

THE MEANING OF THE QUR'ĀN

Vol. XIII

Sūrah Muhammad—Surah Al-Waqi'ah

(ARABIC TEXT WITH TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY)

By

S. ABUL A'LĀ MAUDŪDĪ

English Rendering

'ABDUL 'AZĪZ KAMĀL

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'Abdul Aziz Kamāl

Lahore † May, 1986,

XLVII

MUHAMMAD مُحَمَّد

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

XLVII

MUHAMMAD مُحَمَّدٌ

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah derives its name from the sentence *wa āmanū bi-mā nuzzila ‘alā Muḥammad-in* of verse 2, thereby implying that it is the Sūrah in which the holy name of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah’s peace and blessings) has occurred. Besides, it has another well-known name “*al-Qitāl*” also, which is derived from the sentence *wa dhukira fī-hal-qitāl* of verse 20.

Period of Revelation

The contents of this Sūrah testify that it was sent down after the Hijrah at Madīnah at the time when the

fighting had been enjoined, though active fighting had not yet been undertaken. Detailed arguments in support of this view have been given in E.N. 8 below.

Historical Background

The conditions at the time when this Sūrah was sent down were such that the Muslims were being made the target of persecution and tyranny in Makkah in particular and in Arabia in general, and life had become miserable for them. Although the Muslims had emigrated to the haven of Madīnah from every side, the disbelieving Quraish were not prepared to leave them alone and let them live in peace even there. Thus, the small settlement of Madīnah was hemmed in by the enemy, who was bent upon exterminating it completely. The only alternatives left with the Muslims were that either they should surrender to the forces of ignorance, giving up their mission of preaching the true Faith, or even following it in their private lives, or should rise to wage a war at the cost of their lives to settle finally and for ever whether Islam would stay in Arabia or the creed of ignorance. On this occasion Allah showed the Muslims the same way of resolution and will, which is the only way for the true believers. He first permitted them to fight in Sūrah Al-Hajj : 39 and then enjoined fighting in Al-Baqarah : 190. But at that time everyone knew fully well what it meant to wage a war in those conditions. There were only a handful of Muslims in Madīnah, who could not muster even a thousand soldiers ; yet they were being urged to take up the sword and clash against the pagan forces of the whole of Arabia. Then the kind of the weapons needed to equip its soldiers for war could hardly be afforded by the town in which hundreds of emigrants were still homeless and un-settled even by resort to starving its members at a time when it had been boy-cotted economically by the Arabs on all sides.

Theme and Subject Matter

Such were the conditions when this Sūrah was revealed. Its theme is to prepare the believers for war and to give them preliminary instructions in this regard. That is why it has also been entitled *al-Qitāl*. It deals with the following topics :

At the outset it is said that of the two groups confronting each other at this time, one has refused to accept the Truth and has become an obstruction for others on the way of Allah, while the other group has accepted the Truth which had been sent down by Allah to His servant, Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings). Now, Allah's final decision is that He has rendered fruitless and vain all the works of the former group and set right the condition and affairs of the latter group.

After this, the Muslims have been given the initial war instructions : they have been reassured of Allah's help and guidance : they have been given hope for the best rewards on offering sacrifices in the cause of Allah : and they have been assured that their struggle in the cause of the Truth will not go to waste, but they will be abundantly rewarded both in this world and in the Hereafter.

Furthermore, about the disbelievers it has been said that they are deprived of Allah's support and guidance : none of their designs will succeed in their conflict with the believers, and they will meet a most evil fate both in this world and in the Hereafter. They thought they had achieved a great success by driving the Prophet of Allah out of Makkah, but in fact by this they had hastened their own doom.

After this, the discourse turns to the hypocrites, who were posing to be sincere Muslims before the command to fight was sent down, but were confounded when

this command actually came down, and began to conspire with the disbelievers in order to save themselves from the hazards of war. They have been plainly warned to the effect that no act and deed is acceptable to Allah of those who adopt hypocrisy with regard to Him and His Prophet. Here, the basic issue against which all those who profess the Faith are being tried is whether one is on the side of the Truth or Falsehood, whether one's sympathies are with Islam and the Muslims or with disbelief and the disbelievers, whether one keeps one's own self and interests dearer or the Truth which one professes to believe in and follow. One who fails in this test is not at all a believer; his Prayer and his Fasting and his discharging of the *zakāt* deserve no reward from Allah.

Then the Muslims have been exhorted not to lose heart for being small in numbers and ill-equipped as against the great strength of the disbelievers: they should not show weakness by offering peace to them, which might still further embolden them against Islam and the Muslims, but they should come out with trust in Allah and clash with the mighty forces of disbelief. Allah is with the Muslims: they alone shall triumph; and the might of disbelief will be humbled and vanquished.

In conclusion, the Muslims have been invited to spend their wealth in the cause of Allah. Although at that time they were economically very weak, the problem that they confronted was the very survival of Islam and the Muslims. The importance and delicacy of the problem demanded that the Muslims should not only risk their lives for safeguarding themselves and their Faith from the dominance of disbelief and for exalting Allah's Religion but should also expend their economic resources as far as possible in the

preparations for war. Therefore, they were clearly warned to the effect : Anyone who adopted a niggardly attitude at the time, would not, in fact, harm Allah at all, but would result in his own destruction, for Allah does not stand in need of help from men. If one group of men shirked offering sacrifices in the cause of His Religion, Allah would remove it and bring another group in its place.



الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَصَدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَضَلَّ أَعْمَالَهُمْ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
 وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَآمَنُوا بِمَا نُزِّلَ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَهُوَ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ
 كَفَّرَ عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ وَأَصْلَحَ بَالَهُمْ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا اتَّبَعُوا
 الْبَاطِلَ وَأَنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّبَعُوا الْحَقَّ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ كَذَلِكَ يَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ
 لِلنَّاسِ أَمْثَالَهُمْ ۖ فَإِذَا لَقِيتُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَضَرْبِ الرِّقَابِ ۗ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا
 أَتَخْتَمُوهُمُ فَشَدُّوا الوَثَاقَ ۗ فَإِمَّا مِتًّا بَعْدُ وَإِمَّا فِدَاءً حَتَّىٰ تَضَعَ الْحَرْبُ
 أَوْزَارَهَا ۗ ذَلِكَ ۗ وَلَوْ يَشَاءُ اللَّهُ لَانتَصَرْنَا مِنْهُمْ وَلَكِنْ لِيَبْلُوَ بَعْضَكُمْ
 بِبَعْضٍ ۗ وَالَّذِينَ قَاتَلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَلَنْ يُضِلَّ أَعْمَالَهُمْ ۖ سَيَهْدِيهِمْ
 وَيُصْلِحُ بَالَهُمْ ۖ وَيُدْخِلُهُمُ الْجَنَّةَ عَرَّفَهَا لَهُمْ ۖ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنِ
 تَنصُرُوا اللَّهَ يَنصُرْكُمْ وَيُثَبِّتْ أَقْدَامَكُمْ ۖ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَتَعَسَا لَهُمْ
 أَصْلُ أَعْمَالِهِمْ ۖ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَرِهُوا مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأَحْبَطَ أَعْمَالَهُمْ ۖ أَفَلَمْ
 يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ۖ دَمَّرَ اللَّهُ
 عَلَيْهِمْ ۖ وَلِلْكَافِرِينَ أَمْثَالُهُمْ ۖ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ مَوْلَى الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَأَنَّ الْكَافِرِينَ لَا
 مَوْلَى لَهُمْ ۖ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُدْخِلُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا
 الْأَنْهَارُ ۖ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يَتَمَتَّعُونَ وَيَأْكُلُونَ كَمَا تَأْكُلُ الْأَنْعَامُ وَالنَّارُ مَشْوَىٰ لَهُمْ ۖ

XLVII

MUHAMMAD ﷺ

Verses : 38

Revealed at Al-Madīnah

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

Those who disbelieved¹ and debarred (others) from Allah's Way,² Allah rendered their works fruitless.³ As for those who believed, and did good works, and accepted that which has been sent down to Muhammad⁴—and it is the very Truth from their Lord—Allah removed their evils from them⁵ and set their condition right.⁶ This is because the disbelievers followed falsehood and the believers followed the Truth which has come from their Lord. Thus does Allah make the people aware of their true state.⁷ 1-3

Therefore, when you meet the disbelievers in the battle-field, first smite their necks; then, when you have crushed them completely, bind the prisoners tight. After that (you have the choice) whether you show them favour or accept ransom, until the war lays down its arms.⁸ So shall you do. Had Allah willed, He would Himself have dealt with them. But (He has adopted this way so that) He may test some of you by means of others.⁹ And those who are killed in the way of Allah, Allah will never let their deeds go waste.¹⁰ He will guide them, set their condition right, and will admit them to the Paradise with which He has acquainted them.¹¹ 4-6

O you who have believed, if you help Allah, Allah will help you¹² and make your footsteps firm. As for those 7-12

who have disbelieved, for them is destruction¹³ and Allah has rendered their deeds astray, because they have disapproved of what Allah has sent down;¹⁴ therefore, Allah rendered their deeds fruitless. Have they not travelled in the earth that they could see the end of those who had gone before them? Allah destroyed them utterly and the disbelievers are destined for a similar end.¹⁵ This is because Allah is the Protector and Helper of the believers and the disbelievers have no protector and helper.¹⁶ Allah shall admit those who have believed and done good works into Gardens underneath which rivers flow. As for the dis-believers, they are only enjoying the temporary life of this world, and eating as the animals eat,¹⁷ and their final abode is Hell.

1. "Those who disbelieved": Those who refused to accept the teachings and guidance presented by Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings).

2. The verb *ṣadd* (from which *ṣaddū* of the original is derived) is used both as a transitive and as an intransitive verb in Arabic. Therefore, the sentence would mean: "they themselves refrained from adopting Allah's Way" as well as: "they prevented others from adopting this way."

There are several ways of preventing others from adopting Allah's Way: (1) That one should forcibly prevent another from believing; (2) that one should so persecute the believers that it should become difficult for them to remain steadfast on the Faith and for others to embrace the Faith in view of the dreadful conditions; (3) that one should mislead the people against the Religion and its followers in different ways and create doubts in the hearts so that the people may become suspicious of the Religion itself. Besides, every disbeliever prevents others from the way of Allah in the sense that he brings up his children on the way of disbelief, and then it becomes difficult for his future generation to give up the ancestral faith and accept Islam. Likewise, every unbelieving society is an obstruction to the Way of Allah, for it creates obstacles in the way of the progress of the Faith by its system of education and training, its government and its customs and prejudices.

3. The words *adalla a'mala-hum* (led their deeds astray, let them go to waste) are very comprehensive in meaning. Their one meaning is : Allah deprived them of the grace that their efforts and their labours should be spent in the right way : now, whatever they do, they will do that for wrong aims and objects in wrong ways : all their endeavours will be directed to the way of error and deviation instead of guidance. Their second meaning is : The works that they have been performing as pious deeds, e.g. guardianship of the Ka'bah, entertaining the guests, treating the kindred well, and such other works, which are counted among religious services and noble actions morally, were rendered fruitless by Allah ; they will get no reward for them, for when they refuse to accept *Tauhid* and to adopt the way of Allah's service and worship and stop others also from adopting Islam, none of their works can be acceptable to Allah. The third meaning is : Allah rendered fruitless and vain the efforts they were making to obstruct the way of the Truth and to keep their creed of disbelief alive in Arabia as against the Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) : all their designs and endeavours now are aimless : they will never attain their goals by these designs.

4. Although after saying *alladhina amanu* (those who believed) there was no need to say *wa amanu bi-ma nuzila 'ala Muhammad-in* (and accepted that which has been sent down to Muhammad), for belief by itself implies believing in the Holy Prophet Muhammad and in the teachings sent down to him, yet making a separate mention of it is particularly meant to assert this : After the appointment of Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) to Prophethood, a person's belief in Allah and the Hereafter and the former Messengers and the Books cannot be beneficial until he also believes in him and the teachings brought by him. This explanation was necessary because after the emigration, the Muslims had also to deal with those people, who recognized and accepted all the requirements of the Faith but refused to acknowledge and accept the Prophethood of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings).

5. This has two meanings : (1) That Allah wiped off from their record all those sins which they had happened to commit in the pre-Islamic days of ignorance : now, they will not at all be held accountable for them ; and (2) that Allah removed from them the evils of creed, thought, morals and action in which they were involved. Now their minds were changed ; their creed and ideas

were changed ; now there was faith in their hearts instead of ignorance, and righteous acts instead of the immoral evil.

6. This also has two meanings : (1) That Allah changed their previous condition and put them on the right path and improved and bettered their lives for them ; and (2) that Allah has taken them out of the condition of weakness and helplessness and oppression in which they were placed till then ; now He has created for them such conditions in which instead of being persecuted they will defend themselves against the oppressors ; instead of living as subjects, they will now live and order their lives as free people, and will have the upper hand instead of being subdued and suppressed.

7. That is, "He makes both the parties aware of their positions. One party insists on following falsehood ; therefore, Allah has brought all its endeavours to naught ; and the other party has adopted obedience of the Truth ; therefore, Allah has purified it of its evils and corrected its condition."

8. The words of this verse as well as the context in which it occurs clearly show that it was sent down after the revelation of the command for fighting and before the actual fighting began. The words, "When you meet the disbelievers in the battlefield ..", indicate that the fighting has not yet taken place and the Muslims are being instructed that when it does take place, what they should do.

The words of verse 20 below testify that this Sūrah was sent down at a time when the command for fighting had already been given in Sūrah Al-Hajj : 39 and Al-Baqarah : 190, and the hypocrites of Madīnah and the people of the weak faith had been so upset that it seemed as if they were actually facing death.

Besides, vv. 67-69 of the Sūrah Al-Anfāl also testify that this verse had been sent down before the Battle of Badr. There it has been said :

"It does not behove a Prophet to have captives until he has crushed down the enemies in the land. You desire the gains of this world, but Allah desires the Hereafter, and Allah is All-Powerful, All-Wise. Had not a decree already been issued by Allah, you would have incurred a severe chastisement in consequence of what you have done. So eat of what you have taken as spoils because it is lawful and pure."

A careful study of this passage, especially of its italicised portions, shows that what had displeased Allah on this occasion

was that before crushing down the enemy completely in the Battle of Badr, the Muslims had started taking the enemy soldiers as captives, whereas the instruction given them in Sūrah Muḥammad before the actual fighting was this : "When you have crushed them completely, then bind the captives tight." However, as the Muslims had been permitted, among other things in Sūrah Muḥammad, to accept ransom from the prisoners, Allah declared the money taken from the captives of Badr as lawful and did not punish them for that. The words "Had not the decree already been issued by Allah..." are clearly pointing to the fact that the command for permission to accept ransom had already been given in the Qur'ān before this event, and obviously, there is no other verse in the Qur'ān beside this verse of Sūrah Muḥammad, which contains this command. Therefore, it will have to be admitted that this verse had been sent down before the above-cited verse of the Sūrah Al-Anfāl. (For explanation, see E. N. 49 on Al-Anfāl).

This is the first verse of the Qur'ān in which preliminary instructions have been given about the laws of war. Below is given a resume of the injunctions that are derived from this verse and the Holy Prophet's and his Companions' practice according to it and the juristic inferences as based on this verse and the Sunnah :

(1) The real aim of the Muslim army in war is to break the fighting power of the enemy till it is crushed and the war lays down its arms. Under no circumstances, should the Muslim's lose sight of this aim and start taking the enemy soldiers as captives. Captives should be taken after the enemy has been completely crushed and its numbers thinned down. The Arabs have been so instructed at the outset lest in the greed for ransom and taking slaves they should forget and overlook the real aim of the war.

(2) About the prisoners taken in war it has been said : "You have the option whether you show them favour or accept ransom from them." This gives the general law that the prisoners of war should not be put to death. Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar, Ḥasan Baṣri, 'Aṭā' and Ḥammād bin Abī Sulaimān favour this view, which is quite valid. They say that a man can be killed only during the war. When the war is over and one has been made a prisoner, it is not lawful to kill him. Ibn Jarīr and Abū Bakr al-Jaṣṣāṣ have related that Ḥajjāj bin Yūsuf handed over one of the prisoners of war to Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar and commanded him to put him to death. He refused to obey and cited this verse and said : "We are not allowed to kill a man when he is a prisoner." Imām Muḥammad in

As-Siyar al-Kabir also has related that 'Abdullah bin 'Āmir had commanded Ḥadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar to kill a prisoner of war, and he had refused to obey the command for this reason.

(3) But since in this verse it has neither been clearly forbidden to kill the prisoner, the Holy Prophet understood this intention of Allah's Command, and also acted accordingly, that if there was a special reason for which the ruler of an Islamic government regarded it as necessary to kill a particular prisoner (or prisoners), he could do so. This is not the general law, but an exception to it, which would be applied only when necessary. Thus, the Holy Prophet put to death only 'Uqbah bin Abi Mu'ait and Naḍr bin al Ḥārith from among the 70 prisoners taken at Badr, and only the poet Abū 'Azzah from the prisoners taken at Uhud. Since the Banī Quraizah had surrendered on the condition that they would accept whatever decision Ḥadrat Sa'd bin Mu'adh would give in their regard, and he had decreed that all the males of the Quraizah should be killed, the Holy Prophet had them executed. From among the prisoners taken at Khaiber only Kinānah bin Abī al-Ḥuqaiq was put to death because of his violating the agreement. At the conquest of Makkah, the Holy Prophet commanded in respect of only a few particular persons from among all the inhabitants of Makkah that any one of them who was captured should be put to death. Apart from these exceptions, the Holy Prophet never killed prisoners of war, and the same also continued to be the practice of the righteous Caliphs. During their times also killing of prisoners of war was rare, which was resorted to only for a special reason. Ḥadrat 'Umar bin 'Abdul 'Azīz also during his caliphate put to death only one prisoner of war for the reason that he had persecuted the Muslims very cruelly. On this very basis the majority of the jurists have held the view that the Islamic government can put a prisoner to death if necessary. But it is for the government to take such a decision; every soldier is not permitted to kill any prisoner he likes. However, if there is the danger of a prisoner's running away or of his committing a dangerous mischief, the guard can kill him. In this connection, the jurists of Islam have also made three other points: (a) That if a prisoner accepts Islam, he cannot be killed; (b) that the prisoner can be killed only as long as he is in the government's custody; if he has been allotted to, or given in somebody else's possession by sale, he cannot be killed; and (c) that if the prisoner has to be killed, he should be killed in a straightforward way; he should not be tortured to death.

(4) The general command that has been given about the prisoners of war is : "Show them favour, or accept ransom from them."

Favour includes four things : (a) That they should be treated well as prisoners ; (b) that instead of killing them or keeping them in captivity for lifetime, they should be handed over to the individual Muslims as slaves ; (c) that they should be put under *jizyah* and made *dhimmis* ; and (d) that they should be set free without ransom.

There are three ways of ransoming them : (a) That they should be set free on payment of a ransom ; (b) that they should be set free after taking some special service from them ; and (c) that they should be exchanged for the Muslim prisoners of war who are in the possession of the enemy.

The Holy Prophet and the Companions at different times acted in one or the other way as the occasion demanded. The Divine Law has not bound the Islamic government to act in only one particular way. The government can take any action it deems appropriate on a particular occasion.

(5) The practice of the Holy Prophet and the Companions confirms that as long as a prisoner of war is in the government's custody, the government will be responsible for his food and clothing, and his treatment if he is ill or wounded. Islamic Law does not permit prisoners to be kept without food or clothing, or be subjected to torture. On the contrary, instructions also have been given to treat them well and generously, and precedents of this very practice are found in the *Sunnah*. The Holy Prophet distributed the prisoners of Badr in the houses of different Companions and gave the instruction : "Treat these prisoners well." One of those prisoners, Abū 'Azīz, has reported : "The Anṣār Muslims, in whose house I was kept, gave me bread morning and evening, but as for themselves they had only dates to eat." About another prisoner, Suhail bin 'Amr, the Holy Prophet was told : "He is a fiery speaker, and has been making speeches against you : please have his teeth broken." The Holy Prophet replied : "If I have his teeth broken, Allah will break my teeth, although I am a Prophet." (Ibn Hishām). When Thumāmah bin Uthāl, the chief of Yamāmah, was brought as a prisoner, he was provided with good food and milk on the Holy Prophet's orders as long as he remained a captive. (Ibn Hishām). The same was the practice in the time of the Companions. No precedent is found when a prisoner might have been mistreated in their time.

(6) Islam has not permitted that the prisoners be kept in captivity for ever so that the government may subject them to forced labour as long as it likes. If they are not exchanged for other prisoners of war, or ransomed, the method enjoined of doing them favour is that they should be made slaves and given in possession of individuals, and their masters instructed to treat them well. This method was acted upon during the time of the Holy Prophet as well as of the Companions, and the jurists of Islam have unanimously upheld it as permissible. In this regard, it should be borne in mind that a person who might have accepted Islam before being taken as prisoner, and then is somehow made a prisoner, will be set free, but the acceptance of Islam by a person who accepts it after being taken prisoner, or after being given in possession of somebody, will not gain him freedom automatically. A tradition has been related in Musnad Ahmad, Muslim and Tirmidhi on the authority of Hadrat 'Imrān bin Ḥuṣain that a person from among the Banī 'Uqail was brought as a prisoner and he said: "I have accepted Islam." Thereupon the Holy Prophet said: "If you had said this when you were free, you would certainly have attained to success." The same thing was said by Hadrat 'Umar: "When a prisoner becomes a Muslim after falling into the hands of the Muslims as a captive, he will not be killed, but will remain a slave." On this very point, the jurists of Islam have unanimously ruled that the prisoner who becomes a Muslim after being taken captive cannot escape slavery. (Imām Muḥammad, *As-Siyar al-Kabir*). And this also is quite reasonable. If our law had been that anyone who embraced Islam after being taken a captive, would be set free, no prisoner would be so foolish as not to win his freedom by pronouncing the *Kalimah*.

(7) The third manner of doing favour with the prisoners according to the Law of Islam is that they may be put under *jizyah* and made *dhimmi* subjects of the Islamic state and allowed to live as free citizens of *dār al-Islām* (abode of Islam) just like the Muslims. Imām Muḥammad writes in his *As-Siyar al-Kabir*: "Any person who can be made a slave, can also be made a *dhimmi* and put under *jizyah*." At another place he says: "The ruler of the Muslims has the right to levy *jizyah* on them and a tax on their lands and set them absolutely free." This method has been practised generally in the condition when the territory of the people who have been made prisoners, is conquered and annexed to the Islamic state. The Holy Prophet, for instance, practised this method in the case of the

people of Khaiber, and then Ḥaḍrat 'Umar followed and practised it extensively on the conquest of 'Irāq and other territories. Abū 'Ubaid writes in his *Kitāb al-Amwāl* : "After the conquest of 'Irāq a deputation of the leading men of that country came before Ḥaḍrat 'Umar and submitted : 'O Commander of the Faithful, before this the people of Iran had subdued us : they subjected us to harsh treatment and committed all sorts of excesses against us. Then, when God sent you, we became very pleased, and we neither put up any resistance against you nor participated in the war. Now, we hear that you want to make us slaves.' Ḥaḍrat 'Umar replied : 'You have the option either to become Muslims, or accept to pay *jizyah* and remain free.' They agreed to pay the *jizyah* and they were granted full freedom." At another place in the same book, Abū 'Ubaid says : "Ḥaḍrat 'Umar wrote to Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī : Set free every farmer and peasant from among the people who have been captured in the war."

(8) The fourth favour is that the prisoner be set free without ransom. This is a special concession that the Islamic government can give only in case the special conditions of a prisoner demand it, or when it is expected that the concession will win the prisoner's gratitude for ever, and help turn him a friend from an enemy, or a believer from a disbeliever ; otherwise, obviously, it would in no way be a wise thing to set free a person of the enemy camp, who could again return to fight the Muslims. This is why the Muslim jurists generally have opposed it, and imposed the condition : "If the ruler of the Muslims finds it expedient to set the prisoners, or some of them, free as a favour, there is no harm in doing so." (*As-Siyar al-Kabīr*). Many precedents of this are found in the time of the Holy Prophet, and in almost every case expediency seems to be the reason.

About the prisoners taken at Badr, he said : "If Muṭ'im bin 'Adī were alive, and had spoken to me in respect of these treacherous people, I would have let them go for his sake." (Bukhārī, Abū Da'ūd, Musnad Aḥmad).. The Holy Prophet said this because when he had returned from Ṭā'if to Makkah, Muṭ'im at that time had given him refuge, and his armed sons had escorted him to the Ka'bah. Therefore, he wanted to repay his debt of gratitude in this way.

According to Bukhārī, Muslim and Musnad Aḥmad, when Thumāmah bin Uthāl, the chief of Yamāmah, was brought as a prisoner, the Holy Prophet asked him : "Thumāmah, what do you

say?" He replied: "If I am killed, then such a one would be killed, whose blood has some value; if I am shown favour, then favour would be shown to a person, who appreciates favour; and if you want wealth, ask for it, you will be given it." For three days the Holy Prophet asked him the same thing and he gave the same reply. At last, the Holy Prophet ordered that Thumāmah be set free. On attaining freedom, he went to a nearby oasis, washed himself and came back, pronounced the *kalimah* and became a Muslim, saying: "Before this day nobody was more detestable than you and no religion more odious than your religion in my sight, but now for me no man is more loveable than you and no religion more loveable than your religion." Then he went to Makkah for 'Umrah and gave the people of Quraish a notice to the effect: "After this no grain will reach you from Yamāmah unless Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) permits it." So, he stopped the grain supply and the people of Makkah had to request the Holy Prophet that he should not stop the supply of grain for them from Yamāmah.

From among the prisoners of the Bani Quraizah, the Holy Prophet forgave Zabīr bin Bāṭā and 'Amr bin Sa'd (or Ibn Su'dā), the former because he had given refuge to Ḥaḍrat Thābit bin Qais Anṣārī in the Battle of Bu'āth, in the pre-Islamic days of ignorance; therefore, he handed him over to Ḥaḍrat Thābit that he may repay him for his favour. And he forgave 'Amr bin Sa'd because it was he who was exhorting his tribe not to be treacherous when the Banī Quraizah were committing breach of the trust with the Holy Prophet.

After the Battle of Banī al-Muṣṭaliq, when the prisoners were brought and distributed among the people, the Holy Prophet paid Ḥaḍrat Juwairiyah's ransom to the person to whom she was allotted to secure her freedom and then married her himself. At this all the Muslims set their own prisoners free, saying: "Now they have become the Holy Prophet's relatives." Thus, the prisoners of a hundred families became free. (Mushad Aḥmad, Ṭabaqāt Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Hishām).

On the occasion of the treaty of Ḥudaibiyah, at about dawn, 80 men came from the direction of Tan'im with the intention of launching a sudden attack on the Muslim camp, but were all captured, and the Holy Prophet set all of them free lest it became a cause of war on that critical occasion. (Muslim, Abū Da'ūd, Nasā'i, Tirmidhī, Musnad Aḥmad).

At the conquest of Makkah, the Holy Prophet forgave all the people of Makkah except only a few men, and did not kill more than three or four of even those who had been made an exception. The whole of Arabia was well aware of what atrocities the people of Makkah had committed against the Holy Prophet and the Muslims ; yet the large-heartedness with which he forgave them after attaining complete victory over them, gave the Arabs the satisfaction that they had not been overpowered by a tyrant but by a merciful, affectionate and generous leader. That is why after the conquest of Makkah the Arabian peninsula did not take longer than two years to be completely subdued.

After the Battle of Hunain, when the Hawāzin deputation came to secure the freedom of their prisoners, the prisoners had already been distributed. The Holy Prophet called the Muslims together and said : "These people have come with repentance, and I am of the opinion that their men should be returned to them. The one who would like to set the prisoner allotted to him free willingly without ransom, should set him free, and the one who would like to take ransom, shall be paid it out of the first income that is received in the Public Treasury." Thus, six thousand prisoners were set free, and those who wanted to take ransom, were given it by the government. (Bukhārī, Abū Da'ūd, Musnad Aḥmad, Ṭabaqāt Ibn Sa'd). This also shows that the government is not authorised to set the prisoners free after they have been distributed ; this can be done by the willing approval of those in whose possession the prisoners have been given, or by paying them the ransom.

After the Holy Prophet, precedents of setting the prisoners free as a favour continue to be found throughout the period of the Companions also. Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr set free Ash'ath bin Qais al-Kindī and Ḥaḍrat 'Umar granted freedom to Hurmuzān and the prisoners of Kanādhir and Maisān. (Abū 'Ubaid, *Kitāb al-Amwāl*).

(9) The precedent of setting the prisoners free on payment of the ransom in the time of the Holy Prophet is found only on the occasion of Badr, when the prisoners were set free on payment of one thousand to four thousand dirhams each. (Ṭabaqāt Ibn Sa'd, *Kitāb al-Amwāl*). No precedent of this is found in the time of the Companions ; and the jurists of Islam have generally disapproved of it, for it means that we should take money and set a man free so that he may again rise against us with the sword. But since taking ransom has been permitted in the Qur'ān, and the Holy Prophet has acted according to it once, it is not absolutely forbidden.

Imām Muḥammad writes in his *As-Siyar al-Kabir* that if the need arises the Muslims can free their prisoners on payment of the ransom.

(10) The criterion of freeing a prisoner for a service rendered is also found in connection with the Battle of Badr. For those of the Quraish prisoners who had no ransom the Holy Prophet imposed the condition that they should teach reading and writing to ten Anṣār children each to win their freedom. (Musnad Aḥmad, Ṭabaqāt Ibn Sa'd, *Kitāb al-Amwāl*).

(11) Several instances of the exchange of prisoners are found in the time of the Holy Prophet. Once he despatched Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr on an expedition and he brought some captives, including a beautiful woman, who fell to the lot of Ḥaḍrat Salamah bin Akwa'. The Holy Prophet urged him to give her back, then sent her to Makkah and had several Muslim prisoners released, in exchange for her. (Muslim, Abū Da'ūd, Ṭahāwī, *Kitāb al-Amwāl* of Abī 'Ubaid, *Ṭabaqāt* Ibn Sa'd). Ḥaḍrat 'Imrān bin Ḥuṣain relates that once the tribe of Thaḳīf arrested two men of the Muslims. Some time later a man of the Banī 'Uqail, who were allies of the Thaḳīf, was arrested by the Muslims. The Holy Prophet sent him to Ṭā'if and got both the Muslims released in exchange for him. (Muslim, Tirmidhī, Musnad Aḥmad). From among the jurists Imām Abū Yūsuf, Imām Muḥammad, Imām Shāfi'ī, Imām Mālik and Imām Aḥmad hold the exchange of the prisoners as permissible. A ruling of Imām Abū Hanīfah is that exchange should not be practised, but according to another ruling of his exchange can be practised. However, there is a consensus that the prisoner who becomes a Muslim should not be handed over to the disbelievers for the purpose of exchange.

This explanation makes it abundantly clear that Islam has formulated a comprehensive code in respect of the prisoners of war which contains provision for this problem in every age under all sorts of conditions. Those people who take this Qur'ānic verse in its simple meaning that the prisoners of war should "either be shown favour and set free or freed for ransom", do not know what different aspects the question of the prisoners of war has, and what problems it has been creating in different ages and can create in the future.

9. That is, "If Allah had only wanted to crush the worshippers of falsehood, He did not stand in need of your help for this. He could have done this through an earthquake or a tempest in no time. But what he wills is that the followers of the Truth among

the people should enter into a conflict with the worshippers of falsehood and fight them so that the qualities and characteristics of each are brought out clearly by means of the test and each is given the place and rank that he deserves according to his conduct."

10. It means this : "A person's being slain in the way of Allah does not mean that he lost his life and as far as his person was concerned all his lifework was wasted. It is wrong to think that the sacrifices of the martyrs are not beneficial for themselves but only for those who live after them in the world, and take advantage of their sacrifices. The fact is that even for the martyrs themselves it is a bargain of profit, not of loss at all."

11. This is the profit that the martyrs falling in the way of Allah will gain. Its three grades have been stated : (1) That Allah will guide them ; (2) that He will set their condition right ; and (3) that He will admit them to the Paradise with which He has acquainted them beforehand. Guidance here obviously implies guiding to Paradise ; setting the condition right implies that before their entry into Paradise, Allah will adorn them with robes of honour and remove every filth which had polluted them in the life of the world ; and the third stage means that even in this world they have been told through the Qur'an and the Holy Prophet what kind of Paradise it is that has been prepared for them ; when they enter that Paradise they will enter a place with which they will already be familiar and they will come to know that they have been blessed precisely with the same that had been promised to them in the world.

12. "If you help Allah" : "If you participate in the work of raising Allah's Word with your life and wealth." But this has a deeper meaning too, which we have explained in E. N. 50 of Sūrah Āl-Imrān above.

13. Literally, *ta's* is to stumble and fall down on the face.

14. That is, "They preferred the whims, superstitions, customs and moral perversion of their former ignorance and did not like the teaching that Allah had revealed to guide them to the right way."

15. This sentence has two meanings : (1) "The same destruction that was met by those disbelievers now awaits these disbelievers, who are not accepting the invitation of Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) ; and (2) "the ruin of those people

(Contd. on page 24)

كَاتِبِينَ مِنْ قَرْيَةٍ هِيَ أَشَدُّ قُوَّةً مِنْ قَرْيَتِكَ الَّتِي أَخْرَجْنَاكَ أَهْلَكْنَاهُمْ فَلَا نَاصِرَ لَهُمْ ۖ
 أَفَمَنْ كَانَ عَلَىٰ بَيْتِنَا مِنْ رَبِّهِ كَمَنْ زُيِّنَ لَهُ سُوءُ عَمَلِهِ وَاتَّبَعُوا أَهْوَاءَهُمْ ۗ
 مَثَلُ الْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي وَعِدَ الْمُتَّقُونَ فِيهَا أَنْهَارٌ مِنْ مَاءٍ غَيْرِ آسِنٍ وَأَنْهَارٌ مِنْ
 لَبَنٍ لَوْ يَتَغَيَّرُ طَعْمُهُ ۗ وَأَنْهَارٌ مِنْ خَمْرٍ لَذَّةٍ لِلشَّارِبِينَ ۗ وَأَنْهَارٌ مِنْ عَسَلٍ
 مُصَفًّى وَلَهُمْ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ ۗ كَمَنْ هُوَ خَالِدٌ
 فِي النَّارِ وَسُقُوا مَاءً حَمِيمًا فَقَطَّعَ أَمْعَاءَهُمْ ۗ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يُسْتَعِرُّ إِلَيْكَ ۗ
 حَتَّىٰ إِذَا خَرَجُوا مِنْ عِنْدِكَ قَالُوا لِلَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ مَاذَا قَالَ آنِفًا ۗ
 أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ طَبَعَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ وَاتَّبَعُوا أَهْوَاءَهُمْ ۗ وَالَّذِينَ اهْتَدَوْا
 زَادَهُمْ هُدًى وَاتَّبَعُوا تَقْوَاهُمْ ۗ فَهَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا السَّاعَةَ أَنْ تَأْتِيَهُمْ
 بَغْتَةً ۗ فَقَدْ جَاءَ أَشْرَاطُهَا ۗ فَأَنَّىٰ لَهُمْ إِذَا جَاءَتْهُمْ ذِكْرُهُمْ ۗ فَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّهُ
 لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ ۗ وَاسْتَغْفِرُوا لِذَنبِكُمْ ۗ وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ
 مُتَقَلِّبِكُمْ وَمُتَوَكِّمِكُمْ ۗ وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَوْ لَا نُزِّلَتْ سُورَةٌ ۗ فَإِذَا أُنزِلَتْ
 سُورَةٌ مُّحْكَمَةٌ وَذُكِرَ فِيهَا الْقِتَالُ رَأَيْتَ الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَّرَضٌ يَنْظُرُونَ
 إِلَيْكَ نَظَرَ الْمَغْشِيِّ عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الْمَوْتِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ طَاعَةٌ وَقَوْلٌ مَّعْرُوفٌ
 فَإِذَا عَزَمَ الْأَمْرُ فَلَوْ صَدَقُوا اللَّهَ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ ۗ فَهَلْ عَسَيْتُمْ إِنْ
 تَوَلَّيْتُمْ أَنْ تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۗ وَتَقَطَّعُوا أَرْحَامَكُمْ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَعَنَهُمُ
 اللَّهُ فَأَصَمَّهُمْ وَأَعَمَّىٰ أَبْصَارَهُمْ ۗ أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ ۗ أَمْ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبٍ
 أَقْفَالُهَا ۗ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ارْتَدَوْا عَلَىٰ أَدْبَارِهِمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الْهُدَىٰ
 الشَّيْطَانُ سَوَّلَ لَهُمْ ۗ وَأَمْلَىٰ لَهُمْ ۗ ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا لِلَّذِينَ كَرِهُوا مَا

O Prophet, how many habitations have there been 13-15 that were much stronger in power than this habitation of yours that has expelled you. We destroyed them so utterly that there was none to save them.¹⁸ Can it ever be that he who is on a clear guidance from his Lord, be like those whose evil deed has been made seem fair to them, and who are following their lusts?¹⁹ The Paradise that has been promised to the righteous is such that canals will be flowing in it of pure water,²⁰ and canals will be flowing in it of milk of unchanged flavour,²¹ and canals will be flowing in it of wine which will be delightful to the drinkers,²² and canals will be flowing in it of honey, clear and pure.²³ In it there will be fruits of every kind for them and forgiveness from their Lord.²⁴ (Can the person who will be admitted to this Paradise) be like those who will dwell in Hell for ever and who will be given to drink boiling water that will cut their bowels into pieces?

There are some among them who give ear to what you say, and then when they leave you, they ask those who have been blessed with knowledge, "What did he say just now?"²⁵ These are they upon whose hearts Allah has set a seal, and who are following their lusts.²⁶ As for those who have received guidance, Allah increases their guidance²⁷ and grants them their due share of piety.²⁸ Do they now only await Resurrection that it should come upon them suddenly?²⁹ Its portents indeed have already come.³⁰ But when it does overtake them, what chance will be there for them to accept admonition?

Therefore, O Prophet, know it well that there is none worthy of worship but Allah, and ask forgiveness for your fault and for the believing men and women, too,³¹ for Allah is aware of your busy movements and also of your resting places.

20-25

Those who have believed, were saying, "Why is not a Sūrah sent down (to enjoin fighting)?" But when a decisive Sūrah was sent down in which fighting had been mentioned, you saw those in whose hearts was a disease, looking towards you like the one under the shadow of death.³² Alas for them! (On their tongue is) the promise of obedience and good works, but if they had proved true in their compact with Allah when the final Command was given, it would have been better for them. Now, what else can be expected of you than this that if you turned about,³³ you would again spread mischief in the land and break asunder the ties of blood?³⁴ These are they whom Allah has cursed and made them deaf and blind. Have they not pondered over the Qur'ān, or are there locks upon their hearts?³⁵ The fact is that those who turned back, after guidance had become clear to them, for them Satan has made this way easy and prolonged for them the prospects of false hopes.

(Contd. from page 21)

does not end with the torment of the world; the same doom also awaits them in the Hereafter."

16. After being wounded at Uḥud when the Holy Prophet was resting in a hill pass with a few Companions, Abū Sufyān shouted: "We have 'Uzzā and there is no 'Uzzā for you." Thereupon the Holy Prophet told his Companions to respond, saying: "Our Protector and Helper is Allah, and you have no protector and helper at all." This reply of the Holy Prophet was derived from this very verse.

17. That is, "Just as an animal eats and does not think wherefrom the food it eats has come, who has created it, and what rights of the creator are imposed on it for providing it with food, so are these people also eating and have no higher values or ideals beyond eating."

18. The Holy Prophet was sorely distressed on leaving Makkah. When he was compelled to emigrate, he had stood facing the city outside it and said: "O Makkah, you are the most beloved city in the sight of Allah, and I have the greatest love for you out of all

the cities of Allah ; if the polytheists had not driven me out, I would never have left you." About this it has been said : "After driving you out of the city the people of Makkah think that they have achieved a great success, whereas, in fact, they have hastened only their own ruin by this evil act." The style of the verse clearly indicates that it must have been sent down close after the *Hijrah*.

19. That is, "How is it possible that when the Prophet and his followers have been guided by God to a clear and straight path and they have started following it in the light of full knowledge and vision, they should walk along with those who are still persisting in their ways of ignorance, who regard their deviation as guidance and their evildoing as a praiseworthy thing, and who judge on the basis of their personal desires, and not by argument as to what is the truth and what is falsehood. Now, neither can the lives of these two groups be alike in this world nor can their end be alike in the Hereafter."

20. Literally, *āsin* is the taste and colour of water which has changed, or which gives a bad smell. In the world the water of rivers and canals is generally muddy ; its taste and colour change due to the mixture of sand and dust and of different kinds of vegetation in it, and it also gives off a kind of bad smell. Therefore, the quality of the water of the rivers and canals of Paradise will be that it will be pure and clear, without any adulteration.

21. In a *Hadīth* directly reported from the Holy Prophet, it has been explained thus : "It will not be the milk squeezed from the teats of animals." That is, it will be the milk which Allah will bring out in the form of springs from the earth and cause it to flow into canals ; it will not be squeezed from the teats of animals and then made to flow into the canals of Paradise. About this natural milk it has been said : "Its flavour will not have changed at all ;" that is, it will not give even the slightest offensive smell that is found in every kind of milk squeezed from the animal teats.

22. In another *Hadīth* reported directly from the Holy Prophet, it has been explained, thus : "This wine will not have been distilled from rotten fruit by beating and crushing it under feet," like the wine in the world, but Allah will produce it also in the form of springs and cause it to flow into canals ; then its quality will be that "it will be delightful for the drinkers"; that is, it will not be bitter and foul-smelling like the wines of the world, which cannot

be drunk even by the most habitual drinker without showing some distaste. In Sūrah Aṣ Ṣāffāt, another quality of it has been described: "Neither will the drinker be harmed physically thereby nor become drunk." (v. 47) In Sūrah Al-Wāqī'ah it has been said: "...which will neither cause them giddiness nor affect their sense." (v. 19) This shows that wine will not intoxicate, but will only give pleasure and delight.

23. In the *Hadith* it has been explained, thus: "The honey will not have been drawn from the bees' bellies," but it also will come out from springs and flow into canals; therefore, it will not have wax, and pieces of the honey-comb and legs of dead bees mixed in it, but it will be absolutely pure.

24. The mention of forgiveness from Allah after the blessings of Paradise can have two meanings: (1) That the greatest blessing by far will be that Allah will forgive them; and (2) that the errors and faults that they happened to commit in the world, will not even so much as be mentioned before them, but Allah will cover them up for ever so that they are not put to shame in Paradise.

25. This is concerning those disbelievers and hypocrites and unbelieving followers of the former Books, who sat in the assemblies of the Holy Prophet, listened to his discourses, or the verses of the Qur'ān, but since in their hearts they were averse to the themes presented by him, they would understand nothing in spite of listening to him. Therefore, when they came out, they would ask the Muslims, "What was he saying just now?"

26. This was the real cause because of which their inner ears had become deaf to the teachings of the Holy Prophet; they were the slaves of their lusts, and the teachings that the Holy Prophet was presenting fell against their lusts. Therefore, if ever they sat in the assemblies of the Holy Prophet and listened to him, they would understand nothing.

27. That is, the same revelations about which the disbelievers and hypocrites ask, "What was he (the Holy Prophet) saying just now?" become a cause of further guidance for the rightly-guided people, and from the same assembly from which these unfortunate people rise without gaining anything, the fortunate ones return with a new treasure of knowledge and insight.

28. That is, Allah grants them the grace to develop in themselves the kind of piety (*taqwā*) that they have the capability to develop.

29. That is, as far as the explanation and clarification of the truth is concerned, it has been explained fully well by argument and reasoning, the miraculous discourses of the Qur'ān, the pure character of the Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) and the revolution in the lives of his Companions. Now, are these people awaiting that Resurrection itself should take place and then only they will believe ?

30. The portents of Resurrection imply those signs which indicate that its approach is near. One such important sign is the advent of God's Last Prophet after whom no other prophet will come till Resurrection. Traditions have been related in Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmidhī and Musnad Ahmad on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Anas, Ḥaḍrat Sahl bin Sa'd As-Sā'idī and Ḥaḍrat Buraidah, saying that the Holy Prophet raised his index finger and the middle finger and said : "My advent and Resurrection are like these two fingers." That is, "Just as there is no other finger between these two fingers, so no other prophet will be raised between me and Resurrection ; after me only Resurrection now will occur."

31. One of the morals taught to man by Islam is also this : However hard and sincerely may man be trying to serve and worship his Lord and fighting and struggling in the cause of His Religion, he should never be involved in the misunderstanding that he has done and accomplished whatever he was required to do. Rather, on the contrary, he should have the feeling that he has not been able to do full justice to what was expected of him by his Lord and Master. Therefore, he should confess his errors constantly and pray to Allah, saying : "Lord, forgive me for whatever fault and error I may have committed in Your service." This is indeed the essence of Allah's Command : "O Prophet, ask forgiveness for your fault ..". This does not mean that, God forbid, the Holy Prophet had actually committed an error wilfully, but its correct meaning is that it did not even behove the servant who was the greatest worshipper of his Lord that he should harbour even a tinge of the pride of accomplishment in his heart, but his true position also was that in spite of all his great and glorious services he should continue confessing his shortcomings before his Lord. It was under this state of the mind that the Holy Prophet often implored his Lord for forgiveness. According to Abū Da'ūd and Nasā'ī, the Holy Prophet is reported to have said : "I implore Allah for forgiveness one hundred times every day."

32. That is, "In view of the conditions through which the Muslims were passing and the attitude that the disbelievers had adopted towards Islam and the Muslims at that time the believers were generally of the opinion that they should be permitted to fight even before fighting was actually enjoined by Allah. Rather they were awaiting Allah's Command in this regard impatiently and were asking again and again: "Why are we not permitted to fight these wicked people?" But the condition of the people who had joined the ranks of the Muslims hypocritically was quite different from that of the believers. They held their lives and their properties as dearer to themselves than Allah and His Religion, and were not prepared to risk them at any cost. Therefore, as soon as fighting was enjoined they were clearly sorted out from the true believers. Till the time fighting had not been enjoined, the hypocrites and the common believers could not be distinguished one from the other. The hypocrites offered the Prayer just as the true believers did; they observed the Fast just like them, and practised every article of the Faith as made no demand of a sacrifice on them. But when time came for making the supreme sacrifice of life for the sake of Islam, their hypocrisy was exposed and their veil of false display of the Faith was rent asunder. In Sūrah An-Nisā', their this state has been described thus: "Have you marked those to whom it was said: Withhold your hands a while and establish the *ṣalāt* and pay the *zaka't*? Now that the fighting has been enjoined for them, some of them fear the people as they should fear Allah, or even more than that; they say: Our Lord, why have You enjoined fighting for us? Why have You not given us a brief respite?" (v. 77)

33. Another translation of the words in the original can be: "If you became rulers over the people."

34. Its one meaning is: "If at this time you shirk supporting and defending Islam and refrain from fighting with your life and wealth for the cause of the great reformist revolution which the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) and his Companions are struggling to bring about, there will be no other consequence of this than that you would return to the same system of ignorance in which you have been cutting each other's throat since centuries, burying your children alive, and filling God's earth with injustice and wickedness." Its other meaning is: "You are a people of depraved character. You are not at all sincere in your claim of having affirmed the Faith, because you

are not prepared to make any sacrifice in its cause. Now, is Allah gives you power in the land and entrusts the affairs of the world to you when morally you are unsound and un-reliable, what else can be expected of you than that you would commit tyranny and mischief and resort to killing of your own near and dear ones.

This verse clearly points out that Islam forbids severing of relations with the kindred. On the other hand, in positive terms also, at several places in the Qur'ān, treating the relatives kindly and well has been enjoined and counted among the major virtues. (For instance, see Al-Baqarah : 83, 177 ; An-Nisā' : 8, 36 ; An-Nahl: 90, Banī Isrā'īl : 26 ; An-Nūr : 22). The word *rahīm* in Arabic is used for kinship and relationship by blood metaphorically. All the relations of a person, whether near or distant, are his kinsmen (*dhawil-arḥām*). The nearer the relationship the greater the right one has upon the other and graver the sin of severing the ties of blood. To treat the kindred well implies that one should do one's utmost in doing whatever good one possibly can to one's relative, should avoid doing any ill or harm to him. Reasoning from this very verse Ḥaḍrat 'Umar had forbidden as unlawful selling of the slave-girl who had given birth to a child from her master, and the Companions had concurred with him in this. Ḥākim in his *Mustadrīk* has related on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Buraidah that one day when he was sitting among the audience of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, suddenly a clamour arose in the street. On enquiring it was known that a slave-girl was being sold and her daughter was crying. Ḥaḍrat 'Umar immediately got the *Anṣār* and the *Muhājirin* together and put before them the question : "Do you find in the Religion that Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) has brought any room for severing of relations between the blood relationships ?" Everybody replied in the negative. Thereupon, Ḥaḍrat 'Umar said : Then, how is it that in your houses a mother is being separated from her daughter ? Could there be a greater and more serious instance of the cutting of these relationships ? Then he recited this verse. The people said : You may adopt whatever measure you deem fit to stop this practice. At this Ḥaḍrat 'Umar issued this decree for enforcement in all the Islamic territories : "No slave-girl who has given birth to a child from her master is to be sold because this is breaking of kinship ties which is not lawful."

35. That is, "Either these people do not ponder over the Qur'ān at all, or if they try to ponder over it, its teachings and

(Contd. on page 32)

نَزَلَ اللَّهُ سَنُطِيعُكُمْ فِي بَعْضِ الْأُمْرِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ إِسْرَارَهُمْ ۖ فَكَيْفَ إِذَا
 تَوَفَّتْهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ يَضْرِبُونَ وُجُوهَهُمْ وَأَدْبَارَهُمْ ۗ ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ اتَّبَعُوا مَا
 آسَخَطَ اللَّهُ وَكَرِهُوا رِضْوَانَهُ فَاحْبَطَ أَعْمَالَهُمْ ۗ أَمْ حَسِبَ الَّذِينَ فِي
 قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ أَنَّ لَنْ يُخْرِجَ اللَّهُ أَضْغَانَهُمْ ۗ وَلَوْ نَشَاءُ لَأَرَيْنَاكُمْ
 فَلَعَرَفْتَهُمْ بِسِيئِهِمْ ۗ وَلَتَعْرِفَنَّهُمْ فِي لَحْنِ الْقَوْلِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ أَعْمَالَكُمْ ۗ
 وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ حَتَّى نَعْلَمَ الْمُجْتَهِدِينَ مِنْكُمْ وَالصَّابِرِينَ ۗ وَنَبْلُوا أَخْبَارَكُمْ ۗ
 إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَصَدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَشَاقُّوا الرَّسُولَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا
 بَيَّنَّ لَهُمُ الْهُدَىٰ ۗ لَنْ يَضُرُّوا اللَّهَ شَيْئًا ۗ وَسَيُحِطُ أَعْمَالَهُمْ ۗ يَا أَيُّهَا
 الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَاطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَلَا تُبْطِلُوا أَعْمَالَكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ
 الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَصَدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ مَاتُوا وَهُمْ كُفَّارٌ فَلَنْ يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ
 لَهُمْ ۗ فَلَا تَهِنُوا وَتَدْعُوا إِلَى السَّلَامَةِ ۗ وَأَنْتُمْ الْأَعْلَوْنَ ۗ وَاللَّهُ مَعَكُمْ وَ
 لَنْ يَتْرُكَكُمْ أَعْمَالَكُمْ ۗ إِنَّمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا لَعِبٌ ۗ وَلَهُمْ ۗ وَإِنْ تُؤْمِنُوا وَتَتَّقُوا
 يُؤْتِكُمْ أَجْرَكُمْ وَلَا يَسْئَلْكُمْ أَمْوَالَكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ يَسْئَلَكُمْ فِيهَا فَيُحْفِكُمْ تَبَخَّلُوا وَ
 يُخْرِجُ أَضْغَانَكُمْ ۗ هَٰأَنْتُمْ هَٰؤُلَاءِ تَدْعُونَ لِنُفْسِكُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ۗ فَمِنْكُمْ
 مَنْ يَبْخَلُ ۗ وَمَنْ يَبْخَلْ فَإِنَّمَا يَبْخَلْ عَن نَّفْسِهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ الْغَنِيُّ ۗ وَأَنْتُمْ
 الْفُقَرَاءُ ۗ وَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا يَسْتَبَدِلْ قَوْمًا غَيْرَكُمْ ۗ ثُمَّ لَا يَكُونُوا أَمْثَالَكُمْ ۗ

That is why they said to those who showed aversion to what Allah had revealed, "We shall obey you in some matters."³⁶ Allah knows their secret affairs too well. Then, how shall it be when the angels take their souls, and take them away, smiting their faces and their backs?³⁷ This would be because they followed the way that made Allah angry, and hated to adopt the way of His pleasure. So, He rendered all their works fruitless.³⁸

26-28

Do those in whose hearts is a disease think that Allah will not expose the impurity of their hearts? If We will, We can show them to you and then you may recognize them by their faces. But you will certainly know them from the manner of their speech. Allah is fully aware of all your actions. We shall certainly put you to the test in order to appraise your state and to see who among you are struggling strenuously and enduring patiently.

29-31

Those who disbelieved and hindered (others) from Allah's Way and disputed with the Messenger, after the Right Way had become clear to them, can in no way harm Allah, but Allah indeed will render all their works vain.³⁹ O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and let not your works end in futility⁴⁰. As for those who have disbelieved, and hindered (others) from Allah's Way and have died disbelieving, Allah will never pardon them. Therefore, do not be faint-hearted, and do not beg for peace,⁴¹ for you will surely gain the upper hand. Allah is with you and will never let your works be wasted. The life of this world is only a sport and a pastime.⁴² If you believe and follow the way of piety, Allah will give you your rewards and will not ask of you your possessions.⁴³ If ever He asks of you your possessions, and demands all of them, you would be niggardly, and He would bring your malice out.⁴⁴ Look, you are being called upon to expend in Allah's Way, yet some of you are being niggardly, whereas the one who is niggardly

32-38

is, in fact, being niggardly only to himself. Allah is Self-Sufficient : it is you who are the needy. If you turn away, Allah will replace you by another people, and they will not be like you.

(Contd. from page 29)

meaning do not enter their hearts, because they have put locks on them." As for this that "there are their locks upon the hearts", it means this : "There are such locks on them as are specially meant for the hearts which are not susceptible to the truth."

36. That is, "In spite of professing the Faith and being counted among the Muslims, they went on conspiring secretly with the enemies of Islam and even pledged to support them in certain matters."

37. That is, "In the world they adopted this attitude so that they may safeguard their interests and may protect themselves from the dangers of the conflict between Islam and infidelity, but how will they escape Allah's wrath after death ? At that time no device of theirs will prove helpful for them to remain safe from the punishment by the angels."

This verse also is one of those verses that point to the torment of *barzakh* (i.e. torment of the grave). It clearly shows that the unbelievers and hypocrites start being afflicted with the torment right from the time of death, and this torment is different from the punishment which they will get on Resurrection after their cases will have been decided by Allah. (For further explanation, see An-Nisā' : 97 ; Al-An'ām : 93-94 ; Al-Anfāl : 50 ; An-Naḥl : 28, 32 ; Al-Mu'minūn : 99-100 ; Yā Sīn : 26-27 and E.N.'s 22, 23 ; Al-Mu'min : 46 and E. N. 63).

38. This refers to all those works that they performed as "Muslims." Their Prayers, their fasting, their payments of the *zakāt*, and all other acts of worship and virtue, which in appearance and form are counted among good works, were rendered void, for they failed to adopt the attitude of sincerity and loyalty towards Allah and Islam and the Muslim community even though they professed to be Muslims ; but, on the contrary, they went on conspiring with the enemies of Islam for the sake of small worldly gains, and started devising schemes to save themselves from any possible risks as soon as time came for *Jihād* in the cause of Allah.

These verses are absolutely decisive and conclusive in this regard that in the conflict between Islam and un-Islam the faith of the person whose sympathies are not with Islam and the Muslims, or are with disbelief and the disbelievers, cannot at all be reliable, not to speak of any of his works being acceptable before Allah.

39. This sentence has two meanings : (1) That Allah will render vain and fruitless all those works which they had performed as "good works", and they will get no reward whatever for them in the Hereafter ; and (2) that all the devices that they are adopting to obstruct the way of Allah and His Messenger's Religion will prove ineffective and fruitless.

40. In other words, the deeds' being beneficial and yielding of good results depends wholly on one's obedience to Allah and His Messenger. After one has turned away from obedience, no deed remains a good deed so that one may deserve any reward for it.

41. Here, one should bear in mind the fact that when this discourse was revealed only a handful of the Muslims consisting of a couple of hundreds of the *Muhājirīn* and *Anṣār* living in the small town of Madīnah were upholding the standard of Islam and they were not only faced by the powerful Quraish but also by the whole of pagan Arabia. Such were the conditions when they were exhorted "not to be faint-hearted and not to beg (the enemy) for peace", but to make preparations for the decisive conflict. This does not mean that the Muslims should never negotiate for peace, but it means that in a state like this it is not right to initiate peace negotiations when it shows the Muslims' weakness, for it will still further embolden the enemy. The Muslims should first establish their superiority in power and strength; then if they negotiate peace there will be no harm.

42. That is, "As against the Hereafter, this world is no more than a means of temporary entertainment. The success or failure here is not anything real and enduring, which might in any way be important. The real life is life hereafter success in which should be man's main concern. (For further explanation, see E.N. 102 of *Sūrah Al-'Ankabūt*).

43. That is, "Allah is Self-Sufficient : He does not need taking anything from you for His own Self. If He tells you to expend something in His way, He does so not for Himself but only for your own good."

44. That is, "He does not put you to any severe trial that may bring out your weaknesses."

XLVIII

AL-FAT-H الفتح

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

XLVIII

AL-FAT-H الفتح

INTRODUCTION

Name

It is derived from the words *Innā fataḥ-nā laka* *at-ḥan mubīnā* of the very first verse. This is not only name of the Sūrah but also its title in view of the subject-matter, for it deals with the great victory that Allah granted to the Holy Prophet and the Muslims in the form of the Truce of Hudaibiyah.

Period of Revelation

Traditions concur that it was sent down in Dhil-Qa‘dah, A. H. 6, at a time when the Holy Prophet was on his return journey to Madīnah after concluding the Truce of Hudaibiyah with the disbelievers of Makkah.

Historical Background

The events in connection with which this Sūrah was sent down began like this : One day the Holy Prophet saw in a dream that he had gone to Makkah with his Companions and had performed the 'Umrah there. Obviously, the Prophet's dream could not be a mere dream and fiction ; for it is a kind of Divine inspiration as Allah Himself has confirmed in verse 27 below and said that He Himself had shown that dream to His Messenger. Therefore, it was not merely a dream but a Divine inspiration which the Holy Prophet had to obey and follow.

Apparently, there was no possible way of acting on this inspiration. The disbelieving Quraish had debarred the Muslims from proceeding to the Ka'bah for the past six years and no Muslim had been allowed during that period to approach the Ka'bah for the purpose of performing Hajj and 'Umrah. Therefore, it could not be expected that they would allow the Holy Prophet to enter Makkah along with a party of his Companions. If they had proceeded to Makkah in the pilgrim garments with the intention of performing 'Umrah, along with their arms, this would have provoked the enemy to war, and if they had proceeded un-armed, this would have meant endangering his own as well as his Companions' lives. Under conditions such as these nobody could see and suggest how the Divine inspiration could be acted upon.

But the Prophet's position was different. It demanded that he should carry out whatever Command his Lord gave fearlessly and without any apprehension and doubt. Therefore, the Holy Prophet informed his Companions of his dream and began to make preparations for the journey. Among the tribes living in the suburbs also he had the public announcement made that he was

proceeding for 'Umrah and the people could join him. Those who could only see the apparent conditions thought that he and his Companions were going into the very jaws of death ; none of them therefore was inclined to accompany him in the expedition. But those who had true faith in Allah and His Messenger were least bothered about the consequences. For them this information was enough that it was a Divine inspiration and Allah's Prophet had made up his mind to carry it into effect. After this nothing could hinder them from accompanying the Messenger of Allah. Thus, 1,400 of the Companions became ready to follow him on this highly dangerous journey.

This blessed caravan set off from Madīnah in the beginning of Dhil-Qa'dah, A.H. 6. At Dhul-Hulaifah¹ they entered the pilgrims robe with the intention of 'Umrah, took 70 camels with collars round their necks indicating that they were sacrificial animals ; kept only a sword each in sheaths, which the pilgrims to the Ka'bah were allowed to carry according to the recognized custom of Arabia, but no other weapon. Thus, the caravan set out for the Ka'bah, the House of Allah, at Makkah, chanting the prescribed slogan of *Labbaik, Allahumma labbaik*.

The nature of the relations between Makkah and Madīnah in those days was known too well to every Arab. Just the previous year, in Shawwāl A.H. 5, the Quraish mustering the united strength of the Arab tribes had invaded Madīnah and the well known Battle of the Trench had taken place. Therefore, when the Holy Prophet along with such a large caravan set off for the home of his blood-thirsty enemy, the whole of Arabia

1. A place 6 miles south of Madīnah on the road to Makkah, which is now called Bi'r 'Alī; the pilgrims coming from the direction of Madīnah enter the pilgrim's robe for Ḥajj and 'Umrah here.

looked up with amazement, and the people also noticed that the caravan was not going with the intention to fight but was proceeding to the House of Allah in a forbidden month in the pilgrims garb carrying sacrificial animals and was absolutely un-armed.

The Quraish were confounded at this bold step taken by the Holy Prophet. Dhil-Qa'dah was one of those forbidden months which had been held as sacred for pilgrimage in Arabia for centuries. Nobody had a right to interfere with a caravan which might be coming for Hajj or 'Umrah in the pilgrims garb in this month ; so much so that even an enemy tribe could not hinder it from passing through its territory according to the recognized law of the land. The Quraish therefore were caught in a dilemma, for if they attacked this caravan from Madinah and stopped it from entering Makkah, this would arouse a clamour of protest in the whole country, and all the Arab tribes would have the misgiving that the Quraish had monopolised the Ka'bah as exclusively their own, and every tribe would be involved in the mistrust that now it depended on the will of the Quraish to allow or not to allow anyone to perform Hajj or 'Umrah in the future and that they would stop any tribe with which they were angry from visiting the Ka'bah just as they had stopped the Madinese pilgrims. This they thought would be a grave mistake, which would cause the entire Arabia to revolt against them. But, on the other hand, if they allowed Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) and his large caravan to enter their city safely, they would lose their image of power in Arabia and the people would say that they were afraid of Muhammad. At last, after a great deal of confusion, perplexity and hesitation they were overcome by their false sense of honour and for the sake of their prestige they took the decision that they would at no cost allow the caravan to enter the city of Makkah.

The Holy Prophet had despatched a man of the Bani Ka'b as a secret agent so that he may keep him fully informed of the intentions and movements of the Quraish. When the Holy Prophet reached 'Usfān¹, he brought the news that the Quraish had reached Dhī-Ṭuwā² with full preparations and they had sent Khālīd bin Walīd with two hundred cavalry men in advance towards Kurā'al-Ghamīm³ to intercept him. The Quraish wanted somehow to provoke the Holy Prophet's Companions into fighting so that they may tell the Arabs that those people had actually come to fight and had put on the pilgrims garments for 'Umrah only to deceive others.

Immediately on receipt of this information the Holy Prophet changed his route and following a very rugged, rocky track reached Ḥudaibiyah,⁴ which was situated right on the boundary of the sacred Makkan territory. Here, he was visited by Budail bin Warqā' the chief of the Bani Khuzā'ah, along with some men of his tribe. They asked what he had come for. The Holy Prophet replied that he and his Companions had come only for pilgrimage to the House of Allah and for going round it in worship and not for war. The men of Khuzā'ah went and told this to the Quraish chiefs and counselled them not to interfere with the pilgrims. But the Quraish were obstinate. They sent Ḥulays bin 'Alqamah, the chief of the Aḥābīsh,⁵ to the Holy Prophet to persuade him to go back. Their object was that when Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) would not listen to Ḥulays, he

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1. A place at two days' journey on the road to Makkah.
 2. A place, outside Makkah, on the way to 'Usfān.
 3. A place 8 miles from 'Usfān, towards Makkah.
 4. Ḥudaibiyah, now called Shumaisī, situated about 13 miles from Makkah on the road to Jeddah.
 5. A collection of a few tribes living in the outskirts of Makkah, who were allies of the Quraish.

would come back disappointed and then the entire power of the Aḥābīsh would be on their side. But when Ḥulays went and saw that the whole caravan had put on the pilgrims garments, had brought sacrificial camels with festive collars round their necks, and had come for doing reverence to the House of Allah and not to fight, he returned to Makkah without having any dialogue with the Holy Prophet and told the Quraish chiefs plainly that those people had no other object but to pay a visit to the Ka'bah ; if they debarred them from it, the Aḥābīsh would not join them in that, because they had not become their allies to support them even if they violated the sacred customs and traditions.

Then the Quraish sent 'Urwah bin Mas'ūd Thaqafī ; he had lengthy negotiations with the Holy Prophet in an effort to persuade him to give up his intention to enter Makkah. But the Holy Prophet gave him also the same reply that he had given to the chief of the Khuzā'ah, that they had not come to fight but to do honour to the House of Allah and carry out a religious duty. 'Urwah went back and said to the Quraish : "I have been to the courts of the Caesar and Khosroës, and the Negus also, but by God, never have I seen any people so devoted to a king as are the Companions of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) to him. If Muḥammad makes his ablutions they would not let the water thereof fall on the ground but would rub it on their bodies and clothes. Now you may decide as to what you should do."

In the meantime when the messages were coming and the negotiations were going on, the Quraish tried again and again to quietly launch sudden attacks on the Muslim camp in order to provoke the Companions and somehow incite them to war, but every time they did so the Companions' forbearance and patience and the Holy Prophet's wisdom and sagacity frustrated their designs. On one

occasion forty or fifty of their men came at night and attacked the Muslim camp with stones and arrows. The Companions arrested all of them and took them before the Holy Prophet, but he let them go. On another occasion 80 men came from the direction of Tan'im¹ right at the time of the Fajr Prayer and made a sudden attack. They were also caught, but the Holy Prophet forgave them, too. Thus, the Quraish went on meeting failure after failure in every one of their designs.

At last, the Holy Prophet sent Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān (may Allah be pleased with him) as his own messenger to Makkah with the message that they had not come to fight but only for pilgrimage and had brought their sacrificial camels along, and they would go back after performing the rite of pilgrimage and offering the sacrifice. But the Quraish did not agree and withheld Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān in the city. In the meantime a rumour spread that Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān had been killed; and when he did not return in time the Muslims took the rumour to be true. Now they could show no more forbearance. Entry into Makkah was different for there was no intention to use force. But when the ambassador was put to death, the Muslims had no alternative but to prepare for war. Therefore, the Holy Prophet summoned all his Companions together and took a solemn pledge from them that they would fight to death. In view of the critical occasion it was not an ordinary undertaking. The Muslims numbered only 1400 and had come without any weapons, were encamping at the boundary of Makkah, 250 miles away from their own city, and the enemy could attack them in full strength, and could surround them with its allies from the adjoining tribes as well.

1. A place near Makkah, outside the sacred territory. The people generally go out to Tan'im to don the pilgrim garments for 'Umrah and then return to Makkah to perform 'Umrah.

In spite of this, none from the caravan except one man failed to give his pledge to fight to death, and there could be no greater proof of their dedication and sincerity than that in the cause of Allah. This pledge is well known in the history of Islam as the pledge of Ridwān.

Later it was known that the news about Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān was false. Not only did he return but under Suhail bin 'Amr from the Quraish also arrived a deputation to negotiate peace with the Holy Prophet. Now, the Quraish no more insisted that they would disallow the Holy Prophet and his Companions to enter Makkah. However, in order to save their face they only insisted that he went back that year but could come the following year to perform the 'Umrah. After lengthy negotiations peace was concluded on the following terms :

- (1) War would remain suspended for ten years, and no party would indulge in any hostility, open or secret, against the other.
- (2) If any one during that period from among the Quraish went over to Muḥammad, without his guardian's permission, he would return him to them, but if a Companion of Muḥammad came over to the Quraish, they would not return him to him.
- (3) Every Arab tribe would have the option to join either side as its ally and enter the treaty.
- (4) Muḥammad and his men would go back that year and could come the following year for 'Umrah and stay in Makkah for three days, provided that they brought only one sheathed sword each, and no other weapon of war. In those three days the Makkans would vacate the city for them (so that there was no chance of a clash), but they would not be allowed to take along any Makkan on return.

When the conditions of the treaty were being settled, the whole of the Muslim army was feeling greatly upset.

No one understood the expedience because of which the Holy Prophet was accepting the conditions. No one was far-sighted enough to fore-see the great benefit that was to result from this treaty. The disbelieving Quraish looked at it as their victory, and the Muslims were upset as to why they should be humiliated to accepting those mean conditions. Even a statesman of the calibre of Hadrat 'Umar says that he had never given way to doubt since the time he had embraced Islam but on this occasion he also could not avoid it. Impatient he went to Hadrat Abū Bakr and said : "Is he (the Holy Prophet) not Allah's Messenger, and are we not Muslims ?, and are they not polytheists ? Then, why should we agree to what is humiliating to our Faith ?" He replied : "O 'Umar, he is surely Allah's Messenger, and Allah will never make him the loser." Unsatisfied he went to the Holy Prophet himself and put the same questions to him, and he also gave him the same replies as Hadrat Abū Bakr had given. Afterwards Hadrat 'Umar continued to offer voluntary prayers and give alms so that Allah may pardon his insolence that he had shown towards the Holy Prophet on that occasion.

Two things in the treaty were highly disturbing for the Muslims ; first, the second condition, about which they said that it was an expressly unfair condition, for if they had to return a fugitive from Makkah, why should not the Quraish return a fugitive from Madīnah ? To this the Holy Prophet replied: "What use would be he to us, who fled from us to them? May Allah keep him away from us ! And if we return the one who flees to us from them, Allah will create some other way out for him." The other thing that was rankling in their minds was the fourth condition. The Muslims thought that agreeing to it meant that they were going back unsuccessful and this was humiliating. Furthermore, the question that was

causing them feel upset was that they had accepted the condition of going back without performing the pilgrimage to the Ka'bah, whereas the Holy Prophet had seen in the vision that they were performing *tawāf* at Makkah. To this the Holy Prophet replied that in his vision the year had not been specified. According to the treaty conditions, therefore, they would perform the *tawāf* the following year if it pleased Allah.

Right at the time when the document was being written, Suhail bin 'Amr's own son, Abū Jandal, who had become a Muslim and been imprisoned by the pagans of Makkah somehow escaped to the Holy Prophet's camp. He had fetters on his feet and signs of violence on his body. He implored the Holy Prophet that he help secure his release from imprisonment. The scene only increased the Companions' dejection, and they were moved beyond control. But Suhail bin 'Amr said the conditions of the agreement had been concluded between them although the writing was not yet complete; therefore, the boy should be returned to them. The Holy Prophet admitted his argument and Abū Jandal was returned to his oppressors.

When the document was finished, the Holy Prophet spoke to the Companions and told them to slaughter their sacrificial animals at that very place, shave their heads and put off the pilgrim garments, but no one moved from his place. The Holy Prophet repeated the order thrice but the Companions were so overcome by depression and dejection that they did not comply. During his entire period of apostleship on no occasion had it ever happened that he should command his Companions to do a thing and they should not hasten to comply with it. This caused him a great shock, and he repaired to his tent and expressed his grief before his wife, Hadrat Umm Salamah. She said, "You may

quietly go and slaughter your own camel and call the barber and have your head shaved. After that the people would automatically do what you did and would understand that whatever decision had been taken would not be changed." Precisely the same thing happened. The people slaughtered their animals, shaved their heads or cut their hair short and put off the pilgrim garb, but their hearts were still afflicted with grief.

Later, when this caravan was returning to Madīnah, feeling depressed and dejected at the truce of Hudaibiyah, this Sūrah came down at Dajnān (or according to some others, at Kurā' al-Ghamim), which told the Muslims that the treaty that they were regarding as their defeat, was indeed a great victory. After it had come down, the Holy Prophet summoned the Muslims together and said: "Today such a thing has been sent down to me, which is more valuable to me than the world and what it contains." Then he recited this Sūrah, especially to Hadrat 'Umar, for he was the one who was feeling most dejected.

Although the believers were satisfied when they heard this Divine Revelation, not much longer afterwards the advantages of this treaty began to appear one after the other until every one became fully convinced that this peace treaty indeed was a great victory:

(1) In it for the first time the existence of the Islamic State in Arabia was duly recognized. Before this in the eyes of the Arabs the position of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) and his Companions was no more than of mere rebels against the Quraish and other Arab tribes, and they regarded them as the outlaws. Now the Quraish themselves by concluding this agreement with the Holy Prophet recognized his sovereignty over the territories of the Islamic State and opened the way for the Arab tribes to enter treaties of alliance with either of the political powers they liked.

(2) By admitting the right of pilgrimage to the House of Allah for the Muslims, the Quraish also admitted that Islam was not an anti-religious creed, as they had so far been thinking, but it was one of the admitted religions of Arabia, and like the other Arabs, its followers also had the right to perform the rites of Hajj and 'Umrah. This diminished the hatred in the Arabs' hearts that had been caused by the propaganda made by the Quraish against Islam.

(3) The signing of a no-war pact for ten years provided full peace to the Muslims, and spreading to every nook and corner of Arabia they preached Islam with such spirit and speed that within two years after Hudaibiyah the number of the people who embraced Islam far exceeded those who had embraced it during the past 19 year or so. It was all due to this treaty that two years later when in consequence of the Quraish's violating the treaty the Holy Prophet invaded Makkah, he was accompanied by an army 10,000 strong, whereas on the occasion of Hudaibiyah only 1,400 men had joined him in the march.

(4) After the suspension of hostilities by the Quraish the Holy Prophet had the opportunity to establish and strengthen Islamic rule in the territories under him and to turn the Islamic society into a full-fledged civilization and way of life by the enforcement of Islamic law. This is that great blessing about which Allah says in verse 3 of Sūrah Al-Mā'idah : "Today I have perfected your Religion for you and completed My blessing on you and approved Islam as the Way of Life for you." (For explanation, see Introduction to Sūrah Al-Mā'idah and its E.N. 15).

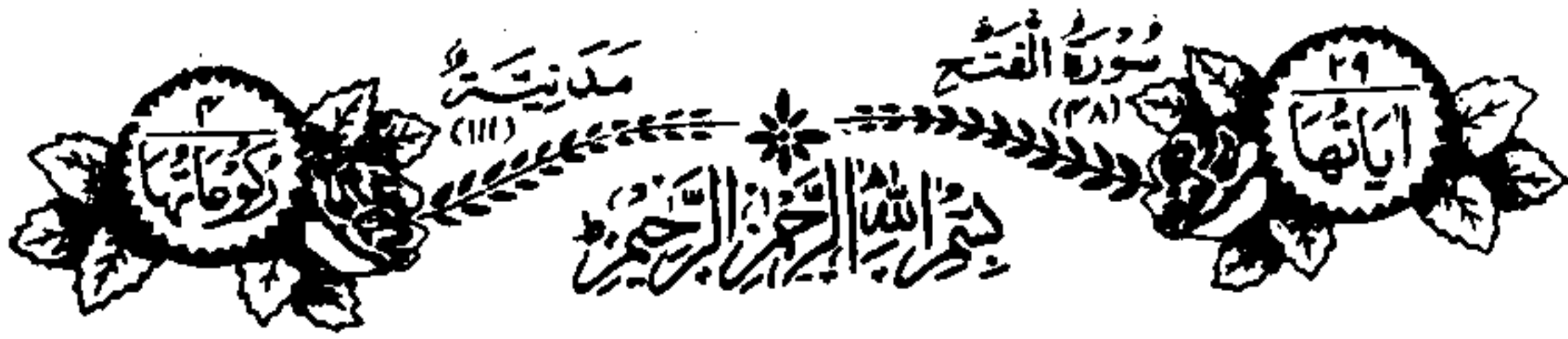
(5) Another gain that accrued from the truce with the Quraish was that being assured of peace from the south

the Muslims overpowered all the opponent forces in the north and central Arabia easily. Just three months after Hudaibiyah, Khaiber, the major stronghold of the Jews, was conquered and after it the Jewish settlements of Fadak, Wād-il-Qurā', Taimā' and Tabūk also fell to Islam one after the other. Then all other tribes of central Arabia, which were bound in alliance with the Jews and Quraish, came under the sway of Islam. Thus, within two years after Hudaibiyah the balance of power in Arabia was so changed that the strength of the Quraish and pagans gave way and the domination of Islam became certain.

