

THE MEANING OF THE QURĀN

Vol. IV

[Sūrah Al-A'arāf, Al-Anfāl and At-Taubah]

By

S. ABUL A'LĀ MAUDŪDĪ

ISLAMIC PUBLICATIONS (PVT.) LIMITED
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VII

Al-A'raf

VII

AL-A'ARĀF الاعراف

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

INTRODUCTION

This Sūrah takes its name from vv. 46-47 in which mention of *A'arāf* occurs.

Period of Revelation

A study of its contents clearly shows that the period of its revelation is about the same as that of AL-AN'ĀM, *i.e.*, the last year of the Holy Prophet's life at Makkah, but it cannot be asserted with certainty which of these two was sent down earlier. Anyhow the manner of its admonition clearly indicates that it belongs to the same period. As both have the same historical background the reader should keep in view the preface to AL-AN'ĀM.

Topics of Discussion

The principal subject of this Sūrah is "invitation to the Divine Message sent down to Muhammad" (Allah's peace be upon him), which is couched in a warning. This is because the Messenger had spent a long time in admonishing the people of Makkah without any tangible effect on them. Nay, they had turned a deaf ear to his message and become so obdurate and antagonistic that, in accordance with the Divine Design, the Messenger was going to be commanded to leave them and turn to other people. That is why they are being admonished to accept the Message but, at the same time, they are being warned in strong terms of the consequences that followed the wrong attitude of the former people towards their Messengers. (Now that the Holy Prophet was going to migrate from Makkah) the concluding portion of the address has been directed towards the people of the Book with whom he was

going to come into contact. This meant that the time of migration was coming near and the "invitation" was going to be extended to mankind in general, and was not to be confined to his own people in particular as before.

During the course of the address to the Jews, the consequences of their hypocritical conduct towards Prophethood have also been pointed out clearly, for they professed to believe in Prophet Moses but in practice opposed his teachings, disobeyed him and worshipped falsehood and consequently were afflicted with ignominy and disgrace.

At the end of the Sūrah, some instructions have been given to the Holy Prophet and his followers for carrying out the work of the propagation of Islam with wisdom. The most important of these is that they should show patience and exercise restraint in answer to the provocations of their opponents. Above all, they have been advised that under stress of the excitement of feeling, they should not take any wrong step that might harm their cause.

SUMMARY

SUBJECT: INVITATION TO THE DIVINE MESSAGE

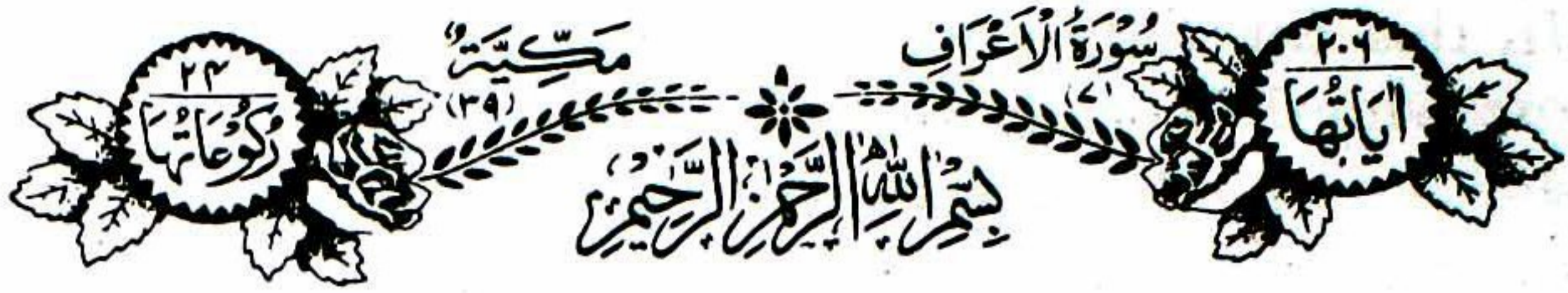
Topics and their Interconnection

- 1-10 In this passage, the people have been invited to follow the Message sent down to them through Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) and warned of the consequences of its rejection.
- 11-25 The story of Adam has been related with a view to warning his descendants against the evil devices of Satan, who is ever ready to mislead them, as he did in the case of Adam and Eve.
- 26-53 This passage contains some Divine instructions, and contrasts these with Satan's instructions, and depicts a graphic picture of the results and the consequences of the two.
- 54-58 As the Message has been sent down by Allah (Who is the Creator of the heavens and the earth and everything in them), it should be followed, for it is like the rain He sends down to give life to the dead earth.
- 59-171 Events from the lives of some well-known Prophets—Noah Hūd, Šāliḥ, Lot, Shu'aib, Moses (Allah's peace be upon them all)—have been related to show the consequences of the rejection of the Message, and the addressees of Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) have been admonished to accept and follow the Message in order to escape perdition.
- 172-174 As the Covenant with the Israelites was mentioned at the end of the preceding passage, the whole mankind has been reminded very appropriately of the Covenant that was made at the time of the appointment of Adam as the Vicegerent of Allah so that all of his descendants should remember it and accept and follow the Message that was delivered by the Holy Prophet.
- 175-179 The example of the one who had the knowledge of the Message but discarded it, has been cited as a warning to those who were treating the Message as false; they have been exhorted to use their faculties to recognise the Message; otherwise

Hell would be their abode.

In this concluding portion of the Sūrah, some deviations of those who do not use their faculties properly to understand the Message have been dealt with and they have been admonished, reproved and warned of the serious consequences of their antagonistic attitude towards the Message of the Holy Prophet. 180-198

In conclusion, instructions have been given to the Holy Prophet, and through him to his followers, about the attitude they should adopt towards those who reject the Message and deviate from it. 199-206



التَّصَّ ۝ كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ فَلَا يَكُنْ فِي صَدْرِكَ حَرَجٌ مِّنْهُ لِتُنذِرَ بِهِ
وَذِكْرَىٰ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۝ اِتَّبِعُوا مَا أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُم مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا مِن
دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَذَكَّرُونَ ۝ وَكَمْ مِّن قَرْيَةٍ أَهْلَكْنَاهَا فَجَاءَهَا بَأْسُنَا
بَيَاتًا أَوْ هُمْ قَائِلُونَ ۝ فَمَا كَانَ دَعْوَاهُمْ إِذْ جَاءَهُمْ بَأْسُنَا إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا
إِنَّا كُنَّا ظَالِمِينَ ۝ فَلَنَسْئَلَنَّ الَّذِينَ أُرْسِلَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَنَسْئَلَنَّ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ۝
فَلَنَقْضَنَّ عَلَيْهِمْ عِلْمَهُمْ وَمَا كُنَّا غَائِبِينَ ۝ وَالْوَزْنُ يَوْمَئِذٍ الْحَقُّ ۝ فَمَنْ
ثَقَلَتْ مَوَازِينُهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ۝ وَمَنْ خَفَّتْ مَوَازِينُهُ فَأُولَئِكَ
الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا يَظْلِمُونَ ۝ وَلَقَدْ مَكَّنَّاكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ
وَجَعَلْنَا لَكُمْ فِيهَا مَعَايِشَ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ ۝ وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَاكُمْ ثُمَّ
صَوَّرْنَاكُمْ ثُمَّ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ ۝ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ ۝ لَمْ يَكُنْ
مِنَ السَّاجِدِينَ ۝ قَالَ مَا مَنَعَكَ آلَا تَسْجُدَ إِذْ أَمَرْتُكَ ۝ قَالَ أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِّنْهُ
خَلَقْتَنِي مِن نَّارٍ وَخَلَقْتَهُ مِن طِينٍ ۝ قَالَ فَاهْبِطْ مِنْهَا فَمَا يَكُونُ لَكَ
أَنْ تَتَكَبَّرَ فِيهَا فَاخْرُجْ إِنَّكَ مِنَ الصَّاغِرِينَ ۝ قَالَ أَنْظِرْنِي إِلَى يَوْمِ
يُبْعَثُونَ ۝ قَالَ إِنَّكَ مِنَ الْمُنظَرِينَ ۝ قَالَ فِيمَا أَخَوَيْتَنِي لَأَقْعُدَنَّ لَهُمْ
صِرَاطَكَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ۝ ثُمَّ لَا تَبْيَهُهُمْ مِّن بَيْنِ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ وَ
عَنْ أَيْمَانِهِمْ وَعَنْ شَمَائِلِهِمْ ۝ وَلَا تَجِدُ أَكْثَرَهُمْ شَاكِرِينَ ۝ قَالَ اخْرُجْ
مِنْهَا مَذْذُومًا مَّدْحُورًا ۝ لَنْ تَبْعَكَ مِنْهُمْ لَأَمْلَأَنَّ جَهَنَّمَ مِنْكُمْ

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VII

AL-A'ARĀF

Revealed at Makkah

Verses : 206

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

Alif. Lām. Mīm. Šād. This is a book which has been sent down to you¹ : so, O Muhammad, let there be no hesitation² in your mind about it; this has been sent down that you may thereby warn (the disbelievers) and that it may be an admonition to the Believers.³ 1-2

O people, follow what has been sent down to you from your Lord and do not follow other patrons beside Him.⁴ But you seldom take admonition. 3

There have been many habitations which We destroyed. Our scourge came upon them all of a sudden at night or at a time during the day when they were taking rest. When Our scourge overtook them, the only cry they could utter was, "Indeed we were transgressors!"⁵ 4-5

Thus (on the Day of Judgment) We will most certainly call to account⁶ all those to whom We sent Our Messengers, and We will also ask the Messengers (how far they conveyed the Message and how the people responded to it⁷). Then We Ourselves will recount to them with knowledge (all their doings); for We were not absent from them. On that Day the weight will be identical with the Truth:⁸ accordingly those whose scales will be heavy will alone come out successful. And those whose scales will be light will be the ones who will have incurred loss⁹ upon themselves because they had been unjust to Our Revelations. 6-9

We established you on the earth entrusting you with power and providing you with sustenance, but you are seldom grateful. 10

Indeed We planned your creation, then We shaped you, and then We said to the angels, "Bow yourselves before Adam."¹⁰ Accordingly all bowed save *Iblīs* who did not join those who bowed themselves. 11-17

Allah said, "What prevented you from bowing down, when I commanded you?"

He replied, "I am better than he; Thou created me of fire and created him of clay."

Allah said, "Well, get down from here. You have no right to brag here of your greatness. Get out; indeed you are of those who wish themselves ignominy."¹¹

Satan requested, "Give me respite till the Day when they shall all be raised from the dead."

Allah replied, "You are granted respite."

He said, "Well for that Thou hast led me into deviation, now I will also lie in ambush for mankind on Thy Right Way. I will come upon them from all sides—from the front and from the rear, and from their right and from their left : then Thou wilt not find most of them to be grateful."¹²

1. Here by 'book' is meant this Sūrah, AL-A'ARĀF.

2. That is, "Convey this to the people without any fear and hesitation and without minding in the least how the opponents react to it. Let them be offended, let them ridicule, let them talk derisively and let them show more and more enmity, if they like, but you should deliver the Message and propagate it without any fear and hesitation."

Literally, the Arabic word "*harajun*" حَرْجٌ (translated into hesitation) means a thick bush, through which it is hard to pass. Figuratively the Text will mean, "There should be no indecision, doubt or unwillingness in your mind in the face of opposition and obstacles about proceeding further on the way of your Mission". The same thing has been expressed in XV : 97 : "O Muhammad, We know that you feel depressed in your heart by what they say (against your Mission)", and in XI : 12 " lest you should leave out a part of what is being revealed to you and be depressed in your heart by the fear that they should say, in answer to your invitation, 'Why has no treasure been sent down to him and why has no angel come along with him?'"

3. It means that the main object of this Sūrah is to warn people of the consequences of the rejection of the Message of the Prophet and to rouse the neglectful. Incidentally it also reminds the Believers of the implications of the Message while administering a warning to the disbelievers.

4. This is the main theme of this Sūrah. It invites the people to accept the Guidance that has been sent down by Allah through His Messengers, for this alone can impart the true knowledge to man about himself and the universe, and tell him the aim and object of his life and teach him the principles on which to build his morality, social life, culture and civiliza-

tion. Man should acknowledge Allah alone as his Guide and follow only His Guidance that has been sent down through His Messengers. The discourse warns that it is basically wrong to turn to anyone other than Allah for guidance, for this has always resulted in utter ruin, and will inevitably lead to ruin.

Here the word "patrons" has been used for all those beings whom a man follows instead of Allah, whether he praises them as saints or curses them as satans. (For further explanation see E.N. 6 of XLII).

5. That is, "You can learn a lesson from those communities that discarded the Guidance of Allah and followed the guidance of others, and consequently became so degenerate as to be a curse for the earth, which was cleansed of their filth by a scourge of Allah."

The words "Indeed we were transgressors" have been cited here to serve as a warning about two things. First, "It is absolutely useless to be sorry for and to confess one's error after the expiry of the term of respite given for its recompense." It is obvious that the individual and the community show utter lack of sense, if they waste the period of respite in negligence and turn a deaf ear to the warning and admonition of those who invite them to the Truth, and realise the horror of their conduct only when the scourge of Allah overtakes them. Secondly, "You yourselves have seen so many instances of individuals and communities, who were suddenly overtaken by the scourge of Allah, when they transgressed the bounds and reached the end of the term of their respite. You have also seen that after the scourge came upon them, there was no way of escape from it. When this has been the repeated verdict of history, why should a man repeat the same error over and over again, and wait for the ultimate end to offer repentance, when it cannot benefit in the least and can produce only grief and regret?"

6. The repeated occurrence of scourge in v. 3 is a conclusive proof of the fact that people will be called to account in the Hereafter, because in this life full punishment is not possible for the crimes committed by wicked individuals and communities. Here it comes merely to put a stop to their further crimes, just as a criminal at large is arrested and deprived of the opportunity for committing further iniquities. The real punishment will be in the Hereafter. The numerous instances of scourge in human history are a clear proof of the fact that man has not been left free to do what he likes. There is the Sovereign above him Who allows him to transgress only up to a certain limit and before he reaches that limit, administers warnings one after the other so that he may give up his wicked ways. But if he does not pay heed, then he is all of a sudden overpowered by a scourge that puts an end to his nefarious activities. If we consider the matter seriously in the light of these inevitable occurrences, we will come to the conclusion that the Sovereign of the universe has most surely appointed a time for calling to account those criminals and doing full justice to them. As the warning in this verse (6) is based on the preceding verses (4-5), it begins with "so" to show that this is a sequel to vv. 4-5.

7. This shows that Prophethood will be the sole criterion of judgment in the Hereafter. On the one hand, the Messengers will be asked about what they did in conveying the Message to mankind; on the other, those to whom the Message was sent, shall be questioned regarding their response to it. As regards the individuals or communities to whom the Message did not reach, the Qurān is silent as to the criterion by which they will be judged and there is no need for us to probe into this because Allah Himself has not deemed it necessary. But in regard to those individuals and communities who have received the Message, the Qurān is quite explicit that they shall be unable to put forward any excuse whatsoever for their disbelief and rejection, their evil deeds and disobedience, and they will be wringing their hands when they shall be driven to Hell with ignominy.

8. "On that Day weight will be identical with the Truth". On the Day of Judgment in the just scales of Allah, nothing but Truth will have any weight and *vice versa*; all that will have weight will be nothing but Truth. The weight of one will increase or decrease in proportion to the Truth one will have with oneself and that one will be judged solely by the measure of that weight and by nothing else. The life of falsehood, irrespective of its longevity and apparent grand deeds, will have absolutely no weight in those scales of justice. When the deeds of the worshippers of falsehood will be weighed in these scales, they will see with their own eyes that the 'grand' deeds of their lives have no weight at all. This thing has also been stated in vv. 103-105 in Sūrah AL-KAHF: "Those who spent all their endeavours in wrong ways during their life in the world with the presumption that what they were doing was all right, are the losers. These are the people who disbelieved in the Revelations of their Lord and their meeting with Him. Therefore all their deeds have got lost; so We will cause these to lose weight on the Day of Resurrection."

9. In other words, all human deeds will be divided into two categories, the positive and the negative. To know the Truth, to acknowledge it, to follow it and to exert in its cause, will be on the positive side; for in the Hereafter these alone will have any weight and value. On the contrary, to neglect the truth or to reject it or to follow one's lusts or other human beings or satans or to exert in the way of falsehood, will be on the negative side. The deeds on this side will not only be valueless in themselves but will also decrease the weight of the positive deeds.

From the above it is quite obvious that success in the Hereafter will depend entirely on this that a man's good deeds should outweigh his evil deeds. The case of the one whose evil deeds far outweigh the good deeds, will be like that of a bankrupt who gives away all his possessions to pay off his debts but still has some outstanding liabilities.

10. Please see also vv. 30-36, AL-BAQARAH, for comparison.

The wording of v. 34, AL-BAQARAH, might have given rise to the doubt that the command given to the angels to bow before Adam was meant for the person of Adam, but the wording of this verse clears that

doubt. Here the words preceding the Command show that the angels were to bow before Adam as representative of the whole of mankind.

As regards the creation of mankind, first of all, Allah made a plan for it; then He got ready the necessary material for this purpose; then He gave it the human shape, and when Adam came into being in the shape of a living man, then the angels were commanded to bow before him, who was the representative of the whole human race.

The above explanation of the verse is based on some other passages of the Qurān. For instance, let us examine vv. 71-72 of Sūrah ṢĀD :

“Just recall the time when your Lord said to the angels, ‘I am going to create a man of clay : when I perfect it in every way, and blow into it of My Spirit, all of you should bow down before him’.”

Here, too, the same three stages, the creation, the perfection and bringing to life, have been mentioned in a different way. First of all, a man of clay was created, then he was given a shape and proportionate limbs and faculties and then he was brought to life as Adam by the blowing of His Spirit into it.

Let us also examine vv. 28-29 of AL-HIJR:

“Just recall the time when your Lord said to the angels, ‘I am going to create a man out of clay of moulded mud. When I perfect it in every way and blow into it of My Spirit, then all of you should bow down before him’.”

It is very difficult for us to understand the exact nature of the creation of the first man, for we cannot comprehend fully how man was made from the material of the earth, how he was shaped and perfected and how the Spirit was blown into him. However, it is quite clear that the story of man's creation as stated in the Qurān is quite different from Darwinism. According to this doctrine, the evolution of man has taken place from a non-human and semi-human state by a continuous process of elimination, selection and adaptation, and in this there is no line of demarcation to denote the end of the non-human state and the beginning of the species of 'man' as such. On the contrary, the Qurān says that man started his life as man; that in the entire history he has absolutely no connection whatsoever with any non-human state. Allah created him as man from the very first day of his life on the earth and endowed him with wisdom and enlightenment from the very start of his life.

The above two points of view of the story of man lead to two opposite conceptions in regard to man. The adoption of the Darwinian conception reduces man to one of the species of animals : therefore all the principles of human life (including the moral principles) will be based on the principles governing animal life and any animal-like behaviour of his will be regarded as natural. Then the only difference between human beings and animals will be the ability of the former to make use of instruments for the provision of their necessities and luxuries. On the contrary, the adoption of the Divine conception raises him from the low position of

[Contd. on p. 14

أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿١٨﴾ وَيَأْمُرُ اسْكُنْ أَنْتَ وَزَوْجُكَ الْجَنَّةَ فَكُلَا مِنْ حَيْثُ شِئْتُمَا
 وَلَا تَقْرَبَا هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةَ فَتَكُونَا مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٩﴾ فَوَسَّوَسَ لَهَا الشَّيْطَانُ
 لِيُبْدِيَ لَهَا مَا وَّرَىٰ عَنْهَا مِنْ سَوَاتِحِهَا وَقَالَ مَا تَهَكِّمَانِ رَبُّكُمَا عَنْ
 هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةِ إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَا مَلَكَتَيْنِ أَوْ تَكُونَا مِنَ الْخَالِدِينَ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَقَاسَمَهُمَا
 إِنِّي لَكُمَا لَمِنَ النَّاصِحِينَ ﴿٢١﴾ فَدَلَّهُمَا بِعُرْوَةٍ فَلَمَّا ذَاقَا الشَّجَرَةَ بَدَتْ لَهُمَا
 سَوَاتِحُهُمَا وَطِفْقًا يَخِصِفُ عَلَيْهِمَا مِنْ وَرَقِ الْجَنَّةِ ۗ وَنَادَاهُمَا رَبُّهُمَا
 أَلَمْ أَنْهَكُمَا عَنْ تِلْكَ الشَّجَرَةِ وَأَقُلْتُ لَكُمَا إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لَكُمَا عَدُوٌّ
 مُبِينٌ ﴿٢٢﴾ قَالَا رَبَّنَا ظَلَمْنَا أَنْفُسَنَا ۖ وَإِنْ لَمْ تَغْفِرْ لَنَا وَتَرْحَمْنَا لَنَكُونَنَّ
 مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٢٣﴾ قَالَ اهْبِطُوا بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ ۗ وَلَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ
 مُسْتَقَرٌّ وَمَتَاعٌ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ ﴿٢٤﴾ قَالَ فِيهَا تَحْيَوْنَ وَفِيهَا تَمُوتُونَ وَ مِنْهَا
 تُخْرَجُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾ يَبْنَىٰ أَدَمَ قَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ لِبَاسًا يُؤَارِي سَوَاتِكُمْ وَرِيشًا ۗ
 ١٥ ع
 وَ لِبَاسِ التَّقْوَىٰ ۗ ذَٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ ذَٰلِكَ مِنْ آيَةِ اللَّهِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَذَّكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾ يَبْنَىٰ
 أَدَمَ لَا يَفْتِنَنَّكَ الشَّيْطَانُ كَمَا أَخْرَجَ أَبَوَيْكَ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ يَنْزِعُ عَنْهُمَا
 لِبَاسَهُمَا لِيُرِيَهُمَا سَوَاتِحَهُمَا ۗ إِنَّهُ يَرِيكُمْ هُوَ وَقَبِيلُهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا تَرَوْنَهُمْ ۗ إِنَّا
 جَعَلْنَا الشَّيْطَانَ أَوْلِيَاءَ لِلَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَإِذَا فَعَلُوا فَاحِشَةً قَالُوا
 وَجَدْنَا عَلَيْهَا آبَاءَنَا وَاللَّهُ أَمَرَنَا بِهَا ۗ قُلْ إِنْ أَرَادَ اللَّهُ بِالنَّاسِ الْفِتْنَةَ
 لَأَسْرِعَنَّ اللَّهُ لِيُفْسِدَ سُلُوكَهُمْ ۗ قُلْ أَمَرَ رَبِّي بِالْقِسْطِ ۗ وَأَقِيمُوا
 وُجُوهَكُمْ عِندَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ وَادْعُوهُ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ ۗ كَمَا بَدَأَكُمْ
 تَعُودُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾ فَرِيقًا هَدَىٰ وَفَرِيقًا حَقَّ عَلَيْهِمُ الضَّلَالَةُ ۗ إِنَّهُمْ اتَّخَذُوا

Allah said, "Get out from here—despised and disowned. 18-19
Note it well that I will fill the Hell with you and with all those who will follow you. As for you, O Adam, you and your wife should dwell in this Paradise; you may eat of anything from anywhere, but do not even go near this tree or you shall become transgressors."

Then Satan tempted them so that he might reveal to 20-25
them their shameful parts which had been hidden from each other. He said to them, "Your Lord has forbidden you to go near this tree only lest you should become angels or become immortals." He swore an oath and assured them, "I am your true well-wisher." Thus he beguiled them and gradually moulded them to his design. So, when they tasted (the fruit) of the tree, their shameful parts became visible to each other and they began to cover themselves with the leaves of the Garden.

Then their Lord called out to them, saying, "Did I not forbid you to go near this tree and warn you that Satan was your open enemy?"

Both of them at once replied, "O Lord, we have wronged ourselves gravely; if You do not forgive us and have mercy upon us, we shall be totally ruined."¹³

Allah commanded, "Go down;¹⁴ you are enemies to each other : the earth shall be a dwelling place for you for a fixed term and there you will get your livelihood". He added, "There you shall live and there you shall die and from there you shall be brought forth at last."

O children of Adam,¹⁵ We have sent down to you cloth- 26-27
ing in order to cover the shameful parts of your body, and to serve as protection and decoration; and the best garment is the garment of piety. This is one of the signs of Allah; it may be the people learn a lesson from this. O children of Adam, let not Satan seduce you in the same way that he caused your first parents to be driven out of the Garden and stripped them of their garments in order to expose their shameful parts before each other. He and his party see you from where you cannot see them. We have made these satans the guardians of those who do not believe.¹⁶

Whenever these people commit a shameful deed, they 28-30

say, "We found our forefathers doing this, and Allah Himself has enjoined us to do this."¹⁷ Say to them, "Allah never enjoins a shameful thing.¹⁸ Do you attribute to Allah's name and say things which you know not to be from Him?" O Muhammad, say to them, "My Lord has enjoined justice and righteousness; (He has also enjoined that) you should keep aright your direction during every act of worship and invoke Him alone, dedicating your faith sincerely and exclusively to Him; you shall be created again just as He has created you now.¹⁹ He has shown the Right Way to some but has justly left others to go astray. This is because, instead of Allah, they have made satans their guardians, and yet think that they are on the Right Way."

Contd. from p. 11]

animal to the high position of man, His noblest creation. Then he is no longer a mere talking animal or a social animal but the vicegerent of Allah on this earth. Then what will distinguish him from all other creatures will not be his faculty of speech and his social life, but his moral responsibilities and the trust of the power delegated to him by Allah and his accountability for these to Him. This will change man's entire outlook about his life on this earth and will demand a different philosophy of life and system of morality, law and civilization. Then man will, of his own accord, look upwards in search of the principles of life and not downwards.

Now let us consider an objection to the Divine conception of man howsoever high sounding this may be from the moral and psychological points of view: how can we reject the scientific Darwinian conception merely on this account? In answer to this, we put a counter question: has the Darwinian theory of the 'Origin of Species' been scientifically proved? Only those people who have a cursory knowledge of science may be suffering from this misunderstanding that the theory of evolution has been scientifically proved to be true, but the majority of the scientists know that it is merely a theory in spite of its high-sounding technical terms, and that the arguments in favour of this are not conclusive, but merely hypothetical. The most that can be said in this connection is that both the theories of the creation of the species may be equally possible. Their creation might have taken place according to the Darwinian theory of evolution, or each of the species might have been brought into existence individually.

11. That is, "It is obvious that you invite your own disgrace because you have formed too high an opinion of yourself, though you are merely a creation and a servant of your Lord. You have arrogantly disobeyed the Command of your Creator, thinking it to be below your dignity. The

mere fact that you have shown pride, conceit and haughtiness without any personal claim or title to any excellence of your own, cannot make you great and respectable. It will make you mean, low and disgraceful, and you yourself will be responsible for this ignominy."

12. This (vv. 16-17) is the challenge that was given by Satan to Allah. It means, "During the respite Thou hast granted me till the Day of Resurrection, I will exert my utmost to show that man does not deserve the superiority Thou hast bestowed upon him over me. I will show how ungrateful, thankless and disloyal he is!"

The respite that was asked by Satan and granted by Allah was not merely for time but also for opportunity to do what he intended (to do). What he meant was that he should be given the opportunity for exploiting man's weaknesses to prove that he was unfit for the vicegerency. Allah granted his request and this has been elaborated in XVII : 61-65. According to this Allah granted leave to Satan to do whatever he liked to mislead Adam and his offspring from the Right Way. He was allowed to practise whatever devices he thought to misguide man. In short, all the ways would remain open for him to mislead men with this proviso : "Indeed you shall have no power over My servants." (XVII : 65). This means, "You will be allowed to make attempts to involve them in misunderstandings and allure them by false hopes, and by making evil look fair to them, and to invite them to evil ways by the allurements of lusts and vain hopes. But you shall have neither any power to force them to your ways nor to prevent them from following the Right Way, if they intend to follow it." The same thing has also been stated in XIV : 22 : "When on (the Day of) Resurrection, Allah will pass His judgment on His followers, Satan will say to them, 'I had no power to force you to follow me. The only thing I did was to invite you to my way; therefore do not blame me now, but blame yourselves'"

Now let us consider the charge of Satan against Allah : "Thou hast involved me in deviation." What he meant was this : "You are responsible for my deviation for You commanded me to bow down before Adam, who is inferior to me in position. As this has injured my self-respect, I have disobeyed You." It is obvious that Satan desired that Allah ought not to have exposed the feelings of pride and rebellion he was nurturing in his heart but ought to have let him go unchecked on the way he was going. As his charge was absurd, Allah did not take any notice of it.

13. In this story the Qurān has brought to light the following important facts :

(1) The feelings of shyness and modesty are natural and instinctive. Their first expression is the natural shyness one feels in exposing one's shameful parts before anyone else. The Qurān tells us that this shyness has not been artificially created in man by the evolution of civilization nor has it been acquired by him as has been asserted by some disciples of Satan. This is an instinct that has been inherent in man from the first

day of his creation.

(2) The sex instinct is the greatest weakness of the human race. That is why Satan selected this weak spot for his attack on the adversary and devised the scheme to strike at their modesty. Therefore the first step he took in this direction was to expose their nakedness to them so as to open the door of indecency before them and beguile them into sexuality. Even to this day, Satan and his disciples are adopting the same scheme of depriving the woman of the feelings of modesty and shyness, and they cannot think of any scheme of 'progress' unless they expose and exhibit the woman to all and sundry.

(3) It is human nature not to accept easily an open invitation to wickedness. That is why every satan has to pose as a sincere well-wisher of man in order to entangle him in his snare.

(4) Man has a great natural yearning for a higher position than the existing one, or for obtaining immortality. That is why Satan succeeded in beguiling them by offering to make them angels or immortals. Even now he first tempts man by the allurements of a higher position and a better condition, and then leads him to follow the way that throws him into the abyss of degeneration.

(5) The Qurān refutes the commonly known version that Satan first beguiled Eve and then used her to mislead Adam. It says that Satan beguiled both of them and both of them were deceived. Though the difference between the two versions appears to be trivial, yet a careful appraisal of the two will show that they have far-reaching implications. The first version played a great part in degrading woman morally, legally and socially, whereas the Quranic version has helped raise the status of woman to a high level.

(6) This story makes it quite clear that whenever man disobeys Allah, he is exposed sooner or later. The nakedness of Adam and Eve became visible because they disobeyed the command of Allah, and not because of any inherent quality of the forbidden tree. At first Allah had made His own special arrangement to cover their nakedness, but when they disobeyed Him by eating the forbidden fruit, He undid that arrangement and they were left to themselves to cover themselves in their own way, if they so desired. And if they had no intention of covering themselves, or if they did not do anything in this connection, Allah did not care at all about the condition in which they moved about. This meant to show that Allah would help them only if they remained obedient to Him. As soon as they would transgress the bounds of His obedience, He would withdraw His protection and leave them to do whatever they liked. The Holy Prophet also stated the same thing in several Traditions. He used to pray, "O my Allah, I expect Mercy from Thee: so do not leave me to myself even for a moment".

(7) In his conflict with man, Satan wanted to prove that man was not superior to him in any way. So he beguiled him to eat the forbidden fruit. Though Satan was successful in beguiling him into disobeying

his Lord, yet on the whole man proved his moral superiority over Satan. (a) Satan exhibited pride by claiming to be superior to man, but man did not put up such a claim. (b) Satan disobeyed Allah solely because of his pride without any external temptation. On the contrary, man did not commit disobedience because he intended it, but he was beguiled into it by Satan, who approached in the guise of a well-wisher. Even then, he was misled because he imagined that he was going towards a higher position. (c) When Satan was warned of his sin, he did not confess it nor return to the way of obedience, but became all the more obdurate. On the contrary, when man was warned of his sin, he did not show obduracy, nor arrogance, but felt ashamed and sorry; he confessed it, turned to the way of obedience to his Lord and begged His forgiveness in order to seek His blessing.

(8) This story has been related here mainly to teach the lesson that the right course for the offspring of Adam is to follow His way and not that of Satan. The Satan's way has been clearly made distinct from Adam's way. It is to turn away from Allah's obedience and to adopt the way of rebellion against Him and to persist in it with pride in spite of warning, and to beguile into disobedience those who are treading the path of obedience. Therefore the Right Way for man is to fight against satanic deceptions and to understand and counteract his cunning devices and to be ever on the guard to protect himself from his evil designs, and to repent, if, in spite of all his precautions, he sometimes falls a victim to Satan and disobeys his Allah. He should, then, confess it, feel sorry for it and be ashamed of it and turn to Allah and make amends for it.

It also meant to warn the people who were opposing the Holy Prophet, as if to say, "The way you are following is the way of Satan, who has made you swerve from the Right Way. The very fact that you have made the satans from among the jinns and mankind your patrons and that you are persisting in your error, in spite of repeated warnings, shows that you have fallen a victim to your open and permanent enemy. As you are going to be utterly ruined by him and meeting with the same consequences that are in store for Satan, if you are not your own enemies, and if you have any common-sense left in you, you should take a warning and turn to the way of your first parents, Adam and Eve, and repent."

14. The words "Go down" should not give rise to the misunderstanding that they were exiled from Paradise as a punishment for their disobedience. The Qurān has at several places declared clearly that Allah accepted their repentance and forgave them their sin. And there is nothing in this command that might be regarded as punishment. They were sent to the earth as His vicegerents and this was the very purpose of the creation of man. (Refer to E.N.'s 48 and 53 of AL-BAQARAH.)

15. In this passage, the Qurān has used the story of Adam and Eve for the eradication of the evil of nakedness. Satan had seduced the Arabs of the pre-Islamic period into believing that clothing was meant merely for the purpose of decorating and protecting the body from the hardships

of weather. Accordingly they totally disregarded its real purpose and paid no heed to cover their shameful parts and did not hesitate to uncover them before others in the open. Above all, they would go round the Ka'abah in perfect nudity during the Haj season, and their women were even more shameless than their men. That was because they considered it a religious act and did this as if it were a virtuous deed.

The whole human race has been addressed because this evil was not confined to the Arabs alone but many people of the world had been (and even today are) guilty of this. Therefore the whole human race has been warned, as if to say, "O children of Adam! Nudity is a clear manifestation of the fact that you have been seduced by Satan. As you have discarded the Guidance of your Lord, and rejected the Message of His Prophets, you have given yourselves up to Satan who has misled you from the way of natural modesty into that shameful state, in which he intended to mislead your first parents. If you consider it seriously, you will come to the inevitable conclusion that you can neither understand rightly the demands of your nature nor fulfil them without the Guidance of the Messengers."

16. This passage brings out clearly the following facts about clothing :

(1) The need of clothing has not been artificially created in man, but it is an important urge of human nature. That is why Allah has not created a natural covering for the human body, as He has done in the case of all other animals. Instead, He has instilled inherently the feelings of modesty and shyness in human nature. Besides this, He has not made his sex organs as merely sex organs, but has also made them shameful organs, which, by his very nature, he does not like to expose before others. Moreover, He has not given man any ready-made covering for hiding the shameful parts, but has ingrained in the human nature that man should hide them with a clothing. This is what v. 26 implies. Allah has inspired man with the urge to hide the shameful parts of the body. Therefore man should understand the nature of this inspired urge and make clothing for himself from the material provided by Him.

(2) The fact that in v. 26 the covering of the shameful parts precedes the protecting and decorating of the body, is a clear proof that more importance has been attached to the moral than the physical function of clothing. Thus it is obvious that the human nature is quite different from the animal nature. That is why Nature has made provision for the protection and decoration of the body of the animals, but has ingrained no urge in them for the covering of their shameful parts. But when the human beings discarded the Guidance of Allah and began to follow the guidance of Satan, they reversed the above order as if to say, "Your clothing is merely to protect and decorate your bodies just as the skins cover the bodies of the animals. As regards the covering of the shameful parts, garments have absolutely no importance, for these are merely sex organs and not shameful organs."

(3) The garments should not only be the means of covering the

shameful parts and of protection and decoration but should also enable man to attain piety. The dress should, therefore, be such as to conceal those parts of the body that should be hidden from others; it should neither be too expensive nor too poor with regard to the position of the wearers; it should not smack of haughtiness nor arrogance nor hypocrisy. Moreover, the garment of piety demands that the male should not wear the female dress and *vice versa*, and that the Muslims should not imitate blindly the non-Muslims in dress. It is obvious that only those who believe in the Guidance of Allah and follow it, can attain the desired standard of the garment of piety. But those who discard the Guidance of God and make satans their guides, are misled by them into one error or the other in regard to clothing.

(4) Clothing is one of Allah's many Signs which are spread all over the world and which lead men to the recognition of the Reality, provided that one sincerely seeks it. If one seriously considers the above-mentioned three facts about clothing, one can easily understand how clothing is an important Sign of Allah.

17. This refers to the custom of the Arabs of going round the Ka'abah in perfect nudity (E.N. 15), considering it to be a religious act, enjoined by Allah.

18. This brief sentence ("Allah never enjoins a shameful thing") contains a very forceful argument against their beliefs and customs of ignorance. In order to understand the force of the argument, it is necessary to understand two basic things :

(1) Though the Arabs practised nudism in the performance of certain religious rituals, they considered nakedness itself a shameful thing. That is why, in spite of this custom, no respectable Arab ever chose to practise nudism in a civilised gathering, in the bazar or before one's kith and kin.

(2) Even though they considered nudism to be a shameful thing, they said that they practised it because this custom had been enjoined by Allah. This claim was based on the wrong notion that their religion was from Allah. But the Qurān refutes their claim by arguing like this : "You yourselves consider nudism to be an indecent thing. Therefore your claim that Allah has enjoined the practice of nudism is absolutely false. As a corollary to this, if this indecent custom is approved by your religion, it is a clear proof of the fact that your religion is not from Allah."

19. In v. 29, Allah showed, by contrast, that the religion prescribed by Him had no connection whatsoever with their senseless customs, which were contradictory to the following fundamental principles of His religion :

(1) A man should conduct his life in accordance with justice and righteousness.

(2) He should keep his direction right during worship. That is, "It should be exclusively directed towards Allah and there should be absolutely nothing of *shirk* in it and he should not show any sort of

[Contd. on p. 22

الشَّيْطَانِ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَيَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّهُمْ مُّهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٥﴾ يَبْنِي أَدَمَ
 خُدُودًا زِينَتَكُمْ عِنْدَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا إِنَّهُ لَا
 يُحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ ﴿١٦﴾ قُلْ مَنْ حَرَّمَ زِينَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي أَخْرَجَ لِعِبَادِهِ وَ
 الطَّيِّبَاتِ مِنَ الرِّزْقِ قُلْ هِيَ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا خَالِصَةٌ يَوْمَ
 الْقِيَامَةِ كَذَلِكَ نَفَصِلُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٧﴾ قُلْ إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ سَرِيقَ
 الْفَوَاحِشِ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَنَ وَالْإِثْمَ وَالْبَغْيَ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَأَنْ
 تُشْرِكُوا بِاللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزَّلْ بِهِ سُلْطَانًا وَأَنْ تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا
 تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٨﴾ وَ لِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ أَجَلٌ فَإِذَا جَاءَ أَجَلُهُمْ لَا يَسْتَأْخِرُونَ سَاعَةً
 وَلَا يَسْتَقْدِمُونَ ﴿١٩﴾ يَبْنِي أَدَمَ إِمَامًا يَا بَنِيَّكُمْ رُسُلٌ مِنْكُمْ يَقُضُونَ عَلَيْكُمْ
 الْإِثْمَ فَمَنْ أَتَى وَأَصْلَحَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَ
 الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَاسْتَكْبَرُوا عَنْهَا أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا
 خَالِدُونَ ﴿٢١﴾ فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا أَوْ كَذَّبَ بِآيَاتِهِ أُولَئِكَ
 يَنَالُهُمُ النَّصِيبُ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ حَتَّى إِذَا جَاءَهُمْ رُسُلُنَا يَتَوَفَّوْنَهُمْ قَالُوا
 آيِنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ قَالُوا ضَلُّوا عَنَّا وَشَهِدُوا عَلَى
 أَنْفُسِهِمْ أَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا كَافِرِينَ ﴿٢٢﴾ قَالَ ادْخُلُوا فِي أُمَمٍ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ
 قَبْلِكُمْ مِنَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنْسِ فِي النَّارِ كُلَّمَا دَخَلَتْ أُمَّةٌ لَعَنَتْ أُخْتَهَا حَتَّى
 إِذَا ادَّارَكُوا فِيهَا جَمِيعًا قَالَتْ أُخْرِبُهُمْ لِأُولِهِمْ رَبَّنَا هُوَ لَاءِ أَصْلُونَا
 فَأْتِيهِمْ عَذَابًا ضِعْفًا مِنَ النَّارِ قَالَ لِكُلِّ ضِعْفٌ وَلَكِنْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾
 وَ قَالَتْ أُولَهُمْ لِأُخْرِبُهُمْ فَمَا كَانَ لَكُمْ عَلَيْنَا مِنْ فَضْلِ فَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ

O children of Adam, dress yourselves fully, properly and decently at the time of every worship;²⁰ eat and drink, but do not transgress, for Allah does not like the transgressors.²¹ 31

O Muhammad, ask them, "Who has forbidden²² the decent garments that Allah brought forth for His servants and (who has forbidden) the good and pure things of life bestowed by Him?" Say, "All these things are for the Believers in this world but on the Day of Resurrection, these shall be exclusively for them."²³ Thus We make quite plain Our Revelations to those who possess knowledge. 32

O Muhammad, say to them, "The things which my Lord has forbidden are : shameful deeds whether open or secret,²⁴ sinful²⁵ things and transgression against the Truth;²⁶ He has also forbidden to associate partners with Allah since He has sent down no authority therefor; (He has also forbidden) to attribute to Allah's name the thing which you know not He has said." 33

Every community has been given a fixed term; when the term expires, it can neither be put back nor put forward by a single hour.²⁷ (Allah declared it clearly at the very beginning of human life,) "O children of Adam! If Messengers from among you should come to you and recite to you My Revelations, whoever will refrain from disobedience and mend his ways, will have no cause of fear nor of sorrow; as for those who will treat Our Revelations as false and show pride in regard to them, shall be the dwellers of Hell, wherein they shall remain for ever".²⁸ Then who can be more wicked than the one who invents falsehoods about Allah and then attributes these to Him or than the one who treats the true Revelations of Allah as false? Such people will go on receiving their destined shares²⁹ till that hour comes when the angels, appointed by Us, will arrive to capture their souls. Then the angels will ask them, "Where are those now whom you worshipped instead of Allah?" They will answer, "All of them have forsaken us." And they will give evidence against themselves that they had indeed denied the truth. Allah will say, "Go into Hell, where those who went before you from among jinns and men have gone." As each generation will be entering Hell it will curse its preceding generation till all generations shall be 34-39

gathered there : then each succeeding generation will say regarding the preceding one, "O Lord, these were the people who led us astray; therefore give them double chastisement of the Fire." Allah will reply, "There is a double chastisement for every one but you know it not."⁸⁰ And the preceding generation will say to the succeeding, "(If we were to blame) you, too, were no better than we. Now taste the torture for what you earned."⁸¹

Contd. from p. 19]

obedience or obeisance or servility to any other than Allah.

(3) He should invoke Allah and none else, for guidance, succour, help and protection. He should, however, dedicate his entire life exclusively to Allah before invoking His help, for it is absurd to lead a life of *shirk*, disbelief, disobedience, and slavery of others, and then invoke Allah as if to say, "O God, help us in carrying out successfully our rebellion against Thyself."

(4) Above all, he should sincerely and firmly believe that he shall be resurrected in the Next World, just as he has been given birth in this world, and then shall be called upon to render an account of all his deeds in this world.

20. Here the word "*Zinat*" means full and proper dress. The verse exhorts the people to be fully clothed, when they are engaged in worship. For this purpose, it does not suffice to cover merely those parts of the body which the Law requires to be hidden in public in addition to the shameful parts. Therefore one should dress properly and decently so as to serve both the purposes, in accordance with one's means.

This command is meant to refute the wrong attitude which the ignorant people at that time had adopted, and have been adopting since then. They thought that one should worship Allah in perfect or semi-nudity and should put on a dishevelled appearance before Him. In utter contrast to this, Allah not only prohibits nudity but also commands that one should be dressed fully, properly and decently at the time of worship and should put on an appearance that might not have even a tinge of untidiness and indecency.

21. That is, "Allah does not like those people who transgress the limits imposed by Him by making the lawful as unlawful. That is why He does not approve of those who put on a dishevelled appearance or starve themselves or deprive themselves of the lawful and pure things under the foolish belief that they are pleasing their Allah thereby. He does not demand this as essential for His worship ; nay, He is pleased if one wears a decent dress and makes use of the pure things provided by Him. According to His Law, the only thing that is sinful is to transgress His limits by making the lawful unlawful or the unlawful lawful."

22. It should be noted that this question is a typical way which the

Qurān employs to refute false ways and religions. The argument implied in the question is this : As Allah Himself has created all the pure, good and nice things for His servants, it cannot be His will to make these as unlawful for His servants. Therefore, if a religious, moral or social system makes these things unlawful or detestable or considers these as impediments in the spiritual evolution and progress, this very thing is a clear proof of the fact that it is not from Allah.

23. That is, "As a matter of fact all the good things of life are meant for the believers because they are the faithful servants of their real Owner and deserve the reward of faithfulness. But in this world, these are given to the unfaithful also because this world is for the trial of mankind. That is why, sometimes, the unfaithful receive even a greater share than the faithful. But in the Hereafter, where these good things will be distributed on the basis of merit alone, all the good and pure things shall be reserved for the faithful only. On the other hand, the unfaithful, who adopted the attitude of rebellion against Allah, in spite of the fact that they lived on His provisions in this world, shall not get any share in the Hereafter.

24. Please refer to E.N. 128 and E.N. 131 of AL-AN'ĀM.

25. The literal meaning of "*ithm*" (إثم) is negligence. The sense of sin has entered into this word from "*āthimah*" which means a she-camel that can run fast but wilfully does not do so. Likewise that man who neglects to obey the Commandments of his Lord, in spite of his ability to do so, shall be sinful for he has no intention of pleasing Him.

26. It will be rebellion against the Truth, if one transgresses the prescribed limits and enters into the bounds where he has no right. Likewise all such people as transgress the bounds prescribed for the servants of Allah and follow their own will, behave as masters in His Kingdom and encroach on the rights that belong to Allah alone, are really rebels against Allah.

27. "Every community has been given a fixed term" : it does not mean a fixed period of time in terms of years, months and days, after the expiry of which that community is exterminated without fail. This means that a moral limit has been set to the opportunity that is allowed to every community for showing its performance as a respectable community. This is determined by the ratio between its good works and its evil works. Allah tolerates a community as long as the ratio of its good works to its evil works does not fall below the normal limits. When it transgresses those limits that wicked community is given no more respite. In order to grasp this see v. 4, v. 10 and v. 12 of LXXI.

28. The Qurān has stated the thing contained in v. 36 in every place where the mention of the sending down of Adam and Eve from Paradise has been made. (Please see II : 38-39 and XX : 123-124). Therefore, here too, the same thing will be taken concerning the same occasion *i.e.*, at the time of the beginning of the life of man, this thing was clearly explained to him. (See E.N. 69 of III).

29. That is, "They shall live here in this world for the term that has been

set for them and get their destined share, good or bad, to pass this life."

30. There is a double chastisement for every generation for the sins it committed as successor, and for the sins it left for others as predecessor, because it followed the heritage of evil left by its predecessors and then left the heritage of evil for its successors. Therefore if its predecessor shares a part of the burden of responsibility for its sins, it also shares a part of the burden of the responsibility for the legacy of the sins left by it for its successors.

There is a Tradition to this effect: "The one who initiates an innovation, that is disapproved of by Allah and His Messenger, shall be held responsible for the sins of all those people, who followed his innovation, without lessening in the least the burden of the responsibility for the sin committed by the inventor." Here is another Tradition: "Whenever a man is killed unjustly anywhere in the world, a part of the guilt of this murder is debited against the account of that son of Adam who was the first to murder his own brother, because he was the first to open the way of murder."

It is clear from the above that the person or the group or the community that starts the wrong idea or a wrong attitude, is not only responsible for his or its own error, but is also partly responsible for the sins of all those who are influenced by the error, and as long as the effects of that error continue to influence others, they are credited to his or its account. This also shows that an individual is not only personally accountable for his own good or bad actions but also for its effects on the lives of others.

As an illustration, let us take the case of an adulterer. All those persons whose bad example, or bad company or evil inducement misled him to adultery, share the responsibility for his becoming an adulterer and this responsibility extends above to all other persons, from whom those persons received this evil heritage. Thus it will go further and further upwards till it reaches the first person who initiated this evil way of sexuality.

Then the adulterer himself shall have to bear the responsibility of his guilt, because he committed this in utter disregard of many deterrents. He did not discriminate between good and bad: he did not pay attention to the voice of his conscience: he did not resort to the power of self-control within him: he did not make use of the knowledge of good and bad he had received from virtuous people and of their noble examples, and he did not take warning from the evil consequences of sexual immorality. In the face of all the above factors, that could have restrained him from adultery, he gave himself up to the blind sex urge that wanted its satisfaction in any available way.

Now let us consider the case of the adulterer from the point of view of its evil influences and heritage in relation to his contemporaries and successors. The responsibility of his guilt does not remain confined to his own acts of adultery but extends to all those evil acts that were

prompted and influenced by these. At first he himself catches the infection of a venereal disease and then communicates it to his own generation and to countless successive generations : he causes illegitimate births and then throws the burden of nourishment on others and makes them unlawful inheritors at the expense of the lawful inheritors, and the evil results of this injustice may continue to influence countless generations. Moreover, he seduces some innocent girl and induces her to surrender herself to sexual immorality, and then she, in her turn, spreads the evil to others and causes the ruin of countless families. Then he sets a bad example for his own children, his relatives and his friends and for the other people of his society and becomes a cause of the moral ruin of many persons, who, in their turn, leave the evil heritage, with all its evil influences on the countless succeeding generations. Therefore justice demands that a part of the responsibility for all these evil results should be laid on him as long as the effects last.

The case of the heritage of virtue may also be considered in the same way. All those persons, up to the first man, who left the heritage of virtue for us are entitled to a share of its reward. Then we shall also be entitled to a share of its reward, if we exert to preserve and increase it. Then we shall also be entitled to a share of its reward, if we leave behind us the legacy of virtue for others to follow, as long as its good effects go on influencing mankind and they benefit from it.

Every sensible man will admit that the manner of retribution presented by the Qurān is the only right and perfect way of doing full justice. The right understanding of this fact will help remove the misunderstandings of those who regard this worldly life to be quite sufficient for retribution, and also of those who believe that this purpose is achieved by the process of the transmigration of souls. As a matter of fact, neither of the groups has fully grasped the extent, the effects and the consequences of human acts, nor the full requirements of just retribution. Obviously it is not possible today to punish here the countless generations, which contributed to the good or bad acts of a person during his life in this world. Moreover the effects of his good or bad acts do not cease with his death, but will continue through the countless centuries and will go on influencing the lives of countless people after him. Justice requires that these should be credited to his account as long as the effects last. Therefore the requital of justice is impossible in this worldly life, when even the smallest part of the effects of his acts has not yet appeared. Then there are not enough means for awarding fully the rewards or the punishments for the acts of a man in the limited life of this world and its limited means. Just imagine the extent of the guilt of a man who kindles the fire of a World War and destroys and ruins the lives of millions of people and leaves a legacy of evil that will continue to influence the lives of billions of people for centuries. Can any punishment in this world, physical or moral, or spiritual, however severe that may be, fully meet the requirements of

[Contd. on p. 28

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بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْسِبُونَ ﴿١١﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَاسْتَكْبَرُوا عَنْهَا لَا تُفْتَحُ
لَهُمْ أَبْوَابُ السَّمَاءِ وَلَا يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ حَتَّى يَلْبِغَ الْجَمَلُ فِي سَمِّ
الْخِيَاطِ ۗ وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿١٢﴾ لَهُمْ مِنْ جَهَنَّمَ مِهَادٌ وَمِنْ
فَوْقِهِمْ غَوَاشٍ ۗ وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٣﴾ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
لَا نُكَلِّفُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ ۗ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿١٤﴾ وَ
نَزَعْنَا مَا فِي صُدُورِهِمْ مِنْ غِلٍّ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهِمُ الْأَنْهَارُ وَقَالُوا الْحَمْدُ
لِلَّهِ الَّذِي هَدَانَا لِهَذَا ۗ وَمَا كُنَّا لِنَهْتَدِيَ لَوْلَا أَنْ هَدَانَا اللَّهُ ۗ لَقَدْ
جَاءَتْ رُسُلٌ مِنَّا بِالْحَقِّ ۗ وَنُودُوا أَنْ تَتَّخِذُوا الْجَنَّةَ بُرُجًا يُعْرَقُونَ
فِيهَا ۗ فَمَنْ كَفَرَ بَعْدَ مَا جَاءَتْهُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ ۗ سَاءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ ﴿١٥﴾ وَنَادَى
أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ أَصْحَابَ النَّارِ أَنْ قَدْ وَجَدْنَا مَا وَعَدَنَا
رَبُّنَا ۗ فَهَلْ وَجَدْتُمْ مَا وَعَدَ رَبُّكُمْ حَقًّا ۗ قَالُوا نَعَمْ ۗ قَالُوا مُؤَدَّبُونَ
بَيْنَهُمْ ۗ أَنْ لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَى الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٦﴾ الَّذِينَ يَصُدُّونَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَيَبْغُونَهَا
عِوَجًا ۗ وَهُمْ بِالْآخِرَةِ كَاهِنُونَ ﴿١٧﴾ وَبَيْنَهُمَا حِجَابٌ ۗ وَعَلَى الْأَعْرَافِ رِجَالٌ
يَعْرِفُونَ كُلًّا بِسِيمَتِهِمْ ۗ وَنَادُوا أَصْحَابَ الْجَنَّةِ أَنْ سَلِّمُوا عَلَيْهِمْ ۗ لَمْ
يَدْخُلُوهَا وَهُمْ يَطْمَعُونَ ﴿١٨﴾ وَإِذَا صُرِفَتْ أَبْصَارُهُمْ تِلْقَاءَ أَصْحَابِ النَّارِ
قَالُوا رَبَّنَا لَا تَجْعَلْنَا مَعَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٩﴾ وَنَادَى أَصْحَابُ الْأَعْرَافِ
رِجَالًا يَعْرِفُونَهُمْ بِسِيمَتِهِمْ ۗ قَالُوا مَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْكُمْ جَنَّتُكُمْ وَمَا كُنْتُمْ
تَسْتَكْبِرُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾ أَهْلَاءَ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذْتُمْ بِرَحْمَةِ اللَّهِ دُخُلًا الْجَنَّةَ
لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَا أَنْتُمْ تَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٢١﴾ وَنَادَى أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ
أَنْ أفيضوا علينا من الماء أو مما رزقكم الله ۗ قالوا إن الله حرمهما على

وقولهم
لا تفرحوا٢٤٨
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Believe it that the doors of heaven will not be opened 40-43
 for those who have treated Our Revelations as false and have
 shown pride in regard to them : their admission into Paradise
 is as impossible as the passing of the camel through the eye of
 the needle, so do We recompense the guilty ones. Hell shall
 be their bed and Hell shall be their covering : this is the chastise-
 ment We award to the workers of iniquity. But as to those who
 have believed in Our Revelations and done good deeds,—
 and in this way We lay not on anyone a burden beyond one's
 capacity—they are worthy of Paradise, wherein they will
 abide for ever. And We will remove whatever ill-feeling
 would have been in their hearts against one another;³² canals
 will be flowing underneath them and they will say, "Praise
 be to Allah, Who has guided us to this Way : by ourselves we
 would not have been able to find the Way, if Allah had not
 guided us. The Messengers sent by our Lord had really
 come with the Truth." At that time a voice will be heard say-
 ing, "This is the Paradise, of which you have been made heirs;
 it has been given to you for the good works you did."³³

Then the inmates of Paradise will call out to the inmates 44-45
 of Hell, "We have found all the promises made to us by our
 Lord to be true : have you, too, found the promises made to
 you by your Lord to be true?" They will say, "Yes". Then
 a herald in their midst will announce: "The curse of Allah
 be upon those evil-doers who debarred others from the Way
 of Allah and sought to make it crooked, and did not believe
 in the Hereafter."

Between these two groups, there shall be a barrier, on 46-49
 'the Heights,' on which will be some other people, who will
 recognise everyone of them by his countenance. They will call
 out to the inmates of Paradise, "Peace be upon you!"—They
 will not have yet entered Paradise, though they will be expect-
 ing to do so.³⁴—And when their eyes will be turned towards
 the inmates of Hell, they will say, "O our Lord, do not include
 us in these wicked people." Then these people on 'the Heights'
 will recognise by their characteristics some 'big' personalities
 from among the inmates of Hell and will call out to them,
 "You have seen that today neither your followers have availed
 you anything nor your wealth and property, of which you

were very proud. And, are not these inmates of Paradise the same people about whom you swore that Allah would not give them any portion of His blessings? Today the same have been welcomed with the words 'Go into Paradise where you will have neither fear nor grief'."

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justice? Or can any reward in this world, however great, fully recompense a man for his lifelong work for the good of humanity, which goes on benefiting millions of people for thousands of years?

Anyone, who will consider the problem of retribution from this point of view, will come to the inevitable conclusion that for the requital of full justice, there should be another world, where all the generations should be mustered together with their accounts: then there should be an all-knowing and all-aware judge to administer justice and there should also be human beings with eternal lives to receive the reward or punishment, as the case may be, and all kinds of means for the dispensation of justice as well.

This way of thinking also helps expose the basic error of the doctrine of transmigration, which has led its advocates to believe in the passage of souls after death into other bodies according to their merits or demerits. This is because they have not been able to grasp the fact that for the retribution of the acts of this short worldly life, a thousand times longer life is required. It is thus obvious that another reborn life of the same length in this world will not help solve the problem of retribution because it is quite insufficient for the purpose. On the contrary, this will make it all the more complex, for the circle of transmigration will go on multiplying such acts—good or bad—and increasing their effects more and more in an endless chain. Thus, according to the doctrine of transmigration, the account of a person will remain unsettled for ever.

31. The Qurān has described at several places this sort of altercation between the dwellers of Hell. For instance, in XXXIV : 31-33, it says, "I wish you could see these unjust people when they will be standing before their Lord and accusing one another. The people, who were made weak, will say to those who posed as mighty ones, 'But for you, we would have been believers'. But the so-called mighty ones will reply, 'What, did we keep you back from the Guidance when it came to you? No, you yourselves were the guilty ones'." In simple words, it means, "You yourselves are to blame for discarding the Guidance. You fell an easy prey to the greed with which we tempted you, to become our slaves, because you yourselves were greedy for wealth. When we wanted to buy your conscience, you sold it because you yourselves were eager to sell it: when we invited you to the worship of materialism, worldliness, nationalism and the like, you accepted our invitation, because you had an aversion to God-worship and a liking for this-worldliness. That is why you rejected the invitation of the worshippers of Allah, and accepted ours. When we

deluded you with false religious things, you at once accepted these, because you yourselves were cherishing the same in your hearts. For instance, you were in search of such gods as might fulfil your desires without demanding any moral obligations from you, and we supplied such ones, and you accepted them. You were in search of such intercessors as might take the responsibility for your entry into Paradise, allowing you to do whatever pleased you in the world, without minding the Guidance of Allah. So we invented such ones and you followed us : you were in search of such religions as might guarantee short-cuts to salvation, freeing you from the hardships, restrictions and sacrifices for the cause of Allah, and permitting you to enjoy all sorts of indulgences, and we invented such easy and pleasant religions for you, and you followed them. In short, we alone are not responsible for your misguidance but you, too, share it equally with us : if we supplied misguidance, you bought it of your own accord".

32. It means that if there had been any hostile unfriendly feelings or misunderstandings between good people in this world, they would all be removed in the Hereafter. Their hearts will be quite free from enmity, and they will enter Paradise like sincere friends. So much so that they will not be displeased to see their opponents, rivals, critics, etc., sharing the joys of Paradise along with themselves. Once when Caliph 'Ali recited this verse, he exclaimed, "I do expect that Allah will remove the misunderstandings between me and 'Uthmān and Ṭalḥah and Zubair."

If we consider this verse in its wider meaning, we come to the conclusion that Allah will not like to take His good people to Paradise with any blot on their characters but He will cleanse them by His grace before their entrance into Paradise. Thus they will enter it in a perfectly pure condition.

33. This refers to a fine happening that will take place on the occasion of the entry of the faithful into Paradise. On the one hand, they will not be boastful that they have gained Paradise by their good works, but will be grateful and thankful and will praise Allah, saying, "All this is due to Allah's grace, for we did not deserve this." On the other, Allah will not even hint that it was due to His favour, but will say, "You have gained this by your services and in return for your own earnings. This is not a piece of charity but a reward of your own efforts, a fruit of your own labour: it is a respectable living that you have earned". To add to His grace, Allah does not say, "We will reply" but "they will hear a voice."

In fact the servants of Allah behave like this in this world also. Unlike the workers of iniquity, they do not become proud of any worldly success and say, "This is the result of our own ability, work and effort." and then grow even more rebellious, and spread disorder in the world. In contrast to these rebels, the true servants of Allah consider every worldly success as His favour and are thankful and grateful to Him. The more they are favoured by Him, the more humble, generous and merciful they become. They do not rely on their good works and say, "We are quite

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الْكٰفِرِيْنَ ۗ الَّذِيْنَ اتَّخَذُوْا دِيْنََهُمْ كَهَوَا وَّ لَعِبًا وَّ غَرَّتْهُمُ الْحَيٰوةُ الدُّنْيَا ۗ
 فَالْيَوْمَ نَنسِفُهُمْ كَمَا نَسَوْا لِقَاءَ يَوْمِهِمْ هٰذَا ۗ وَمَا كَانُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَا يَجْحَدُوْنَ ۗ
 وَلَقَدْ جِئْتَهُمْ بِكِتٰبٍ فَصَّلْنٰهُ عَلٰى عَلِيْمٍ هٰدِيٍّ وَّ رَحْمَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ۗ
 هَلْ يَنْظُرُوْنَ اِلَّا تَاْوِيْلَهُ ۗ يَوْمَ يٰٓاْتِي تَاْوِيْلُهُ يَقُوْلُ الَّذِيْنَ نَسُوْهُ مِنْ
 قَبْلُ قَدْ جَاءَتْ رُسُلٌ رَّبِّنَا بِالْحَقِّ ۗ فَمَا لَنَا مِنْ شٰفِعَآءٍ فَيَشْفَعُوْا لَنَا اَوْ
 نَرُدُّ فَنَعْمَلَ غَيْرَ الَّذِيْ كُنَّا نَعْمَلُ ۗ قَدْ خَسِرُوْا اَنْفُسَهُمْ وَصَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَا
 كَانُوْا يَفْتَرُوْنَ ۗ اِنَّ رَّبِّكُمْ اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ فِيْ سِتَّةِ
 اَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوٰى عَلَى الْعَرْشِ ۗ يُغْشِي السَّمَآءَ بِاللَّيْلِ السُّجُودَ وَيَطْلُبُهَا حٰثِيًا وَّ النَّجْمَ
 وَالْقَمَرَ وَّ النُّجُوْمَ مُسْحَرٰتٍ ۗ بِاَمْرِهٖ ۗ اِلَّا لَهٗ الْخَلْقُ وَاَلْمَرُ ۗ تَبٰرَكَ اللّٰهُ رَبُّ
 الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ۗ اَدْعُوْا رَبَّكُمْ تَضَرُّعًا وَّ خُفْيَةً ۗ اِنَّهٗ لَا يَحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِيْنَ ۗ وَلَا
 تُفْسِدُوْا فِي الْاَرْضِ بَعْدَ اِصْلَاحِهَا وَاَدْعُوْهُ خَوْفًا وَّ طَمَعًا ۗ اِنَّ رَحْمَتَ
 اللّٰهِ قَرِيْبٌ مِّنَ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ۗ وَهُوَ الَّذِيْ يُرْسِلُ الرِّيْحَ بُشْرًا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ
 رَحْمَتِهٖ ۗ حٰثِيًا اِذَا اَقْلَمْتَ سَحَابًا ثِقَالًا يُسْقِنُهٗ لِبَلَدٍ مَّيْمٰنٍ فَاَنْزَلْنَا بِهٖ الْمَآءَ
 فَاَخْرَجْنَا بِهٖ مِنْ كُلِّ الشَّجَرِ ۗ كَذٰلِكَ نُخْرِجُ الْمَوْتٰى لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُوْنَ ۗ
 وَالْبَدُّ الطَّيِّبُ يَخْرُجُ نَبَاتُهٗ بِاِذْنِ رَبِّهٖ ۗ وَالَّذِيْ خَبَتْ لَا يَخْرُجُ اِلَّا
 نَكِيْدًا ۗ كَذٰلِكَ نُصَرِّفُ الْاٰيٰتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَشْكُرُوْنَ ۗ لَقَدْ اَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا اِلَى قَوْمِهٖ
 فَقَالَ يٰقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوْا اللّٰهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ اِلٰهٍ غَيْرُهٗ ۗ اِنِّيْۤ اَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ
 يَوْمٍ عَظِيْمٍ ۗ قَالَ الْمَلَا مِنْ قَوْمِهٖ اِنَّا لَنَرٰكَ فِيْ صَلٰى مُّبِيْنٍ ۗ
 قَالَ يٰقَوْمِ لَيْسَ بِى صُلٰةٌ وَّلٰكِنِّىْ رَسُوْلٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ۗ اٰبْلَغُكُمْ

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And the inmates of Hell will cry out to the inmates of Paradise : "Pour upon us a little water or throw down a bit of the provisions Allah has bestowed upon you." They will reply, "Allah has forbidden both the things to the disbelievers, who had made their religion a pastime, sport and enjoyment, and who had been deluded by the worldly life. Allah says, 'Today We will forget them just as they forgot the meeting of this Day and rejected Our Revelations'."³⁵ 50-51

We have brought to these people a Book which gives details based on knowledge³⁶ and which is a guidance and blessing for those who believe.³⁷ Now, are these people waiting for anything other than the consequence (of which they have been) warned in this Book?³⁸ When the consequence will come before them, those very people who aforesaid had disregarded it, will say, "Indeed, the Messengers of our Lord had come with the Truth. Shall we have, then, any intercessors who will intercede for us? Or could we be sent back that we might do deeds different from those we did before?"³⁹ They have, indeed, incurred heavy loss upon themselves and all the false things they had invented have forsaken them today. 52-53

In fact, your Lord is Allah alone, Who created the heavens and the earth in six days,⁴⁰ and then sat upon the Throne of His Kingdom;⁴¹ Who makes the night cover the day and then the day follows the night swiftly; Who created the sun, the moon and the stars, all of which are under His Command. Note it well : His is the creation and His the Sovereignty.⁴² Full of blessings is Allah, the Lord of the worlds.⁴³ Invoke your Lord with humility and in secret; indeed He does not like the transgressors. Do not spread chaos on the earth after it has been set in order,⁴⁴ and call your Lord with fear and with hope.⁴⁵ Surely, the mercy of Allah is near to the righteous people. 54-56

And it is Allah, Who sends winds as harbingers of the good tidings of His mercy; when they gather up heavy clouds He drives them on to some dead land, and makes the rain fall upon it and brings forth many kinds of fruit (from the same dead land). Look! This is how We bring forth the dead from the state of death; it may be that you learn a lesson from this observation. The soil which is rich, yields rich produce 57-58

by Allah's permission and the soil which is poor yields nothing but poor produce.⁴⁶ Thus We present Our Signs over and over again for those people who intend to be grateful.

9-61 We sent Noah to his people;⁴⁷ he said, "O my people, worship Allah; you have no deity other than He.⁴⁸ I fear lest the chastisement befall you on a dreadful day." The chiefs of his people answered, "We clearly see that you are in obvious deviation." Noah replied, "O my people, I am not in any kind of deviation; on the contrary, I am a messenger from the Lord of the worlds."

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sure that we shall get salvation". Instead of this, they beg Allah's pardon for their shortcomings and rely on His grace and mercy, and they are always filled with the fear lest their accounts should turn out to be unfavourable against them.

A Tradition of the Holy Prophet related both by Bukhārī and Muslim, confirms the above-mentioned thing. Once he warned his Companions, saying, "You should know that you will not get entry into Paradise merely by virtue of your works". They asked, "Is it true of you also?" He replied, "Yes, I, too, shall enter Paradise merely by Allah's grace and mercy."

34. The people on 'the Heights' will be those with pending cases. While their positive sides will not be so strong as to merit admission into Paradise, their negative sides will not be so weak as to condemn them to Hell. Therefore they will wait for the decisions of their cases on 'the Heights' between Paradise and Hell.

35. From this dialogue between the inmates of Paradise and the inmates of Hell and the people on 'the Heights,' we can form some idea of how strong the faculties of men will become in the Next World. The faculty of sight will become so strong that the people of Paradise and those of Hell and on 'the Heights' will be able to see one another whenever they will desire to do so. Likewise their faculties of speech and hearing will grow so strong that the people of the three different worlds will be able to carry on their dialogues without any hindrance. From this and the like descriptions of the Next World in the Qurān, we learn that the laws of life in the Hereafter will be quite different from the physical laws of this world, though there will be no change in our personalities. It is a pity that such descriptions in the Qurān and Ḥadīth have made certain people sceptical because they cannot imagine that there can be another world with greater potentialities than the limited physical world they live in. As they judge everything by the standards of this world, they make fun of such things they come across in the Qurān and Ḥadīth. But the fact is that the potentialities of life are not limited as their narrow minds are.

36. That is, "The Qurān gives details of the reality and of the correct attitude man should adopt in the life of this world and of the basic principles of the Right Way of life. Then it may also be noted that these details are not based on guess-work or conjecture or whim but on pure and accurate knowledge."

37. The Qurān is 'Guidance' because its teachings are so clear that they show the right way to anyone who ponders over them. Moreover, the practical effects of that guidance can be seen in the lives of those who believe in it and follow its teachings. And it is really a great 'blessing' because it brings a blessed change in the mental attitude, the moral outlook and the character of the one who accepts it. The truth of this was being proved by the wonderful changes that were taking place in the lives of the Companions of the Holy Prophet.

