

THE MEANING OF THE QUR'ĀN

Vol. XV

Sūrah Al-Mulk—Sūrah At-Tāriq

(ARABIC TEXT WITH TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY)

By

S ABUL A'LĀ MAUDŪDĪ

English Rendering By
'ABDUL 'AZIZ KAMĀL

ISLAMIC PUBLICATIONS (Pvt.) LTD.

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'Abdul 'Aziz Kamāl

Lahore : December, 1987.

LXVII

AL-MULK المُلْك

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

LXVII

AL-MULK الْمَلِكُ

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name *al-Mulk* from the very first sentence.

Period of Revelation

It could not be known from any authentic tradition when this Sūrah was revealed, but the subject-matter and the style indicate that it is one of the earliest Sūrahs to be revealed at Makkah.

Theme and Subject-Matter

In this Sūrah, on the one hand, the teachings of Islam have been introduced briefly, and, on the other, the people living in heedlessness have been aroused from their slumber in a most effective way. A characteristic of the earliest Sūrahs of the Makkan period is that they present the entire teachings of Islam and the object of the Holy Prophet's mission, not in detail, but briefly, so that they are assimilated by the people easily. Moreover, they are particularly directed to make the people shun heedlessness, to make them think, and to arouse their dormant conscience.

In the first five verses man has been made to realize that the universe in which he lives is a most well organized and fortified Kingdom in which he cannot detect any fault, any weakness or flaw, however hard he may try to probe. This Kingdom has been brought from nothing into existence by Allah Almighty Himself and all the powers of controlling, administering and ruling it are also entirely in Allah's hand and His power is infinite. Besides, man has also been told that in this wise system he has not been created without a purpose, but he has been sent here for a test and in this test he can succeed only by his righteous deeds and conduct.

In vv. 6-11, dreadful consequences of disbelief which will appear in the Hereafter have been mentioned, and the people told that Allah, by sending His Prophets, has warned them of these consequences in this very world, as if to say: "Now, if you do not believe in what the Prophets say and correct your attitude and behaviour accordingly, in the Hereafter you will yourself have to admit that you really deserved the punishment that was being meted out to you."

In vv. 12-14, the truth that has been impressed on the minds is that the Creator cannot be unaware of His

creation, as if to say: "He is aware of each open and hidden secret of yours, even of the innermost ideas of your hearts. Hence, the right basis of morality is that man should avoid evil, fearing the accountability of the unseen God, whether in the world there is a power to take him to task for this or not, and whether in the world there is a possibility of being harmed by such a power or not. Those who adopt such a conduct in the world alone will deserve forgiveness and a rich reward in the Hereafter."

In vv. 15-23, making allusions, one after the other, to those common truths of daily occurrence, which man does not regard as worthy of much attention, he has been invited to consider them seriously. It has been said: "Look: the earth on which you move about with full satisfaction and peace of mind, and from which you obtain your sustenance has been subdued for you by Allah; otherwise this earth might at any time start shaking suddenly so as to cause your destruction, or a typhoon might occur, which may annihilate you completely. Look at the birds that fly above you; it is only Allah Who is sustaining them in the air. Look at your own means and resources: if Allah wills to inflict you with a scourge, none can save you from it; and if Allah wills to close the doors of sustenance on you, none can open them for you. These things are there to make you aware of the truth, but you see them like animals, which are unable to draw conclusions from observations, and you do not use your sight, hearing and minds which Allah has bestowed on you as men; that is why you do not see the right way."

In vv. 24-27, it has been said: "You have ultimately to appear before your God in any case. It is not for the Prophet to tell you the exact time and date of the event. His only duty is to warn you beforehand of its

inevitable occurrence. Today you do not listen to him and demand that he should cause the event to occur and appear prematurely before you; but when it does occur, and you see it with your own eyes, you will then be astounded. Then, it will be said to you; 'This is the very thing you were calling to be hastened'."

In vv. 28-29 replies have been given to what the disbelievers of Makkah said against the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) and his Companions. They cursed the Holy Prophet and prayed for his and the believers' destruction. To this it has been said: "Whether those who call you to the right way are destroyed, or shown mercy by Allah, how will their fate change your destiny? You should look after yourselves and consider who would save you if you were overtaken by the scourge of God? You regard those who believe in God and put their trust in Him as the misguided. A time will come when it will become evident as to who was misguided in actual truth.

In conclusion, the people have been asked this question and left to ponder over it; "If the water which has come out from the earth at some place in the desert or hill country of Arabia and upon which depends your whole life activity, should sink and vanish underground, who beside Allah can restore to you this life-giving water?"



الجزء
(٢٩)

كَرِيمٌ الَّذِي بِيَدِهِ الْمُلْكُ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ الَّذِي خَلَقَ

الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ
 الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ طِبَاقًا مَا تَرَى فِي خَلْقِ الرَّحْمَنِ مِنْ تَفَوُّتٍ
 فَارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ هَلْ تَرَى مِنْ فُطُورٍ ثُمَّ ارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ كَرَّتَيْنِ يَنْقَلِبْ
 إِلَيْكَ الْبَصَرُ خَائِسًا وَهُوَ حَسِيرٌ وَلَقَدْ زَيَّنَّا السَّمَاءَ الدُّنْيَا بِمَصَابِيحٍ وَ
 جَعَلْنَاهَا رُجُومًا لِلشَّيْطَانِ وَأَعْتَدْنَا لَهُمْ عَذَابَ السَّعِيرِ وَلِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
 بِرَبِّهِمْ عَذَابُ جَهَنَّمَ وَأَبْسَ الْمَصِيرِ إِذَا نُفِخَ فِيهَا سِفُوفًا لَهَا شَهِيقًا
 وَهِيَ تَفُورٌ تَكَادُ تَمَيَّزُ مِنَ الْغَيْظِ كُلَّمَا أَلْقَى فِيهَا فَوْجٌ سَأَلَهُمْ خَزَنَتُهَا
 أَلَمْ يَأْتِكُمْ نَذِيرٌ قَالُوا بَلَى قَدْ جَاءَنَا نَذِيرٌ فَكَذَّبْنَا وَقُلْنَا مَا نَزَّلَ
 اللَّهُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِنْ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ كَبِيرٍ وَقَالُوا لَوْ كُنَّا نَسْمَعُ أَوْ
 نَعْقِلُ مَا كُنَّا فِي أَصْحَابِ السَّعِيرِ فَاعْتَرَفُوا بِذُنُوبِهِمْ فَسُحِقًا لِأَصْحَابِ

LXVII

AL-MULK الملك

Verses : 30

Revealed at Makkah

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

Full of blessings is He¹ in Whose hand is the King-
 dom of the Universe², and He has power over everything³;
 Who created death and life that He may try you to see

1-4

which of you is best in deeds⁴, and He is All-Mighty as well as All-Forgiving⁵; Who created seven heavens, one above the other.⁶ You will not see any fault in the creation of the Merciful.⁷ Turn up your eyes: do you see any flaw⁸ anywhere? Look up again and yet again: your look will return to you, disappointed, wearied.

5 And indeed We have adorned the nearest heaven⁹ with magnificent lamps¹⁰ and made them a means of driving away Satans.¹¹ For these satans We have prepared a blazing Fire.

6-11 For those who disbelieve in their Lord,¹² there is the torment of Hell, and it is an evil abode. When they are flung into it, they will hear its roaring;¹³ and it will be boiling up, as though bursting with rage. Every time a crowd is cast into it, its keepers will ask them, "Did not a warner come to you?"¹⁴ They will answer, "Yes, a warner did come to us, but we belied him and said, 'Allah has not sent down anything: you are in grave error!'"¹⁵ And they will add, "Had we only listened or understood,¹⁶ we would not now be among the dwellers of the blazing Fire." Thus will they confess their own sin.¹⁷ Damned be the dwellers of Hell!

1. *Tabāraka* is a superlative from *barkat*. *Barkat* comprehends the meanings of exaltation and greatness, abundance and plentifulness, permanence and multiplicity of virtues and excellences. When the superlative *tabā'aka* is formed from it, it gives the meaning that Allah is infinitely noble and great; He is superior to everything beside Himself in His essence and attributes and works; His beneficence is infinite, and His excellences are permanent and everlasting. (For further explanation, see E.N. 43 of Al-A'rāf, E.N. 14 of Al-Mu'minūn, E.N.'s 1 and 19 of Al-Furqān).

2. As the word *al-Mulk* has been used definitely, it cannot be taken in any limited meaning. Inevitably it would imply sovereignty over everything that exists in the Universe. "In Whose hand is the Kingdom" does not mean that He has physical hands, but that He

is possessor of all power and authority and no one else has any share in it.

3. That is, He can do whatever He wills: nothing can frustrate or hinder Him from doing what He pleases.

4. That is, the object of giving life to men in the world and causing their death is to test them to see which of them is best in deeds. Allusion has been made in this brief sentence to a number of truths: (1) That life and death are given by Allah; no one else can grant life nor cause death; (2) that neither the life nor the death of a creation like man, which has been given the power to do both good and evil, is purposeless; the Creator has created him in the world for the test: life is for him the period of the test and death means that the time allotted for the test has come to an end; (3) that for the sake of this very test the Creator has given every man an opportunity for action, so that he may do good or evil in the world and practically show what kind of a man he is; (4) that the Creator alone will decide who has done good or evil; it is not for us to propose a criterion for the good and the evil deeds but for Almighty Allah; therefore, whoever desires to get through the test, will have to find out what is the criterion of a good deed in His sight; the fifth point is contained in the meaning of the test itself, that is, every person will be recompensed according to his deeds, for if there was no reward or punishment the test would be meaningless.

5. This has two meanings and both are implied here: (1) That He is Almighty: in spite of being dominant over all His creatures, He is Merciful and Forgiving for them, not tyrannous and cruel; and (2) that He has full power to punish the evildoers: no one can escape His punishment; but He is forgiving for him who feels penitent, refrains from evil and asks for His forgiveness.

6. For explanation, see E.N. 34 of Al-Baqarah, E.N. 2 of Ar-Ra'd, E.N. 8 of Al-Hijr, E.N. 113 of Al-Hajj, E.N. 15 of Al-Mu'minun, E.N. 5 of As-Saaffat, E.N. 90 of Al-Mu'min.

7. Literally, *tafawut* is disproportion: two things being out of accord and agreement with each other. So, the Divine words mean: "You will not see any indiscipline, any disorder and discordance anywhere in the universe; there is nothing disjointed and out of proportion in this world created by Allah: all its parts are well connected and in perfect harmony and coordination.

8. The word *fulūḥ* means a crack, rift, fissure, or a thing's being split and broken. The verse means to say that the whole universe is so closely well-knit and everything in it, from a particle on the earth to the huge galaxies, so well connected and coherent that the continuity of the system of the universe seems to break nowhere, however hard one may try to probe and investigate. (For further explanation, see E.N. 8 of Sūrah Qāf).

9. "The nearest heaven": the heaven the stars and planets of which can be seen with the naked eye; the objects beyond that which can be seen only through telescopes are the distant heaven; and the heavens still farther away are those which have not yet been seen even with telescopes.

10. The word *maṣābih* in the original has been used as a common noun, and therefore, automatically gives the meaning of the lamp's being splendid and glorious. It means: "We have not created this universe dark, dismal and desolate, but have decked and decorated it with stars, the glory and grandeur of which at night strike man with amazement."

11. This does not mean that the stars themselves are pelted at the Satans, nor that the meteorites shoot out only to drive away the Satans, but it means that the countless meteorites which originate from the stars and wander in space at tremendous speeds and which also fall to the earth in a continuous shower prevent the Satans of the earth from ascending to the heavens. Even if they try to ascend heavenward these meteorites drive them away. This thing has been mentioned here because the Arabs believed about the soothsayers, and this also was the claim made by the soothsayers themselves, that the satans were under their control, or that they had a close contact with them, and through them they received news of the unseen, and thus, could foretell the destinies of the people. That is why at several places in the Qur'ān, it has been stated that there is absolutely no possibility of the Satans' ascending to the heavens and bringing news of the unseen. (For explanation, see E.N.'s 9-12 of Al-Hijr, E.N.'s 6, 7 of Aṣ-Ṣāffāt).

As for the truth about meteorites, man's information in this regard is still without a scientific basis. However, the theory which seems best to account for all the facts known today and the information gathered from the examination of the meteorites fallen on the earth, is that meteorites originate from the disintegration of one or more planets and wander in space and sometimes fall to the earth

under its gravitational pull. (See *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. XV, under "Meteorites").

12. That is, the fate of all those, whether men or Satans, who disbelieve in their Lord. (For the explanation of the meaning of disbelieving in the Lord (*Rabb*), see E.N. 161 of Al-Baqarah, E.N. 178 of An-Nisā', E.N. 39 of Al-Kahf, E.N. 3 of Al-Mu'min).

13. The word *shahiq* is used for producing a cry like the ass's braying. The sentence may also mean that it could be the sound of Hell itself, as well as that it would be the sound coming from Hell, where the people already flung into it would be screaming and crying. This second meaning is supported by Sūrah Hūd : 106, where it has been said : "Therein they will pant and hiss (because of thirst)", and the first meaning is confirmed by Al-Furqān : 12, which says: "When the Hell will see them from afar, they will hear the sounds of its raging and roaring." On this basis, the correct meaning is that it would be the noise made both by Hell and by the dwellers of Hell.

14. The real nature of this question will not be of a question that the keepers of Hell would like to ask them whether a warner from Allah had come to them or not, but the object would be to make them realize that no injustice had been done to them by casting them into Hell. They would try to make them confess that Allah had not kept them uninformed and unwarned: He had sent the Prophets to them; He had informed them of the truth and of the Right Way; He had warned them that if they followed a way other than the Right Way, it would lead them to Hell, in which they had been cast. But they had not listened to the Prophets. Hence, they rightly deserved the punishment which was being meted out to them at that time.

This thing has been pointed out over and over again in the Qur'ān that the test for which Allah has sent man in the world is not being conducted by keeping man absolutely unaware and uninformed of the requirements of the test only to see whether he found the right way by himself or not; but Allah has made the most appropriate arrangements that could possibly be made of guiding him to the Right Way, and it is that He has raised the Prophets and sent down the Books. Now the test of man lies in this whether he accepts the Prophets and the Books brought by them and adopts the straight

(Contd. on page 14)

التَّعْيِيرُ ۗ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُم بِالْغَيْبِ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ ۖ وَ أَجْرٌ كَبِيرٌ ۗ
 وَ أَسْرُوا قَوْلَكُمْ أَوْ اجْهَرُوا بِهِ ۗ إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ۗ ۝
 خَلَقَ ۖ وَهُوَ اللَّطِيفُ الْخَبِيرُ ۗ ۝
 هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ ذَلُولًا فَامْشُوا
 فِي مَنَاكِبِهَا وَكُلُوا مِن رِّزْقِهِ ۗ وَإِلَيْهِ النُّشُورُ ۗ ۝
 وَأَمِنْتُمْ مَّن فِي السَّمَاءِ
 أَنْ يَخْصِفَ بِكُمْ الْأَرْضَ فَإِذَا هِيَ تَمُورُ ۗ ۝
 وَأَمِنْتُمْ مَّن فِي السَّمَاءِ أَنْ
 يُرْسِلَ عَلَيْكُمْ حَاصِبًا ۗ فَسَتَعْلَمُونَ كَيْفَ نَذِيرٌ ۗ ۝
 وَ لَقَدْ كَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ
 مِن قَبْلِهِمْ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ نَكِيرِ ۗ ۝
 وَأَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا إِلَى الطَّيْرِ فَوْقَهُمْ صَفْتٍ وَ
 يَقْبِضْنَ ۖ مَا يُسْبِكُهُنَّ إِلَّا الرَّحْمَنُ ۗ إِنَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ بَصِيرٌ ۗ ۝
 أَمَّن هَذَا
 الَّذِي هُوَ جُنْدٌ لَّكُمْ يَنْصُرُكُمْ مِّن دُونِ الرَّحْمَنِ ۗ إِنَّ الْكٰفِرُونَ إِلَّا فِي
 غُرُوبٍ ۗ ۝
 أَمَّن هَذَا الَّذِي يَرْزُقُكُمْ إِنْ أَمْسَكَ رِزْقَهُ ۗ بَلْ لَّجُّوا فِي عُتُوٍّ وَ
 نُفُورٍ ۗ ۝
 أَفَمَن يَبْنِي مِثْقَالَ حَبَّةٍ عَلَى رَأْسِهَا
 يُعْتَبِرُ بِهَا وَالَّذِي نَحْنُ بِهَا بِغَافِلِينَ ۗ ۝
 أَفَلَا تَتَّقُونَ ۗ ۝
 قُلْ هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْشَأَكُمْ وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَ الْأَبْصَارَ وَ الْأَفْئِدَةَ ۗ
 قَلِيلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ ۗ ۝
 قُلْ هُوَ الَّذِي ذَرَأَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَإِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ ۗ ۝
 وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَى هَذَا الْوَعْدُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِينَ ۗ ۝
 قُلْ إِنَّمَا الْعِلْمُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ
 وَإِنَّمَا أَنَا نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ ۗ ۝
 فَكَلَّمْنَا رَاوَةَ زُلْفَةَ سِيتَتْ وَجُوهُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَ
 قِيلَ هَذَا الَّذِي كُنْتُمْ بِهِ تَدَّعُونَ ۗ ۝
 قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَهْلَكَنِيَ اللَّهُ وَمَن
 مَّعِيَ أَوْ رَحِمَنَا ۗ فَمَن يُجِيرُ الْكٰفِرِينَ ۗ مِن عَذَابِ إِلَيْهِ ۗ ۝
 قُلْ هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ
 الرَّحِيمُ ۗ ۝
 أَمَّا بِهِ وَعَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْنَا ۗ فَسَتَعْلَمُونَ مَن هُوَ فِي ضَلٰلٍ مُّبِينٍ ۗ ۝
 قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ
 إِنْ أَصْبَحَ مَاؤُكُمْ غَوْرًا ۗ فَمَن يَأْتِيكُمْ بِمَآءٍ مَّعِينٍ ۗ ۝

Those who fear their Lord unseen,¹⁸ for them is forgiveness and a rich reward.¹⁹ Whether you speak secretly or aloud (it is alike for Allah): He even knows the secrets of the hearts.²⁰ Would He not know, who has created?²¹ He is the Knower of subtleties²² and is All-Aware.

12-14

He it is Who has subdued the earth to you. So walk about on its chest and eat of God's provisions:²³ to Him you shall return on Resurrection.²⁴ Do you feel secure that He Who is in the heaven²⁵ would not cause you to sink underground, and the earth may start rocking suddenly? Do you feel secure that He Who is in the heaven would not send a whirlwind charged with stones on you?²⁶ Then you shall know how terrible was My warning!²⁷ And those who have gone before them also belied. Then see how severe was My chastisement!²⁸ Do they not see the birds above them, spreading their wings and closing them? None is upholding them but the Merciful.²⁹ He it is Who watches over everything.³⁰ Tell, what army is there with you that can help you against the Merciful.³¹ The fact is that the disbelievers are lost in utter delusion. Or tell, who is there to provide for you if the Merciful should withhold His provision? In fact, these people persist in rebellion and aversion from the Truth. Just consider: Is he who is walking prone on his face³² better guided or he who is walking upright on a smooth road? Say to them, "Allah it is Who created you, and gave you the faculties of hearing and sight and gave you the hearts to think and understand, but you are seldom grateful."³³

15-23

Say to them: Allah it is Who has dispersed you in the earth, and to Him you shall be gathered together.³⁴ They say, "When will this promise be fulfilled if what you say be true?"³⁵ Say, "The knowledge of it is with Allah, I am only a plain warner."³⁶ Then, when they

24-27

see it close at hand, the faces of all those who disbelieve, shall be distorted,³⁷ and at that time it will be said to them, "This is the same that you were calling for."

30 Say to them, "Have you ever considered that even if Allah should destroy me and those with me, or should bestow mercy upon us, who will save the disbelievers from the painful torment?"³⁸ Say to them, "He is the All-Merciful: In Him we have believed and in Him have we put our trust."³⁹ Soon you will know who is involved in grave error." Say to them, "Have you ever considered that if the water of your wells should sink down into the earth, who would then restore to you the running springs of water?"⁴⁰

(Contd. from page 11)

way, or turns away from them to follow his own desires, whims and speculations. Thus, the Prophethood, in fact, is Allah's argument which He has established against man and on its acceptance or rejection depends his whole future life. No one, after the appointment of the Prophets, can present the excuse that he remained unaware of the Truth, or that he has been caught and put to the hard test unawares, or that he is being punished while he was innocent. This theme has been presented in countless different ways in the Qur'ān; for instance, see Al-Baqarah: 213, and E.N. 230 on it; An-Nisā': 41-42, 165 and E.N.'s 64 and 208; Al-An'ām : 130-131, and E.N.'s 98-100; Banī Isrā'il : 15 and E.N. 17; Ṭā Hā : 134; Al-Qaṣaṣ : 47, 59, 65 and E.N.'s 66, 83; Fāṭir : 37; Al-Mu'min : 50 and E.N. 66.

15. That is, "Not only you but the people who have believed in and followed you also are misguided and lost in grave error."

16. "Had we only listened or understood": "Had we listened to the Prophets with attention as seekers after Truth or used our intellect to understand what actually was the message they were presenting before us." Here listening has been given priority over understanding, the reason being that the pre-requisite of obtaining guidance is to listen to what the Prophet teaches (or to read if it is in the written form, like a seeker after Truth). To ponder

over it in an attempt to understand the truth is secondary. Without the Prophet's guidance man cannot by himself reach the Truth directly by using his intellect and common sense.

17. The word *dhanb* (sin) has been used in the singular. It means that the real sin because of which they became worthy of Hell was to belie the Messengers and refuse to obey them; all other sins are its consequences.

18. This is the real basis of morality in religion. A person's refraining from an evil because it is an evil in his personal opinion, or because the world regards it as an evil, or because its commission is likely to bring loss in the world, or because it may entail a punishment by a worldly power, is a very flimsy basis for morality. A man's personal opinion may be wrong; he may regard a good thing as bad and a bad thing as good because of some philosophy of his own. In the first place, the worldly standards of good and evil have never been the same; they have been changing from time to time. No universal and eternal standard in the moral philosophies is found today, nor has it ever been found before. The fear of worldly loss also does not provide a firm foundation for morality. The person who avoids an evil because he fears the loss that may result from it for himself, cannot keep himself from committing it when there is no fear of incurring such a loss. Likewise, the danger of the punishment by a worldly power also is not something which can turn a person into a gentleman. Everybody knows that no worldly power is knower of both the seen and the unseen. Many crimes can be committed unseen and unobserved. Then, there are many possible devices by which one can escape the punishment of every worldly power; and the laws made by a worldly power also do not cover all evils. Most evils are such as do not come within the purview of the mundane laws, whereas they are even worse than the evils which they regard as punishable. That is why, the Religion of Truth has raised the edifice of morality on the basis that one should refrain from an evil in fear of the unseen God Who sees man under all conditions, from Whose grasp man cannot escape in any way, Who has given man an all-pervading, universal and everlasting criterion of good and evil. To forsake evil and adopt good only out of fear of Him is the real good which is commendable in religion. Apart from this, if a man refrains from committing evil for any other reason or adopts acts which in view of their external form are regarded as good acts, his these moral acts will not be worth any

merit and value in the Hereafter, for they are like a building which has been built on sand.

19. That is, there are two inevitable results of fearing God unseen: (1) That whatever errors and sins one will have committed because of human weaknesses, will be forgiven provided these were not committed because of fearlessness of God; and (2) that whatever good acts a man performs on the basis of this belief, he will be rewarded richly for them.

20. The address is to all human beings, whether they are believers or unbelievers. For the believer it contains the admonition that while living his life in the world he should always remember that not only his open and hidden deeds but even his secret intentions and innermost thoughts are not hidden from Allah; and for the unbeliever the warning that he may do whatever he may please fearless of God, but nothing that he does can remain un-noticed and unseen by Him.

21. Another translation can be: "Would He not know His own creatures?" In the original *man khalaqa* has been used, which may mean: "Who has created" as well as "whom He has created." In both cases the meaning remains the same. This is the argument for what has been said in the preceding sentence. That is, how is it possible that the Creator should be unaware of His creation? The creation may remain unaware of itself, but the Creator cannot be unaware of it. He has made every vein of your body, every fibre of your heart and brain. You breathe because He enables you to breathe, your limbs function because He enables them to function. How then can anything of yours remain hidden from Him?

22. The word *Latif* as used in the original means the One Who works in imperceptible ways as well as the One Who knows the hidden truths and realities.

23. That is, "This earth has not become subdued for you of its own accord, and the provisions also that you are eating have not become available here by themselves, but Allah has so arranged it by His wisdom and power that your life became possible here and this splendid globe became so peaceful that you are moving about on it with full peace of mind, and it has become such a vast table spread with food that it contains endless and limitless provisions for your sustenance. If you are not lost in heedlessness and look about yourself intelligently, you will find how much wisdom under-

lies the making of this earth habitable for you and arranging in it immeasurable stores of provisions for you." (For explanation, see E.N.'s 73, 74, 81 of Sūrah An-Naml, E.N.'s 29, 32 of Ya Sin, E.N.'s 90, 91 of Al-Mu'min, E.N. 7 of Az-Zukhruf, E.N. 7 of Al-Jāthiyah, E.N. 18 of Sūrah Qāf.)

24. That is. "While you move about on the earth and eat of what Allah has provided for you here, you should not forget that ultimately you have to appear before God one day."

25. This does not mean that Allah lives in the heavens, but it has been so said because man naturally looks up to the heaven whenever he wants to turn to Allah, raises his hands heavenward in prayer and implores Allah turning his eyes up to heaven whenever he finds himself helpless in an affliction. Then whenever a calamity befalls him suddenly, he says it has descended from heaven; whenever something unusual happens, he says it has come from heaven; and he calls the Books revealed by Allah as heavenly Books. Accordingly to a tradition in Abū Da'ūd, a person came before the Holy Prophet with a black slave-girl and said: "It has become obligatory on me to set a slave free; can I set this slave-girl free?" The Holy Prophet asked the slave-girl, "Where is Allah?" She pointed heavenward with her finger. The Holy Prophet asked, "Who am I?" She first pointed towards him and then towards the heaven, by which she obviously meant to say: "You have come from Allah." Thereupon the Holy Prophet said: "Set her free; she is a believer." (A story closely resembling this has been narrated in Mu'wattā, Muslim and Nasā'ī also). About Ḥadrat Khawla bint Tha'labah, Ḥadrat 'Umar once said to the people: "She is the lady whose complaint was heard above the seven heavens." (In E.N. 2 of Sūrah al-Mujādalah, we have given full details concerning this). All this clearly shows that it is natural with man that whenever he thinks of God, his mind turns to the heaven above and not to the earth below. In view of this very thing the words *man fis-samā'.* (He Who is in the heaven) have been used about Allah. There is no room here for any doubt that the Qur'an regards Allah Almighty as living in the heaven. In fact, there cannot be any basis for this doubt, for in the very beginning of this Sūrah Al-Mulk, it has been stated: "He Who created seven heavens, one above the other", and in Al-Baqarah it has been said: "You will face Allah in whatever direction you turn your face." (v. 115)

26. The object is to impress this: "Your very survival and well-being on the earth are at all times dependent upon Allah Almighty's grace and bounty: you are not strutting about on this earth at will by your own power: you are under obligation only to Allah's protection for each moment of your life that you are passing here, otherwise Allah at any moment may cause such an earthquake to occur as may make this very earth to become your grave instead of the cradle that it is, or may cause a windstorm to blow razing all your towns and settlements to the ground."

27. "My warning": the warning that was being given through the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) and the Qur'ān to the disbelievers of Makkah to the effect: "If you do not refrain from your disbelief and polytheism and do not accept the message of *Tauhid* being given to you, you will be overtaken by the scourge of God."

28. The allusion is to the communities who had belied the Messengers, who had come to them previously and consequently been afflicted with Divine punishment.

29. That is, each bird that flies in the air, does so in the protection of the All-Merciful God. He it is Who has given to each bird the form and structure by which it became able to fly; He it is Who has taught each bird the method to fly; He it is Who has made the air obey the laws by which it became possible for the heavier than air bodies to fly in it; and He it is Who upholds every bird in the air; otherwise the moment Allah withdraws His protection from it, it drops to the ground.

30. That is, this is not confined only to birds, but whatever exists in the world, exists because of Allah's keeping and guardianship. He alone provides the means necessary for the existence of everything, and He alone keeps watch that everything created by Him is provided with the necessities of life.

31. Another translation can be: "Who is there beside the Merciful, who comes to your rescue as your army?" The translation that we have adopted in the text above has relevance to the following sentence, and this second to the preceding discourse.

32 "Walking prone on his face": walking with face turned down like the cattle on the same track on which someone put him.

33. That is, "Allah had made you men, not cattle. You were not meant to follow blindly whatever error and deviations you found

prevailing in the world, without considering for a moment whether the way you had adopted was right or wrong. You had not been given these ears that you may refuse to listen to the one who tries to distinguish the right from the wrong for you, and may persist in whatever false notions you already had in your mind; you had not been given these eyes that you may follow others like the blind and may not bother to see whether the signs scattered around you in the world testified to the Unity of God, which the Messenger of God is preaching, or whether the system of the universe is Godless, or is being run by many gods simultaneously. Likewise, you had also not been given this knowledge and intelligence that you may give up thinking and understanding to others and may adopt every crooked way that was enforced by somebody in the world, and may not use your own intellect to see whether it was right or wrong. Allah had blessed you with knowledge and intelligence, sight and hearing, so that you may recognize the truth, but you are being ungrateful to Him in that you are employing these faculties for every other object than the one for which these had been granted." (For further explanation, see E.N.'s 72, 73 of An-Naml, E.N.'s 75, 76 of Al-Mu'minun, E.N.'s 17, 18 of As-Sajdah, E.N. 31 of Al-Ahqaf).

34. That is, "After being resurrected from death, you will be gathered together from every corner of the earth and presented before Allah."

35. They did not ask this question in order to know the time and date of Resurrection so that if they were told the year, the month, the day and time of its occurrence, they would accept it. But, in fact, they thought that Resurrection was impossible, and its occurrence remote from reason, and they asked this question in order to have an excuse for denying it. They meant to say: "When will this strange story of Resurrection and gathering together that you are telling us, materialize? What for has it been put off? Why don't you make it appear forthwith so that we are assured of it?" In this connection, one should understand that one can be certain of Resurrection only by rational arguments, and these have been elaborated at many places in the Qur'an. As for the date of its occurrence only an ignorant person could raise such a question about it, for even if it is told, it does not make any difference. The unbeliever would say: "Well, when it does occur on the date you tell, I shall then believe in it; how can I believe today that it will actually occur on that very day?" (For further explanation, see E.N. 63 of Surah

Luqmān, E.N. 116 of Al-Aḥzāb, E.N.'s 5, 48 of Sabā, E.N. 45 of Yā Sīn).

36. That is, "This I know that it will certainly come, and knowing this much only is enough for warning the people before its actual occurrence. As for the question when it will actually come, the knowledge of it is with Allah, not with me, and there is no need of this knowledge for administering the warning. This can be better understood by an example. As to the exact time when a person will die, it is only known to Allah; however, all know that everyone has to die one day. Our this knowledge is enough that we may warn a heedless friend of ours that he should look after himself and his interests before death. For this warning it is not necessary to know the exact day on which he will die.

37. That is, they will be in the same agony as is suffered by the criminal who is being taken to the gallows.

38. When the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) started his mission in Makkah, and the members of the different clans of Quraish began to embrace Islam, the people of every house started cursing him and his Companions. They started practising magic and charms on him to cause his death, even devising plots to kill him. At this, it was said: "Say to them: what will it profit you whether we perish or we live by the grace of God? You should worry for yourselves as to how you will save yourselves from the punishment of Allah?"

39. That is, "We have believed in God, and you are denying Him; we have put our trust in Him, and you have put your trust in yourself, your own resources and false deities besides Allah; therefore, only we deserve to be shown mercy by Allah, not you".

40. That is, "Has another besides Allah the power to restore these springs of water to you? If none else has this power, and you know fully well that none has it, then who is worthy of worship: God or your false deities, who do not have the power to restore them? Then ask your own selves as to who is misled and misguided: those who believe in One God, or those who believe in many gods?"

LXVIII

AL-QALAM القلم

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

LXVIII

AL-QALAM الْقَلَم

INTRODUCTION

Name

This Sūrah is called *Nūn* as well as *Al-Qalam*, the words with which it begins.

Period of Revelation

This too is one of the earliest Sūrahs to be revealed at Makkah, but its subject-matter shows that it was sent down at the time when opposition to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) had grown very harsh and tyrannical.

Theme and Subject-Matter

It consists of three themes: Replies to the opponents' objections, administration of warning and admonition to them, and exhortation to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) to patience and constancy.

At the outset, the Holy Prophet has been addressed, to the effect: "The disbelievers call you a madman, whereas the Book that you are presenting and the sublime conduct that you practise, are by themselves sufficient to refute their false accusations. Soon they will see as to who was mad and who was sane; therefore, do not at all yield to the din of opposition being kicked up against you, for all this is actually meant to cow you and make you resort to a compromise with them."

Then, in order to enlighten the common people the character of a prominent man from among the opponents, whom the people of Makkah fully well recognized, has been presented, without naming him. At that time, the Holy Prophet's pure and sublime conduct was before them, and every discerning eye could also see what sort of character and morals were possessed by the chiefs of Makkah, who were leading the opposition against him.

Then, in vv. 17-33, the parable of the owners of a garden has been presented, who after having been blessed by Allah turned ungrateful to Him, and did not heed the admonition of the best man among them when it was given them. Consequently, they were deprived of the blessing and they realized this, when all they had lay devastated. With this parable the people of Makkah have been warned to the effect: "With the appointment of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) to Prophethood, you, O people of Makkah, too, have been put to a test similar to the one to which the owners of the garden had been put. If you do not listen to him, you

too will be afflicted with a punishment in the world, and the punishment of the Hereafter is far greater.”

Then, in vv. 34-47 continuously, the disbelievers have been admonished, in which the address sometimes turns to them directly and sometimes they are warned through the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace). A summary of what has been said in this regard, is this: Well-being in the Hereafter inevitably belongs to those who spend their lives in the world in full consciousness of God. It is utterly against reason that the obedient servants should meet in the Hereafter the same fate as the guilty. There is absolutely no basis of the disbelievers' misunderstanding that God will treat them in the manner they choose for themselves, whereas they have no guarantee for this. Those who are being called upon to bow before God in the world and they refuse to do so, would be unable to prostrate themselves on the Day of Resurrection even if they wanted to do so, and thus would stand disgraced and condemned. Having denied the Qur'ān they cannot escape Divine punishment. The rein they are being given, has deluded them. They think that since they are not being punished in spite of their denial, they must be on the right path, whereas they are following the path of ruin. They have no reasonable ground for opposing the Messenger, for he is a preacher without any vested interest: he is not asking any reward of them for himself, and they cannot either make the claim that they know with certainty that he is not a true Messenger, nor that what he says is false.

In conclusion, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has been exhorted to the effect: “Bear with patience the hardships that you may have to face in the way of preaching the Faith till Allah's judgement arrives, and avoid the impatience which caused suffering and affliction to the Prophet Jonah (peace be on him).”



نَ وَالْقَلَمِ وَمَا يَسْطُرُونَ ۚ مَا أَنْتَ بِبَعِيدٍ رَبِّكَ يَبْجُتُونَ ۚ وَإِنْ لَكَ
 لَأَجْرًا غَيْرَ مَمْنُونٍ ۚ وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خَلْقٍ عَظِيمٍ ۚ فَسَبِّحْهُ وَبُصِّرْهُ وَيُبْصِرُونَ ۚ
 بِأَيْتِكُمُ الْفَتُونَ ۚ وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ ۚ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ
 بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ ۚ فَلَا تُطِعِ الْمُكَذِبِينَ ۚ وَدُّوا لَوْ تُدْهِنُ فَيُدْهِنُونَ ۚ وَلَا
 تُطِعْ كُلَّ حَلَّافٍ مَمِينٍ ۚ هَمَّازٍ مَشَّاءٍ بِنَمِيمٍ ۚ مَنَّاعٍ لِلْخَيْرِ مُعْتَدٍ أَثِيمٍ ۚ
 عُثْلٍ بِعَدَدِ ذِكْرِ زَيْنٍ ۚ أَنْ كَانَ ذَا مَالٍ وَبَيْنَ إِذَا تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِ آيَاتُنَا
 قَالَ أَسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ۚ سَنَسِئُهُ عَلَىٰ الْخُرُطُومِ ۚ إِنَّا بَلَوْنَهُمْ كَمَا بَلَوْنَا
 أَصْحَابَ الْجَنَّةِ ۚ إِذْ أَقْسَمُوا لَيَصْرِمُنَّهَا مُصْبِحِينَ ۚ وَلَا يَسْتَشُونَ ۚ فطَافَ
 عَلَيْهَا طَافٌ مِّنْ رَبِّكَ ۚ وَهُوَ نَائِمٌ ۚ فَأَصْبَحَتْ كَالضَّرِيحِ ۚ فَنَادُوا
 مُصْبِحِينَ ۚ أَنْ ائْتُوا عَلَىٰ حَرِّكُمْ ۚ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَرِيمِينَ ۚ فَانطَلَقُوا وَهُمْ
 يَتَخَفَتُونَ ۚ أَنْ لَا يَدْخُلَهَا الْيَوْمَ عَلَيْكُمْ مَسْكِينٌ ۚ وَغَدُوا عَلَىٰ حَرِّهِ
 قَدِيرِينَ ۚ فَلَمَّا رَأَوْهَا قَالُوا إِنَّا لَضَالُونَ ۚ بَلْ نَحْنُ مَحْرُومُونَ ۚ قَالَ
 أَوْسَطُهُمْ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ لَكُمْ لَوْ لَا تَسْبَحُونَ ۚ قَالُوا سُبْحَانَ رَبِّنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا ظَالِمِينَ ۚ
 فَأَقْبَلَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ يَتَلَوْمُونَ ۚ قَالُوا يَوَيْلَنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا ظَالِمِينَ ۚ عَسَىٰ
 رَبُّنَا أَنْ يُبَدِّلَنَا خَيْرًا مِّنْهَا ۚ إِنَّا إِلَىٰ رَبِّنَا رَاغِبُونَ ۚ كَذَلِكَ الْعَذَابُ وَالْعَذَابُ
 الْآخِرَةُ أَكْبَرُ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ ۚ إِنَّ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ جَنَّتِ النَّعِيمِ ۚ
 أَفَنَجْعَلُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ كَالْمُجْرِمِينَ ۚ مَا لَكُمْ لِكَيْفَ تَحْكُمُونَ ۚ أَمْ لَكُمْ كِتَابٌ

LXVIII.

AL-QALAM القلم

Verses : 52

Revealed at Makkah

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

Nūn. By the Pen and by that which the writers are writing,¹ you are not, by the grace of your Lord, mad.² And surely you have a reward that shall never end,³ and surely you are exalted to a high and noble character.⁴ Soon you shall see as well as they, which of you is afflicted with madness. Your Lord best knows those who have strayed from His Way and He best knows also those who are rightly guided. Therefore, do not at all yield to the beliers of the Truth. They indeed wish that you should compromise a little, then they also would compromise.⁵ Do not at all yield to any mean swearer of many oaths,⁶ who is a slanderer and a back-biter, a hinderer of good⁷ and a transgressor, wicked and oppressive,⁸ and above all, ignoble by birth,⁹ only because he has abundance of wealth and children.¹⁰ When Our Revelations are recited to him, he says, "These are tales of the ancient times." Soon We shall brand him on the snout.¹¹ 1-16

We have tried them (the people of Makkah) just as we had tried the owners of a certain garden,¹² when they swore that they would surely pluck the fruit of their garden next morning, and they did not make any exception.¹³ But while they lay asleep at night, a calamity from your Lord visited the garden and it became as though it had already been reaped. In the morning they called out to one another, saying: "Go forth early to your tilth¹⁴ if you would pluck fruit." So they set out, whispering to one another, "Let no needy man approach 17-33

you in the garden today." They hurried off early (to their garden) with the resolve not to give away anything¹⁵ as though they had the power (to pluck the fruit). But when they saw the garden, they said, "We have lost our way!—Nay, but we have been left destitute!"¹⁶ The best man among them said, "Did I not tell you, 'Why do you not glorify (Allah)'?"¹⁷ They cried out, "Glorified is our Lord: we were indeed sinners!" Then they began to blame one another.¹⁸ At last, they said, "Alas for us! Indeed we had become rebellious. It may well be that our Lord will give us in exchange a better garden than this: we turn to our Lord." Such is the torment, and the torment of the Hereafter is far greater. Would that they knew this!

34-36

Surely¹⁹ for the Godfearing there are blissful Gardens with their Lord. Shall We then treat the obedient as We treat the guilty? What has happened to you: how ill you judge?²⁰

1. The great commentator Mujāhid says that by pen here is meant the Pen with which the Qur'ān was being written down. From this it automatically follows that that which was being written implies the Holy Qur'ān itself.

2. That is for which an oath has been sworn by the Pen and by the Book. It means that this Qur'ān which is being inscribed by the hands of the writers of Revelation, is by itself enough to refute the slander of the disbelievers who say that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) is, God forbid, a madman. Before his claim to the Prophethood, the people of Makkah looked upon him as the best of their men and trusted his honesty, intelligence and sagacity. But when he started reciting the Qur'ān before them they began to call him a madman. This meant that the Qur'ān itself in their sight was the cause because of which they accused him of madness. Therefore, it was said: "The Qur'ān by itself is a sufficient proof for the refutation of this slander. The presentation of this highly eloquent Revelation which consists of sublime themes, is an argument which proves that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and

blessings) has been especially favoured by Allah, and not an argument which might be used to prove that he has, God forbid, gone mad." Here, one should remember that although the address apparently is directed to the Holy Prophet, yet the real object is to nail the calumny of the disbelievers. Therefore, no one should have the doubt that this verse was sent down only to assure the Holy Prophet that he was not mad. Obviously, the Holy Prophet himself had no such doubt for removing which he might have stood in need of such an assurance. The object was to tell the disbelievers, as if to say: "The Qur'an because of which you are calling the one presenting it a madman, is by itself an argument that your accusation is false." (For further explanation, see E.N. 22 of Sūrah At-Tūr).

3. That is, "You will get an unlimited and continuous reward, for although you have to hear discouraging and disturbing things in response to the efforts that you are making for the instruction and guidance of the people, yet you are steadfastly performing your mission of calling them to the Right Way."

4. Here, this sentence gives two meanings: (1) "That you stand exalted to a high and noble character: that is why you are enduring all these hardships in your mission of guiding the people to the Right Way, otherwise a man of weak character could not have done so;" and (2) "that besides the Qur'an, your high and noble character also is a clear proof that the accusation of madness that the disbelievers bring against you is absolutely false, for high morals and madness cannot co-exist in one and the same person." A madman is he whose balance of mind is upset, who has lost his temperamental equilibrium. Contrary to this, the high morals of a person testify that he is a right-minded and sound-natured person, who possesses perfect temperamental equilibrium. The people of Makkah were not unaware of the morals and character possessed by the Holy Messenger of Allah. Therefore, it was enough just to make a reference to them so that every reasonable man of Makkah was made to think how shameless were those people who were calling a man of such sublime morals and character a madman. Their absurd conduct was not at all harmful for the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) but for themselves, for maddened in their craze for opposition they were saying such a thing about him which could not be regarded as credible by any man of understanding. The same also is the case with those men of knowledge and scholarship, who in the

modern time are accusing the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) of having fits of madness and epilepsy. The Qur'ān is available everywhere in the world and the Holy Prophet's life also exists in the written form in entire detail. Every person can see it for himself what a foolish and meaningless thing is being uttered in their blind enmity by those who regard the man who brought this unique and matchless Book and who possessed such sublime morals and character as a mentally deranged person.

The best description of the Holy Prophet's character has been given by Hadrat 'Ā'ishah in her this statement: "*Kāna khuluqu-hul-Qur'ān*: the Qur'ān was his character." Imām Aḥmad, Muslim, Abū Da'ūd, Nasā'i, Ibn Mājah, Dārimī and Ibn Jarīr have cited, with a little variation in wording, this saying with several chains of transmitters. This means that the Holy Prophet had not merely presented the teaching of the Qur'ān before the world but also given its practical demonstration by his personal example. Whatever was enjoined in the Qur'ān was acted upon practically by himself in the first instance; whatever was forbidden in it was shunned and avoided by himself most of all. His own self was characterised most of all by the moral qualities which were declared as sublime by it, and his own self was most free from those qualities which were declared as abhorrent and reprehensible by it. In another tradition Hadrat 'Ā'ishah has stated: "The Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) never hit a servant, never raised his hand on a woman, never used his hand to kill a person outside the battlefield, never avenged himself on anyone for an injury caused unless someone violated a sanctity enjoined by Allah and he avenged it for the sake of Allah. His practice was that whenever he had to choose between two things, he would choose the easier one unless it was a sin; and if it was a sin he would keep away from it most of all." (Musnad Aḥmad). Hadrat Anas says: "I served the [Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) for ten years. He never did so much as express even a slight disgust over what I did or said: he never asked why I had done what I had done, and never inquired why I had not done what I had not done." (Bukhārī, Mūslim).

5. That is, "If you slackened a little in your propagation of Islam, they also would slacken in their opposition to you. Or, if you became inclined to effect some changes in your Faith to suit these people, they too]would effect a compromise with you,"

6. The word *mahtn* is used for a contemptible, degraded and mean person. This is indeed a necessary quality of a person who swears many oaths. He swears an oath for every minor thing because he himself has the feeling that the people take him for a liar and would not believe him until he swore an oath. For this reason he is not only degraded in his own eyes but commands no respect in society either.

7. *Khayr* in Arabic is used both for wealth and for good. If it is taken in the meaning of wealth, the meaning would be that he is miserly and stingy; he would not even spend a farthing on anyone; and if *khayr* is taken in the meaning of goodness and virtue, it would mean that he creates a hindrance in every good work as well as that he is very active in hindering the people from accepting Islam.

8. The word *'utul* is used for a person who is stout and strong and greedy in eating and drinking and is also ill-mannered, quarrelsome and cruel at the same time.

9. The word *zantm* is used to describe a person of illegitimate birth, who does not, in fact, belong to a family but has joined it. Sa'id bin Jubair and Sha'bī say that this word is used for a person who is notorious among the people for his evildoing.

The views of the commentators with regard to the person who has been described in these verses are different. Some one says it was Walīd bin Mughīrah; another one says it was Aswad bin 'Abd-i Yaghūth, and still another has applied this description to Akhnas bin Shurayq, and some other people have pointed to some other persons. But the Qur'ān has only described his attributes without naming him. This shows that in Makkah the man concerned was so notorious for his such qualities that there was no need to name him definitely. Hearing his description every person could understand who was being referred to.

10. This sentence may be connected with the preceding theme as well as with the following sentence. In the first case, it would mean: "Do not yield to the influence of such a person just because he has plenty of wealth and children." In the second: "He has become proud because he possesses abundance of wealth and children; so when Our Revelations are recited to him, he says, "These are tales of ancient times."

11. Because he thought he was a man of high prestige, his nose has been called a snout, and "branding him on the snout" means disgracing him. That is, "We shall so disgrace him in th

world and in the Hereafter that his mark of disgrace will become indelible."

12. Here, one should also keep Al-Kahf: 32-44 in view, in which the parable of the owners of two gardens has been cited for teaching a lesson.

13. That is, "They were so sure and confident of their power and authority that they swore they would surely pluck the fruit of their garden next morning, without feeling any need to say, "We shall do so if Allah so willed."

14. The word *tilth* probably has been used because in the garden there were fields of crops also in between the trees.

15. The word *hard* in Arabic is used for hindering and withholding, for a purpose and resolution, and for making haste; hence, the composite rendering adopted by us.

16. That is, on seeing the garden they didn't believe it was their own garden, and they said: "Perhaps we have lost our way and come to another place." Then, when they considered it seriously and found it was their own garden, they cried out: "Alas. we are undone!"

17. This means that when they were saying on oath: "We shall surely pluck the fruit of our garden tomorrow." this person had warned them at that time, saying: "Have you forgotten God? Why don't you say: If Allāh so wills?" But they did not listen to him. Then, when they were making up their mind not to give away anything to the needy, he again advised them to remember Allah and to desist from their evil intention, but they persisted in what they had resolved.

18. That is, each reproached and blamed the other that because of his wrong counsel they had forgotten God and resolved upon an evil course.

19. This is a rejoinder to the chiefs of Makkah, who argued with the Muslims, thus: "The blessings that we are enjoying in the world are a sign that we are favourites of Allah, and the miserable lives that you are living are a proof that you are under the wrath of Allah. Therefore, even if there was any life after death, as you say, we shall have good time there too, and the torment would be imposed on you, not on us!"

(Contd. on page 34)

فِيهِ تَدْرُسُونَ ۗ إِنَّ لَكُمْ فِيهِ لَمَا تَخَيَّرُونَ ۗ ۝۳۷ ۚ أَمْ لَكُمْ آيْمَانُ عَلَيْنَا بِاللَّغَةِ
إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ ۗ إِنَّ لَكُمْ لَمَا تَحْكُمُونَ ۗ ۝۳۸ ۚ سَأَلَهُمْ أَيُّهُمْ بِذَلِكَ زَعِيمٌ ۗ ۝۳۹ ۚ أَمْ
لَهُمْ شُرَكَاءُ فَلْيَأْتُوا بِشُرَكَائِهِمْ إِنْ كَانُوا صَادِقِينَ ۗ ۝۴۰ ۚ يَوْمَ يَكْتَفَى عَنْ سَائِرِ
وَدُّعُونَ إِلَى الشُّجُودِ فَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ ۗ ۝۴۱ ۚ خَاشِعَةً أَبْصَارُهُمْ تَرْهُمُهُمْ ذُلَّهُ
وَقَدْ كَانُوا يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الشُّجُودِ وَهُمْ سَالِمُونَ ۗ ۝۴۲ ۚ فَذَرْنِي وَمَنْ يَتَكَذَّبُ
بِهَذَا الْحَدِيثِ ۚ سَنَسْتَدْرِجُهُمْ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ۗ وَأُمْلِي لَهُمْ إِنَّ
كَيْدِي مَتِينٌ ۗ ۝۴۳ ۚ أَمْ تَسْأَلُهُمْ أَجْرًا فَهُمْ مِنْ مَغْرَمٍ مُثْقَلُونَ ۗ ۝۴۴ ۚ أَمْ عِنْدَهُمْ
الْغَيْبُ فَهُمْ يَكْتُبُونَ ۗ ۝۴۵ ۚ فَاصْبِرْ لِحُكْمِ رَبِّكَ وَلَا تَكُنْ كَصَاحِبِ الْحُوتِ إِذْ
نَادَى وَهُوَ مَكْظُومٌ ۗ لَوْلَا أَنْ تَدْرَكَهُ نِعْمَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِ لَنُبِذَ بِالْعَرَاءِ وَ
هُوَ مَذْمُومٌ ۗ ۝۴۶ ۚ فَاجْتَبِهْ رَبُّهُ فَجَعَلَهُ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ۗ ۝۴۷ ۚ وَإِنْ نَكَدَ الَّذِينَ
كَفَرُوا لَنَزْلِقُونَكَ بِأَبْصَارِهِمْ لَمَّا سَمِعُوا الذِّكْرَ وَيَقُولُونَ إِنَّهُ لَمَجْنُونٌ ۗ ۝۴۸
وَمَا هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ لِلْعَالَمِينَ ۗ ۝۴۹

وقف لازم

۲
ع ۱۹
۲

Have you a Book²¹ in which you study that you shall have there the same that you choose for yourselves? Or, have you covenants binding on Us till the Resurrection Day that you will have whatever you demand? Ask them which of them will guarantee this?²² Or, have they some associate gods (who might be responsible for it)? If so, let them produce their associate gods if they are truthful.²³

37-41

The Day the affliction befalls²⁴ and the people are called upon to prostrate themselves, they will not be able to prostrate themselves. Their eyes downcast,

42-43

abjectness will be covering them. Yet when they were safe and sound they used to be called upon to prostrate themselves (but they refused to do so).²⁵

44-45 So, O Prophet, leave to Me the case of those who belie this Revelation.²⁶ We shall lead them to ruin by degrees in ways they will not perceive.²⁷ I am respiting them; My scheme²⁸ is mighty.

46-50 Are you asking them for a reward that they are being weighed down under undeserved penalties?²⁹ Have they the knowledge of the unseen, which they might be writing down?³⁰ So, wait for the issuance of your Lord's decree,³¹ and do not be like the Man of the Fish (the Prophet Jonah),³² when he cried out, overwhelmed with grief.³³ Had not the grace of his Lord reached him, he would have been cast off on the barren ground, condemned.³⁴ Consequently, his Lord chose him and included him among the righteous.

51-52 When the disbelievers hear the Admonition (the Qur'ān), they look at you in a way as though they would trip you up,³⁵ and say, "He is certainly mad", although it is an Admonition to all the people of the world.

(Contd. from page 32)

20. That is, "It is against reason that God should not differentiate between the obedient servant and the guilty. How do you regard this as reasonable that the Creator of the universe should, like a blind ruler, not judge which people in the world obeyed His commands and refrained from evil-doing, and which people committed every sin and crime and perpetrated every cruelty fearless of His punishment? You have seen the adversity of the believers and your own prosperity, but you have not appreciated the distinction between their good morals and your own evil-doing, and have given your judgement without the thought that these obedient people will be treated like culprits by God and the guilty like you will be granted Paradise."

21. That is, the Book sent down by Allah.

22. *Za'im* in Arabic is used for a person who stands a surety on behalf of another, or is a spokesman of others. Thus, the verse means to ask: "Which of you will come forward and say that he has made such and such a covenant with Allah on your behalf?"

23. That is, "The judgement you are passing concerning yourselves has no basis whatever. It is against reason and you cannot show any such thing written in any Divine Book either. No one can make the claim that he has made Allah promise some such thing, and you cannot make any of your deities vouch that it would take the responsibility of securing Paradise for you from God. How then have you been involved in such a misunderstanding?"

24. Literally: "The Day the shin shall be uncovered". A section of the Companions and their successors says that these words have been used idiomatically, for according to Arabic idiom, *kashf-i saq* implies befalling of an affliction. *Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās* also has given this same meaning of this and has supported it by evidence from Arabic poetry. According to another saying that has been cited from Ibn 'Abbās and Rabi' bin Anas, *kashf-i saq* implies uncovering the facts and truths. In view of this interpretation, the meaning would be: "The Day when all truths shall be bared and the people's deeds shall become open and manifest."

25. It means: On the Resurrection Day it will be openly and publicly demonstrated as to who in the world had actually worshipped Allah and who was disinclined to do so. For this purpose the people will be called upon to prostrate themselves before Allah. Then, those who had been sincerely worshipping Allah in the world, would prostrate themselves, and those who had declined to bow before Him in the world, would be unable to do so. It will become impossible for them to put up a false show of being worshippers. Therefore, they will remain standing, degraded and downcast with shame.

26. That is, "Do not worry yourself as to how to deal with them; it is for Me to see how to chastise them."

27. A form of leading somebody to ruin in imperceptible ways is that an enemy of the Truth and wicked person may be blessed in the world, and be granted health, wealth, children and worldly successes, by which he may be deluded into believing that whatever he is doing, he is doing well and right; there is nothing wrong with

his acts and deeds. Thus, he may go on getting more and more deeply involved in enmity of the truth and wickedness and rebellious conduct and may not realize that the blessings he is being favoured with are not a reward but, in fact, a means of his own ruin.

28. The word *kayd* in the original means to devise a secret scheme against another. It is an evil only in case it is devised to harm somebody unjustly; otherwise there is nothing wrong with it, especially when such a scheme is adopted against a person who has made himself worthy of it.

29. The question apparently is being asked of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), but its real audience are the people, who were crossing all limits in their opposition to him. They are being asked: "Is Our Messenger asking you for a reward which makes you feel so upset? You yourself know that he is absolutely selfless in his invitation and is exerting himself only for your own benefit and well-being. If you do not want to believe in what he says, you may not, but why are you feeling so enraged at his this invitation to you? (For further explanation, see E.N. 31 of Sūrah Aṭ-Ṭūr).

30. This second question also appears to be directed to the Holy Prophet, but, in fact, its audience are his opponents. It means: "Have you, O people, peered behind the unseen and found that the Messenger, in fact, is not a Messenger sent by God, and the truths that he is presenting before you are also false; that is why you are being so stubborn in belying what he says?" (For explanation, see E.N. 32 of Aṭ-Ṭūr).

31. That is, "The time when Allah will issue His decree about your success and victory and your opponents' defeat, is yet far off. Till then you should go on enduring with patience whatever hardships and afflictions you may have to face in the way of preaching the Faith."

32. That is, "Do not behave impatiently as did the Prophet Jonah (peace be on him), who on account of his impatience was driven into the fish's belly." Immediately after exhorting the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) to have patience until Allah issued forth His decree, to tell him not to behave like the Prophet Jonah by itself gives the meaning that the latter had shown some kind of impatience before Allah gave His decision and thus had incurred His wrath. (For explanation, see Yūnus; 98, and E.N. 99 on it;

Al-Anbiyā': 87-88 and E.N.'s 82 to 85; Aṣ-Ṣāffāt : 139-148 and E.N.'s 78 to 85).

33. In Sūrah Al-Anbiyā' it has been explained thus : "From inside the fish's belly and the darkness of the sea, the Prophet Jonah invoked Allah, saying: *Lā ilāha illā anta subḥānaka inni kuntu min-az-zālimin*: 'There is no god but You; glory be to You: I had indeed committed a wrong.' Thereupon Allah heard his prayer and delivered him from this affliction." (vv. 87-88).

34. When this verse is read with Aṣ-Ṣāffāt : 142-146, one learns that at the time the Prophet Jonah was caused to be swallowed by the fish, he was blameworthy. But when he glorified Allah and confessed his fault, although he was spat up by the fish on a bare beach in a state of sickness, he was not blameworthy at that time. Allah by His mercy caused a creeper to grow over him so that its leaves should provide him shade and its fruit food and drink.

35. "Would trip you up": "Would eat you up with their eyes". For a similar expression of the Makkan disbelievers' rage and fury against the Holy Prophet, see also Banī Isrā'īl : 73-77.

LXIX

AL-HĀQQAH الحاقه

سُورَةُ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

LXIX

AL-HĀĀQQAH الحَاقَّة

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name from the word *al-Hāāqqah* with which it opens.

Period of Revelation

This too is one of the earliest Sūrahs to be revealed at Makkah. Its subject-matter shows that it was sent down at the time when opposition to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) had started but had not yet become tyrannical. Musnad Aḥmad contains a tradition from Ḥaḍrat ‘Umar, saying: “Before embracing Islam

one day I came out of my house with a view to causing trouble to the Holy Prophet, but he had entered the *Masjid al-Harām* before me. When I arrived I found that he was reciting *Sūrah Al-Hāqqah* in the Prayer. I stood behind him and listened. As he recited the Qur'ān I wondered at its literary charm and beauty. Then suddenly an idea came to my mind that he must be a poet as the Quraish alleged. Just at that moment he recited the words: "This is the Word of an honourable Messenger: it is not the word of a poet." I said to myself: Then, he must be a soothsayer, if not a poet. Thereupon he recited the words: "Nor is it the word of a soothsayer: little it is that you reflect. It is a Revelation from the Lord and Sustainer of the worlds. On hearing this Islam entered deep into my heart." This tradition of Ḥadrat 'Umar shows that this *Sūrah* had been sent down long before his acceptance of Islām, for even after this event he did not believe for a long time, and he continued to be influenced in favour of Islam by different incidents from time to time, till at last in the house of his own sister he came by the experience that made him surrender and submit to the Faith completely. (For details, see Introduction to *Sūrah Maryam* and Introduction to *Sūrah Al-Wāqī'ah*).

Theme and Subject-Matter

The first section (vv. 1-37) is about the Hereafter, and the second (vv. 38-52) about the Qur'ān's being a Revelation from Allah and the Holy Prophet's being a true Messenger of Allah.

The first section opens with the assertion that the coming of the Resurrection and the occurrence of the Hereafter is a truth which has to take place inevitably. Then in vv. 4-12, it has been stated that the communities

that denied the Hereafter in the past became worthy of Allah's scourge ultimately. In vv. 13-17 the occurrence of Resurrection has been depicted. In vv. 18-37 the real object for which Allah has destined a second life for mankind after the present worldly life has been enunciated. In it we are told that on that Day all men shall appear in the Court of their Lord, where no secret of theirs shall remain hidden; each man's record will be placed in his hand. Those who had spent lives in the world with the realization that one day they would have to render an account of their deeds before their Lord, and who had worked righteously in the world and provided beforehand for their well-being in the Hereafter, will rejoice when they see that they have been acquitted and blessed with the eternal bliss of Paradise. On the contrary, those who neither recognized the rights of Allah, nor discharged the rights of men, will have no one to save them from the punishment of Allah, and they will be cast into Hell.

In the second section (vv. 38-52) the disbelievers of Makkah have been addressed and told: "You think this Qur'an is the word of a poet or soothsayer, whereas it is a Revelation sent down by Allah, which is being presented by the noble Messenger. The Messenger by himself has no power to increase or decrease a word in it. If he forges something of his own composition into it, We will cut off his neck-vein (or heart-vein). For this is the Truth absolute and pure: and those who give it a lie, will have ultimately to regret and repent.



الْحَاقَّةُ ۚ مَا الْحَاقَّةُ ۗ وَمَا أُذْرِكُ مَا الْحَاقَّةُ ۚ كَذَّبَتْ ثَمُودُ وَعَادُ
 بِالْقَارِعَةِ ۚ فَأَمَّا ثَمُودُ فَأَهْلِكُوا بِالطَّاغِيَةِ ۚ وَأَمَّا عَادُ فَأَهْلِكُوا بِرِيحٍ صَرْصَرٍ
 عَاتِيَةٍ ۚ سَخَّرَمَا عَلَيْهِمْ سَبْعَ لَيَالٍ وَثَمِينَةَ أَيَّامٍ خُسُوفًا ۚ فَتَرَى الْقَوْمَ
 فِيهَا صَرْعَى ۚ كَأَنَّهُمْ أَعْجَازُ نَخْلٍ خَاوِيَةٍ ۚ فَهَلْ تَرَى لَهُمْ مِنْ بَاقِيَةٍ ۚ
 وَجَاءَ فِرْعَوْنُ وَمَنْ قَبْلَهُ وَالْمُؤْتَفِكَتُ بِالْخَاطِئَةِ ۚ ففَعَصُوا رَسُولَ رَبِّهِمْ

LXIX

AL-HĀQQAH الْحَاقَّةُ

Verses : 52

Revealed at Makkah

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

The Inevitable!¹ What is the Inevitable? And what do you know what the Inevitable is?²

1-3

Thamūd³ and 'Ad belied the coming of the sudden Calamity:⁴ Thamūd were destroyed by a violent catastrophe;⁵ as for 'Ad, they were destroyed by a furious windstorm; Allah imposed it on them for seven nights and eight days continuously. (Had you been there) you would have seen them lying prostrate as though they were hollow trunks of palm trees. Now do you see any of them still surviving?