These were the blessings that the Muslims gained from the peace treaty which they were looking upon as their defeat and the Quraish as their victory. However, what had troubled the Muslims most in this treaty, was the condition about the fugitives from Makkah and Madīnah, that the former would be returned and the latter would not be returned. But not much long afterwards this condition also proved to be disadvantageous for the Quraish, and experience revealed what far-reaching consequences of it had the Holy Prophet fore-seen and then accepted it. A few days after the treaty a Muslim of Makkah, Abū Baṣīr, escaped from the Quraish and reached Madīnah. The Quraish demanded him back and the Holy Prophet returned him to their men who had been sent from Makkah to arrest him. But while on the way to Makkah he again fled and went and sat on the road by the Red Sea shore, which the trade caravans of the Quraish took to Syria. After that every Muslim who succeeded in escaping from the Quraish would go and join Abū Baṣīr instead of going to Madīnah, until 70 men gathered there. They would attack any Quraish caravan that passed that way and cut it into

pieces. At last, the Quraish themselves begged the Holy Prophet to call those men to Madīnah, and the condition relating to the return of the fugitives of itself became null and void.

The Sūrah should be read with this historical background in view in order to fully understand it.



إِنَّا فَتَحْنَا لَكَ فَتْحًا مُّبِينًا ۗ لِيَغْفِرَ لَكَ اللَّهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِكَ وَمَا تَأَخَّرَ

XLVIII

AL-FAT-H الفتح

Verses : 29

Revealed at Al-Madīnah

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

O Prophet, We have indeed granted you a manifest victory¹ so that Allah may pardon you your former and latter faults,² and may perfect His blessing upon you³ and

1-7

1. When after the treaty of Hudaibiyah this good news of the victory was announced, the people wondered as to how the treaty could be called a victory. The Muslims did believe in this Divine Revelation as true on the basis of their Faith, but no one could understand what aspect of the victory it had. On hearing this verse, Hadrat 'Umar asked : "Is it a victory, O Messenger of Allah ?" The Holy Prophet replied : "Yes." (Ibn Jarir) Another Companion came before the Holy Prophet and he also put the same question, whereupon the Holy Prophet replied : "By Him in Whose hand is the life of Muhammad, this indeed is a victory." (Musnad Ahmad, Abū Da'ūd) On arriving at Madīnah still another person said to his companions : "What sort of a victory is it ? We were debarred from the House of Allah ; our sacrificial camels also could not go to their right places ; the Holy Messenger of Allah had to halt at Hudaibiyah, and in consequence of this truce two of our oppressed brothers (Abū Jandal and Abū Baṣīr) were handed over to their oppressors." When this thing reached the Holy Prophet, he said :

“A very wrong thing has been uttered : it indeed is a great victory. You reached the very home of the polytheists, and they had to persuade you to go back by soliciting you to perform ‘Umrah the following year ; they themselves expressed the desire to suspend hostilities and have peace with you, whereas their malice and enmity against you is too well known. Allah has granted you the upper hand over them. Have you forgotten the day when you were fleeing from Uḥud and I was calling you back from behind ? Have you forgotten the day when the enemy had descended on us from every side in the Battle of the Trench and the hearts were coming up to the throats ?” (Baihaqī, on the authority of ‘Urwah bin Zubair). But not long after this the truce’s being a victory began to become manifest, and everyone realized that the triumph of Islam had begun with the treaty of Ḥudaibiyah. Almost one and the same thing has been related from Ḥaḍrat ‘Abdullah bin Mas‘ūd, Ḥaḍrat Jābir bin ‘Abdullah and Ḥaḍrat Barā’ bin ‘Āzib. They are reported to have said : “The people look upon the Conquest of Makkah as the victory, but we regard the truce of Ḥudaibiyah as the real victory.” (Bukhārī, Muslim, Musnad Aḥmad, Ibn Jarīr).

2. If the context in which this sentence occurs is kept in view, one will certainly feel that the faults referred to here imply those shortcomings and weaknesses that had remained in the struggle that the Muslims had been making for the success and victory of Islam, under the leadership of the Holy Prophet, for the past nineteen years or so. These shortcomings are not known to any one because the intellect is absolutely helpless to find out any weakness in that struggle. But according to the highest standards of perfection in the sight of Allah there had remained some such weakness in it because of which the Muslims could not attain a decisive victory so soon over the pagans of Arabia. What Allah means to say is this ; ‘ If you had carried on your struggle along with those weaknesses, it would have taken you much longer to subdue Arabia, but We have overlooked all those weaknesses and shortcomings and compensated for them only through Our grace, and opened for you at Ḥudaibiyah the door to victory and conquest which you could not have achieved only by your ordinary endeavours’.

Here, this thing also should be understood well that for the weaknesses that might occur and remain in the struggle and endeavour that a group might be making for an object, the leader and guide of the group only is addressed. This does not mean that

the weaknesses are the leader's personal weaknesses. Those are, in fact, the weaknesses of the struggle that the group is making as a whole ; but the address is made to the leader to tell him that his work suffers from such and such a weakness.

However, as the address is directed to the Holy Prophet and declared that Allah has forgiven him all his former and latter faults, the general words also give this meaning that Allah pardoned all the shortcomings (which were the shortcomings in view of his high position) of His Holy Messenger. That is why when the Companions saw that he took extraordinary pains over his worship, they would say : "Why do you subject yourself to such hardships when all your former and latter errors and shortcomings have been pardoned ? " the Holy Prophet would reply : "Should I not behave as a grateful servant ? " (Ahmad, Bukhāri, Muslim, Abū Da'ūd).

3. "Perfection of his blessings" implies that the Muslims should become wholly free to live their lives in accordance with Islamic civilization, Islamic law and commandments, secure from every fear, every resistance and every external interference, and they should also be blessed with the power that they may uphold Allah's Word throughout the world. Dominance of disbelief and wickedness which may be a hindrance in the way of Allah's worship and an obstacle in the struggle in propagating Allah's Word, is the greatest calamity for the believers ; the Qur'an calls it "*fitnah*" (mischief). Delivered and freed from this calamity when they are able to achieve an abode of Islam (*dār al-Islām*) in which the Divine Religion is enforced in its entirety, and along with that they are also provided with the means and resources by which they may establish faith and righteousness on Allah's earth in place of disbelief and wickedness, this would be the perfection of Allah's blessing on them. As this blessing was achieved by the Muslims only through the Holy Prophet, Allah addressed only him and said : "We willed to complete Our blessing on you ; therefore we have granted this victory to you."

وَيُتَمِّعُ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكَ وَيَهْدِيكَ صِرَاطًا مُسْتَقِيمًا ۝ وَيَنْصُرَكَ اللَّهُ نَصْرًا
 عَزِيمًا ۝ هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ السَّكِينَةَ فِي قُلُوبِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ لِيَزِدُوا إِيمَانًا مَعَ
 إِيمَانِهِمْ ۝ وَاللَّهُ جُنُودَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۝ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ۝ لِيَدْخُلَ
 الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَيُكَفِّرُ
 عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ ۝ وَكَانَ ذَلِكَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا ۝ وَيُعَذِّبُ الْمُنَافِقِينَ وَالْمُنَافِقَاتِ
 وَالْمُشْرِكِينَ وَالْمُشْرِكَاتِ الظَّالِمِينَ بِاللَّهِ ظَنَّ السَّوْءِ عَلَيْهِمْ دَائِرَةُ
 السَّوْءِ ۝ وَغَضِبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَنَهُمْ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ جَهَنَّمَ ۝ وَسَاءَتْ
 مَصِيرًا ۝ وَاللَّهُ جُنُودَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۝ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَزِيمًا حَكِيمًا ۝
 إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ شَاهِدًا وَمُبَشِّرًا وَنَذِيرًا ۝ لِتُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَتُعَزِّرُوهُ
 وَتُقَرِّبُوهُ ۝ وَتُذْخِرُوهُ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا ۝ إِنِ الَّذِينَ يُبَايِعُونَكَ إِنَّمَا يُبَايِعُونَ
 اللَّهَ ۝ يَدُ اللَّهِ فَوْقَ أَيْدِيهِمْ ۝ فَمَنْ نَكَكَ فَإِنَّمَا يَنْكُكُ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ ۝ وَمَنْ
 آوَىٰ بِهَا عَهْدَ عَلَيْهِ اللَّهُ فَسَيُؤْتِيهِ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ۝ سَيَقُولُ لَكَ الْمُخَلْفُونَ
 مِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ شَغَلَتْنَا أَمْوَالُنَا وَأَهْلُونَا فَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَنَا ۝ يَقُولُونَ بِالسِّنْتِهِمْ
 مَا لَيْسَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ ۝ قُلْ فَمَنْ يَمْلِكُ لَكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا ۝ إِنْ أَرَادَ بِكُمْ
 ضَرًّا أَوْ أَرَادَ بِكُمْ نَفْعًا ۝ بَلْ كَانَ اللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا ۝ بَلْ ظَنَنْتُمْ
 أَنْ لَنْ يَنْقَلِبَ الرَّسُولُ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِيهِمْ أَبَدًا ۝ وَزَيْنَ ذَلِكَ فِي
 قُلُوبِكُمْ ۝ وَظَنَنْتُمْ ظَنَّ السَّوْءِ ۝ وَكُنْتُمْ قَوْمًا بُورًا ۝ وَمَنْ لَمْ يُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ
 وَرَسُولِهِ فَإِنَّا أَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكَافِرِينَ سَعِيرًا ۝ وَاللَّهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
 يَغْفِرُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۝ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ۝ سَيَقُولُ

show you the right way,⁴ and bestow on you a mighty help.⁵ He it is Who sent down tranquillity into the hearts of the believers⁶ so that they may have another Faith added to their Faith.⁷ To Allah belong the hosts of the heavens and the earth, and He is All-Knowing, All-Wise.⁸ (He has done this) so that He may admit the believing men and the believing women⁹ into the Gardens underneath which canals flow, there to live for ever, and may remove their evils from them.¹⁰—This is indeed the greatest success in the sight of Allah.—And that He may punish the hypocritical men and women, and the *mushrik* men and women, who entertain evil thoughts about Allah.¹¹ They themselves have been encircled by the evil.¹² They came under the wrath of Allah and He cursed them and prepared for them Hell, which is a most evil abode. To Allah belong the hosts of the heavens and the earth, and He is All-Mighty, All-Wise.¹³

O Prophet, We have sent you as a witness,¹⁴ as a bearer of good news and as a warner,¹⁵ so that you, O people, may believe in Allah and His Messenger, and may help him (i.e. the Messenger) and honour him, and glorify Allah morning and evening.¹⁶

8-9

O Prophet, those who were swearing allegiance to you,¹⁷ were indeed swearing allegiance to Allah. Allah's hand was over their hands.¹⁸ Now whosoever breaks this pledge breaks it at his own peril, and whosoever keeps his pledge that he has made with Allah,¹⁹ Allah will soon grant him a great reward.

10

O Prophet, the desert Arabs who were left behind,²⁰ will surely come and say to you, "Our properties and our households kept us occupied; so ask forgiveness for us." They say with their tongues that which is not in their hearts.²¹ Say to them: "If it is so, who then can have any power to withhold Allah's decree in your

11-12

behalf if He intends to do some harm to you or bring some good to you? Allah is well aware of all your actions.²² (But the real thing is not what you say:) Nay, you rather thought that the Messenger and the believers would never return to their families and this fancy delighted your hearts²³ and you harboured evil thoughts and you are a people, most wicked."²⁴

13-14

Whoever does not believe in Allah and His Messenger, for such disbelievers We have prepared a blazing Fire.²⁵ To Allah belongs the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth. He may pardon whomever He wills and punish whomever He wills, and He is All-Forgiving, All-Merciful.²⁶

4. "The right way": the way to conquest and success. In other words, it implies that by causing the treaty to be concluded at Hudaibiyah Allah paved the way for and inspired the Holy Prophet with the plan by which he could subdue all the forces that were resisting Islam.

5. Another translation can be: "Bestow on you an unprecedented victory," for the word 'aziz in the original may mean mighty as well as unprecedented and un-paralleled. According to the first meaning, the sentence means: "By means of this treaty Allah has helped you in a way as to make your enemies helpless"; and according to the second, it means: "Seldom has this novel method ever been adopted to help somebody, that a thing which apparently is a mere peace treaty, and that too a treaty concluded from a weak position, would turn into a decisive victory."

6. "Sakīnat" in Arabic is calmness and tranquillity and peace of mind. Here Allah calls its being sent into the hearts of the believers an important factor in the victory that Islam and the Muslims achieved at Hudaibiyah. From a study of the conditions of the time one comes to know what kind of a *Sakīnat* it was that was sent down into the hearts of the Muslims during that period and how it became a source of victory. If at the time when the Holy Prophet expressed his intention to go for 'Umrah to Makkah, the Muslims had become terror-stricken and started behaving like the hypocrites as if they were going into the very jaws of death, or if at the time when they heard the news on the way that the disbelieving Quraish

were coming out in great strength to fight them, they had been alarmed as to how they would face the enemy un-armed, and thus become panic-stricken, obviously no benefits would have resulted from Hudaibiyah at all. Then, if at the time when at Hudaibiyah the disbelievers had stopped the Muslims from going any further, and when they had tried to provoke them by launching against them repeated sudden attacks, and when the rumour of Hadrat 'Uthmān's martyrdom had spread, and when Abū Jandal had appeared on the scene as the very image of oppression and persecution, the Muslims had actually become provoked and broken the discipline that the Holy Prophet had instilled in them, the result would have been disastrous. Above all, if at the time when the Holy Prophet was going to conclude the treaty on the conditions which were unacceptable to the entire party of the Muslims, the Muslims had happened to disobey him, the great victory of Hudaibiyah would have turned into a humiliating defeat. Thus, it was all because of Allah's bounty that on all these critical moments the Muslims were blessed with full peace of mind with regard to the leadership and guidance of the Holy Prophet, the truth of Islam and the truthfulness of their mission. This is why they decided with a cool mind that they would face and accept whatever hardships they would encounter in the way of Allah; that is why they remained safe from fear, confusion, provocation and despair; that is why perfect discipline continued to prevail in the camp; and that is why, in spite of being deeply grieved at the conditions of peace, they submitted to the decision taken by the Holy Prophet. This was the *sakīnat* that Allah had sent down into the hearts of the Muslims, and it was all because of this that the dangerous step of undertaking a journey for performing 'Umrah became the prelude to a unique victory.

7. That is, "One Faith they already had before they set out on this expedition; they attained the additional Faith when they remained steadfast on the way of sincerity, piety and obedience in every trial that they faced in connection with the expedition." This verse is one of those verses which show that Faith is not a static state which is incapable of growth, but it develops as well as decays and deteriorates. After embracing Islam till death the believer at every step in his life continues to be confronted with such tests and trials in which he has to take a decision whether in following the Divine Religion he is prepared to sacrifice his life, his wealth, his sentiments, desires, time, comforts and interests or not. If at the time of every such trial he adopts the way of

sacrifice, his Faith progresses and develops, and if he turns away his Faith decays and deteriorates till a time may also come when the initial state of the Faith with which he had entered Islam is even endangered to be lost and destroyed. (For further explanation, see E.N. 2 of Sūrah Al-Anfāl and E.N. 38 of Al-Aḥzāb).

8. It means this: Allah has such hosts by which He can destroy and exterminate the disbelievers completely whenever He wills, but He has deliberately and by wisdom only placed this responsibility on the believers that they should enter a conflict with the disbelievers and struggle to make the Religion of Allah prevail and prosper in the world. In this way alone does a door to the enhancement of their ranks and successes in the Hereafter open as is being indicated in the following verse.

9. In the Qur'ān generally mention of the rewards for the believers is made collectively and separate mention is not made of the rewards for the men and the women. But here, since the general mention of giving the rewards could cause the doubt that this reward may perhaps be only meant for the men, Allah has made a separate mention of the believing women, saying that they too would be equal partners in this reward with the believing men. The reason is obvious. Those God-fearing women who encouraged their husbands, sons, brothers and fathers to proceed on the dangerous journey instead of stopping them from it and discouraging them by crying and wailing, who looked after their houses, their properties, their honour and children in their absence faithfully, who did not even feel the alarm lest at the sudden departure of 1,400 of the Companions the disbelievers and hypocrites of the surrounding areas would attack the city, should certainly have become equal partners with their men in the reward of *Jihād* although they stayed behind in their homes.

10. That is, that He may pardon whatever errors they might have committed because of human weaknesses, remove every trace and mark of the errors from them before admitting them into Paradise so that they may enter Paradise absolutely free from every evil that may cause them embarrassment.

11. The hypocrites living in the suburbs of Madīnah were thinking, as has been stated in verse 12 below, that the Holy Prophet and his Companions would not return alive from that journey. As for the polytheists of Makkah and their pagan companions, they were thinking that they had successfully put to rout the

Holy Prophet and his Companions by preventing them from performing 'Umrah. In fact, whatever these two groups had thought they had this misunderstanding about Allah that He would not help His Messenger and in the conflict between the Truth and falsehood would allow falsehood to defeat and frustrate the Truth.

12. That is, "They were encompassed by the same evil fate which they wanted to avoid and against which they had devised all those plans, and their same plans caused the evil fate to be hastened."

13. Here the theme of verse 4 has been reiterated for another object. There, the object was to state that Allah instead of employing His supernatural hosts to fight the disbelievers had employed the believers for it only because He willed to favour them. Here, the theme has been repeated to say that in order to punish the one whom Allah wills to punish He can employ whichever of His countless hosts He likes for the purpose; no one has the power to avert His punishment by his own plans.

14. Shāh Waliyullah has translated *shāhid* as "a bearer of witness to the truth", and other translators translate it as "a bearer of the witness". The word *shahādat* comprehends both these meanings. For explanation, see E N. 82 of Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb.

15. For explanation, see E.N. 33 of Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb.

16. According to some commentators the verse means: "...and help the Messenger, and honour him, and glorify Allah morning and evening", and according to others: "... and help Allah, and honour Him and glorify Him morning and evening."

Glorifying Allah morning and evening does not mean glorifying Him only in the morning and the evening but at all times. It is just like saying about something that it is well known in the east and the west when one actually means to say that it is well known everywhere in the world.

17. The reference is to the pledge that the Holy Prophet took from his Companions at Ḥudaibiyah at the rumour that Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān had been killed at Makkah. According to some traditions it was a pledge unto death, and according to others it was an undertaking that they would not run away from the battlefield. The first thing has been reported from Ḥaḍrat Salamah bin Akwa' and the second from Ḥaḍrat Ibn 'Umar, Jābir bin 'Abdullah and Ma'qil bin Yasār. The purport of both is the same. The Companions had

pledged allegiance on the Holy Prophet's hand with the express object that if the news of Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān's martyrdom proved to be true, they would settle the matter with the Quraish there and then even if they were cut to pieces in the clash. As on this occasion it was not yet certain whether Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān actually had been killed or was still living, the Holy Prophet placed one of his own hands on the other and pledged allegiance on his behalf, and thus bestowed a unique honour on Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān in that he made Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān a partner in the pledge by making his own sacred hand represent the hand of Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān. The Holy Prophet's taking the pledge of allegiance on his behalf necessarily meant that he had full confidence that if Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān had been present he would certainly have pledged the allegiance.

18. That is, the hand on which the Muslims were swearing allegiance was not the hand of the Prophet's person but of Allah's representative, and this allegiance was in fact being sworn to Allah through His Messenger.

19. Here, instead of *'alaih-illah* the words used in the original are *'alaih-ullah*, which is a departure from the general rule of Arabic. 'Allāma Ālūsī has given two reasons for the unusual use of the vowel points here. First, the object on this special occasion is to express the great glory, eminence and majesty of the Being to Whom the pledge was being sworn for which *alaih-u* is more appropriate than *'alaih-i*; second, the *hā* in *'alaih-ī* actually represents *huwa*; therefore, adhering here to the vowel points of the original goes well with the theme of the allegiance.

20. This refers to the people living in the suburbs of Madīnah whom the Holy Prophet had invited to accompany him in his march out for 'Umrah, but they had not left their homes in spite of their claim to Faith just because they were afraid of death. Traditions show that these were the people of the tribes of Aslam, Muzainah, Juhainah, Ghifār, Ashja', Dīl and others.

21. This has two meanings: (1) "That after your returning to Madīnah the excuse that these people will present for not going out with you, would only be a lame excuse, because they know in their hearts why they had stayed behind"; and (2) "that their imploring the Messenger of Allah for a prayer of forgiveness would only be an empty word of mouth, for in fact, they are neither feeling remorse for their failure to accompany you, nor have they any feeling that they committed a sin by not going out with the Messenger, nor are

they seeking forgiveness sincerely. As for themselves they think that they did a wise thing by not going on the dangerous journey ; had they any desire for Allah and His forgiveness, they would not have stayed behind at home."

22. That is, "Allah's decision will be on the basis of the knowledge that He has about the reality of your actions. If your actions deserve the punishment and I pray for your forgiveness, my this prayer will not save you from Allah's punishment ; and if your actions do not deserve the punishment, and I do not pray for your forgiveness, my failure to pray will not do any harm to you. Everything is in Allah's control, not mine, and no one's empty words can deceive Him. Therefore, even if I accept as true what you say and then also pray for your forgiveness on its basis, it will be vain and without result."

23. That is, "You were delighted to think that you had saved yourselves from the danger into which the Messenger and his believing supporters were going. You thought you had done so by dint of your great wisdom ; and you also did not feel any compunction in rejoicing at the thought that the Messenger and the believers would not return alive from their expedition. You did not feel uneasy in spite of your claim to the Faith but were pleased to think that you did not put yourselves in the danger by accompanying the Messenger."

24. The word *bā'ir* (pl. *būr* in the original) has two meanings ; (1) A sinful, perverted and evil-minded person, who is incapable of doing anything good ; and (2) one who is doomed to an evil end, who is following the path of destruction.

25. Here, Allah in clear words is declaring all such people disbelievers and devoid of the faith, who are not sincere with regard to Allah and His Religion, who shirk endangering their interests, their lives and wealth for the sake of Allah's Religion when the time comes of their trial and test. But one should remember that this is not the sort of disbelief on the basis of which somebody in the world may be regarded as excommunicated from Islam, but this is the disbelief because of which he will be declared a disbeliever in the Hereafter. The reason is that the Holy Prophet even after the revelation of this verse did not regard as outside Islam those people in respect of whom it was sent down, nor treated them like the disbelievers.

(Contd. on page 64)

الْمُخَلَّفُونَ إِذَا انْطَلَقْتُمْ إِلَى مَغَارِهِمْ لِتَأْخُذُوهُمْ ذُرُوعًا وَنَسَبَكُمْ يُرِيدُونَ أَنْ
 يُبَدِّلُوا كَلِمَ اللَّهِ قُلْ لَنْ تَتَّبِعُونَا كَذَلِكُمْ قَالَ اللَّهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ فَيَقُولُونَ
 بَلْ تَحْصُدُونَنَا بَلْ كَانُوا لَا يَفْقَهُونَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ۝ قُلْ لِلْمُخَلَّفِينَ مِنَ
 الْأَعْرَابِ سُدْعُونَ إِلَى قَوْمِ آبَائِهِمْ أُولَئِكَ شَدِيدُ تَقَاتُلِهِمْ أَوْ يُسَلِّمُونَ
 فَإِنْ طَطِيعُوا يُؤْتِكُمُ اللَّهُ أَجْرًا حَسَنًا وَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا كَمَا تَوَلَّيْتُمْ مِنْ قَبْلُ
 يُعَذِّبُكُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ۝ لَيْسَ عَلَى الْأَعْمَى حَرْجٌ وَلَا عَلَى الْأَعْرَجِ حَرْجٌ وَلَا
 عَلَى الْمَرِيضِ حَرْجٌ وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ يُدْخِلْهُ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي
 مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّ يُعَذِّبْهُ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ۝ لَقَدْ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ
 عَنِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ يُبَايِعُونَكَ تَحْتَ الشَّجَرَةِ فَعَلِمَ مَا فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ فَأَنْزَلَ
 السَّكِينَةَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَثَابَهُمْ فَتْحًا قَرِيبًا ۝ وَمَغَانِمَ كَثِيرَةً يَأْخُذُونَهَا ۝ وَ
 كَانَ اللَّهُ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا ۝ وَعَدَّكُمْ اللَّهُ مَغَانِمَ كَثِيرَةً تَأْخُذُونَهَا فَمَجَّلَ
 لَكُمْ هُنَا وَكَفَّ أَيْدِيَ النَّاسِ عَنْكُمْ ۝ وَلِتَكُونَ آيَةً لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَيَهْدِيَكُمْ
 صِرَاطًا مُسْتَقِيمًا ۝ وَأُخْرَى لَمْ تَقْدِرُوا عَلَيْهَا قَدْ أَحَاطَ اللَّهُ بِهَا ۝ وَكَانَ
 اللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرًا ۝ وَلَوْ قَاتَلَكُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوَلَّوْا الْأَدْبَارَ ثُمَّ لَا
 يَجِدُونَ وَلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيرًا ۝ سُنَّةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلُ ۝ وَلَنْ تَجِدَ
 لِسُنَّةِ اللَّهِ تَبْدِيلًا ۝ وَهُوَ الَّذِي كَفَّ أَيْدِيَهُمْ عَنْكُمْ وَأَيْدِيَكُمْ عَنْهُمْ
 بِبَطْنِ مَكَّةَ مِنْ بَعْدِ أَنْ أَظْفَرَكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ ۝ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرًا ۝
 هُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَصَدُّوكُمْ عَنِ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَالْهَدْيِ مَعْكُوفًا أَنْ يَكُونَ
 مِنْكُمْ مَجْلَهُ ۝ وَلَوْلَا رِجَالٌ مُؤْمِنُونَ وَنِسَاءٌ مُؤْمِنَاتٌ لَمْ تَعْلَمُوهُمْ أَنْ تَطَّوَّهُمْ

When you set out to take the spoils, those who were left behind, will surely say to you, "Allow us too to go with you."²⁷ They wish to change Allah's decree.²⁸ Tell them plainly, "You shall not come with us. Allah has already said this before."²⁹ They will say, "Nay, but you are jealous of us." (Whereas there is no question of jealousy), but they little understand the truth. Tell the desert Arabs who were left behind, "You shall soon be called upon to fight a mighty people. You shall have to fight them, or they will submit."³⁰ Then if you carried out the Command of *Jihād*, Allah will give you a good reward, and if you turned your backs as you did before, Allah will punish you with a painful torment. However, there is no harm if the blind and the lame and the sick person does not come forth for *Jihād*.³¹ Whosoever obeys Allah and His Messenger, Allah will admit him into Gardens underneath which canals flow; and the one who turns away, him He will punish with a painful torment.

15-17

Allah was well pleased with the believers when they were swearing allegiance to you under the tree.³² He knew what was in their hearts; therefore, He sent down tranquillity upon them³³ and rewarded them with a victory near at hand, and many spoils which they will (soon) take.³⁴ Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise. Allah promises you rich spoils which you will acquire.³⁵ Presently He has granted you this victory,³⁶ and has restrained the hands of the people from you³⁷ so that it may be a sign to the believers,³⁸ and Allah may guide you to the right way.³⁹ Besides, He promises you other spoils as well, which you are not as yet able to take, and Allah has encompassed them:⁴⁰ Allah has power over everything.

18-21

If the disbelievers had fought you then, they would certainly have turned their backs and would have found

22-24

no protector or helper.⁴¹ This is the Way of Allah that has been followed in the past,⁴² and you will find no change in the Way of Allah. It is He Who restrained their hands from you and your hands from them in the valley of Makkah, whereas He had granted you victory over them, and Allah saw what you were doing.

(Contd. from page 61)

26. The mention of Allah's being All-Forgiving and All-Merciful after the foregoing warning, contains in it a subtle aspect of admonition. It means this: "Even now if you give up your insincere attitude and way of life and adopt sincerity, you will find Allah All-Forgiving and All-Merciful. He will forgive you your previous shortcomings and will treat you according to the quality of your sincerity in the future."

27. That is, "The time is approaching when these very people who were shirking accompanying you on the dangerous journey, would see you going on an expedition in which there would be the possibility of attaining easy victory and much booty. Then they would come running and request you to take them also along." Such a time came just three months after the truce of Hudaibiyah, when the Holy Prophet invaded Khaiber and took it easily. At that time everyone could see that after the truce with the Quraish not only Khaiber but the Jewish settlements of Taimâ', Fadak, Wâdi-al-Qurâ' and others also of northern Arabia would not be able to withstand the might of the Muslims and would easily fall to the Islamic State. Therefore, Allah in these verses forewarned the Holy Prophet that the opportunists of the suburbs of Madīnah would come up to take part in and receive their share when they would see easy victories being attained, and that he should tell them plainly: "You will never be allowed to take part in these, because only those who had gone forth to offer their lives in the conflict at Hudaibiyah regardless of every danger would be entitled to them."

28. "Allah's decree" implies the decree that only those people would be allowed to accompany the Holy Prophet in the expedition to Khaiber, who had taken part in the expedition to Hudaibiyah and sworn the pledge there for Allah has reserved the spoils of Khaiber exclusively for them, as has been stated clearly in verse 18 below.

29. The words "Allah has already said this before" caused the people the misunderstanding that this refers to some other command bearing upon the same subject that might have been sent down before this verse, and since no such command is found in this Sūrah before this verse, they started looking for it at other places in the Qur'ān till they found verse 84 of Sūrah At-Taubah, in which this very subject has been dealt with for another occasion. But that verse, in fact, does not apply to this, for it was sent down in connection with the Battle of Tabūk, and its period of revelation is three years after the period of revelation of Sūrah Al-Fat-h. The fact of the matter is that this verse refers to vv. 18-19 of this Sūrah itself, and Allah's already having said this does not mean its having been said before this verse but its having been said to the laggards before this conversation. This conversation with the laggards about which advance instructions are being given to the Holy Prophet was to take place at the time of the expedition to Khaiber, and this whole Sūrah, including vv. 18-19, had been sent down three months earlier on return from Hudaibiyah on the way. A careful study of the context shows that Allah here is giving this instruction to His Messenger: "When after your return at Madīnah the laggards come to you with their excuses, you should give them this reply, and when they express their desire to accompany you in the expedition to Khaiber, you should tell them this."

30. The words *au yuslimūn* in the original can have two meanings and both are implied: (1) "That they should accept Islam" and (2) "that they should submit to the Islamic rule."

31. That is, the one who has a genuine excuse for not joining *Jihād* is not accountable, but if the able-bodied, strong people make excuses for not joining it, they cannot be regarded as sincere with regard to Allah and His Religion, and they cannot be given the opportunity to take advantage of the gains as members of the Muslim community, but when time comes for making sacrifices for Islam, they should lag behind and seek the safety of their lives and properties."

Here, one should know that two kinds of the people have been exempted from *Jihād* duty by the *Shari'ah*: (1) Those who are not physically fit for *Jihād*, e.g. young boys, women, the insane, the blind and such patients as cannot perform military duties, and such disabled people as cannot take part in war; and (2) those for whom it may be difficult to join *Jihād* for other sound reasons, e.g. the slaves, or those persons who may be ready for *Jihād* but

may not afford weapons of war and other necessary equipment, or such debtors who may have to pay their debts at the earliest opportunity and the creditors may not be willing to allow them more time, or such people whose parents (or a parent) might be alive, who stand in need of the children's help. In this regard, it should also be known that the children should not join *Jihād* without the permission of their parents if they are Muslims, but if they are non-Muslims it is not permissible for a person to stay away from *Jihād* in case they refuse permission.

32. Here again the pledge taken from the Companions at Hudaibiyah has been mentioned. This is called *Bai'at Ridwān*, for Allah in this verse has given the good news that He became well pleased with those who on this dangerous occasion did not show the least hesitation in offering their lives for the cause of Islam and gave an express proof of their being true in their faith by taking the pledge on the hand of the Holy Prophet. The Muslims at this time were equipped only with a sword each, numbered only 1,400, were unprepared for warfare, but were donning the pilgrim garments, were 250 miles away from their military headquarters (Madīnah), while the enemy's stronghold (Makkah) wherefrom it could get any kind of help was just 13 miles off. Had these people been lacking in their sincerity for Allah and His Messenger and His Religion in any degree, they would have abandoned the Messenger on this extremely dangerous occasion, and Islam would have been vanquished forever. Apart from their own sincerity there was no external pressure under which they might have been compelled to take the pledge. Their becoming ready at that time to fight in the cause of Allah's Religion, regardless of the dangers, is a clear proof that they were true and sincere in their Faith and loyal to the cause of Allah and His Messenger in the highest degree. That is why Allah honoured them with this certificate of His good pleasure. Now if some one becomes angry with them after they have been honoured with this certificate of Allah's good pleasure, or slanders and vilifies them, his enmity is with Allah, not with them. Those who say that at that time when Allah honoured them with this certificate of His good pleasure, they were sincere, but afterwards they became disloyal to Allah and His Messenger, perhaps harbour a mistrust about Allah that while sending down this verse He was unaware of their future; therefore, He awarded them this warrant only in view of their state at that time, and probably due to the same unawareness inscribed

this verse in His Holy Book as well so that afterwards also, when those people have turned disloyal, the world should continue reading this verse about them and praising the knowledge of the unseen of that Allah Who, God forbid, had granted those faithless and disloyal people the warrant of His good pleasure.

About the Tree under which this pledge was taken Ibn 'Umar's slave Ḥaḍrat Nāfi's tradition has generally spread saying that the people had started visiting it and offering Prayers by it, so that when Ḥaḍrat 'Umar came to know of it, he rebuked and warned the people and ordered it to be cut down. (*Ṭabaqāt Ibn Sa'd*, vol. II, p. 100). But there are several other traditions which contradict it. A tradition from Ḥaḍrat Nāfi himself has been reported in *Ṭabaqāt* of Ibn Sa'd to the effect that many years after the *Bai'at Riḍwān* the Companions looked for the Tree but they could not recognize it and differed as to which tree it was. (p. 105). The second tradition has been reported in Bukhārī, Muslim, and *Ṭabaqāt* on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Sa'id bin al-Musayyab. He says that his father was one of those who had participated in the *Bai'at Riḍwān*. He told him that when they had gone for '*Umrah al-Qaḍā'*' the following year, they had forgotten the Tree, and they could not locate it even after looking for it. The third tradition is from Ibn Jarīr. He says that when Ḥaḍrat 'Umar during his caliphate passed by Ḥudaibiyah, he enquired about the Tree under which the pledge had been sworn. Someone pointed to one tree and another one to another tree. At this Ḥaḍrat 'Umar told the people to forget it as there was no real need to bother about it.

33. Here, *sakīnat* means that state of the heart on whose strength a man throws himself into dangers with complete calm and peace of mind for the sake of a great objective and resolves without fear and consternation to undertake it regardless of the consequences.

34. The reference is to the conquest of Khaiber and its rich spoils and this verse expressly points out that Allah had reserved this reward only for those people who had taken part in the *Bai'at Riḍwān*; apart from them no one else was entitled to take part in the victory and have a share in the spoils. That is why when the Holy Prophet marched out to attack Khaiber in Ṣafar, A.H. 7, he took only those people with him. No doubt afterwards he gave some of the spoils of Khaiber to those emigrants also who returned from Ḥabash and to some Companions from the Dūs and Ash'ar tribes
(Contd. on page 70)

فَتُصِيبُكُمْ مِنْهُمْ مَعْرَةٌ ۖ بَغِيرَ عَلِيمٍ لِيُدْخِلَ اللَّهُ فِي رَحْمَتِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۗ لَوْ
 تَزَيَّلُوا لَعَذَّبْنَا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ۗ إِذْ جَعَلَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
 فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْحَبِيَّةَ حَبِيَّةَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ ۖ وَ
 عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۖ وَالزَّمَهُمْ كَلِمَةَ التَّقْوَىٰ وَكَانُوا أَحَقَّ بِهَا وَأَهْلَهَا ۗ وَكَانَ
 اللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا ۗ لَقَدْ صَدَقَ اللَّهُ رَسُولَهُ الرُّمِيَا بِالْحَقِّ ۗ لَتَدْخُلَنَّ
 السَّجِدَ الْحَرَامَ إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ إِمِينِينَ ۗ مُخَلِّقِينَ رُءُوسَكُمْ وَمُقَصِّرِينَ ۗ
 لَا تَخَافُونَ ۗ فَعَلِمَ مَا لَمْ تَعْلَمُوا فَجَعَلَ مِنْ دُونِ ذَلِكَ فَتْحًا قَرِيبًا ۗ
 هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ ۗ
 وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا ۗ مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ۗ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ أَشِدَّاءُ عَلَى
 الْكُفَّارِ رُحَمَاءُ بَيْنَهُمْ تَرَاهُمْ رُكْعًا سُجَّدًا يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِنَ اللَّهِ
 وَرِضْوَانًا سِيمَاهُمْ فِي وُجُوهِهِمْ مِنْ أَثَرِ السُّجُودِ ۗ ذَلِكَ مَثَلُهُمْ فِي
 التَّوْرَةِ ۗ وَمَثَلُهُمْ فِي الْإِنْجِيلِ ۗ كَزَرْعٍ أَخْرَجَ شَطْطَهُ فَازْرَأَهُ
 فَاسْتَغْلَظَ فَاسْتَوَىٰ عَلَىٰ سُوقِهِ يُعْجِبُ الزُّرَّاعَ لِيغِيظَ بِهِمُ
 الْكُفَّارَ ۗ وَعَدَّ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنْهُمْ مَغْفِرَةً ۗ وَ
 أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ۗ

They are the ones who disbelieved and debarred you from the *Masjid al-Harām* and hindered the sacrificial animals from reaching their place of sacrifice.⁴³ Had there not been certain believing men and women (in Makkah) whom you do not know and the fear that you would trample them under foot without knowing it and incur blame on that account, (the fighting would not have been allowed to stop. It was stopped), so that Allah may admit into His mercy whom He will. Had the believers stood apart (from the people of Makkah). We would have severely punished the disbelievers among them.⁴⁴ (That is why) when the disbelievers set in their hearts the arrogance of paganism,⁴⁵ Allah sent down His peace upon His Messenger and the believers,⁴⁶ and obliged the believers to adhere to the word of piety, for they were most worthy and deserving of it. Allah has knowledge of everything.

Indeed, Allah had shown His Messenger a true vision, which was precisely according to the truth:⁴⁷ "You shall surely enter the *Masjid al-Harām*, if Allah so wills,⁴⁸ in full security;⁴⁹ you will have your heads shaved, your hair cut,⁵⁰ and you will have nothing to fear. He knew what you did not know. Therefore, He granted you this near victory before the fulfilment of the vision".

It is Allah Who has sent His Messenger with the Guidance and the Religion of Truth that He may make it prevail over all religion, and Allah is sufficient as a Witness in this regard.⁵¹ Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, and those who are with him are hard⁵² on the disbelievers and merciful among themselves.⁵³ When you see them you will find them bowing down and falling prostrate and craving for Allah's bounty and His goodwill. They have the marks of prostrations on their faces by which they are distinguished⁵⁴ from others. This is

their description in the Torah;⁵⁵ and in the Gospel they have been likened⁵⁶ to a crop which put out its shoot, then strengthened it, then swelled and then stood on its own stem, filling the sowers with delight and the disbelievers with jealousy of them. Allah has promised those of them, who have believed and done good works, forgiveness and a great reward.⁵⁷

(Contd. from page 67)

as well, but this was given either from *Khums* (one-fifth of the spoils of war given into the public treasury), or with the approval of the Companions who had taken the pledge of *Ridwān*; no one else was given any share of it.

35. This refers to the other victories that the Muslim achieved successively after Khaiber.

36. This implies the treaty of Hudaibiyah which has been described as "a manifest victory" in the beginning of the Sūrah.

37. That is, "He restrained the disbelieving Quraish from attacking you at Hudaibiyah although from all appearances they were in a much better position and yours was a much weaker side militarily." Furthermore, it also implies that no enemy power could muster courage to attack Madīnah in those days, whereas after the departure of 1400 soldiers the Madīnah front had become very weak, and the Jews, the polytheists and hypocrites could take advantage of the situation.

38. Sign of this as to how Allah helps the one who remains steadfast on obedience to Allah and His Messenger and comes out to support and defend the Truth and righteousness with his trust and faith in Allah.

39. "To the right way": "To the way of greater insight and faith so that you may remain steadfast on obedience to Allah and His Messenger in the future and may go on marching on the way of truth with trust in Allah, and may learn this lesson from these experiences that the believer should take practical steps to do whatever is demanded by Allah's Religion with his trust in Him, and should not overestimate either his own strength or the strength of the unbelievers."

40. Most probably this is a reference to the Conquest of Makkah. The same is the opinion of Qatādah and Ibn Jarīr. It seems to mean this: "Though Makkah has not yet fallen to you,

Allah has encircled it, and as a result of this victory at Hudaibiyah, it will also fall to you."

41. That is, "Allah did not prevent fighting at Hudaibiyah because there was a possibility of your being defeated there, but there were other reasons for it, which are being stated in the following verses. Had that factor not been there and Allah had allowed the war to take place, the disbelievers would surely have been routed and Makkah would have fallen to you at that very time."

42. Here, "the Way of Allah" means: Allah disgraces the disbelievers who fight His Messenger and helps His own Messenger.

43. That is, "Allah was seeing the sincerity and the selfless devotion with which you had become ready to lay down your lives in the cause of the true Faith and were obeying the Prophet without any question. Allah was also seeing that the disbelievers were being unfair and high-handed. The demand of this situation was that they should have been punished there and then through you, but in spite of that, Allah restrained your hands from them and their hands from you."

44. This was the reason why Allah did not allow fighting to take place at Hudaibiyah. This has two aspects: (1) That at that time there were quite a number of the Muslim men and women living in Makkah, who were either hiding their faith, or were being persecuted because of their faith as they had no means to emigrate. Had there been fighting and the Muslims had pushed back the disbelievers and entered Makkah, these Muslims also would have been killed in ignorance along with the disbelievers. This would not only have grieved the Muslims but the Arab polytheists also would have got an opportunity to say that the Muslims did not even spare their own brethren in faith during wartime. Therefore, Allah took pity on the helpless Muslims and averted the war in order to save the Companions from grief and infamy. The other aspect of the expedience was that Allah did not will that Makkah should fall to the Muslims as a result of the defeat of the Quraish after a bloody clash but He willed that they should be encircled from all sides so that within two years or so they should become absolutely helpless and subdued without offering any resistance, and then the whole tribe should accept Islam and enter Allah's mercy as it actually happened on the Conquest of Makkah.

Here the juristic dispute has arisen that if during a war between the Muslims and the disbelievers, the disbelievers should bring out some Muslim men and women, children and old men, in their

possession and put them in the forefront as a shield for themselves, or if there is some Muslim population also in the non-Muslim city under attack by the Muslim forces, or if in a warship of the disbelievers, which is within our gun-fire, the disbelievers have taken some Muslims also on board, can the Muslim army open fire on it? In answer to it the rulings given by different jurists are as follows:

Imām Mālik says that in such a case fire should not be opened, and for this he cites this very verse as an argument. He contends that Allah prevented the war at Hudaibiyah only in order to save the Muslims. (Ibn al-'Arabi, *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*). But this in fact is a weak argument. There is no word in the verse which may support the view that launching an attack on the enemy in this case is unlawful and forbidden. At the most what one can say on the basis of this verse is that the launching of an attack in such a case should be avoided in order to save the Muslims, provided that it does not put the disbelievers in an advantageous position against the Muslims militarily, or does not diminish the Muslims' chances of gaining an upper hand in the conflict.

Imām Abū Hanīfah, Imām Abū Yūsuf, Imām Zufar and Imām Muḥammad say that it is lawful to open fire in such a case; so much so that even if the disbelievers use the children of the Muslims as a shield by putting them in the forefront, there is no harm in shooting at them, and it is not obligatory for the Muslims to expiate and pay any blood-money for the Muslims thus killed. (Al-Jaṣṣāṣ, *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*; Imām Muḥammad, *Kitāb as-Siyar*).

Imām Sufyān Thaurī also in this case regards opening of the fire as lawful, but he says that although the Muslims will not pay the blood-money of the Muslims thus killed, it is obligatory for them to expiate the sin. (Al-Jaṣṣāṣ, *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*).

Imām Auzā'ī and Laith bin Sa'd say that if the disbelievers use the Muslims as a shield, fire should not be opened on them. Likewise, if it is known that in their warship our own prisoners also are on board, it should not be sunk. But if we attack a city of theirs and we know that there are Muslims also in the city, it is lawful to open fire on the city, for it is not certain that our shells will only hit the Muslims, and if a Muslim becomes a victim of this shelling, it will not be wilful murder of a Muslim but an inadvertent accident. (Al-Jaṣṣāṣ, *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*).

Imām Shāfe'ī holds the view that in such a case if it is not inevitable to open fire it is better to try to save the Muslims from

destruction ; although it is not unlawful to open fire in this case, it is undesirable. But if it is really necessary and it is feared that in case fire is not opened it will put the disbelievers in a better position militarily against the Muslims, it is lawful to resort to shelling, but even then every effort should be made to save the Muslims as far as possible. Furthermore, Imām Shāfe'ī also says that if during a conflict the disbelievers put a Muslim in front as a shield and a Muslim kills him, there can be two possible alternatives : either the killer knew that the murdered person was a Muslim, or he did not know that he was a Muslim. In the first case, he will be under obligation to pay compensation for manslaughter as well as do expiation ; in the second case he will only do expiation. (*Mughni al-Muhtāj*).

45. The words *hamiyyat al-jāhiliyyah* mean that a man should wilfully do something unworthy and improper only for the sake of his honour and prestige. The disbelievers of Makkah themselves acknowledged and admitted that everybody had a right to visit the Ka'bah for performing Hajj and 'Umrah, and that they had no right to stop anyone from this duty. This was an ancient admitted law of Arabia. But in spite of knowing that they were absolutely in the wrong and the Muslims in the right, they prevented the Muslims from performing 'Umrah only for the sake of their prestige. The righteous even among the polytheists also were saying that preventing the people who had come in the pilgrim garbs along with sacrificial camels from performing pilgrimage was an improper act. Yet the Quraish leaders persisted in their resistance only under the idea that if Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) entered Makkah along with a large number of his followers, it would mean loss of prestige for them among the Arabs. This was their arrogance.

46. Here, *sakīnat* means the patience and dignity with which the Holy Prophet and the Muslims resisted the disbelievers' rancour and spirit of paganism. They did not get provoked at their stubborn and insolent behaviour and did not do anything which might have violated the spirit of Truth and righteousness, or which might have further complicated the situation instead of settling it amicably.

47. This is the answer to the question that was constantly agitating the minds of the Muslims. They said, "The Holy Prophet had seen in his vision that he had entered the *Masjid al-Ḥarām* and moved round the Ka'bah in worship. Then how is it that they were

returning without performing 'Umrah?' In answer to this, although the Holy Prophet had told them that in his vision he had not seen that they would perform the 'Umrah that very year, still there remained some suspicion in the hearts. Therefore, Allah Himself explained that it was He Who had shown the vision and it was a true vision and it would certainly be fulfilled.

48. Here, about the words *inshā'-Allah* (if Allah so wills), which Allah Himself has used with His promise, one can raise the objection that when Allah Himself is making this promise, what is the meaning of making it conditional upon His own willing it? The answer is: Here the words *inshā'-Allah* have not been used in the sense that if Allah does not will, He will not fulfil His promise, but in fact these relate to the background in which this promise was made. The presumption on the basis of which the disbelievers of Makkah had played the drama of preventing the Muslims from 'Umrah was that only he whom they would allow would perform 'Umrah, and would perform it only when they would allow it. At this Allah has said: "This depends on Our, not on their, will. The reason why 'Umrah has not been performed this year is not because the disbelievers of Makkah did not allow it to be performed, but because We did not will it to be performed; in the future 'Umrah will be performed if We will, no matter whether the disbelievers allow it or disallow it." Besides, these words also contain the meaning that the Muslims too, will perform 'Umrah not by their own power, but because We would will that they should perform it; otherwise if We do not will, they do not possess any power to perform it by themselves."

49. This promise was fulfilled in the following year in Dhil-Qa'dah A.H. 7. This 'Umrah is well known in history as '*Umrāh al-Qadā'*'.

50. The words clearly point out that it is not obligatory to get the head shaved in 'Umrah and Hajj, but it is also right to get the hair cut short. However, it is better to have the head shaved, for Allah has mentioned it first and then mentioned having the hair cut short.

51. The reason why this thing has been mentioned here is that when at Hudaibiyah the peace treaty was going to be written down, the disbelievers had objected to the use of the words *Rasūl-Allah* (Messenger of Allah) with the name of the Holy Prophet, and on their insistence the Holy Prophet himself had wiped off these words

from the document. At this Allah says: "Our Messenger's being a Messenger is a reality which remains unaffected whether someone believes in it or not. If some people do not believe in it, they may not, for "Allah is enough for a witness" over it. Their denial will not change the reality, but the Guidance and the true Faith which this Messenger has brought from Us, shall prevail over all religion, no matter how hard the deniers try to obstruct its progress."

"All religion" implies all those ways of life which include the nature of *dīn* (religion). We have explained it fully in E.N. 3 of Sūrah Az-Zumar and E.N. 20 of Sūrah Ash-Shūrā above. Here what Allah has stated in clear words is: The purpose of the Holy Prophet's appointment as a Prophet was not merely to preach this Religion but to make it prevail over all others. In other words, he did not bring this Religion so that it might survive in a limited compartment of life which is allowed it by the dominant religion, while the rest of the spheres of life, by and large, should remain under the relentless control of some false religion. But he had brought it so that it should be the dominant Religion of life and any other religion should survive, if at all it survives, only within the limits in which it allows it to survive. (For further explanation, see E.N. 48 of Sūrah Az-Zumar).

52. "The Companions (of the Holy Prophet) are hard on the disbelievers": they are not wax that the disbelievers may mould them as they like; they can neither be cowed nor purchased by any inducement. The disbelievers have no power to turn them away from the great objective for the sake of which they have joined and followed the Holy Prophet even at the cost of their lives."

53. That is, "Whatever their hardness and severity, it is only for the disbelievers, not for the believers. As regards the believers they are soft, merciful, affectionate, sympathetic and compassionate. Their unity of aim and object has produced in them love and harmony and complete accord among themselves."

54. This does not imply the mark that appears on the forehead of some people on account of prostrations, but it implies the marks and traces of the fear of God, munificence, nobility and goodness of manner that naturally appears on the face of a person on account of bowing down before God. Man's face is an open book on the pages of which different states of a man's self can be seen easily. A vain and arrogant person's face is different from the face of a humble,

modest and unassuming person ; an immoral person's face is clearly distinguished from the face of a righteous and well-mannered person; and there is a marked difference between the facial appearance of a wicked man and of a noble and virtuous man. What Allah means to say is : "The Companions of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) are such that one can recognize them on first sight to be the best of mankind, because their faces shine forth with the light of God-worship and God-consciousness." This is the same thing about which Imām Mālik has said that when the armies of the Companions entered Syria, the Syrian Christians remarked : "These people possess the very same qualities and characteristics of the disciples of the Prophet Jesus Christ."

55. The allusion probably is to Deuteronomy, 33 : 2-3, in which the Holy Prophet's advent has been foretold and the word "saints" has been used for his Companions. Apart from this, if some other quality of the Companions has been mentioned in the Torah, it is not found in the existing, corrupted Torah.

56. This parable is found in a sermon of the Prophet Jesus that has been reported in the New Testament, thus :

"And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground : And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself ; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come. And he said, Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God ? or with what comparison shall we compare it ? *It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth : But when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches ; so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it.*"

The last portion of this sermon is also found in Matthew, 13 : 31-32.

57. A section of the Muslims translates this verse, thus : "Allah has promised forgiveness and a great reward to those from among these people who have believed and done good works." Thus, they invent a way to vilify and slander the Companions, and claim that according to this verse many people among the Companions were not believers and righteous. But this commentary goes against vv. 4, 5, 18 and 26 of this very Sūrah, and does not even

accord with the initial sentences of this verse itself. In vv. 4-5, Allah has made mention of sending down *sakinat* (tranquillity) and of effecting increase in the Faith of all those Companions who were present with the Holy Prophet at Hudaibiyah, and given them without any exception the good news of admission into Paradise. In verse 18, Allah has expressed His good pleasure for all those who took the pledge to the Holy Prophet under the Tree, and in this also there is no exception. In verse 26 also Allah has used the word *mu'minin* (believers) for all the Companions, has made mention of sending down His *sakinat* to them, and obliged them to be righteous and pious, for they were most worthy and deserving of all mankind. Here also it was not said that the news was being given only about those who were believers among them. Then in the initial sentences also of this verse itself the characteristics mentioned are of all those people who were with the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings). The words are to the effect that all the people who are with him have this and this quality and characteristic. After this, suddenly in the last sentence there could be no excuse to say that some of them were the believers and others were not.

XLIX

AL-HUJURĀT الْحُجُرَات

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

XLIX

AL-HUJURĀT الْحُجُرَات

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name from verse 4 in which the word *hujurāt* has occurred.

Period of Revelation

Traditions show and the subject-matter of the Sūrah also supports the same that this Sūrah is a collection of the commandments and instructions sent down on different occasions, which have been put together because of the relevancy of the theme. Moreover, the traditions also show that most of these commandments

were sent down during the final stage of the Holy Prophet's life at Madīnah. For instance, about verse 4 the commentators state that it was sent down concerning the Banī Tamīm whose deputation had arrived in Madīnah and started calling out to the Holy Prophet from outside the apartments (*hujurāt*) of his wives, and according to all biographical books on the Holy Prophet's life this deputation had visited Madīnah in A.H. 9. Likewise, about verse 6 a large number of the traditions of *Hadīth* confirm that it was sent down concerning Walīd bin 'Uqbah whom the Holy Prophet had sent to collect the *zakāt* from the Banī al-Muṣṭaliq, and it is well known that Walīd bin 'Uqbah had become a Muslim on the conquest of Makkah.

Subject-Matter and Topics

The subject-matter of this Sūrah is to teach the Muslims the manners worthy of true believers.

In the first five verses they have been taught the manners they should observe with regard to Allah and His Messenger.

Then, they have been given the instruction that it is not right to believe in every news blindly and to act according to it, without due thought. If information is received about a person, a group or a community, it should be seen carefully whether the means of the information is reliable or not. If the means is not reliable, it should be tested and examined to see whether the news is authentic or not before taking any action on it.

Then, it has been told what attitude should the other Muslims adopt in case two groups of the Muslims fall to mutual fighting.

Then the Muslims have been exhorted to safeguard against the evils that corrupt collective life and spoil mutual relationships. Mocking and taunting each other,

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calling others by nicknames, creating suspicions, prying into other people's affairs and backbiting are the evils which are not only sins in themselves but they also corrupt society. Allah has mentioned all these evils separately and forbidden them as unlawful.

After this, the national and racial distinctions that cause universal corruption in the world have been condemned. Nations' and tribes' and families' pride of ancestry and their looking down upon others as inferior to themselves and their pulling down others only for the sake of establishing their own superiority is an important factor that has filled the world with injustices and tyranny. Allah in a brief verse has cut at the root of this evil by stating that all men are descendants of the same one pair and their division into tribes and communities is only for the sake of recognition, not for boasting and pride, and there is no lawful basis of one man's superiority over the other except on the basis of moral excellence.

In conclusion, the people have been told that the real thing is not the verbal profession of the Faith but to believe in Allah and His Messenger truly, to obey them in practical life and to exert sincerely with one's self and wealth in the cause of Allah. True believers are only those who adopt this attitude. As for those who profess Islam merely orally without affirmation by the heart and then adopt an attitude as if they had done someone a favour by accepting Islam, may be counted among the Muslims in the world, may even be treated as Muslims in society, but they cannot be counted as believers in the sight of Allah.

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يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَقَدِّمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ
 اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَرْفَعُوا أَصْوَاتَكُمْ فَوْقَ صَوْتِ

XLIX

AL-HUJURĀT

الْحُجُرَات

Verses : 18

Revealed at Al-Madīnah

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

O you who have believed, do not go in advance of Allah and His Messenger,¹ and fear Allah : Allah is All-Hearing, All-knowing.²

O you have believed, do not raise your voices above the Prophet's voice, nor speak to him loud as you speak

2-3

النَّبِيِّ وَلَا تَجْهَرُوا لَهُ بِالْقَوْلِ كَجَهْرِ بَعْضِكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ أَنْ تَحْبَطَ أَعْمَالُكُمْ
وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَشْعُرُونَ ﴿١٠﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَغُضُّونَ أَصْوَاتَهُمْ عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُولَئِكَ
الَّذِينَ امْتَحَنَ اللَّهُ قُلُوبَهُمْ لِلتَّقْوَى لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ ﴿١١﴾ وَأَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٢﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ
يُنَادُونَكَ مِنْ وَرَاءِ الْحُجُرَاتِ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٣﴾ وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ صَبَرُوا
حَتَّى تَخْرُجَ إِلَيْهِمْ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ ﴿١٤﴾ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٥﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ
آمَنُوا إِنْ جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَأٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوا أَنْ تُصِيبُوا قَوْمًا بِجَهَالَةٍ فَتُصِحُّوا عَلَى
مَا فَعَلْتُمْ نَادِمِينَ ﴿١٦﴾ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ فِيكُمْ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ لَوْ يُطِيعُكُمْ فِي كَثِيرٍ مِنَ
الْأَمْرِ لَعَنِتُّمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ حَبَّبَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْإِيمَانَ وَزَيَّنَهُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَكَرَّهَ
إِلَيْكُمُ الْكُفْرَ وَالْفُسُوقَ وَالْعِصْيَانَ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الرَّشِدُونَ ﴿١٧﴾ فَضَلَّ مِنْ اللَّهِ
وَنِعْمَةً ﴿١٨﴾ وَاللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ حَكِيمٌ ﴿١٩﴾ وَإِنْ طَائِفَتَيْنِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ اقْتَتَلُوا
فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا فَإِنْ بَغَتْ إِحْدَاهُمَا عَلَى الْأُخْرَى فَقَاتِلُوا الَّتِي تَبْغِي حَتَّى
تَفِيءَ إِلَى أَمْرِ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ فَاءَتْ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا بِالْعَدْلِ وَأَقْسِطُوا ﴿٢٠﴾ إِنَّ
اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ ﴿٢١﴾ إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ وَ
اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَسْخَرْ قَوْمٌ مِنْ قَوْمٍ
عَنَى أَنْ يَكُونُوا خَيْرًا مِنْهُمْ وَلَا نِسَاءٌ مِنْ نِسَاءٍ عَنَى أَنْ يَكُنَّ خَيْرًا
مِنْهُنَّ وَلَا تَلْمِزُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَلَا تَنَابَزُوا بِاللِّقَابِ بِئْسَ الإِسْمُ الْفُسُوقُ
بَعْدَ الإِيمَانِ وَمَنْ لَمْ يَتُبْ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا وَلَا يَغْتَبَ
بَعْضُكُمْ بَعْضًا أَيُحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَنْ يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ وَاتَّقُوا

loud to one another³ lest all your works be rendered void, while you do not know.⁴ Those who lower their voices in the presence of the Messenger of God, are, in fact, those whose hearts Allah has disposed to piety.⁵ For them is forgiveness and a great reward!

O Prophet, those who call out to you from outside the apartments, most of them have no sense. If only they had had patience until you came out to them, it would be better for them.⁶ Allah is All-Forgiving, All-Merciful.⁷ 4-5

O you who have believed, if a wicked person brings you some news, inquire into it carefully lest you should harm others unwittingly and then regret what you have done.⁸ Know it well that the Messenger of Allah is among you. If he were to obey you in most affairs, you would certainly be in trouble.⁹ But Allah has endeared the Faith to you and made it seem fair in your hearts and made disbelief, wrongdoing and disobedience abhorrent to you. Such are those who are rightly guided through Allah's grace¹⁰ and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.¹¹ 6-8

And if two parties of the believers fall to mutual fighting,¹² make peace between them.¹³ Then if either of them transgresses against the other, fight the one that has transgressed¹⁴ till it returns to Allah's Command.¹⁵ Then if it returns, make peace between them with justice,¹⁶ and be just because Allah loves those who do justice.¹⁷ The believers are brothers of one another; so set the relations right between your brothers,¹⁸ and fear Allah; it is expected that you will be shown mercy. 9-10

O you¹⁹ who have believed, neither should men mock other men, it may be that these are better than they; nor should women mock other women, it may be that these are better than they.²⁰ Do not taunt one another among yourselves,²¹ nor call one another by nicknames.²² It is an evil thing to be called by a bad name after faith.²³ Those who fail to avoid this are wrongdoers. 11

O you who have believed, avoid much suspicion, for 12

some suspicions are sins.²⁴ Do not spy,²⁵ nor should any of you backbite the other.²⁶ Is there any among you who would like to eat the flesh of his dead brother?²⁷ Nay, you yourselves abhor it. Fear Allah, for Allah is Acceptor of repentance and All-Merciful.

1. This is the foremost and basic demand of the Faith. If the person who regards Allah as his Lord and accepts Allah's Messenger as his guide and leader, is true in his belief, he can never have the attitude that he should give his own opinion and view precedence over the decision of Allah and His Messenger, or should adopt an independent opinion in the matters, and pass his own judgements without caring to find out whether Allah and His Messenger have given any guidance in those matters or not, and if they have given it, what it is. That is why it has been said: "O believers, do not go 'in advance' of Allah and His Messenger." That is, "Do not go ahead of them, but follow behind: Do not precede them, but be subordinate to them." This Command is, in its application and effect, a step further to verse 36 of Al-Aḥzāb. There it was said: "It does not behove a believing man and a believing woman that when Allah and His Messenger have given their decision in a matter, they should exercise an option in that matter of theirs", and here it is said that the believers should not decide their matters themselves by their own initiative, but should look for guidance in Allah's Book and His Prophet's Sunnah concerning those matters.

This Command is not confined only to individual matters of the Muslims but it also applies to their collective affairs. This is in fact the fundamental article of the Islamic Law, which can neither be set aside or ignored by a Muslim government, nor by a Muslim court, nor by a parliament. A tradition has been reported in Musnad Aḥmad, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhī and Ibn Mājah, with authentic chains of transmitters, saying that when the Holy Prophet was sending Ḥaḍrat Mu'ādh bin Jabal to the Yaman as a judge, he asked him: "By what will you decide the matters?" He submitted: "By the Book of Allah." The Holy Prophet said: "If you do not find the Command concerning a matter in the Book of Allah, what will you turn to?" He replied: "To the Sunnah of Allah's Messenger." The Holy Prophet asked: "If this also fails you?" He replied: "Then I shall exert and find out a solution by myself." Thereupon the Holy Prophet placed his hand on Ḥaḍrat Mu'ādh's chest and said: "Thank God Who has helped His Messenger's

deputy to adopt the way that is approved by His Messenger." This giving of precedence to the Book of Allah and the *Sunnah* of His Messenger over one's own exercise to find out a solution and to turn to them first to obtain guidance is the thing that marks the distinction between a Muslim judge and a non-Muslim judge. Likewise, in the matter of legislation also there is absolute consensus that the first and foremost source of the law is the Divine Book and after it the *Sunnah* of the Messenger of Allah. Even the consensus of the entire *Ummah* cannot go against or remain independent of them, not to speak of the individual Muslims reasoning and endeavour to interpret the law.

2. That is, "If ever you adopted an attitude of independence as against Allah and His Messenger, or gave priority to your own opinion and view over their Command, you should know that you have to deal with that God Who is hearing whatever you utter and is even aware of your secret intentions."

3. This is the etiquette that was taught to the people who sat among the audience of the Holy Prophet or came to visit him. Its intention was that the believers should treat the Holy Prophet with the highest respect and reverence when visiting him and talking to him. Nobody should raise his voice louder than his : the people should not be unmindful of the fact that they are addressing the Messenger of Allah, and not a common man, or a person of equal rank ; therefore, there should be a marked difference between one's tone of conversation with the common people and one's tone of conversation with the Holy Prophet, and no one should talk to him in a voice louder than his.

Although this etiquette was taught for sitting in the Holy Prophet's assembly and its addressees were the people who were living in his time, the people of the later ages also should observe the same respect and reverence on the occasion when the Holy Prophet's name is mentioned, or a command of his is stated, or his sayings are explained. Besides, this verse also points out what attitude the people should adopt when talking to persons of a higher rank and status than themselves. A person's talking before the men of a higher rank in a way as he talks before his friends or the common men, is in fact a sign that he has no respect for them in his heart, and he does not recognize any difference between them and the common people.

4. This shows what high position the person of the Holy Prophet occupies in Islam. No one beside the Holy Prophet,

whatever his rank and status, has a position that unmannerly behaviour towards him should deserve in the sight of Allah the same punishment which is, in fact, the punishment for disbelief. In respect of ordinary people it is at the most a sort of rudeness, an un-civilized conduct, but in respect of the Holy Prophet a little lack of reverence is such a grave sin as can destroy all the services of one's lifetime. For the reverence of the Holy Prophet is indeed reverence of that God Who has sent him as His Messenger and lack of reverence for him amounts to lack of reverence to God Himself.

5. That is, "Only those people give due reverence to the Messenger of Allah, who have passed successfully through the tests and trials set by Allah and proved by their steadfastness that their hearts indeed possess *taqvā* (piety)." From this it follows automatically that the heart which is devoid of reverence for the Holy Prophet is, in fact, devoid of *taqvā*, and a person's raising his voice louder than the Holy Prophet's is not only an uncivilized act outwardly but also a sign of the absence of *taqvā* in his heart.

6. The people who in the blessed time of the Holy Prophet had received training in Islamic etiquette and manners under the Holy Prophet himself had a full regard for his person. They fully realized how busy he remained in performing the mission entrusted to him by Allah; they also understood full well that during those tiresome activities he must necessarily have some time for rest, time for his important occupations and also time for attending to his domestic affairs. Therefore, they would come to visit him only at the time when he was available outside his house, and if ever they did not find him outside his living quarters among his Companions, they would sit and await his emergence and would avoid giving him the trouble of coming out of his house unless there was a special need for it. But many a time it so happened that the people from far flung areas, who had had no opportunity to receive training in good manners, would come to visit the Holy Prophet with the idea that the one who invited others to Allah and was working for the reformation of the people had no right to have rest at any time, and they had the right to visit and see him any time they pleased in the day or night and it was his duty that whenever they happened to arrive he should be ready to receive them. Some of these people who came to see the Holy Prophet from different parts of Arabia, were so uncouth and impolite that they would not take the trouble to inform him of their arrival through some attendant, but would

start shouting from outside the apartments of his wives to call him out. Several such incidents have been reported by the Companions in the *Hadith*. This sort of behaviour troubled him much, but he was tolerant on account of his natural clemency. At last, Allah had to intervene, Who reproved the people for their uncivilized behaviour and gave this instruction: whenever they came to see the Holy Prophet and did not find him, they should wait for him patiently until he came out to them himself, instead of shouting to call him out, from the house.

7. This is, "Whatever had happened until then will be overlooked and forgiven by Allah and He will not hold those people accountable for the trouble they had been causing to His Messenger on account of His mercy and kindness, but they should not repeat such behaviour in the future.

8. Most of the commentators have expressed the view that this verse was sent down concerning Walid bin 'Uqbah bin Abi Mu'ayt. Its background is this: When the tribe of the Banī al-Muṣṭaliq embraced Islam, the Holy Prophet sent Walid bin 'Uqbah to collect the *zakāt* from them. When he arrived in their territory, he became scared due to some reason and without visiting the people of the tribe returned to Madinah and complained to the Holy Prophet that they had refused to pay the *zakāt* and had even wanted to kill him. On hearing this the Holy Prophet became very angry and he made up his mind to despatch a contingent to punish those people. According to some traditions he had despatched the contingent, and according to others, he was about to despatch it. In any case all agree that in the meantime the chief of the Banī al-Muṣṭaliq, Hārith bin Dirār (father of Juwariyah, wife of the Holy Prophet), arrived at the head of a deputation, and submitted: "By God, we did not at all see Walid; therefore, there could be no question of refusing to pay the *zakāt* and wanting to kill him. We are steadfast to the Faith and have no intention to withhold the *zakāt*." At this, this verse was sent down. With a little variation in wording this incident has been related by Imām Aḥmad, Ibn Abi Hātim, Ṭabarānī, and Ibn Jarīr, on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, Hārith bin Dirār, Mujāhid, Qatādah, 'Abdur Reḥmān bin Abi Lailā, Yazīd bin Rūmān, Daḥḥāk and Muqātil bin Ḥayyān. In the tradition reported by Ḥaḍrat Umm Salamah this whole story has been related likewise but there is no reference to the name of Walid.

On this critical occasion when on account of believing in a baseless report a grave blunder was about to be committed, Allah gave the Muslims this guiding principle to be followed on receipt of news : "Whenever you receive important news bearing upon a vital matter, you should not accept it immediately but should first examine the man who has brought it. If he is an evil man whose report may not be authentic normally, you should inquire into it carefully to ascertain the truth instead of accepting it and acting on it immediately." From this Divine Command an important legal principle is deduced, the sphere of application of which is very vast. According to it, it is not permissible for a Muslim government to take any action against a person or a group or a nation on the basis of the reports provided by the secret agents whose character might be doubtful. On the basis of this very principle the traditionists introduced the art of critical appraisal in the science of *Hadith* in order to determine the value and worth of the people through whom traditions of the Holy Prophet reached the later generations, and the jurists established this principle in the law of evidence that in a matter from which a *Shari'ah* value can be deduced, or a duty imposed on a person, the evidence of an evil man would be unacceptable. However, all scholars agree that as far as the common worldly matters are concerned it is not necessary to ascertain the truth of every news and the reliability of every informer. For the word used in the verse is *nabā'*, which does not apply to every news but only to the news of consequence. That is why the jurists say that this principle does not apply in the case of ordinary matters. For example, if a person goes to visit somebody and seeks permission to enter the house, and a person comes out and conveys the permission, he can enter the house accordingly no matter whether the one conveying the permission from the master of the house was good or bad. Likewise, the scholars are also agreed that the evidence, as well as the report, of the people whose evil does not relate to lying and immorality, but they are regarded as unrighteous only on account of false beliefs, will also be acceptable. Only the falsehood of their creed cannot be a hindrance to accepting their evidence or reports.

9. This is evident from the context as well as understood by several commentators from this verse that the Holy Prophet was hesitant to take any military action against the Banī al-Muṣṭaliq on the report given by Walid bin 'Uqbah in their case, but some of the people insisted that they should be attacked at

once. At this those people were warned that they should not forget that the Holy Prophet was present among them, who understood them better than they did. Therefore, their thinking that the Holy Prophet should act according to their counsel in important matters was undue boldness. For if he started acting according to what they counselled it would generally lead to blunders for which they themselves would have to suffer.

10. It means this : The whole community of the believers has not committed the error that was committed by those few people who wanted the Holy Prophet to act as they counselled, and the believing community's remaining steadfast on the right path was due to the reason that Allah by His bounty and grace had endeared to them the path of the Faith and made unbelief, wrongdoing and disobedience abhorrent to them. The addressees in the two parts of this verse are two separate groups. The sentence beginning with *lau yuṭī'ukum* is not addressed to the entire class of the Companions but only to those particular Companions who were insisting that the Banī al-Muṣṭaliq should be attacked at once, and the sentence beginning with *wa lākin-nallāha ...* is addressed to the general class of the Companions who would never dare insist on their own opinion and view before the Holy Messenger of Allah, but had full faith in his leadership and remained steadfast on the path of obedience, which is, and should be, the demand of true Faith. From this it cannot be concluded that those who had insisted on their own opinion were devoid of the love of the Faith, but what becomes obvious from this is that they had become forgetful of this demand of the Faith because of which they made the error of insisting on their own opinion in the presence of the Holy Prophet. Therefore, Allah first warned them of their error, then of its evil consequences, and finally stated that the right attitude for a believer was the one that had been adopted by the generality of the Companions.

11. That is, "Allah does not bestow His bounty and favour blindly, but He grants this great blessing to whomever He grants on the basis of wisdom and His knowledge that he is worthy of it."

12. Instead of saying : "When two parties of the believers fight mutually", it has been said : "If two parties of the believers fall to mutual fighting." From these words it by itself follows that mutual fighting is not the character of the Muslims, nor should it be. It is not expected that being the believers they would fight

mutually. However, if such a thing ever happens, the procedure that follows should be adopted. Moreover, the word *tā'ifah* has been used for a group instead of *firqah*; the words *tā'ifah* and *firqah* in Arabic are used for a large group and a small group respectively. This also shows that it is indeed a highly offensive state in the sight of Allah in which large groups of the Muslims cannot be expected to be involved.

13. The recipients of this Command are all those Muslims who may not be a party to either of the groups and for whom it may be possible to try to make peace between them. In other words, Allah does not approve that the other Muslims should just sit and watch the clash when two groups of their own community have fallen to mutual fighting. But whenever such a sad situation arises all the believers should become concerned and should do whatever they can to bring about peace and reconciliation between the parties. They should urge the parties to desist from fighting; they should exhort them to fear God; their influential people should go and talk to the responsible men of the two sides, should find out the causes of the dispute and do whatever they can to effect reconciliation between them.

14. That is, "The Muslims also should not allow the aggressor to continue his aggression and leave the victim alone, or, still worse, join hands with the aggressor. But their duty is that if all their efforts at reconciliation between the parties fail, they should find out as to who is in the right and who is the aggressor. Then they should join hands with the one who is in the right and fight the aggressor. As this fighting has been enjoined by Allah, it is obligatory and comes under *Jihād*; it is not the *fitnah* (mischief) about which the Holy Prophet has said: "It is a situation in which the one standing is better than the one moving, and the one sitting is better than the one standing." For that *fitnah* implies the mutual fighting of the Muslims in which the parties might be fighting out of bigotry, or for a false sense of honour and worldly possessions and neither may be having the truth on its side. As for the fight that is undertaken in support of the group who is in the right against the aggressor, it is not taking part in the *fitnah* but carrying out Allah's Command. All the jurists are agreed on its being an obligation, and there was no difference of opinion among the Holy Prophet's Companions about its being obligatory. (Al-Jaṣṣās, *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*). Some jurists even regard it as

superior to *Jihād* itself and their reasoning is that Ḥaḍrat 'Alī spent the entire period of his caliphate in fighting against the rebels instead of performing *Jihād* against the disbelievers. (*Rūḥ al-Ma'āni*). If a person argues that it was not obligatory because Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar and some other Companions had not participated in the wars fought by Ḥaḍrat 'Alī, he would be in the wrong. Ibn 'Umar himself says: "I have never been so much grieved at heart on anything as on account of this verse as to why I did not fight the rebels as enjoined by Allah." (*Hākim, al-Mustadrak*).

The Command to "fight" the aggressor does not necessarily mean that he should be fought with the weapons and killed, but it implies the use of force against him, the real object being the removal of his aggression. For this object whatever force is necessary should be used, and no more and no less force should be used than what is absolutely necessary.

The addressees of this Command are the people who have the power to repel the aggression by the use of force.

