

VII

AL-A'ARĀF

الاعراف

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

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INTRODUCTION

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

Period of Revelation

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

Topics of Discussion

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

towards their Messengers. (Now that the Holy Prophet was going to migrate from Makkah) the concluding portion of the address has been directed towards the people of the Book with whom he was going to come into contact. This meant that the time of migration was coming near and the "invitation" was going to be extended to mankind in general and was not to be confined to his own people in particular as before.

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

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

SUMMARY

SUBJECT: INVITATION TO THE DIVINE MESSAGE

Topics and their Interconnection

1-10 In this passage, the people have been invited to follow the Message sent down to them through Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) and warned of the consequences of its rejection.

11-25 The story of Adam has been related with a view to warning his descendants against the evil devices of Satan who is ever ready to mislead them as he did in the case of Adam and Eve.

26-53 This passage contains some Divine instructions, and contrasts these with Satan's instructions, and depicts a graphic picture of the results and the consequences of the two.

54-58 As the Message has been sent down by Allah (Who is the Creator of the heavens and the earth and everything in them), it should be followed, for it is like the rain He sends down to give life to the dead earth.

59-171 Events from the lives of some well known Prophets —Noah, Hūd, Sālih, Lot, Shu'aib, Moses (Allah's peace be upon them all)— have been related to show the consequences of the rejection of the Message, and the addressees of Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) have been admonished to accept and follow the Message in order to escape perdition.

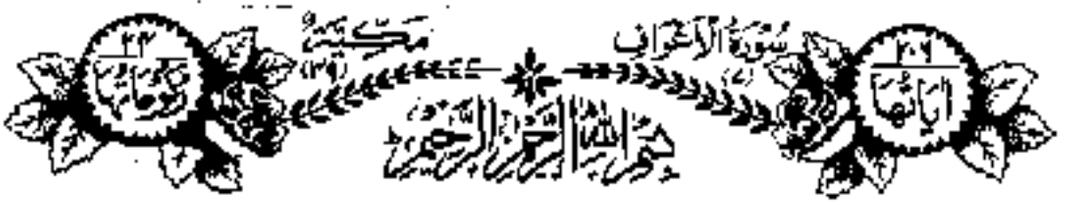
172-174 As the Covenant with the Israelites was mentioned at the end of the preceding passage, the whole mankind has been reminded very appropriately of the Covenant that was made at the time of the appointment of Adam as the Vicegerent of Allah so that all of his descendants should remember it and accept and follow the Message that was delivered by the Holy Prophet.

175-179 The example of the one who had the knowledge of the Message but discarded it, has been cited as a warning to those who were treating the Message as false; they have been exhorted to use their faculties to recognise the Message; otherwise Hell would be

their abode.

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

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



الٓمّٓصٓ ﴿١﴾ كِتٰبٌ اُنْزِلَ اِلَيْكَ فَلَا يَكُنْ فِيْ صَدْرِكَ حَرَجٌ مِّنْهُ لِتُنْذِرَ بِهٖ
وَ ذِكْرٰى لِلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٢﴾ اِتَّبِعُوْا مَآ اُنْزِلَ اِلَيْكُمْ مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوْا مِنْ
دُوْنِهٖٓ اَوْلِيَآءَ ؕ قَلِيْلًا مَّا تَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٣﴾ وَكَمْ مِّنْ قَرْيَةٍ اَهْلَكْنٰهَا فَجَآءَهَا بَاْسُنَا
بَيَاتًا اَوْ هُمْ قَآئِلُوْنَ ﴿٤﴾ فَمَا كَانَ دَعْوٰىهُمْ اِذْ جَآءَهُمْ بَاْسُنَآ اِلَّآ اَنْ قَالُوْٓا
اِنَّا كُنَّا ظٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٥﴾ فَلَنَسْـَٔلَنَّ الَّذِيْنَ اُرْسِلَ اِلَيْهِمْ وَلَنَسْـَٔلَنَّ الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ ﴿٦﴾
فَلَنَقُصَّنَّ عَلَيْهِمْ بِعِلْمٍ وَّمَا كُنَّا غَآئِبِيْنَ ﴿٧﴾ وَالْوَزْنُ يَوْمَئِذِ ِالْحَقُّ ۚ فَمَنْ
ثَقُلَتْ مَوَازِيْنُهٗ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُوْنَ ﴿٨﴾ وَمَنْ خَفَّتْ مَوَازِيْنُهٗ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ
الَّذِيْنَ خَسِرُوْٓا اَنْفُسَهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَا يَظْلِمُوْنَ ﴿٩﴾ وَلَقَدْ مَكَّنّٰكُمْ فِي الْاَرْضِ
وَجَعَلْنَا لَكُمْ فِيْهَا مَعَايِشَ ؕ قَلِيْلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿١٠﴾ وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنٰكُمْ ثُمَّ
صَوَّرْنٰكُمْ ثُمَّ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ اسْجُدُوْا لِاٰدَمَ ۖ فَسَجَدُوْٓا اِلَّآ اِبْلِيْسَ ؕ لَمْ يَكُنْ
مِّنَ السّٰجِدِيْنَ ﴿١١﴾ قَالَ مَا مَنَعَكَ اَلَّا تَسْجُدَ اِذْ اَمَرْتُكَ ؕ قَالَ اَنَا خَيْرٌ مِّنْهُ ؕ
خَلَقْتَنِيْ مِنْ نَّارٍ وَّخَلَقْتَهٗ مِنْ طِيْنٍ ﴿١٢﴾ قَالَ فَاهْبِطْ مِنْهَا فَمَا يَكُوْنُ لَكَ
اَنْ تَتَكَبَّرَ فِيْهَا فَاخْرُجْ اِنَّكَ مِنَ الصّٰغِرِيْنَ ﴿١٣﴾ قَالَ اَنْظِرْنِيْٓ اِلٰى يَوْمِ
يُبْعَثُوْنَ ﴿١٤﴾ قَالَ اِنَّكَ مِنَ الْمُنْظَرِيْنَ ﴿١٥﴾ قَالَ فَبِمَآ اَغْوَيْتَنِيْ لَاَقْعُدَنَّ لَهُمْ
صِرَاطَكَ الْمُسْتَقِيْمَ ﴿١٦﴾ ثُمَّ لَاٰتِيَنَّهُمْ مِّنْۢ بَيْنِ اَيْدِيْهِمْ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ وَ
عَنْ اَيْمَانِهِمْ وَعَنْ شَمَآئِلِهِمْ ؕ وَلَا تَجِدُ اَكْثَرَهُمْ شٰكِرِيْنَ ﴿١٧﴾ قَالَ اخْرُجْ
مِنْهَا مَذْءُوْمًا مَّدْحُوْرًا ؕ لَمَنْ تَبِعَكَ مِنْهُمْ لَاَمْلَـَٔنَّ جَهَنَّمَ مِنْكُمْ

VII

AL-A'RĀF

Verses: 206 *Revealed at Makkah*

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

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

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

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

Thus (on the day of Judgment) We will most certainly call to account[6] all those to whom We sent Our Messengers, and We will also ask the Messengers (how far they conveyed the Message and how the pepole responded to it[7]). Then We Ourself will recount to them with Knowledge (all their doings); for We were not absent from them. On that Day the weight will be identical with the Truth:[8] accordingly those whose scales will be heavy will alone come out successful. And those whose scales will be light will be the ones who will have incurred loss [9] upon themselves because they had been unjust to Our Revelations. 6-9

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

Indeed We planned your creation, then We shaped you, and then We said to the angels, "Bow yourselves before Adam."[10] Accordingly all bowed save *Iblīs* who did not join those who bowed themselves. Allah said, "What prevented you from bowing down, when I commanded you?"He replied, "I am better than he; Thou created me of fire and created him of clay." 11-17

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

themselves ignominy."[11]

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

Allah replied, "You are granted respite."

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

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1. Here by 'book' is meant this Sūrah, Al-A'arāff.

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

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

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

4. This is the main theme of this Sūrah. It invites the people to accept the Guidance that has been sent down by Allah through His Messengers, for this alone can impart the true knowledge to man about himself and the universe, and tell him the aim and object of his life and teach him the principles on which to build his morality, social life, culture and civilization. Man should acknowledge Allah alone as his Guide and follow only His Guidance that has been sent down through His Messengers. The discourse warns that it is basically wrong to turn to anyone other

than Allah for guidance, for this has always resulted in utter ruin, and will inevitably lead to ruin.

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

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

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

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

on the preceding verses (4-5), it begins with "so" to show that this is a sequel to vv. 4-5.

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

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

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

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

10. Please see also vv. 30-36, *Al-Baqarah,* for comparison.

The wording of v. 34, *Al-Baqarah,* might have given rise to the doubt that the command given to the angels to bow before Adam was meant for the person of Adam, but the wording of this verse clears that doubt. Here the words preceding the Command show that the angels were to bow before Adam as representative of the whole of mankind.

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

The above explanation of the verse is based on some other passages of the Qur'ān. For instance, let us examine vv. 71-72 of Sūrah *sād:*

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

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

Let us also examine vv. 28-29 of *Al-Hijr;*

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

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

[Contd. on p. 14

أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿١٨﴾ وَيَا آدَمُ اسْكُنْ أَنْتَ وَزَوْجُكَ الْجَنَّةَ فَكُلَا مِنْ حَيْثُ شِئْتُمَا
وَلَا تَقْرَبَا هَٰذِهِ الشَّجَرَةَ فَتَكُونَا مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٩﴾ فَوَسْوَسَ لَهُمَا الشَّيْطَانُ
لِيُبْدِيَ لَهُمَا مَا وُورِيَ عَنْهُمَا مِنْ سَوْآتِهِمَا وَقَالَ مَا نَهَاكُمَا رَبُّكُمَا عَنْ
هَٰذِهِ الشَّجَرَةِ إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَا مَلَكَيْنِ أَوْ تَكُونَا مِنَ الْخَالِدِينَ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَقَاسَمَهُمَا
إِنِّي لَكُمَا لَمِنَ النَّاصِحِينَ ﴿٢١﴾ فَدَلَّاهُمَا بِغُرُورٍ فَلَمَّا ذَاقَا الشَّجَرَةَ بَدَتْ لَهُمَا
سَوْآتُهُمَا وَطَفِقَا يَخْصِفَانِ عَلَيْهِمَا مِنْ وَرَقِ الْجَنَّةِ وَنَادَاهُمَا رَبُّهُمَا
أَلَمْ أَنْهَكُمَا عَنْ تِلْكُمَا الشَّجَرَةِ وَأَقُلْ لَكُمَا إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لَكُمَا عَدُوٌّ
مُبِينٌ ﴿٢٢﴾ قَالَا رَبَّنَا ظَلَمْنَا أَنْفُسَنَا وَإِنْ لَمْ تَغْفِرْ لَنَا وَتَرْحَمْنَا لَنَكُونَنَّ
مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٢٣﴾ قَالَ اهْبِطُوا بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ وَلَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ
مُسْتَقَرٌّ وَمَتَاعٌ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ ﴿٢٤﴾ قَالَ فِيهَا تَحْيَوْنَ وَفِيهَا تَمُوتُونَ وَمِنْهَا
تُخْرَجُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾ يَا بَنِي آدَمَ قَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكُمْ لِبَاسًا يُوَارِي سَوْآتِكُمْ وَرِيشًا
وَلِبَاسُ التَّقْوَىٰ ذَٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ ذَٰلِكَ مِنْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَذَّكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾ يَا بَنِي
آدَمَ لَا يَفْتِنَنَّكُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ كَمَا أَخْرَجَ أَبَوَيْكُمْ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ يَنْزِعُ عَنْهُمَا
لِبَاسَهُمَا لِيُرِيَهُمَا سَوْآتِهِمَا إِنَّهُ يَرَاكُمْ هُوَ وَقَبِيلُهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا تَرَوْنَهُمْ إِنَّا
جَعَلْنَا الشَّيَاطِينَ أَوْلِيَاءَ لِلَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَإِذَا فَعَلُوا فَاحِشَةً قَالُوا
وَجَدْنَا عَلَيْهَا آبَاءَنَا وَاللَّهُ أَمَرَنَا بِهَا قُلْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَأْمُرُ بِالْفَحْشَاءِ
أَتَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾ قُلْ أَمَرَ رَبِّي بِالْقِسْطِ وَأَقِيمُوا
وُجُوهَكُمْ عِنْدَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ وَادْعُوهُ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ كَمَا بَدَأَكُمْ
تَعُودُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾ فَرِيقًا هَدَىٰ وَفَرِيقًا حَقَّ عَلَيْهِمُ الضَّلَالَةُ إِنَّهُمُ اتَّخَذُوا

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

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

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

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

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

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

Whenever these people commit a shameful deed, they say, "We found our forefathers doing this, and Allah Himself has enjoined us to 28-30

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

Contd. from p. 11]

The above two points of view of the story of man lead to two opposite conceptions in regard to man. The adoption of the Darwinian conception reduces man to one of the species of animals: therefore all the principles of human life (including the moral principles) will be based on the principles governing animal life and any animal-like behaviour of his will be regarded as natural. Then the only difference between human beings and animals will be the ability of the former to make use of instruments for the provision of their necessities and luxuries. On the contrary, the adoption of the Divine conception raises him from the low position of animal to the high position of man, His noblest creation. Then he is no longer a mere talking animal or a social animal but the vicegerent of Allah on this earth. Then what will distinguish him from all other creatures will not be his faculty of speech and his social life, but his moral responsibilities and the trust of the power delegated to him by Allah and his accountability for these to Him. This will change man's entire outlook about his life on this earth and will demand a different philosophy of life and system of morality, law and civilization. Then man will, of his own accord, look upwards in search of the principles of life and not downwards.

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

might have taken place according to the Darwinian theory of evolution, or each of the species might have been brought into existence individually.

11. That is, "It is obvious that you invite your own disgrace because you have formed too high an opinion of yourself, though you are merely a creation and a servant of your Lord. You have arrogantly disobeyed the Command of your Creator, thinking it to be below your dignity. The mere fact that you have shown pride, conceit and haughtiness without any personal claim or title to any excellence of your own, cannot make you great and respectable. It will make you mean, low and disgraceful and you yourself will be responsible for this ignominy."

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

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

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

unchecked on the way he was going. As his charge was absurd, Allah did not take any notice of it.

13. In this story the Qur'ān has brought to light the following important facts:

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

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

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

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

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

(6) This story makes it quite clear that whenever man disobeys Allah, he is exposed sooner or later. The nakedness of Adam and Eve became visible because they disobeyed the command of Allah, and not because of any inherent quality of the forbidden tree. At first Allah had made His own special arrangement to cover their nakedness, but when they disobeyed Him by eating the forbidden fruit, He undid that arrangement and they were left to

themselves to cover themselves in their own way, if they so desired. And if they had no intention of covering themselves, or if they did not do anything in this connection, Allah did not care at all about the condition in which they moved about. This meant to show that Allah would help them only if they remained obedient to Him. As soon as they would transgress the bounds of His obedience, He would withdraw His protection and leave them to do whatever they liked. The Holy Prophet also stated the same thing in several Traditions. He used to pray, "O my Allah, I expect Mercy from Thee: so do not leave me to myself even for a moment".

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

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

It also meant to warn the people who were opposing the Holy Prophet, as if to say, "The way you are following is the way of Satan, who has made you swerve from the Right Way. The very fact that you have made the satans from among the jinns and mankind your patrons and that you are persisting in your error, in spite of repeated warnings, shows that you have fallen a victim to your

open and permanent enemy. As you are going to be utterly ruined by him and meeting with the same consequences that are in store for Satan, if you are not your own enemies, and if you have any common-sense left in you, you should take a warning and turn to the way of your first parents, Adam and Eve, and repent."

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

15. In this passage, the Qur'ān has used the story of Adam and Eve for the eradication of the evil of nakedness. Satan had seduced the Arabs of the pre-Islamic period into believing that clothing was meant merely for the purpose of decorating and protecting the body from the hardships of weather. Accordingly they totally disregarded its real purpose and paid no heed to cover their shameful parts and did not hesitate to uncover them before others in the open. Above all, they would go round the Ka'abah in perfect nudity during the Haj season; and their women were even more shameless than their men. That was because they considered it a religious act and did this as if it were a virtuous deed.

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

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

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

the human nature that man should hide them with a clothing. This is what v. 26 implies. Allah has inspired man with the urge to hide the shameful parts of the body. Therefore man should understand the nature of this inspired urge and make clothing for himself from the material provided by Him.

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

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

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

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

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

[Contd. on p.22

الشَّيٰطِيْنَ اَوْلِيَآءَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ وَيَحْسَبُوْنَ اَنَّهُمْ مُّهْتَدُوْنَ ﴿30﴾ يٰبَنِيْٓ اٰدَمَ
خُذُوْا زِيْنَتَكُمْ عِنْدَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ وَّكُلُوْا وَاشْرَبُوْا وَلَا تُسْرِفُوْا ۚ اِنَّهٗ لَا
يُحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِيْنَ ﴿31﴾ قُلْ مَنْ حَرَّمَ زِيْنَةَ اللّٰهِ الَّتِيْٓ اَخْرَجَ لِعِبَادِهٖ وَ
الطَّيِّبٰتِ مِنَ الرِّزْقِ ۭ قُلْ هِيَ لِلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا فِي الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا خَالِصَةً يَّوْمَ
الْقِيٰمَةِ ۭ كَذٰلِكَ نُفَصِّلُ الْاٰيٰتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَّعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿32﴾ قُلْ اِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ رَبِّيَ
الْفَوَاحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَنَ وَالْاِثْمَ وَالْبَغْيَ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَاَنْ
تُشْرِكُوْا بِاللّٰهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزِّلْ بِهٖ سُلْطٰنًا وَّاَنْ تَقُوْلُوْا عَلَى اللّٰهِ مَا لَا
تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿33﴾ وَلِكُلِّ اُمَّةٍ اَجَلٌ ۚ فَاِذَا جَآءَ اَجَلُهُمْ لَا يَسْتَاْخِرُوْنَ سَاعَةً
وَّلَا يَسْتَقْدِمُوْنَ ﴿34﴾ يٰبَنِيْٓ اٰدَمَ اِمَّا يَاْتِيَنَّكُمْ رُسُلٌ مِّنْكُمْ يَقُصُّوْنَ عَلَيْكُمْ
اٰيٰتِيْ ۙ فَمَنِ اتَّقٰى وَاَصْلَحَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُوْنَ ﴿35﴾ وَ
الَّذِيْنَ كَذَّبُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَا وَاسْتَكْبَرُوْا عَنْهَآ اُولٰٓئِكَ اَصْحٰبُ النَّارِ ۚ هُمْ فِيْهَا
خٰلِدُوْنَ ﴿36﴾ فَمَنْ اَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرٰى عَلَى اللّٰهِ كَذِبًا اَوْ كَذَّبَ بِاٰيٰتِهٖ ۭ اُولٰٓئِكَ
يَنَالُهُمْ نَصِيْبُهُمْ مِّنَ الْكِتٰبِ ۭ حَتّٰٓى اِذَا جَآءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُنَا يَتَوَفَّوْنَهُمْ ۙ قَالُوْٓا
اَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ ۭ قَالُوْا ضَلُّوْا عَنَّا وَشَهِدُوْا عَلٰٓى
اَنْفُسِهِمْ اَنَّهُمْ كَانُوْا كٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿37﴾ قَالَ ادْخُلُوْا فِيْٓ اُمَمٍ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ
قَبْلِكُمْ مِّنَ الْجِنِّ وَالْاِنْسِ فِي النَّارِ ۭ كُلَّمَا دَخَلَتْ اُمَّةٌ لَّعَنَتْ اُخْتَهَا ۭ حَتّٰٓى
اِذَا ادَّارَكُوْا فِيْهَا جَمِيْعًا ۙ قَالَتْ اُخْرٰىهُمْ لِاُوْلٰىهُمْ رَبَّنَا هٰٓؤُلَآءِ اَضَلُّوْنَا
فَاٰتِهِمْ عَذَابًا ضِعْفًا مِّنَ النَّارِ ۭ قَالَ لِكُلٍّ ضِعْفٌ وَّلٰكِنْ لَّا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿38﴾
وَقَالَتْ اُوْلٰىهُمْ لِاُخْرٰىهُمْ فَمَا كَانَ لَكُمْ عَلَيْنَا مِنْ فَضْلٍ فَذُوْقُوا الْعَذَابَ

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

O Muhammad, ask them, "Who has forbidden[22] the decent garments that Allah brought forth for His servants and (Who has forbidden) the good and pure things of life bestowed by Him?" Say, "All these things are for the Believers in this world but on the Day of Resurrection, these shall be exclusively for them."[23] Thus We make quite plain Our Revelations to those who possess knowledge. 32

O Muhammad, say to them, "The things which my Lord has forbidden are: shameful deeds whether open or secret,[24] sinful[25] things and transgression against the Truth;[26] He has also forbidden to associate partners with Allah since He has sent down no authority therefor; (He has also forbidden) to attribute to Allah's name the thing which you know not He has said." 33

Every community has been given a fixed term; when the term expires, it can neither be put back nor put forward by a single hour.[27] (Allah declared it clearly at the very beginning of human life,) "O children of Adam! If Messengers from among you should come to you and recite to you My Revelations, whoever will refrain from disobedience and mend his ways, will have no cause of fear nor of sorrow; as for those who will treat Our Revelation as false and show pride in regard to them, shall be the dwellers of Hell, wherein they shall remain for ever".[28] Then who can be more wicked than the one who invents falsehoods about Allah and then attributes these to Him or than the one who treats the true Revelations of Allah as false? Such people will go on receiving their destined shares[29] till that hour comes when the angels, appointed by Us, will arrive to capture their souls. Then the angels will ask them, "Where are those now whom you worshipped instead of Allah ?" They will answer "All of them have forsaken us." And they will give evidence against themselves that they had indeed denied the truth. Allah will say, "Go into Hell, where those who went before you from among jinns and men have gone." As each generation will be entering Hell it will curse its preceding generation till all generations shall be gathered there: then each succeeding generation will say regarding the preceding one, "O Lord, these were the people who 34-39

led us astray; therefore give them double chastisement of the Fire." Allah will reply, "There is a double chastisement for every one but you know it not."[30] And the preceding generation will say to the succeeding, "(If we were to blame) you, too, were no better than we. Now taste the torture for what you earned."[31]

Contd. from p. 19]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

20. Here the word *"Zīnat"* means full and proper dress. The verse exhorts the people to be fully clothed, when they are engaged in worship. For this purpose, it does not suffice to cover merely those parts of the body which the Law

requires to be hidden in public in addition to the shameful parts. Therefore one should dress properly and decently so as to serve both the purposes, in accordance with one's means.

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

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

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

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

24. Please refer to E.N. 128 and E.N. 131 of *Al-An'ām*.

25. The literal meaning of *"ithm"* (اثم) is negligence. The sense of sin has entered into this word from *"āthimah"* which means a she-camel that can run fast

but wilfully does not do so. Likewise that man who neglects to obey the Commandments of his Lord, in spite of his ability to do so, shall be sinful for he has no intention of pleasing Him.

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

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

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

29. That is, "They shall live here in this world for the term that has been set for them and get their destined share, good or bad, to pass this life."

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

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

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

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

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

Now let us consider the case of the adulterer from the point of view of its evil influences and heritage in relation to his contemporaries and successors. The responsibility of his guilt does not remain confined to his own acts of adultery but extends to all those evil acts that were prompted and influenced by these. At first he himself catches the infection of a venereal disease and then communicates it to his own generation and to countless successive generations: he causes illegitimate births and then throws the burden of nourishment on others and makes them unlawful inheritors at the expense of the lawful inheritors, and the evil results of this injustice may continue to influence countless generations. Moreover, he seduces some innocent girl and induces her to surrender herself to sexual immorality, and then she, in her turn, spreads the evil to others and causes the ruin of countless families. Then he sets a bad example for his own children, his relatives and his friends and for the other people of his society and becomes a cause of the moral ruin of many persons, who, in their turn, leave the evil heritage, with all its evil influences on the countless succeeding generations. Therefore justice demands that a part of the responsibility for all these evil results should be laid on him as long as the effects last.

[Contd. on p. 28

بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْسِبُوْنَ ﴿39﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ كَذَّبُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَا وَاسْتَكْبَرُوْا عَنْهَا لَا تُفَتَّحُ
لَهُمْ اَبْوَابُ السَّمَآءِ وَلَا يَدْخُلُوْنَ الْجَنَّةَ حَتّٰى يَلِجَ الْجَمَلُ فِيْ سَمِّ
الْخِيَاطِ ؕ وَكَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُجْرِمِيْنَ ﴿40﴾ لَهُمْ مِّنْ جَهَنَّمَ مِهَادٌ وَّمِنْ
فَوْقِهِمْ غَوَاشٍ ؕ وَكَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِي الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿41﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ
لَا نُكَلِّفُ نَفْسًا اِلَّا وُسْعَهَآ ۫ اُولٰٓئِكَ اَصْحٰبُ الْجَنَّةِ ۚ هُمْ فِيْهَا خٰلِدُوْنَ ﴿42﴾ وَ
نَزَعْنَا مَا فِيْ صُدُوْرِهِمْ مِّنْ غِلٍّ تَجْرِيْ مِنْ تَحْتِهِمُ الْاَنْهٰرُ ۚ وَقَالُوا الْحَمْدُ
لِلّٰهِ الَّذِيْ هَدٰىنَا لِهٰذَا ۫ وَمَا كُنَّا لِنَهْتَدِيَ لَوْلَآ اَنْ هَدٰىنَا اللّٰهُ ۚ لَقَدْ
جَآءَتْ رُسُلُ رَبِّنَا بِالْحَقِّ ؕ وَنُوْدُوْٓا اَنْ تِلْكُمُ الْجَنَّةُ اُوْرِثْتُمُوْهَا بِمَا كُنْتُمْ
تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿43﴾ وَنَادٰٓى اَصْحٰبُ الْجَنَّةِ اَصْحٰبَ النَّارِ اَنْ قَدْ وَجَدْنَا مَا وَعَدَنَا
رَبُّنَا حَقًّا فَهَلْ وَجَدْتُّمْ مَّا وَعَدَ رَبُّكُمْ حَقًّا ؕ قَالُوْا نَعَمْ ۚ فَاَذَّنَ مُؤَذِّنٌۢ بَيْنَهُمْ
اَنْ لَّعْنَةُ اللّٰهِ عَلَى الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿44﴾ الَّذِيْنَ يَصُدُّوْنَ عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ وَيَبْغُوْنَهَا
عِوَجًا ۚ وَهُمْ بِالْاٰخِرَةِ كٰفِرُوْنَ ﴿45﴾ وَبَيْنَهُمَا حِجَابٌ ۚ وَعَلَى الْاَعْرَافِ رِجَالٌ
يَّعْرِفُوْنَ كُلًّا بِسِيْمٰهُمْ ۚ وَنَادَوْٓا اَصْحٰبَ الْجَنَّةِ اَنْ سَلٰمٌ عَلَيْكُمْ ۫ لَمْ
يَدْخُلُوْهَا وَهُمْ يَطْمَعُوْنَ ﴿46﴾ وَاِذَا صُرِفَتْ اَبْصَارُهُمْ تِلْقَآءَ اَصْحٰبِ النَّارِ ۙ
قَالُوْا رَبَّنَا لَا تَجْعَلْنَا مَعَ الْقَوْمِ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿47﴾ وَنَادٰٓى اَصْحٰبُ الْاَعْرَافِ
رِجَالًا يَّعْرِفُوْنَهُمْ بِسِيْمٰهُمْ قَالُوْا مَآ اَغْنٰى عَنْكُمْ جَمْعُكُمْ وَمَا كُنْتُمْ
تَسْتَكْبِرُوْنَ ﴿48﴾ اَهٰٓؤُلَآءِ الَّذِيْنَ اَقْسَمْتُمْ لَا يَنَالُهُمُ اللّٰهُ بِرَحْمَةٍ ؕ اُدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ
لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَآ اَنْتُمْ تَحْزَنُوْنَ ﴿49﴾ وَنَادٰٓى اَصْحٰبُ النَّارِ اَصْحٰبَ الْجَنَّةِ
اَنْ اَفِيْضُوْا عَلَيْنَا مِنَ الْمَآءِ اَوْ مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللّٰهُ ؕ قَالُوْٓا اِنَّ اللّٰهَ حَرَّمَهُمَا عَلَى

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

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

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

swore that Allah would not give them any portion of His blessings? Today the same have been welcome with the words 'Go into Paradise where you will have neither fear nor grief'."

Contd. from p.25]

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

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

Anyone, who will consider the problem of retribution from this point of view, will come to the inevitable conclusion that for the requital of full justice, there should be another world, where all the generations should be mustered together with their accounts: then there should be an all-knowing and all-aware judge to administer justice and there should also be human beings with eternal

lives to receive the reward or punishment, as the case may be, and all kinds of means for the dispensation of justice as well.

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

31. The Qur'ān has described at several places this sort of altercation between the dwellers of Hell. For instance, in XXXIV:31-33, it says, "I wish you could see these unjust people when they will be standing before their Lord and accusing one another. The people, who were made weak, will say to those who posed as mighty ones, 'But for you, we would have been believers'. But the so-called mighty ones will reply, 'What, did we keep you back from the Guidance when it came to you? No, you yourselves were the guilty ones'." In simple words, it means, "You yourselves are to blame for discarding the Guidance. You fell an easy prey to the greed with which we tempted you, to become our slaves, because you yourselves were greedy for wealth. When we wanted to buy your conscience, you sold it because you yourselves were eager to sell it: when we invited you to the worship of materialism, worldliness, nationalism and the like, you accepted our invitation, because you had an aversion to God-worship and a liking for this-worldliness. That is why you rejected the invitation of the worshippers of Allah, and accepted ours. When we deluded you with false religious things, you at once accepted these, because you yourselves were cherishing the same in your hearts. For instance, you were in search of such gods as might fulfil your desires without demanding any moral obligations from you, and we supplied such ones, and you accepted them. You were in search of such intercessors as might take the responsibility for your entry into Paradise, allowing you to do whatever pleased you in the world, without minding the Guidance of Allah. So we invented such ones and you followed us: you were in search of such religions as might guarantee short-cuts to salvation, freeing you from the hardships, restrictions and sacrifices for the cause of Allah, and permitting you to enjoy all sorts of indulgences, and we invented such easy and pleasant religions for you, and you followed them. In

[Contd. on p. 32

الْكٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿٥٠﴾ الَّذِيْنَ اتَّخَذُوْا دِيْنَهُمْ لَهْوًا وَّلَعِبًا وَّغَرَّتْهُمُ الْحَيٰوةُ الدُّنْيَا ۚ
فَالْيَوْمَ نَنْسٰىهُمْ كَمَا نَسُوْا لِقَآءَ يَوْمِهِمْ هٰذَا ۙ وَمَا كَانُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَا يَجْحَدُوْنَ ﴿٥١﴾
وَلَقَدْ جِئْنٰهُمْ بِكِتٰبٍ فَصَّلْنٰهُ عَلٰى عِلْمٍ هُدًى وَّرَحْمَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يُّؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٥٢﴾
هَلْ يَنْظُرُوْنَ اِلَّا تَاْوِيْلَهٗ ۘ يَوْمَ يَاْتِيْ تَاْوِيْلُهٗ يَقُوْلُ الَّذِيْنَ نَسُوْهُ مِنْ
قَبْلُ قَدْ جَآءَتْ رُسُلُ رَبِّنَا بِالْحَقِّ ۚ فَهَلْ لَّنَا مِنْ شُفَعَآءَ فَيَشْفَعُوْا لَنَآ اَوْ
نُرَدُّ فَنَعْمَلَ غَيْرَ الَّذِيْ كُنَّا نَعْمَلُ ۚ قَدْ خَسِرُوْٓا اَنْفُسَهُمْ وَضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَّا
كَانُوْا يَفْتَرُوْنَ ﴿٥٣﴾ اِنَّ رَبَّكُمُ اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ فِيْ سِتَّةِ
اَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوٰى عَلَى الْعَرْشِ ۘ يُغْشِي الَّيْلَ النَّهَارَ يَطْلُبُهٗ حَثِيْثًا ۙ وَّالشَّمْسَ
وَالْقَمَرَ وَالنُّجُوْمَ مُسَخَّرٰتٍ بِاَمْرِهٖ ۗ اَلَا لَهُ الْخَلْقُ وَالْاَمْرُ ۗ تَبٰرَكَ اللّٰهُ رَبُّ
الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٥٤﴾ اُدْعُوْا رَبَّكُمْ تَضَرُّعًا وَّخُفْيَةً ۚ اِنَّهٗ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِيْنَ ﴿٥٥﴾ وَلَا
تُفْسِدُوْا فِي الْاَرْضِ بَعْدَ اِصْلَاحِهَا وَادْعُوْهُ خَوْفًا وَّطَمَعًا ۚ اِنَّ رَحْمَتَ
اللّٰهِ قَرِيْبٌ مِّنَ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿٥٦﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِيْ يُرْسِلُ الرِّيٰحَ بُشْرًا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ
رَحْمَتِهٖ ۚ حَتّٰٓى اِذَآ اَقَلَّتْ سَحَابًا ثِقَالًا سُقْنٰهُ لِبَلَدٍ مَّيِّتٍ فَاَنْزَلْنَا بِهِ الْمَآءَ
فَاَخْرَجْنَا بِهٖ مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرٰتِ ۚ كَذٰلِكَ نُخْرِجُ الْمَوْتٰى لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٥٧﴾
وَالْبَلَدُ الطَّيِّبُ يَخْرُجُ نَبَاتُهٗ بِاِذْنِ رَبِّهٖ ۚ وَالَّذِيْ خَبُثَ لَا يَخْرُجُ اِلَّا
نَكِدًا ۚ كَذٰلِكَ نُصَرِّفُ الْاٰيٰتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَّشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿٥٨﴾ لَقَدْ اَرْسَلْنَا نُوْحًا اِلٰى قَوْمِهٖ
فَقَالَ يٰقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللّٰهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ اِلٰهٍ غَيْرُهٗ ۗ اِنِّيْٓ اَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ
يَوْمٍ عَظِيْمٍ ﴿٥٩﴾ قَالَ الْمَلَاُ مِنْ قَوْمِهٖٓ اِنَّا لَنَرٰىكَ فِيْ ضَلٰلٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿٦٠﴾
قَالَ يٰقَوْمِ لَيْسَ بِيْ ضَلٰلَةٌ وَّلٰكِنِّيْ رَسُوْلٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٦١﴾ اُبَلِّغُكُمْ

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

We have brought to these people a Book which gives details based on knowledge[36] and which is a guidance and blessing for those who believe.[37] Now, are these people waiting for anything other than the consequence (of which they have been) warned in this Book?[38] When the consequence will come before them, those very people who aforetime had disregarded it, will say, "Indeed, the Messengers of our Lord had come with the Truth. Shall we have, then, any intercessors who will intercede for us? Or could we be sent back that we might do deeds different from those we did before?"[39] They have, indeed, incurred heavy loss upon themselves and all the false things they had invented have forsaken them today. 52-53

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

And it is Allah, Who sends winds as harbingers of the good tidings of His mercy; when they gather up heavy clouds He drives them on to some dead land, and makes the rain fall upon it and brings forth many kinds of fruit (from the same dead land). Look! This is how We bring forth the dead from the state of death; it may be that you learn a lesson from this observation. The soil which is rich, yields rich produce by Allah's permission and the soil which is poor yields nothing but poor 57-58

produce.[46] Thus We present Our Signs over and over again for those people who intend to be grateful.

59-61 We sent Noah to his people;[47] he said, "O my people, worship Allah; you have no deity other than He.[48] I fear lest the chastisement befall you on a dreadful day." The chiefs of his people answered, "We clearly see that you are in obvious deviation." Noah replied, "O my people, I am not in any kind of deviation; on the contrary, I am a messenger from the Lord of the worlds."

Contd. from p.29]

short, we alone are not responsible for your misguidance but you, too, share it equally with us: if we supplied misguidance, you bought it of your own accord".

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

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

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

In fact the servants of Allah behave like this in this world also. Unlike the workers of iniquity, they do not become proud of any worldly success and say, "This is the result of our own ability, work and effort," and then grow even more rebellious, and spread disorder in the world. In contrast to these rebels, the true servants of Allah consider every worldly success as His favour and are thankful

and grateful to Him. The more they are favoured by Him, the more humble, generous and merciful they become. They do not rely on their good works and say, "We are quite sure that we shall get salvation". Instead of this, they beg Allah's pardon for their shortcomings and rely on His grace and mercy, and they are always filled with the fear lest their accounts should turn out to be unfavourable against them.

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

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

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

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

37. The Qur'ān is 'Guidance' because its teachings are so clear that they show the right way to anyone who ponders over them. Moreover, the practical effects of that guidance can be seen in the lives of those who believe in it and

follow its teachings. And it is really a great 'blessing' because it brings a blessed change in the mental attitude, the moral out-look and the character of the one who accepts it. The truth of this was being proved by the wonderful changes that were taking place in the lives of the Companions of the Holy Prophet.

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

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

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

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

41. It is very difficult for us to comprehend the nature of "He sat upon the Throne". It is just possible that after the creation of the universe, He fixed some place as the center of His limitless Kingdom, which may have been called "The Throne," from where He is showering His blessings on the whole universe and it is also possible that the Arabic word *"Al-'Arsh"* may have been used figuratively to express His Sovereignty and "seating Himself on the Throne" may mean "the taking of the reins of His Kingdom in His hands". Anywise, whatever be the details of the Text, the Qur'ān mentions this to impress the fact that Allah is not only the Creator of the universe but also its Sovereign as well as Ruler, that after its creation He has not cut off all connections with it and has not become disinterested in its affairs, but is practically governing each and every minute part of it; all the powers of Sovereignty are, in fact, in His hands; that everything is

under His Command and is obedient to Him, and the destinies of everyone and everything are permanently in His hands. In this way the Qur'ān cuts across the basic misunderstanding that gives rise to the errors like *shirk* and rebellion against Him. The creed that God has nothing to do with the affairs of the universe, inevitably leads to the belief that someone else is the maker or destroyer of one's destiny, and, therefore, one should bow down before that one or one should consider one's own self to be its maker and become independent of Him.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

47. The first of the historical events referred to in E.N. 46, is being related here. According to the Qur'ān, Prophet Noah was sent to his people, who were the first to corrupt the Right Way of life followed by Adam (Allah's peace be upon him) and taught by him to his descendants. We learn from the brief hints in the Qur'ān and the details in the Bible that the people of Noah lived in the country which is now called Iraq. The same is confirmed by the tablets found in the archaeological remains of Babel which are older than the Bible. They tell a story similar to the one related in the Bible and the Qur'ān, and fix the place of its occurrence near Mosul. Moreover, the traditions that have come down from the most ancient times from Kurdistan and Armenia say that the ark of Noah anchored at some place in the same region. They also point out to some relics connected with the story of Noah near Mt. Ararat and the inhabitants of Nakhchiwan claim even today that the town was founded by Prophet Noah.

Traditions, similar to the story of Noah, are found in the ancient

[Contd. on p. 39

رِسٰلٰتِ رَبِّیْ وَ اَنْصَحُ لَكُمْ وَ اَعْلَمُ مِنَ اللّٰهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿62﴾ اَوَ عَجِبْتُمْ
اَنْ جَآءَكُمْ ذِكْرٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ عَلٰى رَجُلٍ مِّنْكُمْ لِيُنْذِرَكُمْ وَ لِتَتَّقُوْا وَ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تُرْحَمُوْنَ ﴿63﴾ فَكَذَّبُوْهُ فَاَنْجَيْنٰهُ وَ الَّذِيْنَ مَعَهٗ فِي الْفُلْكِ وَ اَغْرَقْنَا الَّذِيْنَ
كَذَّبُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَا ؕ اِنَّهُمْ كَانُوْا قَوْمًا عَمِيْنَ ﴿64﴾ وَ اِلٰى عَادٍ اَخَاهُمْ هُوْدًا ؕ قَالَ
يٰقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللّٰهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ اِلٰهٍ غَيْرُهٗ ؕ اَفَلَا تَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿65﴾ قَالَ الْمَلَاُ
الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا مِنْ قَوْمِهٖۤ اِنَّا لَنَرٰىكَ فِيْ سَفَاهَةٍ وَّ اِنَّا لَنَظُنُّكَ مِنَ
الْكٰذِبِيْنَ ﴿66﴾ قَالَ يٰقَوْمِ لَيْسَ بِيْ سَفَاهَةٌ وَّ لٰكِنِّيْ رَسُوْلٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّ
الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿67﴾ اُبَلِّغُكُمْ رِسٰلٰتِ رَبِّيْ وَ اَنَا لَكُمْ نَاصِحٌ اَمِيْنٌ ﴿68﴾ اَوَ عَجِبْتُمْ اَنْ
جَآءَكُمْ ذِكْرٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ عَلٰى رَجُلٍ مِّنْكُمْ لِيُنْذِرَكُمْ ؕ وَ اذْكُرُوْۤا اِذْ جَعَلَكُمْ
خُلَفَآءَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ قَوْمِ نُوْحٍ وَّ زَادَكُمْ فِي الْخَلْقِ بَصْۜطَةً ۚ فَاذْكُرُوْۤا اٰلَآءَ
اللّٰهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُوْنَ ﴿69﴾ قَالُوْۤا اَجِئْتَنَا لِنَعْبُدَ اللّٰهَ وَحْدَهٗ وَ نَذَرَ مَا كَانَ
يَعْبُدُ اٰبَآؤُنَا ۚ فَاْتِنَا بِمَا تَعِدُنَاۤ اِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصّٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿70﴾ قَالَ قَدْ وَقَعَ
عَلَيْكُمْ مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ رِجْسٌ وَّ غَضَبٌ ؕ اَتُجَادِلُوْنَنِيْ فِيْۤ اَسْمَآءٍ سَمَّيْتُمُوْهَاۤ اَنْتُمْ
وَ اٰبَآؤُكُمْ مَّا نَزَّلَ اللّٰهُ بِهَا مِنْ سُلْطٰنٍ ؕ فَانْتَظِرُوْۤا اِنِّيْ مَعَكُمْ مِّنَ الْمُنْتَظِرِيْنَ ﴿71﴾
فَاَنْجَيْنٰهُ وَ الَّذِيْنَ مَعَهٗ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِّنَّا وَ قَطَعْنَا دَابِرَ الَّذِيْنَ كَذَّبُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَا
وَ مَا كَانُوْا مُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿72﴾ وَ اِلٰى ثَمُوْدَ اَخَاهُمْ صٰلِحًا ؕ قَالَ يٰقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا
اللّٰهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ اِلٰهٍ غَيْرُهٗ ؕ قَدْ جَآءَتْكُمْ بَيِّنَةٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ ؕ هٰذِهٖ نَاقَةُ اللّٰهِ
لَكُمْ اٰيَةً فَذَرُوْهَا تَاْكُلْ فِيْۤ اَرْضِ اللّٰهِ وَ لَا تَمَسُّوْهَا بِسُوْٓءٍ فَيَاْخُذَكُمْ
عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ ﴿73﴾ وَ اذْكُرُوْۤا اِذْ جَعَلَكُمْ خُلَفَآءَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ عَادٍ وَّ بَوَّاَكُمْ فِي

"I convey to you the Messages of my Lord and am your well- 62-64
wisher for I know from Allah what you do not know. Do you think it strange that admonition from your Lord should come to you through a man from among your own people so that he may warn you and you may guard against error and be graced with mercy?"[49] But they treated him as an impostor. Ultimately, We rescued Noah and those with him in the Ark and drowned those who rejected Our Revelations as false.[50] Indeed they were a blind people!

And to 'Ād[51] We sent their brother Hūd: he said, "O my 65-72
people, worship Allah: you have no deity other than He. Will you not, then, refrain from wrong ways?" The chiefs of his people who rejected his Message, answered, "We clearly see that you are of unsound mind and we think that you are a liar." He replied, "O my pepole, I am not of unsound mind, but in fact, I am a Messenger from the Lord of the world. I convey the Message of my Lord to you and I am a trustworthy well-wisher of yours. Do you think it strange that admonition from your Lord should come to you through a man among your own people so that he may warn you? Do not forget that after Noah's people your Lord made you his successors and made you very robust. So remember the wonderful manifestations of Allah's power :[52] it is expected that you will attain success." They replied, "Have you come to us (with the demand) that we should worship Allah alone and discard those whom our forefathers have been worshipping?[53] Well, bring on us the scourge with which you have been threatening us, if you are truthful." To this, he replied, "You have already incurred the curse of Allah and His wrath. Do you dispute with me about mere names which you and your forefathers have invented,[54] and for which Allah has sent down no authority?[55] Well, you may wait and I, too, will wait with you." Ultimately, We saved Hūd and his companions with Our Mercy, and We cut off the roots of those who treated Our Revelations as lies, and did not intend to believe.[56]

Contd. from p. 37]

literatures of Greece, Egypt, India and China. Besides these, the traditions that have come down from the most ancient times from Burma, Malaya, East Indies, Australia, New Guinea and from different parts of Europe and America are also similar to it. All this shows that this story is connected with the period when all the

descendants of Adam lived in the same region from where they dispersed all over the earth. That is why references to the "Flood" are found in the ancient history of every nation, though they forgot its real facts and mixed it with the fictions of their own imagination.

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

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

50. The brief descriptions of certain events from the mission of Prophets at certain places in the Qur'ān have given rise to the conjecture that the whole thing was finished in a couple of meetings. They think that a prophet presented his

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

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

This does not, however, mean that Allah has now totally given up the infliction of chastisements. The fact is that even now He sends disasters by way of warning or punishment on those communities which rebel against Him and deviate into error. But it is a pity that people do not turn their attention towards the real cause. Instead of looking at these as the consequences of their own evil ways, their scientists, their historians and their philosophers, who cannot go beyond physical causes, mislead them by ascribing these to some physical and historical laws. These so-called scholars do not let them turn their attention to the fact that there is Allah above them, Who first warns them of their evil ways by inflicting minor disasters, and then, if they persist in the wrong ways, He throws them into the abyss of destruction.

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

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

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

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

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

54. That is "You call one 'the lord of rain', the other 'the lord of air' or 'lord of wealth' or 'lord of disease', when, in fact, none of these is lord of anything. These are mere names that you have invented". In our own time they call one 'the remover of difficulties' and the other 'the bestower of treasures', whereas he has no treasure to bestow on anyone. They have made one "the giver", when he owns nothing to give, and so on. In fact, such titles are empty words without any corresponding possessor of such qualities, entitling anyone to these titles. Therefore, if one argues to justify these titles, he, in fact, raises disputes over mere names that have no reality behind them.

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

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

"We have lived for a long period in this fort in great prosperity. Our canals were always full of water ..... and our rulers were noble kings who were free from evil. They were, however, hard on those who disturbed the peace. They ruled over us in accordance with the Law of Hūd and used to enter all important decisions in a book. We believe in miracles and life-after-death."

