

THE MEANING OF THE QUR'ĀN

Vol. XI

Sūrah Fātir—Sūrah Az-Zumar

(ARABIC TEXT WITH TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY)

By

S. ABUL A'LĀ MAUDŪDĪ

English Rendering By
'ABDUL 'AZIZ KAMAL

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ERRATA

<i>Page No.</i>	<i>Line</i>	<i>Misprint</i>	<i>Correct</i>
79	11	those	those who
83	25	was	was you
92	24	speak	speak to
99	32	not a	not been a
100	15	have	might have
103	26	and	and in
104	17	with a	with his
105	19	So	So much so
108	35	that	that in
108	36	Muslims	And since the Muslims

XXXV

FĀTIR فاطر

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

XXXV

FĀTIR فَاطِر

INTRODUCTION

Name

The word *Fāṭir* of the first very verse is the title given to this Sūrah, which simply means that it is a Sūrah in which the word *Fāṭir* has occurred. The other name is *Al-Malā'ika*, which also occurs in the first verse.

Period of Revelation

The internal evidence of the style shows that the period of the revelation of this Sūrah is probably the middle Makkan period, and especially that part of it,

when antagonism had grown quite strong and every sort of mischief was being adopted to frustrate the mission of the Holy Prophet.

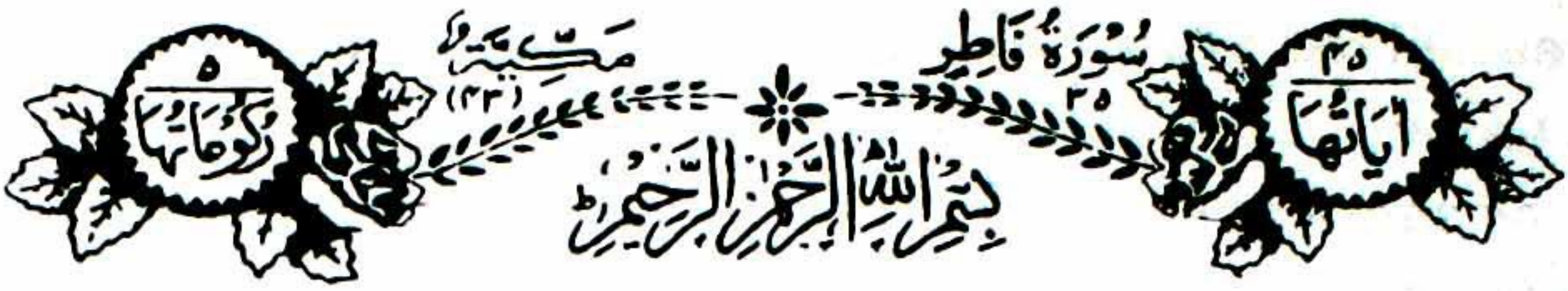
Subject Matter and Theme

The discourse is meant to warn and reprove the people of Makkah and their chiefs for their antagonistic attitude that they had then adopted towards the Holy Prophet's message of *Tauhid*, like a well-wisher, and also to admonish them like a teacher, as if to say: "O foolish people, the way to which this Prophet is calling you is to your own advantage. Your anger, your tricks and machinations against it and your conspiracies and designs to frustrate it are not directed against him but against your own selves. If you do not listen to him, you will be harming your own selves, not him. Just consider and ponder over what he says: there is nothing wrong in it. He repudiates *shirk*. If you look around carefully, you will yourself realize that there is no basis for *shirk* in the world. He presents the doctrine of *Tauhid*. If you use your common sense, you will come to the conclusion that there is no being, beside Allah, Creator of the Universe, which might possess divine attributes and powers and authority. He tells you that you have not been created to be irresponsible in this world, but you have to render an account of your deeds before your God, and that there is life after the life of this world when everyone will meet the consequences of what he has done here. If you think a little you will see that your doubts and your astonishment about it are absolutely baseless. Don't you see the phenomenon of the reproduction of creation day and night? How can then your own recreation be impossible for that God Who created you from an insignificant sperm-drop? Doesn't your own intellect testify that the good and the evil cannot be alike? Then think and judge

for yourselves as to what is reasonable : should the good and the evil meet with the same fate and end up in the dust, or should the good be requited with good and the evil with evil ? Now, if you do not admit and acknowledge these rational and reasonable things and do not abandon your false gods, and wish to continue living only as irresponsible people in the world, the Prophet will not lose anything. It is you yourselves only who will suffer the consequences. The Prophet's only responsibility was to make the truth plain to you, which he has done".

In this connection, the Holy Prophet has been consoled again and again, as if to say : "When you are doing full justice to the preaching of your mission, you do not incur any responsibility for those who persist in their error and do not accept and follow the right way". Furthermore, he has also been consoled to the effect : "You should neither grieve on account of those who do not want to believe, nor consume yourself with the thought of how to bring them to the right path. Instead of this, you should pay your full attention to those who are inclined to listen to you".

The believers also, in this connection, have been given the good news so that they may feel strengthened and encouraged and remain steadfast on the path of the truth with full faith in the promises made by Allah.



الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ فَاطِرِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ جَاعِلِ الْمَلَائِكَةِ رُسُلًا أُولَى أَجْنَحَةٍ
 مَثْنَى وَثُلَاثَ وَرُبْعَ يَزِيدُ فِي الْخَلْقِ مَا يَشَاءُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ
 قَدِيرٌ ۖ مَا يَفْتَحُ اللَّهُ لِلنَّاسِ مِنْ رَحْمَةٍ فَلَا مُمْسِكَ لَهَا ۖ وَمَا يُمْسِكُ
 فَلَا مُرْسِلَ لَهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ ۗ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٥٠﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اذْكُرُوا
 نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ ۗ هَلْ مِنْ خَالِقٍ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ يَرْزُقُكُمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ
 لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ ۚ قَائِلٌ تُوَفَّكَونَ ۚ وَإِنْ يُكَذِّبُوكَ فَقَدْ كَذَّبَتْ رُسُلٌ مِنْ
 قَبْلِكَ ۗ وَ إِلَى اللَّهِ تُرْجَعُ الْأُمُورُ شَيْئًا بِهَا النَّاسُ إِنْ وَعَدَ اللَّهُ حَقًّا فَلَا
 تَغْتَرَبُوا الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا ۗ وَلَا يَغْتَرَبَكُمْ بِاللَّهِ الْغُرُورُ ۗ إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لَكُمْ
 عَدُوٌّ فَاتَّخِذُوهُ عَدُوًّا ۗ إِنَّمَا يَدْعُوا حِزْبَهُ لِيَكُونُوا مِنْ أَصْحَابِ السَّعِيرِ ﴿٥١﴾
 الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ ۗ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ
 مَغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرٌ كَبِيرٌ ۗ أَفَمَنْ زُيِّنَ لَهُ سُوءُ عَمَلِهِ فَرَآهُ حَسَنًا ۗ فَإِنْ لَمْ يَأْتِ
 يَضِلُّ مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۗ وَيَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۗ فَلَا تَذْهَبُ نَفْسُكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَسْرَتٌ ۗ
 إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾ وَاللَّهُ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ الرِّيحَ فَتُثِيرُ سَحَابًا
 فَسُقْنَاهُ إِلَى بَلَدٍ مَيِّتٍ فَأَحْيَيْنَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا ۗ كَذَلِكَ النُّشُورُ ﴿٥٣﴾
 مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ الْعِزَّةَ فَلِلَّهِ الْعِزَّةُ جَمِيعًا ۗ إِلَيْهِ يَصْعَدُ الْكَلِمُ الطَّيِّبُ ۗ وَ

XXXV

FĀTIR فاطر

Verses : 45

Revealed at Makkah

In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate

Praise is only for Allah, Who is the Creator of the heavens and the earth and the Employer of the angels¹ having wings in twos and threes and fours,² as His messengers. He adds to His creation as He pleases³ : surely Allah has power over everything. Whatever door of mercy Allah may open for the people, none can withhold it, and the door that He closes, none has the power to open it after Him.⁴ He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.⁵ 1-2

O people, remember the favours Allah has done to you.⁶ Is there beside Allah any other creator also, who provides for you from the heavens and the earth? There is no god but He. Wherefrom then are you being deceived⁷? Now (O Prophet,) if these people treat you as a liar,⁸ (it is not a new thing :) many Messengers before you also have been treated as liars. And all affairs shall ultimately be presented before Allah.⁹ 3-4

O people, the promise of Allah is surely true.¹⁰ Therefore, let not the worldly life deceive you,¹¹ nor let that great deceiver deceive you concerning Allah.¹² Indeed, Satan is your enemy; therefore, you also should treat him as your enemy. He is inviting his followers towards his way so that they may join the dwellers of Hell. Those who disbelieve¹³ shall have a severe punishment, and those who believe and do good works shall have forgiveness and a rich reward.¹⁴ 5-7

(Can¹⁵ the deviation of that person be imagined) 8-9

whose evil deed is made seem fair to him and he deems it as good¹⁶? The fact is that Allah leads astray whomsoever He pleases and shows the Right Way to whomsoever He pleases. So, (O Prophet,) let not yourself be consumed with grief for the sake of these people¹⁷: Allah is aware of whatever they are doing.¹⁸ Allah it is Who sends the winds; then they raise the cloud, then We drive it towards a waste land and revive it thereby after its death. Likewise shall be the Resurrection of the dead men.¹⁹

1. This can have two meanings: (1) "That these angels perform the service of communicating messages between Allah and His Prophets;" and (2) "that it is the duty of these angels to convey and enforce the Commands of Allah Almighty throughout the universe." The object is to impress this truth: The position of the angels whom the polytheists have made their gods and goddesses is no more than of obedient servants of Allah, the One. Just as the servants of a king run about for the implementation of his orders, so do these angels fly about in the service of the real Sovereign of the Universe. These servants have no authority of their own; all powers rest with Allah, Who is the real Sovereign.

2. We have no means to know what is the nature of the wings of these angels. But when Allah has used this word, which in human language is used for the wings of birds, instead of any other words, to express and depict the truth, one can certainly conclude that this very word of our language is nearest to the actual meaning. The mention of two and three and four pairs of the wings shows that different angels have been granted different degrees of powers by Allah. They have been equipped with different powers of speed and efficiency as demanded by the nature of service for which they are employed.

3. These words show that the number of the wings of the angels is restricted to four, but Allah has provided some angels with more wings than four. According to a *Hadith* related by Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, the Holy Prophet once saw the Angel Gabriel (peace be upon him) with six hundred wings. (Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmidhi). Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah relates that the Holy Prophet had seen Gabriel twice in his real shape: he had six hundred wings and had covered the whole horizon. (Tirmidhi)

4. This also is meant to remove the misunderstanding of the polytheists, who believed that from among the servants of Allah some one gave them the jobs, some one the children and some one health to their patients. All these superstitions of *shirk* are baseless, and the pure truth is just this that whatever of mercy reaches the people, reaches them only through Allah Almighty's bounty and grace. No one else has the power either to bestow it or to withhold it. This theme has been expressed at many places in the Qur'ān and the *Hadiths* in different ways so that man may avoid the humiliation of begging at every door and at every shrine and may realize that making or marring of his destiny is in the power of One Allah alone and of none else.

5. "He is the All-Mighty" : He is dominant and the owner of Sovereignty : none can stop His judgements from being enforced. Also "He is All-Wise" : every judgement of His is based on wisdom. When He gives somebody something He gives it because it is demanded by wisdom, and when He withholds something from somebody He withholds it because it would be against wisdom to give it.

6. "Remember.....you" : "Do not be ungrateful : do not forget that whatever you have has been given by Allah". In other words, this sentence is meant to warn that whoever worships another than Allah, or regards a blessing as a favour done by another than Allah, or thanks another than Allah for a favour received, or prays to another than Allah for the grant of a blessing, is ungrateful".

7. There is a subtle gap between the first and the second sentence, which is being filled by the context itself. To understand this, one may visualize the scene like this : The polytheists are being addressed. The speaker asks the audience : "Is there another creator beside Allah, who might have created you, and might be arranging provisions for you from the earth and heavens ?" After this question the speaker waits for the answer. But there is no reply from anywhere. No one replies that there is another one beside Allah, who is their creator and sustainer. This by itself shows that the audience also believe that there is none beside Allah, who could be their creator and sustainer. Then the speaker says : "If so, then He alone can be the Deity also and no one else. How have you been so deceived ? Why have you taken these others as your deities, when Allah alone is your Creator and Sustainer ?"

8. "If they...liar" : "If they do not believe that there is

no one worthy of worship but Allah, and accuse you of having made a false claim to Prophethood."

9. That is, "It is not for the people to give the verdict that whomsoever they call a liar should in actual fact become a liar. The judgement rests with Allah. He shall in the end decide who was the liar, and shall bring the real liars to their evil end."

10. "The promise" implies the promise of the Hereafter to which allusion was made in the preceding sentence, saying: "All affairs shall ultimately be presented before Allah."

11. "Let not...deceive you": "Deceive you in this that the world is an end in itself: that there is no Hereafter when one will have to render an account of one's deeds; or in this that even if there is the Hereafter, the one who is enjoying life here will enjoy life there, too."

12. "Great deceiver": Satan, as is evident from the next sentence. And "deceive you concerning Allah" means: (1) That he should make some people believe that Allah does not exist at all; (2) involve others in the misunderstanding that Allah after having once created the world, has retired and has now practically nothing to do with the universe any more; (3) delude others into believing that Allah no doubt is running the universe, but He has taken no responsibility of providing guidance to man: therefore, Revelation and Prophethood are a mere deception; and (4) give still others the false hope that since Allah is All-Forgiving and All-Merciful, He will forgive one whatever sins one might have committed, and that He has some beloved ones too: if one remains attached to them, success and salvation are assured.

13. "Those who disbelieve": those who will refuse to believe in this invitation of Allah's Book and His Messenger.

14. That is, Allah will overlook their errors and will reward them for their good deeds not merely with what they will just deserve but much more richly and generously.

15. Verses 3-7 were addressed to the common people. In this paragraph mention has been made of the standard-bearers of error and deviation, who were exerting their utmost to frustrate and defeat the mission of the Holy Prophet.

16. That is, one kind of perverted person is he who commits evil but knows and understands that he is committing evil. Such a person can be reformed by counsel and advice, and sometimes his own conscience also pricks and brings him to the right path, for his habits only are perverted, not his mind. But there is another kind

of a person whose mentality has been perverted, who has lost the discrimination between good and evil, for whom the life of sin has become alluring and lustrous, who abhors good and takes evil for civilization and culture, who regards goodness and piety as things of the past, and sinfulness and wickedness as progressiveness, and for whom guidance becomes error and error guidance. Such a person is not amenable to any advice, any admonition. He neither takes warning from his own follies, nor listens to a well-wisher. It is useless to waste one's time and energy for the reformation of such a person. Instead, the inviter to the truth should turn his attention towards those whose consciences may still be alive and who may still be inclined to listen to the truth.

17. The insertion of the words "Allah leads astray whomsoever He pleases and shows the Right Way to whomsoever He pleases", between the preceding and this sentence, clearly gives the meaning that Allah deprives, of the grace of guidance, those who become so perverted mentally, and leaves them to wander aimlessly in the ways in which they themselves wish to remain lost. After making the Holy Prophet realize this reality Allah exhorts him to the effect: "It is not within your power to bring such people to the right path; therefore, have patience in their regard. Just as Allah is indifferent about them, so should you also avoid being unduly anxious about their reformation."

Here, one should bear in mind two things very clearly. First, the people being mentioned here were not the common people, but the chiefs of Makkah, who were employing every falsehood, every fraud and every trick to defeat the mission of the Holy Prophet. These people were in fact not involved in any misunderstanding about the Holy Prophet. They knew full well what he was calling them to and what were the evils and moral weaknesses which they themselves were striving to maintain. After knowing and understanding all this they had firmly resolved not to let him succeed in his object, and for this purpose they did not feel any hesitation in using any mean or petty device. Now, evidently the people who deliberately and after mutual consultation invent a new falsehood every next day and spread it against a person, can deceive the whole world but as for themselves they know that they are the liars and that the person whom they have accused is free of every blame. Then, if the person against whom the false propaganda is being made also does not react and respond in a way opposed to truth and

[Contd. on p. 14

الْعَمَلُ الصَّالِحُ يَرْفَعُهُ ۗ وَالَّذِينَ يَمْكُرُونَ السَّيِّئَاتِ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ ۗ
 وَمَكْرُ أُولَئِكَ هُوَ يُبْوَءُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ لُطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ
 جَعَلَكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا ۗ وَمَا تَحِيلُ مِنْ أَنْثَىٰ وَلَا تَضَعُ إِلَّا بِعِلْمِهِ ۗ وَمَا
 يُعْتَرُ مِنْ مُعْتَرٍ وَلَا يُنْقِصُ مِنْ عُمُرِهِ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ ۗ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ
 يَسِيرٌ ۗ وَمَا يَسْتَوِي الْبَحْرَيْنِ ۗ هَذَا عَذَابٌ فَرَاتٌ سَائِغٌ شْرَابُهُ وَهَذَا
 مِلْحٌ أُجَاجٌ ۗ وَمِنْ كُلِّ تَاكُلُونَ لَحْمًا طَرِيًّا وَتَسْتَخْرِجُونَ حِلْيَةً تَلْبَسُونَهَا
 وَتَرَى الْفُلْكَ فِيهِ مَوَاجِرَ لَتَبْتَغُوا مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۗ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ۗ يُؤَلِّجُ
 اللَّيْلَ فِي النَّهَارِ وَ يُؤَلِّجُ النَّهَارَ فِي اللَّيْلِ ۗ وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ ۗ كُلٌّ
 يَجْرِي لِأَجَلٍ مُسَمًّى ۗ ذَلِكَُمُ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ ۗ وَالَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ
 دُونِهِ مَا يَمْلِكُونَ مِنْ قِطْمِيرٍ ۗ إِنْ تَدْعُوهُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُوا دَعَاءَكُمْ ۗ وَكَو
 سَمِعُوا مَا اسْتَجَابُوا لَكُمْ ۗ وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يَكْفُرُونَ بِشِرْكِكُمْ ۗ وَلَا يُنَبِّئُكَ
 مِثْلُ خَيْرٍ ۗ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ أَنْتُمُ الْفُقَرَاءُ إِلَى اللَّهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ ۗ
 إِنْ يَشَأْ يُذْهِبْكُمْ وَيَأْتِ بِخَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ ۗ وَمَا ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ بِعَزِيزٍ ۗ وَلَا
 تَزُرُ وَازِرَةً وَزَرَ أُخْرَىٰ ۗ وَإِنْ تَدْعُ مُثْقَلَةٌ إِلَىٰ جَنِيهَا لَا يُحْمَلُ مِنْهُ شَيْءٌ
 وَلَوْ كَانَ ذَا قُرْبَىٰ ۗ إِنَّمَا تُنذِرُ الَّذِينَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُم بِالْغَيْبِ وَأَقَامُوا
 الصَّلَاةَ ۗ وَمَنْ تَزَكَّىٰ فَإِنَّمَا يَتَزَكَّىٰ لِنَفْسِهِ ۗ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ الْمَصِيرُ ۗ وَمَا يَسْتَوِي
 الْأَعْمَىٰ وَالْبَصِيرُ ۗ وَلَا الظُّلُمَاتُ وَلَا النُّورُ ۗ وَلَا الظُّلُّ وَلَا الْحُرُورُ ۗ
 وَمَا يَسْتَوِي الْأَحْيَاءُ وَلَا الْأَمْوَاتُ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُسْمِعُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۗ وَمَا أَنْتَ
 بِمُسْمِعٍ مَن فِي الْقُبُورِ ۗ إِنْ أَنْتَ إِلَّا نَذِيرٌ ۗ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ بِالْحَقِّ بَشِيرًا

Whoever seeks honour should know that the honour wholly belongs to Allah.²⁰ Only the pure Word rises up to Him, and the righteous deed causes it to rise.²¹ As for those who plot evil,²² there is a severe torment for them, and their plotting shall itself perish. 10

Allah²³ created you from dust, then from the sperm-drop,²⁴ then made you pairs (i.e., male and female). No woman conceives or is delivered but it is in the knowledge of Allah. No aging person grows old nor is anything reduced of his age except in accordance with a Book²⁵: this is an easy thing for Allah.²⁶ And the two bodies of water are not alike²⁷: one is sweet and thirst-quenching, pleasant to drink, while the other is saltish and pungent; yet from both you get fresh flesh²⁸ and bring out decorations to wear,²⁹ and in the same waters you see the ships which plough through it so that you may seek Allah's bounty and be grateful to Him. He causes the night to pass into the day and the day into the night³⁰ and He has subjected the sun and the moon till an appointed time.³¹ The same Allah (Whose works are these) is your Lord: Sovereignty is His. Those whom you invoke instead of Him do not own even a blade of grass.³² If you call them, they cannot hear your prayers, and if they hear, they cannot answer you³³; and on the Day of Resurrection they will disown your *shirk*.³⁴ None can inform you of the truth except the One Who is All-Aware.³⁵ 11-14

O people, it is you who stand in need³⁶ of Allah: Allah is Self-Sufficient and Self-Praiseworthy.³⁷ If He wills He can remove you and bring a new creation in your place: this is not at all difficult for Allah.³⁸ No bearer of a burden will bear another's burden³⁹, and if a laden soul cries out for help, none will come forward to share the least of its burden, even though it be the nearest kinsman.⁴⁰ (O Prophet,) you can only warn those who fear their Lord though they cannot see Him, 15-24

and establish the *Ṣalāt*.⁴¹ Whoever adopts purity does so for his own good, and to Allah shall all return. The blind and the seeing are not alike, nor are the dark-nesses and light alike, nor are the cool shade and the heat of the sun, nor the living and the dead alike.⁴² Allah causes whomever He wills, to hear, but (O Prophet,) you cannot make those who are buried in the graves to hear you.⁴³ You are only a warner.⁴⁴ We have sent you with the Truth, as a bearer of good news and a warner. And there has been no nation which was not visited by a warner.⁴⁵

Contd. from p. 11)

righteousness, the unjust people also cannot help realizing that their opponent is a truthful and honest man. If in spite of this the people do not feel ashamed of their misconduct and continue to oppose and resist the truth with falsehood, their conduct itself testifies that they are under Allah's curse and they can no longer discriminate between good and evil.

Secondly, if Allah had only meant to make His Prophet understand the supreme truth, He could have secretly made him aware of this. There was no need to proclaim it openly in the Revelation. To mention it in the Qur'ān and to proclaim it to the world was in fact meant to warn the common people that the leaders and the religious guides whom they were following blindly were the people of perverted mentality, whose mean conduct was itself an evidence that they were under the curse of Allah.

18. This sentence in itself contains the threat that a time is coming when Allah will punish them for their misdeeds. When a ruler says that he is fully aware of the misdeeds of a culprit, it does not only mean that the ruler has the knowledge of his misconduct, but it necessarily contains the warning that he will certainly also punish him for this.

19. That is, "These ignorant people think that the Hereafter is impossible. That is why they are living under the delusion that they may do whatever they like in the world, the time will never come when they will have to appear before their God and render an account of their deeds. But this is no more than a delusion. On the Day of Resurrection, the dead men of all ages will suddenly rise back to life at one call of Allah just as the dead earth comes

back to life at one shower of the rain and the roots, lying dead for ages, become green and start sprouting up from the layers of the earth."

20. It should be noted that whatever the chiefs of the Quraish were doing against the Holy Prophet, they were doing it for the sake of their honour and dignity. They thought that if the Holy Prophet succeeded in his mission, their greatness and glory would fade away, their influence would die out and their honour among the Arabs would be ruined. At this it is being said: "The honour that you have attained for yourselves by your disbelief in and rebellion against Allah, is a false honour, which is destined to be ruined. The true and enduring honour, which can never suffer debasement, can be attained only through service of Allah. If you turn sincerely and faithfully to Him, you will attain it; and if you turn away from Him you are bound to live an abject, wretched life."

21. This is the real means of attaining the honour. In the sight of Allah the false, vicious and mischievous can never rise and flourish. In His sight only such a word can rise and flourish, which is true and pure and based on the truth, and in which a righteous creed and a correct point of view may have been expressed and presented. Then the thing which makes the pure word rise and prosper is the action which conforms to it. Wherever the word is pure but the action opposed to it, the purity of the word suffers a blemish. The mere extravagant use of the tongue does not exalt a word: the power of the righteous action is needed to exalt and raise it high.

Here, one should also note that the Qur'an presents the righteous word and the righteous action as inter-dependent. No action can be righteous merely on the basis of its external and apparent form unless it has a righteous creed behind it. And no righteous creed can be reliable unless it is supported and confirmed by a person's action. For instance, if a person says that he regards Allah, the One, alone as his Deity, but worships others than Allah in practical life, his action belies his word. If a person says that he regards the wine as unlawful but drinks, his mere word can neither be acceptable to the people nor deserve approval in the sight of Allah.

22. "Those who plot evil": Those who propagate false and evil words by means of cunning tricks, deceit and deceptive reasoning, and do not feel any hesitation in employing any device,

however mean and depraved, to frustrate and defeat the word of the truth.

23. From here again the discourse is directed to the common people.

24. That is, man in the first instance was created from the dust directly, then his race was perpetuated through the sperm-drop.

25. That is, "It is pre-ordained for everyone who is born in this world how long he will live. If a person lives a long life, he does so by Allah's decree, and if another one lives a short life, he too lives so by Allah's decree. Some ignorant people give the argument that in the past the death-rate of the newly-born children used to be high, and now it has been checked by the advancement of the medical science ; and the people used to live short lives in the past, now due to better medical facilities the life-span has increased. But this argument could be presented in refutation of the Qur'ānic argument only when it could be ascertained that Allah, for instance, had pre-ordained a two-year life for a certain person, and the modern medical facilities have enhanced it by a day. If a person has no such knowledge, he cannot refute this Qur'ānic statement on any rational grounds. Only on the basis of the statistics that the death-rate among children has fallen, or that the people now are living longer lives, it cannot be argued that man has now become able to change the decrees of Allah. Rationally it is not impossible that Allah might have fixed different life-spans for the people born in different periods, and this might also be Allah Almighty's decree that man in such and such an age would be granted curative power to treat such and such diseases, and in such and such a period man would be given greater means for longevity.

26. That is, "It is not at all difficult for Allah to give commands and pass judgements about each individual of His countless creations when He possesses detailed and perfect knowledge about them."

27. That is, the body of water in the oceans, and the body of water in the rivers and springs and lakes.

28. "Fresh flesh" : Flesh of water animals.

29. That is pearls and corals and, in some rivers, diamonds and gold.

30. That is, "The light of the day starts diminishing and the darkness of the night increasing gradually so as to cover up everything completely. Likewise, towards the end of the night, in the beginning, a streak of the light appears on the horizon, and then the bright day dawns."

31. "Subjected .." : subjected to a law.

32. The word *qiṭmīrā* in the original means the thin skin that covers the stone of the date-fruit ; but what is meant to be said is that the gods of the *mushriks* do not own anything whatever. That is why we have translated it "a blade of grass", which is an insignificant thing.

33. This does not mean that they cannot tell aloud, in answer to your prayer, whether your prayer has been accepted or not, but it means that they cannot take any action on your supplications. If a person sends his application to someone who is not a ruler, his application miscarries. For the person to whom it has been sent, has no authority whatever : he can neither reject it nor accept it. However, if the same application is sent to the one who is really a ruler, one or the other action will certainly be taken on it.

34. That is, "They will plainly say : We had never told them that we are Allah's associates and that they should worship us. On the contrary, we were not at all aware that they regarded us as Allah's associates and were invoking us for help. None of their prayers has reached us, nor has any of their gifts and offerings".

35. "All-Aware" : Allah Almighty Himself. It means this : "The other person can at the most refute *shirk* and prove the powerlessness of the gods of the polytheists by rational arguments only, but We are directly aware of the Absolute Truth. We are telling you, on the basis of knowledge, that all those whom the people believe to be possessing some powers in Our Godhead are absolutely powerless. They have no authority whatever by which they might do somebody good or harm. And We know this directly that on the Day of Resurrection, these gods of the *mushriks* will themselves refute their *shirk*."

36. That is, "You should not remain under the delusion that Allah stands in need of your help. If you do not accept Him as God, His Godhead will fail, and if you do not serve and worship Him, He will incur some loss. Nay, but the fact is that you stand in need of Him. You cannot remain alive for a moment if He does not keep you alive, and does not provide you with the means by which you remain alive in the world and function. Therefore, when you are told to adopt His service and obedience, it is not because Allah stands in need of it, but because upon it depends your own success here as well as in the Hereafter. If you do not do so,

you will be harming your own selves only, and not Allah in any way."

37. The word *Ghani* implies that He is the Owner of everything: He is Self-Sufficient and Independent of all: He does not stand in need of anyone's help. The word *Hamid* implies that He is Self-Praiseworthy: someone may praise Him, or may not, but He alone is worthy of *ḥamd* (praise and gratitude). These two attributes have been used together because one would be *ghani* even if one did not do any good to anyone by one's wealth. In such a case one would be *ghani* but not *ḥamid*. One will be *ḥamid* only in case one does not draw any benefit for oneself but benefits others in every way from the treasures of one's wealth and resources. Since Allah is perfect in these two attributes, it has been said: "He is not just *Ghani* (Self-Sufficient) but such *Ghani* as is worthy of every kind of praise and gratitude, for He is fulfilling your needs as well as the needs of all other creatures."

38. That is, "You are not enjoying life on Allah's earth solely by dint of your own power and might. He has the power to remove you from here in no time and raise another people to take your place. Therefore, you should understand your true worth, and should desist from adopting the conduct which has been causing the downfall of the nations. When Allah wills to send someone to his doom, there is no one in the universe, who can stop Him and withhold His decree from being enforced."

39. "Burden": the burden of the responsibilities of actions. It means this: In the sight of Allah every one is responsible for his own actions and for no one else's. There is no possibility that Allah will place the burden of one man's responsibility upon the other, nor is there the possibility that a person will take the burden of another's responsibility upon himself and get himself seized for the crime committed by the other. This thing has been said here because the polytheist kinsmen and relatives of the people who were embracing Islam in Makkah, used to urge them, saying, "Give up Islam and return to your ancestral faith. We take the responsibility of any punishment etc. on ourselves."

40. In the preceding sentence, Allah's law of justice has been enunciated, according to which He will not seize any person for the sin committed by another, but will hold everyone responsible for his own sin. In this sentence the Muslims have been told: "Those who urge you to give up faith and commit evil on the assurance that they will take on themselves the burden of your sins on the Day of Resurrection, are in fact giving you a false hope. When

Resurrection comes and the people see what fate they are going to meet in consequence of their misdeeds, everyone will be concerned only about himself. Brother will turn away from brother and father from son, and no one will be prepared to take even an atom's weight of another's burden on himself."

41. In other words, "Your warnings cannot have any effect on obstinate and stubborn people. Your admonitions can bring only such people to the right path, who have fear of God in their hearts, and who are inclined to bow before their real Master."

42. In these comparisons the present and the future of a believer and a disbeliever have been contrasted. There is a person who has closed his eyes to the realities and does not care to see as to what truth the whole system of the universe and his own existence itself are pointing. There is the other person, whose eyes are open and who clearly sees that everything outside and inside himself bears evidence to the Unity of God and to man's answerability before Him. There is a person, who is wandering blindly in the superstitions of ignorance and the darknesses of presumptions and speculations, and is not inclined to benefit by the light of the candle lit by the Prophet. There is the other person, whose eyes are open and who, as soon as the light spread by the Prophet appears before him, comes to realize that all the ways being followed by the polytheists and the disbelievers and the atheists lead to destruction, and the way to success is, only that which has been shown by the Messenger of God. Now how can it be possible that the attitude of the two persons be the same in the world and the two may follow one and the same path together? And how can this also be possible either that the two should meet the same end and should both end up in the dust after death? Neither should one be punished for his wrongdoings, nor the other be rewarded for his righteous conduct. The sentence, "the cool shade and the heat of the sun are not alike", points to the same fate. The one will be provided shelter under the shade of Allah's mercy and the other will burn in the fire of Hell. Thus, the notions that the two will ultimately meet the same end is utterly false. In the end, the believer has been likened to the living and the stubborn disbeliever to the dead. That is, the believer is he whose feeling, understanding and perception are alive and whose conscience is making him aware of the distinction between the good and the evil every moment. Contrary to this, the person who has been

(Contd. on p. 22)

وَ نَذِيرًا وَإِنْ مِنْ أُمَّةٍ إِلَّا خَلَا فِيهَا نَذِيرٌ ﴿١٥﴾ وَإِنْ يُكَذِّبُوكَ فَقَدْ كَذَّبَ
 الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ جَاءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَ بِالزُّبُرِ وَ بِالْكِتَابِ الْمُنِيرِ ﴿١٥﴾
 ثُمَّ أَخَذْتُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَكَيْفَ كَانَ نَكِيرِ ﴿١٥﴾ أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ أَنْزَلَ مِنَ
 السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ ثَمَرَاتٍ مُخْتَلِفًا أَلْوَانُهَا وَ مِنَ الْجِبَالِ جُدَدٌ
 بَيْضٌ وَ حُمْرٌ مُخْتَلِفٌ أَلْوَانُهَا وَ غَرَابِيبُ سُودٌ ﴿١٥﴾ وَ مِنَ النَّاسِ وَ الدَّوَابِّ
 وَ الْأَنْعَامِ مُخْتَلِفٌ أَلْوَانُهُ كَذَلِكَ إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ إِنَّ
 اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ غَفُورٌ ﴿١٥﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَتْلُونَ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ وَ أَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَ أَنْفَقُوا
 مِنْ رِزْقِنَا سِرًّا وَ عَلَانِيَةً يُرْجُونَ تِجَارَةً لَنْ تَبُورَ ﴿١٥﴾ لِيُؤْتِيَهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ
 وَ يَزِيدَهُمْ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ إِنَّهُ غَفُورٌ شَكُورٌ ﴿١٥﴾ وَ الَّذِي أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ مِنَ
 الْكِتَابِ هُوَ الْحَقُّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِعِبَادِهِ لَخَبِيرٌ بَصِيرٌ ﴿١٥﴾
 ثُمَّ أَوْرَثْنَا الْكِتَابَ الَّذِينَ اصْطَفَيْنَا مِنْ عِبَادِنَا فَمِنْهُمْ ظَالِمٌ لِنَفْسِهِ وَ
 مِنْهُمْ مُقْتَصِدٌ وَ مِنْهُمْ سَابِقٌ بِالْخَيْرَاتِ إِذِنَ اللَّهُ ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَضْلُ
 الْكَبِيرُ ﴿١٥﴾ جَنَّاتٌ عَدْنٍ يَدْخُلُونَهَا يُحَلَّوْنَ فِيهَا مِنْ أَسَاوِرَ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ
 وَ لُؤْلُؤًا وَ لِبَاسُهُمْ فِيهَا حَرِيرٌ ﴿١٥﴾ وَ قَالُوا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَذْهَبَ عَنَّا
 الْحُزْنَ إِنَّ رَبَّنَا لَغَفُورٌ شَكُورٌ ﴿١٥﴾ الَّذِي أَحَلَّنَا دَارَ الْمُقَامَةِ مِنْ
 فَضْلِهِ لَا يَمَسُّنَا فِيهَا نَصَبٌ وَ لَا يَمَسُّنَا فِيهَا لُغُوبٌ ﴿١٥﴾ وَ الَّذِينَ
 كَفَرُوا لَهُمْ نَارُ جَهَنَّمَ لَا يُقْضَى عَلَيْهِمْ فَيَمُوتُوا وَ لَا يُخَفَّفُ
 عَنْهُمْ مِنْ عَذَابِهَا كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي كُلَّ كَفُورٍ ﴿١٥﴾ وَ هُمْ يَصْطَرِحُونَ فِيهَا
 رَبَّنَا أَخْرِجْنَا نَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا غَيْرَ الَّذِي كُنَّا نَعْمَلُ ﴿١٥﴾ أَوَلَمْ نُعَمِّرْكُم مَّا

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Now if they treat you as a liar, those who lived before them also treated (their Messengers) as liars. Their Messengers came to them with clear proofs⁴⁶ and Scriptures and the enlightening Book.⁴⁷ Then I seized those who disbelieved, and behold, how terrible was My punishment ! 25-26

Do you not see that Allah sends down rainwater from the sky and we bring forth thereby a variety of fruits of different colours ? In the mountains also there are streaks, white and red and jetblack, with different hues. And likewise, men, beasts and cattle also have different colours.⁴⁸ The fact is that only those of His servants, who possess knowledge, fear Allah.⁴⁹ Surely, Allah is All-Mighty, All-Forgiving.⁵⁰ 27-28

Those who recite the Book of Allah and establish the *Ṣalāt*, and spend out of what We have given them, secretly and openly, do hope for a bargain which involves no loss. (They have invested their all in this bargain) so that Allah may give them their full rewards and bless them with even more from His grace.⁵¹ Surely, Allah is Forgiving and Bounteous.⁵² (O Prophet,) the Book that We have sent to you by revelation is the very Truth, which confirms the previous Scriptures.⁵³ Allah is indeed well aware of His servants, and watchful over everything.⁵⁴ Then We made those people heirs of this Book, whom We chose (for this inheritance) from among Our servants.⁵⁵ Now someone of them is being unjust to his own self, and someone following a middle course, and someone excelling in good deeds by Allah's leave. This is the supreme bounty.⁵⁶ There are everlasting Gardens which they shall enter⁵⁷ to be decorated with bracelets of gold and pearls, and their dress will be of silk. They will say, "Praise be unto Allah Who has removed sorrow from us⁵⁸ : surely, our Lord is Forgiving and Bounteous,⁵⁹ Who by His grace has lodged us in an 29-35

eternal abode⁶⁰ : here we do neither experience any trial nor any weariness."⁶¹

36-37

And for those who have disbelieved⁶² there is the Fire of Hell : neither will it be decreed that they should die, nor will the torment of Hell be lightened for them in any way. Thus do We requite every disbeliever. There they will cry out and say, "Our Lord, take us out from here so that we may do good works other than those which we had been doing." (The reply will be :) "Did We not give you lives long enough so that he who would, could take a warning⁶³ ? and the warner also had come to you. Now taste (the torment) : the wicked will have no helper here."

Contd. from p. 19]

wholly lost in the prejudices of disbelief is even worse than the blind person who is wandering about in darkness. Nay, he is like a dead person who has no sense or feeling left in him.

43. That is, "As for the powers of Allah, they are unlimited. He can even make the stones to hear. But it is not within the power of the Messenger to make those people to listen to him whose consciences have become dead and whose ears deaf to every call to the truth. He can only make those people to hear him, who are inclined to listen to every reasonable thing."

44. That is, "Your only duty is to warn the people and nothing else. If even after this a person does not come to his senses, and remains lost in his deviations, you are not to blame for that, for you have not been entrusted with the duty of making the blind to see and the deaf to hear."

45. That there has been no community in the world for whose guidance Allah did not appoint the Prophets, has been stated at several places in the Qur'ān. In Sūrah Ar-Ra'd : 7, it was said : "Every people has its guide ;" in Sūrah Al-Hijr : 10: "O Prophet, We have already sent Messengers before you among many of the ancient peoples ;" in Sūrah An-Nahl : 36: "We sent to every community a Messenger ;" and in Sūrah Ash-Shu'arā : 208: "We have never destroyed a habitation unless it had its warners to administer admonition." But, in this connection, one should note two things so that there remains no misunderstanding. First, one and the same Prophet is enough for the lands to which his message may

reach. It is not necessary that Prophets be sent to every separate habitation and to every separate community. Second, no new Prophet needs to be sent as long as the message and teaching and guidance given by a previous Prophet remains safe and intact. It is not necessary that a separate Prophet be sent for every race and every generation.

46. "Clear proofs": Proofs which clearly testified that they were Allah's Messengers.

47. "Scriptures" probably consisted of good counsels and moral precepts and "the Book" comprised a complete code of the law.

48. This is meant to impress that in the universe created by Allah nowhere is there homogeneity and uniformity; there is variety everywhere. From the same earth and by the same water different kinds of trees are appearing. Even the two pieces of the fruit of the same tree are not uniform in colour and size and taste. In the same mountain one will see a variety of colours and a great difference in the material composition of its different parts. Even among human beings and animals one will not see two offspring of the same parents exactly alike. If a person seeks uniformity of the temperaments and dispositions and mentalities in this universe and is bewildered at the differences which have been alluded to in vv. 19-22 above, it will be his own perception and understanding to blame. This same variety and difference, in fact, point to the reality that this universe has been created by a Wise Being with great wisdom; its Maker is a Unique Creator and a Matchless Fashioner, Who does not have the same model of everything before Him, but has a variety of countless and limitless designs of everything. Then if one ponders over the differences in human temperaments and minds, in particular, one will see that it is not a mere accident, but in fact the masterpiece of the wisdom of creation. If all human beings had been created with the uniform temperaments and desires and feelings and inclinations and ways of thinking, and no room had been left for any difference, it would have been absolutely useless to bring about a new creation like man in the world. When the Creator decided to bring into existence a responsible creation, a creation having power and authority, the necessary inevitable demand of the nature of the decision was that room for all sorts of differences should be provided in its nature and structure. This is the main proof of the fact that the creation of man is not the result of an accident, but the result of a wonderful and wise plan and design. And obviously, wherever there is a wise plan and design, there

must necessarily be a Wise Being working behind it, for the existence of wisdom without a Wise Being would be un-imaginable.

49. That is, the more a person is unaware of the attributes of Allah, the more he will be fearless of Him. Contrary to this, the more a person is aware and conscious of Allah's powers, His knowledge, His wisdom, His vengeance and His omnipotence and His other attributes, the more he will fear His disobedience. Thus, in fact, "knowledge" in this verse does not imply knowledge of academic subjects like philosophy and science and history and mathematics, etc. but the knowledge of Divine attributes, no matter whether one is literate or illiterate. The one who is fearless of God is illiterate merely as regards this knowledge even if he has all the knowledge of the world. And the one who knows the attributes of God and fears Him in his heart, is learned even if he is illiterate. In the same connection, one should also know that in this verse the '*ulamā*' does not imply the scholars in the technical sense, who are termed as religious scholars because of their knowledge of the Qur'ān and *Hadith* and *Fiqh* and philosophy. They will prove true to this verse only when they possess fear of God in their hearts. The same thing has been said by Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, thus: "Knowledge is not due to much narration of *Hadith* but due to much fear of Allah." And also by Ḥaḍrat Ḥassan Baṣri, thus: "The scholar is he who fears Allah though he has not seen Him, and turns to what is approved by Him and keeps away from what makes Him angry."

50. That is, He is All-Mighty, and therefore, can seize the disobedient as and when He likes: no one can escape His grasp. But He is All-Forgiving also and is, therefore, giving respite to the wrongdoers.

51. This kind of conduct and practice of the believers has been likened to a trade bargain because in trade a man invests his money and labour and capabilities in the hope that he will not only get his capital back and his wages for the time and energy spent but in addition some profit as well. Likewise, a believer also invests his wealth and his time and his labour and capabilities in carrying out Allah's Commands and in His service and worship and in the struggle to promote the cause of His Religion in the hope that he will not only get his full rewards for it but Allah will bless him with much more from His bounty as well. But there is a great difference between the two kinds of bargains. In the worldly trade bargains there is the risk of loss also along with

the hope of profits. Contrary to this, in the bargain that a sincere servant makes with his God there is no risk of any loss whatever.

52. That is, "Allah's relation with the sincere believers is not that of a miserly master who checks his servant on trivialities and brings all his services and loyalties to nought on account of a minor error. But Allah is the Most Beneficent and Generous Master. He overlooks the errors of His obedient servant and appreciates whatever service he might be able to render."

53. It means this: "This Book is not presenting anything new which might be opposed to the teaching brought by the former Prophets, but it is presenting the same eternal Truth which all the Prophets have been presenting from the very beginning."

54. The object of mentioning these attributes of Allah here is to arouse the people to the aims and ideals in which their true well-being lies, to the principles which alone can afford the right guidance and to the rules and regulations which are precisely in accordance with them. None can know these except Allah, because He alone is aware of the nature of His servants and its demands, and He alone watches over their well-being and affairs. The people do not know their own selves as much as their Creator knows them. Therefore, the truth is that, and can only be that, which He has taught by Revelation.

55. This implies the Muslims, who have been sorted out from all mankind so that they may become heirs to the Book of Allah, and convey its message to others after the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings). Though this Book has been presented before all human beings, those who accepted it in the first instance, were chosen for the honour to become heirs to a great Book like the Qur'ān and the trustees of the teaching and guidance imparted by a great Messenger like the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings).

56. That is, "All these Muslims are not alike but are divided into three classes :

- (1) Those unjust to themselves : They are those who believe sincerely and honestly that the Qur'ān is the Book of Allah and Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) the Messenger of Allah, but in practical life do not fully follow the Book of Allah and the *Sunnah* of His Messenger. They are believers but sinful; culprits but not rebellious ; weak of faith but not hypocritical and unbelieving at heart. Therefore, although they are "unjust to themselves," they

have been included among the chosen servants of God and among the heirs to the Book ; otherwise, obviously the rebels and the hypocrites and the unbelieving people could not be so treated and honoured. This class of the believers have been mentioned first of all because they are most numerous among the Muslims.

- (2) Those following the middle course : They are the people who fulfil the obligations of this inheritance to some extent but not fully. They are obedient as well as erring. They have not left their self altogether free but try as best as they can to turn it to God's obedience ; however, at times they give it undue freedom and become involved in sin. Thus, their life becomes a combination of both the good and the evil actions. They are less numerous than the first group but more than the third ; that is why they have been mentioned second.
- (3) Those excelling in good deeds : They are the people of the first rank among the heirs to the Book, and they are the ones who are doing full justice to the inheritance. They are in the forefront in following and adhering to the Book and the *Sunnah*, in conveying the message of God to His servants, in offering the sacrifices for the sake of the true Faith, and in every pious and good work. They are not the ones who would commit a sin deliberately, but if they happened to commit a sin inadvertantly, they would be filled with remorse as soon as they became conscious of it. They are less numerous than the people of the first two groups, and therefore, have been mentioned last, although they merit the first place in the matter of doing justice to the heritage of the Book of Allah.

As for the sentence, "this is the supreme bounty", if it is related with the last sentence, it would mean that to excel in good deeds is the supreme bounty, and the people who excel in good deeds are the best of the Muslim community. And if it is taken to be related with the first sentence, it would mean that to be a heir to the Book of Allah and to be chosen for this heritage is the supreme bounty, and the people who have been so chosen on account of their faith in the Qur'an and the Holy Prophet Muhammad are the best among the human beings created by Allah.

57. One section of the commentators has held the view that this sentence is related with the two sentences immediately preced-

ing it. That is, the ones who excel in good deeds are the best of the people and they alone will enter the Gardens. As for the first two groups, nothing has been stated about them so that they become worried concerning their fate and try to improve their lot. This view has been presented by 'Allāma Zamakhshari forcefully and supported by Imām Rāzī.