38. In other words, it means : The distinction between right and wrong has been made clear in the most rational manner, but there are people who do not see it; they have the examples of those who have been totally changed for the better by following the Right Way, though they were just like them before this, yet they do not learn any lesson from this. Such people will admit their error only when they will suffer the consequences of their wrong ways.

Their case is similar to the case of a patient, who does not follow the advice of the physician, nor does he learn a lesson from the other patients, who regained their health by following the instructions of the physician, when they were suffering from the same disease. Such a patient will admit that the ways of life he was following were fatal but only on his death-bed.

39. When they will see, with their own eyes, the consequences of the rejection of the Message of the Prophets, they will say, "Now that we have witnessed that reality, which we denied at the time, when the Messengers informed us about it, we will behave in a different way if we are sent back to the same world". For response to such a request, see VI : 27, 28; XIV : 44, 45; XXXII : 12, 13; XXXV : 37; XXXIX : 56-59; XL : 11, 12.

40. Here the word "*day*" has been used in the sense of period.

This word has been used in the same sense in XXII : 47: "The fact is that with your Lord a day is equal to one thousand years as you reckon", and also in LXX : 4 : "Angels and Gabriel ascend to Him in a day which is equal to fifty thousand years". Allah alone knows its real significance. (For further explanation see E.N.'s 11-15 of XLI).

41. It is very difficult for us to comprehend the nature of "He sat upon the Throne". It is just possible that after the creation of the universe, He fixed some place as the centre of His limitless Kingdom, which may have been called "The Throne," from where He is showering His blessings on the whole universe and it is also possible that the Arabic word "*Al-'Arsh*" may have been used figuratively to express His Sovereignty and "seating Himself on the Throne" may mean "the taking of the reins of His Kingdom in His hands". Anywise, whatever be the details of the Text,

the Qurān mentions this to impress the fact that Allah is not only the Creator of the universe but also its Sovereign as well as Ruler, that after its creation He has not cut off all connections with it and has not become disinterested in its affairs, but is practically governing each and every minute part of it; all the powers of Sovereignty are, in fact, in His hands; that everything is under His Command and is obedient to Him, and the destinies of everyone and everything are permanently in His hands. In this way the Qurān cuts across the basic misunderstanding that gives rise to the errors like *shirk* and rebellion against Him. The creed that God has nothing to do with the affairs of the universe, inevitably leads to the belief that someone else is the maker or destroyer of one's destiny, and, therefore, one should bow down before that one or one should consider one's own self to be its maker and become independent of Him.

In this connection, it is worth while to consider the use of words akin to "kingdom" and "kingship", which the Qurān usually employs to express the relation between Allah and man. Though it is quite obvious that the Qurān has employed such words, technical terms, figures of speech and a style as may be within the comprehension of human beings, yet some critics with perverted minds have inferred from this use the strange conclusion that this Book is the invention of Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him). The line of their argument is this: "The frequent use of the words like 'king' shows that the 'author' of the Qurān was irresistibly influenced by the system of kingship that was prevalent all around him during the period when this Book was composed; therefore its author cannot be Allah, Who knows that there can be no comparison between Him and a king, etc., etc.," Obviously, this argument is very flimsy. The conception of the Sovereign of the earth and the heavens put forward in the Qurān clearly shows that in contrast to the mortal weak kings of this world, having only a limited authority for a limited period, the King, Allah, is Eternal, All-Powerful, having the supreme Authority, above all others and for all times. This conception of the Sovereignty of "King" Allah falsifies the very basis of the theory of the critics, for no human king can fit in the conception of the 'King' laid down in the Qurān. For in this conception there is no scope for anyone to claim or assume powers of sovereignty like the King, because it requires that man should acknowledge Allah alone as the sole object of worship in the religious sense and the sole sovereign in the civil and political sense.

42. This is a further explanation of the meanings of 'seating Himself on the Throne': "Allah is not only the Creator but is also the Sovereign and Ruler of the universe. After its creation, He has neither relinquished its rule in favour of others nor has He made the whole of His creation or any part of it independent, but He has kept in His own hands the functioning of the whole universe. Day and night are not following each other by themselves but by the Command of Allah, Who has the power to stop or change the present system totally. Likewise, the sun, the moon and the stars possess no inherent power of their own but are

entirely under His Command, and are functioning perforce like slaves under His orders.”

43. The original meaning of *barkat* (“blessing”) is growth, increase and development along with greatness, exaltation, permanence and stability. Besides all these meanings, the word carries with it the idea of goodness and welfare. Thus the Text means, “His good qualities and excellences are boundless; His beneficence spreads everywhere; He is the possessor of the highest position that has no limits. Above all, all His excellences are absolutely permanent and stable, without decay or decline.” For further explanation see E.N.’s 1-19 of XXV.

44. According to the Qurān, the root cause of disorder in the world is that man breaks away from the service of God and, giving himself up to the service of his own self or of others and discarding His Guidance, adopts the guidance of others instead for the building up of his morality, society and culture. As this creates disorder and gives birth to many other kinds of disorder, the Qurān aims at its eradication. At the same time it warns that disorder is not inherent in the system of the world so that it may be replaced by order. But it so happens that disorder overwhelms the order that was set in it, as a result of man’s ignorance and rebellion. In other words, man did not start his life on the earth in ignorance, barbarism, *shirk*, rebellion and moral disorder, and then reforms were introduced afterwards to remove them by degrees. The fact is that he started life in peace and order, which was corrupted afterwards by the follies and mischiefs of the evil-doers. Then Allah sent His Messengers to eradicate that disorder and to set right the system of life again to bring it back to the original state. That is why they always invited the people to adopt the same old system of peace and order, and to refrain from spreading disorder.

It should also be noted that the point of view of the Qurān in this matter is quite different from that of the evolutionists who assert that man has gradually come out of darkness into light and his life is being reformed by degrees. In contrast to this, the Qurān declares that Allah settled man on the earth in full light and started his life with a system based on peace and order. Then afterwards man himself repeatedly followed the guidance of Satan and went into darkness and corrupted the original right and orderly system. Then Allah sent His Messengers over and over again to invite the people to come out of darkness into light and to refrain from disorder. (Please refer also to E.N. 230, AL-BAQARAH).

45. It has become clear from this sentence that the ‘chaos’ referred to above is that man should adopt someone else as his guardian, protector and helper and invoke that one for help. The order can, therefore, be restored by acknowledging Allah as the sole Guardian and Protector and Helper and by invoking Him alone.

46. It should be noted here that the allegorical use of rain and its blessings etc. does not only aim to describe the powers of Allah and to give a

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رِسَلْتُ رَبِّي وَانصَحْتُ لَكُمْ وَاعْلَمُ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾ أَوْعَجِبْتُمْ
 أَنْ جَاءَكُمْ ذِكْرٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ عَلَى رَجُلٍ مِّنكُمْ لِيُنذِرَكُمْ وَلِتَتَّقُوا وَلَعَلَّكُمْ
 تُرْحَمُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾ فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَأَنْجَيْنَاهُ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ فِي الْفُلِكِ وَأَغْرَقْنَا الَّذِينَ
 كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا ۗ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَوْمًا عَمِينَ ﴿٤٨﴾ وَإِلَىٰ عَادِ أَخَاهُمْ هُودًا قَالَ
 يَقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِن إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ ۗ أَفَلَا تَتَّقُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾ قَالَ الْمَلَأُ
 الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ قَوْمِهِ إِنَّا لَنَنظُرُكَ وَإِنَّا لَنَنظُرُكَ مِنَ
 الْكَذِبِينَ ﴿٥٠﴾ قَالَ يَقَوْمِ لَيْسَ بِي سَفَاهَةٌ وَلَكِنِّي رَسُولٌ مِّن رَّبِّ
 الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٥١﴾ أُبَلِّغُكُمْ رِسَالَاتِ رَبِّي وَأَنَا لَكُمْ نَاصِحٌ أَمِينٌ ﴿٥٢﴾ أَوْعَجِبْتُمْ أَنْ
 جَاءَكُمْ ذِكْرٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ عَلَى رَجُلٍ مِّنكُمْ لِيُنذِرَكُمْ وَأَذْكُرُوا إِذْ جَعَلَكُمْ
 خُلَفَاءَ مِنْ بَعْدِ قَوْمِ نُوحٍ وَزَادَكُمْ فِي الْخَلْقِ بَضْطَةً ۗ فَادْكُرُوا الْآءِ
 اللَّهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾ قَالُوا اجْعَلْنَا لِنَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ وَحْدَهُ وَنَذَرَ مَا كَانَ
 يَعْبُدُ آبَاؤُنَا ۗ فَاتِنَا بِمَا تَعِدُنَا إِن كُنْتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ ﴿٥٤﴾ قَالَ قَدْ وَقَعَ
 عَلَيْكُمْ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ رِجْسٌ وَغَضَبٌ ۗ أَتُجَادِلُونَنِي فِي أَسْمَاءِ سَيِّئَاتٍ لِّمَا أَنْتُمْ
 وَآبَاؤُكُمْ مَّا نَزَّلَ اللَّهُ بِهَا مِنْ سُلْطٰنٍ فَانظُرُوا إِنِّي مَعَكُمْ مِنَ الْمُنْتَظِرِينَ ﴿٥٥﴾
 فَأَنْجَيْنَاهُ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِنَّا وَقَطَعْنَا دَابِرَ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا
 وَمَا كَانُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٥٦﴾ وَإِلَىٰ شُعْرَبٍ أَخَاهُمْ صَالِحًا قَالَ يَقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا
 اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِن إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ ۗ قَدْ جَاءَتْكُمْ بَيِّنَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ ۗ هَذِهِ نَاقَةُ اللَّهِ
 لَكُمْ آيَةٌ فَذَرُوهَا تَأْكُلْ فِي أَرْضِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تَسُوْهَا بِسُوءٍ فَيَأْخُذَكُمْ
 عَذَابُ إِلَهِكُمْ ﴿٥٧﴾ وَادْكُرُوا إِذْ جَعَلَكُمْ خُلَفَاءَ مِنْ بَعْدِ عَادٍ وَبَوَّأَكُمْ فِي

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“I convey to you the Messages of my Lord and am your well-wisher for I know from Allah what you do not know. Do you think it strange that admonition from your Lord should come to you through a man from among your own people so that he may warn you and you may guard against error and be graced with mercy?”⁴⁹ But they treated him as an impostor. Ultimately, We rescued Noah and those with him in the Ark and drowned those who rejected Our Revelations as false.⁵⁰ Indeed they were a blind people!

And to ‘Ād⁵¹ We sent their brother Hūd: he said, “O my people, worship Allah: you have no deity other than He. Will you not, then, refrain from wrong ways?” The chiefs of his people who rejected his Message, answered, “We clearly see that you are of unsound mind and we think that you are a liar.” He replied, “O my people, I am not of unsound mind, but in fact, I am a Messenger from the Lord of the worlds. I convey the Message of my Lord to you and I am a trustworthy well-wisher of yours. Do you think it strange that admonition from your Lord should come to you through a man among your own people so that he may warn you? Do not forget that after Noah’s people your Lord made you his successors and made you very robust. So remember the wonderful manifestations of Allah’s power:⁵² it is expected that you will attain success.” They replied, “Have you come to us (with the demand) that we should worship Allah alone and discard those whom our forefathers have been worshipping?⁵³ Well, bring on us the scourge with which you have been threatening us, if you are truthful.” To this, he replied, “You have already incurred the curse of Allah and His wrath. Do you dispute with me about mere names which you and your forefathers have invented,⁵⁴ and for which Allah has sent down no authority?⁵⁵ Well, you may wait and I, too, will wait with you.” Ultimately, We saved Hūd and his companions with Our Mercy, and We cut off the roots of those who treated Our Revelations as lies, and did not intend to believe.⁵⁶

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proof of the life-after-death (though that has been mentioned incidentally). Its main object is to present Prophethood and its blessings, as also how it helps to distinguish good from bad, pure from impure. The coming of

the Messenger and the sending down of the Guidance and the teachings have been likened to the winds laden with clouds and the life-giving rainfall. Just as the rainfall brings back to life the dead soil, which begins to bring forth the treasures of life, so the teachings of the Prophet and his guidance bring back to life the dead humanity, which begins to pour out the treasures of goodness. Further on, the allegory points out that all these blessings profit only that soil which is intrinsically rich and fertile, and is only waiting for rainfall to bring forth its treasures. In the same way, only those people can benefit from the blessings of the guidance and teachings of the Messengers, who had the required capability but could not develop their latent qualities for lack of right guidance. As regards the mischievous and impure people, they are incapable of benefiting from the blessings of Prophethood for they are just like the bad soil, which brings forth only useless thorny bushes, if rain falls on it. That is why all their hidden mischiefs come into full play at the coming of the Messenger. The lesson derived from this allegory has been illustrated by citing a series of historical events in the succeeding passages, and it has been shown that on the coming of every Messenger in every age, mankind divided itself into two groups. One group consisted of pure and capable people, who benefited from the guidance of the Messengers, developed their capabilities to the fullest and brought forth the fruit of goodness. The second group, that consisted of impure people, displayed all their impurities in their encounter with the Messengers, and was sorted out, just as alloy is separated from gold, as a useless and worthless metal.

47. The first of the historical events referred to in E.N. 46, is being related here. According to the Qurān, Prophet Noah was sent to his people, who were the first to corrupt the Right Way of life followed by Adam (Allah's peace be upon him) and taught by him to his descendants.

We learn from the brief hints in the Qurān and the details in the Bible that the people of Noah lived in the country which is now called Iraq. The same is confirmed by the tablets found in the archaeological remains of Babel which are older than the Bible. They tell a story similar to the one related in the Bible and the Qurān, and fix the place of its occurrence near Mosul. Moreover, the traditions that have come down from the most ancient times from Kurdistan and Armenia say that the ark of Noah anchored at some place in the same region. They also point out to some relics connected with the story of Noah near Mt. Ararat and the inhabitants of Nakhchiwan claim even today that the town was founded by Prophet Noah.

Traditions, similar to the story of Noah, are found in the ancient literatures of Greece, Egypt, India and China. Besides these, the traditions that have come down from the most ancient times from Burma, Malaya, East Indies, Australia, New Guinea and from different parts of Europe and America are also similar to it. All this shows that this story is connected with the period when all the descendants of Adam lived in the same region from where they dispersed all over the earth. That

is why references to the "Flood" are found in the ancient history of every nation, though they forgot its real facts and mixed it with the fictions of their own imagination.

48. This verse and others, in which the story of Noah has been related, show that his people did neither deny the existence of Allah nor were they ignorant of it, nor did they deny His worship. But the root cause of their deviation was that they were involved in *shirk* and had set up other partners with Allah in His Godhead and regarded them worthy of worship along with Him. This basic deviation led them to numerous other evils. For instance, this gave birth to a special class to represent the false gods they had set up. By and by, this class took possession of all the religious, political and economic powers of the community and created artificial barriers of high and low among people. Consequently, chaos, tyranny and immorality were rampant everywhere and humanity sank to the lowest depths of degradation. Prophet Noah was sent to reform this state of affairs. Accordingly, he exerted his utmost with great wisdom and fortitude for a very long time to bring about the desired reform, but that corrupt class had cunningly deluded the common people so much that all his efforts proved fruitless. When no more hope of their reform was left, Prophet Noah prayed to Allah and said, "My Lord, do not leave upon the earth even one of these disbelievers for, if Thou leave anyone of them alive, he will lead astray Thy servants and will give birth only to wicked and ungrateful descendants." (For details please refer to XI : 25-48, XXVI : 105-119 and the whole of Sūrah LXXI).

49. The incident has been related here because what had happened between Noah (Allah's peace be upon him) and his people was exactly taking place at that time between Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) and his people. His Message was the same as that of Noah and the response of the chiefs to it was also the same. The chiefs of the Quraish were raising the same doubts against his Message that were raised by the chiefs of the people of Noah thousands of years before the Holy Prophet, and the same things were said in reply as were said by Noah. Further on, it has been shown in the stories of the Messengers that the attitude of their people towards their Message was the same that was being shown by the chiefs of Makkah. Thus, the Qurān impresses on its addressees the fact that in every age, the basic deviation of each people had always been the same, and that the invitation of the Messenger of Allah had also been the same in every age, and the ultimate end of all those who denied and rejected that invitation, has always been the same and will always be the same.

50. The brief descriptions of certain events from the mission of Prophets at certain places in the Qurān have given rise to the conjecture that the whole thing was finished in a couple of meetings. They think that a prophet presented his claim before his people and they raised some objections against it. Then the Prophet answered them, but they rejected

him, and declared the Message to be false. This was repeated a couple of times; then God sent down His scourge. This is a wrong conjecture made by those who are ignorant of the style of the Qurān. These things are only parts of the long struggle, for the Qurān does not give all the details of a story at one and the same place. In relating some historical event, it confines itself only to that part of the story which is directly connected with the theme under discussion and leaves out all other details. As an illustration, let us cite instances of this from the story of Prophet Noah. Here the aim is to warn the people of the consequences of the denial and rejection of the Message of the Prophet. So it was not necessary to mention the long period during which the Prophet continued preaching the Message to his people. But at places where the story is related to teach fortitude to Prophet Muhammad and his Companions, a special mention has been made of the long period during which Prophet Noah went on preaching the Message. This is to encourage them that they should not lose heart by seeing no great and immediate result of their efforts of a few years but should learn a lesson from the story of Prophet Noah, who went on performing his mission with fortitude for centuries in very adverse circumstances, without losing heart. (See XXIX : 14).

Likewise, some people become sceptical when they read, over and over again, such a thing as this : "We drowned (destroyed) those who denied the Message and treated it as false"; they ask, "Why do such things not happen now-a-days?" They admit that though the rise and fall of nations is always taking place in the world, this change is of a different nature from the one described in the Qurān, *e.g.*, instant destruction of a nation by an earthquake or flood or storm or lightning after due notice by a Prophet. In order to remove this doubt, one should understand the difference between the case of that community in which a Prophet is born and raised from among themselves, and the one where a Prophet is not present in person. He conveys Allah's Message directly to them in their own language and presents a perfect and excellent model of it in his own person in such a convincing way as to leave no excuse whatever for them to reject it. Therefore such a community deserves the severest punishment on the spot for rejecting the Messenger of Allah after such clear Signs. Obviously the case of such a community is basically different from the case of that community which does not receive the Message directly from the Prophet but received it through indirect means. So there is no wonder if such chastisements are not inflicted on the spot now, as they were during the times of the Prophets. This is because after the Prophethood of Muhammad, the last in the line of Prophets (Allah's peace be upon them all), no prophet has been sent, nor shall any be sent up to the Last Day.

This does not, however, mean that Allah has now totally given up the infliction of chastisements. The fact is that even now He sends disasters by way of warning or punishment on those communities which rebel against Him and deviate into error. But it is a pity that people do not turn their

attention towards the real cause. Instead of looking at these as the consequences of their own evil ways, their scientists, their historians and their philosophers, who cannot go beyond physical causes, mislead them by ascribing these to some physical and historical laws. These so-called scholars do not let them turn their attention to the fact that there is Allah above them, Who first warns them of their evil ways by inflicting minor disasters, and then, if they persist in the wrong ways, He throws them into the abyss of destruction.

51. 'Ād was one of the most ancient tribes of Arabia. Their stories were well known and were related all over the country. The stories of their power and wealth had become proverbial and their utter annihilation also was cited as an example. Their notoriety helped to produce some new words akin to their name. Every ancient thing is called عَادِي ('ādi) and archaeological remains are called عَادِيَّات ('ādiyyāt). The land, which has no owner left and thus becomes fallow, is called عَادِي الْأَرْض ('ādi-ul-ard).

This tribe is often mentioned in the ancient Arabic poetry. The experts in the art of genealogy of the Arab tribes mention 'Ād as the first of the extinct tribes of Arabia. There is a tradition that once a man of Banī Zahl-bin-Shaibān, who was a resident of the territory where the 'Ād tribe lived, came to the Holy Prophet and related stories about 'Ād, that had come down from ancient times.

According to the Qurān, the tribe of 'Ād lived in Aḥqāf, surrounded by Hijāz, Yaman and Yamāmah. From here they had established their authority over a vast territory that extended from the western coast of Yaman and 'Ummān and Ḥaḍar Maut to 'Irāq. Though their remains have become quite extinct from the historical point of view, yet there are some remnants in Southern Arabia that are ascribed to 'Ād. At one place in Ḥaḍar Maut, there is a tomb which is said to be of Prophet Hūd. In 1837, James R. Wellested, an officer in the British Navy, discovered near Ḥiṣn-i-Ghurāb a tablet which contained a mention of Prophet Hūd. Moreover, the writing on the tablet showed that they were the followers of the Law of Prophet Hūd. (For further explanation see E.N. 25 of XLVI).

52. The Arabic word *ālā* means (1) "blessings" (2) Demonstrations of nature and (3) Praiseworthy qualities. Thus the verse can be elaborated to mean, "Remember the blessings and favours of Allah and do not forget that He also has the power to take away these from you".

53. Verse 70 also shows that the people of Hūd were neither ignorant of the existence of Allah nor did they deny Him nor did they refuse to worship Him. What they refused to accept was the invitation of Prophet Hūd to worship Allah alone, without associating anyone else with Him.

54. That is, "You call one 'the lord of rain', the other 'the lord of air' or 'lord of wealth' or 'lord of disease', when, in fact, none of these is

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الْأَرْضِ تَتَّخِذُونَ مِنْ سُهُولِهَا قُصُورًا وَتَنْحِتُونَ الْجِبَالَ بُيُوتًا ۚ فَادْكُرُوا
 آيَةَ اللَّهِ وَلَا تَعَثُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ مَافْسِدِينَ ﴿٤٣﴾ قَالَ الْمَلَأَ الَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا
 مِنْ قَوْمِهِ لِلَّذِينَ اسْتَضَعِفُوا لِمَنْ آمَنَ مِنْهُمْ آتَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّ صَاحِبًا
 مُرْسَلًا مِنْ رَبِّهِ قَالُوا إِنَّا بِمَا أُرْسِلَ بِهِ مُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾ قَالَ الَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا
 إِنَّا بِالذِّمَىٰ آمَنَّا بِهِ كَفَرُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾ فَعَقَرُوا النَّاقَةَ وَعَتَوْا عَنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّهِمْ وَ
 قَالُوا يُصَلِحْ اتِّتْنَا بِمَا تَعِدُنَا إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾ فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ الرَّجْفَةُ
 فَأَصْبَحُوا فِي دَارِهِمْ جِثْمِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾ فَتَوَلَّىٰ عَنْهُمْ وَقَالَ يَا قَوْمِ لَقَدْ أَبْلَغْتُكُمْ
 رِسَالَةَ رَبِّي وَنَصَحْتُ لَكُمْ وَلَكِنْ لَا تُحِبُّونَ النَّصِيحِينَ ﴿٤٨﴾ وَ لَوْ طَآءِذُ قَالَ
 لِقَوْمِهِ آتَانُوكَ الْفَاحِشَةَ مَا سَبَقَكُمْ بِهَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ مِنَ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٤٩﴾ إِنَّكُمْ
 لَتَأْتُونَ الرِّجَالَ شَهْوَةً مِّنْ دُونِ النِّسَاءِ ۗ بَلْ أَنْتُمْ قَوْمٌ مُّسْرِفُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾
 وَمَا كَانَ جَوَابَ قَوْمِهِ إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا أَخْرِجُوهُمْ مِّنْ قَرْيَتِكُمْ ۚ إِنَّهُمْ
 أَنَاسٌ يَّتَطَهَّرُونَ ﴿٥١﴾ فَأَنْجَيْنَاهُ وَأَهْلَهُ إِلَّا امْرَأَتَهُ ۗ كَانَتْ مِنَ
 الْغَابِرِينَ ﴿٥٢﴾ وَآمَطْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ مَّطْرًا ۗ فَانظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿٥٣﴾
 وَإِلَىٰ مَدْيَنَ أَخَاهُمْ شُعَيْبًا ۗ قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنِّي
 إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ ۗ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بَيِّنَةٌ مِّنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَاقْبَلُوهَا الْكَيْلَ وَالْيِزَانَ
 وَلَا تَبْخَسُوا النَّاسَ أَشْيَاءَهُمْ وَلَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ بَعْدَ إِصْلَاحِهَا ۗ
 ذَلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٥٤﴾ وَلَا تَقْعُدُوا بِكُلِّ صِرَاطٍ تُوعِدُونَ
 وَتَصُدُّونَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ مَنْ آمَنَ بِهِ وَتَبْغُونَهَا حِوَجًا ۗ وَادْكُرُوا
 إِذْ كُنْتُمْ قَلِيلًا فَكَثَرْتُمْ ۗ وَانظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٥٥﴾ وَ

And to Thamūd,⁵⁷ We sent their brother Ṣāliḥ. He 73-74
 said, "O my people, worship Allah for you have no other deity save Him. A clear proof has come to you from your Lord : here is Allah's she-camel, a Sign⁵⁸ for you, so let her graze at will in Allah's land; do not touch her with any evil intention, lest a woeful scourge from your Lord seize you. And remember the time when Allah made you successors of 'Ād and established you in the land with dignity and enabled you to make castles on the plains and hew out houses in the hills.⁵⁹ So do not be neglectful of the manifestations of Allah's powers, and do not spread disorder on the earth."⁶⁰

The chiefs of his tribe, who were full of pride, said to 75-76
 those who had believed from among the oppressed people, "Do you know it for certain that Ṣāliḥ is a Messenger from his Lord?" They replied, "Indeed we believe in the Message with which he has been sent." But those who had arrogant assumption of superiority said, "We deny that thing which you believe."

Then they killed the she-camel,⁶¹ and very insolently 77-79
 defied their Lord's command, and challenged Ṣāliḥ, "Bring that scourge with which you threaten us, if you really are one of the Messengers." Consequently a shocking catastrophe⁶² overtook them and they lay lifeless on their faces in their dwellings. So, Ṣāliḥ left their habitations, saying, "O my people! I conveyed the Message of my Lord to you and I did my very best for your good, but I am helpless because you do not like your well-wishers."

And We sent Lot as a Messenger : Remember that he 80-84
 said to his people,⁶³ "Have you become so shameless that you commit such indecent acts as no one committed before you in the world? You gratify your lust with men instead of women :⁶⁴ indeed you are a people who are transgressors of all limits!" But the only answer of his people was no other than to say, "Turn out these people of your habitations for they pose to be very pious."⁶⁵ At last We delivered Lot and the members of his household—except his wife, who was of those who stayed behind⁶⁶—and We rained a rain upon his people;⁶⁷ then behold what happened in the end to the guilty ones!⁶⁸

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And to Madyan⁶⁹ We sent their brother Shu'aib : he said, "O my people, worship Allah : you have no other deity than He. A clear guidance has come to you from your Lord : you should, therefore, give full measure and weight, and do not defraud the people of their goods,⁷⁰ nor spread disorder on the earth after it has been set aright :⁷¹ this is better for you, if you are true Believers.⁷² And do not lie in ambush by every path (of life) as robbers, in order to frighten the people nor debar from Allah's Way those who believe in it, nor seek to make the Right Way crooked. Remember the time, when you were a few in number : then Allah multiplied you : and behold with open eyes what happened to the spreaders of corruption!

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lord of anything. These are mere names that you have invented". In our own time they call one 'the remover of difficulties' and the other 'the bestower of treasures', whereas he has no treasure to bestow on anyone. They have made one "the giver", when he owns nothing to give, and so on. In fact, such titles are empty words without any corresponding possessor of such qualities, entitling anyone to these titles. Therefore, if one argues to justify these titles, he, in fact, raises disputes over mere names that have no reality behind them.

55. That is, "Allah, Whom you yourselves acknowledge to be the Overlord, has not delegated to any of these gods the powers of a lord or god. He has never said that He has delegated a part of His Godhead to such and such a one, nor has He sent command authorising anyone with the powers of 'giver' or 'remover of difficulties'. You yourselves have, of your own accord, bestowed such titles on the ones you pleased.

56. "We cut off the roots of" means, "We destroyed them so completely that no sign of theirs was left in the world". This is a fact that has been established by the traditions of Arabia. The archaeological remains also bear testimony that the people of the "First 'Ād" were so completely annihilated that even their monuments were effaced from the world. The Arab historians count the 'Ād tribe among the extinct tribes. They, however, assert it as a fact that the followers of Hūd were saved and were known as the "Second 'Ād" and the tablet of Ḥiṣn-i-Ghurāb mentioned in E.N. 51, is one of their monuments. Here are some extracts of the inscriptions which were inscribed on it some 1800 years before Christ :—

"We have lived for a long period in this fort in great prosperity. Our canals were always full of water . . . and our rulers were noble kings who were free from evil. They were, however, hard on those who disturbed the peace. They ruled over us in accordance with the Law of Hūd

and used to enter all important decisions in a book. We believe in miracles and life-after-death.”

The above extracts bear witness to the fact stated in the Qurān that the followers of Hūd became the inheritors of the ancient glory and prosperity of the 'Ād tribe.

57. After 'Ād, Thamūd is the second most widely known ancient tribe of Arabia. Before the revelation of the Qurān, their stories were very common among the Arabs. Their mention occurs in the poetry and the addresses of pre-Islamic Arabia, and on the tablets found in Assyria. The ancient historians and geographers of Greece, Alexandria and Rome also mention this tribe. Some of their remains existed till some years before the birth of Prophet Christ. According to the Roman historians, the people of this tribe joined the Roman army and fought against the Nabataeans, their enemies.

The tribe of Thamūd inherited the territory in the north-western part of Arabia and is even today known by the name of Al-Ḥijr. Its capital was Madāin-i-Ṣāliḥ, which is now-a-days a railway station on the Ḥijāz Railway between Al-Madīnah and Tabūk. Its old name is Ḥijr. There are even now spread over thousands of acres of land, those stony buildings that they had hewn out of hills. Even a cursory glance at this dead city leads one to the conclusion that its population must have been about five hundred thousand people.

At the time of the revelation of the Qurān, the trading caravans from Ḥijāz used to pass through the archaeological remains of Thamūd. When the Holy Prophet was leading his followers towards Tabūk, he passed by and pointed out towards the remains and asked them to bear in mind the lesson which such things hold out for every close observer. He pointed to a well from which the she-camel of Prophet Ṣāliḥ drank water, and told them to drink water only from that well. Then he showed them a pass over a hill and said that the she-camel used to come through it to the well for drinking water. That pass is still called Fajj-un-Nāqah (the pass of the she-camel.) Then he assembled together those Muslims who were enjoying a walk through the remains and said, “This is the territory of the tribe on which Allah inflicted His scourge. Therefore pass through this with as much haste as you can, because this is not a place of enjoyment but a place of lamentation.”

58. The wording of the Text clearly shows that Allah's she-camel was “the clear proof”, which has been called “a Sign” in the next sentence. We learn from XXVI : 154-158 that the people of his tribe had themselves demanded from Prophet Ṣāliḥ to bring a clear Sign of his appointment as Messenger of Allah. In response to this, the Prophet presented the she-camel as a Sign. This is a positive proof of the fact that the birth of the she-camel had taken place in some miraculous manner and her appearance was a miracle of the same kind as presented by other Prophets to the disbelievers at their demand of a proof of their Prophethood. Another proof of her miraculous birth is the fact that Prophet Ṣāliḥ

presented the she-camel to the disbelievers with a warning to this effect : "Your lives are directly connected with the life of this she-camel. She shall graze freely in your fields and she shall be privileged to drink water at the well one day all alone by herself, and all your cattle shall drink water the following day, turn by turn; and if you touch her with an evil intention, Allah's scourge will overtake you all of a sudden". It is obvious from this that the she-camel could have been presented in such a forcible manner only if the people had seen with their own eyes that she was an extraordinary animal. That is why they let her graze freely in their fields and let her drink water throughout the day all by herself, though in their heart of hearts they were not willing to accede to this. They were so much afraid of her that in order to kill her they had to hold long consultations and hatch secret plots, though Prophet Ṣāliḥ had no worldly power to prevent them from this. This shows that they knew there was some hidden power behind her that made her so bold as to roam about wherever she liked.

The Qurān does not say anything about its physique as to how it came into being. Moreover, there is no mention of its miraculous existence in any authentic Tradition. Therefore one is not bound to accept the stories the commentators have related concerning her birth, etc. However, it is quite evident from the Qurān that she was a miracle in one way or the other.

59. The people of Thamūd used to carve out grand houses in the hills as has already been mentioned in E.N. 57. Some of them are still intact at Madāin-i-Ṣāliḥ and bear witness to the wonderful skill they had achieved in engineering.

60. That is, "You should take a warning from the woeful end of 'Ād. The same Allah, Who destroyed that mischievous tribe and made you its successor, has the power to destroy you and make someone else your successor, if you become mischievous like 'Ād."

61. Though only one man had killed the she-camel (*vide* IV : 27-29 and XCI : 12-14), the whole tribe has been declared to be guilty of the crime because it was backing him as a whole, and he was, in fact, merely its tool, for every crime which represents the will of a nation or is approved by it, is a national crime, even though it is committed by one individual. According to the Qurān, even that crime, which is committed openly by an individual, and is tolerated by the community, is a national crime.

62. The catastrophe that overtook Thamūd has been called رَجْفَةً, "the terrifying shocker", but in other places it has been called صَيْحَةً (a cry) and صَاعِقَةً (a thunderbolt) and طَائِفَةً (a roaring noise).

63. Those people lived in the territory now called Trans-Jordan and is situated between 'Irāq and Palestine. According to the Bible its headquarters was Sodom which was situated somewhere near the Dead Sea or has been submerged in it. The Talmud says that they had four more big cities besides Sodom, and the land between these cities looked like one

big garden for miles, and charmed the onlookers. But now those cities cannot be located with accuracy because the whole land is covered with the Dead Sea, which is also called Lot's Sea.

Prophet Lot was the nephew of Prophet Abraham. He left 'Irāq along with his uncle and travelled with him over Syria, Palestine and Egypt in order to gain experience for the propagation of the Message. Then he was appointed as a Messenger by Allah and sent to reform the wicked tribe, which has been called 'his people' because he might have had some blood relation with it.

It is a pity that in the existing Bible, which has been tampered with by the Jews, the character of Prophet Lot has been blemished. Besides other things, even his mission to the plains of Jordan has been described as a migration to a fertile land after "a strife between the herdsmen of Abraham's cattle and the herdsmen of Lot's cattle". (Genesis 5 : 12, 13). But the Qurān refutes this allegation and says that Lot was appointed a Messenger and was sent there in order to reform those people.

64. At other places, the Qurān mentions some other crimes of these people, but here it mentions only their most heinous crime that brought about the scourge of Allah on them.

Although wicked people have always been committing this most heinous sin that has given the people of Sodom an everlasting notoriety, yet it has always been considered a filthy and detestable act. But the only people who have ever tried to raise it to a moral excellence, were the Greek philosophers in the ancient world, and the Europeans in the modern world. The latter are doing their utmost to make up the deficiency by making an open propaganda for it, and have succeeded in giving this filthy act a legal sanction. So much so that the legislatures of some countries have legalized it. It does not require elaborate argument to show that homo-sexuality is a horrible social crime and a heinous sin. For the Creator has made the male and the female of each and every living species different from and complementary to each other for their reproduction. Then this difference in the human species has been created to serve another purpose. This is to urge the two to live together in order to form a family along with their offspring. For this is the foundation of a civilized life for which man has been created. That is why their bodies have been made complementary to attract each other for the satisfaction of sex urges and for the service of the natural function of reproduction of the species. Therefore the one who satisfies this sex urge in an unnatural way becomes guilty of many crimes at one and the same time. (1) Such a one, so to speak, wages a war against the natural and physical functionings of his own organs and those of the victims of his lust. This inevitably produces very harmful effects on their physiques, their minds and their morality. (2) He becomes guilty of treachery and dishonesty against Nature for he enjoys sexual pleasure, without performing the necessary service of his species and civilization and without fulfilling the rights and obligations attached to it. (3) He commits a breach of trust

against the society in general for he enjoys all the benefits of the civilized society, but in his turn does not take on himself the responsibilities of the married life and wastes all his powers in the unnatural gratification of his sexual desires. This selfish and unworthy attitude is not only useless but also positively harmful to the collective morality. Thus he makes himself unfit for the service of the family and of the human race and produces unnatural feminine characteristics in, at least, one other male, and opens the way to adultery and moral degradation for at least two women.

65. The very fact that they could not tolerate even the presence of pious people among them, shows that they had gone to the lowest depths of moral degradation. They were not only shameless, wicked and immoral but also had lost every feeling of goodness and virtue. That is why they wanted to turn out Prophet Lot and his followers so that none should be left among them to invite them to virtue. When they, as a community, reached this extreme limit of wickedness and no vestige of goodness was left in them, Allah decreed that they should be totally exterminated because there was then no justification for their existence on the earth. Their case may be likened to a basket of apples, most of which are rotten, and only a few are good. When the good apples are taken out of it, then the remaining fruit becomes utterly useless and should, therefore, be thrown away into a heap of garbage.

66. In other places it has been made clear that Lot's wife, who probably was one of their daughters, supported her disbelieving relatives in their conflict with the Prophet, and did not leave them up to the end. That is why Allah ordained that Lot should not take her away with his followers.

67. The "rain" was not a rain of water but a rain of stones as has been explicitly stated at some other places in the Qurān. Their habitations were turned upside down and sunk into the earth.

68. Here and at other places the Qurān merely declares that sodomy is such a heinous sin that it brought the wrath of Allah on a people. Then we learn from the guidance of the Holy Prophet that it is the duty of the Islamic State to eradicate this crime and should punish those who are guilty of it. In regard to this there are traditions with wording to this effect : (a) "kill the sodomite and the object of sodomy". (b) "... whether they are married or unmarried". (c) "Stone to death the upper one and the lower one". But no definite and specific punishment was prescribed for the criminals because during his time, no case of sodomy was ever brought before the Holy Prophet.

There are, however, some traditions from his successors regarding this. Ḥaḍrat 'Alī is of the opinion that the criminals should be killed with sword and the dead bodies should not be buried but burnt to ashes. Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr also agrees with it. Ḥaḍrat 'Umar and Ḥaḍrat Uṭhmān are of the opinion that they should be taken under the roof of a dilapidated building, which should be pulled down on them. Ibn

'Abbās has decreed that they should be thrown down headlong from the top of the highest building of the habitation and then stoned to death. Imām Shāfi'ī says that both the criminals involved in sodomy should be killed, whether married or unmarried. According to Shi'ibī, Zuhri, Mālik and Aḥmad they should be stoned to death. Sa'id bin Musayyib, 'Atā, Ḥasan Baṣrī, Ibrahim Nakh'ī, Sufyān Thaurī and Auzā'ī are of the opinion that the punishment is the same as for adultery, that is, one hundred stripes and exile for the unmarried, and stoning to death for the married. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah is of the opinion that the culprit should be punished in accordance with the circumstances of the crime with an exemplary punishment. There is also a saying of Imām Shāfi'ī to this effect.

It should also be noted that it is unlawful for the husband to commit sodomy with his own wife. The Holy Prophet has declared, "The man who commits such an act with a woman is accursed" and "Allah will not even look at a person who commits this offence with a woman". In another Tradition, he has warned, "The one who cohabits with a woman in her menses or commits sodomy with her or goes to a soothsayer and believes him to be true, is a disbeliever in what has been sent down to Muhammad."

69. The territory of Madyan (Midian) lay to the north-west of Hijāz and to the south of Palestine in the eastern side of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aqabah and extended to a part of the Sinai Peninsula. The Midianites were great traders. Their habitations lay at the crossroads of the trade routes from Yaman-Makkah to Syria along the side of the Red Sea and from 'Irāq to Egypt. Therefore they were well known among the Arabs and were remembered even after their extermination for their trade caravans to Syria and Egypt had to pass through their archaeological remains.

In order to grasp the significance of their story in the Qurān, it should be noted that the Midianites claimed to be the descendants of Midian, a son of Prophet Abraham from his third wife, Qatūrah. Though all of them had not directly descended from him, they claimed to be so. For, according to an ancient custom, all those people who became attached to some great man, began, by and by, to be counted among his descendants. That is why all Arabs were called Banī Ismā'il, though the majority of them were not his descendants. The same was the case with Banī Isrā'il. Likewise all the inhabitants of the territory, who came under the influence of Midian, a son of Prophet Abraham came to be known as Banī Madyan and the territory itself was called Madyan (Midian).

In the light of the above historical fact, there is no reason to suppose that they heard for the first time the voice of the Truth from Prophet Shu'aib. In fact, they were originally Muslims like the Israelites, but had become corrupt at the time when Prophet Shu'aib was sent to them, just as the Israelites were at the time when Prophet Moses was sent to them. Though they had become involved in *shirk* and immoralities by

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إِنْ كَانَ طَائِفَةٌ مِّنْكُمْ آمَنُوا بِالَّذِي أُرْسِلْتُ بِهِ وَطَائِفَةٌ لَّمْ يُؤْمِنُوا
فَاصْبِرُوا حَتَّى يَحْكُمَ اللَّهُ بَيْنَنَا وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الْحَاكِمِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾

الَّذِينَ
آمَنُوا

قَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا مِنْ قَوْمِهِ لَنُخْرِجَنَّكَ يَشْعِبَ وَالَّذِينَ

آمَنُوا مَعَكَ مِنْ قَرْيَتِنَا أَوْ لَتَعُودَنَّ فِي مِلَّتِنَا قَالَ أَوَلَوْ كُنَّا كَرِهِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾
قَدْ افْتَرَيْنَا عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا إِنْ عُدْنَا فِي مِلَّتِكُمْ بَعْدَ إِذْ نَجَّيْنَا اللَّهُ مِنْهَا
وَمَا يَكُونُ لَنَا أَنْ نَعُودَ فِيهَا إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ رَبُّنَا وَسِعَ رَبُّنَا كُلَّ
شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا عَلَى اللَّهِ تَوَكَّلْنَا رَبَّنَا افْتَحْ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَ قَوْمِنَا بِالْحَقِّ وَ
أَنْتَ خَيْرُ الْفَاتِحِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَقَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ قَوْمِهِ لِيَنَّ اتَّبَعْتُمْ
شُعَيْبًا إِنَّكُمْ إِذًا لَخَسِرُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾ فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ الرَّجْفَةُ فَأَصْبَحُوا فِي دَارِهِمْ
جِثْمِينَ ﴿٤٩﴾ الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا شُعَيْبًا كَانَ لَمْ يَعْنُوا فِيهَا الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا مَعَهُ
شُعَيْبًا كَانُوا هُمُ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٥٠﴾ فَتَوَلَّى عَنْهُمْ وَقَالَ يَا قَوْمِ لَقَدْ
أَبْلَغْتُكُمْ رَسُولَ رَبِّي وَنَصَحْتُ لَكُمْ فَكَيْفَ آسَى عَلَى قَوْمٍ كَافِرِينَ ﴿٥١﴾ وَ
مَا أَرْسَلْنَا فِي قَرْيَةٍ مِّنْ نَّبِيِّ إِلَّا أَخَذْنَا أَهْلَهَا بِالْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ لَعَلَّهُمْ
يَضُرَّحُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾ ثُمَّ بَدَلْنَا مَكَانَ السَّيِّئَةِ الْحَسَنَةَ حَتَّى عَفَوْا وَقَالُوا قَدْ
مَسَّ آبَاءَنَا الضَّرَّاءُ وَالسَّرَّاءُ فَأَخَذْنَاهُمْ بَغْتَةً وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾ وَلَوْ
أَنَّ أَهْلَ الْقُرَى آمَنُوا وَاتَّقَوْا لَفَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِم بَرَكَاتٍ مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ
وَلَكِنْ كَذَبُوا فَأَخَذْنَاهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٥٤﴾ أَفَأَمِنَ أَهْلُ الْقُرَى أَنْ
يَأْتِيَهُمْ بَأْسُنَا بَيَاتًا وَهُمْ نَائِمُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾ وَأَمِنَ أَهْلُ الْقُرَى أَنْ يَأْتِيَهُمْ
بَأْسُنَا ضُحًى وَهُمْ يُلْعَبُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾ أَفَأَمِنُوا مَكْرَ اللَّهِ فَلَا يَأْمَنُ مَكْرَ اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْقَوْمُ

If there are among you some who believe in the 87 teachings with which I have been sent and there are others who believe not, wait and see till Allah judges between us, for He is the best of all judges."

The chiefs of his tribe, who were puffed up with pride, 88-89 said to him, "O Shu'aib, we will banish you and those who have believed with you from our city, or you shall have to return to our fold." Shu'aib replied, "What! will you turn us back forcibly to it, even if we abhor it? We shall be guilty of attributing a lie to Allah, if we return to your creed, after Allah has delivered us from it; nor can we now return to your creed, except that Allah, our Lord, wills it ;⁷³ the knowledge of our Lord embraces everything; in Allah we put our trust, 'Our Lord, judge with truth between us and our people, and Thou art the best of judges'."

The chiefs of his tribe, who had rejected his Message, said 90-93 to one another, "If you follow Shu'aib, you will be utterly ruined."⁷⁴ It, however, so happened that a shocking catastrophe overtook them and they remained lying prostrate in their dwellings. Those who treated Shu'aib as an impostor were so wiped out as if they had never lived in those dwellings. Ultimately the very people, who treated Shu'aib as an impostor, were utterly ruined.⁷⁵ Then Shu'aib left the place, saying, "O my people! I conveyed the Messages of my Lord to you and I did my best for you as your well-wisher. Now, how should I be grieved for the people who reject the Truth!"⁷⁶

Whenever We sent a Prophet to a habitation, We first 94-99 afflicted its people with adversity and calamity so that they should humble themselves. Then We changed their adversity for good fortune till they became very prosperous and said, "Our forefathers also had their adversity and prosperity". At last We seized them all of a sudden when they were quite unaware.⁷⁷ Had the people of the habitations believed and adopted the way of piety, We would have opened the doors of blessings from the heavens and the earth, but they denied the Truth; so We seized them for the evil they had earned. Do the people of the habitations now feel secure that Our punishment will not come to them all of a sudden at night,

while they might be fast asleep? Or, do they feel secure that Our punishment will not smite them all of a sudden during the day while they might be engaged in pastime? Are these people not afraid of Allah's secret plan?⁷⁸ In fact, only those people are doomed to destruction, who are not afraid of Allah's secret plan.

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mixing with the *mushrik* and immoral people during the six centuries or so after Prophet Abraham, yet they professed to be "believers" and were proud of that.

70. This shows that Prophet Shu'aib was sent to reform them of their two main evils—*shirk* and dishonesty in trade.

71. For a detailed commentary on this, please refer to E.N.'s 44 and 45 of this Sūrah. Here Prophet Shu'aib wanted to draw their attention particularly to this : "You should not corrupt by your wrong beliefs and immoral ways the Right Way of life that had been established by the former Prophets."

72. The fact that the Prophet appeals to their Faith shows that they themselves professed to be Believers, as has been pointed out in E.N. 69. They were corrupt Muslims, who, though involved in wrong beliefs and misconduct, not only professed to be "believers" but also were proud of this. That is why the Prophet appealed to them, "If you are true believers, you should judge good and evil by the standard of the righteous and honest people, and not by the standards of those worldly people who do not believe in Allah and the Hereafter."

73. Prophet Shu'aib hastened to add these words to show that he could not claim with certainty even this much that they would not return to the creed of the disbelievers. A believer who rightly and fully comprehends the significance of the power of Allah, knows that it is His Will that prevails over everything. Therefore he cannot claim with certainty "I will do this or I will not do this, for the fulfilment of this or that depends entirely on the will of my Lord. If He will, I shall become successful otherwise I shall fail in it."

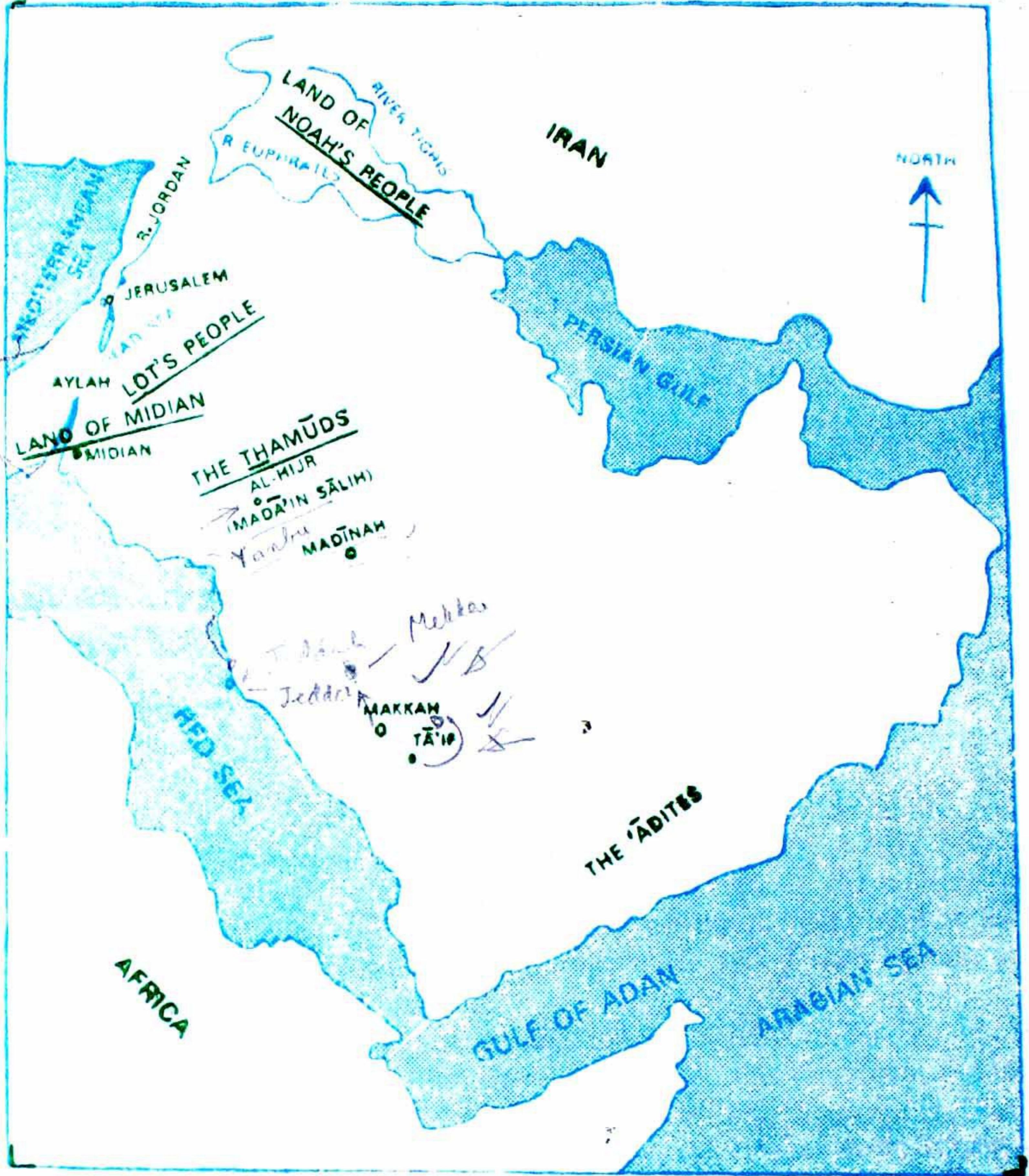
Allah has taught the same thing in XVIII : 23-24 :

"Never say about anything, 'I will do this tomorrow, for you cannot do anything, but say, If it be Allah's Will'."

74. We should not pass cursorily over this sentence, but should think deeply about its implications. The chiefs and the leaders of Midia meant and wanted to convince the people of this thing: "We shall be utterly ruined if we accept and practise the fundamental principles of honesty, righteousness, uprightness and morality. It is obvious that our trade and commerce can never flourish if we apply the principle of truth to it and carry out our bargains with honesty. Besides this, if we do not exploit our geographical position on the crossroads of the most important trade routes, and let the caravans pass on without molestation and become



MAP SHOWING THE LANDS OF THE ANCIENT TRIBES
MENTIONED IN SŪRAH AL-A'ARĀF



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peaceful citizens, all its political and commercial advantages will come to an end. This will also bring to an end the awe and influence we wield over our neighbouring countries." This fear of "ruin" was not peculiar to the people of Shu'aib alone. In every age the corrupt people have felt the same fear concerning the way of truth, righteousness and honesty. This has always been the considered opinion of all the corrupt people that it is not possible to carry out commercial, political and other worldly activities without resort to lies, dishonesty and immorality. That is why the greatest argument against the Message of Truth has always been that the community would be ruined, if it gave up the known worldly wrong ways and adopted the Right Way.

75. This total destruction of Midian had become a byword among the neighbouring nations. In Psalms (83: 5-9) Prophet David invokes the help of Allah against the oppressors, "who have taken crafty counsel against thy people," saying, "Do unto them as unto the Midianites." And Prophet Isaiah consoles the Israel, saying, ". . . be not afraid of Assyrian. . . he shall lift up his staff against thee, after the manner of Egypt. . . the Lord of the hosts shall stir up a scourge for him according to the slaughter of Midian. . . ." (ISAIAH: 10: 21-26.)

76. A deep significance underlies all the stories which have been related here. Every story applied appropriately and exactly to the case of Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) and his people, the Quraish. In every story there are two parties—the Prophet and his people. In every story the Message of the Prophet, his teachings, his admonition and all other things were exactly the same as those of Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him). On the other side, in every case his people, who were sunk deep in wrong creeds, immoralities and obduracies, and the chiefs who were puffed up with pride, rejected the Message contemptuously. As the Quraish were behaving exactly in the same way towards Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) and his Message, they have been warned indirectly that their doom would be similar to those peoples, if they did not accept his Message, and did not avail of the opportunity that Allah had afforded them: if they persisted blindly in their obduracy they would meet with the same destruction which had always been the doom of those peoples who persisted in their deviation.

77. After citing the individual case of every Prophet and his people, now the general and comprehensive procedure has been enunciated, that Allah adopted at the appointment of each one of His Messengers. Whenever a Messenger was sent, Allah afflicted his people with adversities and calamities so that they should become meek and humble, and be conditioned for the acceptance of the Message. Accordingly, He sent famines and epidemics to them and made them suffer economic losses, defeats in wars, and the like, in order to humble their pride and haughtiness and to frustrate their over-confidence in their powers, riches, resources,

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الْخَيْرُونَ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ يَهْدِي لِلَّذِينَ يَرِثُونَ الْأَرْضَ مِنْ بَعْدِ أَهْلِهَا أَنْ لَوْ
 نَشَاءُ أَصَبْنَاهُمْ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَنَطْبَعُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ ۗ تِلْكَ
 الْقُرَى نَقِصُ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِهَا ۗ وَلَقَدْ جَاءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ ۗ فَمَا
 كَانُوا لِيُؤْمِنُوا بِمَا كَذَّبُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ ۗ كَذَٰلِكَ يَطْبَعُ اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِ الْكَافِرِينَ ۗ
 وَمَا وَجَدْنَا لِأَكْثَرِهِمْ مِنْ عَهْدٍ ۗ وَإِنْ وَجَدْنَا أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَفَاسِقِينَ ۗ تَعَوَّ
 بَعَثْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ مُوسَىٰ بِآيَاتِنَا إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَئِهِ ۗ فَظَلَمُوا بِهَا ۗ فَانظُرْ
 كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُفْسِدِينَ ۗ وَقَالَ مُوسَىٰ يُفِرْعَوْنَ إِنِّي رَسُولٌ مِّنْ
 رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ۗ حَقِيقٌ عَلَىٰ أَنْ لَا أَقُولَ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْحَقُّ ۗ قَدْ جِئْتُكُمْ
 بِبَيِّنَةٍ مِّنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَأَرْسِلْ مَعِيَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ ۗ قَالَ إِنْ كُنْتَ جِئْتَ
 بِآيَةٍ فَآتِ بِهَا إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ ۗ فَالْقَىٰ عَصَاهُ فَإِذَا هِيَ
 ثُعْبَانٌ مُّبِينٌ ۗ وَنَزَعَ يَدَهُ فَإِذَا هِيَ بَيْضَاءُ لِلنُّظُرِينَ ۗ قَالَ الْمَلَأُ
 مِنْ قَوْمِ فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّ هَٰذَا لَسِحْرٌ حَلِيمٌ ۗ يُرِيدُ أَنْ يُخْرِجَكُمْ مِنْ
 أَرْضِكُمْ ۗ فَمَاذَا تَأْمُرُونَ ۗ قَالُوا أَرْجِهْ وَأَخَاهُ وَأَرْسِلْ فِي الْمَدَائِنِ
 حِشْرِينَ ۗ يَا تُوَكَّأُ بِكُلِّ سِحْرِ عَلَيْهِ ۗ وَجَاءَ السَّحَرَةُ فِرْعَوْنَ قَالُوا
 إِنَّ لَنَا لَأَجْرًا إِنْ كُنَّا نَحْنُ الْغَالِبِينَ ۗ قَالَ نَعَمْ وَإِنَّكُمْ لَمِنَ
 الْمُقَرَّبِينَ ۗ قَالُوا يُوسَىٰ إِمَّا أَنْ تُلْقَىٰ وَإِمَّا أَنْ نَكُونَ نَحْنُ الْمُلْقِينَ ۗ
 قَالَ الْقَوَا ۗ فَلَمَّا الْقَوَا سَحَرُوا أَعْيُنَ النَّاسِ وَاسْتَرْهَبُوهُمْ وَجَاءُوا بِسِحْرِ
 عَظِيمٍ ۗ وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ أَنْ أَلْقِ عَصَاكَ ۗ فَإِذَا هِيَ تَلْقَفُ مَا
 يَأْفِكُونَ ۗ فَوَقَعَ الْحَقُّ وَبَطَلَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ۗ فَغَلِبُوا هُنَالِكَ

And, have not those people, who inherit the earth after its former occupants, learnt a lesson from the fact that, if We please, We can seize them for their sins?⁷⁹ (But they neglect the realities that teach a lesson) and We seal their hearts: then they do not listen to anything.⁸⁰ These people whose stories We recount to you (can serve as examples to you). Their Messengers came to them with clear Signs, but they would not believe in what they had once denied. Behold, this is how We seal the hearts of the disbelievers.⁸¹ And We found in most of them no respect for any Covenant; nay, We found that most of them were transgressors.⁸² 100-102

Then after the (above mentioned) communities, We sent Moses with Our Signs to Pharaoh and the chiefs of his nation,⁸³ but they also treated Our Signs unjustly.⁸⁴ Then behold, what happened in the end to the mischief-makers. 103

Moses said, "O Pharaoh!⁸⁵ I am a Messenger from the Lord of the universe. It behoves me to say in the name of Allah nothing but the truth. I have come to you from your Lord with clear Signs of my appointment: so send the children of Israel with me."⁸⁶ 104-105

Pharaoh answered, "If you have brought a Sign, and, if what you say is true, produce it". 106

Thereupon, Moses threw down his staff, and behold, it became a real serpent all of a sudden. Then he drew his hand out of his pocket, and lo, it was shining before the beholders!⁸⁷ 107-108

At this the chiefs of Pharaoh's people said to one another, "Indeed this man is an expert magician. He intends to drive you out of your land;⁸⁸ now what do you propose to do?" Then they all advised Pharaoh: "Put him and his brother off for a while, and send heralds to all the cities so that they should bring to you every expert magician".⁸⁹ Accordingly, the magicians came to Pharaoh and said, "Shall we surely get our reward, if we win?" Pharaoh answered, "Yes, indeed, and you shall get a position close to me". 109-110

Then they said to Moses, "Will you throw down first, or should we throw down?" Moses answered, "You should throw down first".

When they threw down their devices, they bewitched the eyes of the people and terrified their hearts: for they had,

indeed, produced a great magic.

117 Then We inspired Moses to throw down his staff. No sooner did he throw it down than it began to swallow their false magic.⁹⁰

Contd. from p. 53]

capabilities etc. This was to make them realize that there is a Higher Power above them that controls their destinies so that their hearts should be inclined to admonition and they should bow down humbly before their Lord. But, if this failed to incline their hearts to the acceptance of the Truth, they were tempted with prosperity. And this was the beginning of their end. As a rule, when such people, as are afflicted with adversity and calamities, begin to flourish and are enriched with blessings, they do not show any gratitude to their Master, and even forget the days of adversity. Then their intellectuals delude them by arguing like this: "There is nothing unusual in this. History tells us that the vicissitudes of fortune have always been taking place independent of moral values and these are not taking place under the control of Allah or in accordance with moral laws but blind nature is always working and bringing about adversity or prosperity. That is why our forefathers also had had their adversities and prosperities. It is, therefore, a sign of mental weakness to draw any moral lesson from these and to bow down and humble oneself before Allah.

The Holy Prophet had described the same thing in a Tradition: "Affliction goes on helping a Believer to reform himself till he comes out of this furnace cleansed of all impurities. But the case of a hypocrite in affliction is that of an ass, who does not realise why his master tied him and why he untied him." This implies that if a community does not turn to Allah, even when adversities and calamities are inflicted on it or does not remember Allah in gratitude, when He showers His blessings upon it and is not inclined at all to reform itself in any way whatsoever, it is doomed and its destruction is imminent.

In this connection it should also be noted that the Divine procedure mentioned in vv. 94-95 was at work at Makkah at the time when this Sūrah was revealed. The Quraish were showing the same antagonistic attitude and were consequently suffering from a severe famine. We learn from a Tradition, related by Ibn Mas'ūd and Ibn 'Abbās, that when the Quraish began to oppose the mission of the Holy Prophet, he prayed, "O Lord, help me against these people by a seven-year famine, like the one that visited Egypt during the time of Joseph". Accordingly, Allah sent a very severe famine to Makkah and things came to such a pass that they began to eat dead animals, skins, bones and even wool. Then the people of Makkah, under the leadership of Abū Sufyān, went to the Holy Prophet, and beseeched him to pray to Allah to remove the famine. But when Allah removed the famine and they began to flourish, they became all the more arrogant and their evil geniuses began to hinder even those

from it whose hearts were somewhat inclined towards the Faith, saying, "The famine was due to the vicissitudes of time, and was not different from the ones that visited us even before the advent of Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him). Therefore you should not fall into his trap by its visitation." Such things as "Our forefathers also had their adversity and prosperity" were being repeated at the time when this Sūrah was sent down. As these verses applied very appropriately to the condition of the Quraish at the time, this background should be kept in view in order to understand their full significance.

7. The Arabic word *makr* implies such a secret plan as remains hidden from the person against whom it is directed, and keeps him deluded that all is well, till it suddenly strikes him a decisive blow.

79. It is a pity that the succeeding nation does not learn any lesson from the mistakes of the fallen nation it replaces. There would be a great guidance for the people if they considered seriously the question why those people, who were ruling over the land before them and were prosperous and flourishing, were utterly ruined and totally destroyed. The answer would show them the erroneous thoughts and deeds which resulted in their ruin. Then they can also realize that the Sovereign Ruler Who seized them for their mistakes and deposed them is All-Powerful even now, is still ruling over the universe and is able to punish them and depose them, if they commit the same kind of errors that their predecessors committed.

80. According to the Divine Law, the fall of a nation takes place when it neglects to take a lesson from the history of the former people and from the ruins of their monuments, but tries to delude itself. Then Allah does not let them think rightly or accept the admonition of any well-wisher. As regards the individuals, the Divine Law is that if a person himself closes his eyes deliberately, the light of the sun does not help him; likewise if he does not want to hear, none else can make him hear.

81. In v. 101, Allah Himself has explained the meanings of the previous verse, "We seal their hearts: then they do not hear anything". From this it is clear that by the 'sealing of the hearts' is meant that state of mind which is caused as a result of the working of the Divine Law. When one deliberately refuses to accept the Truth because of one's ignorance, prejudice, selfishness, lust etc., then such a person becomes so obdurate that he persists in error without paying any attention to his own observations or to the arguments of his true well-wishers.

82. The disbelievers showed no respect for any of the three covenants that should be binding on every man. They respected neither the natural covenant that makes man by his very birth the servant of Allah, his Sustainer, nor that collective covenant that binds every individual to the observance of the known social code of the community of which he is a member, nor that personal covenant which every man undertakes with his Allah at the time of distress and helplessness.

Here Allah has called them "*fāsiq*" (transgressors) because they broke the above-mentioned three covenants.

83. The preceding stories were related to bring home to the people of Makkah the fact that the community which receives the Message of Allah and then rejects it, is inevitably doomed to destruction. After these, the story of Moses, Pharaoh and the Israelites is being related with the same object, though there are other important lessons also for the disbelievers of the Quraish, the Believers and the Jews.

In this story the disbelievers of the Quraish have been admonished that they should not be deluded by their apparent favourable balance of power in the initial stages of the conflict between the Truth and falsehood. The whole history of the conflict bears evidence to the fact that a single man starts the Movement to establish the Truth in his nation, nay, in the whole world, and wages war, without the help of any material provisions, against falsehood which had the backing of great nations and powerful kingdoms. But in spite of this, ultimately it comes out triumphant in the conflict. The Quraish have also been warned to note how all the devices of the disbelievers directed against the Messenger of the Truth in order to suppress his Message turn against themselves: that Allah gives a long respite to the disbelievers so that they might mend their ways before He makes the final decision to destroy them: that He gives exemplary punishment to those who do not take any lesson from a warning or a clear sign or an event that serves for a lesson.

There were two lessons for the Believers who had become the target of the persecution by the enemies. First, they should not be discouraged because they were smaller in number and weaker in power than their opponents, and they should not lose heart because Allah's succour was late in coming. Secondly, they were warned to guard against the attitude that was adopted by the Jews after they had professed to believe in the Truth: otherwise they would become accursed like the Jews.

The past history of the Israelites was related for their own benefit also. They were warned to consider the consequences of the worship of falsehood, and admonished to follow the Holy Prophet who was representing the true religion of the former Prophets after cleansing it of all the impurities that had been mixed up with it.

84. "They, too, treated Our Signs unjustly" by rejecting them and treating them as pieces of sorcery. It was injustice in the sense that they were not behaving fairly towards the signs and were treating them as pieces of sorcery and scoffing at them. There could be no greater injustice than to reject such Signs as were clear proofs of their being from Allah and about which no reasonable man could say that they could be produced by sorcery. Besides this, when the sorcerers themselves bore witness to the fact that it was beyond the power of sorcery to produce such Signs, it was nothing but injustice to reject these as pieces of sorcery. Thus they really showed that they were void of wisdom and truth as well.

85. The word *Fir'aun* (Pharaoh) literally means "the offspring of the sun-god". The ancient Egyptians called the sun *Ra'a*, which they worshipped as their supreme lord, and *Fir'aun* was named after it. According

to the creed of the ancient Egyptians, every ruler based his authority on his relation to *Ra'a* and claimed to be its incarnation and representative on the earth. Therefore every royal dynasty that came into power in Egypt presented itself to be the descendant of the sun-god and every ruler adopted the title of *Fir'aun* in order to show to the people that he was the Supreme Lord.

In this connection, it should also be noted that two different Pharaohs have been mentioned in the story of Moses as related in the Qurān. The one was that Pharaoh who was ruling over Egypt when Moses was born, and who brought him up in his own house, and the second was the one whom Moses invited to accept the Divine Message of God and deliver the children of Israel, and who was drowned.

The research scholars of today are inclined to believe that the first of the two Pharaohs who oppressed the Israelites was Rameses II, who ruled from 1292 to 1225 B.C. And the second Pharaoh who has been mentioned in these verses was Mineptah, who assisted his father Rameses II in the affairs of the government, and succeeded as ruler after his death. But these dates appear to be doubtful because, according to the calendar of the Israelites, the year of the death of Moses was 1272 B.C. These are, however, mere historical guesses for it is difficult to reconcile the dates of the Israelite, the Egyptian and the Christian calendars.

86. Prophet Moses was sent to Pharaoh with two missions. First, he should invite Pharaoh to surrender to Allah by accepting Islam. Second, he should demand from him to set the Israelites free from his slavery and tyranny. The Qurān mentions both the missions at one and the same place or separately, as required by the occasion.

87. These two Signs were given to Prophet Moses as a proof that he was a representative of Allah, the Creator and Sovereign of the whole universe. We have already stated that whenever the Messengers presented themselves before the people as the representatives of Allah, the people always demanded: "If you are really a representative of Allah, let such and such an event take place through you as may not be capable of being explained by the ordinary laws of nature, and which may clearly show that it has happened by the direct intervention of Allah to prove that you are really a representative of Allah". In answer to this demand, the Prophets showed those Signs that are called '*āyāt*' by the Qurān and miracles by the common people.

It is a pity that some learned Muslims try to explain away these Signs or miracles as ordinary events that took place according to the known physical laws of nature. They do not realise that in this way they are adopting a sceptical attitude towards the Book of Allah, for, in the context, the Qurān cites a supernatural event, and it presents the same as a Sign of Allah as a proof of his Prophethood. Therefore to explain it away as an ordinary event is, in fact, to disbelieve the Book. Thus such people make their own position ridiculous. On the one hand, they do not sincerely believe in the Qurān as a Book of Allah just because it upholds miracles; on the other, they do not have the courage to declare openly their disbelief

in the Book which upholds supernatural events, because it would deprive them of the benefit of the religion they profess, as it would adversely affect their worldly interests.

The decisive question about miracles is whether Allah suspended His activities after starting the system of the universe according to certain laws, and now cannot interfere in any way whatever with the working of that system. Or, whether He keeps the reins of His kingdom in His own hands and enforces His commands every moment in this kingdom and He has full powers to make any change, partial or complete, in shaping things and the course of events, as and when He wills. Those who believe in the first alternative cannot believe in the miracles for it goes against their conception of Allah and His universe, but the most proper course for such people is to deny the Divine Revelation of the Qurān instead of writing any commentary on it so as to refute the Quranic conception of Allah and prove their own. On the other hand, if one is convinced by the arguments of the Qurān and accepts the second alternative he would readily understand and believe in the miracles. It is quite obvious that if one believes that a serpent can come into being only through a biological process and it is not possible for Allah to create it in any other way, then such a one should consider it false that a staff was changed into a serpent and again into the staff. On the contrary, if one believes that lifeless matter can come to life by the command of Allah, Who has the power to give any kind of life to anything He wills, he will readily believe that the staff was changed into a serpent just as he believes that a live chicken comes out of a lifeless egg. To such a person, there will be nothing extraordinary, just because the staff was changed into a serpent only thrice and a chicken comes out of an egg over and over again.