15. This shows that the fighting is not meant to punish the rebel (the aggressing party) for his rebellion (aggression), but to force him to return to the Command of Allah. Allah's Command implies that the rebel group should submit to what is right according to the Book of Allah and the *Sunnah* of the Messenger of Allah, and should give up the attitude and conduct that amounts to aggression according to this criterion of the truth. As soon as a rebel group becomes ready and willing to follow this Command, use of force against it should be stopped, for this is the actual object of the fighting and its target. The one who commits an excess after this would himself become the aggressor. As for this as to what is the truth and what is the aggression in a dispute according to the Book of Allah and the *Sunnah* of His Messenger, its determination is inevitably the job of those people of the *Ummah*, who have the ability to carry out research by virtue of their knowledge and insight.

16. The Command is not only to make peace but to make peace with justice and equity. This shows that in the sight of Allah the peace (and reconciliation) which is brought about only to stop fighting, overlooking the distinction between the truth and falsehood, and in which pressure is used against the party that is

in the right to come to terms with the aggressor, is not commendable. True peace is that which is based on justice. This alone can avert disaster and mischief; otherwise the inevitable result of pressing those in the right and encouraging the aggressors would be that the real causes of the evil would remain as they were, rather would go on adding up, and cause the mischief to appear and re-appear over and over again.

17. This verse forms the actual basis of the Islamic law about the mutual fighting between the Muslims. No explanation of this law is found in the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet except one *Hadith* which we shall take up below. For in the time of the Holy Prophet no war took place between the Muslims; hence nothing is found in his practice and sayings that could throw light on the commandments concerning it. Afterwards when during the caliphate of *Ḥaḍrat 'Alī* wars took place between the Muslims themselves authentic explanation of this law became possible. At that time since a large number of the Companions were still living, a detailed code of this aspect of the Islamic law was compiled in the light of their practice and statements. *Ḥaḍrat 'Alī's* personal example in particular has been the real source in this matter for all the jurists. Below we give a brief resume of this code :

(1) There are several forms of mutual fighting between Muslims and each has its own separate injunctions :

(a) When both the fighting groups may be the subjects of a Muslim government : In this case it is the duty of the government to make peace between them, or to decide as to who is the aggressor between them, and to compel him by use of force to revert to the truth.

(b) When the parties may be two powerful groups, or two Muslim governments, and both may be fighting for the sake of the world : In this case, the believers should absolutely refrain from taking part in the *fitnah* and should exhort the parties concerned to fear God and desist from fighting.

(c) When one of the belligerent parties as mentioned under (b) above may be in the right and the other the aggressor, who may not be listening to counsel nor be inclined to make peace : In this case believers should side with and support the party that is in the right against the aggressor.

(d) When one of the parties may be the subjects, who may have

revolted against the government, i.e. the Muslim government: The jurists use the term "*bāghī*" (rebel) for this very party which is guilty of rebelling.

(2) The rebels against the government may also be of several kinds:

(a) Those who may have risen only to create chaos and confusion, and may have no legal ground for their revolt. There is consensus that against such people it is lawful for the government to wage war, and it is obligatory for the believers to side with it, no matter whether it is a just government or not.

(b) Those who may revolt against a government in order to depose it from power, and may have no legal ground for this, and may also appear to be unjust and evil. In this case, if the government is just, it is obligatory to side with it without any question, but even if it is unjust, it is obligatory to fight in order to sustain it, for there is peace and order in the country because of it.

(c) Those who may revolt against a government on the basis of a legal ground, but their ground may be false and their belief vicious and perverse, e.g. the Khwārij. In this case also a Muslim government, whether it is just or unjust, has a lawful right to fight them and it is obligatory to side with it.

(d) Those who may revolt against a just government when its head might have assumed power lawfully. In this case whether they have a legal ground or do not have any, the government in any case is justified to wage war against them and it is obligatory to side with it.

(e) Those who may revolt against an unjust government, which might have come to power by coercion and whose leaders might be wicked and the rebels might have risen to establish justice and enforce articles of the Divine Law, and they might appear to be righteous. In this case, acute difference of opinion has appeared among the jurists as to whether they should be declared the "rebels" (i.e. transgressors) and whether it is obligatory to fight them or not. This we state below briefly:

The generality of the jurists and the Ahl al-Ḥadīth hold the view that it is unlawful to rise in revolt against a ruler whose government has once been established and there is complete peace

and order in the land under him, no matter whether he is just or unjust, and he has come to power in any way whatever, except in case he commits disbelief openly. Imām Sarakhasi writes: "In a case when the Muslims are agreed on a ruler and they enjoy peace under him and the roads are safe, if a group of the Muslims rises in revolt against him, everyone who has power is under obligation to side with the ruler of the Muslims and wage war against the rebels." (*Al-Mabsūṭ*, *Bāb al-Khwārij*). Imām Nawawī writes in his commentary of Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim: "It is forbidden to rise in revolt and fight against the Imāms (i.e. the Muslim rulers) even if they are wicked and unjust." Imām Nawawī claims that there is consensus on this.

But this claim of the consensus is not correct. A large group of the jurists of Islam which includes some major scholars, declares those rising in revolt as "rebels" only in case they rise in revolt against a just ruler. They do not regard as "rebellion" in the Qur'ānic terminology the rising in revolt of the righteous against the unjust and wicked rulers, nor declare the waging of war against them as obligatory. The view of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah about fighting against unjust rulers is well known among the scholars. Abū Bakr al-Jaṣṣāṣ clearly writes in his *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* that the Imām regarded this fighting not only as permissible but as obligatory in favourable conditions. (Vol. I, p. 81; Vol. II, p. 39). In Zaid bin 'Alī's revolt against the Umayyads he not only provided financial help but urged others also to do the same. (Al-Jaṣṣāṣ, Vol. I, p. 81). In Nafs al-Zakiyah's revolt against Manṣūr he went on earnestly supporting Nafs al-Zakiyah, and he declared this war as superior to a war against the disbelievers. (Al-Jaṣṣāṣ, Vol. I, p. 81; Al-Kardarī, *Manāqib Abi Ḥanīfah*, Vol. II, pp. 71-72). Then the view as stated by Imām Sarakhsī is not unanimous even among the Ḥanafī jurists. Ibn Humām writes in *Fath al-Qadīr* (commentary of *Hedāya*): "In the parlance of the jurists the rebel is he who gives up obedience of the just ruler." Ibn 'Aqīl and Ibn al-Jawzī from among the Ḥanballīs regard rising in revolt against an unjust ruler as lawful and present Ḥadrat Ḥusain's revolt as an argument. (Al-*Inṣāf*, Vol. X, *Bāb Qitāl Ahl al-Baghyt*). Imām Shāfe'ī in his *Kitāb al-Um* regards as rebel the one who fights against a just ruler (Vol. IV, p. 135). Imām Mālik's view as cited in *Al-Mudawwanah* is: "If the rebels come out to fight against a just ruler, they should be forcibly opposed." (Vol. I, p. 407). Qādī

Abū Bakr Ibn al-‘Arabī has cited his this view in *Aḥkām al-Qur’ān* : “When a person rises in revolt against a just ruler like ‘Umar bin ‘Abdul ‘Azīz, it is obligatory to resist and repel him ; as for some other kind of the ruler, he should be left alone. Allah will punish him through some other unjust person and then both of them through some third unjust person.” Another saying of Imām Mālik that has been cited is: “When the pledge has been sworn to a ruler, and then his brothers rise in revolt against him, they will be fought against, if he is a just ruler. As for the rulers of our time, there is no pledge for them, for pledge to them has been taken by coercion.” Then the view of the Mālikī scholars that the Qādī has cited with reference to Saḥnūn is : “Fighting will be undertaken only under the just ruler, whether the just ruler is the former one or the one who has risen in revolt against him later, but if neither is just, one should keep away from both. However, if one’s own self is attacked, or the Muslims are being subjected to tyranny, one should put up resistance.” After citing these different views, Qādī Abū Bakr says : “We will not fight except on the side of the just ruler, whom the truth-loving people have made their head of their own free will.”

(3) If the ones rising in revolt are small in number, and may have no large party on their back, nor be possessing any substantial war equipment, the law of rebellion will not be applied against them, but they will be proceeded against under the common penal law, i.e. if they kill, they will be subjected to the law of retaliation, and if they damage property, they will be required to pay the penalties. The law of sedition is applied only against those rebels who might be powerful, and rise in revolt in large numbers and with substantial military equipment.

(4) As long as the ones rising in revolt only express their false and perverse beliefs or hostile and seditious ideas against the government or its head, they cannot be killed or imprisoned. War will be waged against them only when they actually rise in armed revolt and start shedding blood. (*Al-Mabsūt, Bāb al-Khwārij ; Fath al-Qadīr, Bāb al-Bighāt ; al-Jaṣṣāṣ, Aḥkām al-Qur’ān*).

(5) Before starting war against the rebels they will first be invited, according to the Qur’ānic instructions, to give up the way of rebellion and adopt the way of justice ; if they have some doubts and objections, effort will be made to remove them ; even then if

they do not listen, and fighting begins from their side, force will be used to deal with them. (*Fath al-Qadir* ; al-Jaṣṣāṣ, *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*).

(6) The code of regulations that has to be observed in the war against the rebels is based on the Holy Prophet's following Command that has been related by Ḥākim, Bazzār and al-Jaṣṣāṣ on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar :

"The Holy Prophet asked Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd : O Ibn Umm 'Abd : Do you know what is Allah's Command concerning the rebels of this *Ummah* ? He replied : Allah and His Messenger have the best knowledge. The Holy Prophet said : Their wounded ones will not be laid hands on and their captives will not be killed, and the one who flees, will not be pursued, and their properties will not be distributed as spoils."

The second source of this code which has been held as trustworthy by all the jurists is the word and deed of Ḥaḍrat 'Alī. After attaining victory in the Battle of the Camel, he announced ; "Do not pursue him who flees ; do not attack the wounded ; do not kill the captives ; give shelter to him who surrenders ; do not make forcible entry into the people's houses ; and do not raise your hands at the women even if they are abusing and cursing you." Some of his soldiers made the demand that the opponents and their family members be taken prisoners and distributed. At this he became furious and said : "Who among you will take 'Ā'ishah, mother of the Faithful, as his share ?"

(7) The injunction concerning the properties of the rebels as derived from the good example of Ḥaḍrat 'Alī is that no part of it, whether it is found on the battlefield or behind them in their houses, and whether they are living or have been killed, will be declared as the spoils nor distributed among the army. However, no compensation will be necessary for the properties that have been damaged or destroyed. As soon as the war comes to an end and rebellion has been put down, their properties and belongings will be returned to them. Their weapons and conveyances, if seized during the war, will be used against them, but will not be made the possession of the victors and distributed as the spoils ; and if there is no more fear of a rebellion from them, their these things also will be returned to them. Only Imām Abū Yūsuf has expressed the opinion that the government will declare them to be the spoils,)*Al-Mabsūṭ* ; *Fath al-Qadir* ; al-Jaṣṣāṣ).

(8) Their prisoners of war, after they have pledged not to rise in rebellion again, will be set free. (*Al-Mabsūt*).

(9) To cut off the heads of the slain rebels and to take them about the streets is a highly undesirable thing, for this is mutilation which the Holy Prophet has strictly forbidden. When the head of a Roman patriarch was brought before Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr, he expressed great displeasure at it, and said: "We are not here to imitate the Romans and Iranians." When it is not allowed to meet out such a treatment to the unbelievers, how much more so should it be with regard to the Muslims." (*Al-Mabsūt*).

(10) Whatever damage might have been caused to life and property by the rebels during the war, no retaliation and recompense for it will be imposed on them after the war has come to an end and peace has been restored. Neither will there be any retaliation for a slain person nor any recompense for the lost property, so as to avoid any chance of the recurrence of the sedition. This same law was observed in the mutual fighting between the Companions. (*Al-Mabsūt*; al-Jaṣṣāṣ; Ibn al-'Arabī, *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*).

(11) After the government has recaptured the territories which had gone under the rebels and where they had established their rule and order and collected the *zakāt* and other taxes, it will not demand the *zakāt* and the taxes from the people once again. If the rebels have spent the money thus collected lawfully, the payers will be deemed to have paid them off lawfully in the sight of Allah as well, but if the rebels have spent the money unlawfully, it will be a matter between the payers and their God; if they so like they may pay their *zakāt* dues once again. (*Fat-h al-Qadir*; al-Jaṣṣāṣ; Ibn al-'Arabī).

(12) The decisions of the judges, who may be just and may have given the decisions according to the *Sharī'ah* in the courts established by the rebels in the territories under them, will be upheld although the ones who appointed them might be guilty of sedition. However, if their decisions are against the *Sharī'ah*, and they are brought before the courts of the government after the rebellion has been put down, they will not be enforced. Moreover, no warrant or summons issued by the courts established by the rebels will be acceptable in the courts of the government. (*Al-Mabsūt*; al-Jaṣṣāṣ).

(13) The evidence of the rebels will not be acceptable in the

Islamic courts, for it is iniquitous to fight against the just. Imām Muḥammad says : "As long as they do not fight and actually rise in revolt against the people of justice, their evidence will be acceptable, but when they have already fought, I will not accept their evidence." (Al-Jaṣṣāṣ).

From these rulings it becomes plain as to what is the difference between the law of fighting against the disbelievers and of fighting against the Muslim rebels.

18. This verse establishes a universal brotherhood of all the Muslims of the world, and it is by virtue of this that the sort of fraternity that exists among the Muslims exists among the followers of no other religion and creed. The importance of this Command and its demands have been explained by the Holy Prophet in many of his Traditions from which one can understand its full significance and spirit.

Ḥaḍrat Jarīr bin 'Abdullah says : "The Holy Prophet took a pledge from me on three things : That I will establish the Prayer ; that I will continue to pay the *zakāt* ; and that I will remain a well-wisher of every Muslim." (Bukhāri : *Kitāb-al-Imān*). According to Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Maṣ'ūd, the Holy Prophet said : "To abuse a Muslim is sinful and to fight him disbelief." In Musnad Aḥmad a tradition bearing on the same subject has also been related by Ḥaḍrat Sa'īd bin Mālik on the authority of his father.

Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah relates that the Holy Prophet said : "The life, property and honour of every Muslim is forbidden to every other Muslim." (Muslim : *Kitāb-al-Birr waṣ Ṣilah* ; Tirmidhī : *Abwāb-al-Birr waṣ Ṣilah*).

Ḥaḍrat Abū Sa'īd Khudrī and Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah say that the Holy Prophet said : "A Muslim is a brother to the other Muslim : he does not treat him unjustly ; he does not leave him alone ; and he does not dishonour him. There is no greater evil than that one should hold a Muslim in contempt." (Musnad Aḥmad).

Ḥaḍrat Sahl bin Sa'd as Sā'idī has related this saying of the Holy Prophet : "A believer's relation with the community of the believers is just like the head's relation with the body. He feels their afflictions as the head feels the pain of every part of the body." (Musnad Aḥmad). In another *Ḥadīth* bearing on the same subject the Holy Prophet said : "The believers' example in the matter of

their mutual love, relationship and compassion with one another is of the state of the body that when a part of it is afflicted the whole of it is afflicted with fever and restlessness." (Bukhāri, Muslim).

In another *Hadīth* he is reported to have said: "The believers are with one another like the bricks of a wall so that each is strengthened by the other." (Bukhāri: *Kitāb al-Adab*; Tirmidhī: *Abwāb al-Birr waṣ-Ṣilah*).

19. In the preceding two verses after giving necessary instructions about the Muslim people's mutual fighting, the believers were made to realize that by virtue of the most sacred relationship of the faith they were brothers one to another, and they should fear God and try to keep their mutual relations right. Now, in the following two verses, they are being enjoined to avoid and shun those major evils which generally spoil the mutual relationships of the people in a society. Slandering and taunting the people and harbouring suspicions and spying on others are, in fact, the evils that cause mutual enmities and then lead to grave mischief. In this connection, from the commandments that are being given in the following verses and the explanations of these found in the *Hadīth* a detailed law of libel can be compiled. The western law pertaining to libel in this regard is so defective that a person who sues another under this law may well cause some loss to his own honour. The Islamic law, on the contrary, recognizes a basic honour for every person and gives nobody the right to attack it, no matter whether the attack is based on reality or not, and whether the person who has been attacked has a "reputation" of his own or not. Only the fact that a person has debased and humiliated the other person is enough to declare him a criminal unless, of course, it is proved that the humiliation caused had a legal ground for it.

20. Mocking does not only imply mocking with the tongue but it also includes mimicking somebody, making pointed references to him, laughing at his words, or his works, or his appearance, or his dress, or calling the people's attention to some defect or blemish in him so that others also may laugh at him. All this is included in mocking. What is actually forbidden is that one should make fun of and ridicule another, for under such ridiculing there always lie feelings of one's own superiority and the other's abasement and contempt, which are morally unworthy of a gentleman. Moreover, it hurts the other person, which causes mischief to spread in society. That is why it has been forbidden.

To make mention of the men and the women separately does not mean that it is lawful for the men to mock the women or the women to mock the men. The actual reason for making a separate mention of the two sexes is that Islam does not at all believe in mixed society. Ridiculing each other generally takes place in mixed gatherings and Islam does not permit that non-*mahram* males and females should meet in such gatherings and make fun of each other. Therefore, in a Muslim society it is inconceivable that the men would mock a woman, or the women would mock a man in an assembly.

21. The word *lamz* as used in the original is very comprehensive and applies to ridiculing, reviling, deriding, jeering, charging somebody or finding fault with him, and making him the target of reproach and blame by open or tacit references. As all such things also spoil mutual relationships and create bad blood in society, they have been forbidden. Instead of saying, "Do not taunt one another", it has been said: "Do not taunt yourselves", which by itself shows that the one who uses taunting words for others, in fact, taunts his own self. Obviously, a person does not use invectives against others unless he himself is filled with evil feelings and is almost in a state of bursting like a volcano. Thus, the one who nourishes such feelings has made his own self a nest of evils before he makes others a target. Then, when he taunts others, it means that he is inviting others to taunt him. It is a different matter that the other person may evade his attacks because of a gentle nature, but he himself has opened the door to mischief so that the other may treat him likewise.

22. This Command requires that a person should not be called by a name or a title which may cause him humiliation, e.g. calling somebody a sinner or a hypocrite, or calling someone a lame or blind one, or one-eyed, or giving him a nickname containing a reference to some defect or blemish in him, or in his parents, or in his family, or calling a person a Jew or a Christian even after his conversion to Islam, or giving such a nickname to a person, or a family, or a community, or a group, which may bring condemnation or disgrace on it. Only those nicknames have been made an exception from this Command, which though apparently offensive, are not intended to condemn the persons concerned, but they rather serve as a mark of recognition for them. That is why the traditionists have allowed as permissible names like *Sulemān al-A'mash*

(the weak-eyed Sulēmān) and Wāṣil al-Aḥḍab (the hunch-backed Wāṣil) among the reporters of the *Ḥadīth*. If there are several men of the same name and a particular man among them may be recognized only by a particular title or nickname of his, the title or nickname can be used, even though the title by itself may be offensive. For instance, if there are several men called 'Abdullah', and one of them is blind, he may be called 'Abdullah the blind, for his recognition. Likewise, those titles also are excluded from this Command, which though apparently offensive, are in fact, given out of love and the people who are called by those titles themselves approve them, like Abū Hurairah (father of the kitten) and Abū Turāb (father of the dust).

23. That is, "It is very shameful for a believer that in spite of being a believer he should earn a name for using abusive language and for immodest behaviour. If a disbeliever earns reputation for himself for mocking the people, or taunting them, or for proposing evil and offensive titles for others, it may not be a good reputation from the point of view of humanity, but it at least goes well with his disbelief. But if a person after affirming the Faith in Allah and His Messenger and the Hereafter earns reputation on account of these base qualities, it is simply regrettable.

24. What is forbidden is not conjecture as such but excessive conjecture and following every kind of conjecture, and the reason given is that some conjectures are sins. In order to understand this Command we should analyse and see what are the kinds of conjecture and what is the moral position of each.

One kind of conjecture is that which is morally approved and laudable, and desirable and praiseworthy from religious point of view, e.g. a good conjecture in respect of Allah and His Messenger and the believers and those people with whom one comes in common contact daily and concerning whom there may be no rational ground for having an evil conjecture.

The second kind of conjecture is that which one cannot do without in practical life, e.g. in a law court a judge has to consider the evidence placed before him and give his decision on the basis of the most probable conjecture, for he cannot have direct knowledge of the facts of the matter, and the opinion that is based on evidence is mostly based on the most probable conjecture and not on certainty. Likewise, in most cases when one or the other decision has to be taken, and the knowledge of the reality cannot possibly be

attained, there is no way out for men but to form an opinion on the basis of a conjecture.

The third kind of conjecture, which is although a suspicion, is permissible in nature, and it cannot be regarded as a sin. For instance, if there are clear signs and pointers in the character of a person (or persons), or in his dealings and conduct, on the basis of which he may not deserve to enjoy one's good conjecture, and there are rational grounds for having suspicions against him, the *Shari'ah* does not demand that one should behave like a simpleton and continue to have a good conjecture about him. The last limit of this lawful conjecture, however, is that one should conduct oneself cautiously in order to ward off any possible mischief from him; it is not right to take an action against him only on the basis of a conjecture.

The fourth kind of conjecture which is, in fact, a sin is that one should entertain a suspicion in respect of a person without any ground, or should start with suspicion in forming an opinion about others, or should entertain a suspicion about the people whose apparent conditions show that they are good and noble. Likewise, this also is a sin that when there is an equal chance of the evil and goodness in the word or deed of a person, one should regard it as only evil out of suspicion. For instance, if a gentleman while leaving a place of assembly picks up another one's shoes, instead of his own, and we form the opinion that he has done so with the intention of stealing the shoes, whereas this could be possible because of oversight as well, there is no reason for adopting the evil opinion instead of the good opinion except the suspicion.

This analysis makes it plain that conjecture by itself is not anything forbidden; rather in some cases and situations it is commendable, in some situations inevitable, in some permissible up to a certain extent and un-permissible beyond it, and in some cases absolutely unlawful. That is why it has not been enjoined that one should refrain from conjecture or suspicion altogether but what is enjoined is that one should refrain from much suspicion. Then, to make the intention of the Command explicit, it has been said that some conjectures are sinful. From this warning it follows automatically that whenever a person is forming an opinion on the basis of conjecture, or is about to take an action, he should examine the case and see whether the conjecture he is entertaining is not a sin, whether the conjecture is really necessary, whether there are sound reasons for the conjecture, and whether the conduct one is

adopting on the basis of the conjecture is permissible. Everyone who fears God will certainly take these precautions. To make one's conjecture free and independent of every such care and consideration is the pastime of only those people who are fearless of God and thoughtless of the accountability of the Hereafter.

25. "Do not spy": Do not grope after the secrets of the people : do not search for their defects and weaknesses ; do not pry into their conditions and affairs. Whether this is done because of suspicion, or for causing harm to somebody with an evil intention, or for satisfying one's own curiosity, it is forbidden by the *Shari'ah* in every case. It does not behove a believer that he should spy on the hidden affairs of other people, and should try to peep at them from behind curtains to find out their defects and their weaknesses. This also includes reading other people's private letters, listening secretly to private conversation, peeping into the neighbour's house, and trying to get information in different ways about the domestic life or private affairs of others. This is grave immorality which causes serious mischief in society. That is way the Holy Prophet once said in an address about those who pry into other people's affairs :

"O people, who have professed belief verbally, but faith has not yet entered your hearts : Do not pry into the affairs of the Muslims, for he who will pry into the affairs of the Muslims, Allah will pry into his affairs, and he whom Allah follows inquisitively, is disgraced by Him in his own house." (Abū Da'ūd).

Ḥaḍrat Mu'āwiyah says that he himself heard the Holy Prophet say : "If you start prying into the secret affairs of the people, you will corrupt them, or at least drive them very near corruption." (Abū Da'ūd).

In another *Hadīth* he said : "When you happen to form an evil opinion about somebody, do not pry about it." (Al Jaṣṣāṣ, *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*).

According to still another *Hadīth*, the Holy Prophet said: The one who saw a secret affair of somebody and then concealed it is as though he saved a girl who had been buried alive." (Al-Jaṣṣāṣ).

This prohibition of spying is not only applicable to the individuals but also to the Islamic government. The duty of forbidding the people to do evil that the *Shari'ah* has entrusted to the government does not require that it should establish a system of spying to

enquire too curiously into the people's secret evils and then punish them, but it should use force only against those evils which are manifested openly. As for the hidden evils spying is not the way to reform them but it is education, preaching and counselling, collective training of the people and trying to create a pure social environment. In this connection, an incident concerning Ḥaḍrat 'Umar is very instructive. Once at night he heard the voice of a person who was singing in his house. He became curious and climbed the wall. There he saw wine as well as a woman present. He shouted at the man, saying: "O enemy of God, do you think you will disobey Allah, and Allah will not expose your secret?" The man replied: "Do not make haste, O Commander of the Faithful: if I have committed one sin, you have committed three sins. Allah has forbidden spying, and you have spied; Allah has commanded that one should enter the houses by the doors, and you have entered it by climbing over the wall; Allah has commanded that one should avoid entering the other people's houses without permission, and you have entered my house without my permission." Hearing this reply Ḥaḍrat 'Umar confessed his error, and did not take any action against the man, but made him to promise that he would follow the right way in future. (Abī Bakr Muḥammad bin Ja'far al-Kharā'iṭī, *Makārim al-Akhlāq*). This shows that it is not only forbidden for the individuals but also for the Islamic government itself to pry into the secrets of the people and discover their sins and errors and then seize them for punishment. The same thing has been said in a *Ḥadīth* in which the Holy Prophet has said:

"When the ruler starts searching for the causes of suspicions among the people he corrupts them" (Abū Da'ūd).

The only exception from this Command are the special cases and situations in which spying is actually needed. For instance, if in the conduct of a person (or persons) some signs of corruption are visible and there is the apprehension that he is about to commit a crime, the government can enquire into his affairs; or, for instance, if somebody sends a proposal of marriage in the house of a person, or wants to enter into business with him, the other person can enquire and investigate into his affairs for his own satisfaction.

26. *Ghibat* (backbiting) has been defined thus: "It is saying on the back of a person something which would hurt him if he came to know of it." This definition has been reported from the Holy Prophet himself. According to a tradition which Muslim, Abū

Da'ūd, Tirmidhī, Nasā'ī and others have related on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, the Holy Prophet defined *ghibat* as follows :

“It is talking of your brother in a way irksome to him.” It was asked : “What, if the defect being talked of is present in my brother ?” The Holy Prophet replied : “If it is present in him, it would be *ghibat* ; if it is not there, it would be slandering him.”

In another tradition which Imām Mālik has related in Mu'waḍḍā, on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Muṭṭalib bin 'Abdullah, “A person asked the Holy Prophet : What is *ghibat* ? The Holy Prophet replied : It is talking of your brother in a way irksome to him. He asked : Even if it is true, O Messenger of Allah ? He replied : If what you said was false, it would then be a calumny.”

These traditions make it plain that uttering a false accusation against a person in his absence is calumny and describing a real defect in him *ghibat* ; whether this is done in express words or by reference and allusion, in every case it is forbidden. Likewise, whether this is done in the lifetime of a person, or after his death, it is forbidden in both cases. According to Abū Da'ūd, when Mā'iz bin Mālik Aslamī had been stoned to death for committing adultery, the Holy Prophet on his way back heard a man saying to his companion : “Look at this man : Allah had concealed his secret, but he did not leave himself alone till he was killed like a dog !” A little further on the way there was the dead body of an ass lying rotting. The Holy Prophet stopped, called the two men and said : “Come down and eat this dead ass.” They submitted : “Who will eat it, O Messenger of Allah ?” The Holy Prophet said : “A little before this you were attacking the honour of your brother : that was much worse than eating this dead ass.”

The only exceptions to this prohibition are the cases in which there may be a genuine need of speaking ill of a person on his back, or after his death, and this may not be fulfilled without resort to backbiting, and if it was not resorted to, a greater evil might result than backbiting itself. The Holy Prophet has described this exception as a principle, thus : “The worst excess is to attack the honour of a Muslim unjustly.” (Abū Da'ūd).

In this saying the condition of ‘unjustly’ points out that doing so “with justice” is permissible. Then, in the practice of the Holy Prophet himself we find some precedents which show what is implied by “justice” and in what conditions and cases backbiting may be lawful to the extent as necessary.

Once a desert Arab came and offered his Prayer under the leadership of the Holy Prophet, and as soon as the Prayer was concluded, walked away saying : "O God, have mercy on me and on Muḥammad, and make no one else a partner in this mercy beside the two of us." The Holy Prophet said to the Companions: "What do you say : who is more ignorant : this person or his camel ? Didn't you hear what he said ?" (Abū Da'ūd). The Holy Prophet had to say this in his absence, for he had left soon after the Prayer was over. Since he had uttered a wrong thing in the presence of the Holy Prophet, his remaining quiet at it could cause the misunderstanding that saying such a thing might in some degree be lawful ; therefore, it was necessary that he should contradict it.

Two of the Companions, Ḥaḍrat Mu'āwiyah and Ḥaḍrat Abul Jahm, sent the proposal of marriage to a lady, Fāṭimah bint Qais. She came to the Holy Prophet and asked for his advice. He said : "Mu'āwiyah is a poor man and Abul Jahm beats his wives much." (Bukhārī, Muslim). In this case, as there was the question of the lady's future and she had consulted the Holy Prophet for his advice, he deemed it necessary to inform her of the two men's weaknesses.

One day when the Holy Prophet was present in the apartment of Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, a man came and sought permission to see him. The Holy Prophet remarked that he was a very bad man of his tribe. Then he went out and talked to him politely. When he came back into the house, Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah asked : "You have talked to him politely, whereas when you went out you said something different about him." The Holy Prophet said, "On the day of Resurrection the worst abode in the sight of Allah will be of the person whom the people start avoiding because of his abusive language." (Bukhārī Muslim). A study of this incident will show that the Holy Prophet in spite of having a bad opinion about the person talked to him politely because that was the demand of his morals ; but he had the apprehension lest the people of his house should consider the person to be his friend when they would see him treating him kindly, and then the person might use this impression to his own advantage later. Therefore, the Holy Prophet warned Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah telling her that he was a bad man of his tribe.

Once Hind bint 'Utbah, wife of Ḥaḍrat Abū Sufyān, came to the Holy Prophet and said : "Abū Sufyān is a miserly person : he does not provide enough for me and my children's needs." (Bukhārī, Muslim). Although this complaint from the wife in the absence of the husband was backbiting, the Holy Prophet permitted it, for the

oppressed one has a right that he or she may take the complaint of injustice to a person who has the power to get it removed.

From these precedents of the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet, the jurists and traditionists have deduced this principle: "Ghibat (backbiting) is permissible only in case it is needed for a real and genuine (genuine from the *Shari'ah* point of view) necessity and the necessity may not be satisfied without having resort to it". Then on the basis of the same principle the scholars have declared that *ghibat* is permissible in the following cases :

(1) Complaining by an oppressed person against the oppressor before every such person who he thinks can do something to save him from the injustice.

(2) To make mention of the evils of a person (or persons) with the intention of reform before those who can be expected to help remove the evils.

(3) To state the facts of a case before a legal expert for the purpose of seeking a religious or legal ruling regarding an unlawful act committed by a person.

(4) To warn the people of the mischiefs of a person (or persons) so that they may ward off the evil, e.g. it is not only permissible but obligatory to mention the weaknesses of the reporters, witnesses and writers, for without it, it is not possible to safeguard the *Shari'ah* against the propagation of false reports, the courts against injustices and the common people or the students against errors and misunderstandings. Or, for instance, if a person wants to have the relationship of marriage with somebody, or wishes to rent a house in the neighbourhood of somebody, or wants to give something into the custody of somebody, and consults another person, it is obligatory for him to apprise him of all aspects so that he is not deceived because of ignorance.

(5) To raise voice against and criticise the evils of the people who may be spreading sin and immorality and error, or corrupting the people's faith and persecuting them.

(6) To use nicknames for the people who may have become well known by those names, but this should be done for the purpose of their recognition and not with a view to condemn them. (For details, see *Fat-h al-Bari*, vol. X, p. 362; *Sharh Muslim* by An-Nawawi; *Riyad us-Salihin*; al-Jassas, *Ahkam al-Qur'an*; *Ruh al-Ma'ani*; commentary on verse: *wa la yaghtab ba'dukum ba'dan*).

Apart from these exceptions it is absolutely forbidden to speak ill of a person behind his back. If what is spoken is true, it is *ghibat*; if it is false, it is calumny; and if it is meant to make two persons quarrel, it is slander. The *Shari'ah* has declared all these as forbidden. In the Islamic society it is incumbent on every Muslim to refute a false charge made against a person in his presence and not to listen to it quietly, and to tell those who are speaking ill of somebody, without a genuine religious need, to fear God and desist from the sin. The Holy Prophet has said: "If a person does not support and help a Muslim when he is being disgraced and his honour being attacked, Allah also does not support and help him when he stands in need of His help; and if a person helps and supports a Muslim when his honour is being attacked and he is being disgraced, Allah Almighty also helps him when he wants that Allah should help him." (Abū Da'ūd).

As for the backbiter, as soon as he realizes that he is committing this sin, or has committed it, his first duty is to offer repentance before Allah and restrain himself from this forbidden act. His second duty is that he should compensate for it as far as possible. If he has backbitten a dead person, he should ask Allah's forgiveness for the person as often as he can. If he has backbitten a living person, and what he said was also false, he should refute it before the people before whom he had made the calumny. And if what he said was true, he should never speak ill of him in future, and should ask pardon of the person whom he had backbitten. A section of the scholars has expressed the opinion that pardon should be asked only in case the other person has come to know of it; otherwise one should only offer repentance, for if the person concerned is unaware and the backbiter in order to ask pardon goes and tells him that he had backbitten him, he would certainly feel hurt.

27. In this sentence Allah by likening backbiting to eating the dead brother's flesh, has given the idea of its being an abomination. Eating the dead flesh is by itself abhorrent; and when the flesh is not of an animal, but of a man, and that too of one's own dead brother, abomination would be added to abomination. Then, by presenting the simile in the interrogative tone it has been made all the more impressive, so that every person may ask his own conscience and decide whether he would like to eat the flesh of his dead brother. If he would not, and he abhors it by nature, how he would like that

he should attack the honour of his brother-in-faith in his absence, when he cannot defend himself and when he is wholly unaware that he is being disgraced. This shows that the basic reason of forbidding backbiting is not that the person being backbitten is being hurt but speaking ill of a person in his absence is by itself unlawful and forbidden whether he is aware of it, or not, and whether he feels hurt by it or not. Obviously, eating the flesh of a dead man is not forbidden because it hurts the dead man ; the dead person is wholly unaware that somebody is eating of his body, but because this act by itself is an abomination. Likewise, if the person who is backbitten also does not come to know of it through any means, he will remain unaware throughout his life that somebody had attacked his honour at a particular time before some particular people and on that account he had stood disgraced in the eyes of those people. Because of this unawareness he will not feel at all hurt by this backbiting, but his honour would in any case be sullied. Therefore, this act in its nature is not any different from eating the flesh of a dead brother.

اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ رَّحِيمٌ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَ
 جَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَىٰ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
 عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ ﴿١٣﴾ قَالَتِ الْأَعْرَابُ آمَنَّا قُلْ لَمْ تُؤْمِنُوا وَلَكِنْ قُولُوا أَسْلَمْنَا
 وَلَمَّا يَدْخُلِ الْإِيمَانُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَإِنْ تُطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ لَا يَلِتْكُمْ
 مِنَ أَعْمَالِكُمْ شَيْئًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٤﴾ إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
 بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ لَمْ يَرْتَابُوا وَجَاهَدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِ
 اللَّهِ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الصَّادِقُونَ ﴿١٥﴾ قُلْ أَتَعْلَمُونَ اللَّهُ بِدِينِكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا
 فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٦﴾ يَسْتَوُونَ عَلَيْكَ أَنْ
 أَسْلَمُوا قُلْ لَا تَمُوتُوا عَلَىٰ إِسْلَامِكُمْ بَلِ اللَّهُ يَمُنُّ عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْ هَدَىٰكُمْ
 لِلْإِيمَانِ إِنَّ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿١٧﴾ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ غَيْبَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاللَّهُ
 بَصِيرٌ ﴿١٨﴾ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٩﴾

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13

O mankind, We created you from one man and one woman, and then divided you into nations and tribes so that you may recognize one another. Indeed, the most honourable among you in the sight of Allah is he who is the most pious of you.²⁸ Surely, Allah is All-knowing, All-Wise.²⁹

14-15

The desert Arabs say, "We have believed".³⁰ Say to them, "You have not believed; rather say, 'We have submitted'.³¹ Faith has not yet entered your hearts. If you adopt obedience to Allah and His Messenger, He will not diminish anything from the reward of your works." Surely, Allah is All-Forgiving, All-Merciful. In fact, the true believers are those who believed in Allah and His Messenger; then they entertained no

doubt and exerted their utmost in the Way of Allah with their selves and their wealth. They indeed are the truthful ones.

O Prophet, say to those (who claim to have believed), "Are you apprising Allah of your Faith? whereas Allah knows all that there is in the heavens and the earth and has knowledge of everything." They deem it as a favour to you that they have accepted Islam. Say to them, "Do not deem your Islam as a favour to me, but rather Allah has done you a favour that He has guided you to the Faith, if you are really truthful (in your claim to have believed). Allah has the knowledge of every hidden thing in the heavens and the earth, and He sees whatever you do." 16-18

28. In the preceding verses the Muslims were addressed and given necessary instructions to safeguard the Muslim community against social evils. In this verse the whole of mankind has been addressed to reform it of the great evil that has always been causing universal disruption in the world, that is, the prejudices due to race, colour, language, country, and nationality. On account of these prejudices man in every age has generally been discarding humanity and drawing around himself some small circles and regarding those born within those circles as his own people and those outside them as others. These circles have been drawn on the basis of accidental birth and not on rational and moral grounds. In some cases their basis is the accident of being born in a particular family, tribe, or race, and in some particular geographical region, or in a nation having a particular colour or speaking a particular language. Then the discrimination between one's own people and others is not only confined to this that those who are looked upon as one's own people are shown greater love and cooperation than others, but this discrimination has assumed the worst forms of hatred, enmity, contempt and tyranny. New philosophies have been propounded for it, new religions invented, new codes of law made and new moral principles framed ; so much so that nations and empires have made this distinction a permanent way of life with them and practised it for centuries. The Jews on this very basis regarded the children of Israel as the chosen people of God and even

in the practice of their religious rites looked upon the non-Jews as inferior to the Jews in rights and rank. This very discrimination gave birth to class distinctions (varnashrama) among the Hindus according to which superiority of the Brahmins was established, all other human beings came to be regarded as inferior and unclean and the Shudras cast into the depths of disgrace and degradation. Every person can see for himself even in this 20th century what atrocities have been committed against the coloured people in Africa and America on account of the distinction between the white and the black. The treatment that the Europeans meted out to the Red Indian race in America and to the weak nations of Asia and Africa had the same concept underlying it. They thought that the life and property and honour of all those who had been born outside the frontiers of their own land and nation were lawful for them and they had the right to plunder and take them as their slaves and exterminate them if need be. The worst examples of how the nationalism of the western nations has turned one nation against the others and made it their blood-thirsty enemy have been seen in the wars of the recent past and are being seen even in the present time. In particular, if what was manifested by the racism of the Nazi Germany and the concept of the superiority of the Nordic race in the last World War is kept in view, one can easily judge how stupendous and devastating is the error for whose reform this verse of the Qur'ān was revealed.

In this brief verse, Allah has drawn the attention of all mankind to three cardinal truths :

(1) "The origin of all of you is one and the same : your whole species has sprung up from one man and one woman : all your races that are found in the world today are, in fact, the branches of one initial race that started with one mother and one father. In this process of creation there is no basis whatever for the divisions and distinctions in which you have involved yourselves because of your false notions. One God alone is your Creator. Different men have not been created by different Gods. You have been made from one and the same substance ; it is not so that some men have been made from some pure and superior substance and some other men from some impure and inferior substance. You have been created in one and the same way ; it is not also so that different men have been created in different ways. And you are the offspring of the same

parents ; it is not so that in the beginning there were many human couples which gave birth to different populations in the different regions of the world."

(2) "In spite of being one in origin, it was natural that you should be divided into nations and tribes. Obviously, all the men on the earth could not belong to one and the same family. With the spread of the race it was inevitable that countless families should arise, and then tribes and nations should emerge from the families. Similarly, it was inevitable that after settling in different regions of the earth, there should be differences of colours, features, languages and ways of living among the people, and it was also natural that those living in the same region should be closer in affinity and those living in remote regions not so close ; but this natural difference never demanded that distinctions of inequality, of high and low, of noble and mean, should be established on its basis, that one race should claim superiority over the other, that the people of one colour should look down upon the people of other colours, and that one nation should take preference over the other without any reason. The Creator had divided the human communities into nations and tribes for that was a natural way of cooperation and distinction between them. In this way alone could a family, a brotherhood, a tribe and a nation combine to give birth to a common way of life and to cooperate with each other in the affairs of the world. But it was all due to satanic ignorance that the differences among mankind created by Allah to be a means of recognition, were made a means of mutual boasting and hatred, which led mankind to every kind of injustice and tyranny.

(3) The only basis of superiority and excellence that there is, or can be, between man and man is that of moral excellence. As regards birth, all men are equal, for their Creator is One, their substance of creation is one, and their way of creation is one, and they are descended from the same parents. Moreover, a person's being born in a particular country, nation, or clan is just accidental. Therefore, there is no rational ground on account of which one person may be regarded as superior to the other. The real thing that makes one person superior to others is that one should be more God-conscious, a greater avoider of evils, and a follower of the way of piety and righteousness. Such a man whether he belongs to any race, any nation and any country, is valuable and worthy on account of his personal merit. And the one who is reverse of him

in character is in any case an inferior person whether he is black or white, born in the east or the west.

These same truths that have been stated in this brief verse of the Qur'ān, have been explained in greater detail by the Holy Prophet in his addresses and traditions. In the speech that he made on the conquest of Makkah, after going round the Ka'bah, he said :

“Thank God Who has removed from you the blemish of ignorance and its arrogance. O people, men are divided into classes : the pious and righteous, who are honourable in the sight of Allah, and the sinful and vicious, who are contemptible in the sight of Allah, whereas all men are the children of Adam and Adam had been created by Allah from clay.” (Baihaqī, Tirmidhī).

On the occasion of the Farewell Pilgrimage, in the midst of the *Tashriq* days, he addressed the people, and said :

“O people, be aware : your God is One. No Arab has any superiority over a non-Arab, and no non-Arab any superiority over an Arab, and no white one has any superiority over a black one, and no black one any superiority over a white one, except on the basis of *taqvā* (piety). The most honourable among you in the sight of Allah is he who is the most pious and righteous of you. Say if I have conveyed the Message to you ?” And the great congregation of the people responded, saying : “Yes, you have, O Messenger of Allah.” Thereupon the Holy Prophet said : “Then let the one who is present convey it to those who are absent.” (Baihaqī)

In a *Hadith* he has said : “You are all the children of Adam, and Adam was created from the dust. Let the people give up boasting of their ancestors, otherwise they will stand more degraded than a mean insect in the sight of Allah.” (Bazzār)

In another *Hadith* the Holy Prophet said : “Allah will not enquire about your lineage on the Day of Resurrection. The most honourable in the sight of Allah is he who is most pious.” (Ibn Jarīr)

In still another *Hadith* he said : “Allah does not see your outward appearances and your possessions but He sees your hearts and your deeds.” (Muslim, Ibn Mājah).

These teachings have not remained confined to words only but Islam has practically established a universal brotherhood of the

believers on the basis, which does not allow any distinction on account of colour, race, language, country and nationality, which is free from every concept of high and low, clean and unclean, mean and respectable, which admits all human beings with equal rights, whether they belong to any race and nation, any land or region. Even the opponents of Islam have had to admit that no precedent is found in any religion and any system of the success with which the principle of human equality and unity has been given practical shape in the Muslim society, nor has it ever been found. Islam is the only religion which has welded and combined innumerable races and communities scattered in all corners of the earth into one universal *Ummah*.

In this connection, a misunderstanding also needs to be removed. In the case of marriage, the importance that Islamic law gives to *kufu* (likeness of status) has been taken by some people in the sense that some brotherhoods are noble and some mean, and matrimonial relations between them are objectionable. But this, in fact, is a wrong idea. According to the Islamic law, every Muslim man can marry every Muslim woman, but the success of the matrimonial life depends on maximum harmony and conformity between the spouses as regards habits, characteristics and ways of life, family traditions and economic and social status, so that they may get on well with each other. This is the real object of being equal and alike. Where there is unusual difference and disparity between the man and the woman in this regard, lifelong companionship will be difficult. That is why the Islamic law disapproves of such inter-marriages, and not for the reason that one of the spouses is noble and the other mean, but for the reason that in case there is a clear and apparent difference and distinction in status, there would be a greater possibility of the failure of the matrimonial life if the marriage relationship was established.

29. That is, "This is only known to Allah as to who is really a man of high rank and who is inferior in respect of qualities and characteristics. The standards of high and low that the people have set up of their own accord, are not acceptable to and approved by Allah. Maybe that the one who has been regarded as a man of high rank in the world is declared as the lowest of the low in the final judgement of Allah, and maybe that the one who has been looked upon as a very low person here, attains to a very high rank there. The real importance is not of the honour and dishonour of the world but of the honour and dishonour that one will receive

from Allah. Therefore, what man should be most concerned about is that he should create in himself those real qualities and characteristics which make him worthy of honour in the sight of Allah.

30. This does not imply all the desert Arabs but only a few particular groups of the Bedouins who had become Muslims, seeing the increasing power of Islam, thinking that they would not only remain safe from any attack by the Muslims but would also gain materially from the Islamic conquests. These people had not embraced Islam sincerely but had professed faith only verbally in order to be counted among the Muslims, and their this inner state became exposed whenever they would come before the Holy Prophet with different sorts of demands and would enumerate and mention their rights as if they had done him a great favour by accepting Islam. Traditions mention several of such tribal groups, e.g. Muzainah, Juhainah, Aslam, Ashja', Ghifār, etc. About the Bani Asad bin Khuzaimah in particular, Ibn 'Abbas and Sa'id bin Jubair have stated that once during a drought they came to Madīnah and making a demand for financial help they said to the Holy Prophet again and again: "We became Muslims without any conflict: we did not fight against you as have such and such other tribes fought." By this they clearly meant to point out that their refraining from fighting against the Messenger of Allah and their accepting Islam was a favour for which they must be rewarded by the Messenger and the Muslims. It was this same attitude and conduct of the Bedouin groups living around Madīnah, which has been commented upon in these verses. One can understand this appraisal better if one reads it together with vv. 90-110 of At-Taubah and vv. 11-17 of Al-Fat-h.

31. Another translation of the words *qūlū aslamnā* can be: "Say: we have become Muslims." From these words some people have concluded that in the language of the Qur'ān, "Mu'min" and "Muslim" are two opposite terms. A "Mu'min" is he who has believed sincerely and a "Muslim" he who might have accepted Islam only verbally without true faith. But, in fact, this is an absolutely wrong idea. No doubt the word *imān* here has been used for sincere affirmation by the heart and the word *islām* for only outward and external submission but to understand them as two independent and mutually contradictory terms of the Qur'ān is not correct. A study of the Qur'ānic verses in which the words *Islām* and *Muslim* have been used, shows that in the Qur'ānic terminology "Islām" is the name of the true Faith, which Allah has sent down for mankind; it comprehends the faith and obedience both, and a

“*Muslim*” is he who believes with a sincere heart and obeys the Commands practically. This is borne out by the following verses :

“Indeed, Islam is the only right way of life in the sight of Allah.” (Āl-‘Imrān : 19)

“And whoever adopts any other than this way of submission (Islam), that way shall not be accepted from him,” (Āl-‘Imrān : 85)

“And I have approved Islam as the way of life for you.” (Al-Mā'idah : 3)

“Whomever Allah wills to guide aright, He makes his breast wide open to Islam.” (Al-An'ām : 125)

Obviously, in these verses “*Islām*” does not imply obedience without the Faith. Here are some other verses :

“Say (O Prophet) : I have been enjoined to be the first one to affirm (faith in) Islam.” (Al-An'ām : 14)

“If they have surrendered (to Islam), they are rightly guided.” (Āl-‘Imrān : 20)

“All the Prophets, who were Muslims, judged the cases according to the Torah.” (Al-Mā'idah : 44)

Here, and at scores of other places, acceptance of Islam cannot mean adopting obedience without the true faith. Likewise, here are a few verses in which the word “*Muslim*” has occurred signifying the meaning in which it has been used repeatedly in the Qur'an ;

“O you who have believed, fear Allah as He should truly be feared and see that you do not die save as true Muslims.” (Āl-‘Imrān : 102)

“Allāh had called you “*Muslims*” before this and has called you (by the same name) in this Qur'an, too.” (Al-Hajj : 78)

“Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but he was a Muslim, sound in the faith.” (Āl-i-‘Imrān : 67)

“And remember that when Abraham and Ishmael were raising the walls of this House, they prayed : ... Lord, make us Thy Muslims and also raise from our offspring a community which should be Muslim.” (Al-Baqarah : 128)

(The Prophet Jacob's will for his children ;) “O my children, Allah has chosen the same way of life for you. Hence remain Muslims up to your last breath.” (Al-Baqarah : 132)

After a study of these verses who can say that in these the word "Muslim" implies a person who does not believe sincerely but has accepted Islam only outwardly? Therefore, to make the claim that in the Qur'ānic terminology "Islām" implies obedience without the faith and the "Muslim" in the language of the Qur'ān is he who accepts Islam only outwardly is absolutely wrong. Likewise, this claim also is wrong that the words *imān* and *mu'min* have been used in the Qur'ān necessarily in the sense of believing sincerely. No doubt, at most places these words have occurred to express the same meaning, but there are many places where these words have also been used for outward affirmation of the faith, and all those who might have entered the Muslim Community with verbal profession have been addressed with: "O you who have believed", no matter whether they are the true believers, or people with a weak faith, or mere hypocrites. For a few instances of this, see Āl-i-'Imrān : 156, An-Nisā' : 136, Al-Mā'idah : 54, Al-Anfāl : 20-27, At-Taubah : 38, Al-Hadīd : 28, Aṣ-Ṣaff : 2.

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QĀF

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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ق QĀF

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah derives its name from the initial letter *Qāf*, thereby implying that it is the Sūrah which opens with the alphabetic letter *Qāf*.

Period of Revelation

There is no authentic tradition to show as to when exactly this Sūrah was sent down. A study of the subject-matter, however, reveals that its period of revelation is the second stage of the Holy Prophet's life at Makkah, which lasted from the third year of the Prophethood till the fifth year. We have given the characteristics of

this period in the Introduction to the Sūrah Al-An'ām. In view of those characteristics it can be said that this Sūrah might have been sent down in about the 5th year, when the antagonism of the disbelievers had become quite intense but had not yet assumed tyrannical proportions.

Theme and Topics

Authentic traditions show that the Holy Prophet used to recite this Sūrah generally in the Prayer on the 'Id days. A woman named Umm Hishām bin Hārithah, who was a neighbour of the Holy Prophet, says that she was able to commit Sūrah Qāf to memory only because she often heard it from the Holy Prophet in the Friday sermons. According to some other traditions he often recited it in the Fajr Prayer. This makes it abundantly clear that this was an important Sūrah in the sight of the Holy Prophet. That is why he made sure that its contents reached as many people as possible over and over again.

This reason for this importance can be easily understood by a careful study of the Sūrah. The theme of the entire Sūrah is the Hereafter. When the Holy Prophet started preaching his message in Makkah what surprised the people most was the news that people would be ressurected after death, and they would have to render an account of their deeds. They said that that was impossible; human mind could not believe that that would happen. After all, how could it be possible that when the body had disintegrated into dust the scattered particles would be reassembled after hundreds of thousands of years to make up the same body once again and raised up as a living body? Allah in response sent down this discourse. In it, on the one hand, arguments have been given for the possibility and occurrence of the Hereafter in a brief way, in short sentences, and, on the other, the people

have been warned, as if to say : "Whether you express wonder and surprise, or you regard it as something remote from reason, or deny it altogether, in any case it cannot change the truth. The absolute, un-alterable truth is that Allah knows the whereabouts of each and every particle of your body that has scattered away in the earth, and knows where and in what state it is. Allah's one signal is enough to make all the scattered particles gather together again and to make you rise up once again as you had been made in the first instance. Likewise, your this idea that you have been created and left free to yourselves in the world and that you have not been made answerable to anyone, is no more than a misunderstanding. The fact is that not only is Allah Himself directly aware of each act and word of yours, even of the ideas that pass in your mind, but His angels also are attached to each one of you, who are preserving the record of whatever you do and utter. When the time comes, you will come out of your graves at one call just as young shoots of vegetable sprout up from the earth on the first shower of the rain. Then this heedlessness which obstructs your vision will be removed and you will see with your own eyes all that you are denying today. At that time you will realize that you had not been created to be irresponsible in this world but accountable to all your deeds ; the meeting out of the rewards and punishments, the Hell and Heaven, which you regard as impossible and imaginary things, will at that time become visible realities for you ; in consequence of your enmity and opposition to the Truth you will be cast into the same Hell which you regard as remote from reason today ; and the ones who fear the Merciful God and return to the path of righteousness, will be admitted to the same Paradise at whose mention you now express wonder and surprise.



قَالَ الْقُرْآنِ الْمَجِيدِ بَلْ عَجِبُوا أَنْ جَاءَهُمْ مُنذِرٌ مِنْهُمْ فَقَالَ
 الْكٰفِرُونَ هَذَا شَيْءٌ عَجِيبٌ ۚ إِذَا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا ذَلِكَ رَجْعٌ بَعِيدٌ ۚ
 قَدْ عَلِمْنَا مَا تَنْقُصُ الْأَرْضُ مِنْهُمْ وَعِنْدَنَا كِتَابٌ حَفِيفٌ ۚ بَلْ كَذَّبُوا
 بِالْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ فَهُمْ فِي أَمْرٍ مَرِيجٍ ۚ أَفَلَمْ يَنْظُرُوا إِلَى السَّمَاءِ فَوْقَهُمْ
 كَيْفَ بَنَيْنَاهَا وَزَيَّنَّاهَا وَمَا لَهَا مِنْ فُرُوجٍ ۚ وَالْأَرْضَ مَدَدْنَاهَا وَالْقَيْنَا
 فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ وَأَنْبَتْنَا فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ زَوْجٍ بَهِيمٍ ۚ تَبَصَّرْهُ وَذَكَرَىٰ لِكُلِّ

L

قَافٍ QĀF

Verses : 45

Revealed at Makkah

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

Qāf. By the glorious Qur'ān!¹—Nay, but they wondered that a warner from among themselves had come to them.² So the disbelievers said, “This is indeed a strange thing : when we are dead and have become dust, (shall we be raised up again)? Such a return is far removed from reason.”³ (Whereas) We know very well whatever the earth consumes of their bodies, and We have a Book which preserves everything.⁴

1-4

Nay, but these people plainly denied the Truth when it came to them. That is why they are confused now⁵.

5

6-8

What!⁶ Have they never looked up to the sky above them, (and observed) how we made it and adorned it⁷ and how there is no flaw in it?⁸ And We spread out the earth and set mountains in it and caused to grow in it every kind of beautiful vegetable.⁹ All these things are eye-openers and object-lessons for every servant who turns (to the Truth).

1. The word "*majīd*" is used for expressing two meanings in Arabic : for expressing the high rank, status, honour and dignity of a person, and for saying that somebody is highly generous, charitable and beneficent. This word has been used for the Qur'ān in both these meanings. The Qur'ān is great and glorious in the sense that no book of the world can be brought up against it. It is a miracle both in its language and literary excellence and in its teaching and wisdom. Humans were helpless to produce the like of it at the time when it was sent down and are likewise helpless even today. Nothing of it could ever be proved wrong in any age, nor can anything of it be proved wrong in the present age. Falsehood can neither attack it from the front nor from the rear, and defeat it. And it is generous and beneficent in the sense that the more a man goes on trying to gain guidance from it, the more of guidance it goes on giving him, and the more he follows and obeys its commands and instructions the more he continues to be blessed with good things of the world and the Hereafter. There is no limit to its benefits and advantages where a man may become independent of it, and where it may cease to be beneficial and useful for him.

2. This sentence is a unique example of eloquence. In it a vast subject has been compressed into a few brief words. The object for which an oath has been sworn by the Qur'ān has not been mentioned. Instead, a subtle gap has been left and the sentence is resumed with "nay". If one thinks a little and also keeps in view the background in which this has been said, one comes to know what is the subject of the gap that has been left between the oath and "nay". In fact, what has been sworn of is this : "The people of Makkah have not refused to acknowledge the Prophethood of Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) for any sound reason but for the highly unsound reason that a member of their own kind and an individual of their own nation has come to them as a warner from God and this is something highly surprising for them ; whereas what would actually be surprising was if God

had remained unconcerned about the well-being and adversity of His servants and made no arrangement whatever to warn them ; or had sent a non-human to warn the human beings ; or a Chinese to warn the Arabs. Therefore, this basis of the denial is absolutely unsound, and a reasonable person cannot but admit that there must exist some arrangement from God to warn the servants, and in the form that the warner himself should be a person from among the people to whom he is sent." As for the question whether Muḥammad (upon whom be Allāh's peace and blessings) is the person whom God has sent on this mission, no other evidence is needed to settle it but this glorious and beneficent Qur'ān, which he is presenting ; this is by itself enough to provide a proof of it.

This explanation shows that in this verse an oath has been sworn by the Qur'ān to impress the point that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) is really the Messenger of Allah and the disbelievers' surprise and wonder about his apostleship is misplaced, and the fact of the Qur'ān's being "*majid*" is a proof of this claim.

3. This was the second cause of their surprise, the first being that a member of their own kind and clan had arisen with the claim that he had come as a warner to them from God. They were further surprised that the person was warning them to the effect that all men will be raised back to life after death and they will be produced all together in the Court of Allah where their deeds will be subjected to accountability and they will be rewarded and punished accordingly.

4. That is, "If it cannot be comprehended by intellect, it is their own narrow mind to blame. It does not mean that Allah's knowledge and power also should be narrow. They think that it is in no way possible to collect the scattered particles of the bodies of the countless human beings who have died since the beginning of creation and will die till Resurrection. But the fact is that Allah directly knows each of those particles in whatever form and in whichever place they are. Furthermore, a full record of this is being maintained in the Register of Allah, which has not left out any particle un-recorded. Then, as soon as Allah commands, His angels will forthwith take out every particle from wherever it is with the help of this record, and will make up the same bodies once again in which human beings had lived and worked in the world."

This verse also is one of those verses which point out that the life hereafter will not only be a physical life as it is in this world,

but the body of every person also will be the same which he had in this world. If it were not so, it would be meaningless to tell the disbelievers: "We know very well whatever the earth consumes of their bodies and We have a Book which preserves everything." (For further explanation, see E.N. 25 of Sūrah Hā Mīm As-Sajdah)

5. In this brief sentence also a vast subject has been compressed. It means this: These people did not rest content only with expressing wonder and declaring the thing to be far removed from reason, but when the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) presented his message of the Truth they denied it as falsehood without any hesitation. Its inevitable result was, and the same only could follow from it, that they are not agreed on any one position with regard to the invitation and the Messenger who has presented it. Sometimes they brand him a poet, sometimes a sorcerer, and sometimes a madman. Sometimes they say that he is a magician and sometimes that he is bewitched. Sometimes they say that he has fabricated this thing by himself in order to establish his superiority, and sometimes they bring the charge that there are some other people at his back, who fabricate these discourses for him. These contradictory accusations show that these people stand utterly confused with regard to their viewpoint. They would never have been involved in this confusion had they not belied the Prophet at the outset in their haste, but had pondered seriously before taking a decision in advance without due thought and consideration as to who was presenting the invitation, what invitation he was presenting, and what arguments he was giving in support of it. Obviously, the person was not a stranger for them; he had not sprung up suddenly from nowhere. He was a member of their own community, who was fully known to them. They were not unaware of his character and his abilities. When an invitation had been presented by such a man, it might not have been accepted immediately, but it did not also deserve to be rejected all at once. Then, what was presented was also not unreasonable. He was presenting arguments for it. It was necessary that his arguments should have been heard seriously and examined without prejudice and seen as to how far they were rational. But instead of adopting such an attitude, when they belied them in their stubbornness at the outset, the result was that they themselves closed on themselves the one door of reaching the truth and opened many doors of straying about here and there. Now in order to persist in their initial error, they can even invent ten contradictory

things but are not prepared to give due thought to the one thing that a Prophet also can be true and what he presents can also be the truth.

6. After exposing the fallacies of the standpoint of the disbelievers of Makkah in the first five verses, now it is being pointed out as to what are the arguments for the authenticity of the news which Muḥammed (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) has given of the Hereafter. Here, one should fully understand that of the two things about which the disbelievers were expressing wonder and surprise, two arguments for the authenticity of the first, i.e. the Prophethood of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings), have already been given at the outset: first, that he is presenting before them the glorious Qur'ān, which is an obvious proof of his being a Prophet; second, that he is a member of their own kind and clan and community: he has not descended suddenly from heaven or appeared from some other land so that it should be difficult for them to examine and judge his life and character and see whether he is a trustworthy man or not, and whether the Qur'ān can be, or cannot be, his own fabrication; therefore, their expression of wonder at his claim to Prophethood is in error. This reasoning has been presented in the form of two brief allusions instead of presenting it in detail. For at the time when Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) himself was standing in Makkah and reciting the Qur'ān to the people, who had known and seen him grow up from childhood to youth and mature manhood before their eyes, the full meaning of these allusions was by itself clear and evident to every person. Therefore, leaving it aside, detailed reasoning is now being presented about the authenticity of the second thing which those people regarded as strange and far removed from reason and intellect.

7. Here, by the sky is implied the whole firmament that man finds spread over him, day and night, in which the sun shines in the day and the moon and countless stars glitter at night, which amazes him even when he sees it with the bare eye, but which appears as a vast, limitless Universe when he looks at it through the telescope. It seems to be starting from nowhere and ending nowhere. Millions of times larger planets than our earth are moving in it like tiny balls; thousands of times brighter stars than our sun are shining in it; our this entire solar system is located in a corner of its only one

(Contd. on page 136)

عَبْدٍ مُنِيبٍ ۖ وَ نَزَّلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً مُبْرَكًا فَأَنْبَتْنَا بِهِ جَنَّاتٍ وَ حَبَّ
الْحَصِيدِ ۖ وَ النَّخْلَ بَسِطًا لَهَا طَلْعٌ نَضِيدٌ ۖ رِزْقًا لِلْعِبَادِ ۖ وَأَحْيَيْنَا بِهِ
بَلَدَةً مَيْتًا ۖ كَذَلِكَ الْخُرُوجُ ۖ كَذَبَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ نُوحٍ وَ أَصْحَابُ الرَّسِّ
وَ شُعُوبٌ ۖ وَ عَادٌ وَ فِرْعَوْنُ وَ إِخْوَانُ لُوطٍ ۖ وَ أَصْحَابُ الْأَيْكَةِ وَ قَوْمُ
تَبَعٍ ۖ كُلٌّ كَذَّبَ الرُّسُلَ فَحَقَّ وَعِيدِ ۖ أَفَعَيْنَا بِالْخَلْقِ الْأَوَّلِ بَلْ هُمْ
فِي لَبْسٍ مِّنْ خَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ ۖ وَ لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ وَ نَعَلَمُ مَا تُوَسَّوَسُ
بِهِ نَفْسُهُ ۖ وَ نَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ حَبْلِ الْوَرِيدِ ۖ إِذْ يَتَلَقَّى الْمُتَلَقِينَ
عَنِ الْيَمِينِ وَ عَنِ الشَّمَالِ يُعْجِدُ ۖ مَا يَلْفِظُ مِنْ قَوْلٍ إِلَّا لَدَيْهِ رَقِيبٌ
عَتِيدٌ ۖ وَ جَاءَتْ سَكْرَةُ الْمَوْتِ بِالْحَقِّ ۖ ذَلِكُمْ مَا كُنْتُمْ مِنْهُ تَجِدُونَ ۖ وَ
نُفَخَ فِي الصُّورِ ۖ ذَلِكُمْ يَوْمُ الْوَعِيدِ ۖ وَ جَاءَتْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّعَهَا سَائِقٌ وَ
شَهِيدٌ ۖ لَقَدْ كُنْتُمْ فِي غَفْلَةٍ مِّنْ هَذَا فَكَشَفْنَا عَنْكُمْ غِطَاءَكُمُ فَبَصُرَكُمُ
الْيَوْمَ حَدِيدٌ ۖ وَ قَالَ قَرِينُهُ هَذَا مَا لَدَايَ عَتِيدٌ ۖ أَلْقِيَا فِي جَهَنَّمَ كُلَّ
كَفَّارٍ عَنِيدٍ ۖ مَّتَابِعٍ لِّلْخَيْرِ مُعْتَدٍ ۖ مُّرِيبٍ ۖ الَّذِي جَعَلَ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ
فَأَلْقِيَهُ فِي الْعَذَابِ الشَّدِيدِ ۖ قَالَ قَرِينُهُ رَبَّنَا مَا أَطَّغَيْتَهُ وَ لَكِنْ كَانَ
فِي ضَلَالٍ بَعِيدٍ ۖ قَالَ لَا تَخْتَصِمُوا لَدَايَ وَ قَدْ قَدَّمْتُ إِلَيْكُمْ بِالْوَعِيدِ ۖ
مَا يُبَدِّلُ الْقَوْلَ لَدَايَ وَ مَا أَنَا بِظَالِمٍ لِّلْعَبِيدِ ۖ يَوْمَ نَقُولُ لِجَهَنَّمَ هَلِ
أَمْتَلَاتِ وَ تَقُولُ هَلْ مِنْ مَزِيدٍ ۖ وَ أُنزِلَتِ الْجَنَّةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ غَيْرَ بَعِيدٍ ۖ هَذَا مَا
تُوعَدُونَ لِكُلِّ أَوَّابٍ حَفِيظٍ ۖ مَنْ خَشِيَ الرَّحْمَنَ الْغَيْبِ وَ جَاءَ بِقَلْبٍ مُنِيبٍ ۖ
ادْخُلُوهَا بِسَلَامٍ ۖ ذَلِكُمْ يَوْمُ الْخُلُودِ ۖ لَكُمْ نَارُ يَتَشَاءُونَ فِيهَا وَ لَدَيْنَا مَزِيدٌ ۖ وَ كَرَّم

ع ١٥
١٥

ع ١٦
١٦

9-11

And from the sky We sent down blessed water where- by We produced gardens and harvest grain and tall palm-trees laden with clusters of fruit, piled one over another. This is the arrangement to provide food for the servants. With this water We revive a dead land;¹⁰ such also will be the resurrection (of the dead from the earth).¹¹

Before them the people of Noah and the people of the Rass¹² and Thamūd also denied, and so did 'Ad and Pharaoh¹³ and the brethren of Lot and the dwellers of Aiykah and the people of Tubba'.^{14,15} Every one denied the Messengers,¹⁶ and consequently My scourge proved true against them.¹⁷

What! were We powerless in case of the first creation? Yet these people are in doubt concerning a new creation.¹⁸

15

We¹⁹ have created man and know every evil suggestion that arises in his heart : We are even closer to him than his neck-vein.²⁰ (And besides this direct knowledge of Ours) two scribes, sitting on his right and on his left, are recording everything. He utters not a word but there is an ever ready observer to note it down.²¹ Then behold, the agony of death has come with the truth.²² This is the same thing that you were trying to escape.²³ And then the Trumpet was blown.²⁴ This is the Day of which you were threatened. Every person has come in a state that there is a driver with him and a witness.²⁵ You were heedless of this. We have removed your curtain from you, so your sight is very sharp today.²⁶ His companion submitted, "Here is the one who was given in my charge."²⁷ It was commanded, "Cast into Hell²⁸ every stubborn disbeliever,²⁹ who was hostile to the Truth, who was a forbiddor of the good,³⁰ a transgressor,³¹ a doubter³² and who had set up another god with Allah. Cast him into severe torment."³³ His companion

10-29

submitted, "Our Lord, I did not cause him to rebel, but he himself had gone far astray."³⁴ In reply it was said, "Do not dispute in My Presence : I had already warned you of the evil end.³⁵ My sentence cannot be changed³⁶ nor am I unjust to My servants."³⁷

30-35

The Day when We shall ask Hell, "Are you full?" it will say, "Is there any more?"³⁸ And Paradise shall be brought close to the righteous, no longer distant.³⁹ It will be said, "This is that which was promised to you, to every such person who turned (to God) again and again,⁴⁰ who was watchful,⁴¹ who feared the Merciful, unseen,⁴² and who has come with a devoted heart.⁴³ Enter Paradise in peace."⁴⁴ That Day will be the Day of eternal life. There they shall have all that they will desire, and We have with Us yet more for them.⁴⁵

(Contd. from page 133)

galaxy ; only in this one galaxy there exist at least three thousand million other stars like our own sun, and man's observation has so far discovered one million such galaxies. Out of the lacs of galaxies our nearest, neighbouring galaxy is so distant from us that its light reaches the earth in ten lac years travelling at the speed of 186,000 miles per second. This shows the vastness of that part of the Universe which has so far been observed and explored by man. As to how vast is the entire Universe of God we have no means to estimate and judge. Maybe that the known Universe of man does not bear with the entire Universe even that ratio which a drop of water bears with the ocean. If about the God Who has brought this huge and wonderful Universe into being, this tiny talking animal, called man, who creeps the earth, asserts that He cannot recreate him once again after death, it would be due to narrowness of his own mind. The power of the Creator of the Universe would not at all be affected by it !

8. That is, "In spite of its amazing vastness the wonderful order of the Universe is so coherent and firm and its composition so perfect that there is no crack or cleft in it, and its continuity breaks nowhere. This can be understood by an example. Radio astronomers of the present age have observed a galactic system

which they have named Source 30 295. They think that its rays which are now reaching us might have left it more than four thousand million years ago. The question is : How could it be possible for the rays to reach the earth from such a distant source had the continuity and coherence of the Universe between the earth and the galaxy been broken somewhere and its composition been split at some point. Allah, in fact, alludes to this reality and puts this question before man : "When you cannot point out even a small breach in this system of My Universe, how did the concept of any weakness in My power enter your mind, that after the respite of your test is over, if I like to bring you back to life to subject you to accountability before Me, I would not be able to do so ?"

This is not only a proof of the possibility of the Hereafter but also a proof of *Tauhid*. These rays' reaching the earth from a distance of four thousand million light years and being detected by the man-made instruments expressly points to the fact that from the galaxy to the earth the entire world has been made up of one and the same substance continuously, one and the same kind of the forces are working in it, and they are functioning according to the same laws without any difference and disparity. Were it not so the rays could neither have reached here, nor detected by the instruments which man had made after understanding the laws working on the earth and its surroundings. This proves that One God alone is the Creator of this whole Universe and its Master and Ruler and Controller.

9. For explanation, see E.N.'s 12, 13, 14 of An-Nahl, E.N.'s 73, 74 of An-Naml, and E. N. 7 of Az-Zukhruf.

10. For explanation, see E.N.'s 73, 74, 81 of An-Naml, E.N.'s 25, 33, 35 of Ar-Rūm and E.N. 29 of Yā Sīn.

11. The reasoning is this : "Your conjecture about God Who made this sphere of the earth a suitable home for living creatures and Who by combining the lifeless clay of the earth with the lifeless water from the sky produced such a fine vegetable life that you witness flourishing in the form of your gardens and crops, and Who made the vegetation a means of sustenance for both man and beast, that He has no power to resurrect you after death, is a foolish and absurd conjecture. You witness almost daily the phenomenon that a land is lying barren and lifeless ; then as soon as it receives a shower of rain, it gives birth to an endless train of life all of a

sudden, the roots lying dead for ages sprout up and a variety of insects emerge playfully from the layers of the earth. This is a manifest proof that life after death is not impossible. When you cannot deny this express observation of yours, how can you deny that when Allah wills, you too will sprout up from the earth as the vegetation sprouts up. In this connection, one may note that in many parts of Arabia it does not sometimes rain for as long as five years at a stretch and sometimes even for longer periods the land does not receive even a drop of rain. For such long intervals in the burning deserts it is not conceivable that the roots of grass and the insects of the earth would survive. In spite of this when a little of the rain falls at some place, grass sprouts up and the insects of the earth return to life. Therefore, the inhabitants of Arabia can understand this reasoning much better than those people who do not have to experience such long periods of drought.

12. Before this the people of Rass (*Aṣḥāb ar-Rass*) have been mentioned in Sūrah Al-Furqān : 38 above, and now here, but at both places they have been only referred to as of those nations who rejected the Prophets. No other detail about them has been given. In the traditions of Arabia two places are well known by the name of ar-Rass, one in the Najd and the other in northern Ḥejāz. Of these ar-Rass of the Najd is better known and has been referred to more often in the pre-Islamic poetry of Arabia. Now it is difficult to determine which of these was the home of the *Aṣḥāb ar-Rass*. No reliable detail of their story is found in any tradition either. The most that one can say with certainty is that it was a nation which had thrown its Prophet into a well. But from the mere allusion that has been made to them in the Qur'ān one is led to think that in the time of the revelation of the Qur'ān the Arabs were generally aware of this nation and its history, but the traditions about them could not be preserved in historic records.

13. Only the Pharaoh has been mentioned instead of the people of Pharaoh, for he had so dominated his people that they had been left with no independent opinion and will of their own, apart from him. They followed him willy-nilly wherever he led them. That is why he alone was held responsible for the deviation and degeneration of his people. Wherever there exists the freedom of will and action for a nation, it by itself bears the burden of its deeds, and wherever one man's dictatorship may have rendered a nation powerless the one man alone takes on his head the burden of the sins of entire

nation. This does not mean that the nation becomes absolved from its duty and responsibility when the one man alone has burdened himself with the responsibility. This is not so. The nation in such a case becomes responsible for the moral weakness shown by it in that why it allowed a man to overpower and dominate it so completely. The same thing has been alluded to in Az-Zukhruf: 54, thus: "Pharaoh took his people to be light, and they obeyed him, for they were indeed a sinful people." (For explanation, see E.N. 50 of Sūrah Az-Zukhruf).

14 For explanation, see E.N. 37 of Sūrah Sabā ; E.N. 32 of Sūrah Dukhān.

15. That is, they all denied the apostleship of their Messengers as well as the news given by them that they will be raised back to life after death.

16. Although every nation denied only the Messenger who was sent to it, as it denied the news which all the Messengers have been presenting unanimously, denying one Messenger, therefore, amounted to denying all of them. Moreover, these nations did not merely deny the apostleship of the Messenger who had come to them, but they were not at all inclined to believe that a mere human could be appointed by Allah for the guidance of other men. Therefore, they denied apostleship itself, and the crime of no one was confined to belying and rejecting any one Messenger only.

17. This is a reasoning from history for the Hereafter. In the preceding six verses, arguments were given for the possibility of the Hereafter ; in these the historical end of the nations of Arabia and the adjoining lands has been presented as an argument to prove that the doctrine of the Hereafter which all the Prophets have been presenting, is the very truth, for whichever nation denied it became involved in the moral degeneration of the worst kind with the result that the torment of God descended on it and eliminated it from the world. This necessary result of the denial of the Hereafter and moral perversion which one can witness throughout history, is an express proof of the fact that man has not been created to be irresponsible in this world, but he has necessarily to render an account of his deeds as soon as the time limit for action at his disposal comes to an end. That is why whenever he works in the world irresponsibly, his whole life pattern is set on the path of ruin. If evil and wrong results go on following a course of action successively, it is a clear proof that that course of action is in conflict with the truth.