But the majority of the commentators opine that it is related with the whole preceding discourse, which means that all the three classes of the *Ummah* shall eventually enter Paradise, whether without accountability, or after the accountability, whether remaining secure from every punishment, or after receiving some punishment. This commentary is supported by the Qur'ānic context, for a little below about those who are contrasted with the heirs of the Book, it has been said: "And for those who have disbelieved, there is the fire of Hell." This shows that there is Paradise for all those who have believed in the Book, and Hell for all those who have refused to believe in it. The same has been supported by the *Hadīth* of the Holy Prophet, which Imām Aḥmad, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Ṭabarānī, Baihaqī and some other traditionists have related on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Abū ad-Dardā'. The Holy Prophet said :

"Those who have excelled in good works shall enter Paradise without accountability; and those who are following the middle course, shall be subjected to accountability, but their accountability shall be light. As for those who have been unjust to themselves, they shall be detained throughout the long period of Resurrection and accountability (*maḥshar*). Then Allah shall cover them also with His mercy. And they are the ones who will say: 'Thanks to Allah Who has removed sorrow from us!'"

In this *Hadīth* the Holy Prophet has himself given a complete commentary of the verse under discussion, and stated separately the end to be met by each of the three groups of the believers. The "light accountability" for the ones following the middle course means this: The disbelievers will be punished for their disbelief as well as for each single crime and sin of theirs separately, but, contrary to this, the good and bad deeds of the believers who come with both the good and evil deeds will be judged on the whole: they will not be rewarded for each good deed and punished for each evil deed separately. As for those "who will be detained throughout the period of Resurrection and accountability because they had been unjust to themselves," it means this: They will not be thrown

into Hell, but will be sentenced to be detained "till the rising of the Court." In other words, they will be exposed to all the severities and rigours of the lengthy Day of Resurrection (and God alone knows how lengthy it will be!) till Allah Almighty will turn to them in His mercy and command at the rising of the Court that they too be admitted into Paradise. The traditionists have cited several sayings to the same effect from many Companions like Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, Ḥaḍrat Abū Sa'id Khudrī and Ḥaḍrat Barā bin 'Āzib. And obviously, the Companions could not have said any such thing in such matters unless they had heard it from the Holy Prophet himself.

But from this one should not form the impression that "those who have been unjust to themselves" from among the Muslims will only be sentenced to be detained "till the rising of the Court", and none of them will go to Hell at all. Several crimes have been mentioned in the Qur'ān and *Ḥadīth*, whose perpetrator will go to Hell in spite of his faith. For instance, Allah Himself has declared that the believer who kills another believer wilfully shall go to Hell. Likewise, Hell has been mentioned as the punishment of those people also who violate the provisions of the Divine Law of Inheritance. Those who devour interest even after its prohibition have been declared to be "the dwellers of Hell." Besides these, some other major sins also have been mentioned in *Ḥadīth*, whose perpetrator shall go to Hell.

58. "Sorrow": Sorrow of every kind: sorrows and griefs and worries of the world and of the Hereafter with regard to the final end. It means this: "Now we have nothing to worry about; now there can be no question of any sorrow and trouble afflicting us here."

59. That is "He has forgiven us our errors, has appreciated whatever little provision of deeds we had brought and blessed us with His Paradise as a reward."

60. That is, "The world was a stage in our journey of life, which we have crossed, and the plain of Resurrection also is a stage of the same journey, which we have also crossed. Now we have reached a place which is our eternal abode: we have not to go elsewhere from here."

61. In other words, "All our toils and afflictions have come to an end. Now we do not have to perform any work here in

carrying out which we might have to experience any rigour or hardship and after carrying out which we might be fatigued."

62. "Who have disbelieved": Who have refused to believe in the Book which Allah has sent down on Muḥammad (upon whom be His peace and blessings).

63. This implies every such age of life in which a person may be able to distinguish between good and evil, truth and falsehood, if he likes to, and turn to right guidance instead of deviation, if he wishes. If a person has died before attaining such an age, he will not be called to any account according to this verse. However, the one who has attained this age will certainly be held answerable for his actions. Then, as long as he lives after attaining this age and gets more and more opportunities for choosing and adopting the right path, his responsibility also will increase accordingly; so much so that the one who does not adopt right guidance even in old age will have no chance left for making any excuse. This same thing has been reported by Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah and Ḥaḍrat Saḥl bin Sa'd as-Sā'idī in a Ḥadīth, saying: "The one who lives a short life has an excuse to offer, but there is no room for making an excuse for him who lives for 60 years or more."

(Bukhārī, Aḥmad, Nasa'ī, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Ḥātim).

يَتَذَكَّرُ فِيهِ مَنْ تَذَكَّرَ وَجَاءَكُمْ النَّذِيرُ فَذُوقُوا فَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ
تَصِيرَةٍ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عِلْمُ غَيْبِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ
الصُّدُورِ هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَكُمْ خَلْقًا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَعَلَيْهِ كُفْرُهُ
وَلَا يَزِيدُ الْكَافِرِينَ كُفْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ إِلَّا مَقْتًا وَلَا يَزِيدُ الْكَافِرِينَ
كُفْرَهُمْ إِلَّا خَسَارًا قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ شُرَكَاءَكُمُ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ
اللَّهِ أَرُونِي مَاذَا خَلَقُوا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ أَمْ لَهُمْ شِرْكٌ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ أَمْ اتَّيْنَهُمْ
كِتَابًا فَهُمْ عَلَى بَيِّنَةٍ مِّنْهُ بَلْ إِنْ يَعْذِرُ الظَّالِمُونَ بَعْضُهُمْ بَعْضًا إِلَّا
غُرُورًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُمْسِكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ أَنْ تَزُولَا وَلَئِنْ زَالَتَا
إِنْ أَمْسَكْتَهُمَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ إِنَّهُ كَانَ حَلِيمًا غَفُورًا وَ
أَقْسَمُوا بِاللَّهِ جَهْدَ أَيْمَانِهِمْ لَئِنْ جَاءَهُمْ نَذِيرٌ لَّيَكُونُنَّ أَهْدَى مِنْ
إِحْدَى الْأُمُورِ فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ نَذِيرٌ مَّا زَادَهُمْ إِلَّا نُفُورًا اسْتِكْبَارًا فِي
الْأَرْضِ وَمَكْرَ السَّيِّئِ وَلَا يَحِيقُ الْمَكْرُ السَّيِّئِ إِلَّا بِأَمْلِهِ قَهْلٌ يَنْظُرُونَ
إِلَّا سُنَّتَ الْأَوَّلِينَ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لِسُنَّتِ اللَّهِ تَبْدِيلًا وَلَنْ تَجِدَ لِسُنَّتِ
اللَّهِ تَحْوِيلًا أُولَئِكَ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ
مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ وَكَانُوا أَشَدَّ مِنْهُمْ قُوَّةً وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُعْجِزَهُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فِي
السَّمَوَاتِ وَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ إِنَّهُ كَانَ عَلِيمًا قَدِيرًا وَلَوْ يُوَاخِذُ اللَّهُ
النَّاسَ بِمَا كَسَبُوا مَا تَرَكَ عَلَى ظَهْرِهِمَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ وَلَكِنْ يُؤَخِّرُهُمْ إِلَى
أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى فَإِذَا جَاءَ أَجْلُهُمْ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِعِبَادِهِ بَصِيرًا

ع ١١
١٦ع ٥
١٤

Surely, Allah is aware of every secret thing in the heavens and the earth: He even knows the hidden secrets of the breasts. He it is Who has made you vicegerents in the earth.⁶⁴ Now whoever disbelieves shall himself bear the burden of his disbelief,⁶⁵ and for the disbelievers their disbelief does not increase anything except the wrath of their Lord and the disbelievers do not gain anything except an increase in their loss. 38-39

(O Prophet,) say to them, "Have you ever seen those associates of yours⁶⁶ whom you invoke instead of Allah? Tell me: What have they created in the earth, or what is their share in the heavens?" (If they cannot tell this, ask them :) "Have We given them a writing affording a clear sanction (for their *shirk*)?"⁶⁷ Nay, but these wicked people are only beguiling one another with delusions.⁶⁸ The fact is that it is Allah alone Who is sustaining the heavens and the earth from falling into oblivion and if they fall into the abyss there is none to sustain them after Allah.⁶⁹ Indeed, Allah is Forbearing and All-Forgiving.⁷⁰ 40-41

These people used to swear on solemn oaths by Allah that if a warner had visited them, they would certainly have been better guided than any other nation in the world.⁷¹ But when a warner did come to them, it increased them in nothing but aversion to the Truth. They began to behave even more haughtily in the land and to plot evil, whereas the plotting of evil recoils only on the plotters themselves. Now, are these people awaiting that they should be dealt with (by Allah) in the like way as the preceding nations were dealt with?⁷² Well, you will never find any change in the Way of Allah, nor will you see that a power can turn the Way of Allah from its appointed course. Have they never travelled about in the land that they could see the end of those who have passed before them, and who were far mightier than they? There is nothing that could make Allah helpless, 42-45

neither in the heavens nor in the earth: He knows everything and has power over everything. If Allah were to seize the people for their misdeeds, He would not have left alive any living being on the earth. But He is giving them respite till an appointed time. So, when the appointed time comes, Allah will Himself see His servants.

64. This can have two meanings: (1) "Now He has settled you on His earth after the passing away of the previous generations and nations;" and (2) "the powers and authority that He has given you over different things in the earth are not meant to make you the owners of these things but are meant to enable you to function as the representatives of their real Owner."

65. If the previous sentence is taken to mean that you have been made successors to the previous nations, this sentence would mean this: "The one who did not learn any lesson from the fate of the previous nations and adopted the conduct of disbelief due to which those nations have gone to their doom, will himself see the evil end of his folly." And if the sentence is taken to mean this that Allah has delegated to you powers and authority as His vicegerents in the earth, this sentence would mean this: "He who forgot this position of vicegerency and became independent, or he who adopted service of someone else, apart from his real Master, would see the evil end of his rebellious conduct himself."

66. "Associates of yours", because they are not in fact the associates of Allah, but the ones whom the polytheists themselves have made associates of Allah.

67. That is, "Do they possess a written sanction from Us in which We might have indicated that We have given such and such persons the powers to heal the sick, or to get jobs for the jobless, or to fulfil needs of the needy, or that We have made such and such beings Our representatives in such and such parts of the earth and now it is in their hands to make or mar the destinies of the people of those parts; therefore, Our servants now should pray to them and present gifts and offerings before them, and for whatever blessings they receive they should thank those "demigods" only? If you possess any such sanction, produce it. And if you have no such sanction, you should consider on what grounds you have invented these polytheistic creeds and practices. When you are asked as to

what sign is there in the heavens and the earth that may point to your self-invented gods as being God's associates, you cannot point out any. When you are asked to produce any Divine sanction from any Book of Allah, or from your own possession, or from the possession of your self-invented gods, which may testify to God's having Himself delegated to them those powers which you assign to them, you do not produce any. What then is the basis of your these creeds and concepts? Are you the owners of the Divine rights and powers that you may assign and distribute them to whomsoever you please?"

68. That is, "These religious guides, saints, priests, sorcerers, preachers and attendants of shrines and their agents are befooling the people for selfish motives, and are concocting stories to give them false hopes that if they became the followers of such and such personalities, apart from God, they would have all their wishes and needs fulfilled in the world, and all their sins, no matter how grave and numerous, forgiven by Allah in the Hereafter."

69. That is, "This limitless universe is being sustained by Allah alone. No angel, or jinn, or prophet, or saint can sustain it. Not to speak of sustaining the universe these helpless creatures do not even have the power to sustain their own selves. Each one of them is entirely dependent on Allah Almighty for his birth and survival every moment. To think that any one of them has any share in the attributes and powers of Divinity is sheer folly and deception."

70. That is, "It is Allah's Clemency and Forbearance that He is not seizing the culprits immediately in punishment in spite of all kinds of disobedience which are being shown towards Him."

71. Before the advent of the Holy Prophet, the same thing used to be said by the Arabs, in general, and by the Quraish, in particular, when they witnessed the moral degeneration of the Jews and the Christians. Mention of this saying of theirs has also been made in Sūrah Al-An'ām : 156-157 above, and in Sūrah Aṣ-Ṣāffāt : 167-169 below.

72. That is, this Law of Allah that the nation which repudiates its Prophet, is destroyed should be applied in their case as well.

XXXVI

YĀ SĪN يُسَىٰ

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

XXXVI

يٰسٓ ۙ

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name from the two letters of the alphabet with which it begins.

Period of Revelation

A study of the style shows that it was either sent down during the last stage of the middle Makkan period, or it is one of those Sūrahs, which were sent down during the last stage of the Holy Prophet's stay at Makkah.

Subject Matter and Theme

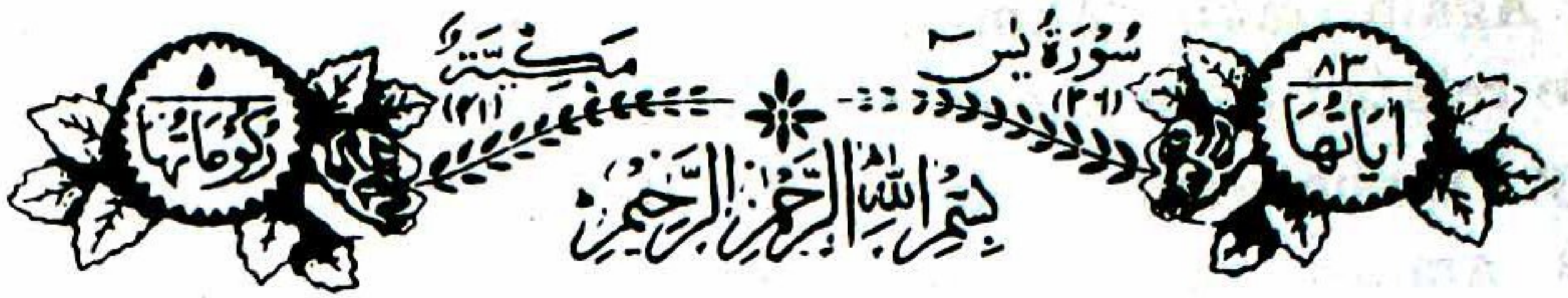
The object of the discourse is to warn the Quraish of the consequences of not believing in the Prophethood of Muhammad (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) and of resisting and opposing it with tyranny, ridicule and mockery. The aspect of the warning is dominant and conspicuous although along with repeatedly giving the warnings, arguments also have been given for the correct understanding by the people.

Arguments have been given for three things: (1) For *Tauhid*, from the signs of the universe and from common sense; (2) for the Hereafter, from the signs of the universe, from common sense and from man's own existence itself; and (3) for the Prophethood of the Prophet Muhammad, from the fact that he was facing all kinds of hardships in the preaching of his message without any selfish motive, and from this that whatever he was inviting the people to was rational and reasonable, accepting which was in the people's own interest.

On the strength of these arguments, themes of reprobation, reproof and warning have been presented repeatedly in a highly forceful manner, so that hearts are shaken up and those which have any capacity for accepting the truth left in them should not remain unmoved.

Imām Ahmad, Abū Da'ūd, Nasā'ī, Ibn Mājah and Tabarānī have related on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Ma'qil bin Yasār that the Holy Prophet said: "Sūrah Yā Sin is the heart of the Qur'ān." This is similar to describing the Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah as the *Umm al-Qur'ān* (the essence or core of the Qur'ān), because Al-Fātiḥah contains the sum and substance of the teaching of the whole Qur'ān. The Sūrah Yā Sin has been called the throbbing heart of the Qur'ān because it presents the message of the Qur'ān in a most forceful manner, which breaks the inertness and stirs the spirit of man to action.

Again Imām Aḥmad, Abū Da'ūd and Ibn Mājah have related from the same Ma'qil bin Yasār that the Holy Prophet said: "Recite Sūrah Yā Sīn to the dying ones among you." The object is not only to revive and refresh the whole Islamic creed in the mind of the dying person but also bring before him, in particular, a complete picture of the Hereafter so that he may know what stages he would have to pass through after crossing the stage of this worldly life. In view of this, it would be desirable that along with the recitation of the Sūrah Yā Sīn its translation also is made for the benefit of the person who does not know Arabic so that the purpose of the admonition is duly fulfilled.



يَسَّ ۙ وَالْقُرْآنَ الْحَكِيمَ ۗ إِنَّكَ لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ۚ عَلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ۗ
 تَنْزِيلَ الْعَزِيزِ الرَّحِيمِ ۗ لِتُنذِرَ قَوْمًا مَّا أُنذِرَ آبَاؤَهُمْ فَهُمْ غٰفِلُونَ ۗ
 لَقَدْ حَقَّ الْقَوْلُ عَلَىٰ أَكْثَرِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ۗ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا فِي آعْنَاقِهِمْ
 أَغْلًا ۖ فَهِيَ إِلَى الْأَذْقَانِ فَهُمْ مُقْمَحُونَ ۗ وَجَعَلْنَا مِنْ بَيْنِ أَيْدِيهِمْ
 سَدًّا ۖ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ سَدًّا فَأَغْشَيْنَاهُمْ فَهُمْ لَا يُبْصِرُونَ ۗ وَسَوَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ
 ءَأَنْذَرْتَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تُنذِرْهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ۗ إِنَّمَا تُنذِرُ مَنِ اتَّبَعَ الذِّكْرَ
 وَخَشِيَ الرَّحْمَنَ الْغَيْبَ ۖ فَبَشِّرْهُ بِمَغْفِرَةٍ ۖ وَأَجْرٍ كَرِيمٍ ۗ إِنَّا نَحْنُ نُحْيِي
 الْمَوْتَىٰ وَنَكْتُبُ مَا قَدَّمُوا وَآثَرَهُمْ ۗ وَكُلَّ شَيْءٍ أَحْصَيْنَاهُ فِي إِمَامٍ
 مُّبِينٍ ۗ وَاضْرِبْ لَهُمْ مَثَلًا أَصْحَابَ الْقَرْيَةِ إِذْ جَاءَهَا الْمُرْسَلُونَ ۗ إِذْ
 أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْهِمُ اثْنَيْنِ فَكَذَّبُوهُمَا فَعَزَّزْنَا بِثَالِثٍ فَقَالُوا إِنَّا إِلَيْكُمْ
 مُّرْسَلُونَ ۗ قَالُوا مَا أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِثْلُنَا ۖ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ الرَّحْمَنُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ
 إِن أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا تَكْذِبُونَ ۗ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا يَعْلَمُ إِنَّا إِلَيْكُمْ لَمُرْسَلُونَ ۗ وَ
 مَا عَلَيْنَا إِلَّا الْبَلَاغُ الْمُبِينُ ۗ قَالُوا إِنَّا نَطَّيَّرْنَا بِكُمْ لَئِن لَّمْ تَنْتَهُوا
 لَنَرْجُمَنَّكُمْ وَلَيَمَسَّنَّكُم مِّنَّا عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ۗ قَالُوا طَائِرُكُمْ مَعَكُمْ أَإِن ذُكِّرْتُمْ
 بَلْ أَنْتُمْ قَوْمٌ مُّسْرِفُونَ ۗ وَجَاءَ مِنْ أَقْصَا الْمَدِينَةِ رَجُلٌ يَسْعَىٰ قَالَ
 يَاقَوْمِ اتَّبِعُوا الْمُرْسَلِينَ ۗ اتَّبِعُوا مَنِ لَا يُسْأَلُكُمْ أَجْرًا وَهُمْ مُّهْتَدُونَ ۗ

وقف غفران

XXXVI

YĀ SĪN يس

Verses : 83

Revealed at Makkah

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

Yā Sīn.¹ By the wise Qur'ān, you are indeed one of the Messengers,² are on the Straight Way, (and this Qur'ān) is the Revelation of the All-Mighty, the All-Merciful One,³ so that you may warn a people whose forefathers were not warned, and so, they live in heedlessness.⁴ 1-6

Most of these people have already deserved the decree of torment ; therefore, they do not believe.⁵ We have put on their necks fetters which reach to their chins, so they stand with heads upright.⁶ We have set a barrier before them and a barrier behind them : We have covered them, so they cannot see anything.⁷ It is all the same for them whether you warn them or warn them not, they would not believe.⁸ You can only warn him who follows the admonition and fears the Merciful God, though he cannot see Him. Give him the good news of forgiveness and of a generous reward. 7-11

We shall certainly one day raise the dead to life. We are recording all the deeds they have done and also that which they have left behind :⁹ We have preserved everything in an open Book. 12

Tell them, for instance, the story of the people of the habitation when the Messengers came to it.¹⁰ We sent to them two Messengers and they denied both. Then We sent a third one to strengthen them, and they all said, "We have been sent to you as Messengers." The 13-15

people said, "You are no more than men like us,¹¹ and the Merciful God has sent down nothing:¹² you are only telling a lie."

16-19 The Messengers said, "Our Lord knows that we have indeed been sent as Messengers to you and our only responsibility is to convey the message plainly."¹³ The people said, "We regard you as an evil omen for ourselves. If you do not desist (from this), we shall stone you, and you will receive a painful punishment from us."¹⁴ The Messengers replied, "Your evil omen is with your own selves.¹⁵ Do you say this because you have been admonished? The fact is that you are a people who have transgressed all limits."¹⁶

20-21 In the meantime a man came running from the remote part of the city, and he said, "O my people, follow the Messengers: follow those who do not ask any reward of you and are on the Right Way."¹⁷

1. Ibn 'Abbās, 'Ikrimah, Ḍaḥḥāk, Ḥasan Baṣrī and Sufyān bin 'Uyainah have opined that it means, "O man", or "O person"; some other commentators have regarded it as an abbreviation of "Yā Sayyid" as well, which, according to this interpretation, would be an address to the Holy Prophet.

2. To begin a discourse like this does not mean that the Holy Prophet, God forbid, had some doubt about his Prophethood, and Allah had to say this in order to reassure him of it. But the reason is that the disbelieving Quraish at that time were most vehemently refusing to believe in his Prophethood; therefore, Allah at the very beginning of the discourse has said: "You are indeed one of the Messengers," which implies that the people who deny your Prophethood, are misled and mistaken. To further confirm the same, an oath has been taken by the Qur'ān, and the word "wise" has been used as an epithet of the Qur'ān, which means this: "An obvious proof of your being a Prophet is this Qur'ān, which is full of wisdom. This itself testifies that the person who is presenting such wise revelations is most surely a Messenger of God. No man has the power to compose such revelations. The people who know Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) can never be in-

volved in the misunderstanding that he is himself forging these discourses, or reciting them after having learnt them from another man." (For further explanation, see Yūnus: 16-17, 37-39; Baḥr Isrā'īl: 88; An-Naml: 75; Al-Qaṣaṣ: 44-46, 85-87; Al-'Ankabūt: 49-51; Ar-Rūm: 1-5 and the relevant E.N.'s).

3. Here, two of the attributes of the Sender of the Qur'ān have been mentioned. First, that He is All-Mighty; second, that He is All-Merciful. The first attribute is meant to impress the reality that the Qur'ān is not the counsel of a powerless preacher, which if you overlook or ignore, will not bring any harm to you; but this is the Edict of that Owner of the Universe, Who is All-Mighty, Whose decrees cannot be withheld from being enforced by any power, and Whose grasp cannot be avoided by anyone. The second attribute is meant to make one realize that it is all due to His kindness and mercy that He has sent His Messenger for your guidance and instruction and sent down this great Book so that you may avoid errors and follow the right path which may lead you to the successes of the world and the Hereafter.

4. Another translation can be: "You should warn the people of the same of which their forefathers had been warned, because they live in heedlessness." If the first meaning, as given above in the text, is taken, the forefathers would imply the forefathers of the immediate past, for in the ancient time several Prophets had appeared in Arabia. And if the second meaning is adopted, it would imply this: "Revive and refresh the message that had been conveyed to the forefathers of this nation by the Prophets in the past, for these people have forgotten it." Obviously, there is no contradiction between the two translations, and, as to meaning, each is correct in its own place.

A doubt may arise here: How could the forefathers of a nation to whom no warner had been sent at a particular time in the past, be held responsible for their deviation at that time? The answer is this: When Allah sends a Prophet in the world, the influence of his message and teaching spreads far and wide, and is handed down by one generation to the other. As long as this influence remains and there continue arising among the followers of the Prophet such people as keep his message of guidance fresh, the period of time cannot be said to be without the guidance. And when the influence of the Prophet's teaching dies out, or the teaching is tampered with, the appointment of another Prophet becomes inevitable. Before the advent of the Holy Prophet the influence of the teachings of the

Prophets Abraham, Ishmael, Shu'ab and Moses and Jesus (peace be upon all of them) could be seen everywhere in Arabia and from time to time there had been arising among the Arabs, or coming from outside, men, who revived their teachings. When the influence was about to die out, and the real teaching was also distorted, Allah raised the Prophet Muhammad, and made such arrangements that his message can neither be wiped out nor tampered with. (For further explanation, see E N. 5 of Sūrah Sabā above).

5. This is about those people who were being obstinate and stubborn with regard to the message of the Holy Prophet and had made up their minds not to listen to him at all. This is because: "They have already deserved the torment; therefore, they do not believe." It means this: "The people who do not heed the admonition, and persist in their denial and hostile attitude to the truth in spite of the final warning from Allah conveyed through the Prophets, are themselves overwhelmed by the evil consequences of their misdeeds and deprived of every opportunity to believe." The same thing has been expressed more clearly in verse 11 below: "You can only warn him who follows the admonition and fears the Merciful God though he cannot see Him."

6. "Fetters" in this verse implies their own stubbornness which was preventing them from accepting the truth. "Which reach to their chins" and "their standing with heads upright" implies the stiffness of the neck which is caused by pride and haughtiness. Allah means to impress this: "We have made their obstinacy and stubbornness the fetters of their neck, and their pride and haughtiness has made them so stiff-necked that they will not pay heed to any reality, however clear and evident it may be."

7. "Set a barrier before them and a barrier behind them" means that the natural result of their stubbornness and pride is that they neither learn any lesson from their past history nor ever consider the consequences of the future. Their prejudices have so covered them from every side and their misconceptions have so blinded them that they cannot see even those glaring realities which are visible to every right-thinking and unbiased person.

8. This does not mean that it is futile to preach, but it means this: "Your preaching reaches every kind of people. Some of them are the ones mentioned above, and some others those who are being mentioned in the next verse. When you come across the people of the first kind and you see that they continue to persist in their

denial, pride and antagonism, you should leave them alone, but at the same time you should not feel disheartened so as to give up your mission, for you do not know exactly where among the multitudes of the people are those sincere servants of God, who would heed your admonition and fear God and turn to the right path. The real object of your preaching, therefore, should be to search out and collect this second kind of the people. You should ignore the stubborn people and gather this precious element of the society about you."

9. This shows that three kinds of the entries are made in the conduct-book of men. First, whatever a person does, good or bad, is entered in the Divine Register. Second, whatever impressions a man makes on the objects of his environment and on the limbs of his own body itself, become recorded, and all these impressions will at one time become so conspicuous that man's own voice will become audible and the whole history of his ideas and intentions and aims and objects and the pictures of all of his good and bad acts and deeds will appear before him. Third, whatever influences he has left behind of his good and bad actions on his future generation, on his society and on mankind as a whole, will go on being recorded in his account as far as they reach and as long as they remain active and operative. The full record of the good and bad training given by him to his children, the good or evil that he has spread in the society, and its impact on mankind as a whole, will go on being maintained till the time that it goes on producing good or evil results in the world.

10. The early commentators, generally, have expressed the opinion that the "habitation" implies the Syrian city of Antioch, and the messengers mentioned here were the ones sent by the Prophet Jesus for the preaching of his message there. Another thing that has been mentioned in this connection is that Antiochus was the king of this land at that time. But historically this story which Ibn 'Abbās, Qatādah, 'Ikrimah, Ka'b Aḥbār and Wahb bin Munabbih, and others have related on the basis of un-authentic Christian traditions is baseless. There have been 13 kings of the Seleucid dynasty named Antiochus who reigned in Antioch, and the rule of the last king of this name, rather the rule of this dynasty itself, came to an end in 65 B.C. At the time of the Prophet Jesus, the whole land of Syria and Palestine, including Antioch, was under the Romans. Then, no proof is forthcoming from any authentic tradition of the Christians that the Prophet Jesus might himself have sent any of

his disciples to Antioch for preaching his message. On the contrary, the Acts of the Apostles (N.T.) shows that the Christian preachers had reached Antioch for the first time a few years after the event of the crucifixion. Now, evidently, the people who were neither appointed messengers by Allah nor sent by His Messenger cannot be regarded as messengers of Allah by any interpretation even if they might have travelled for the purpose of preaching of their own accord. Moreover, according to the Bible, Antioch was the first city where the non-Israelites embraced Christianity in large numbers and where the Christian faith met with great success; whereas the habitation mentioned by the Qur'ān was some such habitation which rejected the invitation of the messengers, and was consequently punished with a Divine torment. History also does not bear any evidence that Antioch was ever afflicted with a destruction, which might be regarded as the result of denying the Prophethood.

On account of these reasons it cannot be accepted that the "habitation" implies Antioch. The habitation has neither been clearly determined in the Qur'ān nor in any authentic *Hadith*; the identity of the messengers also is not known through any authentic means nor the time when they were appointed. To understand the purpose for which the Qur'ān is narrating this story here, it is not necessary to know the names of the habitation and the messengers. The object is to warn the Quraish, as if to say: "You are following the same path of stubbornness, prejudice and denial of the truth as had been followed by the people of that habitation, and are preparing yourselves to meet the same doom as was met by them."

• 11. In other words, what they wanted to say was this: "Since you are human beings, you cannot be the messengers of God." The same was the view of the disbelievers of Makkah. They also said: "Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) cannot be a Messenger because he is a man."

"They say: what sort of a Messenger he is that he eats food and moves about in the streets." (Al-Furqān: 7).

"And the unjust people whisper to one another, saying, 'This man is no more than a human being, like yourselves. What! will you then be enticed by this sorcery while you perceive it?'" (Al-Anbiyā': 3).

The Qur'ān refutes this erroneous notion of the people of Makkah and says that it is not any new kind of ignorance which these people are displaying, but all the ignorant people since the earliest times have been involved in the misunderstanding that a

human being cannot be a Messenger and a Messenger cannot be a human being. When the chiefs of the people of the Prophet Noah had rejected his Prophethood, they had said the same thing:

“This person is no more than a human being like yourselves. By this he merely intends to obtain superiority over you. Had Allah willed, He would have sent down angels. Since the time of our forefathers we have never heard (that a human being should come as a Messenger).” (Al-Mu'minūn : 24).

The people of 'Ād had said the same about the Prophet Hūd : “This person is no more than a human being like yourselves, for he eats of what you eat and drinks of what you drink. Now if you submit to a human being like yourselves you will indeed be the losers.” (Al-Mu'minūn : 33-34).

The people of Thamūd also said the same about the Prophet Šāliḥ : “Shall we follow a man from among ourselves ?” (Al-Qamar : 24). And the same thing happened with almost every Prophet that the disbelievers said : “You are no more than a human being like ourselves,” and the Prophets always replied : “It is true that we are no more than human beings like you, but Allah shows His favour to anyone of His servants He pleases.” (Ibrāhīm : 10-11).

Then the Qur'ān says that this very notion of ignorance has been preventing the people from accepting guidance in every age, and the same has been the cause of every nation's downfall :

“Has not the news reached you of those who had disbelieved before this, and then tasted the evil results of their deeds ? And in the Hereafter there awaits them a painful torment. They deserved this fate because their Messengers came to them with clear Signs, but they said, 'Shall human beings show us guidance ?' So they refused and turned away.” (At-Taghābun : 5-6).

“Whenever guidance came before the people, nothing prevented them from believing in it except this (excuse) : they said : ‘Has Allah sent a human being as His Messenger ?’ ” (Banī Isrā'il : 94).

Then the Qur'ān says explicitly that Allah has always sent human beings as the Messengers and a human being alone can be a Messenger for the guidance for mankind, and not an angel, or a supernatural being :

“And We sent before you also human beings as Messengers to whom We revealed (Our Message). If you (O objectors) have no knowledge of this, you may ask those who have the knowledge. We did not give them such bodies as could survive without food nor were they immortal.” (Al-Anbiyā' : 7-8).

"All the Messengers whom We sent before you also ate food and moved about in the streets." (Al-Furqān : 20).

"O Prophet, say to them : Had angels settled on the earth and moved about in peace, We would certainly have sent an angel as a messenger to them." (Banī Isrā'il : 95).

12. This is another notion of ignorance in which the disbelievers of Makkah were involved. In it are also involved the so-called rationalists of today and in it have been involved the deniers of Revelation and Prophecy of every age since the earliest times. These people have held the view that Allah does not send down any Revelation at all for the guidance of man. He is only concerned with the affairs of the heavens : He has left the affairs and problems of man to be resolved by man himself.

13. That is, "Our only duty is to convey to you the Message that Allah has entrusted us with. Then it is for you to accept it or reject it. We have not been made responsible to make you accept it forcibly ; and if you do not accept it, we shall not be seized in consequence of your disbelief : you will yourselves be answerable for your crimes."

14. What they meant was this : "You are an evil omen for us. Our gods have become angry with us on account of what you have been saying against them. Now whatever calamity is befalling us is only because of you." Precisely the same thing used to be said by the disbelievers and the hypocrites of Arabia concerning the Holy Prophet : "If they suffer a loss, they say : this is because of you." (An-Nisā' : 77). That is why at several places in the Qur'ān these people have been told that in the ancient times also people used to say such things of ignorance in regard to their Prophets. The people of Thamūd said to their Prophet : "We regard you and your companions as a sign of bad omen." (An-Naml : 47). And the same was the attitude of the people of Pharaoh : "Whenever a good time came, they would say : This is but our due, and when there was a hard time, they would ascribe their calamities to Moses and his companions." (Al-A'rāf : 130).

15. That is, "No one is an evil omen for another. Every man's augury is hanging around his own neck. If a person sees an evil, it is because of his own self ; and if he sees a good, it is also because of his own self. 'We have fastened the augury of every man to his own neck'." (Banī Isrā'il : 13).

16. That is, "You in fact want to avoid the good and you like the deviation instead of the guidance. Therefore, instead of determining the truth and falsehood by means of an argument, you are making these false pretences on account of your superstitious whims."

17. That servant of God, in this one sentence, put together all the arguments required for determining the genuineness of Prophethood. The genuineness of a Prophet can be determined by two things. First, his word and deed ; second, his being selfless. What the person meant to say was this : "First, whatever these people are saying is perfectly reasonable, and their own character also is pure ; second, no one can prove that they are calling the people to this faith on account of a selfish motive. Therefore, there is no reason why they should not be listened to." By citing this reasoning of the person the Qur'ān set a criterion before the people of how to judge and determine the genuineness of the Prophethood of a Prophet, as if to say ; "The word and deed of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) bear full evidence that he is on the right path. Then, no one can point out any selfish motive or interest behind his struggle of preaching his message. Therefore, there is no reason why a sensible person should reject what he presents."

وَمَا لِي لَا أَعْبُدَ الَّذِي فَطَرَنِي وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿١٠٠﴾ أَتَأْخُذُ مِنَ

الجزء

دُونِهِ إِلَهًا إِنْ يُرِيدُ الرَّحْمَنُ بِضُرٍّ لَا تُغْنِي عَنِّي شَفَاعَتُهُمْ شَيْئًا وَ
لَا يُنْقِذُونِ ﴿١٠١﴾ إِذْ أَتَى صَاحِبَ الْمَيْمِنِ ﴿١٠٢﴾ إِتَى أَمْنًا بِرَبِّكُمْ فَاسْمَعُونَ ﴿١٠٣﴾
قِيلَ ادْخُلِ الْجَنَّةَ قَالَ يَا لَيْتَ قَوْمِي يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٠٤﴾ بِمَا غَفَرَ لِي رَبِّي وَ
جَعَلَنِي مِنَ الْمُكْرَمِينَ ﴿١٠٥﴾ وَمَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَى قَوْمِهِ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ مِنْ جُنْدٍ
مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَمَا كُنَّا مُنْزِلِينَ ﴿١٠٦﴾ إِنْ كَانَتْ إِلَّا صَيْحَةً وَاحِدَةً فَإِذَا هُمْ
خِجْدُونَ ﴿١٠٧﴾ يُحْضَرُونَ عَلَى الْعِبَادَةِ مَا يَأْتِيهِمْ مِنْ رَسُولٍ إِلَّا كَانُوا بِهِ
يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ ﴿١٠٨﴾ أَلَمْ يَرَوْا كَمَا أَهْلَكْنَا قَبْلَهُمْ مِنَ الْقُرُونِ أَنَّهُمْ إِلَيْهِمْ لَا
يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿١٠٩﴾ وَإِنْ كُلُّ لَمَّا جَمِيعٌ لَدَيْنَا مُحْضَرُونَ ﴿١١٠﴾ وَآيَةٌ لَهُمُ الْأَرْضُ
الْمَيْتَةُ ۖ أَحْيَيْنَاهَا وَأَخْرَجْنَا مِنْهَا حَبًّا فَمِنْهُ يَأْكُلُونَ ﴿١١١﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا فِيهَا
جَنَّتٍ مِنْ نَخِيلٍ وَأَعْنَابٍ وَفَجَّرْنَا فِيهَا مِنَ الْعُيُونِ ﴿١١٢﴾ لِيَأْكُلُوا مِنْ
ثَمَرِهَا ۗ وَمَا عَمِلَتْهُ أَيْدِيهِمْ أَفَلَا يَشْكُرُونَ ﴿١١٣﴾ سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْأَزْوَاجَ
كُلَّهَا مِمَّا تُنْبِتُ الْأَرْضُ وَمِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَمِمَّا لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١١٤﴾ وَآيَةٌ لَهُمُ
الَّيْلُ ۖ نَسَلَخْنَا مِنْهُ النَّهَارَ فَإِذَا هُمْ مُظْلِمُونَ ﴿١١٥﴾ وَالشَّمْسُ تَجْرِي لِمُسْتَقَرٍّ
لَهَا ۗ ذَلِكَ تَقْدِيرُ الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ ﴿١١٦﴾ وَالْقَمَرَ قَدَرْنَاهُ مَنَازِلَ حَتَّىٰ عَادَ
كَالْعُرْجُونِ الْقَدِيمِ ﴿١١٧﴾ لَا الشَّمْسُ يَنْبَغِي لَهَا أَنْ تُدْرِكَ الْقَمَرَ وَلَا اللَّيْلُ
سَابِقُ النَّهَارِ ۗ وَكُلٌّ فِي فَلَكٍ يَسْبَحُونَ ﴿١١٨﴾ وَآيَةٌ لَهُمْ أَنَّا حَمَلْنَا ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ
فِي الْفَلَكَ الْمَشْحُونِ ﴿١١٩﴾ وَخَلَقْنَا لَهُمْ مِنْ مِثْلِهِ مَا يَرْكَبُونَ ﴿١٢٠﴾ وَإِنْ نَشَأْ
نَغْرِقْهُمْ فَلَا صَرِيخَ لَهُمْ وَلَا هُمْ يُسْمَعُونَ ﴿١٢١﴾ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً مِنَّا وَمَتَاعًا

وقف

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Well, why should I not worship the Being Who has created me, and to Whom all of you have to return?¹⁸ Should I take other gods than Him? Whereas if the Merciful God intends to harm me, their intercession cannot avail me anything, nor can they rescue me.¹⁹ If I do so,²⁰ I would be involved in manifest error. I have believed in your Lord:²¹ so, you also should listen to me.”

(Consequently, they killed the man and) it was said to him, “Enter Paradise.”²² He said, “Would that my people knew how my Lord has forgiven me and included me among the honoured ones!”²³

After him We did not send any army against his people from heaven nor was it needful for Us to send one. There only occurred a single blast and they all became extinct.²⁴ Alas for the servants! There came no Messenger to them but they scoffed at him. Have they not seen how many nations We have destroyed before them, and they never returned to them?²⁵ One day they will all be presented before Us!

The²⁶ dead land is a Sign for these people.²⁷ We gave it life and produced grain from it, which they eat. We made gardens of date-palms and grapes in it and caused springs to gush out of it so that they may eat fruits thereof. It is not their hands which have made all this.²⁸ Do they not then give thanks?²⁹ Glorified is He³⁰ Who created in pairs all species, whether of vegetable kingdom or of their own (i.e., human) kind, or of those things of which they know nothing.³¹

Another Sign for them is the night: We remove the day from above it, and they are covered in darkness.³² And the Sun: it is moving to its place of rest.³³ This is the decree of the All-Mighty, All-Knowing God. And the Moon: We have determined stages for it till it again becomes like an old dry palm-branch.³⁴ Neither is it possible for the Sun to overtake the Moon,³⁵ nor for the night to outstrip the day.³⁶ Each is gliding in its own orbit.³⁷

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Yet another Sign for them is that We bore their progeny in a laden vessel,³⁸ and then made for them similar other vessels which they board.³⁹ If We please We can drown them when they would have no one to hear their cry, nor would they be rescued in any way. It is Our Mercy alone which sustains them and enables them to enjoy life till an appointed time.⁴⁰

18. This sentence has two parts. The first part is a masterpiece of reasoning, the second of the wisdom of preaching. In the first part he says: "To worship the Creator is the demand of both reason and nature; it would be highly unreasonable that one should worship those who have not created him and should deny to be the servant of Him Who has created him." In the second part he warns his people to the effect: "All of you ultimately have to die and return to that God adoption of Whose service you object to. Therefore, you should consider for yourselves as to what goodness you could expect by turning away from Him."

19. That is, "They are neither such favourites of God that even if I commit grave crimes He will forgive me on their recommendation, nor are they so powerful that they should be able to rescue me if God may please to punish me."

20. "If I do so": "If I make them my gods in spite of knowing all this."

21. This sentence again contains a subtle point of the wisdom of preaching. Saying this the man made the people realize: "The Lord in Whom I have believed is not merely my Lord but your Lord, too. I have committed no error by believing in Him, but you, in fact, are certainly committing an error by not believing in Him."

22. That is, "Immediately following his martyrdom, the man was given the good news of Paradise. As soon as he entered the Next World through the gate of death, there were the angels to receive him, and they gave him the good news that Paradise was awaiting him." The commentators have disputed the meaning of this sentence. Qatādah says, "Allah admitted him into Paradise straightaway and he is living in it and receiving his sustenance." And Mujāhid says, "This was told him by the angels as a good news; he will enter Paradise on the day of Resurrection along with the other believers."

23. This is a specimen of the high morality of the believer. He had no ill-will or feeling of vengeance in his heart against the people who had just then killed him so that he should invoke Allah against them. Instead, he was still wishing them well. After death the only wish that he cherished was: "Would that my people could know the good end that I have met, and could learn a lesson from my death, if not from my life, and adopt the righteous way." The noble person did not wish Hell for his murderers but wished that they should believe and become worthy of Paradise. The same thing has been commended in the *Hadith*: "He wished his people well when living as well as when dead."

Allah has narrated this event in order to warn the disbelievers of Makkah to the effect: "Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) and his believing Companions are also your well-wishers just as the believer was of his people. They do not cherish any ill-will or feeling of vengeance against you in spite of your persecutions of them. They are not your enemies but enemies of your deviation and error. The only object of their struggle against you is that you should adopt the right way."

This verse also is one of those verses which clearly prove the existence of *barzakh*. This shows that the period of time between death and Resurrection is not a period of non-existence altogether, as some ignorant people think. But in this period the spirit lives without the body, speaks and hears speech, has feelings and desires, feels happy and unhappy, and also continues to be concerned about the people of the world. Had it not been so, the believer would not have been given the good news of Paradise after death, and he could not have wished that his people became aware of his good end.

24. These words contain a subtle satire. In their arrogance and pride of power and their strong antagonism towards the true faith, they thought they would annihilate the three Prophets and their followers, but, contrary to their plot, they were themselves annihilated by only one stroke of the Divine punishment.

25. That is, they were annihilated so completely that not a trace of them was left behind them. No one in the world even remembers them today. Their civilization as well as their race has become extinct.

26. Until now the disbelievers of Makkah were being warned and reproved for their denial of the truth and their attitude of antagonism which they had adopted towards the Holy Prophet.

Now the discourse turns to the basic thing which was the actual cause of the conflict between them and the Holy Prophet, i.o., the doctrine of *Tauhid* and the Hereafter, which the Holy Prophet was presenting and the disbelievers were refusing to accept. In this connection, some arguments have been given, one after the other, to make the people ponder over the realities, as if to say, "Observe these phenomena of the universe, which are ever present before you. Do they not point to the same reality, which this Prophet is presenting before you?"

27. "A Sign" : A Sign of this that *Tauhid* is the Truth and *shirk* the falsehood.

28. Another translation of this sentence can be: ".....so that they may eat fruits thereof and what their own hands make." That is, the artificial kinds of food, which the people prepare from the natural products, e.g., bread, curry, jam, pickles, sauces and countless other things.

29. In these brief sentences the vegetable and plant life of the earth has been presented as an argument. Man is eating the products of the earth day and night and regards this as very ordinary. But if he considers it seriously, he will see that the growth of rich crops and lush green gardens from the dry earth and the flowing in it of the springs and rivers is not a simple thing, which might be happening of itself, but there is a great wisdom and power and providence which is working behind it. Consider the reality of the earth. The substances of which it is composed do not possess any power of their own for growth. All these substances individually as well as after every sort of combination, remain inorganic, and thus do not possess any sign of life. The question is : How did it become possible for plant life to emerge from the lifeless earth? If one looks into it, one will see that there are some important factors without whose provision beforehand life here could not have come into existence.

First, in particular regions of the earth, on its outer surface, a layer was arranged of many such substances, which could serve as food for vegetation. This layer was kept soft so that the roots of the vegetation could spread in it and suck food.

Secondly, a system of irrigation was arranged on the earth in different ways so that the food elements could get dissolved in water and absorbed by the roots.

Thirdly, the atmosphere was arranged around the earth which protects it against the calamities of the sky, becomes a means of the rainfall, and possesses gases which are necessary for the life and growth of the vegetation.

Fourthly, a relationship was established between the sun and the earth so as to provide proper temperature and suitable seasons for the vegetation.

With the provision of these main factors (which in themselves are combinations of countless other factors), the coming to life of the vegetation becomes possible. After arranging the suitable conditions the seed of each species of the vegetation was so constituted that as soon as it received favourable soil, water, air and season, vegetable life should begin stirring within it. Besides, inside the same seed a system was so arranged that from the seed of every species a plant precisely of the same species should grow with all the characteristics of its own species and heredity. Then, in addition to this, another wonderful thing was done. Vegetation was not created in twenty, or fifty, or a hundred kinds but in countless species, and they were so made that they should fulfil the requirements of food, medicine and clothing and innumerable other needs of the countless kinds of animals and man, who were to be brought into being after the vegetation on the earth.