4-8

And the same great crime did Pharaoh and the people before him and the overturned settlements⁶ commit. They all disobeyed the Messenger of their Lord and He seized them with a terrible grip.

9-10

1. The word *al-Hāqqah* as used in the Text means an event which has inevitably to take place and the occurrence of which in the future is so certain as to admit of no doubt or suspicion. To use this word for Resurrection and to begin the discourse with it by itself shows that the people were denying its occurrence. They are being told: "That which you are denying is inevitable: your denial will not prevent its occurrence."

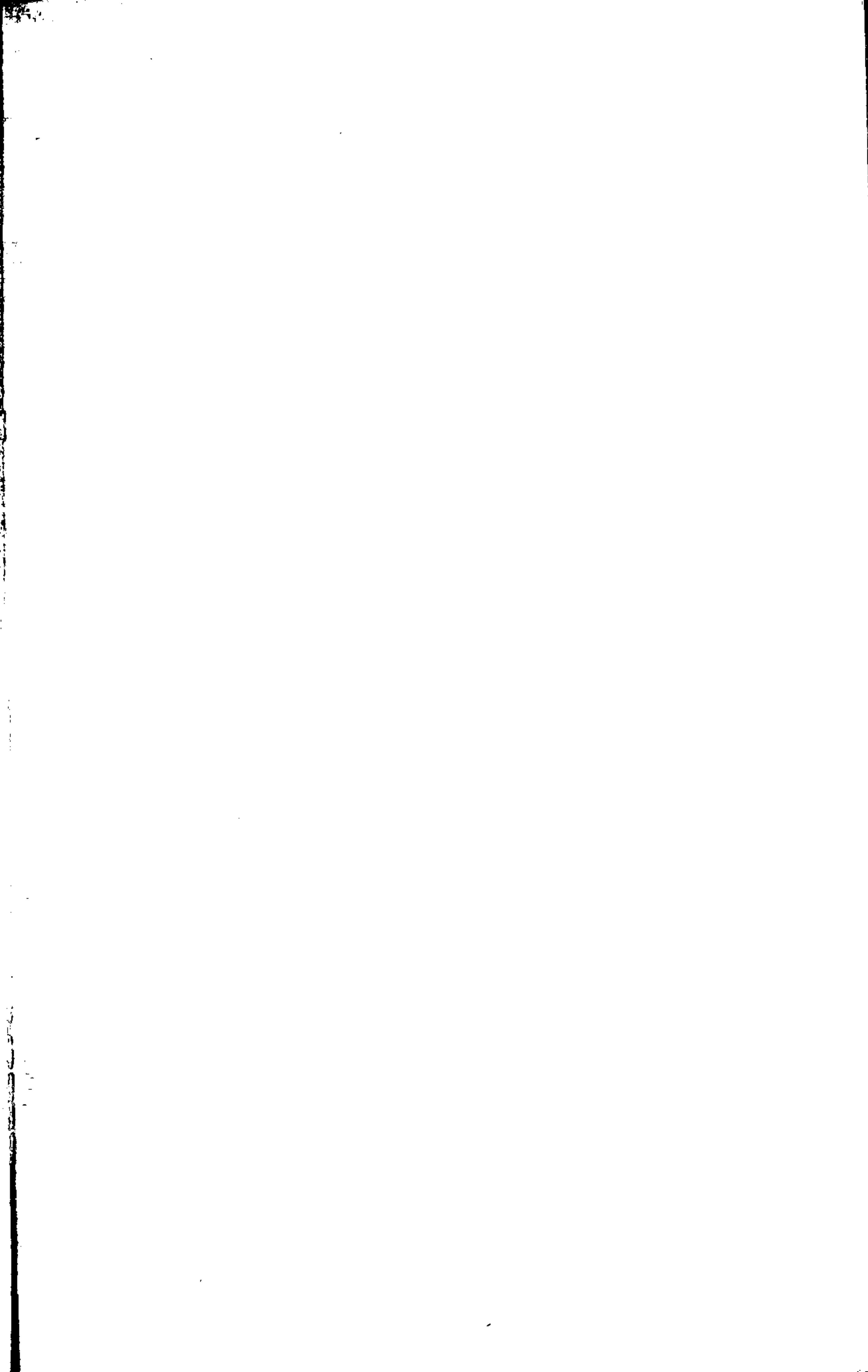
2. These two questions, one after the other, have been put to arouse the listeners, to make them understand the importance of the theme and listen to what follows with full attention.

3. As the disbelievers of Makkah denied Resurrection and took the news of its coming lightly, they have been warned at the outset, as if to say: "Resurrection is inevitable: whether you believe in it, or not, it will in any case take place." Then, they are told: "It is not a simple and ordinary thing that a person accepts the news of the coming of an event, or not, but it has a deep relationship with the morals of the nations and with their future. The history of the nations, which lived before you, testifies that the nation which refused to believe in the Hereafter and thought this worldly life only to be the real life and denied that man would have ultimately to render an account of his deeds before God, corrupted itself morally until the punishment of God overtook it and eliminated it from the world."

4. The word *al-qāri'ah* is derived from *qar'*, which means to hammer, to beat, to knock and to strike one thing upon the other. This other word for Resurrection has been used to give an idea of its terror and dread.

5. In Sūrah Al-A'rāf : 78, it has been called *ar-rajfah* (a terrible earthquake); in Sūrah Hūd : 67 *aş-şayḥah* (a violent blast); in Sūrah Hā Mīm As-Sajdah : 17, it has been said: "They were overtaken by *sā'iqa-tul-'adhāb* (a humiliating scourge): and here the same punishment has been described as *aḷ-tāghiyah* (a violent catastrophe). These words describe different aspects of the same calamity.

6. The reference is to the towns and settlements of the people of the Prophet Lot, about which it has been said in Sūrah Hūd : 82 and Al-Hijr : 74 : "We turned them upside down."



فَآخِذْهُمُ أَخَذَةً رَابِيَةً ۗ إِنَّا لَمَّا طَغَا الْمَاءُ حَمَلْنَاكُمْ فِي الْجَارِيَةِ ۗ لِنَجْعَلَهَا
 لَكُمْ تَذْكُرَةً وَتَعِيهَا أذُنٌ ۗ وَإِنَّا نَفِخُ فِي الصُّورِ نَفْخَةً وَاحِدَةً ۗ
 وَخَلَقْنَا الْأَرْضَ وَالْجِبَالَ فَدَكَّنَا ذَلِكَ ۗ وَاحِدَةً ۗ فَيَوْمَئِذٍ وَقَعَتِ الْوَاقِعَةُ ۗ
 وَانْشَقَّتِ السَّمَاءُ فَهِيَ يَوْمَئِذٍ وَاهِيَةٌ ۗ وَالْمَلِكُ عَلَىٰ أَرْجَائِهَا ۗ وَيَحْمِلُ عَرْشُ
 رَبِّكَ فَوْقَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ ثَمَنِيَةٌ ۗ يَوْمَئِذٍ تُعْرَضُونَ لَا تَخْفَىٰ مِنكُمْ خَافِيَةٌ ۗ
 فَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ بِيَمِينِهِ ۗ فَيَقُولُ هَٰؤُلَاءِ أَقْرَبُوا مِنِّي ۗ إِنِّي ظَنَنْتُ أَنِّي
 مُلْكٌ حِسَابِيَةٌ ۗ فَهُوَ فِي عِيشَةٍ رَاضِيَةٍ ۗ فِي جَنَّةٍ عَالِيَةٍ قَطْرُهَا دَائِمَةٌ ۗ
 كَلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا هَنِيئًا بِمَا أَسْلَفْتُمْ فِي الْأَيَّامِ الْخَالِيَةِ ۗ وَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ بِشِمَالِهِ
 فَيَقُولُ يَلَيْتَنِي لَمْ أُوتِ كِتَابِيَةَ ۗ وَلَمْ أَدْرِ مَا حِسَابِيَةَ ۗ يَلَيْتَهَا كَانَتْ
 الْقَاضِيَةَ ۗ مَا آغْنَىٰ عَنِّي مَالِيَةَ ۗ هَلَكَ عَنِّي سُلْطَانِيَةَ ۗ خُدُوهُ فَعَلُوهُ ۗ
 ثُمَّ الْجَحِيمَ صَلُّوهُ ۗ ثُمَّ فِي سِلْسِلَةٍ ذَرْعُهَا سَبْعُونَ ذِرَاعًا فَاسْلُكُوهُ ۗ إِنَّهُ
 كَانَ لَا يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ الْعَظِيمِ ۗ وَلَا يَحْضُرُ عَلَىٰ طَعَامِ الْبَاسِكِينَ ۗ فَلَيْسَ
 لَهُ الْيَوْمَ هُنَا حَمِيمٌ ۗ وَلَا طَعَامٌ إِلَّا مِنْ غِسْلِينٍ ۗ لَا يَأْكُلُهُ إِلَّا
 الْخَاطِئُونَ ۗ فَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِمَا تُبْصَرُونَ ۗ وَمَا لَا تُبْصَرُونَ ۗ إِنَّهُ لَقَوْلُ
 رَسُولٍ كَرِيمٍ ۗ وَمَا هُوَ بِقَوْلِ شَاعِرٍ قَلِيلًا مَّا تُؤْمِنُونَ ۗ وَلَا بِقَوْلِ
 كَاهِنٍ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَذَكَّرُونَ ۗ تَنْزِيلٌ مِّن رَّبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ۗ وَلَوْ تَقَوَّلَ عَلَيْنَا
 بَعْضُ الْأَقَاوِيلِ ۗ لَأَخَذْنَا مِنْهُ بِالْيَمِينِ ۗ ثُمَّ لَقَطَعْنَا مِنْهُ الْوَتِينَ ۗ
 فَمَا مِنْكُمْ مِنْ أَحَدٍ عَنْهُ حَاجِزِينَ ۗ وَإِنَّهُ لَتَذْكُرَةٌ لِلَّذِينَ هُمْ وَإِنَّا
 لَنَعْلَمُ أَنَّ مِنْكُمْ مُّكَذِّبِينَ ۗ وَإِنَّهُ لَحَسْرَةٌ عَلَى الْكٰفِرِينَ ۗ وَإِنَّهُ لَحَقُّ

الْيَقِينِ ۗ فَسَبِّحْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الْعَظِيمِ ۗ

When the Flood waters rose abnormally high,⁷ We boarded you in the Ark,⁸ that We may make the event a warning for you and that the retaining ears may retain its memory.⁹ 11-12

Then,¹⁰ when the Trumpet is blown once, and the earth and the mountains are raised and crushed into pieces with a single stroke, on that Day shall the Inevitable happen. On that Day the heaven shall split asunder, and its system shall loosen. The angels shall be on its sides and eight of them on that Day shall be upholding the Throne of your Lord, above them.¹¹ That will be the Day when you will be brought forth: no secret of yours will remain hidden. 13-18

Then whoso is given his record in his right hand,¹² shall say: "Look! Read my record."¹³ I knew that I would certainly be getting my account,"¹⁴ So he shall be in a state of bliss, in a high Garden, whose clusters of fruit shall be hanging within easy reach. (To such people it will be said:) "Eat and drink with relish as a reward for the deeds you did in the days gone by." 19-24

As for him whose record is given in his left hand,¹⁵ he will say: "Would that I had not been given my record¹⁶ nor known what my account was."¹⁷ Would that the death (that I suffered in the world) were final.¹⁸ Today my wealth has availed me nothing, and I am robbed of all my power."¹⁹ (It will be ordered:) "Seize him and chain him by the neck, then cast him into Hell, then fasten him in a chain seventy cubits long. For he did not believe in Allah, the Most High, nor urged the feeding of the poor.²⁰ So, he has neither any true friend here today nor any food except the corruption from the washing of wounds, which none but the sinners eat. 25-37

Not so!²¹ I swear by those things which you see and also by those which you do not see, that this is the 38-52

Word of an honourable Messenger.²² It is not the word of a poet: little it is that you believe.²³ Nor is it the word of a soothsayer: little it is that you reflect. It is a Revelation from the Lord of the worlds.²⁴ And if this (Prophet) had forged something himself and ascribed it to Us, We would indeed have seized him by his right hand, and cut off his neck-vein. Then none of you could have withheld (Us) from this.²⁵ This indeed is an Admonition for the righteous.²⁶ And We know that there are some among you who deny it. For such disbelievers it is indeed a cause of despair.²⁷ And surely this is the absolute truth. So, glorify. O Prophet, the name of your Lord, the Great.

7. The allusion is to the Deluge of the Prophet Noah, in which a whole nation was drowned because of this very crime, and only those people were saved, who had listened to and obeyed the Messenger of Allah.

8. "We boarded you...", because the whole human race that exists today has descended from the people who were boarded in the Ark thousands of years ago and thus saved from the Deluge. It means: "You exist in the world today because in that Deluge Allah had caused only the infidels to be drowned and had saved the believers."

9. "The retaining ears...": the ears which may hear it consciously and take it in. Although the word ear has been used, it implies the hearers who may hear the event and always remember it, take heed from it, and may never forget what dreadful fate the deniers of the Hereafter and the disbelievers of the Messenger of God would ultimately suffer.

10. While reading the following verses one should keep in mind that at some places in the Qur'ān the three stages of Resurrection which will occur one after the other at different times have been mentioned separately, and at others all three have been combined and mentioned as a single event. For example, in Sūrah An-Naml: 87 the first blowing of the Trumpet has been mentioned, when everyone will be suddenly struck with terror. At that time they will witness the general confusion and the upsetting of the order of the

universe, as described in Al-Hajj : 1-2, Yā Sīn : 49-50 and At-Takvīr : 1-6. In Sūrah Az-Zumar : 67-70, mention has been made of the second and third blowing of the Trumpet. On the second blowing of it everyone will fall down dead, and when it is blown for the third time, all dead men will rise back to life and present themselves before Allah. In Tā Hā : 102-112, Al-Anbiyā' : 101-103, Yā Sīn : 51-53 and Qāf : 20-22, only the third sounding of the Trumpet has been mentioned. (For explanation, see E.N. 78 of Tā Hā, E.N. 1 of Al-Hajj, E.N.'s 46, 47 of Yā Sīn). But here and at many other places in the Qur'ān all the events of Resurrection, from the blowing of the first Trumpet till the people's entry into Heaven and Hell, have been described as a single event.

11. This is an ambiguous verse the meaning of which is difficult to determine. We can neither know what the Throne is nor can understand what will be the nature of the eight angels upholding it on the Day of Resurrection. It is, however, inconceivable that Allah Almighty would be sitting on the Throne and the eight angels would be upholding it along with Him. The verse also does not say that Allah at that time would be sitting on the Throne. Besides, the conception of God that the Qur'ān gives also prevents one from imagining that the Being Who is free from physical existence as to body, direction and place, should be residing somewhere and His creatures should sustain Him. Therefore, pursuing any research to determine its meaning would be tantamount to disbelief. However, one should understand that in order to give an idea of Allah Almighty's rule and sovereignty, and of the matters associated with it, the same scene has been depicted by the Qur'ān as of worldly kingship and the same terms have been used for it as are common for kingship and its accompaniments, to enable us to understand matters pertaining to sovereignty of the universe to some extent only by means of this very scene and terms. All this is meant to bring the real Truth within human understanding; it is not, therefore, right to take it literally.

12. The record's being given in the right hand will by itself show that the concerned person's account is clear and settled and he is appearing in the Divine Court as a righteous man and not as a culprit. It is probable that at the time the records are distributed the righteous man himself will extend his right hand forward to receive his record. For on account of the good treatment that he

would have received right from the moment of death till his appearance in the Plain of Assembly at Resurrection, would have given him the satisfaction that he was there to be blessed and not to be punished. At many a place in the Qur'ān it has been explicitly stated that right at death itself it becomes clear to every man whether he is entering the next World in a blessed or wretched state. Then from the moment of death till Resurrection the righteous man is treated like a guest and the evil man as a culprit under custody. After this, from the time the second life starts on the Day of Resurrection, the condition and state of the righteous is entirely different from the condition and state of the disbelievers, hypocrites and culprits. (For details, see Al-Anfāl : 50, An-Nahl : 28-32, Bani Isrā'īl : 97, Tā Hā : 102, 103, 124-126, Al-Anbiyā' : 1-3, Al-Furqān : 24, An-Naml : 89, Sabā : 51, Yā Sīn : 26-27, Al-Mu'min : 45-46, Muḥammad : 27, Qāf : 19-23 and the corresponding Notes.

13. That is, he will be overjoyed as soon as he receives his record and will show it to his companions. In Sūrah Al-Inshiqāq ; 9, it has been said: "He will return to his kinsfolk rejoicing."

14. That is, "He was fortunate because he had been conscious of the Hereafter in the world and had lived his life with the belief that he would have to appear before God one day and render his account to Him."

15. In Sūrah Al-Inshiqāq it has been said: "And the one whose record is given him behind his back..." Probably it will be like this: As the culprit would already be knowing that he was a culprit, and would be aware of what his record contained, he would dejectedly extend his left hand forward to receive it, and then would immediately hide it behind his back so that no one else saw what he had received.

16. That is, "I should not have been given this record in the Plain of Assembly and thus publicly disgraced before all mankind, but should have been awarded secretly whatever punishment I deserved."

17. That is, "I should not have been told what I had done in the world." Another meaning of this verse also can be: "I never knew what an account was: I never had imagined that one day I would also have to render my account and that all my deeds would be presented before me."

18. That is, "I should have become extinct after death in the world and should have experienced no other life after death."

19. The word *sullān* of the Text is used both for an argument and for power and authority. If it is taken in the sense of an argument, the meaning would be: "The arguments that I used to give would not work here: here, I have no argument which I can present in self-defence." And if it is taken in the sense of power, it would imply: "The power of which I was so proud in the world is no more: I have no army here and there is none to obey me: I stand as a miserable, helpless creature, who can do nothing to defend himself."

20. That is, not to speak of feeding a poor man himself, he did not even like to tell others that they should feed the hungry."

21. That is, the truth is not as you think it to be.

22. Here, "an honourable Messenger" implies the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) and in Sūrah At-Takvīr : 19, the angel Gabriel (peace be on him), the argument being that after describing the Qur'ān as the Word of an honourable Messenger, it has been said: "It is not the word of a poet ... nor of a soothsayer," and obviously the disbelievers of Makkah branded the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) and not Gabriel as a poet and soothsayer. On the contrary, in Sūrah At-Takvīr, after describing the Qur'ān as the word of "a noble messenger" it has been said: "That Messenger has great power, and has high ranks with the Owner of the Throne: there he is obeyed and held as trustworthy ... And Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) has seen him on the bright horizon." (vv. 20-23). Almost the same thing has been stated in An-Najm : 5-10 about Gabriel.

Here, the question arises: In what sense has the Qur'ān been described as the Word of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) and of Gabriel? The answer is: the people were hearing it being recited by the tongue of the Holy Prophet and the Holy Prophet by the tongue of Gabriel. Thereupon, in one way it was the word of the Holy Prophet and in another way of Gabriel, but a little below it has been explicitly stated: "It is indeed a Revelation from the Lord of the worlds," which is being presented before Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) by the tongue of Gabriel (peace be on him) and before the people by the

tongue of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings). The word Messenger itself points to the truth that the Word belongs to neither of them but they have presented it as Messengers of the One Who has sent it down.

23. One meaning of "little it is that you believe", according to Arabic idiom, can be: "You do not believe it at all." Another meaning also can be: "Hearing the Qur'ān your heart sometimes itself cries out: 'This cannot be mortal word'. Yet you behave stubbornly and refuse to believe in it."

24. In short: "I swear by whatever you see and by whatever you do not see that this Qur'ān is not the word of a poet or a soothsayer, but it is a Revelation from the Lord of the worlds, which is being presented by the Messenger who is noble and gentle." Let us now consider in what sense this oath has been sworn. That which was visible to the people was:

(1) This Word was being presented by a person who being noble and gentle was not hidden from anybody in the society of Makkah. Everyone knew that he was the best man of their nation in conduct. It could not be expected of such a man that he would forge a lie and attribute it to Allah, Lord of the worlds.

(2) They also saw clearly that he had no selfish motive in presenting that word before the people, but had rather sacrificed all his personal interests to it: had ruined his business, had abandoned every ease and comfort, was being cursed and abused by the same people who had shown him the highest veneration and esteem and had caused even his family and children to be subjected to these agonies besides himself. A person having selfish motives could not have submitted himself to such tribulations.

(3) They could also see that the lives of the people in their own society, who believed in him, underwent a sudden transformation. The word of no poet or soothsayer has been known to have brought about such a wonderful moral change in the people that his followers should become ready to face every hardship and bear up against every persecution for his sake.

(4) They were also not unaware of the language of poetry and the diction of the soothsayers. Apart from a stubborn disbelievers, no one could say that the language of the Qur'ān was the language of poetry or sorcery. (For a detailed discussion of this, see E.N. 7 of *Al-Anbiyā'*, E.N.'s 142-145 of *Ash-Shua'rā'*, E.N.22 of *Aṭ-Ṭūr*).

(5) This also was before their eyes that no one in entire Arabia was so eloquent of speech that his word could be brought to match with the Qur'ān. Not to speak of equalling it, not even the greatest poet's eloquence could even approach anywhere near the Qur'ān's.

(6) This also was not hidden from them that the language used by Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) himself was very different in its literary beauty and merit from the language of the Qur'ān. No Arabic speaking person could, after hearing the Holy Prophet's own speech, and the Qur'ān, say that both emanated from one and the same person.

(7) The people of Makkah had never heard even until a day before Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) made the claim to Prophethood anything relating to the themes that the Qur'ān consisted of, nor they knew that he had any means of obtaining that knowledge and information. That is why even if his opponents alleged that he obtained that information secretly from somewhere, no one in Makkah was prepared to believe it. (For explanation, see E.N. 107 of An-Naḥl and E.N. 12 of Al-Furqān).

(8) They could also see the wonderful workshop of existence, from the earth to the heavens, which was functioning before their eyes, and in which they could see a supreme, wise law and an all-pervading order and system at work. In it they could see no sign and evidence of the polytheism and denial of the Hereafter, which the Arabs had adopted as their creed, but there were signs and proofs of the existence of One God and of the truth of the Hereafter which the Qur'ān was presenting.

All this they could see, and what they did not see was: Allah Almighty alone is the Creator and Master and Ruler of this universe: all others are only creatures: none beside Him is God: Resurrection has to take place inevitably; Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) has really been appointed a Messenger by Allah Himself Who is sending down the Qur'ān to him. An oath has been sworn by both truths to affirm that which has been stated in the preceding verses.

25. The object is to impress the point that the Prophet has no authority whatever to make any change in the Revelation. If he did so, he would be severely punished. The style depicts the prompt and quick action of a king who strikes off the head of an official, holding him by the hand, if he commits a forgery in his name. Some

people have misconstrued this verse to mean that if the heart-vein or neck-vein of an impostor is not immediately severed by Allah, it would be a proof that he was a true prophet, whereas in this verse what has been said is about a true prophet and not about the impostors. Some impostors have even claimed to be God and have thrived and lived long lives in the world, so it could not be a proof of the truth of their claim. For a full discussion of this question, see E.N. 23 of Sūrah Yūnus.

26. That is, the Qur'ān is an admonition for those who wish to avoid wrongdoing and its evil consequences. (For explanation, see E.N. 3 of Al-Baqarah).

27. That is, they will ultimately have to despair and regret as to why they had rejected this Qur'ān.

LXX

AL-MA'ĀRIJ المَعَارِج

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

LXX

AL-MA'ĀRIJ المعارج

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name from the word *dhil-Ma'ārij* in verse 3.

Period of Revelation

The subject-matter bears evidence that this Sūrah too was sent down in conditions closely resembling those under which Sūrah Al-Hāqqah was sent down.

Theme and Subject-Matter

It admonishes and gives warning to the disbelievers who made fun of the news about Resurrection and the

Hereafter, and Hell and Heaven, and challenged the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) to cause Resurrection with which he threatened them to take place if what he said was true and they had become worthy of the punishment in Hell by denying it. The whole Sūrah is meant to answer this denial.

The Sūrah opens with words to the effect: "A demander has demanded a torment, the torment which must befall the deniers; and when it takes place, there will be none to prevent it, but it will take place at its own appointed time. Allah has His own way of doing things, but He is not unjust. Therefore, have patience, O Prophet, at what they say. They think it is far off, but We see it as near at hand."

Then it is said: "Resurrection, which they desire to be hastened out of jest and fun, is terrible, and when it comes, it will cause great distress to the culprits. At that time they will even be prepared to give away their wives and children and their nearest kinsfolk in ransom to escape the punishment, but they will not be able to escape it."

Then the people have been warned to the effect: "On that Day the destinies of men will be decided strictly on the basis of their belief and their conduct. Those who turn away from the Truth in the world and amass wealth and withhold it from the needy, will be doomed to Hell; and those who fear the punishment of God here, believe in the Hereafter, keep up the Prayer, discharge the rights of the needy out of their wealth, strictly avoid immoral and wicked deeds, practise honesty in all their dealings, fulfil their pledges and trusts and bear true witness, will have a place of honour in Paradise."

In conclusion, the disbelievers of Makkah who rushed in upon the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) from every side as soon as they saw him, in order to make fun of him, have been warned to the effect: "If you do not believe, Allah will replace you by other people who will be better than you", and the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has been consoled, so as to say: "Do not take to heart their mockery and jesting: leave them to indulge in their idle talk and foolish conduct if they are bent upon experiencing the disgrace and humiliation of the Resurrection: they will themselves see their evil end."



سَأَلَ سَائِلٌ بِعَذَابٍ وَاقِعٍ لِّلْكَافِرِينَ لَيْسَ لَهُ دَافِعٌ ۖ مِّنَ اللَّهِ ذِي
الْمَعَارِجِ ۖ تَعْرَجُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَالرُّوحُ إِلَيْهِ فِي يَوْمٍ كَانَ مِقْدَارُهُ خَمْسِينَ
أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ ۖ قَاصِرٌ مَّنْزِلًا جَبِيلًا ۚ إِنَّهُمْ يَرَوْنَهُ بَعِيدًا ۖ وَرَأَوْهُ قَرِيبًا ۖ
يَوْمَ تَكُونُ السَّمَاءُ كَالرَّهْلِ ۖ وَتَكُونُ الْجِبَالُ كَالْعِهْنِ ۖ وَلَا يَنْشُرُ حِمِيمٌ
حَبِيمًا ۖ يُبْصِرُونَ نَهْمَ يَوْمِ الْمُجْرِمِ ۖ لَوْ يَفْتَدِي مِنْ عَذَابٍ يَوْمِئِذٍ بَيْنِيكَ
وَصَاحِبَتِهِ وَأَخِيهِ ۖ وَفَصِيلَتِهِ الَّتِي تُؤَيِّدُهَا ۖ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا
ثُمَّ يُنْجِيهِ ۖ كَلَّا ۖ إِنَّمَا لَطَىٰ لِلزَّرَاعَةِ لِّلشَّوْىِ ۖ تَدْعُوا مَنْ أَدْبَرَ وَتَوَلَّىٰ ۖ
وَجَمَعَ فَأَوْعَىٰ ۖ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ خُلِقَ هَلُوعًا ۖ إِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ جَزُوعًا ۖ وَإِذَا
مَسَّهُ الْخَيْرُ مَنُوعًا ۖ إِلَّا الْمُصَلِّينَ ۚ الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَىٰ صَلَاتِهِمْ دَائِمُونَ ۖ
وَالَّذِينَ فِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ مَّعْلُومٌ ۖ لِلسَّائِلِ وَالْمَحْرُومِ ۖ وَالَّذِينَ
يُصَدِّقُونَ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ ۖ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ مِّنَ عَذَابِ رَبِّهِمْ مُشْفِقُونَ ۖ
إِنَّ عَذَابَ رَبِّهِمْ غَيْرُ مَأْمُونٍ ۖ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأُزْوَاجِهِمْ حَافِظُونَ ۖ إِلَّا
عَلَىٰ أَرْوَاجِهِمْ ۖ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ ۖ فَإِنَّهُمْ غَيْرُ مَلُومِينَ ۖ فَمَنْ ابْتَغَىٰ
وَرَاءَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْعُدُونَ ۖ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَمْتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ
رُغُوعُونَ ۖ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ بِشَهَادَتِهِمْ قَائِمُونَ ۖ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَىٰ صَلَاتِهِمْ
يُحَافِظُونَ ۖ أُولَٰئِكَ فِي جَنَّةٍ مُّكْرَمُونَ ۖ قَالِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا قَبْلَكَ

LXX

AL-MA'ARIJ المعارج

Verses : 44

Revealed at Makkah

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

A demander has demanded a torment,¹ (the torment) which must befall. It is for the disbelievers. There is none to avert it. It will come from that God Who is the Owner of the Steps of Ascent.² The angels and the Spirit³ ascend to His Presence⁴ in a day whose measure is fifty thousand years.⁵ So, have patience, O Prophet, a graceful patience.⁶ They think it is far off, but We see it as near at hand.⁷ (The torment shall befall on the Day⁸ when the heavens shall be like molten silver,⁹ and the mountains like carded wool of different colours.¹⁰ And no close friend shall ask after his close friend, though they will be shown to each other.¹¹ To save himself from the torment of that Day, the culprit shall wish to give his children, his wife, his brother, his kinsfolk who gave him shelter, and all the people of the earth, in ransom that this device might rescue him. No, never! It will be the flame of the blazing Fire, that will eat up the very flesh. It shall summon to itself every such person who drew away and turned his back and amassed wealth and guarded it jealously.¹²

1-18

Indeed, man has been created impatient.¹³ When affliction befalls him, he becomes fretful, and when good fortune falls to his lot, he becomes stingy. But those people (are an exception) who are the performers of *ṣalāt*:¹⁴ who are steadfast and ever constant in regard to their *ṣalāt*:¹⁵ in whose wealth there is a due share of the beggar and the needy;¹⁶ who believe in the reality of the

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Day of Recompense;¹⁷ who dread the torment of their Lord,¹⁸ for from the torment of their Lord none can feel secure; who guard their private parts¹⁹—except with regard to their wives and those women who are legally in their possession, for in their case they are not blameworthy, but those who go beyond this are indeed transgressors;²⁰—who keep their trusts and honour their promises;²¹ who bear true witnesses;²² and who strictly guard their *ṣalāt*.²³ These are they who shall live with honour in the Gardens of Paradise.

1. Some commentators have taken the verb *sa'ala* in the Text in the meaning of asking, and have interpreted the verse to mean: "The asker has asked: whom will the torment with which we are being threatened befall?" And Allah has answered it, saying: "It will befall the disbelievers." But most of the commentators have taken *sa'ala* here in the meaning of demanding. Nasā'i and other traditionists have related a tradition from Ibn 'Abbās, and Ḥākim holds it as authentic, that Naḍr bin al-Ḥārith Kaladah had said: "O God, if it is really the Truth sent down by You, then rain down stones on us from the heavens, or send down any other painful torment on us." (Al-Anfāl : 32). Apart from this, at several places in the Qur'ān the disbelievers' this challenge has been related: "Why don't you bring down on us the torment that you threaten us with?" For instance, see Yūnus : 46-48, Al-Anbiyā' : 36-41, An-Naml ; 67-72, Sabā : 26-30, Yā Sīn : 45-52, Al-Mulk : 24-27.

2. *Ma'ārij* is plural of *mi'raj*, which means a stairway, or a ladder, or something by which one may go up. To call Allah *dhil-Ma'ārij* (Owner of the Steps of Ascent) means that He is Most High and in order to go up into His Presence the angels have to ascend many heights, one above the other, as has been stated in the following verses.

3. "The Spirit": the Angel Gabriel (peace be on him), who has been mentioned separately from the angels in order to impress his unique glory and greatness. In Sūrah Ash-Shu'arā' it has been said: "The trustworthy Spirit has come down with this Qur'ān upon your heart", (v. 193), and in Sūrah Al-Baqarah "Say to them: whoever is an enemy to Gabriel, should understand that he has, by

Allah's command, revealed upon your heart this Qur'ān." (v. 97). These verses when read together show that *Ar-Rūh* (the Spirit) implies the Angel Gabriel.

4. This is an ambiguous theme the meaning of which cannot be determined precisely. We neither have any knowledge of the reality of the angels, nor can understand the nature of their ascent, nor can conceive the stairways on which they ascend. Besides, about Allah also it cannot be imagined that He lives in a particular place, for He is exalted and free from the restrictions of space and time.

5. In Al-Ḥajj : 47, it has been said: "These people are demanding of you to hasten the torment; Allah will never fail to fulfil His threat, but a day with your Lord is equal to a thousand years as you reckon." In Sūrah As-Sajdah : 5, it has been said: "He administers the affairs of the world from the heavens to the earth, and the report of this administration ascends (to be presented) before Him in a Day whose length, according to your reckoning, is a thousand years." And here, in response to the demand for the torment, the measure of Allah's one day has been stated to be fifty thousand years. Then the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has been consoled, saying: "Have patience at the demand for the torment which the people make out of jest and fun," and then it is said: "They think it is far off, but We see it as near at hand." When all these verses are read together, what becomes obvious is: "The people, because of their narrow and restricted outlook, measure the time of Allah's decrees by their own scales of time and, therefore, consider a hundred years or so to be a very lengthy period, whereas in the Divine conduct of affairs there are schemes spreading over a thousand years each, or fifty thousand years each, as you reckon, and this measure also is only by way of example; otherwise schemes in the universe may extend over millions and billions of years as well. Of these one is the scheme under which Mankind has been created on the earth, and a time limit has been set during which it has been allowed to function here. No man can know when this scheme began, what time-limit has been decreed for its completion, what Hour has been appointed for bringing it to an end, when Resurrection will take place, and what time has been fixed for raising all men, born since the beginning of creation till Resurrection, from death simultaneously and calling them to account for their deeds. We only know to some extent that part of the scheme

which is passing before us, or a partial history of the past ages which exists with us. As for its beginning and end, to say nothing of knowing it, we do not even have the power to understand it, not to speak of understanding the wisdom which works behind and underlies it. Now the people who demand that the scheme be cut short and its conclusion be brought immediately before them, and if this is not done, they use it for an argument to prove that the universe has no end and conclusion, in fact, present a proof of their own ignorance and folly. (For further explanation, see E.N.'s 92, 93 of Sūrah Al-Hajj, E.N. 9 of As-Sajdah).

6. "A goodly patience": "A kind of patience that behoves a magnanimous person like you."

7. This can have two meanings: (1) "That these people think it cannot possibly take place, and in Our view it is going to take place very soon"; and (2) "that these people think Resurrection is yet remote and far off, and in Our sight it is close at hand and may occur any moment."

8. A section of the commentators regard this sentence as related to "a day whose measure is fifty thousand years"; they say that the day whose measure has been stated to be fifty thousand years is the Day of Resurrection. In Musnad Aḥmad and in the *Tafsir* by Ibn Jarir, a tradition has been related, on the authority of Hadrat Abū Sa'īd Khudrī, saying: "When wonder and amazement was expressed before the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) about the length of this Day with reference to this verse, he replied: 'By Him in Whose hand is my life, the believer will find the Day even lighter (of shorter duration) than the time he takes in performing an obligatory Prayer in the world.'" Had this tradition been reported through authentic channels, this verse could not be interpreted in any other way, but two of its transmitters, Darrāj and his teacher Abul-Haytham, are both weak and untrustworthy.

9. That is, it will change its colour over and over again.

10. As the colours of the mountains are different, when they are uprooted and they drift about weightless, they will appear like flakes of carded wool of different colours.

11. Not so that they will not see each other, therefore they will not ask after each other's welfare, but each will be seeing the other in agony and distress, yet will ignore him, being wholly pre-occupied with his own torment.

12. Here also, as in Al-Hāqqah : 33-34, two causes have been mentioned of a person's evil end in the Hereafter: (1) His repudiation of the Truth and refusal to affirm faith; and (2) his worship of the world and stinginess because of which he amasses wealth and refuses to spend it on any good cause.

13. "Man has been created impatient": It is man's nature, or his natural weakness, to be impatient. Here, one should keep in view that at many places in the Qur'an, after making mention of mankind's common moral weaknesses, those who believe and adopted righteousness, have been made an exception; the same theme is being expressed in the following verses. This by itself explains the truth that these hereditary weaknesses are not unalterable; if man accepts the guidance sent down by God and tries to reform himself practically, he can remove them, and if he gives a free rope to his self these become ingrained in him deeply. (For further explanation, see E.N. 41 of Al-Anbiyā', E.N.'s 23-28 of Az-Zumar, E.N. 75 of Ash-Shūrā).

14. A person's performing the *ṣalāt* necessarily implies that he believes in Allah, His Messenger, His Book and the Hereafter as well as tries to act according to his this belief.

15. That is, no laziness, or love of ease and comfort, no occupation, or interest, hinders them from being punctual and regular at the Prayer. When the Prayer time comes, they abandon every occupation and activity and stand up to perform worship of their God. Another meaning which Ḥaḍrat 'Uqbah bin 'Āmir has given of '*alā ṣalāt-i-him dā'īmūn*' is that they perform the Prayer with full peace of mind, tranquillity and humility; they do not try to offer the Prayer in a hurry in order to be rid of it somehow, nor think irrelevant things during the Prayer.

16. In Sūrah Adh-Dhāriyāt : 19, it has been said: "In their wealth there is a right of the beggar and the needy", and here: "In their wealth there is a due share of the beggar and the needy." Some people have understood this to mean that the "due share" implies the obligatory *zakāt*, for in the *zakāt* both the exemption limit and the rate have been fixed. But this commentary cannot be accepted on the ground that the Sūrah Al-Ma'ārij is unanimously a Makkan Revelation, and the *zakāt* with its specific exemption limit and rate was enjoined at Madīnah. Therefore, the correct meaning of the "due share" is that they have of their own accord set aside a share

in their possessions of the beggar and needy, which they discharge regularly and honestly. This same meaning of this verse has been given by Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar, Mujāhid, Sha'bī and Ibrahīm Nakha'ī.

Here, *sā'il* does not imply a beggar but a needy person, who asks someone for help, and *maḥrūm* implies a person who is jobless, or the one who tries to earn a living but does not earn enough to meet his needs, or the one who has become disabled because of an accident or calamity, and is unable to make a living. About such people when it becomes known that they are destitute, a God-worshipper does not wait that they should ask for help, but helps them of his own accord as soon as he comes to know that they are needy and stand in need of help. (For further explanation, see E.N. 17 of Sūrah Adh-Dhāriyāt).

17. "Who believe ... Day of Recompense": who do not think they are irresponsible but believe that one Day they will have to appear before their God and render to Him an account of their deeds.

18. In other words, they are not like the disbelievers, who do not fear God even after they have committed every heinous sin and crime and perpetrated every cruelty in the world, but they, in spite of having adopted a righteous attitude in morals and deeds as best as they could, fear God and continue to remain in constant awe lest their shortcomings should exceed their good works before Him and they should be declared as worthy of punishment. (For further explanation, see E.N. 54 of Al-Mu'minūn, E.N. 19 of Adh-Dhāriyāt).

19. "Who guard their private parts": who abstain from adultery as well as from nudity and exposing their private parts before others. (For explanation, see E.N. 6 of Al-Mu'minūn, E.N.'s 30, 32 of An-Nūr, E.N. 62 of Al-Aḥzāb).

20. For explanation, see E.N. 7 of Al-Mu'minūn).

21. "Trusts" imply those trusts which Allah has entrusted to men as well as those which one man entrusts to another because of faith and confidence. Likewise, "promises" imply those promises which man makes with his God as well as those which one man makes with another. Keeping and fulfilling both these kinds of trusts and promises is a necessary characteristic of a believer. In a *Hadith* Ḥaḍrat Anas (may Allah bless him) has reported that when-

(Contd. on page 69)

مُهْطِعِينَ ۖ عَنِ الْيَمِينِ وَعَنِ الشِّمَالِ عِزِينَ ۗ أَيُّظَعُ كُلُّ امْرِئٍ
 مِنْهُمْ أَنْ يُدْخَلَ جَنَّةً نَعِيمًا ۗ كَلَّا ۗ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاهُمْ مِمَّا يَعْلَمُونَ ۗ فَلَا
 أُنْسُ لِرَبِّ الشَّرِيقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ إِنَّا لَقَادِرُونَ ۗ عَلَىٰ أَنْ نُبَدِّلَ خَيْرًا مِنْهُمْ ۗ
 وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمَسْبُوقِينَ ۗ فَذَرَهُمْ يَخُوضُوا وَيَلْعَبُوا حَتَّىٰ يُلَاقُوا يَوْمَهُمُ الَّذِي
 يُوْعَدُونَ ۗ يَوْمَ يُخْرَجُونَ مِنَ الْأَجْدَاثِ سِرَاعًا كَانَتْهُمْ إِلَىٰ نَصْبِ نُوفُوضُونَ ۗ
 خَاشِعَةً أَبْصَارُهُمْ تَرْهُقُهُمْ ذُلَّةٌ ۗ ذَٰلِكَ الْيَوْمُ الَّذِي كَانُوا يُوْعَدُونَ ۗ

So, O Prophet, what is the matter with the disbelievers that they are rushing in towards you, from the right and from the left, in groups?²⁴ Does everyone of them cherish the desire that he will be admitted into the Garden of Bliss?²⁵ No, never! They themselves know of what We have created them.²⁶ Not so!²⁷ I swear by the Owner of the Easts and the Wests²⁸ that We have the power to replace them by better people than they, and there is none to outstrip Us.²⁹ Hence, leave them engrossed in their vain talk and sport until they encounter that Day of theirs which they are being promised, when they shall be rushing out of their graves as though racing towards the shrines of their deities.³⁰ Their eyes shall be downcast and abasement shall be covering them. That is the Day which they are being promised.

36-44

(Contd. from page 68)

ever the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) addressed his Companions, he would always give them the instruction: "Beware, the one who does not keep his trust has no faith, and one who does not fulfil his pledges, has no religion." (Baihaqi, *Ash-Shu'ab al-Imān*).

22. That is, they neither conceal evidence nor change it in any way for selfish motives.

23. This gives an idea of the importance of the Prayer (*ṣalāt*). The description of the merits of the high and sublime character of those who have been declared as worthy of Paradise, began with the Prayer and has been concluded with it. To be a performer of the Prayer is their first characteristic, to be steadfast and ever constant with regard to the Prayer is their second characteristic, and to guard their Prayer is their last characteristic. "Guarding the Prayer" implies many things: to perform the Prayer at its right time, to make sure before the Prayer that one's body and clothes are clean and pure, to have performed the ablutions and to have washed the limbs well, to perform the basic elements of the Prayer with its obligatory and desirable parts with due care and attention, to observe the requisite rites of the Prayer carefully, to avoid disobedience of God, which is destructive of the Prayer; all these are included in the guarding of the Prayer.

24. This refers to those disbelievers who would rush in towards the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) from every side to mock and ridicule him when they heard him preach Islam and recite the Qur'ān.

25. It means that God's Paradise is only for those righteous people whose characteristics have just been described above. Now, can these people who are not at all inclined to listen to the truth and who are rushing in towards the Prophet in order to suppress every invitation to the truth, be candidates for Paradise? Has God prepared His Paradise only for such people as they? Here, one should also keep in view vv. 34-41 of Sūrah Al-Qalam in which an answer has been given to this saying of the disbelievers of Makkah: "Even if there is any life after death, we shall have good time there too, as we are having in the world, and the torment will befall Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) and his followers and not us."

26. Here, this sentence can have two meanings: (1) If it is taken to be related to the preceding theme, it will mean: As for the substance these people have been created from, all men are equal. For if the substance itself be the cause of man's entry into Paradise, then the good and the bad, the wicked and the just, the guilty and the innocent, all should go to Paradise. But a little common sense is enough to decide that man's qualifications for Paradise are created not on the basis of the substance of his creation

but only on the basis of his merit and excellence. (2) If this sentence is regarded as an introduction to the following theme, it would mean: "These people think they are secure from Our torment and mock the one who warns them of Our punishment, whereas We can punish them even in this world as and when We please, as well as resurrect them after death as and when We like. They themselves know that We began their creation from an insignificant sperm-drop and developed them into a living man. If they had only considered this mode of their creation, they would never have been involved in the misunderstanding that they now have escaped Our grasp, or that We have no power to create them over again."

27. That is, the truth is not that which these people think it is.

28. Here, Allah has sworn an oath by Himself. The words Easts and Wests have been used because the sun rises and sets at a new angle every day during the year, and goes on rising and setting successively at different times around the globe. Thus considered the Easts and the Wests are not one but many. From another point of view as against the north and the south there is a direction of east and a direction of west. On this basis in Sūrah Ash-Shua'ra': 28 and Al-Muzzammil: 19 the words *Rabb-ul-mashriqi wal-maghrib* have been used. From still another view-point the earth has two easts and two wests, for when the sun sets on one hemisphere, it rises on the other. On this basis the words *Rabb-ul-mashriqayn wa Rabb-ul-maghribayn* (Lord of two easts and two wests) have been used in Sūrah Ar-Rahmān: 17. (For further explanation, see E.N. 17 of Ar-Rahmān).

29. This is that for which Allah Almighty has sworn an oath of His being Lord of the Easts and Wests. It means: "As We are Owners of the Easts and Wests, the whole earth is under Our control and power, and you have no power to escape Our punishment: We can destroy you as and when We like and can create another people that may be better than you."

30. There is a difference of opinion among the commentators about the meaning of the word *nuṣub*. Some have interpreted it to mean idols, according to which the meaning would be: "They would be racing towards the place appointed by the Lord of Resurrection as they race today towards the shrines of their idols"; and some others have taken *nuṣub* to mean the goal signs which are set for the competitors in a race, so that each tries to reach and touch the appointed post before the other.

LXXI

NŪH نُوح

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

LXXI

NŪH نُوح

INTRODUCTION

Name

“Nūh” is the name of this Sūrah as well as the title of its subject-matter, for in it, from beginning to the end, the story of the Prophet Noah has been related.

Period of Revelation

This also is one of the earliest Sūrahs to be revealed at Makkah, but the internal evidence of its subject-matter shows that it was sent down in the period when opposition to the Holy Prophet’s message of Islam by the disbelievers of Makkah had grown very strong and active.

Theme and Subject

In this Sūrah the story of the Prophet Noah has not been related only for the sake of story-telling, but its object is to warn the disbelievers of Makkah, so as to say: "You, O people of Makkah, are adopting towards Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) the same attitude as the people of the Prophet Noah had adopted towards him; if you do not change this attitude, you too would meet with the same end." This has not been said in so many words anywhere in the Sūrah, but in the background of the conditions under which this story was narrated to the people of Makkah, this subject itself became obvious.

Vv. 2-4 briefly explain how he began his mission and what he preached.

Then after suffering hardships and troubles in the way of preaching his mission for ages the report that he made to his Lord has been given in vv. 5-20. In it he states how he had been trying to bring his people to the right path and how his people had stubbornly opposed him.

After this, the Prophet Noah's final submission has been recorded in vv. 21-24, in which he prays to his Lord, saying: "These people have rejected my invitation: they are blindly following their chiefs, who have devised a tremendous plot of deceit and cunning. Time now has come when these people should be deprived of every grace to accept guidance." This was not an expression of impatience by the Prophet Noah, but when after having preached his message under extremely trying circumstances for centuries he became utterly disappointed with his people, he formed the opinion that no chance whatever was left of their coming to the right path. His this opinion fully conformed to Allah's

own decision. Thus, in the next verse (25), it has been said: "The torment of Allah descended on those people because of their misdeeds."

In the concluding verse, the Prophet Noah's supplication that he made to his Lord, right at the time the torment descended, has been recorded. In it he prays for his own and for all the believers' forgiveness, and makes a submission to Allah to the effect: "Do not leave any of the disbelievers alive on the earth, for they have become utterly devoid of every good: they will not beget any but disbelieving and wicked descendents."

While studying this Sūrah one should keep in view the details of the Prophet Noah's story which have been given in the Qur'ān above. For this see Al-A'rāf: 59-64, Yūnus : 71, 73, Hūd : 25-49, Al-Mu'minūn : 23-31, Ash-Shua'rā' : 105-122, Al-Ankabūt : 14, 15, Aṣ-Ṣāffāt : 75-82, Al-Qamar : 9-16.

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إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ أَنْ أَنْذِرْ قَوْمَكَ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَهُمْ عَذَابٌ
 أَلِيمٌ ۗ قَالَ يَقَوْمِ إِنِّي لَكُمْ نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ ۗ أَنْ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاتَّقُوهُ وَ
 أَطِيعُوا ۗ يَغْفِرَ لَكُمْ مِنْ ذُنُوبِكُمْ وَ يُؤَخِّرْكُمْ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ۗ إِنَّ أَجَلَ
 اللَّهِ إِذَا جَاءَ لَا يُؤَخَّرُ ۗ لَوْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ۗ قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي دَعَوْتُ قَوْمِي لَيْلًا
 وَ نَهَارًا ۗ فَلَمْ يَزِدْهُمْ دُعَاؤِي إِلَّا فِرَارًا ۗ وَإِنِّي كُلَّمَا دَعَوْتُهُمْ لِتَغْفِرَ لَهُمْ
 جَعَلُوا أَصَابِعَهُمْ فِي آذَانِهِمْ وَ اسْتَعْشَوْا ثِيَابَهُمْ وَ اصْتَرَوْا وَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا
 اسْتِكْبَارًا ۗ ثُمَّ إِنِّي دَعَوْتُهُمْ جِهَارًا ۗ ثُمَّ إِنِّي أَعْلَنْتُ لَهُمْ وَأَسْرَرْتُ لَهُمْ
 إِسْرَارًا ۗ فَقُلْتُ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ غَفَّارًا ۗ يُرْسِلِ السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْكُمْ
 مِدْرَارًا ۗ وَيُزِيلُ كُفْرَكُمْ بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ وَ يُجْعَلْ لَكُمْ
 أَنْهَارًا ۗ مَا لَكُمْ لَا تَرْجُونَ لِلَّهِ وَقَارًا ۗ وَقَدْ خَلَقَكُمْ أَطْوَارًا ۗ أَلَمْ تَرَوْا كَيْفَ
 خَلَقَ اللَّهُ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ طِبَاقًا ۗ وَ جَعَلَ الْقَمَرَ فِيهِنَّ نُورًا وَ جَعَلَ الشَّمْسَ

LXXI

نُوح
NŪH

Verses : 28

Revealed at Makkah

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

We sent Noah to his people (as a Messenger, with the instruction): "Warn your people before there comes upon them a painful torment."

2-4 He said, "O my people, I am a plain warner to you. (I warn you) that you should worship Allah, and fear Him and obey me.² Allah will forgive you your sins,³ and will give you respite till an appointed time.⁴ The fact is that when the appointed time of Allah comes, it cannot be deferred.⁵ Would that you knew it."⁶

5-20 Noah submitted,⁷ "O my Lord, I called my people night and day, but my calling has only increased their aversion.⁸ And whenever I called them that You might pardon them,⁹ they thrust their fingers into their ears and covered their faces with their garments,¹⁰ and grew obstinate and showed great arrogance.¹¹ Then I invited them openly and preached to them in public as well as in private. I said, 'Seek forgiveness from your Lord: indeed He is All-Forgiving. He will send abundant rains for you from heaven, will help you with wealth and children, will create gardens for you, and provide flowing rivers for you.'¹² What is the matter with you that you do not expect for Allah any dignity,¹³ although He has created you in successive stages?¹⁴ Do you not see how Allah has created seven heavens, one above the other, and made the moon a light in them and the sun a lamp? And Allah has caused you to grow out of the earth in a strange way,¹⁵ then He will restore you to the same earth, and will raise you up from it suddenly. And Allah has spread out the earth as a carpet for you that you may walk in its open paths'."

1. "Warn your people ...": Warn them that the errors and moral evils that they were involved in, would only earn them Allah's punishment, if they did not desist from them, and tell them what way they should adopt in order to ward off that punishment.

2. The three things which the Prophet Noah presented before his people at the outset of his mission of Prophethood were: (1) Worship of Allah, (2) adoption of piety (*taqwā*), and (3) obedience of the Messenger. Worship of Allah meant that they should

give up worship and service of all others and should acknowledge Allah alone as their Deity and should worship and carry out His commands alone. *Taqwā* (piety) meant that they should refrain from all those works which caused Allah's anger and displeasure, and should instead adopt such attitude in their lives as the God-fearing people should adopt. As for "obey me", it meant that they should obey the commands that he gave them as Allah's Messenger.

3. The sentence *yaghfir la-kum min dhunūb-i-kum* in the original does not mean that Allah will forgive some of their sins, but its correct meaning is: "If you accept and acknowledge the three things which are being presented before you, He will forgive all the sins that you have committed in the past."

4. That is, "If you accepted these three things, you would be given respite to live in the world until the time that Allah has appointed for your natural death."

5. "The appointed time of Allah ...": the time fixed by Allah for sending down a torment on a people. In this regard the Qur'an has at several places stated explicitly that when Allah's torment has been decreed for a certain people, they are not pardoned even if they affirm the faith after it.

6. That is, "If you come to know fully well that the time which is now passing after you have received Allah's message through me, is, in fact, a period of respite that has been granted to you for affirming the faith — and there is no chance of escape from Allah's torment after the term of respite has elapsed — you would testify to the faith without delay and would not like to postpone it until the torment actually started descending on you."

7. Omitting the history of a long period of preaching, now the Prophet Noah's petition that he made to Allah in the last stage of his worldly mission is being related.

8. That is, "As I went on calling them towards You, they went on fleeing farther and farther away from You."

9. "That you might pardon them": that they might give up their attitude of disobedience and beg forgiveness of Allah, for in that way alone they could be forgiven by Allah.

10. They covered their faces either because they did not even like to have a look at the Prophet Noah's face, not to speak of listening to what he said, or they did so in order to hide their own

faces from him as they passed by him so that he could not recognize and address them. This precisely was the attitude and conduct which the disbelievers of Makkah were adopting towards the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace). In Sūrah Hūd : 5, their attitude has been described thus: "Behold, they turn aside their chests in order to hide themselves from him. Beware, even when they cover themselves up with their garments, Allah knows alike what they hide and what they show; He indeed knows even the secrets they conceal in their breasts." (For explanation, see E.N. 5, 6 of Hūd).

11. "Arrogance" implies that they thought it was below their dignity to bow before the Truth and accept the admonition of Allah's Messenger. As for example, if a gentleman admonishes a perverted person and he, in response, shakes his head and walks away haughtily, this would amount to rejecting the admonition with arrogance.

12. This theme has been expressed at several places in the Qur'ān that the rebellious attitude against God causes man to lead a wretched life not only in the Hereafter but also in this world. Contrary to this, if a nation adopts the way of faith and piety and obedience to Divine Commands, instead of disobedience, it benefits it not only in the Hereafter but also in the world; it is favoured with every kind of blessing. In Sūrah Tā Hā it has been said: "And whoever turns away from My Admonition, will have a wretched life in the world, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Resurrection." (v. 124). In Sūrah Al-Mā'idah it has been said: "Had the people of the Book observed the Torah and the Gospel and the other Books which had been sent down by their Lord, abundance of provisions would have been given to them from above and from beneath." (v. 66). In Al-A'rāf: "Had the people of the settlements believed and adopted the way of piety, We would have opened on them doors of blessings from the heavens and the earth." (v. 96). In Sūrah Hūd, the Prophet Hūd addressed his people, saying: "And O my people, beg forgiveness of your Lord, then turn to Him in penitence, and He will open the gates of heavens for you and add more strength to your present strength." (v. 52). Through the Holy Prophet himself in this very Sūrah Hūd, the people of Makkah have been admonished to the effect: "And you should beg forgiveness of your Lord, then return to Him, and He will provide you with good provisions of life till an appointed term." (v. 3). According to the *Hadith*, the Holy Prophet said to the Quraish: "There is a word which, if you accept, would enable you to rule over the Arab as well

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as the non-Arab world." (For explanation, see E.N. 96 of Al-Mā'idah, E.N.'s 3, 57 of Hūd, E.N. 105 of Ṭā Hā; Introduction to Sūrah Ṣuād).

Acting on this same instruction from the Qur'an, once during a famine Ḥaḍrat 'Umar came out to invoke Allah for the rain and begged only forgiveness of Him. The people said: "O Commander of the Faithful, you have not prayed for the rain." He replied: "I have knocked at the doors of heaven wherefrom the rain is sent down", and then he recited these verses of Sūrah Nūḥ to them. (Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Kathīr). Likewise, when in the assembly of Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan Baṣrī, a person complained of drought, he said to him: "Beg forgiveness of Allah." Another person complained of poverty, a third one said that he was not being blessed with children, a fourth one said that his harvest had failed, and he continued to remind everyone to beg forgiveness of Allah. The people asked: "How is it that you have suggested to all the people one and the same cure for the different complaints? He in response recited these verses of Sūrah Nūḥ to them" (Al-Kashshāf).

13. It means: "As for the petty chiefs of the world, you think it would be dangerous to do anything against their dignity, but as for the Creator and Lord of the universe, you do not expect that He would also be a Being endowed with dignity. You rebel against Him, associate others in His Divinity, disobey His Commands, and yet you are not at all afraid that He would punish you for your misconduct."

14. That is, "He has brought you to the present stage after passing you through different stages of creation and phases of development. In the beginning you lay in the form of sperm and ovum separately in the loins of your father and mother. Then the two were combined by the power of Allah and you were conceived. Then for nine months in the womb of the mother you were gradually formed into a perfect human form and were endowed with all those capabilities which you needed to function as a man in the world. Then you came out as a child from the mother's womb, and you were developed from one state to another constantly until you attained to full youth and then old age. While passing through all these stages you lay wholly in the power of Allah at all times. Had He so willed He would not have allowed you to be conceived but allowed another person to be conceived in your place. Had He so pleased He would have made you blind, deaf, dumb, or a cripple.

in the mother's womb itself, or made you mentally deficient. Had He so liked you would not have been born as a living child. Even after your birth He could have destroyed you any time by causing you to fall a victim to one or other accident suddenly. About that God under Whose power you are so powerless, how could you have taken it into your head that you could commit any insolence against Him, could regard Him with every treachery and ingratitude, could rebel against Him as and when you pleased, and could do all this with impunity?

15. Here, the creation of man out of the substances of the earth has been compared to the growth of vegetation. Just as at one time there was no vegetation on the earth, then Allah caused it to grow, so at one time man did not exist, then Allah created him.

يَرَا جَاءَ وَ اللَّهُ أَتَيْتُكَ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ نَبَاتًا ۖ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُكُمْ فِيهَا وَ يُخْرِجُكُمْ
 إِخْرَاجًا ۚ وَ اللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ الْأَرْضَ سَاطًا ۖ لَتَسْلُكُوا مِنْهَا سُبُلًا فِجَاجًا ۚ
 قَالَ نُوحُ رَبِّ إِنَّهُمْ عَصَوْنِي وَ أَتَّبَعُوا مَنْ كَمُ يَزِدُهُ مَالَهُ وَ وَ لَدَهُ إِلَّا
 خَسَارًا ۖ وَ مَكْرُوا مَكْرًا كُبْرًا ۖ وَ قَالُوا لَا تَذَرُنَّ آلِهَتَكُمْ وَ لَا تَذَرُنَّ وَ دًا
 وَ لَا سُوَاعًا وَ لَا يَغُوثَ وَ يَعُوقَ وَ نَسْرًا ۖ وَ قَدْ أَضَلُّوا كَثِيرًا ۖ وَ لَا تَزِدْ
 الظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا ضَلَالًا ۖ مِمَّا خَطَبْتَهُمْ أُغْرِقُوا فَأَدْخَلُوا نَارًا ۖ فَلَمَّا يَجِدُوا أَهْلَهُمْ
 مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَنْصَارًا ۖ وَ قَالَ نُوحٌ رَبِّ لَا تَذَرْ عَلَي الْأَرْضَ مِنْ
 الْكَافِرِينَ دِيَارًا ۚ إِنَّكَ إِنْ تَذَرَهُمْ يُضِلُّوا عِبَادَكَ وَ لَا يَلِدُوا إِلَّا فَاجِرًا
 كَفَّارًا ۖ رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي وَ لِوَالِدَيَّ وَ لِمَنْ دَخَلَ بَيْتِي مُؤْمِنًا وَ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ
 وَ الْوَالِدِينَ وَ لَا تَزِدِ الظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا تَبَارًا ۖ

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 الظالمين

Noah said, "O my Lord, they have disobeyed me and followed those (chiefs) whose wealth and children have increased them only in loss. They have devised a mighty plot;¹⁶ they said, 'Do not at all abandon your gods, and do not abandon Wadd nor Suwā', nor Yaghūth and Ya'ūq and Nasr.¹⁷ They have led many people astray, and so (O Lord), increase not the wrongdoers in anything but deviation'.¹⁸

21-24

Only because of their sins they were drowned and were cast into Fire.¹⁹ Then they found no helper to save them from Allah.²⁰ And Noah prayed: "My Lord, leave not on the earth any dweller from among the disbelievers. If you leave them, they would lead Your servants astray, and would beget none but sinners and

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disbelievers. My Lord, forgive me and my parents and whoever has entered my house as a believer, and all believing men and all believing women, and increase not the wrongdoers in anything but ruin."

16. "Mighty plot": All those deceits, deceptions and frauds which the chiefs and religious guides were employing in an attempt to mislead the common people against the teachings of the Prophet Noah. For example, they said: "Noah is no more than a mere man like yourselves. How can one believe that Allah sends down Revelations to him? (Al-A'rāf : 63, Hūd : 27). "We also see that only the meanest of us have become his followers without due thought. Had there been some weight in what he says, the elders of the people would have believed in him." (Hūd : 27). "Had Allah willed, He would have sent down angels." (Al-Mu'minūn : 24). "He he been sent by Allah, he would possess treasures, he would know the unseen, and he would be free from all human needs, like the angels." (Hūd : 31). "We find nothing in him that might give him superiority over us." (Hūd : 27). "He merely intends to obtain superiority over you." (Al-Mu'minūn : 24). "Obviously, this man is possessed." (Al-Mu'minūn : 25). Similar were the things that the Quraish chiefs said to mislead the people against the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace).

17. Of the gods of the Prophet Noah's people only those gods have been mentioned, whom later the people of Arabia also had started worshipping and whose shrines were found all over the country at the advent of Islam. It is not impossible that the later generations heard the names of the ancient gods of Noah's people from the people who were saved from the Flood, and when ignorance once again spread among their children, they made idols of the same gods and started worshipping them again.

Wadd was the god of the Banī Kalb bin Wabarab, a branch of the Quḍā'ah tribe, whose shrine had been built at Dūmat al-Jandal. In the ancient Arabian inscriptions he has been named as *Waddam Abam* (father *Wadd*). Kalbī has stated that the image built to him was of a man of enormous size. The Quraish also acknowledged him as god and called him *Wudd*. It is after him that a person has been named 'Abd-i Wudd (slave of Wudd) in history.

Buwā' was the goddess of the Hudhayl tribe and her idol was a female figure. Her temple was situated at Rubāṭ near Yanbū'.

Yaghūth was the god of An'um, a branch of the Ṭay tribe, and of some branches of the Madhjih tribe. The people of Madhjih had installed its idol, the image of a lion, at Jurash, a place between Yaman and Hijāz. Among the Quraish also some people have been named 'Abd-i Yaghūth.

Ya'ūq was the god of Khaywān, a branch of the Hamdān tribe, in the territory of Hamdān in Yaman; its idol was of the horse's figure.