18. This is a rational argument for the Hereafter. The person who is not a denier of God and is also not so foolish as to regard this excellently ordered Universe and the creation of man in it as a mere accident, cannot help but admit that God alone has created man and this whole Universe. Now this actual fact that we exist alive in this world and this great work-house of the earth and heavens is functioning before us, by itself is an obvious proof that God was in no way powerless in creating us and this Universe. Yet if a man says that after bringing about Resurrection the same God will not be able to bring about a new world order and will not be able to create us once again, he says an irrational thing. Had God been powerless He would not have been able to create all this in the first instance. When He has created the Universe in the first instance and we ourselves came into existence by virtue of that act of creation, what can then be the rational ground for assuming that He will become powerless to re-make the dismantled thing originally made by Himself ?

19. After presenting the arguments for the Hereafter, it is being stated : "Whether you believe in the Hereafter, or deny it, it has to come in any case, and it is such a factual reality, which will certainly come about in spite of your denial. If you heed the warning given by the Prophets in advance and prepare for it, you will be doing good to yourselves ; if you do not believe in it, you will be inviting your own doom. Your denial will not prevent the Hereafter from taking place and God's Law of justice will not become suspended."

20. That is, "Our power and Our knowlege has so encompassed man from within and without that Our power and knowledge is closer to him than his own neck-vein. We do not have to travel from a distance to hear what he says, but We directly know every thought that arises in his heart. Likewise, when We shall want to seize him, We will not have to seize him after covering a distance, for wherever he is, he is in Our grasp ; and whenever We will, We will seize him."

21. That is, "On the one hand, We Ourself directly know man's actions and movements, even his hidden thoughts ; on the other, every man has two angels appointed over him, who are recording whatever he does and says ; none of his actions or words is left un-recorded." This means that when man is produced in the Court of Allah, Allah at that time Himself also will be knowing what each

person has done in the world ; besides, there will also be two witnesses who will produce documentary evidence of the person's actions and deeds. As to what will be the nature of this documentary evidence, it is difficult for us to have a precise conception of it. But from the facts that we are witnessing today, it seems certain that the voices and pictures and marks of man's actions and movements are being preserved and imprinted on every particle of the environment in which he lives and works, and each one of these can be reproduced in exactly the same form and voice so as to leave no difference whatever between the original and its copy. Man is doing this on a very limited scale with the help of his inventions, but the angels of God neither stand in need of these machines nor are bound by any limitation. Man's own body and everything around it is their tape and their film upon which they can record every voice and every image along with its minutest and most delicate detail precisely and exactly, and can make man hear, on the Day of Resurrection, with his own ears, in his own voice, those very things which he talked in the world, and can make him see, with his own eyes, the pictures of all his misdeeds, whose genuineness he would not possibly be able to deny.

Here, one should also understand that in the Court of the Hereafter Allah will not punish anybody only on the basis of His own knowledge, but will punish him after fulfilling all the requirements of justice. That is why an exhaustive record is being got prepared of every person's words and deeds in the world so that a complete proof with undeniable evidence becomes available of everyone's life-work and activity.

22. "To come with the truth" implies that the agony of death is the starting point when the reality which had remained concealed in the world, begins to be uncovered. At this point man starts seeing clearly the other world of which the Prophet had forewarned him. Here, man also comes to know that the Hereafter is the very truth, and also this whether he is entering this second stage of life as favoured or damned.

23. That is, "This is the same reality which you refused to believe. You desired that you should live and go about as an unbridled rogue in the world, and there should be no other life after death, in which you may have to suffer for the consequences of your deeds. That is why you shunned the concept of the Hereafter and were not at all inclined to believe that this next world would ever

be established. Now, you may see that the same next world is unveiling itself before you."

24. This implies that blowing of the Trumpet at which all dead men will rise back to life in their own physical bodies. For explanation, see E.N.47 of Al-An'ām, E.N. 57 of Ibrāhīm, E.N. 78 of Ṭā Hā, E.N.1 of Al-Hajj, E.N.'s 46,47 of Yā Sīn, and E.N. 79 of Az-Zumar.

25. Most probably this implies the same two angels who had been appointed for compiling the record of the words and deeds of the person in the world. On the Day of Resurrection, when every man will rise from his grave on the sounding of the Trumpet, the two angels will come forth immediately and take him into their custody. One of them will drive him to the Divine Court and the other will be carrying his record.

26. That is, "You can clearly see that everything of which the Prophets foretold is present here."

27. Some commentators say that "the companion" implies the angel who has been referred to as "a witness" in verse 21. He will say: "I have this person's record ready with me here". Some other commentators say that "the companion" implies the satan who was attached to the person in the world. He will say: "This person whom I was controlling and preparing for Hell, is now presented before You." But the commentary that is more relevant to the context is the one that has been reported from Qatādah and Ibn Zaid. They say that the companion implies the angel who drove and brought the person to Allah's Court. He will say, "Here is the person who had been given in my charge."

28. As the context shows this command will be given to the two angels who had taken the culprit into their custody as soon as he had risen from the grave, and then brought him before the Court."

29. The word "*kaffār*" as used in the Text means an ungrateful person as well as a denier of the truth.

30. "*Khair*" in Arabic is used both for wealth and for goodness. According to the first meaning, the sentence means that he paid no one his dues from his wealth, neither the dues of Allah nor of the people. According to the second meaning, it would mean that he did not only withhold himself from the path of goodness but forbade others also to follow it. He had become a hindrance for the people in the way of goodness and exerted his utmost to see that goodness did not spread.

31. That is, "He transgressed the bounds of morality in everything he did. He was ever ready to do anything and everything for the sake of his interests, his desires and his lusts. He amassed wealth by unlawful means and spent it in unlawful ways. He usurped the people's rights, had neither control over his tongue nor over his hands, and committed every injustice and excess. He did not rest content with creating hindrances in the way of goodness but harassed those who adopted goodness and persecuted those who worked for it."

32. The word "*murib*" as used in the original has two meanings : a doubter, and the one who puts others in doubt, and both are implied here. It means that he was not only himself involved in doubt but also created doubts in the hearts of others. He held as doubtful the Being of Allah and the Hereafter and the angels and the Prophethood and Revelation and every other truth of religion. Anything that was presented by the Prophets as a truth was held as unbelievable by him, and the same disease he spread to other people. Whomever he came in contact with, he would create one or the other doubt, one or the other evil thought in his mind.

33. Allah, in these verses, has enumerated the qualities that make a man worthy of Hell : (1) Denial of the Truth, (2) ingratitude to Allah, (3) enmity for the Truth and the followers of the Truth, (4) to become a hindrance in the way of goodness, (5) failure to fulfil the rights of Allah and the people from one's wealth, (6) to transgress the bounds in one's affairs, (7) to commit injustices and excesses against others, (8) to doubt the truths of religion, (9) to create doubts in the hearts of the people, and (10) to hold another as an associate in the Godhead of Allah.

34. Here by "companion" is meant the satan who was attached to the disobedient person in the world. And this also becomes evident from the style that both the person and his satan are disputing between themselves in the Court of Allah. He says : "My Lord, this wretched one pursued me in the world and did not leave me until he succeeded in misleading me ; therefore he alone should be punished." And the satan replies : "Lord, I had no power over him. Had he not himself willed to become rebellious, I could not have seduced him forcibly. This wretched person himself fled from goodness and was fascinated by evil. That is why he did not like anything that the Prophets presented and went on yielding to every temptation and inducement presented by me."

35. That is, "I had warned both of you as to what punishment will be given to the one who beguiles and what punishment will be suffered by him who is beguiled. In spite of this warning when you did not desist from committing your respective crimes, there is no use quarreling now. Both the one who beguiled and the one who was beguiled have to be punished for the crimes committed by them."

36. That is, "It is not My way to change the decisions once taken. The decision that I have taken to cast you into Hell cannot be withdrawn, nor can the law that I had announced in the world be changed that the punishment for misleading and for being misled will be awarded in the Hereafter."

37. The word *zallām* as used in the original means the one who is highly unjust. It does not mean: "I am unjust to My servants but not highly unjust." But it means: "If I were unjust to My own servants being their Creator and Sustainer, I would be highly unjust. Therefore, I am not at all unjust to My servants. This punishment that I am giving you is precisely the same punishment which you have made yourselves worthy of. You are not being punished an iota more than what you actually deserve, for My Court is a Court of impartial justice. Here, no one can receive a punishment which he does not actually deserve, and for which his being worthy has not been proved by certain and undeniable evidence."

38. This can have two meanings: (1) "There is no room in me for more men;" and (2) "bring all other culprits who may be there." According to the first meaning the scene depicted would be that Hell has been so stuffed up with culprits that it cannot hold any more; so much so that when it was asked: "Are you full?" it cried out, alarmed: "Are there still more culprits to come?" According to the second meaning, the scene depicted before the mind is that the wrath of Hell is so flared up against the culprits that it is constantly demanding more and more of them to be cast into it so that no culprit escapes un-punished."

Here, the question arises: What is the nature of Allah Almighty's addressing Hell and its reply? Is it only something metaphoric, or is Hell actually a living and intelligent being which may be spoken to and it may respond and give replies? In this regard nothing can, in fact, be said with certainty. Maybe the meaning

is metaphoric and only for the purpose of depicting the actual scene of the state of Hell it may have been described in the form of the question and answer, just as one may ask a motor-car : "Why don't you move forward ?" and it may say : "There is no petrol in me." But this also is quite possible that this conversation is based on reality. Therefore, it is not correct to assume about the things which are lifeless and mute for us in the world that they would be lifeless and mute for Allah as well. The Creator can have communion with any of His creatures and each of His creatures can respond to Him, no matter how incomprehensible its language may be for us.

39. That is, "As soon as a judgement will be passed about a person from the Court of Allah that he is righteous and worthy of Paradise, he will immediately find Paradise in front of him. He will not have to travel a distance on foot or by a conveyance to reach it, and there will be no interval between the pronouncement of the judgement and his entry into Paradise. He will enter Paradise immediately on the pronouncement of the judgement as if he has not been conveyed to Paradise but Paradise itself has been brought before him. From this it can be judged how different will be the concept of space and time in the Hereafter from our concepts in this world. The concepts of time and distance and nearness with which we are familiar in this world will become meaningless there."

40. The word *awwāb* is very extensive in meaning. It implies the person who might have adopted the way of obedience and Allah's goodwill instead of the way of disobedience and the flesh, who gives up everything that is disapproved by Allah and adopts everything that is approved by him, who gets alarmed as soon as he swerves a little from the path of worship and obedience and repents and returns to the path of worship and obedience, who remembers Allah much and turns to Him in all matters of life.

41. The word *hafiz* means the "one who guards." This implies the person who takes care of the bounds and duties enjoined by Allah, who guards the trusts imposed by Allah and avoids the things forbidden by him, who keeps watch over his time, energies and activities to see that none of these is being misemployed or misused, who offers repentance, remains steadfast and keeps it strong and intact, who examines himself over and over again to see that he is not disobeying his Lord anywhere, in word or deed.

(Contd. on page 147)

أَهْلَكْنَا قَبْلَهُمْ مِنْ قَرْنٍ هُمْ أَشَدُّ مِنْهُمْ بَطْشًا فَنَقَّبُوا فِي الْبِلَادِ ۗ مَلٌ
 مِنْ تَحِيصٍ ۗ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَذِكْرًا لِمَنْ كَانَ لَهُ قَلْبٌ أَوْ أَلْقَى السَّمْعَ
 وَهُوَ شَهِيدٌ ۗ وَ لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ۗ
 وَمَا مَسَّنَا مِنْ لُغُوبٍ ۗ فَاصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا يَقُولُونَ وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ قَبْلَ
 طُلُوعِ الشَّمْسِ وَقَبْلَ الْغُرُوبِ ۗ وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَسَبِّحْهُ وَ آذْبَارَ السُّجُودِ ۗ
 وَاسْتَمِعْ يَوْمَ يُنَادِي الْمُنَادِ مِنْ مَكَانٍ قَرِيبٍ ۗ يَوْمَ يَسْمَعُونَ الصَّيْحَةَ
 بِالْحَقِّ ۗ ذَلِكَ يَوْمُ الْخُرُوجِ ۗ إِنَّا نَحْنُ نُحْيِي وَنُمِيتُ وَ إِيْنَا الْمَصِيرُ ۗ يَوْمَ
 تَشَقَّقُ الْأَرْضُ عَنْهُمْ سِرَاعًا ۗ ذَلِكَ حَشْرٌ عَلَيْنَا يَسِيرٌ ۗ نَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا
 يَقُولُونَ وَمَا أَنْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِجَبَّارٍ فَذَكَرْ بِالْقُرْآنِ مَنْ يَتَخَفُ وَعِيدِ ۗ

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36-37

We have destroyed many nations before them, who were much stronger than they in power, and they ransacked all the lands;⁴⁶ then, could they find a place of refuge?⁴⁷ Indeed, in this there is a lesson for every such person who has a heart, or who gives ear and listens with attention.⁴⁸

38-40

We created the heavens and the earth and all that lies between them in six days,⁴⁹ and no fatigue overcame Us. Therefore, O Prophet, bear with patience whatever they say,⁵⁰ and keep up glorifying your Lord with His praise, before sunrise and before sunset. And glorify Him again in the night and also when you are free from prostrations.⁵¹

٤١-٤٤

And listen! The Day when the caller shall call out from near (every person),⁵² the Day when all the people shall be hearing the Cry rightly,⁵³ shall be the Day of the coming out of the dead from the earth. It is We Who bestow life and give death and to Us shall all

return on that Day, when the earth shall split asunder and the people shall be rushing out of it in all haste. This gathering together is very easy for Us.⁵⁴

O Prophet, We know very well what they say;⁵⁵ and 45
you are not there to compel them into believing. Therefore, admonish with this Qur'ān every such person who fears My warning.⁵⁶

(Contd. from page 145)

42. That is, "Although he could not see the Merciful God and could not perceive Him by his senses in any way, yet he feared His disobedience. His heart was more dominated by the fear of the unseen Merciful God than the fear of other perceptible powers and visible and mighty beings, and in spite of knowing that He is All-Merciful, he did not become a sinner, trusting His Mercy, but feared His displeasure in whatever he said and did. Thus, this verse points to two of the believer's important and basic characteristics: first, that he fears God although he cannot see and perceive Him; second, that he does not persist in sin in spite of his full awareness of God's quality of mercy. These very two characteristics make him worthy of honour in the sight of Allah. Besides, there is another subtle point also in it, which Imām Razi has pointed out. In Arabic, there are two words for fear, *khauf* and *khashiyyat*, which have a difference in their shade of meaning. The word *khauf* is generally used for the fear that a man feels in his heart on account of his sense of weakness as against someone's superior power and strength, and the word *khashiyyat* is used for the dread and awe with which a man is filled and inspired because of somebody's glory and grandeur and greatness. Here, the word *khashiyyat* has been used instead of *khauf*, which is meant to point out that a believer does not fear Allah only on account of the fear of His punishment, but it is the sense of Allah's glory and greatness that keeps him awe-inspired at all times.

43. The word *munib* in the original is derived from *inābat*, which means to turn to one direction and to turn to the same again and again, just like the needle of the compass that points to the magnetic north persistently, however one may try to turn it away from that direction. Therefore, *qalb-i-munib* would mean such a heart as has turned away from every other direction and turned towards One Allah alone and then kept on turning towards Him

again and again throughout life. The same sense has been conveyed by the "devoted heart." This shows that in the sight of Allah the man of real worth is he who remains attached and devoted to Allah alone not merely verbally but also truly and sincerely.

44. If the word *salām* in *udkhulū-hā bi-salām-in* is taken in the meaning of peace and security, it would mean: "Enter this Paradise safe and secure from every kind of grief, sorrow, anxiety and affliction"; and if it is taken in the meaning of *salām* itself, it would mean: "Enter this Paradise: you are welcomed here with the greeting of peace by Allah and his angels."

In these verses Allah has mentioned the qualities because of which a person makes himself worthy of Paradise, and they are: (1) *Taqvā* (piety), (2) turning towards Allah, (3) watching over and guarding one's relationship with Allah, (4) fearing Allah although one has not seen Him, and has full faith in His quality of mercy, and (5) coming into His Presence with a devoted and captivated heart, i.e. remaining constant on the way of devotion and dedication till death.

45. That is, "They will certainly get whatever they desire, but in addition We will also give them that which they have never conceived and, therefore, could not desire."

46. That is, "They were not only powerful and strong in their own land but had also made incursions into other lands and brought under their sway far off lands as well."

47. That is, "Could their power and might save them when the time appointed by Allah came for their seizure? And could they find shelter and refuge anywhere? Now, on what trust do you hope that you will get refuge somewhere in the world when you have rebelled against Allah?"

48. In other words, either one should have so much of native intelligence that one may think right of one's own accord, or if not so, one should be so free from prejudice and neglect that one may listen with attention when another person tries to make one understand the truth.

49. For explanation, see E.N.'s 11 to 15 of the commentary of *Sūrah Hā Mīm As-Sajdah*.

50. That is, "The fact of the matter is that We have made this entire Universe in six days and We did not become weary at the end so that We might be powerless to reconstruct it. Now, if

these ignorant people mock you when they hear the news of the life-after-death from you and call you a madman, have patience at it, listen to whatever nonsense they utter with a cool mind, and continue to preach the truth that you have been appointed to spread."

In this verse, there is a subtle taunt on the Jews and the Christians as well, in whose Bible the story has been fabricated that God made the earth and the heavens in six days and rested on the seventh day (Gen., 2 : 2). Although the Christian priests are now feeling shy of it and have changed "rested" into "*fārigh hū ā*" (ceased from working) in their Urdū translation of the Holy Bible, yet in King James Authorised Version of the Bible, the words "... and he rested on the seventh day" are still there, and the same words are also found in the translation that the Jews have published from Philadelphia in 1954. In the Arabic translation also the words are : *fastrāḥa fil-yaum as sābi*'.

51. This is the means by which man gets the power and energy to continue his struggle to raise the Word of the Truth and to call the people towards righteousness throughout life with full determination even though he may have to pass through heart-breaking and soul-destroying conditions and his efforts may seem to be bearing no fruit. Praising and glorifying the Lord implies the Prayer here, and wherever in the Qur'ān the praise and glorification has been associated with specific times, it implies the Prayer. The Prayer "before sunrise" is the Fajr Prayer, and the Prayers "before sunset" are the 'Aṣr and the Zuhr Prayers. The Prayers in the night are the Maghrib and the 'Ishā' Prayers, and the third, the Tahajjud Prayer, is also included in the glorification of the night. (For explanation, see E.N. 111 of Ṭā Hā ; E.N.'s 23, 24 of Ar-Rūm). As for the glorification that has been commanded after "being free from prostrations", it may imply the after-Prayer devotions as well as the offering of the voluntary prayers at the end of the prescribed obligatory Prayers. Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, Ḥaḍrat 'Alī, Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan bin 'Alī, Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, Ibn 'Abbās, Sha'bī, Mujāhid, 'Ikrimah Ḥasan Baṣri, Qatādah, Ibrahim Nakha'i and Auzā'i say that it implies the two *rak'ats* after the Maghrib Prayer. Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin 'Āṣ, and according to a tradition, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās also, held the opinion that it implies the after-Prayer devotions, and Ibn Zaid says that the object of this Command is that voluntary Prayers also should be offered after the prescribed obligatory Prayers.

According to a tradition reported in Bukhārī and Muslim, on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, once the poor emigrants from Makkah came before the Holy Prophet, and said: "O Messenger of Allah, the rich people have attained high ranks for themselves. The Holy Prophet asked: What has happened? They said: They offer the Prayers as we offer, and they observe the Fasts as we observe; but they practise charity, which we cannot, and they set the slaves free which we cannot. The Holy Prophet said: Should I tell you a thing which if you practised, you would surpass all others, except those who practised the same that you practised? It is this that you should pronounce *Subhān-Allāh*, *al-Hamdu-lillāh* and *Allāh-u-Akbar*, 33 times each after every Prayer." After some time, the same people came and said: "Our rich brothers also have heard this and they too have started practising it." Thereupon the Holy Prophet said: "This is Allah's bounty and He bestows it on whomever He wills." According to a tradition these devotional words have to be repeated ten times each instead of 33 times each.

Ḥaḍrat Zaid bin Thābit has reported that the Holy Prophet instructed his Companions that they should pronounce *Subhān-Allāh* and *al-Hamdu-lillāh* 33 times each and *Allāh-u-Akbar* 34 times after every Prayer. Afterwards an Anṣār Companion submitted: "I have seen in a vision that somebody was telling me that it would be better if I pronounced these three devotional words 25 times each and then *Lā ilāha ill-Allāh* 25 times. The Holy Prophet replied: Well, you may do likewise." (Aḥmad, Nasā'ī, Dārimī).

Ḥaḍrat Abū Sa'īd Khudrī says: "I have heard the Holy Prophet pronounce the following words when he would return after the Prayers were over: *Subhāna Rabbika Rabbil-'izzat-i 'ammā yasifūn wa salām-un 'alal-mursalīn, wal-hamdu lillāh-i Rabb-il-'ālamīn.*" (Jaṣṣāṣ *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*).

Besides these, several other forms of the after-Prayer devotional pronouncements also have been reported from the Holy Prophet. Those who wish to act on this instruction of the Qur'ān may select the one they find suitable from *Mishkāt: Bāb adh-dhikr ba'd aṣ-Ṣalāt*, commit it to memory and practise it. Nothing can be better than what the Holy Prophet himself has taught in this regard. But what one should bear in mind is that the real object of the devotional pronouncements is not to utter these words only as a matter of course but to refresh and fix their meaning in the mind. Therefore, the meaning of whatever devotions one pronounces should be

understood well and then practised with full consciousness of the meaning.

52. That is, "Wherever a dead person would be lying, or wherever his death had occurred in the world, the cry of the caller shall reach him there, which will urge him to rise and go before his Lord to render his account. This cry will be such that everybody who rises from death anywhere on the surface of the earth, will feel as though the caller had called him from a nearby place. Simultaneously will this cry be heard everywhere on the globe equally clearly. From this also one can judge how different will be the concepts of space and time in the next world from what they are in this world, and what forces will be working there in accordance with the new laws."

53. The words *yasma'ūn-as-ṣaiḥata bil-ḥaqq-i* can have two meanings : (1) That all the people will be hearing the cry of the right Command ; and (2) that they will be hearing the cry rightly. In the first case the sentence will mean that the people will be hearing the same right Command with their ears, which they were not inclined to accept in the world, which they had persistently refused to believe, and mocked the Prophets who had brought it. In the second case it will mean that they will certainly hear this cry, and they will realize that it is no fancy but indeed the Cry of Resurrection ; they will be left with no doubt that the Day of Resurrection of which they had been forewarned had arrived and the Cry that was being raised was of the same.

54. This is the answer to the saying of the disbelievers that has been reproduced in verse 3 above. They said : "How can it be that when we are dead and become dust, we shall be raised back to life once again ? This resurrection is far removed from reason." In reply it has been said : "This gathering together, i.e., raising back to life and gathering all the people of the former and latter times together, is very easy for Us. It is not at all difficult for Us to know as to where the dust of one particular person lies and where of the other. We shall also face no difficulty in knowing as to which are the particles of Harry and which of Dick among the scattered particles of the dust. Gathering together all these particles separately and re-making each and every man's body once again and then creating in that body, the same very personality which had lived in it before, is not a task that may require any hard labour from Us, but all this can be accomplished immediately at one signal

from Us. All those human beings who have been born in the world since the time of Adam till Resurrection can be brought together by one Command of Ours. If your petty mind thinks it is far off, it may think so, but it is not beyond the power of the Creator of the Universe."

55. In this sentence there is consolation for the Holy Prophet as well as a threat for the disbelievers. Addressing the Holy Prophet it has been said: "Do not care at all about what these foolish people utter about you: We are hearing everything and it is for Us to deal with it." The disbelievers are being warned to the effect: "The taunting remarks that you are passing against Our Prophet, will cost you dearly. We Ourselves are hearing everything that you utter and you will have to suffer for its consequences."

56. This does not mean that the Holy Prophet wanted to compel the people into believing and Allah stopped him from this, but, in fact, although the Holy Prophet has been addressed the disbelievers are being warned, as if to say, "Our Prophet has not been sent as a dictator over you. He is not there to compel you to become believers even if you did not wish to believe. His only responsibility is that he should recite the Qur'an and make the truth plain to the one who would take the warning. Now, if you do not accept his invitation, We Ourselves will deal with you, not he."

LI

ADH-DHĀRIYĀT الذَّرِيَّة

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

INTRODUCTION

LI

ADH-DHĀRIYĀT الذُّرِّيَّةُ

Name

It is derived from the very first word *wadh-dhāriyāt*, which implies that it is a Sūrah which begins with the word *adh-dhāriyāt*.

Period of Revelation

The subject-matter and the style clearly show that it was sent down in the period when although the Holy Prophet's invitation was being resisted and opposed with denial and ridicule and false accusations stubbornly, persecution had not yet started. Therefore, this Sūrah also seems to have been revealed in the same period in which the Sūrah Qāf was revealed.

Subject-Matter and Topics

The Sūrah mostly deals with the Hereafter, and in the end it presents the invitation to *Tauhīd*. In addition, the people have also been warned that refusal to accept the message of the Prophets and persistence in the concepts and creeds of ignorance have proved to be disastrous for those nations themselves which have adopted this attitude and way of life in the past.

About the Hereafter what this Sūrah presents in short but pithy sentences is this : The people's different and conflicting beliefs about the end of human life are themselves an express proof that none of these beliefs and creeds is based on knowledge ; everyone by himself has formed an ideology on the basis of conjecture and made the same his creed. Someone thought that there would be no life-after-death ; someone believed in the life-after-death, but in the form of the transmigration of souls ; someone believed in the life hereafter and the meting out of the rewards and punishments but invented different sorts of props and supports to escape retribution. About a question of such vital and fundamental importance a wrong view of which renders man's whole life-work wrong and waste and ruins his future for ever, it would be a disastrous folly to build an ideology only on the basis of speculation and conjecture, without knowledge. It would mean that man should remain involved in a grave misunderstanding, pass his whole life in the heedlessness of error, and after death should suddenly meet with a situation for which he had made no preparation at all. There is only one way of forming the right opinion about such a question, and it is this : Man should seriously ponder over the knowledge about the Hereafter that the Prophet of Allah is conveying to him from Him, and should study carefully the system of the earth and heavens and his own existence, and should

see whether the evidence of that knowledge's being sound and correct is afforded by everything around him or not. In this regard, the arrangement of the wind and rain, the structure of the earth and the creatures found on it, man's own self, the creation of the heavens and of everything in the world in the form of pairs have been presented as evidence of the Hereafter, and instances have been cited from human history to show that the temper of the empire of the Universe requires that the law of retribution must operate here.

After this, giving the invitation to *Tauhid* briefly, it has been said : "Your Creator has not created you for the service of others but for His own service. He is not like your false gods, which receive sustenance from you and godhead of which cannot function without your help, but He is a God Who is the Sustainer of all, Who does not stand in need of sustenance from anyone and Whose Godhead is functioning by His own power and might.

In this very connection, it has also been stated that whenever the Prophets of Allah have been opposed and resisted, they have not been opposed and resisted on the basis of any rational ground but on the basis of the same obduracy and stubbornness and false pride that is being shown against the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and there is no other motive for it than rebellion and arrogance. Then the Holy Prophet has been instructed not to bother about the rebels but to go on performing his mission of invitation and admonition, for it is useful and beneficial for the believers although it may not be so for the other people. As for the wicked people who still persist in their rebellion, they should know that their predecessors who followed the same way of life, have already received their shares of the punishment, and those people's share of the punishment has been made ready for them.



وَالذَّرِيَّتِ ذَرَوًا ۝۱ فَالْحِيلِ ۝۲ وَقَرَّ ۝۳ فَالْجُرِيَّتِ يُسْرًا ۝۴ فَالْمُقْسِمِ أَمْرًا ۝۵
 إِنَّمَا تُوعَدُونَ لَصَادِقٌ ۝۶ وَإِنَّ الدِّينَ لَوَاقِعٌ ۝۷ وَالسَّمَاءِ ذَاتِ الْجُبكِ ۝۸
 إِنَّكُمْ لَفِي قَوْلٍ مُّخْتَلِفٍ ۝۹ يُؤَفِّكُ عَنْهُ مَنَ أُوْفِكَ ۝۱۰ قَتِيلَ الْخَرْصُونَ ۝۱۱
 الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي غَمْرَةٍ سَامُونَ ۝۱۲ يَسْأَلُونَ آيَاتِنَا يَوْمَ الدِّينِ ۝۱۳ يُؤْمَرُ لَهُمْ عَلَى
 النَّارِ يُفْتَنُونَ ۝۱۴ ذُوقُوا فِتْنَتَكُمْ هَذَا الَّذِي كُنْتُمْ بِهِ تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ ۝۱۵ إِنَّ
 الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي جَنَّتٍ وَعُيُونٍ ۝۱۶ أَخِذِينَ مَا أَسْمَهُ رَبُّهُمْ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَبْلَ
 ذَلِكَ مُخْسِنِينَ ۝۱۷ كَانُوا قَلِيلًا مِّنَ اللَّيْلِ مَا يَهْجَعُونَ ۝۱۸ وَبِالْأَسْحَارِ هُمْ
 يَسْتَغْفِرُونَ ۝۱۹ وَفِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ لِّلسَّائِلِ وَالْمَحْرُومِ ۝۲۰ وَفِي الْأَرْضِ آيَاتٌ

LI

ADH-DHĀRIYĀT الذَّرِيَّتِ

Verses : 60

Revealed at Makkah

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

1-6 By the winds that raise up dust, then lift up clouds laden with water,¹ then glide with ease, then distribute a big affair (rain),² the truth is that that with which you are being threatened³ is true, and the meting out of the rewards and punishments is inevitable.⁴

7-9 By the sky of various appearances,⁵ you are at variance with one another (concerning the Hereafter)⁶; only such a one is perverted from it who has turned away from the Truth.⁷

Doomed are they who judge by conjecture,⁸ who are deeply engrossed in ignorance and heedlessness.⁹ They ask, "When will be the Day of Retribution?" It will be when they are punished at the Fire.¹⁰ (It will be said to them:) "Now taste your mischief:¹¹ this is the same which you were seeking to be hastened."¹² The righteous,¹³ however, shall be among gardens and water-springs that Day, and shall be joyfully receiving what their Lord shall give them.¹⁴ They were doers of good even before the coming of this Day: they slept but little in the night,¹⁵ prayed for forgiveness in the early hours of dawn,¹⁶ and in their possessions was a due share of him who asked and of him who was needy.¹⁷

1. All the commentators are agreed that *adh-dhāriyāt* implies the winds that disperse and raise up the dust, and *al-ḥāmilāt-i wiqran* implies the winds that lift up millions of tons of water vapours from the oceans in the form of clouds. This same commentary has been reported from Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, Ḥaḍrat 'Alī, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar, and also from Mujāhid, Sa'īd bin Jubair, Ḥasan Baṣrī, Qatādah, Suddī and other scholars.

2. The commentators have disputed the commentary of *al-jāriyāt-i yusran* and *al-muqassimāt-i amran*. One group has preferred the view, or held this meaning as admissible, that by these two also are meant the winds; that is, the same very winds then transport the clouds, and spreading over different parts of the earth, distribute the water as and where required according to Allah's command. The other group holds that *al-jāriyāt-i yusran* implies fast moving boats, and *al-muqassimāt-i amran* implies the angels who distribute among the creatures their shares of the provisions according to Allah's command. According to a tradition, Ḥaḍrat 'Umar explained this very meaning of these two sentences and said: "Had I not heard this from the Holy Prophet, I would not have mentioned it." On this very basis, 'Allāma Ālūsī has expressed the opinion that it is not permissible to take any other meaning of these sentences than this, and those who have taken any other meaning, have taken undue liberties. But Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr says that this tradition has weak links of the transmitters and on its basis it cannot be said with absolute certainty that the Holy Prophet might himself have given this commentary of these sentences. There is

no doubt that from a good number of the Companions and their immediate followers only this second commentary has been reported, but a good number of the commentators have given the first commentary also, and it fits in better with the context. Shāh Rafī'uddīn, Shāh 'Abdul Qādir and Maulānā Maḥmūd-ul-Ḥasan also have preferred the first meaning in their translations of the Qur'ān.

3. The word used in the original is *tū'adūn*. If it is derived from *wa'd*, the meaning would be: "That which you are being promised;" and if it is from *wa'id*, it would mean: "That which you are being threatened with." As regards the context, the second meaning is preferable, for the addressees are the people who were lost in disbelief, polytheism and sin, and were not prepared to believe that they would be held accountable some time in the future and would be rewarded or punished accordingly. That is why, we have taken *tū'adūn* in the meaning of *wa'id* and not of *wa'd* (promise).

4. This is the thing for which the oath has been sworn. The oath implies this: The unique order and regularity with which the wonderful system of the rain is functioning before your eyes, and the wisdom and good reasons which clearly underlie it, testify to the reality that this world is not a meaningless and useless toy-house where the great drama of life is being presented at random since millions and millions of years. But, it is, in fact, a wise system of the highest order in which everything that happens has a purpose and reason behind it. In this system it is not possible that a creature like man should have been given intellect, sense and the powers to exploit things to advantage, should have been granted moral sense to distinguish the good and evil, right and wrong deeds and then might have been left alone foolishly and meaninglessly in the world to behave as he pleased, and that he should never be questioned as to how he had used and employed the powers of the heart and mind and body, the vast means placed at his disposal to work in the world, and the power and authority granted to him to employ the countless creatures of God to advantage. In this system of the Universe where everything is purposeful, how can the creation of a unique being like man only be purposeless? In a system where everything is based on wisdom, how can the creation of man only be useless and futile? The purpose of the creation of those things which do not possess consciousness and intellect is fulfilled in this very physical world. Therefore, it would be right and reasonable

if they were destroyed after they had reached the end of their life term, for they have not been granted any powers and authority for which they might have to be called to account. But a creature which possesses intellect and consciousness and authority, whose activities are not confined only to the physical world, but are also moral in nature, and whose actions entailing moral consequences do not take place only till the end of life, but continue to register their moral effects on it even after death, cannot be destroyed like plants and animals just after it has fulfilled the function of its physical existence. Whatever good or evil act he has committed by his own will and choice, he must get the reward or suffer the punishment for it justly and equitably, for this is the basic requirement of the factor under which, contrary to other creatures, he has been endowed with the freedom of choice and will. If he is not held accountable, if he is not rewarded or punished according to his moral acts, and if he also is destroyed at the conclusion of his physical life like the creatures which have been given no freedom of will and choice, his creation would inevitably be altogether futile, and a Wise Being cannot be expected to indulge in a futile exercise.

Besides, there is also another reason for swearing an oath by these four phenomena of the Universe regarding the occurrence of the Hereafter and the meting out of rewards and punishments. The ground on which the deniers of the Hereafter regard the life after death as impossible is this : When we are mixed up with dust after death and our particles have scattered away in the earth, how can it be possible that all these scattered particles of the body are re-assembled and we are made to rise up again ? The error of this apprehension is by itself removed when we consider deeply the four phenomena of the Universe, which have been presented as an argument for the Hereafter. The rays of the sun have their effect on all the collections of water on the surface of the earth, where their heat reaches. In this process countless drops of water evaporate from the collection, but they do not become extinct, and every drop remains preserved in the air as vapour. Then, when Allah commands the same wind gathers the same vapours of the drops together, combines them into thick clouds, spreads those clouds on different parts of the earth and precisely at the time appointed by Allah causes each single drop to fall back to the earth in the form as it was in the beginning. This phenomenon that is occurring before the eyes of man daily testifies that the particles of the bodies of the dead men can also gather together at one command by Allah

and the men can be raised up in the shape in which they lived before. Whether these particles are in the dust, or in the water, or in the air, in any case they remain preserved in this very earth and its atmosphere. Why should it be difficult for the God Who gathers together the vapours of water after they had dispersed in the air, by means of the same air, and then causes them to rain as water, to gather together the scattered particles of the human bodies from the air, water and earth and then combine them in their original form and shape ?

5. The word *hubuk* in the original is also used for the paths and for the waves which are produced on the sand of the desert and the surface of stagnant water by the wind ; it is also spoken for the curls in wavy hair. Here, the sky has been characterised by "*hubuk*" either because the sky is often overcast with clouds of different shapes, which go on changing because of the wind, and no shape lasts nor resembles any other, or because at night one sees the stars scattered in the sky in many different combinations and no combination resembles any other combination.

6. The oath has been sworn by the sky of various appearances on this difference of views because of the similarity. That is, just as the clouds and the clusters of stars in the sky have different appearances, and there is uniformity among them, so are also your views about the Hereafter, each different from the other. Some one says that this world is eternal and no Resurrection can take place. Another says that this system is not eternal and can come to an end in the course of time, but whatever becomes extinct, including man, cannot possibly be resurrected. Another one regards resurrection as possible but holds the belief that man in order to be requited for his good and evil deeds is born and reborn again and again in this very world. Some one believes in Hell and Heaven but combines the transmigration of the souls also with it. He thinks that the sinner goes to Hell to suffer the punishment as well as is born and reborn in this world for the sake of the punishment. Some one says that the life in the world is in itself an agony ; as long as man's self remains attached to physical life, he goes on dying and taking birth again and again in this very world, and his real salvation is that he should attain annihilation. Some one believes in the Hereafter and Hell and Heaven, but says that God by giving death to His only son on the cross had atoned for the original sin of man, and man will escape the evil consequences of his evil acts by believing in the son. Some other people generally believe in the

Hereafter and the meting out of the rewards and punishments but at the same time regard certain holy men as the intercessors, who are such favourites of Allah, or wield such influence with Him, that any one who attaches himself to them as a disciple, can escape the punishment whatever he may do in the world. About these holy men also there is no agreement among their devotees ; every group of them has its own separate intercessor. This difference of the views itself is a proof that whenever man has formed an opinion about his own and the world's end, independent of Revelation and Prophethood, he has formed it without knowledge ; otherwise if man in this regard really had some direct means of knowledge there would not have arisen so many different and contradictory beliefs.

7. The pronoun of *'anhu* in this sentence either turns to the meting out of the rewards and punishments, or to various views. In the first case, it means : "The meting out of the rewards has to take place, in spite of your holding different beliefs about it ; but only such a person is perverted from it, who has turned away from the Truth." In the second case, the meaning is : "Only such a one is misled by these different views, who has turned away from the Truth."

8. Here the Qur'ān is warning man of an important truth. To judge or make an estimate on the basis of conjecture and speculation in the ordinary matters of worldly life may be useful to some extent, although it would be no substitute for knowledge, but it would be disastrous to make estimates and give judgements merely according to one's own conjectures and speculations in a question of such fundamental nature and importance as whether we are, or are not, responsible and accountable to anyone for the deeds and actions of our lifetime, and if we are, to whom we are accountable, when and what shall be the accountability, and what will be the consequences of our success and failure in that accountability. This is not a question on which man may form an estimate merely according to his conjecture and speculation and then stake his entire life-capital on the gamble. For if the conjecture proves to be wrong, it would mean that the man has doomed himself to utter ruin. Furthermore, this question is not at all included among those questions about which one may form a right opinion by the exercise of analogy and conjecture. For conjecture and analogy can work only in those matters which are perceptible for man, whereas this is a question which does not come under perception in any way. Therefore,

it is not at all possible that a conjectural and analogical judgement about it may be right and correct. As for the question: What is the right way for man to form an opinion about the matters which are non-perceptible and incomprehensible in nature? this has been answered at many places in the Qur'ān, and from this Sūrah also the same answer becomes obvious, and it is this: (1) Man himself cannot reach the reality directly; (2) Allah gives the knowledge of the reality through His Prophets; and (3) man can ascertain the truth of that knowledge in this way: he should study deeply the countless signs that are found in the earth and heavens and in his own self, then consider seriously and impartially whether those signs testify to the reality that the Prophet has presented, or to the different ideologies that the other people have presented in this regard. This is the only method of scientific investigation about God and the Hereafter that has been taught in the Qur'an. Doomed would be the one who discarded this method and followed his own analogies and conjectures. ■

9. That is, "They do not know what fate they are heading for on account of their wrong conjectures, whereas every way that is adopted with a wrong view of the Hereafter only leads to ruin. He who is a denier of the Hereafter is not at all preparing himself for any accountability and is engrossed in the thought that there would be no life after death, whereas the time would suddenly come when against all his expectations he would open his eyes in the new life and he would realize that there he has to render an account of each of his acts and deeds. The person who is expending his life under the idea that he would come back to this very world after death, will come to know as soon as he dies that all doors of return are closed, that there is no chance of compensating for the misdeeds of the previous life by any new actions, and that there is another life ahead in which he has to meet with and suffer the consequences of his worldly life for ever after. The person who commits suicide in the hope that after he has destroyed his self and its desires he would escape the agony of life in the form of total annihilation, will find as soon as he passes through the gate of death that there is an everlasting life ahead and not mortality, where he has to explain as to why he had been straining every nerve to destroy the self that he had been blessed with instead of developing and adorning it in every possible way. Likewise, the one who continued committing disobedience of Allah throughout life, placing reliance

upon some son of Allah's becoming an atonement or some holy one's becoming an intercessor, will come to know as soon as he appears before Allah that there is neither any atoner there nor anyone wielding such influence and power that he may save him from Allah's grasp and punishment by means of his own power and influence. Thus, all these conjectural creeds are, in fact, an opiate under the intoxication of which these people are lying senseless, and do not know where they are being misled by the ignorance which they have adopted by rejecting the true knowledge given by God and His Prophets.

10. The disbelievers did not ask the question: When will Resurrection be? for the sake of seeking knowledge but for the purpose of taunt and ridicule. That is why they have been given such an answer. It is just like the taunting reaction of the wicked person who is admonished to desist from his immoral deeds, otherwise he would meet with the evil consequences of those deeds one day, and he asks in jest: When will that day be? Obviously, such a question is not asked to know the date of the occurrence of the evil end but to make fun of the admonition. Therefore, its right answer is that it will occur when the evildoers will meet with their doom. Besides, one should also understand well that if a denier of the Hereafter is discussing the question of the Hereafter sensibly, he can dispute the arguments in favour and against it, but he can never ask the question: On what date will the Hereafter occur? unless he has lost all reason. Whenever he puts such a question, it will only be as a taunt and ridicule. For it does not at all affect the real discussion whether the date of the occurrence of the Hereafter is stated or not. No one can deny the Hereafter only because the year and the month and the day of its occurrence have not been given, nor can one believe in it on hearing that it will occur on such- and such a day of such and such a month and year. The date is no argument that may cause a denier to be convinced of its coming, for after that the question will arise: How can one believe whether on that particular day the Hereafter will actually occur?

11. The word *fitnah* gives two meanings here: (1) "Taste this torment of yours;" and (2) "taste the mischief that you had created and spread in the world."

12. The disbelievers' asking: "When will the Day of Retribution be?" implied: "Why is it being delayed?" That is, "When we have denied it and have deserved the punishment for belying it,

why doesn't it overtake us immediately ?" That is why when they will be burning in the Hell-fire, at that time it will be said to them : "This is that which you sought to be hastened." This sentence by itself gives the meaning : "It was Allah's kindness that He did not seize you immediately on the occurrence of disobedience from you and went on giving you respite after respite to think and understand and mend your ways. But the foolish people that you were, you did not take advantage of the respite but demanded that your doom should be hastened for you instead. Now you may see for yourself what it was that you were seeking to be hastened ?"

13. In this context the word *muttaqī* (the righteous) clearly implies those people who believed in the Hereafter when they were given the news of it by the Book of Allah and His Messenger, and adopted the attitude and way of life that they were taught for success in the life hereafter, and refrained from the way about which they had been told that it would involve man in the torment of God.

14. Literally : "... shall be receiving what their Lord will have granted them", but in this context "receiving" does not merely mean "to receive" but to receive joyfully. Obviously, when a person is given something of his own choice and liking, his receiving it will naturally have the meaning of accepting and receiving it joyfully.

15. Some commentators have given this meaning of this verse : "Seldom did it so happen that they spent the whole night sleeping and did not spend a part of it, in the beginning of the night or in the middle or in the end of it, awake in the worship of Allah." This commentary with a little variation in wording has been related from Ḥaḍrat Ibn 'Abbās, Anas bin Mālik, Muḥammad al-Bāqir, Muḥṣin bin 'Abdullah, Abul 'Āliyah, Mujāhid, Qatādah, Rabī' bin Anas and others. According to some other commentators, it means this : "They spent the major part of their nights in the worship of Allah Almighty and slept little." This meaning has been reported from Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan Baṣrī, Aḥnaf bin Qais, and Ibn Shihāb Zuhri, and the later commentators and translators have preferred this, for this appears to be in better agreement with the words of the verse and the context. That is why we have adopted this meaning in the translation.

16. That is "They did not belong to those who spent their nights in immoral and indecent acts and even then never thought of

seeking Allah's forgiveness. On the contrary, they spent a major part of the nights in the worship of Allah and then in the early hours of dawn sought His forgiveness, saying that they did not do full justice to the worship that was due from them. The words *hum ya-taghfirūn* also contain an allusion to this that it befitted and suited them alone that they should exert their utmost in the service of their Lord and then, at the same time, should implore Him humbly for the forgiveness of their errors and shortcomings instead of exulting at and waxing proud of their good acts. This could not be the way of those shameless, wicked people who committed sin and behaved arrogantly as well.

17. In other words, on the one hand, they recognized the right of their Lord and duly discharged it; on the other, they did not think that whatever Allah had given them, whether little or much, was wholly their own and their children's right, but they had the sense that in their possessions there was the right and share of every such person who was indigent and needy. They did not render help to the people as a charity so as to earn their gratitude for the favour done, but they regarded it as the people's right and discharged it as their own duty. Then their this service to mankind was not only confined to those who came to them for seeking help as beggars but anyone about whom they came to know that he had been left destitute, they would become anxious to render him necessary help of their own accord. There was no orphan who might have been left helpless, no widow who might have had no bread-winner, no disabled person who might be unable to earn a living, no one who might have lost his job, or whose earning might not be sufficing his needs, nobody who might have been hit by a calamity and might be unable to compensate for the loss by himself, in short, there was no needy one whose condition they might have known and yet might have withheld their help when they could have rendered him necessary help and support.

The following are the three qualities on the basis of which Allah regards them as the righteous doers of good, and says that these very qualities have made them worthy of Paradise: (1) That they believed in the Hereafter and refrained from every act and conduct which Allah and His Messenger had stated to be disastrous for the life-after-death; (2) that they exerted their utmost to do full justice to the service of Allah and still sought Allah's forgiveness

(Contd. on page 170)

لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۖ وَ فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَفَلَا تُبْصِرُونَ ۗ وَ فِي السَّمَاءِ رِشْقُكُمْ وَ مَا
تُوعَدُونَ ۗ فَوَرَبِّ السَّمَاءِ وَ الْأَرْضِ إِنَّهُ لَحَقٌّ مِثْلَ مَا أَنَّكُمْ تَنْطِقُونَ ۗ
مَلَأْنَاكَ حَدِيثَ صَيْفِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ الْمُكْرَمِينَ ۗ إِذْ دَخَلُوا عَلَيْهِ فَقَالُوا سَلْمًا
قَالَ سَلَامٌ ۗ قَوْمٌ مُنْكَرُونَ ۗ فَرَاغَ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِ فَجَاءَ بِعِجْلٍ سَبِينٍ ۗ فَتَقَرَّبَ
إِلَيْهِمْ قَالَ آلَا تَأْكُلُونَ ۗ فَأَوْجَسَ مِنْهُمْ خِيفَةً ۗ قَالُوا لَا تَخَفْ ۗ وَ بَشَّرُوهُ
بِغُلَامٍ عَلِيمٍ ۗ فَأَقْبَلَتِ امْرَأَتُهُ فِي صَرَخَةٍ فَصَكَتْ وَ جَمَّهَا وَ قَالَتْ عَجُوزٌ
عَقِيمٌ ۗ قَالُوا كَذَلِكَ قَالَ رَبُّكَ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْحَكِيمُ الْعَلِيمُ ۗ

الأنبياء
١٨

الجزء
٢٤

قَالَ فَمَا خَطْبُكُمْ أَيُّهَا الْمُرْسَلُونَ ۗ قَالُوا إِنَّا أُرْسِلْنَا إِلَىٰ قَوْمٍ

مُجْرِمِينَ ۗ لِنُرْسِلَ عَلَيْهِمْ حِجَارَةً مِّنْ طِينٍ ۗ مُّسَوَّمَةً عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ
لِلْمُسْرِفِينَ ۗ فَأَخْرَجْنَا مَن كَانَ فِيهَا مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۗ فَمَا وَجَدْنَا فِيهَا
غَيْرَ بَيْتٍ مِّنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ۗ وَ تَرَكْنَا فِيهَا آيَةً لِلَّذِينَ يَخَافُونَ الْعَذَابَ
الْأَلِيمَ ۗ وَ فِي مُوسَىٰ إِذْ أَرْسَلْنَاهُ إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ بِسُلْطَنٍ مُّبِينٍ ۗ فَتَوَلَّىٰ بِرُكْنِهِ
وَ قَالَ سِحْرٌ أَوْ مَجْنُونٌ ۗ فَأَخَذْنَاهُ وَ جُنُودَهُ فَنَبَذْنَاهُمْ فِي الْيَمِّ وَ هُوَ
مِلِيمٌ ۗ وَ فِي عَادٍ إِذْ أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ الرِّيحَ الْعَقِيمَةَ ۗ مَا تَذَرُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ أَنتَ
عَلَيْهِ إِلَّا جَعَلْتَهُ كَالرَّمِيمِ ۗ وَ فِي ثَمُودَ إِذْ قِيلَ لَهُمْ تَسْبَعُوا حَتَّىٰ جِئْتُمْ
فَعَتُوا عَن أَمْرِ رَبِّهِمْ فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ الضُّعْفَةُ وَ هُمْ يَنْظُرُونَ ۗ فَمَا اسْتَطَاعُوا
مِن قِيَامٍ وَ مَا كَانُوا مُتَّصِرِينَ ۗ وَ قَوْمَ نُوحٍ مِّن قَبْلُ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَوْمًا
فَاسِقِينَ ۗ وَ السَّمَاءَ بَنَيْنَا بِأَيْدٍ وَ إِنَّا لَمُوسِعُونَ ۗ وَ الْأَرْضَ فَرَشْنَاهَا فَنِعْمَ
الْمُهْدُونَ ۗ وَ مِن كُلِّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَا زَوْجَيْنِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ ۗ فَفِرُّوا إِلَىٰ

٢٢٢

There are many signs in the earth for those who affirm faith¹⁸ and also in your own selves.¹⁹ Do you not perceive? In the heaven is your provision and also that which is being promised to you.²⁰ So, by the Lord of the heaven and the earth! This is true, as true as you are speaking now. 20-23

O Prophet,²¹ has the story of Abraham's honoured guests reached you?²² When they came to him, they said, "Peace to you." He said, "Peace to you too—unfamiliar folks they are!"²³ Then he went quietly to his family²⁴ and brought out a fatted (roasted) calf²⁵ and laid it before the guests. He said, "Will you not eat?" Then he became afraid of them.²⁶ They said, "Be not afraid!" And they gave him the good news of the birth of a son, possessing knowledge.²⁷ Hearing this his wife came forward, crying, and she smote her face, and said, "An old woman, barren!"²⁸ "Thus has said your Lord," they replied, "He is the All-Wise, the All-Knowing."²⁹ Abraham said, "O Divine Messengers, what is your special errand?"³⁰ They said, "We have been sent to a guilty people,³¹ to rain upon them stones of baked clay, which are marked with your Lord for the transgressors."³²—Then³³ We evacuated all those who were believers in that settlement, and We did not find in it any house of the Muslims except one.³⁴ Then We left there only one sign for those who fear the painful torment.³⁵ 24-37

(And there is a sign for you) in the story of Moses. When We sent him to Pharaoh with a clear authority,³⁶ he showed arrogance on account of his might, and said, "He is a sorcerer or a madman."³⁷ Consequently, We seized him and his hosts and cast them into the sea, and he became blameworthy.³⁸ 33-40

And (for you is a sign) in 'Ād when We sent upon them a blighting wind which made rotten everything that it blew on.³⁹ 41-42

43-45 And (for you is a sign) in Thamūd when it was said to them, "Enjoy yourselves for a while."⁴⁰ But in spite of this warning they defied the Command of their Lord. Consequently, they were overtaken by a thunderbolt⁴¹ even while they looked on. Then they could neither stand up nor were able to save themselves.⁴²

46 And before them We destroyed the people of Noah because they were a sinful people.

47-51 We⁴³ have built the heaven with Our own might and We possess the power for it.⁴⁴ We have spread out the earth and (behold) how excellent Spreaders We are!⁴⁵ And We have created everything in pairs;⁴⁶ maybe that you learn a lesson from it.⁴⁷ So flee unto Allah: I am an open warner from Him to you. And do not set up another god with God; I am an open warner from Him to you⁴⁸.

(Contd. from page 167)

instead of exulting at their acts of piety ; and (3) that they served Allah's servants not as a favour to them but as their own duty and their right due from them.

Here, one should also know and understand another thing ; The right of the needy ones that has been³ mentioned here in the wealth of the believers does not imply the *zakāt*, which has been imposed as a religious duty on them. But this is the right that a well-to-do believer himself feels there is in his possessions of the needy even after he has paid off the *zakāt*, and he discharges it willingly even if it has not been made obligatory by the *Shari'ah*. Ibn 'Abbās, Mujāhid, Zaid bin Aslam and other scholars have understood this very meaning of this verse. In fact, the real spirit of this Divine Command is that a pious and virtuous person is never involved in the misunderstanding that he has become relieved of his duty of discharging the right of Allah and His servants that there was in his possessions after he has paid the *zakāt*, and now he is not bound to help every needy and destitute person whom he comes across. Contrary to this, every servant of Allah, who is really pious and righteous, remains ever ready to do whatever good he can willingly, does not let slip any opportunity when he could do some good to the people in the world. He is not of the way of

thinking that he has done whatever good he had been enjoined to do and now no more good is required to be done by him. The one who has recognized the true value of goodness, does not perform it as a burden but tries to earn more and more of it, greedily as a bargain to his own advantage, in his own interest.

18. The signs imply those proofs which testify to the possibility and necessity of the Hereafter. The earth's own body and its structure, its having been placed at a suitable distance from the sun at a particular angle, the arrangement of heat and light and of different seasons on it, the provision of air and water on it, and of countless different kinds of treasures in its belly, covering its surface with a fertile crust and causing to grow in it an endless variety of vegetables, generating countless races of the animals of the land and water and air, providing suitable food and proper conditions for the life of every species, creating and making available all those means and resources on it even before the creation of man, so as to meet and suit his ever increasing needs in every stage of history as well as accord with the development of his civilization and way of living, these and countless other signs can be seen in the earth and its surroundings by every discerning eye. The case of the one who has closed the doors of his heart to belief and faith is different. He will see in these everything else but not any sign that may point to the reality. But an un-prejudiced person who has an open mind, will never form the idea after observing these signs that all this has come about as the result of an accidental explosion, that had occurred suddenly in the universe millions of years ago ; he will rather be convinced that this wise and perfect work of art is the creation of an Omnipotent and Omniscient God. And that God Who has made this earth cannot be helpless to resurrect man after death, nor can He be so foolish as to leave a sensible and intelligent being like man after granting him powers and authority to roam at will in His earth. The fact that man has been granted powers and authority by itself demands that he should be accountable ; otherwise it would be against wisdom and justice ; and the Creator's being all-powerful (Omnipotent) is by itself a proof that after the human species has fulfilled its function in the world, He can raise all its members back to life and gather them together from wherever they are lying dead in the earth for the purpose of accountability.

19. That is, "You may not look outside yourself ; look within your own self, and you will find countless signs testifying to the

same truth. You will see how your creation was begun by combining a microscopic sperm with a microscopic egg in a corner of the mother's body; how you were blessed with a body of unique structure and a self endowed with wonderful powers and abilities; how you were brought out from the dark world of your mother's womb, as soon as your structure became complete, into this vast world, equipped with an automatic machine within yourself, which goes on functioning by itself from the day you take birth till your maturity and old age, to assimilate food, produce blood and circulate it in the veins, discharge waste matter, prepare new parts in place of the wasted and worn out parts of the body, resisting the internal and the external hazards to the body and compensating for the losses, even for sending you to peaceful sleep after exhaustion, without any effort required to be made by you towards these basic needs of life. A wonderful brain has been placed under your skull in whose complicated layers lies filled an invaluable wealth of intellect, thought, imagination, consciousness, discrimination, will, memory, desire, feeling and emotions, inclinations and trends, and other mental abilities. You have been provided with numerous means of knowledge which supply you with every kind of information through the eye, nose, ears and skin. You have been given the tongue and the power of speech by which you can express your thoughts and feelings. And then your ego has been placed as a ruler over the entire kingdom of your body so that it may employ all the powers and abilities and form opinions and decide as in what ways you have to expend and employ your time and labour and efforts, what you have to reject and what you have to accept, what should be your objective in life and what you should shun and avoid.

Thus equipped when you were brought into the world, you saw what provisions had been made ready here for your nourishment, development and the progress and perfection of your self by virtue of which you reached a particular stage of life when you became able to use the powers and authority you had been endowed with.

For using these powers you were given means in the earth, provided with opportunities, and given ability to control and employ many of the things as you pleased. You had all the ways of disbelief and faith, sin and obedience, justice and injustice, good and evil, truth and falsehood, open before you; there were those who invited to each of these ways and there were the means to lead to each one of them. Whoever among you selected one particular way did so on his own responsibility, for he had the

power to decide and choose endowed in himself. Depending on the choice made by each one and taking advantage of the opportunities thus afforded of employing his powers of will and intention some one became a good man and another a bad man ; some one adopted the way of belief and faith and another the way of disbelief, polytheism or atheism ; some one withheld himself from unlawful desires, and another did whatever he wanted in obedience to his self ; some one became an oppressor and another the oppressed ; some one carried out his duties and another usurped the rights of others ; some one continued to do good till his last breath, another went on committing evil till his last moment of life ; some one exerted himself to raise the word of the truth, another went on oppressing the followers of the truth in order to cause falsehood to flourish.

Now, can a person, unless he is absolutely blind and senseless, say that a being such as this has appeared on the earth just by an accident? that there is no wisdom and no plan working behind his creation? that the storms that he is raising on the earth are without a purpose and will end up without entailing any consequence? that there will be no reward for a good act and no punishment for an evil act? and that injustice will not be redressed and the unjust will not be brought to book? Such things may be said by a person who has lost his reason, or by the one who is resolved not to acknowledge at all the wisdom of a Wise Being working behind the creation of man. But an un-prejudiced, sensible person cannot help but admit that the creation of man, the powers and abilities he has been given, and the position he has been granted here, is certainly a grand, wise plan, and the wisdom of the God Whose plan it is, inevitably demands that man should be questioned about his actions and deeds; and it cannot be right to entertain the doubt about the powers of God that He will not be able to recreate man whom He has brought up to this noble position of honour from a mere microscopic cell.

20. By the heaven here is meant the "heavens", by "provisions" all that man is given for his survival and functioning in the world, and by "that which is promised." Resurrection, gathering together, accountability, meting out of rewards and punishments, and Hell and Heaven, which have been foretold and promised in all Divine Books and now in the Qur'ān. The verse means to say : "The decisions as to who should be given what and how much in the world are taken in heavens, and also the decision as to when should any of you be recalled for the purpose of accountability and dispensation of the rewards and punishments."

21. Now, from here to the end of verse 46, brief allusions have been made, one after the other, to the end of Allah's Prophets and some of the nations of the past, which are meant to impress two things :

First, that in human history God's law of retribution has been working constantly, in which precedents are found of the rewards for the righteous and of punishments for the wicked people continuously. This is a clear evidence of the fact that even in the life of this world the Creator's relationship with man is not merely based on the physical law but the moral law also is working side by side with it. And when the temper of the kingdom of the universe is such that the creation which has been given an opportunity to act morally while living in a physical body, should not only be dealt with on the basis of physical laws, like animals and plants, but the moral law also should be applied to its moral acts this by itself points to the truth that a time must come in this kingdom when on the completion of man's role in the physical world full results of his moral acts should also appear strictly in accordance with the moral law because in the physical world they do not appear fully.

The second thing that has been impressed by these historical allusions is that the nations which did not believe in the Prophets of Allah and based their conduct and attitude in life on the denial of the Oneness of Allah, the Prophethood and the Hereafter, were ultimately doomed to destruction. This continuous experience of history testifies that God's law of morality that was conveyed through the Prophets, and on the basis of which man will be subjected to accountability in the Hereafter, is entirely based on the truth. For whichever nation determined its conduct and attitude in the world independent of this law, considering itself irresponsible and un-accountable, has gone straight to its doom.

22. This story has been narrated at three places in the Qur'an above, in Hūd : 69-73, Al-Hijr : 51-56 and Al-'Ankabūt : 31.

23. In view of the context in which this sentence has occurred, it can have two meanings : (1) That the Prophet Abraham himself said to the guests, "I have never had the chance to see you before : you are perhaps new-comers in this land." (2) That after responding to their salutation, the Prophet Abraham said these words to himself, or to his servants, while going inside the house for arranging the feast, "They appear to be strangers : people of their noble nature and appearance have not been seen before in this land."

24. That is, "He did not tell his guests that he was going to arrange food for them, but after they were seated he went quietly into the house to arrange a feast for them, so that the guests should not refuse it out of formality."

25. In Sūrah Hūd, the words are *'ijlin ḥanīdh*, a roasted calf; here *bi-'ijlin samīn* : a fatted calf that he got roasted.

26. That is, "When they did not stretch out their hands for food, the Prophet Abraham became afraid in his heart. The reason for this fear could be that in tribal life the strangers' going to a house and avoiding food used to be an indication that they had come with an evil design. But most probably when they refrained from food the Prophet Abraham realized that they were angels, who had come in human guise; and since the angels came in human guise only on extraordinary occasions, he became afraid that they must have come in that guise on some dreadful mission.

27. According to Sūrah Hūd : 71, this was the good news of the birth of the Prophet Isaac (peace be upon him) and this also contained the good news that through the Prophet Isaac he would have a grandson like the Prophet Jacob (peace be upon him).

28. That is, "I am not only old but barren too. How shall a child be born to me?" According to the Bible, the Prophet Abraham at that time was a hundred years old and Sarah was ninety. (Gen., 17 : 17).

29. The object of this story is to tell that Allah will certainly reward His servant, who did full justice to the rights of His worship in the world, in the Hereafter handsomely, but even in this world he rewarded him well by giving him children at an age when according to the common physical laws he could not beget children and his aged wife having remained childless throughout life had completely despaired of ever bearing children; and then He granted him such extraordinary children as have not been granted to any one else in the world. There has been no other man in history in whose line four Prophets might have been born in succession. It was the Prophet Abraham alone whose line continued to be blessed with Prophethood for three generations, and the illustrious Prophets like Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph (peace be upon them) emerged from his house.

30. As the angels come in human guise only on highly important occasions the Prophet Abraham used the word *khaṭb* to find out

the purpose of their visit ; the word *khaṭb* in Arabic is used for an errand of some extraordinary nature.

31. That is, to the people of the Prophet Lot. The epithet of "a guilty people" was enough to tell which people were meant in view of the gravity of their crimes. They have already been mentioned in the Qur'ān in Al-A'rāf : 80-84, Hūd : 74-83, Al-Hijr : 58-79, Al-Anbiyā' : 74-75, Ash-Shua'rā : 160-175, An-Naml : 54-58, Aṣ-Ṣāffāt : 133-137.

32. That is, "Each stone has been marked by your Lord's command to show for which culprit it is meant." According to the details given in the Qur'ān, in Sūrahs Hūd and Al-Hijr, their towns were turned upside down, and then showered with stones of baked clay. From this one can understand that the entire land was overturned by a severe earthquake and the people who tried to escape were showered with brimstone and destroyed.

33. As to what happened between them and the people of the Prophet Lot when the angels reached his house after their meeting with the Prophet Abraham, has been left out. The details have been given in the Sūrahs Hūd, Al-Hijr and Al-'Ankabūt above. Here mention is being made only of the time when they were going to be visited by the scourge.

34. That is, "Among the whole nation and in the entire land there was only one house that shone with the light of the Faith and Islam, and it was no other but the house of the Prophet Lot himself. The rest of the entire nation was sunk deep in sin and wickedness and its whole country was brimming over with filth and immorality. Therefore Allah rescued the people of that one house and then sent down the torment on the land, which did not spare any one of the wicked people.

In this verse three important themes have been discussed : (1) That Allah's law of retribution does not decree the total destruction of a nation as long as there remains a considerable element of good in it. As against the majority of the bad people if it still contains a small element of those who continue trying to invite others to the right way, Allah gives it an opportunity to work, and goes on increasing the respite of the nation which is not yet wholly devoid of goodness. But in case there remains no element of goodness at all in the nation, Allah's law is that He somehow rescues by His power and grace some of the good people,

who might have become weary and helpless fighting evil in its settlements, and deals with the rest as every sensible master would deal with his rotten fruit.

(2) That "Muslim" is not the name only of the people who are the followers of the Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) but of all the Prophets before him and their followers who were also Muslims. Their religions were not mutually exclusive that one might be the religion of the Prophet Abraham, another of the Prophet Moses and still another of the Prophet Jesus, but they all were Muslims and their religion was this same Islam. This truth has been explained at several places in the Qur'ān and there is no room for ambiguity in this regard. For instance, see Al-Baqarah : 128, 131-132 ; Āl-'Imrān : 67 ; Al-Mā'idah : 44, 111 ; Yūnus : 72,84 ; Yūsuf : 101 ; Al-A'rāf : 126 ; An-Naml : 31, 42, 44.

(3) That the words "*Mu'min*" and "*Muslim*" have been used as synonyms in this verse. If this verse is read with verse 14 of Al-Hujurāt, the error of the thinking of those people becomes obvious, who regard *Mu'min* and *Muslim* as two independent terms of the Qur'ān, which have been used in one and the same meaning every where, and *Muslim* is necessarily used for the person who might have entered the fold of Islam by professing the Faith only verbally, without true faith. (For further explanation, see E.N. 31 of Sūrah Al-Hujurāt).

35. "One sign": the Dead Sea, southern part of which still presents the signs of a great disaster. The archaeologists have expressed the opinion that the principal cities of the people of Lot were probably sunk underground and the waters of the Dead Sea spread over them. For that part of this sea which is situated to the south of the small peninsula called "Al-Lisān" clearly seems to be a later development, and the signs of the ruins of the Dead Sea found to the north of this peninsula are very different from those found in the south. From this it is concluded that the southern part was once higher than the sea level. At some later time it sank and went under water. The period of its sinking also seems to be about 2000 B.C. and the same precisely is the time of the Prophets Abraham and Lot historically. In 1965 an American archaeological research party discovered a large grave-yard at Al-Lisān which contains more than twenty thousand graves. From this one is led to think that nearby it there must have existed a large city. But no ruins of any such city are found in the adjoining area, which might have given rise to such a big grave-yard. This fact also

strengthens the doubt that the city whose graveyard it was has sunk under the sea. The area to the south of the sea still abounds in the ruins and the underground stocks of sulphur, resin, tar and natural gas found in this area lead one to believe that hell must have been let loose at this place at some time by the eruption of lava and the play of lightning. (For further explanation, see E.N. 114 of Ash-Shua'rā').

36. "A clear authority": such miracles and clear evidences which made it absolutely manifest that he had been appointed as a Messenger by the Creator of the earth and heavens.

37. That is, they called him sometimes a sorcerer and sometimes a madman.

38. A whole history has been compressed into this brief sentence. To understand it well one should know that Pharaoh was the absolute ruler of the greatest centre of civilization and culture of the world in those days and the people of the adjoining lands were overawed by his power and might. Obviously, when he might have sunk suddenly one day in the sea along with his armies, the event must have become well known not only in Egypt but among all the neighbouring nations as well. At this, except for those whose kith and kin had sunk, there was no one else among their own people, or in the other nations of the world who would mourn them or write an elegy on them, or would at least express sorrow and say that good and noble people had become a victim of the disaster. Instead of this, as the world had become fed up with their wickedness and injustices, every person heaved a sigh of relief at their exemplary fate, everyone cursed them, and anyone who heard this news exclaimed that the wicked people had deserved the fate justly. In Sūrah Ad-Dukhān the same thing has been expressed, thus: "Then neither did the heavens weep on them nor the earth." (For explanation, see E.N. 25 of Sūrah Ad-Dukhān).

39. The word used for this wind is *'aqīm*, which is used for a barren woman, though literally it means dry. If the literal meaning is taken it would mean that it was such an intensely hot and dry wind that on whatever it blew it caused it to become absolutely dry; and if it is taken in the idiomatic sense it would mean that like a barren woman it was a wind without any benefit: neither it was pleasant, nor it brought rain, nor fertilized the trees, nor contained any other benefit for which the wind blows. At other places it has been stated that this wind was not only useless and dry but it blew

so violently that it swept the people off the ground and it continued to rage for eight days and seven nights continuously, till it laid the entire land of the 'Ād waste. (For explanation, see E. N.'s 20, 21 of Sūrah Hā Mīm As-Sajdah, and E.N.'s 25 to 28 of Al-Aḥqāf).

40. The commentators have disputed as to which respite it implies. Ḥaḍrat Qatādah says that it alludes to that verse of Sūrah Hūd in which it has been stated that when the Thamūd killed the she-camel of the Prophet Ṣāliḥ, they were warned by Allah that they had three more days to enjoy life after which they would be overtaken by the torment. Contrary to this, Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan Baṣrī has expressed the opinion that this thing had been said by the Prophet Ṣāliḥ to his people in the beginning of his mission and by this he meant that if they would not adopt the way of repentance and faith, they would be granted a respite to enjoy life in the world only till an appointed time, and then they would be overtaken by the torment. The second of these two commentaries seems to be more correct, for the following verse ("But in spite of this they defied the command of their Lord") indicates that the respite being mentioned here had been given before the defiance and they committed it after the warning. On the contrary, the three days' respite mentioned in Sūrah Hūd had been given after the wicked people had committed the final defiance which became decisive in their case and sealed their doom for ever afterwards.

41. Different words have been used for this torment at different places in the Qur'ān. Somewhere it has been called *rajfah* (a frightful and shocking calamity), somewhere *ṣaiḥah* (a crashing and thundering disaster), somewhere *ṭāghiyah* (a most severe affliction) and here it has been described as *ṣā'iqah* (a calamity that strikes like a thunderbolt). Probably this torment had occurred as an earthquake which was also accompanied by a terrible noise.

42. *Intiṣār* from which the word *muntasiṣirūn* in the original is derived means to save oneself from an attack by somebody as well as to avenge oneself on the attacker.

43. After presenting historical arguments for the Hereafter, now arguments from the universe are being presented in proof of the same.

44. The word *mūsi'* (pl. *mūsi'ūn*) may mean the one who possesses power and means, and also the one who can extend and expand something. According to the first meaning, the verse would

mean: "We have built this heaven by Our own might and not with somebody else's help, and its creation was in no way beyond Us. Then how can you ever conceive that We shall not be able to recreate it?" According to the second meaning, it would mean: "This huge universe that We have created, is not a finished work, but We are expanding it continuously, and new and ever new manifestations of Our creation are appearing in it every moment. How do you then think that such a marvellous Creator would not be able to repeat His creation."

45. For explanation, see E.N. 18 above. For further explanation, see E.N. 74 of Sūrah An-Naml, E.N. 29 of Sūrah Yā Sīn and E.N.'s 7 to 10 of Az-Zukhruf.

46. That is, "Everything in the world has been created on the principle of the pairs. The whole system of the Universe is functioning on the principle that certain things are complementary and matching to certain others, and their combination brings into being countless new forms and combinations. Nothing here is so unique as may have no match, for the fact is that a thing becomes productive only after it has combined with its matching partner." (For further explanation, see E.N. 31 of Sūrah Yā Sīn, and E.N. 12 of Az-Zukhruf).

47. That is, "The creation of the whole Universe on the principle of the pairs and the existence of all things in the world in couples is a reality that testifies expressly to the necessity of the Hereafter. If you consider it deeply you will yourself come to the conclusion that when everything in the world has a partner and nothing becomes productive without combining with its partner, how can the life of the world be without a match and partner? Its match and partner necessarily is the Hereafter. Without that partner it would be absolutely fruitless."

To understand what follows one should also understand that the discussion heretofore centres around the Hereafter, but this very discussion and argument afford a proof of the Oneness of God. Just as the argument of the rain, the structure of the earth, the creation of the heavens, man's own existence, the wonderful working of the law of pairs in the Universe, testify to the possibility and necessity of the Hereafter, so they are also testifying that neither is this Universe Godless nor it has many gods, but One All-Wise and All-Powerful God alone is its Creator and Master and Controller. That is why in the following verses the invitation to the Oneness of God

is being presented on the basis of these very arguments. Furthermore, the inevitable result of believing in the Hereafter is that man should give up his attitude of rebellion against God and should adopt the way of obedience and servitude. He remains turned away from God as long as he remains involved in the false belief that he is not accountable before anyone and that he will not have to render an account of his deeds of the worldly life to anyone. Whenever this misunderstanding is removed, man immediately comes to the realization that he was committing a grave error by regarding himself as irresponsible, and this realization compels him to return to God. That is why immediately after concluding the arguments for the Hereafter, it has been said : "So flee unto Allah."

48. Though these sentences are the Word of Allah, the speaker here is not Allah but the Holy Messenger of Allah. In fact, Allah has made his Messenger say : "Flee unto Allah ; I am warning you from Him." An instance of this style is found in the very first Sūrah of the Qur'ān, Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah, where the Word is of Allah, but the speakers are the servants, who say : *Iyyāka nu'budu wa iyyāka nasta'in ; ihdi-naṣ-ṣirāt al-mustaqīm* : "Thee alone we worship and to Thee alone we pray for help. Show us the Straight Way." Just as there it has not been said : "O believers, pray to your Lord thus," but the context itself shows that it is a supplication which Allah is teaching His servants, so here also it has not been said : "O Prophet, say to these people," but the context itself indicates that it is an invitation to the Oneness of God, which the Holy Prophet is presenting according to Allah's command. Besides Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah, there are several other instances also of this style in the Qur'ān, where though the Word is of Allah, the speakers somewhere are the angels and somewhere the Holy Prophet, and the context shows as through whom Allah is speaking at that particular place. For instance, see Sūrah Maryam : 64-65, Aṣ-Ṣāffāt : 159-167, Ash-Shu'arā' : 10.

اللَّهُ إِنِّي لَكُمْ مِنْهُ نَذِيرٌ مُبِينٌ ۗ وَلَا تَجْعَلُوا مَعَهُ إِلَهًا أُخْرَىٰ إِنِّي إِلَيْكُمْ
 مِنْهُ نَذِيرٌ مُبِينٌ ۗ كَذَلِكَ مَا آتَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِنْ رَسُولٍ إِلَّا قَالُوا
 سَاحِرٌ أَوْ مَجْنُونٌ ۗ أَتَوَاصَوْا بِهِ بَلْ هُمْ قَوْمٌ طَاغُونَ ۗ فَتَوَلَّ عَنْهُمْ فَمَا
 أَنْتَ بِمَلُومٍ ۗ وَذَكَرْ فَإِنَّ الذِّكْرَىٰ تَنْفَعُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۗ وَ مَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ
 إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ ۗ مَا أُرِيدُ مِنْهُمْ مِنْ رِزْقٍ وَمَا أُرِيدُ أَنْ يُطِيعُونِ ۗ
 إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الرَّزَّاقُ ذُو الْقُوَّةِ الْمَتِينُ ۗ فَإِنَّ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا ذُنُوبًا مِثْلَ
 ذُنُوبِ أَصْحَابِهِمْ فَلَا يَسْتَعْجِلُونَ ۗ فَوَيْلٌ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ
 يَوْمِهِمُ الَّذِي يُوعَدُونَ ۗ

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52-55 This has always been so. Whenever a Messenger came to the peoples before them, they said, "He is a sorcerer or a madman."⁴⁹ Have they reached a mutual understanding concerning this? Nay, but they are all a rebellious people.⁵⁰ So, O Prophet, turn away from them: you are not at all to blame.⁵¹ But go on admonishing them, for the admonition is beneficial for the believers.⁵²

56-60 I have not created the jinn and the men except for this that they should worship Me.⁵³ I do not ask any sustenance of them, nor do I ask them to feed Me.⁵⁴ Allah Himself is the Sustainer, Possessor of power and might.⁵⁵ Therefore, those who have done wrong,⁵⁶ have also their portion of a similar torment ready as the people like them have been meted out their portions before. So let them not ask Me to hasten it.⁵⁷ Ultimately, there will be destruction for those who have disbelieved, on the Day with which they are being threatened.

