

THE MEANING OF THE QUR'ĀN

Vol. XII

Sūrah Al-Mu'min—Sūrah Al-Ahqāf

(ARABIC TEXT WITH TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY)

By

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English Rendering

'ABDUL 'AZĪZ KAMĀL

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‘Abdul ‘Azīz Kamāl

XL

AL-MU'MIN الْمُؤْمِنُ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

XL

AL-MU'MIN الْمُؤْمِن

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name *Al-Mu'min* from verse 28, implying thereby, that it is a Sūrah in which *Al-Mu'min* (the Believer of Pharaoh's people) has been mentioned.

Period of Revelation

According to Ibn 'Abbās and Jābir bin Zaid, this Sūrah was sent down consecutively after Sūrah Az-Zumar, and its present position in the order of the Sūrahs in the Qur'ān is the same as its chronological order.

Background of Revelation

There are clear indications in the subject-matter of this Sūrah to the conditions in which it was revealed. The disbelievers of Makkah at that time were engaged in two kinds of the activities against the Holy Prophet. First, they were creating every kind of suspicion and misgiving in the minds of the people about the teaching of the Qur'ān and the message of Islam and about the Holy Prophet himself by starting many disputes and discussions, raising irrelevant objections and bringing ever new accusations so that the Holy Prophet and the believers were sick of trying to answer them. Second, they were preparing the ground for putting an end to the Holy Prophet himself. They were devising one plot after the other, and on one occasion had even taken the practical steps to execute a plot. Bukhārī has related a tradition on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin 'As saying that one day when the Holy Prophet was offering his Prayer in the precincts of the Ka'bah, suddenly 'Uqbah bin Abi Mu'aiṭ, rushed forward and putting a piece of cloth round his neck started twisting it so as to strangle him to death. Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr, who happened to go there in time, pushed him away. Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah says that when Abū Bakr was struggling with the cruel man, he was saying words to the effect: "Would you kill a man only because he says: Allah is my Lord?" With a little variation this event has also been mentioned in Ibn Hishām, Nasā'ī and Ibn Abī Ḥātim.

Theme and Topics

Both aspects of this have been clearly stated at the very outset, and then the whole following discourse is a most effective and instructive review of them.

As an answer to the conspiracies of murder the story of the Believer of the people of Pharaoh has been

narrated (vv. 23-55) and through this story three different lessons have been taught to the three groups:

(1) The disbelievers have been admonished: "Whatever you intend to do against Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace), the same did the Pharaoh with his might intend against the Prophet Moses. Now, would you like to meet with the same fate with which he met by plotting such conspiracies?"

(2) The Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) and his followers have been taught the lesson: "These wicked people may apparently be very strong and powerful and you very weak and helpless against them, yet you should rest assured that the might of that God Whose Word you are trying to raise high is superior to every other power. Therefore, you should only seek Allah's refuge in response to every and any dreadful threat that they utter against you, and then busy yourself after this in fearlessly performing your mission. The God-worshipper has only one answer to every threat of the tyrant: 'I have taken refuge in my Lord and your Lord against every arrogant person who does not believe in the Day of Reckoning.' (v. 27) Thus, if you go on performing your mission fearless of every danger and with full trust in God, His succour will ultimately reach you, and the Pharaohs of today shall be doomed just as the Pharaohs of yesterday. Till that time you will have to face and bear patiently every wave of persecution and tyranny that may be directed against you."

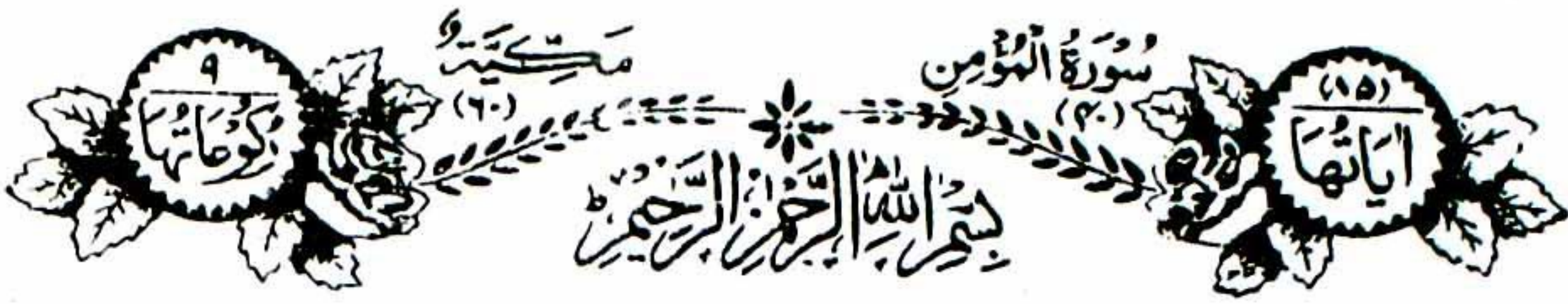
(3) Besides these two, there was a third group of the people also in the society, who had been convinced in their hearts that the Truth was only on the side of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace), and that the disbelieving Quraish were being

unjust and cruel. But in spite of the conviction they were watching quietly and unconcerned the conflict between the Truth and falsehood. Allah here has aroused their conscience as if to say: "When the enemies of the Truth have openly plotted, in front of your very eyes, it would be a sad reflection on you if you still remained indifferent. Under such conditions, unless a person's conscience has wholly become dead, he should rise and perform the duty, which a righteous man from among the courtiers of Pharaoh himself had performed at a time when the Pharaoh had made up his mind to kill the Prophet Moses. The circumstances that prevent you from raising your voice had also obstructed the way of the Believer, but he had full faith in Allah and disregarded all expediency; then note that the Pharaoh was not able to do him any harm."

Now as for the conspiracies, which were continuing in Makkah day and night to defeat the Truth, on the one hand, arguments have been given to prove the doctrines of *Tauhid* and the Hereafter as true, which were the real basis of the dispute between the Holy Prophet and the disbelievers, and it has been stated plainly and openly that the disbelievers are wrangling over those truths without any knowledge. On the other, the motives which were the real cause of the Quraishite chiefs' conflict against the Holy Prophet, have been exposed. Apparently they were trying to have the common people believe that they had some genuine objections against the teaching of the Prophet and his claim to prophethood; that is why they were not prepared to listen to him. But, in fact, this was their struggle for power. In verse 56, they have been openly warned, so as to say: "The real cause of your denial is your arrogance and vanity. You think that if you

acknowledge the prophethood of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace), your power and authority will come to an end. That is why you are straining every nerve to frustrate and defeat him."

In the same connection, the disbelievers have been warned again and again to the effect: "If you do not desist from wrangling against the Revelations of Allah, you will be doomed to the same fate as the nations of the past. Much worse torment awaits you in the Hereafter. Then you will repent, but it will be too late.



حَمْدًا تَنْزِيلُ الْكِتَابِ مِنَ اللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ غَافِرِ الذَّنْبِ وَقَابِلِ
 التَّوْبِ شَدِيدِ الْعِقَابِ ذِي الطَّوْلِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ إِلَهَ الْمَصِيرِينَ مَا يُجَادِلُ
 فِي آيَاتِ اللَّهِ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَلَا يَغْرُرُكَ تَقَلُّبُهُمْ فِي الْبِلَادِ كَذَّبَتْ
 قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ نُوحٍ وَالْأَحْزَابُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ وَهَمَّتْ كُلُّ أُمَّةٍ بِرَسُولِهِمْ
 لِيَأْخُذُوهُ وَجَدَلُوا بِالْبَاطِلِ لِيُدْحِضُوا بِهِ الْحَقَّ فَأَخَذْتُهُمْ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ

XL

AL-MU'MIN الْمُؤْمِن

Verses : 85

Revealed at Makkah

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

1-3 Hā. Mīm. The revelation of this Book is from Allah, the All-Mighty, the All-Knowing, the Forgiver of sin and Acceptor of repentance. He is stern in punishment and is highly Bountiful. There is no deity beside Him. To Him shall all return.¹

1-6 None dispute about the Revelations of Allah² but those who have disbelieved:³ so let not their strutting about in the lands deceive you.⁴ Before them the people of Noah also denied, and so did many a host after them. Every nation fell upon its Messenger to seize him: they all tried to defeat the Truth by means of falsehood, but,

at last, I seized them. Then, just see, how severe was My punishment! Likewise has this judgement of your Lord also proved true against those people who have denied that they would go to Hell.⁵

1. This is the introduction to the discourse. By this the listener has been forewarned to the effect : "What is being presented before you, is not the word of an ordinary being but of that God Who has infinite power." After this, some of Allah's attributes have been mentioned, one after the other, which bear a deep relevance to the following theme :

First, that He is "All-Mighty", i.e. He is Dominant over everything. His every decree concerning anybody is always enforced; none can fight Him and win; none can escape His grasp. Therefore, a person who expects to be successful after turning away from His Command and expects to frustrate His Message after having a dispute with Him is himself foolish. Such notions are only deceptions.

Second, that He is "All-Knowing", i.e. He does not say anything on mere conjecture, but has the direct knowledge of everything. Therefore, whatever information He gives about the supernatural realities, is true, and the one who does not accept it, is following nothing but ignorance. Likewise, He knows in what lies the true success of man and what rules and laws and commands are necessary for his well-being. His every teaching is based on wisdom and correct knowledge, which does not admit of any error. Therefore, if a person does not accept His guidance, he only wants to follow the path of his own ruin. Then, nothing from the acts and deeds of man can remain hidden from Him; so much so that He even knows the intentions of man, which are the real motives of his deeds. Therefore, man can never escape His punishment.

The third attribute is that He is "Forgiver of sin and Acceptor of repentance." This attribute brings hope and causes inducement, which has been mentioned so that the people who have led lives of sin, should not despair but should reform themselves with the hope that if they refrained from their behaviour even now, they could still be redeemed by Allah's mercy. Here, one should understand well that forgiving of sins and accepting of repentance are not necessarily one and the same thing, but in most cases Allah forgives

sins even without the repentance. For example, a person commits errors as well as does good, and his good acts become the means of forgiveness for his mistakes, whether or not he had opportunity to show repentance for the errors, but might even have forgotten them. Likewise, all the troubles and hardships and diseases and calamities that afflict man and cause him grief in the world, serve as penance for his mistakes. That is why mention of forgiveness of sins has been made separately from the acceptance of repentance. But one should remember that the concession of forgiveness of errors without repentance only refers to those believers, who are free from defiance and who committed sins due to human weakness and not persistence in pride and sin.

The fourth attribute is that "He is stern in punishment." By this the people have been warned that just as Allah is Merciful for those who adopt the way of His service, so He is stern for those who adopt an attitude of rebellion against Him. When a person (or persons) transgresses the limits where he can still deserve pardon and forgiveness from Allah, then he becomes worthy of His punishment, and His punishment is so dreadful that only a fool would persist in his wrongdoing.

The fifth attribute is that "He is Bountiful", i.e. He is Generous and Beneficent : all creatures are being showered with His blessings and favours every moment : whatever the servants are getting, they are getting only through His bounty³ and beneficence.

After these five attributes, two realities have been stated expressly : (1) That none but Allah is the Deity no matter how many false gods the people might have set up; and (2) that to Him everyone must return : there is no other deity which can call the people to account and reward or punish them. Therefore, if somebody makes another his deity, apart from Him, he will himself face the consequences of his folly.

2. "To dispute" means using crooked arguments in reasoning, raising irrelevant objections, isolating a word or a sentence from its context, subjecting it to hair-splitting and making it the basis of doubts and accusations, misconstruing words from their true sense and intention so that neither should one understand the meaning oneself nor let others understand it. Such a way of dispute is adopted only by those whose difference of opinion is based on ill-will and malice. If a well-intentioned opponent disputes a point, he does so

for the sake of arriving at the truth, and wants to be satisfied through discussion whether his own point of view is correct. Such a discussion is engaged in quest of truth and not for refutation. Contrary to this, the real purpose of the malicious opponent is not to understand anything nor to help others to understand, but to degrade and humiliate the other man; he joins a discussion only with the intention that he would not let the other man carry his point. That is why he never faces the real problems but launches his attacks only on the irrelevant issues.

3. Here, the word "*kufr*" has been used in two meanings: for ingratitude and for denial of the truth. According to the first meaning, the sentence would mean: As against the Revelations of Allah this sort of behaviour is adopted only by those who have forgotten His bounties and who have even lost the feeling that it is by His bounty that they are flourishing. According to the second, it would mean: "This sort of behaviour is adopted only by those who have turned away from the truth and are determined not to accept it." From the context it becomes obvious that here the disbeliever does not imply every non-Muslim, for a non-Muslim who disputes a point in good faith for the sake of understanding Islam, and who tries to grasp thoroughly those things which he finds hard to follow, although a non-Muslim technically, yet that which has been condemned in this verse does not apply to him.

4. There is a gap between the previous sentence and this, which has been left for the listener to fill. From the context and style it becomes evident that those who adopt the attitude of disputation as against the Revelations of Allah Almighty, can never escape the punishment. Therefore, they shall inevitably meet their doom. Now, if one sees that those people, even after adopting such an attitude, are strutting about, their business is flourishing, their governments functioning in a grand style, and they are enjoying the good things of life, one should not be misled into thinking that they have escaped Allah's punishment, or that war against Allah's Revelations is a sport which can be adopted as a pastime and its evil consequences warded off easily. This, in fact, is a respite which they have been granted by Allah. Those who abuse this respite for doing more mischief are indeed preparing for an ignominious end.

5. That is, "The torment that seized them in the world was

(Contd. on p. 4)

عِقَابِ ۝ وَكَذَلِكَ حَقَّتْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنَّهُمْ أَصْحَابُ
النَّارِ ۝ الَّذِينَ يَسْمُلُونَ الْعَرْشَ وَمَنْ حَوْلَهُ يُسَبِّحُونَ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ وَ
يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُونَ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا رَبَّنَا وَسِعْتَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ رَحْمَةً وَ
عِلْمًا فَاعْفِرْ لِلَّذِينَ تَابُوا وَاتَّبَعُوا سَبِيلَكَ وَقِهِمْ عَذَابَ الْجَحِيمِ ۝ رَبَّنَا
وَأَدْخِلْهُمْ جَنَّاتِ عَدْنٍ الَّتِي وَعَدْتَهُمْ وَمَنْ صَلَحَ مِنْ آبَائِهِمْ وَأَزْوَاجِهِمْ
وَذُرِّيَّتِهِمْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ۝ وَقِهِمُ السَّيِّئَاتِ وَمَنْ تَقِ السَّيِّئَاتِ
يَوْمَئِذٍ فَقَدْ رَحِمْتَهُ ۝ وَذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ۝ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يُنَادُونَ
لَمَقَّتْ اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ مِنْ مَقَّتِكُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ إِذْ تُدْعَوْنَ إِلَى الْإِسْلَامِ فَتُكْفَرُونَ ۝
قَالُوا رَبَّنَا آمَنَّا اثْنَتَيْنِ وَأَحْيَيْتَنَا اثْنَتَيْنِ فَاعْتَرَفْنَا بِذُنُوبِنَا فَهَلْ إِلَى
خُرُوجٍ مِنْ سَبِيلٍ ۝ ذَلِكُمْ بِأَنَّهُ إِذَا دُعِيَ اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ كَفَرْتُمْ وَإِنْ يُشْرَكَ
بِهِ تُؤْمِنُوا ۝ فَالْحُكْمُ لِلَّهِ الْعَلِيِّ الْكَبِيرِ ۝ هُوَ الَّذِي يُرِيكُمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُنَزِّلُ لَكُمْ
مِنَ السَّمَاءِ رِزْقًا ۝ وَمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ إِلَّا مَنْ يُنِيبُ ۝ فَادْعُوا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ
الدِّينَ وَكُفِّرُوا الكُفْرُونَ ۝ رَفِيعُ الدَّرَجَاتِ ذُو الْعَرْشِ يُلْقِي الرُّوحَ مِنْ
أَمْرِهِ عَلَى مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ لِيُنذِرَ يَوْمَ التَّلَاقِ ۝ يَوْمَ هُمْ بَرْزُورٌ لَا
يَخْفَى عَلَى اللَّهِ مِنْهُمْ شَيْءٌ ۝ لِمَنِ الْمُلْكُ الْيَوْمَ ۝ اللَّهُ الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ ۝ الْيَوْمَ
تُجْزَى كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ ۝ لَا ظُلْمَ الْيَوْمَ ۝ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ ۝ وَ
أَنْذِرْهُمْ يَوْمَ الْأَزْفَةِ إِذِ الْقُلُوبُ لَدَى الْحَنَاجِرِ كَظِيمِينَ ۝ مَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ
مِنْ حَيٍّ وَلَا شَفِيعٍ يُطَاعُ ۝ يُعَامُرُ خَائِنَةَ الْأَعْيُنِ وَمَا تُخْفِي الصُّدُورُ ۝
وَاللَّهُ يَقْضِي بِالْحَقِّ ۝ وَالَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ لَا يَقْضُونَ بِشَيْءٍ ۝

عليه
صلى
الله
عليه
وسلم

ع
٦

The angels who bear the Divine Throne and those who stand around it, all are glorifying their Lord with His praises. They affirm faith in Him, and ask forgiveness for the believers.⁶ They say, "Our Lord, You embrace everything in Your mercy and knowledge,⁷ so forgive and save from the torment of Hell⁸ those who have repented and followed Your Way.⁹ Admit them, Our Lord, to the eternal Gardens which You have promised them,¹⁰ and (admit therein also) of their parents and wives and children who are righteous.¹¹ You are surely All-Mighty, All-Wise. And deliver them from evils,¹² for whomever You delivered from evils on the Day of Resurrection,¹³ to him You showed great mercy. This is indeed the supreme success."

7-9

To those who have disbelieved, it will be proclaimed, on the Day of Resurrection: "Allah's wrath against you was greater than is your own anger against yourselves today, when you were called to belief and you disbelieved."¹⁴ They will answer, "Our Lord, You indeed gave us death twice and life twice.¹⁵ Now we confess our sins.¹⁶ Is there any way out from here?"¹⁷ (They will be answered:) "You have incurred this fate because when you were called towards Allah, the One, you refused to believe, and when others were associated with Allah, you readily believed. Now the Judgement rests with Allah, the High, the Great!"¹⁸

10-12

It is He Who shows you His Signs¹⁹ and sends down for you sustenance from heaven,²⁰ but only such a one learns lessons (from the observation of these Signs) who turns to Allah again and again.²¹ (Therefore, O you who turn to Him:) "Invoke Allah alone, making your religion sincerely His,²² much as the disbelievers may dislike your conduct."

13-14

Exalted in ranks²³ and Master of the Throne,²⁴ He

15-20

sends down the Spirit by His Command upon whomsoever of His servants He pleases,²⁵ to give warning of the Day of Meeting,²⁶ the Day when all people shall be naked, and nothing of them will be hidden from Allah. (On that Day it will be asked:) "Whose is the Kingdom today?"²⁷ (The whole universe will cry out: "Of Allah, the One, the Omnipotent." (It will be said): "Today every living being shall be recompensed for what it has earned: none shall be wronged today."²⁸ And Allah is swift at reckoning."²⁹ O Prophet, warn them of the Day that has approached near,³⁰ when the hearts will leap up to the throats and the people will be standing mute, grief-stricken: the wrongdoers will neither have any kindly friend³¹ nor any intercessor who may be listened to.³² Allah is aware of the treachery of the eyes and even of the secrets that the breasts keep hidden, and Allah shall judge with full justice. As for those whom (the *mushriks*) invoke instead of Allah, they shall judge nothing. Indeed, Allah alone hears everything and sees everything.³³

(Contd. from p. 11)

not their final punishment, but Allah has also decreed that they shall go to Hell." Another meaning can be: "Just as the nations of the past have gone to their doom, so will those people also who are committing disbelief go to Hell, according to the fixed decree of Allah."

5. This thing has been said for the consolation of the Holy Prophet's Companions, who were feeling greatly discouraged at the impudence and rebellious attitude of the disbelievers of Makkah as against their own helplessness, as if to say: "Why do you feel grieved at what these mean and worthless people say? You have the support of the angels who bear the Divine Throne and of those who stand around it; they are interceding with Allah for you." The mention of the angels who bear the Divine Throne and of those who stand around it, has been made, instead of the common angels, to impress the fact that not to speak of the common angels of Divine Kingdom, even the angels who are the pillars of this Kingdom, being nearest

in rank and station to Allah, bear deep sympathy and regard for you. Then the words: "They affirm faith in Him and ask forgiveness for the believers", show that the relationship of the faith is the real relationship, which has joined the heavenly creatures and the earthly creatures together, and which has induced sympathy and esteem in the angels stationed around the Throne for the mortal humans inhabiting the earth, who affirm faith in Allah just like them. The angels' affirming the faith in Allah does not mean that they could disbelieve, and they adopted belief instead of disbelief, but it means that they believe in the sovereignty of Allah, the One, alone; there is no other being that may be commanding them and they submit before it in utter obedience. When the same attitude and behaviour was adopted by the human believers, a strong relationship of cherishing a common creed and faith was established between them and the angels in spite of the great disparity in species and remoteness in rank and station.

7. That is, "The weakness, lapses and errors of Your servants are not hidden from You: You indeed know everything, but like Your Knowledge Your Mercy also is infinite; therefore, forgive the poor creatures in spite of knowing their errors." Another meaning can be: "Forgive by Your Mercy all those about whom by Knowledge You know that they have repented sincerely and have, in reality, adopted Your Way."

8. To forgive and to save from the torment of Hell are although correlatives, and there seems to be no need to mention the other when one has been mentioned, this style, in fact, reflects the deep interest the angels have in the believers. It is customary that when a person who is deeply involved in a matter, finds an opportunity to make submissions before a judge, he presents the same petition humbly over and over again, in different ways, and does not rest content with making the petition just once.

9. "Who . . . way": "Who have given up disobedience and rebellion, adopted obedience and followed the way which You Yourself have shown."

10. Here again there is the same state of solicitude as referred to in E.N. 8 above. Obviously, forgiving and saving from Hell by itself amounts to admitting to Paradise. And then soliciting Allah for granting the believers the same Paradise which He Himself has promised them, seems to be unnecessary, but the angels are so

earnest in their desire of well-being for the believers that they go on repeating their good wishes for them although they know that Allah will certainly bless them with these favours in the Hereafter.

11. That is, "Join with them their parents and their wives and children for the comfort of their eyes." This same thing Allah Himself has stated as among the blessings which the believers will be granted in Paradise. For this see Ar-Ra'd : 23 and Aṭ-Ṭūr : 21. In the verse of Sūrah Ṭūr, there is also the explanation that if a person will deserve a higher rank in Paradise, which his parents will not deserve, he will not be lowered in rank to be joined with them but Allah will raise them to join him in the higher station.

12. The word *sayyi'āt* (evils) is used in three different meanings and all three are implied here: (1) False beliefs, perverted morals and evil deeds; (2) consequences of deviation and evil deeds; and (3) calamities, disasters and suffering in this world, or in *barzakh*, or on the Day of Resurrection. The object of the angels' prayer is that they be saved from everything which may be evil for them.

13. "Evils on the Day of Resurrection" implies the dread and terror of the Day, deprivation of the shade and every other comfort, severity of accountability, the ignominy of exposing every secret of life before all mankind, and other humiliations and hardships which the guilty ones will experience in the Hereafter.

14. That is, "When the disbelievers will see on the Day of Resurrection that they had committed a grave folly by founding their entire life-work on polytheism and atheism, denial of the Hereafter and opposition to the Messenger, and due to the folly they were now doomed to that evil end, they will bite at their fingers and will curse themselves fretfully. At that time the angels will proclaim to them: "Today you are being angry with yourselves, but in the world when the Prophets of Allah and the other good people invited you to the right path to save you from this evil end, you turned down their invitation, Allah's wrath against you then was even greater."

15. This same thing has already been mentioned in Al-Baqarah: 28 above. It implies this: "How can you disbelieve in Allah? He granted you life when you were lifeless; then He will give you death, and then will again raise you back to life." The disbelievers do not deny the first three of these conditions, because they are perceptible and therefore un-deniable. But they refuse to accept the occurrence of the fourth condition, for they have not yet experienced it, and only the Prophets yet have foretold it. On the Day of Resurrection when the fourth condition also will be practically experienced by

them, then they will acknowledge that the same which the Prophets had foretold had actually happened.

16. That is, "We confess that we made a grave mistake when we denied this after-life; our life was filled with sins when we followed falsehood."

17. That is, "Is there any possibility now that our confession of sins be accepted and we be rescued from this state of torment in which we have been seized?"

18. That is, "The Judgement now rests entirely with that God alone, Whose Godhead you did not acknowledge, and those others whom you persistently regarded as associates and partners in the powers of Godhead, have no share whatever in the judgement." (For a fuller understanding of this point, please see verse 45 of Az-Zumar and its E.N. 64). This sentence by itself gives the meaning that there would be no possibility of any way out for the disbelievers from the state of torment, for they did not only deny the Hereafter but they had aversion to their Creator and Sustainer, and they were not satisfied until they had associated others with Him.

19. "Signs" imply those Signs which point to the great truth that the Fashioner, Ruler and Administrator of the Universe is One and only One God.

20. "Sustenance" here implies the rain, for every kind of the sustenance that man gets in the world, depends ultimately on the rainfall. Allah presents this one single Sign out of His countless Signs, as if to draw the people's attention to the fact: "If you only consider and ponder over the arrangement of this one thing, you will understand that the concept being presented in the Qur'an of the administration of the Universe, is true. This arrangement could exist only if the Creator of the earth and its creatures and of water and air and the sun and the heat and cold was only One God, and this arrangement could continue to exist for millions and millions of years with perfect regularity only if the same Eternal God caused it to exist continually. And the One Who brought this arrangement into existence could only be an All-Wise and All-Merciful Lord, Who along with creating men, animals and vegetables in the earth, also created water precisely according to their needs and requirements, and then made these wonderful arrangements for transporting and spreading that water to different parts of the earth with perfect regularity. Now, who can be more unjust than the one who sees all this and yet denies God, or associates some other beings also with Him in Godhead?"

21. That is, "A person who has turned away from God and whose intellect has been clouded and corrupted by heedlessness or prejudice, cannot learn any lesson from any Sign. He will see with his animal eyes that the winds blew, the clouds gathered, the lightning thundered and flashed and the rain fell; but his human eyes will never perceive why all this happened, who caused it, and what rights He has on him."

22. For the explanation of "making one's religion sincerely Allah's", see E.N. 3 of Az-Zumar.

23. That is, "He is far exalted above all the creations of the world. Anything that exists in the Universe, whether an angel or a prophet or a saint, or some other creation, may be very exalted and superior to other creations, but it cannot be imagined to have a station anywhere near the highest rank and position of Allah, not to speak of its being an associate in His attributes and powers and authority."

24. That is, He is King and Ruler of the whole Universe, and Master of the Throne of the Kingdom of the Universe. (For explanation, see Al-A'rāf : 54 and E.N. 41 thereof; Yūnus : 3, Ar-Ra'd : 2, Ṭā Hā : 5 and the E.N.'s thereof).

25. "The Spirit" implies Revelation and Prophethood. (For explanation, see An-Naḥl : 2, Banī Isrā'il : 85 and the E.N.'s thereof). And the words : "Allah sends down the Spirit by His Command upon whomsoever of His servants He pleases" mean this : "Nobody has a monopoly over the bounties of Allah. Just as no one has a right to object as to why was so and so given beauty, and so-and-so extraordinary powers of memory or intelligence, so also no one has the right to object as to why so-and-so only was chosen to be a prophet and why a person of some one's own choice was not made a prophet."

26. "The Day of Meeting": the Day when all mankind, jinn and satans will be gathered together before their Lord simultaneously and the witnesses of their acts and deeds also will be present to bear the witness.

27. That is, "Though in the world many vain and self-conceited people publicly proclaimed to be the kings and sovereigns, whose, in fact, is the Kingdom today? Who is the Owner of the powers and authority and Whose is the Command?" If a person hears these words in his right senses, he will be filled with terror, no matter how mighty a king or dictator he might be posing himself to be, and will immediately come to his senses. Here the mention of an historical event will not be out of place. When the Sāmānid ruler, Naṣr bin

Aḥmad (301-331 A.H.), entered Nishāpur, he held a court and after ascending the throne desired that the proceedings be started with recitation from the Holy Qur'ān. At this an elderly pious man came forward and recited this very section of this Sūrah. When he came to this verse, Naṣr was struck with awe; he descended the throne trembling, took off the crown and fell down in prostration, saying: "O my Lord, Kingdom is Thine, not mine!"

28. That is, "None shall be wronged in any way whatever today." It should be noted that in respect of recompense, injustice can have several forms; (1) A person may deserve a reward but he is not given it; (2) he is given a lesser reward than what was due to him; (3) he is given a punishment although he is not liable to any punishment; (4) the one who is liable to punishment is not given any punishment; (5) the one who is liable to a lesser punishment is given a greater punishment; (6) the oppressor goes scot-free; and (7) one is seized for the sin committed by another. What Allah means to say is that none of these different kinds of injustices will be allowed to take place in His Court.

29. It means this: "It will take Allah no time to do the reckoning. Just as He is providing for every creature of the universe simultaneously and He is not so occupied in providing for one that He may have no time to provide for others, and just as He is seeing everything in the universe simultaneously, and hearing everything simultaneously, is managing every small and big affair simultaneously, and nothing absorbs His attention so completely that He may be unable to give attention to others, at the same time, so He will subject to reckoning every single individual simultaneously and the hearing of one case will not make Him so occupied as to render Him unable to hear other countless cases at the same time. Then, in His Court no delay also will be allowed to take place due to any difficulty in the investigation of the facts of the case and the availability of the witnesses. The Judge of the Court will Himself be aware of all the facts directly. Each party in every case will stand completely exposed before Him, and clear, undeniable evidence of the events and deeds, with each minor detail, will come forward without any delay. Therefore, each case will be settled and decided instantaneously.

30. In the Qur'ān the people have been made to realize again and again that Resurrection is not far off but has approached near at hand, and can take place any moment. In An-Naḥl : 1, it has been said: "Allah's Judgement has come, so do not clamour for hastening it;" in Al-Anbiyā' : 1 : "The time of the reckoning of the

(Contd. on p. 22)

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 إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ ۚ أَوَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوا كَيْفَ
 كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ۖ كَانُوا هُمْ أَشَدَّ مِنْهُمْ قُوَّةً وَآثَارًا
 فِي الْأَرْضِ فَأَخَذَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ ۚ وَمَا كَانَ لَهُم مِّنَ اللَّهِ مِن وَّاقٍ ۝۶۱
 ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَانَتْ تَأْتِيهِمْ رُسُلُهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَكَفَرُوا فَأَخَذَهُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّهُ
 قَوِيٌّ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ۝۶۲ وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا مُوسَىٰ بِآيَاتِنَا وَسُلْطٰنٍ مُّبِينٍ ۝۶۳ إِلَىٰ
 فِرْعَوْنَ وَهَامَانَ وَقَارُونَ فَقَالُوا سِحْرٌ كَذَابٌ ۝۶۴ فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُم بِالْحَقِّ
 مِنْ عِنْدِنَا قَالُوا اقْتُلُوا أَبْنَاءَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ وَاسْتَحْيُوا نِسَاءَهُمْ ۚ وَمَا
 كَيْدُ الْكٰفِرِينَ إِلَّا فِي ضَلٰلٍ ۝۶۵ وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ ذَرُونِي أَقْتُلْ مُوسَىٰ وَلْيَدْعُ
 رَبَّهُ ۗ إِنِّي أَخَافُ أَنْ يُبَدِّلَ دِينَكُمْ أَوْ أَنْ يُظْهِرَ فِي الْأَرْضِ الْفَسَادَ ۝۶۶ وَ
 قَالَ مُوسَىٰ إِنِّي عُذْتُ بِرَبِّي وَرَبِّكُمْ مِنْ كُلِّ مُتَكَبِّرٍ لَا يُؤْمِنُ بِيَوْمِ
 الْحِسَابِ ۝۶۷ وَقَالَ رَجُلٌ مُّؤْمِنٌ مِّنْ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ يَكْتُمُ إِيمَانَهُ أَتَقْتُلُونَ
 رَجُلًا أَنْ يَقُولَ رَبِّيَ اللَّهُ وَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ ۚ وَإِنْ يَكُ كَاذِبًا
 فَعَلَيْهِ كَذِبُهُ ۗ وَإِنْ يَكُ صَادِقًا يُصِيبْكُمْ بَعْضُ الَّذِي يَعِدُكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا
 يَهْدِي مَنْ هُوَ مُسْرِفٌ كَذَابٌ ۝۶۸ يُقَوْمُ لَكُمْ الْمُلْكَ الْيَوْمَ ظَهْرِينَ فِي
 الْأَرْضِ ۚ فَمَنْ يَنْصُرُنَا مِنْ بَأْسِ اللَّهِ إِنْ جَاءَنَا ۚ قَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ مَا أُرِيكُمْ إِلَّا
 مَا أَرَىٰ وَمَا أَهْدِيكُمْ إِلَّا سَبِيلَ الرَّشَادِ ۝۶۹ وَقَالَ الَّذِي آمَنَ يُقَوْمِ إِنِّي
 أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ مِثْلَ يَوْمِ الْأَحْزَابِ ۝۷۰ مِثْلَ دَابِ قَوْمِ نُوحٍ وَعَادٍ وَشُودَ
 وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ ۚ وَمَا اللَّهُ يُزِيدُ ظَلْمًا لِلْعِبَادِ ۝۷۱ وَيَقَوْمِ إِنِّي أَخَافُ
 عَلَيْكُمْ يَوْمَ التَّنَادِ ۝۷۲ يَوْمَ تَوَلَّوْنَ مُدْبِرِينَ ۗ مَا لَكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ عَاصِمٍ

Have they never travelled in the land that they could see the end of those who have gone before them? They were stronger than they in power and have left mightier traces in the land, but Allah seized them because of their sins and there was none to save them from Allah. They met this doom because their Messengers came to them with clear Signs³⁴ and they refused to believe in them. Consequently, Allah seized them. Indeed, He is Mighty and very stern in punishment.

We sent Moses³⁵ to Pharaoh and Hāmān³⁶ and Korah with Our Signs and a clear authority of appointment,³⁷ but they said, "He is a sorcerer, a liar."³⁸ Then, when he brought them the truth from Ourselves, they said, "Kill the sons of those who have believed and joined him and spare their daughters."³⁹ But the disbelievers' plot ended in vain.⁴⁰

One day⁴¹ Pharaoh said to his courtiers, "Let me alone that I may kill this Moses.⁴² and let him call to his Lord. I fear he will change your religion, or cause mischief to appear in the land."⁴³

Moses said, "I have taken refuge in my Lord and your Lord against every arrogant person who does not believe in the Day of Reckoning."⁴⁴

At this, a believing man from among the kinsfolk of Pharaoh, who had kept his faith hidden, spoke out, "Would you kill a man merely because he says: My Lord is Allah? whereas he has brought clear Signs to you from your Lord.⁴⁵ If he is a liar, his lie will recoil on him;⁴⁶ but if he is truthful, some of the dreadful things with which he threatens you, will certainly befall you. Allah does not guide the one who is a transgressor and a liar.⁴⁷ O my people, today you possess the kingdom and are dominant in the land, but who will help us if we are visited by Allah's scourge?"⁴⁸

Pharaoh said, "I am telling you the same which I think is proper, and I am only guiding you to the way which is right."⁴⁹

The man who had believed, said, "O my people! I fear that you also may be overtaken by the day that has already overtaken many hosts, a day that overtook the people of Noah and 'Ād and Thamūd and the peoples after them. And the fact is that Allah does not seek to wrong His servants.⁵⁰ O my people! I fear for you the day of wailing, when you will cry out to one another and run about, but there will be none to protect you from Allah; the truth is that there is none to guide the one whom Allah lets go astray.

(Contd. from p. 19)

people has drawn near, and yet they are turning away in heedlessness;" in Al-Qamar : 1 : "The Hour of Resurrection has drawn near and the moon has split asunder;" and in An-Najm : 57 : "That which is coming is near at hand: none but Allah can avert it." All this is meant to warn the people to the effect that they should not become fearless of Resurrection thinking it to be yet far away, but should mend their ways and reform themselves at once.

31. The word *ḥamīm* as used in the original implies such a friend of a person as is aroused to action when he sees him being beaten, and rushes forward to protect and save him.

32. This thing has been said to refute the concept of intercession held by the disbelievers. As a matter of fact, the wicked people will have no intercessor at all, for permission to intercede, if at all granted, can be granted only to the righteous servants of Allah, and Allah's righteous servants can never make friends with the disbelievers, polytheists and sinners so that they should even think of interceding on their behalf to save them. But as the disbelievers have generally held, and still hold, the belief that the saints, whose disciples they are, will not allow that they go to Hell, but will see that they are forgiven. Therefore, it has been said: "There will be no such intercessor there, who may have to be listened to, and whose recommendation Allah may have to accept necessarily."

33. That is, "He is not a blind and deaf god like your deities

that He may be unaware of the misdeeds of a person about whom He is passing judgement."

34. *Bayyināt* means three things: (1) The clear signs which pointed to the Messengers' being appointed by Allah; (2) the convincing arguments which were a clear proof of their teachings being based on the Truth; and (3) the clear guidance and instructions about the problems and affairs of life which could enable every reasonable person to see that such pure teachings could not be given by an impostor.

35. For the other details of the story of the Prophet Moses, see Al-Baqarah : 49-61; An-Nisā : 164; Al-Mā'idah : 20-26; Al-A'rāf : 103-162; Yūnus : 75-92; Hūd 17, 96-97, 110; Introduction to Sūrah Yūsuf; Ibrāhīm : 5-8; Bani Isrā'il : 101-104; Al-Kahf : 60-82; Maryam : 51-53; Ṭā Hā : 9-93; Al-Mu'minūn : 45-49; Ash-Shu'arā' : 10-68; An-Naml : 7-14; Introduction to Sūrah Al-Qaṣaṣ and Al-Qaṣaṣ : 3-44; Al-Aḥzāb : 69; Aṣ-Ṣaff : 114-122 and the E.N.'s thereof.

36. For a reply to the critics' objections about Hāmān, see E.N. 8 of Al-Qaṣaṣ above.

37. "A clear authority of appointment": With such clear Signs as left no doubt that he had been sent by Allah, and he had Allah, Lord of the worlds' power at his back. From a careful study of the details of the Prophet Moses' story, as given in the Qur'ān, it becomes obvious as to what were those Signs which are being described here as "a clear authority of his appointment" as a Prophet by Allah. In the first place, even this was strange that a person who, a few years earlier, had fled the country after killing a man of Pharaoh's nation and whose warrants of arrest had been issued, should make a sudden appearance directly in the full-packed court of Pharaoh, with a staff in hand, and should boldly and fearlessly address the king and his nobles and demand that they should acknowledge him as the representative of Allah, Lord of the worlds, and should act according to what he says, and none dares to lay his hands on him, whereas the nation to which Moses belonged, had been so suppressed under slavery that if he had been apprehended immediately on the charge of murder, no one would have voiced even a protest, not to speak of rising in rebellion. This shows that Pharaoh and his courtiers had been awe-inspired just at the appearance of the Prophet Moses, even before they witnessed the miracles of the staff and the shining hand, and they had realized in the very beginning

that he had some greater power behind him. Then each of the wonderful miracles that he performed, one after the other, was enough to bring about the conviction that it was not a manifestation of magic but of Divine Power. After all, what power of magic could cause a staff to change into a serpent? or cause a whole country to suffer from famine? or cause different sorts of disasters to strike vast areas of the land on a sudden notice by Moses and be removed on a notice by him? That is why, according to the Qur'ān, Pharaoh and all the responsible people of his kingdom had been convinced in their hearts, whether they might be refusing to profess with the tongue, that Moses had indeed been appointed a Prophet by Allah. (For details, see Al-A'rāf : 106-117; Tā Hā : 56-78; Ash-Shu'arā' : 30-51; An-Naml : 10-13).

38. "The truth": the miracles and signs by which the Prophet Moses proved that he was a Messenger sent by Allah and the strong arguments by which he showed that he was wholly in the right.

39. As already mentioned in Al-A'rāf : 127 above, Pharaoh's courtiers had said to him: "Will you leave Moses and his people free to spread disorder in the land?" And he himself had said: "I will have their sons slain and let their daughters live." This verse states that this order was at last issued from Pharaoh's court. It was, in fact, meant to so terrify the Prophet Moses himself and his supporters and followers that they should abandon him out of fear.

40. Another meaning of this sentence can be: "Whatever the disbelievers had plotted, was aimed at deviation, tyranny and antagonism to the truth. That is, even after being convinced of the truth in their hearts, they continued to show stubbornness and did not hesitate to adopt any mean device whatever in order to defeat and frustrate the Truth.

41. The event which is being related here is a very important event of the Israelite history, which the Israelites themselves have totally forgotten. Both the Bible and the Talmud are without it, and no mention of it is found in the other Israelite traditions either. Only through the Qur'ān has the world come to know that during the conflict between Pharaoh and the Prophet Moses this event had taken place at some time. Anybody who reads this story, provided that he has not been blinded by prejudice against Islam and the Qur'ān, cannot but realize that from the viewpoint of the invitation to the Truth this story is very valuable, and this thing by itself also

is in no way against reason that a person from among the nobles of the kingdom of Pharaoh himself might have quietly believed in his heart, having been influenced by the personality of the Prophet Moses, his preaching and the wonderful miracles shown by him, and might not have been able to restrain himself when he saw that Pharaoh was planning to kill him. But the way the Western orientalist, in spite of their tall claims to knowledge and research, try to repudiate the self-evident truths of the Qur'ān, on account of prejudice, can be judged from this that the author of the article "Mūsā" in the Encyclopaedia of Islam writes in respect of this story:

"The Kur'ānic story of a believer at the court of Pharaoh who wants to save Mūsā is not quite clear (xl, 28). Ought we to compare Jethro in the Haggada who advises clemency at Pharaoh's court?"

In other words, these so-called researchers have one thing settled with them: they must find fault with everything that the Qur'ān presents. Now, if they do not find any ground for criticising a statement of it, they should at least say this much out of mischief that the story is not entirely clear, and also should incidentally create this doubt in the reader's mind that the Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) might have heard from somewhere the story of Jethro mentioned in the Haggada taking place even before the birth of Prophet Moses, and inserted it here in this form. This is the type of "literary research" which these people have adopted with regard to Islam and the Qur'ān and the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace).

42. In this sentence Pharaoh tries to give the impression as if some people were restraining him from killing the Prophet Moses. Had they not stood in his way, he would have killed him long ago, whereas in fact there was no external power to restrain him; it was the fear of his own heart which was preventing him from laying his hands on the Messenger of Allah.

43. That is, "I fear a revolution from him, and even if he is unable to bring it about, there is at least the danger that he will cause mischief to appear in the country by his activities. Therefore, even if he doesn't commit a crime punishable with death, he should be put to death only for the sake of the maintenance of public order. As for this whether there is a real danger to the public order from him, the king's satisfaction in this regard is enough. If his majesty is convinced that he is dangerous, it should be declared that he is really dangerous and punishable with death."

Here, the meaning of "changing the religion" also should be understood well, on account of which Pharaoh wanted to put the Prophet Moses to death. *Dīn* here implies the system of government, and what Pharaoh meant to say was this: "I fear that he will change your king." (*Ruḥ al-Ma'ānī*, vol. XXIV, p. 56). In other words, the *dīn* of the land was the religious, political, cultural and economic system that was prevalent in Egypt on the basis of Pharaoh's and his family's sovereignty, and Pharaoh was afraid that Moses' message would change that very *dīn*. But like the cunning and deceitful rulers of every age he also did not say that he feared being deposed from his position of authority and, therefore, he wanted to kill Moses, but he presented the case like this: "O people, the danger is for you, not for me; for if Moses' movement succeeded your *dīn* would change. I am not worried for myself: I am worried for your sake as to what would become of you when you have been deprived of the protection of my authority. Therefore, the wicked man who poses such a danger should be put to death, for he is an enemy of the state."

41. Here, there are two equal probabilities and there is no ground for preferring one to the other. The first probability is that the Prophet Moses might himself be present in the court at the time and Pharaoh might have expressed his intention to kill him in his presence, and the Prophet might have given this direct answer there and then, addressing him and his courtiers. The other probability is that Pharaoh might have expressed this intention in the absence of Moses in a meeting with the responsible people of his government and a report of this conversation might have been conveyed to the Prophet by some of the believers, whereupon he might have said these words in some gathering of his followers. Whatever be the case, it is apparent from the words that the threat of Pharaoh could not cause any state of fear in Moses' heart and with trust in Allah he flung his threat back at Pharaoh. The context in which this event has been related in the Qur'ān by itself shows that the same also was the reply from the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) to those wicked people who, being fearless of the Day of Reckoning, were devising plots to kill him.

45. That is, "He has shown such manifest Signs to you as have made it absolutely clear that he is a Messenger sent by your Lord." The Believer, from among the people of Pharaoh, was obviously referring to the Signs the details of which have already been given in

Al-A'rāf : 107-117, 130-133; Banī Isrā'il : 101-102; Ṭā Hā : 56-73; Ash-Shu'arā' : 30-51; An-Naml : 10-13).

46. That is, "If in spite of such manifest Signs as he has shown you, you regard him as a liar, you should leave him alone, for the alternative probability, and a very strong probability too, is that he is truthful, and therefore you may involve yourselves in God's torment by laying your hands on him. Therefore, even if you think that he is a liar, you should leave him to himself. For if he is lying, in the name of Allah, Allah Himself will take him to task." Similar words had the Prophet Moses himself said to Pharaoh before this: "If you do not believe in me, do not harm me."

(Ad-Dukhān : 21)

Here, one should keep in mind this that the Believer of the people of Pharaoh had not openly disclosed in the beginning that he had affirmed faith in the Prophet Moses, but he spoke as if he also belonged to Pharaoh's side, and was only wishing his people well. But when Pharaoh and his courtiers did not seem to see reason and continued to behave stubbornly, he at last disclosed the secret of his faith, as becomes obvious from his speech in vv. 38-44.

47. This sentence can have two meanings and probably the Believer had intentionally employed it, because he did not yet want to express his belief openly. Its one meaning is: "One and the same person cannot combine righteousness and lying and falsehood. You can clearly see that Moses is a man of very sublime and pure character. Therefore, how can you believe that, on the one hand, he should be such a liar as to lay a baseless claim to prophethood in the name of Allah, and on the other, Allah should bless him with such high morals?" The other meaning is: "If you are bent upon taking the life of Moses (peace be upon him) by transgressing all limits and will execute your evil designs by bringing false accusations against him, you should remember that Allah will never show you the way to success."

48. That is, "Why are you being ungrateful to Allah for His blessing of granting you domination in the land and are inviting His scourge to visit you?"

49. From this answer of Pharaoh it appears that he had not yet found out that that noble of his court had become a Believer in his heart. That is why he did not show any displeasure at what he

(Contd. on p. 30)

وَمَنْ يُضِلِلِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ هَادٍ ۗ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَ لَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ يُوسُفُ مِنْ قَبْلُ
 بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَمَا زِلْتُمْ فِي شَكِّ مِمَّا جَاءَكُمْ بِهِ ۗ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا هَلَكَ قُلْتُمْ لَنْ
 يَبْعَثَ اللَّهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ رَسُولًا ۗ كَذَلِكَ يُضِلُّ اللَّهُ مَنْ هُوَ مُسْرِفٌ مُرْتَابٌ ۗ ﴿٣٧﴾
 الَّذِينَ يُجَادِلُونَ فِي آيَاتِ اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ سُلْطَنِ أَتَّهُمْ كِبَرٌ مَقْتًا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَ
 عِنْدَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ۗ كَذَلِكَ يَطْبَعُ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ قَلْبٍ مُتَكَبِّرٍ جَبَّارٍ ۗ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَقَالَ
 فِرْعَوْنُ يَهْمُنُ ابْنُ بِنْتِ صَرَخًا لَعَلِّي أَبْلُغُ الْأَسْبَابَ ۗ ﴿٣٩﴾ أَسْبَابَ السَّمَوَاتِ فَأَطَّلِعَ
 إِلَىٰ إِلَهِ مُوسَىٰ وَإِنِّي لِأَظُنُّهُ كَاذِبًا ۗ وَكَذَلِكَ زُيِّنَ لِفِرْعَوْنَ سُوءُ عَمَلِهِ وَ
 صُدَّ عَنِ السَّبِيلِ ۗ وَمَا كَيْدُ فِرْعَوْنَ إِلَّا فِي تَبَابٍ ۗ ﴿٤٠﴾ وَقَالَ الَّذِي آمَنَ
 يَوْمَ اتَّبَعُونَ أهدِكُمْ سَبِيلَ الرَّشَادِ ۗ ﴿٤١﴾ يَقَوْمِ إِنَّمَا هِيَ الدُّنْيَا
 مَتَاعٌ وَإِنَّ الْآخِرَةَ هِيَ دَارُ الْقَرَارِ ۗ ﴿٤٢﴾ مَنْ عَمِلَ سَيِّئَةً فَلَا يُجْزَىٰ إِلَّا
 مِثْلَهَا ۗ وَمَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِمَّنْ ذَكَرَ أَوْ أُنْشِيَ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَٰئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ
 الْجَنَّةَ يُرْزَقُونَ فِيهَا بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ۗ ﴿٤٣﴾ وَ يَقَوْمِ مَا لِي أَدْعُوكُمْ إِلَى النَّجْوَىٰ وَ
 تَدْعُونَنِي إِلَى النَّارِ ۗ ﴿٤٤﴾ تَدْعُونَنِي لِأَكْفُرَ بِاللَّهِ وَ أَشْرِكَ بِهِ مَا لَيْسَ لِي بِهِ
 عِلْمٌ ۗ وَ أَنَا أَدْعُوكُمْ إِلَى الْعَزِيزِ الْغَفَّارِ ۗ ﴿٤٥﴾ لَا جَرَمَ أَنَا تَدْعُونَنِي إِلَيْهِ لَيْسَ
 لَهُ دَعْوَةٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَ لَا فِي الْآخِرَةِ وَ أَنَّ مَرَدَّنَا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَ أَنَّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ
 هُمْ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ ۗ ﴿٤٦﴾ فَتَذَكُرُونَ مَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ وَ أَفَوْضُ أَمْرِي إِلَى اللَّهِ ۗ
 إِنَّ اللَّهَ بَصِيرٌ بِالْعِبَادِ ۗ ﴿٤٧﴾ فَوَقَّهُ اللَّهُ سَيِّئَاتِ مَا مَكْرُوا وَ حَاقَ بِإِلِ فِرْعَوْنَ
 سُوءُ الْعَذَابِ ۗ ﴿٤٨﴾ النَّارُ يُعْرَضُونَ عَلَيْهَا غُدُوًّا وَ عَشِيًّا ۗ وَ يَوْمَ تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ ۗ ﴿٤٩﴾
 ادْخُلُوا آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ أَشَدَّ الْعَذَابِ ۗ ﴿٥٠﴾ وَ إِذْ يَتَحَاجُّونَ فِي النَّارِ فَيَقُولُ الضُّعَفَاءُ

Before this Joseph had brought to you clear Signs, but you continued to be in doubt concerning his teachings. Then, when he died, you said, "Allah will never send another Messenger after him."⁵¹—Likewise,⁵² Allah lets go astray the transgressors and doubters who dispute concerning the Revelations of Allah even without any authority having come to them.⁵³ Such an attitude is abhorred by Allah and the believers. Thus does Allah set a seal on the heart of every arrogant, self-exalting person.⁵⁴ 34-35

Pharaoh said, "O Hāmān, build for me a tower that I may reach the paths, the paths of the heavens, and peep at the God of Moses, for I think that Moses is a liar."⁵⁵—Thus the misdeeds of Pharaoh were made seem fair to him and he was barred from the Right Way: all his scheming only led to (his own) ruin. 36-37

The man who had believed, said, "O my people! Follow me: I shall show you the right way. O my people! the life of this world is temporary:⁵⁶ only the abode of the Hereafter is everlasting. Whoever does evil shall be recompensed to the extent of the evil done; and whoever does good, whether man or woman, provided that he is a believer, all such people shall enter Paradise wherein they shall be provided without measure. O my people! How it is that I call you to salvation and you call me to the Fire! You call me to deny Allah and associate with Him those whom I do not know,⁵⁷ while I am calling you to the All-Mighty, the All-Forgiving God. Nay, the truth is, and it cannot be otherwise, that those to whom you call me, can neither be called to in this world nor in the Hereafter,⁵⁸ and to Allah have we all to return, and the transgressors⁵⁹ shall go to Hell. Soon you will remember what I am telling you today. To Allah I entrust my affairs; He is ever Watchful over His servants."⁶⁰ 38-44

45.47

At last, Allah saved the Believer from all those evil plots that the people devised against him,⁶¹ and the companions of Pharaoh themselves were encompassed by the horrible scourge:⁶² it is the fire of Hell before which they are presented morning and evening. And when the Hour of Resurrection comes, it will be commanded: "Admit the people of Pharaoh to the severest torment."⁶³ Then imagine the time when these people will be disputing with one another in Hell. The weak ones will say to the haughty one, "We were your followers: now, can you save us from some part of our punishment in Hell?"⁶⁴

(Contd. from p. 27)

said, but made clear that he was not inclined to change his opinion even after hearing what he had to say.

50. That is, "Allah has no enmity with His servants that He should destroy them without any reason: He sends calamities upon them only when they have transgressed all limits, and sending the torment then is the very demand of justice."

51. That is, "Your deviation, and then your stubbornness, is such that before Moses (peace be upon him) there came in your land the Prophet Joseph about whom you yourselves admit that he was a man of the highest morals, and you also admit that by giving the right interpretation of the king's dream he saved you from the dreadful effects of the seven-year-long famine, which had struck Egypt in his time; and your entire nation also acknowledges that Egypt has never witnessed a period of greater justice and prosperity than the period of his rule. But in spite of knowing and recognizing all his merits and high qualities you did not believe in him during his life time, and when he died, you said: "Never will the like of him come again!" That is, you recognized his excellences only for an excuse to deny every prophet who came after him. This means that you would not accept guidance in any case."

52. It so appears that the next few sentences are an addition by Allah and an explanation of the words of the Believer of the people of Pharaoh.

53. That is, "Allah allows only those people to go astray who

possess the following three qualities: (1) They transgress all limits in their evildoing, and then develop such a taste for it that they do not feel inclined to accept any invitation to reform their morals; (2) their permanent attitude in respect of the Prophets is characterised by doubt and suspicion. The Prophets of God may bring any clear Signs before them, yet they doubt their Prophethood as well as view with suspicion those truths which they present with regard to *Tauhid* and the Hereafter; and (3) they try to resist the Revelations of the Book of Allah with crooked arguments instead of considering them rationally, and these objections are neither based on any sound reason nor on the authority of a revealed Book, but from the beginning to the end their only basis is obstinacy and stubbornness. When a group of the people develops these three evils, Allah hurls it into the deep pit of Hell-fire wherefrom no power can then rescue them.

54. That is, "The seal is not set on the heart of anybody without a reason. This seal of curse is set only on the heart of the one who is filled with arrogance and spirit of violence and tyranny."

55. Pharaoh addresses these words to Hāmān, his minister, interposing in the speech of the Believer in a way as though he has no regard for what he was saying. Therefore, he turns away from him arrogantly and says to Hāmān, "Build me a high tower so that I may climb it to see where the God of whom this Moses speaks, lives." (For explanation, see Al-Qaṣaṣ : 38 and E.N.'s thereof).

56. That is, "You are being forgetful of Allah on account of your pride in the transient wealth and prosperity of this world : this is your folly."

57. That is, "About whom I have no scientific proof that they are God's associates. Why should I then accept such a stupendous thing blindly that they also have a share in Godhead and that I have to serve them too along with Allah?"

58. This sentence can have several meanings : (1) That they neither possess here nor in the Hereafter any right that the people should be invited to acknowledge their godhead; (2) that they have been made gods by the people themselves without any reason, for they have neither claimed godhead for themselves in this world nor will they put forward any such claim in the Hereafter that they also were gods and should have been acknowledged as such; and (3) that it is no use invoking them here nor in the Hereafter, for they are absolutely powerless and invoking them is of no avail at all.

59. A "transgressor" is every such person who recognizes the godhead of others than Allah, or assumes godhead for himself, or rebels against God and adopts an attitude of independence in the world, and then commits excesses against himself, against other creatures of God and against everything else with which he has to deal. Such a person, in fact, transgresses all limits of reason and justice.

60. This sentence clearly shows that while saying all this the Believer was certain that he would have to bear the brunt of the wrath of the entire kingdom of Pharaoh in consequence of his speaking the Truth, and that he would have to lose all his honours and privileges, even his life. But in spite of knowing all this he performed his duty only with his trust in Allah, according to the call of his conscience, on this critical occasion.

61. This shows that the Believer was such an important man in the kingdom of Pharaoh that although he spoke out the truth in the face of Pharaoh, in the full-packed court, yet none could have the courage to punish him publicly. That is why, Pharaoh and his supporters had to make secret plans to kill him, but these plans also were frustrated by Allah.

62. It so appears from the style that this event of the Believer's speaking out the truth had taken place in the last stage of the conflict between the Prophet Moses and Pharaoh. Probably being fed up and disgusted with the long drawn out conflict, Pharaoh might have at last made up his mind to kill the Prophet Moses. But he might have felt from the truthfulness of that influential person of his kingdom that the Prophet Moses' influence had even reached the higher circles of his government. Therefore, he might have decided that before taking the extreme step against Moses he should find out who among the chiefs and nobles and higher officials of the kingdom had been influenced by the movement, and should seize Moses after having punished them. But while he was still busy devising his plans, Allah commanded the Prophet Moses and his companions to migrate, and it was while pursuing them that Pharaoh was drowned in the sea along with his hosts.

63. This verse is an express proof of the torment of *barzakh*, which has often been mentioned in the Traditions as the torment of the grave. Allah here has in clear words mentioned two stages of the torment: a lesser torment, which is being given now to Pharaoh

and his people before the coming of Resurrection, and it is this that they are presented before the fire of Hell morning and evening, which strikes terror in their hearts and they see that that is the Hell which they will have to enter ultimately. After this when Resurrection comes, they will be given the real and greater punishment which is destined for them, i.e. they will be hurled into the same Hell, which they are being made to witness since the time they were drowned till today, and will continue to witness it till the Hour of Resurrection. And such a treatment is not especially meant for Pharaoh and his people: all the culprits continue to witness the evil end, from the hour of death till Resurrection, which is awaiting them. On the other hand, the righteous people are made to see continually the pleasant picture of the good end, which Allah has got ready for them. A Tradition has been related in *Bukhārī*, *Muslim*, and *Musnad Aḥmad* on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar, saying that the Holy Prophet said: "Whoever from among you dies is shown his final resting-place morning and evening continually, whether he be a dweller of Paradise or of Hell. It is said to him: This is the place which you will enter when Allah will raise you back to life on the Day of Resurrection and will call you into His presence." (For further details, see Al-Anfāl : 50-51; An-Naḥl : 28-32; Al-Mu'minūn : 99-100 and the E.N.'s thereof, and E.N.'s 22, 23 of Sūrah Yā Sīn).

64. This they will not say in any hope that their previous guides or rulers or leaders would actually be able to save them from the torment, or would have it reduced. At that time they will have fully realized that those people could not avail them anything there. But they will say this in order to humiliate them, as if to say: 'In the world you ruled over us with great show of power and authority: now save us also from this disaster which has befallen us only because of you.'

الَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا إِنَّا كُنَّا لَكُمْ تَبَعًا فَمَا كُنْتُمْ تُخَافُونَ عَنَّا نَصِيبًا مِّنَ النَّارِ ۗ
 قَالَ الَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا إِنَّا كُلٌّ فِيهَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ حَكَمَ بَيْنَ الْعِبَادِ ۗ وَقَالَ
 الَّذِينَ فِي النَّارِ لِيُخْزِنَهُ جَهَنَّمُ اذْعُوا رَبُّكُمْ يُخَفِّفْ عَنَّا يَوْمًا مِّنَ الْعَذَابِ ۗ
 قَالُوا أَوَلَمْ تَكُ تَأْتِيكُمْ رُسُلُكُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ قَالُوا بَلَىٰ قَالُوا فَاذْعُوا وَمَا دُعُوا
 الْكٰفِرِينَ إِلَّا فِي ضَلٰلٍ ۗ إِنَّا لَنَنصُرُ رُسُلَنَا وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فِي الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا
 وَ يَوْمَ يَقُومُ الْأَشْهَادُ ۗ يَوْمَ لَا يَنْفَعُ الظَّالِمِينَ مَعذِرَتُهُمْ وَلَهُمُ اللَّعْنَةُ
 وَلَهُمْ سُوءُ الدَّارِ ۗ وَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْهُدَىٰ وَأَوْثَقْنَا بِرَبِّي إِسْرَائِيلَ
 الْكِتَابَ ۗ هُدًى وَذِكْرَىٰ لِأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ ۗ فَاصْبِرْ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَ
 اسْتَغْفِرْ لِذَنبِكَ وَ سَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ بِالْعَشِيِّ وَالْإِبْكَارِ ۗ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ
 يُجَادِلُونَ فِي آيَاتِ اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ سُلْطٰنٍ أَتٰهُمْ لَإِن فِي صُدُورِهِمْ إِلَّا كِبْرٌ
 مَّا هُمْ بِبَالِغِيهِ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ ۗ لَخَلَقُ السَّمٰوٰتِ
 وَالْأَرْضِ أَكْبَرُ مِنْ خَلْقِ النَّاسِ وَلٰكِن أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ۗ وَمَا
 يَسْتَوِي الْأَعْمَىٰ وَالْبَصِيرُ ۗ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَلَا السُّيُفِيَّةُ
 قَلِيلًا مَّا تَتَذَكَّرُونَ ۗ إِنَّ الشَّاعَةَ لَأْتِيَةٌ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهَا وَلٰكِن أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا
 يُؤْمِنُونَ ۗ وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمْ اذْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ
 عِبَادَتِي سَيَدْخُلُونَ جَهَنَّمَ دٰخِرِينَ ۗ اللَّهُ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمْ اللَّيْلَ لِتَسْكُنُوا
 فِيهِ وَ النَّهَارَ مُبْصِرًا ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَلٰكِن أَكْثَرَ
 النَّاسِ لَا يَشْكُرُونَ ۗ ذٰلِكُمْ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ ۗ لَا إِلٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ ۗ
 فَآتَىٰ تَوْفِكُونَ ۗ كَذٰلِكَ يُؤفِكُ الَّذِينَ كَانُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ يَجْحَدُونَ ۗ اللَّهُ

The haughty ones will say, "We are all in the same state here, and Allah already has passed judgement between His servants."⁶⁵ Then these dwellers of Hell will say to its keepers, "Pray to your Lord to relieve us of the torment for only one day." They will ask, "Did not your Messengers come to you with clear Signs?" They will say, "Yes". The keepers of Hell will say, "Then pray (for help) yourselves. But the prayer of the disbelievers only ends in vain."⁶⁶ 48-50

Believe it that We do help Our Messengers and the Believers in the life of this world,⁶⁷ and so shall We help them on that Day also when the witnesses shall stand up,⁶⁸ and the excuses of the wrongdoers shall not avail them anything. They shall have the curse on them and the worst abode. Just consider this: We showed Moses guidance⁶⁹ and made the children of Israel to inherit the Book, which was guidance and admonition for the men of understanding.⁷⁰ So, be patient,⁷¹ O Prophet: Allah's promise is true.⁷² Ask forgiveness of your errors,⁷³ and glorify your Lord morning and evening with His praise.⁷⁴ The fact is that the hearts of those who are disputing concerning the Revelations of Allah without any authority having come to them, are filled with pride,⁷⁵ but they shall never attain to their ambitions.⁷⁶ So, seek Allah's refuge:⁷⁷ He hears everything and sees everything. 51-56

Surely⁷⁸ the creation of the heavens and the earth is a greater thing than the creation of man, but most people do not know.⁷⁹ And the blind and the seeing cannot be equal, nor are the believing and righteous men equal to the wicked, but you people understand only a little.⁸⁰ The Hour of Resurrection is sure to come; there is no doubt about it, but most people do not believe.⁸¹ 57-59

Your⁸² Lord says: "Call upon Me; I will answer 60

your prayers.⁸³ Those who disdain My worship on account of pride, shall certainly enter Hell, disgraced."⁸⁴

61-63

It is Allah Who made the night for you to rest in it, and made the day bright. The fact is that Allah is highly Bounteous to the people, yet most people are not thankful.⁸⁵ The same Allah (Who has done all this for you) is your Lord, the Creator of everything. There is no god but He.⁸⁶ Whence then are you being deluded?⁸⁷ Likewise were all those people deluded, who denied the Revelations of Allah.⁸⁸

65. That is, "Both you and we have already been sentenced and Allah has passed His judgement regarding each of us. Now it does not lie in anyone's power to change the sentence of Allah, or to make any increase or decrease in the punishment awarded by Him."

