

THE MEANING OF THE QURAN

Vol. VII

(Surah Al-Kahf—Al-Hajj)

(ARABIC TEXT WITH TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY)

BY

S. ABUL A'LA MAUDUDI

English Rendering by : Late Ch. MUHAMMAD AKBAR

Edited by : A. A. KAMAL, M. A.

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XVIII

AL-KAHF الكهف

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

XVIII

AL-KAHF الكهف

INTRODUCTION

Name. This Sūrah takes its name from v. 9 in which the word الكهف (*al-kahf*) occurs.

Period of Revelation. This is the first of those Sūrahs which were sent down in the third stage of Prophethood at Makkah. We have already divided the life of the Holy Prophet at Makkah into four stages in the Introduction to Chapter VI. According to that division the third stage lasted from the fifth to the tenth year of Prophethood. What distinguishes this stage from the second and the fourth stages is this. During the second stage the Quraish mainly resorted to ridiculing, scoffing, threatening, tempting, raising objections and making false propaganda against the Holy Prophet and his followers in order to suppress the Islamic Movement. But during the third stage they employed the weapons of persecution, man-handling and economic pressure for the same purpose. So much so that a large number of the Muslims had to emigrate from Arabia to Ḥabash, and those who remained behind were besieged in Shi'ib Abī Ṭālib along with the Holy Prophet and his family. To add to their misery, a complete social and economic boycott was applied against them. The only redeeming feature was that there were two personalities, Abū Ṭālib and Ḥaḍrat Khadījah, whose personal influence had been conducive to the support of two great families of the Quraish. However, when in the tenth year of Prophethood these two persons died, the fourth stage began with such severe persecutions as forced the

Holy Prophet and all his Companions to emigrate from Makkah.

It appears from the theme of the Sūrah that it was revealed at the beginning of the third stage when in spite of persecutions and opposition, migration to Ḥabash had not yet taken place. That is why the story of "Aṣḥāb-i-Kahf" (the Sleepers of the Cave) has been related to comfort and encourage the persecuted Muslims and to show them how the righteous people have been saving their Faith in the past.

Subject and Topics. This Sūrah was sent down in answer to the three questions which the *mushriks* of Makkah, in consultation with the people of the Book, had put to the Holy Prophet in order to test him. These were: (1) Who were "the Sleepers of the Cave"? (2) What is the real story of Khidr¹? and (3) What do you know about Zūl-Qarnain? As these three questions and the stories involved concerned the history of the Christians and the Jews, and were unknown in Ḥijāz, a choice of these was made to test whether the Holy Prophet possessed any source of the knowledge of the hidden and unseen things. Allah, however, not only gave a complete answer to their questions but also employed the three stories to the disadvantage of the opponents of Islam in the conflict that was going on at that time at Makkah between Islam and un-belief :

1. The questioners were told that "the Sleepers of the Cave" believed in the same doctrine of *Tauḥīd* which was being put forward in the Qurān and that their condition was similar to the condition of the persecuted Muslims of Makkah. On the other hand, the persecutors of the Sleepers of the Cave had behaved in the same way towards them as the disbelievers of the Quraish were behaving towards the

1. According to some traditions, the second question was in regard to the Soul which (according to those traditions) has been answered in verse 85 of Chapter XVII (Banī Isra'īl), but we do not agree with this because (1) there is an interval of several years between the revelation of this Sūrah and of Sūrah Banī Isra'īl, and (2) in this Sūrah three stories have been related instead of two. Therefore, we are of the opinion that the second question was in regard to the story of Khidr and not concerning the Soul. (Please refer also to E.N. 61 of this Sūrah.)

Muslims. Besides this, the Muslims have been taught that even if a Believer is persecuted by a cruel society, he should not bow down before falsehood but emigrate from the place all alone, if need be, with trust in God. Incidentally the disbelievers of Makkah were told that the story of the Sleepers of the Cave was a clear proof of the creed of the Hereafter, for this showed that Allah has the power to resurrect anyone He wills even after a long sleep of death as He did in case of the Sleepers of the Cave.

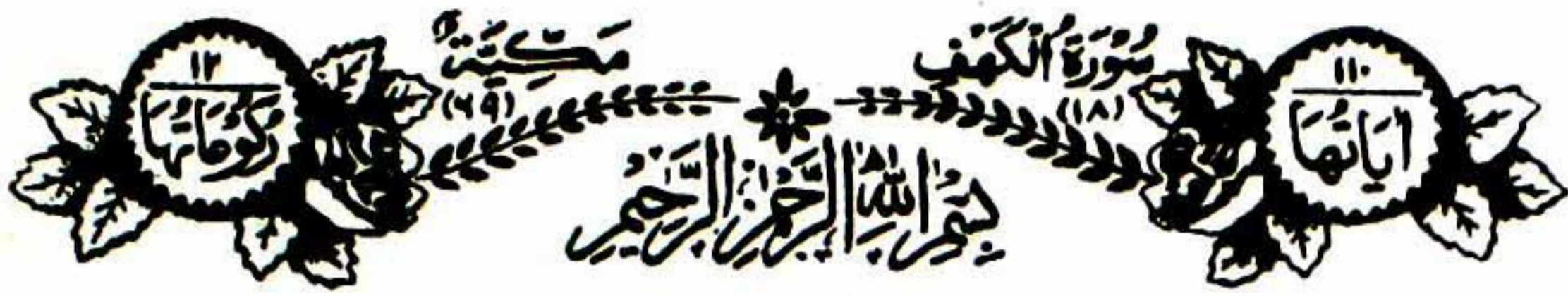
2. The story of the Sleepers of the Cave has also been used to warn the chiefs of Makkah who were persecuting the small newly formed Muslim Community. At the same time, the Holy Prophet has been instructed that he should in no case make a compromise with their persecutors nor should he consider them to be more important than his poor followers. On the other hand, those chiefs have been admonished that they should not be puffed up with the transitory life of pleasure they were then enjoying but should seek after those excellences which are permanent and eternal.

3. The story of Khidr and Moses has been related in such a way as to supply the answer to the question of the disbelievers and to give comfort to the Believers as well. The lesson contained in this story is this : "You should have full faith in the wisdom of what is happening in the Divine Factory in accordance with the will of Allah. As the reality is hidden from you, you are at a loss to understand the wisdom of what is happening, and sometimes if it appears that things are going against you, you cry out, 'How and why has this happened?' The fact is that if the curtain be removed from the "unseen", you would yourselves come to know that what is happening here is for the best. Even if sometimes it appears that something is going against you, you will see that in the end it also produces some good results for you".

4. The same is true of the story of Zul-Qarnain for it also admonishes the questioners, as if to say, "O you vain chiefs of Makkah! you should learn a lesson from Zul-Qarnain. Though he was a great ruler, a great conqueror and the

owner of great resources, yet he always surrendered to his Creator, whereas you are rebelling against Him even though you are insignificant chieftains in comparison with Him. Besides this, though Zul-Qarnain built one of the strongest walls for protection, yet his real trust was in Allah and not in the "wall". He believed that the wall could protect him against his enemies as long as it was the will of Allah and that there would be cracks and holes in it, when it would be His will : whereas you who possess only insignificant fortified abodes and dwellings in comparison with Him, consider yourselves to be permanently safe and secure against all sorts of calamities."

While the Qurān turned the tables on the questioners who had tried to "expose" the Holy Prophet, in the end of the Sūrah the same things have been reiterated that were stated at its beginning: "*Tauhīd* and the Hereafter are absolutely true and real and for your own good ; you should accept these doctrines, mend your ways in accordance with them and live in this world with this conviction that you are accountable to Allah: otherwise you shall ruin your life and all your doings shall be set at naught."



الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَى عَبْدِهِ الْكِتَابَ وَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ عِوَجًا ۗ قِيمًا
 لِيُنذِرَ بَأْسًا شَدِيدًا مِمَّنْ كَفَرُوا وَيُبَشِّرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ الَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ الصَّالِحَاتِ
 أَنَّ لَهُمْ أَجْرًا حَسَنًا ۗ مَا كَثِيرٌ فِيهِ آيَاتٌ لِلَّذِينَ قَالُوا اتَّخَذَ

XVIII

AL-KAHF الْكَهْف

Verses: 110

Revealed at Makkah

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

All praise is for Allah, Who has sent down this Book to His Servant, and assigned nothing crooked to it.¹ This Book says everything directly so that he may warn the people of the severe chastisement of Allah and give good news to the Believers, who do righteous deeds, that they will have an excellent recompense, which they will always enjoy and that he should warn those people who say, "Allah has begotten a son".²

1-4

1. That is, "There is nothing intricate or complicated in it that may be beyond anyone's understanding nor is there anything that deviates from the straight path of the Truth and thus cause hesitation in the mind of a truth-loving person."

2. "Those people" includes the Christians, the Jews and the *mushrik* Arabs who assigned offspring to Allah.

اللَّهُ وَكَذَّابًا ۗ مَا لَهُمْ بِهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ وَلَا لِآبَائِهِمْ كَبُرَتْ كَلِمَةً تَخْرُجُ مِنْ
 أَفْوَاهِهِمْ ۖ إِنَّ يَقُولُونَ إِلَّا كَذِبًا ۗ فَلَعَلَّكَ بَاخِعٌ نَفْسَكَ عَلَىٰ آثَارِهِمْ إِنْ لَمْ
 يُؤْمِنُوا بِهَذَا الْحَدِيثِ أَسَفًا ۗ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا مَا عَلَى الْأَرْضِ زِينَةً لِّهَا لِنَبْلُوهُمْ
 أَيُّهُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا ۗ وَإِنَّا لَجَاعِلُونَ مَا عَلَيْهَا صَعِيدًا جُرُزًا ۗ أَمْ حَسِبْتَ أَنَّ
 أَصْحَابَ الْكَهْفِ وَالرَّقِيِّو كَانُوا مِنْ آيَاتِنَا عَجَبًا ۗ إِذْ أَوْى الْفِتْيَةُ إِلَى الْكَهْفِ
 فَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا آتِنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ رَحْمَةً وَهَيِّئْ لَنَا مِنْ أَمْرِنَا رَشَدًا ۗ فَضَرْبَنَا عَلَىٰ
 أذَانِهِمْ فِي الْكَهْفِ سِنِينَ عَدَدًا ۗ ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَاهُمْ لِنَعْلَمَ أَيُّ الْحِزْبَيْنِ أَحْصَىٰ
 لِمَا لَبِثُوا أَمَدًا ۗ نَحْنُ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ نَبَأَهُم بِالْحَقِّ ۗ إِنَّهُمْ فِتْيَةٌ آمَنُوا
 بِرَبِّهِمْ وَزِدْنَاهُمْ هُدًى ۗ وَرَبَطْنَا عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ إِذْ قَامُوا فَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا رَبِّ
 السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَنْ نَدْعُوكَ مِنْ دُونِهِ ۗ إِنَّهَا لَقَدْ قُلْنَا إِذًا شَطَطًا ۗ
 هُوَ الَّذِي قَوْمُنَا اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ إِلَهًا ۗ لَوْ لَا يَأْتُونَ عَلَيْهِمُ سُلْطٰنٌ بَيْنَٰ
 فَنَّا أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ افْتَرَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا ۗ وَإِذْ اعْتزَلْتُمُوهُمْ وَمَا يُعْبُدُونَ
 إِلَّا اللَّهَ فَأَوْا إِلَى الْكَهْفِ يَنْشُرْ لَكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ مِنْ رَحْمَتِهِ وَيَهَيِّئْ لَكُمْ مِنْ
 أَمْرِكُمْ مَرْفَقًا ۗ وَتَرَى الشَّمْسَ إِذَا طَلَعَتْ تَزُورُ عَنْ كَهْفِهِمْ ذَاتَ الْيَمِينِ
 وَإِذَا غَرَبَتْ تَقْرِضُهُمْ ذَاتَ الشِّمَالِ وَهُوَ فِي فَجْوَةٍ مِنْهُ ۗ ذَلِكَ مِنْ آيَاتِ
 اللَّهِ ۗ مَنْ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَهُوَ الْمُهْتَدِ ۗ وَمَنْ يُضِلِّكَ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهُ وَلِيًا مُرِيْدًا ۗ
 وَتَحْسَبُهُمْ آيَاتِنَا ۗ وَهُمْ رُقُودٌ ۗ وَنُقَلِّبُهُمْ ذَاتَ الْيَمِينِ وَذَاتَ الشِّمَالِ ۗ
 وَكَلْبُهُمْ بَاسِطٌ ذِرَاعَيْهِ بِالْوَصِيدِ ۗ لَوِ اطَّلَعْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ لَوَلَّيْتَ مِنْهُمْ فِرَارًا
 وَكَلِمَتٌ مِنْهُم رُعْبًا ۗ وَكَذٰلِكَ بَعَثْنَا لِيَتَسَاءَلُوا بَيْنَهُمْ ۗ قَالَ قَائِلٌ

ع ١٢
١٣

ع ٢
١٣

Neither had they any knowledge of this³ nor their fore- 5
fathers; it is a monstrous word that comes out of their
mouths: they utter a sheer lie.

Well, O Muhammad, it may be that you will consume 6-8
your life for their sake out of sorrow, if they do not believe
in this message.⁴ The fact is that whatsoever is on the earth,
We have made it as its adornment so that we may test the
people as to which of them does best deeds. In the end,
We will turn all that is in it into a bare plain.⁵

Do you consider "the Sleepers of the Cave",⁶ and the 9-12
bearers of the "Inscription"⁷ to be among Our strange Signs?⁸
When those few young men took refuge in the Cave, they
said, "Our Lord! have a special mercy on us from Thyself
and guide us out of our ordeal aright." Accordingly We
lulled them to a deep sleep in the Cave for a number of years.
Then We raised them up in order to test which of them were
able to calculate correctly the period of their stay there.

Now We tell you their real story.⁹ They were a few 13-16
young men who believed in their Lord, and We increased
them in their guidance.¹⁰ We strengthened their hearts,
when they rose up, and they declared, "Our Lord is the
One Who is the Lord of the heavens and the earth. We will
not invoke any other deity than Him. It will be the most
improper thing if we do so". (Then they held mutual con-
sultations, saying,) "These people of ours have given up the
Lord of the universe and adopted other deities. Why do
they not bring forward any clear argument in support of their
creed? Well, who can be more wicked than the one who
forges a lie against Allah? Now that you have forsaken them
and discarded the deities they worship besides Allah, let
us go to such and such a cave for refuge.¹¹ Your Lord
will extend to you His mercy, and order your affairs for you
for the best."

If you had looked at them in the Cave,¹² it would have 17-18
appeared to you that when the sun rose, it left the Cave to
one side and inclined towards the right, and when it set, it
turned away from them and went to the left while they lay
in the spacious place inside the Cave.¹³ This was one of the
Signs of Allah. Whomsoever Allah guides aright, he is guided

aright, and whomsoever Allah lets go astray, you will find no guardian to direct him. If you had seen them, it would have appeared to you as if they were awake, whereas in fact they were asleep. We turned them about to the right and the left sides.¹⁴ And their dog was sitting at the entrance of the Cave with out-stretched forelegs. If you had looked at them, you would have turned on your heels and their sight would have struck you with terror.¹⁵

3. "Monstrous word": "That one is the son of God, or Allah has adopted that one as His son." This has been declared to be monstrous because it was not based on any knowledge that Allah had a son or had adopted someone as a son. They had merely exaggerated their love for someone and invented such a relationship, and they do not realize that it is a monstrous blasphemy, impudence and fabrication that they are uttering in regard to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.

4. This refers to the real cause of the anxiety of the Holy Prophet at the time of the revelation of this Sūrah. It clearly shows that the Holy Prophet did not grieve at the persecution from which he and his Companions were suffering but at the deviation and moral degeneration of his people. What was consuming him was that, though he was trying to bring them out from their disgraceful state, they persisted in it. He was grieved because he was convinced that their deviation would inevitably lead them to destruction and scourge of Allah. Therefore he was working day and night to save them but it appeared that they were bent upon incurring the chastisement of Allah. The Holy Prophet himself has described this state of his mind in a Tradition to this effect: "I may describe this thing in a parable. A person kindled a fire to spread light but the moths persist in falling over it to burn themselves alive. He tries to save them from the fire but the moths reduce his efforts to failure. The same is true of me and you. I hold you by your skirts to keep you away from the fire, but you are bent upon falling into it." (Bukhārī, Muslim).

Though apparently it is merely stated "...it may be that you will consume your life for their sake out of sorrow..." it also contains a sort of consolation for the Holy Prophet, as if to say, "As you are not responsible for forcing them to believe, why should you consume yourself for their sake? Your only duty is to give good news and warning and not to turn people into Believers. Therefore you may go on carrying out your mission of giving good news to the Believers and warning of the bad consequences to the disbelievers."

5. V. 6 was addressed to the Holy Prophet, but vv. 7-8 have been directed to the disbelievers indirectly, as if to say, "You must understand it clearly that all the things that you see in the world and which allure

you, are a transitory adornment which has been arranged merely to test you, but it is a pity that you have been involved in the misunderstanding that all these things have been created to cater for your pleasure and enjoyment. That is why the only aim and object of life you have set before you is: "Eat, drink and be merry." As a result of this you do not pay any attention to your true and real well-wisher. You must understand it well that these things have not been provided for pleasure but are actually a means of testing you. You have been placed among them to see which of you is allured by these from the real aim of life and which of you keeps steadfast in the worship of Allah, for which you have been sent to the world. All these things and means of pleasure shall come to an end on the Day your examination is over and nothing will remain on the earth because it will be turned into a bare plain."

6. The Arabic word كهف (*kahf*) literally means a vast cave.

7. There is a difference of opinion about the meaning of *ar-raqīm*. Some Companions and their followers opined that it was the name of that habitation where this event took place and that it was situated somewhere between Aylah and Palestine. There are other commentators, who take it to mean the "Inscription" that had been set up at the Cave as a memorial to "the Sleepers of the Cave". Maulānā Abul Kalām Āzād, in his commentary, *Tarjmān-ul-Qurān*, has preferred the first meaning and opined that it is the same place which has been called Rekem in the Bible (Joshua, 18 : 27). Then he identifies it with the ancient historical city of Petra. But he has not considered the fact that Rekem, as mentioned in the Bible, belonged to the children of Benjamin and according to the Book of Joshua, the territory of this clan was situated to the west of river Jordan and the Dead Sea and that the ruins of Petra are situated to the south of Jordan. That is why the modern archaeologists do not believe that Petra and Rekem are one and the same place. (Please refer to *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1946, Vol. XVII, page 658). We are also of the opinion that by "*Ar-raqīm*" is meant "the inscription".

8. This question has been posed to expose the sceptical attitude of the disbelievers towards the "Sleepers of the Cave", as if to say, "Do you think that that Allah, Who has created the heavens and the earth, does not have the power to keep a few persons in a state of sleep for a couple of hundred years and then to raise them up as hale and hearty as they were at the time of going to sleep? If you ever had pondered over the wonderful creation of the sun and the moon and the earth, you would never have expressed any doubt that such a thing was anything difficult for Allah."

9. The oldest evidence of this story is found in a homily written in Syriac by Jacob of Sarug, a Christian priest of Syria, who was born in A.D. 452, a few years after the death of "the Companions of the Cave." The homily which describes the legend in great detail was composed by him in or about A.D. 474. On the one hand, this same Syriac version

came into the hands of our early commentators, and Ibn Jarir Ṭabari cited it in his commentary with various authorities, and on the other, it reached Europe where its translations and abridged versions were published in Greek and Latin. The abridged story as told by Gibbon in Chapter 33 of his *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* under the heading, "The Seven Sleepers", so closely resembles the story told by our commentators that both the versions seem to have been drawn from the same source. For instance, the name of the king, whose persecutions made the Seven Christian youths of Ephesus take refuge in the cave, was Emperor Decius according to Gibbon. He ruled the Roman Empire from A.D. 249 to 251 and whose reign is very notorious because of his persecution of the followers of Prophet Jesus Christ, while our commentators call him 'Decanus', 'Decaus', etc. The city, where this event happened, was 'Aphesus', or 'Aphesos' according to our commentators, while according to Gibbon it was Ephesus, which was the biggest Roman city and sea-port on the west coast of Asia Minor. The ruins of this city can still be seen 20 to 25 miles south of the modern Turkish city of Izmir. (Please see Map No. 1 for reference). Again the name of the king, during whose reign "the Companions of the Cave" awoke was 'Tezusius' according to the Muslim commentators and Theodosius II according to Gibbon. He ruled over Rome from A.D. 408 to 450, after the Roman Empire had accepted Christianity.

The resemblance between the two versions is so close that even the name of the companion whom the Sleepers sent to the city to buy food after waking up has been mentioned as 'Jamblichus' by the Muslim scholars and Jamblichus by Gibbon. The details of the story in both the versions are also similar which are briefly as follows :

When during the reign of the Emperor Decius the followers of Prophet Jesus Christ were being mercilessly persecuted, the Seven Christian youths hid themselves in a cave and fell into a sleep. Then in the 38th year of the reign of the Emperor Theodosius II (approximately in A.D. 445 or 446) they awoke when the whole of the Roman Empire had become Christian. Thus, they slept in the cave for nearly 196 years.

On this ground some orientalisists have rejected that the above-mentioned story is the same as that given in the Qurān because the period of their stay in the cave according to the Qurān (v. 25) was 309 years. We have, however, answered this objection in E.N. 25.

There are a few minor differences between the Qurānic and Syriac versions, on the basis of which Gibbon has charged the Holy Prophet with "ignorance". However, the Syriac version, on the basis of whose authenticity he has committed this gross insolence, was even according to him written thirty to forty years after the event by a Syrian. He has not taken the trouble to consider the fact that verbal versions of events do change a bit during such a long time while they are communicated from one country to the other. Therefore it is wrong to take such a version

of the story for granted and literally true and to charge the Qurān with discrepancy for any main difference with it. Such an attitude is worthy only of those people who are so blinded by religious prejudices that they discard even the most ordinary demands of reason.

The city of Ephesus where the event of the Sleepers of the Cave took place, was built about 11th century B.C. and became a great centre of idol-worship, its chief deity being the moon goddess, Diana, whose temple was regarded as a wonder of the ancient world. Most of her devotees belonged to Asia Minor and the Roman Empire also had accepted her as one of its deities.

After Prophet Jesus when his message started reaching different parts of the Roman Empire, a few youths of Ephesus also gave up idol-worship and accepted God as their only Lord. Gregory of Tours has collected details about these Christian youths in his *Meraculorum Liber*, which are briefly as follows :

“They were seven youths. When the Emperor Decius heard of their change of faith, he summoned them and questioned them about their new religion. In spite of knowing that the Emperor was deadly against the followers of Christ, they frankly admitted before him that their Lord is the Lord of the earth and heavens, and that they recognised none else as Deity for if they did so, they would be committing a grave sin. The Emperor became furious to hear this, and warned that he would have them killed, but then considering their tender age, he granted them three days in which they were counselled to revert to their old faith, otherwise they would be put to death.

“The seven youths took advantage of the situation and fled the city to conceal themselves in a cave in the mountains. On the way a dog also followed them : they did their best to scare it away, but it would not leave them. At last they found a spacious cave as a suitable refuge and hid in it, and the dog sat at the entrance. Being tired they soon fell into a deep slumber. This happened in about 250 A.D. After about 197 years, in 447 A.D., during the reign of Emperor Theodosius II, they awoke suddenly when the whole Roman Empire had embraced Christianity and the Ephesians had given up idolatry.

“At this time a fierce controversy was going on among the Romans regarding the reality of the life-after-death and Resurrection, and the Emperor himself was anxious to eradicate somehow the disbelief in the life-after-death from the minds of his people. So much so that one day he prayed that God in His mercy may show a sign which may help restore and correct the people’s belief. In precisely the same days the Seven Sleepers awoke in the cave.

“After waking up the youths started asking one another about how long they might have slept. Some said it might have been a day : others said it was a part of a day. When they reached no conclusion, they stopped arguing, leaving the knowledge of the exact period to God.

Then they sent Jean, a companion, to the city with a few silver coins to buy food, and warned him to be on his guard lest the people should recognise him, for they feared that if they were discovered the Ephesians would force them to bow before Diana. But when Jean came to the city he was astonished to see that the world had changed: the whole population had embraced Christianity, and there was nobody in the city to worship Diana. He came to a shop and wanted to buy a few loaves of bread. When he paid in a coin bearing the image of Emperor Decius, the shopkeeper could not believe his eyes and asked the stranger wherefrom he had obtained that coin. When the young man said that it was his own, a dispute began between them and soon a crowd gathered around them, and the matter reached the chief officer of the city. The officer himself was puzzled and wanted to know the whereabouts of the treasure-house from where the young man had taken the coin, but the latter insisted that it belonged to him. The officer did not believe him because he thought that a young man like him could not possibly possess a centuries-old coin which had not even been seen by the elders in the city. When Jean came to know that the Emperor Decius had died, he was pleasantly surprised. He told the crowd that he and his six companions had fled the city only the other day and taken refuge in a cave to escape Decius' persecution. The officer was greatly surprised and followed the young man to see the cave where his companions lay in hiding. And a great crowd followed behind them. When they came to the cave, it was fully established that the youths really belonged to the Emperor Decius' period. Consequently, Emperor Theodosius was informed and he also visited the cave to receive grace. Then the seven youths went back into the cave and lay down and breathed their last. Seeing this clear sign the people's belief in the life-after-death was restored, and a monument was ordered to be built over the cave by the Emperor."

The story of the Sleepers of the Cave as narrated above, corresponds so closely with that mentioned in the Qurān that the seven youths can easily be regarded as "*Aṣḥāb-i-Kahf*" (the Companions of the Cave). Some people, however, have raised the objection that this story concerns a city of Asia Minor, and the Qurān does not discuss or refer to any event that might have taken place outside Arabia; therefore it would be against the Quranic style and spirit to label this Christian story as the story of "*Aṣḥāb-i-Kahf*". In our opinion this objection is not correct. The Qurān means to impress and warn the Arabs by relating stories concerning the various ancient tribes who had transgressed from the right path and with whom they were familiar, whether they lived and flourished inside Arabia or outside it. It is for this very reason that a mention has been made of the ancient history of Egypt in the Qurān, whereas Egypt has never been a part of Arabia. The question is that when the history of Egypt can be mentioned in the Qurān, why cannot Rome and the Roman history with which the Arabs were as familiar as with the

Egyptian history ? The Roman frontiers adjoined the northern Hijāz and the Arab caravans traded with the Romans almost throughout the year. Then there were a number of Arab tribes who were directly under Roman domination and the Roman Empire was in no way unknown to the Arabs, a fact which is fully borne out by Sūrah Ar-Rūm. Another thing which should be borne in mind is that the story of the Sleepers of the Cave has been related in the Qurān in response to a query raised by the disbelievers of Makkah, who had been prompted by the Jews and Christians to question the Holy Prophet on such matters as were wholly unknown to the Arabs in order to test his Prophethood.

10. That is, when they had believed sincerely, Allah increased their faith in the guidance and enabled them to become firm and steadfast on the way of the Truth even at the risk of their lives rather than surrender before falsehood.

11. When these God-worshipping youths fled the habitations to take refuge in the hills, the city of Ephesus was the principal centre of idol-worship and sorcery in Asia Minor. There was a great temple dedicated to the goddess Diana, which was well-known in the whole world and attracted devotees from far and near. The sorcerers, workers of magic and occult arts, sooth-sayers and amulet-writers of Ephesus were well-known and their black business had spread throughout Syria and Palestine, even as far as Egypt. The Jews also had a big share in it, who attributed this art to Prophet Solomon. (Please see *Cyclopaedia of Biblical Literature* under 'Ephesus', for details). The predicament in which the righteous people living in an environment of idolatry and superstition were involved can well be imagined from the remark of "the Companions of the Cave" that occurs in v. 20 : "... if they succeed in over-powering us, they will surely stone us to death or force us back into their Faith."

12. It has not been mentioned that in accordance with this mutual resolve, they left the city and went to a secret Cave in the mountains in order to escape from death or forced apostasy.

13. This is to show that the mouth of the Cave faced the north. That is why the light of the sun could not enter inside the Cave and the one who passed by it could not see who was inside it.

14. That is, "If some one could have peeped at the Seven Persons from outside and seen them turning from one side to the other at intervals, he would have thought that they were not asleep but were relaxing themselves."

15. Allah had so arranged their refuge that none dared go inside the Cave and know about them for it was pitch dark in the Cave and the dog was keeping watch at the entrance. If someone ever peeped into the Cave and saw the Sleepers, he took them for some robbers and at once turned on his heels. This was the reason why their refuge remained a secret to the outer world for such a long period.

مِنْهُمْ كَمْ لَبِئْتُمْ ۗ قَالُوا لَبِئْنَا يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ ۖ قَالُوا رَبُّكُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا
 لَبِئْتُمْ ۖ فَابْعَثُوا أَحَدَكُمْ بِوَرِقِكُمْ هَذِهِ إِلَى الْمَدِينَةِ فَلْيَنْظُرْ أَيُّهَا أَزْكَى طَعَامًا
 فَلْيَأْتِكُمْ بِرِزْقٍ مِنْهُ وَلْيَتَلَطَّفْ وَلَا يُشْعِرَنَّ بِكُمْ أَحَدًا ۗ إِنَّهُمْ إِنْ يَظْهَرُوا
 عَلَيْكُمْ يَرْجُمُوكُمْ أَوْ يُعِيدُوكُمْ فِي مِلَّتِهِمْ وَلَنْ تُفْلِحُوا إِذًا أَبَدًا ۗ وَكَذَلِكَ
 عَتَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ لِيَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَأَنَّ السَّاعَةَ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهَا ۗ إِذْ
 يَتَنَازَعُونَ بَيْنَهُمْ أَمْرَهُمْ فَقَالُوا ابْنُوا عَلَيْهِم بُيُوتًا ۗ رَبُّهُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِهِمْ ۗ قَالَ
 الَّذِينَ غَلَبُوا عَلَىٰ أَمْرِهِمْ لَنَتَّخِذَنَّ عَلَيْهِم مَسْجِدًا ۗ سَيَقُولُونَ ثَلَاثَةٌ رَابِعُهُمْ
 كَلْبُهُمْ ۗ وَيَقُولُونَ خَمْسَةٌ سَادِسُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ رَجْمًا بِالْغَيْبِ ۗ وَيَقُولُونَ سَبْعَةٌ
 وَثَامِنُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ ۗ قُلْ رَبِّي أَعْلَمُ بِعَدَّتِهِمْ مَّا يَعْلَمُهُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ ۗ فَلَا تُمَارَ
 فِيهِمْ إِلَّا مِرَاءً ظَاهِرًا ۗ وَلَا تَسْتَفْتِ فِيهِمْ مِنْهُمْ أَحَدًا ۗ وَلَا تَقُولَنَّ
 لَشَأَىٰ ۗ إِنِّي فَاعِلٌ ذَلِكَ ۗ عَدَا ۗ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ ۗ وَاذْكُرْ رَبَّكَ إِذَا نَسِيتَ ۗ
 قُلْ عَسَىٰ أَنْ يَهْدِيَنَّ رَبِّي لِأَقْرَبٍ مِنْ هَذَا رَشَدًا ۗ وَابْتُؤا فِي كُفْرِهِمْ
 ثَلَاثَ مِائَةٍ سِنِينَ وَازْدَادُوا تَسَعًا ۗ قُلْ اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا لَبِئْتُمْ ۗ لَهُ غَيْبُ
 السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۗ أَبْصِرْ بِهِ وَأَسْمِعْ ۗ مَا لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا يُشْرِكُ
 فِي حُكْمِهِ أَحَدًا ۗ وَاتْلُ مَا أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ كِتَابِ رَبِّكَ ۗ لَا مُبَدِّلَ لِكَلِمَاتِهِ ۗ
 وَلَنْ تَجِدَ مِنْ دُونِهِ مُلْتَحَدًا ۗ وَاصْبِرْ نَفْسَکَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ
 بِالْغَدْوَةِ وَالْعَثِي ۗ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ ۗ وَلَا تَعْدُ عَيْنُکَ عَنْهُمْ تُرِيدُ زِينَةَ الْحَيَاةِ
 الدُّنْيَا ۗ وَلَا تُطِعْ مَنْ أَغْفَلْنَا قَلْبَهُ عَنْ ذِكْرِنَا وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ وَكَانَ أَمْرُهُ
 فُرْقَانًا ۗ وَ قُلِ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّکُمْ ۗ فَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُؤْمِنْ وَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُكْفُرْ ۗ إِنَّا

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And in the same miraculous way We raised them up again¹⁶ so that they may ask one another (about their wonderful experience). One of them asked, "Well, how long have you remained in this condition?" The others answered, "May-be, we have remained so for a day or a part of a day." Then they declared, "Your Lord knows best how long we have remained in this condition. So let us send one of us with this silver coin to the city, and he should look for a place wherein he can get the best food so that he may bring something to eat. He should, however, conduct himself with caution lest anyone should discover our whereabouts; for if they succeed in over-powering us, they will surely stone us to death or force us back into their Faith, and in that case we will never be able to obtain true success."—In this way We revealed their secret to the people of the city¹⁷ so that they should know that Allah's promise is true and that there is no doubt about (the coming of) the Hour of Resurrection.¹⁸ (But it is a pity that instead of considering this aspect of the matter) they were at that time disputing among themselves with regard to them (the Sleepers of the Cave). Some of them said, "Let us build a wall against them, for their Lord alone knows best about them".¹⁹ But those people who prevailed in their matter,²⁰ said, "We will build a place of worship as a memorial for them".²¹

Some people will say, "They were three and the fourth was their dog", and some others will say, "They were five and the sixth was their dog." These are mere irrelevant guesses. There are still others who say, "They were seven and the eighth was their dog."²² Say, "My Lord alone knows best how many they were." There are a few people only who know their correct number : so you should not enter into discussions with them about their number except in a cursory way: nor ask anyone about them²³ and never say about any matter, "I will do this tomorrow (for you cannot do anything) except that Allah wills it." If ever you inadvertently utter anything like this, you should at once remember your Lord and say, "I hope that my Lord will guide me²⁴ in this matter with that thing which is nearest to the right way for me"—and some people say that they remain-

ed in their Cave for three hundred years and some others add nine more years²⁵ (to the reckoning of the period). O Prophet, say, "Allah knows best about the period of their stay there, for He is fully aware of all that is hidden in the heavens and the earth." What an excellent Seer and Hearer He is ! There is no other guardian of the creation in the heavens and the earth, and He does not associate anyone with Himself in His authority.

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O Prophet,²⁶ recite (the very same) that has been revealed to you in the Book of your Lord, for no one is authorised to make any change whatsoever in the Word of your Lord and (if you will make any change to please any one) you will find no place of refuge to protect you from Him.²⁷ And keep yourself whole-heartedly content with those who pray to their Lord morning and evening in order to win His approval, and do not turn your attention away from them. Do you desire the allurements of the world²⁸? Do not follow the one²⁹ whose heart We have made neglectful of Our remembrance and who follows his own lust and goes to extremes in the conduct of his affairs.³⁰

16. They were roused from their sleep in the same miraculous way that was employed in sending them to sleep and keeping them hidden from the outer world.

17. The secret of their sleep was revealed when one of them went to Ephesus to buy food for them and offered a coin of the period of Emperor Decius. As it was a changed world, he naturally attracted attention for he was wearing a costume of 200-year old fashion and spoke a language different from that in vogue. This was because during those two centuries the language, culture, dress etc., had undergone a marked change. So the shopkeeper looked askance at him and, according to a Syriac tradition, suspected that he had dug up some ancient treasure. Accordingly, he gathered some people of his neighbourhood and they took him before the ruler. On questioning, it was discovered that he was one of those followers of Christ, who had fled the city 200 years ago to save their Faith. As most of the population had embraced Christianity, the news immediately spread throughout the city and a big crowd of the people along with the Christian Roman Ruler, arrived at the Cave. It was then that the Sleepers of the Cave came to know that they had slept for about two hundred years. So after making salutations to their Christian brothers they lay down and their souls left their bodies.

18. According to the Syriac tradition, at the time of this occurrence, hot discussions were going on in Ephesus about Resurrection and the Hereafter. Though the people had embraced Christianity under the influence of the Roman Empire, yet traces of *shirk* and idolatry of the Romans and the effects of the Greek philosophy were still very powerful. So in spite of the Christian creed of the Hereafter, many people denied this, or at least were sceptical about this. To add to this the Sadducee sect of the Jews, who formed a great part of the population of the city, openly denied the Hereafter and professed to base this on the Torah. The Christian scholars, however, could not put forward any strong arguments to refute them: so much so that the reports of the polemical discussion given in Matthew, Mark and Luke, attributed to Prophet Christ, are admittedly very weak even according to the Christian scholars. (Please refer to Matthew 22 : 23-33, Mark 12 : 18-27, Luke 20 : 27-40). That is why the disbelievers in the Hereafter were having the upper hand and even the believers were being involved in doubts about it. It was at that time that the Sleepers of the Cave were raised up and furnished an absolute proof of the life-after-death and turned the scales in favour of the believers in this dispute.

19. It appears from the context that this was the saying of the righteous people from among the Christians. They were of the opinion that a wall should be raised at the entrance of the Cave in order to let the Sleepers remain in the same condition in which they were, for they argued that their Lord alone knew best about their rank and position and the reward they deserved.

20. The people "who prevailed in their matter" were the Roman rulers and the priests of the Christian Church, who did not let the righteous Christians have their way. This was because by the middle of the fifth century, the common people, especially the orthodox among the Christians, had become fully involved in *shirk* and the worship of saints and tombs. They used to visit the tombs of the saints to worship them and kept the statues of Jesus, Mary and the apostles in their churches : so much so that a few years before the rising up of the Sleepers of the Cave, in 431 A.D., a great council of the representatives of the Christian World had been held in Ephesus itself, in which it was resolved that the creed of the divinity of Christ and of Mary as the mother of God, should be included in the articles of the Christian Church. If we keep in view the year 431, it becomes clear that by "those who prevailed in their matter" are meant the leaders of the Church and the officers of the government, who had the reins of the religious and political powers in their hands. In fact these were the people who were the upholders of *shirk* and who decided that a mausoleum should be built over the Cave of the Sleepers to make it a place of worship.

21. It is an irony that some people among the Muslims have misconstrued this verse of the Qurān so as to make it lawful for themselves

to build mausoleums, monuments and mosques over the tombs of the righteous persons and saints. The Qurān has, in fact, pointed out the deviation of the workers of iniquity who prevailed upon others and built a place of worship over the Cave of the Sleepers, who were indeed a Sign of Resurrection and of the life-after-death. But they abused this good opportunity and produced another means of practising *shirk*.

One fails to understand how anyone can deduce from this verse an argument for the legality of building mosques over the tombs of the righteous people, when the Holy Prophet has categorically prohibited this :

- (1) "Allah has cursed those women who visit tombs and those people who build mosques over them and burn lights over them" (Aḥmad, Tirmizī, Abū Dā'ūd, Nasā'ī, Ibn Mājah).
- (2) "Beware that the people, who have passed before you, made the tombs of their Prophets the places of their worship. I forbid you to do that." (Muslim)
- (3) "Allah has cursed the Jews and the Christians, for they made the tombs of their Prophets the places of their worship." (Aḥmad, Bukhārī, Muslim, Nasā'ī).
- (4) "The behaviour of those people was strange: if a righteous person from among them, died they would build a mosque over his grave and draw his pictures. They will be treated as worst criminals on the Day on Resurrection." (Aḥmad, Bukhārī Muslim, Nasā'ī).

Thus, it is clear from the above Sayings of the Holy Prophet that building of the places of worship over the tombs is utterly unlawful ; the Qurān has merely stated as a historical fact the sinful act of the Christian priests and the Roman rulers and has not sanctioned such a thing. Therefore no God-fearing person can turn this into an argument for building mosques over the tombs.

Incidentally, it will be worthwhile to cite a statement of Rev. T. Arundell who published his *Discoveries in Asia Minor* in 1834. He says that he had seen the remains of the Mausoleums of Mary and the Seven Sleepers on a hillock near the remains of the ancient city of Ephesus.

22. This shows that about three hundred years after this event, at the time of the revelation of the Qurān, different stories had become current among the Christians about the Sleepers of the Cave, but generally these stories had no authentic source behind them. This was because that was not the age of the press in which authentic books might have been published. Therefore naturally the stories of events were carried from place to place by means of oral traditions, and with the passage of time many tales of fiction got mixed up with the real story.

23. This is meant to impress that the real thing in this story is not the number of the Sleepers but the lessons it teaches: (1) A true

believer should not on any account turn away from the truth and bow before falsehood. (2) A believer should not merely rely on the material means but on Allah. He should trust in God and follow the right way, even though the outward adverse circumstances might appear to be unfavourable. (3) It is wrong to suppose that Allah is bound by any so-called "Law of Nature", for He is able to do any thing He wills even though that might seem to be against some common experience. He has the power to change any so-called law of nature, whenever and wherever He wills and bring about any extraordinary "supernatural" thing. So much so that He can raise up anyone who might have been asleep for two hundred years, as if he had slept only for a few hours, without letting any change take place in his appearance, dress, health, indeed in anything during the passage of time. (4) This teaches us that Allah has the power to bring to life all the generations—past, present and future—all together as asserted by the Prophets and Divine Scriptures. (5) It teaches us that ignorant people have always been perverting the Signs of Allah which are sent for the right guidance of the people. That is how the miracle of the Sleepers of the Cave, which had been shown as a proof of the Hereafter, had been turned into a means of *shirk*, as if they were some saints who had been sent only for this purpose.

It is obvious from the above-mentioned real lessons, which one can learn from the story of the Sleepers, that a wise man will pay his attention to these things and not divert it in search of their number, their names, the colour of their dog and the like. Only those people, who have no interest for the reality but for superficial things, will spend their time and energy in making investigations about such things. That is why Allah instructed the Holy Prophet : "You should not enter into useless and irrelevant discussions about such things, if other people try to involve you in them. Instead of wasting your time in such useless things, you should concentrate your attention only on your mission." That is why Allah has not Himself told their exact number lest it should encourage such people as are always hankering after useless things.

24. This is a parenthetical clause which has been inserted here because of its relevancy to the preceding verse, in which it was asserted that the correct number of the Sleepers of the Cave is known only to Allah and a research into it is a useless task. Therefore one should refrain from investigating into unimportant things, nor enter into discussions about them. This has led to the instruction contained in the parenthetical clause for the benefit of the Holy Prophet and the Believers who have been told never to make a positive assertion like this : "I will do this thing tomorrow", for you do not know whether you will be able to do that thing or not : you have neither the knowledge of the unknown nor have full powers to do what you like. If ever inadvertently

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اَعْتَدْنَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ نَارًا اَحَاطَ بِهَمُ سُرَادِقِهَا وَإِنْ يَسْتَعِيذُوا يَغَاثُوا بِمَاءٍ
 كَالْمُهْلِ يَشْوِي الْوُجُوهُ طِبْسُ الشَّرَابِ وَسَاءَتْ مُرْتَفَقًا ﴿٢٥﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَ
 عَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ إِنَّا لَا نُضِيعُ أَجْرَ مَنْ أَحْسَنَ عَمَلًا ﴿٢٦﴾ أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتُ عَدْنٍ
 تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهِمُ الْأَنْهَارُ يُحَلَّوْنَ فِيهَا مِنْ أَسَاوِرَ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ وَيَلْبَسُونَ
 ثِيَابًا خُضْرًا مِنْ سُنْدُسٍ وَإِسْتَبْرَقٍ مُتَّكِينَ فِيهَا عَلَى الْأَرَائِكِ ط نِعْمَ الثَّوَابُ
 وَحَسَنَتْ مُرْتَفَقًا ﴿٢٧﴾ وَاضْرِبْ لَهُمْ مَثَلًا رَجُلَيْنِ جَعَلْنَا لِأَحَدِهِمَا جَنَّتَيْنِ
 مِنْ أَعْنَابٍ وَحَفَفْنَاهُمَا بِنَخْلٍ وَجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمَا زُرْعًا ﴿٢٨﴾ كَلَّمَا الْجَنَّتَيْنِ آتَتْ
 أَكْلَهَا وَلَمْ تَظْلِمْ مِنْهُ شَيْئًا لَا وَفَجَرْنَا خِلْمَهُمَا نَهْرًا ﴿٢٩﴾ وَكَانَ لَهُ ثَمَرٌ فَقَالَ
 لِصَاحِبِهِ وَهُوَ يُحَاوِرُهُ أَنَا أَكْثَرُ مِنْكَ مَالًا وَ أَعَزُّ نَفَرًا ﴿٣٠﴾ وَدَخَلَ جَنَّتَهُ وَ
 هُوَ ظَالِمٌ لِنَفْسِهِ قَالَ مَا أَظُنُّ أَنْ تَبِيدَ هَذِهِ أَبَدًا ﴿٣١﴾ وَ مَا أَظُنُّ السَّاعَةَ
 قَائِمَةً لَا أَرَى رُودًا إِلَى رَبِّي لَأَجِدَنَّ خَيْرًا مِنْهَا مُنْقَلَبًا ﴿٣٢﴾ قَالَ لَهُ صَاحِبُهُ
 وَهُوَ يُحَاوِرُهُ أَكَفَرْتَ بِالَّذِي خَلَقَكَ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ سَوَّكَ
 رَجُلًا ﴿٣٣﴾ لَكِنَّا هُوَ اللَّهُ رَبِّي وَلَا أُشْرِكُ بِرَبِّي أَحَدًا ﴿٣٤﴾ وَكَوْلًا إِذْ دَخَلْتَ جَنَّتَكَ
 قُلْتَ مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ إِنَّ تَرِنًا أَنَا أَقَلُّ مِنْكَ مَالًا وَ وَلَدًا ﴿٣٥﴾
 فَعَسَى رَبِّي أَنْ يُؤْتِيَنِي خَيْرًا مِنْ جَنَّتِكَ وَ يُرْسِلَ عَلَيْهَا حُسْبَانًا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ
 فَتُصْبِحَ صَعِيدًا زَلَقًا ﴿٣٦﴾ أَوْ يُصْبِحَ مَأْوَاهَا غُورًا فَلَنْ تَسْتَطِيعَ لَهُ طَلَبًا ﴿٣٧﴾ وَاجِيطْ
 بِشَرِّهِ فَاصْبِرْ يُقَلِّبُ كَفَيْهِ عَلَى مَا أَنْفَقَ فِيهَا وَ هِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلَى عُرُوشِهَا وَ
 يَقُولُ يَلَيْتَنِي لَمْ أُشْرِكْ بِرَبِّي أَحَدًا ﴿٣٨﴾ وَ لَمْ تَكُنْ لَهُ فِئَةٌ يَنْصُرُونَهُ مِنْ دُونِ
 اللَّهِ وَ مَا كَانَ مُنْتَصِرًا ﴿٣٩﴾ هُنَالِكَ الْوَلَايَةُ لِلَّهِ الْحَقِّ هُوَ خَيْرٌ ثَوَابًا وَ خَيْرٌ

Proclaim, "This is the Truth from your Lord: now who-soever will, he may accept it and whosoever will, he may reject it".³¹ (As for those who reject this,) We have prepared for such workers of iniquity a fire whose flames have encircled them.³² If they will ask for water there, they will be treated with such a drink as will have its residue like that of oil³³ and burn their lips: what an evil drink and what an evil abode! As regards those, who accept it and do righteous deeds, they should rest assured that We do not let go waste the reward of such people: they will have evergreen gardens with canals flowing beneath them: they will be adorned with bracelets³⁴ of gold and will wear green coloured robes of silk and rich brocade and will be reclining upon raised thrones.³⁵ What an excellent reward and what an excellent abode !

O Muhammad, present a parable³⁶ before them. There were two persons; to one of those We gave two gardens of vine and surrounded them with a fence of date-palm trees and We kept a piece of land between them for cultivation. Both of the vine-yards yielded abundant fruit and did not fail anywise in bringing forth their produce, and We caused a canal to flow in their midst. And the owner of the gardens got much benefit. In spite of all this, while conversing with his neighbour, he said, "I have more of wealth than you and have mightier men at my service." Then he entered his "Paradise",³⁷ while he was unjust to himself, and said, "I don't think that this wealth of mine will ever perish, and I do not believe that the Hour of Resurrection will ever come. Anyhow if ever I am returned to my Lord, I will get even a grander place than this."³⁸

His neighbour rebuked him during the conversation, saying, "What ! do you disbelieve in the Being Who has created you from clay, then from sperm drop and shaped you as a perfect man³⁹? As for myself, Allah alone is my Lord and I set up no partners with Him. And when you were entering your garden, why didn't you say, 'Only that shall happen what He will: neither I nor any one else has any power.'⁴⁰ If you find me now less in wealth and offspring than you, my Lord may bestow on me a better

garden than yours and send from heaven on your garden a catastrophe that might turn it into a barren plain, or its water might sink into the earth and you may not be able to bring it out in any way." At last (it so happened that) all his fruit produce was destroyed and, seeing his vines overturned on the trellises, he began to wring his hands at the loss of what he had spent on it, saying, "I wish I had not associated a partner with my Lord!"—He was so helpless that neither could he find any host to help him against Allah, nor was himself able to avert that catastrophe—It was then that he realized that all the power of helping rests with Allah, the True One. That reward is the best which He bestows and that end is the best to which He leads.

Contd. from p. 21]

you utter anything like this, you should at once remember your Lord and say, "*Inshā Allah.*" Besides this you do not know whether there will be any good for you in the thing about which you say, "I will do this." It is possible that you may do another thing better than that. Therefore you should trust in God and say, "I hope that my Lord will guide me in this matter with that thing which is nearer to the right way for me."

25. This sentence is connected with the theme preceding the parenthetical clause like this : "Some people will say, 'They were three and the fourth was their dog.....' and some people will say that they remained in the Cave for three hundred years and some others would add nine more years (to the reckoning of the period)". We are of the opinion that the number of the years "300 and 309" have not been stated by Allah Himself but Allah has cited these as sayings of the people. This opinion is based on this succeeding sentence : "Allah knows best about the period of their stay there." If the number of years, given in v. 25, had been from Allah, this succeeding sentence would have been meaningless. Haḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās has also opined that this is not the saying of Allah but that of the people which has been cited as a part of the story.

26. After relating the story of the Sleepers of the Cave, the Qurān begins to review the condition of the Muslims of Makkah at the time of the revelation of the Sūrah.

27. This does not mean at all that, God forbid, the Holy Prophet was inclined to make any changes in the Qurān to please the disbelievers of Makkah and was thinking of some formula of compromise with the chiefs of the Quraish which necessitated a warning that he was not authorised to do so. As a matter of fact, though this was apparently addressed to the Holy Prophet, it was really meant for the disbelievers that they should not entertain any hope whatsoever for anything like this,

as if to say, "You must understand it once for all that Our Messenger is not authorised to make any changes in Our Revelation, for he has to convey precisely just as it is sent down to him. If you want to accept it, you will have to accept it in its entirety as it is being sent by the Lord of the Universe : and if you want to reject it, you may do so but you must understand it well that no modification even in the least, will be made in it to please you." This was the answer to the repeated demand of the disbelievers. "If you do insist, O Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him), that we should accept your Message in its entirety, then make certain modifications in it to accommodate some creeds and customs of our forefathers, and we will accept your Message. This is our offer for a compromise and this will save our people from dis-union." This demand of the disbelievers has been cited in the Qurān at several places and the same answer has been given, e.g. "When Our clear Revelations are recited to them, those who do not expect to meet Us, say, 'Bring an other Qurān in its stead or make some amendments in it'"

(X : 15)

28. Though these words have also been addressed to the Holy Prophet, they are really meant for the chiefs of the Quraish. According to a Tradition related by Ibn 'Abbās, the chiefs of the Quraish would say to the Holy Prophet that they considered it below their dignity to sit with such people as Bilāl, Ṣuhaib, 'Ammār, Khabbāb, Ibn-Mas'ūd and the like who generally remained in his company : and that if he should send them away, they would be willing to attend his meetings in order to learn about his Message. At this Allah revealed this verse : "And keep yourself whole-heartedly content with those who pray to their Lord morning and evening in order to win His approval and do not turn your attention away from them: (Do you desire to discard these sincere but poor people so that the chiefs of the Quraish, the well-to-do people, should come and sit near you ?)" This was meant to warn the chiefs of the Quraish to this effect : "Your wealth, your pomp and show of which you are so proud, has no value at all in the sight of Allah and His Messenger ; nay, those poor people are really more worthy in their sight, for they are sincere and always remember Allah." The same was the attitude of the chiefs of Prophet Noah's people, who said, "And we see also that none but the meanest and the most shallow of our people have become your followers." (Noah replied,) "I am not going to drive away those who have believed in me, nor can I say about those whom you disdain, 'Allah has not bestowed any good on them' . . ." (XXI : vv. 27, 29, 31)

29. That is, "Do not yield to what he says, nor submit to him, nor fulfil his desire, nor follow his bidding."

30. The original Arabic text may also mean, "Who discards the truth, breaks all moral limits and rushes on headlong." But in both cases it comes to this : "The one, who is neglectful of Allah and

becomes a slave of his lust, inevitably transgresses all limits and becomes a victim of immoderation. Therefore the one, who will submit to him, will also follow the same way and wander about in deviation after him."

31. This verse makes it quite plain that the story of the Sleepers of the Cave has been related to tell the opponents of Islam: "This is the Truth from your Lord: now whosoever will, he may accept it and whosoever will, he may reject it. But people must understand that no compromise will be made in regard to the Truth just as the Sleepers of the Cave did not make any compromise with regard to their creed. They did not make any compromise in regard to the Doctrine of *Tauhid* after they had believed in it and categorically declared, "Our Lord is the One Who alone is the Lord of the heavens and the earth." After this declaration they did not in any way accede to the making of any compromise with their people, who had gone astray, but firmly declared, "We will not give Him up and pray to other deities, because it will be the most improper thing, if we do so." After making this declaration they left their people and deities and took refuge in the Cave without taking any provisions with them. After this when they rose up, the only thing about which they showed any anxiety, was that their people might not succeed in forcing them back to their own faith. After relating these things, the Qurān addresses the Holy Prophet to the effect (though these words are really meant for the opponents of Islam): "It is absolutely out of the question whether any compromise can be made with *mushriks* and disbelievers. Present the truth intact to them whether they accept it or not. If they do not accept it, they themselves will meet with an evil end. As regards those, who have accepted the Truth (whether they be youngsters or poor, indigent people or slaves or labourers,) they are really those people who have a worth with Allah, and they alone will be honoured. Therefore you should not discard them and prefer the chiefs and the rich people who may be neglectful of Allah and be slaves of their lust, even though they might be possessors of worldly grandeur."

32. The Arabic word *سرادق* (*Surādiq*) literally means sides of a tent but, as used in the case of Hell, it may mean its external boundaries to which its flames and heat may reach. According to some commentators, it applies to the future tense "... its flames will encircle them" so as to refer to the flames of Hell in the Hereafter. But we are of the opinion that its flames have already encircled, in this very world, these workers of iniquity, who have turned away from the Truth and that they cannot escape them.

33. The Arabic word *مُهْل* (*muhl*) has several lexical meanings. According to some people, it means "the residue of oil"; according to

others, "lava", which is formed by the melting of things in the earth ; according to others, "molten matter" and according to others "pus and blood".

34. The dwellers of Paradise will be adorned with bracelets of gold like the kings of ancient times. This will be to show that they will be adorned like the kings of this world, whereas an unbeliever and wicked king will be disgraced there.

35. The Arabic word *أرائك* (*arā'ik*) is plural of *arīkah* which is that kind of throne that is covered with an umbrella. This is also to show that in Paradise the Believers will sit on thrones like the kings of this world.

36. In order to understand the significance of this parable we should keep in view v. 28 in which arrogant chiefs of Makkah were told that the poor Companions of the Holy Prophet would not be discarded to please them.

37. He considered his gardens to be "Paradise". Thus he behaved like those mean persons, who, when rise to power and wealth, are always involved in the misunderstanding that they are enjoying "Paradise" in this world ; therefore they do not stand in need of any other Paradise.

38. That is, "I don't think there is any life-after-death, but supposing there be one, I shall fare even better there than in my present life, for my prosperity is a clear proof that I am a favourite of God."

39. This shows that "unbelief" in Allah is not confined to the denial of the existence of God in so many words, but arrogance, pride, vanity and the denial of the Hereafter are also *kufir*. Although that person did not deny the existence of Allah, may be he professed it as is apparent from his words ("—If ever I am returned to my Lord—"), yet in spite of his profession, his neighbour charged him with unbelief in Allah. This is because the person, who considers his wealth and his grandeur etc., to be the fruits of his own power and capability and not the favours of Allah, and who thinks that they are everlasting and none can take them away from him and that he is not accountable to anyone, is guilty of "unbelief in Allah", even though he might profess belief in Him, for he acknowledges Allah as a Being and not as his Master, Owner and Sovereign. In fact, belief in Allah demands not merely the profession of His existence but also the acknowledgement of His Sovereignty, Mastery, Rule and the like.

40. That is, "If we are able to do anything, it is by the help and support of Allah alone."

عُقْبًا ۗ وَاضْرِبْ لَهُم مَّثَلِ الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَاۤ اَنْزَلْنٰهُ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ فَاخْتَلَطَ ۙ
 ۱۴ بِهِ نَبَاتُ الْاَرْضِ فَاَصْبَحَ هَشِيْمًا تَذْرُوهُ الرِّيْحُ ۗ وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ
 مُّقْتَدِرًا ۗ ۙ الْمَالُ وَالْبَنُوْنَ زِيْنَةُ الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا ۗ وَالْبَقِيَّةُ الصّٰلِحٰتُ خَيْرٌ عِنْدَ
 رَبِّكَ ثَوَابًا وَخَيْرٌ اَمَلًا ۗ ۙ وَيَوْمَ نُسِيْرُ الْجِبَالِ وَتَرٰى الْاَرْضَ بَارِزَةً ۗ وَحَشَرْنٰهُمْ
 فَلَمْ نُغَادِرْ مِنْهُمْ اَحَدًا ۗ ۙ وَعُرِضُوْا عَلَىٰ رَبِّكَ صَفًا ۗ لَقَدْ جِئْتُمُوْنَا كَمَا خَلَقْنٰكُمْ
 اَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ ۗ بَلْ زَعَمْتُمْ اَلَّنْ نَجْعَلَ لَكُمْ مَّوْعِدًا ۗ ۙ وَوَضِعَ الْكِتٰبِ فَتَرٰى
 الْمُجْرِمِيْنَ مُشْفِقِيْنَ مِمَّا فِيْهِ وَيَقُوْلُوْنَ يٰوَيْلَتَنَا مَا لِ هٰذَا الْكِتٰبِ لَا يُغَادِرُ
 صَغِيْرَةً وَّلَا كَبِيْرَةً اِلَّا اَحْصٰهَا ۗ وَوَجَدُوْا مَا عَمِلُوْا حَاضِرًا ۗ وَلَا يَظْلِمُ
 رَبُّكَ اَحَدًا ۗ ۙ وَاِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ اسْجُدُوْا لِاٰدَمَ فَسَجَدُوْا اِلَّا اِبْلِيسَ ۗ كَانَ
 ۱۸ مِنَ الْجِيْنِ فَفَسَقَ عَنْ اَمْرِ رَبِّهِ ۗ فَتَتَّخِذُوْنَهُ وَاٰلِهٖٔ اَوْلِيَآءَ مِنْ دُوْنِيْ وَ
 هُمْ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ بِئْسَ لِلظّٰلِمِيْنَ بَدَلًا ۗ ۙ مَا اَشْهَدْتُهُمْ خَلْقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ
 وَلَا خَلْقَ اَنْفُسِهِمْ ۗ وَمَا كُنْتُ مُتَّخِذَ الْمُضِلِّيْنَ عَضَدًا ۗ ۙ وَيَوْمَ يَقُوْلُ
 نَادُوْا شُرَكَآءِي الَّذِيْنَ زَعَمْتُمْ فَدَعَوْهُمْ فَلَمْ يَسْتَجِيبُوْا لَهُمْ وَجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ
 مَوْبِقًا ۗ ۙ وَرَاَ الْمُجْرِمُوْنَ النَّارَ فَظَنُّوْا اَنَّهُمْ مُّوَاقِعُوْهَا وَ لَمْ يَجِدُوْا عَنْهَا
 ۱۹ مَصْرَفًا ۗ ۙ وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَا فِيْ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنِ لِلنَّاسِ مِنْ كُلِّ مَثَلٍ ۗ وَكَانَ
 الْاِنْسَانُ اَكْثَرَ شَيْءٍ جَدَلًا ۗ ۙ وَمَا مَنَعَ النَّاسَ اَنْ يُؤْمِنُوْا اِذْ جَاءَهُمُ الْهُدٰى
 وَيَسْتَغْفِرُوْا رَبَّهُمْ اِلَّا اَنْ تَاْتِيَهُمْ سُنَّةٌ اَلْوَلٰٓئِن اَوْ يٰتِيَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ
 قُبْلًا ۗ ۙ وَمَا نُرْسِلُ الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ اِلَّا مُبَشِّرِيْنَ وَ مُنْذِرِيْنَ ۗ وَيَجَادِلُ الَّذِيْنَ
 كَفَرُوْا بِالْبَاطِلِ لِيُدْحِضُوْا بِهِ الْحَقَّ وَ اتَّخَذُوْا اٰيٰتِي وَمَا اُنْذِرُوْا هُزُوًا ۗ ۙ

And O Prophet, bring home to them the reality of this worldly life by a parable. It is like the vegetation of the earth that flourished luxuriantly when We sent down rain water from the sky, but afterwards the same vegetation was turned into chaff, which is blown away by the wind : Allah has power over everything.⁴¹ Likewise this wealth and the offspring are mere transitory adornment of worldly life : in fact the abiding good deeds are best in the sight of your Lord in regard to their end, and hold out for you greater hopes. The only thing, for which you should prepare, is the Day when We will set the mountains in motion,⁴² and when you will find the Earth quite naked,⁴³ and We will muster together all human beings in a way as to leave none at all behind,⁴⁴ and all shall be presented before your Lord in rows—Well ! you may see that you have come before Us in the same condition in which We created you at first⁴⁵ : You were under the delusion that We had not fixed any time of appointment with you—Then the record of deeds shall be set before them. At that time you will see that the criminals will be afraid of the record of their book of life and will say, “Woe to us ! What sort of a book this is ! It has left nothing unrecorded of our doings, small or great.” They will see before them everything, whatsoever they had done, and your Lord will not be unjust to anyone in the least.⁴⁶

Remember ! When We said to the angels, “Bow down before Adam”. They bowed down but Iblīs did not.⁴⁷ He was one of the *jinns*, so he chose the way of disobedience to his Lord’s Command.⁴⁸ What, would you then discard Me and make him and his offspring your patrons, though they are your enemies ? What a bad substitute it is that these workers of iniquity are taking!

I did not call them to witness the creation of the heavens and the earth nor did I associate them in their own creation.⁴⁹ It is not for Me to make My supporters those who lead others astray.

What they will do on the Day when their Lord will say to them: “Now call all those whom you considered to be My partners.”⁵⁰ They will call them but they will not respond and come to their help, and We will set a gulf of

perdition common between them.⁵¹ All the criminals will see the Fire on that Day and will have a foreboding that they are going to fall into it, but will not find any place of escape.

54-55 We have devised different ways in the Qurān to make the people understand its Message, but man is by nature very contentious. (The question is) what kept them back from accepting guidance when it came before them and from asking the forgiveness of their Lord? It is nothing more than this that they are waiting for the same thing to happen to them that visited the former communities; or that they should see the scourge of Allah coming before them!⁵²

56 The only mission for which We send the Messengers is to convey good news and stern warning,⁵³ but the disbelievers employ weapons of falsehood to defeat the Truth, and they hold up to ridicule My servants and the warnings that have been sent to them.

41. "Allah has power over everything" : He gives life and also death : He causes the rise and the downfall : It is by His command that the seasons change. Therefore, O disbelievers, if you are enjoying prosperity today, you should be under no delusion that this condition will remain for ever. That God, by Whose command these things have been bestowed on you, has the power to snatch away all this by another command.

42. The mountains will begin to move about like clouds when the gravitation of the earth shall be brought to an end. The Qurān has described the same thing in XXVII : 88 in this way : "When you see the mountains, you consider them to be firmly fixed, but they shall be floating about like clouds at that time."

43. "You will find the Earth quite naked" : You will find no vegetation and no building on it and it will become a barren plain. It is the same thing that has been stated in v. 8 of this Chapter.

44. That is, "We will muster together every human being from the first Man, Adam, to the last one born in the last moment of the Day of Resurrection: even that child which had breathed the first breath after its birth, shall be resurrected and all shall be mustered at one and the same time."