49. That is, "This has not happened for the first time that the people are calling the Messenger sent by Allah a sorcerer and a madman when they heard the news of the Hereafter and the invitation to the Oneness of Allah from him. The whole history of Apostleship bears evidence that ever since the Messengers started coming for the guidance of mankind, ignorant people have been repeating the same folly in the same manner. Whichever Messenger came and gave them the warning that they were not the servants of many gods but One God alone is their Creator and Deity and Master of their destinies, ignorant people said that he was a sorcerer, who wanted to beguile and misguide them by his sorcery. Whichever Messenger came and warned them that they had not been created and left irresponsible in the world, but that at the conclusion of their life-work they would have to present themselves before their Creator and Master and render an account of their deeds and in consequence thereof they will be rewarded or punished accordingly, the foolish people cried out that he was a madman and had lost his reason because no one could be resurrected after death."

50. That is, "The fact that the people of different countries and nations adopted the same attitude as against the invitation of the Prophets and opposed them in the same manner in different ages for thousands of years could not be due to the reason that all the former and the latter generations had settled in a conference that whenever a prophet came with his message, he should be given such and such an answer. Then, what could be the reason for the uniformity of their attitude and behaviour? There could be no other reason for this than that rebellion and transgression was their common characteristic. As all the ignorant people of every age have been desirous of living a life free of Allah's service and fearless of His accountability, whoever called them to the service of Allah and to lead a God-conscious life, they gave him one and the same fixed answer."

This also throws light on an important truth and it is this: The motives that man has been naturally endowed with for adopting error and guidance, goodness and evil, justice and injustice, and similar other conducts, have been appearing in every age and in every corner of the world in the like manner no matter how different might have been their forms due to advancement of means and resources. Whether the man of today fights by means of the tanks and aircraft and hydrogen bombs and the man of the ancient time fought with stones and sticks, the basic motives for fighting between

men have always been the same. Likewise, the atheist of today might heap up his arguments for atheism as he likes, his motives for following that creed are precisely the same as had been of an atheist six thousand years ago and in his reasoning also he is not basically any different from his predecessor.

51. In this verse a method of the preaching of religion has been taught, which should be well understood. When a preacher of the truth has presented his message clearly before a person with rational arguments, and has also removed his doubts and objections and answered his arguments, he becomes relieved of his duty of making the truth plain. Even after this if the other person persists in his belief and creed, the responsibility for it does not lie on the preacher of the truth. It is no more necessary that he should pursue the same person, should go on spending his time in discussing things with him, and should make it a point that he has somehow to convince the same one man of the truth. The preacher, in fact, has done his duty ; if the other man is not convinced, let him alone. If the preacher does not any more attend to him, he cannot be blamed for letting a person remain involved in error, because now the other person himself is responsible for his deviation and error.

The Holy Prophet has not been addressed here to be taught this method because, God forbid, in his preaching he unnecessarily pursued the people and Allah wanted to stop him from this. In fact, the actual reason for stating this method is that when a preacher of the truth has done his best to make the people understand his message in a rational way and then seeing the signs of stubbornness in them withdraws from them, the people inveigh against him and start accusing him of indifference and inattention whereas, they, as they say, want to discuss things in order to understand his message. The fact, however, is that they do not intend to understand anything but only to involve the preacher in disputation and waste his time. Therefore, Allah Himself said in clear words ; "Turn away from them ; you are not at all to blame for showing any indifference towards them." After this nobody could blame the Holy Prophet that according to the Book that he had brought he had been appointed to make them understand his religion: then why he did not answer their objections.

52. In this verse the second method of preaching has been stated. The real object of the invitation to the truth is to convey the blessing of the faith to those righteous souls who are apprecia-

tive of the blessing and are themselves keen to attain it. But the preacher does not know where those righteous souls are among the hundreds of thousands of the members of human society. Therefore, his duty is to continue giving his call so that his voice reaches wherever there are the people who would accept his message. These very people are his real wealth. To search them out is his real task ; and to gather them together and bring them on to the path of God should be his objective. The preacher should attend to the useless element of the children of Adam that he comes across in the process only until he finds out by experience that it is a worthless commodity. After he has experienced their worthlessness and base quality, he should not waste his precious time on them, for they are not the people who would benefit from his admonition, and expending his energy on them is indeed a loss of those who are keen to benefit from it.

53. That is, "I have not created them for the service of others but for My own service. They should serve Me, for I am their Creator. When no one else has created them, no one else has the right that they should serve him ; and how can it be admissible for them that they should serve others instead of Me, their Creator?" Here, the question arises that Allah Almighty is not the Creator only of the jinn and men but of the entire Universe and of everything in it. Then, why has it been said only about the jinn and men that He has not created them for the service of others but of Himself? whereas every single creature is there to serve Allah. The answer is : On the earth only the jinn and men have been granted the freedom that they may serve Allah within their sphere of choice if they so like ; otherwise they can turn away from Allah's service as well as serve others beside Him. The rest of the creatures in the world do not have this kind of freedom. They do not have any choice whatever that they may not worship and serve Allah, or may serve any other. Therefore, only about the jinn and men it has been said here that by turning away from the obedience and servitude of their Creator within the bounds of their option and choice and by serving others than the Creator, they are fighting their own nature. They should know that they have not been created for the service of any other but the Creator, and for them the right way is that they should not abuse the freedom granted them, but within the bounds of this freedom also they should serve God voluntarily just as every particle of their body is serving Him involuntarily in the sphere where they have not been granted any freedom.

The word *'ibādat* (service, worship) in this verse has not been used in the sense of only prayer, fasting and other kinds of such worship so that one may understand that the jinn and men have been created only for performing the Prayer, observing the Fast and for praising and glorifying Allah. Although this sense also is included in it, this is not its complete sense. Its complete sense is that the jinn and men have not been created for the worship, obedience and carrying out of the orders of any other but Allah. They are not there to bow to any other, to carry out the orders of any other, to live in fear of any other, to follow the religion enjoined by any other, to look upon any other as the maker and destroyer of one's destiny, and to supplicate any other than Allah for help. (For further explanation, see E.N. 63 of *Sūrah Sabā*, E.N. 2 of *Az-Zumar*, E.N. 30 of *Al-Jāthiyah*).

Another thing that incidentally becomes quite obvious from this verse is that the jinn are a separate and independent creation from men. This brings out the error of the thinking of those people, who assert that some people from among mankind have been called the jinn in the Qur'an. This same thing is also confirmed and testified by the following verses of the Qur'an : *Al-An'ām* : 100, 128, *Al-A'rāf* : 38, 179, *Hūd* : 119, *Al-Hijr* : 27 to 33, *Bani Isrā'il* : 88, *Al-Kahf* : 50, *As-Sajdah* : 13, *Sabā* : 41, *Ṣuād* : 75, 76, *Hā Mīm As-Sajdah* : 25, *Al-Aḥqāf* : 18, *Ar-Raḥmān* : 15, 39, 56. (For a complete discussion of this question, see E.N. 21 of *Al-Anbiyā'*, E.N.'s 23, 45 of *An-Naml*, E.N. 24 of *Sabā*).

54. That is, "I do not stand in need of any kind of help from the jinn and men : that My Godhead would not function if they did not worship Me : that I would be no more God if they turned away from My service. I indeed do not stand in need of their service, but it is the demand of their own nature that they should serve Me. They have been created for this very object, and fighting nature would be to their own detriment."

And in saying : "I do not ask any sustenance of them nor do I ask them to feed Me," there is a subtle hint to this : Those whom the people who have turned away from Godworship in the world, worship, indeed, stand in need of these their worshippers. If they do not help sustain their godhead, it would not function even for a day. The gods do not provide for the worshippers but the worshippers provide for the gods instead. The gods do not feed them but they feed the gods instead. The gods do not protect them but the worshippers protect the gods instead. The worshippers, in fact, are

their army through whom their godhead functions. Wherever the worshippers of the false gods have ceased to exist, or the worshippers have given up their worship, the gods have lost all their pomp and glory and the world has seen how helpless they have become. Of all the deities Allah Almighty is the only real Deity Whose Godhead is functioning by His own power and might, Who does not take anything from His servants, but He alone gives His servants everything.

55. The word *malīn* as used in the original means strong and stable whom nobody can shake and move.

56. "Those, wrong": Those who have violated the reality and the truth and their own nature. The context itself shows that "those who have done wrong", here implies the people who are serving others than the Lord of the Universe, who disbelieve in the Hereafter, who regard themselves as irresponsible in the world, and have denied those Prophets who have tried to make them understand the reality.

57. This is the answer to the disbelievers' demand: "Why doesn't the Day of Retribution overtake us? Why is it being delayed?"

LII

AT-TŪR الطُّور

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

LII

AT-TŪR الطُّور

INTRODUCTION

Name

It is derived from the very first word "*Waṭ-Ṭūr-i.*"

Period of Revelation

From the internal evidence of the subject-matter it appears that this Sūrah too was revealed in the same stage of the Holy Prophet's life at Makkah in which the Sūrah Adh-Dhāriyāt was revealed. While going through it one can clearly feel that during the period of its revelation the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was being showered with objections and accusations but there is no evidence yet to show that severe persecution of the Muslims had started.

Subject-Matter and Topics

The subject-matter of its first section (vv. 1-28) is the Hereafter. As arguments for its possibility, necessity and occurrence had already been given in Sūrah Adh-Dhāriyāt, these have not been repeated here. However, swearing an oath by some realities and signs which testify to the Hereafter, it has been stated most emphatically that it will surely come to pass, and none has the power to prevent its occurrence. Then, it has been stated as to what will be the fate of those who deny it when it actually occurs, and how will those who believe in it and adopt the way of piety and righteousness accordingly, be blessed by Allah.

Then, in the second section (vv. 29-49) the Quraish chiefs' attitude towards the message of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has been criticised. They called him a sorcerer, a madman, or a poet, and would thus mislead the common people against him so that they should not pay any serious attention to the message he preached. They looked upon him as a calamity that had suddenly descended on them and would openly wish that he met with a disaster so that they were rid of him. They accused him of fabricating the Qur'ān by himself and of presenting it in the name of Allah, and this was, God forbid, a fraud that he was practising. They would often taunt him, saying that God could not have appointed an ordinary man like him to the office of Prophethood. They expressed great disgust at his invitation and message and would avoid him as if he was asking them for a reward for it. They would sit and take counsels together to devise schemes in order to put an end to his mission. And while they did all this they never realized what creeds of ignorance they were involved in and how selflessly and sincerely was Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) exerting himself to deliver them from their error.

While criticising them for this attitude and conduct, Allah has put them certain questions, one after the other, each of which is either an answer to some objection of theirs, or a criticism of some error. Then, it has been said that it would absolutely be of no avail to show them a miracle in order to convince them of his Prophethood, for they were such stubborn people as would misinterpret anything they were shown only to avoid affirming the faith.

In the beginning of this section as well as in its end, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has been given the instruction that he should persistently continue giving his invitation and preaching his message in spite of the accusations and objections of his opponents and enemies, and should endure their resistance patiently till Allah's judgement comes to pass. Besides, he has been consoled, as if to say : "Your Lord has not left you alone to face your enemies, after raising you as a Prophet, but He is constantly watching over you. Therefore, endure every hardship patiently till the Hour of His judgement comes, and seek through praising and glorifying your Lord the power that is required for exerting in the cause of Allah under such conditions.



وَالطُّورِ ۝ وَكِتَابٍ مَسْطُورٍ ۝ فِي رَقٍ مَّنْشُورٍ ۝ وَالْبَيْتِ الْمَعْمُورِ ۝
 السَّعْفِ الْمَرْفُوعِ ۝ وَالْبَحْرِ الْمَسْجُورِ ۝ إِنَّ عَذَابَ رَبِّكَ لَوَاقِعٌ ۝ مَا لَهُ
 مِنْ دَافِعٍ ۝ يَوْمَ تَمُورُ السَّمَاءُ مَوْرًا ۝ وَتَسِيرُ الْجِبَالُ سَيْرًا ۝ قَوْلٌ
 يَوْمِيذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ۝ الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي خَوْضٍ يَلْعَبُونَ ۝ يَوْمَ يَدْعُونَ إِلَىٰ
 نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ دَعَاً ۝ هَذِهِ النَّارُ الَّتِي كُنْتُمْ بِهَا تُكذِّبُونَ ۝ أَفَسِحْرٌ هَذَا أَمْ
 أَنْتُمْ لَا تُبْصِرُونَ ۝ إِصْلَوْهَا فَاصْبِرُوا أَوْ لَا تَصْبِرُوا سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْكُمْ إِنَّمَا تُجْزَوْنَ
 مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ۝ إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي جَنَّتٍ وَنَعِيمٍ ۝ فَكِهِينَ بِمَا أَثْمَرَتْهُمْ ۝ وَ
 قَهُمُ رَبُّهُمُ عَذَابَ الْجَحِيمِ ۝ كُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا هَنِيئًا بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ۝
 مُتَّكِنِينَ عَلَىٰ سُرُرٍ مَّصْفُوفَةٍ ۝ وَزَوَّجْنَاهُم بِحُورٍ عِينٍ ۝ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَ

LII

AT-TŪR

الطور

Verses : 49

Revealed at Makkah

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

By the (mount) Tūr,¹ and an open Book written on a fine scroll,² and the inhabited House,³ and the elevated roof,⁴ and the surging ocean,⁵ the torment of your Lord shall surely come to pass, which none can avert.⁶ It will be on a Day when the heaven shall reel and shake violently,⁷ and the mountains shall fly about.⁸ Woe on that Day to the deniers who are today engaged in their (useless) arguments for sport.⁹ The Day when they are driven and pushed to Hell-Fire, it will be said to them, "This is the same Fire that you were wont to deny. Now tell : Is this magic? Or, do you not perceive it ?¹⁰ Now burn ! Whether you bear it patiently or not, it is all the same for you. You are being recompensed only according to your deeds."

1-16

The righteous¹¹ shall be in Gardens and Bliss, rejoicing in what their Lord shall give them ; and their Lord shall save them from the torment of Hell.¹² (It will be said to them :) "Eat and drink with relish¹³ as a reward for what you have been doing." They will be reclining on couches, facing each other, and We shall wed them to houris with beautiful eyes.¹⁴

17-20

1. *Tūr* means a mountain, and *aṭ-Ṭūr* the particular mountain on which Allah had blessed the Prophet Moses with the Prophethood.

2. In ancient times the books and writings which were meant to be preserved for long were written on the skin of deer instead of the paper. This skin was especially prepared for writing as a thin and fine parchment and was called *raqq* terminologically. The Jews and Christians in general wrote the Torah, Psalms, the Gospels and the Prophets' Books on this same *raqq* so that they would endure. Here, by "an open Book" is implied the same collection of the holy scriptures which the followers of the Book possessed. It has been described as "an open Book" because it was not extinct; it was read and one could easily find out what was written in it.

3. According to Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan Baṣri, "the inhabited House" implies the House of Allah, the Ka'bah, which is never without its visitors and pilgrims at any time of the day and night. However, Ḥaḍrat 'Alī, Ibn 'Abbās, 'Ikrimah, Mujāhid, Qatādah, Ḍaḥḥāk, Ibn Zaid and other commentators have stated that it implies the *Bait-al-ma'mūr* (the inhabited House) which the Holy Prophet referred to in connection with his *Mi'rāj* (Ascension), against the wall of which he had seen the Prophet Abraham reclining. Mujāhid, Qatādah and Ibn Zaid say that just as the Ka'bah is the centre and place of refuge for all God-worshippers, so is there in every heaven a similar Ka'bah for its dwellers which occupies a similar central position for the worshippers of Allah there. One of these Ka'bahs was the one against the wall of which the Holy Prophet had seen the Prophet Abraham reclining on the occasion of the *Mi'rāj*; and with it the Prophet Abraham had a natural affinity, for he himself was the founder of the Ka'bah of the earth. In view of this explanation, this second commentary does not go against the commentary given by Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan Baṣri, but if both are read together, we can understand that here the oath has not been sworn only by the Ka'bah of the earth, but it also includes an oath by all the Ka'bahs that are there in the entire Universe.

4. "The elevated roof": the sky which seems to be spread over the earth like a vault; here this word has been used for the entire Universe. (For explanation, see E.N. 7 of Sūrah Qāf).

5. Several meanings have been given of the word *al-baḥr-il-masjūr* as used in the original. Some commentators have taken it in the meaning of "full of fire"; some take it in the sense of "empty

and un-occupied", the water of which might have sunk into the earth ; some take it in the meaning of "restricted and confined", by which they imply that the ocean has been restrained so that its water neither sinks into the earth nor spreads over the land to drown all its dwellers. Some have taken it in the meaning of mixed and blended because in it sweet and saline, warm and cold, water is mixed together ; and some take it in the meaning of brimful and surging. The first two of these meanings bear no relevance to the context. These two states of the ocean—splitting of the bottom of the ocean and sinking of its water into the earth and then its being filled with fire—will appear on the Day of Resurrection, as mentioned in Sūrah Takvīr : 6 and Infiṭār : 3. These states of the future do not exist at present and therefore cannot be sworn by to convince the people of today of the occurrence of the Hereafter. Therefore, here *al-baḥr-il-masjūr* can be taken only in the meaning of confined, mixed, brimful and surging.

6. This is that truth for which an oath has been sworn by the five things. "The torment of your Lord" implies the Hereafter, for it will be a torment for those who deny that it will come. That is why it has been called "the torment of your Lord" instead of the Resurrection, or the Hereafter, or the Day of Retribution. Now let us consider how the five things by which an oath has been sworn point to its occurrence.

Mount Ṭūr is the place where a decision was taken to exalt an oppressed nation and to abase an oppressive nation, and this decision was taken not on the basis of a physical law but on the basis of a Moral Law and the Law of Retribution. Therefore, Mount Ṭūr has been presented as a symbol for the Hereafter. It implies that the decision of exalting a helpless nation like the children of Israel and the drowning of a powerful and mighty ruler like the Pharaoh along with his hosts, which was taken in a quiet and listless night on the Mount Ṭūr, is proof of the fact how the nature of the Kingdom of the Universe demands that man who has been endowed with powers and authority, should be subjected to moral accountability and rewarded and punished accordingly, and for meeting this demand adequately a Day of Reckoning is necessary when the whole of mankind should be gathered together and called to account for its deeds. (For further explanation, see E.N. 21 of Sūrah Adh-Dhāriyāt).

The holy scriptures have been sworn by because all the Prophets who came to the world from the Lord of the Universe and the Books they brought gave the same one news in every age which the Prophet

Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) is giving, i.e. that all humans of the former and latter generations will one day be resurrected and presented before their God and rewarded and punished according to their deeds. There has been no heavenly Book that fails to proclaim that this life is not the only life, that man will not end in the dust after death and that there will be both accountability and reckoning.

"The inhabited House" has been sworn by for the reason that in those days the building of the Holy Ka'bah was a great sign, particularly for the Arabs, which pointed to the truthfulness of Allah's Prophets and to the fact that they were supported by Allah Almighty's far-reaching wisdom and great power. 2,500 years before the revelation of these verses a person happens to visit these barren and un-inhabited mountains, without any army or worldly provision, leaving behind a wife and a suckling child devoid of material support. Then, some time later the same man returns and builds at this desolate place a house for the worship of Allah and gives a call to the people to come and visit that house as pilgrims. This same structure and the call are so fervently received that the House becomes the centre of the entire population of Arabia. People respond to the call enthusiastically and are drawn from every corner of the country to the House in a spirit of devotion and dedication. For 2,500 years this House continues to remain such a sanctuary of peace that while blood is shed in the country around it, none can dare raise his hand against another as soon as people enter its sacred boundaries; and then because of this very House Arabia is blessed with four months of such total peace every year when caravans travel in full safety, trade flourishes and markets are held. Then the House inspired such awe that during this whole period no tyrant could ever look towards it with an evil intention, and whoever dared do so was so seized by Allah's wrath that he became an object of warning for others. Such a miracle had been witnessed by the people themselves only 45 years before the revelation of these verses, and many of those who had witnessed it were still present and living in the city at the time when these verses were being recited to the people of Makkah. What greater proof could be there of the fact that the Prophets of God never uttered empty words? They see with their eyes that which others do not see; they talk freely of such realities as cannot be comprehended by others by intellect; they engage at times in works which might be viewed as madness by the contem-

porary world but which might strike with amazement the people coming centuries afterwards. When men of such calibre have un-animously been giving in every age the news that Resurrection shall occur and accountability shall take place, it would be sheer madness to dub it as the bragging of the insane.

The elevated roof (the sky) and the surging ocean have been sworn by, for both these are a pointer to Allah's wisdom and His power, and the same wisdom and power prove both the possibility of the Hereafter and its occurrence and necessity. As for the sky's being a pointer we have already explained it in E. N. 7 of Sūrah Qāf above. As for the ocean, anyone who considers it deeply with an unbiased mind will testify that the provision of water in such abundance on the earth is by itself such an amazing work which cannot be the result of an accident or chance. This also proves that it is not possible that such a perfect system could come into being by chance and the bodies of each species could be made precisely according to the depth in which it has to live. Its water has been made saline so that the bodies of the millions of the animals which die in it daily do not rot. Its water has been restrained at a particular level in such a way that it neither sinks into the earth's belly passing through its cracks and holes, nor it spreads over the land to submerge it, but has been checked at the same level for millions of years. Because of the existence of this great store of water the rainfall is arranged on the dry parts of the earth, in which the heat of the sun and the circulation of the winds cooperate with full regularity. Then the ocean's being inhabited with life and the creation in it of the various kinds of creatures has given man the advantage that he obtains from it his food and other necessities in large quantities. Then its being checked and restrained to a limit has given birth to the continents and islands which are the home of man, and because of its adhering to and following some fixed laws has it become possible that man may navigate his ships in it. Such an arrangement could not have possibly existed without the wisdom of an All-Wise Being and the power of an Absolute Ruler, nor could this deep relationship that binds the interests of man and other creatures of the earth to the arrangement of the ocean be established at random. Now, if this is un-deniable evidence that an All-Wise and All-Powerful God has created a vast and surging, brackish ocean also besides making countless other arrangements for the purpose of settling man on the earth, that person would be fool-hardy, who expects that the All-Wise God would make arrangements

for man that he should water his crops from the ocean and provide him sustenance thereby but would never question him as to how he returned thanks after eating His provisions, and that He would grant man the power that he should run his ships on the surface of the ocean but would never question him as to whether he had run the ships for the sake of the truth, righteousness and justice, or had committed robberies. Likewise, it would also be sheer folly to imagine that the Absolute Sovereign of Whose power the creation of the wonderful ocean is a petty, insignificant sign, Who has checked and restrained this vast store of water on this suspended globe which is moving in space, Who has dissolved a huge quantity of salt in it, Who has created countless varieties of creatures in it, and has arranged their sustenance therein, Who carries billions of tons of water from it every year by means of the wind and causes it to fall regularly as rain on millions of square miles of dry land, becomes so helpless and powerless after creating man that He could not resurrect him again.

7. The word *maur* in the original is used for turning round, boiling, fluttering, rotating, swinging and moving forward and backward. The object of depicting the condition of the heavens on the Day of Resurrection in these words is to give the idea that the system of the heavens on that Day will be wholly upset, and when an observer will look up to the sky, he will feel that the constant pattern and order that it always used to present, has been broken and there is disorder, confusion and chaos on every side.

8. In other words, the pull of the earth which is keeping the mountains in place, will become loose, they will be uprooted and start floating about in space like clouds.

9. It means that they are mocking and ridiculing the news of Resurrection, Hereafter, Heaven and Hell when they hear it from the Prophet, and instead of considering it seriously they are disputing it only for fun and amusement. Their discussions of the Hereafter are not meant to understand the reality, but only to amuse themselves, and they do not at all realize the fate for which they are destined.

10. That is, "When the Messengers in the world warned you of this Hell, you said that it was only by magic that they were fooling you. Now say : Is this Hell which you are facing mere magic, or you still do not see that you have actually met with the same Hell which was being foretold to you?"

11. "The righteous" : the people who believed in the news given by the Prophets and who safeguarded themselves in the world itself and refrained from thoughts and deeds that doom man to Hell.

12. There seems to be no need to mention a person's being saved from Hell after it has been said that he will be admitted to Heaven, but at several places in the Qur'ān these two things have been mentioned separately because a person's being saved from Hell is by itself a great blessing. And the words, "their Lord shall save them from the torment of Hell", is an allusion to the truth that man's being saved from Hell is possible only through Allah's grace and bounty ; otherwise human weaknesses cause such flaws to occur in everyone's work that if Allah does not overlook them by His grace and instead decides to subject him to accountability, none can save himself from His punishment. That is why although entry into Paradise is a great bounty from Allah, his being saved from Hell is no less a mercy.

13. Here, the word "with relish" contains vast meaning in itself. In Paradise whatever a man receives, he will have it without any labour and toil. There will be no question of its sustenance in short supply. Man will not have to spend anything for it. It will be precisely according to his desire and choice and taste. In whatever quantity and whenever he will desire it, it will be made available. He will not be staying there as a guest that he may feel shy of asking for something, but everything will be the reward of his lifelong deeds and the fruit of his own labours. His eating and drinking anything will not cause any illness nor will he eat for satisfying hunger or for survival but only for the sake of enjoyment. Man will be able to obtain as much pleasure from it as he pleases without the fear of indigestion, and the food eaten will not produce any filth. Therefore, the meaning of eating and drinking "with relish" in Paradise is much more vast and sublime than what is understood by it in the world.

14. For explanation, see E.N.'s 26, 29 of Sūrah Aṣ-Ṣāffāt, and E.N. 42 of Ad-Dukhān.

اتَّبَعْتَهُمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ بِإِيمَانٍ أَلْحَقْنَا بِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَمَا أَلَتْنَاهُمْ مِنْ عَمَلِهِمْ
 مِنْ شَيْءٍ كُلُّ امْرِئٍ بِمَا كَسَبَ رَهِينٌ ﴿٦١﴾ وَآمَدَدْنَاهُمْ بِفَاكِهَةٍ وَلَحْمٍ مِمَّا
 يَشْتَهُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾ يَتَنَزَّعُونَ فِيهَا كَأَسَا لَا لَغْوٌ فِيهَا وَلَا تَأْثِيمٌ ﴿٦٣﴾ وَيَطُوفُ عَلَيْهِمْ
 غِلْمَانٌ لَهُمْ كَأَنَّهُمْ لُؤْلُؤٌ مَكْنُونٌ ﴿٦٤﴾ وَأَقْبَلَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ ﴿٦٥﴾
 قَالُوا إِنَّا كُنَّا قَبْلُ فِي أَهْلِنَا مُشْفِقِينَ ﴿٦٦﴾ فَمَنْ اللَّهُ عَلَيْنَا وَوَقْنَا عَذَابَ
 السُّمُورِ ﴿٦٧﴾ إِنَّا كُنَّا مِنْ قَبْلُ نَدْعُوهُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْبَرُّ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿٦٨﴾ فَذَكَرْنَا أَنْتَ
 بِنِعْمَتِ رَبِّكَ بِكَاهِنٍ وَلَا مَجْنُونٍ ﴿٦٩﴾ أَمْ يَقُولُونَ شَاعِرٌ نَتَرَبَّصُ بِهِ سَرِيبَ
 الْمَنُونِ ﴿٧٠﴾ قُلْ تَرَبَّصُوا فَإِنِّي مَعَكُمْ مِنَ الْمُنْتَرِبِينَ ﴿٧١﴾ أَمْ تَأْمُرُهُمْ أَحْلَامُهُمْ
 بِهَذَا أَمْ هُمْ قَوْمٌ طَاغُونَ ﴿٧٢﴾ أَمْ يَقُولُونَ تَقْوَلَهُ بَلْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٧٣﴾ فَلْيَأْتُوا
 بِحَدِيثٍ مِثْلِهِ إِنْ كَانُوا صَادِقِينَ ﴿٧٤﴾ أَمْ خُلِقُوا مِنْ غَيْرِ شَيْءٍ أَمْ هُمُ الْخَالِقُونَ ﴿٧٥﴾
 أَمْ خَلِقُوا السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بَلْ لَا يُوقِنُونَ ﴿٧٦﴾ أَمْ عِنْدَهُمْ خَزَائِنُ رَبِّكَ أَمْ
 هُوَ الْمَصْطَرُونَ ﴿٧٧﴾ أَمْ لَهُمْ سُلُوسٌ يَسْمَعُونَ فِيهِ فَلْيَأْتِ مُسْتَمِعَهُمْ بِسُلْطَنِ
 مُبِينٍ ﴿٧٨﴾ أَمْ لَهُ الْبَنَاتُ وَلَكُمُ الْبَنُونَ ﴿٧٩﴾ أَمْ تَسْأَلُهُمْ أَجْرًا فَهُمْ مِنْ مَغْرَمٍ
 مُثْقَلُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾ أَمْ عِنْدَهُمُ الْغَيْبُ فَهُمْ يَكْتُمُونَ ﴿٨١﴾ أَمْ يُرِيدُونَ كَيْدًا فَالَّذِينَ
 كَفَرُوا هُمُ الْمَكِيدُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾ أَمْ لَهُمْ إِلَهٌ غَيْرُ اللَّهِ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٨٣﴾ وَإِنْ
 يَرَوْا كِسْفًا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ سَاقِطًا يَقُولُوا سَحَابٌ مَرْكُومٌ ﴿٨٤﴾ فَذَرَهُمْ حَتَّى يُلَاقُوا
 يَوْمَهُمُ الَّذِي فِيهِ يُصْعَقُونَ ﴿٨٥﴾ يَوْمَ لَا يُغْنِي عَنْهُمْ كَيْدُهُمْ شَيْئًا وَلَا هُمْ
 يُنصَرُونَ ﴿٨٦﴾ وَإِنَّ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا عَذَابًا دُونَ ذَلِكَ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا
 يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٨٧﴾ وَاصْبِرْ لِحُكْمِ رَبِّكَ فَإِنَّكَ بِأَعْيُنِنَا وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ

Those who have believed and their offspring also have followed in their footsteps in degrees of faith, We shall join to them those of their offspring also (in Paradise) and shall not deprive them of anything of their deeds.¹⁵ Every person is a pledge for what he has earned.¹⁶ We shall go on providing them well with fruits and meat,¹⁷ such as they may desire. They shall zealously be passing from hand to hand a cup of wine which shall neither contain idle talk nor immorality.¹⁸ And there will go round to them young boys, exclusively appointed for their service,¹⁹ who will be as lovely as well-guarded pearls. They will turn to one another and ask (about their worldly lives). They will say, "Before this we lived among our kinsfolk, in fear and dread.²⁰ Consequently, Allah has been bounteous to us and has saved us from the torment of the scorching wind.²¹ Indeed, we prayed only to Him in our previous life. Most surely He is the Beneficent, the Merciful."

21-28

So, O Prophet, go on admonishing (them). By the grace of your Lord, you are neither a soothsayer nor mad.²²

29

Do they say, "He is a poet for whom we are awaiting the adverse turn of fortune?"²³ Say to them, "Yes, wait; I too shall wait with you."²⁴ Do their minds command them to do so, or, are they a people who have transgressed all limits?²⁵

30-32

Do they say, "This man himself has forged this Qur'an?" The fact is that they do not want to believe.²⁶ Let them then produce a discourse like it, if they are true in what they say.²⁷

33-34

Have they been created without a Creator? Or, are they their own creators? Or, have they created the heavens and the earth? The fact is that they lack faith.²⁸

35-36

Do they possess the treasures of your Lord? Or, is it they who control them?²⁹

37

- 38-39 Do they have a ladder by climbing which they overhear what goes on in heavens? Then let any of them who has overheard bring a clear proof. Is Allah to have daughters and you sons?³⁰
- 40 Do you ask them for any rewards that they are weighed down under a load of debt?³¹
- 41 Do they have the knowledge of the unseen realities whereby they may be writing down?³²
- 42 Do they intend to devise a plot?³³ (If so,) the plot shall recoil upon the disbelievers themselves.³⁴
- 43 Do they have a god other than Allah? Exalted is Allah above what they associate with Him.³⁵
- 44-47 Even if they saw fragments of the sky falling down, they would say, "This is a mass of clouds advancing."³⁶ Therefore, O Prophet, leave them to themselves till they meet that Day of theirs wherein they shall be struck down, the Day when neither shall their own plotting avail them anything nor shall anyone else come to their rescue. And even before that there awaits the wrongdoers another torment, but most of them do not know.³⁷

15. This theme has already been mentioned in Sūrah Ar-Ra'd : 23 and Al-Mu'min : 8 above, but here a greater good news has been given. In the verse of Sūrah Ar-Ra'd only this much was said : "They will enter into them (Gardens) along with the righteous from among their forefathers, wives and descendants," and in Sūrah Al-Mu'min : "The angels ask forgiveness for the believers ; they say : Our Lord...(admit therein also) of their parents and wives and children who are righteous." Here, what has been said in addition is : If the children had been following in the footsteps of their forefathers in faith, they will be joined with them in Paradise even though they might not deserve, on the basis of their deeds, the same high rank which the elders would attain on the basis of their superior faith and deeds, and this joining will not be of the nature of occasional visits and meetings but they will be lodged permanently with them in Paradise as is borne out by the words : *al-ḥaḡna bi-him*. For the sake of further satisfaction it has been stated : "In order to be

joined with their offspring the parents will not be lowered and reduced in rank, but in order to be joined with their elders the rank of the children will be enhanced and exalted”.

Here, it should be borne in mind that this news has been given in respect of the children who on reaching maturity voluntarily decided to affirm faith and of their own free will followed in the footsteps of their righteous forefathers. As for those of the children of a believer, who might have died even before reaching maturity, there cannot be any question of belief or disbelief, obedience or disobedience, for they will be admitted to Paradise automatically and will be lodged along with their parents to be a comfort of the eyes for them.

16. Here, the metaphor of *rahn* (pledge) is very meaningful. If a person takes a loan from somebody, and the creditor keeps some article belonging to the debtor as a pledge with himself as a guarantee for the payment of his right, the debtor cannot redeem his pledge unless he pays off the debts; and if he does not redeem his pledge within the fixed time limit, the pledged article stands forfeited. The nature of the affair between man and God has been compared here to this very situation. The provisions, powers, capabilities and authority that God has granted man in the world are a debt that the Master has given to His servant, and as a guarantee for this debt the self of man is a pledge with Allah. If man by employing the provisions and the powers and authority in the right way earns the good by which the debt can be paid off, he will redeem the pledged thing, i.e. his own self, otherwise it will be forfeited. This thing has been said immediately after the preceding verse because even though the righteous believers may themselves be the people of a very high rank, their children cannot redeem their pledge unless they redeem their self by their own labour and effort. The earning of the forefathers cannot redeem the children. However, if the children are able to redeem themselves by virtue of their faith in some degree by following their righteous forefathers in their footsteps, it would then be Allah's grace and bounty that in Paradise He may exalt them from lower ranks to be joined with their parents in the higher ranks. The good done by the forefathers can benefit the children only so far, but if by their own deeds they deserve Hell, it is not possible that they may be admitted to Paradise for the sake of the forefathers. Another thing that can be deduced from this verse is that the less righteous children's being joined with their more righteous fore-

fathers is not in reality the result of the life-work of the children but of their forefathers'. They by virtue of their deeds will deserve the grace that their children be joined with them in order to be a comfort of the eyes for them. That is why Allah will not lower their ranks to join them with their children but will exalt the children's ranks to be joined with them, so that the perfection of Allah's blessings on them is not marred by the distress that they may suffer on account of the remoteness of their children far away.

17. In this verse, there is the mention of providing the dwellers of Paradise with every kind of meat generally, and in Sūrah Al-Wāqi'ah it has been said: "They will be served with the flesh of fowls." We do not know what exactly will be the nature of this flesh. But just as in some expressions of the Qur'ān and in some *Aḥdīth* it has been said about the milk of Paradise that it will not have been drawn from the udders of animals, and about the honey of Paradise it has been said that it will not have been produced by the bees, and about the wine of Paradise it has been said that it will not have been distilled from rotten fruit, but these things will flow out of the springs into the canals by the power of Allah, so it can be argued by analogy that this flesh too will not be obtained from slaughtered animals but this too will be a natural product. The God Who can produce milk and honey and wine directly from earthly substances can also produce tasty flesh of every kind from the same substances, which should even surpass the flesh of animals in taste and delight. (For further explanation, see E.N. 25 of Sūrah Aṣ-Ṣāffāt, E.N.'s 21 to 23 of Sūrah Muḥammad).

18. That is, the wine of Paradise will not intoxicate that they should get drunk and talk nonsense, or use abusive language, or conduct and behave indecently as drunkards. (For further explanation, see E.N. 27 of Aṣ-Ṣāffāt).

19. Here, the word used is *ghilmān-ul-lahum* and not *ghilmān-u-hum*. If *ghilmān-u-hum* had been used, it would have meant that their servants in the world would be made their servants in Paradise too; whereas whoever from the world goes to Paradise, will go there on the basis of his own work and entitlement, and there is no reason that after his entry in Paradise he may be made a servant of the same master whom he had been serving in the world. But it can also be that a servant on account of his deeds may attain a higher rank than his master in Paradise. Therefore, by using *ghilmān-ul-lahum* no room has been left for this suspicion. This word provides the explanation that these will be the boys who will be exclusively appointed

for their service in Paradise. (For further explanation, see E.N. 26 of Sūrah Aṣ-Ṣāffāt).

20. That is, "We were not heedless and living a care-free life of ease and comfort, but we were always on our guard lest we should commit an evil for which we may be held accountable before God." Here, the mention of "...living among our kinsfolk, in fear and dread," in particular, has been made for the reason that man commits evil mostly when he is deeply engrossed in arranging ease and comfort for his children and trying to make their future secure and happy. For the same purpose he earns forbidden things by forbidden means, usurps the rights of others and makes evil plans. That is why the dwellers of Paradise will say to one another: "That which particularly saved us from the evil of the Hereafter was that while living among our families we did not think so much of arranging the pleasures of life and a splendid future for them as for avoiding for their sake those methods and means that might ruin our life in the Hereafter and that we should not lead our children also on to the way that might make them worthy of the torment of Allah."

21. The word *samūm* in the original means hot, scorching wind; here it implies the waves of hot wind that will be arising from Hell.

22. After depicting a scene of the Hereafter the address now turns to the obdurances of the disbelievers of Makkah with which they were resisting the message of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace). This verse though apparently addressed to the Holy Prophet is actually meant for the disbelievers through him. Whenever he spoke of Resurrection and the gathering together of mankind, and accountability, and meting out of rewards and punishments, and Heaven and Hell, and recited the verses of the Qur'ān in support thereof, with the claim that he received that information from Allah and that it was Allah's Word that had been revealed to him, their leaders and religious guides and depraved people neither listened to him seriously themselves nor wanted that the other people should pay any attention to him. Therefore, they would sometimes taunt him saying that he was a sorcerer, or that he was a poet, or that he was a madman, or that he fabricated those strange things himself and presented them as Revelations from Allah only in order to impress the people. They thought that by passing such remarks against him they would be able to create suspicions among the people about him and would thus render his preaching ineffective and vain. About this it is being said: "O Prophet, the truth in fact is the same that has been presented from the beginning of the Sūrah to this point. If

these people call you a sorcerer and a madman on account of these things, you should not take it to heart but should go on arousing the people from their heedlessness and warning them of the reality, for by the grace of God you are neither."

The word *kāhin* (sorcerer) in Arabic is used for an astrologer, fortune teller and a wise man. In the pre-Islamic days of ignorance it was a full-fledged profession. The sorcerers claimed, and the credulous people thought and believed, that they knew the destinies of the people, or they had a special link with the spirits, devils and jinn through whom they came to know of the unseen realities. If a thing was lost, they could tell where it lay ; if a theft occurred somewhere, they could tell who the thief was ; and they could foretell destinies. People came to them, and they would tell them unseen things in exchange for gifts and offerings. They would sometimes visit the towns and villages and would cry about their profession so that the people might approach them. They had a way and manner and appearance of their own by which they became easily recognisable. The language they used also differed from the common speech of the people. They would utter rhymed and rhythmical sentences with a peculiar accent and modulation and generally used vague and ambiguous sentences from which every person could draw his own meaning. The Quraish chiefs in order to deceive the common people accused the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) of sorcery only for the reason that he was giving the news of the realities that are hidden and his claim was that an angel from God came to reveal that news to him, and the Word of God that he was presenting was also rhymed. But no one in Arabia could be deceived by this accusation because no one was unaware of the sorcerers' profession and their general way and appearance and their language and business. Everyone knew what they did, why the people visited them, what they told them, what sort of modulated sentences they uttered and what subject-matter they contained. Then, above all, it could not be that a sorcerer would rise with a creed that went against the prevalent beliefs of the nation and would exert himself preaching it continuously at his own risk. Therefore, this accusation of sorcery did not apply to the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace) at all and no one in Arabia who had any common sense could be deceived by it.

Likewise, the disbelievers of Makkah also accused him of madness only for their own satisfaction, just as some shameless Western scholars of the present day in order to satisfy their malice and en-

mity against Islam, claim that, God forbid, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) had epileptic fits and whatever he uttered during those fits was taken as Divine Revelation by the people. No sensible person in those days regarded such absurd accusations as worthy of any attention, nor can anyone today who reads the Qur'ān and studies the wonderful feats of the Holy Prophet's leadership and guidance believe that these were the product of epileptic fits.

23. That is, "We are waiting for him to be afflicted with calamity so that we be rid of him." Probably they thought that since Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) was opposing their deities and denying their supernatural powers, he would fall under the curse of some deity, or some bold devotee of a god would put an end to him.

24. This can have two meanings : (1) "I would also see whether this desire of yours is fulfilled or not ;" and (2) "I am also waiting to see who goes to his doom, you or I."

25. In these two sentences, the opponents' entire propaganda has been nailed, and they have been completely exposed. The reasoning briefly is this : These Quraish chiefs and elders pose as very wise people, but does their intellect tell them that they should call a person a poet when he is not a poet, and call him a madman when he is well-known for his wisdom among the people, and dub him a sorcerer when he has not the remotest association with sorcery ? Then, if you are passing these judgements only on the basis of intellect and reason, you should have passed one judgement, and not so many contradictory judgements simultaneously. After all, how can one and the same man be a poet and a madman and a sorcerer at one and the same time ? If he is mad, he can then neither be a sorcerer nor a poet. If he is a sorcerer, he cannot be a poet, and if he is a poet, he cannot be a sorcerer, for the language and diction and themes of poetry are quite different from the language and themes of sorcery. The one who knows the distinctions between poetry and sorcery cannot possibly call and regard the same discourse both as poetry and as sorcery at one and the same time. Therefore, it is evident that these contradictory things are being said against the Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) not on the basis of intellect and reason but only due to obduracy and stubbornness, and the big chiefs of the nation blinded by their prejudice and enmity are levelling absurd charges which no serious person can regard as worthy of any attention. (For further explana-

tion, see E.N. 104 of Al-A'rāf, E.N. 3 of Sūrah Yūnus, E.N.'s 53, 54 of Banī Isrā'īl, E.N.'s 130, 131, 140, 142-144 of Ash-Shua'rā').

26. In other words, it means this : The Quraish who think that Muḥammad (upon whom be peace) himself is the author of the Qur'ān know it in their innermost hearts that it cannot be his word, and those others also whose mother tongue is Arabic not only clearly feel that it is far more sublime and superior to human speech but any one of them who knows Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) personally cannot ever suspect that this is actually his own word and speech. Therefore, the thing plainly is that those who ascribe the authorship of the Qur'ān to the Holy Prophet do not, in fact, wish to affirm faith. That is why they are inventing false excuses one of which is this excuse. (For further explanation, see E.N. 21 of Yūnus, E.N. 12 of Al-Furqān, E.N. 64 of Al-Qaṣaṣ, E.N.'s 88, 89 of Al-'Ankabūt, E.N.'s 1 to 4 of As-Sajdah, E.N. 54 of Hā Mīm As-Sajdah, E.N.'s 8 to 10 of Al-Aḥqāf).

27. That is, "Not only is the Qur'ān not the word of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) but the truth is that it is not human at all ; it is beyond the power of man to compose and produce it. If you think it is human, you are challenged to produce the like of it, which should also be human." This challenge had been given not only to the Quraish but to all the disbelievers of the world first of all in this verse. Then it was repeated thrice in Makkah and then finally in Madīnah. (Please see Yūnus : 38, Hūd : 13, Banī Isrā'īl : 88, Al-Baqarah : 23). But no one could dare meet this challenge of the Qur'ān at that time, nor has any one else had so far the ability to compose and produce a man-made work like the Qur'ān.

Some people because of lack of understanding the real nature of this challenge, say that not to speak of the Qur'ān, no one has the power to write prose or compose poetry in the style of another person. Homer, Rūmī, Shakespeare, Goethe, Ghālib, Tagore, Iqbāl, all are unique in their styles : it lies in no one's power to produce poetry like theirs by imitation. Those who give this answer to the challenge of the Qur'ān are, in fact, involved in the misunderstanding that the meaning of "let them then produce a discourse like it", is a challenge to man to compose and write a book like the Qur'ān, in the style of the Qur'ān ; whereas it does not imply any resemblance in literary style but it implies this : Bring a book of the same sublimity and quality and rank, not only in Arabic but in any language of the world, that may be regarded as a match for the Qur'ān in

respect of the characteristics for which the Qur'ān is a miracle. The following are in brief some of the main characteristics because of which the Qur'ān has been a miracle before as it is a miracle today :

(1) The Qur'ān is the highest and most perfect model of the literature of the language in which it was revealed. No word and no sentence in the entire Book is sub-standard. Whatever theme has been presented in it, has been presented in the most appropriate words and in the most suitable style. One and the same theme has been presented over and over again but every time in a new style avoiding the defect of repetition everywhere. The entire Book, from the beginning to the end, is set in the choicest words, like chiselled and polished gems, that cannot be replaced. The discourses are so impressive that no one who knows the language, even if he is a disbeliever, can help being moved to ecstasies on hearing them. Even after 1,400 years this Book is still the model of Arabic literature and no other Arabic book can approach it in literary excellence not to speak of equalling it. Not only this : this Book has so controlled the Arabic language that even after the passage of 14 centuries the standard of this language's beauty and eloquence is the same that had been set by it ; whereas in such long periods languages change out of recognition. No other language of the world has remained in the same state in so far as its spelling and diction, idiom, rules of language and usages are concerned. But it is only the power of the Qur'ān that has held the Arabic language in place ; each idiom of it is still in use in Arabic literature ; its literature is still the standard literature of Arabic ; and in writing and speech still the same language is regarded as good Arabic that had been used in the Qur'ān 1,400 years ago. Is there any man-made book in any language of the world that bears the same characteristics ?

(2) This is the one single Book in the world, which has so extensively and so universally influenced mankind's thoughts, morals, civilization and way of life as has no precedent in history. In the first instance, its impact changed one nation ; then that nation rose and changed a major part of the world. No other book has proved to be so revolutionary. This Book has not remained confined to writing on paper but in the practical world its each word has formed and moulded ideas and thoughts and built up a lasting civilization. Its influence has continued being operative for 1,400 years and its circle of influence and impact is still expanding every day.

(3) The theme that this Book discusses is the most extensive theme which comprehends the whole Universe, from eternity to eternity. It deals with the reality of the Universe, its beginning and end, its system and law. It tells as to Who is the Creator and Controller and Disposer of this Universe, what are His attributes, what are His powers, and what is that essence and basis on which He has established this entire system of the world. It specifies man's position and his place which he cannot change. It tells what is the right and correct way of thought and action for man in view of this place and position, which corresponds to the reality, and what are the wrong ways which clash with the reality. Then to prove why the right way is right and the wrong ways wrong, it presents countless arguments from various phenomena of the earth and heavens, from different aspects of the system of the Universe, from man's own self and existence and from man's own history. Besides, it also tells how and for what reasons man adopts the wrong ways, by what means he can find out the Right Way, which has always been one and shall remain one, and how he has been guided to it in every age. It does not merely point to the Right Way but presents a plan of the complete system of life for following that way, which contains a detailed and systematic code concerning beliefs, morals, purification of self, worship, social life, civilization, economy, politics, justice, law and every other aspect of human life. Furthermore, it also tells in full detail what are the results of following this Right Way and of adopting the wrong ways in this world and what consequences of this will appear in the Next World after the present system of the world has come to an end. It depicts fully the coming to an end of the present world and of the establishment of the New World; it gives every detail of the process of change; it portrays the Next World and describes fully how man will find a totally new life there, how his deeds from worldly life will be subjected to accountability, what things he will be questioned about, how his complete record, which he will not be able to deny or dispute, will be placed before him, what strong evidence will be produced in proof thereof, why the culprits will be punished and the righteous rewarded, what rewards will be bestowed on the righteous and in what forms will the culprits suffer the evil consequences of their misdeeds. The way this vast theme has been dealt with in this Book is not of the nature of some conclusions that its Author might have reached from some syllogistic premises but its nature is that its Author has the direct knowledge of the Reality;

He sees everything happening from eternity to eternity. All the realities are manifest for Him and the entire Universe is like an open book before Him. He sees the entire life of mankind, from its origin to its end, even beyond the present life into the second life simultaneously, and He is guiding man not on the basis of conjecture and speculation but on the basis of knowledge. Not a single truth that He presents as knowledge has been proved to be wrong so far. The concept of the Universe and Man that He presents fully explains all the phenomena and events and can become the basis of research in every branch of knowledge. His Word contains the answers to all the ultimate problems of philosophy and natural and social sciences, and they are so coherent and consistent logically that a perfect, consistent and comprehensive system of thought can be built on their basis. Then from the practical aspect the guidance that He has given to man about various spheres of life is not only highly rational and pure but countless men have been living according to it in actual fact in different parts of the earth for 1,400 years and have found it by experience to be the only valid way. Is there any man-made book of this unique quality present in the world, or has ever been, which may be produced to match this Book?

(4) This Book was not composed and written all at once and presented before the world, but a reformatory movement was started with some basic and initial instructions and then for 23 years as the movement passed through different stages of its development its parts were presented by the tongue of the leader, sometimes as lengthy discourses and sometimes as brief sentences, as the conditions and requirements of the occasion demanded. Then, when the Mission was brought to completion, these parts that had been issued at different times were compiled in the form of a complete Book which has been known by the name of the 'Qur'ān'. The leader of the movement states that these discourses and sentences are not his original work but were sent down to him by the Lord of all Creation. If a person asserts that they are the original work of the leader himself, he should produce a precedent from history to prove his contention. He should show whether it is possible that the speeches made and the instructions given by a man at different times while leading a powerful collective movement for years continuously by himself in different capacities, sometimes as a preacher and teacher of morals, sometimes as a leader of an oppressed class, sometimes as the ruler of a state, sometimes as the commander of a fighting army, sometimes as a victor, sometimes

as a law-giver and legislator, could form a complete and consistent and comprehensive system of thought and action, which should be free from every contradiction and inconsistency, which should appear to be dominated by the same central idea and pattern of thought, which should show that the leader has been building up a universal system of belief and action on the basis of the same foundation of his message with which he had started his work, and which should be a system each element and part of which is in perfect harmony and consistency with the other parts. Then the one who reads this collection of the discourses with a discerning eye cannot help realizing that the founder of the movement at the outset had a full plan of the movement in view till the last stage, and it never happened that a new idea might have struck him at some later stage, which was unknown to him before, or which he had to change later. If ever there has been a man of this calibre, his name should be made known to the world.

(5) The leader who had been made to give these discourses and speak these sentences did not suddenly emerge from a hidden place to present these before the people nor would disappear after he had done so. He had lived his life in full view of society before he started his movement as well as continued to live in the same society after that till his last breath. The people were well aware of the language and style of his conversation and speech. *Hadith* still presents a major part of it and by going through it the people who know Arabic can easily find out even today what was the leader's own style of speech and conversation. His contemporaries who spoke his language felt then and those who know Arabic feel today that the language and the style of this Book is very different from the language and style of that leader. So much so that whenever in the midst of a sermon delivered by the leader there occurs a sentence or two of this Book, the distinction between the two becomes all too obvious. The question is: Has a man in the world ever had the power, or can he have the capability, that he should go on conversing in two absolutely different styles consistently for years at a stretch and it should never become known that the two separate styles are, in fact, of one and the same person? It is possible that one may succeed in such affectation temporarily but it is not at all possible that for twenty-three years continuously a person should have a different diction and style when he recites the Revelations from Allah and a wholly different diction and style when he speaks in his personal capacity.

(6) The leader while leading and guiding the movement met with different sorts of conditions. Sometimes he became the target of ridicule, humiliation and severe persecution of his fellow-countrymen and the people of his own tribe and clan; sometimes his companions were so harshly treated that they were compelled to emigrate from the country; sometimes the enemies plotted against his life; sometimes he himself had to leave his home and city; sometimes he had to pass through extreme poverty and starvation; sometimes he had to fight wars successively in which he suffered defeats as well as won victories; sometimes he overcame the enemies and the same enemies who had persecuted him, came before him humbled; sometimes he achieved such power which few people in the world have been able to achieve. Under all such conditions a person's feelings obviously cannot remain the same. When on these different occasions the leader spoke in his personal capacity, his words and speeches carried the clear impression of his personal feelings, which naturally arise in the heart of a man on such occasions. But the discourses that were heard from him as Allah's Revelations in these different conditions, are wholly devoid of human feelings. At no place can even an acute observer and critic point out the play of human feelings in them.

(7) The vast and comprehensive knowledge that is contained in this Book, is not possessed even by any of the distinguished learned people of this 20th century, not to speak of the people of Arabia and Rome and Greece and Iran of those days. The condition today is that after a man has spent his whole life-time studying a branch of philosophy or a natural or social science, he comes to know what ultimate problems of his field of study are, but when he studies the Qur'ān seriously he comes to know that this Book contains a clear answer to those problems. This thing is not confined to any one branch of knowledge but holds good in respect of all those sciences which have anything to do with the Universe and Man. How can one believe that 1,400 years ago an un-lettered man in the Arabian desert possessed such deep insight into every branch of knowledge, and he had thought over every basic problem and thought out an absolute and final answer to it?

Although there are several other aspects also of the Qur'ān's being a miracle, if a man ponders over these few aspects only he will realize that the Qur'ān's being a miracle is far more evident today than it was at the time when it was revealed, and if Allah so

wills, it will go on becoming more and more evident and manifest as time passes till the Day of Resurrection.

28. The questions asked before this were meant to make the disbelievers of Makkah realize that whatever they were saying to belie the Prophet Muḥammad's claim to prophethood was highly irrational. Now in this verse the question put before them is: "What is that in the message of the Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) which you find so embarrassing for yourselves? He just says that Allah is your Creator and you should only serve Him. Why are you annoyed at it? Are you your own creators? Or, has this vast Universe been created by you? If neither of these is true, and you admit that your Creator as well as the Creator of the Universe is Allah alone, why do you then feel angry with the person who tells you that Allah alone is worthy of your service and worship? What you should actually feel angry about is that you worship him who is not your creator instead of Him Who is your real Creator. You admit with the tongue that Allah alone is your Creator as well as of the whole Universe, but if you really had faith in this, you would not have so maligned the person who was calling you to Allah's service.

This was such a pungent and stinging question that it shook the polytheistic faith to the root. Bukhāri and Muslim have related that after the Battle of Badr, Jubair bin Muṭ'im came to Madīnah to negotiate release of the Quraish prisoners of war on behalf of the people of Makkah. The Holy Prophet at that time was leading the Maghrib Prayer, and he recited this Sūrah at-Ṭūr in it. Muṭ'im himself has stated that when the Holy Prophet reached this place, his heart seemed to be leaving his breast. One main reason of his embracing Islam afterwards was that Islam had taken root in his heart on hearing these very verses on that day.

29. This is an answer to the objection of the disbelievers of Makkah who said: Why had Muḥammad, son of 'Abdullah (upon whom be peace), only been appointed a Messenger? The answer implies this: "Somebody in any case had to be appointed a Messenger in order to deliver the people from their error of serving others than Allah. Now the question is: Who should decide whom Allah should appoint His Messenger and whom He should not? If these people refuse to accept the Messenger appointed by Allah, it means that either they regard themselves as the masters of the world or they presume that the world may belong to Allah, but it should be ruled by them."

30. A detailed reasoning has been compressed into these brief sentences. It means to say: "If you deny what the Prophet says, then what means have you got to know the reality? Has any of you had access to the heavens where he found out directly from Allah or His angels that the beliefs on which you have based your religion are absolutely in accord with the reality? If someone makes this claim he should come forward and tell as to when and how he had access to the heavens and what knowledge he has brought from there. If you do not make any such claim, then consider how ridiculous is your creed that you assign children to Allah, Lord of the worlds, and that too daughters, whom you regard as disgraceful for yourselves. Without knowledge you are wandering in the darkness of such errors and turning hostile to the person who brings you the light of knowledge from God."

31. The question is actually directed to the disbelievers. It means: "If the Messenger had a selfish motive and had been exerting only for a personal gain from you, there would be a rational ground for you to avoid him. But you yourselves know that he is absolutely selfless in his invitation and is exerting himself only for your own benefit and well-being. Then, how is it that you are not even inclined to listen to him with a cool mind?" There is also a subtle hint in this question. Like the self-styled guides and guardians of religious shrines of the world, the religious guides, priests and scholars of the polytheists of Arabia also were engaged in a religious business. In view of the same, this question was put before them: "On the one hand, these dealers in religion are openly receiving gifts and offerings and fees for every religious service from you; on the other, a person who has ruined his trading business, is trying to show you the right way with highly rational arguments, absolutely selflessly. Is it not sheer senselessness that you shun him but run after them?"

32. That is, "What particular knowledge do you have to refute the truths that the Messenger is presenting before you, which you may present with the claim that you directly know the realities hidden behind the phenomenal world? Do you really have the knowledge that God is not One, but all those whom you have set up as deities also possess godly attributes and powers? Have you really seen the angels and found that they are girls, and, God forbid, are begotten of God? Do you really know that the Revelation has neither come to Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace

and blessings), nor it can come to any man, from God? Do you really have the knowledge that no Resurrection will take place, that there is going to be no life after death, that there will be no Hereafter when man will be subjected to accountability and rewarded or punished according to his deeds? If you claim to possess any such knowledge, can you give in writing that you are belying what the Prophet says about the unseen realities on the ground that you have peeped into the hidden realities and seen that the truth is not that which the Prophet presents." Here, one may express the misgiving that if in response to this, those people had given this in writing, in their stubbornness, will not this reasoning have become meaningless? But this misgiving is misplaced because even if they had given this in writing on account of their stubbornness, the common people of society in which this challenge had been given openly were not blind: everyone of them would have understood that the writing had been given out of sheer stubbornness, and no one, in fact, was refuting what the Prophet said on the basis that he had the knowledge that it was false.

33. The allusion is to the secret plots that the disbelievers of Makkah used to devise in their meetings in order to defeat the mission of the Holy Prophet (on whom be Allah's peace) and to kill him.

34. This is one of the clear prophecies of the Qur'an. In the initial stage at Makkah when the Holy Prophet (on whom be Allah's peace) had no apparent power and support with him except a handful of the ill-equipped Muslims and the whole nation was opposing and resisting him relentlessly, the confrontation between Islam and disbelief appeared to be utterly unequal. No one at that time could imagine that after a few years the tables would be turned on disbelief. Rather, the superficial observer could safely predict that the strong opposition of the Quraish and entire Arabia would at last put an end to the message of Islam. But even under those conditions, a challenge was thrown to the disbelievers and they were told in clear terms: "You may devise whatever plots you wish in order to frustrate this message, they will all recoil upon you, and you will never succeed in defeating and putting an end to it."

35. That is, "The fact of the matter is that those whom they have set up as deities, are not in fact the deities, and *shirk* is wholly an unreal thing. Therefore, the person who has risen with the message of *Tauhid* has the power of the truth with him; and those who are supporting *shirk* are indeed fighting for the imaginary. How will then *shirk* win in this conflict?"

36. This is meant to expose the stubbornness of the Quraish chiefs, on the one hand, and to console the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) and his Companions, on the other. The Holy Prophet and his Companions wished that those people should be shown such a miracle by Allah as should convince them of the truth of his Prophethood. At this, it has been said: Whatever miracle they might see with their eyes, they will in any case misinterpret it and invent an excuse for persisting in disbelief, for their hearts are not at all inclined to believe. At several other places also in the Qur'ān their this stubbornness has been mentioned, e.g. in Sūrah Al-An'ām: 111, it has been said: "Even if we had sent down the angels to them and made the dead speak with them and ranged all the things of the world before them (as a proof thereof), they would still have disbelieved," and in Sūrah Al-Hijr: 15: "Even if We had opened a gate for them in heaven, and they had begun to ascend through it during day time, they would have said: 'Our eyes have been dazzled; nay, we have been bewitched.'"

37. This is a repetition of the same theme that has already occurred in As-Sajdah: 21 above: "Even in this world We shall make them taste (one or the other) lesser torment before that greater torment; maybe they desist (from their rebellious attitude)." That is, "We shall send down personal and national disasters from time to time in the world to remind that there is above them a superior power which is deciding their destinies and none has the power to change its decisions. But the people who are involved in ignorance have neither learnt any lesson from these events before nor will learn any lesson in the future. They do not understand the meaning of the disasters and calamities occurring in the world. Therefore, they explain them away in every such way as takes them further and further away from the reality, and their mind never turns to any explanation, which might make the error of their atheism or polytheism manifest to them. This same thing has been explained by the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) in a *Hadith*, thus: "The example of a hypocrite who falls ill and then gets well, is of the camel whom the masters tied, but it did not understand why they had tied it, and when they untied it, it did not understand why they had untied it." (Abū Da'ūd: *Kitāb al-Janā'iz*). For further explanation, see E.N. 45 of Al-Anbiyā', E.N. 66 of An-Naml, E.N.'s 72, 73 of Al-'Ankabūt).

ع ٢١
 حِينَ تَقُومُوا وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَسَبِّحْهُ وَإِدْبَارَ النُّجُومِ

48-49

Endure patiently, O Prophet, until your Lord's judgement comes to pass³⁸: you are in Our sight.³⁹ Glorify your Lord with His praise when you rise up,⁴⁰ and glorify Him in the night too,⁴¹ and also at the retreat of the stars.⁴²

38. Another meaning can be: "Remain firm and steadfast in carrying out the Command of your Lord."

39. That is, "We are watching over you and have not left you alone."

40. There can be several meanings of this and possibly all may be implied:

First, "Whenever you rise from a meeting, you should rise glorifying and praising Allah." The Holy Prophet himself acted upon this as well as instructed the Muslims that they should glorify and praise Allah when they rose from a meeting. Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhī, Nasā'ī and Ḥākim have related, on the authority of Ḥadrat Abū Hurairah, that the Holy Prophet said: "If a person sat in a meeting in which much controversy took place, and he pronounced the following words before rising, Allah would forgive whatever passed in the meeting: *Subhānaka Allāhumma wa bi-ḥamdika, ashhadu-al lā-ilāha illā Anta, astaghfiruka wa utūbu ilaika*: "O Allah, I glorify You with Your praises: I bear witness that there is no deity but You: I seek Your forgiveness and offer repentance before You."

The second meaning is: "When you get up from bed, glorify your Lord with His praise." The Holy Prophet acted upon this himself and had also taught his Companions that they should pronounce the following words when they got up after sleep: "*Lā ilāha ill-Allah waḥda-hū lā sharikā lahū, lahul mülku wa lahul-ḥamdu wa huwa 'alā kulli shai'in Qadīr. Subhān-Allāh-i wal-ḥamdu-lillāhi wa lā ilāha ill-Allāh, wallāhu Akbar, wa lā ḥaula wa lā quwwata-illā-ōillāh.*" (Musnad Aḥmad, Bukhārī, on the authority of 'Ubādah bin aṣ-Ṣāmit).

Its third meaning is: "When you stand up for the Prayer, begin it with the praise and glorification of Allah." Accordingly,

the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) taught that the Prayer should be begun, after the first *takbir*, with the following words: *Subhānak-Allāhumma wa bi-ḥamdī-ka wa tabarak-asmuka wa ta'āla jadduka wa lā-ilāha ghairuka*: "Glory be to You, O Allah, and I praise You. Blessed is Your name, and You are exalted. There is no god other than You."

Its fourth meaning is: "When you rise to invite others to Allah, begin your invitation with the praise and glorification of Allah." That also was the Holy Prophet's constant practice, and he always began his addresses with the praise and glorification of Allah Almighty.

Commentator Ibn Jarir has given still another meaning of it, and it is this: "When you get up after the midday nap, offer the Prayer and this implies the *Zuhr* Prayer."

41. This implies the *Maghrib*, the 'Ishā' and the *Tahajjud* Prayers as well as the recital of the *Qur'ān* and the remembrance of Allah.

42. "Retreat of the stars" implies the early hours of the morning when the stars set and they lose their lustre on the appearance of dawn. This is the time of the *Fajr* Prayer.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

LIII

AN-NAJM النُّجْم

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah derives its name from the very first word *wan-Najm*. This title also does not relate to the subject-matter, but is a name given to the Sūrah as a symbol.

Period of Revelation

According to a Tradition related by Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Da'ūd and Nasā'ī, on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, the first Sūrah in which a verse requiring the performance of a *sajdah* (prostration) was sent down, is Sūrah An-Najm. The parts of this *Ḥadīth* which have been reported by Aswad bin Yazīd, Abū Ishāq and Zubair bin Mu'āwiyah from Ḥaḍrat Ibn Mas'ūd,

indicate that this is the first Sūrah of the Qur'ān, which the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had publicly recited before an assembly of the Quraish (and according to Ibn Mardūyah, in the Ka'bah) in which both the believers and the disbelievers were present. At the end, when he recited the verse requiring the performance of a *sajdah* and fell down in prostration, the whole assembly also fell down in prostration with him, and even those chiefs of the polytheists who were in the forefront of the opposition to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) could not resist falling down in prostration. Ibn Mas'ūd (may Allah be pleased with him) says that he saw only one man, Umayyah bin Khalaf, from among the disbelievers, who did not fall down in prostration but took a little dust and rubbing it on his forehead said that that was enough for him. Later, as Ibn Mas'ūd relates, he saw this man being killed in the state of disbelief.

Another eye-witness of this incident is Ḥaḍrat Muṭṭalib bin Abī Wadā'ah, who had not yet become a Muslim. Nasā'ī and Musnaḍ Aḥmad contain his own words to the effect: "When the Holy Prophet recited the Sūrah An-Najm and performed the *sajdah* and the whole assembly fell down in prostration along with him, I did not perform the *sajdah*. Now to compensate for the same whenever I recite this Sūrah I make sure never to abandon its performance."

Ibn Sa'd says that before this, in the Rajab of the 5th year of Prophethood, a small group of the Companions had emigrated to Abyssinia. Then, when in the Ramaḍān of the same year this incident took place the news spread that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had recited Sūrah An-Najm publicly in the assembly of the Quraish and the whole assembly, including the believers as well as the dis-

believers, had fallen down in prostration with him. When the emigrants to Abyssinia heard this news they formed the impression that the disbelievers of Makkah had become Muslims. Thereupon, some of them returned to Makkah in the Shawwāl of the 5th year of Prophethood, only to learn that the news was wrong and the conflict between Islam and disbelief was raging as furiously as before. Consequently, the second emigration to Abyssinia took place, in which many more people left Makkah.

Thus, it becomes almost certain that this Sūrah was revealed in the Ramaḍān of 5th year of Prophethood.

Historical Background

The details of the period of revelation as given above point to the conditions in which this Sūrah was revealed. During the first five years of his appointment as a Prophet, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had been extending invitation to Allah's Religion by presenting the Divine Revelations before the people only in private and restricted meetings and assemblies. During this whole period he could never have a chance to recite the Qur'ān before a common gathering openly, mainly because of the strong opposition and resistance from the disbelievers. They were well aware of how magnetic and captivating was the Holy Prophet's personality and his way of preaching and how impressive were the Revelations of the Qur'ān. Therefore, they tried their best to avoid hearing it themselves and to stop others also from hearing it and to suppress his invitation by false propaganda by spreading every kind of suspicion against him. For this object, on the one hand, they were telling the people that Muḥammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had gone astray and was now bent upon misleading others

as well ; on the other, they would raise an uproar whenever he tried to present the Qur'ān before the people so that no one could know what it was for which he was being branded as a misled and misguided person.

Such were the conditions when the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) suddenly stood up one day to make a speech in the sacred precincts of the Ka'bah, where a large number of the Quraish had gathered together. Allah at that time made him deliver this discourse, which we have now in the form of the Sūrah An-Najm with us. Such was the intensity of the impression that when the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) started reciting it the opponents were so completely overwhelmed that they could not think of raising any disorder, and when at the conclusion he fell down in prostration, they too fell down in prostration along with him. Later they felt great remorse at the weakness they had involuntarily shown. The people also started taunting them to the effect that whereas they had been forbidding others to listen to the Qur'ān, that day not only had they themselves listened to it, with complete absorption, but had even fallen down in prostration along with Muḥammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). At last, they had to invent a story in order to get rid of the people's taunt and ridicule. They said : "After he had recited *afara'ait-ul-Lāta wal-'Uzzā wa Manāt ath-thālitha-al-ukhrā*, we heard from Muḥammad the words : *tilk-al-gharāniqat-al-'ulā, wa anna shafā'at-u-hunna latarjā* : 'They are exalted goddesses : indeed, their intercession may be expected.' From this we understood that Muḥammad had returned to our faith." As a matter of fact, only a mad person could think that in the context of this Sūrah the sentences they claimed to have heard could have any place and relevance. (For details, please see E.N.'s 96 to 101 of Sūrah Al-Ḥajj).

Subject-Matter and Topics

The theme of the discourse is to warn the disbelievers of Makkah about the error of the attitude that they had adopted towards the Qur'ān and the Prophet Muḥammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

The discourse starts in a way as if to say: "Muḥammad is neither deluded nor gone astray, as you are telling others in your propaganda against him, nor has he fabricated this teaching of Islam and its message, as you seem to think he has. In fact, whatever he is presenting is nothing but Revelation which is sent down to him. The verities that he presents before you, are not the product of his own surmise and speculation but realities of which he himself is an eye-witness. He has himself seen the Angel through whom this knowledge is conveyed to him. He has been directly made to observe the great Signs of his Lord: whatever he says is not what he has himself thought out but what he has seen with his own eyes. Therefore, your disputing and wrangling with him is just like the disputing and wrangling of a blind man with a man of sight over a thing which the blind man cannot see but he can see."

After this, three things have been presented in their successive order:

First, the listeners have been made to understand that: "The religion that you are following is based on mere conjecture and invented ideas. You have set up a few goddesses like Lāt and Manāt and 'Uzzā as your deities, whereas they have no share whatever in divinity. You regard the angels as the daughters of Allah, whereas you regard a daughter as disgraceful for your own selves. You think that these deities of yours can influence Allah in your favour, whereas the fact is that all the angels together, who are stationed closest to Allah, cannot

influence Him even in their own favour. None of such beliefs that you have adopted, is based on knowledge and reason, but are wishes and desires for the sake of which you have taken some whims as realities. This is a grave error. The right and true religion is that which is in conformity to the reality, and the reality is never subject to the people's wishes and desires so that whatever they may regard as a reality and truth should become the reality and truth. Speculation and conjecture cannot help to determine as to what is according to the truth and what is not; it is knowledge. When that knowledge is presented before you, you turn away from it, and brand the one who tells you the truth as misguided. The actual cause of your being involved in this error is that you are heedless of the Hereafter. Only this world is your goal. Therefore, you have neither any desire for the knowledge of reality, nor you bother to see whether the beliefs you hold are according to the truth or not.

Secondly, the people have been told that : Allah is the Master and Sovereign of the entire Universe. The righteous is he who follows His way, and the misguided he who has turned away from His way. The error of the misguided and the righteousness of the righteous are not hidden from Him. He knows whatever everyone is doing : He will requite the evil with evil and the good with good. The final judgement will not depend on what you consider yourself to be, and on tall claims you make of your purity and chastity but on whether you are pious or impious, righteous or un-righteous, in the sight of God. If you refrain from major sins, He in His mercy will overlook your minor errors.

Thirdly, a few basic principles of the true Religion which had been presented hundreds of years before the revelation of the Qur'ân in the Books of the Prophets Abraham and Moses have been re-iterated so that the

people did not remain involved in the misunderstanding that the Prophet Muḥammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had brought some new and novel religion, but they should know that these are the fundamental truths which the former Prophets of Allah have always been presenting in their respective ages. Besides, the same Books have been quoted to confirm the historical facts that the destruction of the 'Ad and the Thamūd and of the people of the Prophets Noah and Lot was not the result of accidental calamities, but Allah has destroyed them in consequence of the same wickedness and rebellion from which the disbelievers of Makkah were not inclined to refrain and desist in any case.

After presenting these themes and discourses the Sūrah has been concluded, thus : "The Hour of Judgement has approached near at hand, which no one can avert. Before the occurrence of that Hour you are being warned through Muḥammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and the Qur'ān in the like manner as the former people had been warned before. Now, is it this warning that you find novel and strange ? which you mock and ridicule ? which you turn away from and cause disorder so that no one else also is able to hear what it is ? Don't you feel like weeping at your folly and ignorance ? Abandon this attitude and behaviour, bow down to Allah and serve Him alone !"

This was that impressive conclusion hearing which even the most hardened deniers of the Truth were completely overwhelmed, and when after reciting these verses of Divine Word the Holy Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) fell down in prostration, they too could not help falling down in prostration along with him.