66. That is, "When the fact is this that the Messengers had come to you with the clear Signs, and you have already been sentenced to suffer punishment here, because you had refused to believe in them, it is not possible for us to pray for you to Allah. For obviously there should be some plea for such a prayer, and you have exhausted every plea by your misconduct. So, you pray for yourselves if you so like; but we would tell you beforehand that the prayers of the people who had disbelieved in the world like you have been of no avail.

67. For explanation, see E.N. 93 of *Aṣ-Ṣāffāt*.

68. That is, when Allah's Court will be established and the witnesses will be produced before Him.

69. That is, "We did not just leave Moses alone when We sent him against Pharaoh, but We gave him guidance at every step till success." This contains a subtle allusion to the effect: "O Muḥammad, We shall help you too in the same manner. We have neither left you alone after raising you as a Prophet in the city of Makkah and the tribe of Quraish so that these wicked people may treat you as they like, but We Ourselves are at your back and are giving you guidance at every step."

70. That is, "Just as those who disbelieved Moses were deprived of this blessing and the Israelites who believed in him were made heirs to the Book, so will also those who deny you be deprived

and only those who believe in you will have the good fortune to inherit the Qur'ān and rise in the world as the standard-bearers of guidance."

71. "Be patient": "Bear up with a cool mind against these hardships through which you are passing."

72. The allusion is to the promise made above in the sentence: "We do help Our Messengers and the Believers in the life of this world."

73. A study of the context shows that here "error" implies the state of impatience that was being caused to the Holy Prophet on account of the severe antagonism, especially the persecution of his followers. He earnestly desired that either some miracle should be shown, which should convince the disbelievers, or something else should soon come down from Allah, which should quell the storm of opposition. Though this desire in itself was not a sin, which should have called for repentance, the high rank with which Allah had blessed the Holy Prophet demanded great grit and will power; so the little impatience shown by him was regarded as inconsistent with his high rank. Therefore, he was required to ask Allah's forgiveness for showing the weakness and was told to stand his ground like a rock as a man of a high rank like him should.

74. That is, "Glorification of Allah with His praises is the only means by which those who work for the sake of Allah can get the strength to resist and overcome the hardships faced in the way of Allah." Glorifying the Lord morning and evening can have two meanings: (1) "Remembering Allah constantly and perpetually;" and (2) "performing the Prayers at these specific times." And in this second case, the allusion is to the five times of the Prayers, which were enjoined on all the believers as a duty some time after the revelation of this Sūrah. For the word '*ashiyy*' in Arabic is used for the time from the declining of the sun till the early part of night, which covers the times of the four Prayers from Zuhr to 'Ishā'; and *ibkār* is the time from dawn to the rising of the sun, which is the time of the Fajr Prayer. (For further details, see Al-Baqarah : 3, 43, 45, 238; Hūd : 114; Al-Ḥijr : 98-99; Introduction to Banī Isrā'il and vv. 78-79; Ṭā Hā : 130; An-Nūr : 56-58; Al-'Ankabūt : 45; Ar-Rūm : 17-18, 31 and the E.N.'s thereof).

75. That is, "The real cause for their opposition without any argument and their irrational, crooked argumentation is not this

that they do not understand the truths and the themes of goodness and reform being presented before them in the form of the Revelations of Allah; therefore, they dispute about them in good faith in order to understand them; but the actual reason for their wrong attitude is that their self-conceit does not permit them tolerate that while they are living in Arabia the guidance and leadership of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) be accepted and acknowledged and ultimately one day they themselves should have to accept the leadership of the person as against whom they think they have a greater right to be the chiefs and leaders. That is why they are straining every nerve not to let Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) have his way, and they do not hesitate to use any mean device whatever for the purpose.

76. In other words it means this: "He whom Allah has made great, will remain great, and the efforts of the small people who are trying to establish their superiority, will ultimately end in failure."

77. That is, "Just as Moses had become free from fear and anxiety after invoking Allah Almighty's help and refuge against Pharaoh's threats, so should you also seek His help and refuge against the threats and conspiracies of the chiefs of the Quraish, and then should busy yourself in raising His word being free from every anxiety."

78. After reviewing the conspiracies and plots of the chiefs of the Quraish in vv. 21-56, the address is now being directed towards the common people, and they are being made to understand that the truths to which Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) is inviting them, are absolutely rational, as if to say: "Your own good and well-being lies in accepting them and rejecting them is ruinous for your own selves." In this connection, first of all arguments have been given for the doctrine of the Hereafter, for the disbelievers regarded this very doctrine as most bewildering and incomprehensible.

79. This is an argument for the possibility of the Hereafter. The disbelievers thought it was impossible for man to be resurrected after death. In answer to this, it is being said: "Those who talk like this are, in fact, ignorant. If they use their common sense, they will easily understand that for that God Who has created this wonderful Universe it cannot at all be difficult to create men once again."

80. This is an argument for the necessity of the Hereafter. In the preceding sentence it was said that the Hereafter can take place, and its occurrence is not impossible; in this it is being said that the Hereafter should take place; it is the demand of both reason and justice that it should occur, and its non-occurrence is against reason and justice, not its occurrence. After all, how can a reasonable man believe it to be right that those who live like the blind in the world and fill God's earth with mischief by their immoral and wicked deeds, should not see the evil end of their misdeeds and wrong conduct; likewise, those people who pass their lives in the world with open eyes, and believe and do good works, should be deprived of seeing a good result of their righteousness? If this is expressly against reason and justice, then the belief of denying the Hereafter also should be against reason and justice, for the non-occurrence of the Hereafter means that the good and the bad should both become dust after death and meet with one and the same end. For in this case, not only are reason and justice destroyed but morality also is proved to be meaningless and absurd. For if good and evil have one and the same end and destiny, then the evildoer would be highly wise, because he gratified all his desires before his death, and the good man highly foolish because he kept himself subjected to every sort of moral restriction without any reason.

81. This is the absolute assertion about the occurrence of the Hereafter, which can be made only on the basis of knowledge and not on the basis of reasoning, and in no other discourse than of Revelation this assertion can be made with such absoluteness. That which can be said without Revelation only on the basis of intellectual reasoning is that Resurrection can take place and it should take place. Beyond this, to assert that Resurrection will certainly take place, can be said only by that Being Who knows that Resurrection will occur, and that Being is none but Allah. It is here that it becomes explicit and evident that if Religion can be based on pure knowledge, instead of on speculation and reasoning, it can only be on the knowledge obtained through Divine Revelation.

82. After the Hereafter the discourse now turns to *Tauhid* which was the second point of dispute between the Holy Prophet and the disbelievers.

83. That is, "All the powers to answer our prayers vest in Me only; so you should not pray to others but pray to Me." To under-

stand the spirit of this verse well, three things should be comprehended properly:

First, man prays only to that being whom he regards as All-Hearing and All-Seeing and Possessor of supernatural powers. And the real motive of prayer for man is the internal feeling that the natural means and resources of the material world are not enough to remove any of his troubles and to fulfil any of his needs, or are not proving to be enough. Therefore, it is inevitable that he should turn to a being who is possessor of supernatural powers and authority. Man invokes that Being even without having seen Him; he invokes Him at all times, at all places, and under all circumstances; he invokes Him in solitude, aloud as well as in a low voice, and even in the depths of his heart. He does so inevitably on the basis of the belief that that Being is watching him everywhere, is also hearing whatever he has in his heart, and possesses such absolute powers that it can come to the help of the supplicant wherever he is, and can help him out of every trouble and difficulty. After having known this truth about the prayer, it remains no longer difficult for man to understand that the one who invokes another than Allah for help, commits *shirk* absolutely and purely and clearly, for he believes those attributes to be belonging to the other being, which only belong to Allah. Had he not believed the other being to be an associate of Allah in the Divine attributes, he would never have even thought of invoking it for help. 3

Second, one should fully understand that man's merely thinking about a being that it is the possessor of powers and authority, does not necessitate that it should actually become possessor of the powers and authority. Being possessor of powers and authority is a factual matter, which is not dependent on somebody's understanding or not understanding it. The one who is actually the Possessor of the powers will in any case remain the Possessor whether man regards Him so or not. And the one who is not in reality the possessor, will not be able to have any share whatever in the powers only because man has believed it to be possessing the powers. Now, the fact of the matter is that the Being Who is All-Powerful, All-Hearing, All-Seeing, and Who is actually controlling the whole Universe is only Allah, and He alone is Possessor of all powers and authority. There is none else in this Universe, who may have any power to hear the prayers and to answer them or reject them. As

against this factual matter if some people of themselves start entertaining the belief that some prophets, saints, angels, jinns, planets or imaginary gods also are share-holders in the powers, the reality will not change in any way whatever. The Owner will remain the Owner and the helpless servants the servants.

Thirdly, the one who invokes others than Allah behaves like the supplicant who takes his petition to a government office, but leaving aside the real officer who has authority, presents it before one of the other supplicants who may be present there with his petition, and then starts imploring him humbly, saying, "Sir, you possess all the powers, and yours is the only authority here; so, you alone can fulfil my needs." Such a conduct, in the first place, is in itself highly foolish, but in a case like this it also amounts to high insolence, because the real officer who has the authority, is present and before his very eyes applications and petitions are being made before another, apart from him. Then this ignorance and folly reaches its height when the person before whom the petition is being presented makes the petitioner understand over and over again that he himself is a petitioner like him and possesses no power at all, and that the real officer who has the powers is present, and he should make his petition before him. But in spite of this counsel and warning, the foolish person goes on saying: "Sir, you are my lord: you alone can fulfil my need."

Keeping these three things in view, one should try to understand what Allah has said here: "Call upon Me: I shall answer your prayers: it is for Me to accept them."

84. Two things deserve special attention in this verse: (1) *Du'ā* (prayer) and *ibādat* (worship) have been used as synonyms here. The "prayer" of the first sentence has been called "worship" in the second. This makes it explicit that prayer itself is worship, rather the essence of worship; and (2) the words "they disdain My worship on account of pride" have been used for those who do not pray to Allah. This shows that praying to Allah is the very requirement of one's servitude to Him, and turning away from Him amounts to being vain and arrogant. According to Ḥaḍrat Nu'mān bin Bashīr, the Holy Prophet said: "The prayer is the very essence of worship. Then he recited this verse." (Aḥmad, Tirmidhi, Abū Da'ūd, Nasā'i, Ibn Mājah, Ibn Abū Ḥātim, Ibn Jarīr). According to Ḥaḍrat Anas, the Holy Prophet said: "Prayer is the marrow of worship."

(Tirmidhi) Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah says that the Holy Prophet said: "Allah becomes angry with him who does not ask Him for anything." (Tirmidhi)

In the light of the above, the enigma that often causes confusion in the minds is also resolved. In connection with prayer, people say that when the evil or the good destiny is in the control of Allah, and whatever He has already decreed in accordance with His dominant wisdom and expedience has to take place inevitably, what is then the use of the prayer? This is a serious misunderstanding which destroys the importance of prayer from the heart of man, and with this false notion even if man prays, his prayer would be soulless. The above verse of the Qur'ān removes this misunderstanding in two ways :

In the first place, Allah says in clear words: "Call upon Me: I will answer your prayers." This proves that fate or destiny is not something which, God forbid, might have tied the hands of Allah Himself also, and the powers to answer the prayer might have been withdrawn from Him. The creatures have no doubt no power to avert or change the decrees of Allah; but Allah Himself certainly has the power to change His decrees and decisions on hearing a servant's prayer and petition. The other thing that has been stated in this verse is that whether a prayer is accepted or not, it is never without an advantage, which is this: The servant by presenting his petition before his Lord and by praying to Him acknowledges His Lordship and Supremacy and admits his own servitude and helplessness before Him. This expression of servitude is in itself "worship", rather the essence of worship of whose reward the servant will in no case be deprived, irrespective of whether he is granted the particular thing for which he had prayed or not.

We get a full explanation of these two themes in the Sayings of the Holy Prophet. The following Traditions throw light on the first theme:

Ḥaḍrat Salmān Fārsī relates that the Holy Prophet said: "Nothing can avert destiny but the prayer." (Tirmidhi) that is, no one has the power to change the decisions of Allah but Allah Himself can change His decisions, and this happens when the servant prays to Him.

Ḥaḍrat Jābir bin 'Abdullah says that the Holy Prophet said: "Whenever man prays to Allah, Allah either gives him the same

which he prayed for, or prevents a calamity of the same degree from befalling him provided that he does not pray for a sin or for severing relations with the kindred." (Tirmidhi) Another *Hadith* on the same subject has been reported by Ḥaḍrat Abū Sa'īd Khudri in which the Holy Prophet said: "Whenever a Muslim prays, unless it be a prayer for a sin or for severing relations with a kindred, Allah grants it in one of the three ways: Either his prayer is granted in this very world, or it is preserved for rewarding him in the Hereafter, or a disaster of the same degree is prevented from befalling him." (Musnad Aḥmad)

Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah says that the Holy Prophet said: "Whenever one of you prays, he should not say: O God, forgive me if You so please, show me mercy if You so please, grant me provisions if You so please, but he should say definitely: O God, fulfil my such and such need." (Bukhārī). According to another Tradition from Abū Hurairah, the Holy Prophet said: "Pray to Allah with the certainty that He will answer it." (Tirmidhi). In still another Tradition Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah has reported that the Holy Prophet said: "The servant's prayer is granted provided that he does not pray for a sin or for severing connections with the kindred, and is not hasty. It was asked: What is being hasty, O Messenger of Allah? He replied: Being hasty is that man should say: I have prayed much, too much, but I see that my prayer is not being answered. Then he should be tired of it and give up praying." (Muslim).

The other theme is explained by the following Traditions:

Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah relates that the Holy Prophet said: "Nothing is as praiseworthy in the sight of Allah as the prayer." (Tirmidhi, Ibn Mājah).

Ḥaḍrat Ibn Mas'ūd says that the Holy Prophet said: "Ask of Allah His bounty, because Allah likes that He should be asked." (Tirmidhi).

Ḥaḍrat Ibn 'Umar and Ḥaḍrat Mu'ādh bin Jabal state that the Holy Prophet said: "The prayer is in any case beneficial, both with respect to those calamities which have descended and with respect to those which have not yet descended. So, O servants of Allah, you must always pray." (Tirmidhi, Musnad Aḥmad).

Ḥaḍrat Anas says that the Holy Prophet said: "Each one of you should ask his every need of Allah; so much so that even if his

(Contd. on p. 46)

الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمْ الْأَرْضَ قَرَارًا وَالسَّمَاءَ بِنَاءً وَصَوَّرَكُمْ فَأَحْسَنَ صُورَكُمْ
 وَرَزَقَكُمْ مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ ذَلِكُمْ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٥٣﴾ هُوَ
 الْحَقُّ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ فَادْعُوهُ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ
 الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٥٤﴾ قُلْ إِنِّي نُهَيْتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ لَمَّا
 جَاءَنِي الْبَيِّنَاتُ مِنْ رَبِّي وَأُمِرْتُ أَنْ أُسَلِّمَ لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٥٥﴾ هُوَ الَّذِي
 خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ عَلَقَةٍ ثُمَّ يُخْرِجُكُمْ طِفْلًا ثُمَّ
 لِتَبْلُغُوا أَشْدَّكُمْ ثُمَّ لِتَكُونُوا شُيُوخًا وَمِنْكُمْ مَنْ يُتَوَفَّى مِنْ قَبْلُ وَلِتَبْلُغُوا
 أَجَلًا مُّسَمًّى وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾ هُوَ الَّذِي يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ فَإِذَا قَضَىٰ أَمْرًا
 فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ ﴿٥٧﴾ أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ يُجَادِلُونَ فِي آيَاتِ اللَّهِ
 أَنِّي يُصْرَفُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِكِتَابِ وَبِمَا أُرْسِلْنَا بِهِ رُسُلَنَا فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾
 إِذِ الْأَغْلُلُ فِي أَعْنَاقِهِمْ وَالسَّلْسِلُ يُسْحَبُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾ فِي الْحَبِيمِ هُ ثُمَّ فِي النَّارِ
 يُسْجَرُونَ ﴿٦١﴾ ثُمَّ قِيلَ لَهُمْ آيِنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ تُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ قَالُوا
 ضَلُّوا عَنَّا بَلْ لَمْ نَكُنْ نَدْعُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ شَيْئًا كَذَلِكَ يَضِلُّ اللَّهُ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٦٣﴾
 ذَلِكَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَفْرَحُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَبِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَمْرَحُونَ ﴿٦٤﴾
 ادْخُلُوا أَبْوَابَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا فَبئسَ مَثْوًى الْمُتَكَبِّرِينَ ﴿٦٥﴾ فَاصْبِرْ إِنَّ
 وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ فَإِنَّمَا نُرِيَنَّكَ بَعْضَ الَّذِي نَعِدُهُمْ أَوْ نَتَوَفَّيَنَّكَ فَإِنَّمَا
 يُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٦٦﴾ وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلًا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْهُمْ مَنْ قَصَصْنَا عَلَيْكَ وَ
 مِنْهُمْ مَنْ لَمْ نَقْصُصْ عَلَيْكَ وَمَا كَانَ لِرَسُولٍ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ بِآيَةٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ
 اللَّهِ فَإِذَا جَاءَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ قُضِيَ بِالْحَقِّ وَخَسِرَ هُنَالِكَ الْمُبْطِلُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾ اللَّهُ الَّذِي

It is Allah Who made the earth a resting-place for you⁸⁹ and the sky a canopy over it,⁹⁰ Who shaped you, and shaped you so well, and Who provided you with pure things.⁹¹ The same Allah (Who did all this) is your Lord. Highly blessed is Allah, Lord of the Universe. He is the Living One:⁹² there is no god but He. Call upon Him alone, making your religion sincerely His.⁹³ All praise is only due to Allah, Lord of the Universe.⁹⁴

64-65

O Prophet, tell the people, "I have been forbidden to worship those whom you invoke instead of Allah,⁹⁵ (How can I do this) when clear Signs have come to me from my Lord? I have been commanded to submit to the Lord of all creation.

66

He it is Who created you from dust, then from a sperm, then from a clot of blood, then He delivers you as an infant, then He makes you to grow up to attain to full strength, then makes you to grow further to reach old age, though some one of you is recalled earlier.⁹⁶ This is done so that you may reach an appointed time⁹⁷ and may understand the reality.⁹⁸ He it is Who gives life and ordains death. Whatever He decrees, He only commands it to be and it is.

67-68

Have you seen how those who dispute concerning Allah's Revelations are being turned about?⁹⁹ Those who deny this Book and those Books which We sent with Our Messengers,¹⁰⁰ shall soon know when, with fetters round their necks and chains, they shall be dragged towards boiling water and then cast into the fire of Hell.¹⁰¹ Then they will be asked, "Where are those other gods than Allah, whom you associated?¹⁰² They will answer, "They have been lost to us; nay, we did not call upon anything before this."¹⁰³ Thus will Allah establish the deviation of the disbelievers. It will be said to them, "You have met this fate because you re-

69-77

joiced on the earth in things other than the Truth, and then exulted in it.¹⁰⁴ Enter now the gates of Hell to live therein for ever. What an evil abode for the arrogant! So, be patient,¹⁰⁵ O Prophet: Allah's promise is true. Whether We let you witness a part of the evil consequences with which We are threatening them, or recall you from the world (before this), they have to return to Us.¹⁰⁶

78 O Prophet, We have sent many a Messenger before you. Of them there are some whose stories We have related to you, and of others We have not related. Yet it was not in the power of any Messenger to have himself brought a Sign,¹⁰⁸ without Allah's leave. Then, when Allah's Command came, the judgement was passed with justice, and the wrongdoers then incurred loss.¹⁰⁹

(Contd. from p. 43)

shoe-lace breaks, he should pray for it to Allah." (Tirmidhi). That is, even in matters which man feels are in his own power, he should invoke Allah's help for it before planning his own devices for it, for in no matter can man succeed only on the basis of his own devices without the help and succour of Allah, and praying before devising plans means that the servant is at all times acknowledging the supremacy of Allah and admitting his own helplessness.

85. This verse comprises two important themes: First, the night and the day have been presented in it as an argument for *Tauhid*, because their alternating regularly means that One God alone is ruling over the earth and the sun, and their alternation's being beneficial for man and other earthly creatures is an express proof of the fact that the same One God is also the Creator of all these things and has devised this system with such great wisdom that it should be beneficial and useful for all His creatures. Secondly, in this verse the atheists and the polytheists have been made to realize how great a blessing has Allah bestowed on them in the shape of the night and the day, and what ungrateful wretches they are that while they are benefiting from this blessing of His, they are being disloyal and rebellious to Him day and night. (For further explanation, see Yûnus : 87, Al-Furqân : 62, An-Naml : 86, Al-Qaşş : 71-73, Ar-Rûm : 23, Luqmân : 29, Yâ Sîn : 37 and the E.N.'s thereof).

86. That is, "The alternation of the night and day has proved that Allah alone is your Creator as well as of everything else, and the great advantage and benefits that accrue from this alternation for your life, prove that He is your highly Beneficent Lord. After this, it automatically follows that He is your real Deity too. For it would be wholly against reason and justice that your Creator and Providence should be Allah and your deities others."

87. That is, "Who is misleading you to think that those who are neither the creators nor providers should deserve to be worshipped by you?"

88. That is, "In every age the common people have been deluded by the misguides only because the people did not believe in the Revelations that Allah sent down through His Messengers to make them understand the Truth. Consequently; they were trapped by the selfish, dishonest people, who had set up shrines of false gods as a business."

89. For explanation, see An-Naml : 61 and E.N. 74 on it.

90. That is, "You have not been exposed to outer space so that heavenly calamities should rain on you and annihilate you completely, but We have built over the earth a fully fortified celestial system (which appears like a dome to the eye), which does not allow any destructive element to reach you; so much so that even the destructive cosmic rays cannot reach you and that is how you are living peacefully on the earth."

91. That is, "We had provided for you such a safe and peaceful place of rest even before your creation. Then We created you and gave you a fine body with most appropriate limbs and physical and mental powers of a high calibre. You did not create this erect stature, these hands and feet, these eyes and nose and ears, this talking tongue and this brain, which is a treasure-house of great capabilities, nor were these created by your mother and father, nor had a prophet or a saint or a god the power to create them. Their Maker and Creator was the All-Wise, All-Merciful, All-Mighty Sovereign, Who created Man with this wonderful body to function in the world, when He decided to bring him into being. Then as soon as you were created, you found by His beneficence a vast table laid out with pure provisions containing items of pure food which is not poisonous but health-giving, which is not bitter and tasteless but tasty, which is not rotten and stale and stinking but good smelling,

which is not lifeless dregs but rich in vitamins and useful organic substances, so essential for the proper development and nourishment of your body. Who has provided in such abundance this water, and corn, vegetables, fruits, milk, honey, meat and condiments, which not only add relish to your food but also provide you vitality and pleasures of life? And who has made the arrangements that these measureless granaries of food should go on coming out from the earth endlessly and their supply should never fail? Just consider this: What would have become of life if there had been no arrangement of food and man had been brought into existence suddenly? Is this not a clear proof that Your Creator is not merely a Creator but is an All-Wise Creator and All-Merciful Lord? (For further explanation, see Hūd : 6, An-Naml : 60-66 and the E.N.'s thereof).

92. That is, "His is the real and true life. He only is living by virtue of His own power. No one else has the eternal and everlasting life but He. All others have borrowed and temporary life, which is destined to death and perishable."

93. For explanation, see E.N.'s 3, 4 of Az-Zumar.

94. That is, "There is none else the hymns of whose praise may be sung and who may be thanked."

95. Here again *'ibādat* (worship) and *du'ā* (prayer) have been used as synonyms.

96. That is, "Someone dies before birth, and someone before attaining youth, and someone before reaching old age."

97. "An appropriate time" may either imply the time of death, or the time when all human beings will be resurrected and presented before their Lord. In the first case, the meaning would be: Allah passes every man through different stages of life and takes him to the specific time which He has appointed for everyone's return. Before that time even if the whole world joins to kill him, it cannot kill him; and when that time has arrived, none can keep him alive even if all the powers of the world join together to do so. In the second case, it would mean: This gamut of life has not been brought about so that man may end up in the dust and be completely annihilated, but Allah passes him through different stages of life so that all human beings may present themselves before Him at the time which He has appointed for the purpose.

98. That is, "You are not being passed through these different stages of life so that you may live as the animals live and die as

they die, but for the purpose that you may use your common sense which Allah has granted you and may understand the system in which you are living. The creation of a wonderful thing like life from the lifeless substances of the earth, then the coming into being of a marvellous creation like man from the microscopic germ of the sperm, then its developing inside the mother's womb, from the time of conception till delivery, in such a manner that its sex, its form and appearance, its bodily structure, its mental qualities and characteristics, and its faculties and capabilities should be determined therein, un-influenced by any external factor or agency. Then the one who is to be eliminated by abortion does fall a prey to abortion, the one who is to die in infancy, does die in infancy, whether he be the child of a king, and the one who is to reach maturity or old age, does reach that age, even through highly dangerous conditions, in which death should be certain, and the one who is to die in a particular stage of life, does die in that stage even if he is given the best medical attention and treatment in the best hospitals by the best doctors. Are not all these things pointing to the truth that the ultimate control of our life and death is in the hand of an All-Mighty Sovereign? And when the reality is this that an All-Powerful Being is controlling our life and death, then how did a prophet or a saint or an angel or a star or planet become worthy of our worship and service? When did a creature attain the rank that we should pray to it, and accept it as the maker and un-maker of our destiny? And how did a human power have the status that we should obey its commands and prohibitions and its self-made law about the lawful and the unlawful, without question? (For further explanation, see Al-Hajj : 5-7 and the E.N.'s on it).

99. That is, "Have you not understood even after the above discourse what is the real source of these people's misunderstanding and misconduct, and what has caused them to go astray? (One should note that the addressee here is not the Holy Prophet but every such person who reads these verses or hears them read).

100. This is the real cause of their going astray. Their denial of the Qur'an and the teachings brought by the Messenger of Allah and their resisting by disputation the Revelations of Allah instead of pondering over them seriously, was the basic cause, which has led them astray and exhausted all possibilities of their adopting the Right Way.

101. That is, "When compelled by the intensity of thirst they will ask for water, the keepers of Hell will drag them by the chains towards the springs of boiling water, and when they will have drunk from them, they will drag them back to be cast into the fire of Hell."

102. That is, "If they really were gods or associates in God-head, and you worshipped them in the hope that they would help you in the evil time, then why don't they come to rescue you now?"

103. They do not mean to say, "We did not associate them with God in the world," but they mean this: "Now we have understood well that those whom we invoked in the world, were nothing and mere nonentities."

104. That is, "You not only followed that which was untrue and false, but you became so enamoured of the untruth that when the Truth was presented before you, you paid no heed to it, but continued to exult in your worship of the falsehood."

105. That is, "You should have patience at what those people say and do, who are opposing you by disputation and wrangling and want to defeat you by mean devices."

106. That is, "It is not necessary that We should punish every such person who has tried to harm you, in this world and during your lifetime. Whether a person receives his punishment here or not, he cannot in any case escape Our grasp: he has to return to Us after death. Then he will receive full punishment of his misdeeds."

107. A new theme starts from here. The disbelievers of Makkah said to the Holy Prophet, "We would not believe you to be Allah's Messenger unless you showed us the miracle that we ask you to show us." In the following verses an answer is being given to this very demand without mentioning it. (For the type of the miracles they demanded, see Hūd : 12, Al-Hijr: 7, Bani Isrā'il: 90-93, Al-Furqān : 21 and the E.N.'s thereof).

108. That is, "No Prophet ever showed a miracle by his own will and desire, nor had any Prophet the power to show a miracle by himself. Whenever a miracle was shown through a Prophet, it was shown when Allah willed it to be shown through him to the disbelievers." This is the first answer to the disbelievers' demand.

109. That is, "A miracle has never been shown for the mere

(Contd. on p. 52)

جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَنْعَامَ لِتَرْكَبُوا مِنْهَا وَمِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ ﴿٧٩﴾ وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَنَافِعُ وَ
 لِتَبْلُغُوا عَلَيْهَا حَاجَةً فِي صُدُورِكُمْ وَعَلَيْهَا وَعَلَى الْفُلْكِ تُحْمَلُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾ وَيُرِيكُمْ
 آيَاتِهِ ۗ فَآتَى آيَاتِ اللَّهِ تُنْكِرُونَ ﴿٨١﴾ أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوا كَيْفَ
 كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ۖ كَانُوا أَكْثَرَ مِنْهُمْ وَأَشَدَّ قُوَّةً وَآثَارًا فِي
 الْأَرْضِ فَمَا أَعْنَى عَنْهُمْ مِمَّا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾ فَلَمَّا جَاءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ
 بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَرِحُوا بِهَا عِنْدَهُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ
 يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ ﴿٨٣﴾ فَلَمَّا رَأَوْا بَأْسَنَا قَالُوا آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَحُدَاهُ وَكَفَرْنَا بِمَا كُنَّا بِهِ
 مُشْرِكِينَ ﴿٨٤﴾ فَلَوْ يَكُ يَنْفَعُهُمْ إِيْمَانُهُمْ لَمَّا رَأَوْا بَأْسَنَا ۗ سُنَّتَ اللَّهُ الَّتِي
 قَدْ خَلَتْ فِي عِبَادِهِ ۗ وَخَيْرَ هُنَالِكَ الْكَافِرُونَ ﴿٨٥﴾

It is Allah Who has provided the cattle that you may ride on some and eat the flesh of others. Then you have many other uses also in them: you ride on them to places that you desire in your hearts to reach, and you are carried on them as well as on ships. Allah shows you these Signs of His. Then, which Signs of His will you still deny?¹¹⁰

79-81

Well,¹¹¹ have they not travelled in the earth that they could see the fate of those who have gone before them? They were more in number and stronger in might and have left behind greater traces of their power in the land; yet what they earned did not avail them anything. When their Messengers came to them with clear Signs, they remained stuck to the knowledge that they already had,¹¹² and then were encompassed by the same thing that they mocked. When they saw Our scourge, they

82-85

cried out, "We now believe in Allah, the One, and we reject all those gods whom we used to associate with Him." But after having seen Our scourge, their belief could be of no avail to them, because the same has been the standing law of Allah to deal with His servants, in the past,¹¹³ and then the disbelievers only incurred loss.

(Contd. from p. 50)

fun of it. It is a decisive thing. If a nation does not believe even after a miracle has been shown, it is destroyed. You are demanding a miracle only for the sake of fun, but you have no idea that by making such a demand you are, in fact, inviting your own doom." This is the second answer to their demand. (For details, please see Al-Hijr: 8, 58-60, Bani Isrā'il: 59, Al-Anbiyā': 5-9, Al-Furqān: 22-23, Ash-Shua'rā': 66-67 and the E.N.'s thereof).

110. It means this: "If you are not demanding a miracle only for the sake of fun and amusement, but want to have the satisfaction whether that to which Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) is inviting you (i.e. *Tauḥīd* and the Hereafter) is true or not, then God's those Signs which you are observing and experiencing at all times, are quite enough. For there remains no need for other signs when there are these Signs to help you understand the Truth." This is the third answer to their demand of the miracles. This answer also has been given at several places in the Qur'ān and we have given detailed commentary on it. (Please see Al-An'ām: 37-39; Yūnus : 101; Ar Ra'd : 7-13; Ash-Shua'rā' : 4-9 and the E.N.'s thereof).

The animals which serve man on the earth, especially the cow, ox, buffalo, sheep, goat, camel and horse, have been created with such nature by the Creator that they easily become man's domestic pet servants and he uses them to fulfil countless of his needs. He rides on them, employs them for carrying loads and in agriculture, gets milk from them, which he drinks and also uses it for making curd, butter, ghee, condensed milk, cheese and different sorts of confectionaries; eats their flesh, uses their fat, and puts to good uses their wool and hair and skin and intestines and bones, even their blood and dung. Is it not a manifest proof that the Creator of man had created these animals even before creating him in view of his count-

less needs, on a special pattern so that he may use them to advantage?

The three-fourths of the earth's surface is under water and only one-fourth is dry land. In the dry parts also there are small and wide tracts of land which are separated by water. The spreading of human populations on the dry lands and the establishment of commercial and other relations between them could not be possible unless water and oceans and winds were made subject to such laws as would make navigation possible, and such materials were made available on the earth, which man could employ for building ships. Is it not an express sign of this that there is One God and only One All-Powerful, All-Merciful and All-Wise Lord, Who has made man and earth and water and oceans and winds and everything on the earth according to His own special scheme? Rather, if man only considers from the viewpoint of navigation how the positions of the stars and regular movements of the planets are helpful in it, he will have the testimony that not only of the earth but of the heavens too the Creator is the same One Bountiful Lord.

Then, consider also this: Can you in your right senses imagine that the All-Wise God, Who has given His countless things in the control of man and has granted him all these provisions for his well-being, will be, God forbid, so blind of the eye and so thoughtless as would never call man to account after giving him all this?

111. This is the conclusion to the discourse. While studying this please also keep in view vv. 4 5 and v. 21 of this Sūrah.

112. That is, "They took their philosophy and their science, their law, their secular sciences and their mythology and theology invented by their religious guides as the real knowledge, and regarded the Knowledge brought by the Prophets of Allah as worthless and therefore paid no heed to it."

113. "The standing Law of Allah": the Law that repentance and faith are beneficial only till the time man is not seized by the torment of Allah or death. Believing or repenting after the torment has arrived or the signs of death have appeared, is not acceptable to Allah.

XLI

HĀ-MĪM AS-SAJDAH

حَمِّ السُّجْدَةِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

XLI

HĀ-MĪM AS-SAJDAH

حم السجده

INTRODUCTION

Name

The name of this Sūrah is composed of two words, *Hā-Mīm* and *As-Sajdah*, which implies that it is a Sūrah which begins with *Hā-Mīm* and in which a verse requiring the performance of *sajdah* (prostration) has occurred.

Period of Revelation

According to authentic Traditions, it was sent down after the affirmation of the Faith by Ḥaḍrat Ḥamzah and before the affirmation of the Faith by Ḥaḍrat 'Umar.

Muḥammad bin Ishāq, the earliest biographer of the Holy Prophet, has related on the authority of Muḥammad bin Ka'b al-Qurzi, the famous follower of the Companions, that one day some of the Quraish chiefs were sitting in their assembly in the Masjid al-Ḥarām, while in another corner of the Mosque there was the Holy Prophet sitting by himself. This was the time when Ḥadrat Ḥamzah had already embraced Islam and the people of the Quraish were feeling upset at the growing numbers of the Muslims. On this occasion, 'Utbah bin Rabī'ah (the father-in-law of Abū Sufyān) said to the Quraish chiefs: "Gentlemen, if you like I would go and speak to Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) and put before him some proposals; maybe that he accepts one of them, to which we may also agree, and so he stops opposing us." They all agreed to this, and 'Utbah went and sat by the Holy Prophet. When the Holy Prophet turned to him, he said: "Nephew, you know the high status that you enjoy in the community by virtue of your ancestry and family relations, but you have put your people to great trouble: you have created divisions among them and you consider them to be fools: you talk ill of their religion and gods, and say things as though all our forefathers were pagans. Now listen to me and I shall make some suggestions. Consider them well: maybe that you accept one of them." The Holy Prophet said: "Abul Walid, say what you want to say and I shall listen to you." He said, "Nephew, if by what you are doing, you want wealth, we will give you enough of it so that you will be the richest man among us; if you want to become an important man, we will make you our chief and will never decide a matter without you; if you want to be a king, we will accept you as our king; and if you are visited by a jinn, whom you cannot get rid of by your own

power, we will arrange the best physicians and have you treated at our own expense." 'Utbah went on speaking in this strain and the Holy Prophet went on listening to him quietly. Then he said, "Have you said, O Abul Walid, what you had to say?" He replied that he had. The Holy Prophet said: "Well, now listen to me." Then pronouncing *Bismillah ir-Rehman-ir-Raihm* he began to recite this very Sūrah, and 'Utbah kept on listening to it, putting his hands behind his back and leaning on them as he listened. Coming to the verse of prostration (v. 38) the Holy Prophet prostrated himself; then raising his head, said, "This was my reply, O Abul Walid, now you may act as you please." When 'Utbah arose and walked back towards the chiefs, the people saw him from afar, and said: "By God! 'Utbah's face is changed. He does not look the same man that he was when he went from here." Then, when he came back and sat down, the people asked, "What have you heard?" He replied, "By God! I have heard something the like of which I had never heard before. By God, it's neither poetry, nor sorcery, nor magic. O chiefs of the Quraish, listen to what I say and leave this man to himself. I think what he recites is going to have its effect. If the other Arabs overcome him, you will be saved from raising your hand against your brother, and the others will deal with him. But if he overcame Arabia, his sovereignty would be your sovereignty and his honour your honour." Hearing this the chiefs spoke out: "You too, O father of Walid, have been bewitched by his tongue." 'Utbah replied, "I have given you my opinion; now you may act as you please." (Ibn Hishām, vol. I, pp. 313-314).

This story has been narrated by several other traditionists also on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Jābir bin 'Abdullah in different ways, with a little variation in

wording. In some traditions it has also been related that when during the recitation the Holy Prophet had come to verse 13, viz. "If they turn away, say to them: I warn you of a thunderbolt the like of which had visited the 'Ād and the Thamūd," 'Utbah had spontaneously placed his hand on the Holy Prophet's mouth, and said: "For God's sake, have mercy on your people." Afterwards he justified his action before the Quraish chiefs, saying: "You know that whatever Muḥammad says is always fulfilled; therefore, I feared lest a torment should descend on us." (For details, see *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, vol. IV, pp. 90-91; *Al-Bidāyah wan-Nihāyah*, vol. III, p. 62).

Theme and Subject-Matter

In the discourse that Allah sent down in response to what 'Utbah said, no attention whatever was paid to the absurd proposals that he had made to the Holy Prophet. For what he had said was, in fact, an attack on the Holy Prophet's intention and his intellect. His assumption was that as there was no possibility of his being a Prophet and the Qur'ān's being Allah's Revelation, inevitably the motive of his invitation must either be the desire to obtain wealth and political power, or, God forbid, he had lost his reason. In the first case, he wanted to make a bargain with the Holy Prophet; in the second, he was insulting him when he said that the Quraish chiefs would have been cured of his madness at their own expense. Obviously, when the opponents come down to such absurd things, no gentleman would like to answer them, but would ignore them and say what he himself had to say.

Therefore, ignoring what 'Utbah said, this Sūrah makes antagonism its subject of discussion, which the unbelieving Quraish were showing stubbornly and

wickedly in order to defeat the message of the Qur'ān. They would say to the Holy Prophet, "You may try however hard you may: we would not listen to you. We have put coverings on our hearts and we have closed our ears. There is a wall between you and us, which would never let us meet together."

They had given a clear notice to the Holy Prophet to the effect: "You may continue your mission of inviting the people to yourself, but we would go on opposing you as hard as we can to frustrate your mission."

For this object they had devised the following plan: Whenever the Holy Prophet or a follower of his would try to recite the Qur'ān before the people, they would at once raise such a hue and cry that no one could hear anything.

They were desperately trying to misconstrue the verses of the Qur'ān and spread every kind of misunderstanding among the people. They misconstrued everything and found fault even with the straightforward things. They would isolate words and sentences from their right context, from here and there, and would add their own words in order to put new meanings on them so as to mislead the people about the Qur'ān and the Messenger who presented it.

They would raise strange objections a specimen of which has been presented in this Sūrah. They said, "If an Arab presents a discourse in Arabic, what could be the miracle in it? Arabic is his mother tongue. Anyone could compose anything that he pleased in his mother tongue and then make the claim that he had received it from God. It would be a miracle if the person would suddenly arise and make an eloquent speech in a foreign tongue which he did not know. Then only could one say that the discourse was not of his own composition but a revelation from God."

Here is a resume of what has been said in answer to this deaf and blind opposition:

(1) The Qur'ān is most certainly the Word of God, which He has sent down in Arabic. The ignorant people do not find any light of knowledge in the truths that have been presented in it plainly and clearly, but the people of understanding are seeing this light as well as benefiting by it. It is surely Allah's mercy that He has sent down this Word for the guidance of man. If a person regarded it as an affliction, it would be his own misfortune. Good news is for those who benefit by it and warning for those who turn away from it.

(2) If you have put coverings on your hearts and have made yourselves deaf, it is none of the Prophet's job to make the one hear who does not want to hear, and the one who does not want to understand understand forcibly. He is a man like you; he can make only those to hear and understand, who are inclined to hear and understand.

(3) Whether you close down your eyes and ears and put coverings on your hearts, the fact, however, is that your God is only One God, and you are not the servant of any one else. Your stubbornness cannot change this reality in any way. If you accept this truth and correct your behaviour accordingly you will do good only to yourselves, and if you reject it, you will only be preparing your own doom.

(4) Do you have any understanding as to whom you disbelieve and with whom you associate others in divinity? It is with regard to that God Who has created this limitless universe, Who is the Creator of the earth and heavens, from Whose blessings you are benefiting on the earth, and on Whose provisions you are being fed and sustained. You set up His mean creatures as His

associates and when you are made to understand the truth you turn away in stubbornness.

(5) If you still do not believe, then be aware that a sudden torment is about to visit you, the like of which had visited the 'Ād and the Thamūd, and this torment also will not be the final punishment of your crimes, but there is in addition the accountability and the fire of Hell in the Hereafter.

(6) Wretched is the man who gets as company such satans from among men and jinn, who show him nothing but green and pleasant, who make his follies seem fair to him, who neither let him think aright himself nor let him hear right from others. But on the Day of Reckoning when their doom overtakes them, each one of them will say that if he happened to get hold of those who had misled and deceived him in the world, he would trample them under his foot.

(7) This Qur'ān is an unchangeable Book. You can not defeat it by your machinations and falsehoods. Whether falsehood comes from the front or makes a secret and indirect attack from behind, it cannot succeed in refuting it.

(8) Today when this Qur'ān is being presented in your own language so that you may understand it, you say that it should have been sent down in some foreign tongue. But had We sent it in a foreign tongue for your guidance, you would yourselves have called it a joke, as if to say, "What a strange thing! The Arabs are being given guidance in a non-Arabic language, which nobody understands." This means that you, in fact, have no desire to obtain guidance. You are only inventing ever new excuses for not affirming the faith.

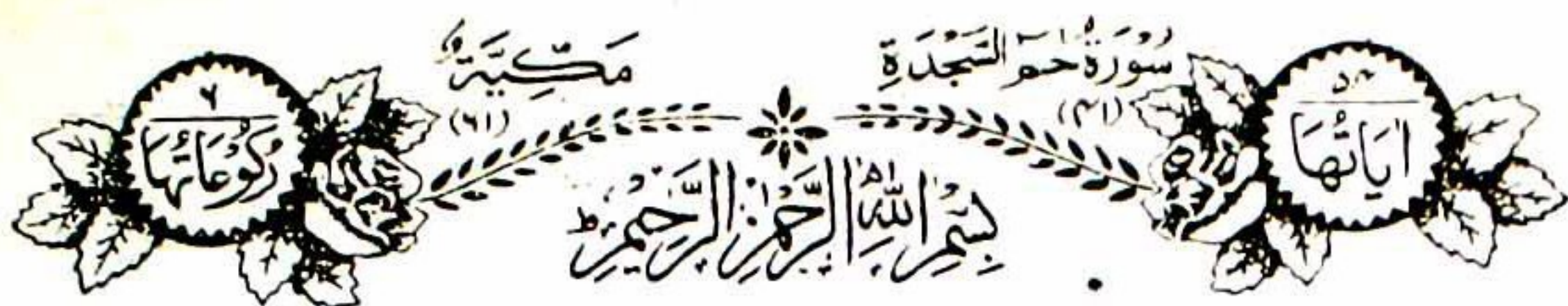
(9) Have you ever considered that if it became established that the Qur'ān was really from Allah, then

what fate you would meet by denying it and opposing it so vehemently as you do?

(10) Today you do not believe but soon you will see with your own eyes that the message of this Qur'ān has pervaded the whole world and you have yourselves been overwhelmed by it. Then you will come to know that what you were being told was the very truth.

Besides giving these answers to the opponents, attention has been paid to the problems which the believers and the Holy Prophet himself were facing in that environment of active resistance. Not to speak of preaching the message to others, the believers were even finding it difficult to follow the way of the Faith. Any one about whom it became known that he had become a Muslim, life would become an agony. As against the dreadful combination of the enemy and its all-pervading power, they were feeling utterly helpless and powerless. In this state, in the first place, they were consoled and encouraged, as if to say: "You are not, in fact, helpless and powerless, for any person who believes in God as his Lord and adheres to this belief and way of life resolutely, God's angels descend on him and help and support him at every stage, from the life of this world till the Hereafter." Then they were encouraged with the consolation: "The best man is he who does good, invites others to God and proclaims firmly that he is a Muslim."

The question that was vexing the Holy Prophet at that time was as to how he should carve out a way of preaching his message when he had to face such heavy odds on every side. The solution he was given to this question was: "Although apparently the obstacles seem to be insurmountable, the weapon of good morals and character can smash and melt them away. Use this weapon patiently, and whenever Satan provokes you and incites you to use some other device, seek refuge in Allah."



حَوْرًا تَنْزِيلٌ مِّنَ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ۝ كَتَبَ فُصِّلَتْ آيَاتُهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا
 لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ ۝ بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا ۝ فَأَعْرَضَ أَكْثَرُهُمْ فَهُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ ۝ وَ
 قَالُوا قُلُوبُنَا فِي أَكْثَرِ مَا تَدْعُونَا إِلَيْهِ وَفِي آذَانِنَا وَقْرٌ وَمِن بَيْنِنَا وَ
 وَبَيْنِكَ حِجَابٌ فَأَعْمَلْ إِنَّا عَمِلُونَ ۝ قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ
 أَنَّمَا إِلَهُكُمُ اللَّهُ وَاحِدٌ فَاستَقِيمُوا إِلَيْهِ وَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ ۝ وَوَيْلٌ لِلْمُشْرِكِينَ ۝
 الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ بِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ كَافِرُونَ ۝ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
 وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ أَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُونٍ ۝ قُلْ إِنِّي كُنتُ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ ۝ بِالَّذِي
 خَلَقَ الْأَرْضَ فِي يَوْمَيْنِ وَتَجْعَلُونَ لَهُ آندَادًا ۝ ذَٰلِكَ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ ۝ وَجَعَلَ

XLI

HĀ-MĪM AS-SAJDAH

حم السجده

Verses : 54

Revealed at Makkah

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

Hā Mim. This is a Revelation from the All-Compassionate, the All-Merciful God, a Book whose verses are well-expounded, an Arabic Qur'ān for those who have knowledge, a giver of good news and a warner.¹

1-4

Yet most of these people have turned away from it, and they pay no heed. They say, "Our hearts are covered with veils from that to which you are calling us;² our ears have become deaf, and between us and you

4-5

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there is a curtain:³ so do as you please; we shall do as we will."⁴

6-8 O Prophet, say to them, "I am only a man, like you.⁵ I am told by revelation that your God is only One God:⁶ therefore, turn straight to Him alone⁷ and ask for His forgiveness.⁸ Woe to the *mushriks* who do not pay the *Zakāt*⁹ and deny the Hereafter. As for those who have believed and done right, for them there is surely an unfailing reward.¹⁰

1. This is a brief introduction to the Sūrah. A study of the following discourse can show what relevance the things mentioned in it have with the theme that follows.

The first thing said is that this Word is being sent down by God, as if to say: "You, O people, may go on saying again and again that this Word is being composed by Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) but the fact is that its revelation is from God, Lord of the worlds." Furthermore, the addressees have also been warned, so as to say: "If you express your displeasure on hearing this discourse, your this displeasure is not against Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) but against God. If you reject it, you reject Allah's Word, not of a man, and if you turn away from it, you do not turn away from a man but from Allah."

Secondly, that the one sending it down is that God, Who is extremely Merciful (*Reḥmān* and *Raḥīm*) to His creatures. The mention of the attribute of mercy of the Sender of Revelation, instead of any other attributes, points to the truth that He has sent down this Word under the requirement of His mercifulness. By this the addressees have been warned, so as to say: "If someone spurns this Word, or rejects it, or expresses displeasure at it, he in fact is his own enemy. This is indeed a supreme blessing, which God has sent down, out of His infinite mercy, for the guidance and well-being and happiness of man. If God were merciless to mankind, He would have left them to wander about in darkness and would have least cared what pit they fell into. But this is His bounty and beneficence that along with bringing men into existence and providing for them He has taken on Himself the responsibility to show them the light of knowledge also in order to adorn their lives, and is sending down this Word to a servant of His for the same purpose. Now, who could be more ungrateful and

a greater enemy of himself than the one who instead of benefiting from this mercy made up his mind to fight it ?”

Thirdly, that the verses of this Book are well-expounded. That is, there is nothing confusing and ambiguous in it so that somebody might excuse himself from accepting it on the ground that he was unable to understand the contents of the Book. In it, it has been plainly told what is the truth and what is the falsehood, what are the right beliefs and what are the wrong beliefs, what is good and what is evil, what is high morality and what is vice, in what way lies the good of man and in what he incurs loss for himself. If a person rejects such clear and manifest guidance, or pays no heed to it, he cannot offer any excuse for it. His this attitude clearly implies that he wants to remain in the wrong wilfully.

Fourthly, that this is an Arabic Qur'ān, which implies this: “If this Qur'ān had been sent down in some other language, the Arabs would have presented the excuse that they were ignorant of the language in which God had sent His Book. But this is their own language. They cannot put forward the excuse that they cannot understand it. (Here, one should keep in view verse 44 also, in which the same theme has been expressed in a different way, and the suspicion that in that case there is a reasonable excuse for the non-Arabs not to accept the message of the Qur'ān, we have already removed in our commentary of Sūrah Yūsuf : 2 and E. N. 2 on it. Please also see *Rasā'il-o-Masā'il*, Vol. I, pp. 19-23).

Fifthly, that this Book is for those who possess knowledge. That is, only the people of understanding can draw any benefit from this Book. For the ignorant it is as useless as a precious diamond for the one who cannot distinguish it from a mere stone.

Sixthly, that this Book gives good news and administers warning. That is, it does not consist of mere fantasy, or a philosophy, or a specimen of good literary composition, which one may accept or reject without entailing any consequence, but it is openly administering a warning to the whole world that the results of accepting and believing in it are marvellous and of rejecting it very dreadful. Thus only a fool could reject it with scant attention.

2. That is, “It has no way open to reach our hearts.”

3. That is, “This invitation has divided us: it has cut us off from you: it has become a hindrance for us to join you.”

4. It has two meanings: (1) “That we have nothing to do with you;” and (2) “that if you do not desist from your preaching, you

(Contd. on p. 70)

فِيهَا رَوَاسِي مِنْ فَوْقِهَا وَبُرُكٌ فِيهَا وَقَدَّرَ فِيهَا أَقْوَاتَهَا فِي أَرْبَعَةِ أَيَّامٍ ۝
 سَوَاءٌ لِلسَّالِفِينَ ۝ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَى إِلَى السَّمَاءِ وَهِيَ دُخَانٌ فَقَالَ لَهَا وَلِلْأَرْضِ
 ائْتِيَا طَوْعًا أَوْ كَرْهًا ۝ قَالَتَا أَتَيْنَا طَائِعِينَ ۝ فَقَضَاهُنَّ سَبْعَ سَمَوَاتٍ فِي
 يَوْمَيْنِ وَأَوْحَى فِي كُلِّ سَمَاءٍ أَمْرَهَا ۝ وَزَيَّنَّا السَّمَاءَ الدُّنْيَا بِمَصَابِيحَ ۝ وَ
 حِفْظًا ۝ ذَلِكَ تَقْدِيرُ الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ ۝ فَإِنْ أَعْرَضُوا فَقُلْ أَنْذَرْتُكُمْ ضِعْفَةَ
 مِثْلِ ضِعْفَةِ عَادٍ وَشُعُوبٍ ۝ إِذْ جَاءَتْهُمْ الرُّسُلُ مِنْ بَيْنِ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمِنْ
 خَلْفِهِمْ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا اللَّهَ ۝ قَالُوا لَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّنَا لَأَنْزَلَ مَلَائِكَةً فَإِنَّا بِمَا
 أُرْسِلْتُمْ بِهِ كَافِرُونَ ۝ فَأَمَّا عَادُ فَاسْتَكْبَرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَقَالُوا
 مَنْ أَشَدُّ مِنَّا قُوَّةً ۝ أَوْلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّ اللَّهَ الَّذِي خَلَقَهُمْ هُوَ أَشَدُّ مِنْهُمْ قُوَّةً
 وَكَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا يَجْحَدُونَ ۝ فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِيحًا صَرْصَرًا فِي أَيَّامٍ نَحْسَاتٍ
 لِنَنْذِرَهُمْ عَذَابَ الْخِزْيِ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا ۝ وَلَعَذَابُ الْآخِرَةِ أَخْزَى
 وَهُمْ لَا يُنصَرُونَ ۝ وَأَمَّا ثَمُودُ فَهَدَيْنَاهُمْ فَاسْتَحَبُّوا الْعَنَى عَلَى الْهُدَى
 فَأَخَذْتَهُمْ ضِعْفَةَ الْعَذَابِ الْهُونِ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ۝ وَنَجَّيْنَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
 وَكَانُوا يَشْكُونَ ۝ وَيَوْمَ يُنْفَخُ الْعَذَابُ عَنْ أَهْلِ اللَّهِ إِلَى النَّارِ فَهُمْ يُوزَعُونَ ۝ حَتَّى
 إِذَا مَا جَاءُوهَا شَهِدَ عَلَيْهِمْ سَعُهُمْ وَأَبْصَارُهُمْ وَجُلُودُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا
 يَعْمَلُونَ ۝ وَقَالُوا لِجُلُودِهِمْ لِمَ شَهِدْتُمْ عَلَيْنَا ۝ قَالُوا أَنْطَقَنَا اللَّهُ الَّذِي
 أَنْطَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ خَلَقَكُمْ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ۝ وَمَا كُنْتُمْ
 تَسْتَرُونَ ۝ أَنْ يَشْهَدَ عَلَيْكُمْ سَمْعُكُمْ وَلَا أَبْصَارُكُمْ وَلَا جُلُودُكُمْ ۝ وَلَكِنْ
 ظَنَنْتُمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَعْلَمُ كَثِيرًا مِمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ۝ وَذَلِكَ ظَنُّكُمُ الَّذِي

O Prophet, say to them, "Do you deny that God, and set up others as equals with Him, Who created the earth in two days? He indeed is the Lord of all creation. He set mountains over the earth (after its creation) and bestowed blessings on it,¹¹ and provided in it means of sustenance adequately according to the needs and demands of all those who ask.¹² This was done in four days.¹³ Then He turned to the heaven, which was only smoke at that time¹⁴ He said to the heaven and the earth: "Come into being, whether you like it or not." They both said, "We do come in submission."¹⁵ Then in two days He made the seven heavens, and in each heaven He ordained its law, and We adorned the lower heaven with lights and made it fully secure.¹⁶ Such is the design of the One, Who is the All-Mighty, the All-Knowing.

9-12

Now if they turn away,¹⁷ say to them, "I warn you of a thunderbolt of punishment the like of which had descended upon the 'Ād and the Thamūd. When the Messengers of God came to them from every side, from front and from behind,¹⁸ saying, "Worship none but Allah", they said, "Had our Lord so willed, He would have sent down angels; therefore, we deny what you have been sent with."¹⁹

13-14

As for the 'Ād, they became arrogant with pride in the land, without any right, and said, "Who is stronger than us in might?" Did they not see that God, Who had created them, is stronger than they in might? Yet they continued to deny Our Revelations. Consequently, We sent upon them a stormy wind over a few ill-omened days²⁰ so that We might make them to taste a disgraceful scourge in the life of this world,²¹ but the scourge of the Hereafter is even more disgraceful; there they shall have none to help them.

15-16

As for the Thamūd, We presented before them the

17-

right way, but they preferred to remain blind rather than see the way. Consequently, a humiliating scourge overtook them all of a sudden on account of their misdeeds, and We saved those, who had believed and refrained from error and wrongdoing. 12

23

And imagine the time when the enemies of Allah will be gathered together to be driven to Hell. 13 Their former generations will be withheld till their later generations also will join them. 14 Then, when all will have reached there, their ears and their eyes and their very skins will bear witness against them concerning what they had been doing in this world. 15 They will say to their skins, "Why have you borne witness against us?" They will reply, "The same God Who has given speech to everything has given us speech. 16 He it is, Who created you in the first instance, and now to Him you are being brought back. When in the world you hid yourselves while committing crime, you never thought that your own ears and your own eyes and your own skins would ever bear witness against you. Rather you thought that even Allah had no knowledge of many of your deeds. This same thought that you thought concerning your Lord, has ruined you, and on the same point you have incurred loss. 17

... have been doing your mission, we also will not stop our opposition to you, and we will do whatever we can to defeat and frustrate your mission.

... That is, it is not in my power to remove the covering that develops your hearts, open your deaf ears, and tear away the screen which you have drawn between me and yourselves. I can only ... and I can make only him understand who is inclined to listen, and I can only meet him who is ready to meet me.

... That is, "You may if you so like put coverings on your hearts and make your ears deaf, but the fact is that you don't have really put here a only one God, Whose servants you are. And

this is no philosophy, which I might have thought out myself, and which might have equal probability of being true or false, but this reality has been made known to me through revelation, which cannot admit of any likelihood of error."

7. That is, "Do not make any other your God : do not serve and worship any other deity : do not invoke and bow to any other for help : and do not obey and follow the customs and laws and codes made and set by others."

8. "Ask for His forgiveness" : Ask for His forgiveness for the unfaithfulness that you have been showing so far towards Him, for the *shirk* and disbelief and disobedience that you have been committing till now, and for the sins that you happened to commit due to forgetfulness of God.

9. Here, the meaning of the word *zakāt* has been disputed by the commentators. Ibn 'Abbās and his illustrious pupils, 'Ikrimah and Mujāhid, say that *zakāt* here implies the purity of the soul and self which accrues from belief in *Tauhid* and obedience to Allah. According to this explanation, the translation of the verse would be : "Woe to the *mushriks*, who do not adopt purity." The other group which includes commentators like Qatādah, Suddī, Hasan Baṣri, Daḥḥāk, Muqātil and Ibn as-Sā'ib take this word here also in the meaning of the *zakāt* on property and wealth. According to this explanation, the verse means : "Woe to those who do not fulfil the right of Allah by committing *shirk* and the right of the men by withholding the *zakāt*."

10. The words *ajrun ghairu mamnūn* in the original have two other meanings also : (1) That it will be a reward which will never decrease and diminish ; and (2) that this reward will not be given with reminders of good done, like the gift made by a miserly person, who keeps on reminding the beneficiary of his favour if at all he gives away anything.

11. "Blessings of the earth" imply those measureless and countless things which have been continuously coming out of it since millions and millions of years, and are fulfilling the ever increasing needs and requirements of all the creatures from the microscopic germs to the highly civilized man. Among these the principal blessings are the air and the water by which alone vegetable, animal and then human life became possible on the earth.

12. This sentence has been interpreted by the commenators in different ways :

Some of them interpret it to mean : "The provisions of the

earth were placed in it precisely according to the needs and requirements of those who ask, in exactly four days." That is, it took exactly four days, neither more nor less.

Ibn 'Abbās, Qatādah and Suddi interpret it to mean: "The provisions of the earth were placed in it in four days. The answer to those who ask is completed." That is, whoever asks as to how long it took, his complete answer is that it took four days.

According to Ibn Zaid it means this: "The provisions of the earth were placed in it for those who ask within four days, precisely in accordance with the demand and need of everyone."

As far as the rules of the language are concerned, the words of the verse admit of all these three meanings, but in our opinion the first two meanings have no merit. In view of the context, it is immaterial whether the work was completed in exactly four days and not in more or less four days. There is no need whatever for such an addition to make up for any deficiency in supporting the description of Allah's perfect power, perfect providence and perfect wisdom. Likewise, the commentary: "The answer to those who ask is completed," is a very weak commentary. There is no indication in the theme preceding the verse and following it, to show that at that time somebody had asked the question as to how long it had taken for those works to be completed, and this verse was sent down as an answer to it. That is why we have adopted the third meaning in our translation. In our opinion the correct meaning of the verse is this: "Allah placed within the earth the full provisions of food precisely and exactly in accordance with the demands and needs of every kind of creature that Allah had to create in the earth from the beginning of the creation till Resurrection. There are countless kinds of vegetation found on land and in water and the food requirements of each kind are different from those of other kinds. Allah has created countless species of living creatures in the air and on land and in water, and every species demands a different kind of food. Then unique among all these is the species of man, who requires different kinds of food not only for the development and nourishment of his body but also for the satisfaction of his taste. Who beside Allah could know how many members of the different kinds of creatures would be born on this globe, from the beginning of life till its end, and when and where they would be born and how much and what kind of food would be required for their nourishment? Just as He had made the plan of creating those creatures who stood in need of food in His scheme of creation, so He made

full arrangements of food also to meet their requirements and demands.

In the modern age, the people who have brought out the Islamic edition of the Marxist conception of Socialism in the name of "the Qur'ānic order of providence", translate the words *sawā-al-lis-sā'ilīn* as "equal for all those who ask", and raise the edifice of reasoning on it, saying that Allah has kept equal provisions for all the people in the earth; therefore, in order to fulfil the intention of the verse a system of the state is needed which may provide equal rations of food to everybody. For in the system of individual ownership the equality which the "Qur'ānic law" demands cannot be established. But these people, in their enthusiasm to press the Qur'ān in the service of their theories, forget that "those who ask", who have been mentioned in this verse, are not only human beings but all those different species of animals and plants who need food for survival. Has Allah really established equality among all of them, or even among all the members of each different species of the creatures, in the matter of the provision of food? Do you find anywhere in this entire system of nature the arrangement of the distribution of equal rations of food? If that is not the case, it means that in the vegetable and animal kingdom, where the distribution of the provisions is directly being arranged by the State of Allah, and not by the human state, Allah Himself is violating His own this "Qur'ānic law", rather, God forbid, is practising injustice! Then, they also forget that "those who ask" also include those animals which man domesticates and arranging provisions for which is also his responsibility, e.g. sheep, goats, cows, buffaloes, horses, asses, mules, camels, etc. If the Qur'ānic law is that equal food be given to all those who ask, and to enforce the same law a state is needed, which may administer the order of providence, will that state establish economic equality between men and animals also?