45. This thing will be addressed to those who denied the Hereafter, as if to say, "Well, now you see that the information given by the Prophets has come out to be true. They told you that Allah would bring you to life again as He first brought you out from the wombs of your

mothers but you disbelieved in it. Now say whether you have been brought to life for the second time or not.”

46. “Your Lord will not be unjust to anyone in the least”: Neither will an evil deed not committed by someone have been recorded in his Conduct Register, nor shall anyone be punished more than one deserved for his crime, nor shall an innocent person be punished at all.

47. The reference to the story of Adam and Iblīs has been made here to warn the erring people of their folly. It is an obvious folly that people should discard their Prophets, who were their well-wishers, and get entangled in the snare set by their eternal enemy, Iblīs, who has been jealous of man ever since he refused to bow down before Adam and became accursed.

48. It was possible for Iblīs to disobey Allah because he was not one of the angels but one of the *jinns*. It must be noted that the Qurān is very explicit that the angels are inherently obedient :

(1) “They do not show arrogance; they fear their Lord Who is above them, and do whatever they are bidden.” (XVI : 50)

(2) “. They do not disobey the Command that is given to them by their Lord and do whatever they are bidden to do.” (LXVI : 6)

In contrast to the angels, the *jinns* have been, like human beings, given the option to obey or not to obey. Therefore they have been given the power to believe or disbelieve, to obey or not to obey. This thing has been made explicit here by saying that Iblīs was one of the *jinns*, so he deliberately chose the way of disobedience. Incidentally, this verse removes all those misunderstandings that are generally found among the common people that Iblīs was one of the angels and not an ordinary angel but the instructor of the angels. As regards the difficulty that arises because of this statement of the Qurān, “When We said to the angels, ‘Bow down before Adam. They bowed down but Iblīs did not,’” it should be noted that the Command to the angels was meant for all those on the Earth who were under the administration of the angels so that they should also be made submissive to man. Accordingly all these creatures bowed along with the angels but Iblīs refused to bow down along with them.

49. This thing has been asserted to impress on the disbelievers that the satans were not entitled to their submission and worship, for they had no share at all in the creation of the heavens and the earth, nay, they themselves were the creation of Allah: therefore Allah alone was worthy of worship.

50. This theme has already been stated at several places in the Qurān. This is to impress that it is *shirk* to discard the commandments and the guidance of Allah and to follow the orders and guidance of any other than Allah, though one may not be professing with one’s tongue that there is any partner of Allah : nay, if one might be cursing others

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مَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ ذُكِّرَ بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِ فَأَعْرَضَ عَنْهَا وَنَسِيَ مَا قَدَّمَتْ يَدَاهُ إِنَّا
 جَعَلْنَا عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ أَكِنَّةً أَنْ يَفْقَهُوهُ وَفِي آذَانِهِمْ وَقْرًا وَإِنْ تَدْعُهُمْ إِلَى
 الْهُدَى فَلَنْ يَهْتَدُوا إِذًا أَبَدًا ﴿٥٤﴾ وَرَبُّكَ الْغَفُورُ ذُو الرَّحْمَةِ ط لَوْ يُؤَاخِذُهُمْ
 بِمَا كَسَبُوا لَعَجَّلَ لَهُمُ الْعَذَابَ ط بَلْ لَهُمْ مَوْعِدٌ لَنْ يَجِدُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ
 مَوْيلًا ﴿٥٥﴾ وَتِلْكَ الْقُرَى أَهْلَكْنَاهُمْ لَمَّا ظَلَمُوا وَجَعَلْنَا لِمَهْلِكِهِمْ مَوْعِدًا ﴿٥٦﴾ وَإِذْ
 قَالَ مُوسَى لِفَتَاهُ لَا أَبْرَحُ حَتَّى أَبْلُغَ مَجْمَعَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ أَوْ أَمْضِيَ حُقُبًا ﴿٥٧﴾
 فَلَمَّا بَلَغَا مَجْمَعَ بَيْنِهِمَا نَسِيَا حُوتَهُمَا فَاتَّخَذَ سَبِيلَهُ فِي الْبَحْرِ سَرَبًا ﴿٥٨﴾ فَلَمَّا
 جَاوَزَا قَالَ لِفَتَاهُ إِنِّي غَدَاءَنَا لَقَدْ لَقِينَا مِنْ سَفَرِنَا هَذَا نَصَبًا ﴿٥٩﴾ قَالَ
 أَرَأَيْتَ إِذْ أَوَيْنَا إِلَى الصَّخْرَةِ فَإِنِّي نَسِيتُ الْحُوتَ وَمَا أَنسِيهِ إِلَّا الشَّيْطَانُ
 أَنْ أَذْكُرَهُ وَاتَّخَذَ سَبِيلَهُ فِي الْبَحْرِ عَجَبًا ﴿٦٠﴾ قَالَ ذَلِكَ مَا كُنَّا نَبْغِ فَارْتَدَّ
 عَلَى آثَارِهِمَا قَصَصًا ﴿٦١﴾ فَوَجَدَا عَبْدًا مِنْ عِبَادِنَا اتَيْنَاهُ رَحْمَةً مِنْ عِنْدِنَا وَ
 عَلَّمْنَاهُ مِنْ لَدُنَّا عِلْمًا ﴿٦٢﴾ قَالَ لَهُ مُوسَى هَلْ أَتَّبِعُكَ عَلَى أَنْ تُعَلِّمَ مِنِّي
 مَا عَلَّمْتَ رُشْدًا ﴿٦٣﴾ قَالَ إِنَّكَ لَنْ تَسْتَطِيعَ مَعِيَ صَبْرًا ﴿٦٤﴾ وَكَيْفَ تَصْبِرُ عَلَى مَا
 لَمْ تُحِطْ بِهِ خُبْرًا ﴿٦٥﴾ قَالَ سَتَجِدُنِي إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ صَابِرًا وَلَا أَعْصِي لَكَ
 أَمْرًا ﴿٦٦﴾ قَالَ فَإِنِ اتَّبَعْتَنِي فَلَا تَسْأَلْنِي عَنْ شَيْءٍ حَتَّى أُحْدِثَ لَكَ مِنْهُ
 ذِكْرًا ﴿٦٧﴾ فَانْطَلَقَا وَنَحَىٰ حَتَّى إِذَا رَكِبَا فِي السَّفِينَةِ خَرَقَهَا ط قَالَ أَخْرَقْتُهَا لِتُغْرِقَ
 أَهْلَهَا لَقَدْ جِئْتَ شَيْئًا إِمْرًا ﴿٦٨﴾ قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ إِنَّكَ لَنْ تَسْتَطِيعَ مَعِيَ
 صَبْرًا ﴿٦٩﴾ قَالَ لَا تُؤَاخِذْنِي بِمَا نَسِيتُ وَلَا تُرْهِقْنِي مِنْ أَمْرِي عُسْرًا ﴿٧٠﴾
 فَانْطَلَقَا وَنَحَىٰ حَتَّى إِذَا لَقِيَا غُلَامًا فَقَتَلَهُ ط قَالَ أَقْتَلْتَنِي بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ

ع ٨
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ع ٩
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Now, who can be more unjust than the person before 57
whom his Lord's Revelations are recited to admonish him,
and he turns away from them and forgets the evil end to
which he has paved the way with his own hands? As
regards those people, who have adopted such an attitude,
We have put coverings over their hearts which do not let
them listen to the Qurān, and We have produced heaviness
in their ears. While in this state, they will never be
guided aright howsoever you may invite them to the
Guidance.⁵⁴

Your Lord is very Forgiving and very Merciful: Had 58
He willed to seize them for their evil deeds, He would have
sent immediately a scourge on them but He has appointed a
time for its fulfilment, and they will find no way out to escape
from it.⁵⁵

These habitations which were stricken with the scourge are 59
before you:⁵⁶ when they committed iniquity We annihilated
them, and We had appointed a term for their annihilation.

(Now relate to them the event regarding Moses,) when 60-65
Moses said to his attendant, "I will not bring my journey to an
end until I reach the confluence of the two rivers: otherwise I
will continue my journey for years."⁵⁷ And it so happened
that when they reached the confluence, they became neglect-
ful of their fish and it burrowed its way to the river as
through a tunnel. When they had passed on further, Moses
said to his attendant, "Let us have our breakfast, for we
are dead tired because of to-day's journey". The attendant
said, "Did you not notice what a strange thing happened
when we were taking rest by the side of that rock? I totally
forgot about the fish and satan made me so neglectful of it
that I could not mention it to you: the fish slipped into the
river in a marvellous manner." Moses replied, "That is
exactly what we were seeking".⁵⁸ Accordingly, they both
went back, retracing their footsteps, and there they found
one of our servants whom We had blessed with special favour
and had given him a special knowledge from Ourselves.⁵⁹

Moses said to him, "May I accompany you, so that you 66-70
may teach me also that Wisdom, which has been taught
to you?" He answered, "You cannot bear with me and you

cannot have the patience with regard to that matter of which you have no knowledge". Moses said, "If Allah' wills, you will find me patient and I will not disobey you in any matter". He said, "Well, if you want to accompany me, you should ask me no questions about anything until I myself mention it to you."

71-73

So they proceeded on until they boarded a boat, and that person bored a hole in the boat. Moses cried out, "What! have you bored a hole in it so that all the passengers may be drowned? This is a grievous thing that you have done". He answered, "Didn't I tell you that you would not be able to bear with me patiently"? Moses replied, "Please do not rebuke me for my forgetfulness, and do not take me to task in regard to my conduct".

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Then they journeyed on until they met a boy and that person slew him. Moses cried out, "Have you killed an innocent person, though he had killed nobody? Surely this is a horrible deed that you have committed".

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but at the same time following their orders instead of Divine Commandments, even then that one shall be guilty of *shirk*. For instance, we see that everyone in this world curses satans but still follows them. According to the Qurān, in spite of cursing them, if people follow satans, they shall be guilty of setting up satans as partners with Allah. Though this will not be *shirk* in so many words, it will be tantamount to the practice of *shirk* and the Qurān denounces this as *shirk*.

51. Generally the commentators have assigned two meanings to this. The one is the same that we have adopted in our translation and the other is this: "We will cause enmity between them." That is, "Their friendship in this world shall be turned into bitter enmity in the Hereafter."

52. This is to warn the people that the Qurān has left no stone unturned in making the Truth plain. It has employed all kinds of arguments, parables, similitudes and used all the possible effective ways to appeal to the heart and the mind of man, and adopted the best possible style. In short, nothing has been left that could persuade the people to accept the Truth. If, in spite of this, they do not accept the truth, it is obvious that they are waiting for God's scourge like the one that visited the former communities to make them realize their error.

53. This verse has two meanings :

(1) We send Our Messengers to forewarn the people before the coming of the judgment of the good results of obedience and the evil

consequences of disobedience. But these foolish people are not taking advantage of these forewarnings and insist on seeing the same evil end from which the Messengers desire to save them.

(2) If they insist on meeting with the scourge, they should not demand this from the Messenger because the Messenger is sent not to bring a scourge but to warn the people beforehand to escape from it.

54. Allah puts a covering over the heart of a person and makes his ears hard of hearing the Truth when he adopts the attitude of contention, dispute, wrangling and argumentation towards the admonition of a well-wisher and tries to defeat the truth with the weapons of falsehood and cunning. Naturally this attitude produces in him obduracy and obstinacy so that he turns a deaf ear towards guidance, and is unwilling to realize his error before seeing his evil end. For such people pay no heed to admonition and warning and insist on falling into the abyss of perdition: then and then alone they are convinced that it was perdition towards which they were rushing headlong.

55. This is to warn the foolish people that they should not be deluded by the respite that is given to them and presume that they will never be taken to task whatever they may go on doing. They forget that Allah gives them respite because He is Forgiving and Forbearing and does not punish the evil-doers on the spot, for His Mercy demands that the evil-doers should be given respite so that they may mend their ways.

56. The ruined habitations were of Sabā, Thamūd, Midian and the people of Prophet Lot, which were visited by the Quraish during their trade journeys, and which were quite well known to other Arabs also.

57. Though this story was told in answer to the question of the disbelievers, it has been used to impress a very important truth on the minds of both the disbelievers and the believers. It is this: those people who draw their conclusions only from the seeming aspects of events, make a very serious error in their deductions, for they only see what is apparent and do not go deep into the Divine Wisdom that underlies them. When they daily see the prosperity of the tyrants and the afflictions of the innocent people, the affluence of the disobedient people and the indigence of the obedient people, the enjoyments of the wicked people and the adversity of the virtuous people, they get involved in mental conflicts, nay, they become victims of misunderstandings because they do not comprehend the wisdom behind them. The disbelievers and the tyrants conclude from this that the world is functioning without any moral laws and has no sovereign, and, if there is one, he must be senseless and unjust: therefore one may do whatever one desires for there is none to whom one shall be accountable. On the other hand, when the believers see those things, they become so frustrated and disheartened that sometimes their faiths are put to a very hard trial. It was to unravel the wisdom behind this mystery that Allah slightly lifted the curtain from the Reality governing His factory, so that Moses might see the wisdom behind the

events that are happening day and night and how their seeming aspect is quite different from the Reality. .

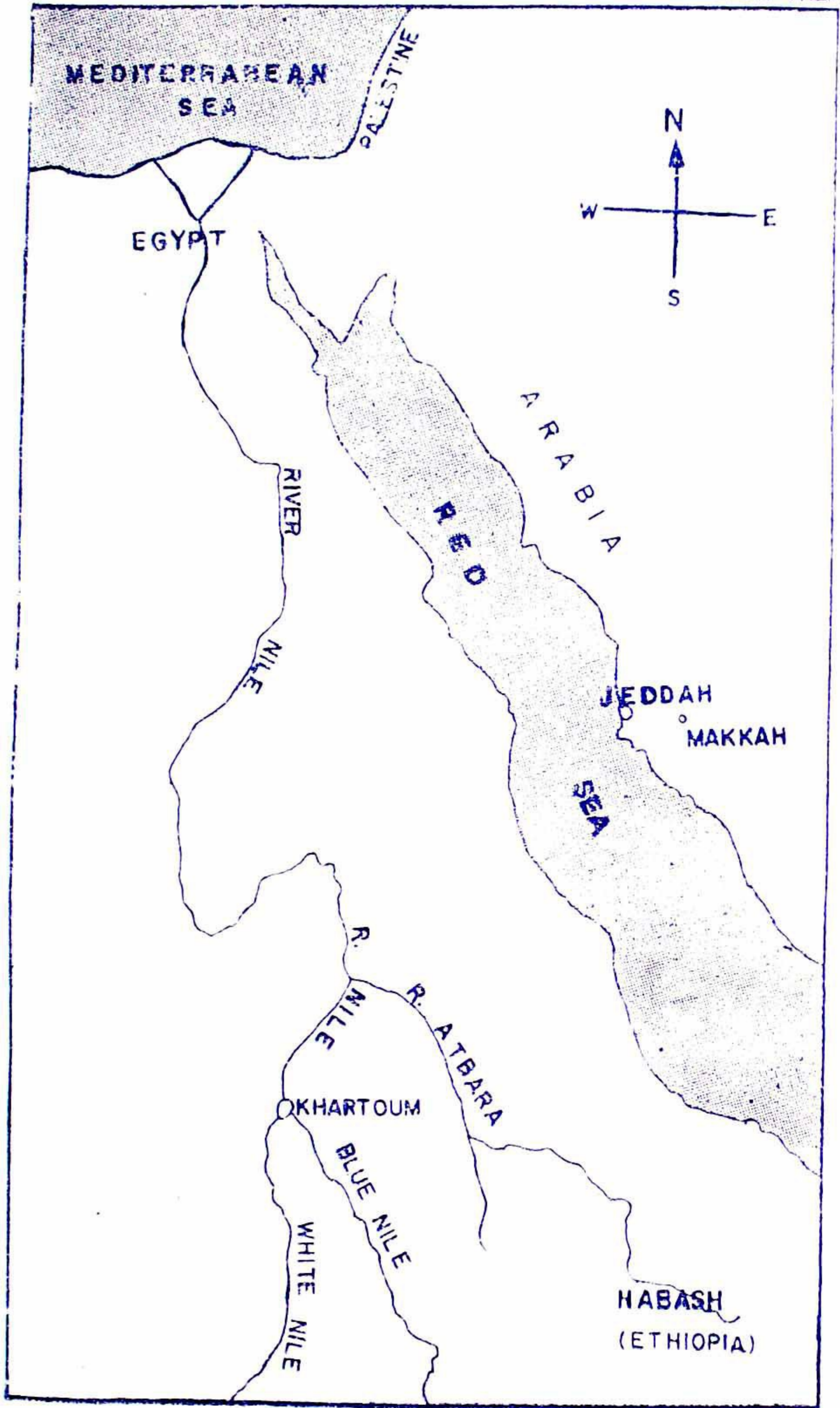
Now let us consider the question: when and where did this event take place? The Qurān says nothing about this. There is a tradition related by 'Aufi in which he cites a saying of Ibn 'Abbās to this effect: "This event happened after the destruction of Pharaoh when Prophet Moses had settled his people in Egypt". But this is not supported by other more authentic traditions from Ibn 'Abbās which have been cited in the collection of Bukhārī and other books of Traditions, nor is there any other source which may prove that Prophet Moses ever settled in Egypt after the destruction of Pharaoh. On the contrary, the Qurān says explicitly that Prophet Moses passed the whole of his life after Exodus from Egypt in the desert (Sinai and *At-Tih*). Therefore the tradition from 'Aufi cannot be accepted. However, if we consider the details of this story, two things are quite obvious: (1) These things would have been demonstrated to Prophet Moses in the earlier period of his Prophethood because such things are needed in the beginning of Prophethood for the teaching and training of the Prophets. (2) As this story has been cited to comfort the Believers of Makkah, it can be reasonably concluded that these demonstrations would have been shown to Prophet Moses, when the Israelites were encountering the same conditions as the Muslims of Makkah did at the time of the revelation of this Sūrah. On the basis of these two things, we are of the opinion (and correct Knowledge is with Allah alone) that this event relates to the period, when the persecution of the Israelites by Pharaoh was at its height and, like the chiefs of the Quraish, Pharaoh and his courtiers were deluded by delay in the scourge that there was no power above them to take them to task, and like the persecuted Muslims of Makkah, the persecuted Muslims of Egypt were crying in their agony, as if to say, "Our Lord! how long will the prosperity of these tyrants and our adversity continue?" So much so that Prophet Moses himself cried out: "... Our Lord, Thou hast bestowed on Pharaoh and his nobles splendour and possessions in the worldly life; O our Lord, hast Thou done this that they might lead astray the people from Thy Way? . . ." (X : 88)

If our conjecture is correct, then it may be concluded that probably this event took place during Prophet Moses' journey to Sudan, and by the confluence of the rivers is meant the site of the present city of Khartoum where the Blue Nile and the White Nile meet together.

The Bible does not say anything about this event but the Talmud does relate this though it assigns it to Rabbi Jochanan, the son of Levi, instead of to Prophet Moses, and according to it the other person was Elijah who had been taken up alive to heaven and joined with the angels for the purpose of the administration of the world. (*The Talmud Selections* by H. Polano, pp. 313-16).

It is just possible that like the events, which happened before the Exodus, this event also might not have remained intact but during the

MAP.NoJ
MAP RELATING OF THE STORY OF KHIDR AND MOSES
(PEACE BE UPON THEM)



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passage of centuries changes and alterations might have been made in it. But it is a pity that some Muslims have been so influenced by the Talmud that they opine that in this story Moses does not refer to Prophet Moses but to some other person bearing the same name. They forget that every tradition of the Talmud is not necessarily correct, nor have we any reason to suppose that the Qurān has related the story concerning some unknown person bearing the name "Moses". Above all, when we learn from an authentic Tradition related by Ubayy-bin-Ka'ab that the Holy Prophet himself made it clear that in this story, by Moses is meant Prophet Moses, there is absolutely no reason why any Muslim should consider any statement of the Talmud at all.

The Orientalists have, as usual, tried to make a "research" into the "sources" of this story and have pointed out that "The Kuranic story may be traced back to three main sources : (1) The Gilgamesh Epic, (2) The Alexander Romance and (3) The Jewish Legend of Elijah and Rabbi Joshua ben Levi (*Encyclopaedia of Islam* new edition and *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam* under the heading Al-Khaḍir). This is because these malicious "scholars" decide beforehand that their "scientific research" must lead to the conclusion that the Qurān is not a revealed book: therefore they have, anyhow or other, to produce a proof that whatever Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) has presented as Revelation, has been plagiarized from such and such "sources". In this these people brazenfacedly use "facts" and "quotations" so cunningly and cleverly as to achieve their mean end and one begins to have nausea at their "research". If that is research what these bigoted forgers make, then one is compelled to curse their "knowledge and research".

We ask them to answer our questions in order to expose their "research":

(1) What proof have you got to make the claim that the Qurān has based a certain statement on the contents of a couple of ancient books ? Obviously it will not be "research" to build this claim on the scant basis that a certain statement made in the Qurān is similar to the one found in these books.

(2) Do you possess any knowledge that at the time of the revelation of the Qurān there was a library at Makkah from which the Holy Prophet collected material for the Qurān? This question is pertinent because if a list were to be made of the numerous books in different languages, which you allege were sources of the stories and statements contained in the Qurān, it will become long enough for a big library. Have you got any proof that Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) had arranged for such translators as translated into Arabic those books from different languages for his use ? If it is not so and your allegation is based on a couple of journeys which the Holy Prophet made outside Arabia, a question arises: How many books did the Holy Prophet copy or commit to memory during these trade journeys before his Prophethood? And

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لَقَدْ جِئْتَ شَيْئًا نُكْرًا ۝

قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ لَكَ إِنَّكَ لَنْ تَسْتَطِيعَ مَعِيَ صَبْرًا ۝ قَالَ إِنْ سَأَلْتَكَ

عَنْ شَيْءٍ بَعْدَهَا فَلَا تُصِحِّبْنِي ۚ قَدْ بَلَغْتَ مِنْ لَدُنِّي عُذْرًا ۝

فَانْطَلَقَا ۚ وَحَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَتَيَا أَهْلَ قَرْيَةٍ اسْتَطْعَمَا أَهْلَهَا فَأَبَوْا أَنْ يُضَيِّفُوهُمَا فَوَجَدَا فِيهَا جِدَارًا يُرِيدُ أَنْ يَنْقَضَ فَأَقَامَهُ ۗ قَالَ لَوْ شِئْتَ لَتَّخَذْتَ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا ۝

قَالَ هَذَا فِرَاقُ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنِكَ ۗ سَأُنَبِّئُكَ بِتَأْوِيلِ مَا لَمْ تَسْتَطِعْ عَلَيْهِ صَبْرًا ۝

أَمَّا السَّفِينَةُ فَكَانَتْ لِمَسْكِينٍ يَعْمَلُونَ فِي الْبَحْرِ فَأَرَدْتُ أَنْ أَعِيبَهَا وَكَانَ وَرَاءَهُمْ مَلِكٌ يَأْخُذُ كُلَّ سَفِينَةٍ غَصْبًا ۝

وَأَمَّا الْغُلَامُ فَكَانَ أَبَوَاهُ مُؤْمِنَيْنِ فَخَشِينَا أَنْ يُرْهِقَهُمَا طُغْيَانًا وَكُفْرًا ۝ فَأَرَدْنَا أَنْ يُبَدِّلَهُمَا رَبُّهُمَا خَيْرًا مِنْهُ زَكَاةً وَأَقْرَبَ رُحْمًا ۝

وَأَمَّا الْجِدَارُ فَكَانَ لِغُلَامَيْنِ يَتِيمَيْنِ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ وَكَانَ تَحْتَهُ كَنْزٌ لَهُمَا وَكَانَ أَبُوهُمَا صَالِحًا فَأَرَادَ رَبُّكَ أَنْ يَبْلُغَا أَشُدَّهُمَا وَيَسْتَخْرِجَا كَنْزَهُمَا رَحْمَةً مِّنْ رَبِّكَ ۗ وَمَا فَعَلْتُهُ عَنْ أَمْرِي ۗ ذَلِكَ تَأْوِيلُ مَا لَمْ تَسْتَطِعْ عَلَيْهِ صَبْرًا ۝

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْقَرْنَيْنِ ۗ قُلْ سَأَتْلُوا عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْهُ ذِكْرًا ۝ إِنَّا مَكَّنَّا لَهُ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَآتَيْنَاهُ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ سَبَبًا ۝ فَاتَّبَعَهُ سَبَبًا ۝ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغَ مَغْرِبَ الشَّمْسِ وَجَدَهَا تَغْرُبُ فِي عَيْنٍ حَمِئَةٍ وَوَجَدَ عِنْدَهَا قَوْمًا ۗ قُلْنَا يَذَا الْقَرْنَيْنِ إِمَّا أَنْ نُعَذِّبَ وَإِمَّا أَنْ تَتَّخِذَ فِيهِمْ حُسْنًا ۝

قَالَ أَمَّا مَنْ ظَلَمَ فَسَوْفَ نُعَذِّبُهُ ثُمَّ يُرَدُّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِ فَيُعَذِّبُهُ عَذَابًا نُكْرًا ۝ وَأَمَّا مَنْ آمَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَهُ جَزَاءٌ الْحُسْنَىٰ ۗ وَسَنَقُولُ لَهُ مِنْ أَمْرِنَا يُسْرًا ۝

ثُمَّ أَتْبَعَهُ سَبَبًا ۝ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغَ مَطْلِعَ الشَّمْسِ وَجَدَهَا

He answered, "Didn't I tell you that you would not be able to bear with me patiently"? Moses said, "If after this, I ask anything of you, you may not let me accompany you. Well, now I have afforded you with an excuse from myself". 75-76

Then they travelled on until they reached a certain habitation and requested its inhabitants to give them some food but they declined to entertain them. There they saw a wall which was about to fall down. That person set it up again. Moses said, "Had you wanted, you could have demanded payment for your labour". The other said, "That will do: we must now part company. Now I explain those things about which you could not keep patience. As regards the boat, it belonged to a few poor persons who toiled on the river. I intended to damage it because further on there was the territory of a king who forcibly seized every boat. As for the boy, his parents were true Believers and we feared lest he should trouble them with his rebellion and unbelief. Therefore we wished that in his stead their Lord may grant them another child who may be more righteous and filial. As regards the wall, it belonged to two orphan boys, who reside in this city. A treasure for them lies buried under this wall. As their father was a righteous man, your Lord willed that when these children attain their maturity, they should dig out their treasure. All this has been done as a mercy from your Lord: I have not done anything of my own authority. This is the interpretation of those things about which you could not keep patience."⁶⁰ 77-82

And O Muhammad, they ask you about Zul-Qarnain⁶¹: tell them, "I am going to recite to you an account of him".⁶² 83

We had established his power on the Earth and had provided him with every kind of ways and means. At first, he made preparations for an expedition (to the West and marched on) till he reached the limit where the sun set,⁶³ and found it setting in black waters,⁶⁴ and there he saw a people. We said to him, "O Zul-Qarnain! you have the power to punish them and also the option to treat them generously".⁶⁵ He said, "We will punish that one of them who will commit 84-88

iniquity: then he shall be returned to his Lord and He will inflict on him a grievous torment: And as for the one, who will believe and do righteous deeds, there is a generous recompense and We will prescribe for him easy tasks."

Contd. from p. 37]

how is it that even a day before he claimed to be a Prophet, no sign at all was displayed in his conversation that he had gathered such information as was revealed in the Qurān afterwards?

(3) How is it then that the contemporary disbelievers of Makkah and the Jews and the Christians, who like you, were always in search of such a proof, could not put forward even a single instance of plagiarism? They had a good reason to produce an instance of this because they were being challenged over and over again to refute the claim that the Qurān was a revealed book and it had no other source than Divine Knowledge and that if they said that it was a human work, they were to prove this by bringing the like of it. Though this challenge had broken the back of the contemporary opponents of Islam, they could not point out even a single plausible source that might prove reasonably that the Qurān was based on it. In the light of these facts one may ask, "Why had the contemporaries of the Holy Prophet failed in their research and how have the opponents of Islam succeeded in their attempt today after the passage of more than a thousand years?"

(4) The last and the most important question is : Does it not show that it is bigotry and malice that has misled the opponents of Islam to discard the possibility that the Qurān may be a revealed book of Allah and to concentrate all their efforts to prove that it is not so at all? The fact that its stories are similar to those contained in the former books, could be considered equally in this light that the Qurān was a revealed book and was relating them in order to correct those errors that had crept into them during the passage of time. Why should their research be confined to prove that those books are the real source of the stories of the Qurān and not to consider the other possibility that the Qurān itself was a revealed book?

An impartial person who will consider these questions will inevitably arrive at the conclusion that the "research" which the orientalisists have presented in the name of "knowledge" is not worth any serious consideration.

58. That is, "The same was the sign of the place of our destination". This shows that Prophet Moses had taken this journey at Allah's behest to meet His Servant. He had been told that he would meet the Servant at the place where the fish would disappear.

59. The name of this Servant has been stated to be "Khiḍr" in all the authentic books of traditions. Thus there is no reason why it should be considered at all that his name was Elijah, as some people have asserted under the influence of the Israelite traditions. Their assertion is

incorrect not only because it contradicts the assertion of the Holy Prophet but it is also absurd because Prophet Elijah was born several hundred years after Prophet Moses.

Though the Qurān does not mention the name of the attendant of Prophet Moses, according to some traditions he was Joshua, the son of Nūn, who succeeded him.

60. In connection with this story, a very hard problem arises to which an answer must be found: Two of the three things done by Haḍrat Khiḍr are obviously against those commandments of the Law which have always been in force since the creation of man. No law allows anyone the right to damage the property of another and kill an innocent person. So much so that if a man were to know by inspiration that some usurper would illegally seize a certain boat, and that a certain boy would be involved in a rebellion and unbelief, even then no law, sent down by Allah, makes it lawful that one should bore a hole in the boat and kill the innocent boy by virtue of one's inspiration. If in answer to this, one were to say that Haḍrat Khiḍr committed these two acts by the Commands of Allah, this does not solve the problem, for the question is not this, "By whose command did Haḍrat Khiḍr commit these acts"? but it is this: "What was the nature of these commands"? This is important because Haḍrat Khiḍr did these acts in accordance with Divine Command, for he himself says that these acts of his were not done by his own authority, but were moved by the mercy of Allah, and Allah Himself has testified this by saying: "We gave him a special knowledge from Ourselves". Thus it is beyond any doubt that these acts were done by the Command of Allah, but the question about the nature of the command remains there, for it is obvious that these commands were not legal because it is not allowed by any Divine Law, and the fundamental principles of the Qurān also do not allow that a person should kill another person without any proof of his guilt. Therefore we shall have to admit that these commands belonged to one of those decrees of Allah in accordance with which one sick person recovers, while another dies: one becomes prosperous and the other is ruined. If the Commands given to Haḍrat Khiḍr were of this nature, then one must come to the conclusion that Haḍrat Khiḍr was an angel (or some other kind of Allah's creation) who is not bound by the Divine Law prescribed for human beings, for such commands as have no legal aspect, can be addressed to angels only. This is because the question of the lawful or the unlawful cannot arise about them: they obey the Commands of Allah without having any personal power. In contrast to them, a man shall be guilty of a sin whether he does any such thing inadvertently by intuition or by some inspiration, if his act goes against some Divine Commandment. This is because a man is bound to abide by Divine Commandments as a man, and there is no room whatsoever in the Divine Law that an act may become lawful for a man merely because he had received an instruction by inspiration and had been

informed in a secret way of the wisdom of that unlawful act.

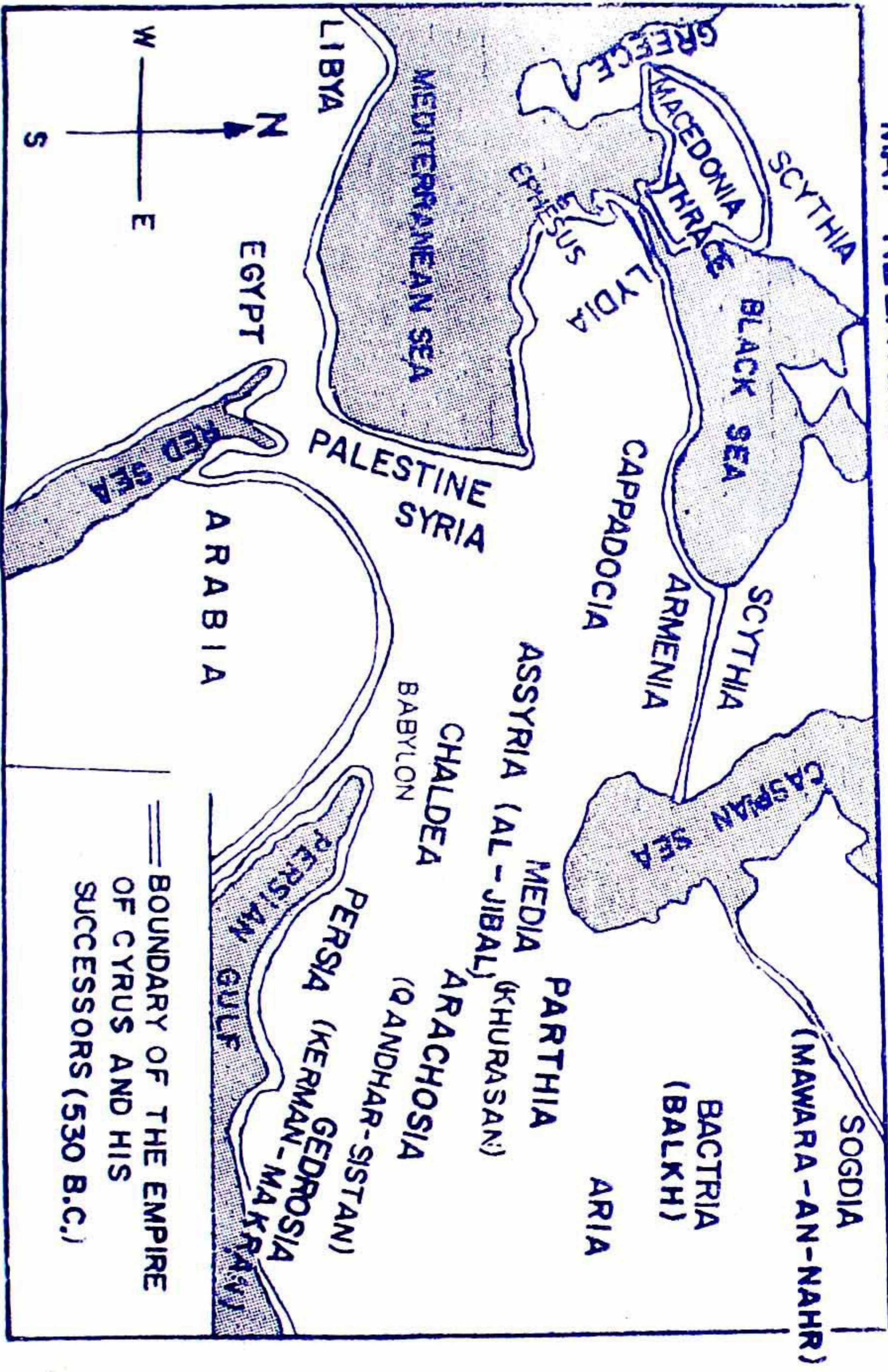
The above-mentioned principle has been unanimously accepted by scholars of the Divine Law and the leaders of Sufism. 'Allāmah Ālūsī has cited in detail the sayings of 'Abdul Wahhāb Shi'irānī, Muḥy-ud-Dīn ibn-'Arabī, Mujaddid Alf Thānī, Shaikh 'Abdul-Qādir Jilānī, Junaid Baghdādī, Sirrī Saqti, Ab-ul-Hussain An-nūrī, Abū Sa'id-al-Kharrāz, Aḥmad ud-Dainaurī and Imām Ghazzālī to this effect that it is not lawful even for a sūfi to act in accordance with that inspiration of his own which goes against a fundamental of law. (*Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī*, Vol. XVI, pp. 16-18). That is why we have come to the conclusion that Haḍrat Khiḍr must be an angel, or some other kind of Allah's creation, exempted from human law, for he could not be the only exception to the above-mentioned formula. Therefore we inevitably come to the conclusion that he was one of those Servants of Allah who act in accordance with the will of Allah and not in accordance with the Divine Law prescribed for human beings.

We would have accepted the theory that Haḍrat Khiḍr was a human being, if the Qurān had plainly asserted that the "servant" to whom Prophet Moses was sent for training, was a man, but the Qurān does not specifically say that he was a human being but says that he was "one of Our Servants", which does not show that he was necessarily a human being. Besides this, there is no Tradition which specifically says that Haḍrat Khiḍr was a human being. In the authentic traditions related by Sa'id bin Jubair, Ibn 'Abbās, Ubayy bin Ka'ab from the Holy Prophet, the Arabic word رجل (*rajul*) has been used for Haḍrat Khiḍr, which though generally used for human beings, is not exclusively used for human beings. In the Holy Qurān itself, this word has been used for *jinn*s also (LXXII : 6). It is also obvious that when a *jinn* or an angel or an invisible being will come before a human being, he will surely come in human shape and, in that form, he will be called a *bashar* (man), just like the angel who came before Mary in the shape of a human being (XIX : 17). Thus the word *rajul*, used for Haḍrat Khiḍr in the above-mentioned Tradition by the Holy Prophet, does not necessarily mean that he was a human being. Therefore we are quite justified in the light of the above discussion to believe that Haḍrat Khiḍr was one of the angels or some other kind of Allah's creation who is not bound by the Divine Law prescribed for human beings. Some of the former scholars of the Qurān have also expressed the same opinion which has been cited by Ibn Kathīr in his Commentary on the authority of Mawardī.

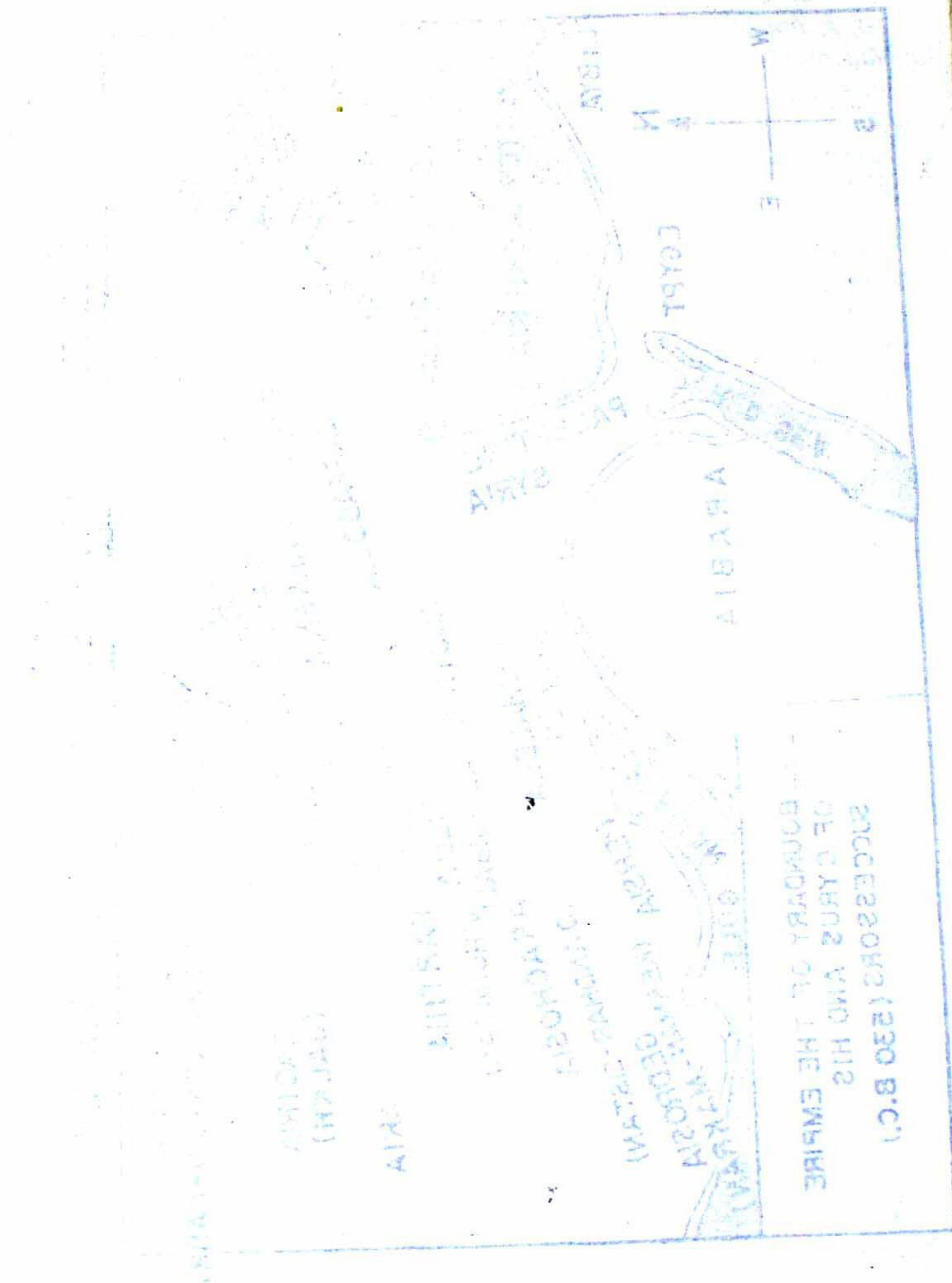
61. It is quite obvious that the conjunction "wao" joins this story with the previous story of Khiḍr. Thus it is a self-evident proof that the previous two stories of the "Sleepers of the Cave" and "Moses and Khiḍr" were also related in answer to the queries of the disbelievers of Makkah who, in consultation with the people of the Book, had put these

MAP RELATING TO THE STORY OF ZUL-QARNAIN

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questions to Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) as a test of his Prophethood.

62. The identification of Zul-Qarnain has been a controversial matter from the earliest times. In general the commentators have been of the opinion that he was Alexander the Great but the characteristics of Zul-Qarnain as described in the Qurān are not applicable to him. However, now the commentators are inclined to believe that Zul-Qarnain was Cyrus, an ancient king of Iran. We are also of the opinion that probably Zul-Qarnain as was Cyrus, but the historical facts, which have come to light up to this time, are not sufficient to make any categorical assertion.

Now let us consider the characteristics of Zul-Qarnain in the light of his story as given in the Qurān :

- (1) The title Zul-Qarnain ("The Two-Horned") should have been quite familiar to the Jews, for it was at their instigation that the disbelievers of Makkah put this question to the Holy Prophet. Therefore we must turn to the Jewish literature in order to learn who was the person known as "The Two-Horned" or which was the kingdom known as "The Two-Horned."
- (2) Zul-Qarnain must have been a great ruler and a great conqueror whose conquests might have spread from the East to the West and on the third side to the North or to the South. Before the revelation of the Qurān there had been several persons, who were such great conquerors. So we must confine our research for the other characteristics of Zul-Qarnain to one of these persons.
- (3) This title should be applicable to such a ruler who might have constructed a strong wall across a mountain pass to protect his kingdom from the incursions of Gog and Magog. In order to investigate this thing, we will have to determine as to who were Gog and Magog. We will also have to find out when such a wall was built and by whom and to which territory it was adjacent.
- (4) Besides possessing the above-mentioned characteristics, he should also be a God-worshipper and a just ruler, for the Qurān has brought into prominence these characteristics more than anything else.

The first of these characteristics is easily applicable to Cyrus, for according to the Bible Prophet Daniel saw in his vision that the united kingdom of Media and Persia was like a two-horned ram before the rise of the Greeks. (Dan. 8 : 3, 20). The Jews had a very high opinion of "The Two-horned" one, because it was his invasion which brought about the downfall of the kingdom of Babylon and the liberation of the Israelites (Please also refer to E.N. 8 of Chapter XVII).

[Contd. on p. 46

تَطَّلُ عَلَى قَوْمٍ لَمْ نَجْعَلْ لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِهَا سِتْرًا ﴿٩٠﴾ كَذَلِكَ ۗ وَ قَدْ أَحْطْنَا بِمَا
لَدَيْهِ خُبْرًا ﴿٩١﴾ ثُمَّ اتَّبَعَ سَبِيلًا ﴿٩٢﴾ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغَ بَيْنَ السَّدَّيْنِ وَجَدَ مِنْ دُونِهَا
قَوْمًا لَا يَكَادُونَ يَفْقَهُونَ قَوْلًا ﴿٩٣﴾ قَالُوا يَا الْقَرْنَيْنِ إِنَّا يَا جُوجَ وَ مَا جُوجَ
مُفْسِدُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَهَلْ نَجْعَلُ لَكَ خَرْجًا عَلَىٰ أَنْ نَجْعَلَ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَهُمْ
سَدًّا ﴿٩٤﴾ قَالَ مَا مَكْنِي فِيهِ رَبِّي خَيْرٌ فَأَعِينُونِي بِقُوَّةٍ أَجْعَلْ بَيْنَكُمْ وَ
بَيْنَهُمْ رَدْمًا ﴿٩٥﴾ اتُّوِنِي زُبْرَ الْحَدِيدِ ۗ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا سَاوَىٰ بَيْنَ الصَّدَفَيْنِ قَالَ
انفُخُوا ۗ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَعَلَهُ نَارًا ۗ قَالَ اتُّوِنِي أُفِرِّغْ عَلَيْهِ قَطْرًا ﴿٩٦﴾ فَمَا اسْطَاعُوا أَنْ
يَظْهَرُوهُ ۗ وَ مَا اسْطَاعُوا لَهُ نَقْبًا ﴿٩٧﴾ قَالَ هَذَا رَحْمَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّي ۗ فَإِذَا جَاءَ وَعْدُ
رَبِّي جَعَلَهُ دَكَّاءَ ۗ وَ كَانَ وَعْدُ رَبِّي حَقًّا ﴿٩٨﴾ وَ تَرَكْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَمُوجُ
فِي بَعْضٍ ۗ وَ نُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ ۗ فَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ جُمُعًا ﴿٩٩﴾ ۗ وَ عَرَضْنَا جَهَنَّمَ يَوْمَئِذٍ
لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَرْضًا ﴿١٠٠﴾ الَّذِينَ كَانَتْ أَعْيُنُهُمْ فِي غِطَاءٍ عَنْ ذِكْرِي ۗ وَ كَانُوا لَا
يَسْتَطِيعُونَ سَمْعًا ﴿١٠١﴾ أَفَحَسِبَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنْ يَتَّخِذُوا عِبَادِي مِنْ دُونِي أَوْلِيَاءَ ۗ
إِنَّا أَعْتَدْنَا جَهَنَّمَ لِلْكَافِرِينَ نُزُلًا ﴿١٠٢﴾ قُلْ هَلْ نُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِالْأَخْسَرِينَ أَعْمَالًا ﴿١٠٣﴾ الَّذِينَ
ضَلَّ سَعِيَّهُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا ۗ وَ هُمْ يَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّهُمْ يُحْسِنُونَ صُنْعًا ﴿١٠٤﴾ أُولَٰئِكَ
الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ ۗ وَ لِقَائِهِ فَجِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فَلَا نُقِيمُ لَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ
وِزْنًَا ﴿١٠٥﴾ ذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ هُمْ جَهَنَّمَ بِمَا كَفَرُوا ۗ وَ اتَّخَذُوا آيَتِي ۗ وَ رُسُلِي هُرُوكًا ﴿١٠٦﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ
آمَنُوا ۗ وَ عَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ ۗ كَانَتْ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتُ الْفِرْدَوْسِ نُزُلًا ﴿١٠٧﴾ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا لَا يَبْغُونَ
عَنْهَا حِوْلًا ﴿١٠٨﴾ قُلْ لَوْ كَانَ الْبَحْرُ مِدَادًا لِكَلِمَاتِ رَبِّي لَنَفِدَ الْبَحْرُ قَبْلَ أَنْ تَنْفَدَ
كَلِمَاتُ رَبِّي ۗ وَ لَوْ جِئْنَا بِمِثْلِهِ مَدَدًا ﴿١٠٩﴾ قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِثْلُكُمْ يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ أَنَّمَا إِلَهُكُمُ

Then he made preparations (for another expedition and marched on) till he reached the limit where the sun rose. There he saw the sun rising on a people, whom We had not given any shelter from sun shine.⁶⁶ This was their condition and We know well whatever Ẓul-Qarnain possessed. 89-91

Then he made preparations (for another expedition and marched on) till he reached between two mountains,⁶⁷ where he found a people who could hardly understand any language.⁶⁸ They said, "O Ẓul-Qarnain, Gog and Magog⁶⁹ spread chaos in this land; should we then pay a tribute to you so that you may build a bulwark between us and them?" He said, "What my Allah has granted me is more than enough. You should help me only with manual labour and I will build a barrier between you and them.⁷⁰ Come, bring sheets of iron for me." When he had filled the space between the two mountains, he said to the people, "Now, ply your bellows." They did so till that (iron-wall) became redhot and he said, "Now let me pour molten brass upon it". This was such a barrier that Gog and Magog could not scale over it, nor were they able to dig through it. Ẓul-Qarnain said, "This is a mercy from my Lord; but when the time of my Lord's promise shall come, He will level it to dust⁷¹ and the promise of my Lord is true."⁷² 92-98

And on that Day,⁷³ We will let loose the people to come close together tumultuously (like the waves of an ocean), and the trumpet shall be blown, and We will gather together all mankind. On that Day Hell shall be brought before the unbelievers who had become blind to My admonition and turned a deaf ear to it. 99-101

What,⁷⁴ do these people, who have disbelieved, presume that they would make My servants their helpers beside Me⁷⁵? We have prepared Hell for the hospitality of such people. 102

O Muhammad, say to them, "Should We tell you who are the most unsuccessful people and miserable failures in regard to their deeds? They are those, all whose endeavours, in the worldly life, had gone astray from the Right Way,⁷⁶ but all along they were under the delusion that everything they were doing, was rightly directed: those are the people who rejected the Signs of their Lord and did not believe that 103-108

they would ever go before Him. Therefore all their deeds were lost, for We will assign no weight to them on the Day Resurrection.⁷⁷ Their recompense is Hell for the disbelief they showed and for the mockery they adopted in regard to My Signs and My Messengers. However, for the hospitality of those people who did righteous deeds, there will be gardens of Paradise wherein they will abide for ever and they will never desire to go anywhere out of them."⁷⁸

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O Muhammad, say to them, "If the waters of the ocean were to become ink to write the Words⁷⁹ of my Lord, it would exhaust but the Words of my Lord will not exhaust: nay, even if We brought as much ink again, it will not suffice for that".

Contd. from p. 43]

The second characteristic is applicable to him to a great extent but not completely. Though his conquests spread to Syria and Asia Minor in the West and to Bākhṭar (Balkh) in the East, there is no trace of any of his great expeditions to the North or to the South, whereas the Qurān makes an explicit mention of his third expedition. Nevertheless, this third expedition is not wholly out of the question for history tells us that his kingdom extended to Caucasia in the North. As regards Gog and Magog, it has been nearly established that they were the wild tribes of Central Asia who were known by different names—Tartars, Mongols, Huns and Scythians—who had been making inroads on settled kingdoms and empires from very ancient times. It is also known that strong bulwarks had been built in southern regions of Caucasia, though it has not been as yet historically established that these were built by Cyrus.

As regards the last characteristic, Cyrus is the only known conqueror among the ancient rulers, to whom this may be applicable, for even his enemies have been full of praise for him for his justice, and, Ezrā, a book of the Bible, asserts that he was a God-worshipper and a God-fearing king who set free the Israelites because of his God-worship, and ordered that the Temple of Solomon should be rebuilt for the worship of Allah, Who has no partner.

In the light of the above, we admit that of all the conquerors, who had passed away before the revelation of the Qurān, Cyrus alone is the one to whom the characteristics of "Zul-Qarnain" are most applicable, but we need more evidence to determine specifically that Cyrus is definitely "Zul-Qarnain." Anyhow, there is no other conqueror to whom the characteristics stated in the Qurān are as much applicable as to Cyrus.

Historically it is enough to say that Cyrus was a Persian ruler, whose rise began about 549 B.C. In a few years, he conquered the kingdom

of Media and Lydia and afterwards conquered Babylon in 539 B.C. After this no powerful kingdom was left to oppose him. His conquests extended to Sind and the territory known as Turkistan on one side, and to Egypt and Lybia and to Thrace and Macedonia and to Caucasia and Khawarzam in the North. In fact, the whole civilized world was under his sway.

63. "The limit where the sun set" does not mean the "place" of the setting of the sun.

According to Ibn Kathīr, it means that he marched to the West conquering one country after the other till he reached the last boundary of the land, beyond which there was ocean.

64. "He found the sun setting in black muddy waters of the sea" : if Zul-Qarnain was Cyrus, then that place would be the western limit of Asia Minor and the "black waters" would be the Aegean Sea. This interpretation is supported by the use of the word "ain" instead of "bahr" in the Qurān.

65. "We said to him" does not necessarily mean that Allah directly revealed to him these words, and that Zul-Qarnain was a Prophet or was the one who received inspiration from Allah, and the same is the reasonable conjecture. This concerns the time when Zul-Qarnain had taken possession of the land as a conqueror and the conquered people were utterly at his mercy. Then Allah posed a question before his conscience, as if to say, "Now is the time of your trial. These people are utterly at your mercy, and you have the option either to behave unjustly towards them or to treat them generously."

66. That is, "When he advanced towards the East, conquering one country after the other, he reached a territory where the limits of the civilized world had come to an end and beyond which was the territory of barbaric people, who had no shelter at all of tents or buildings."

67. The "two mountains" must have been parts of that mountain range which runs between the Caspian Sea and the Black Sea (as stated in v. 96). This must be so because beyond them was the territory of Gog and Magog.

68. That is, "It was difficult to communicate with them : their language was almost foreign to Zul-Qarnain and his companions, and, as they were quite barbaric, none could understand their language, nor were they acquainted with any foreign language."

69. As has already been pointed out in E.N. 62, Gog and Magog were the wild tribes of North Eastern Asia which, from the very early times had been making inroads on settled kingdoms and empires in Asia and Europe and ravaging them. According to Genesis (Chapter 10), they were the descendants of Japheth, the son of Noah, and the Muslim historians have also accepted this. And according to the book of Ezekiel (Chapters 38, 39), they inhabited the territories of Meshech (Moscow) and Tubal (Tubalsek). According to the Israelite historian

Josephus, they were the Scythians and their territory spread to the north and the east of the Black Sea. According to Jerome, Magog inhabited the territory to the north of Caucasia near the Caspian Sea.

70. That is, "As a ruler it is my duty to protect you from the ravages of your enemies : therefore it is not lawful for me to levy any extra taxes on you for this purpose. The treasury that Allah has placed in my custody, suffices for this purpose. You shall, however, have to help me with your manual labour."

71. That is, "Though I have built a very strong iron-wall, as far as it was possible for me, it is not ever-lasting, for it will last only as long as Allah wills, and will fall down to pieces when the time of my Lord's promise shall come. Then no power in the world shall be able to keep it safe and secure."

As regards the time of Allah's promise, it has two meanings: (1) It may mean the time of the destruction of the wall, and (2) it may also mean the time of the death and destruction of everything destined by Allah at the end of the world i.e., the Hour of Resurrection.

Some people have entertained the misunderstanding that the wall attributed here to Zūl-Qarnain refers to the famous Wall of China, whereas this wall was built between Derbent and Dar'yal, two cities of Daghestan in the Caucasus, the land that lies between the Black Sea and the Caspian. There are high mountains between the Black Sea and Dar'yal having deep gorges which cannot allow large armies to pass through them. Between Derbent and Dar'yal, however, there are no such mountains and the passes also are wide and passable. In ancient times savage hordes from the north invaded and ravaged southern lands through these passes and the Persian rulers who were scared of them had to build a strong wall, 50 miles long, 29 feet high and 10 feet wide, for fortification purposes, ruins of which can still be seen. Though it has not yet been established historically who built this wall in the beginning, the Muslim historians and geographers assign it to Zūl-Qarnain because its remains correspond with the description of it given in the Qurān.

Ibn Jarīr Ṭabari and Ibn Kathīr have recorded the event, and Yaqūt has mentioned it in his *Mu'jam-ul-Buldān* that when after the conquest of Azerbaijan, Haḍrat 'Umar sent Surāqah bin 'Amr, in 22 A.H. on an expedition to Derbent, the latter appointed 'Abdur Rehmān bin Rabī'ah as the chief of his vanguard. When 'Abdur Rehmān entered Armenia, the ruler Shehrbrāz surrendered without fighting. Then when 'Abdur Rehmān wanted to advance towards Derbent, Shehrbrāz informed him that he had already gathered full information about the wall built by Zūl-Qarnain, through a man, who could supply all the necessary details and then the man was actually presented before 'Abdur Rehmān. (*Ṭabari*, Vol. III, pp. 235-239 ; *Al-Bidāyah wan-Nihāyah*, Vol. VII, pp. 122-125, and *Mu'jam-ul-Buldān*, under *Bāb-ul-Abwāb* : Derbent).

Two hundred years later, the Abbasid Caliph Wāthiq (227 233 A.H.) despatched a party of 50 men under Sallām-ul-Tarjumān to study the wall of Z̤ul-Qarnain, whose observations have been recorded in great detail by Yaqūt in *Mu'jam-ul-Buldān* and by Ibn Kathīr in *Al-Bidāyah*. They write that this expedition reached Sāmarrah from where they reached Tiflis (the present Tbilisi) and then through As-Sarīr and Al-Lān, they reached Filānshah, from where they entered the Caspian territory. From there they arrived at Derbent and saw the wall. (*Al-Bidāyah*, Vol. II, p. 111, Vol. VII, pp. 122-125 ; *Mu'jam-ul-Buldān* : under *Bāb-ul-Abwāb*). This clearly shows that even up till the third century of *Hijrah* the Muslim scholars regarded this wall of the Caucasus as the wall of Z̤ul-Qarnain.

Yaqūt in his *Mu'jam-ul-Buldān* has further confirmed the same view at a number of places. For instance, under Khazar (Caspian) he writes :

“This territory belongs to the Turks, which adjoins the Wall of Z̤ul-Qarnain just behind *Bāb-ul-Abwāb*, which is also called Derbent.” In the same connection, he records a report by Aḥmad bin Fadlān, the ambassador of Caliph Al-Muqtadar-billah, who has given a full description of the Caspian land, saying that Caspian is the name of a country whose capital is Itil (near the present Astrakhan) right through which flows River Itil, which joins the Caspian from Russia and Bulghar.

Regarding *Bāb-ul-Abwāb* he says that this city is called both Al-Bāb and Derbent, which is a highly difficult passage for the people coming from the northern lands towards the south. Once this territory was a part of the kingdom of Nausherwan, and the Persian rulers paid particular attention to strengthening their frontiers on that side.

72. Here the story of Z̤ul-Qarnain comes to an end. Though this story has been related in answer to the questions put by the disbelievers of Makkah as a test along with the stories of the “Sleepers of the Cave” and “Moses and Khidr”, the Qurān has utilized this story, too, for its own aim and object, as if to say, “Z̤ul-Qarnain, about whose glory you have heard from the people of the Book, was not merely a conqueror, but also a believer of the doctrines of *Tauḥīd* and the life-after-death and acted upon the principles of justice and generosity. He was not a mean person like you who have been puffed up by the possession of petty estates, and give yourselves airs of superiority.”

73. “On that Day” : “The Day of Resurrection”. As if to continue the theme of life-after-death to which Z̤ul-Qarnain referred as the “time of my Lord’s promise”, the Qurān has added verses 99-101 to it.

74. This is the conclusion of the whole Sūrah and is not connected with the story of Z̤ul-Qarnain only but with the subject-matter of this Sūrah as a whole. That theme was enunciated at the beginning of the Sūrah (1-8) : The Holy Prophet invited his people (1) to give up *shirk*

and adopt the doctrine of *Tauḥīd* instead, (2) to give up the worship of the world and to believe in the life of the Hereafter. But the chiefs of his people, who were puffed up with their wealth and grandeur, not only rejected his invitation but also persecuted and insulted those righteous people who had accepted his invitation. The discourse deals with the same themes and utilizes in an excellent manner the three stories which were related in answer to the questions put by the opponents of Islam as a test of his Prophethood.

75. That is, "Do they still stick to their presumption even after hearing all this, and believe that their attitude will be profitable for them?"

76. This verse has two meanings. The one is the same that we have adopted in the translation. The other meaning is this: "...those who confined all their endeavours to the worldly life". That is, whatever they did, they did for this world without paying any regard to God and the Hereafter. As they considered the worldly life to be the real life, they made the success and prosperity in this world their sole aim and object. Even if they professed the existence of Allah, they never paid any heed to the two implications of this profession : to lead their lives in a way to please Allah and to come out successful on the Day they shall have to render an account of what they did in this world. This was because they considered themselves to be mere rational animals who were absolutely independent and free from every kind of responsibility and had nothing else to do but to enjoy the good things of the world like animals in a meadow.

77. "All their deeds were lost" in the sense that they will be of no avail to them in the life-after-death, even though they might have considered them as their great achievements but the fact is that they will lose all their value as soon as the world shall come to an end. When they will go before their Lord, and all their deeds shall be placed in the Scales, they will have no weight at all whether they had built great palaces, established great universities and libraries, set up great factories and laboratories, constructed highways and railways, in short, all their inventions, industries, sciences and arts and other things of which they were very proud in this world, will lose their weights in the Scales. The only thing which will have weight there will be that which had been done in accordance with the Divine instructions and with the intention to please Allah. It is, therefore, obvious that if all one's endeavours were confined to the worldly things and the achievement of worldly desires whose results one would see in this world, one should not reasonably expect to see their results in the Hereafter, for they would have gone waste with the end of this world. It is equally obvious, that only the deeds of the one, who performed them strictly in accordance with His instructions to win His approval with a view to avail of their results in the Hereafter, will find that his deeds had weight in the Scales. On the contrary, such a one will find that all his endeavours in the world

۱۲
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إِلَهُ وَاحِدٌ فَمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُوا لِقَاءَ رَبِّهِ فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَلَا يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ أَحَدًا ۝

O Muhammad say to them, "I am a human being like 110
you: it has been revealed to me that your Deity is only One
Allah. Therefore the one who expects to meet his Lord,
should not associate with Him any other deity in His worship."

had gone waste.

78. "... they will never desire to go anywhere (else)," because they will find no place and no condition better than those in Paradise.

79. By "Words" are meant "the marvellous works, the excellences and the wonders of His Power and Wisdom".

XIX

Maryam (MARY) مَرْيَمَ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

XIX

MARYAM (MARY) مَرْيَمَ

INTRODUCTION

Name. It takes its name from v. 16.

Period of Revelation. It was revealed before the Migration to Ḥabash. We learn from authentic Traditions that Ḥaḍrat Ja‘afar recited vv. 1-40 of this Sūrah in the court of Negus when he called the migrants to his court.

Historical Background. We have already briefly referred to the conditions of that period in the Introduction to Sūrah Al-Kahf. Here we shall give rather fuller details of the same conditions, which will be helpful in grasping the meaning of this Sūrah and the other Sūrahs of the period. When the chiefs of the Quraish felt that they had failed to suppress the Islamic Movement by ridicule, sarcasm, and by holding out promises and threats and by making false accusations, they resorted to persecution, beating and economic pressure. They would catch hold of the new Muslims of their clans and persecute them, starve them and would even inflict physical torture on them in order to coerce them to give up Islam. The most pitiful victims of their persecution were the poor people and the slaves and the proteges of the Quraish. They were beaten black and blue, were imprisoned and kept thirsty and hungry and were dragged on the burning sands of Makkah. The people would get work from the professional labourers but would not pay them their wages. As an instance we give below the story of Ḥaḍrat Khabbāb bin Arat, which is given in *Bukhārī* and *Muslim* :

“I used to work as a blacksmith in Makkah. Once I

did some work for 'Āṣ bin Wā'il. When I went to ask for my wages, he said, 'I will not pay your wages unless you disown Muhammad'."

In the same connection Ḥaḍrat Khabbāb says, "One day the Holy Prophet was sitting in the shadow of the Ka'abah. I went to him and said, 'O Messenger of Allah! now persecution has gone to its extreme; why do you not pray to Allah (for relief)?' At this the Holy Prophet was greatly moved. He said, 'The believers before you were persecuted much more than you. Their bones were scraped with combs of iron and their heads were cut with saws, but still they did not give up their Faith. I assure you that Allah will fulfil this Mission, and there will come a period of such peace that one would travel from Ṣan'ā' to Ḥaḍramaut, and he will have no fear from anyone, save Allah. But you people have already become impatient.'" (*Bukhārī*)

When the conditions became unbearable, the Holy Prophet, in the month of Rajab of the fifth year of Prophethood, gave advice to his Companions to this effect: "You may well migrate to Ḥabash, for there is a king, who does not allow any kind of injustice to anyone, and there is good in his land. You should remain there till the time that Allah provides a remedy for your affliction".