88. Naturally some questions arise here: How was Prophet Moses a danger to Pharaoh and his kingdom? How could a destitute person of a slave community like him be a menace to a powerful and rich king like Pharaoh, who was the object of worship of his subjects as well? How was the turning of the staff into a serpent menace to his great kingdom which extended from Syria to Libya and from the Mediterranean Sea to Abyssinia? Why did they then raise the alarm that Prophet Moses intended to deprive the great Pharaoh and the members of the royal dynasty and the big chiefs of their kingdom, and drive them out of Egypt? Above all, why was there a danger at all of a revolution, when he had put forward no other claim than that he was a Prophet of Allah, and demanded the freedom of the Israelites? These questions are specially important because so far no political talk had taken place between them.

The answer is that the claim to Prophethood in itself implied that Prophet Moses meant to bring about a complete revolution in the existing system of life, including the political system as well. The very fact that a person claims to be a Delegate of the Lord of the universe, contains in itself the demand for total submission of human beings to himself. This is because the Delegate of the Lord of the universe does not come to live

as a subject of and subordinate to anyone else but as the ruler and the guardian. For, it is the negation of his claim to Prophethood to acknowledge the sovereignty of an unbeliever. That is why Pharaoh and his courtiers felt the menace of a political, social and cultural revolution when Moses made a claim to Prophethood.

Let us consider the question: Why did the court of the great Pharaoh of Egypt attach so much importance to the claim of Moses, who had no other helper than his own brother, and no other emblem of his appointment from Allah than his miraculous staff and his shining hand? In my opinion there were two main reasons: First, Pharaoh and his courtiers were fully acquainted with the great personality of Prophet Moses. They knew that he possessed a pure and strong character and an extraordinary ability, and was a born leader and commander. Besides this, if we rely on the stories of the Talmud and Josephus, Prophet Moses had acquired education in all the sciences of the age, and was fully trained in the art of war and administration, because these things were considered essential for the members of the royal family in which he was brought up, and had proved himself to be an excellent general in the campaign against Abyssinia. Above all, the hard desert life of eight years or so in Midian had helped to remove the effects of a life of ease in the royal palace. Therefore, when this grand, serene and pious man stood in the court of Pharaoh with the claim of Prophethood, they could not brush aside his claim as hollow. Secondly, when they saw the miracles of the staff and the shining hand, they were all filled with awe and were inclined to admit that there was, indeed, some supernatural force at his back. Thus there was an apparent contradiction in their calling him a magician and, at the same time, expressing a fear that he would drive them out of the country. This also showed that they had been nonplussed by the very first appearance of the Signs of Prophethood. If they had really considered Prophet Moses to be a magician, they would have never felt and expressed the danger of a revolution from him, for magic has never brought about any revolution in the world.

89. These words of the courtiers of Pharaoh show that they had a clear conception of the distinction between the change produced by a Divine miracle and the effect of magic. They knew that the change brought about by a Divine miracle was real, whereas the effect produced by magic was merely an illusion. That is why they tried to refute the claim of Prophet Moses, saying, "This man is an expert magician". They meant to say that the staff had not actually turned into a serpent but had only appeared so to them to be a serpent because of his magic and they would not acknowledge it as a Divine miracle. Therefore they counselled Pharaoh to gather together all the expert magicians so that they may show that they could also turn ropes and sticks into serpents and remove to some extent from the hearts of the people the awful effect that had been produced in their minds by the miracle of the staff of Moses.

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وَانْقَلَبُوا صَغِيرِينَ ﴿١١٩﴾ وَالْقَى السَّحَرَةُ سِجْدِينَ ﴿١٢٠﴾ قَالُوا آمَنَّا بِرَبِّ
 الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٢١﴾ رَبِّ مُوسَى وَهَارُونَ ﴿١٢٢﴾ قَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ آمَنْتُمْ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ
 آذَنَ لَكُمْ إِنَّ هَذَا لَمَكْرٌ مَكْرَتُوهُ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ لِتُخْرِجُوا مِنْهَا أَهْلَهَا
 فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٢٣﴾ لَأَقْطَعَنَّ أَيْدِيَكُمْ وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ مِنْ خِلَافٍ ثُمَّ لَأُصَلِّبَنَّكُمْ
 أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿١٢٤﴾ قَالُوا إِنَّا إِلَى رَبِّنَا مُنْقَلِبُونَ ﴿١٢٥﴾ وَمَا نُنْقِمُ مِنْهَا إِلَّا أَنْ آمَنَّا
 بِآيَاتِ رَبِّنَا لَمَّا جَاءَنَا رَبَّنَا أَفْرِغْ عَلَيْنَا صَبْرًا وَتَوَقَّنَا مُسْلِمِينَ ﴿١٢٦﴾ وَ
 قَالَ الْمَلَأُ مِنْ قَوْمِ فِرْعَوْنَ أَنْتَذِرُ مُوسَى وَقَوْمَهُ لِيُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَ
 يُدْرِكُوا الْهَيْكَلُ قَالَ سَنَقْتِلُ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ وَنَسْتَحْيِي نِسَاءَهُمْ وَإِنَّا فَوْقَهُمْ
 قَاهِرُونَ ﴿١٢٧﴾ قَالَ مُوسَى لِقَوْمِهِ اسْتَعِينُوا بِاللَّهِ وَاصْبِرُوا إِنَّ الْأَرْضَ
 لِلَّهِ نَتَّيُورُهَا مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١٢٨﴾ قَالُوا أُوذِينَا
 مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تَأْتِيَنَا وَمِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جِئْتَنَا قَالَ عَسَى رَبُّكُمْ أَنْ يُهْلِكَ
 عَدُوَّكُمْ وَيَسْتَخْلِفَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرَ كَيْفَ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٢٩﴾ وَلَقَدْ أَخَذْنَا
 آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ بِالسِّنِينَ وَنَقْصٍ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَذَّكَّرُونَ ﴿١٣٠﴾ فَإِذَا
 جَاءَتْهُمْ الْحَسَنَةُ قَالُوا إِنَّا هَذِهِ ^{for us} وَإِنْ تُصِبْهُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ يَطَّيَّرُوا بِمُوسَى
 وَمَنْ مَعَهُ ^{this is us for} إِلَّا إِنَّمَا ظَنُّهُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٣١﴾ وَ
 قَالُوا مَهْمَا تَأْتِنَا بِهِ مِنْ آيَةٍ لِنَسْحَرَنَّ بِهَا فَمَا نَحْنُ لَكَ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٣٢﴾
 فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ الطُّوفَانَ وَالْجَرَادَ وَالْقُمَّلَ وَالضَّفَادِعَ وَالْدَّمَ آيَاتٍ
 مُفَصَّلَاتٍ فَاسْتَكْبَرُوا وَكَانُوا قَوْمًا مُجْرِمِينَ ﴿١٣٣﴾ وَلَمَّا وَقَعَ عَلَيْهِمُ الرِّجْزُ
 قَالُوا يَا مُوسَى ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ بِمَا عَهِدَ عِنْدَكَ لَئِنْ كَشَفْتَ عَنَّا الرِّجْزَ

Thus the Truth was established, and the falsehood which 118-122 they had wrought proved vain. Pharaoh and his people were vanquished in the combat and (instead of being triumphant) they became humiliated. As regards the magicians, they were compelled to fall prostrate by something from within. They said, "We have acknowledged the Lord of the worlds,— the Lord whom Moses and Aaron acknowledge."⁹¹

Pharaoh said, "Do you dare believe in Him before I permit you? Indeed, it was a plot you conspired in the capital to deprive the rightful owners of their power. Well, you shall soon know its consequences. I will have your hands and feet cut off on opposite sides and then will I have you all crucified." 123-124

They answered, "At any rate, we have to return to our Lord; (as for you,) you want to take vengeance upon us only because we believed in the Signs of our Lord, when they came before us. O our Lord, bestow fortitude upon us, causing us to die as those who have surrendered to Thee".⁹² 125-126

Then the chiefs of Pharaoh's nation said to him, "Will you leave Moses and his people free to spread disorder in the land, and let them discard your service and that of your deities?" 127 Pharaoh answered, "Well, I will have their sons slain and let their women live⁹³ : we have a strong hold over them."

Moses said to his people, "Invoke Allah's help, and show fortitude. The land belongs to Allah. He gives it as a heritage to those of His servants whom He pleases : and the final success is for those who fear Him in all their doings." His people answered, "We were oppressed before you came to us and now also we are being oppressed since you have come to us." He said, "In the near future, your Lord will destroy your enemies, and make you vicegerents in this land; then He will see how you conduct yourselves." *punished p 23, 24* 128-129

Indeed We afflicted Pharaoh's people with several years of famine and scarcity of food so that they should come to their senses. But they responded like this : whenever a good time came, they would say, "This is but our due" and when there was a hard time, they would ascribe their calamities to Moses and those with him. Whereas, in fact, their misfortune was in the hand of Allah; but most of them did not know this. They said to Moses, "We are not going to believe in you, 130-134

whatever Sign you may bring to enchant us.”⁹⁴ At last We let loose upon them the storm,⁹⁵ the locusts, the lice,⁹⁶ and the frogs, and rained blood upon them. Though We showed these Signs, one by one, they persisted in their rebellion; for they were steeped in crime. Whenever a plague befell them they would say, “O Moses! Pray for us to Allah in the name of the office you hold from Him. If you help remove the plague from us this time, we will believe in you, and send the Israelites with you.”

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90. There is no ground to believe that the staff of Moses swallowed up the sticks and ropes that had been cast by the magicians and had appeared to be serpents. What the Qurān says is that the staff swallowed up the false magic produced by them as soon as it turned into a real serpent. In plain words it means that wherever the serpent of the staff went, it nullified the effects of the magic which had made their ropes and sticks appear as moving serpents and as a result of one round made by the staff they began to look like their real selves as ropes and sticks. (For further explanation, see E.N. 42 of XX).

91. This defeat and acknowledgement turned the tables on the people of Pharaoh. They had mustered all the expert magicians of the land to demonstrate publicly that Prophet Moses was a magician or, at least, to create doubts in the minds of the public about his Prophethood. But after the defeat, their own experts in the art admitted unanimously that what Prophet Moses was presenting was not magic at all, but most surely it was the work of the power of the Lord of the worlds, and that every kind of magic was powerless against it.

Obviously their considered opinion could not be brushed aside in an offhand way, for none could judge magic better than the magicians. That is why when the magicians testified, after practical demonstration and trial, that it was not magic, it became impossible for Pharaoh and his courtiers to assert that Moses was a magician.

92. When Pharaoh saw the tables turning on himself, he thought out another device. He declared that the whole show was the outcome of the plot that Moses and the magicians had devised. Then he threatened the magicians with a severe chastisement and death so that they should confess that his accusation was true. But this move also turned against him. As the magicians remained firm in their new Faith, and were prepared to undergo any torture for its sake, it became evident that their belief in the Truth presented by Moses was a genuine confession of faith and not the product of any plot. That is why he had to give up the pretence of truth and justice and resort to open tyranny.

In this connection it should also be noted that in a few moments, their Faith had brought about a wonderful change in the character of the

magicians. The same people who had left their homes for the sake of helping the religion of their forefathers and had, a few minutes before, very humbly requested Pharaoh to give them rewards, if they came out successful in the conflict with Moses, were now filled with the courage of conviction of the true Faith. They had become so bold and brave that they were now defying the same king, before whom they were meekly bowing, and begging a reward for their encounter. But now they had become so convinced of the truth of their Faith that they were not ready to give it up for the fear of the worst torture with which they were being threatened.

93. It should be noted that there were two periods of oppression. At first the Israelites were oppressed during the reign of Rameses II, before the birth of Prophet Moses. The second period of oppression mentioned in this verse started during the reign of Mineptah, after the appointment of Moses as a Messenger of Allah. However, there was one thing common. The sons of Israelites were killed and the lives of their daughters were spared so that their race should gradually come to an end and the survivors get merged into other races. A tablet that was dug up during the archaeological excavations in 1896, probably refers to this period, when it mentions the exploits and victories of Mineptah, saying, "The Israelites have been exterminated and no seed has been left for their reproduction." (For further explanation see v. 25 of XL).

94. This was the height of bigotry and obduracy that the courtiers of Pharaoh were dubbing as magic that thing which they knew could never be magic. Even a fool would not believe that magic can bring about famine and scarcity in the whole country. In connection with the same story the Qurān says in XXVII: 13—14, "When Our Signs came openly before their eyes, they said, 'This is an obvious magic. Though their hearts were convinced (of their truth), they denied these unjustly and rebelliously.'"

95. Probably it was a rain-storm that was accompanied by hailstones, though it could have been any other kind of storm. As the Bible does not mention a rain-storm but only a heavy fall of hailstones, the common word storm has been preferred.

96. The Arabic word قُمَّلٌ (*qummal*) in the original stands for any of the small insects like louse, small fly, mosquito, small locusts, weevil and the like. Probably this comprehensive word has been used for the reason that lice and mosquitoes had inflicted human beings and seed-weevils had attacked granaries at one and the same time. (For comparison, see Chapters 7-12 of Exodus, and E.N. 43 of LXIII).

لَنُؤْمِنَنَّ لَكَ وَلَنُرْسِلَنَّ مَعَكَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ ﴿١٣٢﴾ فَلَمَّا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُمْ الرِّجْزَ
إِلَى آجَلٍ هُمْ بِالْغُورَةِ إِذَا هُمْ يَنْكُثُونَ ﴿١٣٥﴾ فَانْتَقَمْنَا مِنْهُمْ فَأَغْرَقْنَاهُمْ فِي
الْيَمِّ بِآثَمِهِمْ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَكَانُوا عَنْهَا غَافِلِينَ ﴿١٣٦﴾ وَأَوْرَثْنَا الْقَوْمَ الَّذِينَ
كَانُوا يُسْتَضَعُونَ مَشَارِقَ الْأَرْضِ وَمَغَارِبَهَا الَّتِي بَرَكْنَا فِيهَا ۖ وَتَمَّتْ
كَلِمَاتُ رَبِّكَ الْحُسْنَىٰ عَلَىٰ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ ۖ بِمَا صَبَرُوا ۖ وَدَمَرْنَا مَا كَانَ
يَصْنَعُ فِرْعَوْنُ وَقَوْمُهُ وَمَا كَانُوا يَعْرِشُونَ ﴿١٣٧﴾ وَجُوزْنَا بِبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ الرِّيحَ
الْبَحْرَ فَاتُوا عَلَىٰ قَوْمٍ يَعْكِفُونَ عَلَىٰ آصْنَامٍ لَهُمْ قَالُوا يُسُوْسَىٰ اجْعَلْ
لَنَا إِلَهًا كَمَا لَهُمْ آلِهَةٌ ۗ قَالَ إِنَّكُمْ قَوْمٌ تَجْهَلُونَ ﴿١٣٨﴾ إِنَّ هَؤُلَاءِ مُتَّبِعُونَ
مَا هُمْ فِيهِ وَبِطِلٌ مَّا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٣٩﴾ قَالَ أَغَيْرَ اللَّهِ أَبْغِيكُمْ
إِلَهًا وَهُوَ فَضْلُكَ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٤٠﴾ وَإِذْ أَنْجَيْنَاكَ مِنَ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ
يَسُومُونَكَ سُوءَ الْعَذَابِ ۖ يُقْتَلُونَ أَبْنَاءَ كُمْ وَيَسْتَحْيُونَ نِسَاءَ كُمْ ۖ وَفِي
ذَلِكَ بَلَاءٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٤١﴾ وَوَعَدْنَا مُوسَىٰ ثَلَاثِينَ لَيْلَةً وَأَتَمَمْنَا
بِعَشْرِ فِتْنَةٍ مِّيقَاتُ رَبِّهِ أَرْبَعِينَ لَيْلَةً ۗ وَقَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِأَخِيهِ هَارُونَ
اخْلُفْنِي فِي قَوْمِي وَأَصْلِحْ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ سَبِيلَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿١٤٢﴾ وَلَمَّا جَاءَ
مُوسَىٰ لِبَيْقَاتِنَا وَكَلَّمَهُ رَبُّهُ ۗ قَالَ رَبِّ ارْنِنِّي أَنْظُرَ إِلَيْكَ ۗ قَالَ لَنْ
تَرِنِّي وَلَكِن أَنْظُرْ إِلَى الْجَبَلِ فَإِنِ اسْتَقَرَّ مَكَانَهُ فَسَوْفَ تَرِنِّي ۗ فَلَمَّا
تَجَلَّىٰ رَبُّهُ لِلْجَبَلِ جَعَلَهُ دَكًّا وَخَرَّ مُوسَىٰ صِعْقًا ۗ فَلَمَّا آفَقَ قَالَ
سُبْحٰنَكَ تُبْتُ إِلَيْكَ وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٤٣﴾ قَالَ يُسُوْسَىٰ إِنِّي اصْطَفَيْتُكَ
عَلَى النَّاسِ بِرِسَالَتِي وَبِكَلَامِي ۖ فَخُذْ مَا آتَيْنَاكَ وَكُن مِّنَ الشَّاكِرِينَ ﴿١٤٤﴾

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But as soon as We removed the plague from them after the expiry of the term that had been fixed for them, they would at once break their promise. Then We took Our vengeance on them and drowned them in the sea because they had treated Our Signs as false and had grown heedless of them. And after them We gave as heritage to those who had been abased and kept low, the eastern and western parts of that land, which had been blessed bountifully by Us.⁹⁷ Thus the promise of prosperity that your Lord had made with the Israelites was fulfilled, because they had shown fortitude. And We destroyed all that Pharaoh and his people had constructed and raised up. 135-137

We led the Israelites across the sea; then they started on their journey, and came upon a people who were zealously devoted to their idols. They said, "O Moses, make a god also for us like the gods these people have."⁹⁸ Moses replied, "Indeed, you are a people who are behaving very foolishly. The way these people are following is doomed to destruction and the works they are performing are absolutely vain." Then he further said, "What, should I seek a god for you other than Allah : when it is He Who has exalted you above all the nations of the world? And (Allah says), 'Recall the time when We rescued you from the people of Pharaoh, who afflicted you with a dreadful torment; they slew your sons and let your women live and in this was a great trial for you from your Lord!'" 138-141

We summoned Moses to Mount Sinai for thirty nights and days, and We added to them ten, thus the term appointed by his Lord became full forty nights and days.⁹⁹ Before leaving, Moses said to his brother Araon, "After me take my place among my people and do the right, and do not follow the way of the mischief-makers."¹⁰⁰ When Moses arrived there at the appointed time and his Lord spoke with him, he beseeched, "Lord, give me power of sight so that I may look upon Thee." He answered, "You cannot see Me. Well, you may just look towards the yonder Mountain; if it remains firm in its place, then you shall behold Me." Accordingly, when his Lord manifested His glory on the Mountain, that turned it into fine dust, and Moses fell in a swoon. When he came to himself, he said, "Glory be to Thee! I repent before 142-144

وَكَتَبْنَا لَهُ فِي الْأَلْوَارِجِ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مَوْعِظَةً وَتَفْصِيلًا لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ ۖ
 فَخُذْهَا بِقُوَّةٍ وَأْمُرْ قَوْمَكَ يَا خُذُوا بِأَحْسِنَهَا سَأُورِيكُمْ دَارَ الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴿١٣٥﴾
 سَأَصْرِفُ عَنْ آيَتِيَ الَّذِينَ يَتَكَبَّرُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَإِنْ يَرَوْا
 كُلَّ آيَةٍ لَا يُؤْمِنُوا بِهَا ۗ وَإِنْ يَرَوْا سَبِيلَ الرُّشْدِ لَا يَتَّخِذُوهُ سَبِيلًا ۗ
 وَإِنْ يَرَوْا سَبِيلَ الغَىِّ يَتَّخِذُوهُ سَبِيلًا ۗ ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَ
 كَانُوا عَنْهَا غَافِلِينَ ﴿١٣٦﴾ وَالَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَ لِقَاءِ الْآخِرَةِ حَبِطَتْ
 أَعْمَالُهُمْ هَلْ يُجْزَوْنَ إِلَّا مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٣٧﴾ وَاتَّخَذَ قَوْمُ مُوسَىٰ
 مِنْ بَعْدِهِ مِنْ خَلِيلِهِمْ عِبَادًا جَسَدًا لَهُ خُورٌ أَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّهُ لَا يُكَلِّمُهُمْ
 وَلَا يَهْدِيهِمْ سَبِيلًا ۗ اتَّخَذُوهُ وَكَانُوا ظَالِمِينَ ﴿١٣٨﴾ وَلَمَّا سَقَطَ فِي
 أَيْدِيهِمْ وَرَأَوْا أَنَّهُمْ قَدْ ضَلُّوا قَالُوا لَئِنْ لَمْ يَرْحَمْنَا رَبُّنَا وَيَغْفِرْ لَنَا
 لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿١٣٩﴾ وَلَمَّا رَجَعَ مُوسَىٰ إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ غَضْبَانَ أَسِفًا
 قَالَ بِئْسَمَا خَلَفْتُمُونِي مِنْ بَعْدِي ۗ أَعَجَلْتُمْ أَمْرَ رَبِّكُمْ ۗ وَأَلْقَى الْأَلْوَارِحَ
 وَآخَذَ بِرَأْسِ أَخِيهِ يَجُرُّهُ إِلَيْهِ ۗ قَالَ ابْنَ أُمَّ إِنَّ الْقَوْمَ اسْتَضَعَفُونِي
 وَكَادُوا يَقْتُلُونَنِي ۗ فَلَا تُشِيكْ بِي الْأَعْدَاءُ ۗ وَلَا تَجْعَلْنِي مَعَ الْقَوْمِ
 الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٤٠﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي وَ لِأَخِي وَادْخُلْنَا فِي رَحْمَتِكَ ۗ وَأَنْتَ
 أَرْحَمُ الرَّحِيمِينَ ﴿١٤١﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا الْعِجْلَ سِينَالَهُمْ غَضَبٌ مِّنْ
 رَبِّهِمْ وَذِلَّةٌ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا ۗ وَكَذَٰلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُفْتَرِينَ ﴿١٤٢﴾ وَالَّذِينَ
 عَمِلُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ ثُمَّ تَابُوا مِنْ بَعْدِهَا وَآمَنُوا ۗ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ مِنْ بَعْدِهَا
 لَغَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٤٣﴾ وَلَمَّا سَكَتَ عَنْ مُوسَى الْغَضَبُ أَخَذَ الْأَلْوَارِحَ ۗ وَفِي

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Thee, and I am the first of those who believe." He said, "O Moses! I have chosen you from among all the people to deliver My Message and to have conversation with Me: so take whatever I give you and be grateful."

After this, We inscribed upon the tablets¹⁰¹ admonitions concerning every branch of life and clear instructions about all its aspects and gave these to Moses and said to him, "Hold fast to the precepts steadfastly, and enjoin your people to follow them according to their best sense.¹⁰² In the near future, I shall show you the abode of the wicked people.¹⁰³ I will turn away from My Signs the eyes of those who without any sight behave haughtily on the earth.¹⁰⁴ Whatsoever Sign they might see they will never believe in it. If they see the Right Way before them, they will not follow it; but if they see a crooked way, they will follow it. That is because they treated Our Signs as false and were heedless of them. Whoever treated Our Signs as false and denied the meeting in the Hereafter their deeds became vain.¹⁰⁵ Can the people get any recompense except according to what they have wrought?"

In his absence¹⁰⁶ the people of Moses made from their ornaments the image of a calf which made sound like lowing. Did they not see that it could neither speak to them nor guide them in any matter? Yet they took it for a god, for they were wrong-doers.¹⁰⁷ But when the enchantment of self-delusion was broken and they realised that they had, in fact, gone astray, they said, "If our Lord does not have mercy on us and does not forgive us we shall be losers." In the meanwhile when Moses full of anger and sorrow returned to his people, he said, "Very evil is it that you have done in my place after me! Could you not patiently wait for the Commandment of Allah?" And he threw down the tablets, and, seizing his brother by the hair of his head, dragged him. Aaron said, "Son of my mother, these people overpowered me and were going to kill me: so, let not the enemies gloat over me: do not count me among the people who have done wrong."¹⁰⁸ Then Moses said, "O Lord, forgive me and my brother, and admit us to Thy mercy; Thou art the Most Merciful of all." (In response to this Allah said,) "Allah's wrath shall surely overtake those who made the calf a god, and they shall be abased in the life of this world; that is how We punish those who invent falsehood. But those who do evil deeds, then repent after this and believe, will after this repentance and belief most surely find your Lord Forgiving and Merciful."

97. That is, "The Israelites were made the inheritors of Palestine". Some commentators infer from this that the Israelites were made the masters of Egypt. But we hesitate to accept this version for there is neither any direct reference to it in the Qurān nor is there any historical evidence to support it. (See E.N. 57 of XVIII and E.N. 45 of XXVI).

98. "These people" were the Egyptians, who lived at Mafqah, a cantonment in the Sinai Peninsula. The Israelites crossed the Red Sea probably at a place somewhere between the present Suez and Ismā'īliyah, and started on their journey along the coast towards the southern part of the Peninsula, which was at that time under Egypt. In its lower part, there were copper and emerald mines, and for their protection the Egyptians had built cantonments at some places. One of these was at Mafqah, where the Egyptians had set up a big idol temple whose remnants are found even today in the south-western part of the Peninsula. At another place near it, there was another idol-temple, which was dedicated to the Moon-god. Probably the Israelites were passing by one of these idol-temples, when they made their demand for an artificial god. This shows that slavery under the Egyptians had left a deep mark of their culture on the Israelites.

It can be easily judged from the following remarks made by Joshua, son of Nūn, Moses' first successor, in his last address to the Israelites, seventy years after their exodus from Egypt:—

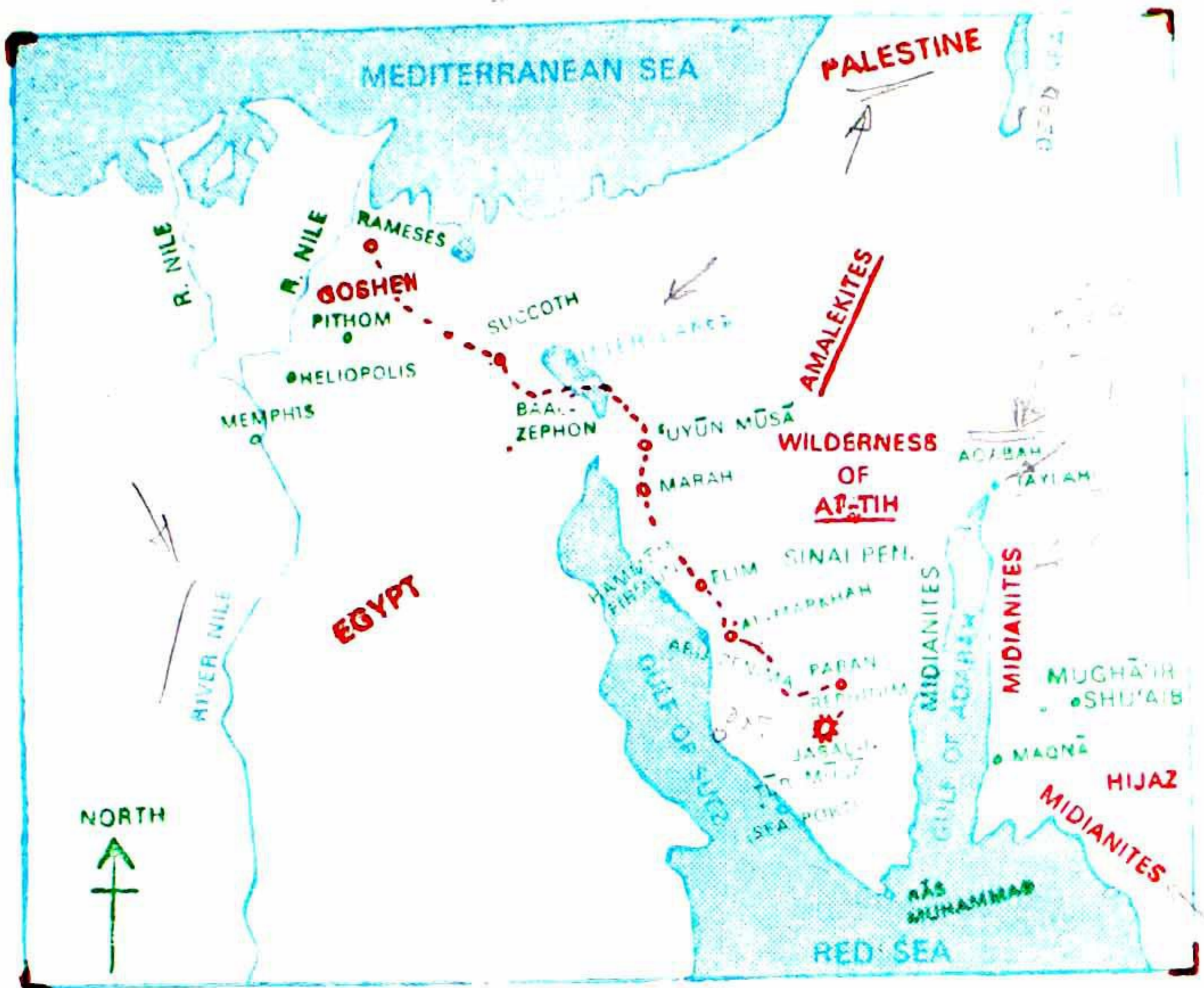
"Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve Him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the Lord. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." (Joshua, 24: 14-15).

This shows that even after forty years of training and guidance under Prophet Moses, and 28 years under Prophet Joshua, the Israelites could not cleanse themselves of the evil effects that had been stamped upon their lives during their long slavery under the Pharaohs of Egypt. That is why these corrupted Muslims were so eager to bow down before those gods, whom their Egyptian masters served, no sooner did they see an idol-temple after their exodus.

99. After their departure from Egypt, when the Israelites became free from the shackles of slavery, and won the position of an independent nation, Prophet Moses was summoned to Mount Sinai by the Divine Command so that the Law should be given to him for them. This was the first summons of the series that is being mentioned here. Forty days were appointed so that he should prepare himself by fast, devotion, worship, prayer, deep thought, meditation and reflection for the heavy task that was about to be entrusted to him.

On this occasion Prophet Moses left the Israelites at a place now called

EXODUS OF THE ISRAELITES



EXPLANATION :

1. Goshen is the land which Prophet Joseph gave to the Israelites to live in Egypt.
2. Memphis was the capital of Egypt in the time of Prophet Moses.
3. Bitter Lakes are found quite at a distance now from the Gulf of Suez but in the ancient time they were connected with the sea.
4. Prophet Moses set out from Ramses with the Israelites and they joined and followed him on the way from all sides. He probably wanted to bring them safely through the wilderness to Sinai, but the fear of the Egyptian military camps on the one hand and the hot pursuit by Pharaoh on the other, took them on to Baa, Zephon, where from some point they crossed the Bitter Lakes, and it was here that Pharaoh and all his hosts were drowned.
5. Prophet Moses and the Israelites travelled through Marah, Elim, Al-Markhah and Paran Rephidim and came to the place now called Jabal-i-Musa (Sinai of the Old Testament) and also Tur. The valley around here has been mentioned as the Holy Valley of Tuwa in the Quran (XX : 12).
6. Hammam-i-Fair'aun is the place where according to the local tradition in the Sinai Peninsula the body of Pharaoh was found floating in the water.
7. Tur in this map shows the present sea-port of Tur and not Mount Tur.
8. Al-Markhah is situated at the edge of the Wilderness of Sin of the Old Testament, where manna and salva began to be sent down.
9. Near Raphidim is found the famous rock in Mount Horeb, which was smitten by Prophet Moses causing twelve springs of water to gush out.
10. At-Tih is the wilderness in which the Israelites remained wandering homeless for forty years. Tih is derived from yatihun (V : 26) and means "wandering homelessly."
11. Aqabah or Aylah which was Ezion-geber in the ancient times, is the place where according to the common tradition, the well-known incident of the Sabbath-breakers took place.

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Wādiy-u-Shaikh, between Nabī Ṣāliḥ and Mt. Sinai. That part of the valley where the Israelites then encamped is now called Maidān-ur-Rāhat. At one end of the valley is situated the hillock, where, according to the local tradition, Prophet Ṣāliḥ migrated from the territory of Thamūd. The mosque, which was built in his memory, stands there even today. On the other side, there is another hillock, called Jabl-i-Hārūn, where it is said, Prophet Aaron had gone in protest against the cow-worship of the Israelites. On its third side is Mt. Sinai, which is 7359 feet above the sea level and is usually covered with clouds. On the top of this is the cave in which Moses spent forty days and nights and which has become a holy place of pilgrimage. There is a mosque of the Muslims and a church of the Christians near the cave and at the foot, a monastery built during the reign of Justinian, Byzantine Emperor. (For details, see E.N.'s 9, 10 of XXVIII).

100. Though Prophet Aaron was the elder of the two by three years, he was under Prophet Moses in the mission of Prophethood. In fact, Prophet Aaron was appointed as a Prophet to work as an assistant to Moses in response to his prayer. The fact that he was appointed by Allah as assistant to Prophet Moses has been stated in XXV: 35.

101. The Bible says that these two tablets were slabs of stone. Both the Qurān and the Bible ascribe the writing upon them to Allah. We have, however, no specific source to say how that was done. Therefore we cannot say with certainty whether the writing was inscribed on the tablets directly by Allah or through the agency of an angel or by Prophet Moses. (Please compare this with Exodus 31 : 18, 32 : 15-16, Deut. 5 : 6-22).

102. That is, "The Divine precepts and instructions should be followed in their direct and plain meanings, that can be grasped by a man of average intelligence, who has a pure heart and pure intentions." This condition has been attached lest one should confuse them with the hair-splitting of those who, by their legal quibblings, are able to devise ways of crookedness, deceit and mischief out of the plain words of the Divine Commandments.

103. That is, "In your onward march, you will pass through the ruins of the homes of those who disobeyed the Divine Law and discarded the way of Allah's worship and obedience and persisted in the paths of error. When you see these things you will yourselves know the end of the people who adopt such ways."

104. That is, "This is My law: such people as behave haughtily cannot take any warning from any exemplary sign and cannot learn any lesson from anything that may teach a lesson."

According to the Qurān, a person behaves haughtily who considers himself above submission to Allah and becomes heedless of His Commandments and behaves in a way as if he was not a servant of Allah and Allah was not his Lord. Obviously such an arrogance is not based on any rightful claim, for no servant has any right to behave as if he were not His servant, when he lives on Allah's earth. That is why Allah says, "... who without any right behave haughtily."

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نُسَخَّتْهَا هُدًى وَرَحْمَةً لِّلَّذِينَ هُمْ لِرَبِّهِمْ يَرْهَبُونَ ﴿١٥٣﴾ وَ اخْتَارَ مُوسَى
 قَوْمَهُ سَبْعِينَ رَجُلًا لِّبَيِّقَاتِنَا ۗ فَلَمَّا اخَذْتَهُمُ الرَّجْفَةُ قَالَ رَبِّ لَوْ شِئْتَ
 اَهْلَكْتَهُمْ مِّن قَبْلُ وَاِيَّايَ ۗ اَتَهْلِكُنَا بِمَا فَعَلَ السُّفَهَاءُ مِنَّا ۗ اِنْ هِيَ اِلَّا
 فِتْنَتُكَ ۗ تُضِلُّ بِهَا مَن تَشَاءُ وَتَهْدِي مَن تَشَاءُ ۗ اَنْتَ وَلِيْنَا فَاعْفِرْ لَنَا
 وَاَرْحَمْنَا وَاَنْتَ خَيْرُ الْغَافِرِينَ ﴿١٥٤﴾ وَاكْتُبْ لَنَا فِي هَذِهِ الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَّ
 فِي الْاٰخِرَةِ ۗ اِنَّا هُدْنَا اِلَيْكَ ۗ قَالَ عَذَابِيْٓ اُصِيبُ بِهٖ مَن اَشَاءُ ۗ وَرَحْمَتِيْ
 وَسِعَتْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ ۗ فَسَاكْتُبْهَا لِلَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكٰوةَ وَاَلَّذِينَ
 هُمْ بِاٰيٰتِنَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٥٥﴾ اَلَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُوْنَ الرَّسُوْلَ النَّبِيَّ الرَّحْمٰنِ الَّذِي
 يَجِدُوْنَهُ مَكْتُوبًا عِنْدَهُمْ فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَاَلْاِنْجِيْلِ ۗ يٰۤاَمْرُهُمْ بِالْمَعْرُوْفِ
 وَيَنْهٰهُمْ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُحِلُّ لَهُمُ الطَّيِّبٰتِ وَيُحَرِّمُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْخَبٰثٰتِ وَ
 يَضَعُ عَنْهُمْ اِصْرَهُمْ وَاَلْاَغْلَالَ الَّتِي كَانَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ ۗ فَاَلَّذِينَ اٰمَنُوْا بِهٖ وَ
 حَزَرُوْهُ وَنَصَرُوْهُ وَاتَّبَعُوا النُّوْرَ الَّذِيْ اُنزِلَ مَعَهُ ۗ اُوْلٰٓئِكَ هُمُ السَّٰلِحُوْنَ ﴿١٥٦﴾
 قُلْ يٰۤاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اِنِّيْ رَسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ اِلَيْكُمْ جَمِيْعًا الَّذِيْ لَهٗ مُلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ
 وَ الْاَرْضِ ۗ لَا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ يُحْيِيْ وَيُمِيْتُ ۗ فَاٰمِنُوْا بِاللّٰهِ وَرَسُوْلِهِ النَّبِيِّ الرَّحْمٰنِ
 الَّذِيْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللّٰهِ وَكَلِمٰتِهٖ وَاتَّبِعُوْهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُوْنَ ﴿١٥٧﴾ وَ مِنْ قَوْمِ مُوسٰى
 اُمَّةٌ يَّهْدُوْنَ بِالْحَقِّ وَبِهٖ يَعْدِلُوْنَ ﴿١٥٨﴾ وَ قَطَعْنٰهُمْ اِثْنَيْ عَشَرَ اَسْبَاطًا
 اَمَّا ۗ وَ اَوْحَيْنَا اِلَى مُوسٰى اِذِ اسْتَسْقٰهُ قَوْمُهٗ اِنْ اَضْرِبْ بِعَصَاكَ الْحَجَرَ
 فَانْبَجَسْتَ مِنْهٗ اِثْنًا عَشَرَ عِيْنًا ۗ قَدْ عَلِمَ كُلُّ اُنٰسٍ مَّشْرَبَهُمْ ۗ وَظَلَّلْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ
 الْغَمَامَ وَ اَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ السَّنَّ وَ السَّلْوٰى ۗ كُلُوْا مِنْ طَيِّبٰتِ مَا رَزَقْنٰكُمْ ۗ وَ مَا

When Moses' anger was allayed, he took up the tablets 154-156 in whose writing was guidance and mercy for those who fear their Lord. And Moses chose from among his people seventy men (to accompany him) to attend a meeting appointed by Us.¹⁰⁹ When a severe earthquake seized them, Moses prayed, "My Lord, if Thou hadst willed, Thou couldst have destroyed them and me before this: wouldst Thou destroy all of us for the offence committed by some foolish people from among us? This was a trial set by Thee, whereby Thou leadst astray whom Thou wilt and guidest whom Thou wilt.¹¹⁰ Thou alone art our Protector; so forgive us and have mercy on us for Thou art the best of all forgivers! And ordain for us what is good in this world as well as in the world to come; we have turned to Thee". He replied, "As to punishment, I inflict it on anyone I will, but My mercy embraces everything.¹¹¹ So I will prescribe it for those who will refrain from disobedience, pay the *Zakāt*, and believe in My Revelations."

(So, now mercy has been assigned to those) who 157-158 follow this Messenger, the *Ummī* Prophet,¹¹² whose mention they shall find in the Torah and the Gospel with them.¹¹³ He enjoins them to follow virtue and forbids them from evil: he makes pure things lawful for them and impure things unlawful.¹¹⁴ He relieves them of their burdens and frees them from the shackles that bound them.¹¹⁵ For this reason those alone who believe in him and support him and succour him and follow the Light that has been sent down with him, shall attain "success". O Muhammad, say, "O mankind, I am a Messenger to all of you from Allah to Whom belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth. There is no deity but He. He bestows life and ordains death. So believe in Allah and His Messenger, the *Ummī* Prophet, who believes in Allah and His Commandments. Follow him: it is expected that you will be guided aright."

Among¹¹⁶ the people of Moses there were some who guided 159-160 (others) with the Truth and judged the affairs with the Truth.¹¹⁷ And We had divided them into twelve clans and made them distinct Communities.¹¹⁸ When his people asked him for water, We inspired Moses to strike a certain rock with his staff. Consequently, twelve springs gushed forth from it and each

Community specified its drinking place; We caused the cloud to cast shadow over them, and We sent down *mannā* and *salvā* for their food,¹¹⁹—saying, “Eat of the clean and pure things We have provided for you.” However, by doing what they did afterwards, they did no wrong to Us but they wronged themselves.

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105. “. . . . his deeds became vain,” and produced no good result and were useless and worthless, because these did not satisfy the two elementary conditions that make human deeds worthwhile. First, these should be performed in accordance with the Divine Law. Secondly, the object of these acts and deeds should be success in the Hereafter and not mere success in this world. If these two conditions are not fulfilled in the performance of any deed, it shall become vain. Obviously anything done without giving heed to or in defiance of the Divine Guidance does not deserve any reward from Him, for his case is the same as that of a usurper of land, who exploits it against the owner’s will. He does not deserve anything but severe punishment for this wrongful possession. Though he may benefit from it as long as the real owner connives at his audacity, he knows that he will be deprived of it when he is dispossessed of it. And there is no reason why (and he himself does not expect that) any portion of its produce should go to him, after the real owner takes possession of his land from the usurper.

106. They made the image in his absence of forty days, when Moses went to Mt. Sinai on the summons of Allah, while his people were encamping in the plain of Ar-Rāḥah.

107. Their calf-worship was the second manifestation of the change that had taken place in the Israelites during their stay in Egypt. They were so charmed by the cow-worship of the Egyptians that the Qurān says, “. . . . They were so prone to disbelief that they cherished the calf in their hearts”. It is really strange that hardly three months after their miraculous escape from Egypt, they began to make demands on their Prophet to make an artificial god for them, and, as soon as he left them for the Sinai, they themselves devised a false god. It appears as if they had forgotten their recent deliverance from slavery, and their safe passage through the sea and the drowning of Pharaoh and his army in it. Though they knew that all those wonderful events had happened wholly and solely through the supernatural power of the Eternal, yet they shame-facedly forgot their Allah. It was this faithless conduct of the Israelites that prompted some of their Prophets to liken the Community to that wicked woman who shows love to all men other than her husband and does not hesitate to be faithless even in the very first night of her marriage.

108. By citing his words “. . . . do not include me among the workers of iniquity”, the Qurān has absolved Prophet Aaron from the wicked blemish that the Jews had stamped upon him. According to the Bible,

Prophet Aaron was guilty of making the golden calf as god for them:

“And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me. And all the people brake off the golden earrings, which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron. And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, Tomorrow is a feast to the Lord. And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.” (Exodus, 32: 1-6). The Qurān has refuted this allegation and related the fact about the matter that the man responsible for this heinous sin was not Allah's Prophet Aaron but his rebel Sāmīrī. (For details, see XX: 90-94).

Though it may appear very strange that the Jews should accuse their own Prophets of the most heinous sins, yet a deep and critical study of their history will show that this was done to justify their own moral degradation. When the whole community in general, and the religious scholars and priests in particular, became involved in deviations and immoralities, their guilty consciences impelled them to invent excuses for justifying their own bad conduct. As they committed heinous sins like *shirk*, sorcery, adultery, treachery, falsehood and the like, they blemished the pure character of their own Prophets by ascribing such sins to them as were most shameful even for an ordinary good man, not to speak of a prophet so that they could justify their own wicked deeds. They argued like this: “When even the Prophets could not save themselves from such sins, how could ordinary people like us be immune from weaknesses?”

The Hindus also did the same during their moral degeneration and the literature of that period depicts gods, rishis and the like, in the blackest colours so that they could say, “When such highly placed beings were involved in immoralities, how could the common people escape from them? And why should such things be shameful for them, when they were not shameful for their gods and rishis?”

109. The seventy delegates were summoned to Mt. Sinai so that they should present themselves before their Lord, and on behalf of the community beg forgiveness for the sin of calf-worship that was committed by the Israelites, and to renew the covenant of obedience to Him. The Bible and the Talmud do not mention this, though the Bible says that Moses was summoned to Mt. Sinai so that he should be given new tablets for those that were broken, when he had thrown them down. (Exodus chapter 34).

110. That is, every occasion of trial is very decisive for the people:

it separates like a winnow useful from the useless out of a mixed mass. On such decisive occasions, the one who comes out successful in the trial, does so only by Divine guidance and help, and the one who fails in the test becomes unsuccessful because he is deprived of Divine guidance and help. Though one gets Allah's guidance and help in accordance with certain Divine Laws, which are based on absolute wisdom and justice, anyway the fact is that one's success or failure in the trial depends entirely on Divine guidance and help.

111. That is, "The way, whereby Allah is ruling His Kingdom, is based on mercy and not on wrath. He always shows mercy to His creatures and manifests His wrath only when the rebellion and arrogance of His servants transgress the limits".

112. After replying to the prayer of Moses in the previous verse, the Qurān utilizes the opportunity to invite the Israelites to follow Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him). It means: "The conditions that were laid down for Allah's mercy upon you during the time of Prophet Moses, still stand, and require you to believe in this Messenger. It was said to you that Allah's mercy is sent to those people who refrain from disobedience. Now, there is no greater disobedience than to reject the Guidance of the Messengers appointed by Allah. If you, therefore, do not refrain from this disobedience, you will have no other basis of virtue left in spite of your show of piety in the observance of minor and trifling religious rituals. You were enjoined to pay the *Zakāt* so that you may be blessed with mercy, but today the only right way of expending the *Zakāt* is to make contributions towards the success of the campaign that is being carried on for the establishment of the Divine Way under the leadership of this Messenger, for the basic requirements of *Zakāt* can only be fulfilled in this way. You were told that Allah has prescribed His Mercy for those who believe in His Revelations; therefore if you reject the Revelations that Allah is sending down to His Messenger, you will have failed to fulfil this last condition, even though you might go on asserting that you believe in the Revelations of the Torah."

Here the use of the word *أُمِّي* (*ummī*) for the Holy Prophet is very significant. This title was used to break the national pride and arrogance of the Jews, who called the non-Jews *ummīs* (gentiles). In this respect, they were so arrogant that, as a nation, not to speak of acknowledging an *ummī* as their leader, they were not ready even to concede basic human rights to the gentiles. They asserted, "... We are not to be called to account for our behaviour towards the gentiles" (III: 75). That is why Allah has used the word *ummī* before "Prophet", as if to say, "Now your salvation solely depends on following this *Ummī* Prophet. If you follow him, you will receive a portion of My mercy, otherwise you are doomed to the same wrath to which you have been subjected during the centuries of your deviation."

113. There are clear references in the Bible to the coming of Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him). For instance, see Deut. 18:

15-19, Matthew 21: 33-46, John I: 19-21, 14: 15-17, 25-30, 15: 25-26, 16: 7-15.

114. That is, "He makes lawful those pure things which they have made unlawful, and makes unlawful those impure things which they have made lawful."

115. That is, "He relieves them of the burdens that had been laid on them by the legal hair-splittings of their jurists and by the exaggerated piety of their spiritual leaders, and by the superstitious restrictions and regulations imposed by their common people. Likewise this Messenger makes their lives free from the fetters with which they themselves had bound their lives".

116. The theme of the address that was interrupted by the parenthesis (vv. 157-158) is again being resumed.

117. The majority of the translators render v. 159 like this: "Among the people of Moses there is a group that guides and decides in accordance with the Truth". They mean to say that there existed such a group among the Jews at the time of the Revelation of the Qurān. But from the context in which this occurs, we conclude that there was such a group of good people among the Israelites during the time of Prophet Moses. This has been mentioned here to show that there were some good people even at that time, when the Israelites had gone to the lowest level of moral and spiritual degradation and adopted the worship of the golden calf, and were punished by Allah.

118. This refers to the organization of the Israelites that has been stated in v. 12 of AL-MĀ'IDAH and given in detail in NUMBERS, the fourth Book of the Bible. According to this, Prophet Moses was bidden in the desert of Sinai by the Eternal to count up the total members of the community of Israel. Accordingly they were numbered and divided into twelve clans, comprising the descendants of the ten sons of Prophet Jacob and two sons of Prophet Joseph. The twelve men, who were at the head of each clan, were made the leaders of their ancestral clans so that they should look after the moral, religious, social, cultural and military condition of each clan and enforce the Commandments. However, the ancestral clan of Prophets Moses and Aaron, the clan of the Levites, the twelfth son of Prophet Jacob, was left out. It was not counted among the other twelve clans of Israel, but was organised as a separate community and was entrusted with the general duty of looking after the religious and spiritual welfare of all the clans of Israel.

119. The above-mentioned organization was one of the great favours that had been conferred by Allah on the Israelites. In continuation of the same, three more favours have been mentioned here: (1) The miraculous supply of water during their stay in the Sinai Peninsula. (2) The sky was covered with clouds to protect them from the scorching heat of the desert. (3) *Mannā* and *salvā* were sent down in a supernatural manner to feed them there. It is obvious that if adequate arrangements had not

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ظَلَمُونَا وَلَكِنْ كَانُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿١٧٠﴾ وَإِذْ قِيلَ لَهُمُ اسْكُنُوا هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةَ
 وَكُلُوا مِنْهَا حَيْثُ شِئْتُمْ وَقُولُوا حِطَّةٌ وَادْخُلُوا الْبَابَ سُجَّدًا نَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ خَطِيئَتَكُمْ
 سَتَرِيدُ الْحُسَيْنِينَ ﴿١٧١﴾ فَبَدَّلَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْهُمْ قَوْلًا غَيْرَ الَّذِي قِيلَ
 لَهُمْ فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِجْزًا مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ بِمَا كَانُوا يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿١٧٢﴾ وَسَأَلَهُمْ
 عَنِ الْقَرْيَةِ الَّتِي كَانَتْ حَاضِرَةَ الْبَحْرِ إِذْ يَعْدُونَ فِي السَّبْتِ إِذْ تَأْتِيهِمْ وَقْفٌ لَّا
 حِيَّتَانَهُمْ يَوْمَ سَبْتِهِمْ شُرْعًا وَيَوْمَ لَا يَسْبِتُونَ ۚ لَا تَأْتِيهِمْ كُنَّا لِكَ ۚ مَعَانِقَةٌ ۚ
 نَبَلُّوهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْسُقُونَ ﴿١٧٣﴾ وَإِذْ قَالَتْ أُمَّةٌ مِّنْهُمْ لِمَ تَعْبُدُونَ قَوْمًا لَّا
 اللَّهُ مُهْلِكُهُمْ أَوْ مُعَذِّبُهُمْ عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا ۗ قَالُوا مَعذِرَةٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ
 لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٧٤﴾ فَلَمَّا نَسُوا مَا ذُكِّرُوا بِهِ أَنجَيْنَا الَّذِينَ يَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ
 السُّوءِ وَأَخَذْنَا الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا بِعَذَابٍ بَیِّنٍ بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْسُقُونَ ﴿١٧٥﴾ فَلَمَّا
 عَتَوْا عَن مَّا نُهَوْا عَنْهُ قُلْنَا لَهُمْ كُونُوا قِرَدَةً خَاسِئِينَ ﴿١٧٦﴾ وَإِذْ تَأَذَّنَ
 رَبُّكَ لِيَبْعَثَنَّ عَلَيْهِمْ إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ مَن يَسُومُهُمْ سُوءَ الْعَذَابِ ۗ
 إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَسَرِيعُ الْعِقَابِ ۗ وَإِنَّهُ لَغَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٧٧﴾ وَقَطَّعْنَاهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ
 أُمَّةً مِّنْهُمْ الصَّالِحُونَ وَمِنْهُمْ دُونَ ذَلِكَ وَبَلَّوْنَاهُمْ بِالْحَسَنَاتِ وَالسَّيِّئَاتِ
 لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿١٧٨﴾ فَخَلَفَ مِنْ بَعدِهِمْ خَلْفٌ وَرِثُوا الْكِتَابَ يَأْخُذُونَ
 عَرَضَ هَذَا الْأَدْنَىٰ وَيَقُولُونَ سَيُغْفَرُ لَنَا ۗ وَإِنْ يَأْتِهِمْ عَرَضٌ مِّثْلَهُ
 يَأْخُذُوهُ ۗ أَلَمْ يُؤْخَذْ عَلَيْهِمْ مِّيثَاقُ الْكِتَابِ أَنَّ لَا يُقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْحَقَّ
 وَدَرَسُوا مَا فِيهِ ۗ وَالذَّارُ الْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لِّلَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ ۗ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٧٩﴾ وَ
 الَّذِينَ يُسْكِنُونَ بِالْكِتَابِ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ ۗ إِنَّا لَا نُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُصْلِحِينَ ﴿١٨٠﴾

And¹²⁰ call to mind the time when it was said to them, 161-162
 “Go and dwell in this town, and get therefrom provision for yourselves out of its produce, according to your liking, and say “hittatun”, “hittatun”, and enter the gate of the town, bowing down with humility. We shall pardon your sins and increase all the more the rewards of the doers of good”. But those from among them who were bent on wrongdoing changed that word which had been said to them. Consequently, We sent down scourge upon them¹²¹ from heaven because of the wrongs they were doing.

And ask them about the township which was situated on 163-166
 the sea shore.¹²² Remind them of what befell its people who used to break the Sabbath (Saturday). Each Sabbath-day the fish appeared in abundance before them on the surface of the water¹²³ but did not appear at all on other days than Sabbath. This was because We were putting them to test on account of the acts of disobedience they did.¹²⁴ Also remind them that when some people from among them asked the others the answer that was given by some of them, “Why do you admonish those people whom Allah is about to destroy or punish severely?” they replied, “We admonish them in order to be able to offer an excuse before your Lord and we also hope that they might refrain from disobedience to Him.” However, when they totally forgot the teachings they were reminded of, We saved those who used to forbid evil, and seized with a severe scourge all others who were transgressors, because of the acts of disobedience they did.¹²⁵ But when even after this they disdainfully persisted in that from which they were forbidden, We said to them, “Become apes—despised and disgraced!”¹²⁶

And recall the time when your Lord declared,¹²⁷ “I will 167
 set over the Israelites over and over again up to the Day of Resurrection, people who should inflict upon them the severest torment.”¹²⁸ Your Lord, indeed, is swift in retribution, and He is indeed also Forgiving and Merciful.

And We divided them into many separate communities 168-170
 all over the earth : some of these people were righteous and some of them were different from this : We tested them with prosperity and with adversity so that they might turn back.

Then after the following generations, unworthy people succeeded them : they inherited the Book, but in spite of this they grab the fleeting good things of this low world, and say, "We expect to be forgiven." Yet if similar worldly things again come before them, they again grab them.¹²⁹ Has not the Covenant of the Book been taken from them that they should ascribe to Allah nothing but the truth? And they themselves have studied well that which is written in the Book.¹³⁰ And the abode of the Hereafter is better for those who fear Allah.¹³¹ Do you not understand even this thing? As for those who strictly observe the Book and establish *Ṣalāt*, surely We will not let go waste the reward of such righteous people.

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been made for the supply of these three most important necessities of life, this big community that consisted of about two million people would have perished with heat, hunger and thirst.

A visit to the Peninsula makes one realize that it is not possible even today to arrange for the supply of water and food and for shelter from the sun, if such a large number of people should happen to visit that place without previous arrangements. It is so thinly populated that its total population is not more than a few thousands. It would be a headache even for a modern government, if it wanted to send an army of, say, only 500,000 soldiers there in this twentieth century of inventions. That is why many research scholars who believe neither in Revealed Books nor in miracles have rejected the historical fact that the Israelites ever passed through and stayed in that part of the Peninsula for years, as mentioned in the Qurān and the Bible. They opine that they might have passed through a region somewhere to the south of Palestine and to the north of Arabia. They consider that it is inconceivable for such a large number of people to encamp so long, under the hard geographical and economical conditions of the Peninsula, when in addition to these the means of supplies from Egypt were also cut off, and there was a constant threat of attack from the Amelikites who lived in the eastern and northern parts of the Peninsula.

If we keep in view these things, we can appreciate the true value of the favours that have been mentioned here. At the same time, it also becomes obvious that this community showed ingratitude by committing acts of disobedience and infidelity, which abound in its history. (Compare this with E.N.'s 72, 73 and 76 of AL-BAQARAH).

120. Now some incidents from the history of the Israelites are being related to show that their response to the above-mentioned favours of Allah was very wicked and rebellious, which gradually threw them into the lowest abyss of destruction.

121. Please refer to E.N.'s 74 and 75 of AL-BAQARAH.

122. The research scholars are of the opinion that the place refers to Ailah or Elat or Elote where the modern Jewish state of Israel has constructed a seaport of the same name and near which is situated Jordan's famous seaport of Aqabah. It is at the end of that long inlet of the Red Sea which is between the eastern part of the Sinai Peninsula and the western side of Arabia. It was a very important trade centre in the heyday of the Israelites. Prophet Solomon had made this city the chief port of his fleet in the Red Sea.

The incident referred to here has neither been mentioned in the religious books of the Jews nor in their history books but the way in which the Qurān has related it here and in AL-BAQARAH clearly shows that at the time of its Revelation, it was well known among the Israelites. That is why the Jews of Al-Madīnah did not challenge its validity, although they never missed a chance of raising an objection against the Holy Prophet.

123. Sabbath (Saturday) is the Holy day of the week. The Lord made Saturday the Sabbath day for the Jews, saying, "Verily my sabbaths ye will keep: for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations.... every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people... wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant." (Exodus 31: 12-16). But, in spite of this Commandment that held out the punishment of death for any worldly work—from burning fire in the houses to taking any service from animals or slaves, the Israelites had begun to practise open violation of this law. So much so that during the time of Prophet Jeremiah (628-586 B.C.), they used to carry in loads through the gates of Jerusalem on the sabbath day. Therefore the Prophet had to hold out the threat that he would 'light a fire in the city-gates that would burn up the buildings of Jerusalem and never be put out.' (JEREMIAH 17: 21-27). Likewise Prophet Ezekiel (595-536 B.C.) also complains bitterly of the desecration of Lord's Sabbath by the Jews on a national scale (EZEKIEL 20: 12-24). From these quotations it appears that the desecration of Sabbath mentioned here in the Qurān probably took place during this period.

124. Allah puts His servants to trial in many ways. When He sees that some of them are turning away from obedience to His Law, and are growing more and more prone to disobedience, He opens the doors of disobedience before them by holding out such temptations as are very alluring to those people. Thus their evil intentions openly come to the surface and they commit such crimes from which they had refrained only for the lack of necessary opportunities for them.

125. This shows that there were three kinds of people in that town. First, there were those who were openly and boldly violating the Divine rules and regulations. Then there were some who did not violate the laws themselves but silently saw others violating them: they told admonishers

that it was no good to give any piece of advice to those hardened law-breakers. Lastly, there were others who were so much imbued with the sense of honour and courage that they could not tolerate such open violations of the Divine Law. They enjoined the law-breakers to practise virtue and refrain from evil in the hope that they would return to the Right Way, or at least, they themselves would be in a position to present the proof before their Lord that they, on their part, did their duty to admonish those law-breakers. Accordingly, when the scourge of Allah befell that township, the only people who were delivered from it were those who belonged to the third group. According to the Qurān, they were delivered because they had shown their concern for the eradication of evil. The other two groups were counted among the workers of iniquity and punished in proportion to the nature and extent of their crime.

Some commentators are of the view that it cannot be said with certainty whether the second group was among those who were delivered or among those who were punished, for the Qurān is not explicit about this. According to a tradition from Ibn 'Abbās (Allah be pleased with him), he was at first of the opinion that the second group was among those who were punished, but afterwards his disciple 'Ikrimah convinced him that it was among those who were delivered. But when we consider deeply the words of the Qurān, we feel that his first opinion was correct for it is obvious that on the occasion of a scourge, the concerned township was divided into two groups only. One group consisted of those who were visited by the scourge, and the other of those who were delivered from it. Now when the Qurān is explicit that the group that was delivered consisted of those who were forbidding evil, the other two groups must have been among those who were not delivered. This conclusion is supported by "in order to offer an excuse before your Lord", and also by the succeeding verse. It is quite clear from this that the whole township, wherein the law of Allah is openly violated, is seized by His wrath, with the only exception of those who forbid evil. One will not be delivered simply because one did not violate the Law but shall have to show practically that one did exert one's utmost to establish virtue and eradicate vice. This view is further supported by other passages from the Qurān and Hadīth that this is the Law of Allah concerning collective crimes. The Qurān says, "Fear that trial which will not involve in scourge only those who will be guilty of transgression from among you . . ." (VIII : 25). Explaining this verse, the Holy Prophet says, "Allah does not punish the common people for the sins of sinful people unless the common people connive at those glaring sins that are committed before their very eyes and show no displeasure at them, in spite of the fact that they are in a position to do so. When they degenerate to such a degree, then Allah seizes the criminals as well as the connivers".

Besides this, it appears from the verses under discussion that the scourge of Allah was sent to that township in two instalments. The first

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has been called عَذَابٌ بَيْسٌ ("a severe scourge.") The second was "Be apes". We are of the opinion that the scourge in the first case was inflicted on both the first and the second groups, but in the second case it was inflicted on the first group only. (And Allah knows best. If I am right, this is from Allah and if I am wrong, it is from me. And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.)

126. Please refer to E.N. 83, Al-BAQARAH.

127. The Arabic word تَأَذَّنَ (*ta-azzana*) means "to give notice" or "to make known".

128. Such a warning had been administered over and over again to the Israelites ever since the eighth century before the Christian era and is contained in the Books of ISAIAH, JEREMIAH and of the Prophets after them. Then Prophet Christ also administered the same in several of his addresses in the Gospels. Last of all, the Qurān also gave the same warning. The fact that since then the Jewish people have always been abased and degraded at one place or the other is a clear proof that the Qurān and those Books are really the Books of Allah.

129. In other words, "They commit a sin, like illegal possession, knowing well that it is a sin, in the expectation of forgiveness. They rely on the presumption that they are the favourites of Allah; therefore, they will be pardoned somehow or other, in spite of what they did. That is why they neither feel ashamed of a sin nor repent of it. Moreover they would again commit a similar sin, as soon as there is another opportunity for it. What a wretched people they are! They inherited the Book that was to make them the leaders of the world; yet they aspired to nothing higher than to grab the transitory things of this world. Thus they became the wretched worshippers of this world, instead of being the bearers of the banner of justice and righteousness and the leaders of virtue and reform."

130. They themselves have studied the Book, and know that there is absolutely no mention in the Torah of an unconditional salvation of the Israelites. When neither Allah guaranteed to them nor did their Prophets ever give them the assurance that they would obtain salvation anyhow, what right have they to ascribe to Allah what He never told them? Besides this, their guilt becomes more heinous because they were breaking the Covenant they had made with Allah that they would say nothing but the truth in the name of Allah.

131. This verse may be translated in two ways. The one that has been adopted in the Text means this: "The abode of the Hereafter is worthy of good people and will be given only to those who are Godfearing, for it is not the monopoly of any person or family as such. How can it be possible that one should commit such deeds as deserve punishment yet get a good place in the Hereafter, just because one is a Jew or an Israelite"? The second rendering will be this: "The abode of the Hereafter is better

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وَإِذْ نَتَقْنَا الْجَبَلَ فَوْقَهُمْ كَأَنَّهُ ظُلَّةٌ وَظَنُّوا أَنَّهُ وَاقِعٌ بِهِمْ خُذُوا مَا آتَيْنَاكُمْ
 بِقُوَّةٍ وَاذْكُرُوا مَا فِيهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٤١﴾ وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِنْ بَنِي آدَمَ ۲١
 مِنْ ظُهُورِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَأَشْهَدَهُمْ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ قَالُوا بَلَىٰ ۗ مَعَانِقَةً ۗ
 شَهِدْنَا ۗ إِنَّ تَقُولُوا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّا كُنَّا عَنْ هَذَا غَافِلِينَ ﴿١٤٢﴾ أَوْ تَقُولُوا إِنَّمَا
 أَشْرَكَ آبَاؤُنَا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَكُنَّا ذُرِّيَّةً مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ ۗ أَفَتُهْلِكُنَا بِمَا فَعَلَ
 النَّبِيطُونَ ﴿١٤٣﴾ وَكَذَلِكَ نَقُصُّ الْأَيَاتِ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿١٤٣﴾ وَآتَىٰ عَلَيْهِمُ
 نَبَأَ الَّذِي آتَيْنَاهُ آيَاتِنَا فَانْسَلَخَ مِنْهَا فَاتَّبَعَهُ الشَّيْطَانُ فَكَانَ مِنَ
 الْغَاوِينَ ﴿١٤٥﴾ وَلَوْ شِئْنَا لَرَفَعْنَاهُ بِهَا وَلَكِنَّهُ أَخْلَدَ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ
 فَمَثَلُهُ كَمَثَلِ الْكَلْبِ ۖ إِنْ تَحْمِلُ عَلَيْهِ يَلْهَثُ أَوْ تَتْرُكُهُ يَلْهَثُ ۗ ذَلِكَ مَثَلُ
 الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا ۗ فَاقْصُصِ الْقَصَصَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿١٤٧﴾ سَاءَ
 مَثَلًا الْقَوْمُ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا ۗ وَأَنفُسُهُمْ كَانُوا يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿١٤٨﴾ مَنْ يَهْدِ
 اللَّهُ فَهُوَ الْمُهْتَدِىٰ ۗ وَمَنْ يُضِلِلْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ﴿١٤٨﴾ وَلَقَدْ ذَرَأْنَا
 لِجَهَنَّمَ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنسِ ۗ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ بِهَا ۗ وَ لَهُمْ
 أَعْيُنٌ لَا يُبْصِرُونَ بِهَا ۗ وَ لَهُمْ آذَانٌ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ كَالْأَنْعَامِ بَلَّ
 هُمْ أَضَلُّ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْغَافِلُونَ ﴿١٤٩﴾ وَ لِلَّهِ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا ۗ
 وَذَرُوا الَّذِينَ يُلْحِدُونَ فِي أَسْمَائِهِ ۗ سَيُجْزَوْنَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٥٠﴾ وَ
 ۲۲
 ٤١٠
 ١٢
 مِمَّنْ خَلَقْنَا أُمَّةً يَهْدُونَ بِالْحَقِّ وَبِهِ يَعْدِلُونَ ﴿١٥١﴾ وَالَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا
 بِآيَاتِنَا سَنَسْتَدْرِجُهُمْ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٥٢﴾ وَ أُمِّلُوا لَهُمْ ۗ إِنَّ كَيْدِي
 مَتِينٌ ﴿١٥٣﴾ أَوْ لَمْ يَتَفَكَّرُوا ۗ مَا بِصَاحِبِهِمْ مِّنْ جَنَّةٍ ۗ إِن هُوَ إِلَّا نَذِيرٌ

Do they also remember the time when We shook the Mountain and spread over them as though it were an umbrella, and they thought that it was going to fall upon them; (then We said to them), "Hold fast the Book We are giving you, and keep in mind what it contains : it is expected that you will refrain from wrong ways."¹³² 171

And, O Prophet,¹³³ remind the people of the time, when your Lord brought forth from the loins of the Children of Adam, their descendants and made them bear witness about themselves. He asked them, "Am I not your Lord?" They replied, "Most certainly, Thou alone art our Lord ; we bear witness to this."¹³⁴ This We did lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection, "We were unaware of this thing," or lest you should say, "Our forefathers started the practice of *shirk* before us and we were born after them to their descendants: dost Thou, then, punish us for the sin that was committed by the wrong-doers?"¹³⁵ Behold, this is how We make Our Signs clear¹³⁶ so that these people return to the right way.¹³⁷ 172-174

And, O Muhammad, relate to them the story of the person whom We had given the knowledge of Our Revelations,¹³⁸ but he turned away from their observance. Then Satan pursued him until he became one of those who had gone astray. If We had willed We would have exalted him by means of those revelations, but he clung on to the earth and followed his own lusts. Therefore he began to behave like a dog : it lolls out its tongue if you chase it away and it lolls out its tongue if you leave it alone.¹³⁹ Such is the likeness of those who treat Our Revelations as false. 175-176

You should go on relating these stories to them : it may be that they consider them seriously. Very bad is the example of those who treated Our Revelations as false and they have been doing wrong to their own selves. Only he whom Allah guides is rightly guided, and they whom Allah deprives of His guidance become losers. And this is a fact that there are many jinns and human beings whom We have created (as if) for Hell :¹⁴⁰ they have hearts but they do not think with them; they have eyes but they do not see with them; they have ears but they do not hear with them. They are like animals; nay, 177-179

even worse, for they are the people who have become utterly heedless.

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Allah is entitled to most excellent names :¹⁴¹ so call Him by excellent names only and leave alone those who deviate from the Truth in giving names to Him; they shall be recompensed for what they have been doing.¹⁴² From among those We have created, there are some who guide with the truth and do justice therewith. As regards those who have treated Our Revelations as false, We will gradually lead them on to ruin in a way they will not know. Though I am giving them a respite, My plan is infallible.

Contd. from p. 83]

for Godfearing people who prefer the good life in the Hereafter to a life of pleasure in this world, for only those people who have no fear of Allah can prefer the pleasures of this life to the joys and peace of the Next World.”

132. This is a reference to the event that occurred at the foot of Mt. Sinai on the occasion when the Stone Tablets containing the Covenant were given to Moses. The Bible says, “And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount. And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke because the Lord descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly”. (Exodus 19: 17-18).

