

THE MEANING OF THE QURĀN

Vol. VI

[Sūrah Ibrāhīm — Bani Isrā'il]

(ARABIC TEXT WITH TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY)

By

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ISLAMIC PUBLICATIONS LTD.

13-E, SHAHALAM MARKET, LAHORE (Pakistan)

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Copyright by:
Islamic Publications (Private) Limited, Lahore

1st Edition	June	1973	3,000
2nd Edition	September	1976	2,000
3rd Edition	May	1978	4,000
4th Edition	May	1981	2,100
5th Edition	April	1983	2,100
6th Edition	September	1985	2,100
7th Edition	March	1988	2,100
8th Edition	August	1990	1,100
9th Edition	July	1991	1,100
10th Edition	August	1992	1,100
11th Edition	August	1993	1,100

Published by :
Rana Allah Dad Khan. Managing Director
Islamic Publications (Pvt.) Limited,
13-E Shahalam Market, Lahore (Pakistan)

Printed by :
Metro Printers Lahore

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XIV

Ibrāhīm (ABRAHAM) اِبْرَاهِيْم

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

XIV

IBRĀHĪM (ABRAHAM) اِبْرَاهِيمَ

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name from v. 35 in which mention has been made of Prophet *Ibrāhīm* (Abraham). But it does not mean that it contains the life story of Prophet Abraham. The name is merely a symbol like the names of many other sūrahs, *i.e.*, the Sūrah in which Abraham's mention has been made.

Period of Revelation

It appears from the tone of the Sūrah that it belongs to that group of the Sūrahs which were revealed during the last stage of the Makkan period. For instance, v. 13 ("The disbelievers warned their Messengers, 'you shall have to return to our community or we will assuredly expel you from our land'") clearly indicates that the persecution of the Muslims was at its worst at the time of the revelation of this Sūrah, and the people of Makkah were bent on expelling the Believers from there like the disbelievers of the former Prophets. That is why in v. 14 they have been warned, "We will destroy these evil-doers," and the Believers have been comforted as were the believers before them, "and after them settle you in the land." Likewise the stern warning contained in the concluding portion (vv. 43-52) also confirms that the Sūrah relates to the last-stage of the Makkan Period.

Central Theme and Purpose

This Sūrah is an admonition and a warning to the disbelievers who were rejecting the Message of the Holy Prophet and devising cunning schemes to defeat his Mission. But warning, reproof, censure and reproach dominate admonition. This is because a good deal of admonition had already been made in the preceding Sūrahs, but in spite of this their obduracy, enmity, antagonism, mischief, persecution etc. had rather increased.



الرِّسَالَةِ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ لِتُخْرِجَ النَّاسَ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ
 إِلَى صِرَاطٍ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَمِيدِ ۝ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ
 وَوَيْلٌ لِلْكَافِرِينَ مِنْ عَذَابٍ شَدِيدٍ ۝ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَحِبُّونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا
 عَلَى الْآخِرَةِ وَيَصُدُّونَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَيَبْغُونَهَا عِوَجًا أُولَئِكَ فِي ضَلَالٍ
 بَعِيدٍ ۝ وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ رَسُولٍ إِلَّا بِلِسَانٍ قَوْمِهِ لِيُبَيِّنَ لَهُمْ فَيُضِلُّ
 اللَّهُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۝ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ۝ وَقَدْ
 أَرْسَلْنَا مُوسَى بِآيَاتِنَا أَنْ أَخْرِجْ قَوْمَكَ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ وَذَكِّرْهُمْ
 بِآيَاتِهِ ۝ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِكُلِّ صَبَّارٍ شَكُورٍ ۝ وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَى
 لِقَوْمِهِ اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ أَنْجَاكُمْ مِنْ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ يَسُومُونَكُمْ
 سُوءَ الْعَذَابِ وَيَدْبِخُونَ آبْنَاءَكُمْ وَيَسْتَحْيُونَ نِسَاءَكُمْ ۝ وَفِي ذَلِكَ بَلَاءٌ مِّنْ
 رَبِّكُمْ عَظِيمٌ ۝ وَإِذْ تَأَذَّنَ رَبُّكُمْ لَئِن شَكَرْتُمْ لَأَزِيدَنَّكُمْ وَلَئِن كَفَرْتُمْ
 إِنَّ عَذَابِي لَشَدِيدٌ ۝ وَقَالَ مُوسَى إِنَّ تَكْفُرُوا أَنْتُمْ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ
 جَمِيعًا ۝ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَغَنِيٌّ حَمِيدٌ ۝ أَلَمْ يَأْتِكُمْ نَبُؤُا الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ
 قَوْمِ نُوحٍ وَعَادٍ وَشُعْرُبَةَ وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ ۝ لَا يَعْلَمُهُمْ إِلَّا اللَّهُ ۝ مَعَانِيهِ
 جَاءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَرَدُّوا أَيْدِيَهُمْ فِي أَقْوَامِهِمْ وَقَالُوا إِنَّا كَفَرْنَا
 بِمَا أُرْسِلْتُمْ بِهِ وَإِنَّا لَفِي شَكٍّ مِّمَّا تَدْعُونَنَا إِلَيْهِ مُرِيبٍ ۝ قَالَتْ رُسُلُهُم أَلَا
 إِنِّي أَنَا اللَّهُ فَاطِرُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ يَدْعُواكُمْ لِيَخْفَا لَكُمْ مِنْ ذُنُوبِكُمْ

XIV

IBRĀHĪM (ABRAHAM) اِبْرَاهِيمَ

Verses: 52

Revealed at Makkah

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

Alif Lām Rā. O Muhammad ! this is a Book which
We have sent down to you so that you may bring man-
kind by the help of their Lord out of the dark ways (of
ignorance) into the Light (of knowledge) to the Way of that
God,¹ Who is All-Powerful and inherently worthy of All-
Praise² and the Owner of whatever is in the heavens and
the earth.

1-2

And there is a painful torment for those who reject the
Truth: who love the life of this world more than the life of
the Hereafter:³ who debar people from Allah's Way and
want to make this Way crooked⁴ (to suit their wishes).
They have gone far astray from the Way of Allah.

3

Whenever We sent a Messenger to convey Our Mes-
sage, he delivered it in the language of his people so that
he may make it plain to them.⁵ Then Allah lets go
astray whomsoever He wills and shows Guidance to whom-
soever He desires:⁶ 'He is All-Powerful, All-Wise.'⁷

4

We sent Moses also before this with Our Signs: and
We commanded him, "Bring your people out of all kinds of
darkness into Light and admonish them to learn lessons
from the Divine History."⁸ There are great Signs⁹ in this
for every steadfast and grateful person.¹⁰

5

Recall (the time) when Moses said to his people,
"Remember Allah's favour on you : He delivered you
from Pharaoh's people who oppressed you with cruel
afflictions: they slaughtered your sons and let your females
live. In this there was a hard trial for you from your
Lord. And remember also that your Lord fore-warned, 'If

6-8

you be grateful¹¹ I will increase My favours on you, and if you be ungrateful (you should know that) My chastisement is severe indeed'!"¹² And Moses said, "If you prove thankless, you and all the dwellers of the earth know that Allah does not stand in need of any of you, for He is All-Sufficient and worthy of all praise by Himself."¹³

9 Has¹⁴ not the story reached you of those who have gone before you of the people of Noah and 'Ād and Thamūd, and of those who came after them? Allah alone knows their number. When their Messengers came to them with plain teachings and manifest Signs, they thrust their hands into their mouths,¹⁵ saying, "We reject the Message with which you have been sent and we have a disquieting doubt about that thing¹⁶ to which you are inviting us."

1. This is the purpose for which the Holy Prophet had been sent. He was entrusted with the mission that he should bring mankind back from the ways of darkness (ways of wickedness) into the Way of God by the help of the Light of the Qurān. For everyone, who is not on the Way of God, is, in fact, wandering about in the ways of the darkness (of ignorance), even though he might consider himself to be very enlightened and full of knowledge. On the other hand, the one who finds the Way of Allah, comes into the Light of Knowledge, even though he might be an illiterate person.

As regards "by the help of their Lord", this implies that the most a missionary of Islam (even though he be a Messenger of Allah) can do is to present the Right Way. It is not in his power to bring anyone forcibly to the Way, for this can only happen by the help and permission of Allah. That is why only that person whom Allah helps and permits gets guidance : otherwise even a perfect Missionary like a Messenger fails to bring a person to the Way. As regards the Divine Law, according to which Allah helps and permits a person to gain guidance, we learn from different passages of the Qurān that Allah gives help only to that person who himself has a desire to get guidance : who frees himself from obduracy, obstinacy and prejudice : who is not a follower of his lust, nor a slave of his desires : who is inclined to see with open eyes and hear with open ears and think with a clear mind, and is ready to accede to any reasonable thing.

2. The word حميد (*Hamīd*) is more comprehensive than محمود (*Mahmūd*). A person will be entitled to be *Mahmūd* only when he is praised. But the Being Who is *Hamīd*, is naturally and permanently worthy of praise, whether anyone praises Him or not, because the element of praise is inherent in Him and is inseparable from Him.

3. Those who reject the Truth are the people whose interests are entirely bound with the life of this world, and who do not care at all for the interests of the life of the Hereafter : who are prepared to undergo any punishment in the Next World for the sake of the interests, pleasures and comforts of this world : who, on the other hand, cannot bear the sacrifice of even the smallest pleasure in this world, nor are ready to bear any loss or encounter danger or trouble in this world for the sake of the joys of the Next World. In short, such are the people who have coolly considered and weighed the pleasures of this world against the joys of the Next World, and decided in favour of this world : therefore they readily sacrifice the interest of the Next World whenever there is a clash between the two.

4. That is, "They do not want to follow the Way of Allah, but endeavour that Allah's Way should follow their desires : it should adjust itself in such a way as to include all their conjectures, theories and whims as its part and parcel, and exclude every creed that does not suit their way of life : it should provide sanction for all their habits, customs and manners : it should not demand from them anything which they do not like : in short, the Way of Allah should be their obedient slave and turn in the direction their devilish lusts want it to turn : nay, it should neither criticize them nor ask them to follow Allah's injunctions. This is their condition for accepting the Guidance of Allah".

5. This implies two things : First, Allah sent down His Message in the language of the people from among whom a Prophet was raised so that they might not have any excuse left that they could not understand the language of the Message. Secondly, this ruled out the presumption that a Messenger was ever given the Message in a different language merely for the sake of a miracle. For Allah considered it more important to make the people understand the Message and guide them rightly than to satisfy their curiosity. Obviously the purpose could best be served only if the Message was sent down to them in their own language by their Prophet and not in any other.

6. That is, "Although the Messenger conveys the Message in the mother tongue of the people, which is understood by everyone of them, yet all of them are not guided aright. This happens because of the fact that all of those who understand a Message do not necessarily accept it. For it is entirely with Allah to show guidance by means of His Message to anyone He wills and to let go astray anyone in spite of it."

7. As Allah is All-Powerful, no one is able by oneself to get guidance or to go astray, for none is completely independent but is under the power of Allah. But as He is All-Wise, He does not use His power blindly so as to show guidance to anyone He wills and to let go astray anyone He desires without rhyme or reason. In fact, the one who gets guidance from Him gets it on merit and the one who is let go astray is deprived of guidance because he himself deliberately chooses deviation.

8. The Arabic word **آيَات** (*ayyām*) technically means memorable historical events. Therefore **آيَاتُ اللَّهِ** (*Ayyām-u-Allah*) (Divine History) implies all those eventful chapters of human history which mention the rewards and punishments that were meted out to the great personalities and nations according to their deeds in the past ages.

9. Those historical events are Signs in this sense that their proper and intelligent study provides proofs of the fact that there is only one God : and that the Law of Retribution is universal and is based absolutely on the differentiation between the knowledge and moral practice of the Truth and falsehood : that this Law also requires another world (the Hereafter) for its due fulfilment. Moreover, these events contain Signs that serve as warnings against the evil consequences of building up systems of life on false creeds and theories, and help one to learn lessons from them.

10. Though these Signs are always there, only those persons learn lessons from them who remain steadfast in trials and appreciate the blessings of Allah rightly and are grateful to Him. Obviously, frivolous and ungrateful persons cannot learn any lesson from these Signs, even though they might grasp their significance.

11. That is, "If you are grateful, you will appreciate Our favours and make right use of them, and will not rebel against Our Commandments, but will surrender and submit to Us to show your gratitude to Us."

12. DEUTERONOMY (Bible) contains a long and detailed discourse to this effect. According to it, Prophet Moses, on the eve of his death, reminded the Israelites of all important events from their history, and reiterated all the Divine Commandments of the Torah which Allah had sent to them through him. Then he told them in a long speech that if they obeyed their Lord, they would be given great rewards. But if they adopted the attitude of disobedience, they would get a terrible punishment. This discourse spreads over chapters 4, 6, 8, 10, 11 and 28-30. Some of these passages are so impressive and instructive that it will be worthwhile to quote a few of them :—

"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. And these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart : And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. . . ." (DEUT. 6 : 4-7)

"And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, to keep the commandments of the Lord, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good? Behold, the heaven and

the heaven of heavens *is* thy Lord's thy God, the earth *also*, with all that therein *is*." (DEUT. 10 : 12-14)

"And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe *and* to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth : And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God. Blessed *shalt* thou *be* in the city, and blessed *shalt* thou *be* in the field. The Lord shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face....The Lord shall command the blessing upon thee in thy storehouses, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto....The Lord shall establish thee an holy people unto himself....And all people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the Lord; and they shall be afraid of thee....and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow. And the Lord shall make thee the head, and not the tail ; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath...." (28 : 1-13).

"But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day ; that all those curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee : Cursed *shalt* thou *be* in the city, and cursed *shalt* thou *be* in the field.... The Lord shall send upon thee cursing, vexation, and rebuke, in all that thou settest thine hand unto for to do....The Lord shall make the pestilence cleave unto thee,....And thy heaven that *is* over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that *is* under thee *shall be* iron....The Lord shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies : thou shalt go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them :....Thou shalt betroth a wife, and another man shall lie with her : thou shalt build an house and thou shalt not dwell therein : thou shalt plant a vineyard, and shalt not gather the grapes thereof. Thine ox shall be slain before thine eyes....Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all *things* : and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee....And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other :...." (DEUT. 28 : 15-64).

13. It should be noted that a reference to Prophet Moses and his people has been made here to warn the people of Makkah of the consequences of their ingratitude towards this favour of Allah that He had raised Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) from among them. This was a timely warning, for at that time they were showing ingratitude by rejecting that Message. They were, therefore, warned to learn a lesson from the miserable condition of the Israelites, which was

[Contd. on p. 12

The Messengers said, "Do you have doubt about the existence of Allah, Who is the Creator of the heavens and the earth ?¹⁷ He calls you that He may forgive you your sins and give you respite till your appointed term."¹⁸ They answered, "You are no more than human beings like ourselves.¹⁹ You intend to debar us from the worship of the deities whom our forefathers have been worshipping. Well, bring a clear Sign."²⁰ The Messengers replied, "It is true that we are no more than human beings like you, but Allah shows His favour to anyone of His servants He pleases.²¹ And it is not in our power to bring any Sign for you. A Sign can come only by Allah's permission. And in Allah alone should the believers put their trust. And why should we not put our trust in Allah when He has guided us in the ways of our lives ? We will bear with fortitude your persecutions of us and the trustful should have trust in Allah alone."

At last the disbelievers said to their Messengers, "You shall either return to our religion²² or we will banish you from our land." Then their Lord revealed to them, "We will destroy these evil-doers and after them settle you in the land."²³ This is the reward of the one who dreads that he is accountable to Me and is afraid of the threat of My punishment." They had sought a judgment (and the judgment was passed on them) and every tyrant, the enemy of the Truth, suffered ignominy.²⁴ Then after this Hell lies before him where he shall get tainted water to drink, which he shall try to gulp down, but will scarcely swallow it. Death shall surround him on all sides, yet he shall not die; and before him there shall be a grievous torment.

The works of those who disbelieved may be likened to the ashes which the wind scatters on a stormy day. They shall not be able to gain anything from what they did.²⁵ This is the extreme deviation. Do you not see that Allah has based the creation of the heavens and the earth on truth ?²⁶ If He will, He can put you away and bring in a new creation in your place. And that is not at all a difficult thing for Allah.²⁷

21 And when those people shall all be exposed together before Allah,²⁸ then those who were weak in this world will say to those who had posed as big ones, "As we followed you in the world, can you now do anything to relieve us from the torment of Allah?" They will reply, "Had Allah guided us to the way of salvation, we would have certainly guided you to it. Now it is all the same whether we bewail it or bear it with patience: there is for us no way of escape."²⁹

22 And when Our judgment has been passed, Satan will say, "The fact is that the promises Allah had made with you were all true. I, too, made some promises with

Contd. from p. 9]

the result of their ingratitude to and rebellion against Allah's favours.

As the Quraish themselves could see the consequences of that rebellious attitude of the Israelites, they were, so to say, asked this question: "Do you also desire to meet with the same consequences by showing ingratitude towards the Message, which is a great favour to you?"

Obviously, the great favour which was shown to the Quraish was that Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) was raised from among them with that Message about which he assured them over and over again: "Accept this Message of mine: all the Arabs and the non-Arabs will surrender and submit to you".

14. The speech of Prophet Moses ended with v. 8. From here begins a direct address to the disbelievers of Makkah.

15. There has been a great deal of difference of opinion in regard to the meaning of the Arabic words of the Text and different commentators have assigned different meanings to them. But we are of the opinion that these express merely the intolerance and perplexity and a bit of anger that was being shown by the disbelievers towards the Message and this is confirmed by the subsequent sentence.

16. They had a "disquieting doubt" about the Message because it had taken away their peace of mind. This was because invitation to the Message always makes the minds uneasy, for it becomes hard even for its opponents to reject it out-right or oppose it with peace of mind. Howsoever they might give vent to their doubts about it and oppose it tooth and nail the force of its truth and its sound arguments, its frankness and candour and its winning manners of exposition produce a great agitation in the minds of its bitterest opponents: then the pure and spotless character of the Messenger and the marked change for the better brought about in his followers produce such an accumulative effect on their minds that even their most bitter antagonists begin to feel uneasy

about their own stand. Thus, those who try to disturb the peace of mind of the upholders of the Truth are themselves deprived of their own peace of mind.

17. The Messengers posed this question to those who rejected the Message in order to bring home to them the absurdity of their stand with regard to God. For though the *mushriks* of every age believed in the existence of God and acknowledged that He was the Creator of the heavens and the earth, they did not accept the Message, its logical result, that He alone was entitled to their worship. That is why the Messengers asked them, "Do you have any doubt about the existence of Allah?"

18. In the case of individuals, the 'appointed term' may be either the time of one's death or the Doomsday. As regards the 'appointed term' for the rise and fall of communities, it is determined by their collective behaviour. For instance, if a capable community degenerates before the expiry of its term, the assigned period is shortened and it is deposed. On the other hand, if a degenerate community changes its ways for the better, its term is extended ; so much so that it may extend even to the Doomsday. This same thing is implied in v. 11 of Ar-R'ad: "...The fact is that Allah does not change a people's lot unless they themselves change their own characteristics...."

19. The disbelievers meant to imply: "You are a human being like us in every respect: you eat, drink and sleep like us and have wife and children like us. You feel hungry and thirsty, and suffer from heat and cold, disease and calamities like us. In short, you have every human limitation like us, and we see nothing unusual and extraordinary in you to induce us to accept you as a Prophet and believe that God communicates with you and sends His angels to you."

20. That is, "If you still insist that you are a Prophet, bring a tangible proof of your appointment so as to convince us that you have really been sent by God and your Message is from Him."

21. That is, "No doubt we are human beings like you but it is Allah's will that He has chosen us from among you and blessed us with the knowledge of the Truth and keen discernment. And this is Allah's will and He has full powers to bestow anything on anyone He wills. We are not in a position to ask Him to send that blessing to you or to anyone else: nor can we deny the realities which have been shown to us."

22. It will be wrong to conclude from this demand of theirs that the Prophets professed the religion of their people before their appointment to the Divine Office. This only meant that their people thought so because before their appointment they led a quiet life and did not propagate a new religion nor refuted the religion in vogue at that time. That is why their people were under the wrong impression that the Prophets also professed the religion of their forefathers, and, therefore, accused them of apostasy. The fact, however, is that they had never followed the religion of their *mushrik* forefathers and were not guilty of apostasy.

23. This was to reassure the Prophets that they should not worry at all about the threat that the disbelievers would banish them from their country, as if to say, "We will uproot them from their land, and establish you and your followers firmly in their place."

24. In order to grasp the real significance of these historical events, it should be kept in view that these are being related here as answers to those objections which the disbelievers of Makkah raised before the Holy Prophet. As the conditions there at the time of the revelation of this Sūrah were exactly like those of the peoples of the former Prophets, they have been cited here to warn the Quraish along with the other *mushriks* of Arabia of the consequences, as if to say, "The former disbelievers challenged their Messengers and were destroyed and the Believers were established in the land. Likewise your future also entirely depends on the attitude you adopt towards the Message of your Prophet. If you accept this, you will be allowed to remain in the land of Arabia, and if you reject it you shall be utterly up-rooted from here." The subsequent events proved that this prophecy was literally fulfilled within fifteen years after this, for there remained not a single *mushrik* in the whole of Arabia.

25. That is, "Those who were perfidious, faithless, and disobedient to the Divine Message, and refused to adopt that Way to which the Messengers invited, will find in the end that all the deeds and earnings of their lives were as worthless as a heap of ashes. Just as each and every particle of a high mound of ashes formed during a long course of years is scattered by the wind on a stormy day, likewise all their grand works will prove on the stormy Doomsday to be no more than a mound of ashes. Their dazzling culture, their grand civilization, their wonderful kingdoms and states, their magnificent universities, their sciences and their literatures, nay, even their hypocritical worship, and so-called virtuous deeds, their charitable and reformatory works of which they were very proud in the worldly life, shall prove to be as worthless as a heap of ashes, and will be scattered by the "Storm" of the Day of Resurrection. So much so that there shall not remain a single particle of their works worthy of being placed in the Divine scale on that Day in their favour.

26. This is the proof of the preceding statement that the works of the disbelievers are worthless like ashes. The question implies: "Why are you sceptical of this? Do you not see that the grand system of the earth and the heavens is based on the survival of Truth and not on the survival of falsehood. Everything bears witness to the fact that anything which is not based on truth and reality but rests on unreal speculation and guess-work cannot continue to live long. Therefore anyone who builds his works on the latter will most surely fail in his designs. For it is obvious that such a person builds his works on sand and should not, therefore, expect that they can last long. Likewise those who discard

the truth and reality and build their works on false theories and presumptions should not expect at all that they can have any lasting value for they are bound to be scattered like worthless ashes. If this is obvious, as it is, why should you cherish any doubts about the fact that anyone who builds the system of his life on the basis that he is independent of Allah or on the god-head of someone else (whereas there is no other God) shall inevitably find all his works to be worthless? When the fact is that man is not absolutely independent in this world nor is he the servant of anyone else than Allah, why should you not expect that anyone who builds his works on this falsehood, shall find that all his works were worthless like the heap of ashes that was scattered all over by the wind?"

27. This is by way of admonition that follows immediately the proof of the statement in the preceding verse. This removes also any doubt that might arise concerning that decisive statement. One might question it like this : "If the creation is really based on the survival of truth, why is it that every follower of falsehood and every wrong-doer is not destroyed forthwith?" This is the answer : "O foolish man ! Do you think that it is difficult for Allah to destroy such a person? Or, do you think that Allah does not destroy him because he has some close relationship with Him? If this is not so, and you yourself know that it is not so, you should understand it well that any community that follows falsehood and commits wicked deeds is always in danger of being removed to make room for a better community to work in its stead. If respite is given and the threat does not take a practical shape it does not mean that there is no danger at all. Instead of being neglectful, you should make use of every moment of this respite and realize that the false system which you are following is not stable and durable. You should, therefore, build it on stable and durable foundations."

28. The word بروز (*barūz*) means 'to emerge' and also implies 'to become known'. That is why it has been translated into "shall be exposed before Allah", for it implies both these meanings. As a matter of fact, all the people are fully exposed all the time before Allah but they do not realize it. They will, however, realize it on the Day of Judgment when they shall be presented before the "Greatest of all Judges" that they were fully exposed before Him all along. So much so that every deed they did and each and every thing they thought and desired is known to Him.

29. This is to serve as a warning to all those people who follow others blindly or obey and submit to tyrants because they say, "We are weak." They are warned, as if to say "You should note it well that those leaders, saints, officers and rulers whom you are following blindly today, will not be able to protect you at all from the chastisement of Allah. Therefore you should consider it well today where such people, whom you are following or obeying, are themselves going and where they are leading you."

عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ سُلْطٰنٍ اِلَّا اَنْ دَعَوْتَكُمْ فَاَسْتَجَبْتُمْ لِيْ ۗ فَلَا تَكُوْمُوْنَ وَاَلُوْمًا
 اَنْفُسَكُمْ ۗ مَا اَنَا بِمُصْرِخِكُمْ وَمَا اَنْتُمْ بِمُصْرِخِيْ ۗ اِنِّيْ كَفَرْتُ بِمَا اَشْرَكْتُمْ
 مِنْ قَبْلُ ۗ اِنَّ الظَّالِمِيْنَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ ﴿٢٢﴾ وَاَدْخَلَ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا
 الصّٰلِحٰتِ جَنّٰتٍ تَجْرِيْ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا بِاِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ ۗ تَحِيَّتُهُمْ
 فِيْهَا سَلَامٌ ﴿٢٣﴾ اَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ ضَرَبَ اللّٰهُ مَثَلًا كَلِمَةً طَيِّبَةً كَشَجَرَةٍ طَيِّبَةٍ
 اَصْلُهَا ثَابِتٌ وَفَرْعُهَا فِي السَّمَآءِ ﴿٢٤﴾ تُؤْتِيْ اُكْلَهَا كُلَّ حِينٍ بِاِذْنِ رَبِّهَا ۗ
 وَيَضْرِبُ اللّٰهُ الْاَمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَمَثَلُ كَلِمَةٍ خَبِيْثَةٍ
 كَشَجَرَةٍ خَبِيْثَةٍ ۗ اجْتَمَعَتْ مِنْ فَوْقِ الْاَرْضِ مَا لَهَا مِنْ قَرَارٍ ﴿٢٦﴾ يُّثْبِتُ اللّٰهُ
 الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا بِالْقَوْلِ الثَّابِتِ فِي الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْاٰخِرَةِ ۗ وَيُضِلُّ اللّٰهُ
 الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَيَفْعَلُ اللّٰهُ مَا يَشَآءُ ﴿٢٨﴾ اَلَمْ تَرَ اِلَى الَّذِيْنَ بَدَّلُوْا نِعْمَتَ اللّٰهِ كُفْرًا
 وَاَحْلَوْا قَوْمَهُمْ دَارَ الْبَوَارِ ﴿٢٩﴾ جَهَنَّمَ ۗ يَصْلَوْنَهَا ۗ وَبِئْسَ الْقَرَارُ ﴿٣٠﴾ وَجَعَلُوْا
 لِلّٰهِ اَنْدَادًا لِّيُضِلُّوْا عَنْ سَبِيْلِهِ ۗ قُلْ تَسْبَحُوْا فَاِنَّ مَصِيْرَكُمْ اِلَى النَّارِ ﴿٣١﴾ قُلْ
 لِعِبَادِيَ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا يُقِيْمُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَيُنْفِقُوْا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ سِرًّا وَعَلٰنِيَةً
 مِنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ يَّآتِيَ يَوْمٌ لَا بَيْعُ فِيْهِ وَلَا خِلَافٌ ﴿٣٢﴾ اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ
 وَالْاَرْضَ وَاَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً فَاَخْرَجَ بِهٖ مِنَ الشَّجَرٰتِ رِزْقًا لَّكُمْ ۗ وَ
 سَخَّرَ لَكُمْ الْفَلَكَ لِتَجْرِيَ فِي الْبَحْرِ بِاَمْرٍ ۗ وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمْ الْاَنْهٰرَ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَسَخَّرَ
 لَكُمْ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ دَآئِبِيْنَ ۗ وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمْ الَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ ﴿٣٤﴾ وَ اَتَاكُمْ مِنْ كُلِّ
 مَا سَأَلْتُمُوْهُ ۗ وَاِنْ تَعَدُّوْا نِعْمَتَ اللّٰهِ لَا تُحْصُوْهَا ۗ اِنَّ الْاِنْسَانَ لَظَلُوْمٌ
 كَفَّارٌ ﴿٣٥﴾ وَاِذْ قَالَ اِبْرٰهِيْمُ رَبِّ اجْعَلْ هٰذَا الْبَلَدَ اٰمِنًا وَاَجْنِبْنِيْ وَبَنِيَّ

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you but I failed to keep any of them.³⁰ Yet I had no power over you; I did nothing but to invite you to my way and you accepted my invitation.³¹ So do not now blame me, but blame yourselves. I cannot help you here, nor can you help me. I dissociate myself from your making me a partner with God before this.³² Such wrong-doers are sure to receive a grievous torment.”

And (in contrast to the transgressors), those who have believed and done righteous deeds, shall be admitted to Gardens underneath which canals flow. They shall abide there for ever by the permission of their Lord, and they shall be welcomed there by “peace be on you.”³³ Do you not see to what Allah has likened the ‘Pure Word’³⁴? It is like a good tree which has got deep roots into the earth and whose branches have spread high up into heaven.³⁵ It bears good fruit every moment by the permission of its Lord.³⁶ Allah cites these parables for the benefit of people so that they learn a lesson from them. And an ‘evil word’³⁷ may be likened to an evil tree, which is torn out from the earth and has no stability.³⁸ Allah makes the believers steadfast in the life of this world and of the Hereafter with the firm Word³⁹ but lets the transgressors go astray.⁴⁰ Allah has full power to do as He will.

23-27

You have seen those people who repaid the bounty of Allah with ingratitude and hurled their people (along with themselves) into the abode of perdition—Hell, wherein they shall enter and it is the most wretched abode to live! And they set up equals with Allah so that they should lead them astray from the way of Allah. Tell them, “Well, you may enjoy yourselves for a while for ultimately you shall have to return to the Fire of Hell.”

28-30

O Prophet! tell My servants who have believed, to establish *Ṣalāt*, and expend openly and secretly (on good works) out of what We have given them⁴¹ before that Day comes when there shall be no buying and selling and no friendly help.⁴²

31

Allah is He⁴³ Who has created the heavens and the earth, and He sent down rain-water from the sky where-

32-34

with He produced different kinds of fruits to provide you with food. It is He Who subdued the ship for you that it may sail in the seas by His order and likewise He subdued the rivers for you. It is He Who subdued the sun and the moon so that they should steadfastly pursue their courses and He subdued day and night for you.⁴⁴ It is He Who fulfilled all your requirements ;⁴⁵ so much so that you cannot count His bounties, if you tried to number them. The fact is that man is very unjust and ungrateful.

30. When the criminals will charge Satan with leading them astray, he will plead guilty, as if to say, "You yourselves see now that all the promises and warnings made by Allah have come out true and all the promises which I made have proved to be false. I also confess that it was all deception that I gave you false assurances of prosperity, beguiled you by greed and enticed you in the snare of great expectations. I assured you that in the first instance there will be no life in the Hereafter, and that, if there be any you will go scot-free by the intercession of such and such a saint. The only thing you have to do is to make offerings before him: then you may do whatever you please, for he will deliver you from all the consequences. I repeat that I said all these things and asked my agents to say the same."

31. That is, "You cannot say and prove that it was I who forced you to follow the wrong way, whereas you wanted to follow the Right Way. You will yourselves admit that it is not so. I did no more than this that I invited you to falsehood in opposition to the invitation to the Truth and tempted you to vice instead of virtue. But I had no power to force you to the wrong way, if you desired to follow the Right Way, when you had the power and the option to follow either of the ways. Now I am ready to bear the burden of the wicked invitation I extended to you, but you are not justified in any way to throw on me the burden of accepting my invitation for you did it on your own responsibility. You should, therefore, yourselves bear all its consequences."

32. This is a clear proof of *shirk* in practice, as apart from *shirk* in creed. As Satan will charge his followers with making him a partner with God, it is obvious that as far as creed is concerned there is no one who makes Satan a partner with God in His Godhead or His worship : nay, every one curses him for his evil ways. Nevertheless, people obey and submit to him and follow him blindly, as if he were their "god" and that is what has been termed *shirk*.

Let us now consider this thesis from the opposite point of view. Some one might say that this does not hold good, for this is based on a mere saying of Satan which has been cited here. First, this objection is not sound because Allah Himself would have refuted it, had it been baseless. Secondly, this is not the only instance of *shirk* in practice in

the Qurān. Here are a few more instances of this :

- (a) It charges the Jews and Christians with *shirk* because they set up their priests and monks as their "Lords" besides Allah. (IX : 31).
- (b) Those who follow the superstitious customs have been called *mushriks*. (VI: 136-139).
- (c) Those who follow their lusts have been charged with making their "selves" their "god". (XXV : 43).
- (d) Those who are disobedient to Allah have been accused of worshipping "Satan". (XXXVI : 60).
- (e) Those who follow man-made laws without Allah's sanction have been reprovved for setting up the makers of the laws without Allah's sanction as partners with God. (XLII : 21).

All the above instances are clear proofs of the fact that *shirk* is not confined to this creed alone that one might set up a partner with Allah in His Godhead as an article of faith. But it is also *shirk* that one should follow and surrender to some one other than Allah without any Divine sanction or in spite of a Divine prohibition. Such a one shall be guilty of *shirk* even though the follower might be at the same time cursing the one whom he follows and obeys. The only difference between the two kinds of *shirk* may be the extent of the crime and not its nature.

33. The Arabic word ^{تَحِيَّاتٌ} (*tahīyyah*) is literally a "prayer for long life," but in usage it is a greeting at meeting. Therefore the expression ^{سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ} "سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ" may mean : "they will welcome one another with 'peace be on you' or will be welcomed with these words". It may also be noted that the word "سَلَامٌ" (*salām*) implies both a prayer for "peace" and a congratulation on it.

34. Though the expression "كَلِمَةٌ طَيِّبَةٌ" literally means "Pure Word," here it stands for "Truthful Saying and Righteous Creed". According to the Qurān, this 'Saying' and 'Creed' are the acceptance of the Doctrine of *Tauhīd*, belief in Prophethood and Revelation, and in the life of the Hereafter, for it declares these things to be the fundamental truths.

35. This is to show the strength and extent of the "Pure Word". As the entire system of the universe hangs upon the Reality contained in this "Pure Word" which the believer professes, the earth and its entire system co-operates with him and the heaven with its entire system welcomes him. There is, therefore, no conflict between him and the Law of nature, and everything in its very nature extends its help to him.

36. That is, the "Pure Word" is so fruitful that every person (or community) who bases his system of life on it, gets benefit from it every moment. For it helps to produce clearness in thought, balance in

temperament, strength in character, purity in morals, firmness in conduct, righteousness in talk, straightforwardness in conversation, good temperament in social behaviour, nobility in culture, justice and equity in economy, honesty in politics, nobility in war, sincerity in peace, confidence in promises and pledges. In short, it is the elixir that changes everything into gold if one makes the proper use of it.

37. "Evil word" is the opposite of "Pure Word". It may be applied to everything that is unreal and wrong but here it stands for any false creed that one might adopt as a basis of one's system of life, irrespective of whether it be atheism or heresy or disbelief or *shirk* or idol-worship or any other "ism" that has not been brought by a Messenger.

38. And "evil word" (false creed) has no stability because it is against the Law of nature. Therefore everything in the universe opposes it and refutes it, as if the earth hates it and is ready to spit out its seeds every time they are sown in it, and if some seed succeeds in growing an evil tree, heaven suppresses down its branches. In fact, false creed could never have been allowed to develop, if man had not been given the freedom of choice and respite for work for the sake of his trial. That is why when some foolish people exert to establish a system of life on it, it is allowed to grow to a certain extent, but it produces nothing but harmful results as long as it lasts. And no sooner does it encounter with adverse circumstances than it is thoroughly uprooted from the earth.

The distinction between the "Pure Word" and the "evil word" is so apparent that anyone who makes a critical study of the religious, moral, intellectual and cultural history of the world can perceive it easily. For the "Pure Word" has always been the one and same during the whole history of mankind and has never been uprooted. On the contrary, there have been innumerable "evil words" but each and every one has been so uprooted that there has remained hardly anything of it except its name in the pages of history. Nay, some of these had proved to be so absurd that if these are mentioned today one wonders how one could have followed such nonsensical things.

There has been another noteworthy difference between the two "words". Whenever and wherever the "Pure Word" has been adopted by an individual or a community, its blessings had not been confined to that individual and community but had benefited all around them. On the contrary, whenever and wherever an evil word has been adopted by an individual or a community, its evils had spread chaos and disorder all around them.

In this connection, it should also be noted that the parable of the "Pure Word" and the "evil word" explains the same theme that had been explained by the similitudes of the mound of ashes that is blown away by the "wind" of the stormy day (v. 18) and of the "foam of flood", and the "scum of the melted metals." (XIII : 17)

39. That is, "The believers remain steadfast during the life of this world because of their stable system of life based on this "Pure Word". For this gives them a straight point of view, a sound system of thought and a comprehensive theory of life, and it serves as a master key to the unravelling of all knots and the solving of all problems. With its help, they acquire that strength of character and that firmness of conduct which keep them steady in the face of every vicissitude of life. This provides them also with such solid principles of life which give them peace of mind and heart, and prevent them from deviation and caprice. Above all, when, after the life of this world, they will enter into the life of the Hereafter, they will remain perfectly calm without any tinge of fear or anxiety, for they will find everything therein to be in accordance with their expectations, as if they were fully acquainted with every aspect of it before they entered into it. For they had been fully informed of, and therefore fully prepared for every stage and phase of this life. That is why they will pass through every stage with perfect calmness and firmness in contrast to the disbelievers who built their worldly lives on an "evil word" and will, therefore, be taken aback to find everything against their expectations.

40. That is, "Allah lets the transgressors, who discard the "Pure Word" and follow an "evil word", go astray by creating confusion in their minds and mis-directing their efforts because of this deviation. That is why they cannot find the right way of thought and action and so fail miserably.

41. That is, "The believers should adopt an attitude of gratitude in contrast to the disbelievers (v. 29). The practical form their gratitude should take is that they should establish *Ṣalāt* and expend their wealth in the Way of Allah".

42. That is, "On that Day none shall be able to rescue himself either by ransom or by intercession".

43. That is, "It is the same Allah Whose bounties they are repaying with ingratitude and disobedience and with Whom they are setting up equals, though He has been so bountiful as to....."

44. The words of the Text *سَخَّرْنَا لَكُمْ* in vv. 32-33 have misled those people, who have translated these into "subjected to you". So much so that some of them interpret these verses to mean that the chief aim of the life of man is to bring the earth and heavens under his subjection, whereas their real meaning is "subjected to (laws) for you". As a matter of fact Allah has subjected all these things to such laws as are beneficial for man. Had not a ship been subjected to certain physical laws, there could have been no navigation at all : had not a river been subjected to certain laws, it could not have been possible to take out canals from them; likewise if the heavenly bodies (the sun and the moon,

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أَنْ تَعْبُدَ الْأَصْنَامَ ۗ رَبِّ انْمُنْ أَضَلَّنَا كَثِيرًا مِنَ النَّاسِ قَسْنُ تَتَّبَعْنِي
 فَإِنَّهُ مِنِّي ۗ وَمَنْ عَصَانِي فَإِنَّكَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ۗ رَبَّنَا إِنِّي أَسْكَنْتُ مِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي
 بُيُوتًا غَيْرَ ذِي زُرْعَةٍ عِنْدَ بَيْتِكَ الْمُحَرَّمِ رَبَّنَا لِيُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ فَاجْعَلْ
 أَفْئِدَةً مِنَ النَّاسِ تَهْوِي إِلَيْهِمْ وَارْزُقْهُمْ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَشْكُرُونَ ۗ
 رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ تَعْلَمُ مَا نُخْفِي وَمَا نُعْلِنُ ۗ وَمَا يَخْفَى عَلَى اللَّهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فِي
 الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَاءِ ۗ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي وَهَبَ لِي عَلَى الْكِبَرِ إِسْمَاعِيلَ
 وَإِسْحَاقَ ۗ إِنَّ رَبِّي لَسَمِيعٌ الدُّعَاءِ ۗ رَبِّ اجْعَلْنِي مُقِيمَ الصَّلَاةِ وَمِنْ
 ذُرِّيَّتِي ۗ رَبَّنَا وَتَقَبَّلْ دُعَاءَ ۗ رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيَّ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَوْمَ
 يَقُومُ الْحِسَابُ ۗ وَلَا تَحْسِبَنَّ اللَّهُ عَافِيًا عَمَّا يَعْبُدُ الظَّالِمُونَ ۗ إِنَّمَا
 يُؤَخِّرُهُمْ لِيَوْمٍ تَشْخَصُ فِيهِ الْأَبْصَارُ ۗ مُهْطِعِينَ مُقْنِعِي رُءُوسِهِمْ لَا
 يَرْتَدُّ إِلَيْهِمْ طَرْفُهُمْ ۗ وَأَفِئَتُهُمْ حَوَآءُ ۗ وَأَنْذِرِ النَّاسَ يَوْمَ يَأْتِيهِمْ
 الْعَذَابُ فَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا رَبَّنَا أَخِّرْنَا إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ قَرِيبٍ نَجِبْ دَعْوَتَكَ
 وَتَتَّبِعِ الرُّسُلَ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ تَكُونُوا آفِسَةً مِّنْ قَبْلِ مَا لَكُم مِّنْ زَوَالٍ ۗ وَسَكَنَتُمْ
 فِي مَسَاكِنَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَتَبَيَّنَ لَكُمْ كَيْفَ فَعَلْنَا بِهِمْ وَضَرَبْنَا لَكُمْ
 الْأَمْثَالَ ۗ وَقَدْ مَكَرُوا مَكْرَهُمْ وَعِنْدَ اللَّهِ مَكْرُهُمْ وَإِنْ كَانَ مَكْرُهُمْ
 لِيَتَزَوَّلَ مِنْهُ الْجِبَالُ ۗ فَلَا تَحْسِبَنَّ اللَّهُ مُخِلًّا وَعَدَةٌ رُّسُلَهُ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ
 ذُو انْتِقَامٍ ۗ يَوْمَ يُبَدَّلُ الْأَرْضُ غَيْرَ الْأَرْضِ وَالسَّمَاوَاتُ وَبَرَزُوا لِلَّهِ الْوَاحِدِ الْقَهَّارِ ۗ
 وَتَرَى الْمُجْرِمِينَ يَوْمَئِذٍ مُّقْرَنِينَ فِي الْأَصْفَادِ ۗ سَرَابِيلُهُمْ مِنْ قَطْرَانٍ وَتَغْشَى
 وُجُوهَهُمُ النَّارُ ۗ لِيَجْزِيَ اللَّهُ كُلَّ نَفْسٍ مَا كَسَبَتْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ ۗ

Recall the time, when Abraham prayed,⁴⁶ saying, 35-41
 “Lord ! make this city⁴⁷ a city of peace, and protect me and my descendants from the worship of idols. Lord! these have turned away⁴⁸ many people from the Right Way (and they might turn away my descendants as well. Therefore only those of them) who follow my way, belong to me, but (I leave to Thee) those who follow a different way from mine, for Thou art very Forgiving and Merciful.⁴⁹ Lord ! I have settled some of my descendants in a barren valley near Thy Sacred House. Lord ! I have done this in the hope that they would establish *Ṣalāt* there. So turn the hearts of the people towards them, and provide fruits for their food⁵⁰ : it is expected that they will become grateful. Lord ! Thou hast full knowledge of all that we hide and disclose.”⁵¹ And⁵² the fact is that nothing in the earth and heavens is hidden from Allah. “All praise be to Allah Who has given me sons like Ismā‘īl and Isaac in my old age. Indeed, my Lord hears all prayers. Lord ! help make me establish *Ṣalāt* and from among my descendants (raise those who should do this work). Lord ! grant my prayer. Lord! forgive me and my parents and the believers on the Day when reckoning will take place.”⁵³

Do not think that Allah is unaware of what these 42-46
 unjust people are doing ; He is only deferring their case to the Day when all eyes shall stare with consternation. They shall be running in terror with heads up-lifted and eyes fixed upwards⁵⁴ and hearts becoming void. O Muhammad, fore-warn them of the Day when Our scourge will overtake them : then these wrong-doers will say, “Our Lord ! give us a little more respite : we will respond to Thy Message and follow the Messengers.” (But it will be said to them decisively,) “Are you not the same people who swore before this that you will never meet with a decline, whereas you had lived in the habitations of those who had wronged their souls and seen how We had dealt with them ; and We held them up to you as examples? They had tried all their cunning devices to outwit Us but Allah had the remedy to counteract their devices, even though these were so powerful as to move mountains.”⁵⁵

47-51

So, O Prophet, never imagine that Allah will ever go against the promises made to His Messengers.⁵⁶ Allah is All-Powerful and capable of revenge. Warn them of the Day when the Earth and the Heavens shall be totally transformed,⁵⁷ and all of them shall stand exposed before Allah, the One, the Almighty. On that Day you will see the criminals with their hands and feet in fetters. They shall be in garments of tar⁵⁸ and the flames of fire shall be covering their faces. This will happen so that Allah may recompense everyone for what one earned : Allah is prompt at reckoning.

Contd. from p. 21]

etc.) and the earth and day and night had not been subjected to certain fixed laws, life could not have been possible, not to speak of civilized life!

45. "He fulfilled all your requirements": He has provided for everything that is required for your life, its development and evolution.

46. In the preceding verses (32—35), an appeal was made to the Quraish to be grateful to that Allah Who has bestowed so many bounties on mankind in general. But in this passage the same appeal is being made on the plea that Allah had bestowed His special bounties on the Quraish in particular. They have been asked to remember that Prophet Abraham had settled their forefathers near the Ka'abah and made their city, Makkah, a "City of Peace" and Allah showered His blessings on the Quraish in answer to the prayer of Prophet Abraham. They have been admonished to remember those "bounties" and mend their ways.

47. Makkah.

48. This is a figurative way of saying that idols have been the means of turning many people away from Allah's Way into the ways of deviation.

49. This forbearance shown towards those who followed a different way from the Right Way is an instance of Prophet Abraham's leniency to mankind. He left their case to the Forgiveness and Mercy of Allah for he could not bear to see them under Divine scourge. Another instance of this has been cited in Sūrah Hūd. When the angels were on their way to destroy the wicked people of Lot, Prophet Abraham began to plead for them : "...Abraham began to dispute with Us concerning the people of Lot for he was tender-hearted and merciful...." (XI : 74-75) Likewise Prophet Jesus was so tender-hearted that even when Allah will show to him that his followers had deviated from the Right Way, he will plead their case : "Now if you punish them, they are your own servants, and if you forgive them, you are All-Mighty and All-Wise" (v : 118).

50. Allah granted this prayer of Prophet Abraham. That was why

people from the whole of Arabia used to come there for *Haj* and 'Umrah at the time of the revelation of this Sūrah, and now people gather there from all over the world. Besides this, there is plenty of food and fruit in all seasons of the year, though the valley is absolutey barren and no vegetation grows in it even for animals.