Anyone who ponders over this wonderful arrangement, if he is not stubborn and prejudiced, will himself testify that all this could not have come about by itself. There is certainly a wise plan underlying it, according to which harmonies and relationships of the soil, water, air and season with respect to the vegetation, and harmonies and relationships of the vegetation with respect to the needs and requirements of animals and human beings have been determined, keeping in view the finest detail. No sensible person can imagine that these universal, all-embracing relationships could be a mere accident. This same subtle arrangement points to the fact that this cannot be the work of many gods. This is, and can only be, the work of One God, Who is the Creator and Lord of the earth, water, air, sun, vegetation, animals and mankind. If each of these had a separate god, it cannot be imagined that such a comprehensive and universal plan with such deep and wise relationship and harmony could be produced, and should have continued to work with such regularity for millions upon millions of years.

After giving these arguments for *Tauhīd*, Allah says: "Do they not then give thanks?" That is: "Are these people so thankless and ungrateful that they do not render thanks to that God Who has provided all this for their survival, but thank others for the blessings and favours done by Him? Are they so wretched that instead of bowing before Him they bow before the false gods, who have not created even a blade of grass for them?"

30. "Glorified is He" : "He is free from every defect and fault, from every error and weakness, and from this that another one should be His associate and partner in His work." The Qur'ān has generally used these words when refuting polytheistic beliefs, because every belief of *shirk* is, in fact, an imputation of some defect, some weakness and some fault to Allah. When a person says that Allah has an associate, he, in fact, thinks that either Allah is incapable of running and ruling His Kingdom alone, or He is under compulsion to make another His associate in His work. Or, some other beings are so powerful in themselves that they are interfering in God's administration and God is putting up with their interference. Or, God forbid, Allah has the weaknesses of the worldly kings, due to which He is surrounded by an army of ministers, courtiers, flatterers and beloved princes or princesses, and thus many powers of Godhead have become divided among them. Had there been no such notions of ignorance about Allah in the minds, there could be no question of any idea of *shirk* in the world. That is why it has been stated again and again in the Qur'ān that Allah is free from and exalted far above those defects and faults and weaknesses which the *mushriks* ascribe to Him."

31. This is still another argument for *Tauhid*. Here again certain realities of daily experience have been mentioned and it is suggested that man observes these day and night but does not ponder over them seriously, whereas they contain signs and pointers to the reality. The coming together of the man and woman is the cause of man's own birth. Procreation among the animals also is due to the combination between the male and the female. About vegetation also man knows that the law of sex is working in it. Even among the lifeless substances when different things combine with one another, a variety of compounds come into existence. The basic composition of matter itself has become possible due to the close affinity between the positive and the negative electric charges. This law of the pairs which is the basis of the existence of the entire universe, contains in itself such complexities and finenesses of wisdom and workmanship, and there exist such harmonies and mutual relationships between the members of each pair that an objective observer can neither regard it as the result of an accident, nor can he believe that many different gods might have created these countless pairs and matched their members, one with the other, with such great wisdom. The members of each pair's being a perfect match for each other and coming into being of new things with their combination itself is an explicit argument of the Creator's being One and only One.

32. The alternation of the night and day also is one of those realities which man does not regard as worthy of much attention only because it is a phenomenon of daily occurrence and experience ; whereas if he considers how the day passes and how the night falls, and what is the wisdom in the passing of the day and in the falling of the night, he will himself realize that this is an obvious sign of the existence of an All-Powerful and All-Wise Allah and of His being One and only One. The day cannot pass and the night cannot fall until the sun hides from the earth. The great regularity which is found in the alternation of the day and night, was not possible unless the sun and the earth were bound in one and the same relentless system. Then the deep relationship which exists between the alternation of the day and night and the other creations on the earth clearly points to the fact that this system has been established deliberately by a Being with perfect wisdom. The existence on the earth, of the men and animals and vegetation, and even of water and air and different minerals, is in fact, the result of placing the earth at a particular distance from the sun, with the arrangement that the different parts of the earth should go on coming successively before the sun and hiding from it at definite intervals. If the distance of the earth from the sun had been a little longer, or a little shorter, or there had been a perpetual night on one side of it and a perpetual day on the other, or the alternation of the day and night had been much faster or much slower, or sometimes the day had appeared suddenly and sometimes the night without any system, no life could be possible on this planet, and even the form and appearance of the inorganic substances would have been much different from what it is now. If the mind's eye is not closed, one can clearly perceive in this system the working of a God, Who willed to bring into being this particular kind of creation on the earth and then established relevances, harmonies and relationships between the earth and the sun precisely in accordance with its needs and requirements. If a person regards the concept of the existence of God and His Unity as far removed from reason, he should think for himself and see how much farther removed should it be from reason to ascribe this wonderful creation to many gods, or to think that all this has happened automatically under some deaf and blind law of nature. When a person who can accept without question these latter unreasonable explanations, only on the basis of conjecture and speculation, says that the existence of a system and wisdom and purpose is not a sufficient proof of the existence of God, it becomes difficult for us to believe whether such a person really feels the need and necessity of a

rational proof, sufficient or insufficient in any degree whatever, for accepting any concept or creed in the world.

33. "Place of rest" may either mean the place where the sun will ultimately come to a halt, or the time when it will come to a halt. The true meaning of this verse can be determined only when man has attained the full and exact knowledge of the realities of the universe. But man's knowledge is such that it has been changing in every age and what he seems to know today might change tomorrow. The people of the ancient times on the basis of their observations of the sun believed that it was moving round the earth. Then after further research and observation the view became that the sun was stationary and all the planets of the solar system were revolving round it. But this theory also did not last long. The later observations revealed that not only the sun but all the stars also are moving in a particular direction, at speeds of 10 to 100 miles per second. About the sun the modern astronomers hold the view that it is moving at a speed of 20 kilometres (about 12 miles) per second along with its whole family of the planets. (See "Star" and "Sun" in *Encyclopedia Britannica*).

34. That is, the phases of the moon go on changing throughout the month. It begins as a crescent, then goes on waxing every day till it becomes the full moon on the 14th of the month. Then it starts waning every day till at last it returns to its original shape of the crescent. The same has been happening for millions of years with perfect regularity, and no change has ever occurred in the phases of the moon. That is why one can always calculate and find out exactly in what phase the moon will be on a particular day. If the movement of the moon had not been bound in a system, estimation of its phases would not have been possible.

35. This sentence can have two meanings and both are correct : (1) The sun does not have the power that it should draw the moon into itself, or enter its orbit and collide with it ; and (2) the sun cannot appear in the times which have been appointed for the rising and appearing of the moon. It is not possible that the sun should suddenly appear on the horizon when the moon is shining at night.

36. Nor does this happen either that the night should approach before the appointed period of the day comes to an end, and should start spreading its darkness suddenly during the time when the day is meant to spread its light.

37. The word *salak* in Arabic is used for the orbit of the planets, and it gives a different meaning from the word *samā'* (sky). The sentence, "Each is gliding in its own orbit," points to four realities : (1) That not only the sun and the moon but all the stars and planets and

celestial bodies are moving ; (2) the *falak*, or orbit, of each one of them is separate ; (3) that the orbits are not moving with the stars in them, but the stars are moving in the orbits ; and (4) that the movement of the stars in their orbits is similar to the floating of something in a fluid.

These verses are not intended to describe the realities of astronomy, but are meant to make man understand that if he looks around himself, with open eyes, and uses his common sense, he will find countless and limitless proofs of the existence of God and His Unity, and he will not come across a single proof of atheism and *shirk*. The vastness of the solar system in which our earth is included is such that its parent body, the sun, is 300,000 times bigger than the earth, and its farthest planet Neptune is at least 2,793 million miles distant from the sun. However, if Pluto is taken as the farthest planet, it revolves 4,600 million miles away round it. Notwithstanding this vastness, the solar system occupies a very insignificant part of a huge galaxy. The galaxy which includes our solar system has about 3,000 million suns in it, and its nearest sun is so distant from our earth that its light takes about four years to reach us. Then this galaxy also is not the whole universe. According to the investigations made so far, it has been estimated that it is one of about 2,000,000 spiral nebulae, and the nearest nebula is about a million light years away from the earth. As for the farthest celestial bodies which are visible through the modern instruments, their light reaches the earth in about 100 million years. Even now it cannot be claimed that man has seen the whole universe. It is a small part of the Kingdom of God which man has yet been able to observe. It cannot be predicted how far and deep man will yet be able to see with greater and more efficient means of observation at his disposal.

All the information that has been gathered so far about the universe proves that this whole world is made up of the same substance of which our tiny earthly world is made, and the same law is working in the universe which is working in the world of our earth ; otherwise it was not at all possible that man should have made observations of the very distant worlds from the earth, measured their distances and estimated their movements. Is it not a clear proof of the fact that this whole universe is the creation of One God and the Kingdom of One Ruler ? Then from the order and the wisdom and the excellence of workmanship and the deep relationships which are found in the hundreds of thousands of the galaxies and in the millions and billions of the stars and planets revolving in them,

(Contd. on p. 62)

إِلَى حِينٍ ۖ وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمُ اتَّقُوا مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَمَا خَلْفَكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ
 تُرْحَمُونَ ۗ وَمَا تَأْتِيهِمْ مِنْ آيَةٍ مِنْ آيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ إِلَّا كَانُوا عَنْهَا مُعْرِضِينَ ۗ وَ
 إِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمُ اتَّقُوا مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَأَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۗ قَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
 أَنْطِعِم مِّنْ لَّوْ يَشَاءُ اللَّهُ أَطْعَمَهُ ؕ إِنَّ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ۗ وَيَقُولُونَ
 مَتَىٰ هَذَا الْوَعْدُ إِن كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ۗ مَا يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا صَيْحَةً وَاحِدَةً
 تَأْخُذُهُمْ وَهُمْ يَخِصِّمُونَ ۗ فَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ تَوْصِيَةً وَلَا إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِمْ
 يَرْجِعُونَ ۗ وَنُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ فَإِذَا هُم مِّنَ الْأَجْدَاثِ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَنْسِلُونَ ۗ
 قَالُوا يُوبَلْنَا مَنْ بَعَثَنَا مِن مَّرْقَدِنَا ۗ هَذَا مَا وَعَدَ الرَّحْمَنُ وَصَدَقَ الْمُرْسَلُونَ ۗ
 إِن كَانَتْ إِلَّا صَيْحَةً وَاحِدَةً فَإِذَا هُمْ جَمِيعٌ لَّدَيْنَا مُحْضَرُونَ ۗ فَالْيَوْمَ لَا
 تُظَلُّ نَفْسٌ شَيْئًا وَلَا تُجْزَوْنَ إِلَّا مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ۗ إِنَّ أَصْحَابَ الْجَنَّةِ
 الْيَوْمَ فِي شُغْلِ فِكْهُونَ ۗ هُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُهُمْ فِي ظِلِّ عَلَى الْأَرْبَابِ مُتَّكِنُونَ ۗ
 لَهُمْ فِيهَا فَاكِهَةٌ وَلَهُمْ مَا يَدَّعُونَ ۗ سَلَامٌ قَوْلًا مِنْ رَبِّ رَحِيمٍ ۗ وَ
 امْتَاذُوا الْيَوْمَ أَيُّهَا الْمُجْرِمُونَ ۗ أَلَمْ أَعْهَدْ إِلَيْكُمْ يَبْنَىٰ أَدَمَ أَنْ لَا تَعْبُدُوا
 الشَّيْطَانَ ۗ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ ۗ وَ أَنْ اعْبُدُونِي ۗ هَذَا صِرَاطٌ مُسْتَقِيمٌ ۗ
 وَ لَقَدْ أَضَلَّ مِنْكُمْ جِبِلًّا كَثِيرًا ۗ أَفَلَمْ تَكُونُوا تَعْقِلُونَ ۗ هَذِهِ جَهَنَّمُ الَّتِي
 كُنْتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ ۗ إِصْلَوْهَا الْيَوْمَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ ۗ الْيَوْمَ نَخْتِمُ عَلَىٰ
 أَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَتُكَلِّمُنَا أَيْدِيهِمْ وَتَشْهَدُ أَرْجُلُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ۗ وَ لَوْ
 نَشَاءُ لَطَمَسْنَا عَلَىٰ أَعْيُنِهِمْ فَاسْتَبَقُوا الصِّرَاطَ فَأَلَىٰ يُبْصِرُونَ ۗ وَ لَوْ نَشَاءُ
 لَمَسَخْنَاهُمْ عَلَىٰ مَكَانَتِهِمْ فَمَا اسْتَطَاعُوا مُضِيًّا وَلَا يَرْجِعُونَ ۗ وَ مَنْ تُعْمِرُهُ

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When it is said to them, "Guard against the end which is before you and which you have left behind,"⁴¹ so that you are shown mercy," (they pay no heed), whatever Revelation of the Revelations of their Lord reaches them, they turn away from it.⁴² And when it is said to them, "Spend also in the way of Allah out of what He has given you," those who disbelieve say to those who believe, "Should we feed those whom Allah Himself could have fed had He so willed? You have utterly gone astray!"⁴³ 45-47

They⁴⁴ say, "When will the threat of Resurrection be carried out? Tell us if you are truthful."⁴⁵ In fact, what they are awaiting is a single blast, which will suddenly seize them while they will be disputing (about their worldly affairs). Then they will neither be able to make a will, nor be able to return to their families.⁴⁶ Then a Trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come out of their graves forthwith to present themselves before their Lord.⁴⁷ Bewildered they will say, "Ah! who has roused us from our sleeping-place?"⁴⁸ ——"This is the same which the Merciful God had promised and the Messengers had spoken the truth."⁴⁹ There shall only be a single loud blast and they shall be presented before Us, all together. 48-53

On this Day⁵⁰ no one will be wronged in the least, and you will be rewarded exactly according to what you had been doing.—(On this Day) the inmates of Paradise are absorbed in enjoying bliss⁵¹: they and their wives are in thick shades, reclining upon couches: they have all kinds of tasteful foods and whatever they may desire: they have been greeted with 'Peace' from the Merciful Lord. ——And O criminals, get you apart today!⁵² Children of Adam, did I not enjoin on you not to worship Satan, who is your open enemy, but to worship Me alone? This is the Straight Way.⁵³ Yet, in spite of this, he led astray a great multitude of you: did you not have common sense?⁵⁴ This is the same Hell with which you 54-64

used to be threatened. Now be its fuel in consequence of your disbelief in the world.

5 On that Day We shall seal their tongues : their hands will speak to Us, and their feet will testify as to what they had been earning in the world.⁵⁵

3-68 If We will, We can put out their eyes: then let them strive to seek the way : wherefrom will they see it ? If We please, We can so transform them in their places that they would neither be able to go forward nor turn backward.⁵⁶ Whomsoever We grant a long life, We just reverse him in nature and constitution.⁵⁷ Do they not understand anything (from this)?

(Contd. from p. 59)

no sensible person can imagine that all this has come about automatically. Is it possible that there should be no administrator behind this order and system, no sage behind this wisdom, no designer behind this design and work of art, and no planner behind this planning ?

38. "A laden vessel" : the Ark of the Prophet Noah. As to boarding of the progeny of man in it, it means that although apparently a few companions of the Prophet Noah had boarded it, in reality all human beings who are to be born till Resurrection were boarding it ; all the rest of mankind had been drowned in the Flood, all later human beings are the children of those who were rescued in the Ark.

39. This indicates that the first vessel ever to be made in the world was the one made by the Prophet Noah. Before that time man did not know any method of crossing the rivers and the seas. This method was first of all taught by Allah to the Prophet Noah, and when some servants of Allah were rescued in it from the Flood, their future generations started making boats and ships for their sea journeys.

40. The signs till now were mentioned as arguments for *Tauhid*. This sign has been mentioned to make man realize that whatever powers he has been given over the forces of nature, have been given him by Allah and are not of his own acquirement. And whatever methods he has discovered of exploiting these forces, have been discovered also through the guidance of Allah and not solely by himself. Man did not have the power and strength to have subdued these great forces by his own power, nor the capability to have

discovered the secrets of nature himself and known the methods of taking service from them. Then he can use and employ the forces over which he has been given control by Allah only till the time that Allah wills them to remain subdued to him. For when Allah wills otherwise the same forces which were serving man turn against him suddenly and he finds himself utterly helpless before them. To call man's attention to this reality Allah has presented the case of the sea journey only as an example. The whole human race would have perished in the Flood had Allah not taught the method of making the vessel to the Prophet Noah and had his followers not boarded it. Then the scattering of the human race over the whole earth became possible only because the people learnt the principles of building vessels from Allah and became able to cross the rivers and oceans. But from that humble beginning till today in spite of making great strides in the art of building huge ships and attaining every possible perfection in the science of navigation, man cannot claim that he has brought the rivers and the oceans fully under his control and power. Even today the water of God is still in God's own power alone and whenever He wills He drowns man along with his ships in it.

41. "Which you have left behind" : Which the peoples before you have seen and experienced.

42. "Revelations" : Verses of the Divine Book by which man is admonished, and the Signs which are found in the universe and in man's own self and in his history which serve as object lessons for man, provided he is inclined to learn any lesson.

43. This means to show that disbelief has not only blinded their intellect but has destroyed their moral sense, too. They neither have the right thought about Allah nor do they adopt the right attitude towards the people. They react adversely to every admonition, follow a perverse philosophy in respect of every deviation and immorality and have a ready made pretence for escape from every good.

44. After *Tauhid* the other question about which a dispute was raging between the Holy Prophet and the disbelievers was the question of the Hereafter. Rational arguments about this have been given in the end of the discourse. Here, before giving the arguments, the Hereafter has been depicted with all its horrors so that the people should know that what they are refusing to believe in cannot be averted by their denial, but they have to meet and experience it one day inevitably.

45. The question did not mean that they wanted to know the exact date of the coming of the Hereafter, and if, for instance, they

were told that it would take place on such and such a date in such and such a month and year, their doubts would have been removed and they would have believed in it. Such questions, in fact, were put as a challenge only for the sake of argument. What they meant to say was that there would be no Resurrection whatever, as if to say, "You are threatening us with Resurrection without rhyme or reason." That is why in reply it has not been said that Resurrection will take place on such and such a day, but that it shall come and shall be accompanied by such and such horrors."

46. That is, "The Resurrection will not take place piecemeal so that the people may leisurely watch its coming, but it will come all of a sudden when the people will be engaged in their daily business and they will have no idea whatever that the end of the world had approached. There will be a terrible blast and everyone will fall dead at the spot."

Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Amr and Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah have related a *Ḥadīth* from the Holy Prophet, saying: "The people will be walking on the roads as usual, will be buying and selling in the markets, will be disputing matters in their assemblies, when suddenly the Trumpet shall be sounded. Thereupon the one who was buying cloth would collapse and he would not have the time to put down the cloth from his hand; the one who was filling a cistern to water his animals would not have the time to water; and the one who was going to eat, would not have the time to lift the morsel to his mouth and Resurrection will take place."

47. For the explanation of the blowing of the "Trumpet", see E.N. 78 of Sūrah Ṭā Hā. As for the length of the interval between the first blowing of the Trumpet and its second blowing, we have no information. The interval may be of hundreds and thousands of years. Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah has related that the Holy Prophet said: "Isrāfīl has put the Trumpet to his mouth and is looking up to the Divine Throne, awaiting orders for blowing it. The Trumpet will be blown thrice: On the first blowing (called *naḥakhat al-faza'*) everything in the earth and heavens will be struck with terror. On the second blowing (*naḥakhat aṣ-Ṣa'q*) everyone will fall down dead. Then, when none shall remain except Allah, the One, the Everlasting, the earth will be changed altogether and will be spread flat and smooth without a crease or wrinkle in it. Then Allah will administer a rebuke to His Creation, whereupon everyone will rise at the spot where he had fallen dead, on the changed earth, and this will happen on the third blowing of the Trumpet (*naḥakhat al-qiyām li-Rabbil-'Ālamin*). This is supported by several allusions in the Qur'ān also.

For example, see Sūrah.Ibrāhīm : 48; Sūrah Ṭā Hā : 105-108, and the E.N.'s thereof.

48. That is, "At that time they will not realize that they had been dead and had been raised back to life after a long period, but they will be thinking that they had fallen asleep, and had been woken up suddenly by some terrible catastrophe, and were running away from it." (For further explanation, see Ṭā Hā : 103, Al-Hajj : 1-2).

49. Here, it is not clear as to who will give this answer. It may be that they themselves would realize after some time to their horror that it was the same thing of which the Messengers of God used to inform them and they used to belie them. It may also be that the believers will remove their misunderstanding and tell them that it was not waking up from sleep but the second life after death. And it may also be that they will understand this from the general conditions prevailing on the Day of Resurrection or the angels might tell them this.

50. This is what Allah will tell the disbelievers and the polytheists, the sinners and the culprits, when they will be presented before Him.

51. To understand this one should remember that the righteous believers will not be withheld in the Plain of Resurrection, but in the very beginning they will be sent to Paradise without accountability, or after a mild reckoning, because their record will be clean. There will be no need to keep them waiting during the hearing by the Court. Therefore, Allah will tell the culprits, who will be required to render their accounts, in the Plain of Resurrection : "Look ! the righteous people whom you used to mock and regard as foolish in the world, are today enjoying the pleasures of Paradise because of their wisdom, and you, who in your own judgement were very prudent and sagacious, are being condemned to accountability for your misdeeds."

52. This can have two meanings : (1) "Get you apart from the righteous believers, for in the world even if you belonged to the same community and the same clan and the same brotherhood, here you have no connection and relationship left with them ;" and (2) "get you apart from one another : now you can no longer remain a group: all your parties have been disbanded : all your relations and connections have been severed. Now each of you will be held answerable in your personal capacity for your actions and deeds."

53. Here again Allah has used 'ibādat in the sense of *ifā'at* (obedience). This subject has already been explained above in Al-Baqarah : 172, An-Nisā' : 117, Al-An'ām : 121, 137, At-Taubah : 31,

Ibrāhīm : 22, Al-Kahf : 52, Maryam : 42, Al-Qaṣaṣ : 63 and E.N. 63 of Sabā. In this connection, the fine explanation given of it by Imām Rāzī in his *Tafsīr Kabīr* is also noteworthy. He writes: "Do not worship Satan means : Do not obey him, the reason being that only falling prostrate before him is not forbidden, but following him and obeying his commands also is forbidden ; therefore, *iṭā'at* (obedience) is 'ibādat (worship)." After this, the Imām raises the question : If 'ibādat means *iṭā'at*, then have the Muslims been commanded to worship the Prophet and the rulers in the verse ; *Att'ullaha wa att'-ur-rasūla wa ulil-amr-i min-kum* ? He himself answers it thus : "If obedience to them is in accordance with the Commands of Allah, it will be Allah's worship ('ibādat) and His obedience (*iṭā'at*). Did not the angels fall prostrate before Adam in obedience to Allah's Command ? This was nothing but worship of Allah. Obedience of the rulers will be their worship only in cases where they are obeyed in matters in which Allah has not given leave to obey them." Then he writes : "If a person comes to you and commands you to do something, you should see whether his command is in accordance with the Command of Allah or not. If it is not, Satan is with him ; and if you obeyed him in this, you worshipped him and his Satan. Likewise, if your self urges you to do something, you should see whether it is permissible to do it according to the *Shari'ah* or not. If it is not permissible, your self is Satan itself, or Satan is with it. If you obeyed him, you in fact, became guilty of worshipping him." Further on, he writes : "But there are different degrees of the worship of Satan. Sometimes it so happens that a man does a work and his limbs and his tongue also join him in this, and his heart also cooperates. At another time it so happens that a man uses his limbs to do a work but his heart and tongue do not cooperate in this. Some people commit a sin while their heart is disagreeable and their tongue is invoking Allah for forgiveness, and they confess that they are committing an evil. This is Satan's worship with external limbs. There are other people who commit a crime with a cool mind and express pleasure and satisfaction with the tongue also.Such people are the worshippers of Satan from outside as well as from inside." (*Tafsīr Kabīr*, vol. VII, pp. 103-104).

54. That is, "If you had been deprived of reason and you had served your enemy instead of your Lord, you could have the reason to offer an excuse. But you, in fact, had been blessed with reason by Allah and you were using it to advantage in all the affairs of the world, and you had been warned by Allah through the Prophets as well, yet, when you were deceived by your enemy and he succeeded

in leading you astray, you could not be excused from the responsibility of your folly."

55. This command will be given in respect of the stubborn culprits, who will refuse to confess their crimes, will belie the witnesses, and will also not acknowledge the genuineness of their conduct-book. Then will Allah Almighty command; "Well, stop your babbling. Just see what your own limbs say about your misdeeds." In this connection, here only the evidence to be given by the hands and the feet has been mentioned. But at other places it has been said that their eyes and their ears and their tongues, and the very skins of their body, will tell how they had been employed in the world. "They should not forget the Day when their own tongues and their own hands and feet will bear testimony to their misdeeds." (An-Nūr : 24) "Then, when all will have reached there, their ears and their eyes and their very skins will bear witness against them concerning what they had been doing in the world." (Hā Mim Sajdah : 20). The question arises : On the one hand, Allah says : "We shall seal their mouths," and on the other, in the verse of Sūrah An-Nūr, He says : "Their tongues will bear testimony against them." How can these two things be reconciled ? The answer is this : "To seal the mouths means to deprive them of their power of speech. That is, after this they will not be able to say whatever they like with their tongue. The testimony of their tongues means that their tongues themselves will tell how the wicked people had used them, what blasphemies and lies they had been made to utter, what mischiefs they had invented and what falsehoods they had been made to say on different occasions."

56. After depicting the scene of Resurrection, the people are being warned to this effect : "The Resurrection may seem yet far off to you, but even if you consider seriously your life in this world of which you are so proud, you will see how helpless you are in the powerful grip of Allah. Your eyes by virtue of whose sight you are carrying out all your obligations in the world can be blinded at one command of Allah. Your legs on whose strength you are showing all this activity can become paralyzed as and when Allah wills. As long as the powers and capabilities granted by Allah continue to function, you remain lost in the arrogance of your self, but as soon as one of them fails to function, you come to understand how helpless you are!"

57. "Reverse him in nature," means that in old age Allah turns him back to the state of childhood. He becomes unable to stand and walk without the help and support of others; he is fed by others;

(Contd. on p. 69)

نُنِكَسُهُ فِي الْخَلْقِ أَفَلَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾ وَمَا عَلَّمْنَاهُ الشِّعْرَ وَمَا يَنْبَغِي لَهُ إِنْ
 هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ وَقُرْآنٌ مُبِينٌ ﴿٥٩﴾ لِيُنذِرَ مَنْ كَانَ حَيًّا وَيَحِقَّ الْقَوْلُ عَلَى
 الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٦٠﴾ أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّا خَلَقْنَا لَهُمْ مِنَّا عَمَلَتِ أَيْدِينَا أَنْعَامًا فَهُمْ لَهَا
 مَالِكُونَ ﴿٦١﴾ وَذَلَّلْنَاهَا لَهُمْ فَمِنْهَا رَكُوبُهُمْ وَمِنْهَا يَأْكُلُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾ وَ لَهُمْ فِيهَا مَنَافِعُ
 وَمَشَارِبٌ أَفَلَا يَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾ وَ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ آلِهَةً لَعَلَّكُمْ يَتَصَرَّوْنَ ﴿٦٤﴾
 لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ نَصْرَهُمْ وَ هُمْ لَهُمْ جُنُودٌ مُحَضَّرُونَ ﴿٦٥﴾ فَلَا يَحْزَنكَ قَوْلُهُمْ وَقِفْ لَنَا
 إِنَّا نَعْلَمُ مَا يُسِرُّونَ وَمَا يُعْلِنُونَ ﴿٦٦﴾ أَوَلَمْ يَرَ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنَّا خَلَقْنَاهُ مِنْ
 نُطْفَةٍ فَإِذَا هُوَ خَصِيمٌ مُبِينٌ ﴿٦٧﴾ وَضَرَبَ لَنَا مَثَلًا وَ نَسِيَ خَلْقَهُ قَالَ مَنْ
 يُحْيِي الْعِظَامَ وَ هِيَ رَمِيمٌ ﴿٦٨﴾ قُلْ يُحْيِيهَا الَّذِي أَنشَأَنَا أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَ هُوَ
 بِكُلِّ خَلْقٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٦٩﴾ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنَ الشَّجَرِ الْأَخْضَرِ نَارًا فَإِذَا أَنْتُمْ
 مِنْهُ تُوقِدُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾ أَوَلَيْسَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِقَدِيرٍ عَلَى
 أَنْ يَخْلُقَ مِثْلَهُمْ بَلَىٰ وَ هُوَ الْخَلْقُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٧١﴾ إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُ إِذَا أَرَادَ شَيْئًا أَنْ
 يَقُولَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ ﴿٧٢﴾ فَسُبْحَانَ الَّذِي بِيَدِهِ مَلَكُوتُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٧٣﴾

9-70 We have not taught this (Prophet) poetry nor does poetry behove him.⁵⁸ This is only an Admonition and a lucid Book, so that he may warn everyone who is living⁵⁹ and the charge is established against the disbelievers.

1-76 Do they not see that out of what Our hands have fashioned,⁶⁰ We have created for them cattle of which they are masters? We have so subjected these to them that they ride on some and eat the flesh of others, and in them there are different advantages and drinks for them. Then, will they not be grateful?⁶¹ Yet, they have set up other gods, apart from Allah, hoping that they would be

helped. They cannot help them at all : yet do these people stand as an ever ready army at their service.⁶² Well, let not their words grieve you : We know whatever they hide and whatever they reveal.⁶³

Does⁶⁴ not man see that We created him from a sperm-drop, and yet he stands forth as a manifest adversary ?⁶⁵ Now he strikes out likenesses for Us⁶⁶ and forgets his own creation.⁶⁷ He says, "Who will give life to these bones when they are rotten ?" Tell him, "He Who created them in the first instance will give them life again : He is skilled at every kind of creation. He it is Who created fire for you from the green tree, with which you kindle your fuel.⁶⁸ Is not He Who created the heavens and the earth able to create the like of them ? Why not, when He is the skilful Creator. When He intends anything, He need only say : 'Be', and it is. Glorified is He in Whose hand is the absolute control of everything, and to Him you shall all be returned.

77.83

(Contd. from p. 67)

he urinates and defecates in bed ; talks childishly and is laughed at by others. In short, towards the end of life he returns to the same state of weakness with which he had started life in this world."

58. This is a rejoinder to the disbelievers, who slighted the Holy Prophet and his message by branding him a poet when he preached *Tauhid* and talked of the Hereafter, life-after-death, and Hell and Heaven. (For further explanation, see Ash-Shu'arā: 224-227 and the E.N.'s thereof).

59. "Every living person" : Every person who is capable of thinking and understanding, who is not like a stone, which neither hears nor understands nor moves from its place, however rationally and sympathetically one may explain the distinction between the truth and falsehood and give admonition before him.

60. The word "hands" has been used metaphorically for Allah. This does not mean that, God forbid, Allah has a body and He works with the hands like human beings, but it means to impress that Allah has made these things Himself, and none else has any share in the matter of their creation.

61. It is ingratitude to regard a blessing as a gift of someone other than the donor, to be grateful to another for it, and to cherish the hope of receiving it or to seek it from another than the donor. Likewise, it is also ingratitude that one should use a blessing against the will of the donor. Therefore, a *mushrik* or a disbeliever or a hypocrite or a sinful person cannot be regarded as a grateful servant of God when he utters words of thankfulness only with the tongue. The disbelievers of Makkah did not deny that the cattle had been created by Allāh ; none of them said that the other deities had any hand in their creation. But despite knowing all this when they paid homage to their deities for the blessings granted by Allāh, presented offerings before them and prayed to them for more blessings and offered sacrifices for their sake, their verbal gratitude became meaningless. That is why Allāh has regarded them as guilty of ingratitude and thanklessness.

62. That is, the poor false gods themselves are dependent upon their worshippers for their survival and their safety and their needs. But for their multitudes they could not survive as gods even for a day. These people are behaving as their humble servants. They are setting up and decorating their shrines ; they carry out propaganda for them ; they fight and quarrel with others for their sake. Then only are they recognized as gods. They are not the real God, Who, whether someone recognizes Him or not, is ruling over the whole universe by His own might and authority.

63. The address is to the Holy Prophet. Here the allusion is to the campaign of vilification which the chiefs of the disbelievers of Makkah were carrying on against him. They knew in their hearts and acknowledged in their private assemblies that the charges they brought against him were absolutely baseless. In order to create suspicions against him in the minds of the people, they branded him a poet, sorcerer, magician, madman, etc. But their consciences recognized, and they also acknowledged before one another, that whatever they were uttering was false, which they were forging only to frustrate his mission. That is why Allāh says to His Prophet : "Do not grieve at their absurd and meaningless talk. Those who are opposing and resisting the Truth with falsehood shall ultimately meet with failure in this world and see their evil end in the Hereafter, too."

64. Here the disbelievers' question cited in verse 48 above, is being answered by reason and argument. The question, "When will the threat of Resurrection be carried out ?" had not been asked with a view to find out the exact date of the coming of the Hereafter. But they asked it because they thought it was impossible,

rather irrational, that human beings would be raised back to life after death. That is why, in reply to their question, arguments are being given for the possibility of the Hereafter.

According to the traditions related by Ibn 'Abbās, Qatādah and Sa'īd bin Jubair, one of the chiefs of Makkah, on this occasion, came up with a rotten bone of a dead person, from the graveyard. He broke and crushed it into pieces before the Holy Prophet and scattering its particles in the air, said, "O Muḥammad, you say that the dead will be raised back to life. Tell us who will give life to these decayed and rotten bones?" The answer was given immediately in the form of these verses.

65. That is, "We caused the sperm-drop which contained nothing but the basic germ of life to develop to an extent that it started moving and eating like the animals. Furthermore, it has developed such powers of intellect and reasoning and disputation and speech, which are not possessed by any animal; so much so that now he dares stand up as an adversary before his Creator!"

66. That is, "He regards Us powerless and weak like the creation, and thinks that just as man cannot raise the dead back to life, so also can't We."

67. "Forgets his own creation": "Forgets that We created the basic germ of life from dead matter, which became the means of his creation; then We caused the germ to develop to such an extent that now he stands before Us as a disputant."

68. It either means this that He has placed the inflammable matter in the green trees due to which people kindle fire from the pieces of wood. Or, it is an allusion to the *markh* and *'afār* trees, whose green branches the Arabs struck against each other to produce the sparks. In ancient times the Bedouins used this method of kindling the fire and might even be using the same today.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

XXXVII

AS-SĀĀFFĀT الصّٰفّٰت

INTRODUCTION

Name

The name is derived from the word *waṣ-ṣāāffāt* with which the Sūrah begins.

Period of Revelation

The subject-matter and the style show that this Sūrah probably was sent down in the middle of the Makkan period, or perhaps in the last stage of the

middle Makkan period. The style clearly indicates that antagonism is raging strong in the background and the Holy Prophet and his Companions are passing through very difficult and discouraging circumstances.

Subject-Matter and Theme

The disbelievers of Makkah have been severely warned for their attitude of mockery and derision with which they were responding to the Holy Prophet's message of *Tauhid* and the Hereafter and for their utter refusal to accept and acknowledge his claim to Prophethood. In the end, they have been plainly warned that the Prophet whom they are mocking and ridiculing will overwhelm them in spite of their power and pelf and they will find the army of Allah encamping in the very courtyards of their houses (vv. 171-179). This notice was given at a time when there appeared no chance whatever of the Holy Prophet's success and triumph. The Muslims (who have been called Allah's army in these verses) were being made the target of severe persecution. Three-fourth of their population had already emigrated and hardly 40 to 50 of the Companions were left with the Holy Prophet in Makkah who were experiencing all sorts of the excesses with utter helplessness. Under such circumstances, in view of the apparent conditions, no one could believe that the Holy Prophet and the handful of his ill-equipped Companions would ultimately attain dominance. The people rather thought that the new movement would end and be buried in the ravines of Makkah. But hardly 15 to 16 years had passed when on the conquest of Makkah precisely the same thing happened of which the disbelievers had been forewarned.

Along with administering warnings, Allah in this Sūrah has done full justice also to the theme of induce-

ment and instruction in a balanced way. Brief but impressive arguments have been given about the validity of the doctrines of *Tauhīd* and the Hereafter. Criticism has been made of the creed of the *mushrikin* to show the absurdity of their beliefs; they have been informed of the evil consequences of their deviations, which have been contrasted with the splendid results of the faith and righteous acts. Then, in continuation of the same, precedents from past history have been cited to show how Allah has been treating His Prophets and their followers: how He has been favouring His faithful servants and punishing their deniers and rejectors.

The most instructive of the historical narratives presented in this Sūrah is the important event of the pious life of the Prophet Abraham, who became ready to sacrifice his only son as soon as he received an inspiration from Allah. In this there was a lesson not only for the disbelieving Quraish, who waxed proud of their blood relationship with him, but also for the Muslims who had believed in Allah and His Messenger. By narrating this event they were told what is the essence and the real spirit of Islam, and how a true believer should be ready to sacrifice his all for the pleasure and approval of Allah after he has adopted it as his Faith and Creed.

The last verses of the Sūrah were not only a warning for the disbelievers but also a good news for the believers who were passing through highly unfavourable and discouraging conditions on account of their supporting and following the Holy Prophet. In these verses they were given the good news that they should not be disheartened at the hardships and difficulties they had to encounter in the beginning, for in the end they alone would attain dominance, and the standard-bearers of falsehood, who appeared to be dominant at the time would be over-

whelmed and vanquished at their hands. A few years later the turn the events took, proved that it was not an empty consolation but an inevitable reality of which they had been foretold in order to strengthen their hearts.



وَالصَّفَاتِ صَفًّا ۖ فَالزَّجْرَاتِ زَجْرًا ۖ فَالتَّالِيَاتِ ذِكْرًا ۗ إِنَّ إِلَهَكُمْ لَوَاحِدٌ ۗ
 رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا وَرَبُّ الْمَشَارِقِ ۗ إِنَّا زَيَّنَّا السَّمَاءَ
 الدُّنْيَا بَرِزِينَةٍ الْكَوَاكِبِ ۗ وَحِفظًا مِّنْ كُلِّ شَيْطَانٍ مَّارِدٍ ۗ لَّا يَسْمَعُونَ
 إِلَى الْمَلَأِ الْأَعْلَىٰ وَيُقَدِّفُونَ مِّنْ كُلِّ جَانِبٍ ۗ دُحُورًا ۗ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ

XXXVII

AS-SĀĀFFĀT الصَّفَاتِ

Verses : 182

Revealed at Makkah

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

By those who range themselves in ranks ; then by those scold and curse ; then by those who recite admonition :¹ your real Deity is but One.² — He Who is Lord of the earth and the heavens and of all that is between them, and Lord³ of all Easts.⁴ 1-5

We have adorned the lower heaven⁵ with the adornment of the stars and have secured it against every rebel satan.⁶ These satans cannot hear the words of the exalted ones ; they are darted at and driven off from every side, and for them there is a perpetual torment. However, if some one snatches away something, a flashing flame follows him.⁷ 6-10

1. The majority of the commentators are agreed that all these three groups imply the groups of the angels, and the same explanation of it has been reported from 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, Ibn 'Abbās, Qatādah, Masrūq Sa'id bin Jubair, 'Ikrimah, Mujāhid, Suddī, Ibn Zaid and Rabi' bin Anas. Some commentators have given other commentaries also, but this commentary is more in keeping with the context. The words "range themselves in ranks" refer to the fact that all the angels who are administering the affairs of the universe, are the humble servants of Allah, and are ever ready to carry out any service and implement any command of His. This theme has been further repeated in verse 165 below, where the angels say with regard to themselves: "We are the ranged servants (of Allah)."

As for "scolding and cursing", some commentators think that it refers to those angels who drive the clouds and arrange the rainfall. Although this meaning is not incorrect either, the meaning which is more relevant to the following context is that among these angels there is also a group of those, who scold and curse the disobedient people and the culprits, and their this scolding and cursing is not merely verbal but it rains on human beings in the form of natural disasters and calamities.

"To recite admonition" implies that among these angels there are also those, who perform the service of admonition in order to draw the people's attention to the Truth. This they do by bringing about natural calamities from which the needful take heed, and by bringing down the teachings to the Prophets, and in the form of revelations with which the pious men are blessed through them.

2. This is the Truth to impress which an oath has been taken by the angels bearing the above-mentioned qualities. In other words, what is meant to be said is this: "The whole system of the universe which is functioning in the service of Allah, and all those manifestations of this universe which bring the evil consequences of deviation from the service of Allah before men, testify that the "Deity" of men is One and only One."

The word "*Ilāh*" applies to two meanings: (1) The deity who is actually being served and worshipped; and (2) the Deity Who, in reality, is worthy of being served and worshipped. Here, the word "*Ilāh*" has been used in the second meaning, for, as far as the first meaning is concerned, men have adopted many other deities. That is why we have translated "*Ilāh*" as the "real Deity".

3. The Truth that has been conveyed in these verses is this: "The Master and Ruler of the Universe is the real Deity of men: He alone can be, and should be, the Deity. It would be utterly

irrational that the *Rabb* (i.e. Master, Ruler, Guardian and Sustainer) of the man should be one but his *ilāh* (deity) another. The basic reason for worship is that man should naturally bow down before and acknowledge the superiority of him who can bring him harm and good, who can fulfil his needs and requirements, who can make or mar his destiny and has power over his life and survival itself. If man understands this he will automatically understand that to worship the one who has no power and not to worship Him Who has all the powers are both against reason and nature. The One Who alone is worthy of worship is He Who possesses the powers. As far as the powerless beings are concerned, they are neither worthy of worship, nor is it in any way profitable to worship and pray to them, for it is not in their power to take any action whatever on man's petitions and prayers. To bow before them humbly and to petition them would be as foolish and meaningless an act as to bow before and petition another one who has himself gone before a ruler to make obeisance and submit his petitions.

4. The sun does not always rise at the same point but at a different point every day. Moreover, it does not rise at one and the same time for the whole world but rises at different times for the different parts of the earth. That is why the plural "*Mashāriq*" (East) has been used to indicate the different points at which the sun rises according to the season of the year. The corresponding word "*Maghārib*" (West) has not been used because *Mashāriq* itself points to *Maghārib*. However, in *Sūrah Al-Ma'ārij*, the word *maghārib* also has been used along with *mashāriq* : *Rabb-ul-mashāriqi wal-maghārib*.

5. "Lower heaven" : The nearer heaven which can be seen with the naked eye, without the help of a telescope. The worlds beyond which can be seen through the telescopes of different powers, and the worlds which have not so far been observed through any means, are the distant heavens. In this connection, one should also note that "*sumā'*" is not something definite and determined, but man generally has been using this word and its other synonyms for the heavens since the earliest times.

6. That is, "Heaven is not merely empty space so that anyone who likes may enter it, but it has been fortified strongly, and its different regions have been bounded by such strong barriers that it is impossible for any rebel satan to exceed them. Every star and planet in the universe has its own circle and sphere escaping from which is as difficult as entering it. With the naked eye one

(Contd. on p. 84)

وَاصْبُ ۙ إِلَّا مَنْ خَظَفَ الْخَظْفَةَ فَاتَّبَعَهُ شِهَابٌ ثَاقِبٌ ۙ فَاسْتَفْتِهِمْ
 أَهْمُ أَشَدُّ خَلْقًا أَمْ مَنْ خَلَقْنَا إِنَّا خَلَقْنَهُمْ مِنْ طِينٍ لَازِبٍ ۙ بَلْ
 عَجِبْتَ وَيَسْخَرُونَ ۙ وَإِذَا ذُكِرُوا لَا يَذْكُرُونَ ۙ وَإِذَا سَرَاوَا آيَةً
 يَسْتَسْخِرُونَ ۙ وَقَالُوا إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ مُبِينٌ ۙ إِذَا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا
 وَعِظَامًا ء إِنَّا لَلْبَعُوثُونَ ۙ أَوْ آبَاؤُنَا الْأَوَّلُونَ ۙ قُلْ نَعَمْ وَأَنْتُمْ دَاخِرُونَ ۙ
 فَإِنَّمَا هِيَ زَجْرَةٌ وَاحِدَةٌ فَإِذَا هُمْ يَنْظُرُونَ ۙ وَقَالُوا يُوَيْلِنَا هَذَا يَوْمُ
 الدِّينِ ۙ هَذَا يَوْمُ الْفَصْلِ الَّذِي كُنْتُمْ بِهِ تُكَذِّبُونَ ۙ أَحْشُرُوا الَّذِينَ
 ظَلَمُوا وَآزَاجَهُمْ وَمَا كَانُوا يَعْبُدُونَ ۙ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَاهْدُوهُمْ إِلَى
 صِرَاطِ الْجَحِيمِ ۙ وَقِفْهُمْ أَنَّهُمْ مَسْئُولُونَ ۙ مَا لَكُمْ لَا تَنصُرُونَ ۙ
 بَلْ هُمْ الْيَوْمَ مُسْتَسْلِمُونَ ۙ وَأَقْبَلَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ ۙ
 قَالُوا إِنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ تَأْتُونَنَا عَنِ الْيَمِينِ ۙ قَالُوا بَلْ لَمْ تَكُونُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ ۙ
 وَمَا كَانَ لَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ بَلْ كُنْتُمْ قَوْمًا طَغِيْنَ ۙ فَحَقَّ عَلَيْنَا
 قَوْلُ رَبِّنَا إِنَّا لَذَائِقُونَ ۙ فَأَغْوَيْنَكُمْ إِنَّا كُنَّا غَوِيْنَ ۙ فَإِنَّهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ
 فِي الْعَذَابِ مُشْتَرِكُونَ ۙ إِنَّا كَذَلِكَ نَفْعَلُ بِالْمُجْرِمِينَ ۙ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا إِذَا
 قِيلَ لَهُمْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ ۙ وَيَقُولُونَ إِنَّا لَنَارِكُوا إِلَهَتِنَا
 لِشَاعِرٍ مَجْنُونٍ ۙ بَلْ جَاءَ بِالْحَقِّ وَصَدَقَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ۙ إِنَّكُمْ لَذَائِقُوا
 الْعَذَابِ الْأَلِيمِ ۙ وَمَا تُجْزَوْنَ إِلَّا مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ۙ إِلَّا عِبَادَ الَّذِينَ
 الْمُخْلِصِينَ ۙ أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ رِزْقٌ مَعْلُومٌ ۙ فَوَاكِهُ ۙ وَهُمْ مُكْرَمُونَ ۙ فِي
 جَنَّتِ النَّعِيمِ ۙ عَلَى سُرُرٍ مُتَقَابِلِينَ ۙ يُطَافُ عَلَيْهِمْ بِكَأْسٍ مِنْ مَعِينٍ ۙ

Now ask them : What is more difficult : their own creation or of those things which We have created ?⁸ Of sticky clay We have created them.⁹ You marvel (at the wonders of Allah's power), but they are scoffing at it. When they are warned they do not take the warning. When they see a Sign they mock at it, and say, "This is plain magic."¹⁰ What ! when we are dead and have become dust and bones, shall we be raised up to life ? And also our forefathers of ancient times ?" Say to them, "Yes, and you are helpless (against God)."¹¹ 11-18

There will only be a single shout and suddenly they will be seeing (all of which they are being warned) with their own eyes.¹² Then they will say, "Woe to us ! This is the Day of Requitā."—"The same Day of Judgement which you used to deny."¹³ (It will be commanded) : "Gather all the unjust people¹⁴ and their associates¹⁵ together, and those gods whom they used to worship instead of Allah¹⁶; then show them the way to Hell. And stop them for a while : they have to be questioned : What is the matter ? Why don't you help one another ? Today, they are surrendering themselves (and others to God)¹⁷ ! " Then they will turn to each other for mutual reproaches. (The followers) will say (to their guides) : "You used to come to us from the right side."¹⁸ They will reply, "Nay but it was yourselves who did not believe : we had no power over you : you yourselves were a rebellious people. Consequently, we have deserved the verdict of our Lord that we should taste the torment. So we led you astray for we ourselves had gone astray."¹⁹ 19-32

So, on that Day they shall all share the torment.²⁰ Thus do We deal with the criminals. These were the people that when it was said to them, "There is no god but Allah," they were puffed up with pride and would say, "Should we give up our gods for the sake of a mad poet ?" Whereas he had come with the Truth and had confirmed the Messengers.²¹ (Then it will be said to 33-39

them :) "You shall have to taste the painful scourge, and your retribution will be strictly according to the deeds that you have been performing."