Allah caused such conditions before taking a Covenant from the children of Israel in the above environment so that they might realize the greatness, the exaltation and the glory of Allah with Whom they were making the Covenant, and the importance of the Covenant itself. It does not, however, mean that they were not willing to enter into the Compact with Allah and were coerced to do so in this terrifying way. The fact is that they all were sincere believers and had gone to the foot of the mountain for the very object of making a Covenant with Allah. But, instead of making the Covenant in an ordinary way, these awe-inspiring conditions were created in order to impress on them its great importance so that they should keep in mind the power of the Almighty God, with Whom they were making it and the fear of grave consequences of breaking it.

Here the address to the Israelites comes to an end. In the succeeding passages, it is directed to mankind in general, and to the people of the Holy Prophet in particular.

133. The previous theme ended with this that God took a Covenant from the children of Israel to the effect that they should surrender to and obey their Lord. From here the address is being directed to the whole of mankind, which is being reminded that all the people, and not the Israelites alone, are bound by a Covenant. Therefore they shall be called upon to render individually an account as to how far they had observed it.

134. We learn from several traditions that this thing happened on the occasion of the creation of Adam. At that time the angels were gathered together and commanded to bow down before him and man's appointment as Allah's vicegerent was proclaimed; likewise the whole of mankind that was to be born up to the Day of Resurrection was brought into existence at one and the same time and imbued with common-sense and brought forth in His presence and asked to testify that Allah is their Lord.

A tradition of Ḥadīrat Ubayy-bin-Ka'ab which is most probably based on the knowledge he received from the Holy Prophet, is the best commentary on this verse. He says:

"Allah gathered the whole of mankind and arranged it into separate groups according to their kinds or periods and gave them human shape and power of speech. Then He took a Covenant from them and made them witnesses concerning themselves and asked, 'Am I not your Lord?' They answered, 'Most certainly, You alone are our Lord.' Then Allah said, 'I ask the earth and the heavens and your father Adam to bear witness to this effect lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection that you had no knowledge of this. So note it well that none other than I is worthy of worship and that there is no other Lord than I. You should not set up any partner with Me. I will send to you My Messengers, who will remind you of this Covenant that you are making with Me; I will also send My Book to you'. At this the whole of mankind replied, 'We bear witness to this: You alone are our Lord and our Deity: we have no other lord or deity than You' "

Some people take vv. 172-173 as a symbolic narration: They are of the opinion that in this way the Qurān intends merely to impress the fact that Allah's Divinity is implanted in the human nature and relates it in a way as if it had happened as a tangible event. But we do not consider this interpretation as correct because the Qurān and the Ḥadīth describe it as an event which actually took place. More than that it has been asserted that on the Day of Judgement the event of the Covenant will be brought forward as an authentic proof against mankind. Therefore there is no reason why we should regard this event as a symbolic narration. We believe that this event actually took place in the physical world. The All-Powerful Allah did actually bring into existence and gave understanding and power of speech to each and every individual in the posterity of Adam whom He intended to create up to the Day of Resurrection and assembled before Himself at one and the same time and took the Covenant from all of them to the effect that they had no other lord or god than Himself and that they had no other right way of life than Islam (surrender and submission to Allah).

Those who consider such an assemblage as impossible are in fact sceptical of the limitless powers of Allah: otherwise they would not have entertained any doubts about it because this is as easy for Allah as the gradual birth of mankind. The All-Powerful Allah, Who is bringing

human beings into existence in the way he is doing now, has also the power to assemble all mankind before its birth and after its death. It appeals to reason that Allah let all mankind know that He was going to make His vicegerents after giving them wisdom and understanding and authority and the right to exploit the resources of the earth, and that He also took the oath of allegiance from them. Thus it is obvious and clear that there is nothing impossible or strange in this assemblage of the whole of mankind on the occasion of Adam's creation.

135. In this verse the object, for which the Covenant was taken from the whole of mankind has been stated: it was to make each and every individual fully and consciously responsible for his deeds so that those who would rebel against their Lord should be held accountable for their guilt. It has been made plain that after this Covenant they could not justify any sin on the ground that they had committed it in ignorance nor could they shift the responsibility for deviation on to their predecessors. Allah warns that by taking this Covenant He has imbued in the heart of every individual that He alone is his Allah and Lord. Therefore none can absolve himself from the responsibility for a deviation, saying, "I was quite unaware of this", or "I was led astray by my wrong environment."

In this connection, let us now consider a few questions that might arise. Supposing that this Covenant did take place, do we have any remembrance of this? Is anyone of us conscious that he was brought before his Allah on the occasion of the Creation and that the said dialogue did actually take place? If the answer is in the negative, then how can it be justified to bring such a Covenant as evidence against us, when we do not remember it nor are conscious of this Covenant?

The answer is that this will be brought against us as an evidence because, though its remembrance and consciousness has been removed from the memory and the conscious mind, it has been retained in the subconscious mind.

As to why it has been removed from the memory and the conscious mind the answer is obvious. If the impression of the Covenant had remained fresh in the memory and the conscious mind, then everyone would have automatically observed it, and the trial and test would have become meaningless. Thus the very object for which man has been created would have been rendered meaningless. It has, however, been retained in the subconscious mind as a potentiality, and can be brought into consciousness by intuition and internal factors as in the case of all other branches of subconscious knowledge. The fact is that whatever man has achieved in culture, civilization, morality, sciences and all other aspects of human activities, lay hidden as potentialities and was brought out by external factors and intuition. But it is also a fact that no education, no training, no environment, no external factor, no intuition is capable of creating any other thing than the one that already lies potentially in the subconscious mind. Likewise none of these factors is in any way capable of totally effacing the things that lie hidden potentially in the subconscious

mind. The most that these factors can do is to pervert its nature, but in spite of all efforts to pervert it, it will still remain latent in the subconscious mind and will try to come to the surface in response to external factors. The following is true of all the branches of potential knowledge:

All these exist as potentialities in our subconscious minds and prove their existence when they appear as actual actions.

All potentialities require external stimuli, teaching and training to take practical shapes which, in fact, are a response of our potentialities to the external stimuli.

All these things can be suppressed and made dormant by wrong desires and environment and perversions but can never be effaced totally from the subconscious mind. Therefore these can be reformed and converted by the help of inner feelings and external efforts.

Exactly the same is true of the intuitional knowledge we have regarding our own position in the universe and our relationship to the Creator of the universe.

That this knowledge does really exist is proved by the fact that it has been appearing every now and then in every period of human life in every part of the earth, in every habitation, in every posterity and in every generation and that no earthly power has been successful in effacing it.

That this conforms to the reality is shown by the fact that whenever this knowledge has actually been applied to practical life, it has always produced good and useful results.

There has always been need of some external appeal to cause them to appear and take practical shapes. Accordingly the Prophets, the Books, and inviters to the Truth from among the followers of the Prophets have been performing this service. That is why the Qurān calls them remembrancers: for the Prophets, the Books and the inviters to the Truth do not create anything new in the minds of the people but refresh and bring to the surface by reminders what was already latent in them.

Another proof of the existence of this hidden knowledge in the human mind is that in every age, it has made a positive response to the call of the inviter and has come out as soon as it recognized his voice.

Above all, the greatest proof of the existence of this knowledge is that it has survived in the human heart in spite of the strenuous and continuous efforts to suppress, conceal and pervert it. Though the powers of ignorance and folly, lusts and prejudices, misguidance and temptations, have succeeded in producing *shirk*, atheism, irreligiousness, deviation, they have failed to efface the impress of this inherent knowledge from the human heart. That is why it comes to the surface whenever efforts are made to revive it.

As regards the evidence of this inherent knowledge on the Day of Judgement, Allah will refresh and revive the memory of this Covenant, whereby they all acknowledged Allah alone as their Lord and Deity. Then He will show that this remained embedded in their hearts, in spite of its persistent denial in this world and will provide from their own selves the

proof of the fact that the impress of this Covenant was always present in their minds and will show from the records of their lives how and when they suppressed the voice of this inherent knowledge: how and when their intuitional knowledge rebelled against their deviations, and how often it urged them to respond to the invitation of the inviters to the Truth and how they silenced their inner voice by means of different pretexts. At that time, when all the secrets will be exposed, none will be able to put forward any excuses. Everyone shall have to confess one's guilt in plain and clear words. That is why the Qurān says that they shall not say, "We had no knowledge of this Covenant," but will have to confess, "We were disbelievers and knowingly denied the Truth". They will stand witness against themselves to the effect that they were disbelievers.

136. "Our Signs" are the impresses of the knowledge of the Truth that have been embedded in the human heart and point clearly to Allah's existence.

137. That is, "So that these people should (turn away from the paths of deviation and rebellion and) come back (to the paths of obedience and service)".

138. The wording of the Text shows that he was not an imaginary person invented for the sake of a parable but did really exist. Allah and His Messenger did not mention him by name because the purpose for which the event had been narrated was served without this. Therefore his name was kept secret so as to avoid giving him unnecessary notoriety; and this generous way has generally been followed both in the Qurān and the Traditions. That is why they have not mentioned the name of the person who has been cited as a bad example. Some commentators have, however, mentioned some specific names belonging to the ancient history or to the time of the Holy Prophet. For instance, some mention the name of Bala'am, the son of Ba'ūrā, others that of Umayyah-bin-Abī-Aṣṣalt and Ṣaifī-ibn Ar-Rāhib. But the fact is that the identity of that person has not been established by the Qurān or the Ḥadīth. Therefore it is still a secret, but the parable applies to everyone who bears such a conduct.

139. As this passage deals with a very important subject, it requires detailed comments.

The person, who has been held out as a bad type, possessed the knowledge of the Revelations of Allah and was acquainted with the Reality. Therefore it was reasonably expected that his knowledge ought to have guarded him against the way he knew to be wrong, and guided him to the way he knew to be right. Then Allah would have exalted him to the high rank of humanity because of his practice in accordance with the knowledge of the Revelation. But he became inclined towards the benefits, lusts and comforts of the world and succumbed to temptations. He was so overpowered by avarice of these lower desires that he discarded all the higher things and let go waste all the rational and moral potentialities of progress. Thus he transgressed all the limits that he ought to have ob-

served in accordance with the demand of his knowledge. When Satan, who was lying in ambush nearby, saw him turning away deliberately and wilfully from the Truth because of his moral weaknesses, he chased him down and down from one abyss to the other, till he fell into the company of those who had utterly lost their reason under his misguidance.

Allah has likened such a person to a dog because of his similarity to it in avarice and lust. The dog is proverbial for these characteristics: its ever hanging tongue and watering mouth point to its insatiable greed: it goes on smelling the earth even when it is hit with a piece of stone; it picks it up in its teeth, hoping that it might be a piece of bone. Its intense greed for exclusive ownership becomes manifest when it comes across a big carcass, sufficient to feed a number of dogs; but it does not let any other dog share it. The second characteristic of the dog is its being very sexy. It is because of these things that the worldly man, who transgresses all bounds imposed by Faith and knowledge, has been likened to a dog. Then he, like the dog, looks for nothing but the means of filling up his belly and gratifying his lust.

140. It does not mean that. . . . "There are many Jinns and human beings whom We have created for the sole purpose of sending them to Hell and with the intention of making them fuel for it." But what it means is this : "We created them and gave them hearts, brains, eyes and ears but these wicked people did not make use of these faculties to discern the Truth from falsehood and made themselves fuel for Hell by their evil deeds."

The way that has been adopted to express the above thing is that of showing intense regret in human language. For example, when the young sons of a mother are killed in the battle she says to the people, "I brought them up to become fodder for the cannon". But she does not mean that she really brought them up for this purpose. She wants to show her intense regret and sorrow and blame those who were responsible for the battle.

141. Now that the discourse is coming to an end, the people are being admonished and reprovved to guard against some well known deviations. At the same time they have been warned of the serious consequences of the attitude of ridicule and denial they were adopting towards the Message of the Holy Prophet.

142. This admonition about giving names to Allah is of great importance, for different names reflect different concepts which people form of Him in their minds. It is obvious that people give such names to things as express their conception of them. The defects in the conceptions of things are reflected by the defects in the names and defects in the names show the defects in the conceptions. Besides this, man's relationships and his dealings depend on that particular conception which he forms about some one or some thing. The defect in the conception of things shows itself in the defect of one's relationship to it. On the other hand, if one's conception of a thing is correct and right, one's relationship to

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And have they never reflected on this matter? There is no tinge of unsoundness of mind in their companion; he is a warner, who is warning plainly (beforehand of the evil consequence). Have they never considered the functioning of the heavens and the earth, and have they never observed closely anything that Allah has created?¹⁴³ And has it never occurred to them that their life might have come near to its end?¹⁴⁴ Then what else can there be in which they will believe after this warning of the Messenger?— Whomever Allah deprives of guidance has no guide, for Allah leaves such people wandering about blindly in their contumacy. 184-186

These people ask you : “Well, when is the Hour of Resurrection coming?” Say, “Its knowledge is with my Lord alone : He Himself will disclose it at the proper time : that Hour will weigh heavily on the heavens and the earth. It will come on you all of a sudden.” They ask you about it as though you have been in search for it. Say, “Its knowledge is with Allah alone, but most of the people do not know this.” Tell them, O Muhammad, “I have not the power to bring any good to or avert any harm from myself : only that happens which Allah wills. Had I the knowledge of the unseen, I would have acquired many benefits for myself and would never have suffered any harm.¹⁴⁵ I am merely a warner, and a bearer of good news to those who believe in what I say.” 187-188

It is Allah Who created you from one being, and of the same species He made his mate, so that he may have a tranquil life with her. Then, when a man covered a woman, she bore a light burden with which she moved about. But when she became heavy with it, both of them prayed together to Allah, their Lord : “If Thou givest us a sound child, we will be grateful to Thee.” But when Allah gave them a child of sound body and sound mind, they both began to associate partners with Allah in His favour, but Allah is exalted far above what they associate with Him.¹⁴⁶ How foolish are these people! They associate with Him partners who do not create anything but are themselves created, who cannot help them nor have power to help themselves. If you invite them to follow the Right Way, they will not follow you; it will be all the same for you whether you call them or keep silent.¹⁴⁷ 189-195

Those whom you invoke besides Allah are mere servants of Allah like you : just invoke them, and, if what you say of them be true, they will answer your prayers. Have they feet that they should walk with them? Or have they hands that they should hold with them? Or have they eyes that they should see with them? Or have they ears that they should hear with them?¹⁴⁸ Tell them, O Muhammad, "Call up the partners you have set up; then all of you sit down together and plot against me and give me no respite".

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it will also be of the correct and right sort. The same is true in the case of one's relationship with Allah.

The error one commits in giving wrong names to Allah (whether for distinction with reference to His attributes) is the result of one's error in the creed and in the conception of Allah and His attributes. A man commits the same kind of error and to the same extent in the formation of his moral attitude towards life that he commits in his creed and his conception of Allah. In fact a man's moral attitude towards life is wholly governed by his conception of Allah and his relationship to Him and the universe. That is why Allah has commanded the people to give most excellent names to Him and to refrain from giving wrong names to Him, for He is worthy of excellent names only. Therefore the best thing is to give Him excellent names because the results of the perversion of His names are most serious.

"Excellent names" are those names that point to the greatness, the supremacy, the sanctity, the purity and the perfection of His attributes. It shall be deemed perversion of His names to give Him such names as are below His dignity; which are against the reverence due to Him; which ascribe defects and shortcomings to Him or mislead one to form wrong creeds about Him. Again it shall also be a perversion to give such names to any of His creation as are worthy of Allah alone.

As regards the Command ". leave alone those who pervert His names," it means, ". you need not involve yourself in useless discussions with them, if they do not listen to your admonition and do not try to understand what you say, but use crooked arguments to confuse the issue. They themselves shall see the consequences of their deviation".

143. These questions have been posed to refute the charge that their comrade, Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him), was suffering from a disorder of the mind, for otherwise he would not have given the Message he was conveying. They have been asked to reflect upon the fact that he was born and bred among them and had been their comrade before he claimed that he was appointed a Messenger by Allah. During all those years they had known him to be of a sound mind and of a good nature. Thus it is obvious that they charged him of having a distracted mind not because of what he said before his Prophethood but because of what

he proclaimed as a Prophet. That is why they have been asked to reflect upon and point out anything from his Message which they regarded as meaningless, unreal and irrational. If they had ever reflected upon the wisdom of the wonderful administration of the heavens and the earth or observed closely any creation of Allah, they would have come to the inevitable conclusion that the whole system of the universe, nay, each and every particle of His creation is a clear evidence of the Truth of His Message. For all these things refute *shirk* and prove the Oneness of Allah and invite people to His worship and arouse in them the sense of responsibility and accountability. And that was what their brother was preaching.

144. That is to say, "They do not realise even this much that none knows the exact time of one's death, and that they should, therefore, make the best use of the respite that has been given them and repent and reform themselves; otherwise they will meet with serious consequences."

145. That is, "I cannot tell you the exact time of Resurrection because I myself do not know anything about the unseen. Had I possessed any knowledge of the future, I would not have suffered any harm because I would have avoided it and achieved many benefits because of my foreknowledge. Therefore it is very foolish on your part to ask me about it merely to test my Prophethood."

146. In order to understand this passage, it should be kept in mind that it criticizes the pagan Arabs for associating partners with Allah in the matter of the birth of children. They have been told to remember that the first man and his mate were brought into being by Allah : and they could not deny this. Then they also knew that it is He Who has arranged the birth of human beings after the first pair : that it is He by Whose will a woman becomes pregnant and nourishes the child in her womb in a wonderful manner, and that it is He Who imbues it with a sound body and sound mind with various powers and capabilities and lets it come out as a healthy human being. They could not deny that all this is in the power of Allah alone. If Allah willed, He could have created a monkey, a serpent or any other animal in her womb or made the child deformed or physically or mentally defective. They knew that no one had the power to make any change in Allah's creation. That is why all their hopes were centred in Allah during the period of pregnancy and prayers were invoked for the birth of a perfect child. But it is an irony that the pagans as well as the Believers change their whole attitude after the birth of a child, and, instead of being grateful to Allah, they make their grateful offerings to some god or goddess or saint or the like and give such names as smack of *s'irk*—Pir Bakhsh, "Favour of the Saint," or Abdur-Rasul, "Servant of the Prophet" etc.

Though the passage is quite clear, yet a misunderstanding has arisen about it, which has been supported by weak traditions. The mention of the first man and woman (Adam and Eve) in the beginning, and immediately after it of a man and a woman, has led to the confusion that both

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الْكِتَابَ ۗ وَهُوَ يَتَوَلَّى الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿١٩٦﴾ وَالَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ لَا
 يَسْتَجِيبُونَ نَصْرَكُمْ وَلَا أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَنْصُرُونَ ﴿١٩٧﴾ وَإِنْ تَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَى الْهُدَى
 لَا يَسْمَعُوا ۗ وَتَرَاهُمْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَيْكَ وَهُمْ لَا يُبْصِرُونَ ﴿١٩٨﴾ خذِ الْعَفْوَ وَ
 أْمُرْ بِالْعُرْفِ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْجَاهِلِينَ ﴿١٩٩﴾ وَإِنَّمَا يَنْزَعُكَ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ
 نَزْعٌ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٠٠﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا إِذَا مَسَّهُمْ
 طَافٌ مِّنَ الشَّيْطَانِ تَذَكَّرُوا فَإِذَا هُمْ مُبْصِرُونَ ﴿٢٠١﴾ وَإِخْوَانُهُمْ يَمُدُّوْنَهُمْ
 فِي الْغَيِّ ثُمَّ لَا يُقْصِرُونَ ﴿٢٠٢﴾ وَإِذَا لَمْ تَأْتِهِمْ بَآيَةٌ قَالُوا لَوْلَا اجْتَبَيْتَهَا
 قُلْ إِنَّمَا اتَّبِعُ مَا يُوْحَىٰ إِلَيَّ مِنْ رَبِّي ۗ هَذَا بَصَائِرُ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَهُدًى
 وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٢٠٣﴾ وَإِذَا قُرِئَ الْقُرْآنُ فَاسْتَمِعُوا لَهُ وَأَنْصِتُوا
 لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ ﴿٢٠٤﴾ وَادْكُرْ رَبَّكَ فِي نَفْسِكَ تَضَرُّعًا وَخِيفَةً وَ دُونَ
 الْجَهْرِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالْآصَالِ وَلَا تَكُنْ مِنَ الْغَافِلِينَ ﴿٢٠٥﴾ إِنَّ
 الَّذِينَ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِهِ وَيَسْتَبِشِرُونَ لَهُ وَيَسْجُدُونَ لِلنَّبِيِّ

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My Protector and Helper is Allah Who has sent down this Book, and Who protects the righteous people.¹⁴⁹ On the contrary, those whom you call beside Allah, cannot help you nor can they help themselves. Nay, if you call them to the Right Way, they cannot even hear what you say; though it would appear to you that they are looking at you, in fact, they do not see anything."

199-202

O Prophet, adopt the way of leniency and forbearance; enjoin what is good and avoid useless discussions with the ignorant people. If Satan ever excites you to anger, seek refuge in Allah : He is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. The fact is that if ever an evil suggestion from Satan so much as touches those, who are Godfearing people, they immediately get alerted and clearly see the right course they should adopt.

As regards their (that is, Satan's) brethren,^{149a} they drag them on and on in their crooked ways and leave nothing undone to seduce them.¹⁵⁰

O Prophet, when you do not show them a Sign (miracle), they say, "Why have you not chosen a sign for yourself?"¹⁵¹ Tell them, "I follow only the Revelation, which my Lord has sent down to me : this contains lights of insight from your Lord, and is guidance and mercy for those who believe in this.¹⁵² When the Qurān is recited to you, listen to it with attention and keep silence: it may be that you also are blessed with mercy."¹⁵³ 203-204

O Prophet, remember your Lord morning and evening, deep in your heart with humility and with fear, and also in a low voice with your tongue : do not be of those who are heedless.¹⁵⁴ Indeed the angels, who are near to your Lord in rank, do not turn away in pride from His service:¹⁵⁵ they glorify Him¹⁵⁶ and bow down before Him.¹⁵⁷ 205-206

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the pairs were one and the same. Therefore some commentators were of the opinion that the man was Adam and the woman who became pregnant was Eve and that they prayed to Allah for their child in the womb, but when it was born, they associated others with Allah in this favour. Then, with the help of weak traditions they concocted a complete story about it : When several children of Eve died soon after their birth, Satan came to her at the birth of one, and seduced her saying, "If you give him the name of 'Abdul Hārith, the servant of Satan, he will survive." It is all the more regrettable that some of these traditions have been linked up to the Holy Prophet. But the fact is that all these traditions are unauthentic and are not supported by the wording of the Qurān and by the context in which they occur. The Qurān criticises the pagans for associating others with Allah in the matter of birth, when they themselves acknowledge that it is He Who is the Creator of the children which are born as a result of the cohabitation of a man and a woman. That is why they also invoke Allah for the safe delivery of the child, when they are not sure of the perfection of the child. But after the safe delivery of a sound child, they turn to others with gratitude and offerings. It is thus clear that it is not any particular man and woman who have been admonished for their behaviour, but every man and every woman, (including pagan men and women) who behave like that.

In this connection it should also be noted that the condition of the present-day Muslims is even worse than that of the pagan Arabs whom the Qurān has condemned in this passage. They committed *shirk* after the delivery of the child, though before this they prayed to Allah for the child. But the Muslims of today, who claim to be the bearers of the creed of *Tauhīd*, go far beyond this. These wretched people pray to others

even for the birth of a child and make vows to others during the period of pregnancy, and after the delivery of the child make offerings to the associates they set up with Allah. Yet they consider those Arabs as pagans who deserved Hell, and themselves as Believers in One Allah, for whom Paradise has been guaranteed!

147. This is to show the helplessness of the deities of the pagans. Not to speak of guiding their worshippers to the Right Way, they themselves are unable to follow the guidance of others. So much so that they cannot give any answer to the call of any one.

148. It is obvious that here they are being criticised for one of the three kinds of *shirk* they practised. First, they worshipped idols, images or some other symbols of the objects of their worship. The second kind of *shirk* was the worship of some persons or spirits which were represented by idols, pictures, etc. The third kind of *shirk* consisted of the wrong creeds that were the basis of these practices of *shirk*. All the three kinds of practices have been criticised severely in the Qurān at different places. Here it condemns the idols before which the pagan Arabs performed their religious rituals and presented their supplications and made their offerings.

149. This is the answer to the threats which the pagan Arabs held out to the Holy Prophet to this effect, "If you do not refrain from opposing our deities and from preaching against them they will inflict their wrath on you and destroy you."

149a. That is, "Those who are under the influence of Satans".

150. In this passage Allah has taught His Messenger some very important things about the methods of inviting people to the Message of promulgating Islam, and of guiding and reforming people. The object is to instruct the Holy Prophet and, through him, his successors to enable them to carry on his mission after him. Some salient points are given below and should be considered in the order they are given :

(1) The most important thing is that the inviter to the Truth should have a big and tender heart, and should be forgiving and forbearing. He should be friendly to his companions, kind to the common people, and should show forbearance to his opponents. He should tolerate the weaknesses of his comrades and endure patiently the persecution of his enemies. He should keep cool even under the greatest provocation and connive at the most unpleasant things. He should bear patiently the bitterest words, the most wicked slanders and the most cruel persecutions. Harsh treatment, hard-heartedness, bitter talk, and vindictive retaliations are as harmful as poison for this work : this spoils the work and does not mend it.

There is a tradition of the Holy Prophet to the same effect : "My Lord has enjoined me to utter what is just whether I am in a state of anger or happiness : to try my best to have cordial relations even with those who are inimical to me : to render their rights even to those who deprive me of my rights : to forgive even those who are cruel to me." He advised those whom he sent on this Mission : "Wherever you go, your

visit should be a harbinger of happiness and not of hatred : you should become the source of comfort to the people and not of bringing hardships on them". Allah has also praised this characteristic of the Holy Prophet: ("O Messenger,) it is a great blessing of Allah that you are very lenient towards and gentle with them. If you had been harsh and hard-hearted, they would have scattered away from you....." (III : 159).

(2) The second formula for the success of this Mission is to avoid philosophising and to enjoin those simple and well-known virtues that are universally accepted to be virtues, and are easily recognized by common sense which an ordinary person possesses. Thus the appeal of the inviter to the Truth convinces every one. Its greatest advantage is that it helps win over the common people to the side of promulgators of the Truth, against its antagonists. When the common people, in spite of their prejudices, see on one side a gentle and kind person inviting them towards simple virtues, which they themselves understand well, and on the other, his antagonists opposing his noble mission with immoral and inhuman devices, they turn away by and by from those degraded opponents and come to the inviter of the Truth. As a result of this, in the end, only those remain in the field to oppose the Truth, whose own interests are closely linked with falsehood or those who are slaves of the traditions of their forefathers and of the customs of ignorance. The Holy Prophet owed his great success in Arabia to this wise policy. Then his successors achieved the same in the adjoining countries, where Islam spread by leaps and bounds and was accepted by the overwhelming majority of the people.

(3) The other important instruction that has been given for the promulgation of Islam is to avoid useless discussions with the ignorant people. The inviter to the Truth should always be strictly on the guard against involvement in useless talk and discussion with mischievous and quarrelsome people. He should take the utmost care to approach and converse with those people only who adopt a reasonable and rational attitude towards his Message. As soon as he feels that his addressees are adopting the attitude of ignorance and are resorting to argumentations, wranglings and taunts, he should make an honourable retreat from them. This is because it is not only useless to be involved in such things but it is harmful to the mission, as valuable time and energy, that could have been usefully employed for the promulgation of the Message, go to waste.

(4) In case the inviter to the Truth feels that the provocations from the mischievous people are becoming too much for him to bear and he cannot withstand their tyrannies, mischiefs, foolish objections and accusations, he should at once realise that it is Satan who is tempting him to retaliate. Then the best thing is to seek refuge in Allah, and invoke His help to protect His servant from doing in anger anything that might be harmful to his Mission. This is possible only if one remains cool-headed even under the greatest provocations, for one can never think or act wisely if one is easily excited by anger, insult, injustice or cruelty, etc. But

Satan who does not like this Mission to succeed and is always devising schemes to defeat it, first incites his own disciples to attack the inviter to the Truth and then incites him to make counter-attacks on them. As Satan's appeal is couched in very alluring words and pious terms, it is not an easy thing to withstand it. That is why pious people have been fore-warned, in vv. 201-202, of this serious danger and instructed that if they intend to refrain from evil, they should immediately get alarmed as soon as they feel the evil effects of the temptation of Satan and its incitement in their hearts and stand on their guard. Then they will clearly see the right course that they should adopt on such occasions and under such circumstances for the sake of their Mission.

As for "the brethren of Satan", they become self-seekers under their influence, and cannot withstand their temptations. So they follow satans, who tempt them to retaliate, and resort to every kind of abuse and dishonesty like their enemies.

Besides the above-mentioned particular implications of this passage, it bears a general meaning as well. It helps differentiate the way of the pious from that of the impious. Those who really fear Allah and sincerely desire to refrain from evil, are so sensitive that even if an evil thought so much as touches their hearts, it pricks their consciences and rankles in their hearts and they seek Allah's refuge from Satan. This is because they are not used to evil thoughts, evil desires and evil intentions, for these are foreign to their nature. As soon as they become conscious of their presence in their minds, their eyes are opened and their consciences recognise them. Then they seek Allah's refuge from Satan in order to cleanse their hearts of those dirty things. In contrast to them, those, who do not fear Allah nor desire to refrain from evil and those who have satans as their brethren, go on cherishing evil thoughts, evil intentions and evil designs in their hearts without feeling anything strange in them. So much so that no sense of cleanliness is left in their minds : and in due course, these dirty things take practical shapes and expose them before the world.

151. This question of the disbelievers implied a taunt. They meant to say, "Well sir, as you are posing to be a Prophet, you ought to have faked up a miracle in proof thereof". The grandeur that is contained in the answer that follows is worthy of the Book of Allah.

152. This is the answer to the question : "I am not in a position to invent miracles or compose or patch up verses on your demand or when I feel their need. I am only a Messenger and my duty is to follow the Guidance of the One Who has sent me. Therefore instead of demanding miracles from me, you should consider seriously the contents of the Qurān that has been sent down to me, as it contains spiritual lights. Those who accept this, see the straight path of life, and their good moral qualities begin to show the signs of "Divine Mercy".

153. It means, "In your bigotry and obduracy you turn a deaf ear to the Qurān when it is being recited, and make a loud noise so that no

one should be able to listen to it. Leave this wrong attitude towards it and listen to it with attention and consider the teachings contained in it. It is just possible that your acquaintance with it may enlighten your hearts and make you co-sharers with the Believers in the mercy of your Lord."

Incidentally, it should be noted that the above answer to the taunts of the opponents is so nice and sweet and appealing to the hearts that words cannot describe its excellence. There is also a lesson of wisdom for those who are engaged in the missionary work.

Though the real object of this verse is the same that has been stated above, incidentally it also enjoins the hearers to remain silent and listen to it as a mark of respect which is due to the Book of Allah. It is also deduced from this that when the *Imām* recites the Qurān during the *Ṣalāt*, the followers in the congregation should listen to it in silence, and they should not recite anything. There is, however, difference of opinion among the *Imāms* in regard to its interpretation. According to *Imām Abū Ḥanīfah* and his companions, the followers in the congregation should not recite anything whether the *Imām* is reciting the Qurān aloud or silently in his mind. However, *Imām Mālik* and *Imām Aḥmad* are of the opinion that only in that case when the *Imām* is reciting the Qurān aloud, the followers should not recite anything, but in the other case they should recite *Sūrah AL-FĀTIHAH*. But according to *Imām Shafi'ī*, the followers must recite *Sūrah AL-FĀTIHAH*, whether the *Imām* is reciting loudly or silently in his mind. He bases his opinion on the Traditions according to which one's *Ṣalāt* is not complete without the recital of *Sūrah AL-FĀTIHAH*.

154. "Remember your Lord" means "offer *Ṣalāt*" as well as "keep Allah in mind whether by utterance or without it."

And "morning and evening" means both the times as well as "always". Therefore "Remember your Lord morning and evening" means "Offer *Ṣalāt* in the morning and in the evening", and also "always keep Allah in mind."

The *Sūrah* concludes with the above admonition, which is meant to warn the Muslims against their negligence in the remembrance of Allah, for this alone is responsible for all the chaos and the evils in the world. Whenever man forgets that Allah is his Lord, and that he is the servant of Allah Who has sent him to this world for a trial and that he shall have to render his account to Him immediately after his death, he deviates from the Right Way and commits acts of wickedness and immorality. Therefore the man who intends to follow the Right Way and guides others to the same Way, should strictly guard against such a negligence. That is why the Qurān has emphasized, over and over again, the importance of the observance of *Ṣalāt* and of the remembrance of Allah and of turning to Him on each and every occasion.

155. In contrast to the ways of pride and vanity of satans that mislead into disobedience to Allah, and consequently to the depths of degradation, the example of the angels has been cited to teach the lesson

of humility. They bow down before Allah and are always engaged in His service. Therefore if one desires to achieve high ranks in the sight of Allah, one should follow the angels and refrain from the paths of satans.

156. The Arabic word **يُسَبِّحُونَهُ** (*yusabb-i-hūna-hū*) means, "They acknowledge and declare that Allah is flawless, and is absolutely free from every sort of defect, error or weakness, and has neither any partners nor compeers nor the like of Him, and that they are always engaged in this".

157. Everyone, who recites this verse or hears its recital, is required to perform a **سَجْدَةٌ** (*sajdah*—prostration) so that one's physical state may be in agreement with the angels near to Allah to give a practical proof of one's humility, servitude and obedience to Allah simultaneously with His angels.

This is the first of the fourteen verses of the Qurān, the recital of which requires the performance of a *sajdah* (prostration). Though all the Jurists agree that a prostration should be performed at these *places*, there is a difference in regard to its obligatory status. According to Imām Abū Hanīfah, it is *wājib* (compulsory) but the other scholars are of the opinion that it is *sunnat* (optional). It may also be noted that a thing which is *sunnat* is not as binding as *wājib* but its intentional omission, though not sinful, is considered bad for a true Muslim and its permanent omission is sinful.

As regards the manner of the performance of *sajdah*, we learn from Traditions that it was different in form on different occasions. Sometimes while the Holy Prophet was reciting a verse that required the performance of *sajdah*, he himself would prostrate then and there, and everyone in the gathering did the same, so much so that if one did not find room for it on the ground, he would perform it by laying his head on the back of the man in front of him. We also learn from Traditions that on the occasion of the Conquest of Makkah, when the Holy Prophet was reciting the Qurān, a verse requiring the performance of *sajdah* occurred. Then those who were standing on the ground performed it on the ground, while those who were riding their horses or camels performed it on the backs of animals they were riding. Sometimes when he recited a verse requiring *sajdah* during his address, he came down from the pulpit, and performed it on the ground and then climbed the pulpit and resumed his address.

The majority of the Muslims are of the opinion that the conditions for the performance of *sajdah* are the same as for the performance of *Ṣalāt*. But there is no proof for these conditions in the Traditions concerning *sajdah*. We find from them that when a person hears a verse requiring *sajdah*, he should bend down his head wherever and in whatever position he may be irrespective of these conditions. He should not mind whether he is in a state of ablutions or not; whether he can turn his face towards the *qiblah* or not; whether it is possible for him to prostrate his head on the ground or not. We find examples of the learned and pious people in the past following the same practice. According to Imām Bukhāri,

Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar would perform *sajdah* whether he was in a state of ablutions or not. It is cited in *Fatehulbāri* that Abū 'Abdur-Rehmān Sulami would recite the Qurān while he was walking and would merely bend down his head when he read a verse requiring *sajdah*, whether he was in a state of ablutions or not and whether he was facing *qiblah* or not. From these we have come to the conclusion that, though the method followed by the majority is more prudent, if a person follows a practice different from that of the majority, he should not be reproved for this because there is no proof in Sunnah for the method followed by the majority, while there are examples of learned personages for this practice.



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

VIII

AL-ANFĀL الْآنْفَال

Name

The Sūrah takes its name AL-ANFĀL (The Bounties) from the first verse.

The Period of Revelation

It was revealed in 2 A.H. after the Battle of Badr, the first battle between Islam and *kufir*. As it contains a detailed and comprehensive review of the Battle, it appears that most probably it was revealed at one and the same time. But it is also possible that some of the verses concerning the problems arising as a result of this Battle might have been revealed later and incorporated at the proper places to make it a continuous whole. At any rate, in the whole Sūrah there is nothing that might show that it is a collection of a couple of discourses, that have been patched up together.

Historical Background

Before reviewing the Sūrah, it is worthwhile to consider the events that led to the Battle of Badr.

During the first decade or so of the Prophethood at Makkah, the Message had proved its firmness and stability. This was the result of two things. First, the Messenger, who possessed the highest qualities of character, was performing his Mission with wisdom, foresight and magnanimity. He had shown by his conduct that he had made up his mind to carry the movement to a successful end and, therefore, was ready to face all sorts of dangers and obstacles in the way. Secondly, the Message was so charming that it attracted the minds and hearts of the people irresistibly towards itself. So much so that all obstacles of ignorance, superstition and petty prejudices failed to check its advance. That is why the Arab upholders of the ways of "ignorance" who looked down upon

it in its initial stages, had begun to reckon it as a serious menace during the last period of the stay of the Holy Prophet at Makkah, and were bent on crushing it with all the force at their command. But in spite of the above-mentioned strength, the Movement still lacked certain things to lead it to victory:—

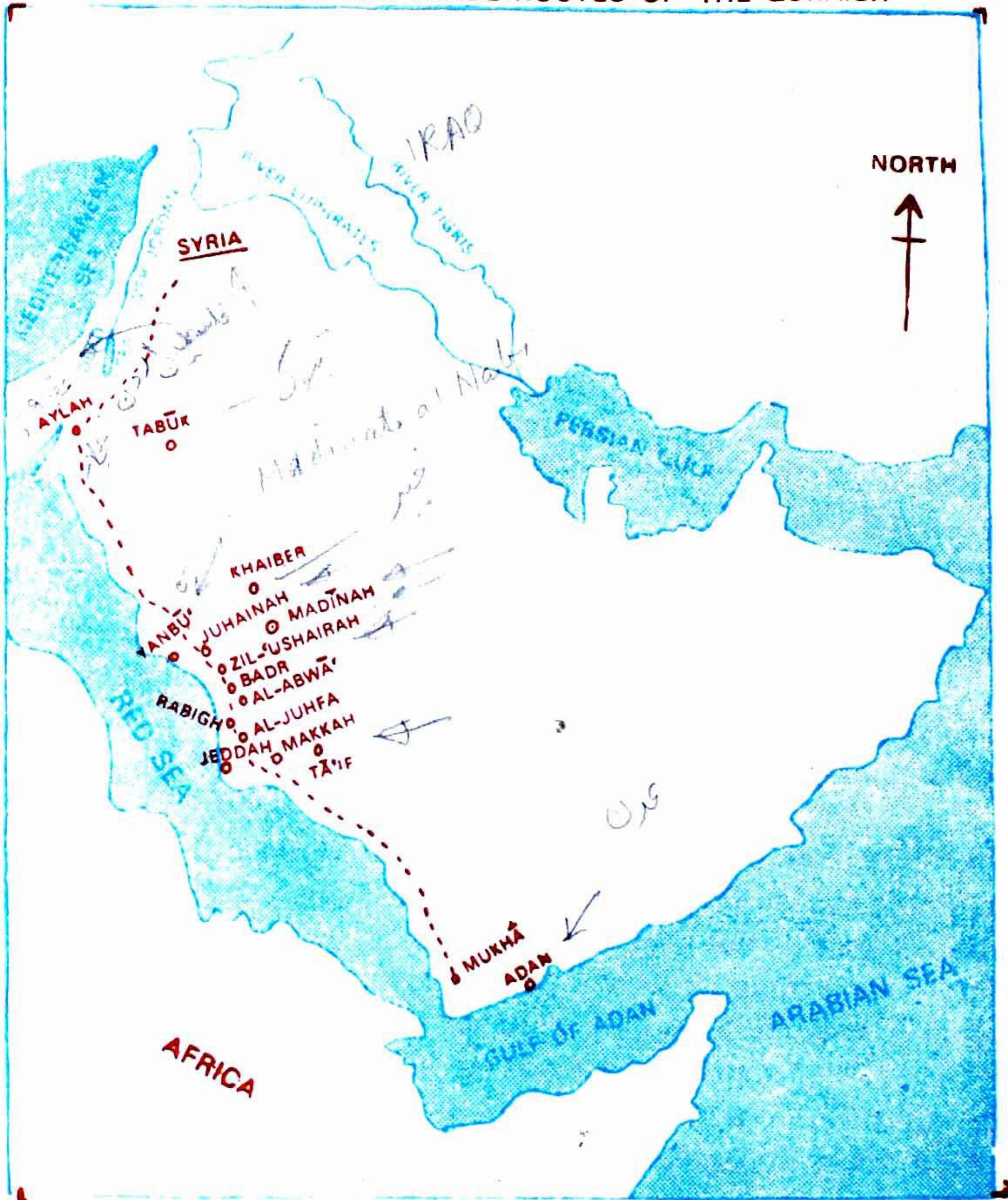
First, it had not yet been fully proved that it had gathered round it a sufficient number of such followers who not only believed in its truth but also had such an intense devotion to its principles that they were ready to expend all their energies and all that they possessed in the struggle for its success and establishment. So much so that they were ready to sacrifice their lives in the fight against the whole world itself even though they should be their own nearest relatives. It is true that the followers of Islam had endured the severest persecutions at the hands of the Quraish of Makkah and had given a good proof of the firmness of their faith and their strong relation with Islam, yet further trials were required to show that Islam had succeeded in acquiring such a band of followers which considered nothing dearer than its ideal and was ready to sacrifice life for it.

Secondly, though the voice of Islam had reached every part of the country, its effects were yet scattered and its acquired strength was spread here and there: it had not yet gathered sufficient force essential for a decisive conflict with the old established order of "ignorance".

Thirdly, Islam had yet no home of its own and had not established itself firmly anywhere in the land where it could consolidate its power and make it a base for further action. For the Muslims were scattered all over the country and were living among the unbelievers as aliens whom their bloodthirsty enemies wanted to uproot from their own homes.

Fourthly, the Muslims had not yet had an opportunity to demonstrate practically the blessings of the system of life based on Islam. There was neither any Islamic culture, nor any social, economic or political system; nor were there any established principles of war and peace for their guidance. Therefore the Muslims had no opportunity for demonstrating those moral principles on which they intended to build their entire system of life; nor had it been proved on the touchstone of trial that

MAP SHOWING THE TRADE ROUTES OF THE QURAIISH



the Muslims as a community were sincere in the proclamation of the Message.

Allah created opportunities for making up these deficiencies.

During the last four years or so of the Prophet's stay at Makkah, the voice of Islam had been proving effective at Yathrab and the people for various reasons had been accepting the message more readily than other clans of Arabia. So much so that in the twelfth year of Prophethood on the occasion of *Haj* a deputation of 75 people met the Holy Prophet in the darkness of night. These people not only accepted Islam, but also offered to give him and his followers a home. As this was a most epoch-making opportunity provided by Allah, the Holy Prophet took advantage of it.

The significance of this offer was quite clear to the people of Yathrab, and they fully realized that this was not an invitation to a mere fugitive, but to the Messenger of Allah so that he should become their leader and ruler. Likewise they knew that they were not inviting the Muslim refugees to give them shelter from persecution but to assemble them from all over the country for their integration with themselves to form an organised community. Thus the offer of the people of Yathrab was to make Yathrab the "City of Islam." Accordingly the Holy Prophet accepted their invitation and made it the first "City of Islam" in Arabia.

And the people of Yathrab were fully aware of the implications of this offer. It was indeed a declaration of war against the whole of Arabia, and an invitation to their own social and economic boycott as well. And when the *Anṣār* from Yathrab declared their allegiance to the Holy Prophet at 'Aqabah, they knew fully well its consequences. During the course of the formal declaration of allegiance, Asad-bin-Zurārah, the youngest of all the delegates from Yathrab, stood up and said, "O people of Yathrab! just listen to me and consider the matter carefully in all its aspects. Though we have come to him, regarding him only as a Messenger of Allah, we should know that we shall be inviting the enmity of the whole of Arabia. For when we take him away to Yathrab, we shall be attacked and our children may be put to

the sword. Therefore if you have the courage in your hearts to face it, then and then only, you should declare your allegiance to him and Allah will give you its reward. But if you love your lives more than him and his Message, then leave this matter and frankly excuse yourselves, for at this time Allah may accept your excuses.”

‘Abbās bin ‘Ubādah bin Naḍlah, another member of the delegation, reiterated the same thing, saying,

‘Do you understand the implication of the declaration of your allegiance to this person?’ (Voices, “Yes, we know it.”) “You are challenging the whole world to war by your declaration of allegiance to him. There is every likelihood of a serious menace to your lives and properties. Therefore consider it well. If you have any idea lurking in your minds that you will then hand him over to his enemies, it is much better to leave him alone now, because that conduct shall bring shame and disgrace to you in this world and the next. On the other hand, if you have sincerely resolved that you will endure all kinds of consequences that will follow as a result of this invitation, then it would be the best thing to take the oath of allegiance to him because, by God, this will surely bring good to you in this world as well as in the next world.”

At this all the members of the delegation cried with one voice, “We are ready and prepared to risk all our wealth and our noble kith and kin for his sake.”

It was then that the famous oath of allegiance, which is known as the “Second Oath of Allegiance at ‘Aqabah,” was taken.

On the other side, the people of Makkah also understood fully well the implications of this matter from their own point of view. They realised that Muhammad (Allah’s peace be upon him), who, they knew well, had a great personality and possessed extraordinary abilities, was going to gain a strong footing, by this allegiance. For this would help integrate his followers, whose constancy, determination, and unwavering fidelity to the Messenger had been tried, into a disciplined community under his wise leadership and guidance. And they knew that this would spell death for their old ways of life. They also realised the strategic importance of Al-

Madīnah to their trade, which was their chief means of livelihood.

Its geographical position was such that the Muslims could strike with advantage at the caravans travelling on the trade route between Yaman and Syria, and thus strike at the root of their economy and that of other pagan clans very effectively. The value of the trade done by the people of Makkah alone on this route, not to count that of Ṭāif and other places, amounted to about two hundred thousand *dinārs* annually.

As the Quraish were fully aware of the implications of the oath of allegiance at 'Aqabah, they were greatly perturbed when they got wind of it the same night. At first they tried to win over the people of Al-Madīnah to their side. But when they saw that the Muslims were migrating to Al-Madīnah in small groups, they realised that the Holy Prophet was also going to emigrate soon from there. Then they decided to adopt an extreme measure to prevent this danger.

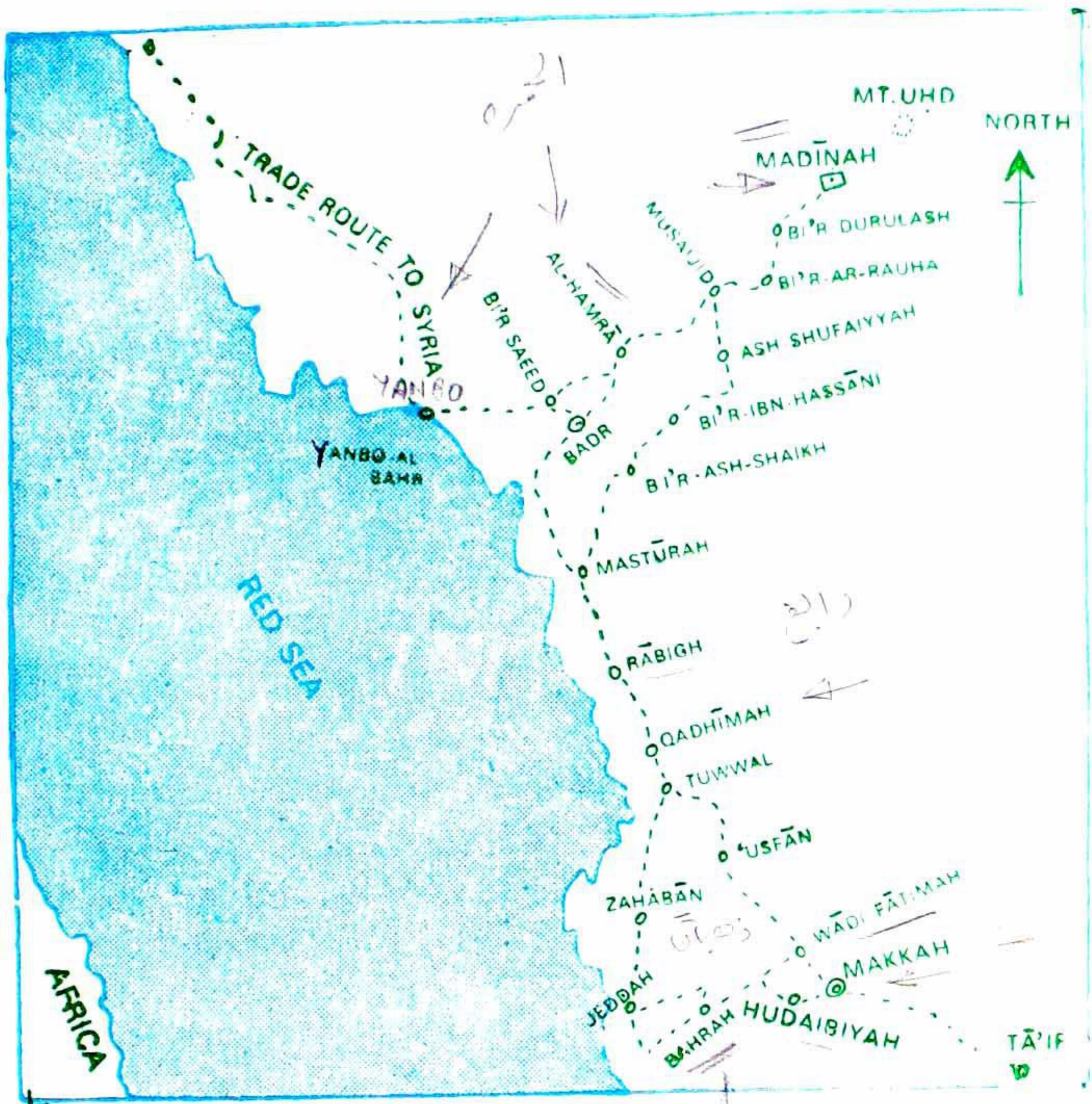
A few days before his migration, the Quraish held a council to consider the matter. After a good deal of argument, they decided that one person should be taken from each of the families of Quraish other than that of Banī Hāshim to put an end to the life of the Holy Prophet. This was to make it difficult for the family of the Holy Prophet to fight alone with all the other families of the Quraish and thus to force them to accept blood-money for his murder instead of taking revenge from them, but by the grace of Allah their plot against the life of the Holy Prophet failed because of his admirable foresight and full trust in Allah, and he reached Al-Madīnah safe and sound. When they could not prevent his emigration, it occurred to them to exploit 'Abdullah bin Ubayy who had begun to cherish a grievance against the Holy Prophet since his arrival at Al-Madīnah. He was an influential chief of Al-Madīnah and the people had agreed to make him their king. But when the majority of Aus and Khazraj clans became Muslims and acknowledged the Holy Prophet as their leader, guide and ruler, all his hopes of becoming a king came to an end. Therefore the Quraish wrote to him, "As you have given shelter to our enemy, we tell you plainly that you should either fight with him yourself or exile him from your city:

otherwise we swear by God that we will invade your city, kill your males and make your females our slave girls." This letter added fuel to the flames of his jealousy and he was inclined to do some mischief, but the Holy Prophet took timely precautions and defeated his evil designs.

The Quraish got another opportunity to hold out a threat. When Sa'ad bin Mu'āz, another chief of Al-Madīnah, went to Makkah to perform 'Umrah, Abū Jahl interrupted him at the very door of the Ka'abah, saying, "Do you think we will let you perform 'Umrah in peace when you give shelter and help to renegades from us? Had you not been a guest of Ummayyah bin Khalf, you would not have gone alive from here." Sa'ad replied, "By Allah, if you prevent me from this, I will retaliate in a worse manner and block your route near Al-Madīnah." This incident virtually led to a declaration from the people of Makkah that they would prevent the Muslims from a pilgrimage to the Ka'abah, and from the people of Al-Madīnah that as a retaliation they would block their trade route to Syria against the opponents of Islam. As a matter of fact there was no other alternative for the Muslims than to keep a strong hold on this route so as to force the Quraish, and the other clans, whose interests were vitally bound with this route, to reconsider their inimical and antagonistic attitude towards them. That is why the Holy Prophet attached the greatest importance to this problem. As soon as he was free from making the preliminary arrangements for organizing the newly formed Muslim Community and settling peace terms with the neighbouring Jewish habitations, he adopted two measures in this connection:—

First, he entered into negotiations with those clans who lived between the Red Sea and this route so as to make alliances with them or at least to persuade them to make treaties of neutrality with the Muslims. He was successful in this, and he entered into a treaty of non-alignment with Juhainah, which was a very important clan of the hilly tract near the sea coast. Then, at the end of the first year of Hijrah, he made a treaty of defensive alliance with Banī Damrah, who lived near Yanb'ū and Zawal 'Ushairah. In 2 A.H. Banī Mudlij also joined the alliance, as they were the neighbours and allies

MAP SHOWING THE CARAVAN ROUTES TO SYRIA FROM MAKKAH VIA BADAR AND ALSO THE WAY FROM MADINAH TO BADAR



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of Banī Ḍamrah. Then it so happened that quite a large number of these people were converted to Islam as a result of the missionary work done by the Muslims.

Secondly, he successively sent small bands of his men on this route to serve as a warning to the Quraish, and himself accompanied some of them. In the first year of Hijrah, four expeditions were sent there, that is, the expedition under Hamzah, the expedition under 'Ubaidah bin Hārith, the expedition under Sa'ad bin Abī Waqqās and the Al-Abwā' expedition under the Holy Prophet himself. In the first month of the second year two more incursions were made on the same route. These are known as Buwāt Expedition and Zawal 'Ushairah Expedition. Two things about all these expeditions are noteworthy. First, no blood was shed and no caravans were plundered in any of these expeditions. This proves that the real object of these expeditions was to show to the Quraish which way the wind was blowing. Secondly, not a single man from the people of Al-Madīnah was sent by the Holy Prophet on any of these incursions. All the bands consisted purely of the immigrants from Makkah so that the conflict should remain between the people of the Quraish themselves and should not further spread by the involvement of other clans. On the other side, the Quraish of Makkah tried to involve others also in the conflict. When they sent bands towards Al-Madīnah, they did not hesitate to plunder the people. For instance, an expedition under the leadership of Kurz bin Jābir al-Fihri plundered the cattle of the people of Al-Madīnah from the very vicinity of the city to show what their real intentions were.

This was the state of affairs when, in Sha'abān, 2 A.H. (February or March, 623 A.D.) a big trade caravan of the Quraish, carrying goods worth £50,000 or so, with only a guard of thirty to forty men, on its way back from Syria to Makkah, reached the territory from where it could be easily attacked from Al-Madīnah. As the caravan was carrying trade goods worth thousands of pounds, and was scantily guarded, naturally Abū Sufyān, who was in charge of it, from his past experience feared an attack from the Muslims. Accordingly, as soon as he entered the dangerous territory, he despatched

a camel rider to Makkah with a frantic appeal for help. When the rider reached Makkah, he, following an old custom of Arabia, tore open the ears of his camel, cut open his nose and overturned the saddle. Then rending his shirt from front and behind, he began to cry aloud at the top of his voice, "O people of Quraish! despatch help to protect your caravan from Syria under the charge of Abū Sufyān, for Muhammad with his followers is in pursuit of it; otherwise I don't think you will ever get your goods. Run, run for help." This caused great excitement and anger in the whole of Makkah and all the big chiefs of the Quraish got ready for war. An army, consisting of 600 armoured soldiers and cavalry of 100 riders with great pomp and show marched out for a fight. They intended not only to rescue the caravan but also to put to an end, once for all, the new menace from the Muslims who had consolidated themselves at Al-Madīnah. They wanted to crush that rising power and overawe the clans surrounding the route so as to make it absolutely secure for future trade.

Now the Holy Prophet, who always kept himself well informed of the state of affairs, felt that the decisive hour had come and that was the right time when he must take a bold step; otherwise the Islamic Movement would become lifeless for ever and no chance would be left for it to rise again. For if the Quraish invaded Al-Madīnah, the odds would be against the Muslims. The condition of the Muslim Community was still very shaky because the immigrants (*Muhājirīn*) had not been able to stabilise their economy during the short period (less than two years) of their stay at Al-Madīnah; their helpers (the *Anṣār*) had not yet been tried; and the neighbouring Jewish clans were antagonistic. Then there was a strong group of hypocrites and *mushriks* in Al-Madīnah itself; above all, the surrounding clans lived in awe of the Quraish and had all their religious sympathies with them. The Holy Prophet, therefore, felt that the consequences of this possible invasion would not be favourable to the Muslims.

The second possibility was that they would not invade Al-Madīnah but try only to escort their caravan safely and securely by a mere show of force. In that case, too, if the Muslims remained inactive, it would affect their reputation adversely.

Obviously, this weak stand in the conflict would embolden the other Arabs also and make the position of the Muslims very insecure in the country and the surrounding clans would, at the instance of the Quraish, start hostilities against them, and the Jews, the hypocrites and the *mushriks* of Al-Madīnah would openly rise against them and not only endanger their security of life, property and honour but make it difficult for them even to live there.

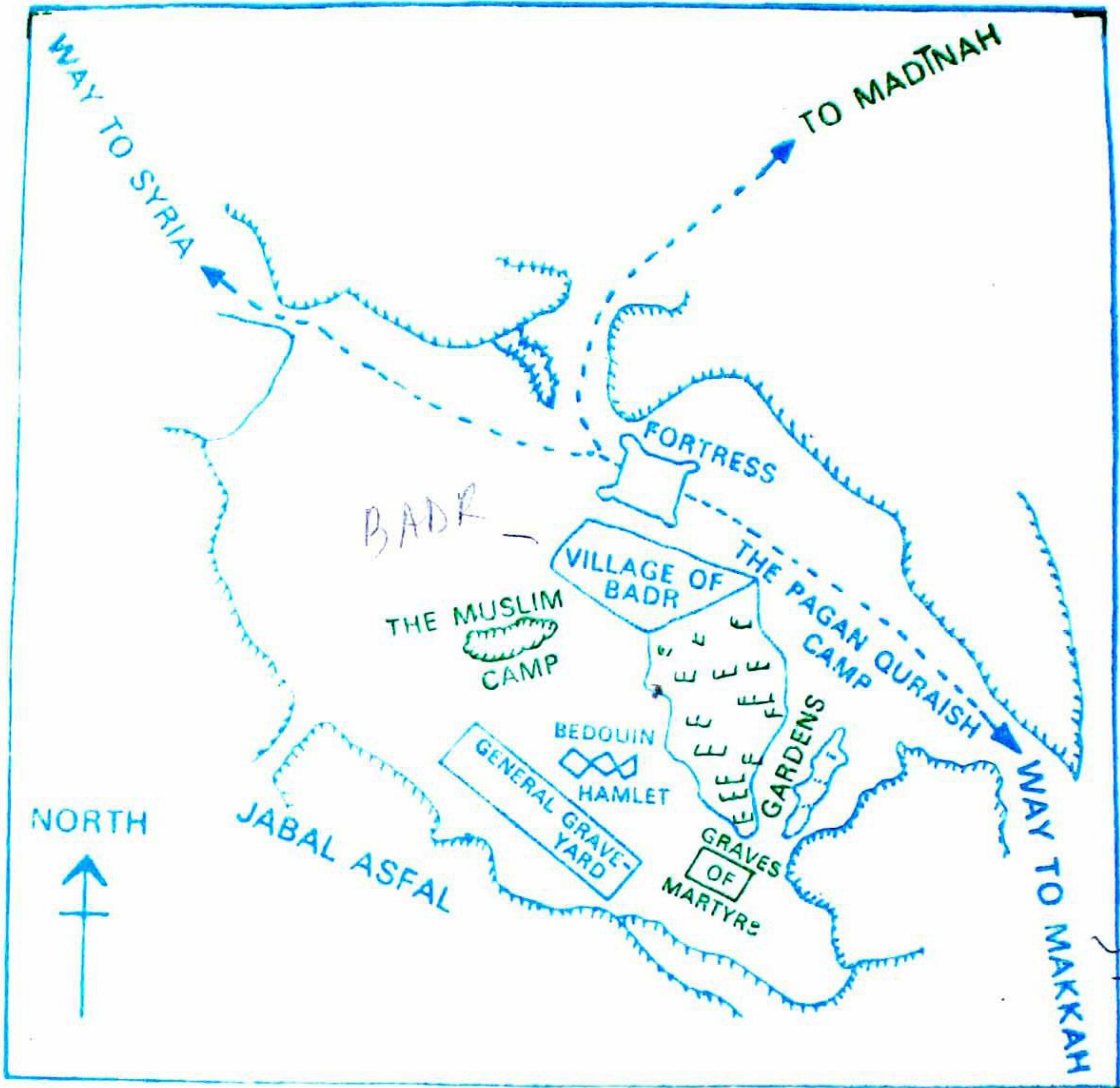
The Muslims would not be able to inspire the enemy with awe so as to keep safe from them their life, property and honour. A careful study of the situation led the Holy Prophet to make up his mind to take a decisive step and go into the battle with whatever little strength he could muster, for thus and thus only could he show whether the Muslim Community had the right to survive or was doomed to perish.

When he arrived at this momentous decision, he called the *Muhājirīn* and the *Anṣār* together and placed the whole position before them, without any reservation. He said, "Allah has promised that you will confront one of the two, the trade caravan coming from the north or the army of the Quraish marching from the south. Now tell me which of the two you want to attack!" A large majority of the people replied that they wanted to attack the caravan. But the Holy Prophet who had something else before him, repeated the same question. At this Miqdād bin 'Amr, a *Muhājir*, stood up and said, "O Messenger of Allah! Please march to the side to which your Lord commands you; we will accompany you wherever you go. We will not say like the Israelites, 'Go and let you and your Lord fight; we will wait here.' In contrast to them we say, 'Let you and your Lord fight; we will fight by your side to our last breath'." Even then he did not announce any decision but waited for a reply from the *Anṣār* who had not yet taken any part in any battle of Islam. As this was the first opportunity for them to prove that they were ready to fulfil their promise of fighting for the cause of Islam, he repeated the question without directly addressing them. At this, Sa'ad bin Mu'āz, an *Anṣār*, stood up and said, "Sir, it appears that you are putting the question to us." When

the Holy Prophet said, "Yes", the *Anṣār* replied, "We have believed in you and confirmed that what you have brought is the Truth, and have made a solemn pledge with you that we will listen to you and obey you. Therefore, O Messenger of Allah, do whatever you intend to do. We swear by Allah Who has sent you with the Truth that we are ready to accompany you to the sea shore and if you enter it, we will plunge into it. We assure you that not a single one of us will remain behind or forsake you, for we will not hesitate at all to go to fight, even if you should lead us to the battlefield tomorrow. We will remain steadfast in the battle and sacrifice our lives in the fight. We do hope that by the grace of Allah our behaviour will gladden your heart. So, trusting in Allah's blessing, take us to the battlefield."

After these speeches it was decided that they should march towards the army of the Quraish and not towards the trade caravan. But it should be noted that the decision was of an ordinary nature. For the number of people, who came forward to go to the battlefield, was only a little more than three hundred (86 *Muhājirs*, 61 from Aus and 170 from Khazraj). Then the little army was ill-armed and hardly equipped for battle. Only a couple of them had horses to ride and the others had to take their turn in threes and fours on the back of a camel, out of the 70 they had in all. Above all, they had not got enough weapons for the battle; only 60 of them had armours. It is, therefore, no wonder that with the exception of those who were prepared to sacrifice their lives for the cause of Islam, the majority of those who had joined the expedition, were so filled with fear that they felt as if they were knowingly going into the jaws of death. Then there were people who always looked at things from a selfish point of view. Though they had embraced Islam, they did not realize that their faith would demand the sacrifice of their lives and properties from them; they were of the opinion that it was a mad expedition prompted by irrational enthusiasm for religion. But the Holy Prophet and the true Believers had realized the urgency of that critical hour which required the risk of life : therefore they marched straight to the south-west, wherefrom the army of the Quraish

THE BATTLEFIELD OF BADR



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was coming. This is a clear proof of the fact that from the very beginning they had gone out to fight with the army and not to plunder the caravan. For if they had aimed at plundering the caravan they would have taken the north-westerly direction and not the south-westerly one.*

The two parties met in combat at Badr on the seventeenth of Ramaḍān. When the two armies confronted each other and the Holy Prophet noticed that the Quraish army outnumbered the Muslims by three to one and was much better equipped, he raised his hands up in supplication and made this earnest prayer with great humility: "O Allah! Here are the Quraish proud of their war material: they have come to prove that Thy Messenger is false. O Allah! now send that succour that Thou hast promised to give me. O Allah! If this little army of Thy servants is destroyed, then there will be left none in the land to worship Thee."

In this combat the emigrants from Makkah were put to the hardest test for they had to fight against their own near and dear relatives and put to the sword their fathers, their sons, their paternal and maternal uncles and their brothers. It is obvious that only such people could have come out successful in this hardest of tests as had accepted the Truth sincerely and cut off all relations with falsehood. And in another way the test to which the *Anṣār* were put was not less hard. So far they had only alienated the powerful Quraish and their allies by giving shelter to the Muslims against their wishes but now, for the first time, they were going to give fight to them and to sow the seeds of a long and bitter war with them. This was indeed a very hard test for it meant that a small town with a population of a few thousand in-

*In this connection it is noteworthy that historians and writers of the biography of the Holy Prophet have mostly relied on the books of traditions and wars, though the greater part of the traditions about the Battle of Badr is against the facts related in the Qurān and, therefore, unreliable. It is not mere credulity that we believe that the facts contained in the Qurān about the Battle are absolutely reliable, but from the historical point of view also there cannot be any doubt about them. For Sūrah AL-ANFĀL was revealed immediately after the Battle and those who had taken part in it had heard and read it. Had there been anything in it against the facts, it would have been refuted then and there.

habitants was going to wage a war with the whole of Arabia. It is obvious that only such people could take this bold step who believed in the Truth of Islam so firmly that they were ready to sacrifice every personal interest for its sake.

So Allah accepted the self-sacrifices of the *Muhājirīn* and the *Anṣār* because of their true faith, and rewarded them with His succour. The proud, well-armed Quraish were routed by these ill-equipped devotees of Islam. Seventy men of their army were killed and seventy captured as prisoners and their arms and equipment came into the hands of the Muslims as spoils of war. All their big chiefs, who were their best soldiers and who had led the opposition to Islam, were killed in this Battle. No wonder that this decisive victory made Islam a power to be reckoned with. A Western research scholar says that before the Battle of Badr, Islam was merely a religion and a state but after the Battle it became the state religion, nay, the state itself.

Topics of Discussion

It is this great Battle that has been reviewed in this Sūrah. But let it be noted that in some respects this review is quite different from the reviews that are usually made by the worldly commanders after a great victory:

1. Instead of gloating over the victory, the moral weaknesses that had come to the surface in that expedition have been pointed out so that the Muslims should try their best to reform themselves.
2. It has been impressed upon them that the victory was due to the succour of Allah rather than to their own valour and bravery so that the Muslims should learn to rely on Him and obey Allah and His Messenger alone.
3. The moral lesson of the conflict between the Truth and falsehood has been enunciated and the qualities which lead to success in a conflict have been explained.
4. Then the Sūrah addresses the *mushriks*, the hypocrites, the Jews and the prisoners of this war in a very impressive manner that should teach them a good lesson.
5. It also gives instructions in regard to the spoils of war. The Muslims have been told not to regard these as

their right but as a bounty from Allah. Therefore they should accept with gratitude the share that is granted to them out of it and willingly accede to the share which Allah sets apart for His cause and for the help of the needy.

6. Then it also gives normal instructions concerning the laws of peace and war for these were urgently needed to be explained at the stage which the Islamic Movement had entered. It enjoined that the Muslims should refrain from ways of "ignorance" in peace and war and thus should establish their moral superiority in the world. It also meant to demonstrate to the world in actual practical life the morality which it had been preaching to the world from the very beginning of Islam and had been enjoining that practical life should be based on the same.

7. It also states some articles of the Islamic Constitution which help differentiate the status of the Muslims living within the limits of *Dār-ul-Islam* (the Abode of Islam) from that of the Muslims living beyond its limits.

SUMMARY

SUBJECT: PROBLEMS OF *JIHĀD*

This Sūrah enunciates general principles of war (one aspect of *Jihād*) and peace while reviewing the Battle of Badr and uses them for the moral training of the Muslims.

Topics and their Interconnection

1-41

This portion deals with the problems of the "Spoils of War". The Qurān says that these are not the spoils of war but the "Bounties of Allah" and proves this by showing that the victory at Badr (and in all other battles, too,) was won by His succour and not by the efforts of the Muslims. It also declares (in v. 40) that the war aim of the Muslims should be to eliminate all unfavourable conditions for the establishment of Islam and not to gain spoils. Moreover, the spoils, being the bounties of God, belong to Allah and His Messenger and they alone are entitled to allocate them. Then after conditioning the Muslims to accept these things, the different shares have been allocated in v. 41.

42-54

The Battle of Badr was ordained by Allah so that Islam should triumph over "ignorance." The lesson from this is that the Muslims should trust in God and prepare themselves for war and should not be beguiled by Satan as the disbelievers were.

55-59

Sanctity of treaties has been enjoined and the Muslims commanded to observe them as long as the other party does not break them.

60-66

The Muslims should always be prepared for war on every front, but should be ready to make peace if the other party is inclined towards it.

67-71

In these verses, instructions about prisoners of war have been given.

72-75

In order to keep the Muslims joined together against their enemies, they have been taught to have cordial relations with one another.



يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْأَنْفَالِ قُلِ الْأَنْفَالُ لِلَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَ
 أَصْلِحُوا ذَاتَ بَيْنِكُمْ وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ۗ
 إِذَا تَلَّوْنَهَا الَّذِينَ يَزُكَّرُونَ إِذَا دُكِّرَ اللَّهُ وَجِلَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَإِذَا تُلِيَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ
 آيَاتُهُ زَادَتْهُمْ إِيمَانًا وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ ۗ الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ
 وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ حَقًّا لَهُمْ دَرَجَاتٌ عِنْدَ

VIII

الْأَنْفَالُ

AL-ANFĀL (BOUNTIES)

Revealed at Al-Madīnah

Verses: 75

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

They ask you concerning the bounties? Say, "The bounties belong to Allah and the Messenger. So fear Allah and set things aright among yourselves; obey Allah and His Messenger, if you are true believers."¹ True believers are only those whose hearts tremble with awe, whenever Allah is mentioned to them; whose faith increases² when the revelations of Allah are recited to them; who put their trust in their Lord, who establish *Ṣalāt* and spend in Our way out of what We have given them.....

1. A dispute arose among the Muslims concerning the division of the spoils of victory after the Battle of Badr. Allah used this opportunity for the benefit of the Muslims and gave instructions for the solution of the problems of peace and war.

As Badr was the first battle fought under the flag of Islam, naturally the Muslims were unaware of the Islamic laws about war and the problems created by it. Some preliminary instructions had already been given in Sūrahs AL-BAQARAH and MUHAMMAD, but more instructions were

[Contd. on p. 124]

رَبِّهِمْ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ وَرِزْقٌ كَرِيمٌ ﴿١٤٠﴾ كَمَا أَخْرَجَكَ رَبُّكَ مِنْ بَيْتِكَ بِالْحَقِّ
 وَإِنَّ فَرِيقًا مِّنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ لَكُرْهُونَ ﴿١٤١﴾ يُجَادِلُونَكَ فِي الْحَقِّ بَعْدَ مَا
 تَبَيَّنَ كَأَنَّمَا يُسَاقُونَ إِلَى الْمَوْتِ وَهُمْ يَنْظُرُونَ ﴿١٤٢﴾ وَإِذْ يَعِدُكُمُ اللَّهُ
 إِحْدَى الطَّائِفَتَيْنِ أَنَّهَا لَكُمْ وَتَوَدُّونَ أَنَّ غَيْرَ ذَاتِ الشَّوْكَةِ تَكُونُ
 لَكُمْ وَيُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَنْ يُحِقَّ الْحَقَّ بِكَلِمَاتِهِ وَيَقْطَعَ دَابِرَ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿١٤٣﴾
 لِيُحِقَّ الْحَقَّ وَيُبْطِلَ الْبَاطِلَ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُجْرِمُونَ ﴿١٤٤﴾ إِذْ تَسْتَغِيثُونَ
 رَبَّكُمْ فَاسْتَجَابَ لَكُمْ أَنِّي مُمِدُّكُمْ بِآلِفٍ مِّنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ مُرَدِّفِينَ ﴿١٤٥﴾ وَ
 مَا جَعَلَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بُشْرَىٰ وَلِتَطْمَئِنَّ بِهِ قُلُوبُكُمْ وَمَا النَّصْرُ إِلَّا مِنْ
 عِنْدِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿١٤٦﴾ إِذْ يُغَشِّيكُمُ النُّعَاسَ أَمَنَةً مِّنْهُ وَ
 يُنَزِّلُ عَلَيْكُمْ مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً لِّيُطَهِّرَكُم بِهِ وَيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ رِجْسَ
 الشَّيْطَانِ وَلِيَرْبِطَ عَلَى قُلُوبِكُمْ وَيُثَبِّتَ بِهِ الْأَقْدَامَ ﴿١٤٧﴾ إِذْ يُوحَىٰ رَبُّكَ
 إِلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ أَنِّي مَعَكُمْ فَثَبِّتُوا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا سَالِقِي فِي قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ
 كَفَرُوا الرُّعْبَ فَاضْرِبُوا فَوْقَ الْأَعْنَاقِ وَاضْرِبُوا مِنْهُمْ كُلَّ بَنَانٍ ﴿١٤٨﴾
 ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ شَاقُّوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ ۗ وَمَنْ يُشَاقِقِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَإِنَّ
 اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿١٤٩﴾ ذَلِكَ فَذُوقُوهُ وَأَنَّ لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابَ النَّارِ ﴿١٥٠﴾
 يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا لَقِيْتُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا زَحْفًا فَلَا تُولُوهُمْ الْأَدْبَارَ ﴿١٥١﴾
 وَمَنْ يُؤَلِّهِمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ دُبْرَهُ إِلَّا مُتَحَرِّفًا لِّقِتَالٍ أَوْ مُتَحَيِّزًا إِلَىٰ فِئَةٍ
 فَقَدْ بَاءَ بِغَضَبٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَمَأْوَاهُ جَهَنَّمُ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿١٥٢﴾ فَلَمْ
 تَقْتُلُوهُمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ قَتَلَهُمْ ۖ وَمَا رَمَيْتَ إِذْ رَمَيْتَ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ رَمَىٰ

Such people are indeed true believers; they have high ranks with their Lord and forgiveness for their sins³ and most generous provisions. (Now in regard to the spoils the same thing is happening again which happened when your Lord had brought you forth from your home with the Truth, for some of the Believers were very much averse to it: they were arguing with you concerning the truth, though it had become quite evident; they were filled with awe as if they were being driven towards death with their eyes wide open.⁴ 4-6

Remember the occasion when Allah was holding out to you the promise that one of the two hosts⁵ would fall to you: you wished the weaker host should fall to you⁶: but Allah willed to prove by His words the Truth to be truth and to cut across the roots of the disbelievers so that the Truth should come out as truth and falsehood should be proved to be falsehood, even though the evil-doers did not like it.⁷ 7-8

And when you were praying to Allah for succour, He answered, "I am sending for your succour one thousand angels, one after another". Allah told you this thing only as a good news for you, and to comfort your hearts: although succour is always from Allah: indeed Allah is All-Powerful, All-Wise. 9-10

And remember the time when Allah was giving you peace and security from Himself in the form of drowsiness,⁸ and was sending down on you water from heaven in order to cleanse you and to remove from you the defilement caused by Satan, and to strengthen your hearts and to steady your footsteps.⁹ 11

And remember when your Lord was inspiring the angels with this: "I am with you: so keep the Believers steadfast. I am now going to fill the hearts of the disbelievers with awe: so smite their necks and beat every joint of their bodies.¹⁰ This is because they have opposed Allah and His Messenger; whoso opposes Allah and His Messenger, surely Allah is very severe for him in retribution.¹¹ This¹² is the punishment for you: so taste it now: you should also know that there is the torture of Hell for those who deny the Truth. 12-14

O Believers! when you encounter, as an army, the disbelievers in a battle, do not turn your backs on them. Whoso turns his back on such an occasion, except it be as a strategy, or 15-16

to join another troop of the Believers, shall incur the wrath of Allah: Hell shall be his abode: most wretched is that place of retreat!¹³

Contd. from p. 121]

needed for the "humanization of war", because their notions were still the same that they had during the pre-Islamic days. That is why according to the old usage each Muslim claimed to be the rightful owner of the spoils which came in his hand after the victory. But there were others, who had gone in pursuit of the enemy instead of plundering the spoils. They claimed that they, too, were entitled to a share of the spoils, for, they said, "If we had not pursued the enemies to a long distance, they would have come back and by a surprise attack turned the victory into a defeat". There were still others, who were standing guard for the Holy Prophet: they also claimed a share, saying that they had rendered the greatest service in the Battle by protecting the person of the Holy Prophet, for, without this, there could have been no victory at all. But the people of the first group who possessed the spoils, were adamant and were not amenable to any reason whatever; for them, possession was the strongest of all arguments. By and by, the dispute began to take a very serious turn.

It was at this psychological moment that Allah sent down Sūrah AL-ANFĀL and chose the same thorny problem for the introduction of the review of the Battle of Badr. And it is a miracle of the Divine Book that it solved the thorny problem in a few words. The very first sentence—"They ask you concerning the bounties?"—that introduced the problem contained its solution. The use of the Arabic word انفال (*anfāl*), 'bounties', instead of غنائم (*ghanā'im*), 'spoils of victory', provided the answer to the problem. The word انفال (*anfāl*) is the plural of نفل (*nafl*). It means something which is in addition to the thing to which one is entitled by right. When that something is from the servant, it denotes the additional service to what is obligatory on the servant, but when it is from the master it denotes the additional reward which is bestowed on the servant as a bounty over and above to what the servant is entitled. The verse, therefore, implies: "Are you having a dispute concerning the bounties of Allah? If these are not the spoils of victory, but the bounties of Allah, who are you to decide about their division? It is for the Giver of the bounties to decide whom to give and how much."

This conception of the spoils of victory helped to bring about a great moral reform in the attitude towards war. Muslims do not go to war for the sake of material gains but for the sake of reforming the moral and social evils in the world in accordance with the principles of the Truth; and that they wage war only when the opposing forces make it impossible for them to carry out the reform work by means of preaching and teaching. Therefore the reformers must keep in view only that aim and object and

not the material gains that may be bestowed on them by Allah as His bounties. That is why the Muslims were warned after the very first battle for the cause of Islam to guard themselves against the material gains of the battle lest these should become the sole aim and object of the fight.

This also brought about a great reform in connection with the division of the spoils of war. Formerly these spoils became the property of anyone who got possession of them, or of the commander or of the king who became the owner of the whole of them. In the first case, the selfishness of the soldiers of the victorious army led to a bitter competition for the grabbing of spoils and sometimes even brought about a civil war with all its horrible consequences. In the second case, the soldiers would resort to pilfering, which would degrade them to the low level of thieves. The Qurān reformed these evils by declaring the spoils of war to be the property of Allah and His Messenger, and then further on in v. 41 by laying down equitable shares for its fair division. The first reform demanded that all these spoils, be they worth much or little, should be brought at one place before the chief commander. Then by the second reform, one-fifth of this should be kept for the Islamic State for the cause of Allah and for the help of the poor, and the remaining part should be divided among all those who had taken part in the battle. In this way the evils of the age of "ignorance" were reformed to the satisfaction of all.

Here this subtle point should also be kept in view : the Qurān leaves the problem of the division after declaring that these bounties belong to Allah and the Messenger, and does not even touch it so that the minds should first be prepared for obedience and its acceptance. Then in v. 41 it gives the Command for the division of the spoils. That is why these have been called the 'bounties' here and the 'spoils' of war in v. 41.

2. This implies that a man's Faith increases on every occasion he acknowledges the Revelations of Allah to be true, and submits to them. Most surely his Faith increases and grows, whenever he surrenders himself to the Book of Allah and to the teachings of the Holy Prophet though they may be against his own desires, his opinions, his conceptions, his theories, his habits, his interests, his lusts, his comforts, his affections and his friendships. For, instead of changing the teachings, he changes himself in accordance with the Commands of Allah and the instructions of the Holy Prophet, and accepts them for his guidance. In contrast to this, if a believer hesitates to accept these, his Faith begins to decrease and fade away.

This also shows that Faith is not something that is incapable of growth and increase and which always remains in one and the same state, but it is capable of both improvement and decay. Every denial of the Truth corrupts its quality, and likewise every acknowledgement and acceptance improves it. But as far as the grading of the rights and ranks of the people, according to the acceptance or denial of the Truth, is concerned, all the Muslims shall be placed in one and the same position, and like-

wise the non-Muslims. In the Islamic society, the legal rights and obligations of all the Muslims shall be the same, irrespective of the differences in the quality of the Faith. In the same way, the non-Muslims shall be *Zimmīs* or belligerents or allies of the same rank, irrespective of the quality of their denial of the Islamic Faith.

3. The promise, that the shortcomings of the believers shall be forgiven, gives great solace to them, for everyone, however great and good he may be, is liable to commit offences and it is not at all possible that a human being will always do such deeds as conform in every case to the highest standard and are absolutely free from defect, deficiency and fault. Allah, however, shows one of His greatest blessings to those who perform obligatory duties, and forgives their shortcomings by His grace, and rewards His servants with a far greater recompense than the one they deserve. Otherwise, if His rule had been to reward and punish each and every virtue and vice separately, then even the most righteous people could not have escaped punishment.

4. The verse may mean either of the two things : as translated it means at that time the Truth required that they should go to the fight but they were afraid of this; and now the Truth required that they should not argue concerning the spoils of war and wait for the Command, but they did not seem to submit to this for the sake of the Truth. The second meaning will be this : "In the Battle of Badr, you have seen with your own eyes the good results of following the Truth. Although you were afraid of going to the fight as if you were being driven towards death, yet by obeying Allah and His Messenger, you won a great victory : likewise, if you now abide by the Truth in regard to the division of the spoils and submit to the Command of Allah and obey the decision of the Holy Prophet, instead of yielding to the desires of your hearts, you will see good results with your own eyes".

Incidentally, verses 5-6 refute all those traditions about the Battle of Badr that are related in the books on the life of the Holy Prophet and his wars. They say that the real plan of the Holy Prophet and his followers was to plunder the caravan and accordingly they had marched out of Al-Madīnah for the same purpose. But when they had travelled some distance, they learnt that an army of the Quraish was coming for the protection of the caravan, and they held a council to decide whether to attack the caravan or the army. The Qurān, however, contradicts this. It says that Allah brought forth the Holy Prophet from his home with the Truth at the very beginning and he had this Truth before him that they should meet the army of the Quraish in a decisive battle. For these consultations were held *before* they had started from Al-Madīnah and not after. It was then that some Muslims were arguing with the Holy Prophet concerning the Truth that they should go to meet the army of the Quraish, though it had become quite evident to them. That was why these people felt as though they were being driven towards death, when they were commanded to march out of Al-Madīnah at the very

start of the expedition.

5. That is, the trade caravan, or the army of the Quraish.

6. That is, the trade caravan, that was accompanied by a guard band numbering between thirty and forty.

7. This makes it clear that the march of the army of the Quraish towards Al-Madīnah amounted to a challenge from the system of 'ignorance' to the system of Islam, as stated in the Introduction to this Sūrah. Allah willed that the Muslims should accept that challenge and fight a decisive battle for the survival of Islam in Arabia. If the Muslims had not marched out boldly on that occasion, they would have lost all chances of their survival. Their bold march and victory at Badr in the very first battle crushed the power of the Quraish and created such favourable conditions for Islam that after this it went on defeating the system of "ignorance".

8. The Muslims experienced the same thing during the Battle of Uḥd. (III : 154). On both these critical occasions, Allah filled the hearts of the Muslims with such peace and security that they were overpowered by drowsiness.

9. On the eve of the Battle of Badr, there was a rainfall, which helped the Muslims in three ways. First, they got an opportunity of storing water in reservoirs. Secondly, it made the sandy ground hard in the upper part of the valley where the Muslims were camping and they could move about with steady footsteps. Thirdly, it created difficulties for the army of the disbelievers who were camping in the lower part of the valley for the rain-water gathered there and made the ground marshy and their feet sank into the mud.

"The defilement caused by Satan" was the fear and confusion he had imbued in their minds because of the coming battle. The God-send rainfall and slumber at that critical occasion helped to remove that fear and confusion.

10. From what we have learnt about the basic principles from the Qurān, we are of the opinion that the angels were not employed directly to take part in fighting and killing but probably they were used to help the Muslims in making their strokes hard and effective. But the true knowledge is with Allah.

11. Up to this place references have been made one by one to some events in connection with the Battle of Badr : this is to show the real significance of the Arabic word *anfāl*. At the very beginning of the Sūrah, it is decreed that 'bounties belong to Allah and the Messenger and not to you because the spoils are not the fruit of your efforts.' As a proof of this, these events have been enumerated for the consideration of the Believers and they have been asked to judge for themselves how much they contributed to the spoils by their courage and bravery and how these owed to the bounty of Allah.

12. The address has been suddenly turned to the disbelievers because of the mention of the punishment they deserved.

[Contd. on p. 130]

وَيُبَيِّنُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ مِنْهُ بَلََاءٌ حَسَنًا ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٤﴾ ذَلِكُمْ وَأَنَّ
 اللَّهُ مُؤْمِنٌ كَيْدِ الْكٰفِرِينَ ۗ إِنَّ تَسْتَفْتِحُوا فَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ الْفَتْحُ ۗ وَإِنْ
 تَنْتَهُوا فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ ۗ وَإِنْ تَعُودُوا نَعُدْ ۗ وَلَنْ تُغْنِيَ عَنْكُمْ فِئَتِكُمْ
 شَيْئًا وَلَوْ كَثُرَتْ ۗ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۗ ﴿١٥﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا
 اللَّهُ وَرَسُولَهُ وَلَا تَوَلَّوْا عَنَّهُ وَ أَنْتُمْ تَسْمَعُونَ ۗ ﴿١٦﴾ وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ
 قَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَهُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ ۗ ﴿١٧﴾ إِنَّ شَرَّ الدَّوَابِّ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الضَّمُرُ
 الْبُكْمُ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ ۗ ﴿١٨﴾ وَلَوْ عَلِمَ اللَّهُ فِيهِمْ خَيْرًا لَّأَسْمَعَهُمْ ۗ وَلَوْ
 أَسْمَعَهُمْ لَتَوَلَّوْا وَهُمْ مُّعْرِضُونَ ۗ ﴿١٩﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَجِيبُوا لِلَّهِ وَ
 لِلرَّسُولِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحْيِيكُمْ ۗ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَحُولُ بَيْنَ الْمَرْءِ وَقَلْبِهِ
 وَأَنَّهُ إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ ۗ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَاتَّقُوا فِتْنَةً لَا تُصِيبَنَّ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْكُمْ
 خَاصَّةً ۗ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ۗ ﴿٢١﴾ وَادْكُرُوا إِذْ أَنْتُمْ قَلِيلٌ
 مُسْتَضْعَفُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ تَخَافُونَ أَنْ يَتَخَطَّفَكُمُ النَّاسُ فَآوَاكُمْ وَ
 آيَدَكُمْ بِنَصْرِهِ وَرَزَقَكُمْ مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ۗ ﴿٢٢﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ
 آمَنُوا لَا تَخَوْفُوا اللَّهَ وَ الرَّسُولَ وَ تَخَوْفُوا أَمْثَلَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ۗ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَ
 اعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَأَوْلَادُكُمْ فِتْنَةٌ ۗ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ ۗ ﴿٢٤﴾
 يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنْ تَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ فُرْقَانًا وَيُكَفِّرْ عَنْكُمْ
 سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ ۗ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَإِذْ يَمْكُرُ بِكَ
 الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِيُثْبِتُوكَ أَوْ يَقْتُلُوكَ أَوْ يُخْرِجُوكَ ۗ وَيَمْكُرُونَ وَيَمْكُرُ
 اللَّهُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الْمَكْرِيْنَ ۗ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَإِذَا تُثْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُنَا قَالُوا قَدْ سَمِعْنَا

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So the fact is that you did not slay them but Allah slew them, and you did not throw (the sand) but Allah threw it.¹⁴ (And the hands of the Believers were employed for this work) so that Allah would pass the Believers successfully through this excellent test; indeed Allah is All-Hearing and All-Knowing. This is His dealing with you: as regards the disbelievers, Allah surely thwarts their evil designs. (Say to the disbelievers:) "If you desired a decision, lo! the decision has come before you."¹⁵ It is best for you to desist from it now: but if you repeat the same folly, We will also repeat the same punishment and your forces, howsoever large their number, shall avail you nothing, for Allah is with the Believers."

O Believers, obey Allah and His Messenger and do not turn away from the Message after hearing it. Do not be like those who said, "We have heard," but have not listened to it,¹⁶ for the vilest beasts in Allah's sight are those deaf, dumb people¹⁷ who do not use commonsense. Had Allah known any good in them, He would certainly have given them the power of hearing but if He had made them hear it (without perceiving any good in them), they would have turned away from it with disdain.¹⁸

O Believers, respond to the call of Allah and the Messenger, when the Messenger calls you to that which gives you life. And know that Allah stands between a man and his heart, and that to Him you shall be mustered.¹⁹ And guard against that mischief which will not bring punishment in particular to the mischief-makers alone from among you:²⁰ and know that Allah is severe in inflicting punishment. Recall to mind that time when you were few in number and were regarded weak in the land, and were fearful lest the people should do away with you; then Allah provided you with a place of refuge, strengthened you with His succour and bestowed pure and good provisions upon you so that you may be grateful.²¹ O Believers, do not betray Allah and His Messenger nor violate your trusts knowingly.²² And know that your worldly goods and your children are, in fact, a test for you,²³ and Allah has plenty for giving you reward. O Believers, if you are Godfearing, He will provide you with a criterion,²⁴ and cleanse you of your evils, and forgive your

shortcomings. Allah is bountiful in His favours.

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13. The Qurān does not forbid an orderly retreat if necessitated by military strategy. It is lawful to retreat if there is a hard pressure of the enemy, and the fighting troops retreat to get re-inforcements or to join another part of the army in the rear. However, what has been forbidden is a rout in utter defeat, involving disorderly and cowardly flight for safety. Such a retreat is obviously a heinous sin, because it is to save one's own life and it deserves the most painful retreat in Hell. Any one, who runs away in disorder from the battlefield, does so because he loves his own life more than the cause for which he professed to fight. Accordingly the Holy Prophet condemns this emphatically, saying, "There are three sins which make virtue vain—*shirk*, violation of the rights of parents and flight from the battlefield, when fighting in the Way of Allah." Likewise in another Tradition, he mentions seven sins that are ruinous and destructive for the Life-after-death. One of these is that one should turn one's back to the disbelievers and run away from the conflict between Islam and *kufr*. Such a rout is condemned because, besides being a cowardly act, it leads to serious consequences: the flight of one soldier may cause the rout of a platoon and that in turn of a regiment or of the whole army. Then it is also possible that the rout of the army might ruin the whole country.

14. This refers to an event that happened during the Battle of Badr. After single bouts, when a general fight was going to ensue, the Holy Prophet took a handful of sand and threw it towards the army of the disbelievers, saying, "May their faces be scorched." At the same time he made a gesture and the Muslims attacked the disbelievers in a body.

15. This refers to the prayer that was offered by the Quraish at the Ka'abah before they marched for the fight. The *mushriks* held the curtains of the Ka'abah and prayed: "O Allah! grant victory to the better of the two parties." Abū Jahl particularly invoked Allah's decision, saying, "O God! grant victory to that party which is in the right, and disgrace that one which is the aggressor." Accordingly Allah gave His decision and granted their prayer to the letter by giving a signal victory to the Muslims to show that they were the better of the two parties and were in the right.

16. This exposes the attitude of the hypocrites, who heard the Truth with their ears, yet did not accept and believe in it: they professed to believe but did not obey the Commands.

17. That is, "Those who do not listen to the Truth and do not utter it with their tongues, are deaf and dumb concerning the Truth."

18. As those hypocrites had no love for the Truth and no desire to work in its cause, they would have turned their backs from the Battle at the first critical juncture, even if Allah had helped them to obey the Command and march to the battlefield. Thus their company would

have proved to be harmful rather than useful.

19. In vv. 21-23, the Believers were warned to guard against behaving like the hypocrites and here the remedy is being prescribed for it. The most effective antidote against hypocritical behaviour is the belief in Allah and the life in the Hereafter. If a person sincerely believes that he has to deal with that Allah Who knows everything—even the intentions, desires, designs, thoughts, etc., hidden in the hearts are known to Him—and that one has ultimately to return to Him, he will try his best to refrain from such a behaviour. That is why the Qurān mentions these two articles of Faith over and over again as a remedy to cure the evil of hypocrisy.

20. "That mischief" refers to those collective evils that are not confined to individuals but are so widespread that a large number of persons in a locality become addicted to these at the same time. In such a case, it is not the wrongdoers alone who are seized by the scourge of Allah but also those few people who are involved in those evils. This is because they put up with life in such evil surroundings.

In order to illustrate this, let us consider the case of a town from the point of view of its sanitary conditions. If filth lies scattered at a few places, its evil effects remain confined to that particular locality or localities and only those people who keep their houses or persons dirty suffer from the consequent diseases. But if filth gets scattered all over the town and there is no one to prevent it and restore sanitary conditions, then the air, the water and the soil will all be contaminated and become so poisonous as to cause the outbreak of an epidemic in the whole town. Obviously it will not discriminate between those who scattered the filth and those who refrained from it, but will affect all the people who live in those surroundings. The same is the case of moral impurity, corruption and obscenity. If these evils are found in some persons individually but the fear of the good people of the society keeps them under check, the evil effects remain confined to the wrongdoers alone. On the other hand, if the collective conscience of the society becomes so weak that it cannot keep the evil suppressed, and the wrongdoers, the indecent and the immoral people become so bold that they begin to commit their filthy acts openly, that mischief takes the form of an epidemic of immorality. Then even those good people who remain content with their own individual goodness and adopt a passive attitude towards the widespread evils, fall victims to the consequent scourge because they did nothing to prevent the spread of the epidemic.

In this way Allah impresses upon the Muslims the importance of the mission of reform and guidance for which the Messenger had risen and to which he was inviting them, as if to say, "There is life for you as individuals and as Community in this work. If you do not sincerely exert for its achievement and for the eradication of evils, an epidemic of evils will break out which will involve in its scourge all of you, even though there

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لَوْ نَشَاءُ لَقُلْنَا مِثْلَ هَذَا إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا آسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿٣١﴾ وَإِذْ قَالُوا
 اللَّهُمَّ إِنْ كَانَ هَذَا هُوَ الْحَقُّ مِنْ عِنْدِكَ فَأَمْطِرْ عَلَيْنَا حِجَابًا مِنَ
 السَّمَاءِ أَوْ اثْبِتْنَا بِعَذَابِ الْيَوْمِ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَأَنْتَ فِيهِمْ
 وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ مُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَهُمْ يَسْتَغْفِرُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَمَا لَهُمْ إِلَّا يُعَذِّبَهُمُ
 اللَّهُ وَهُمْ يَصُدُّونَ عَنِ السَّجْدِ الْحَرَامِ وَمَا كَانُوا أَوْلِيَاءَهُ ؕ إِنْ
 أَوْلِيَاؤُهُ إِلَّا الْبَاطِلُونَ وَلَكِنْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾ وَمَا كَانَ صَلَاتُهُمْ
 عِنْدَ الْبَيْتِ إِلَّا مُكَاءً وَتَصْدِيَةً فَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾
 إِنْ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ لِيَصُدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ؕ
 فَسَيُنْفِقُونَهَا ثُمَّ تَكُونُ عَلَيْهِمْ حَسْرَةً ثُمَّ يُغْلَبُونَ ؕ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
 إِلَىٰ جَهَنَّمَ يُحْشَرُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾ لِيَمِيزَ اللَّهُ الْخَبِيثَ مِنَ الطَّيِّبِ وَيَجْعَلَ الْخَبِيثَ
 بَعْضَهُ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ فَيَرْكُمَهُ جَمِيعًا فَيَجْعَلَهُ فِي جَهَنَّمَ ؕ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ
 الْخٰسِرُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾ قُلْ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنْ يَنْتَهُوا يُغْفَرْ لَهُمْ مَا قَدْ سَلَفَ ؕ وَ
 إِنْ يَعُودُوا فَقَدْ مَضَتْ سُنَّتُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّىٰ لَا تَكُونَ
 فِتْنَةً وَيَكُونَ الدِّينُ كُلُّهُ لِلَّهِ ؕ فَإِنِ انْتَهَوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ
 بَصِيرٌ ﴿٣٩﴾ وَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَوْلٰكُمْ نِعْمَ الْمَوْلٰ وَنِعْمَ النَّصِيرُ ﴿٤٠﴾
وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا غَنِمْتُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَإِنَّ لِلَّهِ خُمُسَهُ وَلِلرَّسُولِ وَلِلَّذِي الْقُرْبٰ
وَالْيَتَامٰ وَالسَّكِينِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ ؕ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ آمَنْتُمْ بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أَنْزَلْنَا
عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا يَوْمَ الْفُرْقَانِ يَوْمَ التَّمْيِ الْجَمْعِ وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ
قَدِيرٌ ﴿٤١﴾ إِذْ أَنْتُمْ بِالْعُدُوِّ الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ بِالْعُدُوِّ الْقُصْوٰ وَالرَّكْبِ

It is worth-while to remember the time when those who 30-37
 rejected the Truth, were making plots against you to capture
 you or to slay you or to exile you.²⁵ They were plotting their
 plots and Allah was devising His schemes: and Allah's schemes
 are most effective of all. When Our revelations were recited
 to them, they said, "Well, we have heard: if we will, we also
 can fabricate such things: for these are the same ancient tales
 which have already been told again and again by the former
 people." And recall also to mind the thing they said, "If it
 is the Truth and has been sent down by Thee, rain down
 stones on us from the heavens or send down any other painful
 torment on us."²⁶ At that time Allah would not send down
 any torment on them for you dwelt in their midst: nor does
 Allah chastise people while they are asking His forgiveness.²⁷
 But now there is no reason why He should not send torment
 on them, when they are barring the way to the Masjid-i-
 Harām whereas they are not its lawful guardians. Indeed the
 Godfearing people alone can be its lawful guardians, but most
 of the people do not know this thing. And what is their
 "prayer" near the House of Allah?: it is nothing but whistling
 and clapping of hands.²⁸ So now take the chastisement and
 taste the torment in requital for your persistent denial of the
 Truth.²⁹ Those who have denied the Truth spend their
 wealth in blocking the way of Allah, and will go on spending
 still more of it. But in the end, these very efforts of theirs
 will become a cause of their regret; then they will be over-
 come, and the disbelievers shall be gathered and driven
 towards Hell: so that Allah may separate the filthy from the
 pure and gather together every sort of filth and then throw the
 whole heap into Hell: they are the people who have, in fact,
 become bankrupt.³⁰

O Prophet, tell the disbelievers that if they desist (from 38
 their evil ways), their past actions will be forgiven; but if they
 persist in their ways, all know what happened to the peoples
 before them.

O Believers, fight with the disbelievers till there is no 39-40
 more mischief and the way of life prescribed by Allah is estab-
 lished in its entirety.³¹ Then if they desist from mischief,
 surely Allah beholds what they do, but if they give no heed,

know it that Allah is your Protector, and He is the best of all protectors and helpers.

- 41 And know that, whatever spoils you have got, the fifth of these is for Allah and His Messenger and for the relatives and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarers;³² if you have believed in Allah and in what We sent down on Our servant on the day of decision,³³ when the two armies met in combat, (then yield this portion willingly :) Allah has power over everything.

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may be some among you who might not have been guilty of either the commission of those evils or of their spread; nay, they might have been leading good lives as individuals”.

The same thing has already been enunciated in VII : 164. And this may be regarded as the fundamental principle of that war which has been permitted by Islam for the reform of the people in general.

21. The words “.....so that you may be grateful” are very significant in the context in which they occur. They require that the Muslims should not merely acknowledge the kindness of Allah that He brought them out of their weak position in Makkah to the security of Al-Madīnah and provided them with pure and good things of life. They should also show their gratitude in a practical manner and obey Allah and His Messenger and work sincerely and devotedly for the success of his mission, facing bravely, with trust in God, the dangers, hardships, obstacles and misfortunes that come in the way. They should firmly believe that if they sincerely exert in the way of Allah, He will most surely become their Guardian and Helper as before and bring them out safely from all sorts of dangers. Thus gratitude does not mean mere acknowledgment; it has to be given a practical shape as well. It is not gratitude if one acknowledges the kindness of a benefactor but does nothing to please him or serve him sincerely or entertains doubts about the kindness of the benefactor in future; it is ingratitude.

22. “Your trusts” is a very comprehensive term and includes all those things that are entrusted to anyone for fulfilment, whether they concern individuals or communities. For instance, one should not violate treaties and agreements or betray secrets of community or misappropriate property and office entrusted to one’s care. (For further details, please refer to E.N. 88 of AN-NISĀ).

23. Worldly goods and children generally prove to be the greatest temptations that lead a person to the ways of hypocrisy, treachery and dishonesty. That is why Allah has warned the Believers to be on their guard against indulging in too much love of money and children, as if to say, “This world is a big Examination Hall, and your wealth and your

children are two of its question papers. These have been given to you only to test whether you fulfil their prescribed rights and keep the prescribed limits; whether you walk straight on the Right Way while carrying the burden of responsibilities or swerve from it because of the attractions of allurements and temptations; and whether you control your "self" which is liable to become their slave in a way that it remains the slave of Allah, and at the same time renders their rights in the way He has prescribed.

24. The Believers have been assured that if they behave in a God-fearing way, Allah will provide them with the criterion (that is, the true knowledge and the right understanding of all affairs), to enable them to discern between right and wrong. Thus, if they so intend, they will be able to do the Will of God and follow the way He approves of. That criterion will serve as a signal at every turning, every crossing, every up and down and show them the Right Way, the Way of God, and warn them of the false ways, the ways of Satan.

25. This plot was made at the time when the Quraish realized that the Holy Prophet also was going to migrate to Al-Madīnah. They felt that if he succeeded in emigrating from Makkah, he would be out of their reach and become formidable. Accordingly they held an urgent meeting of their chiefs in *Dār-un-Nadvah* (Council House) to discuss the matter and come to a final decision in regard to him. Some were of the opinion that he should be chained and imprisoned for life. But this plan was not approved for it was feared that his Companions would go on working for the mission and would do their best to release him, even at the risk of their own lives, as soon as they would gain some power. The others proposed that he should be exiled from Makkah for that would at least relieve them of the 'disorder' he was creating among them. Then it would not matter for them where he lived and what he did. But the chiefs rejected this plan, saying, "This man possesses the art of a charming speech and of winning hearts. If he leaves this place, he may go to the other Arab clans and win them over to his side, and then after gaining power, he may attack Makkah". At last Abū Jahl, putting forward his plan, said, "Let us select from each of our families one strong, stout and smart young man of high rank. They should all attack Muhammad at one and the same time and kill him. In this way, the responsibility for his blood will be divided equally among all the families of the Quraish, and it will not be possible for Banū 'Abd Manāf, the family of Muḥammad, to fight with all of them and they will be forced to accept blood-money for him". They approved this plan unanimously and nominated young men to kill him at the appointed time. Accordingly the would-be murderers reached their places on the night fixed for the crime, but the Holy Prophet, throwing dust in their eyes, escaped safely from Makkah. Thus their plot ended in utter failure at the eleventh hour.

26. These words were not uttered as a prayer but as a challenge. What they really meant was this: Had this been really the Truth sent

down by God, He would have rained down stones on us from heaven or sent down some other painful torment on us, in consequence of its rejection by us. But as nothing of the sort has happened, it means that it is neither the Truth nor has it been sent down by Allah.

27. This is the answer to their challenge that was implied in their seeming prayer. They have been told that a torment was not sent down during the Makkan period because of the presence of the Messenger in their midst. For Allah gives respite to the people to reform themselves as long as the Messenger continues to invite them to the Truth, as He does not deprive them of the opportunity of reforming themselves by sending down a scourge before the expiry of the term. The second reason is that Allah does not send down a scourge on an habitation as long as there remain in it any people, who may ask His forgiveness for their past negligences and deviations and mend their ways. However, a scourge is sent down on the habitation when the Messenger considers that he has done all he could to admonish its people and emigrates from it or is expelled from it or is murdered by its people. This is because that habitation proves practically that it cannot tolerate in it even the presence of any good element.

28. They have been further warned to this effect: "Now that you have incurred a torment, you should be ready for it for nothing will save you now from it". The Quraish were under the delusion that they would not be visited by any torment because they were the guardians and keepers of the House of God. This misunderstanding has been removed by declaring, so to say, "They are not its lawful guardians for mere inheritance does not entitle them to its guardianship. The pious people alone are the rightful guardians of this Sacred Place. The people of the Quraish have forfeited that right now if they had any right to it, because they were barring the way of the really pious people to this House, which is dedicated to the exclusive worship of Allah. The Quraish were behaving not as the guardians and keepers and servants of the House but as its masters, and prevented anyone they liked from visiting it. As regards their worship in the House, it was nothing more than making meaningless noises by whistling and clapping of hands: it was void of devotion towards Allah and of His remembrance and of all its requirements. How could they, then, expect any favour from Allah or any guarantee of immunity from His scourge?"

29. They have been told that the scourge of Allah had visited them in the shape of utter defeat in the Battle of Badr, which had given life to the Islamic Way and brought death to their way of 'ignorance'. This was necessary to remove their wrong notion that the scourge of Allah came only in the shape of rain or storm from the heavens or the like.

30. "They have become bankrupt", for all their efforts, abilities, time and wealth ultimately proved to be absolutely worthless. It not only failed to earn any interest or profit for them but has also driven them to utter ruin.

31. Here the war aim of Islam, which had previously been declared in 11 : 193, has been repeated. This aim has two aspects— the negative and the positive. On the negative side, the aim of war is to abolish **فتنه** (*fitnah*), and on the positive, it is to establish Allah's Way completely and in its entirety. This is the only objective for which it is lawful, nay, obligatory for the believers to fight. There is no other object for which fighting is lawful, and it does not behove the believers to resort to fighting for any other objective. (For fuller details, please see E.N.'s 204 and 205 of AL-BAQARAH.)

32. This verse contains the answer to the question which was asked about the division of spoils at the very beginning of the Sūrah. There it was merely said that 'these are the bounties of Allah and belong to Him and His Messenger, and the authority to divide these belongs to them.' In this verse, the verdict on the spoils has been given. After the battle is over, the fighters should bring all the spoils to the leader and hide nothing of these. Then one-fifth should be set apart for the requirements stated in this verse, and the remaining four-fifths divided among those who took part in the fighting. That is why the Holy Prophet used to announce after every fight, "These spoils belong to you, and I have no share in these for my own person except one-fifth only and that, too, is spent for your common good. Therefore bring here everything—even a needle and its thread. Do not hide anything, big or small, for this is a shameful thing and leads to Hell".

This one-fifth share of Allah and His Messenger has been reserved for the cause of Allah and for the establishment of His Way.

During his life-time, by the relatives were meant the relatives of the Holy Prophet. A share from the one-fifth of the spoils was to be given to those relatives of the Holy Prophet who were dependent on him for now he had to devote the whole of his time to the cause of Allah's religion and it was not possible for him to earn for the maintenance of the members of his own family and of the relatives who were dependent on him. But there has been a difference of opinion regarding this share of the relatives after his death. Some are of the opinion that this share was abolished after the death of the Holy Prophet; others say that this share should go to the relatives of his successor. But there are still others who hold that this share should be spent for the needy persons from among his offspring. According to my research, this share was given to the needy ones of his offspring during the time of his rightly guided successors.

33. "What We sent down on Our servant" means His timely succour that brought about the victory in the Battle of Badr.

أَسْفَلَ مِنْكُمْ ۖ وَكُتِّبَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَأَمْرًا كَانَ مَفْعُولًا لِيَهْلِكَ مَنْ هَلَكَ عَنْ بَيْنَتِهِ وَيُحْيَى مَنْ حَيَّ
 عَنْ بَيْنَتِهِ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَسَبِيءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ ۖ إِذْ يُرِيكُمُ اللَّهُ فِي مَنَامِكُمْ قَلِيلًا
 وَكَثِيرًا لِّفَشَلْتُمْ وَتَنَازَعْتُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ سَلَّمَ ۗ إِنَّهُ
 عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ۖ وَإِذْ يُرِيكُمُ اللَّهُ إِذْ التَّقِيْتُمْ فِي آعْيُنِكُمْ قَلِيلًا
 وَيُقَلِّلُكُمْ فِي آعْيُنِهِمْ لِيَقْضِيَ اللَّهُ أَمْرًا كَانَ مَفْعُولًا ۗ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ تُرْجَعُ
 الْأُمُورُ ۖ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا لَقِيْتُمْ فِئَةً فَاثْبُتُوا وَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا
 لَّعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ۗ وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَلَا تَنَازَعُوا فَتَفْشَلُوا وَتَذْهَبَ
 رِيحُكُمْ وَاصْبِرُوا ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ ۖ وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ خَرَجُوا
 مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ بَطْرًا وَرِئَاءَ النَّاسِ وَيَصُدُّونَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ
 بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ مُحِيطٌ ۗ وَإِذْ زَيْنَ لَهْمُ الشَّيْطَانِ أَعْمَالَهُمْ وَقَالَ لَا
 غَالِبَ لَكُمْ الْيَوْمَ مِنَ النَّاسِ وَإِنِّي جَارٌ لَكُمْ ۗ فَلَمَّا تَرَآتِ الْفِتْنَةَ نَكَصَ
 عَلَى عَقْبَيْهِ وَقَالَ إِنِّي بَرِيءٌ مِّنْكُمْ إِنِّي أَرَىٰ مَا لَا تَرَوْنَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ اللَّهَ
 وَاللَّهُ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ۗ إِذْ يَقُولُ الْمُنْفِقُونَ وَالَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَّرَضٌ
 غَرَّ هُوَآءٌ دِينُهُمْ ۗ وَمَنْ يَتَّوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ۗ وَ
 لَوْ تَرَىٰ إِذْ يَتَوَقَّى الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الْمَلَائِكَةَ يَصْرُبُونَ وُجُوهَهُمْ وَادْبَارَهُمْ
 وَذُوقُوا عَذَابَ الْحَرِيقِ ۗ ذَٰلِكَ بِمَا قَدَّمْتُمْ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَيْسَ
 بِظَلَّامٍ لِّلْعَبِيدِ ۗ كَذَابٍ أَلٍ فِرْعَوْنُ ۗ وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ كَفَرُوا
 بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ فَأَخَذَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَوِيٌّ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ۗ ذَٰلِكَ

Recall the time when you were on this side of the valley 42
and they were encamped on the farther side, and the caravan
was below you (towards the coast). If you had made an
engagement with them to fight, you would surely have evaded
it (but there was a fight); so that Allah might accomplish
what He had ordained, and that whoever had to perish should
perish with a clear sign and whoever deserved to live, should
live with a clear sign:³⁴ indeed, Allah is All-Hearing, All-
Knowing.³⁵

And remember the time, O Messenger, when Allah made 43
them appear in your dream as a small band.³⁶ Had He
shown them to you as a great army, you would certainly have
lost courage and begun to dispute about the matter (the fight).
But Allah saved you from this : indeed He knows the very
secrets of the breasts.

And remember when you met them in the encounter, 44
Allah made the enemies appear in your eyes as few and made
you appear as few in their eyes so that Allah might accomplish
the matter that was to take place : for ultimately all matters
return to Allah.

O Believers, when you encounter a host in combat, be 45-47
steadfast and remember Allah very much: it is expected that
you will obtain success. And obey Allah and His Messenger and
do not enter into disputes with one another, otherwise you will
lose courage and you will become insignificant (in the eyes
of the enemy). Practise fortitude;³⁷ indeed Allah is with those
who practise fortitude. And do not behave like those who
marched arrogantly out of their homes with great pomp and
show for the people to see. They debar the people from the
Way of Allah.³⁸ For whatever they are doing is completely
within Allah's grasp.

Just think of the time when Satan made their foul deeds 48-51
seem fair to them and said, "Today no one can overcome
you, for I am with you." But when the two armies confronted
each other, he took to his heels, saying, "I have nothing to do
with you; I see that which you cannot see. Indeed I fear
Allah, for Allah is very severe in inflicting chastisement". At
the same time, the hypocrites and all those who had diseased
hearts were saying: "Their Faith has made them crazy";³⁹

whereas the fact is that whoso trusts in Allah (finds that) Allah is All-Mighty and All-Wise. Would that you could see how it was when the angels were seizing the souls of the slain disbelievers! They were striking on their faces and hips and saying, "Now taste the torment of burning; this is the recompense for what your hands had prepared beforehand; for Allah does not do injustice to His servants". This happened to them just as it had been happening to the people of Pharaoh and to the peoples before them: this was because they rejected His revelations and He seized them as a consequence of their sins, indeed Allah is All-Powerful and severe in inflicting chastisement.

34. That is, "It should be proved that whichever (Islam or ignorance) survived in the Battle, really deserved to live, and whichever perished ought, to have perished". It should be noted that here the conflict for survival was not between different persons as such but between Islam and 'ignorance' as represented by the Believers and the disbelievers.

35. As Allah hears everything and sees everything and knows everything, He is running His universe with wisdom and justice and will allow the right alone to survive.

36. This happened when the Holy Prophet was marching from Al-Madīnah towards the battlefield and it was not then known how large the army of the disbelievers was. In this dream, he saw the army and concluded from what he saw that it was not large. He related what he saw in his dream to the Muslims, and this filled them with courage and they marched on boldly towards the enemy.

37. As the Arabic word صبر (*ṣabr*) which has been translated into fortitude is very comprehensive in meaning, 'practise fortitude' implies: "Keep your feelings and passions under control; avoid rashness, bewilderment, despair, and greediness: keep cool and calm and make considered decisions; remain firm and steadfast in the face of dangers and difficulties; don't take any wrong step even under the greatest provocations; don't lose your senses even when you are attacked by afflictions and are in a sad plight; don't take any hasty action in your impatience to achieve your objective without delay with the help of some seeming effective device and don't be enticed by the temptation of some worldly interest or gain or lust". Allah helps those who practise fortitude (*ṣabr*) in accordance with the above implications.

38. The Muslims have been forewarned never to behave like the disbelievers of Makkah, who had marched arrogantly out of their homes and who were debarring the Muslims from the Way of Allah. They had singing girls with them and they held singing, dancing and drinking parties at many halting places. Moreover, they made a great display

of their power, grandeur, numerical strength and equipment before the clans and habitations which came in their way and freely bragged that none could have the courage to fight with them. This was the state of their morality but the objective for which they were marching out was even worse than this. They had not marched out to raise the standard of truth, righteousness and justice, but to prevent it from rising up. Their objective was to annihilate the only people who were exerting to raise up that standard. This bad example was held out before the Muslims so that they should guard against such behaviour for their Faith required that their conduct should be righteous and their war aim should be pure and noble.

It may also be noted that this guidance was not needed only at that time but it is equally needed even today and will be needed in future as well, for the moral condition of the armies of the modern 'civilized' nations is the same as of the disbelievers of Makkah. Prostitutes, indecent recreations and wine constitute their essential parts, and they do not ask for these things secretly but openly and brazen-facedly. More than that! their soldiers openly demand from their own people that they should present their own daughters to them for the gratification of their lusts. How can, then, any other people expect from them that they would spare their women and will not make them the plaything of their passions? As regards their arrogance, suffice it to say that each and every soldier and officer of their army is an embodiment of pride and vanity. Then their politicians are never tired of bragging like this : "None is able to defeat us today for none is more powerful than we". And their war aims are still more wicked. Whereas everyone of their leaders most solemnly and cunningly assure the world that they have nothing but the good of humanity before them, they might have, in fact, all other aims but this. They wage war in order to capture all the resources of the earth that God has created for all mankind, and to monopolize these for the benefit of their own country and nation, and make all other people their servants and dependants. That is why the Qurān forbids the Muslims to follow the evil ways of those wicked people and enjoins them to refrain from expending their wealth and life for the achievement of the objective for which the wicked people fight.

39. This was the opinion of the hypocrites and the worldly-wise people of Al-Madīnah. When they saw that the small band of Muslims was going to fight with the large and superior force of the Quraish, they said to one another, "Over-enthusiasm for their religion has made these people mad and they are going to meet with utter destruction. As they have been blinded by their Prophet, they cannot see that they are going into the very mouth of death".

بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَمْ يَكُ مُغَيِّرًا نِعْمَةً أَنْعَمَهَا عَلَىٰ قَوْمٍ حَتَّىٰ يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ
 وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ سَرِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٥٥﴾ كَذَابٍ أَلٍ فِرْعَوْنَ ۗ وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ
 كَذَبُوا بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ فَأَهْلَكْنَاهُمْ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَأَغْرَقْنَا آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ ۗ وَكُلُّ
 كَانُوا ظَالِمِينَ ﴿٥٦﴾ إِنَّ شَرَّ الدَّوَابِّ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَهُمْ لَا
 يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾ الَّذِينَ عَاهَدْتَ مِنْهُمْ ثُمَّ يَنْقُضُونَ عَهْدَهُمْ فِي كُلِّ
 مَرَّةٍ وَهُمْ لَا يَتَّقُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾ فَمَا تَتَّقَنَّهُمْ فِي الْحَرْبِ فَشَرِدْ بِهَمٍّ مِّنْ
 خَلْفِهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَدْكُرُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾ وَإِنَّمَا تَخَافَنَ مِنْ قَوْمٍ خِيَانَةٌ فَانْبِذْ إِلَيْهِمْ
 عَلَىٰ سَوَاءٍ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْخَائِبِينَ ﴿٦٠﴾ وَلَا يَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
 سَبَقُوا ۗ إِنَّهُمْ لَا يُعْجِزُونَ ﴿٦١﴾ وَاعِدُوا لَهُمْ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ قُوَّةٍ وَ
 مِنْ رِّبَاطِ الْخَيْلِ تُرْهِبُونَ بِهِ عَدُوَّ اللَّهِ وَعَدُوَّكُمْ وَآخِرِينَ مِنْ دُونِهِمْ
 لَا تَعْلَمُونَهُمُ اللَّهُ يَعْلَمُهُمْ ۗ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ شَيْءٍ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ يُوَفَّ
 إِلَيْكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾ وَإِنْ جَنَحُوا لِلسَّلْمِ فَاجْنَحْ لَهَا وَتَوَكَّلْ
 عَلَى اللَّهِ ۗ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٦٣﴾ وَإِنْ يُرِيدُوا أَنْ يَخْدَعُوكَ فَإِنَّ حَسْبَكَ اللَّهُ ۗ هُوَ
 الَّذِي آتَاكَ بِنَصْرِهِ وَبِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٦٤﴾ وَالْفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِهِمْ ۗ لَوْ أَنْفَقْتَ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ
 جَمِيعًا مَا آفَتَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِهِمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ آفَ بَيْنَهُمْ ۗ إِنَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٦٥﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ
 حَسْبُكَ اللَّهُ وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَكَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٦٦﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ حَرِّضِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلَى
 الْقِتَالِ ۗ إِنْ يَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ عِشْرُونَ صَابِرُونَ يَغْلِبُوا مِائَتِينَ ۗ وَإِنْ يَكُنْ
 مِنْكُمْ مِائَةٌ يَغْلِبُوا أَلْفًا مِّنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ۗ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾
 أَلَنْ خَفَّفَ اللَّهُ عَنْكُمْ وَعَلِمَ أَنَّ فِيكُمْ ضَعْفًا ۗ فَإِنْ يَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ مِائَةٌ

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This happened in accordance with Allah's way that 53-54
 He does not withdraw the favour He bestows on any
 people unless they themselves change their ways;⁴⁰ Allah
 hears everything and knows everything. This same principle
 was applied to the people of Pharaoh and the other
 peoples before them: when they treated the revelations of
 Allah as false, We destroyed them in consequence of their sins,
 and drowned the people of Pharaoh; all these peoples were
 the workers of iniquity.

Indeed the vilest creatures in the sight of Allah are those 55-59
 people who denied the Truth, and then would not believe in
 it. As regards those from among them with whom you made
 treaties and who violate them time after time and do not fear
 Allah in the least,⁴¹ if you encounter them in combat, make
 of them a fearsome example for others who would follow
 them so that they might be unnerved.⁴² It is expected that
 they will learn a lesson from the end of the treacherous people.
 And if you ever fear treachery from any people, throw their
 treaty openly before them⁴³; indeed Allah does not like the
 treacherous people. Let not those who deny the Truth
 delude themselves that they have won the game; indeed they
 are incapable of frustrating Us.

And to encounter them, provide whatever force and 60
 trained ever-ready horses you can afford⁴⁴ whereby you may
 strike terror into the enemies of Allah and your enemies as
 well and others besides them whom you do not know but whom
 Allah knows. The reward of whatever you expend in the
 way of Allah shall be repaid to you in full, and you shall not
 be wronged in any way.

And, O Prophet, if the enemies incline to peace, you 61-64
 should also incline to it and put your trust in Allah: indeed
 He is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. And if they intend to deceive
 you, Allah is sufficient for you.⁴⁵ It is He Who strengthened
 you with His succour, and by means of the Believers. And it
 is He Who united the hearts of the Believers; even if you had
 spent all the riches of the earth, you could not have united
 their hearts by yourself, but it is Allah Who united their
 hearts;⁴⁶ indeed He is All-Powerful, All-Wise. O Prophet!
 Allah is sufficient for you and for the Believers who follow you.

65-66 O Prophet! stir the Believers to the fight. If there be twenty men among you, who show fortitude, they will overcome two hundred men, and if there be a hundred such men of you, they will overcome a thousand of the deniers of the Truth, for they are a people who lack understanding.⁴⁷ Now that Allah has lightened your burden, He has noticed that you are still weak; so if there be a hundred steadfast men among you, they will overcome two hundred men and if there be a thousand such men, they will overcome two thousand by Allah's permission.⁴⁸ But Allah is with those people alone who show fortitude.

40. That is, "Allah does not withdraw His favour from any people until they themselves prove by their conduct that they have become unworthy of it".

41. "Those . . . who violate the treaties . . ." were the Jews. On his migration to Al-Madīnah, they were the first people with whom the Holy Prophet had entered into an alliance to co-operate for mutual good. He did his very best to establish good relations with them for he considered them to be nearer to Islam than the *mushriks*, and he preferred their way to those of the *mushriks*, whenever a choice had to be made between the two. But their scholars and rabbis did not at all like the pure doctrine of *Tauhīd*, taught by him, and the high standard of morality presented by him, and the exertions put in by him for the establishment of the Right Way. Therefore, in spite of the treaties they were persistently trying to defeat the New Movement. Accordingly, they adopted several measures : they conspired with the hypocrites of Al-Madīnah against the true Muslims: they incited the clans of Aus and Khazraj against each other in order to enkindle the fire of the old enmity that existed between the two before the advent of Islam and had led to bloody feuds, and they contrived plots with the Quraish and other hostile clans to ruin the Muslims.

Though the Jews had all along been violating the written treaty the Holy Prophet had made with them, their enmity and jealousy had become even more furious than before, after the victory at Badr. For they had expected that the Movement would receive a crushing blow at the hands of the Quraish, but the result had been quite the reverse of it. Therefore they increased their inimical activities all the more in order to prevent Islam from becoming a formidable force. So much so that on hearing the news of the defeat of the Quraish, one of their leaders, Ka'ab bin Ashraf, cried out in anguish, "Today the bowels of the earth are far better for us than its surface". Accordingly, he himself went to Makkah and recited exciting elegies to incite the people of Quraish to wreak their vengeance. More than that : the people of one of their clans, *Bani Qainuqā'*, setting aside the good neighbourly manners, began to tease the Muslim women who used

to go to their habitations for business. When the Holy Prophet reproved them, they gave an impudent reply and said, "We are not weak like the Quraish : we are a people who know how to fight even to the death : you will have an experience of our courage when you encounter us."

42. That is, "If we have made a treaty with a certain people and they disregard its obligations and take part in a fight against us we shall also be absolved from the obligations of the treaty and fight against them. Likewise if we are fighting against any people and find any of our allies among the enemies we should not hesitate to kill them and treat them as enemies. For by discarding the obligations of the alliance as individuals, they forfeit all the rights of an ally in regard to the security of life and property."

43. This verse lays down a very clear and strict rule for the breaking of a treaty when necessary, and enjoins the Muslims to "throw their treaty openly before them". According to this verse, it is unlawful to make a unilateral decision of its termination, even if the Muslims felt that the other party with whom they had entered into an alliance, was not observing the treaty strictly and properly, or if they were afraid that the other party would turn treacherous on the first opportunity. Therefore it forbids them to treat the other party in a way as if there had been no treaty with it at all. On the other hand, this verse binds the Muslims to inform the other party in clear words, before taking any step against it, that the treaty with it had been terminated. This is essential so that the other party should have no misunderstanding whatsoever that the treaty was still in force. The Holy Prophet based the international policy of Islam on this verse. He decreed, "The one that has made a treaty with another party is bound by it until the expiry of its term. Or if obliged, then one should throw it before the other party so that both may be set on equal footing". Then he extended the same principle to all other affairs, saying, "Behave not treacherously even towards those who are treacherous to you". And he had impressed the same so deeply on the minds that this principle was observed most strictly both in letter and in spirit. That is why when Amīr Mu'āviyah assembled his army near the frontiers of the Roman Empire with the intention that he would invade their territory immediately after the expiry of the term of the treaty, Haḍrat 'Amar bin 'Anbasah, a Companion of the Holy Prophet, strongly protested against this and recited the same Tradition before him according to which even concentration of army was a piece of treachery. The Amīr had to submit to this, and he gave up the concentration of army.

It may also be noted that the practice of unilateral abrogation of treaties and invading the enemy without any declaration of war was common during the time of 'ignorance' in the ancient times and is also in vogue in the civilised 'ignorance' of today. For example, during World War II, Germany invaded Russia, and Britain and Russia took military action against Iran without any formal declaration of war. It may be noted that the pleas put forward for such breaches and violations are very

fimsy : it is argued that if a declaration of war had been made beforehand, the other party would have taken precautionary measures and given a tough fight; or that if they had not taken action, their enemy would have forestalled them. But they seem to forget that if moral responsibilities were to be set aside on such lame excuses, then there remains no crime and no sin that cannot be justified on one plea or the other, and every thief, every robber, every adulterer, every murderer and every forger can put forward a justification for his crime or sin. But it is strange that the modern leaders have two standards of judgment. While they justify the acts of treachery in the international sphere, they condemn the same when these are committed in their own national sphere.

There is, however, an exception to the above principle. The Islamic Law allows the Muslims to attack the other party, if it violates the treaty openly and takes some specific inimical action against them. In such a clear case, this verse does not bind them to give a due notice of the termination of the treaty, but grants them the right to take military action against such a treacherous party without giving any ultimatum. The Muslim jurists have deduced this exception from a precedent set by the Holy Prophet. When the Quraish openly broke the treaty of Hudaibiyah, in regard to Banī Khuzā'ah, he did not consider it obligatory to give them a notice that he, too, had terminated the same. He, therefore, invaded Makkah without giving them any notice. But here we must strike a note of warning. In order to take advantage of this exception, we must consider all the circumstances under which the Holy Prophet thought it right to invade Makkah. In that case, and in that alone, it is lawful for us to follow the precedent set by him; otherwise we are liable to take undue advantage of it. We learn from the books of Hadīth and *Strat* that the following circumstances led him to take this step :—

(1) The violation of the treaty by the Quraish was so glaring that there was absolutely no doubt that there had been a breach and they themselves confessed that the treaty had come to an end. That is why they sent Abū Sufyān to Al-Madīnah for its renewal. Though that was a proof that they also knew that the treaty had come to an end, it does not mean that this exception will be justifiable only if those who violate the treaty, also know it and confess it. The exception will be only justifiable if the violation would be quite clear and beyond any doubt.

(2) After the violation of the treaty, the Holy Prophet did not indicate in any way whatever by word or by deed or by implication—that in spite of the violation of the treaty by them he regarded the treaty to be still in force; nor did he continue such relations with them as might indicate the same. All the traditions show that he rejected the offer of the renewal of the treaty made by Abū Sufyān.

(3) He openly took the military action against the Quraish and did nothing at all to show an outward display of peace while harbouring secret intentions of war.

This is the excellent precedent set by the Holy Prophet in this matter. An exception to the injunction contained in this verse can, therefore, be made under such specific circumstances that existed on the occasion, and that, too, in the same straightforward noble way.

Besides, it is lawful for the Muslims to use force for the settlement of an issue if and when they find that the other party is neither willing to solve it by mutual talk nor by international arbitration, but is bent upon using force. In such a case, this verse makes it incumbent on the Muslims to make a clear and open declaration to this effect before taking any action. Islam considers a secret military action as immoral and does not allow it, if the Muslims are not prepared to make an open declaration of war.

44. This means, "You should always keep in readiness the necessary military equipment and an organised standing army so that you may be able to take military action immediately without the least delay, should the enemy attack you suddenly. These precautionary measures should be taken so that there should be no confusion and no hurry to urge you to enlist half-trained and ill-equipped volunteers; nor would there be any fear that the enemy would take you unawares and inflict irreparable losses on you before you could get ready for the defence".

45. That is, "Your relations with other nations should be based on your trust in God for 'He is sufficient for you'. Therefore you should boldly face the enemy both in war and in peace. When the enemy desires to have a talk with you for peace, you should be willing and ready to negotiate with the other party without any hesitation. Do not reject the offer on the plea that the other party is not sincere and has treacherous intentions, for no one can have correct knowledge of the intentions of others. If the other party is sincere in its offer, then it will be wrong to reject it and continue the bloodshed. And if the enemy has treacherous intentions, then Allah will protect you from them because of your courage and moral superiority. In that case, fight bravely with the treacherous enemy so as to teach them such a lesson as may prove a deterrent".

46. This refers to the blessing of Islam which led to the union of the hearts of the different Arab clans and integrated them into a strong community, although before this there had been permanent enmities between them for centuries. This favour of God had been very conspicuous in the case of Aus and Khazraj clans of Al-Madīnah. These two clans had been mortal enemies, and the bloody war of *Bu'āth* had taken place between them only two years before this. It was really a miracle that such enmities had been changed into such a union as was witnessed by the Islamic Community during the time of the Holy Prophet. It was quite obvious that this thing could not have been accomplished through any human powers or resources, for whatever had been accomplished, it had been accomplished by His grace and whatever will be accomplished, it will be accomplished by His grace.

[Contd. on p. 150]

صَابِرَةً يَغْلِبُوا مِائَتَيْنِ ۚ وَإِنْ يَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أَلْفٌ يَغْلِبُوا أَلْفَيْنِ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ
وَاللَّهُ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿٧٦﴾ مَا كَانَ لِنَبِيِّ أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُ أَسْرَى حَتَّى يُبَدِّلَ
فِي الْأَرْضِ ۚ تُرِيدُونَ عَرَضَ الدُّنْيَا ۗ وَاللَّهُ يُرِيدُ الْآخِرَةَ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ
حَكِيمٌ ﴿٧٧﴾ لَوْلَا كِتَابٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ سَبَقَ لَمَسَّكُمْ فِيمَا أَخَذْتُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٧٨﴾
فَكُلُوا مِمَّا غَنِمْتُمْ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا ۗ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٧٩﴾
يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لِمَنْ فِي أَيْدِيكُمْ مِنَ الْأَسْرَى ۗ إِنْ يَعْلَمِ اللَّهُ فِي
قُلُوبِكُمْ خَيْرًا يُؤْتِكُمْ خَيْرًا مِّمَّا أُخِذَ مِنْكُمْ وَيَغْفِرَ لَكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ
رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٨٠﴾ وَإِنْ يُرِيدُوا خِيَانَتَكَ فَقَدْ خَانُوا اللَّهَ مِنْ قَبْلُ فَأَمْكَنَ
مِنْهُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٨١﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَهَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا
بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ آوَوْا وَنَصَرُوا أُولَئِكَ
بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ ۗ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَلَمْ يُهَاجِرُوا مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ
وَلَايَتِهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ حَتَّى يُهَاجِرُوا ۗ وَإِنْ اسْتَنْصَرُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ
فَعَلَيْكُمْ النَّصْرُ إِلَّا عَلَى قَوْمٍ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُمْ مِيثَاقٌ ۗ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ
بَصِيرٌ ﴿٨٢﴾ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ ۗ إِلَّا تَفْعَلُوهُ تَكُنْ فِتْنَةٌ
فِي الْأَرْضِ وَفَسَادٌ كَبِيرٌ ﴿٨٣﴾ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَهَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا فِي سَبِيلِ
اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ آوَوْا وَنَصَرُوا أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ حَقًّا ۗ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَ
رِزْقٌ كَرِيمٌ ﴿٨٤﴾ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ وَهَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا مَعَكُمْ
فَأُولَئِكَ مِنْكُمْ ۗ وَأُولُوا الْأَرْحَامِ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلَىٰ بِبَعْضٍ فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ ۗ إِنَّ

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اللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٨٥﴾

It does not behove a prophet to keep captives until he has crushed down the enemies in the land. You desire the gains of this world, but Allah desires (for you the good of) the Hereafter; and Allah is All-Powerful, All-Wise. Had there not been a decree that had already been given by Allah, you would have incurred a severe chastisement in consequence of what you have taken. So eat of what you have taken as spoils for it is lawful and pure. And fear Allah:⁴⁹ Surely Allah is Forgiving and Compassionate. 67-69

O Prophet, tell the captives in your custody, "If Allah finds any good in your hearts, He will give you that which is far more and far better than what has been taken from you, and will forgive your sins: He is Forgiving and Compassionate". But if they have any treacherous designs against you, they have already shown treachery to Allah. As a consequence of this He has given you mastery over them. Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise. 70-71

Those who embraced the Faith and emigrated from their homes and expended their possessions and their lives in the Way of Allah, and those who gave refuge to the emigrants and helped them, are indeed the guardians of one another. However, you have no relation of guardianship with those who have embraced the Faith, but have not emigrated (to *Dār-ul-Islam*) until they emigrate⁵⁰ (to it); yet it is obligatory on you to help them in the matters of Faith, if they ask for your help, except against a people with whom you have a treaty.⁵¹ As for disbelievers, they help one another; unless you also help one another, there will be mischief and great disorder on the earth.⁵² 72-73

Those who embraced the Faith, emigrated and exerted their utmost in the Way of Allah, and those who gave refuge to the emigrants and helped them, are true believers: there is forgiveness for them and the best of provisions. And those who embraced the Faith afterwards and emigrated and joined with you in your exertions for the Faith, are also of you, but according to the Book of Allah the blood relations have greater rights on one another.⁵³ Indeed Allah knows everything. 74-75

Contd. from p. 147]

47. Here the word "understanding" has been used in the same sense as 'morale' is used now-a-days. Understanding is a better scientific term than morale—the moral and mental condition which enables persons to keep up courage and enthusiasm, etc. For it is obvious that the one, who understands clearly the objective for which he is fighting would realize that it is more precious than his own life which would be meaningless if that object was lost, will possess a fighting power far greater than of the one who has no clear understanding of the object for which he is fighting, even though the two may be equal in their physical powers. Above all, the one who has the right understanding of the Reality, of the existence of Allah, of his own position in the universe, of his relation with Allah, of the life and death in this world, of the life in the Next World, of the distinction between Truth and falsehood, of the consequences of the victory of falsehood over Truth, has much more power even than those who fight for their country, their nation or for the sake of a class, even if the latter had the right understanding of their cause. Thus it is clear that the power of the Believers, who have full understanding of their object, is ten times that of disbelievers of the same capability. But along with this understanding, the practice of fortitude is also essential for gaining and maintaining that power.

48. This reduction of the ratio of the power of a Muslim to that of a non-Muslim from ten to one, to two to one does not mean that this was due to some deterioration in the morale of the Muslims. It simply means that in v. 65 the general principle of the ratio of the power of the Believers and the disbelievers was enunciated and in v. 66 that principle was applied in accordance with the then existing condition of their morale. At that time (A.H. 2) the morale of the Muslims had not attained perfection, for many of them had only recently entered the fold of Islam and were still under preliminary training. Afterwards when their morale reached the desired standard under the guidance of the Holy Prophet, the ratio of ten to one was actually established, and was demonstrated practically in the battles during his last years and during the time of his rightly-guided successors.

49. As regards the question why Allah rebuked the Muslims in v. 68 for taking ransom, the commentators have cited some traditions. According to these, after the Battle of Badr, a consultation was held in regard to the prisoners taken from the army of the Quraish. Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr was of the opinion that they should be set at liberty after the payment of ransom but Ḥaḍrat 'Umar opined that they should be slain. The Holy Prophet agreed to the opinion of Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr and set them at liberty after the payment of their ransom. At this, Allah sent down this verse as a rebuke. But this interpretation is open to some objections.

The first difficulty of these interpreters is that they are unable to give a satisfactory explanation that might fit into the words: "Had there not been a decree that had already been given by Allah.....". They

say that it refers to the decree that was predestined by Allah or it means that Allah had already decreed to make spoils of war lawful though He had not sent down this decree to the Holy Prophet. But it is obvious that a thing does not become lawful unless it is made so by an explicit Command. The second difficulty is that according to this explanation, the Holy Prophet himself and his followers become guilty of the sin of taking ransom for prisoners. Therefore one would think many times before accepting an explanation that is based on traditions emanating from a single source.

In my opinion, Allah rebuked the Muslims for not complying fully with the condition laid down in the Ordinance in XLVII : 4 : "So kill the disbelievers until you crush them down; after this you may take them as prisoners; and then set them at liberty as a favour or for a ransom after the battle comes to an end. According to this previous Ordinance, there was nothing wrong in taking prisoners of war and charging ransom for them, but what was wrong was that they did not fully comply with the prior condition, that is, 'until you crush them down'. For we learn that, when after the Battle of Badr the army of the Quraish was put to rout, many Muslims began to gather spoils or to take prisoners and only a few of them went in pursuit of the enemy to crush them. Had all the Muslims gone in pursuit of them, they would have crushed down their power then and there. Therefore Allah rebuked the Muslims (and not the Holy Prophet) as if to say, "O Muslims! you have not yet fully understood the meaning of the mission of the Prophet. He is not sent to take prisoners and charge ransoms or gather spoils. The main objective of his mission is to crush down the powers of disbelief. But you are overwhelmed by the worldly greeds again and again. During the course of this campaign, you at first desired to attack the trade caravan instead of the army of the Quraish. Then you began to gather spoils and take prisoners, and afterwards entered into a dispute regarding the division of spoils. Had We not previously given you permission for taking ransom (XLVII : 4), We would have inflicted a severe chastisement on you. Very well, now you may enjoy what you have taken, but you should, in future, fear Us and refrain from incurring Our displeasure".

Imām Jaṣṣāṣ also is of the same opinion (as expressed in his book *Aḥkām-ul-Qurān*), and therefore the above interpretation is worth considering. This view is also supported by a Tradition related in '*Sīrit-i-Ibn Hishām*'. According to this, the Holy Prophet noticed signs of disapproval on the face of Sa'ad bin M'uāz on the occasion, when the Muslims were gathering the spoils and taking prisoners. So the Holy Prophet said, "O Sa'ad, it appears that you do not approve this conduct of the Muslims". Sa'ad replied, "It is so, O Messenger of Allah. This is the first victory that Allah has given us over the *mushriks*. Therefore it would have been much better for us to crush down their power completely than to save their lives by taking them prisoners". (Volume II, pp. 280-281).