51. That is, "Lord : Thou hearest what I utter with my tongue and also hast full knowledge of my thoughts and feelings."

52. This parenthetical clause has been inserted to confirm the statement of Prophet Abraham.

53. Prophet Abraham included his *mushrik* father in his prayer because he had made promise that he would pray to his Lord for his forgiveness. (XIX : 48). But afterwards when he realized that he should not pray for his forgiveness because he was an enemy of Allah, he absolved himself of that promise. (IX: 114)

54. This graphic picture depicts the horrible plight of the wrongdoers on the Day of Reckoning. When they will realize the situation, they will be so taken aback that they will have their looks fixed straight in front of them without seeing anything.

55. That is, "You have seen that the former people who violated the Divine Law, and who opposed the Message, devised very effective and cunning schemes to avert the consequences of their iniquity, but Allah defeated them with His single counter-device. You did not give up your crafty schemes against the Message of Truth in the vain hope that your "strong" measures would succeed where the schemes of your predecessors had failed.

56. Though this has been addressed to the Holy Prophet, it is really meant for his opponents. They are being warned that they should not delude themselves because of the delay in their punishment. They should note it well that Allah fulfilled the promises He made to the former Messengers and defeated their opponents. Likewise He will surely fulfil the promises He had made to Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him).

57. It is obvious from this verse and some hints in the Qurān that on the occasion of Resurrection, the Earth and the Heavens will not be totally destroyed but at the blowing of the "First Trumpet", the existing physical system shall be disarranged. After this, between the blowing of the "First" and the "Last Trumpet" (Allah alone knows how long this interval will last), the present form and aspect of the earth and the heavens shall be transformed and a new physical system with new physical laws will come into existence. That will be the world of the Hereafter. When the "Last Trumpet" will be blown, all human beings from Adam to those born before the "First Trumpet", shall be brought to life and appear before Allah. The Qurān calls this *حِشْر* (*Hishr*) which literally means "to muster and gather together". It appears from the wording of the Qurān and some clear statements in the

مَدَا بَلَّغُ لِلنَّاسِ وَلِيُنذَرُوا بِهِ وَيَعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا هُوَ إِلَهُ وَاحِدٌ وَلِيُنذَرُوا أُولَئِكَ أُولُوا الْأَلْبَابِ ۗ

- 52 This is a Message for mankind so that they may be warned by it and realize that in fact there is but One God, and that men of understanding may learn a lesson from it.

Traditions that this will take place on this Earth. The "Seat of Judgment" and the "Scales" will be established on the Earth and the decisions will be passed here. This is also clear from the Qurān and the Traditions that the life in the Hereafter will not merely be a spiritual life but the very physical and spiritual life which we are living now on this earth, and every individual shall receive his reward or punishment exactly in that "personality" in which he or she is living in the life of this world.

58. Some commentators and translators are of the opinion that "قَطْرَانٌ" stands for "sulphur" or "molten copper" but actually it stands for "tar" and the like.



XV

Al-Hijr الْحِجْرُ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

XV

AL-HIJR الحجر

INTRODUCTION

Name

This Sūrah takes its name from v. 80.

Period of Revelation

It is clear from its topics and style that the period of its revelation is about the same as that of Sūrah IBRĀHĪM, for two things are quite prominent in its background. First, it appears from the repeated warnings in the Sūrah that in spite of the fact that the Holy Prophet had been propagating the Message for many years, his people in general had not shown any inclination towards its acceptance ; nay, they had become more and more obdurate and stubborn in their antagonism, enmity and ridicule with the passage of time. Secondly, by that time the Holy Prophet had begun to feel a little tired of making strenuous efforts to eradicate disbelief and opposition of his people. That is why Allah has consoled and comforted him over and over again by way of encouragement.

Topics and the Central Theme

Though the main topics of the Sūrah are : (a) warning to those who rejected his Message, opposed it tooth and nail, and ridiculed him, and (b) comfort and encouragement to the Holy Prophet, it does not mean that this Sūrah does not contain admonition and instructions. As

a matter of fact, the Qurān never confines itself to mere warning; rebuke and censure, but resorts to precept in every suitable place. Accordingly, this Sūrah contains brief arguments for *Tauhīd* on the one hand, and admonition in the story of Adam and Satan on the other.



الزَّوْجِ تِلْكَ آيَاتُ الْكِتَابِ وَقُرْآنٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿١﴾

الْحَجَرُ ٣

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ﴿١﴾ ذُرُّهُمُ يَأْكُلُوا وَيَشْتَبِعُوا

وَيُلْهِمُهُمُ الْآمَلُ فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢﴾ وَمَا أَهْلَكْنَا مِنْ قَرِيْبَةٍ إِلَّا وَلَهَا كِتَابٌ
مَعْلُومٌ ﴿٣﴾ مَا تَسْبِقُ مِنْ أُمَّةٍ أَجَلَهَا وَمَا يَسْتَأْخِرُونَ ﴿٤﴾ وَقَالُوا يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِي
نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ الذِّكْرُ إِنَّكَ لَمَجْنُونٌ ﴿٥﴾ لَوْ مَا تَأْتِينَا بِالْمَلَكَةِ إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ
الصَّادِقِينَ ﴿٦﴾ مَا نُنَزِّلُ الْمَلَكَةَ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَمَا كَانُوا إِذَا مُنْظَرِينَ ﴿٧﴾ إِنَّا
نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ ﴿٨﴾ وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ فِي شِعْرِ
الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿٩﴾ وَمَا يَأْتِيهِمْ مِنْ رَسُولٍ إِلَّا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ ﴿١٠﴾ كَذَلِكَ
نَسَلُّكَ فِي قُلُوبِ الْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿١١﴾ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ وَقَدْ خَلَتْ سُنَّةُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿١٢﴾ وَ
لَوْ فَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ بَابًا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَظَلُّوا فِيهِ يَعْرُجُونَ ﴿١٣﴾ لَقَالُوا إِنَّمَا سُكَّرَتْ
أَبْصَارُنَا بَلْ نَحْنُ قَوْمٌ مَسْحُورُونَ ﴿١٤﴾ وَلَقَدْ جَعَلْنَا فِي السَّمَاءِ بُرُوجًا وَ
زَيَّنَّا لِلنَّظِيرِينَ ﴿١٥﴾ وَحَفِظْنَاهَا مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْطَانٍ رَجِئٍ ﴿١٦﴾ إِلَّا مَنْ اسْتَرَقَ السَّمْعَ
فَاتَّبَعَهُ شَهَابٌ مُبِينٌ ﴿١٧﴾ وَالْأَرْضَ مَدَدْنَاهَا وَأَلْقَيْنَا فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ وَأَنْبَتْنَا
فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مَوْزُونٍ ﴿١٨﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا لَكُمْ فِيهَا مَعَايِشَ وَمَنْ لَسْتُ لَهُ
بِرِزْقٍ ﴿١٩﴾ وَإِنْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا عِنْدَنَا خَزَائِنُهُ وَمَا نُنزِّلُهُ إِلَّا بِقَدَرٍ مَعْلُومٍ ﴿٢٠﴾
وَأَرْسَلْنَا الرِّيحَ لَوَاقِحَ فَنُنزِّلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَاسْقِينَكُمُوهُ ﴿٢١﴾ وَمَا أَنْتُمْ لَهُ

XV

AL-HIJR الحجر

Verses : 99

Revealed at Makkah

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

Alif Lām Rā. These are the verses of the Divine Book and the lucid Qurān.¹ 1

The time is not far when the same people who have today refused to accept (the Message of Islām) will regret and say, "We wish we had surrendered to it!" Leave them alone to eat, drink and be merry and to be deluded by false hopes. They will soon realize it. We had prescribed a respite for every habitation that we destroyed before this.² No community is destroyed before the expiry of its respite nor it is allowed to survive it. 2-5

They say, "You, upon whom the Divine word³ has been sent down, are surely insane. Why do you not bring angels before us, if what you say be true?" We do not send down angels in this way. When they come down,⁴ they come down with truth, and then the people are not given respite.⁵ As regards this Admonition, it is We Who have sent it down, and We Ourselves will preserve it.⁶ 6-9

O Muhammad, already We have sent Messengers before you among many of the ancient peoples. But they mocked at each of the Messengers who came to them. Though We cause it (Admonition) to enter into their hearts (like a rod), they would not believe in it.⁷ And the same has been the way of such people since ancient times. Even if We had opened a gate for them in heaven, and they had begun to ascend through it higher during day time, they would have said, "Our eyes have been dazzled ; nay, we have been bewitched." 10-15

It is We Who have divided the heavens into many fortified spheres⁸ for the sake of administration and adorned 16-18

and decked them out fair to the beholders,⁹ and guarded them from every accursed Satan.¹⁰ No Satan can pass through them except that an eaves-dropper might hear something¹¹, but a fiery flame pursues that eaves-dropper.¹²

19-20

We stretched forth the Earth, and set mountains firmly upon it, and caused to grow therein every kind of vegetable in balanced measure.¹³ And We provided therein means of sustenance for you and for many other creatures for whom you do not provide.

21

There is not a thing whose treasures are not with Us, and We send down each thing in appropriate measure.¹⁴

22

It is We Who send the fertilising winds : then We send down water from heaven, and then We give it to you to drink ; and it is not you who hold the store of this wealth.

1. This verse is the brief introduction to the Sūrah, and immediately after this begins its theme.

“These are the verses of the lucid Qurān” : These are the verses of that Qurān which makes its meaning lucid and understandable.

2. This is to refute the fallacious argument of the disbelievers that Muhammad (Allah’s peace be upon him) was not a true Prophet because they had received no prompt punishment for their disbelief. It is like this : “We have never seized a community at the first commital of *kufr*. We prescribe a limit for every community to hear and understand the message and reform its ways. Then We tolerate its mischief and evil deeds up to that limit and allow it full freedom to do as it likes, and give it respite till the term expires. That is why We are tolerating their attitude of ridicule and denial. (For the full meaning of respite, please refer to E.N. 18 of Sūrah IBRĀHĪM).

3. The word ذِکْر (Zikr) literally means “to cause to remember”, “to caution” and “to give advice”. But the Qurān has used it as a technical term for “Admonition”, which comes as a precept. Thus all the Books that had been sent down to the Messengers were *Zikr*, and the Qurān is also *Zikr*.

4. This was a sarcastic remark that was made by the opponents, for they did not acknowledge that the “Admonition” had been sent down to the Holy Prophet : otherwise they could not say that he was “insane”. What they really meant by this remark was : “You, who claim that the “Admonition” has been sent down to you, are insane”. A similar remark was also made by Pharaoh concerning Prophet Moses. Addressing his courtiers, he said, “The Messenger who has been sent to you is insane”. (XXVI : 27)

5. "We do not send down the angels in this way": We do not send down the angels for the mere fun of it in response to the request of the people : nor are they sent to unveil the Reality before them in order to show to them all the "unseen" things to which the Messengers invite them to believe. As a matter of fact, angels are sent down on that occasion when it is decreed to pass judgment on some wicked people. At that time the judgment comes into operation without extending any invitation to the condemned people to accept the Message, for their period of respite ends as soon as the "Reality" is unveiled before them.

".....they come down with truth" : "....they bring down truth with them". That is they come down to eradicate falsehood and to establish truth in its stead. Or, in other words, it means, ".....they come down to put into force the judgment of Allah".

6. That is, "You should note it well that it is We Who have sent this 'Word'. Thus it is not Our Messenger whom you are calling 'insane' but in fact this abusive remark applies to Us. Moreover, you should know that it is Our 'Word' and We are preserving it ; therefore you can do no harm to it ; nor can you discredit it by your ridicules, taunts and objections : nor can you hamper its progress, whatever you may do against it : nor will anyone be ever able to change or tamper with it."

7. The majority of the translators and commentators are of the opinion that the pronoun 'it' in "....cause it" in v. 12, refers to their "mockery", occurring in v. 11, and in "....would not believe in it" in v. 13, refers to the "Admonition" occurring in v. 9. Then vv. 12-13 will be rendered like this : "Thus we cause mockey enter into the hearts of the criminals and they do not believe in the Admonition...." Though grammatically there is nothing wrong with this version, yet our version of "it" will be better even grammatically. According to this v. 12 will mean, "When the Admonition enters into the hearts of the believers it gives them peace of mind and comfort of heart. But when the same enters into the hearts of the criminals it becomes a hot rod, and burns their minds and hearts".

8. In the preceding verses (14-15) it was stated that the disbelievers had become so hardened against the Qurān that they would not have believed in it even if they had ascended the Heaven and seen with their own eyes the Signs mentioned in it. Now in vv. 16-22, some of the Signs are being cited in order to convince them of its truth.

"Fortified spheres" (*burūj*) are Signs of Allah for it is not possible to pass through one sphere of the Heaven into another, as each sphere of the space has been fortified by invisible boundaries. In this connection, it may be noted that literally the Arabic word *burj* means "a fortified place" but as a technical term of ancient astronomy this stood for each of the twelve Signs of the Zodiac, which marked the sun's path through

the heavens. This has led some of the commentators to form the opinion that in this verse the word *burūj* refers to the same. But there are some others who think that it means "planets". However, if we consider this word in the context of v. 19, we are led to the conclusion that probably it stands for "spheres".

9. "We have adorned and decked the "fortified spheres": "We have placed a shining star or planet in each of these spheres and made them look beautiful". In other words, it means : "We have not made the boundless universe dismal, desolate and frightful, but so beautiful that one finds marvellous order and harmony in it everywhere, and sights therein are so attractive that each one of these charms hearts and minds. This wonderful structure of the universe is a clear proof of the fact that its Creator is not only Great and All-Wise but is also a perfect Artist". The Qurān has also stated this aspect of the Creator in XXXII : 7 : "(Allah is) that God Who has created in perfect beauty everything He has created".

10. That is, "These spheres are so fortified that they are beyond the reach of every Satan, for all Satans including those of *jinns*, have been confined to that sphere in which the Earth has been placed and they enjoy no more access to visit other spheres than the other dwellers of this sphere. This has been mentioned in order to remove a common misunderstanding. The common people believed, and still believe, that Satan and his descendants have a free access to every place in the universe. On the contrary, the Qurān says that Satans cannot go beyond a certain limit and they have no unlimited power of ascension.

11. This is the answer to the false claim of the soothsayers, diviners, hermits, conjurers and the like who pretended to receive communications from the Heaven. The Qurān says that in fact they do not possess any means of obtaining information about unseen things. Satans, however, try to eaves-drop because they are by nature more like angels than human beings, but in reality, they succeed in obtaining very little information about it.

12. In Arabic the word *shihāb-i-mubīn* literally means "fiery flame". In XXXVII : 10, the same thing has been called *shihāb-i-thāqīb* ("flame that pierces through darkness"). This may or may not necessarily be a "meteor" for it is just possible that it may be some type of rays such as "Cosmic Rays" or even a stronger type which we have not been able to discover as yet. Anyhow if the "fiery flame" that pursues Satans may be taken to be a meteor, a countless number of these can form a fortification around our sphere of the universe. Scientific observations made with the help of the telescope have shown that billions of these meteors are rushing from space in mass of "rainfall" towards the earth's atmosphere. Such a scene was witnessed in an eastern part of North America on November 13, 1833. This is so strong a fortification that it can prevent Satans from

passing through any fortified sphere.

With the help of the above, one can form a mental picture of the "fortified spheres". Though there is no visible "wall" to keep distinct and separate one sphere from the others, Allah has securely guarded each of these spheres by invisible "walls" against each other. That is why our "planet" has remained safe in spite of the occasional "rainfall" of countless meteors. For as soon as they cross the protective wall of our sphere, they are burnt to ashes. But sometimes a meteorite reaches the earth from outer space as if to warn the dwellers of this planet of the existence of the "power" of the Creator. For instance, the biggest of these weighs 645 pounds and it is obvious from this that if the earth had not been made safe and secure by means of "fortified spheres" the rain of the shooting stars would have utterly annihilated it long long ago. It is these "fortified spheres" which the Qurān calls "*burūj*".

13. The growth of every kind of plant in a limited extent is another Sign of the wisdom and power of Allah. For the generative power of every vegetable plant is so great that if free growth had been allowed to even one kind of plant, it would have covered the whole surface of the Earth. But it is by the design of the All-Wise and All-Powerful Creator that every kind of vegetable is produced in a balanced measure. There is another aspect of the vegetable life. Each and every kind of it is allowed to grow only to a fixed size, height, and thickness, which is a proof of the fact that the Creator himself prescribed the structure, the shape, the size, the height, the leaves and branches, and the number of each and every plant, and no plant is allowed to go beyond any of these fixed limits.

14. This is to bring home the fact that it is not vegetable life alone that has a fixed limit to its growth, etc. The same is true of everything that exists, whether it be air, water, light, heat, cold, mineral, vegetable, animal or power or energy, in short, each and every thing exists in the prescribed quantity, number, etc., which neither decreases nor increases. It is this "determined course", in each and every thing, which has produced appropriate balance and proportion in the entire system of the universe to such a perfection that one is led to the inevitable conclusion that the whole thing has been designed by its All-Wise Creator. For, had the universe come into existence by mere accident or had it been created by many gods, it was impossible to have such a perfect balance and appropriate proportion with perpetual consistence in so many different things and powers.

بِخَزِينٍ ۝ وَإِنَّا لَنَحْنُ نُحْيِ وَنُمِيتُ وَنَحْنُ الْوَارِثُونَ ۝ وَ لَقَدْ عَلِمْنَا
 الْمُسْتَقْدِمِينَ مِنْكُمْ وَ لَقَدْ عَلِمْنَا الْمُسْتَأْخِرِينَ ۝ وَإِن رَّبَّكَ هُوَ يَحْشُرُهُمْ
 إِنَّهُ حَكِيمٌ عَلِيمٌ ۝ وَ لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ صَلْصَالٍ مِنْ حَمِإٍ مَسْنُونٍ ۝
 وَ الْجَانَ خَلَقْنَاهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ مِنْ نَارِ السَّمُومِ ۝ وَ إِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَكَةِ إِنِّي
 خَالِقٌ بَشَرًا مِنْ صَلْصَالٍ مِنْ حَمِإٍ مَسْنُونٍ ۝ فَإِذَا سَوَّيْتَهُ وَ نَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِنْ
 رُوحِي فَقَعُوا لَهُ سَاجِدِينَ ۝ فَسَجَدَ الْمَلَكَةُ كُلُّهُمْ أَسْجُودًا ۝ إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ أَبَى
 أَنْ يَكُونَ مَعَ السَّاجِدِينَ ۝ قَالَ يَا إِبْلِيسُ مَا لَكَ إِلَّا تَكُونَ مَعَ السَّاجِدِينَ ۝
 قَالَ لَمْ أَكُنْ لِأَسْجُدَ لِبَشَرٍ خَلَقْتَهُ مِنْ صَلْصَالٍ مِنْ حَمِإٍ مَسْنُونٍ ۝ قَالَ
 فَخُذْ مِنْهَا فَاتَكَ رَجِيمٌ ۝ وَ إِن عَلَيْكَ اللَّعْنَةُ إِلَى يَوْمِ الدِّينِ ۝ قَالَ رَبِّ
 فَانظُرْنِي إِلَى يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ ۝ قَالَ فَإِنَّكَ مِنَ الْمُنظَرِينَ ۝ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْوَقْتِ
 الْمَعْلُومِ ۝ قَالَ رَبِّ بِمَا أَغْوَيْتَنِي لَأُزَيِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَ لَأُغْوِيَنَّهُمْ
 أَجْمَعِينَ ۝ إِلَّا عِبَادَكَ مِنْهُمُ الْمُخْلَصِينَ ۝ قَالَ هَذَا صِرَاطٌ عَلَيَّ مُسْتَقِيمٌ ۝
 إِن عِبَادِي لَيْسَ لَكَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطَنٌ إِلَّا مَنْ اتَّبَعَكَ مِنَ الْغَوِينَ ۝ وَ إِن
 جَهَنَّمَ لَمَوْعِدُهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ۝ لَهَا سَبْعَةُ أَبْوَابٍ لِكُلِّ بَابٍ مِنْهُمْ جُزْءٌ
 مَقْسُومٌ ۝ إِنَّا الْبَاقِيْنَ فِي جَهَنَّمَ وَ عِيُونَ ۝ أَدْخَلُوهُمْ بِسَلَامٍ أَمِينٍ ۝ وَ
 نَزَعْنَا مَا فِي صُدُورِهِمْ مِنْ غَلٍّ إِخْوَانًا عَلَى سُرُرٍ مُتَقَابِلِينَ ۝ لَا يَمَسُّهُمْ
 فِيهَا نَصَبٌ وَ مَا هُمْ بِمُخْرَجِينَ ۝ نَبِيٌّ عِبَادِي أَنِّي أَنَا الْغَفُورُ
 الرَّحِيمُ ۝ وَ أَن عَذَابِي هُوَ الْعَذَابُ الْأَلِيمُ ۝ وَ نَبِّئُهُمْ عَنْ صَيْفِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ ۝ وَ قَفْ لَازِمٌ
 إِذْ دَخَلُوا عَلَيْهِ فَقَالُوا سَلَامًا ۝ قَالَ إِنَّا مِنْكُمْ وَجِلُونَ ۝ قَالُوا لَا تَوْجَلْ

It is We Who give life and death and We will be the inheritors of all.¹⁵ We have full knowledge about those who lived before you, and We are keeping watch over their successors. Most surely your Lord will gather them together for He is All-Wise, All-Knowing.¹⁶ 23-25

We created Man from dried clay of rotten earth:¹⁷ and before him We had created *jinn* from the flame of heat.¹⁸ Then recall to mind the time when your Lord said to the angels, "I am going to create a man from dried clay of rotten earth. When I have brought him to perfection and breathed of My spirit¹⁹ into him, you should bow down before him all together." Accordingly all the angels bowed down except Iblis: he refused to join those who bowed down.²⁰ The Lord said, "O Iblis! What is the matter with you that you have not joined those who have bowed down?" He replied, "It does not behove me to bow down before this man whom you have created from dried clay of rotten earth." The Lord said, "Get away from here, for you have become accursed: the curse shall rest upon you till the Day of Retribution."²¹ At this he requested, "My Lord! then give me respite till that Day when mankind shall be resurrected." Allah said, "Well! you are given respite till the Day of predestined time." Iblis replied, "Lord, because Thou hast beguiled me, I will create allurements for them²² and seduce them except those of Thy servants whom Thou hast chosen for Thyself from amongst them." Allah replied, "This is the straight way that reaches Me."²³ Indeed, thou shalt have no power over My sincere servants. Thou wilt succeed only in beguiling those who shall follow thee,²⁴ and they shall all be destined for Hell."²⁵ 26-43

This Hell (with which the followers of Iblis have been threatened) has seven gates, and each gate has been specified for a separate group of them.²⁶ In contrast to them, the pious people²⁷ shall go to the gardens and fountains. (It will be said to them), "Enter into these in peace and security." We will remove from their hearts even the little bit of spite that will be therein,²⁸ and they will become like brethren, and sit face to face on couches. They will have 44-48

no toil to weary them nor will they be cast out from there.²⁹

49-50

O Prophet ! tell My servants, "I am Forgiving and Merciful, but at the same time My chastisement is also a severe chastisement."

15. It is to impress this: "Your worldly life and all you possess are transitory and temporary, and Allah alone is Eternal. Your end shall come sooner or later, and you shall leave everything behind in this world, which will again become a part of Our treasure."

16. "He is All-Wise": therefore His Wisdom demands that He should gather the whole of mankind and reward or punish each individual in accordance with his deeds. And "He is All-Knowing": therefore no individual, whosoever he be, can escape from Him. As each and every particle of each and every individual is in His knowledge, He is able to bring the whole of mankind to life in the Hereafter. Thus anyone who denies "Life-in-the-Hereafter" is really ignorant of the Wisdom of Allah ; and anyone who considers it impossible that those particles of the human body, which were all scattered about, could again be brought together in the form of the body that was alive, is ignorant of the All-Comprehensive knowledge and power of Allah.

17. The Arabic word "*ṣalsāl*" means "the dried clay which produces a sound like pottery."

"*Hamā*" is "the black mud which has become so rotten as to be in a fermented state."

"*Masnūn*" has a double meaning: (a) "rotten clay which has become greasy" (b) "clay which has been moulded into a shape." It is clear from the wording of the Text that at first the image of man was made of clay from rotten earth and when it dried up, soul was breathed into it. Thus the Qurān positively refutes the Darwinian theory of Evolution that man came into existence after passing through continuous genetic adaptations. It will, therefore, be a futile attempt, as some modernised Commentators have done, to prove that theory from the Qurān.

18. As '*samūm*' is not wind, "*nār-i-samūm*" will mean "flame of heat" ("intense heat") and not of "fire." This is the explanation of those passages in which it has been stated that *jinns* have been created from fire.

19. "... (when I have) breathed of My spirit into him...." :

".... (when I have) cast a reflection of My Divine characteristics on him...." This shows that the soul of man implies "life, knowledge, power, will, discretion and other human characteristics in the aggregate. These are in reality a slight reflection of Divine characteristics that has been cast on the human body, which was originally created from dried clay. And it is this Divine reflection on the human body which

has raised him to the position of the Vicegerent of Allah and made him that worthy being before whom angels and every earthly thing should bow down.

As a matter of fact, the source of each characteristic of everything is one Divine characteristic or the other, as is borne by a Tradition: "Allah divided Mercy into one hundred parts: then He reserved ninety-nine parts for Himself and sent down the remaining one part to the Earth. It is because of that one part that the creatures show mercy to one another. So much so that it is due to this that an animal refrains from placing the hoof on its young ones."

In this connection one has to be on strict guard against the notion that the possession of a part of any Divine characteristic amounts to the possession of a part of Godhead. This is because Godhead is absolutely beyond the reach of each and every creation.

20. Please compare this passage (vv. 30-43) with II: 30-39, IV: 117-120 and VII: 11-25 and also refer to E.N.'s appended to these.

21. That is, "You shall remain accused up to the Resurrection. Then you shall be punished for your disobedience on the Day of Judgment."

22. That is, "Thou hast beguiled me by commanding me to bow down before a creature who is inferior to me : for it is obvious that I could not obey such an order. Therefore I will now beguile them and disobey Thee." In other words, Iblīs meant to say, "I will make the worldly life, its enjoyments and its transitory benefits so alluring for man that he will forget the responsibilities of the Vicegerent of Allah, and that he shall have to render his account in the Hereafter. They will also forget Thee or will disobey Thee, even though they would profess to remember Thee."

23. This verse (41) may have another meaning: "This is the right thing: I also will stick to this."

24. This verse (42) also may have another meaning: "You will have no power over My servants (common people) to force them to disobey Me. However, We will give freedom of action to those who will willingly or deliberately follow you, and we will not forcibly prevent them from your way, if they intended to follow you."

According to the first rendering, these verses will mean this: "The way followed by My sincere servants is the only straight way to reach Me. Satan will have no power over those people who follow it, for I will choose them to be My own servants." Satan himself admitted that he will not be able to entice them. On the contrary, he will succeed in beguiling those people, who themselves will deviate from the way of obedience. They will then wander farther and farther away following his temptations and allurements.

According to the second meaning, the passage will mean this:

[Contd. on p. 42

إِنَّا نَبِّئُكَ بِغُلْمٍ عَلَيْهِمْ ۖ قَالَ أَبَشْرُهُمْ عَلَىٰ أَنْ مَسَّنِيَ الْكِبَرُ فِيمَ بَشِّرُونَ ۖ
 قَالُوا بَشْرُكَ بِالْحَقِّ فَلَا تَكُن مِّنَ الْقٰنِطِينَ ۖ قَالَ وَمَنْ يَقْنَطُ مِن رَّحْمَةِ
 رَبِّهِ إِلَّا الضَّالُّونَ ۖ قَالَ فَمَا خَطْبُكُمْ أَيُّهَا الْمُرْسَلُونَ ۖ قَالُوا إِنَّا أُرْسِلْنَا
 إِلَىٰ قَوْمٍ مُّجْرِمِينَ ۖ إِلَّا آلَ لُوطٍ إِنَّا لَمُنَجُّوهُمُ أَجْمَعِينَ ۖ إِلَّا امْرَأَتَهُ
 قَدَّرْنَا إِنَّهَا لَمِنَ الْغٰبِرِينَ ۖ فَلَمَّا جَاءَ آلَ لُوطٍ الْمُرْسَلُونَ ۖ قَالَ إِنَّكُمْ
 قَوْمٌ مُّكْرِبُونَ ۖ قَالُوا بَلْ جِئْنَاكَ بِمَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَمْتَرُونَ ۖ وَآتَيْنَاكَ بِالْحَقِّ
 وَإِنَّا لَصٰدِقُونَ ۖ فَأَسْرِ بِأَهْلِكَ بِقِطْعٍ مِّنَ اللَّيْلِ وَاتَّبِعْ أَدْبَارَهُمْ وَلَا
 يَلْتَفِتْ مِنكُمْ أَحَدٌ وَامْضُ حَيْثُ تُؤْمَرُونَ ۖ وَقَضَيْنَا إِلَيْهِ ذٰلِكَ الْأَمْرَ
 أَنَّ دَابِرَ هٰؤُلَاءِ مَقْطُوعٌ مُّصْبِحِينَ ۖ وَجَاءَ أَهْلَ الْمَدِينَةِ يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ ۖ
 قَالَ إِنَّ هٰؤُلَاءِ ضَيْفِي فَلَا تَفْضَحُونِ ۖ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تُخْرُونِ ۖ قَالُوا
 أَوَلَمْ نُنهَكْ عَنِ الْعٰلِيَيْنِ ۖ قَالَ هٰؤُلَاءِ بَنَاتِي إِنْ كُنْتُمْ فٰعِلِينَ ۖ لَعَمْرُكَ
 إِنَّهُم لَفِي سَكْرَتِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ ۖ فَأَخَذْتَهُمُ الصَّيْحَةُ مُشْرِقِينَ ۖ فَجَعَلْنَا
 عَلَيْهِمُ سَافِلَهَا وَأَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ حِجَارَةً مِّن سِجِّيلٍ ۖ إِنَّ فِي ذٰلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ
 لِّلْمُتَوَسِّمِينَ ۖ وَإِنَّمَا لَيْسِبِلٌ مُّقِيُوهُ ۖ إِنَّ فِي ذٰلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۖ وَإِنْ
 كَانَ أَصْحَابُ الْآيَةِ لظٰلِمِينَ ۖ فَانْتَقْنَا مِنْهُمُ وَإِنهٰمَ لِيٰأَمٰرٍ مُّبِينِينَ ۖ وَ
 لَقَدْ كَذَّبَ أَصْحَابُ الْحِجْرِ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ۖ وَآتَيْنَاهُمْ آيَاتِنَا فَكَانُوا عَنْهَا مُعْرِضِينَ ۖ
 وَكَانُوا يَنْحِتُونَ مِنَ الْجِبَالِ بُيُوتًا آمِنِينَ ۖ فَأَخَذْنَاهُمُ الصَّيْحَةَ مُصْبِحِينَ ۖ
 فَمَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ۖ وَ مَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَ
 مَا بَيْنَهُمَا إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَإِنَّ السَّاعَةَ لَآتِيَةٌ ۖ فَاصْفَحِ الصَّفْحَ الْجَبِيلِ ۖ إِنَّ

وقف
لازم

And tell them the story of the guests of Abraham.³⁰ 51-60
 When they came to him, they said, "Peace be to you".
 But he replied, "We are afraid of you."³¹ They said, "Do
 not be afraid of us. We give you the good news of a
 sagacious son."³² Abraham said, "What ! do you give me
 the good news of a son in my old age ? Just consider what
 kind of good news you are giving me." They replied,
 "We are giving you a true good news ; you should not be of
 those who despair". Abraham replied, only those who go
 astray, despair of their Lord's Mercy." Then he asked
 them, "O Messengers of Allah ! What is the expedition for
 which you have been sent ?"³³ They said, "We have been
 sent to (punish) a criminal people³⁴ with the exception of
 Lot's family ; we will rescue all of them except his wife,
 who (Allah says) has been destined to remain with those
 who will stay behind."

Afterwards when these envoys came to the house of 61-66
 Lot,³⁵ he said, "You appear to be strangers."³⁶ They answer-
 ed, "Nay, but we have come to you with that concerning
 which these people had doubts. We tell you the truth that
 we have come to you with the truth. You should, therefore,
 depart with your people in the last hours of the night and
 you yourself should follow them in their rear"³⁷ ; let none of
 you turn round to look behind;³⁸ go straight where you are
 being bidden." And We informed him of Our decree that
 they shall be utterly destroyed by the next morning.

And the people of the town rushed rejoicing to the 67-71
 house of Lot.³⁹ He said, "Brethren ! These are my guests:
 therefore do not dishonour me. Fear God and do not put
 me to shame." They replied, "Have we not forbidden
 you to plead for all and sundry ?" At last Lot pleaded,
 "Here are my daughters,⁴⁰ if you are bent on it."

By your life, O Prophet, they were at that time so 72
 intoxicated with lust as to be quite beside themselves with
 passion.

At last a severe blast overtook them at dawn. Then 73-74
 We turned their habitations up-side-down and We rained
 stones of baked clay upon them.⁴¹

75-77 There are big Signs in these events for men of understanding. And the smitten territory still lies on the highway.⁴² Indeed there is an admonition in it for true believers.

78-79 As the people of Al-Aikah⁴³ were unjust, We took vengeance on them. And the ruined habitations of these two Communities lie upon the open highway.⁴⁴

80-84 The people of Al-Hijr⁴⁵ also treated the Messengers as impostors and We sent Our Revelations and showed Our Signs to them, but they went on ignoring all these things. They hewed their dwellings into the mountains and apparently lived in full security. But at last a violent blast overtook them with the approach of the morning, and all that they had achieved proved of no avail to them.⁴⁶

Contd. from p. 39]

“When Satan challenged that he would beguile people from the Way of Allah by making this worldly life very tempting to them, Allah accepted his challenge but made it clear to him that he was being allowed only to beguile people with temptation, but was not being given any power to force them to deviate from the Right Way. At this, Satan clarified that his challenge did not apply to those people whom Allah will choose for Himself. As this exception might have led to a misunderstanding that Allah may choose any people for Himself to keep them safe and secure from the reach of Satan, Allah clarified it, saying “Only that person will follow you, who himself will deviate from the Right Way.” As a corollary to this, “That person, who will not deviate from the Right Way will not follow you, and will, thus become Our servant, whom We will choose for Our-self.”

25. In order to comprehend the purpose for which the story of Prophet Adam and Satan has been related here, we should keep in mind the context in which this has occurred. In the preceding verses (1-25), it has been stated that the disbelievers were following the ways of deviation that would lead them to perdition. This story has been related to warn them that the ways they were following were the ways of Satan, their eternal enemy, so as to say, “You should realize the consequences of following Satan, who has enticed you in this snare, and is leading you to the lowest depths of degradation because of this enmity and envy. In contrast to this, Our Prophet is doing his utmost to free you from his snare and lead you to the height of success, which as a man you should desire to achieve. But it is a pity that you are regarding your enemy (Satan) as your friend, and your friend (Our Prophet) as your enemy.”

Secondly, the story also makes quite clear to them this thing:

“There is only one way of salvation and that is the Way of obedience to Allah. If you discard this Way, every other way will be a way of Satan which will take you directly to Hell.”

Then this story is meant to bring home to them this fact: You yourselves are responsible for your wrong deeds and not Satan; for, the most he can do is to beguile you from the obedience of Allah and hold temptations before you. It is therefore your own concern and responsibility to be beguiled or not to be beguiled by Satan.”

26. Sinners will be divided into different groups in accordance with their different sins for their entry into Hell from seven different gates specified for each different sin. For instance, the group of atheists shall enter into Hell by one of the seven gates specified for their group. Likewise, *mushriks*, hypocrites, self-seekers, sensualists, tyrants, propagandists and leaders of disbelief, etc. etc., shall each enter into Hell through the gates specified for their group.

27. The pious people are those who did not follow Satan but feared Allah and lived lives of obedience to Him.

28. That is, “If any spite might have been caused in their hearts in this world because of misunderstandings between the pious people, it shall be removed at the time of their entry into Paradise and they will bear no ill-feelings there against each other.” (Please refer also to E.N. 320 of AL-A‘ARĀF.)

29. This verse is explained by the following Tradition : “It will be announced to the dwellers of the Gardens, ‘Now you will remain hale and hearty for ever and shall never fall ill : now you will enjoy eternal life and shall never die : now you will remain young for ever and never grow old, and now you will remain for ever in Paradise and shall never have to move away from it.’” There are other Traditions that further elucidate life in Paradise to this effect: “The dwellers shall have no toil to perform for their livelihood and necessities of life. They will get everything without any labour whatsoever.”

30. The story of Prophets Abraham and Lot has been related to tell the disbelievers of Makkah how angels come down with truth. This was in response to their demand. “Why do you not bring angels before us, if what you say be true?” (v. 7). There, only this brief answer was given: “We do not send down angels in this way. When they come down, they come down with truth” (v. 8). Now these two events are cited as two concrete forms of “truth” with which the angels came, as if to ask the disbelievers, “Now decide for yourselves which of these two forms of truth you want angels to bring to you. It is obvious that you do not deserve that “truth” which was sent to Prophet Abraham. Do you then desire that “truth” which the angels brought to the people of Prophet Lot?”

31. Please compare this story of Prophet Abraham with that contained in XI : 69-76.

32. "...a sagacious son" : Prophet Isaac. His name has been mentioned in connection with this good news in XI : 71.

33. It appears from the question of Prophet Abraham that angels are sent down in human shape only on extraordinary occasions and on some important expedition.

34. The fact that the angels did not name the people of Lot but merely referred to them as "the wicked people", shows that these people had become so notorious for their wicked deeds that there was no need to mention them by name before Prophet Abraham, who was well acquainted with the moral condition of all the people around him.

35. Please compare this with VII : 80-84 and XI : 77-83.

36. Here the story has been related in brief. But we learn from XI : 77-83 that Prophet Lot was greatly perturbed and distressed at the visit of the angels. He said to himself, "This is a day of woe." The reason why he was distressed, as implied in the Qurān and explicitly expressed in the Traditions, was that the angels had come to Prophet Lot in the shape of beautiful boys, and he knew how perverse and wicked his people were. He was distressed for he could not send them away because they were his guests, and because he did not know how to protect them from those villains.

37. That is, "You should walk behind your people lest anyone of them should stay behind".

38. It did not mean : "look not behind thee....lest thou be consumed....", as stated in the Bible. But it merely meant to warn them: "None of you should turn round to see what was happening behind them lest you should stop to see the fun, when you heard the cries of the smitten people. For it is neither the time of enjoying "fun", nor of shedding tears of regret. If you stop even for a minute in the territory of the smitten people you also might get hurt from the rain of stones."

39. This shows that those people had gone to the lowest depths of immorality. No sooner did they hear the news of the arrival of handsome strangers in their town than they rushed rejoicing to the house of Prophet Lot and impudently demanded that he should hand over his guests to them for the gratification of their lust. The pity is that there had remained not a single person among them to make a protest against such a heinous sin. Moreover, this shows that all of them, as a community, had totally lost every sense of decency, and they felt no shame at all to make such a wicked demand on him openly. The very fact, that they felt no hesitation in making such a wicked demand brazenfacedly from a pious and holy man like Prophet Lot, shows that the heinous crime was so common among them that they would not spare anyone.

The Talmud records many instances of the all-round moral degradation of the people of Lot. Once a stranger was passing through their territory. He was forced by coming darkness to pass the night near

Sodom. As he had his own provisions with him, he did not stand in any need of help from the towns-folk ; so he lay under a tree to pass the night. But a Sodomite entreated him to accompany him to his house. During the night he did away with the ass and merchandise of the stranger. When he began to cry for help in the morning, the towns-folk came there not to help him but to rob him of what had been left with him.

On one occasion Ḥaḍrat Sārah sent her slave to Sodom to inquire after Prophet Lot's house-hold. When the slave entered the town, he saw that a Sodomite was beating a stranger. Naturally the slave of Ḥaḍrat Sārah tried to rouse his sense of decency, saying, "Why do you ill-treat helpless strangers like this ?" In answer to this appeal, his head was broken in public.

On an other occasion a poor man happened to come to Sodom but no one gave him anything to eat. When he was half dead with starvation, he fell to the ground in a helpless plight. A daughter of Prophet Lot saw him and sent some food for him. At this the Sodomites reproached Prophet Lot and his daughter and threatened to expel them from there, if they would not refrain from such "deeds"!

After citing several similar incidents, the Talmud says that those people had become so cruel, so deceitful and so dishonest in their dealings that no traveller could pass safe through their territory nor could a poor person expect any food or help from them. Many a time it so happened that a poor stranger came there, and died from hunger. Then they would strip the clothes from his body and bury him naked! If a foreigner committed the blunder of visiting their territory, they would publicly rob him of everything, and make fool of him if he appealed to them to redress the wrong. Then they would openly commit shameless deeds in the gardens which they had grown in their valley because there was none to rebuke them except Prophet Lot. The Qurān has summed up the whole of their wicked story in two concise sentences: (1) "... They had already been committing very wicked deeds" XI : 78, and (2) "You gratify your lust with males: you rob travellers, and you commit wicked deeds publicly in your assemblies."

40. In E.N. 87 of Sūrah Hūd, it has been explained what Prophet Lot meant by this. It may also be added that such words as these were uttered by an honourable man like him in the last resort, when all his entreaties and earnest requests had failed to prevent those people from their evil designs towards his guests.

Here it will be worthwhile to clear the significance of the words which were uttered by Prophet Lot as they occur in Sūrah Hūd (v. 78). When he entreated those wicked people not to molest his guests, saying, "Here are my daughters....", he was unaware that his guests were angels in the disguise of handsome boys. The angels revealed their

[Contd. on p. 47

رَبِّكَ هُوَ الْخَلْقُ الْعَلِيُّ ۗ وَ لَقَدْ آتَيْنَاكَ سَبْعًا مِّنَ الْمَثَابِ وَالْقُرْآنَ
 الْعَظِيمَ ۗ لَا تَمُدَّنَّ عَيْنَيْكَ إِلَىٰ مَا مَتَّعْنَا بِهِ أَزْوَاجًا مِنْهُمْ وَلَا تَحْزَنْ
 عَلَيْهِمْ وَ اخْفِضْ جَنَاحَكَ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۗ وَ قُلْ إِنِّي أَنَا النَّذِيرُ الْمُبِينُ ۗ
 كَمَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَى الْمُتَّبِعِينَ ۗ الَّذِينَ جَعَلُوا الْقُرْآنَ عِضِينَ ۗ فَو رَبِّكَ
 لَنَسَلْتَهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ۗ عَمَّا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ۗ فَاصْدَعْ بِمَا تُؤْمَرُ وَ أَعْرِضْ
 عَنِ الشَّرِיקِينَ ۗ إِنَّا كَفِينَاكَ الْمُسْتَهْزِئِينَ ۗ الَّذِينَ يَجْعَلُونَ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا
 آخَرَ ۗ فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُونَ ۗ وَ لَقَدْ نَعَلْنَاكَ إِذْ يَضِيقُ صَدْرُكَ بِمَا يَقُولُونَ ۗ
 فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ وَ كُنْ مِنَ السَّاجِدِينَ ۗ وَ اعْبُدْ رَبَّكَ حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِيَكَ الْيَقِينُ ۗ

الريح

ع ٢٠

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85-93

We have not based the creation of the Earth and the Heavens and everything therein on anything but truth,⁴⁷ and Our judgment is sure to come. So, O Muhammad, overlook (their misbehaviour) in a gracious manner. Indeed, your Lord is the Creator of all and is All-Knowing.⁴⁸ We have given you seven verses that are worthy of recitation over and over again,⁴⁹ and We have also bestowed on you the glorious Qurān.⁵⁰ Do not even look at the worldly wealth We have given to different people from among them, nor grieve at their condition.⁵¹ Leave them alone and attend to the Believers. Tell (the disbelievers), "I am a plain warner only." This warning is like the warning We sent to the schismatics, who have caused divisions in their "Qurān".⁵² So by your Lord, We will surely take account from them concerning what they had been doing.

94-96

So, O Prophet, proclaim publicly what you are being bidden, and never mind those who practise *shirk*. We suffice on your behalf to take to task those who have set up other gods along with Allah : they will come to know shortly (their folly).

97-99

We know that your heart is distressed at the things they say against you. (This is the remedy:) You should glorify

your Lord with His praise, and fall in prostration before Him, and serve your Lord till that last hour which is sure to come.⁵³

Contd. from p. 45]

identity only when the wicked crowd gathered at the residence of his guests and began to threaten them with their wicked designs, and Prophet Lot began to lament, "I wish I had the power to set you right or I could find some strong support for refuge." It was then that the angels revealed themselves, saying, "We are envoys sent by your Lord..." This sequence of events shows that Prophet Lot had made that "offer" only when he had felt to be utterly helpless.

It is very important to keep this in view because the sequence of events in this Sūrah is different from that in Sūrah Hūd. One is liable to have a misunderstanding as to why Prophet Lot wailed and lamented when he knew all the while that his guests were angels and could defend themselves against those wicked people.

As regards the apparent difference between the two sequences, it may be pointed out that here the important thing to be stated is that the angels come with the truth. Therefore that part of the story (vv. 61—66) has been related first in order to make the point more prominent.

41. These "stones of baked clay" might have been meteoric showers or volcanic eruptions that flew and rained upon them, or these might have been blown by a strong wind.

42. That is, "That smitten territory lies on the high road from Hijāz (Arabia) to Syria and Egypt". Travellers come across these Signs of destruction which are very prominent in the territory that lies to the south-east of the Dead Sea. The geographers are of the opinion that there is no other land on the surface of the Earth which looks desolate as this territory, especially its southern part.

43. The people of Al-Aikah were the community of Prophet Shu'aib and were called Midianites after the name of their capital city and their territory. As regards Al-Aikah, it was the ancient name of Tabūk and literally means a "thick forest".

44. Mid'an lay on the route from Hijāz to Palestine and Syria.

45. Al-Hijr was the capital city of the people of Thamūd, and its ruins are found near the modern city of Al-'Ulā' which is to the north west of Al-Madīnah, and lies on the route from Al-Madīnah to Tabūk. Though the caravans had to pass through the valley of Al-Hijr, the Holy Prophet had forbidden the Muslims to stay in the valley on their journey.

When Ibn Batūtah reached there in the eighth century of Hijrah on his way to Makkah, he wrote: "I have seen the buildings of Thamūd hewed into red mountains; the paintings look so bright as if they have been put on only recently....and rotten bones of human beings are

found in them even today.” (See E.N. 57 of VII.)

46. That is, “Their strong and secure buildings, which they had hewed into the mountains, could not protect them from the blast.”

47. This was to reassure the Holy Prophet that ultimately he would come out successful because he was propagating the Truth, and the whole of the universe was based on truth. Such an assurance was urgently needed because at that time falsehood appeared to be triumphant over the Truth. This implies, “O Prophet, do not worry at all at the apparent “success” of falsehood for this is temporary. Likewise the difficulties, the obstacles and the troubles in the way of truth are not permanent. Take courage, and have confidence in the cause of the Truth and you will triumph over falsehood because the whole system of the universe is akin to truth and averse to falsehood. Therefore, truth is permanent and falsehood is perishable” (Please refer to E.N.’s 25—26, 35 39 of Sūrah Ibrāhīm).