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

الْاَرْضِ تَتَّخِذُوْنَ مِنْ سُهُوْلِهَا قُصُوْرًا وَّ تَنْحِتُوْنَ الْجِبَالَ بُيُوْتًا ۚ فَاذْكُرُوْٓا
اٰلَآءَ اللّٰهِ وَلَا تَعْثَوْا فِى الْاَرْضِ مُفْسِدِيْنَ ﴿74﴾ قَالَ الْمَلَاُ الَّذِيْنَ اسْتَكْبَرُوْا
مِنْ قَوْمِهٖ لِلَّذِيْنَ اسْتُضْعِفُوْا لِمَنْ اٰمَنَ مِنْهُمْ اَتَعْلَمُوْنَ اَنَّ صٰلِحًا
مُّرْسَلٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّهٖ ۚ قَالُوْٓا اِنَّا بِمَآ اُرْسِلَ بِهٖ مُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿75﴾ قَالَ الَّذِيْنَ اسْتَكْبَرُوْٓا
اِنَّا بِالَّذِيْٓ اٰمَنْتُمْ بِهٖ كٰفِرُوْنَ ﴿76﴾ فَعَقَرُوا النَّاقَةَ وَ عَتَوْا عَنْ اَمْرِ رَبِّهِمْ وَ
قَالُوْا يٰصٰلِحُ ائْتِنَا بِمَا تَعِدُنَآ اِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ ﴿77﴾ فَاَخَذَتْهُمُ الرَّجْفَةُ
فَاَصْبَحُوْا فِىْ دَارِهِمْ جٰثِمِيْنَ ﴿78﴾ فَتَوَلّٰى عَنْهُمْ وَ قَالَ يٰقَوْمِ لَقَدْ اَبْلَغْتُكُمْ
رِسَالَةَ رَبِّىْ وَ نَصَحْتُ لَكُمْ وَ لٰكِنْ لَّا تُحِبُّوْنَ النّٰصِحِيْنَ ﴿79﴾ وَ لُوْطًا اِذْ قَالَ
لِقَوْمِهٖٓ اَتَاْتُوْنَ الْفَاحِشَةَ مَا سَبَقَكُمْ بِهَا مِنْ اَحَدٍ مِّنَ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿80﴾ اِنَّكُمْ
لَتَاْتُوْنَ الرِّجَالَ شَهْوَةً مِّنْ دُوْنِ النِّسَآءِ ۚ بَلْ اَنْتُمْ قَوْمٌ مُّسْرِفُوْنَ ﴿81﴾
وَ مَا كَانَ جَوَابَ قَوْمِهٖٓ اِلَّآ اَنْ قَالُوْٓا اَخْرِجُوْهُمْ مِّنْ قَرْيَتِكُمْ ۚ اِنَّهُمْ
اُنَاسٌ يَّتَطَهَّرُوْنَ ﴿82﴾ فَاَنْجَيْنٰهُ وَ اَهْلَهٗٓ اِلَّا امْرَاَتَهٗ ۖ كَانَتْ مِنَ
الْغٰبِرِيْنَ ﴿83﴾ وَ اَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ مَّطَرًا ۚ فَانْظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُجْرِمِيْنَ ﴿84﴾
وَ اِلٰى مَدْيَنَ اَخَاهُمْ شُعَيْبًا ۚ قَالَ يٰقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللّٰهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ
اِلٰهٍ غَيْرُهٗ ۚ قَدْ جَآءَتْكُمْ بَيِّنَةٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ فَاَوْفُوا الْكَيْلَ وَ الْمِيْزَانَ
وَ لَا تَبْخَسُوا النَّاسَ اَشْيَآءَهُمْ وَ لَا تُفْسِدُوْا فِى الْاَرْضِ بَعْدَ اِصْلَاحِهَا ۚ
ذٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿85﴾ وَ لَا تَقْعُدُوْا بِكُلِّ صِرَاطٍ تُوْعِدُوْنَ
وَ تَصُدُّوْنَ عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ مَنْ اٰمَنَ بِهٖ وَ تَبْغُوْنَهَا عِوَجًا ۚ وَ اذْكُرُوْٓا
اِذْ كُنْتُمْ قَلِيْلًا فَكَثَّرَكُمْ ۖ وَ انْظُرُوْا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُفْسِدِيْنَ ﴿86﴾ وَ

And to Thamūd,[57] We sent their brother Sālih. He said, "O my people, worship Allah for you have no other deity save Him. A clear proof has come to you from your Lord: here is Allah's she-camel, a sign[58] for you, so let her graze at will in Allah's land; do not touch her with any evil intention, lest a woeful scourge from your Lord seize you. And remember the time when Allah made you successors of 'Ād and established you in the land with dignity and enabled you to make castles on the plains and hew out houses in the hills.[59] So do not be neglectful of the manifestations of Allah's powers, and do not spread disorder on the earth."[60] 73-74

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

Then they killed the she-camel,[61] and very insolently defied their Lord's command, and challenged Sālih, "Bring that scourge with which you threaten us, if you really are one of the Messengers." Consequently a shocking catastrophe[62] overtook them and they lay lifeless on their faces in their dwellings. So, Sālih left their habitations, saying, "O my people! I conveyed the Message of my Lord to you and I did my very best for your good, but I am helpless because you do not like your well-wishers." 77-79

And We sent Lot as a Messenger: Remember that he said to his people,[63] "Have you become so shameless that you commit such indecent acts as no one committed before you in the world? You gratify your lust with men instead of women :[64] indeed you are a people who are transgressors of all limits!"[7] But the only answer of his people was no other than to say, "Turn out these people of your habitations for they pose to be very pious."[65] At last We delivered Lot and the members of his household—except his wife, who was of those who stayed behind[66]—and We rained a rain upon his people;[67] then behold what happened in the end to the guilty ones![68] 80-84

And to Madyan[69] We sent their brother Shu'aib: he said, "O my people, worship Allah: you have no other deity than He. A clear 85-86

guidance has come to you from your lord: you should, therefore, give full measure and weight, and do not defraud the people of their goods,[70] nor spread disorder on the earth after it has been set aright :[71] this is better for you, if you are true Believers.[72] And do not lie in ambush by every path (of life) as robbers, in order to frighten the people nor debar from Allah's Way those who believe in it, nor seek to make the Right Way crooked. Remember the time, when you were a few in number; then Allah multiplied you: and behold with open eyes what happened to the spreaders of corruption!

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

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

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

58. The wording of the Text clearly shows that Allah's she-camel was the clear proof", which has been called "a Sign" in the next sentence. We learn

from XXVI: 154-158 that the people of his tribe had themselves demanded from Prophet Sālih to bring a clear Sign of his appointment as Messenger of Allah. In response to this, the Prophet presented the she-camel as a Sign. This is a positive proof of the fact that the birth of the she-camel had taken place in some miraculous manner and her appearance was a miracle of the same kind as presented by other Prophets to the disbelievers at their demand of a proof of their Prophethood. Another proof of her miraculous birth is the fact that Prophet Sālih presented the she-camel to the disbelievers with a warning to this effect: "Your lives are directly connected with the life of this she-camel. She shall graze freely in your fields and she shall be privileged to drink water at the well one day all alone by herself, and all your cattle shall drink water the following day, turn by turn; and if you touch her with an evil intention, Allah's scourge will overtake you all of a sudden". It is obvious from this that the she-camel could have been presented in such a forcible manner only if the people had seen with their own eyes that she was an extraordinary animal. That is why they let her graze freely in their fields and let her drink water throughout the day all by herself, though in their heart of hearts they were not willing to accede to this. They were so much afraid of her that in order to kill her they had to hold long consultations and hatch secret plots, though Prophet Sālih had no worldly power to prevent them from this. This shows that they knew there was some hidden power behind her that made her so bold as to roam about wherever she liked.

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

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

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

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

crime, which is committed openly by an individual, and is tolerated by the community, is a national crime.

62. The catastrophe that overtook Thamūd has been called الرَّجْفَة "the terrifying shocker", but in other places it has been called الصَّيْحَة (a cry) and الصَّاعِقَة (a thunderbolt) and الطَّاغِيَة (a roaring noise).

63. Those people lived in the territory now called Trans-Jordan and is situated between 'Irāq and Palestine. According to the Bible its head quarters was Sodom which was situated somewhere near the Dead Sea or has been submerged in it. The Talmud says that they had four more big cities besides Sodom, and the land between these cities looked like one big garden for miles, and charmed the onlookers. But now those cities cannot be located with accuracy because the whole land is covered with the Dead Sea, which is also called Lot's Sea.

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

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

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

Although wicked people have always been committing this most heinous sin that has given the people of Sodom an everlasting notoriety, yet it has always been considered a filthy and detestable act. But the only people who have ever tried to raise it to a moral excellence, were the Greek philosophers in the ancient world, and the Europeans in the modern world. The latter are doing their utmost to make up the deficiency by making an open propaganda for it, and have succeeded in giving this filthy act a legal sanction. So much so that the legislatures of some countries have legalized it. It does not require elaborate argument to show that homo-sexuality is a horrible social crime and a heinous sin. For the Creator has made the male and the female of each and every living species different from

and complementary to each other for their reproduction. Then this difference in the human species has been created to serve another purpose. This is to urge the two to live together in order to form a family along with their offspring. For this is the foundation of a civilized life for which man has been created. That is why their bodies have been made complementary to attract each other for the satisfaction of sex urges and for the service of the natural function of reproduction of the species. Therefore the one who satisfies this sex urge in an unnatural way becomes guilty of many crimes at one and the same time. (1) Such a one, so to speak, wages a war against the natural and physical functionings of his own organs and those of the victims of his lust. This inevitably produces very harmful effects on their physiques, their minds and their morality. (2) He becomes guilty of treachery and dishonesty against Nature for he enjoys sexual pleasure, without performing the necessary service of his species and civilization and without fulfilling the rights and obligations attached to it. (3) He commits a breach of trust against the society in general for he enjoys all the benefits of the civilized society, but in his turn does not take on himself the responsibilities of the married life and wastes all his powers in the unnatural gratification of his sexual desires. This selfish and unworthy attitude is not only useless but also positively harmful to the collective morality. Thus he makes himself unfit for the service of the family and of the human race and produces unnatural feminine characteristics in, at least, one other male, and opens the way to adultery and moral degradation for at least two women.

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

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

[Contd. on p. 52

إِنْ كَانَ طَآئِفَةٌ مِّنكُمْ اٰمَنُوْا بِالَّذِيْٓ اُرْسِلْتُ بِهٖ وَطَآئِفَةٌ لَّمْ يُؤْمِنُوْا
فَاصْبِرُوْا حَتّٰى يَحْكُمَ اللّٰهُ بَيْنَنَا ۚ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الْحٰكِمِيْنَ ﴿٨٧﴾

الجزء ٩

اٰمَنُوْا مَعَكَ مِنْ قَرْيَتِنَآ اَوْ لَتَعُوْدُنَّ فِيْ مِلَّتِنَا ۚ قَالَ اَوَلَوْ كُنَّا كٰرِهِيْنَ ﴿٨٨﴾
قَدِ افْتَرَيْنَا عَلَى اللّٰهِ كَذِبًا اِنْ عُدْنَا فِيْ مِلَّتِكُمْ بَعْدَ اِذْ نَجّٰىنَا اللّٰهُ مِنْهَا ۚ
وَمَا يَكُوْنُ لَنَآ اَنْ نَّعُوْدَ فِيْهَآ اِلَّآ اَنْ يَّشَآءَ اللّٰهُ رَبُّنَا ۚ وَسِعَ رَبُّنَا كُلَّ
شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا ۚ عَلَى اللّٰهِ تَوَكَّلْنَا ۚ رَبَّنَا افْتَحْ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَ قَوْمِنَا بِالْحَقِّ وَ
اَنْتَ خَيْرُ الْفٰتِحِيْنَ ﴿٨٩﴾ وَقَالَ الْمَلَاُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا مِنْ قَوْمِهٖ لَئِنِ اتَّبَعْتُمْ
شُعَيْبًا اِنَّكُمْ اِذًا لَّخٰسِرُوْنَ ﴿٩٠﴾ فَاَخَذَتْهُمُ الرَّجْفَةُ فَاَصْبَحُوْا فِيْ دَارِهِمْ
جٰثِمِيْنَ ﴿٩١﴾ اَلَّذِيْنَ كَذَّبُوْا شُعَيْبًا كَاَنْ لَّمْ يَغْنَوْا فِيْهَا ۚ اَلَّذِيْنَ كَذَّبُوْا
شُعَيْبًا كَانُوْا هُمُ الْخٰسِرِيْنَ ﴿٩٢﴾ فَتَوَلّٰى عَنْهُمْ وَقَالَ يٰقَوْمِ لَقَدْ
اَبْلَغْتُكُمْ رِسٰلٰتِ رَبِّيْ وَنَصَحْتُ لَكُمْ ۚ فَكَيْفَ اٰسٰى عَلٰى قَوْمٍ كٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿٩٣﴾ وَ
مَآ اَرْسَلْنَا فِيْ قَرْيَةٍ مِّنْ نَّبِيٍّ اِلَّآ اَخَذْنَآ اَهْلَهَا بِالْبَاْسَآءِ وَالضَّرَّآءِ لَعَلَّهُمْ
يَضَّرَّعُوْنَ ﴿٩٤﴾ ثُمَّ بَدَّلْنَا مَكَانَ السَّيِّئَةِ الْحَسَنَةَ حَتّٰى عَفَوْا وَّقَالُوْا قَدْ
مَسَّ اٰبَآءَنَا الضَّرَّآءُ وَالسَّرَّآءُ فَاَخَذْنٰهُمْ بَغْتَةً وَّهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُوْنَ ﴿٩٥﴾ وَلَوْ
اَنَّ اَهْلَ الْقُرٰٓى اٰمَنُوْا وَاتَّقَوْا لَفَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ بَرَكٰتٍ مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ وَالْاَرْضِ
وَلٰكِنْ كَذَّبُوْا فَاَخَذْنٰهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوْا يَكْسِبُوْنَ ﴿٩٦﴾ اَفَاَمِنَ اَهْلُ الْقُرٰٓى اَنْ
يَّاْتِيَهُمْ بَاْسُنَا بَيَاتًا وَّهُمْ نَآئِمُوْنَ ﴿٩٧﴾ اَوَاَمِنَ اَهْلُ الْقُرٰٓى اَنْ يَّاْتِيَهُمْ
بَاْسُنَا ضُحًى وَّهُمْ يَلْعَبُوْنَ ﴿٩٨﴾ اَفَاَمِنُوْا مَكْرَ اللّٰهِ ۚ فَلَا يَاْمَنُ مَكْرَ اللّٰهِ اِلَّا الْقَوْمُ

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

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

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

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

afraid of Allah's secret plan?[78] In fact, only those people are doomed to destruction, who are not afraid of Allah's secret plan.

Contd. from p.49]

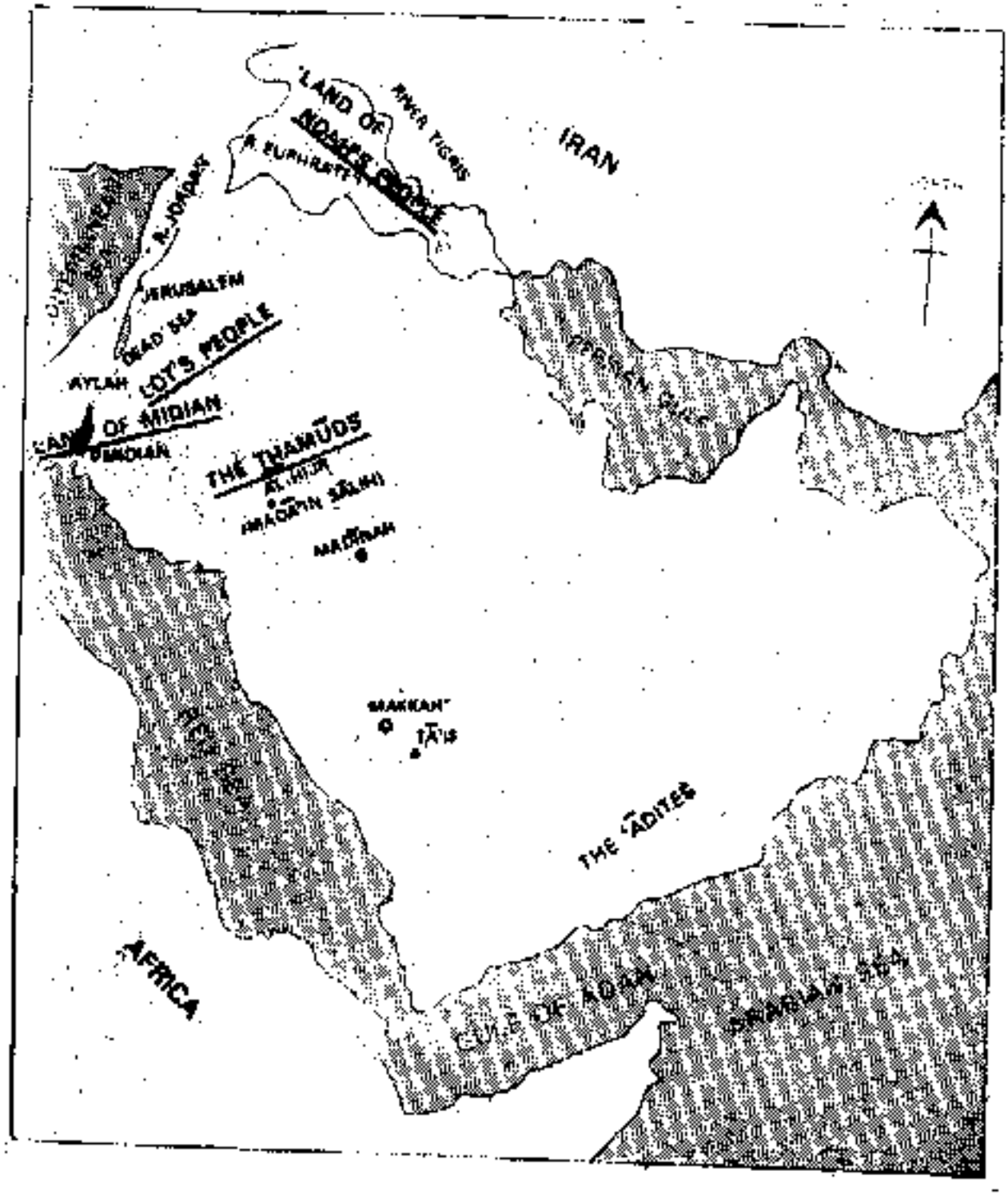
67. The "rain" was not a rain of water but a rain of stones as has been explicitly stated at some other places in the Qur'ān. Their habitations were turned upside down and sunk into the earth.

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

There are, however, some traditions from his successors regarding this. Hadrat 'Alī is of the opinion that the criminals should be killed with sword and the dead bodies should not be buried but burnt to ashes. Hadrat Abu Bakr also agrees with it. Hadrat 'Umar and Hadrat 'Uthmān are of the opinion that they should be taken under the roof of a dilapidated building, which should be pulled down on them. Ibn 'Abbās has decreed that they should be thrown down headlong from the top of the highest building of the habitation and then stoned to death. Imām Shāfi'ī says that both the criminals involved in sodomy should be killed, whether married or unmarried. According to Shi'ibī,, Zuhrī, Mālik and Ahmad they should be stoned to death. Sa'īd bin Musayyib, 'Atā, Hasan Basri, Ibrahim Nakh'i, Sufyān Thauri and Auzā'i are of the opinion that the punishment is the same as for adultery, that is, one hundred stripes and exile for the unmarried, and stoning to death for the married. Imām Abū Hanīfah is of the opinion that the culprit should be punished in accordance with the circumstances of the crime with an exemplary punishment. There is also a saying of Imam Shāfi'i to this effect.

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

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



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

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

In the light of the above historical fact, there is no reason to suppose that they heard for the first time the voice of the Truth from Prophet Shu'aib. In fact, they were originally Muslims like the Israelites, but had become corrupt at the time when Prophet Shu'aib was sent to them, just as the Israelites were at the time when Prophet Moses was sent to them. Though they had become involved in *shirk* and immoralities by mixing with the *mushrik* and immoral people during the six centuries or so after Prophet Abraham, yet they professed to be "believers" and were proud of that.

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

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

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

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

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

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

74. We should not pass cursorily over this sentence, but should think deeply about its implications. The chiefs and the leaders of Midian meant and wanted to convince the people of this thing: "We shall be utterly ruined if we accept and practise the fundamental principles of honesty, righteousness, uprightness and morality. It is obvious that our trade and commerce can never flourish if we apply the principle of truth to it and carry out our bargains with honesty. Besides this, if we do not exploit our geographical position on the crossroads of the most important trade routes, and let the caravans pass on without molestation and become peaceful citizens, all its political and commercial advantages will come to an end. This will also bring to an end the awe and influence we wield over our neighbouring countries." This fear of "ruin" was not peculiar to the people of Shu'aib alone. In every age the corrupt people have felt the same fear concerning the way of truth, righteousness and honesty. This has always been the considered opinion of all the corrupt people that it is not possible to carry out commercial, political and other worldly activities without resort to lies, dishonesty and immorality. That is why the greatest argument against the Message of Truth has always been that the community would be ruined, if it gave up the known worldly wrong ways and adopted the Right Way.

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

76. A deep significance underlies all the stories which have been related here. Every story applied appropriately and exactly to the case of Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) and his people, the Quraish. In every story there are two parties — the Prophet and his people. In every story the

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

77. After citing the individual case of every Prophet and his people, now the general and comprehensive procedure has been enunciated, that Allah adopted at the appointment of each one of His Messengers. Whenever a Messenger was sent, Allah afflicted his people with adversities and calamities so that they should become meek and humble, and be conditioned for the acceptance of the Message. Accordingly, He sent famines and epidemics to them and made them suffer economic losses, defeats in wars, and the like, in order to humble their pride and haughtiness and to frustrate their over-confidence in their powers, riches, resources, capabilities etc. This was to make them realize that there is a Higher Power above them that controls their destinies so that their hearts should be inclined to admonition and they should bow down humbly before their Lord. But, if this failed to incline their hearts to the acceptance of the Truth, they were tempted with prosperity. And this was the beginning of their end. As a rule, when such people, as are afflicted with adversity and calamities, begin to flourish and are enriched with blessings, they do not show any gratitude to their Master, and even forget the days of adversity. Then their intellectuals delude them by arguing like this: "There is nothing unusual in this. History tells us that the vicissitudes of fortune have always been taking place independent of moral values and these are not taking place under the control of Allah or in accordance with moral laws but blind nature is always working and bringing about adversity or prosperity. That is why our forefathers also had had their adversities and prosperities. It is, therefore, a sign of mental weakness to draw any moral lesson from these and to bow down and humble oneself before Allah.

The Holy Prophet had described the same thing in a Tradition: "Affliction goes on helping a Believer to reform himself till he comes out of this furnace cleansed of all impurities. But the case of a hypocrite in afflicition is that of an ass, who does not realise why his master tied him and why he untied him." This

[Contd. on p.58

الْخٰسِرُوْنَ ﴿٩٩﴾ اَوَلَمْ يَهْدِ لِلَّذِيْنَ يَرِثُوْنَ الْاَرْضَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ اَهْلِهَآ اَنْ لَّوْ
نَشَآءُ اَصَبْنٰهُمْ بِذُنُوْبِهِمْ ۚ وَنَطْبَعُ عَلٰى قُلُوْبِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُوْنَ ﴿١٠٠﴾ تِلْكَ
الْقُرٰى نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ اَنْۢبَآئِهَا ۚ وَلَقَدْ جَآءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ ۚ فَمَا
كَانُوْا لِيُؤْمِنُوْا بِمَا كَذَّبُوْا مِنْ قَبْلُ ۚ كَذٰلِكَ يَطْبَعُ اللّٰهُ عَلٰى قُلُوْبِ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿١٠١﴾
وَمَا وَجَدْنَا لِاَكْثَرِهِمْ مِّنْ عَهْدٍ ۚ وَاِنْ وَّجَدْنَآ اَكْثَرَهُمْ لَفٰسِقِيْنَ ﴿١٠٢﴾ ثُمَّ
بَعَثْنَا مِنْۢ بَعْدِهِمْ مُّوْسٰى بِاٰيٰتِنَآ اِلٰى فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَا۟ئِهٖ فَظَلَمُوْا بِهَا ۚ فَانْظُرْ
كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُفْسِدِيْنَ ﴿١٠٣﴾ وَقَالَ مُوْسٰى يٰفِرْعَوْنُ اِنِّيْ رَسُوْلٌ مِّنْ
رَّبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿١٠٤﴾ حَقِيْقٌ عَلٰٓى اَنْ لَّآ اَقُوْلَ عَلَى اللّٰهِ اِلَّا الْحَقَّ ۚ قَدْ جِئْتُكُمْ
بِبَيِّنَةٍ مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ فَاَرْسِلْ مَعِيَ بَنِيْٓ اِسْرَآءِيْلَ ﴿١٠٥﴾ قَالَ اِنْ كُنْتَ جِئْتَ
بِاٰيَةٍ فَاْتِ بِهَآ اِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصّٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿١٠٦﴾ فَاَلْقٰى عَصَاهُ فَاِذَا هِيَ
ثُعْبَانٌ مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿١٠٧﴾ وَّنَزَعَ يَدَهٗ فَاِذَا هِيَ بَيْضَآءُ لِلنّٰظِرِيْنَ ﴿١٠٨﴾ قَالَ الْمَلَاُ
مِنْ قَوْمِ فِرْعَوْنَ اِنَّ هٰذَا لَسٰحِرٌ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿١٠٩﴾ يُّرِيْدُ اَنْ يُّخْرِجَكُمْ مِّنْ
اَرْضِكُمْ ۖ فَمَاذَا تَاْمُرُوْنَ ﴿١١٠﴾ قَالُوْٓا اَرْجِهْ وَاَخَاهُ وَاَرْسِلْ فِي الْمَدَآئِنِ
حٰشِرِيْنَ ﴿١١١﴾ يَاْتُوْكَ بِكُلِّ سَحَّارٍ عَلِيْمٍ ﴿١١٢﴾ وَجَآءَ السَّحَرَةُ فِرْعَوْنَ قَالُوْٓا
اِنَّ لَنَا لَاَجْرًا اِنْ كُنَّا نَحْنُ الْغٰلِبِيْنَ ﴿١١٣﴾ قَالَ نَعَمْ وَاِنَّكُمْ لَمِنَ
الْمُقَرَّبِيْنَ ﴿١١٤﴾ قَالُوْا يٰمُوْسٰٓى اِمَّآ اَنْ تُلْقِيَ وَاِمَّآ اَنْ نَّكُوْنَ نَحْنُ الْمُلْقِيْنَ ﴿١١٥﴾
قَالَ اَلْقُوْا ۚ فَلَمَّآ اَلْقَوْا سَحَرُوْٓا اَعْيُنَ النَّاسِ وَاسْتَرْهَبُوْهُمْ وَجَآءُوْ بِسِحْرٍ
عَظِيْمٍ ﴿١١٦﴾ وَاَوْحَيْنَآ اِلٰى مُوْسٰٓى اَنْ اَلْقِ عَصَاكَ ۚ فَاِذَا هِيَ تَلْقَفُ مَا
يَاْفِكُوْنَ ﴿١١٧﴾ فَوَقَعَ الْحَقُّ وَبَطَلَ مَا كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿١١٨﴾ فَغُلِبُوْا هُنَالِكَ

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

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

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

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

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

At this the chiefs of Pharaoh's people said to one another, "Indeed this man is an expert magician. He intends to drive you out of your land;[88] now what do you propose to do?" Then they all advised Pharaoh: "Put him and his brother off for a while, and send heralds to all the cities so that they should bring to you every expert magician".[89] Accordingly, the magicians came to Pharaoh and said, "Shall we surely get our reward, if we win ?" Pharaoh answered, "Yes, indeed, and you shall get a position close to me". 109-116

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

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

great magic.

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

Contd. from p. 55]

implies that if a community does not turn to Allah, even when adversities and calamities are inflicted on it or does not remember Allah in gratitude, when He showers His blessings upon it and is not inclined at all to reform itself in any way whatsoever, it is doomed and its destruction is imminent.

In this connection it should also be noted that the Divine procedure mentioned in vv. 94-95 was at work at Makkah at the time when this Sūrah was revealed. The Quraish were showing the same antagonistic attitude and were consequently suffering from a severe famine. We learn from a Tradition, related by Ibn Mas'ūd and Ibn 'Abbās, that when the Quraish began to oppose the mission of the Holy Prophet, he prayed, "O Lord, help me against these people by a seven-year famine, like the one that visited Egypt during the time of Joseph". Accordingly, Allah sent a very severe famine to Makkah and things came to such a pass that they began to eat dead animals, skins, bones and even wool. Then the people of Makkah, under the leadership of Abu Sufyān, went to the Holy Prophet, and beseeched him to pray to Allah to remove the famine. But when Allah removed the famine and they began to flourish, they became all the more arrogant and their evil geniuses began to hinder even those from it whose hearts were somewhat inclined towards the Faith, saying, "The famine was due to the vicissitudes of time, and was not different from the ones that visited us even before the advent of Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him). Therefore you should not fall into his trap by its visitation." Such things as "Our forefathers also had their adversity and prosperity" were being repeated at the time when this Sūrah was sent down. As these verses applied very appropriately to the condition of the Quraish at the time, this background should be kept in view in order to understand their full significance.

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

79. It is a pity that the succeeding nation does not learn any lesson from the mistakes of the fallen nation it replaces. There would be a great guidance for the people if they considered seriously the question why those people, who were ruling over the land before them and were prosperous and flourishing, were utterly ruined and totally destroyed. The answer would show them the erroneous thoughts and deeds which resulted in their ruin. Then they can also realize that the

Sovereign Ruler Who seized them for their mistakes and deposed them is All-Powerful even now, is still ruling over the universe and is able to punish them and depose them, if they commit the same kind of errors that their predecessors committed.

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

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

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

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

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

In this story the disbelievers of the Quraish have been admonished that they should not be deluded by their apparent favourable balance of power in the initial stages of the conflict between the Truth and falsehood. The whole history of the conflict bears evidence to the fact that a single man starts the Movement to establish the Truth in his nation, nay, in the whole world, and wages war, without the help of any material provisions, against falsehood which had the backing of

great nations and powerful kingdoms. But in spite of this, ultimately it comes out triumphant in the conflict. The Quraish have also been warned to note how all the devices of the disbelievers directed against the Messenger of the Truth in order to suppress his Message turn against themselves: that Allah gives a long respite to the disbelievers so that they might mend their ways before He makes the final decision to destroy them: that He gives exemplary punishment to those who do not take any lesson from a warning or a clear sign or an event that serves for a lesson.

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

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

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

85. The word *Fir'aun* (Pharaoh) literally means "the offspring of the sun-god". The ancient Egyptians called the sun *Ra'a*, which they worshipped as their supreme lord, and *Fir'aun* was named after it. According to the creed of the ancient Egyptians, every ruler based his authority on his relation to *Ra'a* and claimed to be its incarnation and representative on the earth. Therefore every royal dynasty that came into power in Egypt presented itself to be the descendant of the sun-god and every ruler adopted the title of *Fir'aun* in order to show to the people that he was the Supreme Lord.

In this connection, it should also be noted that two different Pharaohs have been mentioned in the story of Moses as related in the Qur'ān. The one was that Pharaoh who was ruling over Egypt when Moses was born, and who brought

him up in his own house, and the second was the one whom Moses invited to accept the Divine Message of God and deliver the children of Israel, and who was drowned.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[Contd. on p. 66

وَانْقَلَبُوْا صٰغِرِيْنَ ﴿١١٩﴾ وَاُلْقِيَ السَّحَرَةُ سٰجِدِيْنَ ﴿١٢٠﴾ قَالُوْٓا اٰمَنَّا بِرَبِّ
الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿١٢١﴾ رَبِّ مُوْسٰى وَهٰرُوْنَ ﴿١٢٢﴾ قَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ اٰمَنْتُمْ بِهٖ قَبْلَ اَنْ
اٰذَنَ لَكُمْ ۭ اِنَّ هٰذَا لَمَكْرٌ مَّكَرْتُمُوْهُ فِي الْمَدِيْنَةِ لِتُخْرِجُوْا مِنْهَآ اَهْلَهَا ۚ
فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿١٢٣﴾ لَاُقَطِّعَنَّ اَيْدِيَكُمْ وَاَرْجُلَكُمْ مِّنْ خِلَافٍ ثُمَّ لَاُصَلِّبَنَّكُمْ
اَجْمَعِيْنَ ﴿١٢٤﴾ قَالُوْٓا اِنَّآ اِلٰى رَبِّنَا مُنْقَلِبُوْنَ ﴿١٢٥﴾ وَمَا تَنْقِمُ مِنَّآ اِلَّآ اَنْ اٰمَنَّا
بِاٰيٰتِ رَبِّنَا لَمَّا جَاۗءَتْنَا ۭ رَبَّنَآ اَفْرِغْ عَلَيْنَا صَبْرًا وَّتَوَفَّنَا مُسْلِمِيْنَ ﴿١٢٦﴾ وَ
قَالَ الْمَلَاُ مِنْ قَوْمِ فِرْعَوْنَ اَتَذَرُ مُوْسٰى وَقَوْمَهٗ لِيُفْسِدُوْا فِي الْاَرْضِ وَ
يَذَرَكَ وَاٰلِهَتَكَ ۭ قَالَ سَنُقَتِّلُ اَبْنَاۗءَهُمْ وَنَسْتَحْيٖ نِسَاۗءَهُمْ ۚ وَاِنَّا فَوْقَهُمْ
قٰهِرُوْنَ ﴿١٢٧﴾ قَالَ مُوْسٰى لِقَوْمِهِ اسْتَعِيْنُوْا بِاللّٰهِ وَاصْبِرُوْا ۚ اِنَّ الْاَرْضَ
لِلّٰهِ ۙ يُوْرِثُهَا مَنْ يَّشَاۗءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهٖ ۭ وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِيْنَ ﴿١٢٨﴾ قَالُوْٓا اُوْذِيْنَا
مِنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ تَاْتِيَنَا وَمِنْۢ بَعْدِ مَا جِئْتَنَا ۭ قَالَ عَسٰى رَبُّكُمْ اَنْ يُّهْلِكَ
عَدُوَّكُمْ وَيَسْتَخْلِفَكُمْ فِي الْاَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرَ كَيْفَ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿١٢٩﴾ وَلَقَدْ اَخَذْنَآ
اٰلَ فِرْعَوْنَ بِالسِّنِيْنَ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الثَّمَرٰتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَذَّكَّرُوْنَ ﴿١٣٠﴾ فَاِذَا
جَاۗءَتْهُمُ الْحَسَنَةُ قَالُوْا لَنَا هٰذِهٖ ۚ وَاِنْ تُصِبْهُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ يَّطَّيَّرُوْا بِمُوْسٰى
وَمَنْ مَّعَهٗ ۭ اَلَآ اِنَّمَا طٰۗىِٕرُهُمْ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ وَلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿١٣١﴾ وَ
قَالُوْا مَهْمَا تَاْتِنَا بِهٖ مِنْ اٰيَةٍ لِّتَسْحَرَنَا بِهَا ۙ فَمَا نَحْنُ لَكَ بِمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿١٣٢﴾
فَاَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ الطُّوْفَانَ وَالْجَرَادَ وَالْقُمَّلَ وَالضَّفَادِعَ وَالدَّمَ اٰيٰتٍ
مُّفَصَّلٰتٍ فَاسْتَكْبَرُوْا وَكَانُوْا قَوْمًا مُّجْرِمِيْنَ ﴿١٣٣﴾ وَلَمَّا وَقَعَ عَلَيْهِمُ الرِّجْزُ
قَالُوْا يٰمُوْسَى ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ بِمَا عَهِدَ عِنْدَكَ ۚ لَىِٕنْ كَشَفْتَ عَنَّا الرِّجْزَ

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

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

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

Then the chiefs of Pharaoh's nation said to him, "Will you leave Moses and his people free to spread disorder in the land, and let them discard your service and that of your deities?" Pharaoh answered, "Well, I will have their sons slain and let their women live[93]: we have a strong hold over them." 127

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

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

know this. They said to Moses, "We are not going to believe in you, whatever Sign you may bring to enchant us."[94] At last We let loose upon them the storm,[95] the locusts, the lice,[96] and the frogs, and rained blood upon them. Though We showed these Signs, one by one, they persisted in their rebellion; for they were steeped in crime. Whenever a plague befell them, they would say, "O Moses! Pray for us to Allah in the name of the office you hold from Him. If you help remove the plague from us this time, we will believe in you, and send the Israelites with you."

Contd. from p. 63]

the miracle of the staff of Moses.

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

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

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

92. When Pharaoh saw the tables turning on himself, he thought out another device. He declared that the whole show was the outcome of the plot that Moses and the magicians had devised. Then he threatened the magicians with a severe chastisement and death so that they should confess that his accusation was true. But this move also turned against him. As the magicians remained firm in their new Faith, and were prepared to undergo any torture for its sake, it became

evident that their belief in the Truth presented by Moses was a genuine confession of faith and not the pretence of any plot. That is why he had to give up the pretence of truth and justice and resort to open tyranny.

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

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

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

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

96. The Arabic word قُمَّل *(qummal)* in the original stands for any of the small insects like louse, small fly, mosquito, small locusts, weevil and the like.

[Contd. on p. 72

لَنُؤْمِنَنَّ لَكَ وَلَنُرْسِلَنَّ مَعَكَ بَنِيٓ إِسْرَآءِيلَ ﴿١٣٤﴾ فَلَمَّا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُمُ الرِّجْزَ
إِلَىٰٓ أَجَلٍ هُم بَٰلِغُوهُ إِذَا هُمْ يَنكُثُونَ ﴿١٣٥﴾ فَٱنتَقَمْنَا مِنْهُمْ فَأَغْرَقْنَٰهُمْ فِى
ٱلْيَمِّ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَذَّبُوا۟ بِـَٔايَٰتِنَا وَكَانُوا۟ عَنْهَا غَٰفِلِينَ ﴿١٣٦﴾ وَأَوْرَثْنَا ٱلْقَوْمَ ٱلَّذِينَ
كَانُوا۟ يُسْتَضْعَفُونَ مَشَٰرِقَ ٱلْأَرْضِ وَمَغَٰرِبَهَا ٱلَّتِى بَٰرَكْنَا فِيهَا ۖ وَتَمَّتْ
كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ ٱلْحُسْنَىٰ عَلَىٰ بَنِىٓ إِسْرَٰٓءِيلَ ۛ بِمَا صَبَرُوا۟ ۖ وَدَمَّرْنَا مَا كَانَ
يَصْنَعُ فِرْعَوْنُ وَقَوْمُهُۥ وَمَا كَانُوا۟ يَعْرِشُونَ ﴿١٣٧﴾ وَجَٰوَزْنَا بِبَنِىٓ إِسْرَٰٓءِيلَ
ٱلْبَحْرَ فَأَتَوْا۟ عَلَىٰ قَوْمٍ يَعْكُفُونَ عَلَىٰٓ أَصْنَامٍ لَّهُمْ ۚ قَالُوا۟ يَٰمُوسَى ٱجْعَل
لَّنَآ إِلَٰهًا كَمَا لَهُمْ ءَالِهَةٌ ۚ قَالَ إِنَّكُمْ قَوْمٌ تَجْهَلُونَ ﴿١٣٨﴾ إِنَّ هَٰٓؤُلَآءِ مُتَبَّرٌ
مَّا هُمْ فِيهِ وَبَٰطِلٌ مَّا كَانُوا۟ يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٣٩﴾ قَالَ أَغَيْرَ ٱللَّهِ أَبْغِيكُمْ
إِلَٰهًا وَهُوَ فَضَّلَكُمْ عَلَى ٱلْعَٰلَمِينَ ﴿١٤٠﴾ وَإِذْ أَنجَيْنَٰكُم مِّنْ ءَالِ فِرْعَوْنَ
يَسُومُونَكُمْ سُوٓءَ ٱلْعَذَابِ ۖ يُقَتِّلُونَ أَبْنَآءَكُمْ وَيَسْتَحْيُونَ نِسَآءَكُمْ ۚ وَفِى
ذَٰلِكُم بَلَآءٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٤١﴾ وَوَٰعَدْنَا مُوسَىٰ ثَلَٰثِينَ لَيْلَةً وَأَتْمَمْنَٰهَا
بِعَشْرٍ فَتَمَّ مِيقَٰتُ رَبِّهِۦٓ أَرْبَعِينَ لَيْلَةً ۚ وَقَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِأَخِيهِ هَٰرُونَ
ٱخْلُفْنِى فِى قَوْمِى وَأَصْلِحْ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ سَبِيلَ ٱلْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿١٤٢﴾ وَلَمَّا جَآءَ
مُوسَىٰ لِمِيقَٰتِنَا وَكَلَّمَهُۥ رَبُّهُۥ ۙ قَالَ رَبِّ أَرِنِىٓ أَنظُرْ إِلَيْكَ ۚ قَالَ لَن
تَرَىٰنِى وَلَٰكِنِ ٱنظُرْ إِلَى ٱلْجَبَلِ فَإِنِ ٱسْتَقَرَّ مَكَانَهُۥ فَسَوْفَ تَرَىٰنِى ۚ فَلَمَّا
تَجَلَّىٰ رَبُّهُۥ لِلْجَبَلِ جَعَلَهُۥ دَكًّا وَخَرَّ مُوسَىٰ صَعِقًا ۚ فَلَمَّآ أَفَاقَ قَالَ
سُبْحَٰنَكَ تُبْتُ إِلَيْكَ وَأَنَا۠ أَوَّلُ ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٤٣﴾ قَالَ يَٰمُوسَىٰٓ إِنِّى ٱصْطَفَيْتُكَ
عَلَى ٱلنَّاسِ بِرِسَٰلَٰتِى وَبِكَلَٰمِى ۖ فَخُذْ مَآ ءَاتَيْتُكَ وَكُن مِّنَ ٱلشَّٰكِرِينَ ﴿١٤٤﴾

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

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

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

وَكَتَبْنَا لَهٗ فِي الْاَلْوَاحِ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مَّوْعِظَةً وَّتَفْصِيْلًا لِّكُلِّ شَيْءٍ ۚ
فَخُذْهَا بِقُوَّةٍ وَّاْمُرْ قَوْمَكَ يَاْخُذُوْا بِاَحْسَنِهَا ۚ سَاُورِيْكُمْ دَارَ الْفٰسِقِيْنَ ﴿145﴾
سَاَصْرِفُ عَنْ اٰيٰتِيَ الَّذِيْنَ يَتَكَبَّرُوْنَ فِي الْاَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ ۭ وَاِنْ يَّرَوْا
كُلَّ اٰيَةٍ لَّا يُؤْمِنُوْا بِهَا ۚ وَاِنْ يَّرَوْا سَبِيْلَ الرُّشْدِ لَا يَتَّخِذُوْهُ سَبِيْلًا ۚ
وَاِنْ يَّرَوْا سَبِيْلَ الْغَيِّ يَتَّخِذُوْهُ سَبِيْلًا ۭ ذٰلِكَ بِاَنَّهُمْ كَذَّبُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَا وَ
كَانُوْا عَنْهَا غٰفِلِيْنَ ﴿146﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ كَذَّبُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَا وَلِقَاۗءِ الْاٰخِرَةِ حَبِطَتْ
اَعْمَالُهُمْ ۭ هَلْ يُجْزَوْنَ اِلَّا مَا كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿147﴾ وَاتَّخَذَ قَوْمُ مُوْسٰى
مِنْۢ بَعْدِهٖ مِنْ حُلِيِّهِمْ عِجْلًا جَسَدًا لَّهٗ خُوَارٌ ۭ اَلَمْ يَرَوْا اَنَّهٗ لَا يُكَلِّمُهُمْ
وَلَا يَهْدِيْهِمْ سَبِيْلًا ۘ اِتَّخَذُوْهُ وَكَانُوْا ظٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿148﴾ وَلَمَّا سُقِطَ فِيْٓ
اَيْدِيْهِمْ وَرَاَوْا اَنَّهُمْ قَدْ ضَلُّوْا ۙ قَالُوْا لَىِٕنْ لَّمْ يَرْحَمْنَا رَبُّنَا وَيَغْفِرْ لَنَا
لَنَكُوْنَنَّ مِنَ الْخٰسِرِيْنَ ﴿149﴾ وَلَمَّا رَجَعَ مُوْسٰٓى اِلٰى قَوْمِهٖ غَضْبَانَ اَسِفًا ۙ
قَالَ بِئْسَمَا خَلَفْتُمُوْنِيْ مِنْۢ بَعْدِيْ ۚ اَعَجِلْتُمْ اَمْرَ رَبِّكُمْ ۚ وَاَلْقَى الْاَلْوَاحَ
وَاَخَذَ بِرَاْسِ اَخِيْهِ يَجُرُّهٗٓ اِلَيْهِ ۭ قَالَ ابْنَ اُمَّ اِنَّ الْقَوْمَ اسْتَضْعَفُوْنِيْ
وَكَادُوْا يَقْتُلُوْنَنِيْ ۠ فَلَا تُشْمِتْ بِيَ الْاَعْدَاۗءَ وَلَا تَجْعَلْنِيْ مَعَ الْقَوْمِ
الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿150﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِيْ وَلِاَخِيْ وَاَدْخِلْنَا فِيْ رَحْمَتِكَ ۠ وَاَنْتَ
اَرْحَمُ الرّٰحِمِيْنَ ﴿151﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ اتَّخَذُوا الْعِجْلَ سَيَنَالُهُمْ غَضَبٌ مِّنْ
رَّبِّهِمْ وَذِلَّةٌ فِي الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا ۭ وَكَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُفْتَرِيْنَ ﴿152﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ
عَمِلُوا السَّيِّاٰتِ ثُمَّ تَابُوْا مِنْۢ بَعْدِهَا وَاٰمَنُوْٓا ۙ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِهَا
لَغَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿153﴾ وَلَمَّا سَكَتَ عَنْ مُّوْسَى الْغَضَبُ اَخَذَ الْاَلْوَاحَ ۚ وَفِيْ

have conversation with Me: so take whatever I give you and be grateful."

After this, We inscribed upon the tablets[101] admonitions concerning every branch of life and clear instructions about all its aspects and gave these to Moses and said to him, "Hold fast to the precepts steadfastly, and enjoin your people to follow them according to their best sense.[102] In the near future, I shall show you the abode of the wicked people.[103] I will turn away from My Signs the eyes of those who without any sight behave haughtily on the earth.[104] Whatsoever Sign they might see they will never believe in it. If they see the Right Way before them, they will not follow it; but if they see a crooked way, they will follow it. That is because they treated Our Signs as false and were heedless of them. Whoever treated Our Signs as false and denied the meeting in the Hereafter their deeds became vain.[105] Can the people get any recompense except according to what they have wrought?" 145-147

In his absence[106] the people of Moses made from their ornaments the image of a calf which made sound like lowing. Did they not see that it could neither speak to them nor guide them in any matter? Yet they took it for a god, for they were wrong-doers.[107] But when the enchantment of self delusion was broken and they realised that they had, in fact, gone astray, they said, "If our Lord does not have mercy on us and does not forgive us we shall be losers." In the meanwhile when Moses full of anger and sorrow returned to his people, he said, "Very evil is it that you have done in my place after me! Could you not patiently wait for the Commandment of Allah?" And he threw down the tablets, and, seizing his brother by the hair of his head, dragged him. Aaron said, "Son of my mother, these people overpowered me and were going to kill me: so, let not the enemies gloat over me: do not count me among the people who have done wrong."[108] Then Moses said, "O Lord, forgive me and my brother, and admit us to Thy mercy; Thou art the Most Merciful of all." (In response to this Allah said,) "Allah's wrath shall surely overtake those who made the calf a god, and they shall be abased in the life of this world, that is how We punish those who invent falsehood. But those who do evil deeds, then repent after this and believe, will after this repentance and belief most surely find your Lord Forgiving and Merciful." 148-153

Contd. from p.67]

Probably this comprehensive word has been used for the reason that lice and mosquitoes had inflicted human beings and seed-weevils had attacked granaries at one and the same time. (For comparison, see Chapters 7-12 of Exodus, and E.N. 43 of LXIII).