40-46

But the chosen servants of Allah will remain safe (from this evil end). For them there is a known provision²²: tasteful things of all kinds²³ and gardens of delight wherein they shall be lodged with honour. They will sit face to face on couches: cups filled from fountains²⁴ of wine²⁵ will be passed round to them²⁶, of crystal-white drink, delicious for those who drink it.

(Contd. from p. 81)

can only see empty space, but, in reality, there are countless regions in space which have been even more strongly fortified and protected than they could be by steel walls. One can imagine and estimate the strength of these barriers by the difficulties man is experiencing in the way of reaching the moon, which is our nearest neighbour in space. Similar difficulties prevent the other creation of the earth, the jinns, from ascending towards the heavens.

7. To understand this one should keep in view the fact that in the time of the Holy Prophet, soothsaying was in great vogue in Arabia. The soothsayers used to make predictions, give news of the unseen, tell the whereabouts of the lost properties and articles, and the people used to visit them to know the events of their past and future lives. These soothsayers claimed that they had some jinns and satans under their control, who brought them all sorts of news. In this environment when the Holy Prophet was appointed to Prophethood, and he began to recite the verses of the Qur'ān, which described the past history and contained news of the future, and also stated that an angel brought him these verses, his opponents immediately branded him a soothsayer and started telling others that, like the other soothsayers, he too was associated with a satan, who brought him news from the heavens, which he presented as revelations from Allah. To refute this accusation, Allah says: "The satans have no access to heaven. They have no power to hear the conversations of the angels and bring its news for others; if by chance a little of it enters the ear of a satan, and he tries to bring it down, he is followed by a flashing flame." In other words, it means this: "The grand system of the universe, which is functioning under the agency of the angels has been firmly guarded and secured against every interference of the satans. Not to speak of

interfering in it, they do not even have the power to obtain any kind of information about it." (For further explanation, see Al-Hijr : 17-18 and the E.N's thereof).

8. This is an answer to the suspicions of the disbelievers of Makkah, which they presented about the Hereafter. They thought that the Hereafter was not possible, for it is impossible that the dead men should be recreated. In answer to it, Allah presents arguments for the possibility of the Hereafter and asks: "If you think that the recreation of the dead men is a very difficult task which We do not have the power to accomplish, do you think it is easy to create the earth and the heavens and the countless things that they contain? Why don't you use your common sense? Do you think that, that God for Whom it was not at all difficult to create this great Universe and Who has created you in the first instance, will not have the power to create you once again?"

9. That is, "Man is not a difficult thing to make. He has been created from clay, and can again be created from the same clay." "Created man of sticky clay" means that the first man was created directly from the clay and then his race was perpetuated by means of the sperm-drop. It also means that every man has been created from the sticky clay, for the whole substance of man's body is obtained from the earth. The sperm-drop of which he is created, is a product of the food, and all the substances which make up his physical being, from the time he is conceived till his death, are also supplied by the food. The source of the food, whether animal flesh or vegetable, is ultimately the same earth which, in combination with water produces corn and vegetables and fruit to become food for man, and nourish the animals, which supply milk and flesh for the use of man.

Thus, the basis of the argument is: Man could not be living today if the earth and clay had not become the source of life for him. And if it is possible today to create life in it, as your own existence is a clear and definite pointer to this possibility, why should it be impossible to bring about your re-creation from the same earth tomorrow?

10. That is, "This person is talking of the world of magic in which the dead will rise, and will be produced before a court and sent to Heaven and Hell." Or, it may also mean: "This person is talking like a madman. What he talks is a clear proof that somebody has worked magic on him; otherwise a sensible person could not talk such things.

11. That is, "Allah can make of you whatever He likes.

When He willed, you came into being forthwith ; when He wills, you will die at one Command by Him ; and then whenever He will, His one Command will raise you back to life."

12. That is, "When the time comes for this, it will not be difficult to re-establish the whole world. Just a single shout will be enough to make the people to wake up. Here, the word "shout" or "cry" is very meaningful. It depicts the Resurrection as though the people who had died since the beginning of the creation till the last Day, were lying asleep, and a sudden command to them to "wake up", will cause them to rise up all at once."

13. It may be that this is said by the believers, or by the angels ; or it may be, as it were, the common expression of the conditions prevailing in the plain of Resurrection, or it may as well be another reaction of the people themselves. That is, they may be saying in their hearts, "In the world, you lived in a way as if no Day of Judgement would ever come. Now you have come to your doom ! This is the same Day that you used to deny !"

14. "The unjust people" does not only imply those who committed injustices in the world, but as a Qur'ānic term *Zālim* implies every such person, who might have adopted the way of *kufr* and disobedience against Allah."

15. The word "*azwāj*" in the original might also imply their wives, who were their associates in this rebellion, and also all those people who were rebellious and disobedient like them. Moreover it may also mean that the culprits of different categories will be gathered together in separate groups.

16. "Gods" here implies two kinds of the gods : (1) Those men and satans who themselves desired that the people should worship them instead of Allah ; and (2) those idols and trees and stones, etc., which have actually been worshipped in the world. The first kind of the gods will be included among the culprits themselves and will be led to Hell for punishment ; the other kind of them will be thrown into Hell along with their worshippers so that they constantly feel ashamed of and continue to regret their follies. Besides, there is also a third kind of the gods, who have been worshipped in the world, but without their own consent and knowledge ; they rather forbade the people to worship anyone but Allah, e.g. the angels, prophets and saints. Obviously, this kind of the gods will not be included among the gods who will be driven to Hell along with their worshippers.

17. The first sentence will be addressed to the culprits, and the second to the common spectators, who will be watching the scene

of the culprits' departure for Hell. This sentence itself tells of the general conditions at the time. It tells how the haughty and stubborn culprits of the world will be moving towards Hell meekly and without showing any resistance. Somewhere some king will be seen being pushed about, and no one from among his courtiers will come forward to rescue "his majesty"; somewhere some conqueror of the world and some dictator will be moving away in humiliation and disgrace, and his brave army itself will deliver him for the punishment; somewhere some saint or some holy father will be seen being thrown into Hell, and no one of his disciples will bother to save him from disgrace; somewhere some leader will be trudging helplessly towards Hell, and those who used to glorify and applaud him in the world, will turn away their eyes from him. So much so that the lover who was ever prepared to sacrifice everything for the beloved in the world, will feel least concerned to save him from his plight. By depicting this scene Allah wants to impress how the relationships of man with man, which are based on rebellion against Allah in the world, will break in the Hereafter, and how the pride of those who are involved in arrogance and conceit here, will be ruined.

18. The word *yamīn* in Arabic is used for several meanings. It may mean use of the force, or well-wishing, or swearing of an oath. Accordingly, the verse would mean: (1) "You compelled us into following error and deviation"; or (2) "you deceived us by posing as our well-wishers"; or (3) "you swore oaths to satisfy us that what you were presenting was the very truth."

19. For explanation, see E.N's 51, 52, 53 of *Sūrāh Sabā*.

20. That is, the followers as well as the guides, misleaders as well as the misled, all shall suffer the same torment. Neither will the followers' excuse be heeded that they did not go astray but had been led astray, nor the guides' excuse accepted that the people themselves were not desirous of following the right way.

21. Confirmation of the Messengers has three meanings and all the three are implied here: (1) That he had not opposed any former Messenger so that the believers of that Messenger could have a rational ground of prejudice against him; he had rather confirmed all the former Messengers sent by God; (2) that he had not brought any new or novel thing, but he had presented the same that the

(Contd. on p. 90)

بِيضَاءَ لَذَّةٍ لِلشَّرِيبِينَ ﴿٥٤﴾ لَا فِيهَا غَوْلٌ وَلَا هُمْ عَنْهَا يُنزفُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾ وَعِنْدَهُمْ
 قِصْرُ الطَّرْفِ عَيْنٌ ﴿٥٦﴾ كَأَنَّهُنَّ بَيْضٌ مَكْنُونٌ ﴿٥٧﴾ فَأَقْبَلَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ
 يَتَسَاءَلُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾ قَالَ قَائِلٌ مِّنْهُمَا إِنِّي كَانَ لِي قَرِينٌ ﴿٥٩﴾ يَقُولُ إِنِّي كَلِمَن
 الْمُصَدِّقِينَ ﴿٦٠﴾ إِذَا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا وَعِظَامًا إِنَّا لَمَدِينُونَ ﴿٦١﴾ قَالَ هَلْ
 أَنْتُمْ مُّظَلِّعُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾ فَأُطْلِعَ فَرَاةٌ فِي سَوَاءِ الْجَحِيمِ ﴿٦٣﴾ قَالَ تَاللَّهِ إِن كِدْتَ
 لَتُورِدِينَ ﴿٦٤﴾ وَلَوْ لَا نِعْمَةُ رَبِّي لَكُنْتُ مِنَ الْمُحْضَرِينَ ﴿٦٥﴾ أَفَمَا نَحْنُ بِبَيْتِينَ ﴿٦٦﴾
 إِلَّا مَوْتَنَا الْأُولَىٰ وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمُعَذَّبِينَ ﴿٦٧﴾ إِنَّ هَذَا لَهُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿٦٨﴾
 لِيُثِلَّ هَذَا فَلْيَعْمَلِ الْعَمِلُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾ أَذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ تُزَلُّوا أَمْ شَجَرَةُ الزُّقُومِ ﴿٧٠﴾ إِنَّا
 جَعَلْنَاهَا فِتْنَةً لِلظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٧١﴾ إِنَّهَا شَجَرَةٌ تَخْرُجُ فِي أَصْلِ الْجَحِيمِ ﴿٧٢﴾ طَلْعُهَا
 كَأَنَّهُ رُءُوسُ الشَّيْطَانِ ﴿٧٣﴾ فَإِنَّهُمْ لَا يَكُونُ مِنْهَا فَمَا لِيُونَ مِنْهَا الْبُطُونَ ﴿٧٤﴾
 ثُمَّ إِن لَّهُمْ عَلَيْهَا لَشَوْبًا مِّنْ حَبِيمٍ ﴿٧٥﴾ ثُمَّ إِن مَرَجَعَهُمْ لَا إِلَى الْجَحِيمِ ﴿٧٦﴾
 إِنَّهُمْ أَلْفَوْا آبَاءَهُمْ ضَالِّينَ ﴿٧٧﴾ فَهُمْ عَلَىٰ آثَرِهِمْ يُهْرَعُونَ ﴿٧٨﴾ وَلَقَدْ ضَلَّ
 قَبْلَهُمْ أَكْثَرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿٧٩﴾ وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا فِيهِمْ مُّنذِرِينَ ﴿٨٠﴾ فَأَنْظَرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ
 عَاقِبَةُ الْمُذْذَرِينَ ﴿٨١﴾ إِلَّا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ الْمُخْلَصِينَ ﴿٨٢﴾ وَلَقَدْ نَادَيْنَا نُوْحًا فَلْنِعْمَ
 الْمَجِيبُونَ ﴿٨٣﴾ وَنَجَّيْنَاهُ وَآهْلَهُ مِنَ الْكَرْبِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٨٤﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا ذُرِّيَّتَهُ هُمُ
 الْبَاقِينَ ﴿٨٥﴾ وَتَرَكْنَا عَلَيْهِ فِي الْآخِرِينَ ﴿٨٦﴾ سَلَامٌ عَلَىٰ نُوْحٍ فِي الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٨٧﴾ إِنَّا
 كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٨٨﴾ إِنَّهُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٨٩﴾ ثُمَّ آغْرَقْنَا
 الْآخَرِينَ ﴿٩٠﴾ وَإِن مِنْ شَيْعَتِهِ لِابْرَاهِيمَ ﴿٩١﴾ إِذْ جَاءَ رَبَّهُ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ ﴿٩٢﴾
 إِذْ قَالَ لِأَبِيهِ وَقَوْمِهِ مَاذَا تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿٩٣﴾ أَإِنفِكَ إِلَهَةٌ دُونَ اللَّهِ تُرِيدُونَ ﴿٩٤﴾

Neither will they be harmed physically thereby nor become drunk.²⁷ And beside them there will be chaste women²⁸ with beautiful eyes, restraining their looks,²⁹ delicate as the thin skin hidden under the egg shell.³⁰ 10 47-49

Then they will turn to one another to ask questions. One of them will say, "I had a friend in the world, who used to say, 'Are you also of those who affirm?'³¹ What! when we are dead and have become dust and bones, shall we really be rewarded and punished?" "Now, do you want to see where that man is?" Saying this as he will look down, he will see him in the depth of Hell. He will address him, saying, "By God! you had almost ruined me. But for the favour of my Lord, I also should have been among those who have been seized and brought here."³² Well! Are we not to die any other than our first death? Are we not to be punished?"³³ 50-59

This indeed is the supreme success. For the like of this, then, should the workers work. Say, "Is this feast better or the *zaqqūm* tree?"³⁴ We have made that tree a trial for the wicked people.³⁵ It is a tree that grows out from the bottom of Hell. Its buds are like the heads of satans.³⁶ The dwellers of Hell shall eat it and fill their bellies with it. Then, upon it, they will get boiling water to drink. Then, their return shall be to the same Fire of Hell.³⁷ These are the people, who found their forefathers astray and they hastened in their footsteps, whereas many people before them had gone astray though We had sent warners among them. Now see what was the end of those who had been warned. Only such servants of Allah were able to avoid this evil end, whom Allah has chosen for Himself. 60-74

(Before this)³⁸ Noah had called on Us⁴⁰: Just see how excellent Answerers (of the prayers) We were! We saved him and his household from the great distress⁴¹ and made his progeny to be the only survivors⁴² and left 75-82

for him praise among posterity. Peace be upon Noah among the people of the world.⁴³ Thus do We reward the righteous. He was indeed one of Our believing servants. Then We drowned the others.

83-87 And Abraham was the one who followed the way of Noah. When he approached his Lord with a sound heart⁴⁴ : when he said to his father and his people,⁴⁵ "What are these things that you worship? Do you seek false gods instead of Allah? What do you think about the Lord of the worlds?"⁴⁶

(Conld. from p. 87)

former Messengers of God had been presenting from the very beginning ; and (3) that he truly fulfilled and corresponded to the predictions that the former Messengers had made concerning him.

22. "A known provision" : A provision all whose characteristics have been made known to them, which they are sure to receive, about which they have also the full satisfaction that they will continue to receive it for ever, and about which there is no apprehension that they may or may not get it at some time.

23. In this there is a subtle allusion to this also that in Paradise food will be provided not to serve as food but for pleasure and delight. That is, the food there will not be meant to replenish the bodily deficiencies through diet, for no deficiency whatever will occur in the body in that eternal life, nor will man have appetite, for appetite is caused by the process of assimilation in the body, nor will the body demand food for its survival. That is why the word *jawākih* has been used for the different kinds of food in Paradise, which contains the sense of taste and pleasure more than that of nutrition.

24. That is, "It will not be the kind of wine that is extracted from rotten fruit and corn in the world, but it will flow naturally from fountains like canals. In Surāh Muḥammad, the same thing has been described more clearly, thus : "... and canals will be flowing in it of wine which will be delightful for the drinkers." (v. 15)

25. Here the word *ka's* (cup) only has been used and there is no mention of the wine. But in Arabic the use of *ka's* always implies wine. The cup which contains milk or water, instead of

wine, or is empty, is not called *ka's*. The word *ka's* is used for a cup only when it contains wine.

26. Here it has not been mentioned as to who will take these cups of wine round to the dwellers of Paradise. This has been stated at other places: "And there will go round to them young boys, exclusively appointed for their service, who will be as lovely as well-guarded pearls." (Aṭ-Ṭūr : 24). "They will be attended by brisk-moving boys who will for ever remain boys. If you saw them, you would think they were pearls, scattered." (Ad-Dahr : 19). Then, its further details are found in the traditions related by Ḥaḍrat Anas and Ḥaḍrat Samurah bin Jundub from the Holy Prophet, according to which : "The children of the *mushrikin* will be attendants of the dwellers of Paradise." (Abū Da'ūd Ṭayālisi, Ṭabarāni, Bazzār). Though these traditions are weak as regards their links of transmitters, there are several other *Ḥadīths* which mean that children who died young, before attaining maturity, will go to Paradise. *Ḥadīths* also show that the children whose parents are blessed with Paradise, will live with them so as to be a comfort of the eyes for them. This leaves behind those children whose parents will not go to Paradise. Thus, with regard to them, it seems reasonable that they will be made the attendants of the dwellers of Paradise. (For a detailed discussion of this, see Fath ul-Bārī and 'Umdat ul-Qāri : *Kitāb ul-Janā'iz, Bāb ; Māqīla fi aulād il-mushrikin; Ra'ā'il-o-Masā'il*, vol. III, pp. 177-187).

27. That is, the wine of Paradise will be free from both the evils which are found in the wine of the world. The wine of the world, first of all, afflicts man with its stink ; then it embitters his taste, upsets his stomach, affects his mind and causes giddiness ; then it affects the liver and spoils the health generally. Then, when the intoxication is gone, it leaves behind other ill-effects on the body. Its other evil is that man gets drunk with it, talks nonsense and brawls. This is how the wine affects man's mind and reason. Man suffers both these evil effects of the wine only for the sake of delight and pleasure. Allah says that the wine of Paradise will certainly afford and give full pleasure and delight, but it will be free from the kinds of the evils that go with the worldly wine.

28. Probably these will be the girls who died before attaining the age of discretion in the world, and whose parents did not deserve to enter Paradise. This can be said on the basis of analogy that

just as the boys similarly placed will be appointed for the service of the dwellers of Paradise, and they will ever remain boys, so will the girls be made the houris and they will ever remain young and beautiful. The correct knowledge, however, is with Allah.

29. "Restraining their looks" : Restraining their looks from everyone except their husbands.

30. The words of the Text actually mean this : "As if they were the hidden or well-preserved eggs." The commentators have given different interpretations of these words, but the correct commentary is the one which Ḥaḍrat Umm Salamah has related from the Holy Prophet. She says that when she asked the meaning of this verse from the Holy Prophet, he said : "Their delicacy and elegance and tenderness will be like the thin skin which is there between the shell of the egg and its fleshy part." (Ibn Jarīr).

31. That is, "Were you also one of those credulous people who put their faith in an irrational and impossible thing like life-after-death ?"

32. This shows how powerful will be man's hearing, seeing and speaking powers in the Hereafter. Sitting in Paradise he bends his head a little and is able to see a person, who is undergoing torment thousands of miles away in Hell, without the agency of a television set. Then, they not only just see each other, but also commune with each other directly without the medium of the telephone or radio and they speak and hear each other over vast distances.

33. The style clearly shows that while speaking to his friend in Hell, the dweller of Paradise suddenly starts talking to himself. He speaks these three sentences in a way as if he found himself in a state much better than that he ever expected and imagined for himself, and now being beside himself with wonder and joy he is engaged in a sort of soliloquy. In such a state the speaker does not speak to an addressee, nor the questions he asks are meant to find out something from somebody, but in this state the man's own feelings find expression through his tongue. The dweller of Paradise, while speaking to the dweller of Hell, suddenly starts feeling how he has been favoured by good fortune : now there is neither death nor any torment : all troubles and distresses have come to an end and he has been blessed with immortality. Under this very feeling he exclaims : "Well ! are we not to die any other than our first death ? Are we not to be punished ?"

34. *Zaqqūm* is a tree of the cactus species found in Tihāmah. It is bitter in taste, obnoxious in smell and sheds a milk like juice when cut or broken.

35. That is, "On hearing this the disbelievers get a new opportunity to taunt the Qur'ān and mock the Holy Prophet. They ridicule it saying, 'Listen another strange thing: a tree will grow in the blazing fire of Hell!'"

36. Nobody should have the misunderstanding that since no one has seen the head of Satan, it was no use likening the buds of *zaqqūm* to it. This is, in fact, an imaginative kind of the simile, and is employed in the literature of every language. For example, in order to give an idea of the rare beauty of a woman, it is said she is a fairy, and in order to describe her ugliness, it is said that she is a hag or a demon. Likewise, a pious-looking person is described as an angel and a dreadful-looking person as a devil.

37. This shows that when the dwellers of Hell will be in distress due to hunger and thirst, they will be driven to the side where there would be the *zaqqūm* trees and the springs of boiling water. Then, when they will have eaten and drunk, they will be brought back to Hell.

38. That is, they never used their own common sense to see whether the way their forefathers had been following was right or wrong; they just blindly adopted the way that they found others following.

39. This theme is related with the preceding sentences. A study of them shows why these stories are being narrated here.

40. This refers to the prayer that the Prophet Noah had at last made to Allah Almighty, being disappointed with his people, after having preached the true Faith to them for a very long period of time, without much success. This prayer has been related in Sūrah Al-Qamar, thus: "He called out to his Lord, saying: I am overcome: take now Thy vengeance." (v. 10).

41. That is, from the severe distress that was being caused him on account of the continuous opposition and antagonism of a wicked and cruel people. This also contains a subtle allusion to this that just as the Prophet Noah and his companions were saved from the great distress, so also shall We ultimately save the Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allāh's peace) and his Companions from the great distress that is being caused to them by the people of Makkah.

(Contd. on p. 96)

فَمَا ظَنُّكُمْ بِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٤٤﴾ فَنظَرَ نَظْرَةً فِي النُّجُومِ ﴿٤٥﴾ فَقَالَ إِنِّي سَقِيتُهُ ﴿٤٦﴾
فَتَوَلَّوْا عَنْهُ مُدْبِرِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾ فَرَاغَ إِلَى إِلَهِهِمْ فَقَالَ أَلَا تَأْكُلُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾ مَا لَكُمْ لَا
تَنْطِقُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾ فَرَاغَ عَلَيْهِمْ ضَرْبًا بِالْيَمِينِ ﴿٥٠﴾ فَأَقْبَلُوا إِلَيْهِ يَزِفُونَ ﴿٥١﴾ قَالَ
اتَّعْبُدُونَ مَا تَنْحِتُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾ وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَكُمْ وَمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾ قَالُوا ابْنُوا لَهُ بُنْيَانًا
فَالْقُوَّةُ فِي الْجَحِيمِ ﴿٥٤﴾ فَأَرَادُوا بِهِ كَيْدًا فَجَعَلْنَاهُمُ الْأَسْفَلِينَ ﴿٥٥﴾ وَقَالَ إِنِّي
ذَاهِبٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي سَيَّهْدِينِ ﴿٥٦﴾ رَبِّ هَبْ لِي مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٥٧﴾ فَبَشَّرْنَاهُ بِغُلَامٍ حَلِيمٍ ﴿٥٨﴾
فَلَمَّا بَلَغَ مَعَهُ السَّعْيَ قَالَ يَبْنَؤُا إِنِّي أَرَىٰ فِي الْمَنَامِ آتِيَّ أَذْبَحُكَ فَانظُرْ
مَاذَا تَرَىٰ ﴿٥٩﴾ قَالَ يَا بَتِ يَا بَتِ افْعَلْ مَا تُؤْمَرُ سَتَجِدُنِي إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مِنَ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿٦٠﴾
فَلَمَّا أَسْلَمَا وَتَلَّهُ لِلْجَبِينِ ﴿٦١﴾ وَنَادَيْنَاهُ أَنْ يَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ ﴿٦٢﴾ قَدْ صَدَّقْتَ الرُّؤْيَا
إِنَّا كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٦٣﴾ إِنَّ هَذَا لَهُوَ الْبَلَاءُ الْمُبِينُ ﴿٦٤﴾ وَفَدَيْنَاهُ بِذَبْحٍ
عَظِيمٍ ﴿٦٥﴾ وَتَرَكْنَا عَلَيْهِ فِي الْآخِرِينَ ﴿٦٦﴾ سَلَامٌ عَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ ﴿٦٧﴾ كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي
الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٦٨﴾ إِنَّهُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٦٩﴾ وَبَشَّرْنَاهُ بِإِسْحَاقَ نَبِيًّا مِنْ
الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٧٠﴾ وَبُرَكْنَا عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَىٰ إِسْحَاقَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِهِمَا مُوسَىٰ وَظَالِمٌ
لِنَفْسِهِ مُبِينٌ ﴿٧١﴾ وَلَقَدْ مَنَّا عَلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ وَهَارُونَ ﴿٧٢﴾ وَنَجَّيْنَاهُمَا وَقَوْمَهُمَا
مِنَ الْكَرْبِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٧٣﴾ وَنَصَرْنَاهُمْ فَكَانُوا هُمُ الْغَالِبِينَ ﴿٧٤﴾ وَآتَيْنَاهُمَا الْكِتَابَ
الْمُسْتَبِينَ ﴿٧٥﴾ وَهَدَيْنَاهُمَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ﴿٧٦﴾ وَتَرَكْنَا عَلَيْهِمَا فِي الْآخِرِينَ ﴿٧٧﴾
سَلَامٌ عَلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ وَهَارُونَ ﴿٧٨﴾ إِنَّا كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٧٩﴾ إِنَّهُمَا مِنْ عِبَادِنَا
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٨٠﴾ وَإِنَّ إِلْيَاسَ لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿٨١﴾ إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ أَلَا تَتَّقُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾
اتَّعْبُدُونَ بَعْلًا وَتَذَرُونَ أَحْسَنَ الْخَالِقِينَ ﴿٨٣﴾ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ وَرَبُّ آبَائِكُمْ

Then⁴⁷ he cast a glance at the stars⁴⁸ and said, "I am sick."⁴⁹ So they left him behind and went away.⁵⁰ In their absence, he stole into the temple of their gods and said, "Why don't you eat?⁵¹ What is the matter that you do not even speak?" Then he fell upon them, smiting them with his right hand. (On their return) the people came to him running.⁵² He said, "Do you worship those that you have yourselves carved? whereas Allah has created you as well as those (things) which you make." They said to one another, "Prepare for him a bonfire and throw him into the blazing flames." They had designed a plan against him, but We defeated them in their plan.⁵³ 88-98

Abraham said,⁵⁴ "I shall go to my Lord⁵⁵: He will guide me. O my Lord I grant me a son who should be righteous".⁵⁶ (In answer to this prayer) We gave him the good news of a gentle (clement) son.⁵⁷ When the boy reached the age to work with him, (one day) Abraham said to him, "My son! I have dreamt that I am sacrificing you.⁵⁸ Now tell me what you think of it."⁵⁹ He said, "My dear father, do as you are being commanded.⁶⁰ You will find me, if Allah so wills, of the patient." At last, when the two had submitted themselves (to Allah) and Abraham had flung his son down on his brow,⁶¹ and We called out⁶²: "O Abraham! You have indeed fulfilled your vision.⁶³ Thus do We reward the righteous.⁶⁴ This was indeed a manifest trial."⁶⁵ And We ransomed his son for a great sacrifice,⁶⁶ and left for him praise among posterity for ever. Peace is upon Abraham. Thus do We reward the righteous. Indeed he was one of Our believing servants; and We gave him the good news of Isaac, a Prophet among the righteous. And we blessed him as well as Isaac.⁶⁷ Now among their offspring someone is righteous and someone clearly a sinner against his own self.⁶⁸ 99-113

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And We showed favour to Moses and Aaron : We delivered them and their people from a great distress⁶⁹ : We helped them and so they became triumphant : We gave them a clear Book, and guided them to the Right Way, and left good words for them among posterity. Peace is on Moses and Aaron. Thus do We reward the righteous. Indeed they were among Our believing servants.

(Contd. from p. 93)

42. This can have two meanings : (1) That the progeny of the people who were opposing the Prophet Noah was made extinct and the Prophet Noah's progeny alone was allowed to survive ; and (2) that the whole human race was made extinct, and only the Prophet Noah's progeny was allowed to inhabit the earth after that. The commentators generally have adopted this second meaning, but the words of the Qur'ān are not explicit in this regard and no one knows the reality except Allah.

43. That is, there is none in the world today, who would talk evil of the Prophet Noah. After the Flood till today the world has been praising and speaking well of him for thousands of years.

44. "Approached his Lord" : Turned to his Lord sincerely and exclusively ; "with a sound heart" : with a heart that was free from all kinds of moral evils and weaknesses of faith, free from every trace of unbelief and *shirk*, doubt and suspicion, from every feeling of disobedience and rebellion, from every crookedness, confusion and complexity, and free from every evil inclination and desire, and a heart that neither cherished any malice and jealousy and ill-will against anyone, nor had any evil intention.

45. For further details of this story of the Prophet Abraham, please see Sūrah Al-An'ām : 72-90 ; Maryam : 41-50 ; Al-Anbiyāā : 51-75 ; Ash-Shu'arāā : 69-89 ; Al-'Ankabūt : 16-17, and the E.N's thereof.

46. That is, "Why have you formed such a wrong view of Allah ? Do you think that the gods that you have yourselves carved out from wood and stone can be like Him, or can be His associates in his attributes and rights ? And are you involved in the misunderstanding that you will somehow manage to escape His punishment after you have indulged in such blasphemy !"

47. The reference is to a particular incident the details of which have been given in Sūrah Al-Anbiyāā' : 51-73 and Al-'Ankabūt : 16-27 above.

48. Ibn Abī Ḥātim has cited a saying of the famous commentator Qatādah, an immediate follower of the Companions, to the effect that the Arabic idiomatic expression, "cast a glance at the stars," means that he pondered deeply, or that he started thinking seriously. 'Allāma Ibn Kathīr has preferred this same view, and this is also supported by the common observation : when a person is confronted by a problem that needs serious consideration, he looks upward or to the sky for a while, and then makes a reply, after due consideration.

49. This is one of those three things concerning which it is said that the Prophet Abraham had told three lies in his life, whereas it should be ascertained before declaring it a lie, or anything contrary to fact, whether the Prophet Abraham at that time was not suffering from any illness, and therefore, he had made this excuse only as a pretence. If there is no proof, there is no reason why it should be regarded as a lie. For a detailed discussion, please refer to E.N. 60 of Sūrah Al-Anbiyāā' and *Rasā'il-o-Masā'il*, vol. II, pp. 35 to 39.

50. This sentence by itself shows the real state of the affairs. It appears that the people might be going to some fair of theirs. The family of the Prophet Abraham might have asked him also to accompany them. He might have excused himself, saying that he was indisposed, and therefore, could not go. Had it been something contrary to fact, the people of the house would have said : "You look perfectly normal : you are making a false excuse. But when they accepted his excuse and left him behind, it clearly shows that the Prophet Abraham must at that time be suffering from cough and cold or some other such visible illness on account of which the people of the house agreed to leave him behind.

51. This shows that there were different kinds of food placed before the idols in the temple.

52. Here the story has been told in brief. According to the details given in Sūrah Al-Anbiyāā', when they returned and found all their idols broken to pieces in the temple, they started making investigations. Some people said that a young man, called Abraham, had been talking such and such things against idol-wor-

ship. At this the multitude demanded that he should be immediately seized and brought before them. Therefore, a group of the people went running to him and brought him before the multitude.

53. The words in Sūrah Al-Anbiyāā' : 69 are to the effect : "We commanded : O fire, be cool and become safe for Abraham," and in Sūrah Al-'Ankabūt : 24, it has been said : "Then Allah saved him from the fire." This proves that those people had actually thrown the Prophet Abraham into the fire, and then Allah had rescued him from it safe and sound. The words of the verse, "They had designed a plan against him, but We defeated them in their plan," cannot be taken to mean that they had only intended to throw the Prophet Abraham into the fire but could not carry their plan into effect ; but when these words are read with the verses cited above, the meaning becomes plain that they had wanted to kill him by casting him into the fire but could not do so, and the Prophet Abraham's miraculous escape proved his superiority and the polytheists were humbled by Allah. The real object of relating this incident is to warn the people of the Quraish to this effect : "The way that you have adopted is not the way of the Prophet Abraham, whose descendants you claim yourselves to be, but his way is the one being presented by the Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings). Now, if you plot against him in order to defeat him and frustrate his mission, as the people of the Prophet Abraham had done against him, you alone will be defeated in the end, because you cannot defeat Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace).

54. The Prophet Abraham said these words on his departure after he had been delivered safe from the fire and had decided to leave the country.

55. It means this : "I am leaving my home and country for the sake of Allah, for my people have turned hostile to me only because of my turning to Him exclusively ; otherwise there was no worldly dispute between them and me because of which I might have had to leave my country. Moreover, I have no place of refuge in the world, to which I may turn. I am leaving my home with full faith and trust only in Allah : I shall go wherever He ... as me."

56. This prayer by itself shows that the Prophet Abraham at that time was childless. From the details given at other places in the Qur'ān, it becomes clear that he had left his country with only

one wife and one nephew (the Prophet Lot). Therefore, he naturally desired that Allah should bless him with a righteous child, who could be a source of comfort and consolation for him in a foreign land.

57. From this one should not understand that this good news was given him immediately following his prayer. In the Qur'an itself, at another place, this saying of the Prophet Abraham has been related: "All praise be to Allah Who has given me sons like Ishmael and Isaac in my old age." (Ibrāhīm : 39). This proves that there was an interval of many years between the prayer and this good news. The Bible says that at the birth of the Prophet Ishmael, the Prophet Abraham was 86 years old (Gen. 16 : 16) and at the birth of the Prophet Isaac a hundred years. (Gen. 21 : 5).

58. One should note that the Prophet Abraham had dreamt that he was sacrificing his son and not that he had sacrificed him. Although at that time he understood the dream to mean that he should sacrifice his son and on that very basis, he became ready to sacrifice him, with a cool mind, yet the fine point that Allah had in view in making him see the dream has been explained by Himself in verse 105 below.

59. The object of asking this of the son was not this that he would carry out Allah's Command only if he agreed, otherwise not, but the Prophet Abraham, in fact, wanted to find out how righteous, in actual reality, was his child for whom he had prayed to Allah. If the son himself was found to be ready to lay down his life for the sake of Allah's approval and pleasure, it would mean that the prayer had been fully granted, and the son was not his offspring in the natural way only but was morally and spiritually also a true son.

60. The words clearly tell that the son had not taken the dream of his Prophet father to be a mere dream but a Command from Allah. Had it not a Command actually, it was necessary that Allah should have explicitly or implicitly stated that the son of Abraham had mistaken it for a command. But the whole context is without any such allusion. On this very basis, there is the Islamic belief that the dream of the Prophets is never a mere dream it is also a kind of Revelation. Obviously, if a thing, which could become such a fundamental principle in the Divine *Shari'ah*, had not been based on reality, but had been a mere misunderstanding, it was not possible that Allah should not have refuted it. It is impossible for

the one who believes the Qur'ān to be Allah's Word, to accept that such an error and omission could emanate from Allah also.

61. That is, "The Prophet Abraham did not make his son lie flat on his back but made him lie prostrate lest while slaughtering him the sight of his face should arouse compassion and love and make him shaky. Therefore, he wanted to use the knife from under the throat."

62. One section of the grammarians says that here "and" has been used to mean "then"; thus, the sentence would be: "When the two had submitted themselves (to Allah) and Abraham had flung his son down on his brow, then We called out..." But another section of them says that here the answer to the word "when" has been omitted and left for the listener to fill; for it was better to leave such an indescribable thing to the imagination instead of expressing it in words. When Allah might have seen that the old father who had got a son after long earnest prayers, had become ready to sacrifice him only for His pleasure and approval, and the son also had become ready to get slaughtered. His infinite Mercy might have been aroused at the sight, and the Master might have felt great love for the father and son. All this can only be imagined. No words would ever describe the scene adequately.

63. That is, "We did not make you see in the dream that you had actually slaughtered your son and he had died, but that you were slaughtering him. That vision you have fulfilled. Now, it is not Our will to take the life of your child: the actual object of the vision has been fulfilled by your submission and preparation to sacrifice him for Our sake."

64. That is, "We do not subject the people who adopt the righteous way to trials in order to involve them in trouble and distress and affliction just for the sake of it, but these trials are meant to bring out their excellences and to exalt them to high ranks, and then We deliver them also safe and sound from the dilemma in which We place them for the sake of the trial. Thus, your willingness and preparation to sacrifice your son is enough to entitle you to be exalted to the rank that could be attained only by the one who would actually have slaughtered his son for Our approval and pleasure. Thus, We have saved the life of your child as well as exalted you to this high rank."

65. That is, "The object was not to get your son slaughtered

through you but to test you to see that you did not hold anything of the world dearer than Us.

66. "A great sacrifice": A ram, as mentioned in the Bible and the Islamic traditions, that Allah's angel presented at the time before the Prophet Abraham, so that he should sacrifice it instead of his son. This has been called "a great sacrifice" because it was to serve as a ransom from a faithful servant like Abraham for a patient and obedient son like Ishmael, and Allah made it a means of fulfilling the intention of an unprecedented sacrifice. Another reason for calling it "a great" sacrifice is that Allah made it a tradition till the Day of Resurrection that all the believers should offer animal sacrifice on the same date in the entire world so as to keep fresh the memory of the great and unique event signifying faithfulness and devotion."

67. Here, the question arises: Who was the son whom the Prophet Abraham had got ready to offer as a sacrifice, and who had willingly offered himself to be slaughtered as a sacrifice? The first answer to this question is given by the Bible, and it is this:

"And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: ... Take now thy son thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." (Gen. 22: 1-2).

In this statement, on the one hand, it is being said that Allah had asked for the offering of the Prophet Isaac, and on the other, that he was Abraham's only son, whereas the Bible itself, at other places, conclusively states that the Prophet Isaac was not the only son of the Prophet Abraham. Consider the following statements of the Bible:

"Now Sarai, Abram's wife bare him no children: and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar. And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the Lord hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai. And Sarai Abram's wife took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her husband Abram to be his wife. And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived." (Gen. 16: 1-4)

“And the angel of the Lord said unto her, Behold thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael.”

(16 : 11)

“And Abram was fourscore and six years old, when Hagar bare Ishmael to Abram.” (16 : 16).

“And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, I will bless her and give thee a son also of her : and thou shalt call his name Isaac which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year And Abraham took Ishmael his son and every male among the men of Abraham's house ; and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the selfsame day, as God had said unto him. And Abraham was ninety years old and nine, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.” (Gen. 17 : 15-25).

“And Abraham was an hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born unto him.” (Gen. 21 : 5).

This brings out the contradictions of the Bible. It is evident that for 14 years the Prophet Ishmael was the only son of the Prophet Abraham. Now if the offering had been asked of the only son, it was not of Isaac but of Ishmael, for he alone was the only son ; and if the offering of Isaac had been asked, it would be wrong to say that the offering of the only son had been asked.

Now let us consider the Islamic traditions, and they contain great differences. According to traditions cited by the commentators from the Companions and their immediate followers a group of them is of the opinion that the son was the Prophet Isaac, and this group contains the following names :

Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, Ḥaḍrat 'Alī, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, Ḥaḍrat 'Abbās bin 'Abdul Muṭṭalib, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, Qatādah, 'Ikrimah, Ḥasan Baṣri, Sa'īd bin Jubair, Mujāhid, Sha'bi, Masrūq, Makḥūl, Zuhri, 'Atā, Muqātil, Suddī, Ka'b Aḥbār, Zaid bin Aslam, and others.

The other group says that it was the Prophet Ishmael, and this group contains the names of the following authorities :

Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr, Ḥaḍrat 'Alī, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, Ḥaḍrat Mu'āwiyah, 'Ikrimah, Mujāhid, Yūsuf bin Maḥrān, Ḥasan Baṣri, Muḥammad bin Ka'b al-Qurzi, Sha'bi, Sa'īd bin al-Musayyab, Daḥḥāk, Muḥammad

bin 'Ali bin Ḥussain (Muḥammad al-Bāqir), Rabi' bin Anas, Ahmad bin Hanbal, and others.

When compared, the two lists will be seen to contain several common names : this is due to the reason that from the same person two different views have been reported. For example, from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, 'Ikrimah has related the saying that the son was the Prophet Isaac, but from him again 'Atā' bin Abī Rabāh relates : "The Jews claim that it was Isaac, but the Jews tell a lie." Likewise, from Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan Baṣrī, one tradition is to the effect that the Prophet Isaac was the son meant to be made the offering, but 'Umar bin 'Ubaid says that Ḥasan Basri had no doubt regarding this that the son whom the Prophet Abraham had been commanded to offer as a sacrifice was the Prophet Ishmael (peace be upon him).

This diversity of tradition has resulted in the diversity of opinion among the scholars of Islam. Some of them e.g. Ibn Jarīr and Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ, have expressed the firm opinion that the son was the Prophet Isaac. Others, like Ibn Kathīr, have given the verdict that it were the Prophet Ishmael. There was others who are uncertain and wavering, e.g. Jalāluddīn Suyūṭī. However, a deep inquiry into the question establishes the fact that the son intended to be offered as a sacrifice was the Prophet Ishmael. The following are the arguments :

(1) As stated by the Qur'ān above, at the time of his emigration from the country, the Prophet Abraham had prayed for a righteous son, and answer to it, Allah had given him the good news of a clement boy. The context shows that this prayer was made at a time when he was childless, and the boy whose good news was given was his first-born child. Then, this also becomes obvious from the Qur'ānic story that when the child grew up to boyhood, he was inspired to offer him as an offering. Now, it is established beyond any doubt that the Prophet Abraham's first-born son was the Prophet Ishmael and not the Prophet Isaac. The Qur'ān itself has stated the order between the two sons, thus : "All praise be to Allah Who has given me sons like Ishmael and Isaac in my old age." (Ibrāhīm : 39).

(2) The words used in the Qur'ān with regard to the Prophet Isaac while giving the good news of his birth are : "And they gave him the good news of the birth of a son, possessing knowledge ('alīm)." (Adh-Dhāriyāt : 28). "Do not be afraid : we give you the good news of a son, possessing knowledge." (Al-Hijr : 53).

But the son, the good news of whose birth has been given here, has been called a clement (*ḥalīm*) son. This shows that the two sons had distinctive qualities, and the offering had been asked of the clement son and not of the son possessing knowledge.

(3) Along with giving the good news of the birth of the Prophet Isaac in the Qur'ān, the good news of the birth of a grandson like Jacob was also given: "Then We gave her the good news of Isaac, and after Isaac of Jacob." (Hūd: 71). Now obviously, if about the son along with the news of whose birth the news of a worthy son to be born to him had also been given, the Prophet Abraham was shown a vision that he was sacrificing him, he would never have understood that he was being inspired to offer that very son as an offering. 'Allāma Ibn Jarir contends that the Prophet Abraham might have been shown this vision at a time when Jacob had already been born to the Prophet Isaac. But this is, in fact, a very weak reply to the argument. The Qur'ān says: "When the boy became able to work with his father," then he was shown the vision. Anyone who reads these words with an unbiased mind will have the image of an 8 to 10 years lad before him. No one can imagine that these words had been used about a young man having children.

(4) Allah, at the end of the story, says: "We gave him the good news of Isaac, a Prophet among the righteous." This clearly shows that it was not the same son, whom he had been inspired to offer as a sacrifice; but before this the good news of some other son had been given; then when he grew up and became able to work with his father, it was commanded to sacrifice him. Afterwards, when the Prophet Abraham came through this test successfully, he was given the good news of the birth of another son, the Prophet Isaac (may peace be upon him). This order of the events conclusively proves that the son whom the Prophet Abraham had been commanded to sacrifice was not Isaac but another son who had been born several years before him. 'Allāma Ibn Jarir rejects this express argument, saying that in the beginning only the good news of the birth of the Prophet Isaac had been given. Then, when he became ready to be sacrificed for the sake of Allah's approval and pleasure, it was rewarded in the form of the good news of his Prophethood. But this reply to the argument is weaker still. If it had really been so, Allah would not have said: "We gave him the good news of Isaac, a Prophet among the righteous," but "We gave him the good news that this same son of yours would be a Prophet among the righteous."

(5) Authentic traditions confirm that the horns of the ram which was slaughtered as a ransom for the Prophet Ishmael remained preserved in the Holy Ka'bah till the time of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Zubair. Afterwards when Ḥajjāj bin Yūsuf besieged Ibn Zubair in the Ka'bah and demolished the Ka'bah, the horns also were destroyed. Both Ibn 'Abbās and 'Amir Sha'bī testify that they had seen the horns in the Ka'bah. (Ibn Kathīr). This is a proof of the fact that the event of the sacrifice had taken place in Makkah and not in Syria, and concerned the Prophet Ishmael. That is why a relic of it had been preserved in the Holy Ka'bah built by the Prophets Abraham and Ishmael.

(6) The Arab traditions confirmed that this event of the sacrifice had taken place in Minā (near Makkah), and it was not only a tradition but practically also it had been a part of the Hajj rites for centuries. Even until the time of the Holy Prophet people used to offer the animal sacrifice in Minā at the place where the Prophet Abraham had offered the sacrifice. Afterwards when the Holy Prophet was raised as a Prophet, he also maintained and continued the same tradition; so that even till today sacrifices are offered in Minā on the 10th of Dhil-Ḥajj. This continual practice of 4,500 years or so is an undeniable proof of the fact that the heirs to the tradition of sacrifice made by the Prophet Abraham have been the descendents of the Prophet Ishmael and not of the Prophet Isaac. There has never been any such tradition among the descendents of the Prophet Isaac according to which the whole community might have offered the sacrifice at one and the same time and regarded it as a continuation of the sacrifice made by the Prophet Abraham.