13. Here, the commentators generally have been confronted with this question: If it is admitted that the creation of the earth took two days and the setting up of the mountains and placing of the provisions and blessings in it took four days, and the creation of the heavens, as mentioned below, took another two days, the total number of the days would be eight, whereas at several places in the Qur'ān Allah has said that the creation of the earth and heavens took six days in all. (For example, see Al-A'rāf: 54, Yūnus: 3, Hūd: 7, Al-Furqān: 59). On this very basis, almost all the commentators agree that these four days include the two days of the

creation of the earth. That is, two days were taken for the creation of the earth and two days for the creation of the rest of the things within the earth, as mentioned below. Thus, the earth along with its provisions became complete in four days in all. But this not only is against the apparent words of the Qur'ān, but the difficulty also is, in fact, an imaginary difficulty, to avoid which need for this interpretation has been felt. The two days of the creation of the earth are, in fact, not separate from the two days in which this universe as a whole was created. If we consider the following verses, we see that in them the creation of both the earth and the heavens has been mentioned together, and then it has been stated that Allah made the seven heavens in two days. These seven heavens imply the whole universe, one part of which is also our earth. Then, when like the other countless stars and planets of the univers this earth also took the shape of a unique globe within two days, Allah began to prepare it for animate creatures, and in four days created in it all those provisions, which have been mentioned in the above verse. What development works were carried out in the other stars and planets in these four days have not been mentioned by Allah, for not to speak of the man of the period of the revelation of the Qur'ān, even the man of the present age does not have the capability to digest and assimilate this information.

14. Three things need to be explained here :

First, by "heaven" is meant the whole universe, as becomes obvious from the following sentences. In other words, "turning to the heaven" means that Allah turned to the creation of the universe.

Second, by "smoke" is implied the initial and primary stage of matter, in which it lay diffused in space in a shapeless, dustlike condition before the formation of the universe. Scientists of the modern age describe the same thing as nebulae, and the same also is their view about the beginning of the universe : that is, before creation the matter of which the universe was built lay diffused in smoke-like nebulous form.

Third, it would be wrong to interpret "then He turned to the heaven" to mean that first He created the earth, then set mountains in it, then arranged blessings and provisions of food in it, and then, at the end, He turned towards the creation of the universe. This misunderstanding is removed by the following sentence : "He said to the heavens and the earth : Come into being ; and they said : we come in submission." This makes it

clear that in this verse and in the following verses, mention is being made of the time when there was neither the earth nor the heaven, but the creation of the universe was being started. Only the word *thumma* (then) cannot be made the argument to say that the earth had been created before the heavens. There are several instances of this in the Qur'ān that the word *thumma* is not necessarily used to show the chronological order but it is also used for the order of presentation. (Please see E.N. 12 of Sūrah Az-Zumar).

Among the earliest commentators the dispute has been going on for ages as to what was created first according to the Qur'ān, the earth or the heavens. One group of them argues on the basis of this verse and verse 29 of Al-Baqarah that the earth was created first. The other group argues from verses 27-33 of An-Nāzi'āt that the heavens were created first, because there it has been clearly stated that the earth was created after the heavens. But the fact is that nowhere in the Qur'ān has the mention of the creation of the universe been made to teach Physics or Astronomy, but while inviting towards belief in the doctrines to *Tauhīd* and the Hereafter, like countless other Signs, the creation of the heavens and the earth also has been presented as food for thought. For this purpose it was not at all necessary that the chronological order of the creation of the heavens and the earth should have been presented, and it should have been told whether the heavens were created first or the earth. No matter whether this was created first or that, in any case both are an evidence of Allah Almighty's being the One and only Deity, and are a testimony that their Creator has not created this whole universe as a plaything for a care-free person. That is why the Qur'ān sometimes mentions the creation of the earth first and sometimes the creation of the heavens first. Where the object is to make man realize the blessings of God, there generally it has mentioned the earth first, for it is closer to man; and where the object is to give man the concept of God's greatness and His omnipotence there it has generally mentioned the heavens first, for the scene of the revolving heavens has always been awe-inspiring for man.

15. In these words Allah has described the nature of His method of creation in a manner as to differentiate between Divine creation and human workmanship. When man wants to make

something, he prepares a plan for it in his mind ; then gathers together the necessary material ; then works persistently hard to mould the material according to his plan, and in the process of his effort, the material which he wants to mould according to his mental plan constantly resists him ; so much so that sometimes the resistance of the material succeeds and the thing is not made precisely according to the desired plan, and sometimes man's effort overcomes the resistance and he succeeds in giving it the desired form and shape. For example, when a tailor wants to make a shirt, he first conceives in his mind the shape of the shirt, then arranging the cloth he tries to cut and sew it according to his concept of the shirt, and during this effort, he has constantly to face the resistance of the cloth, for it does not easily yield to be moulded according to the tailor's concept ; so much so that sometimes the resistance of the cloth dominates and the shirt doesn't take the desired shape, and sometimes the tailor's effort dominates and he is able to shape it precisely according to his concept. Now, consider Allah's mode of creation. The matter of the universe lay scattered and diffused in the form of smoke. Allah willed to give it the shape of the universe as it is now. For this purpose, He did not have to sit down, like a human artisan, and chisel and mould the earth and the moon and the sun and the other stars and planets, but He only commanded the scheme of the universe that was in His Mind to come into being, i.e. the smoke-like diffused matter to take the shape of the galaxies and stars and planets, which He wanted to create. This matter did not have the power to resist the Command of Allah. Allah did not have to make any effort to give it the shape of the universe. No sooner was the Command given than the matter started contracting and condensing and taking shape obediently according to the scheme of its Master, so that the whole universe including the earth became ready in 48 hours.

This same scheme of Allah's method of creation has been described at several other places in the Qur'ān like this : When Allah decides to do something, He only commands it to be and it is done. (See Al-Baqarah : 117, Āl-Imrān : 47, 59 ; An-Nahl : 40, Maryam : 35, Yā Sīn ; 82, Al-Mu'min : 68).

16. To understand these verses well, it would be useful to study the following portions of the *Tafhīm al-Qurān* : Al-Baqarah :

29, Ar-Ra'd : 2, Al-Hijr : 16-18, Al-Anbiyā' : 30-33, Al-Hajj : 65, Al-Mu'minūn : 17, Yā Sin : E.N. 37, and E.N.'s 5, 6 of Aṣ-Ṣāffāt.

17. That is, "If they do not believe that God and Deity is One and only One, Who has created this earth and the whole universe, and still persist in their ignorance that they would make others also, who are in fact His creatures and slaves, deities beside Him, and regard them as His associates in His Being and rights and powers."

18. This sentence can have several meanings : (1) That the Messengers continued to come to them one after the other ; (2) that the Messengers tried in every way to make them understand the truth and did not leave any stone unturned to bring them to the Right Path ; and (3) that the Messengers came to them in their own country as well as in the adjoining countries.

19. That is, "If Allah had disapproved of our this religion, and had willed to send a messenger to us to keep us away from it, He would have sent the angels. As you are not an angel but a man like us, we do not believe that you have been sent by God, and sent for the purpose that we give up our religion and adopt the way of life that you are presenting." The disbelievers' saying that they deny "what you have been sent with", was only sarcastic. It does not mean that they believed him to have been sent by God and then denied what he said. But this is a sarcastic expression of the type that Pharaoh had uttered before his courtiers about the Prophet Moses: "This messenger of yours, who has been sent to you, seems to be utterly mad." (Ash-Shua'rā' : 27). For further explanation, see E.N. 11 of Sūrah Yā Sīn.

20. "Ill-omened days" does not mean that the days in themselves were ill-omened, and the torment came because the people of 'Ād met with those ill-omened days. If this were the meaning and there were some ill omen in the days themselves, the torment would have visited all the nations of the world. The correct meaning, therefore, is that since in those days God's torment descended on this nation, the days were ill-omened for the people of 'Ād. It is not correct to argue on the basis of the verse that some days are ill-omened and some auspicious.

The lexicographers have disputed the meaning of the words *riḥ-an sarsar-an*, which have been used for the stormy wind. Some

say that they imply an intensely hot wind ; others say that they imply an extremely cold wind ; and some others say that they imply a wind which produces a great noise when it blows. In any case, they all agree that the words are used for a severe storm.

The details of this torment given at other places in the Qur'ān show that this wind continued to rage for seven nights and eight days consecutively. It swept the people off the ground and they fell down dead and lay scattered here and there like hollow trunks of the palm-tree. (Al-Hāqqah : 7). It left rotting everything on which it blew. (Adh-Dhāriyāt : 42). When the people of 'Ād saw it advancing, they rejoiced with the hope that the dense clouds would bring much rain, which would water their withering crops. But when it came it laid waste the entire land." (Al-Aḥqāf : 24-25).

21. This ignominious torment was an answer to their arrogance and vanity because of which they had assumed greatness in the land without any right, and would boast that there was none more powerful than they on the entire earth. Allah disgraced them and destroyed the major part of their population along with their civilization. The remnant of their population was humbled and debased before those very nations whom they used to overawe by their show of power and might (for the details of the story of 'Ād, see Al-A'rāf : 65-72 ; Hūd : 50-60 ; Al-Mu'minūn : 32-41 ; Ash-Shua'rā' : 123-140 ; Al-'Ankabūt ; 40 and the relevant E.N.'s).

22. For the details of the story of Thamūd. see Al-A'rāf : 73-79 ; Hūd : 61-68 ; Al-Hijr : 80-84 ; Bani Isrā'īl : 59 ; Ash-Shua'rā' : 141-159 ; An-Naml : 45-53 and the E.N.'s.

23. What is meant to be said is this : "When they will be rounded up to be presented in the Court of Allah," though the words used are to the effect : "When they will be gathered to be driven to Hell," for Hell in any case will be their final destination.

24. That is, all the former and latter generations and races will be gathered together at a time and called to account together. For whatever a person does in his lifetime, whether good or evil, its influence and impact does not end with his life, but continues to operate even after his death for long periods of time, for which he is totally responsible. Likewise, whatever a generation does in its own time, its influence continues to affect the later generations for centuries, and it is responsible for its heritage. It is inevitable

to examine all these influences and their results and to collect their evidences. For that very reason, generation after generation of the people will go on arriving and will be withheld. The Court will start its work when all the former and latter generations will have assembled together in the Plain of Resurrection. (For further explanation, see Al-A'rāf : 38-39 and E.N. 30 on it).

25. The explanation of this given in the *Ḥadīth* is that when a stubborn culprit will go on denying his crimes, and will even belie all the witnesses, then the limbs of his body will bear the witness, one after the other, by the Command of Allah, and will tell what offences he had committed through them. This thing has been reported by Ḥaḍrat Anas, Ḥaḍrat Abū Mūsā Ash'ari, Ḥaḍrat Abū Sa'id Khudri and Ḥaḍrat Ibn 'Abbās from the Holy Prophet, and traditionists like Muslim, Nasā'i, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abi Ḥātim, Bazzār and others have related these in their books. (For further explanation, see E.N. 55 of Sūrah Yā Sīn).

This verse is one of those many verses which prove that the Hereafter will not only be a spiritual world but human beings will be resurrected with the body and soul as they are now in this world. Not only this : they will be given the same body in which they live now. The same particles and atoms which composed their bodies in the world, will be collected on the Day of Resurrection, and they will be resurrected with the same previous bodies in which they had lived and worked in the world. Evidently, the limbs of man can bear the witness in the Hereafter only in case they are the same limbs with which he committed a crime in his previous life. This subject is borne out decisively and absolutely by the following verses of the Qur'an : Bani Isrā'il : 49-51 , 98 ; Al-Mu'minūn : 35-38, 82-83 ; An-Nūr : 24 ; As-Sajdah : 10 ; Yā Sīn : 65, 78, 79 ; Aṣ-Ṣāffāt : 16-18 ; Al-Wāqi'ah : 47-50 ; An-Nāzi'āt : 10-14.

26. This shows that not only man's own limbs will bear witness on the Day of Resurrection, but every such thing before which man would have committed any crime will also speak out. The same thing has been said in Sūrah Al-Zilzāl, thus : "The earth will cast out all the burdens, which lie within her, and man will say : what has befallen her ? On that Day shall she relate whatever had happened (on her), because your Lord will have commanded her (to do so)." (vv. 2-5).

(Contd. on p. 82)

ظَنَنْتُمْ بِرَبِّكُمْ أَرْدَكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُم مِّنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾ فَإِن يَصْبِرُوا فَالنَّارُ مَثْوًى
 لَهُمْ ۗ وَإِن يَسْتَعْتَبُوا فَمَا هُمْ مِنَ الْمُعْتَبِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَقَيَّضْنَا لَهُمْ قُرَنَاءَ فَزَيَّنُوا
 لَهُمْ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَحَقَّ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقَوْلُ فِي أُمِّ قَدْحَلَتْ
 مِّن قَبْلِهِمْ مِّنَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنسِ ۗ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا خَاسِرِينَ ﴿٤٨﴾ وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
 لَا تَسْمَعُوا لِهَذَا الْقُرْآنِ وَالْغَوْا فِيهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَغْلِبُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾ فَلَنذِيقَنَّ الَّذِينَ
 كَفَرُوا عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا ۗ وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَسْوَأَ الَّذِي كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾ ذَلِكَ
 جَزَاءُ أَعْدَاءِ اللَّهِ النَّارُ ۗ لَهُمْ فِيهَا دَارُ الْخُلْدِ ۗ جَزَاءُ بِمَا كَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا
 يَجْحَدُونَ ﴿٥١﴾ وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا رَبَّنَا أَرِنَا الَّذِينَ أُضْلِنَا مِنَ الْجِنِّ وَ
 الْإِنسِ نَجْعَلُهُمَا تَحْتَ أَقْدَامِنَا لِيَكُونَا مِنَ الْأَسْفَلِينَ ﴿٥٢﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا
 رَبَّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا تَتَنَزَّلُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَلَّا تَخَافُوا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا وَ
 أَبْشِرُوا بِالْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي كُنْتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾ نَحْنُ أَوْلِيَؤُكُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا
 وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ ۗ وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا تَشْتَهُى أَنفُسُكُمْ وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا تَدَّعُونَ ﴿٥٤﴾
 نَزَّلًا مِّنْ غَفُورٍ رَّحِيمٍ ﴿٥٥﴾ وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ قَوْلًا مِّمَّن دَعَا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَعَمِلَ
 صَالِحًا وَقَالَ إِنِّي مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٥٦﴾ وَلَا تَسْتَوِي الْحَسَنَةُ وَلَا السَّيِّئَةُ ۗ ادْفَعْ
 بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ فَإِذَا الَّذِي بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُ عَدَاوَةٌ كَأَنَّهُ وَلِيٌّ حَمِيمٌ ﴿٥٧﴾ وَمَا
 يُلْقِيهَا إِلَّا الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا ۗ وَمَا يُلْقِيهَا إِلَّا ذُو حِظٍّ عَظِيمٍ ﴿٥٨﴾ وَإِنَّمَا يَنزَغَنَّكَ
 مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ نَزْعٌ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ ۗ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٥٩﴾ وَمِن آيَاتِهِ
 اللَّيْلُ وَالنَّهَارُ وَالشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ ۗ لَا تَسْجُدُوا لِلشَّمْسِ وَلَا لِلْقَمَرِ وَ
 اسْجُدُوا لِلَّهِ الَّذِي خَلَقَهُنَّ إِن كُنْتُمْ إِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾ فَإِن اسْتَكْبَرُوا فَالَّذِينَ

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As such, whether they are patient (or not), the Fire will still be their abode, and if they want to make amends, they will not be allowed to do so.²⁸ We had set upon them companions who made everything, in front of them and behind them, seem fair to them.²⁹ At last, the same Decree of punishment proved true against them, which had proved true against the jinn and the men who had gone before them. Certainly they were the losers. 24-25

The disbelievers say, "Do not listen to this Qur'ān, and when it is recited, cause interruption in it, so that you might attain the upper hand."³⁰ We shall certainly make these disbelievers to taste a severe chastisement, and shall fully requite them for the worst of their misdeeds. That is Hell, the requital of the enemies of Allah, wherein they shall live for ever. This is the punishment of the crime that they denied Our Revelations. There the disbelievers will say, "Our Lord, show us the jinn and the men, who led us astray. We shall trample them under our feet so that they are utterly disgraced."³¹ 26-29

Those³² who said, "Allah is our Lord," and then stood steadfast,³³ angels descend on them³⁴ and say, "Fear not nor grieve,³⁵ and rejoice in the good news of Paradise that has been promised to you: we are your companions in the life of this world, and in the Hereafter, too. There you will have whatever you desire, and whatever you ask for will be yours—an entertainment from the One, Who is All-Forgiving, All-Merciful." 30-32

And who could be better of speech than the one who called to Allah and did right and said, "I am a Muslim."³⁶ 33

And O Prophet, goodness and evil are not equal. Repel evil with what is best. You will see that he with whom you had enmity, has become your closest friend.³⁷ 34-36

But none can attain to this quality except those who endure with patience,³⁸ and none can attain to this rank except those who are men of great good fortune.³⁹ And if you feel an incitement from Satan, seek refuge in Allah:⁴⁰ He hears everything and knows everything.⁴¹

37-38

Among⁴² the signs of Allah are the night and the day and the sun and the moon.⁴³ Do not prostrate yourselves before the sun and the moon, but prostrate yourselves before that God, Who created them, if you really are His worshippers.⁴⁴ But it does not matter if these people show arrogance and still persist in their way,⁴⁵ for the angels who are nearest to your Lord, glorify Him day and night and never feel wearied.⁴⁶

(Contd. from p. 79)

27. Ḥadrat Ḥasan Baṣṛi (may Allah bless him) has explained this verse thus : "Every man's attitude and conduct is determined by the thought and conjecture that he has about his God. The conduct of a righteous believer is right because his thought and conjecture about his Lord is right, and the conduct of a disbeliever and a hypocrite and a sinful person is wrong because his thought and conjecture about his Lord is wrong." This same theme has the Holy Prophet expressed in a comprehensive and brief *Ḥadīth*, thus : "Your Lord says : I am with the thought and conjecture that My servant holds about Me." (Bukhāri, Muslim).

28. It can also mean this : "If they would want to return to the world, they would not be able to return," and this : "If they would want to come out from Hell, they would not be able to come out of it," and this : "If they would want to offer an excuse or repentance, it would not be accepted."

29. This is the permanent and eternal way of Allah that He does not let the men with evil intentions and desires have good companions, but lets them have bad companions according to their own inclinations. Then, as they go on descending into the depths of vice, more and more evil and wicked men and devils go on joining them as their associates and advisers and companions. Some people's saying that so-and-so is himself a very good man but

happens to have bad companions is, in fact, contrary to fact. The law of nature is that every man gets the same sort of friends as he himself is. If bad people happen to be associated with a good man, they cannot remain associated with him for long. Likewise, if good and noble men happen to be associated with evil intentioned and immoral men by chance, their association cannot last long. An evil man naturally attracts only evil men to himself and only evil men become attracted towards him just as filth attracts flies and flies are attracted by the filth.

The meaning of : "They made every thing, in front of them and behind them, seem fair to them," is this : They assured them that their past had been glorious and their future would also be bright ; they made them see everything attractive and pleasant on every side ; they told them that those who criticised them were foolish, because they were not doing anything novel or strange : those who had made any progress in the world before them had been doing the same that they were doing ; ahead of them there was no Hereafter at all in which they might have to be called to account for their deeds, but if at all the Hereafter did take place, as some foolish people assert it would, the God who was blessing them in the world, would bless them there too. Hell had not been made for them but for those whom God had deprived of His blessings here.

30. This was one of those plans of the disbelievers of Makkah with which they wanted to frustrate the Holy Prophet's mission of preaching his message. They knew fully well how impressive was the Qur'ān, how high was the character of the man presenting it, and how effective and inspiring the style of his preaching. They knew that anyone who heard such matchless discourses in such an attractive style from such a noble person could not help being lured and charmed. Therefore, they planned that they should neither hear it themselves nor let anyone else hear it ; whenever Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) should start reciting it, they should create noise, clap hands, pass taunting remarks and raise all sorts of objections and such a hue and cry as to drown his voice. By this plan they hoped they would be able to defeat the Prophet of Allah.

31. That is, "In the world these people were at the beck and call of their leaders and religious guides and deceitful devils, but

when on the Day of Resurrection they will come to know where their leaders had led them, they will curse them and would wish that they should somehow get hold of them so that they may trample them under their foot."

32. After warning the disbelievers of the consequences of their opposition to the truth and their stubbornness, the address now turns to the believers and the Holy Prophet.

33. That is, they did not call Allah their Lord merely incidentally, nor were they involved in the error to regard Allah as their Lord and at the same time others as well as their lords, but they embraced the Faith sincerely and stood by it steadfastly: neither adopted a creed contrary to it later nor mixed it up with a false creed, but they fulfilled the demands of the doctrine of *Tauḥīd* in their practical lives as well.

"Standing steadfast on *Tauḥīd*" has been explained by the Holy Prophet and the eminent Companions, thus:

Ḥaḍrat Anas has reported that the Holy Prophet said: "Many people called Allah their Lord, but most of them became disbelievers. Firm and steadfast is he who remained firm on this creed till his death." (Ibn Jarīr, Nasā'ī, Ibn Abi Ḥātim).

Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr Ṣiddīq (may Allah be pleased with him) has explained it thus: "Then he did not associate another with Allah: did not attend to any other deity beside Him." (Ibn Jarīr).

Ḥaḍrat 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) once recited this verse on the pulpit and said: "By God, the steadfast are those who remained firm on obedience to Allah: did not run about from place to place like foxes." (Ibn Jarīr).

Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān (may Allah be pleased with him) says: "Performed his deeds sincerely for the sake of Allah only." (Kashshāf)

Ḥaḍrat 'Alī (may Allah be pleased with him) says: "Performed the duties enjoined by Allah faithfully and obediently." (Kashshāf)

34. It is not necessary that the coming down of the angels may be perceptible, and the believers may see them with the eyes, or hear their voices with the ears. Although Allah also sends the angels openly for whomever He wills, generally their coming down for the believers, especially in hard times when they are being

persecuted by the enemies of the Truth, takes place in imperceptible ways, and their voices penetrate into the depths of the heart as peace and tranquillity instead of just striking the ear-drum. Some commentators have regarded this coming down of the angels as restricted to the time of death, or grave, or the Plain of Resurrection. But if the conditions in which these verses were sent down are kept in view, there remains no doubt that the real object of stating this thing here is to mention the coming down of the angels on those who struggle with their lives in this world in the cause of the Truth, so that they are consoled and encouraged and they rest assured that they are not helpless, but the angels of Allah are at their back. Although the angels also come to receive the believers at the time of death and they also welcome them in the grave (in the state of *barzakh*), and they will also accompany them constantly on the Day of Resurrection, from the time Resurrection takes place till their entry into Paradise, yet their this company is not particularly restricted to the Hereafter but remains available in this world also. The context clearly shows that in the conflict between the Truth and falsehood just as the worshippers of falsehood are accompanied by the devils and mischievous people, so are the believers accompanied by the angels. On the one hand, the companions of the worshippers of falsehood show their misdeeds seem fair to them and assure them that the tyrannical and dishonest acts that they are committing are the very means of their success and through them only will their leadership and dominance remain safe in the world. On the other, the angels come down to the worshippers of the Truth and give them the message that is being mentioned in the following sentences.

35. These are very comprehensive words, which contain a new theme of consolation and peace for the believers, in every stage of life, from the world till the Hereafter. This counsel of the angels in this world means this: "No matter how strong and powerful be the forces of falsehood, you should not be afraid of them, and whatever hardships and deprivations you may have to experience on account of your love of the Truth, you should not grieve on account of them, for ahead there lie in store for you such things against which every blessing of the world is insignificant." When the angels say the same words at the time of death, they mean this: "There is no cause of fear for you in the destination you are

heading for, for Paradise awaits you there, and you have no cause of grief for those whom you are leaving behind in the world, for we are your guardians and companions here." When the angels will say these very words in the intermediary state between death and Resurrection and in the Plain of Resurrection, they will mean this: "Here, there is nothing but peace for you. Do not grieve for the hardships you had to suffer in the world, and do not fear what you are going to face in the Hereafter, for we are giving you the good news of Paradise, which used to be promised to you in the world."

36. After consoling and encouraging the believers, now they are being exhorted towards their real duty. In the preceding verse they were told: "Being firm in the service to Allah and standing steadfast on this way after adopting it is by itself the basic good, which makes man a friend of the angels and worthy of Paradise." Now they are being told: "The next thing which wins man the highest place of honour is that he should do good deeds himself and should invite others to the service of Allah, and even in the environment of severe antagonism where to proclaim Islam is tantamount to inviting hardships for oneself, one should firmly say that one is a Muslim." To understand the full significance of these words, one should keep in view the conditions in which they were said. The conditions were that anyone who proclaimed to be a Muslim, would feel as if he had stepped into a jungle of beasts, where everyone was rushing at him to tear him into pieces. More than that: if anyone opened his mouth to preach Islam he would feel as if he had called on the beasts to come and devour him. Such were the conditions when it was said: "A person's believing in Allah as his Lord and adopting the Right Way and standing steadfast on it is indeed a great and fundamental good, but the greatest good is that man should boldly say that he is a Muslim and should invite others towards Allah's service, fearless of the consequences, and while performing this duty should remain so pure and pious in conduct and character that no one should have a cause to find fault with Islam and with those who uphold it.

37. To understand the full significance of these words also, one should keep in view the conditions in which the Holy Prophet and, through him, his followers were given this instruction. The conditions were that the invitation to the Truth was being resisted

and opposed with extreme stubbornness and severe antagonism, in which all bounds of morality, humanity and decency were being transgressed. Every sort of lie was being uttered against the Holy Prophet and his Companions ; every kind of evil device was being employed to defame him and to create suspicions against him in the minds of the people ; every kind of accusation was being levelled against him and a host of the propagandists were busy creating doubts against him in the hearts; in short, he and his Companions were being persecuted in every possible way because of which a substantial number of the Muslims had been compelled to emigrate from the country. Then the programme that had been prepared to stop him from preaching was that a band of the mischievous people was set behind him, who would raise such a hue and cry that no one should be able to hear anything as soon as he opened his mouth to preach his message. In such discouraging conditions when apparently every way of extending invitation to Islam seemed to be blocked, the Holy Prophet was taught this recipe for breaking the opposition.

First, it was said that goodness and evil are not equal, as if to say: "Although apparently your opponents might have raised a dreadful storm of mischief and evil, as against which goodness might seem absolutely helpless and powerless, yet evil in itself has a weakness which ultimately causes its own destruction. For as long as man is man, his nature cannot help hating evil. Not only the companions of evil, even its own upholders know in their hearts that they are liars and wicked people and are being stubborn for selfish motives. Not to speak of creating dignity and honour for them in the hearts of others, it lowers them in their own esteem, and causes their morale to be weakened and destroyed in the event of every conflict. As against this evil, the good which appears to be utterly helpless and powerless, goes on operating and working and it becomes dominant in the long run. For, in the first place, the good has a power of its own which wins the hearts and no man however perverted and corrupted, can help esteeming it in his own heart. Then, when the good and evil are engaged in a face to face conflict and their nature and merits become apparent and known, after a long drawn out struggle, not many people would be left, who would not start hating the evil and admiring the good.

Second, it was said that evil should be resisted not by the mere good but by a superior good, as if to say: "If a person treats you

unjustly and you forgive him, it is the mere good. The superior good is that you treat the one who ill-treats you with kindness and love."

The result would be that "your worst enemy would become your closest friend," for that is human nature itself. If you remain quiet in response to an abuse, it will be mere goodness but it will not silence the abuser. But if you express good wishes for him in response to his abuses, even the most shameless opponent will feel ashamed, and then would hardly ever be able to employ invectives against you. If a person doesn't miss any opportunity to harm you, and you go on tolerating his excesses, it may well make him even bolder in his mischiefs. But if on an occasion he gets into trouble and you come to his rescue, he will fall down at your feet, for no mischief can hold out against goodness. However, it would be wrong to take this general principle in the meaning that every enemy will necessarily become a close friend when you have treated him with the superior good. There are such wicked people also in the world, whose inimical nature will never change for the better no matter how tolerantly you may overlook their excesses and how benevolently you may react and respond to every evil committed by them. But such devil-incarnates are as few in the world as the embodiments of goodness are.

38. Although a very efficacious recipe, it is not easy to use. It requires a great will power, resolution, courage, power of endurance and full control over one's own self. A man may act benevolently in response to an evil done, on an impulse, and there is nothing extraordinary in it. But when a person has to fight for years and years, for the sake of the Truth, those mischievous worshippers of falsehood, who do not feel any hesitation in violating any bond of morality, and are also intoxicated with power, it requires extraordinary grit to go on resisting the evil with good, and that too with the superior good, without ever showing any lack of restraint and self-control. Such a work can be accomplished only by him who has resolved with a cool mind to work for the cause of upholding the Truth, who has subdued his self to intellect and sense and in whom good and righteousness have taken such deep roots that no malice and mischief of the opponents can succeed in deposing him from his high position.

39. This is a law of nature. Only a man of very high rank is

characterised by these qualities, and the one who possesses these qualities cannot be prevented by any power of the world from attaining to his goal of success. It is in no way possible that the depraved people may defeat him with their mean machinations and shameless devices.

40. Satan feels grieved when he sees that in the conflict between the Truth and falsehood meanness is being resisted with nobility and evil with goodness. He wants that he should somehow incite the fighters for the sake of the Truth and their prominent men in particular, and especially their leaders, to commit such a mistake, even if once, on the basis of which he may tell the common people that evil is not being committed by one side only: if mean acts are being committed by one side, the people of the other side also are not morally any better: they too have committed such and such a shameless act. The common people do not have the capability that they may assess and counterbalance fairly the excesses being committed by one party by the reactions of the other. As long as they see that while the opponents are adopting every mean act yet these people do not swerve at all from the path of decency and nobility, goodness and righteousness, they continue to regard and esteem them highly. But if at some time they happen to commit an unworthy act, even if it is in retaliation against a grave injustice, both the sides become equal in their esteem, and the opponents also get an excuse to counter one blameable act with a thousand abuses. That is why it has been said: "Be on your guard against the deceptions of Satan. He will incite you as a well-wisher to take note of every abuse and every insult and attack and urge you to pay the opponent in the same coin, otherwise you would be regarded as a coward and weaken your image of strength." On every such occasion whenever you feel any undue provocation, you should take care that this is an incitement of Satan who is arousing you to anger and wants you to commit a mistake. And after having been warned do not be involved in the misunderstanding that you have full control over yourself, and Satan cannot make you commit any mistake. This high opinion of one's own power of judgement and will is another and more dangerous deception of Satan. Instead of it you should seek Allah's refuge, for man can save himself from mistakes only if Allah helps and grants him protection.

The best commentary of this subject is the event which Imām

Aḥmad has related in his Musnad on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah. He says that once a man started uttering invectives against Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr, in the presence of the Holy Prophet. Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr kept on hearing the invectives quietly and the Holy Prophet kept on smiling at it. At last, when Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr could restrain himself no longer, he also uttered a harsh word for the person in response. No sooner did he utter the word than the Holy Prophet was seized by restraint, which appeared on his face, and he rose and left the place immediately. Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr also rose and went behind him. On the way he asked, "How is it that as long as the person went on abusing me, you kept quiet and smiling, but when I also said a word in retaliation, you were annoyed?" The Holy Prophet replied, "Until you were quiet an angel remained with you, who went on replying to him on your behalf, but when you spoke out Satan came in place of the angel: I could not sit with Satan."

41. After seeking Allah's refuge against the storm of opposition, the thing that brings patience and peace and tranquillity to the heart of the believer is this conviction: "Allah is not unaware: He knows whatever we are doing as well as that which is being done against us. He is hearing whatever we and our opponents utter and watches the conduct of both of us." On the basis of this very conviction the believer entrusts his own and the opponents of the truth's affair to Allah and remains satisfied.

This is the fifth place where the Holy Prophet and, through him, the believers have been taught this wisdom of preaching and reforming the people. For the other four places, see Al-A'rāf : 199-204, An-Naḥl : 125-128, Al-Mu'minūn : 96-98, Al-'Ankabūt : 46-47 and the E.N.'s.

42. Now the discourse turns to the common people and they are made to understand the truth in a few sentences.

43. That is, "They are not the objects of Divine power that you may start worshipping them, thinking that Allah is manifesting Himself in their form, but they are the Signs of Allah by pondering over which you can understand the reality of the universe and its system, and can know that the doctrine of the Oneness of God which the Prophets are teaching is the actual Reality. The mention of the night and day before the sun and moon has been made to give the warning that the hiding of the sun and appearing of the moon at

night, and the hiding of the moon and appearing of the sun in the day clearly point to the fact that neither of them is God or object of Divine power, but both are helpless and powerless objects, and are moving subject to the law of God.

44. This is an answer to the philosophy that the intelligent among the polytheists generally used to propound to prove that polytheism was rational. They said that they did not bow to these objects but bowed to God through them. An answer to this has been given, so as to say: "If you really are Allah's worshippers, there is no need of these intermediaries: why don't you bow down to Him directly?"

45. "If they show arrogance": If they think it is beneath them to listen to you and persist still in the ignorance in which they are involved.

46. It means this: "The system of this whole universe, whose agents these angels are, is running on the basis of Allah's Oneness and His servitude. The angels who are its agents are testifying every moment that their Lord is pure and exalted far above this that another should be His associate in His Divinity and worship. Now, if a few foolish persons do not believe even after admonition, and turn away from the way that is being followed by the whole universe and persist in following the way of *shirk* only, let them remain involved in their folly."

The consensus is that it is obligatory to perform *sajdah* (prostration) here, but the jurists differ as to which of the two preceding verses requires the performance of *sajdah*. Ḥaḍrat 'Alī and Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd performed the *sajdah* at the end of v. 37, while Ḥaḍrat Ibn 'Abbās, Ibn 'Umar, Sa'id bin Musayyab, Masrūq, Qatādah, Ḥasan Baṣri, Abū 'Abdur Raḥmān as-Sulamī, Ibn Sīrīn, Ibrahīm Nakha'ī and several other prominent jurists have expressed the opinion that it should be performed at the end of v. 38. The same also is the opinion of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, and the Shāfe'ites also have held the same view as preferable.

عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ يُسَبِّحُونَ لَهُ بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَهُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ ^{١٤٨} وَ مِنْ آيَاتِهِ
 أَنْتَ تَرَى الْأَرْضَ خَاشِعَةً فَإِذَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْهَا الْمَاءَ اهْتَزَّتْ وَرَبَتْ ^{١٤٩} إِنَّ
 الَّذِي أَحْيَا مَا لَمْ يَحْيِ الْمَوْتَى إِنَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ^{١٥٠} إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُلْحِدُونَ
 فِي آيَاتِنَا لَا يَخْفَوْنَ عَلَيْنَا ^{١٥١} أَفَمَنْ يُلْقَى فِي النَّارِ خَيْرٌ أَمْ مَنْ يَأْتِيَ آمِنًا
 يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ^{١٥٢} اعْمَلُوا مَا شِئْتُمْ إِنَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ^{١٥٣} إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
 بِالذِّكْرِ لَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ وَإِنَّهُ لَكِتَابٌ عَزِيزٌ ^{١٥٤} لَا يَأْتِيهِ الْبَاطِلُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ
 وَلَا مِنْ خَلْفِهِ ^{١٥٥} تَنْزِيلٌ مِنْ حَكِيمٍ حَمِيدٍ ^{١٥٦} مَا يُقَالُ لَكَ إِلَّا مَا قَدْ قِيلَ
 لِلرُّسُلِ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ ^{١٥٧} إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَذُو مَغْفِرَةٍ وَذُو عِقَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ^{١٥٨} وَلَوْ جَعَلْنَاهُ
 قُرْآنًا عَجَبِيًّا لَقَالُوا لَوْلَا فُصِّلَتْ آيَاتُهُ ^{١٥٩} أَعَجَبِيٌّ وَعَرَبِيٌّ ^{١٦٠} قُلْ هُوَ لِلَّذِينَ
 آمَنُوا هُدًى وَشِفَاءً ^{١٦١} وَالَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ فِي آذَانِهِمْ وَقْرٌ وَهُوَ عَلَيْهِمْ
 عَمًى ^{١٦٢} أُولَئِكَ يُنَادُونَ مِنْ مَكَانٍ بَعِيدٍ ^{١٦٣} وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ
 فَاخْتَلَفَ فِيهِ ^{١٦٤} وَلَوْلَا كَلِمَةٌ سَبَقَتْ مِنْ رَبِّكَ لَقَضَىٰ بَيْنَهُمْ ^{١٦٥} وَانْتَهَرُ لَفِي
 شَكٍّ مِمَّنْهُ مُرِيبٍ ^{١٦٦} مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلِنَفْسِهِ ^{١٦٧} وَمَنْ أَسَاءَ فَعَلَيْهَا ^{١٦٨}
 وَمَا رَبُّكَ بِظَلَّامٍ لِّلْعَبِيدِ ^{١٦٩}

إِلَيْهِ يُرَدُّ عِلْمُ السَّاعَةِ ^{١٧٠} وَمَا تَخْرُجُ مِنْ ثَمَرٍ مِنْ أَكْمَامِهَا ^{١٧١} وَمَا
 تَحْمِلُ مِنْ أُنْثَى وَلَا تَضَعُ إِلَّا بِعِلْمِهِ ^{١٧٢} وَيَوْمَ يُنَادِيهِمْ آيُنَ شُرَكَائِي
 قَالُوا أذُنُكَ ^{١٧٣} مَا مِنَّا مِنْ شَهِيدٍ ^{١٧٤} وَضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ ^{١٧٥} مَا كَانُوا يَدْعُونَ مِنْ
 قَبْلُ وَظَنُّوا مَا لَهُمْ مِنَ مَحْيَصٍ ^{١٧٦} لَا يَسْمَعُ الْإِنْسَانُ مِنْ دُعَاءِ الْخَيْرِ ^{١٧٧} وَ
 إِنْ مَسَّهُ الشَّرْفِيُّوسُ قَنُوطٌ ^{١٧٨} وَلَئِنْ أَذَقْنَاهُ رَحْمَةً مِنَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ ضَرَاءٍ

And among the Signs of Allah is this that you see 39
the earth dry and desolate; then as soon as We send
down rain on it, it stirs (to life) and swells. Surely the
God Who gives the dead earth life will raise the dead
men also to life.⁴⁷ Indeed, He has power over every-
thing.

Those⁴⁸ who misconstrue Our Revelations⁴⁹ are not 40-42
in any way hidden from Us.⁵⁰ Just consider who is
better: he who will be cast into the Hell-Fire, or he who
will appear on the Day of Resurrection in full security?
Do as you please; Allah is watching over everything you
do. These are the people who refused to believe in the
Admonition when it came to them. But the fact is that
this is a mighty Book.⁵¹ Falsehood can neither come at
it from before it nor from behind it:⁵² it is a Revelation
from the All-Wise, All-Praiseworthy One.

O Prophet, nothing is being said to you that has not 43
already been said to the Messengers before you. Surely
your Lord is highly forgiving,⁵³ yet stern in inflicting a
painful punishment.

Had We sent this Qur'ān in a foreign tongue, the 44-45
people would have said, "Why have not its verses been
well expounded? What! the scripture in a foreign langu-
age and the listeners are Arabs?"⁵⁴ Say to them, "This
Qur'ān is a guidance and a healing for the believers, but
to those who do not believe, it is a plug in their ears
and a covering over their eyes. It is as though they are
being summoned from afar.⁵⁵ Before this We had given
to Moses the Book, and it was similarly disputed.⁵⁶ If
your Lord had not already decreed a thing, the judge-
ment would have been passed between the disputants;⁵⁷
and the fact is that they are involved in an anxious
doubt about it.⁵⁸

Whoever does good will do so for his own self, and 46

whoever does evil will himself bear its consequences: your Lord is never unjust to His servants.⁵⁹

47-48

To Allah is remitted⁶⁰ the knowledge of the Hour:⁶¹ He alone knows all the fruits that come out from their sheaths: He alone knows which female has conceived and which has given birth.⁶² Then on the Day when He will call out to the people, asking, "Where are those associates of Mine"? they will say, "We have submitted: there is none of us to bear witness to that".⁶³ At that time, all those gods whom they used to invoke before this, shall be lost to them,⁶⁴ and they will realize that they have no refuge.

47. For explanation, see An-Nahl : 65, Al-Hijr : 5-7, Ar-Rūm : 19 and E.N. 19 of Al-Fāṭir.

48. After telling the common people in a few sentences that the doctrine of *Tauhid* and the Hereafter to which Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) is inviting them, is rational and the signs of the universe testify to its being right and true, the discourse again turns to the opponents who were determined to oppose it stubbornly.

49. The word *yulhidūn* in the original is derived from *ilhād* which means to deviate, to turn away from the right to the wrong path, to adopt crookedness. Thus, *ilhād* in the Revelations of Allah would mean that instead of understanding them in their clear and straightforward meaning one should misconstrue them and go astray and also lead others astray. One of the devices being adopted by the disbelievers of Makkah to defeat the message of the Qur'ān was that they would hear the verses of the Qur'ān and then would isolate one verse from its context, tamper with another, misconstrue a word or a sentence and thus raise every sort of objection and would mislead the people, saying that the Prophet had said such and such a thing that day.

50. These words imply a severe threat. The All-Powerful Ruler's saying that the acts of such and such a person are not hidden from Him by itself contains the meaning that he cannot escape their consequences.

51. "A mighty Book": An unchanging Book, which cannot be

defeated by tricks and cunning devices, which the worshippers of falsehood are employing against it. It has the force of the Truth in it, the force of true knowledge, the force of argument and reason, the force of eloquence and style, the force of Divinity of God Who sent it, and the force of the personality of the Messenger who presented it. No one, therefore, can defeat it by falsehood and hollow propaganda.

52. "Falsehood from before it" means that none can succeed in proving anything wrong or any teaching false in the Qur'ān by making a frontal attack on it; ". . . . nor from behind it" means that nothing can be discovered till Resurrection which may be opposed to the truths and realities presented by the Qur'ān; no new science, if it is really a "science", can be propounded, which may contradict the knowledge contained in the Qur'ān; no new experiment or observation can be made to prove that the guidance given to man by the Qur'ān in respect of the beliefs, morality, law, civilization or culture, and economic, social and political life is wrong. That which this Book has declared as the Truth can never be proved to be falsehood and that which it has declared as falsehood can never be proved to be the truth. Furthermore, it also means that whether falsehood makes a frontal attack, or makes a surprise attack by deception, it cannot defeat the message which the Qur'ān has brought. In spite of all sorts of open and secret machinations of the opponents the message will spread and none shall be able to defeat and frustrate it.

53. That is, "It is all due to His clemency and forgiveness that although His Messengers were opposed, abused and persecuted yet He went on giving respite to their opponents for years and years on end."

54. This is the kind of the stubbornness that the Holy Prophet was confronting. The disbelievers said, "Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) is an Arab. Arabic is his mother tongue. How can one believe that the Arabic Qur'ān that he presents has not been forged by himself but has been revealed to him by God? The Qur'ān could be believed to be the Revelation of God if he had started speaking fluently in a foreign language unknown to him, like Persian, Latin, or Greek." This argument of theirs has been refuted by Allah, saying, "Now when the Qur'ān has been sent down in their own tongue so that they may understand it, they raise the objection:

Why has it been sent down to an Arab in Arabic? But if it had been sent down in a foreign tongue, these very people would have said, 'How strange! An Arab Messenger has been sent to the Arabs, but the Revelations being sent to him are in a tongue which is neither understood by him nor by his people.'

55. When a person is summoned from afar, he hears a voice but does not understand what is being said to him. This is a wonderful simile which fully depicts the psychology of the stubborn opponents. Naturally when you talk to a person who is free from prejudice, he will listen to you, will try to understand what you say, will accept it if it is reasonable, with an open mind. On the contrary, the person who is not only prejudiced against you but is also malicious and spiteful, will not at all listen to you however hard you may try to make him understand your viewpoint. In spite of hearing you all the time he will not understand at all what you had been saying.

56. That is, some people had believed in it and some others had made up their minds to oppose it.

57. It has two meanings: (1) If Allah had not already decreed that the people would be given enough respite for consideration the disputants would have long been destroyed; (2) if Allah had not already decreed that the disputes would finally be decided on the Day of Judgement, the reality would have been made plain as to who is in the right and who is in the wrong.

58. In this brief sentence the spiritual disease of the disbelievers of Makkah has been clearly diagnosed. It says that they are involved in doubt about the Qur'ān and the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace), and this doubt has caused them great anguish and confusion. That is, although apparently they deny the Qur'ān's being Allah's Word and the Holy Prophet's being His Messenger very vehemently, yet their this denial is not based on any conviction, but their minds are afflicted with great vacillation, and doubt. On the one hand, their selfish motives, their interests and their prejudices demand that they should belie the Qur'ān and the Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) and oppose them strongly; on the other, their hearts are convinced from within, that the Qur'ān is, in fact, a unique and un-paralleled Word the like of which has never been heard from any literary man or poet. Neither can the insane utter such things in their madness, nor can devils come to teach God-worship, piety and righteousness to

the people. Likewise, when they say that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) is a liar, their hearts from within put them to shame, and ask: Can such a person ever be a liar? When they brand him a madman, their hearts cry out from within and ask: Do you really think that he is mad? When they accuse that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) is not interested in the truth but is working for selfish motives, their hearts from within curse them and ask: Do you call this virtuous man selfish, whom you have never seen striving for the sake of wealth and power and fame, whose life has been free from every trace of self-interest, who has always been working to bring about goodness and piety, but has never acted from any selfish motives.

59. That is, "Your Lord can never be so unjust as to let go to waste the good deeds of a good man and fail to punish the evil-doers for their evil."

60. That is, "None but Allah knows when the Hour would occur." This is the answer to the disbelievers' question as to when the threat being given them of meeting with the consequences of their evil deeds will be carried out. Allah has answered their this question without citing it.

61. "The Hour": the Hour of Resurrection, i.e. the Hour when the evildoers will be punished for their evil and the grievances of the oppressed good people will be redressed.

62. By [this the listeners have been made to realize two things: (1) That not only of Resurrection but the knowledge of all unseen things is reserved for Allah alone; there is no other knower of the unseen; and (2) that that God Who possesses the detailed knowledge of the most minor things cannot remain unaware of the acts and deeds of anybody. Therefore, no one in His Kingdom should act fearlessly, with impunity. Only according to this second meaning the sentence becomes relevant to what follows. If one studies the following sentences the theme that immediately becomes obvious is: "Don't concern yourselves about finding out the date of the coming of Resurrection; you should, however, be anxious about what consequences of your deviations you will have to bear when it comes." This same thing had the Holy Prophet once said to a person, who asked him the date of the coming of Resurrection. All the major collections of *Ḥadīth* contain a

(Contd. on p. 99)

مَسْتَهُ لَيَقُولَنَّ هَذَا لِي وَمَا أَظُنُّ السَّاعَةَ قَائِمَةً وَلَئِن رُّجِعْتُ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي إِنَّ لِي عِنْدَهُ لَلْحُسْنَىٰ فَلَنُنَبِّئَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِمَا عَمِلُوا وَلَنُذِيقَنَّهُمْ مِّنْ عَذَابٍ غَلِيظٍ ۗ وَإِذَا أَنْعَمْنَا عَلَى الْإِنسَانِ أَعْرَضَ وَنَا بِجَانِبِهِ وَإِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ فَذُو دُعَاءٍ عَرِيضٍ ۗ قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ ثَمَرٌ كَفَرْتُمْ بِهِ مَنْ أَضَلُّ مِمَّنْ هُوَ فِي شِقَاقِ بَعِيدٍ ۗ سَنُرِيهِمْ آيَاتِنَا فِي الْأَفَاقِ وَفِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ أَوَلَمْ يَكْفِ بِرَبِّكَ أَنَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ ۗ إِلَّا إِيَّاهُمْ فِي مَرِيَّةٍ مِّنْ لِّقَاءِ رَبِّهِمْ ۗ إِلَّا أَنَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُّحِيطٌ ۗ

49-50

Man is never wearied of praying for good,⁶⁵ and when an evil befalls him, he loses hope and becomes desperate. But when We let him taste Our mercy after the hardship, he says, "I deserve this,"⁶⁶ and I do not think that the Hour (of Resurrection) will ever come. But if I am really brought back to my Lord, I shall have good reward with Him, too." The fact, however, is that We shall certainly tell the disbelievers what they had done, and We shall make them taste a most degrading chastisement.

51 When We bless man, he turns away and grows stiff-necked;⁶⁷ but when an evil touches him, he comes with lengthy supplications.⁶⁸

52 O Prophet, say to them, "Did you ever consider this: If this Qur'ān were really from Allah, and you went on denying it, who could be more astray than the one who had gone far off in antagonism towards it?"⁶⁹

53-54

Soon shall We show them Our Signs in the world around them, as well as in themselves, till it becomes clear to them, that this Qur'ān is indeed the Truth.⁷⁰ Is it

not enough that your Lord watches everything?⁷¹ Look! these people are in doubt about the meeting with their Lord:⁷² Listen! He encompasses everything!⁷³

(Contd. from p. 97)

commonly reported Tradition to the effect: "Once when the Holy Prophet was on a journey, a man on the way shouted his name from a distance. The Holy Prophet asked what he wanted to say. He said: When will Resurrection come? The Holy Prophet replied: It must come in any case! What preparations have you made for it?"

63. That is, "Now we have realized that what we had in our minds was absolutely wrong. Now none among us is of the view that there is another one also who is Your associate in Godhead." The words "we have submitted" show that on the Day of Resurrection the disbelievers will be asked again and again, on every occasion, "In the world you went on refusing to believe what the Messengers of God said: now say who was in the right: they or you? And the disbelievers will every time confess that the truth indeed was that which the Messengers preached and they themselves were in the wrong because they forsook the knowledge and persisted in their own ignorance.

64. That is, "In their utter hopelessness they will look around to see if they could find any one of those whom they used to serve and worship in the world, who could come to their rescue and save them from God's torment, or at least have their punishment reduced, but they will find no helper on any side."

65. "For good": For prosperity, abundance of provisions, good health, well-being of children, etc. And "man" here does not imply every human being, for it also includes the Prophets and the righteous people, who are free from this weakness as is being mentioned below. But here it implies the mean and shallow person, who starts imploring God humbly when touched by harm and is beside himself with joy when he receives the good things of life. As most human beings are involved in this weakness, it has been called a weakness of man.

66. That is, "I have got all this because of my being worthy of it: it is my right that I should receive all this."

67. That is, "He turns away from Our obedience and worship, and thinks it is beneath his dignity to bow to Us."

68. For other verses on this subject, see Yūnus : 12, Bani Isrā'il : 83, Ar-Rūm : 33-36, Az-Zumar : 8-9, 49 and the E.N.'s.

69. It does not mean that they should believe in it only owing to the danger that if it were really from Allah they would be inviting their own doom by denying it, but it means this: "It is not wisdom that you should be bent upon opposing it stubbornly without seriously trying to understand what it says. You cannot assert that you have come to know that this Qur'ān is not from God, and you have known with certainty that God has not sent it. Obviously, your refusal to believe in it as Divine Word is not based on knowledge, but on conjecture, which may possibly be right as well as wrong. Now consider both the possibilities. If your conjecture were right, then, according to your own thinking, both the believers and the unbelievers would be equal, because both will become dust after death, and there is no life hereafter where belief and unbelief might be distinguished. But, if their Qur'ān were really from God, and that of which it is forewarning did really take place, then think what doom you would invite for yourselves by denying it and opposing it like that. Therefore, your own interest demands that you should give up stubbornness and consider this Qur'ān seriously; if even after due consideration, you decide not to believe in it, you may not, but you should not oppose it to the extent that you start employing falsehood and deception and persecution to bar the way of its message and prevent others from believing in it, not being content with your own unbelief.

70. This verse has two meanings and both have been given by the major commentators :

First, that they will soon see with their own eyes that the message of the Qur'ān has spread in all the adjoining lands, and they themselves have yielded to it. Then they will realize that what they are being told today, which they are denying, was absolutely true. Some people have objected to this meaning, saying that a message's being dominant and overwhelming vast areas is no argument to prove that it is the truth. False messages also become dominant and their adherents also go on subduing one country after the other. But this is a superficial objection which has been raised without a thorough study of the matter. The wonderful conquests that Islam achieved in the period of the Holy Prophet and the rightly-guided Caliphs, were not the Signs of Allah only in the sense that the believers

conquered one country after the other, but in the sense that this conquest of the countries was not like other conquests of the world, which make one man or one family or one nation master of the life and property of others and God's earth is filled with tyranny and injustice. Contrary to this, this conquest brought with it a great religious, moral, intellectual, cultural, political, economic and social revolution, whose influence, wherever it reached, elicited what was best in man and suppressed what was worst in him. This revolution developed and nurtured the moral excellences which the world could hope to see only in the hermits and the meditating recluses and could never imagine that they could also be found among the people responsible for running the worldly affairs—in the politics of the rulers, in the chambers of justice, in the wars and conquests of the commanders of forces, in the work of the tax-collectors and in the commerce of the big businessmen. This revolution so raised the common people in the society created by it in respect of the sense of morality, character, cleanliness and purity that even the select people of other societies seemed to be much inferior to them. It took man out of the labyrinths of superstition and whim and put him on the broad highway of scientific research and rational thought and action. It treated and cured these diseases of the collective life of whose treatment no idea existed in the other systems, or if at all they tried to treat them, they did not succeed in it. For example, separation between men on the basis of colour, race, country and language, classification of men in the same society and discrimination among them, non-existence of legal rights and equality in practical life, degeneration of women and their deprivation of the basic rights, prevalence of crime, liquor drinking and use of all intoxicating drugs, the governments being above criticism and accountability, the masses' deprivation of the fundamental human rights, disrespect of agreements in international relations, barbarism in wars, and such other diseases. In Arabia itself this revolution brought about order in place of chaos, peace in place of bloodshed and anarchy, piety in place of wickedness, justice in place of tyranny and injustice, purity and culture in place of filth and indecency, knowledge in place of ignorance, brotherhood and love in place of long-standing feuds, and it made a nation whose people could not dream of anything beyond chiefship of their tribe, leaders of the world. These were the Signs which the very generation before whom the Holy Prophet had recited

this verse for the first time, saw with their own eyes, and after that till today Allah has been constantly showing those Signs. The Muslims, even during their downfall, displayed such high morals as could never be attained by those people who represent as the leaders of civilization and culture. No precedent can be found from any period of the history of the Muslims of the tyrannical treatment that has been meted out by the European nations to the subdued nations of Africa, America, Asia and of Europe itself. This is the blessing of the Qur'ān which has so humanised Muslims that they could not become so tyrannical even when they had attained domination as the non-Muslims have been in all periods of history and are even today. A person who has eyes can himself see how the Muslims treated the Christians in Spain when they ruled it for centuries, and how the Christians treated the Muslims when they gained power there; how the Muslims behaved towards Hindus during their eight hundred year long rule in India and how the Hindus are now treating them after they have attained power; how the Muslims treated the Jews during the past 1300 years and how the Jews are treating the Muslims in Palestine.

The other meaning of this verse is that Allah will show the people in the external world around them as well as in their own selves such signs as will make manifest that the teaching the Qur'ān is giving is the very truth. Some people have raised the objection that the people even at that time were observing the world around them and also their own selves; therefore, it would be meaningless to show them any such Signs in the future. But this objection also is as superficial as the objection against the first meaning. No doubt, the external world is the same as man has been seeing in the past and his own self also is of the same nature as has been seen in every age, yet in these the Signs of God are so numerous that man has never comprehended them fully nor will ever be able to do so. In every age man has met with many new Signs and this will go on happening till the Resurrection Day.

71. That is, "Is it not enough to warn the people of their evil end that Allah is watching whatever they are doing to belie and defeat the message of the truth?"

72. That is, "The basic cause of their this attitude and conduct is that they are not sure that they will ever have to appear before their Lord and be held accountable for their deeds and actions."

73. That is, "They cannot escape His grasp nor can anything of their deeds be prevented from being recordd by Him."

XLII

ASH-SHURĀ

الشورى

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

XLII

ASH-SHŪRĀ

الشُّورَى

INTRODUCTION

Name

It is derived from the sentence, *wa amru-hum shūrā baina-hum*, of verse 38, implying thereby that it is a Sūrah in which the word *shūrā* has occurred.

Period of Revelation

Although it could not be known from any authentic traditions, yet one feels after a study of its subject-matter that this Sūrah might have been sent down con-

secutively after Hā-Mim As-Sajdah, for it seems to be, in a way, a supplement to it. This will become clear to every person who first studies Sūrah Hā-Mīm As-Sajdah carefully and then goes through this Sūrah. He will see that in that Sūrah the Quraish chiefs had been taken to task for their deaf and blind opposition so that anyone in Makkah and in its out-skirts, who had any sense of morality and nobility left in him, should know how unreasonably the chiefs of the people were opposing Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace), and as against them, how serious he was in everything he said, how rational was his standpoint and how noble his character and conduct. Immediately after that warning this Sūrah was sent down, which did full justice to teaching and instruction, and made the truth of the Holy Prophet's message plain in such an impressive way that anyone who had any element of the love of the truth in him and who had not been blinded by the errors of ignorance, could not help being influenced by it.

Theme and Subject-Matter

The discourse begins in a way as if to say: "Why are you expressing surprise and amazement at what Our Prophet is presenting before you? What he says is not new or strange, nor anything novel, which might have been presented for the first time in history: that Revelation should come down to a man from God and he should be given instructions for the guidance of mankind. Allah has been sending similar Revelations with similar instructions to the former Prophets before this. It is not surprising that the Owner of the Universe should be acknowledged as Deity and Ruler, but what is strange is that one should accept another as divine and deity in spite of being His subject and slave. You are being angry with him who is presenting *Tauḥīd* before you, whereas the *shirk* that you are practising with regard to

the Master of the Universe is such a grave crime as may cause the heavens to break asunder. The angels are amazed at this boldness of yours and fear that the wrath of Allah might descend on you any moment."

After this the people have been told that a person's being appointed to Prophethood and his presenting himself as a Prophet does not mean that he has been made master of the people's destinies and he has come to the world with that very claim. Allah has kept the destinies in His own hand. The Prophet has come only to arouse the heedless and guide the strayed ones to the Right Path. To call to account those who do not listen to him and to punish or not to punish them is Allah's own responsibility, and not part of the Prophet's work. Therefore, they should take it out of their head that the Prophet has come with a claim similar to those that are made by their so-called religious guides and saints to the effect that he who would not listen to them, or would behave insolently towards them, would be burnt to death. In this very connection, the people have also been told that the Prophet has not come to condemn them but he is their well-wisher; he is warning them that the way they are following will only lead to their own destruction.

Then, an answer has been given to the question: Why didn't Allah make all human beings righteous by birth, and why did He allow the difference of viewpoint owing to which the people start following each and every way of thought and action? The answer given is this: Owing to this very fact has it become possible for man to attain to the special Mercy of Allah, which is not meant for other dumb creatures, but is only meant for those endowed with power and authority, who should take Allah as Patron and Guardian not instinctively but

consciously by willing choice. Allah supports the man who adopts this way and guides and helps him to do good and right and admits him into His special Mercy. On the contrary, the man who misuses his option and makes his patron those who are not, in fact, the guardians, and cannot be, are deprived of Divine Mercy. In this connection, it has also been made clear that only Allah is the Patron of man and of all other creatures. Others are neither the patron nor have the power to do full justice to patronage. Man's success depends only on this that he should make no mistake in choosing a patron for himself by the use of his free choice, and should take only Him his Guide Who, in reality, is the real Patron.

After this, it has been explained what the *Dīn* being presented by the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) really is :

Its primary basis is that as Allah Almighty is the Creator, Master and Real Patron of the Universe and Man, He alone is Man's Ruler, He alone has the right to give Man Faith (*Dīn*) and Law (system of belief and practice) and judge the disputes of man and tell what is Truth and what is falsehood. No other being has any right whatever to be man's lawgiver. In other words, like the natural sovereignty, the sovereignty with regard to lawmaking also is vested only in Allah. No man or creature, apart from Allah, can be the bearer of this sovereignty. And if a person does not recognize and accept this Divine rule of Allah, it is merely futile for him to recognize the natural Sovereignty of Allah.

On this very basis has Allah ordained a *Dīn* (True Religion) for Man from the very beginning. It was one and the same Religion that was vouchsafed in every age to all the Prophets. No Prophet ever founded any separate religion of his own. The same one Religion has

been enjoined by Allah for all mankind since the beginning of creation, and all the Prophets have been following it and inviting others to follow it.

This Religion and Creed was not sent so that man may rest content only with believing in it, but it was sent with the purpose and intention that it alone should be introduced, established and enforced in the world, and no man-made religion be made to prevail in Allah's earth apart from His Religion. The Prophets had not been appointed only to preach this Religion but to establish it particularly in the world.

This same was the original Religion of mankind, but after the death of the Prophets, selfish people created new creeds by creating schisms for vested interests due to self-conceit, vanity and ostentation. All the different religions and creeds found in the world today have resulted from corruption of the original Divine Truth.

Now, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) has been sent so that he may present before the people the same original Religion in place of the various practices and artificial creeds and man-made religions, and may try to establish the same. On this, if instead of being grateful, you feel angry and come out to fight him, it is your folly; the Prophet will not abandon his mission only because of your foolishness. He has been enjoined to adhere to his faith at all costs and to carry out the mission to which he has been appointed. Therefore, the people should not cherish any false hope that in order to please them he would cater to the same whims and superstitions of ignorance which has corrupted Allah's Religion before.

You do not understand how great an impudence it is against Allah to adopt a man-made religion and law instead of the Religion and Law enjoined by Allah. You

think it is an ordinary thing and there is nothing wrong with it. But in the sight of Allah it is the worst kind of *shirk* and a grave crime whose punishment will be imposed on all those who enforced their own religion on Allah's earth and those who adopted and followed their religion.

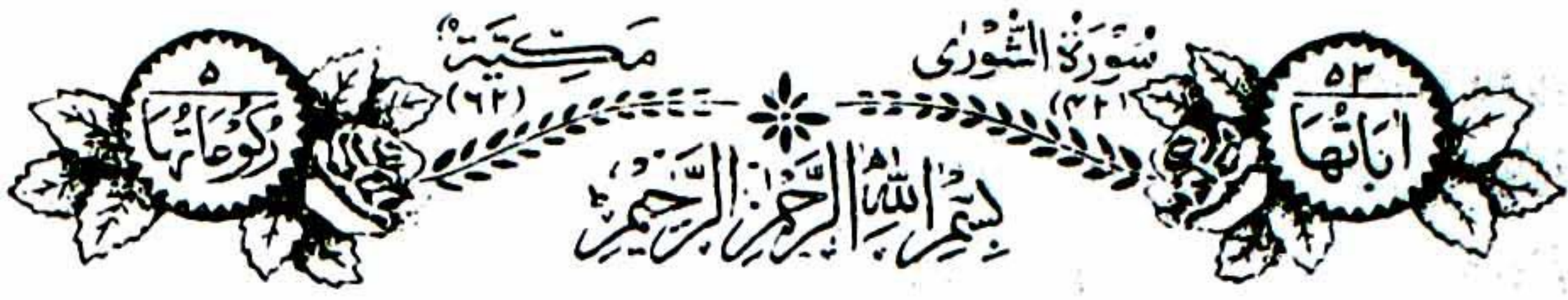
Thus, after presenting a clear and visible concept of Religion it is said: "The best possible method that could be employed for your instruction and for bringing you to the Right Path has already been employed. On the one hand, Allah has sent down His Book, which is teaching you the truth in a most impressive way in your own language; and on the other, the lives of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) and his Companions are present before you by which you can see for yourselves what kind of men are prepared by the guidance given in this Book. Even then if you do not accept this guidance, nothing else in the world can bring you to the Right Path. The only alternative, therefore, is that you should be allowed to persist in the same error in which you have remained involved for centuries, and made to meet with the same doom which has been destined by Allah for such wrongdoers."