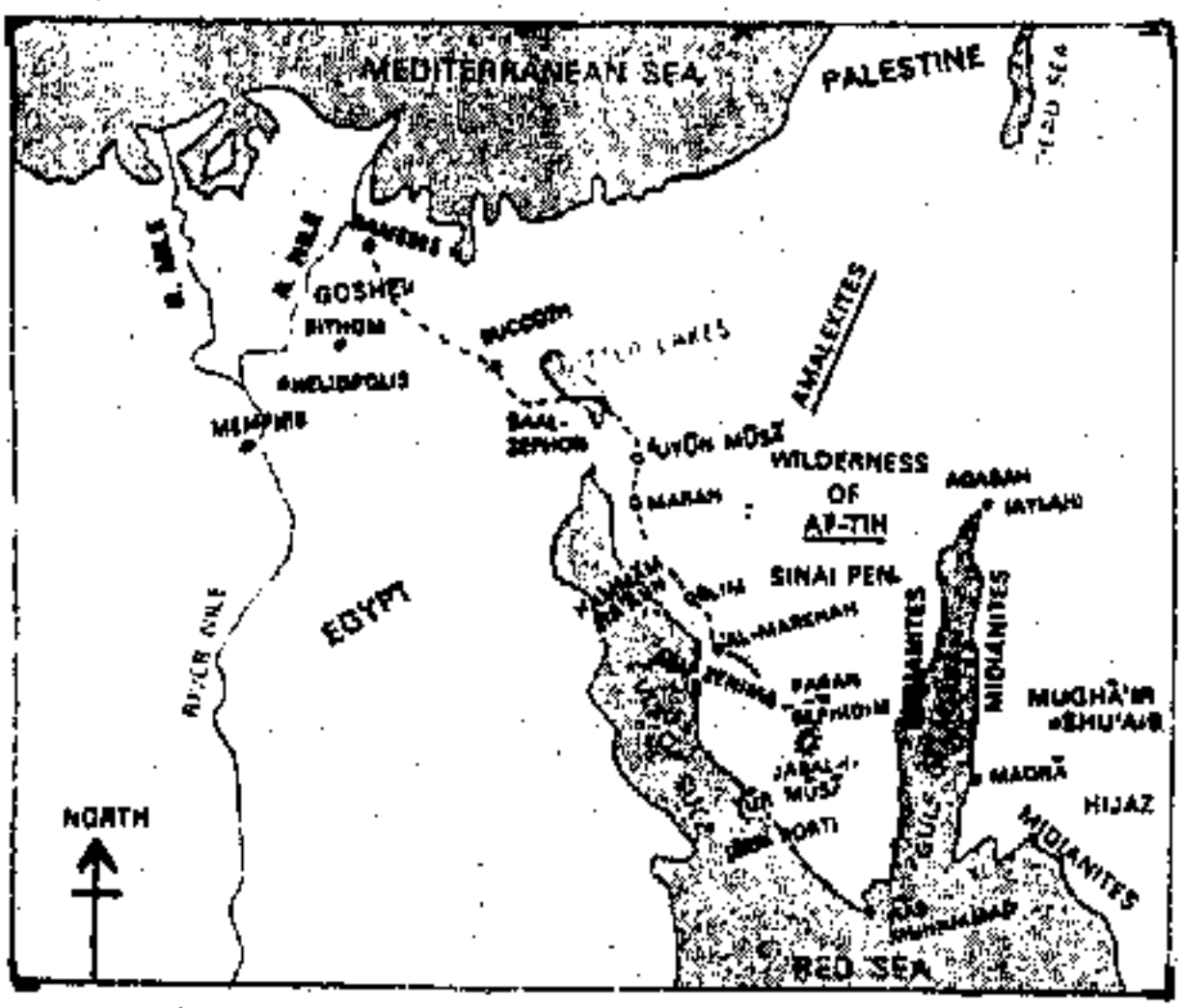
97. That is, "The Israelites were made the inheritors of Palestine". Some commentators infer from this that the Israelites were made the masters of Egypt. But we hesitate to accept this version for there is neither any direct reference to it in the Qur'ān nor is there any historical evidence to support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

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

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

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

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



Explanation:

1. Goshen is the land which Prophet Joseph gave to the Israelites to live in Egypt.

2. Memphis was the capital of Egypt in the time of Prophet Moses.

3. Bitter Lakes are found quite at a distance now from the Gulf of Suez but in the ancient times they were connected with the sea.

4. Prophet Moses set out from Rameses with the Israelites and they joined and followed him on the way from all sides. He probably wanted to bring them safely through the wilderness to Sinai, but the fear of the Egyptian military camps on the one hand and the hot pursuit by Pharaoh on the other, took them on to Baal-Zephon, where from some point they crossed the Bitter Lakes, and it was here that Pharaoh and all his hosts were drowned.

5. Prophet Moses and the Israelites travelled through Marah, Elim, Al-Markhah and Paran Rephidim and came to the place now called Jabal-i Musa (Sinai of the Old Testament) and also Ṭūr. The valley around here has been mentioned as the Holy Valley of *Tuwā* in the Qurān (XX : 12).

6. Hammām-i-Fir'aun is the place where according to the local tradition in the Sinai Peninsula, the body of Pharaoh was found floating in the water.

7. Ṭūr in this map shows the present sea-port of Ṭūr and not Mount Ṭūr.

8. Al-Markhah is situated at the edge of the Wilderness of Sin of the Old Testament, where *mannā* and *salvā* began to be sent down.

9. Near Rephidim is found the famous rock in Mount Horeb, which was smitten by Prophet Moses causing twelve springs of water to gush out.

10. At-Tih is the wilderness in which the Israelites remained wandering homeless for forty years. *Tih* is derived from *yatīhūn* (V : 26) and means "wandering homelessly".

11. Aqabah or Aylah which was Ezion-geber in the ancient times, is the place where according to the common tradition, the well-known incident of the Sabbath-breakers took place.

99. After their departure from Egypt, when the Israelites became free from the shackles of slavery, and won the position of an independent nation, Prophet Moses was summoned to Mount Sinai by the Divine Command so that the Law should be given to him for them. This was the first summons of the series that is being mentioned here. Forty days were appointed so that he should prepare himself by fast, devotion, worship, prayer, deep thought, meditation and reflection for the heavy task that was about to be entrusted to him. On this occasion prophet Moses left the Israelites at a place now called Wādiy-u-Shaikh, between Nabī Sālih and Mt. Sinai. That part of the valley where the Israelites then encamped is now called Maidān-ur-Rāhat. At one end of the valley is situated the hillock, where, according to the local tradition Prophet Sālih migrated from the territory of Thamūd. The mosque, which was built in his memory, stands there even today. On the other side, there is another hillock, called Jabl-i-Hārūn, where, it is said, Prophet Aaron had gone in protest against the cow-worship of the Israelites. On its third side is Mt. Sinai, which is 7359 feet above the sea level and is usually covered with clouds. On the top of this is the cave in which Moses spent forty days and nights and which has become a holy place of pilgrimage. There is a mosque of the Muslims and a church of the Christians near the cave and at the foot, a monastery built during the reign of Justinian, Byzantine Emperor. (For details, see E.N.'s 9, 10 of XXVIII).

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

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

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

103. That is, "In your onward march, you will pass through the ruins of

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نُسْخَتِهَا هُدًى وَّ رَحْمَةٌ لِّلَّذِيْنَ هُمْ لِرَبِّهِمْ يَرْهَبُوْنَ ﴿154﴾ وَ اخْتَارَ مُوْسٰى
قَوْمَهٗ سَبْعِيْنَ رَجُلًا لِّمِيْقَاتِنَا ۚ فَلَمَّاۤ اَخَذَتْهُمُ الرَّجْفَةُ قَالَ رَبِّ لَوْ شِئْتَ
اَهْلَكْتَهُمْ مِّنْ قَبْلُ وَ اِيَّايَ ؕ اَتُهْلِكُنَا بِمَا فَعَلَ السُّفَهَآءُ مِنَّا ۚ اِنْ هِيَ اِلَّا
فِتْنَتُكَ ؕ تُضِلُّ بِهَا مَنْ تَشَآءُ وَ تَهْدِيْ مَنْ تَشَآءُ ؕ اَنْتَ وَلِيُّنَا فَاغْفِرْ لَنَا
وَ ارْحَمْنَا وَ اَنْتَ خَيْرُ الْغٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿155﴾ وَ اكْتُبْ لَنَا فِيْ هٰذِهِ الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَّ
فِي الْاٰخِرَةِ اِنَّا هُدْنَاۤ اِلَيْكَ ؕ قَالَ عَذَابِيْۤ اُصِيْبُ بِهٖ مَنْ اَشَآءُ ۚ وَ رَحْمَتِيْ
وَسِعَتْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ ؕ فَسَاَكْتُبُهَا لِلَّذِيْنَ يَتَّقُوْنَ وَ يُؤْتُوْنَ الزَّكٰوةَ وَ الَّذِيْنَ
هُمْ بِاٰيٰتِنَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿156﴾ الَّذِيْنَ يَتَّبِعُوْنَ الرَّسُوْلَ النَّبِيَّ الْاُمِّيَّ الَّذِيْ
يَجِدُوْنَهٗ مَكْتُوْبًا عِنْدَهُمْ فِي التَّوْرٰىةِ وَ الْاِنْجِيْلِ ۫ يَاْمُرُهُمْ بِالْمَعْرُوْفِ
وَ يَنْهٰىهُمْ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَ يُحِلُّ لَهُمُ الطَّيِّبٰتِ وَ يُحَرِّمُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْخَبٰٓئِثَ وَ
يَضَعُ عَنْهُمْ اِصْرَهُمْ وَ الْاَغْلٰلَ الَّتِيْ كَانَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ ؕ فَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا بِهٖ وَ
عَزَّرُوْهُ وَ نَصَرُوْهُ وَ اتَّبَعُوا النُّوْرَ الَّذِيْۤ اُنْزِلَ مَعَهٗ ۙ اُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُوْنَ ﴿157﴾
قُلْ يٰۤاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اِنِّيْ رَسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ اِلَيْكُمْ جَمِيْعًا الَّذِيْ لَهٗ مُلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ
وَ الْاَرْضِ ۚ لَاۤ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ يُحْيٖ وَ يُمِيْتُ ۫ فَاٰمِنُوْا بِاللّٰهِ وَ رَسُوْلِهِ النَّبِيِّ الْاُمِّيِّ
الَّذِيْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللّٰهِ وَ كَلِمٰتِهٖ وَ اتَّبِعُوْهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُوْنَ ﴿158﴾ وَ مِنْ قَوْمِ مُوْسٰۤى
اُمَّةٌ يَّهْدُوْنَ بِالْحَقِّ وَ بِهٖ يَعْدِلُوْنَ ﴿159﴾ وَ قَطَّعْنٰهُمُ اثْنَتَيْ عَشْرَةَ اَسْبَاطًا
اُمَمًا ؕ وَ اَوْحَيْنَاۤ اِلٰى مُوْسٰۤى اِذِ اسْتَسْقٰىهُ قَوْمُهٗۤ اَنِ اضْرِبْ بِّعَصَاكَ الْحَجَرَ ؕ
فَانْۢبَجَسَتْ مِنْهُ اثْنَتَا عَشْرَةَ عَيْنًا ؕ قَدْ عَلِمَ كُلُّ اُنَاسٍ مَّشْرَبَهُمْ ؕ وَ ظَلَّلْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ
الْغَمَامَ وَ اَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَنَّ وَ السَّلْوٰى ؕ كُلُوْا مِنْ طَيِّبٰتِ مَا رَزَقْنٰكُمْ ؕ وَ مَا

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

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

Among[116] the people of Moses there were some who guided (others) with the Truth and judged the affairs with the Truth.[117] And We had divided them into twelve clans and made them distinct Communities.[118] When his people asked him for water, We inspired Moses to strike a certain rock with his staff. Consequently, twelve springs gushed forth from it and each community specified its drinking place; We caused the cloud to cast shadow over them, and We sent down *mannā* and *salva* for their food,[119]—— saying, "Eat of the clean 159-160

and pure things We have provided for you." However, by doing what they did afterwards, they did no wrong to Us but they wronged themselves.

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the homes of those who disobeyed the Divine Law and discarded the way of Allah's worship and obedience and persisted in the paths of error. When you see these things you will yourselves know the end of the people who adopt such ways."

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

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

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

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

107. Their calf-worship was the second manifestation of the change that had taken place in the Israelites during their stay in Egypt. They were so charmed by the cow-worship of the Egyptians that the Qur'ān says, ".....They were so

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

108. By citing his words ".....do not include me among the workers of iniquity", the Qur'ān has absolved Prophet Aaron from the wicked blemish that the Jews had stamped upon him. According to the Bible, Prophet Aaron was guilty of making the golden calf as god for them:

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

Though it may appear very strange that the Jews should accuse their own Prophets of the most heinous sins, yet a deep and critical study of their history will show that this was done to justify their own moral degradation. When the whole community in general, and the religious scholars and priests in particular, became involved in deviations and immoralities, their guilty consciences impelled them to invent excuses for justifying their own bad conduct. As they committed heinous sins like *shirk*, sorcery, adultery, treachery, falsehood and the like, they

blemished the pure character of their own Prophets by ascribing such sins to them as were most shameful even for an ordinary good man, not to speak of a prophet so that they could justify their own wicked deeds. They argued like this: "When even the Prophets could not save themselves from such sins, how could ordinary people like us be immune from weaknesses?"

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

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

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

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

112. After replying to the prayer of Moses in the previous verse, the Qur'ān utilizes the opportunity to invite the Israelites to follow Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him). It means: "The conditions that were laid down for Allah's mercy upon you during the time of Prophet Moses, still stand, and require you to believe in this Messenger. It was said to you that Allah's mercy is sent to those people who refrain from disobedience. Now, there is no greater disobedience than to reject the Guidance of the Messengers appointed by Allah. If you, therefore, do not refrain from this disobedience, you will have no other basis of virtue left in spite of your show of piety in the observance of minor and trifling

religious rituals. You were enjoined to pay the *Zakāt* so that you may be blessed with mercy, but today the only right way of expending the *Zakāt* is to make contributions towards the success of the campaign that is being carried on for the establishment of the Divine Way under the leadership of this Messenger, for the basic requirements of *Zakāt* can only be fulfilled in this way. You were told that Allah has prescribed His Mercy for those who believe in His Revelations; therefore if you reject the Revelations that Allah is sending down to His Messenger, you will have failed to fulfil this last condition, even though you might go on asserting that you believe in the Revelations of the Torah."

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

113. There are clear references in the Bible to the coming of Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him). For instance, see Deut. 18: 15-19, Matthew 21: 33-46, John I: 19-21, 14: 15-17, 25-30, 15: 25-26, 16: 7-15.

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

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

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

117. The majority of the translators render v. 159 like this: "Among the people of Moses there is a group that guides and decides in accordance with the Truth". They mean to say that there existed such a group among the Jews at the time of the Revelation of the Qur'ān. But from the context in which this occurs, we conclude that there was such a group of good people among the Israelites

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ظَلَمُوْنَا وَلٰكِنْ كَانُوْٓا اَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُوْنَ ﴿١٦٠﴾ وَاِذْ قِيْلَ لَهُمُ اسْكُنُوْا هٰذِهِ الْقَرْيَةَ
وَكُلُوْا مِنْهَا حَيْثُ شِئْتُمْ وَقُوْلُوْا حِطَّةٌ وَّادْخُلُوا الْبَابَ سُجَّدًا نَّغْفِرْ لَكُمْ خَطِيْٓـٰتِكُمْ
سَنَزِيْدُ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿١٦١﴾ فَبَدَّلَ الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا مِنْهُمْ قَوْلًا غَيْرَ الَّذِيْ قِيْلَ
لَهُمْ فَاَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِجْزًا مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ بِمَا كَانُوْا يَظْلِمُوْنَ ﴿١٦٢﴾ وَسْـَٔلْهُمْ
عَنِ الْقَرْيَةِ الَّتِيْ كَانَتْ حَاضِرَةَ الْبَحْرِ ۘ اِذْ يَعْدُوْنَ فِي السَّبْتِ اِذْ تَاْتِيْهِمْ
حِيْتَانُهُمْ يَوْمَ سَبْتِهِمْ شُرَّعًا وَّيَوْمَ لَا يَسْبِتُوْنَ ۙ لَا تَاْتِيْهِمْ ۛ كَذٰلِكَ ۛ
نَبْلُوْهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوْا يَفْسُقُوْنَ ﴿١٦٣﴾ وَاِذْ قَالَتْ اُمَّةٌ مِّنْهُمْ لِمَ تَعِظُوْنَ قَوْمًا ۙ
اللّٰهُ مُهْلِكُهُمْ اَوْ مُعَذِّبُهُمْ عَذَابًا شَدِيْدًا ۭ قَالُوْا مَعْذِرَةً اِلٰى رَبِّكُمْ وَ
لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿١٦٤﴾ فَلَمَّا نَسُوْا مَا ذُكِّرُوْا بِهٖٓ اَنْجَيْنَا الَّذِيْنَ يَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ
السُّوْٓءِ وَاَخَذْنَا الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا بِعَذَابٍۢ بَـِٔيْسٍۢ بِمَا كَانُوْا يَفْسُقُوْنَ ﴿١٦٥﴾ فَلَمَّا
عَتَوْا عَنْ مَّا نُهُوْا عَنْهُ قُلْنَا لَهُمْ كُوْنُوْا قِرَدَةً خٰسِـِٕيْنَ ﴿١٦٦﴾ وَاِذْ تَاَذَّنَ
رَبُّكَ لَيَبْعَثَنَّ عَلَيْهِمْ اِلٰى يَوْمِ الْقِيٰمَةِ مَنْ يَّسُوْمُهُمْ سُوْٓءَ الْعَذَابِ ۭ
اِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَسَرِيْعُ الْعِقَابِ ۚ وَاِنَّهٗ لَغَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿١٦٧﴾ وَقَطَّعْنٰهُمْ فِي الْاَرْضِ
اُمَمًا ۚ مِنْهُمُ الصّٰلِحُوْنَ وَمِنْهُمْ دُوْنَ ذٰلِكَ ۡ وَبَلَوْنٰهُمْ بِالْحَسَنٰتِ وَالسَّيِّاٰتِ
لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُوْنَ ﴿١٦٨﴾ فَخَلَفَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِهِمْ خَلْفٌ وَّرِثُوا الْكِتٰبَ يَاْخُذُوْنَ
عَرَضَ هٰذَا الْاَدْنٰى وَيَقُوْلُوْنَ سَيُغْفَرُ لَنَا ۚ وَاِنْ يَّاْتِهِمْ عَرَضٌ مِّثْلُهٗ
يَاْخُذُوْهُ ۭ اَلَمْ يُؤْخَذْ عَلَيْهِمْ مِّيْثَاقُ الْكِتٰبِ اَنْ لَّا يَقُوْلُوْا عَلَى اللّٰهِ اِلَّا الْحَقَّ
وَدَرَسُوْا مَا فِيْهِ ۭ وَالدَّارُ الْاٰخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لِّلَّذِيْنَ يَتَّقُوْنَ ۭ اَفَلَا تَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿١٦٩﴾ وَ
الَّذِيْنَ يُمَسِّكُوْنَ بِالْكِتٰبِ وَاَقَامُوا الصَّلٰوةَ ۭ اِنَّا لَا نُضِيْعُ اَجْرَ الْمُصْلِحِيْنَ ﴿١٧٠﴾

And[120] call to mind the time when it was said to them, "Go and dwell in this town, and get therefrom provision for yourselves out of its produce, according to your liking, and say *"hittatun"*, *"hittatun"*, and enter the gate of the town, bowing down with humility. We shall pardon your sins and increase all the more the rewards of the doers of good". But those from among them who were bent on wrongdoing changed that word which had been said to them. Consequently, We sent down scourge upon them[121] from heaven because of the wrongs they were doing. 161-162

And ask them about the township which was situated on the sea shore.[122] Remind them of what befell its people who used to break the Sabbath (Saturday). Each Sabbath-day the fish appeared in abundance before them on the surface of the water[123] but did not appear at all on other days than Sabbath. This was because We were putting them to test on account of the acts of disobedience they did.[124] Also remind them that when some people from among them asked the others the answer that was given by some of them, "Why do you admonish those people whom Allah is about to destroy or punish severely?" they replied, "We admonish them in order to be able to offer an excuse before your Lord and we also hope that they might refrain from disobedience to Him." However, when they totally forgot the teachings they were reminded of, We saved those who used to forbid evil, and seized with a severe scourge all others who were transgressors, because of the acts of disobedience they did.[125] But when even after this they disdainfully persisted in that from which they were forbidden, We said to them, "Become apes—— despised and disgraced!"[126] 163-166

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

And We divided them into many separate communities all over the earth: some of these people were righteous and some of them were different from this: We tested them with prosperity and with adversity so that they might turn back. Then after the following generations, unworthy people succeeded them: they inherited the Book, but in spite 168-170

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

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during the time of Prophet Moses. This has been mentioned here to show that there were some good people even at that time, when the Israelites had gone to the lowest level of moral and spiritual degradation and adopted the worship of the golden calf, and were punished by Allah.

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

119. The above-mentioned organization was one of the great favours that had been conferred by Allah on the Israelites. In continuation of the same, three more favours have been mentioned here: (1) The miraculous supply of water during their stay in the Sinai Peninsula. (2) The sky was covered with clouds to protect them from the scorching heat of the desert. (3) *Mannā* and *Salvā* were sent down in a supernatural manner to feed them there. It is obvious that if adequate arrangements had not been made for the supply of these three most important necessities of life, this big community that consisted of about two million people would have perished with heat, hunger and thirst.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

125. This shows that there were three kinds of people in that town. First, there were those who were openly and boldly violating the Divine rules and regulations. Then there were some who did not violate the laws themselves but silently saw others violating them: they told admonishers that it was no good to give any piece of advice to those hardened law-breakers. Lastly, there were others who were so much imbued with the sense of honour and courage that they could not tolerate such open violations of the Divine Law. They enjoined the law-breakers to practise virtue and refrain from evil in the hope that they would return to the Right Way, or at least, they themselves would be in a position to present the proof before their Lord that they, on their part, did their duty to admonish those law-breakers. Accordingly, when the scourge of Allah befell that township, the only people who were delivered from it were those who belonged to the third group. According to the Qur'ān, they were delivered because they had shown their concern for the eradication of evil. The other two groups were counted among the workers of iniquity and punished in proportion to the nature and extent of their crime.

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

Besides this, it appears from the verses under discussion that the scourge of Allah was sent to that township in two instalments. The first has been called عَذَابٍ بَئِيسٍ severe scourge.") The second was "Be apes". We are of the opinion that the scourge in the first case was inflicted on both the first and the second groups, but in the second case it was inflicted on the first group only. (And Allah knows best. If I am right, this is from Allah and if I am wrong, it is from me. And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.)

126. Please refer to E.N. 83, *Al-Baqarah*.

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

128. Such a warning had been administerd over and over again to the Israelites ever since the eighth century before the Christian era and is contained in

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وَاِذْ نَتَقْنَا الْجَبَلَ فَوْقَهُمْ كَاَنَّهٗ ظُلَّةٌ وَّظَنُّوْٓا اَنَّهٗ وَاقِعٌۢ بِهِمْ ۚ خُذُوْا مَآ اٰتَيْنٰكُمْ
بِقُوَّةٍ وَّاذْكُرُوْا مَا فِيْهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿١٧١﴾ وَاِذْ اَخَذَ رَبُّكَ مِنْۢ بَنِيْٓ اٰدَمَ
مِنْ ظُهُوْرِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَاَشْهَدَهُمْ عَلٰٓى اَنْفُسِهِمْ ۚ اَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ ۭ قَالُوْا بَلٰى ۚ
شَهِدْنَا ۚ اَنْ تَقُوْلُوْا يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ اِنَّا كُنَّا عَنْ هٰذَا غٰفِلِيْنَ ﴿١٧٢﴾ اَوْ تَقُوْلُوْٓا اِنَّمَآ
اَشْرَكَ اٰبَاۗؤُنَا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَكُنَّا ذُرِّيَّةً مِّنْۢ بَعْدِهِمْ ۚ اَفَتُهْلِكُنَا بِمَا فَعَلَ
الْمُبْطِلُوْنَ ﴿١٧٣﴾ وَكَذٰلِكَ نُفَصِّلُ الْاٰيٰتِ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُوْنَ ﴿١٧٤﴾ وَاتْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ
نَبَاَ الَّذِيْٓ اٰتَيْنٰهُ اٰيٰتِنَا فَانْسَلَخَ مِنْهَا فَاَتْبَعَهُ الشَّيْطٰنُ فَكَانَ مِنَ
الْغٰوِيْنَ ﴿١٧٥﴾ وَلَوْ شِئْنَا لَرَفَعْنٰهُ بِهَا وَلٰكِنَّهٗٓ اَخْلَدَ اِلَى الْاَرْضِ وَاتَّبَعَ هَوٰىهُ ۚ
فَمَثَلُهٗ كَمَثَلِ الْكَلْبِ ۚ اِنْ تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْهِ يَلْهَثْ اَوْ تَتْرُكْهُ يَلْهَثْ ۭ ذٰلِكَ مَثَلُ
الْقَوْمِ الَّذِيْنَ كَذَّبُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَا ۚ فَاقْصُصِ الْقَصَصَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿١٧٦﴾ سَاۗءَ
مَثَلًا ۨ الْقَوْمُ الَّذِيْنَ كَذَّبُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَا وَاَنْفُسَهُمْ كَانُوْا يَظْلِمُوْنَ ﴿١٧٧﴾ مَنْ يَّهْدِ
اللّٰهُ فَهُوَ الْمُهْتَدِيْ ۚ وَمَنْ يُّضْلِلْ فَاُولٰۗىِٕكَ هُمُ الْخٰسِرُوْنَ ﴿١٧٨﴾ وَلَقَدْ ذَرَاْنَا
لِجَهَنَّمَ كَثِيْرًا مِّنَ الْجِنِّ وَالْاِنْسِ ۡ لَهُمْ قُلُوْبٌ لَّا يَفْقَهُوْنَ بِهَا ۡ وَلَهُمْ
اَعْيُنٌ لَّا يُبْصِرُوْنَ بِهَا ۡ وَلَهُمْ اٰذَانٌ لَّا يَسْمَعُوْنَ بِهَا ۭ اُولٰۗىِٕكَ كَالْاَنْعَامِ بَلْ
هُمْ اَضَلُّ ۭ اُولٰۗىِٕكَ هُمُ الْغٰفِلُوْنَ ﴿١٧٩﴾ وَلِلّٰهِ الْاَسْمَاۗءُ الْحُسْنٰى فَادْعُوْهُ بِهَا ۠
وَذَرُوا الَّذِيْنَ يُلْحِدُوْنَ فِيْٓ اَسْمَاۗىِٕهٖ ۭ سَيُجْزَوْنَ مَا كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿١٨٠﴾ وَ
مِمَّنْ خَلَقْنَآ اُمَّةٌ يَّهْدُوْنَ بِالْحَقِّ وَبِهٖ يَعْدِلُوْنَ ﴿١٨١﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ كَذَّبُوْا
بِاٰيٰتِنَا سَنَسْتَدْرِجُهُمْ مِّنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿١٨٢﴾ وَاُمْلِيْ لَهُمْ ۭ اِنَّ كَيْدِيْ
مَتِيْنٌ ﴿١٨٣﴾ اَوَلَمْ يَتَفَكَّرُوْا ۭ مَا بِصَاحِبِهِمْ مِّنْ جِنَّةٍ ۭ اِنْ هُوَ اِلَّا نَذِيْرٌ

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

And, O Prophet,[133] remind the people of the time, when your Lord brought forth from the loins of the Children of Adam, their descendants and made them bear witness about themselves. He asked them, "Am I not your Lord?" They replied, "Most certainly, Thou alone art our Lord; we bear witness to this."[134] This We did lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection, "We were unaware of this thing," or lest you should say, "Our forefathers started the practice of *shirk* before us and we were born after them to their descendants: dost Thou, then, punish us for the sin that was committed by the wrong-doers?"[135] Behold, this is how We make Our Signs clear[136] so that these people return to the right way.[137] 172-174

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

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

Allah is entitled to most excellent names:[141] so call Him by 180-183

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

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the Books of *Isaiah, Jeremiah* and of the Prophets after them. Then Prophet Christ also administered the same in several of his addresses in the Gospels. Last of all, the Qur'ān also gave the same warning. The fact that since then the Jewish people have always been abased and degraded at one place or the other is a clear proof that the Qur'ān and those Books are really the Books of Allah.

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

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

131. This verse may be translated in two ways. The one that has been adopted in the Text means this: "The abode of the Hereafter is worthy of good people and will be given only to those who are Godfearing for it is not the monopoly of any person or family as such. How can it be possible that one should commit such deeds as deserve punishment yet get a good place in the Hereafter, just because one is a Jew or an Israelite"? The second rendering will be this: The abode of the Hereafter is better for Godfearing people who prefer the good life in the Hereafter to a life of pleasure in this world, for only those people who have no

fear of Allah can prefer the pleasures of this life to the joys and peace of the Next World."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Those who consider such an assemblage as impossible are in fact sceptical of the limitless powers of Allah; otherwise they would not have entertained any doubts about it because this is as easy for Allah as the gradual birth of mankind. The All-Powerful Allah, Who is bringing human beings into existence in the way he is doing now, has also the power to assemble all mankind before its birth and after its death. It appeals to reason that Allah let all mankind know that He was going to make His vicegerents after giving them wisdom and understanding and authority and the right to exploit the resources of the earth, and that He also took the oath of allegiance from them. Thus it is obvious and clear that there is nothing

impossible or strange in this assemblage of the whole of mankind on the occasion of Adam's creation.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

As regards the evidence of this inherent knowledge on the Day of Judgement, Allah will refresh and revive the memory of this Covenant, whereby they all acknowledged Allah alone as their Lord and Deity. Then He will show that this remained embedded in their hearts, in spite of its persistent denial in this world and will provide from their own selves the proof of the fact that the impress of this Covenant was always present in their minds and will show from the records of their lives how and when they suppressed the voice of this inherent knowledge: how and when their intuitional knowledge rebelled against their deviations, and how often it urged them to respond to the invitation of the inviters to the Truth and how they silenced their inner voice by means of different pretexts. At that time, when all the secrets will be exposed, none will be able to put forward any excuses. Everyone shall have to confess one's guilt in plain and clear words. That is why the Qur'ān says that they shall not say, "We had no knowledge of this Covenant," but will have to confess, "We were disbelievers and knowingly denied the Truth". They will stand witness against themselves to the effect that they were disbelievers.

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

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

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

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

The person, who has been held out as a bad type, possessed the knowledge of the Revelations of Allah and was acquainted with the Reality.

[Contd. on p.96

مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿184﴾ أَوَلَمْ يَنْظُرُوْا فِيْ مَلَكُوْتِ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا خَلَقَ اللّٰهُ مِنْ
شَيْءٍ ۙ وَّأَنْ عَسٰى أَنْ يَّكُوْنَ قَدِ اقْتَرَبَ أَجَلُهُمْ ۚ فَبِأَيِّ حَدِيْثٍ بَعْدَهٗ
يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿185﴾ مَنْ يُّضْلِلِ اللّٰهُ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهٗ ۚ وَيَذَرُهُمْ فِيْ طُغْيَانِهِمْ
يَعْمَهُوْنَ ﴿186﴾ يَسْـَٔلُوْنَكَ عَنِ السَّاعَةِ أَيَّانَ مُرْسٰهَا ۚ قُلْ إِنَّمَا عِلْمُهَا عِنْدَ
رَبِّيْ ۚ لَا يُجَلِّيْهَا لِوَقْتِهَآ إِلَّا هُوَ ۚ ثَقُلَتْ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۚ لَا تَأْتِيْكُمْ
إِلَّا بَغْتَةً ۚ يَسْـَٔلُوْنَكَ كَأَنَّكَ حَفِيٌّ عَنْهَا ۚ قُلْ إِنَّمَا عِلْمُهَا عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ وَلٰكِنَّ
أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿187﴾ قُلْ لَّآ أَمْلِكُ لِنَفْسِيْ نَفْعًا وَّلَا ضَرًّا إِلَّا مَا شَآءَ
اللّٰهُ ۚ وَلَوْ كُنْتُ أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبَ لَاسْتَكْثَرْتُ مِنَ الْخَيْرِ ۚ وَمَا مَسَّنِيَ السُّوْٓءُ ۚ
إِنْ أَنَا إِلَّا نَذِيْرٌ وَّبَشِيْرٌ لِّقَوْمٍ يُّؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿188﴾ هُوَ الَّذِيْ خَلَقَكُمْ مِّنْ نَّفْسٍ
وَّاحِدَةٍ وَّجَعَلَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا لِيَسْكُنَ إِلَيْهَا ۚ فَلَمَّا تَغَشّٰهَا حَمَلَتْ حَمْلًا
خَفِيْفًا فَمَرَّتْ بِهٖ ۚ فَلَمَّآ أَثْقَلَتْ دَّعَوَا اللّٰهَ رَبَّهُمَا لَئِنْ اٰتَيْتَنَا صَالِحًا
لَّنَكُوْنَنَّ مِنَ الشّٰكِرِيْنَ ﴿189﴾ فَلَمَّآ اٰتٰهُمَا صَالِحًا جَعَلَا لَهٗ شُرَكَآءَ فِيْمَآ اٰتٰهُمَا ۚ
فَتَعٰلَى اللّٰهُ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُوْنَ ﴿190﴾ أَيُشْرِكُوْنَ مَا لَا يَخْلُقُ شَيْئًا وَّهُمْ يُخْلَقُوْنَ ﴿191﴾
وَلَا يَسْتَطِيْعُوْنَ لَهُمْ نَصْرًا وَّلَآ أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَنْصُرُوْنَ ﴿192﴾ وَإِنْ تَدْعُوْهُمْ إِلَى
الْهُدٰى لَا يَتَّبِعُوْكُمْ ۚ سَوَآءٌ عَلَيْكُمْ أَدَعَوْتُمُوْهُمْ أَمْ أَنْتُمْ صَامِتُوْنَ ﴿193﴾
إِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ تَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ عِبَادٌ أَمْثَالُكُمْ فَادْعُوْهُمْ فَلْيَسْتَجِيْبُوْا
لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿194﴾ أَلَهُمْ أَرْجُلٌ يَّمْشُوْنَ بِهَآ أَمْ لَهُمْ أَيْدٍ يَّبْطِشُوْنَ
بِهَآ أَمْ لَهُمْ أَعْيُنٌ يُّبْصِرُوْنَ بِهَآ أَمْ لَهُمْ اٰذَانٌ يَّسْمَعُوْنَ بِهَا ۗ قُلِ
ادْعُوْا شُرَكَآءَكُمْ ثُمَّ كِيْدُوْنِ فَلَا تُنْظِرُوْنِ ﴿195﴾ إِنَّ وَلِيِّيَ اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْ نَزَّلَ

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

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

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

that they should walk with them? Or have they hands that they should hold with them? Or have they eyes that they should see with them? Or have they ears that they should hear with them?[148] Tell them, O Muhammad, "Call up the partners you have set up; then all of you sit down together and plot against me and give me no respite".

Contd. from p. 93]

Therefore it was reasonably expected that his knowledge ought to have guarded him against the way he knew to be wrong, and guided him to the way he knew to be right. Then Allah would have exalted him to the high rank of humanity because of his practice in accordance with the knowledge of the Revelation. But he became inclined towards the benefits, lusts and comforts of the world and succumbed to temptations. He was so overpowered by avarice of these lower desires that he discarded all the higher things and let go waste all the rational and moral potentialities of progress. Thus he transgressed all the limits that he ought to have observed in accordance with the demand of his knowledge. When Satan, who was lying in ambush nearby, saw him turning away deliberately and wilfully from the Truth because of his moral weaknesses, he chased him down and down from one abyss to the other, till he fell into the company of those who had utterly lost their reason under his misguidance.

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

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

The way that has been adopted to express the above thing is that of showing intense regret in human language. For example, when the young sons of

a mother are killed in the battle she says to the people, "I brought them up to become fodder for the cannon". But she does not mean that she really brought them up for this purpose. She wants to show her intense regret and sorrow and blame those who were responsible for the battle.

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

142. This admonition about giving names to Allah is of great importance, for different names reflect different concepts which people form of Him in their minds. It is obvious that people give such names to things as express their conception of them. The defects in the conceptions of things are reflected by the defects in the names and defects in the names show the defects in the conceptions. Besides this, man's relationships and his dealings depend on that particular conception which he forms about some one or some thing. The defect in the conception of things shows itself in the defect of one's relationship to it. On the other hand, if one's conception of a thing is correct and right, one's relationship to it will also be of the correct and right sort. The same is true in the case of one's relationship with Allah. The error one commits in giving wrong names to Allah (whether for distinction with reference to His attributes) is the result of one's error in the creed and in the conception of Allah and His attributes. A man commits the same kind of error and to the same extent in the formation of his moral attitude towards life that he commits in his creed and his conception of Allah. In fact a man's moral attitude towards life is wholly governed by his conception of Allah and his relationship to Him and the universe. That is why Allah has commanded the people to give most excellent names to Him and to refrain from giving wrong names to Him, for He is worthy of excellent names only. Therefore the best thing is to give Him excellent names because the results of the perversion of His names are most serious "Excellent names" are those names that point to the greatness, the supremacy, the sanctity, the purity and the perfection of His attributes. It shall be deemed perversion of His names to give Him such names as are below His dignity; which are against the reverence due to Him; which ascribe defects and shortcomings to Him or mislead one to form wrong creeds about Him. Again it shall also be a perversion to give such names to any of His creation as are worthy of Allah alone.

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

143. These questions have been posed to refute the charge that their comrade, Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him), was suffering from a disorder of the mind, for otherwise he would not have given the Message he was conveying. They have been asked to reflect upon the fact that he was born and bred among them and had been their comrade before he claimed that he was appointed a Messenger by Allah. During all those years they had known him to be of a sound mind and of a good nature. Thus it is obvious that they charged him of having a distracted mind not because of what he said before his Prophethood but because of what he proclaimed as a Prophet. That is why they have been asked to reflect upon and point out anything from his Message which they regarded as meaningless, unreal and irrational. If they had ever reflected upon the wisdom of the wonderful administration of the heavens and the earth or observed closely any creation of Allah, they would have come to the inevitable conclusion that the whole system of the universe, nay, each and every particle of His creation is a clear evidence of the Truth of His Message. For all these things refute *shirk* and prove the Oneness of Allah and invite people to His worship and arouse in them the sense of responsibility and accountability. And that was what their brother was preaching.

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

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

146. In order to understand this passage, it should be kept in mind that it criticizes the pagan Arabs for associating partners with Allah in the matter of the birth of children. They have been told to remember that the first man and his mate were brought into being by Allah; and they could not deny this. Then they also knew that it is He Who has arranged the birth of human beings after the first pair; that it is He by Whose will a woman becomes pregnant and who nourishes the child in her womb in a wonderful manner, and that it is He Who imbues it with a sound body and sound mind with various powers and capabilities and lets it come out as a healthy human being. They could not deny that all this is in the power of Allah alone. If Allah willed, He could have created a monkey, a serpent or any other animal in her womb or made the child deformed or physically or mentally defective. They knew that no one had the power to make any change in Allah's creation. That is why all their hopes were centred in Allah during the period of

pregnancy and prayers were invoked for the birth of a perfect child. But it is an irony that the pagans as well as the Believers change their whole attitude after the birth of a child, and, instead of being grateful to Allah, they make their grateful offerings to some god or goddess or saint or the like and give such names as smack of *shirk*—Pir Bakhsh, "Favour of the Saint," or Abdur-Rasul, "Servant of the Prophet" etc.

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

In this connection it should also be noted that the condition of the present-day Muslims is even worse than that of the pagan Arabs whom the Qur'ān has condemned in this passage. They committed *shirk* after the delivery of the child, though before this they prayed to Allah for the child. But the Muslims of today, who claim to be the bearers of the creed of *Tauhīd*, go far beyond this. These wretched people pray to others even for the birth of a child and make vows to others during the period of pregnancy, and after the delivery of the child make offerings to the associates they set up with Allah. Yet they consider those Arabs as pagans who deserved Hell, and themselves as Believers in One Allah, for whom Paradise has been guaranteed!

[Contd. on p. 101

الْكِتٰبَ ۚ وَهُوَ يَتَوَلَّى الصّٰلِحِيْنَ ﴿١٩٦﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ تَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِهٖ لَا
يَسْتَطِيْعُوْنَ نَصْرَكُمْ وَلَآ اَنْفُسَهُمْ يَنْصُرُوْنَ ﴿١٩٧﴾ وَاِنْ تَدْعُوْهُمْ اِلَى الْهُدٰى
لَا يَسْمَعُوْا ۭ وَتَرٰىهُمْ يَنْظُرُوْنَ اِلَيْكَ وَهُمْ لَا يُبْصِرُوْنَ ﴿١٩٨﴾ خُذِ الْعَفْوَ وَ
اْمُرْ بِالْعُرْفِ وَاَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْجٰهِلِيْنَ ﴿١٩٩﴾ وَاِمَّا يَنْزَغَنَّكَ مِنَ الشَّيْطٰنِ
نَزْغٌ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللّٰهِ ۭ اِنَّهٗ سَمِيْعٌ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿٢٠٠﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ اتَّقَوْا اِذَا مَسَّهُمْ
طٰۗىِٕفٌ مِّنَ الشَّيْطٰنِ تَذَكَّرُوْا فَاِذَا هُمْ مُّبْصِرُوْنَ ﴿٢٠١﴾ وَاِخْوَانُهُمْ يَمُدُّوْنَهُمْ
فِي الْغَيِّ ثُمَّ لَا يُقْصِرُوْنَ ﴿٢٠٢﴾ وَاِذَا لَمْ تَاْتِهِمْ بِاٰيَةٍ قَالُوْا لَوْلَا اجْتَبَيْتَهَا ۭ
قُلْ اِنَّمَآ اَتَّبِعُ مَا يُوْحٰٓى اِلَيَّ مِنْ رَّبِّيْ ۚ هٰذَا بَصَاۗىِٕرُ مِنْ رَّبِّكُمْ وَهُدًى
وَّرَحْمَةٌ لِّقَوْمٍ يُّؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٢٠٣﴾ وَاِذَا قُرِئَ الْقُرْاٰنُ فَاسْتَمِعُوْا لَهٗ وَاَنْصِتُوْا
لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُوْنَ ﴿٢٠٤﴾ وَاذْكُرْ رَّبَّكَ فِيْ نَفْسِكَ تَضَرُّعًا وَّخِيْفَةً وَّدُوْنَ
الْجَهْرِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالْاٰصَالِ وَلَا تَكُنْ مِّنَ الْغٰفِلِيْنَ ﴿٢٠٥﴾ اِنَّ
الَّذِيْنَ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُوْنَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِهٖ وَيُسَبِّحُوْنَهٗ وَلَهٗ يَسْجُدُوْنَ ﴿٢٠٦﴾

196-198 My Protector and Helper is Allah who has sent down this Book, and Who protects the righteous people.[149] On the contrary, those whom you call beside Allah, cannot help you nor can they help themsleves. Nay, if you call them to the Right Way, they cannot even hear what you say; though it would appear to you that they are looking at you, in fact, they do not see anything."

199-202 O Prophet, adopt the way of leniency and forbearance; enjoin what is good and avoid useless discussions with the ignorant people. If Satan ever excites you to anger, seek refuge in Allah: He is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. The fact is that if ever an evil suggestion from Satan so much as touches those, who are Godfearing people, they

immediately get alerted and clearly see the right course they should adopt. As regards their (that is, Satan's) brethren,[149a] they drag them on and on in their crooked ways and leave nothing undone to seduce them.[150]

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

O Prophet, remember your Lord morning and evening, deep in your heart with humility and with fear, and also in a low voice with your tongue: do not be of those who are heedless.[154] Indeed the angels, who are near to your Lord in rank, do not turn away in pride from His service :[155] they glorify Him[156] and bow down before Him.[157] 205-206

Contd from p.99]

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

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

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

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

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

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

There is a tradition of the Holy Prophet to the same effect: "My Lord has enjoined me to utter what is just whether I am in a state of anger or happiness: to try my best to have cordial relations even with those who are inimical to me: to render their rights even to those who deprive me of my rights: to forgive even those who are cruel to me." He advised those whom he sent on this Mission: "Wherever you go, your visit should be a harbinger of happiness and not of hatred: you should become the source of comfort to the people and not of bringing hardships on them". Allah has also praised this characteristic of the Holy Prophet: ("O Messenger,) it is a great blessing of Allah that you are very lenient towards and gentle with them. If you had been harsh and hard-hearted, they would have scattered away from you..." (III: 159).

(2) The second formula for the success of this Mission is to avoid philosophising and to enjoin those simple and well-known virtues that are universally accepted to be virtues, and are easily recognized by common sense which an ordinary person possesses. Thus the appeal of the inviter to the Truth convinces every one. Its greatest advantage is that it helps win over the common people to the side of promulgators of the Truth, against its antagonists. When the common people, in spite of their prejudices, see on one side a gentle and kind person inviting them towards simple virtues, which they themselves understand well, and on the other, his antagonists opposing his noble mission with immoral and inhuman devices, they turn away by and by from those degraded opponents and come to the inviter of the Truth. As a result of this, in the end, only those remain in the field to oppose the Truth, whose own interests are closely

linked with falsehood or those who are slaves of the traditions of their forefathers and of the customs of ignorance. The Holy Prophet owed his great success in Arabia to this wise policy. Then his successors achieved the same in the adjoining countries, where Islam spread by leaps and bounds and was accepted by the overwhelming majority of the people.

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

(4) In case the inviter to the Truth feels that the provocations from the mischievous people are becoming too much for him to bear and he cannot withstand their tyrannies, mischiefs, foolish objections and accusations, he should at once realise that it is Satan who is tempting him to retaliate. Then the best thing is to seek refuge in Allah, and invoke His help to protect His servant from doing in anger anything that might be harmful to his Mission. This is possible only if one remains cool-headed even under the greatest provocations, for one can never think or act wisely if one is easily excited by anger, insult, injustice or cruelty etc. But Satan who does not like this Mission to succeed and is always devising schemes to defeat it, first incites own disciples to attack the inviter to the Truth and then incites him to make counter-attacks on them. As Satan's appeal is couched in very alluring words and pious terms, it is not an easy thing to withstand it. That is why pious people have been fore-warned, in vv. 201-202, of this serious danger and instructed that if they intend to refrain from evil, they should immediately get alarmed as soon as they feel the evil effects of the temptation of Satan and its incitement in their hearts and stand on their guard. Then they will clearly see the right course that they should adopt on such occasions and under such circumstances for the sake of their Mission.

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

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

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

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

153. *It means*, "In your bigotry and obduracy you turn a deaf ear to the Qur'an when it is being recited, and make a loud noise so that no one should be able to listen to it. Leave this wrong attitude towards it and listen to it with attention and consider the teachings contained in it. It is just possible that your acquaintance with it may enlighten your hearts and make you co-sharers with the Believers in the mercy of your Lord."

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

Though the real object af this verse is the same that has been stated above, incidentally it also enjoins the hearers to remain silent and listen to it as a mark of respect which is due to the Book of Allah. It is also deduced from this that when

the *Imām* recites the Qur'ān during the *Salāt*, the followers in the congregation should listen to it in silence, and they should not recite anything. There is, however, difference of opinion among the Imāms in regard to its interpretation. According to Imām Abū Hanīfah and his companions, the followers in the congregation should not recite anything whether the Imām is reciting the Qur'ān aloud or silently in his mind. However, Imām Mālik and Imām Ahmad are of the opinion that only in that case when the Imām is reciting the Qur'ān aloud, the followers should not recite anything, but in the other case they should recite Sūrah *Al-Fātihah*. But according to Imām Shafi'ī, the followers must recite Sūrah *Al-Fātihah*, whether the Imām is reciting loudly or silently in his mind. He bases his opinion on the Traditions according to which one's *Salāt* is not complete without the recital of Surah *Al-Fātihah*.

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

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

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

155. In contrast to the ways of pride and vanity of satans that mislead into disobedience to Allah, and consequently to the depths of degradation, the example of the angels has been cited to teach the lesson of humility. They bow down before Allah and are always engaged in His service. Therefore if one desires to achieve high ranks in the sight of Allah, one should follow the angels and refrain from the paths of satans.

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

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

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

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

The majority of the Muslims are of the opinion that the conditions for the performance of *sajdah* are the same as for the performance of *Salāt*. But there is no proof for these conditions in the Traditions concerning *sajdah*. We find from them that when a person hears a verse requiring *sajdah*, he should bend down his head wherever and in whatever position he may be irrespective of these conditions. He should not mind whether he is in a state of ablutions or not; whether he can turn his face towards the *qiblah* or not; whether it is possible for him to prostrate his head on the ground or not. We find examples of the learned and pious people in the past following the same practice. According to Imām Bukhārī, Hadrat 'Abdullāh bin 'Umar would perform *sajdah* whether he was in a state of ablutions or not. It is cited in *Fatehulbārī* that Abū 'Abdur-Rehmān Sulami would recite the Qur'ān while he was walking and would merely bend down his head when he read a verse requiring *sajdah*, whether he was in a state of ablutions or not and whether he was facing *qiblah* or not. From these we have come to the

conclusion that, though the method followed by the majority is more prudent, if a person follows a practice different from that of the majority, he should not be reproved for this because there is no proof in Sunnah for the method followed by the majority, while there are examples of learned personages for this practice.