Accordingly, at first, eleven men and four women left for Ḥabash. The Quraish pursued them up to the coast but fortunately they got a timely boat for Ḥabash at the sea-port of Shu'aibah, and they escaped arrest. Then after a few months, other people migrated to Ḥabash and their number rose to eighty-three men and eleven women of the Quraish and seven non-Quraish. After this, only forty persons were left with the Holy Prophet at Makkah.

There was a great hue and cry in Makkah after this Migration, for every family of the Quraish was adversely affected by this. There was hardly a family of the Quraish which did not lose a son, a son-in-law, a daughter, a brother or a sister. For instance, there were among the Migrants the near relatives of Abū Jahl, Abū Sufyān and other chiefs of the Quraish who were notorious for their persecution of the Muslims. As a result of this, some of them became even

more bitter in their enmity of Islam, while there were others who were so moved by this that they embraced Islam. For instance, this Migration left a deep mark on Ḥaḍrat ‘Umar. One of his relatives, Lailā, daughter of Ḥathmah, says, “I was packing my luggage for Migration, while my husband, ‘Amr bin Rabīy‘ah, had gone out. In the meantime ‘Umar came there and began to watch me, while I was engaged in preparation for the journey. Then he said, ‘Are you also going to migrate?’ I answered, ‘Yes! by God, you people have persecuted us much. But the wide earth of Allah is open for us. Now we are going to a place where Allah will grant us peace’. At this, I noticed such signs of emotion on the face of ‘Umar as I had never seen before. He simply said, ‘May God be with you’ and went away.”

After the migration, the Quraish held consultations, and decided to send ‘Abdullah bin Abī Rabīy‘ah, half brother of Abū Jahl, and ‘Amr bin ‘Āṣ to Ḥabash with precious gifts so as to persuade Negus to send the migrants back to Makkah. Ḥaḍrat Umm Salmah (a wife of the Holy Prophet), who was among the migrants, has related this part of the story in detail. She says, “When these two clever statesmen of the Quraish reached Ḥabash, they distributed the gifts among the courtiers of the King and persuaded them to recommend strongly to him to send the migrants back. Then they saw Negus himself and, presenting rich gifts to him, said, “Some headstrong brats of our city have come to your land and our chiefs have sent us to you with the request that you may kindly send them back. These brats have forsaken our faith and have not embraced your faith either, but have invented a new faith”. As soon as they had finished their speech, all the courtiers recommended their case, saying, “We should send such people back to their city for their people know them better. It is not proper for us to keep them here”. At this the King was annoyed and said, “I am not going to give them back without proper enquiry. As these people have put their trust in my country rather than in any other country and have come here to take shelter, I will not betray them. At first I will send for them and investigate into the allegations these people have made against them. Then I will make my

final decision". Accordingly, the King sent for the Companions of the Holy Prophet and asked them to come to his court.

When the migrants received the message of the King, they assembled and held consultations as to what they should say to the King. At last they came to this unanimous decision: "We will present before the King the teachings of the Holy Prophet without adding anything to or withholding anything from them and leave it to him whether he lets us remain here or turns us out of his country". When they came to the court, the King put this problem abruptly before them: "I understand that you have given up the faith of your own people and have neither embraced my faith nor any other existing faith. I would like to know what your new faith is." At this, Ja'afar bin Abī Tālib, on behalf of the migrants, made an extempore speech to this effect: "O King! We were sunk deep in ignorance and had become very corrupt; then Muḥammad (Allah's peace be upon him) came to us as a Messenger of God, and did his best to reform us. But the Quraish began to persecute his followers, so we have come to your country in the hope that here we will be free from persecution". After his speech, the King said, "Please recite a piece of the Revelation which has been sent down by God to your Prophet". In response, Ḥaḍrat Ja'afar recited that portion of Sūrah Maryam which relates the story of Prophets John and Jesus (Allah's peace be upon them). The King listened to it and wept, so much so that his beard became wet with tears. When Ḥaḍrat Ja'afar finished the recital, he said: "Most surely this Revelation and the Message of Jesus have come from the same source. By God! I will not give you up into the hands of these people".

Next day 'Amr bin 'Āṣ went to Negus and said, "Please send for them again and ask them concerning the creed they hold about Jesus, the son of Mary, for they say a horrible thing about him". The King again sent for the migrants, who had already learnt about the scheme of 'Amr. They again sat together and held consultations in regard to the answer they should give to the King, if he asked about the belief they held about Prophet Jesus. Though this was a

very critical situation and all of them were uneasy about it, they decided that they would say the same thing that Allah and His Messenger had taught them. Accordingly, when they went to the court, the King put them the question that had been suggested by 'Amr bin 'Āṣ. So Ja'afar bin Abī Ṭālib stood up and answered without the least hesitation: "He was a Servant of Allah and His Messenger. He was a Spirit and a Word of Allah which had been sent to virgin Mary." At this the King picked up a straw from the ground and said, "By God, Jesus was not worth this straw more than what you have said about him." After this the King returned the gifts sent by the Quraish, saying, "I do not take any bribe". Then he said to the migrants, "You are allowed to stay here in perfect peace".

Theme and Subject

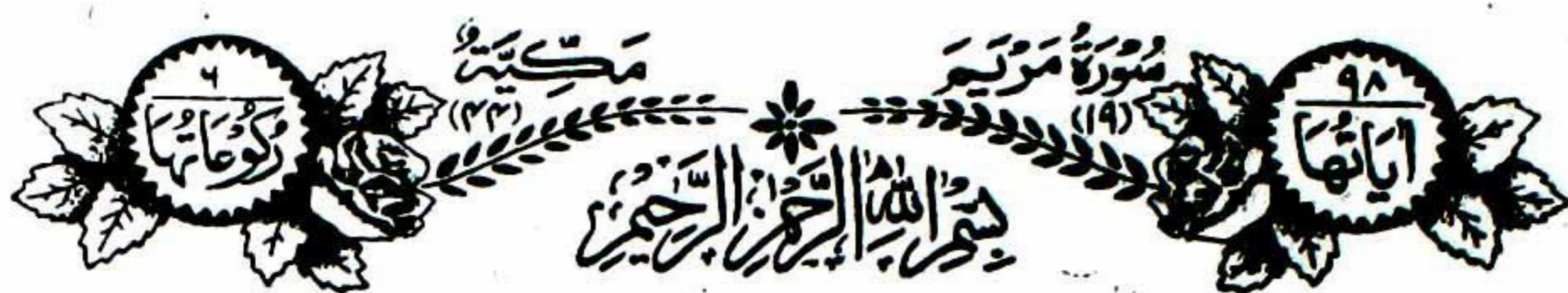
Keeping in view this historical background, it becomes quite obvious that this Sūrah was sent down to serve the migrants as a "provision" for their journey to Ḥabash, as if to say, "Though you are leaving your country as persecuted emigrants to a Christian country, you should not in the least hide anything from the teachings you have received. Therefore you should plainly say to the Christians that Prophet Jesus was not the son of God."

After relating the story of Prophets John and Jesus in vv. 1-40, the story of Prophet Abraham has been related (vv. 41-50) also for the benefit of the Migrants for he also had been forced like them to leave his country by the persecution of his father, his family and his country men. On the one hand, this meant to console the Emigrants that they were following the footsteps of Prophet Abraham and would attain the same good end as that Prophet did. On the other hand, it meant to warn the disbelievers of Makkah that they should note it well that they were in the position of the cruel people who had persecuted their forefather and leader, Abraham, while the Muslim Emigrants were in the position of Prophet Abraham himself.

Then the mention of the other Prophets has been made in vv. 51-65 with a view to impress that Muhammad (Allah's

peace be upon him) had brought the same way of life that had been brought by the former Prophets but their followers had become corrupt and adopted wrong ways.

In the concluding passage (vv. 66-98), a strong criticism has been made of the evil ways of the disbelievers of Makkah, while the Believers have been given the good news that they would come out successful and become the beloved of the people, in spite of the worst efforts of the enemies of the Truth.



كَهَيْئَةِ ۙ ذِكْرُ رَحْمَتِ رَبِّكَ عَبْدَهُ زَكَرِيَّا ۚ إِذْ نَادَى رَبَّهُ نِدَاءً خَفِيًّا ۗ قَالَ
 رَبِّ إِنِّي وَهَنَ الْعَظْمُ مِنِّي وَاشْتَعَلَ الرَّأْسُ شَيْبًا وَلَمْ أَكُنْ بِدُعَائِكَ رَبِّ
 شَقِيًّا ۗ وَإِنِّي خِفْتُ الْمَوَالِيَ مِنْ وَرَائِي وَكَانَتِ امْرَأَتِي عَاقِرًا فَهَبْ لِي مِنْ
 لَدُنْكَ وَلِيًّا ۗ يَرِثُنِي وَيَرِثُ مِنْ آلِ يَعْقُوبَ ۗ وَاجْعَلْهُ رَبِّ رَضِيًّا ۗ يُزَكِّرِيَا
 إِنَّا نُبَشِّرُكَ بِغُلَامٍ اسْمُهُ يَحْيَىٰ لَمْ نَجْعَلْ لَهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ سَمِيًّا ۗ قَالَ رَبِّ أَنَّى
 يَكُونُ لِي غُلَامٌ وَكَانَتِ امْرَأَتِي عَاقِرًا وَقَدْ بَلَغْتُ مِنَ الْكِبَرِ عِتِيًّا ۗ قَالَ كَذَلِكَ
 قَالَ رَبُّكَ هُوَ عَلَىٰ هَيْئٍ وَقَدْ خَلَقْتُكَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَلَمْ تَكُ شَيْئًا ۗ قَالَ رَبِّ
 اجْعَلْ لِي آيَةً ۗ قَالَ إِنَّا لَنُعَلِّمُكَ الْوَيْسُوكَ لِيَالٍ سَوِيًّا ۗ فَخَرَجَ عَلَى
 قَوْمِهِ مِنَ الْبِحْرَابِ فَادَّخَىٰ إِلَيْهِمْ أَنْ سَبِّحُوا بُكْرَةً وَعَشِيًّا ۗ يَحْيَىٰ خُذِ
 الْكِتَابَ بِقُوَّةٍ ۗ وَآتَيْنَاهُ الْحُكْمَ صَبِيًّا ۗ وَحَنَانًا مِّنْ لَّدُنَّا وَزَكَاةً ۗ وَكَانَ
 تَقِيًّا ۗ وَبَرًّا بِوَالِدَيْهِ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ جَبَّارًا عَصِيًّا ۗ وَسَلَّمُ عَلَيْهِ يَوْمَ وُلِدَ وَ
 يَوْمَ يَمُوتُ وَ يَوْمَ يُبْعَثُ حَيًّا ۗ وَادَّكُرُ فِي الْكِتَابِ مَرِيحًا إِذِ انْتَبَذَتْ مِنْ
 أَهْلِهَا مَكَانًا شَرْقِيًّا ۗ فَاتَّخَذَتْ مِنْ دُونِهِمْ حِجَابًا ۗ فَأَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْهَا رُوحَنَا
 فَتَمَثَّلَ لَهَا بَشَرًا سَوِيًّا ۗ قَالَتْ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِالرَّحْمَنِ مِنْكَ إِنْ كُنْتَ تَقِيًّا ۗ
 قَالَ إِنَّمَا أَنَا رَسُولُ رَبِّكِ لِأَهَبَ لَكِ غُلَامًا زَكِيًّا ۗ قَالَتْ أَنَّى يَكُونُ لِي غُلَامٌ
 وَلَمْ يَمَسِّنِي بَشَرٌ وَلَمْ أَكُ بَغِيًّا ۗ قَالَ كَذَلِكَ قَالَ رَبُّكِ هُوَ عَلَىٰ هَيْئٍ ۗ وَ

٥ ا ع

وقف لازم

الربيع

XIX

MARYAM (MARY) مَرْيَمُ

Verses: 98

Revealed at Makkah

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

Kāf Hā Yā ‘Ain Šād. Here is an account¹ of the mercy 1-3
your Lord showed to His servant Zachariah,² when he invoked
his Lord in an under tone.

He prayed, “O my Lord! My very bones have become 4-6
rotten, and my head is glistening with age. My Lord! I
have never been disappointed in my prayer to Thee. I now
fear (the consequences of) the evil ways of my kinsmen after
me,³ and my wife is barren! I, therefore, pray Thee to bless
me by Thy grace with a successor, who may inherit my herit-
age and that of the descendants of Jacob;⁴ and O Lord, make
him a desirable person.”

(The answer was:) “O Zachariah, We give you the good 7
news of a son, who will be called Yaḥyā (John). We have
not created any other man of this name before.”⁵

He said, “Lord, how can I beget a son when my wife is 8
barren, and I have become impotent because of old age?”

In answer, it was said, “So shall it be. Your Lord says, 9
‘This is easy for Me, even as I created you before this, when
you were nothing at all’.”⁶

Zachariah said, “Lord, appoint a sign for me”. He said, 10
“The sign for you is that you shall not talk to the people for
three consecutive days.”

After this, he came out of the sanctuary⁷ to his people, 11
and made signs, asking them, “Glorify God morning and
evening.”⁸

To John We said, “Observe the Divine Book with a firm 12
resolve.”⁹

We blessed him with “judgment”¹⁰ while he was yet a 13-15
child, and bestowed on him tenderness of heart¹¹ and purity
from Ourselves; and he was very pious and dutiful to his parents,
and he was neither arrogant nor disobedient. Peace was on

him on the day he was born and on the day he died, and peace shall be on him on the day he will be raised to life.¹²

16-17 And, O Muḥammad, relate in this Book the story of Mary:¹³ how she had retired in seclusion from her people to the eastern side and had hung down a screen to hide herself from them.¹⁴ There We sent to her Our Spirit (“an angel”) and he appeared before her in the form of a perfect man.

18 Mary cried out involuntarily, “I seek God’s refuge from you, if you are a pious man.”

19 He replied, “I am a mere messenger from your Lord and have been sent to give you a pure son.”

20 Mary said, “How can I bear a son, when no man has touched me, and I am not an unchaste woman?”

1. For comparison please see the story of Zachariah as given in vv. 34—57 of Āl-i-‘Imrān (III) and the E.N.’s thereof.

2. In order to understand the position held by Ḥaḍrat Zachariah, a descendant of Prophet Aaron, one should be acquainted with the system of priesthood among the children of Israel.

After the conquest of Palestine, the whole land was divided among the 12 tribes of the descendants of Prophet Jacob as inheritance, and the 13th tribe (the Levites) were entrusted with religious services and duties. Even among the Levites, the house that was separated “to sanctify the most holy things . . . to burn incense before the Lord, to minister unto him, and to bless in his name for ever” was the house of Prophet Aaron. The other Levites were not allowed to enter the Temple? “Because their office was to wait on the sons of Aaron for the service of the house of the Lord, in the courts, and in the chambers, and in the purifying of all holy things, and the work of the service of the house of the God . . . And to offer all burnt sacrifices unto the Lord in the Sabbaths, in the new moon, and on the set festivals.”

The descendants of Aaron were divided into 24 families, who came to serve the house of the Lord by turns. One of these families was of Abiah whose chief was Zachariah. Thus it was Zachariah’s duty to go into the house on his family’s turn and burn incense before the Lord. (For details, see I Chronicles, chapters 23, 24).

3. That is, “I see none among my kinsmen, the family of Abiah, who is religiously and morally sound and capable of carrying on the work of the mission that has been entrusted to me.”

4. That is, “I do not pray for a successor to inherit me alone, but a successor who may inherit the good ways of the house of Jacob.”

5. In Luke the words are : “There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name.” (I : 61)

6. This dialogue is meant to impress that Allah is able to do whatever He wills and can make an impotent man and a barren woman give birth to a child, and likewise a virgin can be made to conceive a child.

7. For the explanation of *mihṛāb* (sanctuary), see E.N. 36 of *Āl-i-‘Imrān* (III).

8. Below we reproduce the details of this event as given in Luke's Gospel so that the reader may study and compare the Qurānic with the Christian version. The references and additions within the brackets are ours :

“There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea, (see *Banī Isrā’īl* (XVII) : E.N. 9) a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia : and his wife *was* of the daughters of Aaron, and her name *was* Elisabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments, and ordinances of the Lord blameless. And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were *now* well stricken in years. And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course, According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense. And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And when Zacharias saw *him*, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias : for thy prayer is heard; (there is no mention of Zacharias' prayer anywhere in the Bible) and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John (that is, *Yaḥyā*). And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord (*Sayyidan* : a great Leader according to the Qurān, III : 39), and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink (the Qurānic version : *Taqiyyan* : pious and pure); and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb (the Qurān says : ‘We blessed him with “judgment” while he was yet a child’). And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit of the power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

“And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this ? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years. And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings. And, behold, thou shalt

be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season. (This is different from the Qurān, which gives it as a Sign, whereas according to Luke, it was a punishment. Moreover, the Qurān mentions it as the silence for 'three consecutive days', but Luke says that Zacharias remained dumb till the birth of John). And the people waited for Zacharias, and marvelled that he tarried so long in the temple. And when he came out, he could not speak unto them : and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple : for he beckoned unto them, and remained speechless." (Luke, I : 5-22).

9. The details regarding the birth of Prophet John, according to the Divine will, and his coming of age, have been left out. Here, in one sentence, the Mission of Prophethood entrusted to him on attaining maturity has been stated, which was "to observe and follow the Torah in letter and spirit, and to exhort the Israelites as well to do the same."

10. The Arabic word *ḥukm* implies ability (1) to make decisions, (2) to form right opinions, (3) to interpret the Divine Law, (4) to solve problems, and (5) it also means 'authority from Allah to decide affairs'.

11. The Arabic word *ḥanān* is almost synonymous with 'mother love'. In other words, Prophet John bore in his heart the same kind of intense love for Allah's servants as a mother has for her child.

12. In order to have a fuller understanding of the Mission and the pure character of Prophet John, about which brief references have been made in this Sūrah and Sūrah Āl-i-Imrān, it will be useful to study this story as given in different Books of the New Testament in the following order :

According to Luke, Prophet John was older than Prophet Jesus by six months and their mothers were cousins. He was appointed a Prophet at the age of 30 years, and according to the Gospel of John, he started his mission of inviting the people toward God in Jordan. He would say: "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord." (John, I : 23)

According to Mark, "John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. And there went out unto him all the land of Judaea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins." (Mark, I : 4-5). He thus came to be known as John the Baptist, and the Israelites held him as a prophet. (Mat. 21 : 26). Prophet Jesus said about John: "Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist." (Mat. 11 : 11)

"John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leather girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey." (Mat. 3 : 4). He would say : "Repent ye : for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

(Mat. 3 : 2). By this he meant that very soon Prophet Jesus was going to start his Mission of Prophethood. The same thing has been said about him in the Qurān : "... he (John) will come to confirm a Command from Allah." (III : 39). For the same reason has been called 'a Sign of or Pointer to' Prophet Jesus.

He urged the people to observe the Fast and Prayers. (Mat. 9 : 14, Luke, 5 : 33, 11 : 1). He would also tell them, "... He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none ; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise." (Luke 3 : 11). When the tax-collectors asked, "Master, what shall we do?" He said unto them, "Exact no more than that what is appointed you." (12-13), and when the soldiers sought his guidance, he said : "Do violence to no man, neither accuse *any* falsely ; and be content with your wages." (Luke, 3 : 14)

When the corrupt scholars, Pharisees and Sadducees of the Israelites, came to be baptized by him, he rebuked them, sying : "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come ? ... think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to *our* father ... now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees : therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire." (Mat. 3 : 7-10)

The Jewish ruler of his time, Herod Antipas, in whose tetrarchy he was performing his Mission of inviting the people to the Truth, had been so deeply influenced by the Roman civilization that he was causing sin and evil to spread freely in the land. He had kept Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, unlawfully in his house ; when Prophet John reproved him for this and raised his voice against other evils being committed by him, Herod got him arrested and sent to jail. However, he held him in high esteem for his piety and righteousness and even feared him on account of the great respect he enjoyed among the people. On the contrary, Herodias thought that the moral consciousness that Prophet John was producing among the people was directly aimed at women like herself and pulling them down in the public eye. Thus she nursed a grudge against him and would have him killed but could not. Soon an opportunity came her way. On the birthday banquet of Herod, her daughter danced and so delighted Herod and others that the king said to her, 'Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give it thee.' The girl asked her mother what she should ask for. The mother said, 'Ask for the head of John the Baptist.' The girl went back to the king and requested to have there and then the head of John the Baptist on a dish. Herod felt sorry to hear this, but could not reject the demand of the daughter of his beloved. He at once got Prophet John killed in the prison and presented his head on a dish to the dancing girl. (Mat. 14 : 3-12, Mark, 6 : 17-29, Luke, 3 : 19-20).

13. For comparison, see Āl-i-Imrān (III) : 34-57, and An-Nisā (IV) : 156 and E.N.'s thereof.

لِنَجْعَلَهُ آيَةً لِلنَّاسِ وَرَحْمَةً مِّنَّا ۗ وَكَانَ أَمْرًا مَّقْضِيًّا ﴿٢١﴾ فَحَمَلَتْهُ فَانْتَبَدَتْ
بِهِ مَكَانًا قَصِيًّا ﴿٢٢﴾ فَأَجَاءَهَا الْمَخَاضُ إِلَىٰ جِذْعِ النَّخْلَةِ ۗ قَالَتْ يَلَيْتَنِي مِتُّ
قَبْلَ هَذَا وَكُنْتُ نَسِيًّا مَّنْسِيًّا ﴿٢٣﴾ فَنَادَاهَا مِن تَحْتِهَا أَلَا تَحْزَنِي ۚ قَدْ جَعَلَ
رَبُّكَ تَحْتِكَ سَرِيًّا ﴿٢٤﴾ وَهَزَيْتَنِي إِلَىٰ جِذْعِ النَّخْلَةِ ۖ تُسْقِطُ عَلَيْكَ رَطْبًا
جَنِيًّا ﴿٢٥﴾ فَكُلِي وَاشْرَبِي وَقَرِّي عَيْنًا ۗ فَمَا تَرَيْنَ مِنَ الْبَشَرِ أَحَدًا ۖ فَقُورِي
إِنِّي نَذَرْتُ لِلرَّحْمَنِ صَوْمًا فَلَنْ أُكَلِّمَ الْيَوْمَ إِنْسِيًّا ﴿٢٦﴾ فَأَتَتْ بِهِ قَوْمَهَا تَحْمِلُهُ
قَالُوا يَمْرُؤُا لَقَدْ جِئْتَ شَيْئًا فَرِيًّا ﴿٢٧﴾ يَا حَتَّ هُرُونَ مَا كَانَ أَبُوكَ أَمْرًا
سَوْءًا ۖ وَمَا كَانَتْ أُمَّكَ بَغِيًّا ۗ فَأَشَارَتْ إِلَيْهِ ۖ قَالُوا كَيْفَ نُكَلِّمُ مَنْ كَانَ
فِي الْبَهْدِ صَبِيًّا ﴿٢٨﴾ قَالَ إِنِّي عَبْدُ اللَّهِ ۖ قَتَلْتُنِي الْكُتُبَ وَجَعَلَنِي نَبِيًّا ﴿٢٩﴾ وَ
جَعَلَنِي مُبْرَكًا أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُ ۖ وَأَوْصَانِي بِالصَّلَاةِ وَالزَّكَاةِ ۖ مَا دُمْتُ حَيًّا ﴿٣٠﴾
وَ بَرًّا بِوَالِدَاتِي ۖ وَ لَمْ يَجْعَلْنِي جَبَّارًا شَقِيًّا ﴿٣١﴾ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَيَّ يَوْمَ وُلِدْتُ ۖ وَ
يَوْمَ أَمُوتُ ۖ وَيَوْمَ أُبْعَثُ حَيًّا ﴿٣٢﴾ ذَلِكَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ ۗ قَوْلَ الْحَقِّ الَّذِي
فِيهِ يَمْتَرُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾ مَا كَانَ لِلَّهِ أَنْ يَتَّخِذَ مِنْ وَّلَدٍ ۖ سُبْحٰنَهُ ۗ إِذَا قَضَىٰ أَمْرًا
فَأَتَا بِقَوْلٍ لَهُ لَنْ يَكُونَ ۗ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُوهُ ۗ هَذَا صِرَاطٌ
مُّسْتَقِيمٌ ﴿٣٤﴾ فَاخْتَلَفَ الْأَحْزَابُ مِنْ بَيْنِهِمْ ۗ قَوْلُ اللَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ
مَّشْهَدِ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿٣٥﴾ أَسْمِعْ بِهِمْ وَأَبْصِرْ ۖ يَوْمَ يَأْتُونَنَا لَكِنِ الظَّالِمُونَ الْيَوْمَ
فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَأَنْذِرْهُمْ يَوْمَ الْبَصَرَةِ إِذْ قَضَىٰ الْأَمْرَ ۖ وَهُمْ فِي غَفْلَةٍ وَهُمْ
لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾ إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَرِثُ الْأَرْضَ وَمَنْ عَلَيْهَا وَإِلَيْنَا يُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَادْكُرْ فِي
الْكِتَابِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ ۗ إِنَّهُ كَانَ صِدِّيقًا نَبِيًّا ﴿٣٩﴾ إِذْ قَالَ لِأَبِيهِ يَا أَبَتِ لِمَ تَعْبُدُ مَا لَا يَبْعَثُ

The angel replied, "So shall it be. Your Lord says, 21
'This is an easy thing for Me to do, and We will do so in
order to make that boy a Sign for the people¹⁵ and a bless-
ing from Us, and this must happen.'

Accordingly, Mary conceived the child, and with it she 22-26
went away to a distant place.¹⁶ Then the throes of child-
birth urged her to take shelter under a date palm. There
she began to cry, "Oh! would that I had died before this and
sunk into oblivion."¹⁷ At this the angel at the foot of her
bed consoled her, saying, "Grieve not at all, for your Lord
has set a spring under you; as for your food, shake the trunk
of this tree and fresh, ripe dates will fall down for you; so eat
and drink and refresh your eyes; and if you see a man, say to
him, 'As I have vowed to observe the fast (of silence) for the
sake of the Merciful, I will not speak to anyone today'."¹⁸

Then she brought the child to her people. They said, 27-28
"O Mary! This is a heinous sin that you have committed.
O sister of Aaron!¹⁹ your father was not a wicked man, nor
was your mother an unchaste woman."^{19a}

(In answer to this) Mary merely pointed towards the 29
infant. The people said, "How shall we talk with him, who is
but an infant in the cradle"?²⁰

Whereupon the child spoke out, "I am a servant of 30-33
Allah: He has given me the Book and He has appointed me
a Prophet, and He has made me blessed wherever I may be.
He has enjoined upon me to offer Ṣalāt and give Zakāt so
long as I shall live. He has made me dutiful to my mother,^{20a}
and He has not made me oppressive and hard-hearted.
Peace be upon me on the day I was born and peace shall be
on me on the day I die and on the day I am raised to life."²¹

This is Jesus, the son of Mary, and this is the truth about 34-35
him concerning which they are in doubt. It does not behove
God to beget a son for He is far above this. When He
decrees a thing, He only says, "Be", and it does come into
being.²²

(And Jesus had declared) "Allah is my Lord and your 36-40
Lord, so worship Him; this is the Right Way."²³ But in spite
of this, the sects began to have differences among themselves.²⁴
So those who adopted the ways of disbelief shall suffer a

horrible woe, when they witness the Great Day. On that Day when they shall appear before Us, their ears and their eyes shall become very sharp, but today these transgressors (neither hear nor see the Truth and) have strayed into manifest deviation. O Muḥammad, now that these people are not paying heed and are not believing, warn them of the horrors of the Day, when judgment shall be passed, and they will have nothing left for them but vain regret. Ultimately, We will inherit the Earth and all that is on it, and everyone shall be returned to Us.²⁵

14. The Sanctuary where she had retired for devotion was an eastern chamber in the Temple, and as was customary she had hung a curtain to conceal herself from the people. It cannot be Nazareth as some people have wrongly taken it to be, because Nazareth is to the north of Jerusalem.

15. The word "So shall it be" are very significant as has been stated in E.N. 6. The plain meaning is this : "A pure son shall be born to you just as your Lord has decreed, even though no man has touched you." The same was the response to Prophet Zachariah as stated in v. 9 above. And it is a sheer perversion to interpret it as : "So shall it be that a man will touch you and a son will be born to you." For, if it were to mean : "You will bear a son like all other women of the world," the subsequent two sentences : "Your Lord says, 'This is an easy thing for Me to do, and We will make that boy a Sign for the people'," would have become meaningless. Had this birth been an ordinary birth like the birth of every other child, there would have been no occasion to boast : "It is an easy thing, and that it will be made a Sign (miracle). This will be so because the child will speak in the cradle."

16. When she conceived the child, she left the Sanctuary and went to a distant place (Bethlehem) in order to escape the bitter criticism of the people. They would have said, "Look at the virgin daughter of the pious house of Aaron ! She has conceived a child and that, too, in the Sanctuary where she had retired for devotion !" Thus she temporarily succeeded in concealing the shame of the conception, but this event itself is a proof that Prophet Jesus was born without a father. Had Mary been married and had a husband, she would not have left his or her parents' house by herself and chosen a distant place for the purpose of delivery.

17. The words "Would that . . ." show the extreme state of anxiety in which Mary found herself at the time. She did not utter these words on account of the labour pains but due to the pangs of sorrow as to how she would conceal the child from her people. The angel's words—"Grieve not at all"—explain why she had spoken these desperate

words. When a married girl is delivering her first baby, she might be dying with pains, but she is never so sorrowful and grieved.

18. That is, "You need not say anything with regard to the child. It is now Our responsibility to answer the critics." This also indicates why Mary was so sad and grieved. Had she been married and given birth to her first baby like any other mother, there was no occasion to tell her to observe 'a fast of silence', though it was a common custom among the Jews.

19. "Sister of Aaron" may either mean that Mary had a brother of the name of Aaron, or it may mean that she belonged to the family of Prophet Aaron. The first meaning is supported by a tradition of the Holy Prophet and the second is plausible because that is supported by the Arabic idiom. But we are inclined to the second meaning, for the wording of the said tradition does not necessarily mean that she actually had a brother named Aaron. The tradition as related in *Muslim*, *Nasā'i*, *Tirmizi*, etc. says that when the Christians of Najrān criticised the Qurānic version of stating Mary as the sister of Aaron before Ḥaḍrat Mughirah bin Shu'bah, he was not able to satisfy them, because Prophet Aaron had passed away centuries earlier. When he presented the problem before the Holy Prophet, he replied, "Why didn't you say that the Israelites named their children after their Prophets and other pious men?" That is, "You could have answered their objection like this as well." (See also E.N. 32 of Āl-i-Imrān).

19a. How can the people who reject the miraculous birth of Prophet Jesus, explain why Mary's whole community had come out to curse and condemn her when she had appeared before them with the child ?

20. People who misinterpret the Qurān translate this verse as : "How shall we talk with him, who is but a child of yesterday?" They attribute these words to the elderly people of the Jews, who said years later, when Jesus was a grown up boy, that they could not have any useful dialogue with a mere kid. But the person who keeps the whole context in view, will realize that this interpretation is absurd and has been given merely to avoid the miracle. As a matter of fact, the dialogue took place when the people were condemning Mary who being unmarried, had brought forth a child, and not when the child had grown up into manhood. V. 46 of Āl-i-Imrān (III) and v. 110 of Al-Mā'idah (V) also support the view that Prophet Jesus had uttered these words as a baby in the cradle and not when grown up. In the first verse, the angel while giving the good news of a son to Mary, says : "He will speak to the people alike when in the cradle and when grown up"; in the other verse, Allah Himself says to Prophet Jesus : "... you talked to the people even in the cradle as you talked when you were grown up."

20a. The words used are : "... dutiful to my mother", and not "dutiful to my parents". This is another proof of the fact that Jesus

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وَلَا يُجِرُ وَلَا يُغْنِي عَنْكَ شَيْئًا ﴿٥٢﴾ يَا بَتِ اِنِّي قَدْ جَاءَنِي مِنَ الْعِلْمِ مَا لَمْ يَأْتِكَ
 فَاتَّبِعْنِي اَهْدِكَ صِرَاطًا سَوِيًّا ﴿٥٣﴾ يَا بَتِ لَا تَعْبُدِ الشَّيْطَانَ اِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ كَانَ لِلرَّحْمٰنِ
 عَصِيًّا ﴿٥٤﴾ يَا بَتِ اِنِّي اَخَافُ اَنْ يَمَسَّكَ عَذَابٌ مِّنَ الرَّحْمٰنِ فَتَكُونَ لِلشَّيْطٰنِ وَلِيًّا ﴿٥٥﴾
 قَالَ اَرَاغِبُ اَنْتَ عَنْ اِلٰهِي يَا بَرٰهِيْمُ لِيْنِ لَمْ تَنْتَهَ لِارْجَمَنَّكَ وَاَهْجُرْنِي مَلِيًّا ﴿٥٦﴾ قَالَ
 سَلِّمْ عَلَيَّ سَاَسْتَغْفِرُ لَكَ رَبِّي اِنَّهٗ كَانَ بِي حَفِيًّا ﴿٥٧﴾ وَاَعْتَزِلْكُمْ وَمَا تَدْعُونَ مِنْ
 دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ وَاَدْعُوا رَبِّي عَسٰى اَلَّا اَكُوْنَ بِدُعَاءِ رَبِّي شَقِيًّا ﴿٥٨﴾ فَلَمَّا اَعْتَزَلَهُمْ وَمَا
 يَجْبُدُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ وَهَبْنَا لَهُ اِسْحٰقَ وَيَعْقُوْبَ كُلًّا جَعَلْنَا نَبِيًّا ﴿٥٩﴾ وَ
 وَهَبْنَا لَهُمْ مِنْ رَّحْمٰتِنَا وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُمْ لِسَانَ صِدْقٍ عَلِيًّا ﴿٦٠﴾ وَاذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتٰبِ
 مُوسٰى اِنَّهٗ كَانَ مُخْلِصًا وَّكَانَ رَسُوْلًا نَّبِيًّا ﴿٦١﴾ وَنَادَيْنٰهُ مِنْ جَانِبِ الطُّوْرِ
 الْاَيْمَنِ وَقَرَّبْنٰهُ نَجِيًّا ﴿٦٢﴾ وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ مِنْ رَّحْمٰتِنَا اَخَاهُ هٰرُوْنَ نَبِيًّا ﴿٦٣﴾ وَ
 اذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتٰبِ اِسْحٰقَ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ صَادِقَ الْوَعْدِ وَّكَانَ رَسُوْلًا نَّبِيًّا ﴿٦٤﴾ وَ
 كَانَ يَأْمُرُ اَهْلَهُ بِالصَّلٰوةِ وَ الزَّكٰوةِ وَّكَانَ عِنْدَ رَبِّهٖ مَرْضِيًّا ﴿٦٥﴾ وَاذْكُرْ فِي
 الْكِتٰبِ اِدْرِيسَ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ صِدِيْقًا نَّبِيًّا ﴿٦٦﴾ وَرَفَعْنٰهُ مَكَانًا عَلِيًّا ﴿٦٧﴾ اُولٰٓئِكَ الَّذِيْنَ
 اَنْعَمَ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ النَّبِيِّنَ مِنْ ذُرِّيَّةِ اٰدَمَ وَاَمْرَقَ وَمِمَّنْ حَمَلْنَا مَعَ نُوحٍ
 وَ مِنْ ذُرِّيَّةِ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ وَاِسْرٰءِيْلَ وَمِمَّنْ هَدَيْنَا وَاَجْتَبَيْنَا اِذَا سئَلْنٰ عَلَيْهِمْ
 اٰيٰتِ الرَّحْمٰنِ خَرُّوا سُجَّدًا وَّ بُكِيًّا ﴿٦٨﴾ فَخَلَفَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ خَلْفٌ اَضَاعُوا
 الصَّلٰوةَ وَاتَّبَعُوا الشَّهْوٰتِ فَسَوْفَ يَلْقَوْنَ عَذَابًا اِلَّا مَنْ تَابَ وَ اٰمَنَ وَ
 عَمِلَ صٰلِحًا فَاُولٰٓئِكَ يَدْخُلُوْنَ الْجَنَّةَ وَا لَا يُظْلَمُوْنَ شَيْئًا ﴿٦٩﴾ جَنَّتِ عَدٰنِ
 الَّتِي وَعَدَ الرَّحْمٰنُ عِبَادَةً بِالْغَيْبِ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ وَعْدًا مٰثِيًّا ﴿٧٠﴾ لَا يَسْعَوْنَ فِيْهَا

And relate in this Book the story of Abraham;²⁶ indeed 41-45
 he was a righteous man and a Prophet. (Remind them of
 the time,) when he said to his father, "Dear father! why do
 you worship those things, which do not hear nor see nor avail
 you anything? Dear father! I have received that knowledge
 which you have not got; so you should follow me and I will
 guide you on the Right Way. Dear father! do not serve
 Satan,²⁷ for Satan is disobedient to the Merciful. Dear father!
 I am afraid lest you should incur the scourge of God and
 become Satan's companion."

The father replied, "O Abraham! have you renounced 46
 my deities? If you do not desist from this, I will stone you
 to death: so get away from me for ever".

Abraham said, "I bid farewell to you; I will pray to 47-48
 my Lord to forgive you^{27a} for He is very kind to me. I for-
 sake all of you as well as those whom you invoke instead of
 Allah: I will invoke my Lord alone: I do hope that I shall
 not fail to gain my object by invoking my Lord."

Accordingly, when he left those people and their deities 49-50
 besides Allah, We granted to him descendants like Isaac and
 Jacob, and We made each of them a Prophet and We
 bestowed on them Our Mercy and We blessed them with true
 high renown.²⁸

And mention in this Book Moses: he was a chosen 51-53
 person,²⁹ and he was a Messenger Prophet.³⁰ We called him
 from the right side³¹ of Ṭūr, and honoured him with secret
 talk,³² and We made his brother Aaron a Prophet and gave
 to him (as an assistant).

And make a mention in this Book of Ismael: he was true 54-55
 to his promise and was a Messenger Prophet. He enjoined
 his people to offer Ṣalāt and give Zakāt, and his Lord was
 well pleased with him.

And make a mention in this Book of Idrīs:³³ he was a 56-57
 righteous man, and a Prophet; and We had raised him to a
 high position.³⁴

These are the Messengers on whom Allah bestowed His 58
 favours: they were from the descendants of Adam, and from
 the seed of those whom We carried in the Ark with Noah, and
 from the seed of Abraham and of Israel. They were among

those people whom We guided aright and made Our chosen ones. They were so tender-hearted that when the Revelations of the Merciful were recited to them, they fell down prostrate in a state of weeping.

59-61

Then there came after them those degenerate people, who lost their Ṣalāt³⁵ and followed their lusts:³⁶ so they shall soon encounter the consequences of their deviation. However, those, who repent and believe and do righteous deeds, will enter the Garden and they will not be wronged in the least. They will have those everlasting Gardens, which the Merciful has promised to His servants, while yet they have not seen them,³⁷ and most surely that promise shall be fulfilled.

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had no father, and for the same reason he has been called 'Jesus son of Mary' everywhere in the Qurān.

21. This speech in the cradle by Jesus was the 'Sign' to which the angel referred in v. 21. As Allah intended to punish the children of Israel for their continuous wicked ways and evil deeds, He made a pious virgin girl of the family of Prophet Aaron, who had devoted herself to worship in the Temple under the patronage of Zachariah, bear a child and bring it before her people in order to concentrate the whole attention of the thousands of people assembled there on this extraordinary event. Then He made this new born child speak out even in the cradle that he had been appointed a Prophet. Though they had seen this wonderful Sign of Allah, they rejected the Prophethood of Jesus and brought him to the court for crucifixion, and thus incurred the wrath of Allah. (For further details, please see Āl-i-Imrān (III) : E.N.'s 44 and 53, and An-Nisā (IV) : E.N.'s 212-213).

22. In vv. 1-35, it has been shown that the "Doctrine of the son of God" in regard to Prophet Jesus is absolutely wrong. For just as the miraculous birth of Prophet John did not make him the 'son of God', so the miraculous birth of Prophet Jesus could not make him the son of God. For the births of both were the result of the same sort of miracle as they have been mentioned together in the same context in the Gospel of Luke. Therefore, it is mere distortion that the Christians should regard one as the servant of God and the other as the son of God.

23. This declaration by Jesus has been cited to tell the Christians that Jesus also taught the same Doctrine of *Tauḥīd* as was taught by all other Prophets. And it was they who had invented the doctrine of *shirk* by making him the son of God. (Please also refer to Āl-i-Imrān (III) : E.N. 68, and Al-Mā'idah (V) : E.N.'s 100, 101 and 130).

24. That is, the sects of the Christians.

25. Here the address which was meant to be delivered before King

Negus and his courtiers comes to an end. In the Introduction to this Sūrah, we have already stated the historical background of this address. In order to form an idea of its great significance, it should be kept in mind that :

(a) this address was sent down at the time when the persecuted Muslims of Makkah were going to migrate to a Christian kingdom so that they may present before the Christians the true Islamic creed about Prophet Jesus. This shows that the Muslims under no circumstances should conceal the Truth ; (b) it shows a most wonderful moral courage of the Muslim Migrants to Habash that they recited this address in the royal court at the critical moment, when the courtiers who had been bribed were bent on handing them over to their enemies. They indeed were faced with the real threat that this frank Islamic criticism of the basic articles of the Christian Faith might turn the king against them and he might hand them over to the Quraish. But in spite of this, they presented the whole truth before the king without the least hesitation.

26. From here the address is directed towards the people of Makkah, who had forced their own near and dear relatives to emigrate from their homes, just as Prophet Abraham had been exiled by his own father and brethren. The story of Prophet Abraham has been selected for this purpose because the Quraish professed to accept him as their religious leader and were proud of being his descendants.

27. It should be noted that the literal translation of the Arabic text is : "Do not worship Satan", though Abraham's father and the other people did not worship Satan in the same sense as they worshipped idols. But as they followed and obeyed Satan, he accused them of worshipping Satan. Thus it is clear that if somebody follows and obeys Satan, he virtually worships him. For Satan has never been a deity in the sense that people have made him an object of worship; nay, they have always been cursing him and following him at the same time. (For further details see Sūrah Al-Kahf (XVIII) : E.N.'s 49-50).

27a. For explanation, please see Sūrah At-Taubah (IX) : E.N. 112.

28. This is to give comfort to the Migrants who had been forced to migrate from their homes. They were told that they would be honoured and blessed with true renown just as Prophet Abraham had been blessed with true renown after his Migration.

29. The word used is *mukhlaṣ*, which means "purified". In other words, Allah had specially chosen Prophet Moses for the Mission of Prophethood.

30. "*Rasūl*" literally means 'the one who is sent'; therefore it is used for an ambassador, envoy, messenger and representative. The Qurān has used this title for angels, who are sent by Allah on a special mission, or for the human beings who brought His Message to mankind.

As regards the word "*Nabi*", it literally means the one who brings

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لَعَا إِلَّا سَلْمًا ۖ وَلَهُمْ رِزْقُهُمْ فِيهَا بُكْرَةً وَعَشِيًّا ﴿٤٢﴾ تِلْكَ الْجَنَّةُ الَّتِي نُورِثُ
 مِنْ عِبَادِنَا مَنْ كَانَ تَقِيًّا ﴿٤٣﴾ وَمَا نَنْزِلُ إِلَّا بِأَمْرِ رَبِّكَ لَهُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِينَا
 وَمَا خَلْفَنَا وَمَا بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ ۗ وَمَا كَانَ رَبُّكَ نَسِيًّا ﴿٤٤﴾ رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
 وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا فَاعْبُدْهُ وَاصْطَبِرْ لِعِبَادَتِهِ ۗ هَلْ تَعْلَمُ لَهُ سَمِيًّا ﴿٤٥﴾ وَيَقُولُ ۗ
 الْإِنْسَانُ إِذَا مَا مِتُّ لَسَوْفَ أُخْرَجُ حَيًّا ﴿٤٦﴾ أَوْ لَا يَذْكُرُ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنَّا خَلَقْنَاهُ
 مِنْ قَبْلُ وَلَمْ يَكُ شَيْئًا ﴿٤٧﴾ فَوَرَبِّكَ لَنَحْشُرَنَّهُمْ وَالشَّيَاطِينَ ثُمَّ لَنُحْضِرَنَّهُمْ
 حَوْلَ جَهَنَّمَ جِثِيًّا ﴿٤٨﴾ ثُمَّ لَنَنْزِعَنَّ مِنْ كُلِّ شِيعَةٍ أَيُّهُمْ أَشَدُّ عَلَى الرَّحْمَنِ
 عِتِيًّا ﴿٤٩﴾ ثُمَّ لَنَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِالَّذِينَ هُمْ أَوْلَىٰ بِهَا صِلِيًّا ﴿٥٠﴾ وَإِنْ مِنْكُمْ إِلَّا
 وَارِدُهَا كَانَ عَلَىٰ رَبِّكَ حَتْمًا مَقْضِيًّا ﴿٥١﴾ ثُمَّ نُنْجِي الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا وَنَذَرُ
 الظَّالِمِينَ فِيهَا جِثِيًّا ﴿٥٢﴾ وَإِذَا تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُنَا بَيِّنَاتٍ قَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
 لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ۗ آتَىٰ الْفَرِيقَيْنِ خَيْرٌ مَقَامًا وَآحْسَنُ نَدِيًّا ﴿٥٣﴾ وَكَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا قَبْلَهُمْ
 مِنْ قَرْنٍ هُمْ أَحْسَنُ أَثَانًا وَرِعِيًّا ﴿٥٤﴾ قُلْ مَنْ كَانَ فِي الضَّلَالَةِ فَلْيَمْدُدْ لَهُ
 الرَّحْمَنُ مَدًّا ۗ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا رَأَوْا مَا يُوعَدُونَ إِمَّا الْعَذَابَ وَإِمَّا السَّاعَةَ ۗ
 فَسَيَعْلَمُونَ مَنْ هُوَ شَرٌّ مَكَانًا وَأَضْعَفُ جُنْدًا ﴿٥٥﴾ وَيَزِيدُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ
 اهْتَدَوْا هُدًى ۗ وَالْبَيْتُ الصَّلِيحُ خَيْرٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ قَوَابًا وَخَيْرٌ مَرَدًّا ﴿٥٦﴾
 أَفَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي كَفَرَ بِآيَاتِنَا وَقَالَ لَأُوتِيَنَّ مَالًا وَوَلَدًا ﴿٥٧﴾ أَطَّلَعَ الْغَيْبَ أَمْ
 اتَّخَذَ عِنْدَ الرَّحْمَنِ عَهْدًا ﴿٥٨﴾ كَلَّا سَنَكْتُبُ مَا يَقُولُ وَنَنصُدُّ لَهُ مِنَ
 الْعَذَابِ مَدًّا ﴿٥٩﴾ وَنَرِثُهُ مَا يَقُولُ وَيَأْتِينَا فَرْدًا ﴿٦٠﴾ وَاتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِ
 اللَّهِ آلِهَةً لِيَكُونُوا لَهُمْ عِزًّا ﴿٦١﴾ كَلَّا سَيَكْفُرُونَ بِعِبَادَتِهِمْ وَيَكُونُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ

There they will not hear any idle talk but only what shall be good and sensible,³⁸ and they will get their provisions regularly in the morning and evening. That is the Garden which We will give as an inheritance to that one of Our servants, who leads a pious life. 62-63

O Muhammad,³⁹ we do not come down save at the bidding of your Lord; to Him belongs all that is before us and all that is behind us and all that lies between, and your Lord is never forgetful. He is the Lord of the Heavens and the Lord of the Earth, and of all that is between them; so serve Him and be steadfast in His service.⁴⁰ Do you know of any other being equal in rank to Him?⁴¹ 64-65

Man says, "What! after I am once dead, shall I again be brought to life"? Does not the man remember that We made him at first when he was nothing? By your Lord! We will muster them and the Satans along with them;⁴² then We will gather them round Hell and throw them down on their knees: then We will pick out from every band, each one of those who had been most rebellious against the Merciful;⁴³ then We know very well which of them deserves most to be thrown into Hell? And there is none of you who will not be presented before the confines of Hell,⁴⁴ for this is a settled decree, which your Lord will bring in force; then We will deliver those who were pious (in the world), and will leave the transgressors there on their knees. 66-72

When Our plain Revelations are recited to them, the disbelievers say to the Believers, "Tell us, which of the two of our parties is in a better condition and has grander meetings"?⁴⁵ And how many a generation have We destroyed before them, who had more abundant riches than they and were grander in splendour! Say to them, "The Merciful gives respite to the one who falls into deviation up to the time when such people see that thing with which they had been threatened—the scourge of God or the Hour of Resurrection. Then they realize who was in worse plight and whose party was weaker. In contrast to them, Allah increases in guidance those who adopt the righteous way;⁴⁶ and the abiding deeds of righteousness are better in the sight of your Lord in regard to their reward and their end. 73-76

77-80 Then, have you seen the person who denies Our Revelations, and boasts, "I shall continue to be blessed with riches and children"?⁴⁷ What! has the unseen been revealed to him? Or has he taken a pledge from the Merciful?—By no means! We will take down whatever he boasts of,⁴⁸ and will increase his chastisement all the more and We will inherit the riches and the helpers of which he boasts of he shall appear before Us all alone.

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news, or the one who is high in rank, or the one who shows the way. This title is used for the Prophets in all the three senses. Thus Moses was a Messenger Prophet because he was a Messenger of high rank who gave news from Allah and showed the Right Way to the people.

The Qurān does not necessarily differentiate between the use of the two titles, for sometimes it uses the title *Rasūl* for one person at one place and the title *Nabī* for the same person at another place, and sometimes uses both the titles together for one and the same person. However, at some places each title has been used in a way as to show that there is some technical distinction between the two, though that has not been precisely marked out, except that every *Rasūl* (Messenger) is a *Nabī* (Prophet) as well, but every *Nabī* may not be a *Rasūl*, and that a *Rasūl* has a special and more important mission to perform. This is supported by a Tradition of the Holy Prophet, which has been reported by Imām Aḥmad from Abū Umāmah and by Hākim from Ḥaḍrat Abū Zarr. When the Holy Prophet was asked, how many "Messengers" and "Prophets" had been sent to the world, he said that the number of the Messengers was 313 or 315 and of the Prophets 1,24,000.

31. "The right side of Ṭūr" means the eastern side of the mountain. As Prophet Moses, on his way from Midian to Egypt, was passing from the southern side of Mt. Ṭūr, the eastern side would lie on his right and the western on his left if he faced the mountain, otherwise a mountain by itself cannot have a right or a left side.

32. See E.N. 206 of Sūrah An-Nisā (IV).

33. There is a difference of opinion as to who Prophet Idrīs was. Some commentators opine that he was a Prophet from among the Israelites, but the majority of them are inclined to the view that he was a Prophet before Noah. There is no authentic Tradition which may help determine his identity. The next verse (58), however, supports the view that he appeared before Prophet Noah. For of all the Prophets mentioned, he alone was the one who may be said to be "from the descendants of Adam."

The commentators are of the opinion that Idrīs was Enoch of the Old Testament, about whom it is said :

"And Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah :

And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years...and he was not; for God took him."

(Gen. 5 : 21-24)

In Talmud, there are greater details about Enoch, which are briefly as follows : "Before Noah when the descendants of Adam began to degenerate, the angel of God called to Enoch, who led a pious life away from the people, and said, 'O Enoch, arise, come out from seclusion, and go about among the people of the earth, guiding them to the path which they should follow and the ways which they should adopt.'

"Receiving this Divine Command, Enoch left his seclusion and gathered the people together and preached to them what he had been commanded, with the result that they listened to him and adopted the worship of God. Enoch ruled over mankind for 353 years : his rule was based on justice and truth, and consequently God favoured mankind with all kinds of blessings." (H. Polano : *The Talmud Selections*, pp. 18-21).

34. The plain meaning is that God had favoured Idrīs with a high rank, but according to the Israelite traditions, God took up Idrīs (Enoch) to heavens. The Bible says : "...and he was not ; for God took him", but the Talmud has a long story to tell, which ends with the words :

"Enoch ascended to heaven in a whirlwind, with chariot and horses of fire."

35. It appears that the degenerate people totally discarded Ṣalāt, or they had become neglectful and careless in its observance. This is the first evil that is committed by a degenerate people ; for, after this there remains no connection whatever between them and God. Here it has been stated as a universal principle that the degeneration of the people of all the former Prophets started with the abandonment of Ṣalāt by them.

36. This was the inevitable result of the loss of the connection with Allah. As they became more and more neglectful of their Ṣalāt, their lusts took complete hold of them and they fell to the lowest depths of moral depravity and began to follow their whims instead of the Divine Commands.

37. That is, the promised Gardens which are yet unseen by His servants.

38. The word used is *Salām*, which means 'free from defect and fault'. It implies to mean that the greatest blessing that man will enjoy in Paradise will be that there he will hear no idle, vile or indecent talk ; all the dwellers of Paradise will be neat and clean and pure people and every individual will be gentle and right-minded by nature ; everybody will be secure against backbiting, slander and indecent songs and other ugly sounds. Whatever men will hear will be good, sensible and right.

[Contd. on p. 81

ضِدَّ اللَّهِ تَرَاتِنًا أَرْسَلْنَا الشَّيَاطِينَ عَلَى الْكٰفِرِينَ تَوْرَهُمْ آرَآءُ وَلَا تَعْبَلُ عَلَيْهِمْ إِنَّمَا نَعُدُّ لَهُمْ عَدًّا ۗ يَوْمَ نَحْشُرُ الْمُتَّقِينَ إِلَى الرَّحْمٰنِ وَفَدَّاهُمْ وَنَسُوقُ الْجٰرِمِينَ إِلَىٰ جَهَنَّمَ وَرِثًا ۗ لَا يَمْلِكُونَ الشَّفَاعَةَ إِلَّا مَنِ اتَّخَذَ عِنْدَ الرَّحْمٰنِ عَهْدًا ۗ وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ الرَّحْمٰنُ وَلَدًا ۗ لَقَدْ جِئْتُمْ شَيْئًا إِذًا ۗ تَكَادُ السَّمٰوٰتُ يَتَفَطَّرْنَ مِنْهُ وَتَنْشَقُّ الْاَرْضُ وَتَخِرُّ الْجِبَالُ هَدًا ۗ اِنْ دَعَوْا لِلرَّحْمٰنِ وَلَدًا ۗ وَمَا يَنْبَغِي لِلرَّحْمٰنِ اَنْ يَّتَّخِذَ وَلَدًا ۗ اِنْ كُلُّ مَنْ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ اِلَّا اَتَى الرَّحْمٰنِ عَبْدًا ۗ لَقَدْ اَحْصٰهُمْ وَعَدَّهُمْ عَدًّا ۗ وَكُلُّهُمْ اِتِيهٖ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ فَرْدًا ۗ اِنْ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّٰلِحٰتِ سَيَجْعَلُ لَهُمُ الرَّحْمٰنُ وُدًّا ۗ فَاِنَّمَا يَسَّرْنٰهُ بِلِسٰنِكَ لِتُبَشِّرَ بِهٖ الْمُتَّقِيْنَ وَتُنذِرَ بِهٖ قَوْمًا لَّدٰنًا ۗ وَكَمْ اَهْلَكْنَا قَبْلَهُمْ مِّنْ قَرْنٍ ۗ هَلْ تُحِسُّ مِنْهُمْ مِّنْ اَحَدٍ اَوْ تَسْمَعُ لَهُمْ رِكْزًا ۗ

81-82 These people have set up other gods than Allah so that they may become their supporters.⁴⁹ But they will have no supporter; all of them will not only disown their worship⁵⁰ but also become their opponents.

83-87 Do you not see that over those disbelievers We have appointed the Satans, who incite them urgently to oppose the Truth? Well, you need not become impatient for the coming of the scourge on them, for We are numbering their days.⁵¹ The day is coming near, when We will present the righteous people like honoured guests before the Merciful, and drive the criminals to Hell like thirsty flocks. At that time no one shall have the ability to intercede except the one who may have received permission from the Merciful.⁵²

88-95 They say that the Merciful has adopted a son.—What an absurd thing that you have invented! It is well-nigh that the heavens might crack and the earth split asunder and the

mountains crumble down at this hideous thing that they should ascribe a son to the Merciful! It does not behove the Merciful to adopt a son. All those who are in the heavens and the earth, are going to be presented before Him as servants, for He has encircled them and kept a strict account of them; everyone shall be presented before Him individually on the Day of Resurrection.

Most surely the time is coming near, when the Merciful will fill the hearts with love of those who have believed and are doing righteous works.⁵³ So, O Muḥammad, We have made this Qur'ān easy, and sent it down in your tongue so that you should give good news to the pious and warn the obdurate people. We have destroyed many a people before them: do you find any trace of them or do you hear any whisper from them anywhere?

96-98

Contd. from p. 79]

This is indeed a great blessing which only that person can fully appreciate, who possesses a neat and fine taste, because only such a one can feel the misery of living among a dirty society, where his ears are never immune against lies, backbiting, slander, and mischievous and sensual talk.

39. This paragraph is a parenthesis, which has been inserted at the end of one theme and before the commencement of the other. It is obvious from this that this Sūrah was sent down after a long delay. At that time the Holy Prophet and his Companions were passing through very hard times and were always expecting a Revelation to guide and comfort them. When Gabriel (peace be upon him) came with the angels with this Revelation, he at first delivered that part of the Message which was immediately needed. Then before proceeding further, he said these words by the leave of Allah as an explanation for the delay and to give them comfort from Allah and counsel of fortitude. This interpretation is not only borne out by the wording of the passage but also by some Traditions of the Holy Prophet, which have been cited by Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Kathīr, and the author of *Rūḥ ul-Ma'āni* in their commentary on this passage.

40. That is, "You should not only follow strictly the Way of service and face all the obstacles and afflictions with patience, but also should not get uneasy, if there is a delay in Revelation and help. You should rest content with His service as an obedient servant and perform persistently the duties and responsibilities entrusted to you as a Servant and Messenger."

41. The word *Samī* literally means 'a name-sake'. Here it implies :

“Allah is the only Deity : do you know of any other deity besides Him? If there is none, and you know that there is none, then you do not have any alternative but to serve Him and obey His Commands.”

42. The “Satans” are the leaders who persuade the wicked people to enjoy themselves in this worldly life, for there is no life in the Hereafter, where they shall have to present themselves before Allah and give an account of their deeds

43. The leader of every rebel band.

44. According to some traditions, “to be presented before the confines of Hell” means ‘to enter Hell’, but none of these traditions is authentic. Then this interpretation goes against the Qurān and a great many authentic Traditions, which clearly state that the true Believers will never be cast into Hell. Lexically also, *zurūd* (being presented unto) is not synonymous with *dukhūl* (causing to enter). Therefore, the correct meaning would be that every human being will be presented before Hell, but then, as the next verse clarifies, the pious people will be rescued and the transgressors left therein on their knees.

45. In response to the recital of clear Revelations, instead of accepting their Message, the unbelievers put such questions as these to the Believers to show that they were in the right : Who has grander houses to live in? Who has a higher standard of life? Who enjoys splendid meetings? If we are enjoying all these things while you are deprived of them, you may decide for yourselves whether we, who are enjoying happy worldly lives, are in the wrong, or you who are living miserable lives of indigence are in the right? (Also see Sūrah Al-Kahf (XVIII) : E.N.’s 37-38).

46. That is, “On every critical occasion, Allah guides them to make right decisions and helps them to adopt the right way, and protects them from evil and wrong things ; thus they go on making more and more progress on the right way.”

47. The boastful person was not a particular man but a typical chief of the disbelievers of Makkah. Everyone of them claimed, “Howsoever you may call me an erroneous and un-righteous person and threaten me with the Divine scourge, the fact is that I am more prosperous than you today and shall continue being blessed with favours in future as well. Just have a look at my riches, at my grandeur and at my estate, and at my well-known sons, and then say where you see any signs of the wrath of God.”

48. That is, the boastful words of his shall also be included in the record of his crimes and he shall have to bear the consequences of his arrogant claim.

49. The Arabic word ‘*Izzan* (from ‘*Izzat*) implies a powerful and strong person whom nobody may dare do any harm ; here it means a person’s having such a strong supporter that no enemy or opponent of his may even cherish an evil intention against him.

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50. That is, they will say, "We never asked them to worship us nor were we aware that these foolish people were worshipping us."

51. That is: "Endure their persecutions patiently a little more, for the time of their punishment is coming near, for We have given them respite for a fixed term, and let that term expire."

52. This implies two things: (1) Intercession will be allowed only for the one who might have received permission for it from the Merciful, that is, the one who believed in Allah in the world and made himself deserving of His pardon. (2) Only that one will be able to plead intercession who might have got permission for this from the Merciful, and not those ones whom people themselves had made their intercessors without any reason.

53. This is to comfort the righteous people who were being persecuted and insulted in the streets of Makkah. They are being assured that the time is coming near when the people will honour and love them because of their righteous deeds and good conduct. Hearts will be attracted towards them and the world will hold them in high esteem. And this will happen according to a universal principle. Those who are wicked, proud and haughty and try to rule over the people with falsehood and hypocrisy can never captivate the hearts of the people; on the other hand, those who invite the people to the right way with truth, honesty, sincerity and good conduct succeed in winning their hearts in the end, even though at first they might have to face the indifference and opposition of the dishonest people.



XX

Ca Ha ۞

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

XX

TĀ HĀ 'ا-ط'

INTRODUCTION

Name

This Sūrah takes its name from its first word "Tā Hā". This name, like the names of many other Sūrahs, is merely symbolic.

Period of Revelation

The period of its revelation is the same as of Sūrah Maryam. It is just possible that it was sent down during the Migration to Ḥabash or just after it. Anyhow, it is certain that this Sūrah was revealed before Ḥaḍrat 'Umar embraced Islam.

According to a well known and authentic tradition when Ḥaḍrat 'Umar set out to kill the Holy Prophet, he met a certain person, who said, "Before you do anything else, you should know that your own sister and brother-in-law have embraced Islam". Hearing this, he directly went to the house of his sister. There he found his sister, Fāṭimah, and his brother-in-law, Sa'id bin Zaid, learning the contents of a scroll from Khabbāb bin Art. When Fāṭimah saw him coming she hid the scroll at once, but Ḥaḍrat 'Umar had heard the recital, so he began to interrogate them about it. Then he began to thrash his brother-in-law, and wounded his sister, who tried to protect him. At last both of them confessed, "We have become Muslims; you may do whatever you like." As Ḥaḍrat 'Umar was moved to see blood running down from her head, he said, "Show me the thing you were reading." The sister asked him to promise on oath that he would not tear it, and added, "You cannot

touch it unless you have a bath.” Accordingly, Ḥaḍrat ‘Umar took his bath and when he began to read the scroll, which contained this Sūrah, he spontaneously spoke out, “What an excellent thing!” At this Ḥaḍrat Khabbāb, who had hidden himself at the sound of his footsteps, came out of his hiding and said, “By God, I have high expectations that Allah will get great service from you to propagate the Message of His Prophet, for just yesterday I heard the Holy Prophet praying to Allah, ‘My Lord, make Abul Ḥakam bin Hishām (Abū Jahl) or ‘Umar bin Khaṭṭāb a supporter of Islam. So O ‘Umar, turn to Allah, turn to Allah!’” These words proved to be so persuasive that he at once accompanied Ḥaḍrat Khabbāb and went to the Holy Prophet to embrace Islam. This happened a short time after the Migration to Ḥabash.

Theme and Topics of Discussion

This Sūrah begins with the enunciation of the object of the Revelation of the Qur’ān to this effect: “O Muḥammad, this Qur’ān has not been sent down to you to put you unnecessarily to some great affliction. It does not demand from you to perform the impossible task of imbuing the hearts of the obdurate disbelievers with Faith. It is merely an admonition meant to guide on to the Right Path those who fear God and want to save themselves from His punishment. This Qur’ān is the Word of the Master of the earth and the heavens and God-head belongs to Him alone. These two facts are eternal whether one believes them or not.”