48. These Attributes of Allah have been mentioned to reassure the Holy Prophet as if to say, “As Allah is the Creator, He has complete power over all his Creatures, and no one is able to escape His punishment. Moreover, He is All-Knowing : He is fully aware that you are exerting your utmost for their reform, and He knows also their evil machinations against your efforts for reform. Therefore, you need not worry on this account, but you should wait patiently and with confidence that at the appropriate time they will be dealt with justly.”

49. These seven verses which are recited over and over again in every prescribed *Ṣalāt* are the verses of AL-FĀTIHAH. Though some of the commentators are of the view that this “*Al-Mathānī*” refers to the seven Sūrahs which contain two hundred or³ more verses, that is, II-VII and (VIII-IX) or X. But the majority of the early commentators opine that it refers to AL-FĀTIHAH. Imām Bukhāri has cited two authentic Traditions in support of the view that it refers to AL-FĀTIHAH.

50. The mention of the precious gift of the Glorious Qurān has been made also to console the Holy Prophet and his followers that they should not even look at the worldly wealth of their opponents because that was nothing as compared with this precious wealth. In order to grasp the full significance of this, one should keep in view the fact that at that time the Holy Prophet and his Companions were suffering badly from poverty. The trading activities of the Holy Prophet had almost come to an end during the period in which he had been engaged in his Mission. Besides this, he had almost used up the whole wealth of Ḥaḍrat Khadijah. As regards his Companions, some of the young men had been turned out of their homes and reduced to poverty. The economic boycott had ruined the business of those who were engaged in trade. There were others who were mere slaves or proteges of the Quraish and had no economic position whatever. In addition to their sad economic plight, all the Muslims, along with the Holy Prophet, were suffering persecution from the people

of Makkah and its surroundings. In short, they were so much persecuted, ridiculed and insulted that no one of them was safe from physical and mental torture. On the other side, the Quraish, their opponents and persecutors, enjoyed all the good things of this world, and lived lives of happiness and luxury. This is the background of the reassurance given to the Believers, as if to say, "Why should you feel disheartened at this? We have given you "wealth" which surpasses all kinds of worldly riches. Therefore your opponents should envy your knowledge and high morals; you need not envy their ill-earned wealth and their wicked enjoyments, for when they will go before their Lord, they themselves will find that they had not brought such wealth as carries any value there."

51. That is, "Do not grieve that they consider you as their enemy, though you are their sincere well-wisher; that they regard their vices as their virtues; that they are not only themselves following but leading their followers on that way which inevitably leads to destruction : nay, they are doing their worst to oppose the reformative efforts of the one who is showing them the way of peace."

52. The schismatics were the Jews for they had split their religion into many parts and caused division in it. They believed in certain parts and rejected the other parts, and detracted some things from it and added others to it. Thus they had been divided into many sectarian groups, which were opposed to one another.

"They have cut their Qurān (Torah) into pieces": "They believe in certain parts of it and reject other parts." The same thing has been stated in II : 85 like this: "...Do you then believe in one part of the Scriptures and disbelieve in the other parts...."

"....this warning is like the warning We sent to the schismatics (Jews)". This is meant to warn the disbelievers that they should learn a lesson from the plight of the Jews who neglected the warning that was given to them by God, and persisted in their wrong ways, as if to say, "You are beholding the degradation of the Jews. Do you like to meet with the same end by neglecting this warning?"

53. That is, "Ṣalāt and worship of your Lord are the only means which can generate in you that power of sustenance which is required to stand resolutely against the troubles and afflictions you will inevitably encounter in the propagation of the Message of the Truth and reform of humanity. This will comfort you, fill you with courage and enable you to perform that Divine Mission on which you have been sent in the face of abuse, derision and obstacles."

XVI

An-Nahl

النَّحْلُ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

XVI

AN-NAHL النحل

INTRODUCTION

Name

The name, An-Nahl, of this Sūrah has been taken from v. 68. This is merely to distinguish it from other Sūrahs.

Period of Revelation

The following internal evidence shows that this Sūrah was revealed during the last Makkan stage of Prophethood :

1. V. 41 clearly shows that persecution had forced some Muslims to emigrate to Habash before the revelation of this Sūrah.

2. It is evident from v. 106 that at that time the persecution of the Muslims was at its height. Therefore a problem had arisen in regard to the utterance of a blasphemous word, without actual disbelief, under unbearable conditions. The problem was that if one did so how he should be treated.

3. VV. 112-114 clearly refer to the end of seven-year famine that had struck Makkah some years after the appointment of the Holy Prophet as Allah's Messenger.

4. There is a reference to v. 116 of this Sūrah in VI: 145, and v. 118 of this Sūrah contains a reference to VI: 146. This is a proof that both these Sūrahs (VI and XVI) were sent down in the same period.

The general style of the Sūrah also supports the view that this was revealed during the last stage at Makkah.

Central Theme

All the topics of the Sūrah revolve round different aspects of the Message, *i.e.*, refutation of *shirk*, proofs of *Tauhīd*, and warning of the consequences of the rejection of and opposition and antagonism to the Message.

Topics of Discussion

The very first verse gives direct and strict warning to those who were rejecting the Message outright, as if to say, "Allah's decision has already been made concerning your rejection of the Message. Why are you then clamouring for hastening it? Why don't you make use of the respite that is being given to you?" And this was exactly what the disbelievers of Makkah needed at the time of the revelation of this Sūrah. For they challenged the Holy Prophet over and over again: "Why don't you bring that scourge with which you have been threatening us? For we have not only rejected your Message but have been openly opposing it for a long time." Such a challenge had become a by-word with them, which they frequently repeated as a clear proof that Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) was not a true Prophet.

Immediately after this warning they have been admonished to give up *shirk*, for this false creed was the main obstacle in the way of the Message. Then the following topics come over and over again, one after the other:

1. Very convincing proofs of *Tauhīd* and refutation of *shirk* have been based on the plain signs in the universe and in man's own self.
2. The objections of the disbelievers have been answered, their arguments refuted, their doubts removed and their false pretexts exposed.
3. Warnings have been given of the consequences of persistence in false ways and antagonism to the Message.
4. The moral changes which the Message of the Holy Prophet aims to bring practically in human life have been presented briefly in an appealing manner. The *mushriks* have been told that belief in Allah, which they also professed, demanded that it should not be confined merely to

lip-service, but this creed should take a definite shape in moral and practical life.

5. The Holy Prophet and his companions have been comforted and told about the attitude they should adopt in the face of antagonism and persecution by the disbelievers.



اِنِّي اَمْرُ اللّٰهِ فَلَا تَسْتَعْجِلُوْهُۗ سُبْحٰنَهُ وَتَعٰلٰى عَمَّا يُشْرِكُوْنَ ۙ يُنَزِّلُ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةَ
 بِالرُّوْحِ مِنْ اَمْرِهِ عَلٰى مَنْ يَّشَآءُ مِنْ عِبَادَةٍ اَنْ اَنْذِرُوْا اَنَّهُ لَا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا
 اَنَا فَاتَّقُوْنَ ۙ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّۗ تَعٰلٰى عَمَّا يُشْرِكُوْنَ ۙ
 خَلَقَ الْاِنْسَانَ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍۢ فَاِذَا هُوَ خَصِيْمٌ مُّبِيْنٌ ۙ وَالْاَنْعَامَ خَلَقَهَا لَكُمْ
 فِيْهَا دِفْءٌ وَّ مَنَافِعُۗ وَمِنْهَا تَاْكُلُوْنَ ۙ وَلكُمْ فِيْهَا جَمَالٌ حِيْنَ تُرِيْحُوْنَ
 وَ حِيْنَ تَسْرَحُوْنَ ۙ وَ تَحْمِلُ اَثْقَالَكُمْۙ اِلٰى بَلَدٍ لَّمْ تَكُوْنُوْا بِلِيْغِيْهِۗ اِلَّا بِشِقِّ
 الْاَنْفُسِۗ اِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ لَرَءُوْفٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ۙ وَالْخَيْلَ وَالْبِغَالَ وَالْحَمِيْرَ لَتَرْكَبُوْهَا
 وَ زِيْنَةًۗ وَيَخْلُقُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ۙ وَ عَلٰى اللّٰهِ قَصْدُ السَّبِيْلِ وَمِنْهَا جَابِرٌ
 ۙ وَ لَوْ شَآءَ لَهَدٰكُمْ اَجْمَعِيْنَ ۙ هُوَ الَّذِيۡ اَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً لَّكُمْ مِنْهُ

XVI

AN-NAHL النحل

Verses: 128

Revealed at Makkah

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

Allah's "Judgment" has come :¹ so do not clamour for hastening it ; He is free from every defect, and exalted high above the *shirk* that they are practising.² He sends down by His command through His angels the Spirit³ on that one of His servants whom He chooses.⁴ (bidding), "Warn the people that there is no other deity than I : therefore fear Me."⁵

1-2

3 He has based the creation of the heavens and the Earth on truth. He is exalted high above that *shirk* which they are practising.⁶

4-9 He created Man from an insignificant sperm-drop, and behold, by and by he became a manifest disputant⁷. He has created cattle, which provide you with clothing and food, and there are other benefits also for you in them; they look pleasant when you drive them to the pasture in the morning and bring them home in the evening. They carry your burdens to far-off lands, which you could not reach without painful toil. Indeed your Lord is All-Compassionate and All-Merciful. He has created horses, mules and donkeys so that you may ride them, and they may add splendour to your life. He creates for you many other things, of which you have no knowledge at all.⁸ Allah has taken upon Himself to show the Right Way, when there exist crooked ways, too.⁹ He would have guided all of you aright, if He had so willed.¹⁰

1. That is, "The time for final "Judgment" has come near." As regards the use of the past tense in the original, this may be to show certainty of its occurrence in the near future or to emphasize the fact that the rebellion and the wrong deeds of the Quraish had become so unbearable that they warranted that the time for decisive action had come.

Here a question arises as to what that "Judgment" was and how it came. We are of the opinion (and true knowledge is with Allah alone) that that "Judgment" was *Hijrat* (the Migration) of the Holy Prophet from Makkah. For a short time after this Revelation he was bidden to emigrate from there. And according to the Qurān, a Prophet is bidden to leave his place only at that time when the rebellion and antagonism of his people reaches the extreme limit. Then their doom is sealed, for after this Allah's punishment comes on them either as a direct scourge from Him, or they are destroyed by the Prophet and his followers. And this did take place actually. At the occasion of the Migration, the people of Makkah regarded it as a victory for themselves, but in fact it turned out to be a defeat for *shirk* and disbelief which were totally uprooted within a decade or so after the Migration not only from Makkah but from the rest of Arabia as well.

2. In order to understand the interconnection between the first and the second sentences, one should keep in view the background. The challenge of the disbelievers to the Prophet, 'to hasten Divine judgment', was really based on their assumption that their own religion of *shirk*.

was true, and the religion of *Tauhid* presented by Muhammad (Allah's peace be on him) was false ; otherwise, they argued, the Divine scourge with which he threatened them would have come upon them long before because of their disbelief and rebellion, if there had been the authority of Allah behind it. That is why, after the declaration of the "Judgment," their misunderstanding about the cause of delay in the punishment was removed, as if to say, "You are absolutely wrong to assume that punishment has not been inflicted on you because your creed of *shirk* is true, for Allah is free from and far above *shirk* and has no partner".

3. This, means "the Spirit of Prophethood with which a Prophet is imbued in order to fulfil his Mission by word and deed. The Qurān has called this 'the Spirit' in several places, for this has the same relation to the Mission of a Prophet and his moral life, which the soul has to the physical human life."

4. As one of the things, which prompted the disbelievers to challenge the Holy Prophet for scourge, was their presumption that he was not a true Prophet, Allah told them categorically that he was a true Prophet, who had been imbued with the "Spirit" which We Ourselves had sent down on him.

"Allah sends down the Spirit on....He chooses." This is the answer to the objections which the chiefs of the Quraish used to raise against the Holy Prophet : Had Allah wanted to send a Messenger to them, was there no one better than Muhammad (Allah's peace be on him), son of 'Abdullah, for this mission ? Why did He not choose one of the big chiefs of Makkah or Ṭāif for the purpose ?" Such absurd objections needed no other answer than this. That is why such an answer has been given in several places of the Qurān, as if to say, "Allah knows best how to do His work, and does not stand in need of any advice from you. He chooses for His Mission anyone whom He considers fit for it".

5. This verse declares the essence of the "Spirit" of Prophethood, which is this : Godhead belongs to one Allah alone : so only He is worthy of fear. Therefore, there is no other anchor that might make fast and hold together human moral system than His fear. For it is the fear of His displeasure and His punishment, and the fear of the consequences of His disobedience which alone can act as a strong deterrent to restrain one from deviation. That is why mankind has been admonished : "Fear Me."

6. That is to say, "The whole system of the Earth and the heavens is a witness to the truth of the doctrine of *Tauhid*, and to the negation of *shirk*. You may look at anything in the universe and consider the system from any point of view you like, you will find proof of this fact that it is being run by One God and not by many gods. Then how is it that you believe in *shirk* when there is no proof whatsoever of this in the universe?"

As a fitting sequence of this, proofs of *Tauhid* and refutation of *shirk*

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شَرَابٍ وَمِنْهُ شَجَرٌ فِيهِ تُسِيمُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾ يُنَبِّئُكَ لِكُلِّ زُرْعَةٍ وَالزَّيْتُونِ وَ
 النَّخِيلِ وَالْأَعْنَابِ وَمِنْ كُلِّ الشَّجَرِ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾
 وَسَحَّرَ لَكُمْ الَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ وَالنُّجُومَ مُسْحَرَاتٍ بِأَمْرِ رَبِّ
 إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾ وَمَا ذَرَأَ لَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُخْتَلِفًا
 أَلْوَانُهُ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٦١﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِي سَحَّرَ الْبَحْرَ
 لِتَأْكُلُوا مِنْهُ لَحْمًا طَرِيًّا وَتَسْتَخْرِجُوا مِنْهُ حَبْلَةً تَلْبَسُونَهَا وَتَرَى الْفُلْكَ
 مَوَاجِرَ فِيهِ وَلِتَبْتَغُوا مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾ وَاللَّهُ فِي الْأَرْضِ
 رَوَاسِي أَنْ تَمِيدَ بِكُمْ وَأَنْهَارًا وَسُبُلًا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾ وَعَلَّمَتْ
 بِالنَّجْمِ هُوَ يَهْتَدُونَ ﴿٦٤﴾ أَفَمَنْ يَخْلُقُ كَمَنْ لَا يَخْلُقُ أَفَلَا تَتَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٦٥﴾
 إِنَّ تَعْدُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ لَا تُحْصَوْهَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَغَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٦٦﴾ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ
 مَا تُسِرُّونَ وَمَا تُعْلِنُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾ وَالَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ لَا يَخْلُقُونَ
 شَيْئًا وَهُمْ يُخْلَقُونَ ﴿٦٨﴾ أَمْوَاتٌ غَيْرُ أَحْيَاءٍ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ أَيَّانَ يُبْعَثُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾
 إِلَهُكُمْ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ فَالَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ مُنْكَرَةٌ وَهُمْ
 مُسْتَكْبِرُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾ لَا جَرَمَ أَنْ اللَّهُ يَعْلَمَ مَا يُسِرُّونَ وَمَا يُعْلِنُونَ إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ
 الْمُسْتَكْبِرِينَ ﴿٧١﴾ وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ مَاذَا أَنْزَلَ رَبُّكُمْ قَالُوا آسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿٧٢﴾
 لِيُخِيلُوا أَوْزَارَهُمْ كَامِلَةً يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَأَنْزَارِ الَّذِينَ يُضِلُّونَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ
 عِلْمٍ إِلَّا سَاءَ مَا يَزِرُونَ ﴿٧٣﴾ قَدْ مَكَرَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَأَتَى اللَّهُ بُنْيَانَهُمْ
 مِنَ الْقَوَاعِدِ فَخَرَّ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّقْفُ مِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ وَأَشْرَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ مِنْ حَيْثُ
 لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٧٤﴾ ثُمَّ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يُخْزِيهِمْ وَيَقُولُ أَيْنَ شُرَكَاءِيَ الَّذِينَ

It is He, Who sends down for you water from the sky, which provides drinking water for you and brings forth fodder for your cattle. And thereby He grows for you crops and olives and date-palms and vines and different kinds of many other fruits. Surely there is a great Sign in this for those people who ponder.

10-11

He has subjected to your service the day and the night and the sun and the moon: likewise all the stars are subjected by His Command. In this there are many Signs for those who make use of their common sense. And in the things of different colours He has created for you in the Earth, there is indeed a Sign for those who learn lessons from them.

12-13

It is He Who has subjected the sea to your service so that you may get flesh fiesh from it to eat and bring out of it articles of ornament, which you wear, and you see that the ship ploughs her course through it. He has done all this so that you may seek of His bounty¹¹ and show gratitude to Him.

14

He has driven mountains firmly into the earth lest it should turn away from its usual course along with you:¹² He has caused rivers to flow and made natural ways¹³ so that you may be directed aright. He has placed landmarks¹⁴ to direct people, and by stars, too, they are directed aright.¹⁵

15-16

Is, then, He, Who creates, like those who create nothing?¹⁶ Do you not understand even this much? If you try to reckon up Allah's blessings, you cannot count them. Indeed, He is Forgiving and Compassionate,¹⁷ though He knows all that you conceal and all that you reveal.¹⁸

17-19

And the other beings, whom the people invoke, create nothing; nay, they are themselves created. They are dead, not living, and they do not know at all when they shall again be raised to life.¹⁹

20-21

Your Deity is One Allah, but the hearts of those, who do not believe in the Hereafter, are given to denial, and they are puffed up with pride.²⁰ Surely Allah has full knowledge of all their deeds, both secret and open. He

22-23

24-26 does not like those people, who are puffed up with pride. And²¹ when they are asked, "What is it that your Lord has sent down"?, they say these are mere fairy-tales of the ancients.²² They say such things so that they should bear the full brunt of their own burdens on the Day of Resurrection together with some of the burdens of those whom they are leading astray in their ignorance. Behold! what a heavy responsibility they are taking on themselves! Many of those who have gone before them also contrived such cunning devices to defeat the Truth, but behold! Allah smote the edifice of their evil designs at its foundations and its roof fell down upon their heads from above them, and the scourge overtook them from the direction they little dreamed that it would come.

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have been given from Man himself and from other signs in the universe, and it has also been shown that Prophethood is based on Truth.

7. This has two meanings and both are meant here.

(1) Though Allah created man from an insignificant sperm-drop, he is capable of arguing and giving reasons in support of his claim.

(2) Man who has such an insignificant origin, has become so vain that he does not hesitate to dispute even with his Creator.

If considered in its first sense, it is a chain in the series of arguments given in many succeeding verses to prove the truth of the Message of the Holy Prophet. (Please refer to E.N. 15). If taken in the second sense, it is meant to warn man that he should not forget the insignificant origin of his existence while engaged in his rebellious arguments against his Creator. If he remembered the different stages of his humiliating birth and growth, he would consider many times before he assumed a haughty and rebellious attitude towards his Creator.

8. That is, "There are many agencies which are working for the good of man but he is quite unaware of such servants and the services rendered by them".

9. This contains an argument for Prophethood along with a proof of *Tauhid* and of Allah's Compassion and Providence. The argument is this :

There are many divergent ways of thought and action open for man to choose from. Obviously all these divergent ways cannot be straight ways, because there can be only one straight way; therefore, there can be only one right theory of life which is based on that way, and only one right way of life which is based on that right theory. Thus it is clear that the choice of the right way of life is man's most important and

basic need, for its wrong choice would inevitably lead to his ruin. This is because all other things fulfil his animal needs only, but this is the greatest necessity of his life as a human being and without its fulfilment his life would be an utter failure.

Now, it cannot be expected that Allah Who made so many provisions, and on such a large scale, for the fulfilment of the animal life of man, did not make any arrangement for the fulfilment of this real and greatest necessity of man. Just as He has provided for all the necessities of his life, so He has also provided for this greatest need of his through Prophethood. If Prophethood is denied then it should be pointed out in what way Allah has fulfilled this basic need of man. Experience of centuries has shown that mankind has always blundered whenever it has chosen a way of life by itself. This is because Man's wisdom and intelligence are limited, and he cannot depend on these for the choice of the right way of life. Above all, one cannot say that Allah has made no arrangement for this basic need of man, for this will be the greatest misconception of Allah that He may make most elaborate arrangements for man's animal life but should leave him in the lurch to search out a way for himself for the fulfilment of this most important and basic need.

10. Here a question arises : "Why didn't Allah will to guide all the people aright inherently when He had taken upon Himself to show the Right Way ?" It is true that Allah could have imbued Man, like other creatures, with the inborn instinct and enabled him to choose the Right Way without conscious thought, experience or teaching. But this would have been against His will which was to create a being, having will and power and freedom to follow the Right Way or the wrong way, whichever he chose for himself. This is why he has been endowed with different means of knowledge and powers of conscious thought, deliberation and will, and has been empowered with the authority to make use of all powers in him and all things around him. Moreover, He has placed in him and all around him such factors as might lead him to guidance or deviation. All these things would have become meaningless, had he been created righteous by birth, and he could never have attained the heights of progress, which can be achieved only by the right use of freedom. That is why Allah has chosen Prophethood for Man's guidance, and left him free to follow or reject a Prophet. This is a test by means of which Allah judges whether Man accepts the guidance that is presented to him in a rational way.

11. That is, ".....try to get your sustenance in lawful ways".

12. This shows that the real function of mountains is to regulate the motion and speed of the Earth. We have come to this conclusion, for the Qurān has made this benefit of mountains very prominent in many places. Therefore, their other benefits should be regarded as incidental.

13. Natural ways are those routes which are formed along the

banks of streams, ravines and rivers. Though the importance of these ways is great even in the plains, one feels their sore need, especially in the mountainous regions.

14. This is a Sign of Allah that He has broken the monotony of land by placing conspicuous landmarks on it to distinguish different regions from one another. These have many benefits and one of these is to help guide travellers and navigators to their destinations. One also realizes the importance and value of these landmarks, when one is travelling through a sandy desert where there are hardly any objects to guide on the way, and one is liable to lose the way any time. One feels the lack of landmarks much more in the sea voyage. It is in the deserts and the seas that people realize the true significance of ".....by stars, too, they are directed aright" to their destinations.

This verse contains arguments for *Tauhīd*, Providence, and Compassion of Allah, and also a proof of Prophethood. For the mind is instinctively turned towards this question : "Can it be possible that Allah Who has made so elaborate arrangements for man's guidance to fulfil his physical needs has neglected to provide for his moral and spiritual needs?" It cannot be so, for it is obvious that even the greatest loss of some physical necessity due to the adoption of a wrong way is nothing as compared with the loss of spiritual and moral values due to deviation from the Right Way. It would be nothing less than having doubt in Allah's Compassion and Providence to think that He, Who has made so elaborate provisions for man's guidance on land and sea by creating mountains, rivers, stars and other objects, would have neglected to make provision for his moral and spiritual guidance ; nay, it stands to reason that He must have provided prominent beacons of light to guide Man to that Right Way of life which is indispensable to his true success.

15. In vv. 4-16, some Signs have been mentioned in succession in order to focus people's attention on the Creation of man himself and of the Earth and the heavens. They will thus find that everything supports the truth of the doctrines taught by the Holy Prophet. A critical study of all these Signs shows that these must have been designed and created by an All-Wise Being, and One Being alone, and there could not have been any partner or associate to help Him. Let us consider this theme from the point of view of Man, the central figure in the Creation. This wonderful being who is able to speak with his tongue and is capable of arguing his case with it, has been created from an insignificant sperm-drop. Then many animals have been created to satisfy the necessities of his life. They provide food, clothing and conveyance for him and help satisfy his aesthetic taste as well. Then there is a remarkable system of rain-water from the sky to produce corn crops, fruits and verdure, etc., on the earth to fulfil man's needs. Then there is the creation of regular days and nights and seasons, which are closely connected with all kinds of production of the earth, and also with Man's general well

being. Then there are oceans, which help fulfil many of his physical and aesthetic demands and provide water ways for traffic. Likewise mountains have been created to provide man with many benefits. Then there are landmarks on the earth and stars in the heavens to guide travellers and navigators to the destinations. In short, there are innumerable Signs in the Earth and the heavens which are closely inter-connected and are also indispensable to man's welfare, nay, to his very existence. All these are clear proofs that only One Being has designed the whole universe and created it in accordance with that design. It is He Who is all the time creating new things to fit in that scheme, and working this wonderful universe that spreads from the Earth to boundless heavens. Who can then claim, except a foolish or obdurate person, that all this has come into existence by a mere accident? Or, who can say that these different aspects, which are working under a perfect system and are intimately connected with one another and are well-balanced, have been created by different gods and are under the control of different guardians?

16. That is, "If you, people of Makkah, acknowledge (and they acknowledged this just as other *mushriks* did) that Allah alone is the Creator of all of you and everything, and no one of the partners, you have set up with Him, has created anything in the universe, how is it, then, that you ascribe to the created, a status equal to or like that of the Creator in the system of universe created by Him? How can it be possible that the powers and the rights of the created should be equal to the powers and the rights of the Creator in the universe created by Himself? How can it be believed that the Creator and the created possess the same qualities and characteristics, or can have such relationship as of father and son?"

17. Here the connection of Allah's attributes, "Forgiving and Compassionate", with the preceding verse is so obvious that it has been left unmentioned. It is this: "Though Allah goes on showering countless blessings upon people, they behave in an ungrateful, faithless and rebellious manner towards Him. He does not punish them immediately, but gives them respite, for He is Forgiving and Compassionate". This is true of both individuals and communities. There are people, who deny even the existence of God, yet He goes on bestowing His favours on them for years on end. There are others who set up partners with Him in his attributes, powers and rights, and show their gratitude to others than Him for His blessings, yet He does not withhold His favours from them; there are still others who profess to acknowledge Him as their Creator and Benefactor, yet rebel against Him and are disobedient to Him and consider freedom from Him to be their birth right, but in spite of all this He continues to shower His countless blessings on them as long as they live.

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كُنْتُمْ تُفَاقُونَ فِيهِمْ قَالَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ إِنَّ الْخِزْيَ الْيَوْمَ وَالشُّوْبَ
 عَلَى الْكٰفِرِينَ ۝ الَّذِينَ تَتَوَلَّوْهُمُ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ ظٰلِمِيۡنَ۟ۢ بِاَنْفُسِهِمْ ۝ فَالْقَوٰا السَّلٰمَ مَا
 كُنَّا نَعْمَلُ مِنْ سُوْءٍ بَلٰۤى اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلِيْمٌۢ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ۝ فَادْخُلُوْا اَبْوَابَ
 جَهَنَّمَ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا ۝ فَلَيْسَ مَثْوٰى الْمُتَكَبِّرِيْنَ ۝ وَقِيْلَ لِلَّذِيْنَ اٰتَقَوْا مَاذَا
 اَنْزَلَ رَبُّكُمْ ۝ قَالُوْا خَيْرًاۙ لِلَّذِيْنَ اَحْسَنُوْا فِيْ هٰذِهِ الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً ۝ وَ لَدٰارِ
 الْاٰخِرَةِ خَيْرٌ ۝ وَ لَنْعَمَ دٰارُ الْمُتَّقِيْنَ ۝ جَنَّتْ عَدِيْنٌ يَدْخُلُوْنَهَا تَجْرِيْ مِنْ
 تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ لَمْ يَمُرْ فِيْهَا مَا يَشٰءُوْنَ ۝ كَذٰلِكَ يَجْزِي اللّٰهُ الْمُتَّقِيْنَ ۝
 الَّذِيْنَ تَتَوَلَّوْهُمُ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ طٰيِبِيْنَ ۝ يَتَوَلَّوْنَ سَلٰمًا عَلَيْكُمْ ۝ اَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ بِمَا
 كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ۝ هَلْ يَنْظُرُوْنَ اِلَّا اَنْ تَاْتِيَهُمُ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ اَوْ يٰتِيْ اَمْرٌۢ رَبِّكَ ۝
 كَذٰلِكَ فَعَلَ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ۝ وَ مَا ظَلَمَهُمُ اللّٰهُ ۝ وَلٰكِنْ كَانُوْا اَنْفُسَهُمْ
 يَظْلَمُوْنَ ۝ فَاصٰبَهُمْ سَيٰٓاتٌ مَّا عَمِلُوْا وَ حَاقَ بِهِمَّ مَّا كَانُوْا يَكْتُمُوْنَ ۝
 ۴۹
 وَقَالَ الَّذِيْنَ اٰشْرَكُوْا لَوْ شَاءَ اللّٰهُ مَا عَبَدْنَا مِنْ دُوْنِهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ نَّحْنُ وَ
 لَا اٰبَاؤُنَا وَ لَا حَرَمْنَا مِنْ دُوْنِهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ ۝ كَذٰلِكَ فَعَلَ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ
 فَهَلْ عَلَى الرَّسُوْلِ اِلَّا الْبَلٰغَةُ الْبَيِّنَةُ ۝ وَ لَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِيْ كُلِّ اُمَّةٍ رَّسُوْلًا اَنْ
 اَعْبُدُوْا اللّٰهَ وَ اجْتَنِبُوا الطَّاغُوْتَ ۝ فَبِمَهُمْ مِّنْ مَّدٰى اللّٰهُ ۝ وَ مِنْهُمْ مَّنْ حَقَّتْ
 عَلَيْهِ الصَّلٰةُ ۝ فَيَسُوْرُوْا فِي الْاَرْضِ فَانظُرُوْا كَيْفَ كَانَ عٰمِيَةُ الْمُكَذِبِيْنَ ۝
 اِنْ تَحْرِيْضٌ عَلَىٰ مٰدِيْهِمْ ۝ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يَهْدِيْ مَنْ يُضِلُّ ۝ وَ مَا لَهُمْ مِنْ
 نٰصِرِيْنَ ۝ وَ اَقْسَمُوْا بِاللّٰهِ جَهْدَ اَيْْمَانِهِمْ ۝ لَا يَبْعَثُ اللّٰهُ مِنْ يَمُوْتٍ ۝ بَلٰۤى
 وَ مٰدَا عَلَيْهِ حَقًّا ۝ وَلٰكِنْ اَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ۝ لِیُبَيِّنَ لَكُمْ الَّذِي يَخْتَلِفُوْنَ

Contd. from p. 60]

Then on the Day of Resurrection Allah will disgrace and degrade them. He will say to them: "Now where are My partners concerning whom you used to dispute (with the truthful)?"—Those,²³ to whom Knowledge had been given in the world, will say, "Today there is ignominy and misery for the disbelievers." Yes²⁴, this is for those disbelievers, who, while they are still engaged in wronging themselves, shall surrender themselves when seized by the angles,²⁵ saying, "We were doing nothing wrong at all." The angels will retort, "What, dare you deny this! Allah is fully aware of what you were doing. Now, go and enter the gates of Hell, where you shall abide for ever."²⁶ The fact is that a very miserable abode it is for the haughty ones.

27-29

On the other hand, when the God-fearing people are asked, "What is it that has been sent by your Lord?" they say, "It is the best thing that has been sent down."²⁷ There is good for those righteous people who do good works in this world, and far better is their abode in the Hereafter." Blessed indeed is the dwelling place for the pious people. There will be gardens for their permanent residence into which they will enter : canals will be flowing underneath them : above all, they will find there everything as they would desire:²⁸ this is the reward for those pious people whose souls are received in a pure state, by the angels, who welcome them, saying, "Peace be on you : enter into Paradise as the reward of your good deeds".

30-32

O Muhammad ! are these people still waiting, though now nothing has been left but that angels should come or your Lord's judgment be passed on them?²⁹ Many people before them behaved audaciously like them, and had to take the consequence : it was not Allah Who was unjust to them but they were unjust to themselves. In the end their evil deeds brought upon them the consequences and that very thing, they used to scoff at, overwhelmed them.

33-34

The *mushriks* say, "Had Allah willed, neither we nor our forefathers would have worshipped any other than Allah nor made anything unlawful without His will."³⁰ Such excuses were put forward also by those who went before

35-37

them.³¹ Have the Messengers any more responsibility than to convey the Message clearly? Accordingly, we sent to every community a Messenger, saying, "Worship Allah and keep away from the *tāghūt*."³² After that Allah showed guidance to some of them, while deviation took hold of others.³³ So, roam about in the earth and behold what has been the end of the rejectors of the Messengers.³⁴ O Muhammad! howsoever desirous you may be of their guidance, (know) that Allah does not show guidance to those whom He lets go astray, and such people have no helpers.

38 They solemnly swear by God with their most sacred oaths that "Allah will never raise him who once is dead". —Why will He not raise? It is a promise He has made binding on Himself, but most people do not know it.

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18. A grave misunderstanding might arise as to why Allah's blessings should continue to be showered even on those who deny Him and set up partners with Him and are disobedient to Him. The foolish people are liable to conclude from this that He does not withhold His favours from such people because He has no knowledge of their wicked deeds. The Qurān declares: "...Even though He has full knowledge of all the deeds of the people, whether these are done secretly or openly, He does not discontinue His blessings on the sinners, for He is Forgiving, Compassionate and Merciful. Therefore, O foolish people, get rid of this misunderstanding, and reform yourselves."

19. The words employed here to refute man-made deities clearly indicate that these deities were deceased prophets, saints, martyrs and pious and other extraordinary beings buried in their graves and not angels, *jinn*s, devils or idols. For the angels and devils are alive: therefore the words, "They are dead, not living" cannot apply to them, and it is out of the question to say about idols of stone or wood that "They do not know at all when they shall again be raised to life" in the Hereafter. As regards the objection to this version that there were no such deities in Arabia, this is based on the lack of knowledge of the history of the pre-Islamic period. It is well known that there was a large number of Jews and Christians living among many clans of Arabia, who used to invoke and worship their Prophets, saints etc. It is also a fact that many gods of the *mushriks* of Arabia were human beings, whose idols they had set up for worship after their death. According to a Tradition cited in Bukhārī on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās, "Wadd, Suwā', Yaghūth, Ya'ūq, and Nasr were pious human beings, whom the succeeding generations had made gods." In another Tradition, related by Ḥadrat 'Ā'ishah, Asāf and Nā'ilah were human beings. There are also traditions to the same effect

about Lāt, Munāt and 'Uzzā. So much so that according to some traditions of the *mushriks*, Lāt and 'Uzzā were the beloved ones of Allah who used to pass His winter with Lāt and summer with 'Uzzā. But "Allah is absolutely free from such (absurd) things they attribute to Him."

20. That is, "Those who do not believe in the life in the Hereafter, have become so irresponsible, care-free and intoxicated with the life of this world, that they feel no hesitation or pang in denying any reality, and they put no value on or attach no worth to truth. That is why, they are not prepared to impose any moral restraint on themselves and feel no need to investigate as to whether the way, they are following, is right or wrong.

21. In the preceding verse (23) those puffed up people, who were rejecting the Message were warned that Allah had full knowledge of all their "deeds." Now from v. 24 the Qurān takes up those "deeds" one by one and deals with the arguments they presented against the Messenger, the objections they raised and the lame excuses they invented for their rejection, and reproaches and admonishes them.

22. One of their cunning devices was to create doubts about the Qurān. Whenever outsiders came to visit Makkah, they would naturally make enquiries about the Qurān, which the Holy Prophet declared, was being sent down to him by Allah. The disbelievers would answer that it contained merely fairy-tales of the ancients. They would say such things in order to create doubts in the minds of the inquirers so that they should not take any interest in the Message of the Holy Prophet.

23. There is a gap between this answer and the preceding question which has been left for the reader to fill. When Allah will ask, "Now where are My partners....," there will be dead silence in the Plain where the whole of mankind shall have to gather on the occasion of Resurrection. The disbelievers and the *mushriks* will be dumb-founded for they will be at a loss to find an answer to this. Then those who had been given knowledge will make the assertion, "Today, there is....."

24. This is Allah's addition to the previous assertion, and not its continuation. Those commentators who have wrongly considered this as continuation of the preceding sentence, are unable to offer any satisfactory explanation for their opinion.

25. That is, "When the angels take possession of their souls at the time of death....."

26. This verse (28) and verse 32, and several other verses in the Qurān, clearly and definitely assert that immediately after death, souls suffer torment or enjoy peace in the world of Barzakh. The Traditions use the word "*qabar*" (grave) metaphorically for this existence of the souls. This is the world in which souls enter immediately after death and will remain therein up to the Day of Resurrection. Yet the

disbelievers of the Traditions declare that after death souls will remain in a dormant state up to the time of Resurrection, and will neither feel any pain nor joy, nor will be conscious of anything at all. Obviously, this is a wrong opinion, for according to v. 28, just after death when the disbelievers will be conscious of the fact that they had been leading an evil life, they will try to make the angels believe that they had not done any evil deed. The angels will rebuke them at this "boldness" and will tell them that they shall have to go into Hell. On the other hand, according to verse 32, just after their death, the pious believers are welcomed by the angels and given the good news that they will enter into Paradise. Besides these verses, there is the mention of a dialogue between the angels and those Muslims, who did not migrate to Al-Madīnah, after their souls were seized by the angels in IV : 97. Above all, according to XL : 45-46, the people of Pharaoh have been encircled by a torment and are exposed before the Fire of Hell every morning and every evening. This will go on up to the Day of Resurrection when they shall be sentenced to eternal torment.

In fact, both the Qurān and the Traditions present the same kind of picture of the condition of the soul after death up to Resurrection. Death causes merely the separation of the soul from the body but does not annihilate it. The soul lives with the same personality that was formed by the different experiences and the mental exercises and moral activities it had in its worldly life in co-operation with the body. This nature of the consciousness, feelings, observations and experiences of the soul, during the waiting period, is similar to that in a dream. Just as a criminal sentenced to death suffers from mental torture on the eve of his crucifixion, in the same way the angels take to task the guilty as in a dream, torture it and take it to the horrible Hell in order to make it fore-taste the impending torture. In contrast to this, the pure soul is welcomed by the angels and is given the good news of entry into Paradise and is made to enjoy its pleasant breeze and smell, and to feel happy like the faithful servant who is invited to the head-quarters to receive his reward. But this "life" in the world of *Barzakh* will suddenly come to an end on the second blowing of the Trumpet of Resurrection. When the guilty souls will again enter into their former bodies and muster in the Plain, they will cry in horror, "Oh ! woe to us ! who has roused us from our sleeping places ?" But the true Believers will say with perfect peace of mind, "This is exactly what the Beneficent had predicted, and the Messengers had told the truth." (XXXVI : 52).

This has been further elucidated in Chapter XXX.

As the guilty ones will be under the delusion that they had been lying in their death-bed for an hour or so and had been roused from

given Knowledge and Faith, will say, "According to the Record of Allah, you have remained after death till this Day of Resurrection and this is the same Day of Resurrection, but you did not know this." (XXX : 55-56).

27. In contrast to the disbelievers (v. 24), the righteous people spoke highly of the Holy Prophet and of the teachings of the Qurān to the people coming from the suburbs of Makkah. Unlike the former they did not delude the people nor created misunderstandings in the minds. They were full of praise for them and told the truth about the Holy Prophet.

28. This is the best blessing of Paradise. The dweller will get there whatever he will desire and wish and there will be nothing at all to offend him. This is the blessing that has never seen attained even by the richest and the most powerful people in this world. On the contrary, every dweller of Paradise will enjoy this blessing to his fill because he will always have everything to his desire and liking, and will have each and every wish and desire fulfilled.

29. This is to admonish the unbelievers to this effect: "Why are they still hesitating to accept the Message which is very simple and clear? We have tried every method to present each aspect of the Truth clearly with arguments and brought witnesses thereof from the whole system of the universe, and have left no room for any man of understanding to stick to *shirk*. Now what they are waiting for is nothing more than this that the angel of death should come before them: and then they will accept the Message at the last moment of their lives. Or, do they wait for the scourge of God to overtake them and make them accept the Message?"

30. In order to understand the significance of this argument the reader should keep in view vv. 148-150 and E.N.'s 124-126 of Chapter VI, for this has been cited and answered there.

31. That is, "Your argument" is not a new one but the same old one which had always been offered by erroneous people who went before you. Today you are, like them, excusing yourselves for your deviation and evil conduct, saying that it is the will of God. You know that this is a lame excuse that has been invented to delude yourselves, and to escape from admonition."

This answer also contains a subtle retort to the objection of the disbelievers that the Qurān consisted merely of old stories of the ancients (v. 24). They meant to imply that the Prophet had nothing new to offer. So he was repeating the same old stories that had been repeated over and over again since the time of Prophet Noah. The retort is this: "If the Holy Prophet was not presenting anything new but was reciting the old stories of the ancients, you yourselves are not putting forward any new excuse in defence of your evil deeds, but the same old excuse that was

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فِيهِ وَ لِيَعْلَمَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا كَذِبِينَ ﴿٥٠﴾ إِنَّمَا قَوْلُنَا لِشَيْءٍ إِذَا
 أَرَدْنَاهُ أَنْ نَقُولَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ ﴿٥١﴾ وَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا فِي اللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا
 ظَلَمُوا لَنَبْوَنَّهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً ۖ وَلَا جُرْأَلِيفَةَ الْآخِرَةِ أَكْبَرُ مَلَكُوا كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾
 الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾ وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ إِلَّا رِجَالًا
 نُوحِيَ إِلَيْهِمْ فَسَلُّوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٥٤﴾ بِالْبَيْتِ وَالزُّبُرِ
 وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾
 أَقَامِنَ الَّذِينَ مَكَرُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ أَنْ يَخْسِفَ اللَّهُ بِهِمُ الْأَرْضَ أَوْ يَأْتِيَهُمُ
 الْعَذَابُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾ أَوْ يَأْخُذَهُمْ فِي تَقْلِبِهِمْ فَمَا هُمْ
 بِمُعْجِزِينَ ﴿٥٧﴾ أَوْ يَأْخُذَهُمْ عَلَى تَخَوُّفٍ فَإِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ لَرَءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٥٨﴾ أَوْ لَوْ
 يَرَوُا إِلَىٰ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ يَتَفَتَّحُونَ ظِلَّةً عَنِ الْيَمِينِ وَالشَّمَائِلِ سُجَّدًا
 لِلَّهِ وَهُمْ دَاخِرُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾ وَاللَّهُ يَسْجُدُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مِنْ
 دَابَّةٍ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَهُمْ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾ يَخَافُونَ رَبَّهُمْ مِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ
 وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ ﴿٦١﴾ وَقَالَ اللَّهُ لَا تَتَّخِذُوا إِلَهِينَ اثْنَيْنِ ۖ إِنَّمَا هُوَ
 إِلَهُ وَاحِدٌ ۖ فَاتَّيَا فَا رَهْبُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾ وَ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَهُ الدِّينُ
 وَاصِبًا ۖ أَفَغَيْرَ اللَّهِ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾ وَمَا يَكُ مِنْ نِعْمَةٍ فَمِنَ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ إِذَا مَسَّكُمُ
 الضَّرُّ فَالْيَهُ تَجَرَّوْنَ ﴿٦٤﴾ ثُمَّ إِذَا كُفَّ الضَّرُّ عَنْكُمْ إِذَا فَرِيقٌ مِّنْكُمْ بِرَبِّهِمْ
 يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٦٥﴾ لِيَكْفُرُوا بِمَا آتَيْنَاهُمْ فَتَسْتَعِزُّوا ۖ فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٦٦﴾ وَيَجْعَلُونَ
 لِمَا لَا يَعْلَمُونَ نَصِيبًا مِّمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ ۖ تَاللَّهِ لَشَأْنُنَا عَمَّا كُنْتُمْ تَفْتَرُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾
 وَيَجْعَلُونَ لِلَّهِ الْبَنَاتِ سُبْحَانَهُ ۖ وَلَهُمْ مَا يَشْتَهُونَ ﴿٦٨﴾ وَإِذَا بُشِّرَ أَحَدُهُمْ

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And it must be fulfilled so that He may reveal to them that thing about which they are differing, and that the disbelievers might know that they were liars.³⁵ (As regards its possibility,) when We desire to bring a thing into existence, We need only say, "Be", and it is there.³⁶ 39-40

As for those, who after persecution, left their homes for the sake of Allah, We will give them a good abode in this world, but the reward in the Next World is far better.³⁷ 41-42
 Would that those who have borne oppression with fortitude, and are performing their mission with full trust in their Lord, knew (what a happy end awaits them!)

O Muhammad! whenever We sent before you Messengers to whom We revealed Our Messages, they were but human beings.³⁸ You (people of Makkah) may inquire from the people who possess Admonition³⁹ if you do not know this yourselves. We sent the former Messengers with clear Signs and Books, and now We have sent the Admonition to you (O Muhammad), so that you should make plain and explain to the people the teachings of the Book which has been sent for them ;⁴⁰ and so that they (themselves) should ponder over it. 43-44

What! Do those people, who are practising evil devices (to oppose the Message), feel fully secure from the danger that Allah will cause them to sink into the earth? Or that He will bring scourge upon them from whence they little suspect that it will come, or that He will seize them all of a sudden while they are roaming about fearlessly, or that He will seize them when they themselves are on the alert about the impending danger? These people have no power to frustrate His plans. The fact is that your Lord is very Lenient and Compassionate. 45-47

And don't they observe anything created by Allah how it casts its shadow right and left, prostrating itself before Allah?⁴¹ Thus all things express their humility. All the animate creation in the heavens and the earth and all the angels prostrate themselves in adoration before Allah;⁴² they do not show any arrogance at all; they fear their Lord Who is above them, and do whatever they are bidden. 48-50

Allah has enjoined: "You shall not take to yourselves 51-52

two gods;⁴³ for He is the only One God: so fear Me." To Allah belongs everything in the heavens and the earth: His way is being followed in the universe.⁴⁴ Will you, then, fear any other than Allah?⁴⁵

53-55

Whatever blessing you enjoy is from Allah alone; then, when you have a hard time, you with your supplications, run to Him for help.⁴⁶ But no sooner does He relieve you of your distress than some of you begin to associate others with Him (in gratitude⁴⁷ for this favour), to show ingratitude for Allah's favour. Well! you may enjoy yourselves for a while for you shall soon come to know (its consequences.)

56

These people assign shares from Our provisions to those, of whom they know nothing.^{48,49} By God, you shall most surely be called to account about the falsehood you had forged.

57

They assign daughters to Allah ;⁵⁰ praise be to God! as for themselves, they would like to have what they desire.⁵¹

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put forward by the people who went before you."

32. That is, "You are not justified in excusing yourselves for these sins, saying that it is the will of God for We sent Messengers to every *ummat*, who told the people in plain words that they should worship Us and none else, and should not follow and obey *tāghūt*. Besides this, We have already warned you that We do not approve of your deviations. Why should you then put forward this excuse for your deviations? Do you mean to say that We ought to have sent such Messengers as would have forced you to follow the Right Way instead of bringing you to it by preaching?" (Please refer to E.N. 80 of AL-AN'ĀM (VI) for the distinction between God's "will" and God's "approval.")

33. That is, "Whenever a Messenger came to a people, they were divided into two groups:

(1) Those who accepted the Message (and that, too, could not have been possible except with the will of Allah.)