VIII

AL-ANFĀL

الانفال

VIII

AL-ANFĀL

الانفال

Name

The Sūrah takes its name *Al-Anfāl* (The Bounties) from the first verse.

The Period of Revelation

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

Historical Background

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

During the first decade or so of the Prophethood at Makkah, the Message had proved its firmness and stability. This was the result of two things. First, the Messenger, who possessed the highest qualities of character, was performing his Mission with wisdom, foresight and

magnanimity. He had shown by his conduct that he had made up his mind to carry the movement to a successful end and, therefore, was ready to face all sorts of dangers and obstacles in the way. Secondly, the Message was so charming that it attracted the minds and hearts of the people irresistibly towards itself. So much so that all obstacles of ignorance, superstition and petty prejudices failed to check its advance. That is why the Arab upholders of the ways of "ignorance" who looked down upon it in its initial stages, had begun to reckon it as a serious menace during the last period of the stay of the Holy Prophet at Makkah, and were bent on crushing it with all the force at their command. But in spite of the above-mentioned strength, the Movement still lackes certain things to lead it to victory:

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

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

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

aliens whom their bloodthirsty enemies wanted to uproot from their own homes.

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

Allah created opportunities for making up these deficiencies.

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

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

And the people of Yathrab were fully aware of the implications of this offer. It was indeed a declaration of war against the whole of

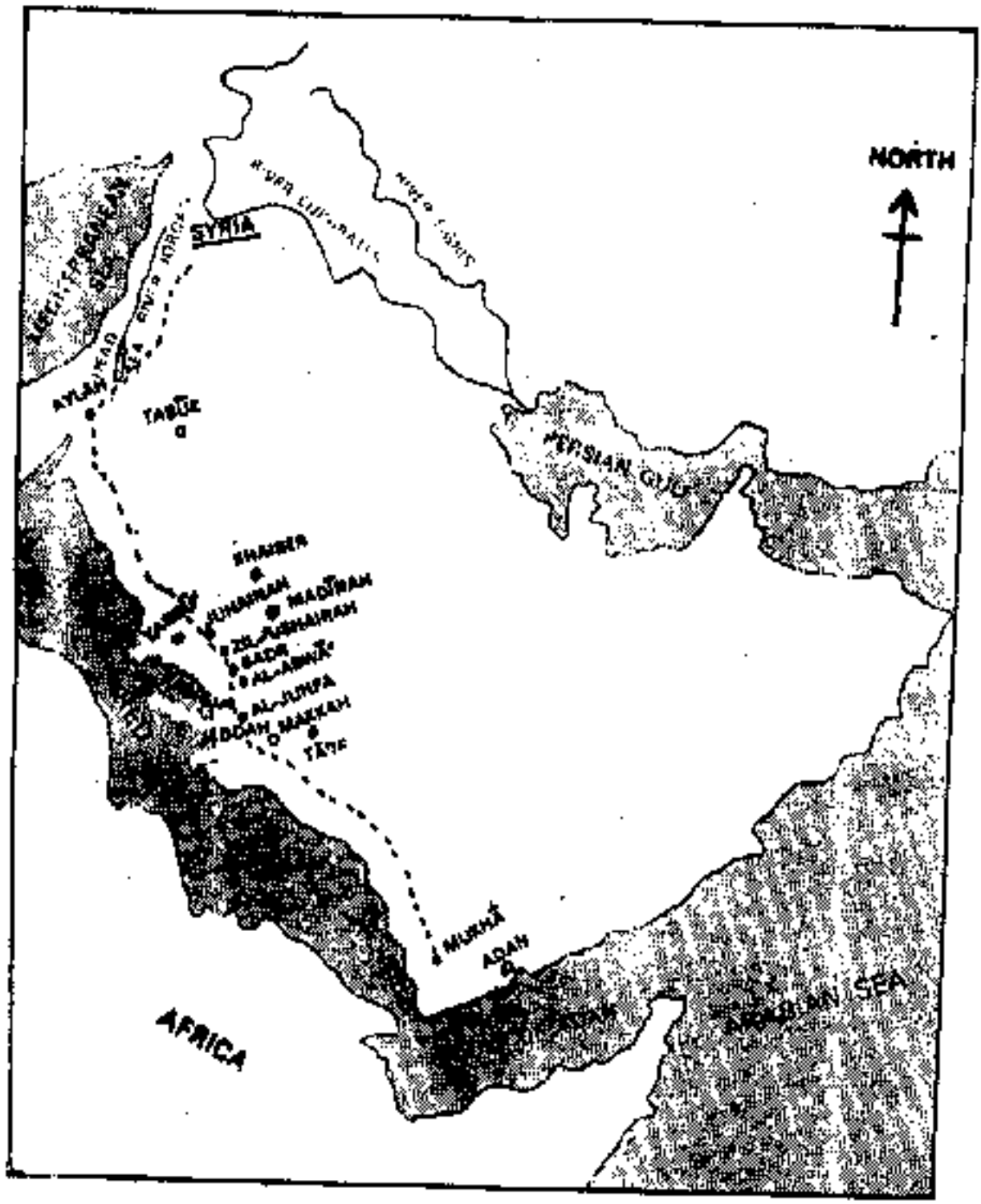
Arabia, and an invitation to their own social and economic boycott as well. And when the *Anṣār* from Yathrab declared their allegiance to the Holy Prophet at 'Aqabah, they knew fully well its consequences. During the course of the formal declaration of allegiance, Asad-bin-Zurārah, the youngest of all the delegates from Yathrab, stood up and said, "O people of Yathrab! just listen to me and consider the matter carefully in all its aspects. Though we have come to him, regarding him only as a Messenger of Allah, we should know that we shall be inviting the enmity of the whole of Arabia. For when we take him away to Yathrab, we shall be attacked and our children may be put to the sword. Therefore if you have the courage in your hearts to face it, then and then only, you should declare your allegiance to him and Allah will give you its reward. But if you love your lives more than him and his Message, then leave this matter and frankly excuse yourselves, for at this time Allah may accept your excuses."

'Abbās bin 'Ubādah bin Nadlah, another member of the delegation, reiterated the same thing, saying,

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

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

MAP SHOWING THE TRADE ROUTES OF THE QURAISH



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

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

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

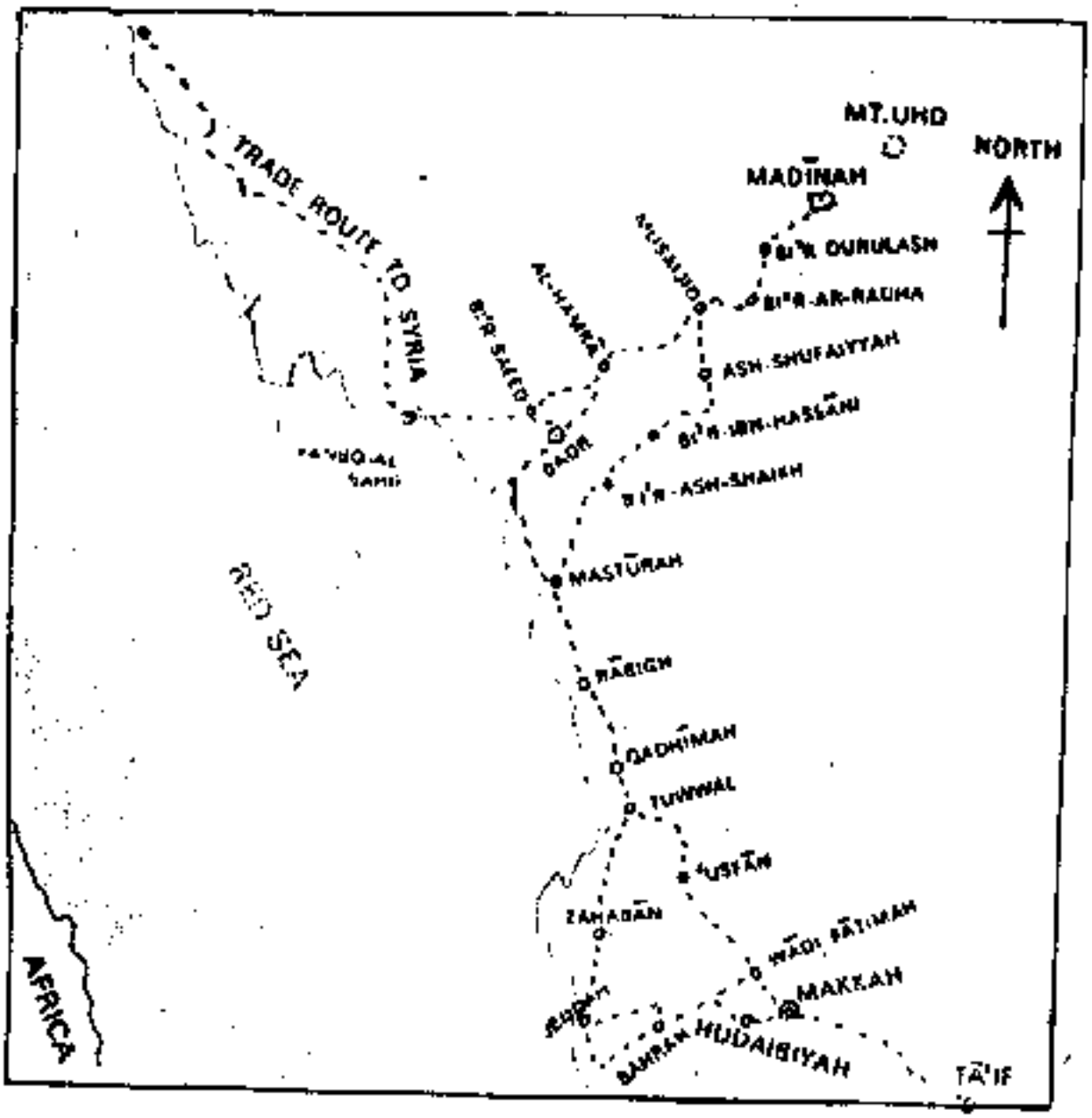
As the Quraish were fully aware of the implications of the oath of allegiance at 'Aqabah, they were greatly perturbed when they got wind of it the same night. At first they tried to win over the people of Al-Madīnah to their side. But when they saw that the Muslims were migrating to Al-Madīnah in small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

A few days before his migration, the Quraish held a council to consider the matter. After a good deal of argument, they decided that one person should be taken from each of the families of Quraish other than that of Banī Hāshim to put an end to the life of the Holy Prophet. This was to make it difficult for the family of the Holy Prophet to fight alone with all the other families of the Quraish and thus to force them to

accept blood-money for his murder instead of taking revenge from them. but by the grace of Allah their plot against the life of the Holy Prophet failed because of his admirable foresight and full trust in Allah, and he reached Al-Madīnah safe and sound. When they could not prevent his emigration, it occurred to them to exploit 'Abdullah bin Ubayy who had begun to cherish a grievance against the Holy Prophet since his arrival at Al-Madīnah. He was an influential chief of Al-Madīnah and the people had agreed to make him their king. But when the majority of Aus and Khazraj clans became Muslims and acknowledged the Holy Prophet as their leader, guide and ruler, all his hopes of becoming a king came to an end. Therefore the Quraish wrote to him, 'As you have given shelter to our enemy, we tell you plainly that you should either fight with him yourself or exile him from your City: otherwise we swear by God that we will invade your city, kill your males and make your females our slave girls." This letter added fuel to the flames of his jealousy and he was inclined to do some mischief, but the Holy Prophet took timely precautions and defeated his evil designs.

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

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



formed Muslim Community and settling peace terms with the neighbouring Jewish habitations, he adopted two measures in this connection:

First, he entered into negotiations with those clans who lived between the Red Sea and this route so as to make alliances with them or at least to persuade them to make treaties of neutrality with the Muslims. He was successful in this, and he entered into a treaty of non-alignment with Juhainah, which was a very important clan of the hilly tract near the sea coast. Then, at the end of the first year of Hijrah, he made a treaty of defensive alliance with Bani Damrah, who lived near Yanbū' and Zawal 'Ushairah. In 2 A.H. Bani Mudlij also joined the alliance, as they were the neighbours and allies of Bani Damrah. Then it so happened that quite a large number of these people were converted to Islam as a result of the missionary work done by the Muslims.

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

people of Al-Madīnah from the very vicinity of the city to show what their real intentions were.

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

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

Now the Holy Prophet, who always kept himself well informed of the state of affairs, felt that the decisive hour had come and that was the right time when he must take a bold step; otherwise the Islamic Movement would become lifeless for ever and no chance would be left for it to rise again. For, if the Qurasih invaded Al-Madīnah, the odds would be against the Muslims. The condition of the Muslim Community

was still very shaky because the immigrants *(Muhājirīn)* had not been able to stabilise their economy during the short period (less than two years) of their stay at Al-Madinah; their helpers (the *Ansār)* had not yet been tried; and the neighbouring Jewish clans were antagonistic. Then there was a strong group of hypocrites and *mushriks* in Al-Madīnah itself; above all, the surrounding clans lived in awe of the Quraish and had all their religious sympathies with them. The Holy Prophet, therefore, felt that the consequences of this possible invasion would not be favourable to the Muslims.

The second possibility was that they would not invade Al-Madinah but try only to escort their caravan safely and securely by a mere show of force. In that case, too, if the Muslims remained inactive, it would affect their reputation adversely. Obviously, this weak stand in the conflict would embolden the other Arabs also and make the position of the Muslims very insecure in the country and the surrounding clans would, at the instance of the Quraish, start hostilities against them, and the Jews, the hypocrites and the *mushriks* of Al-Madīnah would openly rise against them and not only endanger their security of life, property and honour but make it difficult for them even to live there.

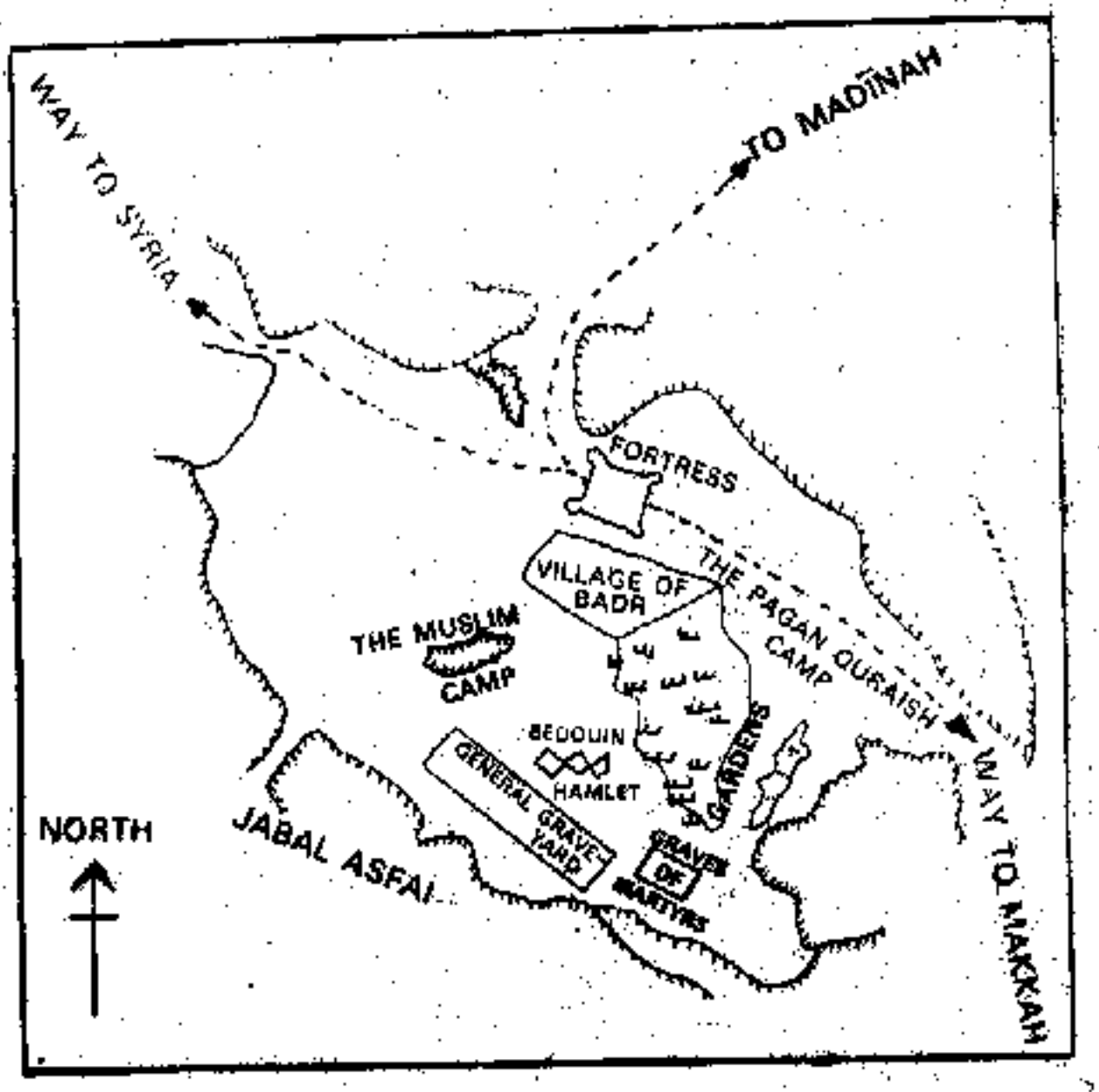
The Muslims would not be able to inspire the enemy with awe so as to keep safe from them their life, property and honour. A careful study of the situation led the Holy Prophet to make up his mind to take a decisive step and go into the battle with whatever little strength he could muster, for thus and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

When he arrived at this momentous decision, he called the *Muhājirīn* and the *Ansār* together and placed the whole position before them, without any reservation. He said, "Allah has promised that you will confront one of the two; the trade caravan coming from the north or the army of the Quraish marching from the south. Now tell me which of the two you want to attack!" A large majority of the people replied that they wanted to attack the caravan. But the Holy Prophet who had something else before him, repeated the same question. At this Miqdād

bin 'Amr, a *Muhājir*, stood up and said, "O Messenger of Allah! Please march to the side to which your Lord commands you; we will accompany you wherever you go. We will not say like the Israelites, 'Go and let you and your Lord fight; we will wait here.' In contrast to them we say, 'Let you and your Lord fight; we will fight by your side to our last breath'." Even then he did not announce any decision but waited for a reply from the *Ansār* who had not yet taken any part in any battle of Islam. As this was the first opportunity for them to prove that they were ready to fulfil their promise of fighting for the cause of Islam, he repeated the question without directly addressing them. At this, Sa'ad bin Mu'āz, an *Ansār*, stood up and said, "Sir, it appears that you are putting the question to us." When the Holy Prophet said, "Yes", the *Ansār* replied, "We have believed in you and confirmed that what you have brought is the Truth, and have made a solemn pledge with you that we will listen to you and obey you. Therefore, O Messenger of Allah, do whatever you intend to do. We swear by Allah Who has sent you with the Truth that we are ready to accompany you to the sea shore and if you enter it, we will plunge into it. We assure you that not a single one of us will remain behind or forsake you, for we will not hesitate at all to go to fight, even if you should lead us to the battlefield tomorrow. We will remain steadfast in the battle and sacrifice our lives in the fight. We do hope that by the grace of Allah our behaviour will gladden your heart. So, trusting in Allah's blessing, take us to the battlefield."

After these speeches it was decided that they should march towards the army of the Quraish and not towards the trade caravan. But it should be noted that the decision was of an ordinary nature. For the number of people, who came forward to go to the battlefield, was only a little more than three hundred (86 *Muhājirs*, 61 from Aus and 170 from Khazraj). Then the little army was ill-armed and hardly equipped for battle. Only a couple of them had horses to ride and the others had to take their turn in threes and fours on the back of a camel, out of the 70 they had in all. Above all, they had not got enough weapons for the battle; only 60 of them had armours. It is, therefore, no wonder that with the exception of those who were prepared to sacrifice their lives for the cause of Islam, the majority of those who had joined the expedition,

THE BATTLEFIELD OF BADR



were so filled with fear that they felt as if they were knowingly going into the jaws of death. Then there were people who always looked at things from a selfish point of view. Though they had embraced Islam, they did not realize that their faith would demand the sacrifice of their lives and properties from them; they were of the opinion that it was a mad expedition prompted by irrational enthusiasm for religion. But the Holy Prophet and the true Believers had realized the urgency of that critical hour which required the risk of life: therefore they marched straight to the south-west, wherefrom the army of the Quraish was coming. This is a clear proof of the fact that from the very beginning they had gone out to fight with the army and not to plunder the caravan. For if they had aimed at plundering the caravan they would have taken the northwesterly direction and not the south-westerly one.*

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

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

maternal uncles and their brothers. It is obvious that only such people could have come out successful in this hardest of tests as had accepted the Truth sincerely and cut off all relations with falsehood. And in another way the test to which the *Ansār* were put was not less hard. So far they had only alienated the powerful Quraish and their allies by giving shelter to the Muslims against their wishes but now, for the first time, they were going to give fight to them and to sow the seeds of a long and bitter war with them. This was indeed a very hard test for it meant that a small town with a population of a few thousand inhabitants was going to wage a war with the whole of Arabia. It is obvious that only such people could take this bold step who believed in the Truth of Islam so firmly that they were ready to sacrifice every personal interest for its sake.

So Allah accepted the self-sacrifices of the *Muhājirīn* and the *Ansar* because of their true faith, and rewarded them with His succour. The proud, well-armed Quraish were routed by these ill-equipped devotees of Islam. Seventy men of their army were killed and seventy captured as prisoners and their arms and equipment came into the hands of the Muslims as spoils of war. All their big chiefs, who were their best soldiers and who had led the opposition to Islam, were killed in this Battle. No wonder that this decisive victory made Islam a power to be reckoned with. A Western research scholar says that before the Battle of Badr, Islam was merely a religion and not a state but after the Battle it became the state religion, nay, the state itself.

Topics of Discussion

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

1. Instead of gloating over the victory, the moral weaknesses that had come to the surface in that expedition have been pointed out so that the Muslims should try their best to reform themselves.

2. It has been impressed upon them that the victory was due to the succour of Allah rather than to their own valour and bravery so that the Muslims should learn to rely on Him and obey Allah and His Messenger alone.

3. The moral lesson of the conflict between the Truth and falsehood has been enunciated and the qualities which lead to success in a conflict have been explained.

4. Then the Sūrah addresses the *mushriks*, the hypocrites, the Jews and the prisoners of this war in a very impressive manner that should teach them a good lesson.

5. It also gives instructions in regard to the spoils of war. The Muslims have been told not to regard these as their right but as a bounty from Allah. Therefore they should accept with gratitude the share that is granted to them out of it and willingly accede to the share which Allah sets apart for His cause and for the help of the needy.

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

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

SUMMARY

SUBJECT: PROBLEMS OF *JIHĀD*

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

Topics and their Interconnection

1-41 This portion deals with the problems of the "Spoils of War". The Qur'ān says that these are not the spoils of war but the "Bounties of Allah" and proves this by showing that the victory at Badr (and in all other battles, too,) was won by His succour and not by the efforts of the Muslims. It also declares (in v. 40) that the war aim of the Muslims should be to eliminate all unfavourable conditions for the establishment of Islam and not to gain spoils. Moreover, the spoils, being the bounties of God, belong to Allah and His Messenger and they alone are entitled to allocate them. Then after conditioning the Muslims to accept these things, the different shares have been allocated in v. 41.

42-54 The Battle of Badr was ordained by Allah so that Islam should triumph over "ignorance." The lesson from this is that the Muslims should trust in God and prepare themselves for war and should not be beguiled by Satan as the disbelievers were.

55-59 Sanctity of treaties has been enjoined and the Muslims commanded to observe them as long as the other party does not break them.

60-66 The Muslims should always be prepared for war on every front, but should be ready to make peace if the other party is inclined towards it.

67-71 In these verses, instructions about prisoners of war have been given.

72-75 In order to keep the Muslims joined together against their enemies, they have been taught to have cordial relations with one another.



يَسْـَٔلُوْنَكَ عَنِ الْاَنْفَالِ ۭ قُلِ الْاَنْفَالُ لِلّٰهِ وَالرَّسُوْلِ ۚ فَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَ
اَصْلِحُوْا ذَاتَ بَيْنِكُمْ ۠ وَاَطِيْعُوا اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهٗٓ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِيْنَ ۝١
اِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ الَّذِيْنَ اِذَا ذُكِرَ اللّٰهُ وَجِلَتْ قُلُوْبُهُمْ وَاِذَا تُلِيَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ
اٰيٰتُهٗ زَادَتْهُمْ اِيْمَانًا وَّعَلٰي رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُوْنَ ۝٢ الَّذِيْنَ يُقِيْمُوْنَ الصَّلٰوةَ
وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنٰهُمْ يُنْفِقُوْنَ ۝٣ اُولٰۗىِٕكَ هُمُ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ حَقًّا ۭ لَهُمْ دَرَجٰتٌ عِنْدَ

VIII

الانفال

AL-ANFĀL (BOUNTIES)

Verses; 75 *Revealed at Al-Madinah*

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

They ask you concerning the bounties? Say, "The bounties belong to Allah and the Messenger. So fear Allah and set things aright among youreselves; obey Allah and His Messenger, if you are true believers."[1] True believers are only those whose hearts tremble with awe, whenever Allah is mentioned to them; whose faith increases[2] when the revelations of Allah are recited to them; who put their trust in their Lord, who establish *Salāt* and spend in Our way out of what we have given them. 1-3

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

[Contd. on p. 128

رَبِّهِمْ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ وَّرِزْقٌ كَرِيْمٌ ۝٤ كَمَآ اَخْرَجَكَ رَبُّكَ مِنْۢ بَيْتِكَ بِالْحَقِّ ۖ
وَاِنَّ فَرِيْقًا مِّنَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ لَكٰرِهُوْنَ ۝٥ يُجَادِلُوْنَكَ فِي الْحَقِّ بَعْدَ مَا
تَبَيَّنَ كَاَنَّمَا يُسَاقُوْنَ اِلَى الْمَوْتِ وَهُمْ يَنْظُرُوْنَ ۝٦ وَاِذْ يَعِدُكُمُ اللّٰهُ
اِحْدَى الطَّآئِفَتَيْنِ اَنَّهَا لَكُمْ وَتَوَدُّوْنَ اَنَّ غَيْرَ ذَاتِ الشَّوْكَةِ تَكُوْنُ
لَكُمْ وَيُرِيْدُ اللّٰهُ اَنْ يُّحِقَّ الْحَقَّ بِكَلِمٰتِهٖ وَيَقْطَعَ دَابِرَ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ ۝٧
لِيُحِقَّ الْحَقَّ وَيُبْطِلَ الْبَاطِلَ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُجْرِمُوْنَ ۝٨ اِذْ تَسْتَغِيْثُوْنَ
رَبَّكُمْ فَاسْتَجَابَ لَكُمْ اَنِّيْ مُمِدُّكُمْ بِاَلْفٍ مِّنَ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ مُرْدِفِيْنَ ۝٩ وَ
مَا جَعَلَهُ اللّٰهُ اِلَّا بُشْرٰى وَلِتَطْمَئِنَّ بِهٖ قُلُوْبُكُمْ ۚ وَمَا النَّصْرُ اِلَّا مِنْ
عِنْدِ اللّٰهِ ۗ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَزِيْزٌ حَكِيْمٌ ۝١٠ اِذْ يُغَشِّيْكُمُ النُّعَاسَ اَمَنَةً مِّنْهُ وَ
يُنَزِّلُ عَلَيْكُمْ مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً لِّيُطَهِّرَكُمْ بِهٖ وَيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمْ رِجْزَ
الشَّيْطٰنِ وَلِيَرْبِطَ عَلٰى قُلُوْبِكُمْ وَيُثَبِّتَ بِهِ الْاَقْدَامَ ۝١١ اِذْ يُوْحِيْ رَبُّكَ
اِلَى الْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ اَنِّيْ مَعَكُمْ فَثَبِّتُوا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا ۗ سَاُلْقِيْ فِيْ قُلُوْبِ الَّذِيْنَ
كَفَرُوا الرُّعْبَ فَاضْرِبُوْا فَوْقَ الْاَعْنَاقِ وَاضْرِبُوْا مِنْهُمْ كُلَّ بَنَانٍ ۝١٢
ذٰلِكَ بِاَنَّهُمْ شَآقُّوا اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهٗ ۚ وَمَنْ يُّشَاقِقِ اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهٗ فَاِنَّ
اللّٰهَ شَدِيْدُ الْعِقَابِ ۝١٣ ذٰلِكُمْ فَذُوْقُوْهُ وَاَنَّ لِلْكٰفِرِيْنَ عَذَابَ النَّارِ ۝١٤
يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا اِذَا لَقِيْتُمُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا زَحْفًا فَلَا تُوَلُّوْهُمُ الْاَدْبَارَ ۝١٥
وَمَنْ يُّوَلِّهِمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ دُبُرَهٗٓ اِلَّا مُتَحَرِّفًا لِّقِتَالٍ اَوْ مُتَحَيِّزًا اِلٰى فِئَةٍ
فَقَدْ بَآءَ بِغَضَبٍ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ وَمَاْوٰىهُ جَهَنَّمُ ۭ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيْرُ ۝١٦ فَلَمْ
تَقْتُلُوْهُمْ وَلٰكِنَّ اللّٰهَ قَتَلَهُمْ ۠ وَمَا رَمَيْتَ اِذْ رَمَيْتَ وَلٰكِنَّ اللّٰهَ رَمٰى ۚ

Such people are indeed true believers; they have high ranks 4-6
with their Lord and forgiveness for their sins[3] and most generous provisions. (Now in regard to the spoils the same thing is happening again which happened when) your Lord had brought you forth from your home with the Truth, for some of the Believers were very much averse to it: they were arguing with you concerning the truth, though it had become quite evident; they were filled with awe as if they were being driven towards death with their eyes wide open.[4]

Remember the occasion when Allah was holding out to you the 7-8
promise that one of the two hosts[5] would fall to you: you wished the weaker host should fall to you[6]: but Allah willed to prove by His words the Truth to be truth and to cut across the roots of the disbelievers so that the Truth should come out as truth and falsehood should be proved to be falsehood, even though the evil-doers did not like it.[7]

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

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

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

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

such an occasion, except it be as a strategy, or to join another troop of the Believers, shall incur the wrath of Allah: Hell shall be his abode: most wretched is that place of retreat ![13]

Contd. from p. 125]

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

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

This conception of the spoils of victory helped to bring about a great moral reform in the attitude towards war. Muslims do not go to war for the sake of material gains but for the sake of reforming the moral and social evils in the world in accordance with the principles of the Truth; and that they wage war only when the opposing forces make it impossible for them to carry out the reform work by means of preaching and teaching. Therefore the reformers must keep in view only that aim and object and not the material gains that may be bestowed on them by Allah as His bounties. That is why the Muslims were warned after the very first battle for the cause of Islam to guard themselves against the material gains of the battle lest these should become the sole aim and object of the fight.

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

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

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

contrast to this, if a believer hesitates to accept these, his Faith begins to decrease and fade away.

This also shows that Faith is not something that is incapable of growth and increase and which always remains in one and the same state, but it is capable of both improvement and decay. Every denial of the Truth corrupts its quality, and likewise every acknowledgement and acceptance improves it. But as far as the grading of the rights and ranks of the people, according to the acceptance or denial of the Truth, is concerned, all the Muslims shall be placed in one and the same position, and likewise the non-Muslims. In the Islamic society, the legal rights and obligations of all the Muslims shall be the same, irrespective of the differences in the quality of the Faith. In the same way, the non-Muslims shall be *Żimmīs* or belligerents or allies of the same rank, irrespective of the quality of their denial of the Islamic Faith.

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

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

Incidentally, verses 5-6 refute all those traditions about the Battle of Badr that are related in the books on the life of the Holy Prophet and his wars. They say that the real plan of the Holy Prophet and his followers was to plunder the caravan and accordingly they had marched out of Al-Madīnah for the same purpose. But when they had travelled some distance, they learnt that an army of the Quraish

was coming for the protection of the caravan, and they held a council to decide whether to attack the caravan or the army. The Qur'ān, however, contradicts this. It says that Allah brought forth the Holy Prophet from his home with the Truth at the very beginning and he had this Truth before him that they should meet the army of the Quraish in a decisive battle. For these consultations were held before they had started from Al-Madīnah and not after. It was then that some Muslims were arguing with the Holy Prophet concerning the Truth that they should go to meet the army of the Quraish, though it had become quite evident to them. That was why these people felt as though they were being driven towards death, when they were commanded to march out of Al-Madīnah at the very start of the expedition.

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

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

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

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

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

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

10. From what we have learnt about the basic principles from the Qur'ān, we are of the opinion that the angels were not employed directly to take part in

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وَلِيُبْلِيَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ مِنْهُ بَلَآءً حَسَنًا ۚ إِنَّ اللّٰهَ سَمِيْعٌ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿١٧﴾ ذٰلِكُمْ وَأَنَّ
اللّٰهَ مُوْهِنُ كَيْدِ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿١٨﴾ إِنْ تَسْتَفْتِحُوْا فَقَدْ جَآءَكُمُ الْفَتْحُ ۚ وَإِنْ
تَنْتَهُوْا فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ ۚ وَإِنْ تَعُوْدُوْا نَعُدْ ۚ وَلَنْ تُغْنِيَ عَنْكُمْ فِئَتُكُمْ
شَيْئًا وَّلَوْ كَثُرَتْ ۙ وَأَنَّ اللّٰهَ مَعَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿١٩﴾ يٰٓأَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا أَطِيْعُوا
اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهٗ وَلَا تَوَلَّوْا عَنْهُ وَأَنْتُمْ تَسْمَعُوْنَ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَلَا تَكُوْنُوْا كَالَّذِيْنَ
قَالُوْا سَمِعْنَا وَهُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُوْنَ ﴿٢١﴾ إِنَّ شَرَّ الدَّوَآبِّ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ الصُّمُّ
الْبُكْمُ الَّذِيْنَ لَا يَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿٢٢﴾ وَلَوْ عَلِمَ اللّٰهُ فِيْهِمْ خَيْرًا لَّأَسْمَعَهُمْ ۖ وَلَوْ
أَسْمَعَهُمْ لَتَوَلَّوْا وَّهُمْ مُّعْرِضُوْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾ يٰٓأَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا اسْتَجِيْبُوْا لِلّٰهِ وَ
لِلرَّسُوْلِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحْيِيْكُمْ ۚ وَاعْلَمُوْٓا أَنَّ اللّٰهَ يَحُوْلُ بَيْنَ الْمَرْءِ وَقَلْبِهٖ
وَأَنَّهٗٓ إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُوْنَ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَاتَّقُوْا فِتْنَةً لَّا تُصِيْبَنَّ الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا مِنْكُمْ
خَآصَّةً ۚ وَاعْلَمُوْٓا أَنَّ اللّٰهَ شَدِيْدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَاذْكُرُوْٓا إِذْ أَنْتُمْ قَلِيْلٌ
مُّسْتَضْعَفُوْنَ فِي الْأَرْضِ تَخَافُوْنَ أَنْ يَّتَخَطَّفَكُمُ النَّاسُ فَاٰوٰىكُمْ وَ
أَيَّدَكُمْ بِنَصْرِهٖ وَرَزَقَكُمْ مِّنَ الطَّيِّبٰتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿٢٦﴾ يٰٓأَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ
اٰمَنُوْا لَا تَخُوْنُوا اللّٰهَ وَالرَّسُوْلَ وَتَخُوْنُوْٓا أَمٰنٰتِكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَ
اعْلَمُوْٓا أَنَّمَآ أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَأَوْلَادُكُمْ فِتْنَةٌ ۙ وَّأَنَّ اللّٰهَ عِنْدَهٗٓ أَجْرٌ عَظِيْمٌ ﴿٢٨﴾
يٰٓأَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا إِنْ تَتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ يَجْعَلْ لَّكُمْ فُرْقَانًا وَّيُكَفِّرْ عَنْكُمْ
سَيِّاٰتِكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ۗ وَاللّٰهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيْمِ ﴿٢٩﴾ وَإِذْ يَمْكُرُ بِكَ
الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا لِيُثْبِتُوْكَ أَوْ يَقْتُلُوْكَ أَوْ يُخْرِجُوْكَ ۚ وَيَمْكُرُوْنَ وَيَمْكُرُ
اللّٰهُ ۚ وَاللّٰهُ خَيْرُ الْمٰكِرِيْنَ ﴿٣٠﴾ وَإِذَا تُتْلٰى عَلَيْهِمْ اٰيٰتُنَا قَالُوْا قَدْ سَمِعْنَا

So the fact is that you did not slay them but Allah slew them, and you did not throw (the sand) but Allah threw it.[14](And the hands of the Believers were employed for this work) so that Allah would pass the Believers successfully through this excellent test; indeed Allah is All-Hearing and All-Knowing. This is His dealing with you: as regards the disbelievers, Allah surely thwarts their evil designs. (Say to the disbelievers:) "If you desired a decision, lo! the decision has come before you.[15] It is best for you to desist from it now: but if you repeat the same folly, We will also repeat the same punishment and your forces, howsoever large their number, shall avail you nothing, for Allah is with the Believers." 17-19

O Believers, obey Allah and His Messenger and do not turn away from the Message after hearing it. Do not be like those who said, "We have heard," but have not listened to it,[16] for the vilest beasts in Allah's sight are those deaf, dumb people[17] who do not use commonsense. Had Allah known any good in them, He would certainly have given them the power of hearing but if He had made them hear it (without perceiving any good in them), they would have turned away from it with disdain.[18] 20-23

O Believers, respond to the call of Allah and the Messenger, when the Messenger calls you to that which gives you life. And know that Allah stands between a man and his heart, and that to Him you shall be mustered.[19] And guard against that mischief which will not bring punishment in particular to the mischief-makers alone from among you;[20] and know that Allah is severe in inflicting punishment. Recall to mind that time when you were few in number and were regarded weak in the land, and were fearful lest the people should do away with you; then Allah provided you with a place of refuge, strengthened you with His succour and bestowed pure and good provisions upon you so that you may be grateful.[21] O Believers, do not betray Allah and His Messenger nor violate your trusts knowingly.[22] And know that your worldly goods and your children are, in fact, a test for you,[23] and Allah has plenty for giving you reward. O Believers, if you are Godfearing, He will provide you with a criterion,[24] and cleanse you of your evils, and forgive your shortcomings. Allah is bountiful in His favours. 24-29

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fighting and killing but probably they were used to help the Muslims in making

their strokes hard and effective. But the true knowledge is with Allah.

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

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

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

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

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

Accordingly Allah gave His decision and granted their prayer to the letter by giving a signal victory to the Muslims to show that they were the better of the two parties and were in the right.

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

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

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

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

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

In order to illustrate this, let us consider the case of a town from the point of view of its sanitary conditions. If filth lies scattered at a few places, its evil effects remain confined to that particular locality or localities and only those people who keep their houses or persons dirty suffer from the consequent diseases. But if filth gets scattered all over the town and there is no one to prevent it and restore sanitary conditions, then the air, the water and the soil will all be contaminated and become so poisonous as to cause the outbreak of an epidemic in the whole town. Obviously it will not discriminate between those who scattered the filth and those who refrained from it, but will affect all the people who live in

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لَوْ نَشَآءُ لَقُلْنَا مِثْلَ هٰذَآ ۙ اِنْ هٰذَآ اِلَّآ اَسَاطِيْرُ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿٣١﴾ وَاِذْ قَالُوا 31
اللّٰهُمَّ اِنْ كَانَ هٰذَا هُوَ الْحَقَّ مِنْ عِنْدِكَ فَاَمْطِرْ عَلَيْنَا حِجَارَةً مِّنَ
السَّمَآءِ اَوِ ائْتِنَا بِعَذَابٍ اَلِيْمٍ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَمَا كَانَ اللّٰهُ لِيُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَاَنْتَ فِيْهِمْ 32
وَمَا كَانَ اللّٰهُ مُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَهُمْ يَسْتَغْفِرُوْنَ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَمَا لَهُمْ اَلَّا يُعَذِّبَهُمُ 33
اللّٰهُ وَهُمْ يَصُدُّوْنَ عَنِ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَمَا كَانُوْٓا اَوْلِيَآءَهٗ ۭ اِنْ
اَوْلِيَآؤُهٗٓ اِلَّا الْمُتَّقُوْنَ وَلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٣٤﴾ وَمَا كَانَ صَلَاتُهُمْ 34
عِنْدَ الْبَيْتِ اِلَّا مُكَآءً وَّتَصْدِيَةً ۭ فَذُوْقُوا الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُوْنَ ﴿٣٥﴾ 35
اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا يُنْفِقُوْنَ اَمْوَالَهُمْ لِيَصُدُّوْا عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ ۭ
فَسَيُنْفِقُوْنَهَا ثُمَّ تَكُوْنُ عَلَيْهِمْ حَسْرَةً ثُمَّ يُغْلَبُوْنَ ۭ وَالَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْٓا
اِلٰى جَهَنَّمَ يُحْشَرُوْنَ ﴿٣٦﴾ لِيَمِيْزَ اللّٰهُ الْخَبِيْثَ مِنَ الطَّيِّبِ وَيَجْعَلَ الْخَبِيْثَ 36
بَعْضَهٗ عَلٰي بَعْضٍ فَيَرْكُمَهٗ جَمِيْعًا فَيَجْعَلَهٗ فِيْ جَهَنَّمَ ۭ اُولٰۗىِٕكَ هُمُ
الْخٰسِرُوْنَ ﴿٣٧﴾ قُلْ لِّلَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْٓا اِنْ يَّنْتَهُوْا يُغْفَرْ لَهُمْ مَّا قَدْ سَلَفَ ۚ وَ 37
اِنْ يَّعُوْدُوْا فَقَدْ مَضَتْ سُنَّتُ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَقَاتِلُوْهُمْ حَتّٰى لَا تَكُوْنَ 38
فِتْنَةٌ وَّيَكُوْنَ الدِّيْنُ كُلُّهٗ لِلّٰهِ ۚ فَاِنِ انْتَهَوْا فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ بِمَا يَعْمَلُوْنَ
بَصِيْرٌ ﴿٣٩﴾ وَاِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَاعْلَمُوْٓا اَنَّ اللّٰهَ مَوْلٰىكُمْ ۭ نِعْمَ الْمَوْلٰى وَنِعْمَ النَّصِيْرُ ﴿٤٠﴾ 39 40

وَالْيَتٰمٰى وَالْمَسٰكِيْنِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيْلِ ۙ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ اٰمَنْتُمْ بِاللّٰهِ وَمَآ اَنْزَلْنَا
عَلٰي عَبْدِنَا يَوْمَ الْفُرْقَانِ يَوْمَ الْتَقَى الْجَمْعٰنِ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ عَلٰي كُلِّ شَيْءٍ
قَدِيْرٌ ﴿٤١﴾ اِذْ اَنْتُمْ بِالْعُدْوَةِ الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ بِالْعُدْوَةِ الْقُصْوٰى وَالرَّكْبُ 41

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

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

O Believers, fight with the disbelievers till there is no more 39-40
mischief and the way of life prescribed by Allah is established in its entirety.[31] Then if they desist from mischief, surely Allah beholds what they do, but if they give no heed, know it that Allah is your Protector, and He is the best of all protectors and helpers.

And know that, whatever spoils you have got, the fifth of these 41

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

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those surroundings. The same is the case of moral impurity, corruption and obscenity. If these evils are found in some persons individually but the fear of the good people of the society keeps them under check, the evil effects remain confined to the wrongdoers alone. On the other hand, if the collective conscience of the society becomes so weak that it cannot keep the evil suppressed, and the wrongdoers, the indecent and the immoral people become so bold that they begin to commit their filthy acts openly, that mischief takes the form of an epidemic of immorality. Then even those good people who remain content with their own individual goodness and adopt a passive attitude towards the widespread evils, fall victims to the consequent scourge because they did nothing to prevent the spread of the epidemic.

In this way Allah impresses upon the Muslims the importance of the mission of reform and guidance for which the Messenger had risen and to which he was inviting them, as if to say, "There is life for you as individuals and as Community in this work. If you do not sincerely exert for its achievement and for the eradication of evils, an epidemic of evils will break out which will involve in its scourge all of you, even though there may be some among you who might not have been guilty of either the commission of those evils or of their spread; nay, they might have been leading good lives as individuals". The same thing has already been enunciated in VII :164. And this may be regarded as the fundamental principle of that war which has been permitted by Islam for the reform of the people in general.

21. The words "...so that you may be grateful" are very significant in the context in which they occur. They require that the Muslims should not merely acknowledge the kindness of Allah that He brought them out of their weak position in Makkah to the security of Al-Madînah and provided them with pure and good things of life. They should also show their gratitude in a practical manner and obey Allah and His Messenger and work sincerely and devotedly for the success of his mission, facing bravely, with trust in God, the dangers, hardships, obstacles and misfortunes that come in the way. They should firmly believe that if they sincerely exert in the way of Allah, He will most surely become their Guardian and Helper as before and bring them out safely from all sorts of dangers. Thus gratitude does not mean mere acknowledgement; it has to

be given a practical shape as well. It is not gratitude if one acknowledges the kindness of a benefactor but does nothing to please him or serve him sincerely or entertains doubts about the kindness of the benefactor in future; it is ingratitude.

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

23. Worldly goods and children generally prove to be the greatest temptations that lead a person to the ways of hypocrisy, treachery and dishonesty. That is why Allah has warned the Believers to be on their guard against indulging in too much love of money and children, as if to say, "This world is a big Examination Hall, and Your wealth and Your children are two of its question papers. These have been given to you only to test whether you fulfil their prescribed rights and keep the prescribed limits; whether you walk straight on the Right Way while carrying the burden of responsibilities or swerve from it because of the attractions of allurements and temptations; and whether you control your "self" which is liable to become their slave in a way that it remains the slave of Allah, and at the same time renders their rights in the way He has prescribed.

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

25. This plot was made at the time when the Quraish realized that the Holy Prophet also was going to migrate to Al-Madīnah. They felt that if he succeeded in emigrating from Makkah, he would be out of their reach and become formidable. Accordingly they held an urgent meeting of their chiefs in *Dār-un-Nadvah* (Council House) to discuss the matter and come to a final decision in regard to him. Some were of the opinion that he should be chained and imprisoned for life. But this plan was not approved for it was feared that his Companions would go on working for the mission and would do their best to release him, even at the risk of their own lives, as soon as they would gain some power. The others proposed that he should be exiled from Makkah for that would at least relieve them of the 'disorder' he was creating among them. Then it would not matter for them where he lived and what he did. But the chiefs rejected this plan, saying, "This man possesses the art of a charming speech and of winning hearts. If he

leaves this place, he may go to the other Arab clans and win them over to his side, and then after gaining power, he may attack Makkah". At last Abū Jahl, putting forward his plan, said. "Let us select from each of our families one strong, stout and smart young man of high rank. They should all attack Muhammad at one and the same time and kill him. In this way, the responsibility for his blood will be divided equally among all the families of the Quraish, and it will not be possible for Banū 'Abd Manāf, the family of Muhammad, to fight with all of them and they will be forced to accept blood-money for him". They approved this plan unanimously and nominated young men to kill him at the appointed time. Accordingly the would-be murderers reached their places on the night fixed for the crime, but the Holy Prophet, throwing dust in their eyes, escaped safely from Makkah. Thus their plot ended in utter failure at the eleventh hour.

26. These words were not uttered as a prayer but as a challenge. What they really meant was this: Had this been really the Truth sent down by God, He would have rained down stones on us from heaven or sent down some other painful torment on us, in consequence of its rejection by us. But as nothing of the sort has happened, it means that it is neither the Truth nor has it been sent down by Allah.