وَالتَّجْوِيدِ إِذَا هَوَىٰ لَكَ مَا ضَلَّ صَاحِبُكُمْ وَمَا غَوَىٰ ۗ وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ ۗ
 إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ ۗ عَلَّمَهُ شَدِيدُ الْقُوَىٰ ۗ ذُو مِرَّةٍ فَاسْتَوَىٰ ۗ وَهُوَ
 بِالْأَفْقِ الْأَعْلَىٰ ۗ ثُمَّ دَنَا فَتَدَلَّىٰ ۗ فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَىٰ ۗ فَأَوْحَىٰ
 إِلَىٰ عَبْدِهِ مَا أَوْحَىٰ ۗ مَا كَذَبَ الْفُؤَادُ مَا رَأَىٰ ۗ أَفَتُسْرُونَهُ عَلَىٰ مَا يُرَىٰ ۗ
 وَلَقَدْ رَأَاهُ نَزْلَةً أُخْرَىٰ ۗ عِنْدَ سِدْرَةِ الْمُنْتَهَىٰ ۗ عِنْدَ مَا جَنَّةُ الْمَأْوَىٰ ۗ
 إِذْ يَغْشَى السِّدْرَةَ مَا يَغْشَىٰ ۗ مَا زَاغَ الْبَصَرُ وَمَا طَغَىٰ ۗ لَقَدْ رَأَىٰ مِنْ آيَاتِ
 رَبِّهِ الْكُبْرَىٰ ۗ أَفَرَأَيْتُمُ اللَّاتَ وَالْعُزَّىٰ ۗ وَمَنْوَةَ الثَّالِثَةَ الْآخِرَىٰ ۗ أَلْكُمْ
 الذَّكْرَ وَلَهُ الْأُنْثَىٰ ۗ تِلْكَ إِذْ قَسَمَ لِيُتْرَىٰ ۗ إِنْ هِيَ إِلَّا أَسْمَاءُ سَمِيَّتُوهَا
 أَنْتُمْ وَ آبَاؤُكُمْ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ بِهَا مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ ۗ إِنْ يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَمَا
 تَهْوَى الْأَنْفُسُ ۗ وَلَقَدْ جَاءَهُمْ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ الْهُدَىٰ ۗ فَأَمْرٌ لِلْإِنْسَانِ مَا تَمَنَّى ۗ
 فِ اللَّهِ الْآخِرَةُ وَالْأُولَىٰ ۗ وَكَمْ مِنْ مَلَكٍ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ لَا تُغْنِي شَفَاعَتُهُمْ شَيْئًا
 إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ أَنْ يَأْذَنَ اللَّهُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَرْضَىٰ ۗ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ
 بِالْآخِرَةِ لَيُسَمُّونَ الْمَلَائِكَةَ تَسْبِيَةً الْأُنْثَىٰ ۗ وَمَا لَهُمْ بِهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ ۗ إِنْ
 يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ ۗ وَإِنَّ الظَّنَّ لَا يُغْنِي مِنَ الْحَقِّ شَيْئًا ۗ فَأَعْرِضْ عَنْ
 مَنْ تَوَلَّىٰ ۗ عَنْ ذِكْرِنَا وَلَمْ يُرِدْ إِلَّا الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا ۗ ذَٰلِكَ مَبْلَغُهُمْ مِنَ
 الْعِلْمِ ۗ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ ۗ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنِ اهْتَدَىٰ ۗ

LIII

AN-NAJM النجم

Verses : 62

Revealed at Makkah

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

By the Star¹ when it set, your companion² is neither 1-12
gone astray nor deluded.³ He does not speak of his own
desire ; it is but a Revelation which is sent down to
him.⁴ One mighty in power has taught him,⁵ who is
endowed with great wisdom.⁶ He stood poised in front
when he was on the uppermost horizon.⁷ Then he drew
near and hung suspended above, two bow-lengths away
or even closer.⁸ Then he revealed to the servant of Allah
whatever he had to reveal.⁹ The heart belied not what he
saw.¹⁰ Do you then dispute with him concerning what he
sees (with the eyes)?

And he saw him once again by the farthest lote-tree, 13-18
nearby which is the Garden of Repose.¹¹ At that time
the lote-tree was covered with that which covered it.¹²
The sight was neither dazzled nor it exceeded the limit,¹³
and he saw of the greatest Signs of his Lord.¹⁴

Now tell: Have you ever pondered over the reality 19-25
of this Lāt, and this 'Uzzā, and another, the third goddess,
Manāt?¹⁵ Are the sons for you and the daughters for
Allah?¹⁶ This would indeed be an unfair division ! These
are nothing but mere names which you and your fore-
fathers have invented. Allah has sent down no authority
for them.¹⁷ The fact is that the people are following mere
conjecture and the lusts of their souls,¹⁸ even though right
guidance has come to them from their Lord.¹⁹ Is it that
whatever man desires should become the truth for him ?²⁰
To Allah belongs the present and the Hereafter.

How many an angel is there in the heavens ! Their 26-28
intercession can avail nothing until Allah permits it in

favour of whomever He wills and is pleased with.²¹ But those who do not believe in the Hereafter, name the angels with the names of goddesses,²² although they have no knowledge of this. They follow mere conjecture,²³ and conjecture can avail nothing against the Truth.

1. In the original the word "*an-najm*" has been used. Ibn 'Abbās, Mujāhid and Sufyān Thaurī opine that it implies the Pleides. Ibn Jarīr and Zamakhsharī have held this same interpretation as preferable, for in Arabic when the word *an-najm* is used absolutely it usually implies the Pleides. Suddī says that it implies Venus; and Abū 'Ubaidah, the grammarian, holds that here the word *an-najm* has been used generically so as to express this idea: "When the day dawned, and the stars set." In view of the context we are of the opinion that this last interpretation is more preferable.

2. "Your Companion" implies the Holy Messenger of Allah (upon whom be peace) and the addressees are the Quraish. The word *Ṣāhib* as used in the original means a friend, a companion, a close associate. Here, making mention of the Holy Prophet by the word *Ṣāhib-u-kum* (your Companion) instead of "Our Messenger" is very meaningful. This is meant to make the people of the Quraish realize this: "The person being mentioned is no stranger to you: he is not an outsider whom you may not be knowing or recognizing already. He is a man of your own clan and tribe; he lives and moves among you; even your children know who and what he is, what is his character, what are his dealings, what are his ways and habits and characteristics, and how he has passed his life among you so far. If some one of you were to say an improbable thing about him, there would be a thousand men among you who knew him, who could see for themselves whether what was said actually applied to him or not."

3. This is the thing for which an oath has been sworn by the setting star or stars. "Going astray" means a person's adopting a wrong way being unaware of the right way, and "being deluded" means his adopting the wrong way knowingly and consciously. The verse means this: "Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) is a well-known man among you. Your accusation that he has gone astray, or is misguided, is utterly wrong. In fact, he is neither gone astray nor misguided." Here, the propriety of

swearing by the setting stars is that in the darkness of the starry night a person cannot see the things of his surroundings clearly, and from their vague appearances can form wrong judgements about them, e.g. he may take a tree for a ghost in the dark, a string for a snake, a rock in the sand for a beast of prey. But when the stars have set and the day has dawned, everything appears before man in its real form and shape, and there remains no doubt whatever about the reality of anything. The same is the case also of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) among you. His life and personality is not hidden in darkness, but is manifest like the bright dawn. You are aware that this "Companion of yours" is a right-minded, wise and sagacious man. How can somebody from among the Quraish have the misunderstanding that he has gone astray? You also know how well-intentioned and honest and righteous person he is. How can one of you form the view that he has knowingly adopted a crooked way not only for himself but has started inviting others also to the same falsehood?

4. It means this: "The things for which you accuse him of having gone astray or been misled and deceived, have neither been fabricated by himself nor motivated by any selfish desire on his part, but they have been sent down, and are being sent down, to him by God. He did not intend to become a Prophet of his own desire so that he might have laid a claim to Prophethood in order to satisfy his desire, but when Allah appointed him to that office through Revelation, then only did he rise to preach his mission and to tell you that he had been appointed God's Messenger to you. Likewise, this invitation to Islam, this teaching of the doctrine of *Tauḥīd*, this news about the gathering together of all mankind on the Day of Resurrection and their accountability, the truths that he is presenting about the Universe and Man and the principles of leading a pure life, are not a philosophy propounded by himself, but the knowledge of all this has been bestowed on him by Revelation. Likewise, this Qur'ān that he recites before you, is also not of his own composition but it is Divine Word which is sent down to him by Revelation."

Here, the question arises: To which of the words spoken by the Holy Prophet do Allah's Words: "He does not speak of his own desire; it is only a Revelation which is sent down to him," apply? Do they apply to everything that he spoke, or to some of his words and not to others? The answer is: As far as the Qur'ān is concerned, the Divine Words apply to it most completely.

As for the other words, apart from the Qur'ān, which the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) spoke, they could inevitably be of three kinds :

First, those words which he employed for preaching religion and inviting others to Allah, and for explaining the themes, teachings and commands of the Qur'ān, or for giving admonition and instruction to the people to fulfil the object for which the Qur'ān was revealed. In this regard, obviously nobody can have the doubt that, God forbid, he fabricated these things from his own mind. In these matters, his position, in fact, was of the official interpreter of the Qur'ān and of Allah's authorised representative. Although these things were not revealed to him literally as the Qur'ān was revealed, yet these were necessarily based on the same knowledge that he had been given by Revelation. The only difference between the Qur'ān and these was that the Qur'ān, both in word and in meaning, was entirely from Allah, and in these other things the meanings were those taught by Allah and the words those which he himself employed to express those meanings. On the basis of this very distinction, the Qur'ān has been described as *wahī-jalī* (manifest Revelation) and the Holy Prophet's other sayings as *wahī-khāfī* (concealed Revelation).

The second kind of the words were those which the Holy Prophet spoke in connection with the struggle of raising Allah's Word and his services for establishing Islam. In this regard, he had to perform countless duties of different kinds as the leader and guide of the Muslim community. In this many a time he took counsel with his Companions as well, and followed their advice instead of his own view. On being asked he sometimes told them that he was expressing a particular view not under Allah's command but as his personal opinion, and on several occasions it so happened that he said something on the basis of his own opinion and later an instruction came down against it from Allah. None of the things of this nature that he said or did could be based on a selfish motive. As for the question whether these sayings were based on Divine inspiration, the answer is that except for the things in regard to which he made it explicit that they were not based on Divine command, or about which he took counsel with his Companions and accepted their advice, or with regard to a thing against which Allah sent down an instruction after he had said or done something on the basis of his personal judgement, all other things were based on concealed Revelation (*wahī khāfī*) just like the things of the first :

kind. For the office of the leader and guide of the Islamic Movement and the chief of the believing community and the ruler of the Islamic State, which he held, was not self-invented or bestowed by the people, but he had been appointed to it by Allah, and whatever he said and did in carrying out the duties of this office, his position in it was of the representative of Divine Will. In this matter, whatever he said on the basis of his personal judgement, his judgement in those matters was approved by Allah, and was derived from the light of the knowledge which Allah had blessed him with. That is why whenever his personal judgement was even slightly turned away from Allah's pleasure, it was immediately rectified by manifest Revelation (*wahī jalī*). This rectification of some of his personal judgements is itself a proof that all the rest of his religious judgements and interpretations were precisely in accordance with Divine Will.

The third kind of the things were those he said concerning common matters of life as a man, which had nothing to do with the duties of Prophethood, which he said before being appointed a Prophet as well as continued saying even after having been appointed a Prophet. About this kind of the things it should be understood at the outset that there was no dispute with the disbelievers concerning them. They had not accused him of being a misled and misguided person because of these but because of the first two kinds of the things. These things were not disputed and therefore could not become the cause of a verse from Allah. But although they were not the subject of any dispute, yet the fact is that in this private aspect of his life also never did the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) utter a word that was opposed to the truth, but at all times, under all conditions, his words and deeds remained within the bounds that Allah had prescribed for living his life as a Prophet and righteous man. Therefore, the light of Revelation shone in that sphere as well. This same thing has been reported from the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) in some authentic *Aḥādīth*. In Musnad Aḥmad a Tradition has been related on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, saying that the Holy Prophet once said: "I never say anything but what is true and right." A Companion said, "O Messenger of Allah, you say things sometimes in jest also." The Holy Prophet replied: "Indeed, I never say anything but the truth." According to Musnad Aḥmad and Abū Da'ūd, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin 'Ās is reported to have said: "I used to write down whatever I heard from the sacred tongue of the Holy

Prophet (upon whom be peace) so as to preserve it. The people of the Quraish forbade me to do this, saying: 'You are writing down everything whereas the Holy Prophet is a man: he sometimes says things in the state of anger too'. At this I gave up writing. Afterwards when I mentioned this before the Holy Prophet, he said: 'You should continue writing: By Him in Whose hand is my life, never have I said anything but the truth'." (For a complete discussion of this question, see my book *Tafhīmāt*, vol. I, Article: Prophethood and Its Injunctions).

5. That is, "There is no human being who teaches him this, as you seem to think, but he obtains this knowledge through a supernatural source." According to some people, "mighty in power" implies Allah Himself, but a great majority of the commentators are agreed that it implies the Angel Gabriel (upon whom be peace). This same view has been reported from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, Qatādah, Mujāhid and Rabī' bin Anas, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Kathīr, Razī, Ālūsī and others also have adopted this very view. Shāh Waliyullah and Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī also have followed this same view in their translations. And the fact is that from the other explanations of the Qur'ān itself also this very thing is confirmed. In Sūrah Takwīr it has been said: "This indeed is the Word of a noble Messenger, who has great power and high rank with the Owner of the Throne: there he is obeyed and held as trustworthy. And (O people of Makkah), your Companion is not mad. He has seen that Messenger on the bright horizon." (vv. 19-23). Then, in Sūrah Al-Baqarah: 97, the Angel has been mentioned by name through whom this teaching had been revealed on the heart of the Prophet: "Say to them: Whoever is enemy to Gabriel should understand that he has, by Allah's Command, revealed to your heart the Qur'ān." If these verses are read with this verse of Sūrah An-Najm, there remains no doubt that here "mighty in power" implies the Angel Gabriel and not Allah. More about it to follow.

Here, some people express the doubt as to how the Angel Gabriel can be regarded as the Holy Prophet Muḥammad's teacher. For this would mean that he was the teacher and the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) his pupil, and this would place him above the Holy Prophet in rank. But this suspicion is misplaced, because Gabriel did not impart instruction to the Holy Prophet from any personal knowledge of his own, which might give him superiority over the Holy Prophet. Allah, in fact, had made him a means of

conveying knowledge to the Holy Prophet, and he was the Holy Prophet's teacher in the metaphoric sense for being only a medium of instruction. That does not give him any superiority whatever. To quote an example : After the Prayer was prescribed five times a day, Allah sent Gabriel (peace be upon him) to teach the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) the correct times of the Prayers, and he led him in the Prayers five times daily for two days. This has been related in Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhī and Mu'waṭṭā and other collections of the *Aḥādīth*, with authentic chains of reporters, and in this the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) himself has explained that he was the follower and Gabriel his leader in the Prayers. But his being made the leader only for the purpose of instruction does not mean that he was superior to the Holy Prophet in rank.

6. Ibn 'Abbās and Qatādah take *dhū-mirra-tin* of the Text in the meaning of beautiful and grand. Mujāhid, Ḥasan Baṣri, Ibn Zaid and Sufyān Thaurī say that it means strong and powerful. Sa'īd bin Musayyab has expressed the opinion that it means wise. In a *Ḥadīth* the Holy Prophet has used this word in the sense of healthy and sound. In Arabic usage this word is used in the meaning of sound in judgement, wise and learned also. Allah has chosen this word for Gabriel (peace be upon him) here because he possesses both intellectual and physical powers to the highest degree. We have adopted only one of these meanings in the translation, for his physical powers have been mentioned in the preceding sentence.

7. The horizon means the eastern edge of the sky where the sun rises and the day dawns. The same has been referred to as *ufuq mubīn* (bright horizon) in Sūrah Takwīr : 23. Both the verses make it explicit that when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) saw Gabriel (peace be upon him) for the first time, he had appeared on the eastern horizon of the sky; and there are several authentic Traditions which show that at that time he was in his real shape in which Allah has created him. We shall quote all such Traditions below.

8. That is, "After appearing on the uppermost edge of the sky, Gabriel started advancing towards the Prophet till he reached and hung suspended above him in mid air. Then he bent down to him and came within just two bow-lengths or even closer." The commentators generally have taken *qāba qausain* in the meaning of "two bow-lengths", but Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās and Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd have taken *qaus* in the meaning of a *dhirā'* (an arm-length, cubit), and have interpreted the words *kāna qāba qausain*,

saying that the distance between them was reduced to only two arm lengths. And since all bows are not equal in length, the approximate distance has been expressed by "two bow-lengths away or even closer."

9. The sentence *fa-auḥā ilā 'abd-i-hi mā auḥā* of the Text can have two translations: (1) "He revealed to His (Allah's) servant whatever he revealed"; and (2) "He (Allah) revealed to His own servant whatever He revealed." According to the first translation, the meaning would be: "Gabriel revealed to the servant of Allah whatever he had to reveal"; according to the second: "Allah revealed through Gabriel to His servant whatever He had to reveal." The commentators have given both these meanings; the first meaning, however, fits in better with the context, and the same has been reported from Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan Baṣri and Ibn Zaid. Here, the question may be asked: "How can the pronoun of *'abd-i-hi* turn to Allah instead of to the subject of *auḥā*, whereas Allah has nowhere been mentioned from the beginning of the Sūrah to this place?" The answer is that wherever it becomes apparent from the context that the antecedent of a pronoun refers to a particular person, the pronoun turns to him automatically whether it has been mentioned before or not. There are several instances of this available in the Qur'ān itself. In Sūrah Al-Qadr: 1, Allah says: "We have sent it down in the Night of Glory." There is no mention of the Qur'ān in this sentence, but the context explicitly shows that the antecedent of the pronoun is the Qur'ān. At another place Allah says: "If Allah were to seize the people because of their misdeeds, He would not leave any creature (unpunished) on its back." In this sentence there is no mention of the earth anywhere, but the context clearly shows that "its back" implies "the earth's back". In Sūrah Yā Sin: 69, it has been said: "We have not taught him poetry, nor does poetry behove him." Here, there is no mention of the Holy Prophet, neither before this sentence nor after it, yet the context is explicit that the antecedent of the pronouns is the Holy Prophet himself. In Sūrah Ar-Raḥmān: 26, it has been said: "Whatever exists on it shall perish." There is no mention of the earth either before or after it, but the style clearly shows that the pronoun of *'alaihā* turns to it. In Sūrah Al-Wāqī'ah: 35, it has been said: "We shall have created them especially." There is no noun or pronoun before or after it to which the pronoun of *hunna* may be referring. It is apparent from the context that it signifies the women of Paradise. Thus, as *auḥā ilā 'abd-i-hi* cannot at all mean

that Gabriel revealed to his servant, the meaning necessarily would be that "Gabriel revealed to the servant of Allah", or that "Allah revealed to His own servant through Gabriel."

10. That is, "As the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be peace) observed all this in broad daylight in the waking condition, with open eyes, his heart did not deem it was a delusion, or that it was a jinn or a devil, who had appeared before him, or that it was an imaginary figure, or a vision that he was seeing while awake, but his heart fully confirmed what his eyes saw. He did not for a moment doubt that it was the Angel Gabriel and the Message he was conveying was indeed God's Revelation to him."

Here, the question arises: How is it that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) did not entertain any doubt at all concerning such a wonderful and extraordinary observation, and he confirmed with full faith that whatever his eyes saw was an actual fact and not an imaginary figure, nor a jinn or devil? When we consider this question deeply we are led to five reasons for it:

First, that the external conditions in which this observation was made, testified to its truth and validity. The Holy Prophet did not observe this in darkness, or in a state of meditation, or in a vision, or in a sleep-like condition, but the day had dawned and he was fully awake, and he was seeing the whole scene in the broad daylight in the open with his own eyes precisely in the way as one sees the other things in the world. If doubt is cast on this, then whatever we see in the day time, e.g. rivers, mountains, men, houses, etc., also would become doubtful and illusory.

Second, that the Holy Prophet's own internal condition also testified to its validity. He was in his full senses. He had no idea whatever in his mind that he should observe, or that he was going to observe, such a thing. His mind was absolutely free from such a thought and any longing for it, and in this state he met with this experience suddenly. There was no room for doubting that the eyes were seeing an actual scene, but that an imaginary thing had appeared before his eyes.

Third, that the being who had appeared before him in that condition was so marvellous and magnificent, so beautiful and bright, that neither had he ever had any concept of such a being before that he could take it for a product of his own imagination, nor could a jinn or a devil have such an appearance that he would have taken him for a being other than an angel. Hadrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud has reported that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace)

said: "I saw Gabriel in the shape that he had six hundred wings." (Musnad Ahmad). In another Tradition Ibn Mas'ud has further explained that each single wing of Gabriel (on whom be peace) was so extensive that it seemed to be covering the whole horizon (Musnad Ahmad). Allah Himself has described him as *shadid al-quwa* (one mighty in power) and *dhū-mirra* (one endowed with great wisdom).

Fourth, that the teaching that the being was imparting also testified to the validity of the observation. The Holy Prophet had no concept of the knowledge that he received suddenly through him, a knowledge that comprehended the realities and truths of the whole Universe. About it he could not have the doubt that it consisted of his own ideas which were being set and arranged by his own mind. Likewise, there was no ground for thinking either that it was Satan who was imparting that knowledge to him and thus deluding him, for it is not for Satan that he should teach, nor can he ever teach, the doctrine of *Tauhid* to man as against polytheism and idol-worship, that he should warn of the accountability of the Hereafter, that he should create contempt against ignorance and its practices, that he should invite people to moral excellences, and should exhort a person not only to accept that teaching himself but should also rise to eradicate polytheism, injustice, wickedness and sin from the world and replace these evils by the virtues of *Tauhid*, justice, equity and piety.

The fifth and by far the most important reason is that when Allah chooses a certain person for His Prophethood, He cleanses his heart of doubts and suspicions and evil suggestions and fills it with faith and conviction. In this state no hesitation or vacillation is caused in his mind about the validity of whatever his eyes see and his ears hear. He accepts with complete satisfaction of the heart every truth that is revealed to him by his Lord, whether it is in the form of an observation that he is made to witness with the eyes, or in the form of knowledge which he is inspired with, or in the form of a Revelation that is recited to him literally. In all these cases the Prophet is fully aware that he is absolutely safe and secure against Satanic interference of every kind, and whatever he is receiving in any form is precisely and definitely from his Lord. Like all God-given feelings this sense and feeling of the Prophet also is a certainty which does not admit of any misunderstanding. Just as the fish has a God-given sense of being a swimmer, the bird of being a bird, and the man of being a man, and there can be no likelihood of any mis-

understanding in this regard, so has the Prophet also a God-given sense of his being a Prophet. He does not even for a moment entertain the doubt that he has perhaps been involved in the misunderstanding of being a Prophet.

11. This is about the Holy Prophet's second meeting with Gabriel (upon whom be peace) in which he appeared before him in his real shape and nature. The place where this meeting took place has been described as *Sidrat-al-muntahā*, along with which it has been said that nearby it is located *Jannat al-ma'vā* (Garden of Repose).

Sidrah in Arabic means the lote-tree and *muntahā* the extreme edge or limit. Thus, literally, *sidrat al-muntahā* means "the lote-tree that is situated on the extreme edge or limit". 'Allāma Ālūsī in his *Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī* has explained it thus: "At this the knowledge of every learned man comes to an end; whatever is beyond it is known to none but Allah." Almost the same explanation of it has been given by Ibn Jarīr in his commentary, and by Ibn Kathīr in *An-Nihāyah fī Gharīb al-Ḥadīth wal-Āthār*. It is difficult for us to know what kind of a lote-tree it is that is situated at the farthest end of this physical world and what is its nature and state. These are the mysteries of the Divine Universe which are incomprehensible for us. In any case, it is some such thing for which there was no more appropriate word than "*sidrah*" in human language, in the sight of Allah.

"*Jannat al-ma'vā*" literally means "the *Jannat* (Garden) that is to be an abode." Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan Baṣṣri says that this is the same *Jannat* which the believers and righteous will be given in the Hereafter, and from this same verse he has argued that that *Jannat* is in the heavens. Qatādah says that this is the *Jannat* in which the souls of the martyrs are kept; it does not imply the *Jannat* that is to be given in the Hereafter. Ibn 'Abbās also says the same but adds that the *Jannat* to be granted to the believers in the Hereafter is not in the heavens but here on the earth.

12. That is, "its Splendour and Glory exceeds all description. The Divine Glory and effulgence was such as can neither be conceived by man nor can any human language depict it adequately.

13. That is, "On the one hand, the Holy Messenger of Allah was so firm and steadfast that even in the Presence of the great Divine Splendour and Glory his sight was not dazzled and he went on gazing at it with great composure. On the other, he was in such complete control of himself and so exclusively attentive that he

kept his mind and his sight focussed upon the object for which he had been summoned, and he did not let his sight wander to any side like a spectator's to have a glimpse of the wonderful objects present there. This can be understood by the example of a person who gets an opportunity to be present in the court of a mighty and powerful king, where he comes across such glory and splendour that had never even been conceived by him before. Now, if he be a shallow person, he would be struck with amazement, and if he be un-initiated in the court etiquette, he would become heedless of the royal presence and would turn his gaze to every side to look at the embellishments of the court. But a noble, reverent and dutiful person will neither be stupefied and confounded, nor will become lost in witnessing the court, but will present himself with full dignity and will keep his mind concentrated on the object for which he had been summoned in the royal court. This very virtue and quality of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has been esteemed in this verse.

14. This verse clearly states that the Holy Prophet had not seen Allah but His wonderful Signs. Even according to the context, this second meeting also took place with the same being with whom the first meeting had taken place. Therefore, one will have to admit that neither the one whom he had first seen on the uppermost horizon was Allah nor the one whom he saw afterwards by the farthest lote-tree was Allah. Had he seen Allah Almighty, on either occasion it would have been a great thing and must certainly have been mentioned here explicitly. About the Prophet Moses it has been said in the Qur'ān that he had besought to see Allah and the reply given was: *Lan tarānī*: "You cannot see Me." (Al-A'rāf: 143). Now, obviously if this honour that was not granted to the Prophet Moses, had been granted to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings), it would by itself have been such an important thing which must have been stated in clear words. But we see that nowhere in the Qur'ān has it been said that the Holy Prophet had seen his Sustainer and Lord. But in Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl also, where mention has been made of the event of *Mī'rāj* (Ascension), it has been said that "We had transported Our servant...so that We may show him some of Our Signs" (*li-nuriya-hū min āyāt-i-nā*), and here in connection with his visit at *Sidrat al-muntahā* also it has been said: "He saw of the greatest Signs of His Lord" (*laqad ra'ā min āyāt-i Rabb-i-hil kubrā*).

In view of these reasons apparently there was no ground for the dispute whether the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) on both these occasions had seen Allah Almighty or the Angel Gabriel (on

whom be peace). But, the reason that has given rise to this dispute is that the traditions of *Hadith* differ on this question. Below we reproduce in their sequence the *Aḥādith* that have been reported from the different Companions in this regard :

(1) *Traditions of Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah :*

Ḥaḍrat Masrūq has stated in *Kitāb at-Tafsīr* of Bukhārī : "I asked Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah : O mother of the faithful ! Had Muḥammad (upon whom be Allāh's peace) seen his Lord and Sustainer ? She replied : Your this question has terrified me. Why do you forget that if a person lays claim to three of the things, he would lay a false claim ? (The first of these things that Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah mentioned was) : Whoever among you says that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) had seen his Lord and Sustainer, tells a lie. Then Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah recited these verses : *Lā tudriku-hul-abṣār* : "Eyes cannot comprehend Him;" and : *Mā kāna li-bashar-in ay, ukallima-hullāh-u illā waḥy-an au min-warā-'il-ḥijab-i au yursila rasūl-an fa-ḥi bi-idh ni hi mā yashā-'u* : "It is not given to any mortal that Allah should speak to him, face to face; He speaks either through Revelation (secret instruction), or from behind a curtain, or He sends a messenger (an angel), who by Allah's Command, reveals whatever He wills." (Ash-Shūrā : 51). Then she said : "The Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) in fact had seen Gabriel (on whom be peace) in his real shape twice."

A part of this *Hadith* is also found in Bukhārī (chapter 4 of *Kitāb at-Tauḥīd*). And in the tradition that Bukhārī has cited from Masrūq in *Kitāb Bidā'al-Khalq*, he states : "Hearing this thing from Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, I asked : What would then Allah's words, *Thumna danā fa-tadallā, fa-kāna qāba qausain-i au adnā*, mean ? She replied : This refers to Gabriel; he always appeared before the Holy Prophet in human shape, but on this occasion he had appeared before him in his real shape and nature and the whole horizon was filled with him."

In Muslim (*Kitāb al-Imān, Bābu ft Dhikr Sidrat al-muntahā*) this conversation between Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah and Masrūq has been related in greater detail, its most important part being this : "Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah said : The one who claims that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) had seen his Lord and Sustainer imputes a lie to Allah. Masrūq says : I was leaning back. Hearing this I sat up and said : Mother of the faithful, do not make haste : Has not Allah said : *wa laqad ra'ā-hu bil-ufuq-il-mubtā' ?* and *laqad ra'ā-hu nazlat-an ukhrā ?* Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah replied : I was the first one in this *Ummah* who inquired of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace)

about this. He had replied : "It was Gabriel (on whom be peace). I have never seen him in his real shape and form in which Allah has created him except on these two occasions. On these two occasions I saw him descending from the heavens and his great presence was covering the whole space between the earth and the heavens."

Ibn Mardūyah has related this tradition of Masrūq, thus : "Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah said : I was indeed the first person who asked the Holy Prophet : Did you ever see your Lord and Sustainer? He replied : No, I had only seen Gabriel descending from the heavens."

(2) Traditions of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd :

Bukhārī (*Kitāb at-Tafsīr*), Muslim (*Kitāb al-Imān*) and Tirmidhī (*Abwāb at-Tafsīr*) contain a tradition on the authority of Zirr bin Ḥubaish, saying that Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd gave this commentary of *fa-kāna qāba qausain-i au adnā* : "The Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) saw Gabriel (on whom be peace) in the shape that he had six hundred wings."

In the other traditions of Muslim, Zirr bin Ḥubaish has reported this very commentary of *Mā kadhab al-fu'ādu mā ra'ā* and *laqad ra'ā min āyāt-i Rabbi-hil kubrā* from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd.

In Musnad Aḥmad this commentary of Ibn Mas'ūd has been reported by 'Abdur Raḥmān bin Yazīd and Abū Wā'il also besides Zirr bin Ḥubaish. Furthermore, in Musnad Aḥmad two more traditions of Zirr bin Ḥubaish have been related in which Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd commenting upon *wa laqad ra'ā-hu nazlat-an ukhrā, 'inda-sidrat-il muntahā* stated : "The Holy Messenger of Allah said that he saw Gabriel by the lote-tree : he had six hundred wings." Imām Aḥmad has cited a tradition on the same subject, on the authority of Shaqīq bin Salamah also, in which he states that he heard Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd saying that the Holy Prophet himself had said that he had seen Gabriel (on whom be peace) in that shape at *sidrat al-muntahā*.

(3) When 'Aṭā' bin Abī Rabāḥ asked Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah the meaning of the verse *laqad ra'ā-hu nazlat-an ukhrā*, he replied : "The Holy Prophet had seen Gabriel (on whom be peace)." : (Muslim : *Kitāb al-Imān*).

(4) Imām Muslim has related in *Kitāb al-Imān* two traditions of 'Abdullah bin Shaqīq on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Abū Dharr Ghifārī, in one of which he says that he asked the Holy Prophet : "Did you ever see your Lord?" The Holy Prophet replied : *Nūr-un annā arā-hu*; and in the other he says that the Holy Prophet gave this answer to his question : *Ra'aitu nūr-an*. Of the first answer of the Holy

Prophet Ibn al-Qayyim has given this meaning in his *Zād al-Ma'ād* : "Between me and the sight of my Lord there was Light," and of the second this : "I did not see my Lord but only a Light."

Nasā'ī and Ibn Abī Hātim have reported the saying of Ḥaḍrat Abū Dharr, thus : "The Holy Prophet had seen his Lord with the heart (mind), not with the eyes."

(5) Imām Muslim in his *Kitāb al-Imān* has related this tradition from Ḥaḍrat Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī : "The Holy Prophet said : The sight of no one from among His creatures has reached Allah Almighty."

(6) *Traditions of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās :*

According to Muslim, when Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās was asked the meaning of : *Mā kaḥab al-fu'ādu mā ra'ā, wa laqad ra'ā-hu nazlat-an ukhrā*, he said : "The Holy Messenger of Allah saw his Lord twice with his heart." This tradition is also contained in Musnad Ahmad.

Ibn Mardūyah has cited this saying of Ibn 'Abbās, on the authority of 'Aṭā' bin Abī Rabāḥ : The Holy Messenger of Allah had not seen Allah with the eyes but with the heart."

Nasā'ī contains a tradition from 'Ikrimah saying that Ibn 'Abbās said : "Do you wonder at this that Allah made the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) His friend, blessed Moses with His Word and honoured Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) with His sight?" Ḥākim also has cited this tradition and held it as authentic.

In Tirmidhī there is a tradition from Sha'bī to the effect that Ibn 'Abbās said in a gathering : "Allah had distributed His Sight and His Word between Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) and Moses (upon whom be peace). He spoke to Moses twice, and Muḥammad saw Him twice." Hearing these very words of Ibn 'Abbās, Masrūq had approached Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah with the question : "Had Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) seen his Lord?" She had replied : "What you have said has made my hair stand on end." After this the same dialogue that we have cited above under the traditions of Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah took place between Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah and Masrūq.

In one of the traditions reported in Tirmidhī from Ibn 'Abbās, he says : "The Holy Prophet had seen Allah Almighty." In yet another he says : "He had seen Him twice", and in a third one : "He had seen Him with the heart."

In Musnad Ahmad a tradition from Ibn 'Abbās is to the effect : "The Holy Prophet said : I saw my Lord, the blessed, the exalted." In another tradition he says : "The Holy Messenger of Allah said : Tonight my Lord came to me in the best shape." I think that by this the Holy Prophet meant that he saw Allah Almighty in a vision.

Ṭabarānī and Ibn Mardūyah have related this tradition also from Ibn 'Abbās : "The Holy Messenger of Allah had seen his Lord twice, once with the eyes and the second time with the heart."

(7) Muḥammad bin Ka'b al-Qurẓī states that when some of the Companions asked the Holy Prophet: "Did you ever see your Lord? he replied: I have seen Him twice with my heart." (Ibn Abī Ḥātim) Ibn Jarīr has related this very tradition, thus : "He said : I have not seen Him with the eye, but with the heart twice."

(8) A tradition of Ḥaḍrat Anas bin Mālik which Imām Bukhārī has cited in his *Kitāb at-Tauḥīd* in connection with the event of the *Mi'raj*, on the authority of Sharīk bin 'Abdullah, contains words to the effect : "When the Holy Prophet reached *sidrat al-muntahā*, Allah Almighty drew near him and hung suspended above him till there remained between the Holy Prophet and Him a distance equal to two bow-lengths or even less. Then, what Allah revealed to him included the Command for 50 Prayers." But, besides the objections that Imām Khaṭṭābī, Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Hajar, Ibn Ḥazm and Ḥāfiẓ 'Abdul Haq (author of *Al-Jam' bain al-Ṣaḥīḥain*) have raised in respect of the authenticity and subject-matter of this tradition, the main objection against it is that it clearly contradicts the Qur'ān, for the Qur'ān mentions two separate occasions when the experience of the vision took place, the first initially at the uppermost horizon to which reference has been made in : *Danā fa-tadallā, fa-kāna qāba qausain-i au adnā*, and a second time near *sidrat al-muntahā*. But this tradition mixes up the two occasions and presents them both as one occasion of the vision. Therefore, because of its being contradictory to the Qur'ān, it cannot be acceptable in any case.

As for the other traditions that we have cited above, the weightiest among them are those that have been related from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd and Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, for both of them have unanimously reported this saying of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) himself that on neither occasion he had seen Allah but Gabriel (peace be on him), and these traditions fully conform to the explanations and allusions of the Qur'ān. Furthermore, they are also confirmed by the sayings of the Holy Prophet which Ḥaḍrat Abū Dharr and Ḥaḍrat Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī have reported from him. On the contrary,

the traditions that have been cited from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās in the books of *Ḥadīth* are self-contradictory. In some he regards both the experiences as a vision with the eyes, in some both as a vision with the heart, in some one with the eyes and the other with the heart, and in some he wholly negates the vision with the eyes. In none of these traditions he has cited any saying of the Holy Prophet himself and where he has cited such a saying, it contains no mention of either of the two experiences stated in the Qur'ān; besides, the explanation of one of his traditions given by the other indicates that the Holy Prophet at some time had seen Allah Almighty not in the waking condition but in a vision during sleep. Therefore, in fact, for the commentary of these verses the traditions ascribed to Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās cannot be held as reliable. Likewise, although the traditions of Muḥammad bin Ka'b al-Qurẓī cite a saying of the Holy Prophet, they do not mention the names of the Companions who might have heard this thing from the Holy Prophet himself. Moreover, in one of them it has been said that the Holy Prophet had clearly denied having seen Allah with the eyes.

15. That is, "You regard the teachings being given to you by Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) as erroneous and falsehood, whereas he is being given this knowledge by Allah, and Allah has made him see with his own eyes the verities to which he is testifying before you. Now consider it for yourself as to how irrational are the beliefs that you are following persistently and as to whom you are causing loss by opposing and resisting the person who is guiding you to the Right Way. In this connection, especially the three goddesses that were worshipped generally by the people of Makkah, Ṭā'if and other parts of Ḥejāz have been taken as an example. About them, they have been asked: Have you ever considered rationally whether they could have even the slightest role in the affairs of the Godhead of the earth and heavens? Or could they bear any relationship whatever with the Lord of the Universe?"

The shrine of Lāt was in Ṭā'if and the Banī Thaḳīf were so devoted to it that when Abraha was advancing to Makkah with his army of elephants to destroy the Ka'bah, the people only in order to save the temple of their deity had provided the wicked man with guides to lead him to Makkah so that he should spare Lāt, whereas like all the Arabs the people of Thaḳīf also believed that the Ka'bah is Allah's House. Scholars have disputed the meaning of Lāt. According to Ibn Jarīr Ṭabarī, it is the feminine gender of Allah, i.e. originally this word was *allahatun* which became al-Lāt. Accord-

ing to Zamakhsharī, it is derived from *lanā yalvt*, which means to turn to or bow to somebody. As the polytheists turned to it for worship and bowed to it and circumambulated it, it began to be called Lāt. Ibn 'Abbās reads it as *latt* (with a stress on t) and holds it is derived from *latt yalittu*, which means to churn and mix together. He and Mujāhid state that this, in fact, was a man, who lived on a rock near Ṭā'if, and used to entertain the pilgrims to Makkah with barley drinks and food. When he died the people built a shrine to him on the same rock and began to worship him. But this explanation of Lāt, in spite of having been reported on the authority of scholars like Ibn 'Abbās and Mujāhid, is not acceptable for two reasons. First, that in the Qur'ān it has been called Lāt and not Latt; second, that the Qur'ān describes all the three as goddesses, and according to this tradition Lāt was a man, not a woman.

'Uzzā is derived from *'izzat*, and it means the one (female) enjoying veneration and respect. This was the special goddess of the Quraish and her shrine was situated at Hurād in the valley of Nakhlah, between Makkah and Ṭā'if. (For the location of Nakhlah, see E.N. 33 of Sūrah Al-Aḥqāf). The people of Banī Shaibān, who were the allies of the Banī Hāshim, were its attendants. The Quraish and the people of other tribes paid visits to it and presented offerings and made sacrifices to it. As for the Ka'bah sacrificial animals were driven to it also and it was held in the highest esteem. Ibn Hishām relates that when Abū Uḥaiḥah was on the point of death, Abū Lahab paid him a visit and found him weeping. Abū Lahab asked, "Why do you weep, Abū Uḥaiḥah? Are you afraid of death?—and death is the destiny of everybody!" He said, "By God, I do not weep because of the fear of death, but I am grieved to think as to how "Uzzā will be worshipped after me." Abū Lahab said, "It was neither worshipped for your sake in your lifetime, nor will it be given up after you have left the world." Abū Uḥaiḥah said, "Now I am satisfied that there are people who will take my place after me."

The shrine of Manāt was situated at Qudaid by the Red Sea between Makkah and Madīnah, and the people of Khuzā'ah and Aus and Khazraj were in particular its great devotees. People visited it as pilgrims, circumambulated it and made offerings and sacrifices before it. In the Ḥajj months as soon as the pilgrims became free from their visit to the Ka'bah and the religious services at Minā and 'Arafāt, they would start raising cries of "*Labbaik, labbaik*" even there for the purpose of visiting Manāt, and the people who

intended to go on this second "hajj" did not run between the Şafā and the Marwah.

16. That is, "You held these goddesses as daughters of Allah, Lord of the worlds, and did not consider while inventing this absurd creed that as for yourselves you regarded the birth of a daughter as disgraceful, and desired to have only male children, but as for Allah you assign to Him only daughters!"

17. That is, "Those whom you call gods and goddesses are neither gods nor goddesses, nor do they possess any attribute of divinity, nor any share whatever in the powers of Godhead. You have of your own whim made them children of God and deities and associates in Godhead. Allah has sent down no authority which you may produce as a proof in support of your presumptions."

18. In other words, the basic causes of their deviation are two: First, that they do not feel any need for the knowledge of reality for the purpose of adopting a creed and religion, but make a supposition on the basis of a mere conjecture and then put belief in it as though it were the reality. Second, that they have, in fact, adopted this attitude in order to follow the lusts of their souls: they desire that they should have such a deity as should help them attain their aims and objects in the world, and if at all there is to be a Hereafter, it should take the responsibility to have them granted forgiveness there too. But it should not impose any restriction of the lawful and the unlawful on them nor should bind them in any discipline of morality. That is why they do not feel inclined to worship One God as taught by the Prophets, and only like to worship these invented gods and goddesses.

19. That is, in every age the Prophets appointed by Allah have been guiding these wicked people to the Truth, and now Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessing) has come to tell them as to whom belongs Godhead in reality in the Universe.

20. Another meaning of this verse can be: "Is man entitled to take anyone he pleases as his god?" Still another meaning can be: "Can the desire of man to have his prayers answered by these gods ever be fulfilled?"

21. That is, "Even if all the angels together intercede for a person, it cannot be beneficial for him not to speak of the intercession by these invented deities of yours, which can do no one any good. All the powers of Godhead rest with Allah. Even the angels cannot dare intercede for somebody before Him unless He permits it and is pleased to hear their intercession in his behalf."

(Contd. on p. 254)

وَ لِلّٰهِ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْاَرْضِ لِيَجْزِيَ الَّذِيْنَ اَسَءُوْا بِمَا عَمِلُوْا وَ
 يَجْزِيَ الَّذِيْنَ اَحْسَنُوْا بِالْحُسْنٰى ۗ الَّذِيْنَ يَجْتَنِبُوْنَ كَبِيْرَ الْاِثْمِ وَالْفَوَاحِشِ
 اِلَّا اللَّمَمَ ۗ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ وَاَسْعُرُ الْبَغْفِرَةِ ۗ هُوَ اَعْلَمُ بِكُمْ اِذَا اَنْشَاكُمْ مِنَ الْاَرْضِ وَ
 اِذَا اَنْتُمْ اَجْتَهُ ۗ فِيْ بُطُوْنِ اُمَّهَاتِكُمْ ۗ فَلَا تُزَكُّوْا اَنْفُسَكُمْ ۗ هُوَ اَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ اَنْتَقٰى ۗ
 اَفَرَيْتَ الَّذِيْ تُوَلِّى ۗ وَ اَعْطٰى قَلِيْلًا وَّ اَكْثٰى ۗ اَعِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ الْغَيْبِ فَهُوَ
 يَرٰى ۗ اَمَرَ لَمْ يَنْبَأْ بِهَا فِيْ صُحُفِ مُوسٰى ۗ وَ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ الَّذِيْ وُفِّى ۗ اِلَّا تَزِرُ
 وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ اٰخْرٰى ۗ وَ اَنْ لِّىْسَ لِلْاِنْسَانِ اِلَّا مَا سَعٰى ۗ وَ اَنْ سَعِيْهُ سَوْفَ
 يُرٰى ۗ ثُمَّ يُجْزٰى الْجَزَآءَ الْاَوَّلٰى ۗ وَ اَنْ اِلٰى رَبِّكَ الْمُنْتَهٰى ۗ وَ اِنَّهُ هُوَ اَضْحٰكُ
 وَ اَبْكٰى ۗ وَ اِنَّهُ هُوَ اَمَاتٌ وَّ اَحْيَا ۗ وَ اِنَّهُ خَلَقَ الزَّوْجَيْنِ الذَّكَرَ وَّ الْاُنْثٰى ۗ
 مِنْ نُّطْفَةٍ اِذَا تُمْنٰى ۗ وَ اَنْ عَلَيْهِ النَّشَاةَ الْاٰخْرٰى ۗ وَ اِنَّهُ هُوَ اَعْنٰى وَ
 اَقْنٰى ۗ وَ اِنَّهُ هُوَ رَبُّ الشُّعْرٰى ۗ وَ اِنَّهُ اَهْلَكَ عَادًا الْاَوَّلٰى ۗ وَ شَمُوْدًا فَمَا
 اَبْقٰى ۗ وَ قَوْمَ نُوْحٍ ۗ مِنْ قَبْلُ ۗ اِنَّهُمْ كَانُوْا هُمْ اَظْلَمَ وَّ اَطْعٰى ۗ وَ الْمُؤْتَفِكَةَ
 اَهْوٰى ۗ فَغَشَّهَا مَا غَشٰى ۗ فَبَاىِٕ اِلَآءِ رَبِّكَ تَتَمَارٰى ۗ هٰذَا نَذِيْرٌ ۗ مِنْ
 النَّذِيْرِ الْاَوَّلٰى ۗ اَزِفَتْ الْاَزْفَةُ ۗ لَيْسَ لَهَا مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ كَاشِفَةٌ ۗ اَفِيْن
 هٰذَا الْحَدِيْثِ تَعْجَبُوْنَ ۗ وَ تَضْحَكُوْنَ وَ لَا تَبْكُوْنَ ۗ وَ اَنْتُمْ

سَيِّدُوْنَ ۗ فَاسْجُدُوْا لِلّٰهِ وَ اعْبُدُوْا ۗ

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So, O Prophet, leave him alone who turns away from Our remembrance²⁴ and seeks nothing but the life of the world,²⁵—this²⁶ only is their amount of knowledge:²⁷ only your Lord knows best who has gone astray from His Way and who is on the right path, and to Allah belongs everything in the heavens and the earth²⁸ — so that²⁹ Allah may recompense the evil-doers according to their deeds and give good rewards to those who have adopted the righteous attitude, who avoid grave sins³⁰ and open indecencies³¹ save the minor offences.³² Surely your Lord is liberal in forgiveness.³³ He knows you well from the time He produced you from the earth and when you were yet embryos in your mothers' wombs. Therefore, do not claim piety for yourselves : He alone knows best who is really pious and Godfearing. 29-32

Then, O Prophet, have you seen him who turned away from God's Way, who gave a little and stopped?³⁴ Does he possess the knowledge of the unseen that he sees the reality?³⁵ Has he not heard of those things that have been mentioned in the Books of Moses and in the Books of that Abraham who proved true to his pledge?³⁶ 33-55

“That no bearer of burdens shall bear the burden of another ;³⁷ and that there is nothing for man but what he has striven for;³⁸ and that his striving shall soon be seen,³⁹ and then he will be fully rewarded for it ; and that to your Lord is the final goal ; and that it is He Who made (men) to laugh and to weep⁴⁰ ; and that it is He Who gave death and granted life ; and that it is He Who created the pair of male and female from a sperm-drop when it is emitted ;⁴¹ and that it rests upon Him to grant the second life;⁴² and that it is He Who made rich and bestowed property ;⁴³ and that He is the Lord of Sirius ;⁴⁴ and that it is He Who destroyed the former 'Ad,⁴⁵ and annihilated Thamūd so as to spare none of them ; and before them He destroyed the people of Noah because they were a most wicked and rebellious people. And He

overthrew the subverted settlements, then there covered them that which (you know well) covered them.⁴⁶ Then,⁴⁷ O man, which of your Lord's bounties will you doubt?"⁴⁸

56-62

This is a warning of the warnings already given.⁴⁹ That which is coming is near at hand.⁵⁰ None but Allah can avert it.⁵¹ Is it at these things that you marvel?⁵² And you laugh and weep not?⁵³ And you ward them off by merry-making?⁵⁴ Bow down before Allah and worship Him.⁵⁵

(Contd. from p. 251)

22. That is, "Their first folly is that they have taken these powerless angels who cannot even intercede for anyone before Allah as their deities; their second folly is that they regard them as female and daughters of Allah. The basic reason for these errors is that they do not believe in the Hereafter. For had they been believers in the Hereafter, they would never have behaved so irrationally and irresponsibly. Their denial of the Hereafter has made them heedless of their end, and they think that believing or disbelieving in God, or believing in a thousand gods, does not make any difference, for none of these creeds seems to entail any good or bad result in the present life of the world. Whether the people are deniers of God, or believers in many gods, or in One God, their crops ripen as well as fail, they fall ill as well as recover from illness, and they pass through all kinds of circumstances, good as well as bad. Therefore it is not at all an important and serious matter for them that man should or should not take some one as a deity, or should take as many deities or of any kind as he likes of his choice. When according to them the decision as to what is truth and what is falsehood is to take place in this very world, depending on the results thereof appearing here, obviously the results here do not decide absolutely that one creed is true and another false. Therefore, the adoption of one creed and rejection of another is a matter of mere whim with these people."

23. That is, "They have not adopted this creed about the angels on the ground that they had found through some means of knowledge that they were females and daughters of God, but they have presumed this on mere conjecture and have set up these shrines at which they pray for fulfilment of desires, make offerings and pay tributes."

24. *Dhikr* here may imply the Qur'ān as well as mere admonition; it may also mean that he does not like that even God be mentioned before him.

25. That is, "You should not waste your time in making him understand the truth, for such a person will never be inclined to accept any invitation which is based on God-worship, which calls to objects and values higher than the material benefits of the world, and according to which the real aim of life may be the eternal success and well-being of the Hereafter. Instead of expending your time and energy on such a materialistic and ungodly person, you should devote attention to the people who are inclined to heed the remembrance of Allah and are not involved in the worship of the world."

26. This is a parenthetical sentence which has been inserted here as an explanation of the preceding verse.

27. That is, "These people neither know nor can think anything beyond the world and its immediate gains; therefore, it is futile merely to expend time and energy on them."

28. In other words, neither the question whether a person is gone astray or is on right guidance, is to be decided in this world, nor has its decision been left to the judgement of the people of the world; the decision rests with Allah. He alone is the Master of the earth and heavens and He alone knows which way out of the different ways being followed by the people of the world, is the way of guidance and which of error and deviation. Therefore, you should least bother if the polytheistic Arabs and the Makkan disbelievers think you are deluded and misguided and regard their own ignorance as truth and guidance. Leave them alone if they wish to remain lost in their falsehood. You need not waste your time in disputing with them.

29. The theme is resumed here and connected as a continuous whole with verse 29. Without the parenthesis, it would read: "Leave him alone so that Allah may requite the evildoers for their evil deeds."

30. For explanation, see E.N. 53 of An-Nisā.

31. For explanation, see E.N. 130 of Al-An'ām and E.N. 89 of An-Nahl.

32. The word *lamam* as found in the original is used for a small quantity of something, or its slight effect, or its mere closeness, or its existence for a short time. This word is used to express the sense that a person did not commit an act but was very near to committing it.

On the basis of its usages some commentators have taken the word *lamam* in the meaning of minor sins. Some others have taken it in the meaning that a person should practically reach very near a grave sin but should desist from actually committing it. Still others take it in the sense of a person's remaining involved in a sin temporarily and then desisting from it. And according to some it implies that a person should think of, or wish, or intend to commit a sin but should take no practical steps towards it. In this regard, the views of the Companions and their immediate followers are as follows :

Zaid bin Aslam and Ibn Zaid opine, and a saying of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās also is to the same effect, that it signifies those sins which the people had committed in the pre-Islamic days of ignorance; then after embracing Islam they refrained from them.

Another view of Ibn 'Abbās is, and the same is also the view of Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin 'Āṣ, Mujāhid, Ḥasan Baṣri and Abū Ṣāliḥ, that it implies a person's being involved in a grave sin or indecency temporarily, or occasionally, and then giving it up.

Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, Masrūq and Sha'bī say, and the same also has been reported from Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah and Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās in authentic traditions, that this implies a person's approaching the very point of a grave sin and crossing all its preliminaries but then restraining himself at the final stage, e.g. a person goes out with the intention of stealing but refrains from it in the end, or has close association with other women, but refrains from committing adultery.

Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Zubair, 'Ikrimah, Qatādah and Daḥḥāk say that this signifies those minor sins for which no punishment has been prescribed in the world nor any threat of punishment held out in the Hereafter.

Sa'id bin al-Musayyab says that this implies one's thinking of a sin in the mind but restraining oneself from committing it practically.

These are the different explanations which have been reported in the traditions from the Companions and their immediate followers. The majority of the later commentators and doctors of law and jurists are of the opinion that this verse and verse 31 of Sūrah An-Nisā classify sins into two main kinds : the major sins and the minor sins, and these two verses give man the hope that if he abstains from the major sins and open indecencies, Allah will over-

look his minor errors. Although some distinguished scholars have also opined that no sin is minor and the disobedience of Allah is by itself a major sin, yet as stated by Imām Ghazālī the distinction between the major and the minor sins is something which cannot be denied, for the sources of knowledge of the *Shari'ah* values and injunctions all point to this.

As for the question, what is the distinction between the major and the minor sins, and what kinds of sins are major and what kinds of them minor? we are satisfied that: "Every such act is a major sin which has been forbidden by a clear ordinance of the Divine Book and the *Shari'ah* of the Prophet, or for which Allah and His Messenger have prescribed a punishment in the world, or have held out a threat of punishment in the Hereafter, or have cursed the one guilty of committing it, or given the news of infliction of punishment on those guilty of committing it." Apart from this class of sins all other acts which are disapproved by the *Shari'ah* come under the definition of minor sins. Likewise, the mere desire for a major sin, or an intention to commit it, also is not a major sin but a minor sin; so much so that even crossing all the preliminaries of a major sin does not constitute a major sin unless one has actually committed it. However, even a minor sin becomes a major sin in case it is committed with a feeling of contempt for religion and of arrogance against Allah, and the one guilty of it does not consider the *Shari'ah* that has declared it an evil worthy of any attention and reverence.

33. That is, "The forgiveness for the one guilty of minor sins is not for the reason that a minor sin is no sin, but for the reason that Allah Almighty does not treat His servants narrow-mindedly and does not seize them on trifling faults; if the servants adopt piety and abstain from major sins and indecencies, He will not seize them for their minor errors and will forgive them magnanimously on account of His infinite mercy."

34. The reference is to Walīd bin Mughīrah who was one of the prominent chiefs of the Quraish. According to Ibn Jarīr Ṭabari, this person had first become inclined to accept the invitation of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), but when a polytheist friend of his came to know of his intention to become a Muslim, he counselled him not to give up his ancestral faith, and asked him that if he was afraid of the punishment of the Hereafter, he should pay him a certain amount of money and he would take the responsibility to suffer the punishment on his behalf. Walīd accepted the offer and

turned away from Allah's way. Then he paid only a little of the amount that he had promised to pay his polytheist friend and withheld the rest. The allusion to this incident was meant to tell the disbelievers of Makkah what kind of errors and follies they were involved in because of their heedlessness of the Hereafter and their ignorance of the Divine Religion."

35. That is, "Does he know that this conduct is in any way beneficial for him? Does he know that a person can save himself even in this way from the punishment of the Hereafter?"

36. In the following verses a resume is being given of the teachings sent down in the Books of the Prophets Abraham and Moses. The Books of Moses signify the Torah. As for the Books of the Prophet Abraham they have become extinct and no mention of them is found even in the holy scriptures of the Jews and Christians. Only in the Qur'ān at two places have some parts of the teachings contained in the Books of the Prophet Abraham been cited, here and in the concluding verses of Sūrah Al-A'lā.

37. From this verse three cardinal principles are derived: (1) That every person is himself responsible for what he does; (2) that the responsibility of one man's act cannot be transferred to another unless he has a share in the commission of the act; and (3) that even if a person wishes he cannot take on himself the responsibility of another man's act, nor can the actual culprit be let off on the ground that another person is willing to suffer the punishment on his behalf.

38. From this verse also three important principles are derived: (1) That every person will get only the fruit of his own deeds; (2) that the fruit of one man's deeds cannot be given to another unless he has a share in that deed; and (3) that none can attain anything without striving for it.

Some people wrongly apply these three principles to the economic problems of the world and conclude that no person can become the lawful owner of anything except of his own earned income. But this conclusion clashes with several laws and injunctions given by the Qur'ān itself, e.g. the law of inheritance, according to which many individuals inherit a person and are regarded as his lawful heirs, whereas the heritage is not their earned income. As for a suckling for instance, it cannot be proved by any stretch of imagination that its labour had any share in the wealth left by its father. Likewise, there are the injunctions about the *zakāt* and voluntary

charities according to which the wealth of one man is transferred to others only on the basis of their legal and moral entitlement and they become its lawful owners, whereas in the production of this wealth they did not make any contribution at all. Thus, it is against the intention of the Qur'ān to take a verse of it and derive from it such conclusions as clash with the other teachings of the Qur'ān itself.

Some other people regard these principles as concerning the Hereafter and raise the question whether, according to these principles, the deeds of one man can in some way be also beneficial for the other person, and whether the deeds of a person which he does for another person, or on his behalf, can be accepted from him, and whether it is also possible that a person may transfer the reward of his act to another. If the answer to these questions be in the negative the sending of spiritual rewards (*iṣāl thawāb*) for the dead and performing Ḥajj on behalf of another, would be inadmissible; even the prayer of forgiveness for the other person would be meaningless, for this prayer also is not the concerned person's own act and deed. However, this extreme point of view has been adopted by none among the followers of Islam except the Mu'tazilites. Only they take this verse in the meaning that one man's acts and deeds can in no case be beneficial for the other. On the contrary, the followers of the *Sunnah* are unanimous that the prayer of one man is beneficial for the other because it is confirmed by the Qur'ān; however, they differ only in details, and not in principles, as to whether the sending of spiritual rewards for another and doing a good work on behalf of another is beneficial or not.

(1) The term *iṣāl thawāb* means that after a person has performed a good act, he may pray to Allah to grant its rewards to another. In this regard, Imām Mālik and Imām Shāfe'ī have expressed the opinion that the rewards of the pure bodily acts of worship, e.g. the Prayer, the Fasting and recitals of the Qur'ān, etc. cannot reach the other person; however, the rewards of one's monetary acts of worship, e.g. charities, or Ḥajj, which is a combination of the monetary and bodily worships, can reach the other, for the principle is that one man's act should not be beneficial for the other. But since according to authentic *Aḥādith* the rewards of charities can be conveyed and Ḥajj on behalf of another also can be performed, they admit the permissibility of conveying of rewards to the extent of this kind of the acts of worship only. On the contrary, the Ḥanafī viewpoint is that a man can send the reward of each of his virtuous

acts as a gift to the other, whether it is the Prayer, or the Fast, or the recitation of the Qur'ān, or remembrance of Allah, or charity, or Hajj and 'Umrah. The argument is that just as a man after carrying out a piece of work can tell the master to pay the wages to such and such other person instead of him, so after performing a good deed also he can pray to Allah to grant its rewards to such and such other person instead of him. In this there is no rational ground for making exception of some kinds of virtues and keeping it restricted to some other kinds of virtues. The same is confirmed by a large number of the traditions :

A Tradition, on the unanimous authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, Ḥaḍrat Jābir bin 'Abdullah, Ḥaḍrat Abū Rāfi', Ḥaḍrat Abū Ṭalḥah Anṣārī and Ḥudhaifah bin Usaid al-Ghifārī has been reported in Bukhārī, Muslim, Musnad Aḥmad, Ibn Mājah, Ṭabari (in *Awsat*), Mustadrik and Ibn Abī Shaibah, saying that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) got two rams and sacrificed one on behalf of himself and his family and the other on behalf of his *Ummah*.

Muslim, Bukhārī, Musnad Aḥmad, Abū Da'ūd and Nasā'ī have related a Tradition from Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah to the effect that a person said to the Holy Prophet : "My mother has died suddenly. I think if she had a chance to speak, she would have asked me giving away something in charity. Now, if I give away something in charity on her behalf, will she get a reward for it ?" The Holy Prophet replied : "Yes, she will."

In Musnad Aḥmad there is a Tradition from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin 'Āṣ to the effect that his grandfather, 'Āṣ bin Wā'il, had vowed in the pre-Islamic days of ignorance to sacrifice 100 camels. His uncle, Hishām bin 'Āṣ, sacrificed fifty camels of his own share. Ḥaḍrat 'Amr bin 'Āṣ, asked the Holy Prophet as to what he should do. The Holy Prophet replied : "If your father had affirmed faith in the Oneness of God, you may observe fasts on his behalf, or give something in charity : this would be beneficial for him."

A Tradition has been reported in Musnad Aḥmad, Abū Da'ūd, Nasā'ī and Ibn Mājah, on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan Baṣri, to the effect that Ḥaḍrat Sa'd bin 'Ubādah asked the Holy Prophet : "My mother has died. Should I give something in charity on her behalf ?" The Holy Prophet replied in the affirmative. Several other traditions bearing on the same subject also have been related in

Bukhārī, Muslim, Musnad Aḥmad, Nasā'ī, Tirmidhi, Abū Da'ūd, Ibn Mājah, etc. on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah and Ḥaḍrat Ibn 'Abbās, according to which the Holy Prophet permitted giving away of something in charity on behalf of the deceased person describing it as beneficial for him.

According to Dāraquṭnī a person said to the Holy Prophet : "I have been serving my parents while they were alive; what should I do now when they are dead?" The Holy Prophet replied : "This would also be their service if you offered the Prayer on their behalf along with your own Prayers, and observed the Fast on their behalf along with your own Fast." Another tradition in Dāraquṭnī has been related from Ḥaḍrat 'Alī according to which the Holy Prophet said : "If a person passing by the graveyard recites "*Qul huwallāh-u aḥad*" eleven times and gives away its reward for the dead, all the dead ones will be granted their due shares of the rewards."

This large number of the traditions which support one another explicitly state that the transfer of the spiritual rewards is not only possible but rewards of all kinds of acts of worship and virtuous deeds can be sent and conveyed and in it there is no specification of any particular kind of acts and deeds. In this connection, however, four things should be understood well :

First, that the reward of that act only can be transferred, which may have been performed purely for the sake of Allah and according to the *Shari'ah* injunctions; otherwise obviously an act which is performed for the sake of another than Allah, or in contravention of the *Shari'ah* injunctions, cannot even entitle its doer himself to any reward, nothing to say of its transfer to another person.

Secondly, the gift of the rewards will certainly reach those righteous persons who are staying as guests with Allah, but no rewards are expected to reach those culprits who are placed in confinement there. The gift can reach the guests of Allah but the criminals of Allah cannot be expected to receive it. If a person sends his rewards to him because of a misunderstanding, it will not go waste but instead of reaching the culprit it will return to the actual worker himself just like the money-order which returns to the sender in case it does not reach the one to whom it has been sent.

Thirdly, the transfer of the reward is possible but not the transfer of punishment. That is, it is possible that one may do a good deed and may willingly transfer its reward to the other and it reaches him, but it is not possible that one may commit a sin and transfer its punishment to the other and it reaches him.

The fourth thing is that a virtuous act is beneficial in two ways : First, on account of its those results which accrue to the soul and morality of the doer himself because of which he becomes worthy of a reward in the sight of Allah; second, on account of the reward which Allah grants him as a gift and favour. The transfer of the spiritual reward does not concern the first but only the second. This can be understood by an example. A person tries to attain proficiency in the art of wrestling by constant practice. The strength and skill thus gained is in any way specially meant for his own self; it cannot be transferred to another. Similarly, if he is attached to a royal court, and there is a stipend fixed for him as a wrestler, he alone will receive it and no one else. However, in respect of the prizes and gifts that his patron may like to grant him as an appreciation for his creditable performance, he may request that they may be given to his coach, or parents, or some other benefactor, on his behalf. The same is the case with the virtuous deeds : their spiritual benefits are not transferable and their rewards also cannot be transferred to another, but as for their rewards and gifts he can pray to Allah that these may be granted to a near and dear one, or a benefactor of his. That is why it is termed as *iṣāl thawāb* (conveying of spiritual rewards) and not as *iṣāl jazā'* (conveying of material reward).

(2) Another form of a person's work being beneficial for another is that one should either do a virtuous deed on the desire or beckoning of another, or without his desire or beckoning, on his behalf, which, in fact, was obligatory for him to carry out, but which he was unable to carry out himself. In this regard, the Hanafī jurists say that the acts of worship are of three kinds : purely physical, e.g. the Prayer; purely monetary, e.g. the *zakāt*; and the compound acts of bodily and monetary worship, e.g. Hajj. As for the first kind, nobody can act as an agent of another. As for the second kind, one can act as an agent of the other, e.g. the husband can pay the *zakāt* due on the ornaments of the wife. As for the third kind, one can act as an agent of the other only in case the actual person on whose behalf the act is being performed, is permanently, and not just temporarily, unfit to carry out his obligation himself. For example, Hajj can be performed on behalf of another only in case the person concerned is unable to go for Hajj himself nor may have the hope that he would ever be able to perform it himself. The Mālikīs and the Shāfe'īs also concur on this. However, Imām Mālik lays down the condition that if the father has

willed that his son should perform Hajj after him, on his behalf, the son can perform Hajj on his father's behalf, otherwise not. But the traditions in this regard are very explicit. Whether the father has expressed the desire, or made a will or not, the son can perform Hajj on his behalf.

Ibn 'Abbās has related that a woman from the tribe of Khath'am said to the Holy Prophet: "The command for Hajj has reached my father at a time when he has become very old; he cannot even sit on the camel's back." The Holy Prophet replied: "You then may perform Hajj on his behalf." (Bukhārī, Muslim, Aḥmad, Tirmidhī, Nasā'ī). A tradition bearing on the same subject has also been related by Ḥaḍrat 'Alī. (Aḥmad, Tirmidhī).

Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Zubair has made mention of a man of the same tribe of Khath'am, who also put a similar question to the Holy Prophet concerning his aged father. The Holy Prophet asked: "Are you his eldest son?" He answered in the affirmative. Thereupon the Holy Prophet said: "If your father had left behind a debt and you paid it off, would it stand paid on his behalf?" He replied that it would. The Holy Prophet said: "Then you should likewise perform Hajj also on his behalf." (Aḥmad, Nasā'ī).

Ibn 'Abbās relates that a woman from the tribe of Juhainah came to the Holy Prophet and said: "My mother had vowed to perform Hajj but she died before performing her vow. Now, can I perform Hajj on her behalf?" The Holy Prophet replied: "If your mother had left behind a debt, would you not have paid it? Likewise, you should also discharge the vow made to Allah, and Allah has a greater right that the vows made to Him be performed." (Bukhārī, Nasā'ī). Bukhārī and Musnad Aḥmad contain another tradition to the effect that a man came and put the same question to the Holy Prophet concerning his sister as has been mentioned above, and the Holy Prophet gave him also the same answer.

These traditions provide a clear proof that so far as the compound acts of bodily and monetary worships are concerned, one can act on behalf of another. As for the purely bodily acts of worship, there are some *Aḥādith* which prove the permissibility of acting on behalf of another in this kind of worship as well. For example, Ibn 'Abbās has related that a woman from the tribe of Juhainah asked the Holy Prophet: "My mother had vowed to observe the Fast and she died without performing her vow. Now, can I observe the Fast on her behalf?" The Holy Prophet replied;

“Observe the Fast on her behalf.” (Bukhārī, Muslim, Aḥmad, Abū Da'ūd). And Ḥaḍrat Buraidah's tradition that a woman asked concerning her mother : “She had one month's (according to another tradition two months') Fasts to observe; can I observe those Fasts on her behalf ?” The Holy Prophet said that she could.” (Muslim, Aḥmad, Tirmidhī, Abū Da'ūd). And Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah's tradition that the Holy Prophet said : “If a person dies and he had some Fasts to observe, his guardian should observe those Fasts on his behalf.” (Bukhārī, Muslim, Aḥmad). In the tradition related by Bazzār the Holy Prophet's words are to the effect : “If his guardian may so like, he may observe those Fasts on his behalf.” On the basis of these very traditions the *Ashāb al-Ḥadīth* and Imām Auzā'ī and the Zāhirīṣ have formed the view that one is permitted to perform bodily acts of worship also on behalf of the other. But Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, Imām Mālik, Shāfe'ī and Imām Zaid bin 'Alī have given the ruling that a fast cannot be observed on behalf of a dead person, and Imām Aḥmad, Imām Laith and Iḥāq bin Rāhawaih opine that this can be done only in case the deceased person might have so vowed but might not have been able to perform his vow. Those who oppose this give the argument that the reporters of the *Aḥādīth*, which prove its permissibility, have themselves given their rulings against it. Ibn 'Abbās's ruling has been related by Nasā'ī, thus : “No one should offer a Prayer or observe a Fast on behalf of another.” And Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah's ruling, according to 'Abdur Razzāq, is : “Do not observe the Fast on behalf of your dead ones; feed (the needy) instead.” The same has been related from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar also by 'Abdur Razzāq that the Fast should not be observed on behalf of the deceased person. This shows that in the beginning it was permissible to perform acts of bodily worship on behalf of others, but the practice that became established in the end was that it was not permissible to do so; otherwise it was not possible that those who have reported these *Aḥādīth* from the Holy Prophet, should have themselves given rulings against them.

In this connection, it should be understood well that fulfilment of an obligation on behalf of another can be beneficial only to those people who have themselves been keen and desirous of fulfilling their obligations and might have been unable to do so being rendered helpless by circumstances. But a person who deliberately shirked going for Ḥajj although he had the necessary means for it and had no feeling whatever of this obligation in his heart either, cannot be benefited even if several Ḥajjs be performed on his behalf

afterwards. This would be analogous to the case of a person who deliberately avoided paying his debts and had no intention to pay them till the last. Afterwards even if every penny is paid off on his behalf, he would remain a debtor in the sight of Allah. The payment of the debts by another can relieve only such a person who in his lifetime was desirous of paying off his debts but was unable to do so due to straitened circumstances.

39. That is, "In the Hereafter the people's deeds shall be examined and judged in order to see what provisions they have brought with them." As this sentence occurs immediately after the preceding sentence, it by itself indicates that the preceding sentence relates to the rewards and punishments of the Hereafter, and the view of those who present it as an economic principle relating to this world is not correct. To interpret a verse of the Qur'ān in a way as is irrelevant to the context as well as clashes with the other ordinances of the Qur'ān cannot be right.

40. That is, "Allah provides the means both for joy and for grief. He controls good and ill luck. There is no one else in the Universe, who may have anything to do with making or marring of destinies."

41. For explanation, see E.N.'s 27 to 30 of Sūrah Ar-Rūm, E.N. 77 of Sūrah Ash-Shūrā.

42. When this verse is read with the two preceding verses, the sequence by itself seems to provide the argument for the life-after-death also. The God Who has the power to give death and grant life and the God Who brings about a creature like man from an insignificant sperm-drop, rather brings about two separate sexes—male and female—from the same substance and by the same method of creation, cannot be helpless to resurrect man once again.

43. Different meanings have been given by the lexicographers and commentators of the word *aqnā* as used in the original. According to Qatādah, Ibn 'Abbās took it in the meaning of *ardā* (pleased), and according to 'Ikrimah in the meaning of *qanna'a* (satisfied). According to Imām Rāzī, whatever is given to a person over and above his need and requirement is *iqnā*'. Abū 'Ubaidah and several other lexicographers have expressed the view that *aqnā* is derived from *qunya-tun*, which means lasting and secured property, e.g. the house, lands, gardens, cattle, etc. Ibn Zaid, however, has given quite a different meaning of it. He says that *aqnā* here has been used in the sense of *afqara* (made penniless), and the verse means:

He made whomever He pleased rich and whomever He pleased penniless.

44. *Shi'rā* is the brightest star in the heavens, which is also known by the names of *Mirzam al-Jawzā'*, *al-Kalb al-Akbar*, *al-Kalb al-Jabbār*, *Ash-Shi'rā al-'Abūr*, etc. In English it is called Sirius, Dog Star and Canis Majoris. It is 23 times as luminous as the Sun, but as it shines over eight light-years away from the earth, it appears to be smaller and less luminous than the Sun. The Egyptians worshipped it, for it made its appearance at about the time of the season when the annual floods were beginning in the Nile; the Egyptians believed that Sirius caused the Nile floods. The pagan Arabs also held the belief that this star influenced human destinies. That is why they worshipped it as a deity, and the Banī Khuzā'ah, the neighbouring tribe of the Quraish, were particularly well-known for being its devotees. What Allah says means: Your destinies are not made and controlled by *Shi'rā* but by the Lord of *Shi'rā*.

45. 'Ād Ūlā signifies the ancient 'Ād to whom the Prophet Hūd (peace be upon him) had been appointed a Prophet. When those people were inflicted with the torment in consequence of denying the Prophet Hūd, the believers only escaped the punishment. Their descendants are called 'Ād Ukhrā, or the latter 'Ād, in history.

46. "The subdued settlements": the settlements of the people of Lot, and "covered them that which covered them" probably imply the waters of the Dead Sea, which spread over their settlements after they had sunk underground, and cover the region even till this day.

47. According to some commentators this sentence also is a part of the resume of the Books of the Prophets Abraham and Moses, and according to others it ended with *Fa-ghashshā-hā mā ghashshā*, and with this begins a new theme. According to the context, however, the first view seems to be preferable, for the following words "This is a warning of the warnings already given," point out that the whole preceding passage is "of the warnings already given", which had been sent down in the Books of the Prophets Abraham and Moses.

48. The word *tatamārā*, as used in the Text, means both to doubt and to wrangle. The address is directed to every listener. To every person who may be listening to this discourse, it is being said: Even after witnessing what has been the fate in human history of denying the bounties of Allah and of wrangling with the Prophets

concerning them, will you still commit the same folly? What the former peoples had doubted was whether the bounties and blessings they were enjoying in the world, had been bestowed by One God, or by other associates of His, or by no one, but had become available by themselves. On account of this they wrangled with the Prophets. The Prophets asserted that all these blessings had been granted to them by God, and by One God alone; therefore, they should be grateful to Him and should serve Him alone; but the people did not believe this and wrangled with the Prophets on this very count. Now, O man: "Don't you see in history what fate these nations met for entertaining this doubt and for their wrangling? Will you entertain the same doubt and indulge in the same wrangling as proved disastrous for others?"

In this connection, one should also bear in mind that the 'Ād and the Thamūd and the people of Noah had passed long before the Prophet Abraham, and the people of Lot had met with the torment during his own lifetime. Therefore, there can be no difficulty in regarding this passage as a part of the resume of the Prophet Abrāham's Books.

49. The words in the original are: *Hādha nadhir-un-min-an-nudhur-il-ūlā*. The commentators have expressed three points of view in the explanation of this sentence. First, that *nadhir* here implies the Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace); second, that it implies the Qur'ān; third, that it implies the fate of the peoples already destroyed which has been referred to in the foregoing verses. In view of the context, we are of the opinion that this last commentary is preferable.

50. That is, "Do not be under the delusion that there is yet enough time for thinking and consideration; therefore, you may not give immediate and serious attention to these things and may not decide that you should accept them without further delay. Nay: no one among you knows how much of the respite of life is left to him. Any one of you can die at any time and the Last Hour can also take place suddenly. Therefore, do not think that the Hour of Judgement is yet far off. Whoever has any concern for the Hereafter, should mend his ways forthwith, for one may not have a chance to take a second breath after the present breath."

51. That is, when the Hour of Judgement does arrive, you will not be able to stop it, nor your deities other than Allah have the power to avert it. Allah alone can stop it but He will not.

52. The word *hādih-al-hādith* as used in the original, signifies the whole teaching that was being presented in the Qur'ān through the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) and "marvel" implies the marvel that man expresses on hearing a novel and incredible thing. The verse means this : "That to which Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) is inviting you is the same that you have already heard. Now, is it this very thing at which you marvel and feel alarmed, and express wonder as if something very strange and novel was being presented before you" ?

53. That is, "Instead of weeping at your ignorance and deviation you, on the contrary, are mocking the Truth".

54. Two meanings have been given of the word *sāmidūn* by the lexicographers. Ibn 'Abbās, 'Ikrimah and Abū 'Uбайдah, the grammarian, are of the view that in the Yamanite tongue *sumūd* means singing and playing, and the verse alludes that the disbelievers of Makkah, in order to suppress the recitation of the Qur'ān and to divert the people's attention away from it, would start singing in a loud voice. The other meaning of it given by Ibn 'Abbās and Mujāhid is : "*Sumūd* means bending down the head out of arrogance; when the disbelievers of Makkah passed by the Holy Prophet, they would pass by him angrily with their faces lifted up." Rāghib Iṣphāhānī in his *Mufradāt* also has adopted the same meaning; accordingly, Qatādah has translated *sāmidūn* into *ghāfilūn* and Sa'īd bin Jubair into *mu'ridūn*.