50. This verse contains a very important article of the Islamic Constitution and lays down the terms of the relationship of **ولاية** (*vilāy'at*—guardianship) between the Muslims. According to it, "Those Muslims only shall be bound by the relationship of *vilāy'at* who are either the inhabitants of *Dār-ul-Islam* or emigrate to it. As for the Muslims living outside the territorial borders of the Islamic State, there shall be the relationship of Islamic brotherhood only, but there shall be no relationship of *vilāy'at* with them. Likewise there shall be no relationship of *vilāy'at* with those Muslims who visit the *Dār-ul-Islam* as foreigners in the capacity of the subjects of *Dār-ul-Kufr*, without emigrating to it permanently".

The Arabic word **ولاية** (*vilāy'at*) is very comprehensive in meaning and 'guardianship' does not convey its full significance. It denotes the relationship of help, succour, protection, support, friendship, guardianship and the like between the citizens and the State and *vice versa*, and between the citizens themselves. Thus it is clear that this verse confines the limits of the Islamic, political and constitutional citizenship to its territorial boundaries only and excludes from this particular relationship the other Muslims who live beyond its territorial boundaries.

The legal implications of this negation of guardianship are very extensive, but this is not the occasion for their statement. Here it will suffice to say that according to this, the Muslims of *Dār-ul-Kufr* cannot become the inheritors of the Muslims of *Dār-ul-Islam* and *vice versa*, nor can they be the legal guardians of one another, nor can there be inter-marriages between them; nor can the Islamic State appoint a citizen of *Dār ul-Kufr* on any responsible post, until that one renounces the relationship of citizenship with *Dār-ul-Kufr*. Moreover, this verse affects also the foreign policy of the Islamic State and frees it from the responsibility of the Muslims living outside its territorial borders by restricting it only to the Muslims living within its territory. The Holy Prophet also declared the same thing, saying, "I owe no responsibility for the protection of any Muslim who resides among the *mushriks*".

This foreign policy of Islam cuts at the very roots of such disputes as are generally responsible for creating international crises. For it is obvious that if states refuse to shoulder any responsibilities for the protection, etc., of the minorities living outside their territorial borders, there cannot arise such disputes concerning them as lead to wars over and over again.

51. Though the Muslims living outside the territorial borders of the Islamic State have been excluded from political protection in the preceding verse, this fact does not deprive them of the brotherly relationship of Faith. Therefore it is obligatory on the Islamic State and its inhabitants to help their wronged and oppressed brethren if they ask for help. But even in this case, they should observe the International Law and the universally accepted moral code. If *Dār-ul-Islam* has made a treaty with the persecuting people of *Dār-ul-Kufr*, the Muslims of *Dār-ul-Islam*

are forbidden to give any help to the oppressed Muslims in *Dār-ul-Kufr* if that is against the moral obligations of the treaty.

In this verse, the word *ميثاق* (*mithāq*) has been used for treaty. It implies everything that gives the guarantee of peace in the known sense to the parties concerned even though there might not be any explicit mention of a no-war agreement.

Moreover, the original words of the Arabic Text—“...between you and them there is a treaty”—clearly show that a treaty of the Islamic State with a non-Islamic State is not merely a treaty between the two states but between the two nations. Therefore it is morally binding on both the Islamic State and the Muslims living in the Islamic State. The Islamic Code does not tolerate that the Muslim subjects should be left free from the obligations of the treaty which a Muslim government makes with other countries or nations. Of course, those Muslims who reside outside the territorial borders of the State that makes a treaty are free from this obligation. That is why *Abū Buṣair*, *Abū Jandal* and other Muslims who were not the subjects of *Dār-ul-Islam* were not bound by the terms of the Treaty of *Ḥudaibiyah*, which the Holy Prophet had made with the disbelievers of *Makkah*.

52. The sentence—“unless you also help one another”—has two meanings : (1) If it is considered in connection with the previous sentence, “the disbelievers help one another,” it means : “If you, the Believers, will not help one another just as the disbelievers help one another, there will be mischief and great disorder on the earth”. (2) But if it is considered in connection with the instructions given in v. 72, it will mean : if the people living in *Dār-ul-Islam* (a) do not become the guardians and protectors of one another, (b) do not consider the Muslims, who have not migrated to *Dār-ul-Islam* and live in *Dār-ul-Kufr*, outside their political protection, (c) do not give help to the persecuted Muslims, living outside *Dār-ul-Islam*, when they ask for it, and if at the same time, they do not observe the law that the Muslims living in *Dār-ul-Islam* would not help those Muslims living in *Dār-ul-Kufr* among the people with whom they made a treaty of peace, and (d) do not break all their friendly relations with the disbelievers,—then there will be mischief and great chaos in the world.

53. This is to remove a misunderstanding. After migration to *Al-Madīnah*, the Holy Prophet had established the relationship of brotherhood between the *Muhājirīn* and the *Anṣār*, which gave rise to the misunderstanding that they had become the inheritors of one another. This verse says that inheritance shall be determined by the blood-relationship and not by the relationship of brotherhood in the Faith.



IX

AT-TAUBAH التَّوْبَةُ

Name

This Sūrah is known by two names—AT-TAUBAH and AL-BARĀ'AT. It is called AT-TAUBAH because it enunciates the nature of *taubah* (repentance) and mentions the conditions of its acceptance. (vv. 102-118). The second name BARĀ'AT (Release) is taken from the first word of the Sūrah.

Why Omission of Bismillah

This is the only Sūrah of the Qurān to which *Bismillah* is not prefixed. Though the commentators have given different reasons for this, the correct one is that which has been given by Imām Rāzī: namely, this is because the Holy Prophet himself did not dictate it at the beginning of the Sūrah. Therefore the Companions did not prefix it and their successors followed them. This is a further proof of the fact that utmost care has been taken to keep the Qurān intact so that it should remain in its complete and original form.

Discourses and Periods of Revelation

This Sūrah comprises three discourses:—

The first discourse (vv. 1-37) was revealed in Zil-Qa'adah A.H. 9 or thereabout. As the importance of the subject of the discourse required its declaration on the occasion of *Hajj*, the Holy Prophet despatched Ḥaḍrat 'Alī to follow Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr, who had already left for Makkah as leader of the pilgrims to the Ka'abah. He instructed Ḥaḍrat 'Alī to deliver the discourse before the representatives of the different clans of Arabia so as to inform them of the new policy towards the *mushriks*.

The second discourse (vv. 38-72) was sent down in Rajab A.H. 9 or a little before this, when the Holy Prophet was engaged in making preparations for the Campaign of Tabūk. In this discourse, the Believers were urged to take active part in *Jihād*, and the shirkers were severely rebuked

for holding back their wealth and for hesitating to sacrifice their lives in the way of Allah because of their hypocrisy, weak faith or negligence.

The third discourse (vv. 73-129) was revealed on his return from the Campaign of Tabūk. There are some pieces in this discourse that were sent down on different occasions during the same period and were afterwards consolidated by the Holy Prophet into the Sūrah in accordance with inspiration from Allah. But this caused no interruption in its continuity because they dealt with the same subject and formed part of the same series of events. This discourse warns the hypocrites of their evil deeds and rebukes those Believers who had stayed behind in the Campaign of Tabūk. Then after taking them to task, Allah pardons those true Believers who had not taken part in the *Jihād* in the Way of Allah for one reason or the other.

Chronologically, the first discourse should have come last; but being the most important of the three in regard to its subject-matter, it was placed first in the order of compilation.

Historical Background

Now let us consider the historical background of the Sūrah. The series of events that have been discussed in this Sūrah took place after the Peace Treaty of Hudaibiyah. By that time, one-third of Arabia had come under the sway of Islam which had established itself as a powerful, well-organized and civilized Islamic State. This Treaty afforded further opportunities to Islam to spread its influence in the comparatively peaceful atmosphere created by it.¹ After this Treaty, two events took place, which led to very important results :

Conquest of Arabia

The first was the Conquest of Arabia. The Holy Prophet was able to send missions among different clans for the propagation of Islam. The result was that during the short period of two years, it became such a great power that it made the old order of 'ignorance' feel helpless before it. So much so that the zealous elements from among the Quraish were so

1. For details please refer to the Prefaces to Al-Mā'idah and Al-Fāṭihah.

ARABIA AT THE TIME OF TABŪK EXPEDITION



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exasperated that they broke the Treaty in order to encounter Islam in a decisive combat. But the Holy Prophet took prompt action after the breach so as not to allow them any opportunity to gather enough force for this. He made a sudden invasion on Makkah in the month of Ramaḍān in A.H. 8 and conquered it.¹ Though this conquest broke the backbone of the order of 'ignorance', it made still another attack on Islam in the battle-field of Ḥunain, which proved to be its death-knell. The clans of Hawāzin, Thaqīf, Naḍr, Jushm and others gathered their entire forces in the battle-field in order to crush the reformative Revolution, but they utterly failed in their evil designs. The defeat of 'ignorance' at Ḥunain paved the way for making the whole of Arabia the 'Abode of Islam' (*Dār-ul-Islām*). The result was that hardly a year had passed after the Battle of Ḥunain, when the major portion of Arabia came within the fold of Islam and only a few upholders of the old order remained scattered over some corners of the country.

The second event that contributed towards making Islam a formidable power was the Campaign of Tabūk, which was necessitated by the provocative activities of the Christians living within or near the boundaries of the Roman Empire to the north of Arabia. Accordingly, the Holy Prophet, with an army of thirty thousand marched boldly towards the Roman Empire but the Romans evaded the encounter. The result was that the power of the Holy Prophet and Islam increased manifold and deputations from all corners of Arabia began to wait upon him on his return from Tabūk in order to offer their allegiance to Islam and obedience to him.² The Holy Qurān has described this triumph in Sūrah AN-NAṢR: "When the succour of Allah came and victory was attained and you saw people entering the fold of Islam in large numbers. . . ."

Campaign to Tabūk

The Campaign to Tabūk was the result of conflict with the

1. Please see E.N. 43 of Sūrah Al-Anfāl.

2. We learn from the traditions that total number of the deputations, chiefs, etc., who came to Al-Madīnah, was about seventy.

Roman Empire, that had started even before the conquest of Makkah. One of the missions sent after the Treaty of Ḥudai-biyah to different parts of Arabia visited the clans which lived in the northern areas adjacent to Syria. The majority of these people were Christians, who were under the influence of the Roman Empire. Contrary to all the principles of the commonly accepted international law, they killed fifteen members of the delegation near a place known as Zāt-u-Ṭalaḥ (or Zāt-i-Iṭlāḥ). Only Ka'ab bin 'Umair Ghifārī, the head of the delegation, succeeded in escaping and reporting the sad incident. Besides this, Shuraḥbīl bin 'Amr, the Christian governor of Buṣrā, who was directly under the Roman Caesar, had also put to death Hārith bin 'Umair, the ambassador of the Holy Prophet, who had been sent to him on a similar mission.

These events convinced the Holy Prophet that a strong action should be taken in order to make the territory adjacent to the Roman Empire safe and secure for the Muslims. Accordingly, in the month of Jamādi-ul-Ūlā A.H. 8, he sent an army of three thousand towards the Syrian border. When this army reached near Ma'ān, the Muslims learnt that Shuraḥbīl was marching with an army of one hundred thousand to fight with them and that the Caesar, who himself was at Ḥims, had sent another army consisting of one hundred thousand soldiers under his brother Theodore. But in spite of such fearful news, the brave small band of the Muslims marched on fearlessly and encountered the big army of Shuraḥbīl at M'utah. And the result of the encounter in which the Muslims were fighting against fearful odds (the ratio of the two armies was 1 : 33), was very favourable, for the enemy utterly failed to defeat them. This proved very helpful for the propagation of Islam. As a result, those Arabs who were living in a state of semi-independence in Syria and near Syria and the clans of Najd near 'Irāq, who were under the influence of the Iranian Empire, turned towards Islam and embraced it in thousands. For example, the people of Banī Sulaim (whose chief was 'Abbās bin Mirdās Sulaimi), Ashja'a, Ghaṭafān, Zubayān, Fazārah, etc., came into the fold of Islam at the same time. Above all,

Farvah bin 'Amral-Juzāmī, who was the commander of the Arab armies of the Roman Empire, embraced Islam during that time, and underwent the trial of his Faith in a way that filled the whole territory with wonder. When the Caesar came to know that Farvah had embraced Islam, he ordered that he should be arrested and brought to his court. Then the Caesar said to him, "You will have to choose one of the two things. Either give up your Islam and win your liberty and your former rank, or remain a Muslim and face death." He calmly chose Islam and sacrificed his life in the way of the Truth.

No wonder that such events as these made the Caesar realize the nature of the danger that was threatening his Empire from Arabia. Accordingly, in A.H. 9, he began to make military preparations to avenge the insult he had suffered at M'utah. The Ghassānid and other Arab chiefs also began to muster armies under him. When the Holy Prophet, who always kept himself well-informed even of the minutest things that could affect the Islamic Movement favourably or adversely, came to know of these preparations, he at once understood their meaning. Therefore, without the least hesitation he decided to fight against the great power of the Caesar. He knew that the show of the slightest weakness would result in the utter failure of the Movement which was facing three great dangers at that time. First, the dying power of 'ignorance' that had almost been crushed in the battle-field of Hūnain might revive again. Secondly, the Hypocrites of Al-Madīnah, who were always on the look-out for such an opportunity, might make full use of this to do the greatest possible harm to it. For they had already made preparations for this and had, through a monk called Abū 'Āmir, sent secret messages of their evil designs to the Christian king of Ghassān and the Caesar himself. Besides this, they had also built a mosque near Al-Madīnah for holding secret meetings for this purpose. The third danger was of an attack by the Caesar himself, who had already defeated Iran, the other great power of that period, and filled with awe the adjacent territories.

It is obvious that if all these three elements had been

given an opportunity of taking a concerted action against the Muslims, Islam would have lost the fight it had almost won. That is why in this case the Holy Prophet made an open declaration for making preparations for the Campaign against the Roman Empire, which was one of the two greatest empires of the world of that period. The declaration was made though all the apparent circumstances were against such a decision: for there was famine in the country and the long-awaited crops were about to ripen: the burning heat of the scorching summer season of Arabia was at its height and there was not enough money for preparations in general, and for equipment and conveyance in particular. But in spite of these handicaps, when the Messenger of Allah realized the urgency of the occasion, he took this step which was to decide whether the Mission of the Truth was going to survive or perish. The very fact that he made an open declaration for making preparations for such a campaign to Syria against the Roman Empire showed how important it was, for this was contrary to his previous practice. Usually he took every precaution not to reveal beforehand the direction to which he was going nor the name of the enemy whom he was going to attack; nay, he did not move out of Al-Madīnah even in the direction of the campaign.

All the parties in Arabia fully realized the grave consequences of this critical decision. The remnants of the lovers of the old order of 'ignorance' were anxiously waiting for the result of the Campaign, for they had pinned all their hopes on the defeat of Islam by the Romans. The 'hypocrites' also considered it to be their last chance of crushing the power of Islam by internal rebellion, if the Muslims suffered a defeat in Syria. They had, therefore, made full use of the 'Mosque' built by them for hatching plots and had employed all their devices to render the Campaign a failure. On the other side, the true Believers also realized fully that the fate of the Movement for which they had been exerting their utmost for the last 22 years was now hanging in the balance. If they showed courage on that critical occasion, the doors of the whole outer world would be thrown open for the Movement to spread. But if they showed weakness or cowardice, then

all the work they had done in Arabia would end in smoke.

That is why these lovers of Islam began to make enthusiastic preparations for the Campaign. Everyone of them tried to surpass the other in making contributions for the provision of equipment for it. Ḥaḍrat 'Uṭhmān and Ḥaḍrat 'Abdur Reḥmān bin 'Auf presented large sums of money for this purpose. Ḥaḍrat 'Umar contributed half of the earnings of his life and Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr the entire earnings of his life. The indigent Companions did not lag behind and presented whatever they could earn by the sweat of their labour and the women parted with their ornaments. Thousands of volunteers, who were filled with the desire of sacrificing their lives for Islam, came to the Holy Prophet and requested that arrangements for weapons and conveyance be made for them so that they should join the expedition. Those who could not be provided with these shed tears of sorrow; the scene was so pathetic that it made the Holy Prophet sad because of his inability to arm them. In short, the occasion became the touchstone for discriminating a true believer from a hypocrite. For, to lag behind in the Campaign meant that the very relationship of a person to Islam was doubtful. Accordingly, whenever a person lagged behind during the journey to Tabūk, the Holy Prophet, on being informed, would spontaneously say, "Leave him alone. If there be any good in him, Allah will again join him with you, and if there be no good in him, then thank Allah that He relieved you of his evil company".

In short, the Holy Prophet marched out towards Syria in Rajab A.H. 9, with thirty thousand fighters for the cause of Islam. The conditions in which the expedition was undertaken may be judged from the fact that the number of camels with them was so small that many of them were obliged to walk on foot and to wait for their turns for several had to ride at a time on each camel. To add to this, there was the burning heat of the desert and the acute shortage of water. But they were richly rewarded for their firm resolve and sincere adherence to the cause and for their perseverance in the face of those great difficulties and obstacles.

When they arrived at Tabūk, they learnt that the Caesar

and his allies had withdrawn their troops from the frontier and there was no enemy to fight with. Thus they won a moral victory that increased their prestige manifold and, that too, without shedding a drop of blood.

In this connection, it is pertinent to point out that the general impression given by the historians of the campaigns of the Holy Prophet about the Campaign of Tabūk is not correct. They relate the event in a way as if the news of the mustering of the Roman armies near the Arabian frontier was itself false. The fact is that the Caesar had begun to muster his armies, but the Holy Prophet forestalled him and arrived on the scene before he could make full preparations for the invasion. Therefore, believing that "discretion is the better part of valour," he withdrew his armies from the frontier. For he had not forgotten that the three thousand fighters for the cause of Islam had rendered helpless his army one hundred thousand strong at M'utah. He could not, therefore, even with an army of two hundred thousand, dare to fight against an army of thirty thousand, and that, too, under the leadership of the Holy Prophet himself.

When the Holy Prophet found that the Caesar had withdrawn his forces from the frontier, he considered the question whether it would be worthwhile to march into the Syrian territory or to halt at Tabūk and turn his moral victory to political and strategical advantage. He decided on the latter course and made a halt for twenty days at Tabūk. During this time, he brought pressure on the small states that lay between the Roman Empire and the Islamic State and were at that time under the influence of the Romans, and subdued and made them the tributaries of the Islamic State. For instance, some Christian chiefs—Ukaidir bin 'Abdul Malik Kindī of Dūmatul Jandal, Yū-ḥannā bin D'obah of Ailah, and the chiefs of Maqnā, Jarbā' and Azruḥ—also submitted and agreed to pay *Jizyah* to the Islamic State of Al-Madīnah. As a result of this, the boundaries of the Islamic State were extended right up to the Roman Empire, and the majority of the Arab clans, who were being used by the Caesar against Arabia, became the allies of the Muslims against the Romans.

Above all, this moral victory of Tabūk afforded a golden

opportunity to the Muslims to strengthen their hold on Arabia before entering into a long conflict with the Romans. For it broke the back of those who had still been expecting that the old order of 'ignorance' might revive in the near future, whether they were the open upholders of *shirk* or the hypocrites who were hiding their *shirk* under the garb of Islam. The majority of such people were compelled by the force of circumstances to enter into the fold of Islam and, at least, make it possible for their descendants to become true Muslims. After this a mere impotent minority of the upholders of the old order was left in the field, but it could not stand in the way of the Islamic Revolution for the perfection of which Allah had sent His Messenger.

Problems of the Period

If we keep in view the preceding background, we can easily find out the problems that were confronting the Community at that time. They were:—

- (1) to make the whole of Arabia a perfect *Dār-ul-Islām*,
- (2) to extend the influence of Islam to the adjoining countries,
- (3) to crush the mischiefs of the hypocrites, and
- (4) to prepare the Muslims for *Jihād* against the non-Muslim world.

(1) Now that the administration of the whole of Arabia had come in the hands of the Believers, and all the opposing powers had become helpless, it was necessary to make a clear declaration of that policy which was to be adopted to make her a perfect *Dār-ul-Islām*. Therefore the following measures were adopted :

(a) A clear declaration was made that all the treaties with the *mushriks* were abolished and the Muslims would be released from the treaty obligations with them after a respite of four months. (vv. 1-3). This declaration was necessary for uprooting completely the system of life based on *shirk* and to make Arabia exclusively the centre of Islam so that it should not in any way interfere with the spirit of Islam nor become an internal danger for it.

(b) A decree was issued that the guardianship of the

Ka'abah, which held a central position in all the affairs of Arabia, should be wrested from the *mushriks* and placed permanently in the hands of the Believers, (vv. 12-18) that all the customs and practices of the *shirk* of the era of 'ignorance' should be forcibly abolished: that the *mushriks* should not be allowed even to come near the "House" (v. 28). This was to eradicate every trace of *shirk* from the "House" that was dedicated exclusively to the worship of Allah.

(c) The evil practice of *Nasī*, by which they used to tamper with the sacred months in the days of 'ignorance', was forbidden as an act of *kufir* (v. 37). This was also to serve as an example to the Muslims for eradicating every vestige of the customs of ignorance from the life of Arabia (and afterwards from the lives of the Muslims everywhere).

(2) In order to enable the Muslims to extend the influence of Islam outside Arabia, they were enjoined to crush with sword the non-Muslim powers and to force them to accept the sovereignty of the Islamic State. As the great Roman and Iranian Empires were the biggest hindrances in the way, a conflict with them was inevitable. The object of *Jihād* was not to coerce them to accept Islam—they were free to accept or not to accept it—but to prevent them from thrusting forcibly their deviations upon others and the coming generations. The Muslims were enjoined to tolerate their misguidance only to the extent that they might have the freedom to remain misguided, if they chose to be so, provided that they paid *Jizyah* (v. 29) as a sign of their subjugation to the Islamic State.

(3) The third important problem was to crush the mischiefs of the hypocrites, who had hitherto been tolerated in spite of their flagrant crimes. Now that there was practically no pressure upon them from outside, the Muslims were enjoined to treat them openly as disbelievers (v. 73). Accordingly, the Holy Prophet set on fire the house of Swailim, where the hypocrites used to gather for consultations in order to dissuade the people from joining the expedition to Tabūk. Likewise on his return from Tabūk, he ordered to pull down and burn the 'Mosque' that had been built to serve as a cover for the hypocrites for hatching plots against the true

Believers.

(4) In order to prepare the Muslims for *Jihād* against the whole non-Muslim world, it was necessary to cure them even of that slight weakness of faith from which they were still suffering. For there could be no greater internal danger to the Islamic Community than the weakness of faith, especially when it was going to engage itself single-handed in a conflict with the whole non-Muslim world. That is why those people who had lagged behind in the Campaign to Tabūk or had shown the least negligence were severely taken to task, and were considered as hypocrites if they had no plausible excuse for not fulfilling that obligation. Moreover, a clear declaration was made that in future the sole criterion of a Muslim's faith shall be the exertions he makes for the uplift of the Word of Allah and the role he plays in the conflict between Islam and *kufr*. Therefore, 'if anyone will show any hesitation in sacrificing his life, money, time and energies, his faith shall not be regarded as genuine'. (vv. 81-96).

If the above-mentioned important points are kept in view during the study of this Sūrah, it will facilitate the understanding of its contents.

SUMMARY

SUBJECT: PROBLEMS OF PEACE AND WAR

In continuation of Sūrah AL-ANFĀL, this Sūrah also deals with the problems of peace and war and bases the theme on the Tabūk Expedition.

Topics and their Interconnection

- 1-12 This portion deals with the sanctity of treaties and lays down principles, rules and regulations which must be kept in view before breaking them, in case the other party does not observe them sincerely.
- 13-37 In this portion the Muslims have been urged to fight in the Way of Allah with the *mushrik* Arabs, the Jews and the Christians, who were duly warned of the consequences of their mischievous and inimical behaviour.
- 38-72 In this discourse, the Muslims have been told clearly and explicitly that they will inherit the rewards promised by Allah only if they take active part in the conflict with *kufr*, for that is the criterion which distinguishes true Muslims from hypocrites. Therefore true Muslims should take active part in *Jihād*, without minding dangers, obstacles, difficulties, temptations and the like.
- 73-90 This portion deals with the problems of hypocrites and lays down rules and regulations governing the treatment that should be meted out to them and points out their distinctive marks from true Muslims.
- 91-110 This portion deals with the case of those who remained behind and did not accompany the Holy Prophet for *Jihād* to Tabūk. For this purpose they have been separated into different categories, that is, the disabled, the sick, the indigent, the hypocrites, the believers who realized their guilt and punished themselves before the return of the Holy Prophet from Tabūk and those who confessed their error. Their cases have been dealt with in accordance with the nature and extent of their offence.

In order to make their noble qualities look all the more 111-118
conspicuous and dignified by contrast, the characteristics of
the Believers have been mentioned, and they have been
reassured that Allah, the Sovereign of the Universe, is their
helper and guardian. Accordingly, because of their sincerity,
He has forgiven the Three Believers who did not take part in
the expedition.

In the concluding portion, general instructions have been 119-127
given to the Believers for their guidance.

This is the conclusion: "Follow the Messenger who is 128-129
gentle and compassionate and your greatest well-wisher, and
trust in Allah, the Lord of the Universe".



بَرَاءَةٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ إِلَى الَّذِينَ عَاهَدْتُمْ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ۗ^(١)
 فَسِيحُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ أَرْبَعَةَ أَشْهُرٍ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّكُمْ غَيْرُ مُعْجِزِي اللَّهِ ۗ
 وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ مُخْزِي الْكَافِرِينَ ۗ^(٢) وَأَذَانٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ إِلَى النَّاسِ يَوْمَ
 الْحَجِّ الْأَكْبَرِ أَنَّ اللَّهَ بَرِيءٌ مِّنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ۗ وَرَسُولُهُ ۗ فَإِنْ تُبْتُمْ
 فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ ۗ وَإِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ فَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّكُمْ غَيْرُ مُعْجِزِي اللَّهِ ۗ وَ
 بَشِّرِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ۗ^(٣) إِلَّا الَّذِينَ عَاهَدْتُمْ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ
 ثُمَّ لَمْ يَنْقُصُوا شَيْئًا وَ لَمْ يُظَاهِرُوا عَلَيْكُمْ أَحَدًا فَأَتُوا إِلَيْكُمْ عَهْدَهُمْ
 إِلَىٰ مَدِينِهِمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ ۗ^(٤) فَإِذَا انْسَلَخَ الْأَشْهُرُ الْحُرْمُ
 فَاقْتُلُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ حَيْثُ وَجَدْتُمُوهُمْ وَخُذُوهُمْ وَأَحْصُرُوهُمْ وَ
 اقْعُدُوا لَهُمْ كُلَّ مَرْصِدٍ ۗ فَإِنْ تَابُوا وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوْا الزَّكَاةَ
 فَخَلُّوا سَبِيلَهُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ۗ^(٥) وَإِنْ أَحَدٌ مِّنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ
 اسْتَجَارَكَ فَأَجِرْهُ حَتَّىٰ يَسْمَعَ كَلِمَ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ ابْلِغْهُ مَا مَنَّهُ ۗ ذَلِكَ
 بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ۗ^(٦) كَيْفَ يَكُونُ لِلْمُشْرِكِينَ عَهْدٌ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَ
 عِنْدَ رَسُولِهِ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ عَاهَدْتُمْ عِنْدَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ فَمَا اسْتَقَامُوا
 لَكُمْ فَاسْتَقِيمُوا لَهُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ ۗ^(٧) كَيْفَ وَإِنْ يَظْهَرُوا
 عَلَيْكُمْ لَا يَرْقُبُوا فِيكُمْ إِلَّا وَا لَ ذِمَّةً ۗ يُرْضُونَكُمْ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَ تَأْبَىٰ
 قُلُوبُهُمْ وَأَكْثَرُهُمْ فَاسِقُونَ ۗ^(٨) اسْتَرَوْا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ شِمًا قَلِيلًا فَصَدُّوا

IX

AT-TAUBAH التَّوْبَةُ

Verses: 129

Revealed at Al-Madīnah

This is a declaration¹ of immunity (from obligations) by Allah and His Messenger to those *mushriks* with whom you had made treaties:² “You are free to move about in the land for four months more:³ but you should know that you cannot frustrate the Will of Allah, and that Allah will degrade the rejecters of the Truth.” 1-2

This is a public proclamation from Allah and His Messenger for all the people on the Day of Great *Haj*:⁴ Allah is free from the treaty obligations made with the *mushriks* and so is His Messenger. If, therefore, you repent now, it is better for you but if you turn away, you should know it well that you cannot frustrate (the Will of) Allah. And, O Prophet, give the good news of a painful chastisement to the rejecters excepting those *mushriks* with whom you made treaties, and who afterwards did not violate these in the least nor did they give help to anyone against you; so you also should observe the treaties with such people in accordance with their terms, for Allah loves the pious people.⁵ 3-4

Then, when the months made unlawful⁶ for fighting expire, kill the *mushriks* wherever you find them, and seize them, and besiege them, and lie in wait for them at every place of ambush. But if they repent, and establish *Ṣalāt* and pay the *Zakāt* dues, then let them go their way:⁷ for Allah is Forgiving and Compassionate. And if any of the *mushriks* requests you for protection so that he may come to you (to hear the Word of Allah), give him protection till he hears the Word of Allah; then convey him to the place of his safety: this should be done because these people do not know the Truth.⁸ 5-6

How shall a treaty with these *mushriks* be regarded as abiding by Allah and His Messenger?—excepting those with whom you made a treaty at the Masjid-i-Ḥarām:⁹ so long as they behave rightly with you, you also should behave rightly 7-8

with them, for Allah loves the righteous people.—But how can a treaty be regarded as abiding with the other *mushriks*? Since if they get power over you, they will not respect ties of kindred with you nor honour any treaty obligations. They try to conciliate you with their tongues, the while their hearts are averse to their tongues,¹⁰ for most of them are evil-doers.¹¹

1. As has already been stated in the Preface to this Sūrah, this discourse (vv. 1-37) was revealed in A.H. 9, when Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr had left for Makkah as leader of the pilgrims to the Ka'abah. Therefore the Companions said to the Holy Prophet, "Sir, send it to Abū Bakr so that he may proclaim it on the occasion of *Haj*." He replied, "The importance and nature of the Declaration demands that this should be proclaimed on my behalf by some one from my own family." Accordingly, he entrusted this duty to Ḥaḍrat 'Alī and instructed him to proclaim it openly before the pilgrims, and also make these four announcements: (1) "No one who rejects Islam shall enter Paradise. (2) No *mushrik* should perform *Haj* after this. (3) It is forbidden to move round the Ka'abah in a naked state. (4) The terms of the treaties which are still in force (*i.e.* with those who have not broken their treaties with the Messenger of Allah up to that time) would be faithfully observed till the expiry of the term of the treaties".

In this connection, it will be worthwhile to know that the first *Haj* of the Islamic period after the conquest of Makkah was performed in A.H. 8, according to the old customs. Then in A.H. 9 the second *Haj* was performed by the Muslims in the Islamic way, and by the *mushriks* in their own way. But the third *Haj*, known as "*Hajja-tul-Widā'a*", was performed in A.H. 10 in the purely Islamic way under the guidance of the Holy Prophet himself. He did not perform *Haj* during the two previous years because up to that time the *mushriks* had not been forbidden from it, and so there were still some traces of *shirk* associated with it.

2. This declaration of the abrogation of the treaties with the *mushriks* was made in accordance with the law enjoined in VIII: 58 regarding the treacherous people, for it is treachery from the Islamic point of view to wage war against any people with whom a treaty of peace had been made, without openly declaring that the treaty had been terminated. That is why a proclamation of the abrogation of the treaties was necessitated against those clans who were always hatching plots against Islam in spite of the treaties of peace they had made. They would break the treaties and turn hostile on the first opportunity for treachery, and the same was true of all the *mushrik* clans with the exception of Banī Kanānah, Banī Ḍamrah and one or two other clans.

This proclamation practically reduced the *mushriks* of Arabia to the position of outlaws and no place of shelter was left for them, for the major part of the country had come under the sway of Islam. As this released the Muslims from the obligations of the treaties made with

them and forestalled them, they were driven into a tight corner. For this smashed all their evil designs of creating trouble by inciting civil war at the time of a threat from the Roman and the Iranian Empires or after the death of the Holy Prophet. But Allah and His Messenger turned the tables on them before the opportune moment for which they were waiting. Now the only alternatives left with them were either to accept Islam that had become the state religion of Arabia, or to fight against it and be exterminated, or to emigrate from the country.

The wisdom of this grand plan became apparent when the mischief of apostasy broke out in different parts of Arabia a year and a half after this at the death of the Holy Prophet. This disturbance was so sudden and violent that it shook to its foundations the newly created Islamic State, and would have done a far greater harm if the organized power of *shirk* had not been broken beforehand by this abrogation. It may be asserted that but for this timely action the mischief of apostasy, that rose at the very beginning of the Caliphate of Ḥaḍrāt Abū Bakr, would have done ten-fold harm by rebellion and civil war, and might have changed the whole history of Islam.

3. The respite of four months from the tenth of Zil-Ḥaj (the date of the proclamation) to the tenth of Rabī'-uth-thānī was granted to give time to the *mushriks* so that they should consider their position carefully and decide whether to make preparation for war or to emigrate from the country or to accept Islam.

4. *Hajj-i-akbar* refers to the 10th of Zil-Ḥajjah and is also known as *Yaum-un-Nahr*. This has been explained by the Holy Prophet in an authentic Tradition. On the 10th of Zil-Ḥajjah, during the last *Haj* of the Holy Prophet, he asked the people, "What is this day?" The people answered, "It is the day of Sacrifice."

The Holy Prophet said, "This is the day of *Hajj-i-akbar*." Here the word *Hajj-i-akbar* (Great Pilgrimage) has been used in contrast to *Hajj-i-aṣghar* which the Arabs used for 'Umrah'. Thus, the *Haj* which is performed in the prescribed dates of Zil-Ḥaj is called *Hajj-i-akbar*.

5. ' you also should observe the treaties with such people' who do not violate them, for your violation in such cases shall be against piety. And Muslims should remain pious under all circumstances 'for Allah loves the pious people' only.

6. Here 'the months made unlawful' are not those four months during which war is forbidden for the sake of *Haj* and 'Umrah but the four months that were made unlawful for the Muslims to make any attack on the *mushriks*, who were granted respite by v. 2.

7. That is, "Mere repentance from disbelief and *shirk* will not end the matter, but they shall have to perform the prescribed prayer and pay

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عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ ۖ إِنَّهُمْ سَاءَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ۝ لَا يَرْقُبُونَ فِي مُؤْمِنٍ إِلَّا
 وَلَا ذِمَّةً ۖ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُعْتَدُونَ ۝ فَإِنْ تَابُوا وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَ
 آتَوْا الزَّكَاةَ فَإِخْوَانُكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَتَفْصِيلُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ ۝
 وَإِنْ تَكَثَّرَ آيَاتُهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ عَهْدِهِمْ وَطَعَنُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ
 فَقَاتِلُوا أَيُّمَةَ الْكُفْرِ إِنَّهُمْ لَا أَيْمَانَ لَهُمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَنْتَهُونَ ۝ إِلَّا تَقَاتِلُوا
 قَوْمًا نَكَثُوا آيَاتَهُمْ وَهَمُّوا بِإِخْرَاجِ الرَّسُولِ وَهُوَ بَدَأُ وَاوَّلَ
 مَرَّةٍ ۖ أَنْ تَخْشَوْنَهُمْ فَأَلَّهِ أَحَقُّ أَنْ تَخْشَوْهُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ۝ قَاتِلُوهُمْ
 يُعَذِّبُهُمُ اللَّهُ بِأَيْدِيكُمْ وَيُخْزِهِمْ وَيَنْصُرْكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَيَشْفِ صُدُورَ
 قَوْمٍ مُؤْمِنِينَ ۝ وَيَذْهَبُ غَيْظُ قُلُوبِهِمْ وَيَتُوبُ اللَّهُ عَلَى مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۖ
 وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ۝ أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تُتْرَكُوا وَلَمَّا يَعْلَمِ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ
 جَاهَدُوا مِنْكُمْ وَلَمْ يَتَّخِذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلَا رَسُولِهِ وَلَا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
 وَلِجَنَّةٍ ۖ وَاللَّهُ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ۝ مَا كَانَ لِلْمُشْرِكِينَ أَنْ يَعْمُرُوا
 مَسْجِدَ اللَّهِ شَاهِدِينَ عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ بِالْكَفْرِ ۖ أُولَئِكَ حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ
 وَفِي النَّارِ هُمْ خَالِدُونَ ۝ إِنَّمَا يَعْمُرُ مَسْجِدَ اللَّهِ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ
 الْآخِرِ وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَى الزَّكَاةَ وَلَمْ يَحْشَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ فَعَسَىٰ أُولَئِكَ
 أَنْ يَكُونُوا مِنَ الْمُهْتَدِينَ ۝ أَجَعَلْتُمْ سِقَايَةَ الْحَاجِّ وَعِمَارَةَ الْمَسْجِدِ
 الْحَرَامِ كَمَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَجَاهَدَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ لَا يَسْتَوُونَ
 عِنْدَ اللَّهِ ۖ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ۝ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَهَاجَرُوا وَ
 جَاهَدُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ ۖ أَكْبَرُ دَرَجَةً عِنْدَ اللَّهِ ۖ

They bartered away Allah's revelations for paltry worldly gains¹² and then debarred others from His Way:¹³ indeed very evil were the deeds they did. They do not observe the ties of kindred in regard to the Believers nor observe the obligations of treaty, and it is they who have always been the transgressors: yet if they repent even now, and establish *Ṣalāt* and pay *Zakāt* dues, then they shall be your brethren in faith. Thus We make plain Our Messages to those who try to understand.¹⁴ But if they break their oaths after making compacts and revile your Faith, you should fight with these ringleaders of disbelief because their oaths are not trustworthy: it may be that sword alone will restrain^{14a} them.¹⁵ 9-12

Will you not fight¹⁶ such people who have been breaking their solemn pledges, who conspired to banish the Messenger and were the first to transgress against you? Are you afraid of them? If you are true Believers, surely Allah has a greater right that you should fear Him. Fight them. Allah will chastise them by your hands and will bring disgrace and degradation upon them and succour you against them and soothe the hearts of many believers. And He may remove the wrath of their hearts; and may also show guidance towards repentance¹⁷ to whomsoever He wills; Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise. Do you think that you will be left (without a trial)? Note it well that Allah has not as yet seen which of you exerted your utmost (in His Allah) and did not take as intimate friends any other than Allah, His Messenger and the Believers;¹⁸ Allah has full knowledge of what you do. 13-16

It does not behove the *mushriks* to become the guardians and servants of Allah's houses of worship, the while they themselves bear witness against themselves to their disbelief;¹⁹ in fact, all their works have gone to waste²⁰ and they shall abide in the Fire for ever. Only those are worthy of being the guardians and servants of Allah's houses of worship, who believe in Allah and the Last Day, and establish *Ṣalāt* and pay *Zakāt* dues, and fear none but Allah: for these alone are expected to follow the Right Way. Have you made the mere giving of water to pilgrims and the guardianship of the *Masjid-i-Ḥarām* as equal to the works of the one who has believed in Allah and the Last Day, and exerted his utmost 17-20

in the Way of Allah?²¹ Well, these things are not equal in the sight of Allah, and Allah does not show guidance to the workers of iniquity. Those alone, who have believed, and left their homes and exerted their utmost with their lives and possessions in the Way of Allah, shall have the highest ranks with Allah: they are truly successful.

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Zakāt dues. Without these it will not be considered that they had given up disbelief and embraced Islam.” Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr based his decision on this verse in the case of the apostates, after the death of the Holy Prophet, who argued that they were not the rejecters of Islam, because they offered *Ṣalāt*, even though they had refused to pay the *Zakāt* dues. This argument roused doubts in the minds of the Companions in general that they had no right to fight with such people as these.

But Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr removed their doubts, saying, “Verse 5 enjoins us to let those people go their way who fulfil all the three conditions—repentance from *shirk*, the establishment of *Ṣalāt* and the payment of *Zakāt*. We cannot forbear them, because they do not fulfil one of these three conditions.”

8. That is, “If during a fight, an enemy makes a request that he should be given an opportunity to understand Islam, the Muslims should give him a surety of protection and allow him to visit them. They should then present Islam before him in order to make him understand it. If, after this, he does not embrace Islam, they should convey him safely to his place”. Such a person who comes to *Dār-ul-Islām* under the above-mentioned protection is called *mustamin* in the Islamic Code.

9. That is: Banī Kinānah and Banī Khuzā‘ah and Banī Ḍamrah.

10. That is, “Though outwardly they negotiated for peace treaties, they cherished evil intentions in their hearts, and waited for an opportune moment to break them. And this was borne by later experiences.”

11. They were evil-doers because they had no sense of moral responsibilities nor did they hesitate to break moral limits.

12. That is, “When they had to make a choice between the Divine Guidance and the transitory worldly ambitions, they chose the latter, because they did not comprehend the comparative values of the two. Whereas the Revelations of Allah were inviting them to goodness, righteousness and observance of the Divine Law, which lead to eternal bliss, they chose to follow the unbridled lusts of their selves which gained some transitory worldly benefits for them, but consequently led them to eternal perdition.”

13. Those evil-doers ‘blocked His Way for others’, for they not only chose misguidance for themselves but also tried to prevent others from following the right way. They put every kind of obstruction in the way of the invitation to righteousness; nay, they tried their worst to gag

the mouths of those who were extending that invitation and make their lives hard for them. In short, they did all they could to prevent the establishment of the righteous system of life that Allah required the people to establish.

14. Here, too, it has explicitly been stated that those who repent will not become your brethren in faith without the observance of *Ṣalāt* and *Zakāt*.

“Yet if they shall be your brethren in faith”: This means that “if they fulfil those conditions, then not only shall their lives and properties become unlawful for you but also they shall enjoy equal rights with you in the Islamic Community. There shall be no distinction between them and the other Muslims in regard to social, cultural, legal and political rights, and nothing will stand in their way to the progress for which they are otherwise qualified.

14a. “. . . . you should fight with them”: perhaps the fear of war may force them to desist from breaking oaths and reviling Islam.

15. In the context, the words oaths and compacts mean the compact of the acceptance of Islam. Therefore, the question of making a new compact with them does not arise. As regards the old pacts, they had already broken all of them. It is on account of this that the declaration of immunity (from obligations) by Allah and His Messenger has been clearly made. It has also been stated that such people are not worthy of any treaty and they can only be let off if they repent of their disbelief and *shirk* and establish *Ṣalāt* and pay *Zakāt* dues. This verse states clearly how the renegades should be treated. As a matter of fact, this verse forestalled the mischief of apostasy that broke out a year and a half after its revelation and Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr followed the guidance given in this verse to crush it. (For further explanation, see my book entitled *Murtad ki Sazā Islāmī Qānūn men*).

16. In this passage the addressees are the Muslims. They have been urged to fight perseveringly in the Way of Allah, without paying the least heed to their ties of blood and relationship and to their worldly interests. In order to understand fully the spirit of this passage, the reader should keep in view the state of affairs at the time, when the abrogation of the treaties was declared. Though Islam was reigning supreme in the greater part of Arabia and there was no greater power to challenge its supremacy, still superficial observers saw a number of dangers in the extreme step which was being taken at that time.

First, it was feared that the abrogating of the treaties with all the *mushrik* clans at one and the same time, and debarring them from *Hāj* and changing the guardianship of the Ka‘abah and abolishing all the rituals of ‘ignorance’, would so incite the *mushriks* and the hypocrites and enkindle such fire of enmity that they would be ready to shed the last drop of their blood for safeguarding their interests and prejudices.

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أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَآئِزُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾ يُبَشِّرُهُمْ رَبُّهُم بِرَحْمَةٍ مِّنْهُ وَرِضْوَانٍ وَجَنَّتِ
 لَهُمْ فِيهَا نَعِيمٌ مُّقِيمٌ ﴿٢٦﴾ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٢٧﴾
 يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا آبَاءَكُمْ وَإِخْوَانَكُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ إِنِ اسْتَحَبُّوا
 الْكُفْرَ عَلَى الْإِيمَانِ وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّهُمْ مِنكُمْ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾ قُلْ
 إِن كَانَ آبَاؤُكُمْ وَأَبْنَاؤُكُمْ وَإِخْوَانُكُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُكُمْ وَعَشِيرَتُكُمْ وَأَمْوَالٌ
 اقْتَرَفْتُمُوهَا وَتِجَارَةٌ تَخْشَوْنَ كَسَادَهَا وَمَسَاكِينُ تَرْضَوْنَهَا أَحَبَّ إِلَيْكُمْ
 مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَجِهَادٍ فِي سَبِيلِهِ فَتَرَبَّصُوا حَتَّى يَأْتِيَ اللَّهُ بِأَمْرِهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ
 لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾ لَقَدْ نَصَرَكُمُ اللَّهُ فِي مَوَاطِنَ كَثِيرَةٍ ۗ وَلَا
 يَوْمَ حُنَيْنٍ إِذْ أَعْجَبَتْكُمْ كَثْرَتُكُمْ فَلَمْ تُغْنِ عَنْكُمْ شَيْئًا وَضَاقَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ
 الْأَرْضُ بِمَا رَحُبَتْ ثُمَّ وَلَّيْتُم مُّدْبِرِينَ ﴿٣٠﴾ ثُمَّ أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَى
 رَسُولِهِ وَعَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَأَنْزَلَ جُنُودًا لَّمْ تَرَوْهَا وَعَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
 وَذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٣١﴾ ثُمَّ يَتُوبُ اللَّهُ مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ عَلَى مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ
 غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٣٢﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّمَا الشُّرُكُونَ نَجَسٌ فَلَا يَقْرَبُوا
 الْمَسْجِدَ الْحَرَامَ بَعْدَ عَامِهِمْ هَذَا ۖ وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ عَيْلَةً فَسَوْفَ يُغْنِيكُمْ
 اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ إِنِ شَاءَ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٣٣﴾ قَاتِلُوا الَّذِينَ لَا
 يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَلَا بِالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَلَا يُحَرِّمُونَ مَا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَلَا
 يَدِينُونَ دِينَ الْحَقِّ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ حَتَّى يُعْطُوا الْجِزْيَةَ
 عَنْ يَدٍ وَهُمْ صَاغِرُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾ وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ عُزَيْرٌ ابْنُ اللَّهِ ۗ وَقَالَتِ
 النَّصَارَى السِّيِّحُ ابْنُ اللَّهِ ۗ ذَلِكَ قَوْلُهُمْ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ يُضَاهِئُونَ قَوْلَ

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Their Lord gives them the good news of His mercy and His pleasure and of the Gardens, wherein is everlasting bliss for them: therein they shall abide for ever, for surely Allah has abundance to give rewards for services. 21-22

O Believers, do not take your fathers and brothers as allies, if they choose disbelief in preference to Faith; for whoso of you will take them as allies shall surely be the workers of iniquity. O Prophet, tell them plainly, "If your fathers and your sons, and your brothers and your wives, and your near and dear ones and the wealth which you have acquired and the trade you fear may decline and the homes which delight you—if all these things—are dearer to you than Allah and His Messenger and the struggle in His Way, then wait till Allah passes His judgment on you;²² for Allah does not guide the wicked people". 23-24

Allah has helped you on many occasions before this; (recently you witnessed the glory of His help²³) on the day of the Battle of Hunain; you were proud of your great numbers which had deluded you but it availed you nothing and the earth, with all its vastness, became too narrow for you, and turning your backs, you fled. Then Allah sent down His *sakīnat* (peace and tranquillity) upon His Messenger and the Believers and sent (to your aid) forces which you could not see and chastised those who denied the Truth: for this is the due recompense of those who deny the Truth. Then (you have also seen that) after giving chastisement like this, Allah guides to repentance whom He wills:²⁴ Allah is Forgiving and Merciful. 25-27

O Believers, the *mushriks* are unclean; therefore let them not come near the Masjid-i-Ḥarām²⁵ after this year (of their pilgrimage); if you fear poverty Allah will enrich you, out of His bounty if He will: for Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise. 28

Fight with those from among the people of the Book, who do not believe in Allah nor in the Last Day;²⁶ who do not make unlawful that which Allah and His Messenger have made unlawful,²⁷ and do not adopt the Right Way as their way. (Fight with them) until they pay *Jizyah* with their own hands and are humbled.²⁸ 29

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Secondly, it was feared that the *mushriks* would be greatly enraged by this declaration which granted freedom of movement to the Muslims to perform *Haj*, whereas it forbade the non-Muslims. Obviously this would also affect adversely their economic condition, for *Haj* played a very important part in the economic life of Arabia during that period of her history.

Lastly, it was feared that this would put to a hard trial those people who had embraced Islam recently after the Peace Treaty of Hudaibiyah and the Conquest of Makkah. For many of their kith and kin were still *mushriks*, some of whom had their interests closely bound up with those offices of 'ignorance' which were abolished. Now it was obvious that the total war against the *mushriks* demanded that these new Muslims should not only kill their own near and dear ones but should also themselves abolish those ancient offices and distinctions which they had enjoyed for centuries.

Though it is true that none of these dangers took any practical shape, there were good reasons for these apprehensions, for none could foresee the trends of events at the time of the abrogation of the treaties. And the dangers were averted because these Commandments had prepared them beforehand to meet them. More than that: this preparedness produced other good results. The delegates from the remnants of the *mushriks*, their chiefs and rulers began to visit Al-Madinah and take the oath of allegiance to Islam and obedience to the Holy Prophet, who let them retain their old positions and offices. These things proved that if the Muslims had not been in a state of readiness to take immediate action for enforcing the terms of the "Declaration" with the sword, the events which followed might have taken a different direction. Therefore it was the need of the hour that the Muslims should have been vehemently urged for *Jihād*, and their apprehensions removed. That is why it was being enjoined that they should not let anything hinder them from doing the Will of Allah. And this is the theme of this discourse.

17. This was a subtle reference to the possibility of what actually was going to happen afterwards. "And He may remove repentance": this was to remove the misunderstandings of the Muslims who apprehended a bloody war as a result of the Declaration. They were told that it was also possible that some of the enemies might repent and embrace Islam. This was not made quite plain lest it should slacken the war preparations of the Muslims on one side and weaken the force of the warning to the *mushriks* on the other. The latter thing might have hindered the *mushriks* from giving a serious thought to the critical position they were in that finally led them to embrace Islam.

18. The addressees in v. 16 were those Muslims who had recently embraced Islam. It means to tell them plainly: "Now that you have embraced Islam, you shall have to give a genuine proof by a trial that you

have accepted it because you believe in its Truth and not because it has become supreme in the country by the exertions of the true Believers. The trial is that you shall have to sacrifice your lives, wealths and your near and dear ones for the sake of Allah and His Way. Then and only then, you will be regarded as true Believers."

19. This lays down the general principle for the guardianship of the places of worship that have been built exclusively for the worship of Allah. Obviously, those people who associate others with Allah in His essence, His rights and His powers cannot be the proper persons to be the guardians, the servants, the managers etc. of such sacred places. And when they themselves reject the invitations to *Tauhid*, and openly declare that they are not going to dedicate their worship and obedience exclusively to Allah, they automatically forfeit any right they had for the guardianship of such places of worship that had been built for the worship of Allah alone. Though the principle is of a general nature, it has been mentioned here with the particular object of removing the *mushriks* from the guardianship of the Ka'abah and Masjid-i-Harām and establishing permanently the guardianship of the worshippers of One God over them.

20. ".....all their works have gone to waste.....", including the little real service they did to the 'House of Allah' because they mixed with it *shirk* and other practices of ignorance. Their little good was destroyed by their far greater evils.

21. This question has been posed to bring home the fact that the guardianship of a shrine or attendance at it or other religious acts that are done for show, and are exploited by worldly people to establish and maintain the show of their piety, have no value whatsoever in the sight of Allah. The real worth of a person with Allah is that he should be sincere in his beliefs and make sacrifices in the Way of Allah, no matter whether he enjoys or does not enjoy such distinctions or happens to descend or not from a family of 'saints'. On the contrary, those people who lack these excellences have no value with Allah, no matter whether they be the descendants of saints or inherit the guardianship of shrines from a long line of saints, or perform some 'religious' acts for show on special occasions. And it is not lawful in any way that the guardianship, etc. of sacred places and institutions should be left in the hands of these worthless people just because they happen to inherit such rights from their forefathers.

22. That is: "The judgment will deprive them of the blessings of the true Faith, and of the honour of bearing its standard and leading the world towards its guidance, and bestow these on others".

23. This has been mentioned to allay the fears of those who were afraid of the consequences of the Declaration of the abrogation of the treaties, as if to say, "Why are you afraid of war? That Allah, Who helped you in far worse and dangerous situations on so many occasions before this, is there even now to help you. Had this Mission depended on your might, it could not have come out victorious in the hard trials at

Makkah nor in the Battle of Badr when the odds were heavily against you. This is because Allah's Power has been helping you, and past experiences have shown you how effective that Power is. Rest assured that the same Power will help you to succeed in your Mission."

The Battle of Hunain had taken place in the valley of Hunain between Ṭā'if and Makkah in the month of Shawwāl A.H. 8, a year or so before the Revelation of this discourse. This was the first battle in which the Muslim army consisted of 12,000 fighters and this far outnumbered the army of the disbelievers. But in spite of this the archers of the Hawāzin clan wrought havoc among the Muslim army and put them to rout. The Holy Prophet and a few of his bravest Companions, however, firmly stood their ground and rallied the routed army, and ultimately won the victory. It was because of their perseverance that the army reassembled and the Muslims ultimately won the victory; otherwise they would have lost much more at Hunain than they had gained by the conquest of Makkah.

24. ". . . . Allah enables to repent" refers to the large number of the disbelievers who embraced Islam after the victory at Hunain as a result of the kind and generous treatment they received from the Holy Prophet, in spite of their former antagonism. This was mentioned to allay the anxiety of those new Muslims who feared that, as a result of the Declaration, all of their *mushrik* relatives would be put to death. (E.N. 16). They have been told to expect, in the light of the previous experiences, that the *mushriks* would be obliged to accept Islam, when they realize that neither any hope of the revival of the order of 'ignorance' was left nor of any props to support it.

25. This prohibition was meant to root out all the vestiges of *shirk* and 'ignorance'. For the *mushriks* were prohibited not only from the performance of *Haj* and attendance at the Masjid-i-Ḥarām but also from entering into its sacred precincts.

They are "unclean" in their creeds, in their morals, in their deeds, and in their ways of 'ignorance', and not in their physical bodies by themselves. That is the reason why they have been prohibited from entering the sacred precincts of the Holy Place.

This prohibition has been interpreted in different ways. Imām Abū Hanīfah is of the view that it prohibits them only from the performance of *Haj* and 'Umrah, and from the observance of the rites of 'ignorance' in the Holy Precincts. But Imām Shafi'ī is of the opinion that they have been forbidden even to enter the Masjid-i-Ḥarām for any purpose whatsoever. Imām Mālik is of the opinion that they are forbidden not only to enter Masjid-i-Ḥarām but any mosque at all. It is, however, obvious that the last opinion is not correct, as the Holy Prophet himself permitted *mushriks* to enter the Prophet's Mosque at Al-Madīnah.

26. Though the people of the Book professed to believe in Allah and the Hereafter, in fact they believed in neither. For only that person really believes in Allah who acknowledges Him as the only One God

and the only One Lord, and does not associate with Him any other, wahtsoever, in His Being, in His characteristics, in His rights and in His powers and authority. But according to this definition of *shirk* both the Christians and the Jews were guilty of *shirk* as has been made plain in the verses that follow: therefore their profession of belief in Allah was meaningless. Likewise they did not really believe in the Hereafter, in spite of the fact that they believed in Resurrection. For it is not enough: one must also believe that on that Day absolute justice will be done on the basis of one's belief and actions. One should also believe that no ransom and no expiation and no 'spiritual' relationships with any 'saint' shall be of any avail on that Day. It is absolutely meaningless to believe in the Hereafter without this. And the Jews and the Christians had polluted their faiths because they believed that such things would protect them against justice on that Day.

27. The second reason why *Jihād* should be waged against them is that they did not adopt the Law sent down by Allah through His Messenger.

28. This is the aim of *Jihād* with the Jews and the Christians and it is not to force them to become Muslims and adopt the 'Islamic Way of Life.' They should be forced to pay *Jizyah* in order to put an end to their independence and supremacy so that they should not remain rulers and sovereigns in the land. These powers should be wrested from them by the followers of the true Faith, who should assume the sovereignty and lead others towards the Right Way, while they should become their subjects and pay *Jizyah*. *Jizyah* is paid by those non-Muslims who live as *Zimmīs* (proteges) in an Islamic State, in exchange for the security and protection granted to them by it. This is also symbolical of the fact that they themselves agree to live in it as its subjects. This is the significance of ". . . . they pay *Jizyah* with their own hands," that is, "with full consent so that they willingly become the subjects of the Believers, who perform the duty of the vicegerents of Allah on the earth."

At first this Command applied only to the Jews and the Christians. Then the Holy Prophet himself extended it to the Zoroastrians also. After his death, his Companions unanimously applied this rule to all the non-Muslim nations outside Arabia.

This is "*Jizyah*" of which the Muslims have been feeling apologetic during the last two centuries of their degeneration and there are still some people who continue to apologize for it. But the Way of Allah is straight and clear and does not stand in need of any apology to the rebels against Allah. Instead of offering apologies on behalf of Islam for the measure that guarantees security of life, property and faith to those who choose to live under its protection, the Muslims should feel proud of such a humane law as that of *Jizyah*. For it is obvious that the maximum freedom that can be allowed to those who do not adopt the Way of Allah but choose to tread the ways of error is that they should be tolerated to lead the life

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الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ قَتَلَهُمُ اللَّهُ ۗ أَمْ يَظُنُّونَ ۙ أَنَّهُم مُّجْرِبُونَ ۖ
 رُءُوسُهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ ۗ وَمَا أَمْرُؤَا إِلَّا
 لِيَعْبُدُوا إِلَهًا وَاحِدًا ۗ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ ۗ سُبْحٰنَهُ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾
 يُرِيدُونَ أَن يُطْفِئُوا نُورَ اللَّهِ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَيَأْبَى اللَّهُ إِلَّا أَن يُتِمَّ نُورَهُ
 وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكَافِرُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾ هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ
 لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ ۗ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّا
 كَثِيرٌ مِّنَ الْأَخْبَارِ ۗ وَالرُّهْبَانِ لِيَآكُلُونَ أَمْوَالَ النَّاسِ بِالْبَاطِلِ ۗ
 يُصَدُّونَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ۗ وَالَّذِينَ يَكْنِزُونَ الذَّهَبَ وَالْفِضَّةَ وَلَا
 يُنْفِقُونَهَا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ۖ فَبَشِّرْهُمْ بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ﴿٤٩﴾ يَوْمَ يُحْمَىٰ عَلَيْهَا
 فِي نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ فُتُكُومٌ بِهَا جِبَاهُهُمْ وَجُنُوبُهُمْ وَأُخْرَاهُمْ ۗ هَذَا مَا
 كَنْزْتُمْ لِأَنفُسِكُمْ فَذُوقُوا مَا كَنْزْتُمْ تَكْنِزُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾ إِنَّا عِدَّةَ الشُّهُورِ عِنْدَ
 اللَّهِ اثْنَا عَشَرَ شَهْرًا فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ يَوْمَ خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ مِنْهَا
 أَرْبَعَةٌ حُرْمٌ ۗ ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ ۗ فَلَا تَظْلِمُوا فِيهِنَّ أَنفُسَكُمْ وَقَاتِلُوا
 الْمُشْرِكِينَ كَآفَّةً كَمَا يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ كَآفَّةً ۗ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٥١﴾
 إِنَّمَا النَّسِيءُ زِيَادَةٌ فِي الْكُفْرِ يُضَلُّ بِهِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يُحِلُّونَهُ عَامًا وَ
 يُحَرِّمُونَهُ عَامًا لِّيُؤَاطِئُوا عِدَّةَ مَا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ فَيُحِلُّوا مَا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ ۗ زُرِينُ
 لَهُمْ سُوءُ أَعْمَالِهِمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٥٢﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ
 آمَنُوا مَا لَكُمْ إِذَا قِيلَ لَكُمْ انْفِرُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ إِذَا قُلْتُمْ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ
 أَرْضَيْتُمْ بِالْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا مِنَ الْآخِرَةِ ۗ فَمَا مَتَاعُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا فِي الْآخِرَةِ

The Jews say, "Ezra ('Uzair) is the son of Allah,"²⁹ and the Christians say, "The Messiah is the son of God." Such are the baseless things they utter with their tongues, following in the footsteps of the former unbelievers.³⁰ May Allah afflict them with chastisement! Wherefrom are they being perverted? They have made their scholars and monks as their Lords beside Allah,³¹ and likewise the Messiah, the son of Mary, although they were enjoined not to worship any other than the One Deity, besides Whom there is none worthy of worship. He is absolutely pure and free from what they associate with Him. These people desire to extinguish the light of Allah with puffs from their mouths and Allah refuses (His consent to their desire) but wills to perfect His light, even though the disbelievers be much averse to it. He is Allah Who has sent His Messenger with Guidance and the Right Way so that He may make it prevail over all other ways,³² even though the *mushriks* be much averse to it. O Believers, indeed most of the scholars and monks of the people of the Book devour the wealth of others by evil means, and debar them from the Way of Allah.³³ Give them the good news of a painful torment, who hoard up gold and silver and expend not these in the Way of Allah. The Day shall surely come when the same gold and silver shall be heated in the fire of Hell, and therewith their foreheads, their bodies and their backs shall be branded, (saying), "Here is that treasure you had hoarded up for yourselves: now taste the evil of your hoarded treasure".

The fact is that the number of months ordained by Allah has been twelve since the time He created the heavens and the earth,³⁴ and out of these four are forbidden months: this is the right code of reckoning: therefore do not wrong yourselves by violating these months.³⁵ And fight against the *mushriks* all together: even as they fight against you all together:³⁶ and note it well that Allah is with the Godfearing people. *Nasī* is but one more instance of disbelief, whereby these disbelievers are led astray. In one year they make a certain month lawful and in another year they make the same a forbidden month, so as they might make up for the number of the forbidden months and, at the same time, make lawful that

which is forbidden by Allah.³⁷ Their evil deeds have been made seeming fair to them: for Allah does not guide those who deny the Truth.

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they like. That is why the Islamic State offers them protection, if they agree to live as its *Zimmīs* by paying *Jizyah*, but it cannot allow that they should remain supreme rulers in any place and establish wrong ways and impose them on others. As this state of things inevitably produces chaos and disorder, it is the duty of the true Muslims to exert their utmost to bring to an end their wicked rule and bring them under a righteous order.

As regards the question, "What do the non-Muslims get in return for *Jizyah*" it may suffice to say that it is the price of the freedom which the Islamic State allows them in following their erroneous ways, while living in the jurisdiction of Islam and enjoying its protection. The money thus collected is spent in maintaining the righteous administration that gives them the freedom and protects their rights. This also serves as a yearly reminder to them that they have been deprived of the honour of paying *Zakāt* in the Way of Allah, and forced to pay *Jizyah* instead as a price of following the ways of error.

29. 'Uzair (Ezra) lived during the period around 450 B.C. The Jews regarded him with great reverence as the revivalist of their Scriptures which had been lost during their captivity in Babylon after the death of Prophet Solomon. So much so that they had lost all the knowledge of their Law, their traditions and of Hebrew, their national language. Then it was Ezra who re-wrote the Old Testament and revived the Law. That is why they used very exaggerated language in his reverence which misled some of the Jewish sects to make him 'the son of God'. The Qurān, however, does not assert that all the Jews were unanimous in declaring Ezra as 'the son of God'. What it intends to say is that the perversion in the articles of faith of the Jews concerning Allah had degenerated to such an extent that there were some amongst them who considered Ezra as the son of God.

30. "Those who were involved in *kufr* before them" were the Egyptians, the Greeks, the Romans, the Persians, etc. The Jews and the Christians were so influenced by their philosophies, their superstitions and fancies that they also invented erroneous creeds like theirs. (For details see E.N. 101 of AL-MĀ'IDAH).

31. "They have taken their scholars and monks as their Lords": the Holy Prophet himself explained its true significance. According to a Tradition, when Ḥaḍrat 'Aḍī bin Hātim, who was formerly a Christian, came to the Holy Prophet with the intention of understanding Islam, he asked several questions in order to remove his doubts. One of these was: "This verse accuses us of taking our scholars and monks as our lords. What is its real meaning, sir? For we do not take them as our lords." As a reply to this, the Holy Prophet put him a counter-question: "Is it

not a fact that you accept as unlawful what they declare to be unlawful, and lawful what they declare to be lawful?" 'Adī confessed, "Yes, sir, it is so." The Holy Prophet replied, "This amounts to making them your lords."

Incidentally, this Tradition shows that those who themselves set limits to the lawful and the unlawful without the authority of Allah's Book, assume for themselves the rank of Godhead, and those who acknowledge their right of making laws take them as their Lords.

It should be noted that they have been charged with (a) attributing sons to Allah, and (b) giving the right of making laws to others than Allah. These are to prove that their claim, that they believed in Allah, is false, even though they should believe in His existence. But such a wrong conception of Allah makes their belief in Allah meaningless.

32. The Arabic word (الدِّين) *ad-din* has been translated into 'ways', for the word (دين) *din*, as has already been explained in E.N. 204, AL-BAQARAH, is used for the 'way of life' or the 'system of life', which is followed in obedience to the supreme authority.

Now let us try to understand the significance of this verse. The object of the Mission of the Messenger is to make the Guidance and the Right Way he has brought from Allah dominant over all the other ways and systems of life. In other words, the Messenger is not sent to allow Allah's Way to remain subordinate to other ways in order to enjoy concessions from them. He is sent by the Sovereign of the earth and the heavens to make His Way dominant over all other ways. And if a wrong way is at all allowed to remain on the earth, it should be tolerated only under its own protection by the payment of *Jizyah* under the limits conferred by the Divine System as in the case of the system of life of the *Zimmis* who pay *Jizyah*.

33. These religious leaders are guilty of two sins. First, they devour the wealth of the common people by selling false decrees, and by taking bribes, gifts and presents on different pretexts. They invent religious regulations and rituals as tempt people to buy their salvations and fortunes in life from them and make deaths and marriages dependent on the payment of due 'price' to these "monopolists" of Paradise. To add to this another sin, they debar the people from the Way of Allah by involving them into different sorts of deviations and by obstructing the way of every Righteous Mission with the obstacles of 'learned' doubts and 'pious' suspicions.

34. This means that ever since Allah created the sun, the moon and the earth, the new moon takes place only once in a month; thus the year has always been of twelve months.

This has been mentioned to refute the practice of *nasī* (v. 37) whereby the pagan Arabs increased the number of the months of a year to 13 or 14 to enable them to interpose in the calendar the forbidden month which

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إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ ۖ إِلَّا تَتَفَرَّوْا يُعَذِّبُكُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ۖ وَيَسْتَبْدِلُ قَوْمًا غَيْرَكُمْ
 وَلَا تَتَضَرَّوْهُ شَيْئًا ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ۝ إِلَّا تَتَضَرَّوْهُ فَقَدْ نَصَرَهُ اللَّهُ
 إِذْ أَخْرَجَهُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ثَانِيَ اثْنَيْنِ إِذْ هُمَا فِي الْغَارِ إِذْ يَقُولُ لِصَاحِبِهِ
 لَا تَحْزَنْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَنَا ۗ فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَيْهِ وَأَيَّدَهُ بِجُنُودٍ لَّمْ
 تَرَوْهَا وَجَعَلَ كَلِمَةَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا السُّفْلَىٰ ۗ وَكَلِمَةُ اللَّهِ هِيَ الْعُلْيَا ۗ وَاللَّهُ
 عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ۝ إِنْفِرُوا خِفَافًا وَثِقَالًا وَجَاهِدُوا بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ فِي
 سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ذَٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ۝ لَوْ كَانَ عَرَضًا قَرِيبًا وَ
 سَفَرًا قَاصِدًا لَاتَّبَعُوكَ وَلَكِنْ بَعَدَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ السُّجَّةُ ۗ وَسَيَحْلِفُونَ بِاللَّهِ
 لَوِ اسْتَطَعْنَا لَخَرَجْنَا مَعَكُمْ يُهْلِكُونَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ إِنَّكُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ ۝
 عَفَا اللَّهُ عَنْكَ لِمَ أَذِنْتَ لَهُمْ حَتَّىٰ يَتَّبِعِنَا لِكِ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَتَعْلَمَ
 الْكَاذِبِينَ ۝ لَا يَسْتَأْذِنُكَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ أَن
 يُجَاهِدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالْمُتَّقِينَ ۝
 إِنَّمَا يَسْتَأْذِنُكَ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَارْتَابَتْ
 قُلُوبُهُمْ فَهُمْ فِي رَيْبِهِمْ يَتَرَدَّدُونَ ۝ وَلَوْ أَرَادُوا الْخُرُوجَ لَأَعَدُّوا لَهُ عُدَّةً
 وَلَكِنْ كَرِهَ اللَّهُ انبِعَاثَهُمْ فَثَبَّطَهُمْ وَقِيلَ اقْعُدُوا مَعَ الْقَاعِدِينَ ۝ لَوْ
 خَرَجُوا فِيكُمْ مَا زَادُوكُمْ إِلَّا خَبَالًا ۗ وَلَا أَوْضَعُوا خِلَافَكُمْ يَبْغُونَكُمُ الْفِتْنَةَ ۗ وَ
 فِيكُمْ سَاعُونَ لَهُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالظَّالِمِينَ ۝ لَقَدْ ابْتِغُوا الْفِتْنَةَ مِن
 قَبْلُ وَقَلَبُوا لِكَ الْأُمُورِ حَتَّىٰ جَاءَ الْحَقُّ وَظَهَرَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ وَهُمْ كَرِهُونَ ۝
 وَمِنْهُمْ مَن يَقُولُ ائْذَنْ لِّي وَلَا تَفْتِنِّي ۗ أَلَا فِي الْفِتْنَةِ سَقَطُوا ۗ وَإِن

O³⁸ you who believed! what was amiss with you that, 38-41
 when you were asked to march forth on the Way of Allah,
 you clung to the earth? What! did you prefer the life of this
 world to the life of the Hereafter? If it is so, you should
 know that all these goods of this worldly life will prove to be
 but little in the Hereafter.³⁹ If you will not march forth,
 Allah will inflict on you a painful chastisement,⁴⁰ and will
 substitute other people for you,⁴¹ and you will in no way harm
 Him, for Allah has power over everything. If you do not help
 your Prophet, (it does not matter): Allah did help him before
 when the disbelievers forced him to go away from his home,
 and he was but the second of two: when the two were in the
 cave; when he was saying to his Companion, "Be not dis-
 tressed: indeed Allah is with us."⁴² Then Allah sent down
 peace of mind to him from Himself, and helped him with the
 forces you did not see, and made the word of the disbelievers
 abased. And Allah's Word is always supreme, for Allah is
 All-Mighty, All-Wise. March forth whether you be light or
 heavy,⁴³ and exert your utmost in Allah's Way with your
 possessions and your lives: this is best for you, if you but
 know it.