Nasr was the god of Āl-i dhul-Kulā', a branch of the Himyar tribe, in the territory of Himyar; it had its idol installed at Balkha' and had the image of the vulture. In the ancient inscriptions of Sabā its name has been written as Nasor. Its temple was called *bayt Nasor* (house of Nasor) and its devotees *ahl Nasor* (people of Nasor). The ruins of the ancient temples that are found in Arabia and in the adjoining lands have the image of the vulture made on the doors of most of them.

18. As we have explained in the Introduction to this Sūrah, the Prophet Noah did not invoke this curse out of impatience but he invoked it when, after doing full justice to the preaching of his mission for many centuries, he became totally despaired of any success with his people. Similar were the conditions under which the Prophet Moses also had cursed Pharaoh and his people, thus: "Lord, destroy their wealth and harden their hearts in a manner so that they do not believe until they see the painful torment." And Allah, in response, had said: "The prayer of you both has been granted" (Yūnus : 88-89). Like the Prophet Moses', the Prophet Noah's curse also was in complete conformity with Divine Will. Thus, in Sūrah Hūd it has been said: "And it was revealed to Noah: No more of your people will believe in you now than those who have already believed. So, do not grieve at their misdeeds." (v. 36).

19. That is, "Drowning was not their end, but after death their souls were immediately subjected to the punishment of the Fire." This precisely was the treatment that was meted out to Pharaoh and his people, as has been stated in Sūrah Al-Mu'min : 45-46. (For explanation, see E.N. 63 of Al-Mu'min). This verse

also is of those verses which prove the punishment of *barzakh* (intermediary stage between death and Resurrection).

20. That is, "None of the gods whom they looked upon as their supporters and helpers came to their rescue." This, in fact, was a warning to the people of Makkah, as if to say: "If you too are subjected to the torment of Allah, your these gods on whom you have placed all your reliance, will avail you absolutely nothing."

LXXII

AL-JINN الجِنّ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

LXXII

AL-JINN الجنّ

INTRODUCTION

Name

“*Al-Jinn*” is the name of this Sūrah as well as the title of its subject-matter, for in it the event of the Jinn’s hearing the Qur’ān and returning to their people to preach Islam to them has been related in detail.

Period of Revelation

According to a tradition related in Bukhārī and Muslim, on the authority of Ḥaḍrat ‘Abdullah bin ‘Abbās, once the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was going to visit the Fair of ‘Ukāz with some of his Companions. On the way he led the Fajr Prayer at

Nakhlah. At that time a company of the jinn happened to pass that way. When they heard the Qur'ān being recited, they tarried and listened to it attentively. This very event has been described in this Sūrah.

Most of the commentators, on the basis of this tradition, believe that this relates to the Holy Prophet's well-known journey to Ṭā'if, which had taken place three years before the Hijrah in the 10th year of the Prophethood. But this is not correct for several reasons. The jinn's hearing the Qur'ān during the journey to Ṭā'if has been related in Al-Aḥqāf: 29-32. A cursory reading of those verses shows that the jinn who had believed after hearing the Qur'ān on that occasion were already believers in the Prophet Moses and the previous scriptures. On the contrary, vv. 2-7 of this Sūrah clearly show that the jinn who heard the Qur'ān on this occasion were polytheists and deniers of the Hereafter and Prophethood. Then, it is confirmed historically that in his journey to Ṭā'if none accompanied the Holy Prophet except Ḥaḍrat Zaid bin Ḥārithah. On the contrary, concerning this journey Ibn 'Abbās says that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was accompanied by some of his Companions. Furthermore, the traditions also agree that in that journey the jinn heard the Qur'ān when the Holy Prophet had stopped at Nakhlah on his return journey from Ṭā'if to Makkah, and in this journey, according to the traditions of Ibn 'Abbās, the event of the jinn's hearing the Qur'ān occurred when the Holy Prophet was going to 'Ukāz from Makkah. Therefore, in view of these reasons what seems to be correct is that in Sūrah Al-Aḥqāf and Sūrah Al-Jinn, one and the same event has not been narrated, but these were two separate events, which took place during two separate journeys.

As far as Sūrah Al-Aḥqāf is concerned, it is agreed that the event mentioned in it occurred on the return journey from Ṭā'if in the 10th year of Prophethood. As for the question, when this second event took place, its answer is not given by the tradition of Ibn 'Abbās, nor any other historical tradition shows as to when the Holy Prophet had gone to the Fair of 'Ukāz along with some of his Companions. However, a little consideration of vv. 8-10 of this Sūrah shows that this could only be an event of the earliest stage of Prophethood. In these verses it has been stated that before the appointment of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) to Divine Mission the jinn used to have one or another opportunity to eavesdrop in the heavens in order to hear news of the unseen, but after it they suddenly found that angels had been set as guards and meteorites were being shot on every side so that they could find no place of safety from where they could hear the secret news. Thereupon they had set about searching for the unusual thing that had occurred on the earth, or was going to occur, because of which the security measures had been tightened up. Probably since then many companies of the jinn must have been moving about in search of the unusual occurrence and one of them after having heard the Qur'ān from the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) must have formed the opinion that that was the very thing for the sake of which all the gates of the heavens had been shut against the jinn.

Reality of Jinn

Before one starts the study of this Sūrah one must clearly know what is the reality of the jinn so as to avoid any possible mental confusion. Many people of the modern times are involved in the misunderstanding that the jinn are not real, but only a figment of the

ancient superstition and myths. They have not formed this opinion on the basis that they have known all the realities and truths about the universe and have thus discovered that the jinn do not exist. They cannot claim to possess any such knowledge either. But they have assumed without reason and proof that nothing exists in the universe except what they can see, whereas the sphere of human perceptions as against the vastness of this great universe is not even comparable to a drop of water as against the ocean. Here, the person who thinks that what he does not perceive, does not exist, and what exists must necessarily be perceived, in fact, provides a proof of the narrowness of his own mind. With this mode of thought, not to speak of the jinn, man cannot even accept and acknowledge any reality, which he cannot directly experience and observe, and he cannot even admit the existence of God, to say nothing of admitting any other unseen reality.

Those of the Muslims who have been influenced by modernism, but cannot deny the Qur'ān either, have given strange interpretations of the clear statements of the Qur'ān about the jinn, Iblis and Satan. They say that this does not refer to any hidden creation, which may have its own independent existence, but it sometimes implies man's own animal forces, which have been called Satan, and sometimes it implies savage and wild mountain tribes, and sometimes the people who used to listen to the Qur'ān secretly. But the statements of the Qur'ān in this regard are so clear and explicit that these interpretations bear no relevance to them whatever.

The Qur'ān frequently mentions the jinn and the men in a manner as to indicate that they are two separate creations. For this, see Al-A'rāf : 38, Hūd : 119, Hā Min As-Sajdah : 25, 29, Aḥqāf : 18; Adh-Dhāriyāt :

56, and the entire Sūrah Ar-Rahmān, which bears such clear evidence as to leave no room to regard the jinn as a human species.

In Sūrah Al-A'rāf : 12, Al-Hijr : 26-27 and Ar-Rahmān : 14-15, it has been expressly stated that man was created out of clay and jinn out of fire.

In Sūrah Al-Hijr : 27, it has been said that the jinn had been created before man. The same thing is testified by the story of Adam and Iblīs, which has been told at seven different places in the Qur'ān, and at every place it confirms that Iblīs was already there at the creation of man. Moreover, in Sūrah Al-Kahf : 50, it has been stated that Iblīs belonged to the jinn.

In Sūrah Al-A'rāf : 27, it has been stated in clear words that the jinn see the human beings but the human beings do not see them.

In Sūrah Al-Hijr : 16-18, Sūrah Aṣ-Ṣāffāt : 6-10 and Sūrah Al-Mulk : 5, it has been said that although the jinn can ascend to the heavens, they cannot exceed a certain limit; if they try to ascend beyond that limit and try to hear what goes on in the heavens, they are not allowed to do so, and if they try to eavesdrop they are driven away by meteorites. By this the belief of the polytheistic Arabs that the jinn possess the knowledge of the unseen, or have access to Divine secrets, has been refuted. The same error has also been refuted in Sabā : 14.

Al-Baqarah : 30-34 and Al-Kahf : 50 show that Allah has entrusted man with the vicegerency of the earth and the men are superior to the jinn. Although the jinn also have been given certain extraordinary powers and abilities an example of which is found in An-Naml : 39, yet the animals likewise have been

given some powers greater than man, but these are no argument that the animals are superior to man.

The Qur'ān also explains that the jinn, like men, are a creation possessed of power and authority, and they, just like them, can choose between obedience and disobedience, faith and disbelief. This is confirmed by the story of Satan and the event of the jinn affirming the faith as found in Sūrahs Al-Aḥqāf and Al-Jinn.

At scores of places in the Qur'ān, it has also been stated that Iblis at the very creation of Adam had resolved to misguide mankind, and since then the Satanic jinn have been persistently trying to mislead man, but they do not have the power to overwhelm him and make him do something forcibly. However, they inspire him with evil suggestions, beguile him and make evil seem good to him. For this, see An-Nisā : 117-120, Al-A'rāf : 11-17, Ibrāhim : 22, Al-Hijr : 30-42, An-Nahl : 98-100, Bani Isrā'il : 61-65.

The Qur'ān also tells us that in the pre-Islamic ignorance the polytheistic Arabs regarded the jinn as associates of God, worshipped them and thought they were descended from God. For this, see Al-An'ām : 100, Sabā : 40-41, Aṣ-Ṣāffāt : 158.

From these details, it becomes abundantly clear that the jinn have their own objective existence and are a concealed creation of an entirely different species from man. Because of their mysterious qualities, ignorant people have formed exaggerated notions and concepts about them and their powers, and have even worshipped them, but the Qur'ān has explained the whole truth about them, which shows what they are and what they are not.

Theme and Topics

In this Sūrah in vv. 1-15, it has been told what was the impact of the Qur'ān on the company of the jinn

when they heard it and what they said to their fellow jinn when they returned to them. Allah, in this connection, has not cited their whole conversation but only those particular things which were worthy of mention. That is why the style is not that of a continuous speech but sentences have been cited so as to indicate that they said this and this. If one studies these sentences spoken by the jinn carefully, one can easily understand the real object of the narration of this event of their affirming the faith and of mentioning this conversation of theirs with their people in the Qur'ān. The explanations that we have given of their statements in our Notes will be of further help in understanding this object.

After this, in vv. 16-18, the people have been admonished to the effect: "If you refrain from polytheism and follow the way of righteousness firmly, you will be blessed; otherwise if you turn away from the admonition sent down by Allah, you will meet with a severe punishment." Then, in vv. 19-23, the disbelievers of Makkah have been reproached, as if to say: "When the Messenger of Allah calls you towards Allah, you surround and mob him from every side, whereas the only duty of the Messenger is to convey the messages of Allah. He does not claim to have any power to bring any gain or cause any harm to the people." Then, in vv. 24-25 the disbelievers have been warned to the effect: "Today you are trying to overpower and suppress the Messenger seeing that he is helpless and friendless, but a time will come when you will know who in actual fact is helpless and friendless. Whether that time is yet far off, or near at hand, the Messenger has no knowledge thereof, but it will come to pass in any case." In conclusion, the people have been told: The Knower of the unseen is Allah alone. The Messenger receives only

that knowledge which Allah is pleased to give him. This knowledge pertains to matters connected with the performance of the duties of Prophethood, and it is delivered to him in such security which does not admit of any external interference whatever.



قُلْ أَوْحِيَ إِلَىٰ آتِهِ اسْتَمَعَ نَفَرٌ مِّنَ الْجِنِّ فَقَالُوا إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا قُرْآنًا عَجَبًا
 يَهْدِي إِلَى الرُّشْدِ فَآمَنَّا بِهِ وَلَنْ نُشْرِكَ بِرَبِّنَا أَحَدًا ۗ وَإِنَّهُ تَعَالَىٰ جَدُّ
 رَبِّنَا مَا اتَّخَذَ صَاحِبَةً وَلَا وَلَدًا ۗ وَإِنَّهُ كَانَ يَقُولُ سَفِيهُنَا عَلَى اللَّهِ
 شَطَطًا ۗ وَآتَا ظَنَنَّا أَنْ لَّنْ نَقُولَ الْإِنسُ وَالْجِنُّ عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا ۗ وَإِنَّهُ
 كَانَ رِجَالٌ مِّنَ الْإِنسِ يَعُوذُونَ بِرِجَالٍ مِّنَ الْجِنِّ فَزَادُوهُمْ رَهَقًا ۗ وَ
 أَنَّهُمْ ظَنُّوا كَمَا ظَنَنْتُمْ أَنْ لَّنْ يَبْعَثَ اللَّهُ أَحَدًا ۗ وَآتَا لَسْنَا السَّمَاءَ
 فَوَجَدْنَاهَا مُلْتَأَةً حَرَسًا شَدِيدًا وَشُهَبًا ۗ وَآتَا كُنَّا نَقْعُدُ مِنْهَا مَقَاعِدَ

LXXII

AL-JINN الجِنِّ

Verses : 28

Revealed at Makkah

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

O Prophet, say: It has been revealed to me that a 1-9
 company of the jinn listened,¹ then (returning to their
 folks) they said, "We have indeed heard a wonderful
 Qur'ān,² which guides to the right way, so we have
 believed in it, and now we shall never associate anyone
 with our Lord."³ And that: "Our Lord's majesty is
 exalted: He has neither taken a wife nor a son."⁴ And
 that: "The foolish among us⁵ have been uttering false-
 hood against Allah." And that: "We thought that the
 men and the jinn could never utter a lie against God,"⁶

And that: "Some people from among the men used to seek refuge with some people from among the jinn, so they caused the jinn to become even more arrogant." And that: "Men thought, even as you thought, that Allah would not send anyone as a Messenger."⁸ And that: "We searched the heavens and found it filled with guards and shooting stars." And that: "Before this we used to find a seat in heaven for eavesdropping, but now if some one tries to eavesdrop, he finds a shooting-star lying in ambush for him."⁹

1. This shows that the jinn at that time were not visible to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), nor he knew that they were hearing the Qur'ān being recited, but Allah informed him of the incident afterwards by Revelation. Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās also has, in connection with this incident, stated: "The Holy Messenger of Allah had not recited the Qur'ān before the jinn, nor did he see them." (Muslim, Tirmidhi, Musnad Aḥmad, Ibn Jarīr).

2. The words in the original are: *Qur'ān-an 'ajabā*. *Qur'ān* means "something which is read again and again", and the jinn probably used this word in this very meaning, for they were introduced to this Divine Revelation for the first time, and they did not perhaps know then that what they were hearing, was the Qur'ān itself. *'Ajab* is a superlative, which is used in Arabic for a wonderful thing. So, what the jinn said means: "We have heard such a wonderful recital which is unique both in its language and in its subject-matter."

This also shows that the jinn not only hear what human beings say but also understand their language fully, although it is not necessary that all the jinn might know all the human languages. It is possible that those of them who live in a particular region of the earth might know the language of the people of that region. But in any case this statement of the Qur'ān clearly shows that the jinn who listened to the Qur'ān at that time were so conversant with the Arabic language that they not only appreciated the matchless eloquence of the Divine Word but also understood its sublime subject-matter fully well.

3. This throws light on several things: (1) That the jinn do not deny Allah's existence and His being Lord and Sustainer; (2) that

among them also there are polytheists, who like polytheistic human beings ascribe divinity to others than Allah; thus, the community of the jinn whose members heard the Qur'ān was polytheistic; (3) that the Prophethood and revelation of Divine scriptures does not exist among the jinn, but whoever of them believe, they believe in the Prophets raised among human beings and in the Books brought by them. This same thing is confirmed by Al-Aḥqāf : 29-30, where it has been stated that the jinn who had then heard the Qur'ān, were from among the followers of the Prophet Moses, and they after having heard the Qur'ān, had invited their people to believe in the Revelation that had been sent down by God confirming the previous scriptures. Sūrah Ar-Raḥmān also points to the same, for its whole subject-matter shows that the audience of the Holy Prophet's invitation are both the men and the jinn.

4. From this we know two things: (1) That these jinn were either from among the Christian jinn, or they were followers of a different religion in which Allah was regarded as having children and families. (2) That at that time the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was reciting some such part of the Qur'ān hearing which they realized the error of their creed and knew that it was sheer ignorance and impudence to ascribe wife and children to the High and Exalted Being of Allah.

5. The word *safihunā* as used in the Text can be spoken for an individual as well as for a group. If it is taken for a foolish individual, it would imply *Iblis*, and if for a group, it would imply a group of foolish jinn who said such things.

6. That is, "We were misled by those falsehoods because we could never think that the men or the jinn could ever dare forge a lie about Allah, but having heard this Qur'ān we now know that they were, in fact, liars."

7. Ibn 'Abbās says that in the pre-Islamic days of ignorance when the Arabs had to spend a night in some un-inhabited, desolate valley, they would shout out: "We seek refuge of the jinn, who is owner of this valley." In other traditions of the pre-Islamic ignorance also the same thing has been reported frequently. For example, if in a place they ran short of water and fodder, the wandering bedouins would send one of their men to some other place to see if water and fodder were available; then when they reached the new

(Contd. on p. 104)

لِلسَّمْعِ فَمَنْ يَسْمِعِ الْآنَ يَجِدْ لَهُ سِيبًا رَصَدًا ۗ وَ أَنَا لَا نَدْرِي أَشَرٌّ أُرِيدَ
 بِمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَمْ أَرَادَ بِهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ رَشَدًا ۗ وَ أَنَا مِنَّا الصَّالِحُونَ وَ مِنَّا دُونَ
 ذَلِكَ كُنَّا طَرِيقَ قَدَدًا ۗ وَ أَنَا ظَنَنَّا أَنْ لَنْ نُعْجِزَ اللَّهَ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَنْ
 نُعْجِزَهُ هَرَبًا ۗ وَ أَنَا لَمَّا سَبَعْنَا الْهُدَىٰ أَمَّا بِهِ فَمَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِرَبِّهِ فَلَا
 يَخَافُ بَخْسًا وَ لَا رَهَقًا ۗ وَ أَنَا مِنَّا السُّلِيمُونَ وَ مِنَّا الْقَيْطُونَ فَمَنْ أَسْلَمَ
 فَأُولَئِكَ تَحَرَّوْا رَشَدًا ۗ وَ أَمَّا الْقَيْطُونَ فَكَانُوا لِجَهَنَّمَ حَطَبًا ۗ وَ أَنْ لَوْ
 اسْتَقَامُوا عَلَى الطَّرِيقَةِ لَأَسْقَيْنَهُمْ مَاءً غَدَقًا ۗ لِنَقِّنَهُمْ فِيهِ وَمَنْ يُعْرِضْ
 عَنْ ذِكْرِ رَبِّهِ يَسْلُكْهُ عَذَابًا صَعَدًا ۗ وَ أَنْ السَّجِدَ لِلَّهِ فَلَا تَدْعُوا مَعَ اللَّهِ
 أَحَدًا ۗ وَ أَنَّهُ لَمَّا قَامَ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ يَدْعُوهُ كَادُوا يَكُونُونَ عَلَيْهِ لِبَدًا ۗ قُلْ
 إِنَّمَا أَدْعُوا رَبِّي وَ لَا أُشْرِكُ بِهِ أَحَدًا ۗ قُلْ إِنِّي لَا أَمْلِكُ لَكُمْ ضَرًّا وَ لَا رَشَدًا ۗ
 قُلْ إِنِّي لَنْ يُجِيرَنِي مِنَ اللَّهِ أَحَدٌ ۗ وَ لَنْ أَجِدَ مِنْ دُونِهِ مُلْتَحَدًا ۗ إِلَّا
 بَلَاغًا مِنَ اللَّهِ وَ رِسَالَتَهُ ۗ وَ مَنْ يَعْصِ اللَّهَ وَ رِسُولَهُ فَإِنَّ لَهُ نَارَ جَهَنَّمَ
 خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا ۗ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا رَأَوْا مَا يُوعَدُونَ فَسَيَعْلَمُونَ مَنْ أَضَعَفَ نَاصِرًا
 وَ أَقَلَّ عَدَدًا ۗ قُلْ إِنْ أَدْرِي أَقْرَبُ مَا تُوعَدُونَ أَمْ يَجْعَلُ لَهُ رَبِّي أَمَدًا ۗ
 عِلْمُ الْغَيْبِ فَلَا يُظْهِرُ عَلَى غَيْبِهِ أَحَدًا ۗ إِلَّا مَنِ ارْتَضَىٰ مِنْ رَسُولٍ فَإِنَّهُ
 يَسْلُكُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَ مِنْ خَلْفِهِ رَصَدًا ۗ لِيَعْلَمَ أَنْ قَدْ أَبْلَغُوا رَسُولًا
 رَبَّهُمْ وَ أَحَاطَ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ وَ أَحْصَىٰ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عَدَدًا ۗ

And that: "We did not know whether some evil was intended for the dwellers of the earth or their Lord wanted to show them the right way."¹⁰ And that: "Some of us are righteous, while some are otherwise. We follow different ways."¹¹ And that: "We thought that we could neither frustrate Allah in the earth nor frustrate Him by flight."¹² And that: "As soon as we heard the message of guidance, we believed in it. Now whoever believes in his Lord, will have neither fear of loss nor of injustice."¹³ And that: "Some of us are Muslims (submissive to Allah) and some deviators from the Truth. Those who have adopted Islam (the way of submission) have found the way to salvation, and those who have deviated from the Truth, will become fuel for Hell."¹⁴ 10-15

And¹⁵ (O Prophet, say: it has been revealed to me:) "If the people had steadfastly pursued the right way, We would have given them abundant waters to drink¹⁶ that We might try them by that blessing.¹⁷ And he who turns away from his Lord's remembrance,¹⁸ his Lord shall punish him with a severe torment. And that the mosques are for Allah; therefore, do not call upon anyone else in them along with Allah.¹⁹ And that when the servant of Allah²⁰ stood up to invoke Him, the people were ready to assault him." O Prophet, say: "I call upon my Lord alone, and I do not associate anyone with Him."²¹ Say, "I have no control over any harm or good for you." Say, "None can protect me from Allah, nor can I find any refuge apart from Him. My mission is only to convey what I receive from Him and His messages.²² Now whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger, for him awaits the fire of Hell: such people shall dwell in it for ever."²³ 16-23

(These people shall not change their ways) until when they see that which they are being promised, they 24-28

shall come to know whose helpers are weaker and whose supporters are fewer in number.²⁴ Say, "I do not know whether that which you are being promised, is near at hand, or whether my Lord appoints a lengthy term for it."²⁵ He alone is the Knower of the unseen: He does not reveal His secrets to anyone²⁶ except to the Messenger whom He may choose²⁷ (for the purpose). Then He appoints before him and behind him guards²⁸ that He may know that they have truly delivered the messages of their Lord;²⁹ and He encompasses all their surroundings and keeps a count of each and every thing.³⁰

(Contd. from p. 101)

site under his direction, they would shout out before they halted to pitch the camp: "We seek refuge of the sustainer of this valley so that we may live here in peace from every calamity." They believed that every un-inhabited place was under the control of one or another jinn, and if someone stayed there without seeking his refuge, the jinn would either himself trouble the settlers, or would let others trouble them. These believing jinn are referring to this very thing. They meant that when man, the vicegerent of the earth, started fearing them without any reason, and started seeking their refuge instead of God's, it caused their people to become even more arrogant, haughty and wicked, and they became even more fearless and bold in adopting error and disbelief.

8. Another meaning of this sentence can be: "Allah will not resurrect anyone after death." As the words are comprehensive they can be taken to mean that, as among human beings, so among the jinn too there were the people who denied both the Prophethood and the Hereafter. However, in view of the theme that follows, the meaning that we have given in the text above is preferable, for according to it these believing jinn tell the people of their community: "Your view is proved wrong that Allah will not appoint anyone as a Messenger. In fact, the gates of heavens have been closed on us only because Allah has already appointed a Messenger."

9. This is the reason why these jinn were now out searching as to what particularly had happened, or was going to happen, on the earth, which had necessitated strict security measures against

eavesdropping so that they were driven away from wherever they tried to eavesdrop in any way.

10. This shows that such extraordinary measures were adopted in the heavens only on two kinds of occasions: first, when Allah might decide to inflict the dwellers of the earth with a torment, and the Divine will might be that before it was actually inflicted the jinn might not know and convey its news to warn their friendly human beings of the impending disaster. Second, that Allah might appoint a Messenger on the earth, and strict security measures might be adopted so that neither the messages being conveyed to him be interfered with by the satans nor should they be able to know beforehand what instructions were being given to the Messenger. Thus, the saying of the jinn means: "When we noticed that strict security measures had been adopted in the heavens for the safeguard of the news, and the meteorites were being showered profusely, we wanted to know which of the two things had happened: whether Allah had caused a torment to descend suddenly on some people of the earth, or a Messenger had been raised somewhere on the earth. We were on the lookout for the same when we heard the wonderful Revelation, which guides to the Right Path, and we came to know that Allah had not sent down a torment but had raised a Messenger to show the Right Way to the people." (For further explanation, see E.N.'s 8 to 12 of *Al-Hijr*, E.N. 7 of *Aş-Şāffāt*, E.N. 11 of *Al-Mulk*).

11. That is, "Morally also there are good and bad jinn among us, and from the viewpoint of creed as well as do not follow one and the same religion, but we are divided into different groups." With these words the believing jinn want to convince the other jinn of their community that they certainly stood in need of finding out the right way and could not dispense with this need.

12. That is, "We were led by this very idea to the way of success. As we were not fearless of Allah and we believed that we would not be able to avoid His punishment if we disobeyed Him, so when we heard the Divine Revelation that had been sent to show the right way, we could not have the courage and boldness to persist in the beliefs that our foolish people had spread among us, after we had known the truth."

13. "Fear of loss": fear of being given a lesser reward than what one actually deserves for one's good deeds, and "injustice" that one may be deprived of the reward for the good deeds done but duly

punished for the errors committed, or punished innocent; no believer has any fear of such an injustice from Allah.

14. Here, one may ask: when, according to the Qur'an, the jinn have been created from the fire, what harm can the fire of Hell do them? The answer is: Even according to the Qur'an, man has been created out of the earth; why does then man feel hurt when a clod of earth is thrown at him? The truth is that although the whole body of man has been made from the earthly substances, when a living man of flesh and blood is moulded from them he becomes an entirely different thing from those substances; then other things made from the same substances become a means of causing harm to him. Likewise, although the jinn also have been created from the fire, when a living and sentient creation has been made from it, the same fire becomes a means of causing harm and hurt for it. (For further explanation, see E.N. 15 of Sūrah Ar-Rahmān).

15. The conversation of the jinn having come to an end, with this begins the speech of Allah.

16. This is the same thing as has been said above in Sūrah Nūḥ : 10-11. "Seek forgiveness of Allah ... He will send abundant rains for you from heaven." (For explanation, see E.N. 12 of Sūrah Nūḥ). Abundance of water has been used for abundance of blessings metaphorically for human life and habitation depend on water. Without water there can be no human settlement, nor can man's basic needs be fulfilled, nor his industries work and prosper.

17. "We might try them by that blessing": "We might see whether they remain grateful after having received the blessing or not, and whether they put Our blessing to right use or not."

18. "To turn away from Allah's remembrance" means that one may reject the advice and admonition sent down by Allah, or one may disdain giving ear to Allah's remembrance, or one may turn away from the worship of Allah.

19. The commentators generally have taken "mosques" to mean the places of worship. Accordingly, the verse means: "None should be associated in the worship of Allah in the places of worship." Ḥadīrat Ḥasan Baṣrī says: "The entire earth is a place of worship, and the verse means to say: polytheism ought not to be committed anywhere on God's earth." He has reasoned out this meaning from the Holy Prophet's this Ḥadīth: "For me the entire

earth has been made a place of worship and a means of obtaining purity." Ḥaḍrat Sa'īd bin Jubair has interpreted *masājid* to imply the parts of the body on which one prostrates oneself, i.e. the hands, the knees, toes and forehead. According to this explanation, the verse means: These limbs have been made by Allah; no one should prostrate oneself on these before anyone other than Allah.

20. "Servant of Allah": the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace).

21. That is, to call upon Allah is no objectionable thing, which may so provoke the people. The evil thing, however, is that one should associate another with Allah in His divinity, and this I never do; this is done by those who mob and surround me when they hear God mentioned by me.

22. That is, "I do not claim to have any share or role in the Godhead of Allah, nor that I possess any power in making or marring the people's destinies. I am only a Messenger and the mission that has been entrusted to me is no more than that I should convey the messages of Allah to you. As for the powers of Godhead, they wholly belong to Allah. Not to speak of benefiting or harming others, I do not have the power to cause good or harm even to myself. If I disobey Allah, I cannot seek and have refuge anywhere from His punishment, and I have no helper and protector beside Allah." (For further explanation, see E.N. 7 of Ash-Shūrā).

23. This does not mean that every sin and act of disobedience will cause one to live in Hell for ever, but in view of the context in which this thing has been said, the verse means: the one who does not accept the invitation to *Tauhid* given by Allah and His Messenger and does not refrain from polytheism will suffer in Hell for ever.

24. The background of this verse is that those of the Quraish who used to mob and surround the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) as soon as they heard his invitation calling to Allah, were under the delusion that they had a strong band at their back and that the Holy Prophet had only a handful of men with him, and therefore, they would easily overwhelm him. At this it is being said: Today these people find the Messenger helpless and friendless and themselves supported and strengthened by great hosts and, therefore, feel encouraged and emboldened to suppress the invitation to the Truth. But when the evil time with which they are being

threatened comes, they will know who in actual fact is helpless and friendless.

25. The style itself shows that this is an answer which has been given without citing the question. Probably, hearing what has been said above, the opponents might have asked mockingly and tauntingly: "When will the time with which you are threatening us come?" In response, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was commanded to say: "The time will certainly come, but I have not been told the date of its coming. Allah alone knows whether it will come soon, or whether a distant term has been set for it."

26. That is, the knowledge of the unseen wholly rests with Allah: He does not give the whole of this knowledge to anyone.

27. That is, the Messenger by himself is no knower of the unseen, but when Allah chooses him to perform the mission of Prophethood, He grants him the knowledge of those of the unseen truths which He is pleased to grant.

28. "Guards": Angels. That is, when Allah sends down the knowledge of the unseen realities to the Messenger by revelation, He appoints angels on every side to safeguard it so that the knowledge reaches the Messenger in a safe condition, free from every kind of adulteration. This is the same thing which has been expressed in vv. 8-9 above, saying: After the appointment of the Holy Messenger the jinn found that all the doors to the heavens had been closed, and they noticed that strict security measures had been adopted because of which no room had been left for them to eavesdrop.

29. This can have three meanings: (1) That the Messenger may know that the angels have delivered the messages of Allah to him precisely and accurately; (2) that Allah may know that the angels have conveyed the messages of their Lord to His Messenger precisely and accurately; and (3) that Allah may know that the Messenger has conveyed the messages of his Lord to His servants precisely and accurately. The words of the verse are comprehensive and may possibly imply all the three meanings. Besides, the verse also points out two other things: first, that the Messenger is given that knowledge of the unseen, which is necessary for him to perform his mission of Prophethood; second, that the angels keep watch that the Revelation reaches the Messenger safely and also that the

Messenger conveys the messages of his Lord to His servants precisely and accurately.

30. That is, Allah's power so encompasses the Messenger as well as the angels that if they swerve even a little from His will, they can be detected immediately. Moreover, a complete record has been kept of each letter of the messages sent down by Allah. The Messengers and the angels cannot dare add or subtract even a letter from them.

LXXIII

AL-MUZZAMMIL المزمِّل

سُورَةُ الْمُزَّمِّلِ

LXXIII

AL-MUZZAMMIL المزمّل

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah has been so designated after the word *al-muzzammil* occurring in the very first verse. This is only a name and not a title of its subject-matter.

Period of Revelation

The two sections of this Sūrah were revealed in two separate periods.

The first section (vv. 1-19) is unanimously a Makki Revelation, and this is supported both by its subject-matter and by the traditions of the *Ḥadīth*. As for the question, in which specific period of the life at Makkah

it was revealed, it is not answered by the tradition, but the internal evidence of the subject-matter of this section helps to determine the period of its revelation.

First, in it the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has been instructed to the effect: "Arise during the night and worship Allah so that you may develop the capability to shoulder the heavy burden of Prophethood and to discharge its responsibilities." This shows that this Command must have been given in the earliest period of the Prophethood, when training was being imparted to the Holy Prophet by Allah for this office.

Secondly, a Command has been given in it that the Qur'ān be recited in the Tahajjud Prayer for half the night, or thereabout. This Command by itself points out that by that time at least so much of the Qur'ān had been revealed as could be recited for that long.

Thirdly, in this section the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has been exhorted to have patience at the excesses being committed by his opponents, and the disbelievers of Makkah have been threatened with the torment. This shows that this section was revealed at a time when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) had openly started preaching Islam and the opposition to him at Makkah had grown active and strong.

About the second section (v. 20) although many of the commentators have expressed the opinion that this too was sent down at Makkah, yet some other commentators regard it as a Madani Revelation, and this same opinion is confirmed by the subject matter of this section. For it mentions fighting in the way of Allah, and obviously, there could be no question of it at Makkah; it also contains the Command to pay the obligatory *zakāt*, and it is fully confirmed that the *zakāt*

at a specific rate and with an exemption limit (niṣāb) was enjoined at Madīnah.

Theme and Subject-Matter

In the first seven verses the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has been commanded to the effect: "Prepare yourself to shoulder the responsibilities of the great Mission that has been entrusted to you; its practical form is that you should rise during the hours of night and stand up in Prayer for half the night, or for a little more or less of it."

In vv. 8-14, he has been exhorted to the effect: "Devote yourself exclusively to that God Who is the Owner of the whole universe. Entrust all your affairs to Him with full satisfaction of the heart. Bear with patience whatever your opponents may utter against you. Do not be intimate with them. Leave their affair to God: He Himself will deal with them."

Then, in vv. 15-19, those of the people of Makkah, who were opposing the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) have been warned, so as to say: "We have sent a Messenger to you just as We sent a Messenger to the Pharaoh. Just consider what fate the Pharaoh met when he did not accept the invitation of the Messenger of Allah. Supposing that you are not punished by a torment in this world, how will you save yourselves from the punishment for disbelief on the Day of Resurrection."

This is the subject-matter of the first section. The second section, according to a tradition from Ḥaḍrat Sa'īd bin Jubair, was sent down ten years later, and in it the initial Command given in connection with the Tahajjud Prayer, in the beginning of the first section, was curtailed. The new Command enjoined: Offer as much of the Tahajjud Prayer as you easily can, but

what the Muslims should particularly mind and attend to is the five times obligatory Prayer a day; they should establish it regularly and punctually; they should discharge their *zakāt* dues accurately; and they should spend their wealth with sincere intentions for the sake of Allah. In conclusion, the Muslims have been exhorted, saying: "Whatever good works you do in the world, will not go waste, but they are like the provision which a traveller sends up in advance to his permanent place of residence. Whatever good you send up from the world, you will find it with Allah, and the provision thus sent up is much better than what you will have to leave behind in the world, and with Allah you will also get a much better and richer reward than what you have actually sent up before."



يَأْتِيهَا الْمُرْمِلُ ۗ قِمِ اللَّيْلَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ۗ تَصِفُهُ أَوْ انْقُصَ مِنْهُ قَلِيلًا ۗ أَوْ زِدَ عَلَيْهِ وَرَتَّلِ الْقُرْآنَ تَرْتِيلًا ۗ إِنَّا سَنُلْقِي عَلَيْكَ قَوْلًا ثَقِيلًا ۗ إِنَّ نَاشِئَةَ اللَّيْلِ هِيَ أَشَدُّ وَطْأً وَأَقْوَمُ قِيلًا ۗ إِنَّ لَكَ فِي النَّهَارِ سَبْعًا طَوِيلًا ۗ وَادْكُرْ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ وَتَبَتَّلْ إِلَيْهِ تَبْتِيلًا ۗ رَبُّ الشَّرْقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ فَاتَّخِذْهُ وَكِيلًا ۗ وَاصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا يَقُولُونَ وَاهْجُرْهُمْ هَجْرًا جَمِيلًا ۗ وَذُرْنِي وَالْمُكَذِّبِينَ أُولِي النَّعْمَةِ وَمَهَلْهُمْ قَلِيلًا ۗ إِنَّ لَدَيْنَا أَنْكَالًا وَجَحِيمًا ۗ وَطَعَامًا ذَا غُصَّةٍ وَعَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ۗ يَوْمَ تَرْجُفُ الْأَرْضُ وَالْجِبَالُ وَكَانَتِ الْجِبَالُ كَثِيبًا مَهِيلًا ۗ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ رَسُولًا شَاهِدًا عَلَيْكُمْ كَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ رَسُولًا ۗ فَعَصَىٰ فِرْعَوْنُ الرَّسُولَ فَأَخَذْنَاهُ أَخْدًا وَبَسِيلًا ۗ فَكَيْفَ تَتَّقُونَ إِنْ كَفَرْتُمْ يَوْمًا يَجْعَلُ الْوِلْدَانَ شِيبًا ۗ السَّمَاءُ مُنْقَطِرَةٌ بِهِ كَانُ وَعْدَاهُ مَفْعُولًا ۗ إِنَّ هَذِهِ تَذْكِرَةٌ ۗ فَمَنْ شَاءَ اتَّخَذَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِ سَبِيلًا ۗ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ يَعْلَمُ أَنَّكَ تَقُومُ أَدْنَىٰ مِنْ ثُلُثِي اللَّيْلِ وَنِصْفَهُ وَثُلُثَهُ وَطَائِفَتَهُ مِنَ الَّذِينَ مَعَكَ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يُقَدِّرُ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ ۗ عَلِمَ أَنْ لَنْ تُحْصَوْهُ فَتَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ فَاقْرَءُوا مَا تَيَسَّرَ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ ۗ عَلِمَ أَنْ سَيَكُونُ مِنْكُمْ مَرْضَىٰ وَآخَرُونَ يَضْرِبُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ يَبْتَغُونَ مِنْ فَضْلِ اللَّهِ ۗ وَآخَرُونَ يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ۗ فَاقْرَءُوا مَا تَيَسَّرَ مِنْهُ ۗ وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَاقْرَءُوا اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا ۗ وَمَا تُقَدِّمُوا لِأَنْفُسِكُمْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ تَجِدُوهُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ هُوَ خَيْرًا ۗ وَأَعْظَمَ أَجْرًا ۗ وَاسْتَغْفِرُوا لِلَّذِينَ سَبَقُوا مِنَ الذُّنُوبِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ۗ

ع ١٧

ع ١٣

LXXIII

AL-MUZZAMMIL المُزَّمِّل

Verses : 20

Revealed at Makkah and Madinah

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

O you who sleeps covered up,¹ keep standing in prayer at night but a little:² half the night, or lessen it a little, or add to it a little;³ and recite the Qur'ān calmly in a measured tone.⁴ Indeed, We are about to send down on you a weighty Word.⁵ In fact, the rising by night⁶ is most effective for controlling the self⁷ and most suitable for reciting the Qur'ān well,⁸ for in the day time you have many an occupation. Remember the name of your Lord⁹ and devote yourself to Him exclusively. He is the Owner of the East and the West: there is no god but He; therefore, take Him alone as your Guardian.¹⁰ And bear with patience what they utter, and depart from them gracefully.¹¹ Leave it to Me to deal with those prosperous people who deny¹² (the Truth) and leave them as they are for a while. We have heavy fetters (for them)¹³ and a blazing Fire, and a choking food and a painful torment. This will happen on the Day when the earth and the mountains shall become as heaps of scattering sand.¹⁴

1-14

To you¹⁵ We have sent a Messenger to be a witness over you,¹⁶ even as We had sent a Messenger to the Pharaoh. (Then behold when) the Pharaoh disobeyed the Messenger, We seized him with a firm grip. If you too, refuse to believe, then how will you protect yourselves on the Day that will make the children old,¹⁷ and whose severity shall cause the heavens to split? Allah's promise has to be fulfilled in any case. This is an Admonition; so, whoever wills, let him take a path to his Lord.

15-19

20

O Prophet,¹⁸ your Lord knows that you sometimes stand in the Prayer nearly two-thirds of the night and sometimes half the night, and sometimes one-third of the night,¹⁹ and so does a group of your Companions.²⁰ Allah alone keeps an account of the time of the day and night. He knows that you cannot compute the time precisely; so He has shown kindness to you. Now you may read as much of the Qur'ān as you easily can.²¹ He knows that there will be sick men among you, and some others who travel to seek Allah's bounty²² and yet others who fight in Allah's Way.²³ Therefore, read as much of the Qur'ān as you may do with ease. Establish the *ṣalāt* and pay the *zakāt*,²⁴ and give to Allah a goodly loan.²⁵ Whatever good you may send forward for yourselves, you shall find it with Allah. That is best and richest in reward.²⁶ Seek forgiveness from Allah: indeed Allah is All-Forgiving, All-Merciful.

1. To address the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) with these words and then to command him to rise and keep standing in the Prayer at night, shows that at the time he either lay asleep, or had wrapped himself up in a sheet in order to go to sleep. Here, to address him with "O you who sleeps covered up" instead of with "O Prophet, or O Messenger", is a fine way of address, which by itself gives the meaning: "Gone is the time when you used to enjoy peaceful sleep at will; now you lie under the burden of a great mission, whose demands and duties are different as well as onerous."

2. This can have two meanings: (1) "Pass the night standing up in the Prayer and spend only a little of it in sleep"; and (2) "there is no demand from you to pass the whole night in the Prayer, but have rest as well and spend a little part of the night in worship too." But in view of the theme that follows the first meaning seems to be more relevant, and the same is supported by Ad-Dahr : 26, in which it has been said: "Prostrate yourself before Him in the night and glorify Him during the long hours of night."

3. This is an explanation of the duration of time commanded to be spent in worship. In it the Holy Prophet (upon whom be

peace) was given the option to spend half of the night in the Prayer, or a little less than that, or a little more than that. But the style shows that half the night has been regarded as preferable, for the measure is the same, which may be decreased or increased, as the people may like and choose.

4. "Recite the Qur'ān . . . ": Do not recite it quickly and in haste, but slowly and distinctly: pause at every verse so that the mind understands the meaning and purport of Divine Revelation well and takes effect from it. If it contains the mention of Allah's Being and Attributes, it may awe-inspire the heart with His glory and majesty; if it expresses His mercy, the heart may be filled with feelings of gratitude to Him; if it mentions His wrath and His punishment, the heart may be overwhelmed by fear of Him; if it enjoins something or forbids something, one may understand what has been enjoined and what has been forbidden. In short, the recital does not only consist in uttering the words with the tongue, but it should involve thoughtful consideration of the meaning. When Ḥaḍrat Anas was asked about the Holy Prophet's method of reciting the Qur'ān, he replied: The Holy Messenger stretched the words when reciting them. For example, when he recited *Bismillāh ir-Raḥmān ir-Raḥīm* he would stretch and prolong the sound of *Allāh, Raḥmān* and *Raḥīm* (Bukhārī). When Ḥaḍrat Umm Salamah was asked the same question, she replied that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) recited every verse separately and distinctly and observed a pause at the end of every verse. For instance, he recited *Al-ḥamdu-lillāh-i Rabb-il-'ālamīn*, and paused, then recited *ar-Raḥmān ir-Raḥīm*, and paused, and then recited *Mālik-i yaum ad-dīn.*" (Musnad Aḥmad, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhī). In another tradition, Ḥaḍrat Umm Salamah has stated that the Holy Prophet recited each word distinctly and clearly. (Tirmidhī, Nasā'ī). Ḥaḍrat Ḥudhaifah bin Yamān says: "Once I stood beside the Holy Prophet in the Night Prayer to see how he recited the Qur'ān. I noticed that he glorified Allah where He should be glorified, invoked and supplicated Allah where He should be invoked and supplicated, and sought refuge of Allah where His refuge should be sought." (Muslim, Nasā'ī). Ḥaḍrat Abū Dharr has stated that once during the Night Prayer when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) came to the sentence: *In tu'adhdhib-hum ...* (If You punish them, then they are Your servants; and if You forgive them, then You are Almighty, All-Wise), he went on repeating it

over and over again until it became dawn." (Musnad Ahmad, Bukhāri).

5. That is, "You are being commanded to stand up in the Night Prayer because We are going to send down on you a weighty word, to bear the burden of which you must develop necessary power in yourself, and you can develop this power only by abandoning your ease and comfort of the night and by standing up in the Prayer and passing half the night or thereabout in the worship of your Lord." The Qur'ān has been called a weighty Word also for the reason that acting on its commands, demonstrating its teaching practically, extending its invitation in the face of the whole world, and bringing about a revolution in the entire system of belief and thought, morals and manners, civilization and social life, according to it, is indeed the weightiest task any human being ever has been charged with. It has been called a weighty Word also because bearing the burden of its revelation was a difficult and heavy duty. Ḥaḍrat Zaid bin Thābit says: "Once Revelation came down upon the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) in a state when he was resting his knee upon my knee. I felt such a pressure of the weight on my knee that I thought it would break." Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah says: "I have seen the state of the Holy Prophet's receiving Revelation during intense cold: drops of perspiration started falling from his forehead." (Bukhārī, Muslim, Mālik, Tirmidhī, Nasā'ī). In another tradition, Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah has stated: "Whenever Revelation came down on the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) while he was riding on his she-camel, the she-camel would be forced to rest her chest on the ground and could not move until the Revelation was over." (Musnad Ahmad. Ḥākim, Ibn Jarīr).

6. About the meaning of the word *nāshi'at al-lail*, as used in the original, the commentators and lexicographers have expressed four different viewpoints: (1) That *nāshi'at* implies the person himself who rises at night; (2) that it implies the hours of night; (3) that it means the rising by night; and (4) that it does not only apply to the rising in the night but rising after having had some sleep. Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah and Mujāhid have adopted this fourth viewpoint.

7. The word *ashaddu waḥ'an* as used in the Text is so vast in meaning that it cannot be explained in any one sentence. Its one meaning is: As the rising for worship by night and standing up for a long time in the Prayer is against human nature and the self of man seeks ease and comfort at that time, this act is an exercise which

is most effective in controlling and disciplining the self. The person who governs himself by this method and gains dominance over his body and mind becomes able to use his this power in the way of God, can work more efficiently and firmly to make the message of true Faith prevail in the world. The second meaning is: This is a very effective means of producing harmony and concord between the heart and the tongue, for during these hours of the night none else intervenes between the servant and his God, and whatever man utters with his tongue in this state, is the very voice of his heart. The third meaning is: This is a very efficacious means of bringing about conformity between the exterior and the interior of man, for the person who in the solitude of the night would abandon his comfort and ease and arise for worship, would do so only out of sincerity: there can be no tinge of display and hypocrisy in this. The fourth meaning is: As this worship is harder on man than the worship of the daytime, it develops steadfastness in him; he is enabled to walk in the path of God more firmly and can face and endure the hardships of that way with greater constancy and determination.

8. Literally: "Makes the speech most upright and sound." But the purport is to say that at that time man can read the Qur'ān with greater peace of mind, attention and understanding. Ibn 'Abbās has explained it thus: "That it is the most suitable time for man to ponder over the Qur'ān well." (Abū Da'ūd).

9. After making mention of the occupation of the daytime, the exhortation to "remember the name of your Lord" by itself gives the meaning: "Never be heedless of the remembrance of your Lord even when you are deeply involved in your worldly occupations, and continue to commemorate His name in one way or another at all times." (For explanation, see E.N. 63 of Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb).

10. "*Wakil*" is a person in whom one has complete faith; so much so that one can entrust all one's affairs to him with full satisfaction of the heart. Thus, the verse means: "Do not feel distressed at the hardships that you are experiencing at the storm of opposition that has been provoked by your invitation to true Faith. Your Lord is He Who is the Owner of the East and the West, (i.e. of the whole universe) besides Whom no one else possesses the powers of Godhead. Entrust your affair to Him and be satisfied that He will fight your case, He will deal with your opponents, and He will look after all your interests well."

11. "Depart from them" does not mean "Break off all ties with them and stop preaching to them", but it means: "Do not have intimate and friendly relations with them; disregard their foolish behaviour and their nonsense." However, you should do so without showing any grief, anger or temper but gracefully like a noble person, who would disregard the abusive remarks of a mean person without minding them at all. This should not create the misunderstanding that the Holy Prophet's conduct was any different from it; therefore, Allah gave him this instruction. As a matter of fact, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was already following this very mode of conduct; this instruction was given in the Qur'ān so as to tell the disbelievers: "It is not due to any weakness on the part of the Prophet that he is not responding to what you are saying against him, but Allah Himself has taught His Messenger to adopt this noble way of conduct in response to your foolish behaviour."

12. These words clearly contain the sense that the people who were actually denying the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) in Makkah and were inciting the common people to oppose and resist him by stirring up prejudices and by deceit and fraud were the well-to-do, prosperous and affluent people, for it was their interests, which were being hit by Islam's message of reform. The Qur'ān tells us that this was not peculiar only to the Holy Prophet's case but in every age this very class of the people have been the main obstacle to every movement of reform. For example, see Al-A'rāf : 60, 66, 75, 88; Al-Mu'minūn : 33; Sabā ; 34-35; Az-Zukhruf : 23.

13. Heavy fetters in Hell will not be put on the criminals' feet to stop them from escape but in order that they are not able to stand up and move; these will not be used to prevent their escape but as an instrument of their torment.

14. Since at that time the cohesive force to bind the parts of the mountains together will cease to work, first they will become like crumbling dunes of fine sand, then because of the earthquake which will be shaking the earth, the sand will scatter and shift and the whole earth will turn into an empty level plain. This last state has been described in Ṭā Hā : 105-107, thus: "They ask you: where will the mountains go on that Day? Say: My Lord will reduce them to fine dust and scatter it away. He will turn the earth into an empty level plain, wherein you will neither see any curve nor crease."

15. The address now turns to the disbelievers of Makkah, who were denying the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) and persecuting him relentlessly.

16. Sending the Holy Prophet to be a witness over the people also means that he should testify to the Truth by his word and deed before them in the world and also that in the Hereafter when Allah's Court is established, he will testify that he had presented the whole Truth before the people in the world. (For further explanation, see E.N. 144 of Al-Baqarah, E.N. 64 of An-Nisā', An-Nahl : 84, 89, E.N. 82 of Al-Aḥzāb, E.N. 14 of Al-Fath).

17. That is, "In the first place, you should be afraid that if you do not accept the invitation of the Messenger sent by Us, you will have to meet the same evil end in this world, which the Pharaoh has already met in consequence of this very crime. But even if no torment is sent on you in the world, how will you save yourselves from the punishment of the Day of Resurrection?"

18. About this verse in which reduction has been made in the injunction concerning the Tahajjud Prayer, there are different traditions. Musnad Aḥmad, Muslim and Abū Da'ūd have related a tradition, on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, saying that this second command was sent down one year after the first command, and the standing up in the Prayer at night was made voluntary instead of obligatory. Another tradition which Ibn Jarīr and Ibn Abī Ḥātim have related, again on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, says that this command came down 8 months after the first command, and a third tradition which Ibn Abī Ḥātim has related again from her, says that it came down 16 months later. Abū Da'ūd, Ibn Jarīr and Ibn Abī Ḥātim have cited the period of one year from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās. But Ḥaḍrat Sa'id bin Jubair has stated that it was sent down ten years later. (Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Ḥātim). In our opinion this last view is most sound, for the subject-matter of the first section clearly shows that it was sent down in Makkah and that too in the earliest stage when at the most four years might have passed since the advent of Prophethood. Contrary to this, this second section, in view of the express evidence of its subject-matter, seems to have been revealed at Madīnah when fighting had started with the disbelievers and the *zakāt* also had been enjoined as an obligatory duty. On this basis inevitably the two sections should have been sent down at an interval of at least ten years between them.

19. Although the initial command to the Holy Prophet was to keep standing up in the Prayer for half the night, or thereabout, it was difficult to compute the time precisely in the absorption of the Prayer, especially when there were no watches either to measure time accurately; therefore, sometimes two-thirds of the night passed in the Prayer and sometimes only one-third of it.

20. In the initial command only the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was addressed and only he was instructed to stand up in the Prayer by night. But since the Muslims at that time were ardently desirous of following him in everything he did and of earning more and more good and virtues, many of the Companions also performed this Night Prayer regularly.

21. As the Prayer is prolonged due mainly to a lengthy recital of the Qur'ān, it is said: "You may recite as much of the Qur'ān as you easily can in the Tahajjud Prayer. This would automatically cause the Prayer to be shortened." Although the words here are apparently in the imperative mood, it is agreed by all that Tahajjud is not an obligatory but a voluntary Prayer. In the *Hadith* also it has been explained that on an enquiry by a person the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) replied: "Five times Prayer in the day and night is obligatory on you. He asked: Is anything besides this also binding on me? The Holy Prophet said: No, unless you may like to offer something of your own accord," (Bukhārī, Muslim).

This verse also shows another thing. Just as the bowing (*rukū'*) and prostration (*sajdah*) are obligatory in the Prayer, so is the recital of the Qur'ān. For just as Allah at other places has used the words *rukū'* and *sajdah* for the Prayer, so here He has mentioned recital of the Qur'ān, which implies its recital in the Prayer. If somebody objects to this conclusion, saying: When the Tahajjud Prayer itself is voluntary, how can recital of the Qur'ān in it be obligatory? The answer is: Even in case of the voluntary Prayer it is incumbent on one to fulfil all the pre-requisites of the Prayer and to perform all its basic elements and obligatory parts. No one can say that in case of the voluntary Prayer, purity of the garments and body, ablutions and concealment of the *satar* (minimal part of the body to be covered) are not obligatory, and the standing up and sitting and performance of *rukū'* and *sajdah* also in it are only voluntary.

22. Travelling to earn one's living by lawful and permissible methods has been described in many places in the Qur'ān as the seeking of Allah's bounty.

23. Here, the way Allah has made mention of seeking pure livelihood and fighting in the Way of Allah together and declared these two, besides the compulsion on account of illness, as reasons for exemption from the Tahajjud Prayer, or concession in it, shows how meritorious it is in Islam to earn one's livelihood by lawful methods. In the *Hadith*, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd has reported that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) said: "The person who came to a city of the Muslims with foodgrains and sold it at the rate of the day, will attain to a place nearest to Allah, and then the Holy Prophet recited this very verse." (Ibn Mardūyah), Ḥaḍrat 'Umar once said: "Except for fighting in the Way of Allah, the state in which I would love to be overtaken by death, is the state when I am overtaken by it while passing through a mountain pass in search of livelihood, and then he recited this very verse." (Baihaqi, *Shu'ab al-Imān*).

24. Commentators are agreed that this implies observance of the obligatory Prayer five times a day and giving away of the obligatory *zakāt*.

25. Ibn Zaid says this implies spending one's wealth in the cause of Allah besides the *zakāt*, whether it is in the cause of fighting in the Way of Allah, or for helping the needy, or for public utilities, or other good works. The meaning of giving to Allah a good loan has been explained at several places above. See E.N. 267 of Al-Baqarah, E.N. 33 of Al-Mā'idah, E.N. 16 of Al-Ḥadīd).

26. It means: "Whatever you have sent forward for the good of your Hereafter is more beneficial for you than that you withheld in the world and did not spend in any good cause for the pleasure of Allah. According to a *Hadith* reported by Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) once asked: "Which of you has a greater love for his own wealth than for the wealth of his heir? The people said: There is none among us, O Messenger of Allah, who would not have greater love for his own wealth than for the wealth of his heir. He said: Consider well what you are saying. The people submitted: This indeed is our considered opinion, O Messenger of Allah. Thereupon the Holy Prophet said: Your own property is only that which you have sent forward (for the good of your Hereafter), and whatever you held back indeed belongs to the heir." (Bukhārī, Nasā'ī, Musnad Abū Ya'lā).

LXXIV

AL-MUDDATHHIR المذثر

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

LXXIV

AL-MUDDATHHIR المُدَّثِر

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name from the word *al-muddaththir* in the first verse. This also is only a name, not a title of its subject-matter.

Period of Revelation

The first seven verses of this Sūrah belong to the earliest period at Makkah. Even according to some traditions which have been related in Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmidhi, Musnad Ahmad, etc., on the authority of Ḥadīrat Jābir bin 'Abdullah, these are the very earliest

verses of the Qur'ān to be revealed to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace). But the Muslim *Ummah* is almost unanimously agreed that the earliest Revelation to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) consisted of the first five verses of Sūrah Al-'Alaq (XCVI). However, what is established by authentic traditions is that after this first Revelation, no Revelation came down to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) for quite some time. Then, when it was resumed, it started with these verses of Sūrah Al-Muddaththir. Imām Zuhri has given the following details of it:

“Revelation to the Holy Prophet remained suspended for quite some time, and it was such a period of deep grief and distress for him that he started going early to the tops of the mountains to throw himself down from them. But whenever he stood on the edge of a peak, the Angel Gabriel would appear and tell him that he was Allah's Prophet. This would console him and restore to him full peace of mind.” (Ibn Jarir).

After this Imām Zuhri relates the following tradition on the authority of Ḥadīrat Jābir bin 'Abdullah:

“The Holy Messenger of Allah describing the period of *falrat al-wahī* (break in revelation) said: One day when I was passing on the way, I suddenly heard a call from heaven. I raised my head and saw that the same Angel who had visited me in the Cave of Ḥirā' was sitting on a throne between heaven and earth. This struck terror in my heart, and reaching home quickly, I said: 'Cover me up, cover me up'. So the people of the house covered me up with a quilt (or blanket). At that time Allah sent down the Revelation: *Yā ayyuhal-Muddaththiru...* From then on revelation became intense and continuous.” (Bukhāri, Muslim, Musnad Ahmad, Ibn Jarir).

The rest of the Sūrah (vv. 8-56) was revealed when the first Hajj season came after public preaching of Islam had begun in Makkah. This has been fully well described in the *Sīrah* by Ibn Hishām and we shall cite it below.

Theme and Subject-Matter

As has been explained above, the earliest Revelation to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) consisted of the first five verses of Sūrah Al-‘Alaq, in which it had been said: “Read (O Prophet), in the name of your Lord, Who created: created man from a clot of congealed blood. Read: and your Lord is Most Generous, Who taught knowledge by the pen, taught man what he did not know.”

This was the first experience of Revelation met with suddenly by the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace). In this message it was not told what great mission he had been entrusted with and what duties he had to perform in future. He was only initiated into it and then left alone for a time so that the great strain this experience had caused should pass away and he should mentally become prepared to receive the Revelation and perform the prophetic mission in the future. After this intermission when Revelation was resumed, the first seven verses of this Sūrah were revealed. In these he was for the first time commanded to arise and warn the people of the consequences of the way of life they were following and to proclaim the greatness of God in the world where others were being magnified without any right. Along with that he was given this instruction: The demand of the unique mission that you have to perform now is that your life should be pure in every respect and you should carry out the duty of reforming your people sincerely irrespective of any worldly gain.

Then, in the last sentence, he was exhorted to endure with patience, for the sake of his Lord, all the hardships and troubles that he might have to face while performing his mission.

In the implementation of this Divine Command when the Holy Messenger of Allah began to preach Islam and recite the Qur'ānic Sūrahs revealed successively, the people of Makkah felt alarmed, and it provoked a great storm of opposition and hostility. A few months passed in this state until the Hajj season approached. The people of Makkah feared that if Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) started visiting the caravans of the pilgrims coming from all over Arabia at their halting places and reciting the spell-binding and unique Revelations of the Qur'ān in their assemblies on the occasion of Hajj, his message would reach every part of Arabia and influence countless people. Therefore, the Quraish chiefs held a conference and settled that they would start a propaganda campaign against the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) among the pilgrims as soon as they arrived. After they had agreed on this, Walid bin al-Mughīrah said to the assembled people: "If you said contradictory things about Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings), we all would lose our trust among the people. Therefore, let us agree upon one opinion, which we should all say without dispute. Some people said that they would call Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) a soothsayer. Walid said: No, by God, he is not a soothsayer. We have seen the soothsayers: what they murmur and what they utter has no remote resemblance with the Qur'ān. Some other people said: Then we say he is possessed. Walid said: He is not a possessed one: we have seen mad and insane people; the way one talks disjointedly and behaves

foolishly in that state is known to all: who would believe that what Muḥammad (upon whom be peace) presented was the incoherent speech of a madman? The people said: Then we say he is a poet. Walīd said: No, he is not a poet, for we know poetry in all its forms, and what he presents conforms to no form of it. The people said: Then he is a sorcerer. Walīd said: He is no sorcerer either: we have seen sorcerers and we also know what methods they adopt for their sorcery. This also does not apply to Muḥammad. Then he said: Whichever of these things you said about Muḥammad, it would be known to be a false accusation. By God, his speech is sweet, his root is deep and his branches are fruitful. At this Abū Jahl urging on Walīd said: Your people will never be pleased with you unless you say something about Muḥammad. He said: Let me think over it awhile. Then, after prolonged thought and consideration, he said: The nearest thing to the truth is that you tell the Arabs that he is a sorcerer, who has brought a message by which he separates a man from his father, and from his brother, and from his wife and children, and from his family. They all agreed on what Walīd had proposed. Then, according to a scheme the men of Quraish spread among the pilgrims in the Ḥajj season and they warned everyone they met of the sorcery of Muḥammad (upon whom be peace) and of his stirring up divisions in the families by it." But the result was that by their this plan the Quraish chiefs themselves made the name of the Holy Messenger known throughout Arabia. (Ibn Hishām, pp. 288-289. That Walīd had made this proposal on the insistence of Abū Jahl has been related by Ibn Jarīr in his *Tafsīr* on the authority of 'Ikrimah).

This same event has been reviewed and commented upon in the second section of this Sūrah. The sequence of its contents is as follows:

In vv. 8-10 the deniers of Truth have been warned, saying: "You will see the evil result of what you are doing today on the Resurrection Day."

In vv. 11-26, without naming Walīd bin al-Mughīrah, it has been told how Allah had blessed him and how inimical he proved to be to true Faith. In this connection, his mental conflict has been portrayed, telling that, on the one hand, he was fully convinced of the truth of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) and the Qur'ān, but, on the other, he did not want to risk his leadership and position among his people. Therefore, not only he did not believe himself but after a long-drawn-out conflict with his conscience he also came out with the proposal that in order to restrain the people from believing the Qur'ān should be branded as magic. After exposing his evil nature, it has been said: "Notwithstanding such evil inclinations and misdeeds, this person desires that he should be further blessed, whereas he has now become worthy of Hell, and never of further blessings."

In vv. 27-48, the dreadfulness of Hell has been depicted and it has been explained as to people of what character and morals really deserve it.

In vv. 49-53, the root cause of the disbelievers' aversion has been pointed out, saying: "Since they are fearless of the Hereafter, and look upon this worldly life as an end in itself, they flee from the Qur'ān as though they were wild asses fleeing away from the lion; therefore, they propose unreasonable conditions for believing, whereas even if each and every condition of theirs was fulfilled, they could not advance even an inch on the way of Faith with their denial of the Hereafter."

In conclusion, it has been explicitly stated: Allah does not stand in need of anybody's faith that He may

fulfil his conditions. The Qur'an is an admonition that has been presented before the people openly; now whoever wills may accept it. Allah has a right that the people should fear His disobedience and He alone has the power to forgive the one who adopts piety and an attitude of God-consciousness even though one may have committed many acts of disobedience in the past.



يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَدِينَةُ قُورٍ فَأَنْذِرِي وَرَبِّكَ فَكَبِّرِي وَثِيَابِكَ فَطَهِّرِي وَالرِّجْزَ فَامْجُرِي
 وَلَا تَسْنُنِي تَسْتَكْثِرِي وَرَبِّكَ فَاصْبِرِي فَإِذَا نُقِرَ فِي النَّاقُورِ فَذَلِكَ يَوْمَئِذٍ
 يَوْمٌ عَسِيرٌ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ غَيْرُ يَسِيرٍ ذُرِّي وَمَنْ خَلَقْتُ وَجِيدًا اللَّهُ وَجَعَلْتُ
 لَهُ مَالًا مَسْدُودًا وَبَيْنَ شُهُودًا وَمَهَّدْتُ لَهُ تَهْيِيدًا ثُمَّ يَطْعَمُ أَنْ
 أَزِيدَهُ كَلَّا إِنَّهُ كَانَ لِآيَاتِنَا عِينِدًا اللَّهُ سَاهُتَةً صَعُودًا إِنَّهُ فَكَرَ وَقَدَّرَ
 فَقَتَلَ كَيْفَ قَدَّرَ ثُمَّ قَتَلَ كَيْفَ قَدَّرَ ثُمَّ نَظَرَ ثُمَّ عَبَسَ وَبَسَرَ ثُمَّ
 أَدْبَرَ وَاسْتَكْبَرَ فَقَالَ إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ يُؤْتَى إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا قَوْلُ الْبَشَرِ
 سَأَصْلِيهِ سَقَرًا وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا سَقَرُهُ لَا تُبْقَى وَلَا تُدْرِكُهُ لَوَاحَةٌ لِلْبَشَرِ
 عَلَيْهَا تِسْعَةَ عَشْرَةَ وَمَا جَعَلْنَا أَصْحَابَ النَّارِ إِلَّا مَلَائِكَةً وَمَا جَعَلْنَا عِدَّتَهُمْ
 إِلَّا فِتْنَةً لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِيَسْتَيْقِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ وَيَزِدَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
 إِيمَانًا وَلَا يَرْتَابَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَلِيَقُولَ الَّذِينَ فِي
 قُلُوبِهِم مَّرَضٌ وَالْكَافِرُونَ مَاذَا أَرَادَ اللَّهُ بِهَذَا مَثَلًا كَذَلِكَ يُضِلُّ اللَّهُ
 مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَمَا يَعْلَمُ جُودَ رَبِّكَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَمَا هِيَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ
 لِلْبَشَرِ كَلَّا وَالْقَمَرِ وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا أَدْبَرَ وَالصُّبْحِ إِذَا أَسْفَرَ إِنَّهَا لَأُحْدَى
 الْكَبِيرِ نَذِيرًا لِلْبَشَرِ لِمَنْ شَاءَ مِنْكُمْ أَنْ يَتَقَدَّمَ أَوْ يَتَأَخَّرَ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا
 رَعِيَتْهُ إِلَّا أَصْحَابَ الْيَمِينِ فِي جَنَّةٍ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ عَنِ الْمُجْرِمِينَ

LXXIV

AL-MUDDATHHIR المُدَّثِّر

Verses : 56

Revealed at Makkah

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

O you who lies enwrapped up,¹ arise and warn;² and proclaim the greatness of your Lord;³ and keep your garments pure,⁴ and avoid filth,⁵ and do not favour (others) expecting to get more,⁶ and be patient for the sake of your Lord.⁷

1-7

When the Trumpet is blown, it shall be a very hard Day,⁸ not easy for the disbelievers.⁹ Leave Me and the person¹⁰ whom I created alone:¹¹ I gave him ample wealth and sons to be present by his side,¹² and smoothed for him the way to his leadership (and prosperity). Yet he desires that I should give him more.¹³ No never! He is hostile to Our Revelations. I shall soon make him ascend a hard ascent. He pondered and tried to devise a plan. May God destroy him: what he tried to devise! Yes, may God destroy him: what he tried to devise! Then he looked around: then he frowned and scowled; then he turned his back and showed arrogance. At last, he said, "This is nothing but magic, handed down from the past; nothing but the word of a mere mortal."¹⁴ Very soon I shall cast him into Hell. And what do you know what Hell is? It leaves nothing and it spares none.¹⁵ It scorches the skin.¹⁶ Nineteen keepers are appointed over it. — We¹⁷ have appointed only angels as the keepers of Hell,¹⁸ and have made their number a trial for the disbelievers,¹⁹ so that the people of the Book are convinced²⁰ and the believers are increased in their faith,²¹ and the people of the Book and the believers may have no doubts, and the sick of the heart²²

8-37

and the disbelievers may say, "What could Allah mean by this strange parable?"²³ In this way Allah leads astray whom He wills and gives guidance to whom He wills,²⁴ and none knows the hosts of your Lord but He Himself.²⁵—And Hell has been mentioned so that the people may take heed.²⁶ No, never!²⁷ By the moon and by the night when it withdraws, and by the morning when it dawns, this Hell too, is one of the mighty things:²⁸ a warning to mankind, a warning to every one of you, who desires to go forward, or to lag behind.²⁹

1. A study of the background of the revelation of these verses given in the Introduction above, can help one understand why the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) on this occasion has been addressed with *Yā ayyuhal-Muddaththiru* instead of *Yā ayyuhar-Rasūlu* (O Messenger), or *Yā ayyuhan-Nabīyyu* (O Prophet). As the Holy Prophet had been terrified when he had suddenly seen the Angel Gabriel (on whom be peace), sitting on a throne between heaven and earth, and had returned hastily home and asked the people of the house to cover him up, so Allah addressed him with *Yā ayyuhal-Muddaththiru*. From this fine way of address the meaning which automatically follows is: "O My dear Servant, why have you lain down thus enwrapped? You have been put under the burden of a great mission: you must now arise from your solitude to perform this mission with resolution and courage."

2. A command of this very nature had been given to the Prophet Noah (peace be on him) while appointing him to the office of Prophethood: "Warn the people of your nation before they are overtaken by a painful torment." (Nūh : 1) The verse means: "O you who lies enwrapped, stand up and arouse the people who live in heedlessness around you: warn them of the fate which would certainly overtake them if they remained involved in the same heedlessness. Warn them that they are not living in a lawless kingdom where they are free to conduct themselves as they like and where they can do whatever they please without any fear of being called to account for it."

3. This is the primary duty of a Prophet, which he has to perform in this world. His foremost duty is to refute the greatness of all those whom the ignorant people might be holding as great,

and publicly proclaim that true greatness in this universe belongs to none but Allah alone. For this very reason the phrase *Allahu Akbar* has been held as of supreme importance in Islam. The *adhān* (call to Prayer) begins with the proclamation of *Allahu Akbar*. The Muslim enters the Prayer itself with *Allahu Akbar* and repeats *Allahu Akbar* every time he sits or stands. He pronounces *Bismillāhi Allahu Akbar* also when slaughtering an animal. The slogan of *Allahu Akbar* has become a most distinctive and prominent emblem of Muslims throughout the world today, for the Prophet of this *Ummah* himself had embarked on his mission with the magnification and glorification of Almighty Allah.

Here, there is another fine point, which must be understood well. As we have learnt from the background of the revelation of these verses, this was the first occasion when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) had been commanded to arise for performing the duties of the great mission of Prophethood, and it was obvious that the city and society in which he was commanded to perform this mission, was the centre of polytheism. Not only were the people around him polytheistic like the common Arabs but, more than that, the city of Makkah had become the most sacred place of pilgrimage for the polytheistic Arabs, and the Quraish were its attendants. Arising of a person in such a place all by himself and proclaiming the Oneness of God in the face of polytheism was full of risks. That is why the exhortation to "proclaim the greatness of your Lord" just after "arise and warn" contains this meaning also: "Do not at all mind the terrifying and dreadful forces that seem to be obstructing and impeding your work and proclaim publicly that your Lord is the greatest of all those who can hinder and resist you from giving your message. This is indeed the greatest encouragement for a person who embarks on a Divine mission. The one who has Allah's greatness and majesty deeply embedded in his heart will feel no hesitation at all in facing and fighting the entire world by himself for the sake of Allah.

4. These are very comprehensive words, which are full of meaning.

They mean this: "Keep your garments free from every filth and impurity, for the purity of the body and garments and the purity of the spirit are inter-linked and inter-dependent." A pure spirit and an impure body with impure garments cannot live together. The

society in which the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), had arisen with the invitation to Islam, was not only steeped in the evils of unbelief and immorality, but was also devoid of even the most elementary concepts of purity and cleanliness, and the Holy Prophet's task was to teach its members cleanliness in every way of life.* Therefore he was instructed to establish and present a high standard of purity in his external life as well. Thus, it is the result of the same instruction that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) gave mankind such detailed teaching about the cleanliness of the body and garments as is not possessed even by the most civilized nations of today, not to speak of the Arabs of the pre-Islamic days of ignorance. So much so that in most of the languages of the world there is no word synonymous with "*ṭahārat*". On the contrary, in Islam every book of the *Hadīth* and *Fiqh* begins with injunctions and instructions on *ṭahārat* (purity), which distinguishes between purity and impurity and gives minute details about the methods and means of obtaining purity.

The second meaning of these words is: "Keep your garments neat and clean." The criterion of religiosity given to the world by the monastic concepts was that a man was holy to the extent he was unclean. If a person happened to put on neat clothes, he was looked upon as a worldly man, whereas the fact is that human nature abhors filth and uncleanness and even a person of ordinary fine taste loves to be associated only with a neat and clean person. On this very basis, for the one calling the people to Allah it was made imperative that externally also he should look so neat and clean that the people should regard him with esteem and his personality should not be stained in any way so as to repel others.

The third meaning of this Divine Command is: "Keep your garments free from moral evils: your dress should be neat and clean but it should bear no tinge of vanity and pride, display and exhibition, pomp and show." The dress is the first thing that introduces the personality of a person to others. The kind of dress a person wears makes the people judge at first sight what kind of a man he is. The dresses of the rulers and princes, the dresses of the religious functionaries, the dresses of the vain and conceited people, the dresses of the mean and shallow people, the dresses of the evil-natured and characterless people, all represent the tastes and tempers of those who wear them. The temper of the one calling to Allah is

naturally different from all such people. Therefore, his dress also should necessarily be different from all of them. He should wear such a dress as should make everyone else feel that he is a noble and refined person, who is not involved in any evil of the self.

Its fourth meaning is: Keep away from moral evils. Ibn 'Abbās, Ibrāhīm Nakha'i, Sha'bi, 'Aṭā', Mujāhid, Qatādah, Sa'īd bin Jubair, Ḥasan Baṣrī and other major commentators have given this very meaning to this verse: keep yourself morally pure and avoid all that is blameworthy. In Arabic usage also when it is said: "So and so is clean in his garments", it implies that he is morally good and pure; on the contrary, when it is said: "He is filthy in his garments", it means that he is dishonest and fraudulent in his dealings: he is un-reliable.

5. "Filth" implies every kind of filth, whether of belief and thought, of morals and deeds, of the body, dress or mode of life. The verse means: "Keep yourself free from the filth of evils which are prevalent in society around you: no one should ever impute to you the blame that your own life itself is stained in some degree with the evils that you tell others to avoid."

6. The words *wa lā tamnun tastakthir* in the original are so vast in meaning that no one sentence can convey their full sense in translation.

Their one meaning is: "Whomever you favour, you should favour him without any selfish motive. Your bestowal of an endowment and donation, your generosity and good treatment should be only for the sake of Allah: there should be no trace in it of the desire that you should receive any worldly gains in return for the favour done. In other words, do good to others for the sake of Allah, not for seeking any benefits."

The second meaning is: "Although the mission of Prophethood that you are performing is a great favour in itself, for the people are obtaining true guidance because of it, do not remind the people of this favour, nor try to obtain any personal benefits from it."

The third meaning is: "Although you are performing a great service, you should never gloat over it, nor should ever have the idea that by performing your prophetic duties, at the risk of life, you are doing any favour to your Lord."

7. That is, "The task that is being entrusted to you is full of hazards: you will meet with great hardships and difficulties and

troubles on this way: even your own people will turn hostile to you and the whole of Arabia will become your enemy. Yet you should endure with patience, for the sake of your Lord, whatever you may have to face in this way, and carry out all your duties firmly and resolutely. Fear, greed, friendship, enmity, love, all these will hinder your way, but you should stand your ground firmly and steadfastly."

These were the very preliminary instructions which Allah gave His Messenger (upon whom be peace) at the time when He commanded him to arise and start the work of Prophethood. If a person ponders over these brief sentences and their meaning his heart will testify that no better instructions could be given to a Prophet at the commencement of his prophetic mission. In these he was told what he was required to do, what kind of life, morals and dealings he should adopt, and taught with what intention, mentality and mode of thought he should go about his mission and also forewarned what kind of conditions he would meet with in the performance of his mission and how he would have to face and overcome them. Today the people who, blinded by their prejudices, say that these words were, God forbid, uttered by the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) during epileptic fits, should study these sentences carefully and judge for themselves whether these are the product of any epileptic fits, or the instructions of a God, which He gave to His Servant while appointing him to the mission of Apostleship.

8. As already explained in the Introduction, this part of the Sūrah was sent down a few months after the initial verses when at the beginning of the first ever Ḥajj season, after the advent of Islam, the Quraish chiefs decided in a conference to start a powerful propaganda campaign to dissuade the outsiders, who came to visit the Ka'bah, from the Qur'ān and the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings). In these verses, this very scheming of the Quraish has been reviewed, and the review has been begun with the words, as if to say: "You may act as you please, but even if you succeed in achieving your object by these devices in the world, how will you save yourselves from your evil end on the Day when the Trumpet will be sounded and Resurrection established?" (For explanation of the Trumpet, see E.N. 47 of Al-An'ām, E.N. 57 of Ibrāhīm, E.N. 78 of Ṭā Hā, E.N. 1 of Al-Ḥajj, E.N.'s 46, 47 of Yā Sin, E.N. 79 of Az-Zumar, E.N. 52 of Qāf).

9. These words by themselves support the conclusion that that Day will be light for the believers, and its hardships will be specially

intended only for the deniers of the Truth. Moreover, these words also contain the meaning that the severity of that Day will be of an enduring and permanent nature for disbelievers: it will not be a severity which might be expected to become mild with the passage of time.

10. The address is directed to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) and it means: "O Prophet, leave the case of the person (Walid bin al-Mughirah) to Me, who in the disbelievers' conference proposed that you should be branded as a sorcerer among the pilgrims coming from different parts of Arabia; it is now for Me to deal with him; you need not bother yourself about it at all."

11. This sentence can have two meanings and both are correct: (1) "That when I created him, he was not at that time born with any wealth and children and position of authority and chieftainship;" and (2) "that I alone was his Creator; those other gods whose godhead he is so ardently trying to keep established and is opposing your invitation to One God for the same object, were not My associates in creating him."

12. Walid bin al-Mughirah had ten or twelve sons of whom Hadrat Khalid bin Walid became most famous. For these sons the word *shuhud* has been used, which can have several meanings: (1) That they do not have to run about and go abroad in search of their livelihood: they have enough provisions at home; therefore, they can always remain at the beck and call of their father; (2) that all his sons are prominent and influential people: they sit in assemblies and conferences with him; and (3) that they are the people of high rank and position and their testimony is accepted in all matters of life.

13. Its one meaning is that there is still no end to his greed. In spite of having all this he still desires that he should be granted every good thing of the world. Another meaning which Hadrat Hasan Basri and some other scholars have given is: "He used to say: If what Muhammad (upon whom be peace) says is really true that there is another life after death, and there will be a Paradise also in it, then that Paradise too has been prepared for me."

14. The reference is to what happened in the conference of the disbelievers of Makkah. From the details of it that we have given in the Introduction, it becomes obvious that this man in his heart had become fully convinced of the Qur'an's being Divine Word, but

in order to save his position as a chief of his people, he was not prepared to affirm faith. When in the conference he himself turned down all the accusations that the Quraish chiefs were proposing against the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), he was compelled to devise an accusation from himself, which could be spread among the Arabs in order to bring a bad name to the Holy Prophet. Then, the way he struggled against his conscience, and the way he devised an accusation at last after a prolonged mental conflict, has been vividly depicted here.

15. This can have two meanings: first, that it will burn to ashes whoever is cast into it, but even after death he will not escape from punishment: he will be given life once again and burnt once again. This very subject has been treated at another place thus: "He will neither die in it nor live." (Al-A'lā : 13) Another meaning also can be: "It will leave none who has deserved the punishment and it will spare none from being punished."

16. After saying that it will leave nothing of the body unconsumed, making mention of "scorching of the skin" separately seems to be somewhat unnecessary. But this form of the punishment has been mentioned separately in particular because it is the skin of a man's face and body which actually makes his personality prominent, and it is its ugliness which makes him feel most ill at ease. He is not so grieved at the internal troubles of his body as, for instance, at his face being ugly, or that there should be spots on the skin of the exposed parts of his body, abhorrent to others. That is why it has been said: If the people who feel proud of their personalities in the world because of having handsome faces and splendid bodies, treat the Revelations of Allah mockingly, as did Walid bin al-Mughirah, their faces will be scorched and their skins burnt black.

17. The whole passage from here to "none knows the hosts of your Lord but He Himself", is a parenthetical sentence, which has been inserted here to answer an objection of the disbelievers, who had started mocking it when they heard the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) say that 19 keepers had been appointed over Hell. Their objection was: "How strange that, on the one hand, we are told that all human beings, from the time of the Prophet Adam till Resurrection, who disbelieved and committed evil, will be cast into Hell, and, on the other, that there will be only 19 keepers, who will administer punishment to the countless numbers of men in such a

huge Hell." This caused a huge laughter among the chiefs of Quraish. Abū Jahl said: "Brothers, are you so powerless that even as many as ten of you at a time will not be able to overpower a single policeman of Hell?" At this a wrestler of the Banī Jumha said: "Well, I will deal with and overpower at least 17 of them by myself; as for the remaining two you all together can tackle them." In response these sentences have been inserted as a parenthetical clause.

18. That is, "It is foolish on your part to compare the angelic powers to human powers. They will be angels, not men, and you cannot imagine what tremendous powers Allah has granted to the angels He has created."

19. That is, "Although apparently there was no need to mention the number of the keepers of Hell, yet We have mentioned it so that it becomes a trial for every such person who may be concealing any kind of unbelief in his heart. Such a man may be making a great display of his faith but if he conceals even a tinge of the doubt about the Godhead and supreme powers of God, or about Revelation and Prophethood, anywhere in his heart, his disbelief would immediately be exposed as soon as he would hear that only 19 policemen would control countless numbers of the culprits from among the jinn and men in such a huge jail and would also administer punishment to each of them individually."

20. Some commentators have explained it thus: "As in the scriptures of the Jews and Christians themselves also the same number of the angels has been mentioned as keepers of Hell, they would be convinced of this thing's being truly from Allah as soon as they heard it." But in our opinion this commentary is not correct for two reasons. First, we have not been able to see anywhere in the existing scriptures of the Jews and Christians in spite of search that the number of the angels appointed over Hell is 19. Second, there are many things in the Qur'ān, which also have been mentioned in the scriptures of the Jews and Christians, yet they explain them away, saying that the Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) has plagiarized these from their books. For these reasons the correct meaning of this statement in our opinion is: The Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) knew fully well that he would be ridiculed as soon as the disbelievers heard that 19 angels had been appointed over Hell, but

in spite of this, he presented without the least hesitation and fear publicly before the people what had been revealed to him from Allah, and did not at all mind the jesting and mocking by the people. The pagans of Arabia were unaware of the unique distinction of the Prophets, but the followers of the earlier scriptures were fully aware that the Prophets in every age used to convey to their people intact whatever they received from God, whether it pleased them or displeased them. On this very basis it was to be expected of the Jews and the Christians that they would be convinced of the Prophet Muhammad's truth for only a Prophet could present an apparently strange thing without any hesitation before the people in an environment charged with antagonism and hostility. This also is evident that such a thing was shown by the Holy Prophet on many other occasions. Its most prominent example is the event of the *mi'rāj* (ascension) which he related openly before a general assembly of the disbelievers and did not at all care how his opponents would behave and react after they had heard the story of the wonderful event.

21. It has been explained at several places in the Qur'ān above that on the occasion of every trial when a believer remains steadfast to his faith, and forsaking the way of doubt and denial, disobedience or disloyalty to the faith, adopts the way of faith, obedience and loyalty to it, it increases and strengthens him all the more in faith and resignation. (For explanation, see 'Āl 'Imrān: 173, Al-Anfāl: 2, At-Taubah: 124-125, Al-Aḥzāb: 22, Al-Fath: 4 and the corresponding E.N.'s).

22. As "sickness of the heart" in the Qur'ān is generally understood to imply hypocrisy, seeing this word here some commentators have expressed the view that this verse was revealed at Madīnah, for the hypocrites appeared at Madīnah. But this view is not correct for several reasons. In the first place, the assertion itself that there were no hypocrites at Makkah is false, and its falsehood has been exposed in the Introduction to the Sūrah Al-'Ankabūt and in its vv. 10-11. Secondly, in our opinion it is not a correct way of writing commentary that in respect of a certain sentence occurring in a particular discourse which was revealed on a particular occasion, under particular circumstances, one should declare that it had been sent down on another occasion but has been inserted here without any relevance. The historical background of this part of Sūrah Al-Muddaththir is fully well known to us from

authentic traditions. This was revealed in connection with a particular event of the earliest period of the life at Makkah. The whole context bears full relevance to the event. What could, therefore, be the occasion in this context that this one sentence, if it was revealed many years later at Madīnah, should have been inserted here? As for the question, what is implied by the disease of the heart here, its answer is that it implies the disease of doubt. Not only in Makkah but in the entire world also there have been, and are, very few such people, who might deny God, Hereafter, Revelation, Prophethood, Heaven, Hell, etc. absolutely. In every age the greater majority by far has been of those people, who have been involved in the doubt whether there is God, or no God. Hereafter or no Hereafter, whether Heaven and Hell really exist, or are mere figments of the imagination, and whether the Messengers did really come and receive Revelation or not. This same doubt has led most people to unbelief, otherwise the number of such people in the world who denied these truths absolutely has never been great. For a person who has any common sense knows that there is no rational ground whatever for denying the possibility of the existence of these things, or of declaring them absolutely impossible.

23. This does not mean that they accepted it as Divine word but wondered why Allah had said such a thing. But what they actually meant was: "A discourse which contained such an irrational and impossible thing could not be a Revelation from Allah."

24. That is, Allah in this very way sometimes sends down in the course of His Revelations and Commandments such things as become a means of test and trial for the people. It is one and the same thing which a truth-loving, good-natured and right-minded person hears and understanding its right meaning in the right way, adopts the straight path, but which when heard by an obstinate, perverse and wilful wrongdoer, makes him to misconstrue it and make it a new excuse for fleeing from the truth. Since the first man is himself a lover of the truth, Allah grants him guidance, for it is not the way of Allah to lead the seekers after truth forcibly astray; and since the second man himself does not want guidance, but chooses only error for himself, Allah also pushes him on to the way of error and deviation, for it is also not the way of Allah to forcibly pull to the way of the truth him who has an aversion to the truth. (The question of Allah's granting guidance and misguidance has been fully explained at many places in *The Meaning of the Qur'an*;

for example, see E.N.'s 10, 16, 19, 20 of Al-Baqarah; E.N. 173 of An-Nisā', E.N.'s 17, 28, 90 of Al-An'ām, E.N. 13 of Yūnus, E.N. 54 of Al-Kahf, E.N. 71 of Al-Qaṣaṣ).

25. That is, none knows but Allah what different kinds and how many of the creatures He has created in the universe, what powers He has granted them, and what services He is taking from them. If the man clinging to the tiny globe of the earth seeing the tiny world around himself with his limited sight, is involved in the misunderstanding that the universe of God contains nothing but what he can perceive by his senses, or by his instruments, this would only be his own short-sightedness, otherwise this universe is so vast and limitless that it is not in the power of man to obtain full knowledge about any of the things here, not to speak of comprehending mentally the concept of all its vastnesses.

26. "The people may take heed": the people may recover their senses and wake up before they make themselves worthy of Hell and suffer its punishment, and should think of saving themselves from it.

27. That is, it is not a hollow thing which may be mocked like that.

28. That is, "Just as the moon and the night and the day are the great signs of the powers of Allah, so also is Hell a great sign of His powers. If the existence of the moon and the alternation of the night and day so regularly were not impossible, why should the existence of Hell be impossible as you think it is? You see these phenomena day and night; therefore, they do not surprise you; otherwise these things in themselves also are great marvels of the powers of Allah. If you had not observed them, and somebody were to tell you that there is also such a thing as the moon in the world, or, there is a sun which leaves the world dark when it hides and makes the world shine forth with light when it appears, then the people like you would have made jests of it too as you make jests of Hell."

29. That is, the people have been warned to this effect. Now, let him who heeds the warning go forward on the right way, and let him who wills still lag behind.

مَا سَلَكَكُمْ فِي سَقَرٍ ۚ قَالُوا لَوْ نَكَّ مِنَ الْمُصَلِّينَ ۚ وَلَوْ نَكَّ نَطَعُمُ الْبَسِيطِينَ ۚ
 وَكُنَّا نَحْوُضَ مَعَ الْخَائِضِينَ ۚ وَكُنَّا نَكْذِبُ بِيَوْمِ الدِّينِ ۚ حَتَّىٰ آتَيْنَا
 الْيَقِينَ ۚ فَمَا تَنْفَعُهُمْ شَفَاعَةُ الشُّفَعِينَ ۚ فَمَا لَهُمْ عَنِ التَّذْكَرَةِ مُعْرِضِينَ ۚ
 كَانَهُمْ حُرٌّ مُسْتَنْفِرَةٌ ۚ فَرَّتْ مِنْ قَسْوَرَةٍ ۚ بَلْ يُرِيدُ كُلُّ امْرِئٍ مِنْهُمْ أَنْ
 يُؤْتَىٰ صُحُفًا مُنشَرَّةً ۚ كَلَّا ۚ بَلْ لَا يَخَافُونَ الْآخِرَةَ ۚ كَلَّا إِنَّهُ تَذْكِرَةٌ ۚ
 فَمَنْ شَاءَ ذَكَّرَهُ ۚ وَمَا يَذْكُرُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ ۚ هُوَ أَهْلُ التَّقْوَىٰ
 وَأَهْلُ الْمَغْفِرَةِ ۚ

Every person is a pledge for his own deeds,³⁰ except the people of the right hand, who shall be in Gardens.³¹ There they will ask the culprits,³² "What has brought you into Hell?" They will reply, "We were not of those who offered the *ṣalāt*,³³ and we did not feed the poor,³⁴ and we used to join with those who indulged in idle talk against the Truth, and we used to belie the Day of Recompense, till the inevitable overtook us."³⁵ At that time, no intercession of the intercessors shall avail them anything.³⁶

38-48

What then is the matter with these people that they are turning away from this Admonition as though they were wild asses fleeing away from a lion?³⁷ Nay, each one of them desires that he should be sent open letters.³⁸ No, never! The fact is that they do not fear the Hereafter.³⁹ No, never!⁴⁰ This indeed is an Admonition. So, let him who wills, take heed. But they will never take heed unless Allah so wills.⁴¹ He alone is worthy that he should be feared,⁴² and He alone is worthy to forgive (those who fear Him).⁴³

49-56

30. For explanation, see E.N. 16 of Sūrah Aṭ-Ṭūr.

31. In other words, the people of the left hand will be seized in consequence of their misdeeds, but the people of the right hand will have their debts settled. (For explanation of the people of the right hand and the left hand, see E.N.'s 5, 6 of Sūrah Al-Wāqī'ah).

32. At several places in the Qur'ān above, it has been stated that the dwellers of Paradise and the dwellers of Hell will be able to see and commune with each other directly without the agency of any instrument whenever they will so desire, although they will be living hundreds of thousands of miles away from each other. For instance, see Al-A'rāf : 44-50 and E.N. 35, Aṣ-Ṣāffāt : 50-57 and E.N. 32 on it.

33. That is, "We were not of those who after having believed in Allah and His Messenger and His Book, performed the foremost duty imposed by Allah, i.e. the Prayer." Here, it should be understood well that unless a person has believed he cannot offer the Prayer at all. Therefore, one's being of those who performed the Prayer, by itself implies that one is a believer. But by attributing one's going to Hell to one's not being of those who performed their Prayer, it has been made explicit that one cannot escape Hell even after having believed if one does not perform one's Prayers regularly.

34. This shows how grave a sin it is in Islam to see a hungry man and fail to feed him even if one can, for this has been particularly mentioned as one of the causes of one's going to Hell.

35. "Till the inevitable overtook us": till death came upon us. Here, "the inevitable" implies death as well as the Hereafter.

36. That is, "Even if an intercessor interceded for a person who persisted in this way of life till death, he would not be forgiven." The question of intercession has been so fully explained at so many places in the Qur'ān that no one can have any difficulty in knowing and understanding as to who can intercede and who cannot, when one can intercede and when one cannot, for whom one can intercede and for whom one cannot, and for whom intercession is beneficial and for whom it is not. As one of the major causes of the people's deviation in the world, is their false concept about intercession, it has been explained at such length in the Qur'ān as to leave no room for any doubt and ambiguity. For example, see Al-Baqarah: 255, Al-An'ām: 94, Al-A'rāf : 53, Yūnus : 3-18, Maryam : 87, Ṭā Hā : 109, Al-Anbiyā' : 28, Sabā: 23, Az-Zumar : 43, 44, Al-Mu'min: 18, Ad-Dukhān: 86, An-Najm: 26, An-Nabū: 37-38.

37. This is an idiomatic expression in Arabic which depicts the character of wild asses who flee stupefied and stunned as soon as they smell a lion or hear a hunter.

38. That is, they desire that if Allah really has appointed Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) as His Prophet, He should send a letter to each one of the chiefs and elders of Makkah telling him that Muhammad is Allah's Prophet; therefore, he should obey and follow him. And these letters should be such as may convince them that they have been written by Allah Himself. At another place in the Qur'an, this saying of the disbelievers of Makkah has been cited: "We will not believe in it unless we are given the like of what has been given to the Messengers of Allah." (Al-An'am: 124). At still another place their this demand has been cited: "Or you ascend the sky ... and bring down to us a writing that we may read." (Bani Israil: 93).

39. That is, the real cause of their failure to affirm the faith is not that their demands are not fulfilled, but the real cause is that they are fearless of the Hereafter. They think that this world is an end in itself and they do not have any idea that there is another life after this worldly life in which they will have to render an account of their deeds. This very thing has made them careless and irresponsible in the world. They regard the question of truth and falsehood as utterly meaningless, for they do not see any truth following which may have necessarily led to a good result in the world, nor do they see any falsehood which might have always led to an evil result in the world. Therefore, they think it is useless merely to consider as to what is really true and what is false. This question can be worthy of serious consideration only for the person who regards the present life of the world as transitory and admits that the real and everlasting life is the life hereafter, where the truth will necessarily lead to a good result and falsehood necessarily to an evil result. Such a person will certainly believe when he sees the rational arguments and the pure teachings presented in the Qur'an, and will use his common sense to understand what is actually wrong with the beliefs and deeds which the Qur'an calls wrong. But the denier of the Hereafter who is not at all serious in his search for the truth, will present ever new demands every day for not believing, and will present a new excuse for his denial even if all his demands are fulfilled. This same thing has been expressed

in Sūrah Al-An'ām : 7 thus: "O Prophet, even if We had sent down to you a Book written in paper, and even if they had touched it with their own hands, the disbelievers would have said: 'This is nothing but manifest sorcery'."

40. That is, no such demand of theirs will ever be fulfilled.

41. That is, a person's taking heed does not wholly depend upon his own will, but he takes heed only when Allah also wills to grant him the grace to take heed. In other words, the truth that has been expressed here is that no act of man takes a concrete shape solely by his own will, but each act is implemented only when the will of God combines with the will of the man. This is a very delicate question, failure to understand which has often made human thought falter. Briefly it can be understood thus: If in this world every man had the power to accomplish whatever he wanted to accomplish, the system of the world would be disturbed. This system continues to hold only because the will of Allah is dominant over all other wills. Man can accomplish whatever he wants to accomplish only when Allah also wills that he be allowed to accomplish it. The same is also the case with guidance and error. Only man's own desiring to have guidance is not enough for him to have guidance; he receives guidance only when Allah also takes a decision to fulfil his desire. Likewise, only man's desiring to go astray by itself is also not enough, but when Allah in view of his desire decides that he be allowed to wander into evil ways, then he wanders into the evil ways in which Allah allows him to wander. As for example, if a person wants to become a thief, only his desire is not enough that he may enter into any house he likes and make away with whatever he likes, but he can fulfil his desire only at the time and to the extent and in the form that Allah allows him to fulfil it, according to His supreme wisdom and expedience.

42. That is, "The admonition being given to you to avoid Allah's displeasure is not for the reason that Allah needs it, and if you did not take it, Allah would be harmed, but you are being so admonished because it is Allah's right that His servants should seek His pleasure and goodwill and should avoid doing anything against His will."

43. That is, "It behoves only Allah that He should receive into His mercy whoever desists from evil no matter how many acts of disobedience he might have committed in the past. Allah is not vengeful to His servants so that He may refuse to forgive their errors and be bent upon punishing them in any case."

LXXV

AL-QIYĀMAH القِيَامَة

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

LXXV

AL-QIYĀMAH الْقِيَامَةُ

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah has been so named after the word *al-Qiyāmah* in the first verse. This is not only the name but also the title of this Sūrah, for it is devoted to Resurrection itself.

Period of Revelation

Although there is no tradition to indicate its period of revelation, yet there is in the subject-matter of this Sūrah an internal evidence, which shows that it is one of the earliest Sūrahs to be sent down at Makkah,

After verse 15 the discourse is suddenly interrupted and the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) told: "Do not move your tongue to remember this Revelation hastily. It is Our responsibility to have it remembered and read. Therefore, when We are reciting it, listen to its recital carefully. Again, it is Our responsibility to explain its meaning." Then, from verse 20 onward the same theme which was interrupted at verse 15, is resumed. This parenthetical passage, according to both the context and the traditions, has been interposed here for the reason that when the Angel Gabriel was reciting this Sūrah to the Holy Prophet, the Holy Prophet, lest he should forget its words later, was repeating them at the same moment. This in fact happened at the time when the coming down and receipt of Revelation was yet a new experience for him and he was not yet fully used to receiving it calmly. There are two other instances also of this in the Qur'ān. First, in Sūrah Tā Hā the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has been told: "And see that you do not hasten to recite the Qur'ān before its revelation is completed to you." (v. 114). Then, in Sūrah Al-A'lā, it has been said: "We shall enable you to recite: then you shall never forget." (v. 6). Later, when the Holy Prophet became fully used to receiving the Revelation well, there remained no need to give him any such instruction. That is why except for these three, there is no other instance of this in the Qur'ān.

Theme and Subject-Matter

Most of the Sūrahs, from here till the end of the Qur'ān, in view of their content and style, seem to have been sent down in the period when after the first seven verses of Sūrah Al-Muddaththir, revelation of the Qur'ān began like a shower of rain. Thus, in the

successively revealed Sūrah's Islam and its fundamental concepts and moral teachings were presented so forcefully and effectively in pithy, brief sentences and the people of Makkah warned so vehemently on their errors and deviations that the Quraish chiefs were utterly confounded. Therefore, before the next Hajj season came they held the conference for devising schemes to defeat the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) as has been mentioned in the Introduction to the Sūrah Al-Muddaththir above.

In this Sūrah, addressing the deniers of the Hereafter, replies have been given to each of their doubts and objections, strong arguments have been given to prove the possibility, occurrence and necessity of the Resurrection and Hereafter, and also it has been pointed out clearly that the actual reason of the people's denying the Hereafter is not that they regard it as impossible rationally but because their selfish motives do not allow them to affirm it. At the same time, the people have been warned, as if to say: "The event the occurrence of which you deny, will inevitably come: all your deeds will be brought and placed before you. As a matter of fact, even before any of you sees his record, he will be knowing fully well what he has done in the world, for no man is unaware of himself, no matter what excuses and pretences he may offer to deceive the world and deceive himself in respect of his misdeeds."



لَا أُقْسِمُ بِيَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ وَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِالنَّفْسِ اللَّوَّامَةِ ۗ أَيَحْسَبُ الْإِنْسَانُ
 أَن تَجْمَعَهُ عِظَامَهُ ۗ أَبَلَىٰ قَدِيرِينَ عَلَىٰ أَن تُسَوَّىٰ بَنَانَهُ ۗ بَلْ يُرِيدُ الْإِنْسَانُ
 لِيَفْجُرَ أَمَامَهُ ۗ يَسْأَلُ أَيَّانَ يَوْمُ الْقِيَامَةِ ۗ فَإِذَا بَرَقَ الْبَصْرُ ۗ وَخَفَّتِ الْقَمَرَةُ ۗ
 وَجُمِعَ الشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ ۗ يَقُولُ الْإِنْسَانُ يَوْمَئِذٍ أَيْنَ الْمَفْرُتُ ۗ كَلَّا لَا وَزَرَ ۗ إِلَىٰ
 رَبِّكَ يَوْمَئِذٍ الْمُسْتَقَرُّ ۗ يُنْبِئُوا الْإِنْسَانَ يَوْمَئِذٍ بِمَا قَدَّمَ وَأَخَّرَ ۗ بَلِ الْإِنْسَانُ
 عَلَىٰ نَفْسِهِ بِصِيرَةٌ ۗ وَلَوْ أَلْقَىٰ مَعَاذِيرَهُ ۗ لَا تُحَرِّكُ بِهِ لِسَانَكَ لِتَعْجَلَ بِهِ ۗ
 إِنَّا عَلَيْنَا جَمْعَهُ وَقُرْآنَهُ ۗ فَإِذَا قَرَأَهُ فَأَتِبْنَاهُ تُرَّانَهُ ۗ تَرَّانًا عَلَيْنَا بَيَانَهُ ۗ
 كَلَّا بَلْ تُحِبُّونَ الْعَاجِلَةَ ۗ وَتَذَرُونَ الْآخِرَةَ ۗ وَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ نَّاصِرَةٌ ۗ
 إِلَىٰ رَبِّهَا نَاطِرَةٌ ۗ وَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ بَاسِرَةٌ ۗ تَظُنُّ أَنْ يُفْعَلَ بِهَا فَاقِرَةٌ ۗ
 كَلَّا إِذَا بَلَغَتِ التَّرَاقِيَ ۗ وَقِيلَ مَنْ رَاقٍ ۗ وَظَنَّ أَنَّهُ الْفِرَاقُ ۗ وَالْتَفَتِ
 السَّاقُ بِالسَّاقِ ۗ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ يَوْمَئِذٍ الْمَسَاقُ ۗ أَفَلَا صَدَقَ وَلَا صَلَّىٰ ۗ وَ
 لَكِن كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلَّىٰ ۗ ثُمَّ ذَهَبَ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِ يَتَمَطَّىٰ ۗ أَوْلَىٰ لَكَ فَأَوْلَىٰ ۗ ثُمَّ
 أَوْلَىٰ لَكَ فَأَوْلَىٰ ۗ أَيَحْسَبُ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنْ يُتْرَكَ سُدًى ۗ أَلَمْ يَكُ نَاطِقًا مِّنْ
 مِّمَّنِي يَمْنَىٰ ۗ ثُمَّ كَانَ عَاقِبَتُهُ فِئْتًا ۗ فَخَلَقَ فَسَوَّىٰ ۗ فَجَعَلَ مِنْهُ الزَّوْجَيْنِ الذَّكَرَ
 وَ الْأُنثَىٰ ۗ أَلَيْسَ ذَلِكَ بِقَدِيرٍ عَلَىٰ أَن يَنْجِيَّ الْمَوْتَىٰ ۗ

ع ۳۰
۱۲ع ۱۰
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LXXV

AL-QIYĀMAH القِيَامَةُ

Verses : 40

Revealed at Makkah

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

Nay,¹ I swear by the Day of Resurrection: and nay, I swear by the reproaching self;² Does man think that We shall not be able to put his bones together?³ Why not? We have even the power to shape and restore his very finger-tips.⁴ But man desires that he may go on doing evil in future as well.⁵ He asks, "When is the Day of Resurrection to be?"⁶ When the eyes are dazzled⁷ and the moon is darkened and the sun and the moon are brought together,⁸ then the same man will say, "Whither to escape?" No, by no means! There will be no refuge whatever. Only before your Lord that Day shall be the place of rest. That Day man shall be told all his former and latter deeds.⁹ Nay, man knows his own self best, even though he may offer many excuses.¹⁰ — O Prophet,¹¹ do not move your tongue to remember this Revelation hastily. It is for Us to have it remembered and read. Therefore, when We are reciting it,¹² listen to its recital carefully. Again, it is for Us to explain its meaning.¹³ — No, by no means!¹⁴ The fact is that you (people) love that which is hastily attainable (i.e. the world) and neglect the Hereafter.¹⁵ On that Day some faces shall be fresh,¹⁶ looking towards their Lord,¹⁷ and some faces shall be gloomy, thinking that a back breaking calamity is about to befall them. No, by no means!¹⁸ When the soul reaches the throat, and it is said, "Is there an enchanter to help?"¹⁹ and man thinks that it is the time of his departure from the world, and the leg is joined to the

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leg.²⁰ that will be the Day of driving towards your Lord.

31-35

But he neither affirmed (the Truth) nor prayed, but he belied and turned away. Then he went to his kinsfolk, arrogantly.²¹ This sort of conduct behoves you and you alone. Yes, this sort of conduct behoves you and you alone!²²

36-40

Does man²³ think that he will be left to himself to wander at will?²⁴ Was he not a mere sperm-drop, which is emitted (in the mother's womb)? Then he became a blood-clot; then Allah formed him and fashioned his limbs in proportion; then from it He made two kinds, male and female. Has He not then the power to give life to the dead?²⁵

1. To begin the discourse with "Nay" by itself indicates that the Sūrah was sent down to refute some argument which was already in progress. The theme that follows shows that the argument was about Resurrection and life after death, which the people of Makkah were denying and also mocking at it at the same time. This can be understood by an example. If a person only wants to affirm the truth of the Messenger, he will say: "By God, the Messenger has come with the truth." But if some people might be denying the truth of the Messenger, he in response would rejoin, thus: "Nay, by God, the Messenger has come with the truth." It would mean: "That which you say is not true. I swear that the truth is this and this."

2. The Qur'ān has mentioned three kinds of human self: (1) *Ammārah*: the self that urges man to evil; (2) *Lawwāmah*: the self that feels repentant at doing wrong, thinking wrong and willing wrong and reproaches man for this; and the same is called Conscience in modern terminology; and (3) *Mulma'innah*: the self that feels full satisfaction at following the right path and abandoning the wrong path.

Here, the thing for which Allah has sworn an oath by the Resurrection (*al-Qiyāmah*) and the self-reproaching Self, has not been mentioned, for the following sentence itself points it out. The

oath has been sworn to stress the truth that Allah will certainly resurrect man after death and He has full power to do so. Now, the question arises: What is the relevance of swearing an oath by these two truths to this thing?

As for the Day of Resurrection, the reason of swearing by it is certainty. The whole system of the universe testifies that it is neither eternal nor everlasting. Its own nature itself tells that it has neither existed since eternity nor can last till eternity. Human intellect has never had any strong argument to support the baseless view that this ever changing world could have existed since ever and would last for ever. But as the knowledge of man about this world goes on increasing, it goes on becoming more and more certain for man himself that this workhouse of life had a beginning in time before which it was not, and necessarily it has also an end in time after which it will not be. For this reason, Allah has sworn an oath by Resurrection itself on the occurrence of Resurrection, and this is an oath of the kind that we might swear addressing a sceptical person, who may be sceptical about his own existence, saying: "By you yourself, you exist, i.e., your own being itself testifies that you exist."

But an oath by the Day of Resurrection is only an argument for the truth that this system will one day be upset. As for the truth that after that man shall be resurrected and called upon to account for his deeds and made to see the good or evil results thereof, another oath has been sworn by the self-reproaching soul. No man exists in the world, who may not have a faculty called Conscience in him. This Conscience is necessarily conscious of the good and evil, and no matter how perverted and degraded a man might be, his Conscience always checks him on doing evil and for not doing good irrespective of the fact whether the criterion of good and evil that he had set for himself might in itself be right or wrong. This is an express pointer that man is not merely an animal but a moral being. He naturally can distinguish good from evil; he regards himself as responsible for the good or the evil he does; and even if he might feel pleased suppressing the reproaches of his Conscience over the evil he has done to another, he, on the contrary, feels and demands from within that the other one who has done the same evil to him, must deserve punishment. Now, if the existence of a self-reproaching soul of this kind in man himself is an undeniable truth, then this truth too is undeniable that the same self-reproaching soul is an evidence of the life hereafter, which exists in man's own nature itself. For this demand of nature that man must be rewarded

or punished for his good or evil deeds for which he himself is responsible, cannot be met in any other way than in the life hereafter. No sensible man can deny that if man becomes non-existent after death, he will certainly be deprived of the rewards of his good deeds and escape the just and lawful punishment of many of his evil deeds. Therefore, unless one comes to believe in the absurd idea that a rational being like man has stumbled into an irrational system of the universe and a moral being like man has happened to be born in a world which basically has nothing to do with morality, he cannot deny the life hereafter. Likewise, the philosophy of the transmigration of souls also is no reply to this demand of nature, for if man goes on being born and reborn in this very world for the sake of being rewarded and punished for his moral acts, in every cycle of life he will perform some additional moral acts, which again will need to be rewarded and punished, thus making his account more and more lengthy and complicated in an endless way instead of being settled finally and for good. Therefore, this demand of nature is fulfilled only in case man in this world should have only one life and then, after the whole human race has been brought to an end, there should be another life in which all acts of man should be judged and assessed rightly and justly and he should be fully rewarded and punished in consequence thereof. (For further explanation, see E.N. 30 of Sūrah Al-A'rāf).

3. The above two arguments, which have been presented in the form of the oaths, only prove two things. First, that the end of the world (i.e. the first stage of Rerurrection) is a certainty; and second, that another life after death is necessary, for without it the logical and natural demands of man's being a moral being cannot be fulfilled; and this will certainly happen, for the existence of the Conscience in man testifies to it. Now, this third argument has been given to prove that life after death is possible. The people of Makkah who denied it, said again and again: "How can it be that the people who died hundreds of thousands of years ago, whose bodies have disintegrated into particles and mixed in the dust, whose bones decayed and were scattered away by the winds, some of whom were burnt to ashes, others devoured by the beasts of prey, still others drowned in the seas and swallowed by fish, the material constituents of their bodies should re-assemble and every man should rise up as the same person that he once was ten or twenty thousand years before? Allah has given its very rational and highly forceful

reply in the form of this brief question: "Does man think that We shall not be able to put his bones together?" That is, "If you had been told that the scattered particles of your body would reunite of their own accord some time in the future, and you would come back to life by yourself with this very body, you would no doubt have been justified in regarding it as impossible. But what you have actually been told is that such a thing will not happen by itself, but Allah Almighty will do this. Now, do you really think that the Creator of the universe, Whom you yourself also regard as the Creator, would be powerless to do so?" This was such a question in answer to which nobody who believed in God to be the Creator of the universe, could say, neither then nor today, that even God Himself could not do this even if He so willed. And if a disbeliever says such a thing, he can be asked: How did God in the first instance make the body in which you at present exist, by gathering its countless particles together from the air, water and earth and many other places you know not what, and how can you say that the same God cannot gather its constituent parts together once again?

4. That is, "Not to speak of building up your skeleton once again by gathering together the major bones, We are able to make whole the most delicate parts of your body, even your finger-tips, as they used to be before."

5. In this brief sentence the real disease of the deniers of the Hereafter has been clearly diagnosed. What makes them deny the Hereafter is not, in fact, their regarding the Resurrection and Hereafter as impossible but they deny it because acceptance of the Hereafter inevitably imposes certain moral restrictions on them, which they detest. They desire that they should continue roaming in the world at will as they have been roaming before. They should have full freedom to go on committing whatever injustice, dishonesty, sin and wickedness that they have been committing before, and there should be no deterrent to obstruct their freedom and to warn them that one day they will have to appear and render an account of their deeds before their God. Therefore, it is not their intellect which is hindering them from believing in the Hereafter but their desires of the self.

6. This question was not put as a question but derisively and to deny Resurrection. That is, they did not want to ask when Resurrection would take place but asked mockingly: "What has

happened to the day with which you are threatening us? When will it come?"

7. Literally, the words *barīq al-baṣaru* mean dazzling of the eyes by lightning, but in the Arabic idiom these words do not specifically carry this meaning only but are also used for man's being terror-stricken and amazed, or his being confounded on meeting with an accident suddenly and his eyes being dazed at some distressing sight before him. This subject has been expressed at another place in the Qur'ān, thus: "Allah is only deferring their case to the Day when the eyes shall stare with consternation." (Ibrāhīm : 42).

8. This is a brief description of the chaotic condition of the system of the universe, that will prevail in the first stage of Resurrection. The darkening of the moon and the joining of the moon and the sun together can also mean that not only will the moon lose its light, which is borrowed from the sun, but the sun itself will become dark and both will become devoid of light similarly. Another meaning can be that the earth will suddenly start rotating in the reverse order and on that day both the moon and the sun will rise simultaneously in the west. And a third meaning can be that the moon will suddenly shoot out of the earth's sphere of influence and will fall into the sun. There may possibly be some other meaning also of this which we cannot understand today.

9. *Bimā qaddama wa akhkhara* is a very comprehensive sentence, which can have several meanings and probably all are implied: (1) That man on that Day will be told what good or evil he had earned in his worldly life before death and sent forward for his hereafter, and also informed what effects of his good or evil acts he had left behind in the world, which continued to work and to influence the coming generations for ages after him; (2) that he will be told everything he ought to have done but which he did not do, and did what he ought not to have done; (3) that the full datewise account of what he did before and what he did afterwards will be placed before him; (4) that he will be told whatever good or evil he had done as well as informed of the good or the evil that he had left undone.

10. That is, the object of placing man's record before him will not be to inform the culprit of his crimes, but this will be done

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because the demands of justice are not fulfilled unless the proof of the crime is produced before the court; otherwise everyman fully well knows what he actually is. For the sake of self-knowledge he does not need that another one should tell him what he is. A liar can deceive the whole world but he himself knows that he lies. A thief can devise a thousand devices to conceal his crime but he himself is aware that he is a thief. A person involved in error can present a thousand arguments to assure the people that he is honestly convinced of the disbelief, atheism or polytheism, which he professes and follows, but his own conscience is never unaware of why he persists in that creed and what, in fact, prevents him from understanding and admitting its error and falsity. An unjust, wicked, dishonest, immoral and corrupt person can even suppress the voice of his own conscience by inventing one or another excuse so that it may stop reproaching him and should be satisfied that he is doing whatever he is doing only because of certain compulsions, expediences and genuine needs, but despite this he has in any case the knowledge of what wrong he has committed against a certain person, how he has deprived another of his rights, how he deceived still another and what unlawful methods he used to gain what he has gained. Therefore, at the time when one appears in the Court of the Hereafter, every disbeliever, every hypocrite, every wicked person and culprit will himself be knowing what he has done in the world and for what crime he stands before his God.

11. The whole passage from here to "Again, it is for Us to explain its meaning", is a parenthesis, which has been interposed here as an address to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace). As we have explained in the Introduction above, in the initial stage of the Prophethood when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was not yet fully used to receiving the Revelation, he was afraid when Revelation came down to him whether he would be able to remember exactly what the Angel Gabriel (peace be on him) was reciting to him or not. Therefore, he would try to commit to memory rapidly what he heard from the Angel simultaneously. The same thing happened when Gabriel was reciting these verses of Sūrah Al-Qiyāmah. Therefore, interrupting what was being revealed, the Holy Prophet was instructed to the effect: "Do not try to commit to memory the words of the Revelation; but listen to it attentively and carefully. It is Our responsibility to enable you to remember it by heart and then to recite it accurately. Rest assured that you will not forget even a

word of this Revelation, nor ever commit a mistake in reciting it." After this instruction the original theme is resumed with: "No, by no means! The fact is ..." The people who are not aware of this background regard these sentences as wholly unconnected with the context when they see them interposed here. But one does not see any irrelevance when one has understood their background. This can be understood by an example. A teacher seeing the inattentiveness of a student in the course of the lesson might interrupt the lesson to tell him, "Listen to me carefully", and then resume his speech. This sentence will certainly seem to be irrelevant to those who might be unaware of the incident and might read the lesson when it is printed and published word for word. But the one who is aware of the incident because of which this sentence was interposed, will feel satisfied that the lesson has been reproduced verbatim and nothing has been increased or decreased in it in the process of reproduction.

The explanation that we have given above of the interpolation of the parenthesis in the present context, is not merely based on conjecture, but it has been explained likewise in the authentic traditions. Imām Aḥmad, Bukhārī, Muslim, Nasā'ī, Tirmidhi, Ibn Jarīr, Ṭabarānī, Baihaqī and other traditionists have related with authentic chains of transmitters a tradition from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, saying that when the Qur'ān was revealed to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), he would start repeating the words of the Revelation rapidly as the Angel Gabriel recited them, fearing lest he should forget some part of it later. Thereupon, he was instructed: "Do not move your tongue to remember this Revelation hastily ..." The same thing has been related from Sha'bi, Ibn Zaid, Ḍaḥḥāk, Ḥasan Baṣrī, Qatādah, Mujāhid and other early commentators.

12. Although it was Gabriel (peace be on him) who recited the Qur'ān to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace), since he recited it on behalf of Allah, and not on his own behalf, Allah said: "When We are reciting it."

13. This gives the feeling, and some early commentators also have given expression to the same, that probably in the beginning the Holy Messenger of Allah used to ask of the Angel Gabriel the meaning of a verse or a word or a command of the Qur'ān even in the very midst of the Revelation itself. Therefore, the Holy Prophet was not only given the instruction that he should listen quietly to

Revelation when it came down to him, and assured that its each word would be preserved in his memory precisely, and he would be enabled to recite the Qur'ān exactly as it was revealed, but at the same time it was also promised that he would be made to understand the meaning and intention of each command and each instruction of Divine Revelation.

This is a very important verse, which proves certain fundamental concepts which if understood well, can protect one against the errors which some people have been spreading before as they are spreading them today.

First, it clearly proves that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) did not receive only the Revelation which is recorded in the Qur'ān but besides that he was also given such knowledge by revelation as is not recorded in it. For, if the meaning and intention of the commandments of the Qur'ān, its allusions, its words and its specific terms, which the Holy Prophet was made to understand, had been recorded in the Qur'ān, there was no need to say that it was also Allah's own responsibility to explain its meaning, for it should then be there in the Qur'ān itself. Hence, one will have to admit that the explanations which were given by Allah of the meanings of the contents of the Qur'ān, were in any case in addition to the words of the Qur'ān. This is another proof of the secret Revelation to the Holy Prophet which the Qur'ān provides. (For further proofs of this from the Qur'ān, see our book *Sunnat kī Ā'ini Hathiya*, pp. 94-95 and pp. 118-125).

Secondly, the explanation of the meaning and intention of the Qur'ān and of its commandments that was given by Allah to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), was given for the purpose that he should make the people understand the Qur'ān by his word and deed according to it and teach them to act on its Commands. If this was not the object, and the explanation was only given so that he may restrict its knowledge to himself, it was then an exercise in futility, for it could not help in any way in the performance of the prophetic duties. Therefore, only a foolish person could say that this explanatory work had no legal value at all. Allah Himself has said in Sūrah An-Nahl : 44: "And O Prophet, We have sent down this Admonition to you so that you may make plain and explain to the people the teaching which has been sent for them." (For explanation, see E.N. 40 of Sūrah An-Nahl). And at four places in the Qur'ān Allah has stated that the Holy Prophet's task was not only to

recite the verses of the Book of Allah but also to teach the Book. (Al-Baqarah : 129, 151, Āl- Imrān : 164, Al-Jumu'ah : 2. We have fully explained all these verses at pp. 74-77 of *Sunnat ki Ā'ini Hathi-yat*). After this, how can a believer of the Qur'ān deny that the Qur'ān's correct and authoritative, as a matter of fact official, explanation is only that which the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has given by his word and deed, for it is not his personal explanation but the explanation given by the God Who sent down the Qur'ān to him. Apart from this, or leaving this aside any person who explains a verse, or a word, of the Qur'ān according to his personal whim and desire, commits a boldness which no true believer could ever commit.

Thirdly, even if a person has read the Qur'ān only cursorily, he cannot help feeling that there are many things in it whose actual meaning and intention cannot be understood by a reader of Arabic only from the words of the Qur'ān, nor can he know how to act on the commands enjoined in them. Take the word *ṣalāt* for instance. The act which has been most stressed by the Qur'ān after the affirmation of faith is the act of *ṣalāt*. But no man only with the help of the dictionary can determine its actual meaning. At the most what one can understand from the way it has been repeatedly mentioned in the Qur'ān is that this Arabic word has been used in some special terminological sense, and it probably implies some special act which the believers are required to perform. But merely by reading the Qur'ān no reader of Arabic can determine what particular act it is, and how it is to be performed. The question: If the Sender of the Qur'ān had not appointed a teacher from Himself and explained to him the precise and exact meaning of this term and taught him the method in full detail of implementing the command of *ṣalāt*, could there be even two Muslims in the entire world who would have agreed on one method of acting on the command of *ṣalāt* just by reading the Qur'ān? The reason why Muslims have been performing *ṣalāt* in one and the same way, generation after generation, for more than 1500 years, and the way millions and millions of Muslims are carrying out the command of *ṣalāt* similarly in every part of the world, is that Allah had not only revealed the words of the Qur'ān to His Messenger but had also explained to him fully the meaning of those words, and the same meaning he taught to the people who accepted the Qur'ān as the Book of Allah and him as the Messenger of Allah.

Fourthly, the means of knowing the explanation of the words of the Qur'ān that Allah taught His Messenger and the Messenger his *Ummah* by word and deed, is none but the *Hadith* and the *Sunnah*. The *Hadith* implies the traditions which the earliest followers passed on to the later generations about the sayings and acts of the Messenger on sound authority, and the *Sunnah* implies the way of life which became prevalent in the individual and collective life of the Muslims by the Holy Messenger's oral and practical teaching, the details of which have been bequeathed by the former to the latter generations by reliable traditions as well as seen by them practically in the life of the earliest followers. The person who refuses to acknowledge this means of knowledge, in fact, says that Allah after taking the responsibility of explaining the meaning of the Qur'ān to His Messenger had, God forbid, failed to fulfil His promise. For this responsibility had not been taken to explain the meaning only to the Messenger in his personal capacity but for the purpose that the *Ummah* also be made to understand the meaning of the Divine Book through the agency of the Messenger. And as soon as the *Hadith* and the *Sunnah* are denied to be a source of law, it virtually amounts to saying that Allah has failed to carry out His responsibility. May Allah protect us from such blasphemy! To the one who argues that many people had also fabricated *Hadith*, we would say that fabrication of *Hadith* itself is a major proof of the fact that in the beginning the entire *Ummah* gave the sayings and acts of the Holy Messenger (upon whom be Allah's peace) the status of law, otherwise why should the people who wanted to spread error have fabricated false *Hadith*? For only those coins are counterfeited which are current in the bazaar; nobody would print paper currency which had no value in the bazaar. Then, those who say such a thing perhaps do not know that this *Ummah* had seen to it from the very beginning that no falsehood was ascribed to the holy man whose sayings and acts had the status of law, and as the danger of ascribing false things to him increased, the well-wishers of the *Ummah* made greater and still greater efforts to distinguish the genuine from the counterfeit. The science of distinguishing the genuine from the false traditions is a unique science invented and developed only by the Muslims. Unfortunate indeed are those who without acquiring this science are being misled by the western orientalist to look upon the *Hadith* and the *Sunnah* as un-authentic and unreliable and do not realize how grievously they are harming Islam by their foolhardiness.

14. The theme is again resumed from where it was interrupted by the parenthesis. "By no means" implies: "You deny the Hereafter not because you regard the Creator of the universe as helpless to bring about Resurrection and raise the dead, but because of this and this other reason."

15. This is the second reason for denying the Hereafter, the first being the one mentioned in verse 5 above, saying: Since man wants to avoid the moral restrictions which are inevitably imposed by the belief in the Hereafter, his selfish motives, in fact, urge him to deny the Hereafter, and then he tries to present arguments in order to rationalise his denial. Now, the second reason being presented is that the deniers of the Hereafter are narrow-minded and short-sighted; for them only those results are all important, which appear in this world, and they do not give any importance to those effects which will appear in the Hereafter. They think that they should expend all their labour and effort in attaining whatever benefits, pleasures or joys they can attain here, for if one attained this, one attained everything, no matter what evil end this might lead to in the Hereafter. Likewise, they think that the loss or trouble or grief that can afflict one here is a thing that one must avoid, no matter how great a reward it might earn one in the Hereafter if one endured it here. They are only interested in the cash bargain. For the sake of as remote a thing as the Hereafter they can neither abandon a profit nor suffer a loss today. With this mode of thought when they discuss the question of the Hereafter rationally, it is not true rationalism but a mode of thinking because of which they are resolved not to acknowledge the Hereafter in any case even if their conscience might be crying from within that the arguments for the possible occurrence and necessity of the Hereafter given in the Qur'ān are highly rational and their own reasoning against it is very weak.

16. "Some faces will be fresh": will be beaming with joy and delight, for the Hereafter which they had believed in, will be before them precisely according to their belief. Thus, when they see the Hereafter for the sake of which they had given up the unlawful benefits of the world and suffered the lawful losses, actually established before their very eyes, they will have the satisfaction that they had made the correct decision about their way of life, and the time had come when they would enjoy its best and plentiful fruits.

17. Some commentators have understood this allegorically. They say that the words "looking towards someone" are used

idiomatically for having expectations from some one, awaiting his decision and hoping for his mercy and kindness; so much so that even a blind person also says that he is looking towards some one in the hope to see how he helps him. But in a large number of the *Aḥādith* the commentary that has been reported of it from the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) is that in the Hereafter the illustrious servants of Allah will be blessed with the vision of their Lord. According to a tradition in Bukhārī: "You will openly see your Lord." Muslim and Tirmidhī have related on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Ṣuḥaib that the Holy Prophet said: "When the righteous people enter Paradise, Allah will ask them: Do you want that I should bless you with something more? They will answer: Have You not made our faces bright: Have You not admitted us into Paradise and saved us from Hell? Thereupon, Allah will remove the curtain and none of the blessings that they had been blessed with until then will be dearer to them than that they should be blessed with the vision of their Lord." And this very reward is the additional reward about which the Qur'ān says: "Those who have done excellent works, will get excellent rewards, and even something in addition to that." (Yūnus : 26) Bukhārī and Muslim have related, on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Abū Sa'īd Khudrī and Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah : "The people asked : O Messenger of Allah, shall we see our Lord on the Day of Resurrection? The Holy Messenger replied: Do you find any difficulty in seeing the sun and the moon when there is no cloud in between? They said that they did not. The Holy Messenger said: Likewise, you will see you Lord." Another tradition bearing almost on the same subject has been reported in Bukhārī and Muslim from Ḥaḍrat Jarīr bin 'Abdullah. Imām Aḥmad, Tirmidhī, Dāraqutnī, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Al-Mundhir, Ṭabarānī, Baihaqī, Ibn Abi Shaibah and some other traditionists have related, with a little variation in wording, a tradition from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar, saying: "The man of the lowest rank among the dwellers of Paradise will see the vastness of his kingdom up to a distance covered in two thousand years, and the people of the highest rank among them will see their Lord twice daily. Then, the Holy Prophet recited this verse: 'On that Day some faces shall be fresh, looking towards their Lord'." A tradition in Ibn Mājah from Ḥaḍrat Jabir bin 'Abdullah is to the effect: "Allah will look towards them, and they will look towards Allah. Then, until Allah hides Himself from them, they will not pay attention to any other blessing of Paradise, and will continue to look towards Him." On the basis of this and many

other traditions, the followers of the *Sunnah* almost unanimously understand this verse in the meaning that in the Hereafter the dwellers of Paradise will be blessed with the vision of Allah, and this is supported by this verse of the Qur'ān too: "Nay, surely on that Day they (the sinners) shall be kept away from their Lord's vision." (Al-Muṭaffifin : 15). From this one can automatically conclude that this deprivation will be the lot of the sinners, not of the righteous.