While stating these truths, brief arguments have been given, here and there, for *Tauḥīd* and the Hereafter, the world-worshippers have been warned of the evil consequences and their punishment in the life hereafter, and the disbelievers have been criticised for the moral weaknesses, which were the real cause of their deviation from the truth. The Sūrah has been concluded with two important themes:

First, that the Holy Prophet was wholly unaware of this concept of the "Book" or the True Faith during the first forty years of his life, and then his sudden

appearance before the people with those two things, is a manifest proof of his being a Prophet.

Secondly, his presenting his own teaching as the teaching of God does not mean that he claims to have spoken to God, face to face, but God has conveyed to him this Guidance, as in the case of all other Prophets, in three ways: He speaks to His Prophets either through Revelation, or from behind a veil, or He sends an angel with the message. This thing was clarified so that the opponents did not have an opportunity of accusing the Holy Prophet of claiming to have spoken to God, face to face, and the lovers of the truth should know by what methods Allah gave instruction to the man whom He had appointed to the mission of Prophethood.



حَمْدٌ عَسَىٰ ۚ كَذٰلِكَ يُوحَىٰ اِلَيْكَ وَاِلَى الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ اللّٰهُ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ
 لَهُ مَا فِى السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِى الْاَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيْمُ ۗ تَكَادُ السَّمٰوٰتُ
 يَتَفَطَّرْنَ مِنْ فَوْقِهِنَّ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ يُسَبِّحُوْنَ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِنَّ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُوْنَ لِهِنَّ
 فِى الْاَرْضِ اِلَّا اِنَّ اللّٰهَ هُوَ الْغَفُوْرُ الرَّحِيْمُ ۗ وَالَّذِيْنَ اتَّخَذُوْا مِنْ دُوْنِهٖ
 اَوْلِيَاءَ اللّٰهُ حَفِيْظٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَمَا اَنْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِوَكِيْلٍ ۗ وَكَذٰلِكَ اَوْحَيْنَا
 اِلَيْكَ قُرْاٰنًا عَرَبِيًّا لِتُنذِرَ اُمَّ الْقُرَىٰ وَمَنْ حَوْلَهَا وَتُنذِرَ يَوْمَ الْجَمْعِ لَا
 رَيْبَ فِیْهِ فَرِیْقٌ فِى الْجَنَّةِ وَفَرِیْقٌ فِى السَّعِيْرِ ۗ وَكُوْشًا اللّٰهُ لَجَعَلَهُمْ
 اُمَّةً وَّاحِدَةً وَّلٰكِنْ يَدْخُلُ مِنْ يَشَآءُ فِى رَحْمَتِهٖ ۗ وَالظَّالِمُوْنَ مَا لَهُمْ مِنْ
 وَّلِيٍّ وَّلَا نَصِيْرٍ ۗ اِمْرٌ اتَّخَذُوْا مِنْ دُوْنِهٖ اَوْلِيَاءَ ۗ فَاَللّٰهُ هُوَ الْوَلِيُّ وَهُوَ
 يُحْيِ الْمَوْتٰى وَهُوَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ۗ وَمَا اَخْتَلَفْتُمْ فِیْهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ ۗ

XLII

ASH-SHŪRĀ

الشُّورَى

Verses : 53

Revealed at Makkah

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

1-6

Hā. Mīm. ‘Ain. Sīn. Qāf. Likewise has Allah, the All-Mighty, the All-Wise, been inspiring you and those (Messengers) before you.¹ Whatever is in the heavens and the earth is His. He is the High, the Great!² Near

it is that the heavens should break asunder from above.³ The angels are glorifying their Lord with His praise and begging forgiveness for those on the earth.⁴ Listen! Allah is indeed All-Forgiving, All-Merciful.⁵ Those who have taken some others than Him as guardians⁶, Allah is watching them; you are not responsible for their conduct⁷.

Yes: thus have We revealed to you, O Prophet, this Arabic Qur'ān⁸ so that you may warn those who dwell in the centre of habitation (i. e. Makkah) and around it,⁹ and warn them of the Day of Gathering¹⁰ which is sure to come: one group shall go to Paradise and the other to Hell.

Had Allah so willed, He would have made all of them a single nation, but He admits into His mercy whomever He wills; and the wrongdoers have neither any protector nor helper.¹¹ What! Have (the foolish people) taken other guardians besides Him? Guardian is Allah alone: He alone gives life to the dead, and He has power over everything.¹²

1. The style of the opening verses by itself shows that in the background there are the misgivings, wonder and amazement which were being expressed at that time in every assembly, every meeting place, every street and every house and shop of Makkah at the message of the Holy Prophet and the themes of the Qur'ān. The people said, "Wherefrom is this man bringing us new revelations everyday? The like of these we had never heard nor seen before. How strange that he rejects as false the religion that our forefathers have been following in the past, the religion that is still being followed by all of us, and the traditions and ways that have been prevalent in the country for so many centuries; and he says that the religion that he presents only is right and true." They said: "Had he presented even this new religion in a way as to substitute some of the falsehood he found in the ancestral paganism and prevalent customs with certain others which might be the result of his own thought, there could be a dialogue with him. But he says that what he recites is Divine Word. How can we accept this? Does

God visit him, or does he visit God? Or does some dialogue take place between him and God?" It is in the background of such expression of wonder and doubt that although the address is apparently directed to the Holy Prophet, the disbelievers have in fact been told: "Yes: these very things are being revealed by the Almighty, All-Wise Allah, and with the same themes has its Revelation been coming down to all the former Prophets."

Lexically, *wahī* means "swift and secret instruction", i.e. an inspiration which is made with such haste and speed that none may know it except the inspirer and the one being inspired. As a term this word has been used for the guidance and instruction that is put in the mind of a man by Allah like a flash of lightning. What is meant to be said here is this: "There is no question of Allah's visiting somebody or somebody's visiting Allah and speaking face to face with Him. He is All-Mighty and All-Wise. Whenever He pleases to have a contact with a servant for the guidance and instruction of mankind, nothing can obstruct His will and intention, for He adopts the method of revelation for the purpose by His wisdom." This very theme has been repeated in the last verses of the Sūrah with greater clarity and detail.

As to the people's objection that the Holy Prophet was presenting strange and novel things, it has been said: "There is nothing strange and novel in what Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) presents; Allah has been giving the same guidance and instructions to the Prophets who came before him in the world."

2. These introductory sentences are not meant to be said merely in praise of Allah Almighty, but their each word has a deep link with the background in which these verses were sent down. The foremost basis of the objections of the people who were expressing wonder and doubts against the Holy Prophet and the Qur'ān was that he was inviting them to *Tauhīd* and they were being alarmed at this and saying that if Allah alone is the Creator, Sustainer and Ruler, what would be the position of their saints and holy men? At this it has been said: "This whole Universe belongs to Allah. How can therefore the godhead of another work and operate in the Kingdom of the real Sovereign, particularly when those others whose godhead is acknowledged, are themselves also His subjects?" Then, it has been said: "He is the High, the Great!" That is, He is far above this that somebody else should be equal to Him in rank and should become His associate in His Being, attributes, powers or rights."

3. That is, "It is not a trivial matter that a creature should be joined in lineage with Allah and regarded as His son or daughter; another regarded as fulfiller of the needs and the answerer of the petitions so that the people should start invoking him for help; another taken as the maintainer of the entire world, and his devotees should start proclaiming that their holy saint hears the prayer of everyone at all places at all times and comes to his help and answers his petition; another invested with the authority to enjoin and prohibit things and declare them as lawful and unlawful, and the people should start obeying his commands, instead of the Commands of God, as if he alone was their God. These boldnesses against God are such that they may well cause the heavens to break asunder." (This same theme has also been presented in Sūrah Maryam : 88-91 above).

4. It means this: "The angels shudder with disgust when they hear such nonsense being uttered by the people in respect of their Lord, and they regard it as a rebellion against Him." They say: "Glorified be Allah! No one can have the position that he should become an associate with Allah, Lord of the worlds, in Divinity and Command; there is none beside Him who may be our and all other servants' benefactor so that hymns be sung in his praise and he be thanked." So, they feel that it is a grave crime being committed in the world, and it may provoke Allah Almighty's wrath any moment. Therefore, they implore Allah for mercy again and again for the dwellers of the earth, who have forgotten themselves and their God, and pray that they may yet be spared from the torment and given more respite to mend their ways.

5. That is, "It is only Allah's clemency, mercifulness and forgiveness that the people who have touched the extreme limits in disbelief, polytheism, atheism, sinfulness and tyranny, have been receiving respite after respite for years and years, even for centuries; yet they not only go on receiving their sustenance but are also acclaimed as the great people of the world and they are provided with such adornments of the worldly life as cause the ignorant people the misunderstanding that this world perhaps has no God."

6. The word *aulyā'* (sing. *wali*) as used in the Text is very comprehensive in meaning. The different beliefs and all sorts of diverse practices with regard to the false deities held and worshipped by the polytheistic people, have been described as "taking others as *aulyā'* (guardians) instead of Allah" in the Qur'ān. According to the

Qur'ān, a person takes such a one his *walī* : (1) whom he obeys in all matters, whose instructions he carries out and whose ways and customs and rules he follows in all affairs of life (An-Nisā : 118-120; Al-A'rāf : 3, 27-30); (2) in whose guidance he has full faith, and who he thinks will lead him aright and save him from error and deviation (Al-Baqarah : 257, Banī Isrā'il : 97, Al-Kahf : 17-50, Al-Jāthīah : 19); (3) about whom he trusts he will protect him from the torment of God in the Hereafter if it really existed (An-Nisā : 123, 173 ; Al-An'ām : 51, Ar-Ra'd : 37, Al-'Ankabūt : 22, Al-Aḥzāb : 65, Az Zumar : 3); (4) about whom he has the belief that he helps him in the world in supernatural ways, protects him from disaster and afflictions, gets him jobs, blesses him with children, and fulfils his desires and all other needs. (Hūd: 20, Ar-Ra'd : 16, Al-'Ankabūt: 41).

At some places in the Qur'ān the word *walī* has been used in one of these senses and at others in all its meanings. The verse being commented upon is one of such verses. In it, taking others as guardians instead of Allah implies regarding them as one's patron and supporter and helper in all the four above mentioned meanings.

7. "Allah is watching them": Allah sees whatever they are doing and is recording their conduct. It is His responsibility to call them to account and punish them. As for the words "You are not responsible for their conduct", these have been addressed to the Holy Prophet. They mean this: "Their destiny has not been placed under your control so that you may burn to ashes anyone who does not listen to you, or depose him from power, or annihilate him." This, however, does not mean that, God forbid, the Holy Prophet regarded himself as such, and this was said in order to remove his misunderstanding or self-conceit, but this was meant for the disbelievers. Although apparently the Holy Prophet himself is the addressee, the real object is to tell the disbelievers that the Prophet of Allah has made no such claims as were usually made by their so-called saints who posed to possess great spiritual powers. Among the ignorant people it is generally thought that the so-called "holy men" have the power to ruin the destiny of anyone who behaves insolently towards them in any way; so much so that even after their death if somebody happened to dishonour their grave, or if nothing else, only thoughts an evil thought about them in his mind, they destroyed him completely. Such a thought is in most cases spread by the "holy men" themselves. As for the good men

who do not themselves say any such thing, their names are exploited by some other clever people, who spread such thoughts about them in order to promote their business. In any case this is regarded as a necessary corollary of spirituality and piety among the common people that one should possess the powers of making and marring destinies. To destroy the spell of this same fraud, Allah is addressing His Holy Messenger, as if to tell the disbelievers: "You are no doubt Our Messenger and We have blessed you with Our Revelations, but your duty is only to guide the people to the Right Path. Their destinies have not been placed under your control; they are in Our hand; therefore, to watch over the deeds and acts of the servants and to punish or not to punish them is Our own responsibility."

8. The same thing which had been said in the beginning of the discourse has been said again with greater emphasis, and by making mention of the "Arabic Qur'ān", the listeners have been warned to the effect: "The Qur'ān is not in any foreign language but in your own language; you can understand it yourself directly; study its themes and see for yourself that the pure and selfless guidance that is being given in it can be from none other than the Lord of the Universe."

9. That is, "Arouse them from slumber and warn them that there is nothing but destruction in store for them in consequence of the errors of morality and conduct in which they are involved and of the perverse principle on which they have ordered their individual and collective lives."

10. That is, "Tell them also this that this destruction is not confined only to this world but the Day has to come when Allah will gather together all mankind and subject them to accountability. Even if a person escaped the evil consequences of his deviation and wickedness in the world, there will be no chance of his escape on that Day, and highly unfortunate is he, who is doomed to a tragic fate both in this world and in the Hereafter."

11. This theme has three objects in this context :

First, it is meant to instruct and console the Holy Prophet, as if to say : "Do not grieve so much at the ignorance and deviation of the disbelievers of Makkah and their stubbornness and obduracy. It is Allah's will that man should be granted the freedom of choice and action : then whoever desires to have guidance should be given guidance, and whoever wants to remain astray should be allowed to

go astray. Had this not been Allah's will, there was no need whatever of sending the Prophets and the Book ; for this only a creative hint of Allah Almighty's was enough : all human beings would have become as obedient as the rivers, mountains, trees, stones, and all other creatures." (In this connection, please also see Al-An'ām : 35-36, 107).

Secondly, its addressees are all those people who were involved in the confusion, and even now are, that if Allah really had wanted to show guidance to human beings and He did not like the differences of creed and practice that were prevalent among the people, and wanted to have the people adopt the way of the Faith and Islam, there was no need of the Revelation and the Book and the Prophethood. He could have easily achieved this object by creating everyone a believer and Muslim by birth. Another result of this confusion was also this reasoning : "When Allah has not done so, the different ways that we are following, are approved by Him, and whatever we are doing, is according to His will. Therefore, nobody has any right to object to it." (To remove this misunderstanding also this theme has been mentioned at several places in the Qur'ān. Please see Al An'ām : 112, 137, 148-149 ; Yūnus : 99 ; Hūd : 118 119 ; An-Nahl : 9, 35 and the relevant E.N.'s).

Thirdly, its object is to make the believers realize the truth about the difficulties that one generally faces in the way of preaching religion and reforming the people. Those people who do not understand the reality of the God given freedom of choice and will and of the resulting differences of temperament and methods sometimes become despondent at the slow progress of the reformatory work and wish that some supernatural things should appear from Allah, which should change the hearts of the people, and are sometimes inclined to adopt unsound methods of bringing about reformation, owing to excessive enthusiasm. (For this object also this theme has occurred at some places in the Qur'ān, for which see Ar-Ra'd : 31, An-Nahl : 91-93).

To highlight these objects a very important theme has been expressed in these brief sentences. Allah's real vicegerency in the world and His Paradise in the Hereafter is not an ordinary blessing, which may be distributed over creatures of the rank of the earth and stones and donkeys and horses as a common blessing. This is indeed a special blessing and a blessing of a very high order for

which even the angels were not considered fit. That is why Allah created man as a creature endowed with power and authority and placed vast means of His earth under his control and blessed him with these special powers so that he may pass through the test, success in which alone can entitle a servant to His blessings. This blessing is Allah's own; no one has a monopoly over it, nor can anyone claim to have it on the basis of a personal right, nor has anyone the power to take it by force. He who presents service before Allah, who takes Him as his Guardian and comes under His protection, alone can have it. Then Allah blesses him with help, guidance and grace to pass this test, so that he may enter His Mercy. As for the unjust man who turns away from Allah Himself and instead takes others as his patrons, Allah has no need that He should become his guardian by force. And the others whom he takes as his guardians do not possess any knowledge and power and authority that they may enable him to achieve success by dint of their guardianship of him.

12. That is, "Guardianship is not a thing of one's personal choice and satisfaction that one may take anyone one may please as one's guardian, and the other may also become one's real and true guardian and may do full justice to the function of guardianship. This is an actual reality, which does not change with the whims of the people; the Guardian is He Who is really the Guardian, whether someone regards and acknowledges Him as his Guardian or not, and the one who is not in reality the guardian is not the guardian, no matter whether someone continues to regard and acknowledge him as his guardian till the last moment. Now, as for the question: What is the proof of only Allah's being the real Guardian and of no one else's being the guardian? the answer is: Man's real Guardian can be the one who changes death into life, who has created a living man by breathing life into inorganic substances, and who also possesses the powers and authority to do full justice to the function of Guardianship. If there is such a one, apart from Allah, he may be made the guardian, and if He is Allah alone, then taking another beside Him as one's guardian is nothing but ignorance and folly and self-destruction.

فَحُكْمُهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ ذَلِكُمْ اللَّهُ رَبِّي عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ ۗ وَإِلَيْهِ أُنِيبُ ﴿١١﴾ فَأَطْرُ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا وَمِنَ الْأَنْعَامِ أَزْوَاجًا يَذُرُّكُمْ
فِيهِ ۗ لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ ۗ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ ﴿١٢﴾ لَهُ مَقَالِيدُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَ
الْأَرْضِ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَقْدِرُ ۗ إِنَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٣﴾ شَرَعَ
لَكُمْ مِنَ الدِّينِ مَا وَصَّى بِهِ نُوحًا وَالَّذِي أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ وَمَا وَصَّيْنَا بِهِ
إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَى وَعِيسَى أَنْ أَقِيمُوا الدِّينَ وَلَا تَتَفَرَّقُوا فِيهِ ۗ كَبُرَ عَلَى
الشُّرَكِيِّنَ مَا تَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَيْهِ ۗ اللَّهُ يَجْتَبِي إِلَيْهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي إِلَيْهِ
مَنْ يُنِيبُ ﴿١٤﴾ وَمَا تَفَرَّقُوا إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْعِلْمُ بَيْنَهُمْ وَلَوْ
لَا كَلِمَةٌ سَبَقَتْ مِنْ رَبِّكَ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى لَفُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ
أُورِثُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ لَفِي شَكٍّ مِنْهُ مُرِيبٍ ﴿١٥﴾ فَلِذَلِكَ فَادْعُ وَاسْتَقِمْ
كَمَا أُمِرْتَ ۗ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ وَقُلْ آمَنْتُ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنْ كِتَابٍ وَ
أُمِرْتُ لِأَعْدِلَ بَيْنَكُمُ ۗ اللَّهُ رَبُّنَا وَرَبُّكُمْ ۗ لَنَا أَعْمَالُنَا وَلَكُمْ أَعْمَالُكُمْ ۗ لَا
حُجَّةَ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمُ ۗ اللَّهُ يَجْمَعُ بَيْنَنَا ۗ وَإِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿١٦﴾ وَالَّذِينَ يُحَاجُّونَ
فِي اللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا اسْتُجِيبَ لَهُ حُجَّتُهُمْ دَاحِضَةٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَعَلَيْهِمْ
غَضَبٌ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ ﴿١٧﴾ اللَّهُ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ وَالْمِيزَانَ ۗ
وَمَا يُدْرِيكَ لَعَلَّ السَّاعَةَ قَرِيبٌ ﴿١٨﴾ يَسْتَعْجِلُ بِهَا الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهَا ۗ
وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مُشْفِقُونَ مِنْهَا ۗ وَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهَا الْحَقُّ ۗ إِلَّا إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُبَارِزُونَ
فِي السَّاعَةِ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ بَعِيدٍ ﴿١٩﴾ اللَّهُ لَطِيفٌ بِعِبَادِهِ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۗ وَهُوَ الْقَوِيُّ
الْعَزِيزُ ﴿٢٠﴾ مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ حَرْثَ الْآخِرَةِ نَزَدَ لَهُ فِي حَرْثِهِ ۗ وَمَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ

It¹³ is for Allah to give judgement in whatever you may differ.¹⁴ The same Allah¹⁵ is my Lord: in Him did I put my trust, and to Him I turn.¹⁶ He is the Creator of the heavens and the earth, Who made for you pairs from your own kind, and pairs also of the cattle (from their own kind) so as to multiply you. There is nothing like Him in the universe:¹⁷ He hears everything and sees everything.¹⁸ To Him belong the keys of the treasures of the heavens and the earth: He gives abundantly to whomsoever He wills and sparingly to whomsoever He wills: He has knowledge of everything.¹⁹ 10 12

He has appointed for you the same Way of life which He had ordained for Noah and which (O Muḥammad) We have now revealed to you, and which We had already enjoined on Abraham and Moses and Jesus, stressing this: "Establish this Way and be not divided in it."²⁰ The same thing to which you (O Muḥammad) are calling the *mushriks* has set them ill at ease. Allah chooses for Himself whomever He wills, and He guides to His Way only him who turns to Him (in penitence).²¹ 13

The people became divided only after the Knowledge had come to them²² just because they wanted to wrong one another.²³ Had your Lord not already issued the Word to defer their punishment till an appointed time, the matter would surely have been settled between them.²⁴ And the fact is that those who were made to inherit the Book after them, are involved in a disquieting doubt concerning it.²⁵ 14

Because of this, therefore, O Muḥammad, you should call them to the same Way, and hold fast to it yourself as you have been commanded, and do not follow their whims.²⁶ Say to them, "I have believed in whatever Book Allah has sent down,²⁷ and I have been commanded to do justice between you.²⁸ Allah is our Lord as well 15

as your Lord. For us are our deeds and for you your deeds.²⁹ There is no dispute between us.³⁰ Allah shall gather us all together one day and to Him we shall all return.”

16 After Allah's invitation has been accepted, those who dispute (with those who have accepted it) concerning Allah's religion,³¹ their argument is absurd in the sight of their Lord, and on them is His wrath and for them there is a severe punishment.

17-18 It is Allah Who has sent down this Book with the truth and the Balance;³² and what will make you understand that the Hour of Judgement might well have drawn near at hand?³³ Those who do not believe in its coming, seek to hasten it, but those who believe in it, dread it, and know that it is sure to come. Note it well that those who dispute concerning the coming of the Hour, in order to create doubts about it, have gone far astray.

19-20 Allah is very Kind to His servants:³⁴ He gives whatever He pleases to whom He wills:³⁵ He is the All-Powerful, the All-Mighty.³⁶ Whoever seeks the harvest of the Hereafter, We do increase his harvest; and whoever seeks the harvest of this world, We do give him of it here, but in the Hereafter he will have no share whatever.³⁷

13. From here to the end of verse 12, though the whole discourse is a Revelation from Allah, the speaker is not Allah but the Holy Messenger of Allah. In other words, Allah Almighty is telling His Prophet to make this proclamation to the people. Such themes in the Qur'ān sometimes begin with *qul* (say, O Prophet) and sometimes without it. Only the style indicates that the speaker at a place is not Allah but Allah's Messenger. Even at some places though the words are Allah's, the speaker are the believers, as for example in Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah; or, the speaker are the angels as in Sūrah Maryam : 64-65.

14. This is the natural and logical demand of Allah Almighty's

being the Master of the Universe and His being the real Guardian. When Sovereignty and Guardianship belong to Him only inevitably He alone is also the Ruler, and it is for Him to judge human beings' mutual disputes and differences. Those who restrict it only to the Hereafter make a mistake. There is no argument to prove that Allah's position as a Ruler has no effect in this world but is meant only for the life hereafter. Likewise, those who restrict it only to beliefs and a few questions of "religious nature" are also in the wrong. The words are general and they clearly proclaim Allah as having the sole right to judge all disputes and differences. According to them, just as Allah is the Master of the Day of Judgement in the Hereafter, so He is the best of Judges in this world too; and just as He is the Settler of the differences pertaining to beliefs as to what is the Truth and what is falsehood, so also in legal matters He is the Settler of differences as to what is pure for man and what is impure, what is lawful and desirable for him and what is forbidden and undesirable, what is evil and vicious in morals and what is good and virtuous, what are the rights of the people in their mutual dealings and what are the right practices in social and political and economic life and what are wrong. On this very basis the Qur'ān has declared this principle as the fundamental of law: "If there arises any dispute between you about anything, refer it to Allah and the Messenger." (An-Nisā : 59). And: "It does not behove a believing man and a believing woman that when Allah and His Messenger have given their verdict in a matter, they should exercise an option in that matter of theirs." (Al-Aḥzāb : 36). And: "O people, follow what has been sent down to you from your Lord and do not follow other patrons beside Him." (Al-A'rāf : 3).

Then, in the context in which this verse has occurred, it gives another meaning also and it is this: "To decide differences is not only Allah's legal right on accepting or rejecting which depends man's being a believer or an unbeliever, but Allah, in fact, practically also is deciding between the truth and falsehood due to which falsehood and its worshippers are ultimately being destroyed and the truth and the faithful are being honoured and exalted, no matter how delayed the enforcement of this decision may seem to be. This theme occurs in verse 24 below, and has been expressed at several places above in the Qur'ān. For this please see Ar-Ra'd : 17, 41;

Ibrāhīm : 24-27 ; Banī Isrā'īl : 81 ; Al-Anbiyā' : 18, 44 ; and the E.N.'s.

15. "The same Allah", Who is the real Settler of disputes.

16. These are two verbs one of which is in the past tense and the other in the present which contains the sense of perpetuity. In the past verb it was said : "In Him did I put my trust," i.e. "I decided once and for all that as long as I live I have to rely on His help, on His guidance, on His support and protection, and on His decision." Then in the present verb it was said : "To Him I turn," i.e. "Whatever situation I face in life, I turn only to Allah in it. I do not look towards others in an affliction or trouble or difficulty but invoke only Him for help ; I seek only His refuge when I face a danger and depend on His protection ; I turn to Him for guidance whenever I am confronted by a problem and seek its solution in His teaching and guidance ; and I look up only to Him when I have a dispute with somebody with the belief that He alone will give the final decision, and have the faith that whatever decision He gives will be the right one."

17. Literally, "Nothing is like His likeness," which implies this : Even if there were a likeness of Allah, nothing would be like not to speak of being like unto Allah Himself.

18. That is, "At one and the same time He is hearing everybody and seeing everything in the Universe."

19. These are the arguments to prove why Allah alone is the true Guardian and why putting trust in Him alone is right and correct and why He alone should be turned to in all matters. (For explanation, see An Naml : 60-66, Ar-Rūm : 20-22 and the E.N.'s).

20. Here the same thing as already mentioned in the first verse has been further elaborated. It clearly states that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) is not the founder of any new religion, nor was any of the Prophets a founder of a separate religion, but it has been one and the same Religion which all the Prophets have been presenting from Allah from the very beginning, and the same is being presented by Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace). In this regard, the first name mentioned is of the Prophet Noah, who was the first Prophet after the Flood. After him the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) has been mentioned, who is the last of the Prophets ; then the Prophet Abraham has been

mentioned, whom the Arabs acknowledged as their guide, and last of all, the Prophets Moses and Jesus have been mentioned to whom the Jews and the Christians attribute their religions. This does not mean that only these five Prophets had been enjoined this Religion, but what is meant to be said is that all the Prophets who came to this world, brought one and the same Religion and the names of the five illustrious Prophets have been mentioned only as examples through whom the world received the most well known codes of Divine Law.

As this verse throws important light on *Dīn* (Religion) and its aim, it is necessary that we should study it to understand it well.

Lexically, the word *shara'a* in *shara'a la-kum* (ordained for you) means to make the way. As a term it implies appointing a way, a code and a rule. Accordingly, in Arabic the words *tashrī'* and *sharī'at* and *shāri'* are understood as the synonyms of legislation and law and law-giver respectively. This Divine legislation, in fact, is the natural and logical result of the fundamental truths which have been stated in verses 1, 9 and 10 above: that Allah alone is the Owner of everything in the Universe, and He alone is man's real Guardian and it is for Him to judge the disputes that arise between human beings. Now, when Allah alone is the Owner and Guardian and Ruler, inevitably He alone is entitled to make the code of law for man and it is His responsibility that He should give this code of law to man. So, He has carried out His responsibility like this.

Then the words *min-ad-din* (of the nature of *din*) denote that the way appointed by Allah is legislation pertaining to *dīn*. If the explanation of the word *dīn* that we have given in E.N. 3 of Sūrah Zumar above, is kept in view, there can be no difficulty in understanding that *dīn* means nothing but acknowledging the sovereignty and leadership of someone and obeying his commands. And when this word is used in the meaning of the way, it implies the way which man must regard as obligatory for himself to follow and the one appointing it as the one whom he ought to obey. On this basis, calling this God-appointed Way as legislation pertaining to *dīn* clearly means that it is not merely recommendatory in nature or a mere counsel, but it is a law enjoined by the Master, which must necessarily be obeyed by the servants and disobedience of which is tantamount to rebellion, and the one who does not obey it, in fact,

denies Allah's being the Sovereign and Ruler and his own position of a servant.

Then, it has been said that this legislation which pertains to *dīn* is the same as was enjoined on Noah, Abraham and Moses (peace be upon them all) and the same now has been enjoined on Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace). This contains several points: (1) That Allah did not send this legislation of His directly to every man, but appointed whenever He deemed proper and necessary a person as His Messenger and consigned the legislation to him; (2) that this legislation has been the same from the beginning: it did not so happen that in one age one particular *dīn* was appointed for a nation, and in another age another and contradictory *dīn* was sent for another nation. Allah did not send many *dīns* but on every occasion He sent one and the same *dīn*; (3) that it is in an essential part of this *dīn* to acknowledge the apostleship of those men through whom the legislation has been sent and the Revelation in which the legislation has been couched, besides acknowledging the Sovereignty of Allah; and it is the demand of reason and logic too, that it should be a necessary part of it, for a man cannot obey this legislation at all unless he is satisfied that it is authentically from Allah.

Then it has been said that the Prophets were given this legislation pertaining to *dīn* with the express instruction: "*Aqīm-ud-dīn*"; "Establish this *dīn*", or "Keep this *dīn* established," as variously translated by Shāh Waliullah, Shāh Rafī'uddīn and Shāh 'Abdul Qādir. Both these translations are correct, for *iqāmat* means both to establish and to keep established, and the Prophets were appointed to perform both the functions. Their first duty was to establish this *dīn* wherever it was not established, and the second that they should keep it established after they had established it, or had found it already established in a place. Obviously, a thing can be kept established only when it has already been established, otherwise the primary requirement would be to establish it first, and then make continuous effort to keep it established.

Here, two questions arise: First, what is the meaning of establishing the *dīn*? Second, what is *dīn* itself, which we have been enjoined to establish and then keep it established? Let us try to understand these questions well.

The word *iqāmat* (to establish) when used in respect of a material

or physical object implies causing it to rise from the sitting or lying position, or assembling the scattered parts of a thing and raising it up high. But when *iqāmat* is used in respect of a thing which is not material but spiritual in nature it does not merely imply preaching it, but also acting according to it as best as one can, introducing it and enforcing it practically. For example, when we say that so-and-so established his rule, it does not mean that he invited others to his government but that he subdued the people of the land and organised the different departments of the government in a way that the administration of the country began to function according to his orders. Similarly, when we say that courts have been established in the country, it means that judges have been appointed to do justice and they are hearing the cases and giving judgements, and not that hymns in praise of justice are being sung and the people being impressed. Likewise, when the Qur'ān enjoins the establishment of the Prayer (*Ṣalāt*), it does not imply that one should merely preach and exhort others to the Prayer but that one should not only perform it oneself, observing all its conditions, but should also strive to make arrangements so that it becomes a regular practice among the believers. There should be mosques, there should be arrangements for offering the Prayer collectively and for the Friday congregational Prayer, and for making calls to the Prayer punctually; there should be the *Imāms* to lead the Prayers and the scholars to give sermons, and the people should visit the mosques regularly and punctually and make offering the Prayer an essential part of their daily routine. After this explanation, there should remain no difficulty in understanding that when the Prophets were enjoined to establish the *dīn* and to keep it established, it did not simply mean that they should practise it themselves and not even this that they should preach it to others so that the people may accept its truth, but also this that when the people have accepted it, steps should be taken to introduce and enforce the entire *dīn* practically among them so that they may start living according to it for ever afterwards. No doubt preaching is the primary necessary stage of this work without which there can be no second stage, but every intelligent person can himself see that in this Command preaching has not been made the object, but the real object is to establish the *dīn* and keep it established. Preaching is certainly a means to the end but not the end in itself, but nobody can say that it was the only and foremost object of the mission of the Prophets.

Now, let us take the second question. When some people saw that the *dīn* which has been enjoined to be established is common among all the Prophets, and their *sharī'ahs* have been different, as Allah Himself says: "We appointed for each community among you a law and a way of life". they formed the view that inevitably this *dīn* did not imply the *sharī'ah* commandments, rules and regulations but only the acceptance of *Tauhīd*, the Hereafter and the Book and the Prophethood and performance of certain acts of devotion to Allah, or at the most, it included some of the major moral principles which have been common to all the *sharī'ahs*. But this is a superficial view, which has been formed after having a cursory glance over the unity of religion and the difference of the *sharī'ahs*. This is, however, a dangerous view, which if not corrected in time, may well lead to the separation between *dīn* (religion) and *sharī'ah* (law). It was this very view in which St. Paul was involved, who presented the doctrine of the *dīn* (religion) without *sharī'ah* (law), and corrupted the community of the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him). For, if *sharī'ah* (law) is something separate from *dīn* (religion) and the command is only for establishing the *dīn* and not the *sharī'ah*, inevitably the Muslims also, like the Christians, would regard the *sharī'ah* as un-important and overlook its establishment as not being the real object by itself, and would remain content with only beliefs and a few important moral principles. Instead of determining the meaning of *dīn* from such speculations, let us turn to the Qur'ān itself and see whether the *dīn* which we have been enjoined here to establish implies the beliefs and a few important moral principles only, or the *sharī'ah* values and commandments as well. When we explore the Qur'ān we find that what it regards as *dīn* includes the following things as well:

(1) "And the only Command they were given was to worship Allah, making their *dīn* sincerely His, turning all their attention towards Him, and to establish the *Ṣalāt* and to pay the *Zakāt*: this alone is the true and right *dīn*." (Al-Bayyinah: 5). This shows that the *Ṣalāt* and the *Zakāt* are included in this *dīn*, whereas the commandments pertaining to both have been different in the different *sharī'ahs*. No one can say that in all the previous *sharī'ahs* the *Ṣalāt* has had the same form, the same elements, the same number of the *rak'ahs*, the same direction of the *qiblah*, the same times and the same other commands concerning it. Likewise, no one can claim also about the *Zakāt* that in all the *sharī'ahs* the same

has been the exemption limit, the same rates and the same injunctions concerning its collection and distribution. But in spite of the difference of the *shari'ahs*, Allah has regarded both these as part of *din*.

(2) "You are forbidden carrion and blood, the flesh of swine and of that animal which has been slaughtered in any other name than of Allah, and of the strangled animal, and of that beaten to death or killed by a fall or gored to death or mangled by a beast of prey—save of that you duly slaughtered while it was still alive—and of that which is slaughtered at (ungodly) shrines. It is also unlawful for you to try to find your fortune by means of divining devices, for all these things are sinful acts. Today the disbelievers have despaired of (vanquishing) your religion; therefore do not fear them but fear Me. Today I have perfected your *din* for you and completed My blessing on you and approved Islam as the *din* (way of life) for you." (Al-Mā'idah : 3). This shows that all these *shari'ah* commandments are also *din*.

(3) "Fight with those from among the people of the Book, who do not believe in Allah nor in the Last Day; who do not make unlawful what Allah and His Messenger have made unlawful, and do not adopt the right *din* as their *din*." (At-Taubah : 29). This shows that besides belief in Allah and the Hereafter it is also *din* to accept and follow the Commands about the lawful and the unlawful, which have been given by Allah and His Messenger.

(4) "The woman and the man guilty of fornication, flog each one of them with a hundred stripes, and let not any pity for them restrain you in regard to a matter prescribed in the *din* of Allah, if you believe in Allah and the Last Day." (An-Nūr : 2). "It did not behove Joseph to seize his brother by the king's *din*." (Yūsuf : 76). This shows that the criminal law is also *din*. If a man follows the criminal law prescribed by God, he is a follower of God's *din* and if he follows a king's law, he is a follower of the king's *din*.

These are the four specimens in which the *shari'ah* commandments have been described as *din* in clear words. But, besides these, a careful study shows that the eradication of the sins for which Allah has held out the threat of Hell (e.g. adultery, taking of interest, killing of a believer, consuming the property of the orphan, taking possession of the other people's properties in unlawful ways, etc.), and the crimes which become the cause of God's torment, e.g.

sodomy (the act of Lot's people) and dishonesty in business dealings (as practised by the Prophet Shu'aib's people) should necessarily be included in *dīn*, for if *dīn* cannot save one from Hell and Allah's torment, what use could it be? Likewise, those *sharī'ah* commandments also should be part of the *dīn* violation of which has been regarded as cause of entry into the Fire, e.g. injunctions relating to inheritance, after stating which it has been said: "And whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger and transgresses the limits prescribed by Him, Allah will cast him into the Fire wherein he will have a disgraceful torment." (An-Nisā : 14). Likewise, the prohibition of those things whose prohibition Allah has mentioned with great emphasis and absoluteness, e.g. prohibition of the mother, sister and daughter and prohibition of wine, theft, gambling, false evidence, etc. if not included in the establishment of the *dīn*, it would mean that Allah has given some unnecessary Commands also, which are not meant to be introduced and enforced. Similarly, establishing those things which Allah has made obligatory, e.g. fasting and pilgrimage, cannot be excluded from the establishment of *dīn* only on the pretext that the 30 fasts of Ramaḍān had not been enjoined in the previous *sharī'ahs*, and pilgrimage to the Ka'bah was enjoined only in the *Sharī'ah* which was inherited by the Ishmaelite branch of the Prophet Abraham's progeny.

As a matter of fact, the misunderstanding was caused only because the verse: "We appointed for each community among you a law and a way of life", has been misconstrued to mean that since the *sharī'ah* appointed for every community was separate, and the command given was only to establish the *dīn* (way of life) which was common to all the Prophets, the establishment of the *sharī'ah* was not included in the establishment of the *dīn*, whereas the real meaning of this verse is just the opposite of it. If the context (vv. 41-50) in which this verse has occurred in Sūrah Al-Mā'idah is studied carefully, it will be seen that the correct meaning of this verse is this: Whatever *sharī'ah* was given by Allah to the community of a Prophet, was the *dīn* for that community, and the establishment of the same *dīn* was the object during his Prophethood. And since now is the period of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad's Prophethood, the *sharī'ah* which has been given to the Ummah of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) is the *dīn* of this time, and to establish the same is to establish the *dīn*. As for the

difference of the *sharī'ahs*, it does not mean that the *sharī'ahs* sent by God were mutually contradictory, but it means that in their details there have been some differences owing to the different environments. Take, for instance, the Prayer and the Fast. The Prayer has been obligatory in all the *sharī'ahs* but the *qiblah* of all the *sharī'ahs* was not the same, and there was a difference in its times and *rak'ahs* and elements as well. Likewise, the Fast was obligatory in every *sharī'ah*, but the 30 fasts of Ramaḍān were not there in the other *sharī'ahs*. From this it is not correct to conclude that the Prayer and the Fast as such are included in the establishment of *dīn*, but performing the Prayer in a particular way and observing the Fast at a particular time is excluded from it. However, the correct conclusion that one can draw is this : To perform the Prayer and observe the Fast according to the rules and procedures that had been appointed for the people in the *sharī'ah* of every Prophet amounted to establishment of *dīn* in his time. In the present age the establishment of the *dīn* is that these acts of worship be performed according to the procedures enjoined in the *Sharī'ah* of the Prophet Muḥammad for these. The same is true about all other *Sharī'ah* commandments as well.

Whoever studies the Qur'ān carefully will see that this Book does not envisage that its adherents will live as subjects of the disbelievers and will pass a religious life under them, but it openly proclaims that it will have its own rule established; it demands from its followers that they should struggle with their lives for the intellectual, cultural, legal and political supremacy of the true Faith; and it gives them a programme for the reformation of human life, the major part of which can be acted upon only when political power and authority is in the believers' hand. As stated by itself, the object of this Book's being sent down is this : "We have sent down this Book to you with the Truth so that you may judge between the people in accordance with the light that Allah has shown you." (An-Nisā : 105). The Commandments given in this Book about the collection and distribution of the *Zakāt* expressly envisage a government who should be responsible for collecting the *Zakāt* and distributing it among the deserving people according to a laid down procedure. (At-Taubah : 60, 103). The prohibition of interest that has been enjoined in this Book and the declaration of war that has been made against those who do not abstain from taking interest

(Al Baqarah : 275-279) can be enforced only when the political and economic system of the country is entirely in the believers' hand. The Law of Retribution for murder (Al-Baqarah : 178), cutting off of the hand for theft (Al-Mā'idah : 33) and carrying out of the prescribed punishment for adultery and calumny (An-Nār : 2-4) have not been enjoined on the assumption that the believers will remain subject to the police and courts of the disbelievers. The Command to fight the disbelievers (Al-Baqarah : 190, 216) has not been given with the idea that the followers of this *dīn* will carry out this Command by getting enlisted in the army of disbelief. The command to take *Jizyah* from the followers of the former Books (At-Taubah : 2) has not been given on the assumption that the Muslims will take *Jizyah* from them while being their subjects and will be responsible for their protection. And this thing is not true only about the Madinite Sūrah; in the Makkan Sūrah as well a discerning eye can clearly see that the scheme envisaged from the very beginning was of Islam's supremacy and dominance and not of Islam's and the Muslims' subjugation under an un-Islamic rule. See, for instance, Banī Isrā'īl : 76, 89 ; Al-Qaṣaṣ : 85-86 ; Ar-Rūm : 1-6 ; Al-Ṣāffāt : 171-179 ; Ṣuād : Introduction, v. 11 and E.N. 12 on it.

Above all, this misinterpretation clashes with the great work that the Holy Prophet himself accomplished during the 23 years of his Prophethood. Who can deny the fact that he subdued entire Arabia by means of both preaching and the sword and established in it a full fledged system of government with a detailed law, covering all aspects of life, from beliefs and rites of worship to personal conduct, collective morality, culture and civilization, economic and social life, politics and judiciary, peace and war. If this entire work of the Holy Prophet is not accepted as a commentary of the Command of "*iqīmat dīn*" (establishment of *dīn*) which, according to this verse, he had been enjoined to undertake like all other Prophets, then it could have one of the two meanings: That earlier, God forbid, the Holy Prophet should be blamed that he had been appointed only to preach and teach beliefs and a few important moral rules but he exceeded his mandate and established a government of his own whim and laid down a code of law, which was different from the common law of the Prophets as well as in excess of it; or that Allah should be blamed that after having made the above-mentioned declaration in Sūrah Ash-Shūrā, He went back on

His own word, and made His Last Prophet do something which was not only much over and above and different from the objective of "iqāmat dīn" as stated in this Sūrah but on the completion of this mission He also made this other declaration, contrary to His first declaration: "Today I have perfected your dīn for you." (Al-Mā'idah : 3). May Allah keep us safe from this! Apart from these two, if there is any third alternative, which makes this interpretation of "iqāmat dīn" plausible and also does not lay any blame on Allah or His Messenger, we would like to know it.

After giving the Command for "iqāmat dīn", the last thing that Allah has stated in this verse is this: *Lī talafarraquū fi-hi*: "Do not create schisms in the dīn: Be not divided in it." Creating schisms in dīn implies that one should introduce something new in religion for which there exists no sound basis, and then should insist that belief and unbelief depend on the acceptance of the innovation, and should separate along with those who have accepted it from those who have not accepted it. This new thing can be of several kinds: (1) To introduce something entirely new into dīn; (2) to exclude from dīn something which actually belonged to it; (3) to temper with the fundamentals of dīn by misinterpretations and introduce new beliefs and novel practices; and (4) to distort the dīn by making changes of fundamental nature in it, for example, by reducing what was important in it to un-important, by raising what was at most permissible to the position of imperative and obligatory, even to the position of the most fundamental pillar of Islam. Owing to such innovations, divisions first appeared in the communities of the Prophets; then gradually the creeds of the sects developed into wholly separate and mutually exclusive religious systems, whose followers now do not have any idea that once they all belonged to one and the same origin. These divisions have nothing to do with the permissible and reasonable difference of opinion which naturally takes place among the scholars when they are engaged in understanding and studying the injunctions and fundamentals of the dīn for the purpose of deriving and extracting points of law, and for which there is room in the words of the Book of Allah itself owing to the considerations of lexicon, idiom and rules of grammar. (For a detailed discussion of this subject, see Al-Baqarah : 213, Al-Imrān : 19, 50; An-Nisā : 171, Al-Mā'idah : 77; Al-An'ām : 159; An-Nahl : 118-124; Al-Anbiyā' : 92-93; Al-Hajj :

67 ; Al-Mu'minūn : 53-54 ; Al-Qaṣaṣ : 53 ; Ar-Rūm : 32 and the E.N.'s).

21. Here the same thing as stated in vv. 8-9 above, has been reiterated, and we have explained it in E.N. 11 above. The object of repeating it here is as if to say : "You are presenting the clear highway of religion before them but the foolish people, instead of appreciating the blessing, are becoming annoyed over it. But even among them there are the people of their own tribe, who are turning to Allah, and Allah also is drawing them closer to Himself. But one should understand that Allah's bestowal of His blessings is not blind : He draws only him towards Himself who is inclined to be drawn and not him who runs away from Him."

22. That is, "The divisions were created not because Allah had failed to send the Prophets and the Books, and therefore, the people could not know the Right Way and so invented their own separate religions, sects, schools of thought and systems of life, but divisions appeared after knowledge had come to them from Allah. Therefore, Allah is not responsible for it, but the people who abandoned the clear principles of religion and commands of the *Shari'ah* and created their own creeds and religions are themselves responsible for it".

23. That is, "The motive for creating the divisions was not good, but they resulted from the desire for ostentation, love of an independent entity, mutual rivalry and stubbornness, the urge to humiliate and defeat one another, and greed for worldly wealth and position. When the clever and ambitious saw that if the godly people followed the true religion honestly, there would only be One God before whom the people would bow, there would be one Messenger whom they would acknowledge as their guide and leader, there would be one Book which they would turn to and there would be a clearly defined creed and code of life which they would be following. In such a system there could be no place of distinction for themselves, on the strength of which they could have their own leadership flourish so that the people should rally round them, and bow to them and also make rich offerings to them. This was the real cause which became the motive of the invention of new creeds and philosophies, new ways and rites of worship and new systems of life, and diverted a large part of humanity from the highway of Divine Religion and misled them into blind alleys. Then the mutual

disputes of the factions and their religious, economic and political conflicts gave rise to intense bitterness, which in turn led to bloodshed and violence among humanity."

24. That is, all such people who were guilty of inventing false systems and followed them would have been annihilated in the world itself by a torment, and only the righteous ones allowed to survive, which should have indicated as to who was a follower of the Truth and who of falsehood in the sight of Allah. But Allah has deferred this plain decision till Resurrection, for after such a decision in the world, the trial of mankind becomes meaningless.

25. It means this : "After the passage of the time of every Prophet and his closest followers when the Divine Book reached the later generations, they did not receive it with faith and conviction but were involved in doubts and suspicions and confusions about it. There were many causes for this state of affairs, which can be easily understood by a study of the case of the Torah and the Gospel. The earlier generations have not conveyed both these Books to the later generations well preserved in their original state and in their original words and language. They mixed up the Divine Word in them with the human word in the form of their commentary, history, verbal traditions and juristic hair-splitting. They made their translations prevail until the original was lost and only the translations remained. Their historical authenticity also was ruined ; so much so that nobody now can say with certainty that the Book in his hand is the same that the world had once received through the Prophet Moses or the Prophet Jesus. Then their elders in the different periods of history initiated such discussions on religion, divinity, philosophy, law, physics, psychology and sociology and invented such systems of thought that the people were lost in them and it became impossible for them to decide as to which was the straight highway of the Truth among the countless crooked ways. And since the Divine Book did not exist in its original, reliable state, they could neither turn to any authority that could help them to distinguish the truth from falsehood.

26. That is, "Do not make any change nor effect any increase or decrease in this religion only to please them. Do not resort to any compromises with the misguided people on the principle of "give and take": Do not make any room in the Religion for their whims, prejudices and practices of ignorance in the hope that they

would embrace Islam. Let the one who wants to accept, accept the original, pure Religion of God, as sent down by Him, straightforwardly ; otherwise let him go and enter any hell that he chooses for himself. The Religion of God cannot be changed for the sake of the people ; if the people are desirous of their own well-being and true success, let them change their ways and mould themselves according to it."

27. In other words, "I am not like those schismatic people who believe in some Books sent down by God and disbelieve in others ; I believe in every Book sent down by Him."

28. This pithy sentence has several meanings: (1) "I have been appointed to discard the schisms and adopt true impartiality: I do not like to harbour prejudice in favour of one and against the other schism: I have one and the same kind of relationship with all human beings, and it is the relationship of justice and equity. I am a companion and supporter of everyone who follows the truth, whether he is an utter stranger for me, and an opponent of everyone who follows falsehood, whether he is a neighbour or a close kinsman."

(2) "There is no place of distinction for anybody in the system of truth, which I have been appointed to present before you. It honours everyone equally. It does not contain separate sets of the rights for the kindred and the stranger, the big and the small, the poor and the rich, the noble and the humble. Whatever is good in it is good for everyone ; and whatever is sinful and unlawful and criminal in it is sinful, unlawful and criminal for everybody. In its just system, there is no exception even for my own self."

(3) "I have been appointed to establish justice in the world. I have been entrusted with the mission of doing justice between the people and should put an end to their excesses and injustice, which are prevalent in your society."

Besides, there is a fourth meaning also of this sentence, which remained hidden in Makkah life but became clear after emigration to Madinah, and it was this: "I am a judge appointed by God: I am responsible to do justice between you."

29. That is, "Each one of us is himself responsible and accountable for his deeds. If you do good, you will yourself profit by its good results, and not we. If we do evil, we ourself shall bear all its evil consequences and not you. The same thing has been

stated in Al-Baqarah : 139, Yūnus : 41, Hūd : 35, and Al-Qaṣaṣ : 55 above.

30. That is, "We have done our best in conveying to you the message in a rational way. Now there is no use wrangling and disputing ; therefore, even if you try to have a dispute with us, we have no desire to join in."

31. This is an allusion to the state of affairs that was being experienced in Makkah at that time almost daily. Whenever it became known about somebody that he had become a Muslim, the people would start treating him mercilessly : they would worry and vex him, would neither let him have peace in the house nor in the street nor in society ; wherever he went, they would start an endless discussion with the object to somehow make him abandon Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) and return to the same creed of ignorance which he had rejected.

32. *Mizān* (Balance) : the *Sharī'ah* of Allah, which, like a balance, brings out clearly the distinction between the right and the wrong, the Truth and falsehood, justice and injustice, and righteousness and wickedness. In verse 15 above, the Holy Prophet has been made to say : "I have been commanded to do justice between you." Here, it has been told that with this Holy Book the "Balance" has come by which justice will be established.

33. That is, "The one who is inclined to mend his ways, must mend his ways forthwith : he should not lose time under the delusion that the Hour of Judgement is yet far off. Man cannot be sure whether he will be able to take another breath or not : his present breath may be his last."

34. The word "Kind" cannot fully convey the meaning of the word "*Laṭīf*" as used in the original. This word contains two meanings : First, that Allah is very Kind and Compassionate to His servants ; second, that He is a subtle observer and keeps in view even their minutest and most ordinary needs, which none else can see, and He fulfils them in such ways that they themselves do not perceive as to which need of theirs has been fulfilled at what time and by whom. Then the "servants" here does not imply only the believers but all servants. That is, Allah is Kind and Compassionate to all His servants."

35. It means this: The demand of His general kindness and compassion is not this that all the servants should be given everything equally. For although He is providing for each and every one from His treasures, there is no equality and uniformity in the measure of His provisions. He has given one thing to one and another to another: He has provided someone with something in a greater measure and another with another thing more generously.

36. That is, "His system of providence is functioning under His own might. No one has the power to change it, or take away something forcibly from Him, or prevent Him from providing for somebody."

37. Two of the truths have been mentioned in the previous verse, which we are observing everywhere at all times: (1) That Allah is Kind and Compassionate to all His servants; and (2) that the measure of His provisions is not the same for everybody, but it varies from man to man. Now, in this verse it is being told that although the partial differences in kindness and measures of provisions are countless, there is also a difference of fundamental nature, which is this: there is one kind of the provision for the seeker of the Hereafter and of another kind for the seeker of the world.

This is a very important truth which has been stated here briefly. Let us understand it fully, for it helps every man to determine his attitude to life.

Both the seeker of the Hereafter and the seeker of the world have been likened to the farmer in this verse, who labours persistently hard right from the time he prepares the soil till the time his crop is ready for harvesting. He puts in all his labour so that he may reap and gather the crop of the seeds he sowed. But because of the difference of the intention and objective and also the difference of the attitude and conduct, to a large extent, a vast difference takes place between the farmer who sows for the Hereafter and the farmer who sows for this world. Therefore, Allah has ordained different results and consequences of the labours of each, although the place of activity of both is this very earth.

As to the farmer who is sowing for the Hereafter, Allah has not said that he will get no share from the world. The world, in a more or less measure, he will get in any case, for he also has a share in the common provisions being bestowed by Allah, and every person,

good or bad, is getting his sustenance here. But Allah has not given him the good news of the harvest of this world but of this that his harvest of the Hereafter will be increased, for he is a seeker of the same, and is concerned about his end there. There are several ways in which this harvest can be increased ; for example, as he will go on doing righteous deeds with sincere intentions, he will be blessed with the grace to do more and more righteous deeds and his breast will be opened out for more and more good works. When he will make up his mind to adopt pure means for achieving pure aims, he will be blessed with pure means only and Allah will not let it so happen that all doors to goodness be closed and only doors to evil to remain open for him. Above all, his each good work, however small and insignificant, will at least be increased ten times over in the Hereafter, and there is no limit to this increase. Allah will increase it hundreds of thousands of times for whomever He may please.

As for the one who is only sowing for this world, and is not at all concerned about the Hereafter, Allah has plainly told him of two of the results of his labours : (1) That, however hard he may struggle and strive, he will not get the whole of what he is trying for, but only a fraction of it, which Allah has ordained for him ; and (2) that whatever he has to get, he will get only in this world : there is no share for him in the good things of the Hereafter.

حَرَّتِ الدُّنْيَا نَفْسَهُ مِنْهَا وَمَالَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنْ تَصِيبٍ ۗ أَمْرٌ لَهُمْ شَرَكُوا
 شَرَعُوا لَهُمْ مِنَ الدِّينِ مَا لَوْ يَأْذَنُ بِهِ اللَّهُ ۗ وَلَوْ لَا كَلِمَةُ الْفَصْلِ لَفُضِيَ
 بَيْنَهُمْ وَإِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ۗ تَرَى الظَّالِمِينَ مُشْفِقِينَ مِمَّا
 كَسَبُوا وَهُوَ وَاقِعٌ بِهِمْ ۗ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فِي رَوْضَاتِ الْجَنَّاتِ
 لَهُمْ مَا يَشَاءُونَ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ ۗ ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَضْلُ الْكَبِيرُ ۗ ذَلِكَ الَّذِي يُبَشِّرُ
 اللَّهُ عِبَادَهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ قُلْ لَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا إِلَّا
 الْمَوَدَّةَ فِي الْقُرْبَىٰ ۗ وَمَنْ يَقْتَرِفْ حَسَنَةً نَّزِدْ لَهُ فِيهَا حُسْنًا ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ
 شَكُورٌ ۗ أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا ۗ فَإِنْ يَشَأِ اللَّهُ يَخْتِمْ عَلَىٰ قَلْبِكَ ۗ
 وَيَبْحَثُ اللَّهُ الْبَاطِلَ وَيُحِقُّ الْحَقَّ بِكَلِمَاتِهِ ۗ إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ۗ وَ
 هُوَ الَّذِي يَقْبَلُ التَّوْبَةَ عَنْ عِبَادِهِ وَيَعْفُو عَنِ السَّيِّئَاتِ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا
 تَفْعَلُونَ ۗ وَيَسْتَجِيبُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَيَزِيدُهُمْ مِنْ
 فَضْلِهِ ۗ وَالْكَافِرُونَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ ۗ وَلَوْ بَسَطَ اللَّهُ الرِّزْقَ لِعِبَادِهِ لَبَغَوْا
 فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَكِنْ يُنَزِّلُ بِقَدَرٍ مَّا يَشَاءُ ۗ إِنَّهُ بِعِبَادِهِ خَبِيرٌ بَصِيرٌ ۗ وَهُوَ
 الَّذِي يُنَزِّلُ الْغَيْثَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا قَنَطُوا وَيَنْشُرُ رَحْمَتَهُ ۗ وَهُوَ الْوَلِيُّ
 الْحَمِيدُ ۗ وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ خَلْقُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ
 وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ جَمْعِهِمْ إِذَا يَشَاءُ قَدِيرٌ ۗ وَمَا أَصَابَكُمْ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ فِيمَا كَسَبْتُمْ
 أَيْدِيَكُمْ وَيَعْفُوا عَنْ كَثِيرٍ ۗ وَمَا أَنْتُمْ بِمُعْجِزِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ ۗ وَمَا لَكُمْ
 مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مِنْ قَوْلٍ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ ۗ وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ الْجَوَارِ فِي الْبَحْرِ
 كَالْأَعْلَامِ ۗ إِنَّ يَشَاءُ يُسْكِنِ الرِّيحَ فَيَظْلَنَ رَوَاكِدَ عَلَى ظَهْرِهِ ۗ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ

Have they set up such associates of God, who have laid down for them a (religious) way of life, which Allah has not permitted?³⁸ Had the word of judgement not already been issued, their case would long have been settled.³⁹ Surely for these wrongdoers there is a painful torment. You will see that at that time these wicked people will be fearing the consequence of their deeds, and it will certainly befall them. Contrary to this, those who have believed and done righteous deeds, shall be in the Gardens of Paradise: they shall have with their Lord whatever they will desire. This is the greatest bounty. This is that of which Allah gives good news to His servants, who believed and did good works. O Prophet, say to them: "I do not ask of you any reward for this work;⁴⁰ however, I do seek the love of the kindred."⁴¹ Whoever earns a good deed, We shall increase its good for him. Indeed, Allah is All-Forgiving and Appreciative.⁴²

21-23

Do they say, "He has forged a lie against Allah?"⁴³ If Allah so wills, He may seal up your heart.⁴⁴ He blots out falsehood and proves the truth to be true by His Words:⁴⁵ He even knows the secrets hidden in the breasts.⁴⁶ It is He Who accepts repentance from His servants and overlooks sins although He knows whatever you do.⁴⁷ He answers the prayers of those who believe and do good works and gives them even more out of His bounty. As for the disbelievers, there is a severe punishment for them.

24-26

If Allah had given His provisions abundantly to all His servants, they would have rebelled in the earth, but He sends down in due measure what He wills. He is well informed of His servants and watches over them.⁴⁸ He it is Who sends down the rain when the people have lost all hope, and spreads His mercy, and He alone is the Praiseworthy Guardian.⁴⁹ Among His Signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the living

27-35

things, which He has scattered in both:⁵⁰ He can gather them all together whenever He wills.⁵¹ Whatever affliction has befallen you, it is for what your own hands have earned, and there is many a sin that He pardons.⁵² You cannot frustrate your God in the earth, and you do not have any protector and helper against Allah. Among His signs are the ships which look like mountains in the sea. If Allah so wills He can still the wind and leave them motionless on its back.—In this there are many signs for every such person who patiently endures and is grateful.⁵³—Or, forgiving many of the sins (of the voyagers), He may drown them in consequence of a few of their misdeeds, and then those who dispute about Our Revelations, may realize that they have no refuge.⁵⁴

38. In this verse the word *shurakā'* (associates) obviously does not mean those beings whom the people invoke, or those in whose names they make offerings, or those before whom they carry out rites of worship, but inevitably it refers to those men whom the people regard as associates in the authority and sovereignty of Allah, whose thoughts, creeds, ideologies and philosophies they believe in, whose values they admit, whose moral precepts and norms of civilization and culture they accept, and whose laws and rules and regulations they adopt in their rituals and rites of worship, in their personal and collective lives, in their trade and business dealings, in their politics and governments, as if they constituted the *sharī'ah* that they had to follow faithfully. This is a complete code of life which the inventors invented against the legislation of Allah, Lord of the worlds, without His sanction, and followed by the followers. This is the same sort of *shirk* as prostrating oneself before another and invoking another than Allah. (For further explanation, see An Nisā : 60 ; Al-Mā'idah : 87 ; Al-An'ām : 121, 136, 137 ; At-Taubah : 31 ; Yūnus : 59 ; Ibrāhīm : 22 ; An-Nahl : 115-116 ; Al-Kahf : 52 ; Al Qaṣaṣ : 62-64 ; Sabā : 41 ; Yā Sīn : 60 and the relevant E.N.'s).

39. That is, "This is such a boldness against Allah that had not judgement been deferred till Resurrection, the torment would have been sent down on every such person, who in spite of being Allah's servant, enforced his own religion and way of life on Allah's earth,

and those people also would have been visited by it, who forsook Allah's Religion and accepted the religion invented by others."

40. "This work": Every effort that the Holy Prophet was making to save the people from Allah's punishment and to enable them to become worthy of the promise of Paradise.

41. The word *qurbā* in the original has been interpreted differently by the different commentators. One section of them takes it in the meaning of kinship and has given this meaning to the verse: "I do not ask of you any reward for this service, but I do desire that you (O people of Quraish) should show some regard for the kinship that there is between me and you. You should have accepted my invitation, but if you do not accept it, you should not be so hard-hearted as to become my bitterest enemies in the entire land of Arabia." This is the interpretation given by Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, which has been cited by Imām Aḥmad, Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmidhī, Ibn Jarīr, Ṭabarānī, Baihaqī, Ibn Sa'īd and others on the authority of many reporters and the same commentary has been given by Mujāhid, 'Ikrimah, Qatādah, Suddī, Abū Mālik, 'Abdur Reḥmān bin Zaid bin Aslam, Ḍaḥḥāk, 'Aṭā bin Dinār and the other major commentators.

The other section takes *qurbā* in the meaning of nearness and interprets the verse to mean: "I do not seek from you any other reward than this that you should develop in yourselves a desire for attaining nearness to Allah. That is, you should be reformed. That is my only reward." This commentary has been reported from Ḥasan Baṣri and a saying of Qatādah also has been cited in support of this; so much so that in a tradition by Ṭabarānī this saying has also been attributed to Ibn 'Abbās. In the Qur'ān itself, at another place, this same subject has been treated, thus: "Tell them: I do not seek of you any reward for this work: I only ask of the one who will, to adopt the way of his Lord." (Al-Furqān: 57).