O Prophet, had there been a prospect of immediate gain 42
 and an easy journey, most certainly they would have been
 quite ready to follow you; but the journey seemed too hard
 to them.⁴⁴ Still they will swear by Allah and say, "Had we
 been able to go forth, we would certainly have marched
 along with you"; they are incurring destruction on themselves:
 for Allah knows well that they are liars.

O Prophet, may Allah forgive you: why did you give 43-45
 them leave to stay behind? (You yourself should not have
 given them leave), so that it would have become clear to you
 which of them spoke the truth, and you would have also
 known which of them were liars.⁴⁵ For, those, who believe
 in Allah and the Last Day, will never ask you to exempt
 them from doing *Jihād* with their possessions and their per-
 sons: Allah knows well those who fear Him. Those only make
 such requests, who do not believe in Allah and the Last Day,
 and whose hearts are filled with doubts, and they are waver-
 ing because of their doubts.⁴⁶

46-49

If they had really intended to march forth, they would surely have made some preparation for it. But Allah was averse to their going forth;⁴⁷ and He caused them to hold back, and it was said to them, "Stay behind with those who stay behind." Had they gone forth with you, they would have added nothing but mischief to you and they would have made strenuous efforts to sow discord among your ranks; yet there are among you some who listen to them but Allah knows these mischief-makers full well. Even before this, these people had striven to stir up mischief and turn by turn they practised all sorts of devices to make you unsuccessful, until the Truth prevailed and Allah's design was fulfilled, though they were averse to it.

There is such a one among them, who says, "Give me leave to stay behind and do not expose me to temptations."⁴⁸—Note it well that such people have already succumbed to temptations⁴⁹ and Hell has encircled these disbelievers.⁵⁰

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had been made lawful by them. (For fuller explanation see E.N. 37).

35. ". . . . do not wrong yourselves": "Do not let go waste the good things for which fighting has been made unlawful during these months by creating disorder in them that will ultimately be harmful to you also". The four forbidden months are . . . Zil-Qa'adah, Zil-Hajjah and Muḥarram for *Haj* and Rajab for *'Umrah*.

36. That is, "If the *mushriks* do not desist from fighting during these months, you should also fight them and present a united front against them, just as they put up a united front against you". This verse has been explained by v. 194 of AL-BAQARAH.

37. The pagan Arabs practised نَسِيَ (*nasi*) in two ways. Whenever it suited them, they would declare a prohibited month to be an ordinary month in which fighting, robbery and murder in retaliation were lawful for them. Then they would declare an ordinary month to be a prohibited month instead of this month in order to make up for the deficiency caused in the number of the prohibited months.

The other way of *nasi* was the addition of a month in order to harmonize the lunar with the solar year so that the *Haj* should always fall in the same season and they should be saved from the botheration and inconveniences that are experienced by its observance according to the lunar year. In this way *Haj* was observed for 36 years on dates other than the actual dates. Then in the thirty-seventh year it was again observed on the 9th and 10th of Zil-Hajjah, as they should have actually fallen according to the lunar calendar. It so happened that on the occasion

when the Holy Prophet performed Ḥajja-tul-Widā'a (his Last *Haj*), these dates by rotation coincided with the actual dates of *Haj* according to the lunar calendar. So he declared during the course of his historic address at 'Arafāt: "This year the dates of *Haj* have again occurred exactly at their natural and proper time after a long period of circulation." Accordingly, since that 'Last *Haj*' of A.H. 9, it is being observed up to this day according to the correct dates of the lunar year.

By making *nasī* unlawful and forbidding it, the Law declared that the two objects for which it was practised were also sinful. First, they not only made lawful what Allah had made unlawful but also tried to practise deception on Allah by the seeming observance of the Law. As regards the second object of making the season of *Haj* fixed permanently according to the solar calendar, this too, was in fact the worst kind of rebellion against the Divine Law, although it appeared to be a harmless thing done for public good. But it defeated the very object of the Divine Law which prescribed the lunar calendar instead of the solar calendar for the observance of obligatory duties. Allah did this to ensure many good things for the Muslims, one of which is that His servants should be so trained as to obey His Commandments at all times of the year and under all circumstances. For instance, the month of Ramaḍān circulates among all the seasons of the year and the Muslims get used to obeying His Commandments whether it be summer or winter, dry or rainy season. This gives them that excellent moral training which is the real object of all the obligatory duties imposed by the Divine Law. Likewise, the dates of *Haj* according to the lunar calendar, fall during different seasons: therefore the servants of Allah have to travel during all the seasons, favourable and unfavourable. Thus they come out successful in the Divine test under all the circumstances and learn to be steadfast in their obedience.

It is obvious that such a training will stand them in good stead in many other fields in which one has to fight the battle of the Truth.

Now it would have become quite clear why *nasī* was made unlawful and forbidden. It was designed to fix the season of *Haj* in order to suit their own conveniences though it defeated the Divine purpose of *Haj* and of the forbidden months. It meant that they had rebelled against Allah and become independent of Him; this is *kufr*. Besides this, Islam is a universal religion and for all human beings. It is obvious that the periods of fasting and performing *Haj* cannot satisfy all if they be fixed in accordance with the months of the solar year. For if they are performed in fixed months according to the solar year, the one and the same month will not equally suit all for the simple reason that it will fall during the same seasons in different places—summer or winter or very hot or very cold or rainy or dry or harvesting or sowing—year after year.

In this connection it may also be kept in view that the proclamation about the prohibition of "*nasī*" was made on the occasion of *Haj* in A.H. 9 and next year, the *Haj* was performed on right dates which were in accord-

ance with the lunar year. Since that time *Haj* is being performed according to exact dates.

38. From here begins the discourse (vv. 38-72) which was sent down at the time when the Holy Prophet was engaged in making preparations for the Campaign to Tabūk.

39. "... you should know that the goods . . . Hereafter" may imply two meanings. First: "When you will find that the life in the Hereafter is eternal and see that the good things and the provisions of enjoyment are countless, you will realize that the potential and the actual enjoyments of the temporary life of this world were nothing as compared with the blessings of that great Kingdom. At that time you will regret why you deprived yourselves of this everlasting happiness and bliss for the sake of the little—very little—short-lived enjoyments of the mortal life of this world." Second: "The goods of this worldly life are of no value in the Hereafter, howsoever abundant they might be. You shall have to give up each and every thing as soon as you breathe your last, for nothing of this world can go with you to the Next World. Of course, you will get credit for what you sacrificed for the pleasure and love of Allah, and love of Islam."

40. A general rule of the Islamic conduct has been derived from "If you . . . chastisement." When the Muslims are commanded to go to *Jihād* by a public proclamation from their leader, it becomes an obligatory duty for those who are called upon to do *Jihād*, whether they belong to any particular group or region. So much so that the Faith of those who do not go for *Jihād* without a genuine excuse becomes doubtful. But even in cases where the Muslims are called upon to go forth for *Jihād* and there is no command for the compulsory enrolment of every able-bodied Muslim of a particular group or region, it is a religious duty (though not obligatory), and it shall be considered to have been performed even if only some Muslims go forth for it.

41. That is, "Allah's work does not depend on you and will be accomplished only if you do it. It is Allah's grace and bounty that He is affording you the golden opportunity of serving the cause of His Way. Therefore if you miss this opportunity because of any foolish assumption, Allah will raise another people and bestow on them the opportunity and capability of doing His work, and you will be losers".

42. This refers to the occasion when the disbelievers had decided to assassinate the Holy Prophet, and the very night fixed for his assassination he had left Makkah for Al-Madīnah. By that time most of the Muslims had migrated to Al-Madīnah in twos and threes and only a few helpless ones had remained behind in Makkah. As he was sure that he would be pursued, he took only Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr with him and went southward instead of following the northern route to Al-Madīnah and remained hidden in the Thaur Cave for three days. In the meantime the blood thirsty enemies had begun to make a thorough search for him all

around Makkah and some of them reached the very mouth of the Cave where he was hidden. On this critical occasion Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr naturally felt alarmed lest they should peep into the Cave, and see them. But the Holy Prophet remained as calm as before and reassured his Companion, saying, "Be not distressed: indeed Allah is with us."

43. The words ". . . . whether you are light or heavy . . ." have a very comprehensive meaning: "When it is enjoined to march forth for *Jihād*, you must go forth anyhow, whether you like it or not: whether you are in a state of prosperity or indigence: whether you are well-equipped or ill-equipped: whether the circumstances are favourable or adverse: whether you are young and healthy or old and weak."

44. They felt the journey to Tabūk to be hard because they had to fight with the army of the great and powerful Roman Empire: because they had to journey in the scorching heat of the summer season of the desert: because there was a famine in the country and the new harvest on which they had pinned their hopes, was ready for reaping.

45. Allah did not approve of the exemption which the Holy Prophet had granted to the hypocrites who had put forward lame excuses. Though he knew it well that they were inventing false excuses, he gave them leave to stay behind because of his inherent kindness. But Allah warned him that such a leniency was not well placed as he gave them an opportunity of hiding their hypocrisy. Had they remained behind without getting an exemption, the false profession of their faith would have been exposed.

46. This verse shows clearly that the conflict between Islam and *kufir* is the criterion to distinguish between a true Believer and a hypocrite. The one who supports Islam in this conflict with the whole of his heart and expends all of his energies and resources in order to make it victorious and does not hesitate in the least to make any sacrifices for this purpose, is a true Believer. On the contrary, the one who hesitates to support Islam in this conflict and refrains from making sacrifices in its Way, when he confronts the threat of the victory of *kufir*, is a hypocrite, for such an attitude is itself a proof of the fact that there is no faith in his heart.

47. Allah held them back for He did not like that they should join *Jihād* unwillingly without any sincere intention for it. As they had no mind to make sacrifices to exalt the cause of Islam, and, therefore, would have taken part in it half-heartedly to escape the taunts of the Muslims or to create mischief, this would have resulted in a greater evil, as has been stated explicitly in the next verse (48).

48. Some of the hypocrites, who were requesting the Holy Prophet to give them leave to stay behind on one pretext or the other, were so impudent that they were inventing excuses of a religious or moral nature for refraining from *Jihād* in the Way of Allah. One of these was Jad-bin-Qais, who, according to traditions came to the Holy Prophet and said, "I am a lover of beauty and my people know that I am very weak in regard to women: therefore I am afraid to go forth lest the beauty of the Roman

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جَهَنَّمَ لَسِحِيطَةً^{٥١} بِالْكَافِرِينَ^{٥٢} إِنْ تُصِيبَكَ حَسَنَةٌ تَسُؤْهُمْ^{٥٣} وَإِنْ
 تُصِيبَكَ مُصِيبَةٌ يَقُولُوا قَدْ أَخَذْنَا أَمْرًا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَيتَوَلَّوْا وَهُمْ
 فَرِحُونَ^{٥٤} قُلْ لَنْ يُصِيبَنَا إِلَّا مَا كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَنَا^{٥٥} هُوَ مَوْلَانَا وَعَلَى اللَّهِ
 فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ^{٥٦} قُلْ هَلْ تَرْتَضُونَ بِنَا إِلَّا لِأَحَدٍ الْحُسَيْنِ وَ
 نَحْنُ نَرْتَضِ بِكُمْ أَنْ يُصِيبَكُمُ اللَّهُ بِعَذَابٍ مِنْ عِنْدِهِ أَوْ بِأَيْدِينَا^{٥٧}
 فَتَرْتَضُوا إِنَّا مَعَكُمْ مُتَرَبِّصُونَ^{٥٨} قُلْ أَنْفِقُوا طَوْعًا أَوْ كَرْهًا لَنْ يُتَقَبَلَ
 مِنْكُمْ إِتْكَكُمْ كُنْتُمْ قَوْمًا فَسِيقِينَ^{٥٩} وَمَا مَنَعَهُمْ أَنْ تُقَبَلَ مِنْهُمْ نَفَقَتُهُمْ
 إِلَّا أَنَّهُمْ كَفَرُوا بِاللَّهِ وَبِرَسُولِهِ وَلَا يَأْتُونَ الصَّلَاةَ إِلَّا وَهُمْ كُسَالَى
 وَلَا يُنْفِقُونَ إِلَّا وَهُمْ كَرِهُونَ^{٦٠} فَلَا تُعْجِبْكَ أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُهُمْ
 إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُعَذِّبَهُمْ بِهَا فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَتَزْهَقَ أَنْفُسُهُمْ وَهُمْ
 كَافِرُونَ^{٦١} وَيَحْلِفُونَ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُمْ لَمِنْكُمْ وَمَا هُمْ مِنْكُمْ وَلَكِنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ
 يَفْرُقُونَ^{٦٢} لَوْ يَجِدُونَ مَلْجَأً أَوْ مَغْرَبًا أَوْ مَدَّخَلًا لَوَلَّوْا إِلَيْهِ وَهُمْ
 يَجْسَحُونَ^{٦٣} وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَلْمِزُكَ فِي الصَّدَقَاتِ فَإِنْ أُعْطُوا مِنْهَا رَضُوا
 وَإِنْ لَمْ يُعْطُوا مِنْهَا إِذَا هُمْ يَسْخَطُونَ^{٦٤} وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ رَضُوا مَا أَشْهَمُ
 اللَّهُ وَرَسُولَهُ^{٦٥} وَقَالُوا حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ سَيُؤْتِينَا اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَرَسُولُهُ إِنَّا
 إِلَى اللَّهِ رَاغِبُونَ^{٦٦} إِنَّمَا الصَّدَقَاتُ لِلْفُقَرَاءِ وَالسَّكِينِ وَالْعَمِلِينَ عَلَيْهَا^{٦٧}
 وَالْمُؤَلَّفَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَالْغَرَمِينَ وَفِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَابْنِ
 السَّبِيلِ^{٦٨} فَرِيضَةٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ^{٦٩} وَمِنْهُمْ الَّذِينَ
 يُؤْذُونَ النَّبِيَّ وَيَقُولُونَ هُوَ أذُنٌ^{٧٠} قُلْ أذُنٌ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ بِاللَّهِ وَ

If a good thing comes to you, it grieves them; but if a disaster befalls you, they turn away rejoicing and saying, "It is good that we took our precautionary measures beforehand to set our affairs aright." Say to them, "Nothing (good or bad) can befall us except that which Allah has destined for us: Allah is our Guardian and the Believers should put their trust in Him alone".⁵¹ 50-51

Say to them, "What can be the thing you await for us other than one of the two best things?⁵² But what we await for you is whether Allah Himself inflicts His chastisement on you or at our hands; well, now await, and we, too, await with you". 52

Say, "You may expend your possessions willingly or unwillingly:⁵³ they shall not be accepted in any case, because you are a wicked people." The reason why their expendings shall not be accepted is no other than that they have not believed in Allah and His Messenger: and they come to offer their *Ṣalāt* but reluctantly, and they expend in the Way of Allah with unwilling hearts. So let not their great wealth and the large number of their children delude you; for Allah wills to chastise them by means of these very things in this worldly life⁵⁴ and that they would die in a state of unbelief.⁵⁵ 53-55

They swear by Allah that they are Believers like you, whereas they are not at all of you. In fact, they are people who are afraid of you: if they could find a place of refuge or a cave or a hiding place to hide therein, they would run in frantic haste to take refuge in it.⁵⁶ 56-57

O Prophet, there are some among them who find fault with you concerning the distribution of *Ṣadaqāt* (*Zakāt* collections); if something is given to them thereof, they are well pleased and if they are not given anything thereof they become angry.⁵⁷ Would that they were content⁵⁸ with what Allah and His Messenger had given them and would say, "Allah suffices us: He will provide for us in abundance out of His own bounty,⁵⁹ and His Messenger will also be kindly disposed towards us. Indeed we look to Allah alone."⁶⁰ As a matter of fact, *Zakāt* collections are only for the needy⁶¹ and the indigent,⁶² and for those who are employed to collect them⁶³ and for those whose hearts are to be won over⁶⁴ and 58-60

for the ransoming of slaves⁶⁵ and for helping the debtors⁶⁶ and for the way of Allah⁶⁷ and for the hospitality of the wayfarers.⁶⁸ This is an obligatory duty from Allah : and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.

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women should beguile me into sin. Therefore “. . . do not expose me to temptations.”

49. Though they wanted exemption, they had already fallen a prey to the temptations of telling lies, of double dealings and hypocrisy. They deluded themselves that they would be considered pious people, if they would put forward the fear of temptations to avoid *Jihād*, when, in fact, they had already fallen into the greatest possible temptation of refraining from *Jihād* in the conflict between Islam and *kufr*.

50. That is, “Such a show of piety has not taken them away from Hell; nay, on the other hand, the same thing has caused them to be entangled in the clutches of Hell.”

51. In this passage a demarcation has been made between the attitudes of a man of the world and of a man of God. Whatever the man of the world does, he does it to please his own self. He exults if he attains some worldly ends but feels utterly dejected if he fails to attain them. Besides, he depends entirely on his material resources for his success and feels encouraged if these are favourable, but loses heart if these are unfavourable.

In contrast to the man of the world, whatever the man of God does, he does it to please Him and trusts in Him and not in his own powers nor in material resources. Therefore he is neither exultant over his success in the cause of Allah nor loses heart by failure, for he believes that it is the Will of God that is working in both the cases. Therefore he is neither disheartened by disasters nor is filled with conceit by successes. This is because he believes that both prosperity and adversity are from Allah and are nothing but a trial from Him. Therefore his only worry is to do his best to come out successful in His test. Besides, as there are no worldly ends before him, he does not measure his success or failure by the achievement or failure of his ends. On the other hand, the only object before him is to sacrifice his life and wealth in the Way of Allah, and he measures the success or failure of his efforts by the standard he achieves in the performance of this duty. Therefore if he is satisfied that he has done his best to perform this duty, he believes that he has come out successful by the grace of God, though he might not have been able to accomplish anything from the worldly point of view; for he believes that his Allah in Whose cause he has expended his life and wealth will not let go waste the reward of his efforts. As he does not depend on the material resources only, he is neither grieved if they are unfavourable, nor feels exultant when they are favourable. His entire trust is in God, Who is the controller

of all the resources; therefore he goes on doing his duty even under the most unfavourable circumstances with the same courage and perseverance that is shown by the worldly people in favourable circumstances alone. That is why Allah asked the Holy Prophet to say to the hypocrites, "There is a basic difference between you and us in regard to the conduct of affairs. We believe that both the good and the bad are from Allah: therefore the apparent result does not make us happy or sad. Moreover, we depend on Allah in our affairs and you depend on material resources: so we are content and happy in all circumstances."

52. This is the answer to those who, as usual, were not taking any part in the conflict between Islam and *kufir*, but were very "wisely" watching it from a distance to see whether the Holy Prophet and his Companions would return victorious from Tabūk or would be totally destroyed by the powerful Roman army. They were told that either of the two results they were awaiting, would be good for the Muslims. For it was obvious that it would be a good thing if they won victory. But even if they were killed in the Way of Allah, it would be a success from their point of view, though not in the sight of the world, as the Muslims' standard of measurement is different from that of the hypocrites and the like. A Believer considers it his success if he sacrifices his life and wealth in the Way of Allah, irrespective of whether he succeeds in conquering some country or in establishing a government or not. According to him the criterion of success or failure is whether he has extended or not all the powers of his body and soul, his head and his heart to elevate the Word of Allah, though from the worldly point of view the result of his efforts might be nothing at all.

53. V. 53 is a sharp retort to those hypocrites who desired exemption from *Jihād* but, at the same time, wanted to make some monetary contributions in order to avoid the exposure of their hypocrisy. They said, "Please grant us leave from military service because we are unable to do this, but we are ready to make monetary contributions towards it." To this Allah retorted, saying, "Whatever you may contribute, it shall not be accepted.....".

54. "Allah wills to chastise them by means of these things in this world.....", because of their great love for their children and wealth as these misled them to adopt the hypocritical attitude which, in turn, degraded them in the Muslim society. Consequently, in the Islamic System they would lose the respect, the reputation and the prestige they enjoyed in the pre-Islamic society. On the contrary, even the Muslim slaves and the sons of slaves, the farmers and the shepherds, who proved the sincerity of their Faith would win honour in the new system, and the big hereditary chiefs, who refrained from this because of their love of the world, would lose their fame, honour and prestige.

In order to illustrate the above we cite an incident that happened during the Caliphate of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar. Once some big chiefs of the Quraish including Suhail-bin-'Amr and Ḥārith-bin-Hishām, went to see

Caliph 'Umar and took their seats near him. Soon after (his) some humble people from among the *Muhājirīn* and the *Anṣār* came there. The Caliph asked those chiefs to make room for them, and seated these humble people near his own seat. This went on for some time till these chiefs reached the remotest corner in the assembly. When they came out, Hārith-bin-Hishām said to his companions, "You have noticed what a humiliating treatment has been meted out to us today!" Suhail-bin-'Amr replied, "It is no fault of 'Umar but it is our own fault. When we were invited to Islam, we turned away from it, but these humble people accepted it and made sacrifices for it." Then both of them returned to the meeting and said, "Today we have noticed your treatment and we feel that it is all due to our own shortcomings, but tell us if there is a way for us to make atonements for our past failures". The Caliph did not make any reply but merely pointed towards the Roman territory, which meant that the only way of regaining their prestige was to expend their lives and wealths in doing *Jihād* there.

55. "They would die in a state of unbelief" because of their hypocrisy, which would not let them attain sincere Faith till they die. Thus after ruining their moral and spiritual lives in this world, they would leave it in the state of unbelief, which will ruin their lives in the Hereafter in a far worse way.

56. This was the condition of the hypocrites of Al-Madīnah, the majority of whom were rich and old. We find from a list of the hypocrites, cited by Ibn Kathīr in *Al-Badāyah-wan-Nihayah*, that only one of them was young and none was poor. These people had large properties and flourishing businesses in Al-Madīnah. They were worldly-wise and their wide experience had taught them expediency, but their sense of self-interest had put them into a dilemma. When Islam reached Al-Madīnah and a large majority of the population embraced it sincerely and enthusiastically, they found themselves in a very perplexing situation. They could not reject it outright for the majority of their own people, nay, their own sons and daughters, were filled with enthusiasm for Islam. If they had remained unbelievers, they would have lost their high position, their prestige and reputation and run the risk of a rebellion by the Muslims of their own household. On the other hand, if they sincerely embraced Islam, they would incur the danger of war, not only with the whole of Arabia but also with the adjoining nations and empires. Above all, self-interest had so blinded them that, in resolving the dilemma, they would not consider the problem from the point of view of truth and righteousness which by themselves are worthy of every sacrifice. Therefore they decided that the best thing for them was to profess Islam outwardly in order to make their positions, properties and businesses secure, but to adopt a hypocritical attitude towards it so that they might be able to avoid the losses and perils inherent in the sincere acceptance of Islam.

This verse (57) depicts the dilemma of the hypocrites, as if to say, "In reality these people are not Muslims, though they swear that they

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are Muslims like you; they profess Islam simply because they are afraid of losses they might incur, if they reject it outright. Then they dare not stay at Al-Madīnah as non-Muslims for they would lose the high positions they enjoyed and might even have to cut off their connection with their wives and children; and if they decided to emigrate from Al-Madīnah, they would have to abandon their properties and business. But they are not prepared for these sacrifices for they have no sincere attachment even to *kufr*. Therefore they are compelled against their beliefs by the force of circumstances to remain in Al-Madīnah: they offer their *Ṣalāt* but regard this as forced labour: they pay the *Zakāt* dues but as a penalty, for they are in their heart of hearts averse to these things. To add to their 'calamities' they are asked every now and then to make sacrifices of their lives and their wealth and to go forth for *Jihād* and to fight with one enemy or the other. They are so much afraid of these 'calamities' that, in order to escape from them, they would run in frantic haste to take refuge in any hole, if they hoped that it would provide immunity against these 'calamities'."

57. The people referred to were the hypocrites, who felt depressed on every occasion of the distribution of the *Zakāt* collections, for they thought that they were not being given their due share. Then they would taunt the Holy Prophet with making unfair distributions. This happened when the payment of *Zakāt* was made an obligatory duty on all those Muslims whose possessions exceeded the prescribed limits. They were required to contribute from their agricultural products, animals, commercial commodities, minerals dug out of mines and the gold and silver they possessed, at different rates, varying from 2½% to 20%, and all these were collected and spent in a systematic way from a central place.

As a result of this so much wealth flowed into the hands of a single person, the Holy Prophet, that it had no parallel in the whole territory of Arabia. Naturally the materialists looked at these things with greedy eyes and wanted to grab as much as possible out of this wealth. But their greed could not be satisfied, for the Holy Prophet, who had made the use of *Zakāt* Fund unlawful for his own person and for his own relatives, could not be expected to give anything out of it to anyone who did not deserve it. It is thus obvious that they found fault with the Holy Prophet not because he was unfair in the distribution of the *Zakāt* collections but because he did not allow the hypocrites to grab anything from these without any right to them. They, however, very cunningly hid their real grievance, and accused the Holy Prophet of showing partiality and injustice in the distribution of the *Zakāt* collections.

58. That is, it would have been much better for them if they had been content with their share of the spoils which the Holy Prophet gave them and what they earned by the grace of Allah and with the prosperity Allah had bestowed on them.

59. It would have been good for them to adopt this attitude: "Allha

suffices us... bounty," for they ought to have known that they would receive their due shares besides the *Zakāt* collections out of the wealth that would come to the State treasury, just as they were receiving their shares previously.

60. "We look to Allah alone" means "We give our attention to Allah and His grace and not to the world and its worthless riches and we desire to do His Will: we direct our expectations and hopes to Him and we are content with what He bestows on us."

61. According to the Arabic usage, **فُقَرَاء** (*fuqarā'*: the needy) are all those people who depend on others for the necessities of life. The Arabic word *fuqarā'* is a general word for all those who are needy because of some physical defects, or old age, or temporarily, and can become self-supporting if they are helped, e.g. orphans, widows, the unemployed, etc., etc.

62. According to the Arabic usage, **مَسَاكِين** (*masākīn*), are those indigent people who are in greater distress than the needy people usually are. The Holy Prophet especially enjoined the Muslims to help such people as are unable to find the necessary means to satisfy their wants and are in very straitened circumstances, but are so self-respecting that they would not beg for anything nor would others judge from their outward appearance that they were deserving people. According to a Tradition, "*Miskīn* is one who cannot make both ends meet, though his appearance does not show that he needs help nor does he beg for help." In short, he is a self-respecting man who has become needy.

63. "...who are employed to collect them..." are those who collect *Zakāt* dues, supervise the collections and keep accounts, and help in their distribution, irrespective of the fact whether or not they are needy or indigent; their remunerations shall be paid out of the *Zakāt* Funds. In this connection it should be noted well that the Holy Prophet had declared the *Zakāt* Funds to be unlawful for himself and for the members of his own family (Banī Hāshim). Accordingly, he never received any remuneration for collecting or distributing *Zakāt* Funds. As regards the other members of Bani Hāshim, they were allowed to do this service without receiving any remuneration, but otherwise it is unlawful for them. On the contrary, the payment of the *Zakāt* dues was obligatory on Banī Hāshim if their possessions warranted this under the prescribed limits, but under no circumstances whatsoever were they allowed to accept anything out of *Zakāt* collected from others.

There is, however, a difference of opinion as to whether they should accept anything out of the collections made from their own family or not. Imām Abū Yūsuf opines that they are allowed to accept these when they are needy or poor or wayfarers, but the majority of the Jurists regard this also unlawful.

64. A portion of *Zakāt* Funds may also be given to win over to Islam those who might be engaged in anti-Islamic activities or to those in the camp of the unbelievers who might be brought to help the Muslims

or to those newly converted Muslims, who might be inclined to revert to *kufr*, if no monetary help was extended to them. It is permissible to award pensions to them or give them lump sums of money to make them helpers of Islam or submissive to it, or at least to render them into harmless enemies. A portion of the spoils or other incomes may be spent on them and, if need be, also a portion of *Zakāt* Funds. In such cases, the condition of being needy or indigent or on a journey, etc., is also waived; nay, they might be even rich people or chiefs who are otherwise not eligible for anything from *Zakāt* Funds.

All are agreed that during the time of the Holy Prophet pensions and gifts were given under the head of 'winning over people', but there is a difference of opinion whether this head of expenditure was abolished or not after his death. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah and his followers are of the opinion that it was abolished during the Caliphate of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, and 'now it is not lawful to spend anything under this head'. Imām Shāfi'ī is of the opinion that something may be given to sinful Muslims under this head from *Zakāt* Funds but not to unbelievers, while other Jurists are of the opinion that expenses under this head are lawful even now, if a need arises for them.

The Ḥanafīs base their opinion on an incident that happened after the death of the Holy Prophet. 'Uyainah bin Ḥiṣan and Aqra'a bin Ḥabīs came to Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr and asked him to allot to them a certain piece of land. So he gave them a written order for this. They took it to some other highly placed Companions for further confirmation and some of them endorsed this order. But when they took it to Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, he tore the paper into pieces before their very eyes, saying, "It is true that the Holy Prophet used to give something to win over your hearts because Islam was weak at that time, but now Allah has made Islam so strong that it does not stand in need of people like you." At this they went to Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr and complained to him about it and taunted him, saying, "Are you the Caliph or 'Umar?" But he took no notice of this nor did any of the Companions differ with Ḥaḍrat 'Umar's opinion. The Ḥanafīs conclude from this incident that when the number and power of Muslims increased by the grace of Allah and they no longer stood in need of any support from such people, the reason for which expenses under this head were permitted in the first instance remained no longer there. Therefore the Companions unanimously abolished expenditure under this head.

Imām Shāfi'ī says that there is nothing to prove that the Holy Prophet ever spent anything out of *Zakāt* Funds under this head. All the incidents mentioned in the traditions show that whatever he spent for the purpose of winning over hearts to Islam, was spent out of the spoils of war and not out of *Zakāt* Funds.

In my opinion there is nothing to show that the expenses for winning over hearts have been made unlawful for ever up to the Last Day. There

[Contd on p. 204

يُؤْمِنُ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَرَحْمَةً لِّلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ
رَسُولَ اللَّهِ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٧٦﴾ يَخْلِفُونَ بِاللَّهِ لَكُمْ لِيَرْضَوْكُمْ وَاللَّهُ وَ
رَسُولُهُ أَحَقُّ أَنْ يُرْضَوْهُ إِنْ كَانُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٧٧﴾ أَلَمْ يَعْلَمُوا أَنَّهُ مَنِ
الَّذِي
يُحَادِدِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَأَنَّ لَهُ نَارَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدًا فِيهَا ذَلِكَ الْخِزْيُ
الْعَظِيمُ ﴿٧٨﴾ يَحْذَرُ الْمُنْفِقُونَ أَنْ تَنْزَلَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُورَةٌ تُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا فِي
قُلُوبِهِمْ قُلِ اسْتَهْزِئُوا إِنَّا اللَّهُ مُخْرِجٌ مَّا تَحْذَرُونَ ﴿٧٩﴾ وَلَئِنْ سَأَلْتَهُمْ
لَيَقُولُنَّ إِنَّمَا كُنَّا نَخُوضُ وَنَلْعَبُ قُلْ أَبِاللَّهِ وَآيَاتِهِ وَرَسُولِهِ كُنْتُمْ
تَسْتَهْزِئُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾ لَا تَعْتَذِرُوا قَدْ كَفَرْتُمْ بَعْدَ إِيمَانِكُمْ إِنْ نَعَفَ عَنْ
كَآفِيَةٍ مِّنْكُمْ نُعَذِّبْ طَائِفَةً بِأَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا مُجْرِمِينَ ﴿٨١﴾ الْمُنْفِقُونَ وَ
السُّفِيَّتُ بَعْضُهُمْ مِّنْ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمُنْكَرِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمَعْرُوفِ
وَيَقْبِضُونَ أَيْدِيَهُمْ نَسُوا اللَّهَ فَنَسِيَهُمْ إِنَّ الْمُنْفِقِينَ هُمُ الْفٰسِقُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾
وَعَدَّ اللَّهُ الْمُنْفِقِينَ وَالْمُنْفِقَاتِ وَالْكُفَّارَ نَارَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا هِيَ
حَسْبُهُمْ وَلَعَنَّ اللَّهُ وَلَعَنَّ اللَّهُ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّقِيمٌ ﴿٨٣﴾ كَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ
كَانُوا أَشَدَّ مِنْكُمْ قُوَّةً وَآكْثَرَ أَمْوَالًا وَأَوْلَادًا فَاسْتَمْتَعُوا بِخَلْقِهِمْ
فَاسْتَمْتَعَتْ خَلْقَكُمْ كَمَا اسْتَمْتَعَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ بِخَلْقِهِمْ وَ
خُصَّتُمْ كَالَّذِينَ خَاضُوا أُولَئِكَ حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ
وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْخٰسِرُونَ ﴿٨٤﴾ أَلَمْ يَأْتِهِمْ نَبَأُ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ قَوْمِ
نُوحٍ وَعَادٍ وَشُعُوبَةَ وَقَوْمِ إِبْرٰهِيمَ وَأَصْحَابِ مَدْيَنَ وَالْمُؤْتَفِكَةَ
إَتَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيَظْلِمَهُمْ وَلٰكِنْ كَانُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ

وقف لازم
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There are some among them who injure the Prophet and 61
 say, "This man readily believes whatever he hears."⁶⁹ Say,
 "It is good for you that he is so:⁷⁰ He believes in Allah and
 puts his trust in the believers⁷¹ and is a blessing for those who
 are true believers among you. As regards those who injure
 the Messenger of Allah, there is a painful chastisement for
 them".

These people swear by Allah before you in order to 62-63
 please you, though Allah and His Messenger have a greater
 right that they should try to please them if they are true
 believers. Do they not know that whoso opposes Allah and
 His Messenger shall have the Fire of Hell for him wherein he
 shall abide for ever? This is a great ignominy.

The hypocrites dread lest a *sūrah* should be sent down to 64-66
 Muslims revealing to them what is in their hearts.⁷² O
 Prophet, say to them, "Go on mocking, Allah will surely bring
 to light the very thing you are dreading." If you question
 them ("What were you talking about?"), they will promptly
 answer, "We were merely jesting and making merry."⁷³ Ask
 them, "What, then! were you mocking at Allah and His
 Revelations and His Messenger? Do not invent excuses now;
 you have indeed denied the truth after you had professed
 belief in it. Even if We pardon some of you, We will surely
 chastise others of you, for they are the guilty ones".⁷⁴

The hypocrites, both men and women, are all of a kind: 67-70
 they enjoin what is evil and forbid what is good and withhold
 their hands from doing good.⁷⁵ They forgot Allah: then Allah
 also forgot them; indeed the hypocrites are the evil-doers.
 Allah has promised the hypocrites, both men and women, as
 well as the disbelievers the fire of Hell, wherein they shall
 abide for ever: that is the proper place for them; for the curse
 of Allah is upon them and theirs is the lasting torment.—You
 are behaving⁷⁶ just like those who went before you: they had
 more power than you, and possessed greater riches and had
 more children than you: they had enjoyed their portion of the
 good things of the worldly life and you, too, have enjoyed your
 portion of the good things like them: you are also engaged in
 idle discussions like the discussions they held. Consequently,
 in the end everything they did, proved vain in this world and

shall be vain in the Next World: surely they are the people who are the losers. Has not⁷⁷ the story reached them of those who had gone before them—the people of Noah, tribes of 'Ād and Thamūd, the people of Abraham and the inhabitants of Midian and of the overturned cities⁷⁸? Their Messengers came to them with clear signs; then it was not Allah Who would wrong them, but they wronged their own selves.⁷⁹

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is no doubt that the action taken by Ḥaḍrat 'Umar was absolutely right, for if and when the Islamic State does not consider it necessary to spend anything under this head, Islam does not make it obligatory to spend something for 'winning hearts'. On the other hand, if need for this arises at any time, it is authorized to incur expenses under this head for Allah has kept a provision for this. Ḥaḍrat 'Umar and the other Companions agreed only on this that there was no need to give anything for this purpose at that time because the circumstances did not warrant it. But there is no reason to conclude from this that the Companions disallowed for ever the expenses that were permitted by the Qurān under certain circumstances for the good of Islam.

As regards the opinion of Imām Shāfi'ī, it appears to be correct in so far as it is not lawful to spend anything under this head out of *Zakāt* Funds, if these expenses can be met out of other funds. But if it is necessitated that something should be spent under this head out of *Zakāt* Funds, there is no reason why a differentiation should be made in this regard between sinful Muslims and unbelievers. For the Qurān has not allocated the share because of the faith of the prospective recipients but because Islam required to win their hearts for its own good, and because this could not be achieved except by giving them a portion of wealth. Therefore the Qurān allows the *Amīr* of the Believers to spend a part of the *Zakāt* Funds to achieve this end, if, when and where the required conditions exist. The fact that the Holy Prophet did not spend anything from the *Zakāt* Funds on unbelievers for this purpose does not mean that it is unlawful to do so, for he did not spend from this fund because there was enough money in other funds for this purpose. Had it been unlawful to spend anything from *Zakāt* Funds on unbelievers, he would have explicitly forbidden it.

65. A portion of *Zakāt* Funds may be spent for the ransoming of slaves in two ways. First, help may be given to a slave for the payment of the ransom money, if he enters into an agreement with his master that he will set him free, if the slave pays him a certain amount of money. The second way is that the Islamic government may itself pay the price of his freedom and set him at liberty. There is a consensus of opinion about the first way, but there is difference of opinion about the second way. Ḥaḍrat 'Alī, Sa'īd bin Jubair, Laith, Thaurī, Ibrahīm Nakhī', Sha'abī

and Muḥammad bin Sīrīn, Ḥanafīs and Shafi'īs consider this as unlawful while Ibn 'Abbās, Ḥasan Baṣrī, Mālik, Aḥmad and Abū Thaur consider this as lawful expenditure from this Fund.

66. Help may be given out of *Zakāt* Funds to such debtors as would be reduced to a state of poverty, if they paid off all their debts out of their own possessions, irrespective of the fact whether they are earning any money or not, whether they are indigent in the general sense or well off. According to some Jurists, the only exceptions to this are those debtors who are spendthrifts or involve themselves in debts by spending money on wicked deeds. Help may be given to them only if and when they repent.

67. "The Way of Allah" is a general term which implies all those good works which please Allah. That is why some Jurists are of the opinion that *Zakāt* Funds may be spent on every kind of good work. But the fact is, and the majority of the earliest Muslim scholars have opined, that here the 'Way of Allah' stands for *Jihād* in the Way of Allah, that is, the struggle to eradicate the systems based on *kufṛ* and to establish the Islamic system in their stead. Therefore the *Zakāt* Fund may be utilised to meet the expenses of the journeys the people make, or for procuring means of conveyance, equipment, weapons and other articles needed for *Jihād*, irrespective of the fact whether they are so well off or not as to need any help for personal requirements. Likewise help of a temporary or permanent nature may also be given to those people who devote the whole of their time and energies, temporarily or permanently, for this work.

It should also be noted that there has arisen a misunderstanding regarding the "Way of Allah," for the early scholars usually use for *Jihād* the Arabic word *غزوه* (*ghazwah*) which is synonymous with "fight". They, therefore, are of the opinion that *Zakāt* Fund may only be used for the purpose of fighting. But *Jihād* in the Way of Allah is a much more comprehensive term than mere fighting in the Way of Allah. *Jihād* applies to all those efforts that are made to degrade the word of *kufṛ* and to exalt the Word of Allah and to establish the Islamic System of life, whether by propagating the Message of Allah in the initial stage or by fighting in the final stage of the struggle.

68. Help from *Zakāt* Fund may be given to a wayfarer on a journey even though he might be quite well off at home.

Some of the Jurists are of the opinion that according to this verse only that wayfarer who does not undertake a journey for a sinful purpose may be helped out of *Zakāt* Funds. But no such condition has been laid down in the Qurān or the *Ḥadīth* to this effect. Besides this, we learn from the fundamental principles of Islam that the sins of a needy person would in no way prevent us from helping him. As a matter of fact, such a help may prove very useful in reforming sinful and depraved persons. For if they get a support in the time of need, it may reasonably be expected that they would turn towards purifying their souls.

69. This was one of the charges which the hypocrites levelled against the Holy Prophet. As he used to listen to everyone and let him say freely whatever he had to say, they would find fault with him, saying, "He is a credulous person. Everyone can approach him freely and may say whatever he pleases, and he readily believes whatever he hears!" Though it was a good thing that he heard everyone, the hypocrites intentionally spread it as a vice, so that the poor and humble Muslims should be kept away from coming near the Holy Prophet. The hypocrites did not like that these true Believers should inform the Holy Prophet about their plots, mischiefs and hostile talks. They resented it very much that the Holy Prophet listened to and believed in the talk of these humble people against such "respectable" people as they.

70. The answer to this charge implies two things. First, "Though the Prophet listens to everything, he attends only to that which is good and is for the welfare of the Community, for he is not the one who would listen to or encourage mischievous things." Secondly, "It is good for yourselves that he listens patiently to everyone; otherwise he would not have allowed you to put forward lame excuses for your negligence from the struggle in the Way of Allah. Had he not been forbearing, he would not have paid attention to your false professions of faith and hypocritical expressions of good wishes for Islam, but would have taken you to task for your mischiefs and made it difficult for you to live at Al-Madīnah. It is thus obvious that it is good for you that he listens to everyone."

71. That is, "You are wrong that he listens to everyone. He puts his trust only in the true Believers. Accordingly, he believed only in those things about you that were conveyed to him by good and trustworthy people, who were neither liars nor tale-bearers. Therefore, whatever they said about you was true and should have been taken as true."

72. The hypocrites were afraid that their secret plans would be disclosed in the Qurān to their great discomfiture. Though they did not believe that the Holy Prophet was a Messenger of Allah, they were convinced from their experience of the last nine years or so that he possessed some supernatural powers by which he learnt their hidden secrets, and revealed these through the Qurān (which according to them was written by himself).

73. This refers to the hypocrites who used to make fun of the Holy Prophet and the true Muslims in their secret meetings when they were making preparations for the expedition to Tabūk. In this way, they used to discourage those Muslims who sincerely and honestly intended to go forth for *Jihād*. We learn many things in this connection from the traditions. For instance, in one of their meetings, when the hypocrites were having a gossip, one of them remarked, "I say! Do you think that the Romans are no better than the Arabs? You will see that in the near future these "brave" men will be bound with ropes." Another responded to this, "What a fun it would be if after this each one of them is lashed with a hundred stripes!" Still another, ridiculing the preparations by the

Prophet for the expedition, remarked, "Look at this man, and his preparations! He intends to go forth to conquer the forts in Syria and the Roman Empire."

74. That is, "Those foolish buffoons, who take interest in such conversations and mock even at serious things because there is nothing serious in the world for them, may be pardoned. But there are others who mock at these serious things deliberately with evil intentions, because they consider the Messenger and the Way taught by him as ridiculous, in spite of their professions of Faith. As their real object is to discourage the believers from making preparations for *Jihād*, they are criminals and not buffoons; therefore they shall not be pardoned at all."

75. These are the common characteristics of all hypocrites. All of them are interested in evil and inimical to good. If some one undertakes to do an evil thing, they would dedicate all their sympathies, counsels, encouragements, contributions, good wishes, praises and their approvals to such a one. They would join hands to accomplish that evil thing and persuade others to take part in it and encourage the doer in every way. Moreover, they would show in every way their hearty pleasure if they perceived that that evil thing was progressing satisfactorily. On the other hand, if someone undertakes to do a good thing, they are shocked to hear the very news of it for it pains their hearts; nay, they do not even like that such a thing should be undertaken at all. Then if they see some one coming forward to help it, they feel very uncomfortable and try their worst to hinder him from it and if he does not give it up, they would wish that he should fail in it. Then all of them have this common characteristic that they do not spend anything at all for good ends irrespective of the fact whether they be otherwise parsimonious or generous. At any rate, their wealth is either for hoarding or for evil deeds. As a matter of fact, they would spend large sums on evil works generously but would not be willing to spend a farthing for good things.

76. In the preceding verse, they were being mentioned in the third person, but here they are being addressed directly in the second person.

77. Again they are being mentioned in the third person.

78. These were the people of Lot.

79. "They wronged themselves" for they were themselves responsible for their destruction. Allah had no enmity with them and had no desire to destroy them. As a matter of fact, they themselves adopted the way of life that led to destruction, whereas Allah had sent His Messengers to them and afforded them the opportunities of thinking, understanding and reforming. His Messengers admonished and warned them of the consequences of treading wrong paths, and presented very clearly before them the Way that leads to success, and also the ways that lead to destruction. But when they did not benefit from the opportunities that were offered to them to mend their ways, and persisted in treading the ways that led to destruction, they inevitably met with the end for which they were heading. And this horrible end was not due to Allah's will to be unjust to them but due to their own evil doings.

يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ
 بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ
 وَيُطِيعُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ ۗ أُولَئِكَ سَيَرْحَمُهُمُ اللَّهُ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ
 حَكِيمٌ ﴿٤٦﴾ وَعَدَّ اللَّهُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا
 الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَمَسْكِنٍ طَيِّبَةٍ فِي جَنَّاتٍ عَدْنٍ ۗ وَرِضْوَانٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ
 أَكْبَرُ ۗ ذَٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿٤٧﴾ يَأْتِيهَا النَّبِيُّ جَاهِدِ الْكُفَّارَ وَالْمُنَافِقِينَ
 ۗ وَأَغْلَظْ عَلَيْهِمْ ۗ وَمَا لَهُمْ جَهَنَّمَ ۗ وَيَبْسُ الْبَصِيرُ ﴿٤٨﴾ يَخْلِفُونَ بِاللَّهِ مَا
 قَالُوا ۗ وَقَدْ قَالُوا كَلِمَةً الْكُفْرِ وَكَفَرُوا بِعَدَاةِ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَمَا
 لَمْ يَنَالُوا ۗ وَمَا نَقَمُوا إِلَّا أَنْ أَغْنَاهُمُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۗ فَإِنْ
 يَتُوبُوا يَكُ خَيْرًا لَّهُمْ ۗ وَإِنْ يَتَوَلَّوْا يُعَذِّبُهُمُ اللَّهُ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ۗ فِي
 الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ ۗ وَمَا لَهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ ﴿٤٩﴾ وَمِنْهُمْ
 مَنْ عٰهَدَ اللَّهَ لَئِنْ آتَيْنَاهُمْ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ لَنَصَّدَّقَنَّ وَلَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ
 الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٥٠﴾ فَلَمَّا آتَاهُمْ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ بَخِلُوا بِهِ وَتَوَلَّوْا ۗ وَهُمْ
 مُعْرِضُونَ ﴿٥١﴾ فَأَعْقَبَهُمْ نِفَاقًا فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ إِلَى يَوْمِ يَلْقَوْنَهُ بِمَا أَخْلَفُوا
 اللَّهَ مَا وَعَدُوهُ وَبِمَا كَانُوا يَكْذِبُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾ أَلَمْ يَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ سِرَّهُمْ
 وَنَجْوَاهُمْ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَّامُ الْغُيُوبِ ﴿٥٣﴾ الَّذِينَ يَلْمِزُونَ الْمُطَّوِّعِينَ
 مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فِي الصَّدَقَاتِ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَجِدُونَ إِلَّا جُهْدَهُمْ
 فَيَسْخَرُونَ مِنْهُمْ ۗ سَخِرَ اللَّهُ مِنْهُمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٥٤﴾ اسْتَغْفِرُ
 لَهُمْ أَوْ لَا تَسْتَغْفِرُ لَهُمْ ۗ إِنْ تَسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ سَبْعِينَ مَرَّةً فَلَنْ يَغْفِرَ

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As regards the true Believers, men and women, they are all comrades to one another: they enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil; they establish *Ṣalāt*, pay *Zakāt* dues, and obey Allah and His Messenger.⁸⁰ It is they upon whom Allah will most surely send His blessings. Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise. Allah has promised to the Believers, both men and women, the Gardens underneath which canals flow and wherein they will abide for ever: there will be neat and clean dwelling places for them in these Gardens of perpetual bliss; and, above all, they will enjoy Allah's pleasure: this is the great success. 71-72

O Prophet,⁸¹ strive hard against the disbelievers and the hypocrites and be adamant and stern with them.⁸² In the end, their abode shall be Hell, and it is the worst of all abodes. They swear by Allah that they did not say the thing, when in fact, they did utter the word of unbelief.⁸³ Thus, they were guilty of unbelief after they had professed Islam: however, they could not accomplish what they had intended to do.⁸⁴ They had no reason to be spiteful except that Allah and His Messenger had enriched them by His bounty.⁸⁵ If even now they repent of their misbehaviour, it will be good for their own selves, but if they do not repent, Allah will chastise them with a painful chastisement in this world and in the Hereafter, and there will be none on the earth to protect and help them. 73-74

There are some among them, who made this covenant with Allah: "If He gives us of His bounty, we will disburse charity and lead a righteous life." But when Allah enriched them by His bounty, they grew niggardly and went back on their covenant, and paid no heed to it.⁸⁶ As a consequence of the breach of the covenant they had made with Allah and the lies they told, He set hypocrisy deep in their hearts that will follow them till the Day when they shall meet Him. Do these people not know that Allah knows fully well even their secrets and their conspiracies and that Allah knows fully well all that is hidden. (He fully knows those stingy rich people) who find fault with the monetary sacrifices of those Believers who make willing and voluntary contributions generously and scoff at those people who find nothing to contribute (to the cause of Allah) except what little they contribute sacrific- 75-79

ing their own needs:⁸⁷ Allah scoffs at those who scoff and there is a painful punishment in store for them.

80. The contrast between the characteristics of the hypocrites (v. 67) and of the true Believers (v. 71) clearly shows that the two are entirely different from each other, in spite of their outwardly similar profession of faith in Islam and obedience to it. The difference lies in their morals, conducts, habits, attitudes and ways of thinking. On the one hand are the hypocrites whose tongues are never tired of professing faith in Islam, but who are void of sincere faith, and whose whole conduct belies their professions. They are, as it were, like bottles which have labels of "musk", but contain cow-dung which may easily be recognized from its appearance and unpleasant odour. On the other hand are the true Believers, who are like those bottles which contain musk which may be tested in any way—by its appearance, its smell and other characteristics—to be musk. Likewise, though the outward label of Islam apparently makes both of them one Community of Muslims, the real characteristics of the hypocritical Muslims are so different from those of the true Muslims that they have, in fact, become two different communities. The hypocritical Muslims, men and women, form a separate community with those who have similar characteristics. They all are neglectful of Allah, take interest in evil things and deviate from all that is good and never co-operate with true Believers and, in short, they are allies to one another and practically dissociate themselves from true Believers and form a group of their own. In contrast to them, the true Believers, men and women, have practically become one Community. All of them take interest in what is good, and abhor what is evil: they remember Allah day and night and cannot think of life without the constant remembrance of Allah; they are very generous in spending in the Way of Allah, and obey Him and His Messenger without any mental reservations. These common characteristics have dissociated them from the hypocrites and united them in one Community and made them allies to one another.

81. From here begins the third discourse that was sent down after the Expedition to Tabūk.

82. This Command enunciated the change of policy towards the hypocrites. Up to this time, leniency was being shown to them for two reasons. First, the Muslims had not as yet become so powerful as to take the risk of an internal conflict in addition to the one with the external enemies. The other reason was to give enough respite to those people who were involved in doubts and suspicions so that they could get sufficient time for attaining to faith and belief. But now the time had come for a change of policy. The whole of Arabia had been subdued and a bitter conflict with the external enemies was about to start; therefore it was required that these internal enemies should be crushed down so that they should not be able to conspire with the external enemies to stir up any

internal danger to the Muslims. And now it had become possible to crush them. As regards the second reason, these hypocrites had been given respite for a period of nine years to observe, to consider and test the Right Way, and they could have availed of it, if they had any good in them. So there was no reason why any more leniency should be shown to them. Therefore, Allah enjoined the Muslims to treat the hypocrites on one and the same level with the disbelievers and start *Jihād* against them, and to give up the policy of leniency they had adopted towards them and adopt a firm and stern policy instead.

In this connection, it should also be noted that this verse does not enjoin the Muslims to fight with the hypocrites. It merely meant to end the policy of leniency that had hitherto been adopted towards them. This verse enjoined that they were no more to be considered a part and parcel of the Muslim Community nor were they to be allowed to take part in the management of its affairs nor consulted about any matter, so that they might not be able to spread the poison of hypocrisy. This changed policy required that the true Believers should expose all those, who adopted a hypocritical attitude and conduct and showed in any way that they were not sincere allies to Allah, His Messenger and the true Muslims. Each and every one of such hypocrites should be openly criticized and reproved so that there should remain for them no more place of honour and trust in the Muslim society: they should be socially boycotted and kept away from the consultations of the Community: their evidence in the courts of law should be regarded as untrustworthy: the doors of offices and positions of trust should be closed against them and they should be held in contempt in the social meetings. In short, every Muslim should show by his behaviour to such a one that there was no place of honour or respect or trust for a hypocrite in the Muslim society. Besides this, if any one of them was found to be guilty of treachery, there should be no connivance at his crime, nor should he be pardoned but openly tried in a court of law and should be duly punished.

This Command was urgently needed at the time it came. It was obvious that in order to save the Muslim Community from fall and degradation, it was essential to purge it of all the internal dangers to its solidarity, because a Community, which nourishes hypocrites and traitors and allows the internal enemies to flourish with honour and security, shall inevitably be doomed to moral degradation and ultimate destruction. Hypocrisy is a plague and a hypocrite is the rat that carries and spreads its germs. Therefore to allow him the freedom of movement in the society is to expose the whole population to the danger of hypocrisy. Likewise, to give a place of honour and prestige to a hypocrite is to encourage many others in hypocrisy and treachery, for this shows that it is not sincerity, true faith and its welfare that count in it. One may flourish and prosper in it even if one verbally professes to be a Muslim and at the same time indulges in dishonesty and treachery. The Holy Prophet has

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اللَّهُ لَهُمْ ذِكْرٌ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَفَرُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ
 الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴿٥٨﴾ فَرِحَ الْمُخَلَّفُونَ بِمَقْعَدِهِمْ خَلْفَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ وَكَرِهُوا
 أَنْ يُجَاهِدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَقَالُوا لَا تَنْفِرُوا
 فِي الْحَرِّ قُلْ نَارُ جَهَنَّمَ أَشَدُّ حَرًّا لَوْ كَانُوا يَفْقَهُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾ فَلْيَضْحَكُوا
 قَلِيلًا وَلْيَبْكُوا كَثِيرًا جَزَاءً بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾ فَإِنْ رَجَعَكَ اللَّهُ
 إِلَى طَائِفَةٍ مِنْهُمْ فَاسْتَأْذَنُوكَ لِلْخُرُوجِ فَقُلْ لَنْ تَخْرُجُوا مَعِيَ أَبَدًا
 وَلَنْ تُقَاتِلُوا مَعِيَ عَدُوًّا إِنَّكُمْ رَضِيتُمْ بِالْقُعُودِ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ فَاقْعُدُوا
 مَعَ الْخُلَفَاءِ ﴿٦١﴾ وَلَا تُصَلِّ عَلَى أَحَدٍ مِنْهُمْ مَاتَ أَبَدًا وَلَا تَقُمْ عَلَى
 قَبْرِهِ إِنَّهُمْ كَفَرُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَمَاتُوا وَهُمْ فَسِقُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾ وَلَا تَعْجَبْكَ
 أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَأَوْلَادُهُمْ إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَنْ يُعَذِّبَهُمْ بِهَا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَ
 تَزَهِّقَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَهُمْ كَافِرُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾ وَإِذَا أَنْزَلْتَ سُورَةَ أَنْ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ
 وَجَاهِدُوا مَعَ رَسُولِهِ اسْتَأْذَنَكَ أُولُوا الطُّوْلِ مِنْهُمْ وَقَالُوا ذَرْنَا
 نَكُنْ مَعَ الْقُعْدِيِّينَ ﴿٦٤﴾ رَضُوا بِأَنْ يَكُونُوا مَعَ الْخَوَالِفِ وَطُبِعَ عَلَى
 قُلُوبِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ ﴿٦٥﴾ لَكِنَّ الرَّسُولَ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ جَاهِدُوا
 بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ وَأُولَئِكَ لَهُمُ الْخَيْرَاتُ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ السَّالِحُونَ ﴿٦٦﴾
 أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ
 الْعَظِيمُ ﴿٦٧﴾ وَجَاءَ الْمُعَذِّبُونَ مِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ لِيُؤْذَنَ لَهُمْ وَقَعَدَ الَّذِينَ
 كَذَبُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ سَيُصِيبُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٦٨﴾ كَيْسَ
 عَلَى الضُّعَفَاءِ وَلَا عَلَى الْمَرْضَى وَلَا عَلَى الَّذِينَ لَا يَجِدُونَ مَا يُنْفِقُونَ

O Prophet, (it will all be the same) whether you beg forgiveness for such people or not; for Allah will not forgive them even if you beg forgiveness for them seventy times. This is because they have no belief in Allah and His Messenger: and Allah does not show guidance to the wrong-doers. 80

Those who were allowed to remain behind, were happy that they had not gone with Allah's Messenger, and had stayed at home, for they did not like to do *Jihād* in the Way of Allah with their possessions and their persons. They said to the people, "Do not go forth in this heat." Say to them, "The Fire of Hell is much hotter than this"; would that they understood this! Let them now laugh little and weep much for the recompense of what they have been earning is such (that they should weep). Henceforth, if Allah brings you among them and any of them asks your leave to go forth for *Jihād*, say to them plainly, "Now you shall never be allowed to go forth with me nor to fight an enemy in my company; as you were pleased to stay behind the first time, now you stay at home with those who stay behind". 81-83

And in future you should never say funeral prayer for anyone from among them, who dies nor stand at his grave, for they have denied Allah and His Messenger and died the while they were transgressors.⁸⁸ And let not the abundance of their possessions and children delude you; for Allah will only to chastise them by means of their possessions and children in this world and let their souls depart while they are should still disbelievers. 84-85

Whenever a Sūrah was sent down with the revelation, "Believe in Allah and go forth for *Jihād* with His Messenger", you might have perceived that even the capable people from among them began to beg you to excuse them from *Jihād*, saying, "Please leave us behind with those who are to stay at home. Those people chose to stay with those who had remained behind and a seal was set upon their hearts: therefore they do not understand anything now."⁸⁹ But the Messenger and those who shared his belief did *Jihād* with their possessions and persons: now all the good things are for them only and they alone are truly successful. Allah has prepared for them Gardens underneath which canals flow wherein they 86-89

will abide for ever: this is the great success.

90

And many from among the Bedouins⁹⁰ also came with their excuses that they, too, might be allowed to remain behind: thus stayed behind those who had made a false compact of Faith with Allah and His Messenger. In the near future those from among the Bedouins who adopted the way of unbelief⁹¹ shall meet with a painful chastisement.

Contd. from p. 211]

expressed the same thing in a pithy saying. He said, "Whoso honours and respects the inventor of new practices which are un-Islamic, indeed helps to demolish the very structure of Islam."

83. We cannot say with certainty what that "word of unbelief" was which they had uttered. There are, however, traditions that mention several things of unbelief which were uttered by the hypocrites during that time. For instance, it is related that a hypocrite, while he was talking to a young Muslim, a near relative of his, said, "If all that this man (referring to the Holy Prophet) is saying be true, then we are worse than donkeys." Another tradition relates that when, during the Expedition to Tabūk, one of the she-camels of the Holy Prophet went astray and the Muslims were moving about in search of it, a party of the hypocrites made a good deal of fun of this, saying to one another, "(Just consider the Prophethood of this man!) He tells news of heavens but cannot tell where his she-camel is!"

84. This is a reference to the plots which the hypocrites had made during the Tabūk Expedition. On the return journey they conspired to push the Holy Prophet down into some ravine, while he would be passing over some hill at night. The Holy Prophet got wind of the plot and ordered that the army should take the longer route through the valley round the hills, while he himself along with 'Ammār-bin-Yāsir and Huḏaifah-bin-Yamān would make the short-cut over the hills. While they were on the way, suddenly they discovered that a dozen of the hypocrites, with covered faces, were following them. At this Ḥaḍrat Huḏaifah turned towards them so that he may drive away their camels but they were terrified when they saw him coming towards them and took to flight lest they should be recognized.

The other plot was to declare 'Abdullah bin Ubayy as king at Al-Madīnah as soon as they should hear some 'bad news' about the Muslim army, because according to their expectations, the Holy Prophet and his faithful Companions could never fare well against the armies of the Great Roman Empire.

85. This is an insinuation to put to shame by an indirect suggestion the hypocrites of Al-Madīnah. This referred to the prosperity of Al-Madīnah and its people, for Al-Madīnah was a small town before the migration of the Holy Prophet to it, and its two clans—Aus and Khazraj—

did not hold any high position in regard to wealth or prestige. But within the short period of nine years or so, this small town became the capital of Arabia because of the residence of the Holy Prophet and the sacrifices of the *Ansār*, the true Muslims. As a result of this, the former peasants—Aus and Khazraj—of Al-Madīnah became the 'Great Ones' of the Islamic State and wealth began to flow into this central city on account of spoils of war and increased commercial activity. The hypocrites were rebuked in this verse that, instead of being grateful to the Holy Prophet, they showed anger and spite against him for no other "sin" than that he had brought forth prosperity among them.

86. This is an instance of their ingratitude for which the hypocrites were rebuked in v. 74.

They broke their covenant with Allah which enjoined them to spend money in charity, if Allah enriched them by His bounty. This shows that they were confirmed criminals and they did not care in the least for the agreements they made, and were niggardly and had no moral code to observe.

87. This refers to the mean conduct which the hypocrites evinced on the occasion of the appeal of the Holy Prophet for contributions towards the Tabūk Expedition. The well-to-do hypocrites did not themselves make any contributions, but when the sincere Muslims came forward with generous contributions according to their means, they began to deride them. If a well-to-do Muslim made a handsome contribution, they would at once accuse him to be guilty of a 'show-off'. On the other hand, if a poor Muslim contributed a paltry sum which he could hardly spare after sacrificing some of the barest necessities of his family or contributing the small earnings obtained by hard work, they would at once ridicule, saying, "Lo! Here is the farthing that will help conquer the forts of the Roman Empire!"

88. This verse was sent down to prevent the Holy Prophet from saying funeral prayers for 'Abdullah bin Ubayy, the ringleader of the hypocrites, who died a short while after the Tabūk Expedition. His son 'Abdullah who was a sincere Muslim called on the Holy Prophet and requested him to give his shirt for his father's shroud. The Holy Prophet very generously granted his request. Then he begged the Holy Prophet to lead his father's funeral prayer. The Holy Prophet agreed to this also but Ḥaḍrat 'Umar very respectfully requested him repeatedly not to do so, saying, "O Prophet of Allāh! will you say funeral prayer for a person who was guilty of such and such crimes and sins"? The Holy Prophet, who was a blessing both for friends and for foes, got ready to say funeral prayer even for that man who was a deadly enemy of Islam. At last when he stood up to lead the funeral prayer, this verse was sent down to prevent him from this by a direct Command from God, in accordance with the changed policy declared in v. 73 which forbade to do anything that might encourage the hypocrites among the Muslims.

[*Contd. on p. 218*]

حَرَجٌ إِذَا نَصَحُوا لِلَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ۗ مَا عَلَى الْمُحْسِنِينَ مِنْ سَبِيلٍ ۗ وَاللَّهُ
 غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٩١﴾ وَلَا عَلَى الَّذِينَ إِذَا مَا اتَّوَكَّاتُوا لِيَتَحِبَّهُمْ قُلَّتْ لَآ آجِدُ مَا
 أَحْبَبْتُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ ۗ تَوَلَّوْا وَآعَيْنُهُمْ تَفِيضٌ مِنَ الدَّمْعِ حَزَنًا أَلَّا يَجِدُوا مَا
 يُنْفِقُونَ ﴿٩٢﴾ إِنَّمَا السَّبِيلُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ يَسْتَأْذِنُونَكَ وَهُمْ أَغْنِيَاءُ ۗ رَضُوا
 بِأَنْ يَكُونُوا مَعَ الْخَوَالِفِ ۗ وَطَبَعَ اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٩٣﴾

الجملة

يَعْتَذِرُونَ إِلَيْكُمْ إِذَا رَجَعْتُمْ إِلَيْهِمْ ۗ قُلْ لَا تَعْتَذِرُونَ لِي فَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْعَاقِلِينَ
 قَدْ بَيَّأْنَا اللَّهُ مِنْ أَخْبَارِكُمْ وَسَيَرَى اللَّهُ عَمَلَكُمْ وَرَسُولُهُ شَيْءٌ تُرَدُّونَ
 إِلَىٰ عِلْمِ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ فَيُنبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٤﴾ سَيَحْلِفُونَ
 بِاللَّهِ لَكُمْ إِذَا انْقَلَبْتُمْ إِلَيْهِمْ لِتُعْرِضُوا عَنْهُمْ ۗ فَأَعْرِضُوا عَنْهُمْ إِنَّهُمْ
 رِجْسٌ ۚ وَمَاؤُهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ ۗ جَزَاءُ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٩٥﴾ يَحْلِفُونَ لَكُمْ
 لِيَرْضَوْا عَنْهُمْ ۗ فَإِنْ تَرْضَوْا عَنْهُمْ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَرْضَىٰ عَنِ الْقَوْمِ
 الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴿٩٦﴾ الْأَعْرَابُ أَشَدُّ كُفْرًا وَنِفَاقًا ۚ أَلَّا يَعْلَمُوا حُدُودَ مَا
 أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ رَسُولِهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٩٧﴾ وَمِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ مَنْ يَتَّخِذُ
 مَا يُنْفِقُ مَغْرَمًا وَيَتَرَبَّصُ بِكُلِّ الدَّوَابِّ عَلَيْهِمْ دَائِرَةُ السَّوْءِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ
 سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٩٨﴾ وَمِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ مَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَيَتَّخِذُ
 مَا يُنْفِقُ قُرْبَىٰ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ ۗ وَصَلَوَاتِ الرَّسُولِ ۗ أَلَا إِنَّهَا قُرْبَىٰ لَهُمْ ۗ
 سَيُدْخِلُهُمُ اللَّهُ فِي رَحْمَتِهِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٩٩﴾ وَالشَّابِقُونَ
 الْأَوَّلُونَ مِنَ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالْأَنْصَارِ وَالَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُمْ بِإِحْسَانٍ ۗ
 رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ ۗ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ

١٢
ع ١٠

There is no harm, if the weak, the sick and those that 91-93
 have no means of providing for *Jihād* stay behind, provided
 they are sincerely faithful to Allah and His Messenger.⁹²
 There is no cause of blame against such righteous people:
 and Allah is Forgiving and Compassionate. Likewise there
 can be no ground for criticising those people who came to you
 in person and requested you to provide them with mounts.
 For when you said to them, "I am unable to provide you
 with mounts, they returned with heavy hearts, their eyes
 overflowing with tears: they were filled with sorrow that they
 had no means of going forth for *Jihād* at their own expense.⁹³
 However, the conduct of those who are well-to-do and still
 ask for exemption from *Jihād*, is indeed very objectionable.
 As such people chose to stay behind with women, Allah set a
 seal upon their hearts: therefore now they do not know
 anything (about the consequences they shall incur in Allah's
 court).

When you return to them, they will apologise to you, 94-96
 offering many sorts of excuses: but say to them plainly,
 "Make no excuses: we will not believe in anything you say
 for Allah has revealed to us the whole truth about you. Now
 Allah and His Messenger will keep a watch over your conduct:
 then you shall return to Him Who knows all that is visible and
 hidden, and He will tell you all that you have been doing."
 On your return they will take solemn oaths by Allah to re-
 assure you, so that you may turn away from them. So turn
 away from them⁹⁴ because they are a filth and their real abode
 is Hell which shall be the recompense of what they have earned.
 They will take solemn oaths before you to satisfy you, but
 even if you accept their excuses, Allah will never accept the
 excuses of the evil-doers.

These Bedouins are most stubborn in unbelief and 97-99
 hypocrisy, and, in all probability, will remain ignorant of the
 laws of the Way which Allah has sent down to His Messenger:⁹⁵
 and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise. There are such among
 the Bedouins, who regard what they expend in the Way as a
 penalty⁹⁶ and await some change of fortune to turn against
 you (so that they should be able to overthrow the government
 you have imposed on them,) whereas they themselves have

been encircled by a vicious circle; and Allah hears everything and knows everything. But among these Bedouins there are some, who believe in Allah and the Last Day and regard what they expend in the Way as a means of bringing themselves nearer to Allah and of seeking the Messenger's prayers for Allah's blessing; yes, this is indeed a means of bringing them nearer to Allah, and Allah will certainly admit them to His blessing; indeed Allah is Forgiving and Compassionate.

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The above incident led to the formulation of the regulation that the leaders and prominent people from among the Muslims should neither lead nor offer the funeral prayers of the sinners against Islam or for those notorious for their disobedience to Islam. After this, whenever a request was made to the Holy Prophet for a funeral prayer, he would first enquire about the conduct of the deceased person. If he came to know that he was a bad person, he would say to his people, "You may perform his burial just as you like".

89. "... they do not understand anything now," for they deliberately and intentionally chose the shameful way of staying at home with women, when they were required to go forth for *Jihād*, though they were healthy, physically fit and well-to-do, and professed Islam. Therefore, according to the Divine Law of Nature, a seal was set upon their hearts and they were bereft of those noble feelings which make one feel ashamed of adopting such a disgraceful conduct.