Here, the question arises: How can man ever see God? A thing is seen when it is there in a particular direction, place, form and colour, and the rays of light are reflected from it to the eye of man and its image is conveyed from the eye to the sight area in the brain. Is it ever conceivable with regard to the Being of Allah, Lord of the Universe, that man would be able to see Him in this way? But this question, in fact, springs from a grave misunderstanding. It does not take into account the distinction between two things: the essence of seeing and the specific form of the occurrence of the act of seeing with which we are familiar in the world. The essence of seeing is that the seer should be characterised by the power of sight: he should not be blind, and the thing to be seen should be manifest to him, not hidden from him. But in the world what we experience and observe is only the specific form of seeing in which a man or an animal practically sees something, and for this it is necessary that the seer should have an organ called the eye in his body, the eye should have the power of sight, it should have a physically bounded, coloured object before it, which should reflect rays of light to the eye, and the eye should be able to receive its image. Now, if a person thinks that the practical demonstration of the essence of seeing can take place only in the form with which we are familiar in the world, he would be only showing the narrowness of his own mental outlook; otherwise there can be in the Kingdom of God countless ways of seeing, which we cannot even imagine. The one who disputes this should tell us whether his God is seeing or blind. If He is seeing and sees His whole Universe and everything in it, does He see all this with an organ called the eye with which men and animals see things in the world, and does the act of seeing issue forth from Him as it issues forth from us? Obviously, the answer to this is in the negative, and when it is so, why should a sensible man find it difficult to understand that in the Hereafter the dwellers of Paradise will not see Allah in the specific form in which

man sees something in the world, but there the nature of seeing will be different, which we cannot comprehend here. The fact is that it is even more difficult for us to understand the nature of the Hereafter precisely and accurately than it is for a two-year-old child to understand what matrimonial life is, whereas he himself will experience it when he grows up.

18. The phrase "by no means" relates to the context, and means: "You are wrong in thinking that you will be annihilated after death and you will not return to your Lord."

19. The word *rāq-in* in the original may be derived from *ruqayyah*, which means resort to charming, enchanting and exorcising, and also from *raqi*, which means ascending. In the first case, the meaning would be: "At last, when the attendants of the patient are disappointed with every remedy and cure, they will say: "Let us at least call in an enchanter, who may save him;" in the second case, the meaning would be: "At that time the angels will say: which angels are to take his soul: the angels of punishment or the angels of mercy?" In other words, at that very time the question will be decided in what capacity the dying one is entering the Hereafter; if he is a righteous person, the angels of mercy will take him, and if he is wicked, the angels of mercy will keep away and the angels of punishment will seize him and take him away.

20. Some commentators have taken the word *sāq* (leg, shank) in its literal meaning, thereby implying that at death one lean leg will join the other lean leg; some others have taken it metaphorically in the sense of difficulty, vehemence and hardship so as to mean: At that time one affliction will be joined with another affliction, one of being separated from the world and all its enjoyments, and the other of being seized and taken to the Hereafter as a culprit, and this will be experienced by every disbeliever, hypocrite and sinner.

21. It means that the one who was not prepared to believe in the Hereafter, heard all that has been described in the above verses; yet he persisted in his denial, and hearing these verses went back to his household, arrogantly. Mujāhid, Qatādah and Ibn Zaid say that this person was Abū Jahl. The words of the verse also indicate that it was some particular person, who adopted such a conduct after having heard the above-mentioned verse of Sūrah Al-Qiyāmah.

The words, "He neither affirmed the Truth nor offered the Prayer", are particularly noteworthy. They clearly show that the

first and necessary demand of acknowledging the truth about Allah and His Messenger and Book is that one should perform the Prayer. The occasion and time to carry out the other injunctions of the Divine *Shari'ah* come later but the Prayer time approaches soon after one has affirmed the faith, and then it becomes known whether what one has affirmed with the tongue was really the voice of one's heart, or it was only a puff of the wind which one sent out from one's mouth in the form of words.

22. The commentators have given several meanings of the word *aulā laka*: shame on you, may you perish, woe to you, may you hasten to your doom. But in our opinion, in view of the context, the most appropriate meaning is that which Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr has given in his commentary: "When you have had the boldness to disown your Creator, then it only behoves a person like you to persist in the sort of conduct you display." This is the same sort of sarcastic remark as occurred in Sūrah Ad-Dukhān : 49 above. While meting out punishment to the culprit in Hell, it will be said: "Taste this: a mighty and honourable man that you are!"

23. Now, in conclusion, the same theme is being repeated with which the discourse began: Life-after-death is necessary as well as possible.

24. The word *sudā* when used with regard to a camel implies a camel who is wandering aimlessly, grazing at will, without there being anybody to look after him. Thus, the verse means: "Does man think that he has been left to himself to wander at will as if his Creator had laid no responsibility on him, had imposed no duty on him, had forbidden nothing to him, that at no time in future he would be required to account for his deeds?" This same theme has been expressed in Al-Mu'minūn : 115 thus: "On the Day of Resurrection, Allah will ask the disbelievers: 'Did you think that We had created you without any purpose, and that you would never be brought back to Us?'" At both these places the argument for the necessity of the life hereafter has been presented as a question. The question means: Do you really think that you are no more than mere animals? Don't you see the manifest difference between yourself and the animal? The animal has been created without the power of choice and authority, but you have been blessed with the power of choice and authority; there is no question of morality about what the animal does, but your acts are necessarily characterised by good and evil,

Then, how did you take it into your head that you had been created irresponsible and unanswerable as the animal has been? Why the animal will not be resurrected, is quite understandable. The animal only fulfilled the fixed demands of its instinct: it did not use its intellect to propound a philosophy; it did not invent a religion; it did not make anyone its god nor became a god for others; it did nothing that could be called good or bad; it did not enforce a good or bad way of life, which would influence others, generation after generation, so that it should deserve a reward or punishment for it. Hence, if it perished to annihilation, it would be understandable, for it could not be held responsible for any of its acts to account for which it might need to be resurrected. But how could you be excused from life-after-death when right till the time of your death you continued to perform moral acts, which your own intellect judged as good or bad and worthy of reward or punishment? Should a man who killed an innocent person and then fell a victim to a sudden accident immediately after it, get off scot-free and should never be punished for the crime of murder he committed? Do you really feel satisfied that a man, who sowed corruption and iniquity in the world, which entailed evil consequences for mankind for centuries after him, should himself perish like an insect, or a grasshopper, and should never be resurrected to account for his misdeeds, which corrupted the lives of hundreds of thousands of human beings after him? Do you think that the man, who struggled throughout his life for the cause of truth and justice, goodness and peace, and suffered hardships for their sake, was a creation of the kind of an insect, and had no right to be rewarded for his good acts?

25. This is an argument for the possibility of life-after-death. As for the people who believe that the whole act of creation, starting from the emission of a sperm-drop till its development into a perfect man, is only a manifestation of the power and wisdom of Allah, they cannot in fact refute this argument in any way, for their intellect however shamelessly and stubbornly they might behave, cannot refuse to admit that the God Who thus brings about man in the world, also has the power to bring the same man into being once again. As for those who regard this expressly wise act only as a result of accidents; do not in fact have any explanation to offer, unless they are bent upon stubbornness, how in every part and in every nation of the world, from the beginning of creation till today,

the birth of boys and girls has continuously been taking place in such proportion that at no time it has so happened that in some human population only males or only females might have been born and there might be no possibility of the continuation of the human race. Has this also been happening just accidentally? To make such an absurd claim one should at least be so shameless as to come out one day with the claim that London and New York, Moscow and Peking, have come into existence just accidentally. (For further explanation, see E.N.'s 27 to 30 of Sūrah Ar-Rūm, E.N. 77 of Ash-Shūrā).

There are several traditions to show that whenever the Holy Prophet recited this verse, he would sometimes respond with *balā* (why not!), sometimes with *Subhānaka Allāhumma fa-balā* (Glorified are You, O Allah, why not!) and sometimes with *Subhānaka fa-balā* or *Subhānaka wa balā*. (Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abi Ḥātim, Abū Da'ūd). Abū Da'ūd contains a tradition from Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, saying that the Holy Prophet said: "When in Sūrah At-Tīn, you read the verse: *Alais-Allāhu bi-ahkam-il-Ḥakimīn* ("Is not Allah the greatest Ruler of all?"), you should respond to it, saying: *Balā wa anā 'alā dhālika min-ash-shāhidīn* (Why not? I am of those who bear witness to this"). And when you read this verse of Sūrah Al-Qiyāmah, say: *Balā*; and when you read verse: *Fa-bi-ayyi ḥadīth-in ba'da hū yu'minūn* ("Now, what message is there after this (Qur'ān) in which they will believe?") of Sūrah Al-Mursalāt, say: *Āmannā billāh* (We believed in Allah). Traditions on this subject have been related also by Imām Aḥmad, Tirmidhī, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Mardūyah, Baihaqī and Ḥākim.

LXXVI

AD-DAHR **الدَّهْر**

سُورَةُ الدَّاهِرِ

LXXVI

AD-DAHR الدَّهْر

INTRODUCTION

Name

This Sūrah is called *Ād-Dahr* as well as *Al-Insān* after the words occurring in the first verse.

Period of Revelation

Most of the commentators, including 'Allāma Zamakhshari, Imām Rāzi, Qādi Baidāwī, 'Allāma Nizām ad-Dīn Nisābūrī, Hāfiz Ibn Kathīr and many others, regard it as a Makki Sūrah, and, according to 'Allāma Alūsī, the same is the opinion of the majority

of scholars. However, some commentators hold the view that the Sūrah was revealed at Madīnah, and some others say that it was revealed at Makkah but vv. 8-10 of it were sent down at Madīnah.

As far as the subject-matter and the style of the Sūrah are concerned, these are very different from those of the Madani Sūrahs. A little study of it rather shows that it is not only a Makki Sūrah but it was revealed during the earliest period at Makkah, which began just after the revelation of the first seven verses of Sūrah Al-Muddaththir. As for vv. 8-10, they are so naturally set in the theme of the Sūrah that if they are read in their proper context, no one can say that the theme preceding and following them had been sent down 15 to 16 years earlier but these three verses which were revealed many years later were inserted here unnaturally.

In fact, the basis of the idea that this Sūrah, or some verses of it were revealed at Madīnah, is a tradition which 'Aṭā' has related from Ibn 'Abbās (may Allah bless him). He says that once Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan and Ḥusain fell ill. The Holy Prophet and some of his Companions visited them. They wished Ḥaḍrat 'Alī to make a vow to Allah for the recovery of the two children. Thereupon, Ḥaḍrat 'Alī, Ḥaḍrat Fāṭimah and Fidḍah, their maid servant, vowed a fast of three days if Allah restored the children to health. The children recovered by the grace of Allah and the three of them began to fast as avowed. As there was nothing to eat in the house, Ḥaḍrat 'Alī borrowed three measures (sā') of barley from somebody (according to another tradition, earned through labour). When on the first day they sat down to eat after breaking the fast, a poor man came and begged for food. They gave all their

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food to him, drank water and retired to bed. The next day when they again sat down to eat after breaking the fast, an orphan came and begged for something. They again gave away the whole food to him, drank water and went to bed. On the third day when they were just going to eat after breaking the fast, a captive came up and begged for food likewise. Again the whole food was given away to him. On the fourth day Ḥaḍrat 'Alī took both the children with him and went before the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace). The Holy Prophet (on whom be peace) seeing the weak condition of the three, returned with them to the house of Ḥaḍrat Fāṭimah and found her lying in a corner half dead with hunger. This moved him visibly. In the meantime the Angel Gabriel (peace be on him) came and said: "Look, Allah has congratulated you on the virtues of the people of your house!" When the Holy Prophet asked what it was, he recited this whole Sūrah in response. (According to Ibn Mahrān's tradition, he recited it from verse 5 till the end. But the tradition which Ibn Mardūyah has related from Ibn 'Abbās only says that the verse *Wa yul'imūn-al-la'ām* ... was sent down concerning Ḥaḍrat 'Alī and Ḥaḍrat Fāṭimah; there is no mention of this story in it). This whole story has been narrated by 'Alī bin Ahmad al-Wāḥidī in his Commentary of the Qur'ān, entitled *Al-Basīṭ*, and probably from the same it has been taken by Zamakhsharī, Rāzī, Nisābūrī and others.

In the first place, this tradition is very weak as regards its chain of transmission. Then, from the point of view of its subject-matter also, it is strange that when a poor man, or an orphan, or a captive, comes to beg for food, he is given all the food. He could be given one member's food and the five of them could share the rest of it among themselves. Then this also

is incredible that illustrious persons like Ḥaḍrat 'Alī and Ḥaḍrat Fāṭimah, who possessed perfect knowledge of Islam, should have regarded it as an act of virtue to keep the two children, who had just recovered their health and were still weak, hungry for three consecutive days. Moreover, in respect of the captives also, it has never been a practice under the Islamic government that they should be left to beg for food for themselves. For if they were prisoners of the government, the government itself was responsible to arrange food and clothing for them, and if they were in an individual's custody, he was made responsible to feed and clothe them. Therefore, it was not possible that in Madīnah a captive should have gone about begging food from door to door. However, overlooking the weaknesses of transmission and the probability of subject-matter, even if the narrative is accepted as it goes, at the most what it shows is that when the people of the Holy Prophet's house acted righteously as they did, Gabriel came and gave him the good news that Allah had much appreciated their act of virtue, for they had acted precisely in the righteous way that Allah had commanded in these verses of Sūrah Ad-Dahr. This does not necessitate that these verses too were sent down on that very occasion. The same is the case with many traditions concerning the occasion of revelation. When about a certain verse it is said that it was sent down on a particular occasion, it in fact does not mean that the verse was sent down on the very occasion the incident took place. But it means that the verse applies precisely and exactly to the incident. Imām Suyūṭī in *Al-Itqān* has quoted this from Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Taimiyyah: "When the reporters say that a verse was sent down concerning a particular incident, it sometimes implies that the same incident (or matter) occasioned its revelation, and

sometimes that the verse applies to the matter although it may not have occasioned its revelation." Further on he quotes Imām Badr ad-Dīn Zarkashī's view from his *Al-Burhān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*: "It is well-known in respect of the Companions and their immediate successors that when one of them says that a verse was sent down concerning a particular matter, it means that the ruling contained in it applied to that matter and not that the matter itself occasioned the revelation of the verse. Thus, it only uses the ruling of the verse for the purpose of reasoning and not for stating a fact." (*Al-Itqān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, vol. I, p. 31, Ed. 1929).

Theme and Subject-Matter

The theme of this Sūrah is to inform man of his true position in the world and to tell him that if he understood his true position rightly and adopted the attitude of gratefulness, he would meet with such and such good end, and if he adopted the way of disbelief, he would meet with such and such evil end. In the longer Sūrahs of the Qur'ān this same theme has been presented at length, but a special characteristic of the style of the earliest Sūrahs revealed at Makkah is that the subjects dealt with at length in the later period, have been presented in a brief but highly effective way in this period in such concise, elegant sentences as may automatically be preserved in the memory of the hearers.

In this Sūrah, first of all man has been reminded that there was a time when he was nothing; then a humble beginning of him was made with a mixed drop of sperm and ovum of which even his mother was not aware; even she did not know that he had been conceived, nor anyone else seeing the microscopic cell could say that it was a man, who in future would

become the best of creation on the earth. After this, man has been warned, so as to say: "Beginning your creation in this way We have developed and shaped you into what you are today in order to test and try you in the world. That is why, unlike other creatures, you were made intelligent and sensible and were shown both the way of gratitude and the way of ingratitude clearly so that you may show in the interval that you have been granted here for work whether you have emerged as a grateful servant from the test or an unbelieving, ungrateful wretch!"

Then, just in one sentence, it has been stated decisively what will be the fate to be met with in the Hereafter by those who emerged as unbelievers from this test.

After this, in vv. 5-22 continuously, the blessings with which those who do full justice to servitude in the world, will be favoured, have been mentioned in full detail. In these verses, not only have their best rewards been mentioned but they have also been told briefly what are the acts on the basis of which they would become worthy of those rewards. Another special characteristic of the earliest Sūrahs revealed at Makkah is that besides introducing in them briefly the fundamental beliefs and concepts of Islam, here and there, those moral qualities and virtuous acts have been mentioned, which are praiseworthy according to Islam, and also those evils of deed and morality of which Islam strives to cleanse human life. And these two things have not been mentioned with a view to show what good or evil result is entailed by them in the transitory life of the world, but they have been mentioned only to point out what enduring results they will produce in the eternal and everlasting life of the Here-

after, irrespective of whether an evil quality may prove useful or a good quality may prove harmful in the world.

This is the subject-matter of the first section (vv. 1-22). In the second section, addressing the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), three things have been stated: first, that "it is in fact We Ourselves Who are revealing this Qur'an piecemeal to you, and this is intended to inform the disbelievers, not you, that the Qur'an is not being fabricated by Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) but it is "We" Who are revealing it, and it is Our own wisdom which requires that We should reveal it piece by piece and not all at once." Second, the Holy Prophet has been told: "No matter how long it may take for the decree of your Lord to be enforced and no matter what afflictions may befall you in the meantime, in any case you should continue to perform your mission of Apostleship patiently, and not to yield to the pressure tactics of any of these wicked and unbelieving people." The third thing he has been told is: "Remember Allah day and night, perform the Prayer and spend your nights in the worship of Allah, for it is these things which sustain and strengthen those who call to Allah in the face of iniquity and disbelief."

Then in one single sentence, the actual cause of the disbelievers' wrong attitude has been stated: they have forgotten the Hereafter and are enamoured of the world. In the second sentence, they have been warned to the effect: "You have not come into being by yourself; We have created you. You have not made these broad chests and strong, sturdy hands and feet for yourselves; it is We Who made these for you; and it also lies in Our power to treat you as We please. We

can distort your figures, We can destroy you and replace you by some other nation. We can cause you to die and can recreate you in whatever form We like."

In conclusion, it has been said: This is an Admonition: whoever wills may accept it and take a path to his Lord. But man's own will and desire is not everything in the world. No one's will and desire can be fulfilled unless Allah (also) so wills. And Allah's willing is not haphazard: whatever He wills, He wills it on the basis of His knowledge and wisdom. He admits into His mercy whomever He regards as worthy of His mercy on the basis of His knowledge and wisdom, and He has prepared a painful torment for those whom He finds unjust and wicked.



مَلْ آتَى عَلَى الْإِنْسَانِ حِينٌ مِّنَ الدَّهْرِ لَمْ يَكُن شَيْئًا مَّذْكُورًا إِنَّا خَلَقْنَا
 الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ أَمْشَاجٍ نَّتَبَّلِيهِ فَجَعَلْنَاهُ سَيِّئًا بَصِيرًا إِنَّا هَدَيْنَاهُ
 السَّبِيلَ إِنَّمَا شَاكَرًا وَإِنَّمَا كَفُورًا إِنَّا أَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكَافِرِينَ سَلِيلًا وَاعْلَلَّا وَ
 سَعِيرًا إِن الْأَبْرَارَ يَشْرَبُونَ مِنْ كَأْسٍ كَانَ مِزَاجُهَا كَافُورًا إِنَّا عَيْنًا يَشْرَبُ
 بِهَا عِبَادُ اللَّهِ يُفَجِّرُونَهَا تَفْجِيرًا يُؤفُونَ بِالنَّذْرِ وَيَخَافُونَ يَوْمًا كَانَ
 شَرُّهُ مُسْتَطِيرًا وَيُطْعَمُونَ الطَّعَامَ عَلَى حُبِّهِ مِسْكِينًا وَيَتِيمًا وَأَسِيرًا
 إِنَّمَا نُطْعِمُكُمْ لِوَجْهِ اللَّهِ لَا نُرِيدُ مِنْكُمْ جَزَاءً وَلَا شُكْرًا إِنَّا نَخَافُ مِنْ
 رَبِّنَا يَوْمًا عَبُوسًا قَتَطِيرًا فَوَقَّهُمُ اللَّهُ شَرَّ ذَلِكَ الْيَوْمِ وَلَقَّهْمُ نَصْرَهُ وَ
 سُرُورًا وَجَزَاهُمْ بِمَا صَبَرُوا جَنَّةً وَحَرِيرًا مُتَّكِلِينَ فِيهَا عَلَى الْأَرَائِكِ
 لَا يَرُونَ فِيهَا شَجَرًا وَلَا زَمْهَرِيرًا وَدَانِيَةً عَلَيْهِمْ ظِلُّهَا وَذُلَّتْ أَطْوْفُهَا
 تَذْلِيلًا وَيُطَافُ عَلَيْهِمْ بِإِنِّيَّةٍ مِّنْ فِضَّةٍ وَأَكْوَابٍ كَانَتْ قَوَارِيرًا قَوَارِيرًا
 مِنْ فِضَّةٍ قَدَّرُوهَا تَقْدِيرًا وَيَسْقُونَ فِيهَا كَأْسًا كَانَ مِزَاجُهَا زَنْجَبِيلًا
 عَيْنًا فِيهَا تُسْقَى سَلْسَبِيلًا وَيَطُوفُ عَلَيْهِمْ وِلْدَانٌ مُّخَلَّدُونَ إِذَا رَأَيْتَهُمْ
 حَسِبْتَهُمْ لُؤْلُؤًا مَّنشُورًا وَإِذَا رَأَيْتَ ثَمْرًا رَأَيْتَ نَعِيمًا وَمُلَكًا كَبِيرًا عَلَيْهِمْ
 ثِيَابٌ سُنْدُسٌ خُضْرٌ وَإِسْتَبْرَقٌ وَحُلُوا بِأَسَاوِرٍ مِنْ فِضَّةٍ وَسَقَّهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ
 قَرَارًا طُهُورًا إِن هَذَا كَانَ لَكُمْ جَزَاءً وَكَانَ سَعْيَكُمْ مَشْكُورًا إِنَّا نَحْنُ

قره حفص بغير الالف في الوصل فيها
 على الاول بالالف وعلى الثاني بغير الالف

LXXVI

AD-DAHR الذَّهْر

Verses : 31 .

Revealed at Makkah

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

Has there also passed on man a period of the 1-3
endless time when he was not yet a thing worthy of
mention?¹ Indeed, We created man from a mixed
sperm drop,² to try him,³ and therefore We made him
capable of hearing and seeing.⁴ We showed him the
way, whether to be grateful or disbelieving.⁵

For the disbelievers We have prepared chains and 4
collars and a raging Fire.

The righteous⁶ shall drink (in Paradise) cups of 5-22
wine flavoured with camphor-water. It will be a run-
ning fountain⁷ with the waters of which the servants of
Allah⁸ shall drink wine, and shall take out its channels
from place to place at will.⁹ These will be the people
who fulfil their vows¹⁰ (in the world), and fear the Day
whose evil shall be wide-spread, and who feed, out of love
for Allah,¹¹ the poor and the orphan and the captive,¹²
(saying),¹³ "We are feeding you only for the sake of
Allah: we neither seek any reward from you nor thanks."¹⁴
We dread from our Lord the torment of the Day, which
will be a long, dismal Day of affliction."¹⁵ So Allah shall
save them from the evil of that Day and shall bestow
on them freshness and joy.¹⁶ and shall grant them
Paradise and robes of silk as a reward for their patience.¹⁶
There they shall be reclining upon high couches, neither
troubled by the heat of the sun nor by severe cold. The
shades of Paradise shall cover them all round, and its
fruits shall be within their easy reach (so that they may

pluck them at will). Vessels of silver¹⁷ and goblets of glass shall be passed round to them, goblets made of crystal-clear silver,¹⁸ which will have been filled (by the attendants of Paradise) in due measure.¹⁹ There they shall be served with cups of wine flavoured with ginger. This will be a fountain of Paradise named *Salsabil*.²⁰ They will be attended by brisk-moving boys who will for ever remain boys. When you see them, you would think they were scattered pearls.²¹ In whatever direction you may look there, you would see only bliss and the splendour of a great kingdom.²² Upon them shall be the garments of fine green silk and rich brocade.²³ They shall be adorned with bracelets of silver.²⁴ and their Lord shall give them a pure wine to drink.²⁵ This is your reward and your endeavours have been appreciated,²⁶

1. Most of the commentators and translators have taken *hal* in the first sentence *Hal atā 'alal-insān-i*, in the meaning of *qad*. Accordingly, they interpret this sentence to mean: "No doubt, there has indeed passed on man a time." But, in fact, the word *hal* in Arabic is used only as an interrogative particle, and its object is not to ask a question in every case, but this apparently interrogative particle is used in different meanings on different occasions. For example, sometimes, in order to find out whether a certain incident has taken place or not, we ask: "Has this thing happened?" Sometimes we do not mean to ask a question but to deny something and we express the denial, thus: "Can any other also do this?" Sometimes we want somebody to affirm something and so ask him: "Have I paid what was due to you?" And sometimes we do not intend to have something just affirmed but we put a question in order to make the addressee pay particular attention to something which follows his affirmation as a sequel. For example, we ask someone: "Have I harmed you in any way?" The object is not only to make him affirm that one has not done him any harm, but also to make him think how far one is justified to harm somebody who has not harmed him in any way. The interrogative sentence in the verse before us

illustrates this last meaning. The object is not only to make man affirm that there has indeed passed on him such a period of time but also to make him think that the God Who developed and shaped him into a perfect man from an insignificant, humble beginning, would not be helpless to create him once again.

In the second sentence, *hīn-um-min ad-dahr*, the word *dahr* implies the endless time, the beginning and end of which are unknown to man; and *hīn* is the particular period of time which might at some time have passed during this endless period. What is meant to be said is that in this immensely long span of time there has passed a long period when human race was altogether non-existent. Then a time came in it when a species called Man was created, and in the same period a time has passed on every person when a beginning was made to bring him into existence from nothingness.

The third sentence, "when he was not yet a thing worthy of mention", implies that a part of him existed in the form of a microscopic germ in the sperm-drop of the father and a part in the form of a microscopic ovum in the mother. For long ages man did not even know that he comes into being when the sperm germ and the ovum combine. Now both have been observed by means of powerful microscopes but even now no one can say how much of man exists in the father's germ and how much in the mother's ovum. Then, the initial cell that comes into being by the combination of the two at the time of conception is such an insignificant thing that it can be seen only through highly powerful microscopes and seeing it also no one at first sight can claim that it is a man taking shape, nor that even if a man emerges from this humble beginning, what will be his size and stature, what will be his form and figure, and what will be his capabilities and personality like. This is the meaning of the sentence that at that time he was not yet a thing worthy of any mention although a beginning of his being as a man had been made.

2. "From a mixed sperm-drop": from the intermingling of the male sperm with the female ovum and not separately from the sperm and the ovum.

3. This shows man's real position in the world and the position of the world for man. He is not like the trees and animals that the object of his creation be fulfilled on the earth itself, and he should die and perish here after he has played his appointed role over a period of time according to the law of nature. Furthermore, this world is neither a place of punishment for him, as the monks think,

nor a place of rewards as the believers of the law of transmigration think, nor a place of entertainment and enjoyment, as the materialists think, nor a battlefield, as the followers of Darwin and Marx think, but in fact it is a place of test and trial for him. That which he regards as his age, is in fact the time given him for the test. Whatever powers and capabilities he has been given in the world, the things that have been placed under his control and authority, the various positions and capacities in which he functions, and the relationships that he enjoys with other men, all these are the countless papers of the test, and this test continues till the last breath of his life. The result is not to be announced in this world but in the Hereafter when all his answer-books will have been assessed, decision will be given whether he has come out successful or failed. And his success or failure wholly depends on what he thought of himself while he functioned here and how he answered the papers that were given him here. If he believed that he had no God, or that he was the slave of many gods, and while answering the papers thought that he was not to be held accountable before his Creator in the Hereafter, his whole lifework went wrong. And if he regarded himself as the slave of One God and worked in the way approved by God, with the accountability of the Hereafter always in view, he stood successful in the test. (This theme has occurred at many places in the Qur'ân and has been dealt with at length in the corresponding notes. It is not possible to give all the references, but those who are interested in it may see the explanation of it in its different aspects under "Test and Trial" in the Index. In no other book beside the Qur'ân has this truth been explained at such length).

4. The word *sami'* (hearing) and *basir* (seeing) in the original actually imply being "sensible and intelligent". These words of the Arabic language are never used in respect of the animal although it also hears and sees. Thus, hearing and seeing here do not imply the powers of hearing and seeing which have been given to the animals too, but those means through which man obtains knowledge and then draws conclusions from it. Besides, since hearing and seeing are among the most important means of knowledge for man, only these two have been mentioned briefly; otherwise it actually implies giving man all those senses of the body by which he gathers information. Then the senses given to man are quite different in their nature from those given to animals, for at the back of every sense he has a thinking brain, which collects information gained through

the senses, arranges it, draws conclusions from it, forms opinions, and then takes some decisions which become the basis of his attitude and conduct in life. Hence, after saying, "We created man in order to try him," to say, "therefore, We made him capable of hearing and seeing" actually contains the meaning that Allah gave him the faculties of knowledge and reason to enable him to take the test. Obviously, if this were not the meaning and the meaning of making man hearing and seeing just implied the one who could hear and see, then a blind and deaf person would stand exempted from the test, whereas unless a person is utterly devoid of knowledge and reason, there can be no question of his being exempted from the test.

5. That is, "We did not just leave him to himself after giving him the powers of knowledge and reason, but We also guided him so that he knows which is the path of gratefulness and which of ungratefulness, so that whichever path he chooses in his later life, he himself is responsible for it. In Sūrah Al-Balad, the same subject has been expressed, thus: "And We showed him both the conspicuous ways (of good and evil)." And in Sūrah Ash-Shams, thus: "By the human self, and by Him Who balanced it (with all the external and internal powers), then inspired it with its wickedness and its piety." When all these explanations are kept in view and also those detailed statements of the Qur'an in which it has been stated what arrangements Allah has made for man's guidance in the world, it becomes evident that in this verse "showing the way" does not imply any one form of guidance but many forms of it which are limitless and countless. For example :

(1) Along with the faculties of knowledge and reason man has also been endowed with a moral sense by which he discerns between good and evil, regards some acts and qualities as evil even if he himself is involved in them, and regards some other acts and qualities as good even if he himself is avoiding them. So much so that even those people who for the satisfaction of their selfish motives and desires have invented philosophies by which they have justified many evils for themselves, protest loudly when they are themselves treated with the same evils by others, and then it becomes known that in spite of their false philosophies they actually regard them as evil. Likewise, when a man himself is benefited by a good treatment from another person, he is from within forced to commend and appreciate it even though he might be looking upon good acts and qualities as ignorance, folly and antiquated things.

(2) In every man Allah has placed the faculty of Conscience (the *lawwāmah*), which checks and pricks him every time he is about to commit an evil, or is in the process of committing it, or has already committed it. However hard man may try to silence his Conscience or make it insensitive, he does not have the power to destroy it completely. He may become shameless and prove himself to be absolutely devoid of the Conscience, he may also try to deceive the world by argumentation, he may even invent a thousand excuses to justify his acts in order to deceive himself, but despite all this the censor that Allah has placed in his nature is so active and powerful that it does not let remain hidden from an evil person what he actually is. This same thing has been stated in Sūrah Al-Qiyāmah, thus: "Man knows his own self best even though he may offer many excuses." (v. 15)

(3) In man's own self and outside him, from the earth to the heavens, there lie scattered in the universe countless such signs which clearly show that all this could not happen without a God, nor could there be many gods to create this life and control and administer it. Likewise, these very signs, inside man and outside him, clearly point also to the Resurrection and Hereafter. If man shuts down his eyes on them, or refuses to ponder over them intelligently, or avoids to admit the truths which they point out, he himself would be to blame. For Allah has shown no negligence in laying out every possible sign of the truth for the guidance of man.

(4) Man does come across in his own life, and in the contemporary world and in the experiences of past history, countless such incidents which prove that a supreme power is ruling over him and the entire universe before whom he is absolutely powerless, whose Will is dominant over everything and whose help he needs at every moment. These experiences and observations which point to the truth do not exist only outside him but in man's own nature as well there exists the evidence of the existence of the supreme power on the basis of which even the most confirmed atheist spreads out his hands in prayer before God when in distress and the most hardened polytheist abandons all false gods and starts invoking One God only for help.

(5) Man's intellect and his nature assert positively that crime ought to be punished and good deeds ought to be rewarded. On this very basis in every society of the world a system of the courts is established in one form or another, and the services and works,

which are regarded as commendable are also rewarded in one way or another. This is a clear proof of the fact that there is a necessary relationship between morality and the law of retribution, which man cannot possibly deny. Now, if it is admitted that in this world there are countless such crimes which cannot be punished at all, to say nothing of punishing them fully and adequately, and there are also countless such virtues, which cannot be rewarded at all, to say nothing of rewarding them fully and adequately, there is no alternative but to acknowledge the Hereafter, unless, of course, a foolish person may assume, or a stubborn person may insist on having the opinion, that man who has been endowed with the concept of justice, has taken birth in a world which in itself is devoid of the concept of justice; and then it remains for him to answer the question as to how and wherefrom this man, who was born in such a world, obtained this concept of justice.

(6) To reinforce these means of guidance Allah sent Messengers and revealed Books in the world for the purpose of giving clear and definite guidance to man; in these Books it was clearly explained what is the way of gratefulness and what is the way of ungratefulness and unbelief and what will be the consequences of following either way. The teaching brought by the Prophets and the Books has spread throughout the world in countless perceptible and imperceptible ways, on such a large scale that no section of human population has remained unaware of the concept of God and the Hereafter, of the distinction between good and evil, and of the moral principles and legal rulings presented by them, whether it knows or does not know that it has obtained this knowledge only through the teachings of the Prophets and the Books they brought. Even those who disbelieve in the Prophets and the Books today, or are unaware of them, also are following many of those things which have reached them actually through their teachings while they do not know what is the real source of these teachings.

6. The word *abrār* as used in the original implies the people who have done full justice to their Lord's obedience, have carried out the duties enjoined by Him and abstained from the things forbidden by Him.

7. That is, it will not be camphor-mixed water but a natural fountain, the purity, coolness and agreeable odour of whose water will resemble camphor.

8. Although the words *'ibād Allah* (servants of Allah), or *'ibād ar-Reḥmān* (servants of *Reḥmān*), can be used for all men literally, for every human being is God's servant, yet wherever these words occur in the Qur'an they only imply the righteous men. In other words, the wicked ones who have excused themselves from Allah's servitude do not deserve that Allah should honour them with the honourable title of *'ibād-Allah* or *ibād ar-Reḥmān*, attributing them to His own Holy Name.

9. It does not mean that they will use spades and showels to dig out its channels and will take out its branches whithersoever they please, but that their one single command and desire will be enough to cause a fountain to gush forth from wherever they please in Paradise.

10. One meaning of fulfilling the vow is that one should fulfil second, that one should fulfil what one has pledged oneself to do; third, that one should fulfil what one has been enjoined; what is obligatory for one to do, whether one has been enjoined it, or is self-imposed. Of these three the second meaning is the best known and generally the same is implied by fulfilling the vow. In any case, these righteous people have been regarded as praiseworthy either because they carry out the duties enjoined by Allah, or because if they vow to Allah to perform certain good deeds, which Allah has not enjoined on them, they fulfil even those self-imposed vows, not to speak of showing any negligence in carrying out the duties which Allah has actually enjoined on them.

As for the commandments concerning the vow, we have explained these briefly in E.N. 310 of *Sūrah Al-Baqarah* above. But it would be useful to explain them at length here so as to enable the people to avoid the errors and rid themselves of the misunderstandings with regard to fulfilling the vow and learn the correct rules pertaining to it.

(1) The jurists have mentioned four kinds of the vow: (a) that one should pledge to Allah that one would perform such and such a good act to earn His good pleasure; (b) that one should make a vow that one would perform such and such a good act in gratitude to Allah if He fulfilled one's such and such wish and desire. Both these kinds of the vow have been termed *nadh'r tabarrur* (i.e. vows for a good cause) by the jurists, and it is agreed by all that it is obligatory to fulfil them. (c) That one should pledge to do an unlawful thing or to refrain from an obligatory thing; (d) that one should bind oneself to do a permissible thing, or to refrain from an

approved thing, or pledge to do an unworthy thing. These two kinds of the vow have been termed *nadh'r lajāj* (i.e. vow of ignorance, disputation and stubbornness) by the jurists. About the third kind of the vow it is agreed that it does not take place at all; and about the fourth kind the juristic opinion is divided. Some jurists say that it should be fulfilled; some others say that one should expiate the breaking of the oath, and still others that one has the option to fulfil the vow or to expiate it. According to the Shāfe'is and the Mālikis this vow does not take place at all, and according to the Hanafis both these kinds of the vow entail expiation.

(*Umdat al-Qāri*)

(2) Several *Aḥādīth* show that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has forbidden making a vow with a view to changing the destiny, or with a view to making an offer to Allah that if He fulfilled one's such and such wish, one would perform such and such good act, not in gratitude to Allah, but in exchange for His help. Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar has reported that once the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) while he forbade the making of a vow, said: "It cannot avert anything which is about to befall, but through it something is extracted from the miserly person." (*Muslim, Abū Da'ūd*). The last sentence of the *Ḥadīth* means: The miserly person is not prone to spend anything in the cause of Allah; because of the vow he gives away something in charity in the greed that Allah would accept his offer and change his destiny for him. Another tradition from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar is to the effect: "The Holy Prophet said: the vow can neither hasten anything nor defer anything, but through it something is extracted from the miserly person." (*Bukhārī, Muslim*). In another tradition he says that the Holy Prophet forbade making of the vow and said: "It does not bring any good, but it is a means whereby something is extracted from the miserly person." (*Bukhārī, Muslim*). Several traditions on the same subject have been related by Muslim from Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, and in one tradition which both Bukhārī and Muslim have related, he reports that the Holy Prophet said: "As a matter of fact, the vow cannot bring the son of Adam anything which Allah has not ordained for him, but the vow sometimes coincides with the destiny itself and through it the Divine will takes out from the possession of the miserly person that which he was not inclined to give away willingly." This same theme is further explained by the tradition of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin 'Āṣ according to which the Holy Prophet (upon whom be

peace) said: "True vow is that whereby Allah's good will and approval may be sought." (*Ṭahāvi*).

(3) Another rule that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) gave concerning the vow is that only that vow should be fulfilled, which is in obedience to Allah; the vow made in disobedience to Allah should never be fulfilled. Likewise, there can be no vow concerning a thing which is not in one's power to perform. Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah has reported that the Holy Prophet said: "The one who made a vow that he would obey Allah, should obey Him, and the one who made a vow that he would disobey Allah, should not disobey." (*Bukhāri, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhi, Nasā'i, Ibn Mājah, Ṭahāvi*). Ṭhābit bin Ḍaḥḥāk says that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) said: "There can be no question of fulfilling a vow made in the disobedience of Allah, nor in something which is not in one's possession." (*Abū Da'ūd*). Muslim has related a tradition on the same subject from Ḥaḍrat 'Imrān bin Ḥuṣain; and in *Abū Da'ūd* a tradition has been reported in greater detail from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin 'Āṣ, saying that the Holy Prophet said: "No vow and no oath is of any use in an act which is not in the power of man to perform, or which involves disobedience of Allah, or severance of relations with kindred."

(4) One should not fulfil a vow which is made to perform an act which is of no good in itself, which is useless, or involves unbearable hardship or self-torture, and might have been self-imposed as an act of virtue. In this connection, the sayings of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) are very clear and definite. Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās says that once when the Holy Prophet was giving a sermon, he saw a man who was standing in the sun. He asked who he was and why he was standing in the sun. The people said that he was Abū Isrā'īl: he had vowed that he would keep standing and would not sit, nor take shade, nor speak to anybody, and would keep fast. Thereupon the Holy Prophet said: "Tell him to speak, to come in the shade and sit, but to observe the fast." (*Bukhāri, Abū Da'ūd, Ibn Mājah, Mu'waṭṭā*). Ḥaḍrat 'Uqbah bin 'Āmir Juhani says: "My sister vowed that she would go for Ḥajj bare-foot and also vowed that she would not cover her head with a garment during the journey. The Holy Prophet said: Tell her to go by a conveyance and to cover her head." (*Abū Da'ūd*). Muslim has related several traditions on this subject with a little variation in wording. Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbas reporting the incident concerning 'Uqbah bin 'Āmir's sister,

has reported the Holy Prophet's words to the effect: "Allah has no need of her vow: tell her to use a conveyance." (Abū Da'ūd). In another tradition Ḥaḍrat Ibn 'Abbās says: "A man said: My sister has vowed to go and perform Ḥajj on foot. The Holy Prophet replied: Allah has no need that your sister should undergo hardship. She should go for Ḥajj by a conveyance." (Abū Da'ūd). Ḥaḍrat Anas bin Mālik has reported that the Holy Prophet saw (probably during the Ḥajj journey) an old man being supported between his two sons. When he asked what was the matter with him, it was said that the old man had vowed to go on foot. Thereupon the Holy Prophet said: "Allah is free from this that the man should place himself in agony. Then he commanded him to ride." (Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Da'ūd. In Muslim another *Hadīth* on this very subject has been reported by Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah also).

(5) If it is not practically possible to fulfil a vow, it may be fulfilled in some other way. Ḥaḍrat Jābir bin 'Abdullah says: "On the day of the conquest of Makkah, a man stood up and said: O Messenger of Allah, I had vowed that if Allah made Makkah fall at your hand, I would pray two *rak'ahs* of the Prayer in *Bait al-Maqdis* (Jerusalem). The Holy Prophet replied: Say the Prayer here. He again asked the same thing and the Holy Prophet again gave the same reply. When he asked it again, the Holy Prophet said: All right, as you please." According to another tradition, the Holy Prophet said: "By Him Who has sent Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) with the truth, if you pray here, it will suffice for you instead of your praying at *Bait al-Maqdis* (Abū Da'ūd)."

(6) The opinion among the jurists is divided concerning the person who vows to give away all his possessions for the cause of Allah. Imām Mālik says that he should give away one-third of his possessions, and Saḥnūn from among the Mālikīs has expressed the opinion that he should give away so much of his possessions as does not subject him to hardship later. Imām Shāfi'ī says that if the vow is of the nature of *tabarrur* (i.e. for a good cause), he should give away all his possessions, and if it is of the nature of *lafāf* (i.e. a vow of ignorance), he has the option to fulfil the vow or to expiate the oath. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah says that he should give away all such possessions as are subject to *zakāt*, but the vow will not apply to those possessions which are exempt from *zakāt*, e.g. house, or other such properties. Imām Zufar from among the Ḥanafīs is of the

opinion that he should give away everything in charity after he has taken out two months' maintenance for his family. (*Umdat al-Qārī, Sharh Mu'waṭṭā* by Shāh Waliyullah). Traditions of the *Hadīth* in this connection are as follows:

Ḥaḍrat Ku'b bin Mālik says: "When I was granted forgiveness for incurring Allah's displeasure for staying behind on the occasion of the Battle of Tabūk, I went before the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) and submitted: My repentance also included that I would give away all my possessions in charity for the sake of Allah and His Messenger. The Holy Prophet replied: No, do not do that. I said: Then half of the possessions? He said: No. I said: Then one-third of the possessions? He replied: Yes." (Abū Da'ūd). According to another tradition, the Holy Prophet replied: "Withhold some of your possessions for yourself: this would be better for you." (Bukhārī). Imām Zuhri says: "Information has reached me that Ḥaḍrat Abū Lubābah (who had similarly incurred displeasure in connection with the same Battle of Tabūk) said to the Holy Prophet: "I shall give away all my possessions for the sake of Allah and His Messenger in charity. The Holy Prophet replied: For you it would be enough to give away only one-third of it." (*Mu'waṭṭā*).

(7) Should a person who vowed to perform a good act before embracing Islam, fulfil it after he has embraced Islam? The Holy Prophet's ruling in this connection is that he should fulfil it. (Bukhārī; according to a tradition in *Abū Da'ūd* and *Tahāvi*, Ḥaḍrat 'Umar is reported to have vowed in the pre-Islamic days that he would observe *i'tikāf* (devotional seclusion) in the *Masjid al-Ḥarām* (for one night, or according to others, one day). After embracing Islam when he asked for the Holy Prophet's ruling, he replied: "Fulfil your vow." Some jurists have taken this ruling of the Holy Prophet to mean that it is obligatory to do so, and some others that it is commendable.

(8) About the question whether the heirs are under obligation to fulfil a vow made by the deceased person or not, the juristic opinion is divided. Imām Aḥmad, Ishāq bin Rāhawaih, Abū Thaur and the Zāhirīs say that if the deceased person had vowed to observe the Fast or perform the Prayer but could not fulfil the vow, the heirs have to fulfil it. The Ḥanafīs say that if the vow pertained to a bodily worship (e.g. the Prayer or the Fast), the heirs are under no obligation to fulfil it, and if it pertained to monetary worship and the deceased did not leave any will for his heirs to fulfil it, they are

again under no obligation to fulfil it, but if he left a will, it will be obligatory for the heirs to fulfil it from his inheritance up to one-third of its extent. The Māliki viewpoint also is somewhat the same. The Shāfi'is say that if the vow pertains to a non-monetary worship, or if it pertains to a monetary worship and the deceased person did not leave any inheritance, the heirs are under no obligation to fulfil it; and if the deceased left some inheritance, the heirs would be bound to fulfil the vow pertaining to a monetary worship, no matter whether the dying person left a will or not. (*Sharḥ Muslim* by Al-Nawawī, *Badhl al-Majhūd Sharḥ Abi Da'ūd*). In the *Ḥadīth* there is a tradition from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās on this subject to the effect: "Ḥaḍrat Sa'd bin 'Ubādah asked for the Holy Prophet's verdict, saying: 'My mother has died and she had made a vow which she could not fulfil. The Holy Prophet said: Fulfil the vow on her behalf.'" (*Abū Da'ūd, Muslim*). Another tradition from Ibn 'Abbās is to the effect: "A woman went on a sea journey and vowed that if she returned home safe and sound, she would observe fast for a month. On her return home she died. Her sister or her daughter came to the Holy Prophet to ask for his decision. The Holy Prophet replied: "Observe the fast on her behalf.'" (*Abū Da'ūd*). Abū Da'ūd has related another tradition with the same content from Ḥaḍrat Buraidah, saying: "A woman asked the Holy Prophet a similar thing and he gave the same reply as mentioned above." Since these traditions are not explicit as to whether the rulings the Holy Prophet gave pertained to its being obligatory or commendable, and since about the vow made by Ḥaḍrat Sa'd bin 'Ubādah's mother also it is not clear whether it pertained to a monetary worship, or a bodily worship, there have arisen differences among the jurists on this question.

(9) As for an unlawful vow it is clear that it should not be fulfilled. However, there is a difference of opinion as to whether it entails an expiation or not. On this point since the traditions differ the juristic opinion is also divided. According to one kind of the traditions the Holy Prophet commanded the person concerned to make the expiation. Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah has reported that the Holy Prophet said: "There is no vow in the disobedience of Allah, and its expiation is the expiation of breaking the oath." (*Abū Da'ūd*). In the case of 'Uqbah bin 'Āmir Juhānī's sister (mentioned under No. 4 above), the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) commanded that she should break her vow and fast for three days. (*Muslim, Ahḍ*

Da'ūd). In the case of another woman also who had vowed to go for Hajj on foot, he commanded that she should go by a conveyance and should make expiation for the oath (*Abū Da'ūd*). Ibn 'Abbās has reported that the Holy Prophet said: "The one who made a vow but did not specify what the vow was about, should expiate for the oath, and the one who made a vow to perform a sinful act, should expiate for the oath, and the one who made a vow to perform something which he does not have the power to perform, should expiate for the oath, and the one who made a vow to do something which he can do, should fulfil it." (*Abū Da'ūd*). On the other hand, there are the traditions which show that there is no expiation in this case. The person under No. 4 above had vowed that he would stand in the sun and would not speak to anyone. Making a reference to him in *Mu'waḥḥā*, Imām Mālik writes: "I could not know by any means whether the Holy Prophet besides commanding him to break the vow might also have told him to make the expiation. Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin 'Āṣ has reported that the Holy Prophet said: "If the one swearing an oath for something later finds that another thing was better than that he should abandon it and should adopt the better course and the abandonment itself is the expiation." (*Abū Da'ūd*; Baihaqi says that this *Ḥadīth* and Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah's this tradition: "He should adopt the better course and this is its expiation" are not established). Imām Nawawī discussing these traditions of the *Ḥadīth* in his commentary of *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Muslim writes: "Imām Mālik, Shāfe'ī, Abū Ḥanīfah, Da'ūd Zāhiri and other scholars say that the vow made to do a sinful thing is void and ineffectual and it does not entail any expiation if not fulfilled, but Imām Aḥmad says that it entails expiation."

11. Most of the commentators hold the view that the pronoun in *ḥubbi-hi* refers to food. Accordingly, they interpret the sentence to mean: "In spite of the food's being agreeable and tasty and that they need it, they give it away to others." Ibn 'Abbās and Mujāhid say: "They do so because of their fondness for feeding the poor (*'ala ḥubb-il-il'ām*); and Fuḍail bin 'Iyāḍ and Abū Sulemān ad-Dārānī say: "They do so out of love for Allah." In our opinion the following sentence ("We are feeding you only for the sake of Allah") supports the last meaning.

12. The custom in the ancient days was that the prisoners were put in fetters and shackles and taken out daily to go about the streets begging food. Later the Islamic government abolished this custom.

(Imām Abū Yūsuf, *Kitāb al-Kharāj*, p. 150, Ed. 1382 H.) In this verse, the captive implies every such person who is in bondage, whether he is an unbeliever, a Muslim, a war prisoner, or imprisoned in consequence of a crime, and whether he is provided food in that state, or made to beg for it. In any case, to feed a helpless person who cannot do anything to earn a living, is an act of great virtue.

13. Although feeding a poor man is in itself a great virtue, yet fulfilling the other needs of an indigent person is no less virtuous. For example, to clothe a poor man, to arrange treatment for a sick person, or to help a debtor who is harassed by his creditor, is an act of equally great virtue. Here, a particular kind of virtue in view of its importance has been presented only as an example, but the real object is to stress giving help to the needy.

14. It is not necessary that this may be said in so many words while feeding the poor man. It may be said in the heart; in the sight of Allah this is as meritorious as saying it with the tongue. But saying these words with the tongue has been particularly mentioned so as to set the person being helped at ease that no thanks or recompense is due from him, so that he eats with full satisfaction and peace of mind.

15. "Freshness and joy": freshness of the face and joy of the heart. In other words, all the severities and terrors of the Day of Resurrection will be meant only for the disbelievers and the culprits. The righteous will on that Day remain immune from every hardship and will be well-pleased with their lot. The same theme has been expressed in Al-Anbiyā': 103, thus: "The time of great fright will not trouble them at all; the angels will rush forth to receive them, saying: this is the Day that you were promised;" and in An-Naml: 89 thus: "He who brings good deeds, will have a reward better than that, and such people shall be secure from the terror of that Day."

16 Here the word *ṣabr* (patience) has been used in a very comprehensive sense. The whole worldly life of the righteous believers in fact has been described as a life of patience. From the time a man attains discretion, or believes, till death, his suppressing of unlawful desires, adhering to the bounds set by Allah, carrying out the duties enjoined by Him, sacrificing his time, his wealth, his effort, powers and abilities, even his life if so required, ignoring every greed and temptation, which might turn him away from Allah's way, meeting every danger and enduring every hardship faced on the way of the truth, giving up every gain and pleasure accruing from unlawful ways

and means, bearing every loss and suffering and affliction incurred on account of his love for truth, and doing all this with full faith in the promise of Allah that He will bless the doer with the fruits of this righteous conduct not in this world but in the second life after death, turns the whole life of a believer into a life of patience—eternal and perpetual patience, all-pervasive and life-long patience! (For further explanation, see E.N. 60 of Al-Baqarah, E.N.'s 13, 107, 131 of Al-'Imrān, E.N. 23 of Al-An'ām, E.N.'s 37, 47 of Al-Anfāl, E.N. 9 of Yūnus, E.N. 11 of Hūd, E.N. 39 of Ar-Ra'd, E.N. 98 of An-Nahl, E.N. 40 of Maryam, E.N. 94 of Al-Furqān, E.N.'s 75, 100 of Al-Qaṣaṣ, E.N. 97 of Al-'Ankabūt, E.N.'s 29, 56 of Luqmān, E.N. 37 of As-Sajdah, E.N. 58 of Al-Aḥzāb, E.N. 32 of Az-Zumar, E.N. 38 of Ḥā-Mīm As-Sajdah, E.N. 53 of Ash-Shūrā).

17. According to Az-Zukhruf: 71, vessels of gold shall be passed round to them, but here of silver. This shows that vessels of gold as well as of silver shall be passed round to them as required by the occasion.

18. That is, though silver, it will be as transparent as glass. Vessels of this kind of transparent, crystal like silver will be the special characteristic of the vessels in which drinks will be served to the people of Paradise.

19. "In due measure": filled accurately according to the desire of every person, neither over-filled nor under-filled. In other words, the attendants of the dwellers of Paradise will be so judicious and discerning that they will have accurate judgement about everybody whom they serve wine as to how much of it he wishes to drink. (For the characteristics of the wine of Paradise, see As-Şāffāt : 43-47 and the E.N.'s 24 to 27, Muḥammad : 15 and E.N. 22, Aṭ-Ṭūr ; 23 and E.N. 18, Al-Wāq'ah : 19 and E.N. 10).

20. This is to suit the taste of the Arabs who liked the wine flavoured with ginger-mixed water. But this flavouring will not be achieved by adding ginger-mixed water to it: it will be a natural fountain which will have the flavour of ginger but without its bitterness; therefore, it will be called *Salsabil*, which implies such water as flows gently and pleasantly down the throat on account of its being sweet, light and palatable. Most commentators think that the word *salsabil* has been used here as an adjective of the fountain and not as a name for it.

21. For explanation, see E.N. 26 of As-Şāffāt, E.N. 19 of Aṭ-Ṭūr, E.N. 9 of Al-Wāq'ah.

22. Even if a person might have lived a pauper in the world, in the Hereafter when he is admitted to Paradise, on the basis of his good deeds, he will live as though he were the owner of a splendid kingdom.

23. This same theme has been expressed in Sūrah Al-Kahf : 31, thus: "They (the dwellers of Paradise) will wear coloured robes of silk and rich brocade and will be reclining upon raised thrones." On this basis, the opinion of the commentators who have expressed the view that this implies the sheets of cloth which will be hanging over their thrones or bedsteads or that this would be the dress of the boys who would be moving about serving them, does not seem to be correct.

24. In Sūrah Al-Kahf : 31, it has been said: "They will be adorned with bracelets of gold." This same theme has also occurred in Al-Hajj : 23 and Fāṭir 33 above. When all these verses are read together, three possibilities become obvious. (1) That sometimes they would like to wear bracelets of gold and sometimes bracelets of silver, both kinds of the ornaments being available for use as and when required; (2) that they will wear bracelets of both gold and silver at the same time, for the combination of the two enhances the personal charms of the wearer; (3) that whosoever desires will wear bracelets of gold and whosoever desires will wear bracelets of silver. As for the question, why will the men be adorned with the ornaments when these are usually worn by the women? The answer is that in the ancient times the custom was that the kings and their nobles used to adorn their hands and necks and the crowns of their heads with different kinds of ornaments. In Sūrah Az-Zukhruf it has been said that when the Prophet Moses arrived in the Pharaoh's court in his simple dress, with only a staff in hand, and told him that he was a Messenger sent by Allah, Lord of the worlds, the Pharaoh said to his courtiers: "What kind of a messenger is he, who has appeared before me in this state? If he was sent by the King of the universe, why were not bracelets of gold sent down on him, or a company of angels as attendants?" (v. 53).

25. Two kinds of the wine have been mentioned above, first that to which water will be added from the fountain of camphor; second that to which water will be added from the fountain of ginger. After these, making mention of another wine, with the remark that their Lord shall give them a pure wine to drink, gives the meaning

نَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْآنَ تَنْزِيلًا ۖ فَأَصْبِرْ لِحُكْمِ رَبِّكَ وَلَا تُطِعْ مِنْهُمْ آيْمًا
 أَوْ كُفُورًا ۗ وَادْكُرْ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا ۗ وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَاسْجُدْ لَهُ وَسَبِّحْهُ
 لَيْلًا طَوِيلًا ۗ إِنَّ هَؤُلَاءِ يُحِبُّونَ الْعَاجِلَةَ وَيَذَرُونَ وَرَاءَهُمْ يَوْمًا
 ثَقِيلًا ۗ نَحْنُ خَلَقْنَاهُمْ وَشَدَدْنَا أَسْرَهُمْ ۗ وَإِذَا شِئْنَا بَدَّلْنَا أَمْثَلَهُمْ تَبْدِيلًا ۗ
 إِنَّ مِنْهُمْ تَذَكِّرًا ۗ فَمَنْ شَاءَ اتَّخَذْ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِ سَبِيلًا ۗ وَمَا تَشَاءُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ
 يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ۗ يُدْخِلُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ فِي رَحْمَتِهِ
 وَالظَّالِمِينَ أَعَدَّ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ۗ

23-31

O Prophet, it is We Ourselves Who have sent down this Qur'an piecemeal to you.²⁷ So be patient with regard to the command of your Lord,²⁸ and do not obey any wicked or disbelieving person from among them.²⁹ Remember the name of your Lord morning and evening, prostrate yourself before Him in the night, and glorify Him during the long hours of night.³⁰ These people only love the quickly attainable (world), and neglect a heavy Day that is coming ahead.³¹ It is We Who have created them and strengthened their joints, and whenever it be Our will We can change their forms.³² This is indeed an Admonition. Now whoever wills, let him adopt the way to his Lord, but you cannot will it unless Allah wills.³³ Indeed Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise. He admits into His mercy whomever He wills, and for the wrongdoers He has prepared a painful torment.³⁴

that this will be some superior kind of wine, which they will be given to drink as a special favour from Allah.

26. In the original, *kāna sa'yu-kum mashkūra*: "your endeavours have been accepted and recognized." *Sa'i* implies the entire lifework that a person accomplished in the world, the works and objectives to which he applied his energies and abilities; and its being *mashkūr*

means that Allah has appreciated it. *Shukr* when expressed by the servant to God implies his gratefulness to Him for His blessings, and when it is expressed by God for the servant, it means that He has appreciated his services. It is indeed highly kind of the Master that He should appreciate the endeavours of the servant when the servant has only carried out his duties according to the Master's will.

27. Though the addressee here apparently is the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), the discourse is directed to the disbelievers, who said: "Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) himself composes the Qur'an deliberately piece by piece; had it been from Allah, it would be revealed all at once." At some places in the Qur'an this objection has been cited and answered (e.g. see E.N.'s 102, 104, 105, 106 of An-Nahl and E.N. 119 of Banl Isrā'īl), but here Allah has answered it without citing it, saying emphatically: "It is We Ourselves Who are sending it down: it is not the composition of Muhammad; and it is We Ourselves Who are sending it gradually. That is, it is the requirement of Our wisdom that We should not send down Our message all together in book form, but should send it piece by piece."

28. "Be patient": "Face patiently the hardships and difficulties of the great Mission your Lord has entrusted to you: endure firmly and steadfastly whatever comes to pass, without showing any weakness in this regard."

29. "Do not obey ...": "Do not yield to any one of them so as to give up preaching of the true faith: do not be inclined to make even the least change in the religious beliefs for the sake of any denier of the Truth, or in the moral teachings for the sake of a wicked person. Proclaim whatever is unlawful and forbidden to be so openly even if an immoral person might press you hard to show some lenience in this condemnation, and proclaim whatever is false as false and whatever is true as true publicly even if the disbelievers might use all their influence to silence you, or to make you adopt a little lenience in this regard."

30. The rule followed in the Qur'an is that wherever the Muslims have been exhorted to show patience against the disbelievers, immediately after it they have been commanded to remember Allah much and to observe the Prayer, which automatically implies that the power needed to meet the resistance of the enemies of the Truth in the way of true faith can be obtained only by this means. To remember

Allah morning and evening may also imply remembering Allah always but when the command to remember Allah at specific times is given, it implies the *ṣalāt* (Prayer). In this verse, *bukrāh* means the morning and *aṣl* the time from the sun's decline till sunset, which obviously covers the *Zuhr* and the '*Aṣr*' times. Night starts after sunset; therefore, the command "to prostrate yourself in the night" would apply to both the *Maghrib* and the '*Ishā*' Prayers. Then, the command "to glorify Allah in the long hours of night", clearly points to the time of the *Tahajjud* Prayer. (For further explanation, see E.N.'s 92 to 97 of *Bani Isrā'īl*, E.N. 2 of *Al-Muzzammil*). This also shows that these very have been the Prayer times in Islam from the beginning. However, the command making the Prayer obligatory five times a day with fixed times and number of *rak'ahs* was given on the occasion of *mi'rāj* (ascension).

31. That is, "The reason why the disbelieving Quraish still persist in the errors and deviations of belief and morality and why they turn a deaf ear to your invitation to the Truth is, in fact, their worship of the world and their heedlessness of the Hereafter. Therefore, the way being followed by a true God-worshipper is so different from and opposed to their way that there can be no question of any compromise between them."

32. The sentence, "Whenever it be Our will We can change their forms", can have several meanings : (1) That whenever We please We can destroy them and replace them by other people of their own kind, who will be different from them in conduct ; (2) that whenever We please We can change their forms ; that is, just as We can make someone healthy and sound in body, so also We have the power to make somebody a paralytic, cause someone to be struck with facial paralysis and another to fall a victim to some disease or accident and become a cripple permanently ; and (3) that whenever We will We can recreate them in some other form after death.

33. Three things have been said in these verses : (1) That whoever wills may adopt the way to his Lord ; (2) that one's willing to do a thing is not enough unless Allah so wills ; and (3) that Allah is All-Wise, All-Knowing. If one considers these three things deeply one can fully well understand the relationship between man's freedom of choice and Allah's Will, and it helps to remove all the confusions from the people's minds about the question of destiny.