(2) Those who rejected it and stuck to their deviation". (For fuller explanation, please consult E.N. 28 of AL-AN'ĀM) (VI.)

34. That is, "You can see for yourselves the lesson of human history. It is this that the people, who rejected the Message, incurred the scourge of Allah like Pharaoh and the people of Pharaoh, while Prophet Moses received the blessings of Allah".

35. In v. 39 those two things have been stated which rationally and morally require that there must be Resurrection and Life-after-death, that is: (1) to reveal what the reality was, and (2) to reward or punish people in accordance with the right or wrong stand they took about it in this world. It is common knowledge that since the creation of Man on the Earth there have been many differences regarding the Reality which have been sowing dissension between families, nations and races. These have also led to the formation of many different societies, cultures and creeds on different theories. In every age millions of the torch-bearers of each of these theories have been putting at stake their all—life, property, honour—to propagate and defend their favourite theory. Nay, there has always been such a bitter conflict between them that each group tried to annihilate the other, who, in his turn, stuck to it to the last. This being the case, common sense demands that such far-reaching and serious differences should be cleared some time or other, so as to decide with certainty what was right and what was wrong, who was in the right and who was in the wrong. Obviously, it is not possible to lift the curtain from the Reality in this world so as to reveal things in their true perspective. This is because the system on which this world has been created does not allow this. Therefore, there should be another world to fulfil this demand of common sense.

This is not the demand of common sense alone but also of the moral sense, which requires that the partners in this conflict should be rewarded or punished according to right or wrong, just or unjust part they played in it. For, some of these committed cruelties on the others, who had to make sacrifices for their cause. Then each one should also bear the responsibility for formulating and practising a moral or immoral philosophy which influenced millions and billions of others for better or worse. Moral sense demands that there should be a time for the moral consequences to take their due course. As this is not possible in this world there should be another world for the purpose.

36. This is the answer to those who imagined that it was the most difficult thing to raise the dead, and that, too, to raise together at once all the people who had died at any time. They have been told that it is an easy thing for Allah, Who has the power to bring into existence anything He desires, merely by His command, "Be", for He does not stand in need of any provisions, any means and any favourable environment for this. His mere Command produces necessary provisions, means and environment. This world was brought into existence by His mere Command, "Be", and likewise the Next world will at once come into existence by His single Command.

37. This is to comfort the Muslim emigrants from Makkah to Habash, who were forced to leave their homes because of the unbearable persecution they suffered at the hands of the disbelievers. The change of the scene from the disbelievers to the emigrants to Habash contains a subtle

warning to the disbelievers that they should not remain under any delusion that they would get off scot-free from punishment for their cruel behaviour towards those Muslims, so as to say, "O cruel people! there shall be Resurrection to reward the oppressed Believers and to punish you for your persecution of them."

38. This is the answer to the objection of the *mushriks* of Makkah (which has not been cited here) that they could not believe that Muhammad (may Allah's peace be upon him), was a Prophet of God, because he was a human being like them. They have been told that the same objection had been raised against all the Prophets who came before him.

39. "...people who possess Admonition" are the scholars of the people of the Books and others, who, though not scholars in the strict sense had sufficient knowledge of the teachings of the revealed Books and were acquainted with the stories of the former Prophets.

40. In this connection, it is worthwhile to note that this duty of 'making plain and explaining the teachings of the Book' was to be performed by Prophet not only by word of mouth but also practically. It was required that he should organize, under his own guidance, a Muslim Community and establish it in accordance with the principles of the Book. This duty of the Holy Prophet has been stated here especially to show the wisdom of sending a man as a Messenger, for, otherwise the Book could have been sent through the angels or could have been printed and sent directly to each man. But in this way, that purpose for which Allah in His Wisdom and Bounty and Providence designed to send the Book could not have been served. For, that purpose demanded that the Book should be brought by a perfect man, who should present it piece by piece, explain its meaning, remove the difficulties and doubts, answer objections etc., and above all, he should show towards those who rejected and opposed it that kind of attitude which is worthy of the bearer of this Book. On the other hand, he should guide those who believed in it in every aspect of life and set before them his own excellent pattern of life. Then he should train them individually and collectively on the principles of the Book, so as to make them a model society for the rest of mankind.

Let us now consider this verse (43) from another point of view. Just as it cuts at the root of the argumentation of those who rejected the Creed that a human Prophet could bring the Book, in the same way, it repudiates the view of those who plead that the Book should be accepted without any exposition of it from the Prophet. This latter view is contradictory to this verse, whatever be the position taken by its exponents. They might either be of the opinion that (a) the Prophet did not give any explanation of the Book he presented or that (b) the only acceptable thing is the Book and not any "Exposition" thereof by the Prophet, or that (c) now the Book alone suffices us, for its "Exposition" by the Prophet has lost its utility or that (d) now the Book alone is authentic for the "Exposition" by the Prophet has ceased to exist, or if

it does exist, it cannot be relied upon.

If they take the position (a), it will mean that the Prophet did not fulfil the purpose for which he was chosen to be the bearer of the Book: otherwise Allah could send it through an angel or directly to each person.

If they take the position (b) or (c), (God forbid) they will be accusing Allah of doing a useless thing by sending His Book through a Prophet, when He could have printed copies of the Qurān and sent those directly to the people.

In case, they take the position (d), they, in fact, repudiate both the Qurān and the "Exposition" by the Holy Prophet. Then the only rational course left for them would be to accept the view of those who believe in the necessity of a new Prophet and a new revelation; whereas Allah Himself considers the "Exposition" of the Book by the Prophet as an essential thing, and puts it forward as an argument for the necessity of a Prophet. Now if the view of the rejectors of Tradition that the Explanation of the Holy Prophet has disappeared from the world is to be accepted, then two conclusions are inevitable. First, the Prophethood of Muhammad (may Allah's peace be upon him) as a pattern for us has ceased to exist, and the only relation we have with him is the same that we have with the other former Prophets, e.g. Hūd, Šālih, Shu'aib etc. (May Allah's peace be upon them). That is, we have only to testify that they were Prophets but we have no obligation to follow their patterns, for we have none with us. This position obviously leads to the need of a new Prophet, for it automatically refutes the doctrine of the Finality of Prophethood. The second inevitable conclusion will be that a new Book is needed because in that case the Qurān alone could not, according to its author, suffice. Thus in the face of this verse, there is no argument left to prove that the Qurān is self-sufficient to explain itself, for it itself says that there is no need of a Prophet to explain it. Thus it is absolutely necessary that a new Book must be sent down. May Allah destroy such people! In their enthusiasm to repudiate Tradition, they are really cutting at the very root of Islam itself.

41. The argument is this: The fact that everything—a man, an animal, a tree or a mountain—casts its shadow, is a clear proof of its material nature, and everything which is made of matter, is a creation of Allah and is subject to a universal law. In this case the law is that every material thing casts its shadow, which is symbolical of its servitude, and it cannot have any share whatsoever in Godhead.

42. That is, "Not only all things on the earth alone but also all things in the heavens, including all those whom people have been regarding as gods and goddesses, and considering to be closely related to Allah, are subservient to God, and have no share whatsoever in His Godhead."

Incidentally, it implies the existence of living creatures not only on the earth but in the planets, too.

بِالْأَنْثَى خَلَّ وَجْهَهُ مُسَوِّدًا وَهُوَ كَظِيمٌ ﴿٥٥﴾ يَتَوَارَى مِنَ الْقَوْمِ مِنْ سُوءِ
 مَا بُشِّرَبِهِ ۗ أَيُّسِكُّ عَلَى هُونٍ أَمْ يَدُلُّهُ فِي التُّرَابِ إِلَّا سَاءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾
 لِلَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ مَثَلُ السُّوءِ ۗ وَ لِلَّهِ الْمَثَلُ الْأَعْلَىٰ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ
 الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٥٧﴾ وَ كُو يُؤَاخِذُ اللَّهُ النَّاسَ بِظُلْمِهِمْ مَا تَرَكَ عَلَيْهَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ وَلَكِنْ
 يُؤَخِّرُهُمْ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ۚ فَإِذَا جَاءَ أَجْلُهُمْ لَا يَسْتَأْخِرُونَ سَاعَةً ۚ وَلَا
 يَسْتَقْدِمُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾ وَ يَجْعَلُونَ لِلَّهِ مَا يَكْرَهُونَ وَ تَصِفُ أَلْسِنَتُهُمُ الْكَذِبَ أَنَّ
 لَهُمُ الْحُسْنَىٰ ۚ لَا جَرَمَ أَنَّ لَهُمُ النَّارَ ۚ وَأَنَّهُمْ مُّفْرَطُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾ تَاللَّهِ لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا
 إِلَىٰ أُمَمٍ مِّن قَبْلِكَ فَرَزَيْنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانَ أَعْمَالَهُمْ فَهَوَّ وَ لِيَهُمُ الْيَوْمَ وَ
 لَهُمُ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٦٠﴾ وَ مَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا لِتُبَيِّنَ لَهُمُ الَّذِي اخْتَلَفُوا
 فِيهِ ۚ وَ مَدَىٰ وَ رَحْمَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٦١﴾ وَ اللَّهُ أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَحْيَا
 بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَسْمَعُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾ وَ إِنَّ لَكُمْ فِي
 الْأَنْعَامِ لَعِبْرَةً ۚ نُسِقُكُمْ مِمَّا فِي بُطُونِهِ مِن بَيْنِ فَرْثٍ وَ دَمٍ لَّبَنًا خَالِصًا
 سَائِغًا لِلشَّرِيبِينَ ﴿٦٣﴾ وَ مِن شَجَرٍ النَّخِيلِ وَ الْأَعْنَابِ تَتَّخِذُونَ مِنْهُ سَكَرًا
 وَ رِزْقًا حَسَنًا ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٦٤﴾ وَ أَوْحَىٰ رَبُّكَ إِلَى النَّحْلِ
 أَنِ اتَّخِذِي مِنَ الْجِبَالِ بُيُوتًا ۚ وَ مِنَ الشَّجَرِ ۚ وَ مِنَّا يَعْرِشُونَ ﴿٦٥﴾ ثُمَّ كُلِي مِن
 كُلِّ الشَّجَرِ فَاسْلِكِي سُبُلَ رَبِّكِ ذُلًا ۚ يَخْرُجُ مِن بُطُونِهَا شَرَابٌ مُّخْتَلِفٌ
 أَلْوَانُهُ فِيهِ شِفَاءٌ لِلنَّاسِ ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٦٦﴾ وَ اللَّهُ خَلَقَكُمْ
 ثُمَّ يَتَوَكَّفُكُمْ ۚ وَ مِنْكُمْ مَّن يُرَدُّ إِلَىٰ أَرْدَلِ الْعُزْرِ لِكِي لَا يَعْلَمَ بَعْدَ عِلْمٍ
 شَيْئًا ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٦٧﴾ وَ اللَّهُ فَضَّلَ بَعْضَكُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ فِي الرِّزْقِ ۚ

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When anyone of them is given the good news of a daughter, his face grows dark after this news and he chokes with inward gloom : he hides himself from people because of this disgrace, asking himself whether he should suffer his daughter with disgrace or bury her alive. What an evil judgment they have about Allah!⁵² Bad attributes should be ascribed to those who do not believe in the Hereafter. As regards Allah, all excellences are for Him; for He is the All-Powerful, the All-Wise: 58-60

Had Allah seized people on the spot for their transgression, He would not have left alive any living creature on the Earth: but He respites all for an appointed term. When their appointed time comes, they shall not be able to put it back or forward by a single moment. Yet they assign to Allah what they themselves dislike, and their tongues utter the lie that their lot shall be a fair one anyhow. Nay, only one thing awaits them, and that is the fire of Hell, wherein most certainly they shall be hastened.. 61-62

By God, O Muhammad, We sent Messengers before you to many communities (and it has always been so that) Satan made their evil deeds seem fair to them, (and so they did not believe in the Message). The same Satan has this day become their patron also and they are incurring the most painful punishment. We have sent down this Book to you so that you may reveal to them the reality of the differences in which they are involved. Moreover, this Book has been sent down as guidance for and blessing to those who believe in it.⁵³ 63-64

(In every rainy season you see that) Allah sent down water from heaven, and by it gave life to the earth after it had been dead : indeed there is a Sign in this for those who listen (to the Message).^{53a} 65

And surely there is a lesson for you in the cattle : We give you to drink of that which is in their bellies between filth and blood, that is, pure milk,⁵⁴ which is very pleasant to those who drink it. 66

(Likewise) We give you from date-palms and vines a drink from which you derive intoxicants and also pure food:⁵⁵ indeed there is a Sign in this for those who make 67

68-69

use of their common sense.

And behold ! Your Lord has inspired the bee⁵⁶ with this : "Build thy hive in the mountains, trees and in the creepers over trellises: then drink nectar from every kind of fruit, and follow the ways made smooth by thy Lord."⁵⁷ From its belly comes out a fluid of varying hues wherein is healing for mankind.⁵⁸ Here is indeed a Sign for those people who ponder over it.⁵⁹

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And consider this: Allah created you: then He causes your death;⁶⁰ and some one from among you is carried on to abject old age so that after knowing all he could, he may no longer have any knowledge of it.⁶¹ The fact is that Allah alone is All-Knowing, All-Powerful.

43. Negation of two gods by itself negates the existence of more than two gods.

44. In other words it means that the whole system of the universe exists on its obedience to Him.

45. That is, "When it is so, will you then make the fear of any other than God the basis of the system of your life?"

46. That is, "The fact, that you run to Allah for help in your distress and not to anyone else, is a clear proof of the Oneness of Allah, which has been embedded in your own hearts. At the time of your affliction, your true nature, which had been suppressed by the gods you had forged, involuntarily comes to the surface and invokes Allah, for it knows no other god or lord or master, having any real power. (For further details please refer to E.N.'s 29 and 41 of Chapter VI).

47. That is, "At the time of showing gratitude to Allah for removing his affliction, he begins to make offerings also to some god, goddess or saint to show that Allah's kindness to him was due to the intercession of his patron, for he imagines that otherwise Allah would not have removed his distress."

48. They assign shares to those patrons about whom they have no authentic knowledge that God has made them His partners and allotted some duties of Godhead to them and made them governors of some territories in His Kingdom.

49. That is, "They set apart a portion of their incomes and land products to make offerings of this to their patrons".

50. This refers to a tradition of the ancient Arabs. They regarded their goddesses and angels as daughters of God.

51. That is, "sons".

52. This attitude of contempt towards daughters has been mentioned to bring home to them the height of their folly, ignorance and

impudence in regard to God. This is why they did not hesitate to assign daughters to Allah, though they themselves felt that to have daughters was a matter of disgrace for them. Besides this, it shows that they had a very low estimation of Allah, which had resulted from their ways of *shirk*. So they felt nothing wrong in ascribing such foolish and absurd things to Allah Who is above such things.

53. That is, "This Book has afforded them an excellent opportunity to resolve their differences which have been caused by the superstitious creeds of their forefathers, and which have divided them into warring factions. They can then unite on the permanent basis of the Truth presented by the Qurān, but those foolish people preferring their former condition even after the coming of this blessing, shall meet with disgrace and torment. On the other hand, only those, who believe in this Book, will find the Right Way and blessed with mercy and favours from Allah".

53a. That is, "Had you listened to the Message of the Prophet, and observed those Signs carefully, you would have cried from the core of your heart, 'These Signs support his Message'. Year after year you witness these Signs. There is the land, all barren before you, without any sign of life—no blade of grass, no bud or flower, and no insect. Then comes rain. All of a sudden, the same land is covered with life. There crop up numerous kinds of insects of which no vestige had been left. You witness this process of life and death, and death and life, repeated year after year. Yet you doubt this when the Prophet tells you that Allah will again bring to life all human beings after their death. This is because you see these Signs as animals do, who do not see the wisdom of the Creator underlying this phenomenon; otherwise you would have discovered that these signs support the Message of the Prophet".

54. "...between filth and blood.....": This refers to the most wonderful process of the formation of pure milk in the bellies of the she-cattle, for, the fodder they eat turns into blood, filth and pure milk, which is altogether different from the first two in its nature, colour and usefulness. Some she-cattle produce milk in such abundance that after suckling their young-ones a large quantity of it is left to make excellent human food.

55. Incidentally, it implies that the juice of the fruits of date-palms and vines contains two things. One is that which is pure and wholesome food for man and the other is that which turns into alcohol after it becomes rotten. But it has been left to the choice of man to obtain pure healthy food from this providence or to drink it as intoxicant wine to excite him and make him lose his self-control. This also contains a hint as to the prohibition of wine.

56. The lexical meaning of the Arabic word وحى ('*wahī*') is secret inspiration which is felt only by the one who inspires and the other who is inspired with. The Qurān has used this word both for the instinctive

inspiration by Allah to His creation in general and for the Revelation towards His Prophets in particular. Allah sends His "*wahī*" to the heavens with His Command and they begin functioning in accordance with it (XL : 12). He will send this to the Earth with His Command and it will relate the story of all that had happened on and in it. (XCIX : 4-5). He sends *wahī* to the bee and inspires it with faculties to perform the whole of its wonderful work instinctively (v. 68). The same is true of the bird that learns to fly, the fish that learns to swim, the newly born child that learns to suck milk, etc. etc. Then, it is also *wahī* with which Allah inspires a human being with a spontaneous idea (XXVIII : 7). The same is the case with all the great discoveries, inventions, works of literature and art, etc., which would not have been possible without the benefit of *wahī*. As a matter of fact, every human being at one time or the other feels its mental or spiritual influence in the form of an idea or thought or plan or dream, which is confirmed by a subsequent experience to be the right guidance from the unseen *wahī*.

Then there is the *wahī* (Revelation) which is the privilege of the Prophets. This form of *wahī* has its own special features and is quite distinct from all its other forms. The Prophet, who is inspired with it, is fully conscious and has his firm conviction that it is being sent down from Allah. Such a Revelation contains doctrines of creed, commandments, laws, regulations and instructions for the guidance of mankind.

57. "...follow the ways made smooth by thy Lord" : "...work in accordance with the methods which have been taught to thee by Allah's *wahī* for the smooth running of hive life". It is Allah's *wahī* (instinctive inspiration) that has taught the bees how to build their wonderful factory with separate combs to rear brood, combs to turn nectar into honey, combs to store food, in short, separate combs to fulfil every aspect of hive life. It is *wahī* that has taught the bees how to organize themselves into a co-operative society for collective effort to run the "factory" with the queen and thousands of workers to perform a variety of specific tasks. All these things have been made so smooth for them by *wahī* that the bees never feel the necessity of ever thinking about it. They have been running smoothly their factory with their collective effort for thousands of years with perfect accuracy.

58. Though honey is a wholesome food with a sweet taste and has medicinal power as well, its latter quality has been mentioned only because the former is too obvious. It is used as a medicine to cure several diseases because it contains the juice and glucose of flowers and fruits in the best form. Besides this, it is also used in preparing and preserving other medicines because it does not rot. It also preserves other things from decay. That is why it has been used for centuries as a substitute for alcohol. And if the bee-hive is built at a place, which abounds in certain medicinal herbs, its honey does not remain mere honey, but becomes also the essence of that herb. It is expected that if bees are used

methodically for extracting essence from herbs etc., that essence will prove to be much better than the one obtained in the laboratories.

59. This passage (vv. 48-69) contains proofs of *Tauhid* and Life-after-death. These were necessitated, for the disbelievers and the *mushriks* were bitterly opposed to the Holy Prophet mainly because of these two doctrines. The acceptance of the first doctrine demolished the whole system of life based on *shirk* or atheism because to acknowledge Allah to be the sole Providence, the Helper and the Protector left no room for the worship of any god or goddess. The proof of *Tauhid* is based on the observance of the structure of the cattle, the bees, the date-palms and vine-yards and their usefulness to mankind. Naturally the question arises : Who has designed these in the manner and for the purpose they have been created? The only obvious answer is that it is the All-Wise and All-Beneficent Allah Who has designed all these things for the benefit of mankind to produce such varieties of food that are so wholesome and so tasty. The Prophet, therefore, rightly demanded, "When you yourselves admit, and you cannot but admit, that it is Allah alone Who has provided milk, honey, dates, grapes and the like, He and none but He is worthy of your worship, praise, gratitude and allegiance. Why do you then insist on making offerings to your self-made gods and goddesses?"

The second doctrine to which the disbelievers took strong objection was that there is surely the Life-after-death. They were against this doctrine for its acceptance changed the whole moral system and they were not prepared to change their immoral ways. Their objection was based on the presumption that it was impossible to bring to life anyone after death.

They have been asked to observe that the barren land, which once had been covered with vegetable life, was again covered with it after rainfall and they have been watching such repetition of life year after year. That Allah, Who could so easily bring to life the dead vegetable, could do the same and bring to life all the dead without any difficulty at all.

60. It is to emphasize this: Allah not only provides you with the necessities and good things of life (as stated in the preceding verses), but also has full power over your life and death. None else has any power to give life or cause death.

61. This fact has been mentioned to bring home to the disbelievers and the *mushriks* that knowledge, which gives superiority to man over all creatures on this Earth, has been given by Allah, as if to say, "You yourselves have seen that when a man, who once possessed much knowledge, becomes very old, he is reduced to a mere lump of flesh. Then that man who once taught knowledge to others loses all his senses and cannot look even after his own self".

فَمَا الَّذِينَ فُضِّلُوا بِرَأْدِي رَبِّهِمْ عَلَىٰ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ فَهُمْ فِيهِ سَوَاءٌ ۗ
 أَفَبِعِنتَةِ اللَّهِ يَجْحَدُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾ وَاللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا وَجَعَلَ
 لَكُمْ مِنْ أَزْوَاجِكُمْ بَنِينَ وَحَفَدَةً وَرَزَقَكُمْ مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ أَفَبِالْبَاطِلِ يُؤْمِنُونَ
 وَبِئَعْتِ اللَّهِ هُمْ يَكْفُرُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَيَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَمْلِكُ لَهُمْ
 رِزْقًا مِنَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾ فَلَا تَضْرِبُوا لِلَّهِ
 الْأَمْثَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾ ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا عَبْدًا مَمْلُوكًا
 لَا يَقْدِرُ عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ وَ مَنْ زَوَّجْنَاهُ مِنَّا رِزْقًا حَسَنًا فَهُوَ يُنْفِقُ مِنْهُ سِرًّا
 وَ جَهْرًا هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾ وَضَرَبَ اللَّهُ
 مَثَلًا رَجُلَيْنِ أَحَدُهُمَا أَبْكَمُ لَا يَقْدِرُ عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ كَلٌّ عَلَىٰ مَوْلَاهُ أَيْنَمَا
 يُوَجَّهُهُ لَا يَأْتِ بِخَيْرٍ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي هُوَ وَمَنْ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ
 صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٥١﴾ وَاللَّهُ غَيْبُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا أَمْرُ السَّاعَةِ إِلَّا
 كَلَمْحِ الْبَصَرِ أَوْ هُوَ أَقْرَبُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٥٢﴾ وَاللَّهُ أَخْرَجَكُمْ
 مِنْ بُطُونِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ شَيْئًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ
 لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾ أَلَمْ يَرَوْا إِلَى الطَّيْرِ مُسَخَّرَاتٍ فِي جَوِّ السَّمَاءِ مَا يُمْسِكُهُنَّ
 إِلَّا اللَّهُ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٥٤﴾ وَاللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ بُيُوتِكُمْ
 سَكَنًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ جُلُودِ الْأَنْعَامِ بُيُوتًا تَسْتَخِفُّونَهَا يَوْمَ ظَعْنِكُمْ وَيَوْمَ
 إِقَامَتِكُمْ وَمِنْ أَصْوَابِهَا وَأَوْبَارِهَا وَأَشْعَارِهَا أَثَانًا وَمَتَاعًا إِلَىٰ حِينٍ ﴿٥٥﴾
 وَاللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ خَلْقِ ظِلَالًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنَ الْجِبَالِ أَكْنَانًا وَجَعَلَ
 لَكُمْ سَرَابِيلَ تَقِيكُمُ الْحَرَّ وَ سَرَابِيلَ تَقِيكُمُ الْبَأْسَ كَذَلِكَ يُتَوَّعُ بِعِنتِهِ

Consider also this: Allah has favoured some of you above others with provisions, but those who have been favoured with this, do not give away their provisions to their slaves so that both may become equal in the provision. What! do they then deny to acknowledge Allah's favour?⁶² 71

It is Allah alone, Who has made wives for you from your own species and He alone bestowed upon you sons and grandsons from those wives, and provided you with good things to eat. What, do they then, (even after seeing and knowing all this,) believe in falsehood,⁶³ and deny Allah's favours⁶⁴ and, instead of Allah, worship those who do not provide them with anything from the heavens or the earth, nor have any power to do so? Make no comparisons, therefore, with Allah.⁶⁵ Allah knows but you do not know. 72-74

Allah cites a similitude⁶⁶ (of two men) : one of them is a slave, who is owned by another and has no power over anything. There is the other man whom We Ourselves have provided with a fair provision from which he freely spends openly and secretly. (Ask them): "Are these two men equal?"—May God be praised!⁶⁷ But most people do not understand (this simple thing).⁶⁸ 75

Allah cites another similitude of two men. One of them is dumb and deaf and cannot do any work, and has become a burden upon his master; wherever he despatches him, he does nothing useful. There is the other one, who enjoins justice and follows the Right Way. (Ask them): "Are these two men equal?"⁶⁹ 76

Allah alone has the knowledge of all the "unknown" things of the heavens and the earth.⁷⁰ As regards the coming of the Resurrection, it will not take more time than is taken in the twinkling of an eye rather less than this;⁷¹ the fact is that Allah has power over all things. 77

Allah brought you out of your mothers' wombs in this state that you knew nothing : He gave you ears and eyes and thinking minds⁷² so that you may be grateful.⁷³ 78

Have they never observed how the birds are poised in the vault of heaven? Who holds them up but Allah? 79

There are many Signs in this for those people who believe.

80

Allah has made your homes places of rest and peace for you: and from the skins of cattle He has made for you houses⁷⁴ which you find light during your journey and at the time of your halt.⁷⁵ And from their soft fur and wool and hair, He has furnished you with many things for clothing and domestic service which are very useful to you during your prescribed term of life.

62. It will be worthwhile to give deep thought to the meanings of this verse, for some modern commentators of the Qurān have founded strange economic theories and systems on it. Their interpretation is an instance of perverting the meaning of the Qurān by isolating verses from their context and treating it as a separate whole in order to formulate a new philosophy and law of Islamic Economics. In their opinion the verse implies this: Those people to whom Allah has given more provisions than others, should share these equally with their servants and slaves: otherwise they shall be guilty of ingratitude to Allah in regard to the wealth with which He had blessed them. This commentary on the verse is obviously wrong and far-fetched because in the context it occurs, there is no mention at all of any law of economics. The whole passage in which this verse occurs deals with the refutation of *shirk* and proof of *Tauhid*. The same themes are continued in the subsequent verses. There seems to be no reason why an economic law should have been inserted here, which would have been absolutely irrelevant, to say the least. On the contrary, when the verse is considered in its context, it becomes quite obvious that it is no more than the statement of a fact to prove the same theme that is contained in this passage. It argues like this: "When you yourselves do not make your servants and slaves equal partners in your wealth—which in fact is given to you by Allah—how is it that you join other gods with God in your gratitude to Him for the favours with which He has blessed you. You know that these gods have no powers to bestow anything on anyone, and, therefore, have no right in your worship of Allah, for they are after all His slaves and servants."

This interpretation of the verse under discussion is corroborated by XXX : 28: "Allah sets forth to you an instance from your own selves: Do your slaves share with you the wealth We have bestowed on you so that you and they become equals in this? And do you fear them as you fear one another? Thus We make clear Our Signs to those who use their common sense." A comparison of the two verses makes it quite clear that these have been cited to bring home to the *mushriks* that they themselves do not associate their slaves with themselves in their wealth and status, but they have the impudence and folly to set up His own creature as partner with God.

It appears that the erroneous interpretation has been strengthened

by the succeeding sentence: "What! do they then deny to acknowledge Allah's favour? As this sentence immediately follows the similitude of the rich people and their slaves, they conclude that it will be ingratitude on the part of those, who possess more wealth not to share it equally with those who have less. As a matter of fact, everyone who has studied the Qurān critically knows that ingratitude to Allah is to show gratitude to others than Allah for His blessings. This interpretation is so patently wrong that those who are well-versed in the teachings of the Qurān can have no misconception about it. And such verses as these can mislead only those who have a cursory knowledge of the Qurān.

Now that the significance of the ingratitude towards Allah's blessing has become plain, the meaning of the verse will be quite clear, and it is this: "When the *mushriks* understand the implication of the difference between the master and his slave and observe this distinction in their own lives, why do they then persist in ignoring the immense difference between the Creator and His creatures and set up the latter as His partners and pay homage of gratitude to them for the blessings bestowed on them by Allah."

63. "...they believe in falsehood..": they have this false and baseless belief that there are certain gods and goddesses, *jinn*s and saints, dead and alive, who possess the power to make or mar their fates, fulfil their desires and answer their prayers, give them children, cure their diseases and help them win law suits.

64. "...they deny Allah's favours" by associating others with Allah in offering gratitude to Him for His favours, though they did not have any proof or authority that their false gods had played any part in regard to those favours. The Qurān considers such an association to be the denial of Allah's favours. It puts forward the fundamental principle: It is the denial of the favour of the real benefactor to offer gratitude for his favour to anyone who has not done that favour, or to presume without any proof or reason that the real benefactor has not granted that favour of his own accord but because of the mediation or regard or recommendation or intercession of this or that person.

Even a little thinking will show that both of the above-mentioned fundamental things are absolutely just and rational. Let us suppose, for the sake of illustration, that A, out of sympathy, helps B, a needy person, but at that very moment B stands up in A's presence, and offers gratitude for that kind act to another person who had no share at all in it. A being a generous person may not take any notice of B's absurd response, and may even continue to help him as before, but he cannot help having a very low opinion of B character and considering him to be an ungrateful wretch. Then on inquiry B reveals that he was grateful to the other person for A had done that kindness to B because of him. Naturally A will take it ill, for he knows that B's assumption is absolutely wrong: nay, he will take this as an insult to himself because it means that B has a very low opinion of him that

he is not a generous and kind-hearted man but merely does such deeds to please his friends. It means that A helps a needy person only if he brings recommendation of his friends; otherwise none can expect any goodness from him.

65. "Make no comparisons with Allah": You should not compare Allah with others nor consider Him to be unapproachable like worldly kings and rulers, to whom none can have access without the mediation and intercession of their courtiers and servants. As Allah is not surrounded by angels, saints, favourites etc., everyone can have direct access to Him without mediation by anyone.

66. In the preceding verse, the *mushriks* were told not to make comparisons between Allah and His creatures, for there is nothing like Him. As the bases of their comparison were wrong, their conclusions were also misleading. In this verse appropriate similitudes have been cited and right comparisons have been made to lead them to Reality.

67. Between the last question and "May God be praised!" there is a gap which is to be filled with the help of the latter. When the question was posed, obviously the *mushriks* could not say that the two men were equal. So some of them would have admitted that they were not equal, while the others would have kept quiet for fear that in case of admission, they would have to abide by its logical conclusion, that is, the admission of refutation of the doctrine of *shirk*. Therefore, the words, "May God be praised!" have been put in the mouth of the Prophet in answer to both kinds of the response to the question. In the first case, it would mean: "May God be praised! you have admitted at least so much". In the second case, it would mean: "May God be praised! you have kept quiet in spite of all your obduracy and have not had the audacity to say that both were equal".

68. "...most people do not understand (this simple thing)" that while they feel and carefully observe the distinction between those who have powers and those who are powerless, they neither feel nor observe the clear distinction between the Creator and His creation. That is why they associate the creatures with the Creator in His Attributes and Powers and show the kind of allegiance to them as is the exclusive right of the Creator. The pity is that in their everyday life, they would beg for something from the master of the house and not from the servant, but in contrast to this, they would beg for their needs from the servants of Allah and not from Him.

69. In the first similitude, distinction between Allah and false gods has been made clear in regard to the possession of powers and the lack of these. In the second one, the emphasis is on the use of those powers. Allah is not only All-Powerful, but also hears all the prayers and fulfils all the needs, while the slave is utterly powerless. He does not and cannot hear prayers, nor can make a response to them nor has the power to do anything at all. He is totally dependent on the Master and quite incapable of doing anything by himself. On the other hand, the Master-

is All-Powerful and All Wise. He enjoins justice on the world: whatever He does is right and accurate. Ask them, "Is it then a point of wisdom to regard such Master and such a slave as equal?"

70. The subsequent sentence shows that this is the answer to a question which was frequently put to the Holy Prophet by the disbelievers of Makkah. The question which has not been cited was this: If the Resurrection you so often talk of is really coming, let us know the date of its coming.

71. That is, "Don't be under the delusion that the Resurrection will come gradually and take a long time: you will neither be able to see it coming at a distance nor guard against it and make preparations to meet it. For it will come suddenly without any previous notice, in the twinkling of an eye or even take less time than this. Therefore, now is the time to consider this matter seriously and to decide about your attitude towards it. You should not depend upon this false hope that there is still a long time in the coming of the Resurrection and you will set matters right with Allah when you will see it coming".

It may be pointed out that the Resurrection has been mentioned here during the discussion on *Tauhid* in order to warn the people that the choice between the doctrines of *Tauhid* and *shirk* is not merely a theoretical question. For that choice determines different courses of life for which they will be called to account on the Day of Resurrection. They have also been warned that it will come all of a sudden at some unknown time. Therefore they should be very careful to make that choice which will determine their success or failure on that Day.

72. This is to remind them that when they were born they were more helpless and ignorant than the young-one of an animal, but Allah gave them ears to hear, eyes to see and minds to think and reflect. These have enabled them to acquire every kind of information and knowledge to carry on their worldly affairs efficiently. So much so that these sensory faculties are the only means which help man attain so much progress as to rule over every thing on the earth.

73. That is, "You should be grateful to that Allah Who has bestowed upon you such blessings as these. It will be ingratitude on your part if you hear everything with your ears except the Word of God, and see everything with your eyes except the Signs of Allah and consider seriously about all the matters except your Benefactor Who has blessed you with these favours".

74. Houses: tents of skin which are in common use in Arabia.

75. That is, "When you want to start on a journey, you can easily fold your tents and carry them, and when you want to make a short halt, you can easily unfold them and pitch them for shelter and rest."

عَلَيْكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُسْلِمُونَ ﴿٥١﴾ فَإِنْ كَوَّنُوا فَإِنَّمَا عَلَيْكَ الْبَلْغُ الْمُبِينُ ﴿٥٢﴾ يَعْرِفُونَ
 نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ يُنْكِرُونَهَا وَأَكْثَرُهُمُ الْكَافِرُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾ وَيَوْمَ نَبْعَثُ مِنْ كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ
 شَهِيدًا ثُمَّ لَا يُؤْذَنُ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَلَا هُمْ يُسْتَعْتَبُونَ ﴿٥٤﴾ وَإِذَا رَأَى الَّذِينَ
 ظَلَمُوا الْعَذَابَ فَلَا يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمْ وَلَا هُمْ يُنظَرُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾ وَإِذَا رَأَى الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا
 شُرَكَاءَهُمْ قَالُوا رَبَّنَا هَؤُلَاءِ شُرَكَائُنَا الَّذِينَ كُنَّا نَدْعُوا مِنْ دُونِكَ فَأَلْقُوا
 إِلَيْهِمُ الْقَوْلَ إِنَّكُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾ وَالْقَوْلُ إِلَى اللَّهِ يَوْمَئِذٍ السَّلَامُ وَصَلَّ عَنْهُمْ
 مَا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَصَدَّوْا عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ زِدْنَاهُمْ عَذَابًا
 فَوْقَ الْعَذَابِ بِمَا كَانُوا يُفْسِدُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾ وَيَوْمَ نَبْعَثُ فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ شَهِيدًا
 عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَجِئْنَا بِكَ شَهِيدًا عَلَى هَؤُلَاءِ وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ تِبْيَانًا
 لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً وَبُشْرَى لِلْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٥٩﴾ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ
 وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَايِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ
 يَعِظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾ وَأَوْفُوا بِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ إِذَا عَاهَدْتُمْ وَلَا تَنْقُضُوا
 الْأَيْمَانَ بَعْدَ تَوْكِيدِهَا وَقَدْ جَعَلْتُمُ اللَّهَ كَفِيلًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا
 تَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٦١﴾ وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِي نَقَضَتْ غَزْلَهَا مِنْ بَعْدِ قُوَّةٍ أَنْكَاثًا تَتَّخِذُونَ
 أَيْمَانَكُمْ دَخَلًا بَيْنَكُمْ أَنْ تَكُونَ أُمَّةٌ هِيَ أَرْبَىٰ مِنْ أُمَّةٍ إِنَّمَا يَبْلُوكُمُ اللَّهُ
 بِهِ وَيُبَيِّنْ لَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ مَا كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ
 لَجَعَلَكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَكِنْ يُضِلُّ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَلِتَسَلَّنَ
 عَنَّا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾ وَلَا تَتَّخِذُوا أَيْمَانَكُمْ دَخَلًا بَيْنَكُمْ فَتَزِلَّ قَدَمٌ بَعْدَ
 ثُبُوتِهَا وَتَذُوقُوا الشَّوْءَ بِمَا صَدَدْتُمْ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَكُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٦٤﴾

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ع
١٤

الْقَوْلِ

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ع
١٨

81-83

Allah has made for you from the many things He has created shelter from the sun. He has created for you places of refuge in the mountains and blessed you with such garments as protect you from heat⁷⁶ and garments which shield you in your fights.⁷⁷ Thus He perfects His blessings on you⁷⁸, so that you should submit to Him. But if they give no heed to you, O Muhammad, (you need not worry) for, your only responsibility is to convey the plain Message of truth. They recognise the blessing of Allah, yet they deny it,⁷⁹ for the majority of them are not inclined to accept the Truth.

84-88

(Do they realize what will happen) on the Day when We shall raise up a witness⁸⁰ from every community? Then the disbelievers shall not be given any opportunity to put forward any excuses⁸¹ nor shall they be asked to show penitence.⁸² When once the transgressors will see the torment, their punishment shall neither be lightened for them after this nor shall any respite be given to them. When the people, who had committed *shirk* in this world, will see those whom they had made associates with Allah, they will say, "Our Lord ! here are those associate-deities whom we used to invoke beside Thee". At this their deities will retort, "You are liars."⁸³ At that time all of them will proffer submission before Allah and all they used to forge in this world shall vanish from them.⁸⁴ We will inflict double torment⁸⁵ on those who followed the way of disbelief and hindered others from the Way of Allah on account of the chaos they spread in this world.

89

(O Muhammad, warn them of) the Day when We shall call a witness from among every community to testify against it. And We shall call you to testify against these people; (that is why) We have sent down to you this Book which makes plain everything⁸⁶ and is guidance, blessing and good news to those who have surrendered themselves entirely.⁸⁷

90-93

Allah enjoins justice, generosity and kind treatment with kindred,⁸⁸ and forbids indecency, wickedness and oppression.⁸⁹ He admonishes you so that you may learn a lesson. Fulfil your covenant with Allah when you have

made a Covenant with Him, and do not break your oaths after they have been confirmed and you have made Allah your witness. Allah is fully aware of all your actions. Do not behave like that woman who had spun yarn laboriously and then had herself broken it into pieces.⁹⁰ You make your mutual oaths a means of mutual deceit in your affairs so that one people might take undue advantage over the other whereas Allah puts you to trial by these pledges.⁹¹ Allah will certainly reveal to you the truth about all your differences on the Day of Resurrection.⁹² Had Allah so willed (that you may not have any differences,) He would have made you all a single community,⁹³ but He leads astray whom He will and shows guidance to whom He will.⁹⁴ And be sure that He will take you to account for all your doings.

94

And (O Muslims,) do not make your oaths the means of deceiving one another lest (someone's) foot should slip after being firmly fixed⁹⁵ and you may suffer the consequences of debarring other people from the Way of Allah, and undergo a severe torment.

76. The Qurān has not mentioned protection from cold for either of the two reasons : (1) Because the use of garments in the summer season is a symbol of cultural perfection and obviously there is no need to mention the lower stages of culture. Or (2) the use of garments in hot countries has specially been mentioned because the main use of garments there is for protection from the hot pestilential furious wind. Therefore one has to cover one's head, neck, ears, and the whole of one's body to protect it from the hot wind which would otherwise scorch one to death.

77. That is, "Armour".

78. "He perfects His blessings on you": Allah makes provision for the minutest needs and necessities of every aspect of human life. For example, let us take the instance of the protection of the human body from external influences. We find that Allah has made such elaborate arrangements as require a complete book to relate them. These arrangements reach their perfection in the case of clothing and housing arrangement. Or, if we consider the food requirements we realize that it is of many varieties which fulfil every need. More than this: the means Allah has provided for food requirements of man are so numerous that the list of the varieties and the names of different kinds of food require a big volume. This is the perfection of the blessing of food. Likewise, one would see perfection of the blessings of Allah in the fulfilment of each and every human need and necessity.

79. Here the denial of the blessings of Allah refers to practical denial by the disbelievers of Makkah. For they did not deny that all these blessings were from Allah but along with this they believed that their saints and gods also had contributed towards them. This is why they associated their intercessors in their gratitude to Allah for these blessings. Nay, they were even more grateful to them than to Allah. Allah regards this association as denial of His blessings, ingratitude and forgetfulness of His favours.

80 The witness will be the Prophet of that community or his follower who invited that community to *Tauhid* and God-worship and warned it of the consequences of *shirk* and superstitious rites and customs and cautioned it against the accountability on the Day of Resurrection. He will bear witness of the fact that he had conveyed the true Message to those people, and that they committed evils deliberately and not in ignorance.

81. This does not mean that the criminals will not be given any opportunity to clear themselves but it means that their crimes will be proved to the hilt by means of irrefutable evidence which will leave no room for excuses.

82. That is, "They will not be given the opportunity to beg pardon of their Lord for their crimes. For that will be the time of judgment as the time of begging pardon would have ended long before this." The Qurān and the Traditions are explicit on this point that the place for penitence is this world and not the Next World. Even in this world the opportunity is lost as soon as signs of death begin to appear, for the penitence at that time will be of no avail when a person knows that the time of his death has come. Respite for deeds expires as soon as one enters into the boundary of death, and the only thing that remains after that is the award of reward and punishment.

83. It does not mean that they would deny the fact that the *mushriks* used to invoke their help. They will call them liars in the sense that they had made them deities without their knowledge, information and permission, as if to say, "We never told you to leave Allah aside and pray to us for help. As a matter of fact, we never approved of this, nay, we were utterly unaware of this that you were invoking us. It was an utter lie that you considered us to be able to hear your prayers, answer them and help you out of your difficulties. As you yourselves were responsible for this *shirk*, why are you involving us in its consequences?"

84. That is, "All those things on which they had relied will prove to be false, for they will not find anyone to hear their supplication nor anyone to remove their hardships. Nay, there will be none who will come forward and say, "These are my dependents : so no action should be taken against them".

85. Double torment : one for their own disbelief and the other for hindering others from the Way of Allah.

86. The Qurān makes manifest everything on which depends guidance or deviation, success or failure : whose knowledge is essential for following the Right Way : which clearly distinguishes Truth from falsehood.

In this connection one should guard against that meaning of this sentence and the like in the Qurān according to which some people interpret "everything" to mean "the knowledge of all sciences, arts etc.," and in order to prove the correctness of their interpretation, they have to pervert the real meaning of the Qurān.

87. This Book is a guidance for those who surrender to it as a Divine Book and follow it in every aspect of life. Then it will bring Allah's blessings upon them, and will give them the good news that they will come out successful in the Court of Allah on the Day of Judgment. On the contrary, those people who reject it shall not only be deprived of guidance and blessing but will also find it as a testimony against themselves on the Day of Resurrection when Allah's Messenger will stand up to testify against them. This Book will prove to be a strong argument against them, for Allah's Messenger will say that he had conveyed its Message which made manifest the distinction between Truth and falsehood.

88. In this brief sentence Allah has enjoined three most important things on which alone depends the establishment of a sound and healthy society :—

The first of these is justice which has two aspects.

To make such arrangements as may enable everyone to get one's due rights without stint. Justice does not, however, mean equal distribution of rights, for that would be absolutely unnatural. In fact, justice means equitable dispensation of rights which in certain cases may mean equality. For example, all citizens should have equal rights of citizenship but in other cases equality in rights would be injustice. For instance, equality in social status and rights between parents and their children will obviously be wrong. Likewise those who render services of superior and inferior types cannot be equal in regard to wages and salaries. What Allah enjoins is that the full rights of everyone should be honestly rendered whether those be moral, social, economic, legal or political in accordance with what one justly deserves.

The second thing enjoined is "*ihsān*" which has no equivalent in English. This means to be good, generous, sympathetic, tolerant, forgiving, polite, co-operative, selfless, etc. In collective life this is even more important than justice ; for justice is the foundation of a sound society but *ihsān* is its perfection. On the one hand, justice protects society from bitterness and violation of rights : on the other, *ihsān* makes it sweet and joyful and worth living. It is obvious that no society can flourish if every individual insists on exacting his pound of flesh. At best such a society might be free from conflict but there cannot be love, gratitude, generosity, sacrifice, sincerity, sympathy and such humane

qualities as produce sweetness in life and develop high values.

The third thing which has been enjoined is good treatment towards one's relatives which in fact is a specific form of *ihsān*. It means that one should not only treat one's relatives well, share their sorrows and pleasures and help them within lawful limits but should also share one's wealth with them according to one's means and the need of each relative. This enjoins on everyone who possesses ample means to acknowledge the share of one's deserving relatives along with the rights of one's own person and family. The Divine Law holds every well-to-do person in a family to be responsible for fulfilling the needs of all his needy kith and kin. The Law considers it a great evil that one person should enjoy the pleasures of life while his own kith and kin are starving. As it considers the family to be an important part of society, it lays down that the first right of needy individuals is on its well-to-do members and then on the others. Likewise it is the first duty of the well-to-do members of the family to fulfil the needs of their own near relatives and then those of others. The Holy Prophet has emphasized this fact in many Traditions, according to which a person owes rights to his parents, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters, other relatives etc., in accordance with the nearness of their relationships. On the basis of this fundamental principle, Caliph 'Umar made it obligatory on the first cousins of an orphan to support him. In the case of another orphan he declared that if he had no first cousins he would have made it obligatory on distant cousins to support him. Just imagine the happy condition of the society every unit of which supports its every needy individual in this way—most surely that society will become high and pure economically, socially, and morally.

89. In contrast to the above mentioned three virtues, Allah prohibits three vices which ruin individuals and the society as a whole:

(1) The Arabic word *fahshā* applies to all those things that are immodest immoral or obscene or nasty or dirty or vulgar, not fit to be seen or heard, because they offend against recognized standards of propriety or, good taste, e.g., adultery, fornication, homo-sexuality, nakedness, nudity, theft, robbery, drinking, gambling, begging, abusive language and the like. Likewise it is indecent to indulge in giving publicity to any of these evils and to spread them, e.g., false propaganda, calumny, publicity of crimes, indecent stories, dramas, films, naked pictures, public appearance of women-folk with indecent make-ups, free mixing of sexes, dancing and the like.