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

28. They have been further warned to this effect: "Now that you have incurred a torment, you should be ready for it for nothing will save you now from it". The Quraish were under the delusion that they would not be visited by any torment because they were the guardians and keepers of the House of God. This misunderstanding has been removed by declaring, so to say, "They are not its lawful guardians for mere inheritance does not entitle them to its guardianship. The pious people alone are the rightful guardians of this Sacred Place. The people of the Quraish have forfeited that right now if they had any right to it, because they were barring the way of the really pious people to this House, which is

dedicated to the exclusive worship of Allah. The Quraish were behaving not as the guardians and keepers and servants of the House but as its masters, and prevented anyone they liked from visiting it. As regards their worship in the House, it was nothing more than making meaningless noises by whistling and clapping of hands: it was void of devotion towards Allah and of His remembrance and of all its requirements. How could they, then, expect any favour from Allah or any guarantee of immunity from His scourge?"

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

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

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

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

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

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أَسْفَلَ مِنكُمْ ۚ وَلَوْ تَوَاعَدتُّمْ لَاخْتَلَفْتُمْ فِي الْمِيعَادِ ۙ وَلَٰكِن لِّيَقْضِيَ اللَّهُ
أَمْرًا كَانَ مَفْعُولًا ۚ لِّيَهْلِكَ مَنْ هَلَكَ عَن بَيِّنَةٍ وَيَحْيَىٰ مَنْ حَيَّ
عَن بَيِّنَةٍ ۗ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَسَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٤٢﴾ إِذْ يُرِيكَهُمُ اللَّهُ فِي مَنَامِكَ قَلِيلًا ۖ وَ
لَوْ أَرَاكَهُمْ كَثِيرًا لَّفَشِلْتُمْ وَلَتَنَازَعْتُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ وَلَٰكِنَّ اللَّهَ سَلَّمَ ۗ إِنَّهُ
عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ﴿٤٣﴾ وَإِذْ يُرِيكُمُوهُمْ إِذِ الْتَقَيْتُمْ فِي أَعْيُنِكُمْ قَلِيلًا
وَيُقَلِّلُكُمْ فِي أَعْيُنِهِمْ لِيَقْضِيَ اللَّهُ أَمْرًا كَانَ مَفْعُولًا ۗ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ تُرْجَعُ
الْأُمُورُ ﴿٤٤﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا لَقِيتُمْ فِئَةً فَاثْبُتُوا وَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا
لَّعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾ وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَلَا تَنَازَعُوا فَتَفْشَلُوا وَتَذْهَبَ
رِيحُكُمْ ۖ وَاصْبِرُوا ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾ وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ خَرَجُوا
مِن دِيَارِهِم بَطَرًا وَرِئَاءَ النَّاسِ وَيَصُدُّونَ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ۚ وَاللَّهُ
بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ مُحِيطٌ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَإِذْ زَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَعْمَالَهُمْ وَقَالَ لَا
غَالِبَ لَكُمُ الْيَوْمَ مِنَ النَّاسِ وَإِنِّي جَارٌ لَّكُمْ ۖ فَلَمَّا تَرَاءَتِ الْفِئَتَانِ نَكَصَ
عَلَىٰ عَقِبَيْهِ وَقَالَ إِنِّي بَرِيءٌ مِّنكُمْ إِنِّي أَرَىٰ مَا لَا تَرَوْنَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ اللَّهَ
وَاللَّهُ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٤٨﴾ إِذْ يَقُولُ الْمُنَافِقُونَ وَالَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِم مَّرَضٌ
غَرَّ هَٰؤُلَاءِ دِينُهُمْ ۗ وَمَن يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٤٩﴾ وَ
لَوْ تَرَىٰ إِذْ يَتَوَفَّى الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الْمَلَائِكَةُ يَضْرِبُونَ وُجُوهَهُمْ وَأَدْبَارَهُمْ
وَذُوقُوا عَذَابَ الْحَرِيقِ ﴿٥٠﴾ ذَٰلِكَ بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَيْسَ
بِظَلَّامٍ لِّلْعَبِيدِ ﴿٥١﴾ كَدَأْبِ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ ۙ وَالَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ ۚ كَفَرُوا
بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ فَأَخَذَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَوِيٌّ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٥٢﴾ ذَٰلِكَ

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

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

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

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

Just think of the time when Satan made their foul deeds seem fair to them and said, "Today no one can overcome you, for I am with you." But when the two armies confronted each other, he took to his heels, saying, "I have nothing to do with you; I see that which you cannot see. Indeed I fear Allah, for Allah is very severe in inflicting chastisement" At the same time, the hypocrites and all those who had diseased hearts were saying: "Their Faith has made them crazy";[39] whereas the fact is that whoso trusts in Allah (finds that) Allah is All-Mighty and All-Wise. Would that you could see how it was when the 48-52

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

38. The Muslims have been forewarned never to behave like the disbelievers of Makkah, who had marched arrogantly out of their homes and who were debarring the Muslims from the Way of Allah. They had singing girls with them and they held singing, dancing and drinking parties at many halting places. Moreover, they made a great display of their power, grandeur, numerical strength and equipment before the clans and habitations which came in their way and freely bragged that none could have the courage to fight with them. This was the state of their morality but the objective for which they were marching out was even worse than this. They had not marched out to raise the standard of truth, righteousness and justice, but to prevent it from rising up. Their objective was to annihilate the only people who were exerting to raise up that standard. This bad example was held out before the Muslims so that they should guard against such behaviour for their Faith required that their conduct should be righteous and their war aim should be pure and noble.

It may also be noted that this guidance was not needed only at that time but it is equally needed even today and will be needed in future as well, for the moral condition of the armies of the modern 'civilized' nations is the same as of the disbelievers of Makkah. Prostitutes indecent recreations and wine constitute their essential parts, and they do not ask for these things secretly but openly and brazen-facedly. More than that! their soldiers openly demand from their own people that they should present their own daughters to them for the gratification of their lusts. How can, then, any other people expect from them that they would spare their women and will not make them the plaything of their passions? As regards their arrogance, suffice it to say that each and every soldier and officer of their army is an embodiment of pride and vanity. Then their politicians are never tired of bragging like this: 'None is able to defeat us today for none is more powerful than we". And their war aims are still more wicked. Whereas everyone

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بِاَنَّ اللّٰهَ لَمْ يَكُ مُغَيِّرًا نِّعْمَةً اَنْعَمَهَا عَلٰى قَوْمٍ حَتّٰى يُغَيِّرُوْا مَا بِاَنْفُسِهِمْ ۙ
وَاَنَّ اللّٰهَ سَمِيْعٌ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿٥٣﴾ كَدَاْبِ اٰلِ فِرْعَوْنَ ۙ وَالَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ؕ
كَذَّبُوْا بِاٰيٰتِ رَبِّهِمْ فَاَهْلَكْنٰهُمْ بِذُنُوْبِهِمْ وَاَغْرَقْنَاۤ اٰلَ فِرْعَوْنَ ۚ وَكُلٌّ
كَانُوْا ظٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٥٤﴾ اِنَّ شَرَّ الدَّوَآبِّ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا فَهُمْ لَا
يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٥٥﴾ الَّذِيْنَ عٰهَدْتَّ مِنْهُمْ ثُمَّ يَنْقُضُوْنَ عَهْدَهُمْ فِيْ كُلِّ
مَرَّةٍ وَّهُمْ لَا يَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿٥٦﴾ فَاِمَّا تَثْقَفَنَّهُمْ فِي الْحَرْبِ فَشَرِّدْ بِهِمْ مَّنْ
خَلْفَهُمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَذَّكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٥٧﴾ وَاِمَّا تَخَافَنَّ مِنْ قَوْمٍ خِيَانَةً فَانْۢبِذْ اِلَيْهِمْ
عَلٰى سَوَآءٍ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْخَآئِنِيْنَ ﴿٥٨﴾ وَلَا يَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا
سَبَقُوْا ؕ اِنَّهُمْ لَا يُعْجِزُوْنَ ﴿٥٩﴾ وَاَعِدُّوْا لَهُمْ مَّا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِّنْ قُوَّةٍ وَّ
مِنْ رِّبَاطِ الْخَيْلِ تُرْهِبُوْنَ بِهٖ عَدُوَّ اللّٰهِ وَعَدُوَّكُمْ وَاٰخَرِيْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِهِمْ ۚ
لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَهُمْ ۚ اَللّٰهُ يَعْلَمُهُمْ ؕ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوْا مِنْ شَيْءٍ فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ يُوَفَّ
اِلَيْكُمْ وَاَنْتُمْ لَا تُظْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٦٠﴾ وَاِنْ جَنَحُوْا لِلسَّلْمِ فَاجْنَحْ لَهَا وَتَوَكَّلْ
عَلَى اللّٰهِ ؕ اِنَّهٗ هُوَ السَّمِيْعُ الْعَلِيْمُ ﴿٦١﴾ وَاِنْ يُّرِيْدُوْۤا اَنْ يَّخْدَعُوْكَ فَاِنَّ حَسْبَكَ اللّٰهُ ؕ هُوَ
الَّذِيْۤ اَيَّدَكَ بِنَصْرِهٖ وَبِالْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٦٢﴾ وَاَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوْبِهِمْ ؕ لَوْ اَنْفَقْتَ مَا فِي الْاَرْضِ
جَمِيْعًا مَّاۤ اَلَّفْتَ بَيْنَ قُلُوْبِهِمْ وَلٰكِنَّ اللّٰهَ اَلَّفَ بَيْنَهُمْ ؕ اِنَّهٗ عَزِيْزٌ حَكِيْمٌ ﴿٦٣﴾ يٰۤاَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ
حَسْبُكَ اللّٰهُ وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَكَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٦٤﴾ يٰۤاَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ حَرِّضِ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ عَلَى
الْقِتَالِ ؕ اِنْ يَّكُنْ مِّنْكُمْ عِشْرُوْنَ صٰبِرُوْنَ يَغْلِبُوْا مِائَتَيْنِ ۚ وَاِنْ يَّكُنْ
مِّنْكُمْ مِّائَةٌ يَّغْلِبُوْۤا اَلْفًا مِّنَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا بِاَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَّا يَفْقَهُوْنَ ﴿٦٥﴾
اَلْـٰٔنَ خَفَّفَ اللّٰهُ عَنْكُمْ وَعَلِمَ اَنَّ فِيْكُمْ ضَعْفًا ؕ فَاِنْ يَّكُنْ مِّنْكُمْ مِّائَةٌ

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

Indeed the vilest creatures in the sight of Allah are those people who denied the Truth, and then would not believe in it. As regards those from among them with whom you made treaties and who violate them time after time and do not fear Allah in the least,[41] if you encounter them in combat, make of them a fearsome example for others who would follow them so that they might be unnerved.[42] It is expected that they will learn a lesson from the end of the treacherous people. And if you ever fear treachery from any people, throw their treaty openly before them[43]; indeed Allah does not like the treacherous people. Let not those who deny the Truth delude themselves that they have won the game; indeed they are incapable of frustrating Us. 55-59

And to encounter them, provide whatever force and trained ever-ready horses you can afford[44] whereby you may strike terror into the enemies of Allah and your enemies as well and others besides them whom you do not know but whom Allah knows. The reward of whatever you expend in the way of Allah shall be repaid to you in full, and you shall not be wronged in any way. 60

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

O Prophet! stir the Believers to the fight. If there be twenty men among you, who show fortitude, they will overcome two hundred men, and if there be a hundred such men of you, they will overcome a 65-66

thousand of the deniers of the Truth, for they are a people who lack understanding.[47] Now that Allah has lightened your burden, He has noticed that you are still weak: so if there be a hundred steadfast men among you, they will overcome two hundred men and if there be a thousand such men, they will overcome two thousand by Allah's permission.[48] But Allah is with those people alone who show fortitude.

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of their leaders most solemnly and cunningly assure the world that they have nothing but the good of humanity before them, they might have, in fact, all other aims but this. They wage war in order to capture all the resources of the earth that God has created for all mankind, and to monopolize these for the benefit of their own country and nation, and make all other people their servants and dependants. That is why the Qur'ān forbids the Muslims to follow the evil ways of those wicked people and enjoins them to refrain from expending their wealth and life for the achievement of the objective for which the wicked people fight.

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

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

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

written treaty the Holy Prophet had made with them, their enmity and jealousy had become even more furious than before, after the victory at Badr. For they had expected that the Movement would receive a crushing blow at the hands of the Quraish, but the result had been quite the reverse of it. Therefore they increased their inimical activities all the more in order to prevent Islam from becoming a formidable force. So much so that on hearing the news of the defeat of the Quraish, one of their leaders, Ka'ab bin Ashraf, cried out in anguish, "Today the bowels of the earth are far better for us than its surface". Accordingly, he himself went to Makkah and recited exciting elegies to incite the people of Quraish to wreak their vengeance. More than that: the people of one of their clans, *Banī Qainqā'*, setting aside the good neighbourly manners, began to tease the Muslim women who used to go to their habitations for business. When the Holy Prophet reproved them, they gave an impudent reply and said, "We are not weak like the Quraish: we are a people who know how to fight even to the death: you will have an experience of our courage when you encounter us."

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

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

Mu'āviyah assembled his army near the frontiers of the Roman Empire with the intention that he would invade their territory immediately after the expiry of the term of the treaty, Hadrat Amar bin 'Anbasah, a Companion of the Holy Prophet, strongly protested against this and recited the same Tradition before him according to which even concentration of army was a piece of treachery. The Amīr had to submit to this, and he gave up the concentration of army.

It may also be noted that the practice of unilateral abrogation of treaties and invading the enemy without any declaration of war was common during the time of 'ignorance' in the ancient times and is also in vogue in the civilised 'ignorance' of today. For example, during World War II, Germany invaded Russia, and Britain and Russia took military action against Iran without any formal declaration of war. It may be noted that the pleas put forward for such breaches and violations are very flimsy: it is argued that if a declaration of war had been made beforehand, the other party would have taken precautionary measures and given a tough fight; or that if they had not taken action, their enemy would have forestalled them. But they seem to forget that if moral responsibilities were to be set aside on such lame excuses, then there remains no crime and no sin that cannot be justified on one plea or the other, and every thief, every robber, every adulterer, every murderer and every forgerer can put forward a justification for his crime or sin. But it is strange that the modern leaders have two standards of judgment. While they justify the acts of treachery in the international sphere, they condemn the same when these are committed in their own national sphere.

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

(1) The violation of the treaty by the Quraish was so glaring that there was absolutely no doubt that there had been a breach and they themselves confessed that the treaty had come to an end. That is why they sent Abu

Sufyān to Al-Madīnah for its renewal. Though that was a proof that they also knew that the treaty had come to an end, it does not mean that this exception will be justifiable only if those who violate the treaty also know it and confess it. The exception will be only justifiable if the violation would be quite clear and beyond any doubt.

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

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

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

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

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

45. That is, "Your relations with other nations should be based on your trust in God for 'He is sufficient for you'. Therefore you should boldly face the enemy both in war and in peace. When the enemy desires to have a talk with you for peace, you should be willing and ready to negotiate with the other party

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صَابِرَةٌ يَّغْلِبُوْا مِائَتَيْنِ ۚ وَاِنْ يَّكُنْ مِّنْكُمْ اَلْفٌ يَّغْلِبُوْٓا اَلْفَيْنِ بِاِذْنِ اللّٰهِ ۗ
وَاللّٰهُ مَعَ الصّٰبِرِيْنَ ﴿٦٦﴾ مَا كَانَ لِنَبِيٍّ اَنْ يَّكُوْنَ لَهٗٓ اَسْرٰى حَتّٰى يُثْخِنَ
فِى الْاَرْضِ ۗ تُرِيْدُوْنَ عَرَضَ الدُّنْيَا ۖ وَاللّٰهُ يُرِيْدُ الْاٰخِرَةَ ۗ وَاللّٰهُ عَزِيْزٌ
حَكِيْمٌ ﴿٦٧﴾ لَوْلَا كِتٰبٌ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ سَبَقَ لَمَسَّكُمْ فِيْمَآ اَخَذْتُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيْمٌ ﴿٦٨﴾
فَكُلُوْا مِمَّا غَنِمْتُمْ حَلٰلًا طَيِّبًا ۖ وَّاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ ۗ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿٦٩﴾
يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لِّمَنْ فِيْٓ اَيْدِيْكُمْ مِّنَ الْاَسْرٰٓى ۙ اِنْ يَّعْلَمِ اللّٰهُ فِيْ
قُلُوْبِكُمْ خَيْرًا يُّؤْتِكُمْ خَيْرًا مِّمَّآ اُخِذَ مِنْكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ۗ وَاللّٰهُ غَفُوْرٌ
رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿٧٠﴾ وَاِنْ يُّرِيْدُوْا خِيَانَتَكَ فَقَدْ خَانُوا اللّٰهَ مِنْ قَبْلُ فَاَمْكَنَ
مِنْهُمْ ۗ وَاللّٰهُ عَلِيْمٌ حَكِيْمٌ ﴿٧١﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَهَاجَرُوْا وَجٰهَدُوْا
بِاَمْوَالِهِمْ وَاَنْفُسِهِمْ فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰوَوْا وَّنَصَرُوْٓا اُولٰٓئِكَ
بَعْضُهُمْ اَوْلِيَآءُ بَعْضٍ ۗ وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَلَمْ يُهَاجِرُوْا مَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ
وَّلَايَتِهِمْ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ حَتّٰى يُهَاجِرُوْا ۚ وَاِنِ اسْتَنْصَرُوْكُمْ فِى الدِّيْنِ
فَعَلَيْكُمُ النَّصْرُ اِلَّا عَلٰى قَوْمٍ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُمْ مِّيْثَاقٌ ۗ وَاللّٰهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ
بَصِيْرٌ ﴿٧٢﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا بَعْضُهُمْ اَوْلِيَآءُ بَعْضٍ ۗ اِلَّا تَفْعَلُوْهُ تَكُنْ فِتْنَةٌ
فِى الْاَرْضِ وَفَسَادٌ كَبِيْرٌ ﴿٧٣﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَهَاجَرُوْا وَجٰهَدُوْا فِيْ سَبِيْلِ
اللّٰهِ وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰوَوْا وَّنَصَرُوْٓا اُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ حَقًّا ۗ لَهُمْ مَّغْفِرَةٌ وَّ
رِزْقٌ كَرِيْمٌ ﴿٧٤﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا مِنْۢ بَعْدُ وَهَاجَرُوْا وَجٰهَدُوْا مَعَكُمْ
فَاُولٰٓئِكَ مِنْكُمْ ۗ وَاُولُوا الْاَرْحَامِ بَعْضُهُمْ اَوْلٰى بِبَعْضٍ فِيْ كِتٰبِ اللّٰهِ ۗ اِنَّ
اللّٰهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿٧٥﴾

It does not behove a prophet to keep captives until he has 67-99
crushed down the enemies in the land. You desire the gains of this world, but Allah desires (for you the good of) the Hereafter; and Allah is All-Powerful, All-Wise. Had there not been a decree that had already been given by Allah, you would have incurred a severe chastisement in consequence of what you have taken. So eat of what you have taken as spoils for it is lawful and pure. And fear Allah:[49] Surely Allah is Forgiving and Compassionate.

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

Those who embraced the Faith and emigrated from their homes 72-73
and expended their possessions and their lives in the Way of Allah, and those who gave refuge to the emigrants and helped them, are indeed the guardians of one another. However, you have no relation of guardianship with those who have embraced the Faith, but have not emigrated (to *Dar-ul-Islam)* until they emigrate[50] (to it); yet it is obligatory on you to help them in the matters of Faith, if they ask for your help, except against a people with whom you have a treaty.[51] As for disbelievers, they help one another; unless you also help one another, there will be mischief and great disorder on the earth.[52]

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

Contd. from p.151]

without any hesitation. Do not reject the offer on the plea that the other party is not sincere and has treacherous intentions, for no one can have correct knowledge

of the intentions of others. If the other party is sincere in its offer, then it will be wrong to reject it and continue the bloodshed. And if the enemy has treacherous intentions, then Allah will protect you from them because of your courage and moral superiority. In that case, fight bravely with the treacherous enemy so as to teach them such a lesson as may prove a deterrent".

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

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

48. This reduction of the ratio of the power of a Muslim to that of a non-Muslim from ten to one, to two to one does not mean that this was due to some deterioration in the morale of the Muslims. It simply means that in v. 65 the general principle of the ratio of the power of the Believers and the disbelievers was enunciated and in v. 66 that principle was applied in accordance with the then

existing condition of their morale. At that time (A.H. 2) the morale of the Muslims had not attained perfection, for many of them had only recently entered the fold of Islam and were still under preliminary training. Afterwards when their morale reached the desired standard under the guidance of the Holy Prophet, the ratio of ten to one was actually established, and was demonstrated practically in the battles during his last years and during the time of his rightly-guided successors.

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

The first difficulty of these interpreters is that they are unable to give a satisfactory explanation that might fit into the words: "Had there not been a decree that had already been given by Allah....". They say that it refers to the decree that was predestined by Allah or it means that Allah had already decreed to make spoils of war lawful though He had not sent down this decree to the Holy Prophet. But it is obvious that a thing does not become lawful unless it is made so by an explicit Command. The second difficulty is that according to this explanation, the Holy Prophet himself and his followers become guilty of the sin of taking ransom for prisoners. Therefore one would think many times before accepting an explanation that is based on traditions emanating from a single source.

In my opinion, Allah rebuked the Muslims for not complying fully with the condition laid down in the Ordinance in XLVII: 4: "So kill the disbelievers until you crush them down; after this you may take them as prisoners; and then set them at liberty as a favour or for a ransom after the battle comes to an end. According to this previous Ordinance, there was nothing wrong in taking prisoners of war and charging ransom for them, but what was wrong was that they did not fully comply with the prior condition, that is, 'until you crush them down'. For we learn that, when after the Battle of Badr the army of the Quraish was put to rout, many Muslims began to gather spoils or to take prisoners and only a few of them went in pursuit of the enemy to crush them. Had all the Muslims gone in pursuit of them, they would have crushed down their power then and there. Therefore Allah rebuked the Muslims (and not the Holy Prophet) as if to say, "O Muslims ! you have not yet fully understood the meaning of the mission of the Prophet. He is not sent to take prisoners and charge ransoms or gather spoils. The main objective of his mission is to crush down the powers of disbelief. But you are overwhelmed

by the worldly greeds again and again. During the course of this campaign, you at first desired to attack the trade caravan instead of the army of the Quraish. Then you began to gather spoils and take prisoners, and afterwards entered into a dispute regarding the division of spoils. Had We not previously given you permission for taking ransom (XLVII :4), We would have inflicted a severe chastisement on you. Very well, now you may enjoy what you have taken, but you should, in future, fear Us and refrain from incurring Our displeasure."

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

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

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

The legal implications of this negation of guardianship are very extensive, but this is not the occasion for their statement. Here it will suffice to say that according to this, the Muslims of *Dār-ul-Kufr* cannot become the inheritors of the Muslims of *Dār-ul-Islam* and *vice versa*, nor can they be the legal guardians of

one another, nor can there be inter-marriages between them; nor can the Islamic State appoint a citizen of *Dār-ul-Kufr* on any responsible post, until that one renounces the relationship of citizenship with *Dār-ul-Kufr*. Moreover, this verse affects also the foreign policy of the Islamic State and frees it from the responsibility of the Muslims living outside its territorial borders by restricting it only to the Muslims living within its territory. The Holy Prophet also declared the same thing, saying, "I owe no responsibility for the protection of any Muslim who resides among the *mushriks*".

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

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

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

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

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

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

IX

AT-TAUBAH

التَّوبه

IX

AT-TAUBAH

التوبة

Name

This Sūrah is known by two names---*At-Taubah* and *Al-Barā'at*. It is called *At-Taubah* because it enunciates the nature of *taubah* (repentance) and mentions the conditions of its acceptance. (vv. 102-118) . The second name *Barā'at* (Release) is taken from the first word of the Sūrah.

Why Omission of *Bismillah*

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

Discourses and Periods of Revelation

This Sūrah comprises three discourses:

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

The second discourse (vv. 38-72) was sent down in Rajab A.H.9 or a little before this, when the Holy Ptophet was engaged in making preparations for the campaign of Tabūk. In this discourse, the Believers were urged to take active part in *Jihād*, and the shirkers were severely rebuked for holding back their wealth and for hesitating to sacrifice their lives in the way of Allah because of their hypocrisy, weak faith or negligence.

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

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

Historical Background

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

Conquest of Arabia

The first was the Conquest of Arabia. The Holy Prophet was able to send missions among different clans for the propagation of Islam. The

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

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

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

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

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

Campaign to Tabūk

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

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

ARABIA AT THE TIME OF TABŪK EXPEDITION



When the Caesar came to know that Faryah had embraced Islam, he ordered that he should be arrested and brought to his court. Then the Caesar said to him, "You will have to choose one of the two things. Either give up your Islam and win your liberty and your former rank, or remain a Muslim and face death." He calmly chose Islam and sacrificed his life in the way of the Truth.

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

It is obvious that if all these three elements had given an opportunity of taking a concerted action against the Muslims, Islam would have lost the fight it had almost won. That is why in this case the Holy Prophet made an open declaration for making preparations for the campaign against the Roman Empire, which was one of the two greatest empires of the world of that period. The declaration was made though all the apparent circumstances were against such a decision: for there was famine in the country and the long-awaited crops were about to

ripen: the burning heat of the scorching summer season of Arabia was at its height and there was not enough money for preparations in general, and for equipment and conveyance in particular. But in spite of these handicaps, when the Messenger of Allah realized the urgency of the occasion, he took this step which was to decide whether the Mission of the Truth was going to survive or perish. The very fact that he made an open declaration for making preparations for such a campaign to Syria against the Roman Empire showed how important it was, for this was contrary to his previous practice. Usually he took every precaution not to reveal beforehand the direction to which he was going nor the name of the enemy whom he was going to attack; nay, he did not move out of Al-Madīnah even in the direction of the campaign.

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

That is why these lovers of Islam began to make enthusiastic preparations for the campaign. Everyone of them tried to surpass the other in making contributions for the provision of equipment for it. Hadrat 'Uthmān and Hadrat 'Abdur Rehmān bin 'Auf presented large sums of money for this purpose. Hadrat 'Umar contributed half of the earnings of his life and Hadrat Abū Bakr the entire earnings of his life. The indigent companions did not lag behind and presented whatever they could earn by the sweat of their labour and the women parted with their ornaments. Thousands of volunteers, who were filled with the desire of sacrificing their lives for Islam, came to the Holy Prophet and requested

that arrangements for weapons and conveyance be made for them so that they should join the expedition. Those who could not be provided with these shed tears of sorrow; the scene was so pathetic that it made the Holy Prophet sad because of his inability to arm them. In short, the occasion became the touchstone for discriminating a true believer from a hypocrite. For, to lag behind in the campaign meant that the very relationship of a person to Islam was doubtful. Accordingly, whenever a person lagged behind during the journey to Tabūk, the Holy Prophet, on being informed, would spontaneously say, "Leave him alone. If there be any good in him, Allah will again join him with you, and if there be no good in him, then thank Allah that He relieved you of his evil company".

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

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

In this connection, it is pertinent to point out that the general impression given by the historians of the campaigns of the Holy Prophet about the campaign of Tabūk is not correct. They relate the event in a way as if the news of the mustering of the Roman armies near the Arabian frontier was itself false. The fact is that the Caesar had begun to muster his armies, but the Holy Prophet forestalled him and arrived on the scene before he could make full preparations for the invasion. Therefore, believing that "discretion is the better part of valour," he withdrew his armies from the frontier, for he had not forgotten that the three thousand fighters for the cause of Islam had rendered helpless his

army one hundred thousand strong at M'utah. He could not, therefore, even with an army of two hundred thousand, dare to fight against an army of thirty thousand, and that, too, under the leadership of the Holy Prophet himself.

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

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

Problems of the Period

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

(1) to make the whole of Arabia a perfect *Dār-ul-Islām*,

(2) to extend the influence of Islam to the adjoining countries,

(3) to crush the mischiefs of the hypocrites, and

(4) to prepare the Muslims for *Jihād* against the non-Muslim world.

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

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

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

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

(2) In order to enable the Muslims to extend the influence of Islam outside Arabia, they were enjoined to crush with sword the

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

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

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

role he plays in the conflict between Islam and *Kufr*. Therefore, 'if anyone will show any hesitation in sacrificing his life, money, time and energies, his faith shall not be regarded as genuine'. (vv. 81-96).

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

SUMMARY

SUBJECT: PROBLEMS OF PEACE AND WAR

In continuation of Sūrah *Al-Anfāl*, this Sūrah also deals with the problems of peace and war and bases the theme on the Tabūk expedition.

Topics and their Interconnection

1-12 This portion deals with the sanctity of treaties and lays down principles, rules and regulations which must be kept in view before breaking them, in case the other party does not observe them sincerely.

13-37 In this portion the Muslims have been urged to fight in the Way of Allah with the *mushrik* Arabs, the Jews and the Christians, who were duly warned of the consequences of their mischievous and inimical behavior.

38-72 In this discourse, the Muslims have been told clearly and explicitly that they will inherit the rewards promised by Allah only if they take active part in the conflict with *kufr*, for that is the criterion which distinguishes true Muslims from hypocrites. Therefore true Muslims should take active part in *Jihād*, without minding dangers, obstacles, difficulties, temptations and the like.

73-90 This portion deals with the problems of hypocrites and lays down rules and regulations governing the treatment that should be meted out to them and points out their distinctive marks from true Muslims.

91-110 This portion deals with the case of those who remained behind and did not accompany the Holy Prophet for *Jihād* to Tabūk. For this purpose they have been separated into different categories, that is, the disabled, the sick, the indigent, the hypocrites, the believers who realized their guilt and punished themselves before the return of the Holy Prophet from Tabūk and those who confessed their error. Their cases have been dealt with in accordance with the nature and extent of their offence.

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

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

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

سُوْرَةُ التَّوْبَةِ مَدَنِيَّةٌ (9) (113)

بَرَآءَةٌ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ وَ رَسُوْلِهٖۤ اِلَى الَّذِيْنَ عٰهَدْتُّمْ مِّنَ الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ ۝1
فَسِيْحُوْا فِي الْاَرْضِ اَرْبَعَةَ اَشْهُرٍ وَّ اعْلَمُوْۤا اَنَّكُمْ غَيْرُ مُعْجِزِي اللّٰهِ ۙ وَ
اَنَّ اللّٰهَ مُخْزِي الْكٰفِرِيْنَ ۝2 وَ اَذَانٌ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ وَ رَسُوْلِهٖۤ اِلَى النَّاسِ يَوْمَ
الْحَجِّ الْاَكْبَرِ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ بَرِيْٓءٌ مِّنَ الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ ۙ وَ رَسُوْلُهٗ ؕ فَاِنْ تُبْتُمْ
فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ ۚ وَ اِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ فَاعْلَمُوْۤا اَنَّكُمْ غَيْرُ مُعْجِزِي اللّٰهِ ؕ وَ
بَشِّرِ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا بِعَذَابٍ اَلِيْمٍ ۝3 اِلَّا الَّذِيْنَ عٰهَدْتُّمْ مِّنَ الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ
ثُمَّ لَمْ يَنْقُصُوْكُمْ شَيْـًٔا وَّ لَمْ يُظَاهِرُوْا عَلَيْكُمْ اَحَدًا فَاَتِمُّوْۤا اِلَيْهِمْ عَهْدَهُمْ
اِلٰى مُدَّتِهِمْ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَّقِيْنَ ۝4 فَاِذَا انْسَلَخَ الْاَشْهُرُ الْحُرُمُ
فَاقْتُلُوا الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ حَيْثُ وَجَدْتُّمُوْهُمْ وَ خُذُوْهُمْ وَ احْصُرُوْهُمْ وَ
اقْعُدُوْا لَهُمْ كُلَّ مَرْصَدٍ ۚ فَاِنْ تَابُوْا وَ اَقَامُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَ اٰتَوُا الزَّكٰوةَ
فَخَلُّوْا سَبِيْلَهُمْ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ۝5 وَ اِنْ اَحَدٌ مِّنَ الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ
اسْتَجَارَكَ فَاَجِرْهُ حَتّٰى يَسْمَعَ كَلٰمَ اللّٰهِ ثُمَّ اَبْلِغْهُ مَاْمَنَهٗ ؕ ذٰلِكَ
بِاَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَّا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ۝6 كَيْفَ يَكُوْنُ لِلْمُشْرِكِيْنَ عَهْدٌ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ وَ
عِنْدَ رَسُوْلِهٖۤ اِلَّا الَّذِيْنَ عٰهَدْتُّمْ عِنْدَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ ۚ فَمَا اسْتَقَامُوْا
لَكُمْ فَاسْتَقِيْمُوْا لَهُمْ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَّقِيْنَ ۝7 كَيْفَ وَ اِنْ يَّظْهَرُوْا
عَلَيْكُمْ لَا يَرْقُبُوْا فِيْكُمْ اِلًّا وَّ لَا ذِمَّةً ؕ يُرْضُوْنَكُمْ بِاَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَ تَاْبٰى
قُلُوْبُهُمْ ۚ وَ اَكْثَرُهُمْ فٰسِقُوْنَ ۝8 اِشْتَرَوْا بِاٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيْلًا فَصَدُّوْا

IX

AT-TAUBAH

التوبة

Verses: 129 *Revealed at Al-Madīnah*

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

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

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

How shall a treaty with these *mushriks* be regarded as abiding by Allah and His Messenger? —excepting those with whom you made 7-8

a treaty at the Masjid-i-Harām:[9] so long as they behave rightly with you, you also should behave rightly with them, for Allah loves the righteous people.—But how can a treaty be regarded as abiding with the other *mushriks?* Since if they get power over you, they will not respect ties of kindred with you nor honour any treaty obligations. They try to conciliate you with their tongues, while their hearts are averse to their tongues,[10] for most of them are evil-doers.[11]

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

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

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

This proclamation practically reduced the *mushriks* of Arabia to the position of outlaws and no place of shelter was left for them, for the major part of the country had come under the sway of Islam. As this released the Muslims from the obligations of the treaties made with them and forestalled them, they were driven into a tight corner. For this smashed all their evil designs of creating trouble by inciting civil war at the time of a threat from the Roman and the Iranian Empires or after the death of the Holy Prophet. But Allah and His Messenger turned the tables on them before the opportune moment for which they were waiting. Now the only alternatives left with them were either to accept Islam that had become the state religion of Arabia, or to fight against it and be exterminated, or to emigrate from the country.

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

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

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

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

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

[Contd. on p. 180

عَنْ سَبِيْلِهٖ ؕ اِنَّهُمْ سَآءَ مَا كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ۝٩ لَا يَرْقُبُوْنَ فِيْ مُؤْمِنٍ اِلًّا
وَّلَا ذِمَّةً ؕ وَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْمُعْتَدُوْنَ ۝١٠ فَاِنْ تَابُوْا وَاَقَامُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَ
اٰتَوُا الزَّكٰوةَ فَاِخْوَانُكُمْ فِي الدِّيْنِ ؕ وَنُفَصِّلُ الْاٰيٰتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَّعْلَمُوْنَ ۝١١
وَاِنْ نَّكَثُوْٓا اَيْمَانَهُمْ مِّنْۢ بَعْدِ عَهْدِهِمْ وَطَعَنُوْا فِيْ دِيْنِكُمْ
فَقَاتِلُوْٓا اَئِمَّةَ الْكُفْرِ ۙ اِنَّهُمْ لَآ اَيْمَانَ لَهُمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَنْتَهُوْنَ ۝١٢ اَلَا تُقَاتِلُوْنَ
قَوْمًا نَّكَثُوْٓا اَيْمَانَهُمْ وَهَمُّوْا بِاِخْرَاجِ الرَّسُوْلِ وَهُمْ بَدَءُوْكُمْ اَوَّلَ
مَرَّةٍ ؕ اَتَخْشَوْنَهُمْ ۚ فَاللّٰهُ اَحَقُّ اَنْ تَخْشَوْهُ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِيْنَ ۝١٣ قَاتِلُوْهُمْ
يُعَذِّبْهُمُ اللّٰهُ بِاَيْدِيْكُمْ وَيُخْزِهِمْ وَيَنْصُرْكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَيَشْفِ صُدُوْرَ
قَوْمٍ مُّؤْمِنِيْنَ ۝١٤ وَيُذْهِبْ غَيْظَ قُلُوْبِهِمْ ؕ وَيَتُوْبُ اللّٰهُ عَلٰى مَنْ يَّشَآءُ ؕ
وَاللّٰهُ عَلِيْمٌ حَكِيْمٌ ۝١٥ اَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ اَنْ تُتْرَكُوْا وَلَمَّا يَعْلَمِ اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْنَ
جٰهَدُوْا مِنْكُمْ وَلَمْ يَتَّخِذُوْا مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ وَلَا رَسُوْلِهٖ وَلَا الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ
وَلِيْجَةً ؕ وَاللّٰهُ خَبِيْرٌۢ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ ۝١٦ مَا كَانَ لِلْمُشْرِكِيْنَ اَنْ يَّعْمُرُوْا
مَسٰجِدَ اللّٰهِ شٰهِدِيْنَ عَلٰٓى اَنْفُسِهِمْ بِالْكُفْرِ ؕ اُولٰٓئِكَ حَبِطَتْ اَعْمَالُهُمْ ۖ
وَفِي النَّارِ هُمْ خٰلِدُوْنَ ۝١٧ اِنَّمَا يَعْمُرُ مَسٰجِدَ اللّٰهِ مَنْ اٰمَنَ بِاللّٰهِ وَالْيَوْمِ
الْاٰخِرِ وَاَقَامَ الصَّلٰوةَ وَاٰتَى الزَّكٰوةَ وَلَمْ يَخْشَ اِلَّا اللّٰهَ فَعَسٰٓى اُولٰٓئِكَ
اَنْ يَّكُوْنُوْا مِنَ الْمُهْتَدِيْنَ ۝١٨ اَجَعَلْتُمْ سِقَايَةَ الْحَآجِّ وَعِمَارَةَ الْمَسْجِدِ
الْحَرَامِ كَمَنْ اٰمَنَ بِاللّٰهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْاٰخِرِ وَجٰهَدَ فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ ؕ لَا يَسْتَوٗنَ
عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ۝١٩ اَلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَهَاجَرُوْا وَ
جٰهَدُوْا فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ بِاَمْوَالِهِمْ وَاَنْفُسِهِمْ ۙ اَعْظَمُ دَرَجَةً عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ ؕ وَ

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

Will you not fight[16] such people who have been breaking their solemn pledges, who conspired to banish the Messenger and were the first to transgress against you? Are you afraid of them? If you are true Believers, surely Allah has a greater right that you should fear Him. Fight them. Allah will chastise them by your hands and will bring disgrace and degradation upon them and succour you against them and soothe the hearts of many believers. And He may remove the wrath of their hearts; and may also show guidance towards repentance[17] to whomsoever He wills; Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise. Do you think that you will be left (without a trial)? Note it well that Allah has not as yet seen which of you exerted your utmost in His (Allah his way) and did not take as intimate friends any other than Allah, His Messenger and the Believers [18] Allah has full knowledge of what you do. 13-16

It does not behove the *mushriks* to become the guardians and servants of Allah's houses of worship, the while they themselves bear witness against themselves to their disbelief;[19] in fact, all their works have gone to waste[20] and they shall abide in the Fire for ever. Only those are worthy of being the guardians and servants of Allah's houses of worship, who believe in Allah and the Last Day, and establish *Salāt* and pay *Zakāt* dues, and fear none but Allah: for these alone are expected to follow the Right Way. Have you made the mere giving of water to pilgrims and the guardianship of the Masjid-i-Harām as equal to the works of the one who has believed in Allah and the Last Day, and exerted his utmost in the Way of Allah ?[21] Well, these things are not equal in the sight of Allah, and Allah does not show guidance to the workers of iniquity. Those alone who have believed, and left their 17-20

homes and exerted their utmost with their lives and possessions in the Way of Allah, shall have the highest ranks with Allah: they are truly successful.

Contd. from p. 177]

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

7. That is, "Mere repentance from disbelief and *shirk* will not end the matter, but they shall have to perform the prescribed prayer and pay *Zakāt* dues. Without these it will not be considered that they had given up disbelief and embraced Islam." Hadrat Abu Bakr based his decision on this verse in the case of the apostates, after the death of the Holy Prophet, who argued that they were not the rejecters of Islam, because they offered *Salāt*, even though they had refused to pay the *Zakāt* dues. This argument roused doubts in the minds of the Companions in general that they had no right to fight with such people as these.

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

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

9. That is: Banī Kināmah and Banī Khuzā'ah and Banī Damrah.

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

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

12. That is, "When they had to make a choice between the Divine Guidance and the transitory worldly ambitions, they chose the latter, because they did not comprehend the comparative values of the two. Whereas the Revelations of Allah were inviting them to goodness, righteousness and observance of the Divine Law, which lead to eternal bliss, they chose to follow the unbridled lusts of

their selves which gained some transitory worldly benefits for them, but consequently led them to eternal perdition."

13. Those evil-doers "blocked His Way for others", for they not only chose misguidance for themselves but also tried to prevent others from following the right way. They put every kind of obstruction in the way of the invitation to righteousness; nay, they tried their worst to gag the mouths of those who were extending that invitation and make their lives hard for them. In short, they did all they could to prevent the establishment of the righteous system of life that Allah required the people to establish.

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

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

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

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

16. In this passage the addressees are the Muslims. They have been urged to fight perseveringly in the Way of Allah, without paying the least heed to their ties of blood and relationship and to their worldly interests. In order to understand fully the spirit of this passage, the reader should keep in view the state of affairs at the time, when the abrogation of the treaties was declared. Though Islam was reigning supreme in the greater part of Arabia and there was no greater power to challenge its supremacy, still superficial observers saw a number of dangers in the extreme step which was being taken at that time. *[Contd. on p. 183.*

أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْفَائِزُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾ يُبَشِّرُهُمْ رَبُّهُم بِرَحْمَةٍ مِّنْهُ وَرِضْوَانٍ وَجَنَّاتٍ
لَّهُمْ فِيهَا نَعِيمٌ مُّقِيمٌ ﴿٢١﴾ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عِندَهُ أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٢٢﴾
يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا آبَاءَكُمْ وَإِخْوَانَكُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ إِنِ اسْتَحَبُّوا
الْكُفْرَ عَلَى الْإِيمَانِ ۚ وَمَن يَتَوَلَّهُم مِّنكُمْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾ قُلْ
إِن كَانَ آبَاؤُكُمْ وَأَبْنَاؤُكُمْ وَإِخْوَانُكُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُكُمْ وَعَشِيرَتُكُمْ وَأَمْوَالٌ
اقْتَرَفْتُمُوهَا وَتِجَارَةٌ تَخْشَوْنَ كَسَادَهَا وَمَسَاكِنُ تَرْضَوْنَهَا أَحَبَّ إِلَيْكُم
مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَجِهَادٍ فِي سَبِيلِهِ فَتَرَبَّصُوا حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِيَ اللَّهُ بِأَمْرِهِ ۗ وَ
اللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴿٢٤﴾ لَقَدْ نَصَرَكُمُ اللَّهُ فِي مَوَاطِنَ كَثِيرَةٍ ۙ وَ
يَوْمَ حُنَيْنٍ ۙ إِذْ أَعْجَبَتْكُمْ كَثْرَتُكُمْ فَلَمْ تُغْنِ عَنكُمْ شَيْئًا وَضَاقَتْ عَلَيْكُمُ
الْأَرْضُ بِمَا رَحُبَتْ ثُمَّ وَلَّيْتُم مُّدْبِرِينَ ﴿٢٥﴾ ثُمَّ أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَىٰ
رَسُولِهِ وَعَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَأَنزَلَ جُنُودًا لَّمْ تَرَوْهَا وَعَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ۚ
وَذَٰلِكَ جَزَاءُ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٢٦﴾ ثُمَّ يَتُوبُ اللَّهُ مِن بَعْدِ ذَٰلِكَ عَلَىٰ مَن يَشَاءُ ۗ وَ
اللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٢٧﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّمَا الْمُشْرِكُونَ نَجَسٌ فَلَا يَقْرَبُوا
الْمَسْجِدَ الْحَرَامَ بَعْدَ عَامِهِمْ هَٰذَا ۚ وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ عَيْلَةً فَسَوْفَ يُغْنِيكُمُ
اللَّهُ مِن فَضْلِهِ إِن شَاءَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٢٨﴾ قَاتِلُوا الَّذِينَ لَا
يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَلَا بِالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَلَا يُحَرِّمُونَ مَا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَ
لَا يَدِينُونَ دِينَ الْحَقِّ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ حَتَّىٰ يُعْطُوا الْجِزْيَةَ
عَن يَدٍ وَهُمْ صَاغِرُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾ وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ عُزَيْرٌ ابْنُ اللَّهِ وَقَالَتِ
النَّصَارَى الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ اللَّهِ ۖ ذَٰلِكَ قَوْلُهُم بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ ۖ يُضَاهِئُونَ قَوْلَ

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

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

Allah has helped you on many occasions before this; (recently you witnessed the glory of His help[23]) on the day of the Battle of Hunain; you were proud of your great numbers which had deluded you but it availed you nothing and the earth, with all its vastness, became too narrow for you, and turning your backs, you fled. Then Allah sent down His *sakīnat* (peace and tranquillity) upon His Messenger and the Believers and sent (to your aid) forces which you could not see and chastised those who denied the Truth: for this is the due recompense of those who deny the Truth. Then (you have also seen that) after giving chastisement like this, Allah guides to repentance whom He wills:[24] Allah is Forgiving and Merciful. 25-27

O Believers, the *mushriks* are unclean; therefore let them not come near the Masjid-i-Harām[25] after this year (of their pilgrimage); if you fear poverty Allah will enrich you, out of His bounty if He wills: for Allah is All-knowing, All-Wise. 28

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

Contd. from p. 181]

First, it was feared that the abrogating of the treaties with all the *mushrik* clans at one and the same time, and debarring them from *Hāj* and changing the

guardianship of the Ka'abah and abolishing all the rituals of 'ignorance', would so incite the *mushriks* and the hypocrites and enkindle such fire of enmity that they would be ready to shed the last drop of their blood for safeguarding their interests and prejudices.

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

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

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

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

hindered the *mushriks* from giving a serious thought to the critical position they were in that finally led them to embrace Islam.

18. The addressees in v. 16 were those Muslims who had recently embraced Islam. It means to tell them plainly: "Now that you have embraced Islam, you shall have to give a genuine proof by a trial that you have accepted it because you believe in its Truth and not because it has become supreme in the country by the exertions of the true Believers. The trial is that you shall have to sacrifice your lives, wealths and your near and dear ones for the sake of Allah and His Way. Then and only then, you will be regarded as true Believers."

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

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

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

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

23. This has been mentioned to allay the fears of those who were afraid of the consequences of the Declaration of the abrogation of the treaties, as if to say, "Why are you afraid of war? That Allah, Who helped you in far worse and dangerous situations on so many occasions before this, is there even now to help you. Had this Mission depended on your might, it could not have come out victorious in the hard trials at Makkah nor in the Battle of Badr when the odds were heavily against you. This is because Allah's Power has been helping you, and past experiences have shown you how effective that Power is. Rest assured that the same Power will help you to succeed in your Mission."

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

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

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

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

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

26. Though the people of the Book professed to believe in Allah and the Hereafter, in fact they believed in neither. For only that person really believes in Allah who acknowledges Him as the only One God and the only One Lord, and does not associate with Him any other, whatsoever, in His Being, in His characteristics, in His rights and in His powers and authority. But according to this definition of *shirk* both the Christians and the Jews were guilty of *shirk* as has been made plain in the verses that follow: therefore their profession of belief in Allah was meaningless. Likewise they did not really believe in the Hereafter, in spite of the fact that they believed in Resurrection. For it is not enough: one must also believe that on that Day absolute justice will be done on the basis of one's belief and actions. One should also believe that no ransom and no expiation and no 'spiritual' relationships with any 'saint' shall be of any avail on that Day. It is absolutely meaningless to believe in the Hereafter without this. And the Jews and the Christians had polluted their faiths because they believed that such things would protect them against justice on that Day.