The first verse shows that in this world the authority granted to man is only to the extent that he may decide to adopt any one of the

different courses available for passing life here. This is the freedom of choice that Allah has given him. For example, when a man confronts the question of earning a living for himself, he finds many ways before him of which some are lawful, as for example lawful kinds of labour, service, trade and business, industry, or agriculture, and some are unlawful, as thievery, robbery, picking pockets, prostitution, trading in money (on interest), gambling, bribery and unlawful kinds of services and business, etc. The decision to adopt any one of these ways has been left to man's own free choice as to how he would like to earn his living. Likewise, there are different modes of morality. On the one side, there are the good qualities, like honesty, nobility, decency, justice, pity, sympathy and chastity, and on the other, the evil traits like wickedness, meanness, tyranny, dishonesty, and frivolity. Man has full freedom to adopt any mode of morality he likes. The same is the case with religion; man has many ways open before him in this regard also—atheism and denial of God, polytheism and idol-worship, different combinations of monotheism and polytheism, and the un-alloyed creed of God-worship, which is taught by the Qur'ān. In these also the decision to choose has been left to man as to which of these he wants to adopt. Allah does not impose on him any decision of His own so that man may like to choose a lawful means of earning his living for himself but Allah may force him to adopt an unlawful means for it, or that he may like to follow the Qur'ān, but Allah may force him to become an atheist, polytheist or disbeliever, or that he may like to become a good man, but Allah may force him to become an evil man.

But after man has exercised this freedom of choice whether he can practically also do the same which he wants to do, depends on Allah's Will, His leave and His grace. If the Will of Allah be to let the man do what he has willed or decided to do, then alone can he do it; otherwise he cannot do anything without Allah's Will and His leave, however hard and seriously he may try to do it. This same thing has been said in the second verse. This can be explained by an example. If man had been delegated all the powers in the world and permitted to do whatever he pleased, the system of the world would have been disrupted. One murderer was enough to murder all the people in the world if he were given the freedom to kill anybody he liked. One pickpocket could pick the pocket of everyone if he were given the option to pick anyone's pocket he pleased. One thief was enough to steal whatever he liked, one adulterer to commit

rape on every woman, one robber to plunder every house, if each one of them had full powers to act as he desired. Therefore, Allah has kept this in His own power whether He may allow or disallow the man to follow the right or the wrong path that he chooses to follow or not. The person who giving up error wants to adopt the right way is also granted righteousness only by Allah's leave and will. However, the condition is that the decision to give up error and choose guidance should have been taken by the man himself; otherwise just as Allah does not make anybody a thief or murderer or atheist or polytheist forcibly, so also He does not make anybody a believer forcibly.

After this, the third verse removes the misunderstanding whether Allah's willing may not be arbitrary. That is why it has been said that "Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise." That is whatever He does, He does it on the basis of knowledge and wisdom; therefore, there can be no possibility of any error in His decisions. He decided with full knowledge and wisdom as to who should be given a particular kind of help and who should not be given it, who should be allowed to do a particular work and who should not be allowed to do it. To the extent that Allah provides opportunities to man and makes the conditions favourable for him, he can work according to his desire, whether it be good or evil. The question of guidance also is no exception to it. Allah alone knows on the basis of His knowledge and He alone determines on the basis of His wisdom as to who deserves to be guided and who does not. (Also see E. N. 41 of Al-Muddaththir).

34. In this verse "wrong doers" imply the people whom the Revelations of Allah and the teachings of His Prophet may reach, yet they deliberately and consciously decide that they would not obey and follow them. This also includes those unjust people who may plainly say that they do not accept the Revelation as God's Revelation and the Prophet as God's Prophet, or that they do not believe in God at all, and also those wicked people who may not refuse to believe in God and the Prophet and the Qur'an, but they are resolved not to obey and follow them. As a matter of fact, both these groups are unjust and wicked. As regards the first group, their case is clear and obvious; but the second group is no less wicked: it is also hypocritical and treacherous. Verbally they say that they believe in God and the Messenger and the Qur'an, but in

their hearts and minds they are resolved not to follow them, and their practical conduct of life is also opposed to it. About both Allah has declared that He has prepared for them a painful torment. They might strut about in the world, enjoy life as they like, boast and brag of their superiority, but ultimately they will be subjected to a disgraceful punishment; they cannot enter and enjoy Allah's mercy in any way.

LXXVII

AL-MURSALAT

المرسلات

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

LXXVII

AL-MURSALĀT

المرسلات

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name from the word *wal-mursalāt* in the first verse.

Period of Revelation

Its subject-matter bears full evidence that it was revealed in the earliest period at Makkah. If this Sūrah is read together with the two Sūrahs preceding it, namely Al-Qiyāmah and Ad-Dahr, and the two Sūrahs following it, namely An-Naba' and An-Nāzi'āt, it be-

comes obvious that all these Sūrah's are the Revelations of the same period, and they deal with one and the same theme, which has been impressed on the people of Makkah in different ways.

Theme and Subject-Matter

Its theme is to affirm the Resurrection and Hereafter and to warn the people of the consequences which will ultimately follow the denial and the affirmation of these truths.

In the first seven verses, the system of winds has been presented as an evidence of the truth that the Resurrection which is being foretold by the Qur'ān and the Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) must come to pass. The reasoning is that the power of All-Mighty Allah Who established this wonderful system on the earth, cannot be helpless in bringing about the Resurrection, and the express wisdom which underlies this system bears full evidence that the Hereafter must appear, for no act of an All-Wise Creator can be vain and purposeless, and if there was no Hereafter, it would mean that the whole of one's life was useless and absurd.

The people of Makkah repeatedly asked: "Bring about the Resurrection with which you threaten us; only then shall we believe in it." In vv. 8-15, their demand has been answered, saying: "Resurrection is no sport or fun so that whenever a jester should ask for it, it should be brought forth immediately. It is indeed the Day of Judgement to settle the account of all mankind and of all its individuals. For it Allah has fixed a specific time; it will take place at its own time, and when it takes place with all its dreads and horrors, it will confound those who are demanding it for fun

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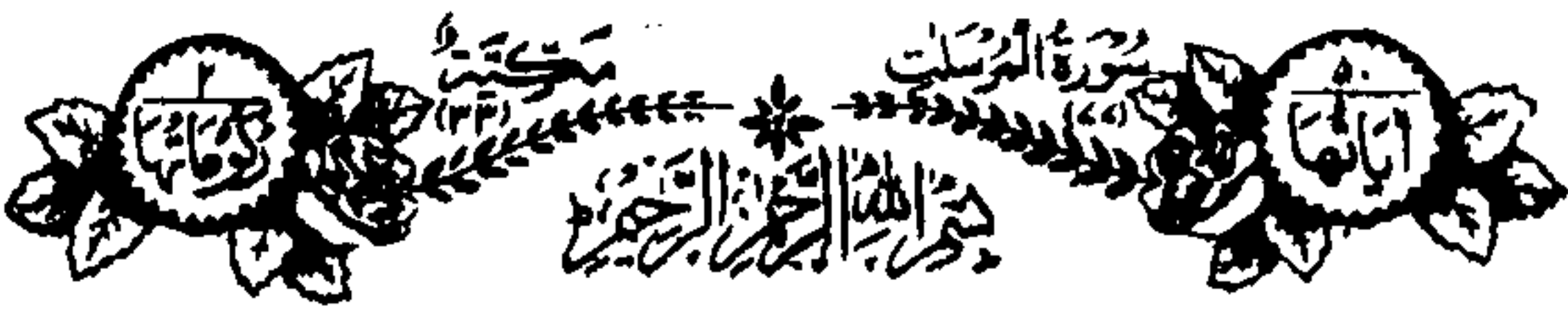
today. Then their cases will be decided only on the evidence of those Messengers whom these deniers of the truth are repudiating with impunity. Then they will themselves realize how they themselves are responsible for their doom."

In vv. 16-28 arguments have been given continuously for the occurrence and necessity of the Resurrection and Hereafter. In these it has been stated that man's own history, his own birth, and the structure of the earth on which he lives, bear the testimony that the coming of Resurrection and the establishment of the Hereafter are possible as well as the demand of Allah Almighty's wisdom. History tells us that the nations which denied the Hereafter ultimately became corrupted and met with destruction. This means that the Hereafter is a truth which if denied and contradicted by a nation by its conduct and attitude, will cause it to meet the same doom, which is met by a blind man who rushes headlong into an approaching train. And it also means that in the kingdom of the universe only physical laws are not at work but a moral law also is working in it, under which in this very world the process of retribution is operating. But since in the present life of the world retribution is not taking place in its complete and perfect form, the moral law of the universe necessarily demands that there should come a time when it should take its full course and all those good works and evil deeds, which could not be rewarded here, or which escaped their due punishment, should be fully rewarded and punished. For this it is inevitable that there should be a second life after death. If man only considers how he takes his birth in the world, his intellect, provided it is sound intellect, cannot deny that for the God Who began his creation from an insignificant sperm-

drop and developed him into a perfect man, it is certainly possible to create the same man once again. After death the particles of man's body do not disappear but continue to exist on the same earth on which he lived his whole life. It is from the resources and treasures of this very earth that he is made and nourished and then into the same treasures of the earth he is deposited. The God Who caused him to emerge from the treasures of the earth, in the first instance, can also cause him to re-emerge from the same treasures after he has been restored to them at death. If one only considers the powers of Allah, one cannot deny that He can do this; and if one considers the wisdom of Allah, one also cannot deny that it is certainly the very demand of His wisdom to call man to account for the right and wrong use of the powers that He has granted him on the earth; it would rather be against wisdom to let him off without rendering an account.

Then, in vv. 28-40, the fate of the deniers of the Hereafter has been depicted, and in vv. 41-45 of those who affirming faith in it in their worldly life, endeavoured to improve their Hereafter, and abstained from the evils of disbelief and thought, morality and deed, conduct and character which might be helpful in man's worldly life, but are certainly ruinous for his life hereafter.

In the end, the deniers of the Hereafter and those who turn away from God-worship, have been warned, as if to say: "Enjoy your short-lived worldly pleasure as you may, but your end will ultimately be disastrous." The discourse concludes with the assertion that the one who fails to obtain guidance from a Book like the Qur'ān, can have no other source in the world to afford him guidance.



وَالْمُرْسَلَاتِ عُرْفًا ۖ فَالْعُصْفَاتِ ۖ وَالتَّشْرِيبِ نَشْرًا ۖ فَالْفَرْقَتِ
 فَرَقًا ۖ فَالْمُلْقِيَةِ ذِكْرًا ۖ عُنْدًا ۖ أَوْ نُذْرًا ۖ إِنَّمَا تُوعَدُونَ لَوَاقِعٍ ۖ فَإِذَا السُّحُومُ
 طُمِسَتْ ۖ وَإِذَا السَّمَاءُ فُرِجَتْ ۖ وَإِذَا الْجِبَالُ نُسِفَتْ ۖ وَإِذَا الرُّسُلُ أُوتِنَتْ ۖ
 لِأَيِّ يَوْمٍ أُجِّلَتْ ۖ لِيَوْمِ الْفَصْلِ ۖ وَمَا آذْرُكَ مَا يَوْمُ الْفَصْلِ ۖ وَيَلُ
 يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ۖ أَلَمْ نُهَبِكِ الْآقِلِينَ ۖ ثُمَّ تَتَّبِعُهُمُ الْآخِرِينَ ۖ كَذَلِكَ
 نَفَعُ الْمُجْرِمِينَ ۖ وَيَلُ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ۖ أَلَمْ نَخْلُقْكُمْ مِنْ مَّاءٍ

LXXVII

AL-MURSALAT

المرسلات

Verses : 50

Revealed at Makkah

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

By the (winds) which are sent in succession, which then blow tempestuously, and lift up (the clouds) and scatter them, then split (them) asunder, then infuse (the hearts) with the remembrance (of God), as an excuse or as a warning!¹ That which you are being promised,² must happen.³

1-7

Then, when the stars become dim⁴ and the heaven is rent asunder,⁵ and the mountains are thrashed into dust, and the time of the Messengers' appointment comes,⁶ (that Day it shall happen). For what day has all this been deferred? For the Day of Decision. And

8-15

what do you know what the Day of Decision is? Woe on that Day to the deniers (of Truth)!⁷

16.19

Did We not destroy the former peoples?⁸ Then We shall follow them up with those of latter day.⁹ Thus do We deal with the culprits. Woe on that Day to the deniers (of Truth)!¹⁰

1. That is, sometimes the failure of winds causes the people to be alarmed at the prospect of a famine, and they turn to Allah to repent of their sins; sometimes they bring a lot of rain and the people turn to Allah in gratitude; and sometimes their blowing violently causes dread in the hearts and the people turn to Allah from fear of destruction.

In these verses initially the order of rain-bringing winds has been stated, which is this: first, winds start blowing in succession; then they assume the proportions of a storm; then they raise the clouds and spread them; then they split and separate them. After this, instead of making mention of the rainfall, it is said that the winds infuse the hearts with the remembrance of Allah, as an excuse or as a warning. That is, it is an occasion when either because of fear man is compelled to remember Allah, or else he confesses his errors and invokes Allah to protect and save him from ruin and bless him with rain. If it has not rained for a long time, and the people are thirsty for rain, even the most hardened disbeliever sometimes begins to remember God when he sees the winds blowing and the clouds advancing. The drought's being mild and severe makes the difference. In case the drought is mild, the common man who is not far from Allah, will remember Him, but others will offer scientific explanations, saying that there was no cause for anxiety: it did not rain because of such and such a cause: it would be weak-mindedness to start praying to God on such an ordinary thing. However, if the drought is unusually prolonged, and the whole country is faced with a calamitous situation, even the confirmed disbelievers begin to remember God. If they feel shy to use their tongue, in their hearts they feel penitent on their wrongdoing and ingratitude and pray to God to cause rain throughout the country from the winds which are raising the clouds. This is infusion of God's remembrance in the hearts as an excuse. As for its infusion as a warning, it happens when the wind develops into a cyclone and destroys settlement after settlement, or it rains so

heavily as to cause a deluge. In such a state even a confirmed atheist starts imploring God out of awe for Him, and then all scientific explanations of the cyclone or deluge evaporate from his mind. Thus, after describing the blowing of winds in their succession, to say that they infuse the hearts with Allah's remembrance as an excuse or as a warning, is meant to impress the truth that the system working in the world keeps on reminding man that everything on the earth has not been placed under his control but there is a Supreme Power above him, which rules his destiny. That Power is so supreme and mighty that it can use the elements for the sustenance and nourishment of man when it so wills and can use the same elements for his destruction when it so wills.

After this the same system of winds has been proffered as an argument to prove that the Resurrection which is being promised to man, must come to pass. Now, let us see how this system testifies to this truth.

Man generally is perplexed in the case of Resurrection and the Hereafter at two questions. First: is the occurrence of Resurrection possible? Second: what is its need and necessity? And then being perplexed at these questions, he starts entertaining doubts whether it will at all occur or not, or whether it was only a figment of the imagination. In this connection, the Qur'ān has at some places reasoned out and proved its possibility, its necessity and occurrence from the system of the universe, and at others adopted another mode of reasoning: oaths have been sworn by some of the countless signs of God's Kingdom and it has been asserted that it shall surely come to pass. This mode of reasoning contains arguments for its possibility as well as arguments for its necessity and arguments for its occurrence.

Here, adopting the same mode of reasoning only the system of the circulation of winds and rainfall has been presented as a sign of the truth that it is a regular system, which has been established by the design of an All-Wise, All-Mighty Sovereign; it is not a chance occurrence, as a result of which a system might have been generated in the atmosphere of the earth that vapours should arise from the seas, winds should carry them and gather them into clouds, then split and separate them into pieces and transport them to different parts of the earth and then should cause them to fall as rain. This system has not been devised accidentally by some blind and deaf

Nature, but it is a well-considered and well-designed plan, which is functioning regularly according to a law. That is why it never so happens that the heat of the sun should produce ice on the surface of the sea instead of vapours, but the sun always raises only vapours from the sea. It never so happens that the monsoons should blow in the reverse order and suppress vapours into the sea but they always raise them up into the atmosphere. It never so happens that the formation of clouds should cease, or the winds should stop to carry them to dry lands or the falling of rain on the earth should discontinue. The same law has been at work since millions and millions of years under which this system is functioning. Had it not been so our coming into existence on the earth and survival here would not be possible.

In this system one finds a clear purpose and the working of a regular law. One can clearly see that on the earth the life of man, animal and vegetation deeply relates to the winds and rainfall, and this arrangement testifies that water has been provided to bring animate life into existence and keep it alive precisely according to their requirements and a law. This purpose and regularity is not found only in this aspect but in the entire system of the universe, and man's whole scientific progress is based on it. About every thing man tries to find out what is its purpose and on what principle it works. Then as he goes on gaining insight into the purposes of the creation of different things and the principles on which they work, he goes on devising new and ever new methods of their use and making new inventions for the progress of his civilization. Had there been no such concept in the mind of man naturally that the world is a meaningful world and everything in it is working on a principle, he would never have entertained the question about anything as to what was its purpose and how it could be put to use.

Now, when this world and everything in it has meaning, and if there is a law working in this world and in everything it contains, and if it has been functioning with the same purpose and regularity since millions and millions of years, then a stubborn person only could refuse to accept that an All-Knowing, All-Mighty God has made it, and about that God it would be foolish to assume that although He could make and cause it to function but cannot break it, and after breaking it, cannot reconstruct it in any other form if He so wills. The concept about matter that it is imperishable was

the chief support of the ignorant atheist of the past, but the progress of knowledge has proved it also false. Now it is an acknowledged scientific fact that matter can change into energy and energy into matter. Therefore, it is perfectly according to knowledge and reason that this material world will last only as long as the Living and Eternal God sustains it. As soon as He wills to change it into energy, He can change it by a simple Command and His one Command is enough to re-create it into any other material form and shape He wills.

This much then about the possibility of the Resurrection, which cannot now be rejected by any scientific and rational argument. As for the question that it must take place so that man is rewarded for his good works and punished for his evil deeds, the person who acknowledges man's moral responsibility and also believes that rewarding the good services and punishing the crimes is the necessary demand of this moral responsibility, cannot but admit that there must be the Hereafter. There is no law or government in the world, which can punish every crime and reward every good act. To say that the prick of the conscience is a sufficient punishment for the culprit and the satisfaction of the conscience is a sufficient reward for the doer of good is no more than meaningless philosophizing. The question is: How and when did the conscience of the person who killed an innocent man and then himself died in an accident immediately after it reprove him? And when did the conscience of the man who went to fight for the sake of truth and justice and fell a victim to a bomb-blast suddenly, have the satisfaction that he had laid down his life for a good cause? Thus, the truth is that the pretences invented to avoid the belief in the Hereafter are all meaningless. Man's intellect wants, his nature requires, that there should be justice, but in the present life of the world it is not possible to have full and perfect justice. Justice can be had only in the Hereafter and only under the judgement and command of the All-Knowing, Omnipotent God. Denial of the necessity of the Hereafter is, in fact, denial of the necessity of justice.

Intellect can go only so far as to convince man that the Hereafter is possible and it should come about. As for the truth that it will surely come about, the "knowledge" of it can be obtained only through Revelation, and Revelation has given us the news that "that which you are being promised must happen". We cannot attain this knowledge by intellectual reasoning; however, we can attain the certainty of its being true on the basis that the thing of which we are being informed by Revelation is both possible and necessary.

2. Another meaning can be: "That which you are being threatened with," i.e. the Resurrection and Hereafter.

3. Here an oath has been sworn by five things on the inevitability of the Resurrection: (1) "Those which are sent forth in succession, or for a good cause;" (2) "those which blow violently and tempestuously," (3) "those which disperse and scatter;" (4) "those which split and separate;" and (5) "those which inspire the remembrance." As these words only describe the characteristics and it has not been specified what thing or things they qualify, this has given rise to a difference of opinion among the commentators as to whether these are the qualities of one particular thing or of different things and what the thing or things are. One group of them says that all the five qualify the winds; the second group says that all the five imply the angels; the third group says that the first three imply the winds and the remaining two the angels; the fourth says that the first two imply the winds and the other three the angels; another group has opined that the first quality implies the angels of mercy, the second the angels of punishment and the remaining three imply the verses of the Qur'an.

In our opinion, the first thing worthy of consideration is that when five characteristics have been mentioned continuously in one and the same context and there is no indication to show as to what has been qualified up to a certain point and wherefrom has the qualification of another thing begun, it cannot be correct, on the basis of a baseless conjecture, to understand that in these verses oaths have been sworn by two or three different things. Rather in this case the continuity of the subject by itself requires that the whole passage be regarded as related to the characteristics of one and the same thing. Secondly, wherever in the Qur'an an oath has been sworn by a certain thing or things in order to convince the doubters or deniers of an unseen truth, there the oath stands for an argument or reasoning which is meant to tell that the thing or things point to the truth's being right and correct. For this purpose obviously it cannot be correct to present one imperceptible thing as an argument for another imperceptible thing; for, only a perceptible thing can be presented as an argument for an imperceptible thing. Hence, in our opinion the correct explanation is that it implies the winds and the explanation of the people who interpret the five things to mean the angels cannot be acceptable, for the angels are as imperceptible as is the occurrence of the Resurrection.

Now, let us consider as to how these different states of winds point to the occurrence of the Resurrection. One of the most important factors which have made animal and vegetable life possible on the earth is the air. The relationship its qualities bear with every kind of life testify that there is an All-Powesful, All-Wise Creator, Who willed to create life on this earth and for this purpose created here a thing whose qualities exactly and precisely correspond to the requirements of the existence of living beings. Then, He did not only wrap up the earth in the air and left it alone, but by His power and wisdom characterised this air with countless different states, which are being regulated since millions and millions of years in such a way that they cause the change of seasons and weather: sometimes it is close and sometimes a soft breeze blows; sometimes it is hot and sometimes cold; sometimes it brings clouds and sometimes it drives away clouds; sometimes it causes pleasant gusts to blow and sometimes disastrous windstorms; sometimes it brings beneficial rains and sometimes there is drought; in short, there are different kinds of winds which blow in their own time, and every kind serves one or the other purpose. This arrangement is the proof of a dominant Power, for which neither it can be impossible to bring life into existence, nor to obliterate it, nor to re-create it after having annihilated it. Likewise, this arrangement is also proof of a supreme wisdom about which only a foolish man could think that all this was being done for fun, without any higher object in view. As against this wonderful system man is so helpless that he can neither cause a favourable wind to blow for himself, nor can prevent a disastrous cyclone from blowing on himself. However shameless, obstinate and stubborn he may be the wind does at one time or another remind him that a Mighty Sovereign is ruling over him, Who can turn this principal means of his life into a cause of blessing for him or into a cause of ruin for him whenever He so likes, and man does not have the power to prevent or avert any of His decisions. (For further explanation, see E.N. 7 of Al-Jāthiyah, E.N.'s 1 to 4 of Adh-Dhāriyāt).

4. That is, when they lose their light and lustre.

5. "When the heaven is rent asunder": when the system and discipline of the heavens under which every star and planet is established and moving in its orbit and everything in the universe is adhering to the bounds set for it, is broken.

(Contd. on page 230)

مَهِينٌ ۖ فَجَعَلْنَاهُ فِي قَرَارٍ مَّكِينٍ ۖ إِلَىٰ قَدَرٍ مَّعْلُومٍ ۖ فَقَدَرْنَا فَنِعْمَ
 الْقَادِرُونَ ۖ وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ۖ أَلَمْ نَجْعَلِ الْأَرْضَ كِفَاتًا ۖ أَحْيَاءَ
 وَآمَاتًا ۖ وَجَعَلْنَا فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ شَاخِصَاتٍ وَأَسْقَيْنَكُم مَّاءً فُرَاتًا ۖ وَيْلٌ
 يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ۖ إِن طَلِقُوا إِلَىٰ مَا كُنْتُمْ بِهِ تُكَذِّبُونَ ۖ إِن طَلِقُوا إِلَىٰ ظِلٍّ
 ذِي ثَلَاثِ شُعَبٍ ۖ لَا ظَلِيلٍ وَلَا يُغْنِي مِنَ اللَّهِ ۖ إِنَّهَا تَرْمِي بِشَرِّ
 كَالْقَصْرِ ۖ كَأَنَّهُ جِمَلَتٌ صَفْرٌ ۖ وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ۖ هَذَا يَوْمٌ لَا
 يَنْطِقُونَ ۖ وَلَا يُؤْذَنُ لَهُمْ فَيَعْتَذِرُونَ ۖ وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ۖ هَذَا
 يَوْمُ الْفَصْلِ ۖ جَمَعْنَاكُمْ وَالْأَوَّلِينَ ۖ فَمَنْ كَانَ لَكُمْ كَيْدٌ فَكِيدُوا ۖ وَيْلٌ
 يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ۖ إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي ظِلِّ وَحْيُونَ ۖ وَفَوَاصِحَٰهُ مِمَّا
 يَشْتَهُونَ ۖ كُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا هَنِيئًا بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ۖ إِنَّا كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي
 الْمُحْسِنِينَ ۖ وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ۖ كُلُوا وَتَشَبَّهُوا قَلِيلًا ۖ إِنَّكُمْ
 مُجْرِمُونَ ۖ وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ۖ وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمُ ارْكَعُوا لَا يَرْكَعُونَ ۖ
 وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ۖ فَبِأَيِّ حَدِيثٍ بَعْدَهُ يُؤْمِنُونَ ۖ

Did We not create you out of a mean fluid, and kept it lodged in a secure place¹¹ for an appointed term?¹² Behold! We had power to do this, so We are excellent Possessors of power!¹³ Woe on that Day to the deniers (of Truth)!¹⁴ 20-24

Have We not made the earth a receptacle, both for the living and for the dead, and set in it high mountains, and given you sweet water to drink?¹⁵ Woe on that Day to the deniers (of Truth)!¹⁶ 25-28

Go off¹⁷ now to the same that you used to deny. Go off to the shadow which has three branches.¹⁸ It neither gives coolness nor shelter from the flame of Fire. The Fire shall throw off sparks as huge as castles as though they were yellow camels.¹⁹ Woe on that Day to the deniers (of Truth)! 29-34

That is the Day when they shall neither speak nor be given leave to offer excuses.²⁰ Woe on that Day to the deniers (of Truth)! 35-37

This is the Day of Decision. We have gathered both you and those who had gone before you together. Now, if you have a trick, use it against Me.²¹ Woe on that Day to the deniers (of Truth)! 33-40

The righteous²² are today amidst shades and springs, and whatever fruits they desire (they shall have). "Eat and drink with relish as a reward for the deeds you have been doing." Thus do We recompense the doers of good. Woe on that Day to the deniers (of Truth)!²³ 41-45

"Eat²⁴ and enjoy yourselves for a while.²⁵ Indeed, you are culprits." Woe on that Day to the deniers (of Truth)! When it is said to them: "Bow down (before Allah), they do not bow down."²⁶ Woe on that Day to the deniers (of Truth)! Now, what message can there be after this (Qur'ān) in which they will believe?²⁷ 46-50

(Contd. from page 227)

6. At several places in the Qur'ān it has been stated that when the case of mankind will be presented before Allah on the Day of Resurrection, the Messenger of every nation will be called upon to testify that he had conveyed Allah's Messages intact to his people. This will be Allah's first and major argument against the culprits and the wicked people to prove that they were themselves responsible for their wrong attitude and conduct in life, for there had been no negligence on the part of Allah to show guidance and administer warnings. For instance, see Al-A'rāf : 172, 173 and E.N.'s 134, 135, Az-Zumar : 69 and E.N. 80, Al-Mulk : 8 and E.N. 14.

7. "Deniers of Truth": those people who took the news of the coming of Resurrection as a lie, and spent their lives in the world under the delusion that the time would never come when they would have to present themselves before their God and render an account of their deeds.

8. This is an argument from history for the Hereafter. It means: "Consider your own history in the world. Whichever nations denied the Hereafter and took this worldly life to be real life and based their moral attitude on the results appearing here regarding them as the criterion of good and evil, ultimately went to their doom without exception. This is a proof of the fact that the Hereafter is an actual reality overlooking and ignoring which causes the same kind of harm to a person which is caused when he chooses to close his eyes to the hard facts of life. (For further explanation, see E.N. 12 of Yūnus. E.N. 86 of An-Naml, E.N. 8 of Ar-Rūm, E.N. 25 of Sabā).

9. That is, "This is a permanent law with Us. Just as denial of the Hereafter has proved disastrous for the nations of the past, so it will always prove disastrous also for the nations of the future. No nation has been an exception to it before nor will any be so in the future."

10. This sentence in the present context means: "The fate they have met or will meet in the world, is not their real punishment; their real doom will descend on them on the Day of Decision. The punishment here is only in the nature of a person's being arrested when he commits one crime after the other fearlessly and is not inclined to mend and change his ways. The court where his test is to

be decided and he is to be punished for all his misdeeds, will not be established in this world, but in the Hereafter, and that indeed will be the actual Day of his ruin and disaster." (For further explanation, see E.N.'s 5, 6 of Al-A'rāf, E.N. 105 of Hūd).

11 "A secure place": the mother's womb in which the child is so firmly lodged as soon as it has been conceived and where such arrangements are made for its security and nourishment that abortion cannot take place unless there is a disaster, and even for artificial abortion extraordinary devices have to be adopted, which are both risky and harmful in spite of modern developments in medical science.

12. The words *qadar im-ma'lūm* do not only mean that the term is appointed and fixed but they also contain the sense that it is known to Allah alone. About no child can man know by any means how many months, days, hours, minutes and seconds it will remain in the mother's womb and what will be its exact and precise time of birth. Allah alone has fixed a specific term for every child and He alone knows it.

13. This is an express argument for the possibility of the life-after-death. What is meant to be said is: "When We had the power to shape and develop you into a perfect and complete man from an insignificant sperm-drop, how shall We be helpless to re-create you in some other way? Our this creation in consequence of which you exist as a living being, is a proof that We are excellent Possessors of power: We cannot be so helpless as to be unable to re-create you after having created you in the first instance."

14. This sentence here gives the meaning that in spite of the express argument for the possibility of life-after-death, the people who are denying it, may mock it as they may and look down upon its believers as people of antiquated ideas and whims, but when the Day comes which they are denying today, they will themselves know that it is a Day of their own ruin and disaster.

15. This is yet another argument for the possibility and reasonableness of the Hereafter. It is this very earth which since millions and millions of years has been sustaining and providing for countless different kinds of creatures. Every kind of vegetation and every kind of animal and man are living on it. To meet the requirements of all immeasurable treasures of provisions of different kinds are coming out of its belly. Then it is on this very earth that countless

members of all kinds of creatures die every day, but there exists a wonderful arrangement in that the dead bodies of all creatures are deposited in the same earth, and it again becomes ready for sustaining life and providing home to the new members of every species. This earth has not been shaped like a smooth-surfaced ball either, but here and there on it there have been set high mountains and mountain-ranges, which play an important role in causing the change of seasons and rainfall, the birth of rivers, creation of fertile valleys, growth of trees which supply timber, and provisions of a variety of minerals and stones. Then in the interior of this very earth, sweet water has been stored and on its surface rivers of sweet water have been arranged and from the saline waters of the sea also vapours of pure water are raised and caused to fall as rain from the sky. Is not all this an argument to prove that an All-Powerful Sovereign has created all this and He is not only All-Powerful but All-Knowing and All-Wise as well? Now, if this earth has been thus equipped and provisioned only by His power and wisdom, why should an intelligent man find it difficult to understand that the same Sovereign by His power can wind up this world and create another world on a new pattern, and the demand of His wisdom is that he should create another world after it so that He may call man to account for the deeds he has done in this world?

16. Here, this sentence signifies that the people who deny the coming of the Hereafter and regard it as impossible and irrational in spite of seeing these manifest signs of Allah's power and wisdom, may remain lost in their vain imaginations if they so like. But the Day when all this takes place against their expectations, they will realize that they have earned ruin on account of their own folly.

17. After giving proofs of the coming of the Hereafter, now it is being stated how the deniers will be dealt with when it has actually taken place.

18. "Shadow": shadow of smoke; "three branches": because when a big smoke arises it is divided into several parts at the top.

19. That is, each spark will be like a castle, and when these huge sparks will rise and burst and fly about in all directions it will seem as though they were yellow camels running and jumping about ceaselessly.

20. This will be their ultimate state at the time they will be entering Hell. Before this in the plain of Resurrection they will be offering all sorts of excuses, blaming others for their errors and

proving their own selves to be innocent, abusing their leaders and guides who led them astray ; so much so that some of them will even disown their crimes shamelessly, as has been stated at several places in the Qur'an. But when their being criminals will have been established by every kind of evidence, and when their own hands and feet and limbs will have borne witness against them to prove their guilt fully, and when after fulfilling all requirements of justice rightly and truly, the sentence will be passed on them, they will be dumb-founded and no room will be left for them to offer any excuse. To refuse an opportunity or permission to offer an excuse, does not mean that judgement will be passed against them without giving them a chance for self-defence, but it means that their guilt and crime will be proved to the hilt and they will not be able to offer any excuse after it.

21. That is, "In the world you used every kind of deception and trick in self-interest. Now, if you have any trick to escape My punishment, you may use it to defeat Me and My plan."

22. As this word has been used here in contrast to the "deniers", the righteous here implies the people who refrained from denying the Hereafter and accepted it and passed their life in the world with the belief that in the Hereafter they would have to render an account of their word and deed and their conduct and character.

23. Here this sentence means that one of their afflictions, as mentioned above, will be that they will be standing as culprits in the plain of Resurrection, their crimes will have been proved and established openly and they will not be in a position even to open their mouths to put forward a plea in self defence, and shall ultimately become fuel of Hell. Their other affliction, and by far the worse, will be that they will see the same believers enjoying themselves in Paradise, whom they had been opposing and resisting and mocking throughout their lives as foolish, narrow-minded, mean and old-fashioned people.

24. In conclusion, these words are being addressed not only to the disbelievers of Makkah but to all disbelievers of the world.

25. 'For a while': in their brief life of the world.

26. "Bowing before Allah" does not only imply worshipping Him but it also means believing in the Messenger sent by Allah

and in the Book revealed by Him and following and obeying His Commands.

27. That is, the greatest Message that could distinguish the Truth from falsehood for man and show him right guidance, has been sent down in the shape of the Qur'an. If a person does not believe even after reading it or hearing it read, what else after this can show him the correct guidance ?

LXXVIII

AL-NABA ٱلنَّبَأ

LXXVIII

النَّبَا ٱلنَّبَا
AL-NABĀ

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah derives its name from the word *an-Nabā* in the second verse. This is not only a name but also a title of its subject-matter, for *Nabā* implies the news of Resurrection and Hereafter and the whole Sūrah is devoted to the same theme.

Period of Revelation

As we have explained in the Introduction to Sūrah Al-Mursalāt, the theme of all the Sūrahs, from Al-Qiyāmah to An-Nāzi'āt, closely resembles one another's, and all these seem to have been revealed in the earliest period at Makkah.

Theme and Subject-Matter

Its theme also is the same as of Sūrah Al-Mursalāt, i.e. to affirm the Resurrection and Hereafter, and to warn the people of the consequences of acknowledging or disacknowledging it.

When the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) first started to preach Islam in Makkah, his message consisted of three elements: (1) That none be held as an associate with Allah in Godhead; (2) that Allah had appointed him as His Messenger; (3) that this world will come to an end one day and then another world will be established when all the former and the latter generations will be resurrected with the same bodies in which they lived and worked in the world; then they will be called to account for their beliefs and deeds and those who emerge as believing and righteous in this accountability will go to Paradise and those who are proved to be disbelieving and wicked will live in Hell for ever.

Of these although the first thing was highly unpleasant for the people of Makkah, yet in any case they were not disbelievers in the existence of Allah. They believed in His Being the Supreme Sustainer, Creator and Providence and also admitted that all those beings whom they regarded as their deities, were themselves Allah's creatures. Therefore, in this regard the only thing they disputed was whether they had any share in the attributes and powers of Divinity and in the Divine Being itself or not.

As for the second thing the people of Makkah were not prepared to accept it. However, what they could not possibly deny was that during the 40 years' life that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) had lived among them before his claim to Prophethood, they had never found him a lying, deceitful person, or the one

who would adopt unlawful methods for selfish ends. They themselves admitted that he was a man possessed of wisdom, righteousness and moral superiority. Therefore, in spite of charging him with a thousand false accusations, nothing to say of making others believe, they were finding it difficult even for themselves to believe that although he was an honest and upright man in every other affair and dealing of life, yet, God forbid, a liar only in his claim to be a Prophet.

Thus, the first two things were not in fact so perplexing for the people of Makkah as the third thing. When this was presented before them, they mocked it most of all, expressed unusual wonder at it, and regarding it as remote from reason and impossible, started talking against it as incredible, even inconceivable, in their assemblies. But in order to bring them to the way of Islam it was absolutely essential that the doctrine of the Hereafter should be instilled into their minds, for without belief in this doctrine, it was not at all possible that they could adopt a serious attitude with regard to the truth and falsehood, could change their standard of values in respect of good and evil, and giving up worship of the world, could be inclined to follow the way that Islam urged them to follow. That is why in the earliest Sūrah's revealed at Makkah the doctrine of the Hereafter has been impressed and stressed more than anything else. However, the arguments for it have been given in such a way that the doctrine of the Oneness of God (*Tauhīd*) also is impressed on the minds automatically. This also contains brief arguments, here and there, to confirm the truth of the Holy Messenger of Allah and the Qur'ān.

After understanding well why the theme of the Hereafter has been so frequently repeated in the Sūrah's of this period, let us now have a look at the subject

matter of this Sûrah. In it, first of all, allusion has been made to the common talk and the doubts that were being expressed in every street of Makkah and in every assembly of the people of Makkah on hearing the news about Resurrection. Then, the deniers have been asked: "Don't you see this earth which We have spread as a carpet for you? Don't you see the high mountains which we have so firmly placed in the earth? Don't you consider your own selves how We have created you as pairs of men and women? Don't you consider your sleep by which We make you seek a few hours' rest after every few hours' labour and toil so as to keep you fit for work in the world? Don't you see the alternation of the night and day which We are so regularly perpetuating precisely according to your needs and requirements? Don't you see the strongly fortified system of the heavens above you? Don't you see the sun by means of which you are receiving your light and heat? Don't you see the rains which fall from the clouds and help produce corns and vegetables and luxuriant gardens? Do these things only tell you that the power of the Almighty Being Who has created them, will be unable to bring about Resurrection and establish the Next World? Then, from the supreme wisdom which is clearly working in this world around you, do you only understand this that although each part of it and each function of it is purposive, yet life is meaningless? Nothing could be more absurd and meaningless that after appointing man to the office of foreman and granting him vast powers of appropriation, in this workhouse, when he leaves the world after fulfilling his role, he should be let off without any accountability. He should neither be rewarded and granted pension on satisfactory work, nor subjected to any accountability and punishment on unsatisfactory performance of duty.

After giving these arguments it has been emphatically stated that the Day of Judgement shall certainly come to pass on its appointed time. No sooner is the Trumpet sounded than whatever is being foretold shall appear before the eyes, and whether you believe in it today, or not, at that time you will come out in your multitudes from wherever you would be lying dead and buried to render your account. Your denial cannot in any way avert this inevitable event.

Then, in vv. 21-30, it has been stated that every single misdeed of those who do not expect any accountability to take place and have thus belied Our Revelations, lies reckoned and recorded with Us, and Hell is ever lying in ambush to punish them and punish them fully for all their doings. Then, in vv. 31-36, the best rewards of those who lived as responsible people in the world and have provided for their Hereafter beforehand have been mentioned. They have been reassured that they will not only be rewarded richly for their services but in addition they will also be given sufficient gifts.

In conclusion, the Divine Court in the Hereafter has been depicted, making it plain that there will be no question of somebody's being adamant in the matter of getting his followers and associates forgiven, none will speak without leave, and leave will be granted on the condition that intercession be made only for the one to whom leave of intercession will have been given, and the intercessor will say only what is right. Moreover, leave for intercession will be given only for those who had acknowledged the Truth in the world but were sinners, rebels of God and rejectors of the Truth will deserve no intercession at all.

The discourse has been concluded with this warning: The Day the coming of which is being foretold,

shall certainly come to pass. Do not think it is yet far off, it is close at hand. Now, whoever wills, let him believe in it and take the way towards his Lord. But he who disbelieves, in spite of the warning; will have all his deeds placed before him, and he will exclaim regretfully: "Oh, would that I were not born in the world!" At that time, his regrets will be about the same world of which he is so enamoured today!



الجزء
(٣٠)

عَمَّ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ ۚ عَنِ النَّبَا الْعَظِيمِ ۚ الَّذِي هُمْ فِيهِ مُخْتَلِفُونَ ۗ

كَلَّا سَيَعْلَمُونَ ۚ ثُمَّ كَلَّا سَيَعْلَمُونَ ۚ أَلَمْ نَجْعَلِ الْأَرْضَ مِهْدًا ۚ وَ
الْجِبَالَ أَوْتَادًا ۚ وَخَلَقْنَاكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا ۚ وَجَعَلْنَا نَوْمَكُمْ سُبَاتًا ۚ وَجَعَلْنَا
النَّيْلَ لِيَاسًا ۚ وَجَعَلْنَا النَّهَارَ مَعَاشًا ۚ وَبَيْنَا وَقَوْمَكُمُ سَبْعًا شَدَادًا ۚ وَ
جَعَلْنَا سِرَاجًا وَهَاجًا ۚ وَ أَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ الْمُعْصِرِ مَاءً ثَجَّاجًا ۚ لِنُخْرِجَ
بِهِ حَبًّا وَنَبَاتًا ۚ وَجَنَّتِ الْفَاقَاتُ ۚ إِنَّ يَوْمَ الْفَصْلِ كَانَ مِيقَاتًا ۚ يَوْمَ
يُنْفَخُ فِي الصُّورِ نَمَاتُونَ أَفْوَاجًا ۚ وَفُتِحَتِ السَّمَاءُ فَكَانَتْ أَبْوَابًا ۚ وَ
سُيِّرَتِ الْجِبَالُ فَكَانَتْ سَرَابًا ۚ إِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ كَانَتْ مِرْصَادًا ۚ لِلطَّاغِيْنَ
مَأْتَابًا ۚ لَيْسَ فِيهَا أَحْقَابًا ۚ لَا يَذُوقُونَ فِيهَا بَرْدًا وَلَا شَرَابًا ۚ إِلَّا
حَبِيبًا وَسَعَاءًا ۚ جَزَاءً وِفَاقًا ۚ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا لَا يَرْجُونَ حِسَابًا ۚ وَ
كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا كِذَابًا ۚ وَكُلَّ شَيْءٍ أَحْصَيْنَاهُ كِتَابًا ۚ فَذُوقُوا فَلَنْ نَزِيدَكُمْ
إِلَّا عَذَابًا ۚ إِنَّ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ مَفَازًا ۚ حَدَائِقَ وَأَعْنَابًا ۚ وَكَوَاعِبَ أَتْرَابًا ۚ
وَكَأْسًا دِهَاقًا ۚ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ فِيهَا لَغْوًا وَلَا كِذَابًا ۚ جَزَاءً مِمَّنْ رَزَقَكَ
عَطَاءً حِسَابًا ۚ رَبِّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا الرَّحْمَنُ لَا يَمْلِكُونَ
مِنْهُ خِطَابًا ۚ يَوْمَ يَقُومُ الرُّوحُ وَالْمَلِكَةُ صَفًّا ۚ لَا يَتَكَلَّمُونَ إِلَّا
مَنْ أذِنَ لَهُ الرَّحْمَنُ وَقَالَ صَوَابًا ۚ ذَلِكَ الْيَوْمُ الْحَقُّ ۚ فَمَنْ شَاءَ اتَّخَذَ
إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِ مَآبًا ۚ إِنَّا أَنْذَرْنَاكُمْ عَذَابًا قَرِيبًا ۚ يَوْمَ يَنْظُرُ الْمَرْءُ مَا قَدَّمَتْ
يَدَاهُ ۚ وَيَقُولُ الْكٰفِرُ يَلْبَسُنِي كُنْتُ شُرَابًا ۚ

ع ١٠

LXXVIII

AN-NABĀ ٱلنَّبَا

Verses : 40

Revealed at Makkah

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

About what are they inquiring? Is it about the Great News concerning which they are at variance?¹ By no means!² They shall soon know. Yes, by no means! They shall soon know!³ 1-5

Is it not a fact that We have made the earth a bed⁴ and set the mountains as pegs⁵ and created you as pairs (of men and women),⁶ and made your sleep for rest,⁷ and the night a covering and the day for seeking livelihood,⁸ and established above you seven strong heavens,⁹ and set a bright, blazing lamp,¹⁰ and rained water from the clouds in abundance that We may produce thereby corn and vegetables and lush gardens?¹¹ 6-16

Surely the Day of Decision is an appointed time. The day the Trumpet is blown, you shall come out in multitudes,¹² and the heaven shall be opened so as to become all doors, and the mountains shall be set in motion till they become as a mirage.¹³ 17-20

Hell, in fact, is an ambush,¹⁴ the abode for the rebellious in which they shall remain lodged for ages.¹⁵ In it they shall not taste any coolness nor any drink, except boiling water and the washing from wounds,¹⁶ a full recompense (for their misdeeds). They did not expect any reckoning and had treated Our Revelations as utterly false,¹⁷ whereas We had counted and preserved everything in writing.¹⁸ Now taste it, for We shall never increase anything for you except the torment. 21-30

31-37

Surely for the righteous¹⁹ there is an abode of success: gardens and vineyards and maidens of equal age²⁰ and brimful cups. There they shall neither hear idle talk nor any falsehood,²¹ a reward and sufficient gift²² from your Lord, from the All-Merciful God, Who is the Owner of the heavens and the earth and of everything lying between them, before Whom none can have the power to speak.²³

38-39

The Day when the Spirit²⁴ and the angels shall be standing up in ranks, none shall speak except the one whom the Merciful may permit, and who speaks what is right.²⁵ That Day is sure to come. Now whoever wills, let him take the path back to his Lord.

40

We have warned you of the torment which is near at hand:²⁶ the Day when man will see all that his hands have sent forward, and the disbeliever will cry out: "Would that I were mere dust!"²⁷

1. "The Great News": the news of the Resurrection and Hereafter, which the people of Makkah heard with amazement, then raised questions and doubts about it in their assemblies. When they met each other they would ask: "Did you ever hear that the dead will be resurrected to life? Is it credible that life will be infused once again into the bones which have decayed and become rotten? Does it stand to reason that the former and the latter generations will rise up and gather together at one place? Is it possible that these huge mountains which are so firmly set in the earth will fly about like flakes of wool? Can it so happen that the sun and the moon and the stars should be extinguished and the order and system of the world be overturned and upset? What has happened to him who was until yesterday a sane and wise man among us? Today he is giving us strange, impossible news. Where were this Hell and Heaven of which we had never heard from him before? Wherefrom have they appeared suddenly so that he has started depicting them so vividly before us?"

Another meaning of *fi-hi mukhtalifūn* also can be: "As these people themselves are not agreed on any one view about the end of the

world, they hold varying views about it." Some one has been influenced by the Christian belief and believes in the life after death but thinks that the second life would not be a physical but only a spiritual life. Another does not deny the Hereafter absolutely but doubts whether it was possible or not. The Qur'an relates the view of these very people when it says: "We do only guess: we are not certain." (Al-Jāthiyah : 32). And another plainly said: "There is no other life than this present life, and we shall never be raised back to life after our death." (Al-An'ām : 29). Then, there were some atheists, who said: "Life is only this worldly life of ours. Here we shall die and live and nothing but the change of time destroys us." (Al-Jāthiyah : 24). There were some others who were not atheistic but they regarded the second life as impossible. According to them it was beyond the power of God to raise the dead back to life. They said, "Who will give life to these bones when they are rotten." (Yā Sīn : 78). Their different views by themselves were a proof that they had no knowledge in this regard; they were only conjecturing and guessing. Had they any knowledge they would have agreed on one view. (For further explanation, see E.N. 6 of Sūrah Adh-Dhāriyāt).

2. That is, whatever they say about the Hereafter is false, and all their concepts about it are wrong.

3. That is, the time is not far off when the same thing about which they are expressing all sorts of meaningless doubts and misgivings, will appear before them as a reality. Then they will realize that what the Messenger had foretold was absolutely true and what they were saying on the basis of conjecture and speculation had no truth in it.

4. Enough light has been thrown at several places in *The Meaning of the Qur'an* on the supreme wisdom and power of Allah that underlies His making the earth a carpet, i.e. an abode of perfect peace and rest. For explanation, see E.N.'s 73, 74, 81 of An-Naml, E.N. 29 of Yā Sīn, E.N.'s 90, 91 of Al-Mu'min, E.N. 7 of Az-Zukhruf, E.N. 7 of Al-Jāthiyah, E.N. 18 of Sūrah Qāf.

5. For the wisdom of creating mountains on the earth, see E.N. 12 of An-Nahl, E.N. 74 of An-Naml, E.N. 15 of Al-Mursalāt.

6. For explanation of the supreme wisdom that underlies the creation of men and women into pairs, see E.N. 69 of Al-Furqān, E.N.'s 28 to 30 of Ar-Rūm, E.N. 31 of Yā Sīn, E.N. 77 of Ash-Shūrā, E.N. 12 of Az-Zukhruf, E.N. 25 of Al-Qiyāmah.

7. The explanation of the wisdom for which Allah Almighty has placed a desire for sleep in man's nature in order to make him fit for work in the world, and which impels him to a few hours' sleep after every few hours of work, has been given in E.N. 33 of Sūrah Ar-Rūm.

8. That is, "The night has been made dark so that protected from light, you could enjoy a peaceful sleep more easily and made the day bright for the reason that you could work for your livelihood with greater ease and facility. Reference has been made to only one benefit out of countless benefits of the continuous alternation of night and day regularly on the earth to tell that all this is not happening without a purpose or accidentally, but there is supreme wisdom underlying it, which has a deep connection with your own immediate interests. The darkness that was needed for the peace and rest of your body in view of its structure has been provided in the night and the light that was needed for earning livelihood has been provided in the day. This arrangement that has been made precisely in accordance with your needs by itself testifies that it could not be possible without the wisdom of a Wise Being." (For further explanation, see E.N. 65 of Yūnus, E.N. 32 of Yā Sin, E.N. 85 of Al-Mu'min, E.N. 4 of Az-Zukhruf).

9. "Strong" in the sense that their boundaries are so strongly fortified that no change whatever occurs in them, nor does any of the countless stars and planets in the heavens, violating these boundaries, collide with the other, nor falls down to the earth. (For further explanation, see E.N. 34 of Al-Baqarah, E.N. 2 of Ar-Ra'd, E.N.'s 8, 12 of Al-Hijr, E.N. 15 of Al-Mu'minūn, E.N. 13 of Luqmān, E.N. 37 of Yā Sin, E.N.'s 5, 6 of Aṣ-Ṣāffāt, E.N. 90 of Al-Mu'min, E.N.'s 7, 8 of Sūrah Qāf).

10. "A bright, blazing lamp": the sun. The word *wahhāj* used for the sun means both intensely hot and intensely bright. Hence our rendering. In this brief sentence, allusion has been made to a most wonderful and glorious sign of Allah Almighty's power and wisdom which the sun is. Its diameter is 109 times that of the earth's and its size more than 333,000 times that of the earth's. Its temperature is 14,000,000°C. In spite of shining 93,000,000 miles away from the earth, its light and brightness is dazzling, and man can look at it with the naked eye only at the risk of losing his eye-sight. As for its heat, temperature in some parts of the earth reaches 140°F.

because of its radiation. It is only Allah Who by His wisdom has placed the earth at the right distance from it, neither it is too hot for being close to it, nor too cold for being very far away from it. For this very reason life of man, animal and vegetable became possible on it. Measureless treasures of energy from it are reaching the earth and sustaining life. It helps ripen our crops to provide sustenance to every creature; its heat causes vapours to rise from the seas, which spread to different parts of the earth by means of the winds and fall as rain. In the sun Allah has kindled such a mighty furnace that has been constantly radiating light, heat and different kinds of rays throughout the entire solar system since millions and millions of years.

11. For the details of the wonderful manifestations of Allah Almighty's power and wisdom in making arrangements for the rain and the growth of vegetation thereby, see E.N. 53 (a) of An-Nahl, E.N. 17 of Al-Mu'minūn, E.N. 5 of Ash-Shua'rā', E.N. 35 of Ar-Rūm, E.N. 19 of Fāṭir, E.N. 29 of Yā Sīn, E.N. 20 of Al-Mu'min, E.N.'s 10, 11 of Az-Zukhruf, E.N.'s 28 to 30 of Al-Wāq'ah.

After presenting a number of the signs and testimonies, one after the other, in these verses, the deniers of the Resurrection and Hereafter have been exhorted, so as to say: "If you consider the earth and the mountains and your own creation, your sleep and wakefulness, and the system of the day and night intelligently, and consider the well-fortified system of the universe and the shining sun in the heavens, the rain falling from the clouds and the vegetables growing thereby, you will see two things very clearly: first, that all this could neither come into existence without a mighty power, nor continue to exist and function so regularly; second, that in each of these great wisdom is working and nothing that happens here is purposeless. Now, only a foolish person could say that the Being Who by His power has brought these things into existence, does not have the power to destroy them and create them once again in some other form, and this also could be said only by an unreasonable person that the Wise Being Who has not done anything without purpose in this universe, has given to man in His world understanding and intelligence, discrimination between good and evil, freedom to obey or disobey, and powers of appropriation over countless of His creatures, without any purpose and design: whether man uses and employs the things granted by Him in the right way or the wrong way, it does not make any difference; whether man continues to do good throughout life

till death, he will end up in the dust, or continues to do evil till death, he will likewise end up in the dust ; neither the virtuous man will receive any reward for the good deeds, nor the bad man will be held accountable for his evil deeds. These very arguments for life after death and Resurrection and Hereafter have been given here and there in the Qur'ān, e.g. see E.N. 7 of Ar-Ra'd, E.N. 9 of Al-Hajj, E.N. 6 of Ar-Rūm, E.N.'s 10, 12 of Sabā, E.N.'s 8, 9 of Aṣ-Ṣāffāt.

12. This implies the final sounding of the Trumpet at which all dead men will rise back to life forthwith. "You" implies not only those who were the addressees at that time but all those humans who will have been born from the beginning of creation till Resurrection. (For explanation, see E.N. 57 of Ibrāhīm, E.N. 1 of Al-Hajj, E.N.'s 46, 47 of Yā Sīn, E.N. 79 of Az-Zumar).

13. One should bear in mind the fact that here also, as at many other places in the Qur'ān, the different states of Resurrection have been mentioned all together. In the first verse, mention has been made of what will happen at the final sounding of the Trumpet and in the following two verses of the state which will appear at the second sounding of the Trumpet. This we have already explained in E.N. 10 of Sūrah Al-Hāqqah above. "The heavens shall be opened" means: All obstacles in the heavens will be removed and every heavenly calamity from every side will be befalling freely as though all doors for it were open and no door had remained closed to obstruct its happening. "The mountains will be set in motion till they become as a mirage" means: In no time will the mountains be uprooted from their places and then will be scattered away in particles leaving nothing but vast, empty sand plains behind. "This same state has been described in Sūrah Tā Hā, thus: They ask you: well, where will the mountains go on that Day? Say to them: My Lord will reduce them to fine dust and scatter it away. He will turn the earth into an empty level plain, wherein you will neither see any curve nor crease." (vv. 105-107 and the corresponding E.N. 83).

14. "An ambush": a place contrived to entrap game by surprise. Hell has been described as an ambush, because the rebels of God are fearless of it and are enjoying life thinking that the world is a haven of bliss for them. They do not know that Hell is lying in ambush for them, which will trap them suddenly and keep them trapped.

15. The word *aḥqāb* as used in the original means successive periods of long time appearing continuously one after the other.

From this word some people have tried to argue that there will be eternity in the life of Paradise but no eternity in the life of Hell. For however long these ages may be, they will not be endless but will come to an end at some time. But this argument is wrong for two reasons. First, that lexically, the word *ḥaqāb* (sing. of *aḥqāb*) itself contains the meaning that one *ḥaqāb* should be closely followed by another *ḥaqāb*; therefore, *aḥqāb* will necessarily be used only for such periods of time as continue to appear successively one after the other and there should be no period which is not followed by another period. Second, that as a rule it is wrong to put a meaning on a verse of the Qur'ān pertaining to a particular theme which clashes with other statements of the Qur'ān pertaining to the same theme. At 34 places in the Qur'ān the word *khulūd* (eternity) has been used concerning the dwellers of Hell. At three places not only the word *khulūd* has been used but the word *abad-an* (for ever and ever) also has been added to it; and at one place it has been clearly stated: "They will wish to get out of Hell but shall not be able to come out of it and theirs shall be an everlasting torment." (Al-Mā'idah: 37). At another place it has been said: "Therein they shall abide for ever, as long as the earth and the heavens shall last, unless your Lord ordains otherwise." And the same thing has been said about the dwellers of Paradise too: "They shall dwell in Paradise for ever, as long as the earth and the heavens shall last, unless your Lord wills something else." (Hūd: 107-108). After these explanations, how can one argue, on the basis of the word *aḥqāb*, that the stay of the rebels of God in Hell will not be eternal, but it will come to an end at some stage in time?

16. The word *ghassāq* as used in the original applies to pus, blood, pus-blood and all those fluids that flow out from the eyes and skins as a result of a grievous penalty. Besides, this word is also used for a thing which stinks and gives out horrid, offensive smell.

17. This is the reason for which they will deserve this dreadful penalty of Hell. Firstly, they lived in the world thinking that the time will never come when they will have to appear before God and render an account of their deeds; second, that they utterly refused to accept and acknowledge the Revelations that Allah had sent through His Prophets for their instruction and treated them as false hood.

18. That is, "We were continuously preparing a complete record of their sayings and doings, their movements and occupations,

even of their intentions, thoughts and aims in life and nothing was being left un-recorded, whereas the foolish people in their heedlessness thought that they were living in a lawless kingdom, where they were free to do whatever they pleased and desired, and there was no power to call them to account."

19. Here, the word "righteous" has been used in contrast to those who did not expect any accountability and who had belied Allah's Revelations. Therefore, this word inevitably implies those people who believed in Allah's Revelations and lived in the world with the understanding that they had to render an account of their deeds ultimately.

20. This may mean that they will be of equal age among themselves as well as that they will be of equal age with their husbands. This same theme has already occurred in Sūrah Sūad : 52 and Al-Wāqī'ah : 37 above.

21. At several places in the Qur'ān this has been counted as among the major blessings of Paradise. Human ears there will remain secure against idle, false and indecent talk. There will be no nonsensical, meaningless gossiping in Paradise ; no one will tell lies nor belie others ; nor will there be any use of abusive language, slandering, calumnies and false accusations which are so common in the world. (For further explanations, see E.N. 28 of Sūrah Maryam, E.N.'s 13, 14 of Al-Wāqī'ah).

22. "A reward and sufficient gift": that is, they will not only be given their due rewards which they will deserve for their good deeds, but over and above these they will be given additional and sufficient gifts and prizes as well. Contrary to this, in respect of the dwellers of Hell it has been said : "They will be recompensed fully for their misdeeds." That is, they will neither be punished less than what they will deserve for their crimes nor more. This theme has been explained at length at many places in the Qur'ān, for example, see Yūnus : 26-27, An-Naml : 89-90, Al-Qaṣaṣ : 84, Sabā : 33-38, Al-Mu'min : 40.

23. That is, the Court of Allah Almighty will be so awe-inspiring that no one, whether belonging to the earth or to the heavens, will dare open his mouth of his own will before Allah, nor interfere in the Court's work and proceedings.

24. According to most commentators, "the Spirit" implies the Angel Gabriel (peace be on him), who has been mentioned separately

from the angels because of his high rank and position with Allah. (For further explanation, see E.N. 3 of Al-Ma'ārij).

25. "To speak": to intercede, and intercession has been made conditional upon two things: (1) That the person who is granted permission by Allah to intercede for a sinner will alone be allowed to intercede and for the particular sinner only; and (2) that the intercessor will say only what is right and proper, and nothing derogatory, and the one for whom he is interceding should have at least acknowledged the Truth in the world. That is, he should only be a sinner, not an unbeliever. (For further explanation, see E.N. 251 of Al-Baqarah, E.N. 5 of Yūnus, E.N. 106 of Hūd, E.N. 52 of Maryam, E.N.'s 85, 86 of Ṭā Hā, E.N. 27 of Al-Anbiyā', E.N.'s 40, 41 of Sabā, E.N. 32 of Al-Mu'min, E.N. 68 of Az-Zukhruf, E.N. 21 of An-Najm, E.N. 36 of Al-Muddaththir).

26. Apparently, one might think that the people who were the audience of this verse died fourteen centuries ago, and even now it cannot be said how many hundreds or thousands or millions of years Resurrection will take to come. Then, in what sense has it been said: "The torment of which you have been warned, has approached near at hand?" And what is the meaning of saying in the beginning of the Sūrah: "Soon they shall know?" The answer is that man can have the feeling of time only until he is passing a physical life in the world within the bounds of space and time. After death when only the soul will survive, he will lose every feeling and consciousness of time, and on the Day of Resurrection when man will rise back to life, he will feel as though some one had aroused him from sleep suddenly. He will not at all be conscious that he has been resurrected after thousands of years. (For further explanation, see E.N. 26 of An-Nahl, E.N. 56 of Banī Isrā'īl, E.N. 80 of Ṭā Hā, E.N. 48 of Yā Sīn).

27. "Would dust": "Would that I had not been born in the world, or had become mere dust after death, and thus reduced to nothingness."

LXXIX

AN-NĀZĪ'ĀT النّٰزِعات

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

LXXIX

AN-NAZI'AT النَّازِعَات

INTRODUCTION

Name

It is derived from the word *wan-nāzi'āt* with which the Sūrah opens.

Period of Revelation

According to Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, this Sūrah was sent down after Sūrah An-Nabā. Its subject-matter also testifies that it belongs to the earliest period at Makkah.

Theme and Subject-Matter

Its theme is affirmation of Resurrection and the life hereafter; it also warns of the consequences of belying the Messenger of God.

The Sūrah opens with oaths sworn by the angels who take the soul at death, and those who hasten to carry out Allah's Commands, and those who conduct the affairs of the universe according to Divine Will, to assure that the Resurrection will certainly come to pass and the second life after death will certainly take place. For the angels who are employed to pluck out the soul today can also be employed to restore the soul tomorrow, and the angels who promptly execute Allah's Commands and conduct the affairs of the universe today can also upset the order of the universe tomorrow by orders of the same God and can also bring about a new order.

After this the people have been told, so as to say: "This work which you regard as absolutely impossible, is not any difficult for Allah, for which He may have to make lengthy preparations. Just a single jolt will upset this system of the world and a second jolt will be enough to cause you to appear as living beings in the new world. At that time the same people who were wont to deny it, would be trembling with fear and seeing with awe-struck eyes all that they thought was impossible.

Then, relating the story of the Prophet Moses and Pharaoh briefly, the people have been warned to the effect: "You know full well what fate the Pharaoh met in consequence of belying the Messenger and rejecting the guidance brought by him and endeavouring to defeat his mission by trickery and deceit. If you do not learn any lesson from it and do not change your ways and attitude accordingly, you also will have to meet the same fate.