(2) *Munkar* applies to all those evils which have always been universally regarded as evils and have been forbidden by all divine systems of law.

(3) *Baghy* applies to those vices that transgress the proper limits of decency and violate the rights of others, whether those of the Creator or His Creation.

وَلَا تَشْتَرُوا بِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا ۗ إِنَّمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ هُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنْتُمْ
 تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٤٦﴾ مَا عِنْدَكُمْ يَنْفَدُ وَمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ بَاقٍ ۗ وَلَنَجْزِيَنَ الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا
 أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤٧﴾ مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثِيَ وَ
 هُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيٰوةً طَيِّبَةً ۗ وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا
 يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤٨﴾ فَإِذَا قَرَأْتَ الْقُرْآنَ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطٰنِ الرَّجِيْمِ ﴿١٤٩﴾ إِنَّهُ
 لَيْسَ لَهُ سُلْطٰنٌ عَلَى الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ ﴿١٥٠﴾ إِنَّمَا سُلْطٰنُهُ
 عَلَى الَّذِينَ يَتَوَلَّوْنَهُ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ بِهِ مُشْرِكُونَ ﴿١٥١﴾ وَإِذَا بَدَّلْنَا آيَةً مَّكَانَ
 آيَةٍ ۗ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يُنزِلُ قَالُوا إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُنذِرٌ بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٥٢﴾
 قُلْ نَزَّلَهُ رُوْحُ الْقُدُسِ مِن رَّبِّكَ بِالْحَقِّ لِيُثَبِّتَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَهُدًى وَ
 بُشْرَىٰ لِلْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴿١٥٣﴾ وَلَقَدْ نَعَلِمُ أَنَّهُمْ يَقُولُونَ إِنَّمَا يُعَلِّمُهُ بَشَرٌ لِّسَانُ
 الَّذِي يُلْحِدُونَ إِلَيْهِ أَعْجِبُوا ۗ وَهٰذَا لِسَانٌ عَرَبِيٌّ مُّبِينٌ ﴿١٥٤﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ لَا
 يُؤْمِنُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ ۗ لَا يَهْدِيهِمُ اللَّهُ ۗ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿١٥٥﴾ إِنَّمَا يَفْتَرِي الْكٰذِبُ
 الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ ۗ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْكٰذِبُونَ ﴿١٥٦﴾ مَنْ كَفَرَ بِاللَّهِ
 مِن بَعْدِ إِيْمَانِهِ إِلَّا مَن أٰكْرَهَ وَقَلْبُهُ مُطْمَئِنٌّ بِالْإِيْمَانِ وَلٰكِن مِّنْ
 شَرٍّ بِأَلْكَفْرِ صَدْرًا فَعَلَيْهِمْ غَضَبٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ ۗ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٥٧﴾ ذٰلِكَ
 بِأَنَّهُمْ اسْتَحَبُّوا الْحَيٰوةَ الدُّنْيَا عَلَى الْآخِرَةِ ۗ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ
 الْكٰفِرِينَ ﴿١٥٨﴾ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ طَبَعَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ وَسَمِعِهِمْ وَأَبْصَارِهِمْ ۗ وَ
 أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْغٰفِلُونَ ﴿١٥٩﴾ لَا جَرَمَ أَنَّهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ هُمُ الْخٰسِرُونَ ﴿١٦٠﴾ ثُمَّ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ
 لِلَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا مِن بَعْدِ مَا فِتْنٰتُهُمْ جٰهِدُوا ۗ وَصَبَرُوا ۗ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ مِنْ بَعْدِهَا

Do not barter away the Covenant⁹⁶ of Allah for paltry gains:⁹⁷ Indeed what is with Allah is far better for you if you knew it. Whatever is with you is transitory and whatever is with Allah is ever-lasting. And We will reward those, who practise fortitude⁹⁸ according to their best deeds. Whosoever does righteous deeds, whether male or female, provided he is a Believer, We will surely grant him live a pure life in this world.⁹⁹ And We will reward such people (in the Hereafter) according to their best deeds.¹⁰⁰ 95-97

Then, when you begin to recite the Qurān, seek Allah's refuge against the accursed Satan,¹⁰¹ for no power has he over those who believe and put their trust in their Lord ; he has power only over those who make him their patron and practise *shirk* by his temptation. 98-100

And when We send down one verse to elaborate upon the other—and Allah knows best what to send down—they say, "You forge this Qurān yourself."¹⁰² The fact is that most of them do not know the reality. Tell them, "The Holy Spirit has brought it down piece meal¹⁰³ intact from my Lord so that He may make firm the faith of those who have believed,¹⁰⁴ and to show the Right Way,¹⁰⁵ and to give good news to those who surrender themselves to Allah."¹⁰⁶ 101-102

We know very well what they say about you: "Surely a certain person teaches him."¹⁰⁷ But the person to whom they allude speaks a foreign tongue, and this (Qurān) is in plain Arabic. It is a fact that Allah does not show guidance to those who do not believe in His Revelations, and there is a painful torment for them. (The Prophet is not forging any false thing but) those, who do not believe in the Revelations of Allah, are inventing falsehoods:¹⁰⁸ they are indeed the liars. 103-105

Whoso is forced to disbelieve after believing, while his heart is convinced of the Faith, (he shall be absolved) but whosoever accepts disbelief willingly, he incurs Allah's wrath, and there is severe torment for all such people.¹⁰⁹ This is because they preferred the life of this world to the life in the Hereafter, and Allah does not show the Way of salvation to those people who are ungrateful. Allah has sealed the hearts, the ears and the eyes of such 106-109

people and they have become neglectful: therefore it is inevitable that they should be losers in the Hereafter.¹¹⁰

90. In this verse, Allah has enjoined three kinds of Covenants which have been mentioned in the order of their importance. The first of these Covenants is the one between man and his Allah which is the most important of all. The second in importance is the Covenant between one man or one group of men and another man or another group of men, which is taken with Allah as a witness or in which the name of God has been used. The third Covenant is that which has been made without using Allah's name. Though this is third in importance, its fulfilment is as important as that of the first two and the violation of any of these has been prohibited.

91. In this connection it should be noted that Allah has rebuked the people for the worst form of violation of treaties which has been creating the greatest disorder in the world. It is a pity that even "big" people consider it to be a virtue to violate treaties in order to gain advantages for their people in political, economic and religious conflicts. At one time the leader of one nation enters into a treaty with another nation for the interest of his own people but at another time the same leader publicly breaks the very same treaty for the interest of his people, or secretly violates it. It is an irony that such violations are made even by those people who are honest in their private lives. Moreover, it is regrettable that their own people do not protest against them; nay, they eulogize them for such shameful feats of diplomacy. Therefore Allah warns that every such treaty is a test of the character of those who enter into it, and of their nations. They might gain some apparent advantage for their people in this way, but they will not escape their consequences on the Day of Judgment.

92. This is to warn that decision about differences and disputes that lead to conflict, will be made on the Day of Judgment. Therefore these should not be made an excuse to break agreements and treaties. Even if one is wholly in the right and the opponent is wholly in the wrong, it is not right for the former to break treaties or make false propaganda or employ other deceitful methods to defeat the other. If one does so, it will go against him on that Day because righteousness demands that one should not only be right in one's theories and aims but should also use right methods and employ right means. This warning has especially been given to those religious groups and sects who always suffer from this misunderstanding that they have a right to defeat their opponents because they are on the side of God and their opponents are rebels against Allah: therefore there is no obligation on them to stick to their treaties with their opponents. This was what the Arab Jews practised, declaring, "There is no moral obligation on us in regard to the pagan Arabs, and we are rightly entitled to practise dishonesty and

deceit that might be of advantage to us and harmful to the disbelievers”.

93. This further supports the previous warning. It means that it would be wrong for any champion of Allah's religion to arrogate to himself the use of every sort of method and means irrespective of whether they are right or wrong to propagate his own religion (considering it to be Allah's Religion) and try to destroy opposite religions. For this would be utterly against the will of Allah : if Allah had willed that there should be no religious differences, He could have deprived mankind of the freedom of choice. In that case, there would have been no need for Allah to get help of any such up-holder of His Religion, who uses disgraceful means for this purpose. Allah could have created all mankind to be inherent believers and obedient servants by depriving them of the power and option of disbelief and sin. Then there would have been none who could have dared to deviate from belief and obedience.

94. This is to show that Allah Himself has given man the power and freedom to follow any out of the many ways. That is why Allah makes arrangements for the guidance of the one who intends to follow the right way, and lets go astray the one who desires to deviate.

95. That is, “Someone, who might have been convinced of Islam, seeing your dishonest conduct should become disgusted and hold back from joining the Believers”. For he might argue like this : “As these Muslims are not much different from the disbelievers in their morals and dealings, there is no reason why I should join them.”

96. That is, “The Covenant that you may make in the name of Allah as a representative of His religion.”

97. It does not mean that they should barter away Allah's Covenant for some big gain. What it implies is that any worldly gain howsoever great, is insignificant as compared with the worth of Allah's Covenant. Therefore it will be a losing bargain to barter that away for any worldly gain, which is after all paltry.

98. Those who practise fortitude are the people who will always stand firm in the struggle between right and truth on one side and greed and lust on the other. They bear every loss for the sake of righteousness and spurn away every gain that they might obtain by adopting unlawful means. They patiently wait for the rewards of their good deeds in the Hereafter.

99. This verse removes the wrong notions of both the Muslims and the disbelievers who are of the opinion that those who adopt a just, honest and pious attitude, are most surely losers in this world, though they might be gainers in the Hereafter. Allah removes this misunderstanding, as if to say, “This presumption of yours is wrong. The righteous attitude not only leads to a happy life in the Hereafter, but it also guarantees, by Allah's grace, a pure and happy life even in this world.” And this is a fact : those people who are sincerely righteous, honest, pure and fair in their dealings, enjoy a much better life in this

world, for they enjoy that confidence and real honour and respect because of their spotless character, which is not enjoyed by those who lack these virtues. They obtain such pure and outstanding successes as are denied to those who employ dirty and disgusting ways to win success. Above all, they enjoy, even though they might be living in huts, that peace of mind and satisfaction of conscience which is denied to the wicked dwellers of mansions and palaces.

100. That is, "Their rank in the Hereafter shall be determined according to their best deeds". In other words, "If a person has done both small and great virtues," he will be awarded that high rank which he would merit according to his greatest virtues.

101. This does not mean that one should merely repeat the Arabic words : اعوذ بالله من الشيطان الرجيم (I seek Allah's refuge against the accursed Satan). It means that one should have a sincere desire and do one's utmost to guard against Satan's evil suggestions when one is reciting the Holy Qurān and should not allow wrong and irrelevant doubts and suspicions to enter one's heart. One should try to see everything contained in the Qurān in its true light, and refrain from mixing it up with one's self-invented theories or ideas foreign to the Qurān so as to construe its meaning against the will of Allah. Moreover, one should feel that the most sinister and avowed design of Satan is that the reader should not obtain any guidance from the Qurān. This is why Satan tries his utmost to delude the reader and pervert him from getting guidance from it, and mislead him into wrong ways of thinking. Therefore, the reader should be fully on his guard against Satan and seek Allah's refuge for help so that Satan should not be able to deprive him of the benefits from this source of guidance, for one who fails to get guidance from this source, will never be able to get guidance from anywhere else. Above all, the one who seeks to obtain deviation from this Book, is so entangled in deviation that he can never get out of this vicious circle.

The context in which this verse occurs here is to serve as an introduction to the answers to the questions which the *mushriks* of Makkah were raising against the Qurān. They have been warned that they could appreciate the blessing of the Qurān only if they would try to see it in its true light by seeking Allah's protection against Satan's misleading suggestions, and not by raising objections against it. Otherwise Satan does not let a man understand the Qurān and its teachings.

102. This may also mean, "To send down one Commandment to elaborate upon the other, for the Commandments were sent down piecemeal in the Qurān". For instance, the Commandments about "prohibition" and fornication were sent down gradually one after the other during several years. But We hesitate to accept this interpretation because AN-NAHL is a Makki Sūrah and to the best of our information there is no instance to show that Commandments were sent down piecemeal at Makkah. Therefore we prefer the other interpretation. The

Qurān has added details of one theme and explained the same with different kinds of illustrations at different places. Likewise it has related a story in different words at different places and presented its different aspects and details at other places. It has put forward one argument at one place to prove a theme and another at another place to prove the same theme. It has related one theme concisely at one place and in detail at the other. That is what the disbelievers of Makkah put forward as proof that Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) forged the Qurān himself. They argued like this: "Had the Qurān been the Word of Allah it would have related in full one thing at one place, for Allah's knowledge is not defective that He should have to think out gradually the details of a theme and to give different versions to explain the same thing. In contrast to this, the knowledge of a human being is defective. A man has to think out gradually as has been done in the case of the Qurān which is a clear proof that you have forged it yourself".

103. 'The Holy Spirit': 'Jibrīl'. Instead of using the name of the Angel who brought Revelation, his title has been deliberately mentioned to warn the disbelievers that the 'Holy Spirit' who brought Revelation, is free from human frailties. He is neither dishonest that he should add something to or take away something from the Message he brought, nor is he a liar and forger that he should invent and state something in the name of Allah. Nor does he suffer from any human lust that he should practise a deceit. He is wholly pure and holy and conveys the Word of Allah intact.

104. That is, "The fact that Allah sends down His Message piece-meal does not mean that Allah's knowledge and wisdom are defective as you consider because of your folly. Allah sends His Revelations gradually because human intelligence and capacity to grasp are limited and defective which do not let him understand the whole theme at one and the same time and make it firm in his mind. Therefore, Allah in His wisdom conveyed His Revelation piece-meal through the Holy Spirit. He sends a theme gradually and gives its details by and by and uses different methods and ways to make it plain to human beings so that they might grasp it according to their abilities and capabilities and become firm in their faith and knowledge.

105. The second practical wisdom of sending down the Qurān piecemeal was that those Believers, who obediently followed it, should get necessary instructions for the propagation of Islam and the solution of other problems of life at the time when they were actually needed. It is obvious that if those instructions had been sent down before time and at one and the same time they would not have been useful.

106. The third practical wisdom of not sending down the Qurān as a whole at one and the same time was to give good tidings and encouragement to the obedient servants who were suffering from perse-

[Contd. on p. 102

لَغَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١١٥﴾ يَوْمَ تَأْتِي كُلُّ نَفْسٍ تُجَادِلُ عَنْ نَفْسِهَا وَتُوْفَىٰ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا
 عَمِلَتْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿١١٦﴾ وَضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا قَرْيَةً كَانَتْ آمِنَةً مُّطْمَئِنَّةً
 يَأْتِيهَا رِزْقُهَا رَغَدًا مِنْ كُلِّ مَكَانٍ فَكَفَرَتْ بِأَنْعُمِ اللَّهِ فَأَذَاقَهَا اللَّهُ لِبَاسَ
 الْجُوعِ وَالْخَوْفِ بِمَا كَانُوا يَصْنَعُونَ ﴿١١٧﴾ وَ لَقَدْ جَاءَهُمْ رَسُولٌ مِنْهُمْ فَكَذَّبُوهُ
 فَأَخَذَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ وَهُمْ ظَالِمُونَ ﴿١١٨﴾ فَكُلُوا مِنْ مَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ حَلَلًا طَيِّبًا ۚ وَ
 اشْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ إِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿١١٩﴾ إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةَ وَ
 الدَّمَّ وَ لَحْمَ الْخَيْزِيرِ وَمَا أُهِلَّ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ بِهِ ۚ فَمَنِ اضْطُرَّ غَيْرَ بَاغٍ وَلَا عَادٍ
 فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٢٠﴾ وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَا تَصِفُ أَلْسِنَتُكُمُ الْكَذِبَ هَذَا حَلَلٌ
 وَ هَذَا حَرَامٌ لِنَفْتَرُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ ۚ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَفْتَرُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ
 لَا يُفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٢١﴾ مَتَاعٌ قَلِيلٌ ۚ وَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿١٢٢﴾ وَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ هَادُوا حَرَّمْنَا
 مَا قَصَصْنَا عَلَيْكَ مِنْ قَبْلُ ۚ وَ مَا ظَلَمْنَهُمْ وَلَكِنْ كَانُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿١٢٣﴾
 ثُمَّ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لِلَّذِينَ عَمِلُوا الشُّرُوءَ بِجَهَالَةٍ ثُمَّ تَابُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ وَ
 أَصْلَحُوا ۚ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ مِنْ بَعْدِهَا لَغَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٢٤﴾ إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ كَانَ أُمَّةً قَانِتًا
 لِلَّهِ حَنِيفًا ۚ وَ لَمْ يَكُ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿١٢٥﴾ شَاكِرًا لِأَنْعُمِهِ ۚ اجْتَبَاهُ وَ هَدَاهُ إِلَى
 صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿١٢٦﴾ وَ اتَيْنَاهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً ۚ وَ إِنَّا فِي الْآخِرَةِ لَمِنَ
 الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿١٢٧﴾ ثُمَّ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ أَنْ اتَّبِعْ مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا ۚ وَ مَا كَانَ مِنَ
 الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿١٢٨﴾ إِنَّمَا جُعِلَ السَّبْتُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ ۚ وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَيَحْكُمُ
 بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فِيمَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿١٢٩﴾ أَدْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمِ
 وَ الْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ ۚ وَ جَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ ۚ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ

On the other hand, Allah is most surely Forgiving and Compassionate towards those people who, when they were persecuted (because of their Faith), left their homes and migrated and struggled hard in the Way of Allah and practised fortitude.¹¹¹ (All these will be judged) on the Day when everyone will be pleading for himself only and everyone will be recompensed fully for one's deeds and none shall be unjustly dealt with in the least. 110-111

Allah cites the instance of a habitation : it was enjoying a life of peace and security and was receiving its provisions in abundance from every quarter. But when it began to show ingratitude towards the favours of Allah, He made its inhabitants taste the consequences of their doings, and inflicted misfortunes of hunger and fear on them. A Messenger came to them from among themselves but they treated him as an impostor. At last a torment overtook them while they had become guilty of iniquity.¹¹² 112-113

So, O people, eat of the lawful and pure provisions with which Allah has blessed you and show gratitude¹¹³ to Allah for His favours, if you are sincerely obedient to Him.¹¹⁴ Allah has forbidden only these things: do not eat what dies of itself nor blood nor swine flesh nor what has been slaughtered in any name other than Allah's. But if forced by hunger one eats of any of these forbidden things, provided he has no intention of breaking the Divine Law or of transgressing the limits by taking more than what is absolutely indispensable, one may expect mercy, for Allah is very Forgiving and very Compassionate.¹¹⁵ Do not ascribe lies to Allah by decreeing with your tongues, "This is lawful and that is unlawful,"¹¹⁶ for those people who ascribe lies to Allah can never come to any good. (They should remember that) the pleasures of this world are transitory and in the end there is a painful torment for them. 114-117

To the Jews We had especially forbidden the things¹¹⁷ We have already related to you,¹¹⁸ and it was not We who imposed this hardship on them, but they imposed the hardship themselves. Nevertheless, your Lord is Forgiving and Compassionate towards those who have repented and mended their ways after they had committed evil in 118-124

ignorance. The fact is that Abraham was a community in himself:¹¹⁹ he was obedient to Allah and had turned to Him exclusively. He was never a *mushrik*: he was always grateful for Allah's favours. Accordingly Allah chose him and showed him the Right Way. Allah blessed him with goodness in this world and most surely he will be among the righteous in the Hereafter. Then We sent down this Revelation to you: "Follow the way of Abraham exclusively" and he was not one of the *mushriks*.¹²⁰ As regards the Sabbath, We imposed this on those who differed about its observance.¹²¹ Surely your Lord will decide between them on the Day of Resurrection about all those things in which they have been differing.

Contd. from p. 99]

cution and encountering great obstacles because they needed it over and over again. That is why they were assured of ultimate success time and again to fill them with hope to carry on their mission.

107. In this connection, traditions mention the names of several persons, one of whom (Jabar), according to the disbelievers of Makkah taught the Holy Prophet; however, one thing particularly noteworthy about all these persons is that they were non-Arab slaves. Whosoever he might be, the fact that he used to recite the Torah and the Gospel and had an acquaintance with the Holy Prophet, gave an opportunity to the disbelievers for spreading this false report that it was the particular slave who was the real author of the Holy Qurān, but Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) presented it as the Word of God. This not only shows that his opponents were very impudent in spreading false accusations against the Holy Prophet but also that, in general, people are not just in judging the worth of their contemporaries. They were ill treating like this that great personality who has had no parallel in History. Nevertheless, these people who had become blind in their opposition, preferred to attribute the authorship of the matchless Arabic Qurān to a non-Arab slave who had a smattering of the Torah and the Gospel. Instead of accepting the claim of the Holy Prophet, who was an embodiment of truth, they attributed its authorship to an insignificant foreign slave.

108. This verse can also be rendered like this: "A Prophet does not forge any false thing but those, who do not believe in the Revelations of Allah, invent falsehoods."

109. This verse deals with the case of those Muslims who were being persecuted with cruelty and were being subjected to unbearable torments to force them to give up their Faith. They are being told that if at any time they are forced to utter words of disbelief to save their lives, when in fact in their hearts they are secure against disbelief, they will be pardoned. On the other hand, if they accepted unbelief from the core

of their hearts, they shall not escape the torment of Allah even if they succeed in saving their lives.

It does not, however, mean that one should utter words of disbelief to save one's life. This is merely a permission but not the ideal thing for a Believer. According to this permission if one utters such a thing, he shall not be taken to account. In fact, the ideal for a Believer is to utter words of truth in any case whether his body is cut into pieces. There are instances which show that during the period of the Holy Prophet some acted upon the ideal while others took advantage of the permission. There was Khabbāb bin Art (may Allah be pleased with him) who was made to lie on embers of fire until the fire was extinguished by the melting of his fat, but he remained firm in his Faith. Then there was Bilāl Ḥabashī (may Allah be pleased with him) who was made to put on an armour and stand in the scorching heat. Then he was dragged on the burning sand but he went on saying, "Allah is one." There was another Believer, Ḥabīb bin Zaid bin 'Āṣim, whose limbs were cut one by one by the order of Musailimah, the Liar. Each time his limb was severed it was demanded of him that he should acknowledge the Liar as a prophet but each time he refused to bear witness to his claim of prophethood until he breathed his last. On the other hand, there was the instance of 'Ammār bin Yāsir (may Allah be pleased with him) whose parents were mercilessly butchered before his eyes. After this he himself was put to such unbearable torture that, in order to save his life, he had to utter the same words of unbelief that were demanded of him. Afterwards when he came crying to the Holy Prophet, he said, "O Messenger of Allah, they did not let me go until I spoke evil of you and praised their deities". The Holy Prophet asked him, "How do you feel about this in your heart?" He replied humbly, "My heart is fully convinced of the Faith." At this the Holy Prophet replied, "If they put you to the same torture again, you may utter the same words".

110. These words apply to those people who gave up their Faith, when they felt that they could not bear hardships of the Right Way and so they again joined their unbelieving, *mushrik* people.

111. They were those Believers who migrated to Ḥabashah.

112. That habitation has not been specified here nor have the commentators definitely pointed out which that habitation was. However, there is a saying of Ibn 'Abbās (which seems to be correct) that the place referred to is Makkah itself. In that case, "hunger and fear" will mean the famine which prevailed over the people of Makkah for several years during the Prophethood of Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him).

113. This shows that the above-mentioned famine had come to an end at the time of the revelation of this Sūrah.

114. Here the observation of the lawful and the unlawful has been made the test of worship of Allah. Those who claim to be the servants

of Allah will eat what is lawful and pure and show gratitude to Him and will scrupulously refrain from what is forbidden and impure.

115. Please refer also to II : 173, V : 3 and VI : 145.

116. This verse clearly shows that none but Allah has the right to declare a thing to be lawful or unlawful. Or, in other words, the right of making laws exclusively rests with Allah. Therefore any person, who will dare to decide about the lawful and the unlawful, will transgress his powers. Of course, a person, who acknowledges the Divine law as the final authority, may deduce from it whether a certain thing or these claims action is lawful or unlawful.

The arrogation of the right of determining the lawful and the unlawful has been declared to be a falsehood on Allah for two reasons: (1) Such a person, so to say, claims that what he declares to be lawful or unlawful disregarding the authority of the Divine Book, has been made lawful or unlawful by God or (2) he means to claim that Allah has given up the authority of making lawful and unlawful and has thus left man free to make his own laws for the conduct of life. It is obvious that each of these claims will be a "falsehood" and a false imputation to Allah.

117. In this paragraph (vv. 118-124), answers to the objections raised by the disbelievers of Makkah concerning the Commandments contained in vv. 114—117 have been given. Their first objection was : "Besides the above-mentioned unlawful things, there are other unlawful things in the Jewish Law which have been made lawful by you. If that law was from Allah and yours is also from Allah why do they then contradict each other ?" Their second objection was : "You have abrogated the sanctity of the Sabbath of the Israelites. Have you done this of your own accord or by Allah's Command ? In the latter case then will be an obvious contradiction in the two laws, Or has Allah Himself given two contradictory Commandments ?"

118. This refers to: "And We prohibited all animals with claws to those people who had adopted Judaism. . . ." (VI: 146) In this verse (117) Allah has stated that certain things were made unlawful because of the disobedience of the Jews.

Here a question arises : Which of the two Sūrahs, Al-An'ām or An-Naḥl, was first revealed ? This is because in verse 118, a reference has been made to verse 146 of Al-An'ām and in verse 119 of Al-An'ām, "And why should you not eat that thing over which Allah's name has been mentioned, when He has already given you a detail of those things that have been declared to be unlawful for you except in case of extremity. . . . ?", a reference has been made to verse 115 of An-Naḥl. This is because these are the only two Makki Sūrahs in which details of unlawful things have been given. As regards the question, we are of the opinion that An-Naḥl was revealed earlier than Al-An'ām, for verse 119 of the latter contains a reference to verse 115 of the former. It appears that after the revelation of Sūrah Al-An'ām, the disbelievers raised objections in regard to these verses of An-Naḥl. So they were

ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ ﴿١٧٥﴾ وَإِنْ عَاقَبْتُمْ فَعَاقِبُوا بِمِثْلِ
مَا عُوقِبْتُمْ بِهِ ۗ وَلَئِنْ صَبَرْتُمْ لَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لِلصَّابِرِينَ ﴿١٧٦﴾ وَاصْبِرْ وَمَا صَبْرُكَ
إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ وَلَا تَحْزَنْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا تَكُ فِي ضَيْقٍ مِمَّا يَمْكُرُونَ ﴿١٧٧﴾ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
مَعَ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ مُحْسِنُونَ ﴿١٧٨﴾

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ع۹
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125-12۸

O Prophet! invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and excellent admonition¹²² and discuss things with people in the best manner.¹²³ Your Lord knows best who has gone astray from His Way and He knows best who is rightly guided. And if you retaliate, let your retaliation be to the extent that you were wronged, but if you endure it with patience, it is indeed best for those who endure with patience. O Muhammad, go on performing your mission with fortitude—and you can practise fortitude only with the help of Allah—do not be grieved at their doings and do not distress yourself at their intrigues, for Allah is with those people who fear Him and adopt the righteous attitude.¹²⁴

referred to verse 146 of Al-An'ām in which a few things were made unlawful, especially for the Jews. As this answer concerned An-Nahl, so verse 118, though it was revealed after the revelation of Al-An'ām, was inserted as a parenthetical clause in An-Nahl.

119. "Abraham was a community in himself" for at that time he was the only Muslim in the whole world who was upholding the banner of Islam, while the rest of the world was upholding the banner of unbelief. As that servant of Allah performed the Mission which is ordinarily carried out by a whole community, he was not one person but an institution in himself.

120. This is the complete answer to the first objection (E.N. 117) raised by the disbelievers. This has two parts:

(1) There is no contradiction in the Divine Law as you seem to presume on the apparent variance in the Jewish and the Islamic Law. As a matter of fact a few things had been made unlawful especially for the Jews as punishment to them because of their disobedience; therefore there was no reason why others should be deprived of those good things.

(2) Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) was commanded to follow the way of Abraham and not the way of the Jews, and they themselves knew that these things were not unlawful in

the law of Abraham. For instance, the Jews did not eat the flesh of camel but this was lawful according to Abraham. Likewise, ostrich, hare, duck, etc. were unlawful in the Jewish law, but they were lawful according to Abraham. Incidentally the disbelievers of Makkah have been warned that neither they nor the Jews had any relationship with Prophet Abraham for he was not a *mushrik* while both of them were practising *shirk*. Prophet Muhammad and his followers were the only true followers of Prophet Abraham (Allah's peace be upon them) for there was no tinge of *shirk* in their creed or in their practice.

121. This is the answer to their second objection. Obviously, there was no need to state that the restrictions about the Sabbath applied only to the Jews and had nothing to do with the law of Prophet Abraham, because they themselves knew it. The restrictions were imposed upon the Jews because of their mischiefs and violations of the law. In order to understand fully the significance of this reference one is requested to read those passages of the Bible in which Commandments about the Sabbath have been stated, e.g., Exodus 20 : 8-11, 23 : 12-13, 31 : 1-17, 35 : 23, and Numbers 15 : 32-36. Besides this, one should also be acquainted with the impudent violations of the Sabbath. See Jeremiah: 17 : 21-27 and Ezekiel, 10 : 18-24.

122. This instruction is very important for those who are engaged in the propagation of Islam. They should always keep in view two things—"wisdom" and "excellent admonition". "Wisdom" implies that one should use discretion in the work of propagation and should not do this blindly like foolish people. Wisdom demands that one should keep in view the intelligence, capability and circumstances of the addressees and convey the Message in accordance with the requirements of the occasion. Moreover, one should refrain from applying one and the same method to each and every person or group but should first diagnose the real disease of the addressee and then cure it by appealing to his head and heart.

"Excellent admonition" implies two things: (1) One should not be content with convincing the addressee with arguments alone but should also appeal to his feelings. Likewise one should not confine oneself merely to arguments in condemning evils and deviations but should try to convince the other of their repugnance that lies embedded in the human nature. One should also warn of the worst consequences of those evils. Besides, one should not only try to convince the addressee rationally of the soundness and excellence of guidance and righteous deeds but should also create in him interest and love for them. (2) Admonition should be administered in such a manner as to show sincere concern for and the welfare of the addressee. Nothing should be said or done to create the impression that the admonisher is looking down upon him and taking pleasure in his own feeling of superiority. On the contrary, he should feel that the admonisher is filled with the strong desire for his reform and welfare.

123. "Best manner" implies that one should have a sweet tongue,

show noble character and give reasonable and appealing arguments, and refrain from indulging in polemics, argumentation and controversies. The one who discusses things with people in the best manner, does not resort to accusations, crooked arguments, taunts, nor makes fun of the opponent in order to defeat him and to win applause for his own superiority in argument. For these things will produce obduracy and obstinacy. In contrast to this, he will try to convince the other in a simple and humble way, and when he feels that the other person has come down to crooked arguments, he will leave him alone lest the other should go further and further astray in his deviation.

124. "Allah is with those who fear Him" because they scrupulously refrain from evil ways and always adopt the righteous attitude, for they know that their actions and deeds are not determined by the evils others do to them but by their own sense of righteousness; so they return good for evil.



XVII

BANI ISRĀ'ĪL بنی اسرائیل

BANĪ ISRĀ'ĪL بنى اسرائيل

INTRODUCTION

Name

This Sūrah takes its name (Banī Isrā'īl) from v. 4. But this name is merely a distinctive appellation like the names of many other sūrahs and not a descriptive title, and does not mean that "Banī Isrā'īl" is the theme of this Sūrah.

Period of Revelation

The very first verse indicates that this Sūrah was revealed on the occasion of *Mi'rāj* (Ascension). According to the Traditions and books on the life of the Holy Prophet, this event happened one year before Hijrah. Thus, this Sūrah is one of those which were revealed in the last stage of Prophethood at Makkah.

Background

The Holy Prophet had been propagating *Tauhīd* for the previous twelve years and his opponents had been doing all they could to make his Mission a failure, but in spite of all their opposition, Islam had spread to every corner of Arabia and there was hardly any clan which had not been influenced by his invitation. In Makkah itself the true Believers had formed themselves into a small community and were ready and willing to face every danger to make Islam a success. Besides them, a very large number of the people of Aus and Khazraj, (two influential clans of Al-Madīnah) had accepted Islam. Thus the time had come for the Holy Prophet to emigrate from Makkah to Al-Madīnah and there gather together the scattered Muslims and establish a state based on the principles of Islam.

These were the conditions when *Mi'rāj* took place and

on his return the Holy Prophet brought down the Message contained in this Sūrah.

Theme and Topics

This Sūrah is a wonderful combination of warning, admonition and instruction, which have been blended together in a balanced proportion.

The disbelievers of Makkah had been admonished to take a lesson from the miserable end of the Israelites and other communities and mend their ways within the period of respite given by Allah, which was about to expire. They should, therefore, accept the invitation that was being extended by Muḥammad (Allah's peace be upon him) and the Qurān; otherwise they shall be annihilated and replaced by other people. Incidentally, the Israelites, with whom Islam was going to come in direct contact in the near future at Al-Madīnah have also been warned that they should learn a lesson from the chastisements that have already been inflicted on them. They were warned, "Take advantage of the Prophethood of Muḥammad (Allah's peace be upon him) because that is the last opportunity which is being given to you. If even now you behave as you have been behaving, you shall meet with a painful torment."

As regards the education of mankind, it has been impressed that human success or failure, gain or loss, depends upon the right understanding of *Tauḥīd*, life-after-death and Prophethood. Accordingly, convincing arguments have been put forward to prove that the Qurān is the Book of Allah and its teachings are true and genuine; the doubts of the disbelievers about these basic realities have been removed and on suitable occasions they have been admonished and rebuked in regard to their ways of ignorance.

In this connection, those fundamental principles of morality and civilization on which the Islamic System of life is meant to be established have been put forward. Thus this was a sort of the Manifesto of the intended Islamic

State which had been proclaimed a year before its actual establishment. It has been explicitly stated that that was the sketch of the system on which Muḥammad (Allah's peace be upon him) intended to build human life first in his own country and then in the outside world.

Besides these, the Holy Prophet has been instructed to stick firmly to his stand without minding the opposition and difficulties which he was encountering and should never think of making a compromise with unbelief. The Muslims who sometimes showed signs of impatience, when they met with persecution, calumny, and crooked arguments, have also been instructed to face adverse circumstances with patience and fortitude and keep full control over their feelings and passions. Moreover, *Ṣalāt* was prescribed in order to reform and purify their souls, as if to say, "This is the thing which will produce in you those high qualities of character which are essential for everyone who intends to struggle in the righteous way". Incidentally, we learn from Traditions that *Mī'rāj* was the first occasion on which the five daily Prayers were prescribed to be offered at fixed times.



سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي أَسْرَى بِعَبْدِهِ لَيْلًا مِنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ

الْأَقْصَا الَّذِي بَرَكْنَا حَوْلَهُ لِنُرِيَهُ مِنْ آيَاتِنَا إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ ۝
 إِنَّا أَنزَلْنَا مُوسَىٰ أَلْكِتَابَ وَجَعَلْنَاهُ هُدًى لِّبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ إِلَّا تَنَجَّدُوا مِنْ دُونِ
 وَكَيْلًا ۝ ذُرِّيَّةً مَنْ حَمَلْنَا مَعَ نُوحٍ إِنَّهُ كَانَ عَبْدًا شَكُورًا ۝ وَقَضَيْنَا
 إِلَىٰ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ فِي الْكِتَابِ لَتُفْسِدُنَّ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَرَّتَيْنِ وَلَتَعْلُنَّ عُلُوًّا
 كَبِيرًا ۝ فَإِذَا جَاءَ وَعْدُ أُولَاهُمَا بَعَثْنَا عَلَيْكُمْ عِبَادًا لَنَا أُولَىٰ بَأْسٍ شَدِيدٍ
 فَجَاسُوا خِلَالَ الدِّيَارِ ۝ وَكَانَ وَعْدًا مَفْعُولًا ۝ ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَا لَكُمُ الْكَرَّةَ
 عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَمْدَدْنَاكُمْ بِأَمْوَالٍ وَبَنِينَ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ أَكْثَرَ نَفِيرًا ۝ إِنْ أَحْسَنْتُمْ
 أَحْسَنُوا لِنَفْسِكُمْ ۝ وَإِنْ أَسَأْتُمْ فَلَهَا ۝ فَإِذَا جَاءَ وَعْدُ الْآخِرَةِ لِيَسُوءُوا
 وُجُوهَكُمْ وَلِيَدْخُلُوا الْمَسْجِدَ كَمَا دَخَلُوهُ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَلِيُتَبِّرُوا مَا عَلَوْا
 تَتَبِّرَاهُ ۝ عَلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ أَنْ يَرْحَمَكُم ۝ وَإِنْ عُدتُّمْ عُدْنَا ۝ وَجَعَلْنَا جَهَنَّمَ
 لِلْكَافِرِينَ حَصِيرًا ۝ إِنَّ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ يَهْدِي لِلَّتِي هِيَ أَقْوَمُ وَيُبَشِّرُ
 الْمُؤْمِنِينَ الَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ الصَّالِحَاتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ أَجْرًا كَبِيرًا ۝ وَأَنَّ الَّذِينَ

وقف لازم

XVII

BANĪ ISRĀ'ĪL بنی اسرائیل

Verses: 111

Revealed at Makkah

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

Glory be to Him, Who transported His Servant one night from the Masjid-i-Harām to the distant Temple, whose surroundings We have blessed, so that We might show him some of Our Signs:¹ the fact is that He alone is All-Hearing and All-Seeing.

2-8

Before this We had given the Book to Moses and made it a means of guidance for the Israelites² with the Command: "Do not make any other guardian than Myself."³ You are the descendants of those whom We bore in the Ark with Noah,⁴ and he was truly a grateful servant". Besides this, We forewarned the Israelites in the Scriptures:⁵ You will work great mischief twice in the land and will become over-bearingly arrogant.⁶ When the occasion of the first of the two mischiefs came, O Israelites, We raised against you such of Our servants who were very mighty and formidable; so they penetrated through all parts of your country. This was a warning that was bound to be fulfilled.⁷ Then after this We afforded you an opportunity to over-power them and helped you with abundance of riches and children and increased you far more in numbers than before.⁸ Behold! If you did good it proved to be good for yourselves and if you committed evil it proved to be bad for your own selves. Then, when the time came for the fulfilment of the second warning, We set other enemies on you so that they might disfigure your faces and enter into the Temple just as the former enemies had entered and destroyed whatever they could lay their hands on⁹.....Now again your Lord may show compassion on you, but if you again repeat your former behaviour, We will again visit you with Our punishment, for We have prepared Hell to serve as a prison-house for the ungrateful people.¹⁰

1. The event referred to in this verse is known as "*Mi'rāj*" and "*Isrā'*". According to authentic traditions, this took place a year before *Hijrah*. In the traditional and biographical literature, its details have been related by a large number (25) of the Companions. Anas bin Mālik, Mālik bin Ṣa'asa'ah, Abūzar Ghifārī and Abū Hurairāh (Allah be pleased with them all) have related details of the event. Besides them, 'Umar, 'Alī, 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd.....(Allah be pleased with them) have also related some parts of this event.

In this verse, the Qurān mentions only a part of the Journey, *i.e.*, from Masjid-i-Harām to the Temple at Jerusalem. The object of this journey as stated here was that Allah willed to show His Servant some of His Signs. The Qurān does not give any details other than this but we find further details in the traditions, which are to this effect:

One night the Angel Jibril transported the Holy Prophet on *al-Burāq* from Masjid-i-Ḥarām to Masjid-i-Aqṣā (the Temple). There the Holy Prophet offered his prayers along with the other Prophets. Then he took him towards the higher spheres, where he met some of the great Prophets in different spheres. At last he reached the Highest Place in the Heavens, and was received in audience by Allah. It was there that besides other important instructions five daily Prayers were prescribed. Then he returned to the Temple and from there came back to Masjid-i-Ḥarām. During this Journey, according to many traditions, Paradise and Hell were shown to him. We also learn from authentic traditions that on the following day when he mentioned this event, the disbelievers of Makkah scoffed at him, and some of the Muslims also were sceptical about this.

The above additional details based on the traditions cannot be said to be against the Qurān, for these are additions to the details given in the Qurān; therefore the details related in the traditions cannot be rejected on the plea that they are against the Qurān. Nevertheless, if one rejects any part of those details which are given in the traditions, one cannot be declared a renegade. On the other hand, if one rejects the details given in the Qurān, one does become a renegade.

There are different versions of this Journey. Some say that this happened in a dream, while others are of the opinion that the Holy Prophet was fully awake and went on the Journey with his own physical body; some others say that it was merely a mystic vision which was shown to him. The opening words of this verse: "Glory be to Him, Who transported His Servant....." however, clearly show that it was a super-natural event which was brought about by the unlimited power of Allah. It is quite obvious that if the event had been merely a mystic vision, it would not have been introduced by the words *سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي* which imply that the Being Who brought about this event is free from each and every kind of weakness and defect. Again the words "transported His Servant one night" also show that this was not a dream or a vision but a physical journey in which Allah arranged that the Holy Prophet should make observation of His Signs with his physical eyes. Therefore, one is bound to admit that this was not a mere spiritual experience but a physical journey and visual observation which Allah arranged for His Prophet.

It is strange that some people are of the opinion that this extraordinary journey could not be possible, but now when man with his limited — very limited—power has been able to reach the moon, it is absurd to deny that Allah with His limitless powers could enable His Messenger to make this journey in the extraordinary short time it took.

Above all, the question whether a thing is possible or not, can arise

only in the case of human beings whose powers are after all limited, but such questions cannot be raised where the All-Powerful Allah is concerned. Only such a person who does not believe that Allah is able to do everything can raise objections against this wonderful Journey about which Allah Himself says that he transported His Servant one night from Masjid-ī-Harām to Masjid-ī-Aqṣā. Likewise all the objections raised against the various details which are given in the traditions are frivolous, except two, which are plausible:

First, if we accept these details, then we shall have to admit that Allah is confined to a certain place: otherwise there was no need that His Servant should be transported for this purpose to a certain place. Secondly, according to traditions, the Holy Prophet was enabled to observe Paradise and Hell where he saw some people suffering from torment. The objection is: why should some people be awarded punishments or rewards before the Final Judgement after Resurrection?

As regards the first objection, it is true that Allah is Infinite by Himself, but in dealing with His creation, He employs those means which suit His imperfect creation not because of any limitation of His, but because of the limitations of His creation. For instance, when He speaks to any of His creature, He adopts the same limited mode of conversation as the addressee can understand, though He has limitless modes of speech. Likewise, when He desires to show some of the wonderful Signs of His Kingdom to a servant, He transports him to the place where the Signs are to be shown. It is obvious that the servant cannot see at one and the same time the whole of the universe as Allah does, for Allah has no need to go to any place at all for this purpose but the servant has. The same applies to the appearance of the servant before the Creator. Though Allah is not confined to any locality, it is necessary for the servant to go to the place where His manifestations have been concentrated for his observation because it is not possible for the servant with his limited powers to go in His Presence in His Infinite Capacity.

As regards the second objection, it is based on the lack of understanding the thing: many of the Signs which were shown to the Holy Prophet were symbolical. For instance, a small hole from which a fat ox came out but could not go back into it, represented mischief personified. In the same way the adulterers were shown as if they had fresh meat before them but instead of that they were eating rotten flesh. Similarly punishments for evil deeds shown to him were only symbolic observations of the punishments in the Hereafter so that he might see in advance the things which would take place in the Hereafter.

In regard to the *Mirāj* it should be kept in view that all the Prophets were enabled by Allah to see His Signs in the heavens and the earth according to their ranks. And for this purpose all the material curtains were lifted so that they could see with their naked eyes the unseen

realities, to which they were required to invite the people.

This was done so that the Prophets could say with full conviction what they had seen with their own eyes. For this experience would distinguish them from a philosopher who bases all his theories on guess-work and cannot say that he bears witness to what he claims. In contrast to philosophers, Prophets could say that they bore witness to the things which they presented because they had seen them with their own eyes

2. As this verse has no apparent connection with the event of *Mī'rāj*, it may appear to a cursory reader that either of the two verses has been misplaced here. But if we try to understand the matter in the context of the theme of the whole Sūrah, we can easily understand the connection between the two. The main object of this Sūrah is to give a warning to the disbelievers of Makkah. That is why the mention of *Mī'rāj* has been made in the very first verse, as if to say, "The person whom you dub as an impostor and reject the Book sent down to him, has just now seen with his naked eyes great Signs of Allah. So you should learn a lesson from the history of the Israelites who discarded the Book of Allah and therefore were given painful punishment."

3. The Arabic word "*vakīl*" (guardian) denotes a person who is trust-worthy and can be depended upon in regard to one's affairs and may be turned to for guidance and help.

4. That is, "You are the descendants of Noah and his companions;" therefore you should behave in a manner as behoves such people. You should make Allah alone your Guardian, for your ancestors escaped death from the Flood only because they had made Allah their Guardian."

5. The original Arabic word "*Al-kitāb*" does not stand here for the Torah but for all the Divine Books.

6. Such warnings have been given in different Books of the Bible. As regards their first mischief and its evil consequences, the Israelites were warned in the Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel and the warnings about their second mischief and its severe punishments are found in Matthew and Luke. Below are given extracts to confirm this statement of the Qurān.

Prophet David was the first to warn the Israelites in his Psalms of their first mischief :

"They did not destroy the nations, concerning whom the Lord commanded them: But were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works. And they served their idols: which were a snare unto them. Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils, And shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters, Therefore was the wrath of the Lord kindled against his people, insomuch that he abhorred his own inheritance. And he gave them into the hand of the heathen;" Psalms: Chapter 106, vv. 34-38, 40, 41.

The above events have been described in the past tense as if they had already actually happened. The Scriptures employ this mode of expression to emphasize the importance of the prophecies.

When this mischief actually came to pass, Prophet Isaiah warned them of its ruinous consequences: "Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: How is the faithful city become an harlot! it was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers. Thy princes *are* rebellious, and companions of thieves: everyone loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them. Therefore saith the Lord, the Lord of hosts, the mighty One of Israel. Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies: they be replenished from the east, and *are* soothsayers like the Philistines, and they please themselves in the children of strangers. Their land also is full of idols; they worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made: Moreover the Lord saith, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing *as* they go, and making a tinkling with their feet: Therefore the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the Lord will discover their secret parts. Thy men shall fall by the sword, and thy mighty in the war. And her gates shall lament and mourn: and she *being* desolate shall sit upon the ground. Now therefore, behold, the Lord bringeth up-upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, *even* the king of Assyria, and all his glory: and he shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks: That this *is* a rebellious people, lying children, children *that* will not hear the law of the Lord: Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits: Wherefore thus saith the Holy One of Israel, Because ye despise this word, and trust in oppression and perverseness, and stay thereon: Therefore this iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall,.... And he shall break it as the breaking of the potters' vessel that is broken in pieces; he shall not spare: so that there shall not be found in the bursting of it a shred to take fire from the hearth, or to take water withal out of the pit." (Isaiah, Chapter 1: verses 4-5; 21-24, Chapter 2: verses 6, 8; Chapter 3: verses 16-17, 25-26; Chapter 8: verse 7; Chapter 30: verses 9-10, 12-14.)