In the face of such arguments it appears strange how the idea of the Prophet Isaac's being the son offered as the sacrifice spread among the Muslim community itself. If the Jews might have tried to attribute the honour to their ancestor, the Prophet Isaac, by depriving the Prophet Ishmael of it, it would be understandable. But the question is: How did a large number of the Muslims come to accept this wrong notion? A very satisfactory answer to this question has been given by 'Allāma Ibn Kathīr in his commentary. He says: "The reality is known to Allah alone but it appears that all the sayings (in which the Prophet Isaac has been mentioned as the son offered as a sacrifice) are related from Ka'b Aḥbār. This man, when he became a Muslim in the time of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, used to relate before him the contents of the ancient Jewish and Christian scriptures, and Ḥaḍrat 'Umar would hear them. On

(Contd. on p. 108)

الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿١٢٨﴾ فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَإِنَّهُمْ لَمُحْضَرُونَ ﴿١٢٩﴾ إِلَّا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ الْمُخْلَصِينَ ﴿١٣٠﴾ وَتَرَكْنَا
 عَلَيْهِ فِي الْآخِرِينَ ﴿١٣١﴾ سَلَامٌ عَلَىٰ آلِ يَاسِينَ ﴿١٣٢﴾ إِنَّا كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١٣٣﴾
 إِنَّهُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٣٤﴾ وَإِنْ لَوْطَا لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿١٣٥﴾ إِذْ نَجَّيْنَاهُ وَأَهْلَهُ
 أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿١٣٦﴾ إِلَّا عَجُوزًا فِي الْغَابِرِينَ ﴿١٣٧﴾ ثُمَّ دَمَرْنَا الْآخِرِينَ ﴿١٣٨﴾ وَإِنَّكُمْ لَتَمُرُّونَ
 عَلَيْهِمْ مُصْبِحِينَ ﴿١٣٩﴾ وَبِالْبَيْتِ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٤٠﴾ وَإِنْ يُؤْتَسَّرَ لِمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿١٤١﴾
 إِذْ أَبَقَ إِلَى الْفُلْكِ الْمَشْحُونِ ﴿١٤٢﴾ فَسَاهَمَ فَكَانَ مِنَ الْمُدْحَضِينَ ﴿١٤٣﴾ فَالْتَقَمَهُ
 الْحَوْتُ وَهُوَ مُلِيمٌ ﴿١٤٤﴾ فَلَوْلَا أَنَّهُ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُسَبِّحِينَ ﴿١٤٥﴾ لَلَبِثَ فِي بَطْنِهِ إِلَى
 يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ ﴿١٤٦﴾ فَنَبَذْنَاهُ بِالْعَرَاءِ وَهُوَ سَقِيمٌ ﴿١٤٧﴾ وَأَنْبَتْنَا عَلَيْهِ شَجَرَةً مِنْ
 يَقْطِينٍ ﴿١٤٨﴾ وَأَرْسَلْنَاهُ إِلَىٰ مِائَةِ أَلْفٍ أَوْ يَزِيدُونَ ﴿١٤٩﴾ فآمَنُوا فَمَتَّعْنَاهُمْ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ ﴿١٥٠﴾
 فَاسْتَفْتِهِمُ الرِّبِّكَ الْبَنَاتُ وَ لَهُمُ الْبَنُونَ ﴿١٥١﴾ أَمْ خَلَقْنَا الْمَلَائِكَةَ إِنَاثًا وَ هُمْ
 شَاهِدُونَ ﴿١٥٢﴾ أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ مِنْ أَيْكِهِمْ لَيَقُولُونَ ﴿١٥٣﴾ وَكَذَّابُوا اللَّهَ وَ إِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ ﴿١٥٤﴾
 اصْطَفَىٰ الْبَنَاتِ عَلَى الْبَنِينَ ﴿١٥٥﴾ مَا لَكُمْ تَكَيْفٌ تَحْكُمُونَ ﴿١٥٦﴾ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿١٥٧﴾ أَمْ
 لَكُمْ سُلْطَنٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿١٥٨﴾ فَاتُوا بِكُتُبِكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿١٥٩﴾ وَجَعَلُوا بَيْنَهُ وَ
 بَيْنَ الْجَنَّةِ نَسَبًا وَ لَقَدْ عَلِمْتِ الْجِنَّةُ إِنَّهُمْ لَمُحْضَرُونَ ﴿١٦٠﴾ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا
 يُصِفُونَ ﴿١٦١﴾ إِلَّا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ الْمُخْلَصِينَ ﴿١٦٢﴾ فَإِنَّكُمْ وَمَا تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿١٦٣﴾ مَا أَنْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ
 بِفِتْنِينَ ﴿١٦٤﴾ إِلَّا مَنْ هُوَ صَالِ الْجَحِيمِ ﴿١٦٥﴾ وَمَا مِنَّا إِلَّا لَهُ مَقَامٌ مَعْلُومٌ ﴿١٦٦﴾ وَ
 إِنَّا لَنَحْنُ الصَّافُونَ ﴿١٦٧﴾ وَ إِنَّا لَنَحْنُ الْمُسَبِّحُونَ ﴿١٦٨﴾ وَإِنْ كَانُوا لَيَقُولُونَ ﴿١٦٩﴾ لَوْ
 أَنَّ عِنْدَنَا ذِكْرًا مِنَ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿١٧٠﴾ لَكُنَّا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ الْمُخْلَصِينَ ﴿١٧١﴾ فَكَفَرُوا بِهِ
 فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٧٢﴾ وَ لَقَدْ سَبَقَتْ كَلِمَتُنَا لِعِبَادِنَا الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿١٧٣﴾ إِنَّهُمْ لَهُمُ

And Elias also was one of the Messengers.⁷⁰ Remember when he said to his people, "Do you not fear? Do you invoke Ba'al⁷¹ and leave the Best of Creators, that Allah Who is your Lord and Lord of all your forefathers?" But they treated him as a liar, so they will certainly be presented for punishment, except for the true servants of God,⁷² and We left good words for Elias among posterity.⁷³ Peace is upon Elias!⁷⁴ Thus do We reward the righteous. Indeed he was one of Our believing servants. 123-132

And Lot also was one of the Messengers. Remember when We rescued him and all his household, except for an old woman who was among those who remained behind.⁷⁵ Then We destroyed the others completely. Now you pass by their ruins by day and by night⁷⁶: Have you then no sense? 133-138

And indeed Jonah also was one of the Messengers.⁷⁷ Remember when he fled to the laden vessel;⁷⁸ then he took part in the casting of lots and lost. At last, the fish swallowed him, for he was blameworthy.⁷⁹ Had he not been of those who glorify⁸⁰ (Us), he would have remained in the fish's belly till the Day of Resurrection.⁸¹ At last We cast him on a bare shore in a state of sickness,⁸² and caused a creeper⁸³ to grow over him. Then We sent him to a hundred thousand people, or more⁸⁴: they believed in him and We let them live till an appointed time.⁸⁵ 139-148

Just ask the people⁸⁶ (whether it appeals to them) that their Lord should have daughters and they should have sons!⁸⁷ Have We really created the angels females and they are eye-witnesses of it? Note it well: they, in fact, invent a falsehood when they say, "Allah has children." They are utter liars. Did Allah choose daughters for Himself instead of sons? What is the matter with you? How you judge? Will you not have 149-157

sense? Or, if you have a clear authority for this, then bring your Book if you are truthful.⁸⁸

158-166

They have invented a blood-relationship between Allah and the angels,⁸⁹ whereas the angels know full well that these people will be brought up as culprits. (And they say :) "Allah is free from the things which the other people than His true servants attribute to Him. Therefore you and your gods cannot turn anyone from Allah, except him who shall burn in the blazing Fire of Hell."⁹⁰ As for ourselves, each one of us has an appointed place,⁹¹ and we are the ranged servants and the glorifiers (of Allah)."

67-173

Before this they used to say, "If we had the 'Admonition' which the earlier peoples had received, we would have been the chosen servants of Allah."⁹² But (when it did come) they denied it. Now, they will soon come to know (the consequences of this attitude). We have already promised Our servants whom We sent that they would certainly be helped, and Our army alone would be triumphant.⁹³

(Contd. from p. 105)

this basis, the other people also began to listen to him, and started relating every mixture of the truth and falsehood that they heard from him, whereas this *Ummah* did not stand in need of anything whatever from the store of his knowledge and information."

This thing is further explained by a tradition from Muhammad bin Ka'b al-Qurzi. He says that once during his presence the question whether the son offered as a sacrifice was the Prophet Isaac or the Prophet Ishmael arose before Hadrat 'Umar bin 'Abdul 'Aziz. Among them at that time was a person who had been a Jewish scholar but had become a sincere Muslim afterwards. He said, "O Commander of the Faithful! By God it was Ishmael, and the Jews know it, but claim on account of their jealousy of the Arabs that it was the Prophet Isaac." (Ibn Jarir). When the two things are put side by side, it becomes evident that actual fact it was the Jewish propaganda that spread among the Muslims have always been unbiased in literary matters, a large number of them accepted the statements of the Jews as a historic truth, which

they presented as historical traditions with reference to the ancient scriptures, and did not realize that these were based on prejudice instead of knowledge.

68. This sentence throws light on the real object for which this event of the Prophet Abraham's sacrifice has been related here. From the race of his two sons arose two great nations in the world. First, the children of Israel, from whose house two major religions (Judaism and Christianity) emerged, which dominated and won over large human populations. Second, the children of Ishmael, who were the religious leaders and guides of all the Arabs at the time of the revelation of the Qur'ān, and the tribe of Quraish of Makkah at that time held the most important position among them. Whatever eminence these two branches of the offspring of the Prophet Abraham attained became possible only on account of their connection and relation with the Prophet Abraham and his two illustrious sons; otherwise, God alone knows how many such families have arisen in the world and been assigned to oblivion. Now, Allah relates the most glorious event of the history of this family and makes both its branches realize that whatever honour and eminence they have attained in the world, has been due actually to the great traditions of God-worship and sincerity and obedience, which were set by their ancestors, the Prophets Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac (may peace be upon them all). He tells them: "The great blessings which We bestowed on them, were not bestowed arbitrarily and haphazardly: We did not just pick out a person and his two sons blindly and blessed them, but they gave definite proofs of their loyalty and faithfulness to their real Master and then became deserving of His favours. Now, you cannot become entitled to those favours merely on the basis of your pride of descent, for We shall see who among you is righteous and who is wicked and then deal with him accordingly."

69. "A great distress": the distress in which they were involved at the hands of Pharaoh and his people.

70. The Prophet Elias was from among the Israelite Prophets. He has been mentioned only twice in the Qur'ān, here and in Sūrah Al-An'ām: 85. The present-day scholars have determined his period between 875 and 850 B.C. He was an inhabitant of Gilead, which in ancient days was the territory now under the northern districts of the modern state of Jordan, to the south of the River Yarmūk. In the Bible he has been mentioned as Elijah the Tishbite. Here is briefly his life-story:

After the death of the Prophet Solomon the Israelite kingdom

was broken up into two parts due mainly to the unworthiness of his son, Rehoboam. One part which consisted of Jerusalem and southern Palestine remained with the descendents of the Prophet David, while in the second, which comprised northern Palestine, an independent state by the name of Israel was established with Samaria as its capital. Although conditions in both the states were very bad, the state of Israel, from the very beginning, followed the path of depravity due to which the evils of polytheism and idol-worship and tyranny and wickedness went on increasing and multiplying in it endlessly ; so much so that when Ahab, the king of Israel, married Jezebel, the daughter of the king of Sidon (mod., Lebanon), the mischief reached its extremity. Under the influence of this polytheistic princess Ahab himself became a polytheist. He built a temple and altar to Ba'al in Samaria, tried his very best to introduce and popularise Ba'al-worship instead of the worship of One God, and consequently, offerings began to be made publicly in the name of Ba'al in the Israelite towns and cities.

This was the time when the Prophet Elijah (peace be upon him) appeared on the scene. He came from Gilead and gave Ahab a notice that in consequence of his sins, the land of Israel would go without rain, even without the dew. This word of the Prophet of Allah proved to be literally true and there fell no rain in Israel for three and a half years. At last, Ahab came to his senses and he got the Prophet Elijah searched out. But Elijah, before praying for the rain, thought it necessary to make the distinction between Allah, Lord of the worlds, and Ba'al plain before the people of Israel. For this purpose, he commanded that the priests of Ba'al would make an offering in the name of their deity, and he also would make an offering in the name of Allah, Lord of the worlds, in front of the assembled people. Then the one whose offering would be consumed by a fire from heaven, without the agency of the human hand, the truth of his deity would be established beyond doubt. Ahab accepted this proposal. Thus, 850 of the priests of Ba'al assembled on Mt. Carmel to answer the challenge given by the Prophet Elijah. In this encounter the Ba'al worshippers were defeated, and the Prophet Elijah proved that Ba'al was a false god, and the real God is the One God alone, Who had appointed him as His Prophet. After this, Elijah got the priests of Ba'al slaughtered in front of the same assembly of the people ; then he prayed for the rain, and his prayer was immediately answered and the whole land of Israel was saturated with water.

But, despite these miracles, Ahab could not shake off the influ-

ence of his polytheistic wife. Jezebel turned hostile to the Prophet Elijah and she swore that he would be put to death just as the Ba'al worshippers had been put to death. Under the circumstances the Prophet Elijah was compelled to leave the country and he remained lodged in a cave at the foot of Mt. Sinai for several years. The lamentation that he made to Allah, on this occasion, has been related in the Bible, in these words :

"The children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away." (I Kings, 19 : 10).

About the same time Jehoram, the ruler of the Jewish state of Jerusalem, married the daughter of Ahab, the king of Israel, and under her polytheistic influence the same evils that had spread in Israel also began to spread in Judah. The Prophet Elijah carried out his prophetic duty again and wrote a letter to Jehoram, the following words of which have been reported in the Bible :

"Thus saith the Lord God of David thy father, Because thou hast not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat thy father, nor in the ways of Asa king of Judah. But hast walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and hast made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to go a whoring, like to the whoredoms of the house of Ahab, and also hast slain thy brethren of thy father's house, which were better than thyself : Behold, with a great plague will the Lord smite thy people, and thy children, and thy wives, and all thy goods : And thou shalt have great sickness by disease of thy bowels, until thy bowels fall out by reason of the sickness day by day." (2 Chronicles, 21 : 12-15).

Whatever the Prophet Elijah had prophesied in this letter proved true. First, the kingdom of Jehoram was destroyed by the external invaders, and the enemies even carried away his wives, then he himself died of the disease of the bowels.

A few years later the Prophet Elijah again went to Israel and constantly tried hard to bring Ahab, and after him his son, Ahaziah, to the right path, but the evil that had taken root in the house of the royal family of Samaria could not be eradicated. At last, due to the curse of the Prophet the family of Ahab met its doom, and then Allah recalled his Prophet from the world.

For details, see the following books of the Bible: I Kings, chs., 17, 18, 19, 21; 2 Kings, chs., 1, 2; 2 Chronicles, ch. 21.

71. Lexically, *ba'al* means master, chief and possessor. This word was also used for husband, and has been used in this sense at

several places in the Qur'ān itself, e.g. in Sūrah Al-Baqarah: 228, An-Nisā': 127, Hūd: 72 and An-Nūr: 31. However, in the ancient times the Semetic nations used it in the meaning of deity or lord; they had even given the name of Ba'al to a special god. The chief male god of the Phoenicians, in particular, was Ba'al and their chief goddess was Ashtoreth, his wife. The scholars differ as to whether Ba'al meant the sun or Jupiter, and Ashtoreth the moon or Venus. In any case, historically it is certain that Ba'al worship was prevalent from Babylon to Egypt throughout the Middle East, and the polytheistic communities of the Lebanon and Syria and Palestine, in particular, had become its devotees. When the Israelites settled in Palestine and Jordan after they came out from Egypt, they started contracting marriage and other social relations with the polytheistic nations round about them, in violation of the strict prohibitive injunctions of the Torah, the disease of idol-worship began to spread among them, too. According to the Bible, this moral and religious decline had started appearing among the Israelites soon after the death of Joshua, son of Nūn, who was the first caliph of the Prophet Moses:

"And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Ba'alim..... And they forsook the Lord, and served Ba'al and Ashtoreth." (Judges, 2: 11-13).

"And the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, Hittites, and Amonites, and Perizzites and Hivites, and Jebusites. And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods." (Judges, 3: 5-6).

At that time worship of Ba'al had so deeply affected the Israelites that, according to the Bible, in one of their habitations a public altar had been built at which offerings were made to Ba'al. A God-worshipping Israelite could not bear the sight; so he pulled down the altar one night. Next morning a great multitude of the people gathered together and demanded that the man who had cast down the altar be put to death. (Judges, 6:25-32). This evil, at last, was put an end to by Samuel, Saul and the Prophets David and Solomon (peace be upon them); they not only reformed the Israelites generally but also eradicated polytheism and idol-worship from their kingdom. But after the death of the Prophet Solomon the mischief was again revived and the Israelite state of northern Palestine was swept away in the flood of Ba'al-worship.

72. That is, "Only those people will be made an exception from the punishment, who did not believe the Prophet Elijah, and whom Allah chose from among the nation for His worship."

73. The treatment that the Israelites meted out to the Prophet

Elijah in his life has been referred to above, but after his death they became so enamoured of him that they held him in the highest esteem and reverence after the Prophet Moses. They formed the belief that Elijah (peace be upon him) had been taken up alive into heaven by a whirlwind (2 Kings, ch. 2), and that he will come back to the world again. Thus, in Malachi (O.T.) it is written :

“Behold, I will send you Elijah the Prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.” (4 : 5).

At the time the Prophets John and Jesus (peace be upon them) appeared, the Jews were awaiting the advent of these three men : the Prophet Elias, the Christ and “that Prophet” (i.e. the Holy Prophet Muḥammad). When the ministry of the Prophet John began and he started baptizing the people, the Jews sent priests to him to ask, “Are you the Christ?” And he said that he was not the Christ. Then they asked, “Are you Elijah?” And he answered that he was not Elias; then they asked, “Are you ‘that Prophet?’” And he answered that he was not “that Prophet” either. Thereupon they said, “If you are neither the Christ, nor Elias, nor that Prophet, why do you then baptize?” (John, 1 : 19-26). Afterwards when the name of the Prophet Jesus spread among the people, the Jews thought that perhaps the Prophet Elias had come. (Mark, 6 : 14-15). Even among the disciples of Jesus themselves the idea was common that Elias the Prophet would come, but Jesus removed their misunderstanding, saying, “Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatever they listed.” Then the disciples understood that he spoke to them of John the Baptist and not of Elias who had appeared eight hundred years earlier. (Matthew, 11 : 14, and 17 : 10-13).

74. The words in the original are: *Salām-un ‘alū El-yā-sīn*. Some commentators say that *El-yā-sīn* is the other name of the Prophet Elias, just as Abraham is the other name of the Prophet Ibrāhīm; some others say that different versions of the Hebrew names were prevalent among the Arabs, e.g. one and the same angel was called Mīchāl and Mīchā’il and Mīchā’in. The same has been the case with the name of the Prophet Elias also. In the Qur’ān itself the same mountain has been called Ṭūr Sīnā’ and Ṭūr Sīnīn.

75. This implies the wife of the Prophet Lot, who did not migrate with her illustrious husband, but remained behind with her people and was punished.

76. The reference is to the ruined habitations of the people of Lot by which the Quraishite merchants passed day and night during their trade journeys to Syria and Palestine.

77. This is the third place where the Prophet Jonah (peace be upon him) has been mentioned in the Qur'ān. Before this he has already been mentioned in Sūrah Yūnus and Sūrah Al-Anbiyā'. (For reference, please see Yūnus : 98 and Al-Anbiyā': 87-88 and the E.N.'s thereof).

78. The word *abaqa* in Arabic is used for the flight and escape of a slave from his master's house.

79. This is what one understands from a study of these sentences :

(1) The vessel which the Prophet Jonah boarded was already overloaded.

(2) Lots were drawn in the vessel probably at a time when during the voyage it was felt that the lives of the passengers had been endangered due to the overloading ; therefore, lots were cast to pick out a person to be thrown overboard.

(3) The lot fell on the Prophet Jonah, and so he was thrown into the sea, and a fish swallowed him.

(4) The Prophet Jonah was so afflicted because he had fled and abandoned the place of his mission without the permission of his Master (Allah Almighty). This meaning is confirmed by the word *abaqa* as has been explained in E.N. 78 above, and also by the word *multm*. *Multm* is a blameworthy person, who becomes worthy of blame by himself because of his sin and error, whether somebody else blames him for it or not. (*Ibn Jarir*).

80. It has two meanings and both are implied : (1) That the Prophet Jonah was not of the people who are heedless of God, but was of those who glorify and adore Allah constantly and perpetually; and (2) that when he went inside the fish, he turned to Allah alone and glorified Him. In Sūrah Al-Anbiyā' it has been said : "He invoked Us from the depths of the darkness, saying : 'There is no god but You : Glory be to You : I am indeed blameworthy.'" (v. 87).

81. This does not mean that the fish would have lived till Resurrection and the Prophet Jonah would have remained alive in its belly till then, but that the fish's belly would have become his grave till Resurrection. The famous commentator Qatādah has given this same meaning of this verse. (*Ibn Jarir*).

82. That is, "When the Prophet Jonah confessed his fault, and began to glorify Allah like a true and sincere believer, the fish spat him up on the beach by Allah's Command. The beach was a bare plain, without any vegetation on it, or anything to provide him shade, or any means of food."

Here, the rationalists have been heard expressing the misgiving that it is impossible for a man to come out alive from the belly of a fish. But, towards the end of the last century, an event took place near the sea-shores of England (the centre of this so-called rationalism), which belies this claim. In August, 1891, some fishermen went to the high sea to hunt whales in a ship called Star of the East. There they injured a great fish which was 20 feet long, 5 feet wide and weighed a hundred tons, but during the struggle the fish swallowed a fisherman, James Bartley, in front of the very eyes of his companions. Next day the same fish was found dead on the sea. The fishermen hauled it up on board and when they cut open its belly, James Bartley came out alive. He had remained in the fish's belly for full 60 hours. (*Urdū Digest*, February, 1964). Obviously, when such a thing is possible in normal circumstances naturally, why should it be impossible under abnormal conditions as a miracle of God?

83. The Arabic word *yaqqīn* applies to a tree which does not stand on a stem but grows and spreads like a creeper, e.g. a pumpkin, cucumber, water-melon, etc. In any case, a creeper was produced miraculously, so that its leaves should provide shade to the Prophet Jonah and its fruit should serve him both as food and as shade.

84. The mention of "a hundred thousand people or more" does not mean that Allah had any doubt about their number, but it means that a casual observer would have estimated the population to be more than a hundred thousand people in any case. Probably it was the same place which the Prophet Jonah had left and fled. After his departure when the people of the place saw the scourge approaching they believed, but this was only a kind of repentance which was accepted and the scourge averted. Now, the Prophet Jonah was again sent to them so that the people should believe in him as a Prophet and become Muslims formally. To understand this, one should keep in view verse 98 of Sūrah Yūnus.

85. Some people have taken exception to what we have written concerning this story of the Prophet Jonah in our commentary of Sūrahs Yūnus and Al-Anbiyā'. It would therefore be proper that we should reproduce here the explanations given by the other commentators in this regard.

The famous commentator Qatādah in his commentary of verse 98 of Sūrah Yūnus says: "There has been no habitation which disbelieved and might have believed after the arrival of the scourge, and then might have been left unpunished. The only exception were the people of the Prophet Jonah. When they searched for their Prophet

and did not find him, and felt that the scourge had approached near at hand, Allah put repentance in their hearts." (*Ibn Kathir*, vol. II, p. 433).

Commenting on the same verse 'Allāma Ālūsī says: "The Prophet Jonah (peace be upon him) had been sent to the people of Nineveh in the land of Mosul. They were polytheistic people. The Prophet Jonah invited them to believe in Allah, the One, and to give up idol-worship. They refused to believe and belied him. Jonah gave them the news that they would be visited by a scourge after three days and he left the place at midnight before the expiry of the three days. Then, in the day time when the scourge approached..... and the people realized that they would all perish, they began to search for the Prophet but did not find him. At last, they took their families and their cattle and came out in the desert and expressed belief and repentance..... So, Allah showed them mercy and accepted their prayer." (*Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī*, vol. XI, p. 170)

Commenting on v. 87 of Sūrah Al-Anbiyā', 'Allāma Ālūsī writes: "The Prophet Jonah's forsaking his people in anger was an act of migration, but he had not been commanded to do so." (*Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī*, vol. XVII, p. 77). Then he explains the meaning of the sentence, "*Inni kun-tu min-az-zālimīn*", of Jonah's prayer, thus: "That is, I was blameworthy in that I hastened to migrate, against the way of the Prophets, before receiving the command for it." This was, in fact, a confession of his sin and expression of repentance so that Allah might remove his affliction. (*Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī*, vol. XVII, p. 78).

Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī's note on this verse is: "He became angry with his people when they did not believe, and forsook them, and did not return to them of his own accord when the scourge had been averted, and did not await Our Command for the migration." (*Bayān al-Qur'ān*).

Maulānā Shabbīr Aḥmad 'Uthmānī writes in his note on this verse: "Vexed at the misconduct of his people he left the city in anger, did not await the Divine Command and threatened the people that they would be visited by a torment after three days..... *Inni kun-tu min az-zālimīn*: He confessed his error that he had made haste and left the habitation without awaiting Allah's Command."

Explaining these verses of Sūrah Ṣāāffāt, Imām Rāzī writes: "The Prophet Jonah's fault was that when Allah threatened to destroy the people who had belied him, he thought that the scourge would inevitably befall them. Therefore, he did not show patience and abandoned his mission and left the place, whereas he ought to have continued the work of his mission, for there was a possibility

that Allah might not destroy those people." (*Tafsīr Kabīr*, vol. VII, p. 158).

Explaining the verse *Idh abaqa.....*, 'Allāma Ālūsī writes: "Literally, *abaqa* means the escape of a slave from his master's house. Since Jonah had run away from his people without Allah's leave, the word has been rightly used about him." Then he writes: "When the third day came, the Prophet Jonah left the place without Allah's permission. Thus, when his people did not find him, they came out along with their young and old people and their cattle, and they implored Allah and begged for His forgiveness and Allah forgave them." (*Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī*, vol. XXII, p. 13).

Maulānā Shabbīr Aḥmad 'Uthmānī has explained the words *wa huwa mulīm*, thus: "The accusation against him was that he had left the city because of an error of judgement, without awaiting the Divine Command, and even specified the day for the coming of the scourge."

Then Maulānā Shabbīr Aḥmad's note on v. 48 of Sūrah Al-Qalam is: "Do not be perplexed and agitated with regard to the deniers like the Man of the Fish (i.e. the Prophet Jonah)." And about the sentence: *wa huwa makzūm* of the same verse, he writes: "That is, he was full of anger against his people, so he prayed for the torment, rather foretold it, in fretful haste."

These explanations by the commentators clearly show that there were three offences on account of which the Prophet Jonah was made to suffer Allah's displeasure: (1) That he himself fixed the day of the torment, whereas Allah had not made any declaration in this regard; (2) that he emigrated from the city even before the day came; whereas a Prophet should not leave the place of his mission until Allah commands him to do so; and (3) that he did not return to his people after the torment had been averted from them.

86. Another theme starts from here. In the preceding theme that started from v. 11, the Quraish had been put this question: "Ask them: what is more difficult: their own creation or of those things that We have created?" Now, they are being asked this second question. The object of the first question was to warn the disbelievers of their deviation because of which they regarded life-after-death and the meting out of rewards and punishments as impossible, and therefore, mocked the Holy Prophet for it. Now they are being asked this second question to warn them of their ignorance due to which they attributed children to Allah and would join anybody with Allah in any relationship they liked on mere conjecture.

87. Traditions show that, in Arabia the tribes of Quraish, Juhainah, Baṣī Salimah, Khuzā'ah, Banī Mulaiḥ, etc., held the

belief that the angels were Allah's daughters. Their this belief of ignorance has been referred to at several places in the Qur'an, e.g. in An-Nisa': 117, An-Nahl: 57-58, Banl Isra'il: 40, Az-Zukhruf: 16-19, An-Najm: 21-27.

88. That is, "There can be only two bases for regarding the angels as the daughters of Allah: Either such a thing could be said on the basis of observation, or the one who asserted it should possess a Divine book in which Allah Himself might have stated that the angels were His daughters. Now, if those who held such a belief could neither make a claim to have observed such a thing nor did they possess any divine book that might contain such a thing, there could be no greater stupidity than this that one should base one's religious belief on mere conjecture, and attribute to Allah, Lord of the worlds, such things as were patently ridiculous."

89. Though the word used is *al-jinnah* instead of *al-malā'ikah*, some major commentators have opined that here the word *jinn* has been used for *malā'ikah* in its literal sense (of hidden creation); *malā'ikah* (angels) also are, in reality, a hidden creation, and the following theme also demands that *al-jinnah* here be taken in the sense of *al-malā'ikah*.

90. Another translation of this verse can be: "Therefore, you and your this worship: on this you cannot tempt into mischief anyone except him ..." According to this second translation, the meaning would be: "O you who have gone astray, by this worship that you are performing before us, and regarding us as the children of Allah, Lord of the worlds, you cannot tempt us into mischief. By this you can only beguile a fool who might be working for his own doom. So, we refuse to fall into the trap that you have set for us."

91. That is, "Not to speak of being Allah's children, we do not have the power to exceed in any way or degree the place and position and status appointed for each of us by Allah."

92. This same thing has already been mentioned in Sūrah Fāṭir: 42 above.

93. "Allah's army": implies the believers who obey Allah's Messenger and side with him. This also includes those unseen powers by which Allah helps the followers of the truth.

This help and domination does not necessarily mean that in every age every Prophet of Allah and his followers must attain political dominance, but this dominance has many forms one of which is political rule as well. Wherever the Prophets of Allah did not attain any such dominance, they did establish their moral superiority even in those places. The nations which did not accept

(Contd. on p. 119)

الْمَنْصُورُونَ ﴿١٧٤﴾ وَإِنْ جُنَدْنَا لَهُمُ الْغَلِيْبُونَ ﴿١٧٥﴾ فَتَوَلَّ عَنْهُمْ حَتَّىٰ حِينٍ ﴿١٧٦﴾ وَ
 أَبْصِرْهُمْ فَسَوْفَ يُبْصِرُونَ ﴿١٧٧﴾ أَفَبِعَذَابِنَا يَسْتَعْجِلُونَ ﴿١٧٨﴾ فَإِذَا نَزَلَ بِسَاحِحِهِمُ فَسَاءَ
 صَبَاحُ الْمُنْذَرِينَ ﴿١٧٩﴾ وَتَوَلَّ عَنْهُمْ حَتَّىٰ حِينٍ ﴿١٨٠﴾ وَ أَبْصِرْ فَسَوْفَ يُبْصِرُونَ ﴿١٨١﴾
 سُبْحٰنَ رَبِّكَ رَبِّ الْعِزَّةِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ ﴿١٨٢﴾ وَسَلَامٌ عَلَى الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿١٨٣﴾ وَ
 الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٨٤﴾

Therefore, O Prophet, leave them for a while to themselves and watch (them); soon they will see it for themselves.⁹⁴ Are they clamouring for our torment? The day when it descends in their courtyards, will be a dreadful day for those who have been warned. So leave them alone for a while and watch; soon they will themselves see.

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Glorified is your Lord, Lord of Honour, (and free) from all that they attribute to Him, and peace on the Messengers, and all praise is only for Allah, Lord of the Universe.

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(Contd. from p. 118)

their message and adopted a way contrary to their teachings, were ultimately doomed to destruction. Whatever philosophies of error and misguidance the people invented and whatever corrupt and evil practices of life they enforced died out ultimately after they had their sway for some time. But the truths preached by the Prophets of Allah for thousands of years have been unalterable before as they are unalterable today. No one has been able to disprove them in any way.

94. That is, "It will not take long when they will see their defeat and your victory with their own eyes." This proved to be true as it had been foretold. Hardly 14 to 15 years had passed after the revelation of these verses when the pagans of Makkah witnessed the Holy Prophet enter their city as a conqueror, and then a few years later the same people saw that Islam had overwhelmed not only Arabia but the mighty empires of Rome and Iran aswell.

XXXVIII

SUĀD ۱۸

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

XXXVIII

SUĀD ص

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name from the alphabetic letter *Suād* with which it begins.

Period of Revelation

As will be explained below, according to some traditions this Sūrah was sent down in the period when the Holy Prophet had started calling the people openly to Islam in Makkah, and this had caused great alarm among the chiefs of the Quraish. If this be true, its period of revelation would be about the 4th year of the Prophethood. According to some other traditions, it was sent down after Hadrat 'Umar's embracing Islam, and this happened, as is well known, after the migration to Habash. Another chain of the traditions shows that the event which occasioned the revelation of this Sūrah took place during the last illness of Abū Ṭālib. If this

be correct, the period of its revelation would be the 10th or 11th year of the Prophethood.

Historical Background

Here is a resume of the traditions related by Imām Aḥmad, Nasā'ī, Tirmidhi, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Shaibah, Ibn Abī Hātim, Muḥammad bin Ishāq and others :

When Abū Ṭālib fell ill, and the Quraish chiefs knew that his end was near, they held consultations and decided to approach the old chief with the request that he should solve the dispute between them and his nephew. For they feared that if Abū Ṭālib died and then they subjected Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) to a harsh treatment, after his death, the Arabs would taunt them, saying, "They were afraid of the old chief as long as he lived ; now that he is dead they have started maltreating his nephew." At least 25 of the Quraish chiefs including Abū Jahl, Abū Sufyān, Umayyah bin Khalaf, 'Aṣ bin Wā'il, Aswad bin al-Muṭṭalib, 'Uqbah bin Abi Mu'ait, 'Utbah and Shaibah went to Abū Ṭālib. First, they put before him their complaints against the Holy Prophet as usual, then said, "We have come to present before you a just request and it is this : let your nephew leave us to our religion, and we shall leave him to his. He may worship whomever he may please : we shall not stand in his way in this matter; but he should not condemn our gods, and should not try to force us to give them up. Please tell him to make terms with us on this condition". Abū Ṭālib called the Holy Prophet and said, "Dear nephew, these people of your tribe have come to me with a request. They want you to agree with them on a just matter so as to put an end to your dispute with them." Then he told him about the request of the chiefs of the Quraish. The Holy Prophet replied, "Dear uncle: I shall request them to agree upon a thing which, if they accept, will enable them to conquer the whole of Arabia and subject the non-Arab world

to their domination.”¹ Hearing this the people were first confounded; they did not know how they should turn down such a proposal. Then, after they had considered the matter, they replied: “You speak of one word: we are prepared to repeat ten others like it, but please tell us what it is.” The Holy Prophet said: *Lā ilāha ill-Allāh*. At this they got up all together and left the place saying what Allah has narrated in the initial part of this Sūrah.

Ibn Sa’d in his *Ṭabaqāt* has related this event just as cited above, but, according to him, this did not happen during Abū Ṭālib’s last illness but at the time when the Holy Prophet had started preaching Islam openly, and the news of the conversion of one person or the other was being heard almost daily in Makkah. In those days the Quraish chiefs had led several deputations to Abū Ṭālib and had asked him to stop Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah’s peace and blessings) from preaching his message, and it was with one of those deputations that this conversation had taken place.

Zamakhshari, Rāzī, Nisābūrī and some other commentators say that this deputation went to Abū Ṭālib at the time when the chiefs of the Quraish had been upset at Hadrat ‘Umar’s embracing Islam; but no reference to its basis is available in any book of the traditions, nor have these commentators cited the source of their this information. However, if it be true, it is under-

1. This saying of the Holy Prophet has been reported in different words by the different reporters. But in spite of the difference in the wording, the meaning of all the reports is one and the same. He said: “If I present before you a word accepting and following which will enable you to overpower the whole of Arabia and the non-Arab adjacent countries, tell me what would be better: My word or that which you are presenting before me as an equitable thing? Just consider this: Does your well-being lie in accepting and believing in my word or in this that I should leave you in whatever state you are and should myself remain preoccupied in the worship of my God?”

standable. For the unbelieving Quraish had already been bewildered to see that the person who had arisen from among themselves with the message of Islam had no parallel in the entire tribe as regarded nobility, purity of character, wisdom and seriousness. Moreover, his right-handman and chief supporter was a man like Abū Bakr, who was well known in and around Makkah as a gentle, righteous and brilliant man. Now when they might have seen that a brave and resolute man like 'Umar also had joined them, they must have felt that the danger was growing and becoming intolerable.

Subject-Matter and Topics

The Sūrah begins with a review of the aforesaid meeting. Making the dialogue between the Holy Prophet and the disbelievers the basis, Allah says that the actual reason with those people for their denial is not any defect in the message of Islam but their own arrogance, jealousy and insistence on following the blind. They are not prepared to believe in a man from their own clan as a Prophet of God and follow him. They want to persist in the ideas of ignorance which they have found their ancestors following. And when a person exposes their this ignorance and presents the truth before them, they are alarmed and regard it as an oddity, rather as a novel and impossible thing. For them the concept of *Tauhid* and the Hereafter is not only an un-acceptable creed but also a concept which only deserves to be ridiculed and mocked.

Then, Allah, both in the initial part of the Sūrah and in its last sentences, has precisely warned the disbelievers, as if to say, "The man whom you are ridiculing today and whose guidance you reject will soon overpower you, and the time is not far when in this very city of Makkah, where you are persecuting him, he will overwhelm you completely."

Then describing nine of the Prophets, one after the

other, with greater details of the story of the Prophets David and Solomon; Allah has emphasized the point that His Law of Justice is impartial and objective, that only the right attitude of man is acceptable to Him, that He calls to account and punishes every wrongdoer whoever he be, and that He likes only those people who do not persist in wrongdoing but repent as soon as they are warned of it, and pass their life in the world keeping in mind their accountability in the Hereafter.

After this, the final end that the obedient servants and the disobedient people will meet in the Hereafter, has been depicted, and two things have been especially impressed on the disbelievers: (1) That the leaders and guides whom the ignorant people are following blindly in the world, on the way of deviation, will have reached Hell even before their followers in the Hereafter, and the two groups will be cursing each other there; and (2) that the disbelievers will be amazed to see that there is no trace whatever in Hell of the believers whom they used to regard as contemptible in the world and will themselves be involved in its torment.

In conclusion, mention has been made of the story of Adam and *Iblis* (Satan), which is meant to tell the disbelieving Quraish that the same arrogance and vanity which was preventing them from bowing before Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) had prevented *Iblis* also from bowing before Adam. *Iblis* felt jealous of the high rank God had given to Adam and became accursed when he disobeyed His Command. Likewise, "You, O people of Quraish, are feeling jealous of the high rank God has bestowed on Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) and are not prepared to obey him whom God has appointed His Messenger. Therefore, you will be doomed ultimately to the same fate as will be met by Satan."



صَ وَالْقُرْآنِ ذِي الذِّكْرِ ۚ بَلِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي عِزَّةٍ وَشِقَاقٍ ۚ كُمْ أَفَلَكُنَا
 مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِنْ قَرْنٍ فَنَادَوا وَكَلَاتَ حِينَ مَنَاصٍ ۚ وَعَجِبُوا أَنْ جَاءَهُمْ
 مُنذِرٌ مِنْهُمْ ۚ وَقَالَ الْكٰفِرُونَ هَذَا سِحْرٌ كَذَابٌ ۚ أَجَعَلَ الْإِلٰهَةَ الْهٰ
 وَاحِدَةً ۚ إِنَّ هَذَا لَشَيْءٌ عُجَابٌ ۚ وَانطَلَقَ الْمَلَأُ مِنْهُمْ أَنِ امشُوا وَاصْبِرُوا
 عَلَىٰ الْهَمِّ ۚ إِنَّ هَذَا لَشَيْءٌ يُرَادُ ۚ مَا سَمِعْنَا بِهَذَا فِي الْمِلَّةِ الْآخِرَةِ ۚ إِنْ
 هَذَا إِلَّا اخْتِلَافٌ ۚ هٰ أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْهِ الذِّكْرَ مِنْ بَيْنِنَا ۚ بَلِ هُوَ فِي شَكٍّ مِّنْ
 ذِكْرِي ۚ بَلِ لَمَّا يَدُوؤُوا عَذَابَ ۚ أَمْرٌ عِنْدَهُمْ خَزَائِنُ رَحْمَةِ رَبِّكَ الْعَزِيزِ
 الْوَقَابِ ۚ أَمْرٌ لَهُم مِّنكَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا ۚ فَلْيَرْتَقُوا فِي
 الْأَسْبَابِ ۚ جُنْدٌ مَّا هُنَالِكَ مَهْزُومٌ مِّنَ الْأَحْزَابِ ۚ كَذَّبَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ
 نُوحٍ وَعَادٌ وَفِرْعَوْنُ ذُو الْأَوْتَادِ ۚ وَثَمُودُ وَقَوْمُ لُوطٍ وَأَصْحَابُ لَيْكَةِ ۚ
 أُولَٰئِكَ الْأَحْزَابُ ۚ إِنْ كُلُّ إِلَّا كَذَّبَ الرُّسُلَ فَحَقَّ عِقَابِ ۚ وَمَا يَنْظُرُ هَؤُلَاءِ
 إِلَّا صَيْحَةً وَاحِدَةً مَّا لَهَا مِنْ فَوَاقٍ ۚ وَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا عَجِّلْ لَنَا قِطْنَا قَبْلَ

XXXVIII

SUĀD

Verses : 88

Revealed at Makkah

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

Suād.¹ By the Qur'ān which is full of admonition:² 1-3
but the people who have disbelieved, are themselves
involved in sheer arrogance and stubbornness.³ How
many a nation have We destroyed before them! (And
when their doom approached) they cried out, but that
was not the time of being saved.

These people wondered that a warner from among 4-8
themselves has come to them.⁴ The disbelievers began
to say, "He is a sorcerer,⁵ a liar! Has he made just One
God in place of all the gods? This is indeed a strange
thing!" And their chiefs went away,⁶ saying, "Go and
stand firm in the service of your gods; for this thing⁷ is
being said with a purpose.⁸ We have not heard such a
thing from anyone of the people of latter days.⁹ This is
nothing but a fabrication. Was he the only (fit) person
among us to whom Allah's Admonition should have been
sent down?"

The fact of the matter is that they doubt My 8-10
"Admonition",¹⁰ and they say this because they have
not yet tasted My punishment. Do they possess the
treasures of the mercy of your Mighty and Bounteous
Lord? Do they own the heavens and the earth and all
that is between them? If so, let them climb up to the
heights of the worldly means!¹¹

This is a small host from among the hosts, which 11-16
shall be routed here.¹² Before them did the people of
Noah and 'Ad and the Pharaoh of the stakes,¹³ and

Thamūd, and the people of Lot and those of Aiykah reject (the Messengers). Hosts were they. Each one of them treated the Messengers as liars, and justly deserved the decree of My chastisement. These people too await but a single blast after which there will be no other blast!¹⁴ And they say, "Our Lord, hasten to us our share even before the Day of Reckoning."¹⁵

1. Although like all other enigmatic letters (*muqalla'āt*) it is difficult to determine the meaning of the letter *ṣuād* also, yet the interpretation of it given by Ibn 'Abbās and Ḍahḥāk is quite plausible. According to them, it implies: *Ṣādiq-un fi qauli-hi*, or *Ṣadaqa Muḥammad-un*: Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) is Truthful: whatever he says is the very Truth.

2. The words *dhi-dh-dhikr* of the Text can have two meanings; (1) *Dhi-sharaf*: the noble Qur'ān; and (2) *dhi-at-tadhkir*: the Qur'ān which is full of admonition, or the Qur'ān which serves as a reminder, or arouses a heedless person.

3. If the interpretation given of *ṣuād* by Ibn 'Abbās and Ḍahḥāk is accepted, the sentence would mean this: "By this noble Qur'ān, or by this Qur'ān which is full of admonition, Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) is presenting the Truth, but the people who persist in their denial, are in fact, involved in arrogance and stubbornness." And if *ṣuād* is taken as one of those enigmatic letters whose meaning cannot be determined, then the answer to the oath is omitted, which is indicated by "but" and the sentence following it. The meaning then would be: "The reason for the denial of these disbelievers is not that the religion which is being presented before them is unsound, or that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) has shown some slackness in the matter of presenting the Truth before them, but their own boasting and bragging, their haughtiness and stubbornness, and this is borne out by this Qur'ān itself, which is full of admonition. Every unbiased person who studies it will admit that full justice has been done in it to the task of making the people understand the Truth."

4. That is, "They are so foolish that when a man from their own kind and from their own clan and brotherhood, whom they knew fully well, was appointed to warn them, they wondered at it, whereas it would have been strange if some other kind of creature had been sent down from heaven to warn human beings, or an utter stranger

had arisen among them suddenly and started functioning as a prophet. In that case they would have been perfectly justified to say, "What an odd thing! How can this strange creature know our conditions and feelings and requirements that he should guide us? How can we test and find out the truth about the stranger who has suddenly arisen among us and know whether he is trustworthy or not? And how can we decide whether we should or should not believe in him when we have not judged and seen his character and personality?"

5. The disbelievers used the word *sāḥir* (sorcerer, magician) for the Holy Prophet in the sense that whoever came in contact with him was so influenced by him that he would become his follower like a possessed person; he would least mind severing of his connections with others or incurring material losses; the father would give up the son and the son the father; the wife would separate from the husband and the husband from the wife; he would at once be prepared to leave his country if it was so required; he would even be ready to pass through the severest persecutions for the sake of the faith. (For further details, see *Sūrah Al-Anbiyā'*: 3 and E.N. 5 thereof).

6. The allusion is to the chiefs who got up and left Abū Ṭālib when they had heard what the Holy Prophet said.

7. "This thing": the Holy Prophet's asking them to affirm faith in "*Lā ilāha ill-Allāh*" so as to overpower both Arabia and the adjoining lands.

8. What they meant to say was this: "Muḥammad has some vested interests: He is extending this invitation to us in order to subjugate us and rule us as his subjects."

9. That is, "There have been our own elderly people in the recent past; there are Christians and Jews also living in our land and in the adjoining lands; and there are the Zoroastrians abounding in Iran and Iraq and eastern Arabia. None of them has ever preached that man should only believe in One Allah, Lord of the worlds, and in none else beside Him: no one can remain content with one God only: everyone believes in the beloved ones of Allah also: they are all paying obeisance to them, making offerings at their shrines and praying for fulfilment of their needs and requirements. From one place people get children and from another provisions of life, and from yet another whatever they pray for. The whole world believes in their powers and capabilities, and those who have bene-

fited from them tell how the needs of the people are being met and their difficulties being removed through their help and grace. Now this man is telling us a queer thing which we had never heard before. He says that none of these holy men has any share in Godhead and that Godhead wholly belongs only to Allah!"

10. In other words Allah says: "O Muḥammad, these people are not belying you but Me. As for your truthfulness, they had never doubted it before; now that they are doubting it, it is because of My Admonition; now that I have entrusted to you the Mission of admonishing them, they have started doubting the truthfulness of the very person whose righteousness and piety they used to swear by." The same theme has also been discussed above in Al-An'ām : 33 and E.N. 21 thereof.

11. This is an answer to this saying of the disbelievers: "Was he the only (fit) person among us to whom Allah's Admonition should have been sent down?" Allah says: "It is for Us to decide whom We should choose and appoint as a Prophet and whom We should not. These people do not possess any power and authority to exercise choice in this regard. If they wish to attain such an authority they should try to reach the Divine Throne in order to obtain control over the office of sovereignty of the Universe, so that revelation should come down on him whom they regard as deserving their mercy and not on him whom We regard as fit for it." This theme has occurred at several places in the Qur'ān, because the unbelieving Quraish again and again said, "How did Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) become a Prophet? Did Allah find no better man among the principal leaders of the Quraish worthy of this office?" (See Sūrah Bani Isrā'il : 100; Az-Zukhruf : 31-32).

12. "Here" implies the city of Makkah. That is, "The time is coming when these people shall be humbled and routed in the very place where they are opposing and mocking you. Then, they will be standing, with heads hung down, before the same man whom they despise and refuse to recognize as a Prophet of Allah."