The third group takes *qurbā* in the meaning of the kindred, and interprets the verse to mean this: "I do not seek from you any other reward than this that you should love my near and dear ones." Then, some of the commentators of this group interpret "the kindred" to mean all the children of 'Abdul Muṭṭalib, and some others restrict it to Ḥaḍrat 'Ali and Fātimah and their children. This commentary has been reported from Sa'īd bin Jubair and 'Amr bin Shu'aib, and in some traditions it has been attributed

to Ibn 'Abbās and Ḥaḍrat 'Ali bin Husain (Zain al-'Ābedīn), but this interpretation cannot be accepted for several reasons. Firstly, when Sūrah Ash-Shūrā was sent down at Makkah, Ḥaḍrat 'Ali and Fāṭimah had not yet been married and, therefore, there could be no question of their children. As for the children of 'Abdul Muṭṭalib, they were not all following the Holy Prophet but some of them had openly joined with his enemies, and the enmity of Abū Lahab is too well known. Second, "the kindred" of the Holy Prophet were not only the children of 'Abdul Muṭṭalib but he had his kindred among all the families of the Quraish through his mother and his father and his wife, Ḥaḍrat Khadijah. In all these clans he had his best supporters as well as his staunch enemies. Third, and this is the most important point, in view of the high position of a Prophet from which he starts his mission of inviting the people towards Allah, it does not seem fitting that he would ask the people to love his kindred in return for his services in connection with his great Mission. No person of fine taste could imagine that Allah would have taught His Prophet such a mean thing, and the Prophet would have uttered the same before the Quraish. In the stories that have been narrated of the Prophets in the Qur'ān, we find that a Prophet after a Prophet stands up before his people and says: "I do not ask of you any reward: my reward is with Allah, Lord of the worlds." (Yūnus : 72 ; Hūd : 29, 51 ; Ash-Shu'arā' : 109, 127, 145, 164, 180). In Sūrah Yā Sīn the criterion given of a Prophet's truthfulness is that he gives his invitation without any selfish motive. (v. 21). In the Qur'an the Holy Prophet himself has been made to say again and again words to the effect: "I demand no reward from you for this message." (Al-An'ām : 90, Yūsuf : 104, Al-Mu'minūn : 72, Al-Furqān : 57, Sabā : 47, Ṣuād : 86, Aṭ-Ṭūr : 40, Al Qalam : 46). After this, what could be the occasion for the Holy Prophet to tell the people that in return for his service of inviting them to Allah, they should love his relatives. Then it seems all the more irrelevant when we see that the addressees here are the disbelievers and not the believers. The whole discourse, from the beginning to the end, is directed to them. Therefore, there could be no question in this regard of asking the opponents for any reward, for a reward is asked of those who show some appreciation for the services that a person has rendered for them. The disbelievers were not at all appreciative of the Holy Prophet's services ; on the

contrary, they regarded them as a crime and had turned bitterly hostile to him.

42. That is, "Contrary to the culprits who commit disobedience knowingly, Allah's affair with the servants who strive to do good, is like this : (1) He makes them even more righteous than they could be solely by their own efforts ; (2) He overlooks the weaknesses that remain in their work, and the sins that are committed by them inadvertently, in spite of striving to become good ; and (3) Allah appreciates whatever little provision of the good deeds they bring and rewards them richly and generously for it."

43. In this interrogative sentence the style is of severe reproach. It means this : "O Prophet : Have these people become so bold and fearless that they do not feel any shame in accusing you of inventing a lie, and that too of a heinous sin of a lie against Allah ? They calumniate you that you are forging the Qur'an yourself and then falsely attributing to Allah."

44. That is, "Such big lies are only uttered by those whose hearts have been sealed up. If Allah wills, He may include you also among them, but it is His mercy that He has kept you away from them. This answer contains a severe satire against the people who were so accusing the Holy Prophet. It means this : "O Prophet, they think that you are a man like them. Just as they are in the habit of uttering any big lie only for the sake of a selfish motive, so they thought you also must have forged a lie for selfish ends. But it is Allah's mercy that He has not sealed up your heart as He has sealed up theirs."

45. That is, "It is Allah's way that He does not grant stability to falsehood, and in the long run proves the truth to be true. Therefore, O Prophet, you should go on doing your mission, without paying any attention to their false accusations. A time will come when this whole falsehood will vanish like dust, and the truth of that which you are presenting will become visible and manifest."

46. That is, "He knows why you are being thus falsely accused and what are the actual motives that are working behind all this struggle that is being made to frustrate and defeat you."

47. Calling the people's attention to repentance immediately after the preceding verse by itself gives the meaning, as if to say : "O wicked people : Why are you making yourselves still more worthy of God's punishment by falsely accusing the true Prophet ?

If you desist from your misdeeds even now, and offer true repentance Allah will forgive you." Repentance means that one should feel remorse for the evil one has done, and should refrain and desist from it in the future. Moreover, it is also an inevitable demand of true repentance that one should try one's utmost to compensate for the evil one has done in the past, and wherever compensation is not possible, one should seek Allah's forgiveness and should do more and more good to wipe off the blot from oneself. But no repentance can be true repentance unless it is offered, with the intention of pleasing Allah. Giving up an evil for some other reason or intention is no repentance at all.

48. If the context in which this thing has been said is kept in view, it appears that Allah here is alluding to the basic factor that was working in the rebellion of the disbelievers of Makkah. Although they were insignificant as against the mighty Roman and Iranian Empires and their position among the nations of the neighbouring countries was no more than of a commercial tribe of a backward people, the relative prosperity and glory that they enjoyed among the other Arabs had made them so proud and arrogant that they were not inclined even to listen to the Prophet of Allah, and their chiefs of the tribes regarded it beneath their dignity that Muḥammad bin 'Abdullah (upon whom be Allah's peace) should be their guide and they his followers. On this it is being said: "If We had actually opened up the gates of provisions for these mean people, they would have burst with pride. But We are watching over them, and are providing for them only sparingly so as to keep them within limits." According to this meaning this verse, in other words, is touching on the same subject which has already been treated in At-Taubah : 68-70, Al-Kahf : 32-42, Al-Qaṣaṣ : 75-82, Ar-Rūm : 9, Sabā : 34-36 and Al-Mu'min : 82-85 above.

49. Here, the word *walī* implies the Being Who is the Governor of the affairs of all His creations, Who has taken the responsibility of fulfilling all the needs and requirements of His servants.

50. "In both": In both the earth and the heavens. This is a clear pointer to the fact that life does not only exist on the earth but on other planets as well.

51. That is, "Just as He has the power to scatter them, so He has also the power to gather them all together. Therefore, it is wrong to think that Resurrection cannot take place, and all the

former and the latter generations cannot be raised up and gathered all together."

52. One should note that here the cause of all human afflictions is not being stated but the address is directed to the people who were at that time committing disbelief and disobedience at Makkah. They are being told: "Had Allah seized you for all your sins and crimes, He would not have even allowed you to live, but the calamities (probably the allusion is to the famine of Makkah) that have descended on you, are only a warning so that you may take heed and examine your actions and deeds to see as to what attitude and conduct you have adopted as against your Lord, and try to understand how helpless you actually are against God against Whom you are rebelling, and know that those whom you have taken as your patrons and supporters, or the powers that you have relied upon, cannot avail you anything against the punishment of Allah."

For further explanation it is necessary to state that as regards the sincere believer, Allah's law for him is different. All the calamities and hardships that befall him go on becoming an atonement for his sins, errors and deficiencies. There is an authentic *Hidith* to the effect: "Whatever sorrow and suffering, distress and grief, and affliction and worry that a Muslim experiences, even if it be a thorn-prick, it is made an atonement by Allah for one or the other of his errors." (Bukhārī, Muslim). As for the hardships that a believer faces in the way of raising Allah's Word, they do not merely become an atonement for his deficiencies but also a means of the exaltation of ranks with Allah. In this connection, it cannot even be imagined that they descend as a punishment for sins."

53. "Who patiently endures": who keeps himself fully under control and remains steadfast on the path of servitude under all circumstances, good or bad; who does not forget himself so as to become rebellious against God and cruel to the people, when favoured with good times, and loses heart and stoops to anything when visited by evil times. A "grateful person" is every such person who regards it as a bounty of Allah and not the result of any merit or excellence in himself when he is exalted to any high place of honour in life by a Divine decree, and keeps his mind concentrated on the blessings which remain available to man even under the worst circumstances instead of his deprivations when deposed to the lowest

(Contd. on p. 150)

لَا يَتِي لِكُلِّ صَبَّارٍ شُكْرٌ ۗ أَوْ يُؤْتِيهِمْ مِمَّا كَسَبُوا وَيَعْفُ عَنْ كَثِيرٍ ۗ وَ
بَعَلَّ الَّذِينَ يُجَادِلُونَ فِي آيَاتِنَا مَا لَهُمْ مِنْ مَحِيصٍ ۗ فَمَا أُوْتِيْتُمْ مِنْ
شَيْءٍ فَمَتَّاعٌ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا ۗ وَمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ وَآبِقَى لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ ۗ وَالَّذِينَ يَجْتَنِبُونَ كَبِيرَ الْإِثْمِ وَالْفَوَاحِشِ وَإِذَا
مَا غَضِبُوا هُمْ يَغْفِرُونَ ۗ وَالَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِرَبِّهِمْ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ
وَآمَرُوهُم بِشُرَىٰ بَيْنَهُمْ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنفِقُونَ ۗ وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَهُمُ
الْبَغْيُ هُمْ يَنْتَصِرُونَ ۗ وَجَزَا سَيِّئَةٍ سَيِّئَةٌ مِّثْلُهَا ۗ فَمَنْ عَفَا وَأَصْلَحَ
فَأَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ ۗ إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الظَّالِمِينَ ۗ وَلَمَنِ انْتَصَرَ بَعْدَ ظُلْمِهِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ
مَا عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ سَبِيلٍ ۗ إِنَّمَا السَّبِيلُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ يَظْلِمُونَ النَّاسَ وَيَبْغُونَ
فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ۗ وَلَمَنْ صَبَرَ وَغَفَرَ
إِنَّ ذَلِكَ لَمِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ ۗ وَمَنْ يُضِلِلِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ وَّالِيٍّ مِّنْ
بَعْدِهِ ۗ وَتَرَى الظَّالِمِينَ لَمَّا رَأُوا الْعَذَابَ يَقُولُونَ هَلْ إِلَىٰ مَرَدٍّ مِّنْ
سَبِيلٍ ۗ وَتَرَاهُمْ يُعْرَضُونَ عَلَيْهَا خَشِيعِينَ مِنَ الذَّلِيلِ يَنْظُرُونَ مِنْ طَرْفٍ
خَفِيٍّ ۗ وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّ الْخَيْرِينَ الَّذِينَ خَرَوْا أَنفُسَهُمْ وَأَهْلِيهِمْ يَوْمَ
الْقِيَامَةِ ۗ أَلَا إِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ فِي عَذَابٍ مُّقِيمٍ ۗ وَمَا كَانَ لَهُمْ مِنْ أَوْلِيَاءٍ
يُنصِرُونَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ ۗ وَمَنْ يُضِلِلِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ سَبِيلٍ ۗ اسْتَجِيبُوا
لِرَبِّكُمْ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ يَوْمٌ لَا مَرَدَّ لَهُ مِنَ اللَّهِ ۗ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ مَلْجَأٍ يَوْمَئِذٍ
وَمَا لَكُمْ مِنْ نَّكِيرٍ ۗ فَإِنْ أَعْرَضُوا فَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَفِيظًا ۗ إِنْ عَلَيْكَ
إِلَّا الْبَلَاغُ ۗ وَإِنَّا إِذَا أَذَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنَّا رَحْمَةً فَرِحَ بِهَا ۗ وَإِنْ تُصِيبُهُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ

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Whatever you have been given, is merely a provision for the transitory life of this world,⁵⁵ and that which is with Allah is better as well as more lasting.⁵⁶ That is for those who have believed and put their trust in their Lord;⁵⁷ who refrain from gross sins and indecencies;⁵⁸ who, when they are angry, forgive;⁵⁹ who obey their Lord,⁶⁰ establish the *Ṣalāt*, and conduct their affairs by mutual consultation;⁶¹ who spend out of what We have given them as sustenance;⁶² who, when they are oppressed, help and defend themselves.⁶³—The recompense⁶⁴ of evil is a like evil;⁶⁵ then whoever pardons and seeks reconciliation, his reward is with Allah.⁶⁶ Allah does not like the wrongdoers.⁶⁷ And those who avenge themselves after they have been wronged, cannot be held blameworthy, for blameworthy indeed are those who oppress others and commit excesses in the land without any right. For such people there is a painful torment. However, the one who practises patience and is forgiving, these indeed are works of great courage and resolution.⁶⁸

The one whom Allah lets go astray, has no protector after Him.⁶⁹ You will see that when the wrongdoers see the torment, they will say, "Is there any way back?"⁷⁰ And you will see that when they are brought before Hell, they shall be downcast with disgrace and shall look at it with stealthy glances.⁷¹ At that time those who had believed, will say, "The real losers indeed are those who have lost themselves and their followers on this Resurrection Day." Beware! The wrongdoers shall suffer an everlasting torment, and they will have no protectors and guardians, who could come to their help against Allah. The one whom Allah lets go astray has no way of escape.

Answer your Lord before there comes the Day of which there is no chance of being averted by Allah.⁷²

On that Day you will have no place of refuge, nor will there be any who could change your condition.⁷³ Now if they turn away, We have not sent you, O Prophet, to be a keeper over them:⁷⁴ your only responsibility is to convey the Message. Man is such that when We let him taste Our mercy, he exults at it, and if an evil befalls him in consequence of what his own hands have done before, he turns utterly ungrateful.⁷⁵

(Contd. from p. 147)

of the low position. Thus, he continues to thank his Lord in both prosperity and adversity with his tongue and heart.

54. The Quraish, in connection with their business and trade, had also to visit Habash and the coastal lands of Africa, and in these journeys they used sailing ships and boats for crossing the Red Sea, which is a very dangerous sea. It is generally stormy and abounds in submarine rocks which are a serious hazard for navigation especially during the storms. Therefore, the state that has been depicted here by Allah, could be fully realized by the people of the Quraish in the light of their personal experiences.

55. That is, "It is not a thing at which man should exult. Whatever worldly wealth a person has in his possession, he has it only for a short time. He uses it for a few years and then leaves the world empty-handed. Then, although the amount of the wealth may be very high in the ledgers, practically only a fraction of it is used by the man himself. To exult at such wealth does not behove a man who understands the truth about himself, about his wealth and this world itself."

56. That is, that wealth is far more superior as regards its nature and quality; and is also eternal and everlasting.

57. Here, trust (*tawakkul*) in Allah has been regarded as an inevitable demand of the faith and a necessary characteristic for success in the Hereafter. *Tawakkul* means: (1) That man should have full confidence in the guidance of Allah, and should understand that the knowledge of the truth, the principles of morality, the bounds of the lawful and the unlawful, and the rules and regulations of passing life in the world, that Allah had enjoined, are based on the truth and in following them alone lies man's good and well-

being ; and (2) that man should not place reliance on his own powers and abilities, means and resources, plans and schemes and the help of others than Allah, but he should keep deeply impressed in his mind the fact that his success in every thing, here and in the Hereafter, actually depends on the help and succour of Allah, and that he can become worthy of Allah's help and succour only if he works with the object of winning His approval, within the bounds prescribed by Him ; (3) that man should have complete faith in the promises that Allah has made with those who would adopt the way of faith and righteousness and work in the cause of the truth instead of falsehood, and having faith in the same promises would discard all those benefits, gains and pleasures that may seem to accrue from following the way of falsehood, and endure all those losses, hardships and deprivations that may become his lot on account of following the truth steadfastly. From this explanation of the meaning of *tawakkul* it becomes obvious how deeply it is related with the faith, and why those wonderful results that have been promised to the believers who practise *tawakkul*, cannot be obtained from the mere empty affirmation of the faith.

58. For explanation, see An-Nisā : 31, Al-An'ām : 151, An-Naml : 90, An-Najm : 32 and the E.N.'s.

59. That is, they are not wrathful and crazy but are temperate and cool-minded ; they are not revengeful but forbearing and forgiving by nature. If ever they feel angry at something they control their rage. This characteristic is the best of man's qualities, which has been highly commended in the Qur'an (Āl-'Imrān : 134) and regarded as a major factor of the Holy Prophet's success (Āl-'Imrān : 159). According to Ḥadrat 'Ā'ishah, "The Holy Messenger of Allah never avenged himself on anybody ; however, when a thing enjoined to be held sacred by Allah was desecrated, he would award the punishment." (Bukhārī, Muslim)

60. Literally : "Who answer the call of their Lord". That is, they hasten to do whatever Allah enjoins them to do, and accept whatever Allah invites them to accept.

61. This thing has been counted here as the best quality of the believers, and has been enjoined in Sūrah Āl-'Imrān : 159. On this basis, consultation, is an important pillar of the Islamic way of life, and to conduct the affairs of collective life without consultation is not only the way of ignorance but also an express violation of the law prescribed by Allah. When we consider why consultation has

been given this importance in Islam, three things become obvious :

First, that it is injustice that a person should decide a matter by his personal opinion and ignore others when it involves the interests of two or more persons. No one has a right to do as he likes in matters of common interest. Justice demands that all those whose interests are involved in a matter be consulted, and if it concerns a large number of the people, their reliable representatives should be made a party in consultation.

Second, that a man tries to do what he likes in matters of common interest either because he wants to usurp the rights of others for selfish ends, or because he looks down upon others and regards himself as a superior person. Morally both these qualities are equally detestable, and a believer cannot have even a tinge of either of these in himself. A believer is neither selfish so that he should get undue benefits by usurping the rights of others, nor he is arrogant and self-conceited that he should regard himself as all-wise and all-knowing.

Third, that it is a grave responsibility to give decisions in matters that involve the rights and interests of others. No one who fears God and knows what severe accountability for it he will be subjected to by his Lord, can dare take the heavy burden of it solely on himself. Such a boldness is shown only by those who are fearless of God and heedless of the Hereafter. The one who fears God and has the feeling of the accountability of the Hereafter, will certainly try that in a matter of common interest he should consult all the concerned people or their authorised representatives so as to reach, as far as possible, an objective and right and equitable decision, and if there occurs a mistake one man alone should not be held responsible for it.

A deep consideration of these three things can enable one to fully understand that consultation is a necessary demand of the morality that Islam has taught to man, and departure from it is a grave immorality which Islam does not permit. The Islamic way of life requires that the principle of consultation should be used in every collective affair, big or small. If it is a domestic affair, the husband and the wife should act by mutual consultation, and when the children have grown up, they also should be consulted. If it is a matter concerning the whole family, the opinion of every adult member be solicited. If it concerns a tribe or a fraternity or the

population of a city, and it is not possible to consult all the people, the decision should be taken by a local council or committee, which should comprise the trustworthy representatives of the concerned people according to an agreed method. If the matter concerns a whole nation, the head of government should be appointed by the common consent of the people, and he should conduct the national affairs in consultation with the leaders of opinion, whom the people regard as reliable, and he should remain at the helm of affairs only as long as the people themselves want him to remain in that position. No honest man can try to assume the headship of a nation by force, or desire to continue in that position indefinitely, nor can think of coming into power by deception and then seek the people's consent by coercion, nor can devise schemes so that the people may elect representatives to act as his advisers not by their own free choice but according to his will. Such a thing can be desired only by the one who cherishes evil intentions, and such a fraud against the Islamic principle of consultation can be practised only by him who does not feel any hesitation in deceiving both God and the people, whereas the fact is that neither can God be deceived nor the people be so blind as to regard the robber, who is committing robbery in the bright day light openly, as their well-wisher and servant.

The principle of consultation as enshrined in *amru-hum shūrā baina-hum* by itself demands five things :

(1) The people whose rights and interests relate to collective matters, should have full freedom to express their opinion and they should be kept duly informed of how their affairs are being conducted; they should also have the full right that if in the conduct of the affairs they see an error, a weakness or a deficiency, they can check it and voice a protest, and if they do not see any change for the better, they can change their rulers. To conduct the people's affairs by keeping them silent and un-informed is sheer dishonesty which no one can regard as adherence to the principle of consultation in Islam.

(2) The person who is to be entrusted with the responsibility of conducting the collective affairs, should be appointed by the people's consent, and this consent should be their free consent, which is not obtained through coercion, temptation, deception, and fraud, because in that case it would be no consent at all. A nation's true

head is not he who becomes its head by trying every possible method, but he whom the people make their head by their own free choice and approval.

(3) The people who are appointed as advisers to the head of the state should be such as enjoy the confidence of the nation, and obviously the people who win representative positions by suppression or by expending wealth, or by practising falsehood and fraud, or by misleading the people cannot be regarded as enjoying the confidence in the real sense.

(4) The advisers should give opinion according to their knowledge and faith and conscience and they should have full freedom of such expression of opinion. Wherever this is not the case, wherever the advisers give advice against their own knowledge and conscience, under duress or temptation, or under party discipline, it will be treachery and dishonesty and not adherence to the Islamic principle of consultation.

(5) The advice that is given by a consensus of the advisers, or which has the support of the majority of the people, should be accepted, for if a person (or a group of persons) behaves independently and acts on his own whims, even after hearing the advice of others, consultation becomes meaningless. Allah does not say: "They are consulted in their affairs", but says: "They conduct their affairs by mutual consultation". This instruction is not implemented by mere consultation, but for its sake it is necessary that the affairs be conducted according to what is settled by consensus or by majority opinion in consultation.

Along with this explanation of the Islamic principle of consultation, this basic thing also should be kept in view that this consultation is not independent and autocratic in conducting the affairs of the Muslims, but necessarily subject to the bounds that Allah Himself has set by His legislation, and is subject to the fundamental principle: "It is for Allah to give a decision in whatever you may differ," and "if there arises any dispute among you about anything, refer it to Allah and the Messenger." According to this general principle, the Muslims can hold consultations in *Shari'ah* matters with a view to determining the correct meaning of a text or verse and to find out the ways of implementing it so as to fulfil its requirements rightly, but they cannot hold consultations in order to

give an independent judgement in a matter which has already been decided and settled by Allah and His Messenger.

62. It has three meanings :

(1) "They spend only out of what lawful provisions We have given them: they do not touch unlawful things for supplementing their expenditure."

(2) "They do not set aside the provisions granted by us, but spend them."

(3) "They spend out of what they have been given in the cause of Allah also: they do not reserve everything for personal use only."

The first meaning is based on this that Allah calls the lawful and pure provisions only as "the provisions granted by Him"; He does not call the provisions earned in impure and unlawful ways His provisions. The second meaning is based on this that whatever Allah provides for man is provided so that he may spend it and not that he may set it aside and hoard it up like a miser. The third meaning is based on this that according to the Qur'an, spending does not mean spending merely on one's own self and for one's personal needs, but it also contains the meaning of spending for the sake of Allah in His way. On account of these three reasons Allah here is counting spending of wealth among the best qualities of the believers because of which the blessings of the Hereafter have been reserved only for them.

63. This also is one of the best characteristics of the believers: they do not fall a prey to the tyrants. Their tender heartedness and forgiving nature is not the result of any weakness. They have not been taught to live humbly and meekly like the hermits and ascetics. Their nobility demands that when they are victors they should forgive the errors of the vanquished; when they possess the power, they should avoid vengefulness and when a weak or subdued person happens to commit a mistake they should overlook it; but when a powerful person, drunk with power, commits violence against them, they should resist and fight him with all their might. A believer is never cowed by a wicked person nor bows to an arrogant man. For such people he proves to be a hard nut which breaks the teeth of those who try to break it.

64. The passage from here to the end of verse 43 is an explanation of verse 39.

65. This is the first fundamental principle which must be borne in mind in retaliation. The right limit of retaliation is that one should return the same sort of ill treatment that one has received; one has no right to return a greater ill treatment.

66. This is the second principle. It means this: Although it is permissible to retaliate against the one who has committed a violence, wherever pardoning can be conducive to reconciliation, pardoning is better for the sake of reconciliation than retaliation. And since man pardons the other by suppressing his own feelings, Allah says that the reward of such a one is with Him, for he has suppressed his own self for the sake of reforming the evildoers.

67. In this warning allusion has been made to a third principle about retaliation, and it is this: One should not become a wrong-doer oneself in the process of avenging a wrong done by the other. It is not permissible to do a greater wrong in retaliation for the wrong done. For example, if a person gives another a slap, the other can return only one slap; he cannot shower blows and kicks. Likewise, it is not right to commit a sin in retaliation for a sin. For example, if a wicked man has killed the son of someone, it is not right to go and kill the son of the former. Or, if a mean person has violated the chastity of a person's sister or daughter, it is not lawful for him to commit rape on the former's sister or daughter.

68. One should note that the qualities of the believers that have been mentioned in these verses, practically existed in the lives of the Holy Prophet and his Companions, and the disbelievers of Makkah were their eye-witnesses. Thus, Allah has, in fact, told the disbelievers: "The real wealth is not the provisions that you have received for passing the transitory life of the world, and are bursting with pride of it, but the real wealth are the morals and characteristics which the believers from your own society have developed by accepting the guidance given by the Qur'ān."

69. That is, "Allah sent the best Book like the Qur'ān for the guidance of the people, which is giving them the knowledge of the reality in a rational and effective way and guiding them to the right way of life. He sent a Prophet like Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) for their guidance, a man of better character than whom they had never seen before. And then Allah also showed them the results of the teaching and training of this Book and this Messenger in the lives of the Believers. Now, if after

witnessing all this, a person turns away from the guidance, Allah casts him into the same deviation from which he has no desire to come out. And when Allah Himself has driven him away, who else can take the responsibility of bringing him to the Right Way."

70. That is, "Today when there is a chance of coming back, they are refusing to come back. Tomorrow when the judgement will have been passed and the sentence enforced, then seeing their fate they will wish to come back."

71. By nature man is such that when a dreadful scene comes before him and he knows that soon he is going to fall a prey to it, he closes his eyes forthwith in fear. Then, when he cannot hold himself any longer, he tries to see what kind of the calamity it is and how far away it is from him. But he does not find the courage to lift up his head and have a full view of it. Therefore, he opens his eyes a little again and again and sees it from the corner of the eye, and then again closes his eyes from fear. The same state of those who will be driven to Hell has been depicted here.

72. That is, neither will Allah Himself avert it, nor has anyone else the power to avert it.

73. This sentence has several other meanings also: (1) "You will not be able to deny any of your misdeeds"; (2) "you will not be able to hide yourself even in disguise;" (3) "you will not be able to protest or show any displeasure against any treatment that is meted out to you;" (4) "it will not be in your power to change the condition in which you are placed."

74. That is, "You have not been made responsible that you must bring them to the right path anyhow, nor will you be held accountable as to why these people did not come to the right path."

75. "Man" here implies the mean and shallow people who are the subject of the discourse here, who have got a measure of the worldly provisions and are exulting in this, and who do not pay any attention when they are admonished to come to the right path. But when they are visited by a disaster in consequence of their own misdeeds, they start cursing their fate, and forget all those blessings which Allah has blessed them with and do not try to understand how far they themselves are to blame for the condition in which they are placed. Thus, neither does prosperity become conducive to their reformation nor can adversity teach them a lesson and bring

(Contd. on p. 159)

بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ فَإِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ كَفُورٌ ﴿٥٠﴾ لِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَيَهَبُ لِمَن يَشَاءُ إِنَاثًا وَيَهَبُ لِمَن يَشَاءُ الذُّكُورَ ﴿٥١﴾ أَوْ
يُزَوِّجُهُمْ ذُكْرَانًا وَإِنَاثًا وَيَجْعَلُ مَن يَشَاءُ عَقِيمًا إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٥٢﴾
وَمَا كَانَ لِبَشَرٍ أَنْ يُكَلِّمَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا وَحْيًا أَوْ مِنْ وَرَائِ حِجَابٍ أَوْ يُرْسِلَ
رَسُولًا فَيُوحِيَ بِإِذْنِهِ مَا يَشَاءُ إِنَّهُ عَلَىٰ حَكِيمٍ ﴿٥٣﴾ وَكَذَلِكَ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ
رُوحًا مِّنْ أَمْرِنَا مَا كُنْتَ تَدْرِي مَا الْكِتَابُ وَلَا الْإِيمَانُ وَلَكِن جَعَلْنَاهُ
نُورًا نَهْدِي بِهِ مَن نَّشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا وَإِنَّكَ لَتَهْدِي إِلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٥٤﴾
صِرَاطِ اللَّهِ الَّذِي لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا إِلَى اللَّهِ تَصِيرُ الْأُمُورُ ﴿٥٥﴾

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To Allah belongs the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth:⁷⁶ He creates whatever He wills: He gives daughters to whom He wills, and sons to whom He wills; or, He gives both sons and daughters to whom He wills and makes barren whom He wills. Indeed, He knows everything and has power over everything.⁷⁷

51-53

It⁷⁸ is not given to any mortal that Allah should speak to him, face to face. He speaks either through revelation (secret instruction),⁷⁹ or from behind a veil,⁸⁰ or He sends a messenger (an angel), who by His Command, reveals whatever He wills:⁸¹ He is the Exalted, the All-Wise.⁸² Even so We have, (O Muḥammad), revealed a Spirit to you by Our Command.⁸³ You did not know at all what was the Book and what was the Faith,⁸⁴ but We made that Spirit a light by which We show the way to any of Our servants We will. You are indeed guiding to the Right Way, the Way of that God, to Whom belongs everything in the heavens and the earth. Beware! All affairs tend to Allah alone!⁸⁵

(Contd. from p. 157)

them to the right path. A study of the context shows that this is, in fact, a satire on the attitude of the people who were the addressees of the above discourse, but they have not been addressed to tell them of their weakness directly, but the weakness of man has been mentioned in a general way and pointed out that that is the real cause of his sad plight. This gives an important point of the wisdom of preaching: the weaknesses of the addressee should not be made the target directly, but they should be mentioned in a general way so that he is not provoked, and if his conscience has still some life in it, he may try to understand his shortcoming with a cool mind.

76. That is, "If the people who are involved in disbelief and polytheism do not believe even after the admonition, they may not, for the truth is the truth. The kingdom of the earth and heavens has not been entrusted to the so-called kings and despots and chiefs of the world, nor has any prophet, saint, god or goddess any share in it, but its Master is One Allah alone. His rebel can neither succeed by his own power, nor can any of the beings whom the people look upon as owners of divine powers by their own folly, come to their rescue and aid."

77. This is a manifest proof of Allah's Sovereignty being absolute. No man, whether he be posing as owner of the highest worldly authority, or regarded as owner of great spiritual powers, has ever been able to produce children for himself according to his own choice and desire, not to speak of providing children for others. The one whom Allah made barren could not have children through any medicine, any treatment, any amulet or charm. The one whom Allah gave only daughters could not get a single son by any device, and the one whom Allah gave only sons could not have a single daughter by any means. In this matter everyone is absolutely helpless. So much so that before the birth of a child no one could know whether a son was taking shape in the mother's womb or a daughter. Even after seeing all this if some one posed to be all-powerful in God's Kingdom, or regarded another as a possessor of the powers, it would be his own short-sightedness for which he himself will suffer; the truth will not change at all.

78. In conclusion, the same theme with which the discourse began has been reiterated. To understand it fully, please see the first verse of this Sūrah and the E.N. on it.

79. Here, *wahī* means to inspire somebody with something, or to show something to somebody in a vision as were the Prophets Abraham and Joseph shown. (Yūsuf : 4, 100 ; Aṣ-Ṣāffāt : 102).

80. That is, "One may hear a voice without seeing the speaker, just as it happened in the case of the Prophet Moses when he suddenly began to hear a voice from a tree on Mount Ṭūr, while the Speaker was hidden from him." (Ṭā Hā : 11-48, An-Naml : 8-12, Al-Qaṣas : 30-35).

81. This is the form of *wahī* by which all Divine scriptures have actually reached the Prophets of Allah. Some people have misinterpreted this sentence and given it this meaning: "Allah sends a messenger who by His Command conveys His message to the common people." But the words of the Qur'ān *fa-yūhiya bi-idhni-hi mā yashā'u* (then He reveals by His Command whatever He wills) show that their this interpretation is absolutely wrong. The Prophets' preaching before the common people has neither been called *wahī* anywhere in the Qur'ān, nor is there any room in Arabic for describing a man's speaking to another man openly by the word *wahī*. Lexically, *wahī* means secret and swift instruction. Only an ignorant person will apply this word to the common preaching by the Prophets.

82. That is, He is far above this that He should speak to a man, face to face, and His wisdom is not helpless from this that He may adopt another method of conveying His instructions to a servant of His than of speaking to him face to face.

83. "Even so" does not refer only to the last method of *wahī*, but to all the three methods as mentioned in the preceding verses, and a "Spirit" implies *wahī* (Revelation), or the teaching given to the Holy Prophet by revelation. Both the Qur'ān and the *Ḥadīth* confirm that the Holy Prophet was given instruction by all these three methods :

(1) In a *Ḥadīth* Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah has stated that Revelation in the beginning came to the Holy Prophet in the form of true visions. (Bukbārī, Muslim). This continued in later life also. Traditions mention many visions in which he was given some teaching or informed of something, and in the Qur'ān also a vision of his has been clearly mentioned (Al-Fath : 27). Besides, several Traditions also mention that the Holy Prophet said, "I have been inspired with such and such a thing, or I have been informed of this and this,

or I have been enjoined this, or I have been forbidden this." All such things relate to the first kind of the *wahī*, and the Divinely inspired Traditions (*Aḥādith Qudsi*) mostly belong to this category of the Traditions.

(2) On the occasion of the *Mi'rāj* (Ascension) the Holy Prophet was honoured with the second kind of the *wahī* also. In several authentic Traditions the way mention has been made of the Commandment of the *Ṣalāt* five times a day and the Holy Prophet's making submissions in that regard again and again clearly shows that at that time a similar dialogue took place between Allah Almighty and His servant Muḥammad (upon whom be His peace and blessings) as had taken place between Allah and the Prophet Moses at the foot of Mount Ṭūr.

(3) As for the third kind, the Qur'ān itself testifies that it was conveyed to the Holy Prophet through Angel Gabriel, the Trustworthy. (Al-Baqarah : 97, Ash-Shu'arā' : 192-195).

84. That is, "Before his appointment to Prophethood, the Holy Prophet had never had any idea that he was going to receive a Book, or that he should receive one, but he was wholly unaware of the heavenly Books and the subjects they treated. Likewise, although he believed in Allah, intellectually he was not aware of the requirements of the Faith in Allah, nor did he know that along with that belief it was also necessary that he should believe in other things—the angels, the Prophethood, the Divine Books and the Hereafter. Both these things were such as were not hidden even from the disbelievers of Makkah. No one belonging to Makkah could bear witness that he had ever heard anything pertaining to a Divine Book from the Holy Prophet before his sudden proclamation of the Prophethood, or any such thing that the people should believe in such and such things. Obviously if a person had already been looking forward to becoming a prophet, it could not be that the people who remained socially associated with him day and night for 40 years should not have even so much as heard the word Book and the Faith from him, and after 40 years he should suddenly have started making fiery speeches on the same themes.

85. This is the final warning that has been given to the disbelievers. It means this : "The Prophet said something and you heard and rejected it. The matter would not end there. Whatever is happening in the world, will be presented before Allah, and ultimately He Himself will decide what should be the end of each and every person."

XLIII

AZ-ZUKHRUF الزُّخْرَى

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

XLIII

AZ-ZUKHRUF الْأُخْرُفُ

INTRODUCTION

Name

It is derived from the word *zukhruf-an* which occurs in verse 35 of this Sūrah.

Period of Revelation

It could not be known from any authentic tradition, but a study of its subject-matter shows that this Sūrah also was sent down in the same period in which the Sūrahs Al-Mu'min, Hā-Mīm As-Sajdah and Ash-Shūrā, were sent down. It appears that the revelation of this series of the Sūrahs began when the disbelievers of Makkah were planning to put an end to the Holy Prophet's

life. Day and night they were holding consultations in their assemblies as how to eliminate him, and even an attack on his life also had been made as has been clearly referred to in vv. 79-80.

Theme and Topics

In this Sūrah a forceful and severe criticism has been made of the Quraish's and the common Arabs' creeds and superstitions of ignorance in which they persisted, and their stubbornness has been exposed in a firm and effective way, so that every member of the society, who was reasonable in some degree, should be made to consider the evils in which the community was involved and its tyrannical treatment of the person who was trying to redeem it.

The discourse starts in a way as if to say: "You, by means of your mischiefs, want that the revelation of this Book should be stopped, but Allah has never withheld the appointment of His Prophets and the revelation of His Books because of the mischiefs of the people, but has destroyed the wicked people, who obstructed the way of His guidance. The same He will do again. A little further in vv. 41-43 and 79-80 the same thing has been reiterated. Though the people who were plotting against his life are meant, the Holy Prophet has been addressed to the effect: "Whether you remain alive or not, We will certainly punish the wicked," and the people themselves have been plainly warned to the effect: "If you have decided to take an action against Our Prophet, We too will take a decisive action."

Then, it has been told what is the reality of the religion that the people are following so devotedly and what are the arguments on whose strength they are resisting Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings).

They themselves admit that the Creator of the earth and heavens and of themselves and their deities is only Allah. They also know and admit that the blessings they are benefiting from, have been bestowed by Allah; yet they insist on making others associates of Allah in His Godhead.

They regard the servants as the children of Allah, and that too daughters, whom they regard as disgraceful for themselves.

They believe that the angels are goddesses; they have carved their images as females; they adorn them with female dresses and ornaments, and call them daughters of Allah: they worship them and invoke them for the fulfilment of their needs. How did they know that the angels were female?

When they are rebuked for these superstitions, they present the pretence of destiny and say: "Had Allah disapproved of these our practices, we could not have worshipped these images, whereas the means of finding out whether Allah had approved of something or not, are His Books and not those things which are happening in the world according to His Will. For under His Will not only idol-worship but crimes like theft and adultery, robbery, murder, etc. also are being committed. Can this argument be used to justify as right and proper this commission of every crime and evil in the world?"

When it is asked: Have you any other authority, apart from this wrong argument, for the polytheism of yours? they reply, "The same has been the practice since the time of our forefathers." In other words, this in their opinion is a strong enough argument for a creed's being right and true, whereas the Prophet Abraham, descent from whom is the only basis of their pride and

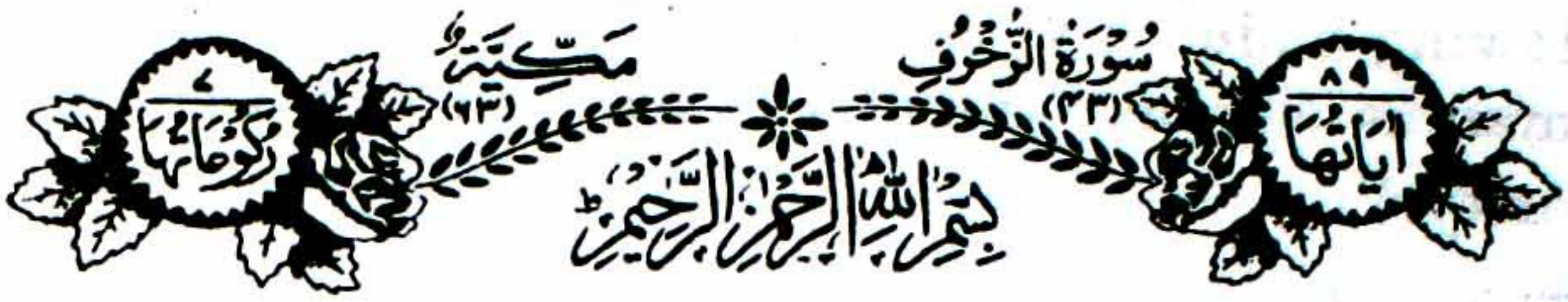
distinction, had rejected the religion of his elders and left his home, and he had discarded every such blind imitation of his forefathers, which did not have the support of any rational argument. Then, if these people had to follow their elders only, for this also they selected their most ignorant elders and abandoned their most illustrious elders like the Prophets Abraham and Ishmael (on whom be peace).

When they are asked: "Has ever a Prophet or a Book sent down by God also given this teaching that others beside Allah too are worthy of worship? they present this practice of the Christians as an argument that they took Jesus son of Mary as son of God and worshipped him; whereas the question was not this whether the community of a Prophet had committed *shirk* or not, but this whether a Prophet had himself taught *shirk*. Jesus son of Mary had never said that he was son of God and that the people should worship him. His own was the same teaching which every other Prophet had given: "My Lord as well as your Lord is Allah: so worship Him alone."

They were disinclined to believe in the Prophethood of the Holy Prophet because he was neither a rich man nor a person of high worldly position and rank. They said: "Had Allah willed to appoint a prophet among us, He would have appointed one of the great men of our two cities (Makkah and Ṭā'if)." On that very basis, Pharaoh also had looked down upon the Prophet Moses and said: "If Allah, the King of the heavens, had to send a messenger to me, the king of the earth, He would have sent him with bracelets of gold and a company of angels in attendance. Wherefrom has this mendicant appeared? I am superior to him, for the kingdom of Egypt belongs to me, and the canals of the River Nile

are flowing under my control. What is the status of this man as against me? He has neither wealth nor authority."

Thus, after criticising each practice of ignorance of the disbelievers and rejecting it with rational arguments, it has been pointed out: "Neither has God any offspring, nor are there separate gods of the earth and heavens, nor is there any intercessor who may be able to protect from His punishment those who adopt deviation knowingly. Allah is far above this that He should have children. He alone is the God of the whole Universe: all others are His servants and not associates in His attributes and powers, and only such men can intercede with Him, who are themselves followers of the Truth and they also can intercede only for those who may have adopted obedience of the Truth in the world."



حَوْثٌ ۝ وَ الْكِتَابِ الْبَيِّنِ ۝ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاهُ قُرْءَانًا عَرَبِيًّا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ۝ وَإِنَّهُ
 فِي أُمِّ الْكِتَابِ لَدِينًا لَعَلِيٌّ حَكِيمٌ ۝ أَفَنْضِرُ عَنْكُمْ الذِّكْرَ صَفْحًا أَنْ كُنْتُمْ
 قَوْمًا مُّسْرِفِينَ ۝ وَ كَمْ أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ نَبِيِّ فِي الْأَوَّلِينَ ۝ وَ مَا يَأْتِيهِمْ مِنْ
 نَبِيِّ إِلَّا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ ۝ فَأَهْلَكْنَا أَشَدَّ مِنْهُمْ بَطْشًا وَ مَضَى مَثَلُ
 الْأَوَّلِينَ ۝ وَ لَيْنِ سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَ الْأَرْضَ لَيَقُولُنَّ خَلَقَهُنَّ
 الْعَزِيزُ الْعَلِيمُ ۝ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمْ الْأَرْضَ مَهْدًا وَ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ فِيهَا سُبُلًا
 لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ ۝ وَ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً بِقَدَرٍ فَأَنْشَرْنَا بِهِ بَلْدَةً
 مَيِّتًا ۝ كَذَلِكَ تُخْرَجُونَ ۝ وَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْأَزْوَاجَ كُلَّهَا وَ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ
 الْفُلْكِ وَ الْأَنْعَامِ مَا تَرْكَبُونَ ۝ لَيْسَتُوا عَلَى ظُهُورِهِ ثُمَّ تَذَكَّرُوا نِعْمَةً رَبِّكُمْ

XLIII

AZ-ZUKHRUF الزُّكْرُوفِ

Verses : 89

Revealed at Makkah

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

1-4 Hā-Mīm. By this lucid Book, We have made it an Arabic Qur'an so that you (O people) may understand it.¹ And, in fact, it is inscribed in *Umm al-Kitāb*,² a Book truly sublime and full of wisdom with Us.³

5-8 Now, should We despair and stop sending this Admonition to you only because you are a people who

have transgressed (all limits)?⁴ Many a Prophet have We sent among the ancient peoples, too. Never did it so happen that a Prophet came to his people and they did not mock him.⁵ So, We destroyed them though they were much stronger than these in might; there have gone before the examples of the ancient peoples.⁶

If you ask them, "Who has created the heavens and the earth?" they will surely say, "The Almighty, the All-Knowing One has created them." He it is Who made this earth a cradle for you⁷ and made in it paths⁸ for you so that you may be guided to your destinations⁹; Who sent down water from heaven in due measure¹⁰ and revived thereby the dead earth—even so shall you be brought out from the earth¹¹; Who created all these pairs¹²; and Who made ships and animals as conveyance for you to ride on their back, so that when you sit on them, you may remember your Lord's favour, and say, "Glorified is He Who has subjected them to us, otherwise we could not have brought them under control,¹³ and one day we have to return to our Lord."¹⁴ 9-14

1. The object of taking an oath by the Qur'ān is to impress this fact; "We are the Author of this Book and not Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace)," and the attribute of the Qur'ān chosen for the oath is that it is a "lucid Book". To swear by the Qur'ān itself with its this attribute in order to impress that the Qur'ān is Divine Word by itself implies this: "O people, this is an open Book before you. Read it intelligently. Its clear and unambiguous themes, its language and literary style, its teaching which distinguishes the truth from falsehood, all are testifying to the fact that none but the Lord of the Universe could be its Author." Then the sentence: "We have made it an Arabic Qur'ān so that you may understand it," has two meanings: (1) It is not in any foreign tongue but in your own language; therefore, you can have no difficulty in assessing its value and worth. Had it been in a non-Arabic language, you could have offered the excuse that you could not determine its being Divine, or otherwise, for you did not understand

it. But you cannot offer this excuse about this Arabic Qur'ān. Its each word is clear to you : its each passage and discourse, both in language and in theme, is plain for you. Now you may see it for yourself whether this could be the word of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) or of some other Arab." (2) "We have sent this Book in Arabic because We are addressing the Arabs, who can only understand an Arabic Qur'ān. The person who disregards this expressly rational ground for sending down the Qur'ān in Arabic and regards it as the word of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) instead of Divine Word only because Muḥammad's mother tongue is also Arabic, commits a grave injustice." (To understand this second meaning, please see Sūrah Ḥā-Mīm As-Sajdah : 41 and its E.N. 51).

2. "*Umm al-Kitāb*": the "Original Book": the Book from which all the Books sent down to the Prophets have been derived. In Sūrah Al-Wāqī'ah the same thing has been described as *Kitāb-um-Maknūn* (the hidden and preserved Book) and in Sūrah Al-Burūj : 22 as *Lauh-i Maḥfūz* (the Preserved Tablet), that is, the Tablet whose writing cannot be effaced, which is secure from every kind of interference. By saying that the Qur'ān is inscribed in *Umm al-Kitāb*, attention has been drawn to an important truth. Different Books had been revealed by Allah in different ages to different Prophets for the guidance of different nations in different languages, but all these Books invited mankind to one and the same Faith; they regarded one and the same thing as the Truth; they presented one and the same criterion of good and evil; they propounded the same principles of morality and civilization; in short, they brought one and the same *Dīn* (Religion). The reason was that their source and origin was the same, only words were different; they had the same meaning and theme which is inscribed in a Source Book with Allah, and whenever there was a need, He raised a Prophet and sent down the same meaning and subject-matter clothed in a particular diction according to the environment and occasion. Had Allah willed to raise the Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be His peace) in another nation instead of the Arabs, He would have sent down the same Qur'ān in the language of that nation. In it the meaning and content would have been expressed according to the environments and conditions of the people and land; the words would have been different and the language also different but the teaching and guidance the same basically, and it would be the same Qur'ān

though not the Arabic Qur'ān. This same thing has been expressed in Sūrah Ash-Shu'arā, thus : "This (Book) has been revealed by the Lord of the worlds. The trustworthy Spirit has come down with it upon your heart so that you may become one of those who are (appointed by God) to warn (the people) in plain Arabic language ; and this is also contained in the scriptures of the former peoples." (vv. 192-196). (For explanation, see Ash-Shu'arā : 192-196 and the E.N.'s on it).

3. This sentence is related both to *Kitāb-i mubīn* and to *Umm al-Kitāb*. Thus, it is in praise of both the Qur'ān and the Original Book from which the Qur'ān has been derived. This praise is meant to impress the fact that if a person does not recognize the true worth of this Book and does not benefit from its wise teaching because of his own folly, it would be his own misfortune. If someone tried to degrade it and found fault with it, it would be his own meanness. It cannot become worthless on account of someone's lack of appreciation of it, and its wisdom cannot be eclipsed by anyone's throwing dust at it. This is by itself a glorious Book, which stands exalted by its matchless teaching, miraculous eloquence, faultless wisdom and the sublime personality of its great Author. Therefore, none can succeed in minimizing its value and worth. In verse 44 below the Quraish in particular and the Arabs in general have been told that the revelation of the Book for which they are showing such lack of appreciation had provided them a unique opportunity of honour, which if they lost, would subject them to a severe accountability before God. (Please see E.N. 39 below).

4. In this one sentence the whole history that had taken place since the time the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) had proclaimed to be a Prophet till the revelation of these verses during the past few years has been compressed. This sentence depicts the following picture : A nation has been involved in ignorance, backwardness and depravity for centuries. Suddenly, Allah looks at it with favour. He raises in it an illustrious guide and sends down His own Word to take it out of the darkness of ignorance so that it is aroused from slumber, it gives up superstitions of ignorance and it becomes aware of the truth and adopts the right way of life. But the ignorant people of the nation and the tribal chiefs turn hostile to the guide, and try their utmost to defeat him and

his mission. With the passage of time their hostility and mischief go on increasing ; so much so that they make up their mind to kill him. At this, it is being said : "Should We stop making any efforts to reform you because you are proving to be un-worthy people? Should We withhold sending down this Admonition, and leave you lying in the same wretched state in which you have been lying since centuries? Do you really think that that should be the demand of Our Mercy? Have you ever considered what doom you would meet when you have turned down the bounty of Allah and persisted in falsehood after the truth has come before you?"

5. That is, if such absurdity and senselessness had barred the sending of a Prophet or a Book, no Prophet would ever have come to any nation nor a Book sent to it.

6. That is, the result of the senselessness of some particular people could not be that the entire mankind should be deprived of the guidance of the Prophethood and the Book, but its result always has been that the worshippers of falsehood who, being drunk with the pride of power, did not desist from mocking the Prophets, were ultimately destroyed. Then, when Allah's wrath descended even the people, who possessed thousands of times greater power than that possessed by the puny chiefs of the Quraish, were crushed to annihilation like mosquitoes and fleas.

7. At other places the earth has been described as a bed, but here as a cradle. That is, just as a child lies resting in its cradle, so is this great globe meant to be a place of rest for you, which is suspended in space, which is spinning on its axis at a speed of 1,000 miles an hour, which is revolving around the sun at a speed of 66,000 miles an hour. Its interior is so intensely hot that it can melt the stones and it manifests its power sometimes in the form of volcanic eruptions. But, in spite of that, the Creator has made it so tranquil that one sleeps on it in full peace and there is no jerk whatever. One lives on it and does not at all feel that this globe is suspended and one is hanging from it with one's head pointing downward. One moves about on it with satisfaction and never thinks that one is riding on a vehicle moving faster than a bullet. You dig it at will and turn it inside out and beat it as you like to obtain your sustenance, whereas a little shaking of it in an earthquake makes you feel what a terrible giant it is, which Allah has subdued

for you. (For further explanation, see Al-Naml : 61 and E.N. 74 on it).

8. The passes in the mountains and the rivers in the hill and plain regions are the natural paths, which Allah has provided on the surface of the earth. Man has spread on the earth by means of these. If the mountainous ranges had been created erect, without a crevice, and there had been no rivers and streams, man would have been confined to the same areas where he was born. Then, Allah through another grace has not made the whole surface of the earth uniform in nature, but has created different marks of distinction by means of which man recognizes different lands and feels the difference between one land and another. This is the second important means by which man became able to move about on the earth. This blessing can be appreciated by the one who has had a chance of going on a vast desert, where for thousands of miles the earth is without any land-marks and one does not know where one has reached and where one has to go.

9. This sentence gives two meanings simultaneously: (1) "That by means of these natural paths and land-marks you may find your way and reach the place you want to reach;" and (2) "that you may obtain guidance from the observation of this craftsmanship of Allah Almighty : may reach the underlying reality and understand that this system of the earth is not functioning haphazardly, nor has been devised by many gods jointly, but there is one All-Wise Creator, Who has made these paths in the hills and on the plains in view of the needs and requirements of His creatures, and has given each region of the earth a different form in countless different ways by means of which man can distinguish one region from the other.

10. That is, "For each region He has ordained an average measure of the rain, which falls year after year for long ages regularly. It does not happen that an area may have two inches of the rainfall one year and 200 inches of it the next year. Then He spreads the rainfall over different places in different times in such a way that it becomes beneficial on the whole for the products of the earth. And this is also His wisdom that He has deprived some parts of the earth of the rainfall almost wholly and turned them into dry, barren deserts, and in some other parts He continues

causes famines to occur and sometimes sends torrential rains so that man may know what a great blessing the rain and its general regularity is for the populated areas, and he may also remember that this system is under the control of another power, whose decrees cannot be changed by anyone. No one has the power that he may change the general average of the rainfall of a country, or effect a variation in its distribution over vast areas of the earth, or avert an impending storm, or attract the displeased clouds towards one's own land and compel them to rain." (For further explanation, see Al-Hijr : 21-22, Al-Mu'minūn : 18-20).

11. Here, the birth of vegetation in the earth by means of water has been presented as an argument for two things simultaneously: (1) That these things are happening by the power and wisdom of One God ; no one else is His associate in these works; and (2) that there can be life after death, and it will be. (For further explanation see An-Nahl : 65-67, Al-Hajj : 5-7, An-Naml : 60, Ar-Rūm : 19, 24 ; Fāṭir : E.N. 19 and Yā Sīn : E.N. 29).

12. Pairs here does not imply only pairs of men and women among human beings and of males and females among animals and vegetation, but there are countless other things which the Creator has made as matching partners of each other and by whose coming together and combination new and ever new things come into being in the world. For example, among the elements, some can be combined with others and some cannot be. The combination of these which can combine is resulting into various compositions, e.g. the negative and positive charges in electricity are the matching partners of each other and their mutual attraction is causing wonderful things to happen in the world. If man considers the structure and the mutual relationships and the different forms of cooperation and the results of the combination of this and other countless pairs which Allah has created among countless of His creations, He cannot help testifying to the truth that this great workshop of the world is the creation of one and only one Almighty, All-Wise Designer, and is functioning only under His care and control. Only a man of mean intelligence could suppose that all this happened, and is happening, without a Wise Being, or there is the possibility in it of the agency and interference of more gods than one.

13. That is, "Only man from among all the creatures of the earth was not given this power by Allah to use boats and ships and animals as conveyance so that he may be loaded on them like bags of grain and should never think as to who it is who created possibilities for him to run boats in the mighty oceans, and who created some animals of the countless kinds of animals, with a nature that they become his servants in spite of being far stronger than him in power, and he rides on them and drives them wherever he likes. To benefit by these blessings and to forget the Benefactor is a sign of the heart's becoming dead and the conscience's being insensitive. For when a man endowed with a living heart and a sensitive conscience will sit on these conveyances, he will be filled with the feelings of the blessings and with the gratitude for it, and will cry out : "Glorified is the Being Who subjected these things to me : Glorified is He from this that another should be His associate in His Being and attributes and powers : Glorified is He and free from the weakness that He should become helpless of performing the functions of His Godhead by Himself and should stand in need of other associate gods : Glorified is He that I should make another an associate with Him in rendering thanks for these blessings."

The best practical commentary of the intention and meaning of this verse are the words that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) used to pronounce at the time he sat on the conveyance. Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar says that whenever the Holy Prophet sat on a conveyance for a journey, he would pronounce *Allah-u Akbar* thrice, then would recite this verse, and then pray : "O God, I implore You to grant me in this journey the grace of goodness and piety and such acts as may please You. O God, make the journey easy and roll up the long distance for us ; O God, You alone are the Companion during the journey and Guardian of the family in our absence. O God, take care of us during the journey and our household in our absence." (Musnad Aḥmad, Muslim, Abū Da'ūd, Nasā'i, Dārimi, Tirmidhī).

Ḥaḍrat 'Ali says : Once the Holy Prophet put his foot in the stirrup with *bismillah*, and then, after riding, said : *Al-ḥamd-u lillāh, subḥān-alladhī sakhkhara lanā hādihā*, then pronounced *al-ḥamd-u lillāh* thrice, and *Allah-u Akbar* thrice ; then said : *Subḥāna-ka, lā ilāha illā anta, qad zalamtu nafsī fagh-fir-lī*. Then he laughed. I asked :

(Contd. on page 178)

إِذَا اسْتَوَيْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ وَ تَقُولُوا سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي سَخَّرْنَا هَذَا وَمَا كُنَّا لَهُ مُقْرِنِينَ ﴿١٤٤﴾
 وَإِنَّا إِلَىٰ رَبِّنَا لَمُنْقَلِبُونَ ﴿١٤٥﴾ وَجَعَلُوا لَهُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ جُزْءًا إِنَّا لِلْإِنْسَانِ
 لَكَفُورٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿١٤٦﴾ أَمِ اتَّخَذَ مِمَّا يَخْلُقُ بَنَاتٍ وَأَصْفَكُمْ بِالْبَنِينَ ﴿١٤٧﴾ وَإِذَا بُشِّرَ
 أَحَدُهُمْ بِمَا ضَرَبَ لِلرَّحْمَنِ مَثَلًا ظَلَّ وَجْهُهُ مُسْوَدًّا وَهُوَ كَظِيمٌ ﴿١٤٨﴾ أَوْ
 مَنْ يَنْشَأُ فِي الْحُلِيِّةِ وَهُوَ فِي الْخِصَامِ غَيْرُ مُبِينٍ ﴿١٤٩﴾ وَجَعَلُوا الْمَلَائِكَةَ الَّذِينَ
 هُمْ عَبْدُ الرَّحْمَنِ إِنَاثًا أَشْهَدُوا خَلْقَهُمْ سَتُكْتَبُ شَهَادَتُهُمْ وَيُسْأَلُونَ ﴿١٥٠﴾
 وَقَالُوا لَوْ شَاءَ الرَّحْمَنُ مَا عَبَدْنَاهُمْ مَّا لَهُمْ بِذَلِكَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا
 يَخْرُصُونَ ﴿١٥١﴾ أَمِ اتَّيْنَاهُمْ كِتَابًا مِنْ قَبْلِهِ فَهُمْ بِهِ مُسْتَسْكِنُونَ ﴿١٥٢﴾ بَلْ قَالُوا إِنَّا
 وَجَدْنَا آبَاءَنَا عَلَىٰ أُمَّةٍ وَإِنَّا عَلَىٰ آثَرِهِمْ مُّهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٥٣﴾ وَكَذَلِكَ مَا أَرْسَلْنَا
 مِنْ قَبْلِكَ فِي قَرْيَةٍ مِّنْ نَّذِيرٍ إِلَّا قَالَ مُتْرَفُوهَا إِنَّا وَجَدْنَا آبَاءَنَا عَلَىٰ
 أُمَّةٍ وَإِنَّا عَلَىٰ آثَرِهِمْ مُّقْتَدُونَ ﴿١٥٤﴾ قُلْ أَوَلَوْ جِئْتُكُمْ بِآهْدَىٰ مِمَّا وَجَدْتُمْ
 عَلَيْهِ آبَاءَكُمْ قَالُوا إِنَّا بِمَا أُرْسِلْتُمْ بِهِ كَافِرُونَ ﴿١٥٥﴾ فَانْتَقَمْنَا مِنْهُمْ فَأَنْظَرُوا
 كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكْذِبِينَ ﴿١٥٦﴾ وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ لِأَبِيهِ وَقَوْمِهِ إِنَّنِي
 بَرَاءٌ مِّمَّا تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿١٥٧﴾ إِلَّا الَّذِي فَطَرَنِي فَإِنَّهُ سَيَهْدِينِ ﴿١٥٨﴾ وَجَعَلَهَا كَلِمَةً
 بَاقِيَةً فِي عَقِبِهِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿١٥٩﴾ بَلْ مَتَّعْتُ هَؤُلَاءَ وَآبَاءَهُمْ حَتَّىٰ
 جَاءَهُمُ الْحَقُّ وَرَسُولٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿١٦٠﴾ وَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمُ الْحَقُّ قَالُوا هَذَا سِحْرٌ
 وَإِنَّا بِهِ كَافِرُونَ ﴿١٦١﴾ وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ هَذَا الْقُرْآنُ عَلَىٰ رَجُلٍ مِّنَ
 الْقَرْيَتَيْنِ عَظِيمٍ ﴿١٦٢﴾ أَهَمْ يَقْسِمُونَ رَحْمَتَ رَبِّكَ نَحْنُ قَسَمْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ
 مَعِيشَتَهُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَرَفَعْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ دَرَجَاتٍ لِّيَتَّخِذَ

(In spite of knowing and recognizing all this) these people have made some of His servants to be part of Him.¹⁵ The fact is that man is manifestly ungrateful. 15

Did Allah choose from His creation daughters for Himself and blessed you with sons? whereas when the birth of the offspring whom they ascribe to the Merciful God, is announced to any of them, his face grows black and he is filled with grief.¹⁶ Would they assign to Allah the offspring who is brought up among ornaments and is even unable to make itself clear in disputation?¹⁷ 16-18

They have regarded the angels, who are themselves servants of the Merciful God,¹⁸ as females. Have they seen them in person?¹⁹ Their evidence will be recorded and they will be called to account for it. 19

They say, "Had the Merciful God willed (that we should not worship them), we would never have worshipped them."²⁰ They do not at all know the fact of the matter: they only conjecture. Did We give them a Book before this of which they hold an authority (for their angel-worship)?²¹ Nay! but they say, "We found our forefathers on a way and we are only walking in their footsteps."²² Even so, whenever before you We sent a warner to a habitation, its people of means said, "We have found our forefathers on a way and we are only following in their footsteps."²³ Every Prophet asked them, "Will you still go on following the same old way even if I guide you to a more right way than that you found your forefathers following?" They replied, "We disbelieve the religion with which you have been sent." Consequently, We took vengeance on them. Just consider what was the end of those who denied (the Truth)! 20-25

Recall the time when Abraham had said to his father and his people:²⁴ "I have nothing to do with those whom you worship. I worship only Him Who 26-30

created me : He alone will guide me."²⁵ And Abraham left behind the same Word²⁶ among his descendants so that they should turn to it.²⁷ (In spite of that when the people started worshipping others, I did not annihilate them), but I went on providing sustenance of life to them and to their forefathers until the Truth came to them and a Messenger who expounded everything clearly.²⁸ But when the Truth came to them, they said, "This is a sorcery²⁹ and we refuse to believe in it."

31-32 They say, "Why was not this Qur'ān sent down to one of the great men from the two cities?"³⁰ Is it they who distribute the mercy of your Lord? It is We Who have distributed the means of their sustenance in the life of this world and raised some of them above others in ranks so that they may take one another in service;³¹ and your Lord's Mercy is far greater in worth than the wealth which (their chiefs) are amassing.³²

(Contd. from page 175)

What made you laugh, O Messenger of Allah? He replied: When a servant says: *Rabb-ighfir-lī*. Allah Almighty is very pleased with this. He says: My this servant knows that there is none beside Me who can forgive sins." (Aḥmad, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhī, Nasā'i, and others).

Abū Mijlaz says: Once I rode on my animal and recited this verse: *Subhān-alladhī sakhkhara lanā hādhā . . .*; Ḥadīrat Ḥasan (may Allah be pleased with him) said: Have you been commanded to say so? I said: What should I say then? He replied: Say, thank God, Who guided us to Islam: Thanks to Him, Who did us a favour by sending Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace): Thanks to Him, Who admitted us into the best community that has been raised for the people; then recite this verse." (Ibn Jarīr, *Aḥkān al-Qur'ān* by Jaṣṣāṣ).

14. That is, "While embarking on every journey one should remember that there is ahead a longer and final journey also. Besides, there is the possibility in the use of every conveyance that

an accident may turn that very journey into one's last journey ; therefore, every time one should remember one's return to one's Lord so that if something untoward happens, one does not die unawares.

Let us pause here for a while and consider the moral results of this teaching. Can one imagine that a person who while sitting on a conveyance starts his journey consciously with full remembrance of Allah and his return and accountability before Him, would commit sins and injustices and tyrannies on the way? Can a person think or utter these words from his mouth when he intends to go to meet a prostitute, or to visit a club for the purpose of drinking and gambling? Can a ruler, or a government official, or a merchant, who has stepped out of his house with such thoughts and such words at his lips, usurp the rights of others when he reaches his destination? Can a soldier utter these words while boarding his aircraft or tank when he goes out to shed blood of the innocent and deprive the weak of their freedom? If not, then this one thing alone is enough to bar every movement undertaken for the commission of a sin.