After this introduction, the Sūrah abruptly moves on to relate the story of Prophet Moses without any apparent relevancy and without even hinting at its applicability to the events of the period. However, if we read between the lines, we realize that the discourse is addressed very relevantly to the people of Makkah. But before we explain the hidden meaning of the discourse, we must keep in view the fact that the Arabs in general acknowledged Moses as a Prophet of God. This was so because they had been influenced by the large number of the Jews around them and by the neighbouring Christian kingdoms. Now let us state those things which are

hidden between the lines of the story:

1. Allah does not appoint a Prophet by the beat of drums or by celebrating the occasion in a regular and formal ceremony, as if to say, "We are appointing such and such a person as Our Prophet from today." On the contrary, He bestows Prophethood in a confidential manner just as He did in the case of Prophet Moses. Therefore you should not consider it strange if Ḥaḍrat Muḥammad has been appointed as a Prophet all of a sudden and without any public proclamation.

2. The fundamental principles presented by Prophet Muḥammad—*Tauḥīd* and the Hereafter—are just the same as were taught to Prophet Moses at the time of his appointment.

3. Prophet Muḥammad has been made the standard-bearer of the Message of the Truth among the people of the Quraish all by himself without material provisions, just as Prophet Moses was entrusted with the Mission to go to a tyrant king like Pharaoh and ask him to give up his attitude of rebellion. These are the mysterious ways of Allah. He catches hold of a way-farer of Midian on his way to Egypt and says, "Go and fight with the greatest tyrant of the time." He did not provide him with armies and provisions for this Mission. The only thing He did was to appoint his brother as his assistant at his request.

4. You, O People of Makkah, should note it well that Pharaoh employed the same devices against Prophet Moses as you are employing against Prophet Muḥammad—frivolous objections, accusations, and cruel persecutions. You should know that Allah's Prophet came out victorious over Pharaoh, who possessed large armies and war equipments. Incidentally, the Muslims have been consoled and comforted, though not in so many words, that they should not be afraid of fighting with the Quraish against fearful odds, for the mission which is supported by Allah comes out victorious in the end. At the same time, the Muslims have been exhorted to follow the excellent example of the magicians of Egypt, who remained steadfast in their Faith, though Pharaoh threatened them with horrible vengeance.

5. An incident from the story of the Israelites has been

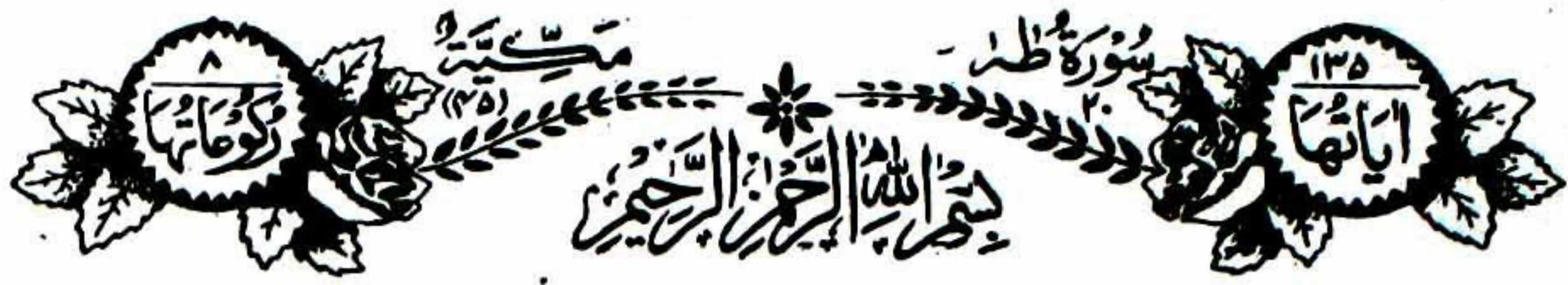
cited to show in what ridiculous manner the idolisation of false gods and goddesses starts and that the Prophets of God do not tolerate even the slightest tinge of this preposterous practice. Likewise, Prophet Muḥammad is following the former Prophets in opposing *shirk* and idol-worship today.

Thus, the story of Moses has been used to throw light on all those matters which were connected with the conflict between the Holy Prophet and the Quraish. Then at the end of the story, the Quraish have been briefly admonished, as if to say, "The Qur'ān has been sent down in your tongue for your own good. If you listen to it and follow its admonition, you will be doing so for your own good but if you reject it, you will yourselves meet with an evil end."

After this the story of Prophet Adam has been related, as if to tell the Quraish, "The way you are following is the way of Satan, whereas the right way for a man is to follow his father Adam. He was beguiled by Satan, but when he realized his error, he plainly confessed it and repented and again turned back to the service of Allah and won His favour. On the other hand, if a person follows Satan and sticks to his error obdurately in spite of admonition, he does harm to himself alone like Satan."

In the end, the Holy Prophet and the Muslims have been advised not to be impatient in regard to the punishment to the disbelievers, as if to say, "Allah has His Own scheme concerning them. He does not seize them at once but gives them sufficient respite. Therefore you should not grow impatient but bear the persecutions with fortitude and go on conveying the Message."

In this connection, great emphasis has been laid on *Ṣalāt* so that it may create in the believers the virtues of patience, forbearance, contentment, resignation to the will of God and self-analysis for these are greatly needed in the service of the Message of the Truth.



طه ﴿١﴾ مَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْآنَ لِتَشْقَى ﴿٢﴾ إِلَّا تَذِكْرَةً لِمَنْ يَخْشَى ﴿٣﴾ تَنْزِيلًا
 مِمَّنْ خَلَقَ الْأَرْضَ وَالسَّمَوَاتِ الْعُلَى ﴿٤﴾ الرَّحْمَنُ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ اسْتَوَى ﴿٥﴾ لَهُ مَا
 فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا وَمَا تَحْتَ الثَّرَى ﴿٦﴾ وَإِنْ تَجَهَّرَ بِالْقَوْلِ
 فَإِنَّهُ يَعْلَمُ السِّرَّ وَأَخْفَى ﴿٧﴾ اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ لَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَى ﴿٨﴾ وَ
 هَلْ أَتَاكَ حَدِيثُ مُوسَى ﴿٩﴾ إِذْ رَأَى نَارًا فَقَالَ لِأَهْلِهِ امْكُثُوا إِنِّي آنَسْتُ نَارًا
 تَعَلَّىٰ آتِيكُمْ مِنْهَا بِقَبَسٍ أَوْ أَجْدٍ عَلَى النَّارِ هُدى ﴿١٠﴾ فَلَمَّا أَتَاهَا نُودِيَ يَوْمَئِذٍ ﴿١١﴾

وقت لازم

XX

TĀ HĀ طه

Verses : 135

Revealed at Makkah

In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate

1-8

Tā Hā. We have not sent down the Qur'ān to you to put you in distress. This is an Admonition for every such person who fears (God).¹ This has been sent down by that

1. This verse makes plain the meaning of the previous one. The object of the Revelation of the Qur'ān is not to make the Holy Prophet do something impossible and to put him to unnecessary distress by demanding from him to imbue the hearts of the obdurate people with Faith, but to admonish those people who have fear of Allah. Therefore the Holy Prophet should not waste his efforts on those people who have no fear

Being, Who has created the earth and the high heavens. The Merciful is sitting on the throne of the Kingdom (of the universe)²: He is the Owner of all that which is in the heavens and the earth and all that which is between them and under the soil. Whether you utter your supplication in a loud voice, (it makes no difference), for He hears not only what is said in a low voice but also what is kept most secret.³ He is Allah: there is no god but He; all the excellent names are for Him.⁴

And has the history of Moses reached you? When he saw a fire⁵ he said to his family, "Wait a bit, I have seen a fire: it may be that I bring a burning brand for you, or find guidance (to the way) at the fire."⁶ 9-10

When he reached there, a voice called out, "O Moses, 11

of God left in them, and who do not bother at all about what is Truth and what is falsehood.

2. That is, "After creating the universe, He is ruling over it and conducting all the affairs of its management."

3. That is, "You need not complain to Allah in a loud voice against the persecution from which you and your companions are suffering and the mischievous machinations your enemies are devising to defeat you for Allah is fully aware of all those things, and He hears even the complaints you cherish in your hearts."

4. That is, "He possesses all the excellent attributes and characteristics."

5. This happened when Prophet Moses was returning to Egypt after passing several years in exile in Midian, along with his wife whom he had married there. According to the early part of his history, which has been related in Sūrah XXVIII (Al-Qaṣaṣ), an Egyptian had been killed by Prophet Moses; so he had to leave Egypt in order to escape arrest and had taken refuge in Midian.

6. It appears that this happened during a night of winter, when Prophet Moses was passing through the southern part of the Sinai Peninsula. When he saw a fire at a distance, he went towards it in the hope that he might get some of it to keep his wife and children warm during the night, or at least get some guidance concerning the direction of his journey. But instead of this it was his good fortune that he found the guidance to the Right Way.

إِنِّي أَنَا رَبُّكَ فَأَخْلَعُ نَعْلَيْكَ إِنَّكَ بِالْوَادِ الْمُقَدَّسِ طُوًى ﴿١٣﴾ وَأَنَا اخْتَرْتُكَ
 فَاسْتَمِعْ لِمَا يُوحَى ﴿١٤﴾ إِنَّنِي أَنَا اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاعْبُدْنِي وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ
 لِذِكْرِي ﴿١٥﴾ إِنَّ السَّاعَةَ آتِيَةٌ أَكَادُ أُخْفِيهَا لِتُجْزَىٰ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا تَسْعَى ﴿١٦﴾ فَلَا
 يَصُدُّكَ عَنْهَا مَن لَّا يُؤْمِنُ بِهَا وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ فَتَرْدَى ﴿١٧﴾ وَمَا تِلْكَ بِيَمِينِكَ
 يَمُوسَىٰ ﴿١٨﴾ قَالَ هِيَ عَصَايَ أَتَوَكَّوْا عَلَيْهَا وَاهْتَسُّ بِهَا عَلَىٰ غَنَمِي وَ إِلَىٰ
 فِيهَا مَارِبٌ أُخْرَىٰ ﴿١٩﴾ قَالَ أَلْقِهَا يَمُوسَىٰ ﴿٢٠﴾ فَالْقَهَا فَإِذَا هِيَ حَيَّةٌ تَسْعَى ﴿٢١﴾
 قَالَ خُذْهَا وَلَا تَخَفْ سَنُعِيدُهَا سِيرَتَهَا الْأُولَىٰ ﴿٢٢﴾ وَاضْمُرْ يَدَكَ إِلَىٰ
 جَنَاحِكَ تَخْرُجَ بَيْضَاءَ مِمَّنْ غَيْرِ سَوَاءٍ آيَةٌ أُخْرَىٰ ﴿٢٣﴾ لِنُرِيكَ مِنْ آيَاتِنَا الْكُبْرَىٰ ﴿٢٤﴾
 إِذْ هَبَّ إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّهُ طَغَىٰ ﴿٢٥﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ اشْرَحْ لِي صَدْرِي ﴿٢٦﴾ وَيَسِّرْ لِي
 أَمْرِي ﴿٢٧﴾ وَاحْلُلْ عُقْدَةً مِّنْ لِّسَانِي ﴿٢٨﴾ يَفْقَهُوا قَوْلِي ﴿٢٩﴾ وَاجْعَلْ لِّي وَزِيرًا
 مِّنْ أَهْلِي ﴿٣٠﴾ هَارُونَ أَخِي ﴿٣١﴾ اشْدُدْ بِهِ أَزْرَمِي ﴿٣٢﴾ وَاشْرِكُهُ فِي أَمْرِي ﴿٣٣﴾ كَىٰ
 نَسِيحَكَ كَثِيرًا ﴿٣٤﴾ وَنَذُرَكَ كَثِيرًا ﴿٣٥﴾ إِنَّكَ كُنْتَ بِنَا بَصِيرًا ﴿٣٦﴾ قَالَ قَدْ
 أُوتِيتَ سُؤْلَكَ يَمُوسَىٰ ﴿٣٧﴾ وَلَقَدْ مَنَّا عَلَيْكَ مَرَّةً أُخْرَىٰ ﴿٣٨﴾ إِذْ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ
 أُمِّكَ مَا يُوحَىٰ ﴿٣٩﴾ أَنْ اقْنِصِي فِي التَّابُوتِ فَاقْنِصِي فِي الْيَوْمِ فَلْيَلْقِهِ الْيَوْمَ
 بِالسَّاحِلِ يَأْخُذْهُ عَدُوٌّ لِّي وَعَدُوٌّ لَهُ ﴿٤٠﴾ وَأَلْقَيْتُ عَلَيْكَ مَحَبَّةً مِنِّي هُوَ
 لِيُصْنَعَ عَلَىٰ عَيْنِي ﴿٤١﴾ إِذْ تَسْتَشِيءُ أَخْتُكَ فَتَقُولُ هَلْ أَدُلُّكُمْ عَلَىٰ مَن يَكْفُلُهُ ﴿٤٢﴾
 فَرَجَعْنَاكَ إِلَىٰ أُمِّكَ كَىٰ تَقَرَّ عَيْنُهَا وَلَا تَحْزَنَ ﴿٤٣﴾ وَوَقَّلتَ نَفْسًا فَتَجَنَّبَنكَ
 مِنَ الْغَمِّ وَفَقَّنَكَ فَتُونَاهُ فَلَيْسَتْ بِنِيبَةٍ فِي أَهْلِ مَدْيَنَ هُوَ ثَمَرٌ جَنَّتٍ
 عَلَىٰ قَدَرٍ يَمُوسَىٰ ﴿٤٤﴾ وَأَصْطَفَعْنَاكَ لِنَفْسِي ﴿٤٥﴾ إِذْ هَبَّ آنتَ وَأَخُوكَ بِآيَتِي وَ

I am your Lord; take off your shoes,⁷ for you are in the sacred valley of Ṭuwā.⁸ And I have chosen you: so listen to what is revealed. It is I Who am Allah; there is no god but Me: so worship Me and establish *Ṣalāt* to remember Me.⁹ The Hour of Resurrection is sure to come, but it is My will to keep the time of its coming secret so that every soul may be recompensed according to its labours.¹⁰ Therefore let not any person who does not believe in it and has become a slave of his lusts, turn your thoughts away from it, lest you perish— And O Moses, what is this in your right hand?"¹¹ 12-17

Moses replied, "It is my staff: I lean upon it and I beat down leaves with it for my flock, and I have quite a few other uses for it."¹² 18

He said, "Cast it down, O Moses." 19

So he cast it down and immediately it turned into a snake, which began to run about. 20

He said, "Catch hold of it and do not fear for We will again restore it to its former state. Now clasp your hand under your arm-pit: it will come out shining without any hurt (to you).¹³ This is the second Sign: this is because We are going to show you Our great Signs. Now go to Pharaoh for he has become rebellious." 21-24

Moses said, "Lord, open my breast for me¹⁴ and make my task easy for me, and remove the impediment from my tongue so that people may understand my speech,¹⁵ and appoint a counsellor for me from my own family, and strengthen my hands by means of Aaron, who is my brother,¹⁶ and make him my associate in my work so that we may glorify Thee and remember Thee always. Thou hast always been watching over us." 25-35

He said, "Your request is granted, O Moses. We have shown favour to you for the second time.¹⁷ Recall the time when We inspired your mother with this idea by means of a Revelation: 'Place this child in a box and put the box in the river; the river will cast it on to the bank and My enemy and his enemy will pick it up. I Myself made you an object of love and so arranged things that you should be brought up under My supervision. Recall the time when your sister was walking along; then she said: 'May I inform you of one,

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who will bring up this child in the best manner?' Thus We returned you to your mother so that her eye might be cooled and she might not be grieved. And (also remember that) you killed a certain person and We freed you from its evil (consequences) and put you through various trials and you stayed with the people of Midian for several years. Now you have come back at the right time: O Moses, I have moulded you for My Mission. You and your brother should go (on the Mission) with My Signs. And see that you do not show any negligence in remembering Me."

7. Probably, it is because of this that the Jews do not say their prayers with their shoes on. The Holy Prophet, however, removed this misunderstanding, saying, "Act in contrast to the practice of the Jews who do not say their prayers with their shoes or leather socks on." (Abū Dā'ūd). It does not, however, mean that one must say one's prayers with the shoes on, but it is merely to make it lawful to say prayers with shoes on. This is confirmed by another tradition, related by Abū Dā'ūd from 'Amar bin 'Ās, that he had seen the Holy Prophet saying his prayer both with and without the shoes.

There are other traditions also to this effect but it should also be kept in mind that there were no carpets, mats, etc. in the mosques in those days, not even in the Holy Prophet's Mosque. Therefore it would be improper to go with shoes on into the mosques of today which have carpets, mats, etc. However, one may say one's prayer on grassy plots or open ground with shoes on.

8. In general, the commentators are of the opinion that Ṭuwā was the name of the valley, but according to some it means, "The valley that had been made sacred for the time being."

9. This is the real object of *Ṣalāt*. It has been prescribed to remind people that they should not become neglectful of Allah by worldly diversions and that they should remember that man is not an unbridled free being but a servant of Allah. *Ṣalāt* has been prescribed five times a day to remind man of Allah's presence.

Some people are of the opinion that it means: "Establish *Ṣalāt*, so that I may remember you."

Incidentally, according to this verse, if one forgets to offer a prayer in time, one should offer it when one recollects it. This is also supported by a tradition related by Ḥaḍrat Anas: "If one forgets to offer a certain prayer at the proper time, he should offer it whenever he recollects this; for there is no other expiation for this omission." (Bukhārī, Muslim, Aḥmed). There is another tradition related by Abū Hurairah to the same effect. It was inquired from the Holy Prophet: "What should we do if we remained asleep during the time of prayer?" The Holy Prophet

said, "There is no sin if one remained asleep. The sin is that one should neglect one's prayer intentionally while awake. Therefore if one forgets to offer a prayer or remained asleep one should offer that prayer on remembering it or on awaking." (Tirmīzi, Nasā'i, Abū Dā'ūd).

10. After *Ṭauhīd* the second thing that was revealed to all the Prophets was the reality of the "Hereafter", and they were appointed to impart its knowledge to their peoples. Here its object has also been stated. The Hour of Resurrection is destined to come so that every one should get the recompense in the Hereafter of what one did in this world, and that Hour has been kept secret to fulfil the requirement of the trial. For the one who believes in the Hereafter will always be on his guard against any deviation from the Right Way, and the one who does not believe in the coming of that Hour will remain engaged in other things, for he will think that he did not see any sign of the coming of the Hour.

11. This question was not asked for the sake of getting any information, for Allah knew that Moses held a staff in his hand. The question was posed with a view to impressing upon him the fact that it was a staff so that he might be mentally prepared to see the miracle which was going to be performed with it.

12. Prophet Moses deliberately prolonged his answer and did not stop at: "It is my staff". This was because he naturally wanted to prolong the dialogue to make the privilege meeting last longer.

13. That is, "Your hand will shine brightly like the sun, but it will not cause any hurt to you." It is strange that the Bible interprets this miracle, saying that 'his hand was leprous as snow but it was turned again as his other flesh'. The Talmud also interprets the miracle in the same way and adds that this was a miracle which was meant for Pharaoh who was suffering from leprosy. It is a pity that the same interpretation has been adopted by our own commentators, though the correct interpretation is the one that has been adopted by us, and many former commentators. Obviously, it is bad taste to attribute to a Prophet the repugnant miracle of leprosy and that, too, before a king in his court.

14. That is, "Fill my heart with the courage that may enable me to perform the obligations connected with the great Mission of a Messenger, and give me the confidence for its fulfilment". Prophet Moses prayed for this because he realized the grave responsibilities of the great Mission.

15. Prophet Moses prayed to Allah for this because he was conscious that he was not a fluent speaker but was slow of speech. He also knew that as a Messenger he would have to be fluent in order to impress Pharaoh and his courtiers. This is confirmed by the Bible (Exodus 4 : 10) but the Talmud gives a strange explanation for this impediment in his speech. According to it, when he was a child he burnt his tongue with a live coal to escape punishment from Pharaoh whose crown he had taken

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لَا تَنبِيَا فِي ذِكْرِي ۗ إِذْ هَبْنَا إِلَى فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّهُ طَغَى ۗ فَقُولَا لَهُ قَوْلًا لَيِّنًا
 لَعَلَّهُ يَتَذَكَّرُ أَوْ يَخْشَى ۗ قَالَ رَبَّنَا إِنَّا نَخَافُ أَنْ يُفْرِطَ عَلَيْنَا أَوْ أَنْ
 يَطْغَى ۗ قَالَ لَا تَخَافَا إِنِّي مَعَكُمْ أَسْمَعُ وَأَرَى ۗ فَاتِيَهُ فَقَوْلَا إِنَّا رَسُولَا
 رَبِّكَ فَأَرْسِلْ مَعَنَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ وَلَا تَعَذِّبْهُمْ ۗ قَدْ جِئْنَاكَ بِآيَةٍ
 مِنْ رَبِّكَ ۗ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَيَّ مِنَ اتَّبَعَةِ الْهُدَى ۗ إِنَّا قَدْ أُوحِيَ إِلَيْنَا أَنَّ الْعَذَابَ
 عَلَى مَنْ كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلَّى ۗ قَالَ فَمَنْ رَبُّكُمَا يُوسَى ۗ قَالَ رَبُّنَا الَّذِي جَعَلَ
 لَكُمْ الْأَرْضَ مَهْدًا وَوَسَّعَ لَكُمْ فِيهَا سُبُلًا وَأَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً ۗ
 فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ أَزْوَاجًا مِنْ تَحْتِ شَجَرٍ ۗ كَلُومًا ۗ وَارْعَوْا أَنْعَامَكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ
 لَآيَاتٍ لِأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ ۗ مِنْهَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ وَفِيهَا نُعِيدُكُمْ وَمِنْهَا نُخْرِجُكُمْ
 تَارَةً أُخْرَى ۗ وَلَقَدْ آرَيْنَا آيَاتِنَا كُلَّهَا فَكَذَّبَ وَآبَى ۗ قَالَ أَجِئْتَنَا
 لِتُخْرِجَنَا مِنْ أَرْضِنَا بِسِحْرِكَ يَا مُوسَى ۗ فَلَنَأْتِيَنَّكَ بِسِحْرٍ مِثْلِهِ فَاجْعَلْ
 بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكَ مَوْعِدًا لَا نُخْلِفُهُ نَحْنُ وَلَا أَنْتَ مَكَانًا سُوًى ۗ
 قَالَ مَوْعِدُكُمْ يَوْمَ الزَّيْنَةِ وَأَنْ يُحْشَرَ النَّاسُ ضَحَى ۗ فَتَوَلَّى فِرْعَوْنُ
 فَجَمَعَ كَيْدَهُ ثُمَّ أَتَى ۗ قَالَ لَهُمْ مُوسَى وَيْلَكُمْ لَا تَفْتَرُوا عَلَيَّ كَذِبًا
 فَيُسْحِتَكُمْ بِعَذَابٍ ۗ وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ افْتَرَى ۗ فَتَنَازَعُوا أَمْرَهُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ وَ
 أَسْرَوْا النَّجْوَى ۗ قَالُوا إِنْ هَذَا كَسِحْرٍ يُرِيدُ أَنْ يُخْرِجَكُمْ مِنْ
 أَرْضِكُمْ بِسِحْرِهِمَا وَيَذْهَبَ بِطَرِيقَتِكُمُ الْمُثَلَّى ۗ فَاجْمِعُوا كَيْدَكُمْ ثُمَّ ائْتُوا

“Go both of you to Pharaoh, for he has transgressed all bounds. Talk to him in a gentle manner; may be that he is convinced by admonition or imbued with fear.”¹⁸ 43-44

The two^{18a} said, “Lord, we dread that he will behave unjustly towards us or treat us cruelly.” He answered, “Have no fear : I am with you: I hear everything and see everything. Go to him and say, ‘We are Messengers from your Lord, so let the Israelites go with us, and do not oppress them. We have come to you with Signs from your Lord; and peace is for him who follows the Right Way. We have been informed by Revelation that there is scourge for him who rejects it and turns away.’”¹⁹ 45-48

Pharaoh²⁰ said, “Well, who is the Lord of you both, O Moses?”²¹ 49

Moses replied, “Our Lord is He²² Who has given a distinctive form to everything and then guided it aright.”²³ 50

Pharaoh said, “And what was the position of the generations who have passed before?”²⁴ 51

Moses replied, “The knowledge of that is with my Lord, secure in a writing; my Lord neither errs nor forgets.”²⁵ 52-55

He²⁶ it is Who has spread the earth as a bed for you, and made paths for you to move about (from place to place); He sent down rain water from above and produced different kinds of vegetation: eat of these and graze your cattle. Surely there is many a Sign in this for those who possess common sense.²⁷ We have created you from this earth and We will return you into it and then will bring you forth out of it once again.²⁸

We showed all (kinds of) Our Signs²⁹ to Pharaoh, but he went on treating them as falsehood and refused to believe. He said, “O Moses, have you come to drive us out of our land by the power of your sorcery?³⁰ Well, we will also bring as strong a sorcery as yours. So settle with us when and where should the encounter take place; then neither should we back out of this agreement nor you. Come out in the open field.” 56-58

Moses replied, “Let the encounter take place on the Day of the Feast, and the people assemble after the rising of the sun.”³¹ 59

60 Pharaoh then withdrew and gathered together all his devices, and came to the encounter.³²

61 (On the very occasion) Moses warned (his adversaries), saying,³³ "O unfortunate people, do not invent falsehoods in regard to Allah :³⁴ otherwise He will destroy you by a scourge: for whoso invented a falsehood, perished."

62-64 Hearing this, a difference of opinion arose among them concerning the issue, and they began to hold secret consultations.³⁵ At last some of them decided the issue, saying,³⁶ "These two are no more than sorcerers. Their object is to drive you out of your homeland by the power of their sorcery, and bring to an end your ideal way of life.³⁷ Therefore muster up all your devices and come into the field with a united front.³⁸ You should realize that whoso comes out victorious today, he will win (the battle of ideology)."

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off from his head and put it on his own head. The same story has been adopted by many of our commentators, though it is absurd on the face of it. Our interpretation is also confirmed by the Qur'ān. The fact is, that at first he was not a fluent speaker and Pharaoh had also taunted him on this impediment (XLIII : 52). Prophet Moses realized the same for he said, "My brother Aaron is more fluent than I, so send him with me as a helper, so that he may support me (with his fluent speech)." (XXVIII : 34). Afterwards this impediment in his speech was removed and he was able to deliver very fluent speeches. This may be testified by his speeches which have been cited both in the Bible and in the Qur'ān for they are masterpieces of eloquence and rhetoric.

Above all, it does not stand to reason that Allah should appoint a lisper or a stammerer or a stutterer as His Messenger. That is why the Messengers have always been the best of mankind in regard to their appearance, personality and capabilities for they had to be most impressive both in their appearance and conduct, so that they could not be made the target of ridicule and contempt by the people because of such personal defects as stammering or stuttering.

16. Prophet Aaron was three years older than Prophet Moses (Exodus, 7 : 7).

17. Allah recounts the favours He had shown to Prophet Moses since his birth in order to impress on him the fact that he had been brought up under Divine care right from his birth for the purpose of appointing him as a Messenger. Here mere references have been made but in Sūrah XXVIII (Al-Qaṣaṣ) details of the favours have been given.

18. The only two ways of bringing a man to the Right Way are :

(1) To convince him by argument and admonition, or (2) to warn him of the consequences of deviation.

18a. It appears that they implored Allah thus before going before Pharaoh when Prophet Moses had reached Egypt and Aaron had joined him in the propagation of the Mission.

19. A comparative study of this incident as given in the Bible and the Talmud will show that the Qur'ān does not copy the stories from these books, but gives its own version in order to portray the Messengers in their true glory and dignity. According to the Bible, when God said to Moses that He would send him to Pharaoh, Moses replied, "Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" (Exodus 3 : 11). God persuaded and encouraged Moses by giving him Signs but he was still reluctant and said, "O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of *him whom* thou wilt send." (Exodus 4 : 13). And the Talmud goes even further than this and says that there was an argument between God and Moses for seven days that he should become a Prophet but Moses did not accept the offer. At this God was angry with him and so made his brother Aaron a partner in his Prophethood. Moreover, He deprived the descendants of Moses of the office of priesthood and bestowed it on the descendants of Aaron. These two versions depict Allah to be suffering from human weaknesses and Prophet Moses from inferiority complex.

20. Here the details have been omitted. These have been given in VII : 103-108, XXVI : 10-33, XXVIII : 28-40, LXXIX : 15-25.

As regards the necessary information about Pharaoh, see E.N. 85 of Chapter VII.

21. Pharaoh addressed Prophet Moses because he was, in regard to Prophethood, the senior of the two. It is also possible that he deliberately addressed him in order to exploit his impediment in speech, and ignored Prophet Aaron, who was more fluent.

As regards the implication of this question of Pharaoh, he meant to say, "You say that you have brought a Message from my Lord to me. Who is that Lord? You should know that I am the Lord of Egypt and the people of Egypt". In regard to this claim of his, see LXXIX : 24, XLIII : 51, XXVIII : 38 and XXVI : 29.

It may also be noted that by this claim Pharaoh did not mean to say that he was the sole deity of his people nor did it mean that none other was worshipped in Egypt. As a matter of fact, he himself based his right of sovereignty on his claim of being the incarnation of the sun-god. And we also learn from the history of Egypt that there were many other gods and goddesses. In fact, what he claimed was that he was politically the Lord of not only Egypt but also of the whole of mankind theoretically. Therefore, he would not acknowledge that there was any supreme sovereign over him whose delegate might bring an order to him and demand its obedience from him.

22. That is, "We acknowledge Him alone as our Lord in every sense: He is our Sustainer, our Maker, our Master, our Sovereign and is Supreme in everything, and there is no other lord in any sense but He."

23. This concise sentence needs serious attention. It means that it is Allah alone Who has created everything and given it its distinctive structure, form, capabilities, characteristics, etc.

(1) For instance, man has been given the hands and feet which are given the most appropriate structure that was needed for their right functioning.

(2) A human being, an animal, a plant, mineral and the like, air, water and light—everything has been given that particular form which was needed for its right functioning in the universe.

(3) Then He has guided everything aright to function properly. It is He Who has taught everything the way to fulfil that object for which it has been created. He has taught the ear to hear and the eye to see; the fish to swim and the swallow to fly; the earth to grow vegetation and the tree to blossom and bear fruit. In short, He is not only the Creator of everything but also its Guide and Teacher.

Prophet Moses employed this concise and meaningful sentence to convey the Message to Pharaoh and his people. He not only gave a suitable reply to Pharaoh as to who his Lord was, but also told him why He was his Lord, and how there was no other lord than He. The argument implied in it was this : As Pharaoh and every one of his subjects was obliged to Allah for his human form and could not live even for a moment without the functioning of the different parts of his body which were performing their functions in accordance with the guidance of Allah, so Pharaoh's claim that he was the lord of the people was absurd, and its acknowledgement by his people that he was their Lord, a folly.

Besides this, Prophet Moses also hinted at the need of Prophethood which was denied by Pharaoh. When Allah guides everything in the universe, He has also to fulfil the need of the guidance of mankind. Whereas the guidance of the animals and birds has been provided by instinct, the guidance of rational human beings has been provided by sending Messengers who appealed to them by rational arguments.

24. The question posed by Pharaoh was very subtle. He meant to say, "If there is no other lord than the One Who has given a distinctive form to everyone, then what will be the position of our forefathers who had been worshipping other deities since centuries? Were all those people in error? Did all of them deserve torment? Did they all lack common sense?" Thus Pharaoh perhaps wanted to give vent to his anger against Prophet Moses for showing disrespect to his forefathers. At the same time he also wanted to incite his courtiers and the common people of Egypt against the Message of Prophet Moses. And this trick has

always been used against the people who propagate the Truth and has always proved very effective to incite those people who lack common sense. This same trick has been mentioned here for it was being employed at the very time against the Holy Prophet by the people of Makkah.

25. This answer is full of wisdom. If Prophet Moses had said, "Yes, they all lacked common sense and had gone astray and would become the fuel of Hell", this answer, though true, would have served the very purpose Pharaoh had in mind in putting the question. But the answer given by the Prophet was true and it frustrated the trick of Pharaoh as well. His answer was to this effect : "Well, those people have now gone before their Lord, and I have no means of judging their deeds and intentions. However, their whole record is safe and secure with Allah, and nothing can escape Him. Allah alone knows how to deal with them. What concerns you and me is our own position and attitude to life. We should be more concerned about our own end than of those who have already passed away into Allah's presence."

26. It is quite obvious that vv. 53-55 are an addition by Allah to the foregoing answer by Prophet Moses. There are other instances of this in the Qur'ān that Allah added a few sentences to the speech of someone by way of admonition. Moreover, it is connected not only with the preceding verse but also with the whole reply of Prophet Moses (vv. 50-52).

27. That is, "Those, who use their common sense in their search for the Truth, find a way to the Reality by the help of these Signs, which clearly show that the universe has One Lord Who alone is sustaining it, and there is no room here for any other lord."

28. That is, "Every man has to pass through three stages: (1) from birth to death, (2) from death, to Resurrection, and (3) from the Day of Resurrection to Eternity. According to this verse, all the three stages will take place on this Earth.

29. "Signs" comprised those arguments which were based on natural phenomena and human life and those miracles which were given to Prophet Moses. These arguments are contained in the speeches of Prophet Moses which he delivered before Pharaoh, and the miracles which he showed and are mentioned at several places in the Qur'ān.

30. Here by sorcery are meant the miracles of the staff and the shining hand, which according to the details given in Chapters VII and XXVI, were shown to Pharaoh by Prophet Moses in his first visit to his court. On seeing these miracles Pharaoh was so upset that he cried out, "Have you come to drive us out of our country by the power of your sorcery? although he knew that it had never happened in history that a magician had conquered a country by the power of sorcery. Moreover, there were

hundreds of magicians in his own country, who used to show their feats to earn rewards and prizes. Accordingly, Pharaoh's statement that "you are a sorcerer" on the one hand, and his apprehension that "you want to snatch my kingdom" on the other, were a clear indication of his perturbed mind. In fact, Pharaoh had come to understand that the well-reasoned speech of Moses and his miracles were bound to influence not only his courtiers, but also the common people and accordingly he tried to play upon their prejudices through falsehood and treachery. He did not admit that it was a miracle, but called it sorcery. He wanted to create an impression that any sorcerer of his empire could turn a staff into a serpent. He also incited the people, saying: "Look ! he says that your forefathers were on the wrong way and deserved perdition. So beware of him! He is not a Prophet. He simply aspires for power. He wants that the Israelites should again capture power here like the times of Joseph and wrest the reigns of government from the Copts." Pharaoh, in fact, wanted to suppress the invitation to the Truth through such devices. (For details please see E.N.'s 87 to 89 of Chapter VII; E.N. 75 of Chapter X). 16-18

31. The object of Pharaoh was this : "Once the sorcerers are able to transform the staffs and ropes into serpents, the entire effect of the miracle performed by Moses would disappear from the people's minds. That was exactly to Moses' advantage, who suggested that it was no good fixing an ordinary day or place for the purpose. The Day of the Feast was at hand. People would flock on that occasion from all corners of the empire. Therefore, the encounter should be held in the open so that all might witness it, and in the day time so that every one should be able to see it clearly."

32. Pharaoh and his courtiers considered the coming encounter as a decisive one as far as their own future was concerned and, therefore, they attached the utmost importance to it. Courtiers were sent throughout the country to muster round all the magicians wherever available. People were especially encouraged to come in the largest numbers to witness the magic skills so as to keep them immune from the awe inspired by the staff of Moses. It was openly said that the fate of their religion hinged on the skill of their magicians : their religion could survive only if they won; otherwise the religion of Moses would have its sway (see XXVI : 34-51).

Here one should bear in mind the fact that the religion of the royal family and the elite of Egypt was much different from that of the common people. They had separate gods and temples and different creeds and concepts about the life after death. They also differed in the practice of religion as well as in the ideologies. (Toynbee: *A Study of History* : Somervell's Abridgement Vols. I-VI, pp. 31-32). Moreover, there were sufficiently strong pockets of the population, who under the influence of

various religious upheavels, were prone to prefer Monotheism to a creed of polytheism. Besides this, there was also a fairly large element of the worshippers of One God for the Israelites and their fellow believers were at least ten per cent of the total population. Pharaoh also remembered that about 150 years earlier a religious revolution had been brought about by Pharaoh Amenophis IV or Akhenaton (1377-1360 B.C.) by military force, which had abolished all deities except Aton, a single, universal god, which was worshipped by the king and his family. Though this religious revolution had been reversed later by another king, yet its influence remained, and Pharaoh dreaded that Moses might bring about yet another revolution.

33. The "adversaries" whom Prophet Moses addressed were Pharaoh and his courtiers who had dubbed him as a "sorcerer", and not the common people, who had yet to see the encounter between him and the magicians.

34. "The falsehoods" were that they had dubbed Allah's Messenger as a "sorcerer" and his miracles as "a piece of sorcery".

35. This shows that those people felt in their hearts that their position was weak and knew that the miracle shown by Prophet Moses was not a piece of magic. Therefore, they had come for the encounter with hesitation and fear. But when the timely, sudden warning of Prophet Moses shook them to the core, they began to debate the wisdom of holding the encounter on the Feast Day in an open place in the broad day light. For they thought that if they were defeated in the presence of the common people, all would come to know of the difference between magic and a miracle and they would lose the battle once for all.

36. Those who were of this view must have been a few fanatics of Pharaoh's party—who were prepared to go to any extent to oppose Prophet Moses. Those hot-headed people must have been preparing the public for a determined encounter, while the saner and experienced among them must have been advising caution and restraint.

37. Probably those people based their argument on two things :

(1) If their magicians were also able to turn their staffs into serpents, it would be a clear proof that Moses too was a sorcerer.

(2) If, on the other hand, Moses won, the rulers would lose their country, and their ideal way of life, which reflected their culture, their arts, their civilization, their recreations, etc. would automatically come to an end. Therefore they should do all they could to defeat Moses.

38. They also urged them to present a united front and not to show their differences on the very occasion of the encounter. For, they argued, any hesitation and secret consultation before the very eyes of the public would show that they did not consider themselves to be in the right.

صَفَاءٍ وَقَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْيَوْمَ مَنْ اسْتَعْلَى ﴿٥٣﴾ قَالُوا يُمُوسَىٰ إِنَّمَا أَنْ تُلْقِيَ وَ
 إِنَّمَا أَنْ تَكُونَ أَوَّلَ مَنْ أَلْقَى ﴿٥٤﴾ قَالَ بَلِ الْقَوَاءُ فَإِذَا جِبَالُهُمْ وَعِصِيُّهُمْ
 يُخَيَّلُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ سِحْرِهِمْ أَنَّهَا تَسْعَى ﴿٥٥﴾ فَأَوْجَسَ فِي نَفْسِهِ خِيفَةً مُوسَىٰ ﴿٥٦﴾
 قُلْنَا لَا تَخَفْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْأَعْلَى ﴿٥٧﴾ وَ أَلْقَى مَا فِي يَمِينِكَ تَلْقَفَ مَا صَنَعُوا
 إِنَّمَا صَنَعُوا كَيْدُ سِحْرٍ وَلَا يُفْلِحُ السَّاحِرُ حَيْثُ أَتَى ﴿٥٨﴾ فَأَلْقَى السَّحْرَةَ
 سُجَّدًا قَالُوا أَمَّا بِرَبِّ هَارُونَ وَ مُوسَىٰ ﴿٥٩﴾ قَالَ أَمَنْتُمْ لَهُ قَبْلَ أَنْ أَدْنِ
 لَكُمْ طَائِفَتَهُ لِكَبِيرِكُمُ الَّذِي عَلَّمَكُمُ السَّحْرَ فَلَا قِطْعَانَ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَ أَرْجُلِكُمْ
 مِنْ خِلَافٍ وَ لَا أُصَلِّبَنَّكُمْ فِي جُدُوعِ النَّخْلِ وَ لَتَعْلَسَنَّ آيَاتُنَا شَدِيدًا عَذَابًا
 وَ أَبْقَى ﴿٦٠﴾ قَالُوا كُنْ نُؤْتِرُكَ عَلَىٰ مَا جَاءَنَا مِنَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَ الَّذِي فَطَرَنَا
 فَاقْضِ مَا أَنْتَ قَاضٍ إِنَّمَا تَقْضِي هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا ﴿٦١﴾ إِنَّا أَمَّا بِرَبِّنَا
 لِيَخْفِرَ لَنَا خَطِينًا وَ مَا أَكْرَهْتَنَا عَلَيْهِ مِنَ السَّحْرِ وَ اللَّهُ خَيْرٌ وَ أَبْقَى ﴿٦٢﴾ إِنَّهُ
 مَنْ يَأْتِ رَبَّهُ مُجْرِمًا فَإِنَّ لَهُ جَهَنَّمَ لَا يَمُوتُ فِيهَا وَ لَا يَحْيَىٰ ﴿٦٣﴾ وَ مَنْ
 يَأْتِهِ مُؤْمِنًا قَدْ عَمِلَ الصَّالِحَاتِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمُ الدَّرَجَاتُ الْعُلَىٰ ﴿٦٤﴾ جَنَّاتُ
 عَدْنٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَ ذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ مَنْ تَزَكَّى ﴿٦٥﴾
 وَ لَقَدْ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ ۖ أَنْ أَسْرِ بِعِبَادِي فَاصْرَبْ لَهُمْ طَرِيقًا فِي الْبَحْرِ
 يَبَسًا ۖ لَا تَخَفْ دَرَكًا وَ لَا تَخْشَىٰ ﴿٦٦﴾ فَاتَّبَعَهُمْ فِرْعَوْنُ بِجُنُودِهِ فَغَشِيَهُمْ مِنَ
 الْيَمِّ مَا غَشِيَهُمْ ﴿٦٧﴾ وَ أَضَلَّ فِرْعَوْنُ قَوْمَهُ وَ مَا هَدَىٰ ﴿٦٨﴾ يَبْنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ
 قَدْ أَنْجَيْنَاكَ مِنْ عَدُوِّكَ وَ وَعَدْنَاكَ جَانِبَ الطُّورِ الْأَيْمَنِ وَ نَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ
 الْمَنَ وَ السَّلْوَىٰ ﴿٦٩﴾ كُلُوا مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ وَ لَا تَطْغَوْا فِيهِ فَيَحِلَّ

الْبَيْتِ

ع ٢٢
١٢

The magicians³⁹ said, "O Moses, will you cast down (your things) or shall we cast down first?" 65

Moses replied, "No, cast down (yours)." 66-70

Suddenly it so appeared to Moses that their cords and staffs were running about by the power of their magic,⁴⁰ and Moses' heart was filled with fear.⁴¹ We said, "Don't fear for you will come out victorious. Cast down what is in your hand, and it will swallow up all their sham creation ;⁴² for they are mere tricks of a magician ; and a magician can never succeed, howsoever skilled he may be." Accordingly, at the end of the encounter, all the magicians were cast down to prostration⁴³ and they cried out, "We believe in the Lord of Aaron and Moses."⁴⁴

Pharaoh said, "Have you believed in him before I gave you permission? Obviously, he is your master who has taught you sorcery.⁴⁵ Well, now I will have your hands and feet cut off on alternate sides⁴⁶ and crucify you on the trunks of palm-trees :⁴⁷ then you shall know whose punishment is more terrible and lasting (mine or that of Moses)."⁴⁸ 71

The magicians replied, "By Him Who has created us, we can never prefer you (to the Truth) after we have seen clear Signs.⁴⁹ Therefore you may do your worst, for at the most you can pass judgment concerning this worldly life. We have believed in our Lord so that He may pardon our errors, and forgive us the sin of sorcery which you forced us to practise. Allah is Best and Eternal."—In fact,⁵⁰ for the one who comes before his Lord as a criminal, there shall be Hell, wherein he shall neither live nor die.⁵¹ As for the one, who comes before Him as a Believer, who has done good deeds, all such people will have the highest ranks for them. They will dwell for ever in the evergreen Gardens beneath which canals flow. Such is the reward of the one who adopts purity. 72-76

We⁵² sent this Revelation to Moses : "Set forth with My servants during the night and make for them a dry path across the sea.⁵³ Have no fear of being overtaken nor be afraid (while passing through the sea)." 77

Pharaoh pursued them with his hosts but the sea overwhelmed them completely.⁵⁴ Pharaoh had misled his 78-79

people and had not guided them aright.⁵⁵

80 O children of Israel,⁵⁶ We rescued you from your enemy and fixed a time for your attendance on the right side of Tūr,^{57, 58} and sent down *manna* and *salva* to you.⁵⁹—Eat of

39. That confidence was subsequently restored among Pharaoh's party by the speech of the head-strong people, and the magicians were asked to come into the field for the encounter, has been omitted.

40. In VII : 116, it was stated : "When they threw down their devices they bewitched the eyes of the people and filled their hearts with terror." Here it is stated that it was not the common people alone who were terrified by their magic but Prophet Moses too suffered from its effect. He not only seemed to see that the staffs and cords were running about like serpents but he also felt a dread of them.

41. It appears that no sooner did Prophet Moses say, "Cast down", than the magicians immediately cast their staffs and cords and it seemed as if hundreds of serpents were running towards him, and he instinctively felt a dread of them. And there is nothing strange in this because a Prophet is after all a human being. Besides this, it is also possible that Prophet Moses apprehended that the demonstration of the magic might create a misunderstanding among the people about his miracle.

This is also a proof that a Prophet too can be influenced by magic to a certain extent like the common people, though magicians have no power to produce any effect on his Prophethood or interfere with Revelation, or misguide him. Therefore there is no reason why one should consider as false those traditions in which it has been stated that the Holy Prophet suffered temporarily from the effect of magic.

42. This is capable of two interpretations : (1) the staff, which was turned into a dragon by a miracle, actually swallowed up all the staffs and cords which had been made to appear as serpents. (2) The dragon of the staff did not actually swallow up the serpents of the magicians but wiped out the effect of their magic from these things and they again became ordinary cords and staffs. We prefer the second interpretation because the wording of VII : 117 and XXVI : 45 is this : "It swallowed up their false magic", and here the wording is : "It will swallow up all their sham creation". Obviously, the staffs and cords were not their creation but the magic which had made them appear like serpents.

43. When they saw the power of the staff of Moses, they involuntarily fell prostrate as if some one had made them do so, because they were convinced that it was a Miracle and not a feat of magic.

44. This profession of faith by the magicians shows that every one was aware of the basic object of the encounter. It was not an encounter between the feats of the magicians and those of Prophet Moses, but it was to decide whether the claim of Prophet Moses that he was a Messenger of Allah was true or not. If this staff was actually turned into a dragon, it

was by means of a miracle. On the other hand, Pharaoh intended to prove by the feats of his magicians that it was not a miracle but a feat of magic. Incidentally, this also shows that Pharaoh and his magicians and the common people fully understood the distinction between a miracle and a feat of magic. That is why when the magicians saw that it was a miracle shown by the power of Allah which had exposed their magic, they did not say that Moses was a more skilful magician, but straightway fell prostrate, saying, "We believe in the Lord of Aaron and Moses."

It is obvious that the defeat turned the tables on Pharaoh who had himself arranged the encounter "to expose" Prophet Moses. He had mustered all his magicians with a view to demonstrating before the public that there was nothing extraordinary in turning a staff into a serpent for this could be done by every magician. But the defeat of the magicians and their acknowledgement testified that Moses was really a Messenger of Allah and the transformation of the staff was not a feat of magic but a miracle.

45. In VII : 123, it has been stated : "Indeed it was a plot you conspired in the city to deprive the rightful owners of their power." Here the same thing has been further explained, as if to say, "It is not merely a plot between you and him but it appears that Moses is your master and leader. You conspired beforehand that you would be defeated by your master in the encounter to prove that he was a Messenger who had shown the miracle of the staff to frustrate your magic and bring about a political revolution in the country."

46. That is, "Right hand and left foot or *vice versa*."

47. This was a very cruel way of punishment in ancient times. They fixed a long pole in the ground or used the trunk of a tree for this purpose. Then a piece of wood was tied across it at the top. Then the hands of the criminal were nailed on to it and he was left hanging there for hours to die a slow, painful death.

48. This was the last trick played by Pharaoh to win the losing game. He held out the threat of a cruel punishment in order to coerce them to admit that that really was a conspiracy between Prophet Moses and them against the kingdom. But the fortitude and determination of the magicians turned the tables on him. The very fact that they were ready to endure the terrible punishment proved to the world that they had sincerely believed in the Prophethood of Moses and that the charge of conspiracy was an impudent trick that had been invented as a device.

49. It may also be interpreted like this : "It cannot be that we should prefer you to these plain Signs which have come before us and to that Being Who has created us."

50. This is a saying of Allah, which has been added to the foregoing words of the magicians.

51. This is the most terrible of all the punishments that have been mentioned in the Qur'ān. The criminal will prefer death to the horrible

life in Hell, but death will not come to him. He will remain in that state of agony without any hope of relief from it.

52. Here the details of the events which happened during the long period of Prophet Moses' stay in Egypt have been omitted. For these please see VII: 130-147, X : 83-92, XL : 23-50 and XLIII : 46-56.

53. This happened when God at last appointed a night for the exodus of the Israelites and the other Muslims from Egypt. They were asked to gather at a fixed place and set forth as a caravan. Just at the time when they reached the coast of the Red Sea from where they had to cross to the Sinai Peninsula, Pharaoh arrived there with a large army in their pursuit. We learn from XXVI : 61-63 that when they were literally between the devil and the deep sea, Allah commanded Moses to smite the sea with his staff and according to this verse the sea tore asunder and stood like two high walls on both sides, leaving a dry path between them for the caravan to pass. Thus, it is quite clear and plain that it was a miracle, and not the result of a wind storm or tide, for when the water rises in this way it does not remain standing like two high walls, leaving a dry path between them. (For details see E.N. 47 of Chapter XXVI).

54. According to XXVI : 64-66, Pharaoh with his hosts followed the caravan on the dry path and they were all drowned. In 11:50, it has been stated that the Israelites had reached the other shore and saw them drowning in the sea. From X: 90-92, we learn that Pharaoh professed to believe in God while he was drowning but this was rejected by God and he was told that his dead body would be preserved for the coming generations to serve as a lesson for them.

55. This was a subtle warning to the disbelievers of Makkah, as if to say, "Your chiefs and leaders are leading you on the same way on which Pharaoh led his people; now you may yourselves see that he did not guide them aright."

In conclusion, it will be worth while to consider the version as given in the Bible, for this will make it plain that it is absolutely false and ridiculous to say that the Qur'ān has copied these stories from the Israelite traditions. We learn from Exodus the following :

(1) According to 4 : 2-5, the miracle of the staff was given to Prophet Moses, and in 4 : 17 he was instructed : "And thou shalt take this rod in thine hand, wherewith thou shalt do signs", but according to 7 : 9, the same rod was transferred to Prophet Aaron and then it remained with him to work miracles.

(2) The first dialogue between Prophet Moses and Pharaoh has been given in Chapter 5, but there is no mention in it whatever of the Doctrine of *Tauhīd* presented by Moses. In answer to Pharaoh's question : "Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD", Moses and Aaron merely said, "The God of the Hebrews hath met with us". (5 : 2-3).

(3) The encounter with the magicians has been summed up in a few

sentences thus: "And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, When Pharaoh shall speak unto you, saying, Shew a miracle for you: then thou shalt say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and cast *it* before Pharaoh, *and* it shall become a serpent. And Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh, and they did so as the LORD had commanded : and Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it became a serpent. Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers : now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments. For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents : but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods." (7 : 8-12)

When we compare this with the version of it in the Qur'ān, it becomes obvious that the description in the Bible lacks the real essence of the whole encounter, for it does not mention that the encounter took place on the Day of the Feast in the open as a result of a regular challenge, and there is no mention at all that the magicians became believers in the Lord of Moses and Aaron and remained steadfast in their faith even in face of terrible threats.

(4) According to the Qur'ān, Prophet Moses demanded full freedom and liberty for the Israelites, but according to the Bible his demand was only this : "Let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the LORD our God." (5 : 3)

(5) In Chapters 11 to 14, the details of the events concerning the exodus from Egypt to the drowning of Pharaoh have been given. Though these contain some useful information and details about the events which have been briefly described in the Qur'ān, they contain some strange contradictions as well. For instance, in 14 : 15-16 the staff (rod) again comes into the hands of Prophet Moses, who is commanded : "... lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it; and the children of Israel shall go on dry *ground* through the midst of the sea." But in vv. 21-22, it is said : "And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go *back* by a strong east wind all the night, and made the sea dry *land*, and the waters were divided. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry *ground* : and the waters *were* a wall unto them, on their right hand, and on their left."

It is not clear whether the sea was divided by a miracle or by a strong "east wind" which incidentally has never been known to divide the sea into two parts leaving a dry path between them.

It will also be worth while to make a study of these events as given in the Talmud. The Talmudic account differs from the Biblical version but is nearer to the one given in the Qur'ān. A comparative study of the two clearly shows that the one is based on direct Revelation from Allah and the other on centuries old oral traditions which have been handed down from one generation to the other and thus considerably tampered with. (See H. Polano : *The Talmud Selecti ns*, pp. 150-154).

56. The part of the story relating to their journey from the Red Sea

[Contd. on p. 112

عَلَيْكُمْ غَضَبِي وَمَنْ يَحِلُّ عَلَيْهِ غَضَبِي فَقَدْ هَوَىٰ ۗ وَ إِنِّي لَغَفَّارٌ
 لِّمَنْ تَابَ وَ آمَنَ وَ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا ثُمَّ اهْتَدَىٰ ۗ وَمَا اَعْجَلَكُ عَنْ
 قَوْمِكَ يٰمُوسَىٰ ۗ قَالَ هُوَ اَوْلَاءٌ عَلٰى اَثَرِي وَ عَجَلْتُ اِلَيْكَ رَبِّ لِتَرْضَىٰ ۗ
 قَالَ فَاِنَا قَدْ فَتَنَّا قَوْمَكَ مِنْ بَعْدِكَ وَ اضَلَّهُمُ السَّامِرِيُّ ۗ فَرَجَعَ مُوسَىٰ
 اِلَى قَوْمِهِ غَضْبَانَ اَسْفَاهُ قَالَ يَقَوْمِ اَلَمْ يَعِدْكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ وَعَدَا حَسَنًا
 اَفَطَالَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْعَهْدُ اَمْ اَرَدْتُمْ اَنْ يَّحِلَّ عَلَيْكُمْ غَضَبٌ مِّنْ رَبِّكُمْ
 فَاخْلَفْتُمْ مَّوْعِدِي ۗ قَالُوا مَا اخْلَفْنَا مَوْعِدَكَ بِمَلِكِنَا وَ لَكِنَّا حَمَلْنَا اَوْزَارًا
 مِّنْ زِينَةِ الْقَوْمِ فَقَذَفْنَاهَا فَكَذٰلِكَ اَلْقَى السَّامِرِيُّ ۗ فَاخْرَجَ لَهُمْ عِجْلًا
 جَسَدًا لَّهُ خُوَارٌ فَقَالُوا هٰذَا اِلٰهُكُمْ وَ اِلٰهُ مُوسَىٰ هٗ فَنَسِيَ ۗ اَفَلَا يَرَوْنَ
 اَلَّا يَرْجِعُ اِلَيْهِمْ قَوْلًا ۗ وَ لَا يَمْلِكُ لَهُمْ ضَرًّا وَ لَا نَفْعًا ۗ وَ لَقَدْ قَالَ
 لَهُمْ هُرُونٌ مِّنْ قَبْلُ يَقَوْمِ اِنَّمَا فُتِنْتُمْ بِهِ ۗ وَ اِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ الرَّحْمٰنُ
 فَاتَّبِعُونِي وَ اطِيعُوا اَمْرِي ۗ قَالُوا لَنْ نَّبْرَحَ عَلَيْهِ عٰكِفِيْنَ حَتّٰى يَرْجِعَ
 اِلَيْنَا مُوسَىٰ ۗ قَالَ يُهْرُونَ مَا مَنَعَكَ اِذْ رَاَيْتَهُمْ ضَلُّوْا ۗ اَلَا تَتَّبِعُنِ
 اَفْعَصِيْتَ اَمْرِي ۗ قَالَ يَبْنُوْهُمْ لَا تَاْخُذْ بِلِحِيَّتِي وَ لَا بِرَاسِي ۗ اِنِّي خَشِيْتُ
 اَنْ تَقُوْلَ فَرَقْتَ بَيْنَ بَنِي اِسْرٰءِيْلَ وَ لَمْ تَرْقُبْ قَوْلِي ۗ قَالَ فَمَا خَطْبُكَ
 يٰسَامِرِيُّ ۗ قَالَ بَصُرْتُ بِمَا لَمْ يَبْصُرُوْا بِهِ ۗ فَقبَضْتُ قبْضَةً مِّنْ اَشْرِ
 الرَّسُوْلِ فَبَدَدْتُهَا وَ كَذٰلِكَ سَوَّلْتُ لِيْ نَفْسِي ۗ قَالَ فَاذْهَبْ فَاِنَّ لَكَ
 فِي الْحَيٰوةِ اَنْ تَقُوْلَ لَا مِسَاسَ ۗ وَ اِنَّ لَكَ مَوْعِدًا لَنْ تُخْلَفَهُ ۗ وَ اَنْظُرْ
 اِلَى اِلٰهِكَ الَّذِي ظَلْتَ عَلَيْهِ عَاكِفًا لَنُْحَرِّقَنَّهُ ثُمَّ لَنَنْسِفَنَّهُ فِي الْيَمِّ

the pure provision We have given you and do not transgress after this; otherwise My wrath will visit you. And he who is visited by My wrath is bound to perish except the one who repents and believes and does righteous deeds and then follows the straight path, for I am very forgiving for such a one.⁶⁰ 81-82

“And Moses,⁶¹ what has hastened you to come here before your people?”⁶² 83

He said, “They are just coming behind me : I have hastened to come before Thee, O my Lord, so that Thou mayst be pleased with me.” He said, “Well, listen ! We put your people to a trial after you and the Sāmirī⁶³ has misled them.” 84-85

Moses returned to his people in a state of anger and grief. Reaching there, he said, “O my people, did not your Lord make good promises with you?⁶⁴ Had a long time passed since those promises were fulfilled?⁶⁵ Or did you want Allah’s wrath to come down upon you that you went against your Covenant with me?”⁶⁶ 86

They answered, “We did not go against the Covenant with you of our own accord; it so happened that we felt burdened with the ornaments of the people and we merely threw them down.⁶⁷—Then⁶⁸ the Sāmirī also put down something like these and forged the shape of a calf which lowed like an ox. Then the people cried out, ‘This is your god and the god of Moses: Moses has forgotten it.’ Did they not see that it did not respond to their prayer nor had it any power to hurt and benefit them?” 87-89

Aaron had already warned the people, saying, “O people, you have been involved in mischief by this (calf) In fact, your Lord is Raḥmān, so follow me and submit to me.” But they replied, “We will go on worshipping it till Moses comes back to us.”⁶⁹ 90-91

(After rebuking the people, Moses turned to Aaron) and said, “O Aaron, what prevented you from following my way when you saw that they were going astray? What, did you disobey my command?”⁷⁰ 92-93

Aaron said, “O son of my mother, do not seize me by my beard nor pull the hair of my head.⁷¹ I was afraid that 94

you might say on your return, 'You sowed discord among the Israelites and did not pay due heed to my words!'"⁷²

95 (Then Moses turned to the Sāmīrī) and said, "O Sāmīrī, what have you to say about the matter?"

96 He replied, "I saw what the people did not see: so I took a handful of dust from the footprints of the Messenger, and sprinkled it (on the calf), for so did my soul prompt me."⁷³

97 Moses said, "Well, get away! now you shall have to say throughout your life : 'Touch me not'.⁷⁴ And there is an appointed time for your reckoning which is inevitable. And just have a look at your god which you cherished so much : now We will burn it and shatter it and cast the ashes into the sea.

Contd. from page 109]

to the foot of Mount Ṭūr has been omitted. This has already been given in VII: 138-147. It has also been stated there that the Israelites said to Moses, "O Moses, make a god also for us like the gods these people have". (See VII : 138 and its E.N. 98).

57. That is, on the eastern side of Ṭūr.

58. According to II : 51 and VII : 142, Prophet Moses and the chiefs of the Israelites were summoned to Mount Ṭūr for receiving the Divine Commandments on stone tablets for the guidance of the people. (See E.N. 71 of Chapter II).

59. For details please see E.N. 73 of Chapter II and E.N. 119 of Chapter VII. According to the Bible, *manna* and *salva* started being provided to the Israelites when they were passing through the wilderness between Elim and Sinai. According to Exodus, *manra* and *salva* were sent down thus :

"And it came to pass, that at even the quails came up, and covered the camp : and in the morning the dew lay round about the host. And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold upon the face of the wilderness *there lay* a small round thing, *as* small as the hoar frost on the ground. And when the children of Israel saw *it*, they said one to another, It is *manna* : for they wist not what it *was*. And Moses said unto them, This *is* the bread which the LORD hath given you to eat. . . . And the house of Israel called the name thereof *Manna*: and it *was* like coriander seed, white; and the taste of it *was* like wafers made with honey." (16 : 13-15, 31).

In Numbers, the following details have been given:

"And the people went about, and gathered *it*, and ground *it* in mills, or beat *it* in a mortar, and baked *it* in pans, and made cakes of it : and the taste of it was as the taste of fresh oil. And when the dew fell upon the camp in the night, the *manna* fell upon it." (11 : 8-9).

60. According to this verse (82), there are four conditions for forgiveness:

(1) Repentance: to refrain from rebellion, disobedience, *shirk* or disbelief.

(2) Faith : sincere belief in Allah and the Messenger and the Book and the Hereafter.

(3) Righteous works : to do good deeds according to the instructions of Allah and His Messenger.

(4) Guidance : to follow the right way steadfastly and to refrain from straying into any wrong path.

61. From here the same account is resumed that was interrupted by the parenthesis (vv. 81-82). The Israelites were told to stay on the right side of Mount Ṭūr, and they would be given the Commandments after forty days.

62. This shows that in his eagerness to see his Lord as soon as possible, Prophet Moses had left them in the way and reached the meeting place alone. For the details of that meeting the reader should see VII : 143-145. Here only that portion has been mentioned which is connected with the calf-worship by the Israelites. This has been stated here to bring home to the disbelievers of Makkah how idol-worship starts and how deeply a Prophet of Allah is concerned about this evil.

63. It is obvious from the last letter 'yā' that Sāmīrī was not the proper name of the person, for this Arabic letter is always added to show a person's connection with his race or clan or place. Moreover, the prefix 'al' (definite article 'the') in the original Arabic text clearly denotes that the Sāmīrī was a particular man from among many other persons of the same race or clan or place, who had propagated the worship of the golden calf. In fact, this does not require any further explanation than this, but this has been necessitated because many Christian missionaries and the Western Orientalists have tried to criticise the Holy Prophet and the Qur'ān on this account. They say, (God forbid,) "This is a proof of the grievous ignorance of history on the part of Muḥammad, the author of the Qur'ān, and is one of the anachronisms of the Qur'ān." They base this absurd criticism on the assumption that this Sāmīrī was the inhabitant of Samaria, the capital of the ancient kingdom of Israel, which was built in 925 B.C. long after this happening; then centuries after this, a generation of the Samaritans came into existence as a result of inter-marriage between the Israelites and the non-Israelites. As the Samaritans worshipped the golden calf, the critics accuse the Holy Prophet of inventing this story on the basis of mere hearsay. They say that the Holy Prophet might have heard something like this from the neighbouring Jews and inserted it in the Qur'ān. This is not all. They also criticise that Hāmān who was a courtier of Cyrus has been mentioned in the Qur'ān as a minister of Pharaoh. It is a pity that these so-called scholars seem to think that in the ancient times there used to be only one person bearing one name in a clan or a place, and there was absolutely no possibility of

another person or persons having the same name. They do not know, or pretend they do not know, that during the time of Prophet Abraham, a famous people known as the Sumerians inhabited 'Iraq and the neighbouring regions, and it is just possible that during the time of Prophet Moses there were some people known as the Sāmīrīs who might have migrated to Egypt from 'Iraq. Besides this, according to the Bible (1 Kings, 16 : 24), Samaria itself was built on a hill which was bought from Shemer and named Samaria after him. This is a clear proof that there were people named Shemer (or Sumer) even before Samaria came into existence and it is also just possible that some clans might have been called "Sāmīrī".

64. That is, "Did not Allah fulfil the promises He made with you of showing His favours to you? For instance, He safely brought you out of Egypt and not only freed you from the slavery of your enemy but also destroyed him totally. He provided you with provisions in the desert and in the mountainous regions." It may also be translated like this : "Did not Allah make a good promise with you?" In that case, it will mean : "He made a promise that He will give you the Law and Guidance : was this not a good promise for your well being and betterment?"