13. The use of *dhil-aulād* (of the stakes) for Pharaoh is either in the sense that his kingdom was very strong as though a stake were firmly driven into the ground, or for the reason that wherever his large armies camped, pegs of the tents were seen driven into the ground on every side, or because he would torture and punish at the stakes anyone with whom he was angry; and possibly the stakes may imply the pyramids of Egypt which seem to be driven into the earth like the stakes.

14. That is, "Only a single blast of the torment will be enough to annihilate them; no other will be needed for the purpose." Another meaning of the sentence can be: "After this they will get no more relief and no more respite."

15. That is, "Allah's torment will be so severe and terrible as mentioned above, but just consider the behaviour of these foolish people: they are telling the Prophet mockingly: 'Do not put off our affairs till the Day of Reckoning with which you are threatening us, but settle our account just now: whatever punishment is to be inflicted on us should be inflicted immediately'."

يَوْمِ الْحِسَابِ ﴿١٦﴾ إِصْبِرْ عَلَى مَا يَقُولُونَ وَادْكُرْ عَبْدَنَا دَاوُدَ ذَا الْأَيْدِ إِنَّهُ
 آوَابٌ ﴿١٧﴾ إِنَّا سَخَرْنَا الْجِبَالَ مَعَهُ يُسَبِّحُنَ بِالْعَشِيِّ وَالْإِشْرَاقِ ﴿١٨﴾ وَالطَّيْرَ مَحْشُورَةً
 كُلُّ لَهَّ آوَابٌ ﴿١٩﴾ وَشَدَدْنَا مُلْكَهُ وَآتَيْنَاهُ الْحِكْمَةَ وَفَصَلَ الْخِطَابِ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَهَلْ
 آتَاكَ نَبِيُّ الْخَصْمِ إِذْ تَسَوَّرُوا الْبِحْرَابِ ﴿٢١﴾ إِذْ دَخَلُوا عَلَى دَاوُدَ فَفَزِعَ مِنْهُمْ
 قَالُوا لَا تَخَفْ خَصْمِينَ بَغَى بَعْضُنَا عَلَى بَعْضٍ فَاحْكُم بَيْنَنَا بِالْحَقِّ وَلَا
 تُشْطِطْ وَاهْدِنَا إِلَى سَوَاءِ الصِّرَاطِ ﴿٢٢﴾ إِنَّ هَذَا أَخِي لَهُ تِسْعٌ وَتِسْعُونَ نَعْمَةً
 فَرَى نَعْمَةً وَاحِدَةً فَقَالَ أَكْفِلْنِيهَا وَعَزَّنِي فِي الْخِطَابِ ﴿٢٣﴾ قَالَ لَقَدْ ظَلَمَكَ
 بِسُؤَالِ نَعَجِكَ إِلَى نِعَاجِهِ وَإِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِنَ الْخُلَطَاءِ لَيَبْغِي بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى
 بَعْضٍ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَقَلِيلٌ مَا هُمْ وَظَنَّ دَاوُدُ أَنَّمَا
 فَتْنَاهُ فَاسْتَغْفَرَ رَبَّهُ وَخَرَّ رَاكِعًا وَأَنَابَ ﴿٢٤﴾ فَغَفَرْنَا لَهُ ذَلِكَ وَإِنَّ لَهُ عِنْدَنَا
 لَزُلْفَىٰ وَحُسْنَ مَآءٍ ﴿٢٥﴾ يَدَاوُدَ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاكَ خَلِيفَةً فِي الْأَرْضِ فَاحْكُم
 بَيْنَ النَّاسِ بِالْحَقِّ وَلَا تَتَّبِعِ الْهَوَىٰ فَيُضِلَّكَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ
 الَّذِينَ يَضِلُّونَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ بِمَا نَسُوا يَوْمَ
 الْحِسَابِ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاءَ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا بَاطِلًا ذَلِكُمْ
 ظَنُّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَوَيْلٌ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنَ النَّارِ ﴿٢٧﴾ أَمْ نَجْعَلُ الَّذِينَ
 آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ كَالْمُفْسِدِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَمْ نَجْعَلُ الْمُتَّقِينَ
 كَالْفُجَّارِ ﴿٢٨﴾ كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ مُبَارَكٌ لِيَدَّبَّرُوا آيَاتِهِ وَلِيَتَذَكَّرَ
 أُولُوا الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿٢٩﴾ وَهَبْنَا لِدَاوُدَ سُلَيْمَانَ نِعَمَ الْعَبْدِ إِنَّهُ آوَابٌ ﴿٣٠﴾
 إِذْ عَرَضَ عَلَيْهِ بِالْعَشِيِّ الصُّفِينُ الْجِيَادُ ﴿٣١﴾ فَقَالَ إِنِّي أَحْبَبْتُ

O Prophet, have patience at what they utter,¹⁶ and tell them the story of Our servant David,¹⁷ who was a man of great strength.¹⁸ He turned to Allah in every matter. We had subdued for him the mountains, which joined with him in praise morning and evening. The birds would gather together: they all turned to his (hymns of) praise.¹⁹ We had strengthened his kingdom, had given him wisdom and the ability to pronounce sound judgements.²⁰ Has the story of the litigants, who had entered into his upper chamber by climbing over the wall, reached you?²¹ When they came before David, he was alarmed to see them.²² They said, "Have no fear: we are two parties in a suit, one of which has wronged the other; so decide between us rightly: do not be unjust and guide us to the right way. This is my brother:²³ he has ninety-nine ewes and I have only one ewe. He said to me, 'Give this ewe also in my charge, and he has prevailed over me in the dispute'."²⁴ David replied, "This person has certainly wronged you in demanding your ewe to be added to his ewes.²⁵ And the fact is that the people who live together often wrong one another; the only exception are those who believe and do good works, and they are few." (While he said this) David realized that We had, in fact, tried him. So he asked forgiveness of his Lord and fell down prostrate and turned (to Him).²⁶ Then We forgave him for his error, and certainly he has a place of nearness with Us and an excellent abode!²⁷ (We said:) "O David, We have made you vicegerent in the earth, so rule among the people with justice and do not follow your lust, for it will lead you astray from Allah's Way." For those who go astray from Allah's Way, there is a severe punishment because they forgot the Day of Reckoning."²⁸

We have not created the heavens and the earth and all that is between them, in vain.²⁹ This is the fancy of those who have disbelieved, and woe to such disbelievers

from the Fire of Hell. Should We treat those who believe and do good works like those who spread mischief in the earth? Should We treat the pious as the sinners?³⁰ ———This is a highly blessed Book,³¹ which We have sent down to you (O Muḥammad), so that these people may ponder over its verses and the men of understanding may learn lessons from it.

16. The allusion is to the absurd conversation of the disbelievers of Makkah, as narrated above, to the effect that the Holy Prophet was a sorcerer and a liar, and to their this objection whether he was the only fit person in the sight of Allah to be appointed as a Messenger, and to their this accusation that he had a vested interest in preaching the doctrine of *Tauḥīd* to the people and not any religious mission.

17. Another translation of this sentence can be: "Remember Our servant David." According to the first translation, it would mean: "There is a lesson in this story for these people," and according to the second: "The remembrance of this story will help you too, to have patience." As the narrative is meant to serve both purposes, comprehensive words have been used as contain both meanings. (For the story of the Prophet David, see Al-Baqarah : 251, 'Banī Isrā'īl : 55, Al-Anbiyā' : 78-81, An-Naml : 15 and the E.N.'s thereof ; and E.N.'s 14 to 16 of Sābā).

18. The words in the original are: *dhal-ayd* (possessor of the hands). The word "hand" is used metaphorically for strength and power not only in Arabic but in other languages also. When as an attribute of the Prophet David it is said that he was a "possessor of the hands", it will necessarily mean that he possessed great powers. These powers may mean the physical strength which he displayed during his combat against Goliath, military and political power by which he crushed the neighbouring idolatrous nations and established a strong Islamic empire, moral strength by which he ruled like a poor king and always feared Allah and observed the bounds set by Him, and the power of worship by virtue of which, besides his occupations in connection with rule and government and fighting in the cause of Allah, he fasted every alternate day and spent a third of the night in worship according to a tradition of Bukhārī. Imām Bukhārī in his History has related, on the authority

of Ḥaḍrat Abū ad-Dardā', that whenever the Prophet David was mentioned, the Holy Prophet used to say: "He was the greatest worshipper of God."

19. For explanation, see Sūrah Al-Anbiyā' : 79 and E.N. 71 thereof.

20. That is, "He was never ambiguous in speech but clear and forthright. Whatever problem he talked about he would lay bare its basic points, and would clearly and precisely determine the real issue under question, and would pass a decisive judgement." This quality is not attained by a person unless he is granted wisdom, understanding and mastery of language of the highest degree.

21. The object why the Prophet David has been mentioned here is to relate the story that begins from here; the object of mentioning his sterling qualities in the introduction was only to point out the high calibre of the Prophet David with whom this incident took place.

22. He was alarmed because the two men had appeared in the private quarters of the ruler of the land suddenly, by climbing over the wall, instead of going before him by the proper entrance.

23. "Brother" does not mean a real brother but a brother-in-faith and a member of one's own clan.

24. To understand what follows one should note that the complainant did not say that the other person had taken away his only ewe and added it to his own ewes, but said that he was asking for it, and since he was a powerful person he had prevailed over him in the matter and he could not reject his demand, being a weak and poor man.

25. Here, one should not doubt that the Prophet David gave his decision after hearing only what one party had to say. The fact of the matter is that when the respondent kept quiet at the complaint of the complainant and said nothing in defence it by itself amounted to a confession by him. That is why the Prophet David came to the conclusion that the facts of the case were the same as the complainant had stated.

26. There is a difference of opinion as to whether it is obligatory to perform a *sajdah* (prostration) on this occasion or not. Imām Shāfe'ī says that it is not obligatory, for this is only a Prophet's repentance; but Imām Abū Ḥanīfah has opined that prostration

here is obligatory. The traditionists have related three traditions from Ibn 'Abbās in this regard. According to 'Ikrimah, Ibn 'Abbās said: "This is not one of those verses on the recitation of which prostration is obligatory, but I have seen the Holy Prophet prostrating himself on this occasion." (Bukhārī, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhi, Nasā'i, Musnad Ahmad). The second tradition which Sa'id bin Jubair has related from Ibn 'Abbās is to the effect: "The Holy Prophet prostrated himself in Sūrah Ṣuād and said: "The Prophet David (on whom be peace) had prostrated himself in order to express his repentance and we prostrate ourselves as a token of gratitude, because his repentance was accepted. (Nasā'i) In the third tradition that Mujāhid has related from him, he says: "Allah has commanded the Holy Prophet in the Qur'ān: 'These were the ones whom Allah had shown the Right Way: therefore, you should follow their way'." (Al-An'ām : 90). Now, since David was a Prophet and he had prostrated himself on this occasion, the Holy Prophet also prostrated himself here only to follow his way. (Bukhārī). These three are the statements of Ḥaḍrat Ibn 'Abbās; and Ḥaḍrat Abū Sa'id Khudrī says: "The Holy Prophet once recited Sūrah Ṣuād in his address, and when he came to this verse, he descended from the pulpit and performed a prostration and the audience also did the same along with him. Then, on another occasion, he recited this same Sūrah and when the people heard this verse, they were ready to perform the prostration. The Holy Prophet said: 'This is the repentance of a Prophet, but I see that you have got ready to perform the prostration.'—Saying this he descended from the pulpit and prostrated himself and the people also did the same." (Abū Da'ūd). Although these traditions do not provide any absolute argument to prove that it is obligatory to perform the prostration here, yet they prove at least this that because the Holy Prophet generally performed a prostration on this occasion, it is in any case commendable to prostrate here.

Another thing that one notices in this verse is that Allah has used the words *kharra rāki an* (fell in *rukū'*) here, but all the commentators are agreed that this implies *kharra sājid-an* (fell in *sajdah*: prostration). On this very basis, Imām Abū Ḥanīfah and his companions have expressed the opinion that one may perform only a *rukū'* instead of a *sajdah*, when one recites or hears being recited a verse requiring a *sajdah* in the Prayer or outside it. For when Allah has used the word *rukū'* to imply *sajdah*, it becomes obvious that

rukū' can represent *sajdah*. Imām Khaṭṭābī, a Shāfe'ite jurist, also holds the same opinion. Though this opinion in itself is sound and reasonable, we do not find any precedent in the practices of the Holy Prophet and his Companions that they might have been content with performing a *rukū'* only instead of a *sajdah* on a verse requiring a *sajdah*. Therefore, one should act upon the view only when there is an obstruction in performing the *sajdah*; it would be wrong to make it a practice. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah and his companions themselves also did not intend that it should be made a practice; they only ruled that it was permissible.

27. This shows that the Prophet David had certainly committed an error, and it was an error which bore some resemblance with the case of the ewes. Therefore, when he gave a decision on it, he at once realized that he was being put to the test. But the nature of the error was not such as could not be forgiven, or if forgiven, it would have deposed him from his high rank. Allah Himself says: "When he fell down prostrate and repented, he was not only forgiven but his high rank in the world and the Hereafter also remained unaffected."

28. This is the warning that Allah gave the Prophet David on accepting his repentance along with giving him the good news of exalting his rank. This by itself shows that the error that he had committed contained an element of the desires of the flesh; it also pertained to the abuse of power and authority; and it was an act which was unworthy of a just and fair-minded ruler.

We are confronted with three questions here :

- (1) What was the error that the Prophet David committed?
- (2) Why has Allah made only tacit allusions to it instead of mentioning it openly and directly?
- (3) What is its relevance to the present context?

The people who have studied the Bible (the Holy Book of the Jews and Christians) are not unaware that in this Book the Prophet David has been accused clearly of committing adultery with the wife of Uriah the Hittite and then marrying her after having Uriah intentionally slain in a battle. It has also been alleged that this same woman, who had surrendered herself to the Prophet David, while being another man's wife, was the mother of the Prophet Solomon. This story is found with all its details in chapters 11 and

12 of the Second Book of Samuel in the Old Testament. It had been included in it centuries before the revelation of the Qur'ān. Any Jew or Christian who read his Holy Book anywhere in the world, or heard it read, was not only aware of this story but also believed in it as true. It spread through them, and even in the present time no book is written in the West on the history of the Israelites and the Hebrew religion, in which this charge against the Prophet David is not repeated. This well known story also contains the following :

“And the Lord sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. The rich *man* had exceeding many flocks and herds : But the poor *man* had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. . And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him. . And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, *As* the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this *thing* shall surely die: And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity. . And Nathan said to David, *Thou art* the man. Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul; And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if *that had* been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things. Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in his sight? Thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife *to be* thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon.” (2 Samuel, ch. 12 : 1-9).

When this story was so well known among the people there was no need that a detailed account of it should have been given in the Qur'ān, nor is it the way of Allah to mention such things openly in His Holy Book. That is why only tacit allusions have been made to it here as well as pointed out what the actual event was and what the people of the Book have turned it into. The actual event as one clearly understands from the aforesaid statement of the Qur'ān was this :

“The Prophet David (peace be upon him) had only expressed this desire before Uriah (or whatever be the name of the man) that he should divorce his wife; as this desire had been expressed not by a common man but by an illustrious king and a great Prophet before a member of the public, the man was finding himself constrained to yield to it even in the absence of any compulsion. On this occasion, before the man could act as the Prophet David had desired, two righteous men of the nation suddenly made their appearance before David and presented before him this matter in the form of an imaginary case. At first, the Prophet David thought it was a real case, and so gave his decision after hearing it. But as soon as he uttered the words of the decision, his conscience gave the warning that the parable precisely applied to the case between him and the person, and that the act which he was describing as an injustice had issued forth from his own person. As soon as he realized this, he fell down prostrate, repented and reversed his decision.”

The question as to how this event took the ugly shape as related in the Bible, also becomes obvious after a little consideration. It appears that the Prophet David had come to know of the unique qualities of the woman through some means and had started thinking that she should be the queen of the country instead of being the wife of an ordinary officer. Overwhelmed by the thought he expressed the desire before her husband that he should divorce her. He did not see any harm in it because it was not looked upon as anything improper among the Israelites. It was an ordinary thing among them that if a person happened to like the wife of another, he would freely request him to give her up for him. Nobody minded such a request, and often it so happened that friends would divorce their wives for each other's sake of their own accord, so that the other may marry her. However, when the Prophet David expressed this desire, he did not realize that the expression of such a desire could be without compulsion and coercion when expressed by a common man, but it could never be so when expressed by a king. When his attention was drawn to this aspect of the matter through a parable, he gave up his desire immediately, and the thing was forgotten. But afterwards when, without any desire or planning on his part, the woman's husband fell martyr on the battlefield, and he married her, the evil genius of the Jews started concocting stories and this mischievous mentality became even more acute after a

section of the Israelites turned hostile to the Prophet Solomon. (Please see E.N. 56 of An-Naml). Under these motives the story was invented that the Prophet David, God forbid, had seen Uriah's wife washing herself from the roof of his palace. He had her called to his house and committed adultery with her and she had conceived. Then he had sent Uriah on the battle-front to fight the children of Ammon, and had commanded Joab, the army commander, to appoint him in the forefront of the battle where he should be killed. And when he was killed, he married his widow, and from the same woman the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) was born. The wicked people described all these false accusations in their "Holy Book", so that they should go on reading it generation after generation and slandering the two most illustrious men of their community, who were their greatest benefactors after the Prophet Moses.

A section of the commentators of the Qur'ān has almost entirely accepted these tales that have reached them through the Israelites. They have dropped only that part of these traditions in which mention has been made of the accusation of adultery against the Prophet David and the woman's having conceived. The rest of the story as found in the traditions reproduced by them is the same as it was well known among the Israelites. Another group of the commentators has altogether denied that any such act was ever committed by the Prophet David, which bore any resemblance with the case of the ewes. Instead of this, they have put forward such interpretations of this story as are wholly baseless, unauthentic and without relevance to the context of the Qur'ān itself. But among the Muslim commentators themselves there are some who have accepted the truth and the facts of the story through the clear references made to it in the Qur'ān. Here are, for instance, some of their views :

Both Masrūq and Sa'īd bin Jubair have related this saying of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās : "The only thing that the Prophet David did was that he expressed his desire before the woman's husband that he should give up his wife for him." (*Ibn Jarīr*).

'Allāma Zamakhsharī writes in his commentary *Al-Kashshāf* : "The way Allah has narrated the story of the Prophet David indicates only this that he had only expressed his desire before the man that he should leave his wife for him."

'Allāma Abū Bakr al-Jaṣṣāṣ has expressed the opinion that the woman was not the other man's wedded wife but was only his

betrothed. The Prophet David had also asked for the same woman's hand in marriage. This earned him Allah's displeasure, for he had asked for her hand in spite of the fact that another Muslim had already asked for her hand, and the Prophet David had several wives already with him in his house. (*Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*). Some other commentators also have expressed the same opinion, but this does not entirely conform to what the Qur'ān has said. The words of the suitor as related in the Qur'ān are to the effect: "I have only one ewe; he says: Give this ewe also in my charge." The Prophet David also said the same thing in his decision: "This person has certainly wronged you in demanding your ewe to be added to his ewes." This parable could apply to the case between the Prophet David and Uriah only in case the woman was the latter's wife. Had it been the case of asking for the woman's hand when another Muslim had already asked for her hand, the parable would have been like this: "I desired to have an ewe, and this man said: leave this also for me."

Qāḍī Abū Bakr Ibn al-'Arabi has discussed this question in detail in his *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* and concluded: "What actually happened was just this that the Prophet David asked one of his men to leave his wife for him and made this demand seriously... The Qur'ān does not say that the man gave up his wife on this demand and the Prophet David then married her and the Prophet Solomon was born of her womb.. What displeased Allah was that he asked the woman's husband to leave her for him. This act, even if otherwise lawful, was unworthy of the office of Prophethood; that is why he earned Allah's displeasure and was admonished."

This commentary fits in well with the context in which this story has been told. A little consideration of the context shows that it has been related in the Qur'ān on this occasion for two objects. The first object is to exhort the Holy Prophet to patience, and for this purpose he has been addressed and told: "Have patience on what these people say against you, and remember Our servant David." That is, "You are being accused only of sorcery and lying, but Our servant David was even accused of adultery and having a person killed wilfully, by the wicked people; therefore, bear up against what you may have to hear from these people." The other object is to warn the disbelievers to the effect: "You are committing all sorts of excesses in the world with impunity, but the God in Whose Godhead you are committing these misdeeds does not spare anyone from being called to account. Even if a favourite and

beloved servant of His happens to commit but a minor error, He calls him to strict accountability. For this very object the Holy Prophet has been asked: 'Tell them the story of Our servant David, who was a man of high character, but when he happened to commit sin, We did not even spare him but condemned him severely'."

In this regard, there is another misunderstanding which must also be removed. The suitor in his parable said that his brother had 99 ewes and he had only one ewe, which he was demanding from him. From this one gets the idea that perhaps the Prophet David had 99 wives, and by having another he wanted to make their number 100. But, in fact, it is not necessary that every minor part of the parable should be literally applicable to the case between the Prophet David and Uriah the Hittite. In common idiom the numbers ten, twenty, fifty, etc. are mentioned to express plurality and not to indicate the exact number of something. When a man tells another that he has told him something ten times over, he only means to stress that he has been told that thing over and over again. The same is also true here. By means of the parable the suitor wanted the Prophet David to realize that he already had several wives with him, and even then he desired to have the only wife of the other man. This same thing has been cited by the commentator Nisābūrī from Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan Baṣri: "The Prophet David did not have 99 wives: this is only a parable." (For a detailed and well-reasoned discussion of this story, see our book *Tafshimāt*, vol. II, pp. 29-44).

29. That is, "We have not created anything in the world merely in sport and fun so that it may be without any wisdom and purpose and justice, and there may accrue no result from any act, good or bad." This is the conclusion of the preceding discourse as well as an introduction to the following theme. The object of this statement as a conclusion to the discourse is to impress the following truth: "Man has not been left to wander about at will in the world, nor is this world a lawless kingdom that one may do here whatever one likes with impunity." As an introduction to the following theme, the sentence is meant to say: "The person who does not believe in the meting out of the rewards and punishments, and thinks that both the good and the evil people will ultimately end up in the dust after death and that nobody will be called to account, nor will anyone be rewarded for good or punished for evil, in fact, regards the

world as a plaything and its Creator a senseless player, and thinks that by creating the world and man in it, the Creator of the Universe has committed a useless thing. The same thing has been stated in different ways at several places in the Qur'ān, e.g. "Did you think that We created you without any purpose, and that you would never be brought back to Us?" (Al-Mu'minūn : 115)

"We have not created the heavens and the earth and whatever lies between them merely in sport: We have created them with the truth, but most of them do not know. For the resurrection of them all the appointed time is the Day of Decision." (Ad-Dukhān : 38-40).

30. That is, "Do you think it is reasonable and fair that both the pious and the wicked should be treated alike in the end? Do you regard this concept as satisfying that the pious man should not get any reward for his piety and the wrongdoer should not receive any punishment for his sins? Obviously, if there is to be no Hereafter, and there is to be no accountability and no rewards and no punishments for human acts, it negates both Allah's wisdom and His justice, and the entire order of the Universe becomes a blind order. On this assumption there remains no motive for doing good and no deterrent against evil. God forbid, if the Godhead of God should be such a lawless kingdom, the one who leads a pious life in the face of all kinds of hardships in the world and endeavours to reform the people, would be a foolish person, and the one who gains benefits by committing all kinds of excess and enjoys sinful pleasures of life, would be a wise man."

31. The Qur'ān has been called a blessed Book in the sense that it is highly useful for man: it gives him the best guidance to improve and reform his life: by following it he has only to gain and nothing to lose.

حُبِّ الْخَيْرِ عَنْ ذِكْرِ رَبِّي حَتَّى تَوَارَتْ بِالْحِجَابِ ^{١١} رُدُّوهَا
 عَلَيَّ فَطَفِقَ مَسْحًا بِالسُّوقِ وَالْأَعْنَاقِ ^{١٢} وَلَقَدْ فَتَنَّا سُلَيْمَانَ وَالْقَيْنَانَ
 عَلَى كُرْسِيِّهِ جَسَدًا ثُمَّ أَنَابَ ^{١٣} قَالَ رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي وَهَبْ لِي مُلْكًا لَا يَنْبَغِي
 لِأَحَدٍ مِّنْ بَعْدِي إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْوَاقِبُ ^{١٤} فَسَخَّرْنَا لَهُ الرِّيحَ تَجْرِي بِأَمْرِهِ
 رُجَاءً حَيْثُ أَصَابَ ^{١٥} وَالشَّيْطَانَ كُلَّ بَنَاءٍ وَغَوَاصٍ ^{١٦} وَآخَرِينَ مُقَرَّنِينَ
 فِي الْأَصْفَادِ ^{١٧} هَذَا عَطَاؤُنَا فَامْنُنْ أَوْ أَمْسِكْ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ^{١٨} وَإِنَّ لَهُ عِنْدَنَا
 لَزُلْفَىٰ وَحُسْنَ مَّآبٍ ^{١٩} وَادْكُرْ عَبْدَنَا أَيُّوبَ إِذْ نَادَىٰ رَبَّهُ أَنِّي مَسَّنِيَ الشَّيْطَانُ
 بِنُصْبٍ وَعَذَابٍ ^{٢٠} أَرْكُضْ بِرَجْلِكَ هَذَا مَغْسَلٌ بَارِدٌ وَشَرَابٌ ^{٢١} وَهَبْنَا لَهُ
 أُمَّةً وَمِثْلَهُمْ مَعَهُمْ رَحْمَةً مِنَّا وَذَكَرَىٰ لِأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ ^{٢٢} وَخُذْ بِيَدِكَ
 ضِغْتًا فاضرب به وَلَا تُحْنَفْ إِنَّا وَجَدْنَاهُ صَابِرًا نِّعْمَ الْعَبْدُ إِنَّهُ أَوَّابٌ ^{٢٣}
 وَادْكُرْ عَبْدَنَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَاسْحَقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ أُولِي الْأَيْدِي وَالْأَبْصَارِ ^{٢٤} إِنَّا
 أَخْلَصْنَاهُمْ بِخَالِصَةٍ ذِكْرَى الدَّارِ ^{٢٥} وَإِنَّهُمْ عِنْدَنَا لَمِنَ الْمُصْطَفِينَ الْآخِيَارِ ^{٢٦}
 وَأَذْكُرْ إِسْمَاعِيلَ وَالْيَسَعَ وَذَا الْكِفْلِ وَكُلٌّ مِّنَ الْآخِيَارِ ^{٢٧} هَذَا ذِكْرٌ وَإِنَّ
 لِلْمُتَّقِينَ لَحُسْنَ مَّآبٍ ^{٢٨} جَنَّاتٍ عَدْنٍ مُّفْتَحَةٌ لَهُمْ أَبْوَابُ ^{٢٩} مُتَّكِينَ فِيهَا
 يَدْعُونَ فِيهَا بِفَاكِهِةٍ كَثِيرَةٍ وَشَرَابٍ ^{٣٠} وَعِنْدَهُمْ قَصِرَتُ الظُّرُفِ أَثْرَابٌ ^{٣١}
 هَذَا مَا تُوْعَدُونَ لِيَوْمِ الْحِسَابِ ^{٣٢} إِنَّ هَذَا لَرِزْقُنَا مَا لَهُ مِنْ نَّفَادٍ ^{٣٣} هَذَا
 وَإِنَّ لِلطَّاغِينَ لَشَرَّ مَّآبٍ ^{٣٤} جَهَنَّمَ يَصْلَوْنَهَا فَبِئْسَ الْمِهَادُ ^{٣٥} هَذَا فَلْيَذوقوه
 حَمِيمٌ وَغَسَّاقٌ ^{٣٦} وَآخَرِينَ مِنْ شَكْلِهِ أَزْوَاجٌ ^{٣٧} هَذَا فَوْجٌ مُّقْتَحِمٌ مَّعَكُمْ لَا
 مَرْحَبًا بِهِمْ إِنَّهُمْ صَالُوا النَّارِ ^{٣٨} قَالُوا بَلْ أَنْتُمْ لَأَمْشِكُونَ قَدِّمُوا

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And to David We gave (a son like) Solomon,³² an excellent servant, who turned to his Lord over and over again. Worthy of mention is the occasion when, one evening, well-bred horses were presented before him,³³ and he said, "I have adopted the love of this wealth³⁴ because of the remembrance of my Lord." So, when the horses disappeared from sight, (he commanded:) "Bring them back to me." Then he began to stroke their shanks and necks.³⁵ And (note that) We put Solomon too to the test and placed a mere body on his throne. Then he turned (to Allah), and said, "My Lord, forgive me and grant me a kingdom as may belong to no one else after me. Indeed, Thou art the real Giver."³⁶ So, We subdued to him the wind, which blew gently at his bidding wherever he directed it;³⁷ and We subjected to him the satans: all kinds of builders and divers and others who were bound in chains.³⁸ (We said to him:) "This is Our gift: you may give to whomsoever you will and withhold from whomsoever you will, without reckoning."³⁹ Surely, he has a place of nearness to Us and an excellent resort.⁴⁰ 30-40

And make mention of Our servant Job⁴¹ when he called upon his Lord, (saying), "Satan has afflicted me with great distress and torment."⁴² (We commanded him:) "Stamp your foot on the ground: this is cool water for washing and drinking."⁴³ We restored to him his family and as many more with them,⁴⁴ as a mercy from Ourselves, and an admonition for the men of understanding.⁴⁵ (And We said to him:) "Take a handful of straw and strike therewith: do not break your oath."⁴⁶ We found him patient, an excellent servant, who turned to his Lord over and over again.⁴⁷ 41-44

And make mention of Our servants, Abraham and Isaaq and Jacob: they were men of great power and insight.⁴⁸ We had chosen them because of a pure quality —the remembrance of the abode of the Hereafter.⁴⁹ 45-48

Indeed, they are, in Our sight, included among the chosen, the righteous. And make mention of Ishmael and Elisha⁵⁰ and Dhul-Kifl:⁵¹ they were all of the righteous.

49-54 This was an admonition. (Now listen:) for the righteous there is indeed an excellent resort: everlasting Gardens whose gates shall remain open to them.⁵² Therein they shall be reclining, calling for plentiful of fruit and drink, and beside them there will be modest wives of equal age.⁵³ These are the things which you are being promised for the Day of Reckoning. This is Our provision: it will never come to an end.

55-60 This is (the recompense) for the righteous. And for the rebellious, there is a most evil home—Hell in which they will burn, the worst abode! This is for them: so let them taste boiling water and pus-blood⁵⁴ and other things of the same sort. (When they see their followers coming towards Hell, they will say to one another:) "This is a host coming in to you: there is no welcome for them: they will burn in the Fire." They will reply, "Nay, but you yourselves are burning: there is no welcome for you (either): it is you who have brought us to this end. What an evil resting-place!"

32. The Prophet Solomon has been mentioned already at the following places: Al-Baqarah: 102, Bani Isrā'il: 5, Al-Anbiyā': 78-82, An-Naml: 15-44, Sabā: 12-14.

33. The words *aṣ-ṣāfināt-ul-jiyād* in the original imply the horses, which are very calm and quiet when they stand, and very fast-moving when they run.

34. The Arabic word *khair* in the Text is used for abundance of wealth as well as for horses metaphorically. As the Prophet Solomon had kept these horses for fighting in the way of Allah, he called them "*khair*".

35. There is a difference of opinion among the commentators about the translation and commentary of these verses.

One section of them interprets them as follows :

The Prophet Solomon became so absorbed in reviewing the horses and watching their races, that he forgot to offer his 'Aṣr Prayer, or according to some others, to perform certain devotions that he used to perform before the sunset. Then when the sun went down, he commanded that the horses be brought back, and when they came back, the Prophet Solomon started slashing them with the sword, or in other words, slaughtering them as a sacrifice to Allah, because they had caused him to become heedless of the remembrance of Allah. Accordingly, the verses have been translated thus : "And he said: I so preferred the love of this wealth that I became heedless of the remembrance (the 'Aṣr Prayer, or the special devotions) of my Lord till (the sun) went down (behind the veil of the west). (Then he commanded :) bring them back, (and when the horses came back) he began to stroke their shanks and necks (with the sword)."

Although this commentary has been given by some major commentators, it is not plausible for the reason that in this the commentator has to add three things from himself, which have no basis whatever. In the first place, he has to assume that the Prophet Solomon's 'Aṣr Prayer was lost in the occupation, or some special devotions that he used to perform at that time, whereas the words of the Qur'ān are only to the effect : "I so preferred this wealth that I became heedless of the remembrance of my Lord." In these there is no ground for taking any word for the 'Aṣr Prayer or the special devotions. Secondly, he also assumes that the sun set, whereas there is no mention of the sun whatever. On the contrary, when one reads the words *ḥattā tawārat bil-ḥijāb* (when they disappeared from sight) one's mind automatically turns to *aṣ-ṣāfināt-ul-jiyād* (well-bred horses) which have been mentioned in the preceding verse. Thirdly, he also has to assume that the Prophet Solomon did not simply stroke the shins and necks of the horses with the hand but stroked them with the sword, whereas the Qur'ān does not contain the words *mashan-bis-saif* or any other pointer from which stroking may be taken to mean stroking with the sword. We have a fundamental difference with this kind of the commentary. In our opinion, only in four cases it would be right to interpret the words of the Qur'ān in other than their normally accepted meaning: (1) Either there should be a pointer to it in the words of the Qur'ān itself; or (2) there should be an allusion to it at some other place in the Qur'ān; or (3) an explanation of it should be afforded by some authentic *Ḥadīth*; or (4)

it should have some other reliable source, e.g., if it pertains to history, there should be ~~an~~ historical evidence to support it; if it pertains to the manifestations of the universe, there should be authentic scientific knowledge to substantiate it; and if it pertains to the *Shari'ah* values, the sources of Islamic law should explain it. In the absence of any of these, we do not think it is right to invent a story on the basis of one's own imagination and add it to the words of the Qur'ān.

One section of the commentators has differed a little from the above translation and commentary. They say that the pronoun in both *hattā tawārat bil-hijāb* and *ruddū-hā 'allayya* turns only to the sun. That is, when the 'Aṣr Prayer was lost and the sun went down behind the veil of the west, the Prophet Solomon said to the workers of destiny: "Turn the sun back so that the 'Aṣr time comes back for me to offer the Prayer." So, the sun retreated and he performed his Prayer. But this commentary is even more un-acceptable than the previously mentioned one not because Allah is powerless to bring the sun back, but because Allah has made no mention of it anywhere. On the contrary, if such a wonderful miracle had actually been worked for the sake of the Prophet Solomon, it would certainly be worthy of mention. Moreover, if the extraordinary event of the returning of the sun after having set had actually taken place, the history of the world would never be without it. In support of this commentary these commentators present some *Hadiths* also in order to prove that the returning of the sun after having set is not a rare event that happened only once, but it has happened several times. There is the mention of bringing the sun back in connection with the Holy Prophet's Ascension (*mi'rāj*); the sun was also brought back on the occasion of the Battle of the Trench for the Holy Prophet, and also for Ḥaḍrat 'Ali, when the Holy Prophet was sleeping with his head in Ḥaḍrat Ali's lap and his 'Aṣr Prayer was lost: then the Holy Prophet had prayed for the return of the sun and it had returned. But the reasoning from these traditions is even weaker than the commentary in support of which they have been presented. Ibn Taimiyyah has proved as fabricated the tradition about Ḥaḍrat 'Ali after a detailed discussion of its chains and transmitters. Imām Aḥmad says it has no basis, and Ibn Jauzī says that it is without any doubt a forged tradition. The tradition of the sun's being brought back on the occasion of the Battle of the Trench also is weak according to some traditionists and fabricated according to

others. As far as the tradition regarding the event of the Ascension is concerned, the truth about it is that when the Holy Prophet was describing what had happened in the Night of Ascension, before the disbelievers of Makkah, they asked for a proof of it. The Holy Prophet replied that on the way from Jerusalem he had seen a caravan at such and such a place, which had met with such and such an accident. When asked as to when that caravan would reach Makkah, the Holy Prophet named the day. When the day came, the people of the Quraish waited for the caravan all day till the sun began to set. On this occasion the Holy Prophet prayed that the sun should not set till the caravan had arrived. So, the caravan actually arrived before the sunset. Some reporters even have stated that the day on that occasion had been enhanced by an hour, and the sun had stood still for that long. The question is: Are such traditions sufficient evidence for the proof of such an extraordinary event? As we have said above, the returning of the sun, or its standing still for an hour, is no ordinary event. Had such an event actually taken place, it would have become well known the world over. Its mention and narration could not remain restricted to only a few reporters.

The third section of the commentators interprets these verses as any un-biased person would interpret them from these words. According to this commentary, what actually happened was this: When a squadron of fine, well-bred horses was presented before the Prophet Solomon, he said: "I love this wealth not for the sake of personal glory or desire but for the cause of raising the Word of my Lord." Then he ordered that the horses run a race, and they disappeared from sight. Then he ordered that they be brought back, and when they were brought back, according to Ibn 'Abbās: "He started passing his hand on their necks and shanks with love." This same commentary is correct in our opinion, because it corresponds to the words of the Qur'ān, and for the sake of the full meaning, nothing needs to be added to it, which may neither be in the Qur'ān, nor in any authentic *Hadith*, nor in the Israelite history.

Besides, one should also note that Allah has narrated this event immediately after using epithets like *ni'm al-'abd*, *inna-hū awwāb* (an excellent servant, who turned to His Lord over and over again) for the Prophet Solomon. This clearly shows that the object is to relate this message: Behold, what a good servant of Ours he was! He loved the means of kingly pomp and glory not for the sake of the

world but for Our sake! After watching and reviewing his grand cavalry he did not boast of his power and grandeur like the worldly rulers but even at that time he remembered only Us.

36. In view of the context, the real object here is to relate this event; the preceding verses are an introduction to it. Just as above this, first the Prophet David was praised, then the event narrated by which he was put to temptation, then it was said that Allah Almighty does not spare even such a beloved servant from accountability, then about his noble nature it was said that as soon as he was warned of the temptation, he repented and bowed before Allah and withheld himself from the act, so also here the sequence is like this: First, the Prophet Solomon's high rank and his deep sense of devotion has been mentioned, then it is said that he also was put to the test, then it has been stated that when a mere body was placed on his throne, he immediately felt warned on his error, and pleading the forgiveness of his Lord, withdrew from the act, because of which he was involved in the temptation. In other words, Allah by means of these two stories wants to impress two things upon the reader simultaneously: (1) Not to speak of the common men, even high-ranking Prophets were not spared from His strict accountability; and (2) the right attitude for man is not to brag and feel proud after committing an error, but to bow down humbly before his Lord as soon as he realizes his sin. It was the result of this attitude that Allah not only forgave the mistakes of those illustrious men but blessed them with still more favours and kindness.

Here, the question again arises as to what was the temptation in which the Prophet Solomon was involved; what is the meaning of placing a mere body on his throne, and what was the nature of the warning on the occurrence of which he repented? In reply to this the commentators have adopted four different points of view:

One section of them has related a long story whose details are disputed, but their resume is this: The error committed by the Prophet Solomon was either this that one of his wives continued to worship the idols in the palace for forty days and he remained unaware of it, or that he remained confined to his residence for a few days and did not attend to redressing of the oppressed people's grievances. For this he was punished as follows: A satan somehow made away with his ring by which he ruled over the jinns, men and wind. As soon as he lost the ring he was deprived of his powers and he remained wandering

from place to place for forty days ; in the interval the satan continued to rule in the guise of Solomon. The placing of a mere body on Solomon's throne implied this very satan, who had sat on his throne. Some people have gone to the extent to say that during that period even the chastity of the women in the royal household did not remain safe from the satan. At last from his conduct the ministers and the chiefs and the scholars of the court began to doubt that he was not Solomon. Therefore, when they opened the Torah before him, he fled. On the way the ring fell from his hand in the sea, or he cast it into the sea himself, and a fish swallowed it. Then, somehow the Prophet Solomon came by the fish. When in order to cook it, he cut open its belly he found his ring in it. Then, no sooner did he get the ring than the jinns and men presented themselves humbly before him. — This whole story, from the beginning to the end, is nonsensical and absurd, which the converts from among the Jews and Christians took from the Talmud and other Israelite traditions and spread it among the Muslims. It is strange that some of our well known scholars took these traditions as authentic and cited them as the explanation of the allusions of the Qur'ān, whereas neither is there any truth in Solomon's ring, nor could his glorious works be attributed to any ring, nor had the satans been given the power that they might disguise themselves as Prophets and mislead the people, nor can it be imagined about Allah that He would punish a Prophet for an error in such a manner as to enable a satan to corrupt and destroy a whole community, disguised as a prophet. The Qur'ān itself repudiates this commentary. In the verses that follow Allah says : When Solomon met with the trial, and he asked Our forgiveness for it, then We subdued the wind and the satans to him. But, on the contrary, according to the above commentary, the satans were already under his control by virtue of the ring. It is strange that the scholars who have made this commentary did not care to consider what the subsequent verses say.

The second section of them says that a son was born to the Prophet Solomon after twenty years. The satans feared that if he became king after Solomon, they would continue to remain slaves as they were under him. Therefore, they plotted to kill him. When Solomon came to know of this plot, he hid the child in the clouds so that he was brought up there. This was the temptation in which he was involved : he placed reliance on the protection of the clouds instead of having trust in Allah. For this he was punished in this way that

the child died and fell on his throne as a mere body..... This tale also is baseless and is expressly against the Qur'ān, for in this also it has been assumed that the winds and satans were already under the Prophet Solomon's control, whereas the Qur'ān in clear words has stated their subjection to be an event that took place after the trial.

The third section says that the Prophet Solomon one day swore that he would go in to his 70 wives that night, and from each a warrior would be born, who would fight in the cause of Allah, but while he said this he did not say : *In shā'-Allah* : if Allah so wills. Consequently, only one wife conceived and from her also a defective child was born, whom the midwife brought and placed on his throne. This *Hadith* has been reported by Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah from the Holy Prophet and it has been related by Bukhārī and Muslim and other traditionists in several ways. In Bukhārī itself this tradition has been related at different places in different ways. At one place the number of the wives has been stated as 60 and at others 70 or 90 or 99 or 100. As far as the chains of the transmitters are concerned, most of the traditions have strong chains, and their authenticity cannot be disputed from the point of view of the principles of reporting. But the subject-matter of the *Hadith* is patently against reason, and proclaims aloud that such a thing could not have been said by the Holy Prophet, as reported. But, on the contrary, he might have probably mentioned it as an example of the foolish and nonsensical tale-telling of the Jews, and the hearer might have misunderstood that the Holy Prophet himself had stated it as an event. To force the people to accept such traditions only on the strength of their chains of transmitters would be making religion a matter of mockery and jest. Everyone can calculate for himself that even in the longest night of winter the interval between the 'Ishā' and the Fajr Prayers cannot be of more than ten to eleven hours. If the minimum number of the wives be 60, it would mean that the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) went on having intercourse with them continuously for 10 to 11 hours that night at the rate of six wives per hour, without having a moment's rest. Is it practically possible ? And can it be expected that the Holy Prophet might have related it as an event ? Then in the *Hadith* nowhere has it been said that the body that had been placed on Solomon's throne, as stated in the Qur'ān, implied the malformed child. Therefore, it cannot be claimed that the Holy Prophet had narrated this event as a commentary of this verse. Furthermore, though it is understandable why the Prophet Solomon

asked for Allah's forgiveness on the birth of the child, one fails to understand why, along with the prayer for forgiveness, he prayed: "My Lord, grant me a kingdom as may belong to no one else after me."

Another commentary which Imām Rāzī has preferred is this: The Prophet Solomon was afflicted with a serious disease, or on account of an impending danger his body had been reduced to a mere skeleton. But this commentary also does not conform to the words of the Qur'ān. The Qur'ān says: "We put Solomon to the test and placed a mere body on his throne. Then he turned (to Allah)." From these words no one can understand that the mere body implied the body of the Prophet Solomon himself. They clearly show that putting to the test implied some error that he happened to commit. On this, the way he was given the warning was that a mere body was placed on his throne, and when he realized his error he turned to Allah.

As a matter of fact, this is one of the most difficult places of the Qur'ān, and we do not find any indisputable ground for giving a definite and absolute commentary of it. But if the words of the Prophet Solomon's prayer: "My Lord, forgive me, and grant me a kingdom as may belong to no one else after me," are read in the light of the Israelite history, it appears that probably he cherished in his heart the desire that his son should succeed him on the throne so that His kingdom and sovereignty should continue in his own race after him. This same thing has been called a "temptation" for him by Allah, and he realized this when his heir Rehoboam grew up into an unworthy young man, whose ugly manners clearly foretold that he would not be able to sustain the mighty kingdom of the Prophets David and Solomon (peace be upon them) even for a few days. "Placing a mere body on his throne" probably means that the son whom he wanted to succeed him on the throne, was an unworthy person. Therefore, he restrained his desire, asked for Allah's forgiveness and prayed that the kingdom should end with him, and he would curb his desire to have it continued in his dynasty. The Israelite history also shows the same thing. The Prophet Solomon did not make any will about his successor, nor made it binding for the people to obey a particular person. After him his ministers put Rehoboam on the throne, but not long afterwards ten tribes of Israel took northern Palestine and broke away, and only the tribe of Judah remained loyal to the throne of Jerusalem.

37. For explanation, see Sūrah Al-Anbiyā' : 81 and E.N. 74 thereof. However, there is one thing which requires further explanation here. In Sūrah Al-Anbiyā' where mention has been made of subjecting the wind for the Prophet Solomon, it has been described as "the strongly blowing wind," but here "which blew gently at his bidding". This means that the wind in itself was strong and violent as is needed for moving the sailing-ships but it had been made gentle for the Prophet Solomon in the sense that it blew whither-so-ever he wanted it to blow for his commercial fleets.

38. For explanation, see Al-Anbiyā' : 82, An-Naml ; 17, 39 and the E.N.'s thereof. "The satans" imply the jinns, and "the satans bound in chains" imply the serving satans, who were fettered and imprisoned as a punishment for making mischief. It is not necessary that the fetters and chains in which those satans were bound might be made of iron and they might appear as bound in them like the human prisoners. In any case, they were imprisoned in a manner that they could neither escape nor were able to commit further mischief.

39. This verse can have three meanings: (1) "This is Our unlimited gift : you have the authority to give of it freely to whomsoever you like and keep it from whomsoever you like;" (2) "this is Our gift : you may give of it to whomsoever you like and keep it from whomsoever you like : you will not be called to account for giving it or keeping it from the people;" and (3) Another meaning of it given by some commentators is : "The satans have been placed entirely under your control : you may set free whomsoever you like and restrain whomsoever you like : you will not be held accountable for this."