15. "To make part of Allah" implies declaring a servant of Allah His offspring, for an offspring inevitably is homogeneous with and a part of the father's body, and regarding somebody as Allah's son or daughter means that he or she is being made a partner in Allah's Being. Besides, another form of making a creature a part of Allah is that it should be regarded as possessor of the attributes and powers as are specifically Allah's own, and it should be invoked under the same concept, or rites of worship performed before it, or its sanctities observed and regarded as imperative and binding, for in that case man divides divinity and providence between Allah and His servants and hands over a part of it to the servants.

16. Here, the folly of the polytheists of Arabia has been fully exposed. They said that the angels were the daughters of Allah. They had carved out their images as females, and these were their goddesses whom they worshipped. About this Allah says: In the first place, in spite of knowing and recognizing that the Creator of the earth and heavens is Allah and it is He Who has made this earth a cradle for you and it is He Who sends down the rain from the sky and it is He Who has created these animals for your service, yet you have taken others as gods beside Him, whereas those whom

you serve as deities are not God but creatures of God. Then, furthermore, you have made some of the servants associates of Allah not only in His attributes but in His Being as well, and invented the creed that they were Allah's offspring. Then, not resting content with this, you assigned to Allah that kind of the offspring which you regard as disgraceful for your own selves. When a daughter is born in your house, your face grows dark, you feel distressed, and sometimes you bury her alive. This offspring you assign to Allah and reserve for yourselves the sons, whom you regard as a source of joy and pride. Even then you claim that you believe in Allah.

17. In other words, "You have assigned to Allah the offspring that is by nature delicate, weak and frail, and adopted for yourselves the offspring that is bold, courageous and fearless."

This verse shows permissibility of the ornaments for the women, for Allah has mentioned the ornaments as a natural thing for them. The same is also confirmed by the *Hadith*. Imām Aḥmad, Abū Da'ūd and Nasā'ī have related on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Alī that the Holy Prophet took silk in one hand and gold in the other and said that both were forbidden to be used in dress by the men of his *Ummah*. Tirmidhī and Nasā'ī have related from Ḥaḍrat Abū Mūsā Ash'arī a tradition, saying that the Holy Prophet said: "Silk and gold have been forbidden for the men but made lawful for the women of my *Ummah*." 'Allāma Abū Bakr al-Jaṣṣāṣ has discussed this question in his *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* and related the following traditions:

Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah says: Once Usāmah, son of Zaid bin Ḥārithah, was hurt and started bleeding. The Holy Prophet loved him like his own children. He sucked his blood and spat it out, and cheered him saying, "Had Usāmah been a daughter we would have adorned him with ornaments! Had Usāmah been a daughter, we would have dressed him in fine clothes!"

Ḥaḍrat Abū Mūsā Ash'arī has related that the Holy Prophet said: "Wearing of silken clothes and ornaments of gold is unlawful for the men of my *Ummah* but lawful for the women."

Ḥaḍrat 'Amr bin 'Ās has related: "Once two women came before the Holy Prophet, and they were wearing bracelets of gold. He said: Would you like that Allah should make you wear brace-

lets of the fire instead of these? They replied that they would not. Thereupon he said: Pay their dues, i.e. the *zakāt* due on them."

Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'isha has stated that there is no harm in wearing the ornaments if the *zakāt* due on them is paid.

Ḥaḍrat 'Umar wrote to Ḥaḍrat Abū Mūsā Ash'arī: Order the Muslim women who live in the areas under your administrative control that they should pay the *zakāt* dues on their ornaments.

Imām Abū Ḥanīfah has related the following traditions on the authority of 'Amr bin Dīnār: Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah had arranged ornaments of gold for her sisters and Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar for his daughters.

After citing all these traditions 'Allama Jaṣṣāṣ writes: "The traditions that have been related from the Holy Prophet and the Companions about the permissibility and lawfulness of gold and silk for the women are better known and more common than those that are there about their unlawfulness, and the above verse also points to their lawfulness. Then the practice of the Muslims also from the time of the Holy Prophet and his Companions till our time (i.e. till the latter part of the 4th century of *hijrah*) has been the same, and no one ever objected to it. In such matters, no objection can be admitted on the basis of the isolate reports (*Akhbār āḥād*)."

18. That is, who are free from this that they should be males or females.

19. Another translation can be: "Were they present at the time of their creation?"

20. This was their reasoning from destiny to cover up their deviation and error, and this has been the argument of the wrongdoers in every age. They argued that their worshipping the angels became possible only because Allah allowed them to do so. Had He not willed so they could not have done it; and then it had been a practice with them for centuries and no torment from Allah had descended on them, which meant that Allah did not disapprove of their this practice.

21. It means this: "These ignorant people think that whatever is happening in the world has the approval of Allah for it, because

it is happening according to His will. This argument, however, is wrong. For it is not only *shirk* which is being committed in the world, but countless other crimes like stealing, robbery, murder, bribery, etc. also are taking place, which nobody likes. Then, can it be said by the same reasoning that all such acts are lawful and good only because Allah is letting them happen in His world, and when He allows them to happen, He must have approved of them also? The means of knowing what Allah likes and what He hates are not the events that are happening in the world, but the Book of Allah, which comes through His Messenger and in which Allah Himself states as to what beliefs, what deeds and what morals He likes and what He dislikes. If these people have a Book, which came before the Qur'ān, and which tells that Allah has appointed the angels also as deities beside Himself and that they should worship them also, they should cite it." (For further explanation, see Al-An'ām : 107, 112, 137, 148-149 ; Al-A'rāf : 28 ; Yūnus : 99 ; Hūd : 118-119 ; Ar-Ra'd : 31 ; An-Nahl : 9, 35 36, 93 ; and E.N. 20 of Az-Zumar and E.N. 11 of Ash-Shūrā).

22. That is, "They have no authority of any divine book ; the only authority they have is that that has been the practice since the time of their forefathers ; therefore, they have taken the angels as goddesses in imitation of them."

23. Here, the point worthy of consideration is why the well-to-do people of every community only have resisted the Prophets and upheld the imitation of their forefathers in every age. Why have they alone been in the forefront to oppose the Truth and to endeavour to maintain the established falsehood and to beguile and incite the common people against them? Its basic causes were two: (1) The well-to-do and affluent people are so absorbed in making and enjoying the world of their own that they are not inclined to bother themselves about the useless debate (as they assume it to be) between the Truth and falsehood. Their love of ease and mental lethargy renders them so heedless of religion and conservative that they want the established order, no matter whether it is based on truth or falsehood, to remain in force so that they do not have to take the trouble of thinking about the new order at all for themselves. (2) Their interests become so dependent on the established order that when they get the first glimpse of the order presented by the Prophets they start feeling that if it came, it would

not only put an end to their leadership but also would deprive them of the freedom to consume the lawful and commit the unlawful. (For further details, see Al-An'ām : 123 ; Al-A'rāf : 66-70, 75, 88, 109, 127 ; Hūd : 27-28 ; Banī Isrā'īl : 16 ; Al-Mu'minūn : 24-33, 46 ; Sabā : 34 and the corresponding E.N.'s).

24. For details, see Al-Baqarah 124-133, Al-An'ām : 74-84, Ibrāhīm : 35-41, Maryam : 41-50, Al-Anbiyā' : 51-73, Ash-Shu'arā : 69-89, Al-'Ankabūt : 16-27, Aş-Şāffāt : 83-100 and the corresponding E.N.'s.

25. In these words not only did the Prophet Abraham state his creed but also gave the argument for it. The reason for not having any connection with the other deities is that they neither have created nor they give right guidance in any matter, nor they can; and the reason for having a connection only with Allah Almighty is that He alone is the Creator and He alone gives, and can give, the right guidance to mankind.

26. "The same word": the word that none but the Creator is worthy of worship in the world.

27. That is, "Whenever they swerve from the right path, this word should be there to guide them so that they return to it again." This event has been mentioned here in order to expose the foolishness of the disbelieving Quraish and to put them to shame, as if to say : "When you have adopted obedience of your ancestors, you have selected the most depraved of them for the purpose instead of the most righteous and illustrious, who were the Prophets Abraham and Ishmael (peace be upon them)." The basis of the leadership of the Quraish in Arabia was that they were the descendants of the Prophets Abraham and Ishmael and were the attendants of the Ka'bah built by them. Therefore, they should have followed them and not their ignorant forefathers who had given up the way of the Prophets and adopted polytheism from the neighbouring idol-worshippers. Furthermore, by mentioning this event another error of those people has been pointed out. That is, if the blind imitation of the forefathers, without the distinction of good and evil, had been the right thing, the Prophet Abraham should have done so in the first instance. But he had plainly told his father and his people that he could not follow their creed of ignorance in which they had abandoned the Creator and made those imaginary beings their deities, who were E^t the creator. This shows that the Prophet Abraham did not believe

in following the forefathers, but his creed was that before one followed the forefathers one should see whether they were following the right way or not, and if it became known by reason that they were following the wrong way, one should give up their way and adopt the way that was proved right.

28. Another meaning of the word *“rasūl-um-mubīn* can be: “A Messenger whose being a Messenger was obvious and apparent: whose life before and after the Prophethood clearly testified that he was certainly Allah’s Messenger.”

29. For explanation, see *Sūrah Al-Anbiyā’* : 3 and E.N. 5 on it, and E.N. 5 of *Sūrah Ṣuād*.

30. “The two cities”: Makkah and Ṭā’if. What the disbelievers meant was this: “Had Allah really willed to send a messenger and intended to send down a book to him, He would have selected a great man from our these central cities for the purpose. For Allah could not have selected for this great mission a person who was born an orphan, who did not inherit much property, who passed his youth by tending goats, who even at present earned his living through business with his wife’s money, and who was neither the chief of a tribe nor the head of a family. Were not there well known chiefs like Walīd bin Mughīrah and Utbah bin Rabī’ah in Makkah, and nobles like ‘Urwah bin Mas’ūd, Ḥabīb bin ‘Amr, Kinānah bin ‘Abd-i ‘Amr and Ibn ‘Abd Yālīl in Ṭā’if? This was their reasoning. In the first instance, they were also not inclined to believe that a man could be a Messenger. But when the Qur’ān refuted their this misconception by argument and reason and they were told that in the past only men had come as Messengers, and a man only could be a Messenger for the guidance of the people, and not another kind of being and the Messengers who came did not descend, suddenly from heavens, but were born in the same ordinary dwellings, walked about in the streets, had children and families and stood in need of food and drink (see *An-Naḥl* : 43, *Banī Isrā’īl* : 94-95, *Yūsuf* : 109, *Al-Furqān* : 7, 20; *Al-Anbiyā’*: 7-8; *Ar-Ra’d* : 38), they took this stand, saying: “Well, even if a human being, he should be a big man, who should be wealthy, influential and awe-inspiring and having a large following. How could Muḥammad bin ‘Abdullah (upon whom be Allah’s peace) be fit for this appointment?”

31. This is the answer to their objection, which briefly mentions many important things: First, it asks: “Since when have these

people become responsible for distributing the mercy of your Lord? Is it for them to decide whom Allah should favour with His mercy and whom He should not? (Here, by Allah's mercy is implied His general mercy from which everyone has a share).

Second, Allah says: "Prophethood is a great blessing: We have even kept the distribution of the common means of life in the world in Our own hand, and have not entrusted it to anyone else. We create someone beautiful and another ugly, someone with a sweet voice and another with a harsh voice, someone robust and strong and another weak and frail, someone intelligent and another dull, someone with a strong memory and another forgetful, someone with healthy limbs and another a cripple, or blind or deaf and dumb, someone in a rich family and another among the poor, someone in an advanced country and another in a backward community. No one can do anything about this destiny concerning birth. One is compelled to be what We have made him. And it is in no one's power to avert the impact one's circumstances of birth have on one's destiny. Then it is We Ourselves Who are distributing provisions, power, honour, fame, wealth, government, etc. among men. No one can degrade the one whom We have blessed with good fortune, and no one can save from ruin the one whom We have afflicted with misfortune. All plans and schemes of man become ineffective against Our decrees. In this universal Divine System, therefore, how can these people decide as to whom should the Master of the universe make His Prophet and whom He should not?"

Thirdly, "An abiding principle that We have kept in view in this Divine System is that everything should not be given to one and the same person, or everything should not be given to everybody. If you look around carefully, you will see that great differences exist between the people in every respect. We have given one thing to one person but deprived him of another, and given the same to another one. This is based on the wisdom that no human being should become independent of others, but everyone should remain dependent on the other in one way or the other. Now it would be foolish on your part to think that We should have given the Prophethood also to the same person whom We had blessed with wealth and nobility. Likewise, will you also say that wisdom, knowledge, wealth, beauty, power, authority and all other ex-

(Contd. on page 188)

بَعْضُهُمْ بَعْضًا سَخِرِيًّا وَرَحِمْتَ رَبِّكَ خَيْرٌ مِّمَّا يَجْمَعُونَ ﴿١٣٦﴾ وَ لَوْ لَا أَنْ
 يَكُونَنَّ النَّاسُ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً لَجَعَلْنَا لِمَنْ يَكْفُرُ بِالرَّحْمَنِ لِبُيُوتِهِمْ سُقْفًا مِّنْ
 فِضَّةٍ وَمَعَارِجَ عَلَيْهَا يَظْهَرُونَ ﴿١٣٧﴾ وَ لِبُيُوتِهِمْ أَبْوَابًا وَسُرُورًا عَلَيْهَا يُتَكُونُونَ ﴿١٣٨﴾
 وَ زُخْرَفًا وَإِنْ كُلُّ ذَلِكَ لَمَّا مَتَاعُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةُ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ
 لِلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١٣٩﴾ وَ مَنْ يَعِشْ عَنِ ذِكْرِ الرَّحْمَنِ نَقِيضٌ لَهُ شَيْطَانًا فَهُوَ لَهُ
 قَرِينٌ ﴿١٤٠﴾ وَ إِنَّهُمْ لَيَصْذَقُونَ نَارًا عَنِ السَّبِيلِ وَ يُحَسِّبُونَ أَنَّهُمْ مُّهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٤١﴾
 حَتَّى إِذَا جَاءَنَا قَالَ يَلَيْتَ بَيْنِي وَ بَيْنَكَ بَعْدَ الشَّرِيقَيْنِ فَيَنسُ الْقَرِينَ ﴿١٤٢﴾
 وَ لَنْ يَنْفَعَكَ الْيَوْمَ إِذْ ظَلَمْتُمْ أَنْتُمْ فِي الْعَذَابِ مُشْتَرِكُونَ ﴿١٤٣﴾ أَفَأَنْتَ تُسْمِعُ
 الصَّمْرَ أَوْ تَهْدِي الْعُمْى وَ مَنْ كَانَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿١٤٤﴾ فَأَمَّا نَذَاهِبَنَ بِكَ
 فَأَنَا مِنْهُمْ مُنْتَقِمُونَ ﴿١٤٥﴾ أَوْ تُرِيكَ الَّذِي وَعَدْنَاهُمْ فَأَنَا عَلَيْهِمْ مُّقْتَدِرُونَ ﴿١٤٦﴾
 فَاسْتَمْسِكْ بِالَّذِي أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ إِنَّكَ عَلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿١٤٧﴾ وَ إِنَّهُ لَذِكْرٌ
 لَّكَ وَ لِقَوْمِكَ وَ سَوْفَ تُسْأَلُونَ ﴿١٤٨﴾ وَ سَأَلَ مَنْ أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رُسُلِنَا
 أَجَعَلْنَا مِنْ دُونِ الرَّحْمَنِ إِلَهًا يُعْبَدُونَ ﴿١٤٩﴾ وَ لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا مُوسَى بِآيَاتِنَا
 إِلَى فِرْعَوْنَ وَ مَلَائِكِهِ فَقَالَ إِنِّي رَسُولُ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٥٠﴾ فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ بِآيَاتِنَا
 إِذَا هُمْ مِنْهَا يَضْحَكُونَ ﴿١٥١﴾ وَ مَا تُرِيهِمْ مِنْ آيَةٍ إِلَّا هِيَ أَكْبَرُ مِنْ أُخْتِهَا
 وَ أَخَذْنَاهُمْ بِالْعَذَابِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿١٥٢﴾ وَ قَالُوا يَا أَيُّهُ السِّحْرُ آدَعُ لَنَا
 رَبِّكَ بِمَا عَهِدَ عِنْدَكَ إِنَّا لَمُهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٥٣﴾ فَلَمَّا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُمْ الْعَذَابَ إِذَا
 هُمْ يَنْكَبُونَ ﴿١٥٤﴾ وَ نَادَى فِرْعَوْنُ فِي قَوْمِهِ قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ أَلَيْسَ لِي مُلْكُ
 مِصْرَ وَ هَذِهِ الْأَنْهَارُ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِي أَفَلَا تُبْصِرُونَ ﴿١٥٥﴾ إِنَّ أَمَّا أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِّنْ

But for the fear that all mankind would follow the same way, We would have made for those who disbelieve in the Merciful God, houses with roofs of silver and gold, and stairways by which they go to upper chambers, and their doors and their couches on which they recline (all of silver and gold).³³ But all this is merely a provision of this worldly life; and the Hereafter with your Lord is only for the righteous. 33-35

He who does not heed the admonition of the Merciful,³⁴ We set a satan upon him, and he becomes his companion. These satans hinder such people from the right way while they think that they are guided aright. Ultimately, when he comes to Us, he will say to his satan companion, "Would that between me and you there were the distance of the East and the West: you turned out to be a most evil companion." Then it will be said to them, "When you have done wrong, it will avail you nothing today as you and your satans are partners in the same torment."³⁵ 36-39

Now, O Prophet, will you make the deaf to hear you, or show the way to the blind and those who are involved in manifest deviation?³⁶ Now We have to punish them, whether We take you away from the world, or let you see their end, which We have promised them: We have full power over them.³⁷ So, hold fast to the Book that has been revealed to you: you are surely on the Straight Way.³⁸ The fact is that this Book is a great honour for you and your people, and soon you shall be called to account for it.³⁹ You may ask all other Messengers whom We sent before you if We ever had appointed any other gods to be worshipped besides the Merciful God.⁴⁰ 40-45

We⁴¹ sent Moses with Our Signs⁴² to Pharaoh and his chiefs, and he said to them, "I am a Messenger of the Lord of the worlds". Then, when he showed Our Signs 46-53

to them, they laughed at him. We showed them Sign after Sign, each greater than the one preceding it, and We seized them with the torment that they might give up their attitude.⁴³ Whenever a torment visited them, they said, "O sorcerer, pray to your Lord for us by virtue of the appointment you hold from Him : we shall surely take the right way." But whenever We removed the torment from them, they would go back on their word.⁴⁴ One day Pharaoh proclaimed among his people,⁴⁵ "O my people: Is not the kingdom of Egypt mine? And are not these canals flowing beneath me? Can you not see who is better :⁴⁶ I or this contemptible, wretched person,⁴⁷ who can hardly express himself clearly?⁴⁸ Why were not bracelets of gold sent down on him, or a company of angels as attendants?"⁴⁹

(Contd. from 185)

cellences should be assembled in one and the same person, and the one who has not been given one thing, should not be given anything else?"

32. "Your Lord's mercy": the Prophethood. It means this: "Your leaders and chiefs whom you regard as big people because of their wealth and dignity and chiefship, are not worthy of this wealth, which has been given to Muḥammad bin 'Abdullah (upon whom be Allah's peace). This wealth is far superior to that and for this the criterion is different. If you think that every noble and rich man is worthy of becoming a prophet, it would only show your own thinking. Why do you expect Allah to be so ignorant and foolish?"

33. That is, "This silver and gold whose possession by somebody is the highest blessing and the very climax of good fortune in your sight, is so base and contemptible a thing in the sight of Allah that had there been no danger of all human beings being inclined towards unbelief, He would have made every disbeliever's house of gold and silver. Since when has the abundance of this worthless commodity become proof of man's nobility and his piety and his spiritual purity? This kind of wealth is even found in the possession of those foul and wicked people whose filthy characters make the whole

society stink. And this you have made the criterion of man's greatness of character."

34. "*Dhikr* of the Merciful": His remembrance as well as His admonition and the Qur'ān.

35. That is, "In this there is no aspect of consolation for you that the one who misguided you is being punished, for you also are receiving the same punishment for accepting and following the deviation."

36. It means to say: "Pay attention to those who are inclined to listen and have not closed their eyes to the realities, and do not consume yourself in showing the way to the blind and making the deaf to hear, nor consume yourself with the grief as to why your near and dear ones are not coming to the right path, and why they are making themselves worthy of Allah's torment."

37. This thing can be understood fully only by keeping in view the background in which it was said. The disbelievers of Makkah thought that the person of the Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) had become a source of trouble for them. If they could somehow get rid of him, matters would become normal. On the basis of this evil thought they were holding consultations day and night and planning to kill him. At this, Allah addresses His Prophet so as to tell them indirectly: "It doesn't make any difference whether you remain among them or not: if you live, you will see them meet their doom with your own eyes; if you are recalled from the world, they will be sent to their doom in your absence, because they cannot in any case escape the consequences of their misdeeds."

38. That is, "You should not worry as to what punishment do those who are resisting and opposing the truth with injustice and dishonesty receive and when, nor take thought for this whether Islam flourishes during your lifetime or not. For you this satisfaction is enough that you are on the Right Path. Therefore, you should go on doing your mission unconcerned about the results, and leave it to Allah whether He defeats falsehood in front of you or after you."

39. That is, "There can be no greater good fortune for a person than that Allah should choose him from among all men to become

the recipient of His Book, and there can be no greater good fortune also for a nation than that Allah should raise His Prophet in it, apart from all other nations of the world, and should send down His Book in its tongue, and give it the opportunity to rise as the standard-bearer of Divine Message in the world. If the Quraish and the people of Arabia have no sense of this great honour, and spurn it, a time will come when they will be called upon to account for it."

40. "Ask the Messengers": Find out from the Books brought by them. Just as the meaning of: "If there arises any dispute among you about anything, refer it to Allah and His Prophet," is not this that the dispute should be taken before Allah and His Messenger, but that one should turn to the Book of Allah and the *Sunnah* of His Messenger for a decision, so "asking the Messengers" also does not mean that one should approach all the Messengers who have left the world and ask them, but the right meaning is: "Discover what teachings the Messengers of Allah have left in the world as to which of them taught that another than Allah also is worthy of worship and service."

41. This story has been narrated here for three objects: (1) That when Allah sends His Prophet to a country and nation and affords it the opportunity which He has now given to the Arabs by appointing the Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) to Prophethood, and it, instead of taking advantage of it, commits the folly of Pharaoh and his people, it meets the same fate which has become an object lesson in history. (2) That just as Pharaoh also on account of his arrogance and pride of kingdom and grandeur and wealth and possessions had belittled the Prophet Moses as mean and contemptible, so the unbelieving Quraish now are regarding Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) as insignificant as against their chiefs. But God's judgement was different which ultimately proved who was really great. (3) That to mock Allah's Revelations and show stubbornness against His warnings is not a mere joke, but a very serious sin. If you do not learn a lesson from the fate of those who have been doomed on account of this, you also would go to your doom on account of the same."

42. This implies the signs with which the Prophet Moses had gone to the court of Pharaoh, i.e. the Signs of the staff and the

shining hand. (For explanation, see Al-A'rāf : 107-108, Tā Hā : 20-22, Ash-Shu'arā : 32-33, An-Naml : 10-12, Al-Qaṣaṣ : 31-32).

43. This implies the Signs which Allah showed them through the Prophet Moses afterwards, and these were the following :

(1) A public encounter of Allah's Prophet with the magicians, who believed after their defeat. For details, see Al-A'rāf : 112-126, Tā Hā : 58-73, Ash-Shu'arā : 37-51.

(2) A severe famine which hit the land of Egypt according to the Prophet Moses' announcement and which left the country only on his prayer.

(3) Dreadful rain and hail-storms accompanied by lightning and thunder struck the country even as the Prophet had announced, which destroyed the crops and dwellings and which also was removed only on his prayer.

(4) The sudden appearance of locusts in the land. This calamity also was not removed till the Prophet prayed to Allah.

(5) Lice and weavils spread throughout the country according to the announcement made by Moses, which afflicted men and animals on the one hand, and destroyed granaries on the other. This torment also was averted when the Prophet Moses was requested to pray for its removal.

(6) Frogs appeared everywhere in the country according to the warning given by Moses, which put the whole population to great distress; this calamity also did not retreat till the Prophet prayed for it.

(7) The torment of blood appeared precisely as foretold by Moses, which turned the water of all canals, wells, springs, pools and cisterns into blood. The fish died and the water smelled so bad that the Egyptians could not drink from it for a full week. This evil also was averted when the Prophet Moses was asked to pray for its removal. For details, see Al-A'rāf : 130-136, An-Naml : 12 and E.N. 37 of Al-Mu'min.

Chapters 7 to 10 of Exodus also contain the details of these calamities, but it is a combination of gossip and truth. It says that when the calamity of blood appeared, the magicians also worked a similar miracle, but when the calamity of the lice came, the magicians could not produce lice, in response, and they said that that was

God's work. Even more strange than this is that when the storm of the frogs came, the magicians also brought about frogs, but in spite of that Pharaoh requested only the Prophet Moses to pray to God to take away the frogs. The question is: When the magicians could produce frogs, why didn't Pharaoh get the frogs taken away through them? And how did it become known which of the frogs were Allah's work and which of the magicians'? The same question arises about the blood. When according to the warning of Moses water became blood everywhere, which water did the magicians turn into blood? And how was it known that the water of a particular place had turned blood by the power of the magicians? Such are the things which show that the Bible does not consist of purely Divine revelation, but the people who wrote it mixed up many things in it from their own imagination. The pity, however, is that the authors also were people of ordinary intelligence, who did not even know how to invent a story.

44. The stubbornness of Pharaoh and the chiefs of his people can be judged from this that when distressed by the torment they wanted the Prophet Moses to pray for its removal, even then they did not recognize him as a Prophet but addressed him as a magician, whereas they were not unaware of the truth about magic, and they also knew that those miraculous things could not be brought about by the power of magic. The most that a magician can do is that in a limited area he can so influence the people present in front of him as to make them feel that water has become blood, or frogs are coming out in large numbers or swarms of locusts are advancing. And within this limited place also no water will actually become blood, but water will remain water as soon as it comes outside it; no frog will be produced in actual fact, but will prove to be an imaginary thing as soon as brought outside the circle; locusts also would be imaginary: they would not be able to destroy any crop. As for this that a famine appears throughout a country, or that the canals and springs and wells of the country are filled with blood, or that swarms of locusts spread over thousands of square miles and eat up crops growing over lakhs of acres, this has neither been accomplished by a magician so far, nor can it ever happen by the power of magic. Should such magicians be there in the service of a king, he need not keep forces and fight wars; he could conquer the whole world by the power of magic. Even if the magicians possessed

such power, they would not seek service under the kings, but would assume kingship themselves.

The commentators in general have been perplexed as to why Pharaoh and his courtiers addressed the Prophet Moses as "O sorcerer," when they requested him to pray for the removal of the calamity, for the one who seeks another's help in a hard time flatters him and does not condemn him. They have given the interpretation that sorcery in the Egypt of those days was held as a very respectable art, and when they addressed Moses as "O sorcerer" they did not condemn him, but honoured him because it amounted to calling him as "O learned man." But this interpretation is absolutely wrong on the ground that wherever at other places in the Qur'an Pharaoh's sayings have been cited in which he has called the Prophet Moses a sorcerer and the miracles presented by him sorcery, the sense of condemnation and contempt becomes apparent, and it becomes manifestly clear that sorcery was false in his sight, which he imputed to the Prophet Moses so as to prove his claim to the Prophethood to be false! Therefore, it cannot be acceptable that suddenly at this time "sorcerer" became the title of an honourable and learned man in his sight. As for the question: Why did the Prophet Moses accede to his request at all when even while requesting him for the prayer, Pharaoh insulted him publicly, the answer is that the object before the Prophet Moses was to strengthen the case against those people by Allah's command. Their request to him to pray for the removal of the torment by itself proved that in their heart of hearts they had come to know why the torments were occurring, who was sending them and who could avert them. In spite of that, when they called him a "sorcerer" stubbornly, and went back on their word of following the right way as soon as the torment was averted, they in fact, did not do any harm to Allah's Prophet, but only caused the case and argument to be strengthened against themselves, which Allah at last decided against them with their total destruction. When they called him a sorcerer, this did not mean that they believed in their hearts as well that the torments against them were coming by the power of sorcery, but they realized it fully well that those were Allah's Signs and yet they denied them deliberately. The same thing has been said in Sūrah An-Naml : 14 : "They rejected those Signs out of sheer injustice and vanity, whereas in their heart of hearts they were convinced." (Contd. on page 198)

هَذَا الَّذِي هُوَ مَهِينٌ ۗ وَلَا يَكَادُ يَبِينُ ۚ فَلَوْلَا أَلْقَىٰ عَلَيْهِ آسُورَةٌ مِّنْ
 ذَهَبٍ أَوْ جَاءَ مَعَهُ الْمَلِيكَةُ مُقْتَرِنِينَ ۝ فَاسْتَخَفَّ قَوْمَهُ فَاطَاعُوهُ ۗ إِنَّهُمْ
 كَانُوا قَوْمًا فَسِيقِينَ ۝ فَلَمَّا اسْفُونا انْتَقَمْنَا مِنْهُمْ فَأَغْرَقْنَاهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ۝
 فَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ سَلَفًا وَمَثَلًا لِّلْآخِرِينَ ۚ وَلَمَّا ضُرِبَ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ مَثَلًا إِذَا قَوْمُكَ
 مِنْهُ يَصِدُّونَ ۝ وَقَالُوا ۗ الْهَيْتُنَا خَيْرٌ أَمْ هُوَ مَا ضَرَبُوهُ لَكَ إِلَّا جَدَلًا بَلْ
 هُمْ قَوْمٌ خَصِمُونَ ۚ إِنَّ هُوَ إِلَّا عَبْدٌ أَنْعَمْنَا عَلَيْهِ وَجَعَلْنَاهُ مَثَلًا لِّبَنِي
 إِسْرَائِيلَ ۚ وَلَوْ نَشَاءُ لَجَعَلْنَا مِنْكُمْ مَّلَكَةً فِي الْأَرْضِ يَخْلِفُونَ ۝ وَإِنَّهُ
 لَعِلْمٌ لِّلسَّاعَةِ فَلَا تَمْتَرَنَّ بِهَا وَاتَّبِعُونِ ۗ هَذَا صِرَاطٌ مُّسْتَقِيمٌ ۝ وَلَا
 يَصُدَّنَّكُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ ۝ وَلَمَّا جَاءَ عَيْسَىٰ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ
 قَالَ قَدْ جِئْتُكُمْ بِالْحِكْمَةِ وَإِلَابِينَ لَكُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي تَخْتَلِفُونَ فِيهِ
 فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاطِيعُونَ ۝ إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ رَبِّي وَرَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُوهُ ۗ هَذَا صِرَاطٌ
 مُّسْتَقِيمٌ ۚ فَاخْتَلَفَ الْأَحْزَابُ مِنْ بَيْنِهِمْ ۚ قَوْلٌ لِّلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْ عَذَابِ
 يَوْمِ الْيَوْمِ ۚ هَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا السَّاعَةَ أَنْ تَأْتِيَهُمْ بَغْتَةً وَهُمْ لَا
 يَشْعُرُونَ ۚ الْآخِلَاءُ يَوْمَئِذٍ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ إِلَّا الْمُتَّقِينَ ۚ يُعْبَادُ
 لَا خَوْفَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْيَوْمَ وَلَا أَنْتُمْ تَحْزَنُونَ ۚ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَكَانُوا
 مُسْلِمِينَ ۚ أَدْخِلُوا الْجَنَّةَ أَنْتُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُكُمْ تُحْبَرُونَ ۚ يُطَافُ عَلَيْهِمْ
 بِصِحَافٍ مِّنْ ذَهَبٍ وَأَكْوَابٍ ۚ وَفِيهَا مَا سَشْتَهِيهِ الْأَنْفُسُ وَتَلَذُّ الْأَعْيُنُ
 وَأَنْتُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ۝ وَتِلْكَ الْجَنَّةُ الَّتِي أُورِثْتُمُوهَا بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ۚ
 لَكُمْ فِيهَا فَاكِهَةٌ كَثِيرَةٌ مِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ ۚ إِنَّ الْمُجْرِمِينَ فِي عَذَابِ جَهَنَّمَ

He took his people to be light, and they obeyed him, for they were indeed a sinful people.⁵⁰ At last, when they had annoyed Us, We took vengeance on them and drowned them all together, and made them a precedent and an object lesson for the later generations.⁵¹

54-56

And when the son of Mary was cited as an example, your people raised a clamour at it, saying, "Are our gods better, or is he?"⁵² They have cited this example to you only in the spirit of dispute. The fact is that they are a quarrelsome people. The son of Mary was no more than a servant whom We favoured and made an example of Our power for the children of Israel.⁵³ If We please We can create angels from you⁵⁴ to succeed you in the earth. And he is, in fact, a Sign of the Hour;⁵⁵ therefore, do not have any doubt about it, and follow Me : this is the Straight Way. Let not Satan hinder you from this⁵⁶ : he is your open enemy. And when Jesus had come with clear Signs, he had said, "I have brought wisdom to you, and have come to make plain to you the reality of those things in which you differ : so fear Allah and follow me. The fact is that Allah is my Lord and your Lord, too. Worship Him alone : this is the Straight Way."⁵⁷ But (in spite of his clear teachings) the sects disagreed among themselves.⁵⁸ So, woe to those who committed evil from the punishment of a painful Day.

57-65

Do these people now only await the Hour (of Resurrection) that it should come upon them suddenly while they are unaware? When the Day comes all friends shall become enemies of one another except the righteous.⁵⁹ On that Day it will be said to those who had believed in Our Revelations and surrendered themselves, "O My servants ! Today you have nothing to fear, nor will there be any cause for you to grieve. Enter Paradise,

66-78

you and your wives⁶⁰ : you will be made happy !” There they shall have platters and cups of gold passed round to them and there they shall have everything that the souls can desire and the eyes can delight in. It will be said to them, “You shall live here for ever. You have inherited this Paradise by virtue of the deeds you did in the world. You have abundance of fruit here, which you will eat.” As for the criminals, they shall endure for ever the torment of Hell ; their punishment will never be lightened for them, and there they shall remain, despairing. We did not wrong them, but they themselves were the wrongdoers. They will call out, “O Mālik,⁶¹ let your Lord put an end to us !” He will answer, “Here you must remain ! We had brought the Truth to you, but most of you abhor the Truth”.⁶²

(Contd. from page 195)

45. Pharaoh probably sent heralds to the cities and towns throughout the country to proclaim what he said in his address to his ministers and courtiers in the capital. Pharaoh could not have availed of the services of a sycophantic press, controlled news agencies and official radio.

46. The words of the proclamation clearly show that ground was slipping from under the Pharaoh's feet. The miracles performed one after the other by the Prophet Moses had caused the common people's beliefs in their gods to waver and the Pharaoh's spell under which their dynasty was ruling over Egypt as representatives of the gods, was shattered. Thereupon, Pharaoh cried out : “O wretched people, can't you see who is ruling over this land and under whose control are the canals which have been dug out from the Nile, upon which depends your whole economy ? All these developments in this country have been brought about by me and my predecessors, but you are being devoted, charmed and fascinated by this pauper !”

47. “Wretched person” : the person who has neither wealth, power nor authority. This same objection had been raised by the disbelieving Quraish against the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace).

48. Some commentators have expressed the opinion that Pharaoh referred to the impediment of speech from which the Prophet Moses suffered since childhood. But this is not a correct opinion. As has been mentioned in Sūrah Ṭā Hā above, when the Prophet Moses was being appointed to Prophethood, he had implored Allah Almighty to remove the defect from his tongue so that the people might understand his speech, and at that very time his this request had also been granted along with his other requests (vv. 27-36). Moreover, orations of the Prophet Moses that have been cited at different places in the Qur'ān, point to his perfect eloquence and fluency. Therefore, the basis of Pharaoh's objection was not any impediment of speech from which Moses might be suffering, but what he meant was this : "This person talks confusedly : at least I have never been able to understand what he says."

49. In the ancient times when a person was appointed to be governor of a land or sent as an ambassador to a foreign country, a robe of honour was conferred on him by the king, which also included bracelets of gold, and he was also accompanied by a contingent of soldiers and servants for over-awing the people and for showing the glory and grandeur of the king who had appointed him. What Pharaoh meant to say was this : "If the King of the heavens had really sent Moses (peace be upon him) as His ambassador to His counterpart on the earth, he should have been dressed in a robe of honour and come with several contingents of angels in attendance. How strange that a poor man should appear with a staff in his hand and say that he was the messenger of the Lord of the worlds!"

50. A tremendous reality has been expressed in this brief sentence. When a person wishes to become autocratic in a country, and contrives every plan openly to achieve his object—practises every deception and trick, buys and sells consciences, and persecutes and crushes ruthlessly those who cannot be purchased—he, in fact, shows by his actions, whatever he may say to the contrary, that he takes the people of the country to be light as regards their intellect, morals and manliness, and has formed the impression that he can drive the foolish, unscrupulous and cowardly people wherever he likes. Then, when he has succeeded in his designs and the people become his obedient servants, they prove by their conduct and behaviour that they are actually what the wicked man had taken them to be, and the main cause of their depravity is that they are basically a "sinful people".

They are not in the least concerned as to what is the truth and what is falsehood, what is justice and what is injustice, whether the noble traits of character are truthfulness and honesty or falsehood and dishonesty and meanness. Instead of this, only their personal interests are of real importance to them, for the sake of which they remain ever ready to cooperate with every wicked person, to yield to every tyrant, to accept every falsehood and to suppress every protest that is voiced in favour of the truth.

51. That is, "They are a precedent for those who do not learn any lesson from their example, and an object lesson for those who are keen to learn a lesson."

52. In verse 45 above, it was said: "You may ask all other Messengers whom We sent before you whether We had appointed any other gods to be worshipped beside the Merciful God." When this discourse was being presented before the people of Makkah, a person called 'Abdullah ibn az-Zibārā in the traditions, put forward the objection: "Well, is it not a fact that the Christians regard the son of Mary as the son of God and worship him? What is then wrong with our gods? This caused much laughter among the crowd of the disbelievers and they started clamouring for an answer to this objection. But at this foolish behaviour, the continuity of the revelation was not broken, but was first completed and then the objection of the questioner was taken up. (It should be borne in mind that this incident has been reported in the books of commentaries in different ways which contain great variations, but after a study of the context and the traditions the real incident in our view is the same as we have mentioned above).

53. "Making an example of Our power" implies causing the Prophet Jesus to be born without a father, and then granting him such miracles as had not been granted to anyone before him nor to anyone after him. He would make a bird of clay and then breathe into it and it would become a living bird; he would give sight to those born blind; he would cure the lepers; so much so that he would raise the dead back to life. What Allah means to say is: "It is wrong to worship him as son of God and regard him as above servitude only because of his extraordinary birth and the great miracles granted to him. He was no more than a mere servant, whom We had blessed and made an example of Our power." (For details, see

Āl-'Imrān : 42-49, 59 ; An-Nisā : 156 ; Al-Mā'idah: 17, 110 ; Maryam : 17-35 ; Al-Anbiyā' : 91, Al-Mu'minūn : 50).

54. Another translation can be : "... make some of you angels."

55. Another translation of this sentence can be : "He is a means of the knowledge of Resurrection." Here the question arises : What is implied by "he"? According to Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan Baṣrī and Sa'īd bin Jubair it implies the Qur'ān. That is, one can learn from the Qur'ān that Resurrection will come. But this commentary is irrelevant to the context. There is nothing in the context on the basis of which it may be said that it refers to the Qur'ān. Other commentators almost unanimously have expressed the opinion that it implies the Prophet Jesus Christ, and this is suitable to the context. Now the question is : In what sense has Jesus Christ been called a Sign or a means of the knowledge of Resurrection? Ibn 'Abbās, Mujāhid, 'Ikrimah, Qatādah, Suddī, Ḍaḥḥāk, Abul 'Āliyah and Abū Mālik say that this refers to the second coming of the Prophet Jesus as has been foretold in a large number of the Traditions, and the verse means that when he comes the second time to the world, it will become known that Resurrection is not far behind. But in spite of the great authority that these scholars hold it is difficult to believe that in this verse the second advent of the Prophet Jesus has been called a Sign of Resurrection, or a means of its knowledge. For it is contradicted by the next verse. His second advent, indeed, can be a means of the knowledge of Resurrection only for those people who will be living in that future period or will be born after that. How could he be regarded as a means of the knowledge for the pagans of Makkah, who are being asked "not to have any doubt about it"? Therefore, the correct interpretation in our opinion is the one that has been given by some other commentators, according to which the Prophet Jesus' birth without a father and his making a bird out of clay and his raising the dead back to life has been presented as a proof of the possibility of Resurrection. So, the Divine Words would mean this: "Why do you think it is impossible for God to raise you and all mankind from death when He can create a child without a father and a servant of His can breathe life into an image of clay and raise the dead back to life?"

(Contd. on page 201)

خَلِدُونَ ۗ لَا يُفْتَرُ عَنْهُمْ وَهُمْ فِيهِ مُبْلِسُونَ ۗ وَمَا ظَلَمْنَاهُمْ وَلَكِنْ
 كَانُوا هُمُ الظَّالِمِينَ ۗ وَنَادُوا يَمْلِكُ لِيَقْضِ عَلَيْنَا رَبُّكَ قَالَ إِنَّكُمْ تُكْتَبُونَ ۗ
 لَقَدْ جِئْتُمْ بِالْحَقِّ وَلَكِنْ أَكْثَرَكُمْ لِلْحَقِّ كُرْهُونَ ۗ أَمْ أَوْرَمُوا أَمْراً فَإِنَّا
 مُبْرَمُونَ ۗ أَمْ يَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّا لَا نَسْمَعُ سِرَّهُمْ وَنَجْوَاهُمْ ۗ بَلَىٰ وَرُسُلْنَا
 لَدَيْهِمْ يَكْتُبُونَ ۗ قُلْ إِن كَانَ لِلرَّحْمَنِ وَلَدٌ ۗ فَإِنَّا أَوَّلُ الْعَبِيدِينَ ۗ
 سُبْحَانَ رَبِّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبِّ الْعَرْشِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ ۗ فَذَرَهُمْ
 يَخَوْضُوا وَيَلْعَبُوا ۗ حَتَّىٰ يُلَاقُوا يَوْمَهُمُ الَّذِي يُوْعَدُونَ ۗ وَهُوَ الَّذِي فِي
 السَّمَاءِ إِلَهُ ۗ وَفِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَهُ ۗ وَهُوَ الْحَكِيمُ الْعَلِيمُ ۗ وَتَبَارَكَ الَّذِي لَهُ
 مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا ۗ وَعِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ السَّاعَةِ ۗ وَإِلَيْهِ
 تُرْجَعُونَ ۗ وَلَا يَمْلِكُ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ الشَّفَاعَةَ إِلَّا مَنْ شَهِدَ
 بِالْحَقِّ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ۗ وَلَئِن سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ خَلَقَهُمْ لَيَقُولُنَّ اللَّهُ ۗ فَأَنَّى
 يُؤْفَكُونَ ۗ وَقِيلَ لَهُ يَرْبِّ إِنَّ هَؤُلَاءِ قَوْمٌ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ۗ فَاصْفَحْ عَنْهُمْ
 وَقُلْ سَلَامٌ فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُونَ ۗ

79-80

Have they decided to contrive a plan?⁶³ Well, we too, shall contrive. Do they think that We do not hear their secret talk and their whisperings? We hear everything and Our angels at their sides are recording it.

81-83

Say to them, "If the Merciful really had a son, I would be the first to worship him."⁶⁴ Exalted is the Ruler of the heavens and the earth. Lord of the Throne, above what they ascribe to Him! Well, let them remain absorbed in their falsehoods and sport, till they

see that Day of theirs with which they are being threatened.

He alone is God in heavens and God on earth : He is the All-Wise, the All-Knowing.⁶⁵ Highly blessed is He to Whom belongs the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth and of all that lies between them.⁶⁶ He alone has the knowledge of the Hour of Resurrection, and to Him you shall all be returned.⁶⁷ 84-85

Those whom they call upon beside Him, have no power of intercession except that one may testify to the Truth by virtue of knowledge.⁶⁸ 86

And if you ask them who created them, they will surely say, "Allah."⁶⁹ Whence then are they being deluded? By this word of the Messenger: "O my Lord, these are a people who would not believe."⁷⁰ 87-88

Well, O Prophet, bear with them and say, "Peace to you!"⁷¹ Soon they shall know. 89

(Contd. from page. 201)

56. "... hinder you from this": hinder you from believing in Resurrection.

57. That is, "The Prophet Jesus himself had never claimed that he was God or son of God, and that the people should worship him, but, on the contrary; his message was the same as of all other Prophets, the same as was now being conveyed to you through Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace)." (For explanation, see Āl-'Imrān : 50-51, An-Nisā : 171-172, Al-Mā'idah : 72, 116-117, Maryam : 30-36).

58. That is, one group of the people denied him and in their antagonism went to the extent of accusing him of illegitimate birth and got him crucified as they thought; the other group believed in him but owing to exaggerated reverence made him son of God, and then the question of man's being God became such a riddle for it that every effort to resolve it caused it to be divided into countless sects. (For explanation, see An-Nisā : 171, Al-Mā'idah : 17, 77, 116-117 and the corresponding E.N.'s).

59. In other words, only those friendships will remain unaffected which are based on righteousness and piety in the world; all other friendships will turn into enmities, and those who are cooperating with one another in deviation, tyranny and wickedness today, will on the Day of Resurrection, put the blame on others and try to escape. This subject has been treated repeatedly at many places in the Qur'ān so that every person in this very world may fully realize with whom it would be beneficial for him to cooperate and with whom it is harmful.

60. The word *azwāj* as used in the original can be used both for the wives and for those people who are a person's close associates, friends and peers. This comprehensive word has been used so as to cover both the meanings. The believers will be accompanied both by their believing wives and by their believing friends in Paradise.

61. "Mālik": a keeper of Hell as is evident from the context.

62. That is, "We made the reality plain to you, but you were fond of the imaginary, and you had an aversion to the truth. Now, why do you lament at the fate of your foolish choice?" It may be a part of the Hell-keeper's answer, and it may also be that his answer ended with: "Here you must remain!" and this second sentence an addition by Allah. In the first case, the keeper's saying: "We had brought the Truth to you," is just like an official's using the word "we" on behalf of his government, when he wants to say, "Our government did this or gave such and such an order."

63. The allusion is to the plans that the chiefs of the Quraish were devising in their secret assemblies in order to take a decisive action against the Holy Prophet.

64.. It means this: "My rejection of somebody's being God's offspring and my refusal to worship those whom you regard as His offspring is not due to any stubbornness and obduracy. My reason for the refusal is only this that God has no son or daughter, and your these beliefs are against the reality; otherwise I am such a faithful servant of my Lord that if at all the reality had been the same as you state I would have submitted myself in worship before you."

65. That is, "The gods of the heavens and the earth are not separate, but there is only One God of the entire universe. It is His wisdom that is working in the whole system of the universe and only He has the knowledge of all realities."

66. That is, "He is far above this that another should be His associate in Godhead and may have any share whatever in ruling this great universe. Whatever is there in the earth and the heavens, whether the Prophets, the saints, the angels, jinn, spirits, stars or planets, they are His servants and slaves and subjects. It is impossible for them to be characterised with a Divine attribute or be possessed with a Divine power."

67. That is, "You may have taken anyone as your helper and patron in the world, but after death you will have to face only One God and render an account of your deeds before Him alone."

68. This sentence has several meanings: (1) Those whom the people have made their deities in the world, will not all be their intercessors before Allah. Those of them who were wicked, will themselves be presented as culprits there. However, those who had borne witness to the Truth by virtue of knowledge (and not unconsciously) will certainly be able to intercede for others.

(2) Those who will be permitted to intercede, will be able to do so only for those who had testified to the Truth consciously (and not heedlessly). They will neither intercede of their own will, nor will have the permission to intercede for anyone who had gone and been led astray from the Truth in the world, or had been affirming the faith in Allah as the only Deity unconsciously as well as serving other deities at the same time.

(3) If a person says that those whom he has made gods necessarily possess the powers of intercession, and they wield such an influence with Allah that they can have anyone they like forgiven, irrespective of his beliefs and deeds, is totally wrong. No one enjoys such a position with Allah. If the one who claims that another has such powers of intercession, can testify to the truth of this matter by virtue of knowledge, one should have the courage to say so. But if one is not in a position to bear such a testimony, and one is certainly not, it would be sheer folly to invent such a creed on the basis of mere hearsay, or conjecture, and risk one's life hereafter relying only on an imaginary support.

Incidentally, this verse also gives two important principles: First, it shows that bearing a testimony to the truth without knowledge may be reliable in the world, but it is not so before Allah. In the world, whoever affirms the Faith verbally will be regarded as a Muslim and treated as such unless he openly commits an act expressly

contradictory to belief. But as before Allah only such a one will be counted as a Muslim, who has uttered *Lā ilāha ill-Allāh* consciously, with full understanding of what he is denying and what he is affirming according to his best knowledge.

Secondly, it gives this principle of the law of evidence that knowledge is a pre-requisite of bearing the evidence. If the bearer of an evidence has no knowledge of the event to which he is bearing evidence, his evidence is meaningless. The same is borne out by a decision given by the Holy Prophet. He said to a witness: "If you saw what happened with your own eyes as you are seeing the sun, then you may bear the witness, otherwise not." (*Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* by al-Jaṣṣāṣ).

69. This verse has two meanings: (1) "If you ask them who has created them, they will say: Allah"; and (2) "If you ask them who is the Creator of their gods, they will say: Allah."

70. This is one of the most difficult verses of the Qur'ān as it involves the complicated syntactic question of the kind of *wāw* that has been used in *wa-qīl-i-hī*. From the translation of Shāh 'Abdul Qādir it appears that the *wāw* here is not conjunctive but for taking oath, and is related to *fa-anna yu'fakūn*, and the pronoun in *qīl-i-hī* turns to the Holy Prophet of Allah. Therefore, the verse means this: "By this saying of the Messenger: 'O my Lord, these are a people who would not believe'": they are so utterly deluded that although they themselves admit that Allah alone is their Creator and Creator of their gods, yet they abandon the Creator and persist in worshipping His creatures."

The object of swearing by this saying of the Messenger is that the conduct of the people clearly shows that they are, in fact, stubborn, for the foolishness of their attitude is apparent from their own admission, and such an irrational attitude can be adopted only by such a person, who is resolved not to believe. In other words, the oath implies this: "The Messenger has rightly said so: indeed these people would not believe."

71. That is, "You should neither curse them for their scornful words and attitude of mockery and derision, nor respond with harsh words: just wish them well and take your leave."

XLIV

AD-DUKHĀN اَلدُّخَانُ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

XLIV

AD-DUKHĀN الدُّخَانُ

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name from the word *dukhān* which occurs in verse 10.

Period of Revelation

Its period of revelation also could not be determined from any authentic tradition, but the internal evidence of the subject-matter shows that this Sūrah too was sent down in the same period in which Sūrah Zukhruf and a few other earlier Sūrahs had been revealed. However, this Sūrah was sent down somewhat later. Its historical background is this : When the disbelievers of Makkah became more and more antagonistic in their attitude and conduct, the Holy Prophet prayed : O God, help me

with a famine like the famine of Joseph. He thought that when those people would be afflicted with a calamity, they would remember God, their hearts would soften and they would accept the admonition. Allah granted his prayer, and the whole land was overtaken by such a terrible famine that the people were sorely distressed. At last, some of the Quraish chiefs among whom Hadrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd has particularly mentioned the name of Abū Sufyān came to the Holy Prophet and requested him to pray to Allah to deliver his people from the calamity. On this occasion Allah sent down this Sūrah.

Subject-Matter and Topics

The introduction to the address revealed on this occasion for the admonition and warning of the people of Makkah contained some important points, which are as follows :

(1) "You, O people of Makkah, are wrong in thinking that the Qur'ān is being composed by Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace). This Book by itself bears the clear testimony that it is not the composition of a man but of Allah, Lord of the worlds."

(2) "You are making a wrong estimate of the worth of this Book. You think it is a calamity that has descended on you, whereas the Hour when Allah, out of sheer mercy, decided to send His Messenger and His Book to you was highly blessed."

(3) "You are foolishly involved in the misunderstanding that you will fight this Messenger and this Book and will win, whereas the fact is that the Messenger has been raised and the Book sent down in that particular Hour when Allah decides the destinies, and Allah's decisions are not so weak that they may be changed to a person's liking, nor are they based on ignorance and folly that there may be the likelihood of a mistake or error or

weakness in them. They are rather the firm and unalterable decisions of the Ruler of the Universe, Who is All-Hearing, All-Knowing and All-Wise. Therefore, they cannot be treated lightly.

(4) "You yourselves acknowledge that Allah alone is the Master and Lord of the earth and heavens and of everything in the Universe and also admit that life and death are only in His power, yet you insist on making others your deities, for which the only argument you offer is that that has been the practice since the time of your forefathers, whereas if a person has the conviction that Allah alone is the Master, Sustainer and Giver of life and death, he can never entertain the doubt that there can be other gods also beside Him, who can be worthy of worship. If your forefathers had committed this folly, there is no reason why you also should continue committing it blindly. As a matter of fact, their Lord too was only One God, Who is your Lord, and they also should have worshipped only Him, Whom you should worship."

(5) "The only demand of Allah's Providence and Mercifulness is not this that He should feed you, but also this that He should arrange guidance for you. For this very guidance He has sent His Messenger and His Book."

After this introduction, the question of the famine that was raging in Makkah has been discussed. As already mentioned, this famine had occurred on the Holy Prophet's prayer, and he had prayed for it so that when the calamity befell it would break the stubbornness of the disbelievers and then they would listen to the rebuke. It looked as if this expectation was being fulfilled to some extent, for some of the most stubborn enemies of the Truth, on account of the severities of the

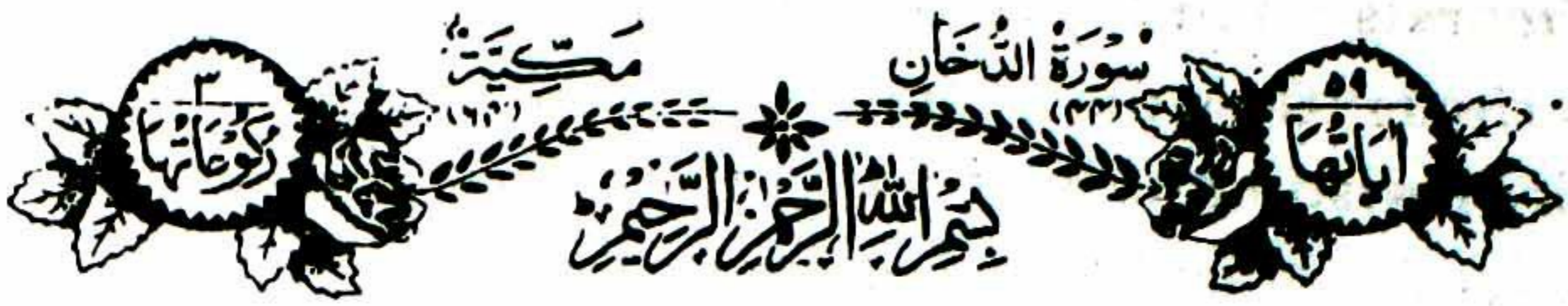
famine, had cried out : "O Lord, avert this torment from us and we will believe." At this, on the one hand, the Holy Prophet has been foretold : "These people will not learn any lesson from such calamities. When they have turned away from the Messenger, whose life, character, works and speech clearly show that he is Allah's true Messenger, how will a mere famine help remove their disbelief?" On the other, the unbelievers have been addressed, so as to say : "You lie when you say that you will believe as soon as the torment is removed from you. We shall just remove it to see how sincere you are in your promise. There is a graver disaster about to fall upon you. You need a much more crushing blow : minor misfortunes cannot set you right."

In this very connection, a reference has been made a little below to Pharaoh and his people, implying that those people also had met with precisely the same trial as the chiefs of the disbelieving Quraish are now afflicted. To them also a similar noble and honourable Messenger had come; they also had seen those express pointers and signs which clearly showed that he had been appointed by Allah; they also had gone on witnessing one sign after the other but they did not give up their stubbornness, till at last they made up their mind to put an end to the Messenger's life, and they met their doom, which has since become an object lesson for the people for ever.

After this the theme of the Hereafter has been taken up, which the disbelievers of Makkah vehemently denied. They said : "We have never seen anyone rising back to life after death. Raise our forefathers back to life if you are true in your claim about the life hereafter." In response to this, two arguments for the Hereafter have been presented briefly ; (1) That the

denial of this creed has always proved destructive for the morals ; and (2) that the universe is not a plaything of a thoughtless diety, but it is a wise system and no work of wisdom is ever vain or useless. Then the disbelievers' demand to bring their forefathers back to life has been answered, thus : "This cannot be done every day to meet the demand of the individuals, but Allah has appointed a time when He will resurrect all mankind simultaneously and will subject them to accountability in His Court. If one has to protect oneself there, one should think about it here. For no one will be able to save himself there by his own power, nor by the power of any one else."

In connection with this Court of Allah, mention has been made of the fate of those who will be declared as culprits and of the rewards of those who will be declared as successful. The discourse has been concluded with this warning : "This Qur'ān has been revealed in simple language in your own tongue so that you may understand it ; yet if you do not understand it and insist on seeing your evil end, you may wait ; Our Prophet too is waiting. Whatever is to happen, will happen at its own appointed time."



حَوْرًا ۝ وَالْكِتَابِ الْمُبِينِ ۝ إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةٍ مُبَارَكَةٍ إِنَّا كُنَّا مُنذِرِينَ ۝
 فِيهَا يُفْرَقُ كُلُّ أَمْرٍ حَكِيمٍ ۝ أَمْرًا مِّنْ عِنْدِنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا مُرْسِلِينَ ۝ رَحْمَةً
 مِّنْ رَبِّكَ ۝ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ۝ رَبِّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا ۝
 إِنَّ كُنُوزَ مَوْقِنِينَ ۝ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ رَبُّكُمْ وَرَبُّ آبَائِكُمْ

XLIV

الدُّخَانُ · AD-DUKHĀN

Verses : 59

Revealed at Makkah

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

1-9 Hā-Mīm. By this lucid Book, We have sent it down in a highly blessed night, for We intended to warn the people.¹ This was a night in which every matter is decided wisely² by Our Command.³ We had to send a Messenger, as a mercy from your Lord.⁴ Indeed, He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing,⁵ Lord of the heavens and the earth, and Lord of all that lies between them, if you would really believe.⁶ There is no god but He.⁷ It is He Who gives life and death.⁸ He is your Lord and Lord of your ancestors who have gone before.⁹ (But, in fact, they have no faith :) nay, they play about in doubt.¹⁰

1. The meaning of taking an oath by "the lucid Book" has been explained in E.N. 1 of Sūrah Zukhruf. Here also what has been sworn by is that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) is not the author of this Book but "We", and this Book by itself is enough to provide a proof of this. Furthermore, it has been said that the night in which it was sent down was full of blessings. That is, the foolish and ignorant people, who have no idea of their own well-being or otherwise, regard the revelation of this Book as a disaster for themselves and are deeply anxious as how to be rid of it. But, as a matter of fact, the Hour when "We" decided to send down this Book to arouse the heedless, was highly blessed for them and for all mankind.

Some commentators have expressed the opinion that the meaning of sending down the Qur'ān in that night is that its revelation began during that night, and some others think that the whole of the Qur'ān was transferred from *Umm al-Kitāb* and entrusted to the bearers of Revelation (angels), and then revealed to the Holy Prophet as and when required and demanded by the occasion and circumstances during 23 years. As to what actually happened Allah alone has the best knowledge.

The night implies the same night which has been called *lailat-ul-qadr* in Sūrah Al-Qadr (97). There it has been said: "We sent it down in a Night of Glory," and here: "We sent it down in a blessed Night." Then the Qur'ān itself has told that it was a night of the month of Ramaḍān (Al-Baqarah).

2. The word *amr-in-ḥakīm* as used in the Text has two meanings: (1) That the Command is wholly based on wisdom: there is no likelihood of any error or weakness in it; and (2) that it is a firm and stable decision: it lies in no one's power to change it.

3. In Sūrah Al-Qadr, this same thing has been expressed thus: "The angels and the Spirit (Angel Gabriel) descend in it with every decree, by the leave of their Lord." This shows that it is such a Night in the Divine administration of Allah in which He decides the destinies of the individuals and nations and countries and entrusts His decisions to His angels, who then implement them accordingly. Some commentators among whom Ḥaḍrat 'Ikrimah is most prominent, have been involved in the misunderstanding that this is the 15th night of Sha'bān, for in some traditions it has been said that the destinies of people are decided during that night. But Ibn

'Abbās. Ibn 'Umar, Mujāhid, Qatādah, Hasan Basri, Sa'id bin Jubair, Ibn Zaid, Abū Mālik, Ḍaḥḥāk and many other commentators are agreed that this is the same night of Ramaḍān, which has been called *lailat-il-qadr*, for the Qur'ān itself has stated this, and where any Qur'ānic statement exists, no other view can be formed on the basis of random reports. Ibn Kathir says, "The traditions that Imām Zuhri has related from 'Uthmān bin Muhammad that destinies are decided from one Sha'bān to the next Sha'bān, is an indirect tradition and such traditions cannot be cited as against the clear texts of the Qur'ān." Qādi Abū Bakr Ibn al-'Arabi says: "No *Hadith* in respect of the 15th of Sha'bān is reliable, either in respect of its merit, or about this that decisions with regard to the destinies are taken in it; therefore, they do not merit attention," (*Ahkām ul-Qur'ān*).

4. That is, "It was not only a demand of wisdom to send a Messenger with this Book but also of Allah's mercy, for He is the Providence, and Providence requires that not only should arrangements be made for nourishing the servants' bodies but they should also be afforded right guidance by knowledge, that they should be made aware of the distinction between right and wrong and that they should not be left wandering in darkness."

5. The object of mentioning these two attributes of Allah in this context is to warn the people of the truth that He alone can give correct knowledge for He alone knows all the realities. Not to speak of one man, even if all men join to determine a way of life for themselves, there can be no guarantee of its being the right way, for even the whole of mankind together cannot become all-hearing and all-knowing. It does not lie in its power to comprehend all those realities whose knowledge is essential for determining a correct way of life. This knowledge is only with Allah: He alone is All-Hearing and All-Knowing. Therefore, He alone can tell what is guidance for man and what is falsehood, what is the Truth and what is wrong, what is good and what is evil.

6. The Arabs themselves admitted that Allah alone is the Lord (Master and Providence) of the Universe and of everything in it. Therefore, it has been said to them: "If you are not admitting only verbally but are really conscious of His being the Providence and are convinced of His being the Master, you should admit that: (1) It is the very demand of His Mercifulness and Providence that He should send a Book and a Messenger for the guidance of man;

and (2) it is His right as the Master and your duty as His servants that you should obey every Guidance and submit to every Command that comes from Him."

7. The real God Who alone has the right that He should be worshipped and served.

8. That is, "There is no god other than Allah, nor can there be. Therefore, it is against reason that you should disdain the worship of Him Who breathed life into dead matter and made you a living man, and Who possesses full powers to keep you alive as long as He likes and bring your life to an end whenever He likes, should serve another than Him, or start worshipping others beside Him."