65. That is, "Had a long time passed since those great favours were done to you that you forgot them? Had long ages passed since you were afflicted with persecution by your enemy that you committed such a blasphemy?" It may also be translated like this : "Had you to wait for a long time for the fulfilment of God's promise that you became so impatient?" In that case, the meaning is obvious : "You had not to wait for a long time to see the fulfilment of the promise of Guidance. Therefore there was no excuse for what you did."

66. This Covenant was the one which every community makes with its Prophet and promises that it will steadfastly follow the Guidance brought by him and will not worship anyone except Allah.

67. This excuse was put forward by those people who were involved in the *shirk* fabricated by the Sāmīrī. They meant to say, "We did not throw down the ornaments with the intention of setting up a calf nor did we know what was going to be made of these, but when the calf was brought before us, we involuntarily got involved in *shirk*."

The Arabic text which we have translated into : "We felt burdened with the ornaments of the people", simply means this : "The heavy ornaments which our men and women were wearing like the Egyptians proved very burdensome to us in our wanderings in the desert and we did not know how to get rid of them for it appeared very difficult for us to travel in the desert with them." But according to the Bible these ornaments had been borrowed by every family of the Israelites from their Egyptian neighbours with this intention; "...and ye shall put them

upon your sons, and upon your daughters and ye shall spoil the Egyptians....and let every man borrow of his neighbour, and every woman of her neighbour, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold....And the Lord gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians....so that they lent unto them *such things as they required*. And they spoiled the Egyptians.” And that, too, on the advice of Prophet Moses, whom God Himself had instructed to do this “noble deed.” (Exodus, 3 : 14-22, 11 : 2-3, and 12 : 35-36).

It is a pity that some of our commentators have interpreted this verse in the light of the above traditions of the Bible. They say that the Israelites felt burdened with the weight of those ornaments which they had borrowed from their Egyptian neighbours, with the intention of carrying them away as a “spoil” bestowed by God.

We are of the opinion that the clause of the verse under discussion means this : “When the people were tired of carrying their ornaments on their bodies, they decided by mutual consultation that all the ornaments should be gathered at one place and it should be noted down how much gold and silver belonged to each of the owners. Then it should be melted into bars and rods and placed on the backs of the beasts of burden.” Accordingly, they might have brought their ornaments and thrown them in the common heap.

68. It is obvious from the context that the answer of the people ended with “threw them down”, and Allah Himself has added the remaining story up to the end of the paragraph. It appears from this that the people including the Sāmirī went on bringing their ornaments and throwing them down into the heap while they were absolutely unaware of what was going to be done by the Sāmirī. After this the Sāmirī offered his services to melt it. Then he shaped it into a calf which looked like a cow. Thus the Sāmirī deluded the people, saying, “This god of yours has come into being by itself for I had simply thrown the gold in the fire.”

69. Here the Qur’ān exonerates Prophet Aaron from the sin of taking any part in the calf-worship, but in contrast to this, the Bible makes him wholly responsible for making the golden calf and setting it up as a god. According to Exodus :

“And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for *as for* this Moses, the man that brought us out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which *are* in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring *them* unto me. And all the people brake off the golden earrings which *were* in their ears, and brought *them* unto Aaron. And he received them at his hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And when Aaron saw *it*, he built an altar

before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, Tomorrow is a 53-54 feast to the LORD." (32 : 1-5).

It is just possible that the real name of the Sāmīrī was also Aaron which later on might have misled the Israelites to attribute the making of the golden calf to Prophet Aaron. Thus it is obvious that the Qur'ān has shown a favour to the Jews and Christians by exonerating Prophet Aaron from the sin, but it is an irony that the Christian missionaries and the Orientalists still insist that the Qur'ān is guilty of anachronism and that the calf was made a deity of worship by a holy prophet of theirs. In their blind obduracy they forget that even according to the Bible this was a great sin. (Exodus, 32 : 21). A little further on in the same chapter the Bible again contradicts itself. It says that Prophet Moses ordered the Levites to kill all their kinsfolk, their friends and their fellow country men who had been guilty of the sin of calf-worship. Accordingly, about three thousand men fell that day. (Exodus, 32 : 27-29).

Now the question arises: Why was Prophet Aaron not killed, if he was the inventor of the calf-worship? Why didn't the Levites ask Prophet Moses to kill his brother, Prophet Aaron, who was the real sinner, just as they were asked to kill theirs. The Bible also says that after this Moses went back to the Eternal and prayed Him to forgive their sins or blot him out of His list of the living, and the Eternal answered : "Whosoever has sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book" (Exodus, 32 : 31-33). But we learn from the Bible that the name of Prophet Aaron was not blotted out, but, on the other hand, he and his sons and his family were given the charge of the sanctuary and the office of priesthood (Numbers, 18 : 1-7). Thus it is quite evident from the internal testimony of the Bible itself, that it contradicts itself and supports the Qur'ān in its exoneration of Prophet Aaron.

70. The "command" refers to the instructions which Prophet Moses gave to his brother Aaron when he made him his deputy in his absence when he went up to Mount Ṭūr : "After me take my place and do the right and follow not the way of the mischief-makers". (VII : 142).

71. See VII : 150.

72. It can also be interpreted like this : "You did not wait for orders from me". In order to understand fully the statement of Prophet Aaron, one should read this verse along with verse 150 of Chapter VII, where he says : "Son of my mother, these people overpowered me and were going to kill me : so, let not the enemies gloat over me : do not count me among the people who have done wrong." Now if both these verses are read together, one can easily see the true picture of the event : Prophet Aaron did his utmost to stop the people from committing the sin of calf-worship, but they revolted against him and might even have killed him. Fearing a clash between them, therefore, he held his peace lest Prophet Moses, on his return, might blame him for letting the situation worsen and failing to control it effectively in his absence. The last clause of VII : 150 also gives the hint that there existed among the people a good number

of the enemies of the two brothers.

73. There has been a good deal of divergence of opinion in regard to the interpretation of this verse. According to the majority of the early commentators and their followers, it means: "The Sāmirī saw the Messenger (Angel Gabriel) when he was passing and took a handful of dust from his footprints. Then he sprinkled this upon the idol of the golden calf. This created life in it and it began to low like a living calf." The Qur'ān, in fact, does not say that this actually happened but merely cites the reply given by the Sāmirī to Prophet Moses when the latter took him to task for the great sin he had committed.

There are others who interpret the words of the Sāmirī like this: "I saw a weakness in the Messenger (Prophet Moses) or in his Creed, which others did not see. Therefore I followed in his footsteps to a certain limit but afterwards I left his way." This interpretation was most probably put forward first of all by Abū Muslim Iṣfahānī. Then Imām Rāzī not only cited it in his own Commentary but also approved of it. And now it is being followed by some modernistic commentators, who try to prove their own favourite theories by giving far-fetched interpretations to the obvious meaning of the words of the Qur'ān. Such people forget that the Qur'ān has not been sent down in the terminology of enigmas, riddles and puzzles but in clear, plain and intelligible Arabic. Therefore the Qur'ān would have never employed the words it has used in the Text to convey the meaning given by them because their usage cannot support that far-fetched interpretation. What such interpreters really mean to imply is that Allah has failed to express Himself clearly and plainly; therefore, they wish to come to His rescue by their interpretations in order to save Him from the ridicule of the "learned" people.

If we study the verse in the context in which it occurs, we shall be able to understand easily that the Sāmirī was a mischief-monger who had contrived his deceitful scheme after a good deal of consideration. As he appears to have been a good craftsman, he caused the golden calf he had made to produce a lowing sound, and successfully deluded the ignorant and simple people. He did not rest content with this but impudently invented the story that he had seen what the common people could not see and that he had taken a handful of the dust from the footprints of the Messenger and sprinkled it on the calf which made it low like a living calf. It is possible that by the "Messenger", he meant Prophet Moses himself and might have cunningly tried to flatter him, saying, that the dust of his footprints was miraculous. By saying so, he was playing the most subtle trick. He wanted to offer an intellectual bait to Moses so that he might feel elated about the miraculous effect of the dust trodden by his feet and utilize his services for propagating his own miraculous acts. Anyhow, the fact is that the Qur'ān has presented the whole thing as a trick of the Sāmirī and has not given the account as if it were a real event by itself. The subsequent reaction of Prophet Moses to the

[*Contd. on p. 120*]

نَسْفًا ۗ إِنَّمَا إِلَهُكُمُ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَسِعَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا ۗ كَذَلِكَ
 نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ مَا قَدْ سَبَقَ ۗ وَقَدْ آتَيْنَاكَ مِنْ لَدُنَّا ذِكْرًا ۗ مَنْ أَهْلًا
 أَعْرَضَ عَنْهُ فَإِنَّهُ يَحْمِلُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وِزْرًا ۗ خَلِيدِينَ فِيهِ وَسَاءَ لَهُمْ
 يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ حِمْلًا ۗ يَوْمَ يُنْفَخُ فِي الصُّورِ وَنَحْشُرُ الْمُجْرِمِينَ يَوْمَئِذٍ
 زُرْقًا ۗ يَخَافَتُونَ بَيْنَهُمْ إِنْ لَبِثْتُمْ إِلَّا عَشْرًا ۗ نَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَقُولُونَ
 إِذْ يَقُولُ أَمْثَلُهُمْ طَرِيقَةً إِنْ لَبِثْتُمْ إِلَّا يَوْمًا ۗ وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْجِبَالِ
 فَقُلْ يَنْسِفُهَا رَبِّي نَسْفًا ۗ فَيَذَرُهَا قَاعًا صَفْصَفًا ۗ لَا تَرَى فِيهَا عِوَجًا وَ
 لَا امْتًا ۗ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَتَّبِعُونَ الدَّاعِيَ لَا عِوَجَ لَهُ ۗ وَخَشَعَتِ الْأَصْوَاتُ لِلرَّحْمَنِ
 فَلَا تَسْمَعُ إِلَّا هَمْسًا ۗ يَوْمَئِذٍ لَا تَنْفَعُ الشَّفَاعَةُ إِلَّا مَنْ أَذِنَ لَهُ الرَّحْمَنُ
 وَرَضِيَ لَهُ قَوْلًا ۗ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ
 عِلْمًا ۗ وَعَنْتِ الْوُجُوهُ لِلْحَيِّ الْقَيُّومِ ۗ وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ حَمَلَ ظُلْمًا ۗ وَمَنْ
 يَعْمَلْ مِنَ الصَّالِحَاتِ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَا يَخْفُ ظُلْمًا ۗ وَلَا هَضْمًا ۗ وَكَذَلِكَ
 أَنْزَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا وَصَرَّفْنَا فِيهِ مِنَ الْوَعِيدِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ أَوْ يُحْدِثُ
 لَهُمْ ذِكْرًا ۗ فَتَعَلَى اللَّهُ الْمَلِكُ الْحَقُّ ۗ وَلَا تَعْجَلْ بِالْقُرْآنِ مِنْ قَبْلِ
 أَنْ يُقْضَىٰ إِلَيْكَ وَحْيُهُ ۗ وَقُلْ رَبِّ زِدْنِي عِلْمًا ۗ وَلَقَدْ عَمِدْنَا إِلَىٰ آدَمَ
 مِنْ قَبْلِ فَنَسِيَ ۗ وَلَمْ نَجِدْ لَهُ عِزْمًا ۗ وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ
 فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ ۗ أَبَىٰ ۗ فَقُلْنَا يَا آدَمُ إِنَّ هَذَا عَدُوٌّ لَكَ وَزَوْجِكَ فَلَا
 يُخْرِجَنَّكَ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ فَتَشقىٰ ۗ إِنَّ لَكَ أَلَّا تَجُوعَ فِيهَا وَلَا تَعْرَىٰ ۗ وَلَا
 أَنْتَ لَا تَطْمَؤُنَا فِيهَا وَلَا تَضْحَىٰ ۗ فَوَسَّوَسَ إِلَيْهِ الشَّيْطَانُ قَالَ يَا آدَمُ هَلْ

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98
O people, your God is Allah alone Who has no other
god beside Him : His knowledge embraces everything."

99-112
O Muḥammad,⁷⁵ thus do We relate to you the history of
the past events; and We have given you an "Admonition"
from Our Own Self.⁷⁶ Whoso will turn away from it, he
shall bear a heavy burden of sin on the Day of Resurrection;
and all such people shall always remain under its heavy
burden, and it will be a very heavy responsibility indeed that
they shall have to bear on the Day of Resurrection.⁷⁷ On
that Day, when the Trumpet will be blown⁷⁸ and We will
muster the criminals while their eyes shall be dimmed (with
terror),⁷⁹ they will whisper to one another, "You hardly
stayed for ten days on the Earth."⁸⁰—We know full well⁸¹
what they will be talking; (We also know that) at that time
the most careful estimator among them will say, "No, your
life on the Earth was but for a day."⁸²—They ask you,
"Well, where will the mountains go on that Day?" Say to
them, "My Lord will reduce them to fine dust and scatter
it away. He will turn the Earth into an empty level plain,
wherein you will neither see any curve nor crease."⁸³—On
that Day the people will come straight to the call of the
summoner; no one will dare show any haughtiness, and all
the voices will be hushed before the Merciful and you will
hear nothing but a whispering murmur.⁸⁴ On that Day no
intercession shall avail save his whom the Merciful may allow
to intercede and be pleased to give him a hearing.⁸⁵—He
is fully aware of all that is before the people and of all that is
behind them but others do not have full knowledge of it.⁸⁶—
The people will hang their heads with awe before the Living
One, the Eternal. Loser shall be the one who will be carrying
the burden of the sin of an iniquity, but whoso does righteous
deeds and is a Believer as well, he shall have no fear of any
injustice nor shall he be deprived of his rights.⁸⁷

113
And, O Muḥammad, thus have We sent this down as an
Arabic Qur'ān⁸⁸ and have given therein warnings in various
ways, perhaps these people may be saved from perverseness or
that this may help arouse understanding in them.⁸⁹

114
So, high and exalted is Allah, the True King.⁹⁰

And see that you do not hasten to recite the Qur'ān before its revelation is completed to you, and pray, "O my Lord, give me more of knowledge."⁹¹

5-120 We⁹² gave a command to Adam before this⁹³, but he forgot it, and We did not find firmness of purpose in him.⁹⁴ Recall to mind the time when We said to the angels: "Bow yourselves to Adam;" they all bowed down except Iblīs, who refused. At this, We said to Adam,⁹⁵ "He is an enemy to you and to your wife.⁹⁶ Be on your guard lest he should have you expelled from the Garden⁹⁷ and you find yourself in great distress. For here you have quite a few facilities: you neither starve nor remain naked nor suffer from thirst nor from sun."⁹⁸ But Satan seduced him,⁹⁹ saying, "O Adam,

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statement of the Sāmirī clearly shows that he considered it as a deceitful story, and so laid the curse on him.

74. The words show that he was not only made an outcast for life but was made to inform the people himself that he was an outcast, as given in Leviticus:

"And the leper in whom the plague *is*, his clothes shall be rent, and his head bare, and he shall put a covering upon his upper lip, and shall cry, Unclean, unclean. All the days wherein the plague *shall be* in him he shall be defiled; he *is* unclean: he shall dwell alone; without the camp *shall* his habitation *be*". (13 : 45-46).

We conclude from this that either he was inflicted with leprosy as a scourge by Allah or the punishment inflicted on him was that, being a moral "leper", he should be made an outcast and should himself proclaim to be an unclean and impure person, saying, "Touch me not".

75. Now that the story of Prophet Moses comes to an end, the same theme, that was interrupted by this story, has been resumed.

76. That is, the Qur'ān about which it was said at the beginning of the Sūrah that it had not been sent down to put the Holy Prophet in distress, and that it was an Admonition for the God-fearing.

77. Here the people have been warned that whoso will turn away from the Qur'ān and will reject its guidance, he shall do harm to himself only and not to Allah and His Messenger, and that the one, who rejects His Message, shall inevitably be punished in the Hereafter. And this warning holds good for every people, every country and every age. This is because there are only two alternatives for an individual or a community, whom the Message of the Qur'ān reaches. They can either accept it or reject it; there is no third way.

78. As regards the nature of the blowing of the "Trumpet" on the Day of Resurrection, it may be likened to the blowing of the bugle in the army to muster or disperse the soldiers. It is obvious that these words and terms have been used because these are known to the people. Therefore it will be wrong to consider the "Trumpet" to be exactly like the bugles and trumpets of this world.

79. According to some Commentators, it means this : "The bodies of the criminals will turn white as if no drop of blood had been left in them."

80. The original text may also be interpreted to mean : "After your death, you may have passed hardly ten days till now." As regards the interpretation adopted in the translation, it is supported by XXIII : 112-113 : "When Allah will ask them, 'For how many years did you stay on the Earth?' They will say, 'We stayed there for a day or a part of a day : You may ask those who have kept the record!'" The second interpretation is supported by XXX : 55-56 : "And on the day when Resurrection will take place, the criminals will declare on oaths, 'We have not remained in the state of death for more than an hour.' And likewise they were deluded on the Earth. On the other hand, those who have been given Knowledge and Faith will say, 'According to the Book of Allah, you have remained in this state up to the Day of Resurrection, and this is the very Day of Resurrection, but you did not know of it.'" Both the interpretations are supported by other verses of the Qur'ān. It is clear from these that they will consider both the life on the Earth and the life in the interval between death and Resurrection to be very short. They will consider the earthly life to be very short because, against all their expectations, they will have to face the eternal life in the Hereafter which they denied in their earthly life. As they had made no preparation for this life, they will wring their hands with regret that they had ruined their eternal life for the sake of a few transitory pleasures of the short life they had been given on the Earth. As regards the duration of the interval between death and Resurrection, they will consider it to be very short, for they will imagine that they had been suddenly awakened by the "Trumpet" from their last sleep or unconsciousness in their earthly life. Thus, they will not at first realize that the "Trumpet" was the signal for the Day of Resurrection because they had no expectation whatever that the Day of Resurrection would ever come. As a matter of fact, they used to make fun of this Day as a nonsensical thing.

81. This is a parenthesis that has been inserted to remove this doubt of the hearers : "How has it been known today what the people will be talking in whispers in the Plain of Resurrection?"

82. This is another parenthesis which has been inserted in answer to another objection raised by some hearer. It appears that when this Sūrah was being recited, some one might have raised this question as a

ridicule : 'Where will these high mountains go on the Day of Resurrection, for it appears from your description of Resurrection that all the people of the world will be running about in a level plain?' In order to understand the background of the question, it should be kept in mind that Makkah, where this Sūrah was first recited on the occasion of its revelation, is surrounded on all sides by high mountains. The answer to this question follows immediately : "Allah will reduce them to fine dust and scatter it away."

83. According to the Qur'ān, the earth will take a new shape in the Hereafter :

"The earth will be spread." (LXXXIV : 3).

"The bottoms of the oceans will be split (and the whole water will sink down in the earth.)" (LXXXII : 3).

"The oceans will be filled up". (LXXXI : 6).

"The mountains will be reduced to fine dust and scattered away and there will be left no curve or crease in the earth". (XX : 105-107).

"On that day the earth will be totally changed". (XIV : 48).

"And it will be turned into a garden and given to the pious people to dwell therein for ever." (XXXIX : 74).

This shows that ultimately this earth will be turned into Paradise which will be inherited by the pious and righteous servants of Allah. The whole earth will become one country, and there will be no mountains, oceans, rivers and deserts which today divide it into countless countries and homelands and divide mankind as well into as many tribes, races and classes. Ḥaḍrat Ibn 'Abbās and Qatādah have held this same view that Paradise will be established on this very earth.

84. The original Arabic word (*hams*) is used for the sound of footsteps, the sound of whispering and other low sounds. What it implies here is that the people will be so awe-stricken on that Day that there will be no sound other than that of footsteps and whispering.

85. This has another interpretation also : "On that Day intercession will not be effective except in the case of the one for whom the Merciful may allow it and be pleased to hear it for him." Both these interpretations are supported by the following :

"Who is there that can intercede with Him except by His own permission?" (11 : 255).

"On that Day when the spirit and the angels will stand with folded hands, they will not be able to say anything except what the Merciful will permit, and they will say the right thing." (LXXVIII : 38).

"They do not intercede for anyone except for whom the Merciful may be pleased to listen to, and they are always fearful of Him." (XXI : 28).

“There are many angels in the heavens whose intercession avails nothing at all except when it is made after getting permission from Allah, and for the one for whom He wills to hear and approves of it.” (LIII : 26).

86. Here the reasons for the restrictions on intercession have been stated. On the one hand, no angel, no prophet, no saint, nor anyone else knows, nor can know, the full details about the records of others. On the other hand, Allah has full knowledge of all the deeds and misdeeds of everyone and He knows who deserves pardon or punishment, and how much. If, therefore, there had been full freedom for intercession, the whole purpose of the creation of man would have become meaningless. According to this verse, the door against intercession has not been entirely closed. The righteous people will be allowed to show their sympathy for other human beings as they did in the world, but they will have to get permission for this beforehand and even then make only a right sort of recommendation.

87. From this, it is clear that in the Hereafter the case of every individual will be decided on merits. If a man had been guilty of iniquity and injustice in regard to the rights of God or the rights of man or even his own rights, he shall be dealt with accordingly. On the other hand, those, who are both believers and workers of righteous deeds, shall have no fear that they would be deprived of their rights or punished even though they were innocent.

88. “....thus..Qur’ān”: This means that the Qur’ān is full of such high themes, wise teachings and admonitions as are contained in the preceding portion of this Sūrah as well as in the other Sūrahs of the Book.

89. That is, “The Arabic Qur’ān might awaken them from their heedlessness and they might recollect the forgotten lessons and feel that they are going astray and might realize the consequences thereof.”

90. Such sentences as this are usually found in the Qur’ān at the end of a discourse so that it may end with the praise of Allah. It is plain from the context that the discourse ends with “the True King.”

91. At the end of the discourse, the Angel cautions the Holy Prophet by Allah’s Command to guard against a thing that had been noticed during the Revelation, for it was not considered appropriate to do so during its recital. It is obvious from the wording of the caution that the Holy Prophet was trying to learn the revealed discourse and was repeating it during its recital by the Angel. Naturally this might have diverted his attention over and over again from listening to and grasping the Revelation. Therefore it was felt necessary that he should be taught the right method of the receipt of the message of Revelation and be asked not to try to commit it to memory during the Revelation.

This sentence shows that this portion of Sūrah ṬĀ HĀ is one of the earliest Revelations, for we learn from the other early Sūrahs that the Holy Prophet tried to commit to memory the Qur'ānic Revelation and Allah cautioned him against it. For instance in LXXV : 16-19, he was told : "Do not move your tongue over and over again in order to learn the Revelation, for it is Our responsibility to cause you to remember it by heart and recite it. Therefore when it is being recited to you, listen to it carefully. Then it is also Our responsibility to make its meanings clear to you."

Again in LXXXVII : 6, he was assured : "We will teach you how to recite it and you will not forget it." It appears that afterwards when the Holy Prophet had learnt how to receive the messages of Revelation, this did not occur. That is why there is no such caution in the Sūrahs of the later period.

92. From here begins a new discourse, which probably was sent down some time after the preceding discourse (see E.N. 90), and it was incorporated in this Sūrah by the command of Allah because both deal with the same theme. The following are the similarities between the two :

(1) Both the discourses remind mankind of the "forgotten lesson", the Admonition, which Allah had taught man on the occasion of his creation.

(2) Both teach that it is Satan who seduces man to forget that lesson. He succeeded in this by causing his first parents to forget it; since then he has been forgetting it over and over again and, therefore, has been cautioned against this.

(3) Both warn man that his ultimate success or failure depends upon his attitude towards this "Admonition."

(4) Both warn mankind to discriminate between an inadvertent error and an intentional rebellion and their consequences. If man (like Prophet Adam and his offspring and the magicians of Pharaoh) realizes that he has been seduced by Satan, his eternal enemy, and then repents of his error, he is forgiven. But there is no forgiveness for intentional rebellion as was the case with Satan, Pharaoh and the Sāmirī.

93. The story of Prophet Adam has already been stated in 11 : 30-39, VII : 11-27, 189, XV : 28-42, XVII : 61-65 and XVIII : 51-52. But at every place only that part of the story which was relevant to the context has been cited. Therefore, in order to understand the whole story well, one should read it in all the Sūrahs along with the relevant E.N's.

94. This means that he disobeyed the Command because he lacked the firmness of purpose and not because of intentional rebellion. He did not say, "I don't care a fig for Allah. If it is His Command, let it be."

I will do whatever I like. Who is Allah to intervene in my private affairs?" On the contrary, he disobeyed because he forgot Allah's Command, and did not show firmness of purpose and determination against the temptations presented by Satan. This is shown by his subsequent repentance.

95. Here the Command, which was given to Prophet Adam, has not been mentioned, which was : "You must not eat the fruit of this tree." This has been mentioned at other places but has been omitted here because the emphasis here is on this weakness of man that he is easily seduced by Satan in spite of the forewarnings and admonitions to this effect.

96. Both knew that Satan was their enemy, for Adam himself had witnessed the demonstration of his enmity, when he had refused to bow down before him and declared in plain words, "I am better than he; Thou didst create me of fire and him of clay". (VII : 12, XXXVIII : 76, see also XV : 33). "Should I bow before the one whom Thou hast created out of clay?" And then added, "Just consider this : was he worthy of this that Thou hast exalted him over me?" (XVII : 61-62). Then Satan did not rest content with this bragging of superiority but evinced his jealousy by giving an open challenge that he would prove it by seducing Adam. (VII : 16, 17; XV : 36-42; XVII : 62-66; XXXVIII : 82-83).

97. This was to forewarn both of them of the consequences of disobedience of the Command.

98. This is the explanation of the "distress" which they had to undergo immediately after their expulsion from the Garden. Here instead of mentioning the high and perfect blessings of the Garden, only four basic necessities of life have been stated, namely, food, drink, dress, and shelter, as if to say, "In the Garden you are being supplied with all these necessities without any labour from you. But if you succumb to the temptations and seduction of Satan, you will be totally deprived not only of these facilities but also of the higher blessings of the Garden. In that case, you will have to work so hard for these necessities that very little energy and time and leisure will be left with you to strive for higher aims of life."

99. According to this verse, it was Adam whom Satan primarily wanted to seduce and not Eve. Though according to VII : 20, he tempted both of them and both were seduced, but Satan's efforts were mainly directed to Adam. On the contrary, according to the Bible, the serpent first tempted the woman "to eat the fruit of the forbidden tree and then she seduced her husband". (Genesis, 3).

أَدُّكَ عَلَى شَجَرَةِ الْخُلْدِ وَمُلْكٍ لَّا يَبْلَى ﴿١٢٦﴾ فَأَكَلَا مِنْهَا فَبَدَتَ لهُمَا سَوَاتِمُهُمَا
 وَطِفْعًا يَخْصِفُنِ عَلَيْهِمَا مِنْ وَّرَقِ الْجَنَّةِ - وَ عَطَىٰ أَدَمَ رَبُّهُ فَعَاوَى ﴿١٢٧﴾
 ثُمَّ اجْتَبَاهُ رَبُّهُ فَتَابَ عَلَيْهِ وَهَدَىٰ ﴿١٢٨﴾ قَالَ اهْبِطَا مِنْهَا جَمِيعًا بَعْضُكُمْ
 لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ فَمَا يَأْتِيَنَّكُمْ مِنِّي هُدًى لَّ فَمَنِ اتَّبَعَ هُدَايَ فَلَا يَضِلُّ وَ
 لَّا يَشْقَى ﴿١٢٩﴾ وَمَنْ أَعْرَضَ عَن ذِكْرِي فَإِنَّ لَهُ مَعِيشَةً ضَنْكًا وَ نَحْشُرُهُ
 يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ آخَى ﴿١٣٠﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ لِمَ حَشَرْتَنِي أَعْمَى وَقَدْ كُنْتُ بَصِيرًا ﴿١٣١﴾
 قَالَ كَذَلِكَ أَتَتْكَ آيَاتُنَا فَنَسِيْتَهَا وَكَذَلِكَ الْيَوْمَ تُنسى ﴿١٣٢﴾ وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي
 مَنْ أَسْرَفَ وَلَوْ يُؤْمِنُ بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِ ٥ وَ لَعَذَابُ الْآخِرَةِ أَشَدُّ وَ أَبْقَى ﴿١٣٣﴾ أَفَلَمْ
 يَهْدِ لَهُمْ كَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا قَبْلَهُمْ مِّنَ الْقُرُونِ يَمْشُونَ فِي مَسْجِنِهِمْ ٥ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ
 لَآيَاتٍ لِّأُولِي النُّهَىٰ ٤ وَ لَوْ لَا كَلِمَةٌ سَبَقَتْ مِن رَّبِّكَ لَكَانَ لِزَامًا وَ آجَلٌ
 مُّسْتَقَرًّا ٥ فَاصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا يَقُولُونَ وَ سَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ قَبْلَ طُلُوعِ الشَّمْسِ
 وَ قَبْلَ غُرُوبِهَا ٥ وَ مِنِ انبَآئِ اللَّيْلِ فَسَبِّحْ وَ اطْرَافِ النَّهَارِ لَعَلَّكَ
 تَرْضَىٰ ﴿١٣٤﴾ وَ لَّا تَدْنَنَّ عَيْنِكَ إِلَىٰ مَا مَتَّعْنَا بِهِ أَزْوَاجًا مِنْهُمْ زَهْرَةَ الْحَيَاةِ
 الدُّنْيَا لِنَفِثَنَّهُمْ فِيهِ ٥ وَ رَزَقُ رَبِّكَ خَيْرٌ وَ أَبْقَى ﴿١٣٥﴾ وَ أَمْرٌ أَهْلَكَ بِالصَّلَاةِ وَ
 اصْطَبِرْ عَلَيْهَا ٥ لَّا نَسْأَلُكَ رِزْقًا نَحْنُ نَرْزُقُكَ ٥ وَ الْعَاقِبَةُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ ﴿١٣٦﴾ وَ قَالُوا لَوْ
 لَّا يَأْتِينَا بِآيَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّهِ ٥ أَوَلَمْ تَأْتِهِم بَيِّنَةٌ مَّا فِي الصُّحُفِ الْأُولَىٰ ﴿١٣٧﴾ وَ لَوْ
 أَنَّا أَهْلَكْنَاهُمْ بِعَذَابٍ مِّن قَبْلِهِ لَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا لَوْ لَا أَرْسَلْتَ إِلَيْنَا رَسُولًا فَنَتَّبِعَ
 آيَاتِكَ مِن قَبْلِ أَنْ نَذِلَّ وَ نَخْزَىٰ ﴿١٣٨﴾ قُلْ كُلُّ مُتَرَبِّصٍ فَتَرَبَّصُوا ٥

ع ١٣
١٦

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ع ٤
١٤

فَسَتَعْلَمُونَ مِّنْ أَصْحَابِ الصِّرَاطِ السَّوِيِّ وَ مَنِ اهْتَدَىٰ ﴿١٣٩﴾

should I show you the tree which gives eternal life and everlasting kingdom?"¹⁰⁰

At last, both of them (Adam and his wife) ate of the fruit (of the forbidden tree). As a result thereof, the nakedness of each appeared before the other, and they began to cover themselves up with leaves from the Garden.¹⁰¹ Adam disobeyed his Lord and went astray from the right way.¹⁰² Afterwards his Lord chose him¹⁰³ and accepted his repentance and gave him Guidance, saying,¹⁰⁴ "Get down from here both of you (Man and Satan): you will remain enemies to each other. After this, if you receive Guidance from Me, whoso will follow that Guidance, he will neither go astray nor be involved in wretchedness, and whoso will turn away from My Admonition, he shall have a wretched life¹⁰⁵ in the world, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Resurrection."¹⁰⁶——He will say, "Lord, why have you raised me blind here, whereas I was blessed with sight in the world?" Allah will say, "Yes; you forgot Our Revelations when they came to you, (as if you were blind), so you are being forgotten today".¹⁰⁷——This is how We recompense (in this world)¹⁰⁸ those who transgress the bounds and do not believe in the Revelations of their Lord. And the torment of the Hereafter is more terrible and more lasting.

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Have these people¹⁰⁹ not received any guidance (from this lesson of history) that We have destroyed before them many a generation in whose (ruined) habitations they move about today? In fact, there are many Signs in this for sagacious people.¹¹⁰

Had not a decree been fore-ordained by your Lord and a term for respite been appointed, judgement on them would have been passed now immediately. Therefore O Muḥammad, endure what they say and glorify your Lord with His praise before the rising of the sun and before its setting, and glorify Him during the hours of the night and at the extremes of the day :¹¹¹ perhaps you may feel satisfied.¹¹² And do not cast an envious look at the worldly property We have bestowed on different kinds of people, for We have given them that to put them to trial, and the lawful provision¹¹³ of your Lord is

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better and more lasting : enjoin *Ṣalāt* on the members of your family¹¹⁴ and yourself also observe it strictly. We do not ask any provision of you, for it is We Ourselves Who give you provision. And the ultimate good is for piety.¹¹⁵

133-135

They say, "Why does he not bring us a Sign from his Lord?" Has not a clear Sign come to them containing all the teachings of the former Scriptures?¹¹⁶ Had We destroyed them with a scourge before its coming, these very people would have said, "Our Lord, why did you not send a Messenger to us so that we would have followed Your Revelations before we were humiliated and disgraced?" O Muḥammad, say to them, "Everyone is waiting for the ultimate result;¹¹⁷ so you may also wait, for you will soon come to know who are following the straight path and who are rightly guided."

100. According to this verse, Satan tempted Adam to eat the fruit of the tree so that he might get eternal life and everlasting kingdom, and according to VII : 20, he put an additional temptation in their way, saying that they would become angels and immortal.

101. No sooner did they disobey the "Command" than they were deprived of all the facilities, but naturally the immediate effect of this as felt by them was that they were stripped of their garments. Then gradually, as they felt thirsty, hungry etc., they realized that they had been deprived of all the facilities that they enjoyed in the Garden.

102. It is worth while to understand the nature of human weakness which helped Satan to seduce Adam and Eve. They succumbed to seduction because Satan tempted them in the garb of a true friend and well-wisher even though they knew full well that he was their enemy. For Adam had a direct knowledge of the envy and enmity of Satan, who had challenged to seduce and ruin him in his very presence. Allah had also warned them to guard against the envy of and the temptations by Satan and had informed them of the consequences of disobedience. Above all, Adam and Eve still believed in Allah and never thought of intentional disobedience. But in spite of this, when Satan tempted them in the garb of a friend, they disobeyed their Lord : they forgot the "Command" for the time being for lack of firmness of purpose. And since then this human weakness has persisted in their descendants during all ages.

103. "... His Lord chose him" because he did not disobey Him intentionally and did not persist in sin arrogantly. As soon as he realized his error he felt ashamed of it and asked Allah's pardon : "O our Lord, we have wronged ourselves gravely; if Thou dost not forgive us and have mercy upon us, we shall be totally ruined". (VII : 23). In contrast to

Adam and Eve, Satan was cursed because he not only disobeyed his Lord but also persisted in his sin, and boldly challenged Him that it was He Who was responsible for his disobedience, for He had preferred Adam whom He had created of clay over him whom He had made of fire.

104. That is, "Allah not only pardoned him but also gave him Guidance and taught him the way to follow it."

105. "Wretched life in this world" does not mean a life of poverty. It means that such a one shall be deprived of the peace of mind, even though he may be a millionaire or the ruler of a vast empire, for the one, who will turn away from the "Admonition", will win all the worldly successes by unlawful means and, therefore, will always be suffering from pangs of a guilty conscience and deprived of the peace of mind and real happiness.

106. Here the story of Prophet Adam ends. In the light of this part of the story which has been related here and at other places in the Qur'ān, I have come to the conclusion (and correct knowledge is with Allah alone) that the "vicegerency of the Earth" was the same as was initially bestowed on Adam in the Garden, which might have been created in the heavens or on this Earth. Anyhow the vicegerent of Allah was supplied gratis with all the necessities of life and the angels were placed under his command for service. This was to enable him to discharge the high and noble obligations of vicegerency, without any worry about the procurement of the necessities of life. But in order to make him permanent in this office, it was necessary to put him to a test so that all his capabilities, excellences and weaknesses might be known. Accordingly, he had to take his test in which some of his weaknesses came to the surface : he was prone to be seduced by greed and temptation : he did not remain firm in obedience : he was capable of forgetfulness. That is why he was given the "vicegerency" as a trial in the Earth for a fixed term up to the Day of Judgment. During this period of trial, he had himself to make arrangements for the necessities of life though he was allowed to exploit all the resources of the Earth and to rule over other creatures. The trial is this : does he or does he not obey his Lord in spite of having the power to obey or not to obey? And if he forgets or is seduced by greed, does he or does he not repent through warning and admonition, when he realizes his error? At the same time, his Lord has warned him that a full and perfect record of all his deeds and misdeeds is being kept, and that he shall be judged on the Day of Reckoning in accordance with it. Those, who will come out successful will be given permanent vicegerency and that eternal life and everlasting kingdom by which Satan seduced him. The righteous servants will become the heirs to the Garden, if they had obeyed their Lord or repented after "forgetfulness". It should also be noted well that life in the Garden will not merely be to "eat, drink and be merry", but there will be such higher things to achieve as no human being can conceive in this world. That is why only those blessings of the

Garden have been mentioned in the Qur'ān which can be comprehended by human beings in this world.

It will be worth while to make a comparative study of the account of Adam and Eve as given in the Qur'ān with that given in the Bible. According to Genesis :

“And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree....the tree of life....and the tree of knowledge of good and evil....And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayst freely eat : But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it : for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die....And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man....And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.” (2 : 7-25). “Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?....And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die : For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil....she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they *were* naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where *art* thou? And he said, I heard Thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. And He said, who told thee that thou *wast* naked? Hast thou eaten, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou *art* cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life : And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire *shall be* to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam

he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it : cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life: In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread. . . . Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them. And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil : and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever : Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken." (3 : 1-23).

It is obvious that the Bible has not done justice to Adam and Eve, nay, even to God Himself. On the other hand, the account given in the Qur'ān is itself a clear proof that the stories given in it have not been copied from the Bible; for the Qur'ān not only corroborates those parts of the Bible which have remained untampered but also corrects its wrong statements.

107. The Qur'ān has described the different conditions and experiences through which the criminals will pass from the Day of Resurrection to the time of their entry into Hell : "You were neglectful of this; now We have removed the curtain from before you and your sight has become very sharp." (L : 22). "He is only deferring them to the Day when all eyes shall stare with consternation. They will be running in terror with heads uplifted and eyes fixed upwards and hearts void". (XIV : 42-43). "We have fastened the augury of every man to his own neck 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 can yourself reckon your account' ". (XVII : 13-14).

In the light of the above and this verse (126), it appears that in the Hereafter, the criminals shall be enabled to see the horrible sights and to realize the consequences of their evil deeds, but in other respects they will be like the blind man who cannot see his way and is deprived of even a staff to feel his way, nor is there anyone to guide him. So he stumbles and is knocked about and does not know where to go and how to satisfy his needs. This very state has been expressed thus : "You forgot Our Revelations when they came to you, so you are being forgotten today", as if, "you were blind and had no one to look after you."

108. This refers to the "wretched life" which will be the lot of those who turn away from the "Admonition" in this worldly life.

109. "These people" of Makkah.

110. That is, "In this lesson of History and in the observation of the archaeological remains and in this experience of mankind".

111. This is to comfort and console the Holy Prophet, as if to say, "Allah does not intend to destroy them yet, for He has appointed for them a term of respite, so you should endure with patience whatever they do

against you and hear their harsh talk and go on performing the obligations of your Mission. For this purpose you should offer *Ṣalāt* in accordance with the prescribed times because it will create in you necessary forbearance and fortitude”.

“Glorify your Lord” means : “Offer your prescribed Prayers”, as is clear from v. 132.

Incidentally, in this verse (130) the times of *Ṣalāt* have been prescribed : (1) Fajr Prayer before sunrise, (2) ‘Asr Prayer before sunset, (3) ‘Ishā and Tahajjud Prayers during the hours of night. Morning and Afternoon (Dhuhr) and Evening (Maghrib) Prayers “at the extremes of the day.” (See also E.N’s. 91 to 97 of Chapter XVII.)

112. The original Arabic Text admits of two meanings :

(1) “Rest content with your present condition in which you have to hear many unpleasant things for the sake of your Mission, and submit to this decree that they are not being punished for the time being, for they will continue to persecute you and at the same time lead prosperous lives.”

(2) “Go on performing your Mission, for as a result of this, you will be fully satisfied.”

This second meaning is supported by (a) XVII : 79 : “That time is not far, when your Lord may exalt you to a laudable position,” which follows the commandment about *Ṣalāt*, (b) XCIII : 4-5 : “Surely the later period of life will be better for you than the former, and in the near future your Lord will give you so much that you will be fully satisfied.”

113. It means this : “It does not behove you and your companions to be envious of the riches of the wicked people who are amassing wealth by unlawful means. The best thing for you is the lawful provision which you earn by your hard labour, even though this may be meagre in quantity. That is better for the pious and righteous and is of everlasting virtue.”

114. That is, “Teach your children also that lawful provision is much better than the unlawful riches of the wicked people. For this purpose, enjoin them to say their prescribed Prayers, for this will change their attitude, their standard of values, and make them contented with pure provisions and virtuous life in preference to the life of sin and luxury.”

115. It implies this : “We do not ask you to offer your Prayers for any benefit of Our own. We ask you to do that for your own good, because this will create piety in you which will bring about true success for you in this world and in the Hereafter.”

116. This means that the Qur’ān itself is a great miracle, for though it is being presented by an unlettered person from among them, it contains the essence of the teachings and guidance of all the previous Divine Books. Not only this : it makes those teachings and guidance so plain and clear that even a simple man of the desert can benefit from them.

117. That is, “Ever since the Message of Islam is being presented in your city (Makkah), it is not only every person of this city who is waiting for its ultimate result but also every one outside it, who has heard of it,”

XXI

Al-Anbiyāa' الانبياء

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

XXI

الانبياء 'AL-ANBIYĀĀ'

INTRODUCTION

Name

The name of this Sūrah has not been taken from any verse but it has been called *Al-Anbiyāā'* because it contains a continuous account of many *Anbiyāā'* (Prophets). Nevertheless, it is a symbolic name and not a title.

Period of Revelation

Both the subject-matter and the style of the Sūrah indicate that it was sent down in the third stage of the life of the Holy Prophet at Makkah. (See Introduction to Chapter VI).

Subject and Topics

This Sūrah discusses the conflict between the Holy Prophet and the chiefs of Makkah, which was rampant at the time of its Revelation and answers those objections and doubts which were being put forward concerning his Prophethood and the Doctrines of *Tauhīd* and the Hereafter. The chiefs of Makkah have also been rebuked for their machinations against the Holy Prophet and warned of the evil consequences of their wicked activities. They have been admonished to give up their indifference and heedlessness that they were showing about the Message. At the end of the Sūrah, they have been told that the person whom they considered to be a "distress and affliction" had in reality come to them as a blessing.

Main Themes

In vv. 1-47, the following themes have been discussed in particular :

(1) The objection of the disbelievers that a human being could not be a Messenger and therefore they could not accept

Muḥammad (peace be upon him) as a Prophet, has been refuted.

(2) They have been taken to task for raising multifarious and contradictory objections against the Holy Prophet and the Qur'ān.

(3) Their wrong conception of life has been proved to be false because it was responsible for their indifferent and heedless attitude towards the Message of the Holy Prophet. They believed that life was merely a sport and pastime and had no purpose behind or before it and there was no accountability or reward or punishment.

(4) The main cause of the conflict between the disbelievers and the Holy Prophet was their insistence on the doctrine of *shirk* and antagonism to the Doctrine of *Tauḥīd*. So the doctrine of *shirk* has been refuted and the Doctrine of *Tauḥīd* reinforced by weighty and impressive though brief arguments.

(5) Arguments and admonitions have been used to remove another misunderstanding of theirs. They presumed that Muḥammad (peace be upon him) was a false prophet and his warnings of a scourge from God were empty threats, just because no scourge was visiting them in spite of their persistent rejection of the Prophet.

In vv. 48-91, instances have been cited from the important events of the life-stories of the Prophets to show that all the Prophets, who were sent by God, were human beings and had all the characteristics of a man except those which were exclusive to Prophethood. They had no share in Godhead and they had to implore Allah to fulfil each and every necessity of theirs.

Along with these two other things have also been mentioned :

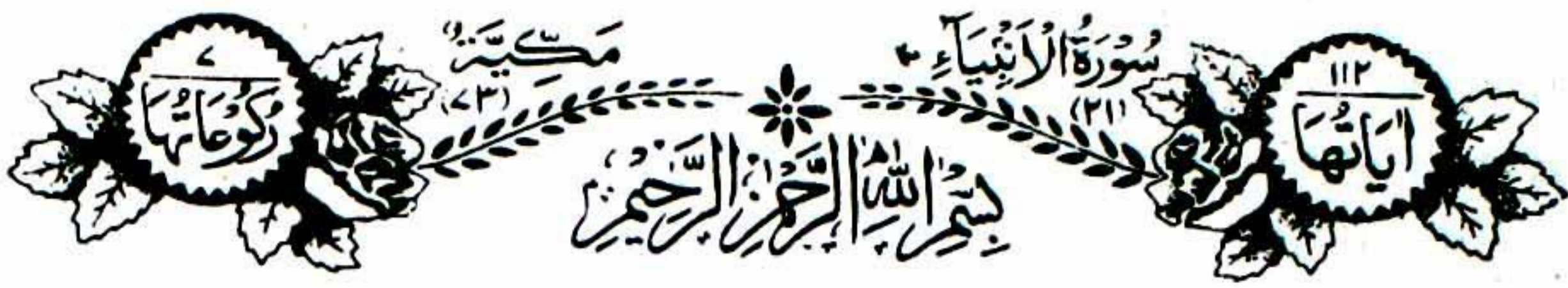
(1) All the Prophets had to pass through distress and affliction ; their opponents did their worst to thwart their mission, but in spite of it they came out successful by the extraordinary succour from Allah.

(2) All the Prophets had one and the same "Way of Life", the same as was being presented by Muḥammad (Allah's peace be upon him), and that was the only Right

Way of Life and all other ways invented and introduced by mischievous people were utterly wrong.

In vv. 92-106, it has been declared that only those who follow the Right Way, will come out successful in the final judgment of God and those who discard it shall meet with the worst consequences.

In vv. 107-112, the people have been told that it is a great favour of Allah that He has sent His Messenger to inform them beforehand of this Reality and that those, who consider his coming to be an affliction instead of a blessing, are foolish people.



اقْتَرَبَ لِلنَّاسِ حِسَابُهُمْ وَهُمْ فِي غَفْلَةٍ مُّعْرِضُونَ ﴿١٠٠﴾ مَا يَأْتِيهِمْ

مِّنْ ذِكْرِ مِّنْ رَبِّهِمْ مُّحَدَّثِينَ إِلَّا اسْتَعْوَاهُ وَهُمْ يَلْعَبُونَ ﴿١٠١﴾ لَاهِيَةً قُلُوبُهُمْ
 وَاسْرَوْا النَّجْوَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا هَلْ هَذَا إِلَّا بَشْرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ هَ أَفْتَاتُونَ
 السِّحْرَ وَأَنْتُمْ تُبْصِرُونَ ﴿١٠٢﴾ قُلْ رَبِّي يَعْلَمُ الْقَوْلَ فِي السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ
 وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿١٠٣﴾ بَلْ قَالُوا أَضْغَاثُ أَحْلَامٍ بَلِ افْتَرَاهُ بَلْ هُوَ
 شَاعِرٌ فَلْيَأْتِنَا بِآيَةٍ كَمَا أُرْسِلَ الْأَوْلُونَ ﴿١٠٤﴾ مَا آمَنَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ مِّنْ قَرْيَةٍ
 أَهْلَكْنَاهَا هَ أَفَهُمْ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٠٥﴾ وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا قَبْلَكَ إِلَّا رِجَالًا نُّوحِي إِلَيْهِمْ
 فَسَلُّوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٠٦﴾ وَمَا جَعَلْنَاهُمْ جَسَدًا لَّا
 يَأْكُلُونَ الطَّعَامَ وَمَا كَانُوا خَالِدِينَ ﴿١٠٧﴾ ثُمَّ صَدَقْنَاهُمُ الْوَعْدَ فَأَنْجَيْنَاهُمْ
 وَمَنْ نَّشَاءُ وَاهْلَكْنَا السُّرِفِينَ ﴿١٠٨﴾ لَقَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ كِتَابًا فِيهِ ذِكْرُكُمْ
 أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٠٩﴾ وَكَمْ قَصَمْنَا مِنْ قَرْيَةٍ كَانَتْ ظَالِمَةً وَأَنْشَأْنَا بَعْدَهَا
 قَوْمًا آخَرِينَ ﴿١١٠﴾ فَلَمَّا أَحْسَبُوا بَأْسَنَا إِذَا هُمْ مِنْهَا يَرْكُضُونَ ﴿١١١﴾ لَّا تَرْكُضُوا
 وَارْجِعُوا إِلَىٰ مَا أُتْرِفْتُمْ فِيهِ وَمَسْكِنِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَسْأَلُونَ ﴿١١٢﴾ قَالُوا يَوَيْلَنَا
 إِنَّا كُنَّا ظَالِمِينَ ﴿١١٣﴾ فَمَا زَالَتْ تِلْكَ دَعْوَاهُمْ حَتَّىٰ جَعَلْنَاهُمْ حَصِيدًا خَبِيبِينَ ﴿١١٤﴾
 وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاءَ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا لِعِبِينِ ﴿١١٥﴾ لَوْ أَرَدْنَا أَنْ نَتَّخِذَ
 لَهُمْ لَا تَخَذَنَّهُ مِنْ لَدُنَّا لَإِن كُنَّا فَعَالِينَ ﴿١١٦﴾ بَلْ نَقْذِفُ بِالْحَقِّ عَلَى
 الْبَاطِلِ فَيَدْمَغُهُ فَإِذَا هُوَ زَاهِقٌ وَلَكُمْ الْوَيْلُ مِمَّا تَصِفُونَ ﴿١١٧﴾ وَلَهُ مَنْ

XXI

AL-ANBIYĀĀ' الأنبياء

Verses: 112

Revealed at Makkah

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

The time of the reckoning of the people has drawn near,¹ and yet they are turning away (from the Admonition) in heedlessness.² They give a mere formal hearing to every new Revelation³ that comes to them from their Lord and remain engaged in the game (of life) for their hearts are pre-occupied (with other matters.)⁴ 1-3

And the unjust people whisper to one another, saying, "This man is no more than a human being like yourselves. What! will you, then, be enticed by his sorcery while you perceive it?"⁵

To this the Prophet replied, "My Lord has the knowledge of everything that is said in the heavens and the earth for He is All-Hearing, All-Knowing."⁶ 4

Then, they say, "It is a bundle of incoherent dreams : nay, he himself has invented it : nay, he is a poet;⁷ if not, let him bring a sign like the signs with which the former Prophets were sent." The fact, however, is that no habitation, which We destroyed before them, believed (in spite of signs); now, will they, then, believe?⁸ 5-6

And, O Muḥammad, We sent before you also human beings as Messengers, to whom We revealed (Our Message).⁹ If you (O objectors,) have no knowledge of this, you may ask the people of the Book.¹⁰ We did not give them such bodies as could survive without food nor were they immortal. Then We fulfilled Our promises with them and ultimately delivered them and whomsoever We willed, and destroyed the transgressors.¹¹ 7-9

O people, We have sent down to you a Book, which deals with matters concerning yourselves. What, do you not understand this?¹² 10

Many a habitation of wicked people is there, which We crushed to pieces, and after them raised up another people. When they perceived Our Scourge¹³ they began to flee the 11-15

place. (Then it was said to them :) "Do not run away : go back to the same life of luxury and the houses where you were making merry : perhaps you may be asked about it."¹⁴ They cried out, "Woe be to us : indeed we were wrong-doers." They went on crying out this very thing till We threshed them, leaving no spark of life in them.

We have not created for a pastime the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them.¹⁵ Had We meant to make it a plaything and nothing more than this, We would have done it by Ourselves.¹⁶ But We give falsehood a hard blow with the Truth, which breaks its head and falsehood vanishes away in no time; and there is woe for you because of the falsehoods you invent.¹⁷

1. "The time....near": the time of Resurrection. This is to warn the people that the time of Resurrection when they will have to appear before their Lord to render their accounts is not far. This was because the coming of the Holy Prophet was a sign and a clear evidence of the fact that mankind had entered the last stage of its history. The Holy Prophet himself explained it by holding out two of his adjoining fingers and said, "I have been sent at a time which joins to the time of Resurrection just as these two fingers adjoin". By this he meant to say, "No other Prophet is coming between me and the Resurrection. Therefore mend your ways now, for after me no guide is coming with good news and warning".

2. That is, "They do not pay heed to any warning nor reflect on their end nor listen to the admonition of the Messenger."

3. "New Revelation": A new Sūrah of the Qur'ān.

4. The words of the original Text may also be interpreted as : "They do not take life seriously but treat it as a sport and a joke".

5. This may also be translated as : "What, are you then being ensnared by his magic?"

The disbelievers, who were the chiefs of Makkah, whispered to one another to this effect : "Anyhow this man cannot be a Prophet because he is a human being like us and eats and drinks and has wife and children like us. We see nothing unusual about him that might distinguish him from us and make him worthy of the office of Prophethood. We, however, admit that there is some magic in his talk and personality. That is why any one who listens to him or goes near him is charmed. Therefore, the best thing for you is not to listen to him at all, nor go near him, for listening to him or going near him will only be involving yourselves intentionally in his snare."

The reason why they accused the Holy Prophet of practising magic was that even his antagonists were "charmed" by his personality when they met him. Muḥammad bin Ishāq (d. 152 A.H.) says, "Once 'Utbaḥ bin Rabī'ah, the father-in-law of Abū Sufyān, said to the chiefs that he wanted to see Muḥammad and give him counsel. They said, 'We have full confidence in you; you may go and have a talk with him.' Accordingly, he went to the Holy Prophet and said, 'Dear nephew, you know that you were held in great honour here before this and you belong to a noble family. Why have you then brought this affliction to your people? You have caused discord among them: you consider your people to be fools: you speak ill of their religion and deities, and you declare their deceased forefathers to be disbelievers. My dear nephew, if your object is to become a rich man, we can give you so much wealth that you will become the richest man among us: if you are seeking a high rank, we will make you our chief, even our king, if you so like. But if you are suffering from a mental illness which makes you see illusions, we will have you treated by the best physicians.' He went on talking in this strain and the Holy Prophet remained silent. When he had a long talk, the Holy Prophet said, 'Abul Walīd, have you had your say or do you want to say anything more?' He replied that he had said what he had to say. Then the Holy Prophet said, 'Now listen to me'. And he began to recite Sūrah Hā Mīm Sajdah (Chapter XLI) after *Bismillah* and 'Utbaḥ listened to him as if he had been charmed. When the Holy Prophet came to v. 38, he fell down in prostration. Then raising his head, he said, 'O Abul Walīd, I have said whatever I had to say, and you have heard it. Now I have nothing more to say'. After this 'Utbaḥ walked back towards the chiefs who perceived him to be a changed man, and remarked, 'By God! his face shows that he is not the same man that he was when he went from here.' When he came to them, they asked, 'What has been the result of your mission'? He answered, 'By God, today I have heard a thing the like of which I had never heard before. By Allah! it is not poetry nor sorcery nor divination. O people of Quraish, I advise you to leave him to himself. From what I have heard from him, I conclude that his Message is going to bring about a great revolution here. If the Arabs overcome him, you will stand absolved from the charge of murdering your own brother, and if he over-powers the Arabs, his sovereignty will be your own sovereignty and his honour your own honour.' The people answered, 'By God! you, too, O Abul Walīd, have been charmed by him'. To this he replied, 'I have expressed my opinion. Now it is for you to accept or reject it.'" (*Ibn Hishām*, Vol. I, pp. 313-314).

Baihaqī, in his narration of the above event, makes this addition: "When the Holy Prophet recited v. 13: 'If they turn away from your Message, say to them, I have warned you of the coming of a thunderbolt like the thunderbolt that visited the 'Ād and the Thamūd', 'Utbaḥ placed his hand on the mouth of the Holy Prophet, saying, 'For God's sake,

have mercy on your own people'."

In this connection, Ibn Ishāq has cited another event. Once a man from the clan of Arāsh came to Makkah with some camels and Abū Jahl bought them. When he demanded their price, he put him off by lame excuses. At last the man came to the Sanctuary of the Ka'bah and began to bewail publicly the dishonesty of Abū Jahl. The Holy Prophet was also sitting in a corner of the Sanctuary. The chiefs of the Quraish said to the man, "We cannot help you in any way in this matter; look, there is a man sitting: go to him and he will get you your money." Accordingly the Arāshī went towards the Holy Prophet and the chiefs began to whisper jokingly, "Today there will be great fun!" When the man expressed his complaint before the Holy Prophet, he at once stood up and accompanied him to the house of Abū Jahl, followed by an informer of the chiefs. The Holy Prophet knocked at Abū Jahl's door, who asked from inside, "Who is there"? He answered, "Muḥammad." Hearing this, he at once came out and the Holy Prophet said to him, "Pay this man his dues." Accordingly, Abū Jahl went in without uttering a word, brought the price of the camels and paid the man. At this the informer ran back to the Quraish and told them the whole story and said, "By God, today I have seen something which I had never seen before. When Abū Jahl came out, Muḥammad asked him to pay the dues, and he obeyed him as if he were spell bound." (*Ibn Hishām*, Vol. II, pp. 29-30).

It was this "charm" of the personality, character and words of the Holy Prophet which these people considered to be the effects of "charm" and warned the people not to go near him for fear of his "magic."

6. This was the answer of the Prophet to their false propaganda and whispering campaign. Instead of giving a 'tit for tat' answer, he said, "My Lord will deal with you for He hears everything and knows everything."

7. The background of this verse is this: "When the message of the Holy Prophet started gaining adherents, the chiefs of Makkah decided among themselves to start a propaganda campaign to counteract it. For this purpose they decided that every visitor to Makkah for pilgrimage should be approached and his mind so poisoned against the Holy Prophet that he does not even go near and listen to him. Though this campaign continued throughout the year, in the pilgrimage season specially a large number of men were deputed to go to the tents of the pilgrims to warn them to beware of the Holy Prophet. Different sorts of things were said against the Holy Prophet during these talks. Sometimes it was said that he was a sorcerer, or that he had fabricated the Qurān himself but attributed it to Allah. Some would say that his 'Revelations' were the words of an insane person and a bundle of incoherent ideas. Others would say that these were ordinary poetic ideas which were being dubbed

as the words of Allah. All they wanted to do was to poison the minds of the visitors irrespective of the correctness of their own versions. They had no considered and definite opinion in the matter.

This false propaganda, however, had just the opposite effect. The name of the Holy Prophet became known throughout the length and breadth of the country through the nefarious activities of the chiefs of Makkah. A positive kind of approach from the Muslims would not have achieved the same publicity in years as was achieved so rapidly through this negative campaign of the Quraish. It set everybody thinking: "After all, who is this man against whom such a campaign of vilification has been started?" The serious type among them rather came to the conclusion that they must hear the Holy Prophet himself and said to themselves: "After all we are not children who can be easily enticed away".

For instance, Ibn Ishāq has related in detail the story of Ṭufail-bin-'Amr Dausī in his own words: "I was a poet of the clan of Daus. Once I went to Makkah and was, on my arrival there, surrounded by some people of the Quraish who told me all sorts of things against the Holy Prophet. So I grew suspicious and tried to avoid him as far as possible. The very next day, when I went to visit the Sanctuary, I saw him saying his prayer. By chance, I heard a few sentences and felt that what he was reciting were excellent words. I said to myself, 'I am a poet and a sensible young man and no child who cannot discriminate between the right and the wrong. Why should I not therefore meet him and inquire what he is reciting?' Accordingly, I followed him to his house and said, 'The people had so much poisoned me against you that I had actually put cotton into my ears lest I should hear your voice, but what I have heard today from you by chance was so appealing that I feel urged to inquire into your Message rather in detail. At this the Holy Prophet recited a passage of the Qur'ān, as a result of which I embraced Islam there and then. On my return home I induced my father and wife to become Muslims, which they did, and then invited the people of my clan to embrace Islam with the result that till the Battle of the Trench as many as eighty families from my clan had entered the fold of Islam.'" (*Ibn Hishām*, Vol. II, pp. 22-24).

According to another tradition cited by Ibn Ishāq, the chiefs of the Quraish confessed in their private meetings that all their charges against the Holy Prophet were false. According to him, addressing a meeting, Naḍr bin Ḥārith once said, "You cannot overcome Muḥammad by the methods you are adopting against him. When he was a young man you regarded him as your best-mannered person and looked upon him as your most truthful and honest man. Now that he has attained advanced age, you say, 'He is a sorcerer: he is a sooth-sayer: he is a poet: he is insane.' By God, he is not a sorcerer, for we very well know what kind of people the sorcerers are and what kind of tricks they resort to. By God, he is not a sooth-sayer, for we are fully aware of the guess-works of the sooth-sayers. By God, he is not a poet for we know what poetry is and can

judge that his words cannot be classified under poetry in any sense. By God, he is not insane, for we all know what nonsensical things the insane people utter. Therefore, O chiefs of the Quraish, let us think of some other plan to defeat him". After this, he himself proposed that stories from Persia like those of Rustam and Asfandyār should be given publicity to divert the people's attention from the Qur'ān. Accordingly, they put this scheme into practice and Naḍr himself began to relate such stories before the people. (*Ibn Hishām*, Vol. I, pp. 320-321).

8. This contains a concise answer to the demand for a sign to the effect :

(1) You ask for Signs like the ones which were shown by the former Messengers but you forget that those obdurate people did not believe in spite of the Signs shown to them.

(2) While demanding a Sign, you fail to realize that the people, who disbelieved even after seeing a Sign, were inevitably destroyed.

(3) It is indeed a favour of Allah that He is not showing the Sign as demanded by you. Therefore, the best course for you would be to believe without seeing a Sign. Otherwise, you will meet the same doom that the former communities met, when they did not believe even after seeing the Signs.

9. This is the answer to their objection : "This man is no more than a human being like yourselves", and therefore, cannot be a Messenger of God. They have been told that the former Prophets, too, whom you also recognize as Prophets, were human beings and were blessed with Revelations from Allah.

10. That is, "You may have it testified by the Jews, who are the enemies of Islam like you, and are teaching you the ways to oppose it, that all the Messengers including Prophet Moses were human beings."

11. History not only tells us that the former Messengers were human beings but it also contains a lesson that they all received Allah's succour as promised by Him and their enemies were completely destroyed. Therefore you should seriously consider the goal for which you are heading.

12. This is a comprehensive answer to the various objections which were being raised in desperation by the disbelievers of Makkah against the Qur'ān and the Holy Prophet, as if to say : "What is there in this Book that you cannot understand? Why don't you consider it in the right spirit? There is nothing contradictory in it : it discusses you and your own problems and affairs of life ; it describes your own nature, origin and end ; it discriminates between good and evil and presents high moral qualities which your own consciences endorse and confirm. Why don't you, then, use your minds to understand this simple and easy thing?"

13. That is, "When they realized that Allah's scourge was actually coming"

14. This is a very meaningful sentence. It may mean :

(1) "Examine this scourge minutely so that if someone asks you about it, you may be able to give an accurate account of it."

(2) "Hold your grand meetings as usual : perhaps your servants may come with folded hands before you to receive orders."

(3) "Hold your councils as before ; perhaps people may still come to ask for your wise counsels."

15. This was to refute their entire conception of life which was based on the assumption that man was free to do whatever he liked, and there was none to call him to account or take him to task : that there was no life in the Hereafter where one's good deeds would be rewarded and evil deeds punished. In other words, this meant that the whole universe had been created without any serious purpose and therefore there was no need to pay any heed to the Message of the Prophet.

16. That is, "This world has been created with a definite purpose and not as a plaything; for, if he had wanted to enjoy a sport, We would have done so without creating a sentient, rational and responsible creature like you. Far be it from Us to put man to trial and conflict for the sake of mere fun."

17. That is, "The object for which this world has been created is to stage a conflict between the Truth and falsehood. And you yourselves know that in this conflict falsehood has always been defeated and destroyed. You should, therefore, consider this reality seriously, for, if you build the system of your life on the false presumption that it is mere fun, you will meet with the same consequences as the former people did, who presumed that the world was a mere show and pastime. Therefore you should reconsider your whole attitude towards the Message which has come to you. In stead of making fun of it and scoffing at the Messenger you should take a warning from the fate of the former peoples."

فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَنْ عِنْدَهُ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِهِ وَلَا
 يَسْتَحْسِرُونَ ﴿١٤﴾ يُسَبِّحُونَ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ لَا يَفْتُرُونَ ﴿١٥﴾ أَمَّا اتَّخَذُوا إِلَهًا
 مِمَّنْ الْأَرْضِ هُوَ يُنْشِرُونَ ﴿١٦﴾ لَوْ كَانَ فِيهِمَا آلِهَةٌ إِلَّا اللَّهُ لَفَسَدَتَا فَسُبْحَانَ
 اللَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَرْشِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ ﴿١٧﴾ لَا يُسْئَلُ عَمَّا يَفْعَلُ وَهُوَ يُسْئَلُ ﴿١٨﴾
 أَمَّا اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ إِلَهًا قُلْ مَا تَأْتُوا بِرَهَانِكُمْ هَذَا ذِكْرٌ مِنْ مَعِيَ وَ
 ذِكْرٌ مِنْ قَبْلِي بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ الْحَقَّ فَهُمْ مُعْرِضُونَ ﴿١٩﴾ وَمَا
 أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رَسُولٍ إِلَّا نُوحِي إِلَيْهِ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاعْبُدُونِ ﴿٢٠﴾
 وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ الرَّحْمَنُ وَلَدًا سُبْحَانَهُ بَلْ عِبَادٌ مُكْرَمُونَ ﴿٢١﴾ لَا يَسْبِقُونَهُ
 بِالْقَوْلِ وَهُمْ بِأَمْرِهِ يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ
 وَلَا يَشْفَعُونَ إِلَّا لِمَنْ ارْتَضَى وَهُوَ مِنَ خَشِيَّتِهِ مُشْفِقُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَمَنْ
 يَقُلْ مِنْهُمْ إِنِّي إِلَهٌ مِنْ دُونِهِ فَذَلِكَ نَجْزِيهِ جَهَنَّمَ كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي
 الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٢٤﴾ أَوَلَمْ يَرِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنَّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ كَانَتَا رَتْقًا
 فَفَتَقْنَاهُمَا وَجَعَلْنَا مِنَ الْمَاءِ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ حَيٍّ أَفَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا
 فِي الْأَرْضِ رَوَاسِيَ أَنْ تَمِيدَ بِهِمْ وَجَعَلْنَا فِيهَا فِجَاجًا سُبُلًا لَعَلَّهُمْ
 يَهْتَدُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا السَّمَاءَ سَقْفًا مَحْفُوظًا وَهُمْ عَنْ آيَاتِهَا مُعْرِضُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾
 وَهُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ كُلٌّ فِي فَلَكٍ يَسْبَحُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾
 وَمَا جَعَلْنَا لِشَرِّهِمْ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ الْخُلْدَ أَفَإِنْ مِتَّ فَهُمُ الْخَالِدُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾ كُلُّ
 نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ وَنَبْلُوكُمْ بِالشَّرِّ وَالْخَيْرِ فِتْنَةً وَإِلَيْنَا تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾
 وَإِذَا رَأَى الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنْ يَتَّخِذُونَكَ إِلَّا هُزُوعًا هَذَا الَّذِي يَذْكُرُ

All that exists in the heavens and the earth belongs to Allah :¹⁸ and (the angels) who are near Him¹⁹ disdain not to serve Him, nor do they feel wearied :²⁰ they glorify Him night and day without taking rest. 19-20

Have the earthly deities they have set up the power to give life and raise the (inanimate) things?²¹ 21

Had there been other deities besides Allah in the heavens and the earth, both (the heavens and the earth) would have gone out of order.²² So, absolutely free is Allah, Lord of the Throne,²³ from the false things they ascribe to Him. He is accountable to none for what He does, but all others are accountable (to Him). 22-23

Have they discarded Him and set up other deities? Say to them, O Muḥammad, "Bring your authority; here is this Book, which contains Admonition for the people of my time, and there are also those Books which contained Admonition for the former people."²⁴ But most of these people have no knowledge of the Reality; therefore they have turned away from it.²⁵ The fact is that to every Messenger whom We sent down before you, We revealed this same thing: "There is no other deity than Me: so worship Me alone." 24-25

They say, "The Merciful has offspring."²⁶ Glory be to Allah! they are His mere servants who have been honoured: they do not exceed the limits in their talk before Him and just do His bidding. He knows whatever is before them and also whatever is hidden from them; they do not intercede for anyone except for the one for whom Allah pleases to hear a plea, and they live in awe of Him.²⁷ And if anyone of them were to say, "I am also a deity besides Allah", We would send him to Hell, for this is the recompense from Us for such workers of iniquity. 26-29

Have not the people, who have disbelieved (the Message), ever considered this: the heavens and the earth were at first one mass; then We parted them,²⁸ and created every living thing from water?²⁹ Do they not acknowledge (that this is Our Creation)? And We set mountains firmly in the earth lest it should tilt to one side along with them,³⁰ and We left therein open paths³¹ so that they may find their way.³² And We made the sky a safe canopy,³³ but in spite of this they do 30-33

not pay due heed to its signs.³⁴ And it is Allah, Who has made the night and the day and created the sun and the moon; all of them are floating, each in its own orbit.³⁵

34-35

And,³⁶ O Muḥammad, no man have We made immortal before you; then, if you die, will they live on for ever? Every living being has to taste death,³⁷ and We are putting all of you to trial by passing you through good and bad conditions,³⁸ and ultimately you shall return to Us.

36

When these disbelievers see you, they scoff at you: they say, "What! Is this the man who speaks slightly of your

18. From here begins the discourse on the confirmation of *Tauḥīd* and the refutation of *shirk* for these were the actual bases of the conflict between the Holy Prophet and the disbelievers of Makkah. The line of argument is this: The whole system of the universe is a clear proof that there is One Allah Who is its Creator, Sovereign, Ruler, and Lord and it is a falsehood that there are many gods who are partners in His Kingdom and Sovereignty, or that there is a Supreme God Who has under Him some minor gods to conduct the affairs of His Kingdom. This proof is also based on the preceding verses in which it has been stated that the universe has not been created as a pastime or a plaything, but for a serious purpose and that there has always been a conflict between the Truth and falsehood, and falsehood has always been defeated and destroyed.

19. That is, the angels whom the *mushriks* of Arabia believed to be the children of God and worshipped, them as partners in Godhead.

20. That is, "They are engaged in His service day and night without grumbling or ever feeling wearied."

21. This question has been posed to bring home to the disbelievers that when they themselves believed that there is no being other than Allah who can give life to inanimate matter, why do they then acknowledge other deities besides Allah?

22. This concise sentence contains two arguments:

(1) The obviously simple argument is that no institution, no household, not to speak of the vast universe containing multitudes of countless distant stars, can function smoothly and properly, if it has two masters.

(2) The deeper argument is that the system of the whole universe, including that of the earth, is functioning according to a universal law. It could not work so even for a moment, if there had been no proper proportion, balance, harmony and coordination between the different powers and countless things. This is a clear proof that there is a universal and all-powerful law and system which binds and forces these powers and things to co-operate and coordinate between themselves with a perfect proportion and harmony and this could not have happened if there had been different independent rulers. The existence of such a system is itself

a clear proof that there must be One All-Powerful Manager and Administrator governing and ruling the whole universe. For further details, please see E. N. 47 of Banī Isra'īl (XVII).

23. That is, "The Sovereign of the whole universe."

24. The first two were rational arguments and this is a historical one. This means that the study of all the former Scriptures shows that the Creator of the universe is One Allah and He alone is worthy of service and worship, while "Your religion is neither supported by rational arguments nor by historical evidence."

25. It is their lack of the knowledge of the Reality which has created this indifference towards the Message of the Prophet, and the same has made them heedless of the Message.

26. "Offspring" here refers to the angels as is clear from v. 28. The disbelievers of Arabia believed that the angels were the daughters of God.

27. These two verses refute the two reasons for which the *mushriks* had made the angels their deities:

(1) They took them for the offspring of Allah.

(2) They thought that if they worshipped the angels, they would be so pleased that they would intercede with Allah on their behalf. (See X:18; XXXIX:3).

In this connection, it should also be noted that the Qurān refutes the doctrine of intercession of the *mushriks*, saying, that their so-called intercessors are not qualified to intercede for anyone. This is so because they have no knowledge of the hidden things, whereas Allah knows all that is hidden from or open to them. Therefore, the angels or Prophets or saints shall be allowed intercession only with the prior permission of Allah. As Allah alone has the power to hear or accept intercession, none else is entitled to divine worship or rights. For further details, please see Tā Hā (XX): E. N's 85-86.

28. From the wording of the Text, it appears that at first the whole universe was a single mass of matter; then it was split into different parts and the earth and the other heavenly bodies were formed. For fuller details, please see Hā Mīm (XLI): E. N's 13-15.

29. From the wording of the Text, it appears that Allah made water the cause and origin of life. See also An-Nūr (XXIV): 45.

30. For explanation, see E. N. 12 of An-Naḥl (XVI).

31. "Open paths" are the passes between high mountains and the valleys and ravines made by the rivers in the mountainous regions and other natural ways that connect different regions on the earth.

32. This is a very meaningful sentence. It may mean that the people may find paths for travelling on the earth, and it may also mean that the wisdom that underlies the skill and the system of their creation may guide them to the Reality.

33. For explanation, see Al-Hijr (XV): E. N's 8 and 10-12.

34. That is, "Those signs which are in the sky".

إِلَهَتِكُمْ وَهُوَ بِيَذِكُرِ الرَّحْمَنِ هُوَ كَفَرُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾ خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَجَلٍ
 سَأُورِيكُمْ آيَاتِي فَلَا تَسْتَعْجِلُونِ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَى هَذَا الْوَعْدُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ
 صَادِقِينَ ﴿٣٩﴾ لَوْ يَعْلَمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا حِينَ لَا يَكْفُونَ عَنْ وُجُوهِهِمُ النَّارَ وَ
 لَا عَنْ ظُهُورِهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ ﴿٤٠﴾ بَلْ تَأْتِيهِمْ بَغْتَةً فَتَبْهَتُهُمْ فَلَا
 يَسْتَطِيعُونَ رَدَّهَا وَلَا هُمْ يُنظَرُونَ ﴿٤١﴾ وَ لَقَدْ اسْتَهْزَيْتَ بِرُسُلٍ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ
 فَحَاقَ بِالَّذِينَ سَخِرُوا مِنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾ قُلْ مَنْ يَمْلِكُكُمْ
 بِالنَّيْلِ وَ النَّهَارِ مِنَ الرَّحْمَنِ بَلْ هُوَ عَنْ ذِكْرِ رَبِّهِمْ مُعْرِضُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾ أَمْ
 لَهُمْ آلِهَةٌ تَسْنَعُهُمْ مِنْ دُونِنَا لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ نَصْرَ أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ
 مِنَّا يُصْحَبُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾ بَلْ مَتَّعْنَا هَؤُلَاءِ وَ آبَاءَهُمْ حَتَّى طَالَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْعُمُرُ
 أَفَلَا يَرَوْنَ أَنَّا نَأْتِي الْأَرْضَ نَنْقُصُهَا مِنْ أَطْرَافِهَا أَفَهُمُ الْغَالِبُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾ قُلْ
 إِنَّمَا أُنذِرُكُمْ بِالْوَحْيِ وَلَا يَسْمَعُ الصُّمُّ الدُّعَاءَ إِذَا مَا يُنذَرُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾ وَ لَيْنَ
 مَسَّتْهُمُ نَفْحَةٌ مِنْ عَذَابِ رَبِّكَ لَيَقُولُنَّ يُوَيْلَنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا ظَالِمِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَ نَضَعُ
 الْمَوَازِينَ الْقِسْطَ لِيَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ فَلَا تُظْلَمُ نَفْسٌ شَيْئًا وَإِنْ كَانَ مِثْقَالَ
 حَبَّةٍ مِنْ خَرْدَلٍ أَتَيْنَا بِهَا وَ كَفَى بِنَا حَسِيبِينَ ﴿٤٨﴾ وَ لَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى وَ
 هَارُونَ الْفُرْقَانَ وَ ضِيَاءً وَ ذِكْرًا لِلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٤٩﴾ الَّذِينَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَيْبِ
 وَ هُمْ مِنَ السَّاعَةِ مُشْفِقُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾ وَ هَذَا ذِكْرٌ مُبْرَكٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ أَفَأَنْتُمْ لَهُ
 مُنْكَرُونَ ﴿٥١﴾ وَ لَقَدْ آتَيْنَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ رُشْدَهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَ كُنَّا بِهِ عَلِيمِينَ ﴿٥٢﴾ إِذْ
 قَالَ لِأَبِيهِ وَ قَوْمِهِ مَا هَذِهِ التَّمَاثِيلُ الَّتِي أَنْتُمْ لَهَا عَاقِبُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾ قَالُوا
 وَجَدْنَا آبَاءَنَا لَهَا عِبَادِينَ ﴿٥٤﴾ قَالَ لَقَدْ كُنْتُمْ أَنْتُمْ وَ آبَاؤُكُمْ فِي ضَلَالٍ

deities"?³⁹ But as for them they discard with disdain the mention of the Merciful.⁴⁰

Man is a creature of haste (and impatience).⁴¹ Well, you need not be impatient: I will show you My signs before long.⁴² —They ask, "Anyhow, when will this threat be made good, if you speak the truth?" Would that the disbelievers knew something about the time, when they shall neither be able to protect their faces from the Fire nor their backs, nor will they get any succour from anywhere! For that catastrophe will occur all of a sudden and will overpower them so abruptly that they shall neither be able to ward it off nor shall they get any respite. As for their scoff, the Messengers before you also have been scoffed at, but the scoffers were encircled by that very doom at which they used to scoff.

O Muḥammad, ask them, "Who is there to protect you from the Merciful in the night or in the day?"⁴³ (None!) Yet they are paying no heed to the Admonition of their Lord. Do they have gods who can defend them against Us? (No) for they can neither help themselves nor are they helped by Us. The fact is that We provided them and their forefathers with provisions of life until the period grew too long for them.⁴⁴ But can they not see that We are coming in the land, shrinking its boundaries for them on all sides?⁴⁵ Do they, then, expect to come out victorious (over Us)?⁴⁶ Say to them, "I am warning you on the authority of Revelation". —But the deaf do not hear the call when they are warned. However, even if the slightest torment of your Lord touched them,⁴⁷ they would forthwith cry out, "Woe to us! no doubt we were wrong-doers".

On the Day of Resurrection, We will set up just and accurate balances so that no one will be wronged in the least in anyway; even if it be an act equal in weight to a grain of mustard seed, We will bring it forth (to be weighed) and We suffice for reckoning.⁴⁸

Before⁴⁹ this We bestowed on Moses and Aaron the Criterion and Light and "Admonition"⁵⁰ for the betterment of those righteous⁵¹ people, who fear their Lord though they have not seen Him, and dread the Hour⁵² (of Reckoning). And now We have sent down this blessed "Admonition" (for you). Do you, then, reject this?

37-41

42-46

47

48-50

Even before that, We had blessed Abraham with the discretion he displayed, for We knew him well.⁵³ Recall to mind the occasion⁵⁴ when he said to his father and his people, "What are these images to which you are so devoted"? They replied, "We found our forefathers worshipping them". He said, "You have gone astray and so had your forefathers manifestly deviated from the Right Way."

35. The use of the words *kullun* (all) and *yasbahūn* (float) in the plural (for more than two) indicates that not only the sun and the moon but all the heavenly bodies are floating in their own separate orbits and none of them is fixed or stationary. These verses (30-33) are capable of being interpreted in the modern scientific terms in accordance with the present day conceptions of Physics, Biology and Astronomy.

Here it should also be noted that vv. 19-23 refute *shirk* while vv. 30-33 present positive proofs of *Tauhīd*. They imply that the creation and regular functioning of the universe clearly show that it is the work of One All-Powerful Creator, and no sensible person can say that it has been created as a mere pastime for the sake of fun. When the fact is this and you see proofs of the Doctrine of *Tauhīd* all around yourself, in the earth and heavens, why do you reject the Message of the Prophet and demand other Signs from him?

36. From here the same theme of the conflict between the Holy Prophet and the disbelievers, that was interrupted by vv. 19-33, has been resumed.

37. This is a brief answer to all those warnings and curses with which the Holy Prophet was being threatened and the conspiracies which the Quraish were hatching against him day and night. On the one hand, the women of the Quraish cursed him because according to them, he had ruined their home life by enticing away their kith and kin; while on the other, the chiefs of the Quraish threatened him with horrible consequences for the propagation of Islam. After the emigration to Habash' especially, which almost affected every home of Makkah, these curses and threats increased all the more. This verse is meant to comfort and console the Holy Prophet as well so that he should continue his mission without any fear of their threats.

38. That is, Allah is always putting human beings to test and trial both through adversity and affluence. This is to judge whether prosperity makes them proud, cruel and slaves of their lusts or they become grateful to Allah. On the other hand, He inflicts adversity upon them in order to see whether they remain within the prescribed and lawful limits or become low-spirited and down-hearted. A sensible person therefore should not be deluded by prosperity and adversity, but should keep their trial element in view and try to pass through it gracefully.

39. It should be noted that this sentence contains only the reason why they scoffed at him, but does not refer to the expression of "scoff" itself. Obviously, the disbelievers must have been using some other words or expressions of derision to avenge themselves on the Holy Prophet for his rejecting their self-made deities.

40. This is to rebuke the disbelievers, as if to say, "You cherish so much love of your self-made idols and false gods that you cannot tolerate anything against them; so much so that you scoff at the Messenger of Allah, but, as for you, you are not ashamed that you are stung to the quick when you hear the name of the Merciful and discard His mention with disdain."

41. This is not the literal translation of the Text; its purport according to the Arabic usage is: "Man is a hasty and impatient creature by his very nature." The same thing has been stated in XVII:11: "Man is very hasty and impatient."

42. From the succeeding sentences it is obvious that "Signs" here stands for the things that have been mentioned therein—the "threat" of the scourge of Allah, Resurrection and Hell. They made fun of these, as if to say: "This man threatens us with the scourge of Allah and the torment of the Day of Resurrection if we deny him and that we shall become fuel of Hell; but nothing of the sort has befallen us. We are as strong as ever and nothing seems to be happening".

43. That is to say, "Who is there to protect and save you from the scourge of Allah if you are suddenly visited by it any time during the night or day?"

44. In other words it means: "These people have been deluded by Our favour and Our provisions. They think they are enjoying prosperity and good life as their personal right and there is none to take it away from them. They have forgotten that there is God above them Who is able to make or mar their fortune".

45. In this connection, see Ar-Ra'd (XIII): 41 and E. N. 60 thereof. Here it bears an additional meaning also: "Do they not see that an All-Powerful Being is showing His Signs every now and then everywhere on the earth in the form of famines, epidemics, floods, earthquakes and other calamities; millions of people are killed, habitations and harvests are destroyed and other damages are caused, which frustrate all human designs?"

46. It means: "When they know that all the resources and provisions of life are in Our hands and that We can increase or decrease them as We will, have they the power and strength to defend themselves against Our punishment? Can they not see from these "Signs" that their power, prosperity and luxury are not everlasting and that there is an All-Powerful Allah to seize and punish them?"

47. That is, "The same scourge which they are demanding to be hastened and of which they are making fun."

مُبِينٌ ﴿٥٥﴾ قَالُوا أَجِئْتَنَا بِالْحَقِّ أَمْ أَنْتَ مِنَ اللَّعِينِينَ ﴿٥٥﴾ قَالَ بَلْ رَبُّكُمْ رَبُّ
 السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ الَّذِي فَطَرَهُنَّ وَأَنَا عَلَىٰ ذَلِكُمْ مِنَ الشَّاهِدِينَ ﴿٥٦﴾ وَ
 تَاللَّهِ لَأَكِيدَنَّ أَصْنَامَكُمْ بَعْدَ أَنْ تُوَلُّوا مُدْبِرِينَ ﴿٥٧﴾ فَجَعَلَهُمْ جُذُودًا إِلَّا
 كَبِيرًا لَهُمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ إِلَيْهِ يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾ قَالُوا مَنْ فَعَلَ هَذَا بِإِلَهِنَا إِنَّهُ لِسِنَ
 الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٥٩﴾ قَالُوا سَمِعْنَا فَتَىٰ يَذُكُرُهُمْ يُقَالُ لَهُ إِبْرَاهِيمُ ﴿٦٠﴾ قَالُوا فَأْتُوا
 بِهِ عَلَىٰ أَعْيُنِ النَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَشْهَدُونَ ﴿٦١﴾ قَالُوا يَا نَسِيتَ هَذَا بِإِلَهِنَا
 يَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ ﴿٦٢﴾ قَالَ بَلْ فَعَلَهُ كَبِيرُهُمْ هَذَا فَسَلُّوهُمْ إِنْ كَانُوا يَنْطِقُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾
 فَرَجَعُوا إِلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ فَقَالُوا إِنَّكُمْ أَنْتُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٦٤﴾ ثُمَّ نَكِسُوا عَلَىٰ رُءُوسِهِمْ
 لَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمْ مَا هَؤُلَاءِ يَنْطِقُونَ ﴿٦٥﴾ قَالَ أَفَتَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا
 يَنْفَعُكُمْ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَضُرُّكُمْ ﴿٦٦﴾ أَلَيْسَ لَكُم مِّن دُونِ اللَّهِ أَفْلا
 تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾ قَالُوا حَرِّقُوهُ وَانصُرُوا آلِهَتَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ فاعِلِينَ ﴿٦٨﴾ قُلْنَا يَنَارُ
 كُونِي بَرْدًا وَسَلَامًا عَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ ﴿٦٩﴾ وَآرَادُوا بِهِ كَيْدًا فَجَعَلْنَاهُمُ الْآخِرِينَ ﴿٧٠﴾
 وَنَجَّيْنَاهُ وَلُوطًا إِلَى الْأَرْضِ الَّتِي بَرَكْنَا فِيهَا لِلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٧١﴾ وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ
 إِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ نَافِلَةً ﴿٧٢﴾ وَكُلًّا جَعَلْنَا صَالِحِينَ ﴿٧٣﴾ وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ آيَةً يُهْدُونَ
 بِأَمْرِنَا وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْهِمْ فِعْلَ الْخَيْرَاتِ وَإِقَامَ الصَّلَاةِ وَإِيتَاءَ الزَّكَاةِ وَ
 كَانُوا لَنَا عِبِيدِينَ ﴿٧٤﴾ وَلُوطًا آتَيْنَاهُ حُكْمًا وَعِلْمًا وَنَجَّيْنَاهُ مِنَ الْقَرْيَةِ
 الَّتِي كَانَتْ تَعْمَلُ الْخَبِيثَ ﴿٧٥﴾ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَوْمَ سَوْءٍ فَسَقِينَ ﴿٧٦﴾ وَأَدْخَلْنَاهُ
 فِي رَحْمَتِنَا ﴿٧٧﴾ إِنَّهُ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٧٨﴾ وَنُوحًا إِذْ نَادَىٰ مِن قَبْلُ فَاسْتَجَبْنَا
 لَهُ فَنَجَّيْنَاهُ وَأَهْلَهُ مِنَ الْكَرْبِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٧٩﴾ وَنَصَرْنَاهُ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ

They said, "What! are you presenting your real ideas before us, or are you jesting"?⁵⁵ He answered, "Nay, in fact your Lord is the same Who is the Lord of the heavens and the earth and their Creator! I bear witness to this, and, by God, I will out-wit your idols in your absence."⁵⁶ Accordingly, he broke them into pieces,⁵⁷ but he left the major one intact so that they might turn to it.⁵⁸ (On their return when they saw the plight of their idols,) they said, "Who has done this to our gods? Indeed he must be a spiteful person." Some replied, "We heard a young man called Abraham talking about them". At this, they said, "Then seize him, and bring him here before the people so that they may witness (how severely he is dealt with)".⁵⁹ (When Abraham came there,) they asked, "O Abraham, have you done this to our gods?" He answered, "Nay, all this has been done by their chief; you may ask them, if they can speak".⁶⁰ This turned them to (search) their own conscience, and they said (to themselves), "Surely you yourselves are in the wrong". But soon after this their minds became perverse,⁶¹ and they said, "You know that they cannot speak". At this Abraham said, "Do you even then discard Allah and worship these things which are unable to do any good or harm to you? Fie upon you and the deities you worship instead of Allah! What! have you got no sense at all?" They said, "Burn him alive and avenge your gods, if you want to take any action". At this, We commanded, "O fire! be cool and become safe for Abraham".⁶² They intended to do some harm to Abraham, but We frustrated them in their evil design. Then We brought him and Lot⁶³ safely to the land, which We have made blessed for all the people of the world.⁶⁴ Then We bestowed on him Isaac and added Jacob to him,⁶⁵ and We made each of them righteous. We appointed them leaders who guided others by Our Command. We also enjoined them by Revelation to do righteous deeds and establish *Ṣalāt* and pay *Zakāt* dues, and they all worshipped Us.⁶⁶

And We bestowed judgment and knowledge⁶⁷ on Lot, and delivered him from that habitation which committed indecent deeds—Indeed, they were a very wicked, perverse and disobedient people—And We admitted Let into Our

Mercy: he was, indeed, of the righteous people.

76-77

And We blessed Noah with the same favour; remember that he had invoked Us⁶⁸ before those Prophets; We heard his prayer and delivered him and the people of his house from the great calamity⁶⁹ and helped him against those who had treated Our Revelations as false. They were indeed a very wicked people, so We drowned them all together.

48. See also vv. 8-9 and E.N's 8-9 of Al-A'arāf (VII). It is difficult for us to understand the exact nature of the "Balance". Anyhow it is clear that the "Balance" will weigh accurately all the human moral deeds instead of material things, and will help judge whether a man is virtuous or wicked and how much. The Qur'ān has used this word to make mankind understand that every deed, good or bad, will be weighed and judged according to merit.

49. From here begin the stories of the Prophets. If we consider these stories in the context in which they occur, it becomes plain that these have been related to impress the following themes:

(1) All the former Prophets were human beings: therefore there is nothing strange or unusual that a human being like Muḥammad has been sent as a Messenger (Allah's peace be upon him).

(2) The Mission and teachings of this Prophet are the same as of those who were sent before him.

(3) All the Prophets had been granted a privileged position by Allah, Who blessed them with special favours. For instance, though they were made to suffer from hardships and persecutions for years, ultimately Allah heard their prayers and helped them in miraculous ways against their enemies and persecutors.

(4) In spite of Allah's special favours on them they were no more than His humble servants and human beings and had no share whatever in Godhead; so much so that sometimes they committed errors of judgment, fell ill, were put to trials and even committed faults, for which they were called to account by Allah.

50. All the three words have been used in praise of the Torah: (1) A Criterion which distinguished the Truth from falsehood. (2) A Light which showed the Right Way of life, and (3) An Admonition, which reminded the erring descendants of Adam to remember the lesson they had forgotten.

51. Though it was sent for the good of all human beings, only the pious people, having these characteristics, could benefit from it.

52. The Hour of "Resurrection".

53. The Arabic word رُشْد (rushd) is very comprehensive and means righteousness as well.

“We had blessed Abraham with discretion;” “The discretion he showed in discriminating between the right and the wrong etc. was not of his own acquirement but had been bestowed on him by Us.”

“We knew him well”: “We knew that he was worthy of Prophethood; therefore We appointed him as such”. According to VI:124: “....Allah knows best whom to entrust with His Mission....” It contains a subtle answer to the objection raised by the chiefs of the Quraish: “Why has Allah appointed this man (the Holy Prophet) to the office of Prophethood, when he is in no way superior to us?” This objection has been answered, as if to say, “The same objection might even have been raised against Prophet Abraham by his people, but We knew his capabilities. Therefore We selected him for Prophethood.”

In this connection, please also see 11: 124-141, 258-260; VI: 74-84; IX: 114; XI: 69-76; XIV: 35-41; XV: 51-58 and XVI: 120-122 and the E. N’s thereof.

54. Before proceeding further it should be kept in mind that the incident from the history of Prophet Abraham has been cited here to refute the erroneous creeds of the Quraish. This was meant to hit them hard for they were the descendants of Prophet Abraham and were proud of their relationship with him. It was he who had built the Ka’abah which had become the centre of the whole of Arabia and they, being its keepers, were its most important clan. Therefore, they could not remain indifferent to this answer.

55. The literal translation will be: “Are you presenting the Truth before us, or just playing with us?” They were so sure of the truth of their creed that they could never imagine that anyone could be serious in declaring it to be false.

56. That is, “If you do not understand this by argument, I will present a practical proof that these idols are helpless and have no powers. Therefore, it is wrong to make them your deities”.

57. This was that practical proof. In the absence of the priests and attendants, Prophet Abraham entered their central Temple and broke all the idols to pieces.

58. The pronoun in the original Text may be translated into “it” or “him”. In the former case, it will refer to the chief idol and in the latter to Prophet Abraham. In the first case, it will imply a subtle sarcasm in order to make them realize that their creed of idol-worship was foolish, for obviously the chief idol could not break the minor idols. In the second case, it will refer to Prophet Abraham, who thought that they might turn to him about the “incident” and he might get an opportunity to have a frank talk with them about their absurd creed.

59. This was exactly what Prophet Abraham expected to happen. He wished that the matter should not remain confined to the priests and the attendants but the common people also should be present there to witness that their deities were helpless and their priests were deluding

them about their powers. The priests committed the same folly as was later committed by Pharaoh when he arranged an encounter between Prophet Moses and the magicians in the open in front of the multitudes of the common people, and the former got an opportunity to show publicly the miracle of the staff which shattered the illusory, magical tricks of the magicians.

60. The very sentence, "You may ask them, if they can speak", is a clear proof that it was not a lie when Prophet Abraham said, "All this has been done by their chief." What he intended by this was to make them realize and confess that their idols were helpless because they could do nothing to protect themselves, and could not even speak. It is clear that when a person poses an unreal question for the sake of argument in order to bring home the fact that the position taken by the other party is untenable, it cannot be considered as a lie; firstly, because the speaker himself never intended it to be a lie, and secondly, because the addressees also knew that it was not a lie.

The foregoing remarks have been necessitated because of a "tradition" that Prophet Abraham told three "lies" in his life, of which one is the above-mentioned event. The second "lie" is contained in XXXVII: 89: "I am indisposed", and the third "lie" is not contained in the Qurān but in the Bible that he declared his wife to be his sister. (Gen. 12:12,13, 18,19). It is a pity that this "tradition" has given rise to two divergent opinions. The orthodox traditionalists actually believe that Prophet Abraham told these lies just because an "authentic tradition" says so. They do not consider that it is far better to discard the "tradition" according to which a Prophet is accused of being a "liar". On the other hand, those who are against the Traditions, discard all of them just because this solitary tradition, which has been reported as authentic by *Bukhārī* and *Muslim*, is unreliable on the very face of it. Obviously it needs no elaborate arguments to prove that all the traditions cannot be discarded just because one or a few of them are unreliable. As regards the upholders of the first opinion, they have gone to the other extreme and think that a tradition can be discarded in spite of the authenticity of its reporters for cogent reasons. They do this without reference to the contents of the tradition itself. But if the text of the tradition itself clearly shows that such a thing could not have been said by the Holy Prophet, there is no reason to insist that it should be accepted as authentic merely because its reporters are authentic.

This tradition is unreliable for other reasons also. As has already been shown, the first "lie" is no lie at all. As regards the second "lie", ("I am indisposed"), it cannot be considered as a lie unless it is proved beyond doubt that Prophet Abraham was perfectly healthy at that time, and the text does not testify this. As regards the third "lie", the event stated in the Bible in chapter 12 of Genesis is absurd on the face of it. When Prophet Abraham went to Egypt with his wife Sārah, he was, according to the Bible itself, 75 years old and his wife was 65. Therefore

the very age of Sārah is a clear proof that she could not be a "fair woman to look upon" to force Prophet Abraham to pose that she was his sister in order to save his life. The tradition under discussion, which accuses Prophet Abraham to be guilty of telling a lie, has accordingly no basis at all and cannot be taken as reliable in spite of its authentic reporters.

61. Literally the original Text means: "They were turned down upon their heads." Some commentators have interpreted it to mean: "They hung down their heads with shame". But this does not fit in the context and the wording of the Text. The right interpretation would be: "When they considered the answer of Prophet Abraham, they realized that they themselves were in the wrong, because they had set up helpless idols as deities, which could not even speak a word as to who had broken them. But soon after this, they were overpowered by obduracy and ignorance which perverted their minds and they again relapsed into crookedness."

62. Though this is one of those miracles which have been clearly stated in the Qurān, there are people who try to "prove" that there was no such miracle at all. According to this passage (vv. 68-70), Prophet Abraham was actually threatened to be burnt alive and he was accordingly thrown into the burning fire; but Allah ordered the fire to become cool and harmless for him. In the face of the clear words of the Qurān, these people deny this miracle because according to them it is impossible even for Allah to go beyond the routine of the physical laws. They say that miracles cannot appeal to the rationalists of the modern age, and therefore these should be interpreted in accordance with physical laws. They forget that according to the Qurān, Allah is able to do everything, and He does extraordinary and unusual things which cannot be explained by "science". Therefore they should accept the Qurān as it is or discard it, but they should not twist it to suit their so-called rationalism.

63. According to the Bible, Prophet Abraham had two brothers, Naḥor and Ḥarān; Prophet Lot was the son of Ḥarān (Gen. 11:26), and he was the only person to believe in Prophet Abraham. (XXIX: 26).

64. The "blessed land" refers to Syria and Palestine, which contains both material and spiritual blessings. It is one of the most fertile regions in the world; moreover, it was blessed for two thousand years with more Prophets than any other region of the world.

65. That is, "We made his son a Prophet and his grandson too".

66. This important event of the life of Prophet Abraham has found no mention whatever in the Bible. In fact nothing about his life in 'Irāq—his conflict with Nimrod, his father and the community at large, his efforts to eradicate idolatry, the incident of his being cast into the fire, which ultimately led to his forced exile from the country—is mentioned anywhere in the Bible. The Bible merely mentions his migration, and that too, in a manner as if a family was migrating from one country to another in search of livelihood. There is another interesting difference

between the Qurān and the Bible. According to the Qurān, the father of Abraham, who was a *mushrik*, was foremost in tyrannizing over his son, but the Bible gives a different account, which is as follows:

“Now these are the generations of Terah: Terah begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran begat Lot. And Haran died before his father Terah in the land of his nativity, in Ur of the Chaldees. And Abram and Nahor took them wives: the name of Abram's wife was Sarai; and the name of Nahor's wife, Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah, and the father of Iscah. But Sarai was barren; she had no child. And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son's son, and Sarai his daughter in law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran, and settled there. And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years: and Terah died in Haran.” (Gen. 11: 27-32).

“Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.” (Gen. 12: 1-3).

The Talmud, however, gives quite a few details about the life of Prophet Abraham about the period of his stay in 'Irāq, which are generally the same as given in the Qurān, but there is a glaring discrepancy in some of the important events. In fact, one can clearly feel that the account given in the Talmud is full of heterogeneous and hypothetical things while the one given in the Qurān is most clear and contains nothing unworthy of Prophet Abraham. We reproduce below the account as given in the Talmud so that the reader may know the difference between the Qurānic and Jewish versions. This will also remove the misunderstanding of those who think that the Qurān has borrowed stories from the Bible or Jewish literature.

According to the Talmud, “The wise men saw a large star in the sky on the night Abram was born and they advised Nimrod to kill the child born in the house of Terah. The King decided to kill the child but Terah hid his child and had a servant's son killed in exchange. Terah thereupon hid his wife and child in a cave where they lived for ten years. In the 11th year Abram was taken by Terah to Noah, where he lived under the guidance of Noah and his son Shem for 39 years. During the same period Abram married his niece Sarai, who was 42 years his junior. (The Bible does not mention that Sarai was the niece of Abram; moreover, the difference in their ages is mentioned as ten years). (Gen. 11: 29, 17 : 17).

The Talmud then says, “Abram left Noah at the age of 50 and came back to his father. Here he found that his father was an idolator and had twelve idols in the house according to the twelve months of the year. He tried to preach to his father against idolatry but when the latter did not

listen to him, Abram one day broke all the idols in the house. Seeing this Terah went straight to Nimrod and complained that the son who was born in his house 50 years ago had misbehaved and broken the idols. He wanted the King's verdict on this. Nimrod summoned Abram for interrogation, but the replies given by Abram were straight, terse and clear. Nimrod sent him to jail and then referred the matter to the Council for a decision. The Council decided that Abram should be burnt to death. A fire was accordingly prepared and Abram was cast into it. His brother and father-in-law Harān was also similarly cast into the fire. Harān was punished because Nimrod enquired of Terah as to why he had another child killed in place of Abram when he wanted to kill Abram on the day of his birth. Terah replied that this was done at the instigation of Haran. Nimrod accordingly let off Terah but threw Haran into the fire along with Abram. Haran was burnt to death instantly but people saw that Abram was walking unhurt through the flames. When Nimrod was informed of it, he witnessed it with his own eyes and cried out: 'O man of the God of Heaven, come out of the fire and stand before me'. Thereupon, Abram came out and Nimrod became one of his believers and gave him many costly presents. After this, according to the Talmud, Abram stayed in 'Irāq for two more years when Nimrod saw a dreadful dream and the astrologers told him that the destruction of his empire would come through Abram and that he should, therefore, put him to death. Nimrod sent people to kill Abram but Abram came to know of the plot before-hand through Eleazar, a slave presented to him by Nimrod himself. Abram accordingly fled and took refuge with Noah where Terah also met him off and on secretly. The father and the son at last decided to leave the country and Noah and his son Shem also approved of their plan. Accordingly, Terah along with his son Abram and his grandson Lot and his grand-daughter and son's wife Sarai, left Ur and went to Haran."

(H. Polano: The Talmud Selections, London, pp. 30-42).

Can a reasonable person after reading this account of the Talmud ever imagine that this could be a source book for the story as given in the Qurān?

67. The original Arabic word *hukm* is very comprehensive. It means judgment, wisdom and discretion, and authority from Allāh. 'Ilm stands for the revealed knowledge of the Truth. Thus, "We bestowed *hukm* and 'ilm on Lot": "We appointed Lot as a Prophet". (For the story of Lot, see VII: 80-84; XI: 70-83; XV: 57-74 and the E.N's thereof).

68. This refers to Prophet Noah's prayer which he at last made after having tried his utmost to reform his people: "Lord, help me for I have been overpowered". (LIV: 10), and "Lord, do not leave even a single disbeliever on the earth." (LXXI: 26).

69. "Great calamity" may either refer to living a miserable life among the wicked people, or to the Flood. (For the story of Prophet Noah, see VII: 59-64; X: 72-74; XI: 25-48, and XVII: 3 and the E.N's thereof).

كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا ۖ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَوْمَ سَوْءٍ فَأَخْرَقْنَاهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿٤٤﴾ وَدَاوُدَ وَ
 سُلَيْمَانَ إِذْ يَحْكُمُونَ فِي الْحَرْثِ إِذْ نَفَسَتْ فِيهِ غَمْرُ الْقَوْمِ ۖ وَكُنَّا
 لِحُكْمِهِمْ شَاهِدِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾ فَفَقَّهْنَاهَا سُلَيْمَانَ ۖ وَكُلًّا آتَيْنَا حُكْمًا وَعِلْمًا ۚ وَسَخَّرْنَا
 مَعَ دَاوُدَ الْجِبَالَ يُسَبِّحْنَ وَ الطَّيْرَ ۖ وَكُنَّا فَاعِلِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾ وَعَلَّمْنَاهُ صَنْعَةَ لَبُوسٍ
 لَكُمْ لِنُخْصِنَكُمْ مِنْ بَأْسِكُمْ ۖ فَهَلْ أَنْتُمْ شَاكِرُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَاسْلَيْمَانَ الرِّيحَ
 عَاصِفَةً تَجْرِي بِأَمْرِهِ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ الَّتِي بَرَكْنَا فِيهَا ۖ وَكُنَّا بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ
 عَلِيمِينَ ﴿٤٨﴾ وَمِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ مَنْ يَغْوُصُونَ لَهُ وَيَعْمَلُونَ عَمَلًا دُونَ ذَلِكَ
 وَكُنَّا لَهُمْ حَافِظِينَ ﴿٤٩﴾ وَآيُوبَ إِذْ نَادَى رَبَّهُ أَنِّي مَسَّنِيَ الضُّرُّ وَأَنْتَ
 أَرْحَمُ الرَّحِيمِينَ ﴿٥٠﴾ فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ فَكَشَفْنَا مَا بِهِ مِنْ ضُرٍّ وَآتَيْنَاهُ أَهْلَهُ
 وَمِثْلَهُمْ مَعَهُمْ رَحْمَةً ۖ مِنْ عِنْدِنَا وَ ذِكْرَى لِلْعَبِيدِينَ ﴿٥١﴾ وَاسْمَاعِيلَ
 وَإِدْرِيسَ وَذَا الْكِفْلِ ۖ كُلٌّ مِّنَ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿٥٢﴾ وَأَدْخَلْنَاهُمْ فِي رَحْمَتِنَا ۖ إِنَّهُمْ
 مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٥٣﴾ وَذَا النُّونِ إِذْ ذَهَبَ مُغَاضِبًا فَظَنَّ أَنْ لَنْ نَقْدِرَ عَلَيْهِ
 فَنَادَى فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٥٤﴾
 فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ ۖ وَنَجَّيْنَاهُ مِنَ الْغَمِّ ۖ وَكَذَلِكَ نُجِي الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٥٥﴾ وَ زَكَرِيَّا
 إِذْ نَادَى رَبَّهُ رَبِّ لَا تَذَرْنِي فَرْدًا وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الْوَارِثِينَ ﴿٥٦﴾ فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ
 وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ يَحْيَى ۖ وَأَصْلَحْنَا لَهُ زَوْجَهُ ۖ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا يُسْرِعُونَ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ
 وَيَدْعُونَنَا رَغَبًا وَرَهَبًا ۖ وَكَانُوا لَنَا خَشِيعِينَ ﴿٥٧﴾ وَ الَّتِي أَحْصَتْ فَرْجَهَا
 فَفَقَّحْنَا فِيهَا مِنْ رُّوحِنَا وَجَعَلْنَاهَا وَابْنَهَا آيَةً لِلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٥٨﴾ إِنَّ هَذِهِ أُمَّتُكُمْ
 أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً ۖ وَأَنَا رَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُونِ ﴿٥٩﴾ وَ تَقَطَّعُوا أَمْرَهُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ ۖ كُلُّ إِلَيْنَا

And We bestowed the same favour upon David and Solomon: Remember the occasion when the two were judging a case regarding a field into which the goats of other people had strayed at night, and We Ourselves were watching their conduct of the case. At that time We guided Solomon to the right decision, though We had bestowed wisdom and knowledge upon both of them.⁷⁰ 78-79

We had subdued to David the mountains and the birds which joined with him in Our praise:⁷¹ It was We Who had done all this. And We taught him for your benefit the armourer's craft so that you might protect yourselves from each other's violence.⁷² Are you, then, grateful?⁷³ And We had subdued to Solomon the strongly blowing wind which sped at his bidding to the land wherein We had placed Our blessings,⁷⁴ for We had the knowledge of everything. And We had subjected to him many of the satans who dived into the sea for him, and performed other works besides this: and We kept watch over all of them.⁷⁵ 79-82

And We had given Job⁷⁶ the same (blessing of wisdom and knowledge). Remember when he invoked his Lord, saying, "I have been afflicted with the disease, and Thou art most Merciful."⁷⁷ We heard his prayer and relieved him of his affliction⁷⁸ and gave him back not only those of his family but also as many more with them as a favour from Us so that it may serve as a reminder to Our worshippers.⁷⁹ 83-84

And the same blessing was bestowed upon Ismael and Idrīs⁸⁰ and Zul-Kifl,⁸¹ because they all practised fortitude. We admitted them to Our mercy because they were of the righteous people. 85-86

And We showed a favour to Zun-nūn:⁸² Remember when he went away in anger⁸³ for he thought that We would not take him to task for this.⁸⁴ But afterwards he invoked Us from the depths of darkness,⁸⁵ saying, "There is no God but Thou: glory be to Thee: I had indeed committed a wrong". So We heard his prayer, and delivered him from the affliction: Thus do We deliver the believers. 87-88

And (We showed a favour) to Zacharias, when he invoked his Lord, saying, "O Lord, do not leave me childless though Thou alone art the best Inheritor". So We heard his prayer, 89-90

and bestowed on him Yaḥyā (John) and made his wife fit (to bear a child) for him.⁸⁶ These people exerted their utmost in righteous deeds and called upon Us with love and fear and they remained humble before Us.⁸⁷

91 And (We blessed) that woman who had kept her chastity.⁸⁸ We breathed into her of Our Spirit⁸⁹ and made her and her son a Sign to the whole world.⁹⁰

92-93 Indeed this community of yours is one community, and I am your Lord: so worship Me alone. But the people (of their own accord) cut asunder their (one) Creed into many religions;⁹¹—they have all to return to Us.

70. There is no mention of this event in the Bible nor in the Jewish literature. According to the Muslim commentators, it happened like this: The goats of one person entered into the field of another person at night. The latter brought his complaint to Prophet David who decided that the strayed goats should be given to the owner of the field. Prophet Solomon, however, differed with this and opined that the goats should remain with the owner of the field up to the time that the former tilled and prepared the field as before. In regard to this Allah says, "We led Solomon to the right decision". As regards the legal aspect of the matter we cannot say with certainty what is the Islamic law in such a case nor is there any Tradition of the Holy Prophet to explain or support it. That is why the jurists have differed about it.

It should, however, be noted that in this context, the incident has been cited to show that the Prophets were after all human beings in spite of their God-given powers and abilities. In this case, Prophet David committed an error of judgment because he was not guided by Allah as was Prophet Solomon, though both of them were Prophets. In the succeeding passage the wonderful powers of both have been mentioned to show that they were God-given and did not make anyone a god.

Incidentally, we learn from this verse that if two judges give different decisions about one and the same case, both of them will be regarded as righteous, though the decision of only one of them will be correct, provided that both are duly qualified for sitting in judgement on the case. The Holy Prophet has stated the same principle more elaborately. In a Tradition of *Bukhārī*, he is reported by 'Amar bin 'Āṣ to have said, "If a judge does his very best to arrive at the right decision, he will get a double reward in case of a right judgment and a single reward if his judgment is wrong." According to another Tradition, cited by Abū Da'ūd and Ibn Mājah, on the authority of Buraidah, he is reported to have said, "Judges are of three kinds and only one of them will go to Paradise: the one who recognizes the Truth and decides according to it. On the

other hand, the one who recognizes the Truth but gives his decision against it, will go to Hell, and he too, who sits in judgment on a case without the necessary knowledge (and competence)."

71. From the wording of the Text, it is clear that "the mountains and the birds" were not subjected to Prophet David but were joined with him in glorifying Allah. This is also supported by XXXVIII:19: "We had subdued the mountains by Our Command so that they praised Us with him (David) in the morning and evening, and the birds too, which gathered together and repeated Our praise with him". And, according to XXXIV: 10: "We commanded the mountains to repeat Our praise with him and also the birds to do the same." We are of the opinion that it means this: "When Prophet David sang hymns of Allah's praise and glory, in his rich and sweet voice, the mountains echoed back his melodies and the birds gathered round him and the whole scene became charming." Our interpretation is supported by this Tradition:

"Once when Ḥaḍrat Abū Mūsā Ash'arī, who had an extremely sweet voice, was reciting the Holy Qurān, the Holy Prophet, who was passing by, stood and listened to him for a long time. When he finished the recital, the Holy Prophet remarked: 'This man has been granted a portion of the melody of David'."

72. According to XXXIV: 10-11, it was like this: "...And We made the iron soft for him (and commanded him): 'Make coats of mail complete in every way, and arrange the plates properly....'". This shows that Allah had made Prophet David an expert in the use of iron, and had especially taught him the art of an armourer for defence purposes. This fact is confirmed by archaeological and historical researches, for according to these the iron-age in the world started between 1200 and 1000 BC and this was precisely the period of Prophet David. At first the Hittites in Syria and Asia Minor, who flourished between 2000 and 1200 BC, discovered a method of melting and moulding iron, but they guarded it as a close secret from the world, and it could not be put to common use. Later on, the Philistines came to know of it, but they too guarded it as a secret. The incessant defeats suffered by the Israelites at the hands of the Hittites and the Philistines before King Saul, were due mainly to the use of chariots of iron in their wars by the latter. (Joshua, 17:16; Judges, 1:19, 4:2-3). In 1020 BC when Saul became ruler over the Israelites by Allah's Command, he subdued the Canaanites and recaptured most of Palestine. After him Prophet David (1004—965 BC) not only annexed the whole of Palestine and Jordan to the Israeli kingdom but a major portion of Syria as well. This was the time when the secret of armour making, so closely guarded by the Hittites and the Philistines, became well known and even cheaper articles of daily use began to be made. The recent archaeological excavations conducted in Edom, to the south of Palestine, which is rich in iron ore, have brought to light furnaces for melting and moulding iron. The furnace excavated near

Ezion-geber, a port on the Gulf of 'Aqabah, in the time of Prophet Solomon, seems to have been built on the principles which are used in the modern blast furnaces. It is therefore natural that Prophet David must have first of all utilized this discovery for war purposes, because a little earlier the hostile Canaanites around his kingdom had made life really difficult for his people. The Bible also says that Prophet David was an expert in the art of melting and using iron for war purposes. (See Joshua, 17: 16; Judges, 1:19 and 4: 2-3).

73. For further details about Prophet David, please see II:251 and XVII: 55 and the E.N's thereof.

74. This is also explained in XXXIV: 12: "And for Solomon We had subjected the wind which covered a month's journey in the morning and a month's journey in the evening", and in XXXVIII: 36: "So We subjected the wind to him. It blew softly at his bidding whither-soever he wanted it to blow." Thus it is clear that the wind was so subjected to Prophet Solomon that the voyages to places at one month's sea journey could be performed conveniently, because a favourable wind was always blowing for his ships to and from those places.

It is confirmed by the Bible that Prophet Solomon had developed sea trade on a large scale. (I Kings, 10: 22)! On the one side, his trade ships sailed from Ezion-geber, through the Red Sea, towards Yaman and other southern and eastern lands, and on the other, his naval fleet called Tharshish, sailed on the Mediterranean to the western countries. The great furnace which he had built at Ezion-geber for melting and moulding ores extracted from the copper and iron mines in the 'Arabah in Edom, has been confirmed by modern archaeological researches as well. This molten iron and copper was used in building ships besides being put to other uses. The Qurān refers to this when it says: "...and We made a fountain of molten copper to flow for him (Solomon)..." (XXXIV:12).

As regards the subjection of the wind, it may mean that Allah, by His special favour, had so arranged that the wind—and sea voyages in those days depended entirely on wind—was always favourable for Prophet Solomon's fleet. But if we take the literal meaning of v. 81: "it sped at his bidding", there will be no harm, for Allah is able to give such powers to any of His servants He pleases.

75. The subjection of "satans" has been explained in XXXIV:12-13. Incidentally, these verses of the Qurān clearly show that the satans and jinns who worked for Prophet Solomon belonged to quite a different genus from human beings. Therefore, it is wrong to pervert the Qurān to prove that "they were human beings" as some modernist commentators have tried to do. It is obvious from the wording of the Qurān and the context in which the story of the jinns has been related, that they were not human beings. Had they been so this would have been no special favour to Solomon, because human beings had already built the gigantic monuments like the pyramids of Egypt.

76. There is a wide divergence of opinion concerning the personality, period and nationality of Prophet Job. Some commentators opine that he was an Israelite, while others think that he was an Egyptian or an Arab who lived before Prophet Moses, or during the time of Prophets David and Solomon. As all these conjectures are based on the Book of Job, which is self-contradictory and against the Qurān, nothing can be said about him with certainty, but in the light of the Book of Isaiah (8th century BC) and the Book of Ezekiel (6th century BC), which are more trustworthy works, he lived in the 9th century BC or even earlier. As regards his nationality, the context in which his name occurs in IV: 163 and VI: 84, it may be assumed that he was an Israelite. According to a saying of Ḥaḍrat Wahb bin Munabbih, he might have been from the offspring of Esau, a son of Prophet Isaac.

77. The words of the prayer are note-worthy. Prophet Job mentions his distress but does not say anything more to his Lord except: "Thou art most Merciful". This is a great proof of his fortitude, noble and contented nature.

78. How his disease was cured has been explained in XXXVIII: 42: "Stamp the ground with your foot: here is cool water for you to wash with and to drink." From this it appears that no sooner did he stamp the ground than a spring gushed forth. He took bath and drank the water and was cured of his disease. The nature of the treatment hints that he was suffering from a skin disease. This is confirmed by the Bible as well. "Satan smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown." (Job, 2:7).

79. It will be worth-while to compare the high character of Prophet Job as given in the Qurān with that in the Book of Job in the Bible. The Qurān presents him as a veritable picture of patience and fortitude and an excellent model for the worshippers of Allah, but his general picture presented in the Book of Job is that of a man who is full of grievance against God: "Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived.... Let them curse (the night) that curse the day,.... Because it shut not the doors of my mother's womb, nor did sorrow from mine eyes. Why died I not from the womb?" (Chapter 3).... "Oh that my grief were thoroughly weighed, and my calamity laid in the balance together.... the arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit: the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me." (Chapter 6).... "I have sinned; what shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver of men? Why hast thou set me as a mark against thee, so that I am a burden to myself? And why dost thou not pardon my transgressions, and take away my iniquity? (Chapter 7 : 20-21).

His three friends try to console him and counsel patience, but in vain. He says. "My soul is weary of my life.... I will speak in the bitterness of my soul" (10:1).... "I have heard many such things: miserable com-

forters are ye all." (16:2). . . . "So these three men ceased to answer Job... — Then was kindled the wrath of *Elihu*. . . . against Job because he justified himself rather than God." (32:1-3), but he also failed to console him. . . . Then the Lord himself came down and condemned the three friends and *Elihu* and rebuked Job and then forgave him, accepted him and blessed him." (Chapters 41, 42).

It should be noted that in the first two chapters of this Book, Prophet Job is presented as a perfect and upright man who feared God, but in the following chapters he becomes an embodiment of grievance against God, as though the estimate of Satan about him was correct and that of God incorrect. Thus this Book itself is a clear evidence that it is neither the Word of God nor of Prophet Job but had been written afterwards by some literary man and incorporated in the Bible as a scripture.

80. For explanation, see *Sūrah Maryam* (XIX): E. N. 33.

81. *Zul-Kifl* is not the name but the title of a righteous man, which literally means 'a man of luck'. Here it does not refer to worldly prosperity but to his high character and ranks in the Hereafter. He has also been mentioned by this title in XXXVIII: 48. There are different opinions about his identity and nationality: some have regarded him as Zacharias (but this is not correct because Zacharias has been mentioned separately in v. 89); others say he was Elias, or Joshua, son of Nūn, or Elisha, but this again is incorrect, because in *Sūrah Şād* (XXXVIII: 49) Elisha and *Zul-Kifl* have been mentioned as separate personalities; some others say that he was Prophet Job's son, named Bishr, who succeeded him as Prophet.

'Allāmah Ālūsī says, "The Jews claim that he was Ezekiel who was appointed to Prophethood during the captivity (597 BC) of the Israelites and he performed his mission in a habitation by the side of the Chebar canal."

These conflicting opinions indeed confirm nothing. The modern commentators, however, are inclined to believe that he was Ezekiel, though there is no convincing argument about it. This opinion is sound because his description in this verse "that he was a patient and righteous man and was blessed by God" is fully confirmed by the Book of Ezekiel. He was one of those people who had been taken prisoner by Nebuchadnezzar at the downfall of Jerusalem, who settled the Israeli exiles at Tel-abib by the river Chebar in Irāq. Here, in 594 BC, Ezekiel was raised to Prophethood when he was hardly 30, and he continued preaching the message of God to the exiled Israelites as well as to the iniquitous people and rulers of Jerusalem for full 22 years. In the 9th year of his mission, his wife whom he called "the desire of his eyes" died, but when the people came to mourn her death, he warned them of the wrath of God and the impending disaster. (Chapter 24: 15-27). The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel in the Bible is one of those scriptures which appear to be genuine and divinely inspired.

82. That is, Jonah. Literally *Zun-Nūn* means "the man of the fish". He was called so because he was devoured by a fish by the Command of Allah. (Also See XXXVII:142 and X:98 and its E.N's 98-100).

83. Prophet Jonah left his people before he received Allah's Command for migration.

84. He presumed that he should leave the place which was going to be visited by the scourge of Allah. This was not by itself an offence but it was an offence for a Prophet to leave the place of his Mission without the permission of Allah.

85. "...darkness": the darkness in the belly of the fish and the darkness of the sea over and above it.

86. "Made his wife fit": "We cured his wife of sterility." As "Thou alone art the best Inheritor", I shall have no grief even if Thou dost not give me any child. (For further details, please see III: 37-41 and XIX: 2-14 and the E.N's thereof).

87. It will be worth while to reiterate the reasons why the stories of the Prophets have been cited in this sūrah.

(1) The story of Prophet Zacharias has been cited to impress on the minds that all the Prophets were human beings and servants of Allah and had no tinge of Godhead in them. They had no power to bestow children upon others because they themselves had to pray to Allah for children for themselves.

(2) The story of Prophet Jonah has been cited to show that even a great Prophet like him did not go unnoticed when he committed an error in regard to Allah's Message. But when he repented, Allah, by His grace, delivered him alive from the belly of the fish.

(3) The mention of Prophet Job has been made to show that even Prophets were put to hard trials and afflictions and even they had to beg Allah to restore them to health, not to speak of curing others of diseases.

Along with these, the other important thing which is meant to be impressed is that all the Prophets believed in the Doctrine of *Tauḥīd*. That is why they begged and prayed to One Allah alone to fulfil their needs and requirements. Though they met with trials, Allah helped them and granted their prayers in supernatural and miraculous ways.

88. That is, "Mary (Allah's peace be upon her)".

89. It should be noted that the incident of the birth of Prophet Jesus was not different from that of Prophet Adam, because the wording of the Arabic Text in the two cases is almost identical: (See XXXVIII: 71-72). Besides this in verse 91, almost similar words have been used in regard to the birth of Jesus Christ. (See also IV:171 and LXVI:12). Allah Himself has stated that the birth of Prophet Jesus was just like the birth of Prophet Adam: "In the sight of Allah, the case of the birth of Jesus is like that of Adam, whom He created out of dust and said, 'Be', and he was." (III: 59). In the light of these verses, we may

[Contd. on p. 172

رُجِعُونَ ﴿١١٨﴾ فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِنَ الصَّالِحَاتِ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَا كُفْرَانَ لِسَعْيِهِ ۖ وَإِنَّا لَهُ كَاتِبُونَ ﴿١١٩﴾ وَحَرَمٌ عَلَى قَرْيَةٍ أَهْلَكْنَاهَا أَنَّهُمْ لَا يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿١٢٠﴾ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا فُتِحَتْ يَأْجُوجُ وَيَأْجُوجُ وَهُمْ مِنْ كُلِّ حَدَبٍ يَنْسِلُونَ ﴿١٢١﴾ وَاقْتَرَبَ الْوَعْدُ الْحَقُّ فَإِذَا هِيَ شَاخِصَةٌ أَبْصَارُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ۖ يَوِيلُنَا قَدْ كُنَّا فِي غَفْلَةٍ مِّنْ هَذَا بَلْ كُنَّا ظَالِمِينَ ﴿١٢٢﴾ إِنَّكُمْ وَمَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ حَصَبُ جَهَنَّمَ ۖ أَنْتُمْ لَهَا وَرِدُونَ ﴿١٢٣﴾ لَوْ كَانَ هَؤُلَاءِ إِلَهًا مَّا وَرَدُّوهَا ۖ وَكُلٌّ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿١٢٤﴾ لَهُمْ فِيهَا زَفِيرٌ ۖ وَهُمْ فِيهَا لَا يَسْمَعُونَ ﴿١٢٥﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ سَبَقَتْ لَهُمْ مِنَّا الْحُسْنَىٰ أُولَٰئِكَ عَنْهَا مُبْعَدُونَ ﴿١٢٦﴾ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ حَسِيسَهَا ۖ وَهُمْ فِي مَا اشْتَهَتْ أَنفُسُهُمْ خَالِدُونَ ﴿١٢٧﴾ لَا يَحْزَنُهُمُ الْفَزَعُ الْأَكْبَرُ ۖ وَتَتَلَقَّهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ ۖ هَذَا يَوْمُكُمْ الَّذِي كُنْتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ ﴿١٢٨﴾ يَوْمَ نَطْوِي السَّمَاءَ كَطَيِّ السِّجِلِ لِلْكِتَابِ ۖ كَمَا بَدَأْنَا أَوَّلَ خَلْقٍ نُعِيدُهُ ۖ وَعَدَّا عَلَيْهَا ۖ وَإِنَّا لَكُنَّا فَاعِلِينَ ﴿١٢٩﴾ وَلَقَدْ كَتَبْنَا فِي الزَّبُورِ مِنْ بَعْدِ الذِّكْرِ أَنَّ الْأَرْضَ يَرِثُهَا عِبَادِيَ الصَّالِحُونَ ﴿١٣٠﴾ إِنَّ فِي هَذَا لَبَلَاغًا لِّقَوْمٍ عَابِدِينَ ﴿١٣١﴾ وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٣٢﴾ قُلْ إِنَّمَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ أَنَّمَا إِلَهُكُمُ اللَّهُ وَاحِدٌ ۖ فَهَلْ أَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٣٣﴾ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَقُلْ أَدْبَانُكُمْ عَلَىٰ سَوَاءٍ ۖ وَإِنِ آدِرِيَّ أَقْرَبُ أَمْرٍ بَعِيدٌ مَّا تُوعَدُونَ ﴿١٣٤﴾ إِنَّهُ يَعْلَمُ الْجَهْرَ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تَكْتُمُونَ ﴿١٣٥﴾ وَإِنِ آدِرِيَّ لَعَلَّهُ فِتْنَةٌ لِّكُمْ وَمَتَاءٌ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ ﴿١٣٦﴾ قُلْ رَبِّ احْكُم بِالْحَقِّ ۗ وَرَبُّنَا الرَّحْمَنُ السُّتَعَانُ عَلَىٰ مَا تَصِفُونَ ﴿١٣٧﴾

Then whosoever does good deeds, and he is a believer as **94-103** well, his work will not be treated slightingly: We are recording it all. And it is not possible that the habitation We have once destroyed gets another lease of life⁹² until Gog and Magog are let loose: they will swoop down from every height, and the time of the fulfilment of the True Promise will draw near,⁹³ whereupon the eyes of those who had disbelieved will be struck with amazement: they will say, "Woe to us: we were heedless of this: nay, we were wrong-doers."⁹⁴ As a matter of fact, you and your deities, whom you worship beside Allah, are fuel of Hell, wherein you have to enter;⁹⁵ had they really been God, they would not have gone there; now therein they will dwell for ever. There they will groan,⁹⁶ but they shall hear nothing (in response due to the roaring noise). As for those for whom We will already have ordained good (rewards), they will be kept far away from it⁹⁷—they will not hear even its faintest sound—and they shall dwell for ever in the midst of those things which they will desire and cherish most; the time of the great fright will not trouble them at all;⁹⁸ the angels will rush forth to receive them, saying: "This is the very Day which you were promised!"

On that Day, We will roll up the sky as the leaves of **104-106** paper are rolled up in a written scroll. We will bring forth the creation once again as We had originated it before. This is a promise We have made to Ourselves, and We have to fulfil it. And We have written in the Psalms after the Admonition: "Our righteous servants shall inherit the land". Surely in this is a great news for those people who worship Us.⁹⁹

O Muḥammad! We have sent you to be a real blessing **107-111** for the people of the world.¹⁰⁰ Say to them, "That which is revealed to me is this: Your Deity is One Deity only. Will you, then, surrender to Him?" If even then, they turn away from it, tell them plainly, "I have warned you openly; now I do not know whether that thing with which you are being threatened¹⁰¹ is near at hand or far off. (You should, however, note it well that) Allah has the knowledge of what is uttered aloud and also of what you talk about secretly.¹⁰² I think that this (delay) may be a trial for you,¹⁰³ and you are being given respite to enjoy yourselves for an appointed term".

(At long last) the Messenger said, "O my Lord, pass Thy Judgment with the truth. And, O people, we trust in our Lord, the Merciful, to help us against the things you say".

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conclude that Allah uses words like: "We breathed into him or her of Our spirit" for miraculous births. (For fuller details please see IV: E.N's 212-213).

90. That is, "The mother and the son were not partners of God nor had any share whatever in Godhead, but were a Sign from among the Signs of God." (See XIX: E.N. 21 also).