55. According to Imām Abū Ḥanīfah; Imām Shāfe'ī and many other scholars it is obligatory to perform a *sajdah* on the recitation of this verse. Although Imām Mālik himself used to perform a *sajdah* here (as cited by Qāḍi Abū Bakr ibn al-'Arabī in *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*), yet he held the view that it was not obligatory to perform a *sajdah* here, the basis of his view being this tradition of Ḥaḍrat Zaid bin Thābit : "I recited Sūrah an-Najm before the Holy Prophet, and he did not perform a *sajdah*." (Bukhārī, Muslim, Aḥmad, Tirmidhī, Abū Da'ūd, Nasā'ī). But this *Ḥadīth* does not negate the incumbency of the prostration here, for it is likely that the Holy Prophet did not perform the *sajdah* then due to some reason but might have performed it later. Other traditions on the subject are explicit that the prostration was always performed on this verse. Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, Ibn 'Abbās and Muṭṭalib bin Abī Wadā'ah have unanimously stated that when the Holy Prophet recited this Sūrah for the first time in the Ka'bah, he had

prostrated himself and along with him the whole assembly of the believers and the disbelievers also had fallen down prostrate. (Bukhārī, Aḥmad, Nasā'i) Ibn 'Umar has reported that the Holy Prophet recited Sūrah an-Najm in the Prayer and prostrated himself and lay long in that state. (Baihaqī, Ibn Mardūyah). Saburat al-Juhanī states that Ḥaḍrat 'Umar recited Sūrah an-Najm in the Fajr Prayer and performed a *sajdah*, then stood up, recited Sūrah al-Zilzāl and performed the *rukū'*. (Sa'īd bin Manṣūr). Imām Mālik himself has related this act of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar in his *Mu'waḍḍā* (*Bāb Mā Jā'fi Sujūd al-Qur'ān*).

LIV

AL-QAMAR

القَمَر

سُورَةُ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

LIV

AL-QAMAR

القَمَر

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name from the very first verse : *Wan-shaqq-al-Qamar*, thereby implying that it is a Sūrah in which the word *al-Qamar* has occurred.

Period of Revelation

The incident of the *shaqq-al-Qamar* (splitting of the Moon) that has been mentioned in it, determines its period of revelation precisely. The traditionists and commentators are agreed that this incident took place at Minā in Makkah about five years before the Holy Prophet's *hijrah* to Madīnah.

Theme and Subject Matter

In this Sūrah the disbelievers of Makkah have been warned for their stubbornness which they had adopted against the invitation of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The amazing and wonderful phenomenon of the splitting of the Moon was a manifest sign of the truth that the Resurrection, of which the Holy Prophet was giving them the news, could take place and that it had approached near at hand. The great sphere of the Moon had split into two distinct parts in front of their very eyes. The two parts had separated and receded so much apart from each other that to the on-lookers one part had appeared on one side of the mountain and the other on the other side of it. Then, in an instant the two had rejoined. This was a manifest proof of the truth that the system of the Universe was neither eternal nor immortal, it could be disrupted. Huge stars and planets could split asunder, disintegrate, collide with each other, and everything that has been depicted in the Qur'ān in connection with the description of the details of Resurrection, could happen. Not only this: it was also a portent that the disintegration of the system of the Universe had begun and the time was near when Resurrection would take place. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) invited the people's attention to this event only with this object in view and asked them to mark it and be a witness to it. But the disbelievers described it as a magical illusion and persisted in their denial. For this stubbornness they have been reproached in this Sūrah.

At the outset it has been said: "These people neither believe in the admonition, nor learn a lesson from history, nor affirm faith after witnessing manifest signs with their eyes. Now they would believe only when

Resurrection has taken place and they would be rushing out of their graves towards the Summoner on that Day."

Then, the stories of the people of Noah and of 'Ād and Thamūd and of the peoples of Lot and the Pharaoh have been related briefly and they have been reminded of the terrible punishments that these nations suffered when they belied and disregarded the warnings given by the Prophets of God. After the narration of each story the refrain that has been provided is: "This Qur'ān is an easy means of admonition, which if a nation takes to heart and thereby takes the Right Way, the torment that descended on the former nations could be avoided. But it would indeed be a folly if instead of heeding the admonition through this easy means, one persisted in heedlessness and disbelieved until one was overtaken by the torment itself."

Likewise, after citing admonitory precedents from the history of the former nations, the disbelievers of Makkah have been addressed and warned to this effect: "If you too adopt the same attitude and conduct for which the other nations have already been punished, why will you not be punished for it? Are you in any way a superior people that you should be treated differently from others? Or, have you received a deed of amnesty that you will not be punished for the crime for which others have been punished? And if you feel elated at your great numbers, you will soon see that these very numbers of yours are put to rout (on the battlefield) and on the Day of Resurrection you will be dealt with even more severely."

In the end, the disbelievers have been told that Allah does not need to make lengthy preparations to bring about Resurrection. No sooner does He give a simple command for it than it will take place immediately. Like everything else the Universe and mankind also have a

destiny. According to this destiny everything happens at its own appointed time. It cannot be so that whenever somebody gives a challenge, Resurrection is brought about in order to convince him. If you adopt rebellion because you do not see it coming, you will only be adding to your own distress and misfortune. For your record which is being prepared by Divine agents, has not left any misdeed of yours, great or small, unrecorded.



اقْتَرَبَتِ السَّاعَةُ وَانْشَقَّ الْقَمَرُ ۗ وَإِنْ يَرَوْا آيَةً يُعْرِضُوا وَيَقُولُوا سِحْرٌ

LIV

AL-QAMAR

القَمَرُ

Verses : 55

Revealed at Makkah

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

The Hour of Resurrection has drawn near and the Moon has split asunder.¹ Yet whatever Sign these people may see they turn away and say, "This is current magic."² They have denied (this too) and followed only their own lusts.³ Ultimately, every matter has to reach an appointed end.⁴ 1-3

1. That is, "The splitting of the Moon asunder is a portent that the Hour of Resurrection of which you are being foretold, has drawn near at hand, and the order of the Universe has begun to be disrupted. Moreover, the incident that a great sphere like the Moon's has split into two distinct parts, is a specific proof of the fact that Resurrection of which you are being forewarned can take place. Obviously, when the Moon can split, the earth also can split, the orbits of the stars and planets also can change and the whole system of the heavens also can be disturbed. There is nothing eternal and everlasting and stable here so that Resurrection may be improbable."

Some people have taken this sentence to mean: "The Moon will split." Although according to Arabic usage it is possible to take this meaning, the context clearly rejects it. In the first place, if this were the meaning, the first sentence would become meaning-

less. If the Moon had not actually split at the time when this Revelation was made, but it was going to split some time in the future, it would be absurd to say on the basis of this that the Hour of Resurrection had approached near at hand. After all, how can an incident that is to take place in the future, be regarded as a sign of Resurrection's being near at hand, and how can such a testimony be put forward as a rational argument? Second, with this meaning in mind when we read the following verses, they appear to be altogether incoherent. The verses that follow clearly show that the people at that time had witnessed a sign that was a manifest portent of the possibility of Resurrection, but they rejected it as a magical illusion, and persisted in their belief that Resurrection was not possible. In this context, the words *inshaqq-al-Qamar* can be meaningful only if they are taken to mean: "The Moon split asunder." If they are taken to mean: "The Moon will split asunder," the whole following theme becomes disjointed. It will look like this:

"The Hour of Resurrection has drawn near and *the Moon will split asunder*. Yet whatever sign these people may see they turn away and say: 'This is current magic!' They have denied and followed only their own lusts."

Therefore, the truth is that the incident of the splitting of the Moon is confirmed explicitly by the words of the Qur'an and it is not dependent upon the traditions of the *Hadith*. However, the traditions supply its details, and one comes to know when and how it had taken place. These traditions have been related by Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmidhī, Aḥmad, Abū 'Uwānah, Abū Da'ūd Ṭayālīsī, 'Abdur Razzāq, Ibn Jarīr, Baihaqī, Ṭabarānī, Ibn Mardūyah, and Abū Nu'aim Iṣfahānī with many chains of transmitters on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Alī, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar, Ḥaḍrat Hudhaifah, Ḥaḍrat Anas bin Mālīk and Ḥaḍrat Jubair bin Muṭ'im. Three of these authorities, viz., Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd; Ḥaḍrat Hudhaifah, and Ḥaḍrat Jubair bin Muṭ'im, state that they were the eye-witnesses of this event; two of them cannot be its eye-witnesses, for this event took place before the birth of one (i.e. 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās) and at a time when the other (i.e. Anas bin Mālīk) was yet a child. But since both these scholars were Companions, obviously they must have reported this event after they had heard it from the aged Companions who had direct knowledge of it.

The information that one gathers from the various traditions is that this incident occurred about five years before the *Hijrah*. It

was the 14th night of the lunar month; the Moon had just risen when it suddenly split and its two parts were seen on either side of the hill in front. Then after a moment or so they rejoined. The Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) at that time was at Minā. He told the people to mark it and be witnesses to it. The disbelievers said that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) had worked magic on them; therefore, their eyes had been deceived. The other people said: "Muḥammad could have worked magic on us but not on all the people. Let the people from other places come: we shall ask them if they also had witnessed this incident." When the people from other places came, they bore evidence that they also had witnessed the same phenomenon.

Some traditions which have been related from Ḥaḍrat Anas give rise to the misunderstanding that the incident of the splitting of the Moon had happened twice. But, in the first place, no one else from among the Companions has stated this; second, in some traditions of Ḥaḍrat Anas himself also the words are *marratain* (twice), and in some *fiḡatain* and *shaqqatain* (two pieces); third, the Qur'ān mentions only one incident of the Moon's splitting asunder. The correct view therefore is that this incident happened only once. As for the stories which are current among the people that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) had made a gesture towards the Moon and it split into two parts and that one part of the Moon entered the breast of the garment of the Holy Prophet and went out of the sleeve, have no basis whatever.

Here, the question arises: What was the real nature of this incident? Was it a miracle that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) performed on the demand of the disbelievers of Makkah as a proof of his Prophethood? Or, was it only an accident that occurred on the Moon by the power of Allah and the Holy Prophet had only called the people's attention to it and warned them to mark it as a Sign of the possibility and nearness of Resurrection? A large group of the Muslim scholars regards it as among the miracles of the Holy Prophet and holds the view that it had been shown on the demand of the disbelievers. But this view is based only on some of those traditions which have been related from Ḥaḍrat Anas. Apart from him no other Companion has stated this. According to *Fath al-Bārī*, Ibn Hajar says: "Apart from the narration by Ḥaḍrat Anas, in no other narration of this story have I come across the theme that the incident of the splitting of the Moon had taken place on the demand

of the polytheists. (*Bab Inshiqāq al-Qamar*). Abū Nu'aim Iṣṣabānī has related a tradition on this subject in *Dalā'il an-Nubuwwat*, on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās also, but it has a weak chain of transmitters, and none of the traditions that have been related with strong chains of transmitters in the collections of *Ḥadīth* on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, contains any mention of this. Furthermore, neither Ḥaḍrat Anas nor Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās was a contemporary of this incident. On the contrary, none of the Companions from among Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, Ḥaḍrat Ḥudhaifah, Ḥaḍrat Jubair bin Muṭ'im, Ḥaḍrat 'Alī, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar, who were contemporaries of the incident, has stated that the pagans of Makkah had demanded a Sign of the Holy Prophet to testify to his Prophethood on which he might have shown the miracle of the splitting of the Moon. Above all, the Qur'ān itself also is presenting this event not as a Sign of the Prophethood but as a Sign of the nearness of Resurrection. However, this was indeed a conspicuous proof of the Holy Prophet's truthfulness because it testified to the news that he was giving to the people of the coming of Resurrection.

The critics raise two kinds of objections against it. In the first place, they say it is impossible that a great sphere like the Moon should split asunder into two distinct parts, which should get hundreds of miles apart and then rejoin. Secondly, they say if it had so happened, it would be a well known event in the world and would have found mention in the books of History and Astronomy. But, in fact, both these objections are flimsy. As for the discussion of its possibility, it could perhaps find credibility in the ancient days but on the basis of what man has come to know in the present day about the structure of the planets, it can be said that it is just possible that a sphere may burst because of its internal volcanic action and its two parts may be thrown far apart by the mighty eruption, and then may rejoin under the magnetic force of their centre. As for the second objection, it is flimsy because the event had taken place suddenly and lasted a short time only. It was not necessary that at that particular moment the world might be looking at the Moon. There was no explosion either that might have attracted the people's attention; there was no advance information of it that the people might be awaiting its occurrence and looking up at the sky. It could not also be seen everywhere on the earth but only in Arabia and the eastern lands where the Moon had risen

and was visible at that time. The taste and art of writing history also had not yet developed so that the people who might have witnessed it, should have made a record of it and then some historian might have gathered the evidence and preserved it in some book of History. However, in the Histories of Malabar mention has been made of a native ruler who had witnessed this phenomenon that night. As for the books of Astronomy and Calendars, this event might have been mentioned in them only if the event had affected the movement of the Moon, its orbit and the times of its rising and setting. As no such thing happened, it did not attract the ancient astronomers' attention. The observatories also were not so developed that they might have taken notice of everything happening in the heavens and preserved a record of it.

2. The words *sihr-um-mustamirr* of the Text can have several meanings: (1) That, God forbid, this magical illusion also is one of those magical performances that Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) has been performing day and night; (2) that this certainly is a work of magic which has been performed with great expertise; and (3) that just as other works of magic have passed, so will this also pass without leaving any lasting effect behind.

3. That is, "They still persisted in the same decision that they had made of denying the Hereafter and have not changed their mind even after having witnessed this manifest Sign, mainly because it clashed with their desires of the flesh."

4. That is, "It cannot be so endlessly that Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) should go on inviting you to the Truth while you persist in your falsehood stubbornly and his Truth and your falsehood should never be established. All affairs ultimately have to reach an appointed end. Likewise, inevitably this conflict between you and Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) has also to reach an end. A time will certainly come when it will be clearly established that he had been in the right and you in the wrong throughout. Likewise, the worshippers of the Truth shall one day see the result of their worshipping the Truth and the worshippers of falsehood of their worshipping the falsehood."

مُسْتَمِرًّا ۖ وَكَذَّبُوا وَاتَّبَعُوا أَهْوَاءَهُمْ وَكَلَّأَ أَمْرَهُمْ تَوَلَّوْا ۚ وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا
 وَمِنَ الْأَنْبَاءِ مَا فِيهِ مُزْدَجَرٌ ۖ حِكْمَةٌ بَالِغَةٌ ۚ فَمَا تُغْنِ التُّذُرَاتُ ۚ فَتَوَلَّوْا عَنْهُمْ
 يَوْمَ يَدْعُ الدَّاعِ إِلَىٰ شَيْءٍ تُكْرَهُ ۖ خُشْعًا أَبْصَارُهُمْ يَخْرُجُونَ مِنَ
 الْأَجْدَاثِ ۚ كَأَنَّهُمْ جَرَادٌ مُّنتَشِرٌ ۚ تَهْطِئِينَ إِلَى الدَّاعِ يَقُولُ الْكٰفِرُونَ
 هٰذَا يَوْمٌ عَسِرٌ ۚ كَذَّبَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ نُوحٍ ۚ فَكَذَّبُوا عَبْدَنَا وَقَالُوا مَجْنُونٌ
 وَازْدُجِرَ ۚ فَدَعَا رَبَّهُ أَنِّي مَغْلُوبٌ فَانْتَصِرَ ۚ فَفَتَحْنَا أَبْوَابَ السَّمَاءِ بِمَاءٍ
 مُّنْهَرٍ ۚ وَفَجَّرْنَا الْأَرْضَ عُيُونًا فَالْتَقَى الْمَاءُ عَلَىٰ أَمْرٍ قَدْ قُدِرَ ۚ وَحَمَلْنَاهُ
 عَلَىٰ ذَاتِ الْأَوَاجِ ۚ وَدُسِرَ ۚ فَتَجَرَّي بِأَعْيُنِنَا ۚ جَزَاءٌ لِّمَن كَانَ كُفِرَ ۚ وَكَذَّبُوا
 بِآيَاتِنَا ۚ فَهَلْ مِنْ مُّذَكِّرٍ ۚ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عَذَابِي وَنُذُرِي ۚ وَكَذَّبُوا
 بِآيَاتِنَا ۚ فَهَلْ مِنْ مُّذَكِّرٍ ۚ كَذَّبَتْ عَادٌ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عَذَابِي وَ
 نُذُرِي ۚ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِيحًا صَرْصَرًا فِي يَوْمٍ نَحْسٍ مُّسْتَمِرٍّ ۚ تَنْزِعُ
 النَّاسَ ۚ كَأَنَّهُمْ أَعْجَازُ نَخْلٍ مُّنْقَعِرٍ ۚ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عَذَابِي وَنُذُرِي ۚ وَكَذَّبُوا
 بِآيَاتِنَا ۚ فَهَلْ مِنْ مُّذَكِّرٍ ۚ كَذَّبَتْ ثَمُودُ بِالنُّذُرِ ۚ فَقَالُوا أَبَشْرًا
 مِنَّا وَاحِدًا تَتَّبِعُهُ ۚ إِنَّا إِذَا لَفِئَ ضَلَّىٰ وَسُعِرَ ۚ أَلْقَى الدِّكْرَ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ بَيْنِنَا
 بَلْ هُوَ كَذَّابٌ أَشْرٌ ۚ سَيَعْلَمُونَ عَذَابًا مِّنَ الْكَذَّابِ الْأَشْرِ ۚ إِنَّا مُرْسِلُوا
 النَّاقَةَ فِتْنَةً لَهُمْ فَارْتَقِبْهُمْ وَاصْطَبِرْ ۚ وَنَبِّئُهُمْ أَنَّ الْمَاءَ قِسْمَةٌ بَيْنَهُمْ
 كُلُّ شَرِبٍ مُّحْتَضِرٌ ۚ فَنادَوْا صَاحِبَهُمْ فَتَعَاطَى فَعَقَرَ ۚ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عَذَابِي
 وَنُذُرِي ۚ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ صَيْحَةً وَاحِدَةً فَكَانُوا كَهَشِيمِ الْمُحْتَظِرِ ۚ وَكَذَّبُوا
 بِآيَاتِنَا ۚ فَهَلْ مِنْ مُّذَكِّرٍ ۚ كَذَّبَتْ قَوْمُ لُوطٍ بِالنُّذُرِ ۚ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا

There have already come to them narratives (of the former communities) containing enough deterrents to restrain them from rebellion and profound wisdom as serves the purpose of admonition well, but warnings are of little avail with these people. So, O Prophet, turn away from them.⁵ The Day the Caller shall call them to a most terrifying event,⁶ the people shall rise out of their graves⁷ with awe-struck looks⁸ as though they were scattered locusts. They will be rushing towards the Caller and the same disbelievers (who denied it in the world) shall say, "This indeed is a hard day!"

4-8

Before them the people of Noah also denied.⁹ They called Our servant a liar, and said, "He is a madman," and he was rebuked harshly.¹⁰ At last, he called out to his Lord, saying, "I am overcome: take now Thy vengeance." Then We opened the gates of heaven with torrential rain and We caused the earth to burst forth into springs,¹¹ and the waters met to fulfil the decreed end. And We bore Noah upon a thing made of planks and nails,¹² which floated under Our care. This was a vengeance for the sake of him who had been slighted.¹³ And We left that Ark as a Sign.¹⁴ Then, is there any who would take admonition? Just see how dreadful was My scourge and how true My warnings! We have made this Qur'ān an easy means of admonition.¹⁵ Then, is there any who would take admonition?

9-17

'Ād also denied. Then behold, how severe was My punishment and how true My warnings! We sent on them a raging wind on a day of continuous ill-luck,¹⁶ which swept them off as though they were trunks of uprooted palm-trees. Then see how severe was My punishment and how true My warnings! We have made this Qur'ān an easy means of admonition. Then, is there any who would take admonition?

18-22

Thamūd rejected the warnings, and said, "A solitary man he is from among ourselves. Shall we now follow

23-32

him ?¹⁷ If we did so, we should indeed be gone astray and have committed folly. Was he the only person among us to have God's Reminder sent down to him? Nay, but he is an utter liar and a conceited person."¹⁸ (We said to Our Messenger :) "Tomorrow they shall know who is an utter liar and a conceited person. We are sending the she-camel as a trial for them. Now watch with patience what end they meet. Tell them that the water will be divided between them and the she-camel, and each will have water on his own turn."¹⁹ At last, they called out to their companion, who took up the responsibility and killed her.²⁰ Then see how severe was My punishment and how true My warnings! We let loose on them a single blast and they became as the trampled twigs of the fence of a fold-builder.²¹ We have made this Qur'an an easy means of admonition. Then, is there any who would take admonition ?

5. In other words, "Leave them to themselves. When every effort has been made to make them understand the Truth in the most rational ways, when instances have been cited from history to show them the evil results of the denial of the Hereafter, when the dreadful fates suffered by the other nations in consequence of their rejecting the Prophetic messages have been brought to their notice and yet they are disinclined to give up their stubbornness, they should be left alone to gloat over their follies. Now, they would believe only when after death they arise from their graves to see with their own eyes that the Resurrection of which they were being forewarned and exhorted to adopt the truth, had actually taken place."

6. Another meaning can be "an unknown thing", a thing which they never could imagine, of which they never had any concept and no idea whatever that it also could occur.

7. "Graves" do not signify only those pits in the earth in which a person might have been properly buried, but he would rise up from wherever he had died, or from wherever his dust lay, on the call of the Caller to the plain of Resurrection.

8. Literally : "Their looks will be downcast." This can have several meanings ; (1) That they will appear terror-stricken; (2)

that they will be reflecting disgrace and humiliation, for as soon as they arise out of their graves they would realize that it was indeed the same second life which they had been denying, for which they had made no preparation, and in which they would have to present themselves before their God as culprits; and (3) that with awe-struck looks they would be watching the dreadful scenes before them, from which they would not be able to avert their eyes.

9. That is, "They denied that the Hereafter has to take place when man will have to render an account of his deeds; they denied the Prophethood of the Prophet who was making his people aware of this truth; and they denied the teaching of the Prophet, which taught them what to believe and what creed and conduct they should adopt in order to pass the reckoning of the Hereafter."

10. That is, "The people not only belied the Prophet but also branded him as a madman; they uttered threats against him, showered him with curses and abuses; and did whatever possibly they could to stop him from preaching the truth, and thus made life extremely difficult for him.

11. That is, the earth so burst forth with springs at the Command of Allah that it was no longer earth but presented a scene of the springs all around.

12. This signifies the Ark which the Prophet Noah had built under Allah's care and guidance even before the coming of the Flood.

13. Literally: "This was a vengeance for the sake of him whose *kufr* had been committed." If *kufr* be taken in the sense of denial, it would mean: "Whose message had been denied and rejected;" and if it is taken in the meaning of ingratitude for a blessing, it would mean: "Who was indeed a blessing for the people, but had been ungratefully rejected."

14. It may also mean: "We left this dreadful punishment as a sign of warning," but in our opinion the preferable meaning is that the Ark was left as a sign of warning. Its resting and existence on a high mountain continued to warn the later generations of the wrath of God for thousands of years and kept on reminding them how the people who had disobeyed God on this earth had met their doom, and how the believers had been rescued from it. Imām Bukhārī, Ibn Abī Hātim, 'Abdur Razzāq and Ibn Jarīr have related traditions on the authority of Qatādah saying that at the time the Muslims conquered 'Irāq and al-Jazīrah, this Ark still existed on

Mount Jūdī (and according to a tradition, near the settlement of Bāqirdā), and the early Muslims had seen it. In the modern times also some people during their flights in the aeroplanes have sighted an Ark-like object on a peak in this region, which is suspected to be the Ark of Noah, and on the basis of the same expeditions have been sent from time to time to search it out. (For further details, see E.N. 47 of Al-A'rāf, E.N. 46 of Hūd, and E.N. 25 of Al-'Ankabūt).

15. Some people have misconstrued the words *yassarnal-Qur'ān* to mean that the Qur'ān is an easy Book : no knowledge is required to understand it; so much so that a person even without the knowledge of the Arabic language, can write a commentary on it, and can deduce any injunctions he likes from its verses independent of the *Hadith* and Islamic Law, whereas the context in which these words occur, indicates that they are meant to make the people realize this : "One means of the admonition are the dreadful torments that descended upon the rebellious nations, and the other means is this Qur'ān, which guides you to the right path by argument and instruction. Obviously, this means of admonition is by far the easier one; then, why don't you take advantage of it and insist on meeting with the torment instead ? It is indeed Allah's bounty that He has sent this Book through His Prophet and is warning you that the ways you are following lead only to destruction and your well-being lies only in following this way. This method of admonition has been adopted so that you are rescued even before you fall into the pit of destruction. Now, who could be more foolish than the one who does not believe in the admonition and realizes his error only after he has fallen into the pit ?"

16. That is, on a day the ill-luck of which continued to rage for several days. In Sūrah Hā Mīm As-Sajdah : 16, the words are : *fi ayyām-in-naḥisāt* : "in a few ill-omened days," and in Sūrah Al-Hāqqah : 7, it has been said : "This wind-storm continued to rage for seven nights and eight days." It is said that the day on which the storm started was Wednesday. From this the idea spread that Wednesday was a day of ill-luck, and no work should be started on this day. Some very weak traditions also have been cited to support this view, which have further strengthened the idea that this day is ill-omened. For example, there is Ibn Mardūyah and Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī's tradition that the last Wednesday of the month is ill-omened, the ill-omen of which is endless. Ibn Jauzī regards this

tradition as fabricated and Ibn Rajab as unauthentic. Hāfiẓ Sakhāvi says that all the methods through which this tradition has been reported, are weak. Likewise, Ṭabarāni's tradition ("Wednesday is a day of perpetual ill-luck") also has been declared as weak by the scholars of *Hadith*. In some other traditions one is also forbidden to start a journey, to do business transactions, to pare the nails, or to visit the sick on a Wednesday. They also say that leprosy starts on this day. But all these traditions are weak and these cannot be made the basis of any belief. The scholar Munāwi says: "To abandon Wednesday taking it as ill-omened and to entertain the astrologer's whims in this regard is forbidden, strictly forbidden, for all days belong to Allah; no day is beneficial by itself nor harmful." Allāma Ālūsi says: "All days are equal; Wednesday has no peculiarity about it. There is no hour in the night or day which might be good for one person and bad for another. It is Allah Who creates favourable conditions for some people and adverse for others."

17. In other words, there were three reasons for their refusal to obey and follow the Prophet Sāliḥ: (1) "He is a human being and not a super-human person so that we may regard him as superior to ourselves." (2) "He is a member of our own nation: he is in no way superior to us." (3) "He is a single man, one from among ourselves. He is not a prominent chief with a large following, or an army of soldiers, or a host of attendants so that we may acknowledge his superiority." They wanted that a Prophet should either be a superman, or if he be a common man, he should not have been born in their own land and nation, but should have descended from above, or sent from another land, and if nothing else, he should at least have been a rich man, whose extraordinary splendour should make the people believe why Allah had selected him alone for the leadership of the nation. This same was the error of ignorance in which the disbelievers of Makkah were involved. They also refused to acknowledge the Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) as a Prophet on the ground that he was a man who moved about in the streets like the common men, had been born among them only the other day and now was claiming that God had appointed him as a Prophet.

18. The word *ashir* of the original means a conceited, insolent person given to bragging of his own superiority over others.

(Contd. on p. 290)

عَلَيْهِمْ حَاصِبًا إِلَّا آلَ لُوطٍ نَجَّيْنَاهُمْ بِسَحَرٍ ۗ نِعْمَةٌ مِّنْ عِنْدِنَا كَذَلِكَ
 نَجِّنِي مَن شَكَرَ ۗ وَ لَقَدْ أَنْذَرَهُمْ بَطْشَتَنَا فَتَمَارَوْا بِالنُّذُرِ ۗ وَ لَقَدْ رَاودُوهُ
 عَن ضَيْفِهِ فَطَمَسْنَا أَعْيُنَهُمْ فَذُوقُوا عَذَابِي وَ نَذُرِ ۗ وَ لَقَدْ صَبَّحَهُمْ بُكْرَةً
 عَذَابٌ مُّسْتَقَرٌّ ۗ فَذُوقُوا عَذَابِي وَ نَذُرِ ۗ وَ لَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْآنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ
 مِّن مُّذَكِّرٍ ۗ وَ لَقَدْ جَاءَ آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ النُّذُرُ ۗ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا كُلِّهَا فَأَخَذْنَاهُمْ
 أَخَذَ عَزِيزٍ مُّقْتَدِرٍ ۗ أَكْفَارَكُمْ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ أَوْلِيَّكُمْ أَمْ لَكُمْ بَرَاءَةٌ فِي الزُّبُرِ ۗ
 أَمْ يَقُولُونَ نَحْنُ جَمِيعٌ مُّنتَصِرُونَ ۗ سَيُهْزَمُ الْجَمْعُ وَ يُؤْتُونَ الدُّبُرَ ۗ بَلِ
 السَّاعَةُ مَوْعِدُهُمْ وَ السَّاعَةُ أَدْحَىٰ وَ أَمْرُهُ ۗ إِنَّ السُّجْرِمِينَ فِي ضَلَالٍ وَسُعُرٍ ۗ
 يَوْمَ يُسْحَبُونَ فِي النَّارِ عَلَىٰ وُجُوهِهِمْ ذُوقُوا مَسَّ سَقَرَ ۗ إِنَّا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ
 خَلَقْنَاهُ بِقَدَرٍ ۗ وَ مَا أَمْرُنَا إِلَّا وَاحِدَةٌ كَلَمْحٍ بِالْبَصَرِ ۗ وَ لَقَدْ أَهْلَكْنَا أَشْيَاعَكُمْ
 فَهَلْ مِّن مُّذَكِّرٍ ۗ وَ كُلُّ شَيْءٍ فَعَلُوهُ فِي الزُّبُرِ ۗ وَ كُلُّ صَغِيرٍ وَ كَبِيرٍ مُّسْتَطَرٌّ ۗ
 إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي جَنَّتٍ وَ نَهْرٍ ۗ فِي مَقْعَدِ صِدْقٍ عِنْدَ مَلِكٍ مُّقْتَدِرٍ ۗ

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Lot's people denied the warnings. We sent on them a wind charged with stones, which spared none but Lot's household, whom We saved in the last hours of the night through Our grace. Thus do We reward him who is grateful. Lot did warn his people of Our scourge but they doubted all the warnings and paid no heed. Then they sought to prevent him from guarding his guests. Consequently, We blinded their eyes (and said), "Taste now My torment and My warnings!"²² Early in the morning they were overtaken by a lasting torment. Taste now My torment and My warnings. We have made this Qur'ān an easy means of admonition. Then, is there any who would take admonition? 33-40

And warnings had come to the people of Pharaoh too, but they belied all Our Signs. Consequently, We seized them like the seizure of an All-Mighty, All-Powerful One. 41-42

Are your disbelievers any better?²³ Or, is there any exemption for you in the Divine Books? Or, do they say, "We are a strong host : We shall defend ourselves?" Soon shall this host be put to rout and they will all show their backs.²⁴ But the promised time to deal with them is the Hour of Resurrection, a most grievous and bitter Hour! These wicked people are in fact involved in misunderstanding and folly. The Day they are dragged into the Fire, on their faces, it will be said to them, "Taste now the flame of Hell." 43-48

We have created everything with a destiny,²⁵ and Our Command is but one Command, which takes effect in the twinkling of an eye.²⁶ We have destroyed many like you.²⁷ Then, is there any who would take admonition? Whatever they have done is recorded in registers and everything, small or great, is written therein.²⁸ 49-53

Those who have avoided disobedience shall be among gardens and canals, in a place of true honour, in the Presence of a most Powerful King. 54-55

(Cont. from p. 287)

19. This explains the verse: "We are sending the she-camel as a trial for them." The trial was that suddenly a she-camel was produced before them and they were told that one day she would drink the water all by herself and the next day they would be allowed to have water for themselves and their cattle. On the day of her turn neither would any of them himself come to any of the springs and wells to take water nor bring his cattle for watering. This challenge was given on behalf of the person about whom they themselves admitted that he had no army and no hosts to support him.

20. These words by themselves indicate that the she-camel roamed at will in their settlements for a long period of time. No one could dare approach a source of water on the day of her turn. At last, they called out to a haughty chief of theirs who was well known for his courage and boldness, and urged him to put an end to her. Emboldened by the false encouragement he took up the responsibility and killed the she-camel. This clearly means that the people were very frightened. They felt that she had extraordinary power, and so they dared not touch her with an evil intention. That is why the killing of a mere she-camel especially when the Prophet who had presented her, did not possess any army that could be a deterrent for them, amounted to undertaking a dangerous and difficult task. (For further details, see E.N. 58 of Sūrah Al-A'rāf and E.N.'s 104, 105 of Sūrah Ash-Shua'rā').

21. The crushed and rotten bodies of the people of Thamūd have been compared to the trampled and trodden twigs and pieces of bush lying around an enclosure for cattle.

22. The details of this story have been given in Sūrah Hūd: 77-83 and Sūrah Al-Hijr: 61-74 above, a resume of which is as follows:

When Allah decided to punish those people with a torment, He sent a few angels in the guise of handsome boys as guests in the house of the Prophet Lot. When the people saw such handsome guests in Lot's house they rushed to it and demanded that they be handed over to them for the gratification of their lust. The Prophet Lot implored them to desist from their evil intention, but they did not listen and tried to enter his house to take hold of the guests forcibly. At this stage suddenly their eyes were blinded. Then the angels told Lot that he and his household should leave the city before dawn; then as soon as they had left a dreadful torment des-

cended on the people. In the Bible also this event has been described. The words are: "And they pressed sore upon the man, even Lot, and came near to break the door. But the men (i.e. the angels) put forth their hand and pulled Lot into the house to them, and shut to the door. And they smote the men that were at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great: so that they wearied themselves to find the door." (Gen., 19: 9-11).

23. The address here is directed to the Quraish, as if to say: "When the other nations have been punished for adopting disbelief and showing stubbornness and denying the Truth, why would you not be punished if you adopted the same attitude and conduct? For you are not a special people in any way."

24. This is a specific prophecy that was made five years before the *hijrah*, saying that the hosts of the Quraish who waxed proud of their strength would soon be put to rout by the Muslims. At that time no one could imagine how such a revolution would take place in the near future. Such was the helplessness of the Muslims that a group of them had already left the country and taken refuge in Habash and the rest of the believers lay besieged in Sh'ib Abi Talib, and were being starved by the Quraish boycott and siege. Under such conditions no one could imagine that within only the next seven years the tables were going to turn. 'Ikrimah, the pupil of Hadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbas, has related that Hadrat 'Umar used to say: "When this verse of Sūrah Al Qamar was sent down, I wondered what hosts it is that would be routed. But when in the Battle of Badr the pagan Quraish were routed and they were fleeing from the battlefield, I saw the Messenger of Allah in his armour rushing forward and reciting this verse: *Sa-yuhzam-al-jam'u wa yuwallūn-ad-dubur*. Then only did I realize that this was the defeat that had been foretold." (Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Hātim).

25. That is, "Nothing in the world has been created at random but with a purpose and destiny. A thing comes into being at an appointed time, takes a particular form and shape, develops to its fullest extent, survives for a certain period, and then decays and dies at an appointed time. Even according to this universal principle this world too has a destiny in accordance with which it is functioning till an appointed time and will come to an end at an appointed time. It will neither come to an end a moment earlier than its appointed time of end nor survive a moment longer; it has neither existed since

eternity nor will exist till eternity, nor is it the plaything of a child which he may destroy as and when he likes."

26. That is, "We shall not have to make any lengthy preparations for bringing about Resurrection, nor will it take long to come. For no sooner will a Command be issued forth from Us than it will take place in the twinkling of an eye."

27. That is, "If you think that the world is not the Kingdom of a Wise and Just God but the lawless empire of a blind ruler, in which man may behave and conduct himself as he likes, without any fear of accountability, history is proof and an eye-opener for you, which shows that the nations that adopted such a way of life, have been sent to their doom, one after the other."

28. That is, "These people should not be under the delusion that whatever they did in the world has become extinct; nay, they should know that full record of the deeds of every person, every group and every nation, lies preserved and it will be presented before them at the appropriate time."

LV

AR-RAHMĀN

الرَّحْمَنُ

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

LV

AR-RAHMĀN

الرَّحْمٰنُ

INTRODUCTION

Name

This Sūrah is entitled Ar-Rahmān, the word with which it begins. This title, however, deeply relates to the subject-matter of the Sūrah too, for in it, from the beginning to the end, the manifestations and fruits of Allah's attribute of mercy and grace have been mentioned.

Period of Revelation

The commentators generally hold the view that this is a Makkī Sūrah, though according to some traditions which have been cited on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, 'Ikrimah and Qatādah, it was revealed at Madīnah. But, firstly, there are also some other traditions from these very authorities, which contradict this view; secondly, its subject-matter bears a

closer resemblance with the Makkī Sūrahs than with the Madanī Sūrahs; rather it appears to belong to the very early Makkah period. However, there are several authentic traditions which testify that it had been revealed in Makkah itself many years before the *hijrah*.

Musnad Aḥmad contains a tradition from Ḥaḍrat Asmā', daughter of Abū Bakr (may Allah bless them both), to the effect: "I saw the Messenger of Allah offering his Prayers in the sacred precincts of the Ka'bah facing the corner in which the "Black Stone" is fixed. This relates to the time when the Divine Command, *fasda' bi-mā tu'mar* ("So, proclaim publicly, O Prophet, what you are being commanded") had not yet been revealed. The polytheists at that time were hearing the words, *Fa-bi-ayyi ālāā'i Rabbi-kumā tukadhdhi-bān*, being recited by him in the Prayer." This shows that this Sūrah had been sent down even before Sūrah Al-Hijr.

Al-Bazzār, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Al-Mundhir, Dāraqūṭnī (in *Al-Afrād*), Ibn Mardūyah and Ibn Al-Khaṭīb (in *Al-Tarīkh*) have related, on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar, that once the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) recited Sūrah Ar-Raḥmān himself, or heard it recited before him: then he said to the people: How is it that I am not hearing from you the kind of good answer that the jinn had given to their Lord? When the people asked what it was he replied: "As I recited the Divine Words, *Fa-bi-ayyi ālāā'i Rabbi-kumā tukadhdhibān*, the jinn in response would repeat the words: *Lā bi-shai'in min ni'mati Rabbi-nā nukadhdhib*: "We do not deny any of our Lord's blessings."

A similar theme has been related by Tirmidhī, Ḥākim and Ḥāfiẓ Abū Bakr al-Bazzār from Ḥaḍrat Jābir bin 'Abdullah. Their tradition contains these words:

“When the people kept silent on hearing the Sūrah Ar-Raḥmān, the Holy Prophet said : ‘I recited this very Sūrah before the jinn in the night when they had gathered together to hear the Qur’ān. They responded to it better than you have. As I recited the Divine Words, *Fa-bi-ayyi ālāā’i Rabbi-kumā tukadhdhibān* (“O jinn and men, which blessings of your Lord will you deny ?”) they would respond to it, saying : O our Lord, we do not deny any of your blessings : Praise is for You alone !”

This tradition indicates that on the occasion of the incident that has been related in Sūrah Al-Aḥqāf (vv. 29-32) of the jinn’s hearing the Qur’ān from the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) he was reciting Sūrah Ar-Raḥmān in the Prayer. This happened in the 10th year of the Prophethood when the Holy Prophet had halted at Nakhlah on his way back from Tā’if. Although in some other traditions it has been reported that the Holy Prophet did not know then that the jinn were hearing him recite the Qur’ān, but afterwards Allah had informed him of this, it is not unreasonable to suppose that just as Allah had informed him of the jinn’s hearing the Qur’ān so also Allah Himself might have told him as to what answer they were giving on hearing Sūrah Ar-Raḥmān.

These traditions only indicate that Sūrah Ar-Raḥmān had been revealed even before Sūrahs Al-Hijr and Al-Aḥqāf. Besides, we come across another tradition which shows that it is one of those Sūrahs which were the earliest Revelations at Makkah. Ibn Ishāq has related this on the authority of Ḥaḍrat ‘Urwah bin Zubair : The Companions one day said to one another : “The Quraish have never heard any one recite the Qur’ān publicly to them, and who would read out the Divine Word aloud to them ? Ḥaḍrat ‘Abdullah bin Mas‘ūd said that he would. The Companions expressed the

apprehension that he might be subjected to a harsh treatment and said that it should better be done by a person of a powerful family, who would protect him if the Quraish tried to subject him to violence. Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah said : 'Let me alone : my Protector is Allah.' So early next morning he went to the Ka'bah while the Quraish chiefs were sitting in their respective conferences. Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah arrived at the *Maqām* (station of Abraham) and began to recite Sūrah Ar-Rahmān raising his voice as he did so. The Quraish first tried for a while to understand what he was saying. Then, when they realized that it was the Word that Muḥammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was representing as the Word of God, they fell upon him and began to hit him in the face. But Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah was not deterred : he continued to receive the slaps and to read the Qur'ān as long as he could. At last, when he returned with a swollen face, the Companions said that they apprehended the same. He replied : 'God's enemies were never so light for me as they were today. If you say I'll recite the Qur'ān to them again tomorrow.' They all said, 'No, you have done enough ; you have made them listen to what they didn't want to hear.''' (Ibn Hishām, vol. 1, p. 336).

Theme and Subject Matter

This is the only Sūrah of the Qur'ān in which besides men the jinn also, who are the other creation of the earth endowed with freedom of will and action, have been directly addressed, and both men and jinn have been made to realize the wonders of Allah's power, His countless blessings, their own helplessness and accountability before Him, and have been warned of the evil consequences of His disobedience and made aware of the best results of His obedience. Although at several other places in the Qur'ān there are clear pointers to show

that like the men the jinn too are a creation who have been endowed with freedom of will and action and are accountable, who have been granted the freedom of belief and unbelief, of obedience and disobedience, and among them too there are the believers and the unbelievers, the obedient and the rebellious, as among human beings, and among them too there exist such groups as have believed in the Prophets sent by God and in the Divine Books, this Sūrah clearly points out that the message of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and the Qur'ān is meant both for men and for jinn and that his Prophethood is not restricted to human beings alone.

Although in the beginning of the Sūrah the address is directed only to human beings, for to them only belongs the vicegerency of the earth, among them only have the Messengers of Allah been raised, and in their tongues only have the Divine Books been revealed, yet from verse 13 onward both the men and the jinn have been addressed and one and the same invitation has been extended to both.

The themes of the Sūrah have been couched in brief sentences in a specific sequence :

In vv. 1-4 it has been stated that the teaching of the Qur'ān is from Allah Almighty and it is the very demand of His mercy that He should provide guidance to mankind through this teaching, for it is He Who has created man as a rational and intelligent being.

In vv. 5-6 it has been said that the whole system of the Universe is functioning under Allah's Sovereignty and everything in the earth and heavens is subject to His Command alone.

In vv. 7-9 another important truth that has been expressed is that Allah has established the entire system

of the Universe precisely and equitably on justice, and the nature of this system requires that those who dwell in it also should adhere to justice within the bounds of their authority and should not disturb the balance.

In vv. 10-25 besides mentioning the wonders and excellences of Allah's might, references have been made to His those bounties from which the jinn and men are deriving benefit.

In vv. 26-30 both the men and the jinn have been reminded of the truths that in this Universe no one except One God is immortal and imperishable, and there is none, from the lowest to the highest, who does not stand in deed of God for his survival and other requirements. Whatever is happening here, from the earth to the heavens, is happening under His administration and control.

In vv. 31-36 both the groups have been warned that the time is fast approaching when they will be called to account, which they will not be able to avoid, for God's Kingdom is encircling them from every side; it is not in their power to flee it; if they are involved in the misunderstanding that they can, they may try to do so.

In vv. 37-38 it has been said that this accountability will be held on the Day of Resurrection.

In vv. 39-45 the evil end of the guilty ones, from among men and jinn, who have been disobeying Allah in the world has been mentioned.

And from verse 46 to the end of the Sūrah mention has been made of those rewards and blessings which will be granted to the righteous men and jinn who have led pious lives in the world and lived with a clear understanding that they will have to appear before their Lord one day and render an account of their deeds and actions.

This whole discourse is couched in oratorical language. It is a spirited and eloquent address in the course of which after mentioning each of the wonders of Allah's great power, and each of the blessings bestowed by Him, and each of the manifestations of His Sovereignty and dominion, and each of the details of His punishment and rewards, the jinn and men have been over and over again questioned : "Which then of the bounties and favours of your Lord will you deny ?" Below we shall explain that *ālāī*' is a word with many shades of meaning, which has been used in different senses at different places in this discourse, and this question to the jinn and men bears its own special meaning at every place according to the context.



الرَّحْمَنِ ۝ عَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ ۝ خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ ۝ عَلَّمَهُ الْبَيَانَ ۝ الشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ
 بِحُسْبَانٍ ۝ وَالنَّجْمُ وَالشَّجَرُ يَسْجُدْنَ ۝ وَالسَّمَاءَ رَفَعَهَا وَوَضَعَ الْمِيزَانَ ۝
 أَلَّا تَطْغَوْا فِي الْمِيزَانِ ۝ وَأَقِيمُوا الْوَزْنَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا تُخْسِرُوا الْمِيزَانَ ۝ وَ
 الْأَرْضَ وَضَعَهَا لِلْأَنْعَامِ ۝ فِيهَا فَاكِهَةٌ ۝ وَالنَّخْلُ ذَاتُ الْأَكْمَامِ ۝ وَالْحَبُّ
 ذُو الْعَصْفِ ۝ وَالرِّيحَانَ ۝ فَبِأَيِّ آيَةٍ رَبِّكُمَا تُكذِّبِينَ ۝ خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ

LV

AR-RAHMĀN

الرَّحْمَنِ

Verses : 78

Revealed at Makkah

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

The most Merciful (God) has taught this Qur'an.¹ He 1-4
 it is Who created man² and taught him speech.³

The sun and the moon adhere to a schedule,⁴ and 5-9
 the stars⁵ and the trees, all bow down in worship.⁶ He
 raised the heaven high and set the balance.⁷ Therefore,
 do not upset the balance : weigh with equity and do
 not give short weight.⁸

He⁹ set the earth for all creatures,¹⁰ with all kinds 10-13
 of tasty fruits in abundance and palm-trees with sheath-
 ed fruit, and a variety of corn with husk as well as
 grain.¹¹ So, O jinn and men, which of your Lord's
 blessings¹² will you deny?¹³

1. That is, the teaching of this Qur'ān is not the production of a man's mind but its Teacher is the Merciful God Himself. Here, there was no need to tell as to whom Allah had imparted this Qur'ānic teaching, for the people were hearing it from the tongue of the Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings). Therefore, the situation by itself made it evident that the teaching had been imparted to Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings).

To begin the discourse with this sentence is meant, first of all, to tell that the Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) himself is not its author, but its Teacher is Allah Almighty. Furthermore, there is another object also to which the word *Rahmān* (Merciful) is pointing. If the purpose was only to say that the teaching is from Allah, and not the production of the Prophet's mind, there was no need to use an attribute of Allah instead of His proper name, and for that purpose any attribute from among the Divine attributes could have been adopted. But when, instead of saying that Allah, or the Creator, or the Providence, has taught this, it was said: 'The Merciful (*Ar-Rahmān*) has taught this Qur'ān,' it by itself gave the meaning that the revelation of the Qur'ān for the guidance of mankind was nothing but Allah's mercy and grace. As He is most kind and Merciful to His creation, He did not like that He should leave them wandering in the darkness, and His mercy demanded that He should send down this Qur'ān to bless them with the knowledge on which depends their right guidance and conduct in the world and their success and well-being in the Hereafter."

2. In other words, as Allah is the Creator of man, and it is the Creator's responsibility to provide guidance to His creation and show it the way by following which it may fulfil the object of its creation, the revelation of this Qur'ānic teaching from Allah is not only the demand of Allah's mercifulness but also the necessary and natural demand of His being the Creator. Who else would provide guidance to the creation if not the Creator? And if the Creator did not provide guidance, who else could? And what greater defect could there be for a creator that he should not teach his creation the method of fulfilling the object for which it has been created? Thus, in fact, the arrangement and provision of the teaching for man by Allah is not anything strange; it would be strange if no such arrangement had been made at all. Allah has not just left alone whatever He has created in the Universe, but has given it the

most appropriate structure by which it may play its role in the system of nature and has taught it the method of playing that role effectively and successfully. Thus, each single hair and each single cell of man's own body has been born with the knowledge of how it has to carry out the task in the human body for which it has been created. Then, after all how could man himself remain deprived and independent of his Creator's teaching and guidance? This theme has been presented in the Qur'ān at different places in different ways. In Sūrah Al-Lail : 12, it has been said : "Indeed, it is for Us to tell the Way"; in Sūrah An-Nahl : 9, it is said : "Allah has taken upon Himself to show the Right Way, when there exist crooked ways too." In Sūrah Ṭā Hā (vv. 47-50) it has been stated that when the Pharaoh heard the prophetic message from the Prophet Moses and asked who was his Lord who had sent him as a Messenger to him, the Prophet replied : "Our Lord is He Who has given a distinctive form to everything and then guided it aright." That is, He has taught it the method by which it could carry out and fulfil the object of its creation in the system of existence. This is the reasoning by which an unbiased mind is satisfied that the coming of the Prophets and the Books from Allah for the instruction of man is the very demand of nature.

3. One meaning of the word *bayān*, as used in the original, is the expression of one's own mind, i.e. speaking and expressing one's thoughts and intentions. Its other meaning is to make distinction between things, which here signifies the distinction between good and evil, virtue and vice. According to these two meanings this brief sentence completes the above reasoning. Speech is the distinctive quality which distinguishes man from the animals and other earthly creatures. It is not merely the power of speech, but there are working behind it the faculties of reasoning and intellect, understanding and discernment, will and judgement, and other mental powers without which man's power of speech could not operate at all. Therefore, speech is in fact an express symbol of man's being an intelligent being who has been endowed with freedom and authority, and when Allah has blessed man with this distinctive quality, evidently the nature of instruction for him also cannot be the same as would be suitable for the guidance of other creatures. Likewise, another distinctive quality of vital importance in man is that Allah has placed in him moral sense by virtue of which he can naturally distinguish between good and evil, truth and falsehood, justice and injustice, right and wrong, and this intuition and sense

does not leave him even when he degrades himself to the lowest state of error and ignorance. The inevitable demand of these two distinctive qualities is that the method of instruction for man's conscious and voluntary life should be different from the innate, natural mode of instruction under which the fish has been taught to swim, the bird to fly, and the eye in the human body itself to wink and see, the ear to hear and the stomach to digest. Man in this sphere of his life himself recognizes the means like the teacher, the book, the school, the verbal and written instruction and reasoning and discussion as the modes of instruction, and does not regard the innate knowledge and intelligence as enough. Why should it then appear strange that for fulfilling the responsibility that falls upon the Creator of educating man, He has made the Messenger and the Book the means of his education and instruction? The mode of education has to suit the nature of the creation. And very rationally so. The "Qur'ān" alone can be the means of educating the creation that has been taught "*bayān*" (speech) and not any other means that might suit the creatures which have not been taught the speech.

4. That is, "It is a powerful law and unalterable system that binds the great planets together. Man is able to calculate and measure time, days, dates, and crops and seasons only because no change takes place in the rule that has been laid down for the rising and setting of the sun and of its passing through different stages. The innumerable creatures found on the earth are staying alive only because the sun and the moon have been accurately and precisely placed at particular distances from the earth and any increase or decrease in this distance is made in the right measure, in a particular order; otherwise if their distance from the earth increased or decreased haphazardly, no one could possibly survive here. Likewise, the perfect relationship and harmony that has been established between the movements of the moon round the earth and the sun, has made the moon a universal calendar, which announces the lunar date every night to the whole world with perfect regularity.

5. The word used in the original is *an-najm*, the well-known meaning of which is the star; but in the Arabic lexicon this word is also used for the plants and creepers which do not have a stem, e.g. vegetable, melons, water melons, etc. The commentators have disputed the sense in which this word has been used here. Ibn 'Abbās, Sa'id bin Jubair, Suddī, and Sufyān Thaurī have taken it in the meaning of stemless vegetation, for just after it the word *ash-shajar*

(the tree) has been used and this meaning is more relevant to it. On the contrary, Mujāhid, Qatādah and Ḥasan Baṣri have expressed the opinion that *an-najm* here does not imply the plants of the earth, but the stars of the sky, for this is its well-known meaning. On hearing this word, the mind first turns to this very meaning, and the mention of the sun and the moon has been followed by the stars very naturally and relevantly. Though the majority of the commentators and translators have preferred the first meaning, and it cannot be held wrong either, we hold Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr's this opinion as sound that in view of both the language and the subject-matter the second meaning seems to be preferable. At another place in the Qur'ān (Al-Ḥajj : 18) also mention has been made of the stars and the trees prostrating themselves, and there the word *nujūm* (pl. of *najm*) cannot be taken in any other meaning than of the stars. The words of the verse are : *Alam tara annallāha yasjudu li-hū man fis-smāwāt-i wa man fil-arḍi wash-shamsu wal-qamaru wal-nujūmu wal-jibālu wash-shajaru wad-dawābu wa kathīr-um-min-annāsi...* (Al-Ḥajj : 18). In this verse *nujūm* (stars) have been mentioned along with *shams* (sun) and *qamar* (moon), and *shajar* (trees) along with mountains and animals and it has been said that they all bow down to Allah.

6. That is, "The stars of the heavens and the trees of the earth, all are subject to Allah's Command and obedient to His Law. They cannot exceed the rule that has been set for them."

What is meant to be impressed in these two verses is that the whole system of the Universe has been created by Allah and is functioning in His obedience. Nothing from the earth to the heavens is independent, nor functioning under another's godhead, nor has anyone any share in God's Kingdom, nor has anyone the position that it should be made a deity. All are servants and slaves : the Master is One Almighty Lord alone. Hence, *Tauḥīd* alone is the Truth, which is being taught by this Qur'ān. Apart from this, any one who is involved in polytheism and denial of God is, in fact, at war with the whole system of the Universe.

7. Almost all the commentators have interpreted *mīzān* (balance) to mean justice, and "...set the balance" to imply that Allah has established the entire system of the Universe on justice. Had there been no harmony and balance and justice established among the countless stars and planets moving in space, and the mighty forces working in this Universe, and the innumerable creatures and things found here, this life on earth would not have func-

tioned even for a moment. Look at the creatures existing in the air and water and on land for millions and millions of years on this earth. They continue to exist only because full justice and balance has been established in the means and factors conducive to life; in case there occurs a slight imbalance of any kind, every trace of life would become extinct.

8. That is, "As you are living in a balanced Universe, whose entire system has been established on justice, you also should adhere to justice. For if you act unjustly within the sphere in which you have been given authority, and fail to render the rights of others, you would indeed be rebelling against the nature of the Universe; for the nature of this Universe does not admit of injustice and perversion and violation of the rights. Not to speak of a major injustice, even if a person fraudulently deprives another of an ounce of something, by giving him short measure, he disturbs the balance of the entire Universe.—This is the second important part of the Qur'ānic teaching that has been presented in these three verses. The first teaching is *Tauhīd* and the second is justice. Thus, in a few brief sentences the people have been told what teaching has been brought by the Qur'ān which the Merciful God has sent for the guidance of man."

9. Now from here to verse 25, mention is being made of the blessing and bounties of God and of those manifestations of His might by which both man and jinn are benefiting, and whose natural and moral demand is that although they have the option to believe or not to believe, they should adopt the way of their Lord's service and obedience willingly by their own free choice.

10. The word *wada'* in the original means to compose, make, prepare, keep, and inscribe, and *anām* the creatures, which includes man and all other living things. According to Ibn 'Abbās, *anām* includes every thing which has a soul. Mujāhid takes it in the meaning of the living creatures. Qatādah, Ibn Zaid and Sha'bi say that all living things are *anām*. Hasan Baṣri says that both the men and the jinn are included in its meaning. The same meanings have been given by the lexicographers. This shows that the people who deduce from this verse the command of making land the state property, are in error. This is an ugly attempt to introduce alien theories forcibly into the Qur'ān which are neither supported by the words of the verse nor by the context. *Anām* is not used only for human society but it includes all other creatures of the earth as well, and setting

of the earth for *anām* does not mean that it should be the common property of all. Besides, the context here also does not indicate that the object of the verse is to state some economic principle. This, in fact, is meant to impress the truth that Allah made and prepared this earth in such a way that it became a fit abode for every kind of living being. It has not become so by itself, but by the will and power of the Creator. He in His wisdom placed it at a suitable distance and created such conditions on it which made it possible for the different species to exist and stay alive on it. (For explanation, see E.N.'s 73, 74 of An-Naml, E.N.'s 29, 32 of Yā Sīn, E.N.'s 90, 91 of Al-Mu'min, E.N.'s 11 to 13 of Hā Mim As-Sajdah, E.N.'s 7 to 10 of Az-Zukhruf, E.N. 7 of Al-Jāthiyah).

11. That is, grain for men and husk for the animals.

12. The word *ālāā'* in the refrain as repeated over and over again in the subsequent verses has been translated differently at different places. Therefore, it would be useful to understand at the outset how vast this word is in meaning and what different shades of meaning it contains.

The lexicographers and commentators generally have explained *ālāā'* to mean "blessings" and "bounties". The translators also have given this same meaning of this word, and the same has been reported from Ibn 'Abbās, Qatādah and Ḥasan Baṣrī. The major argument that supports this meaning is the Holy Prophet's own statement that the jinn on hearing this verse being recited would respond to it, saying: *Lā bi-shai in-min-ni'matika Rabba-nā nukadhhib*: "O our Lord, we do not deny any of Your blessings." Therefore, we do not subscribe to the view of some present-day scholars, who say that *ālāā'* is never used in the meaning of the blessing.

Another meaning of this word is power and wonders of power, or excellent manifestations of power. Ibn Jarīr Ṭabari has reported that Ibn Zaid took the words *fa-bi-ayyi ālāā'i Rabbi-kumā* in the meaning of *fa-bi-ayyi qudrat-Allah*. Ibn Jarīr himself has taken *ālāā'* in the meaning of power and might in his commentary of vv. 37-38. Imām Rāzī also has made this observation in his commentary of vv. 14-16: "These verses do not describe the blessings but the powers of Allah, and in the commentary of vv. 22-23, this: "These describe the wonders of power and not the blessings."

Its third meaning is virtue, praiseworthy qualities, and perfections. Though this meaning has not been mentioned by the lexicographers and commentators, this word has often been used in this meaning in Arabic poetry. (Examples omitted).

Thus, we have taken this word in its vastest meaning and translated it suitably keeping in view the context in which it occurs. However, at some places the word *âlââ'* may have several senses in one and the same place, but due to limitations of translation we have had to adopt only one meaning. For example, in this verse after making mention of the creation of the earth and of making the best arrangements for the supply of provisions to the creatures, it has been said: "Which of the *âlââ'* of your Lord will you deny?" Here, *âlââ'* has not been used in the meaning of the blessings only but also in the meaning of the manifestations of Allah Almighty's power and His praiseworthy attributes. It is a wonder of His might that He fashioned this earth in such a marvellous manner that countless species of creatures live here and an endless variety of fruits and grain are grown on it. And it is due to His praiseworthy qualities that He not only created these creatures but also made arrangements for their sustenance and the supply of provisions for them; and the arrangements also so perfect that their food is not only nutritious but also pleasing to the taste and sight. In this connection, reference has been made to only one excellence of Allah Almighty's workmanship for the sake of example, viz., the creation of the date-palm fruit in sheaths. Keeping this one example in view one may consider what excellences of art have been devised and shown in the packing of banana, pomegranates, orange, coconut and other fruits, and how each of the different sorts of the grains and pulses which we so thoughtlessly cook and eat, are produced finely packed and covered in ears and pods and clusters.

13. "Denying" implies the several attitudes that the people adopt in respect of Allah Almighty's blessings and manifestations of His might and His praiseworthy attributes. For example, some people do not at all admit that the Creator of all things is Allah Almighty. They think that all this is a mere by-product of the matter, or an accidental happening, which is un-related with any wisdom and skill and workmanship. This is open denial.

Some other people do admit that the Creator of these things is Allah, but regard others beside Him also as associates in Godhead: they render thanks to others for His blessings; they adore others

although they eat His provisions. This is another form of denial. Obviously, it would be the height of ingratitude if a person while admitting that a certain person had done him a favour rendered thanks to another, who had not in fact done him that favour, for this act of his would be an express proof that he regarded the other person as his benefactor whom he was rendering the thanks.

There are still others who acknowledge Allah alone as the Creator of all things and the Bestower of all blessings, but do not admit that they should obey the Commands of their Creator and Sustainer and follow His injunctions. This is another form of ingratitude and denial of the blessings, for the person who behaves so denies the right of the Bestower of the blessing although he acknowledges the blessing itself.

Some other people neither disavow the blessing nor deny the right of the Bestower of the blessing, but in practice there is no appreciable difference between their conduct and the conduct of a denier. This is not verbal denial but denial in practice.

صَلَّالٍ كَالْفَخَّارِ ۝ وَخَلَقَ الْجَانَّ مِنْ مَّارِجٍ مِنْ تَارٍ ۝ فَبِأَيِّ آيَةِ رَبِّكُمَا
 تُكذِّبِينَ ۝ رَبُّ الشَّرْقَيْنِ وَرَبُّ الْمَغْرِبَيْنِ ۝ فَبِأَيِّ آيَةِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكذِّبِينَ ۝
 مَرَجَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ يَلْتَقِيانِ ۝ بَيْنَهُمَا بَرْزَخٌ لَا يَبْغِيانِ ۝ فَبِأَيِّ آيَةِ رَبِّكُمَا
 تُكذِّبِينَ ۝ يَخْرُجُ مِنْهُمَا اللُّؤْلُؤُ وَالْمَرْجَانُ ۝ فَبِأَيِّ آيَةِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكذِّبِينَ ۝ وَ
 لَهُ الْجَوَارِ الْمُنشَآتُ فِي الْبَحْرِ كَالْأَعْلَامِ ۝ فَبِأَيِّ آيَةِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكذِّبِينَ ۝ كُلُّ
 مَنْ عَلَيْهَا فَانٍ ۝ وَبَاقِيَ وَجْهَ رَبِّكَ ذُو الْجَلِّ وَالْإِكْرَامِ ۝ فَبِأَيِّ آيَةِ
 رَبِّكُمَا تُكذِّبِينَ ۝ يَسْأَلُهُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ هُوَ فِي شَأْنٍ ۝
 فَبِأَيِّ آيَةِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكذِّبِينَ ۝ سَنَفَعُ لَكُمْ آيَةَ الثَّقَلَيْنِ ۝ فَبِأَيِّ آيَةِ رَبِّكُمَا
 تُكذِّبِينَ ۝ يَمْشُرُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِنْ اسْتِطَعْتُمْ أَنْ تَتَفَدُّوا مِنْ أَقْطَارِ
 السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ فَانْفُدُوا ۝ لَا تَتَفَدُّونَ إِلَّا بِسُلْطَنِ ۝ فَبِأَيِّ آيَةِ رَبِّكُمَا
 تُكذِّبِينَ ۝ يُرْسِلُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَوَاطِئَ مِنْ تَارٍ ۝ وَنُحَاسٌ فَلَا تَنْتَصِرُونَ ۝ فَبِأَيِّ
 آيَةِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكذِّبِينَ ۝ فَإِذَا انشَقَّتِ السَّمَاءُ فَكَانَتْ وَرْدَةً كَالدِّهَانِ ۝ فَبِأَيِّ
 آيَةِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكذِّبِينَ ۝ فَيَوْمَئِذٍ لَا يُسْأَلُ عَنْ ذَنْبِهِ إِنْسٌ وَلَا جَانٌّ ۝ فَبِأَيِّ
 آيَةِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكذِّبِينَ ۝ يُعْرِفُ الْمُجْرِمُونَ بِسِيمِهِمْ فَيُؤْخَذُ بِالتَّوَاصِي وَ
 الْأَقْدَامِ ۝ فَبِأَيِّ آيَةِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكذِّبِينَ ۝ هَذِهِ جَهَنَّمُ الَّتِي يُكذِّبُ بِهَا
 الْمُجْرِمُونَ ۝ يَطُوفُونَ بَيْنَهَا وَبَيْنَ حَيْمِمْ إِن شَاءَ رَبِّي الْآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكذِّبِينَ ۝
 وَلَيْسَ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ نَجَّتِ ۝ فَبِأَيِّ آيَةِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكذِّبِينَ ۝ ذَوَاتَا
 أَذْنَانٍ ۝ فَبِأَيِّ آيَةِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكذِّبِينَ ۝ فِيهَا عَيْنٌ تُجْرِي ۝ فَبِأَيِّ آيَةِ
 رَبِّكُمَا تُكذِّبِينَ ۝ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ فَاكِهَةٍ زَوْجَانٌ ۝ فَبِأَيِّ آيَةِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكذِّبِينَ ۝

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He created man from dry, rotten clay like the potter's,¹⁴ and the jinn from the flame of fire.¹⁵ So, O jinn and men, which wonders of your Lord's power¹⁶ will you deny? 14-16

Both the Easts and both the Wests: He is the Lord and Sustainer of all.¹⁷ So, O jinn and men, which of your Lord's powers¹⁸ will you deny? 17-18

He let loose the two seas that they may meet together. Yet there stands between them a barrier which they do not transgress.¹⁹ So, O jinn and men, which manifestations of your Lord's power will you deny? From these seas come out pearls²⁰ and corals.²¹ So, O jinn and men, which excellences of your Lord's power will you deny?²² 19-23

And His are the ships²³ raised up high like mountains in the sea. So, O jinn and men, which of your Lord's bounties will you deny?²⁴ 24-25

All²⁵ that exists on the earth shall perish. Only your Lord, possessed of majesty and honour, shall endure for ever. So, O jinn and men, which of your Lord's excellences will you deny?²⁶ Whosoever is there in the earth and the heavens, implores Him for its needs. Every moment He is in a new (state of) glory.²⁷ So, O jinn and men, which of your Lord's glories will you deny?²⁸ 26-30

O you burdens of the earth,²⁹ We shall soon be free to call you to account.³⁰ (Then We shall see) which of your Lord's favours you deny.³¹ O company of jinn and men! If you have the power to escape across the bounds of the earth and the heavens, then escape! You shall not escape, for it requires great power.³² So, O jinn and men, which of your Lord's powers will you deny? (If you try to escape) a flame of fire and smoke³³ shall be let loose upon you, which you will not be able to withstand. O jinn and men, which of your Lord's powers will you deny? 31-36

- 37-38 Then (how will it be) when the heaven will burst and redden like red leather?³⁴ O jinn and men, which of your Lord's powers will you (then) deny?³⁵
- 39-45 On that Day no man and no jinn will need be asked concerning his sin.³⁶ Then (it will be seen) which of your Lord's favours you deny.³⁷ The culprits there shall be recognized by their faces and they shall be seized by their forelocks and by their feet and dragged. (Then) which of your Lord's powers will you deny? (At that time it will be said:) "This is the same Hell which the culprits were wont to deny." They will wander to and fro between the same Hell and the hot boiling water.³⁸ Then, which of your Lord's powers will you deny?³⁹
- 46-53 And for everyone who dreads to stand before his Lord⁴⁰ there are two gardens.⁴¹ O which of your Lord's blessings will you deny?⁴² Full of lush green branches. O which of your Lord's mercies will you deny? In both two springs of running water. O which of your Lord's blessings will you deny? In both there will be two kinds of every fruit.⁴³ O which of your Lord's blessings will you deny?

14. The order of the initial stages of the creation of man, as given at different places in the Qur'ān, seems to be as follows: (1) *Turāb*, i. e. earth or dust; (2) *ḥīn*, i.e. clay made by mixing water with earth; (3) *ḥīn-i-lāzib*: sticky clay, i.e. a clay which becomes sticky when left alone for a long time; (4) *ḥama'in masnūn*, i.e. clay with a stink in it; (5) *ṣalṣāl-im-min ḥama'in masnun kalfakhkār*, i.e. the rotten clay which when dried becomes like baked pottery; (6) *bashar*, i.e. the one who was made from this last form of the earth, in whom Allah breathed of His Spirit, to whom the angels were commanded to bow down, and from whose species his mate was created; (7) *thumma ja'ala nasla-hū min sulāla-tin-min-mā'in-mahīn*: "then spread his progeny by means of an extract of the nature of a despicable water", for which the word *nūṣṣah* has been used at other places.

For these stages one may look up the following verses of the Qur'ān in sequence : *ka-mathal-i Ādama khalāqa-hū min turāb* (Āl-Imrān : 59); *bad'a khalq-al-insān-i min ṭīn* (As-Sajdah : 7); *Innā khalāq-nā hum min ṭīn-il-lāzib* (Aṣ-Ṣāffāt : 11); the fourth and fifth stages have been described in the verse being explained, and the later stages in the following verses : *Inni Khāliq-un bashar an-min ṭīn. Fa-idhā sawwaitu-hū wa nofakhtu-ṣī-hi min-rūḥi fa-qa'ū-lahū sājidīn.* (Suād : 71-72); *khalāqa-kum min-nafs-in wāḥidatin wa khalāqa min-hā zauja-hā wa biththa min-humā rijāl-an kathīr-an wa nisā-an.* (An-Nisā' : 1); *thumma ja'ala nasla-hu min sulāla-tin-min māā'-im-mahīn.* (As-Sajdah : 8); *fa-innā khalāq-nā-kum min turāb-in thumma min nūṣa-tin.* (Al-Ḥajj : 5).

15. The words in the original are : *min-mārij-im-min-nār.* *Nār* signifies fire of a special nature and not the fire which is produced by burning wood or coal, and *mārij* means a pure, smokeless flame. The verse means that just as the first man was created out of earth, then passing through various stages of creation, the clay model adopted the shape of a living man of flesh and blood, and then his progeny spread by means of the sperm-drop, so was the first jinn created from a pure flame of fire, or a fire free of smoke, and then the species of jinn spread from his progeny. The position of the first jinn among the jinn is the same as of Adam (peace be upon him) among human beings. After taking the shape of a living man, the body of Adam and the human beings born of his progeny retained no relationship with the dust from which they were originally created. Though even now our body is entirely a compound of the earthly substances, these substances have taken the form of flesh and blood and after being made a living body it has become quite a different thing from a mere lump of clay. The same also is true of the jinn. Their being also is essentially fiery. But just as we are not a mere lump of earth, so also they are not a mere flame of fire.

This verse proves two things. First, that the jinn are not simply spirit, but are material beings of a special nature, but since they have been composed of pure fiery substances, they remain invisible to human beings who have been created of earthly substances. The same has been referred to in this verse : "Satan and his party see you from where you cannot see them." (Al-A'rāf : 27) Likewise, the jinn's being fast-moving, their adopting different shapes and forms easily and their penetrating into different places imperceptibly where things made of earthly substances cannot

penetrate, or if they do, their penetration becomes perceptible, all these things are possible and understandable only because they are essentially a fiery creation.

The other thing that we come to know from this verse is that the jinn are not only a creation of a wholly different nature from human beings, but the substance of their creation also is absolutely different from that of man, animal, vegetable and solid matter. This verse explicitly points out the error of the viewpoint of those people who regard the jinn as a kind of human beings. According to their interpretation, the meaning of creating man of the dust and the jinn of the fire is to describe the difference of the temperamental nature of the two kinds of the people: one kind of them are humble by nature, and they are men in the true sense, and the other kind of the people are wicked by nature and fiery in temper, who may better be called devils. This is, however, no commentary of the Qur'ān but its distortion. In E.N. 14 above we have shown in detail how the Qur'ān itself has fully described the meaning of creating man from the earth. After reading all these details, can a reasonable person understand that the object of all this is only to define the humility of the good men? Moreover, how can a sound-minded person understand that the meaning of creating man of rotten, dry clay and the jinn of the flame of pure fire is the difference of the separate moral characteristics of the two individuals or groups with different temperaments belonging to the same human species? (For further explanation, see E.N. 53 of Sūrah Adh-Dhāriyāt).

16. Here, in view of the context, it is more appropriate to translate *ālāā*' as "wonders of power", but in this the aspect of the blessing is also present. Just as it is a wonderful manifestation of Allah's power to have brought into existence marvellous creatures like man from the dust and the jinn from the flame of fire, so for both these creatures this is a great blessing also that Allah not only granted them a body but gave each such a structure and endowed each with such powers and capabilities that they became able to perform unique works in the world. Though we do not know much about the jinn, man is present before us. Had he been given the body of a fish or a bird or a monkey along with the human brain, he could not have with that body used the mental powers to any advantage. Then, is it not a supreme blessing of Allah that He blessed man with the most suitable body also, so that he may exploit the mental powers granted to him efficiently? Consider the hands, the

feet, the eyes, the ears, the tongue and the erect stature as against the intellect and reason, and the capabilities of workmanship and artistic skill, and one will feel that the Creator has provided a deep relationship and harmony between them without which the human body would have remained useless. Then, the same thing points out Allah's praiseworthy qualities too. How could the men and jinn of such quality and rank be brought into existence without knowledge, wisdom, mercy and a profound creative power? For such miracles of creation cannot be performed by accidents and automatic blind and deaf laws of nature.

17. "Both the Easts and both the Wests" may mean the two points of sunrise and the two points of sunset on the shortest day of winter and the longest day of summer as well as the easts and the wests of the two hemispheres of the earth. On the shortest day of winter the sun rises and sets making a small acute angle; on the contrary, on the longest day of summer it rises and sets making a wide obtuse angle. Between them its points of rising and setting go on shifting every day, for which at another place in the Qur'ān (Al-Ma'ārij : 40) the words *Rabbul-mushār'iq wal-maghārib* have been used. Likewise, at the time the sun rises in one hemisphere of the earth, it sets in the other hemisphere, thus producing two easts and two wests of the earth. There are several meanings of calling Allah Lord of both the Easts and both the Wests. Firstly, that it is by His Command that the system of the rising and setting of the sun and their changing pattern during the year is functioning. Second, that Allah alone is the Master and Ruler of the earth and the sun; had they their own separate lords, this regular system of the rising and setting of the sun on the earth could not have functioned and continued to function permanently. Third, that the Master and Sustainer of both the Easts and both the Wests is One Allah alone; to Him belong the creations living between them, He alone is nourishing them, and it is for their sustenance that He has established this wise system of the rising and setting of the sun on the earth.

18. Here also, although in view of the context, "power" seems to be a more conspicuous meaning of *alāā'*, yet, besides, the aspect of "blessing" and "praiseworthy qualities" also is present in it. It is a great blessing that Allah Almighty has prescribed the rule of the rising and setting of the sun, for by means of it the changes of the crops and seasons are regulated with which countless interests of the men and animals and vegetables are attached.

Likewise, it is Allah's mercy and providence and wisdom that He has made these arrangements by His power to meet the respective needs and requirements of the creatures He has created on the earth.

19. For explanation, see E.N. 68 of Sūrah Al-Furqān.

20. According to Ibn 'Abbās, Qatādah, Ibn Zaid and Daḥḥāk (may Allah bless them), *marjān* implies small pearls, but according to Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, this word is used for corals in Arabia.

21. Literally: "From both these seas come out..." The objectors say that pearls and corals come out only from salt waters. How is it then that they are stated to come out from both the sweet and salt waters? The answer is that the seas contain both the sweet and the salt waters; therefore, whether it is said that these things come out from the combination of both, or from both kinds of waters, it would be one and the same thing. And it may well be that further investigations might reveal that both these things originate in the sea at the place where springs of sweet water gush out from the sea bed; and in their birth and development combination of both kinds of the water plays its part. Near Baḥrain which has been famous for its pearl-fisheries for centuries, there exist springs of sweet water at the bottom of the Gulf.

22. Here also though the aspect of power in *ālāā'* is conspicuous, the aspect of the blessing and praiseworthy qualities also is not hidden. It is a blessing of God that these valuable things come out from the sea, and it is His Providence that for the satisfaction of the aesthetic taste of the creatures whom He had blessed with the taste for beauty and the love and longing for adornment, He created all sorts of these beautiful things in His world.