Then, in vv. 27-33, arguments have been given for the Hereafter and life after death. In this regard, the deniers have been asked the question: "Is your re-

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resurrection a more difficult task or the creation of the huge universe which spreads around you to infinite distances with myriads of its stars and planets? Your re-creation cannot be difficult for the God for Whom this was an easy task. Thus, after presenting in a single sentence, a decisive argument for the possibility of the Hereafter, attention has been drawn to the earth and its provisions that have been arranged in it for the sustenance of man and animal and of which everything testifies that it has been created with great wisdom for fulfilling some special purpose. Pointing to this the question has been left for the intellect of man to ponder for itself and form the opinion whether calling man to account after having delegated authority and responsibilities to a creature like him in this wise system would be more in keeping with the demands of wisdom, or that he should die after committing all sorts of misdeeds in the world and should perish and mix in the dust for ever and should never be called to account as to how he employed the authority and fulfilled the responsibilities entrusted to him. Instead of discussing this question, in vv. 34-41, it has been said: "When the Hereafter is established, men's eternal future will be determined on the criterion as to which of them rebelled against his God transgressing the bounds of service and made the material benefits and pleasures his objective of life and which of them feared standing before his Lord and refrained from fulfilling the unlawful desires of the self. This by itself provides the right answer to the above question to every such person who considers it honestly, free from stubbornness. For the only rational, logical and moral demand of giving authority and entrusting responsibilities to man in the world is that he should be called to account on this very basis ultimately and rewarded or punished accordingly.

In conclusion, the question of the disbelievers of

Makkah as to when Resurrection will take place, has been answered. They asked the Holy Prophet this question over and over again. In reply it has been said that the knowledge of the time of its occurrence rests with Allah alone. The Messenger is there only to give the warning that it will certainly come. Now whoever wishes may mend his ways, fearing its coming, and whoever wishes may behave and conduct himself as he likes, fearless of its coming. When the appointed time comes, those very people who loved the life of this world and regarded its pleasures as the only object of life, would feel that they had stayed in the world only for an hour or so. Then they will realize how utterly they had ruined their future for ever for the sake of the short-lived pleasures of the world.



الزُّعْمِ غَرَقًا ۝ وَالتَّشْيِطِ نَشْطًا ۝ وَالشَّيْحَتِ سَبْحًا ۝ فَالشَّيْبَتِ
 سَبْقًا ۝ فَالْمُدْبِرَتِ أَمْرًا ۝ يَوْمَ تَرْجُفُ الرَّاجِفَةُ ۝ تَتَّبِعُهَا الرَّادِفَةُ ۝
 لُوبُ يَوْمَئِذٍ وَاجِفَةٌ ۝ أَبْصَارُهَا خَاشِعَةٌ ۝ يَقُولُونَ ءَاِنَّا لَمَرْدُودُونَ
 فِي الْحَافِرَةِ ۝ ءَاِذَا كُنَّا عِظَامًا تَخِرَّةً ۝ قَالُوا تِلْكَ إِذًا كَرَّةٌ خَاسِرَةٌ ۝
 إِنَّمَا هِيَ زَجْرَةٌ وَاحِدَةٌ ۝ فَإِذَا هُم بِالسَّاهِرَةِ ۝ هَلْ أَتَكَ حَدِيثُ
 مُوسَى إِذْ نَادَاهُ رَبُّهُ بِالْوَادِ الْمُقَدَّسِ طُوًى ۝ إِذْ هَبَّ إِلَى فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّهُ
 لَمَغِيٌّ ۝ فَقُلْ هَلْ لَكَ إِلَىٰ أَنْ تَزَكَّىٰ ۝ وَ أَهْدِيكَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ فَتَخْشَىٰ ۝
 آيَةُ الْآيَةِ الْكُبْرَىٰ ۝ فَكَذَّبَ وَ عَصَىٰ ۝ ثُمَّ أَذْبَرَ يَسْعَىٰ ۝ فَحَشَرَ
 نَادَىٰ ۝ فَقَالَ أَنَا رَبُّكُمُ الْأَعْلَىٰ ۝ فَأَخَذَهُ اللَّهُ نَكَالَ الْآخِرَةِ وَالْأُولَىٰ ۝
 فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَعِبْرَةٌ لِّمَن يَخْشَىٰ ۝ ءَأَنْتُمْ أَشَدُّ خَلْقًا أَمِ السَّمَاءُ بَنِيهَا ۝
 سَنَكهَا فَسَوَّيْنَاهَا ۝ وَأَغْطَشَ لَيْلَهَا وَأَخْرَجَ ضُحَاهَا ۝ وَالْأَرْضُ بَعْدَ
 ذَٰلِكَ دَحَاهَا ۝ أَخْرَجَ مِنْهَا مَاءَهَا وَمَرْعَاهَا ۝ وَالْجِبَالُ أَرْسَاهَا ۝
 فَأَتَاكُمْ وَإِنَّمَا كُنْتُمْ لَهَا كُذَّابًا ۝ فَإِذَا جَاءَتِ الطَّامَةُ الْكُبْرَىٰ ۝ يَوْمَ يَتَذَكَّرُ
 الْإِنْسَانُ مَا سَعَىٰ ۝ وَبُرِّزَتِ الْجَحِيمُ لِمَن يَبْزَىٰ ۝ فَأَمَّا مَنْ طَغَىٰ ۝ وَ
 كَفَرَ بِالْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا ۝ فَإِنَّ الْجَحِيمَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَىٰ ۝ وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ
 فَمَرْبِيَّهُ وَنَهَىٰ النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ ۝ فَإِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَىٰ ۝
 فَلَوْ نَكَ عَنْ السَّاعَةِ آيَاتٍ مُّرْسَدَهَا ۝ فِيمَ أَنْتَ مِنْ ذِكْرِهَا ۝ إِلَىٰ
 كَ مُنْتَهَاهَا ۝ إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُنذِرٌ مَّن يَخْشَاهَا ۝ كَانْتَهُم يَوْمَ يُرَوَّنَهَا
 لَمْ يَلْبَثُوا إِلَّا عِشِيَّةً أَوْ ضُحَاهَا ۝

LXXIX

AN-NĀZI'ĀT النّٰزِعَات

Verses : 46

Revealed at Makkah

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

By those (angels) who pluck out from the depths, 1-9
and draw out gently, and by those (angels) who glide
about swiftly (through space), then hasten out (to carry
out Commands), then conduct the affairs (in accordance
with Divine Commands)¹: the Day when the quake shall
cause a violent jolt, which is followed by another jolt,²
some hearts on that Day shall be trembling with fear,³
their looks struck with awe.

They say, "Shall we really be restored to our former 10-14
state? What, when we shall have become hollow, rotten
bones?" They said, "It would then be a return with
sheer loss!"⁴ Whereas it will only need a single shout
and they will forthwith appear in an open plain.⁵

Has⁶ the story of Moses reached you? Recall when 15-26
his Lord called out to him in the sacred valley of Ṭuwā,⁷
(saying), "Go to Pharaoh: he has become rebellious,
and say to him: Will you mind to adopt purity that I
may guide you to your Lord, so that you may have fear
(of Him)?"⁸ Then Moses (went to Pharaoh and) showed
him the great Sign,⁹ but he belied it and disobeyed.
Then, he turned back to devise plots,¹⁰ and gathering
the people together, proclaimed, "I am your Lord, the
highest."¹¹ Consequently, Allah seized him for punish-
ment both in the Hereafter and in the world. Indeed,
there is a lesson in this for him who fears.¹²

Are¹³ you (O men,) harder to create, or is the 27-33
heaven?¹⁴ Allah built it: He raised its vault high and
gave it balance, and covered its night and brought forth

its day.¹⁵ After that He spread out the earth:¹⁶ from within it He brought out its water and its pasture,¹⁷ and set the mountains in it, as a means of sustenance for you and your cattle.¹⁸

34-41

Then, when the great Disaster befalls¹⁹ – the Day when man shall remember whatever he had striven for²⁰ – and Hell shall be laid open for everyone to see, then the one who had rebelled and preferred the life of the world, Hell shall be his home. As for him who had feared to stand before his Lord and restrained himself from evil desires, Paradise shall be his home.²¹

42-46

They ask you, “When will the Hour come to stay?”²² (But) it is not for you to tell its time. Its knowledge rests only with your Lord. You are only a warner to him who fears it.²³ The Day these people see it, they will feel as though they had stayed (in the world or in the state of death) only for the afternoon of a day or its forenoon.²⁴

1. Here, the object for which an oath has been sworn by beings having five qualities has not been mentioned; but the theme that follows by itself leads to the conclusion that the oath has been sworn to affirm that the Resurrection is a certainty, which must come to pass, when all dead men shall be resurrected. Nor is there any mention as to what are the beings possessed of the qualities. However, a large number of the Companions and their immediate successors and most of the commentators have expressed the opinion that they are the angels. Ḥaḍrat ‘Abdullah bin Mas‘ūd, Ḥaḍrat ‘Abdullah bin ‘Abbās, Masrūq, Sa‘īd bin Jubair, Abū Ṣāliḥ, Abuḍ-Ḍuḥā and Suddī say that “those who pluck out from the depths and those who draw out gently” imply the angels, who wrench out the soul of man at death from the very depths of his body, from its every fibre. “Those who glide about swiftly”, according to Ḥaḍrat Ibn Mas‘ūd, Mujāhid, Sa‘īd bin Jubair and Abū Ṣāliḥ, also imply the angels, who hurry about swiftly in execution of Divine Commands as though they were gliding through space. The same meaning of “those who hasten out as in a race” has been taken by Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī, Mujāhid, Masrūq, Abū Ṣāliḥ and Ḥasan Baṣrī, and hastening out implies that

each one of them hurries on his errand as soon as he receives the first indication of Divine Will. "Those who conduct the affairs" also imply the angels as has been reported from Ḥaḍrat 'Alī, Mujāhid, 'Aṭā', Abū Ṣāliḥ, Ḥasan Baṣrī, Qatādaḥ, Rabī' bin Anas and Suddī. In other words, these are the workers of the Kingdom of the Universe, who are conducting all the affairs of the world in accordance with Allah's Command and Will. Though this meaning of these verses has not been reported in any authentic Ḥadīth from the Holy Prophet, when this meaning has been given by some major Companions and their immediate successors and pupils, one is led to form the view that they must have obtained this knowledge from the Holy Prophet himself.

Now the question arises: On what basis has the oath been sworn by these angels for the occurrence of the Resurrection and life after death when they themselves are as imperceptible as the thing for the occurrence of which they have been presented as an evidence and as an argument. In our opinion the reason is (and Allah has the best knowledge) that the Arabs were not deniers of the existence of the angels. They themselves admitted that at death the soul was taken out by the angels; they also believed that the angels moved at tremendous speeds; they could reach any place between the earth and the heavens instantly and promptly execute any errand that was entrusted to them. They also acknowledged that the angels are subordinate to Divine Will and they conduct the affairs of the universe strictly and precisely in accordance with Divine Will; they are not independent and masters of their will. They regarded them as daughters of Allah out of ignorance and worshipped them as deities, but they did not believe that they possessed the real authority as well. Therefore, the basis of the reasoning from the above-mentioned attributes for the occurrence of the Resurrection and life after death is that the angels who took the soul by the order of God, could also restore the soul by the order of the same God; and the angels who conducted the affairs of the universe by the order of God could also upset this universe by the order of the same God whenever He so ordered them and could also bring about a new world order. They would not show any negligence or delay in the execution of His Command.

2. The first jolt implies the jolt which will destroy the earth and everything on it, and the second jolt at which all dead men will rise up from death and from their graves. This same state has been described in Sūrah Az-Zumar, thus: "And when the Trumpet

shall be blown on that Day, all those who are in the heavens and the earth shall fall down dead except those whom Allah may allow (to live). Then the Trumpet shall be blown again and they will all stand up, looking around," (v. 68)

3. "Some hearts", because, according to the Qur'an, only the disbelievers, the wicked people and the hypocrites will be terror-stricken on the Resurrection Day, the righteous believers will remain secure from this terror. About them in Sūrah Al-Anbiyā' it has been said: "The time of great fright will not trouble them at all; the angels will rush forth to receive them, saying: 'This is the very Day which you were promised'." (v. 103)

4. That is, when they were told that they would surely be raised back to life after death, they started mocking it, saying to one another, "Well, if we have really to be restored to our former state of life, then we would certainly be doomed."

5. That is, "They are mocking it as an impossibility, whereas it is not at all a difficult task for Allah for the performance of which He may have to make lengthy preparations. For it only a single shout or cry is enough at which your dust or ash will gather together from wherever it lay, and you will suddenly find yourself alive on the back of the earth. Thinking this return to be a return to loss, you may try to escape from it however hard you may, but it will inevitably take place; it cannot be averted by your denial, escape or mockery."

6. As the denial of the Resurrection and Hereafter by the disbelievers of Makkah and their mockery of it was not, in fact, rejection of a philosophy but belying Allah's Messengers, and the tricks that they were employing against the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) were not against an ordinary man but were meant to frustrate the mission of Allah's Messenger, the story of the Prophet Moses and the Pharaoh is being related before giving additional arguments for the occurrence of the Here-after so that they are warned of the consequences of fighting with the Messenger and resisting the God Who sent him.

7. According to general opinion among the commentators "the sacred valley of Ṭuwā" means "the sacred valley which was named Ṭuwā". But, besides this, two other meanings of it also have been given: (1) "The valley that was blessed and made sacred twice", for it was first made sacred when Allah spoke to Moses in it for the first time, and it was blessed and made sacred for the second time

when the Prophet Moses led the children of Israel out of Egypt and brought them into it ; and (2) "called out to him in the sacred valley in the night," and this is according to the meaning of *fuwā* in the Arabic idiom.

8. Here, one should understand a few things well : (1) The dialogue that took place between the Prophet Moses and Allah Almighty at the time of appointing him to the office of Prophethood has been related at some places briefly and at others in full detail in the Qur'ān as the occasion demanded. Here, brevity was the need ; therefore, only a resume has been given. Fuller details are found in *Ṭā Hā* : 9-48, *Ash-Shua'rā'* : 10-17, *An-Naml* : 7-12, *Al-Qaṣaṣ* : 29-35.

(2) The rebellion of the Pharaoh referred to here relates to his transgressing the bounds of service and rebelling both against the Creator and against His creatures. As for his rebellion against the Creator, it is being mentioned a little below when he gathered his people together and proclaimed : "I am your lord, the supreme." As against the creatures his rebellion was that he had divided his subjects into classes; he treated the weak classes tyrannically and had reduced his entire nation to slavery as has been mentioned in *Al-Qaṣaṣ* : 4 and *Az-Zukhruf* : 54.

(3) The instruction given to Moses was : "Go, you and your brother Aaron, to Pharaoh for he has transgressed all bounds. Talk to him gently ; maybe that he is convinced by admonition or is imbued with fear." (*Ṭā Hā* : 44). One model of the gentle speech has been given in these verses, which shows what right method a preacher should adopt when preaching to a perverted man. Other models are given in *Ṭā Hā* : 49-52, *Ash-Shua'rā'* : 23-28, and *Al-Qaṣaṣ* : 37. These verses are of those in which Allah has taught the correct methods of preaching Islam in the Qur'ān.

(4) The Prophet Moses had not been sent to Pharaoh only for the deliverance of the children of Israel as some people seem to think, but the primary object of his appointment was to show Pharaoh and his people the right way, and the second object was that if he did not accept the right way, the children of Israel (who in fact were a Muslim people) should be taken out of his slavery and from Egypt. This thing becomes plain from these verses too, for there is no mention whatever in these of the deliverance of the children of Israel, but the Prophet Moses has been commanded to present the message of the Truth before Pharaoh, and this is confirmed by those

verses also in which the Prophet Moses has preached Islam as well as demanded freedom of the children of Israel, e.g. see Al-A'rāf : 104-105, Ṭā Hā : 47-52, Ash-Shua'arā' : 16-17, 23-28. (For further explanation, see E.N. 74 of Yūnus).

(5) Here, "to adopt purity" means to adopt purity of belief, morals and deeds, or, in other words, to accept Islam. Ibn Zaid says : "Wherever in the Qur'ān the word *ṣaḥḥa* (purity) has been used, it implies acceptance of Islam." As an example of this he has cited the following three verses : "And this is the reward of him who adopts purity", i.e. accepts Islam; "and what would make you know that he might adopt purity", i.e. becomes a Muslim ('Abasa:3); "And you would not be responsible if he did not adopt purity", i.e. did not become a Muslim ('Abasa : 7). (Ibn Jarīr).

(6) "That I may guide you to your Lord so that you may have fear (of Him)" means : "When you recognize your Lord and come to know that you are His slave, and not a free man, you will inevitably have fear of Him in your heart, for fear of God is the thing on which depends the right attitude of man in the world. Without the knowledge and fear of God no purity of the self can be possible."

9. "The great Sign" : the turning of the staff into a serpent, as has been mentioned at several places in the Qur'ān. Obviously there could be no greater sign than that a lifeless staff should turn into a living serpent right in front of the eyes of the people, that it should devour the artificial serpents produced by the magicians out of their staffs and cords, and when the Prophet Moses should pick it up, it should become a walking stick again. This was proof that it was Allah, Lord of the worlds, Who had sent Moses as a Prophet.

10. According to the details given at other places in the Qur'ān, he summoned skilful magicians from all over Egypt and made them produce serpents out of sticks and cords in front of the assembled people so that they were convinced that Moses (peace be upon him) was not a Prophet but a magician, and that the miracle worked by him of turning a staff into a serpent, could also be worked by other magicians. But this device of his recoiled upon himself and the defeated magicians themselves admitted that what Moses (peace be on him) had displayed was not magic but a miracle.

11. This proclamation of Pharaoh has been mentioned at several places in the Qur'ān. On one occasion he said to the Prophet Moses : "If you look another one as a deity beside me, I would cast you in the prison." (Ash-Shua'arā' : 29). On another occasion he had

addressed his courtiers, saying : "O chiefs, I do not know of any other god of yours than myself." (Al-Qaṣaṣ : 38). By this Pharaoh did not mean, nor could he ever mean, that he himself was the creator of the universe and he had made the world, nor that he denied the existence of Allah and claimed to be lord of the universe, nor that he regarded only himself as a deity of the people in the religious sense. In the Qur'ān itself there is a clear testimony that as regards religion he himself worshipped other gods. Once his courtiers said to him : "Will you leave Moses and his people free to spread chaos in the land, and let them discard you and your deities?" (Al-A'rāf : 127). And in the Qur'ān itself this saying of the Pharaoh also has been cited : "Had Moses been sent by Allah, why were not bracelets of gold sent down to him, or a company of angels as attendants?" (Az-Zukhruf : 53). Thus, in fact, he called himself a god and supreme deity not in the religious but in the political sense. What he meant was that he possessed the sovereign rights : no one beside him had the right to rule in his kingdom and there was no superior power whose orders could be enforced in the land. (For further explanation, see E.N. 85 of Al-A'rāf, E.N. 21 of Tā Hā, E.N.'s 24, 26 of Ash-Shua'rā', E.N.'s 52, 53 of Al-Qaṣaṣ, E.N. 49 of Az-Zukhruf).

12. "...who fears" : who fears the consequences of denying God's Messenger, which the Pharaoh experienced in the past.

13. Now arguments are being given for the possibility of Resurrection and life after death and their being the very demand and requirement of wisdom.

14. Here, creation implies the re-creation of men, and the heaven the entire firmament which contains countless stars and planets, and innumerable solar systems and galaxies. It means to say : "You think that your resurrection after death is something extremely improbable and you express wonder saying : 'How is it possible that when our very bones will have decayed and become rotten, the scattered particles of our bodies will be re-assembled and made living once again?' But have you ever also considered whether the great universe is harder to create or your own re-creation in the form in which you were created in the first instance? The God Who created you in the first instance cannot be powerless to create you once again." This same argument for life after death has been given at several places in the Qur'ān. For example, in Sūrah Yā Sin it has been said : "Is not He Who created the heavens and

the earth able to create the like of them (again)? Why not, when He is the skilful Creator." (v. 81) And in Sūrah Al-Mu'min it was said: "Surely the creation of the heavens and the earth is a greater task than the creation of man, but most people do not know." (v. 57)

15. The night and the day have been attributed to the heaven, for the night falls when the sun of the heavens sets and the day dawns when it rises. The word "cover" has been used for the night in the sense that after the sun has set the darkness of the night so spreads over the earth as though it has covered it from above by a curtain.

16. "After that He spread out the earth" does not mean that Allah created the earth after the creation of the heavens, but it is a style of expression just like our saying after making mention of something: "Then this is noteworthy." The object is not to express the sequence of occurrence between the two things but to draw attention from the first to the second thing although both may exist together. Several instances of this style are found in the Qur'ān, e.g. in Sūrah Al-Qalam it is said: "(He is) oppressive, and after that, ignoble by birth." This does not mean that first he became oppressive and then he turned ignoble by birth, but it means: "He is oppressive, and above all, ignoble by birth." Likewise, in Sūrah Al-Balad it is said: "Should free a slave...then be of those who believe." This also does not mean that first he should act righteously and then believe, but that along with doing righteous deeds he should also be characterised by belief. Here, one should also understand that at some places in the Qur'ān the creation of the earth has been mentioned first and then the creation of the heavens, as in Al-Baqarah: 29, and at others the creation of the heavens has been mentioned first and then of the earth, as in these verses. There is, in fact, no contradiction in this. At no place the object is to tell what was created first and what afterwards, but wherever the context requires that the excellences of the power of Allah be made prominent, the heavens have been mentioned first and then the earth, and where the context requires that the people be made to appreciate and acknowledge the blessings that they are benefiting by on the earth, the mention of the earth has been made before that of the heavens. (For further explanation, see E.N.'s 13, 14 of Hā Mim As-Sajdah).

17. "Pasture" here does not only imply pasture and fodder for the animals but all kinds of herbal produce suitable for consumption both by man and by animal. An example of the use of *rat*, which is

generally used in Arabic for the grazing of animals, is found in Sūrah Yūsuf : 12, signifying that this word is sometimes used for man also. The brothers of Joseph said to their father : "Send Joseph with us tomorrow that he may freely graze and enjoy sport." Here, the word graze (*rat'*) for the child has been used in the meaning that he may move about freely in the jungle and pluck and eat fruit.

18. In these verses arguments have been given for the Resurrection and life after death from two aspects : first, that it is not at all difficult to establish these for the power of that God Who has made this vast and huge universe with such wonderful balance and this earth with such provisions. Second, that the pointers to the perfect wisdom of Allah which are clearly visible in the universe and the earth, point out that nothing is happening here purposelessly. The balance that exists between countless of the stars and planets and galaxies in the heavens testifies that all this has not happened haphazardly but there is a well thought-out plan working behind it. The regular alternation of the night and day is an evidence that this system has been established with supreme wisdom and knowledge for making the earth a home and place of settlement. On this very earth are found regions where the alternation of the night and day takes place within 24 hours and also those regions where there are longer days and longer nights. A very large part of the earth's population lives in the first kind of the regions. Then as the days and nights go on becoming longer and longer, life goes on becoming harder and harder and population thinner and thinner. So much so that the regions where there are six-month-long days and six-month-long nights, are not at all fit for human settlement. Arranging both these types of the land on this very earth Allah has provided the evidence that this regular order of the alternation of night and day has not come about accidentally but has been brought about with great wisdom precisely in accordance with a scheme to make the earth a place fit for human settlement. Likewise, spreading out the earth so that it becomes a fit place to live in, providing in it that water which should be palatable for man and animal and a cause of growth for vegetation, setting in it mountains and creating all those things which may become a means of life for both man and animal—all these are a manifest sign that they are not chance happenings or the purposeless works of a care-free person but each one of these has been arranged purposefully by a Supreme, Wise Being. Now every sensible and intelligent man can consider for himself whether the necessity and occurrence of the Hereafter is the requirement of

wisdom or its negation. The person who in spite of seeing all this says that there is no Hereafter, in fact, says that everything in the universe is happening wisely and purposefully, but only the creation of man on the earth as a being endowed with sense and power is meaningless and foolish. For there could be nothing more purposeless than delegating to man vast powers of appropriation in the earth and providing him an opportunity to do good as well as evil deeds but then failing to ever subject him to accountability.

19. This implies the Resurrection for which the words *at-Tāammāt al-kubrā* have been used. *Ṭāammah* by itself is a grievous calamity which afflicts everybody. Then it has been further qualified by the word *kubrā* (great), which shows that the mere word *Ṭāammah* is not enough to describe fully its intensity and severity.

20. That is, "When man will see that the same Day of accountability of which he was being foretold in the world, has come, he will start remembering each one of his misdeeds done in the world even before his records are handed over to him. Some people experience this even in the world. If at some time they come across a dangerous situation suddenly when death seems to be staring them in the face, their whole life-film flashes across their mind's eye all at once.

21. Here, in a few words, it has been told briefly what shall be the criterion of the final judgement in the Hereafter. One kind of the conduct of life in the world is that transgressing all bounds of service man should rebel against his God and should make up his mind that he would seek only the benefits and pleasures of this world in whatever way they could be sought and achieved. The other kind of conduct is that while man passes life in the world he should constantly keep in view the truth that ultimately one day he has to stand before his Lord, and should refrain from fulfilling the evil desires of the self only for the fear that if he earned an unlawful benefit in obedience to his self, or enjoyed an evil pleasure, what answer he would give to his Lord. The criterion of the judgement in the Hereafter will be which of the two kinds of conduct he adopted in the world. If he had adopted the first kind of conduct, his permanent abode would be Hell, and if he had adopted the second kind of conduct, his permanent home would be Paradise.

22. The disbelievers of Makkah asked this question of the Holy Prophet over and over again. By this they did not mean to

know the time and date of the coming of Resurrection but to mock it. (For further explanation, see E.N. 35 of Sūrah Al-Mulk).

23. This also we have explained in E.N. 36 of Sūrah Al-Mulk above. As for the words "you are only a warner to him who fears it", they do not mean that it is not your duty to warn those who do not fear, but it means: "Your warning will benefit only him who fears the coming of that Day."

24. This theme has occurred at several places in the Qur'ān and been explained in the corresponding Notes. For it, see E.N. 53 of Yūnus, E.N. 56 of Banī Isrā'il, E.N. 80 of Ṭā Hā, E.N. 101 of Al-Mu'minūn, E.N.'s 81, 82 of Ar-Rūm, E.N. 48 of Yā Sīn. Besides, this theme has also occurred in Al-Aḥqāf: 35 but we have not explained it there for fear of repetition.

LXXX

'ABASA عَبَسَ

سُورَةُ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

LXXX

'ABASA عَبَسَ

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah is so designated after the word '*abasa* with which it opens.

Period of Revelation

The commentators and traditionists are unanimous about the occasion of the revelation of this Sūrah. According to them, once some big chiefs of Makkah were sitting in the Holy Prophet's assembly and he was earnestly engaged in trying to persuade them to accept Islam. At that very point, a blind man, named Ibn Umm Maktūm, approached him to seek explanation of some point concerning Islam. The Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) disliked his interruption and ignored

him. Thereupon Allah sent down this Sūrah. From this historical incident the period of the revelation of this Sūrah can be precisely determined.

In the first place, it is confirmed that Ḥaḍrat Ibn Umm Maktūm was one of the earliest converts to Islam. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar and Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr have stated that he was one of those who had accepted Islam at a very early stage at Makkah.

Secondly, some of the traditions of the *Ḥadīth* which relate this incident show that he had already accepted Islam and some others show that he was inclined to accept it and had approached the Holy Prophet in search of the truth. Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah states that coming to the Holy Prophet he had said: "O Messenger of Allah, guide me to the straight path." (Tirmidhi, Ḥākim, Ibn Ḥibbān, Ibn Jarīr, Abū Ya'lā). According to Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, he had asked the meaning of a verse of the Qur'ān and said to the Holy Prophet: "O Messenger of Allah, teach me the knowledge that Allah has taught you." (Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Ḥātim). These statements show that he had acknowledged the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) as a Messenger of Allah and the Qur'ān as a Book of Allah. Contrary to this, Ibn Zaid has interpreted the words *la'allahū yazzakkā* of verse 3 to mean: *la'allahū yuslim*: "maybe that he accepts Islam." (Ibn Jarīr) And Allah's own words: "What would make you know that he might reform, or heed the admonition, and admonishing might profit him?" and "The one who comes to you running, of his own will, and fears, from him you turn away", point out that by that time he had developed in himself a deep desire to learn the truth; he had come to the Holy Prophet with the belief that he was the only source of guidance and his desire would be satisfied only through him; his apparent state also reflected that if he was given instruction, he would benefit by it.

Thirdly, the names of the people who were sitting in the Holy Prophet's assembly at that time, have been given in different traditions. In this list we find the names of 'Utbah, Shaibah, Abū Jahl, Umayyah bin Khalaf, Ubayy bin Khalaf, who were the bitterest enemies of Islam. This shows that the incident took place in the period when these chiefs were still on meeting terms with the Holy Prophet and their antagonism to Islam had not yet grown so strong as to have stopped their paying visits to him and having dialogues with him off and on. All these arguments indicate that this is one of the very earliest Sūrahs to be revealed at Makkah.

Theme and Subject-Matter

In view of the apparent style with which the discourse opens, one feels that in this Sūrah Allah has expressed His displeasure against the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) for his treating the blind man with indifference and attending to the big chiefs exclusively. But when the whole Sūrah is considered objectively, one finds that the displeasure, in fact, has been expressed against the disbelieving Quraish, who because of their arrogant attitude and indifference to the truth, were rejecting with contempt the message of truth being conveyed by the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace). Then, besides teaching him the correct method of preaching, the error of the method that he was adopting at the start of his mission has also been pointed out. His treating the blind man with neglect and disregard and devoting all his attention to the Quraish chiefs was not for the reason that he regarded the rich as noble and a poor blind man as contemptible, and, God forbid, there was some rudeness in his manner for which Allah reproved him. But, as a matter of fact, when a caller to Truth embarks on his mission of conveying his message

to the people, he naturally wants the most influential people of society to accept his message so that his task becomes easy, for even if his invitation spreads among the poor and weak people, it cannot make much difference. Almost the same attitude had the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) also adopted in the beginning, his motive being only sincerity and a desire to promote his mission and not any idea of respect for the big people and hatred for the small people. But Allah made him realize that that was not the correct method of extending invitation to Islam, but from his mission's point of view, every man, who was a seeker after truth, was important, even if he was weak, or poor, and every man, who was heedless to the truth, was un-important, even if he occupied a high position in society. Therefore, he should openly proclaim and convey the teachings of Islam to all and sundry, but the people who were really worthy of his attention, were those who were inclined to accept the Truth, and his sublime and noble message was too high to be presented before those haughty people who in their arrogance and vanity thought that they did not stand in need of him but rather he stood in need of them.

This is the theme of vv. 1-16. From verse 17 onward the rebuke directly turns to the disbelievers, who were repudiating the invitation of the Holy Messenger of Allah (upon whom be peace). In this, first they have been reprovved for their attitude which they had adopted against their Creator, Providence and Sustainer. In the end, they have been warned of the dreadful fate that they would meet in consequence of their conduct, on the Day of Resurrection.



عَبَسَ وَ تَوَلَّى ۖ أَنْ جَاءَهُ الْأَعْمَى ۚ وَمَا يُدْرِيكَ لَعَلَّهُ يَزْكِي ۖ أَوْ يَذَّكُرُ
 فَتَنْفَعَهُ الذِّكْرَى ۚ أَمَا مِنْ اسْتَعْنَى ۚ فَأَنْتَ لَهُ تَصَدَّى ۚ وَمَا عَلَيْكَ
 إِلَّا يَرْكَبُ ۚ وَ أَمَا مِنْ جَاءَكَ يَسْعَى ۚ وَهُوَ يَخشى ۚ فَأَنْتَ عَنْهُ
 تَكْفَى ۚ كَلَّا إِنهَا تَذَكُّرَةٌ ۚ فَمِنْ شَاءَ ذَكَرَهُ ۚ فِي صُحُفٍ مُكَرَّمَةٍ ۚ وَقَدْ لَازِمٍ
 مَرْفُوعَةٍ مُطَهَّرَةٍ ۚ بِأَيْدِي سَفَرَةٍ ۚ كِرَامٍ بَرَرَةٍ ۚ قَبْلِ الْإِنْسَانِ
 مَا أَكْفَرَهُ ۚ مِنْ أَيِّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَهُ ۚ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ خَلَقَهُ فَقَدَّرَهُ ۚ
 ثُمَّ السَّبِيلَ يَسَّرَهُ ۚ ثُمَّ أَمَاتَهُ فَأَقْبَرَهُ ۚ ثُمَّ إِذَا شَاءَ أَنشَرَهُ ۚ
 كَلَّا لَمَّا يَقِضْ مَا أَمَرَهُ ۚ فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْإِنْسَانُ إِلَى طَعَامِهِ ۚ أَنَا صَبَبْنَا
 الْمَاءَ حَبَابًا ۚ ثُمَّ شَقَقْنَا الْأَرْضَ شَقًّا ۚ فَأَنْبَتْنَا فِيهَا حَبًّا ۚ وَ عِنَبًا وَ
 قَضْبًا ۚ وَ زَيْتُونًا وَ نَخْلًا ۚ وَ حَدَّاقِمًا ۚ وَ غُلَبًا ۚ وَ فَاكِهَةً وَ أَبَاةً ۚ مَتَّامًا
 تَلْمُزُ ۚ وَ لِأَنْعَامِكُمْ ۚ فَإِذَا جَاءَتِ الصَّاحَةُ ۚ يَوْمَ يَفِرُّ الْمَرْءُ مِنْ
 أَخِيهِ ۚ وَ أُمِّهِ وَ أَبِيهِ ۚ وَ صَاحِبَتِهِ وَ بَنِيهِ ۚ لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مِنْهُمْ
 يَوْمَئِذٍ شَأْنٌ يُغْنِيهِ ۚ وَ جُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ مُسْفِرَةٌ ۚ ضَاحِكَةٌ مُسَبِّرَةٌ ۚ
 وَ وَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ عَلَيْهَا غَبَرَةٌ ۚ تَرْهَقُهَا قُبْرَةٌ ۚ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْكٰفِرَةُ الْفَجْرَةُ ۚ

LXXX

‘ABASA عَبَسَ

Verses : 42

Revealed at Makkah

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

He frowned and turned away his face because there came up to him the blind man.¹ And what would make you know that he might reform, or heed the admonition, and admonishing might profit him? As for him who is indifferent, to him you attend, though you would not be responsible if he did not reform. And the one who comes to you running, of his own will, and fears, from him you turn away.² By no means!³ This is but an admonition.⁴ Let him who wills accept it. It is written in scrolls, which are honoured, exalted, purified,⁵ (and which) remain in the hands of noble and virtuous scribes.⁷

1-16

Cursed⁸ be man!⁹ What a perverse disbeliever he is!¹⁰ Out of what has Allah created him? Out of a sperm-drop.¹¹ Allah created him, then set him his destiny,¹² then made the way of life easy for him,¹³ then caused him to die, and brought him to the grave.¹⁴ Then whenever He wills, He will raise him up again to life.¹⁵ Nay, but he has not fulfilled the duty that Allah had assigned to him.¹⁶ Then let man look at his food.¹⁷ We poured down water in abundance,¹⁸ then cleft the earth asunder,¹⁹ then caused to grow in it corns and grapes and vegetables and olives and dates and lush gardens and fruits of every kind and fodder as a means of sustenance for you and your cattle.²⁰

17-32

At last, when the deafening blast is sounded,²¹— that Day shall man flee from his brother and his mother and his father and his wife and his children.²² Each one of them, on that Day, shall have enough to occupy him

33-42

so as to make him heedless of others.²³ Some faces on that Day shall be shining—rejoicing and joyful. And some faces on that Day shall be dusty, and darkness shall be covering them. These will be the disbelievers and the sinners.

1. The style of this first sentence is elegant and subtle. Although in the following sentences the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has been directly addressed, which by itself shows that the act of frowning and turning aside had issued forth from him, the discourse has been opened in a manner as though it was not he but some one else who had so acted. By this style the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), by a subtle method, has been made to realize that it was an act unseemly for him. Had somebody familiar with his high morals witnessed it, he would have thought that it was not he but some other person who had behaved in that manner.

The blind man referred to here implies, as we have explained in the Introduction, the well-known Companion, Ḥaḍrat Ibn Umm Maktūm. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn 'Abdul Barr in *Al-Istī'āb* and Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar in *Al-Iṣābah* have stated that he was a first cousin of the Holy Prophet's wife, Ḥaḍrat Khadijah. His mother, Umm Maktūm, and Ḥaḍrat Khadijah's father, Khuwailid, were sister and brother to each other. After one knows his relationship with the Holy Prophet, there remains no room for the doubt that he had turned away from him regarding him as a poor man having a low station in life, and attended to the high-placed people, for he was the Holy Prophet's brother-in-law and a man of noble birth. The reason why the Holy Prophet had shown disregard for him is indicated by the word *a'mā* (blind man), which Allah Himself has used as the cause of the Holy Prophet's inattention. That is, the Holy Prophet thought that even if a single man from among the people whom he was trying to bring to the right path, listened to him and was rightly guided, he could become a powerful means of strengthening Islam. On the contrary, Ibn Umm Maktūm was a blind man, who could not prove to be so useful for Islam because of his disability as could one of the Quraish elders on becoming a Muslim. Therefore, he should not interrupt the conversation at that time; whatever he wanted to ask or learn, he could ask or learn at some later time.

2. This is the real point which the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) had overlooked in the preaching of Islam on that occasion,

and for teaching him the same Allah first reproved him on his treatment of Ibn Umm Maktūm, and then told him what really deserved to occupy his attention as preacher of the Truth and what did not. There is a man whose apparent state clearly shows that he is a seeker after truth: he fears lest he should follow falsehood and invite Allah's wrath; therefore, he comes all the way in search of the knowledge of the true faith. There is another man, whose attitude clearly reflects that he has no desire for the truth; rather on the contrary, he regards himself as self-sufficient, having no desire to be guided to the right way. Between these two kinds of men one should not see whose becoming a Muslim would be of greater use for Islam and whose becoming a believer could not be of any use in its propagation. But one should see as to who was inclined to accept the guidance and reform himself, and who was least interested in this precious bargain. The first kind of man, whether he is blind, lame, crippled, or an indigent mendicant, who might apparently seem incapable of rendering any useful service in the propagation of Islam, is in any case a valuable man for the preacher to the Truth. To him therefore he should attend, for the real object of this invitation is to reform the people, and the apparent state of the person shows that if he was instructed he would accept guidance. As for the other kind of man, the preacher has no need to pursue him, no matter how influential he is in society. For his attitude and conduct openly proclaim that he has no desire for reform; therefore, any effort made to reform him would be mere waste of time. If he has no desire to reform himself, he may not; the loss would be his. the preacher would not at all be accountable for this.

3. That is, "You should never do so: do not give undue importance to those who have forgotten God and become proud of their high worldly position. The teaching of Islam is not such that it should be presented solicitously before him who spurns it, nor should a man like you try to invite these arrogant people to Islam in a way as may cause them the misunderstanding that you have a selfish motive connected with them, and that your mission would succeed only if they believed, otherwise not, whereas the fact is that the Truth is as self-sufficient of them as they are of the Truth."

4. The allusion is to the Qur'ān.

5. "Purified": free from all kinds of mixtures of false ideas and thoughts, and presenting nothing but the pure Truth. There is no tinge whatever in these scrolls of the impurities with which the other religious books of the world have been polluted. They have

been kept pure and secure from all kinds of human speculation and evil suggestions.

6. This refers to the angels who were writing the scrolls of the Qur'ān under the direct guidance of Allah, were guarding them and conveying them intact to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace). Two words have been used to qualify them: *karīm*, i.e. noble, and *barr*, i.e. virtuous. The first word is meant to say that they are so honoured and noble that it is not possible that such exalted beings would commit even the slightest dishonesty in the trust reposed in them. The second word has been used to tell that they carry out the responsibility entrusted to them of writing down the scrolls, guarding them and conveying them to the Messenger with perfect honesty and integrity.

7. If the context in which these verses occur, is considered deeply, it becomes obvious that here the Qur'ān has not been praised for the sake of its greatness and glory but to tell the arrogant people, who were repudiating its message with contempt, plainly: "The glorious Qur'ān is too holy and exalted a Book to be presented before you humbly with the request that you may kindly accept it if you so please. For it does not stand in need of you as you stand in need of it. If you really seek your well-being, you should clear your head of the evil thoughts and submit to its message humbly; otherwise you are not so self-sufficient of this Book as this Book is self-sufficient of you. Your treating it with scorn and contempt will not affect its glory and greatness at all, rather your own pride and arrogance will be ruined on account of it."

8. From here the rebuke turns directly against the disbelievers, who were treating the message of the Truth with scant attention. Before this, from the beginning of the Sūrah to verse 16, the address though apparently directed to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), was actually meant to reprimand the disbelievers, as if to say: "O Prophet, why are you ignoring a seeker after truth and paying all your attention to those who are worthless from your mission's point of view? They do not deserve that a great Prophet like you should present a sublime thing like the Qur'ān before them."

9. At all such places in the Qur'ān, "man" does not imply every individual of the human race but the people whose evil traits of character are intended to be censured. At some places the word "man" is used because the evil traits are found in most of human beings, and at others for the reason that if the particular people are

pin-pointed for censure, it engenders stubbornness. Therefore, admonition is given in general terms so as to be more effective. (For further explanation, see E.N. 65 of Hā Mim As-Sajdah, E.N. 75 of Ash-Shūrā).

10. Another meaning also can be: “What caused him to be inclined to *kufr*?” Or, in other words: “On what strength does he commit *kufr*?” *Kufr* here means denial of the Truth as well as ingratitude for the favours of one’s benefactor and also rebellious attitude against one’s Creator, Providence and Master.

11. That is, let him first consider out of what he was created, where he was nourished and developed, by what way he came into the world, and from what helpless state he began his life in the world. Why does he forget his this beginning and becomes involved in conceit and haughtiness and why does he feel so puffed up as to resist his Creator and stand before Him as an adversary? (The same theme has been expressed in Yā Sīn : 77-78 above).

12. That is, he was yet developing and taking shape in his mother’s womb when his destiny was set for him. It was determined what would be his sex, his colour, his size, the extent and volume of his body, the extent to which his limbs would be sound or unsound, his appearance and voice, the degree of physical strength and mental endowments, what would be the land, the family, the conditions and environments in which he would take birth, develop and be moulded into a specific person, what would be the hereditary influences and effects of the surroundings and the role and impact of his own self in the make-up of his personality, the part he would play in his life of the world, and how long he would be allowed to function on the earth. He cannot swerve even a hair-breadth from his destiny, nor can effect the slightest alteration in it. Then, how strange is his daring and stubbornness! He commits disbelief of the Creator before Whose destiny he is so helpless and powerless!

13. That is, He created all those means and provisions in the world, which he could utilize, otherwise all the capabilities of his body and mind would have remained useless, had not the Creator provided the means and created the possibilities on the earth to employ them. Furthermore, the Creator also gave him the opportunity to choose and adopt for himself whichever of the ways, good or evil, of gratitude or ingratitude, of obedience or disobedience, that he pleased. He opened up both the ways before him and made each way smooth and easy so that he could follow any way that he liked.

14. That is, not only in the matter of birth and destiny but in the matter of death also he is absolutely helpless before his Creator. Neither he can take birth by his choice nor die by his choice, nor can defer his death even by a moment. He dies precisely at the appointed time, in the appointed place, under the appointed circumstances that have been decreed for his death, and he is deposited in the type of grave destined for him whether it is the belly of the earth, the depths of the sea, a bonfire, or the stomach of a beast. Nothing to say of the man, even the whole world together cannot change the Creator's decree in respect of any person.

15. That is, he does not either have the power to refuse to rise up when the Creator may will to resurrect him after death. When he was first created, he was not consulted: he was not asked whether he wanted to be created or not. Even if he had refused, he would have been created. Likewise, his resurrection also is not dependent upon his will and assent that he may rise from death if he so likes, or refuse to rise if he does not like. In this matter also he is absolutely helpless before the Creator's will. Whenever He wills He will resurrect him, and he will have to rise whether he likes it or not.

16. "Duty" implies the duty that Allah has enjoined on every man in the form of natural guidance as well as the duty to which man's own existence and every particle of the universe, from the earth to the heavens, and every manifestation of Divine power are pointing, and that duty also which Allah has conveyed in every age through His Prophets and Books and disseminated through the righteous people of every period. (For explanation, see E.N. 5 of Sūrah Ad-Dahr). In the present context the object is to express the meaning that on the basis of the truths stated in the above verses, it was man's duty to have obeyed his Creator, but, contrary to this, he adopted the way of disobedience and did not fulfil the demand of his being His creature.

17. That is, let him consider the food, which he regards as an ordinary thing, how it is created. Had God not provided the means for it, it was not in the power of man himself to have created the food on the earth in any way.

18. This refers to rainwater. Water vapours are raised in vast quantities from the oceans by the heat of the sun; then they are turned into thick clouds; then the winds blow and spread them over different parts of the earth; then because of the coolness in the upper atmosphere the vapours turn back to water and fall as rain in every area in a particular measure. The water not only falls as rain

directly on the earth but also collects underground in the shape of wells and fountains, flows in the form of rivers and streams, freezes on the mountains as snow and melts and flows into rivers in other seasons as well than the rainy season. Has man himself made all these arrangements? Had his Creator not arranged this for his sustenance, could man survive on the earth?

19. "Cleaving the earth asunder" implies cleaving it in a way that the seeds, or seed-stones, or vegetable seedlings that man sows or plants in it, or which are deposited in it by winds or birds, or by some other means, should sprout up. Man can do nothing more than to dig the soil, or plough it, and bury in it the seeds that God has already created. Beyond this everything is done by God. It is He Who has created the seeds of countless species of vegetable; it is He Who has endowed these seeds with the quality that when they are sown in the soil, they should sprout up and from every seed vegetable of its own particular species should grow. Again it is He Who has created in the earth the capability that in combination with water it should break open the seeds and develop and nourish every species of vegetable with the kind of food suitable for it. Had God not created the seeds with these qualities and the upper layers of the earth with these capabilities, man could not by himself have arranged any kind of food on the earth.

20. That is, "A means of sustenance not only for you but also for those animals from which you obtain items of food like meat, fat, milk, butter, etc. and which perform countless other services also for your living. You benefit by all this and yet you disbelieve in God Whose provisions sustain you."

21. The final terrible sounding of the Trumpet at which all dead men shall be resurrected to life.

22. A theme closely resembling this has already occurred in Al-Ma'ārij : 10-14 above. "Fleeing" may also mean that when he sees those nearest and dearest to him in the world, involved in distress, instead of rushing forth to help them, he will run away from them lest they should call out to him for help; and it may also mean that when they see the evil consequences of committing sin for the sake of one another and misleading one another, fearless of God and heedless of the Hereafter, in the world, each one would flee from the other lest the other should hold him responsible for his deviation and sin. Brother will fear brother, children their parents, husband

his wife, and parents their children lest they should become witnesses in the case against them.

23. A tradition has been reported in the *Ḥadīth* by different methods and through different channels, saying that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) said : "On the Day of Resurrection all men will rise up naked." One of his wives (according to some reporters, Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, according to others, Ḥaḍrat Saudah, or a woman) asked in bewilderment : "O Messenger of Allah, shall we (women) appear naked on that Day before the people ?" The Holy Prophet recited this very verse and explained that on that Day each one will have enough of his own troubles to occupy him, and will be wholly unmindful of others. (Nasā'i, Tirmidhī, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Ibn Jarir, Ṭabarānī, Ibn Mardūyah, Baihaqī, Ḥākim).

LXXXI

AT-TAKWIR التكوير

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

LXXXI

AT-TAKWĪR التَّكْوِير

INTRODUCTION

Name

It is derived from the word *kuwwirat* in the first verse. *Kuwwirat* is passive voice from *takvīr* in the past tense, and means "that which is folded up", thereby implying that it is a Sūrah in which the "folding up" has been mentioned.

Period of Revelation

The subject-matter and the style clearly show that it is one of the earliest Sūrahs to be revealed at Makkah.

Theme and Subject-Matter

It has two themes: the Hereafter and the institution of Apostleship.

In the first six verses the first stage of the Resurrection has been mentioned when the sun will lose its light, the stars will scatter, the mountains will be uprooted and will disperse, the people will become heedless of their dearest possessions, the beasts of the jungle will be stupefied and will gather together, and the seas will boil up. Then in the next seven verses the second stage has been described when the souls will be re-united with the bodies, the records will be laid open, the people will be called to account for their crimes, the heavens will be unveiled, and Hell and Heaven will be brought into full view. After depicting the Hereafter thus, man has been left to ponder his own self and deeds, saying: "Then each man shall himself know what he has brought with him."

After this the theme of Apostleship has been taken up. In this the people of Makkah have been addressed, as if to say: "Whatever Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) is presenting before you, is not the bragging of a madman, nor an evil suggestion inspired by Satan, but the word of a noble, exalted and trustworthy messenger sent by God, whom Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) has seen with his own eyes in the bright horizon of the clear sky in broad day light. Whither then are you going having turned away from this teaching?"



إِذَا الشَّمْسُ كُوِّرَتْ ﴿١﴾ وَإِذَا النُّجُومُ انْكَدَرَتْ ﴿٢﴾ وَإِذَا الْجِبَالُ سُيِّرَتْ ﴿٣﴾ وَإِذَا
 الْعِشَارُ عُطِّلَتْ ﴿٤﴾ وَإِذَا الْوُحُوشُ حُشِرَتْ ﴿٥﴾ وَإِذَا الْبِحَارُ سُجِّرَتْ ﴿٦﴾ وَإِذَا
 النَّفُوسُ زُوِّجَتْ ﴿٧﴾ وَإِذَا الْمَوْءُدَةُ سُيِّلَتْ ﴿٨﴾ بِأَيِّ ذَنْبٍ قُتِلَتْ ﴿٩﴾ وَإِذَا
 الصُّحُفُ نُشِرَتْ ﴿١٠﴾ وَإِذَا السَّمَاءُ كُشِطَتْ ﴿١١﴾ وَإِذَا الْجَحِيمُ سُعِّرَتْ ﴿١٢﴾ وَإِذَا
 الْجَنَّةُ أُزْلِفَتْ ﴿١٣﴾ عَلِمَتْ نَفْسٌ مَّا أَحْضَرَتْ ﴿١٤﴾ فَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِالْخُنُوسِ ﴿١٥﴾
 الْجَوَارِ الْكُنَّسِ ﴿١٦﴾ وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا عَسَسَ ﴿١٧﴾ وَالصُّبْحِ إِذَا تَنَفَّسَ ﴿١٨﴾ إِنَّهُ
 لَقَوْلُ رَسُولٍ كَرِيمٍ ﴿١٩﴾ ذِي قُوَّةٍ عِنْدَ ذِي الْعَرْشِ مَكِينٍ ﴿٢٠﴾ مُطَاعٍ ثَمَرٍ
 أَمِينٍ ﴿٢١﴾ وَمَا صَاحِبُكُمْ بِسَجُنُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾ وَلَقَدْ رَآهُ بِالْأَفْقِ الْمُبِينِ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَمَا هُوَ
 عَلَى الْغَيْبِ بِضَنِينٍ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَمَا هُوَ بِقَوْلِ شَيْطَانٍ رَجِيبٍ ﴿٢٥﴾ فَأَيْنَ تَذَهَبُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾
 إِنَّ هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ لِلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٢٧﴾ لِمَنْ شَاءَ مِنْكُمْ أَنْ يَسْتَقِيمَ ﴿٢٨﴾ وَمَا تَشَاءُونَ
 إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾

LXXXI

AT-TAKWĪR التكویر

Verses : 29

Revealed at Makkah

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

When the sun is folded up,¹ and when the stars scatter,² and when the mountains are set in motion,³ and when the ten-month pregnant she-camels are left untended,⁴ and when the beasts are gathered together,⁵ and when the oceans are set ablaze,⁶ and when⁷ the souls are re-united (with the bodies),⁸ and when the infant girl, buried alive, is asked for what crime she was slain,⁹ and when the records are unfolded, and when the veil of heaven is removed,¹⁰ and when Hell is set blazing, and when Paradise is brought near,¹¹ then each person shall know what he has brought with him. 1-14

But not so!¹² I swear by the retreating and hiding stars, and the night when it departed, and the dawn when it breathed up,¹³ that this indeed is the Word of a noble Messenger,¹⁴ who has great power,¹⁵ and has high ranks with the Owner of the Throne: there he is obeyed¹⁶ and held as trustworthy.¹⁷ And (O people of Makkah), your Companion¹⁸ is not mad. He has seen that Messenger on the clear horizon;¹⁹ and he is not stingy in the matter of conveying the (knowledge of the) unseen (to the people).²⁰ And this is not the word of an accursed satan.²¹ Whither then are you going? This is an Admonition to all the people of the world, to each one of you, who wishes to follow the Straight Path;²² but your willing is of no avail unless Allah, Lord of the worlds, wills so.²³ 15-29

1. This is a matchless metaphor for causing the sun to lose its light. *Takwir* means to fold up; hence *takwir al-'imāmah* for folding

up the turban on the head. Here, the light which radiates from the sun and spreads throughout the solar system has been likened to the turban and it has been said that on the Resurrection Day the turban will be folded up about the sun and its radiation will fade.

2. That is, when the force which is keeping them in their orbits and positions is loosened and all the stars and planets will scatter in the universe. The word *inkidār* also indicates that they will not only scatter away but will also grow dark.

3. In other words, the earth also will lose its force of gravity because of which the mountains have weight and are firmly set in the earth. Thus, when there is no more gravity, the mountains will be uprooted from their places and becoming weightless will start moving and flying as the clouds move in the atmosphere.

4. This was by far the best way of giving an idea of the severities and horrors of Resurrection to the Arabs. Before the buses and trucks of the present day there was nothing more precious for the Arabs than the she-camel just about to give birth to her young. In this state she was most sedulously looked after and cared for, so that she is not lost, stolen, or harmed in any way. The people's becoming heedless of such she-camels, in fact, meant that at that time they would be so stunned as to become unmindful of their most precious possessions.

5. When a general calamity befalls the world, all kinds of beasts and animals gather together in one place. Then, neither the snake bites, nor the tiger kills and devours.

6. The word *sujjirat* as used in the original is passive voice from *tasjir* in the past tense. *Tasjir* means to kindle fire in the oven. Apparently it seems strange that on the Resurrection Day fire would blaze up in the oceans. But if the truth about water is kept in view, nothing would seem strange. It is a miracle of God that He combined oxygen and hydrogen, one of which helps kindle the fire and the other gets kindled of itself and by the combination of both He created a substance like water which is used to put out fire. A simple manifestation of Allah's power is enough to change this composition of water so that the two gases are separated and begin to burn and help cause a blaze, which is their basic characteristic.

7. From here begins mention of the second stage of Resurrection.

8. That is, men will be resurrected precisely in the state as they lived in the world before death with body and soul together.

9. The style of this verse reflects an intensity of rage and fury inconceivable in common life. The parents who buried their daughters alive, would be so contemptible in the sight of Allah that they would not be asked: "Why did you kill the innocent infant?" But disregarding them the innocent girl will be asked: "For what crime were you slain?" And she will tell her story how cruelly she had been treated by her barbarous parents and buried alive. Besides, two vast themes have been compressed into this brief verse, which though not expressed in words, are reflected by its style and tenor. First that in it the Arabs have been made to realize what depths of moral depravity they have touched because of their ignorance in that they buried their own children alive; yet they insist that they would persist in the same ignorance and would not accept the reform that Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) was trying to bring about in their corrupted society. Second, that an express argument has been given in it of the necessity and inevitability of the Hereafter. The case of the infant girl who was buried alive, should be decided and settled justly at some time, and there should necessarily be a time when the cruel people who committed this heinous crime, should be called to account for it, for there was none in the world to hear the cries of complaint raised by the poor soul. This act was looked upon with approval by the depraved society; neither the parents felt any remorse for it, nor anybody in the family censured them, nor the society took any notice of it. Then, should this monstrosity remain wholly unpunished in the Kingdom of God?

This barbaric custom of burying the female infants alive had become widespread in ancient Arabia for different reasons. One reason was economic hardship because of which the people wanted to have fewer dependents so that they should not have to bear the burden of bringing up many children. Male offspring were brought up in the hope that they would later help in earning a living, but the female offspring were killed for the fear that they would have to be reared till they matured and then given away in marriage. Second, the widespread chaos because of which the male children were brought up in order to have more and more helpers and supporters; but daughters were killed because in tribal wars they had to be protected instead of being useful in any way for defence. Third, another aspect of the common chaos also was that when the hostile tribes raided each other and captured girls they would either keep them as slave-girls or sell them to others. For these reasons the practice that had become common in Arabia was that at child-

birth a pit was kept dug out ready for use by the woman so that if a girl was born, she was immediately cast into it and buried alive. And if sometimes the mother was not inclined to act thus, or the people of the family disapproved of it, the father would rear her for some time half-heartedly, and then finding time would take her to the desert to be buried alive. This tyranny and hard-heartedness was once described by a person before the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) himself. According to a *Hadīth* related in the first chapter of *Sunan Dārimi*, a man came to the Holy Prophet and related this incident of his pre-Islamic days of ignorance: "I had a daughter who was much attached to me. When I called her, she would come running to me. One day I called her and took her out with me. On the way we came across a well. Holding her by the hand I pushed her into the well. Her last words that I heard were: Oh father, oh father!!" Hearing this the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) wept and tears started falling from his eyes. One of those present on the occasion said: O man, you have grieved the Holy Prophet. The Holy Prophet said: Do not stop him, let him question about what he feels so strongly now. Then the Holy Prophet asked him to narrate his story once again. When he narrated it again the Holy Prophet wept so bitterly that his beard became wet with tears. Then he said to the man: Allah has forgiven what you did in the days of ignorance: now turn to Him in repentance."

It is not correct to think that the people of Arabia had no feeling of the baseness of this hideous, inhuman act. Obviously, no society, however corrupted it may be, can be utterly devoid of the feeling that such tyrannical acts are evil. That is why the Holy Qur'ān has not dwelt upon the vileness of this act, but has only referred to it in awe-inspiring words to the effect: "A time will come when the girl who was buried alive, will be asked for what crime she was slain?" The history of Arabia also shows that many people in the pre-Islamic days of ignorance had a feeling that the practice was vile and wicked. According to Ṭabarānī, Ṣa'ṣa'ah bin Nājiyah al-Mujāshi'i, grandfather of the poet, Farazdaq, said to the Holy Prophet: "O Messenger of Allah, during the days of ignorance I have done some good works also among which one is that I saved 360 girls from being buried alive: I gave two camels each as ransom to save their lives. Shall I get any reward for this?" The Holy Prophet replied; "Yes, there is a reward for you, and it is this that Allah has blessed you with Islam."

As a matter of fact, a great blessing of the blessings of Islam is that it not only put an end to this inhuman practice in Arabia but even wiped out the concept that the birth of a daughter was in any way a calamity, which should be endured unwillingly. On the contrary, Islam taught that bringing up daughters, giving them good education and enabling them to become good housewives, is an act of great merit and virtue. The way the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) changed the common concept of the people in respect of girls can be judged from his many sayings which have been reported in the *Hadith*. As for example, we reproduce some of these below:

“The person who is put to a test because of the birth of the daughters and then he treats them generously, they will become a means of rescue for him from Hell.” (Bukhāri, Muslim).

“The one who brought up two girls till they attained their maturity, will appear along with me on the Resurrection Day ... Saying this the Holy Prophet jointed and raised his fingers.” (Muslim).

“The one who brought up three daughters, or sisters, taught them good manners and treated them with kindness until they became self-sufficient, Allah will make Paradise obligatory for him. A man asked: what about two, O Messenger of Allah? The Holy Prophet replied: the same for two.” Ibn ‘Abbās, the reporter of the *Hadith*, says: “Had the people at that time asked in respect of one daughter, the Holy Prophet would have also given the same reply about her.” (*Sharḥ as-Sunnah*).

“The one who has a daughter born to him and he does not bury her alive, nor keeps her in disgrace, nor prefers his son to her, Allah will admit him to Paradise.” (Abū Da‘ūd).

“The one who has three daughters born to him, and he is patient over them, and clothes them well according to his means, they will become a means of rescue for him from Hell.” (Bukhāri, *Al-Adab al-Mufrad*, Ibn Mājah).

“The Muslim who has two daughters and he looks after them well, they will lead him to Paradise.” (Bukhāri: *Al-Adab al-Mufrad*).

The Holy Prophet said to Surāqah bin Ju‘sham: “Should I tell you what is the greatest charity (or said: one of the greatest charities)? He said: Kindly do tell, O Messenger of Allah. The Holy Prophet said: Your daughter who (after being divorced or widowed) returns to you and should have no other bread-winner.” (Ibn Mājah, Bukhāri: *Al-Adab al-Mufrad*).

This is the teaching which completely changed the viewpoint of the people about girls not only in Arabia but among all the nations of the world, which later became blessed with Islam.

10. That is, everything which is hidden from view now will become visible. Now one can only see empty space, or the clouds, hanging dust, the moon, the sun or stars, but at that time the Kingdom of God will appear in full view before the people, without any veil in between, in its true reality.

11. That is, in the Plain of Resurrection, when the hearing of the cases of the people will be in progress, the blazing fire of Hell also will be in full view, and Paradise also with all its blessings will be visible to all, so that the wicked should know what they are being deprived of and where they are going to be cast, and the righteous as well should know what they are being saved from and with what being blessed and honoured.

12. That is, "You are not correct that what is being presented in the Qur'ān is the bragging of an insane person, or the evil suggestion of a devil."

13. That for which the oath has been sworn, has been stated in the following verses. The oath means: "Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) has not seen a vision in darkness, but when the stars had disappeared, the night had departed and the bright morning had appeared, he had seen the Angel of God in the open sky. Therefore, what he tells you is based on his own personal observation and on the experience that he had in full senses in the full light of day."

14. "A noble messenger": the Angel who brought down Revelation, as becomes explicit from the following verses. "The word of a noble messenger" does not mean that the Qur'ān is the word of the Angel himself, but, as the context shows, of Him Who appointed him a messenger. In Al-Hāqqah : 40, likewise, the Qur'ān has been called the word of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings), and there too it does not mean that it is the Holy Prophet's own composition, but describing it as "the word of an honourable messenger", it has been made clear that the Holy Prophet is presenting it in his capacity as the Messenger of God and not as Muḥammad bin 'Abdullah. At both places, the Word has been attributed to the Angel and to Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) on the ground that the message of Allah was being

delivered to Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) by the Angel and to the people by Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace). (For further explanation, see E.N. 22 of Al-Hāqqah).

15. Sūrah An-Najm : 4-5, deals with the same theme, thus: "It is but a Revelation which is sent down to him. One, mighty in power, has taught him." As to what is implied by the mighty powers of the Angel Gabriel (peace be upon him) is ambiguous. In any case it at least shows that he is distinguished even among the angels because of his extraordinary powers. In Muslim (*Kitāb al-Imān*), Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah has reported the Holy Prophet's saying to the effect: "I have twice seen Gabriel in his real shape and form: his glorious being was encompassing the whole space between the earth and the heavens." According to the tradition reported from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd in Bukhāri, Muslim, Tirmidhi and Musnad Ahmad, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) had seen Gabriel with his six hundred wings. From this one can have an idea of his mighty powers.