After this Prophet Jeremiah raised his voice when the flood of corruption swept away everything before it.

"Thus saith the Lord, What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity and are become vain? And I brought you into a plentiful country

to eat the fruit thereof and the goodness thereof; but when ye entered, ye defiled my land, and made my heritage an abomination. For of old time I have broken thy yoke, and burst thy hands; and thou saidst, I will not transgress; when upon every high hill and under every green tree thou wanderest, playing the harlot. As the thief is ashamed when he is found, so is the house of Israel ashamed: they, their kings, their princes, and their priests, and their prophets, Saying to a stock, Thou art my father; and to a stone, Thou hast brought me forth: for they have turned *their* back unto me, and not *their* face: but in the time of their trouble they will say, Arise, and save us. But where *are* thy gods that thou hast made thee? let them arise, if they can save thee in the time of thy trouble: for according to the number of thy cities are thy gods, O Judah. The Lord said also unto me in the days of Josiah the king, Hast thou seen *that* which backsliding Israel hath done? she is gone up upon every high mountain and under every green tree, and there hath played the harlot. And her treacherous sister Judah saw *it*. And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also. And it came to pass through the lightness of her whoredom, that she defiled the land, and committed adultery with stones and with sticks. Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be *any* that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth; and I will pardon it. How shall I pardon thee for this? thy children have forsaken me, and sworn by *them that are* no gods: when I had fed them to the full, they then committed adultery, and assembled themselves by troops in the harlots' houses. They were *as* fed horses in the morning: every one neighed after his neighbour's wife. Shall I not visit for these *things*? saith the Lord: and shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this? Lo, I will bring a nation upon you from far, O house of Israel, saith the Lord: it is a mighty nation, it is *an* ancient nation, a nation whose language thou knowest not, neither understand what they say. Their quiver is an open sepulchre, they *are* all mighty men. And they shall eat up thine harvest, and thy bread, *which* thy sons and thy daughters should eat: they shall eat up thy flocks and thine herds; they shall eat up thy vines and thy fig trees: they shall impoverish thy fenced cities, wherein thou trustedst, with the sword. And the carcasses of this people shall be meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beasts of the earth; and none shall fray *them* away. Then will I cause to cease from the cities of Judah, and from the streets of Jerusalem, the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride: for the land shall be desolate.

And it shall come to pass, if they say unto thee, Whither shall we go forth? then thou shalt tell them, Thus saith the Lord; Such as *are* for death, to death; and such as *are* for the sword, to the sword; and such as *are* for the famine, to the famine; and such as *are* for the captivity, to the captivity. And I will appoint over them four kinds, saith the Lord: the sword to slay, and the dogs to tear, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the earth, to devour and destroy." (Jeremiah, Chapter 2: verses 5-7, 20, 26-28; Chapter 3: verses 6-9; Chapter 5: verses 1, 7-9 15-17; Chapter 7: verses 33, 34; Chapter 15: verses 2, 3.)

Then Prophet Ezekiel was raised to warn them in time. Addressing Jerusalem he said :

"The city sheddeth blood in the midst of it, that her time may come, and maketh idols against herself to defile herself. Behold, the princes of Israel, every one were in thee to their power to shed blood. In thee they have set light by father and mother : in the midst of thee have they dealt by oppression with the stranger : in thee have they vexed the fatherless and the widow. Thou hast despised mine holy things, and hast profaned my sabbaths. In thee are men that carry tales to shed blood : and in thee they eat upon the mountains : in the midst of thee they commit lewdness. In thee have they discovered their fathers' nakedness: in thee have they humbled her that was set apart for pollution. And one hath committed abomination with his neighbour's wife; and another hath lewdly defiled his daughter-in-law; and another in thee hath humbled his sister, his father's daughter. In thee have they taken gifts to shed blood; thou hast taken usury and increase, and thou hast greedily gained of thy neighbours by extortion and hast forgotten me, can thine hands be strong, in the days that I shall deal with thee? And I will scatter thee among the heathen, and disperse thee in the countries, and will consume thy filthiness out of thee. And thou shalt take thine inheritance in thy self in the sight of the heathen, and thou shalt know that I am the Lord." (Ezekiel, Chapter 22: verses 3, 6-12, 14-16.)

Besides the above mentioned warnings which were given to Israelites at the time of their first mischief, Prophet Jesus Christ warned them of the consequences of their second great mischief. In a forceful address he criticized their moral degeneration like this:

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *thou* that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under *her* wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." (Matthew, Chapter 23 : verses 37, 38; Chapter 24: verse 2.)

Then, when the Roman officials were taking Prophet Jesus out for crucifixion, and a great company of people including women were following

him bewailing and lamenting, he addressed them and gave his final warnings:

"But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For, behold, the days are coming, in which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us." (Luke, Chapter 23: verses 28-30.)

7. This refers to the terrible destruction that the Israelites suffered at the hands of the Assyrians and Babylonians. One cannot fully appreciate the historical background of this merely from the extracts that have been reproduced above from "the Books of the Prophets". A brief history of the Israelites is also needed so that a student may become acquainted with all the causes and circumstances on account of which Allah removed this nation, that professed to believe in a revealed Book, from the leadership of mankind and turned it into a humiliated, condemned and backward community.

When, after the death of Prophet Moses, the Israelites entered Palestine it was inhabited by the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, Jebusites, the Philistines, etc. These communities had adopted the worst kind of idolatry, their supreme deity being Ayl whom they regarded as the father of gods and who was usually represented by the bull-images. His consort was called Asherah from whom had descended a whole line of gods and goddesses, about 70 in number. The most powerful god among them was Baal who was regarded as the god of rain and growth and the lord of the earth and heavens. In the northern regions his consort was called Anathoth and in Palestine Ashtaroth. These two were the goddesses of love and procreation. Besides them, there was a god of death, a god of disease and famine, and a goddess of health, and thus all the worldly powers and agencies stood divided among a large number of deities. The people had ascribed such dirty and base qualities and acts to these deities that even a worst offender against morality would shun being known by them. Obviously the people who have adopted such mean deities for worship and devotion cannot remain secure from the worst kind of moral degeneration and the modern excavations have shown this conclusively.

Child sacrifice was a common thing among them. Their places of worship had turned into brothels, where women were kept as religious prostitutes and illicit relations with them were regarded as part worship and devotion.

The Israelites had clearly been told in the instructions given in the Torah that they should destroy those communities and wrest the land of Palestine from them, and that they should avoid mixing up with those people and ward off their moral and ideological weaknesses:

But when the Israelites entered Palestine they set this guidance

aside. They not only did not establish a united kingdom of their own but fell a prey to tribal parochialism. Each of their tribes was content to take a part of the captured land and become a separate and independent state. This disunity among them did not leave any of the tribes strong enough to purge its territory completely of the idolaters, and therefore they had to allow them to live side by side with them in the same land. Not only this, but there had remained in the conquered territories a number of small city states of these idolatrous communities which the Israelites had not been able to subjugate. It is this very thing which has been complained against in the extract of the Psalms reproduced above in the beginning of E.N. 6.

The first consequence of intermixing with those communities, was that the Israelites also became idolatrous, and gradually began to adopt other moral evils also. This has been complained about in the Book of Judges as below: "And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim : And they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the Lord to anger. And they forsook the Lord, and served Baal and Ashtaroth". (Judges, 2: 11-13.)

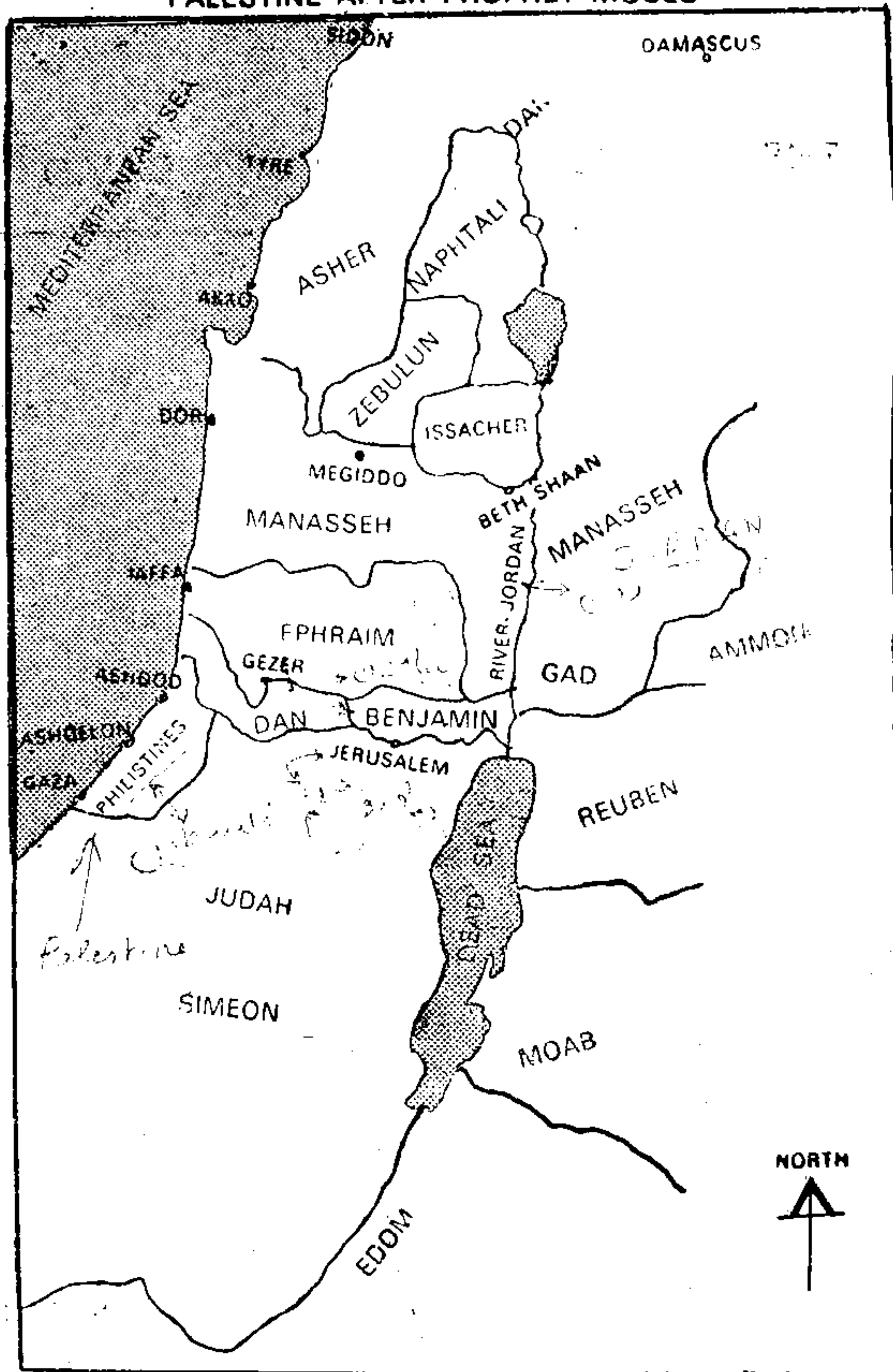
The second consequence suffered by the Israelites was that the communities whose city-states they had left unconquered and the Philistines whose land they had not at all touched set up a united front against them and drove them out of a major part of Palestine by incessant attacks; so much so that they deprived them of the Holy Ark of their Lord. At last, the Israelites felt the need of establishing a united kingdom of their own under one ruler, and on their request Prophet Samuel appointed Saul as their king in 1020 B.C. (For details see vv. 246-48 and E.Ns. 268-270 of Al-Baqarah.)

This united kingdom was ruled by three kings : Saul (1020 B.C. to 1004 B.C.), Prophet David (1004 to 965 B.C.) and Prophet Solomon (965 to 926 B.C.). These kings brought to completion the mission that had been left incomplete by the Israelites after the death of Prophet Moses. They annexed all the territories except the Phoenician state on the northern and the Philistine state on the southern coast, which, of course, became tributaries.

After the death of Prophet Solomon the Israelites again adopted the ways of the world and fought among themselves and split into two independent kingdoms, the kingdom of Israel in the northern Palestine and Jordan with Samaria as its capital, and the kingdom of Judah in the southern Palestine and Edom with Jerusalem as its capital. These kingdoms were strife-ridden from the very beginning and this state of affairs persisted till the end.

The rulers and people of the kingdom of Israel were the first to be

MAP No. 1
PALESTINE AFTER PROPHET MOSES



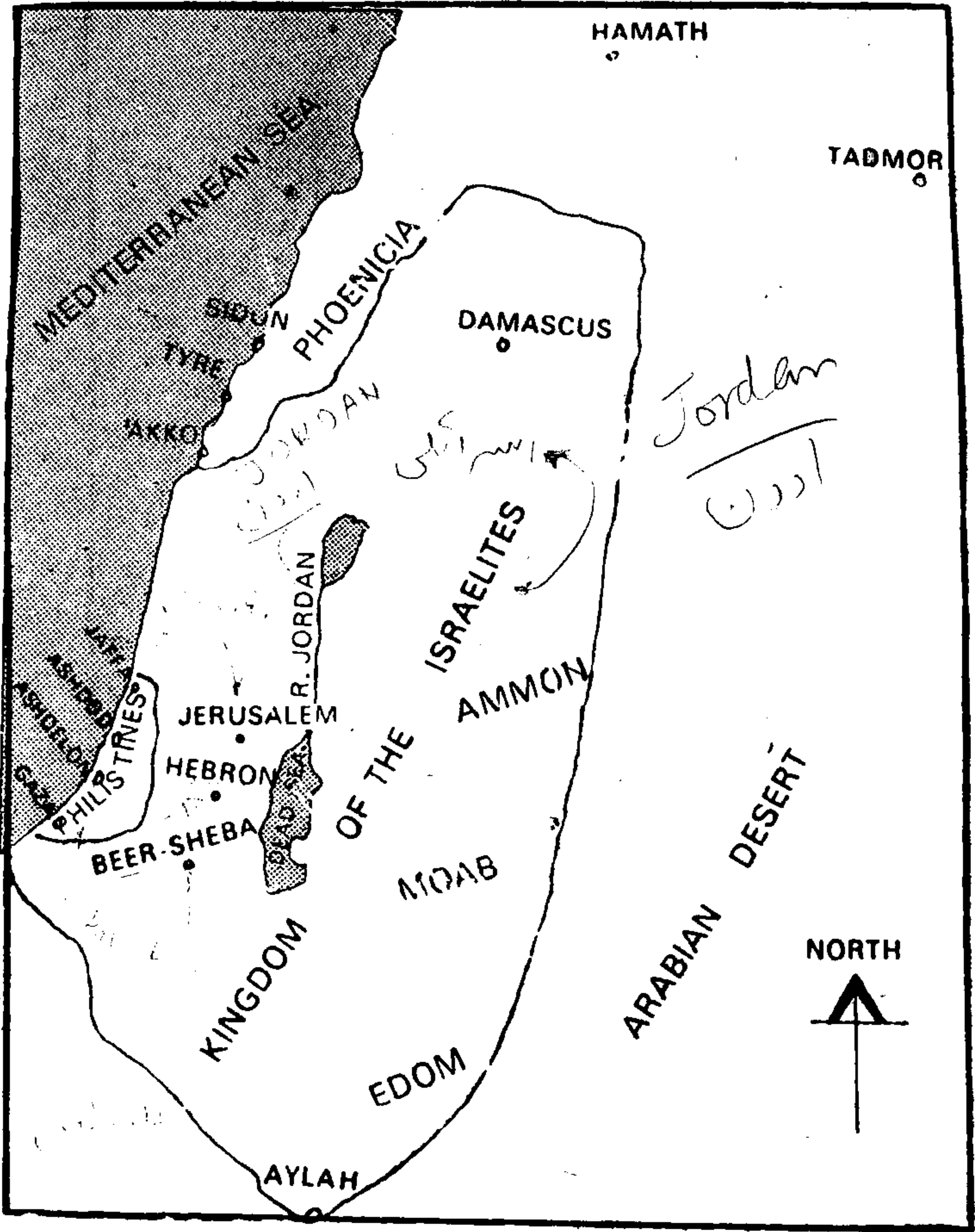
EXPLANATION : After the death of Prophet Moses, the Children of Israel conquered the whole of Palestine under Joshua, but instead of establishing a united kingdom they divided the land among themselves as inheritance.

This map shows how the land of Palestine was divided into lots and taken over by the 12 tribes of the Israelites, who were ; the Children of Judah, Simeon, Dan, Benjamin, Ephraim, Reuben, Gad, Manasseh, Issacher, Zebulun, Naphtali and Asher.

Being weak and divided, they could not fulfil the mission of the Torah, which was to drive out the idolatrous Canaanites from Palestine. The Canaanites still dwelt among them and retained strong-holds in the shape of city states. According to the Bible, up to the time of Saul, the cities of Sidon, Tyre, Dor, Megiddo, Beth-Shaan, Gezer, Jerusalem, etc. were still in the hands of the Canaanites and their idolatrous culture was influencing the Israelites.

Furthermore, on the borders of the Israelite territories, there still existed powerful states of the Philistines, the Edomites, the Moabites, and the Ammonites, who subjected them later to incessant attacks and annexed large chunks of their lands. The Israelites might even have been driven out of Palestine, had they not been shown grace by God and united in time under Saul.

MAP No. 2
THE KINGDOM OF PROPHETS DAVID
AND SOLOMON (1000-930 B.C.)



affected grievously by the ideological and moral weaknesses of the neighbouring communities. Specially after the marriage of its ruler, Ahab, with the idolatrous princess Jezebel of Zidon, idolatry and other evils began to spread unchecked among the Israelites under the official patronage. Prophets Elias and Elisha tried their very best to check this deluge but the Israelites, who were rapidly degenerating, did not heed their warnings. At last, the wrath of Allah overtook the kingdom of Israel in the shape of the Assyrians who started subjecting Palestine to incessant attacks from 900 B.C. downward. During this period, Prophet Amos (787-747 B.C.) and then Prophet Hosea (747-735 B.C.) rose and warned the Israelites again and again but the wretched, depraved people did not heed their warnings at all, and transgressed all limits. Prophet Amos was banished by the king of Israel from the realm of Samaria and warned not to preach his mission in the country. Not very long after this, the wrath of Allah burst upon the kingdom of Israel and its people. The Assyrian king Sargon took Samaria in 721 B.C. and put an end to this northern kingdom. Thousands of Israelites were put to the sword and 27 thousand of their leading men were driven out of their homeland and scattered in the eastern districts of the Assyrian empire and replaced by settlers from other parts of the empire. When the remaining Israelites intermixed with the settlers they also lost gradually their national and cultural identity.

The other kingdom of the Israelites, called the kingdom of Judah, which was set up in southern Palestine also began to adopt godless ways soon after the death of Prophet Solomon, though its moral degeneration took place at a slower pace than that of Israel. Therefore it was allowed to exist for a longer period. Then, like the kingdom of Israel, it also began to be subjected to continual attacks, its cities ruined and its capital besieged, but this kingdom could not be wholly destroyed by the Assyrians; it only became a tributary. Afterwards, when in spite of the best reformatory efforts of Prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah the people of Judah did not give up idol-worship and other moral evils, king Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon attacked and captured the whole of Judah, in 598 B.C. including Jerusalem and took the king of Judah as prisoner. Even then the Israelites did not mend their ways and paid no heed to the warnings and guidance of Prophet Jeremiah. Instead of reforming their ways, they started making plans to change their fate by revolting against Babylon. At last in 587 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar punished them heavily by invading Judah and destroyed all its important cities. He razed Jerusalem and Solomon's Temple to the ground and did not leave a wall of it standing in place. He drove a large part of the Israelite population out of their land and scattered them into the adjoining countries. The people who were left behind were cursed and subjected to all kinds of humiliations by the neighbouring communities.

This was the first calamity that came as a warning to the Israelites

and the first chastisement that they suffered as a result thereof.

8. This refers to the lease of time that the Israelites (that is, the people of Judah) got after their release from the captivity of Babylon. As for the people of Israel and Samaria, they did not rise again after their moral and spiritual degeneration. But among the people of Judah there still were some people who practised the truth and invited others also to follow it. They carried on their work of invitation to the truth among the remaining Israelites in Judah and exhorted those also to repent and follow the truth who had been driven out into Babylon and other lands. At last, the mercy of Allah came to their help. The downfall of Babylon started. The Persian king, Cyrus, took Babylon in 539 B.C. and in the following year issued a decree allowing the Israelites to return to and re-settle in their homeland. The Israelites began to return home in caravan after caravan, and this continued for a long time. Cyrus also allowed the Israelites to rebuild the Temple of Solomon but the neighbouring communities who had settled in this land resisted it. At last, Darius I appointed Zerubbabel, a grandson of the last king of Judah, governor of Judah in 522 B.C. who got the Temple rebuilt under the care of Prophet Haggai, Prophet Zechariah and Jeshua. In 458 B.C. Ezra arrived in Judah along with an exiled group and the Persian king Artaxerxes made the following decree :

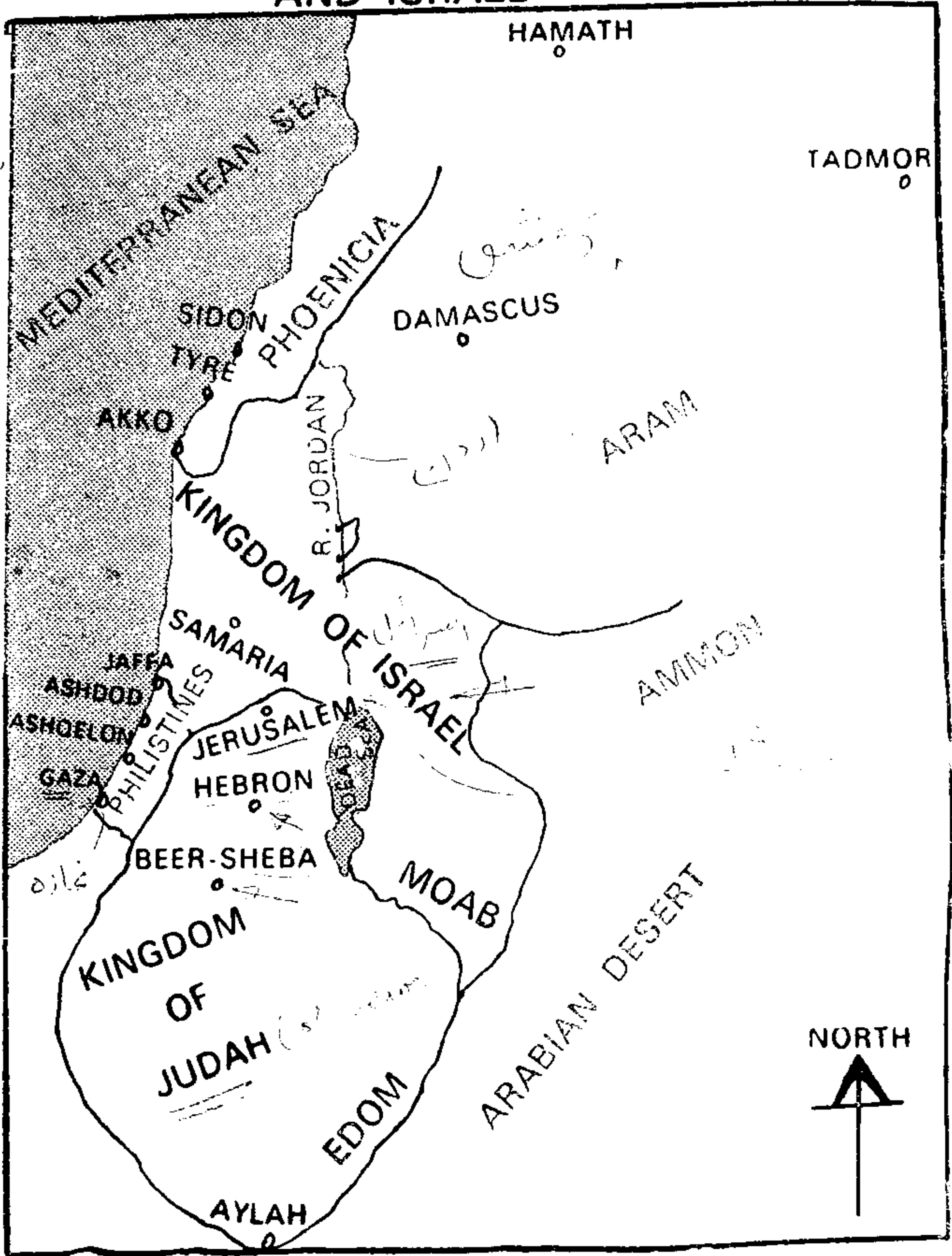
“And thou, Ezra, after the wisdom of thy God that is in thine hand, set magistrates and judges, which may judge all the people that are beyond the river, all such as know the laws of thy God; and teach ye them that know them not.

And whosoever will not do the law of thy God, and the law of the king, let judgment be executed speedily upon him, whether it be unto death, or to banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment.” (Ezra, 7 : 25-26).

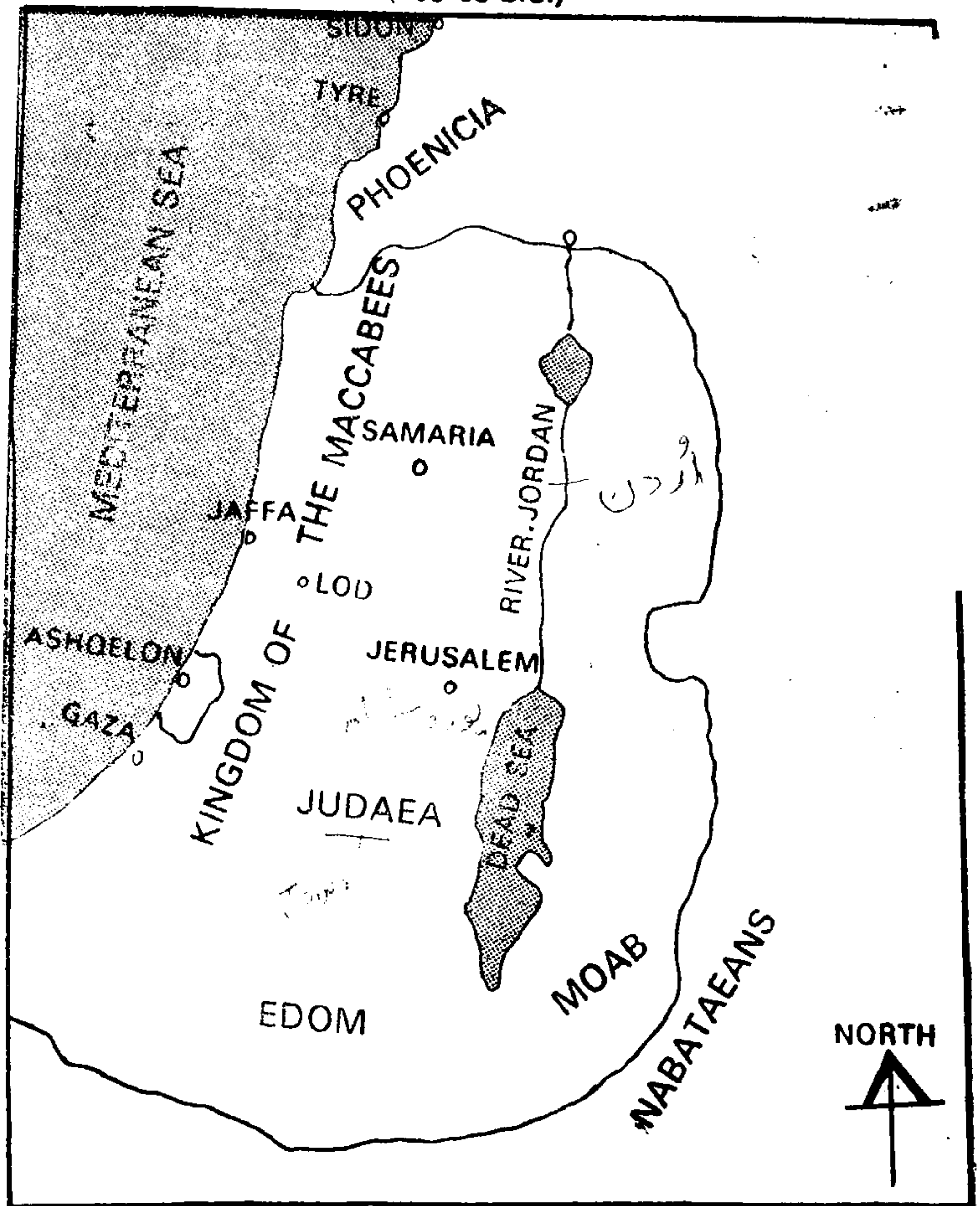
Taking advantage of this decree, Ezra carried out the revival of the religion of Prophet Moses. He gathered together all the righteous and good people from the Israelites and set up a strong organisation. He compiled and spread the Pentateuch which contained the Torah, made arrangements for the religious education of the Israelites, enforced the Law and started purging the people of moral and ideological weaknesses which they had adopted by intermixing with the other communities. He compelled the Jews to divorce the idolatrous wives they had married, and took a covenant from them that they would worship God alone and follow His Law only.

In 445 B.C. an exiled group came back to Judah under Nehemiah whom the Persian king appointed as the ruler of Jerusalem and ordered him to build the wall round the city. Thus, after 150 years the Holy City was fully restored and became the centre of Jewish religion and culture. But the Israelites of northern Palestine and Samaria did not benefit by the work of revival done by Ezra. They built a rival sanctuary

MAP No. 3
ISRAELITE KINGDOMS OF JUDAH
AND ISRAEL (860 B.C.)



MAP No. 4
PALESTINE UNDER THE MACCABEES
(168-63 B.C.)



on Mount Gerizim, and tried to make it the religious centre for the people of the Book. This caused a further, and perhaps the final, split between the Jews and the Samaritans.

The Jews suffered a set-back for a while with the fall of the Persian Empire and the conquests of Alexander the Great and the rise of the Greeks. After the death of Alexander, his kingdom was subdivided into three empires. Syria fell to the lot of the Seleucide empire, with Antioch as its capital, whose ruler Antiochus III incorporated Palestine into his dominions in 198 B.C. These Greek conquerors who were idolatrous by precept and free lance morally felt greatly ill at ease with the Jewish religion and culture. So, they began to propagate the rival Greek way of life and culture by political and economic pressure, and were able to win over a strong section of the Israelites who became their helpers. This external interference caused a split in the Jewish nation. One group among them readily adopted the Greek dress, the Greek language, the Greek way of life and the Greek sports, while the other persistently stuck to their own culture and way of life.

In 175 B.C. when Antiochus IV (who was called Epiphanes, that is, the manifestation of God) came to the throne, he used all his power and authority to stamp out the Jewish religion and culture. He got idols installed in the Holy Temple at Jerusalem and forced the Jews to prostrate themselves before them. He strictly forbade the rite of offering the sacrifices at the altar, and commanded the Jews to offer sacrifices to idolatrous deities instead. He proposed death penalty for those who would keep the Torah in their houses, or observe the Sabbath or perform circumcision of their children. But the Jews did not yield to this coercion, and started a powerful resistance movement, known in history as the revolt of the Maccabees. Though in this struggle the sympathies of the Greece-oriented Jews were with the Greeks, and they fully cooperated with the despots of Antioch to crush the Maccabean revolt, the common Jews who still retained the religious fervour of the days of Ezra sided with the Maccabees, who were ultimately able to drive out the Greeks and establish a free religious state which remained in power till 67 B.C. This state prospered and in time extended to all those territories which had once been under the control of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel. It was able to annex a part of the land of the Philistines which had remained unconquered even in the days of Prophets David and Solomon (peace be upon them).

This is the historical background of the verse of the Qurān under commentary.

9. The historical background of the second degeneration and its chastisement is as follows:

The moral and religious fervour with which the Maccabees had started their movement gradually cooled down and was replaced by love

[Contd. on p. 128

لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ اَعْتَدْنَا لَهُمْ عَذَابًا اَلِيمًا ۝۱۰ وَيَدْعُ الْاِنْسَانَ بِالشَّرِّ اِذْ
 دَعَاةً بِالْخَيْرِ ۝۱۱ وَكَانَ الْاِنْسَانُ عَجُولًا ۝۱۲ وَجَعَلْنَا الْاَيْلَ وَالتَّهَارَ اَيَاتَيْنِ
 فَمَحَوْنَا اَيَةَ الْاَيْلِ وَجَعَلْنَا اَيَةَ التَّهَارِ مُبْصِرَةً لِّتَبْتَغُوا فَضْلًا مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ
 وَلِتَعْلَمُوا عَدَدَ السِّنِينَ وَالْحِسَابَ ۝۱۳ وَكُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَصَّلْنَاهُ تَفْصِيلًا ۝۱۴ وَكُلَّ
 اِنْسَانَ الْزَّمْنَةُ طَيْرَةٌ فِي عُنُقِهِ ۝۱۵ وَنُخْرِجُ لَهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ كِتَابًا يَلْقَاهُ
 مَنشُورًا ۝۱۶ اِقْرَأْ كِتَابَكَ ۝۱۷ كَفَىٰ بِنَفْسِكَ الْيَوْمَ عَلَيْكَ حَسِيبًا ۝۱۸ مِّنْ اِهْتَدَىٰ فَاِنَّمَا
 يَهْتَدِي لِنَفْسِهِ ۝۱۹ وَمَنْ ضَلَّ فَاِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهَا ۝۲۰ وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ
 اُخْرَىٰ ۝۲۱ وَمَا كُنَّا مُعَذِّبِينَ حَتَّىٰ نَبْعَثَ رَسُولًا ۝۲۲ وَإِذَا اَرَدْنَا اَنْ نُّهْلِكَ
 قَرْيَةً اَمَرْنَا مَلٰٓئِكَتِنَا فِيهَا فَفَسَقُوا فِيهَا فَحَقَّ عَلَيَّهَا الْقَوْلُ فَمَدَدْنَاهَا تَدْمِيمًا ۝۲۳ وَ
 كَمْ اَهْلَكْنَا مِنَ الْقُرُونِ مِنْ بَعْدِ نُوْحٍ ۝۲۴ وَكَفَىٰ بِرَبِّكَ بِذُنُوبِ عِبَادِهِ خَبِيرًا
 بَصِيرًا ۝۲۵ مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ الْعَاجِلَةَ عَجَلْنَا لَهُ فِيهَا مَا نَشَاءُ لِمَنْ نُّرِيدُ
 ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَا لَهُ جَهَنَّمَ يَصْلَاهَا مَذْمُومًا مَّدْحُورًا ۝۲۶ وَمَنْ اَرَادَ الْاٰخِرَةَ وَ
 سَعَىٰ لَهَا سَعْيًا وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ كَانَ سَعْيُهُمْ مَّشْكُورًا ۝۲۷ كَلَّا تَبَدُّ
 لِمَوْلَاةٍ وَهُوَ لَآءٍ مِّنْ عَطَاءِ رَبِّكَ ۝۲۸ وَمَا كَانَ عَطَاءُ رَبِّكَ مَحْظُورًا ۝۲۹ اَنْظُرْ
 كَيْفَ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ ۝۳۰ وَلِلْاٰخِرَةِ الْكِبْرُ دَرَجَاتٍ ۝۳۱ وَ الْكِبْرُ تَفْصِيْلًا ۝۳۲
 لَا تَجْعَلْ مَعَ اللهِ اِلٰهًا اٰخَرَ فَتَقَعَّدَ مَذْمُومًا مَّخْذُورًا ۝۳۳ وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ اَلَّا
 تَعْبُدُوْا اِلَّا اِيَّاهُ ۝۳۴ وَ بِالْوَالِدَيْنِ اِحْسَانًا ۝۳۵ اِمَّا يَبْلُغَنَّ عِنْدَكَ الْكِبَرَ اَحَدُهُمَا اَوْ
 كِلٰهُمَا فَلَا تَقُلْ لَهُمَا اٰيٌ وَلَا تَنْهَرُهُمَا وَقُلْ لَهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيْمًا ۝۳۶ وَ
 اخْفِضْ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ الذَّلٰلِ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ وَقُلْ رَبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيْنِي

Indeed the Qurān shows that way which is perfectly straight : To those who believe in it and do good deeds, it gives the good news that there is a great reward for them and to those who do not believe in the Hereafter, it gives the warning that a painful torment has been made ready for them.¹¹ 9-10

Man invokes evil instead of goodness for he is very hasty and impatient.¹² 11

Behold! We have created day and night as two signs : We have deprived the sign of night of light and made the sign of day bright to enable you to seek bounty of your Lord and to reckon months and years. Thus We have made everything manifestly distinct.¹³ 12

We have fastened the augury of every man to his own neck,¹⁴ and on the Day of Resurrection We will bring forth a writing which he will find like an open book. (It will be said to him,) "Here is your record : read it. Today you yourself suffice as reckoner against yourself." 13-14

Whosoever adopts the righteous way, his righteous conduct will be for his own good, and whosoever goes astray, his deviation shall bring its consequences on him.¹⁵ No bearer will bear the burden of another.¹⁶ And We do not inflict punishment until We have sent a Messenger¹⁷ (to make Truth distinct from falsehood.) 15

When We decree that a habitation should be destroyed, We give Commands to its well-to-do people and they show disobedience; then that habitation incurs just torment and We totally exterminate it.¹⁸ Just see how many generations have been destroyed by Our Command after Noah. Your Lord is fully aware of the sins of his servants and is seeing everything. 16-17

If a person hankers after the immediate good things of this worldly life,¹⁹ We give him whatever We will; then We condemn such a one to Hell, wherein he will burn, accursed and deprived of mercy.²⁰ On the other hand, who so desires the life of the Hereafter and strives for it as best as one should strive, and is a believer, the endeavour of every such person will be appreciated.²¹ As regards the 18-21

provisions of this worldly life, We bestow them on these and on those; this is a gift of your Lord and there is none to withhold the gift of your Lord.²² But in spite of this you can see that We have exalted one people above the others and in the Hereafter these grades will be far greater, and their superiority will be far higher.²³

22 Do not associate another deity with Allah,²⁴ otherwise you shall be reduced to a state of ignominy and helplessness.

23-24 Your Lord has enjoined the following:²⁵

1. You should not worship anyone but Him.²⁶

2. Treat your parents with great consideration; if either or both of them live with you in their old age, do not say even "fie" to them; nor rebuke them, but speak kind words to them; treat them with humility and tenderness and pray: "Lord, be merciful to them just as they brought me up with kindness and affection."

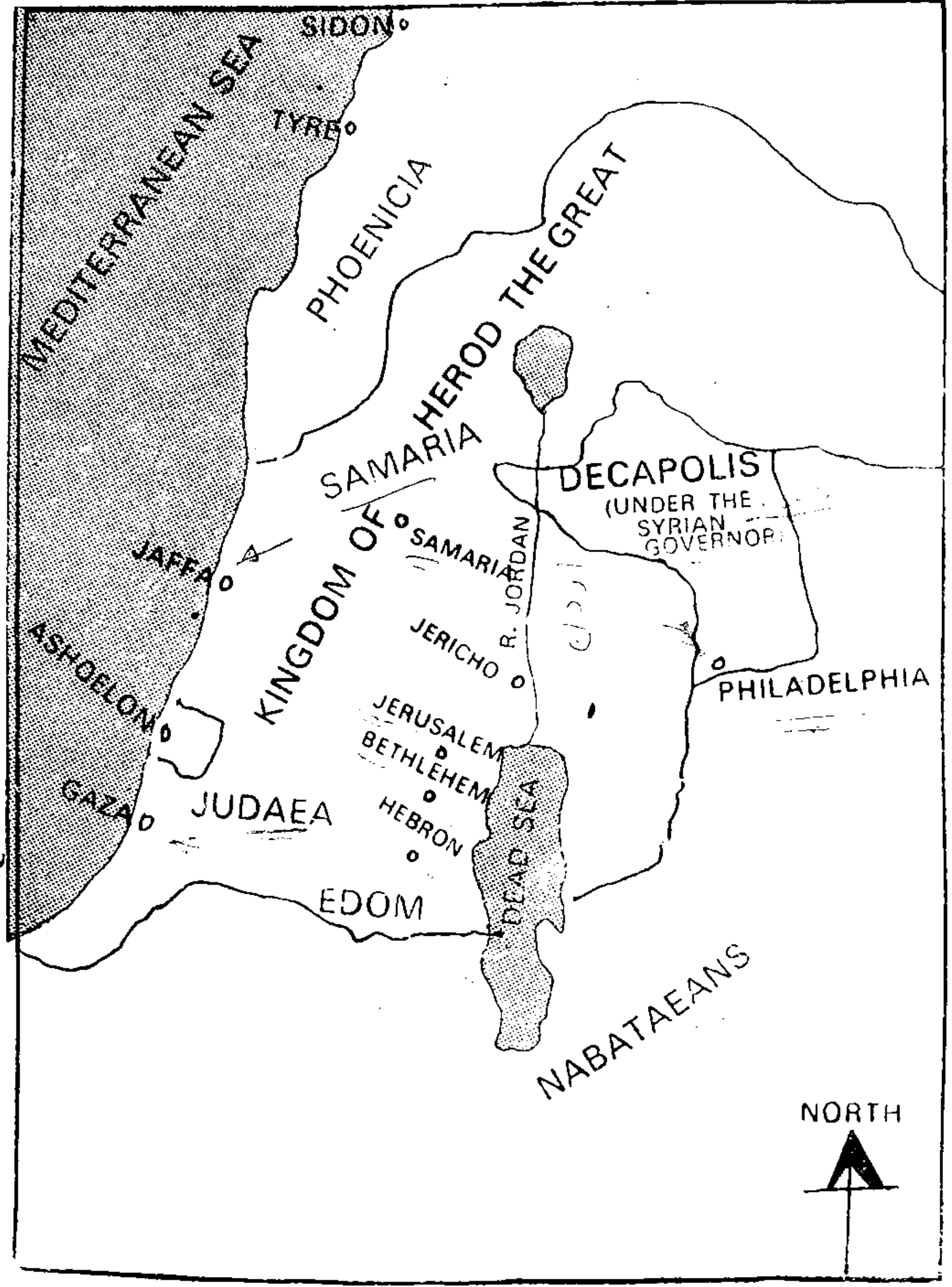
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of the world and empty external form. A split appeared among them and they themselves invited the Roman general, Pompey, to come to Palestine. Pompey turned his attention to this land in 63 B.C. and, taking Jerusalem, put an end to the political freedom of the Jews. But the Roman conquerors preferred to rule their dominions through the agency of the local chiefs rather than by direct control. Therefore a local government was set up in Palestine which eventually passed into the hand of Herod, a clever Jew, in 40 B.C. This ruler is well known as Herod the Great. He ruled over the whole of Palestine and Jordan from 40 to 4 B.C. On the one hand Herod patronised the religious leaders to please the Jews, and on the other, he propagated the Roman culture and won the goodwill of Caesar by showing his loyalty and faithfulness to the Roman Empire. During his reign the Jews degenerated and fell to the lowest ebb of moral and religious life.

On the death of Herod his kingdom was subdivided into three parts. His son, Archelaus, became the ruler of Samaria, Judaea and northern Edom. In A.D. 6, however, Caesar Augustus deprived him of his authority and put the state under his Roman governor, and this arrangement continued up till A.D. 41. This was precisely the time when Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) appeared to reform the Israelites whose religious leaders opposed him tooth and nail and even tried to get him the death sentence by the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate.

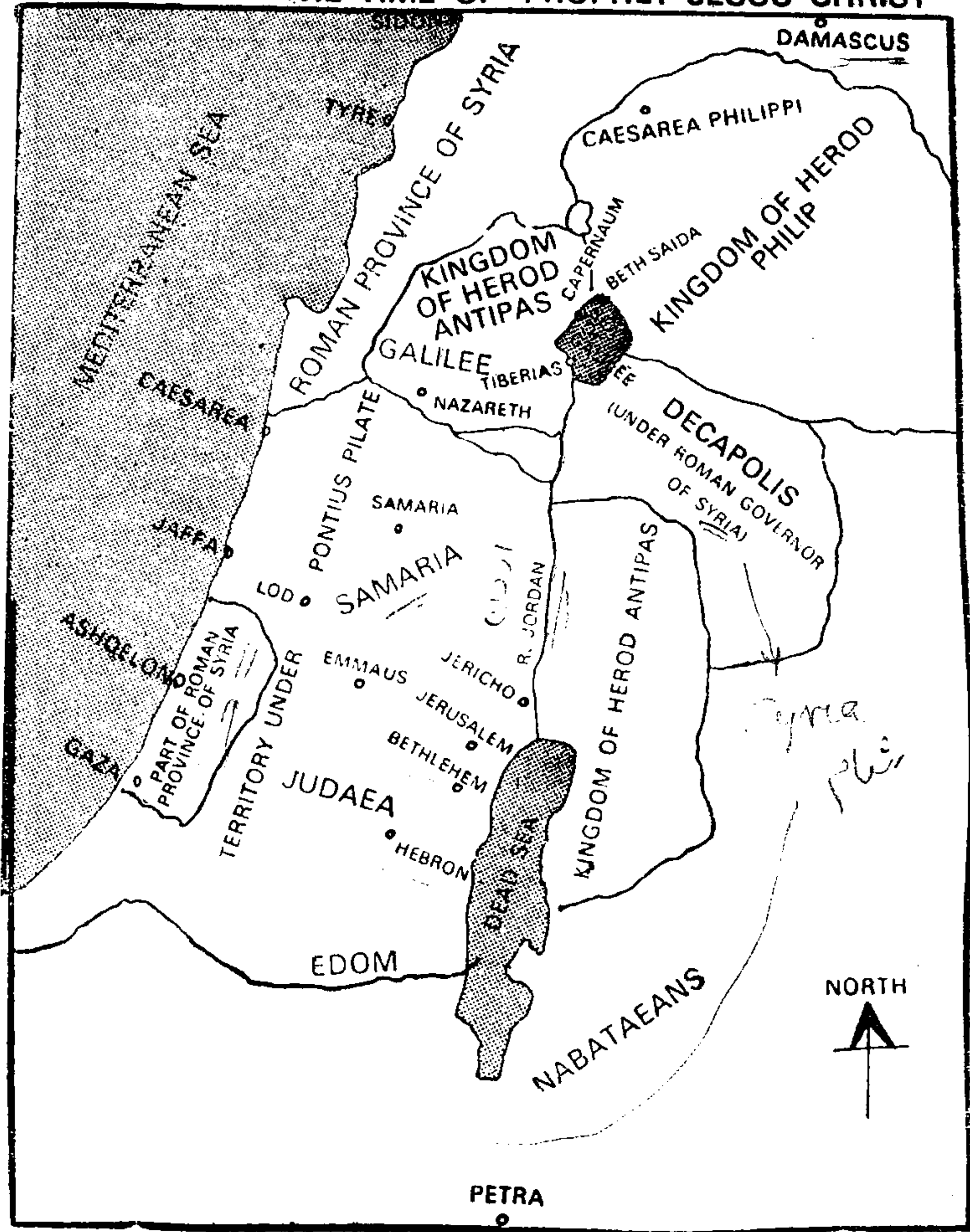
The second son of Herod, Herod Antipas, became the ruler of Galilee and Jordan in northern Palestine, and he was the person who got Prophet John (peace be upon him) beheaded at the request and desire of

MAP No. 5
KINGDOM OF HEROD THE GREAT (40-4 B.C.)