91. In this verse, the addressees are the whole of mankind. It means: "O mankind, in reality all of you belonged to one community and had one and the same religion and all the Prophets brought one and the same Creed which was this: 'Allah alone is the Lord of all mankind: therefore they should worship Him alone.'" But afterwards the people corrupted this Creed and invented and adopted the things they liked and mixed their own theories, whims and practices in it. This brought into being countless communities and religions. Thus it is absolutely wrong to say that a particular Prophet was the founder of a particular religion and another of another, and so on. The very fact that different religions came into being at different periods of time, does not prove that the Prophets created these differences. It is obvious that the Prophets of God could not found different religions nor could they teach their followers to worship any beings other than Allah.

92. The Arabic Text of v. 95 may be interpreted in three ways:

(1) The community which is once destroyed by the scourge of Allah can never have a second or new life.

(2) After its destruction, its people are not given a second chance for their test: then they shall be presented in the Court of Allah for final judgment.

(3) When a community transgresses the last limits in its wickedness, injustices and disobedience, and Allah ordains to destroy it, no other chance of repentance is given to it because it becomes incapable of turning back to right guidance.

93. For the details about Gog and Magog, see E.N's 62 and 69 of Sūrah Al-Kahf (XVIII). They will be let loose in the sense that they will swoop down on the regions of the earth like a beast of prey which is set free from its cage suddenly.

"The time of the fulfilment of the true promise" will come on the eve of Resurrection and the appearance of Gog and Magog will be a sign of it. In a Tradition related in Muslim, by Huzaifah bin Asīd Ghifārī, the Holy Prophet said, "Resurrection will not take place until ten signs appear:

(1) The smoke. (2) Dajjāl. (3) Dāābat-ul-Ard. (4) rising of the sun from the west. (5) coming down of Jesus, son of Mary. (6) sudden

attack of Gog and Magog. (7-9) three land slides—one in the east, the second in the west and the third in Arabia. (10) the flare up of a great fire from Yaman which will drive the people to the Plain of Resurrection. In another Tradition the Holy Prophet stated that after the swoop of Gog and Magog, Resurrection will be so near that it may take place at any moment just as a pregnant woman might deliver the child at any moment, in the day or night, after her term has expired. But the reference to the appearance of Gog and Magog in the Qurān and Ḥadīth does not indicate that they will swoop on mankind jointly; it may be that they will clash against each other near the time of Resurrection and their mutual conflict might result in a universal catastrophe and destruction.

94. "We were heedless of this" contains a kind of excuse in it, as if to say, "The Prophets warned us of the Day of Resurrection but we were wrong-doers and paid no heed to their warning".

95. We learn from traditions that 'Abdullah bin Azzab'arā raised an objection in this connection, saying, "According to this not only our deities but Prophets Jesus and 'Uzair and the Angels also will become fuel for Hell because they are also worshipped." The Holy Prophet replied, "Yes, everyone who would approve of his own worship instead of Allah's will go to Hell along with those who worshipped him." He meant to say, "There is no reason why Prophets Jesus and 'Uzair and the Angels should go to Hell because they never approved that they should be worshipped in stead of Allah, and were not responsible for this; on the other hand, they taught people to worship Allah alone". Of course, those who tried to become deities and became partners in the *shirk* of others will certainly go to Hell along with their worshippers. Likewise those, who induced others to take deities other than Allah, will go to Hell. Satan comes under this category for he induces others to make deities. Thus it is Satan who is made the real deity whom they obey and commit *shirk*. Besides this, idols of stone and wood and other accessories of *shirk* will also be thrown into Hell along with the *mushriks* so that the latter should see that their deities were becoming a cause of the intensity of their torture of fire instead of becoming their intercessors.

96. The Arabic word زفير (*zafir*) means 'hard breathing' because of excessive heat, hard work and weariness.

97. These will be the people who practised virtue and righteousness in this world. Allah has already promised that they will be kept safe from the torture and will be granted salvation.

98. That is, "The time of mustering and going before Allah will be very dreadful for the common people but the righteous people will have full peace of mind because everything will be happening according to their expectations. Their Faith and the righteous deeds they did in the world, will help console them by the grace of Allah and, instead of grief and sorrow, they will be filled with the hope that they are going to get their promised rewards."

99. The interpretation of this verse has given rise to a great misunderstanding. Some people have tried to interpret it in a way, which is entirely opposed to the ideology of the Qurān. They interpret it to mean: "The inheritance of the kingdom and the resources of the earth are given to the righteous people alone in this worldly life, and upon them alone Allah showers His favours and blessings." Then they apply this formula conversely and conclude that the gift of this inheritance of the earth is the sole criterion between the "righteous" and the "unrighteous" men. The righteous is the one who inherits the sovereignty of the earth and the unrighteous the one who is deprived of this inheritance. But when they apply their formula in the historical perspective, they find that most of those nations which have inherited the earth in the past and are inheriting it today, have been and are mostly disbelieving, *mushriks*, atheists and immoral, and that these are not the characteristics of the righteous people when judged by the criterion put forward by the Qurān. From Nimrod and Pharaoh to the present day communist despots, who have been inheriting the earth, were and are unbelievers and the enemies of God and therefore could not be considered righteous, according to the Qurānic formula. Faced with this situation they start arguing that there must be some error in the conception of the "righteous" which should be such as would fit all the inheritors of the earth whether they were Caliphs like Abū Bakr Ṣiddīq and 'Umar Farūq or Chingez and Halākū. This research leads them to the Darwinian theory of the survival of the fittest and they assume fitness to be a synonym of "righteousness".

According to this new conception or definition of "righteousness", the proposition would plainly mean: "Any person, or a group of persons, who is capable of conquering and subduing countries by military force and has the ability to exploit the resources of the earth successfully is a 'righteous servant of Allah' and his achievement is a criterion and message of righteousness and worship for other human beings to follow. Consequently, if they fail to achieve the inheritance of the earth, they will neither be regarded among the righteous nor among the servants of Allah".

As a result of this interpretation of the verse, and this conception of "righteousness" and "service", they were confronted with the interpretation of some basic and fundamental articles of the Islamic Faith. For instance, according to the Qurān, no deed, howsoever good, could be regarded as righteous without belief in Allah, the Hereafter, the Prophets and the Books. Moreover, the invitation of the Prophet to accept the moral and legal systems of Islam would become meaningless. Then these people could not reconcile their interpretation with the teachings of the Qurān that obedience to the Holy Prophet and the Commandments of Allah was absolutely essential for a righteous man and that the lack of this would make a person a disbeliever and a transgressor who deserved the wrath of Allah. If they had faced this problem boldly and honestly, they would have realized that their interpretation was wrong, but instead

of this, they very impudently changed the universally accepted conception of Faith, Islam, *Tauhid*, Prophethood and the Hereafter in order to make these basic articles of the Faith fit in with their interpretation of this verse. Thus, they turned all the teachings of the Qurān up side down and tampered with its meaning without the least hesitation.

Now let us consider their interpretation and point out its errors:

(1) Their interpretation contradicts the teachings of the Qurān as a whole, for according to these virtue, piety and goodness do not comprise material progress and ability to rule over the land. Moreover, if the Qurānic word "Sāliḥ" (virtuous, good) is regarded as synonymous with "Ṣāhib Ṣalāḥiyyat" (i.e. possessor of fitness and competence), this one verse will clash with the whole of the Qurān.

(2) They isolate this verse from its context and ascribe to it whatever meaning they like; otherwise, they would have seen that the "inheritance" referred to in the context is the promise to the Believers which is to be fulfilled in the Hereafter, and thus has nothing to do with inheritance in this world.

If this verse is interpreted in the context in which it occurs, it becomes very plain from the preceding verses that this promise to the righteous people holds good for the life in the Hereafter. This thing has been made more explicit in XXXIX: 73-74. According to this passage (which is definitely about life in the Hereafter), when the pious people will enter into Paradise, they will say: "God be praised, Who has fulfilled His promise and made us heirs to the land."

Now let us consider this matter in the light of the Psalms (whether the Book of Psalms in the Bible is genuine or tampered with, because the real Psalms of Prophet David are nowhere available) to which this verse refers. According to 37:9-29: "...evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth. For yet a little while, and the wicked *shall not be*: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it *shall not be*. But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace....and their inheritance shall be for ever....The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever." Thus the Psalms also confirm word for word verse 105. It is obvious that "(They shall) dwell therein for ever" refers to the life in the Hereafter.

As regards the inheritance of the earth in this worldly life, Allah gives it as a heritage to those of His servants whom He pleases (VII:128), irrespective of whether they are believers or disbelievers, righteous or wicked, not as a reward but for their trial. "...Your Lord will make you rulers on the earth, and then He will see how you conduct yourselves." (VII:129). The heritage of the earth in this worldly life is neither permanent nor everlasting. It is merely bestowed as a trial for different communities. On the other hand, the heritage of the "land" referred to in v. 105 is permanent and for ever and, according to the Qurān, it will be bestowed

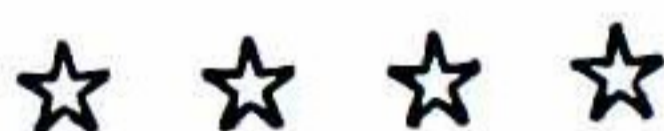
on the basis of this formula: "The land belongs to Allah and He will make only His righteous servants heirs to it not for their test but as a permanent reward for the righteous attitude they adopted in this worldly life."

100. This verse (107) can also be translated as: "We have sent you only as a blessing for the people of the world". In both cases it will mean that the appointment of the Holy Prophet is indeed a blessing and mercy of Allah to the whole world. This is because he aroused the neglectful world from its heedlessness and gave it the knowledge of the criterion between truth and falsehood, and warned it very clearly of both the ways of salvation and ruin. This fact has been stated here to tell the disbelievers of Makkah that they were quite wrong in their estimate of the Holy Prophet that he was an affliction and distress for them because they said, "This man has sown seeds of discord among our clans and separated near relatives from each other." They have been told here, "O foolish people, you are wrong to presume that he is an affliction for you; but he is in reality a blessing and mercy of Allah for you."

101. That is, "I do not know the time and the form of the punishment of Allah for your rejection of the Message. It may come at any time in any shape."

102. This refers to their secret schemes, plots and their whispering campaign which have been mentioned in v. 3. There, too, the Prophet had said, "My Lord has the knowledge of everything that is said in the heavens or the earth for He is All-Hearing, All-Knowing". (v. 4). This was to warn them that they would be taken to task for these things, too.

103. This was a "trial" because the delay in the "punishment" was deluding them into believing: "All the things put forward by the Prophet are false: had he been a true Prophet of Allah we would have been punished long before this for our disbelief." They did not realize that the reason for the delay was that Allah willed to give them respite for mending their ways.



XXII

AL-HAJJ الْحَجَّ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allāh, the Merciful, the Compassionate

INTRODUCTION

Name

This Sūrah takes its name from v. 27.

Period of Revelation

As this Sūrah contains the characteristics of both the Makkī and the Madanī Sūrahs, the commentators have differed as to its period of revelation, but in the light of its style and themes we are of the opinion that a part of it (vv. 1-24) was sent down in the last stage of the Makkī life of the Holy Prophet a little before migration and the rest (vv. 25-78) during the first stage of his Madanī life. That is why this Sūrah combines the characteristics of both the Makkī and the Madanī Sūrahs.

The sudden change of the style from v. 25 shows that probably vv. 25-78 were sent down in the month of Zul-Hijjah in the very first year after *Hijrah*. This is indicated by vv. 25-41 and confirmed by the occasion of the revelation of vv. 39-40. It appears that the month of Zūl-Hijjah must have brought to the immigrants nostalgic memories of their homes in Makkah and naturally they must have thought of their Sacred City and of their Hajj congregation there, and grieved to think that the *mushrik* Quraish had debarred them from visiting the Sacred Mosque. Therefore, they might even have been praying for and expecting Divine permission to wage war against those tyrants who had expelled them from their homes and deprived them of visiting the House of Allāh and made it difficult for them to follow the way of Islam. It was at this psychological occasion that these verses were sent down. That is why the purpose for which *Masjid-al-Harām* was built has been specifically mentioned. It has been made plain that Hajj (pilgrimage) had been enjoined for the worship of One Allāh. But it is an irony

that afterwards it had been dedicated to the rituals of *shirk* and the worshippers of One Allāh had been debarred from visiting it. Therefore, permission for waging war against those tyrants has been given to oust them from there and to establish the righteous way of life for establishing virtue and eradicating evil. According to Ibn 'Abbās, Mujāhid, 'Urwah bin Zubair, Zaid bin Aslam, Muqātil bin Ḥayyān, Qatādah and other great commentators, v. 39 is the first verse that grants the Muslims permission to wage war. Collections of Ḥadīth and books on the life of the Holy Prophet confirm that after this permission actual preparations for war were started and the first expedition was sent to the coast of the Red Sea in Ṣafar A.H. 2, which is known as the Expedition of Waddān or Al-Abwā'.

Subject Matter and Theme

This Sūrah is addressed to: (1) The *mushriks* of Makkah, (2) the wavering Muslims, and (3) the True Believers. The *mushriks* have been warned in a forceful manner to this effect: "You have obdurately and impudently persisted in your ideas of ignorance and trusted in your deities instead of Allāh, though they possess no power at all and you have repudiated the Divine Messenger. Now, you will meet the same end as has been the doom of those like you before. You have only harmed yourselves by rejecting Our Prophet and by persecuting the best element of your own community; now your false deities shall not be able to save you from the wrath of God". At the same time, they have been admonished time and again for their creed of *shirk* and sound arguments have been given in favour of *Tauhīd* and the Hereafter.

The wavering Muslims, who had embraced Islam but were not prepared to endure any hardship in its way, have been admonished to this effect: "What is this faith of yours? On the one hand, you are ready to believe in Allāh and become His servants provided you are given peace and prosperity but, on the other, if you meet with afflictions and hardships in His Way, you discard your Allāh and cease to remain His servants. You should bear in mind that this wavering attitude of yours cannot avert those misfortunes and losses which Allāh has

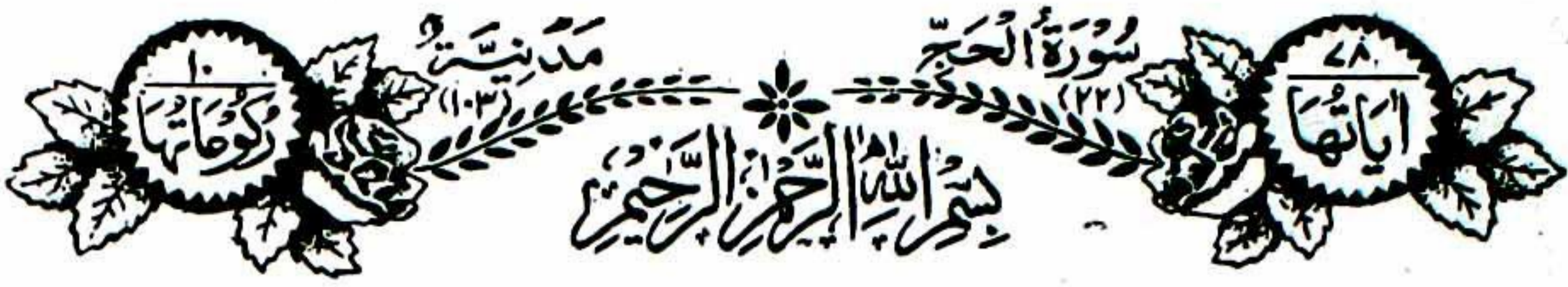
ordained for you.”

As regards the true Believers, they have been addressed in two ways: (1) in a general way so as to include the common people of Arabia also, and (2) in an exclusive way:

(1) The Believers have been told that the *mushriks* of Makkah had no right to debar them from visiting the Holy Mosque. They had no right to prevent anyone from performing Hajj because the Holy Mosque was not their private property. This objection was not only justified but it also acted as an effective political weapon against the Quraish. For it posed this question to the other clans of Arabia: Were the Quraish mere attendants of the Holy Mosque or its owners? It implied that if they succeeded in debarring the Muslims from Hajj without any protest from others, they would feel encouraged in future to debar from Hajj and ‘Umrah the people of any other clan, who happened to have strained relations with the Quraish. In order to emphasize this point, the history of the construction of the Holy Mosque has been cited to show that it was built by Prophet Abraham by the Command of Allāh and he had invited all the peoples to perform Hajj there. That is why those coming from outside had enjoyed equal rights with the local people from the very beginning. It has also been made clear that that House had not been built for the rituals of *shirk* but for the worship of One Allāh. Thus it was sheer tyranny that the worship of Allāh was being forbidden there while the worship of idols enjoyed full licence.

(2) In order to counteract the tyranny of the Quraish, the Muslims were allowed to fight with them. They were also given instructions to adopt the right and just attitude as and when they acquired power to rule in the land. Moreover, the Believers have been officially given the name of “Muslims”, saying, “You are the real heirs to Abraham and you have been chosen to become witnesses of the Truth before mankind. Therefore you should establish Ṣalāt and pay the Zakāt dues in order to become the best models of righteous life and perform Jihād for propagating the Word of Allāh.” (vv. 41, 77, 78.)

It will be worth while to keep in view the introductions to Chapters II (Al-Baqarah) and VIII (Al-Anfāl).



يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ إِنَّ زَلْزَلَةَ السَّاعَةِ شَيْءٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١﴾ يَوْمَ تَرَوُنَّهَا
تَدْهَلُ كُلُّ مُرْضِعَةٍ عَمَّا أَرْضَعَتْ وَتَضَعُ كُلُّ ذَاتِ حَمْلٍ حَمْلَهَا وَتَرَى
النَّاسَ سُكْرَىٰ وَمَا هُمْ بِسُكْرَىٰ وَلَكِنَّ عَذَابَ اللَّهِ شَدِيدٌ ﴿٢﴾ وَمِنَ
النَّاسِ مَنْ يُجَادِلُ فِي اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَ يَتَّبِعُ كُلَّ شَيْطَانٍ مَّرِيدٍ ﴿٣﴾ كُتِبَ
عَلَيْهِ أَنَّهُ مِنَ تَوَلَّاهُ فَأَنَّهُ يُضِلُّهُ وَيَهْدِيهِ إِلَىٰ عَذَابِ السَّعِيرِ ﴿٤﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا
النَّاسُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِّنَ الْبَعْثِ فَإِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِّن نُّرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ
نُطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ عَلَقَةٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ مُّضْغَةٍ مُّخَلَّقَةٍ وَغَيْرِ مُخَلَّقَةٍ لِّنُبَيِّنَ
لَكُمْ ۖ وَنُقَرِّئُ فِي الْأَرْحَامِ مَا نَشَاءُ إِلَىٰ آجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ثُمَّ نُخْرِجُكُمْ طِفْلًا
ثُمَّ لِنَبْلُغُنَّ أَشَدَّكُمْ وَمِنْكُمْ مَّن يُتَوَقَّىٰ وَمِنْكُمْ مَّن يَئِدُ إِلَىٰ أَرْدَلِ الْعُرِ
لِكَيْلَا يَعْلَمَ مِنْ بَعْدِ عِلْمٍ شَيْئًا ۗ وَتَرَى الْأَرْضَ هَامِدَةً فَإِذَا أَنزَلْنَا عَلَيْهَا
الْمَاءَ اهْتَرَّتْ وَرَبَّتْ ۖ وَأَنْبَتَتْ مِنْ كُلِّ زَوْجٍ بَهِيجٍ ﴿٥﴾ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ
الْحَقُّ وَأَنَّهُ يُحْيِي الْمَوْتَىٰ وَأَنَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٦﴾ وَأَنَّ السَّاعَةَ
آتِيَةٌ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهَا ۖ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَبْعَثُ مَنْ فِي الْقُبُورِ ﴿٧﴾ وَمِنَ النَّاسِ
مَنْ يُجَادِلُ فِي اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَلَا هُدًى وَلَا كِتَابٍ مُّنِيرٍ ﴿٨﴾ ثَانِي
عَطْفِهِ لِيُضِلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ۗ لَهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا خِزْيٌ وَنَذِيقُهُ يَوْمَ
الْقِيَامَةِ عَذَابَ الْحَرِيقِ ﴿٩﴾ ذَلِكَ بِمَا قَدَّمْتَ يَدَكَ ۖ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَيْسَ بِظَلَّامٍ
لِّلْعَبِيدِ ﴿١٠﴾ وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَعْبُدُ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ حَرْفٍ ۖ فَإِنْ أَصَابَهُ خَيْرٌ

XXII

AL-HAJJ أَتَجَّ

Verses : 78

Revealed at Al-Madīnah

In the name of Allāh, the Merciful, the Compassionate

O people, save yourselves from the wrath of your Lord: 1-2
the fact is that the earthquake of the Resurrection is a
terrible thing.¹ On the Day you behold it, you will see that
every suckling woman will forsake her suckling,² and every
pregnant female will cast her burden, and the people will
appear to you to be intoxicated, though they will not be drunk,
but the dreadful torment from Allāh will be such (as to make
them reel like drunkards³).

There are some among the people, who indulge in discus- 3-7
sions about Allah without any knowledge⁴ and follow every re-
bellious Satan, concerning whom it has been decreed that he
will mislead whoever takes him for a friend and will show
him the way to the torment of Hell. O people, if you have
any doubt about Life-after-death, you should know that We
first created you of clay, then of a sperm-drop,⁵ then of a clot
of blood, then of a lump of flesh, shaped or shapeless.⁶ (We
are telling you this) so that We may make the reality plain to
you. And We make those (sperm-drops), which We will, remain
in the wombs for a fixed period, then We bring you forth as
a child ; then (We nourish you) so that you may attain to
your full youth. And there may be among you one who is
recalled earlier and one who is returned to the most abject
age so that he should know nothing even after knowing all he
could.⁷ And you see the land lying dry and barren, but as
soon as We send down rain water upon it, it stirs (to life),
and swells and brings forth every kind of luxuriant vegeta-
tion. This is so because Allāh is the Truth.⁸ He brings the
dead to life and He has power over everything and (this is a
proof that) the Hour of Resurrection is sure to come and
there is absolutely no doubt about it, and most surely He will
raise up those who are lying in the graves.⁹

There are still others who arrogantly¹⁰ dispute about 8-10
Allāh without any knowledge¹¹ and guidance¹² and illuminat-

ing Book,¹³ so that they may lead people astray from Allāh's Way.¹⁴ Such a one shall incur disgrace in this world, and on the Day of Resurrection, We will make him taste the torment of the Fire, saying, "This is the future you have prepared for yourself with your own hands". In fact, Allāh is not unjust to His servants.

1. According to the early commentators, this earthquake will be a prelude to Resurrection. This will probably take place when the earth will begin to rotate in the reverse order, and the sun will rise in the west. In a lengthy Tradition reported by Ibn Jarīr, Ṭabarānī and Ibn Abi Ḥātim from Abū Hurairah, the Holy Prophet has stated that when the first Trumpet will be blown, there will be a general confusion; at the second all people will die and at the third they will be brought back to life and presented before Allāh. At the first blowing of the Trumpet, the earth will begin to rock like a boat which is beaten about by huge waves, or like a hanging lamp which is moved from side to side by a strong wind.

This condition has been depicted in the Qur'ān at several other places. For instance LVI : 4-6 ; LXIX : 13-14; LXXIII : 14, 17-18; LXXIX : 6-9 and XCIX : 1-3.

According to other commentators, this earthquake will occur when the dead will be brought back to life and presented before their Lord. Though this is supported by some Traditions, we prefer the first interpretation (in spite of the fact that the Tradition reported by Abū Hurairah is "weak") because that is supported by clear verses of the Qur'ān.

2. This is to show the intensity and horror of the earthquake. At that time there will be so much confusion and terror that mothers will forsake their dear children at the very time they will be suckling them.

3. It should be noted that it is not meant to depict here the condition of the Resurrection but to impress upon the people the dreadful torment of the Hour in order to admonish them to mend their ways. This is supported by the subsequent passage.

4. They do not indulge in discussions or disputes about the Being or existence of Allāh but about His rights and powers and His Revelations, as is evident from the succeeding passage. When the Holy Prophet tried to convince them of *Tauḥīd* and Resurrection, inevitably the dispute arose whether there is One Allāh, the sole Sovereign or there were other partners as well in His Godhead and whether He has the power to bring about Resurrection, etc.

5. "... created you . . . sperm-drop" : The first man Adam was created directly from clay and after him the process of procreation started by means of sperm-drop. This has been stated in XXXII : 7-8 as

well. It may also mean that man is created from sperm-drop but his body is made of those elements which are all available in the earth.

6. This refers to the different stages of development of the child in the womb of its mother. This description is based on observation and not on scientific research, and there was no need for it for the purpose for which reference to this has been made here.

7. That is, "In old age man is again reverted to the same condition in which he was in childhood. He loses his senses and knows little or nothing like a child".

8. The Arabic Text may mean three things :

- (1) Allāh is telling the Truth and you are wrong in presuming that there is no possibility of life-after-death.
- (2) Allāh's existence is not merely a supposition but it is a Reality. He is not only the First Cause but has supreme authority, and is conducting every affair in the universe according to His Will, Knowledge and Wisdom.
- (3) All His designs and works are based on Truth and are, therefore, serious, meaningful and full of wisdom.

9. In this passage, different stages of the life of man, the effects of rain on the earth and the growth of vegetation have been cited as pointers to five realities :

- (1) "Allāh alone is the Truth".
- (2) "He brings the dead to life".
- (3) "He has power over everything".
- (4) "The Day of Resurrection and the end of the world is inevitable".
- (5) Most surely Allāh will bring back to life all the people who have died".

Let us now consider how these signs point to the above five realities :

- (1) "Allāh is the Truth" : In order to prove this, let us first take the case of man. All the stages of his development are a clear proof that Allāh has designed them with wisdom. He takes his birth from a sperm-drop which itself is produced in a wonderful manner. The food, which a man takes, turns into hair, flesh, bones and a part of it is turned into semen, which is potentially capable of producing millions of human beings. It is the Wise and True God Who decides which of these millions of seeds from the semen should be utilized to make a woman pregnant by mixing the seed with the egg-cell. This insignificant thing turns into a living child in nine months in the womb of the mother. If we consider the different stages of the child's birth we come to the inevitable conclusion that all these have been designed by the True, Ever-Living Designer. For it is He Who decides whether it should be a male or a female, seeing or

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اطْمَآنَ بِهِ وَإِنْ أَصَابَتْهُ فِتْنَةٌ انْقَلَبْ عَلَىٰ وَجْهِهِ فَخَسِرَ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةُ
 ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْخُسْرَانُ الْمُبِينُ ﴿١٤﴾ يَدْعُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَنْصُرُهُ وَمَا لَا
 يَنْفَعُهُ ذَلِكَ هُوَ الضَّلَالُ الْبَعِيدُ ﴿١٥﴾ يَدْعُوا لِمَنْ خَضِرَ أَقْرَبُ مِنْ نَفْعِهِ
 لَيْسَ النَّوَىٰ وَلَيْسَ الْعَشِيرُ ﴿١٦﴾ إِنْ اللَّهُ يُدْخِلُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
 جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ إِنْ اللَّهُ يَفْعَلُ مَا يُرِيدُ ﴿١٧﴾ مَنْ كَانَ يَظُنُّ
 أَنْ لَنْ يَنْصُرَهُ اللَّهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ فَلْيَمْدُدْ بِسَبَبٍ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ ثُمَّ
 لِيَقْطَعْ فَلْيَنْظُرْ هَلْ يُذْهِبَنَّ كَيْدَهُ مَا يَغِيظُ ﴿١٨﴾ وَكَذَلِكَ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ آيَاتٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ
 وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ يَهْدِي مَنْ يُرِيدُ ﴿١٩﴾ إِنْ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالصَّابِقِينَ
 وَالنَّصَارَىٰ وَالنَّجْوَسَ وَالَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَفْصِلُ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ
 إِنْ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ ﴿٢٠﴾ أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَسْجُدُ لَهُ مَنْ فِي
 السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَالشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ وَالنُّجُومُ وَالْجِبَالُ وَالشَّجَرُ
 وَالْدَّوَابُّ وَكَثِيرٌ مِنَ النَّاسِ وَكَثِيرٌ حَقَّ عَلَيْهِ الْعَذَابُ وَمَنْ يُهِنِ اللَّهُ
 فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ مَكْرِمٍ إِنْ اللَّهُ يَفْعَلُ مَا يَشَاءُ ﴿٢١﴾ هَذَانِ خَصْمِينَ
 اخْتَصَمُوا فِي رَبِّهِمْ فَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا قُطِعَتْ لَهْمُ ثِيَابٍ مِّنْ تَارٍ يُصَبُّ مِنْ
 فَوْقِ رُءُوسِهِمُ الْحَبِيمُ ﴿٢٢﴾ يُصْهَرُ بِهِ مَا فِي بُطُونِهِمْ وَالْجُلُودُ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَ لَهُمْ
 مَقَامِعٌ مِنْ حديدٍ ﴿٢٤﴾ كُلَّمَا أَرَادُوا أَنْ يَخْرُجُوا مِنْهَا مِنْ غَمٍّ أُعِيدُوا فِيهَا
 وَذُوقُوا عَذَابَ الْحَرِيقِ ﴿٢٥﴾ إِنْ اللَّهُ يُدْخِلُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
 جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ يُجْلُونَ فِيهَا مِنْ آسَاوِرَ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ وَ
 لَوْلَا وِلْيَانُهُمْ فِيهَا حَرِيرٌ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَ هُدُوا إِلَى الطَّيِّبِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ وَ هُدُوا

السجدة

٢٤٩

And there is a type of man who serves Allāh standing on the borders (of the Faith) ;¹⁵ if some good comes to him, he is satisfied (with his Faith), but if he encounters a trial, he turns his back (upon it).¹⁶ Thus he loses both this world and the Hereafter: this is the manifest loss.¹⁷ Then, instead of Allāh, he invokes those who can do him neither harm nor good : this is the last extremity of deviation. He invokes those who are more likely to do him harm than good.¹⁸ What an evil guardian he chooses and what an evil companion !¹⁹ As for those who believed and did righteous deeds,²⁰ Allāh will admit them to Gardens underneath which canals will be flowing. Allāh does whatever He wills.²¹ As for the one who presumes that Allāh will neither help him in this world nor in the Hereafter, he should (if he can) ascend the sky by a rope and cut a hole into it and then peep through it and see for himself whether any device of his can avert his doom, which he abhors²²—And We have sent down this Qur'ān with clear teachings such as these, but Allāh alone guides whomsoever He wills.

11-16

As regards those who believed²³ and those who became Jews²⁴ and the Sabaeans²⁵ and the Christians²⁶ and the Magians²⁷ and those who committed *shirk*,²⁸ Allāh will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection,²⁹ for everything is in the sight of Allāh. Do you not see that everything in the heavens and the earth bows down before Allāh?³⁰⁻³¹ and so do the sun, and the moon and the stars, and the trees and the beasts and a large number of the people³² and even a large number of those who have deserved the torment.³³ And the one whom Allāh degrades and disgraces has none to make him worthy of honour;³⁴ Allāh does whatever He wills.³⁵

17-18

These are the two parties who have disputed about their Lord.³⁶ As regards those who have disbelieved, garments of fire have already been cut out for them ;³⁷ over their heads shall be poured boiling water, which will melt not only their skins but also the inner parts of their bellies and there shall be maces of iron to lash them. Whenever in their anguish they will try to come out of Hell, they shall be driven back into it (with the rebuke) : “Taste now the torment of burning.” As regards those, who believed and did righteous

19-24

works, Allāh will admit them into Gardens underneath which canals will be flowing : there they will be decorated with golden bracelets and pearls,³⁸ and their garments will be of silk. (This is because) they were guided to accept the pure Word,³⁹ and shown the Way of the All-Praiseworthy.⁴⁰

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blind, etc. Then it is He Who decides how long a child is destined to live. All these things are a clear proof that Allāh alone is the Truth.

- (2) "He brings the dead to life" : Even a little thinking on the right lines will convince every sensible and honest man that this process of bringing the dead to life is continuously going on before our eyes. Every human being has been created from a "dead" sperm-drop. Then he gets life from "dead things" like food containing dead matter like coal, iron, lime, salts, gases, which help make him a living human being. Then let us consider our surroundings. Seeds of different things which had been scattered here and there by the wind and birds, and the roots of different kinds of vegetation which lay rotten and dead in the soil, spring up to life as soon as there occurs a sprinkling of rain water. This process of the dead coming to life is observed during every rainy season year after year.
- (3) "Allāh has power over everything" : There are people who believe that no doubt Allāh created everything and is governing the universe, but He cannot do anything in the future in addition to or apart from this. This is because they do not observe the phenomena of His powers which have been and are appearing every moment. They do not realize that if man—His creation—can perform wonderful feats of science which could not even be dreamt of in the former ages, why should Allāh alone be held as having only limited powers ?
- (4) "The Day of Resurrection is inevitable" and "Most surely Allāh will bring back to life all the people who have died" : These two are the rational corollaries of the preceding three premises. Allāh is All-Powerful and therefore can bring about Resurrection at any moment He wills. He can also bring back to life all the dead people just as He brought to life human beings out of nothing in the first instance. As He is All-Wise, He has not created human beings without any object and purpose. He will judge their worldly lives in accordance with the object and purpose for which He created them. He will call them to account for everything He entrusted to them. This is very simple : even human beings ask one another to render an account of the property etc. they entrust to others. Likewise, Allāh's wisdom requires to call every human being to

account for the things entrusted to him. Then human nature also demands that there should be a differentiation between good and bad, and it expects the reward of good works and dreads the punishment of bad deeds. That is why the people have set up judicial courts. Thus man cannot imagine that the Creator will not call him to account for the things, powers and faculties, etc. which He has entrusted to him. Therefore common sense confirms that Allāh will hold the Last Judgment so that every one should get his due reward and his due punishment.

10. That is, they are so stiff-necked, proud, arrogant, obdurate and obstinate that they do not pay any heed to "Admonition".

11. "Knowledge" : that personal information which is gained directly through observation and experience.

12. "Guidance" : that information which is gained by reasoning or through another person who has knowledge.

13. "Illuminating Book" : Source of information gained from Divine Revelation.

14. V. 3 mentioned those people who have themselves gone astray, but v. 9 mentions those who have not only deviated from the Right Way themselves but are also bent upon misleading others from it.

15. This type of man is a time server, who stands on the boundary line between Islam and *kufr* so that he may join the winning side whether it be Islam or *kufr*.

16. As this type of man has a weak character and wavers between *kufr* and Islam he becomes the slave of his "self". He accepts Islam for the sake of self-interest : he is faithful to it if all his wishes are fulfilled and he has a life of ease and comfort; he is well-pleased with his Allāh and is "firm" in his faith. On the contrary, if his "faith" demands some sacrifice from him, or he is visited by some affliction, or encounters some hardship and loss in the way of Allāh, or he does not have his way, he begins to waver about the Godhead of Allāh and the Prophet-hood of the Messenger and becomes sceptical about everything of the "Faith". Then he is ready to bow down before any power from which he expects some benefit and security from loss.

17. This is a great moral proposition that has been stated concisely. The fact is that the wavering man remains a loser in this world as well as in the Next World, and fares worse even than an unbeliever. The unbeliever applies himself exclusively to the benefits of this world and becomes more or less successful in his object because he is not handicapped by the fear of Allāh, accountability of the Hereafter and restrictions of Divine Law. Likewise a true believer follows the way of Allāh with fortitude and perseverance and may as well become successful in this world, but even if he loses it altogether, he is assured of success in the Next World. But the "wavering Muslim" becomes a loser both in

this world and in the Next World because he is handicapped by doubt and indecision and cannot make his choice between the two worlds. As he cannot decide whether there is Allāh and the Hereafter, he cannot apply himself exclusively to the worldly affairs with that single-mindedness which the unbeliever enjoys. And when he thinks of Allāh and the Hereafter, the allurements of this world and the fear of the disadvantages here and the abhorrence of observing the Divine restrictions do not let him apply himself exclusively to the demands of the Hereafter. This conflict between "God-worship" and "World-worship" makes him a loser in this world as well as in the next.

18. Vv. 12-13 clarify two things about the deities whom the *mushriks* invoke. Firstly, they can do a person neither any good nor any harm ; nay, it is more probable that they do harm rather than good. For when the *mushrik* invokes other deities than Allāh, he loses his faith forthwith. Secondly, the *mushrik* himself knows that there is no guarantee or probability of any good from his 'god' who is utterly helpless and powerless. As regards the occasional grant of his request through his god, this is done by Allāh merely to test his faith.

19. That is, the one, who leads a person to the way of *shirk*, is the worst guardian and the worst comrade, whether he be a human being or a satan.

20. "Those who believed and did righteous deeds" are quite different from the wavering Muslims, for they have a firm belief in Allāh, His Prophet and the Hereafter. Therefore they follow the way of Truth both in prosperity and in adversity.

21. That is, "Allāh's powers are unlimited : He may bestow anything on anyone He wills in this world or in the Hereafter or in both, and bar anything from anyone. None has the power to interfere with what He wills and does".

22. There is a great divergence of opinion about the exact meaning of this verse. Some of the interpretations are :

- (1) One who presumes that Allāh will not help him (Muḥammad : Allāh's peace be upon him), he should hang himself by a rope from the ceiling.
- (2) One who presumes that Allāh will not help him (Muḥammad : Allāh's peace be upon him), he should ascend the sky by a rope and try to stop Allāh's help.
- (3) One who presumes that Allāh will not help him (Muḥammad : Allāh's peace be upon him), he should ascend the sky and stop the process of Revelations.
- (4) One who presumes that Allāh will not help him (Muḥammad : Allāh's peace be upon him), he should ascend the sky and stop his provisions.
- (5) The one who presumes that Allāh will not help him (the presumer himself), he should hang himself by a rope from the ceiling of his house.

(6) The one who presumes that Allāh will not help him (the presumer himself), he should try to ascend the sky to seek help.

The first four interpretations are obviously irrelevant to the context, and the last two, though they might fit in with the context, do not explain the real meaning of the verse. If we consider this in the context, it becomes obvious that the one who presumes is "the one who serves Allāh standing on the border". This is to rebuke him, as if to say, "You may do whatever you can to change the decrees of Allāh, but you will see that no device of yours can succeed, whether these decrees are favourable to your designs or unfavourable to them."

Obviously, "he should ascend the sky . . . cut a hole into it" has not been used in the literal but in the figurative sense.

23. This means the "Muslims" of every age who believed in the Prophets of Allāh and His Books upto the time of Prophet Muḥammad (Allāh's peace be upon him) : they included both the sincere Muslims and the wavering Muslims.

24. See E.N. 72 of Chapter IV (An-Nisā').

25. "Sabaeans" : In ancient times two sects were known by this title :

(1) The followers of Prophet John, who were found in upper Irāq in large numbers and practised baptism.

(2) The worshippers of stars, who ascribed their creed to Prophets Shīth and Idrīs (peace be upon them) and believed that the elements were governed by the planets and the planets by the angels. Their centre was at Harrān with branches spread all over Irāq. These people have been well known for their knowledge of philosophy and science and their achievements in medicine.

Probably here the first sect is referred to, because the second sect was not known by this name at the time the Qur'ān was revealed.

26. See E. N. 36 of Chapter V (Al-Mā'idah).

27. That is, the fire-worshippers of Iran, who believed in two gods—one of light and the other of darkneses—and regarded themselves as the followers of Zoroaster. Their creed and morals were so corrupted by Mazdak that a brother could easily enter into matrimony with his sister.

28. That is, "The *mushriks* of Arabia and of other countries, who had no special name like those mentioned above."

29. That is, "Allāh will pass His judgment on the Day of Resurrection in regard to all the differences and disputes which take place between different people and different religions and will decide which of them was right and which was wrong."

30. See E.N. 25 Chapter XIII (Ar-Ra'd) and E.N. 41 of Chapter XVI (An-Naḥl).

31. That is, "Angels, stars, planets, etc. and all the creation that exists in other parts of the universe, whether it is rational and possesses

[Contd. on p. 194

إِلَى صِرَاطِ الْحَمِيدِ ۗ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَيَصُدُّونَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَ
 السَّجِدِ الْحَرَامِ الَّذِي جَعَلْنَاهُ لِلنَّاسِ سَوَاءً الْعَاكِفِ فِيهِ وَالْبَادِ ۗ وَمَنْ
 يَرِدْ فِيهِ بِالْحَادِ بِظُلْمٍ نُدِقَهُ مِنْ عَذَابِ الْيَوْمِ ۗ وَإِذْ بَوَّأْنَا لِإِبْرَاهِيمَ مَكَانَ
 الْبَيْتِ أَنْ لَا تُشْرِكْ بِي شَيْئًا وَطَهِّرْ بَيْتِيَ لِلطَّائِفِينَ وَالْقَائِمِينَ وَالرُّكَّعِ
 السُّجُودِ ۗ وَأَذِّنْ فِي النَّاسِ بِالْحَجِّ يَأْتُوكَ رِجَالًا وَعَلَى كُلِّ ضَامِرٍ يَأْتِينَ
 مِنْ كُلِّ فَجٍّ عَبِيقٍ ۗ لِيَشْهَدُوا مَنَافِعَ لَهُمْ وَيَذْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ فِي أَيَّامٍ
 مَعْلُومَاتٍ عَلَى مَا رَزَقَهُمْ مِنْ بَهِيمَةِ الْأَنْعَامِ فَكُلُوا مِنْهَا وَأَطِعُوا الْبَآئِسَ
 الْفَقِيرَ ۗ ثُمَّ لِيُقْضَىٰ لَهُمْ أَهْلِيَاكُمْ وَأَسْرَابُهُمْ وَالْيَاقُوتَ وَالْيَاقُوتَ ۗ
 ذَلِكَ قَوْلُ مَنْ يُعْظَمُ حُرْمَتِ اللَّهِ فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَهُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِ ۗ وَأَحَلَّتْ لَكُمْ
 الْأَنْعَامَ إِلَّا مَا يُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْكُمْ فَاجْتَنِبُوا الرِّجْسَ مِنَ الْأَوْثَانِ وَاجْتَنِبُوا قَوْلَ
 الزُّورِ ۗ حُنْفَاءَ اللَّهِ غَيْرَ مُشْرِكِينَ بِهِ ۗ وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَكَأَنَّمَا خَرَّ مِنَ
 السَّمَاءِ فَتَخْطَفُهُ الطَّيْرُ أَوْ تَهْوِي بِهِ الرِّيحُ فِي مَكَانٍ سَحِيقٍ ۗ ذَلِكَ قَوْلُ
 مَنْ يُعْظَمُ شَعَائِرَ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّهَا مِنْ تَقْوَى الْقُلُوبِ ۗ لَكُمْ فِيهَا مَنَافِعُ إِلَىٰ
 أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ثُمَّ مَحِلُّهَا إِلَى الْبَيْتِ الْعَتِيقِ ۗ وَلِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ جَعَلْنَا مَنْسَكًا
 لِيَذْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ عَلَىٰ مَا رَزَقَهُمْ مِنْ بَهِيمَةِ الْأَنْعَامِ فَإِلَهُمُ اللَّهُ وَاحِدٌ
 فَلَهُ أَسْلَبُوا ۗ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُخْبِتِينَ ۗ الَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ وَجِلَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَ
 الصَّابِرِينَ عَلَىٰ مَا أَصَابَهُمْ وَالتَّقِيَةَ الصَّلَاةِ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ ۗ
 وَالْبُدْنَ جَعَلْنَاهَا لَكُمْ مِنْ شَعَائِرِ اللَّهِ لَكُمْ فِيهَا خَيْرٌ ۗ فَاذْكُرُوا اسْمَ
 اللَّهِ عَلَيْهَا صَوَافٍ ۗ فَإِذَا وَجَبَتْ جُنُوبُهَا فَكُلُوا مِنْهَا وَأَطِعُوا الْقَانِعَ وَ

Those who disbelieved,⁴¹ and are (now) debarring others from the Way of Allāh and from visiting that Sacred Mosque,⁴² which We have assigned to all mankind with equal rights for its dwellers and the out-siders,⁴³ (surely deserve punishment); whosoever shall deviate from righteousness, and adopt in this (Sacred Mosque) the way of iniquity,⁴⁴ We will make him taste a painful chastisement.

25

Recall to mind the time when We assigned the site of this House (the Ka'bah) to Abraham, saying, "Do not associate anything as a partner with Me ; keep My House clean and pure⁴⁵ for those who go round it and for those who stand and bow down and prostrate (in worship), and make a proclamation to the people to come to you for Ḥajj from far and near, on foot and on lean⁴⁶ camels⁴⁷ so that they may witness the benefits that have been made available here for them ;⁴⁸ and during the known appointed days, they should mention the name of Allāh over the cattle He has provided them :⁴⁹ then they may eat their flesh and also give of it to the indigent and needy.⁵⁰ Then they should clean off their "dirt",⁵¹ fulfil their vows⁵² and go round the "Ancient House".⁵³

26-29

This was (the object for which the Ka'bah was built,) and whoso observes the sanctity of the things ordained by Allāh, it will be best for him in the sight of his Lord.⁵⁴

30

And the cattle have been made lawful for you⁵⁵ except what has already been mentioned to you⁵⁶ ; therefore guard yourselves against the filth of idols,⁵⁷ and refrain from all false things.⁵⁸ Become Allāh's sincere servants, turning away from everything and without associating any partner with Him, for the one who associates a partner with Allāh, becomes like him who has fallen from heaven. Then either the birds will snatch him away or the wind will blow him off to a place where he will be shattered into pieces.⁵⁹

30-31

This is the fact of the matter : (so understand it well.) And whoso observe the sanctity of what have been ordained as Symbols⁶⁰ of Allāh, do so because of the piety of the hearts.⁶¹

32

You are permitted to derive benefits from the cattle (dedicated for sacrifice) up to an appointed time.⁶² There-

33

after the (lawful) place (of their sacrifice) is near the Ancient House.⁶³

34-35

For every community We have prescribed a way of sacrifice so that the people (of that community) should pronounce the name of Allāh over the cattle which He has provided for them,⁶⁴ (but one and the same object underlies all the different ways). So your Deity is One Deity : surrender to Him alone. And, O Prophet, give good news to those who adopt a humble way,⁶⁵ whose hearts are filled with awe when Allāh is mentioned before them : who endure with fortitude any affliction that befalls them : and who establish Ṣalāt and expend of what We have given them.⁶⁶

36

And We have included the camels⁶⁷ (dedicated for sacrifice) among the Symbols of Allāh, for there is much good for you in them.⁶⁸ Therefore make them stand⁶⁹ and mention the name of Allāh over them,⁷⁰ and when (after the sacrifice,) their backs lie still on the ground,⁷¹ you may eat of their flesh and give of it to the contented ones and to those who ask for it. Thus have We subjected these animals to you so that you may be grateful.⁷²

Contd. from p. 191]

freedom of will and choice like man, or irrational like animals, vegetation, solid matter, air and light.”

32. That is, “A large number of the people bow down before Allāh not by compulsion but willingly. On the other hand, there are many other people who bow down before Him under compulsion along with everything else in the universe, but they deserve punishment because they refuse to obey Allāh in those spheres of life in which they have the choice to obey or not to obey.”

33. That is, though the Final Judgment will be passed on the Day of Resurrection, a discerning eye can see even today those “who have already deserved the torment.” For instance, the man who rejects the Message of the open book of Nature and the Message of the Prophets and adopts self-made false creeds and then disputes about them with the Believers, proves himself to be in manifest error in this world as well.

34. In this verse “honour” and “disgrace” mean the acceptance of the Truth and its rejection. It is obvious that the one who does not see manifest realities is doomed to disgrace : for Allāh lets him attain what he desires and works for; and when Allāh does not bestow on anyone the honour of following the Truth, there is none else who can bestow it on him.

35. Here it is obligatory to perform a *sajdah* (prostration), which is agreed upon by all Jurists. For further details please See E.N. 157 of Chapter VII (Al-A'raf).

36. Here all the disputants about Allāh have been divided into two main categories in spite of their large numbers :

(1) Those who believe in the Message of the Prophets and adopt the righteous way of life.

(2) Those who reject their Message and follow different ways of disbelief, though they may have countless differences and disputes among themselves.

37. See v. 50 and E.N. 58 of Chapter XIV (Ibrāhīm) for explanation.

38. This is to show that they will be honoured like the kings and chiefs who used to wear ornaments of gold and jewelry in the period the Qur'ān was revealed.

39. "Pure Word" : though it may imply every pure thing, here it refers to the basic articles of the Faith.

40. As already stated in the Introduction, the portion of the Sūrah, which was sent down at Makkah, comes to an end here. Though its style is clearly that of the Makkī Sūrahs and there is nothing to indicate that any part (or the whole) of it was revealed at al-Madīnah, yet the words, "these are the two parties", have given rise to the misunderstanding that this verse was revealed at al-Madīnah. Some commentators are of the opinion that the two parties referred to were the parties who met in the Battle of Badr, but there is nothing in the context to support this opinion. On the other hand, from the context in which these words occur, it becomes obvious that the two parties referred to were the "Believers and the disbelievers." For the conflict between Belief and disbelief has always been going on ever since the creation of man and will go on upto the Day of Resurrection.

Incidentally, this latter view helps prove that the Qur'ān is a continuous whole and every part of it is closely connected with the other : whereas the comments mentioned earlier would imply that there is no continuous theme in the Qur'ān but different parts of it have been put together without rhyme or reason.

41. "Those who disbelieved" were the people who rejected the Message of the Holy Prophet. The subsequent theme clearly shows that they were the disbelievers of Makkah.

42. That is, "They debarred the Holy Prophet and his followers from performing Hajj and 'Umrah".

43. That is, "This is not exclusively the property of any person or family or clan but is meant for all mankind alike. Therefore none has any right to debar others from it."

In this connection, two questions have arisen among the Jurists of Islam :

(1) What is meant by the "Sacred Mosque" ? Does it mean the mosque itself or includes the whole "Inviolable Place" of

Makkah ?

- (2) What is meant by "equal rights" of its dwellers and the outsiders ?

According to some jurists it means the "Sacred Mosque" itself and not the whole of Inviolable Makkah. They base this opinion on the apparent wording of the Qur'ān, and say that by "equal rights" is meant equal rights only in regard to worship in it. They cite a Tradition of the Holy Prophet to support their opinion. He said : "O children of 'Abd Manāf, those of you who will have authority over the affairs of the people, should not stop anybody from moving round the Ka'bah or from offering prayers in it at any time of the day or night."

Imām Shāfi'ī and others who support this view are of the opinion that it is wrong to conclude from this verse that the rights of the dwellers and the outsiders are equal in every respect, but they are equal only in regard to the right of worship and in nothing else, for the people of Makkah owned the lands and the houses of Makkah before Islam and also after it. So much so that during the time of Caliph 'Umar, the house of Ṣafwān bin Umayyah was actually purchased from him for the purpose of making a prison in Makkah.

The others who hold that the "Sacred Mosque" refers to the whole of the "Inviolable Place" of Makkah derive their authority from verses 196 and 217 of Chapter II (Al-Baqarah). They argue that Ḥajj is not performed only in the Ka'bah (the Sacred Mosque), but the pilgrim has to visit Minā, Muzdalifah, 'Arafāt, etc. for the performance of Ḥajj rites. Thus, they hold that equality is not merely in regard to worship in the "Sacred Mosque", but in regard to all other rights in Makkah. As this place has been appointed for Ḥajj by Allāh for all alike, none has any right of ownership in it. Anyone can stay anywhere he likes and none can prohibit him from doing so. They cite many Traditions in support of their opinion :

- (1) 'Abdullāh bin 'Umar reports that the Holy Prophet said : "Makkah is the place where travellers have to stay : therefore its lands cannot be sold nor can anyone charge rent for its houses."
- (2) According to Ibrāhīm Nakha'ī, the Holy Prophet said: "Makkah has been made an 'Inviolable Place' by Allāh : therefore selling its land and charging of rent for its houses is unlawful". Mujāhid has also reported a tradition almost in similar words.
- (3) 'Alqamah says, "During the time of the Holy Prophet, and of the first three Caliphs, the lands of Makkah were regarded as common property and one could live there or allow others to live therein."
- (4) 'Abdullāh bin 'Umar says, "Caliph 'Umar had ordered that no resident of Makkah should close the door of his house during the Ḥajj season." According to Mujāhid, Caliph 'Umar had ordered that the people of Makkah should not put doors to

enclose their courtyards but keep them open so that anyone who liked might come in and stay there. The same has been related by 'Atā' with the addition that Suhail bin 'Amr was the only exception to this rule, who was allowed to put a door in his courtyard in order to safeguard his camels in connection with his trade.

- (5) 'Abdullāh bin 'Umar also says that the one who receives rent for his house in Makkah fills his belly with fire.
- (6) 'Abdullāh bin 'Abbās says that Allāh has made the whole of Makkah the "Sacred Mosque" where all have equal rights. Therefore the people of Makkah have no right to charge rent.
- (7) 'Umar bin 'Abdul 'Azīz sent an order to the governor of Makkah to this effect : "No rent should be charged for the houses of Makkah because it is unlawful".

On the basis of the above traditions, quite a few of the followers of the Companions and also Imāms Malik, Abū Ḥanīfah, Sufyān Thaurī, Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal and Ishāq bin Rāhawayah from among the Jurists, are of the opinion that it is unlawful to sell a piece of land and to charge rent, at least during the Ḥajj season, in Makkah. However, the majority of the Jurists are of the opinion that people can own houses in Makkah and can sell them as buildings but not as land.

In my opinion, this last view seems to be the right one because it conforms with the Qur'ān and the Sunnah and the practice of the rightly-guided Caliphs. It is obvious that Allāh has not made Ḥajj obligatory for the Muslims of the whole world in order to provide a means of income for the people of Makkah. As Allāh has set apart the "Inviolable Place" for the benefit of all the Believers, that land is not the property of anyone and every pilgrim has the right to stay anywhere he can find room for himself.

44. It does not imply any specific act, but means every act that deviates from righteousness and falls under the definition of iniquity. Though all such acts are sins at all times and places, their commission in the "Inviolable Place" makes them all the more heinous; so much so that the commentators are of the opinion that even taking of an unnecessary oath brings it under the same category.

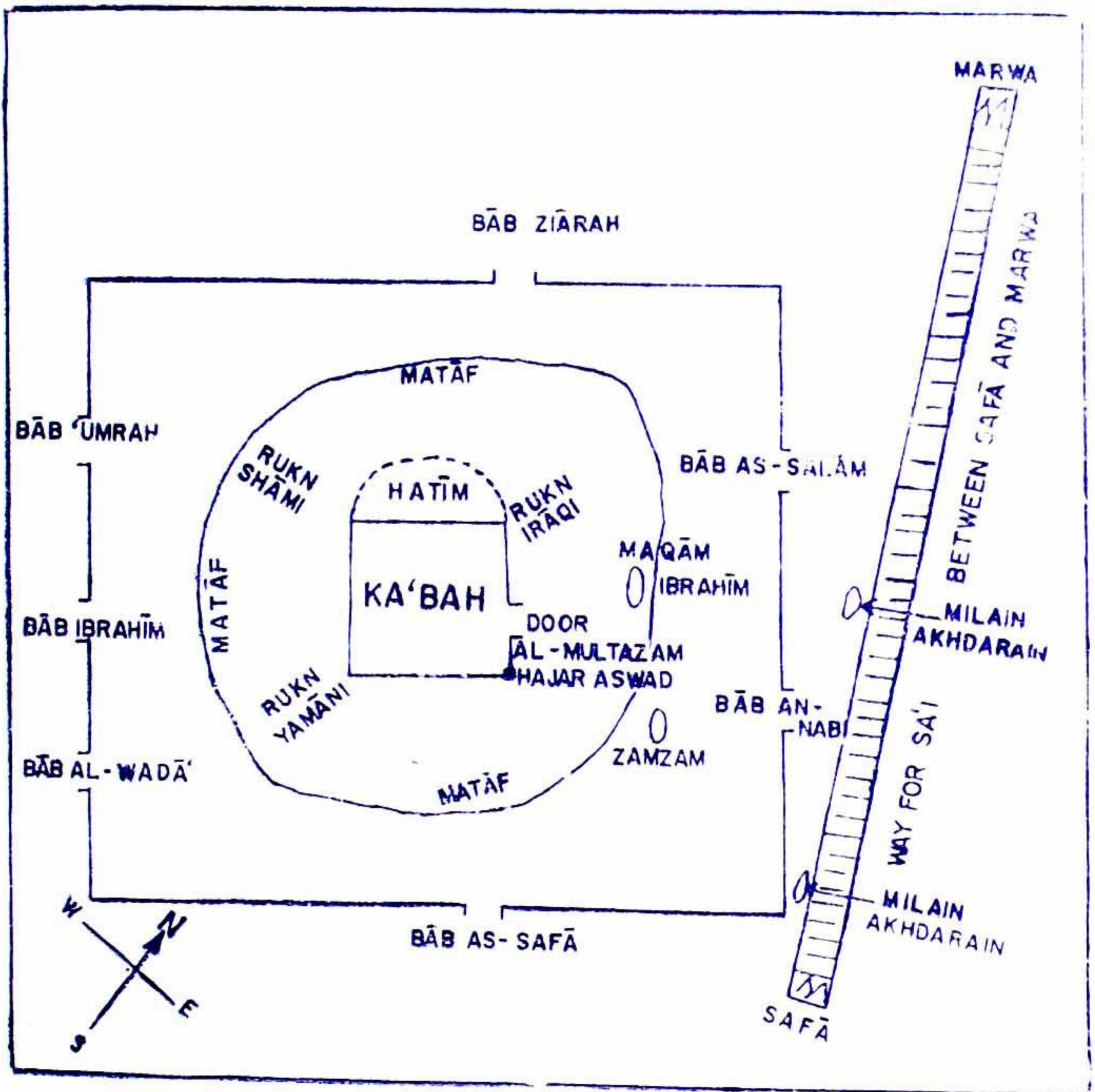
Besides common sins, there are certain other things whose commission in the "Inviolable Place" brings them under the same category. For instance :

- (1) It is prohibited to take legal action even against a murderer, etc. who takes shelter within the "Inviolable Place": so much so that he cannot be arrested as long as he remains therein. This sanctity of the "Inviolable Place" is being observed since the time of Prophet Abraham. The Qur'ān says, "Whoso even enters it, he becomes safe and secure . . ." (III : 97).

- (2) The consensus of opinion is that there can be no retribution within the "Inviolable Place" for the crimes committed outside it. Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, 'Abdullāh bin 'Umar and 'Abdullāh bin 'Abbās declared, "We will not take any action in it even against the murderer of our fathers."
- (3) It is unlawful to wage war or shed blood within it. On the second day of the conquest of Makkah, the Holy Prophet declared, "O people, Allāh has made Makkah a Sanctuary since the very creation of this world, and it will remain so by Allāh's ordinance up to the Day of Resurrection; therefore, it is not lawful for any man, who believes in Allāh and the Day of Resurrection, to shed blood here". Then he added, "Suppose a man legalizes bloodshed here on the basis of the precedent that I waged war here, tell him, 'Allāh made it lawful for His Messenger and not for you'. It was made lawful for me for a short interval of the day. Then it was again made "Inviolable" as before".
- (4) It is unlawful to cut naturally growing trees or uproot the grass which has grown there. It is also prohibited to hunt birds and animals within the boundary or to drive them out from the "Inviolable Place" for hunting. It is, however, lawful to kill a serpent, a scorpion and other harmful animals and to uproot dry grass and "*Izkhir*" which is a kind of grass.
- (5) It is prohibited to pick up anything that has fallen to the ground. In a Tradition, reported by Abū Dāwūd, the Holy Prophet prohibited people to pick up anything belonging to a pilgrim that had fallen to the ground.
- (6) It is unlawful for a pilgrim who comes with the intention of performing Ḥajj or 'Umrah to enter therein without *Iḥrām*. However, there is a divergence of opinion in regard to the entry of others than the pilgrims without *Iḥrām*. According to 'Abdullāh bin 'Abbās no one is allowed to enter therein without *Iḥrām* in any case, and this has been supported by a saying each of Imām Aḥmad and Imām Shāfi'ī. According to other sayings of Imāms Aḥmad and Shāfi'ī, those people who have to visit the "Inviolable Place" frequently in connection with trade and business, are excepted. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, however, holds the view that the person who lives within the limits of the appointed "*Miqāts*" can visit Makkah without entering *Iḥrām* but the outsiders cannot enter it without *Iḥrām*.

45. Some commentators opine that the address to Prophet Abraham ends with v. 26 and say that the Command contained in v. 27 was addressed to the Holy Prophet; but this opinion does not fit in with the context. For it is obvious that this Command also was addressed to Prophet Abraham when he had built the Ka'bah. Moreover, the

MAP No. 3
 OUTLINE MAP OF THE KA'BAH AND WAY FOR SA'I



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command implies that the House of Allāh had been built for the worship of One Allāh and there was general permission from the very first day for all worshippers to visit it for performing Hajj.

46. The expression "lean camels" has been deliberately used to depict the picture of the camels of pilgrims coming from far-off places to perform Hajj.

47. In my opinion the address to Prophet Abraham comes to an end with v. 27 and vv. 28-29 have been added to emphasize and give further instructions for the performance of Hajj. We have based this opinion on the use of the epithet "Ancient House of the Ka'bah". It could not have been used at the time when Prophet Abraham built it. (For further details about the construction of the Ka'bah see II: 125-129, III : 96, 97 and XIV : 35-41).

48. "The benefits" include both religious and worldly benefits. It was due mainly to the Ka'bah that during the period of 2500 years between the times of Prophet Abraham and the Holy Prophet, the Arabs, in spite of their tribal life, remained attached to one central place and continued to visit it from all parts of Arabia for performing Hajj year after year. This in turn preserved their language, their culture and their Arab identity. Then during the course of the year they were afforded at least four months of perfect peace when anybody and everybody could safely travel alone or in trade caravans ; thus the ritual of Hajj was directly beneficial to economic life of the country as well. For details see III : 97 and E.N's 80, 81 thereof, and V : 97 and E.N. 113 thereof.

49. "The cattle" here imply the camel, cow, sheep and goat as has been clearly mentioned in VI : 142-144. "... they should mention the name of Allāh over the cattle" implies that they should slaughter the cattle for Allāh's sake and in His name, as is clear from the subsequent sentences. Allāh's name should be recited at the time the cattle are slaughtered to show that the Muslims are to slaughter and sacrifice animals in Allāh's name alone so as to distinguish them from the disbelievers who slaughtered animals without mentioning Allāh's name or by mentioning other names than that of Allāh.

As regards "the known appointed days", there is a difference of opinion as to their exact identity. Some of the opinions as to what the "appointed days" mean are :

- (1) The first ten days of Zil-Hajj. This view is supported by Ibn 'Abbās, Ḥasan Baṣri, Ibrāhīm Nakha'ī, Qatādah and several other Companions and their followers. Imāms Abū Ḥanīfah, Shāfi'ī and Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal have also favoured this view.
- (2) The tenth of Zil-Hajj and the three days following it. This view is supported by Ibn 'Abbās, Ibn 'Umar, Ibrāhīm Nakha'ī, Ḥasan and 'Atā'. Imāms Shāfi'ī and Aḥmad are also reported to have favoured this in a saying each.

- (3) The tenth day of Zil-Hajj and the two following days. This view has been supported by Ḥadhrat 'Umar, 'Alī, Ibn 'Umar, Ibn 'Abbās, Anas bin Mālik, Abū Hurairah, Sa'īd bin Musayyab and Sa'īd bin Jubair. Sufyān Thaurī, Imām Mālik, Imām Abū Yūsuf and Imām Muḥammad from among the Jurists have also adopted it, and the Hanafites and the Malikites are also generally agreed on this.

50. The imperative mood of the verb has given rise to the misunderstanding that it is obligatory to eat their flesh and also to give of it to the needy people, Imāms Shāfi'ī and Mālik opine that it is good to eat of it and it is obligatory to give of it to others. According to Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, both these things are permitted but are not obligatory. It is good to eat of it, for the people in the days of ignorance considered it unlawful to eat sacrificial meat of their own animals, and it is good to give of it to the poor by way of help. Ibn Jarīr has cited instances from Ḥasan Baṣrī, 'Atā', Mujāhid and Ibrāhīm Nakha'ī to prove that the imperative mood does not always imply a command, as for example in V : 2 and LXII : 10. Thus, "... give of it to the indigent" does not mean that the flesh cannot be given to a rich person for the Companions of the Holy Prophet used to give of it to their friends, neighbours, relatives whether they were rich or poor. According to Ibn 'Umar, one-third of the flesh may be consumed at home, one-third may be given to the neighbours and the remaining one-third distributed among the needy.