23. "His are the ships...": Ships became possible only by His power. It is He Who blessed man with the capability and skill that he may build ships for crossing the oceans; it is He Who created on the earth the material from which ships could be built; and it is He Who subjected water to the laws by which it became possible for the mountain-like ships to sail on the surface of the surging oceans.

24. Here, the aspect of the blessing and bounty is conspicuous in *ālāā'*, but the explanation given above shows that the aspect of power and good qualities also is present in it.

25. From here to verse 30, the jinn and the men have been informed of two realities:

First, "Neither you are immortal nor the provisions that you are enjoying in this world everlasting. Immortal and Everlasting is the Being of the High and Supreme God alone Whose greatness this Universe testifies, and by Whose grace and kindness you have been favoured with these bounties. Now, if some one among you behaves arrogantly, it would be due to his own meanness. If a foolish person assumes haughtiness in his tiny sphere of authority, or becomes god of a few helpless men who fall into his hand, this farce would not last long. A godhead that lasts for a mere score or two score years in a corner of the earth whose size in this limitless Universe is not even equal to a pea seed, and then becomes a legend of the past, is not something of which one may feel proud and arrogant."

The other important truth of which both these creations have been warned is: "None of those whom you have set up as deities and removers of hardships and fulfillers of needs, apart from Allah, whether they are angels or prophets or the moon and the sun, or some other creation, can fulfil any of your needs. These helpless creatures and things themselves stand in need of Allah's help for their needs and requirements. They themselves pray to Him for help; when they are not able to remove their own hardships, how will they remove your hardships? Whatever is happening in this limitless Universe, from the earth to the heavens, is happening under the Command of One God alone. No one else has any share in His Godhead; no one therefore can influence anyone else's destiny in any way."

26. Here, as the context itself shows, the word *ālā'* has been used in the sense of excellences and perfections. Whoever of the mortal creatures is involved in vanity and self-arrogance and struts about thinking that his false godhead is everlasting, disavows Lord of the world's glory and majesty by his conduct, if not by his tongue. His pride and arrogance by itself is a denial of Allah Almighty's greatness and glory. Whatever claim he may make to an excellence by his tongue, or arrogate to himself such an excellence, it is indeed a disavowal of the rank and station of the real Possessor of excellences and perfections.

27. That is, "He is continuously and endlessly functioning in this Universe and creating countless new things with new and yet new forms and designs and qualities. He is giving death to one and life to another, exalting one and debasing another, causing one to recover and another to remain ill, rescuing a drowning one and

drowning a floating one. He is providing sustenance to countless creatures in a variety of ways, His world never stays in the same state : it is changing every moment and its Creator arranges it in a new state and fashion every time, which is different from every previous form and fashion and state."

28. Here, *ālāā'* seems to have been used in the sense of qualities and glories. Every person who commits polytheism of any kind, in fact, disavows one or the other of Allah's attributes. A person's saying that such and such a saint has removed his disease, in fact, amounts to saying that Allah is not the Remover of disease and Restorer of health but the saint. Another one's saying that such and such a holy one has got him a job, in fact, amounts to saying that Allah is not the Sustainer and Lord but the particular holy person. Still another one's saying that his prayer has been answered at a particular shrine, in fact, amounts to saying that the command governing the world is not Allah's but the shrine's. In short, every polytheistic belief and utterance, in the final analysis, leads up to the disavowal of the Divine attributes. Polytheism is nothing but that one should ascribe the Divine attributes of being All-Hearing and All-Seeing, Almighty and All-Powerful, etc., to others than Allah, and should deny that Allah alone is the Possessor of all these attributes.

29. *Thaqalān* is derived from *thiqal*, which means a burden, and *thaqal* is the burden loaded on a conveyance. *Thaqilān* (dual) therefore would mean : "two loaded burdens". Here this word refers to the jinn and men; who are both loaded on the earth. As the addressees here are those jinn and men who have turned away from the service and obedience of their Lord and Sustainer, they have been addressed as : "O burdens of the earth." In other words, the Creator is warning these two unworthy groups of His creation, saying : "O you who have become a burden for My earth, I am soon going to take you to task."

30. This does not mean that Allah at this time is too busy to call the disobedient servants to account, but it means that Allah has arranged a special time-table according to which He will first bring into existence generation after generation of the jinn and men in the world till an appointed time, and will provide them with an opportunity to work in this examination centre of the world; then at a specific Hour the examination will be suddenly brought to a close, and all the jinn and men living at that time will be given

death simultaneously. Then at another time which is preordained with Allah for calling the jinn and men to account, all the former and the latter generations of both the species will be resurrected and mustered at one and the same time. In view of this time-table the two species have been warned, as if to say : "We are yet busy with the work of the first period, and the time for the second period has not yet come, not to speak of embarking on the work of the third period. But you may rest assured. The time is fast approaching when We shall be free to take you to task." This lack of leisure does not mean that Allah is too occupied with one kind of work to attend to another kind of work. But its nature is analogous to the occupation of a person who has set a time-table for different sorts of the works and in respect of a work whose time has not yet arrived according to the time-table, he may say that he at the moment is not free for it.

31. Here, *ālāʾ* can also be taken in the meaning of powers. In view of the context, each meaning seems to be appropriate in its own way. According to the first meaning, it would mean : "Today you are being ungrateful for Our blessings and are being treacherous and disloyal by adopting the different attitudes of disbelief, polytheism, atheism, sin and disobedience, but tomorrow when the time comes for accountability, We shall see which of Our blessings you prove to be the result of a mere accident, or the fruit of your own ability, or a manifestation of the kindness of a god or goddess or saint." In the second case, the meaning would be : "Today you are mocking the doctrine of Resurrection and the gathering together of all mankind and jinn on the Day of Judgement and the accountability and the Heaven and Hell, and are harbouring the misunderstanding that such things are not at all possible, but when We gather you together for accountability and all that you deny today will appear before you, then We shall see which of Our powers you deny."

32. "The earth and the heavens" : the Universe or the Kingdom of God. The verse means to impress this : "It is not in your power to escape Allah's grasp. When the time for the accountability of which you are being foretold comes, you will be seized and brought before God in any case wherever you may be. To go out of God's reach you will have to flee from the Universe of God for which you do not have the required power. If you feel that you have the power, then you may use that power if you so will."

33. The word *shuwāz*, as used in the original, means the pure, smokeless flame, and *nuhās* is the gross smoke without a flame. These two things, one after the other, will be let loose upon the men and jinn, when they try to escape the accountability of Allah.

34. This refers to the Day of Resurrection. Bursting of the heavens implies loosening of the discipline of the heavens, scattering of the celestial bodies, upsetting of the system of the heavens. And the meaning of "reddening like red leather" is that during that great upheaval anyone who looks up towards the sky, will feel as though the entire heavens were on fire.

35. That is, "Today you deem Resurrection impossible; you think Allah has no power to bring it about. But when it will have taken place and you see with your eyes all that you are being foretold, which of the powers of Allah will you then deny?"

36. This is being explained by the subsequent sentence: "The culprits there shall be recognized by their faces." It means that in that great assembly where all the former and the latter generations will have gathered together, there will be no need to ask as to who are the culprits, nor will any man or jinn need be asked whether he is a culprit or not. The dejected faces of the culprits, their terror-stricken eyes, their disturbed and alarmed countenances will themselves be enough to expose the secret that they are the culprits. When a crowd comprising both the guilty and the innocent people, is encircled by the police, the calm and tranquil of the innocent people and the bewildered and disturbed state of the guilty ones tell at one glance as to who in the crowd is the culprit and who is innocent. This general rule is in most cases belied in the world, because the worldly police do not enjoy the reputation of being fair and just, rather on many an occasion they have turned out to be more bothersome for the gentle and innocent people than for the culprits. Therefore, here it is possible that when encircled by the police the gentle and innocent people might become even more terror-stricken than the criminals, but in the Hereafter, when every noble person will have complete faith in the justice of Allah, bewilderment will afflict only those whose conscience will be conscious of their being the culprits themselves, and who on their very arrival in the Court of God will become certain of their doom, which they had regarded as impossible or doubtful in the world and so had been committing every heinous sin and crime.

37. The real basis of the crime according to the Qur'ān is that the servant who is benefiting by the blessings of his Sustainer, should harbour the misunderstanding that the blessings have been bestowed by no one, but have reached him of their own accord, or that the blessings are not the gift of God but the fruit of his own ability or good fortune, or that they are the gift of God, but God has no right on His servants, or that God Himself has not done him those favours but some other being has got these done him. These are the wrong concepts on account of which man becomes independent of God and being free from His obedience and service performs acts which He has forbidden, and avoids acts which He has enjoined. Seen in this light every crime and every sin is, in reality, a disavowal of the favours of Allah whether a person denies them by the word of mouth or not. But the person who, in fact, has no intention of the denial, but acknowledges the favours in the depths of his heart, commits an error occasionally because of human weakness, he shows repentance on it and tries to avoid it. This saves him from being included among the deniers. Apart from this, all other culprits are, in fact, beliers of Allah's blessings and deniers of His favours. That is why it has been said: "When you will have been seized as culprits, then We shall see as to which of Our favours you deny." In Sūrah Takāthur: 8 the same thing has been put thus: "On that Day you will certainly be called to account for the blessings you had been granted." That is, it will be asked: "Had We granted you these blessings or not? Then, what attitude did you adopt towards your Benefactor, and in what ways did you use His blessings?"

38. That is, "In Hell they will feel oppressed with thirst again and again, and will rush towards the springs of water, but will find only boiling water, which will not satisfy their thirst, and they will thus continue to wander to and fro between Hell and the springs for ever and ever."

39. That is, "Will you even at that time be able to deny that God can bring about Resurrection, can give you another life after death, can call you to account, and can also make this Hell in which you are suffering punishment today?"

40. "Who dreads...Lord": who fears God in whatever he does in the world, and dreads his accountability before Him in the Hereafter. Whoever holds this belief will inevitably avoid serving the lusts of his self, will avoid following every path blindly, will distinguish between the truth and falsehood, justice and injustice,

(Contd. on p. 325)

مُتَكِبِينَ عَلَى فُرُشٍ بَطَّأْنَهَا مِنْ إِسْتَبْرَقٍ وَجَنَّاتٍ جَنَّتَيْنِ دَاخِلَةٌ فِيهَا
 الْآءُ رَبِّكُمْ تُكَذِّبِينَ ۗ فِيهِنَّ قُصِرَتِ الطَّرْفُ لَمْ يَطْمِئْتُنَّ إِسْ قَبْلَهُمْ وَ
 لَا جَانٌّ ۗ فِيهَا الْآءُ رَبِّكُمْ تُكَذِّبِينَ ۗ كَأَنَّهُنَّ الْيَاقُوتُ وَالْمَرْجَانُ ۗ فِيهَا
 الْآءُ رَبِّكُمْ تُكَذِّبِينَ ۗ هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ ۗ فِيهَا الْآءُ رَبِّكُمْ
 تُكَذِّبِينَ ۗ وَ مِنْ دُونِهِمَا جَنَّتَيْنِ ۗ فِيهَا الْآءُ رَبِّكُمْ تُكَذِّبِينَ ۗ مُدَاهِمَاتِنِ ۗ
 فِيهَا الْآءُ رَبِّكُمْ تُكَذِّبِينَ ۗ فِيهِمَا عَيْنِينَ نَضَّاحَتَيْنِ ۗ فِيهَا الْآءُ رَبِّكُمْ
 تُكَذِّبِينَ ۗ فِيهِمَا فَاكِهَةٌ وَنَخْلٌ وَرُمَّانٌ ۗ فِيهَا الْآءُ رَبِّكُمْ تُكَذِّبِينَ ۗ
 فِيهِنَّ خَيْرَاتٌ حِسَانٌ ۗ فِيهَا الْآءُ رَبِّكُمْ تُكَذِّبِينَ ۗ حُورٌ مَقْصُورَاتٌ فِي
 الْخِيَامِ ۗ فِيهَا الْآءُ رَبِّكُمْ تُكَذِّبِينَ ۗ لَمْ يَطْمِئْتُنَّ إِسْ قَبْلَهُمْ وَلَا جَانٌّ ۗ
 فِيهَا الْآءُ رَبِّكُمْ تُكَذِّبِينَ ۗ مُتَكِبِينَ عَلَى رَفْرَفٍ خُضِرَ وَعَبَقَرِي حِسَانٍ ۗ
 فِيهَا الْآءُ رَبِّكُمْ تُكَذِّبِينَ ۗ تَبْرَكَ اسْمُ رَبِّكَ ذِي الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ ۗ

The dwellers of Paradise shall be reclining on carpets lined with thick silk,⁴⁴ and the branches of the gardens will be hanging down (on them) with fruit. O which of your Lord's blessings will you deny? Amidst these blessings will be those of bashful looks,⁴⁵ whom neither man nor jinn will have touched before them.⁴⁶ O which of your Lord's bounties will you deny? As beautiful as rubies and pearls. O which of your Lord's bounties will you deny?

Could the reward of goodness be anything but goodness?⁴⁷ Then, O jinn and men, which of your Lord's praiseworthy attributes will you deny?⁴⁸ And besides those two, there will be two other gardens.⁴⁹ O which of your Lord's bounties will you deny? Dark-green and well-watered.⁵⁰ O which of your Lord's blessings will you deny? In both two gushing springs. O which of your Lord's favours will you deny? In them plenty of fruit, and dates and pomegranates. O which of your Lord's blessings will you deny? Amidst these blessings chaste and beautiful wives. O which of your Lord's bounties will you deny? Houris kept in their tents.⁵¹ O which of your Lord's blessings will you deny? No man or jinn will have touched them before them. O which of your Lord's blessings will you deny? They will be reclining on green cushions and fine, rich carpets.⁵² O which of your Lord's bounties will you deny?

Full of blessings is the name of your Lord, Owner of Glory and Honour!

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pure and impure, and the lawful and the unlawful, and will not turn away deliberately from following the Commands of God. This is the real ground for the reward that is being mentioned below.

41. *Jannat* actually means a garden. At some places in the Qur'an the entire world in which the righteous people will be kept, has been called *Jannat*, as though the whole of it was a garden. And at others it has been said that they will have *Jannāt* (Gardens) under

which canals will be flowing. This means that that big Garden will comprise countless other gardens; and here precisely it has been stated that every pious man will be given two gardens in that big Garden, which will be particularly meant for him; it will have his own palaces in which he will live with his family and attendants like a king, and in it he will be provided with all that is being mentioned below.

42. From here till the end, the word *ālāā'* has been used both for the blessings and for the powers, and there is an aspect of the praiseworthy qualities too, in it. If we take the first meaning, the meaning of repeating the refrain in this context will be: "If you like to deny the blessings of Allah, you may do so. The righteous will certainly receive these blessings from their Lord." In the second case the meaning would be: "If you think it is impossible for Allah to create the Garden and bless His righteous servants with these bounties in it, you may think so. Allah certainly has the power to do this work and He will surely accomplish it." According to the third meaning, it means: "You think that after having created this big world Allah now doesn't bother whether a person behaves unjustly here or justly, works to promote the truth or falsehood, spreads evil or good: He will neither punish the oppressor nor redress the grievances of the oppressed, will neither appreciate good nor abhor evil. Then, as you think, He is helpless too. He can build the heavens and the earth but cannot prepare Hell for punishing the wicked and cannot make Heaven for rewarding the followers of the Truth. Thus, you may deny His praiseworthy attributes as you may, but tomorrow when He hurls the evildoers into Hell and blesses the worshippers of the Truth in Heaven, will you even then be able to deny His these attributes?"

43. This can have two meanings: (1) "The fruits of the two gardens will have their own special flavours and tastes. In one garden he will find one kind of the fruit clustering on its branches, and in the other, another kind." (2) "In each garden there will be two kinds of fruit; one kind of the familiar fruit known and tasted in the world, though much superior to that found in the world, and the other kind of the rare fruit never imagined and tasted before."

44. That is, "When their lining will be of such superior quality, you may imagine what will be the quality of the outer layer of the carpets."

45. This is the real character of the woman: she should neither be shameless nor immodest, but should have modesty in her looks.

That is why Allah while making a mention of women among the blessings of Paradise has first of all praised their modesty and chastity, and not their beauty and physical charms. Beautiful women can get together in mixed clubs and film studios and beauty contests where the select beautiful women only are admitted, but a person of low taste and mentality only can show any interest in them. No noble person can find any charm in the beauty that attracts every evil look and is ready to fall in every lap!

46. This means that in the worldly life whether a woman died a spinster, or as the wife of somebody, or died young, or as an old woman, in the Hereafter when all the righteous women enter Paradise, they will be made young and virgins; and any of the women who is made a life-partner of a righteous man, will not have been possessed by anyone before that husband, in Paradise.

This verse also shows that the righteous jinn too will enter Paradise like the righteous men. Men will have women from their own kind and the jinn their wives from their own kind; both the kinds will have their mates from their own particular kind. No person of one kind will be made a partner of a member of another kind with whom he cannot live as husband or wife naturally. The words of the verse: "...whom neither man nor jinn will have touched before them," do not mean that the women there will only be of human species and they will not have been touched by any man or jinn before their husbands, but its real meaning is: In Paradise there will be women of both the jinn and the human species; they all will be modest and untouched: neither a jinn female will have been touched by a jinn male before her husband in Paradise, nor a human female will have been touched by a human male before her husband in Paradise.

47. That is, "How, after all, is it possible that Allah should allow to go waste the sacrifices of those righteous servants and should deny them their rewards, who kept themselves subjected to restrictions throughout their lives for the sake of Allah, who avoided the unlawful and remained content with the lawful, who performed their duties faithfully and sincerely, rendered the rights of those to whom rights were due, and endured hardships against evil and upheld good?"

48. Obviously, the person who is a denier of Paradise and its rewards, actually denies many of Allah Almighty's praiseworthy attributes. Even if he believes in Allah, he holds a bad opinion about Him. In his view He is a perverse ruler in whose lawless

kingdom doing good is an exercise in futility. He is either blind and deaf and is, therefore, wholly unaware as to who in his kingdom is making sacrifices of life, wealth and labour for His sake; or He is un-appreciative and cannot distinguish between good and evil; or, as he seems to think, He is helpless and powerless: He may be very appreciative of the good but is unable to reward the doer of it. That is why it has been said: "When in the Hereafter good will be rewarded with good in front of your very eyes, will you even then disavow the praiseworthy attributes of your Lord?"

49. The word *dūn* as used in *min dūn-i-himā jannatān*, is employed in three different meanings in Arabic: (1) To be situated at a lower level than another thing; (2) to be inferior to something of better and nobler quality; and (3) to be over and above something else. On account of this difference in meaning, one probable meaning of these words is that every dweller of Paradise will be given two more gardens besides the two previously mentioned; another probable meaning is that these two gardens will be inferior in quality and rank to both the first mentioned gardens; that is, the first two gardens will either be situated at a higher level than these two, or the first two gardens will be of a superior kind and these two of an inferior kind as compared to them. If the first probability is adopted, it would mean that these two additional gardens also will be for those dwellers of Paradise, who have been mentioned above. And in case the second probability is adopted, the meaning would be that the first two gardens will be for "those nearest to Allah", and these two for "the people of the right hand." This second probability is strengthened by the two kinds of the righteous men as mentioned in *Sūrah Al-Wāqī'ah*. First, the foremost, who have also been called the "*muqarrabūn*"; second, the people of the right hand, who have also been entitled "*aṣḥāb al-maimanah*"; and for both these separate qualities of the two kinds of the gardens have been mentioned. Furthermore, this probability is also strengthened by the *Ḥadīth* which Abū Bakr has related on the authority of his father, *Ḥaḍrat Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī*. In this he says: The Holy Prophet said: "Two *jannats* (gardens) will be for the foremost among the righteous (or the *muqarrabīn*), in which the utensils and articles of decoration will be of gold, and two *jannats* for the followers (or the *aṣḥāb al-yamīn*), in which everything will be of silver." (*Fath al-Bārī, Kitāb al-Tafsīr*; *Sūrah Ar-Raḥmān*).

50. The word *madhāmmatān* has been used in praise of these

gardens. *Mudhāmmā* is such luxuriant vegetation which because of its extreme luxuriance assumes a darkish hue.

51. For the explanation of *hūr* see E.N.'s 28, 29 of Sūrah Aṣ-Ṣāffāt and E.N. 42 of Sūrah Ad-Dukhān. The tents probably will be similar to those pitched for the nobles and rich people in the public parks. Most probably the wives of the dwellers of Paradise will live with them in their palaces and in their parks there will be tents pitched here and there in which there will be the houris to entertain them. Our this presumption is based on this that in the foregoing verses beautiful and chaste wives have been mentioned; now, here, mention of the houris signifies that they will be a different kind of women from the wives. This presumption is further strengthened by the *Ḥadīth* which Ḥaḍrat Umm Salamah has reported. She says: "I asked: O Messenger of Allah, who are better; the women of the world or the houris? The Holy Prophet replied: The women of the world are superior to the houris in the same way as the outer layer of a garment is superior to its lining. I asked; On what grounds? He replied: On the ground that the women have offered their Prayers, observed their Fasts, and performed other devotions." (Ṭabarānī). This shows that the wives of the dwellers of Paradise will be the women who affirmed the faith in the world and left the world while they practised good and right. They will enter Paradise in consequence of their faith and good deeds, and will deserve the blessings of Paradise on merit. They would either become the wives of their previous husbands of their own free will and choice, if they too happened to be dwellers of Paradise, or Allah will wed them to some other dweller of Paradise, if the two would like to live together as husband and wife. As for the houris they will not be entitled to dwell in Paradise as a result of any righteous deed of their own, but Allah will create them as young, beautiful women and bestow them also as a blessing among the other blessings on the dwellers of Paradise so that they may enjoy their companionship. But they will not in any case be creatures of the kind of the jinn and fairies, for man cannot cohabit with a kind other than his own. Therefore, most probably these would be those innocent girls who died immature, and whose parents did not deserve Paradise so that they could be admitted to Paradise with them as the children of their righteous parents.

52. The word '*abqarī*' in the original is from '*abqar*', the capital city of the jinn in the legends of the pre-Islamic Arabia. It was on

that account that the Arabs called every fine and rare thing 'abqari as if it belonged to the fairyland and had no match in the material world. So much so that in their idiom the man who possessed extraordinary abilities and who performed wonderful works was also called 'abqari. The English word genius also is spoken in the same sense and is also derived from genii which is a synonym of jinn. That is why the word 'abqari has been used here to give an idea of the extraordinary exquisiteness of the provisions of Paradise to the Arabs.

LVI

AL-WĀQI'AH

الواقعه

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

LVI

AL-WĀQI'AH

الواقعه

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name from the word *al-wāqi'ah* of the very first verse.

Period of Revelation

According to the chronological order that Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās has given of the Sūrahs, first Sūrah Ṭā Hā was sent down, then Al-Wāqi'ah and then Ash-Shu'arā' (Suyūṭī : *Al-Itqān*). The same sequence has been reported from 'Ikrimah. (Baihaqī : *Dalā'il an-Nubuwwat*).

This is supported also by the story that Ibn Hishām has related from Ibn Ishāq about the affirmation

of the Faith by Ḥaḍrat 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him). It says that when Ḥaḍrat 'Umar entered his sister's house, Sūrah Ṭā Hā was being recited. Hearing his voice the people of the house hid the pages of the Qur'ān. Ḥaḍrat 'Umar first seized his brother-in-law and when his sister rose in defence of her husband, he hit her also and wounded her on the head. When 'Umar saw blood on his sister, he was sorry for what he had done, and said to her: "Show me the manuscript that you have concealed so that I may see what it contains." The sister said: "You are unclean because of your polytheism: *wa anna-hū lā yamassu-hā ill-at-tāhir*: Only a clean person can touch it." So, Ḥaḍrat 'Umar rose and washed himself, and then took up the manuscript to read it. This shows that Sūrah Al-Wāqī'ah had been sent down by that time for it contains the verse: *Lā yamassu-hū ill-al-muṭahharūn*; and it has been established historically that Ḥaḍrat 'Umar embraced Islam after the first migration to Ḥabash, in the fifth year of the Prophethood.

Theme and Subject Matter

Its theme is the Hereafter, *Tauhīd* and refutation of the Makkan disbelievers' suspicions about the Qur'ān. What they regarded as utterly incredible was that Resurrection would ever take place, when the entire system of the earth and heavens would be upset, and when all the dead would be resurrected and called to account, after which the righteous would be admitted to Paradise and the wicked cast into Hell. They regarded all this as imaginary, which could not possibly happen in actual fact. In answer to this, it was said: "When the inevitable event will take place, there will be none to belie its happening, nor will anyone have the power to avert it, nor prove it to be an unreal happening. At that time all peoples will be divided into three classes:

(1) The foremost in rank and position ; (2) the common righteous people ; and (3) those who denied the Hereafter and persisted in disbelief and polytheism and major sins till the last." How these three classes of the people will be rewarded and punished has been described in detail in vv. 7-56.

Then, in vv. 57-74 arguments have been given, one after the other, to prove the truth of the two basic doctrines of Islam, which the disbelievers were refusing to accept, viz. the doctrines of *Tauhīd* and the Hereafter. In these arguments, apart from every thing else that exists in the earth and heavens, man's attention has been drawn to his own body and to the food that he eats and to the water that he drinks and to the fire on which he cooks his food, and he has been invited to ponder the question : What right do you have to behave independently of, or serve any other than, the God Whose creative power has brought you into being, and Whose provisions sustain you ? And how can you entertain the idea that after having once brought you into existence He has become so helpless and powerless that He cannot recreate you once again even if he wills to ?

Then, in vv. 75-82 their suspicions in respect of the Qur'ān have been refuted and they have been made to realize how fortunate they are that instead of deriving any benefit from the great blessing that the Qur'ān is, they are treating it with scant attention and have set only this share of theirs in it that they deny it. If one seriously considers this matchless argument that has been presented in two brief sentences about the truth of the Qur'ān, one will find in it the same kind of firm and stable system as exists among the stars and planets of the Universe, and the same is the proof of the fact that its Author is the same Being Who has created the Universe. Then the disbelievers have been told that this Book is inscribed in that Writ of Destiny which is

beyond the reach of the creatures, as if to say: "You think it is brought down by the devils to Muḥammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), whereas none but the pure angels has any access to the means by which it reaches Muḥammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) from the well-guarded Tablet."

In conclusion, man has been warned, as if to say: "You may brag and boast as you like and may shut your eyes to the truths in your arrogance of independence, but death is enough to open your eyes. At death you become helpless: you cannot save your own parents; you cannot save your children; you cannot save your religious guides and beloved leaders. They all die in front of your very eyes while you look on helplessly. If there is no supreme power ruling over you, and your this assumption is correct that you are all in all in the world, and there is no God, then why don't you restore to the dying person his soul? Just as you are helpless in this, so it is also beyond your power to stop Allah from calling the people to account and mete out rewards and punishments to them. You may or may not believe it, but every dying person will surely see his own end after death. If he belongs to those nearest to God, he will see the good end meant for them; if he be from among the righteous, he will see the end prepared for the righteous; and if he be from among the deniers of the truth, he will see the end destined for the criminals.



إِذَا وَقَعَتِ الْوَاقِعَةُ ۗ لَيْسَ لِيُوقِعَتَهَا كَازِبَةٌ ۖ خَافِضَةٌ رَافِعَةٌ ۗ إِذَا رُجَّتِ
 الْأَرْضُ رَجًا ۗ وَبُسَّتِ الْجِبَالُ بَسًّا ۗ فَكَانَتْ هَبَاءً مُنْبَثًا ۗ وَكُنُفٌ أَرْوَاجًا
 ۗ ثَلَاثَةٌ ۗ فَأَصْحَابُ الْمَيْمَنَةِ ۗ مَا أَصْحَابُ الْمَيْمَنَةِ ۗ وَأَصْحَابُ الشُّمُولِ ۗ مَا
 أَصْحَابُ الشُّمُولِ ۗ وَالشَّيْقُونَ الشَّيْقُونَ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ الْمُقَرَّبُونَ ۗ فِي جَنَّةٍ
 النَّعِيمِ ۗ ثَلَاثَةٌ ۗ مِنَ الْأُولَىٰ ۗ وَقَلِيلٌ ۗ مِنَ الْآخِرِينَ ۗ عَلَىٰ سُرُرٍ مَّوْضُونَةٍ ۗ
 مُتَّكِنِينَ عَلَيْهَا مُتَقَابِلِينَ ۗ يَطُوفُ عَلَيْهِمْ وِلْدَانٌ مُّخَلَّدُونَ ۗ يُبَاغَوٰبُ وَ

وقر
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LVI

AL-WĀQI'AH

الواقعه

Verses : 96

Revealed at Makkah

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

When the inevitable event happens, there shall be none to belie its happening.¹ It will be a calamity which will abase and exalt.² The earth shall be shaken all of a sudden,³ and the mountains shall crumble and become as scattered dust. You, then, shall be divided into three classes :⁴ People of the right hand :⁵ Oh, how (fortunate) shall be the people of the right hand ! And the people of the left hand :⁶ Oh, how (unfortunate) shall be the people of the left hand ! And the foremost shall still be the foremost.⁷ They will be those nearest (to God). They shall abide in the Gardens of bliss. Most of them

1-16

will be from among the former people and a few from among those of latter day.⁸ They will be reclining on jewelled couches, facing each other.

1. Opening the discourse with this sentence by itself signifies that this is an answer to the objections that were then being raised in the disbelievers' conferences against Resurrection. This was the time when the people of Makkah had just begun to hear the invitation to Islam from the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon be Allah's peace and blessings). In it what seemed most astonishing and remote from reason to them was that the entire system of the earth and heavens would one day be overturned and then another world would be set up in which all the dead, of the former and the latter generations, would be resurrected. Bewildered they would ask: "This is just impossible! Where will this earth, these oceans, these mountains, this moon and sun go? How will the centuries-old dead bodies rise up to life? How can one in his senses believe that there will be another life after death and there will be gardens of Paradise and the fire of Hell?" Such were the misgivings that were being expressed at that time everywhere in Makkah. It was against this background that it was said: "When the inevitable event happens, there shall be no one to belie it."

In this verse the word "*wāqi'ah*" (event) has been used for Resurrection, which nearly means the same thing as the English word 'inevitable', signifying thereby that it is something that must come to pass. Then, its happening has been described by the word "*waq'ah*," which is used for the sudden occurrence of a disaster. *Lā iss li-waq'at-i-hā kādhibat-un* can have two meanings: (1) That it will not be possible that its occurrence be averted, or stopped, or turned back; or, in other words, there will be no power to make it appear as an unreal event; and (2) that there will be no living being to tell the lie that the event has not taken place.

2. Literally: "that which causes (something or somebody) to rise and to fall." Its one meaning can be that it will upset every order; it will turn things up-side-down. Another meaning also can be that it will exalt the lowly and bring low the high and mighty; that is, on its advent, the decision as to who is noble and who is ignoble among the people will be made on quite a different basis. Those who posed as honourable people in the world, would become contemptible and those who were considered contemptible would become honourable.

3. That is, it will not be a local earthquake that may occur in a restricted area, but it will shake the whole earth to its depths all of a sudden, and it will experience a tremendous jolt and tremors all through.

4. Although the address apparently is directed to the people to whom this discourse was being recited, or who may read it or hear it read now, in fact the entire mankind is its addressee. All human beings who have been born since the first day of creation and will be born till the Day of Resurrection, will ultimately be divided into three classes.

5. The word *maimanah* in *aṣḥāb al-maimanah*, in the original, may have been derived from *yamīn*, which means the right hand, and also from *yumn*, which means good omen. If it is taken to be derived from *yamīn*, *aṣḥāb al-maimanah* would mean: "those of the right hand." This, however, does not imply its lexical meaning, but it signifies the people of exalted rank and position. The Arabs regarded the right hand as a symbol of strength and eminence and honour, and therefore would seat a person whom they wished to do honour, on the right hand, in the assemblies. And if it is taken as derived from *yumn*, *aṣḥāb al-maimanah* would mean fortunate and blessed people.

6. The word *mash'amah* in *aṣḥāb al-mash'amah*, in the original, is from *shu'm* which means misfortune, ill-luck and bad omen; in Arabic the left hand also is called *shūmā*. The Arabs regarded *shimāl* (the left hand) and *shu'm* (bad omen) as synonyms, the left hand being a symbol of weakness and indignity. If a bird flew left on the commencement of a journey, they would take it as a bad omen; if they made a person sit on their left, it meant they regarded him as a weak man. Therefore, *aṣḥāb al-mash'amah* implies ill-omened people, or those who would suffer disgrace and ignominy, and would be made to stand on the left side in the Court of Allah.

7. *Sābiqīn* (the Foremost) implies the people who excelled others in virtue and love of the truth and in good works and responded to the call of Allah and His Messenger before others. They were also in the forefront in their response to the call for *Jihād*, for expending their wealth for the sake of the needy and for public services, or for inviting others to virtue and truth, in short, for spreading the good and wiping out evil and making sacrifices and exerting themselves whenever there was need for it. On this very basis, in the Hereafter too, they will be placed in the forefront.

(Contd. on p. 342)

أَبَارِئِقَ ۚ وَكَأْسٍ مِّنْ مَّعِينٍ ۚ لَا يُصَدَّعُونَ عَنْهَا وَلَا يُنْزِفُونَ ۚ وَفَاكِهَةً
 مَّمَّا يَتَخَيَّرُونَ ۚ وَلَحْمِ طَيْرٍ مِّمَّا يَشْتَهُونَ ۚ وَحُورٍ عِينٍ ۚ كَأَمْثَالِ اللُّؤْلُؤِ
 الْمَكْنُونِ ۚ جِزَاءً بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ۚ لَا يَسْعَوْنَ فِيهَا لَغْوًا وَلَا تَأْتِيهِمْ
 إِلَّا قِيلًا سَلَامًا ۚ وَاصْحَابُ الْيَمِينِ ۚ مَا أَصْحَابُ الْيَمِينِ ۚ فِي سِدْرٍ
 مَّخْضُودٍ ۚ وَطَلْحٍ مَّنضُودٍ ۚ وَظِلِّ مَمْدُودٍ ۚ وَمَاءٍ مَّسْكُوبٍ ۚ وَفَاكِهَةٍ
 كَثِيرَةٍ ۚ لَا مَقْطُوعَةٍ وَلَا مَمْنُوعَةٍ ۚ وَفُرُشٍ مَّرْفُوعَةٍ ۚ إِنَّا أَنْشَأْنَاهُنَّ
 ۚ إِنشَاءً ۚ فَجَعَلْنَاهُنَّ أَبْكَارًا ۚ عُرْبًا ۚ أَثْرَابًا ۚ لِأَصْحَابِ الْيَمِينِ ۚ ثَلَاثَةٌ ۚ مِّنَ
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 ۲۸
 ۱۲
 الْأَوَّلِينَ ۚ وَثَلَاثَةٌ ۚ مِّنَ الْآخِرِينَ ۚ وَاصْحَابُ الشِّمَالِ ۚ
 فِي سُمُورٍ ۚ وَحَيْمِرٍ ۚ وَظِلِّ مِّنْ يَّخْشَمٍ ۚ لَا بَارِدٍ وَلَا كَرِيمٍ ۚ إِنَّهُمْ
 كَانُوا قَبْلَ ذَلِكَ مُتْرَفِينَ ۚ وَكَانُوا يُصِرُّونَ عَلَى الْحِنثِ الْعَظِيمِ ۚ وَكَانُوا
 يَقُولُونَ ۚ إِذَا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا وَعِظَامًا ۚ إِنَّا لَبَعَثُوتُنَّ ۚ أَوْ آبَاؤُنَا الْأَوَّلُونَ ۚ
 قُلْ إِنَّ الْأَوَّلِينَ وَالْآخِرِينَ ۚ لَجَجُّوعُونَ ۚ إِلَىٰ مِيقَاتِ يَوْمٍ مَّعْلُومٍ ۚ ثُمَّ
 إِنَّكُمْ أَيُّهَا الضَّالُّونَ الْمُكَذِّبُونَ ۚ لَا تَأْكُلُونَ مِنْ شَجَرٍ مِّنْ زُقُومٍ ۚ فَمَا لَشُونَ
 مِنْهَا الْبُطُونَ ۚ فَشَرِبُونَ عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الْحَمِيمِ ۚ فَشَرِبُونَ شُرْبَ الْهَيْوَةِ ۚ
 هَذَا نُزُلُهُمْ يَوْمَ الدِّينِ ۚ نَحْنُ خَلَقْنَاكُمْ فَلَوْلَا تُصَدِّقُونَ ۚ أَفَرَأَيْتُمْ
 مَا تُمْنُونَ ۚ أَنْتُمْ تَخْلُقُونَهُ أَمْ نَحْنُ الْخَالِقُونَ ۚ نَحْنُ قَدَرْنَا بَيْنَكُمْ
 الْمَوْتَ وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمَسْبُوقِينَ ۚ عَلَىٰ أَنْ تُبَدِّلَ أَمْثَالَكُمْ وَنُنشِئَكُمْ فِي مَا لَا
 تَعْلَمُونَ ۚ وَلَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمُ النَّشْأَةَ الْأُولَىٰ فَلَوْلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ ۚ أَفَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا
 تَحْرُثُونَ ۚ أَنْتُمْ تَزْرَعُونَهُ أَمْ نَحْنُ الزَّارِعُونَ ۚ لَوْ نَشَاءُ لَجَعَلْنَاهُ حُطَامًا

Eternal youths⁹ shall go round them briskly with brimful goblets and beakers and cups of wine from a flowing spring, which will neither cause them giddiness nor affect their sense.¹⁰ And they shall present before them every kind of tasty fruit, whichever they may choose; and the flesh of fowls, whichever they may desire.¹¹ And for them there shall be beautiful-eyed houris, as lovely as well-guarded pearls.¹² All this they will receive in reward for what they had done in the world. There they shall neither hear vain talk nor sinful speech.¹³ Whatever they hear shall be right and pure.¹⁴

17-26

And the people of the right hand: —Oh, how fortunate will be the people of the right hand! They shall be among thornless lote-trees,¹⁵ and piled up bananas, one upon the other, and outspread shade and ever flowing waters and abundant fruits,¹⁶ neither failing in supply nor forbidden, and in upraised couches. We shall create their wives anew and make them virgins,¹⁷ lovers of their husbands¹⁸ and of equal age.¹⁹ All this is for the people of the right hand. A good number of them will be from among the former people and a good number also from among those of latter day.

27-40

And the people of the left hand:—Oh, how unfortunate will be the people of the left hand! They will be in the scorching wind and the boiling waters and the shadow of black smoke, which will be neither cool nor refreshing. These will be the people who had lived in ease and comfort before meeting this fate. They persisted in heinous sin²⁰ and used to say, "What, when we are dead and become dust and bones, shall we be raised up again? And our forefathers too, who have gone before?" Say to them, "Surely, the former and the latter, all shall be gathered together one day, the hour of which has already been appointed. Then, O deviators and deniers, you shall eat of the zaqqūm-tree²¹ and fill

41-56

your bellies with it, and drink on top of that boiling water like the thirsty camel. This shall be the entertainment of the people of the left hand on the Day of Recompense.

57-62

We have created you ;²² then why don't you confirm?²³ Have you ever considered the sperm-drop that you emit ? Is it you who create the child from it, or are We the Creators ?²⁴ We have distributed death among you,²⁵ and We are not helpless that We may change your forms and create you in another form that you do not know.²⁶ You already know well your first creation. Why then you do not take heed ?²⁷

Contd. from p. 339)

Thus, mankind, so to say, will be ranged in Allah's Court like this : On the right hand, there will be the righteous, on the left the wicked, and in the forefront (nearest in Divine Presence) the *Sābiqin* (the Foremost in Faith and good deeds). According to a *Hadīth* reported by Ḥadīrat 'Ā'ishah the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) asked the people: "Do you know who, on the Day of Resurrection, will be the first to be accommodated under the Divine Shade ?" The people said Allah and His Messenger only had the best knowledge. Thereupon the Holy Prophet replied : "Those who were such that when the Truth was presented before them, they accepted it forthwith ; when a right was asked of them, they discharged it gracefully ; and their decision in respect of others was the same as in respect of their own selves." (Musnad Aḥmad).

8. The commentators have differed as to who are implied by "the former and the latter people." One group of them has expressed the view that the "former people" were the communities that passed away since the time of the Prophet Adam (peace be upon him) till the time of the Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings), and the "people of the latter day" those who will have lived in the world since the advent of the Holy Prophet till the Day of Resurrection. Accordingly the verse would mean : "The number of the *Sābiqin* (the Foremost in Faith and good deeds) among the people who passed away during the thousands of years before the advent of the Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) would be greater, and the number of those who

would attain to the rank of the *Sābiqīn* among those people who have been born since the advent of the Holy Prophet, or will be born till the Day of Resurrection, will be less." The second group says that the former and the latter in this verse imply the former and the latter people of the Holy Prophet's own *Ummah* itself. That is, in his *Ummah* the people belonging to the earliest period were the former among whom the number of the *Sābiqīn* will be greater, and the people of the later periods are the latter among whom the number of the *Sābiqīn* will be smaller. The third group holds the view that this implies the former and the latter people of every Prophet's own *Ummah*. That is, there will be numerous *Sābiqīn* among the earliest followers of every Prophet, but among his later followers their number will decrease. The words of the verse bear all the three meanings, and possibly all three are implied, for there is no contradiction between them. Besides, they give another meaning also and that too is correct: In every early period of a Prophet's following the proportion of the *Sābiqīn* in human population would be greater and in the later period less, for the number of the workers of good and right does not increase at the rate of increase of the human populations. They may be more numerous as against the *Sābiqīn* of the earliest period, but on the whole their number as against the world population goes on becoming less and less.

9. This implies boys who will ever remain boys and stay young. Ḥaḍrat 'All and Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan Baṣrī say that these will be those children of the people, who died before reaching their maturity; therefore, they will neither have any good works to their credit for which they may be rewarded, nor any evil deeds for which they may be punished. But obviously, this could imply those people who would not deserve Paradise. For, as for the true believers, about them Allah has guaranteed in the Qur'ān that their children will be joined with them in Paradise (Aṭ-Ṭūr : 21). This is also supported by the *Ḥadīth*, which Abū Da'ūd Ṭayālīsī, Ṭabarānī and Bazzār have related on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Anas and Ḥaḍrat Samurah bin Jundub, according to which the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) said that the children of the polytheists will be attendants of the people of Paradise. (For further explanation, see E.N. 26 of Aṣ-Ṣāffāt, E.N. 19 of Aṭ-Ṭūr).

10. For explanation, see E.N. 27 of Aṣ-Ṣāffāt, E.N. 22 of Sūrah Muḥammad, E. N. 18 of Aṭ-Ṭūr.

11. For explanation, see E.N. 17 of Sūrah Aṭ-Ṭūr.

12. For explanation, see E.N.'s 28, 29 of Aṣ-Ṣāffāt, E.N. 42 of Ad-Dukhān, E.N. 51 of Ar-Raḥmān.

13. This is one of the major blessings of Paradise, which has been mentioned at several places in the Qur'ān, viz. that in Paradise human ears will remain secure against idle and frivolous talk, lying, backbiting, slander, invective, boasting and bragging, taunts and mockery, satire and sarcasm. It will not be a society of foul-mouthed, indecent people who will throw mud at each other, but a society of noble and civilized people free of such frivolities. A person who has been blessed with some decency of manner and sense by Allah can very well feel what an agony it is in worldly life a hope of deliverance from which has been given to man in Paradise.

14. Some commentators and translators have taken the words, *illā qīlan salām-an salāmā*, to mean that in Paradise one will hear only the greeting of 'Peace, peace' on every side; the correct view, however, is that it implies healthy and wholesome speech, i.e. such speech as may be free of the vices and blemishes, faults and evils, that have been mentioned in the preceding sentence. Here the word *salām* has been used nearly in the same sense as the English word sane.

15. That is, lote-trees without thorns on them. This will be a superior kind of the lote-tree to be only found in Paradise, and its fruit likewise will be much superior to that found in the world.

16. The word *lā maqtū'ah* of the Text means: This fruit will neither be seasonal that its supply may fail when the season is over, nor its production will cease as it happens in a garden after its fruit has been picked. But in Paradise every kind of fruit will remain available in abundance in every season and will continue to be produced and supplied no matter how much of it is consumed. And *lā mamnū'ah* means that there will be no prohibition or hindrance in obtaining fruit as it is in the gardens of the world, nor will it be out of reach because of thorns or height.

17. This signifies the virtuous women of the world, who will enter Paradise on the basis of their faith and good works. Allah will make them young no matter how aged they might have died in the world; will make them beautiful whether or not they were beautiful in the world; and will make them virgins whether they died virgins in the world or after bearing children. If their husbands also entered Paradise with them, they would be joined with them, otherwise Allah will wed them to another dweller in Paradise. This very explanation of this verse has been reported from the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) in several *Aḥādīth*. According to *Shamā'il Tirmidhi*, an old woman requested the Holy Prophet to pray for her

admission to Paradise. The Holy Prophet replied: "No old woman will enter Paradise." Hearing this the woman went back crying. Thereupon the Holy Prophet said to the people: "Tell her that she will not enter Paradise as an old woman, for Allah says: 'We shall create them anew and make them virgins'." Ibn Abī Hātim has related, on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Salamah bin Yazid, that he heard the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) explain this verse, thus: "This implies the women of the world, whether they died virgins or married." Ṭabarāni contains a lengthy tradition related from Ḥaḍrat Umm Salamah according to which she asked the Holy Prophet the meaning of the several references in the Qur'ān to the women of Paradise. In answer, he explained this very verse and said: "These are the women who died as aged and decayed women, with sticky eyes and gray hair; after this old age Allah will again make them young and virgins." Ḥaḍrat Umm Salamah asked: "If a woman had several husbands in the world, one after the other, to whom will she belong in Paradise?" The Holy Prophet replied: "She will be asked to make her own choice, and she will choose the one who had the best moral character. She will say: O my Lord, make me his wife, for he was the best in his conduct and dealings with me. O Umm Salamah, good moral conduct has carried off all the good of this world and the Hereafter." (For further explanation, see E.N. 51 of Sūrah Ar-Raḥmān).

18. The word *'uruban* is used for the best feminine qualities of the woman in Arabic. This signifies a woman who is graceful and elegant, well-mannered and eloquent, and brimful of feminine feelings, who loves her husband with all her heart, and whose husband also loves her with all his heart.

19. This can have two meanings: (1) That they will be of equal age with their husbands; and (2) that they will be of equal age among themselves; i.e. all the women in Paradise will be of the same age and will eternally stay young. Both these meanings may be correct at one and the same time, i.e. these women may be of equal age among themselves and their husbands also may be made of equal age with them. According to a *Ḥadith*, "When the dwellers of Paradise enter it, their bodies will be without hair, their moustaches will be just appearing, but will yet be beardless; they will be handsome and fair-complexioned, with sturdy bodies and collyrium-stained eyes; they will all be 33 years of age." (Musnad Aḥmad: *Marwiyāt Abi Hurairah*). Almost the same theme has been related in *Tirmidhi* by Ḥaḍrat Mu'ādh bin Jabal and Ḥaḍrat Abū Sa'id Khudri also,

20. That is, "Their prosperity had an adverse effect on them. Instead of being grateful to Allah Almighty, they had become deniers of His blessings. Lost in pleasure-seeking they had forgotten God and persisted in heinous sinning. "Heinous sinning" includes disbelief, polytheism and atheism as well as every grave sin of morality and conduct."

21. For the explanation of *zaqqūm*, see E.N. 34 of Aṣ-Ṣāffāt.

22. The arguments from here to verse 74 provide the reasoning to prove both the doctrines of *Tauḥīd* and of Hereafter rationally. For it was these two basic doctrines of the Holy Prophet's teaching that the people of Makkah were debating and objecting to at that time.

23. That is, "Why don't you confirm that We alone are your Lord and God and We have the power to create you once again?"

24. In this brief sentence a very important question has been put before man. Apart from all other things in the world, if man only considers as to how he himself has come into being, he can then neither have any doubts left about the doctrine of *Tauḥīd* presented by the Qur'ān nor about its doctrine of the Hereafter. The process of man's own creation starts when the male has conveyed his sperm to the womb of the female. But the question is : Has the sperm by itself become endowed with the capability of producing a child, and necessarily a human child ? Or, has it been created by man himself, or, by another than God ? And, is it in the power of the man, or of the woman, or of another agency in the world, to cause conception by this sperm ? Then, who is responsible for the gradual formation and development of the foetus in the mother's womb, its shaping and moulding into a unique child, the provision in a particular proportion of different mental and physical powers and qualities in each child, so that it develops into a unique person, except One God ? Has another than God any role to play in this ? Is it done by the parents themselves ? Or, by a doctor ? Or, by the prophets or saints, who were themselves created in this very way ? Or, by the sun and the moon and the stars, which are themselves subject to a law ? Or, by Nature, which is devoid of any knowledge, wisdom, will and authority ? Then, is it also in the power of another than God to decide whether the child is to be a boy or a girl ? Whether it is to be beautiful or ugly, strong or weak, blind and deaf and a cripple or sound-bodied, intelligent or stupid ? Then, is it another than God who decides as to people of what calibre, good or and are to be created in a particular nation at a particular time, who

would cause its rise or fall? If a person is not obdurate and stubborn, he will himself realize that no rational answer can be given to these questions on the basis of polytheism and atheism. Their rational answer is only one and it is this: Man is wholly and entirely the creation of God; and when the truth is this, what right has this man, the creature of God, to claim freedom and independence as against his Creator, or serve another beside Him?

As it is for *Tauhīd*, so it is with regard to the Hereafter too. Man is created from a germ which cannot be seen without a powerful microscope. This germ combines in the darkness of the mother's body with the ovum (female germ) which is like itself an insignificant microscopic germ. Then by their combination a tiny living cell comes into being, which is the starting-point of human life. This cell also is too small to be seen without a microscope. Allah develops this insignificant cell in the mother's womb for nine months or so into a living human, and when its development and formation becomes complete, the mother's body itself pushes it out to raise a storm in the world. All human beings have been born into the world in this very way and are witnessing day and night this phenomenon of the birth of human beings like themselves. After this, only a foolish person could assert that the God Who is creating human beings in this way today would not be able to create the human beings created by Himself in some other way tomorrow.

25. That is, "Like your birth your death too, is under Our control. We decide as to who is to die in the mother's womb itself, who is to die soon after birth, and who is to die at a later stage. No power in the world can cause death to a person before the time appointed for his death by Us, nor can keep him alive after it even for a moment. The dying ones die in big hospitals even before the eyes of eminent doctors; and the doctors themselves also die at their appointed time. Never has anyone been able to know the time of death in advance, nor has anyone been able to avert the approaching death, nor to find out as to how and where and by what means will a certain person die."

23. That is, "Just as We were not powerless to create you in your present form and appearance, so also We are not powerless to change the method of your creation and bring you into being in another form and shape with another set of qualities and characteristics. Today the method We have adopted for your creation is that conception takes place by your sperm, then you are gradually form

(Contd. on p. 350)

فَظَلَّمْتُمْ نَفْسَكُمْ ۖ وَإِنَّا لَمُغْرَمُونَ ۖ بَلْ نَحْنُ مَحْرُومُونَ ۖ أَفَرَأَيْتُمُ الْمَاءَ
 الَّذِي تَشْرَبُونَ ۖ ءَأَأَنْتُمْ أَنْزَلْتُمُوهُ مِنَ الْمُزْنِ أَمْ نَحْنُ الْمُنزِلُونَ ۖ لَوْ
 نَشَاءُ جَعَلْنَاهُ أُجَاجًا فَلَوْلَا تَشْكُرُونَ ۖ أَفَرَأَيْتُمُ النَّارَ الَّتِي تُورُونَ ۖ ءَأَأَنْتُمْ
 أَنْشَأْتُمْ شَجَرَتَهَا أَمْ نَحْنُ الْمُنشِئُونَ ۖ نَحْنُ جَعَلْنَاهَا تَذْكَرَةً وَرَمَاءً
 لِلْمُقْوِينَ ۖ فَسَبِّحْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الْعَظِيمِ ۖ فَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِوَقَعِ النُّجُومِ ۖ وَ
 إِنَّهُ لَقَسَمٌ لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ عَظِيمٌ ۖ إِنَّهُ لَقُرْآنٌ كَرِيمٌ ۖ فِي كِتَابٍ مَكْنُونٍ ۖ لَا
 يَمَسُّهُ إِلَّا الْمُطَهَّرُونَ ۖ تَنْزِيلٌ مِّن رَّبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ۖ أَفَبِهَذَا الْحَدِيثِ أَنْتُمْ
 مُدْهِمُونَ ۖ وَأَتَجْعَلُونَ رِزْقَكُمْ أَنْكُمْ تَكْذِبُونَ ۖ فَلَوْلَا إِذَا بَلَغَتِ الْحُلُقُومَ ۖ
 وَأَأَنْتُمْ حِينِيذٍ تَنْظُرُونَ ۖ وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْكُمْ وَلَكِنْ لَا تُبْصِرُونَ ۖ
 فَلَوْلَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ غَيْرَ مَدِينِينَ ۖ تَرْجِعُونَهَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ۖ فَأَمَّا إِنْ
 كَانَ مِنَ الْمُقْرَبِينَ ۖ فَرَوْحٌ وَرِيحَانٌ ۖ وَجَنَّاتٌ نَّعِيمٍ ۖ وَأَمَّا إِنْ كَانَ
 مِنْ أَصْحَابِ الْيَمِينِ ۖ فَسَلْمٌ لَّكَ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ الْيَمِينِ ۖ وَأَمَّا إِنْ كَانَ مِنَ
 الْمَكْذِبِينَ الضَّالِّينَ ۖ فَنُزُلٌ مِّن حَيْثُ ۖ وَتَصْلِيَةٌ جَاجِيَةٌ ۖ إِنْ هَذَا
 لَهُوَ حَقُّ الْيَقِينِ ۖ فَسَبِّحْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الْعَظِيمِ ۖ

Have you ever considered the seeds that you sow? 63-67
 Is it you who cause them to grow into crops, or do We?²⁸
 If We so pleased We could turn these crops into chaff,
 and you would then be left lamenting, "We have in-
 curred penalties! Ah, we are undone!"

Have you ever seen (with open eyes) the water that 68-70
 you drink? Is it you who cause it to rain from the
 clouds, or do We?²⁹ If We so pleased We could make it
 salt.³⁰ Then why don't you be grateful³¹?

Have you ever considered the fire that you kindle? 71-73
 Is it you who have created its tree,³² or are We its Creator?
 We have made it a means of remembrance³³ and a pro-
 vision of life for the needy.³⁴

So, O Prophet, glorify the name of your Lord, the 74
 Supreme!³⁵

But nay!³⁶ I swear by the positions of the stars—and 75-82
 it is a great oath, only if you knew it — that this is a
 glorious Qur'ān,³⁷ inscribed in a well-guarded Book,³⁸
 which none can touch but the purified.³⁹ This has been
 sent down by the Lord of the worlds. Then, do you
 regard this discourse as unworthy of serious attention?⁴⁰
 And do you have in this blessing only this share that
 you deny it?⁴¹

If you think you are subject to nobody, and you 83-9
 deem you are right in thinking so, then why don't you
 restore to the dying person his soul when it has come up
 to the throat and you are helplessly watching that he is
 at the point of death? At that time We are closer to him
 than you, but you do not see Us. Then, if the dying
 person be of those nearest to Us, for him there is comfort
 and good provision and the blissful Garden. And if he
 be of the people of the right hand, he is greeted with
 "Peace be to you: You are of the people of the right!"
 And if he be of the deniers, gone astray, his entertain-
 ment is of boiling water and burning in Hell.

All this is absolute truth. So, O Prophet, glorify the 95-1
 name of your Lord, the Supreme!⁴²

Contd. from p. 347)

ed and developed in your mother's womb, and then you are brought out as a child. This method of creation also has been devised by Us. But this is not the only method apart from which We may not be knowing, or may not be able to adopt, any other method. On the Day of Resurrection We can create you in the form of the man of the same age at which you died. Today We have set one particular measure for your sight and hearing and other faculties. But this is not the only measure that We have for man, which We may not have the power to change. On the Day of Resurrection We shall change it absolutely; so much so that you will be able to see and hear things which you cannot see and cannot hear here. Today your skin and your limbs and your eyes do not possess the power of speech. But it is We Who have given the tongue the power of speech; so We are not powerless to cause your every limb and every part of the skin of your body to speak by Our command on the Day of Resurrection. Today you live up to a certain age and then die. Your this living and dying also is controlled by a law ordained by Us. Tomorrow We can make another law to control your life under which you may never die. Today you can endure punishment only to a certain extent : you cannot survive if the punishment is increased beyond it. This rule also has been made by Us. Tomorrow We can make another rule for you under which you will be able to suffer much severer punishments endlessly, and death would not come to you even if you were given the severest torment. Today you cannot imagine that an old man could return to youth, that he could never become ill, that a young man could never be old, and, that he could stay young for ever and ever. But youth here changes into old age according to the biological laws made by Us. Tomorrow We can make some other laws for your life under which every old man may become young as soon as he entered Paradise and stay young and healthy eternally.

27. That is, "You already know how you were created in the first instance, how the sperm was transferred from the loins of the father by which you came into being, how you were nourished in the mother's womb, which was no less dark than the grave, and formed into a living human being, how an insignificant speck was developed and endowed with the heart and brain, eyes and ears, and hands and feet, and how it was blessed with the wonderful faculties of intellect and sense, knowledge and wisdom, workmanship and inventiveness,

etc. Is this miracle in any way less wonderful than raising the dead back to life? And when you are witnessing this wonderful miracle with your own eyes and are yourselves a living evidence of it in the world, why don't you then learn the lesson that the same God Who by His power is causing this miracle to take place day and night, can also cause the miracle of life after death, Resurrection and Hell and Heaven to take place by the same power?"

28. The above question drew the people's attention to the truth that they have been developed and nourished by Allah Almighty and have come into being by His act of creation. Now this second question draws their attention to this important truth that the provisions which sustain them, are also created only by Allah for them, as if to say: "Just as in your own creation human effort has nothing more to do than that your father may cast the sperm in your mother, so in the supply of the provisions for you also human effort has nothing more to do than that the farmer should sow the seed in the soil. The land in which cultivation is done, was not made by you. The power of growth to the soil was not granted by you. The substances in it that become the means of your food are not provided by you. The seed that you sow is not made capable for growth by you. The capability in every seed that from it should sprout up the tree of the same species of whose seed it is, has not been created by you. The process for changing this cultivation into blooming crops that is working under the soil and of arranging the required kind of weather and air and water above it does not owe anything in any way to your planning and skill. All this is the manifestation of Allah's power and providence. Then, when you have come into being only by His act of creation and are being sustained by His provision, how can you then have the right to pose yourself as independent of Him, or serve another than Him as your deity?"

Although apparently this verse reasons out *Tauhid*, yet if one considers its theme a little more deeply, one finds in it the argument for the Hereafter, too. The seed that is sown in the soil is by itself dead, but when the farmer buries it under the soil, Allah infuses it with plant life, which puts out sprouts and blooms into spring. Thus, these countless bodies are rising from the dead in front of our eyes daily. Is this miracle in any way less wonderful so that a person may regard the other wonderful miracle of the life hereafter, which is being foretold by the Qur'an, as impossible?

29. That is, "We have not only made arrangements of satisfying your hunger but also of satisfying your thirst. This water that

is even more essential for your life than bread has been arranged by Us, not by you. The seas in the earth have been created by Us. It is the heat of Our sun that causes their water to evaporate, and it is Our winds that cause the vapours to rise. Then it is by Our power and wisdom that the vapours collect and form into clouds. Then, by Our command the clouds divide in a particular proportion and spread over different regions of the earth so that the share of the water appointed for a particular region, should reach it. And in the upper atmosphere also We bring about the cool that causes the vapours to change back into water. We have not only brought you into being but are also busy making all these arrangements for your sustenance without which you could not survive at all. Then, when the fact is that you have come into being by Our act of creation, are eating Our provisions and drinking Our water, wherefrom have you got the right that you should pose to be independent of Us and serve another beside Us ?”

30, In this sentence an important manifestation of Allah's power and wisdom has been pointed out. Among the wonderful properties that Allah has created in water one property also is that no matter what different substances are dissolved in water, when it changes into vapour under the effect of heat, it leaves behind all adulterations and evaporates only with its original and actual component elements. Had it not possessed this property the dissolved substances also would have evaporated along with the water vapours. In this case the vapours that arise from the oceans would have contained the sea salt, which would have made the soil saline and uncultivable wherever it rained. Then, neither could man have survived by drinking that water, nor could it help grow any vegetation. Now, can a man possessed of any common sense claim that this wise property in water has come about by itself under some blind and deaf law of nature ? This characteristic by virtue of which sweet, pure water is distilled from saltish seas and falls as rain, and then serves as a source of water-supply and irrigation in the form of rivers, canals, springs and wells, provides a clear proof of the fact that the Providence has endowed water with this property thoughtfully and deliberately for the purpose that it may become a means of sustenance for His creatures. The creatures that could be sustained by salt water were created by Him in the sea and there they flourish and multiply. But the creatures that He created on the land and in the air, stood in need of sweet water for their sustenance and before making arrangement of the rainfall for its supply He

created this property in water that at evaporation it should rise clear and free of everything dissolved in it.

31. In other words, "Why do you commit this ingratitude in that some of you regard the rainfall as a favour of the gods, and some others think that the rising of the clouds from the sea and their raining as water is a natural cycle that is working by itself, and still others, while acknowledging it as a mercy and blessing of God, do not admit that that God has any such right on them that they should bow to Him alone? How is it that while you derive so much benefit from this great blessing of Allah, in return you commit sins of disbelief and polytheism and disobedience of Him?"

32. The tree here either implies the tree that supplies wood for lighting a fire, or the trees of *markh* and *'afār*, green sticks of which were struck one against the other to produce sparks in ancient Arabia.

33. Making the fire "a means of remembrance" means: "The fire by virtue of its quality of being kindled at all times reminds man of his forgotten lesson that without it human life could not be any different from animal life. Because of the fire only did man learn to cook food for eating instead of eating it raw like the animals, and then new and ever new avenues to industry and invention went on opening up before him. Obviously, if God had not created the means of kindling the fire and the substances that could be kindled, man's inventive potentialities would have remained dormant. But the man has forgotten that his Creator is a wise Sustainer, Who created him with human capabilities on the one hand, and on the other, created such materials on the earth by which his these capabilities could become active and operative. If he is not lost in heedlessness, the fire alone is enough to remind him of the favours and bounties of his Creator, which he is so freely enjoying in the world."

34. The word *muqwin* in the original has been interpreted differently by the lexicographers. Some have taken it in the meaning of the travellers who have halted in the desert, some in the meaning of a hungry man, and some take it in the meaning of all those who derive benefit from the fire, whether it is the benefit of cooking food or of light or of heat.

35. That is, "Mention His blessed name and proclaim that He is free from and far above the defects and faults and weaknesses that the pagans and polytheists ascribe to Him, and which underlie every

creed of disbelief and every argument that is presented by the deniers of the Hereafter."

36. That is, "The truth is not what you seem to think it is." Here, the use of the word *lā* (nay) before swearing an oath by the Qur'ān's being Allah's Revelation by itself shows that the oath has been sworn to refute certain objections that the disbelievers were raising with regard to the Qur'ān.

37. "The positions of the stars" : the positions and phases and orbits of the stars and planets. The oath implies that just as the system of the celestial bodies is firm and stable, so also is this Divine Word firm and stable. The same God Who has created that system has also sent down this Word. Just as there exists perfect consistency and harmony among the countless stars and planets found in the countless galaxies of the Universe, whereas apparently they seem to be scattered, so also this Book presents a perfectly consistent and systematic code of life in which detailed guidance has been given, on the basis of belief, about morals, modes of worship, civilization and culture, economic and social life, law and justice, peace and war, in short, about every aspect of human life, and there is nothing out of harmony with the other, whereas this system of thought has been expressed in scattered verses and discourses given on different occasions. Then, just as the system of the heavens set and planned by God is stable and unalterable, and does not ever admit of the slightest variation, so also are the truths and instructions given in this Book stable and unalterable: no part of these can be changed or displaced in any way.

38. This implies the well-guarded Tablet (*lauḥ-mahfūz*). For it the word *Kitāb maknūn* has been used, which means a writing kept hidden, i.e. a writing that is inaccessible to all. The Qur'ān's having been inscribed in this well-guarded Book means that before its being sent down to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) it lay inscribed in the Divine Writ of Destiny in which there is no possibility of any alteration or corruption taking place, for it is inaccessible to every kind of creation.

39. This is a refutation of the accusation that the disbelievers used to level against the Qur'ān. They regarded the Holy Prophet as a sorcerer and asserted that he was being inspired with the Word by the jinn and satans. An answer to it has been given at several places in the Qur'ān, e.g. in Sūrah Ash-Shu'arā', where it has been said: "This (lucid Book) has not been brought down by satans, nor does this work behove them, nor are they able to do it. They

have indeed been kept out of its hearing" (vv. 210-212). The same theme has been expressed here, saying: "None but the purified can touch it." That is to say: "Not to speak of its being brought down by the satans, or its being tampered with in any way when it is being revealed, none but the pure angels can come anywhere near it when it is being revealed from the well-guarded Tablet (*Lauh-mahfūz* to the Prophet." The word *muṭahhurīn* has been used for the angels in the sense that Allah has kept them free of every kind of impure feeling and desire.

This same commentary of this verse has been given by Anas bin Mālik, Ibn 'Abbās, Sa'īd bin Jubair, 'Ikrimah, Mujāhid, Qatādah, Abul 'Āliyah, Suddī, Ḍaḥḥāk and Ibn Zaid, and the same also fits in with the context. For the context itself shows that after refuting the false concepts of the Makkan disbelievers about *Tauḥīd* and the Hereafter, now their false accusations against the Qur'ān are being answered, and by swearing an oath by the positions of the stars, it is being stated that the Qur'ān is an exalted Book, which is inscribed in the well-guarded Divine Writ, in which there is no possibility of any interference by any creation, and it is revealed to the Prophet in such a safe way that none but the pure angels can touch it.

Some commentators have taken *lā* in this verse in the sense of prohibition, and have interpreted the verse to mean: "None who is unclean should touch it." Although some other commentators take *lā* in the sense of negation and interpret the verse to mean: "None but the clean and pure touch this Book," they express the opinion that this negation is a prohibition in the same way as the Holy Prophet's this saying is a prohibition: "A Muslim is a brother of a Muslim: he does not treat him unjustly." Although in it, it has been said that a Muslim does not treat the other Muslim unjustly, yet it enjoins that a Muslim is not to treat the other Muslim unjustly. Likewise, although in this verse it has been stated that none but the clean and pure angels touch this Book, yet it enjoins that unless a person is purified, he should not touch it.

The fact, however, is that this commentary does not conform to the context of the verse. Independent of the context, one may take this meaning from its words, but if considered in the context in which the verse occurs, one does not see any ground for saying that "None is to touch this Book except the clean and purified people." For the addressees here are the disbelievers and they are being told, as if to say: "This Book has been sent down by Allah, Lord of the worlds. Therefore, your suspicion that the satans

inspire the Prophet with it, is wrong." What could be the occasion here to enunciate the *Sharī'ah* injunction that no one should touch it without purification? The most that one could say in this regard is that although this verse has not been sent down to enjoin this command, yet the context points out that just as only the purified (*muṣahharīn*) can touch this Book in the presence of Allah, so in the world also the people who at least believe in its being Divine Word should avoid touching it in the impure and unclean state.

The following are the traditions that bear upon this subject:

(1) Imām Mālik has related in *Mu'aṭṭā* this tradition on the authority of 'Abdullah bin Abī Bakr Muḥammad bin 'Amr bin Ḥazm: "The written instructions that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) had sent to the Yamanite chiefs by the hand of 'Amr bin Ḥazm contained this instruction also: *Lā yamass-ul Qur'āna illā tāhir-un*: No one should touch the Qur'ān except the pure one." This same thing has been related by Abū Da'ūd from Imām Zuhri in the Traditions which are immediately traced to the Holy Prophet (*marāsīl*), saying that the writing that he had seen with Abū Bakr Muḥammad bin 'Amr bin Ḥazm contained this instruction as well.

(2) The traditions from Ḥaḍrat 'Alī in which he says: "Nothing prevented the Holy Prophet of Allah from reciting the Qur'ān but the state of uncleanness due to sexual intercourse." (Abū Da'ūd, Nasā'i, Tirmidhī).

(3) The tradition of Ibn 'Umār in which he states: "The Holy Messenger of Allah said: The menstruating woman and the one who is unclean on account of sexual intercourse should not read any portion of the Qur'ān." (Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhī).

(4) The tradition of Bukhārī in which it has been said that the letter which the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) sent to Heraclius, the Roman emperor, also contained this verse of the Qur'ān: *Yā ahl al-Kitāb-i ta'ālaw ilā kalimat-in sawā'ūn bainanā wa bainā-kum...*

The views that have been related from the Holy Prophet's Companions and their immediate followers are as follows:

Salmān, the Persian, saw no harm in reading the Qur'ān without the ablutions, but even according to him touching the Qur'ān with the hand in this state was not permissible. The same also was the view of Ḥaḍrat Sa'd bin Abī Waqqās and Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar. And Ḥaḍrat Hasan Baṣri and Ibrāhīm Nakha'i also regarded touching the Qur'ān with the hand without the ablutions as disapproved. (*Al-Jaṣṣāṣ, Ahkām al-Qur'ān*). The same has been reported

from 'Aṭā', Ṭa'ūs, Sha'bī and Qāsim bin Muḥammad also. (Ibn Qadāmah, *Al-Mughnī*). However, according to all of them, reading the Qur'ān without touching it with the hand, or reciting it from memory, was permissible even without the ablutions.

Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, Ḥaḍrat 'Alī, Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan Baṣrī, Ḥaḍrat Ibrahim Nakha'ī and Imām Zuhri regarded reading the Qur'ān in the state of uncleanness due to sexual intercourse and menstruation and bleeding after childbirth as disapproved. But Ibn 'Abbās held the view, and the same also was his practice, that one could recite from memory the portion of the Qur'ān that one usually recited as one's daily practice. When Ḥaḍrat Sa'id bin al-Musayyab and Sa'id bin Jubair were asked about their view in this regard, they replied : "Is not the Qur'ān preserved in the memory of such a person? What then is the harm in reciting it?" (*Al-Mughnī, Al-Muḥallā* by Ibn Ḥazm).

The following are the viewpoints of the jurists on this subject :

The Ḥanafī viewpoint has been explained by Imām 'Alā-'uddin al-Kāshānī in his *Badā'i as-Sanā'i*, thus : "Just as it is not permissible to offer the Prayer without the ablutions, so also it is not permissible to touch the Qur'ān without the ablutions. However, if the Qur'ān is in a case or a cover, it may be touched." According to some jurists, the case or cover implies the binding, and according to others, the bag or the envelope or the wrapper in which the Qur'ān is kept and can also be taken out. Likewise, the books of the commentary also should not be touched without the ablutions, nor anything else in which a Qur'ānic verse may have been written. However, the books of *Fiqh* (Islamic Jurisprudence) may be touched although preferably they too may not be touched without the ablutions, for they also contain Qur'ānic verses as part of argument and reasoning. Some Ḥanafī jurists hold the opinion that only that part of the Qur'ān where the Text may have been written should not be touched without the ablutions. As for the margins there is no harm in touching it, whether they are blank or contain notes on the Text. The correct thing, however, is that the margins also are a part of the Book and touching them amounts to touching the Book. As for reading the Qur'ān, it is permissible without the ablutions." In *Fatāwā 'Ālamgīrī* children have been made an exception from this rule. The Qur'ān can be given in the children's hand for teaching purposes whether they are in the state of ablutions or not.

The Shāfi'ī viewpoint has been stated by Imām Nawawī in *Al-Minhāj*, thus : "As it is for the Prayer and the circumambula-

tion of the Ka'bah, it is also forbidden to handle the Qur'ān or to touch a leaf of it without the ablutions. Likewise, it is also forbidden to touch the binding of the Qur'ān, and also a bag, or a box containing the Qur'ān, or a tablet on which a part of the Qur'ān may have been written for instructional purposes. However, it is lawful to touch the baggage of a person containing the Qur'ānic inscription. A child may touch the Qur'ān without the ablutions, and a person without ablutions may turn over a leaf with a piece of wood, or something else, if he wants to read the Qur'ān.

The Mālikī position as stated in *Al-Fiqh 'alal-Madhāhib al-'Arabah* is: They concur with the other jurists in this that the state of ablutions is a pre-requisite for touching the Qur'ān, but in the matter of imparting instruction in the Qur'ān they make both the teacher and the taught an exception from the rule, and allow even a menstruating woman to touch the Qur'ān if she is engaged in learning or teaching it. Ibn Qudāmah has cited in *Al-Mughnī* this saying of Imām Mālik: Although reading the Qur'ān in the state of uncleanness due to sexual intercourse is forbidden, the woman who is discharging the menses is permitted to read it, for she would forget her recitations if prohibited from reading the Qur'ān for a long time.

The Hanbali viewpoint as stated by Ibn Qudāmah is as follows: In the state of uncleanness due to sexual intercourse and menstruation and bleeding after childbirth, it is not permissible to read the Qur'ān or any complete verse of it. However, it is permissible to recite *bismillah*, *al-hamdu-lillah*, etc. for although these also are parts of one or the other verse, their recitation does not amount to recitation of the Qur'ān. As for handling the Qur'ān, it is not permissible in any case without the ablutions. However, one is not forbidden to touch a letter, or a book of *Fiqh*, or some other writing containing a Qur'ānic verse. Likewise, one may handle even without the ablutions, something that contains the Qur'ān. The state of ablutions is also no pre-requisite for handling the books of exegesis. Furthermore, if a person who is not in the state of ablutions is required to handle the Qur'ān under an immediate need, he may do so after purification with the dust (*tayammum*).'' *Al-Fiqh 'alal-Madhāhib al-'Arabah* contains this ruling also of the Hanbali *Fiqh*: It is not right for the children to handle the Qur'ān without ablutions even when receiving instruction in it, and it is the duty of

their guardians to make them perform the ablutions before they give the Qur'ān to them.

The Zāhiri viewpoint is that reading the Qur'ān and handling it is permissible under all conditions, whether one is without the ablutions, or unclean due to sexual intercourse, or even if the woman is menstruating. Ibn Ḥazm has discussed this question fully in *Al-Muḥallā* (vol. I, pp. 77-84) and given arguments for the validity of this viewpoint and has concluded that none of the conditions laid down by the jurists for reading the Qur'ān and handling it, is supported by the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*.

40. Literally, *idhān* (from which *mudhinūn* of the Text is derived) means to treat something with contempt, to deny its due importance, to regard it as unworthy of serious attention, to hold it in light esteem.

41. In his commentary of *taj'ālūna rizqa-kum*, Imām Rāzī has expressed the view that probably the word *rizq* here means livelihood. Since the disbelieving Quraish regarded the message of the Qur'ān as harmful to their economic interests and feared that if it succeeded it would deprive them of their means of livelihood, the verse may also mean this: "You have made the denial of this Qur'ān a question of your economic interests, and for you the question of the right and wrong is of no consequence; the only thing of real importance in your sight is the bread for the sake of which you would least hesitate to oppose the truth and adhere to the falsehood."

42. Ḥaḍrat 'Uqbah bin 'Āmir Juhnī relates that when this verse was sent down the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) commanded that the people put it in their *ruku'*, i.e. they should recite *Subḥāna Rabbi-yal-'Azim* in *rukū'* position in the Prayer. And when the verse *Sabbih-ismi-Rabb-i-kal-A'lā* was sent down, he enjoined that they put it in their *sajdah*, i.e. they should recite *Subḥāna Rabb-i-yal-A'lā* in *sajdah*. (Musnad Aḥmad, Abū Da'ūd, Ibn Mājah, Ibn Ḥibbān, Ḥākim). This shows that even the most minor details of the procedure enjoined by the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) for the Prayer are derived from the allusions given in the Qur'ān.