90. Here the word "Bedouins" refers to those Arabs who lived in the desert near Al-Madīnah.

91. The hypocritical profession of Islam has been called the way of unbelief, because that profession of faith which lacks practical proof, surrender, sincerity and obedience, is, in fact, unbelief. As such persons prefer their own interests and worldly desires to Allah and His Way, they shall be dealt with by Allah as unbelievers and rebels, even if they could not be legally treated as such in this world but were considered Muslims due to their profession of faith. This is because in the life of this world, the Islamic Law treats as unbelievers only such hypocrites as are guilty of open unbelief, rebellion, treachery or infidelity. That is why there are many cases of hypocrisy that do not come under *kufr* in the Islamic *Shari'ah*. However, this does not mean that if one escaped the penalty according to the Islamic Code, one will escape punishment according to the Divine Judgement also.

92. This implies that even those people who are otherwise excusable because of disability, sickness or indigence will be pardoned only if they are sincerely and truly faithful to Allah and His Messenger. Without this fidelity, no one shall be pardoned merely because he was sick or indigent at the time when he was called upon to go forth for *Jihād*. For

Allah does not judge merely by appearances and treat alike and forgive all those who present "medical certificates" of their disability because of sickness, old age or some other physical defect. On the Day of Judgement, He will examine minutely the heart of each and everyone, and take into account his whole conduct, open and hidden, and will consider whether his excuse was of a faithful servant or of a traitor and rebel. It is obvious that each and every case, in spite of apparent similarity, requires a separate and different judgement. For instance, let us take the case of two men who suddenly fell ill on the eve of *Jihād*. One of them thanked his lucky stars for the timely disease, as if to say, "How lucky it is that I have fallen ill on the opportune moment! Otherwise, this calamity of *Jihād* could not have been avoided and I would have had to suffer it anyhow." On the contrary, the other man was filled with sorrow at his illness, and he cried in anguish, "Ah! what a bad luck! I have been attacked by this sudden disease at the time when I ought to have been in the battle-field instead of lying down here in bed!" One of them made his illness not only an excuse for exemption from *Jihād* but also tried to dissuade others from it. On the contrary, the other one, though lying in the sick-bed, went on urging his own dear relatives, friends and others to go forth to *Jihād*; nay, he entreated even those who were attending him, saying, "Leave me in the care of the Real Master, and go forth to *Jihād*. I am sure that the arrangements for my nursing will be made somehow or other: therefore you should not waste your precious chance for my sake but go forth and serve the Right Way." But the other, who stayed at home, spent all this time in spreading discontent and bad news and in damaging war efforts and in disrupting the affairs of the families of the fighters. The other man in similar circumstances did his very best to make the home front as strong as he could. Though these two men had similar excuses for exemption, they cannot be considered as equal in the sight of Allah: the second one only may expect Allah's pardon, and not the first man who was a traitor and rebel against Allah, though he might have had a genuine excuse for exemption.

93. Such people as felt a strong urge for *Jihād* but could not join it because of some really genuine excuse, will be counted by Allah among those who actually took part in it, even though they could not join it in person and do anything practically for it. This is because they were sincerely grieved at their absence from *Jihād* for no fault of theirs, just as a man of the world would be grieved if he were deprived of some lucrative business or of some high profit. Allah considers such a one as on duty, because his heart was serving in the Way of Allah, though he had been deprived of active service on account of some genuine excuse. The Holy Prophet, while returning from Tabūk, stated the same thing like this: "There are some people at Al-Madīnah (at this time) who have been travelling and marching all along with you through every valley." Naturally the Companions to whom he was speaking were wonder-

[Contd. on p. 222

خَلِيدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا ۗ ذَٰلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ۗ وَمِمَّنْ حَوْلَكُم مِّنَ الْأَعْرَابِ
 مُنْفِقُونَ ؕ وَمِنَ أَهْلِ الْمَدِينَةِ مَقَرُّوْا عَلَى النِّفَاقِ ۗ لَا تَعْلَمُهُمْ نَحْنُ مَعَهُمْ
 نَعْلَمُهُمْ سَنَعَذِّبُهُمْ مَّرَّتَيْنِ ثُمَّ يُرَدُّوْنَ إِلَىٰ عَذَابِ عَظِيمٍ ۗ وَالْآخِرُونَ
 اعْتَرَفُوا بِذُنُوبِهِمْ خَلَطُوا عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَآخَرَ سَيِّئًا ۗ عَسَىٰ اللَّهُ أَن يَتُوبَ
 عَلَيْهِمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ۗ خُذْ مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ صَدَقَةً
 تُطَهِّرُهُمْ وَتُزَكِّيهِمْ بِهَا وَصَلِّ عَلَيْهِمْ ۗ إِنَّ صَلَاتَكَ سَكَنٌ لَهُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ
 سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ۗ أَلَمْ يَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ يَقْبَلُ التَّوْبَةَ عَنْ عِبَادِهِ وَيَأْخُذُ
 الصَّدَقَاتِ ۗ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ ۗ وَقُلْ أَعْمَلُوا فَسَيَرَى اللَّهُ
 عَمَلَكُمْ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ ۗ وَسَتُرَدُّوْنَ إِلَىٰ عِلْمِ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ
 فَيُنَبِّئُكُم بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ۗ وَالْآخِرُونَ مُرْجُونَ لِأَمْرِ اللَّهِ ۗ إِنَّمَا يُعَذِّبُهُمْ
 وَإِنَّمَا يَتُوبُ عَلَيْهِمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ۗ وَالَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مَسْجِدًا
 ضَرَارًا وَكُفْرًا وَتَفْرِيقًا بَيْنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَإِرْصَادًا لِّمَنْ حَارَبَ اللَّهَ وَ
 رَسُولَهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ ۗ وَلِيَحْلِفُنَّ إِنْ أَرَدْنَا إِلَّا الْحُسْنَىٰ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَشْهَدُ إِنَّهُمْ
 لَكَاذِبُونَ ۗ لَا تَقُمْ فِيهِ أَبَدًا ۗ لَسَجِدٌ أَتَّسَّ عَلَى التَّقْوَىٰ مِنْ أَوَّلِ يَوْمٍ
 أَحَقُّ أَنْ تَقُومَ فِيهِ ۗ فِيهِ رِجَالٌ يُحِبُّوْنَ أَنْ يَتَّطَهَّرُوا ۗ وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ
 الْمُطَهَّرِينَ ۗ أَفَمَنْ أَتَّسَّ بُنْيَانَهُ عَلَى تَقْوَىٰ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانٍ خَيْرٌ
 أَمْ مَنْ أَتَّسَّ بُنْيَانَهُ عَلَى شَفَا جُرْفٍ هَارٍ فَأَنْهَارِيهِ فِي نَارٍ جَهَنَّمَ ۗ وَ
 اللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ۗ لَا يَزَالُ بُنْيَانُهُمُ الَّذِي بَنَوْا رِيبَةً فِي
 قُلُوبِهِمْ إِلَّا أَنْ تَقَطَّعَ قُلُوبُهُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اشْتَرَىٰ مِنَ

Allah was pleased with those *Muhājirs* and *Anṣār* who were the first to respond to the invitation to the Faith, and with those also who followed them in their righteous conduct, and they, too, were pleased with (the reward from) Allah; He has got ready for them gardens underneath which canals flow and they will abide therein for ever; this is the greatest success. 100

There are many hypocrites among the Bedouins who dwell around you; likewise among the citizens of Al-Madinah there are hypocrites who have become experts in hypocrisy. You do not know them, but We do know them.⁹⁷ The time is coming when We will give them double chastisement:⁹⁸ then they shall be returned to a far greater torment. 101

There are some others who have confessed their sins: they have a mixed record of deeds, good and bad. It may be that Allah will turn to them again with kindness for He is Forbearing and Compassionate. O Prophet, accept propitiatory offerings from their possessions to cleanse and purify them thereby, and help them onward (in the way of virtue); and pray for blessings for them because your prayer will bring comfort to them; and Allah hears everything and knows everything. Do these people not know that it is Allah alone Who accepts the repentance of His servants and approves of their propitiatory offerings, and that Allah is indeed Forgiving, Compassionate? And tell them, O Prophet: Do as you will: Allah and His Messenger and the Believers will now keep a watch over your conduct;⁹⁹ then you shall return to Him Who knows all that is visible and hidden and He will tell you all that you have been doing.¹⁰⁰ 102-105

There are some others who yet await Allah's decision: He may either punish them or turn to them again with mercy: Allah knows everything and is All-Wise.¹⁰¹ 106

There are others who built a "mosque" in order to harm the Righteous Mission and to practise unbelief (instead of Allah's worship) and to cause discord among the Believers, and to make this ('place of worship') an ambush for the one who even before this had been in conflict with Allah and His Messenger. They will take solemn oaths and say, "Our intention was nothing but good." But Allah is a witness that 107-110

they are absolute liars. You should never stand in that building: the Mosque which has been founded on piety from the very first day, is the proper place for you to stand (for prayer). For there are such people in it as would like to keep themselves pure; and Allah likes those people who like to keep themselves pure.¹⁰² Why, is he better who founded his building upon Allah's fear and for His approval or he who founded his building on the brink of an under-mined bank¹⁰³ that tumbled with him down into the fire of Hell? Allah never shows the Right Way to such workers of iniquity.¹⁰⁴ This building which they have built will never cease to create doubts in their hearts (from which there is no way to come out) unless it be that their hearts are cut into pieces:¹⁰⁵ and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.

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struck at this. So they asked, "While staying at Al-Madīnah?" He replied, "Yes! while staying at Al-Madīnah! This is because they were compelled by the circumstances to stay behind at Al-Madīnah: otherwise they would certainly have accompanied you."

94. The Arabic words *تَعَرَّضُوا* and *أَعْرَضُوا* are of the same root but have different senses in the two sentences in which they occur. In the first sentence it means, "... so that you may turn away from them and forbear them and may not take them to task..." In the second sentence it means, "... so turn away from them and break off all connections with them and have nothing to do with them, as if you had broken off completely with them, and they with you".

95. As has already been stated in E.N. 90, the "Bedouins" here refers to those rustic Arabs of the desert who had settled in the suburbs of Al-Madīnah.

The background which may help one to comprehend the meanings of the verse is this. Though these people had outwardly embraced Islam, they had not done so from conviction. When they saw the rising of the organized power of Islam in Al-Madīnah, they were so overawed by it that they could not ignore it. So at first they adopted the attitude of the opportunists towards the conflict between Islam and *kufr*. But when the power of the Islamic Government spread over the major portions of Hijāz and Najd, and the power of its enemy clans began to decline, they thought it expedient to enter the fold of Islam. But there were very few among them who had sincerely accepted Islam from the conviction that it was the Right Way. That is why they did not make any sincere efforts to fulfil the implications of the true Faith, and observe the obligatory duties imposed by Islam. On the contrary, the majority of them had accepted Islam just because it was the best policy for them. They merely

desired to take advantages of being "Muslims" in order to gain those benefits to which they were entitled as members of the ruling party, without performing those duties which became obligatory on them by the very acceptance of Islam. Therefore they were utterly averse to saying the prescribed Prayers, observing the Fast, paying the *Zakāt* dues from their date-palm gardens and their herds of cattle. Moreover, they smarted under the discipline of the Islamic State and resented being subdued by any power for the first time in history. Above all, it was against their very nature to make sacrifices of their lives and wealth in the Way of Allah, as was being demanded by Islam, for they were accustomed to fight only for plunder and spoils. That is why they always invented one excuse or the other for exemption from the restrictions and obligations that were being imposed on them. For they had no interest in the Truth or the welfare of humanity; their only concern was their camels and their goats, that is, the narrow world around their tents. As regards anything higher than these, the only thing which they could believe in was irrational reverence for those who would guarantee their worldly welfare and protect them from calamities and give them amulets to safeguard them against harm and evil, and say prayers for them as a recompense for their offerings to them. But they were not prepared to accept any faith or belief that would bring under its moral and legal discipline every aspect of their cultural, social and economic life, and demand from them the sacrifices of lives and wealth for the cause of a universal reform.

In this verse, the above-mentioned mental and moral condition of the Bedouins has been described like this: "These Bedouins are more hypocritical than the urban Arabs and are more stubborn and obdurate in their denial of the Truth. This is because the urban people make use of the opportunities of meeting the learned and pious people and thus learn the laws and regulations of the Way. On the other hand, in all probability, the Bedouins will learn little about the Divine Way, because they get few opportunities for this. Moreover, they lead lives of "economic animals" rather than of human beings having moral and spiritual values; therefore they do not think of higher things than their animal urges.

It should also be noted that the main cause of the subsequent storm of rebellion and apostasy during the caliphate of Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr two years after the revelation of these verses (97-99) was the same that has been mentioned therein.

96. This means that they regarded the payment of *Zakāt* dues as a fine and the expenditure on hospitality, an Islamic duty, a penalty. Likewise, if they had to make any contributions towards *Jihād*, they did so to show that they were loyal to the Islamic State and not because they wanted to please Allah by giving sincere monetary help for His cause.

97. They had become so expert in the art of hiding their hypocrisy that even the Holy Prophet could not recognize them, though he possessed immense sagacity and insight into human nature; so Allah informed him about them.

98. This double chastisement will be the loss of their worldly advantages and the victory of the Islamic Mission in the teeth of their opposition. Thus one chastisement shall be the loss of their worldly benefits for which they practised deceptions and adopted hypocritical attitudes, and instead of gaining wealth, honour and prestige they shall meet with disgrace and utter failure. The second chastisement will be in the shape of the victory of the Islamic Mission to defeat which they exerted their utmost by their machinations and plots. But the Islamic Mission will come out successful in the teeth of their evil wishes, desires, intentions and vicious efforts and they themselves shall witness its victory to their utter despair, regret, grief and sorrow.

99. In this passage a clear line of demarcation has been drawn between the hypocritical "Muslims" and the true Muslims, and instructions have been given regarding the treatment that should be meted out to the hypocrites. Therefore, the one who claims to be a Muslim but does not sincerely devote himself to Allah, His Way and the Islamic Community, should be severely dealt with, if there is a clear proof, from his conduct, that he lacks sincerity; or if he offers anything in the Way of Allah, it should be rejected forthwith: or when he dies the Muslims should neither join his funeral prayer nor beg God's pardon for him, even though he be one's father or brother. In contrast to this, if a believer is guilty of some sin and confesses it, he should be pardoned, and his offerings should be accepted and prayers should be said for his forgiveness.

As regards the criterion by which it will be judged whether one is or is not a hypocrite, though one might have been guilty of an act of insincerity, three things have been implied in this passage:—

(1) A sincere follower will openly and clearly confess his sin without offering any lame excuses and giving false explanations and interpretations of his offence.

(2) It will be judged from his previous conduct whether he was a habitual offender or he committed the sin on the spur of the moment because of some weakness. If he had been behaving like a righteous Muslim and if his record showed sincere services, sacrifices and good deeds to his credit, it will be reasonably concluded that he was not a hypocrite.

(3) His future conduct will be watched to see whether his confession was verbal or there had really been a change of heart. If he sincerely feels sorry for his sin and is anxious to compensate for it and his whole conduct shows that he intends to eradicate the root cause of the weakness in his Faith that misled him into the sin, it will be concluded that he sincerely feels sorry for his sin and that he was not a hypocrite but a sinful believer.

The event that is connected with the occasion on which this passage was sent down, makes this subject quite clear. It is related by the scholars of Traditions that these verses were revealed in regard to Abū Lubābah bin 'Abdul Manẓar and his Companions. Ḥaḍrat Abū Lubābah was one of those people who had embraced Islam on the occasion of the Oath

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of Allegiance at 'Aqabah before the migration of the Holy Prophet to Al-Madinah. He had taken part in the battles of Badr, Uhd and other campaigns. But on the occasion of the Tabūk Expedition, he succumbed to some inner weakness and stayed at home without any genuine and lawful excuse. The same was the case of the other six Companions, who were sincere Muslims. When the Holy Prophet returned from Tabūk and they came to know that Allah and His Messenger had a very bad opinion of those who had stayed behind, they were filled with shame and regret. Therefore they tied themselves to a pillar even before they were called upon to explain their conduct. Then they declared, "We will neither eat anything nor sleep unless we are pardoned or die in the same condition." After some days they fell down in an unconscious condition because of hunger and sleeplessness. When at last they were informed that Allah and His Messenger had pardoned them, they went to see the Holy Prophet and said, "Sir, we request you to accept from us as propitiatory offerings our houses and the whole of our possessions. As these were responsible for our sin of omission, we desire to give them away in the Way of God." But the Holy Prophet replied, "There is no need to give the whole of your property for only one-third of it will suffice."

A deep consideration of this event clearly brings out the kind of weaknesses that are pardonable. All of these people were not habitual offenders and defaulters. Their whole past conduct showed that they were sincere Muslims : none of them invented false explanations to excuse themselves but confessed their sin. By offering the whole of their properties as propitiatory offerings, they proved that they were really sorry for their conduct and wanted to atone for their sin.

In this connection, another important lesson should also be learnt from these verses. In order to atone for one's sins, one should give a practical proof along with the verbal confession and heartfelt regret. One way of this is to give charity in the Way of Allah for this helps to cleanse the filth which was being nourished in the heart and which was responsible for the sin. This not only eradicates the hidden evil but also increases the capacity for good works. For the confession of one's sin is like the feeling of one who has fallen into a pit. He at once realizes that he is in a critical situation in a pit, where he does not like to abide, and is troubled over it. Therefore he thinks out plans for getting out of it and makes practical efforts for this. Likewise the one who confesses his sin and feels ashamed of it and takes practical steps to atone for it by making offerings and doing other good works, intends to come out of the pit of sin.

100. "... then you shall return to Allah" Who is the ultimate judge of everything and from Whom nothing can be concealed. Therefore even if one succeeds in hiding one's hypocrisy in this world or is judged to be up to the standard in one's Faith and sincerity, it does not mean in any way that such a one will succeed in escaping chastisement for hypocrisy in the Hereafter also.

101. The case of these people had been deferred because it could not yet be legally decided whether they were sinners or hypocrites and not because their case was doubtful in the sight of Allah. This was because the symptoms of their diseases had not as yet come to the surface to indicate clearly which of the two they were. For Islam teaches the Muslims not to pass judgement on a person or a party unless they possess definite knowledge based on conscious reasoning and not on intuition and the like to support it.

102. “. . . . the one in conflict Messenger” was Abū ‘Āmir, who belonged to the clan of Aus of Al-Madīnah. He had become a Christian monk during the period of ‘ignorance’ before the migration of the Holy Prophet and was well-known as a scholar of the Scriptures and was held in great reverence as a pious monk. But his scholarship and asceticism, instead of leading him to the Truth, became hindrances in the way. That was why he not only rejected Islam but also became a bitter enemy of the Holy Prophet and his Mission, for he took the Prophet for a rival in the “holy business” of priesthood. At first he ignored the Holy Prophet and his Mission in the hope that the power of the Quraish would suffice to crush him and his Mission. But when the Quraish suffered an utter defeat in the battle of Badr, he could no longer ignore it, so he started a vigorous vicious campaign against the Islamic Movement. Accordingly, he left Al-Madīnah and visited different clans, in order to incite them against Islam, and was one of those who brought about the battle of Uḥd. It is said that he had got some pits dug in the battle-field of Uḥd, and that the Holy Prophet fell into one of these and received injuries. Then he played an important role in organizing the armies which came to invade Al-Madīnah in the battle of Aḥzāb. Likewise this Christian Monk took a very active part in giving support to the *mushriks* against Islam in all the subsequent battles up to the battle of Hunain. At last when he realized that no power in Arabia could withstand the onslaught of Islam, he left Arabia and went to the Roman Caesar in order to warn him of the rising “danger” from Al-Madīnah. It was because of his efforts that the Caesar began to make preparations for invading Arabia, to counteract which the Holy Prophet went forth on the Expedition to Tabūk.

Now let us consider the background of the building of the ‘mosque’ that was built to harm the Righteous Mission.

A section of the hypocrites of Al-Madīnah collaborated wholeheartedly with Abū ‘Āmir in all the above-mentioned hostile activities against Islam. They also fully agreed with him that he should use his “spiritual” influence to obtain military help from the Roman Caesar and the Christian states of northern Arabia. Accordingly, when he was preparing to go to the Roman Caesar to urge him to invade Arabia, they devised a plan of making a ‘mosque’ of their own to serve as a safe meeting place for organizing themselves into a separate party because none would suspect that they were carrying on evil activities under the garb of religion. Moreover, this ‘mosque’ would serve as an ambush for the agents of

Abū 'Āmir who could stay in it as travellers and mendicants without raising any suspicion that they were spies of the enemy.

As there were already two mosques in Al-Madīnah—one at Qutā and the other, *Masjid-i-Nabavī*, in the city obviously there was no need for a third one. The hypocrites themselves understood this : therefore they began to invent "reasons" to show that there was really a need for a third mosque. Accordingly, they went to the Holy Prophet and said, "We need another 'mosque' because it is very difficult for the people of this area, especially the old, the sick and the disabled, to offer the five prescribed Prayers in either of the two Mosques, during the winter season and the rainfall. Therefore we intend to build a new 'mosque' only for the convenience of those who live at a distance from the two Mosques but are desirous of saying their prayers in congregation."

With such professedly pure motives, these mischief makers built the 'mosque' and then went to the Holy Prophet with the request, "Sir, please stand in this new 'mosque' and lead the congregation in one of the prescribed prayers so as to perform its opening ceremony." But the Holy Prophet postponed the matter, saying, "At this time I am wholly engaged in making preparations for the Expedition to Tabūk. I shall consider the matter on my return home." After this he went forth to Tabūk, and they started their nefarious activities. They went on organizing themselves and conspiring against Islam in the 'mosque' and decided to crown 'Abdullah-bin-Ubayy as their king, as soon as the Muslims would meet with reverses and be utterly crushed down by the Romans, as they had expected. But their expectations were all frustrated by what happened at Tabūk. Then on the revelation of these verses during the return journey at a place, Zī Avān, near Al-Madīnah, the Holy Prophet despatched some men to demolish the 'mosque' before his entry into the city.

103. In order to comprehend fully the implications of this simile, let us first consider the significance of the Arabic word جُرْفُ (*Jurf*). This applies to the brink of that piece of land which has been undermined by a river or a stream, leaving its surface without any support. In this meaningful simile the construction of the structure of life on the Godless foundations has been compared to that building which is built on the river brink, which has been undermined by its water. It is obvious that the ignorant man who builds a structure on the surface of such a piece of land, merely because it is a piece of land, will not only lose the building but will also lose his own life, for it will inevitably fall down into the river along with him because it has nothing to support it. Likewise, the one who lays the foundation of the structure of the system of his life on the surface of worldly things, without any regard to God's fear or His favour which are the only permanent supports of human life, is like the man who builds his structure on the surface undermined by the river. For such a man himself undermines the structure of his life by his wrong deeds

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الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَنفُسَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ بِأَنْ لَهُمُ الْجَنَّةَ يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
 فَيَقْتُلُونَ وَيُقْتَلُونَ وَعَدًّا عَلَيْهِ حَقًّا فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَالْإِنْجِيلِ وَالْقُرْآنِ
 وَمَنْ أَوْفَى بِعَهْدِهِ مِنَ اللَّهِ فَاسْتَبْشِرُوا بِبَيْعِكُمُ الَّذِي بَايَعْتُمْ بِهِ ۗ وَ
 ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿١١١﴾ التَّائِبُونَ الْعِبَادُونَ الْحَمِيدُونَ السَّائِحُونَ
 الرُّكَّعُونَ السَّجِدُونَ الْأَمْرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَالنَّاهُونَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَ
 الْحَفِظُونَ لِحُدُودِ اللَّهِ ۗ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١١٢﴾ مَا كَانَ لِلنَّبِيِّ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
 أَنْ يَسْتَغْفِرُوا لِلْمُشْرِكِينَ وَلَوْ كَانُوا أُولَىٰ قُرْبَىٰ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا بَيَّنَّ لَهُمْ
 أَنَّهُمْ أَصْحَابُ الْجَحِيمِ ﴿١١٣﴾ وَمَا كَانَ اسْتِغْفَارُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لِأَبِيهِ إِلَّا عَنْ
 مَوْعَدَةٍ وَعَدَمَ آيَآءٍ ۗ فَلَمَّا بَيَّنَّ لَهُ أَنَّهُ عَدُوٌّ لِلَّهِ تَبَرَّأَ مِنْهُ إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ
 لَأَوَّاهٌ حَلِيمٌ ﴿١١٤﴾ وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُضِلَّ قَوْمًا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَاهُمْ حَتَّىٰ يُبَيِّنَ
 لَهُمْ مَا يَتَّقُونَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١١٥﴾ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ
 وَالْأَرْضِ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ ۗ وَمَا لَكُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ ﴿١١٦﴾
 لَقَدْ تَابَ اللَّهُ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ وَالْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالْأَنْصَارِ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ فِي
 سَاعَةِ الْعُسْرَةِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا كَادَ يَزِيغُ قُلُوبَ فَرِيقٍ مِّنْهُمْ ثُمَّ تَابَ
 عَلَيْهِمْ ۗ إِنَّهُ بِهِمْ رَءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١١٧﴾ وَعَلَى الثَّلَاثَةِ الَّذِينَ خَلَفُوا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا
 ضَاقتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الْأَرْضُ بِمَا رَحُبَتْ وَضَاقَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ أَنفُسُهُمْ وَظَنُّوا أَنْ
 لَا مَلْجَأَ مِنَ اللَّهِ إِلَّا إِلَيْهِ ثُمَّ تَابَ عَلَيْهِمْ لِيَتُوبُوا ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ
 الرَّحِيمُ ﴿١١٨﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ ﴿١١٩﴾ مَا
 كَانَ لِأَهْلِ الْمَدِينَةِ وَمَنْ حَوْلَهُمْ مِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ أَنْ يَتَخَلَّفُوا عَنْ

Indeed Allah has bought from the Believers their persons and their possessions in return for the Gardens;¹⁰⁶ they fight in the Way of Allah, kill and are killed. This promise (of the Gardens) is the true pledge of Allah made in the Torah, the Gospel, and the Qurān,¹⁰⁷ and who is more true in fulfilling his promise than Allah? So rejoice in the bargain you have made with Him; and this is the greatest success. Those who turn back to Allah over and over again,¹⁰⁸ those who worship Him, those who sing hymns in His praise, those who move about in the land for His sake,¹⁰⁹ those who bow down and prostrate before Him, those who enjoin virtue and forbid evil and strictly observe the limits prescribed by Allah¹¹⁰ (are the Believers who make such a bargain with Allah;) and O Prophet, give good news to such Believers. 111-112

It does not behove the Prophet and those who have believed to pray for the forgiveness of the *mushriks*, even though they be near kinsmen, when it has become clear to them that they deserve Hell.¹¹¹ As regards the prayer of Abraham for his father, it was only to fulfil a promise he had made to him,¹¹² but when he realized that he was an enemy of Allah, he disowned him. The fact is that Abraham was a tender-hearted, Godfearing and forbearing man.¹¹³ 113-114

It is not the way of Allah to let people go astray after He has given them guidance, until He makes plain to them all that they should avoid¹¹⁴ : surely Allah has the knowledge of everything. And it is also the fact that the kingdom of the heavens and the earth belongs to Him: He ordains life and death: and you have neither any helper nor protector to rescue yourself from Him. 115-116

Allah forgave the Prophet and those *muhājirīn* and *Anṣār* who stood by him in the hour of distress,¹¹⁵ though the hearts of some of them had well-nigh swerved aside¹¹⁶ : (But when they did not follow that crooked way, and stood by the Prophet) Allah forgave them:¹¹⁷ surely Allah is Gentle and Compassionate to these people. And Allah has forgiven the Three whose case had been put off.¹¹⁸ When the earth with all its vastness seemed to have become narrow for them, and their own souls were a burden on them, and they realized that there was no refuge for them except in the mercy of 117-118

Allah Himself, Allah turned to them with kindness so that they should turn to Him. Surely, He is Forgiving and Compassionate.¹¹⁹

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which inevitably follow if there is no bed-rock of God's fear and His favour. Therefore the surface on which he had built his life would one day inevitably tumble down into the abyss of Hell along with the earnings of his whole life.

104. "The Right Way" that leads to man's real success.

105. That is, these hypocrites have deprived their hearts of the capability of receiving and accepting faith by the commission of the most heinous sin of building a 'mosque' to do harm to that very Islam for the propagation of which mosques are built. This crime has set the desire of disbelief so deep in their hearts that it will remain there as long as they are alive and will leave them only at the time of death when their hearts will cease to beat in their breasts. Obviously, the case of such people is quite different from that of those unbelievers, who openly build idol-temples or openly make preparations for war against God. For it is possible that such a one may get Guidance just because he is honest, sincere and bold. Moreover, his open antagonism shows that he has the courage of his convictions and may, therefore, accept Islam, when he would be convinced of its Truth. But there is no hope for that cowardly, lying and cunning man who builds a 'mosque' for the service of *kufr* and puts on the garb of God-worship for fighting against Allah's Way. This is because a conduct like this kills all the noble sentiments within him and renders him utterly incapable of understanding and accepting Islam.

106. In this verse that aspect of the Islamic Faith which determines the nature of the relationship between Allah and His servants has been called a transaction. This means that Faith is not merely a metaphysical conception but is, in fact, a contract by which the servant sells his life and possessions to Allah and in return for this accepts His promise that He would give him the Garden in the Life-after-death. In order to comprehend the full implications of this transaction, let us first understand its nature.

We should note it well at the outset that, in reality, this transaction is not in regard to the actual selling of the life and possessions of the servant to Allah in the literal sense, for Allah is in fact the real Owner of man's life and possessions. Allah alone has the right of ownership because He is the Creator of man and of everything he possesses and uses. Therefore there is no question at all of selling and buying in the worldly sense; for man possesses nothing of his own to sell, and Allah has no need to buy anything because everything already belongs to Him. However, there is one thing which has entirely been entrusted to man by Allah, that is, the freedom of will and the freedom of choice, and the transaction concerns that thing.

Of course, it is true that this freedom does not make any change in the real position of man with regard to the right of ownership to his own life and his possessions. They belong to Allah Who has delegated to him only the authority to use or abuse these things as he wills, without any coercion or compulsion from Him. This means that man has been given the freedom to acknowledge or not to acknowledge that Allah is the owner of his life and property. The transaction mentioned in v. 111 is concerning the voluntary surrender of this freedom to Allah's Will. In other words, Allah wills to test man whether he acknowledges the ownership of Allah over his life and property, in spite of that freedom, and considers himself to be their trustee only, or behaves as if he were their owner and so could do whatever he liked with them.

Thus, the terms of this transaction from Allah's side are these : "If you voluntarily (and not by compulsion or coercion) agree to acknowledge that your life, your property and everything in this world, which in fact belong to Me, are Mine, and consider yourself only as their trustee, and voluntarily surrender the freedom I have given you to behave, if you so like, in a dishonest way and yourself become their master and owner, I will give you, in return, Gardens in the eternal life of the Next World". The one who makes this bargain with Allah is a Believer, for Faith is in fact the other name for making this bargain. On the other hand, the one who refuses to make this bargain, or after making it adopts the attitude of the one who has not made the bargain, is a *kāfir* for, technically, *kufr* is the term applied to the refusal to make this bargain.

The following are the implications of making this transaction :—

(1) Allah has put man to two very hard tests in this matter. The first is whether he acknowledges the real Owner as owner, in spite of the freedom of choice given to him, or he refuses this and becomes ungrateful, treacherous and rebellious. The second test is whether he puts his trust in his God or not, and surrenders his freedom and sacrifices his desires and wishes in this present world in return for His promise of the Gardens and eternal bliss in the Next World, even though the world were to proclaim: "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush".

(2) This matter helps to draw a clear line of demarcation between the legal conception of the Islamic Faith and the higher and spiritual one according to which Allah will judge one in the Hereafter.

According to its legal conception, the mere verbal profession of the articles of the Faith is a sufficient proof that one is legally a Muslim and after this no Jurist is authorized to declare such a one to be a disbeliever or to expel one from the fold of the Islamic Community, unless there is a definite and clear proof that the one made a false profession of the Faith. But this is not so with Allah : Allah considers the Faith of only that person to be true, who makes this bargain with Him and sells his freedom of thought and action to Him and gives up his entire claim to ownership in His favour. That is why a man might profess the articles of the Faith and observe the prescribed obligatory duties, but if

he considered himself alone to be the master and owner of his body and soul, his heart and brain and his other faculties, his property and his resources and other things in his possession, and reserved to himself the right of expending them as he willed, he shall be regarded a disbeliever in the sight of Allah, even though he should be regarded a believer in the sight of the world. This is because such a man has not made that bargain with God which is the essence of the Faith according to the Qurān. The very fact that a man does not expend his life and property in the way Allah approves of, or expends these in the way He disapproves, shows that the one who claimed to profess the Faith either did not sell these to Allah or after having made the transaction still regarded himself to be their master and owner.

(3) The above conception of the Islamic Faith draws a clear line of demarcation between the attitude of a Muslim and that of a disbeliever towards life. The Muslim, who sincerely believes in Allah, surrenders himself completely to Allah's Will, and does nothing whatsoever which may show that he is independent in his attitude, except when he temporarily forgets the terms of the bargain he has made with Him. Likewise no community of the Muslims can collectively adopt an independent attitude in political, cultural, economic, social and international matters and still remain Muslim. And if sometimes it temporarily forgets its subordinate position and its voluntary surrender of its freedom, it will give up the attitude of independence and readopt the attitude of surrender, as soon as it becomes aware of its error. In contrast to this, if one adopts the attitude of independence towards Allah and makes decisions about all the affairs of life in accordance with one's own wishes, whims and caprices, one shall be regarded to have adopted the attitude of disbelief, even though one was a 'Muslim' or a non-Muslim.

(4) It should also be noted well that the Will of God to which a man is required to surrender himself is that which is specified by Allah Himself and not the one which the man himself declares to be the will of God. For in the latter case one does not follow God's Will but one's own will, which is utterly against the terms of the transaction. Only that person (or community) who adopts the attitude that conforms to the teachings of His Book and His Messenger, shall be deemed to have fulfilled the terms of the transaction.

From the above implications of this transaction, it also becomes clear why the fulfilment of the terms by Allah has been deferred to the Next World after the termination of the life of this world. It is obvious that the Garden is not the return for the mere profession that the buyer has sold his life and property to Allah "but it is the actual surrender of these things in the worldly life and their disposal by him as a trustee of Allah according to His Will." Thus, this transaction will be completed only when the life of the buyer comes to an end in this world and it is proved that after making the bargain, he went on fulfilling the terms of the agreement up to his last breath. For then and then alone, he will be entitled to the recompense in accordance with the terms of the transaction.

It will also be worthwhile to understand the context in which this matter has been placed here. In the preceding passage, there was the mention of those people who failed in the test of their Faith and did not make the sacrifice of their time, money, life and interests for the sake of Allah and His Way, in spite of their professions, because of their negligence or lack of sincerity or absolute hypocrisy. Therefore after criticising the attitudes of different persons and sections, they have been told in clear words the implications of the Faith they had accepted: "This is not the mere verbal profession that there is God and He is One, but the acceptance of the fact that He is the Owner and the Master of your lives and possessions. Therefore, if you are not ready and willing to sacrifice these in obedience to the Command of Allah, but expend these and your energies and resources against the Will of Allah, it is a clear proof that you were false in your profession of the Faith. For the true Believers are those who have truly sold their persons and possessions to Allah, and consider Him to be their Owner and Master, and expend their energies and possessions without any reservations, where He commands them to expend, and do not expend the least of these where He forbids them to expend."

107. Some critics say that the statement "this promise is contained in the Torah and the Gospel" is not confirmed by these Books. Their objection in regard to the Gospel is obviously wrong for even in the existing Gospels there are sayings of Prophet Jesus that confirm this verse. For instance :

"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (MAT. 5 : 10).

"He that findeth his life shall lose it : and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." (MAT. 10 : 39).

"And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold and shall inherit everlasting life." (MAT. 19 : 29).

It is, however, true that the matter of this transaction is not confirmed in its entirety by the existing Torah. For instance, there is a mention of the first part of the bargain at several places in one form or the other:—

".....is not he thy father *that* hath bought thee? hath he not made thee, and established thee?" (DEUT. 32 : 6).

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God *is* one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." (DEUT. 6 : 4-5).

But as regards the other part of the bargain, that is, the promise of the Gardens, they applied it to the land of Palestine:—

"Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do *it*; that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the Lord God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and honey." (DEUT. 6 : 3).

This is because the Torah does not give any conception of the Life-

after-death, the Day of Judgement, Rewards and Punishments in the Hereafter, though this creed has always been an inseparable part of the Right Way. This does not, however, mean that the Torah did not originally contain this creed. The fact is that the Jews had become so materialistic during the period of their degeneration that they had no other idea of a reward from God than the well-being and prosperity in this world. Therefore they perverted all the promises made by God in return for man's service and obedience to Him and applied those to the land of Palestine.

In this connection, it should also be noted that the above-mentioned changes became possible because the original Torah had been tampered with in several ways. Some portions were taken away from it and others were added to it. Thus, the Torah in the existing form is not purely the Word of God but also contains the comments, etc., of the Jewish scholars mixed up with it. So much so that at some places it becomes difficult to distinguish the Word of God from the Jewish traditions, their racial prejudices, their superstitions, their ambitions and wishes, their legal interpretations, etc., all of which have got mixed with the Word of God. (For further details please see E.N. 2 of ĀL-I-'IMRĀN.)

108. The Arabic word **التَّائِبُونَ** (*attā-i-būn*) literally means "those who repent". But in the context it occurs it implies "those who possess repentance as their permanent characteristic", that is, they repent over and over again. Moreover, the literal meaning of **تَوْبَةً** (*taubah*) is "to turn to" or "to turn back". Therefore its explanatory translation will be "... those who turn back to Allah over and over again". This is the first and foremost characteristic of a true Believer because even a true Believer is liable to forget the bargain he makes with Allah by which he sells his life and property to Him. As this matter does not concern his sense organs but pertains to his mind and heart, he is liable to forget that these things are not really his property but they belong to Allah. Therefore, even the true believer occasionally forgets the bargain, and behaves in a way as if he were their owner. But as soon as he becomes conscious of this transitory lapse and realizes that he had violated the terms of his agreement, he feels sorry and ashamed of his conduct and turns to his God, begs His pardon and renews the terms of the bargain with Him, and pledges his allegiance to Him after every slip of its violation. This kind of repentance alone is the guarantee that one will always come back to one's Faith : otherwise it is not possible for man because of the inherent human weaknesses, to observe strictly and deliberately the terms of the bargain without ever falling a prey to negligence and error. That is why Allah says in praise of the true Believer that "... he turns back to Allah over and over again" and not that "he never slips into error after making the bargain of obedience and service to Him". And this is the greatest excellence that man can accomplish. Let us now consider the wisdom of placing this characteristic first in the list of the characteristics of the true Believers. It is to admonish those

who had been guilty of crimes after the profession of their Faith. They have been told in v. 111 that the true Believers are those who sell their lives and property to Allah. After this they are being told that if they sincerely intend to become true Believers they should first of all create in themselves this characteristic and at once turn to Allah without showing any obduracy so that they should not deviate further into error.

109. Some commentators are of the opinion that here **الْمَسَافِرُونَ** (*Asā-s'ihūn*) means "... those who observe fast". As this is not the lexical meaning of the word but only its figurative sense, which has been based on an unauthentic tradition attributed to the Holy Prophet, we are of the opinion that there is no need to depart from its lexical meanings, that is, "... move about in the land (for His sake ...)". For here the Arabic word does not mean merely to "... move about in the land" but "move about in the land for the sake of noble and high aims, e.g. to propagate Islam, to do *Jihād*, to emigrate from those places where the unbelievers are in power, and to reform the people, to seek True Knowledge, to earn a lawful livelihood and the like". This characteristic of the Believers has been especially mentioned here to reprove those who had not gone forth to *Jihād*, in spite of their claim that they were "Believers". They have been admonished that a true Believer is the one who goes forth into the land to raise high His Word, and exerts his utmost to fulfil the implications of his Faith, and not the one who stays behind when he is called upon to move about in the land.

110. That is those who "strictly observe the limits prescribed by Allah . . ." in regard to the Articles of the Faith, worship—morality, social behaviour, culture, economics, politics, judiciary, peace and war—in short, in all the aspects of their individual and collective lives. They neither transgress these limits in order to follow their lusts nor invent laws nor replace the Divine Law by other laws. They establish these limits and prevent their violations. Hence, the true Believers are those who not only strictly observe the limits prescribed by Allah, but also do their very best to establish them and safeguard them so as to prevent their violation to the best of their powers and capabilities.

111. "It does not behove . . . to pray for the *mushriks* . . ." implies two things. First, we love them and sympathise with them. Secondly, we consider their crime to be pardonable. There is no harm to cherish these things for the one who is loyal, though a sinner, but it is absolutely wrong in principle to love and sympathise with a person who is an open rebel and to consider his case as pardonable as it renders our own loyalty doubtful. Besides, it adds to the intensity of the crime, if we pray for the forgiveness of a *mushrik*, who is our near relative. For it means that we consider our relationships to be more valuable than the fulfilment of the implications of our loyalty to Allah and that our love with Allah and His Way is not wholly unalloyed and that we desire that Allah should also be influenced by the love we have with His rebels and pardon our criminal

kinsmen, even though He should throw the other criminals into the fire of Hell. Obviously, all such things are wrong and are against loyalty and sincerity and the Faith demands that our love with Allah and His Way should be absolutely unalloyed and that His friend should be our friend and His enemy our enemy. That is why Allah has not said, "Do not pray for the forgiveness of the *mushriks*", but has instead warned, "It does not behove the Prophet and those who have believed to pray for the forgiveness of the *mushriks*", which implies this: "The right thing for you is that you yourselves should regard it as improper to show sympathy with Our rebels and consider their crime as pardonable: nay, you should not wait for any Command from Us about this".

In this connection, it should also be noted well that it is forbidden to show sympathy with the *mushriks* only in matters of Faith. As regards the human relationships that demand the observance of the rights of one's own relatives, of showing love, sympathy and kindness, and cherishing fellow-feelings with them it is not forbidden at all. but it is considered to be a virtue. We must fulfil the worldly rights of a relative whether he be a believer or a disbeliever: we should help him in affliction and give support to the needy ones and the orphans and show all possible sympathy with a sick or wounded person, irrespective of whether he is a Muslim or a non-Muslim.

112. The reference is to what Prophet Abraham said when he broke off all connections with his father :—

(1) ". . . Peace be upon you. I will pray to my Lord to forgive you: for He is very kind to me". (XIX : 47).

(2) "And forgive my father : indeed he is of those who have gone astray. And disgrace me not on the Day, when mankind shall be brought back to life; when neither riches nor children shall avail anyone, and none shall obtain salvation except the one who comes before his Lord with a sound and pure heart". (XXVI: 86-89).

(3) ". . . I will pray for your forgiveness, but I have no power to rescue you from Allah . . ." (LX : 4).

In the first place it should be noted that even the wording and the tone of the prayer for his father were very guarded, but when Prophet Abraham realized that the person for whom he was praying was an open rebel against Allah and a bitter enemy of His Way, he refrained himself from saying even such a guarded prayer for him and declared in clear words that he would have nothing to do with him in future, even though the rebel was his father who had brought him up with love and care.

113. The words—*أَوَّاهٌ* (*avvāh*) and *حَلِيمٌ* (*halim*) which the Qurān uses for Prophet Abraham are very comprehensive in meaning. *Avvāh* is the one who is lamenting, humble, weeping, grief-stricken and God-fearing. And *halim* is the one who can keep control over himself under all circumstances, and is neither beside himself in anger and enmity nor

transgresses the proper limits in his affections, friendships and relationships. Here both the words have been used in their comprehensive senses. Prophet Abraham prayed for his father because he was tender-hearted and lamented for him that he would become the fuel for the fire of Hell. As he had full control over himself, and was very forbearing, he prayed even for that father who had persecuted him cruelly in order to hinder him from the Way of Islam. Lastly, he was Godfearing and did not want to go beyond the limits in his love for his father; so he broke off all his relations with his father when he realized that he was an enemy of Allah.

114. "He makes plain to the people . . ." beforehand that they should avoid such and such thoughts, deeds and ways. But if they take no heed, and persist in wrong thinking and wrongdoing, Allah withholds His guidance from them and lets them follow the wrong way they themselves choose to follow.

This is the general formula that helps understand those passages of the Qurān in which Allah ascribes to Himself the guidance and the deviation of the people. Allah's guidance is that He makes plain to them the Right Way through His Prophets and Books. Then He enables those who have the intention, to follow the Right Way. On the other hand, He does not force and compel them to follow the Right Way, if they themselves intend to persist in the wrong ways in spite of the fact that the Right Way has been made quite clear to them; He rather enables them to follow the way they themselves intend to follow.

As regards the context in which this occurs here, it is plain that it is meant to warn those people who have been mentioned in the preceding passage, and to introduce those who are going to be mentioned in the succeeding passage.

115. Allah forgave the Prophet and his Companions for those inadvertent lapses that had been made in connection with the Tabūk Expedition, in view of their excellent services. The inadvertent lapse made by the Holy Prophet was that he had given leave to stay behind to those people who were able to take part in the *Jihād*. (v. 43).

116. This refers to those sincere Companions who were at first somewhat unwilling to go to war on that critical occasion, but at last overcame their weakness, for they had true Faith in their hearts and loved the Right Way.

117. That is, Allah will not take them to account for their wrong inclinations, for He does not punish a man for that weakness which he himself has overcome and corrected.

118. These Three were among those who came to the Holy Prophet to present their excuses for staying behind. More than eighty of them were hypocrites, who put forward lame excuses and the Holy Prophet accepted these and let them go. Then came the turn of these Three, who were true Believers, and they confessed their fault plainly. Therefore the Holy Prophet postponed the decision of their case, and ordered the Muslims not to have any social relations with them till the decision

of their case came from Allah. This verse was sent down to decide their case.

In this connection it should be kept in mind that the case of these Three was different from the case of the seven mentioned in E.N. 99. They had inflicted the punishment on themselves before they were called to account for their fault.

119. The Three whose condition has been described in this verse, were Ka'ab bin Mālik, Hilāl bin Umayyah and Murārah bin Ruba'i. They were sincere Believers, as has been stated above, and had made many sacrifices and given proofs of their sincerity before this. The last two had taken part in the battle of Badr also, and therefore their Faith was above every kind of suspicion. Though Ka'ab had not taken part in the battle of Badr, he had accompanied the Holy Prophet in every other expedition. But in spite of all these services, they were severely punished for the negligence they had shown on the critical occasion of the Tabūk Expedition, when all the able-bodied Muslims were commanded to go forth to *Jihād*.

When the Holy Prophet came back from Tabūk, he ordered the Muslims to break away completely from them; so much so that they should not even respond to their greetings. After forty days of this boycott their wives also were ordered to have nothing to do with them. In short, they were reduced at Al-Madīnah to the same sad plight which has been described in this verse. At last, after a boycott of fifty days, this verse was sent down to announce their forgiveness.

The story of the above-mentioned boycott has been described in detail by Ka'ab bin Mālik, who was one of the Three. When he became old and blind, he himself told his story to his son, 'Abdullah, who used to accompany him everywhere. As this story is an excellent lesson for all, it is given below in Ka'ab's own words:—

“Whenever the Holy Prophet urged upon the people to get ready for *Jihād*, I made up my mind to make preparations for this. But when I went home, I became negligent, saying to myself, ‘There is no hurry : when the time comes I will readily make preparations and start forthwith’. In this way I went on putting off my preparations till the time came when the army was going to start on the Expedition. As I had made no preparations for the journey, I said to myself, ‘It does not matter: I will be able to join the army in a couple of days during the journey’. But again the same negligence prevented me from putting my intention into practice. At last no occasion was left for me to join the army. To add to my misery my conscience pricked me over and over again that the people with whom I had stayed behind in Al-Madīnah were either the hypocrites or those Muslims who were old or otherwise unfit for *Jihād*.

“When the Holy Prophet came back from Tabūk, he, as usual, said two *rak'ats* of prayer in the Mosque. Then he sat there to meet the people. At first, the hypocrites, whose number was a little more than eighty, came to him and offered lame excuses on solemn oaths. The Holy

Prophet listened to the false story of each of them and accepted their apparent excuses and left the decision about their hearts to Allah, saying, 'May Allah forgive you'. Then it was my turn to put forward my excuse. I went forward and uttered my salutations. He smiled and said, 'Well, what kept you behind?' (I hesitated for a moment.) By God, I would have invented one excuse or the other to satisfy any man of the world, for I am well versed in the art of conversation. But here was the Holy Prophet who was demanding an explanation from me. I believed that, even if I succeeded in satisfying him by making a false excuse, Allah will inform him of the truth of the case and I shall again incur his displeasure. On the other hand, if I told the truth, I expected that Allah would forgive me, even though I were to incur his displeasure for the time being. So I replied, 'Sir, I have no excuse for staying behind. I was in every way able to go forth (to Tabūk)'. At this the Holy Prophet remarked, 'This is the man who has told the truth'. Then turning to me, he said, 'Go and wait till Allah decides your case'.

"I rose from there and took my seat among the people of my own clan. They at once began to tease and reprove me because I had made no excuse. At this, I was tempted to go and make some false excuse. But when I came to know that there were also two good people (Murārah bin Ruba'ī and Hilāl bin Umayyah), who had told the same thing that I had, I felt satisfied and stuck to the truth.

"After this the Holy Prophet issued a general order that no one should have any kind of talk with us. The other two confined themselves to their houses but I used to go out of my house and say my prayers in congregation and walk through the bazaars. As nobody spoke to me, it appeared to me that I was a foreigner in some strange city where I had no acquaintances. When I attended the mosque, I would utter the usual salutations and wait in vain for a response from the Holy Prophet. I would turn stealthy looks at him to read his thoughts in regard to me, but he would turn his eyes away from me, though he had been looking at me while I was engaged in prayer. As this condition became intolerable for me, one day I went to see Abū Qatādah who was a cousin of mine and a friend from childhood. I climbed over the wall of his garden and uttered my salutations, but even he did not make any response to it. Then I said, 'O Abū Qatādah! I ask you to tell me on oath whether I love or do not love Allah and His Messenger'. But he remained silent. Again I repeated the question but he kept silent. I asked him on oath to answer my question. Then he merely replied, 'Allah and His Messenger know best'. At this my eyes were filled with tears, and I came back.

"Another incident happened during those days. Once I was passing through the bazaar, when a Syrian came to me and gave me a letter wrapped in silk. This was from the king of Ghassan and read like this: 'We have come to know that your Leader is persecuting you these days. As you are not an ignoble person, we will not leave you to rot there. Therefore come to us and we will honour you (as you deserve)'. I said to myself,

'Here is another hard trial for me'. Then I threw the letter into the burning oven.

"The boycott continued for forty days, when a man brought this message from the Holy Prophet that I should separate from my wife. I asked whether, I should divorce her but was told that I should only separate from her. Accordingly, I said to my wife, 'Go to your parental home and wait till a decision comes from Allah.'

"On the fiftieth day, when after the Morning Prayers, I was sitting in a state of utter despair on the top of my house, all of a sudden some one cried aloud, 'O Ka'ab bin Mālik! Please accept my congratulations.' Hearing this, I fell prostrate to the ground before Allah, for I understood that the Command of my forgiveness had come. After this, people began to pour in, each trying to forestall the other in congratulating me on the acceptance of my repentance. I rose and went directly to the Mosque. I noticed that the face of the Holy Prophet was glowing with happiness and in response to my salutations, he said, 'I congratulate you on this: it is the best day of your life.' I said, 'Is this forgiveness from you or from Allah?' He replied, 'It is from Allah.' Then he recited these verses (117-118). I asked, 'O Messenger of Allah! Does my repentance require that I should give the whole of my property in charity?' He replied, 'Keep a part of it, for it will be better for you.' Accordingly, I kept my property at Khaibar for myself and gave all the rest in charity. Then I solemnly pledged that I would stick to the truth throughout the rest of my life, for Allah had forgiven me in return for the truth I had told. That is why I have never uttered a word against reality intentionally up to this time and hope and expect that Allah will protect me from lies in future as well."

This story contains many lessons, and every Believer should impress these on his mind and heart.

The first and foremost lesson we learn from this story is that the matter of the conflict between Islam and *kufr* is so important and delicate that we should take the greatest possible care to be on our guard in regard to this. Not to mention the case of one who takes active part on the side of *kufr*, if a Muslim shows the least negligence even inadvertently in taking part on the side of Islam once in his life, and that, too, not with any evil intention, he is liable to lose all the lifelong services and devotions rendered by him in the cause of Islam. That was why such a severe action was taken even against those worthy people who had done great deeds of valour in the battles of Badr, Uḥd, Aḥzāb and Ḥunain, and whose sincerity and Faith were absolutely above suspicion.

The second thing, which is as important as the first, is that one should never consider lightly any negligence in the performance of a duty, for this often misleads one to commit an offence that is counted among heinous sins. The fact that one did not commit the offence with any evil intention cannot save one from punishment.

Lastly, this story presents the true spirit of the society that had been evolved out under the leadership of the Holy Prophet. On the one side, there were the hypocrites whose treacherous deeds were quite well known to all. They offered lame excuses which were accepted without demur, for nothing better could be expected from them. On the other side, let us take the case of Ka'ab bin Mālik, who was a tried Believer, and whose sacrifices were above every kind of suspicion. He did not invent any false story to justify himself but confessed his fault quite plainly and clearly. But, in contrast to the hypocrites, a severe chastisement was inflicted on him, not because there was any suspicion about his Faith but because a sincere Believer like him had behaved in a way in which only a hypocrite could behave. Thus the chastisement was meant to remind them: "You are the salt of the earth. But if you, too, become tasteless, wherefrom will then salt be obtained?"

There is another noteworthy side of the matter. The part played by the Leader and the Follower and the Muslim Society in this incident is unique. The Leader inflicts the most severe punishment but with the feelings of affection and without any tinge of anger or hatred in it. It is like the punishment which a father gives to his son. It is always understood that the punishment is given for the good of the son, who knows that as soon as he mends his ways, he will regain the fatherly love. And the Follower sets an excellent example of obedience under very trying circumstances. He suffers hard from the severity of the chastisement but never thinks of rebelling against the Leader because of any false personal or clannish pride; nay, he does not cherish in his heart any complaint against his beloved Leader, but begins to love him even more than before. During this saddest period of his life the only thing he yearns for is a look of affection from his Leader. For he is like a famine-stricken farmer whose only hope is the piece of cloud which he sees floating in the sky.

Now let us have a glimpse of the Muslim Society, which displayed the greatest discipline and the highest moral spirit that had ever been shown by any society. No sooner does the Leader order the boycott than the whole Community becomes a stranger to the Follower not only in public but also in private. So much so that his nearest relatives and closest friends do not even speak to him; nay, his own wife leaves him alone. He implores them on oath to tell him if they suspected his sincerity, but even his lifelong companions make a point-blank refusal, saying that he should ask Allah and His Messenger for that testimony. But in spite of the show of this strict discipline, the moral spirit of the Community is so high and so pure that not a single person tries to take advantage of the position of the fallen brother by adding insult to his injury; nay, every one feels sorry for his brother in disgrace, and is impatient to embrace him as soon as he is forgiven. That is why the people run in haste to tell him the good news.

The above is the model of the Righteous Community that the Qurān aims to build.

[Contd. on p. 244

رَسُولِ اللَّهِ وَلَا يَرْغَبُوا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ عَنِ نَفْسِهِ ۗ ذَٰلِكُمْ بِأَنَّهُمْ لَا يُصِيبُهُمْ
 ظَمَأٌ وَلَا نَصَبٌ وَلَا مَخَصَصَةٌ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا يَطَّوِّنَ مَوْطِنًا يَعْغِطُ
 الْكُفَّارَ وَلَا يَنَالُونَ مِنْ عَدُوِّ نَيْلًا إِلَّا كُتِبَ لَهُمْ بِهِ عَمَلٌ صَالِحٌ ۗ إِنَّ
 اللَّهَ لَا يُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْحَسِنِينَ ﴿١٣٠﴾ وَلَا يُنْفِقُونَ نَفَقَةً صَغِيرَةً وَلَا كَبِيرَةً
 وَلَا يَقْطَعُونَ وَادِيًا إِلَّا كُتِبَ لَهُمْ لِيَجْزِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنَ مَا كَانُوا
 يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٣١﴾ وَمَا كَانَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لِيَنْفِرُوا كَآفَّةً ۗ فَلَوْلَا نَفَرَ مِنْ كُلِّ
 فِرْقَةٍ مِنْهُمْ طَائِفَةٌ لِيَتَفَقَّهُوا فِي الدِّينِ وَلِيُنذِرُوا قَوْمَهُمْ إِذَا رَجَعُوا
 إِلَيْهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَحْذَرُونَ ﴿١٣٢﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قَاتِلُوا الَّذِينَ يَلُونَكُمْ
 مِنَ الْكُفَّارِ وَلِجِدُوا فِيكُمْ غِلْظَةً ۗ وَعَلِمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١٣٣﴾ وَ
 إِذَا مَا أَنْزَلَتْ سُورَةٌ فَمِنْهُمْ مَن يَقُولُ آيَاتُهَا زَادَتْهُ هِدَايَةً أَيْمَانًا ۗ
 فَمَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فزَادَتْهُمْ أَيْمَانًا وَهُوَ يُسَبِّحُونَ ﴿١٣٤﴾ وَ أَمَّا الَّذِينَ فِي
 قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ فزَادَتْهُمْ رِجْسًا إِلَى رِجْسِهِمْ وَمَاتُوا وَهُمْ كَافِرُونَ ﴿١٣٥﴾
 أَوَلَا يَرَوْنَ أَنَّهُمْ يُفْتَنُونَ فِي كُلِّ عَامٍ مَّرَّةً أَوْ مَرَّتَيْنِ ثُمَّ لَا يَتُوبُونَ
 وَلَا هُمْ يَذَّكَّرُونَ ﴿١٣٦﴾ وَإِذَا مَا أَنْزَلَتْ سُورَةٌ نَّظَرَ بَعْضُهُمْ إِلَى بَعْضٍ ۗ
 هَلْ يَرِيكُمْ مِنْ أَحَدٍ ثُمَّ انصَرَفُوا ۗ صَرَفَ اللَّهُ قُلُوبَهُمْ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ
 لَا يَفْقَهُونَ ﴿١٣٧﴾ لَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ عَزِيزٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا عَنِتُّمْ
 حَرِيصٌ عَلَيْكُمْ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٣٨﴾ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَقُلْ حَسْبِيَ
 اللَّهُ ۗ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَهُوَ رَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿١٣٩﴾

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O Believers, fear Allah and be with those who are Truthful. It did not behove the people of Al-Madīnah and the Bedouins, dwelling around, to abandon Allah's Messenger and stay at home in order to safeguard their own interests, in utter disregard of him. For, every hardship like thirst, hunger and any other physical ordeal they suffer in the Way of Allah, and every step they take on that Way which enrages the unbelievers, and every act of wreaking vengeance upon the enemies of the truth, is credited in their favour with a good deed for each: surely Allah does not let go unrewarded any deed of the righteous people. Likewise, whatever they spend (in the Way of Allah), be it little or much, and whichever valley they traverse (for *Jihād*), is credited to their account so that Allah may reward them for the good deeds they did. 119-121

And it was not required that all the believers should leave their homes, but why did not some people from every habitation leave their homes in order to understand the Way of Islam and to warn their people when they returned to them, so that they should refrain from un-Islamic conduct?¹²⁰ 122

O Believers, fight with these disbelievers who are near you,¹²¹ and they should find you firm and stern:¹²² and know that Allah is with the Godfearing.¹²³ Whenever a new sūrah is revealed, some of them ask the Muslims (in jest), "Say, whose Faith from among you has increased?" (The answer is that) most surely (every sūrah) increases the Faith of those who have sincerely believed and they rejoice, but it has added more filth to the existing filth¹²⁴ of those whose hearts are suffering from the disease (of hypocrisy) and they shall remain disbelievers up to their death. Do these people not see that they are tried once or twice every year?¹²⁵ Yet, still they do not repent or learn a lesson from this. When a sūrah is sent down, they cast looks at one another, asking, "Is anyone watching you?" Then they silently slip away:¹²⁶ Allah has turned away their hearts for they are a people who do not understand.¹²⁷ 123-127

Listen! A Messenger has come to you, who is from among you. He grieves at your (spiritual) loss: he is greedily anxious for your (true) success: he is gentle and compassionate for the Believers:— 128-129

Now if they turn away from you, say to them, O Prophet, "Allah suffices me: there is no god but He: in Him have I put my trust: He is the Lord of the Great Throne."

Contd. from p. 241]

This background makes it plain why Allah not only forgave them but also manifested His Kindness, Gentleness and Compassion in His Forgiveness to these people. It was because of their sincerity which they proved during the fifty days of their chastisement. Had they shown arrogance after the commission of their offence and retaliated by taking angry and hostile actions as does every self-worshipper whose pride is wounded: had they behaved during their boycott in a manner as if they would break away from the Community but never bow down before it: had they passed this period in spreading dissatisfaction in the Community and gathering around them all the disgruntled people in order to organize a strong "opposition" against the Leader, then they would have most certainly been expelled from the Community, as if to say, "Go you now and worship the idol of your self, for henceforth you will never be given any opportunity for exerting to raise the Word of Allah". But these Three did not adopt this way though it was open to them. On the contrary, they took a different way, as has been seen, and proved that God-worship had destroyed every idol that might have remained hidden in their hearts: that they had dedicated themselves entirely to the exertion in the Way of Allah: that while joining the Islamic Community they had burnt their boats to make it impossible for themselves to go back anywhere: that they would put up with every kind of treatment but would remain in the Community and die as a member of it and would scornfully reject any offer of an honourable place outside it; and would rather bear disgrace in it. That was why they were again taken in the Community with the same honour as before. This is the explanation of the kind words of forgiveness: "Allah turned to them with kindness so that they should turn to Him." In these concise words, the Qurān has depicted the true picture of the matter. The Master had at first turned away His attention from His Three servants but when He saw that they had not left His door but had remained there with broken hearts, He again turned to them in appreciation of their fidelity so as to bring them back into the fold.

120. In order to comprehend the meaning of this verse, v. 97 with which it is connected, should be kept in view:

"These Bedouins are most stubborn in unbelief and hypocrisy, and, in all probability, will remain ignorant of the laws of the Way which Allah has sent down to His Messenger."

In v. 97, the Qurān merely diagnosed the disease and pointed out its symptoms. The Bedouins were suffering from the disease of hypocrisy because of their ignorance of the laws of the Way of Allah. This was so because they had not had any connections with the Centre of that Knowledge. Here in this concluding portion of the Sūrah, the remedy of that

disease has been prescribed so that they should have an understanding of Islam and its implications. It is not necessary that for this purpose all of them should leave their homes and come to Al-Madīnah to learn that knowledge, but some of them should come from each habitation, clan and region to the Centres of the Knowledge (Al-Madīnah, Makkah and the like) and understand Islam. Then they should go back to their own habitations and create its understanding among the common people.

This was a very important instruction that was given at the opportune moment to strengthen the Islamic Movement for, at that time, the people were entering into the fold of Islam in large numbers without its proper understanding. Obviously, this instruction was not needed in the initial stages of the Movement, for at that time everyone who embraced Islam did so with its full understanding. No one would think of becoming a Muslim without this as this was an invitation to persecution. When the Movement became successful and won power in the land, the clans and the habitations began to enter *en bloc* into the fold of Islam. Naturally very few of them understood the full implications of the Faith before accepting it, but the majority of them were being carried into the Fold, as it were, by the strong current that had been generated by the Movement. Outwardly this immense increase in numbers appeared to be a source of strength to Islam, but in reality such people as had no true understanding of Islam and were, therefore, not prepared to fulfil its moral obligations, were not only useless for the Islamic System but were actually harmful to it. This side of the matter became quite apparent during the preparations for the Tabūk Expedition. That is why Allah sent down the instruction that necessary steps should be taken for the integration of the Islamic Community so that it may keep pace with the immense increase in its numbers. Therefore some people should be brought out from every habitation and taught and trained in the requirements of Islam and these in their turn should teach and train their own people so that the whole Muslim population should understand Islam and obtain the knowledge of the limits prescribed by Allah.

In this connection, it should also be clearly understood that *the Command about mass education given in this verse is not merely about literacy but it had the definite aim of imparting the understanding of the Way of Islam among the masses and enabling them to refrain from un-Islamic Ways.* This is the real and permanent aim of education that has been set before the Muslims by Allah Himself. Therefore every system of their education shall be judged by this criterion and shall be regarded Islamic only to the extent it fulfils this aim. It does not, however, mean that Islam is against the spreading of literacy and teaching of the purely mundane subjects to the masses, but it simply means that the primary aim of the Islamic Education should be the achievement of the objective which has been mentioned above in italics. Without this, it does not consider any education to be education at all, even if it were to produce Einsteins and Freuds of the age.

It will be worthwhile to consider the true significance of the words (لِيَتَفَقَّهُوا فِي الدِّينِ) used in the context, for they created a strange misunderstanding among the people of the later period, and produced lasting poisonous effects on the religious education of the Muslims, nay, on their whole religious life in general. It is obvious that Allah used these words in order to lay down the objective of education before the Muslims, which was this: to understand the Islamic Way of life and have an insight into its system : to be familiar with its true nature and spirit so as to be able to judge and differentiate between the Islamic and the un-Islamic ways of thought and conduct in every aspect of life. But later on when the knowledge of the Muslim Law was given the technical name of *فقه* (*fiqh*), it gradually developed into the science of the details of external form (as opposed to the spiritual aspect of the Islamic Law). As the word *فقه* (*fiqh*) is of the same root *فَقَّهَ* as *لِيَتَفَقَّهُوا* used in this verse, a misunderstanding was created that this Command of the Qurān was about acquiring the knowledge of *fiqh* in the above-mentioned sense. It is true that this knowledge is of great importance in the Islamic System of life, but it is not all that is required by the Qurān but only a part of the objective. It is not possible to recount here all the damages that the Muslim Community has suffered because of this misunderstanding, but suffice it to say that this is the thing, which is responsible for reducing the religious education of the Muslims to the knowledge and interpretation of the external form of Islam without paying any attention to the spirit of Islam. This inevitably resulted in making lifeless formalism the ultimate goal of the life of the Muslims.

121. From the apparent wording of this verse, it may be inferred that only those Muslims have at first been held responsible to fight with those enemies of Islam who live near their territory. But if we read this verse along with the succeeding passage, it becomes clear that here "disbelievers who are near you" refers to those hypocrites who were doing great harm to the Islamic Society by mixing up with the sincere Muslims. This very thing was stated in v. 73 at the beginning of this discourse. The Command has been repeated at its end in order to impress on the Muslims the importance of the matter and to urge them to do *Jihād* and crush these internal enemies, without paying the least regard to the racial, family and social relations that had been proving a binding force with them. The only difference between the two Commands is that in v. 73, the Muslims were asked to do *Jihād* with them, while in this verse stronger words, "fight with them", have been used, which were meant to impress on them that they should crush the hypocrites thoroughly and completely. Another difference in the wordings is that in v. 73, two different words, "disbelievers and hypocrites", have been used, while in this verse only one word, "disbelievers", has been used so that the hypocrites should forfeit all their claims as Muslims, for there was room for this concession

in the word "hypocrite".

122. This is meant to impress that they should not, in future, show the lenient treatment they had been meting out to them up to that time. This has already been commanded in v. 73: "be firm and stern with them".

123. This warning has two-fold meanings and both are implied here. First, "If you show any kind of leniency towards them because of your personal or family or economic connections with them, you should know that such a thing shall be against 'the fear of God', for the fear of God and friendly relations with the enemies of Allah are contradictory things. Therefore, you should give these up, if you desire to obtain Allah's help". Secondly, "You should scrupulously observe the moral and humane limits in doing *Jihād*, and in fighting with them. For you should always keep yourselves within the prescribed limits in everything. If you transgress these in any way, you should know that Allah will forsake you for He helps only those who are Godfearing".

124. As regards the increase and decrease in Faith, disbelief and hypocrisy, please refer to E.N. 2 of Sūrah AL-ANFĀL.

125. That is, during the course of every year such circumstances are created as put to test once or twice their claim to the Faith, and these disclose that their profession of Islam was like a counterfeit coin. For instance, some time their Faith is tested by (a) a Commandment of the Qur'an which lays some new restriction on their lusts, or by (b) a demand of the Faith that hits hard at their self-interests, or by (c) an internal dispute which discloses their preference for worldly interests and for their personal, family and clannish relations to Allah, His Messenger and the Faith, or by (d) a war that requires the sacrifice of their lives, wealth, time and energies. All these tests help bring to the open that filth of hypocrisy that lay hidden in their hearts under the garb of the profession of Islam. Besides, these things increase that filth which had already gathered in their hearts because of their deviations from the implications of the Faith.

126. This happened when the hypocrites had to attend a meeting that was specially held for the recital of some new sūrah. The Holy Prophet used to recite as an address every new sūrah before the assembly. The true Believers would listen to it very attentively and respectfully. But the hypocrites, who had to attend the meeting to show that they were "Muslims", would sit listlessly in the meeting for they had no interest in the recital. But when they would be assured that their "attendance" had been marked, they would look for an opportune moment to slip away without being seen and noticed.

127. "Allah has turned away their hearts" from the Qur'an, because they do not understand that it is in their own interest to listen to the Qur'an and to act upon its teachings. These foolish people do not realize that by ignoring the Qur'an and the Holy Prophet, they, in fact, deprive themselves of a great blessing. As they are deeply engaged in their own narrow

interests, they do not see that the great knowledge of the Qurān and the right guidance of the Holy Prophet has the potentiality of making them the leaders of this world, and of bringing salvation to them in the Next World. As a result of their folly and neglect of the great blessing, Allah has, in accordance with His Law, deprived them of the capacity of making use of this blessing and "turned away their hearts" from it. That is why these unfortunate people do not even feel the great loss they are suffering, while the blessed people are taking full advantage of this great fountain-head of power and strength and are preparing themselves for achieving the greatest success that human beings could ever achieve.