16. That is, he is the chief of the angels and all angels work under his command.

17. That is, he is not one who would tamper with Divine Revelation, but is so trustworthy that he conveys intact whatever he receives from God.

18. "Your Companion": the Holy Messenger of Allah (upon whom be peace). Here, making mention of the Holy Prophet as the companion of the people of Makkah, they have been made to realize that the Holy Prophet was no stranger for them. He was not an outsider but a man of their own clan and tribe; he had lived his whole life among them; even their children knew that he was a very wise man. They should not be so shameless as to call such a man a mad man. (For further explanation, see E.N.'s 2, 3 of An-Najm).

19. In An-Najm : 7-9, this observation of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has been described in greater detail. (For explanation, see E.N.'s 7, 8 of An-Najm).

20. That is, "The Holy Messenger of Allah does not conceal anything from you. Whatever of the unseen realities are made known to him by Allah, whether they relate to the essence and attributes of Allah, the angels, life-after-death and Resurrection, or to the Hereafter, Heaven and Hell, he conveys everything to you without change.

21. That is, "You are wrong in thinking that some satan comes and whispers these words into the ear of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings). It does not suit Satan that he should divert man from polytheism, idol-worship, atheism and sin and turn him to God-worship and *Tauḥīd*, make man realize that he should live a life of responsibility and accountability to God instead of living an irresponsible, care-free life, should forbid man to adopt practices of ignorance, injustice, immorality and wickedness and lead him to a clean life of justice, piety and high morals." (For further explanation, see *Ash-Shua'rā'* : 210-212 along with E.N.'s 130 to 133, and vv. 221-223 along with E.N.'s 140, 141).

22. In other words, although this is an Admonition for all mankind, only such a person can benefit by it, who is himself desirous of adopting piety and righteousness. Man's being a seeker after truth and a lover of right is the foremost condition of his gaining any benefit from it.

23. This theme has already occurred in *Al-Muddaththir* : 56 and *Ad-Dahr* : 20 above. For explanation, see E.N. 41 of *Al-Muddaththir*.

LXXXII

AL-INFITĀR الانفطار

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

LXXXII

AL-INFITĀR الانفطار

INTRODUCTION

Name

It is derived from the word *infatarat* in the first verse. *Infitār* is an infinitive which means to burst or split asunder, thereby implying that it is the Sūrah in which the splitting asunder of the sky has been mentioned.

Period of Revelation

This Sūrah and the Sūrah At-Takwīr closely resemble each other in their subject-matter. This shows that both were sent down in about the same period.

Theme and Subject-Matter

Its theme is the Hereafter. According to a tradition related in Musnad Aḥmad, Tirmidhi, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ṭabarānī, Hākim and Ibn Mardūyah, on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar, the Holy Messenger (upon whom be peace) said: "The one who wants that he should see the Resurrection Day as one would see it with one's eyes, should read Sūrah At-Takwīr, Sūrah Al-Infītār and Sūrah Al-Inshiqāq".

In this Sūrah first the Resurrection Day has been described and it is said that when it occurs, every person will see whatever he has done in the world. After this, man has been asked to ponder the question: "O man, what has deluded you into thinking that the God, Who brought you into being and by Whose favour and bounty you possess the finest body, limbs and features among all creatures, is only bountiful and not just? His being bountiful and generous does not mean that you should become fearless of His justice." Then, man has been warned, so as to say: "Do not remain involved in any misunderstanding. Your complete record is being prepared. There are trustworthy writers who are writing down whatever you do." In conclusion, it has been forcefully stated that the Day of Resurrection will surely take place when the righteous shall enjoy every kind of bliss in Paradise and the wicked shall be punished in Hell. On that Day no one shall avail anyone anything. All powers of judgement shall be with Allah.



إِذَا السَّمَاءُ انْفَطَرَتْ ۝ وَإِذَا الْكَوَاكِبُ انْتَثَرَتْ ۝ وَإِذَا الْبِحَارُ فُجِّرَتْ ۝
 وَإِذَا الْقُبُورُ بُعْثِرَتْ ۝ عَلِمْتَ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمَتْ وَأَخَّرَتْ ۝ يَا أَيُّهَا الْإِنْسَانُ
 مَا غَرَّكَ بِرَبِّكَ الْكَرِيمِ ۝ الَّذِي خَلَقَكَ فَسَوَّاكَ فَعَدَلَكَ ۝ فِي أَيِّ صُورَةٍ
 مَّا شَاءَ رَكَّبَكَ ۝ كَلَّا بَلْ تُكذِّبُونَ بِالذِّينِ ۝ وَإِنَّ عَلَيْكُمْ لَحَافِظِينَ ۝
 كِرَامًا كَاتِبِينَ ۝ يَعْلَمُونَ مَا تَفْعَلُونَ ۝ إِنَّ الْأَبْرَارَ لَفِي نَعِيمٍ ۝ وَإِنَّ
 الْفُجَّارَ لَفِي جَحِيمٍ ۝ تَصَلُّونَهَا يَوْمَ الدِّينِ ۝ وَمَا هُمْ عَنْهَا بِغَائِبِينَ ۝
 وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا يَوْمُ الدِّينِ ۝ ثُمَّ مَّا أَدْرَاكَ مَا يَوْمُ الدِّينِ ۝ يَوْمَ لَا
 تَمْلِكُ نَفْسٌ لِنَفْسٍ شَيْئًا ۝ وَالْأَمْرُ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلَّهِ ۝

LXXXII

AL-INFITAR الانفطار

Verses : 19

Revealed at Makkah

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

When the heaven splits asunder, and when the stars scatter, and when the seas are torn apart,¹ and when the graves are laid open,² then every person shall know all his works, the former and the latter.³ 1-5

O man, what has beguiled you concerning your Lord, the gracious, Who created you, fashioned you, proportioned you, and put you together in whatever form He pleased?⁴ Indeed not!⁵ But (the fact is that) you (O men) deny (the meting out of) rewards and 6-12

punishments," although watchers have been appointed over you, honourable scribes, who know whatever you do.⁷

13-19 Surely the righteous shall be in bliss, and the wicked shall indeed go to Hell: they shall enter it on the Day of Recompense, and shall never be able to be absent from it. And what do you know what the Day of Recompense is? Yes, what do you know what the Day of Recompense is? It is a Day when no one shall have the power to do anything for another.⁸ Judgement on that Day shall wholly rest with Allah.

1. In Sūrah At-Takwīr it has been said: "When the oceans are set ablaze," and here: "When the oceans are torn apart." When the two verses are read together, and this fact also is kept in view that even according to the Qur'an a terrible earthquake will occur on the Resurrection Day, which will shake up the entire earth all at once, the state of the splitting of the oceans and their being set ablaze seems to be as follows: first, because of the terrible convulsion, the bottom of the oceans will split asunder and their water will start sinking into the interior of the earth where an intensely hot lava is constantly boiling up. Coming into contact with the lava, water will dissolve into its two constituent parts, oxygen which helps combustion, and hydrogen, which is itself combustible. Thus, in the process of dissolution and combustion, a chain reaction will start, which will set all the oceans of the world ablaze. This is our conjecture, the correct knowledge is only with Allah.

2. In the first three verses, the first stage of the Resurrection has been mentioned, and in this verse the second stage is being described. "Opening of the graves" implies resurrection of the dead men.

3. The words *mā qaddamat wa akhkharat* can have several meanings and all are implied here: (1) *Mā qaddamat* is the good or evil act which man has sent forward, and *mā akhkharat* is what he refrained from doing. Thus, these Arabic words correspond to the acts of commission and omission in one's life.

(2) *Mā qaddamat* is what one did earlier and *mā akhkharat* what one did later; i.e. the whole life-work of man will appear before him date-wise and in proper sequence

(3) Whatever good and evil deeds a man did in his life is *mā qaddamat* and whatever effects and influences of his acts he left behind for human society is *mā akhkharat*.

4. That is, "In the first place, the bounty and favour of your Beneficent Sustainer required that you should have acknowledged his bounties and become an obedient servant and should have felt shy of disobeying Him, but you were deluded into thinking that you have become whatever you are by your own effort, and you never thought that you should acknowledge that favour of Him Who gave you life. Secondly, it is your Lord's bounty and kindness that you can freely do whatever you like in the world and it never so happens that whenever you happen to commit an error, He should punish you with paralysis, or blind your eyes, or cause lightning to strike you. But you took His bountifulness for weakness and were beguiled into thinking that the Kingdom of your God was devoid of justice."

5. That is, "There is no reasonable ground for you to be deluded. Your own physical existence itself tells that you did not come into being by yourself; your parents also did not make you. Man also did not come about as a result of the elements combining together by themselves accidentally; but a Wise and Powerful God has composed you into this perfect human shape and form. There are other kinds of animals in the world compared with which your excellent form and structure and your superior powers and faculties stand out in sharp contrast. Reason demanded that in view of all this you should have submitted gratefully and should never have dared commit disobedience of your beneficent Sustainer. You also know that your Lord and Sustainer is not only Compassionate and Bountiful but Almighty and Omnipotent as well. When an earthquake, cyclone or flood occurs by His Command, all your devices and measures fail to be effective. You also know that your Lord and Sustainer is not ignorant and foolish but Wise and Knowing, and the necessary demand of wisdom and knowledge is that whoever is given intellect should also be held responsible for his acts; whoever is given powers should also be held accountable as to how he used those powers; and whoever is given the choice to do good or evil on his own responsibility, should also be rewarded for his good act and punished for his evil act. All these truths are clearly and plainly known to you; therefore, you cannot say that there exists a reasonable ground for you to be deluded concerning your Lord. Therefore, your own nature is sufficient evidence that the beneficence of the Master should never cause the servant to be fearless of Him, and be

involved in the misunderstanding that he may do whatever he pleases, no one can harm him in any way.

6. That is, "You have not been deluded and beguiled by any good reason but by your foolish concept that there is going to be no meting out of rewards and punishments after the life of this world. It is this wrong and baseless concept, which has made you heedless of God, fearless of His justice and irresponsible in your moral attitude."

7. That is, "Whether you deny the meting out of rewards and punishments, belie it, or mock it, the reality cannot change. The reality is that your Lord has not left you to yourself in the world, but has appointed over each one of you honest and upright guardians, who are recording objectively and faithfully all your good and evil acts, and none of your acts is hidden from them, whether you commit it in darkness, or in private, or in far off jungles, or in secret when you are fully satisfied that whatever you have done has remained hidden from human eye. For these guardian angels Allah has used the words *kirām-an kātibīn*, i.e. writers who are honourable and noble. They are neither attached in personal love with somebody, nor are inimical to anybody, so that they would prepare a fictitious record on the basis of their favouring one man and disfavouring another unduly. They are neither dishonest that without being present on duty they would make wrong entries by themselves; nor are they bribable so that they would take bribes and make false reports in favour of or against somebody. They are far above these moral weaknesses. Therefore, both the good and the bad people should be fully satisfied that each man's good acts will be recorded without any omission, and no one will have an evil act recorded in his account which he has not done. Then the second quality that has been mentioned of these angels is: "They know whatever you do." That is, they are not like the secret, intelligence agencies of the world, from which, despite all their search and scrutiny, many things remain hidden. They are fully aware of everyone's deeds. They accompany every person, at all places, under all conditions, in such a way that he himself does not know that someone is watching him, and they also know with what intention has somebody done a certain thing. Therefore, the record prepared by them is a complete record in which nothing has been left un-recorded. About this very thing it has been said in Sūrah Al-Kahf: 49: "Woe to us! What sort of a book it is: it has left nothing un-recorded of our doings,

small or great. They will see before them everything, whatever they had done."

8. That is, no one there will have the power to save anyone from suffering the consequences of his deeds; no one there will be so influential, strong, or such a favourite with Allah that he should behave stubbornly in the Divine Court and say: "Such and such a one is a close relative or associate of mine; he will have to be forgiven, no matter what evils he might have committed in the world."

LXXXIII

AL-MUTAFFIFIN المطففين

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

LXXXIII

AL-MUTAFFIFIN المطففين

INTRODUCTION

Name

It is derived from the very first verse: *Wayl-ul-lil-mutaffifin.*

Period of Revelation

The style of the Sūrah and its subject-matter clearly show that it was revealed in the earliest stage at Makkah, when sūrah after sūrah was being revealed to impress the doctrine of the Hereafter on the people's minds. This Sūrah was revealed when they had started ridiculing the Muslims and disgracing them publicly in the streets and in their assemblies, but persecution and

manhandling of the Muslims had not yet started. Some commentators regard this as a Madani Sūrah. This misunderstanding has been caused by a tradition from Ibn 'Abbās according to which when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) arrived in Madīnah, the evil of giving short weight and measure was widespread among the people there. Then Allah sent down *Wayl-ul-lil-mutaffifin* and the people began to give full weight and measure. (Nasā'ī, Ibn Mājah, Ibn Mardūyah, Ibn Jarīr, Baihaqī: *Shu'ab-il-Imān*). But, as we have explained in the Introduction to Sūrah Ad-Dahr, the common practice with the Companions and their successors was that when they found that a verse applied to a certain matter of life, they would say that it had been sent down concerning that particular matter. Therefore, what is proved by the tradition of Ibn 'Abbās is that when after his emigration to Madīnah the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) saw that the evil was widespread among the people there, he recited this Sūrah before them by Allah's Command and this helped them mend their ways.

Theme and Subject-Matter

The theme of this Sūrah too is the Hereafter. In the first six verses the people have been taken to task for the prevalent evil practice in their commercial dealings. When they had to receive their due from others, they demanded that it be given in full, but when they had to measure or weigh for others, they would give less than what was due. Taking this one evil as an example out of countless evils prevalent in society, it has been said that it is an inevitable result of the heedlessness of the Hereafter. Unless the people realized that one day they would have to appear before God and account for each single act they performed in the world, it was not possible that they would adopt piety

Introduction

and righteousness in their daily affairs. Even if a person might practise honesty in some of his less important dealings in view of "honesty is the best policy", he would never practise honesty on occasions when dishonesty would seem to be "the best policy". Man can develop true and enduring honesty only when he fears God and sincerely believes in the Hereafter, for then he would regard honesty not merely as "a policy" but as "a duty" and obligation, and his being constant in it, or otherwise, would not be dependent on its being useful or useless in the world.

Thus, after making explicit the relation between morality and the doctrine of the Hereafter in an effective and impressive way, in vv. 7-17, it has been said. The deeds of the wicked are already being recorded in the black list of the culprits, and in the Hereafter they will meet with utter ruin. Then in vv. 18-28, the best end of the virtuous has been described and it has been said that their deeds are being recorded in the list of the exalted people, on which are appointed the angels nearest to Allah.

In conclusion, the believers have been consoled, and the disbelievers warned, as if to say: "The people who are disgracing and humiliating the believers today, are culprits who, on the Resurrection Day, will meet with a most evil end in consequence of their conduct, and these very believers will feel comforted when they see their fate."



وَيْلٌ لِّلْمُطَفِّفِينَ ۚ الَّذِينَ إِذَا كَالُوا عَلَى النَّاسِ يَسْتَوْفُونَ ۖ وَإِذَا كَالُوهُمْ
 أَوْ ذَرَّوهُمْ يُخْسِرُونَ ۚ إِلَّا يَظُنُّ أُولَٰئِكَ أَنَّهُمْ مَبْعُوثُونَ ۖ لِيَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ ۚ
 يَوْمَ يَقُومُ النَّاسُ لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ۚ كَلَّا إِنَّ كِتَابَ الْفُجَارِ لَهِيَ سِجِّينٌ ۚ
 وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا سِجِّينٌ ۚ كِتَابٌ مَّرْقُومٌ ۚ وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ۚ
 الَّذِينَ يُكَذِّبُونَ بِيَوْمِ الدِّينِ ۚ وَمَا يَكْذِبُ بِهِ إِلَّا كُلٌّ مِّمَّنْ عِندِ آثِيمٍ ۚ
 إِذَا تُلِيٰ عَلَيْهِ آيَاتُنَا قَالَ أَسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ۚ كَلَّا بَلْ عَصَا رَانَ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمُ
 مَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ۚ كَلَّا إِنَّهُمْ عَنْ رَبِّهِمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ لَّحَجُوبُونَ ۚ ثُمَّ
 إِنَّهُمْ لَصَالُوا الْجَحِيمِ ۚ ثُمَّ يُقَالُ هَذَا الَّذِي كُنْتُمْ بِهِ تُكَذِّبُونَ ۚ
 كَلَّا إِنَّ كِتَابَ الْأَبْرَارِ لَهِيَ عَلَيْهِمْ ۚ وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا عَلَيْهِمْ ۚ كِتَابٌ مَّرْقُومٌ ۚ
 يَشْهَدُهُ الْمُقَرَّبُونَ ۚ إِنَّ الْأَبْرَارَ لَهِيَ نَعِيمٍ ۚ عَلَىٰ الْأَرَائِكِ يَنْظُرُونَ ۚ
 تَعْرِفُ فِي وُجُوهِهِمْ نَضْرَةَ النَّعِيمِ ۚ يُسْقَوْنَ مِنْ رَحِيقٍ مَّخْتُومٍ ۚ خِتْمُهُ
 مِسْكٌ ۚ وَفِي ذَٰلِكَ فَلْيَتَنَافَسِ الْمُتَنَافِسُونَ ۚ وَمِرَاجُهُ مِنْ تَسْنِيمٍ ۚ عَيْنًا
 يَشْرَبُ بِهَا الْمُقَرَّبُونَ ۚ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ أَجْرَمُوا كَانُوا مِنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
 يَضْحَكُونَ ۚ وَإِذَا مَرُّوا بِهِمْ يَتَغَامِرُونَ ۚ وَإِذَا انْقَلَبُوا إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِمْ انْقَلَبُوا
 فَكِهِينَ ۚ وَإِذَا رَأَوْهُمْ قَالُوا إِنَّ هَٰؤُلَاءِ لَضَالُّونَ ۚ وَمَا أُرْسِلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ
 حَافِظِينَ ۚ فَالْيَوْمَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنَ الْكُفَّارِ يَضْحَكُونَ ۚ عَلَىٰ الْأَرَائِكِ
 يَنْظُرُونَ ۚ هَلْ تُؤْتِبُ الْكُفَّارُ مَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ ۚ

LXXXIII

AL-MUTAFFIFIN المطففين

Verses : 36

Revealed at Makkah

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

Woe to those who give short weight,¹ who, when they take by measure from others, take it fully, and when they measure or weigh for them, they give them less than what is due.² Do they not think that they will be raised up again on a Great Day?³ – the Day when all mankind shall stand before the Lord of the worlds. 1-6

Indeed not!⁴ Surely the records of the wicked are in the Prison Register,⁵ and what do you know what the Prison Register is? It is a written book. Woe on that Day to the beliers who belie the Day of Recompense, and none belies it but every sinful transgressor. When Our Revelations are recited to him,⁶ he says: “These are tales of the ancient times.” By no means! But the fact is that their evil deeds have stained their hearts.⁷ By no means! Surely on that Day they shall be debarred from their Lord’s vision.⁸ Then they shall enter Hell. Then it will be said to them, “This is the very thing you used to belie.” 7-17

Indeed not!⁹ Surely the record of the righteous is in the Register of the exalted ones. And what do you know what is the Register of the exalted ones? It is a written book, guarded by the angels nearest to Allah. Surely the righteous shall be in bliss: seated on high couches they shall be looking around. In their faces you shall mark the glow of bliss. They shall be given to drink the choicest, sealed wine, whose seal shall be musk.¹⁰ Those who wish to excel others, let them endeavour to excel in this. That wine shall have 18-28

the mixture of *Tasnīm*;¹¹ this is a fountain with the waters of which those nearest to Allah shall drink wine.

29-36

The culprits used to laugh at the believers in the world. They would wink at one another when they passed by them. When they returned to their kinsfolk they returned jesting,¹² and when they saw them, they would say, "These are the people gone astray",¹³ although they had not been sent to be guardians over them.¹⁴ Today the believers are laughing at the disbelievers, as they recline on couches and gaze at them. Have not the disbelievers been duly rewarded for what they used to do?¹⁵

1. In the original the word *mutaffifin* has been used, which is derived from *talfif*, a word used for an inferior and base thing in Arabic. Terminologically, *talfif* is used for giving short weight and short measure fraudulently, for the person who acts thus while measuring or weighing, does not defraud another by any substantial amount, but skimps small amounts from what is due to every customer cleverly, and the poor customer does not know of what and of how much he is being deprived by the seller.

2. At several places in the Qur'ān giving of short measure and weight has been condemned and measuring fully and weighing rightly has been stressed. In Sūrah Al-An'ām, it has been enjoined: "You should use a full measure and a just balance. We charge one only with that much responsibility that one can bear." (v. 152). In Sūrah Banī Isrā'il it has been said: "Give full measure when you measure and weigh with even scales." (v. 35). In Sūrah Ar-Reḥmān it has been stressed: "Do not upset the balance: weigh with equity and do not give short weight." (vv. 8-9). The people of the Prophet Shu'aib were punished for the reason that the evil of giving short measure and weight had become widespread among them and in spite of his counsel and advice they did not refrain from it.

3. "A Great Day": the Day of Resurrection when all men and jinn will be called to account together in the Divine Court and decisions of vital importance will be made pertaining to rewards and punishments.

4. That is, "These people are wrong in thinking that they will

be let off without being called to account when they have committed such and such crimes in the world."

5. The word *sijjtn* in the original is derived from *sijn* (a prison) and the explanation of it that follows shows that it implies the general Register in which the actions and deeds of the people worthy of punishment are being recorded.

6. "Our Revelations": those verses in which news of the Day of Recompense has been given.

7. That is, they have no good reason for regarding the meting out of rewards and punishments as unreal. What has made them say this, is that their hearts have become rusty because of their sins; therefore, a thing which is thoroughly reasonable appears unreal and unreasonable to them. The explanation of this rust as given by the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) is as follows: "When a servant commits a sin, it marks a black stain on his heart. If he offers repentance, the stain is washed off, but if he persists in wrongdoing, it spreads over the whole heart." (Musnad Ahmad, Tirmidhi, Nasāi, Ibn Mājah, Ibn Jarir, Hākim, Ibn Abi Hātim, Ibn Hibbān and others).

8. That is, these people will remain deprived of the vision of Allah with which the righteous will be blessed. (For further explanation, see E.N. 17 of Al-Qiyāmah).

9. That is, they are wrong in thinking that there is going to be no meting out of rewards and punishments.

10. One meaning of the words *khitāmu-hū misk* is that the vessels containing the wine will carry the seal of musk instead of clay or wax. Accordingly the verse means: This will be the choicest kind of wine, which will be superior to the wine flowing in the canals, and it will be served by the attendants of Paradise in vessels sealed with musk to the dwellers of Paradise. Another meaning also can be: When that wine will pass down the throat, its final effect will be of the flavour of musk. This state is contrary to the wines of the world which give out an offensive smell as soon as the bottle opens and one feels its horrid smell even while drinking and also when it passes down the throat.

11. "Tasnim": height. Thus, *Tasnim* will be a fountain flowing down from a height.

12. That is, they returned home rejoicing, thinking that they had made fun of such and such a Muslim, had passed evil remarks against him and subjected him to ridicule among the people.

13. That is, they have lost their reason: they have deprived themselves of the gains and enjoyments of the world and have experienced dangers and undergone hardships only for the reason that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) has deluded them with the Hereafter, Heaven and Hell. They are giving up whatever is present and here on the false hope that the promise of some Paradise has been held out to them after death, and they are enduring the hardships in the present life only for the reason that they have been threatened with some Hell in the next world.

14. In this brief sentence the mockers and jesters have been given an instructive warning to the effect: "Even if what the Muslims have believed in, is false, they are not harming you at all. They regard something as true and are accordingly adopting a certain moral attitude for themselves, for their own good. Allah has not appointed you to be keepers over them so that you may be free to criticise and persecute those who are not harming you in any way."

15. There is a subtle satire in this sentence. In the world, the disbelievers used to persecute the believers, thinking it was an act of virtue. In the Hereafter, the believers will be enjoying life in Paradise, and watching the disbelievers being punished in Hell, will say to themselves: "What a reward they have earned for their acts of virtue!"

LXXXIV

AL-INSHIQĀQ الانشقاق

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

LXXXIV

AL-INSHIQĀQ الانشقاق

INTRODUCTION

Name

It is derived from the word *inshaqqat* in the first verse. *Inshaqqat* is infinitive which means to split asunder, thereby implying that it is the Sūrah in which mention has been made of the splitting asunder of the heavens.

Period of Revelation

This too is one of the earliest Sūrahs to be revealed at Makkah. The internal evidence of its subject-matter indicates that persecution of the Muslims had not yet started; however, the message of the Qur'ān was being

openly repudiated at Makkah and the people were refusing to acknowledge that Resurrection would ever take place when they would have to appear before their God to render an account of their deeds.

Theme and Subject-Matter

Its theme is the Resurrection and Hereafter.

In the first five verses not only has the state of Resurrection been described vividly but an argument of its being true and certain also has been given. It has been stated that the heavens on that Day will split asunder, the earth will be spread out plain and smooth, and it will throw out whatever lies inside it of the dead bodies of men and evidences of their deeds so as to become completely empty from within. The argument given for it is that such will be the Command of their Lord for the heavens and the earth; since both are His creation, they cannot dare disobey His Command. For them the only right and proper course is that they should obey the Command of their Lord.

Then, in vv. 6-19 it has been said that whether man is conscious of this fact, or not, he in any case is moving willy nilly to the destination when he will appear and stand before his Lord. At that time all human beings will divide into two parts: first those whose records will be given in their right hands: they will be forgiven without any severe reckoning; second those whose records will be given them behind their back. They will wish that they should die somehow, but they will not die; instead they will be cast into Hell. They will meet with this fate because in the world they remained lost in the misunderstanding that they would never have to appear before God to render an account of their deeds, whereas their Lord was watching whatever they were doing, and there was no reason why they should escape the

accountability for their deeds. Their moving gradually from the life of the world to the meting out of rewards and punishments in the Hereafter was as certain as the appearance of twilight after sunset, the coming of the night after the day, the returning of men and animals to their respective abodes at night, and the growing of the crescent into full moon.

In conclusion, the disbelievers who repudiate the Qur'ān instead of bowing down to God when they hear it, have been forewarned of a grievous punishment, and the good news of limitless rewards has been given to the believers and the righteous.



إِذَا السَّمَاءُ انشَقَّتْ ۝ وَأَذِنَتْ لِرَبِّهَا وَحُقَّتْ ۝ وَإِذَا الْأَرْضُ مُدَّتْ ۝
 وَأَلْقَتْ مَا فِيهَا وَتَخَلَّتْ ۝ وَأَذِنَتْ لِرَبِّهَا وَحُقَّتْ ۝ يَا أَيُّهَا الْإِنْسَانُ
 إِنَّكَ كَادِحٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ كَدْحًا فَمُلَاقِيهِ ۝ فَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوْتِيَ كِتَابَهُ بِيَمِينِهِ ۝
 فَسَوْفَ يُحَاسِبُ حِسَابًا يَسِيرًا ۝ وَيُنْقَلِبُ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِ مَسْرُورًا ۝ وَأَمَّا مَنْ
 أُوْتِيَ كِتَابَهُ وِرَاءَ ظَهْرِهِ ۝ فَسَوْفَ يَدْعُوا ثُبُورًا ۝ وَيَصْلَىٰ سَعِيرًا ۝ إِنَّهُ كَانَ فِي
 أَهْلِهِ مَسْرُورًا ۝ إِنَّهُ ظَنَّ أَنْ لَنْ يَخُورَهُ ۝ بَلَىٰ ۚ إِنَّ رَبَّهُ كَانَ بِهِ بَصِيرًا ۝
 فَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِالشَّفَقِ ۝ وَاللَّيْلِ وَمَا وَسَقَ ۝ وَالْقَبْرِ إِذَا فَتَقَ ۝ لَتَرْكَبُنَّ طَبَقًا
 عَنْ طَبَقٍ ۝ فَمَا لَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ۝ وَإِذَا قُرِئَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقُرْآنُ لَا يَسْجُدُونَ ۝
 بَلِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يَكْتُمُونَ ۝ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يُوعُونَ ۝ فَبَشِّرْهُم بِعَذَابٍ
 أَلِيمٍ ۝ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ أَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُونٍ ۝

عالمه

سجدة ١٣

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LXXXIV

AL-INSHIQĀQ الانشقاق

Verses : 25

Revealed at Makkah

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

When the heaven splits asunder, and obeys its Lord's Command,¹ as in truth it must (obey its Lord's Command); and when the earth is spread out,² and throws out whatever is within it, and becomes empty,³ and obeys its Lord's Command, as in truth it must (obey the Command):⁴ O man, you are moving on towards your Lord, willy nilly,⁵ and are about to meet Him. Then he whose record is given in his right hand, shall have an easy reckoning,⁶ and he shall return to his kinsfolk rejoicing.⁷ As for him whose record is given him behind his back,⁸ he shall call for death and shall enter a blazing Fire. For he lived among his kinsfolk, completely absorbed,⁹ and deemed he would never return. Why not? His Lord was ever watching his misdeeds.¹⁰

1-15

So no! I swear by the daylight and the night and what it gathers together, and the moon when it grows full, that you have surely to pass from one state to another gradually.¹¹ Then, what is the matter with these people that they do not believe, and when the Qur'ān is recited before them, they do not fall prostrate?¹² But, on the contrary, the disbelievers deny, although Allah knows best what they are collecting (in their record).¹³ Therefore, give them the good news of a painful torment. However, those who have believed and done righteous deeds, shall have a reward that will never fail.

16-25

1. Literally: "... and hears its Lord's Command." However, according to Arabic usage *adhina lahū* does not only mean: "He

heard the Command," but it means: "Hearing the Command he carried it out promptly like an obedient servant."

2. "When the earth is spread out": when the oceans and rivers are filled up, the mountains are crushed to pieces and scattered away, and the earth is levelled and turned into a smooth plain. In Sūrah Tā Hā, the same thing has been expressed, thus: "He will turn the earth into an empty level plain, wherein you will neither see any curve nor crease." (vv. 106-107). Ḥākim in *Mustadrak* has related through authentic channels on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Jābir bin 'Abdullah a saying of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) to the effect: "On the Resurrection Day the earth will be flattened out and spread out like the table-cloth; then there will hardly be room on it for men to place their feet." To understand this saying one should keep in mind the fact that on that Day all men who will have been born from the first day of creation till Resurrection, will be resurrected simultaneously and produced in the Divine Court. For gathering together such a great multitude of the people it is inevitable that the oceans, rivers, mountains, jungles, ravines, and all high and low areas be levelled and the entire globe of the earth be turned into a vast plain so that all individuals of human race may have room on it to stand on their feet.

3. That is, it will throw out all dead bodies of men and also the traces and evidences of their deeds lying within it, so that nothing remains hidden and buried in it.

4. Here, it has not been expressly told what will happen when such and such an event takes place, for the subsequent theme by itself explains this, as if to say: "O man, you are moving towards your Lord and are about to meet Him: you will be given your conduct book and rewarded or punished according to your deeds."

5. That is, "You may if you so like think that all your efforts and endeavours in the world are confined to worldly life and motivated by worldly desires, yet the truth is that you are moving, consciously or unconsciously, towards your Lord and you have ultimately to appear before Him in any case."

6. That is, his reckoning will be less severe: he will not be asked why he had done such and such a thing and what excuses he had to offer for it. Though his evil deeds also will be there along with his good deeds in his records, his errors will be overlooked and pardoned in view of his outweighing good deeds. In the Holy Qur'ān, for the severe reckoning of the wicked people the words

sū-al-ḥisāb (heavy reckoning) have been used (Ar-Ra'd : 18), and concerning the righteous it has been said: "From such people We accept the best of their deeds and overlook their evils." (Al-Aḥqāf : 16). The explanation of it given by the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has been related in different words by Imām Aḥmad, Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmidhī, Nasā'ī, Abū Da'ūd, Ḥākim, Ibn Jarīr, 'Abd bin Ḥumaid, and Ibn Mardūyah on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah. According to one of these traditions the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) said: "Doomed will be he who is called to account for his deeds. Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah said: O Messenger of Allah, has not Allah said: 'He whose record is given in his right hand shall have an easy reckoning?' The Holy Prophet replied: 'That is only about the presentation of the deeds, but the one who is questioned would be doomed.'" In another tradition Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah has related: "I once heard the Holy Prophet supplicate during the Prayer, thus: O God, call me to a light reckoning. When he brought his Prayer to conclusion, I asked what he meant by that supplication. He replied: Light reckoning means that one's conduct book will be seen and one's errors will be overlooked. O 'Ā'ishah, the one who is called to account for his deeds on that Day, would be doomed."

7. "His kinsfolk": his family and relatives and companions who will have been pardoned even like himself.

8. In Sūrah Al-Ḥāqqah : 25, it was said that his record will be given him in his left hand, but here "behind his back." This will probably be for the reason that he would already have lost all hope that he would be given his record in his right hand, for he would be well aware of his misdeeds and sure to receive his record in his left hand. However, in order to avoid the humiliation of receiving it in the left hand, in front of all mankind, he will withdraw his hand behind and so would receive it "behind his back."

9. That is, his way of life was different from that of God's righteous men, about whom in Sūrah At-Ṭūr : 26, it has been said that they lived among their kinsfolk in fear and dread of God, i.e. they feared lest they should ruin their own Hereafter on account of their absorption in the love of children and endeavours for the sake of their well-being and prosperity in the world. On the contrary, this man lived a life free from every care and worry and helped his children and kinsfolk also to enjoy life fully, no matter what wicked and immoral methods he had to use to procure the means of enjoy-

ment, how he had to usurp the rights of others and transgress the bounds set by Allah for the sake of the worldly pleasures.

10. That is, it was against God's justice and His wisdom that He should overlook the misdeeds that he was committing and should not summon him before Himself to render his account of the deeds.

11. That is, "You will not remain in one and the same state, but will have to pass through countless stages gradually, from youth to old age, from old age to death, from death to *barzakh* (the intermediary state between death and Resurrection), from *barzakh* to Resurrection, from Resurrection to the Plain of Assembly, then to the Reckoning, and then to the meting out of rewards and punishments. An oath has been sworn by three things to confirm this: (1) by the twilight, (2) by the darkness of night and the gathering together in it of all those human beings and animals who remain scattered in the day time, and (3) by the moon's passing through different phases to become full. These are some of those things which testify that rest and stillness is unknown in the universe in which man lives. There is a continuous and gradual change taking place everywhere. Therefore, the disbelievers are wrong in thinking that life comes to an end after man has breathed his last.

12. "They do not fall prostrate": they do not bow down to God out of fear of Him. To perform a *sajdah* (prostration) here is confirmed by the practice of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace). Imām-Mālik, Muslim and Nasā'ī have related a tradition concerning Ḥaḍrat Abū Huraira (may Allah be pleased with him), saying that he recited this Sūrah in the Prayer and performing a *sajdah* here said: "The Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) performed a *sajdah* at this point." Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Da'ūd and Nasā'ī have cited this statement of Abū Rāfi': "Ḥaḍrat Abū Huraira recited this Sūrah in the 'Ishā' Prayer and performed a *sajdah*. When I asked why he had done so, he replied: I prayed under the leadership of Abul Qāsim (upon whom be Allah's peace) and he performed a *sajdah* here. Therefore, I will continue to perform this *sajdah* likewise as long as I live." Muslim, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhī, Nasā'ī, Ibn Mājah and others have related another tradition saying that Ḥaḍrat Abū Huraira said: "We performed *sajdah* behind the Holy Messenger of Allah in this Sūrah and in *Iqra' bi-ismi Rabbik-alladhi khalaq*."

13. Another meaning also can be: "Allah knows best what filth of disbelief, malice, hostility to the Truth and evil intentions and designs they keep filled in their breasts."

LXXXV

AL-BURŪJ البروج

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

LXXXV

AL-BURUJ البروج

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah is so designated after the word *al-burūj* appearing in the first verse.

Period of Revelation

The subject-matter itself indicates that this Sūrah was sent down at Makkah in the period when persecution of the Muslims was at its climax and the disbelievers of Makkah were trying their utmost by tyranny and coercion to turn away the new converts from Islam.

Theme and Subject-Matter

Its theme is to warn the disbelievers of the evil con-

sequences of the persecution and tyranny that they were perpetrating on the converts to Islam, and to console the believers, so as to say: "If you remain firm and steadfast against tyranny and coercion, you will be rewarded richly for it, and Allah will certainly avenge Himself on your persecutors on your behalf."

In this connection, first of all the story of the people of the ditch (*aṣḥāb al-ukhdud*) has been related, who had burnt the believers to death by casting them into pits full of fire. By means of this story the believers and the disbelievers have been taught a few lessons. First, that just as the people of the ditch became worthy of Allah's curse and punishment, so are the chiefs of Makkah also becoming worthy of it. Second, that just as the believers at that time had willingly accepted to sacrifice their lives by being burnt to death in the pits of fire instead of turning away from the faith, so also the believers now should endure every persecution but should never give up the faith. Third, that God, acknowledging Whom displeases the disbelievers and is urged on by the believers, is Dominant and Master of the Kingdom of the earth and heavens; He is self-praiseworthy and is watching what the two groups are striving for. Therefore, it is certain that the disbelievers will not only be punished in Hell for their disbelief but, more than that, they too will suffer punishment by fire as a fit recompense for their tyranny and cruelties. Likewise, this also is certain that those, who believe and follow up their belief with good deeds, should go to Paradise and this indeed is the supreme success. Then the disbelievers have been warned, so as to say: "God's grip is very severe. If you are proud of the strength of your hosts, you should know that the hosts of Pharaoh and Thamūd were even stronger and more numerous. Therefore, you should learn a lesson from the fate they

met. God's power has so encompassed you that you cannot escape His encirclement, and the Qur'ān that you are bent upon belying, is unchangeable: it is inscribed in the Preserved Tablet, which cannot be corrupted in any way."



وَ السَّمَاءِ ذَاتِ الْبُرُوجِ ۗ وَ الْيَوْمِ الْمَوْعُودِ ۗ وَ شَاهِدٍ وَ مَشْهُودٍ ۗ قِيلَ
 أَصْحَابُ الْأُخْدُودِ ۗ النَّارِ ذَاتِ الْوُقُودِ ۗ إِذْ هُمْ عَلَيْهَا قُعُودٌ ۗ وَ هُمْ
 عَلَىٰ مَا يَفْعَلُونَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ شُهُودٌ ۗ وَ مَا نَقَمُوا مِنْهُمْ إِلَّا أَنْ يُؤْمِنُوا
 بِاللهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَمِيدِ ۗ الَّذِي لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَ الْأَرْضِ ۗ وَ اللهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ
 شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ ۗ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ فَتَنُوا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَشُوبُوا
 فَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ جَهَنَّمَ ۗ وَ لَهُمْ عَذَابُ الْحَرِيقِ ۗ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَ
 عَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ ۗ ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْكَبِيرُ ۗ
 إِنَّ بَطْشَ رَبِّكَ لَشَدِيدٌ ۗ إِنَّهُ هُوَ يُبْدِي ۗ وَ يُعِيدُ ۗ وَ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الْوَدُودُ ۗ
 ذُو الْعَرْشِ الْمَجِيدُ ۗ فَقَالَ لِمَا يُرِيدُ ۗ أَهَلْ أَنْتَ حَدِيثُ الْجُنُودِ
 فِرْعَوْنَ وَ شَمُودَ ۗ بَلِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي تَكْذِيبٍ ۗ وَ اللهُ مِنْ وَرَائِهِمْ
 مُحِيطٌ ۗ بَلِ هُوَ قُرْآنٌ مَجِيدٌ ۗ فِي لَوْحٍ مَحْفُوظٍ ۗ

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LXXXV

AL-BURŪJ البروج

Verses : 22

Revealed at Makkah

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

By the heaven with its strong forts,¹ and the pro- 1-9
mised Day,² and the seer and that which is seen:³
Doomed were the people of the ditch, (of that ditch
which had the fire fed by the intensely blazing fuel,
when they were sitting by the ditch and witnessing what
they were doing with the believers.⁴ And their enmity
against the believers was for no other reason than that
they had believed in that Allah Who is the All-Mighty
the Self-Praiseworthy, Who is the Owner of the Kingdom
of the heavens and the earth; and Allah is watching
over everything.⁵

For those who persecuted the believing men and 10-11
women and did not repent of it, there is the torment of
Hell and the punishment of burning.⁶ As for those who
believed and did good deeds, there are Gardens for
them beneath which canals will be flowing. This is the
supreme success!

Indeed, the grip of your Lord is very severe. It is 12-22
He Who creates in the first instance, and He it is Who
will create again. And He is the All-Forgiving, the All-
Loving, Owner of the Throne, the Exalted and Doer of
whatever He wills.⁷ Has the story of the hosts reached
you, (of the hosts of) Pharaoh and Thamūd?⁸ But those
who disbelieve, persist in denying, although Allah has
encircled them. (Their denial does not affect the Qur'ān
at all), for this Qur'ān is sublime: it is (inscribed) in the
Tablet that is preserved.⁹

The Meaning of the Qur'ān

1. Literally: "By the heaven having constellations." Some of the commentators have interpreted it to mean the twelve signs of the zodiac in the heavens according to ancient astronomy. However, according to Ibn 'Abbās, Mujāhid, Qatādah, Ḥasan Baṣrī, Ḍaḥḥāk, and Suddī, it implies the glorious stars and planets of the sky.

2. That is, the Day of Resurrection.

3. The commentators have expressed many different views about "the seer" and "that which is seen". In our opinion what fits in well with the context is that the seer is every such person who will witness the Day of Resurrection and that which is seen is the Resurrection itself, the dreadful scenes of which will be seen by all. This is the view of Mujāhid, 'Ikrimah, Ḍaḥḥāk, Ibn Nujaiḥ and some other commentators.

4. "The people of the ditch": those who had burnt the believers at stake and witnessed their burning themselves. "Doomed were...": cursed were they by God and they became worthy of Hell torment. On this an oath has been sworn by three things: (1) By the heaven having constellations, (2) by the Day of Resurrection, which has been promised, and (3) by the dreadful scenes of the Day of Resurrection and all those creatures who will witness those scenes. The first of these testifies to the truth that the Sovereign, Absolute Being Who is ruling over the glorious stars and planets of the universe, cannot allow this contemptible, insignificant creature called man to escape His grip. The second thing has been sworn by on the basis that the wicked people committed whatever tyranny they wanted to commit, but the Day of which men have been forewarned is sure to come, when the grievances of every wronged person will be redressed and every wrongdoer will be brought to book and punished. The third thing has been sworn by for the reason that just as these wicked people enjoyed witnessing the burning of the helpless believers, so will all human beings on the Day of Resurrection witness how they are taken to task and burnt in Hell.

Several events have been mentioned in the traditions of the believers having been thrown into pits of blazing fire, which show that such tyrannies have been inflicted many a time in history.

One of the events has been reported by Ḥaḍrat Ṣuḥaib Rūmi from the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), saying that a king had a magician at his court, who on becoming old requested the king to appoint a boy who should learn magic from him. Accordingly the king appointed a boy. But the boy while going to the magi-

cian's place and coming back home also started visiting on the way a monk (who was probably a follower of the Prophet Jesus) and being influenced by his teaching turned a believer. So much so that by his training he acquired miraculous powers. He would heal the blind and cure the lepers. When the king came to know that the boy had believed in the Unity of God, he first put the monk to the sword; then wanted to kill the boy, but no instrument and no device had any effect on him. At last, the boy said to the king: "If you are bent upon killing me, shoot an arrow at me with the word: *Bi-ismi Rabbi-ghulam* (in the name of this boy's Lord) in front of the assembled people, and I shall die." The king did as he was told and the boy died. Thereupon the people cried out that they affirmed faith in the Lord of the boy. The courtiers told the king that the same precisely had happened which he wanted to avoid: the people had forsaken his religion and adopted the boy's religion. At this the king was filled with rage. Consequently, he got pits dug out along the roads, got them filled with fire and ordered all those who refused to renounce the new faith to be thrown into the fire. (Aḥmad, Muslim, Nasā'ī, Tirmidhī, Ibn Jarīr, 'Abdur Razzāq,' Ibn Abi Shaibah, Ṭabarānī, 'Abd bin Humaid).

The second event has been reported from Ḥaḍrat 'Alī. He says that a king of Iran drank wine and committed adultery with his sister resulting in illicit relations between the two. When the secret became known, the king got the announcement made that God had permitted marriage with the sister. When the people refused to believe in it, he started coercing them into accepting it by different kinds of punishment; so much so that he began to cast into the pits of fire every such person who refused to concede it. According to Ḥaḍrat 'Alī, marriage with the prohibited relations among the fire-worshippers has begun since then (Ibn Jarīr).

The third event has been related by Ibn 'Abbās probably on the basis of the Israelite traditions, saying that the people of Babylon had compelled the children of Israel to give up the religion of the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him): so much so that they cast into pits of fire all those who refused to obey. (Ibn Jarīr, 'Abd bin Humaid).

The best known event, however, relates to Najrān, which has been related by Ibn Hishām, Ṭabarī, Ibn Khaldūn, the author of *Mu'jam al-Buldān* and other Islamic historians. Its resume is as follows: Tubān As'ad Abū Karīb, king of Ḥimyar (Yaman), went to

Yathrib once, where he embraced Judaism under the influence of the Jews, and brought two of the Jewish scholars of Bani Quraizah with him to Yaman. There he propagated Judaism widely. His son Dhū Nuwās succeeded him and he attacked Najrān, which was a stronghold of the Christians in southern Arabia, so as to eliminate Christianity and make the people accept Judaism. (Ibn Hishām says that these people were true followers of the Gospel of the Prophet Jesus). In Najrān he invited the people to accept Judaism but they refused to obey. Thereupon he caused a large number of the people to be burnt in the ditches of fire and slew many others with the sword until he had killed nearly twenty thousand of them. Daus Dhū Tha'labān an inhabitant of Najrān, escaped and went, according to one tradition, to the Byzantine emperor, and according to another, to the Negus king of Abyssinia, and told him what had happened. According to the first tradition, the emperor wrote to the king of Abyssinia, and according to the second, the Negus requested the emperor to provide him with a naval force. In any case, an Abyssinian army consisting of seventy thousand soldiers under a general called Aryāṣ, attacked Yaman. Dhū Nuwās was killed, the Jewish rule came to an end, and Yaman became a part of the Christian kingdom of Abyssinia.

The statements of the Islamic historians are not only confirmed by other historical means but they also give many more details. Yaman first came under the Christian Abyssinian domination in 340 A.D. and this domination continued till 378 A.D. The Christian missionaries started entering Yaman in that period. About the same time, a man named Faymiyūn (Phemion) who was a righteous, earnest, ascetic man and possessed miraculous powers, arrived in Yaman and by his preaching against idol-worship converted the people of Najrān to Christianity. These people were ruled by three chiefs: *Sayyid*, who was the principal chief like the tribal elders and responsible for external affairs, political agreements and command of the forces, *ʿAqib*, who looked after the internal affairs, and *Usquf* (Bishop), the religious guide. In southern Arabia Najrān commanded great importance, being a major trade and industrial centre with tussore, leather and the armament industries. The well-known Yamanite wrapper and cloak (*hulla Yamāni*) was also manufactured here. On this very basis, Dhū Nuwās attacked this important place not only for religious but also for political and economic reasons. He put to death Hārithan (called Arethas by the Syrian historians).

Sayyid of Najrān, killed his two daughters in front of his wife Romah and compelled her to drink their blood, and then put even her to death. He took out the bones of Bishop Paul from the grave and burnt them, and ordered women, men, children, aged people, priests and monks, all to be thrown into the pits of fire. The total number of the people thus killed has been estimated between twenty and forty thousand. This happened in October, 523 A.D. At last, in 525 A.D. the Abyssinians attacked Yaman and put an end to Dhū Niwās and his Himyarite kingdom. This is confirmed by the Ḥiṣn Ghurāb inscription which the modern archaeologists have unearthed in Yaman.

In several Christian writings of the 6th century A.D. details of the event relating to the "people of the ditch" have been given, some of which are contemporary and reported from eye-witnesses. Authors of three of these books were contemporaries with the event. They were Procopeus, Cosmos Indicopleustis, who was translating Greek books of Ptolemy under command of the Negus Elesban at that time and resided at Adolis, a city on the sea-coast of Abyssinia, and Johannes Malala from whom several of the later historians have related this event. After this, Johannes of Ephesus (d. 585 A.D.) has related the story of the persecution of the Christians of Najrān in his history of the Church from a letter of Bishop Mar Simeon who was a contemporary reporter of this event. Mar Simeon wrote this letter to Abbot von Gabula; in it Simeon has reported this event with reference to the statements of the Yamanite eye-witnesses present on the occasion. This letter was published in 1881 A.D. from Rome and in 1890 A.D. in the memoirs of the martyrs of Christianity. Jacobian Patriarch Dionysius and Zacharia of Mitylene have in their Syriac histories also related this event. Ya'qūb Sāruji also in his book about the Christians of Najrān has made mention of it. Bishop Pulus of Elessa's elegy on those who perished in Najrān, is still extant. An English translation of the Syriac *Kitāb al-Himyarīn* (Book of the Himyarites) was published in 1924 from London, which confirms the statements of the Muslim historians. In the British Museum there are some Abyssinian manuscripts relating to that period or a period close to it, which support this story. Philby in his travelogue entitled "Arabian Highlands", writes: Among the people of Najrān the place is still well known where the event of the people of the ditch (*ashāb al-ukhdūd*) had taken place. Close by Umm Kharāq

there can still be seen some pictures carved in the rocks, and the present day people of Najrān also know the place where the cathedral of Najrān stood.

The Abyssinian Christians after capturing Najrān had built a church here resembling the Ka'bah, by which they wanted to divert pilgrimage from the Ka'bah at Makkah to it. Its priests and keepers wore turbans and regarded it as a sacred sanctuary. The Roman empire also sent monetary aid for this "ka'bah". The priests of this very "ka'bah" of Najrān had visited the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) under the leadership of their Sayyid, 'Āqib and Bishop for a discussion with him and the famous event of the *mubāhala* (trial through prayer) took place as referred to in 'Āl-Imran : 61. (For details, see E.N.'s 29 and 55 of 'Āl-Imrān).

5. In these verses those of Allah Almighty's attributes have been mentioned on account of which He alone deserves that one should believe in Him, and the people who feel displeased at one's believing in Him, are wicked and unjust.

6. "Punishment by burning" has been mentioned separately from the torment of Hell because they had burnt the oppressed people to death by casting them into the pits of fire. Probably this will be a different and severer kind of fire from the fire of Hell in which those people will be burnt.

7. "He is All-Forgiving": If a person repents and reforms himself, he can hope to be received by Allah in his mercy. "He is All-Loving"; i.e. He has no enmity with His creatures that he would subject them to torment without any reason, but He loves the creatures He has created and punishes them only when they do not give up the attitude of rebellion against Him. "Owner of the Throne" means that He alone is the Ruler of the Kingdom of the Universe: no one who is a rebel can escape His grip and punishment. The mention of His being "Exalted" is meant to warn man for his meanness when he adopts an attitude of arrogance against such a Being. Last of all, "He is Doer of whatever He wills": no one in the entire universe has the power to obstruct and resist what Allah wills to do.

8. The address is directed to the people who in their false pride of having powerful hosts, are breaking the law of God on His earth. They are being warned, as if to say: "Do you know what evil fate was met before by those who broke the bounds

set by Allah on the strength of the power of their hosts?"

9. That is, "The writ of the Qur'ān is unchangeable and imperishable. It is inscribed in the Preserved Tablet of God, which cannot be corrupted in any way. Whatever is written in it, has to be fulfilled; even the whole world together cannot avert its fulfilment."

LXXXVI

AT-TARIQ تَطَارِق

سورۃ الطارق

LXXXVI

AT-TARIQ الطارق

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name from the word *at-tāriq* in its first verse.

Period of Revelation

The style of its subject-matter resembles that of the earliest Sūrahs revealed at Makkah, but this Sūrah was sent down at a stage when the disbelievers of Makkah were employing all sorts of devices and plans to defeat and frustrate the message of the Qur'ān and Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings).

Theme and Subject-Matter

It discusses two themes: first that man has to appear before God after death; second, that the Qur'ān is a

decisive Word which no plan or device of the disbelievers can defeat or frustrate.

First of all, the stars of the heavens have been cited as an evidence that there is nothing in the universe which may continue to exist and survive without a guardian over it. Then man has been asked to consider his own self as to how he has been brought into existence from a mere sperm-drop and shaped into a living human being. Then it has been said that the God, Who has so brought him into existence, has certainly the power to create him once again, and this resurrection will be for the purpose to subject to scrutiny all the secrets of man, which remained hidden in the world. At that time, man will neither be able to escape the consequences of his deeds by his own power, nor will anyone else come to his rescue.

In conclusion, it has been pointed out that just as the falling of rain from the sky and the sprouting of plants and crops from the earth is no child's play but a serious task, so also the truths expressed in the Qur'ân are no jest but a firm and unchangeable reality. The disbelievers are involved in the misunderstanding that their plans and devices will defeat the invitation of the Qur'ân, but they do not know that Allah too is devising a plan which will bring to nought all their scheming and planning. Then in one sentence the discourse has been summed up, with a word of consolation to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) and a tacit warning to the disbelievers, saying: "Have patience for a while: let the disbelievers do their worst. Before long they will themselves realize whether they have been able to defeat the Qur'ân by their scheming or the Qur'ân has dominated them in the very place where they are exerting their utmost to defeat it."



وَالسَّمَاءِ وَالطَّارِقِ ۗ وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الطَّارِقُ ۗ النَّجْمُ الثَّاقِبُ ۗ إِنَّ
كُلَّ نَفْسٍ لَّمَّا عَلَيْهَا حَافِظٌ ۗ فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْإِنْسَانُ مِمَّ خُلِقَ ۗ خُلِقَ مِنْ نَّوَاءٍ
دَافِقٍ ۗ يَخْرُجُ مِنْ بَيْنِ الصُّلْبِ وَالتَّرَائِبِ ۗ إِنَّهُ عَلَى رَجْعِهِ
لَقَادِرٌ ۗ يَوْمَ تُبْلَى السَّرَائِرُ ۗ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ قُوَّةٍ وَلَا نَاصِرٍ ۗ وَ
السَّمَاءِ ذَاتِ الرَّجْعِ ۗ وَالْأَرْضِ ذَاتِ الصَّدَعِ ۗ إِنَّهُ لَقَوْلُ فَصْلٍ ۗ
وَمَا هُوَ بِالْهَزْلِ ۗ إِنَّهُمْ يَكِيدُونَ كَيْدًا ۗ وَأَكِيدُ كَيْدًا ۗ فَمَهْلِكُ
التَّكْفِيرِينَ أَمْهَلُهُمْ رُؤْيَا ۗ

LXXXVI

الطَّارِقُ AT-TARIQ

Verses : 17

Revealed at Makkah

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

By the heaven and the visitant by night, and what do you know what the visitant by night is? A shining star! There is no soul without a Guardian over it.¹ Then let man at least consider from what he is created.² He is created from a spurting fluid that issues forth from between the backbone and the breast-bones.³ Surely He (the Creator) has the power to create him again.⁴ The Day the hidden secrets are held to scrutiny,⁵ then man will neither have any power of his own nor any helper. By the heaven that sends down rain,⁶ and by the earth that splits (at the sprouting of vegetation), it is a decisive Word; it is no jest.⁷ These people (i.e. the

1-17

disbelievers of Makkah) are devising some plans," and I, too, am devising a plan.⁹ So leave the disbelievers, O Prophet; leave them to themselves for a while.¹⁰

1. "A Guardian": Allah Almighty Himself, Who is looking after and watching over every creature, big or small, in the earth and heavens. He it is Who has brought everything into existence, Who is maintaining and sustaining everything in its place and position, and Who has taken the responsibility to provide for every creature and to protect it from calamities till an appointed time. On this, an oath has been sworn by the heaven and by every star and planet which appears in the darkness of the night. (Although lexically, *an-najm ath-thāqib* is singular, it does not imply any one star but the star in the generic sense). The oath signifies that the existence of each of the countless stars and planets that shines in the sky at night, testifies to the fact that there is a Being Who has created it, illuminated it, suspended it in space, and thus is watching over it in a manner that neither it falls from its place nor collides with any other of the countless stars in their movements, nor does any other star collide with it.

2. After making man ponder over the heavens, he is now being invited to consider his own self and see how he has been created. Who is it Who selects one spermatozoon from among billions of spermatozoa emitted by the father and combines it at some time with one ovum out of a large number of the ova produced by the mother, and thus causes a particular human being to be conceived? Then, Who is it Who after conception develops it gradually in the mother's womb until it is delivered in the form of a living child? Then, Who is it Who in the mother's womb itself brings about a certain proportion and harmony between its bodily structure and its physical and mental capabilities? Then, Who is it Who watches over it continuously from birth till death—protects it from disease, accidents and calamities and provides him with countless means of life and opportunities for survival in the world of which he is not even conscious, not to speak of having the power to provide these for himself? Is all this happening without the planning and supervision of One God?

3. "Ṣulb" is the backbone and "ṭarā'ib" the breast-bones, i.e. the ribs. Since the procreative fluid in both man and woman is discharged from that part of the body which is between the back and

the breast, it is said that man has been created from the fluid issuing out from between the back and the breast. This fluid is produced even in case the hands and feet are cut off. Therefore, it is not correct to say that it issues out from the whole body of man. In fact, the principal organs of the body are its source and all these are located in the trunk. The brain has not been mentioned separately because the back-bone is that part of the brain through which connection between the body and the brain is established. (Also see Appendix I).

4. That is, His bringing man into existence and watching over him from the time conception takes place until death, is a clear proof that He can create him once again after death. If He had the power to create him in the first instance and man stays alive in the world by His power alone, what rational arguments can be presented for the conjecture that He does not have the power to do the same thing a second time? To deny this power man will even have to deny that God has brought him into existence, and the one who denies this may well come out one day with the claim that all books in the world have been printed accidentally, all cities of the world have been built accidentally, and there has occurred on the earth an explosion by chance which made all the factories start functioning automatically. The fact is that the creation of man, the structure of his body, the existence of the powers and capabilities working within him, and his survival as a living being - all this is a much more complex process than all those works that have come to be accomplished through man, or are still in the process of being accomplished. If such a complex work with such wisdom, proportion and order could be accomplished just through a chance accident, what else could not be regarded as accidental by a mentally deranged person?

5. "The hidden secrets": the acts of every person which remained a secret to the world as well as those affairs which came before the world only in their apparent form but the intentions, aims and secret motives working behind them remained hidden from the people. On the Resurrection Day all this will be laid bare and not only will the acts and deeds of every person be examined but it will also be seen what was his motive and intention and object of so acting. Likewise, it also remained hidden from the world, even from the doer of the act himself, what effects and influences of his act appeared in the world, to what extent they spread and for how

long they continued to work. This secret too will be revealed on the Resurrection Day and it will be fully examined as to what were the consequences of the seed that a person sowed in the world, what fruit it bore and for how long it affected the later generations for better or for worse.

6. The words *dhāt ar-raj'* have been used for the sky. Literally *raj'* means to return, but metaphorically this word is used for the rain in Arabic, for the rain does not fall just once, but returns over and over again in the season and sometimes out of season as well. Another reason for calling the rain *raj'* is that water rises as vapour from the oceans of the earth and then falls back as rain on the same earth.

7. That is, just as the falling of rain from the sky and the splitting of the earth to put out shoots is no jest but a serious reality, so also the news which the Qur'ān gives that man has to return to his God is no jest but a definite and decisive reality and an unchangeable truth which has to be fulfilled.

8. That is, these disbelievers are devising every kind of plan to defeat the invitation of the Qur'ān; they wish to blow out this candle; they are creating all sorts of doubts in the people's minds; they are inventing false accusations against the Prophet who has brought it so as to frustrate his mission in the world and perpetuate the darkness of ignorance and unbelief which he is struggling so hard to remove.

9. That is, "I am planning that none of their devices should succeed so that they are utterly defeated in their designs, and the light which they are trying their utmost to put out, spreads far and wide."

10. That is, "Leave them for a while to have their will. Before long the result will be before them and they will realize how far their scheming has become successful against My plan."

APPENDIX I

(In continuation of E.N. 3 of *Aṭ-Ṭāriq*)

In connection with our explanation of vv. 6-7 of *Sūrah Aṭ-Ṭāriq*, as given in E.N. 3, a doctor wrote to us:

"I have read your explanation carefully several times but have not been able to understand it fully. As far as the practical observation is concerned, the procreative fluid is produced by the testes. The fluid then empties into the epididymis, which leads into the vas deferens immediately before the vas enters the body of the prostate gland, where it is supplied with mucus and is discharged. How it issues forth from between the backbone and the breast-bones, I have not been able to understand. However, control over it is exercised by a nervous system which is spread like a net-work between the breast-bone and the back-bone. But that too only to a certain extent; it is controlled by the mucus of another gland located in the brain. But the question here relates to its issuing forth (which can only take place through a tube). I would request for a detailed commentary of this point. I have given you this trouble (for which I hope to be excused) only because you believe in scientific knowledge."

In reply to this we wrote in the issue of the *Tarjumān al-Qur'ān* for November, 1971:

"As you are a doctor you can better understand that although different parts of the body have their own separate functions, no part can perform its function by itself but only in coordination with the other parts. No doubt, the seminal fluid is produced by the testes from where it is emitted through a particular channel. But if the stomach, liver, lungs, heart, brain, kidney, etc. are not performing their respective functions rightly, the system of the production of the seminal liquid and its emission cannot work by itself. Let us understand this by an example. Urine forms in the kidney, is emptied into the bladder from where it is discharged through the outlet of the urinary tract. But by what process? If the organs which produce blood and circulate it throughout the body are not functioning properly, can the kidney by itself separate those elements

from the blood, which make up urine, and send it to the bladder? That is why, the Qur'an does not say that the seminal fluid issues from the back-bone and the breast-bones, but has said: "It issues forth from the part of the body which is located between the two." This does not negate the fact that the production of the seminal fluid and its emission has a mechanism which functions through particular parts of the body, but it shows that this mechanism is not independent; it performs its function in consequence of the combined work of the organism placed by Allah between the *ṣulb* (back-bone) and the *ṭarā'ib* (breast-bones). That is why, I have pointed out that the whole body is not involved in it, for even if the hands and feet are cut off, this system continues to work. However, if any one organ out of the principal organs located between the backbone and the breast-bones, is eliminated, the system cannot continue its function."

After reading the Question and the Answer, two doctors from two different places have provided some medical information which is given below:

"According to modern Embryology, it is an established fact that the testes in the foetus, the glands which produce seminal fluid, are located close to the kidneys between the backbone and the breast-bones, from where they gradually descend into the scrotum later. This happens before birth and sometimes a little after it. But even then the source of their nerves and veins remains the same, i.e. between the backbone and the breast-bones. Even their artery shoots out from the aorta located close to the backbone and traversing the whole stomach supplies them with blood. Thus, in fact, the testes are a part of the back, which on account of their inability to endure the high temperature of the body, have been transferred to the scrotum. Furthermore, although the seminal fluid is produced by the testes and stored in seminal vesicles, yet its emission is motivated from between the backbone and the breast-bones. On stimulation from the brain the trigger action causes seminal vesicles to contract and this causes ejaculation of the seminal fluid. Thus, it will be seen that the Qur'anic statement conforms to modern research of medical science on the subject.

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