NORTH

MAP No. 6
PALESTINE IN THE TIME OF PROPHET JESUS CHRIST



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Herod's third son, Philip, succeeded to the territories bounded on one side by river Yermuk and on the other by Mount Hermon. Philip had been much more deeply influenced by the Roman and Greek cultures than his father and brothers. Therefore the preaching of the truth could not have even so much effect in his land as it had in the other parts of Palestine.

In A.D. 41, the Romans appointed Herod Agrippa, the grandson of Herod the Great, ruler of the territories that had once been under Herod himself. Coming into power this man did whatever he could to persecute the followers of Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) and used all the forces at his disposal to crush the movement that was functioning under the guidance of the Disciples to inculcate fear of God in the people and reform their morals.

In order to have a correct estimate of the condition of the common Jews and their religious leaders, one should study the criticisms levelled by Prophet Jesus on them in his sermons contained in the four Gospels. Even a religious man like Prophet John was beheaded before their eyes and not a voice was raised in protest against this barbarity. Then all the religious leaders of the community unanimously demanded death sentence for Prophet Jesus, and none but a few righteous men were there to mourn this depravity. Above all, when Pontius Pilate asked these depraved people, 'which condemned prisoner he should release, according to the custom, at Passover, Jesus or Barabbas the robber', they all cried with one voice, 'Barabbas'. This was indeed the last chance Allah gave to the Jews, and then their fate was sealed.

Not long after this, a serious conflict started between the Jews and the Romans, which developed into an open revolt by the former between A.D. 64 and 66. Both Herod Agrippa II and the Roman procurator Floris failed to put down the rebellion. At last, the Romans crushed it by a strong military action and in A.D. 70 Titus took Jerusalem by force. About 1,33,000 people were put to the sword, 67 thousand made slaves, and thousands sent to work in the Egyptian mines and to other cities so that they could be used in amphitheatres for being torn by wild beasts or become the "practice-target" for the sword fighters. All the tall and beautiful girls were picked out for the army of conquest and the Holy City of Jerusalem and the Temple were pulled down to the ground. After this the Jewish influence so disappeared from Palestine that the Jews could not regain power for two thousand years, and the Holy Temple could never be rebuilt. Afterwards the Roman Emperor, Hadrian, restored Jerusalem but renamed it Aelia. The Jews, however, were not allowed to enter it for centuries. This was the calamity that the Jews suffered on account of their degeneration for the second time.

10. Though this admonition has been given as a parenthesis at the end of the address to the children of Israel, it does not mean that this

and the address itself are solely meant for them. As a matter of fact, the whole address is really directed towards the disbelievers of Makkah but, instead of addressing them directly, some important historical events from the history of the children of Israel have been cited in order to serve as admonition for them.

11. This means to warn those persons or people or nations who do not take a lesson from the admonitions of the Qurān to be ready to undergo that chastisement which Israelites had to suffer.

12. This is in answer to the foolish demands of the disbelievers of Makkah who repeatedly demanded from the Holy Prophet to bring about that torment with which he threatened them. It is closely connected with the preceding verse, as if to say, "O foolish people, instead of asking goodness you demand the torment : can't you realise the sufferings of the community which is visited by God's torment?"

It also contains a subtle warning to those Muslims who prayed for punishment for those disbelievers who persecuted them and rejected the Message obdurately; there were still among those disbelievers many such people who afterwards embraced Islam and became its standard bearers in the world. That is why Allah says, "Man does so because he is very hasty and impatient." He prays to Allah for all such things as are the immediate need of the time, though often subsequent experience shows that if Allah had granted his prayer, it would have been very harmful to him.

13. Allah invites man to study the wisdom that underlies variety in the world and not get confused and long for monotonous uniformity. In fact, the whole system is based on variety, distinctiveness and diversity in things. For the sake of illustration let us take the case of the signs of day and night : "You see these underlying opposite things daily in your life. If you just consider the underlying wisdom, you will find that without this variety there would have been hardly any activity in the world. Likewise great wisdom lies in the creation of the people with different temperaments, thoughts and inclinations. If Allah had made all men righteous by birth or annihilated disbelievers and wicked people and left only believers and submissive people in the world, the purpose of men's creation could not have been realized. Therefore it is wrong to desire that there should only be day and no night. The righteous thing is that these people, who have got the light of guidance, should exert their utmost to remove the darkness of deviation. It is their duty that if they find darkness like that of night, they should pursue it like the sun so that the light of guidance should re-appear".

14. "We have fastened the augury of every man to his own neck": therefore one does not need to take omens from a bird. This is to remove the superstition of the disbelievers who used to take omens from birds etc., as if to say, "The causes and con-

sequences of good fortune or bad fate exist in man's own person. He merits good fortune because of his own good conduct and good judgment, and likewise, suffers the consequences of evil fate by the lack of these". This was necessitated because foolish people always try to attribute their misfortunes to external causes, when in fact our fate depends on our own deeds, good or bad. If they probe into the causes, they will find that their fate was decided by their own good or bad qualities and judgments.

15. This is to impress that if a person adopts the right way, he does not do any favour to God or His Messenger or a reformer but he himself gets its benefits. On the other hand, if a person deviates from the right way, he can do no harm to God or His Messenger or a reformer, for they desire only to protect men from wrong ways and guide him on to the Right Way, and not for any selfish ends. Therefore the right course for a wise man is to adopt the righteous way, when it becomes distinct to him what is truth and what is falsehood. On the other hand, if he rejects Truth because of his prejudices and self-interest, he will be his own enemy and not a well-wisher.

16. The Qurān has laid great stress on the doctrine of personal responsibility at several places, for one cannot follow the Right Way scrupulously without understanding fully its implications. It means that everyone is solely responsible for one's moral conduct and is accountable to God as an individual in one's own person and no other person can share the burden of responsibility with him. As an instance, we may take the case of a particular action or a particular way of conduct in which a generation or a community or a large number of people had collaborated. When the people will assemble before Allah on the Day of Judgment their collective action will be analysed so as to lay the burden of its responsibility on each and every person who had been conducive to it, and rewarded or punished in accordance with it. Neither will a person be punished for the part another had played in its performance nor shall the burden of the sin of one individual laid on the shoulders of another. This doctrine has been emphasized over and over again so that a wise man should not act in imitation of another or justify his own conduct by similar deeds of others. If a particular person feels the sense of his own responsibility, he will act in such a way as to come out successful on the Day of Judgment, regardless of what the others do.

17. This is another doctrine which has been impressed on the minds by the Qurān in different ways. This is to emphasize the basic importance that a Messenger has in the dispensation of Divine justice because this is determined in the light of the Message brought by him. This will be employed as an argument in favour of or against the concerned people. Otherwise the infliction of punishment on the

people would be unjust for in that case they could argue that they should not be punished as the knowledge of the righteous way had not been conveyed to them. But after the Message had been conveyed to a particular people, and they had rejected it, there would be left no excuse for them.

It is an irony that instead of accepting the Message some foolish people are misled by reading verses like these and they ask such absurd questions : "What will be the position of those, who might not have received the message of any Prophet?" The wise course for such persons would have been to ask themselves what their own position will be on the Day of Judgment, because they themselves had received the Message. As regards other people, Allah knows best who has received the Message, and when, how and to what extent and what attitude a certain person adopted towards it. In short, Allah alone is aware of whether a particular person received the Message in such a way as to fulfil the required condition for punishment.

18. Here a definite form of Divine procedure for the destruction of a people has been stated. When the well-to-do people of a habitation become disobedient, it is a portent that it is doomed to destruction. After their persistent and continuous transgression, the well-to-do people become so obdurate in their disobedience that they begin to discard the instinctive dictates of their conscience. The same thing has been stated in v. 16 : "When We decree that a habitation should be destroyed We give Commands to its well-to-do people and they show disobedience." This is because Allah has created conscience for the guidance of man. Therefore the dictates of conscience are really the commands of Allah. Thus it has become quite obvious that by "When We decree that a habitation should be destroyed. . . ." is not meant that Allah intends to destroy it without any reason. It is destroyed because after their disobedience "that habitation incurs Our just wrath and We totally exterminate it." The habitation deserves such a punishment because its common people follow the well-to-do people who are the factual leaders of a community and are mainly responsible for the corruption of the community. At first the well-to-do people commit acts of disobedience, wickedness, mischief, cruelty and tyranny and then the common people follow them and incur the torment of Allah. Incidentally, this is a warning for every community that it should be very discreet and prudent in choosing and electing its leaders and rulers, for if the latter are mean and wicked, they will inevitably lead the community to destruction.

19. The Arabic word "*Ā-jilah*" literally means something which can be had immediately, but the Qurān employs it as a term for "This World" which yields its advantages and results in this worldly life. Its antonym is "*Ākhirat*" (Hereafter) which will yield its advantages and results after death in the life of the Next World.

20. The person who does not believe in the life of the Hereafter deserves Hell, because he strives only for the successes and good things of this world and his endeavours are confined to material objects. Consequently, such a person becomes a mere worshipper of this world and adopts wrong conduct, for he has no sense of personal responsibility and accountability to God and ultimately deserves the torment of Hell.

21. "His endeavours will be appreciated": he will be rewarded for the efforts he had made for success in the Hereafter.

22. Allah gives the provisions of this world both to those who strive for this world and to those who strive for the Hereafter, but it is the gift of Allah alone and not of anyone else. It does not lie in the power of the worshippers of the world to deprive the seekers after the Hereafter of these provisions: nor have the seekers after the Hereafter any power to withhold these provisions from the worshippers of the world.

23. This is to show that the seekers after the Hereafter have been exalted over the worshippers of the world even in this worldly life. However, this exaltation is not in regard to the good things of this world—rich food and dress, palatial dwellings, limousines, helicopters and other grand things, but it is from another point of view. They enjoy that true honour, love and good-will which is denied to the tyrants and the rich people in spite of the fact that they may be indigent. This is because whatever the seekers after the Hereafter get in this world, it is earned in righteous and honest ways, while the worshippers of the world amass wealth by employing dishonest and cruel ways. Then the former spend what they get with prudence and righteousness. They fulfil the obligations they owe to others. They spend their money in the Way of Allah and to please Allah on the needy and the indigent. In contrast to them, the worshippers of this world spend their money in the enjoyment of luxuries, wicked works, corruption and spreading other evil things. This makes the former models of God-worship and purity in every respect and distinguishes them so clearly from the worshippers of the world that they shine in exaltation over the latter. These things clearly indicate that in the next world the grades of the seekers after the Hereafter will be far greater and their superiority far higher than those of the worshippers of the world.

24. Or it can be rendered like this: "Do not invent another deity besides Allah", or "Do not set up another as a deity beside Allah."

25. In the succeeding verses, those main basic principles have been put forward on which Islam desires to build the whole structure of human life. These form, so to say, the Manifesto of the Invitation of the Holy Prophet declared by him at the end of the Makkī stage of his mission, on the eve of the new stage at Al-Madīnah so that it should be known to all that the new Islamic Society and State were going to be built on such and such ideological, moral, cultural, economic and legal

[Contd. on p. 136

صَغِيرًا ۝ رَّبُّكُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا فِي نُفُوسِكُمْ ۝ إِنَّ تَكُونُوا ضَالِحِينَ فَإِنَّهُ كَانَ
 لِلْأَوَّابِينَ غَفُورًا ۝ وَأَتِ ذَا الْقُرْبَىٰ حَقَّهُ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالسَّبِيلَ وَ
 لَا تُبَذِّرْ تَبْذِيرًا ۝ إِنَّ الْمُبَذِّرِينَ كَانُوا إِخْوَانَ الشَّيْطَانِ ۝ وَكَانَ الشَّيْطَانُ
 لِرَبِّهِ كَفُورًا ۝ وَإِنَّمَا تَعْرِضُ عَنْهُمْ وَابْتَغَاءَ رَحْمَةٍ مِّنَ رَبِّكَ تَرْجُوهَا
 فَقُلْ لَهُمْ قَوْلًا مَّيْسُورًا ۝ وَلَا تَجْعَلْ يَدَكَ مَغْلُولَةً إِلَىٰ عُنُقِكَ وَلَا
 تَبْسُطْهَا كُلَّ الْبَسْطِ فَتَقْعُدَ مَلُومًا مَّحْضُورًا ۝ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَن
 يَشَاءُ وَيَقْدِرُ ۝ إِنَّهُ كَانَ بِعِبَادِهِ خَبِيرًا بَصِيرًا ۝ وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ خَشْيَةً
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- Your Lord best knows what is in your minds. If you live righteously, He surely forgives and turns towards all such people as are penitent and obedient.²⁷ 25-27
3. Fulfil your obligations towards your relatives and the indigent and the wayfarer.
4. Do not be a spendthrift because the spendthrifts are the brethren of Satan and Satan has been ungrateful to his Lord.
5. If you have to put them (the needy persons) off because you are still waiting for Allah's favour that you are expecting, put them off with tenderness.²⁸ 28
6. Do not tie your hand to your neck nor stretch it without any restraint lest you should become blameworthy and left destitute.²⁹ Your Lord provides plentifully to whom He wills and withholds His provisions from anyone He pleases, for He is fully aware of the condition of His servants and observes them closely.³⁰ 29-30
7. Do not kill your offspring for fear of want : for it is We Who provide them and you as well. Indeed their killing is a heinous crime.³¹ 31
8. Do not even go near fornication for it is a very indecent thing and a very evil way.³² 32
9. Do not kill any soul whose killing has been forbidden by Allah³³ except by right³⁴: and if one is killed unjustly We have granted the right of retribution to his guardian.³⁵ So he should not transgress the limits in retaliation,³⁶ for he shall be helped.³⁷ 33
10. Do not go near the property of an orphan except in the best manner until he reaches the age of maturity.³⁸ 34-35
11. Keep your pledges, for you shall be accountable for your pledges.³⁹
12. Give full measure when you measure and weigh with even scales⁴⁰ when you weigh. This is the best way and will prove to be the best in the end.⁴¹
13. Do not follow that of which you have no knowledge for you shall be questioned for (the use) of your eyes, ears and minds.⁴² 36
14. Do not strut about in the land for you can 37

neither cleave the earth nor attain the height of the mountains.⁴³

38-40

The evil aspect of each of these Commandments is odious in the sight of your Lord.⁴⁴ These are the things of wisdom which your Lord has revealed to you.

And behold ! do not associate any other deity with Allah lest you should be cast into Hell reproached and deprived of every good⁴⁵—What! has your Lord favoured you with sons and adopted angels as daughters for Himself?⁴⁶ Indeed it is a big lie that you are uttering.

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principles. (Please also refer to vv. 151-153 and E.N.'s thereof of Chapter VI).

26. This commandment is very comprehensive. It prohibits not only the worship of anyone except Allah but also implies that one should obey and serve and submit to Allah alone without question : one should accept His Commandments and Law alone to be worthy of obedience and His authority to be supreme above all. This was not merely an instruction confined to a religious creed and individual practice but it served as the foundation of the moral, cultural, and political system which was practically established in Al-Madīnah by the Holy Prophet. Its first and foremost principle was that Allah alone is the Master, Sovereign and Law-giver.

27. This verse enjoins that after Allah's right, the greatest of all the human rights is the right of parents: therefore the children should obey and serve and respect their parents. The collective morality of society should make it incumbent on children to be grateful and respectful to their parents, they should serve them as they nursed and brought them up in their childhood. Above all, this verse is not merely a moral recommendation but is the basis of the rights and powers of parents the details of which we find in the Books of *Hadīth* and *Fiqh*. Moreover, respectful behaviour and obedience to and observance of the rights of parents comprise the most important element of the material education and moral training in the Islamic Society and civilization. Incidentally, all these things have determined for ever the principle that the Islamic State shall make the family life sound and secure by laws, administrative regulations and educational policy and prevent its disintegration.

28. These three articles (3-5) are meant to impress that a man should not reserve his earnings and his wealth exclusively for his own person. He should do his utmost to fulfil his own necessities of life in a moderate way and render the rights of his relatives, neighbours and other needy persons as well. This attitude will help create the spirit of co-

operation, sympathy and justice in the collective Islamic life. Thus every relative will cooperate with the other and every well-to-do person will help the needy in his neighbourhood and a wayfarer would find himself an honourable guest among generous hosts. The conception of rights should be so extensive that every person should consider that all other human beings have rights on his person and his property so that he should serve them with the idea that he is rendering their rights and is not doing any favour to them. In that case one would beg pardon of the other if one was unable to serve him and would pray to God to send his blessings upon him to enable him to serve His servants.

These articles of the Islamic Manifesto were not merely confined to moral teachings but these formed the basis of the Commandments of *Zakāt* and voluntary charity. The laws of inheritance and of making will and endowments were based on these articles. The rights of the orphans were determined by these and it was made obligatory on every habitation to entertain a wayfarer gratis for at least three days. Subsequently, the whole moral system was formed so as to create the feelings of generosity, sympathy and cooperation. So much so that the people began to realize the importance of and observe voluntarily the moral rights which could neither be demanded legally nor enforced by law.

29. "Do not tie your hand to your neck" is the literal translation of the Text which means : "Do not be parsimonious"; "nor stretch it without any restraint" means, "Do not be extravagant". If verses 27 and 29 are read together, it becomes obvious that the Qurān desires the people to follow the golden mean, *i.e.*, they should neither be so parsimonious as to prevent the circulation of wealth nor so extravagant as to destroy their own economy. On the contrary, they should learn to behave in a balanced manner so that they should spend money wherever it should be spent and refrain from becoming spendthrifts so as to involve themselves into trouble. As a matter of fact, it is ingratitude towards Allah's favour to spend money for the sake of show, luxury and sinful acts and similar things which are neither man's real necessities nor useful. Therefore those people who spend money lavishly on such things as these are the brethren of Satan.

These clauses too, are not merely meant to be moral instructions for individuals. They are intended to safeguard the Islamic Society against extravagance by moral instruction, collective pressure and legal restrictions. Accordingly, in the Islamic State of Al-Madīnah practical steps were taken to safeguard the Community against extravagance. First, many forms of extravagance and luxury were forbidden by law. Secondly, legal measures were taken against it. Thirdly, social reforms were introduced to put an end to those customs which involved extravagance. The Government was empowered to prevent people from the obvious forms of extravagance. Above all, *Zakāt* and voluntary charity helped to break parsimony and the lust of hoarding money. Besides

these measures, a public opinion was created that enabled the people to discriminate between generosity and extravagance and thrift and parsimony: so much so that parsimonious people were looked down upon as ignominious and the thrifty people were regarded as honourable. This moral and mental attitude became a part and parcel of the Muslim Society, and even today the parsimonious people and hoarders are looked down upon in the Muslim Society, while the generous people are respected everywhere.

30. That is, "Man cannot realize the wisdom of the disparity of wealth among the people": therefore man should not try to interfere by artificial means with the natural distribution of wealth. It is wrong to level down natural inequality or to aggravate it by artificial means so as to make it unjust. Both the extremes are wrong. The best economic system is that which is established on the Divine Way of the division of wealth.

As a result of the realization of the wisdom of economic disparity, no such problems arose which might have made that disparity an evil in itself so as to demand the creation of a classless society. On the contrary, in the righteous society established at Al-Madīnah on these Divine principles which are akin to human nature, the economic differences were not artificially disturbed. But by means of moral and legal reforms these became the means of many moral, spiritual and cultural blessings and benefits instead of becoming the means of injustice. Thus, the wisdom of the disparity created by the Creator of the Universe was practically demonstrated at Al-Madīnah.

31. This verse cuts at the very root of the movement of birth control, which has been going on from ancient times to our present age. It was the fear of want that induced people to kill their children or resort to abortion. In our age another plan has been added to these, *i.e.*, contraception. This article of the Islamic Manifesto prohibits the people from reducing the number of mouths by artificial means but exhorts them to increase the means of production according to the natural methods enjoined by Allah. According to this article, it is one of the biggest mistakes of man to check birth rate as a solution to the want and scarcity of provisions : therefore it warns him, as if to say, "O man, it is not you who make arrangement for food, but Allah, Who settled you in the land and has been providing for you and will provide for those who will come after you". History tells us that the food resources have always expanded in proportion to the number of inhabitants of a country : nay, often they have exceeded far more than the needs of the inhabitants. Thus it is a folly on the part of man to interfere with the arrangements of Allah.

It is very significant that as a result of this teaching no movement has ever been started to control birth nor has there been any inclination to infanticide among the Muslims ever since the revelation of the Qurān.

32. "Do not even go near fornication." This Commandment is meant both for individuals and society as a whole. It warns each individual not only to guard against adultery or fornication itself but against all those things that lead to or stimulate it. As regards society as a whole the Commandment enjoins it to make such arrangements as prevent adultery and eradicate the means and stimulants that lead to adultery. Therefore the society should employ all those legal and educative means that help develop such an environment as prevents and eradicates indecency.

Finally, this article formed the basis of laws and regulations of the Islamic system of life. In order to fulfil its implications adultery and false accusation of adultery were made criminal offences: regulations about "*Purdah*" were promulgated: the publication of indecent things was banned and drinking of intoxicants was made unlawful: restrictions on music, dancing and pictures which are conducive to adultery were imposed. Then such laws were enacted as made marriage easy, and cut at the root of adultery.

33. "Do not kill any soul" includes not only the prohibition of the killing of other souls but also one's own soul as well for it is also included in the prohibition that immediately follows this Command. Thus suicide is regarded as heinous a sin as murder. Some foolish people object to the prohibition of suicide saying that they themselves are the masters of their souls. Therefore there is nothing wrong in killing one's own self or in destroying one's own property. They forget that every soul belongs to Allah, and none has any right to destroy it, nay, even to abuse it, for this world is a place of trial, where we should undergo the test up to the end of our lives in accordance with the will of Allah. It does not matter whether our circumstances are favourable or adverse for trial. Therefore it would be wrong to run away from the place of test, not to speak of committing such a heinous crime as suicide (which Allah has prohibited) to escape it, for it means that the one who commits suicide tries to run away from small troubles and ignominies towards greater affliction and eternal torment and ignominy.

34. When the Islamic State was established, "killing by right" was confined to five cases only: To punish (1) a wilful murderer for retribution, (2) opponents of the true religion during war, (3) those who attempt to overthrow the Islamic system of government, (4) a man or woman guilty of adultery and (5) an apostate.

35. We have translated the Arabic word "*sultān*" into "the right of retribution". Here it stands for "a ground for legal action". This also lays down the legal principle that in a case of murder, the real plaintiff is not the government but the guardian or the guardians of the murdered person who are authorized to pardon the murderer or receive blood-money instead of taking his life.

36. Transgression in killing would be to kill more persons than the murderer or to kill the criminal by degrees with torment or to dis-

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قَوْلًا عَظِيمًا ۗ وَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَا فِي هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ لِيَذَّكَّرُوا ۗ وَمَا يَزِيدُهُمْ
 إِلَّا نُفُورًا ۗ فَمَنْ كُنَّ مَعَهُ إِلَهَةٌ كَمَا يَقُولُونَ إِذَا لَابَتَّخُوا إِلَىٰ ذِي
 الْعَرْشِ سَبِيلًا ۗ سُبْحٰنَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ عَمَّا يَقُولُونَ ۗ عَلُوا كَبِيرًا ۗ تَسْبِيحُ
 لَهُ السَّمٰوٰتُ السَّبْعُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيهِنَّ ۗ وَإِنْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا يَسْبِيحُ
 بِحَمْدِهِ ۗ وَلَكِنْ لَا تَفْقَهُونَ تَسْبِيحَهُمْ ۗ إِنَّهُ كَانَ حَلِيمًا غَفُورًا ۗ وَإِذَا قَرَأْتَ
 الْقُرْآنَ جَعَلْنَا بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ حِجَابًا مَّسْتُورًا ۗ وَ
 جَعَلْنَا عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ أَكِنَّةً أَنْ يَفْقَهُوهُ وَفِي آذَانِهِمْ وَقْرًا ۗ وَإِذَا ذَكَرْتَ رَبَّكَ
 فِي الْقُرْآنِ وَحْدَهُ وَلَّوْا عَلَىٰ أَدْبَارِهِمْ نُفُورًا ۗ نَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَسْمَعُونَ ۗ
 إِذْ يَسْمَعُونَ إِلَيْكَ وَإِذْ هُمْ نَجْوَىٰ إِذْ يَقُولُ الظَّالِمُونَ إِنْ تَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا رَجَا
 مَسْحُورًا ۗ أَنْظِرْ كَيْفَ ضَرَبُوا لَكَ الْأَمْثَالَ فَضَلُّوا فَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ سَبِيلًا ۗ وَ
 قَالُوا إِذَا كُنَّا عِظَامًا وَرَفَاتًا ؕ إِنَّا لَنَبْعَثُوهُمْ خَلْقًا جَدِيدًا ۗ قُلْ كُونُوا
 حِجَارَةً أَوْ حَدِيدًا ۗ أَوْ خَلْقًا مِّمَّا يَكْبُرُ فِي صُدُورِكُمْ ۗ فَسَيَقُولُونَ مَنْ يُعِيدُنَا
 قُلِ الَّذِي فَطَرَكُمْ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ ۗ فَسَيُنْخِضُونَ إِلَيْكَ رُءُوسَهُمْ وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَىٰ
 هُوَ قُلْ عَسَىٰ أَنْ يَكُونَ قَرِيبًا ۗ يَوْمَ يَدْعُوكُمْ فَتَسْتَجِيبُونَ بِحَمْدِهِ وَ
 تَقُولُونَ إِنْ لَيْسَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ۗ وَقُلْ لِعِبَادِي يَقُولُوا الَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ ۗ
 إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ يَنْزِعُ بَيْنَهُمْ ۗ إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ كَانَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ عَدُوًّا مُّبِينًا ۗ رَبُّكُمْ
 أَعْلَمُ بِكُمْ ۗ إِنْ يَشَأْ يُرْحِمَكُمُ أَوْ إِنْ يَشَأْ يُعَذِّبِكُمْ ۗ وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَكِيلًا ۗ
 وَرَبُّكَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۗ وَقَدْ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَ النَّاسِ
 عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ ۗ وَآتَيْنَا دَاوُدَ زَبُورًا ۗ قُلِ ادْعُوا الَّذِينَ زَعَمْتُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ فَلَا

We have admonished the people in different ways in the Qurān so that they may take warning, yet they are running further and further away from the Truth. O Muhammad, tell them that if there had been other deities beside Allah, as they assert, they would surely have tried to find a way to (dethrone) the Master of the Throne.⁴⁷ He is free from and far above the things they say about Him. The seven heavens and the Earth and all the things therein⁴⁸ are chanting hymns of His glory⁴⁹ along with His praise but you do not understand their hymns. The fact is that He is very Forbearing and Forgiving.⁵⁰ 41-44

When you recite the Qurān, we place an invisible curtain between you and those who do not believe in the Hereafter and we cover their hearts with a covering so that they understand nothing and we make their ears hard of hearing.⁵¹ And when in the Qurān you mention your one Lord only, they turn their faces away in aversion.⁵² We know best what they really wish to hear, when they listen to you, and also what they say, when they sit together in secret conversation. These wrongdoers say to one another, "The man you are following is really bewitched"⁵³—Behold! what epithets they apply to you! They have gone astray, so they cannot find the Right Way.⁵⁴ 45-48

They say, "What! shall we really be raised up again into a new creation, when we are reduced to bones and dust?" Say to them, ("yes, most certainly you shall be brought back to life,) even if you be stone or iron or even something harder than this which you consider in your minds impossible to be brought to life." At this they will ask, "Who is he who will bring us back to life?" Say to them, "The same Being Who brought you to life in the first instance." Then they will shake their heads at you and ask,⁵⁵ "Well, when will this happen?" Say, "That time may be near at hand. On the Day, when He will call you, you will rise up in response to it, praising Him, and you will think, "We have remained in this state only for a little while."⁵⁶ 49-52

And O Muhammad, say to My servants,⁵⁷ "They should utter only that which is the best of all."⁵⁸ In reality, it is 53-54

Satan who tries to sow discord between human beings. The fact is that Satan is the avowed enemy of man.⁵⁹ Your Lord is fully aware of everything concerning you. If He will, He may show mercy to you, and if He will, He may give you severe chastisement.”⁶⁰ And, O Prophet, We have not sent you to be the guardian over people.⁶¹

55 Your Lord is fully aware of all the creatures in the heavens and the earth. We have exalted some Prophets above the others in ranks,⁶² and We gave the Psalms to David.⁶³

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figure his dead body or to kill him after receiving blood-money, etc. etc. All these things have been forbidden.

37. It has not been defined how succour will be given because at the time of its revelation the Islamic State had not yet been established. After its establishment it was made clear that a guardian was not authorised to enforce retribution by murdering the criminal. The Islamic Government alone is legally authorized to take retribution; therefore succour for justice should be demanded only from it.

38. This too, was not merely a moral instruction. When the Islamic State was established, legal and administrative methods were adopted to safeguard the rights of orphans, the details of which are found in the literature of *Hadith* and *Fiqh*. Then this principle was extended to cover the cases of all those citizens who were unable to safeguard their own rights. The Holy Prophet himself declared, “I am the guardian of the one who has no guardian”. And this is the basis of many rules and regulations of the Islamic Law.

39. “Fulfilment of pledges” was not meant to be merely a moral instruction for individuals but afterwards when the Islamic State was established, this became the guiding principle for the conduct of all internal and external affairs by the Muslim Community and the Islamic Government.

40. This instruction was not confined to individuals only but it has been made a part of the duties of an Islamic Government to supervise transactions in the markets and streets to see that exact measures and weights are being observed, and prevent their breach and violation by the force of law. Afterwards it was made one of the duties of the government to eradicate dishonesty in all commercial dealings and economic transactions.

41. That is, “Its end will be best in this world and it will be best in the Hereafter.” It is best in this world because it produces mutual trust between sellers and buyers. As a result of this, commerce prospers and there is a general prosperity. As regards the Hereafter, there the

and depends wholly on honesty, piety and fear of God.

42. The meanings of "Do not follow that of which you have no knowledge" are very comprehensive. It demands that both in individual and collective life, one should not follow mere guess work and presumption instead of "knowledge". This instruction covers all aspects of Islamic life, moral, legal, political, administrative and applies to science, arts and education. It has thus saved the society from numerous evils which are produced in human life by following guess-work instead of knowledge. The Islamic moral code demands: Guard against suspicion and do not accuse any individual or group without proper investigation. In law, it has been made a permanent principle that no action should be taken against anyone without proper investigation. It has been made unlawful to arrest, beat or imprison anyone on mere suspicion during investigation. In regard to foreign relations, the definite policy has been laid down that no action should be taken without investigation, nor should rumours be set afloat. Likewise in education the so-called sciences based on mere guess-work, presumptions and irrational theories have been disapproved. Above all, it cuts at the very root of superstitions, for this instruction teaches the Believers to accept only that which is based on the knowledge imparted by Allah and His Messenger.

43. This instruction warns against the ways of tyrants and vain people and is not merely meant for the individual but also for the collective conduct of the Muslim Community. It was because of this guidance that the rulers, governors and commanders of the Islamic State which was established on the basis of this Manifesto, were free from every tinge of tyranny, arrogance, haughtiness, pride and vanity; so much so that even in the battle-field they never uttered a word which had the slightest indication of any of these vain things. Their gait, dress, dwelling and conveyance showed humility. In short, their ways of conduct were not those of "big ones" but those of humble persons. That is why they never tried to overawe the people of a conquered city by show of pomp and pride.

44. That is, "Allah disapproves of the commission of anything that has been prohibited" or, in other words, "He disapproves of disobedience to any of these Commandments."

45. Though this has been addressed to the Holy Prophet, the real addressee is every human being as in the case of many such verses.

46. Please refer to verses 57-59 and their E.N's.

47. That is, "They would have themselves tried their best to become masters of the Throne". This is because if there had been more than one partners in Godhead, it would produce one of the two results: (1) If they were all independent gods, it was not conceivable that they would agree and co-operate with one another in the management of the boundless universe and there could never have been unanimity, uniformity and

balanced proportion in its functioning. There would have been conflict at every step and everyone would have tried to dominate others in order to become its sole master. Or (2) if one of them had been the supreme god and the others his obedient servants whom he had delegated some of his powers, then, according to the maxim "power corrupts", they would never have been content with remaining obedient servants of the supreme god and would have conspired to become the supreme god themselves.

Whereas the fact is that in this universe not even a grain of wheat or a blade of grass can grow unless and until everything in the earth and the heavens cooperate with one another for its production. Therefore only an utterly ignorant and blockheaded person can conceive that there are more than one independent or semi-independent rulers, who carry on the management of this universe. Anyone who has tried to understand the nature and functioning of the universe will most surely arrive at the conclusion that there is One and only One Sovereign ruling over this universe, and there is absolutely no likelihood of any one else to be a co-partner in this at any stage.

48. That is, "The whole of the universe and everything in it bear witness to the fact that their Creator and Guardian is free from each and every fault, defect and weakness, and that He is 'far above this that there should be any partner or associate in His Godhead.'"

49. Everything is not only singing hymns of the glory of its Creator but is affording the proof that He is perfect in every respect and worthy of all praise. Everything is an embodiment of the proof that its Creator and Administrator is the One in whom there is perfection of every quality. Therefore He alone is worthy of praise.

50. That is, "It is due to His forbearance and forgiveness that though you are persistently insolent to Him and go on inventing one false thing or the other against Him, He forbears and forgives you: He neither withholds provisions from you nor deprives you of His favours nor strikes an insolent person instantly dead with a thunderbolt. Above all, He is so forbearing and forgiving that He gives long enough respite to the individuals and communities to mend their ways, sends His Prophets and Reformers for their admonition and guidance and forgives all the past mistakes and errors, if one sincerely repents and adopts the Right Way.

51. This refers to the Divine Law according to which those people, who do not believe in the Hereafter, cannot benefit from the Qurān. Allah has attributed this law to Himself, as if to say, "The natural result of disbelief in the Hereafter is that the heart of such a man becomes dull and his ears become deaf to the Message of the Qurān, for the Qurān bases its invitation on the belief in the Hereafter. So it warns the people that they should not be deluded by this apparent aspect of the worldly life if there appears to be none to

call them to account here; for it does not mean they are not at all accountable and answerable to anyone. Likewise if Allah allows freedom of belief to practise *shirk*, atheism, disbelief or *Tauhid* with impunity in this world, and their practice does not appear to make any practical difference in this world, it does not mean that these things do not produce any results at all. For, in fact, everyone shall be accountable and answerable but after death in the Next World. Then every one will realize that the doctrine of *Tauhid* alone is true and all other doctrines are false. For, if at present the consequences of deeds do not appear, after death they shall inevitably appear, but now the Reality has been hidden behind an invisible curtain. There is an inevitable moral law according to which submission to it will bear its fruit and disobedience shall incur its losses. As decisions according to this moral law will be made in the Hereafter, you should not be enticed by the charms of this transitory life. You should, therefore, keep in view that ultimately you shall have to render an account of all your deeds in this world before your Lord, and adopt that true creed and moral attitude which may be conducive to your success in the Hereafter”.

From this it must have become obvious that if a man does not believe in the Hereafter, he will never consider the message of the Qurān worth his while but will hanker after this world and its joys which he can feel and experience. Naturally his ears will not listen to the Message and it will never reach the depths of his heart. Allah has stated this psychological fact in this verse.

In this connection, it should be remembered that the words contained in this verse were uttered by the disbelievers of Makkah as quoted in verse 5 of Sūrah 41: “They say, O Muhammad, a covering has fallen over our hearts, and our ears are deaf for the Message you give and there is a curtain between you and us. You may go on with your work and we will do whatever we desire.” Here the same words have been cited, as if to say, “You consider this state of yours to be a virtue, whereas this is a curse which has fallen on you according to the Divine Law because of your disbelief of the Hereafter.”

52. That is, “They do not like it at all that you should consider Allah alone as your Lord and not mention the lords they have set up.” They seem to think it strange that one should go on praising Allah and never mention the “miracles” of their elders and saints nor praise them for their favours. For, according to them, Allah has delegated the powers of His Godhead to their great ones. Therefore, they say, “What a strange fellow he is! He believes that the knowledge of the unknown, and all the power and authority belong to One Allah alone. Why does he not pay tribute to those who give us children, cure us of diseases and help make our commerce flourish, in short, fulfil all our wishes and desires?”

53. This refers to those devices which they conspired against the

Message of the Holy Prophet. They would secretly listen to him, and then hold consultations in order to counteract this. Sometimes it so happened that they suspected that someone had been influenced by the Qurān. Then they would sit together and try to dissuade him, saying, "How is it that you have been influenced by a person who himself is bewitched by some enemy and talks like this?"

54. This is to say that they expressed different opinions at different times which contradicted each other. Sometimes they said, "You are a sorcerer" and at other times, "You have been bewitched by someone, or you are a poet or you are possessed of some evil spirit." These contradictory things were a proof that they did not know the reality. Otherwise, they would not have invented a different name to suit each occasion. This also shows that they themselves were not sure of the 'charge' they levelled against him. If they called him by one epithet one day, they themselves felt afterwards that it did not fit in. Then they would invent the second epithet and then the third and so on. Thus every new epithet contradicted the previous ones and showed that there was no truth in them, but in their enmity they were inventing one falsehood after the other.

55. "They will shake their heads at you" in astonishment or to express doubt or disapproval or to scoff at you.

56. That is, "You will feel as if the intervening period between death and coming again to life on the Day of Resurrection was only a few hours or so, for you will think that you had just woken up after a short sleep by the sudden noise produced on the Day."

As regards ".....you will rise up praising Him," it is a subtle hint towards a great reality: at the time of rising up from death both the believer and the unbeliever will be uttering the praise of Allah. The believer will do so because in the worldly life also he believed in this creed and practised it. As regards the unbeliever, he will have the urge to do so because of the inherent and ingrained tendency in him which he had been suppressing by his folly. In the new life all those deliberate suppressions will vanish away and he will involuntarily utter the praise of Allah.

57. "The believers."

58. The believers have been enjoined to say only the best things even in their discussion with the disbelievers and other opponents of their Faith. They should neither use harsh words nor make exaggerated statements. They should be cool in their conversation and say only what is true and dignified in spite of the provoking behaviour of the opponents.

59. The believers have been forewarned to guard against the provocations of Satan, as if to say, "While answering your opponents, if you feel that you are being aroused to anger, you should at once understand that it is Satan who is exciting you in order to do harm to your

dispute, in which he wants to engage human beings for sowing discord between them."

60. This is to warn the believers to refrain from making claims of piety so as to assign Paradise to themselves and Hell to their opponents. It is Allah alone Who has the power to decide these things because He is fully aware of the known and secret and the present and future things about all human beings. It is He Who will decide whether to show mercy to anyone or give chastisement. However, a man may say in the light of the Divine Book that a certain kind of human beings deserve mercy and another kind of people incur chastisement but none has any right to say specifically that a particular man will be given chastisement and another will get salvation.

61. This is to declare that a Prophet is sent to convey the Message and not to decide whether a person will receive mercy or get chastisement. It does not, however, mean that, God forbid, the Holy Prophet himself did such a thing and Allah had to warn him. In fact, this is to warn the Muslims that when the Prophet himself is not in a position as to decide the fates of the people, they should never think of such a thing as to assign Paradise and Hell to anyone.

62. Though this has apparently been addressed to the Holy Prophet, in fact the real addressees are the disbelievers of Makkah. This is to rebuke them for the low opinion they held in regard to the Holy Prophet. As it commonly happens contemporaries, in general, and opponents, in particular, do not see anything great and noble in a person of their own time. The same was the case with the contemporaries of the Holy Prophet who could not see anything extra-ordinary or great in him. He appeared to be merely a common man of their habitation. On the other hand, they were full of praise in regard to the famous personalities who had lived in the past few centuries and imagined them to be the perfection of greatness. That is why, they raised frivolous objections against his claim to Prophethood, as if to say, "Look at this man who considers himself to be a Prophet whereas he cannot stand in comparison with the former great Prophets who are held in high esteem by all." Allah has answered their objection, as if to say, "We are fully aware of all Our creatures in the heavens and the earth, and We know their ranks but you do not know. We know whom to favour with Prophethood, as We have been favouring the former Prophets and exalting some Prophets above others in rank."

63. It appears that Prophet David has been particularly mentioned to show that Prophethood does not mean that one should have nothing to do with the life of this world. This was the answer to the objection they were raising against the claim to Prophethood by Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him), that he was a man of the world. It means to say, "Though David was a king who had to engage himself in

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يَبْلُغُونَ كَشَفَ الضَّرِّ عَنْكُمْ وَلَا تَحْوِيلًا ﴿٥٦﴾ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ يَبْتَغُونَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمُ الْوَسِيلَةَ أَيُّهُمْ أَقْرَبُ وَيَرْجُونَ رَحْمَتَهُ وَيَخَافُونَ عَذَابَهُ إِنَّ عَذَابَ رَبِّكَ كَانَ مَحْذُورًا ﴿٥٧﴾ وَإِنْ مِنْ قَرْيَةٍ إِلَّا نَحْنُ مُهْلِكُومًا قَبْلَ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ أَوْ مُعَذِّبُومًا عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا ۖ كَانَ ذَٰلِكَ فِي الْكِتَابِ مَسْطُورًا ﴿٥٨﴾ وَمَا مَنَعَنَا أَنْ نُرْسِلَ بِالْآيَاتِ إِلَّا أَنْ كَذَّبَ بِهَا الْأَوَّلُونَ ۖ وَآتَيْنَا نُوحًا النُّوحَ الْمُبِينَةَ فظَلَمُوا بِهَا ۖ وَمَا نُرْسِلُ بِالْآيَاتِ إِلَّا تَخْوِيفًا ﴿٥٩﴾ وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لَكَ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ أَحَاطَ بِالنَّاسِ وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الرُّؤْيَا الَّتِي آرَيْنَكَ إِلَّا فِتْنَةً لِلنَّاسِ وَالشَّجَرَةَ الْمَلْعُونَةَ فِي الْقُرْآنِ وَنُحِفُّهُمْ لِمَا يُزِيدُهُمْ إِلَّا طُغْيَانًا كَبِيرًا ﴿٦٠﴾ وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ ۖ قَالَ ءَأَسْجُدُ لِمَنْ خَلَقْتَ طِينًا ﴿٦١﴾ قَالَ أَرَأَيْتَكَ هَٰذَا الَّذِي كَرَّمْتَ عَلَيَّ لَئِنْ لَئِن آخَرْتَنِي إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ لَآخُتِنُكَ ذُرِّيَّتَهُ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴿٦٢﴾ قَالَ أَذْهَبَ فَمَنْ تَبِعَكَ مِنْهُمْ فَإِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ جَزَاءُكُمْ جَزَاءً مَوْفُورًا ﴿٦٣﴾ وَاسْتَفْرَزَ مِنْهُمُ ابْنُ آدَمَ وَمَنْ يَتَّبِعْهُ يَكْفِرْ ۖ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ آلِهِمْ وَنَحْبِهِمْ غَافِلُونَ ﴿٦٤﴾ وَاسْتَفْرَزَ مِنْهُمُ ابْنُ آدَمَ وَمَنْ يَتَّبِعْهُ يَكْفِرْ ۖ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ آلِهِمْ وَنَحْبِهِمْ غَافِلُونَ ﴿٦٥﴾ وَاسْتَفْرَزَ مِنْهُمُ ابْنُ آدَمَ وَمَنْ يَتَّبِعْهُ يَكْفِرْ ۖ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ آلِهِمْ وَنَحْبِهِمْ غَافِلُونَ ﴿٦٦﴾

Say to them, "You may invoke for help those deities whom you consider to be (your helpers) beside Allah: They will not be able to relieve you of any trouble nor change it."⁶⁴ In fact those whom these people invoke for help themselves seek means of approach to their Lord and vie with one another to be nearer to Him and hope for His mercy and fear His chastisement.⁶⁵ The fact is that the chastisement of your Lord is a thing to be dreaded. 56-57

There is no habitation which We shall not destroy before the Day of Resurrection or punish with a severe chastisement.⁶⁶ This has been ordained in the Eternal Record. 58

And nothing has hindered Us from sending Signs⁶⁷ except that the former people refused to acknowledge them as such. (For example,) We sent the She-camel as an open Sign to Thamūd but they treated her with cruelty;⁶⁸ whereas We send Signs only by way of warning.⁶⁹ Call to mind, O Muhammad! We told you at the very beginning that your Lord is encircling these people.⁷⁰ And We made what We have shown you now⁷¹ and also the Tree which has been cursed in the Qurān⁷² as a trial for these people.⁷³ We are giving them warning after warning but each warning helps only to increase their insurrection. 59-60

And remember: when We commanded the angels, "Bow yourselves before Adam," all bowed down but Iblīs.⁷⁴ He replied, "Should I bow before the one whom you have created of clay?" Then he added, "Just consider this: Was he worthy of this that you have exalted him over me? If you give me respite up to the Day of Resurrection, I will uproot the whole of his progeny;⁷⁵ there shall be only a few of them who will be able to save themselves from me." Allah replied, "Well, get away. Hell is your ample reward and the reward of those who follow you. You may try to allure with your invitation whomsoever you can.⁷⁶ Rally against them your horsemen and your footmen:⁷⁷ set a partner with them in their wealth and children⁷⁸ and entice them with your false promises⁷⁹——. And Satan's promises 61-65

are nothing but deception——. Indeed you will have no power over my servants.”⁸⁰ And your Lord suffices for you as a guardian.⁸¹

66-68

Your (real) Lord is the One, Who drives your ship across the sea⁸² so that you may seek His bounty.⁸³ The fact is that He is very merciful towards you. When a misfortune befalls you on the sea, all of those whom you invoke for help fail you but He (is there to help you⁸⁴): yet when He brings you safe to land, you turn away from Him. Indeed man is very ungrateful. What, do you feel quite secure that sometimes Allah would not cause you to sink underground even on land, or send a deadly whirlwind charged with stones toward you, and you may not find anyone to protect you from it?

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worldly affairs more than a common man, he was favoured by Allah with Prophethood, and given the Book, the Psalms. Likewise Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) could be favoured with Prophethood in spite of the fact that he had wife and children and passed his life like other common people and was engaged in buying and selling in the market, in short, in performing all those duties that a man of the world has to perform to meet his necessities of life. This was necessitated because according to the disbelievers of Makkah, such a man of the world could not be considered to be even a pious man, much less a Prophet, for pious people should have nothing to do with the worldly affairs but should sit in seclusion and remember God whereas the Holy Prophet had to work to fulfil the necessities of life.

64. This warning helps to elaborate the Doctrine of *Tauhid* and negate *shirk*. According to this, *shirk* is not confined merely to falling prostrate before any other than Allah but it is also *shirk* to pray to or invoke the help of any other than Allah; for praying to or calling for help any other than Allah is in reality a kind of worship. Therefore, the one who invokes for help any other than Allah is as much guilty of *shirk* as the worshipper of an idol. This verse also shows clearly that none other than Allah has any power to attend to prayers and relieve any one of trouble or alter any one's bad condition. Hence, if one believes that some one other than Allah has any power, he shall be guilty of *shirk*.