40. Here, the object is to tell that just as a servant's arrogance causes Allah's displeasure and wrath, so does his humility earn Allah's pleasure and approval for him. If a servant commits an error and becomes even more arrogant when warned, he is led to the same fate as is being mentioned in connection with the story of Adam and Satan below. Contrary to this, if a servant happens to commit an error and he repents and bows down before his Lord humbly, he is blessed with such bounties as the Prophets David and Solomon were blessed with. The prayer that Solomon had made after seeking Allah's forgiveness, was literally fulfilled and Allah actually granted him a kingdom as had neither been granted to

anyone before him nor bestowed on anyone after him. Having control over the winds and the jinns is an extraordinary power, which has been granted only to the Prophet Solomon and to none else in human history.

41. This is the fourth place in the Qur'ān where the Prophet Job has been mentioned. Before this he has been mentioned in An-Nisā : 163, Al-An'ām : 84 and Al-Anbiyā' : 83-84 above. For the details about him, please see E.N.'s 76 to 79 of Surah Al-Anbiyā'.

42. This does not mean that Satan has afflicted me with illness and brought distress upon me, but it means this : "The affliction of the severities of illness, the loss of property and wealth, and the desertion of the near and dear ones, is not so great a torment and trouble for me as the temptation of Satan, who is exploiting my this condition to despair me of my Lord and wants that I should turn ungrateful to Him and become desperate and impatient." This meaning of the lamentation of the Prophet Job is preferable for two reasons : (1) According to the Qur'ān, Allah has granted Satan only the power of temptation : He has not given him the power to afflict with illness the worshippers of Allah and compel them to deviate from the way of service and obedience by causing them physical ailments. (2) In Sūrah Al-Anbiyā' when the Prophet Job puts before Allah his complaint about illness and disease, he does not mention Satan at all, but says only this : "I have been afflicted with the disease and You are most Merciful."

43. That is, "As soon as he stamped his foot on the ground, a spring gushed forth by Allah's Command, drinking from which and washing with which was the remedy of the Prophet Job's disease." Most probably he was suffering from some skin disease. According to the Bible also : "Satan smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown." (Job, 2 : 7).

44. Traditions show that during this illness everyone except his wife had deserted the Prophet Job; even his children had turned away. To this Allah has alluded, saying : "When We granted him health, the whole family returned to him, and then We granted him even more children."

45. That is, in this there is a lesson for an intelligent man : "Neither should man forget God and become arrogant in good times nor despair of Him in bad times : Good fortune and misfortune are entirely in the power of Allah, the One. If He wills He can change

the best times of man into the worst times and the worst into the best. Therefore, a wise person should trust in Him alone in all sorts of circumstances and should pin all his hopes on Him."

46. A careful study of these words shows that the Prophet Job during illness had been annoyed with somebody (according to traditions, his wife) and sworn to beat him or her by giving so many stripes. When Allah restored him to health and the anger of the illness was gone, he became worried as how to fulfil the oath. For if he carried out the oath, he would be inflicting pain on an innocent person, and if he did not, he would be committing the sin of breaking the oath. Allah took him out of the difficult situation by this Command: "Take a broom containing as many sticks of straw as the number of the stripes you had sworn to give; then strike the person just once with the broom so as both to fulfil your oath and to avoid giving undue trouble to the person concerned."

Some jurists hold the view that this concession was specially meant for the Prophet Job, and some others think that other people also can take advantage of it. The first view has been cited by Ibn 'Asākir from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās and by Abū Bakr al-Jaṣṣāṣ from Mujāhid, and Imām Mālik also held the same view. The second view has been adopted by Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, Imām Abū Yūsuf, Imām Muḥammad, Imām Zufar and Imām Shāfe'ī. They say that if a person, for instance, has sworn to give his servant ten stripes, and afterwards combines ten whips and strikes him only once in a way that some part of each whip strikes him, his oath will be fulfilled.

Several *Hadiths* show that the Holy Prophet, in order to inflict the prescribed punishment on a fornicator who was too ill or too weak to receive a hundred stripes, also adopted the method taught in this verse. 'Allāma Abū Bakr al-Jaṣṣāṣ has related a tradition on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Sa'īd bin Sa'd bin 'Ubādah to the effect that a person from the tribe of Banī Sā'idah happened to commit fornication, and he was a sick man and a mere skeleton. Thereupon the Holy Prophet commanded: "Take a branch of the palm tree with a hundred twigs on it and strike him therewith once and for all." (*Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*). In Musnad Aḥmad, Abū Da'ūd, Nasā'ī, Ibn Mājah, Ṭabarānī, 'Abdur Razzāq and other collections of *Hadith* also there are several *Hadiths* supporting it, which conclusively proves that the Holy Prophet had devised this very method for inflicting the prescribed punishment on a sick or weak person. How

ever, the jurists lay the condition that some part of every twig or piece of straw must strike the culprit, and even if only one stroke, it must also hurt the culprit; that is, it is not enough just to touch him but he must be struck with it.

Here the question also arises that if a person has sworn to do something and afterwards he comes to know that it is improper, then what should he do? There is a tradition from the Holy Prophet to the effect that in such a case one should do only that which is better, and the same is the atonement for the oath. Another tradition from him says that one should do something good instead of the improper thing and should atone for his oath. This verse supports this second tradition, for if keeping oneself from an improper thing had been the atonement for the oath, Allah would not have told the Prophet Job to strike the broom once and fulfil his oath, but would have said: "Do not do this improper thing, and your restraint itself is the atonement for your oath."

This verse also shows that it is not necessary to carry out immediately what one has sworn to do. The Prophet Job had sworn an oath in the state of illness, and fulfilled it after complete recovery, and not immediately even after the recovery.

Some people have regarded this verse as an argument for practising pretence under the *Shari'ah*. No doubt it was a pretence which the Prophet Job had been taught but it had been taught not for evading anything obligatory but for avoiding an evil. Therefore, in the *Shari'ah* those pretences only are lawful, which are adopted to remove injustice and sin and evil from one's own self or from another person, otherwise practice of pretence is highly sinful if it is employed for the purpose of making the unlawful lawful, or evading the obligatory duties and righteous acts. For a person who practises pretence for such impious objects, in fact, tries to deceive God. For example, a person who transfers his wealth to another before the completion of a year on it, only for the purpose of evading payment of the *Zakāt* on it, not only evades an obligatory duty, but also thinks that Allah will get deceived by this trickery and will consider him as relieved of his duty. The jurists who have mentioned such pretences in their books, do not mean that one should practise them in order to evade the *Shari'ah* obligations, but they mean to point out that a judge or ruler cannot take to task a person who escapes the consequences of a sin under a legal cover for his affair is with Allah.

47. The Prophet Job has been mentioned in this context to impress the reader that when the righteous servants of Allah are afflicted with hardships and calamities, they do not complain of their distress to Allah but endure the tests and trials set by Him patiently and invoke only Him for help. They do not despair of God and turn to others for help if their distress is not removed after making invocations to God for some time, but they believe that whatever they will get, they will get only from Allah. Therefore, they remain hopeful of His mercy no matter how long they might have to suffer the distress. That is why they are honoured and blessed with the favours and bounties with which the Prophet Job was honoured and blessed in his life. So much so that if they get involved in a moral dilemma due to a state of agitation, Allah shows them a way out of it in order to save them from evil, as He showed a way to the Prophet Job.

48. The actual words in the Text mean: "Those who possessed the hands and the insights." The hand, as we have explained above, implies power and capability. To describe these Prophets as "men of great power and insight" means that they were practical men: they possessed great power to obey Allah and to abstain from sin, and they had made great efforts for raising the Word of Allah in the world. "Insight" does not mean eye-sight but the vision of the heart and mind. They could see and recognize the Truth: they did not live like the blind in the world, but they walked the straight path of guidance in the full light of knowledge, with open eyes. In these words, there is a subtle allusion to this also that the people who commit evil, and have gone astray, are in fact, deprived of the hands as well as the eyes. He who works in the cause of Allah only possesses the hands, and he who distinguishes between the light of the Truth and the darkness of falsehood only possesses the eyes.

49. That is, "The real cause for their success and eminence was that there was no tinge of this-worldliness in their character: all their efforts, mental and physical, were directed towards the Hereafter. They remembered it themselves and urged others also to remember it. That is why Allah exalted them to such high ranks as have never been attained by those who remained absorbed in earning worldly wealth and prosperity. In this regard, one should also keep in view the subtle point that Allah here has only used the word *ad-dār* (that abode, or the real abode) for the Hereafter. This

is meant to impress the truth that this world is no abode for man, but only a passage and a rest house, which man has to leave in any case. The real abode is the abode of the Hereafter. He who works to adorn that abode is the man of insight and such a one should inevitably be a commendable person in the sight of Allah. As for him who in order to adorn his transitory abode in this rest house behaves in a way as to ruin his real abode in the Hereafter, is foolish, and naturally cannot be liked by Allah.

50. The Prophet Al-Yas'a has been mentioned only twice in the Qur'an, in Sūrah Al-An'am : 86 and here, without any detail about him; only his name appears in the chain of the Prophets. He was one of the major Prophets of Israel, belonged to Abel Meholah, a place on the river Jordan, and is well known as Elisha among the Jews and Christians. When the Prophet Elijah (peace be upon him) had taken refuge in the Sinai peninsula, he was commanded to return to Syria and Palestine for some important works, one of which was to prepare the Prophet Elisha for his successorship. Accordingly, when the Prophet Elijah came to his town, he found Elisha ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth. The Prophet Elijah passed by him and cast his mantle upon him, and he left the oxen and followed him. (I Kings, 19 : 15-21). He remained under training with him for 10 to 12 years. Then, when Allah recalled Elijah, he was appointed Prophet in his place. (2 Kings, ch. 2). The Second Book of the Kings gives a detailed account of the Prophet Elisha (chs., 2 to 13), which shows that when the Israeli state of northern Palestine got lost in polytheism and idol-worship and moral evils, Elisha anointed Jehu, the son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi, king of Israel against the royal dynasty due to whose misdeeds those evils had spread in Israel. Jehu not only put an end to Ba'al-worship, but also condemned to death every member of the wicked family, including its children. But in spite of this reformist revolution the evils that had taken root in Israel could not be completely eradicated, and after the death of the Prophet Elisha they assumed enormous proportions; so much so that the Assyrians began to invade Samaria whenever they pleased. (For further details, see E.N. 7 of Sūrah Banī-Isrā'il and E.N.'s 70, 71 of Sūrah Aṣ-Ṣāffāt).

51. Dhul-Kifl also has been mentioned only twice in the Qur'an, in Al-Anbiyā' : 85 and here. For our research about him see E.N. 81 of Al-Anbiyā'.

(Continued on Page 164)

لَنَا فَيَسَّ الْقَرَارُ ۖ قَالُوا رَبَّنَا مَنْ قَدَّمَ لَنَا هَذَا فَزِدْهُ عَذَابًا ضِعْفًا فِي
 النَّارِ ۗ قَالُوا مَا لَنَا لَا نَرَى رِجَالًا كُنَّا نَعُدُّهُمْ مِنَ الْأَشْرَارِ ۗ أَخَذَتْهُمُ
 سِخْرِيًّا أَمْ زَاغَتْ عَنْهُمْ الْأَبْصَارُ ۗ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ لَحَقٌّ تَخَاصُمُ أَهْلِ النَّارِ ۗ
 قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا مُنذِرٌ ۚ وَمَا مِن إِلَهٍ إِلَّا اللَّهُ الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ ۗ رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَ
 الْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا الْعَزِيزُ الْغَفَّارُ ۗ قُلْ هُوَ نَبِيُّ عَظِيمٍ ۗ أَنْتُمْ عَنْهُ مُعْرِضُونَ ۗ
 مَا كَانَ لِي مِن عِلْمٍ بِالْمَلَائِكَةِ الْأَعْلَى إِذْ يَخْتَصِمُونَ ۗ إِنَّ يُوحَىٰ إِلَىٰ آلِنَا
 أَنَا نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ ۗ إِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلِكَةِ إِنِّي خَالِقٌ بَشَرًا مِّن طِينٍ ۗ فَإِذَا
 سَوَّيْتُهُ وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِن رُّوحِي فَقَعُوا لَهُ سَاجِدِينَ ۗ فَسَجَدَ الْمَلَكَةُ
 كُلُّهُمْ أَسْجُودًا ۗ إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ ۗ اسْتَكْبَرَ وَكَانَ مِنَ الْكٰفِرِينَ ۗ قَالَ يَا بَلِيسُ مَا
 مَنَعَكَ أَن تَسْجُدَ لِمَا خَلَقْتُ بِإِيْدِي ۗ اسْتَكْبَرْتَ ۗ أَمْ كُنتَ مِنَ الْعَالِينَ ۗ
 قَالَ أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِّنْهُ خَلَقْتَنِي مِن نَّارٍ وَخَلَقْتَهُ مِن طِينٍ ۗ قَالَ فَأخْرِجْ مِنْهَا
 فَإِنَّكَ رَجِيمٌ ۗ وَإِنَّ عَلَيْكَ لعَذَابِي إِلَى يَوْمِ الدِّينِ ۗ قَالَ رَبِّ فَأَنْظِرْنِي إِلَى
 يَوْمٍ يُبْعَثُونَ ۗ قَالَ فَإِنَّكَ مِنَ الْمُنْظَرِينَ ۗ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْوَقْتِ الْمَعْلُومِ ۗ قَالَ
 فَبِعِزَّتِكَ لأُغْوِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ۗ إِلَّا عِبَادَكَ مِنْهُمُ الْمُخْلَصِينَ ۗ قَالَ فَالْحَقُّ
 وَالْحَقُّ أَقُولُ ۗ لَأَمْلَأَنَّ جَهَنَّمَ مِنكَ وَمِمَّن تَبِعَكَ مِنْهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ۗ قُلْ
 مَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِن أَجْرٍ ۚ وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُتَكَلِّفِينَ ۗ إِنَّ هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ
 لِّلْعٰلَمِينَ ۗ وَلَتَعْلَمُنَّ نَبَأَهُ بَعْدَ حِينٍ ۗ

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Then they will say, "Our Lord, give him who has brought this fate on us a double punishment in Hell." And they will say to one another, "How is it that we do not see those whom we regarded as bad people in the world?⁵⁵ Did we treat them as such in ridicule, or are they hidden from sight?" Indeed, this is the Truth! Such will be the disputes among the dwellers of Hell. 61-64

(O Prophet,)⁵⁶ say to them, "I am only a warner:⁵⁷ there is no real god but Allah, the One, the All-Mighty, Lord of the heavens and the earth and of all that is between them, the Mighty, the Forgiving." Say to them, "This is a great News from which you turn away."⁵⁸ 65-68

(Say to them,) "I had no knowledge of the time when the exalted ones were disputing among themselves. I am informed of all this by revelation because I am an open warner." When your Lord said to the angels,⁵⁹ "I am about to create man from clay:⁶⁰ then, when I have fashioned him duly, and have breathed into him of My Spirit,⁶¹ prostrate yourselves before him."⁶² Accordingly, the angels prostrated themselves, all in obedience, but Iblīs assumed arrogance, and became one of the disbelievers.⁶³ The Lord said, "O Iblīs, what has prevented you from prostrating yourself before him whom I have made with both My hands?⁶⁴ Are you assuming arrogance, or are you one of the high ones?" He replied, "I am better than he: You have created me from fire and him from clay." (The Lord) said: "Then get you gone from here:⁶⁵ you are accursed,⁶⁶ and My curse shall be on you till the Day of Judgment."⁶⁷ He said, "My Lord, if so, then give me respite till the time when these people shall be raised (back to life)." (The Lord) said: "Well, you are given respite till the Day of appointed time." He said, "By Thy Honour! I shall certainly lead them astray except those of Thy servants whom Thou hast chosen."⁶⁸—(The Lord) said, "The truth is this, and the truth only I speak, that I shall fill Hell with you⁶⁹ and with all those who follow you from among mankind."⁷⁰ 69-85

86-88

(O Prophet,) say to them, "I do not ask any recompense of you for this message,⁷¹ nor am I an impostor.⁷² This is only an Admonition for all the people of the world, and after a while you shall yourself come to know all about it."⁷³

(Continued from Page 161)

52. The words *mufattaḥat-al-lahum-ul-abwāb* may have several meanings: (1) They will go about in the Gardens (Paradise) freely without any hesitation; (2) no effort will have to be made to open the gates of Paradise: they will open automatically as soon as they will have the desire to enter them; (3) the angels appointed for keeping Paradise will open the gates for them as soon as they see them. This third meaning has been expressed more clearly at another place in the Qur'ān, thus: "When they arrive there, and its gates shall already have been opened, its keepers will say: Peace be upon you: you have fared well: enter here to dwell for ever."

(Az-Zumar : 73)

53. "Wives of equal age" may mean that they will be of equal age among themselves, and also that they will be of the same age as their husbands.

54. Several meanings of the word *ghassāq*, as used in the original, have been given by the lexicographers: (1) Any moisture that is discharged by the body in the form of pus, blood, or mixture of pus and blood, etc. and this includes tears as well; (2) something extremely cold; and (3) something stinking and giving out offensive smell. However, the word is generally used in the first meaning only, though the other two meanings also are correct lexically.

55. This implies the believers whom the disbelievers used to look down upon as bad people in the world. It means this: They will look around bewildered and will find only themselves and their guides in Hell but will find no trace of those people of whom they used to talk disparagingly in the world, and whom they used to mention in their meetings for talking about God, the Messenger and the Hereafter.

56. Now the discourse turns to the same theme with which it began. One should read it with vv. 1-14 in order to understand the meaning fully.

57. In verse 4 it was said: "The people wonder that a warner from among themselves has come to them." Here it is being said: "Tell them: I am only a warner." That is, "I do not command an army that I may forcibly pull you from a wrong way and put you on the Right Way: If you do not listen to me and do not accept my message, you will only be causing a loss to yourselves. If you like to remain ignorant, you may continue to be heedless, for you will see your end yourselves."

58. This is the answer to what the disbelievers said in verse 5: "Has he made just One God in place of all the gods? This is indeed a strange thing." It means this: "You may frown and scowl as you like, but this is a reality of which I am informing you, and your frowning and scowling cannot change it."

This answer not only contains the statement of the truth, but it also contains the argument for it. The *mushriks* said: "Deities are many of whom one is Allah also. How is it that you have done away with all other deities and kept only One Allah?" In answer it was said: "The real Deity is One Allah alone, for He is dominant over everything: He is the Owner of the earth and the heavens, and everything in the Universe belongs to Him. Every being other than Him, whom you have set up as other gods in the Universe, is dominated and subdued before Him; therefore, the subservient beings cannot be associates in the Godhead of the Dominant and All-Mighty God. Therefore, there is no ground for which they may be regarded as deities."

59. This is the explanation of the dispute referred to above, and the dispute implies Satan's dispute with God, as becomes evident from the verses that follow. In this regard, one should bear in mind the fact that "the exalted ones" implies the angels, and the dialogue between Allah and Satan was not direct but it took place through some angel. Therefore, no one should have the misunderstanding that Allah also was included among the exalted ones. This story has already been narrated at the following places above: Al-Baqarah: 30-39, Al-A'rāf: 11-25, Al-Ḥijr: 26-44, Bani Isrā'il: 61-65, Al-Kahf: 50, Ṭā Hā: 116-126.

60. Lexically, *bashar* means a gross body whose surface is bare and un-covered by anything else. After the creation of man this word has been used for man himself, but mentioning him by the word *bashar* before his creation and making him from clay clearly

means this: "I am about to make an image of clay, which will be without any feathers and hair, etc., whose skin will not be covered by wool or hair or feathers like the skin of other animals."

61. For explanation, see Al-Hijr : 29-30, and E.N. 16 of Sūrah As-Sajdah.

62. For explanation, see Al-Baqarah : 34, Al-A'rāf : 11 and the E.N.'s thereof.

63. For explanation, see Al-Baqarah : 34, Al-Kahf : 50 and the E.N.'s thereof.

64. These words have been used to point out the honour, rank and glory bestowed on man by his Creator. In other words, Allah did not get man created through his angels but created him Himself because his creation was a highly noble task. Therefore, what is meant to be said is this: "What has prevented you from prostrating yourself before him whom I have made directly Myself?"

The words "both hands" probably are meant to refer to the fact that this new creation combines in itself two important aspects of Allah's power of creation: (1) That man has been given an animal body on account of which he belongs to the animal kingdom; and (2) that on account of the Spirit breathed into him, he has been characterised with qualities which place him in honour and merit above all earthly creations and creatures.

65. "From here": from the place where Adam was created and where the angels were commanded to bow down before Adam, and where Iblis committed disobedience of Allah.

66. Lexically, the word *rajim*, as used in the original, means "cast off" or "smitten"; in common usage it is used for the person, who has been thrown down from a place of honour and humiliated. In Sūrah Al-A'rāf, the same thing has been expressed thus: "Get out: you are indeed one of those who wish themselves ignominy." (v. 13).

67. This does not mean that there will be no curse on him after the Day of Judgment, but rather it means this: "He will remain accursed till the Day of Judgment because of his disobedience, and after the Day of Judgment he will be punished for the sins which he will have committed from the creation of Adam till Resurrection."

68. This does not mean: "I will not lead Your chosen servants

astray," but this: "I shall have no power over Your chosen servants."

69. "With you" is not only addressed to *Iblis* but to the whole species of satans; that is, *Iblis* and his whole army of the satans who will be joining him in misleading mankind till Resurrection.

70. This whole story has been related in answer to this saying of the chiefs of the Quraish: "Was he the only (fit) person among us to whom Allah's Admonition should have been sent down?" Its first answer was the one given in vv. 9-10, saying: "Are you the owners of the treasures of the mercy of your Mighty and Bounteous Lord? And does the kingdom of the heavens and the earth belong to you, and is it for you to decide as to who should be appointed God's Prophet and who should not be appointed?" The second answer is this: In this the chiefs of the Quraish have been told: "Your jealousy, your pride and arrogance against Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) are similar to the jealousy and arrogance of *Iblis* against Adam (peace be upon him). *Iblis* also had refused to acknowledge the right of Allah to appoint anyone He pleased His vicegerent, and you also are refusing to acknowledge His right to appoint anyone He pleases His Messenger: he disobeyed the Command to bow down before Adam, and you are disobeying the Command to follow Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace). Your resemblance with him does not end here, but your fate also will be the same as has been pre-ordained for him, i.e. the curse of God in the world and the fire of Hell in the Hereafter."

Besides, in connection with this story, two other things also have been stressed: (1) Whoever is disobeying Allah in this world, is in fact, falling a prey to *Iblis*, his eternal enemy, who has resolved to mislead and misguide mankind since the beginning of creation; and (2) the one who disobeys Allah on account of arrogance and persists in His disobedience is under His wrath; such a one has no forgiveness from Him.

71. That is, "I am a selfless person: I have no vested interest in preaching this message."

72. That is, "I am not one of those who arise with false claims for the sake of vanity and pose to be what actually they are not." The Holy Prophet has not been made to say this merely for the information of the disbelievers of Makkah, but this is testified by

his whole life which he lived among the same people for forty years before his advent as a Prophet. Every child of Makkah was a witness that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) was not an impostor. Never had anybody from among the people of Makkah ever heard anything from him, which might have caused somebody the doubt that he aspired to be a great man and was planning and scheming for that end.

73. That is, "Those of you who live will see for themselves within a few years that what I am saying is fulfilled; those who die will come to know as soon as they pass through the gate of death that the truth is the same which I am preaching."

XXXIX

AZ-ZUMAR

الزُّمَر

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

XXXIX

AZ-ZUMAR

الزُّمَرُ

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah derives its name from verses 71 and 73 in which the word *zumar* has occurred.

Period of Revelation

In verse 10 (*wa arḍullah-i-wāsi'atun:* and Allah's earth is vast) there is abundant evidence that this Sūrah

was sent down before the migration to Habash: Some traditions provide the explanation that this verse was sent down in respect of Ḥaḍrat Ja'far bin Abī Tālib and his companions when they made up their mind to emigrate to Habash. (*Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī*, vol. XXII, p. 226).

Theme and Subject-matter

The entire Sūrah is a most eloquent and effective address which was given some time before the emigration to Habash, in an environment filled with tyranny and persecution, ill-will and antagonism, at Makkah. It is a sermon whose addressees mainly are the unbelieving Quraish, although here and there the believers also have been addressed. In it the real aim of the invitation of Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) has been enunciated, which is this: Man should adopt Allah's servitude sincerely, and should not pollute his God-worship with the service of any other. Presenting this cardinal principle in different ways over and over again, the truth of *Tauḥīd* and the excellent results of accepting it, and the falsehood of *shirk* and the evil consequences of following it, have been explained in a most forceful way, and the people exhorted to give up their wrong way of life and return to the mercy of their Lord. In this very connection, the believers have been instructed, as if to say: "If a place has become narrow for the worship and service of Allah, His earth is vast: you may emigrate to some other place in order to save your faith: Allah will reward you for your patience." On the other hand, the Holy Prophet has been encouraged, so as to say: "Tell the disbelievers plainly that they may do whatever they like, but their persecutions and tyrannies

will never deter you from the way of Islam; that they may go on doing their worst to obstruct your way, but you will continue to perform your mission in spite of the adverse conditions and circumstances."



تَنْزِيلُ الْكِتَابِ مِنَ اللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَكِيمِ ۝ إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ
فَاعْبُدِ اللَّهَ مُخْلِصًا لَهُ الدِّينَ ۝ أَلَا لِلَّهِ الدِّينُ الْخَالِصُ ۗ وَالَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا
مِنْ دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ مَا نَعْبُدُهُمْ إِلَّا لِيُقَرِّبُونَا إِلَى اللَّهِ زُلْفَىٰ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَحْكُمُ
بَيْنَهُمْ فِي مَا هُمْ فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي مَنْ هُوَ كَاذِبٌ كَفَّارٌ ۝
لَوْ أَرَادَ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَتَّخِذَ وَلَدًا لَأَصْطَفَىٰ مِمَّا يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ ۗ سُبْحٰنَهُ ۗ هُوَ اللَّهُ
الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ ۝ خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ ۗ يَكْوُرُ اللَّيْلَ عَلَى النَّهَارِ وَيَكْوُرُ
النَّهَارَ عَلَى اللَّيْلِ وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ ۗ كُلٌّ يَجْرِي لِأَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ۗ أَلَا هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ
الْفَعَّالُ ۝ خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ ثُمَّ جَعَلَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَأَنْزَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ
الْأَنْعَامِ ثَمِينًا ۗ زَوْاجٌ ۗ يَخْلُقُكُمْ فِي بُطُونِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ خَلْقًا مِنْ بَعْدِ خَلْقٍ فِي
فَلْتَبِئَ ثَلَاثٌ ۗ ذَلِكُمْ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ ۗ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ ۗ فَآتَىٰ تَصْرُفُونَ ۝
إِنْ تَكْفُرُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ عَنْكُمْ ۗ وَلَا يَرْضَىٰ لِعِبَادِهِ الْكُفْرَ ۗ وَإِنْ تَشْكُرُوا
يَرْضَهُ لَكُمْ ۗ وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَىٰ ۗ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ مَرْجِعُكُمْ فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا
كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ۗ إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ۝ وَإِذَا مَسَّ الْإِنْسَانَ ضُرٌّ دَعَا
رَبَّهُ مُنِيبًا إِلَيْهِ ثُمَّ إِذَا خَوَّلَهُ نِعْمَةً مِنْهُ نِسَىٰ مَا كَانَ يُدْعُوا إِلَيْهِ مِنْ
قَبْلُ وَجَعَلَ لِلَّهِ أَنْدَادًا لِيُضِلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ ۗ قُلْ تَسْعَرُ بِكَفْرِكَ قَلِيلًا ۗ إِنَّكَ
مِنْ أَصْحَابِ النَّارِ ۗ أَمَنْ هُوَ قَائِمٌ أَنْتَ إِلَيْهِ سَاجِدًا ۗ وَقَائِمًا يَحْذَرُ الْآخِرَةَ
وَيَرْجُوا رَحْمَةَ رَبِّهِ ۗ قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ۗ

وقف لازم

XXXIX

AZ-ZUMAR

الزُّمَر

Verses : 75

Revealed at Makkah

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

The revelation of this Book is from the All-Mighty, 1
the All-Wise Allah.¹

(O Muhammad,) We have sent down this Book to 2-3
you with the truth²; so worship Allah alone, making your
religion His exclusively.³ Beware! Religion is exclusively
Allah's right.⁴ As for those who have taken other
guardians besides Him (and justify their this conduct,
saying): "We worship them only that they may bring
us closer to Allah,"⁵ Allah will surely judge between them
concerning all that in which they differ.⁶ Allah does not
show guidance to any liar and denier of the truth.⁷

Had Allah willed to take a son, He would have 4-6
chosen anyone He pleased out of His creation.⁸ Glorified
is He (that He should have a son)! He is Allah, the One,
the Omnipotent.⁹ He has created the heavens and the
earth with the truth.¹⁰ He it is Who wraps the night
about the day and the day about the night. He has so
subjected the sun and the moon that each is moving till
an appointed time. Note it well: He is the All-Mighty,
the All-Forgiving.¹¹ It is He Who created you from a
single being, then from that being He created its mate,¹²
and it is He Who created for you eight heads of cattle,
male and female.¹³ He shapes you in your mothers'

wombs, giving you one form after the other, under three dark veils.¹¹ This same Allah (Whose works are these) is your Lord:¹⁵ sovereignty is His:¹⁶ there is no god but He.¹⁷ Whence are you, then, being turned away?¹⁸

7 If you disbelieve, Allah is independent of you;¹⁹ yet He does not approve of disbelief for His servants;²⁰ and if you are thankful, He approves it for you.²¹ No bearer will bear the burden of another;²² ultimately, all of you have to return to your Lord. Then He will tell you what you have been doing. He knows even the secrets of the hearts.

8-9 When an affliction befalls man,²³ he calls upon his Lord, turning to Him (in penitence);²⁴ then, when his Lord blesses him with his favour, he forgets the affliction for which he was calling upon Him before,²⁵ and sets up others as equals with Allah,²⁶ to lead astray from His way.²⁷ (O Prophet,) Tell him, "Enjoy your disbelief for a while: you shall certainly go to Hell." (Whose conduct is better: of this man or of him) who is obedient, who passes the hours of night standing and prostrating (in worship), and who dreads the Hereafter and hopes for the mercy of his Lord? Ask them, "Can those who know and those who do not know ever be equal?"²⁸ Only men of understanding do accept the admonition.

1. This is a brief introduction to the Sūrah which only stresses the point that the Qur'ān is not Muḥammad's word, as the disbelievers assert, but it is Allah's Word, which He Himself has sent down. Along with this, two of Allah's attributes have been mentioned to warn the listeners of two realities so that they do not underestimate this Word but understand its full importance: (1) That that Allah Who has sent it down, is All-Mighty; that is, He is so powerful that no power can prevent His will and decisions from being enforced and none can dare resist Him in any way; (2) that He is All-Wise; that is, the guidance He is giving in this Book, is wholly based on wisdom, and only an ignorant and foolish person

can turn away from it. (For further explanation, see E.N. 1 of Sūrah As-Sajdah).

2. That is, it contains nothing but the truth, and there is no element of falsehood in it.

3. This is a very important verse, which states the real objective of the message of Islam. Therefore, one should not pass over it superficially, but should try to understand its meaning and intention well. It has two basic points without grasping which one cannot understand the verse: (1) That the demand is to worship Allah; and (2) that the demand is of such worship as may be performed by making religion exclusively Allah's.

'*Ibādat* is derived from '*abd*', and this word is used as an antonym of "freeman" for the "slave" and "bondsmen" in Arabic. Accordingly, '*ibādat* contains two meanings: (1) Worship and devotion; and (2) humble and willing obedience, as is borne out by the well-known and authoritative Arabic Lexicon, *Lisān al-'Arab*. Thus, according to the authentic lexical explanation, the demand is not only of Allah's worship but also of willing and sincere obedience to His Commands and His Law.

The Arabic word *dīn* contains several meanings:

- (1) Domination and sovereignty, rulership and political power and authority to enforce one's decisions on others.
- (2) Obedience, compliance with commands and servitude.
- (3) The practice and the way that a man follows.

In view of these three meanings, *dīn* in this verse means: "The way of life and attitude which a man adopts after acknowledging the supremacy and accepting the obedience of another;" and "to worship Allah making one's religion exclusively His" means that one should refrain from combining another's worship with the worship of Allah, but should worship Allah alone, should follow His Guidance alone, and should comply with His Commands and injunctions only.

4. This is an actual fact and reality, which has been presented as an argument for the above demand. It means this: "You should worship Allah, making *dīn* exclusively His, for it is only Allah's right that He should be obeyed and worshipped sincerely and exclusively." In other words, there is no one else who may deserve to be worshipped so that he also should be served and worshipped

besides Allah and his commands and laws also obeyed. If a person serves another, apart from Allah, sincerely and exclusively, he does wrong. Likewise, if he combines the worship of another with his worship of Allah, this also is against the truth. The best commentary of this verse is the *Hadith* which Ibn Mardūyah has related from Yazid ar-Raqāshī. He says: A person asked the Holy Prophet: "We give away our wealth so that we become well-known. Shall we get a reward for this?" The Holy Prophet replied: No. He asked: "What, if one has the intention both of Allah's reward and of reputation in the world?" The Holy Prophet replied: "Allah does not accept any deed unless it is performed exclusively for His sake." After this he recited this same verse.

5. The disbelievers of Makkah said, and the polytheists the world over generally say the same, "We do not worship other beings regarding them as our creators: the Creator is only Allah, and He alone is the real Deity; but He is too high for us to have access to Him. Therefore, we make these saintly beings a means to convey our prayers and our petitions to Allah."

6. One should understand it well that unity and concord is possible only through *Tauhid*: there can be no unity through *shirk*. The polytheists the world over have never agreed as to which beings are the definite means of access to Allah. Some people have taken some particular gods and goddesses as the means, but even among them there is no agreement on all the gods and goddesses; some others have taken the moon, the sun, Mars, Jupiter, etc. as the means, and they also are not agreed as to which of them holds what rank and which is the real means of approach to Allah; some others have taken the dead saints as the means, but they also differ widely about them: one believes in one saint and another in another. The reason is that the belief about these different beings is neither based on any knowledge, nor has Allah ever sent down a list telling that such and such persons are His special favourites; therefore, they only should be made the means to have access to Him. This is a creed which has spread among the people only on account of superstitions and whims and blind imitation of the elders. Hence the

7. Here, Allah has used two words for these people, *kāzib* (liar) and *kaffār* (denier). They have been called *kāzib* because they have falsely invented this creed by themselves, and then they spread

falsehood among others: As for *kaffār*, it has two meanings: (1) A stubborn disbeliever, i.e. the people who insist on their false creed even after the doctrine of *Tauhid* has come before them; and (2) ungrateful for blessings, i.e. they are receiving all kinds of blessings from Allah, but are thanking those other beings about whom they have assumed that these blessings are reaching them through their agency and influence.

8. That is, "It is just impossible that Allah should have begotten a son. The only possibility is that Allah should choose someone for Himself; and whomever He chooses will inevitably be from among the creatures, for everything in the world, apart from Allah, is His creation. Now, evidently, however exalted and chosen a creature might be, it cannot have the position of the offspring. For between the Creator and the created there exists a great disparity of nature and essence and character, and parenthood necessarily demands that there should be the unity of nature and essence between a father and his offspring."

Besides, one should also bear in mind the point that the words: "Had Allah willed to take a son, He would....." themselves give the meaning that Allah has never willed so. Here the object is to impress that not to speak of taking a son, Allah has never even willed so.

9. The following are the arguments by which the doctrine of parenthood has been refuted:

First, that Allah is free from every defect and fault and weakness. Obviously, children are needed by the one who is defective and weak; the one who is mortal stands in need of them, so that his progeny should continue to live after him in the world. Likewise, he who adopts a son does so either because he feels the need of having an heir, being childless himself, or he adopts a son being overpowered by love of somebody. Attributing such human weaknesses to Allah and forming religious creeds on their basis is nothing but ignorance and short-sightedness.

The second argument is that Allah in His essence and Being is unique: He is not a member of a species, whereas, evidently, offspring must necessarily belong to a species. Furthermore, there can be no concept of offspring without marriage, and marriage can take place only between homogeneous individuals. Therefore, the one

who proposes offspring for the Unique and Matchless Being like Allah, is ignorant and foolish.

The third argument is that Allah is Omnipotent, i.e. whatever is there in the world is subdued to Him and is held in His powerful grasp. No one in this Universe has any resemblance with Him in any way or degree on account of which it may be imagined that he has some relation with Allah.

10. For explanation, see Ibrāhim : 19, An-Nahl : 3, Al-'Ankabūt : 44, and the E.N.'s thereof.

11. That is, "He is All-Mighty: if He wills to punish you, no power can resist Him. But it is His kindness that He does not seize you forthwith in spite of your arrogant and insolent behaviour, but He goes on giving you respite after respite." Here, Allah's making no haste in seizing people in punishment and His giving them respite has been called forgiveness.

12. This does not mean that first He created the human beings from Adam and then created his wife, Eve. But here, instead of the chronological order, there is the order of presentation, examples of which are found in every language. For instance, we say, "Whatever you did today is known to me, and whatever you did yesterday is also in my knowledge." This cannot mean that what happened yesterday has happened after today.

13. That is, the camel, cow, sheep and goat whose four males and four females together make eight heads of cattle.

14. The three dark veils are: the belly, the womb and the caul or membrane enclosing the foetus.

15. "Your Lord": your Master, Ruler and Providence.

16. That is, "All powers and authority rest with Him and it is He Who is ruling over the whole Universe."

17. In other words, the reasoning is this: "When Allah alone is your Lord and His is the sovereignty, then inevitably your Deity also is He. How can another be your deity when he has neither any share in providence nor any role in sovereignty? After all, how can it be reasonable for you to take others as your deities when Allah alone is the Creator of the heavens and the earth, when Allah alone has subjected the sun and the moon for you, when He alone brings the day after the night and the night after the day, and when He alone is your own Creator and Lord as well as of all animals and cattle?"

18. These words need deep consideration. It has not been said: "Where are you turning away?" but "where are you being turned away?" That is, "There is someone else who is misleading you, and being thus deceived you do not understand such a simple and reasonable thing." The other thing which by itself becomes evident from the style is: The word "you" is not addressed to the agents but to those who were turning away under their influence. There is a subtle point in this which can be understood easily after a little thought. Those who were working to turn away others (from the Right Way) were present in the same society and were doing whatever they could openly and publicly. Therefore, there was no need to mention them by name. It was also useless to address them, for they were trying to turn away the people from the service of Allah, the One, and entrapping them for the service of others, and keeping them entrapped for selfish motives. Obviously, such people could not be made to see reason by argument, for it lay in their own interest not to understand and see reason, and even after understanding they could hardly be inclined to sacrifice their interests. However, the condition of the common people who were being deceived and cheated, was certainly pitiable. They had no interest involved in the business; therefore, they could be convinced by reasoning and argument, and after a little understanding they could also see what advantages were being gained by those who were showing them the way to other deities, after turning them away from Allah. That is why the address has been directed to the common people, who were being misguided rather than those few who were misguiding them.

19. That is, "Your disbelief cannot cause any decrease or deficiency in His Kingdom. He will be God if you believe in Him, and He will still be God if you deny Him. He is ruling over His Kingdom by His own power; your believing or denying Him does not affect His Sovereignty in any way." According to a *Hadith*. Allah says: "O My servants, if all of you, the former and the latter, the men and the jinns, become like the heart of a most sinful person among you, it will cause no deficiency whatever in My Kingdom." (Muslim)

20. That is, "He does not approve, not for any interest of His own but for the interest and benefit of the servants themselves, that they should disbelieve, for disbelief is harmful for them." Here, one should bear in mind the fact that Allah's will is one thing and His approval and pleasure another. Nothing in the world can happen

against Allah's will, but many things can happen against His approval, and are happening day and night. For example, the dominance of the tyrants and the wicked in the world, the existence of thieves and robbers, the presence of murderers and adulterers, are possible only because Allah has made room for the occurrence of these evils and the existence of these criminals in the scheme of things ordained by Him. Then He provides opportunities also of committing evil just as He provides opportunities to the good of doing good. Had He made no room for these evils and had provided no opportunities of committing these to the evildoers, no evil would have ever occurred in the world. All this is based on Allah's Will. But the occurrence of an act under Divine Will does not mean that Allah's approval also goes with it. This may be explained by an example. If a person tries to obtain his living only by lawful means, Allah provides him his living through those means. This is His will. But providing for the thief or the robber or the corrupt person under the will does not mean that Allah also likes stealing and robbery and taking of bribes. Allah says the same thing here, as if to say: "If you want to disbelieve, you may do so: We will not stop you from this nor make you believe forcibly. But We do not approve that you should deny your Creator and Providence, being His servants, for it is harmful for yourselves: Our Godhead is not harmed and affected by it in any way."

21. The word *shukr* (gratitude) has been used here as against *kufr* (disbelief) instead of *Imān* (belief). This by itself shows that *kufr* is, in fact, ingratitude and disloyalty, and faith is the necessary requirement of gratitude. The person who has any feeling of the favours of Allah Almighty, cannot adopt any other way than that of belief and faith. Therefore, gratitude and faith are correlatives: wherever there is gratitude there will be faith also. On the contrary, wherever there is disbelief, there will be no question of gratitude at all, for gratitude along with disbelief is meaningless.

22. It means this: "Each one of you is himself responsible for his deeds. If a person adopts disbelief in order to please others, or to avoid their displeasure, those others will never bear the burden of his disbelief, but will leave him to bear his own burden himself. Therefore, anyone who comes to know that disbelief is wrong and belief is right, should give up the wrong attitude and adopt the right attitude, and avoid making himself worthy of Allah's punish-

ment by associating himself with his family or brotherhood or nation."

23. "The man": the disbeliever who adopted the way of ingratitude.

24. That is, "At that time he does not remember those other deities whom he used to invoke in good times; but he despairs of them all and turns only to Allah, Lord of the worlds." This is a clear proof of the fact that in the depths of his heart he has the feeling that those other deities are helpless, and the realization that Allah alone is the Possessor of all powers and authority, lies buried and hidden deep in his mind."

25. That is, "He again forgets the bad times when abandoning all other deities he was invoking only Allah, the One."

26. That is, "He again starts serving others: he obeys them, prays to them and makes offerings before them."

27. That is, "He is not content with his own self having gone astray, but also leads others astray, telling them that the affliction which had befallen him, had been averted by the help of such and such a pious man or saint, or god and goddess." Thus, many other people also put their faith in these deities besides Allah, and are further misled as the ignorant and foolish people describe their experiences before them.

28. It should be noted that here two kinds of the men are being contrasted. First, those who turn to Allah when a calamity befalls them, but worship others than Allah normally. Second, those who have made it their permanent way of life to obey Allah and worship and serve Him, and their worshipping Him in solitude during the night is a proof of their sincerity. The first kind of the men have been called ignorant by Allah, even if they might have devoured whole libraries. And the second kind of the men have been called the learned, even if they might be illiterate. For the real supremely important thing is the knowledge of the Truth and man's action according to it, and on this depends his true success. Allah asks: How can these two be equal? How can they possibly follow the same way together in the world, and meet with the same end in the Hereafter?

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 ١٥
 إِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ ۗ قُلْ يُعْبَادِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِينَ
 أَحْسَنُوا فِي هَذِهِ الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً ۖ وَارْضُ اللَّهُ بِوَسْعَةِ إِنَّمَا يُؤْتِي الضَّابِرُونَ
 أَجْرَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ۗ قُلْ إِنِّي أُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ مُخْلِصًا لَهُ الدِّينَ ۗ
 أُمِرْتُ لِأَنْ أَكُونَ أَوَّلَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ۗ قُلْ إِنِّي أَخَافُ إِنْ عَصَيْتُ رَبِّي عَذَابَ يَوْمِ
 عَطِيئِهِ ۗ قُلِ اللَّهُ أَعْبُدُ مُخْلِصًا لَهُ دِينِي ۗ فَاَعْبُدُوا مَا شِئْتُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ ۗ قُلْ
 إِنَّ الْخَاسِرِينَ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَآهْلِيهِمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ۗ أَلَا ذَلِكَ هُوَ
 الْخُسْرَانُ الْمُبِينُ ۗ لَهُمْ مِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ ظُلَلٌ مِنَ النَّارِ وَ مِنْ تَحْتِهِمْ ظُلَلٌ ۗ
 ذَلِكَ يُخَوِّفُ اللَّهُ بِهِ عِبَادَهُ ۗ يُعْبَادِ فَاتَّقُونِ ۗ وَالَّذِينَ اجْتَنَبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ
 أَنْ يَعْبُدُوهَا وَأَنَابُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ لَهُمُ الْبُشْرَى ۗ فَبَشِّرْ عِبَادِ ۗ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَمِعُونَ
 الْقَوْلَ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ أَحْسَنَهُ ۗ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ هَدَاهُ اللَّهُ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ أُولُو
 الْأَلْبَابِ ۗ أَفَمَنْ حَقَّ عَلَيْهِ كَلِمَةُ الْعَذَابِ أَفَأَنْتَ تُنقِذُ مَنْ فِي النَّارِ ۗ لَكِنَّ
 الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا رَبَّهُمْ لَهُمْ عُرفٌ مِّنْ فَوْقِهَا عُرفٌ مُّبِينَةٌ ۗ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا
 الْأَنْهَارُ وَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَا يُخْلِفُ اللَّهُ الْمِيعَادَ ۗ أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ
 مَاءً فَسَلَكَهُ يَنَابِيعَ فِي الْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ يُخْرِجُ بِهِ زَرْعًا مُّخْتَلِفًا أَلْوَانُهُ ثُمَّ
 يَهِيَهِ فَتَرَهُ مَصْفَرًّا ثُمَّ يَجْعَلُهُ حُطَامًا ۗ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَذِكْرًا لِأُولِي
 الْأَلْبَابِ ۗ أَفَمَنْ شَرَحَ اللَّهُ صَدْرَهُ لِلْإِسْلَامِ فَهُوَ عَلَى نُورٍ مِّنْ رَبِّهِ ۗ فَوَيْلٌ
 ٢١
 ١٦
 لِلْقَسِيَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ مِّنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ ۗ أُولَئِكَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ۗ اللَّهُ نَزَّلَ أَحْسَنَ
 الْحَدِيثِ كِتَابًا مُّتَشَابِهًا مَّثَانِي ۗ تَتَقَشَّرُ مِنْهُ جُلُودُ الَّذِينَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ ۗ
 ثُمَّ تَلِينُ جُلُودُهُمْ وَقُلُوبُهُمْ إِلَىٰ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ ۗ ذَلِكَ هُدَىٰ اللَّهُ يَهْدِي بِهِ

(O Prophet :) Say, "O My servants, who have believed, fear your Lord.²⁹ There is good for those who have adopted the righteous attitude in this world,³⁰ and God's earth is vast.³¹ Those who endure with patience shall be rewarded without measure."³² 10

(O Prophet,) say to them, "I have been commanded to serve Allah, making religion sincerely His, and I have been commanded to be a Muslim myself first of all."³³ Say, "If I disobey my Lord, I fear the torment of a dreadful Day." Say, "I shall serve Allah alone, making my religion sincerely His. As for you, you may serve whomever you please besides Him." Say, "The real losers are those who would risk loss for themselves and for their families on the Day of Resurrection." Note it well: this is the real bankruptcy.³⁴ They shall have the canopies of fire covering them from above them and also from beneath them. This is the doom of which Allah frightens His servants. So, O My servants, avoid My wrath. Contrary to this, those who refrained from serving *tāghūt*³⁵ and turned to Allah, for them there is good news. So (O Prophet,) give good news to those of My servants who listen to the word carefully and follow what is best in it.³⁶ These are they whom Allah has shown guidance and these are the ones who possess understanding. 11-18

(O Prophet,) who can protect the person for whom the torment has already been decreed?³⁷ Can you rescue him who has already fallen into the fire? Of course, those who truly feared their Lord, for them there are high mansions, built with storey upon storey, beneath which there will be canals flowing. This is Allah's promise: Allah never fails in His promise. 19-20

Do you not see that Allah sent down rainwater from the sky, then made it to flow in the earth in the form of 21-22

springs and fountains and rivers,³⁸ then He brings forth thereby a variety of crops of different kinds; then they ripen and wither and you see them turn yellow, and then, finally, He reduces them to straw? Indeed, there is a lesson in this for the men of understanding.³⁹ Now, can the person whose breast Allah has opened for Islam⁴⁰ and he is walking in the light shown by his Lord⁴¹ (be like the one who has learnt no lesson from these things)? Woe to those whose hearts became even more hardened⁴² from Allah's admonition! They are in manifest error.