51. It means that after performing the essential Ḥajj rites, one should put off *Iḥrām*, have a shave, bath, etc. for one is free from the restrictions of *Iḥrām* after Ḥajj. However, one is not allowed to have sexual relations with his wife till one has performed the *Ṭawāf* of *Ziyārah* or *Ifādah*.

52. That is, the vow one has made for that occasion.

53. The Arabic word '*Atīq*', which has been used for the Ka'bah, is very meaningful for it implies :

- (1) ancient,
- (2) free from the sovereignty and ownership of anyone,
- (3) honoured and revered.

I am of the opinion that here the word *Ṭawāf* refers to the circumambulation performed on the tenth day of Zil-Hajj after setting aside *Iḥrām*, as the last ritual of Ḥajj, and is called *Ṭawāf* of *Ifādah* or *Ziyārah* (Visit).

54. Though the "command" is of a general nature, here it refers particularly to the prohibitions which are connected with the "Sacred Mosque", Ḥajj, 'Umrah and Makkah. Incidentally, there is a subtle hint in it to the Quraish; who had driven out the Muslims from Makkah and debarred them from Ḥajj and violated the sanctity of the "Ancient House" by associating indecent, filthy, and ungodly rites with Ḥajj and the House in contradiction to the ways of Abraham.

55. "And the cattle have been made lawful for you . . ." has been cited here for two objects :

- (1) It is to refute the custom of the Quraish under which certain cattle—*baḥīrah*, *sāibah*, *waṣilah* and *ḥām*—were considered unlawful. They are being told that these are also lawful like other cattle.
- (2) It is not unlawful as was held by the Quraish to eat the flesh of the cattle even in the state of "*Iḥrām*".

56. This refers to VI: 145 and XVI : 115 in which Allāh has forbidden the Muslims to eat what dies of itself, blood, flesh of swine or what has been slaughtered in any name other than Allāh's.

57. That is, "Refrain from and guard against the worship of idols just as you avoid filthy and dirty things".

58. Though the expression "false things" is general and implies lies, false evidence, calumny, etc., here it particularly refers to those false creeds, rites, and rituals and superstitious things on which *kufr* and *shirk* have been founded. It is obvious that there is no greater lie than associating others with Allāh in His Being, Attributes, Powers and Rights. It was a falsehood to make *baḥīrah*, etc. unlawful. See also XVI : 116.

To take a false oath and give a false evidence also come under this Commandment. A Tradition from the Holy Prophet says :

"A false evidence is equal to *shirk* with Allāh."

That is why according to the Islamic Law, a false witness should be punished and disgraced. Imāms Abū Yūsuf and Muḥammad have expressed the opinion that a person who brings a false witness in the court should be publicly exposed and sentenced to a long imprisonment. This was the actual practice in the time of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar. According to Makhūl, he said :

"Such a person should be whipped, his head shaved and face blackened and he should be sentenced to a long imprisonment."

'Abdullāh bin 'Āmir has reported from his father that a person's false evidence was established in Ḥaḍrat 'Umar's court, whereupon the Caliph kept him exposed to public for a day, saying that he was so and so and a false witness so that people might recognize him, and then he imprisoned him. These days this can be done by publishing the culprit's name in the newspapers, etc.

59. In this parable "heaven" means the original human nature. Man by nature is the servant of none else but Allāh and inherently accepts the Doctrine of *Tauḥīd*. That is why the one who follows the guidance of the Prophets becomes firm in these dictates of his nature and soars higher and higher. On the other hand, the one who rejects Allāh or associates a partner with Him falls down from the "heaven" of his nature. Then he either becomes a victim of satans and evil leaders like the birds of the parable, which snatch away the fallen man, or he becomes a slave of his lusts, passions, whims, etc., which have been likened to the

wind in the parable. They lower him down from one wrong position to the other till he falls into the deepest abyss of degradation.

60. "Symbols of God worship" : the performance of Ṣalāt, Ḥajj, Fasting, etc., or things like a Mosque or sacrificial offerings, etc. (See V: 2 and E.N.'s 5-7 thereof).

61. That is, the observance of the sanctity of the "Symbols" by a man is a proof that there is piety in his heart. On the other hand, the man who violates their sanctity proves himself to be void of piety and fear of God. It shows that he either does not believe at all in Allāh or adopts a rebellious attitude against Him.

62. This is to remove the misunderstanding about getting any benefit from the animals dedicated for sacrifice as they were also included in the "Symbols of Allāh". This was necessitated because the Arabs believed that it was unlawful to get any benefit from them. One could neither ride on them nor carry any load on them nor consume their milk, after they had been dedicated for sacrifice during Ḥajj. In this verse that misunderstanding has been removed. Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah and Anas have reported that the Holy Prophet saw a man walking in a miserable condition on foot leading his camel by the nose-string. When the Holy Prophet asked him to ride on it, he replied that it was his sacrificial offering. The Holy Prophet again urged him to ride on his camel.

There is a divergence of opinion in regard to the interpretation of "an appointed time". Some commentators, particularly Ibn 'Abbās, Qatādah, Mujāhid, Ḍaḥḥāk and 'Atā' are of the view that it refers to the time of the dedication of the animals for sacrifice. Obviously this is not the correct view, because in that case the permission to get benefit from them becomes meaningless. There are other commentators including 'Urwah bin Zubair and 'Atā' bin Abī Rabāḥ, who are of the view that "appointed time" means the time of sacrifice and one can get benefit from them up till then. One may ride on them, drink their milk, take their young ones for use and shear their hair, wool, etc. Imām Shāfi'ī has adopted this view. The Hanafites are of the opinion that one can get benefit from them, if need be, though it is preferable not to do so.

63. It does not mean that the sacrifice is to be made in the precincts of the "Ancient House" of the Ka'bah. The Qur'ān uses the "House of Allāh" or Masjid-i-Ḥarām for the whole of the "Inviolable Place" of Makkah and not for that particular building. (V : 95).

64. This verse implies two things :

- (1) Sacrifice has been an essential part of the worship of One Allāh in all the revealed religions. In order to inculcate *Tauḥīd*, Allāh prohibited sacrifice for anyone other than Himself. This was in keeping with the other prohibitions which were made for others than Allāh. For instance, "prostration" before anyone other than Allāh, making vows for others than Allāh, visiting holy places others than those prescribed by Allāh, fasting in the name

of others than of Allāh, etc., were all prohibited.

- (2) The other thing which has been common in all the revealed religions was the object of the sacrifice in the name of Allāh though its details have been different in different religions, times and countries.

65. The Arabic word '*mukhbitin*' has no equivalent in English. It includes those who (1) give up pride, arrogance and adopt humility before Allāh, (2) surrender themselves to His service and slavery, and (3) accept His decrees sincerely.

66. It means that righteous people spend their lawful provisions in the Way of Allāh to meet their own and their dependents' lawful needs, to help their relatives, neighbours and other needy people, on public works and propagation of the Word of Allāh. It does not include expenditure in unlawful ways for unlawful purposes. The Qur'ānic term *Infāq* implies neither over-spending nor being miserly and stingy, but spending one's wealth on oneself and others according to one's means and status in society.

67. Seven persons can become partners in the sacrifice of one camel and likewise in the sacrifice of one cow and the like, as enjoined by the Holy Prophet in a Tradition reported by Jābir bin 'Abdullāh in the Collection of *Hadīth* by Muslim.

68. That is, "You should sacrifice animals because you get many benefits from them to show your gratitude to Allāh, the Giver, and also to acknowledge His Supremacy and Sovereignty".

69. It should be noted that a camel is sacrificed while it is standing. This was enjoined by the Holy Prophet and is supported by Ibn 'Abbās, Mujāhid, Daḥḥāk, etc. Muslim and Bukhārī have reported a Tradition from Ḥaḍrat Ibn 'Umar, who saw a man slaughtering his camel in the sitting position. He said to him, "Tie one foot of your camel and make it stand, because that is the way of Abul Qāsim (peace be upon him)". According to a tradition reported by Ḥaḍrat Jābir bin 'Abdullāh, in Abū Dāwūd, the Holy Prophet and his Companions would tie a left foot of the camel and would make it stand on three feet; then they would slaughter it. The same is implied by the subsequent sentence: ". . . and after their backs lie still on the ground . . .", *i.e.* when they fall down to the ground after enough of their blood has run out.

70. "Mention the name of Allāh over them" implies that animals should be slaughtered by pronouncing the name of Allāh over them, because without that their flesh would be unlawful to eat. This shows that in the Islamic Law there is no conception of slaughtering an animal without pronouncing the name of Allāh over it. According to Traditions, there are different wordings for pronouncing the name of Allāh over the animals at the time of their slaughter. Some of these are:

- (1) *Bismillahi Allahu Akbar; Allahumma minka wa laka*: "In the

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الْمُحْتَرِّطُ كَذَلِكَ سَخَرْنَاهَا لَكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾ لَنْ يَنَالَ اللَّهُ لُحُومَهَا وَ
 لَا دِمَآؤَهَا وَلَكِنَّ يَنَالُهُ التَّقْوَى مِنْكُمْ كَذَلِكَ سَخَرَهَا لَكُمْ لِتُكَبِّرُوا اللَّهَ عَلَى
 مَا هَدَاكُمْ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٥١﴾ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُدْفِعُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ۗ إِنَّ
 اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ خَوَّانٍ كَفُورٍ ﴿٥٢﴾ أُوذِيَ الَّذِينَ يُقْتَلُونَ بِأَنَّهُمْ ظَلَمُوا وَإِنَّ
 اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ نَصْرِهِمْ لَقَدِيرٌ ﴿٥٣﴾ الَّذِينَ أُخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ إِلَّا أَنْ
 يَقُولُوا رَبَّنَا اللَّهُ ۗ وَكَوَلَا دَفَعُ اللَّهُ النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُمْ بِبَعْضٍ لَّهَدَمَتْ صَوَامِعُ
 وَبِيَعٌ وَصَلَوَاتٌ وَمَسَاجِدُ يُذَكَرُ فِيهَا اسْمُ اللَّهِ كَثِيرًا ۗ وَكَيْنُصَرَنَ اللَّهُ
 مَنْ يَنْصُرُهُ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَقَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ ﴿٥٤﴾ الَّذِينَ إِنْ مَكَّنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَقَامُوا
 الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ وَآمَرُوا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَنَهَوْا عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَاقِبَةُ
 الْأُمُورِ ﴿٥٥﴾ وَإِنْ يُكَذِّبُوكَ فَقَدْ كَذَّبَتْ قَوْمُ نُوحٍ وَآدَمُ وَشُعُوبٌ
 وَقَوْمُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَقَوْمُ لُوطٍ ﴿٥٦﴾ وَأَصْحَابُ مَدْيَنَ ۗ وَكَذَّبَ مُوسَىٰ فَأَمَلَيْتُ
 لِلْكَافِرِينَ ثُمَّ أَخَذْتُهُمْ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ نَكِيرِ ﴿٥٧﴾ فَكَأَيِّنْ مِنْ قَرْيَةٍ أَهْلَكْنَاهَا
 وَهِيَ ظَالِمَةٌ فَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلَىٰ عُرُوشِهَا وَبِئْرٌ مُعَطَّلَةٌ وَقَصْرٌ مَشِيدٌ ﴿٥٨﴾
 أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَتَكُونُ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ يَعْقِلُونَ بِهَا أَوْ آذَانٌ
 يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا ۗ فَإِنَّهَا لَا تَعْمَى الْأَبْصَارُ وَلَكِنْ تَعْمَى الْقُلُوبُ الَّتِي فِي
 الصُّدُورِ ﴿٥٩﴾ وَيَسْتَعْجِلُونَكَ بِالْعَذَابِ وَلَنْ يُخْلِفَ اللَّهُ وَعْدَهُ ۗ وَإِنَّ يَوْمًا
 عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ كَأَلْفِ سَنَةٍ مِمَّا تَعُدُّونَ ﴿٦٠﴾ وَكَأَيِّنْ مِنْ قَرْيَةٍ أَمَلَيْتُ لَهَا
 وَهِيَ ظَالِمَةٌ ثُمَّ أَخَذْتُهَا ۗ وَإِلَى الْمَصِيرِ ﴿٦١﴾ قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّمَا أَنَا
 لَكُمْ نَذِيرٌ مُبِينٌ ﴿٦٢﴾ فَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَأَرْزُقُ

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(Note it well that) neither their flesh reaches Allāh nor their blood, but it is your piety that reaches Him.⁷³ Thus has Allāh subjected these animals to you so that you should glorify Him for the guidance He has given you.⁷⁴ And, O Prophet, give good news to those who do righteous works.

37

Assuredly⁷⁵ Allāh defends those who have believed⁷⁶ for He does not like any treacherous, ungrateful wretch⁷⁷ at all. Permission (to fight) has been granted to those against whom war has been waged because they have been treated unjustly,⁷⁸ and Allāh is certainly able to help them.⁷⁹ These are the people who have been expelled unjustly from their homes⁸⁰ only for the reason that they said, "Our Lord is Allāh."⁸¹ Had Allāh not repelled one people by means of another people, monasteries, churches, synagogues⁸² and mosques, wherein the name of Allāh is often mentioned, would have been demolished.⁸³ Allāh will surely help those people who help Him:⁸⁴ Allāh is indeed All-Powerful, All-Mighty. These are the people who, if We give them power in the land, will establish Ṣalāt, pay the Zakāt dues, enjoin what is right and forbid what is evil,⁸⁵ and the final decision of all affairs is in the hand of Allāh.⁸⁶

38-41.

O Prophet, if they⁸⁷ treat you as false, (you should remember that) before them the people of Noah, and the tribes of 'Ād and Thamūd, and the peoples of Abraham and Lot and the dwellers of Midian had treated their Prophets as false and likewise Moses was also rejected. At first I gave respite to all these disbelievers and then seized them.⁸⁸ Now you can see for yourselves how terrible was My chastisement!⁸⁹ There are (the ruins of) many a wicked habitation which We destroyed: today they are lying upside down upon their roofs. How many a well has been rendered useless,⁹⁰ and how many a lofty castle is lying in ruins! Have they not gone about in the land so as to make their hearts think and ears hear? The fact, however, is that it is the hearts in the breasts and not the eyes that become blind.⁹¹

42-46

These people are demanding of you to hasten the chastisement.⁹² Allāh will never fail to fulfil His threat, but a day with your Lord is equal to a thousand years as you reckon.⁹³ There has been many a wicked habitation, whom at first I

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gave respite and then seized it, and all shall have to return to Me.

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name of Allāh, Allāh is most Great! O Allāh, this is Thine and is presented to Thee”.

(2) *Allāhu Akbar ; Lā ilāha ill-Allahu ; Allahumma minka wa laka :* “Allāh is most Great: There is no god but Allāh: O Allāh, this is Thine and is presented to Thee”.

(3) *Innī wajjahtu wajhiya lillazī faṭar-as-samāwāti wal-arda, ḥanīf-an-wa mā anā min-al-mushrikīn. Inna Ṣalāti wa nusukī wa maḥyāya wa mamātī lillāhi Rabb-ill-‘ālamīn. Lā sharīka lahū wa bi-zālika umirtu wa anā min-al-Muslimīn. Allahumma minka wa laka.*

“I have turned my face sincerely towards the Being Who created the heavens and the earth, and I am not from among the idolatrous people. My Ṣalāt and my rites of worship and my life and my death are all for Allāh, the Lord of the universe, Who has no partner with Him. This is what I have been enjoined and I am the first to surrender to Him. O Allāh! This is Thine, and is presented to Thee”.

71. “. . . lie still on the ground . . .” means till they die completely, for the Holy Prophet prohibited to cut off a piece of flesh, if there is still any sign of life in the slaughtered animal; if this is done, the piece of flesh would be unlawful.

72. This is another reason why animals should be sacrificed: “They should be sacrificed as a mark of gratitude to Allāh Who has subjected them to you”.

73. This prescribes a very important condition for the sacrifice made in the worship of Allāh. A sacrifice is acceptable to Allāh only if it is accompanied by piety and sincerity. Though sacrifice is a Symbol of Allāh, yet it has been made plain that it is accepted only if it is accompanied by piety, saying, “Neither their flesh reaches Allāh nor their blood, but it is your piety” This was also meant to condemn the ritual of the days of ignorance, when the Arabs took the flesh to the Ka‘bah and smeared its walls with the blood of the sacrificed animal.

74. “. . . . you should glorify Allāh” at the time of sacrifice verbally also in order to acknowledge that the animals really belong to Allāh and to no one else. One of the sentences uttered at the time of sacrifice is *Allahumma minka wa laka* (O Allāh, this animal is Thine and is presented to Thee).

It should be noted well that the command of sacrifice as contained in verses 36 and 37 is not for the pilgrims alone and that the performance of sacrifice is not confined to Makkah on the occasion of Ḥajj. It is a general command for all those Muslims who are well off. They have been enjoined to be grateful to Allāh because He has subjected these animals for the good of all human beings. Therefore they are required to sacrifice

the animals during these days so that they may spiritually join those who go to Makkah to perform Hajj.

There are many authentic Traditions to the effect that the Holy Prophet made sacrifice on this occasion, while he was personally at al-Madīnah:

- (1) "The one who does not perform sacrifice even though he can should not join us in the 'Īd Prayer". (Musnad Aḥmad, Ibn Mājah).
- (2) According to a Tradition reported by Ibn 'Umar, the Holy Prophet dwelt at al-Madīnah for ten years and performed sacrifice every year. (Tirmizī).
- (3) According to Ḥaḍrat Anas, the Holy Prophet said :
"The one who sacrificed an animal before the 'Īd Prayer, should offer another sacrifice; but the one who sacrificed his animal after the 'Īd Prayer, did the right thing and followed the way of the Muslims". (Bukhārī)

In this connection, it is note-worthy that no 'Īd Prayer is held on the tenth of Zil-Hajj in Makkah: therefore the injunction was meant for all Muslims and not only for those performing Hajj at Makkah.

Thus, it is clear that the sacrifice on the occasion of 'Īd which is observed in the whole Muslim world is a Sunnah of the Holy Prophet and has been enjoined by him. The only dispute is whether it is obligatory in nature or only a Sunnah. Ibrāhīm Nakha'ī, Imāms Abū Ḥanīfah, Mālik, Muḥammad and, according to a Tradition, Imām Abū Yūsuf too, are of the opinion that it is obligatory in nature. On the other hand, Imāms Shāfi'ī and Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal regard it only as a Sunnah of the Muslims, and Sufyān Thaurī has also agreed with them, saying that there will be no harm if a person does not offer a sacrifice. It is, however, an irony that some of the "learned" Muslims of our time, who follow neither the Qur'ān nor the Sunnah, and are only guided by personal whims, have declared that if there is a consensus of opinion of the Muslims, they can give up the practice of sacrifice on the occasion of 'Īd.

75. From here the address for the first time prepares the Muslims for *Jihād*. In order to understand this, we should keep in view the preceding portion (vv. 19-24) in which the ideological conflict between the two parties (Believers and disbelievers) and the result thereof have been described. This naturally serves as a prelude to the armed conflict between the two parties. That is why in vv. 26-37 the immediate causes which necessitated war have been stated to serve as an introduction and justification for war with the disbelievers of Makkah.

After the migration to al-Madīnah, when the first Hajj season approached, it naturally brought along with it anguish and anger both for the *Muhājirs* and the *Anṣār*, who had been debarred from visiting Makkah and performing Hajj. That is why, in this passage (vv. 26-37)

the rituals and the objects of Ḥajj have been described to bring home to the disbelievers that they had no right to debar anyone from Ḥajj. On the other hand, the Muslims are being prepared to fight not with the intention of wreaking vengeance but for the sake of reform. At the same time sacrifice on the occasion of Ḥajj has been prescribed as a permanent rite to enable them (and the Muslims of the whole world) to commemorate Ḥajj and the rites connected with it, so that they might refrain from wreaking vengeance on the people of Makkah for the persecution to which they had been subjected. They have, therefore, been enjoined to fight to bring about better conditions and not to take revenge on their persecutors.

76. The Arabic word *mudāfi'at* implies two things :

(1) to fight with the enemy to ward off his aggressive attack;

(2) to fight with the enemy not just once but whenever the need arises.

Allāh has assured the Believers that He will defend them against the enemy every time there is a conflict between Islam and *kufr*. This is to encourage the Believers that they will not be left alone in their defence, but Allāh Himself will be a party with them and will help them to frustrate the cunning designs of the enemy and to ward off their attacks. Indeed this verse is a great encouragement for the Believers, for it imbues their hearts with spirit and strength which nothing else can.

77. Allāh becomes a party with the Believers because they are justified in waging war against the disbelievers who are treacherous and ungrateful to Allāh in spite of His many blessings and favours to them.

78. This (v. 39) is the first verse of the Qur'ān in which permission to fight was given in the month of Zil-Ḥajj in the first year after Hijrah according to our research. Then the command to fight was given in vv. 190, 191, 193, 216 and 244 of Chapter II (Al-Baqarah) in Rajab or Sha'bān of A.H. 2.

79. "... and Allah is certainly able to help them": this assurance was urgently needed by the persecuted Muslims whose fighting strength at that time was very meagre—not even a thousand including all the migrants and the Muslims of al-Madīnah. On the other hand, the fighting strength of the Quraish by themselves was much greater. Besides, they had all the other *mushrik* clans of Arabia at their back and were joined later by the Jews as well. Therefore, this assurance was most opportune and the challenge to the disbelievers was very significant, for it meant to say that they were not fighting against a small number of the Muslims but against Allāh. Therefore, "You are welcome to fight if you dare".

80. The mention of their expulsion from their homes in v. 40 is a clear proof that this portion of Sūrah al-Ḥajj was revealed at al-Madīnah.

81. In order to have an idea of the severe persecution of the Muslims, a few instances of this are cited:

- (1) Ḥaḍrat Ṣuḥaib Rūmī was deprived of everything, when he was about to migrate to al-Madīnah. When he reached there, he had nothing with him except the clothes he was wearing. Though he had earned all that through his own labours he was deprived of everything by the disbelievers of Makkah.
- (2) When Ḥaḍrat Abū Salmāh was about to leave Makkah with his wife and a suckling child, his in-laws forcibly separated his wife from him, and then the people of his own family tore away the child from them. Thus the poor woman had to pass one whole year in sorrow and grief. After a year, she secured the child somehow and journeyed from Makkah to al-Madīnah with it all alone on a dangerous route.
- (3) ‘Ayyāsh bin Rabī‘ah was a half brother of Abū Jahl. When he migrated to al-Madīnah, he was followed by Abū Jahl and another brother of his, and they told him the lie: “Your mother has taken the oath that she will not move from the sun to the shade nor comb her hair until she should see you (‘Ayyāsh). You should therefore go back with us to Makkah, show her your face and then come back”. He was taken in by this trick. When they were journeying back the two brothers made him a prisoner, took him to Makkah with his hands and feet tied, and proclaimed, “O people of Makkah, this is how these lads should be treated and set right”. He remained in that state for a long time and was at last rescued by a brave Muslim.

82. *Ṣaumah* (pl. *Ṣawāmi*), *Biy‘ah* and *Ṣalawāt* in the original Text are the places of worship of the monks who have left the world, the Christians and the Jews respectively. *Ṣalawāt* was *Ṣalawāt* in Aramaic, which might be the origin of the English words salute and salutation.

83. In this sentence, a Divine principle has been stated:

“Allāh does not let a group of people or a community have authority for ever. Every now and then He repels one group by means of another”.

If this had not been the case, the permanent dominator would have created chaos not only in the political and economic spheres, but would have encroached upon the places of worship as well. This “principle” has also been stated in v. 251 of Chapter II (Al-Baqarah).

84. Those “who help Allāh” are the people who invite mankind to *Tauḥīd* and exert their utmost to establish the “True Faith” and righteousness. For further explanation see E.N. 50 of Chapter III (Āl-‘Imrān).

85. “. . . if We give them power . . . evil” : In this one sentence, the real aim of the Islamic State and the characteristics of those who

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كَرِيمٌ ﴿٥٦﴾ وَالَّذِينَ سَعَوْا فِي آيَاتِنَا مُعْجِزِينَ أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَحِيمِ ﴿٥٧﴾
 وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رَسُولٍ وَلَا نَبِيٍّ إِلَّا إِذَا تَمَنَّى أَلْقَى الشَّيْطَانُ
 فِي أُمْنِيَّتِهِ فَيَنسَخُ اللَّهُ مَا يُلْقِي الشَّيْطَانُ ثُمَّ يُحْكُمُ اللَّهُ آيَةً وَاللَّهُ
 عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٥٨﴾ لِيَجْعَلَ مَا يُلْقِي الشَّيْطَانُ فِتْنَةً لِلَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ
 وَالْقَاسِيَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَإِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ لَفِي شِقَاقٍ بَعِيدٍ ﴿٥٩﴾ وَلِيَعْلَمَ الَّذِينَ
 أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ فَيُؤْمِنُوا بِهِ فَتُخْبِتَ لَهُ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَإِنَّ
 اللَّهَ لَهَادِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٦٠﴾ وَلَا يَزَالُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
 فِي مِرْيَةٍ مِنْهُ حَتَّى تَأْتِيَهُمُ السَّاعَةُ بَغْتَةً أَوْ يَأْتِيَهُمْ عَذَابٌ يَوْمٌ
 عَقِيمٌ ﴿٦١﴾ الْمَلِكُ يَوْمَئِذٍ اللَّهُ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَهُمْ فَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
 فِي جَنَّاتِ النَّعِيمِ ﴿٦٢﴾ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا فَأُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ
 مُهِينٌ ﴿٦٣﴾ وَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ قَاتَلُوا أَوْ مَاتُوا لَيَرْزُقَنَّهُمُ
 اللَّهُ رِزْقًا حَسَنًا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَهُ خَيْرُ الرَّازِقِينَ ﴿٦٤﴾ لِيَدْخُلَنَّهُمْ مَدْخَلًا
 يُرْضَوْنَهُ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَعَلِيمٌ حَلِيمٌ ﴿٦٥﴾ ذَلِكَ وَمَنْ عَاقَبَ بِبِئْسَ مَا عُوِّقَبَ
 بِهِ ثُمَّ بُغِيَ عَلَيْهِ لِيَنْصُرَنَّهُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَعَفُوفٌ غَفُورٌ ﴿٦٦﴾ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ
 اللَّهَ يُوَلِّجُ اللَّيْلَ فِي النَّهَارِ وَ يُوَلِّجُ النَّهَارَ فِي اللَّيْلِ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيمٌ
 بَصِيرٌ ﴿٦٧﴾ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْحَقُّ وَأَنَّ مَا يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ هُوَ
 الْبَاطِلُ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْكَبِيرُ ﴿٦٨﴾ أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ
 مَاءً فَتُصْبِحُ الْأَرْضُ مُخْضَرَّةً إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَطِيفٌ خَبِيرٌ ﴿٦٩﴾ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا
 فِي الْأَرْضِ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَهُ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ ﴿٧٠﴾ أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ سَخَّرَ لَكُمْ

O Muḥammad, say to them : "O people, I am merely a warner⁹⁴ who informs you plainly (of the coming evil time)." So those who believe and do righteous deeds shall have forgiveness and honourable provision,⁹⁵ and those, who will strive to discredit Our Revelations, shall become the dwellers of Hell.

49-51

And, O Muḥammad, (it has always been so with) every Messenger and Prophet⁹⁶ We sent before you that whenever he had a desire,⁹⁷ Satan tried to interfere with his desire.⁹⁸ But Allāh eradicates the mischiefs worked by Satan and confirms His Revelations,⁹⁹ for Allāh is All-Knowing, All-Wise,¹⁰⁰ (He allows this) so that He may make Satan's obstacles a trial for those, whose hearts suffer from the disease (of hypocrisy) and whose hearts are false——the fact is that these unjust people have gone far away in their enmity——and so that those who have knowledge may realize that this (Message) is the Truth from Allāh and may believe in it, and their hearts may submit humbly to it. Most surely Allāh always guides the Believers to the Straight Way.¹⁰¹

52-54

Yet the disbelievers will always remain in doubt about it until the Hour of Resurrection overtakes them suddenly or the scourge of a "barren" day¹⁰² descends upon them. On that Day Allāh will reign supreme, and He will judge between them ; then those who will have believed and done righteous works, will go to the Gardens of Bliss, but those who will have disbelieved and treated Our Revelations as false, shall receive an ignominious punishment. As for those, who left their homes for the sake of Allāh and then were killed or died, Allāh will make for them a generous provision, and Allāh is the best of Providers. He will admit them to a place with which they will be well pleased; indeed Allāh is All-Knowing and Clement.¹⁰³ This is about them. As regards the one, who takes vengeance equal to the wrong that had been done to him, and has again been oppressed, Allāh will surely help him¹⁰⁴ : Allāh is Forgiving and Forbearing.¹⁰⁵

55-60

So it is¹⁰⁶ because it is Allāh Who brings forth the day from the night and the night from the day¹⁰⁷ and He hears everything and sees everything.¹⁰⁸ This is so because it is

61-64

Allah alone Who is the Truth and all others, whom they invoke besides Him, are falsehood,¹⁰⁹ and Allāh is the Supreme and the Exalted One. Do you not see that Allāh sends down rain water from the sky and the land becomes green because of it?¹¹⁰ The fact is that Allāh works in imperceptible ways and is fully aware of everything.¹¹¹ To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and the earth and undoubtedly Allāh is All-Sufficient and All-Praiseworthy.¹¹²

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conduct its affairs have been stated concisely but comprehensively. Those who help Allāh and deserve His succour behave righteously, establish Ṣalāt, make arrangements for the collection of Zakāt and use their power and authority to propagate good and eradicate evil.

86. That is, "It is Allāh Who decides whom to give power in the land and when". This is meant to remove the misunderstanding of the proud and arrogant people who think that the destiny of the land and its dwellers is in their hands, and there is none to depose them from power. But Allāh dethrones the most haughty ruler in supernatural ways and gives power to the most humble in order to show that He is All-Powerful, All-Mighty.

87. "The disbelievers of Makkah".

88. The instances of some peoples who rejected their Prophets have been cited to impress that they were given respite to reform themselves before they were punished. Therefore, "O people of Makkah, you should not be deluded by the delay in your punishment. When the term of respite comes to an end, you shall also be punished like the former people, if you do not mend your ways in the meantime".

89. The Arabic word *nakir* is very comprehensive and implies two meanings :

- (1) Displeasure at the evil conduct of the other, and
- (2) a terrible punishment which disfigures the culprit so badly that he cannot even be recognized. The sentence therefore will mean : "Just see when I seized them for this evil conduct, how terrible was My chastisement".

90. In Arabic a "well" is synonymous with a "habitation". Thus "many a well useless" means "many a habitation has been destroyed".

91. The words ". . . . the hearts blind" have been used in the metaphorical and not in the literal sense. Since the heart is regarded as the centre of emotions, feelings and of mental and moral qualities, these words have been used to imply that their obduracy has inhibited them from feeling and acting rationally.

92. This refers to the oft-repeated challenge by the disbelievers : "Well, if you are a true prophet, why does not that chastisement come with which you have been threatening us, for we have been rejecting your claim of being a true Prophet of Allāh?"

93. That is, "The decisions of Allāh do not follow your time and calendar, nor do the consequences of your wrong attitudes appear immediately after the deeds". Therefore it will be very foolish on the part of a people to argue that the threat of punishment was empty just because a decade or a century had passed since they had adopted a wicked attitude and conduct with impunity.

94. That is, "I am merely a warner and not the maker of your destinies. It is Allāh Who passes judgement and decides about the punishment."

95. "The Believers shall have forgiveness" means that Allāh will over-look their faults, weaknesses, and acts of omission and commission. They will have "honourable provisions" means that they will have excellent supplies which will be given to them in an honourable way.

96. For the distinction between *Nabī* and *Rasūl*, refer to E. N. 30 of Chapter XIX (Maryam).

97. The Arabic word *tamannā* has two meanings : "desire" and "to recite" something.

98. If the first meaning is taken, it will imply : "Satan tried to prevent the fulfilment of his desire." If the second meaning is taken, it will imply : "When the Prophet recited the Revelations, Satan created different sorts of doubts about its truth and meanings in the minds of the people."

99. If the first meaning is adopted, it will imply : "Allāh fulfils the Prophet's desire and makes his Mission successful in spite of the obstacles of Satan and confirms the truth of His Revelations by fulfilling His promises to the Prophet". In case of the second meaning, it will imply : "Allāh eradicates all the doubts and objections inspired by Satan in the hearts of the people and clarifies the confusion created about any verse of the Qur'ān in subsequent Revelations".

100. "Allāh is All-Knowing" and has full knowledge of the mischief worked by Satan and of its effects, and being "All-Wise", He counteracts every mischief of Satan.

101. That is, "Allāh lets Satan work such mischiefs to put to the test both the righteous and the wicked people". The people with a perverted mentality deduce wrong conclusions from these and deviate from the Right Way, while those, who think on the right lines, realize that all these things are the mischiefs of Satan and that the Message of the Prophet is based on the Truth. They conclude that the very fact that Satan has been so much agitated and become active against it is a clear proof of its being the Truth. It is very important to understand the real

significance of this passage (vv. 52-54) for this has given rise to a grave misunderstanding.

If we consider it in the context in which it occurs, it becomes obvious that it was sent down to refute the wrong appraisal of the casual observers that the Holy Prophet had "failed" to achieve his desired object. This was because he had striven for thirteen long years to persuade his people to accept his Message but the apparent result was that he had not only failed in this, but he and the small band of his followers had been forced to leave their homes. As this "exile" contradicted his claim that he was a Prophet of Allāh and had His approval and succour with him, some people became sceptical about it. Moreover, they became doubtful about the truth of the Qur'ān, because they were not being visited by the scourge, which was inflicted on those who treated the Prophet as false. His antagonists scoffed at him, saying, "Where is that succour of Allāh and the scourge with which we were threatened?" The answer to these doubts of the disbelievers was given in the preceding passage, and in this passage the addressees were those who were influenced by this propaganda. Briefly the whole answer was to this effect:

"It is not a new thing that the people of a Messenger have treated him as an impostor for it has always been happening like this : You can see from the remnants of those peoples who treated their Messengers as impostors how they were punished for their mischief. You can learn a lesson from them, if you will. As regards the delay in the coming of scourge, the Qur'ān never threatened the disbelievers with immediate punishment, nor is it the job of the Messenger to inflict punishments. The scourge is sent by Allāh, but He³ is not hasty in sending His torment. He gives respite to the people to mend their ways as He is giving you now. Therefore, you should not be under any delusion that the threats of scourge are empty threats.

"It is also not a new thing that the desires and wishes of a Prophet meet with obstacles or that false propaganda is made against his Message for the same has already happened with regard to the Messages of the former Prophets. But ultimately Allāh eradicated the mischief worked by Satan and made the Message successful. Therefore you should take a warning from the past history of Satan's mischiefs and their ultimate failure. You should note it well that the obstacles and the mischiefs of Satan are a trial and means that help attract the righteous people towards Islam and winnow the dishonest people away from it".

It is a pity that in spite of the above clear and simple meaning of the passage which fits in well with the context, a grave misunderstanding has arisen because of a tradition which has not only changed its meaning entirely and rendered it irrelevant in the context but has helped make doubtful the very basic Articles of the Faith. Therefore we are making

a critical appraisal of the tradition in order to show how to make the right use of traditions for the correct interpretation of the Qur'an.

According to this tradition, the Holy Prophet had a strong longing and desire to this effect : "I wish some Revelations were sent down to tone down the abhorrence of the *mushrik* Quraish against Islam so as to bring them nearer to it, or at least the criticism against their creed may not be so severe as to arouse their enmity".

While he was cherishing this desire, it so happened that one day when he was sitting in a big gathering of the Quraish, Sūrah An-Najm (LIII) was sent down and he began to recite it. When he came to vv. 19, 20 : "Have you ever considered about this *Lāt* and this '*Uzzā*, and a third (goddess) *Manāt*," all of a sudden he recited, "These are exalted goddesses; indeed their intercession may be expected". After this he continued to recite Sūrah An-Najm up to the last verse and then fell down in prostration and all the Muslims and the *mushriks* of the Quraish also did the same, for the latter said, "Now we have no difference with Muḥammad; we also profess that Allāh is the Creator and the Provider and that these deities of ours are merely our intercessors with Him". After this, when in the evening Angel Gabriel came, he said, "What have you done? I did not bring these two sentences". At this the Holy Prophet became very sad and Allāh sent down vv. 73-75 of Sūrah Banī Isrā'il (XVII): "O Muḥammad ! 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. 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".

But in spite of this, he continued to be grieved till Allāh sent down v. 52 of this Sūrah (Al-Hajj) in which Allāh consoled him, saying that the same had been happening to the former Prophets.

Another thing that happened in the meantime was that the story reached the migrants to Ḥabash that there had been a reconciliation between the Holy Prophet and the disbelievers of Makkah. Accordingly, many of them returned to Makkah only to learn that the news of reconciliation was wrong and the conflict between Islam and *kufr* was raging as furiously as before.

Now let us make a critical study of this story which has been cited by Ibn Jarīr and many other commentators and is even contained in many collections of Traditions.

- (1) None of its reporters, except Ibn 'Abbās, is a Companion.
- (2) There are many major discrepancies and variations in its details.

(3) The wording ascribed to the Holy Prophet in praise of the idols in each Tradition is different from that of others.

Moreover, these words have been attributed to different sources according to different Traditions: (a) These words were put in by Satan during the Revelation and the Holy Prophet imagined that they were revealed by Gabriel. (b) He himself uttered these words inadvertently, being urged by his own desire. (c) He was dozing when he uttered these words. (d) He intentionally uttered these words but in a manner as to question their veracity. (e) Satan interpolated these words into the Revelation, giving an impression that the Holy Prophet himself had recited them. (f) It was one of the *mushriks* who had recited these words.

Yet scholars of Tradition like Hāfiz Ibn Ḥajar and jurists like Abū Bakr al-Jaṣṣās and rationalists like Zamakhshari and commentators like Ibn Jarīr accept this story as true and consider it as a commentary on verse 52 of this Sūrah. Ibn Ḥajar argues like this :

“Even though the links by which this Tradition has been related are either weak or “broken”, except in one case, the very fact that it has been related through so many “links” is a proof that there is some truth about it. The one which has strong links is by Sa‘īd bin Jubair who has related it from Ibn ‘Abbās and the reporters of two more Traditions (which have been cited by Ṭabari) have been declared authentic by Bukhāri and Muslim”.

On the other side, there are other eminent scholars who declare this story to be utterly baseless. Ibn Kathīr says, “All the links of this Tradition are unauthentic and I have found no correct version of this with continuous links”. Baihaqi says, “This story has not been proved to be correct by the rules of reporting”. When Ibn Khuzaimah was asked about it, he said, “This story has been invented by heretics”. Qazi ‘Ayād says, “The very fact that this Tradition is neither contained in any of the six authentic collections of Hadith nor has it been related in an authentic way by authentic reporters shows its weakness”. Besides them, Imām Rāzī, Qāzī Abū Bakr Ibn al-‘Arabi, Ālūsi etc. have rejected it altogether.

It is a pity that even those who reject this story have not done full justice to their cases. There are some who reject it because its “links” are weak. In other words, they would have accepted it, if its links were strong. Then there are others who reject it because its acceptance makes the whole Faith doubtful. This kind of reasoning may satisfy the believers but it cannot satisfy those who are already sceptical or intend to make a research into it with a view to making a correct appraisal of Islam. They will rather say, “When a story is related by an eminent Companion and is contained in the collections of Traditions, there is no reason why we should reject it just because it makes your Faith doubtful”.

Now let us consider the story critically and rationally to prove that it is unacceptable.

(1) Its internal evidence proves it to be wrong : (a) According to the story the incident happened after the first migration to Ḥabash, for according to it some of the migrants returned to Makkah after hearing the story. Now the fact is that the migration took place in the month of Rajab of the fifth year of Prophethood and some of the migrants returned to Makkah three months later, *i.e.* in Shawwāl of the same year. (b) Verses 73-75 of Chapter XVII in which the Holy Prophet was “reproved” for this incident were revealed in the eleventh or twelfth year of Prophethood. In other words, he was “reproved” by Allāh five or six years after the incident. (c) This verse (52) in which the interpolation by Satan was abrogated was sent down in the first year of Hijrah, *i.e.* about two years after the reproof. Can a person in his senses believe that the Holy Prophet was reproved for the interpolation after six years, and it was abrogated after nine years?

(2) According to the story, this interpolation was made in Sūrah An-Najm. When the Holy Prophet was reciting the words, “And a third (goddess) *Manāt*”, he also recited the interpolated sentence, and then continued the recital up to the end of the Sūrah. It is said that the disbelievers of Makkah were so pleased with the interpolation that they declared, “The differences between us and Muḥammad (Allāh’s peace be upon him) have now come to an end”.

Let us now read vv. 19-23 of An-Najm along with the alleged interpolation (in italics) : “Have you ever considered about the reality of this *Lāt* and *‘Uzzā* and a third (goddess) *Manāt*? *These are exalted goddesses; indeed their intercession may be expected.* What, do you have sons for yourselves and daughters for Him (Allāh)? This is indeed an unfair division. They are nothing but mere names which you and your forefathers have invented. Allāh has sent down no authority in regard to them. They follow only conjectures and the whims of their own minds, although right guidance has come from their Lord”.

Even a casual reader will detect an obvious contradiction in the passage. Immediately after “praising” the goddesses there is a hard hit on their worshippers, as if to say : “O foolish people! How is it that you have ascribed daughters to Allāh and sons to yourselves? All this is your own invention which has no authority from Allāh”. On the face of it, the interpolation makes the passage absurd which cannot be assigned even to a rational person not to speak of Allāh. Then the story presumes that all the Quraish who were listening to it must have lost their senses; otherwise they could not have declared that their differences with Muḥammad (Allāh’s peace be upon him) had been made up from thence.

From this internal evidence it has become clear that this story is absurd and meaningless.

(3) Now let us consider whether the occasions ascribed by the commentators to the revelation of the verses under discussion, fit in with the chronological order of the Qur'ān. According to the story, the interpolation in Sūrah An-Najm (LIII) was made in the fifth year of Prophethood; the reproof was made in vv. 73-75 of Banī Isrā'il (XVII) and then the interpolation was annulled and the incident explained in vv. 52-54 of Sūrah Al-Ḥajj (XXII). Now there could be only two possibilities about the time of their revelation : either the verses containing the reproof and the abrogation were sent down in the period in which the interpolation took place, or the verse containing the reproof was sent down along with Sūrah Al-Ḥajj (XXII). In the first case, the question arises : Why were these verses (XVII : 73-75) not inserted in An-Najm (LIII)? Why were they held in abeyance for six long years and then inserted in Sūrah Banī Isrā'il (XVII), when it was revealed, and vv. 52-54 (containing the abrogation) inserted in Sūrah Al-Ḥajj (XXII) after a further delay of more than two years? Does it mean that the verses were sent down on one occasion and inserted years later haphazardly in one Sūrah or the other? In the second case, the question would arise: Does it stand to reason that the verses containing the reproof (XVII : 73-75) were sent down six years after the interpolation, and the verse of abrogation (XXII : 52) nine years after the incident? Still another question arises : What was the occasion of the revelation of the verses of reproof and abrogation in Chapters XVII and XXII in the context in which they occur?

(4) Now let us turn to the third principle of correct appraisal of the Qur'ān.

For a correct appreciation of the Qur'ān it is essential to consider whether a particular commentary fits in with the relevant context of the Qur'ān or not. If we make even a cursory study of XVII : 71-77 (Banī Isrā'il), it will become obvious that there was no occasion for the alleged reproof in v. 73 and that there is no tinge of reproof in it, for the words of the verse refute the allegation that the Prophet was taken in by the mischief of the disbelievers. Then in Sūrah Al-Ḥajj (XXII), if we make a critical study of the verses that precede vv. 52-54 and follow them, it will become obvious that there was no occasion to console the Prophet for the "interpolation" and to annul it after nine years.

(5) We reiterate that no Tradition, however strong links it might have, can be accepted when the Text itself is a clear evidence against it, and when it does not fit in with the wording, the context, the order etc. of the Qur'ān. When the incident is considered in this background, even a sceptical research scholar would be convinced that the Tradition is absolutely wrong. As regards a believer, he can never accept it, when he knows that it contradicts not only one verse but a large number of other verses of the Qur'ān. He would rather believe that the reporters of the Tradition might have been deluded by Satan and not the Holy

Prophet. He would never believe that the Holy Prophet could interpolate even a single word in the Qur'ān under the influence of a desire of his own: or that there could ever occur such a desire in his mind that he should make a compromise with the disbelievers by associating *shirk* with *Tauhid*: or that he could ever wish that Allāh might not say anything to displease the disbelievers: or that the Revelation was made in such an unsafe and doubtful manner as to enable Satan to mix with it even a word in a manner as if it was also brought by Gabriel. Each of these things is contradictory to the clear Revelation of the Qur'ān and the basic Articles of the Faith which we have learnt from the Qur'ān and the Holy Prophet. God forbid that we should accept any such Tradition that might lead to the above-mentioned presumptions just because the Tradition seems to be "authentic" in every way.

It will be worth-while to consider the question: How is it that so many reporters of Traditions have related this story? Does it not show that there must have been some reality about it? Otherwise, so many reporters, who included many authentic and eminent scholars, could not have made such an heinous slander against the Qur'ān and the Holy Prophet. Its answer is contained in the authentic collections of Traditions by Faḥḥārī, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, Nasā'ī and Musnad Aḥmad. The reality of the incident is this:

The Holy Prophet recited Sūrah An-Najm and performed prostration at the end of it. At this, all the hearers, both the Muslims and the *mushriks*, fell down in prostration. This was what really happened and there is nothing strange about it. Let us depict the occasion: The Holy Prophet was reciting a forceful piece of the eloquent Qur'ān in a very impressive manner. Naturally the occasion produced an emotional effect and all the listeners instinctively fell down in prostration along with him. It was because of such ecstasies produced by the Holy Prophet's recital of the Qur'ān as this that the disbelievers dubbed him a "sorcerer". As regards the story that the Holy Prophet praised the deities of the disbelievers, it appears that the Quraish concocted the story to hide their "defeat". Probably someone or other of them explained away their defeat, saying, "We ourselves heard Muḥammad praising our deities. Therefore we also fell down in prostration along with him". As regards the migrants to Ḥabash, they returned to Makkah when they heard the concocted story that there had been a compromise between the Holy Prophet and the Quraish. It appears that some of those people who had seen the Muslims and the *mushriks* falling down together in prostration, presumed that peace had been made between them, so the story travelled to the migrants in Ḥabash who had no means to verify it and thus thirty-three of them returned to Makkah.

Naturally these three things—prostration by the Quraish, their explanation of it, and the return of the migrants from Ḥabash—combined to evolve that story. So much so that some authentic people were also deluded by it, for to err is human, and the pious and intelligent people are no exception to it. However, the error of the latter proves to be more harmful, because their credulous followers accept with closed eyes their misconceptions along with their right conclusions. On the other hand, mischief mongers collect all such errors of the righteous people and exploit them to prove that all the collections of Traditions are false and should be rejected forthwith.

102. The epithet “barren” has been applied to the “day” in its metaphorical and not literal sense. A “day” is barren if all the plans, hopes and devices remain unproductive in it, or it does not bring forth its night. For instance, the days on which the people of Prophet Noah, the tribes of ‘Ād and Thamūd, the people of Lot and of Midian met with their destruction by scourge from Allāh, were barren days in this sense, because those days did not bring forth any “tomorrow” for them, and no device of theirs could avert their doom.

103. As Allāh is All-Knowing, He knows well those who left their homes for His sake and what reward they deserve. He is Clement, and forgives minor errors and weaknesses of the people ; therefore these things will not hinder Him from rewarding the Believers for their services and sacrifices.

104. The preceding verses referred to those persecuted people who could not retaliate and here the reference is to those victims of persecution who could fight back.

From this verse, Imām Shāfi‘ī has concluded that “retaliation” will be effected in the way as life was taken in the original act. If a person is killed by immersion in water, the killer also should be put to death by immersion in water; or if a person is burnt to death, the killer also will be burnt to death. The Hanafites dispute this. According to them, retaliation against a murderer will be incurred in one and the same established way no matter how life was taken by the culprit in the original act.

105. This verse (60) may imply two things ;

- (1) Allāh forgives that “killing” which is done in self-defence, though killing of people is not a good thing in itself.
- (2) As Allāh, Whose slaves the Believers are, is Forgiving and Forbearing, they should also forgive and forbear as far as possible. Though they have the right of retaliation, they should not resort to carnage and massacre.

106. “So it is” (as stated in the preceding paragraph) because Allāh is the Ruler of the universe and has the power to give punishments and rewards to those who deserve them.

107. The fact that "Allāh brings forth . . . day" is a proof that He is the Master, Sovereign and Ruler of the universe. But the deeper meaning of the verse is that Allāh, Who is able to bring forth the light of the day out of the darkness of the night, has the power to bring out the light of the Truth out of the darkness of disbelief and ignorance, and the light of justice out of the darkness of tyranny.

108. He hears everything and sees everything and is not unaware of anything.

109. As Allāh is in fact the Sovereign of the universe, His worshippers will surely attain true success and the worshippers of false gods will meet with utter failure.

110. This verse has a deeper meaning also, though apparently it merely declares that Allāh alone has the power to send down rain which makes the land green. The deeper meaning is that the rainfall of the blessed Revelation will, in the near future, turn the barren land of Arabia into a garden of knowledge, morality and bring forth a high and righteous civilization.

111. The original word *Latīf* in the Text has no equivalent in English. The word "subtle" has not been used because of its bad associations. *Latīf* implies that Allāh fulfils His designs in such fine ways that it is difficult to understand them till they become real and apparent.

As He is fully aware of everything, He knows how to conduct the affairs of His Kingdom.

112. He alone is "All-Sufficient" and does not stand in need of anyone in any way. He is "All-Praiseworthy" because all praise belongs to Him alone whether anyone praises Him or not.

تَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَالْفَلْكَ تَجْرِي فِي الْبَحْرِ بِأَمْرِهِ ۗ وَيُسِكَ السَّمَاءَ أَنْ تَقَعَ عَلَى
 الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِالنَّاسِ لَرءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٤٥﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَحْيَاكُمْ ثُمَّ
 يُمِيتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُحْيِيكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَكَفُورٌ ﴿٤٦﴾ لِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ جَعَلْنَا مَنْسَكًا هُمْ نَاسِكُوهُ
 فَلَا يُنَازِعُكَ فِي الْأَمْرِ وَاذْعُ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ ۗ إِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ هُدًى مُسْتَقِيمٌ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَإِنْ
 جَدَلُوكَ فَقُلِ اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾ اللَّهُ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فِيمَا
 كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾ أَلَمْ تَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۗ إِنَّ
 ذَلِكَ فِي كِتَابٍ ۗ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ ﴿٥٠﴾ وَيَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَمْ
 يَنْزِلْ بِهِ سُلْطَانًا وَمَا لَيْسَ لَهُمْ بِهِ عِلْمٌ وَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ نَصِيرٍ ﴿٥١﴾ وَإِذَا تُتْلَىٰ
 عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُنَا بَيِّنَاتٍ تَعْرِفُ فِي وُجُوهِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا النُّكْرَ ۗ يَكَادُونَ يَسْطُونَ
 بِالَّذِينَ يَتْلُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُنَا قُلِ أَفَأَنْتُمْ كُفِرْتُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِنْ ذَلِكَ ۗ النَّارُ وَعَدَهَا اللَّهُ
 الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ۗ وَبَشِّرِ الْمَصِيرِينَ ﴿٥٢﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ ضَرْبَ مَثَلٍ ۗ فَاسْتَمِعُوا لَهُ ۗ إِنَّ
 الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ لَنْ يَخْلُقُوا ذُبَابًا وَلَوْ اجْتَمَعُوا لَهُ ۗ وَإِنْ
 يَسْلُبُهُمُ الذُّبَابُ شَيْئًا لَا يَسْتَنْقِذُوهُ مِنْهُ ۗ ضَعُفَ الطَّالِبُ وَالْمَطْلُوبُ ﴿٥٣﴾ مَا
 قَدَرُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ قَدْرِهِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَقَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ ﴿٥٤﴾ اللَّهُ يَصْطَفِي مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ
 رُسُلًا وَمِنَ النَّاسِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٥٥﴾ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ ۗ وَ
 إِلَى اللَّهِ تُرْجَعُ الْأُمُورُ ﴿٥٦﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ارْكَعُوا وَاسْجُدُوا وَاعْبُدُوا رَبَّكُمْ وَ
 افْعَلُوا الْخَيْرَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾ وَجَاهِدُوا فِي اللَّهِ حَقَّ جِهَادِهِ ۗ هُوَ اجْتَبَاكُمْ
 وَمَا جَعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ مِنْ حَرَجٍ ۗ مِلَّةَ أَبِيكُمْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ ۗ هُوَ سَمَّاكُمُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ۗ
 مِنْ قَبْلُ وَفِي هَذَا لِيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ شَهِيدًا عَلَيْكُمْ وَتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ

٩
ع ٨
١٦

عند الشافعي ١٢
السجدة

Do you not see that He has subdued to you all that is in the earth and that He has subjected the boat to the law that she floats over the sea at His bidding, and He is supporting the sky in a way that it cannot fall down without His permission?¹¹³ The fact of the matter is that Allāh is very Kind and Merciful to the people. He it is Who has given you life and causes your death, and He will again bring you to life ; yet Man denies the Truth.¹¹⁴

65-66

For every community¹¹⁵ We have prescribed a way of worship,¹¹⁶ which it follows ; therefore, O Muḥammad, let them not dispute with you concerning this matter.¹¹⁷ And invite the people to the Way of your Lord, for you are on the Straight Way.¹¹⁸ And if they dispute with you, say to them, "Allāh knows full well what you are doing : on the Day of Resurrection, Allāh will judge between you concerning that about which you differ". Do you not know that Allāh has full knowledge of everything in the heavens and the earth? Everything has been recorded in a Book ; this is an easy thing for Allāh.¹¹⁹

67-70

They worship, besides Allāh, those for whom He has sent down no authority nor they themselves have any knowledge about them.¹²⁰ Such transgressors have no helper.¹²¹ And when Our clear Revelations are recited to them, you perceive signs of disdain in the faces of the disbelievers as though they were going to assault those who recite Our Revelations to them. Say to them, "May I inform you of a thing worse than this?¹²² It is the Fire which Allāh has promised for those who reject the Truth; and what an evil abode it is !"

71-72

O mankind ! A parable is related to you : so listen to it. The deities, whom you invoke instead of Allāh, cannot create a fly even though they may all combine together for this purpose. Nay ! if a fly snatches away something from them, they cannot get it back from it. How weak are the suppliants and how weak those whom they supplicate.¹²³ They do not recognize the true worth of Allāh as they should : the fact is that Allāh alone is All-Mighty, All-Powerful.

73-74

The fact is that Allāh chooses His Messengers from among the angels and also from among the human beings (to

75-76

convey His decrees).¹²⁴ He hears everything and knows everything. He knows whatever is open before them as well as that which is hidden from them,¹²⁵ and all matters are presented before Him.¹²⁶

77-78

O people, who have believed, bow down and prostrate yourselves before Allah, worship your Lord and do righteous deeds : it may be that you attain true success.¹²⁷ Exert your utmost for the cause of Allāh as one should.¹²⁸ He has chosen you for His service¹²⁹ and has not laid on you any hardship in your religion.¹³⁰ Therefore, be steadfast in the religion of your father Abraham.¹³¹ Allāh had called you "Muslims" before this and has called you¹³² (by the same name) in this (Qur'ān) also so that the Messenger may be a witness in regard to you and you may be witnesses in regard to the rest of mankind.¹³³

113. Here "the sky" implies the whole of the universe above and below the earth where everything is held in its own place and sphere.

114. That is, "Though man sees every reality presented by the Prophets, he denies it".

115. That is, "The Community of every Prophet".

116. Here the Arabic word *mansak* has been used in its most comprehensive sense which also includes "sacrifice" (v. 34). It means service, worship, in short, "the whole way of life". The same theme has been expressed in V : 48 : "We prescribed a law and a way of life for each of you".

117. That is, "Now you have brought a way of life just as the former Prophets brought "ways of life" for their people. Therefore the people have no right to dispute with you concerning the "Law" you have brought".

118. This confirms the explanation given in E.N. 117 above.

119. In order to understand the significance of this paragraph, we should keep in view vv. 55-57 with which this is connected.

120. That is, "Neither there is any mention of their deities in any revealed Book nor have they any other source of knowledge about them nor any authority to worship them. Therefore, it is sheer ignorance that they have associated their self-invented deities with Allāh and worship them, makes vows and offer sacrifices to them and supplicate them for their needs etc. This is to warn the foolish people that they are absolutely wrong in expecting that their deities would help them in this world and in the Hereafter, because they have no power to help them. Thus,

they will find no helper, for Allāh alone could help them and they have already displeased Him by their rebellious behaviour.

122. That is, "You will meet with a far worse state of anguish than that which you display against those who recite Divine Revelations to you."

123. This parable has been cited to impress upon the idol-worshippers that their deities are absolutely powerless, for even if they all collaborated to create an insignificant thing like a fly, they could not; nay, even if a fly snatched away anything from them they could not prevent it. This shows how weak they themselves are and how powerless are the idols they supplicate.

124. In continuation of the refutation of *shirk*, Allāh has taken two kinds of the most revered of "deities" to show their real status, as if to say, "The angels and the Prophets whom you have set up as deities are mere Messengers of Allāh. Allāh has chosen them to convey His Messages to human beings and this does not make them God or partners in His Godhead."

125. The Qur'ān employs this sentence to refute the creed of the *mushriks* in regard to intercession, as if to say, "You imagine that angels, prophets, saints, and the like can intercede with Allāh on your behalf and therefore you worship them. You are absolutely wrong, for none of your deities knows what is good for you and what is not: Allāh alone hears everything, sees everything and knows everything. Therefore He has not given the right of intercession and recommendation to anyone except when He Himself is pleased to give such permission."

126. This is to impress upon them that every affair and every matter, big or small, is presented before Allāh for a decision. Therefore you should not invoke anyone else than Allāh, for all others are utterly helpless and powerless and cannot even fulfil their own desires and needs.

127. This is the right way of attaining true success, but even after adopting these ways of worship and performing good deeds one should not rest content or be proud that he would surely attain success because he is worshipping Allāh and is doing good deeds. He should only expect that Allāh will by His grace accept his services and bless him with true success.

Imām Shāfi'ī, Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal, 'Abdullāh bin Mubāarak and Ishāq bin Rāhawayah hold the view that this verse of Sūrah Al-Hajj requires a 'prostration'. But Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, Imām Mālik, Ḥasan Baṣrī, Sa'īd bin al-Musayyab, Sa'īd bin Jubair, Ibrāhīm Nakha'ī and Sufyān Thaurī dispute this. The arguments of the two sides are briefly as follows:

The former group of commentators base their opinion on the following:

- (1) The verb in the verse is in the imperative mood.

- (2) The Tradition of 'Uqbah bin 'Āmir, which has been reported by Imām Aḥmad, Abū Dāwūd, Tirmizī, Ibn Mardūyah and Baihaqi, says, "I asked, 'O Messenger of Allāh! Does the merit of Sūrah Al-Ḥajj consist in the fact that it contains two verses requiring prostration?' He replied, 'Yes, the one who does not prostrate on these two verses, should not recite them.'"
- (3) The Tradition of Abū Dāwūd and Ibn Mājah in which 'Amr bin 'Ās says that he was told by the Holy Prophet that there were two verses requiring prostration in Sūrah Al-Ḥajj.
- (4) Sayings of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, 'Alī, 'Uthmān, Ibn 'Umar, Ibn 'Abbās, Abul Dardā, Abū Mūsā Ash'arī and Ammār bin Yāsir to the effect that Sūrah Al-Ḥajj contains two prostrations.

The latter group of commentators argue as follows :

- (1) The verse contains a command both for *Sajdah* (prostration) and for *Rukū'* (bowing in prayer), which implies the whole Islamic Prayer according to the Qur'ānic usage, and not 'prostration' alone.
- (2) The tradition reported by 'Uqbah bin 'Āmir is unauthentic as it has weak links.
- (3) The Tradition of 'Amr bin 'Ās is also unreliable, because its reporters are not well known.
- (4) As for the sayings of the Companions, Ibn 'Abbās has clearly explained that prostration in respect of the first verse (in Sūrah Al-Ḥajj) is obligatory, whereas in regard to the second, it is only suggestive.

128. The Arabic word *Jihād* is very comprehensive. It includes every kind of effort, exertion, conflict and war. *Jihād* for the cause of Allāh means that it should be performed for His service and for His approval against those who prevent others from following His Way. The performance of *Jihād* also requires that one should first of all fight against one's own self in order to subdue it. For there can be no true *Jihād* unless one fights against one's evil self and subdues one's desires and lusts to the obedience of Allāh. The Holy Prophet himself has emphasized the need for this *Jihād*. Once when the warriors for the cause of Allāh returned from *Jihād*, he said : "You have returned from the lesser *Jihād* to the greater *Jihād*." They asked, "What is that greater *Jihād*?" The Holy Prophet replied, "It is the *Jihād* against one's own desires and lusts."

Moreover, the battlefield for *Jihād* is, in fact, the whole world, and Islam demands that one should exert one's utmost against all the rebels of Allāh and the wicked powers with all one's heart and mind and body and wealth.

129. The direct addressees of this were the Companions of the

Holy Prophet, for they were the first who had the honour to be chosen for this service ; others have been addressed only indirectly being their followers. This thing has been mentioned in the Qur'ān in other ways as well. For reference, see II : 143 and III : 110.

130. “. . . (Allāh) has not laid on you any hardship in your religion.” That is, “The creed you have been given is very simple and straightforward and the laws and regulations you have to obey are practicable. You are free within its bounds to make as much progress as you can.” This was to impress that the lives of the Muslims were free from all those useless and unnatural restrictions which had been imposed upon the former communities by their priests and law-givers. The negative aspect of the same thing has been mentioned in VII : 157 : “. . . He enjoins them to follow virtue and forbids them from evil : He makes pure things lawful for them and impure things unlawful. He relieves them of their burdens and frees them from the shackles that bound them.”

131. Though Islam may be called the religion of Prophets Noah, Moses, Jesus, etc., yet the Qur'ān emphasizes over and over again that it is the religion of Prophet Abraham. Therefore, “You should follow it.” This is for three reasons :

- (1) The first addressees of the Qur'ān were the Arabs who were more familiar with Prophet Abraham than with any other Prophet and acknowledged him to be a holy personage and their leader.
- (2) Prophet Abraham alone was the person whom the Jews, the Christians, the Muslims and the *mushriks* of Arabia and of the adjoining countries unanimously acknowledged as a great Prophet.
- (3) When the Qur'ān invites all these communities to follow the way of Abraham, it in fact, admonishes them that all their religions had been invented long after Prophet Abraham and, therefore, were not trustworthy because they contradicted many things taught by him. As for the *mushriks* of Arabia, they also acknowledged that idol-worship among them had been started by 'Amr bin Luḥayy, who was a leader of Banī Khuzā'ah, and had brought an idol, called Ḥubal, from Moab in about 600 B.C. So the religion to which Prophet Muḥammad (Allāh's peace and blessings be upon him) invited them was the same pure, un-adulterated religion which was taught by Prophet Abraham (Allāh's peace be upon him).

For further details, see E.N.'s 134, 135 of Chapter II (Al-Baqarah) and E.N.'s 58, 79 of Chapter III (Āl-'Imrān) and E.N.'s 119, 120 of Chapter XVI (An-Nahl).

132. Here the word “you” has not been addressed exclusively to those Believers who lived at the time of the revelation of this verse, or those who believed after its revelation. It includes all those human

فَأَقِمْوَا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِاللَّهِ هُوَ مَوْلَاكُمْ فَنِعْمَ الْمَوْلَىٰ وَنِعْمَ النَّصِيرُ

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Therefore, establish Ṣalāt and pay the Zakāt dues, and hold fast to Allāh,¹³⁴ for He is your Guardian : What an excellent Guardian and what an excellent Helper !

beings, who, from the beginning of human history, believed in *Tauhīd*, the Hereafter, Prophethood and the Divine Books. They were not “Jews”, “Christians”, etc., but “Muslims” in the sense that they had surrendered themselves to Allāh. Likewise the followers of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (Allāh’s peace and blessings be upon him) are not Muham-madens but “Muslims”.

133. For Explanation, see E. N. 144 of Chapter II (Al-Baqarah).

134. “. . . hold fast to Allah” : Follow exclusively the Guidance and the law of Allāh: obey Him alone: fear Him and have all your hopes and expectations in Him: invoke Him alone for help : trust in Him and pray to Him for all your needs.