9. There is a subtle allusion in it to this: "He was also Lord of those of your ancestors who took other gods besides Allah; they had not done the right thing by giving up their real Lord and serving others that you should be justified in imitating them and should regard their conduct as an argument for the soundness of your creed. They ought to have served only Him, because He alone was their Lord. But if they did not do so, you ought to give up worship of others and serve only Him because He alone is your real Lord."

10. In this brief sentence an allusion has been made to an important truth. Even atheists or polytheists do come across occasions when their heart from within says: There is somewhere some weakness in the creed that you have adopted. The atheist may apparently be very firm in his denial of God, his heart at one or the other time does bear the testimony that this wonderful and wise system which extends from the particle of dust to the galaxies and from a blade of grass to the creation of man, could not come into existence without an All-Wise Designer. Likewise, a polytheist may be deeply submerged in his polytheism, his heart also sometimes cries out: Those whom you have adopted as deities cannot be God. But this testimony of the heart neither leads the atheist and the polytheist to the conviction about the existence and Oneness of God, nor to conviction and satisfaction about their creed of atheism and polytheism itself. Instead, their religion, in fact, is based on doubt, no matter how convinced they might appear to be of its truth. As for the question: Why doesn't this doubt make them restless, and why don't they seek the truth seriously so as to obtain

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الْأَوَّلِينَ ۚ بَلْ هُمْ فِي شَكِّ يَلْعَبُونَ ۚ فَارْتَقِبْ يَوْمَ تَأْتِي السَّمَاءُ بِدُخَانٍ
 مُبِينٍ ۚ يَغْشَى النَّاسَ ۚ هَذَا عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ۚ رَبَّنَا اكشِفْ عَنَّا الْعَذَابَ إِنَّا
 مُؤْمِنُونَ ۚ آتَى لَهُمُ الدِّكْرَىٰ وَ قَدْ جَاءَهُمْ رَسُولٌ مُّبِينٌ ۚ ثُمَّ تَوَلَّوْا
 عَنْهُ وَقَالُوا مُعَلَّمٌ مَّجْنُونٌ ۚ إِنَّا كَاشِفُوا الْعَذَابَ قَلِيلًا إِنَّكُمْ عَائِدُونَ ۚ وَ قَف لازم
 يَوْمَ نَبْطِشُ الْبَطْشَةَ الْكُبْرَىٰ إِنَّا مُنتَقِمُونَ ۚ وَ لَقَدْ فَتَنَّا قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمَ
 عِرْعَوْنَ وَ جَاءَهُمْ رَسُولٌ كَرِيمٌ ۚ أَنْ أَدَّوْا إِلَىٰ عِبَادِ اللَّهِ إِنِّي لَكُمْ رَسُولٌ
 أَمِينٌ ۚ وَ أَنْ لَا تَعْلُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنِّي آتِيكُمْ بِسُلْطَنِ مُّبِينٍ ۚ وَ إِنِّي عِدْتُ
 بِرَبِّي وَ رَبِّكُمْ أَنْ تَرْجُمُونِ ۚ وَ إِنْ لَمْ تُؤْمِنُوا لِي فَاَعْتَرِلُونِ ۚ فَدَعَا رَبَّهُ
 أَنْ هُوَ لَاءَ قَوْمٍ مُّجْرِمُونَ ۚ فَاسْرِ بِعِبَادِي لَيْلًا إِنَّكُمْ مُّتَّبِعُونَ ۚ وَ اشْرِكْ
 الْبَحْرَ رَهْوًا إِنَّهُمْ جُنْدٌ مُّغْرَقُونَ ۚ كُمْ تَرَكُوا مِنْ حَبْتٍ وَ عُيُونٍ ۚ وَ زُرُوعٍ
 وَ مَقَامِرٍ كَرِيمٍ ۚ وَ نَعْمَةٌ كَانُوا فِيهَا فَاكِهِينَ ۚ كَذَلِكَ ۚ وَ أَدْرَجْنَاهَا قَوْمًا آخِرِينَ ۚ
 ٤٢٩
 فَمَا بَكَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّمَاءُ وَ الْأَرْضُ وَ مَا كَانُوا مُنْظَرِينَ ۚ وَ لَقَدْ نَجَّيْنَا بَنِي
 إِسْرَائِيلَ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ الْبُهَيْنِ ۚ مَنْ فِرْعَوْنُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ عَلِيًّا مِنَ الْمُسْرِفِينَ ۚ
 وَ لَقَدْ اخْتَرْنَاهُمْ عَلَىٰ عِلْمٍ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ ۚ وَ آتَيْنَاهُمْ مِنَ الْآيَاتِ مَا فِيهِ بَلَاءٌ مُّبِينٌ ۚ
 إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا لَيَقُولُنَّ ۚ إِنْ هِيَ إِلَّا مَوْتَتُنَا الْأُولَىٰ وَ مَا نَحْنُ بِمُنشَرِينَ ۚ
 فَاتُوا بِآبَائِنَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ۚ أَهُمْ خَيْرٌ أَمْ قَوْمٌ تُبِعَ ۚ وَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ
 أَهْلَكْنَاهُمْ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا مُّجْرِمِينَ ۚ وَ مَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَوَاتِ وَ الْأَرْضَ وَ مَا بَيْنَهُمَا
 لِعَيْنٍ ۚ مَا خَلَقْنَاهُمَا إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَ لَكِنْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ۚ إِنْ يَوْمَ
 الْفَصْلِ مِيقَاتُهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ۚ يَوْمَ لَا يُغْنِي مَوْلَىٰ عَنْ مَوْلَىٰ شَيْئًا وَ لَا هُمْ

Well, wait for the Day when the sky shall appear with a visible smoke, which shall envelope mankind: this is a painful punishment. (Now they say :) "Our Lord, remove this torment from us : we do now believe." How can they rid themselves of their heedlessness? Even when a manifest Messenger¹¹ came to them, they paid no heed to him, and said, "He is a madman taught by others."¹² Were We to remove the torment a little, you would revert to the same that you were doing before. The Day We inflict the severest stroke shall be the Day when We shall take Our vengeance.¹³ 10-16

Before them We put the people of Pharaoh to the same test. A noble Messenger¹⁴ came to them, and said,¹⁵ "Deliver to me the servants of Allah ;¹⁶ I am a trustworthy Messenger to you :¹⁷ Do not rebel against Allah: I present before you a clear authority¹⁸ (of my appointment), and I have taken refuge in my Lord and your Lord lest you should assault me. If you do not believe in me, do not harm me."¹⁹ At last, he called to his Lord, saying, "These are criminals."²⁰ (The reply came:) "Set forth with My servants by night²¹ for you will be pursued.²² Leave the sea as it is: the whole host shall be drowned."²³ How many were the gardens and springs and cornfields and grand palaces that they left behind, and how many means of luxury and comfort, which they used to enjoy! This was their end, and We made others to inherit those things.²⁴ Then neither did the heaven weep on them nor the earth,²⁵ and they were not given the least respite. Even so We delivered the children of Israel from an abasing scourge, from Pharaoh,²⁶ who was indeed a most prominent man among the transgressors,²⁷ and We exalted them, knowing them to be so, above the other nations of the world,²⁸ and showed them such Signs as were clearly a trial (for them).²⁹ 17-33

34-42

These people say, "There is nothing beyond our first death, and we are not going to be raised back to life.³⁰ Bring back our forefathers if you are truthful."³¹ Are they better or the people of Tubba³² and those before them? We destroyed them only because they had become wicked.³³ We have not created the heavens and the earth and whatever lies between them merely in sport: We have created them with the truth, but most of them do not know.³⁴ For the resurrection of them all, the appointed time is the Day of Decision,³⁵ the Day when a kinsman shall not avail his kinsman³⁶ anything at all, nor shall they receive any help from anywhere except that Allah Himself may show His mercy to some one: He is the All-Mighty, the All-Merciful.³⁷

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a satisfactory ground for their convictions? the answer is: they lack seriousness in religious matters. What they really regard as important are the worldly earnings and acquisitions and their enjoyment, in search of which they expend all their powers and abilities of the heart and mind and body. As for the religious matters, they are in fact no more than fun, a mere pastime, amusement, or a mental diversion for them, for which they cannot spare even a few moments of serious study. Religious rites are being performed as an entertainment; discussions about denial and atheism are being engaged in as an amusement; no one can spare a few moments from his worldly pursuits to consider whether he has turned away from the Truth, and if so, what would be its consequences.

11. *Rasûl-i-mubîn* has two meanings: (1) His being a Messenger is quite evident from his character, his morals and his works; and (2) he has made every effort to make the truth plain and clear.

12. What they meant was this: "This was a simple man; some others have incited and deceived him: they secretly forge and teach him verses of the Qur'ân, and he comes and recites them before the people: they sit back in peace and leave him alone to receive the abuses and be pelted with stones." They would make a mockery of all the arguments, the admonitions and the serious

teachings which the Holy Prophet had been presenting since several years and was growing weary. Neither they paid any attention to the rational things being expressed in the Qur'ān nor recognized the extraordinary character of the man who was presenting them, nor took any trouble to think what nonsense they were uttering when they imputed such things to the Holy Prophet. Obviously, if there had been another person who gave secret instruction to the Holy Prophet, he could not have remained hidden from Ḥaḍrat Khadijah and Abū Bakr, 'Alī and Zaid bin Ḥārithah and other early Muslims, who were the closest and constant Companions of the Holy Prophet. Then, how it is that these very people only became his most devoted and dedicated followers, whereas if the business of prophethood had depended on the secret instruction of some other person, these very people would have been in the forefront to oppose him. (For further explanation, see An-Naḥl : 103, Al-Furqān : 4-6 and the corresponding E.N.'s).

13. The commentators have seriously disputed the meaning of these verses, and the difference of opinion existed even in the time of the Companions. Masrūq, the well-known pupil of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, states : One day when we entered the mosque of Kūfah, we saw a preacher addressing the people. He recited the verse : *Yauma ta'tis-samā-u bidukhān-im-mubīn*; then asked : 'Do you know what kind of smoke it is ? This smoke will appear on the Day of Resurrection and will make the disbelievers and the hypocrites blind and deaf, but the believers will be affected only to the extent as if they had caught cold.' Hearing this commentary we went to Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd and reported to him what the preacher had said. Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah at that time was lying down. On hearing this commentary he sat up startled and said : 'When a person does not have the knowledge he should ask those who have it. The fact is that when the people of the Quraish went on refusing to accept Islam and continued to oppose the Holy Prophet, the Holy Prophet prayed : O God, help me with a famine like the famine of Joseph (peace be upon him); consequently, a very severe famine overtook Makkah and the people were forced to eat bones, skins and carrion. The conditions became so bad that whoever looked up to the sky would see nothing but smoke due to intensity of hunger. At last, Abū Sufyān came to the Holy Prophet and said : 'You tell the people to treat their kindred kindly : your own people are starving : kindly pray to God to remove this calamity.' This

was the time when the people of the Quraish had started saying: 'O God, if You remove this torment from us, we will believe.' This same event has been referred to in these verses; and the severest blow implies the calamity that was inflicted on the Quraish in the Battle of Badr." This tradition has been related by Imām Aḥmād, Bukhāri, Tirmidhi, Nasā'i, Ibn Jarīr and Ibn Abi Hātim from Masrūq with several chains of authorities. Besides Masrūq, Ibrahīm Nakha'i Qatādah, 'Āsim and 'Āmir also have related that Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd had given the same commentary of this verse. Therefore, there cannot be any doubt that Ibn Mas'ūd actually held this same opinion. Among the immediate followers of the Companions, Mujāhid, Qatādah, Abul 'Āliyah, Muqātil, Ibrahīm Nakha'i, Ḍaḥḥāk and 'Atiyyah al-'Aufi and others have also concurred with Ibn Mas'ūd in this commentary.

On the contrary, scholars like Ḥaḍrat 'Alī, Ibn 'Umar, Ibn 'Abbās, Abū Sa'id Khudrī, Zaid bin 'Alī, and Ḥasan Baṣri say that in these verses mention has been made of the time just before Resurrection, and the smoke that has been foretold will envelop the earth at that time. This commentary is further strengthened by the Traditions that have been reported from the Holy Prophet. Ḥudhaifah bin Asīd al-Ghifārī says: One day when we were talking about Resurrection, the Holy Prophet came out to us and said: "Resurrection will not be established till ten Signs have appeared one after the other: Rising of the sun in the west, smoke, the beast, emergence of Gog and Magog, descent of Jesus son of Mary, sinking of the earth in the East, in the West and in the Arabian Peninsula, and the appearance of a fire from Yaman, which will drive the people away." (Muslim) This is confirmed by Abū Mālik Ash'arī's tradition which has been related by Ibn Jarīr and Ṭabarānī, and Abū Sa'id Khudrī's tradition which has been related by Ibn Abi Hātim. Both these traditions show that the Holy Prophet regarded the smoke as one of the Signs of Resurrection and also said that when that smoke will spread, it will affect the believer only like a cold, but will infuse every nerve of the disbeliever and come out from every part of his body.

A study of the verses under consideration can remove the disparity between the two commentaries. As for the commentary of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, it is a fact that a severe famine had hit Makkah resulting from the Holy Prophet's prayer and it had

unnerved the disbelievers considerably and they had requested the Holy Prophet to pray for its removal, as referred to at several places in the Qur'ān. (See Al-An'ām : 43, Al-A'rāf : 94-95, Yūnus : 21, Al-Mu'minūn : 75-77 and the corresponding E.N.'s). In these verses also there is a clear pointer to the same conditions. The disbelievers' saying : "Our Lord, remove this torment from us : we will believe," Allah's saying : "How can they rid themselves of their heedlessness? Even when a manifest Messenger came to them, they paid no heed to him, and said: He is a madman taught by others," then saying : "Were We to remove the torment a little, you would revert to the same that you were doing before," all this can be relevant only if it refers to the conditions of the Holy Prophet's time. To apply them to what will happen near the time of Resurrection, is not correct. Therefore, in view of this, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd's commentary seems to be correct, but its this part that "the smoke" also had appeared in that very time, in that when the people in their extreme state of hunger looked up to the sky, they could see nothing but smoke, does not seem to be correct. It also does not conform to the apparent words of the Qur'ān and is against the Traditions as well. The Qur'ān does not say: the sky brought forth the smoke and it spread over the people; but it says: "Wait for the Day when the sky will appear with a visible smoke, and it will envelop mankind." A study of the subsequent verses clearly points to this meaning : "When you do not believe even after the Messenger's admonition, nor take heed from the warning given in the shape of the famine, then you should wait for Resurrection. At that time when you see your doom confronting you, you will fully realize what was the truth and what was falsehood." Therefore, as for the smoke, the correct view is that it has nothing to do with the time of the famine, but it is a Sign of Resurrection and the same is also confirmed by the *Ḥadīth*. It is surprising that those commentators who confirmed what Ḥaḍrat Ibn Mas'ūd said confirmed him wholly and those who refuted what he said refuted him wholly, whereas a study of the verses and the *Ḥadīth* clearly shows how far he was correct and how far he was wrong.

14. The words *rasūl-un karīm* in the original imply a man who is characterised with most noble traits of character and highly praiseworthy qualities.

15. One should note that the sayings of the Prophet Moses

being cited here, are not parts of a continuous address delivered by him at any one time, but they are a summary in a few sentences of what he said to Pharaoh and his courtiers on different occasions during many years. For the details, see Al-A'rāf : 103-136, Yūnus : 75-92, Ṭā Hā : 45-76, Ash-Shua'rā : 10-63, An-Naml : 7-14, Al-Qāṣaṣ : 32-42, Al-Mu'min : 23-46, Az-Zukhruf : 46-56 and the corresponding E.N.'s.

16. That is, "Leave the children of Israel to go with me." This demand is synonymous with the demand made in Al-A'rāf : 105, Ṭā Hā : 47 and Ash-Shua'rā : 17. Another translation that has been reported from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās is : "Servants of Allah, fulfil my right," i.e. "Accept what I say : believe in me : follow my guidance. This is my right on you from Allah." The following sentence : "I am a trustworthy Messenger to you." is more in keeping with the second meaning.

17. That is, "I am a reliable Messenger : I do not forge anything from myself, nor am I the one who would present something based on personal interest or desire, or forge a command or law, in the name of Allah. Rest assured that I shall convey to you intact only that which my Sender has commanded." (It should be noted that these two sentences belong to the time when the Prophet Moses first started preaching his Message).

18. In other words, it means this : "Your rebellion against me is in fact rebellion against Allah, for what annoys you is not what I say but what Allah says, and I only present those things as His Messenger. If you doubt whether I have really been sent by Him or not, I present before you a clear authority of my appointment from Allah." This authority does not imply any one miracle but a long series of the miracles which the Prophet Moses continued to show to Pharaoh and his people for years since the time he arrived in the court of Pharaoh till his last days in Egypt. Whatever Sign they denied, was followed up by a greater Sign of authority by him. (For explanation, see E.N.'s 42, 43 of Az-Zukhruf).

19. This was said at the time when, as against all the Signs presented by the Prophet Moses, Pharaoh was still showing stubbornness, but was feeling upset and confounded at the realization that all classes of the Egyptian society were rapidly being influenced by those Signs. In that period first of all he made the speech before his full packed court as mentioned in vv. 51-53 of Sūrah Zukhruf above

(see E.N.'s 45 to 49). Then, when he felt the ground slipping from under his feet, he made up his mind to kill Allah's Messenger. At that time the Prophet said the words as mentioned in Sūrah Al-Mu'min : 27, to the effect : "I have taken refuge in my Lord and your Lord against every arrogant person who does not believe in the Day of Reckoning." Here, the Prophet Moses is referring to this same thing and telling Pharaoh and his chiefs : "Look, I have sought Allah's refuge against all sorts of violence from you : now you cannot harm me ; but if you wish yourselves well, do not harm me. If you do not want to believe what I say, you may not, but you should never lay your hands on me, otherwise you will meet with catastrophic consequences".

20. This is the final report that the Prophet Moses presented before his Lord, saying : "These are criminals." That is, their being the criminals has been confirmed finally and absolutely. They have exhausted every chance of concession and respite for reformation. It is time that the final fatal decision be passed against them.

21. "With my servants": with all those people who have believed, including both the Israelites and the Egyptian Copts who had become Muslims since the time of the Prophet Joseph till that of the Prophet Moses, and those also who had been influenced by the Signs shown by Moses and his preaching and accepted Islam from among the Egyptians. (For explanation, see Sūrah Yūsuf : E.N. 68).

22. This was the initial command given to the Prophet Moses for the migration. (For explanation, see Ṭā-Hā : 77, Ash-Shua'rā' : 52-68 and the corresponding E.N.'s).

23. This command was given when the Prophet Moses had crossed the sea along with his caravan and wanted that he should restore the sea to its former state by smiting it with the staff so that Pharaoh and his hosts should not pursue them on the dry path created by the miracle. At that time it was said : "Leave the sea divided as it is, so that Pharaoh and his armies should descend into it; then the sea will be restored and they will be drowned all together."

24. Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan Baṣri says that "others" here implies the children of Israel, whom Allah made heirs of the land of Egypt after Pharaoh's people, and Qatādaḥ says it implies the other people

who inherited Egypt after the people of Pharaoh, for the Histories do not make any mention that the Israelites ever returned to Egypt after the exodus and inherited it. This same point has been disputed by the later commentators also. (For a detailed discussion, see Ash-Shua'rā' : 57-59 and the E.N.'s on it).

25. That is, "When they were the rulers, they were known for their glory and grandeur : hymns were sung of their praise, flatterers flattered them to such an extent as if the whole world was devoted to them for their excellences and indebted to them for their favours and there was none more popular in the world than they. But when they fell there was none to shed a tear on their fall; rather the world felt relieved that a cause of distress had been removed. Obviously, they had neither done any good to the people that the dwellers of the earth might weep on them, nor anything for the sake of Allah's pleasure that the dwellers of the heavens might grieve over their ruin. As long as Allah continued to give them rope by His will, they enjoyed life as they pleased; but when they transgressed all limits in their crimes, they were cast aside like so much rubbish.

26. That is, Pharaoh by himself was an abasing torment for them and all other torments were indeed offshoots of the same great torment.

27. There is a subtle satire in it on the chiefs of the disbelieving Quraish. It means to say this : "You do not enjoy any place of distinction among the transgressors against Allah. Pharaoh indeed was a rebel of the highest order who was ruling on the throne of the largest kingdom of the time as a god. When he was swept away like straw, how can you prevent the Divine wrath?"

28. That is, "Allah was well aware both of the qualities and of the weaknesses of the children of Israel. He had not chosen them blindly. For when He chose them from among the contemporary nations to become the standard-bearers of His message and His *Tauhid*, they were the most suitable people in His knowledge for the purpose."

29. For explanation, see Al-Baqarah : 49-74, An-Nisā : 153-160, Al-Mā'idah : 20-26, Al-A'rāf : 138-171, Tā-Hā : 80-97 and the corresponding E.N.'s.

30. That is, "When we die the first time, we shall be annihilated : there will be no other life after that",

31. This was their reasoning : "We have never seen a dead person ressurected to life. Therefore, we believe that there will be no other life after death. If you claim that there will be another life, then ressurect our forefathers from their graves, so that we are convinced of the life-after-death. If you do not do this, we would think that your claim is false. This was, as they thought, a very strong argument for the refutation of life-after-death, whereas it was absurd. Nobody had told them that the dead would return to this very world after being raised back to life, nor the Holy Prophet, nor any Muslim, had ever claimed that he could raise the dead back to life.

32. 'Tubba' was the title of the kings of the Himyarites, like the titles of Khosroes, Caesar, Pharaoh etc. which have been associated with the kings of different countries. They were a branch of the Sabaeans, who attained domination over Sabā in 115 B.C. and ruled it till 300 A.D. They have been a well known people of Arabia for centuries. (For details, see E.N. 37 of Sūrah Sabā).

33. This is the first answer to the disbelievers' objection; it means this : No individual group or nation which denies the Hereafter can help becoming criminal. Perversion of the morals is its inevitable result, and human history bears evidence that whichever nation adopted this view of life ultimately perished. As for the question : Are they better or the people of Tubba' or the people before them? it means this : The disbelievers of Makkah have not been able to attain to the prosperity and splendour that became the lot of the people of Tubba' and of the people of Sabā and of the people of Pharaoh and others before them. But this material prosperity and worldly splendour could not save them from the consequences of their moral degeneration. How will then the chiefs of the Quraish be saved from destruction on the strength of their puny resources and wealth? (For details, see E.N.'s 25 to 36 of Sūrah Sabā).

34. This is the second answer to their objection ; it means this : "Whoever denies life-after-death and the rewards and punishments of the hereafter, in fact, regards this world as a plaything and its Creator as a foolish child. This is why he has formed the view that man, after raising all sorts of the storms in the world, will end up in the dust one day and none of his good or bad acts will bear any

fruit. The fact, however, is that this universe is the creation of an All-Wise Creator and not of a frivolous being. and it cannot be expected from an All-Wise Creator that he would perform a useless and vain act." (For a detailed explanation, see Al-An'ām : 73, Yūnus : 5-6, Al-Anbiyā' : 16-18, Al-Mu'minūn : 115, Ar-Rūm : 8-9 and the corresponding E.N.'s).

35. This is the answer to their this demand : "Bring back our forefathers if you are truthful." It means this: "Life-after-death is not a trivial matter ; it cannot be that whenever somebody denies it, a dead person may be raised immediately from the graveyard and presented before him. For it a time has been fixed by the Lord of the worlds, when He will resurrect to life all the former and the latter generations, gather them together in His Court and will decide their cases. You may believe in it or may not, but this will in any case happen on its own pre-ordained time. If you believe in it, it will be to your own advantage, for, being forewarned, you will make preparations to fare well in that Court. If you do not believe in it, you will incur loss for yourselves, for you will expend your whole life in the misunderstanding that good and evil are confined only to this worldly life ; after death there is going to be no court where our good or bad deeds might have to be judged for any permanent results."

36. The Arabic word "*maulā*" is used for a person who supports another person either because of kinship, or friendship, or some other relationship.

37. These sentences portray the nature of the Court that will be established on the Day of Decision. It will be a Court where nobody's help or support will help rescue any culprit nor have his sentence reduced. All powers will rest with the real Sovereign Whose decisions cannot be withheld from being enforced nor influenced by any power. It will entirely depend on His own discretion whether He forgives somebody mercifully, or awards him a lesser punishment; it indeed behoves Him to exercise justice mercifully and not mercilessly, but whatever decision He gives in any case, will be enforced entirely and completely. After this portrayal of the nature of the Divine Court, in the following few sentences it has been stated what will be the fate of those who will be found guilty in that Court, and what will be conferred on those about whom it will be established that they had been refraining from Allah's disobedience in the world out of fear of Him.

يُنصَرُونَ ۗ إِلَّا مَنْ رَجَعَهُ اللَّهُ ۗ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ ۗ إِنَّ شَجَرَتَ الزَّقُّومِ ۗ
 طَعَامُ الْإِثْمُونَ ۗ كَالْمُهْلِ ۗ يَغْلَى فِي الْبُطُونِ ۗ كَغَلَى الْحَبِيمِ ۗ خُذُوهُ فَاعْتِلُوهُ
 إِلَى سَوَاءِ الْجَحِيمِ ۗ ثُمَّ صُبُّوا فَوْقَ رَأْسِهِ مِنْ عَذَابِ الْحَبِيمِ ۗ ذُقْ ۗ إِنَّكَ
 أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْكَرِيمُ ۗ إِنَّ هَذَا مَا كُنْتُمْ بِهِ تَبْتَرُونَ ۗ إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي
 مَقَامٍ أَمِينٍ ۗ فِي جَنَّاتٍ وَعُيُونٍ ۗ يَلْبَسُونَ مِنْ سُندُسٍ وَإِسْتَبْرَقٍ
 مُتَقَابِلِينَ ۗ كَذَلِكَ ۗ وَزَوَّجْنَهُمْ بِحُورٍ عِينٍ ۗ يُدْعَوْنَ فِيهَا بِكُلِّ فَاكِهَةٍ
 آمِنِينَ ۗ لَا يَذُوقُونَ فِيهَا الْمَوْتَ إِلَّا الْمَوْتَةَ الْأُولَى ۗ وَوَقَّهُمْ عَذَابَ
 الْجَحِيمِ ۗ فَضْلًا مِّن رَّبِّكَ ۗ ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ۗ فَإِنَّمَا يَسَّرْنَاهُ بِلِسَانِكَ
 لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ ۗ فَارْتَقِبْ ۗ إِنَّهُمْ مُرْتَقِبُونَ ۗ

٢
ع ١٣
١٥

٧
ع ١٤
١٦

43-50

The zaqqūm-tree³⁸ shall be the sinner's food, like the dregs of oil.³⁹ It will boil in the belly like the boiling of hot water. "Seize him and drag him into the midst of Hell, and pour over his head the chastisement of boiling water. Taste this: a mighty and honourable man that you are! This is the same thing about which you entertained doubts."

The God-fearing shall be in a secure place:⁴⁰ in the gardens and springs, dressed in silk and brocade,⁴¹ sitting face to face. Such will be their station! And We shall wed to them fair-complexioned, gazelle-eyed women.⁴² There, in full peace, they shall ask for all kinds of tasty things.⁴³ There they shall never taste death, after their first death in the world, and Allah by His grace will protect them from the torment of Hell.⁴⁴ This is the supreme success!

51-57

O Prophet, We have made this Book easy in your 58-59

own tongue so that they may take counsel. Wait then, as they too are waiting.⁴⁵

38. For the explanation of *zaqqūm*, see E.N. 34 of Sūrah Aṣ-Ṣāffāt.

39. The word *al-muhl* in the original has several meanings : molten metal, pus-blood, molten tar, lava, dregs of oil. These are the different meanings given by the lexicographers and commentators, but if this word is understood with reference to *zaqqūm* (cactus), it may mean its juice which will probably be like the dregs of oil.

40. "A secure place" : A place safe from every kind of fear, grief, worry and danger, hardship and trouble. According to a *Hadith*, the Holy Prophet said : "It will be proclaimed to the dwellers of Paradise : 'You will remain in good health, will never fall ill; will live for ever : will never die; will ever remain happy and prosperous and will never meet with a misfortune; will ever remain youthful, will never become old.'" (Muslim, on the authority of Abū Hurairah and Abū Sa'īd Khudri).

41. *Sundus* and *istabraq* in the original are fine silk cloth and thick silk cloth respectively.

42. In the original, *ḥūr-un 'in* : fair-complexioned, large-eyed women. (For further explanation, see E.N.'s 26, 29 of Aṣ-Ṣāffāt).

43. That is, they will order the attendants in Paradise to bring anything they would like in any measure they would demand, and it will be presented before them. In this world, a man cannot ask for a thing in a hotel, or even his own things in his own house, with the freedom and satisfaction as he will ask for these in Paradise, for in the world nothing is found anywhere in un-limited measure; whatever man uses here, he has to pay for it. In Paradise, things will belong to Allah, and the servants will enjoy full freedom to use them. Neither will there be the danger of the failure of the supply, nor the necessity of a bill to pay.

44. Two things are worthy of notice in this verse :

First, after mentioning the blessings of Paradise special mention has been made of being secure from Hell separately, whereas a person's entry into Paradise by itself amounts to his being safe from Hell. This is because man can feel the worth of the reward of obedience fully only when he is informed what end

the disobedient people have met and from what evil end he himself has been saved.

Secondly, Allah is mentioning those people's safety from Hell and their entry into Paradise as a result of His own grace. This is meant to warn man of the truth that this success cannot be achieved by any person unless he is blessed by Allah's grace. Although man will be rewarded for his own good deeds, in the first place he cannot do good unless favoured by Allah's succour; then even the best deed that man is able to perform, cannot be absolutely perfect and none can claim that it is flawless and faultless. It is only Allah's bounty that He should overlook the servant's weaknesses and defects in his actions and accept his services and bless him with rewards; otherwise if He resorts to minute accountability no one can dare claim to win Paradise only on the strength of his own deeds. The same thing has been said by the Holy Prophet in a *Hadīth* to the effect: "Act and try to act as righteously as you possibly can, but know that the action of a person alone will not make him enter Paradise. It was asked: What about your own action, O Messenger of Allah? He replied: Yes, even I won't enter Paradise on the strength of my actions, unless, of course, my Lord covers me up in His mercy."

45. That is, "If they do not accept the admonition even now, you should wait to see how they are visited by their doom; and they also are waiting to see what becomes of the message that you are giving them."

XLV

AL-JATHIYAH أَجَاثِيه



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

XLV

AL-JĀTHIYAH الْجَاثِيَة

INTRODUCTION

Name

It is derived from the sentence *wa tarā kullu ummat-in jāthiyat-un* of verse 28, implying thereby that it is the Sūrah in which the word *jāthiyah* has occurred.

Period of Revelation

The period of the revelation of this Sūrah also has not been mentioned in any authentic tradition, but its subject-matter clearly shows that it was revealed consecutively after Sūrah Ad-Dukhān. The close resemblance between the contents of the two Sūrahs makes them look like the twin Sūrahs.

Subject-Matter and Topics

It answers the doubts and objections of the disbelievers of Makkah about *Tauhid* and the Hereafter and warns them for their attitude that they had adopted against the message of the Qur'ān.

The discourse begins with the arguments for *Tauhid*. In this connection, reference has been made to the countless Signs that are found in the world, from man's own body to the earth and heavens, and it is pointed out that everywhere around him man finds things which testify to *Tauhid* which he refuses to acknowledge. If man sees carefully the variety of animals, the day and night, the rainfall and the vegetation thereby, the winds and his own creation, and ponders over them intelligently, without prejudice, he will find these Signs sufficiently convincing of the truth that this universe is not Godless, nor under the control of many gods, but it has been created by One God, and He alone is its Controller and Ruler. However, the case of the person who is determined not to acknowledge and wants to remain involved in doubts and suspicions is different. He cannot be blessed with the faith and conviction from anywhere in the world.

A little below, in the beginning of the second section, it has been reiterated that the things man is exploiting in the world, and the countless forces and agencies that are serving his interests in the universe, did not come into being just accidentally, nor have they been provided by the gods and goddesses, but it is One God alone, Who has supplied and subjected these to him from Himself. If only a person uses his mind properly and rightly, his own intellect will proclaim that God alone is man's real Benefactor and He alone deserves that man should pay obeisance to Him.

After this, the disbelievers of Makkah have been taken to task and reproved for their stubbornness, arrogance, mockery and insistence on disbelief with which they were resisting the invitation of the Qur'ān ; they have been warned that this Qur'ān has brought the same blessing which had been granted to the children of Israel before, by virtue of which they became distinguished above all the people of the world. Then, when they failed to recognize the true worth of this blessing and disputed their religion and lost it, this blessing now has been sent to them. This is such a code of guidance which shows the clear highway of Religion to man. The people who would turn it down by their own folly, would only prepare for their own doom, and only such people would become worthy of God's succour and mercy who would adopt obedience to it and lead a life of piety and righteousness.

In this connection, the followers of the Holy Prophet have been instructed that they should forbear and pardon the absurd and foolish behaviour towards them of the people fearless of God, for if they showed patience God Himself would deal with their opponents and would reward them for their fortitude.

Then, there is a criticism of the erroneous ideas that the disbelievers held about the Hereafter. They said that life was only this worldly life ; there was no life hereafter. Man dies in the course of time just as a watch stops functioning suddenly. The body is not survived by any soul, which might be seized and then breathed again into the human body some time in the future. In this regard, they challenged the Holy Prophet, saying : "If you lay a claim to this, then raise our dead forefathers back to life." In answer to this, Allah has given the following arguments :

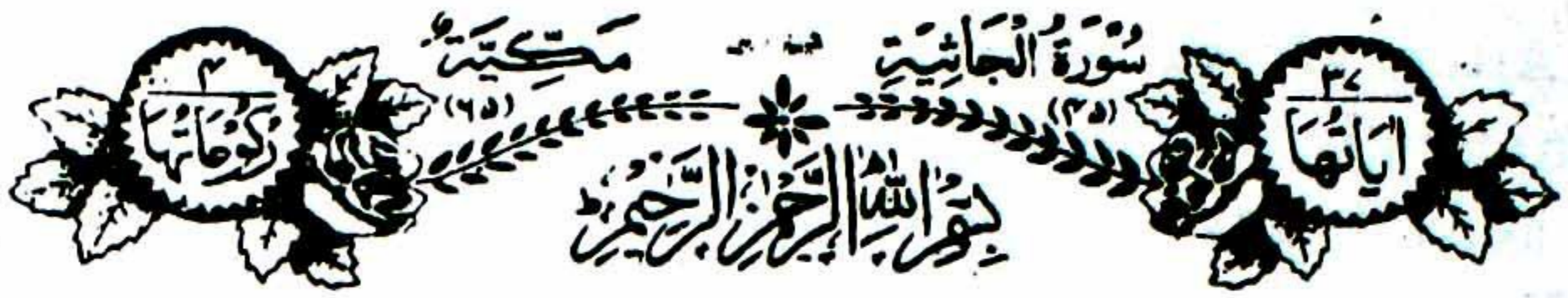
(1) "You do not say this on the basis of any knowledge but are uttering this grave thing on the basis of conjecture. Do you really have the knowledge that there is no other life after death, and the souls are not seized but are annihilated?"

(2) "Your this claim rests mainly on this that you have not seen any dead person rising back to life and returning to the world. Is this basis strong enough for a person to make a claim that the dead people will never rise to life? When you do not experience and observe a thing, does it mean that you have the knowledge that it does not exist at all?"

(3) It is utterly against reason and justice that the good and the bad, the obedient and the disobedient, the oppressor and the oppressed, should be made equal ultimately. Neither a good act should bear a good result nor an evil act an evil result; neither the grievances of the oppressed be redressed nor the oppressor be punished, but everyone should meet with the same fate ultimately. Whoever has formed this view about the universe of God, has formed a patently wrong view. The unjust and wicked people adopt this view because they do not want to face the evil results of their deeds, but this world of God is not a lawless kingdom; it is rather a system based on the Truth, in which there can be no question of the injustice of regarding the good and the bad as equal.

(4) That the creed of the denial of the Hereafter is highly destructive of morals. This is adopted only by such people as are the slaves of their lusts, and for the reason that they should have full freedom to serve their lusts. Then, when they have adopted this creed, it goes on making them more and more perverse till at last their moral sense becomes dead and all avenues of guidance are closed against them.

After giving these arguments Allah says most emphatically: "Just as you did not become living of your own accord, but became living by Our power, so you do not die of your own accord, but die when We send death on you. And a time is certainly coming when you will all be gathered together. If you do not believe in this because of your ignorance and folly today, you may not; when the time arrives, you will see for yourself that you are present before your God and your whole book of conduct is ready accurately, which bears evidence against each of your misdeeds. Then you will come to know how dearly has your denial of the Hereafter and your mockery of it cost you."



حَمْدًا تَنْزِيلُ الْكِتَابِ مِنَ اللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَكِيمِ ۝ إِنَّ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
 لَآيَاتٍ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۝ وَفِي خَلْقِكُمْ وَمَا يَبُثُّ مِنْ دَابَّةٍ آيَاتٌ لِقَوْمٍ يُوقِنُونَ ۝
 وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مِنْ رِزْقٍ فَأَحْيَا بِهِ
 الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَتَصْرِيفِ الرِّيْحِ آيَاتٌ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ ۝ تِلْكَ آيَاتُ اللَّهِ
 نَتْلُوهَا عَلَيْكَ بِالْحَقِّ فَبِأَيِّ حَدِيثٍ بَعْدَ اللَّهِ وَآيَاتِهِ يُؤْمِنُونَ ۝ وَيْلٌ
 لِكُلِّ أَفَّاكٍ أَثِيمٍ ۝ يَسْمَعُ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ تُثَلَّى عَلَيْهِ ثُمَّ يُصِرُّ مُسْتَكْبِرًا كَأَن لَّمْ
 يَسْمَعْهَا فَبَشِيرُهُ عَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ۝ وَإِذَا عَلِمَ مِنْ آيَاتِنَا شَيْئًا اتَّخَذَهَا هُزُوًا
 أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُهِينٌ ۝ مِنْ وَرَائِهِمْ جَهَنَّمُ وَلَا يُغْنِي عَنْهُمْ مَا كَسَبُوا

XLV

AL-JĀTHIYAH الْجَاثِيَةِ

Verses : 37

Revealed at Makkah

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful

1-2 Hā-Mīm. The revelation of this Book is from Allah, the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.¹

3.6 The fact is that there are countless Signs in the heavens and the earth for those who believe.² And in your own creation and in the animals, whom Allah is scattering (all over the earth), there are signs for those who affirm faith.³ And in the difference of the night

and day,⁴ and in the provisions⁵ that Allah sends down from the heaven, whereby He revives the earth after its death,⁶ and in the circulation of the winds,⁷ there are many signs for those who use their common sense. These are the Revelations of Allah, which We are rehearsing to you accurately. Then, what is there after Allah and His Revelations in which they will believe.⁸

7-10

Woe to every lying, sinful person before whom the Revelations of Allah are recited and he hears them, yet he persists in his disbelief arrogantly as if he never heard them.⁹ Give such a one the good news of a painful torment. When something of Our Revelations comes to his knowledge, he takes it in jest.¹⁰ For all such people there is an abasing torment. They have Hell in front of them.¹¹ Nothing of what they have earned in the world will avail them anything, nor those whom they have taken for guardians instead of Allah.¹² There is a great punishment for them.

1. In this brief introduction to the Sūrah, the listeners have been warned of two things: (1) That this Book is not the composition of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) himself, but it is being sent down to him by Allah; and (2) that it is being sent down by that Allah Who is All-Mighty as well as All-Wise. His being the Almighty demands that man should not dare disobey His Commands, for if he disobeys Him, he cannot escape His punishment; and His being the All-Wise demands that man should obey and follow His Guidance and His Commands with full satisfaction and willingness of the heart, for there can be no possibility of His teachings being wrong or inadequate or harmful in any way.

2. To begin the discourse like this after the introduction, indicates that in the background there are the objections of the people of Makkah, which they were raising against the teachings of the Holy Prophet. They said: "After all, how can we believe this one man when he says that all those great beings to whose shrines we have been dedicated and devoted so far, are nothing and that Godhead belongs to only One God?" About this it is being said

that the world is replete with the signs of the Reality to which they are being invited. If only they saw with open eyes, they would find those signs in themselves and outside them everywhere, which testify that this whole universe is the creation of One and only One God, and He alone is its Master and Ruler and Controller. It didn't need to be pointed out what was the nature of the signs in the earth and heavens, for the dispute at that time centred around the point that the polytheists were insisting on believing in other gods and deities also besides Allah and the Qur'ān gave the message that there was neither a god nor a deity beside One God. Therefore, it was apparent by itself from the context that the signs were of the truth of *Tauhīd* and of the refutation of *shirk*.

As for the sentence: "The signs are for those who believe," it means that although the signs are meant for all human beings, only those people can reach the right conclusion from their observation, who are inclined to believe; as for the heedless people, who live like animals and the stubborn people who are resolved not to believe, the existence and the non-existence of the signs is equal. The splendour and beauty of the garden is for those who can see; a blind man cannot perceive any splendour and beauty; for him even the existence of the garden is meaningless.

3. That is, "The case of those who have made up their minds not to believe, or of those who have chosen for themselves to remain lost in the blind alleys of doubt, is different, but when those who have not locked up their hearts against belief and conviction, will consider seriously their own creation, the structure of their own body, and the variety of animals found on the earth, they will see countless such signs as will leave no doubt in their minds that all this did not come into being without a God, or that it stood in need of more than one God for its creation. (For explanation, see Al-An'ām : 37-38, An-Naḥl : 5-8, Al-Ḥajj : 5-7, Al-Mu'minūn : 12-14, Al-Furqān : 54, Ash-Shua'rā' : 78-81, An-Naml : 64, Ar-Rūm : 20-21, 54, E.N.'s 14 to 18 of As-Sajdah, Yā Sīn : 71-73, Az-Zumar : 6, and E.N.'s 97, 98, 110 of Al-Mu'min).

4. The difference of the night and day is a sign because one follows the other with full regularity, because one is bright and the other dark, because over a certain period the day goes on shortening and the night lengthening gradually till the two become equal in duration, then again the day goes on lengthening and the night

shortening till the two again become equal in duration. These different kinds of variations found in the night and the day and the great aspects of wisdom that accrue from these, are a clear pointer to the fact that the Creator of the sun and the earth and of everything on the earth is one and that one All-Powerful Being is keeping both these spheres under His control; that that Being is not deaf and blind and unwise but All-Wise, Who has established this unalterable system and made His earth a suitable place for the countless species of life, which He has created here in the form of vegetables, animals and men. (For explanation, see Yūnus : 67, An-Naml : 83, Al-Qaṣaṣ : 71-73, Luqmān : 29 and E.N. 50, Yā Sīn : 37 and E.N. 32).

5. "Provisions": rainfall as becomes evident from the following sentence.

6. For explanation, see Al-Mu'minūn : 18-20, Al-Furqān : 48-49, Ash-Shua'arā' : 7, An-Naml : 61, Ar-Rūm : 24, 48, Yā Sīn : E.N.'s 26 to 31.

7. The circulation of the winds implies the circulation of the different kinds of winds at different times, on different parts of the earth and at different heights, which cause change of the seasons. What deserves attention is not only this that above the surface of the earth there is a thick atmosphere, which contains all those elements needed by living beings for breathing, and this thick covering has kept the earth's population safe from many of the heavenly calamities. Besides, another noteworthy thing is also this that the air is not just filled inertly in the atmosphere, but it blows occasionally in different ways. Sometimes a cool wind blows and sometimes a hot wind; sometimes it stops blowing and sometimes it starts blowing; sometimes it blows soft and sometimes strong, and sometimes it assumes the proportions of a storm; sometimes a dry wind blows and sometimes a moist wind; sometimes it brings the rain and sometimes it drives away the clouds. These different kinds of the winds do not blow without a purpose, but under a law and a system, which testifies that this arrangement is based on perfect wisdom, and it is serving great objectives. Then it is deeply related with coolness and heat, which go on increasing and decreasing according to the changing conditions and relationships between the earth and the sun. Furthermore, it has a deep relation with the seasonal changes and the distribution of the rain. All these facts proclaim that these arrangements have not been made haphazardly by some

different nature, nor have the sun and the earth and the air and water and vegetation and animals separate controllers, but inevitably they find their cause in the Creator of them all, and it is His Wisdom that has established this system for a great objective, and it is His power that it is functioning regularly according to a pre-ordained law.

What is "What these people have not believed even after Allah's own arguments have been presented for His Existence and His Signs, what else can be there by which they will gain the faith? But Allah's Will is the final thing by which a person can attain to the blessing, and the maximum of the rational arguments that could possibly be given to convince someone of an unseen reality have been presented in the Quranic Words. In spite of this if a person is still not convinced, he may persist in his denial, for his denial can be changed only by Allah.

The text in this section is extremely faint and illegible, appearing as a series of horizontal lines of ghosting. It seems to contain several paragraphs of text, but the words are not discernible.

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first puts a crooked meaning on it in order to make it a subject of ridicule and mockery, then after making fun of it, says: "These are strange things: one daily hears one or the other funny thing from them."

11. The word *warā'* is used for every such thing as is hidden from man, whether it is before him or behind him. Therefore, another translation can be: "They have Hell behind them." In the first case, the meaning would be: "They are unconsciously running on this way and have no idea that there is Hell in front of them in which they would fall;" in the second case, it would mean: "They are engaged in this mischief of theirs, thoughtless of the Hereafter, and they have no idea that Hell is in pursuit of them."

12. Here, the word *walī* (guardian) has been used in two meanings: (1) For those gods and goddesses and living and dead guides about whom the polytheists thought that anybody who was devoted to them, would escape Allah's punishment, whatever he might have done in the world, for their intercession will save them from Allah's wrath; and (2) for those chiefs and leaders and rulers whom the people took as their guides and patrons independent of God and followed them blindly and tried to please them even if they had to displease God. This verse warns all such people that when they will face Hell in consequence of their this way of life, neither of the two kinds of the guardians will come forward to save them from it. (For further explanation, see E.N. 6 of *Sūrah Ash Shūrā*).

شَيْئًا وَلَا مَا اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ ۗ وَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ۚ هَذَا
 هُدًى ۗ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مِّن رَّجْزِ أَلِيمٍ ۚ اللَّهُ
 الَّذِي سَخَّرَ لَكُمُ الْبَحْرَ لِتَجْرِيَ الْفُلُكُ فِيهِ بِأَمْرِهِ ۗ وَ لِيَتَّبِعُوا مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۗ وَ
 لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ۚ وَ سَخَّرَ لَكُم مَّا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَ مَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا مِّنْهُ ۗ
 إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ۚ قُلْ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يَغْفِرُوا لِلَّذِينَ لَا
 يَرْجُونَ أَيَّامَ اللَّهِ لِيَجْزِيَ قَوْمًا بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ۚ مَن عَمِلَ صَالِحًا
 فَلِنَفْسِهِ ۗ وَ مَن أَسَاءَ فَعَلَيْهَا ۗ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ تُرْجَعُونَ ۚ وَ لَقَدْ آتَيْنَا بَنِي
 إِسْرَائِيلَ الْكِتَابَ وَ الْحُكْمَ وَ النُّبُوَّةَ ۗ وَ رَزَقْنَاهُمْ مِّنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَ فَضَّلْنَاهُمْ عَلَى
 الْعَالَمِينَ ۚ وَ آتَيْنَاهُمْ بَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْرِ ۗ فَمَا اخْتَلَفُوا إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ
 الْعِلْمُ ۗ بَغْيًا بَيْنَهُمْ ۗ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ يَقْضِي بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ۗ فِيمَا كَانُوا فِيهِ
 يَخْتَلِفُونَ ۚ ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاكَ عَلَىٰ شَرِيعَةٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْرِ فَاتَّبِعْهَا ۗ وَ لَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَ
 الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ۚ إِنَّهُمْ لَن يَغْنُوا عَنْكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا ۗ وَ إِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ
 بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ ۗ وَ اللَّهُ وَ لِيُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ ۚ هَذَا بَصَائِرُ لِلنَّاسِ وَ هُدًى
 وَ رَحْمَةٌ لِّقَوْمٍ يُوقِنُونَ ۚ أَمْ حَسِبَ الَّذِينَ اجْتَرَحُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ أَن نَّجْعَلَهُمْ
 كَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَ عَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ سَوَاءً مَّحْيَاهُمْ وَ مَمَاتُهُمْ ۗ سَاءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ ۚ
 وَ خَلَقَ اللَّهُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَ الْأَرْضِ بِالْحَقِّ ۗ وَ لِيَجْزِيَ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ ۗ وَ هُمْ
 لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ۚ أَفَرَأَيْتَ مَن اتَّخَذَ إِلَهَهُ هَوَاهُ ۗ وَ أَضَلَّهُ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ عِلْمٍ وَ خَتَمَ
 عَلَىٰ سَمْعِهِ وَ قَلْبِهِ ۗ وَ جَعَلَ عَلَىٰ بَصَرِهِ غِشَاةً ۗ فَمَن يَهْدِيهِ ۗ مَن بَعْدَ اللَّهِ ۗ
 أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ ۚ وَ قَالُوا مَا هِيَ إِلَّا حَيَاتُنَا الدُّنْيَا نَمُوتُ وَ نَحْيَا ۗ وَ مَا يُهْلِكُنَا

This Qur'ān is true Guidance, and for those who have refused to believe in the Revelations of their Lord, there is the torment of a terrible scourge. 11

Allah it is Who subjected to you the ocean so that ships may sail in it by His Command,¹³ and you may seek His bounty¹⁴ and be grateful to Him. He subjected to you everything that the heavens and the earth contain,¹⁵ all from Himself.¹⁶ There are many signs in this for those who think.¹⁷ 12-13

O Prophet, tell the believers to pardon the errors of those who do not fear the coming of the evil days from Allah,¹⁸ so that Allah may Himself recompense a group for what they have earned.¹⁹ Whoever does good will do so for himself, and whoever does evil will himself bear its burden. To your Lord you have all to return ! 14-15

Before this We had bestowed on the children of Israel the Book and the Judgement²⁰ and the Prophethood. We blessed them with good things of life ; We exalted them above all the people of the world,²¹ and gave them clear instructions with regard to religion. Then they differed among themselves (not because of ignorance but) after the Knowledge had come to them, only because they wanted to wrong one another.²² Your Lord will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection concerning the matters in which they have been differing. After this We have set you, O Prophet, upon a clear highway (of the *Sharī'ah*) concerning religion :²³ so follow it, and do not follow the lusts of those who have no knowledge. They cannot avail you at all against Allah.²⁴ The wrongdoers are companions of one another and the Companion of the righteous is Allah. These are the lights of discernment for all mankind and guidance and mercy for those who affirm the faith.²⁵ 16-20

21-22

Do²⁶ those who have committed evil, think that We shall hold them and those who have believed and done right as equal, so that their life and their death should be alike? Evil indeed are the judgements they pass!²⁷ Allah has created the heavens and the earth with the truth²⁸ in order that each living being be rewarded for what it has earned. The people shall not be wronged at all.²⁹

3

Then, have you ever considered the case of the person who made his lust his god,³⁰ and Allah, in spite of knowledge,³¹ let him go astray and set a seal upon his heart and ears and laid a covering on his eyes?³² Who is there after Allah Who can guide him? Do you learn no lesson?³³

13. For explanation, see Banī Isrā'il : 66-67, Ar-Rūm : 46 and the corresponding E.N.'s, and E.N. 55 of Luqmān, E.N. 110 of Al-Mu'min, and E.N. 54 of Ash-Shūrā.

14. "Seek His bounty": Seek lawful provisions by trade, fishing, diving, navigation and other means in the sea.

15. For explanation, see Ibrāhīm : 32 and E.N. 44 on it, and E.N. 35 of Luqmān.

16. This sentence has two meanings : (1) "This gift and favour of Allah is not like the gift of the worldly kings, who favour their favourites with the wealth that they have collected from the people themselves, but, on the contrary, all the good things in the universe have been created by Allah Himself, and He has granted these to man from Himself;" and (2) "neither is anyone a partner of Allah in the creation of these good things, nor has anyone anything to do in making them subservient to man. Allah alone is their Creator and He alone has granted these to man from Himself."

17. That is, "In their subjection and in making them beneficial for man there are many signs for those who think and reflect. These signs clearly point to the truth that the Creator and Master and Administrator of everything and of every power in the universe, from the earth to the heavens, is One God alone, Who has subjected

them to a law ; and that God alone is Lord of man, Who has made all these things and powers favourable and helpful for man's life, his sustenance, his convenience, his development and his civilization and social life by His power and wisdom and mercy, and that God alone is worthy of man's service and gratitude and devotion and not some other beings, who have neither any share in creating the things and powers nor anything to do with subjecting them to man and making them beneficial for him."

18. Literally : "Who do not expect the days of Allah." But in Arabic usage on such occasions *ayyām* does not merely mean days but those memorable days in which important historical events may have taken place. For example, the word *ayyām-ul-'Arab* is used for the important events of the history of the Arabs and the major battles of the Arab tribes, which the later generations remember for centuries. Here, *ayyām-Allah* implies the evil days of a nation when the wrath of Allah may descend on it and ruin it in consequence of its misdeeds. That is why we have translated it: "Those who do not fear the coming of evil days from Allah," i.e. those who do not fear that a day will come when they will be called to account for their actions and deeds, and this same fearlessness has made them bold and stubborn in acts of wickedness.

19. The commentators have given two meanings of this verse and the words of the verse admit of both : (1) "That the believers should pardon the excesses of this wicked group so that Allah may reward them for their patience and forbearance and nobility from Himself and recompense them for the persecutions they have suffered for His sake." (2) "That the believers should pardon these people so that Allah may Himself punish them for their persecutions of them."

Some other commentators have regarded this verse as repealed. They say that this command was applicable only till the Muslims had not been permitted to fight. Then, when they were permitted to fight, this command became abrogated. But a careful study of the words of the verse shows that the claim about abrogation is not correct. The word "pardon" is never used in the sense that when a person is not able to retaliate upon another for the latter's excesses, he should pardon him, but on such an occasion the usual words are patience and forbearance. Instead of them, when the word "pardon" has been used here, it by itself gives the meaning

that the believers, in spite of their ability for retaliation, should refrain from retaliating upon the people for their excesses, whom fearlessness of God has made to transgress all limits of morality and humanity. This command does not contradict those verses in which the Muslims have been permitted to fight. Permission to fight pertains to the condition when the Muslim government has a reasonable ground for taking military action against an unbelieving people, and the command concerning forgiveness and pardon pertains to the common conditions in which the believers have to live in contact with a people who are fearless of God and have to suffer persecutions by them in different ways. The object of this command is that the Muslims should keep their moral superiority and should not stoop to the level of the morally inferior people by indulging in disputes and wranglings with them and resort to retaliation for every frivolity. As long as it is possible to respond to an accusation or objection gently and rationally, or to defend oneself against an excess, one should not refrain from this, but when things seem to be crossing these limits, one should hold one's peace and entrust the matter to Allah. If the Muslims themselves become involved in a fight or quarrel with them, Allah will leave them alone to deal with them; but if they pardon and forbear, Allah will Himself deal with the wicked people and reward the oppressed ones for their patience.

20. *Hukm* (Judgement) implies three things: (1) Knowledge and understanding of the Book and Religion; (2) wisdom to act according to the intention of the Book; and (3) capability to give right decisions in disputes.

21. It does not mean that they were given preference over all the people of the world for ever, but it means this: Allah had chosen the children of Israel from among all the contemporary nations of the world for the service that they should hold fast to the Divine Book and should rise as the standard-bearers of God-worship in the world.

22. For explanation, see *Al-Baqarah* : 213, *Āl-'Imrān* : 19 and E.N.'s 22, 23 of *Ash-Shūrā*.

23. It means this: "The mission that had been entrusted to the children of Israel before this has now been entrusted to you. They, in spite of receiving knowledge, created such differences in religion out of selfish motives and stirred up such divisions among themselves that they became disqualified to call the people to God's

way. Now you have been set upon the clear highway of Religion so that you may perform the service which the children of Israel have failed to perform and become disqualified to perform it." (For further explanation, see Ash-Shūrā : 13-15 and E.N.'s 20 to 26).

24. That is, "If you make any changes in Allah's Religion only to please them, they will not be able to save you from Allah's accountability and punishment."

25. That is, "This Book and this *Shari'ah* present such a light for all the people of the world, which distinguishes the truth from falsehood, but only such people receive any guidance from it, who believe in its truth ; for them only it is a mercy."

26. After the invitation to *Tauhid*, the discourse now turns to the theme of the Hereafter.

27. This is the moral reasoning for the truth of the Hereafter. The difference of good and evil in morals and of goodness and wickedness in deeds necessarily demands that the good and the evil people should not meet with one and the same end, but the good should be rewarded for their good and the wicked punished for their evil deeds. Otherwise, if the good and the evil end up similarly, the distinction of virtue and vice in morals becomes meaningless and God becomes unjust. The people who follow evil ways in the world do want that there should be no accountability and no rewards and punishments, for this concept goes against their enjoyment of life, but it is against the justice and wisdom of the Lord of the worlds that He should treat the good and the evil alike, and should not care to see how the righteous believer has lived his life in the world and how the sinful unbeliever has been enjoying it. One of them kept himself subjected to moral restrictions all his life, rendered the rights of those to whom they were due, restrained himself from the unlawful benefits and pleasures, and continued to incur losses for the sake of the truth; the other fulfilled his desires in every possible way: neither recognized the rights of God nor hesitated from violating the rights of the people, but went on collecting benefits and good things of life in every possible way. Can it be expected o God that He would overlook the difference between the lives of the two kinds of men? If the end of both be the same, no greater injustice could be conceived. (For further explanation, see Yūnus : 4, Hūd : 106, An-Naḥl : 38-39, Al-Ḥajj : E.N. 9, An-Naml : E.N. 86, Ar-Rūm : 7-8. Ṣuād : 28 and E.N. 30 on it).

28. That is, "Allah has not created the earth and the heavens for mere sport, but it is a wise system with a purpose. In this system it is absolutely un-imaginable that the people who may have accomplished good deeds by the right use of the powers and means and resources granted by Allah and the people who may have spread mischief and wickedness by their wrong use, should end up ultimately in the dust after death, and there should be no life hereafter in which their good and bad deeds should lead to good or bad results according to justice. If this were so, this universe would be the plaything of a thoughtless person, and not a purposeful system devised by a Wise Being." (For further explanation, see Al-An'ām: 73, Yūnus : 5-6, Ibrahim : 19, An-Nahl : 3, Al-'Ankabūt : 44 and E.N.'s 75, 76; Ar-Rūm : 8 and E.N. 6 on it).

29. In this context the sentence clearly means this : "If the good people are not rewarded for their goodness, and the wicked are not punished for their wickedness, and the grievances of the oppressed are not redressed, it would be injustice. There cannot be such an injustice in the Kingdom of God. Likewise, there cannot also be the other kind of injustice that a good man be given a lesser reward than what is due to him, or a bad man given a greater punishment than what he deserves."

30. "To make one's lust one's god" implies that one should become a slave of one's lusts and desires : one should do whatever one likes whether God has forbidden it, and should not do what one dislikes, whether God has made it obligatory. When a man starts obeying somebody like this, it means that his deity is not God but the one whom he is obeying without question, no matter whether he calls him his lord (with the tongue) or not, and carves out an image of him and worships him or not. For when he has worshipped him directly without question, it is enough to make him a deity and after this practical *shirk* one cannot be absolved from the guilt of *shirk* only because one did not call the object of one's worship one's deity with the tongue, nor prostrated oneself before it. The other major commentators also have given the same commentary of this verse. Ibn Jarīr says : "He made his lust his god : he carried out what his self desired : neither regarded the forbidden things by Allah as forbidden, nor regarded the things made lawful by Him as lawful." Abū Bakr al-Jaṣṣāṣ gives this meaning : "He obeys his lusts as one should obey one's

God." Zamakhshari explains it, thus: "He is obedient to the lusts of his self: He follows his self wherever it beckons him, as if he serves him as one should serve one's God." (For further explanation, see E.N. 56 of Al-Furqān, E.N. 63 of Sabā, E.N. 53 of Yā Sīn, and E.N. 38 of Ash-Shūrā).

31. The words *adalla-hulla-hu 'alā 'ilm-in* may either mean: "The person in spite of being knowledgeable was driven astray by Allah, for he had become a slave of his lusts;" or "Allah, by virtue of His knowledge that he had made his lusts his god, drove him astray."

32. For the commentary of letting a person go astray and setting a seal upon his heart and ears and a covering on his eyes, see Al-Baqarah: 7, 18, Al-An'ām: 25 and E.N. 28, Al-A'rāf: 100, At-Taubah: 87, 93, Yūnus: 74 and E.N. 73, Ar-Ra'd: 27, Ibrahim: 4, 27, An-Nahl: 108, Banī Isrā'il: 46, Ar-Rūm: 59, Fāṭir: 8 and E.N.'s 16, 17, and E.N. 54 of Al-Mu'minūn).

33. From the context in which this verse occurs, it becomes obvious that only those people deny the Hereafter, who want to serve their lusts and who regard belief in the Hereafter as an obstacle to their freedom. Then, once they have denied the Hereafter, their servitude of the self goes on increasing and they go on wandering further into deviation. They commit every kind of evil without feeling any qualms; they do not hesitate to usurp the rights of others; they cannot be expected to restrain themselves when there is an opportunity for them to commit an excess or injustice only because of a regard for justice and truth in their hearts. The events and incidents that can serve as a warning for a man, are witnessed by them too, but they draw the wrong conclusion that whatever they are doing is right and they should do the same. No word of advice moves them; no argument, which can stop a man from evil, appeals to them; but they go on devising and furnishing more and more arguments to justify their unbridled freedom, and their minds remain day and night engaged only in devising ways and means of fulfilling their own interests and desires in every possible way instead of engaging in a good thought. This is an express proof of the fact that the denial of the Hereafter is destructive for human morals. The only thing that can restrain man within the bounds of humanity is the feeling that man is not irresponsible but has to render an account of his deeds before God. Being devoid of this feeling even if a person is highly learned, he cannot help adopting an attitude and behaviour worse than that of the animals.