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

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

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الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا مِنْ قَبْلُ ۭ قٰتَلَهُمُ اللّٰهُ ۚ اَنّٰى يُؤْفَكُوْنَ ۝30 اِتَّخَذُوْٓا اَحْبَارَهُمْ وَ
رُهْبَانَهُمْ اَرْبَابًا مِّنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ وَالْمَسِيْحَ ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ ۚ وَمَآ اُمِرُوْٓا اِلَّا
لِيَعْبُدُوْٓا اِلٰهًا وَّاحِدًا ۚ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ ۭ سُبْحٰنَهٗ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُوْنَ ۝31
يُرِيْدُوْنَ اَنْ يُّطْفِـــُٔوْا نُوْرَ اللّٰهِ بِاَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَيَاْبَى اللّٰهُ اِلَّآ اَنْ يُّتِمَّ نُوْرَهٗ
وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكٰفِرُوْنَ ۝32 هُوَ الَّذِيْٓ اَرْسَلَ رَسُوْلَهٗ بِالْهُدٰى وَدِيْنِ الْحَقِّ
لِيُظْهِرَهٗ عَلَى الدِّيْنِ كُلِّهٖ ۙ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُشْرِكُوْنَ ۝33 يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا اِنَّ
كَثِيْرًا مِّنَ الْاَحْبَارِ وَالرُّهْبَانِ لَيَاْكُلُوْنَ اَمْوَالَ النَّاسِ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَ
يَصُدُّوْنَ عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ ۭ وَالَّذِيْنَ يَكْنِزُوْنَ الذَّهَبَ وَالْفِضَّةَ وَلَا
يُنْفِقُوْنَهَا فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ ۙ فَبَشِّرْهُمْ بِعَذَابٍ اَلِيْمٍ ۝34 يَّوْمَ يُحْمٰى عَلَيْهَا
فِيْ نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ فَتُكْوٰى بِهَا جِبَاهُهُمْ وَجُنُوْبُهُمْ وَظُهُوْرُهُمْ ۭ هٰذَا مَا
كَنَزْتُمْ لِاَنْفُسِكُمْ فَذُوْقُوْا مَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْنِزُوْنَ ۝35 اِنَّ عِدَّةَ الشُّهُوْرِ عِنْدَ
اللّٰهِ اثْنَا عَشَرَ شَهْرًا فِيْ كِتٰبِ اللّٰهِ يَوْمَ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ مِنْهَآ
اَرْبَعَةٌ حُرُمٌ ۭ ذٰلِكَ الدِّيْنُ الْقَيِّمُ ۙ فَلَا تَظْلِمُوْا فِيْهِنَّ اَنْفُسَكُمْ وَقَاتِلُوا
الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ كَاۗفَّةً كَمَا يُقَاتِلُوْنَكُمْ كَاۗفَّةً ۭ وَاعْلَمُوْٓا اَنَّ اللّٰهَ مَعَ الْمُتَّقِيْنَ ۝36
اِنَّمَا النَّسِيْۗءُ زِيَادَةٌ فِي الْكُفْرِ ۭ يُضَلُّ بِهِ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا يُحِلُّوْنَهٗ عَامًا وَّ
يُحَرِّمُوْنَهٗ عَامًا لِّيُوَاطِـُٔوْا عِدَّةَ مَا حَرَّمَ اللّٰهُ فَيُحِلُّوْا مَا حَرَّمَ اللّٰهُ ۭ زُيِّنَ
لَهُمْ سُوْۗءُ اَعْمَالِهِمْ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ ۝37 يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ
اٰمَنُوْا مَا لَكُمْ اِذَا قِيْلَ لَكُمُ انْفِرُوْا فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ اثَّاقَلْتُمْ اِلَى الْاَرْضِ ۭ
اَرَضِيْتُمْ بِالْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا مِنَ الْاٰخِرَةِ ۚ فَمَا مَتَاعُ الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا فِي الْاٰخِرَةِ

The Jews say, "Ezra ('Uzair) is the son of Allah,"[29] and the Christians say, "The Messiah is the son of God." Such are the baseless things they utter with their tongues, following in the footsteps of the former unbelievers.[30] May Allah afflict them with chastisement! Wherefrom are they being perverted? They have made their scholars and monks as their Lords beside Allah,[31] and likewise the Messiah, the son of Mary, although they were enjoined not to worship any other than the One Deity, besides Whom there is none worthy of worship. He is absolutely pure and free from what they associate with Him. These people desire to extinguish the light of Allah with puffs from their mouths and Allah refuses (His consent to their desire) but wills to perfect His light, even though the disbelievers be much averse to it. He is Allah Who has sent His Messenger with Guidance and the Right way so that He may make it prevail over all other ways,[32] even though the *mushriks* be much averse to it. O Believers, indeed most of the scholars and monks of the people of the Book devour the wealth of others by evil means, and debar them from the Way of Allah.[33] Give them the good news of a painful torment, who hoard up gold and silver and expend not these in the Way of Allah. The Day shall surely come when the same gold and silver shall be heated in the fire of Hell, and therewith their foreheads, their bodies and their backs shall be branded, (saying), "Here is that treasure you had hoarded up for yourselves: now taste the evil of your hoarded treasure" 30-35

The fact is that the number of months ordained by Allah has been twelve since the time He created the heavens and the earth,[34] and out of these four are forbidden months: this is the right code of reckoning: therefore do not wrong yourselves by violating these months.[35] And fight against the *mushriks* all together even as they fight against you all together;[36] and note it well that Allah is with the Godfearing people. *Nasī* is but one more instance of disbelief, whereby these disbelievers are led astray. In one year they make a certain month lawful and in another year they make the same a forbidden month, so as they might make up for the number of the forbidden months and, at the same time, make lawful that which is forbidden by Allah.[37] Their evil deeds have been made seeming fair to them: for Allah does not guide those who deny the Truth. 36-37

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pay *jizyah* with their own hands," that is, "with full consent so that they willingly become the subjects of the Believers, who perform the duty of the vicegerents of Allah on the earth."

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

This is *"Jizyah"* of which the Muslims have been feeling apologetic during the last two centuries of their degeneration and there are still some people who continue to apologize for it. But the Way of Allah is straight and clear and does not stand in need of any apology to the rebels against Allah. Instead of offering apologies on behalf of Islam for the measure that guarantees security of life, property and faith to those who choose to live under its protection, the Muslims should feel proud of such a humane law as that of *jizyah*. For it is obvious that the maximum freedom that can be allowed to those who do not adopt the Way of Allah but choose to tread the ways of error is that they should be tolerated to lead the life they like. That is why the Islamic State offers them protection, if they agree to live as its *Zimmīs* by paying *jizyah*, but it cannot allow that they should remain supreme rulers in any place and establish wrong ways and impose them on others. As this state of things inevitably produces chaos and disorder, it is the duty of the true Muslims to exert their utmost to bring to an end their wicked rule and bring them under a righteous order.

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

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

declaring Ezra as 'the son of God'. What it intends to say is that the perversion in the articles of faith of the Jews concerning Allah had degenerated to such an extent that there were some amongst them who considered Ezra as the son of God.

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

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

As a reply to this, the Holy Prophet put him a counter-question: "Is it not a fact that you accept as unlawful what they declare to be unlawful, and lawful what they declare to be lawful?" 'Adī confessed, "Yes, sir, it is so." The Holy Prophet replied, "This amounts to making them your lords." Incidentally, this Tradition shows that those who themselves set limits to the lawful and the unlawful without the authority of Allah's Book, assume for themselves the rank of Godhead, and those who acknowledge their right of making laws take them as their Lords.

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

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

Now let us try to understand the significance of this verse. The object of the Mission of the Messenger is to make the Guidance and the Right Way he has brought from Allah dominant over all the other ways and systems of life. In other words, the Messenger is not sent to allow Allah's Way to remain subordinate to other ways in order to enjoy concessions from them. He is sent by the Sovereign

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إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ ﴿38﴾ إِلَّا تَنفِرُوا يُعَذِّبْكُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا وَيَسْتَبْدِلْ قَوْمًا غَيْرَكُمْ
وَلَا تَضُرُّوهُ شَيْئًا ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿39﴾ إِلَّا تَنصُرُوهُ فَقَدْ نَصَرَهُ اللَّهُ
إِذْ أَخْرَجَهُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ثَانِيَ اثْنَيْنِ إِذْ هُمَا فِي الْغَارِ إِذْ يَقُولُ لِصَاحِبِهِ
لَا تَحْزَنْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَنَا ۖ فَأَنزَلَ اللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَيْهِ وَأَيَّدَهُ بِجُنُودٍ لَّمْ
تَرَوْهَا وَجَعَلَ كَلِمَةَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا السُّفْلَىٰ ۗ وَكَلِمَةُ اللَّهِ هِيَ الْعُلْيَا ۗ وَاللَّهُ
عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿40﴾ انفِرُوا خِفَافًا وَثِقَالًا وَجَاهِدُوا بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنفُسِكُمْ فِي
سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ۚ ذَٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿41﴾ لَوْ كَانَ عَرَضًا قَرِيبًا وَ
سَفَرًا قَاصِدًا لَّاتَّبَعُوكَ وَلَٰكِن بَعُدَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الشُّقَّةُ ۚ وَسَيَحْلِفُونَ بِاللَّهِ
لَوِ اسْتَطَعْنَا لَخَرَجْنَا مَعَكُمْ ۖ يُهْلِكُونَ أَنفُسَهُمْ ۖ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ إِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ ﴿42﴾
عَفَا اللَّهُ عَنكَ ۖ لِمَ أَذِنتَ لَهُمْ حَتَّىٰ يَتَبَيَّنَ لَكَ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَتَعْلَمَ
الْكَاذِبِينَ ﴿43﴾ لَا يَسْتَأْذِنُكَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ أَن
يُجَاهِدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنفُسِهِمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿44﴾
إِنَّمَا يَسْتَأْذِنُكَ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَارْتَابَتْ
قُلُوبُهُمْ فَهُمْ فِي رَيْبِهِمْ يَتَرَدَّدُونَ ﴿45﴾ وَلَوْ أَرَادُوا الْخُرُوجَ لَأَعَدُّوا لَهُ عُدَّةً
وَلَٰكِن كَرِهَ اللَّهُ انبِعَاثَهُمْ فَثَبَّطَهُمْ وَقِيلَ اقْعُدُوا مَعَ الْقَاعِدِينَ ﴿46﴾ لَوْ
خَرَجُوا فِيكُم مَّا زَادُوكُمْ إِلَّا خَبَالًا وَلَأَوْضَعُوا خِلَالَكُمْ يَبْغُونَكُمُ الْفِتْنَةَ ۖ وَ
فِيكُمْ سَمَّاعُونَ لَهُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالظَّالِمِينَ ﴿47﴾ لَقَدِ ابْتَغَوُا الْفِتْنَةَ مِن
قَبْلُ وَقَلَّبُوا لَكَ الْأُمُورَ حَتَّىٰ جَاءَ الْحَقُّ وَظَهَرَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ وَهُمْ كَارِهُونَ ﴿48﴾
وَمِنْهُم مَّن يَقُولُ ائْذَن لِّي وَلَا تَفْتِنِّي ۚ أَلَا فِي الْفِتْنَةِ سَقَطُوا ۗ وَإِنَّ

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

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

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

If they had really intended to march forth, they would surely have made some preparation for it. But Allah was averse to their going forth;[47] and He caused them to hold back, and it was said to them, 46-49

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

There is such a one among them, who says, "Give me leave to stay behind and do not expose me to temptations."[48]---Note it well that such people have already succumbed to temptations[49] and Hell has encircled these disbelivers.[50]

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of the earth and the heavens to make His Way dominant over all other ways. And if a wrong way is at all allowed to remain on the earth, it should be tolerated only under its own protection by the payment of *Jizyah* under the limits conferred by the Divine System as in the case of the system of life of the *Zimmīs* who pay *Jizyah*.

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

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

This has been mentioned to refute the practice of *nasī'* (v. 37) whereby the pagan Arabs increased the number of the months of a year to 13 or 14 to enable them to interpose in the calendar the forbidden month which had been made lawful by them. (For fuller explanation see E.N. 37).

35. "....do not wrong yourselves ....": "Do not let go waste the good things for which fighting has been made unlawful during these months by creating disorder in them that will ultimately be harmful to you also". The four forbidden

months are . . . Zil-Q'adah, Zil-Hajjah and Muharram for *Haj* and Rajab for *'Umrah*.

36. That is, "If the *mushriks* do not desist from fighting during these months, you should also fight them and present a united front against them, just as they put up a united front against you". This verse has been explained by v. 194 of *Al-Baqarah*.

37. The pagan Arabs practised نسی (*nasi'*) in two ways. Whenever it suited them, they would declare a prohibited month to be an ordinary month in which fighting, robbery and murder in retaliation were lawful for them. Then they would declare an ordinary month to be a prohibited month instead of this month in order to make up for the deficiency caused in the number of the prohibited months.

The other way of *nasi'* was the addition of a month in order to harmonize the lunar with the solar year so that the *Haj* should always fall in the same season and they should be saved from the botheration and inconveniences that are experienced by its observance according to the lunar year. In this way *Haj* was observed for 36 years on dates other than the actual dates. Then in the thirty seventh year it was again observed on the 9th and 10th of Zil-Hajjah, as they should have actually fallen according to the lunar calendar. It so happened that on the occasion when the Holy Prophet performed *Hajja-tul-Widā'a* (his Last Haj), these dates by rotation coincided with the actual dates of *Haj* according to the lunar calendar. So he declared during the course of his historic address at 'Arafāt: "This year the dates of *Haj* have again occurred exactly at their natural and proper time after a long period of circulation." Accordingly, since that 'Last *Haj*' of A.H. 9, it is being observed up to this day according to the correct dates of the lunar year.

By making *nasi'* unlawful and forbidding it, the Law declared that the two objects for which it was practised were also sinful. First, they not only made lawful what Allah had made unlawful but also tried to practise deception on Allah by the seeming observance of the Law. As regards the second object of making the season of *Haj* fixed permanently according to the solar calendar, this too, was in fact the worst kind of rebellion against the Divine Law, although it appeared to be a harmless thing done for public good. But it defeated the very object of the Divine Law which prescribed the lunar calendar instead of the solar calendar for the observance of obligatory duties. Allah did this to ensure many good things for the Muslims, one of which is that His servants should be so trained as to obey His Commandments at all times of the year and under all circumstances. For instance, the month of Ramadān circulates among all the seasons of the year and the Muslims get used to obeying His Commandments whether it be summer or winter, dry or rainy season. This gives them that excellent moral training which is the real

object of all the obligatory duties imposed by the Divine Law. Likewise, the dates of *Haj* according to the lunar calendar, fall during different seasons: therefore the servants of Allah have to travel during all the seasons, favourable and unfavourable. Thus they come out successful in the Divine test under all the circumstances and learn to be steadfast in their obedience.

It is obvious that such a training will stand them in good stead in many other fields in which one has to fight the battle of the Truth.

Now it would have become quite clear why *nasi'* was made unlawful and forbidden. It was designed to fix the season of *Haj* in order to suit their own conveniences though it defeated the Divine purpose of *Haj* and of the forbidden months. It meant that they had rebelled against Allah and become independent of Him; this is *kufr*. Besides this, Islam is a universal religion and for all human beings. It is obvious that the periods of fasting and performing *Haj* cannot satisfy all if they be fixed in accordance with the months of the solar year. For if they are performed in fixed months according to the solar year, the one and the same month will not equally suit all for the simple reason that it will fall during the same seasons in different places—summer or winter or very hot or very cold or rainy or dry or harvesting or sowing—year after year.

In this connection it may also be kept in view that the proclamation about the prohibition of *"nasi'"* was made on the occasion of *Haj* in A.H. 9 and next year, the *Haj* was performed on right dates which were in accordance with the lunar year. Since that time *Haj* is being performed according to exact dates.

38. From here begins the discourse (vv. 38-72) which was sent down at the time when the Holy Prophet was engaged in making preparations for the Campaign to Tabūk.

39. ".... you should know that the goods ... Hereafter" may imply two meanings. First: "When you will find that the life in the Hereafter is eternal and see that the good things and the provisions of enjoyment are countless, you will realize that the potential and the actual enjoyments of the temporary life of this world were nothing as compared with the blessings of that great Kingdom. At that time you will regret why you deprived yourselves of this everlasting happiness and bliss for the sake of the little—very little—sort-lived enjoyments of the mortal life of this world." Second: "The goods of this worldly life are of no value in the Hereafter, howsoever abundant they might be. You shall have to give up each and everything as soon as you breathe your last, for nothing of this world can go with you to the Next World. Of course, you will get credit for what you sacrificed for the pleasure and love of Allah, and love of Islam."

40. A general rule of the Islamic conduct has been derived from "If you .... chastisement." When the Muslims are commanded to go to *Jihād* by a public proclamation from their leader, it becomes an obligatory duty for those who are called upon to do *Jihād*, whether they belong to any particular group or region. So much so that the Faith of those who do not go for *Jihād* without a genuine excuse becomes doubtful. But even in cases where the Muslims are called upon to go forth for *Jihād* and there is no command for the compulsory enrolment of every able-bodied Muslim of a particular group or region, it is a religious duty (though not obligatory), and it shall be considered to have been performed even if only some Muslims go forth for it.

41. That is, "Allah's work does not depend on you and will be accomplished only if you do it. It is Allah's grace and bounty that He is affording you the golden opportunity of serving the cause of His Way. Therefore if you miss this opportunity because of any foolish assumption, Allah will raise another people and bestow on them the opportunity and capability of doing His work, and you will be losers".

42. This refers to the occasion when the disbelievers had decided to assassinate the Holy Prophet, and the very night fixed for his assassination he had left Makkah for Al-Madīnah. By that time most of the Muslims had migrated to Al-Madīnah in twos and threes and only a few helpless ones had remained behind in Makkah. As he was sure that he would be pursued, he took only Hadrat Abū Bakr with him and went southward instead of following the northern route to Al-Madīnah and remained hidden in the Thaur Cave for three days. In the meantime the blood thirsty enemies had begun to make a thorough search for him all around Makkah and some of them reached the very mouth of the Cave where he was hidden. On this critical occasion Hadrat Abū Bakr naturally felt alarmed lest they should peep into the Cave, and see them. But the Holy Prophet remained as calm as before and reassured his Companion, saying, "Be not distressed: indeed Allah is with us."

43. The words ".... whether you are light or heavy ..." have a very comprehensive meaning: "When it is enjoined to march forth for *Jihād*, you must go forth anyhow, whether you like it or not: whether you are in a state of prosperity or indigence: whether you are well-equipped or ill-equipped: whether the circumstances are favourable or adverse: whether you are young and healthy or old and weak."

44. They felt the journey to Tabūk to be hard because they had to fight with the army of the great and powerful Roman Empire: because they had to

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جَهَنَّمَ لَمُحِيطَةٌ بِالْكٰفِرِينَ ﴿٤٩﴾ إِنْ تُصِبْكَ حَسَنَةٌ تَسُؤْهُمْ ۚ وَإِنْ
تُصِبْكَ مُصِيبَةٌ يَقُولُوا قَدْ أَخَذْنَا أَمْرَنَا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَيَتَوَلَّوا وَّهُمْ
فَرِحُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾ قُلْ لَنْ يُصِيبَنَا إِلَّا مَا كَتَبَ اللّٰهُ لَنَا ۚ هُوَ مَوْلٰنَا ۚ وَعَلَى اللّٰهِ
فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٥١﴾ قُلْ هَلْ تَرَبَّصُونَ بِنَا إِلَّا إِحْدَى الْحُسْنَيَيْنِ ۖ وَ
نَحْنُ نَتَرَبَّصُ بِكُمْ أَنْ يُصِيبَكُمُ اللّٰهُ بِعَذَابٍ مِّنْ عِنْدِهٖٓ أَوْ بِأَيْدِينَا ۚ
فَتَرَبَّصُوٓا إِنَّا مَعَكُمْ مُّتَرَبِّصُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾ قُلْ أَنْفِقُوا طَوْعًا أَوْ كَرْهًا لَّنْ يُّتَقَبَّلَ
مِنْكُمْ ۖ إِنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ قَوْمًا فٰسِقِينَ ﴿٥٣﴾ وَمَا مَنَعَهُمْ أَنْ تُقْبَلَ مِنْهُمْ نَفَقٰتُهُمْ
إِلَّآ أَنَّهُمْ كَفَرُوا بِاللّٰهِ وَبِرَسُولِهٖ وَلَا يَأْتُونَ الصَّلٰوةَ إِلَّا وَهُمْ كُسَالٰى
وَلَا يُنْفِقُونَ إِلَّا وَهُمْ كٰرِهُونَ ﴿٥٤﴾ فَلَا تُعْجِبْكَ أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَلَآ أَوْلَادُهُمْ ۚ
إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللّٰهُ لِيُعَذِّبَهُمْ بِهَا فِي الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَتَزْهَقَ أَنْفُسُهُمْ وَهُمْ
كٰفِرُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾ وَيَحْلِفُونَ بِاللّٰهِ إِنَّهُمْ لَمِنْكُمْ ۖ وَمَا هُمْ مِّنْكُمْ وَلٰكِنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ
يَّفْرَقُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾ لَوْ يَجِدُونَ مَلْجَأً أَوْ مَغٰرٰتٍ أَوْ مُدَّخَلًا لَّوَلَّوْا إِلَيْهِ وَهُمْ
يَجْمَحُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَّلْمِزُكَ فِي الصَّدَقٰتِ ۖ فَإِنْ أُعْطُوا مِنْهَا رَضُوا
وَإِنْ لَّمْ يُعْطَوْا مِنْهَآ إِذَا هُمْ يَسْخَطُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾ وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ رَضُوا مَآ ءَاتٰىهُمُ
اللّٰهُ وَرَسُولُهٗ ۙ وَقَالُوا حَسْبُنَا اللّٰهُ سَيُؤْتِينَا اللّٰهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهٖ وَرَسُولُهٗٓ ۙ إِنَّآ
إِلَى اللّٰهِ رٰغِبُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾ إِنَّمَا الصَّدَقٰتُ لِلْفُقَرَآءِ وَالْمَسٰكِينِ وَالْعٰمِلِينَ عَلَيْهَا
وَالْمُؤَلَّفَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَالْغٰرِمِينَ وَفِي سَبِيلِ اللّٰهِ وَابْنِ
السَّبِيلِ ۖ فَرِيضَةً مِّنَ اللّٰهِ ۗ وَاللّٰهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٦٠﴾ وَمِنْهُمُ الَّذِينَ
يُؤْذُونَ النَّبِيَّ وَيَقُولُونَ هُوَ أُذُنٌ ۚ قُلْ أُذُنُ خَيْرٍ لَّكُمْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللّٰهِ وَ

If a good thing comes to you, it grieves them; but if a disaster befalls you, they turn away rejoicing and saying, "It is good that we took our precautionary measures beforehand to set our affairs aright." Say to them, "Nothing (good or bad) can befall us except that which Allah has destined for us: Allah is our Guardian and the Believers should put their trust in Him alone."[51] 50-51

Say to them, "What can be the thing you await for us other than one of the two best things?[52] But what we await for you is whether Allah Himself inflicts His chastisement on you or at our hands; well, now await, and we, too await with you". 52

Say, "You may expend your possessions willingly or unwillingly:[53] they shall not be accepted in any case, because you are a wicked people." The reason why their expendings shall not be accepted is no other than that they have not believed in Allah and His Messenger: and they come to offer their *Salāt* but reluctantly, and they expend in the Way of Allah with unwilling hearts. So let not their great wealth and the large number of their children delude you; for Allah wills to chastise them by means of these very things in this worldly life[54] and that they would die in a state of unbelief.[55] 53-55

They swear by Allah that they are Believers like you, whereas they are not at all of you. In fact, they are people who are afraid of you: if they could find a place of refuge or a cave or a hiding place to hide therein, they would run in frantic haste to take refuge in it.[56] 56-57

O Prophet, there are some among them who find fault with you concerning the distribution of *Sadaqāt (Zakāt* collections); if something is given to them thereof, they are well pleased and if they are not given anything thereof they become angry.[57] Would that they were content[58] with what Allah and His Messenger had given them and would say, "Allah suffices us: He will provide for us in abundance out of His own bounty,[59] and His Messenger will also be kindly disposed towards us. Indeed we look to Allah alone."[60] As a matter of fact, *Zakāt* collections are only for the needy[61] and the indigent,[62] and for those who are employed to collect them[63] and for those whose hearts are to be won over[64] and for the ransoming of slaves[65] and for helping the debtors[66] and for the way of Allah[67] and for the hospitality of the wayfarers.[68] 58-60

This is an obligatory duty from Allah: and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.

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journey in the scorching heat of the summer season of the desert: because there was a famine in the country and the new harvest on which they had pinned their hopes, was ready for reaping.

45. Allah did not approve of the exemption which the Holy Prophet had granted to the hypocrites who had put forward lame excuses. Though he knew it well that they were inventing false excuses, he gave them leave to stay behind because of his inherent kindness. But Allah warned him that such a leniency was not well placed as he gave them an opportunity of hiding their hypocrisy. Had they remained behind without getting an exemption, the false profession of their faith would have been exposed.

46. This verse shows clearly that the conflict between Islam and *kufr* is the criterion to distinguish between a true Believer and a hypocrite. The one who supports Islam in this conflict with the whole of his heart and expends all of his energies and resources in order to make it victorious and does not hesitate in the least to make any sacrifices for this purpose, is a true Believer. On the contrary, the one who hesitates to support Islam in this conflict and refrains from making sacrifices in its Way, when he confronts the threat of the victory of *kufr*, is a hypocrite, for such an attitude is itself a proof of the fact that there is no faith in his heart.

47. Allah held them back for He did not like that they should join *Jihād* unwillingly without any sincere intention for it. As they had no mind to make sacrifices to exalt the cause of Islam, and, therefore, would have taken part in it half-heartedly to escape the taunts of the Muslims or to create mischief, this would have resulted in a greater evil, as has been stated explicitly in the next verse (48).

48. Some of the hypocrites, who were requesting the Holy Prophet to give them leave to stay behind on one pretext or the other, were so impudent that they were inventing excuses of a religious or moral nature for refraining from *Jihād* in the Way of Allah. One of these was Jad-bin-Qais, who, according to traditions came to the Holy Prophet and said, "I am a lover of beauty and my people know that I am very weak in regard to women: therefore I am afraid to go forth lest the beauty of the Roman women should beguile me into sin. Therefore "…. do not expose me to temptations."

49. Though they wanted exemption, they had already fallen a prey to the temptations of telling lies, of double dealings and hypocrisy. They deluded

themselves that they would be considered pious people, if they would put forward the fear of temptations to avoid *Jihād*, when, in fact, they had already fallen into the greatest possible temptation of refraining from *Jihād* in the conflict between Islam and *kufr*.

50. That is, "Such a show of piety has not taken them away from Hell; nay, on the other hand, the same thing has caused them to be entangled in the clutches of Hell."

51. In this passage a demarcation has been made between the attitudes of a man of the world and of a man of God. Whatever the man of the world does, he does it to please his own self. He exults if he attains some worldly ends but feels utterly dejected if he fails to attain them. Besides, he depends entirely on his material resources for his success and feels encouraged if these are favourable, but loses heart if these are unfavorable.

In contrast to the man of the world, whatever the man of God does, he does it to please Him and trusts in Him and not in his own powers nor in material resources. Therefore he is neither exultant over his success in the cause of Allah nor loses heart by failure, for he believes that it is the Will of God that is working in both the cases. Therefore he is neither disheartened by disasters nor is filled with conceit by successes. This is because he believes that both prosperity and adversity are from Allah and are nothing but a trial from Him. Therefore his only worry is to do his best to come out successful in His test. Besides, as there are no worldly ends before him, he does not measure his success or failure by the achievement or failure of his ends. On the other hand, the only object before him is to sacrifice his life and wealth in the Way of Allah, and he measures the success or failure of his efforts by the standard he achieves in the performance of this duty. Therefore if he is satisfied that he has done his best to perform this duty, he believes that he has come out successful by the grace of God, though he might not have been able to accomplish anything from the worldly point of view; for he believes that his Allah in Whose cause he has expended his life and wealth will not let go waste the reward of his efforts. As he does not depend on the material resources only, he is neither grieved if they are unfavourable, nor feels exultant when these are favourable.His entire trust is in God Who is the controller of all the resources; therefore he goes on doing his duty even under the most unfavourable circumstances with the same courage and perseverance that is shown by the worldly people infavourable circumstances alone. That is why Allah asked the Holy Prophet to say to the hypocrites, "There is a basic difference between you and us in regard to the conduct of affairs. We believe that both the good and the bad are from Allah; therefore the apparent result does not make us happy or sad. Moreover, we depend on Allah in our affairs and you depend on material resources: so we are content and happy in all circumstances."

52. This is the answer to those who, as usual, were not taking any part in the conflict between Islam and *kufr*, but were very "wisely" watching it from a distance to see whether the Holy Prophet and his Companions would return victorious from Tabūk or would be totally destroyed by the powerful Roman army. They were told that either of the two results they were awaiting, would be good for the Muslims. For it was obvious that it would be a good thing if they won victory. But even if they were killed in the Way of Allah, it would be a success from their point of view, though not in the sight of the world, as the Muslims' standard of measurement is different from that of the hypocrites and the like. A Believer considers it his success if he sacrifices his life and wealth in the Way of Allah, irrespective of whether he succeeds in conquering some country or in establishing a government or not. According to him the criterion of success or failure is whether he has extended or not all the powers of his body and soul, his head and his heart to elevate the Word of Allah, though from the worldly point of view the result of his efforts might be nothing at all.

53. V. 53 is a sharp retort to those hypocrites who desired exemption from *Jihād* but, at the same time, wanted to make some monetary contributions in order to avoid the exposure of their hypocrisy. They said, "Please grant us leave from military service because we are unable to do this, but we are ready to make monetary contributions towards it." To this Allah retorted, saying, "Whatever you may contribute, it shall not be accepted".

54. "Allah wills to chastise them by means of these things in this world", because of their great love for their children and wealth as these misled them to adopt the hypocritical attitude which, in turn, degraded them in the Muslim society. Consequently, in the Islamic System they would lose the respect, the reputation and the prestige they enjoyed in the pre-Islamic society. On the contrary, even the Muslim slaves and the sons of slaves, the farmers and the shepherds, who proved the sincerity of their Faith would win honour in the new system, and the big hereditary chiefs, who refrained from this because of their love of the world, would lose their fame, honour and prestige.

In order to illustrate the above we cite an incident that happened during the Caliphate of Hadrat 'Umar. Once some big chiefs of the Quraish including Suhail-bin-'Amr and Hārith-bin-Hishām, went to see Caliph 'Umar and took their seats near him. Soon after this some humble people from among the *Muhājirūn* and the Ansār came there. The Caliph asked those chiefs to make room for them, and seated these humble people near his own seat. This went on for some time till these chiefs reached the remotest corner in the assembly. When they came out, Hārith-bin-Hishām said to his companions, "You have noticed what a humiliating treatment has been meted out to us today!" Suhail-bin-'Amr replied, "It is no fault of 'Umar but it is our own fault. When we were invited to Islam, we turned away

from it, but these humble people accepted it and made sacrifices for it." Then both of them returned to the meeting and said "Today we have noticed your treatment and we feel that it is all due to our own shortcomings, but tell us if there is a way for us to make atonements for our past failures". The Caliph did not make any reply but merely pointed towards the Roman territory, which meant that the only way of regaining their prestige was to expend their lives and wealths in doing *Jihād* there.

55. "They would die in a state of unbelief" because of their hypocrisy, which would not let them attain sincere Faith till they die. Thus after ruining their moral and spiritual lives in this world, they would leave it in the state of unbelief, which will ruin their lives in the Hereafter in a far worse way.

56. This was the condition of the hypocrites of Al-Madīnah, the majority of whom were rich and old. We find from a list of the hypocrites, cited by Ibn Kathīr in *Al-Badāyah-wan-Nihāyah*, that only one of them was young and none was poor. These people had large properties and flourishing businesses in Al-Madīnah. They were worldly-wise and their wide experience had taught them expediency, but their sense of self-interest had put them into a dilemma. When Islam reached Al-Madīnah and a large majority of the population embraced it sincerely and enthusiastically, they found themselves in a very perplexing situation. They could not reject it outright for the majority of their own people, nay, their own sons and daughters, were filled with enthusiasm for Islam. If they had remained unbelievers, they would have lost their high position, their prestige and reputation and run the risk of a rebellion by the Muslims of their own household. On the other hand, if they sincerely embraced Islam, they would incur the danger of war, not only with the whole of Arabia but also with the adjoining nations and empires. Above all, self-interest had so blinded them that, in resolving the dilemma, they would not consider the problem from the point of view of truth and righteousness which by themselves are worthy of every sacrifice. Therefore they decided that the best thing for them was to profess Islam outwardly in order to make their positions, properties and businesses secure, but to adopt a hypocritical attitude towards it so that they might be able to avoid the losses and perils inherent in the sincere acceptance of Islam.

This verse (57) depicts the dilemma of the hypocrites, as if to say, "In reality these people are not Muslims, though they swear that they are Muslims like you; they profess Islam simply because they are afraid of losses they might incur, if they reject it outright. Then they dare not stay at Al-Madīnah as non-Muslims for they would lose the high positions they enjoyed and might even have to cut off their connection with their wives and children; and if they decided to emigrate from Al-Madīnah, they would have to abandon their properties and business. But they are not prepared for these sacrifices for they have no sincere attachment even

to *kufr*. Therefore they are compelled against their beliefs by the force of circumstances to remain in Al-Madinah: they offer their *Salāt* but regard this as forced labour: they pay the *Zakāt* dues but as a penalty, for they are in their heart of hearts averse to these things. To add to their 'calamities' they are asked every now and then to make sacrifices of their lives and their wealth and to go forth for *Jihād* and to fight with one enemy or the other. They are so much afraid of these 'calamities' that, in order to escape from them, they would run in frantic haste to take refuge in any hole, if they hoped that it would provide immunity against these 'calamities'."

57. The people referred to were the hypocrites, who felt depressed on every occasion of the distribution of the *Zakāt* collections, for they thought that they were not being given their due share. Then they would taunt the Holy Prophet with making unfair distributions. This happened when the payment of *Zakāt* was made an obligatory duty on all those Muslims whose possessions exceeded the prescribed limits. They were required to contribute from their agricultural products, animals, commercial commodities, minerals dug out of mines and the gold and silver they possessed, at different rates, varying from 2 ½% to 20%, and all these were collected and spent in a systematic way from a central place.

As a result of this so much wealth flowed into the hands of a single person, the Holy Prophet, that it had no parallel in the whole territory of Arabia. Naturally the materialists looked at these things with greedy eyes and wanted to grab as much as possible out of this wealth. But their greed could not be satisfied, for the Holy Prophet, who had made the use of *Zakāt* Fund unlawful for his own person and for his own relatives, could not be expected to give anything out of it to anyone who did not deserve it. It is thus obvious that they found fault with the Holy Prophet not because he was unfair in the distribution of the *Zakāt* collections but because he did not allow the hypocrites to grab anything from these without any right to them. They, however, very cunningly hid their real grievance, and accused the Holy Prophet of showing partiality and injustice in the distribution of the *Zakāt* collections.

58. That is, it would have been much better for them if they had been content with their share of the spoils which the Holy Prophet gave them and what they earned by the grace of Allah and with the prosperity Allah had bestowed on them.

59. It would have been good for them to adopt this attitude: "Allah suffices us.... bounty," for they ought to have known that they would receive their due shares besides the *Zakāt* collections out of the wealth that would come to the State treasury, just as they were receiving their shares previously.

60. "We look to Allah alone" means "We give our attention to Allah and His grace and not to the world and its worthless riches and we desire to do His Will: we direct our expectations and hopes to Him and we are content with what He bestows on us."

61. According to the Arabic usage فقراء (*fuqarā:* the needy) are all those people who depend on others for the necessities of life. The Arabic word *fuqarā'*, is a general word for all those who are needy because of some physical defects, or old age, or temporarily, and can become self-supporting if they are helped. *e.g.* orphans, widows, the unemployed, etc., etc.

62. According to the Arabic usage مساكين *(masākin)* are those indigent people who are in greater distress than the needy people usually are. The Holy Prophet especially enjoined the Muslims to help such people as are unable to find the necessary means to satisfy their wants and are in very straitened circumstances, but are so self-respecting that they would not beg for anything nor would others judge from their outward appearance that they were deserving people. According to a Tradition *"Miskīn* is one who cannot make both ends meet, though his appearance does not show that he needs help nor does he beg for help." In short, he is a self-respecting man who has become needy.

63. "....who are employed to collect them...." are those who collect *Zakāt* dues, supervise the collections and keep accounts, and help in their distribution, irrespective of the fact whether or not they are needy or indigent; their remunerations shall be paid out of the *Zakāt* Funds. In this connection it should be noted well that the Holy Prophet had declared the *Zakāt* Funds to be unlawful for himself and for the members of his own family (Banī Hāshim). Accordingly, he never received any remuneration for collecting or distributing *Zakāt* Funds. As regards the other members of Banī Hāshim, they were allowed to do this service without receiving any remuneration, but otherwise it is unlawful for them. On the contrary, the payment of the *Zakāt* dues was obligatory on Banī Hāshim if their possessions warranted this under the prescribed limits, but under no circumstances whatsoever were they allowed to accept anything out of *zakāt* collected from others.

There is, however, a difference of opinion as to whether they should accept anything out of the collections made from their own family or not. Imām Abū Yusuf opines that they are allowed to accept these when they are needy or poor or wayfarers, but the majority of the Jurists regard this also unlawful.

[Contd. on p.208

يُؤْمِنُ لِلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا مِنْكُمْ ۚ وَالَّذِيْنَ يُؤْذُوْنَ
رَسُوْلَ اللّٰهِ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ ﴿٦١﴾ يَحْلِفُوْنَ بِاللّٰهِ لَكُمْ لِيُرْضُوْكُمْ ۚ وَاللّٰهُ وَ
رَسُوْلُهٗۤ اَحَقُّ اَنْ يُّرْضُوْهُ اِنْ كَانُوْا مُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٦٢﴾ اَلَمْ يَعْلَمُوْۤا اَنَّهٗ مَنْ
يُّحَادِدِ اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهٗ فَاَنَّ لَهٗ نَارَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدًا فِيْهَا ۚ ذٰلِكَ الْخِزْيُ
الْعَظِيْمُ ﴿٦٣﴾ يَحْذَرُ الْمُنٰفِقُوْنَ اَنْ تُنَزَّلَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُوْرَةٌ تُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا فِيْ
قُلُوْبِهِمْ ۚ قُلِ اسْتَهْزِءُوْا ۚ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ مُخْرِجٌ مَّا تَحْذَرُوْنَ ﴿٦٤﴾ وَلَئِنْ سَاَلْتَهُمْ
لَيَقُوْلُنَّ اِنَّمَا كُنَّا نَخُوْضُ وَنَلْعَبُ ۚ قُلْ اَبِاللّٰهِ وَاٰيٰتِهٖ وَرَسُوْلِهٖ كُنْتُمْ
تَسْتَهْزِءُوْنَ ﴿٦٥﴾ لَا تَعْتَذِرُوْا قَدْ كَفَرْتُمْ بَعْدَ اِيْمَانِكُمْ ۚ اِنْ نَّعْفُ عَنْ
طَآئِفَةٍ مِّنْكُمْ نُعَذِّبْ طَآئِفَةً ۢ بِاَنَّهُمْ كَانُوْا مُجْرِمِيْنَ ﴿٦٦﴾ اَلْمُنٰفِقُوْنَ وَ
الْمُنٰفِقٰتُ بَعْضُهُمْ مِّنْۢ بَعْضٍ ۘ يَاْمُرُوْنَ بِالْمُنْكَرِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمَعْرُوْفِ
وَيَقْبِضُوْنَ اَيْدِيَهُمْ ۚ نَسُوا اللّٰهَ فَنَسِيَهُمْ ۚ اِنَّ الْمُنٰفِقِيْنَ هُمُ الْفٰسِقُوْنَ ﴿٦٧﴾
وَعَدَ اللّٰهُ الْمُنٰفِقِيْنَ وَالْمُنٰفِقٰتِ وَالْكُفَّارَ نَارَ جَهَنَّمَ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا ۚ هِيَ
حَسْبُهُمْ ۚ وَلَعَنَهُمُ اللّٰهُ ۚ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّقِيْمٌ ﴿٦٨﴾ كَالَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ
كَانُوْۤا اَشَدَّ مِنْكُمْ قُوَّةً وَّاَكْثَرَ اَمْوَالًا وَّاَوْلَادًا ۚ فَاسْتَمْتَعُوْا بِخَلَاقِهِمْ
فَاسْتَمْتَعْتُمْ بِخَلَاقِكُمْ كَمَا اسْتَمْتَعَ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ بِخَلَاقِهِمْ وَ
خُضْتُمْ كَالَّذِيْ خَاضُوْا ۚ اُولٰٓئِكَ حَبِطَتْ اَعْمَالُهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْاٰخِرَةِ ۚ
وَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْخٰسِرُوْنَ ﴿٦٩﴾ اَلَمْ يَاْتِهِمْ نَبَاُ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ قَوْمِ
نُوْحٍ وَّعَادٍ وَّثَمُوْدَ ۙ وَقَوْمِ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ وَاَصْحٰبِ مَدْيَنَ وَالْمُؤْتَفِكٰتِ ۚ
اَتَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ ۚ فَمَا كَانَ اللّٰهُ لِيَظْلِمَهُمْ وَلٰكِنْ كَانُوْۤا اَنْفُسَهُمْ

There are some among them who injure the Prophet and say, "This man readily believes whatever he hears."[69] Say, "It is good for you that he is so:[70] He believes in Allah and puts his trust in the believers[71] and is a blessing for those who are true believers among you. As regards those who injure the Messenger of Allah, there is a painful chastisement for them." 61

These people swear by Allah before you in order to please you, though Allah and His Messenger have a greater right that they should try to please them if they are true believers. Do they not know that whoso opposes Allah and His Messenger shall have the Fire of Hell for him wherein he shall abide for ever? This is a great ignominy. 62-63

The hypocrites dread lest a *sūrah* should be sent down to Muslims revealing to them what is in their hearts.[72] O Prophet, say to them, "Go on mocking, Allah will surely bring to light the very thing you are dreading." If you question them ("What were you talking about?"), they will promptly answer, "We were merely jesting and making merry."[73] Ask them, "What, then! were you mocking at Allah and His Revelations and His Messenger? Do not invent excuses now; you have indeed denied the truth after you had professed belief in it. Even if We pardon some of you, We will surely chastise others of you, for they are the guilty ones".[74] 64-66

The hypocrites, both men and women, are all of a kind: they enjoin what is evil and forbid what is good and withhold their hands from doing good.[75] They forgot Allah: then Allah also forgot them; indeed the hypocrites are the evil-doers. Allah has promised the hypocrites, both men and women, as well as the disbelievers the fire of Hell, wherein they shall abide for ever: that is the proper place for them; for the curse of Allah is upon them and theirs is the lasting torment.—You are behaving[76] just like those who went before you: they had more power than you, and possessed greater riches and had more children than you: they had enjoyed their portion of the good things of the worldly life and you, too, have enjoyed your portion of the good things like them: you are also engaged in idle discussions like the discussions they held. Consequently in the end everything they did, proved vain in this world and shall be vain in the Next World: surely they are the people who are the losers. Has not[77] the story reached 67-70

them of those who had gone before them—the people of Noah, tribes of 'Ād and Thamūd, the people of Abraham and the inhabitants of Midian and of the overturned cities[78]? Their Messengers came to them with clear signs; then it was not Allah Who would wrong them, but they wronged their own selves.[79]

Contd. from p. 205]

64. A portion of *Zakāt* Funds may also be given to win over to Islam those who might be engaged in anti-Islamic activities or to those in the camp of the unbelievers who might be brought to help the Muslims or to those newly converted Muslims, who might be inclined to revert to *kufr* if no monetary help was extended to them. It is permissible to award pensions to them or give them lump sums of money to make them helpers of Islam or submissive to it or at least to render them into harmless enemies. A portion of the spoils or other incomes may be spent on them and, if need be, also a portion of *Zakāt* Funds. In such cases, the condition of being needy or indigent or on a journey etc., is also waived; nay, they might be even rich people or chiefs who are otherwise not eligible for anything from *Zakāt* Funds.

All are agreed that during the time of the Holy Prophet pensions and gifts were given under the head of 'winning over people', but there is a difference of opinion whether this head of expenditure was abolished or not after his death. Imām Abū Hanīfah and his followers are of the opinion that it was abolished during the Caliphate of Hadrat 'Umar, and 'now it is not lawful to spend anything under this head'. Imām Shāfi'ī is of the opinion that something may be given to sinful Muslims under this head from *Zakāt* Funds but not to unbelievers, while other Jurists are of the opinion that expenses under this head are lawful even now, if a need arises for them.

The Hanafis base their opinion on an incident that happened after the death of the Holy Prophet. 'Uyainah bin Hisan and Aqra'a bin Habis came to Hadrat Abū Bakr and asked him to allot to them a certain piece of land. So he gave them a written order for this. They took it to some other highly placed Companions for further confirmation and some of them endorsed this order. But when they took it to Hadrat 'Umar, he tore the paper into pieces before their very eyes, saying, "It is true that the Holy Prophet used to give something to win over your hearts because Islam was weak at that time, but now Allah has made Islam so strong that it does not stand in need of people like you." At this they went to Hadrat Abū Bakr and complained to him about it and taunted him, saying, "Are you the Caliph or 'Umar?" But he took no notice of this nor did any of the Companions differ with Hadrat 'Umar's opinion. The Hanafis conclude from this incident that when the number and power of Muslims increased by the grace of

Allah and they no longer stood in need of any support from such people, the reason for which expenses under this head were permitted in the first instance remained no longer there. Therefore the Companions unanimously abolished expenditure under this head.

Imām Shāfi'i says that there is nothing to prove that the Holy Prophet ever spent anything out of *Zakāt* Funds under this head. All the incidents mentioned in the traditions show that whatever he spent for the purpose of winning over hearts to Islam, was spent out of the spoils of war and not out of *Zakāt* funds.

In my opinion there is nothing to show that the expenses for winning over hearts have been made unlawful for ever up to the Last Day. There is no doubt that the action taken by Hadrat 'Umar was absolutely right, for if and when the Islamic State does not consider it necessary to spend anything under this head, Islam does not make it obligatory to spend something for 'winning hearts'. On the other hand, if need for this arises at any time, it is authorized to incur expenses under this head for Allah has kept a provision for this. Hadrat 'Umar and the other Companions agreed only on this that there was no need to give anything for this purpose at that time because the circumstances did not warrant it. But there is no reason to conclude from this that the Companions disallowed for ever the expenses that were permitted by the Qur'ān under certain circumstances for the good of Islam.

As regards the opinion of Imām Shāfi'ī, it appears to be correct in so far as it is not lawful to spend anything under this head out of *Zakāt* Funds, if these expenses can be met out of other funds. But if it is necessitated that something should be spent under this head out of *Zakāt* Funds, there is no reason why a differentiation should be made in this regard between sinful Muslims and unbelievers. For the Qur'ān has not allocated the share because of the faith of the prospective recipients but because Islam required to win their hearts for its own good and because this could not be achieved except by giving them a portion of wealth. Therefore the Qur'ān allows the *Amīr* of the Believers to spend a part of the *Zakāt* Funds to achieve this end, if, when and where the required conditions exist. The fact that the Holy Prophet did not spend anything from the *Zakāt* Funds on unbelievers for this purpose does not mean that it is unlawful to do so, for he did not spend from this fund because there was enough money in other funds for this purpose. Had it been unlawful to spend anything from *Zakāt* Funds on unbelievers, he would have explicitly forbidden it.