23 Allah has sent down the best of discourses, a Book all whose parts are uniform in style⁴³ and whose themes have been repeated over and over again. Those who fear their Lord are filled with awe when they hear it, and then their bodies and their hearts soften and turn to the remembrance of Allah. This is Allah's guidance, whereby He guides to the Right Way whomever He wills; and the one whom Allah does not guide has no guide whatever.

29. That is, "Do not rest content with belief but follow it up with piety and fear of God. Act³ according to what Allah has enjoined and avoid what He has forbidden and live in the world fearing His accountability."

30. Good and well-being both of this world and of the Hereafter.

31. That is, "If one city, territory or land has become difficult for the worshippers of Allah, they may emigrate to another place where they may not have to face any such hardship."

32. "Those ... measure": Those who brave all kinds of hardships and persecutions in following the way of God-worship and piety but do not abandon the way of the Truth. This also includes those people who emigrate to other countries and experience hardships in the foreign land for the sake of religion and faith, and those also who continue to face every kind of temptation and calamity firmly and patiently in the land where they are being persecuted."

33. That is, "My mission is not only to exhort others but also to practise what I preach myself: I first myself follow the way which I call others to follow."

34. Bankruptcy is loss of a person's capital and failure of his business so that he is unable to pay his debts in full. This same metaphor Allah has used here for the disbelievers and polytheists. The sum total of whatever man has got in this world—his life, his intellect, body, powers, capabilities, means and opportunities—is in fact, the capital, which he invests in the business of the worldly life. If a person invested this whole capital on the hypothesis that there is no God, or that there are many gods, whose servant he is, and that he is not accountable to anyone, or that someone else will rescue him on Judgment Day, it would mean that he made a losing bargain and lost all his capital. This is his first loss. His second loss is that in everything that he did, on the basis of the wrong hypothesis, he went on wronging himself and many other men, and the coming generations and many other creatures of Allah, throughout his life. Thus, he got into countless debts, but has no money with which he may fully pay his debts. Over and above this, he has not only himself incurred this loss, but has caused the same loss to his children and near and dear ones and friends and fellow countrymen by his wrong education and training and wrong example. It is these three losses together which Allah has called *khusrān-i-mubīn* (utter bankruptcy) in this verse.

35. *Ṭāghūt* is from *ṭughyān* and means rebellion. If someone is called *ṭāghūt* (rebellion) instead of *ṭāghī* (rebel), it would mean that he is a rebel incarnate. For example, if a person is called *ḥusn* (beauty) instead of *ḥasīn* (beautiful), it would mean that he has reached perfection in beauty. The other deities than Allah have been called *ṭāghūt* because it is rebellion to worship others besides Allah, but the one who has others worship him, is a rebel of the worst kind. (For further explanation, see Al-Baqarah : 256, Al-Nisā : 60, 76, An-Naml : 36 and the E.N.'s thereof).

36. This verse can have two meanings: (1) That they do not follow every voice but ponder over what every man says and accept only what is right and true; and (2) that they do not try to give a false meaning to what they hear but adopt its good and righteous aspects.

37. That is, the person who has made himself worthy of Allah's

punishment and about whom Allah has already decided that he will be punished.

38. The word *yanābi'* in the Text is comprehensive and applies to all the three sources of water.

39. That is, "A man of understanding learns this lesson from it that the life of this world and its adornments are all transitory: the end of every spring is autumn; the fate of every youth is weakness and death; and every rise has a fall. Therefore, this world is not something of which one should be charmed and enamoured so as to forget God and the Hereafter and should conduct himself here in a manner as to ruin his Hereafter, only for the sake of enjoying the short lived pleasures of this world. Then a man of understanding also learns this lesson from these phenomena that the spring and autumn of this world are only under Allah's control: Allah allows to grow and prosper whomever He wills and ruins and lays waste whomever He wills. Neither it is in anybody's power to stop the growth of someone whom Allah wills to grow, nor has anyone the power to save from destruction him whom Allah wills to destroy.

40. "Whose breast ... Islam": Whom Allah helps to learn a lesson from these realities and to be satisfied with Islam as based on the Truth. Opening of a man's breast for something is, in fact, a state in which there remains no anxiety or ambiguity or suspicion and doubt in his mind about the thing, nor has he the feeling of any danger and loss in accepting and adopting it, but he decides with full satisfaction of the heart that it is the Truth; therefore, he must follow it whatever be the consequences. Having made such a decision when a person adopts the way of Islam, he obeys whatever Command he receives from Allah and His Messenger willingly and with pleasure, without any hesitation. He accepts whatever beliefs and ideas, rules and regulations, he comes across in the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet as if they were the voice of his own heart. He does not feel any compunction on giving up an unlawful gain, because he believes that it was no gain for him at all; it was rather a loss from which Allah saved him by His grace. Likewise, even if he incurs a loss while following the way of righteousness, he does not feel sad about this but bears it with patience and regards it as an ordinary loss as compared to the loss of turning away from the Way of Allah. The same is his behaviour on confronting dangers.

He believes that there is no other way for him, which he may follow in order to avoid the danger. The Straight Way of Allah is only One, which he has to follow in any case: if there is a danger in following it, let it be.

41. "In the light shown by his Lord": In the light of the knowledge of the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet, by the help of which he sees clearly at every step which is the straight path of the Truth among the countless by-paths of life.

42. As against the opening of the breast there can be two other states of man's heart: (1) The state of narrowing of the breast and squeezing of the heart; and in this state there still remains some room for the truth to permeate it; and (2) the state of hardening or petrifying of the heart; in this there is left no room whatever for the truth to permeate. About this second state Allah says that the person who reaches such a stage is totally ruined. This means that if a person becomes inclined to accept the truth, even though with an unwilling and squeezed heart, there remains some possibility for him to be redeemed. This second theme becomes obvious from the style and tenor of the verse itself, though Allah has not stated it directly. For the real intention of the verse was to warn those who were bent upon stubbornness in their antagonism towards the Holy Prophet, and had made up their mind not to listen to him at all. For this they have been warned, as if to say: "You take pride in this stubbornness of yours, but, as a matter of fact, there cannot be a greater misfortune and unworthiness of man than this that his heart should become even more hardened, instead of becoming soft, when he hears Allah being mentioned and the admonition sent by Him."

43. That is, there is no contradiction and disagreement between them. The whole Book, from the beginning to the end, projects one and the same aim, one and the same belief, and one and the same system of thought and action. Each of its parts confirms and supports and explains the other themes; and there is perfect consistency in it both in meaning and in style.

مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَمَنْ يُضِلِلِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ هَادٍ ۖ فَمَنْ يَتَّقِ بِوَجْهِهِ سُوءَ
 الْعَذَابِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ۗ وَقِيلَ لِلظَّالِمِينَ ذُوقُوا مَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْسِبُونَ ۗ كَذَّبَ
 الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَاتَّسَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ۗ فَإِذَا قَهَمُوا
 اللَّهُ الْخِزْيَ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا ۗ وَالْعَذَابُ الْآخِرَةُ أَكْبَرُ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ ۗ وَقَدْ لَازَمَ
 وَ لَقَدْ ضَرَبْنَا لِلنَّاسِ فِي هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ مِنْ كُلِّ مَثَلٍ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ ۗ
 قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا غَيْرَ ذِي عِوَجٍ ۗ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ ۗ ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا رَجُلًا
 فِيهِ شُرَكَاءُ مُتَشَكِّسُونَ وَرَجُلًا سَلَمًا لِرَجُلٍ ۗ هَلْ يَسْتَوِينَ مَثَلًا
 الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ ۗ بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ۗ إِنَّكَ مَيْتٌ وَ إِنَّهُمْ مَيِّتُونَ ۗ
 ثُمَّ إِنَّكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ عِنْدَ رَبِّكُمْ تَخْتَصِمُونَ ۗ

ع ١٠
١٧

الجزء

فَمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَمَنْ يُضِلِلِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ هَادٍ ۖ فَمَنْ يَتَّقِ بِوَجْهِهِ سُوءَ الْعَذَابِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ۗ وَقِيلَ لِلظَّالِمِينَ ذُوقُوا مَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْسِبُونَ ۗ كَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَاتَّسَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ۗ فَإِذَا قَهَمُوا اللَّهُ الْخِزْيَ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا ۗ وَالْعَذَابُ الْآخِرَةُ أَكْبَرُ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ ۗ وَقَدْ لَازَمَ وَ لَقَدْ ضَرَبْنَا لِلنَّاسِ فِي هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ مِنْ كُلِّ مَثَلٍ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ ۗ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا غَيْرَ ذِي عِوَجٍ ۗ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ ۗ ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا رَجُلًا فِيهِ شُرَكَاءُ مُتَشَكِّسُونَ وَرَجُلًا سَلَمًا لِرَجُلٍ ۗ هَلْ يَسْتَوِينَ مَثَلًا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ ۗ بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ۗ إِنَّكَ مَيْتٌ وَ إِنَّهُمْ مَيِّتُونَ ۗ ثُمَّ إِنَّكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ عِنْدَ رَبِّكُمْ تَخْتَصِمُونَ ۗ

أَلَيْسَ فِي جَهَنَّمَ مَثْوًى لِّلْكَافِرِينَ ۗ وَ الَّذِي جَاءَ بِالصِّدْقِ وَصَدَّقَ بِهِ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُونَ ۗ لَهُمْ مَا يَشَاءُونَ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ ۗ ذَلِكَ جَزَاُ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ۗ
 لِيُكَفِّرَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ أَسْوَأَ الَّذِي عَمِلُوا وَ يَجْزِيَهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ الَّذِي
 كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ۗ أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِكَافٍ عَبْدَهُ ۗ وَ يَخَوِّفُونَكَ بِالَّذِينَ مِنْ دُونِهِ ۗ
 وَمَنْ يُضِلِلِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ هَادٍ ۗ وَمَنْ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ مُضِلٍّ ۗ
 أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِعَزِيزٍ ذِي انْتِقَامٍ ۗ وَ لَئِنْ سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَ
 الْأَرْضَ لَيَقُولَنَّ اللَّهُ ۗ قُلْ أَفَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ ۗ إِنْ أَرَادَنِيَ
 اللَّهُ بِضُرٍّ هَلْ هُنَّ كَاشِفَاتُ ضُرِّهِ ۗ أَوْ أَرَادَنِي بِرَحْمَةٍ هَلْ هُنَّ مُمْسِكَتُ
 رَحْمَتِهِ ۗ قُلْ حَسْبِيَ اللَّهُ ۗ عَلَيْهِ يَتَوَكَّلُ الْمُتَوَكِّلُونَ ۗ قُلْ يَقَوْمِ اعْمَلُوا عَلَى

Now, how can you imagine the plight of the one who will receive the severe punishment of the Day of Resurrection on his face?⁴⁴ To such wrongdoers it will be said, "Taste now (the fruit of) what you had been earning."⁴⁵ Many a people before them also denied likewise. Consequently, the scourge overtook them from whence they least expected. Then Allah made them to taste disgrace even in their worldly life, but the punishment of the Hereafter is far more terrible. Would that they knew it!

We have cited for the people in this Qur'ān every kind of parable, so that they may take heed. It is a Qur'ān in Arabic⁴⁶ without any crookedness in it,⁴⁷ so that they may guard against the evil end. Allah cites a parable: There is a man who is shared by many harsh masters, each pulling him to himself, and there is the other man who entirely belongs to one master. Can the two be alike in comparison?⁴⁸—Praise be to Allah!⁴⁹ But most of the people have no knowledge.⁵⁰ (O Prophet,) you shall die, and they, too, shall die.⁵¹ Then on the Day of Resurrection, you all will present your disputes before your Lord. Then, who could be more wicked than the one who invented a falsehood against Allah, and denied the Truth when it came before him? Is not there in Hell a place for such disbelievers? And the one who came with the Truth, and those who confirmed it, they indeed shall remain secure from the torment.⁵² They shall get from their Lord whatever they will desire.⁵³ This is the compensation of those who do right, so that Allah may wipe off from their account their worst deeds and reward them according to their best deeds.⁵⁴

(O Prophet:) Is not Allah enough for His servant? These people frighten you with others besides Him,⁵⁵ whereas there is none to guide him whom Allah lets go astray, and there is none to misguide him whom He guides aright. Is not Allah Mighty and capable of

revenge?⁵⁶ If you ask them, "Who created the heavens and the earth?" they will say, "Allah." Ask them, "When the fact is this, do you think that if Allah wills harm for me, your these goddesses, whom you invoke instead of Allah, will avert His harm from me? Or, if Allah wills to show me mercy, will they be able to withhold His mercy?" Therefore, tell them, "Allah is enough for me. In Him do those who trust place their trust."⁵⁷ Tell them plainly, "O my people: Do whatever you can,⁵⁸ so shall I. Soon you shall come to know as to whom comes the disgraceful torment and who gets the enduring punishment." (O Prophet:) We have sent down to you for all mankind this Book with the truth. Now whosoever adopts the right way, will do so for his own sake, and whosoever goes astray, will himself bear the burden of his deviation: you are not responsible for them.⁵⁹

44. One takes a blow on one's face only when one is absolutely helpless and powerless, otherwise until one has some power to resist, one goes on receiving the blows on the other parts of one's body but saves one's face. Therefore, here the extreme state of helplessness of a person has been depicted, saying that he will receive the severe punishment on his face.

45. The word *kasab*, in the Qur'ānic terminology, implies one's deserving and earning a reward and punishment in consequence of one's actions and deeds. The real earning of a doer of good is that he becomes worthy of Allah's reward, and the earning of the evil-doer is the punishment that he will receive in the Hereafter.

46. That is, "It has not been sent down in a foreign language so that the people of Makkah and Arabia should stand in need of a translator or interpreter, but it is in their own language, which they can understand directly."

47. That is, "There is nothing of double-dealing in it so that a common man should find it difficult to understand, but everything has been presented in it in a straightforward manner, from which everyone can know what this Book states as wrong and why, what it states as right and on what ground, what it wants the people to

accept and what it wants them to reject, and what it enjoins and what it forbids."

48. Allah in this parable has explained the difference between *shirk* and *Tauhid* and the impact each has on human life so clearly that it is not possible to put across such a vast theme so concisely and effectively in other words. Everyone will admit that the person who has many masters, each one pulling him to himself, and the masters also so ill-tempered that no one spares him time in his service to obey the other, and no one rests content only with threatening and cursing him if he fails to carry out his command from among the contradictory commands of the other masters, but is bent upon punishing him, his life would certainly be in great anguish. On the contrary, the person who is the slave or servant of only one master, would be living a life of ease and comfort because he will not have to serve and seek the pleasure of another master. This is such a straightforward thing which does not need deep consideration for its understanding. After this it remains no longer difficult for a person to understand that the peace of mind and satisfaction that accrue to him from the service of One God, can never accrue from the service of many gods.

Here, it should be understood well that the parable of many ill-tempered and contesting masters cannot apply to the images of stone, but it only applies to living masters, who practically give contradictory commands to man and keep pulling him to themselves in actual reality. One such master sits in one's own self, which presents before him desires of every kind and compels him to fulfil them. Other countless masters are there in the house, in the family, in the brotherhood, in the society, among the religious guides and the rulers and legislators, in the business and economic circles and among the dominant powers of civilization whose contradictory demands and requirements keep on pulling man to themselves at all times; then any god whose demand he fails to fulfil in any way, does not let him go unpunished in his own circle. However, each one's instrument of punishment is different. Someone causes a heart-break, another takes offence, another humiliates, another boycotts, another bankrupts, another makes a religious or a legal attack. Man has no other way of being saved from this anguish and agony but to adopt the Way of *Tauhid* and become the slave of One God, and throw off the yoke of servitude of every other god.

Adoption of the Way of *Tauhid* also has two forms, which lead to different results:

First, that an individual should decide to become the servant of One God individually but his environment is hostile. In this case the external conflict and his anguish and agony might increase, but if he has adopted the Way sincerely, internal peace and satisfaction will necessarily accrue. He will turn down every such desire of the self as goes against the Divine Commands, or whose fulfilment may clash with the demands of God-worship. He will also reject every such demand of the family, society, nation, government, religious guides and economic powers that conflicts with the Divine Law. Consequently, he might have to face extreme hardships, rather he will surely face, but his heart will have full satisfaction that he is fulfilling the demand of the servitude of that God Whose servant he actually is, and that those whose servant he is not, have no right on him, because of which he may have to serve them against the Command of his God. No power of the world can deprive him of this satisfaction of the heart and peace of mind; so much so that even if he has to go to the gallows for its sake, he will go to it with a clear conscience, and he will have no compunction as to why he did not save his life by bowing before the false gods.

The second form is that the whole society be established on the basis of the *Tauhid* imbining the principles of morality, civilization, culture, education, religion, law, social custom, politics, economics in every sphere of life as a creed, which the Master of the Universe has given through His Book and His Messenger. The law should declare as a crime everything which God's religion has declared sinful and the government administration should try to eradicate the same; the system of education and training should prepare the minds and character to avoid the same; the same should be condemned from the religious pulpit, and regarded as vicious and forbidden in every economic enterprise. Likewise, everything that Allah's religion has declared as good and virtuous should be protected and defended by the law, developed by the administrative forces, impressed in the minds and instilled in character by the entire system of education and training, infused from the religious pulpit, admired by the society and followed by it practically and enforced in every economic enterprise. This is how man can attain to perfect internal and external peace and satisfaction, and all the doors to material and spiritual progress are thrown open, for the conflict in it between

God-worship and the worship of others would be reduced to the minimum.

Although Islam invites every single individual to adopt *Tauhid* as his creed and to worship Allah alone, braving every danger and hardship, even in the absence of the established order, it cannot be denied that Islam's ultimate aim and object is to establish this second order, and the same has been the objective of the endeavours of all the Prophets: to bring into existence a community of the Muslims, who should follow Allah's Religion collectively, free from the domination and influence of unbelief and the unbelievers. No one, unless he is unaware of the Qur'an and the Sunnah and senseless, can say that the objective of the Prophets' struggle has been only the faith and obedience of the individual, and that it has never been their aim to enforce and establish Islam in the society and state.

49. Here, in order to understand the real significance of *al-hamdu-lillah* (praise be to Allah), one should visualise this scene: After presenting the above question before the people the speaker observed a pause so that the opponents of *Tauhid* could give an answer to it if they had any. Then, when they could not give any answer, and from nowhere it was said that both were equal, the speaker said: "*Al-hamdu-lillah*: Thank God that you too appreciate the difference between the two situations and none among you can dare say that slavery to many masters is better than slavery to one master, or that both are equal."

50. That is, "You fully understand and appreciate the difference between slavery to one master and slavery to many masters, but when you are made to understand the difference between God-worship and the worship of many gods, you show lack of understanding."

51. There is a subtle gap between the preceding sentence and this, which can be filled by every intelligent person himself by a little consideration of the context. It contains this theme: "You are making every effort to make the people understand a simple thing in a simple way, but they are not only showing stubbornness with regard to what you say and rejecting it but are also bent upon harming you in order to suppress the manifest truth. Well, neither you are immortal nor they: both you and they have to die one day: then, each of you will experience his own end."

52. It means this: "As to who will receive punishment in the

trial before Allah on the Day of Resurrection, you should note it well that the punishment inevitably will be inflicted on those wicked people who invented a false creed that there were other associates also with Allah, who had a share in His Being, authority, powers and rights, and worse than that, when the truth was presented before them, they not only paid no heed to it, but, on the contrary, treated the one who presented it as an impostor. As far as the person who came with the truth, and those who affirmed faith in him, are concerned there can obviously be no question of their receiving any punishment from the Court of Allah."

53. One should note that the words used here are *'inda Rabbi-him* (with their Lord) and not *fil-jannah* (in Paradise), and obviously man reaches in the presence of his Lord just after death. Therefore, the intention of the verse seems to be: Not only after entering Paradise but right from the time of death till his entry into Paradise also Allah will treat the righteous believer in the same kind manner. The believer will certainly desire to be saved from the torment of *barzakh*, from the severities of the Day of Resurrection and Judgment, from the humiliation of the Plain of Gathering and from the punishment of his errors and shortcomings, and Allah Almighty will fulfil all his these desires.

54. The people who believed in the Holy Prophet had happened to commit most heinous sins, both ideological and moral, in the days of ignorance, and after affirmation of the faith the good that they did was not only that they gave up the falsehood they had been professing and accepted the Truth that the Holy Prophet had presented, but in addition, they had performed the best righteous acts in morality, devotion and in their dealings with others. Allah says: The worst deeds that they had committed in the days of ignorance will be wiped off from their account, and they will be rewarded for the best of their deeds found in their conduct book.

55. The disbelievers of Makkah used to say to the Holy Prophet, "You behave insolently in respect of our deities and utter rude words against them: you do not know how powerful they are and what miraculous powers they possess. Anybody who dishonoured them was ruined. If you also do not desist from what you say against them, you too will be annihilated."

56. That is, "This also is a result of their lack of guidance that the foolish people esteem highly the power and honour of their deities but they never think that Allah also is Almighty and they

can also be punished for insulting Him by the *shirk* they are committing against Him."

57. Ibn Abi Hātim has related from Ibn 'Abbās that the Holy Prophet said: "The person who desires that he should become most powerful among men should repose his trust in Allah; and the person who desires that he should become the wealthiest among men should have more trust in that which is with Allah than that which is in his own hand; and the person who desires that he should become most honourable among men should fear Allah Almighty."

58. That is, "You may go on doing what you can in order to harm me and do not give me any respite."

59. That is, "It is not for you to bring them to the Right Path. Your only duty is to present the Right Path before them. If they prefer to remain astray after that, you are not responsible for it."

مَكَانَتِكُمْ إِنِّي عَامِلٌ فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٤٤﴾ مَنْ يَأْتِيهِ عَذَابٌ يُخْزِيهِ وَ
 يَحِلُّ عَلَيْهِ عَذَابٌ مُّقِيمٌ ﴿١٤٥﴾ إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ لِلنَّاسِ بِالْحَقِّ فَمَنِ
 اهْتَدَى فَلِنَفْسِهِ ۖ وَمَنْ ضَلَّ فَإِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهَا ۖ وَمَا أَنْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِوَكِيلٍ ﴿١٤٦﴾
 اللَّهُ يَتَوَقَّى الْأَنْفُسَ حِينَ مَوْتِهَا وَالَّتِي لَمْ تَمُتْ فِي مَنَامِهَا ۖ فَيُمْسِكُ
 الَّتِي قَضَىٰ عَلَيْهَا الْمَوْتَ وَيُرْسِلُ الْأُخْرَىٰ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ
 لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿١٤٧﴾ أَمِ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ شُفَعَاءَ ۗ قُلْ أَوْ كَو
 كَانُوا لَا يَمْلِكُونَ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٤٨﴾ قُلْ لِلَّهِ الشَّفَاعَةُ جَمِيعًا ۗ لَهُ مُلْكُ
 السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۗ ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ۗ وَإِذَا ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ اشْمَأَزَّتْ
 قُلُوبُ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ ۗ وَإِذَا ذُكِرَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ دُونِهِ إِذَا هُمْ
 يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ ﴿١٤٩﴾ قُلِ اللَّهُمَّ فَاطِرَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۗ عَالِمَ الْغَيْبِ ۗ وَالشَّهَادَةِ
 أَنْتَ تَحْكُمُ بَيْنَ عِبَادِكَ فِي مَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ ۗ وَأَلَوْ أَنَّ لِلَّذِينَ
 ظَلَمُوا مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا وَمِثْلَهُ مَعَهُ لَافْتَدَوْا بِهِ مِنْ سُوءِ الْعَذَابِ
 يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ۗ وَبَدَأَ لَهُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يَكُونُوا يَحْتَسِبُونَ ﴿١٥٠﴾ وَبَدَأَ لَهُمْ
 سَيِّئَاتُ مَا كَسَبُوا وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ ﴿١٥١﴾ فَإِذَا مَسَّ
 الْإِنْسَانَ ضُرٌّ دَعَانَا ۗ ثُمَّ إِذَا خَوَلُّهُ نِعْمَةٌ مِنَّا قَالَ إِنَّمَا أُوتِيتُهُ عَلَىٰ
 عِلْمٍ ۗ بَلْ هِيَ فِتْنَةٌ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٥٢﴾ قَدْ قَالَهَا الَّذِينَ مِنْ
 قَبْلِهِمْ ۗ فَمَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿١٥٣﴾ فَأَصَابَهُمْ سَيِّئَاتُ مَا كَسَبُوا
 وَالَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْ هَؤُلَاءِ سَيُصِيبُهُمْ سَيِّئَاتُ مَا كَسَبُوا ۗ مَا هُمْ بِمُعْجِزِينَ ﴿١٥٤﴾
 أَوَلَمْ يَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ ۗ وَيَقْدِرُ ۗ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ

It is Allah Who takes the souls at death, and the soul of the one, who has not yet died, during sleep.⁶⁰ Then He withholds that for whom He decrees death and restores the souls of others till an appointed time. In this there are many signs for the people who reflect.⁶¹ What! Have they taken besides Allah others as intercessors?⁶² Say to them, "Will they intercede even if they have no power whatever nor understanding?" Say, "Intercession is wholly in the power of Allah:⁶³ His is the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth. Then, to Him you will be returned."

When Allah alone is mentioned, the hearts of those who do not believe in the Hereafter, are filled with anguish; but when others beside Him are mentioned, they are at once filled with joy.⁶⁴ Say, "O God! Creator of the heavens and the earth, Knower of the unseen and the seen! You alone shall judge between Your servants concerning that in which they have been differing." Even if the wicked people possessed all the wealth of the earth, and as much more, they would be prepared to offer it all as ransom to escape the terrible punishment of the Day of Resurrection; yet from Allah there would appear before them that which they would never have imagined. There, all the evil results of their deeds shall become manifest to them, and the same which they had been mocking shall encompass them completely.

Man⁶⁵ is such that when a little affliction touches him, he calls upon Us, and when We bestow Our favour on him, he says, "I have been given this because of my knowledge!"⁶⁶ Nay, it is a trial, but most of them do not know.⁶⁷ The same was said also by those who went before them, but whatever they earned did not avail them anything.⁶⁸ So, they met the evil consequences of their deeds, and the wicked ones among these people, too,

shall soon meet the evil consequences of their deeds. They cannot frustrate Us. And do they not know that Allah provides abundantly for whom He wills and sparingly for whom He wills?⁶⁰ In this there are signs for those who believe.

60. "Taking the souls during sleep" implies the suspension of the powers of feeling and consciousness, understanding and will.

61. By this Allah wants every man to realize how life and death are entirely in His own hand. No one has the guarantee that he will certainly get up alive in the morning when he goes to sleep at night. No one knows what disaster could befall him within a moment, and whether the next moment would be a moment of life for him or of death. At any time, while asleep or awake, in the house or outside it, some unforeseen calamity, from inside his body or from outside, can suddenly cause his death. Thus, man who is so helpless in the hand of God, would be foolish if he turned away from the same God or became heedless of Him.

62. That is, "In the first place, these people have foolishly presumed that there are some beings who wield great influence with Allah, and whose intercession is never turned down, whereas there is no proof of their being intercessors at all, nor has Allah ever said that they hold such a position with Him, nor did these beings themselves ever claim that they would use their influence with Allah and help them out in every case. Another folly of these people is that they have ignored the real Master and have believed the imaginary beings to be all-powerful, who deserve to receive all their devotion and dedication "

63. That is, "Not to speak of getting his intercession granted, no one has the power to stand before Allah as an intercessor. The right to grant or not to grant anyone the permission to intercede with Him exclusively rests with Allah. Then He may allow intercession for whomever He may please and forbid for whomever He may please." (For understanding the difference between the Islamic concept of intercession and the polytheistic concept, see Al-Baqarah: 255, Al-An'ām: 51, Yūnus: 3, 18, Hūd: 105, Ar-Ra'd: 11, An-Naml: 73, 84, Ṭā Hā: 109-110, Al-Anbiyā': 28, Al-Hijr: 76, and the E.N.'s thereof and E.N. 40 of Sabā.

64. This evil is common to almost all polytheistic people of

the world, and even some unfortunate Muslims also suffer from it, They profess with the tongue that they believe in Allah, but when One Allah alone is mentioned before them, their faces are distorted, and they say, "This man certainly does not believe in the saints and holy men; that is why he talks of Allah and Allah alone." And if others besides Allah are mentioned, they are delighted, and their faces brighten up with joy. Their this attitude shows as to who is the actual object of their love and esteem. 'Allāma Ālūsī, in his commentary *Rūḥ al-Ma'āni*, has related his own experience here. He says: "One day I saw that a man was invoking the help of a dead saint in his affliction. I said; O bondsman of Allah, invoke Allah, for He Himself says: 'If My servants ask you, O Prophet, concerning Me, tell them I am quite near to them. I hear and answer the prayer of the supplicant when he calls to Me.'" (Al-Baqarah: 186). Hearing this the man became angry; the people told me afterwards that he said: This man is a denier of the saints; and some others heard him also say: The saints answer the prayers more promptly than does Allah."

65. "The man": the one who has aversion to Allah and whose face is distorted on hearing Allah alone being mentioned.

66. This sentence can have two meanings: (1) "That Allah knows that I am worthy of this blessing; that is why He has given me all this, otherwise He would not have blessed me if I had been an evil and wicked person in His sight;" and (2) "that I have attained to this by virtue of my ability."

67. People ignorantly think that whoever is being blessed by Allah in some way is being so blessed necessarily on account of his worth and ability and that the same is a sign or proof of his being a favourite in His sight; whereas the fact is that whoever is being given something here, is being given it for the sake of a trial by Allah. This is a means of the test, and not any reward for ability. otherwise many able and worthy people would not be living in poverty and many unworthy people would not be rolling in prosperity. Likewise, these worldly blessings are not a sign of one's being a favourite with Allah either. Everyone can see that many good people whose goodness is un-questionable are living in hardships in the world, and many wicked people whose evildoing is well known are enjoying the pleasures of life. Now, can a sensible man take

(Contd. on p. 204)

لِقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١١٥﴾ قُلْ يَعْبَادِي الَّذِينَ اسْرِفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا
 مِن رَّحْمَةِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿١١٦﴾
 وَأَنِيبُوا إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ وَأَسْلِمُوا لَهُ مِن قَبْلِ أَن يَأْتِيَكُمُ الْعَذَابُ ثُمَّ لَا
 تُنصَرُونَ ﴿١١٧﴾ هُوَ أَتَّبِعُوا أَحْسَنَ مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكُم مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ مِّن قَبْلِ أَن يَأْتِيَكُمُ
 الْعَذَابُ بَغْتَةً وَ أَنْتُمْ لَا تَشْعُرُونَ ﴿١١٨﴾ أَنْ تَقُولَ نَفْسٌ بِحَصْرَتِي عَلَىٰ مَا
 قَرَّطْتُ فِي جَنبِ اللَّهِ وَإِن كُنْتُ لَمِنَ السَّخِرِينَ ﴿١١٩﴾ أَوْ تَقُولَ لَوْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ
 هَدَانِي لَكُنْتُ مِنَ الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١٢٠﴾ أَوْ تَقُولَ حِينَ تَرَى الْعَذَابَ لَوْ أَنَّ لِي
 كَرَّةٌ فَأَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١٢١﴾ بَلَىٰ قَدْ جَاءَتْكَ آيَاتِي فَكَذَّبْتَ بِهَا وَاسْتَكْبَرْتَ
 وَ كُنْتَ مِنَ الْكٰفِرِينَ ﴿١٢٢﴾ وَ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ تَرَى الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ وُجُوهُهُم
 مُّسْوَدَّةٌ أَلَيْسَ فِي جَهَنَّمَ مَثْوًى لِّلْمُتَكَبِّرِينَ ﴿١٢٣﴾ وَ يُنَجِّي اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا
 بِفَارِزَتِهِمْ لَا يَمَسُّهُمُ السُّوءُ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿١٢٤﴾ اللَّهُ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ
 وَ هُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَكِيلٌ ﴿١٢٥﴾ لَهُ مَقَالِيدُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالَّذِينَ
 كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْخٰسِرُونَ ﴿١٢٦﴾ قُلْ أَغْيَرَ اللَّهُ تَأْمُرَاتِي أَعْبُدُ أَيُّهَا
 الْجَاهِلُونَ ﴿١٢٧﴾ وَ لَقَدْ أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ وَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكَ لَئِن أَشْرَكَتَ
 لَيَحْبَطَنَّ عَمَلُكَ وَ لَتَكُونَ مِنَ الْخٰسِرِينَ ﴿١٢٨﴾ بَلِ اللَّهُ فَاعْبُدْ وَ كُنْ مِنَ
 الشَّاكِرِينَ ﴿١٢٩﴾ وَ مَا قَدَرُوا اللَّهَ حَتَّىٰ قَدَرَهُ اللَّهُ وَ الْأَرْضُ جَمِيعًا قَبْضَتُهُ يَوْمَ
 الْقِيٰمَةِ وَ السَّمٰوٰتُ مَطْوِيٰتًا بِيَمِينِهِ سُبْحٰنَهُ وَ تَعٰلَىٰ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿١٣٠﴾ وَ
 نُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ فَصَعِقَ مَنْ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ مَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا مَنْ شَاءَ
 اللَّهُ ثُمَّ نُفِخَ فِيهِ أُخْرَىٰ فَإِذَا هُمْ قِيَامٌ يَنْظُرُونَ ﴿١٣١﴾ وَ أَشْرَقَتِ الْأَرْضُ

(O Prophet,) say, "O My servants,⁷⁰ who have wronged their own souls: Do not despair of Allah's mercy: surely Allah forgives all sins: He is the All-Forgiving, the All-Merciful."⁷¹ Return to your Lord and submit to Him before the scourge overtakes you, and then you may get no help from anywhere. And follow the best aspect⁷² of the Book sent down by your Lord, before the scourge comes down upon you suddenly while you are unaware, lest afterwards someone should say, "Alas for the negligence (in duty) I showed towards Allah! Indeed, I was among those who mocked." Or: "Would that Allah had shown me guidance so that I too would have been among the righteous!" Or, when he sees the torment: "Would that I could get another chance so that I also should be among the doers of good!" (And then he should get this answer:) "Why not! My Revelations did come to you; then you denied them, and showed arrogance, and you were among the disbelievers." You will see that on the Day of Resurrection the faces of those who have invented falsehoods against Allah, will be blackened. Is not there in Hell enough room for the arrogant? On the contrary, those who have adopted righteousness here, Allah will rescue them because of their means of success. No evil shall touch them nor will they grieve.

53-61

Allah is the Creator of everything and over everything He is the Guardian.⁷³ To Him belong the keys of the treasures of the heavens and the earth; and the losers are only those who disbelieve His Revelations. (O Prophet,) say to them, "Ignorant people! Do you bid me worship others than Allah?" (Tell them plainly this because) the Revelation sent to you and to all the Prophets before you has been this: "If you commit *shirk*, all your works will be rendered vain⁷⁴ and you will be among the losers." Therefore, (O Prophet), you should worship only Allah and be among His grateful servants.

62-66

67-68

These people have not recognized the true worth of Allah as His worth should truly be recognized.⁷⁵ (As for His Omnipotence) the entire earth on the Day of Resurrection shall be in His grasp and the heavens shall be rolled up in His right hand.⁷⁶ Glorified is He and Exalted above what they associate with Him.⁷⁷ And the Trumpet shall be blown on that Day⁷⁸ and all those who are in the heavens and the earth shall fall down dead except those whom Allah may allow to live. Then the Trumpet shall be blown again and they will all stand up, looking around.⁷⁹

(Contd. from p. 201)

the affliction of the one and the life of ease and comfort of the other as an argument to say that Allah hates the good man and prefers the bad man ?

68. That is, "When they were seized for evildoing, the ability of which they were so proud, did not avail them anything, and this also became known that they were not Allah's favourites. Evidently, if their earning had been due to their capability and their being favourites with Allah, they would not have been seized for evildoing at all."

69. That is, "The abundance or restriction of the provisions is based on another law of Allah, which has some other wisdom. The distribution of the provisions does not at all depend on man's worthiness and ability, or on his being a favourite of Allah, or for being under His wrath." (For details, see At-Taubah : 55, 69, 85; Yūnus : 17; Hūd : 3, 27; Ar-Ra'd : 26; Al-Kahf : 34-36; Ṭā Hā : 131-132; Al-Anbiyā' : 105; Al-Mu'min : Introduction and vv. 55-56; Ash-Shu'arā' : 111; Al-Qaṣaṣ : 78, 82. and the E.N.'s thereof, and E.N.'s 54 to 60 of Sabā).

70. Some commentators have given a strange interpretation to these words. They say that Allah Himself has commanded the Holy Prophet to address the people as "My servants;" therefore, all men are the servants of the Holy Prophet. This interpretation is no interpretation at all but a worst distortion of the meaning of the Qur'ān and indeed tampering with the Word of Allah. If this interpretation were correct, it would falsify and negate the whole Qur'ān.

For the Qur'ān, from the beginning to the end, establishes the concept that men are the servants of Allah alone, and its whole message revolves around the point that they should serve none but One Allah alone. The Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) himself was Allah's servant. Allah had sent him not as *rabb* (sustainer, providence) but as a Messenger so that he should himself serve Him and teach the other people also to serve Him alone. After all, how can a sensible person believe that the Holy Prophet might have one day stood up before the disbelieving Quraish of Makkah and made the sudden proclamation: "You are in fact the slaves of Muḥammad and not of al-'Uzzah and ash-Shams." (We seek Allah's refuge from this).

71. The address here is to all mankind. There is no weighty argument to regard only the believers as the addressees. As has been observed by 'Allāma Ibn Kathīr, to address such a thing to the common men does not mean that Allah forgives all sins without repentance, but Allah Himself has explained in the following verses that sins are forgiven only when the sinner turns to Allah's worship and service and adopts obedience to the message sent down by Him. As a matter of fact, this verse brought a message of hope for those people who had committed mortal sins like murder, adultery, theft, robbery, etc. in the days of ignorance, and had despaired whether they would ever be forgiven. To them it has been said: "Do not despair of Allah's mercy: whatever you might have done in the past, if you sincerely turn to your Lord's obedience, you will be forgiven every sin." The same interpretation of this verse has been given by Ibn 'Abbās, Qatādah, Mujāhid and Ibn Zaid. (Ibn Jarīr, Bukhārī, Muslim, Abu Da'ūd, Tirmidhi). For further explanation, see Al-Furqān: 70-71 and the E.N.'s thereof.

72. "To follow the best aspect of the Book of Allah" means that one should carry out the Commands Allah has given and refrain from what He has forbidden, and learn lessons from what He has brought out in the parables and narratives. As against this, the one who turns away from Allah's Commands, indulges in the forbidden things, and does not heed His admonitions, follows the worst aspect of the Book of Allāh, i.e. that aspect which the Divine Book has declared as the most evil.

73. That is, "He did not just create the world and then left it alone, but He is constantly guarding and watching over everything."

Just as everything in the world came into being by His act of creation, so everything is living and surviving by His leave, and flourishing and functioning only under His protection and care."

74. That is, "No act which is performed along with *shirk* will be adjudged as a righteous act, and no one who, being a *mushrik*, performs many acts as good acts in his personal judgement, will deserve any reward for them, and his whole life work will be deemed to have gone waste."

75. That is, "They have no conception of the greatness and glory of Allah; they have never tried to understand how high is the position of the Lord of the Universe and how insignificant are the beings whom these foolish people have made associates in Godhead and worthy of their worship."

76. This is a figurative way of describing the complete control and authority of Allah over the earth and heavens. Just as a man encloses a small ball in the hollow of his hand with perfect ease, or a person rolls up an handkerchief in his hand without any difficulty, so will all men (who fail to conceive the greatness and glory of Allah) see with their own eyes, on the Day of Resurrection, that the earth and the heavens are like an ordinary ball and a small scroll in the hand of Allah. Traditions have been related in Musnad Ahmad, Bukhāri, Muslim, Nasā'i, Ibn Mājah, Ibn Jarir and others, on the authority of Ḥadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar and Ḥadrat Abū Hurairah, that once during a sermon the Holy Prophet recited this verse and then said: "Allah will hold the heavens and the earths (i.e. the planets) in His grasp and will roll them about in such a way as a child rolls a ball, and will say: 'I am God, the One: I am the King: I am the All-Mighty, Owner of glory: Where are the kings of the world? Where are the tyrants? Where are the arrogant?'" —Saying these words he started so shaking that we feared that he might topple over along with the pulpit."

77. That is, there is no comparison whatever between Allah's greatness and glory and the insignificance of those who are associated with Him in Godhead.

78. For the explanation of *Ṣūr* (Trumpet), see Al-An'ām: 73, Ibrāhīm: 48, Al-Kahf: 99, Ṭā Hā: 102-103, Al-Ḥajj: 1, Al-Mu'minūn: 101, An-Naml: 87 and the E.N.'s thereof.

79. Here, mention has been made of the Trumpet's being blown

only twice. Besides, in Sūrah An-Naml there is the mention of another blowing of the Trumpet before these two, on hearing which everything in the earth and the heavens will be struck with terror (v, 87). On this very basis, the *Ḥadīths* mention that the Trumpet will be blown thrice : (1) *Nafakhat al-Faza'*, on hearing which everything will be struck with terror, (2) *nafakhat aṣ-Ṣa'q*, on which everyone will fall down dead, and (3) *nafakhat al-qiyām li-Rabbil-'ālamīn*, i.e. the Trumpet on the blowing of which all dead men will return to life and arise from their graves to present themselves before their Lord.

يُنُورِ رَبِّهَا وَوُضِعَ الْكِتَابُ وَجَاءُوا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالشُّهَدَاءِ وَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ
 بِالْحَقِّ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَوُفِّيَتْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا عَمِلَتْ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا
 يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾ وَسِيقَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِلَىٰ جَهَنَّمَ زُمَرًا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءُوهَا
 فُتِحَتْ أَبْوَابُهَا وَقَالَ لَهُمْ خَزَنَتُهَا أَلَمْ يَأْتِكُمْ رُسُلٌ مِّنكُمْ يَتْلُونَ
 عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِ رَبِّكُمْ وَيُنذِرُونَكُمْ لِقَاءَ يَوْمِكُمْ هَٰذَا قَالُوا بَلَىٰ وَلَكِنْ حَقَّتْ
 كَلِمَةُ الْعَذَابِ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٤٩﴾ قِيلَ ادْخُلُوا أَبْوَابَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا
 فِيئْسَ مَثْوَى الْمُتَكَبِّرِينَ ﴿٥٠﴾ وَسِيقَ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا رَبَّهُمْ إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ زُمَرًا
 حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءُوهَا وَفُتِحَتْ أَبْوَابُهَا وَقَالَ لَهُمْ خَزَنَتُهَا سَلِّمُوا عَلَيْكُمْ
 طِبْتُمْ فَادْخُلُوهَا خَالِدِينَ ﴿٥١﴾ وَقَالُوا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي صَدَقَنَا وَعْدَهُ وَأَوْرَثَنَا
 الْأَرْضَ نَتَّبِعُوا مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ حَيْثُ نَشَاءُ فَنِعْمَ أَجْرُ الْعَامِلِينَ ﴿٥٢﴾ وَشَرَى
 الْمَلَائِكَةُ حَافِينَ مِنْ حَوْلِ الْعَرْشِ يُسَبِّحُونَ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ وَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ
 بِالْحَقِّ وَقِيلَ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٥٣﴾

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The earth will shine forth with the light of her Lord and the conduct book will be laid open, and the Prophets and the witnesses⁸⁰ shall be brought in, and the people shall be judged with full justice, and none shall be wronged. And every living being shall be recompensed fully for whatever it had done. Allah knows full well what the people do. 69-70

(After this Judgement) those who had disbelieved, shall be driven towards Hell, in groups, till, when they have reached there, its gates will be opened,⁸¹ and its keepers will say to them, "Did not Messengers come to you from among yourselves, who recited to you the Revelations of your Lord, and warned you that you shall have to encounter this Day?" They will reply, "Yes, they did come, but the sentence of punishment proved true against the disbelievers." It will be said, "Enter the gates of Hell, to dwell therein for ever. What an evil abode for the arrogant!" 71-72

And those who had refrained from the disobedience of their Lord shall be led towards Paradise, in groups, till, when they arrive there, and its gates shall already have been opened, its keepers will say, "Peace be upon you: you have fared well. Enter herein to dwell for ever." And they will say, "Praise is for Allah, Who has proved true to us His promise and made us heirs of the earth:⁸² now we can dwell in Paradise wherever we like."⁸³ How excellent a reward for the virtuous!⁸⁴ 73-74

And you will see the angels circling around the Throne, glorifying their Lord with His praises; and the people shall be judged with full justice, and it will be proclaimed; "Praise is for Allah, Lord of the worlds!"⁸⁵ 75

80. "The witnesses" : those who will bear witness to the effect that the Message of Allah had been conveyed to the people as well as those who will bear witness to the acts and deeds of the people. It is not necessary that these witnesses will be only human beings. The angels, the jinns, the beasts, men's own limbs, their dwelling places and the trees and stones, will all be included among the witnesses.

81. That is, the gates of Hell will not have already been opened but will be opened on their arrival there just as the gate of a prison is opened on the arrival of the culprits and is closed as soon as they have entered it.

82. For explanation, see Ṭā Hā : 106-107, 124 ; Al-Anbiyā' : 105-106 and the E.N.'s thereof.

83. That is, "The Paradise which has been granted to each of us, is now our property and we possess full rights over it."

84. Maybe this is said by the dwellers of Paradise, or maybe this sentence is added by Allah to what the dwellers of Paradise will say.

85. That is, the entire Universe will proclaim the praises of Allah Almighty.

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