65. The words of the text are a clear proof that the deities and the helpers referred to in this verse were not idols of stone but were either angels or dead saints. It is clearly implied in this that no prophet, no saint and no angel, whom the people invoke for help, has

the power to hear prayers and help anyone. They themselves hope for mercy from Allah and dread His punishment and vie with one another in seeking means for nearness to Him.

66. This is to remove the delusion of the disbelievers that their habitations were immune from danger or chastisement. This verse warns that every habitation will be destroyed as a matter of course or by Allah's chastisement.

67. Here "Signs" mean those visible miracles which are presented as a proof of Prophethood. The disbelievers from among the Quraish were demanding such Signs over and over again.

68. This is to warn the disbelievers, as if to say, "It is the mercy of Allah that He is not showing such a Sign so that you might mend your ways but in your folly you presume that such a Sign cannot be presented. You should know that a Sign is not being sent because its denial inevitably brings chastisement and the community is annihilated. You can learn from the past History that those communities which disbelieved in the open Signs were utterly destroyed, such as the people of Thamūd.

69. That is, "Miracles are not shown for fun. These are meant to warn the people that the Prophet is being helped by the Almighty and that they should realize the terrible consequences of disobedience."

70. That is, "At the very beginning of your Prophethood, when the disbelievers of the Quraish had started opposition to your message, We declared that We are encircling them. They might try their worst to obstruct your Message, but they will inevitably fail in this and your Mission will succeed in the teeth of opposition. Can't they see that this declaration has come out true as a miracle, for their opposition has failed to hinder your Message, and they have not been able to do any harm to you at all? This was a clear Sign of the fact that the Mission of the Holy Prophet was being supported by the Almighty God."

As regards the declaration that Allah is encircling the disbelievers and helping the Mission of the Prophet, it occurs in several Sūrah's of the first stage of Prophethood at Makkah. For instance, in vv. 17-20 of LXXV, Allah says, "These disbelievers do not learn a lesson from the stories of the people of the Pharaoh and Thamūd but are rejecting the Message whereas Allah is encircling them on all sides."

71. This refers to *Mi'rāj* (Ascension) for here word "*ru'yā*" does not mean "seeing things in a dream" but seeing things actually with physical eyes. It is quite obvious that if it had been a mere "dream" and the Holy Prophet had presented it as a dream to the disbelievers, there was no reason why it should have become a trial for them. Everyday people see strange dreams and relate them to the people but these dreams never become such a curious thing as to make people scoff

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بِمَا كَفَرْتُمْ لَا تَعُدُّوا لَكُمْ عَلَيْنَا بِهِ تَبِيعًا ۗ وَ لَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ وَ
 حَمَلْنَاهُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَرَزَقْنَاهُمْ مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَفَضَّلْنَاهُمْ عَلَى كَثِيرٍ مِمَّنْ
 خَلَقْنَا تَفْضِيلًا ۗ يَوْمَ نَدْعُوا كُلَّ أُنَاسٍ بِإِسْمِهِمْ ۗ فَمَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ بِرَيْبِهِ
 فَأُولَئِكَ يَقْرَءُونَ كِتَابَهُمْ وَلَا يُظَلِّمُونَ فِتْيَلًا ۗ وَ مَنْ كَانَ فِي هَذِهِ أَعْمَى
 فَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ أَعْمَى وَ أَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا ۗ وَإِنْ كَادُوا لَيَفْتِنُونَكَ عَنِ الَّذِي
 أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ لِتَفْتَرِيَ عَلَيْنَا غَيْرَةً ۗ وَإِذَا لَاتَخَذُوكَ خَلِيلًا ۗ وَ لَوْ لَا أَنْ
 تَبَتَّنَا لَقَدِ كِدْتَ تَرْكُنُ إِلَيْهِمْ شَيْئًا قَلِيلًا ۗ إِذَا لَأَذْنُكَ ضَعْفَ الْحَيَاةِ وَ
 ضَعْفَ الْمَمَاتِ ثُمَّ لَا تَعْدُ لَكَ عَلَيْنَا نَصِيرًا ۗ وَإِنْ كَادُوا لَيَسْتَفِزُّوكَ
 مِنَ الْأَرْضِ لِيُخْرِجُوكَ مِنْهَا وَإِذَا لَا يَلْبَثُونَ خِلْفَكَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ۗ سَنَّةً مِّنْ
 قَدِ أَرْسَلْنَا قَبْلَكَ مِنْ رُّسُلِنَا وَ لَا تَعْدُ لِحِسَابِنَا تَحْوِيلًا ۗ أَقِيمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِذُلُوكِ
 الشَّمْسِ إِلَى غَسَقِ اللَّيْلِ وَ قُرْآنِ الْفَجْرِ ۗ إِنَّ قُرْآنَ الْفَجْرِ كَانَ مَشْهُودًا ۗ وَ
 مِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَسَبِّحْهُ بِمِ نَافِلَةٍ ۗ لَكَ تَشْعَى أَنْ يَبْعَثَكَ رَبُّكَ مَقَامًا مَّخْرُودًا ۗ
 وَقُلْ رَبِّ أَدْخِلْنِي مُدْخَلَ صِدْقٍ وَ أَخْرِجْنِي مُخْرَجَ صِدْقٍ وَ اجْعَلْ
 لِي مِّنْ لَّدُنْكَ سُلْطَانًا نَّصِيرًا ۗ وَقُلْ جَاءَ الْحَقُّ وَ زَهَقَ الْبَاطِلُ ۗ إِنَّ
 الْبَاطِلَ كَانَ زَهُوقًا ۗ وَ نُنزِّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَ رَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ
 وَ لَا يَزِيدُ الظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا خَسَارًا ۗ وَإِذَا أَنْعَمْنَا عَلَى الْإِنْسَانِ أَعْرَضَ وَ نَا
 بِجَانِبِهِ ۗ وَإِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ كَانَ يَئُوسًا ۗ قُلْ كُلُّ يَعْتَلُ عَلَى شَاكِلِيهِ
 فَرَبُّكُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ هُوَ أَهْدَى سَبِيلًا ۗ وَ يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الرُّوحِ ۗ قُلِ الرُّوحُ
 مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي وَ مَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ۗ وَ لَئِنْ سَأَلْتُمْ لَنَدَّهَبَنَّ

Or, are you not afraid that God may again send you to the sea and smite you with a violent tempest and drown you for your ingratitude, and you may not find any one to question Us in regard to this end of yours?—It is a favour that We have honoured the sons of Adam and blessed them with conveyances on land and sea and provided them with good and pure things and exalted them above many of Our other creatures.⁸⁵ Just imagine the scene on the Day, when We will summon every community with its leader: then those, who will be given their records in their right hands, will read their records⁸⁶ and will not be wronged in the least; on the other hand, the one, who leads his life in this world as if he were blind shall be blind in the Hereafter, nay, he shall fare even worse than a blind person in finding the way.

69-72

O Muhammad! these people have left no stone unturned to tempt you away from that which We have revealed to you so that you might fabricate something in Our name.⁸⁷ Had you done that, they would have made you their friend. It was just possible that you might have inclined a little towards them, if We had not given you strength. But if you had done so, We would have made you taste double chastisement in this world as well as in the Hereafter: then you would have found no helper against Us.⁸⁸

73-75

And these people have persistently been trying to uproot you from this land and exile you from it, but if they do so, they will not be able to stay here much longer.⁸⁹

76

This has always been Our Way with the Messengers whom We sent before you,⁹⁰ and you will find no change in Our way.

77

Establish *Ṣalāt*⁹¹ from the declining of the sun⁹² to the darkness of the night,⁹³ and be particular about the recital of the *Qurān*⁹⁴ at the dawn of the morning, for the recital of the *Qurān* at the dawn is witnessed.⁹⁵ Besides this, offer *Tahajjud* Prayer⁹⁶ at night: this is an additional prayer for you.⁹⁷ That time is not far when your Lord may exalt you to a laudable position.⁹⁸

78-79

And pray, "Lord, whereto Thou takest me, take me with truth, and wherefrom Thou takest me out, cause me

80

to go out with truth:⁹⁹ and grant me a power from Thee to help me."¹⁰⁰

81 And declare, "The Truth has come and falsehood has vanished: for falsehood is a thing that must by its nature vanish."¹⁰¹

82-84 We are sending down to you through the revelation of the Qurān what is a healing and mercy to the Believers, though it adds nothing but loss to the workers of iniquity.¹⁰² Man is a (strange) creature: when We bestow favour on him, he behaves arrogantly and turns his back, but when misfortune befalls him, he begins to despair. O Prophet, say to them, "Everyone is following his own way but your Lord alone knows best who is on the right way."

85 They ask you about "The Spirit."¹⁰³ Say, "This Spirit comes by the Command of my Lord, but you have been given only a little of the 'Knowledge'."

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at the dreamer and accuse him of making a false claim or of being a mad person.

72. This cursed tree, "*Az-Zaqqūm*", which has been mentioned in vv. 43-44 of Sūrah XLIV, grows at the bottom of Hell and its dwellers shall have to eat it. This has been called a cursed tree because it is not given to people to eat as a mercy from Allah but as a symbol of His curse so that the accursed people should eat it and get more sore, for this will, so to speak, burn in their bellies like the boiling water.

73. That is, "We showed you such things during the *Mi'rāj* so that they should have the first hand knowledge of the Reality from a truthful and honest man like you and be warned by it to the Right Way. They, however, began to make fun of you, though We had already warned them through you that their evil ways would force them to eat of the *Az-Zaqqūm*. Instead of this they began to scoff at you, saying, 'Just consider the logic of this man: on the one hand, he says that there is an awful fire burning in Hell and, on the other, he says that trees are growing in it.'"

74. Please also refer to II : 30-39, IV: 117-122, VII: 11-25, XIV: 22, XV: 26-43.

• This story has been cited here to impress upon the disbelievers that their attitude of arrogance and indifference towards Allah is exactly the same as was adopted by Satan. As a matter of fact, they were following Satan who is the avowed enemy of man, and were being entangled in the snare spread by him who had challenged the progeny of Adam at the very beginning of human history that he would allure and ruin them.

75. That is, "I will uproot them from the high position of Divine Vicegerency which demands steadfastness in obedience. Their removal from that high position is just like the tearing of a tree from its roots."

76. The literal meaning of the Arabic Text is, "You may sweep away those whom you find superficial and weak-minded."

77. Here, Satan has been likened to that robber who assaults a habitation with horsemen and footmen, and orders one to rob this thing and the other to plunder that thing and so on—The horsemen and the footmen of Satan are those *jinn*s and human beings who are engaged in numerous forms and positions in carrying out his mission.

78. This is a very meaningful sentence which depicts a true and perfect picture of the relationship between Satan and his followers. On the one hand, Satan becomes a partner with the one who follows him in the earning and spending of his money without putting in any labour in it; on the other, he does not become a partner in bearing the consequences of his error, crime and sin. But his foolish dupe follows his instructions as if he were a partner, nay, a stronger party. Again in regard to the children of such a man, the father himself bears the whole burden of bringing them up, but under the mis-guidance of Satan he trains them in wrong and immoral ways as if he alone was not their father but Satan as well was a partner in it.

79. Satan entices them with false promises of success and entangles them in the snare of false expectations.

80. It has two meanings: (1) "You will have no power over human beings to force them to follow your way. What you are allowed to do is that you may delude them by false counsel and entice them by false promises, but they will have the option to follow or not to follow your counsel. You will not have the power over them to force them to follow your way against their will." (2) "You will not succeed in alluring My righteous people. Though the weak-minded will be enticed by you, My righteous people who are steadfast in My obedience will not succumb to you."

81. That is, "Those who will trust in Allah and believe in His guidance and help, will not stand in need of any other support in their trial by Satan for Allah will guide them, protect them and help them to be safe from his allurements. On the other hand, those people, who will place their trust in their own power or that of any other than Allah, will not come out successful in their trial by Satan."

82. This passage (vv. 66-72) is closely connected with the previous one. It tells man that if he wants to protect himself from the allurements, temptations and false promises of Satan who has been his avowed enemy from the day of his creation, he should recognize his real Lord and be steadfast in His obedience. Satan intends to prove that man is not worthy of the honour with which Allah has blessed him. Therefore man should trust in his Lord and look up to Him for guidance for if he

follows any other way he cannot escape the snares of Satan.

In this passage, arguments of *Tauhid* have been put forward in order to make man steadfast in his Faith and refrain from *shirk*.

83. That is, "Try to avail of the economic, social, educational and intellectual benefits which are provided by the sea voyages."

84. That is, "This is a proof of the fact that your real nature knows no other Lord than Allah, and you feel in the depths of your hearts that He alone possesses the real power of every gain or loss. Had it not been so, man would never have invoked Allah at the time when he realized that no other helper could remove his misfortune."

85. That is, "It is an obvious fact that the superiority man enjoys over all other beings on the Earth and all that is in it, has not been bestowed upon him by a *jinn* or an angel or a prophet. Most surely that is Allah's blessing and favour. Is it not then the height of folly and ignorance that after having achieved such a high rank, man should bow down before any creature of Allah instead of Him?"

86. We learn from the Qurān that on the Day of Resurrection, the righteous people will be given their records in their right hands and they will be overjoyed to have a look at it and will show it to others. As regards the wicked people, they will get their records in their left hands and in their shame will try to hide it behind their backs. (Please refer to LXIX: 19-28, LXXXIV: 7-13).

87. In order to understand the significance of this verse, we should keep in view the circumstances through which the Holy Prophet had been passing at Makkah during the preceding decade or so. The disbelievers of Makkah were exerting their utmost to turn the Holy Prophet away, somehow or other, from his Message of *Tauhid*, which he was presenting, and to force him to make a compromise with *shirk* and the customs of ignorance. In order to achieve this end, they tempted him in several ways. They practised deception upon him, and tempted him with greed, held out threats, and raised a storm of false propaganda against him, and persecuted him and applied economic pressure and social boycott against him. In short, they did all that could be done to defeat his resolve.

88. This review implies two things: (1) "If you had compromised with falsehood after recognizing the Truth, you might have pleased your degenerate people but would have incurred the wrath of Allah and would have received double chastisement both in this world and in the Hereafter." (2) "No man, not even a Messenger of Allah, can fight single-handed against the deceitful methods of falsehood, unless he receives the succour of Allah." It was the fortitude which Allah had bestowed upon the Holy Prophet, which helped him to remain steadfast on the right position he had taken, so that no persecution, howsoever great, could turn him away in the least from that position.

89. This was a clear prophecy which was made at the time when it appeared to be no more than a mere threat, but it was fulfilled literally

in a decade or so. A year after the revelation of this Sūrah, the disbelievers of Makkah compelled the Holy Prophet to leave his home. Then within eight years he entered Makkah as a conqueror, and within two years after this, the whole of Arabia was totally freed from *mushriks*. Then whosoever stayed in that country, he remained there as a Muslim and not as a *mushrik*.

90. That is, "This is how Allah has always dealt with the people who killed or exiled His Messengers. They never survived in the land after this. They were either annihilated by the scourge of Allah or were brought under the sway of an enemy or were subdued by the followers of the Messenger."

91. The Muslims have been commanded to establish *Ṣalāt* immediately after the mention of obstacles and adversities. This implies that the perseverance required to face adverse circumstances is obtained by the establishment of *Ṣalāt*.

92. We have translated the words of the Arabic Text into "the declining of the sun." Though some of the Companions and their followers are of the opinion that it means "the sunset", the majority of them are of the opinion that it means "the declining of the sun from its zenith." Caliph 'Umar, Ibn 'Umar, Anas bin Mālik, Abū Barza-tal-Aslamī, Hasan Baṣrī, Sha'abī, Atā', Mujāhid and, according to a Tradition, Ibn 'Abbās (Allah be pleased with them all) are of this opinion and Imām Muḥammad Bāqir and Imām Ja'afar Ṣādiq also are of the same opinion. Besides this, there are some Traditions from the Holy Prophet to the same effect, though they are not so authentic.

93. According to some, the original words of the Arabic text mean "complete darkness of the night", while others take it to mean "midnight". If the first opinion is accepted, it will imply the beginning of the time of the '*Ishā*' Prayer and according to the other it will mean "the last limit of the time of '*Ishā*'."

94. The literal meaning of the word *fajr* is "dawn", that is, "the beginning of the morning after the darkness of night."

Here the "recital of the Qurān in the morning" stands for the Morning Prayer. At some places the Qurān has used the word *Ṣalāt* for 'Prayer' and at other places a particular part of *Ṣalāt* for Prayer as a whole e.g., *tasbīh*, *ḥamd*, *zīkr*, *qayām*, *rukū'*, *sujūd* etc. Likewise, here "recital of the Qurān at dawn" does not mean the mere recital of the Qurān but its recital during the Prayer. Thus, the Qurān has also incidentally referred to the different parts of which *Ṣalāt* is composed and these guided the Holy Prophet to prescribe the definite form of *Ṣalāt* in which it is performed by the Muslims to-day.

95. The recital of the Qurān at dawn is witnessed by the angels of Allah to testify it, as has been explained in the Traditions. Though the angels witness each prayer and each good deed the special mention of their being witnesses at the time of the recital of the Qurān during the Morning

Prayer gives it a particular importance. That is why the Holy Prophet used to recite long passages from the Qurān during the Morning Prayer. His example was followed by the Companions, and the succeeding Muslim scholars held it to be a desirable thing.

In this verse, it has been briefly stated how to establish *Ṣalāt* which was made obligatory on the occasion of *Mi'rāj* at the prescribed timings. It has been ordained that the first Prayer is to be offered before the sunrise and the remaining four after the declining of the sun till the darkness of the night. Afterwards Angel Jibrīl was sent to the Holy Prophet to define the limits of the timings of each Prayer. According to a Tradition of Abū Da'ūd and Tirmizī related by Ibn 'Abbās, the Holy Prophet said, "Jibrīl led me in the five Prayers twice near the Ka'abah. On the first day, he offered the *Dhuhr* Prayer just after the declining of the sun, when the shadow of every thing was the shortest. Then he offered the 'Aṣr Prayer when the shadow of each thing was equal to its own length; then the *Maghrib* Prayer at the time when one breaks one's fast, and the 'Ishā' Prayer was offered just at the time when twilight had disappeared, and *Fajr* Prayer at the time when it becomes unlawful to eat and drink anything for the one who intends to observe a Fast. The next day he offered the *Dhuhr* Prayer at the time when the shadow of each thing became equal to its own length and the 'Aṣr Prayer when the shadow had doubled. The *Maghrib* Prayer was offered as on the previous day and the 'Ishā' Prayer when one-third of the night had passed away, and the Morning Prayer when light had spread all over. After this Jibrīl turned towards me and said, 'O Muhammad, these are the timings of *Ṣalāt* of the Prophets and the right timings are between these two extreme limits."

The Qurān has also pointed to these five times of *Ṣalāt* on different occasions:

(1) "And listen; establish *Ṣalāt* at the two ends of the day and in the early parts of the night . . ." (IX: 114).

(2) ". . . And glorify your Lord with His praise before the sunrise (*Fajr*) and before sunset ('Aṣr) and then glorify Him during the night ('Ishā') and then at the ends of the day (*Fajr*, *Dhuhr* and *Maghrib*) . . ." (XX: 130).

(3) "So glorify Allah when it is evening for you (*Maghrib*), and when it is morning (*Fajr*). Praise is only for Him in the heavens and the earth and glorify him in the later part of the afternoon ('Aṣr) and in the afternoon (*Dhuhr*)." (XXX: 17-18).

There is great wisdom in this system of the timings of *Ṣalāt*. One of these is to avoid the timings of the worship of the sun-worshippers. This is because the sun has always been in every age one of the greatest deities of the *mushriks*, who worshipped it especially at the time of sunrise and sunset. Therefore these two times have totally been forbidden for *Ṣalāt*. Besides this, they worshipped the sun at the time of its zenith. That is why Islam has ordained that the Muslims should offer their two Prayers

during the day-time after the sun has declined and the *Fajr* Prayer before the sunrise. The Holy Prophet himself has stated this wisdom of the timings of Prayer in several Traditions. For instance, in the Tradition related by 'Amar bin 'Abasah, the Holy Prophet is reported to have replied to a question to this effect: "Offer your Morning Prayer, but refrain from it when the sun is about to rise until it has risen high. For the sun rises between the horns of Satan and the unbelievers fall prostrate before it at that time."

Then after mentioning the 'Aṣr Prayer, he said:

"After 'Aṣr Prayer, refrain from any Prayer until the sunset, for during that time the sun sets between the horns of Satan and the unbelievers fall prostrate before it."

The rising and the setting of the sun between the horns of Satan is a symbolic expression that has been used in this Tradition. This implies that both these times are used by Satan as temptations for the people. This is, as if to say, that Satan is so pleased with the worship of the unbelievers at the time of sunrise and sunset that he appears to carry the sun on his head as a mark of approval. This interpretation of the Tradition is based on this remark of the Holy Prophet: "The unbelievers fall prostrate before it."

96. The literal meaning of "*Tahajjud*" is to rise up by breaking sleep. Therefore the sentence has been translated into "Offer *Tahajjud* Prayer", which means "Rise up from sleep after the passing of a part of night and then offer your Prayer."

97. "*Nafl*" literally means "something done in addition to an obligatory duty". This shows that the *Tahajjud* Prayer is in addition to the five prescribed Prayers.

98. "... may exalt you to a laudable position": "You may attain such a high position in this world and in the next world that people from everywhere may be full of praise for you, and you may become a praiseworthy personality." This is, as if to say, "Now your opponents are engaged in calling you names and are trying to defame you throughout the country, and have raised a storm of false accusations against you but that time is not far when the world will ring with the echoes of your praise and in the Hereafter you will become worthy of praise by all creatures." The exaltation of the Holy Prophet to the high position of intercession on the Day of Resurrection is also a part of that "laudable position."

99. This prayer clearly shows that the time of *Hijrah* (Migration) had come near. That is why Allah has instructed the Holy Prophet to this effect: "You should follow the truth wherever and in whatever condition you be. If you migrate from a place, you should migrate for the sake of the truth, and wherever you go, you should go for the sake of the truth."

[Contd. on p. 162

بِالَّذِي أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ ثُمَّ لَا تَجِدُ لَكَ بِهِ عَلَيْنَا وَكِيلًا ۝ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً مِن
 رَبِّكَ ۝ إِنَّ فَضْلَهُ كَانَ عَلَيْكَ كَبِيرًا ۝ قُلْ لَئِنِ اجْتَمَعَتِ الْإِنْسُ وَالْجِنُّ
 عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَأْتُوا بِمِثْلِ هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ لَا يَأْتُونَ بِمِثْلِهِ وَلَوْ كَانَ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ
 ظَهِيرًا ۝ وَ لَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَا لِلنَّاسِ فِي هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ مِن كُلِّ مَثَلٍ فَأَبَىٰ أَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ
 إِلَّا كُفُورًا ۝ وَقَالُوا لَنْ نُؤْمِنَ لَكَ حَتَّىٰ تَنْفَجِرَ لَنَا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ يَنْبُوعًا ۝
 أَوْ تَكُونَ لَكَ جَنَّةٌ مِّنْ تَحِيْلٍ ۝ وَ عِنَبٍ فَتُفَجِّرَ الْأَنْهَارَ خِلَالَهَا تَفْجِيرًا ۝ أَوْ
 تُسْقِطَ السَّمَاءَ كَمَا زَعَمَتْ عَلَيْنَا لِسَفَا أَوْ تَأْتِيَ بِلَهُ وَ الْمَلَكَةِ قَبِيلًا ۝ أَوْ
 يَكُونَ لَكَ بَيْتٌ مِّنْ زُخْرِفٍ أَوْ تَرْقَىٰ فِي السَّمَاءِ ۝ وَ كُنْ تُؤْمِنُ لِرُوقِيكَ حَتَّىٰ
 نُنزِلَ عَلَيْكَ كِتَابًا تَقْرُؤُهُ ۝ قُلْ سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ هَلْ كُنْتُ إِلَّا بَشَرًا رَسُولًا ۝ وَ
 مَا مَنَعَ النَّاسَ أَنْ يُؤْمِنُوا إِذْ جَاءَهُمُ الْهُدَىٰ إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا أَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ بَشَرًا
 رَسُولًا ۝ قُلْ لَوْ كَانَ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَلَائِكَةٌ يَشْهَدُونَ مَطْمَئِنِّينَ لَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْهِم مِّنَ
 السَّمَاءِ مَلَكًا رَسُولًا ۝ قُلْ كَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا بَيْنِي وَ بَيْنَكُمْ ۝ إِنَّهُ كَانَ بِعِبَادِهِ
 خَبِيرًا بَصِيرًا ۝ وَ مَنْ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَهُوَ الْمُهْتَدِ ۝ وَ مَنْ يَضِلْ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهُمْ
 أَوْلِيَاءَ مِّنْ دُونِهِ ۝ وَ نَحْشُرُهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ عَلَىٰ وُجُوهِهِمْ عُرْيًا وَ بُكْمًا وَ
 صُمًّا ۝ مَا لَهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ كُلَّمَا خَبَتْ زِدْنَاهُمْ سَعِيرًا ۝ ذَلِكَ جَزَاؤُهُمْ بِأَنَّهُمْ
 كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَ قَالُوا إِذَا كُنَّا عِظَامًا وَ رَفَاتًا ۝ إِنَّا لَبَعُوثُونَ خَلْقًا جَدِيدًا ۝
 أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّ اللَّهَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَ الْأَرْضِ قَادِرٌ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَخْلُقَ مِثْلَهُمْ
 وَ جَعَلَ لَهُمْ أَجَلًا لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ ۝ فَأَبَى الظَّالِمُونَ إِلَّا كُفُورًا ۝ قُلْ لَوْ أَنَّكُمْ
 تَمْلِكُونَ خَزَائِنَ رَحْمَةِ رَبِّي إِذًا لَأَمْسَكْتُمْ خَشْيَةَ الْإِنْفَاقِ ۝ وَ كَانَ الْإِنْسَانُ

O Muhammad, We may, if We so will, take back from you all of what We have revealed to you: then you will find none to help you in getting it back from Us. All that you have received is by the favour of your Lord. Indeed His favour to you is very great.¹⁰⁴ Declare this, "Even if human beings and *jinns* should cooperate with one another to bring forth a book like the Qurān, they will never be able to bring anything like it, even though all of them help one another."¹⁰⁵ 86-88

In this Qurān, We employed different ways to make the people understand the Message, but the majority of them persisted in unbelief, and they said, "We will not believe in what you say until you cause a spring to gush forth from the earth for us, or a garden of date-palms and vines be created for you, and you cause canals to flow in it; or until you cause the sky to fall on us in fragments, as you threaten us; or you bring Allah and the angels face to face before us or a house of gold comes into being for you or you ascend the sky, and we are not going to believe in your ascension until you bring down to us a writing that we may read"—O Muhammad, Say to them, "My Lord be glorified! have I ever claimed to be anything more than a human Messenger?"¹⁰⁶ 89-93

Whenever Guidance came before the people nothing prevented them from believing in it except this (excuse): they said: "Did Allah send a human being as His Messenger?"¹⁰⁷ Say to them, "Had angels settled on the Earth and moved about in peace, We would certainly have sent an angel as a Messenger to them."¹⁰⁸ 94-95

O Muhammad, say to them, "Allah suffices for a witness to judge between you and me: for He is fully aware of and is observing what His servants are doing."¹⁰⁹ 96

Whomsoever Allah guides, he alone is rightly guided and whomsoever He lets go astray, you will find for such people no other protector and helper besides Him.¹¹⁰ On the Day of Resurrection, We will muster them prostrate upon their faces, blind, dumb and deaf.¹¹¹ Their abode will be Hell: whenever its fire abates, We will rekindle it 97-99

for them. This is their recompense, for they rejected Our Signs and said, "What! shall we really be raised up anew, when we have been reduced to bones and dust?" Could they not perceive that the same Allah, Who created the Earth and the Heavens, has the power to create the like of them? He has ordained a time for resurrecting them which shall inevitably come, but these workers of iniquity persist in their disbelief.

100

O Muhammad, say to them, "Had the treasures of your Lord's blessings been in your possession, you would have held them back lest they should be spent up. Indeed man is very narrow-minded."¹¹²

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100. That is, "Either grant me power and authority or make some government my helper so that I may use its power to reform the corrupt world." This is because power is required to check indecency and sin and to enforce the law of justice.

Hasan Basri and Qatadah have made the same interpretation of this verse, and the great commentators like Ibn Jarir and Ibn Kathir have adopted the same. This is supported by a Tradition of the Holy Prophet: "Allah eradicates by the power of government those evils, which are not eradicated by the teachings of the Qurān." This is a clear proof that according to Islam, political power is also required to introduce reform, for admonition alone is not enough for this. Besides this, when Allah Himself has taught this prayer to His Prophet for the establishment of His Way and enforcement of His Law, it is not only lawful but desirable to acquire power and those, who consider this to be a worldly thing, are obviously in the wrong. What is really "worldliness" is that one should desire and acquire power for one's own interest. On the contrary, the desire of power for the sake of Allah's Way is not the worship of the world but the worship of God.

101. At the time of this declaration, the persecution of the Muslims was at its height. A large number of them had emigrated to Habash, and those who had remained behind were suffering from untold hardships at Makkah and its suburbs: so much so that the life of the Holy Prophet himself was always in danger. Therefore, to all appearances, falsehood was prevailing everywhere and there was no sign to show that the truth would ever overpower falsehood. That is why the disbelievers took it for a boastful talk and scoffed at it when this declaration was made. But this prophecy of victory did come out true in less than a decade when the Holy Prophet entered the same city of Makkah as a conqueror, and entered the Ka'abah where he made the same declaration while he was breaking the three hundred and sixty idols. According to a

Tradition of Bukhārī, related by Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, "On the day of the conquest of Makkah the Holy Prophet went on striking idols and uttering these words: 'The Truth has come and falsehood has vanished; for falsehood is a thing that must by its nature vanish. The Truth has come and falsehood will never reappear nor return'."

102. That is, "Those people who make the Qurān their guide and their book of law, are favoured with the blessing of Allah and are cured of all their mental, psychological, moral and cultural diseases. On the other hand, those wicked people who reject this and turn their back on its guidance, in fact, are unjust to themselves. Therefore, the Qurān does not allow them to remain even in that bad condition in which they were before its revelation or its knowledge but involves them in a greater loss than before. This is because before the revelation of the Qurān or their acquaintance with it, they suffered from ignorance alone but when the Qurān came before them and made distinct the difference between Truth and falsehood, no excuse was left with them to remain in their previous condition of ignorance. After this, if they reject its guidance and persist in their deviation, it is a clear proof that they are not ignorant but workers of iniquity and worshippers of falsehood, which are averse to the Truth. For then their position is of the one who, when presented both poison and elixir, makes a choice of poison. Therefore they themselves are in that case fully responsible for their deviation and whatever crimes they commit after that, shall incur their full punishment. It is obvious that the consequent loss of wickedness must be far greater than the loss of ignorance. The Holy Prophet has summed this up in this concise and comprehensive sentence: "The Qurān is either an argument in your favour or against you."

103. It is generally understood that the Arabic word "*Rūḥ*" stands here for "soul" as if the people asked the Holy Prophet about the soul of man in regard to its nature, and the answer was that it came by the Command of Allah. But we have great hesitation in accepting this meaning for it could be taken only if the verse be isolated from its context; otherwise these words would become quite incoherent for there is no reason why the question about "soul" should have intervened between the preceding three verses and following verses which deal with the theme of the Qurān.

If we read the verse in its context, it becomes quite obvious that here the word "*Rūḥ*" (The Spirit) stands for the angel who brings Revelation. This was in answer to the question of the *mushriks*, "Where from do you bring the Qurān?" as if to say, "O Muhammad, these people ask you about 'The Spirit', that is, the source of the Qurān or the means of acquiring it", so tell them, "This Spirit comes to me by the Command of my Lord but your knowledge is so little that you cannot distinguish between the nature of human words and the Divinely revealed words. That is why you suspect that this has been fabricated by some man."

The above interpretation is to be preferred, because it fits in excellently between the preceding and the succeeding verses. This is also supported by the Qurān itself: "... He sends down by His Command 'The Spirit' to any of His servants He wills so that they should warn the people of the Day, when they shall be assembled together." (XL: 15) "And likewise We have sent down 'The Spirit' to you by Our Command: you did not know what the Book was and what the Faith..." (XLII : 52).

Besides this, Ibn 'Abbās, Qatādah and Ḥasan Baṣrī (may Allah bestow His mercy upon them all) have also adopted the same interpretation. Ibn Jarīr has attributed the same thing to Ibn 'Abbās on the authority of Qatādah, but at the same time he tells a strange thing that Ibn 'Abbās stated this thing only in secret. Again the author of *Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī* cites these words of Ḥasan and Qatādah: "By *rūḥ* is meant Jibrīl: the question was about the nature of his coming down and inspiring the heart of the Holy Prophet with Revelation."

104. Though these words are apparently addressed by the Holy Prophet, they are in fact meant for the disbelievers who considered the Holy Qurān to be either the invention of the Holy Prophet himself or of some other man, who secretly taught him the Qurān. They are being told that this is the Word of Allah, as if to say, "Our Prophet has not fabricated the Qurān but We have bestowed this on him, and if We take it back from him, the Prophet has no power to invent such a thing nor has any other man the power to help the Prophet to present such a miraculous Book."

105. This challenge occurs at several other places in the Qurān: (II : 23, X : 38-39, XL : 13-14, LII : 33-34). At all these places, this has been cited as an answer to the charge of the disbelievers that Muḥammad (Allah's peace be upon him) has himself invented the Qurān but is presenting it as Allah's Word. Besides this, the same has also been refuted in X: 16: "Say also, 'Had not Allah willed that I should recite the Qurān to you, I could not have recited it to you, nor could I have been able to give you any information about it: already have I lived a lifetime among you before its revelation. Do you not use your common sense?'"

Now let us turn to the three arguments contained in these verses as a proof that the Qurān is the Word of Allah.

(1) The Qurān is such a miracle in regard to its language, style, arguments, themes, topics, teachings and prophecies that it is beyond any human power to produce the like of it, as if to say, "You say that a man has invented this but We challenge that even the whole of mankind combined cannot produce a Book like this: nay, even if the *jinn*s, whom the *mushriks* worship as deities and whom this Book openly attacks, should come to the help of the disbelievers, they cannot produce a Book like this to refute this challenge."

(2) As regards the charge that Muḥammad (Allah's peace be upon

him) has himself invented this Book, the Qurān refutes their claim, as if to say, "Muhammad is one of you and not a foreigner. He has lived among you for forty years before the revelation of the Qurān. Did you ever hear words like those of the Qurān from him even a day before his claim of Prophethood, or did you ever hear him discussing themes and problems contained in the Qurān? If you consider the matter from this point of view, it will become obvious to you that the sudden change which has come about in the language, ideas, information, style and the way of thinking of Muhammad, could not take place without Divine Guidance."

(3) "Can you not see that after the recital of the Qurān he does not disappear but lives among you? You hear other things than the Qurān from him. Do you not notice that the distinction between the two different styles of expression is so obvious that no man can successfully adopt the two styles at one and the same time?" The distinction can also be noticed, even today, between the language of the Qurān and that of the Traditions of the Holy Prophet. Anyone well-versed in the Arabic language and literature notices the difference which is so marked that one can categorically say that these modes of expression cannot belong to one and the same person. (For further reference please also see E.N. 21 of X : 16).

106. This is the second answer to the demand of the disbelievers for a miracle. The first answer is contained in V. 59. The eloquence of this concise answer is above praise: "You demand from me that I should cause a spring to gush forth, or in the twinkling of an eye should bring into being a garden in full bloom with canals flowing in it: or I should cause the heaven to fall into pieces on those of you who are rejecting the message: or I should cause to build a furnished palace of gold: or I should call Allah and the angels to stand before you and testify to this effect: 'We Ourselves have sent down Muhammad as Our Messenger': or I should go up to the sky in your presence and bring down, addressed to you, the letter of authority of my appointment duly signed by Allah so that you may touch it with your hands and read it with your own eyes." The concise answer to these big demands was this, "My Lord be glorified! Have I ever claimed to be anything more than a human Messenger?" It may be expanded like this: "O foolish people! have I claimed to be God that you are demanding such things from me? Did I ever say that I am all-powerful and am ruling over the Earth and the Heavens? From the very first day my claim has been that I am a human being who is bringing the Message from God. Therefore if you want to judge the authenticity of my claim, you may judge it from my Message. If you are convinced that it is based on the Truth and is absolutely rational, then you should believe in it without making foolish demands. On the other hand, if you

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وَقَدْ اتَيْنَا مُوسَى تِسْعَ آيَاتٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ فَمَسَّكُ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ إِذْ جَاءَهُمْ
 فَقَالَ لَهُ فِرْعَوْنُ إِنِّي لَأَظُنُّكَ يَمُوسَى مَسْحُورًا ۖ قَالَ لَقَدْ عَلِمْتَ مَا أَنزَلَ
 هَؤُلَاءِ إِلَّا رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ بِصَآئِرٍ وَإِنِّي لَأَظُنُّكَ يُفْرَعُونَ مَثْبُورًا ۖ
 فَأَرَادَ أَنْ يَنْتَفِرَهُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ فَأَغْرَقْنَاهُ وَمَنْ مَعَهُ جَمِيعًا ۖ وَكَلَّمْنَا
 مِنْ بَعْدِهِ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ إِسْكُنُوا الْأَرْضَ فَإِذَا جَاءَ وَعْدُ الْآخِرَةِ جِئْنَا
 بِكُمْ كَافٍنَا ۖ وَبِالْحَقِّ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ وَبِالْحَقِّ نَزَلْنَا وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا مُبَشِّرًا وَ
 نَذِيرًا ۖ وَقُرْآنًا فَرَقْنَاهُ لِتَقْرَأَهُ عَلَى النَّاسِ عَلَى مَكَّةٍ وَنَزَلْنَاهُ تَنْزِيلًا ۖ
 قُلْ إِمْنُوا بِهِ أَوْ لَا تُؤْمِنُوا ۖ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ إِذَا يُتْلَى عَلَيْهِمْ
 يَخِرُّونَ لِلآذْقَانِ سُجَّدًا ۖ وَيَقُولُونَ سُبْحَانَ رَبِّنَا إِنْ كَانَ وَعْدُ رَبِّنَا
 لَمَفْعُولًا ۖ وَيَخِرُّونَ لِلآذْقَانِ يَبْكُونَ وَيَزِيدُهُمْ خُشُوعًا ۖ قُلْ ادْعُوا اللَّهَ
 أَوْ ادْعُوا الرَّحْمَنَ ۖ أَيًّا مَا تَدْعُوا فَلَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ وَلَا تَجْهَرُوا بِصَلَاتِكُمْ
 وَلَا تَخَافُوهَا بِهَا وَابْتَغِ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ سَبِيلًا ۖ وَقُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي لَمْ
 يَتَّخِذْ وَلَدًا وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ شَرِيكٌ فِي الْمُلْكِ وَ لَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ وِليٌّ مِنَ
 الدَّالِّ وَكَبِيرًا ۖ

وقف لازم

السجدة

 ۱۲
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And We gave to Moses nine Signs which were quite manifest.¹¹³ Now you yourself may inquire from the children of Israel about it: when those Signs came before Pharaoh, he uttered these very words: "O Moses, I consider you to be a bewitched man."¹¹⁴ Moses replied, "You know it full well that none but the Lord of the Heavens and the Earth had sent down these Signs as eye-openers,¹¹⁵ and O Pharaoh, I consider you indeed to be a doomed person."¹¹⁶ At last Pharaoh resolved to uproot Moses and the Israelites from the land but We drownèd him and his followers all together. Then We said to the Israelites, "Now you should settle down in the land¹¹⁷ and when the prescribed time of Resurrection comes about, We will gather all of you together."

101-10

We have sent down the Qurān with the truth and with the truth it has come down; and O Muhammad, We have sent you only to give good news (to the Believers) and warning (to the disbelievers).¹¹⁸ And We have sent down this Qurān piecemeal so that you may recite it to the people gradually piece by piece, and We have sent it down by gradual Revelations¹¹⁹ (to suit particular occasions). O Muhammad, say to these people, "Whether you believe in it or not, those who were given the Knowledge before this,¹²⁰ fall prostrate on their faces when it is recited to them and cry out, 'Our Lord is glorious and His promise was surely to be fulfilled'." And they fall down on their faces, weeping when they listen to it, and this increases their humility¹²¹ all the more.¹²²

105-10

O Prophet, say to them, "You may call Him by any name, Allah or Raḥmān, for it is all the same by whichever name you call Him because all His names are most excellent.¹²³ And do not raise your voice high in your Prayer nor make it very low but adopt the middle way¹²⁴ between these two and say, 'Praise is for that Allah Who has begotten no son nor has any partner in His Kingdom nor is helpless to need any supporter.'¹²⁵ And glorify Him in the most glorious way.

110-11

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find any defect in it, you may reject it. If you want to test whether my claim is based on truth, you should judge it by the standard of my conduct and morals as a human being and my mission. Is it not a folly that, instead of this, you are demanding from me to cleave the earth and cause the sky to fall? Is there any connection whatsoever of Prophethood with things like these?"

107. It implies that this misunderstanding has always been common among the ignorant people of every age that a human being could not be a Messenger of Allah. They rejected a Messenger just because he was a human being and took his meals and had wife and children like themselves. In contrast to this, after the passage of the time the credulous followers of a Messenger began to claim that he was not a human being at all because he was a Messenger. That is why some people made their Messenger their God, others the son of God and still others the incarnation of God. In short, the ignorant people had never been able to understand that a human being could be a Messenger of Allah.

108. This is to say that a Messenger does not merely convey the Message but is sent to reform human life in accordance with it. He has to apply the principles of the Message to the circumstances of human beings and has himself to demonstrate practically those principles. Moreover, he has to remove the misunderstandings of those people who try to listen to and understand his Message. Besides this, he has to organize and train the Believers to create a society based on the teachings of his Message. He has to struggle against those who reject and oppose his Message in order to subdue those powers that are bent upon corruption, and bring about that reformation for which Allah has sent His Messenger. As all these things have to be done in a society of human beings only a human Messenger can perform the mission. If an angel had been sent as a Messenger, the most he could have done was to convey the message, for he could not live among human beings and share their life and problems in order to reform them. It is thus clear that a human Messenger only could be suitable for this purpose.

109. That is, "Allah is fully aware of all my efforts which I am expending in order to reform you, and He is fully aware of the efforts you are making against my mission. His witness is sufficient because He will pass the final judgement."

110. In this verse, the Qurān has enunciated a Divine principle. Allah guides to the Right Way only that person who intends to follow His Guidance, and lets go astray that person who intends to go astray. Thereafter none is able to bring back to the Right Way the one against whom Allah has closed the door of guidance because of his own persistent deviation and obduracy. It is obvious that if a man turns his back against the truth and rests content with falsehood, there is no power in the world to make him turn away from falsehood and come to the truth.

This is because after this depravity Allah provides for that wicked person such means as increase his aversion to truth and his love for falsehood.

111. On the Day of Resurrection, they will be raised up blind, dumb and deaf because they behaved like such people in this world and would not see the Truth nor listen to the Truth nor speak the Truth.

112. This verse also suggests the same thing that has already been mentioned in V. 55. This hints at the real psychological reason why the disbelievers of Makkah were not inclined to accept Muḥammad (Allah's peace be upon him), their contemporary, as a Prophet. For thus they would have to acknowledge his superiority and one does not easily acknowledge the superiority of one's contemporary. This verse may be expanded like this: "Those people who are so narrow-minded that they are unwilling even to acknowledge the real superiority of another, cannot be expected to be generous in spending on others, if they possessed the keys of the treasures of Allah's blessings."

113. It should be noted that this is the third answer to the demand of the disbelievers of Makkah for Signs. They said, "We will not believe in you until you do this and do that before our eyes." In answer to this demand, they are being warned: "Nine clear Signs, like the ones you are demanding, were shown one after the other to Pharaoh before you and you also know full well what he said, simply because he did not want to believe in Moses; you also know that when he rejected the Prophet, even after seeing the Signs, We drowned him."

The nine Signs mentioned here have also been mentioned in VII : 133. These were : (1) The staff which turned into a monster snake, (2) Moses' bright hand which shone like the sun, (3) The public defeat of the sorcery of the magicians. (4) Universal famine. (5) Storm. (6) Locusts. (7) Lice. (8) Frogs. (9) Rain of blood.

114. This has been particularly mentioned here because the *mushriks* of Makkah attributed the same epithet to the Holy Prophet as contained in V. 47. "These wrong-doers say to each other, 'The man, you are following, is a bewitched person'." Here they are being warned that in this they were following Pharaoh, who gave the same epithet to Prophet Moses.

In this connection, we want to make a brief reference to an objection which has been raised by the modernists against a Tradition according to which the Holy Prophet once came under the influence of sorcery. They say that this Tradition confirms that the epithet "bewitched" applied to the Holy Prophet by the Quraish was correct, whereas the Qurān refutes this as false. They forget that the same argument could be applied to the case of Prophet Moses whom Pharaoh accused of being bewitched, for the Qurān says, in XX : 66-67: "When the magicians threw down their cords and rods (instruments of their sorcery), it seemed to Moses as if they were running, as a result of which Moses conceived in his mind a sort of fear." If the words of the Tradition were to be considered against the Qurān, do not these words of the Qurān contradict

Qurān by its teachings nor decide between the Truth and falsehood on merit. As the Qurān has been sent down with truth, you should present it before the people and tell them plainly that the one, who believes, does so for his own good and the one who rejects it, does it at his own peril."

119. This is an answer to this objection: "Why has not Allah sent down His Message as a whole? Why is He sending it piecemeal? Has Allah any need to think deliberately what to send down?" As the answer to this objection has been given in XVI : 101-102 and in the Explanatory Notes 104-106 added to them, there is no need to repeat the same here.

120. This refers to those people of the Book who were well-versed in the Scriptures and could judge them from their themes and wording.

121. That is, "When they listen to the Qurān, they at once recognize that its bearer is the promised Prophet mentioned in the Books of the former Prophets."

122. This attitude of the righteous people of the Book has been mentioned at several places in the Qurān, e.g. III : 113-114, 199, V : 83-84.

123. This is the answer to another objection of the disbelievers. They said, "We have heard the name Allah for the Creator but wherefrom have you brought the name *Rahmān*?" This was because the name "*Rahmān*" was not used for Allah and they did not like it.

124. This instruction was given at Makkah. Ibn 'Abbās relates that when the Holy Prophet or his Companions offered their Prayers, they recited the Qurān in a loud voice. At this the disbelievers would raise a hue and cry and often called them names. Therefore they were enjoined that they should neither say their Prayers in such a loud voice as might incite the disbelievers nor should they say it in such a low voice that their own Companions might not hear it. This instruction was discontinued under the changed conditions at Al-Madīnah. However, if the Muslims may have to face the same conditions, at any place or at any time, they should observe the same instruction.

125. A subtle sarcasm is implied in the sentence. The *mushriks* believed that Allah had appointed assistants and deputies for the administration of His Kingdom. Obviously this meant that Allah was helpless and powerless to carry out the administration of His Kingdom: therefore He needed supporters to help Him in the work of His Godhead. This sentence negates their false creeds, saying, "He does not stand in need of any gods and saints in order to delegate to them the different departments of His Godhead or make them governors in different parts of His Kingdom."