إِلَّا الدَّهْرُ وَمَا لَهُم بِذَلِكَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَظُنُّونَ ﴿٣٤﴾ وَإِذَا تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ
 آيَاتُنَا بَيِّنَاتٍ مَّا كَانَ حُجَّتَهُمْ إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا اتُّوًّا بِآيَاتِنَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٣٥﴾
 قُلِ اللَّهُ يُحْيِيكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمِيتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يَجْمَعُكُمْ إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ وَ
 لَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَ لِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَ يَوْمَ تَقُومُ
 السَّاعَةُ يُومِئِدُ يَخْسِرُ الْمُبْطِلُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾ وَ تَرَىٰ كُلَّ أُمَّةٍ جَائِشَةً تَدْعَىٰ
 إِلَىٰ كِتَابِهَا الْيَوْمَ تُجْزَوْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾ هَذَا كِتَابُنَا يَنْطِقُ عَلَيْكُمْ بِالْحَقِّ
 إِنَّا كُنَّا نَسْتَنسِخُ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
 فَيُدْخِلُهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ فِي رَحْمَتِهِ ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْبَیِّنُ ﴿٤٠﴾ وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
 أَفَلَمْ تَكُنْ آيَاتِي تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْكُمْ فَاسْتَكْبَرْتُمْ وَ كُنْتُمْ قَوْمًا مُّجْرِمِينَ ﴿٤١﴾ وَإِذَا قِيلَ
 إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَ السَّاعَةُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهَا قُلْتُمْ مَا نَدْرِي مَا السَّاعَةُ إِنْ
 نَظُنُّ إِلَّا ظَنًّا وَ مَا نَحْنُ بِمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٤٢﴾ وَ بَدَأَ لَهُمْ سَيِّئَاتٍ مَا عَمِلُوا وَ حَاقَ
 بِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾ وَ قِيلَ الْيَوْمَ نَسُكُكُمْ كَمَا نَسَيْتُمْ لِقَاءَ يَوْمِكُمْ
 هَذَا وَ مَاؤُكُمْ النَّارُ وَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ نَصِيرِينَ ﴿٤٤﴾ ذَلِكَ بِأَنكُمْ اتَّخَذْتُمْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ
 هُزُوءًا وَ غَرَّكُمْ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا فَالْيَوْمَ لَا يُخْرَجُونَ مِنْهَا وَ لَا هُمْ يُسْتَعْتَبُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾
 قُلِ لِلَّهِ الْحَمْدُ رَبِّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَ رَبِّ الْأَرْضِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾ وَ لَهُ الْكِبْرِيَاءُ
 فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَ الْأَرْضِ وَ هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٤٧﴾

٣
 ع ٥
 ١٩

٣
 ع ١١
 ٢٠

They say, "Life is only this worldly life of ours. Here we shall die and live and nothing but the change of time destroys us." In fact, they have no knowledge concerning this: they merely guess.³⁴ And when Our clear Revelations are recited to them,³⁵ their only argument is that they say, "Bring back our forefathers if you are truthful."³⁶ O Prophet, say to them, "It is Allah Who gives you life, then He it is Who causes your death,³⁷ then He it is Who will gather you together on the Day of Resurrection, which is sure to come,³⁸ but most people do not know.³⁹ To Allah belongs the Sovereignty of the heavens and the earth,⁴⁰ and the Day the Hour of Resurrection arrives, the worshippers of falsehood on that Day shall be doomed to loss."

24-27.

At that time you will see every nation on their knees.⁴¹ Each nation will be summoned to see its record. It will be said to them, "Today you shall be rewarded for what you have done. This is a record which We have prepared: it gives true evidence against you. We were recording all your deeds."⁴² Then, those who had believed and done righteous deeds, their Lord shall admit them to His mercy; this is the manifest success! And to those who had disbelieved, it will be said: "Were not My Revelations recited to you? But you showed arrogance⁴³ and became criminals. And when it was said, 'Allah's promise is true and there is no doubt about the coming of Resurrection', you used to say, 'We do not know what Resurrection is: we do only guess: we are not certain.'⁴⁴ The evils of their deeds then will become manifest to them⁴⁵ and they will be encompassed by the same that they used to mock. It will be said to them, "We will today forget you even as you yourselves had forgotten the meeting of this Day. Your abode now is Hell and there is none to help you. You have met

28-35

this fate because you took Allah's Revelations in jest, and the life of the world deluded you. Therefore, neither shall they be taken out of Hell today, nor shall they be asked to make amends and please their Lord."⁴⁶

36-37

So, praise is for Allah alone, Who is the Lord of the heavens and the earth and the Lord of all the worlds. To Him belongs Greatness in the heavens and the earth, and He alone is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.

34. This is, "There is no means of knowledge by which they might have known with certainty that after this life there is no other life for man, and that man's soul is not seized by the Command of God, but he dies and perishes merely in the course of time. The deniers of the Hereafter say these things not on the basis of any knowledge but on mere conjecture. The maximum that they could say scientifically is : "We do not know whether there is any life after death or not;" but they cannot say : "We know that there is no other life after this life." Likewise, they cannot make the claim of knowing scientifically that man's soul is not seized by God's Command but he perishes after death just like a watch which suddenly stops functioning. The most they can say is just this : "We do not know what exactly happens in either case." Now the question is : When to the extent of the means of human knowledge there is an equal possibility of there being life after death or there being no life after death, and the soul's being seized by Allah's Command, or man's dying of himself in the course of time, what is the reason that these people abandon the probability of the possibility of the Hereafter and give their judgement in favour of its denial ? Do they have any other reason than this that they, in fact, decide this question on the basis of their desire and not by any argument ? As they do not like that there should be any life after death and death should mean total annihilation and not seizure of the soul by Allah's Command, they make their heart's desire their creed and deny the other probability."

35. "Our clear Revelations": the Revelations in which strong arguments have been given for the possibility of the Hereafter and in which it has been stated that its occurrence is the demand of both wisdom and justice, and its non-occurrence renders the whole system of the universe meaningless and absurd.

36. In other words, what they meant to say was this : When somebody tells them that there is life after death, he must raise a dead person from the grave and present him before them. And if this is not done, they cannot believe that the dead would ever be raised to life once again at some time in the future, whereas nobody ever told them that the dead would be raised to life in this world as and when required separately, but what was said was this : On the Day of Resurrection Allah will raise all human beings to life simultaneously and will subject them to accountability and punish and reward them accordingly.

37. This is the answer to their saying that death comes to man automatically in the course of time. It means this : "Neither you get life accidentally nor your death occurs automatically. It is God Who gives you life and it is He Who takes it away."

38. This is the answer to their this demand : "Bring back our forefathers if you are truthful." To this it has been said : "This will not happen now separately for individuals, but a Day has been fixed for gathering all mankind together."

39. That is, "It is lack of knowledge and right understanding which is the real cause of the people's denying the Hereafter ; otherwise it is not its coming but its not coming which is against reason. If a person reflects rightly on the system of the universe and on his own self, he will himself realize that there can be no doubt about the coming of the Hereafter."

40. In view of the context, this sentence by itself gives the meaning that it is not at all beyond the power of God Who is ruling over this great and marvellous universe that He should bring the human beings whom He has created in the first instance back into existence once again.

41. That is, the dread and terror of the Plain of Resurrection and the awe of the Divine Court will be such that it will break the stubbornness of the most arrogant and boastful people, and everyone will be found fallen on his knees humbly.

42. The only possible way of getting a thing recorded is not by means of the pen and paper only. Man himself has discovered in this world several other forms of recording human words and actions and reproducing them exactly and accurately; and we cannot even imagine what other possibilities of it lie yet undiscovered,

which man himself will discover and exploit in the future. Now, who can know how and by what means is Allah getting recorded man's every word, his every movement and action, even his hidden intentions and motives and desires and ideas, and how He will place before every man and every group and every nation his or its whole lifework accurately and exactly?

43. That is, "You thought it was beneath your dignity to believe in Allah's Revelations and submit to them, and considered yourselves to be above subjection and servitude."

44. The people mentioned in verse 24 above were those who denied the Hereafter openly and absolutely, here those who are not sure of it although they do not deny its possibility because of conjecture. Apparently there is a vast difference between the two groups in that one of them denies the Hereafter absolutely and the other regards it as possible on the basis of conjecture. But as for the result and final end, there is no difference between them, for the moral consequences of the denial of the Hereafter and of lack of the faith in it are the same. A person whether he disbelieves in the Hereafter or lacks faith in it, will in either case be inevitably devoid of the feeling of accountability before God, and this lack of feeling will necessarily involve him in the error and deviation of thought and action. Only faith and belief in the Hereafter can keep a man on the right track in the world. In the absence of it, both doubt and denial give him a similar attitude of irresponsibility, and since this same attitude of irresponsibility is the real cause of man's being doomed in the Hereafter, therefore neither the denier of it can escape Hell nor the one who lacks faith in it.

45. That is, "There they will come to know that their ways of behaviour, their practices and manners, and their actions and pastimes, which they regarded as very good in the world were, in fact, very bad: they had committed a basic mistake in thinking that they were not answerable to anyone, and this had rendered their whole lifework fruitless and vain."

46. This last sentence depicts the manner of a master who after rebuking some of his servants turns to others and says: "Well, these wretched people now deserve this and this punishment!"

XLVI

AL-AHQĀF ٱلأحقاف

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

XLVI

AL-AHQĀF الْأَحْقَافُ

INTRODUCTION

Name

It is derived from the sentence *idh andhara qauma-hū bil Ahqāf-i* of verse 21.

Period of Revelation

It is determined by an historical event that has been mentioned in vv. 29-32. This incident of the visit of the jinn and their going back after listening to the Qur'ān had occurred, according to agreed traditions of the *Hadith* and biographical literature, at the time when the Holy Prophet

had halted at Nakhlah during his return journey from Tā'if to Makkah. And according to all authentic historical traditions he had gone to Ṭā'if three years before the *Hijrah*; therefore it is determined that this Sūrah was sent down towards the end of the 10th year or in the early part of the 11th year of the Prophethood.

Historical Background

The 10th year of the Prophethood was a year of extreme persecution and distress in the Holy Prophet's life. The Quraish and the other tribes had continued their boycott of the Bani Hāshim and the Muslims for three years and the Holy Prophet and the people of his family and Companions lay besieged in Shi'b Abi Tālib.¹ The Quraish had blocked up this locality from every side so that no supplies of any kind could reach the besieged people. Only during the Ḥajj season they were allowed to come out and buy some articles of necessity. But even at that time whenever Abū Lahab noticed any of them approaching the market place or a trading caravan he would call out to the merchants exhorting them to announce forbidding rates of their articles for them, and would pledge that he himself would buy those articles so that they did not suffer any loss. This boycott which continued un-interrupted for three years had broken the back of the Muslims and the Bani Hāshim; so much so that at times they were even forced to eat grass and the leaves of trees.

1. Shi'b Abi Tālib was a locality of Makkah inhabited by the Bani Hāshim. As it was located in one of the ravines of the Mount Abū Qubais and Abū Tālib was the chief of the Bani Hāshim, it was called Shi'b Abi Tālib. It lay by the house which according to local tradition is well known as the birthplace of the Holy Prophet in Makkah. Now it is called Shi'b 'Alī or Shi'b Bani Hāshim.

At last, when the siege was lifted this year, Abū Tālib, the Holy Prophet's uncle, who had been shielding him for ten long years, died, and hardly a month later his wife, Ḥadrat Khadijah, who had been a source of peace and consolation for him ever since the beginning of the call, also passed away. Because of these tragic incidents, which closely followed each other, the Holy Prophet used to refer to this year as the year of sorrow and grief.

After the death of Ḥadart Khadijah and Abū Tālib the disbelievers of Makkah became even bolder against the Holy Prophet. They started treating him even more harshly. So much so that it became difficult for him to step out of his house. Of these days Ibn Hishām has related the incident that a Quraish scoundrel one day threw dust at him openly in the street.

At last, the Holy Prophet left for Ṭā'if with the intention that he should invite the Bani Ṭhaqīf to Islam, for even if they did not accept Islam, they might at least be persuaded to allow him to work for his mission peacefully. He did not have the facility of any conveyance at that time, and travelled all the way to Ṭā'if on foot. According to some traditions, he had gone there alone, but according to others, he was accompanied by Zaid bin Ḥārithah. He stayed at Ṭā'if for a few days, and approached each of the chiefs and nobles of the Bani Ṭhaqīf and talked to him about his mission. But not only they refused to listen to him, but plainly gave him the notice that he should leave their city, for they feared that his preaching might "spoil" their younger generation. Thus, he was compelled to leave Ṭā'if. When he was leaving the city, the chiefs of Ṭhaqīf set their slaves and scoundrels behind him, who went on crying at him, abusing him and pelting him with stones for a long way from either side of the road till he became broken down

with wounds and his shoes were filled with blood. Wearied and exhausted he took shelter in the shade of the wall of a garden outside Ṭā'if, and prayed :

“O God, to Thee I complain of my weakness, little resource, and lowness before men. O Most Merciful, Thou art the Lord of the weak, and Thou art my Lord. To whom wilt Thou confide me ? To one afar who will misuse me ? Or to an enemy to whom Thou hast given power over me ? If Thou art not angry with me I care not. Thy favour is more wide for me. I take refuge in the light of Thy countenance by which the darkness is illumined, and the things of this world and the next are rightly ordered, lest Thy anger descend upon me or Thy wrath light upon me. It is for Thee to be satisfied until Thou art well pleased. There is no power and no might save in Thee.” (Ibn Hishām : A. Guillaume's Translation, p. 193).

Grieved and heart-broken when he returned and reached near Qarn al-Manāzil, he felt as though the sky was overcast by clouds. He looked up and saw Gabriel in front of him, who called out : “Allah has heard the way your people have responded. He has, therefore, sent this angel in charge of the mountains. You may command him as you please.” Then the angel of the mountains greeted him and submitted : “If you like I would overturn the mountains from either side upon these people.” The Holy Prophet replied : “No, but I expect that Allah will create from their seed those who will worship none but Allah, the One.” (Bukhāri, *Dhikr al-Malā'ikah* ; Muslim : *Kitāb al-Maghāzī* ; Nasa'i : *Al-Ba'ūth*).

After this he went to stay for a few days at Nakhlah, perplexed as to how he would face the people of Makkah, who, he thought, would be still further emboldened against

him after hearing what had happened at Ṭā'if. It was here that one night when he was reciting the Qur'ān in the Prayer, a group of the jinn happened to pass by and listened to the Qur'ān, believed in it, and returned to their people to preach Islam. Thus, Allah gave His Prophet the good news that if the men were running away from his invitation, there were many of the jinn, who had become its believers, and they were spreading his message among their own kind.

Subject-Matter and Topics

Such were the conditions when this Sūrah was sent down. Anyone who keeps this background in view, on the one hand, and studies this Sūrah, on the other, will have no doubt left in his mind that this is not at all the composition of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace), but "a Revelation from the All-Mighty, All-Wise Allah." For nowhere in this Sūrah, from the beginning to the end, does one find even a tinge of the human feelings and reactions, which are naturally produced in a man who is passing through such hard conditions. Had it been the word of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) whom the occurrence of personal griefs one after the other and the countless and the recent bitter experience at Ṭā'if had caused extreme anguish and distress, it would have reflected in some degree the state of the mind of the man who was the subject of these afflictions and griefs. Consider the prayer that we have cited above: it contains his own language: its every word is saturated with the feelings that he had at the time. But this Sūrah which was sent down precisely in the same period and was recited even by him under the same conditions, is absolutely free from every sign or trace of the time.

The subject-matter of the Sūrah is to warn the disbelievers of the errors in which they were involved, and

also persisted arrogantly, and were condemning the man who was trying to redeem them. They regarded the world as a useless and purposeless place where they were not answerable to anyone. They thought that invitation to *Tauhīd* was false and stuck to the belief that their own deities were actually the associates of Allah. They were not inclined to believe that the Qur'ān was the Word of the Lord of the worlds. They had a strange erroneous concept of apostleship on the basis of which they were proposing strange criteria of judging the Holy Prophet's claim to it. In their estimation one great proof of Islam's not being based on the truth was that their elders and important chiefs of the tribes and so-called leaders of their nation were not accepting it and only a few young men, and some poor folks and some slaves had affirmed faith in it. They thought that Resurrection and life after death and the rewards and punishments of the Hereafter were fabrications whose occurrence was absolutely out of the question.

In this Sūrah each of these misconceptions has been refuted in a brief but rational way, and the disbelievers have been warned that if they would reject the invitation of the Qur'ān and the Prophethood of the Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) by prejudice and stubbornness instead of trying to understand its truth rationally, they would only be preparing for their own doom.



الجزء
(٢٦)

حَمْدٌ تَنْزِيلُ الْكِتَابِ مِنَ اللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَكِيمِ ۝ مَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَوَاتِ

وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَأَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا عَمَّا
أُنذِرُوا مُّعْرِضُونَ ۝ قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَرُونِي مَا ذَا
خَلَقُوا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ أَمْ لَهُمْ شِرْكٌ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ إِيْتُونِي بِكِتَابٍ مِّن قَبْلِ هَذَا
أَوْ آثَرَةٍ مِّنْ عِلْمٍ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ۝ وَمَنْ أَضَلُّ مِمَّن يَدْعُوا مِنْ دُونِ
اللَّهِ مَنْ لَا يَسْتَجِيبُ لَهُ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ وَهُمْ عَن دُعَائِهِمْ غَفِلُونَ ۝ وَإِذَا
حُثِرَ النَّاسُ كَانُوا لَهُمْ أَعْدَاءً وَكَانُوا بِعِبَادَتِهِمْ كَافِرِينَ ۝ وَإِذَا تَشَلَّى
عَلَيْهِمْ أَيْتَانَا بَيَّنَّتْ قَالِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَلْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ هَذَا سِحْرٌ مُّبِينٌ ۝
أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَاهُ قُلْ إِنْ افْتَرَيْتُهُ فَلَا تَمْلِكُونَ لِي مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا هُوَ
أَعْلَمُ بِمَا تُفِيضُونَ فِيهِ كَفَىٰ بِهِ شَهِيدًا بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ ۝ وَهُوَ الْغَفُورُ
الرَّحِيمُ ۝ قُلْ مَا كُنْتُ بِدَاعًا مِنَ الرُّسُلِ وَمَا أَدْرِي مَا يُفْعَلُ بِي وَلَا بِكُمْ ۝
إِنْ أَتَيْتُمُونِي إِلَّا مَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ وَمَا أَنَا إِلَّا نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ ۝ قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ كَانَ
مِن عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَكَفَرْتُمْ بِهِ وَشَهِدَ شَاهِدٌ مِّن بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ عَلَىٰ مِثْلِهِ
فَأَمَّنَ وَاسْتَكْبَرْتُمْ ۝ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ۝ وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ
كَفَرُوا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَوْ كَانَ خَيْرًا مَا سَبَقُونَا إِلَيْهِ ۝ وَإِذْ لَمْ يَهْتَدُوا بِهِ
فَسَيَقُولُونَ هَذَا إِفْكٌ قَدِيمٌ ۝ وَمِن قَبْلِهِ كَتَبَ مُوسَىٰ إِمَامًا وَرَحْمَةً ۝
وَهَذَا كِتَابٌ مُّصَدِّقٌ لِّسَانِ عَرَبِيًّا لِّنَذِيرِ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا ۝ وَبُشْرَى

ع ١٠

XLVI

AL-AHQĀF الْأَحْقَاف

Verses : 35

Revealed at Makkah

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful

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

1-2

We have created the heavens and the earth and all that lies between them with the truth and to last for an appointed term,² but the disbelievers are turning away from the reality of which they have been warned.³

3

O Prophet, say to them, "Have you ever seen with open eyes those whom you invoke instead of Allah? Show me what they have created in the world, or, have they any share in the creation and control of the heavens? Bring me a Book revealed before this, or produce some remnant of knowledge (in support of your beliefs) if you are truthful."⁴ And who could be further astray than the one who invokes, instead of Allah, those who cannot answer him till the Day of Resurrection?⁵ Nay, they are even unaware that they are being invoked.⁶ And when all mankind shall be gathered together, they will become enemies of those who invoked them and will disown their worship.⁷

4-6

Whenever Our clear Revelations are recited to them and the Truth comes before them, the disbelievers say, "This is plain magic."⁸ Do they mean to say that the Messenger himself has fabricated it?⁹ Say to them, "If I have fabricated it myself, you will not be able to do anything to save me from Allah's punishment. Allah knows full well whatever you utter. He is enough as a witness between me and you;¹⁰ and He is the All-Forgiving, the All-Merciful."¹¹

7-8

9-10 Say to them, "I am not a novel Messenger, I do not know what shall befall you tomorrow nor what shall befall me. I only follow that which is revealed to me, and I am no more than a warner."¹² O Prophet, say to them, "Have you ever considered that if this (Qur'ān) were really from Allah, and yet you denied it, (what would be your end)?¹³ And a witness from among the children of Israel has already borne witness to the like of it ; he believed while you showed arrogance.¹⁴ Allah does not show guidance to such wrongdoers."

11-12 Those who have refused to believe say with regard to those who have believed, "If it had been any good to believe in this Book, they would not have believed in it before us."¹⁵ As they have not received any guidance from it, they will surely say, "This is an ancient falsehood."¹⁶ Yet before it there has come the Book of Moses as a guide and a mercy, and this Book has been revealed to confirm it in the Arabic tongue so as to warn the wrongdoers¹⁷ and to give good news to those who have adopted the righteous conduct.

1. For explanation, see E. N. 1 of Sūrah Az-Zumar, E. N. 1 of Al-Jāthīyah and also E. N. 1 of As-Sajdah for understanding the true spirit of this introduction.

2. For explanation, see Al-An'ām : 73, Yūnus : 5-6, Ibrāhīm : 19, Al-Hijr : 85, An-Nahl : 3, Al-Anbiyā, : 16-18. Al-Mu'minūn : 115, Al-'Ankabūt : 44, Ar-Rūm : 8 and the corresponding E.N.'s.

3. That is, "The actual fact is that this universe is not a purposeless plaything but a purposeful, wise system in which the decisions regarding the good and the bad, the oppressor and the oppressed, will necessarily be based on justice ; and the present system of the universe is not permanent and eternal, but it has a fixed term appointed for it on the expiry of which it will inevitably come to an end. For the Court of Allah also there is a settled time and it will

certainly be established when the time for it reaches its term. But the people who have refused to believe in Allah's Prophet and His Book, have an aversion to these truths. They are least mindful of this that a time has to come when they will have to render an account of their deeds. They think that the Messenger of Allah has done them a great wrong by warning them of these truths, whereas he has done them a great good by fore-warning them not only of the time when they will be subjected to accountability but also of what they will be questioned at that time so that they may prepare themselves accordingly."

To understand the following discourse it should be borne in mind that man's basic error is the one that he commits with regard to determining his belief about God. In this regard, the adoption of a creed carelessly on the basis of mere hearsay, without any serious and deep thought and investigation, is a stupendous folly, which vitiates man's whole attitude to life in the world and ruins his destiny for ever afterwards. But the reason why man becomes involved in this dangerous kind of heedlessness is that he regards himself as irresponsible and un-answerable and develops the misunderstanding that whatever creed he may adopt about God, it would make no difference, because either there is no life after death in which he might have to face accountability, or if there is any such life and he is also called to account, the beings of whom he is a devotee, will save him from any evil fate. This same lack of the sense of responsibility renders him frivolous in the selection of a religious creed, and on the basis of the same he fabricates all sorts of absurd creeds, from atheism to every form of polytheism, or adopts the creeds fabricated by others.

4. As the addressees are a polytheistic people they are being told the reality of the irrational creed in which they persisted carelessly due to lack of the sense of responsibility. Along with acknowledging Allah as the Creator of the universe they had made many other beings their deities: they invoked them, regarded them as fulfillers of their needs and removers of hardships: prostrated themselves and made offerings before them, and thought they had the powers of making and un-making of their destinies. About the

same beings, they are being asked : "On what basis have you made them your deities ?". Obviously, there can be only two bases for regarding someone as an associate in worship along with Allah : either man himself should know through some means of knowledge that his deity too has a share in making the earth and heavens, or Allah Himself may have stated that so-and-so also is His associate in the functions of Godhead. Now, if a polytheist can neither make the claim that he possesses direct knowledge of his deity's being an associate of God, nor he can show in a Book sent by God that God Himself has appointed somebody as His associate, his creed would inevitably be baseless.

In this verse, "a Book revealed before this" implies a Book sent by Allah before the Qur'ān, and "some remnant" of knowledge implies some part of the teachings of the Prophets and righteous men of the ancient times, which may have reached the later generations reliably. There is no tinge of *shirk* in whatever man has received through these two means. All the heavenly Books unanimously present the same *Tauhīd* to which the Qur'ān invites the people, and no existing remnant of the ancient lore bears evidence to this that some Prophet or saint or righteous man might have taught the people to serve and worship any other than God. Even if we do not take a Book to mean a Divine Book and remnant of knowledge the knowledge bequeathed by the Prophets and righteous men, no authentic book or the research made by a scholar of religious or secular lore has pointed out that such and such a thing in the earth or the heavens has been created by such and such a saint or god, or a certain blessing of the blessings of life which man is benefiting from in the universe has been created by such and such a deity instead of God.

5. "Cannot answer him" : Cannot answer the supplications of any one. That is, these gods do not possess the powers by virtue of which they could give decisions on the prayers and petitions of their devotees. (For further explanation, see E.N. 33 of Az-Zumar).

"Till the Day of Resurrection" means that as long as the world lasts they will get no answer to their supplications and prayers from their deities, but when Resurrection will have taken place, the deities will turn hostile to their worshippers themselves, as becomes explicit from the next verse.

6. That is, "They do not even hear the supplications of the

supplicants, neither through their own ears nor through any other means." This thing can be elaborated like this : The beings whom the polytheists the world over have been invoking are divided into three categories : (1) Lifeless and inanimate creation ; (2) the pious men who have passed away ; and (3) the wicked men who had themselves gone astray, and who misled others and passed away. As for the first category of the deities they will naturally remain unaware of the supplications of their worshippers. As for the deities of the second kind, who were favourites with their God, there are two reasons of their remaining unaware : (a) They are in the presence of Allah in a state where human voices cannot reach them directly ; and (b) even Allah and His angels do not inform them that the people whom they had been teaching to invoke Allah alone in the world, were invoking them instead, for no information could cause them a greater shock than this, and Allah does not at all like to vex the souls of His righteous servants. Now if we consider the case of the third kind of the deities, we shall see that there are two reasons also of their remaining unaware : (a) That they have been placed in confinement as the accused, and no voice from the world can reach them ; and (b) that even Allah and His angels do not convey to them the news that their mission is flourishing in the world, and the people have set them up as deities, for this news would be a happy news for them, and Allah does not like to make the wicked people happy.

In this connection, one should also understand that Allah conveys to His righteous servants the greetings of peace and prayers of mercy from the people of the world, for these things are a source of joy and pleasure for them ; likewise, He informs the culprits of the curses, censures and condemnations of the people of the world, as the disbelievers killed in the Battle of Badr were made to hear the curse of the Holy Prophet according to a *Ḥadīth*, for it is a cause of anguish for them. But anything which might cause distress to the righteous people and joy to the culprits is not conveyed to them. This explanation makes the truth about the question of hearing by the dead plain and easy to understand.

7. That is, they will say : "We had neither told the people to invoke us for help, nor are we aware that they used to invoke us. They themselves had presumed that we could fulfil their needs and so had started invoking us."

8. It means this : When the Revelations of the Qur'ān were recited before the disbelievers of Makkah, they realized that the Qur'ān was far superior to human speech. The compositions of their greatest poets, orators and literary men were no match with the un-paralleled eloquence, enchanting oratory, sublime themes and heart-moving style of the Qur'ān. Above all, even the Holy Prophet's own words and speech were not comparable with the discourses that were being sent down to him by God. Those who had known him since childhood knew full well the vast difference that was there between his language and words and the words of the Qur'ān, and it was not possible for them to believe that a man who had been living day and night among them for forty years would suddenly one day forge a speech whose diction and style would bear no resemblance with his familiar and known manner of speech and style. This thing made the truth plain before them, but since they were bent upon denial, they would say : "This is plain magic," instead of acknowledging it as Divine Word after witnessing this manifest Sign. (They regarded the Qur'ān as magic from another aspect also, which we have explained in our commentary of *Al-Anbiyā'* : 3 and E.N. 5 of *Sūrah Ṣuād*).

9. This interrogative tone expresses great surprise and amazement. It means to say : "Are these people so shameless that they accuse Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) of fabricating the Qur'ān himself ? Whereas they know that it cannot be his word ; and their calling it magic is by itself an express proof that they regard it as an extraordinary word, which cannot be of human composition even according to themselves."

10. As it was quite evident that their accusation was baseless and motivated by stubbornness, there was no need to present arguments to refute it. Therefore, only this much was regarded as a sufficient response : "If I have really fabricated something and committed a grave crime by imputing it to Allah, as you accuse me of, you will not be able to rescue me from Allah's punishment. But if it is really Allah's Word, and you are rejecting it by bringing false accusations, Allah Himself will deal with you. For the reality is not hidden from Allah, and He is sufficient to decide between the truth and falsehood. If the whole world calls some one a liar, although he is truthful in Allah's knowledge, the final decision will be in his favour. On the country: if the whole world regards some

one as truthful, though he is a liar in the knowledge of Allah, he will be regarded as a liar in the final judgement. Therefore, do not confuse things but pay heed to your final end."

11. Here, this sentence gives two meanings : (1) "It is in fact Allah's mercy and His forbearance that these people are surviving in the world, although they have no hesitation in declaring Allah's Word as falsehood ; otherwise if a merciless and cruel god had been the master of this universe, he would not have allowed such insolent people to live even for a moment in the world." (2) "O unjust people, if you give up your stubbornness even now, the door of God's mercy is still open for you, and whatever misdeeds you may have committed heretofore can be forgiven."

12. Its background is this : When the Holy Prophet presented himself as Allah's Messenger, the people of Makkah raised different kinds of objections against it. They said : "What kind of a Messenger he is who has a family, who moves about in the streets, eats and drinks and lives a common man's life. There is nothing special about him, which might distinguish him above the other people and therefore we may know that Allah has specially made this man His Messenger." Then they said : "Had he been appointed a Messenger by God, He would have sent an angel as an attendant with him, who would have announced that he was God's Messenger, and would have punished with a scourge every such person who had behaved insolently towards him. How strange that God should appoint a person as His Messenger and then should leave him alone to roam the streets of Makkah and suffer every kind of humiliation. If nothing else Allah should at least have created a magnificent palace and a blooming garden for His Messenger. He should not have been left to depend on his wife's resources so that when they exhausted the Messenger should be forced to go without food and should not even afford a conveyance to Ṭā'if." Besides, these people demanded different kinds of miracles from him and asked news of the unseen. They thought that a person's being God's Messenger meant that he should possess supernatural powers so that mountains should move at his bidding and deserts at once turn into green fields ; he should have the knowledge of the past and the future events and of everything hidden from others.

An answer to the same has been given in these sentences, and each sentence contains a world of meaning.

First, it is said : "Tell them : I am not a novel Messenger." That is, "My being appointed as a Messenger is not a novel event of its kind in the world so that you may have some confusion about the characteristics of a Messenger. Many Messengers have come to the world before me, and I am not any different from them. Never has a Messenger come, who did not have a family, who did not eat and drink, or who did not live a common man's life. Never has an angel descended as an attendant with a Messenger, heralding his prophethood and carrying a whip before him. Never have gardens and palaces been created for a Messenger and never has a Messenger been spared of the hardships which I am suffering. Never has a Messenger shown a miracle by his own power, or known everything by his own knowledge. Then, how is it that you are bringing forth these strange criteria only to judge my Prophethood ?"

Then it is said : Tell them also this : "I do not know what shall befall you tomorrow nor what shall befall me. I only follow that which is revealed to me." That is, "I am not a knower of the unseen so that everything of the past and present and future should be known to me, and I should have the knowledge of everything in the world. Not to speak of your future, I do not even know my own future. I only know that of which I am given knowledge by revelation. More than that I have never claimed to know, nor has there ever been a Messenger in the world, who made that claim. It is not a Messenger's job to tell the whereabouts of the lost articles, or tell whether a pregnant woman will deliver a boy or a girl, or whether a sick patient will live or die."

In conclusion, it is said : "Say to them : I am no more than a plain warner." That is, "I do not possess Divine powers so that I may show you the wonderful miracles that you demand from me every next day. My only mission is that I should present the right way before the people, and should warn of an evil end those who do not accept it."

13. This same theme has been expressed in another way in Sūrah Hā-Mīm As-Sajdah : 52 above. For explanation, see E.N. 69 of the said Sūrah.

14. A large number of the commentators have taken this "witness" to imply Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Salām, who was a famous Jewish scholar of Madīnah, and who believed in the Holy Prophet after the migration. As this thing happened in Madīnah, these com-

mentators say that this verse was revealed at Madīnah. This commentary is based on a statement of Ḥaḍrat Sa'd bin Abi Waqqās according to which this verse was sent down in respect of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Salām (Bukhārī, Muslim, Nasā'ī, Ibn Jarīr); and on the same basis have several major commentators like Ibn 'Abbās, Mujāhid, Qatādah, Daḥḥāk, Ibn Sirīn, Ḥasan Baṣri, Ibn Zaid and 'Auf bin Mālik al-Ashja'ī accepted this commentary. But, on the other hand, 'Ikrimah and Sha'bī and Masrūq say that this verse cannot be about 'Abdullah bin Salām (may Allah be pleased with him) for this entire Sūrah was sent down at Makkah. Ibn Jarīr Ṭabarī also has preferred this view. He says: The whole previous discourse is an address directed to the pagans of Makkah and the following discourse also is directed to them. In this context it is not conceivable that a verse revealed at Madīnah was inserted here. The later commentators who have accepted this second version, do not reject the tradition of Ḥaḍrat Sa'd bin Abi Waqqās, but have opined that as this verse also applies to Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Salām's affirmation of the faith, Ḥaḍrat Sa'd expressed the opinion, in the tradition of the ancients, that it was sent down with regard to him. This does not, however, mean that when he believed, it was revealed then about him only, but this that this verse precisely applied to him and his acceptance of Islam.

Apparently, this second view seems to be more correct and reasonable. Now, the question that remains to be answered is: Who is implied by this "witness?" Some of the commentators who have accepted the second view say that it implies the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him), but the following sentence: "He believed while you showed arrogance", bears no relevance to this explanation. What seems to be nearer the truth is that which the commentator Nisabūrī and Ibn Kathīr have stated. They say: Here, by "a witness" is not meant any particular person but a common Israelite. The meaning is this: "The teachings that the Qur'ān is presenting before you are not new so that you could deny them by offering the excuse that they were novel teachings which had never been presented before man in the past. Before this these very teachings have been similarly revealed and exist with the Israelites in the form of the Torah and other scriptures, and a common Israelite has already believed in them, and also admitted that

(Contd. on p. 278)

لِلْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١٦﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا
 هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿١٧﴾ أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا جَزَاءً بِمَا كَانُوا
 يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٨﴾ وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ إِحْسَانًا حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُ كُرْهًا وَوَضَعَتْهُ
 كُرْهًا وَحَمْلُهُ وَفِصْلُهُ ثَلَاثُونَ شَهْرًا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغَ أَشُدَّهُ وَبَلَغَ أَرْبَعِينَ
 سَنَةً قَالَ رَبِّ أَوْزِعْنِي أَنْ أَشْكُرَ نِعْمَتَكَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ وَعَلَىٰ
 وَالِدَيَّ وَأَنْ أَعْمَلَ صَالِحًا تَرْضَاهُ وَأَصْلِحْ لِي فِي ذُرِّيَّتِي ۚ إِنِّي تُبْتُ
 إِلَيْكَ وَإِنِّي مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴿١٩﴾ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ نَتَقَبَّلُ عَنْهُمْ أَحْسَنَ مَا عَمِلُوا
 وَنَتَجَاوَزُ عَنْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ فِي أَصْحَابِ الْجَنَّةِ وَعَدَّ الصِّدِّيقُ الَّذِي كَانُوا
 يُوعَدُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَالَّذِي قَالَ لِوَالِدَيْهِ إِف لِمَا آتَيْتَنِي أَنْ أَخْرَجَ وَقَدْ خَلَتْ
 الْقُرُونُ مِن قَبْلِي ۖ وَهَبَا يَسْتَفِئِفْنِي إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَبِكَ آمَنَ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ ۖ
 فَيَقُولُ مَا هَذَا إِلَّا أَسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿٢١﴾ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ حَقَّ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقَوْلُ
 فِي أُمَمٍ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِن قَبْلِهِم مِّنَ الْجِنِّ وَالإِنسِ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا خٰسِرِينَ ﴿٢٢﴾
 وَلِكُلِّ دَرَجَةٍ مِّمَّا عَمِلُوا ۖ وَيُؤْفِقُهُمْ أَعْمَالَهُمْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَيَوْمَ
 يُعْرَضُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا عَلَى النَّارِ أَذْهَبَتْ طَبِيبَتِكُمْ فِي حَيَاتِكُمُ الدُّنْيَا وَ
 اسْتَمْتَعْتُمْ بِهَا ۖ فَالْيَوْمَ تُجْزَوْنَ عَذَابَ الْهُونِ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَسْتَكْبِرُونَ فِي
 الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَبِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَفْسُقُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَاذْكُرْ أَخَا عَادٍ إِذْ أَنْذَرَ قَوْمَهُ
 بِالْأَحْقَافِ وَقَدْ خَلَّتِ النَّذُرُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِن خَلْفِهِ ۖ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا
 اللَّهَ ۖ إِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿٢٥﴾ قَالُوا اجْعَلْنَا لَنَا فِئْتًا مِّنَ الْهَيْئَاتِ
 فَأَتَيْنَا بِمَا تَعِدُنَا إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصّٰدِقِينَ ﴿٢٦﴾ قَالَ إِنَّمَا الْعِلْمُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ ۖ وَ

Indeed, those who said, "Allah alone is our Lord," then remained steadfast, they shall neither have anything to fear nor shall they grieve.¹⁸ They all shall go to Paradise wherein they shall live for ever, a reward for the deeds they did in the world. 13-14

We have enjoined man to treat his parents with kindness. His mother bore him with hardship and she gave him birth with hardship, and his bearing and his weaning took thirty months,¹⁹ until when he attained to his full strength and became forty years old, he said, "O my Lord, grant me the grace that I may thank You for the favours You have bestowed on me and on my parents, and that I should do such good works as may please You,²⁰ and make my children also good to comfort me. I turn to You in penitence and I am of those who have surrendered to You (as Muslims)." From such people We accept the best of their deeds and overlook their evils.²¹ They will be among the dwellers of Paradise according to the true promise that has been made to them (here). But the one who said to his parents, "Fie upon you ! what, do you frighten me with this that I shall be taken out of the grave after death ? whereas many a generation has passed away before me (and none has risen from among them). The mother and father cry for Allah's help and say, "Believe, O wretch ! Allah's promise is true." But he says, "These are nothing but tales of the ancient times." Such are the people against whom the decision of torment has already been decreed. They will also join those hosts of the jinns and men (of their own kind) who have passed away before them. Indeed, they are the losers.²² Each one of the two groups will have their ranks according to their deeds so that Allah may reward them fully for what they have done, and they shall not be wronged at all.²³ Then, when the 15-20

disbelievers are mustered at the Fire, it will be said to them, "You have exhausted your share of the good things in your life of the world and you enjoyed them fully. Today you shall be punished with a torment of disgrace in consequence of the arrogance that you showed on the earth, without any right, and the transgressions that you committed."²⁴

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And relate to them the story of the brother of 'Ad (Hūd), when he warned his people in Aḥqāf²⁵—and such warners had preceded as well as followed him—saying, "Worship none but Allah. I fear for you the torment of a dreadful day." They said, "Have you come to seduce us away from our own gods? Well, bring down your torment with which you threaten us, if you are really truthful." He said, "The knowledge of this is with Allah.²⁶ I am only conveying to you the message with which I have been sent. But I see that you are a people sunk in ignorance."²⁷

(Contd. from p. 277)

Allah's Revelation is a means of the coming down of these teachings. Therefore, you cannot make the claim that Revelation and these teachings are incomprehensible. The only thing that hinders you from believing is your arrogance and baseless conceit."

15. This is one of those arguments that the chiefs of the Quraish employed to beguile and mislead the common people against the Holy Prophet. They said: If the Qur'ān were really based on the truth and Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) were inviting towards a right thing, the chiefs and the elders and the noblemen of the community would have been in the forefront to accept it. How could it be that a few young boys and mean slaves only should accept a reasonable thing but the distinguished men of the nation, who are wise and experienced, and who have been held as reliable by others, would reject it? This was the deceptive reasoning by which they tried to make the common people believe that there was something wrong with the new message; that is why the elders

of the people were not believing it ; therefore, they also should avoid it.

16. That is, "They regard themselves as a criterion of the truth and falsehood. They think that whatever (guidance) they reject must be falsehood. But they cannot dare call it a "new falsehood" for before it also the Prophets have been presenting the same teachings, and all the heavenly scriptures which the followers of the previous Books possess, are full of the same beliefs and instructions. Therefore, they call it an "ancient falsehood." In other words, they seem to think that all those people who have been presenting these truths and those accepting them since thousands of years also were devoid of wisdom and knowledge, and the whole wisdom has now become these people's monopoly."

17. "To warn the wrongdoers : " To warn of the evil end those who are being unjust to themselves and to the truth itself by disbelieving in Allah and serving others than Allah, and are involved because of this deviation of theirs in the evils of morals and deeds, which have filled human society with every kind of wickedness and injustice.

18. For explanation, see E.N.'s 33 to 35 of Ḥā-Mīm As-Sajdah.

19. This verse tells that although the children should serve both the mother and the father, the mother's right is greater in importance, on the ground that she undergoes greater hardships for the sake of the children. The same is borne out by a *Ḥadīth*, which has been related with a little variation in wording in Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dā'ūd, Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah, Musnad Aḥmad, and in *Adab al-Mufrad* of Imām Bukhārī, to the effect that a person asked the Holy Prophet : "Who has got a greater right to my service ? The Holy Prophet replied : Your mother. He asked : Who after her ? He replied : Your mother. He asked : Who after her ? He replied : your mother. He asked : Who after her : He replied : Your father." This *Ḥadīth* precisely explains this verse, for in it also allusion has been made to the triple right of the mother : (1) His mother bore him with hardship ; (2) she gave him birth with hardship ; and (3) his bearing and his weaning took thirty months.

Another legal point also is derived from this verse and verse 14 of Sūrah Luqmān and verse 233 of Al-Baqarah, which was pointed out by Ḥaḍrat 'Alī and Ḥaḍrat Ibn 'Abbās in a law case and made Ḥaḍrat 'Uṭhmān change his decision. The story goes that during

the caliphate of Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān (may Allah be pleased with him) a person married a woman from the Juhainah tribe, and just six months after the marriage she gave birth to a healthy and sound child. The man took the case before Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān, who declared the woman to be an adultress and ordered that she be stoned to death. On hearing this Ḥaḍrat 'Alī immediately came to Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān and asked : What sort of a decision have you given ? He replied : She has given birth to a sound child six months after marriage. Is it not a clear proof of her being an adultress ? Ḥaḍrat 'Alī did not agree, and recited the three above-mentioned verses in their sequence. In Sūrah Al-Baqarah Allah says : "The mothers shall suckle their children for two whole years, if the fathers desire the suckling to be completed." In Sūrah Luqmān it is said : "And his weaning took two years," and in Sūrah Al-Aḥqāf : "And his bearing and his weaning took thirty months." Now, if two years of suckling are taken away from 30 months, six months of bearing remain. This shows that the minimum period of pregnancy in which a sound child can be born is six months. Therefore, the woman who has given birth to a child six months after the marriage cannot be declared an adultress. On hearing this reasoning of Ḥaḍrat 'Alī, Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān admitted that he had not considered that thing at all. Then he recalled the woman and changed his decision. According to another tradition, Ibn 'Abbās also supported the reasoning of Ḥaḍrat 'Alī and then Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān changed his decision. (Ibn Jarīr, *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* by al-Jaṣṣāṣ, Ibn Kathīr).

The following legal injunctions are derived from the three verses when they are read together :

(1) The woman who gives birth to a sound and complete child in less than six months after marriage (i.e. in a proper delivery and not abortion) will be declared an adultress and her child's lineage from her husband will not be established.

(2) The woman who delivers a sound and complete child six months or more after marriage, cannot be accused of adultery only on the basis of the child birth, nor can her husband have the right to slander her, nor can he refuse to acknowledge fatherhood of the child; the child will certainly be recognized as his, and the woman will not be punished.

(3) The maximum period for fosterage is two years. If a woman has suckled a child after this age, she will not be regarded as his foster-mother. nor will the injunctions pertaining to fosterage (An-Nisā : 23) be applicable to her. In this regard, Imām Abū Ḥanīfah has out of caution proposed the period of two and a half years instead of two years so that there remains no chance of error in a delicate matter like the prohibition of the foster relations. (For explanation, see E.N. 23 of Sūrah Luqmān).

Here, it would be useful to know that according to the latest medical research a child needs at least 28 weeks to remain in the mother's womb to be developed and delivered as a living baby. This period amounts to a little more than 6½ months. The Islamic law has allowed a concession of about half a month, because a woman's being declared an adultress and a child's being deprived of lineage is a grave matter, and its gravity demands that maximum period be allowed to save both the mother and the child from its legal consequences. Furthermore, no physician and no judge, not even the pregnant woman herself and the man impregnating her, can know as to when exactly did the conception take place. This thing also demands that a few more days be allowed in determining the minimum legal period of pregnancy.

20. That is, "O Lord, grant me the grace of such righteous deeds as may conform to Your Law in the apparent form as well as be acceptable to You in their actual worth." If an action, however good in the sight of the people, does not conform to obedience to Allah's Law, it cannot have any value in the sight of Allah, no matter how highly it is praised by the people. On the contrary, another action which conforms to the *Shari'ah* exactly and has no flaw or deficiency in its apparent form, becomes hollow from within, on account of an evil intention, conceit, arrogance and greed of the world, and so worthless in the sight of Allah.

21. That is, "Their ranks in the Hereafter will be determined by the best deeds they would have done in the world, and their lapses and weaknesses and errors will be overlooked. It is just like a generous and appreciative master who determines the worth of his loyal and obedient servant not by the petty services that he renders but by some work of merit that he might accomplish or a feat of devotion and dedication that he might perform. He will not call

his servant to account for his minor shortcomings and overlook his major services."

22. Here, two types of the character have been placed side by side and the listeners asked the silent question as to which of them is better. At that time both these types of character practically existed in the society, and it was not at all difficult for the people to know where they could find the first type of the character and where the second. This is the answer to this saying of the chiefs of the Quraish: "If it had been any good to believe in this Book, these few youngsters and slaves would not have believed in it before they did." In the light of this answer everyone could see for himself as to what was the character of the believers and what of the unbelievers.

23. That is. "Neither will the good deeds and sacrifices of the good people be lost, nor the evildoers awarded a greater punishment than what they will actually deserve. If a good man is deprived of his reward and receives a lesser reward than what is actually his due, it is injustice. Likewise, if an evildoer is not punished appropriately for his evil deeds, or receives a greater punishment than deserved, it is also injustice."

24. "A torment of disgrace", because of the arrogance that they showed. They thought they were big people and it was beneath their dignity to believe in the Messenger and join the group of the poor and indigent believers. They were involved in the false pride that if the big people like them would believe in a thing which a few slaves and poor men had believed in, they would incur infamy. That is why Allah will disgrace them in the Hereafter and will destroy their pride.

25. As the chiefs of the Quraish had a false pride of their superiority and exulted in their wealth and prosperity, the story of 'Ād is being related to them about whom it was well known that they had been the mightiest people in Arabia.

Literally, *Aḥqāf* ((pl. of *ḥiqf*) are long dunes of sand less in height than mountains, but technically it is a name given to the southern-western part of the Arabian desert (*Ar-Rub 'ul-khāli*) which is wholly un-inhabited. Please see the map on page 292.

Ibn Ishāq says that the territory of 'Ād extended from 'Omān to Yaman, and the Qur'ān tells us that they actually belonged to

Al-Aḥqāf from where they spread to the adjoining lands and subdued weak nations. 125 miles to the north of the present-day city of Mukallah there is a place in Ḥaḍramaut, where the people have built a tomb to the Prophet Ḥūd, and the place is well known as the Grave of Ḥūd. A religious festival is held there on the 15th of Sha'bān and thousands of people from different parts of Arabia gather there annually. Although it is not historically established, the grave's being built there and the southern Arabs' visiting it in large numbers is at least a proof that local tradition regards this very territory as the land of 'Ād. Besides, there are several ruins in Ḥaḍramaut which the natives still call by the name of *Dār-'Ād* (Abode of 'Ād).

From the present condition of Al-Aḥqāf no one can even imagine that this land might have been the home of a mighty people boasting of magnificent civilization. Probably it was a green and fertile land thousands of years ago, and then the change of climate might have turned it into a sandy desert. Today it is a vast, wind-swept desert, and no one can dare go into its interior. In 1843 A. D. a Bavarian soldier was able to reach its southern edge. He says that if one looks down from the northern plateau of Ḥaḍramaut one can see this desert about a thousand feet in the depression. Here and there in it there are white areas where if a thing falls it goes on sinking into the sand and decays. The Arab Beduins fear this land and are never willing to step into it at any cost. Once when the beduins were not ready to take him there, he went by himself. He says that the sand there is very fine powder, and when he threw a plummet into it from a distance, it sank into it within five minutes and the end of the line to which it was attached, also decayed.

For detailed information, see :

Arabia and The Isles, Harold Ingrams, London, 1946.

The Unveiling of Arabia, R. H. Kirnan, London, 1937.

The Empty Quarter, Philby, London, 1933.

26. That is, "Allah alone knows as to when the torment will descend on you and for how long you will be granted respite."

27. That is, "You are taking my this warning as a joke in your ignorance and are demanding the torment for fun. You have no idea of how dreadful is God's torment and how near at hand it might have approached because of your misdeeds."

أَبْلَغَكُمْ مَا أُرْسِلْتُ بِهِ وَ لَكِنِّي أَرَاكُمْ قَوْمًا تَجْهَلُونَ ۚ فَلَمَّا رَأَوْهُ عَارِضًا
 مُسْتَقْبِلَ أَوْدِيَّتِهِمْ ۚ قَالُوا هَذَا عَارِضٌ مُسْطَرٌّ عَلَيْنَا ۚ بَلْ هُوَ مَا اسْتَعْجَلْتُمْ بِهِ
 رِيحٌ فِيهَا عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ۚ تُدَمِّرُ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ بِأَمْرِ رَبِّهَا فَأَصْبَحُوا لَا يُرَى
 إِلَّا مَسَكِنُهُمْ ۚ كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْقَوْمَ الْمُجْرِمِينَ ۚ وَ لَقَدْ مَكَّنَّهُمْ فِيْمَا أَنْ
 مَكَّنَّاكُمْ فِيهِ وَ جَعَلْنَا لَهُمْ سَمْعًا وَ أَبْصَارًا وَ أَفِيدَةً ۚ فَمَا أَغْنَى عَنْهُمْ
 سَمْعُهُمْ وَ لَا أَبْصَارُهُمْ وَ لَا أَفِيدَتُهُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِذْ كَانُوا يَجْحَدُونَ ۚ بَلِيت
 اللَّهُ وَ حَاقَ بِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ ۚ وَ لَقَدْ أَهْلَكْنَا مَا حَوْلَكُمْ مِنْ
 الْقُرَى وَ صَرَفْنَا الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ ۚ فَلَوْ لَا نَصَرَهُمُ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا
 مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ قُرْبَانًا آلِهَةً ۚ بَلْ ضَلُّوا عَنْهُمْ ۚ وَ ذَلِكَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ
 يَفْتَرُونَ ۚ وَ إِذْ صَرَفْنَا إِلَيْكَ نَفَرًا مِنَ الْجِنِّ يَسْتَمِعُونَ الْقُرْآنَ ۚ فَلَمَّا
 حَضَرُوهُ قَالُوا أَنْصِتُوا ۚ فَلَمَّا قُضِيَ وَلَّوْا إِلَى قَوْمِهِمْ مُنْذِرِينَ ۚ قَالُوا يَقَوْمُنَا
 إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا كِتَابًا أُنزِلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مُوسَىٰ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ يَهْدِي إِلَى
 الْحَقِّ وَ إِلَى طَرِيقٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ۚ يَقَوْمَنَا أَجِيبُوا دَاعِيَ اللَّهِ وَ آمِنُوا بِهِ يَغْفِرَ
 لَكُمْ مِنْ ذُنُوبِكُمْ وَ يُجْزِكُمْ مِنَ عَذَابِ الْيَوْمِ ۚ وَ مَنْ لَا يُجِبْ دَاعِيَ اللَّهِ
 فَلَيْسَ بِمُعْجِزٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَ لَيْسَ لَهُ مِنْ دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءُ ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ فِي ضَلَالٍ
 مُبِينٍ ۚ أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّ اللَّهَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَ الْأَرْضِ وَ لَمْ يَعَى
 بِخَلْقِهِنَّ بِقُدِيرٍ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يُحْيِيَ الْمَوْتَىٰ ۚ بَلَىٰ إِنَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ۚ وَ
 يَوْمَ يُعْرَضُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا عَلَى النَّارِ ۚ أَلَيْسَ هَذَا بِالْحَقِّ ۚ قَالُوا بَلَىٰ وَ رَبِّنَا ۚ
 قَالَ فَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ ۚ فَاصْبِرْ كَمَا صَبَرَ أُولُو الْعَزْمِ

Then, when they saw the torment coming towards their valleys, they said, "This is a cloud that will give us much rain."—Nay,²⁸ but this is the same thing which you asked to be hastened. This is a storm of wind bringing a painful torment. It will destroy everything by the Command of its Lord. Consequently, there remained nothing to be seen except their (empty) dwelling places. Thus do We recompense the culprits.²⁹ We had given them that which We have not given you.³⁰ We had given them ears and eyes and hearts, but nothing did their ears and their eyes and their hearts avail them, because they denied the Revelations of Allah,³¹ and they were encompassed by the same thing that they mocked. 25-26

We have destroyed many habitations around you. We sent Our Revelations to them over and over again in various ways that they might desist (from wrongdoing). Then, why did not those beings help them whom they had made their gods instead of Allah, and regarded them as a means of attaining nearness to Him?³² Nay, they were lost from them : and this was the end of their lies and their false beliefs that they had invented. 27-28

(And recall the event) when We brought to you a group of jinns so that they might listen to the Qur'ān.³³ When they reached the place (where you were reciting it), they said to one another, "Be silent." When the recitation was over, they returned to their people as warners. They said to them, "O our people ! We have just listened to a Book that has been sent down after Moses. It contains the Books that came before it and it guides to the Truth and to a Straight Way.³⁴ O our people ! Accept the invitation of the one calling to Allah and believe in him. Allah will forgive you your sins and will save you from a painful torment."³⁵ And³⁶ he who 29-32

does not answer the one calling to Allah neither possesses any power in the earth to make Allah helpless nor has any protector and guardian to save him from Allah. Such people are involved in manifest error.

33-34

Do they not see that that God Who created the heavens and the earth and was not wearied by their creation, has surely the power to raise the dead to life! Why not! Surely He has power over everything. The Day the disbelievers are mustered at the Fire, they will be asked, "Is not this the Truth?" They will say, "Yes, by our Lord (this is the very Truth!)." Allah will say, "Well, then taste the torment in consequence of your donying the Truth (in the world)."

28. Here, there is no indication as to who gave them this answer. However, the style shows explicitly that this was the answer they were given by the existing conditions. They thought it was a cloud which was coming to give rain to their valleys, but in reality it was a windstorm that was coming on to completely exterminate them.

29. For the details of the story of 'Ād, see Al-A'rāf : 65-72, Hūd : 50-60, Al-Mu'minūn : 31-41, Ash-Shu'arā : 123-140, Al-'Ankabūt : 40, Hā-Mīm As-Sajdah : 15-16 and the corresponding E.N.'s.

30. That is, "You are no match for them as far as wealth, power, authority and other things are concerned : your sphere of authority is restricted to the bounds of the city of Makkah, but they had dominated a large part of the earth."

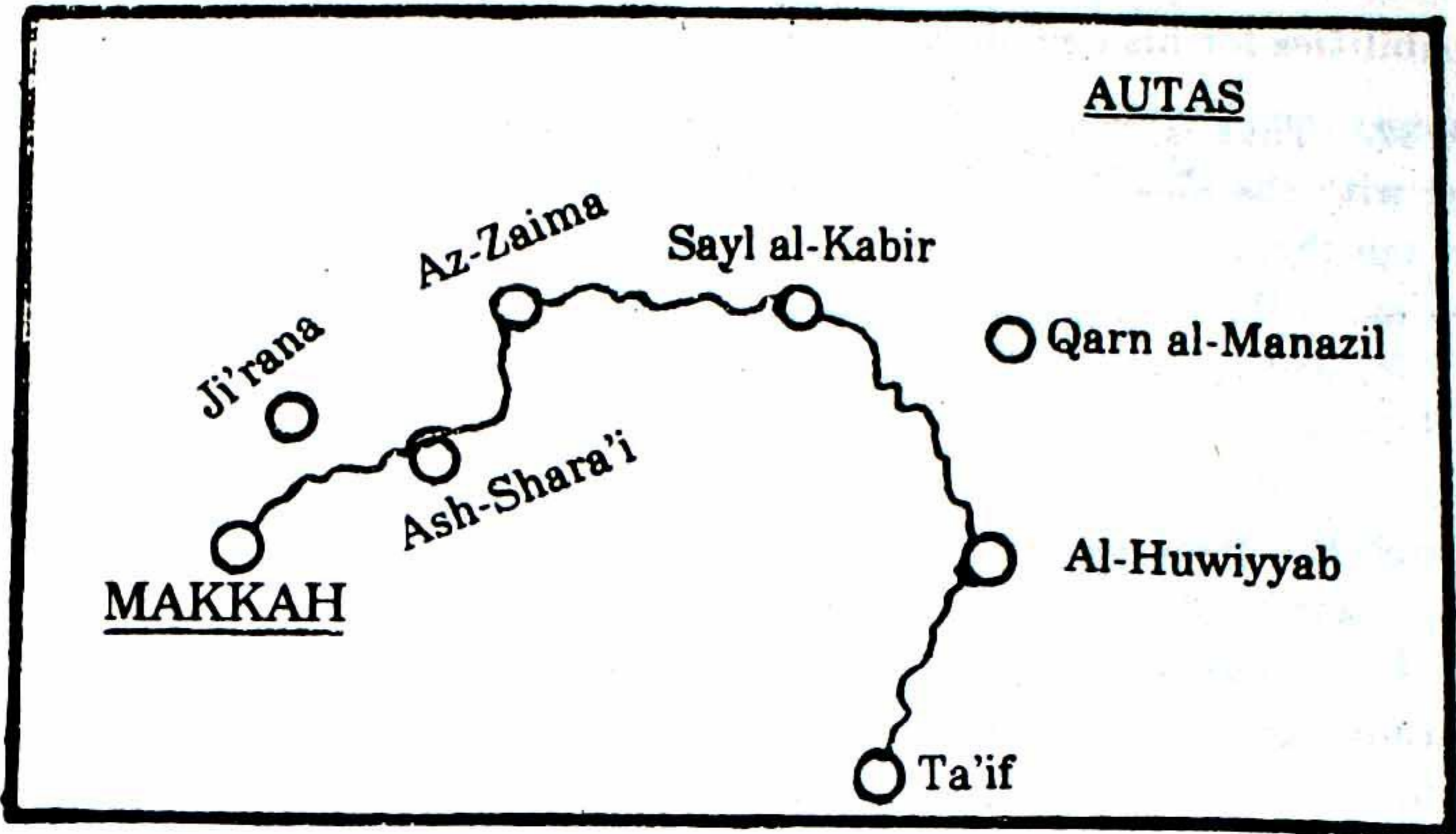
31. An important truth has been stated in this brief sentence. It is only the Revelations of Allah which give the right knowledge and understanding of the truth and reality to man. If man has this understanding and knowledge he sees the right thing with his eyes, hears the right thing with his ears, thinks the right thing with his mind and intellect and takes the right decisions. But when he refuses to believe in the Revelations of Allah, he fails to see the truth in spite of the eyes, becomes deaf to every word of admonition in spite of the ears, and misuses the blessings of the mind and intellect that God has granted him, and goes on drawing wrong con-

clusions one after the other ; so much so that he starts using all his capabilities for his own destruction.

32. That is, "They had put faith in those things in the beginning with the idea that they were favourite servants of God and through them they would attain nearness to Him, but then gradually they made them their gods. They started invoking them for help; they formed the belief that they had the powers to change their destinies and could answer their prayers and remove their hardships." To deliver them from this error Allah sent His Revelations through His Messengers over and over again in different ways to bring them to the right path, but they persisted in the worship of their false gods, and continued to insist that they would still invoke them instead of Allah. Now consider this: When the torment of Allah visited these polytheists because of their deviation, where had their redressers of grievances and removers of hardships disappeared? Why didn't they come to their rescue at the time of affliction?

33. The traditions that have been related from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, Ḥaḍrat Zubair, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, Ḥasan Baṣri, Sa'id bin Jubair, Zarr bin Ḥabaish, Mujāhid, 'Ikrimah and others in connection with the commentary of this verse concur that this incident of the first visit of the jinns, which has been mentioned in this verse, had occurred in the valley of Nakhlah. And according to Ibn Ishāq, Abū Nu'aim Iṣṣahāni and Wāqidi, this incident occurred during the Holy Prophet's return journey from Ṭā'if to Makkah. On the way, when he halted at Nakhlah, and was reciting the Qur'ān in the 'Ishā' or the Fajr or the Tahajjud Prayer, a group of the jinns happened to pass by and stopped to listen to him. In this connection, all the traditions agree that on this occasion the jinns did not appear before the Holy Prophet, nor did he feel their presence, but Allah informed him afterwards by revelation that they had come and listened to the Qur'ānic recitation.

The place where this incident took place was either Az-Zaimah or As-Sayl-ul-Kabir, for both these places are situated in the valley of Nakhlah and at both water is available and are green; if the travellers from Ṭā'if have to halt in this valley, they can halt at either of the places. Please see the map for the location of these places.



34. This shows that these jinns had already had faith in the Prophet Moses and in the Divine Books. After hearing the Qur'ān they felt that it gave the same teachings as the former Prophets had been preaching. Therefore, they believed in this Book forthwith and also in the Holy Prophet who had brought it.

35. Authentic traditions show that after this several deputations of the jinns visited the Holy Prophet, one after the other, and met him face to face. When all the traditions related in the collections of *Hadith* on this subject are read together, it appears that at least six deputations had visited him in Makkah before the Hijrah.

About one of these deputations Hadrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd relates: "One day the Holy Prophet remained missing from Makkah for the whole night. We could not know his whereabouts and feared he might have been attacked by somebody. Early in the morning we saw him coming from the direction of Hīrā'. On enquiring he said that a jinn had come to invite him and he had accompanied him and recited the Qur'ān to a gathering of them there." (Muslim, Musnad Ahmad, Tirmidhi, Abū Da'ūd).

Hadrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd has related another tradition, saying: "Once the Holy Prophet asked his Companions in Makkah as to which of them would accompany him that night to meet the jinns. I became ready to go with him. At a place in the upper quarters of Makkah the Holy Prophet drew a line and told me not to cross it. Then he went forward and stood and began to recite

مِنَ الرُّسُلِ وَلَا تَسْتَعْجِلْ لَهُمْ كَأَنَّهُمْ يَوْمَ يَرَوْنَ مَا يُوعَدُونَ لَمْ يَلْبَثُوا
إِلَّا سَاعَةً مِّنْ نَّهَارٍ بَلُغْ فَمَا يُهَابِكُ إِلَّا الْقَوْمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

Therefore. endure with patience, O Prophet, as did the Messengers endowed with the firmness of purpose, and do not be in haste concerning them.³⁷ The day these people see that with which they are being threatened, it will so appear to them that they did not stay in the world for more than an hour of a day. The Message has been conveyed. Now, shall any other than the disobedient people be destroyed ?

the Qur'an. I saw that a number of the people had gathered around him and they stood between me and him." (Ibn Jarir, Baihaqi : *Dalā'il an-Nubuwwat* ; Abū Nu'aim Iṣfahāni : *Dalā'il an-Nubuwwat*).

On another occasion also during the night Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd was with the Holy Prophet and he decided a case of the jinns at Ḥajūn in Makkah. Many years later Ibn Mas'ūd saw a group of the villagers at Kūfa and said that the group of the jinns he had seen at Ḥajūn closely resembled those people. (Ibn Jarir).

36. This sentence might also be a part of the saying of the jinns, or it might be an addition by Allah to their saying. In view of the context the second view seems to be more reasonable.

37. That is, "Just as the Prophets before you went on enduring with patience and ceaseless struggle the indifference, opposition, resistance and persecutions of their people for years on end, so should you also do the same, and do not entertain the idea that either the people should believe in you immediately or, if they do not believe, Allah should visit them with His torment."