65. A portion of *Zakāt* Funds may be spent for the ransoming of slaves in two ways. First, help may be given to a slave for the payment of the ransom money, if he enters into an agreement with his master that he will set him free, if the slave pays him a certain amount of money. The second way is that the Islamic

government may itself pay the price of his freedom and set him at liberty. There is a consensus of opinion about the first way, but there is difference of opinion about the second way. Hadrat 'Ali, Sa'id bin Jubair, Laith Thauri, Ibrahim Nakh'i, Sha'abi; and Muhammad bin Sirin, Hanafis and Shafi'is consider this as unlawful while Ibn 'Abbās, Hasan Basri, Mālik, Ahmad and Abū Thaur consider this as lawful expenditure from this Fund.

66. Help may be given out of *Zakāt* Funds to such debtors as would be reduced to a state of poverty, if they paid off all their debts out of their own possessions, irrespective of the fact whether they are earning any money or not, whether they are indigent in the general sense or well off. According to some Jurists, the only exceptions to this are those debtors who are spendthrifts or involve themselves in debts by spending money on wicked deeds. Help may be given to them only if and when they repent.

67. "The Way of Allah" is a general term which implies all those good works which please Allah. That is why some Jurists are of the opinion that *Zakāt* Funds may be spent on every kind of good work. But the fact is, and the majority of the earliest Muslim scholars have opined, that here the 'Way of Allah' stands for *Jihād* in the Way of Allah, that is, the struggle to eradicate the systems based on *kufr* and to establish the Islamic system in their stead. Therefore the *Zakāt* Fund may be utilised to meet the expenses of the journeys the people make, or for procuring means of conveyance, equipment, weapons and other articles needed for *Jihād*, irrespective of the fact whether they are so well off or not as to need any help for personal requirements. Likewise help of a temporary or permanent nature may also be given to those people who devote the whole of their time and energies, temporarily or permanently, for this work.

It should also be noted that there has arisen a misunderstanding regarding the "Way of Allah," for the early scholars usually use for *Jihād* the Arabic word as غزوہ *(ghazvah)* which is synonymous with "fight". They, therefore, are of the opinion that *Zakāt* Fund may only be used for the purpose of fighting. But *Jihād* in the Way of Allah is a much more comprehensive term than mere fighting in the Way of Allah. *Jihād* applies to all those efforts that are made to degrade the word of *kufr* and to exalt the Word of Allah and to establish the Islamic System of life, whether by propagating the Message of Allah in the initial stage or by fighting in the final stage of the struggle.

68. Help from *Zakāt* Fund may be given to a wayfarer on a journey even though he might be quite well off at home.

Some of the Jurists are of the opinion that according to this verse only that wayfarer who does not undertake a journey for a sinful purpose may be helped out

of *Zakāt* Funds. But no such condition has been laid down in the Qur'ān or the *Hadīth* to this effect. Besides this, we learn from the fundamental principles of Islam that the sins of a needy person would in no way prevent us from helping him. As a matter of fact such a help may prove very useful in reforming sinful and depraved persons. For if they get a support in the time of need, it may reasonably be expected that they would turn towards purifying their souls.

69. This was one of the charges which the hypocrites levelled against the Holy Prophet. As he used to listen to everyone and let him say freely whatever he had to say, they would find fault with him, saying, "He is a credulous person. Everyone can approach him freely and may say whatever he pleases, and he readily believes whatever he hears!" Though it was a good thing that he heard everyone, the hypocrites intentionally spread it as a vice, so that the poor and humble Muslims should be kept away from coming near the Holy Prophet. The hypocrites did not like that these true Believers should inform the Holy Prophet about their plots, mischiefs and hostile talks. They resented it very much that the Holy Prophet listened to and believed in the talk of these humble people against such "respectable" people as they.

70. The answer to this charge implies two things. First, "Though the Prophet listens to everything, he attends only to that which is good and is for the welfare of the Community, for he is not the one who would listen to or encourage mischievous things." Secondly, "It is good for yourselves that he listens patiently to everyone; otherwise he would not have allowed you to put forward lame excuses for your negligence from the struggle in the Way of Allah. Had he not been forbearing, he would not have paid attention to your false professions of faith and hypocritical expressions of good wishes for Islam, but would have taken you to task for your mischiefs and made it difficult for you to live at Al-Madīnah. It is thus obvious that it is good for you that he listens to everyone."

71. That is, "You are wrong that he listens to everyone. He puts his trust only in the true Believers. Accordingly, he believed only in those things about you that were conveyed to him by good and trustworthy people, who were neither liars nor tale-bearers. Therefore, whatever they said about you was true and should have been taken as true."

72. The hypocrites were afraid that their secret plans would be disclosed in the Qur'ān to their great discomfiture. Though they did not believe that the Holy Prophet was a Messenger of Allah, they were convinced from their experience of the last nine years or so that he possessed some supernatural powers by which he learnt their hidden secrets, and revealed these through the Qur'ān (which according to them was written by himself).

[Contd. on p. 214

يَظْلِمُوْنَ ﴿70﴾ وَالْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ وَالْمُؤْمِنٰتُ بَعْضُهُمْ اَوْلِيَآءُ بَعْضٍ ۘ يَاْمُرُوْنَ
بِالْمَعْرُوْفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُقِيْمُوْنَ الصَّلٰوةَ وَيُؤْتُوْنَ الزَّكٰوةَ
وَيُطِيْعُوْنَ اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهٗ ۭ اُولٰۗىِٕكَ سَيَرْحَمُهُمُ اللّٰهُ ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَزِيْزٌ
حَكِيْمٌ ﴿71﴾ وَعَدَ اللّٰهُ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ وَالْمُؤْمِنٰتِ جَنّٰتٍ تَجْرِيْ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا
الْاَنْهٰرُ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا وَمَسٰكِنَ طَيِّبَةً فِيْ جَنّٰتِ عَدْنٍ ۭ وَرِضْوَانٌ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ
اَكْبَرُ ۭ ذٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيْمُ ﴿72﴾ يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ جَاهِدِ الْكُفَّارَ وَالْمُنٰفِقِيْنَ
وَاغْلُظْ عَلَيْهِمْ ۭ وَمَاْوٰىهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ ۭ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيْرُ ﴿73﴾ يَحْلِفُوْنَ بِاللّٰهِ مَا
قَالُوْا ۭ وَلَقَدْ قَالُوْا كَلِمَةَ الْكُفْرِ وَكَفَرُوْا بَعْدَ اِسْلَامِهِمْ وَهَمُّوْا بِمَا
لَمْ يَنَالُوْا ۚ وَمَا نَقَمُوْٓا اِلَّآ اَنْ اَغْنٰىهُمُ اللّٰهُ وَرَسُوْلُهٗ مِنْ فَضْلِهٖ ۭ فَاِنْ
يَّتُوْبُوْا يَكُ خَيْرًا لَّهُمْ ۚ وَاِنْ يَّتَوَلَّوْا يُعَذِّبْهُمُ اللّٰهُ عَذَابًا اَلِيْمًا ۙ فِي
الدُّنْيَا وَالْاٰخِرَةِ ۚ وَمَا لَهُمْ فِي الْاَرْضِ مِنْ وَّلِيٍّ وَّلَا نَصِيْرٍ ﴿74﴾ وَمِنْهُمْ
مَّنْ عٰهَدَ اللّٰهَ لَىِٕنْ اٰتٰىنَا مِنْ فَضْلِهٖ لَنَصَّدَّقَنَّ وَلَنَكُوْنَنَّ مِنَ
الصّٰلِحِيْنَ ﴿75﴾ فَلَمَّآ اٰتٰىهُمْ مِّنْ فَضْلِهٖ بَخِلُوْا بِهٖ وَتَوَلَّوْا وَّهُمْ
مُّعْرِضُوْنَ ﴿76﴾ فَاَعْقَبَهُمْ نِفَاقًا فِيْ قُلُوْبِهِمْ اِلٰى يَوْمِ يَلْقَوْنَهٗ بِمَآ اَخْلَفُوا
اللّٰهَ مَا وَعَدُوْهُ وَبِمَا كَانُوْا يَكْذِبُوْنَ ﴿77﴾ اَلَمْ يَعْلَمُوْٓا اَنَّ اللّٰهَ يَعْلَمُ سِرَّهُمْ
وَنَجْوٰىهُمْ وَاَنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلَّامُ الْغُيُوْبِ ﴿78﴾ اَلَّذِيْنَ يَلْمِزُوْنَ الْمُطَّوِّعِيْنَ
مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ فِي الصَّدَقٰتِ وَالَّذِيْنَ لَا يَجِدُوْنَ اِلَّا جُهْدَهُمْ
فَيَسْخَرُوْنَ مِنْهُمْ ۭ سَخِرَ اللّٰهُ مِنْهُمْ ۡ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ ﴿79﴾ اِسْتَغْفِرْ
لَهُمْ اَوْ لَا تَسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ ۭ اِنْ تَسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ سَبْعِيْنَ مَرَّةً فَلَنْ يَّغْفِرَ

As regards the true Believers, men and women, they are all comrades to one another: they enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil; they establish *Salāt*, pay *Zakāt* dues, and obey Allah and His Messenger.[80] It is they upon whom Allah will most surely send His blessings. Allah is All-Mighty, All Wise. Allah has promised to the Believers, both men and women, the Gardens underneath which canals flow and wherein they will abide for ever: there will be neat and clean dwelling places for them in these Gardens of perpetual bliss; and, above all, they will enjoy Allah's pleasure: this is the great success 71-72.

O Prophet,[81] strive hard against the disbelievers and the hypocrites and be adamant and stern with them.[82] In the end, their abode shall be Hell, and it is the worst of all abodes. They swear by Allah that they did not say the thing, when in fact, they did utter the word of unbelief.[83] Thus, they were guilty of unbelief after they had professed Islam: however, they could not accomplish what they had intended to do.[84] They had no reason to be spiteful except that Allah and His Messenger had enriched them by His bounty.[85] If even now they repent of their misbehaviour, it will be good for their own selves, but if they do not repent, Allah will chastise them with a painful chastisement in this world and in the Hereafter, and there will be none on the earth to protect and help them. 73-74

There are some among them, who made this covenant with Allah: "If He gives us of His bounty, we will disburse charity and lead a righteous life." But when Allah enriched them by His bounty, they grew niggardly and went back on their covenant, and paid no heed to it.[86] As a consequence of the breach of the covenant they had made with Allah and the lies they told, He set hypocrisy deep in their hearts that will follow them till the Day when they shall meet Him. Do these people not know that Allah knows fully well even their secrets and their conspiracies and that Allah knows fully well all that is hidden. (He fully knows those stingy rich people) who find fault with the monetary sacrifices of those Believers who make willing and voluntary contributions generously and scoff at those people who find nothing to contribute (to the cause of Allah) except what little they contribute sacrificing their own needs:[87] Allah scoffs at those who scoff and there is a painful punishment in store for them. 75-79

Contd. from p.211]

73. This refers to the hypocrites who used to make fun of the Holy Prophet and the true Muslims in their secret meetings when they were making preparations for the expedition to Tabūk. In this way, they used to discourage those Muslims who sincerely and honestly intended to go forth for *Jihād*. We learn many things in this connection from the traditions. For instance, in one of their meetings, when the hypocrites were having a gossip, one of them remarked, "I say! Do you think that the Romans are no better than the Arabs ? You will see that in the near future these "brave" men will be bound with ropes." Another responded to this, "What a fun it would be if after this each one of them is lashed with a hundred stripes !" Still another, ridiculing the preparations by the Prophet for the expedition, remarked, "Look at this man, and his preparations ! He intends to go forth to conquer the forts in Syria and the Roman Empire."

74. That is, "Those foolish buffoons, who take interest in such conversations and mock even at serious things because there is nothing serious in the world for them, may be pardoned. But there are others who mock at these serious things deliberately with evil intentions, because they consider the Messenger and the Way taught by him as ridiculous in spite of their professions of Faith. As their real object is to discourage the believers from making preparations for *Jihād*, they are criminals and not buffoons; therefore they shall not be pardoned at all."

75. These are the common characteristics of all hypocrites. All of them are interested in evil and inimical to good. If some one undertakes to do an evil thing, they would dedicate all their sympathies, counsels encouragements contributions, good wishes, praises and their approvals to such a one. They would join hands to accomplish that evil thing and persuade others to take part in it and encourage the doer in every way. Moreover, they would show in every way their hearty pleasure if they perceived that that evil thing was progressing satisfactorily. On the other hand, if someone undertakes to do a good thing, they are shocked to hear the very news of it for it pains their hearts; nay, they do not even like that such a thing should be undertaken at all. Then if they see some one coming forward to help it, they feel very uncomfortable and try their worst to hinder him from it and if he does not give it up, they would wish that he should fail in it. Then all of them have this common characteristic that they do not spend anything at all for good ends irrespective of the fact whether they be otherwise parsimonious or generous. At any rate, their wealth is either for hoarding or for evil deeds. As a matter of fact, they would spend large sums on evil works generously but would not be willing to spend a farthing for good things.

76. In the preceding verse, they were being mentioned in the third person, but here they are being addressed directly in the second person.

77. Again they are being mentioned in the third person.

78. These were the people of Lot.

79. "They wronged themselves" for they were themselves responsible for their destruction. Allah had no enmity with them and had no desire to destroy them. As a matter of fact, they themselves adopted the way of life that led to destruction, whereas Allah had sent His Messengers to them and afforded them the opportunities of thinking, understanding and reforming. His Messengers admonished and warned them of the consequences of treading wrong paths, and presented very clearly before them the Way that leads to success, and also the ways that lead to destruction. But when they did not benefit from the opportunities that were offered to them to mend their ways, and persisted in treading the ways that led to destruction, they inevitably met with the end for which they were heading. And this horrible end was not due to Allah's will to be unjust to them but due to their own evil doings.

80. The contrast between the characteristics of the hypocrites (v. 67) and of the true Believers (v. 71) clearly shows that the two are entirely different from each other, in spite of their outwardly similar profession of faith in Islam and obedience to it. The difference lies in their morals, conducts, habits, attitudes and ways of thinking. On the one hand are the hypocrites whose tongues are never tired of professing faith in Islam, but who are void of sincere faith, and whose whole conduct belies their professions. They are, as it were, like bottles which have labels of "musk", but contain cow-dung which may easily be recognized from its appearance and unpleasant odour. On the other hand are the true Believers, who are like those bottles which contain musk which may be tested in any way—by its appearance, its smell and other characteristics—to be musk. Likewise, though the outward label of Islam apparently makes both of them one community of Muslims, the real characteristics of the hypocritical Muslims are so different from those of the true Muslims that they have, in fact, become two different communities. The hypocritical Muslims, men and women, form a separate community with those who have similar characteristics. They all are neglectful of Allah, take interest in evil things and deviate from all that is good and never co-operate with true Believers and, in short, they are allies to one another and practically dissociate themselves from true Believers and form a group of their own. In contrast to them, the true Believers, men and women, have practically become one community. All of them take interest in what is good, and abhor what is evil: they remember Allah day and night and cannot think of life

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اللّٰهُ لَهُمْ ۚ ذٰلِكَ بِاَنَّهُمْ كَفَرُوْا بِاللّٰهِ وَرَسُوْلِهٖ ۚ وَاللّٰهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ
الْفٰسِقِيْنَ ﴿٨٠﴾ فَرِحَ الْمُخَلَّفُوْنَ بِمَقْعَدِهِمْ خِلٰفَ رَسُوْلِ اللّٰهِ وَكَرِهُوْٓا
اَنْ يُّجَاهِدُوْا بِاَمْوَالِهِمْ وَاَنْفُسِهِمْ فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ وَقَالُوْا لَا تَنْفِرُوْا
فِي الْحَرِّ ۭ قُلْ نَارُ جَهَنَّمَ اَشَدُّ حَرًّا ۭ لَوْ كَانُوْا يَفْقَهُوْنَ ﴿٨١﴾ فَلْيَضْحَكُوْا
قَلِيْلًا وَّلْيَبْكُوْا كَثِيْرًا ۚ جَزَاۗءًۢ بِمَا كَانُوْا يَكْسِبُوْنَ ﴿٨٢﴾ فَاِنْ رَّجَعَكَ اللّٰهُ
اِلٰى طَاۗىِٕفَةٍ مِّنْهُمْ فَاسْتَاْذَنُوْكَ لِلْخُرُوْجِ فَقُلْ لَّنْ تَخْرُجُوْا مَعِيَ اَبَدًا
وَّلَنْ تُقَاتِلُوْا مَعِيَ عَدُوًّا ۭ اِنَّكُمْ رَضِيْتُمْ بِالْقُعُوْدِ اَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ فَاقْعُدُوْا
مَعَ الْخٰلِفِيْنَ ﴿٨٣﴾ وَلَا تُصَلِّ عَلٰٓى اَحَدٍ مِّنْهُمْ مَّاتَ اَبَدًا وَّلَا تَقُمْ عَلٰي
قَبْرِهٖ ۭ اِنَّهُمْ كَفَرُوْا بِاللّٰهِ وَرَسُوْلِهٖ وَمَاتُوْا وَهُمْ فٰسِقُوْنَ ﴿٨٤﴾ وَلَا تُعْجِبْكَ
اَمْوَالُهُمْ وَاَوْلَادُهُمْ ۭ اِنَّمَا يُرِيْدُ اللّٰهُ اَنْ يُّعَذِّبَهُمْ بِهَا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَ
تَزْهَقَ اَنْفُسُهُمْ وَهُمْ كٰفِرُوْنَ ﴿٨٥﴾ وَاِذَآ اُنْزِلَتْ سُوْرَةٌ اَنْ اٰمِنُوْا بِاللّٰهِ
وَجَاهِدُوْا مَعَ رَسُوْلِهِ اسْتَاْذَنَكَ اُولُوا الطَّوْلِ مِنْهُمْ وَقَالُوْا ذَرْنَا
نَكُنْ مَّعَ الْقٰعِدِيْنَ ﴿٨٦﴾ رَضُوْا بِاَنْ يَّكُوْنُوْا مَعَ الْخَوَالِفِ وَطُبِعَ عَلٰي
قُلُوْبِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا يَفْقَهُوْنَ ﴿٨٧﴾ لٰكِنِ الرَّسُوْلُ وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا مَعَهٗ جٰهَدُوْا
بِاَمْوَالِهِمْ وَاَنْفُسِهِمْ ۚ وَاُولٰۗىِٕكَ لَهُمُ الْخَيْرٰتُ ۚ وَاُولٰۗىِٕكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُوْنَ ﴿٨٨﴾
اَعَدَّ اللّٰهُ لَهُمْ جَنّٰتٍ تَجْرِيْ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا ۭ ذٰلِكَ الْفَوْزُ
الْعَظِيْمُ ﴿٨٩﴾ وَجَاۗءَ الْمُعَذِّرُوْنَ مِنَ الْاَعْرَابِ لِيُؤْذَنَ لَهُمْ وَقَعَدَ الَّذِيْنَ
كَذَبُوا اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهٗ ۭ سَيُصِيْبُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا مِنْهُمْ عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ ﴿٩٠﴾ لَيْسَ
عَلَي الضُّعَفَاۗءِ وَلَا عَلَي الْمَرْضٰى وَلَا عَلَي الَّذِيْنَ لَا يَجِدُوْنَ مَا يُنْفِقُوْنَ

O Prophet, (it will all be the same) whether you beg forgiveness for such people or not; for Allah will not forgive them even if you beg forgiveness for them seventy times. This is because they have no belief in Allah and His Messenger: and Allah does not show guidance to the wrong-doers. 80

Those who were allowed to remain behind, were happy that they had not gone with Allah's Messenger, and had stayed at home, for they did not like to do *Jihād* in the Way of Allah with their possessions and their persons. They said to the people, "Do not go forth in this heat." Say to them, "The Fire of Hell is much hotter than this"; would that they understood this! Let them now laugh little and weep much for the recompense of what they have been earning is such (that they should weep). Henceforth, if Allah brings you among them and any of them asks your leave to go forth for *Jihād,* say to them plainly, "Now you shall never be allowed to go forth with me nor to fight an enemy in my company; as you were pleased to stay behind the first time, now you stay at home with those who stay behind". 81-83

And in future you should never say funeral prayer for anyone from among them, who dies nor stand at his grave, for they have denied Allah and His Messenger and died the while they were transgressors.[89] And let not the abundance of their possessions and children delude you; for Allah wills only to chastise them by means of their possessions and children in this world and let their souls depart while they are still disbelievers. 84-85

Whenever a Sūrah was sent down with the revelation, "Believe in Allah and go forth for *Jihād* with His Messenger", you might have perceived that even the capable people from among them began to beg you to excuse them from *Jihād,* saying, "Please leave us behind with those who are to stay at home. Those people chose to stay with those who had remained behind and a seal was set upon their hearts: therefore they do not understand anything now.[89] But the Messenger and those who shared his belief did *Jihād* with their possessions and persons: now all the good things are for them only and they alone are truly successful. Allah has prepared for them Gardens underneath which canals flow wherein they will abide for ever: this is the great success. 86-89

90 And many from among the Bedouins[90] also came with their excuses that they, too, might be allowed to remain behind: thus stayed behind those who had made a false compact of Faith with Allah and His Messenger. In the near future those from among the Bedouins who adopted the way of unbelief [91] shall meet with a painful chastisement.

Contd. from p.215]

without the constant remembrance of Allah; they are very generous in spending in the Way of Allah, and obey Him and His Messenger without any mental reservations. These common characteristics have dissociated them from the hypocrites and united them in one Community and made them allies to one another.

81. From here begins the third discourse that was sent down after the expedition to Tabūk.

82. This Command enunciated the change of policy towards the hypocrites. Up to this time, leniency was being shown to them for two reasons. First, the Muslims had not as yet become so powerful as to take the risk of an internal conflict in addition to the one with the external enemies. The other reason was to give enough respite to those people who were involved in doubts and suspicions so that they could get sufficient time for attaining to faith and belief. But now the time had come for a change of policy. The whole of Arabia had been subdued and a bitter conflict with the external enemies was about to start; therefore it was required that these internal enemies should be crushed down so that they should not be able to conspire with the external enemies to stir up any internal danger to the Muslims. And now it had become possible to crush them. As regards the second reason, these hypocrites had been given respite for a period of nine years to observe, to consider and test the Right Way, and they could have availed of it, if they had any good in them. So there was no reason why any more leniency should be shown to them. Therefore, Allah enjoined the Muslims to treat the hypocrites on one and the same level with the disbelievers and start *Jihād* against them, and to give up the policy of leniency they had adopted towards them and adopt a firm and stern policy instead.

In this connection, it should also be noted that this verse does not enjoin the Muslims to fight with the hypocrites. It merely meant to end the policy of leniency that had hitherto been adopted towards them. This verse enjoined that they were no more to be considered a part and parcel of the Muslim community nor were they to be allowed to take part in the management of its affairs nor consulted about any matter, so that they might not be able to spread the poison of hypocrisy. This changed policy required that the true Believers should expose all

those, who adopted a hypocritical attitude and conduct and showed in any way that they were not sincere allies to Allah, His Messenger and the true Muslims. Each and every one of such hypocrites should be openly criticized and reproved so that there should remain for them no more place of honour and trust in the Muslim society: they should be socially boycotted and kept away from the consultations of the Community: their evidence in the courts of law should be regarded as untrustworthy: the doors of offices and positions of trust should be closed against them and they should be held in contempt in the social meetings. In short; every Muslim should show by his behaviour to such a one that there was no place of honour or respect or trust for a hypocrite in the Muslim society. Besides this, if any one of them was found to be guilty of treachery, there should be no connivance at his crime, nor should he be pardoned but openly tried in a court of law and should be duly punished.

This Command was urgently needed at the time it came. It was obvious that in order to save the Muslim ,Community from fall and degradation, it was essential to purge it of all the internal dangers to its solidarity, because a Community, which nourishes hypocrites and traitors and allows the internal enemies to flourish with honour and security, shall inevitably be doomed to moral degradation and ultimate destruction. Hypocrisy is a plague and a hypocrite is the rat that carries and spreads its germs. Therefore to allow him the freedom of movement in the society is to expose the whole population to the danger of hypocrisy. Likewise, to give a place of honour and prestige to a hypocrite is to encourage many others in hypocrisy and treachery, for this shows that it is not sincerity, true faith and its welfare that count in it. One may flourish and prosper in it even if one verbally professes to be a Muslim and at the same time indulges in dishonesty and treachery. The Holy Prophet has expressed the same thing in a pithy saying. He said, "Whoso honours and respects the inventor of new practices which are un-Islamic, indeed helps to demolish the very structure of Islam."

83. We cannot say with certainty what that "word of unbelief" was which they had uttered. There are, however, traditions that mention several things of unbelief which were uttered by the hypocrites during that time. For instance, it is related that a hypocrite, while he was talking to a young Muslim, a near relative of his, said, "If all that this man (referring to the Holy Prophet) is saying be true, then we are worse than donkeys." Another tradition relates that when, during the expedition to Tabūk, one of the she-camels of the Holy Prophet went astray and the Muslims were moving about in search of it, a party of the hypocrites made a good deal of fun of this, saying to one another, "(Just consider the Prophethood of this man!) He tells news of heavens but cannot tell where his she-camel is!"

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حَرَجٌ إِذَا نَصَحُوا لِلّٰهِ وَرَسُولِهٖ ؕ مَا عَلَى الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ مِنْ سَبِيْلٍ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ
غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿٩١﴾ وَّلَا عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ إِذَا مَآ أَتَوْكَ لِتَحْمِلَهُمْ قُلْتَ لَآ أَجِدُ مَآ
أَحْمِلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ ۖ تَوَلَّوْا وَّأَعْيُنُهُمْ تَفِيْضُ مِنَ الدَّمْعِ حَزَنًا أَلَّا يَجِدُوْا مَا
يُنْفِقُوْنَ ﴿٩٢﴾ إِنَّمَا السَّبِيْلُ عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ يَسْتَأْذِنُوْنَكَ وَهُمْ أَغْنِيَآءُ ۚ رَضُوْا
بِأَنْ يَّكُوْنُوْا مَعَ الْخَوَالِفِ ۙ وَطَبَعَ اللّٰهُ عَلٰى قُلُوْبِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٩٣﴾

يَعْتَذِرُوْنَ إِلَيْكُمْ إِذَا رَجَعْتُمْ إِلَيْهِمْ ۚ قُلْ لَّا تَعْتَذِرُوْا لَنْ نُّؤْمِنَ لَكُمْ

قَدْ نَبَّأَنَا اللّٰهُ مِنْ أَخْبَارِكُمْ ۚ وَسَيَرَى اللّٰهُ عَمَلَكُمْ وَرَسُوْلُهٗ ثُمَّ تُرَدُّوْنَ
إِلٰى عٰلِمِ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٩٤﴾ سَيَحْلِفُوْنَ
بِاللّٰهِ لَكُمْ إِذَا انْقَلَبْتُمْ إِلَيْهِمْ لِتُعْرِضُوْا عَنْهُمْ ۖ فَأَعْرِضُوْا عَنْهُمْ ۖ إِنَّهُمْ
رِجْسٌ ۖ وَّمَأْوٰهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ ۚ جَزَآءً بِمَا كَانُوْا يَكْسِبُوْنَ ﴿٩٥﴾ يَحْلِفُوْنَ لَكُمْ
لِتَرْضَوْا عَنْهُمْ ۚ فَإِنْ تَرْضَوْا عَنْهُمْ فَإِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يَرْضٰى عَنِ الْقَوْمِ
الْفٰسِقِيْنَ ﴿٩٦﴾ اَلْأَعْرَابُ أَشَدُّ كُفْرًا وَّنِفَاقًا وَّأَجْدَرُ أَلَّا يَعْلَمُوْا حُدُوْدَ مَآ
أَنْزَلَ اللّٰهُ عَلٰى رَسُوْلِهٖ ۗ وَاللّٰهُ عَلِيْمٌ حَكِيْمٌ ﴿٩٧﴾ وَمِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ مَنْ يَّتَّخِذُ
مَا يُنْفِقُ مَغْرَمًا وَّيَتَرَبَّصُ بِكُمُ الدَّوَآئِرَ ۚ عَلَيْهِمْ دَآئِرَةُ السَّوْءِ ۗ وَاللّٰهُ
سَمِيْعٌ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿٩٨﴾ وَمِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ مَنْ يُّؤْمِنُ بِاللّٰهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَيَتَّخِذُ
مَا يُنْفِقُ قُرُبٰتٍ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ وَصَلَوٰتِ الرَّسُوْلِ ۗ أَلَآ إِنَّهَا قُرْبَةٌ لَّهُمْ ۗ
سَيُدْخِلُهُمُ اللّٰهُ فِيْ رَحْمَتِهٖ ۗ إِنَّ اللّٰهَ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿٩٩﴾ وَالسّٰبِقُوْنَ
الْأَوَّلُوْنَ مِنَ الْمُهٰجِرِيْنَ وَالْأَنْصَارِ وَالَّذِيْنَ اتَّبَعُوْهُمْ بِإِحْسَانٍ ۙ
رَّضِيَ اللّٰهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوْا عَنْهُ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ جَنّٰتٍ تَجْرِيْ تَحْتَهَا الْأَنْهٰرُ

There is no harm if the weak, the sick and those that have no means of providing for *Jihād* stay behind, provided they are sincerely faithful to Allah and His Messenger.[92] There is no cause of blame against such righteous people: and Allah is Forgiving and Compassionate. Likewise there can be no ground for criticising those people who came to you in person and requested you to provide them with mounts. For when you said to them, "I am unable to provide you with mounts, they returned with heavy hearts, their eyes overflowing with tears: they were filled with sorrow that they had no means of going forth for *Jihad* at their own expense.[93] However, the conduct of those who are well-to-do and still ask for exemption from *Jihād*, is indeed very objectionable. As such people chose to stay behind with women, Allah set a seal upon their hearts: therefore now they do not know anything (about the consequences they shall incur in Allah's court). 91-93

When you return to them, they will apologise to you, offering many sorts of excuses: but say to them plainly, "Make no excuses: we will not believe in anything you say for Allah has revealed to us the whole truth about you. Now Allah and His Messenger will keep a watch over your conduct: then you shall return to Him Who knows all that is visible and hidden, and He will tell you all that you have been doing." On your return they will take solemn oaths by Allah to reassure you, so that you may turn away from them. So turn away from them[94] because they are a filth and their real abode is Hell which shall be the recompense of what they have earned. They will take solemn oaths before you to satisfy you, but even if you accept their excuses, Allah will never accept the excuses of the evil-doers. 94-96

These Bedouins are most stubborn in unbelief and hypocrisy, and, in all probability, will remain ignorant of the laws of the Way which Allah has sent down to His Messenger :[95] and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise. There are such among the Bedouins, who regard what they expend in the Way as a penalty[96] and await some change of fortune to turn against you (so that they should be able to overthrow the government you have imposed on them,) whereas they themselves have been encircled by a vicious circle; and Allah hears everything and knows everything. But among these Bedouins there are some, who believe in Allah and the Last Day and regard what they expend in the 97-99

Way as a means of bringing themselves nearer to Allah and of seeking the Messenger's prayers for Allah's blessing; yes, this is indeed a means of bringing them nearer to Allah, and Allah will certainly admit them to His blessing; indeed Allah is Forgiving and Compassionate.

Contd. from p. 219]

84. This is a reference to the plots which the hypocrites had made during the Tabūk expedition. On the return journey they conspired to push the Holy Prophet down into some ravine, while he would be passing over some hill at night. The Holy Prophet got wind of the plot and ordered that the army should take the longer route through the valley round the hills, while he himself along with 'Ammār-bin-Yāsir and Huzaifah-bin-Yamān would make the short-cut over the hills. While they were on the way, suddenly they discovered that a dozen of the hypocrites, with covered faces, were following them. At this Hadrat Huzaifah turned towards them so that he may drive away their camels but they were terrified when they saw him coming towards them and took to flight lest they should be recognized.

The other plot was to declare 'Abdullah bin Ubayy as king at Al-Madīnah as soon as they should hear some 'bad news' about the Muslim army, because according to their expectations, the Holy Prophet and his faithful Companions could never fare well against the armies of the Great Roman Empire.

85. This is an insinuation to put to shame by an indirect suggestion the hypocrites of Al-Madīnah. This referred to the prosperity of Al-Madīnah and its people, for Al-Madīnah was a small town before the migration of the Holy Prophet to it, and its two clans—Aus and Khazraj—did not hold any high position in regard to wealth or prestige. But within the short period of nine years or so, this small town became the capital of Arabia because of the residence of the Holy Prophet and the sacrifices of the *Ansār*, the true Muslims. As a result of this, the former peasants—Aus and Khazraj of Al-Madīnah became the 'Great Ones' of the Islamic State and wealth began to flow into this central city on account of spoils of war and increased commercial activity. The hypocrites were rebuked in this verse that, instead of being grateful to the Holy Prophet, they showed anger and spite against him for no other "sin" than that he had brought forth prosperity among them.

86. This is an instance of their ingratitude for which the hypocrites were rebuked in v. 74.

They broke their covenant with Allah which enjoined them to spend money in charity, if Allah enriched them by His bounty. This shows that they were confirmed criminals and they did not care in the least for the agreements they made, and were niggardly and had no moral code to observe.

87. This refers to the mean conduct which the hypocrites evinced on the occasion of the appeal of the Holy Prophet for contributions towards the Tabūk expedition. The well-to-do hypocrites did not themselves make any contributions, but when the sincere Muslims came forward with generous contributions according to their means, they began to deride them. If a well-to-do Muslim made a handsome contribution, they would at once accuse him to be guilty of a 'show-off'. On the other hand, if a poor Muslim contributed a paltry sum which he could hardly spare after sacrificing some of the barest necessities of his family or contributing the small earnings obtained by hard work, they would at once ridicule, saying, "Lo! Here is the farthing that will help conquer the forts of the Roman Empire!"

88. This verse was sent down to prevent the Holy Prophet from saying funeral prayers for 'Abdullah bin Ubayy, the ringleader of the hypocrites, who died a short while after the Tabūk Expedition. His son 'Abdullah who was a sincere Muslim called on the Holy Prophet and requested him to give his shirt for his father's shroud. The Holy Prophet very generously granted his request. Then he begged the Holy Prophet to lead his father's funeral prayer. The Holy Prophet agreed to this also but Hadrat 'Umar very respectfully requested him repeatedly not to do so, saying, "O Prophet of Allah! will you say funeral prayer for a person who was guilty of such and such crimes and sins"? The Holy Prophet, who was a blessing both for friends and for foes, got ready to say funeral prayer even for that man who was a deadly enemy of Islam. At last when he stood up to lead the funeral prayer, this verse was sent down to prevent him from this by a direct Command from God, in accordance with the changed policy declared in v. 73 which forbade to do anything that might encourage the hypocrites among the Muslims.

The above incident led to the formulation of the regulation that the leaders and prominent people from among the Muslims should neither lead nor offer the funeral prayers of the sinners against Islam or for those notorious for their disobedience to Islam. After this, whenever a request was made to the Holy Prophet for a funeral prayer, he would first enquire about the conduct of the deceased person. If he came to know that he was a bad person, he would say to his people, "You may perform his burial just as you like".

89. "...they do not understand anything now," for they deliberately and intentionally chose the shameful way of staying at home with women, when they were required to go forth for *Jihād*, though they were healthy, physically fit and well-to-do, and professed Islam. Therefore, according to the Divine Law of Nature, a seal was set upon their hearts and they were bereft of those noble feelings which make one feel ashamed of adopting such a disgraceful conduct.

[Contd. on p. 226

خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَآ اَبَدًا ؕ ذٰلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيْمُ ﴿١٠٠﴾ وَمِمَّنْ حَوْلَكُمْ مِّنَ الْاَعْرَابِ
مُنٰفِقُوْنَ ۛ وَمِنْ اَهْلِ الْمَدِيْنَةِ ۛ مَرَدُوْا عَلَى النِّفَاقِ ۖ لَا تَعْلَمُهُمْ ؕ نَحْنُ
نَعْلَمُهُمْ ؕ سَنُعَذِّبُهُمْ مَّرَّتَيْنِ ثُمَّ يُرَدُّوْنَ اِلٰى عَذَابٍ عَظِيْمٍ ﴿١٠١﴾ وَاٰخَرُوْنَ
اعْتَرَفُوْا بِذُنُوْبِهِمْ خَلَطُوْا عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَّاٰخَرَ سَيِّئًا ؕ عَسَى اللّٰهُ اَنْ
يَّتُوْبَ عَلَيْهِمْ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿١٠٢﴾ خُذْ مِنْ اَمْوَالِهِمْ صَدَقَةً
تُطَهِّرُهُمْ وَتُزَكِّيْهِمْ بِهَا وَصَلِّ عَلَيْهِمْ ؕ اِنَّ صَلٰوتَكَ سَكَنٌ لَّهُمْ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ
سَمِيْعٌ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿١٠٣﴾ اَلَمْ يَعْلَمُوْٓا اَنَّ اللّٰهَ هُوَ يَقْبَلُ التَّوْبَةَ عَنْ عِبَادِهٖ وَيَاْخُذُ
الصَّدَقٰتِ وَاَنَّ اللّٰهَ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿١٠٤﴾ وَقُلِ اعْمَلُوْا فَسَيَرَى اللّٰهُ
عَمَلَكُمْ وَرَسُوْلُهٗ وَالْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ ؕ وَسَتُرَدُّوْنَ اِلٰى عٰلِمِ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ
فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿١٠٥﴾ وَاٰخَرُوْنَ مُرْجَوْنَ لِاَمْرِ اللّٰهِ اِمَّا يُعَذِّبُهُمْ
وَاِمَّا يَتُوْبُ عَلَيْهِمْ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ عَلِيْمٌ حَكِيْمٌ ﴿١٠٦﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ اتَّخَذُوْا مَسْجِدًا
ضِرَارًا وَّكُفْرًا وَّتَفْرِيْقًا بَيْنَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ وَاِرْصَادًا لِّمَنْ حَارَبَ اللّٰهَ وَ
رَسُوْلَهٗ مِنْ قَبْلُ ؕ وَلَيَحْلِفُنَّ اِنْ اَرَدْنَآ اِلَّا الْحُسْنٰى ؕ وَاللّٰهُ يَشْهَدُ اِنَّهُمْ
لَكٰذِبُوْنَ ﴿١٠٧﴾ لَا تَقُمْ فِيْهِ اَبَدًا ؕ لَمَسْجِدٌ اُسِّسَ عَلَى التَّقْوٰى مِنْ اَوَّلِ يَوْمٍ
اَحَقُّ اَنْ تَقُوْمَ فِيْهِ ؕ فِيْهِ رِجَالٌ يُّحِبُّوْنَ اَنْ يَّتَطَهَّرُوْا ؕ وَاللّٰهُ يُحِبُّ
الْمُطَّهِّرِيْنَ ﴿١٠٨﴾ اَفَمَنْ اَسَّسَ بُنْيَانَهٗ عَلٰى تَقْوٰى مِنَ اللّٰهِ وَرِضْوَانٍ خَيْرٌ
اَمْ مَّنْ اَسَّسَ بُنْيَانَهٗ عَلٰى شَفَا جُرُفٍ هَارٍ فَانْهَارَ بِهٖ فِيْ نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ ؕ وَ
اللّٰهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿١٠٩﴾ لَا يَزَالُ بُنْيَانُهُمُ الَّذِيْ بَنَوْا رِيْبَةً فِيْ
قُلُوْبِهِمْ اِلَّآ اَنْ تَقَطَّعَ قُلُوْبُهُمْ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ عَلِيْمٌ حَكِيْمٌ ﴿١١٠﴾ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ اشْتَرٰى مِنَ

Allah was pleased with those *Muhājirs* and *Ansār* who were the first to respond to the invitation to the Faith, and with those also who followed them in their righteous conduct, and they, too, were pleased with (the reward from) Allah; He has got ready for them gardens underneath which canals flow and they will abide therein for ever; this is the greatest success. 100

There are many hypocrites among the Bedouins who dwell around you; likewise among the citizens of Al-Madīnah there are hypocrites who have become experts in hypocrisy. You do not know them, but We do know them.[97] The time is coming when We will give them double chastisement;[98] then they shall be returned to a far greater torment. 101

There are some others who have confessed their sins: they have a mixed record of deeds, good and bad. It may be that Allah will turn to them again with kindness for He is Forbearing and Compassionate. O Prophet, accept propitiatory offerings from their possessions to cleanse and purify them thereby, and help them onward (in the way of virtue); and pray for blessings for them because your prayer will bring comfort to them; and Allah hears everything and knows everything. Do these people not know that it is Allah alone Who accepts the repentance of His servants and approves of their propitiatory offerings, and that Allah is indeed Forgiving, Compassionate? And tell them, O Prophet: Do as you will: Allah and His Messenger and the Believers will now keep a watch over your conduct;[99] then you shall return to Him Who knows all that is visible and hidden and He will tell you all that you have been doing.[100] 102-105

There are some others who yet await Allah's decision: He may either punish them or turn to them again with mercy: Allah knows everything and is All-Wise.[101] 106

There are others who built a "mosque" in order to harm the Righteous Mission and to practise unbelief (instead of Allah's worship) and to cause discord among the Believers, and to make this ('place of worship') an ambush for the one who even before this had been in conflict with Allah and His Messenger. They will take solemn oaths and say, "Our intention was nothing but good." But Allah is a witness that they are absolute liars. You should never stand in that building: the 107-110

Mosque which has been founded on piety from the very first day, is the proper place for you to stand (for prayer). For there are such people in it as would like to keep themselves pure; and Allah likes those people who like to keep themselves pure.[102] Why, is he better who founded his building upon Allah's fear and for His approval or he who founded his building on the brink of an under-mined bank[103] that tumbled with him down into the fire of Hell? Allah never shows the Right Way to such workers of iniquity.[104] This building which they have built will never cease to create doubts in their hearts (from which there is no way to come out) unless it be that their hearts are cut into pieces;[105] and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.

Contd. from p.223]

90. Here the word "Bedouins" refers to those Arabs who lived in the desert near Al-Madīnah.

91. The hypocritical profession of Islam has been called the way of unbelief, because that profession of faith which lacks practical proof, surrender, sincerity and obedience, is, in fact, unbelief. As such persons prefer their own interests and worldly desires to Allah and His Way, they shall be dealt with by Allah as unbelievers and rebels, even if they could not be legally treated as such in this world but were considered Muslims due to their profession of faith. This is because in the life of this world, the Islamic Law treats as unbelievers only such hypocrites as are guilty of open unbelief, rebellion, treachery or infidelity. That is why there are many cases of hypocrisy that do not come under *kufr* in the Islamic *Sharī'ah*. However, this does not mean that if one escaped the penalty according to the Islamic Code, one will escape punishment according to the Divine Judgement also.

92. This implies that even those people who are otherwise excusable because of disability, sickness or indigence will be pardoned only if they are sincerely and truly faithful to Allah and His Messenger. Without this fidelity, no one shall be pardoned merely because he was sick or indigent at the time when he was called upon to go forth for *Jihād*. For Allah does not judge merely by appearances and treat alike and forgive all those who present "medical certificates" of their disability because of sickness, old age or some other physical defect. On the Day of Judgement, He will examine minutely the heart of each and everyone, and take into account his whole conduct, open and hidden, and will consider whether his excuse was of a faithful servant or of a traitor and rebel. It is obvious that each and every case, in spite of apparent similarity, requires a separate and different judgement. For instance, let us take the case of two men

who suddenly fell ill on the eve of *Jihād*. One of them thanked his lucky stars for the timely disease, as if to say, "How lucky it is that I have fallen ill on the opportune moment! Otherwise, this calamity of *Jihād* could not have been avoided and I would have had to suffer it anyhow." On the contrary, the other man was filled with sorrow at his illness, and he cried in anguish, "Ah! what a bad luck! I have been attacked by this sudden disease at the time when I ought to have been in the battle-field instead of lying down here in bed!" One of them made his illness not only an excuse for exemption from *Jihād* but also tried to dissuade others from it. On the contrary, the other one, though lying in the sick-bed, went on urging his own dear relatives, friends and others to go forth to *Jihād;* nay, he entreated even those who were attending him, saying, "Leave me in the care of the Real Master, and go forth to *Jihād*. I am sure that the arrangements for my nursing will be made somehow or other; therefore you should not waste your precious chance for my sake but go forth and serve the Right Way." But the other, who stayed at home, spent all this time in spreading discontent and bad news and in damaging war efforts and in disrupting the affairs of the families of the fighters. The other man in similar circumstances did his very best to make the home front as strong as he could. Though these two men had similar excuses for exemption, they cannot be considered as equal in the sight of Allah: the second one only may expect Allah's pardon, and not the first man who was a traitor and rebel against Allah, though he might have had a genuine excuse for exemption.

93. Such people as felt a strong urge for *Jihād* but could not join it because of some really genuine excuse, will be counted by Allah among those who actually took part in it, even though they could not join it in person and do anything practically for it. This is because they were sincerely grieved at their absence from *Jihād* for no fault of theirs, just as a man of the world would be grieved if he were deprived of some lucrative business or of some high profit. Allah considers such a one as on duty, because his heart was serving in the Way of Allah, though he had been deprived of active service on account of some genuine excuse. The Holy Prophet, while returning from Tabūk, stated the same thing like this: "There are some people at Al-Madīnah (at this time) who have been travelling and marching all along with you through every valley. Naturally the Companions to whom he was speaking were wonder struck at this. So they asked, "While staying at Al-Madīnah?" He replied, "Yes! while staying at Al-Madīnah! This is because they were compelled by the circumstances to stay behind at Al-Madīnah; otherwise they would certainly have accompanied you."

94. The Arabic words تُعْرِضُوا and أَعْرِضُوا are of the same root but have different senses in the two sentences in which they occur. In the first sentence it means, "... so that you may turn away from them and forbear them and may not take them to task ...." In the second sentence it means, "... so turn

away from them and break off all connections with them and have nothing to do with them, as if you had broken off completely with them, and they with you".

95. As has already been stated in E.N. 90, the "Bedouins" here refers to those rustic Arabs of the desert who had settled in the suburbs of Al-Madīnah.

The background which may help one to comprehend the meanings of the verse is this. Though these people had outwardly embraced Islam, they had not done so from conviction. When they saw the rising of the organized power of Islam in Al-Madīnah, they were so overawed by it that they could not ignore it. So at first they adopted the attitude of the opportunists towards the conflict between Islam and *kufr*. But when the power of the Islamic Government spread over the major portions of Hijāz and Najd, and the power of its enemy clans began to decline, they thought it expedient to enter the fold of Islam. But there were very few among them who had sincerely accepted Islam from the conviction that it was the Right Way. That is why they did not make any sincere efforts to fulfil the implications of the true Faith, and observe the obligatory duties imposed by Islam. On the contrary, the majority of them had accepted Islam just because it was the best policy for them. They merely desired to take advantages of being "Muslims" in order to gain those benefits to which they were entitled as members of the ruling party, without performing those duties which became obligatory on them by the very acceptance of Islam. Therefore they were utterly averse to saying the prescribed Prayers, observing the Fast, paying the *Zakāt* dues from their date-palm gardens and their herds of cattle. Moreover, they smarted under the discipline of the Islamic State and resented being subdued by any power for the first time in history. Above all, it was against their very nature to make sacrifices of their lives and wealth in the Way of Allah, as was being demanded by Islam, for they were accustomed to fight only for plunder and spoils. That is why they always invented one excuse or the other for exemption from the restrictions and obligations that were being imposed on them. For they had no interest in the Truth or the welfare of humanity; their only concern was their camels and their goats, that is, the narrow world around their tents. As regards anything higher than these, the only thing which they could believe in was irrational reverence for those who would guarantee their worldly welfare and protect them from calamities and give them amulets to safeguard them against harm and evil, and say prayers for them as a recompense for their offerings to them. But they were not prepared to accept any faith or belief that would bring under its moral and legal discipline every aspect of their cultural, social and economic life, and demand from them the sacrifices of lives and wealth for the cause of a universal reform.

In this verse, the above-mentioned mental and moral condition of the Bedouins has been described like this: "These Bedouins are more hypocritical than the urban Arabs and are more stubborn and obdurate in their denial of the Truth.

This is because the urban people make use of the opportunities of meeting the learned and pious people and thus learn the laws and regulations of the Way. On the other hand, in all probability, the Bedouins will learn little about the Divine Way, because they get few opportunities for this. Moreover, they lead lives of "economic animals" rather than of human beings having moral and spiritual values; therefore they do not think of higher things than their animal urges.

It should also be noted that the main cause of the subsequent storm of rebellion and apostasy during the caliphate of Hadrat Abū Bakr two years after the revelation of these verses (97-99) was the same that has been mentioned therein.

96. This means that they regarded the payment of *Zakāt* dues as a fine and the expenditure on hospitality, an Islamic duty, a penalty. Likewise, if they had to make any contributions towards *Jihād*, they did so to show that they were loyal to the Islamic State and not because they wanted to please Allah by giving sincere monetary help for His cause.

97. They had become so expert in the art of hiding their hypocrisy that even the Holy Prophet could not recognize them, though he possessed immense sagacity and insight into human nature; so Allah informed him about them.

98. This double chastisement will be the loss of their worldly advantages and the victory of the Islamic Mission in the teeth of their opposition. Thus one chastisement shall be the loss of their worldly benefits for which they practised deceptions and adopted hypocritical attitudes, and instead of gaining wealth, honour and prestige they shall meet with disgrace and utter failure. The second chastisement will be in the shape of the victory of the Islamic Mission to defeat which they exerted their utmost by their machinations and plots. But the Islamic Mission will come out successful in the teeth of their evil wishes, desires, intentions and vicious efforts and they themselves shall witness its victory to their utter despair, regret, grief and sorrow.

99. In this passage a clear line of demarcation has been drawn between the hypocritical "Muslims" and the true Muslims, and instructions have been given regarding the treatment that should be meted out to the hypocrites. Therefore, the one who claims to be a Muslim but does not sincerely devote himself to Allah, His Way and the Islamic Community, should be severely dealt with, if there is a clear proof, from his conduct, that he lacks sincerity; or if he offers anything in the Way of Allah, it should be rejected forthwith: or when he dies the Muslims should neither join his funeral prayer nor beg God's pardon for him, even though he be one's father or brother. In contrast to this, if a believer is guilty of some sin and confesses it, he should be pardoned, and his offerings should be accepted and prayers should be said for his forgiveness.

As regards the criterion by which it will be judged whether one is or is not a hypocrite, though one might have been guilty of an act of insincerity, three things have been implied in this passage:

(1) A sincere follower will openly and clearly confess his sin without offering any lame excuses and giving false explanations and interpretations of his offence.

(2) It will be judged from his previous conduct whether he was a habitual offender or he committed the sin on the spur of the moment because of some weakness. If he had been behaving like a righteous Muslim and if his record showed sincere services, sacrifices and good deeds to his credit, it will be reasonably concluded that he was not a hypocrite.

(3) His future conduct will be watched to see whether his confession was verbal or there had really been a change of heart. If he sincerely feels sorry for his sin and is anxious to compensate for it and his whole conduct shows that he intends to eradicate the root cause of the weakness in his Faith that misled him into the sin, it will be concluded that he sincerely feels sorry for his sin and that he was not a hypocrite but a sinful believer.

The event that is connected with the occasion on which this passage was sent down, makes this subject quite clear. It is related by the scholars of Traditions that these verses were revealed in regard to Abū Lubābah bin 'Abdul Manzar and his Companions. Hadrat Abū Lubābah was one of those people who had embraced Islam on the occasion of the Oath of Allegiance at 'Aqabah before the migration of the Holy Prophet to Al-Madīnah. He had taken part in the battles of Badr, Uhd and other campaigns. But on the occasion of the Tabūk Expedition, he succumbed to some inner weakness and stayed at home without any genuine and lawful excuse. The same was the case of the other six Companions, who were sincere Muslims. When the Holy Prophet returned from Tabūk and they came to know that Allah and His Messenger had a very bad opinion of those who had stayed behind, they were filled with shame and regret. Therefore they tied themselves to a pillar even before they were called upon to explain their conduct. Then they declared, "We will neither eat anything nor sleep unless we are pardoned or die in the same condition." After some days they fell down in an unconscious condition because of hunger and sleeplessness. When at last they were informed that Allah and His Messenger had pardoned them, they went to see the Holy Prophet and said, 'Sir, we request you to accept from us as propitiatory offerings our houses and the whole of our possessions. As these were responsible for our sin of omission, we desire to give them away in the Way of Allah. "But the Holy Prophet replied, "There is no need to give the whole of your property for only one-third of it will suffice."

A deep consideration of this event clearly brings out the kind of weaknesses that are pardonable. All of these people were not habitual offenders and defaulters. Their whole past conduct showed that they were sincere Muslims: none of them invented false explanations to excuse themselves but confessed their sin. By offering the whole of their properties as propitiatory offerings, they proved that they were really sorry for their conduct and wanted to atone for their sin.

In this connection, another important lesson should also be learnt from these verses. In order to atone for one's sins, one should give a practical proof along with the verbal confession and heartfelt regret. One way of this is to give charity in the Way of Allah for this helps to cleanse the filth which was being nourished in the heart and which was responsible for the sin. This not only eradicates the hidden evil but also increases the capacity for good works. For the confession of one's sin is like the feeling of one who has fallen into a pit. He at once realizes that he is in a critical situation in a pit, where he does not like to abide, and is troubled over it. Therefore he thinks out plans for getting out of it and makes practical efforts for this. Likewise the one who confesses his sin and feels ashamed of it and takes practical steps to atone for it by making offerings and doing other good works, intends to come out of the pit of sin.

100. "... then you shall return to Allah ...." Who is the ultimate judge of everything and from Whom nothing can be concealed. Therefore even if one succeeds in hiding one's hypocrisy in this world or is judged to be up to the standard in one's Faith and sincerity, it does not mean in any way that such a one will succeed in escaping chastisement for hypocrisy in the Hereafter also.

101. The case of these people had been deferred because it could not yet be legally decided whether they were sinners or hypocrites and not because their case was doubtful in the sight of Allah. This was because the symptoms of their diseases had not as yet come to the surface to indicate clearly which of the two they were. For Islam teaches the Muslims not to pass judgement on a person or a party unless they possess definite knowledge based on conscious reasoning and not on intuition and the like to support it.

102. "..the one in conflict ...Messenger" was Abū 'Āmir who belonged to the clan of Aus of Al-Madīnah. He had become Christian monk during the period of 'ignorance' before the migration of the Holy Prophet and was well-known as a scholar of the Scriptures and was held in great reverence as a pious monk. But his scholarship and asceticism, instead of leading him to the Truth, became hindrance in the way. That was why he not only rejected Islam but also became a bitter enemy of the Holy Prophet and his Mission, for he took the Prophet for a

[Contd. on p. 234

الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ اَنْفُسَهُمْ وَاَمْوَالَهُمْ بِاَنَّ لَهُمُ الْجَنَّةَ ؕ يُقَاتِلُوْنَ فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ
فَيَقْتُلُوْنَ وَيُقْتَلُوْنَ ؕ وَعْدًا عَلَيْهِ حَقًّا فِي التَّوْرٰىةِ وَالْاِنْجِيْلِ وَالْقُرْاٰنِ ؕ
وَمَنْ اَوْفٰى بِعَهْدِهٖ مِنَ اللّٰهِ فَاسْتَبْشِرُوْا بِبَيْعِكُمُ الَّذِيْ بَايَعْتُمْ بِهٖ ؕ وَ
ذٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيْمُ ﴿١١١﴾ اَلتَّآئِبُوْنَ الْعٰبِدُوْنَ الْحٰمِدُوْنَ السَّآئِحُوْنَ
الرّٰكِعُوْنَ السّٰجِدُوْنَ الْاٰمِرُوْنَ بِالْمَعْرُوْفِ وَالنَّاهُوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَ
الْحٰفِظُوْنَ لِحُدُوْدِ اللّٰهِ ؕ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿١١٢﴾ مَا كَانَ لِلنَّبِيِّ وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا
اَنْ يَّسْتَغْفِرُوْا لِلْمُشْرِكِيْنَ وَلَوْ كَانُوْٓا اُولِيْ قُرْبٰى مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ
اَنَّهُمْ اَصْحٰبُ الْجَحِيْمِ ﴿١١٣﴾ وَمَا كَانَ اسْتِغْفَارُ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ لِاَبِيْهِ اِلَّا عَنْ
مَّوْعِدَةٍ وَّعَدَهَآ اِيَّاهُ ۚ فَلَمَّا تَبَيَّنَ لَهٗٓ اَنَّهٗ عَدُوٌّ لِّلّٰهِ تَبَرَّاَ مِنْهُ ؕ اِنَّ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ
لَاَوَّاهٌ حَلِيْمٌ ﴿١١٤﴾ وَمَا كَانَ اللّٰهُ لِيُضِلَّ قَوْمًۢا بَعْدَ اِذْ هَدٰىهُمْ حَتّٰى يُبَيِّنَ
لَهُمْ مَّا يَتَّقُوْنَ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿١١٥﴾ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَهٗ مُلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ
وَالْاَرْضِ ؕ يُحْيٖ وَيُمِيْتُ ؕ وَمَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ مِنْ وَّلِيٍّ وَّلَا نَصِيْرٍ ﴿١١٦﴾
لَقَدْ تَّابَ اللّٰهُ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ وَالْمُهٰجِرِيْنَ وَالْاَنْصَارِ الَّذِيْنَ اتَّبَعُوْهُ فِيْ
سَاعَةِ الْعُسْرَةِ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مَا كَادَ يَزِيْغُ قُلُوْبُ فَرِيْقٍ مِّنْهُمْ ثُمَّ تَابَ
عَلَيْهِمْ ؕ اِنَّهٗ بِهِمْ رَءُوْفٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿١١٧﴾ وَّعَلَى الثَّلٰثَةِ الَّذِيْنَ خُلِّفُوْا ؕ حَتّٰٓى اِذَا
ضَاقَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الْاَرْضُ بِمَا رَحُبَتْ وَضَاقَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ اَنْفُسُهُمْ وَظَنُّوْٓا اَنْ
لَّا مَلْجَاَ مِنَ اللّٰهِ اِلَّآ اِلَيْهِ ؕ ثُمَّ تَابَ عَلَيْهِمْ لِيَتُوْبُوْا ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ
الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿١١٨﴾ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَكُوْنُوْا مَعَ الصّٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿١١٩﴾ مَا
كَانَ لِاَهْلِ الْمَدِيْنَةِ وَمَنْ حَوْلَهُمْ مِّنَ الْاَعْرَابِ اَنْ يَّتَخَلَّفُوْا عَنْ

Indeed Allah has bought from the Believers their persons and their possessions in return for the Gardens;[106] they fight in the Way of Allah, kill and are killed. This promise (of the Gardens) is the true pledge of Allah made in the Torah, the Gospel, and the Qur'ān,[107] and who is more true in fulfilling his promise than Allah? So rejoice in the bargain you have made with Him; and this is the greatest success. Those who turn back to Allah over and over again;[108] those who worship Him, those who sing hymns in His praise, those who move about in the land for His sake,[109] those who bow down and prostrate before Him, those who enjoin virtue and forbid evil and strictly observe the limits prescribed by Allah[110] (are the Believers who make such a bargain with Allah;) and O Prophet, give good news to such Believers. 111-112

It does not behove the Prophet and those who have believed to pray for the forgiveness of the *mushriks*, even though they be near kinsmen, when it has become clear to them that they deserve Hell.[111] As regards the prayer of Abraham for his father, it was only to fulfil a promise he had made to him,[112] but when he realized that he was an enemy of Allah, he disowned him. The fact is that Abraham was a tender-hearted, Godfearing and forbearing man.[113] 113-114

It is not the way of Allah to let people go astray after He has given them guidance, until He makes plain to them all that they should avoid[114]: surely Allah has the knowledge of everything. And it is also the fact that the kingdom of the heavens and the earth belongs to Him: he ordains life and death: and you have neither any helper nor protector to rescue yourself from Him. 115-116

Allah forgave the Prophet and those *muhājirīn* and *Ansār* who stood by him in the hour of distress,[115] though the hearts of some of them had well-nigh swerved aside[116]; (But when they did not follow that crooked way, and stood by the Prophet) Allah forgave them:[117] surely Allah is Gentle and Compassionate to these people. And Allah has forgiven the Three whose case had been put off.[118] When the earth with all its vastness seemed to have become narrow for them, and their own souls were a burden on them, and they realized that there was no refuge for them except in the mercy of Allah Himself, Allah turned to them with kindness so that they should turn to Him. Surely, He is 117-118

Forgiving and Compassionate.[119]

Contd. from p.231]

rival in the "holy business" of priesthood. At first he ignored the Holy Prophet and his Mission in the hope that the power of the Quraish would suffice to crush him and his Mission. But when the Quraish suffered an utter defeat in the battle of Badr, he could no longer ignore it, so he started a vigorous vicious campaign against the Islamic Movement. Accordingly he left Al-Madīnah and visited different clans, in order to incite them against Islam, and was one of those who brought about the battle of Uhd. It is said that he had got some pits dug in the battle-field of Uhd, and that the Holy Prophet fell into one of these and received injuries. Then he played an important role in organizing the armies which came to invade Al-Madīnah in the battle of Ahzāb. Likewise this Christian Monk took a very active part in giving support to the *mushriks* against Islam in all the subsequent battles up to the battle of Hunain, At last when he realized that no power in Arabia could withstand the onslaught of Islam, he left Arabia and went to the Roman Caesar in order to warn him of the rising "danger" from Al-Madīnah. It was because of his efforts that the Caesar began to make preparations for invading Arabia, to counteract which the Holy Prophet went forth on the expedition to Tabūk.

Now let us consider the background of the building of the 'mosque' that was built to harm the Righteous Mission.

A section of the hypocrites of Al-Madīnah collaborated wholeheartedly with Abū 'Āmir in all the above-mentioned hostile activities against Islam. They also fully agreed with him that he should use his "spiritual" influence to obtain military help from the Roman Caesar and the Christian states of northern Arabia. Accordingly, when he was preparing to go to the Roman Caesar to urge him to invade Arabia, they devised a plan of making a 'mosque' of their own to serve as a safe meeting place for organizing themselves into a separate party because none would suspect that they were carrying on evil activities under the garb of religion. Moreover, this 'mosque' would serve as an ambush for the agents of Abū 'Āmir who could stay in it as travellers and mendicants without raising any suspicion that they were spies of the enemy.

As there were already two mosques in Al-Madinah—one at Qubā and the other, *Masjid-i-Nabavi*, in the city obviously there was no need for a third one. The hypocrite's themselves understood this; therefore they began to invent "reasons" to show that there was really a need for a third mosque. Accordingly, they went to the Holy Prophet and said, "We need another 'mosque' because it is very difficult for the people of this area, especially the old, the sick and the

disabled, to offer the five prescribed Prayers in either of the two Mosques, during the winter season and the rainfall. Therefore we intend to build a new 'mosque' only for the convenience of those who live at a distance from the two Mosques but are desirous of saying their prayers in congregation."

With such professedly pure motives, these mischief makers built the 'mosque' and then went to the Holy Prophet with the request, "Sir, please stand in this new 'mosque' and lead the congregation in one of the prescribed prayers so as to perform its opening ceremony." But the Holy Prophet postponed the matter, saying, "At this time I am wholly engaged in making preparations for the expedition to Tabūk. I shall consider the matter on my return home." After this he went forth to Tabūk, and they started their nefarious activities. They went on organizing themselves and conspiring against Islam in the 'mosque' and decided to crown 'Abdullah-bin-Ubayy as their king, as soon as the Muslims would meet with reverses and be utterly crushed down by the Romans, as they had expected. But their expectations were all frustrated by what happened at Tabūk. Then on the revelation of these verses during the return journey at a place, Zī Avān, near Al-Madīnah, the Holy Prophet despatched some men to demolish the 'mosque' before his entry into the city.

103. In order to comprehend fully the implications of this simile, let us first consider the significance of the Arabic word جُرُف (*Juruf*). This applies to the brink of that piece of land which has been undermined by a river or a stream, leaving its surface without any support. In this meaningful simile the construction of the structure of life on the Godless foundations has been compared to that building which is built on the river brink, which has been undermined by its water. It is obvious that the ignorant man who builds a structure on the surface of such a piece of land, merely because it is a piece of land, will not only lose the building but will also lose his own life, for it will inevitably fall down into the river along with him because it has nothing to support it. Likewise, the one who lays the foundation of the structure of the system of his life on the surface of worldly things, without any regard to God's fear or His favour which are the only permanent supports of human life, is like the man who builds his structure on the surface undermined by the river. For such a man himself undermines the structure of his life by his wrong deeds which inevitably follow if there is no bed-rock of God's fear and His favour. Therefore the surface on which he had built his life would one day inevitably tumble down into the abyss of Hell along with the earnings of his whole life.

104. "The Right Way" that leads to man's real success.

105. That is, these hypocrites have deprived their hearts of the capability of receiving and accepting faith by the commission of the most heinous sin of

building a 'mosque' to do harm to that very Islam for the propagation of which mosques are built. This crime has set the desire of disbelief so deep in their hearts that it will remain there as long as they are alive and will leave them only at the time of death when their hearts will cease to beat in their breasts. Obviously, the case of such people is quite different from that of those unbelievers, who openly build idol-temples or openly make preparations for war against God. For it is possible that such a one may get Guidance just because he is honest, sincere and bold. Moreover, his open antagonism shows that he has the courage of his convictions and may, therefore, accept Islam, when he would be convinced of its Truth. But there is no hope for that cowardly lying and cunning man who builds a 'mosque' for the service of *kufr* and puts on the garb of God-worship for fighting against Allah's Way. This is because a conduct like this kills all the noble sentiments within him and renders him utterly incapable of understanding and accepting Islam.

106. In this verse that aspect of the Islamic Faith which determines the nature of the relationship between Allah and His servants has been called a transaction. This means that Faith is not merely a metaphysical conception but is, in fact, a contract by which the servant sells his life and possessions to Allah and in return for this accepts His promise that He would give him the Garden in the Life-after-death. In order to comprehend the full implications of this transaction, let us first understand its nature.

We should note it well at the outset that, in reality, this transaction is not in regard to the actual selling of the life and possessions of the servant to Allah in the literal sense, for Allah is in fact the real Owner of man's life and possessions. Allah alone has the right of ownership because He is the Creator of man and of everything he possesses and uses. Therefore there is no question at all of selling and buying in the worldly sense; for man possesses nothing of his own to sell, and Allah has no need to buy anything because everything already belongs to Him. However, there is one thing which has entirely been entrusted to man by Allah, that is, the freedom of will and the freedom of choice, and the transaction concerns that thing.

Of course, it is true that this freedom does not make any change in the real position of man with regard to the right of ownership to his own life and his possessions. They belong to Allah Who has delegated to him only the authority to use or abuse these things as he wills, without any coercion or compulsion from Him. This means that man has been given the freedom to acknowledge or not to acknowledge that Allah is the owner of his life and property. The transaction mentioned in v. 111 is concerning the voluntary surrender of this freedom to Allah's Will. In other words, Allah wills to test man whether he acknowledges the ownership of Allah over his life and property, in spite of that freedom, and

considers himself to be their trustee only, or behaves as if he were their owner and so could do whatever he liked with them.

Thus, the terms of this transaction from Allah's side are these: "If you voluntarily (and not by compulsion or coercion) agree to acknowledge that your life, your property and everything in this world, which in fact belong to Me, are Mine, and consider yourself only as their trustee, and voluntarily surrender the freedom I have given you to behave, if you so like, in a dishonest way and yourself become their master and owner, I will give you, in return, Gardens in the eternal life of the Next World". The one who makes this bargain with Allah is a Believer, for Faith is in fact the other name for making this bargain. On the other hand, the one who refuses to make this bargain, or after making it adopts the attitude of the one who has not made the bargain, is *a kāfir* for, technically, *kufr* is the term applied to the refusal to make this bargain.

The following are the implications of making this transaction:

(1) Allah has put man to two very hard tests in this matter. The first is whether he acknowledges the real Owner as owner, in spite of the freedom of choice given to him, or he refuses this and becomes ungrateful, treacherous and rebellious. The second test is whether he puts his trust in his God or not, and surrenders his freedom and sacrifices his desires and wishes in this present world in return for His promise of the Gardens and eternal bliss in the Next World, even though the world were to proclaim: "A bird in hand is worth two in the bush".

(2) This matter helps to draw a clear line of demarcation between the legal conception of the Islamic Faith and the higher and spiritual one according to which Allah will judge one in the Hereafter.

According to its legal conception, the mere verbal profession of the articles of the Faith is a sufficient proof that one is legally a Muslim and after this no Jurist is authorized to declare such a one to be a disbeliever or to expel one from the fold of the Islamic Community, unless there is a definite and clear proof that the one made a false profession of the Faith. But this is not so with Allah: Allah considers the Faith of only that person to be true, who makes this bargain with Him and sells his freedom of thought and action to Him and gives up his entire claim to ownership in His favour. That is why a man might profess the articles of the Faith and observe the prescribed obligatory duties, but if he considered himself alone to be the master and owner of his body and soul, his heart and brain and his other faculties, his property and his resources and other things in his possession, and reserved to himself the right of expending them as he willed, he shall be regarded a disbeliever in the sight of Allah, even though he should be regarded a believer in the sight of the world. This is because such a man has not made that bargain with God which

is the essence of the Faith according to the Qur'ān. The very fact that a man does not expend his life and property in the way Allah approves of, or expends these in the way He disapproves, shows that the one who claimed to profess the Faith either did not sell these to Allah or after having made the transaction still regarded himself to be their master and owner.

(3) The above conception of the Islamic Faith draws a clear line of demarcation between the attitude of a Muslim and that of a disbeliever towards life. The Muslim, who sincerely believes in Allah, surrenders himself completely to Allah's Will, and does nothing whatsoever which may show that he is independent in his attitude, except when he temporarily forgets the terms of the bargain he has made with Him. Likewise no community of the Muslims can collectively adopt an independent attitude in political, cultural, economic, social and international matters and still remain Muslim. And if sometimes it temporarily forgets its subordinate position and its voluntary surrender of its freedom, it will give up the attitude of independence and readopt the attitude of surrender, as soon as it becomes aware of its error. In contrast to this, if one adopts the attitude of independence towards Allah and makes decisions about all the affairs of life in accordance with on's own wishes, whims and caprices, one shall be regarded to have adopted the attitude of disbelief, even though one was a 'Muslim' or a non-Muslim.

(4) It should also be noted well that the Will of God to which a man is required to surrender himself is that which is specified by Allah Himself and not the one which the man himself declares to be the will of God. For in the latter case one does not follow God's Will but one's own will, which is utterly against the terms of the transaction. Only that person (or community) who adopts the attitude that conforms to the teachings of His Book and His Messenger, shall be deemed to have fulfilled the terms of the transaction.

From the above implications of this transaction, it also becomes clear why the fulfilment of the terms by Allah has been deferred to the Next World after the termination of the life of this world. It is obvious that the Garden is not the return for the mere profession that the buyer has sold his life and property to Allah "but it is the actual surrender of these things in the worldly life and their disposal by him as a trustee of Allah according to His Will." Thus, this transaction will be completed only when the life of the buyer comes to an end in this world and it is proved that after making the bargain, he went on fulfilling the terms of the agreement up to his last breath. For then and then alone, he will be entitled to the recompense in accordance with the terms of the transaction.

It will also be worthwhile to understand the context in which this matter has been placed here. In the preceding passage, there was the mention of those people who failed in the test of their Faith and did not make the sacrifice of their

time, money, life and interests for the sake of Allah and His Way, in spite of their professions, because of their negligence or lack of sincerity or absolute hypocrisy. Therefore after criticising the attitudes of different persons and sections, they have been told in clear words the implications of the Faith they had accepted: "This is not the mere verbal profession that there is God and He is One, but the acceptance of the fact that He is the Owner and the Master of your lives and possessions. Therefore, if you are not ready and willing to sacrifice these in obedience to the Command of Allah, but expend these and your energies and resources against the Will of Allah, it is a clear proof that you were false in your profession of the Faith. For the true Believers are those who have truly sold their persons and possessions to Allah, and consider Him to be their Owner and Master, and expend their energies and possessions without any reservations, where He commands them to expend, and do not expend the least of these where He forbids them to expend."

107. Some critics say that the statement "this promise is contained in the Torah and the Gospel" is not confirmed by these Books. Their objection in regard to the Gospel is obviously wrong for even in the existing Gospels there are sayings of Prophet Jesus that confirm this verse. For instance:

"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (MAT. 5: 10).

"He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." (MAT. 10: 39).

"And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold and shall inherit everlasting life." (MAT. 19: 29).

It is, however, true that the matter of this transaction is not confirmed in its entirety by the existing Torah. For instance, there is a mention of the first part of the bargain at several places in one form or the other:

"... *is* not he thy father *that* hath bought thee? hath he not made thee, and established thee?" (DEUT. 32: 6).

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." (DEUT. 6: 4-5).

But as regards the other part of the bargain, that is, the promise of the Gardens, they applied it to the land of Palestine:

"Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do *it;* that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the Lord God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and honey." (DEUT. 6: 3).

This is because the Torah does not give any conception of the Life-after-death, the Day of Judgement, Rewards and Punishments in the Here-after, though this creed has always been an inseparable part of the Right Way. This does not, however, mean that the Torah did not originally contain this creed. The fact is that the Jews had become so materialistic during the period of their degeneration that they had no other idea of a reward from God than the well-being and prosperity in this world. Therefore they perverted all the promises made by God in return for man's service and obedience to Him and applied those to the land of Palestine.

In this connection, it should also be noted that the above-mentioned changes became possible because the original Torah had been tampered with in several ways. Some portions were taken away from it and others were added to it. Thus, the Torah in the existing form is not purely the Word of God but also contains the comments, etc., of the Jewish scholars mixed up with it. So much so that at some places it becomes difficult to distinguish the Word of God from the Jewish traditions, their racial prejudices, their superstitions, their ambitions and wishes, their legal interpretations, etc., all of which have got mixed with the Word of God. (For further details please see E.N. 2 of *Āl-i-'Imrān*).

108. The Arabic word التَّائِبُون (*attā-i-būn*) literally means "those who repent". But in the context it occurs it implies "those who possess repentance as their permanent characteristic", that is, they repent over and over again. Moreover, the literal meaning of توبہ *(taubah)* is "to turn to" or "to turn back". Therefore its explanatory translation will be "....those who turn back to Allah over and over again". This is the first and foremost characteristic of a true Believer because even a true Believer is liable to forget the bargain he makes with Allah by which he sells his life and property to Him. As this matter does not concern his sense organs but pertains to his mind and heart, he is liable to forget that these things are not really his property but they belong to Allah. Therefore, even the true believer occasionally forgets the bargain, and behaves in a way as if he were their owner. But as soon as he becomes conscious of this transitory lapse and realizes that he had violated the terms of his agreement, he feels sorry and ashamed of his conduct and turns to his God, begs His pardon and renews the terms of the bargain with Him, and pledges his allegiance to Him after every slip of its violation. This kind of repentance alone is the guarantee that one will always come back to one's Faith: otherwise it is not possible for man because of the inherent human weaknesses, to observe strictly and deliberately the terms of the bargain without ever falling a prey to negligence and error. That is why Allah says

in praise of the true Believer that ".....he turns back to Allah over and over again" and not that "he never slips into error after making the bargain of obedience and service to Him". And this is the greatest excellence that man can accomplish. Let us now consider the wisdom of placing this characteristics first in the list of the characteristics of the true Believers. It is to admonish those who had been guilty of crimes after the profession of their Faith, They have been told in v. III that the true Believers are those who sell their lives and property to Allah. After this they are being told that if they sincerely intend to become true Believers they should first of all create in themselves this characteristic and at once turn to Allah without showing any obduracy so that they should not deviate further into error.

109. Some commentators are of the opinion that here السَّائِحُونَ *(Assā'ihūn)* means "...those who observe fast". As this is not the lexical meaning of the word but only its figurative sense, which has been based on an unauthentic tradition attributed to the Holy Prophet, we are of the opinion that there is no need to depart from its lexical meanings, that is, ".....move about in the land (for His sake.....)". For here the Arabic word does not mean merely to "...move about in the land" but "move about in the land for the sake of noble and high aims, *e.g.* to propagate Islam, to do *Jihād*, to emigrate from those places where the unbelievers are in power, and to reform the people, to seek True Knowledge, to earn a lawful livelihood and the like". This characteristic of the Believers has been especially mentioned here to reprove those who had not gone forth to *Jihād*, in spite of their claim that they were "Believers". They have been admonished that a true Believer is the one who goes forth into the land to raise high His Word, and exerts his utmost to fulfil the implications of his Faith, and not the one who stays behind when he is called upon to move about in the land.

110. That is those who "strictly observe the limits prescribed by Allah ....." in regard to the Articles of the Faith, worship—morality, social behaviour, culture, economics, politics, judiciary, peace and war— in short, in all the aspects of their individual and collective lives. They neither transgress these limits in order to follow their lusts nor invent laws nor replace the Divine Law by other laws. They establish these limits and prevent their violations. Hence, the true Believers are those who not only strictly observe the limits prescribed by Allah, but also do their very best to establish them and safeguard them so as to prevent their violation to the best of their powers and capabilities.

111. "It does not behove . . . to pray for the *mushriks* . . ." implies two things. First, we love them and sympathise with them. Secondly, we consider their crime to be pardonable. There is no harm to cherish these things for the one who is loyal, though a sinner, but it is absolutely wrong in principle to love and

sympathise with a person who is an open rebel and to consider his case as pardonable as it renders our own loyalty doubtful. Besides, it adds to the intensity of the crime, if we pray for the forgiveness of a *mushrik*, who is our near relative. For it means that we consider our relationships to be more valuable than the fulfilment of the implications of our loyalty to Allah and that our love with Allah and His Way is not wholly unalloyed and that we desire that Allah should also be influenced by the love we have with His rebels and pardon our criminal kinsmen, even though He should throw the other criminals into the fire of Hell. Obviously, all such things are wrong and are against loyalty and sincerity and the Faith demands that our love with Allah and His Way should be absolutely unalloyed and that His friend should be our friend and His enemy our enemy. That is why Allah has not said, "Do not pray for the forgiveness of the *mushriks*", but has instead warned, "It does not behove the Prophet and those who have believed to pray for the forgiveness of the *mushriks*", which implies this: "The right thing for you is that you yourselves should regard it as improper to show sympathy with Our rebels and consider their crime as pardonable: nay, you should not wait for any Command from Us about this".

In this connection, it should also be noted well that it is forbidden to show sympathy with the *mushriks* only in matters of Faith. As regards the human relationships that demand the observance of the rights of one's own relatives, of showing love, sympathy and kindness, and cherishing fellow-feelings with them it is not forbidden at all but it is considered to be a virtue. We must fulfil the worldly rights of a relative whether he be a believer or a disbeliever: we should help him in affliction and give support to the needy ones and the orphans and show all possible sympathy with a sick or wounded person, irrespective of whether he is a Muslim or a non-Muslim.

112. The reference is to what Prophet Abraham said when he broke off all connections with his father:

(1) ".....Peace be upon you. I will pray to my Lord to forgive you: for He is very kind to me". (XIX: 47).

(2) "And forgive my father: indeed he is of those who have gone astray. And disgrace me not on the Day, when mankind shall be brought back to life; when neither riches nor children shall avail anyone, and none shall obtain salvation except the one who comes before his Lord with a sound and pure heart". (XXVI: 86-89).

(3) ".....I will pray for your forgiveness, but I have no power to rescue you from Allah ....." (LX: 4).

In the first place it should be noted that even the wording and the tone of the prayer for his father were very guarded, but when Prophet Abraham realized

that the person for whom he was praying was an open rebel against Allah and a bitter enemy of His Way, he refrained himself from saying even such a guarded prayer for him and declared in clear words that he would have nothing to do with him in future, even though the rebel was his father who had brought him up with love and care.

113. The words— أَوَّاهٌ (*avvāh*) and حَلِيمٌ (*halīm*) which the Qur'ān uses for Prophet Abraham are very comprehensive in meaning. *Avvāh* is the one who is lamenting, humble, weeping, grief-stricken and Godfearing. And *halīm* is the one who can keep control over himself under all circumstances, and is neither beside himself in anger and enmity nor transgresses the proper limits in his affections, friendships and relationships. Here both the words have been used in their comprehensive senses. Prophet Abraham prayed for his father because he was tender-hearted and lamented for him that he would become the fuel for the fire of Hell. As he had full control over himself, and was very forbearing, he prayed even for that father who had persecuted him cruelly in order to hinder him from the Way of Islam. Lastly, he was Godfearing and did not want to go beyond the limits in his love for his father; so he broke off all his relations with his father when he realized that he was an enemy of Allah.

114. "He makes plain to the people ...." beforehand that they should avoid such and such thoughts, deeds and ways. But if they take no heed, and persist in wrong thinking and wrongdoing, Allah withholds His guidance from them and lets them follow the wrong way they themselves choose to follow.

This is the general formula that helps understand those passages of the Qur'ān in which Allah ascribes to Himself the guidance and the deviation of the people. Allah's guidance is that He makes plain to them the Right Way through His Prophets and Books. Then He enables those who have the intention, to follow the Right Way. On the other hand, He does not force and compel them to follow the Right Way, if they themselves intend to persist in the wrong ways in spite of the fact that the Right Way has been made quite clear to them; He rather enables them to follow the way they themselves intend to follow.

As regards the context in which this occurs here, it is plain that it is meant to warn those people who have been mentioned in the preceding passage, and to introduce those who are going to be mentioned in the succeeding passage.

115. Allah forgave the Prophet and his Companions for those inadvertent lapses that had been made in connection with the Tabūk expedition, in view of their excellent services. The inadvertent lapse made by the Holy Prophet was that he had given leave to stay behind to those people who were able to take part in the *Jihād*. (v. 43).

116. This refers to those sincere Companions who were at first somewhat unwilling to go to war on that critical occasion, but at last overcame their weakness, for they had true Faith in their hearts and loved the Right Way.

117. That is, Allah will not take them to account for their wrong inclinations, for He does not punish a man for that weakness which he himself has overcome and corrected.

118. These Three were among those who came to the Holy Prophet to present their excuses for staying behind. More than eighty of them were hypocrites, who put forward lame excuses and the Holy Prophet accepted these and let them go. Then came the turn of these Three, who were true Believers, and they confessed their fault plainly. Therefore the Holy Prophet postponed the decision of their case and ordered the Muslims not to have any social relations with them till the decision of their case came from Allah. This verse was sent down to decide their case.

In this connection it should be kept in mind that the case of these Three was different from the case of the seven mentioned in E.N. 99. They had inflicted the punishment on themselves before they were called to account for their fault.

119. The Three whose condition has been described in this verse, were Ka'ab bin Mālik, Hilāl bin Umayyah and Murārah bin Ruba'i. They were sincere Believers, as has been stated above, and had made many sacrifices and given proofs of their sincerity before this. The last two had taken part in the battle of Badr also, and therefore their Faith was above every kind of suspicion. Though Ka'ab had not taken part in the battle of Badr, he had accompanied the Holy Prophet in every other expedition. But in spite of all these services, they were severely punished for the negligence they had shown on the critical occasion of the Tabūk Expedition, when all the able-bodied Muslims were commanded to go forth to *Jihād*.

When the Holy Prophet came back from Tabūk, he ordered the Muslims to break away completely from them; so much so that they should not even respond to their greetings. After forty days of this boycott their wives also were ordered to have nothing to do with them. In short, they were reduced at Al-Madīnah to the same sad plight which has been described in this verse. At last, after a boycott of fifty days, this verse was sent down to announce their forgiveness.

The story of the above-mentioned boycott has been described in detail by Ka'ab bin Mālik, who was one of the Three. When he became old and blind, he himself told his story to his son, 'Abdullah, who used to accompany him

everywhere. As this story is an excellent lesson for all, it is given below in Ka'ab's own words:

"When the Holy Prophet urged upon the people to get ready for *Jihād*, I made up my mind to make preparations for this. But when I went home, I became negligent, saying to myself, 'There is no hurry: when the time comes I will readily make preparations and start forthwith'. In this way I went on putting off my preparations till the time came when the army was going to start on the Expedition. As I had made no preparations for the journey, I said to myself, 'It does not matter: I will be able to join the army in a couple of days during the journey'. But again the same negligence prevented me from putting my intention into practice. At last no occasion was left for me to join the army. To add to my misery my conscience pricked me over and over again that the people with whom I had stayed behind in Al-Madīnah were either the hypocrites or those Muslims who were old or otherwise unfit for *Jihād*."

"When the Holy Prophet came back from Tabūk, he, as usual, said two *rak'ats* of prayer in the Mosque. Then he sat there to meet the people. At first, the hypocrites, whose number was a little more than eighty, came to him and offered lame excuses on solemn oaths. The Holy Prophet listened to the false story of each of them and accepted their apparent excuses and left the decision about their hearts to Allah, saying, 'May Allah forgive you'. Then it was my turn to put forward my excuse. I went forward and uttered my salutations. He smiled and said, 'Well, what kept you behind?' (I hesitated for a moment.) By God, I would have invented one excuse or the other to satisfy any man of the world, for I am well versed in the art of conversation. But here was the Holy Prophet who was demanding an explanation from me. I believed that even if I succeeded in satisfying him by making a false excuse, Allah will inform him of the truth of the case and I shall again incur his displeasure. On the other hand, if I told the truth, I expected that Allah would forgive me, even though I were to incur his displeasure for the time being. So I replied, 'Sir, I have no excuse for staying behind. I was in every way able to go forth (to Tabūk)'. At this the Holy Prophet remarked, 'This is the man who has told the truth'. Then turning to me, he said, 'Go and wait till Allah decides your case'.

"I rose from there and took my seat among the people of my own clan. They at once began to tease and reprove me because I had made no excuse. At this, I was tempted to go and make some false excuse. But when I came to know that there were also two good people (Murārah bin Rubā'i and Hilāl bin Umayyah), who had told the same thing that I had, I felt satisfied and stuck to the truth.

"After this the Holy Prophet issued a general order that no one should have any kind of talk with us. The other two confined themselves to their houses but I used to go out of my house and say my prayers in congregation and walk through the bazaars. As nobody spoke to me, it appeared to me that I was a foreigner in some strange city where I had no acquaintances. When I attended the mosque, I would utter the usual salutations and wait in vain for a response from the Holy Prophet. I would turn stealthy looks at him to read his thoughts in regard to me, but he would turn his eyes away from me, though he had been looking at me while I was engaged in prayer. As this condition became intolerable for me, one day I went to see Abū Qatādah who was a cousin of mine and a friend from childhood. I climbed over the wall of his garden and uttered my salutations, but even he did not make any response to it. Then I said, 'O Abu Qatādah ! I ask you to tell me on oath whether I love or do not love Allah and His Messenger'. But he remained silent. Again I repeated the question but he kept silent. I asked him on oath to answer my question. Then he merely replied, 'Allah and His Messenger know best'. At this my eyes were filled with tears, and I came back.

"Another incident happened during those days. Once I was passing through the bazaar, when a Syrian came to me and gave me a letter wrapped in silk. This was from the king of Ghassān and read like this: 'We have come to know that your Leader is persecuting you these days. As you are not an ignoble person, we will not leave you to rot there. Therefore come to us and we will honour you (as you deserve)'. I said to myself, 'Here is another hard trial for me'. Then I threw the letter into the burning oven.

"The boycott continued for forty days, when a man brought this message from the Holy Prophet that I should separate from my wife. I asked whether I should divorce her but was told that I should only separate from her. Accordingly I said to my wife, 'Go to your parental home and wait till a decision comes from Allah.'

"On the fiftieth day, when after the morning prayers, I was sitting in a state of utter despair on the top of my house, all of a sudden some one cried aloud, 'O Ka'ab bin Mālik! Please accept my congratulations.' Hearing this, I fell prostrate to the ground before Allah, for I understood that the Command of my forgiveness had come After this, people began to pour in, each trying to forestall the other in congratulating me on the acceptance of my repentance. I rose and went directly to the Mosque. I noticed that the face of the Holy Prophet was glowing with happiness and in response to my salutations, he said, 'I congratulate you on this: it is the best day of your life.' I said, 'Is this forgiveness from you or from Allah?' He replied, 'It is from Allah.' Then he recited these verses (117-118). I asked, 'O Messenger of Allah! Does my repentance require that I should give the whole of my property in charity?' He replied, 'Keep a part of it, for it

will be better for you.' Accordingly, I kept my property at Khaibar for myself and gave all the rest in charity. Then I solemnly pledged that I would stick to the truth throughout the rest of my life, for Allah had forgiven me in return for the truth I had told. That is why I have never uttered a word against reality intentionally up to this time and hope and expect that Allah will protect me from lies in future as well."

This story contains many lessons, and every Believer should impress these on his mind and heart.

The first and foremost lesson we learn from this story is that the matter of the conflict between Islam and *kufr* is so important and delicate that we should take the greatest possible care to be on our guard in regard to this. Not to mention the case of one who takes active part on the side of *kufr*, if a Muslim shows the least negligence even inadvertently in taking part on the side of Islam once in his life; and that, too, not with any evil intention, he is liable to lose all the lifelong services and devotions rendered by him in the cause of Islam. That was why such a severe action was taken even against those worthy people who had done great deeds of valour in the battles of Badr, Uhd, Ahzāb and Hunain, and whose sincerity and Faith were absolutely above suspicion.

The second thing, which is as important as the first, is that one should never consider lightly any negligence in the performance of a duty, for this often misleads one to commit an offence that is counted among heinous sins. The fact that one did not commit the offence with any evil intention cannot save one from punishment.

Lastly, this story presents the true spirit of the society that had been evolved out under the leadership of the Holy Prophet. On the one side there were the hypocrites whose treacherous deeds were quite well known to all. They offered lame excuses which were accepted without demur for nothing better could be expected from them. On the other side, let us take the case of Ka'ab bin Mālik, who was a tried Believer; and whose sacrifices were above every kind of suspicion. He did not invent any false story to justify himself but confessed his fault quite plainly and clearly. But in contrast to the hypocrites, a severe chastisement was inflicted on him, not because there was any suspicion about his Faith but because a sincere Believer like him had behaved in a way in which only

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رَّسُوْلِ اللّٰهِ وَلَا يَرْغَبُوْا بِاَنْفُسِهِمْ عَنْ نَّفْسِهٖ ؕ ذٰلِكَ بِاَنَّهُمْ لَا يُصِيْبُهُمْ
ظَمَاٌ وَّلَا نَصَبٌ وَّلَا مَخْمَصَةٌ فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ وَلَا يَطَـُٔوْنَ مَوْطِئًا يَّغِيْظُ
الْكُفَّارَ وَلَا يَنَالُوْنَ مِنْ عَدُوٍّ نَّيْلًا اِلَّا كُتِبَ لَهُمْ بِهٖ عَمَلٌ صَالِحٌ ؕ اِنَّ
اللّٰهَ لَا يُضِيْعُ اَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿١٢٠﴾ وَلَا يُنْفِقُوْنَ نَفَقَةً صَغِيْرَةً وَّلَا كَبِيْرَةً
وَّلَا يَقْطَعُوْنَ وَادِيًا اِلَّا كُتِبَ لَهُمْ لِيَجْزِيَهُمُ اللّٰهُ اَحْسَنَ مَا كَانُوْا
يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿١٢١﴾ وَمَا كَانَ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ لِيَنْفِرُوْا كَآفَّةً ؕ فَلَوْلَا نَفَرَ مِنْ كُلِّ
فِرْقَةٍ مِّنْهُمْ طَآئِفَةٌ لِّيَتَفَقَّهُوْا فِي الدِّيْنِ وَلِيُنْذِرُوْا قَوْمَهُمْ اِذَا رَجَعُوْٓا
اِلَيْهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَحْذَرُوْنَ ﴿١٢٢﴾ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا قَاتِلُوا الَّذِيْنَ يَلُوْنَكُمْ
مِّنَ الْكُفَّارِ وَلْيَجِدُوْا فِيْكُمْ غِلْظَةً ؕ وَاعْلَمُوْٓا اَنَّ اللّٰهَ مَعَ الْمُتَّقِيْنَ ﴿١٢٣﴾ وَ
اِذَا مَآ اُنْزِلَتْ سُوْرَةٌ فَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَّقُوْلُ اَيُّكُمْ زَادَتْهُ هٰذِهٖٓ اِيْمَانًا ؕ
فَاَمَّا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا فَزَادَتْهُمْ اِيْمَانًا وَّهُمْ يَسْتَبْشِرُوْنَ ﴿١٢٤﴾ وَاَمَّا الَّذِيْنَ فِيْ
قُلُوْبِهِمْ مَّرَضٌ فَزَادَتْهُمْ رِجْسًا اِلٰى رِجْسِهِمْ وَمَاتُوْا وَهُمْ كٰفِرُوْنَ ﴿١٢٥﴾
اَوَلَا يَرَوْنَ اَنَّهُمْ يُفْتَنُوْنَ فِيْ كُلِّ عَامٍ مَّرَّةً اَوْ مَرَّتَيْنِ ثُمَّ لَا يَتُوْبُوْنَ
وَلَا هُمْ يَذَّكَّرُوْنَ ﴿١٢٦﴾ وَاِذَا مَآ اُنْزِلَتْ سُوْرَةٌ نَّظَرَ بَعْضُهُمْ اِلٰى بَعْضٍ ؕ
هَلْ يَرٰىكُمْ مِّنْ اَحَدٍ ثُمَّ انْصَرَفُوْا ؕ صَرَفَ اللّٰهُ قُلُوْبَهُمْ بِاَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ
لَّا يَفْقَهُوْنَ ﴿١٢٧﴾ لَقَدْ جَآءَكُمْ رَسُوْلٌ مِّنْ اَنْفُسِكُمْ عَزِيْزٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا عَنِتُّمْ
حَرِيْصٌ عَلَيْكُمْ بِالْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ رَءُوْفٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿١٢٨﴾ فَاِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَقُلْ حَسْبِيَ
اللّٰهُ ۖ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ ؕ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَهُوَ رَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيْمِ ﴿١٢٩﴾

O Believers, fear Allah and be with those who are Truthful. It did not behove the people of Al-Madīnah and the Bedouins, dwelling around, to abandon Allah's Messenger and stay at home in order to safeguard their own interests, in utter disregard of him. For, every hardship like thirst, hunger and any other physical ordeal they suffer in the Way of Allah, and every step they take on that Way which enrages the unbelievers, and every act of wreaking vengeance upon the enemies of the truth, is credited in their favour with a good deed for each: surely Allah does not let go unrewarded any deed of the righteous people. Likewise, whatever they spend (in the Way of Allah), be it little or much, and whichever valley they traverse (for *Jihād*), *is* credited to their account so that Allah may reward them for the good deeds they did. 119-121

And it was not required that all the believers should leave their homes, but why did not some people from every habitation leave their homes in order to understand the Way of Islam and to warn their people when they returned to them, so that they should refrain from un-Islamic conduct?[120] 122

O Believers, fight with these disbelievers who are near you,[121] and they should find you firm and stern:[122] and know that Allah is with the Godfearing.[123] Whenever a new Sūrah is revealed, some of them ask the Muslims (in jest), "Say, whose Faith from among you has increased?" (The answer is that) most surely (every Sūrah) increases the Faith of those who have sincerely believed and they rejoice but it has added more filth to the existing filth[124] of those whose hearts are suffering from the disease (of hypocrisy) and they shall remain disbelievers up to their death. Do these people not see that they are tried once or twice every year?[125] Yet, still they do not repent or learn a lesson from this. When a Sūrah is sent down, they cast looks at one another, asking, "Is anyone watching you?" Then they silently slip away:[126] Allah has turned away their hearts for they are a people who do not understand.[127] 123-127

Listen! A Messenger has come to you, who is from among you. He grieves at your (spiritual) loss; he is greedily anxious for your (true) success: he is gentle and compassionate for the Believers: 128-129

Now if they turn away from you, say to them, O Prophet, "Allah suffices me: there is no god but He: in Him have I put my trust: He is the Lord of the Great Throne."

Contd. from p.247]

a hypocrite could behave. Thus the chastisement was meant to remind them: "You are the salt of the earth. But if you, too, become tasteless, wherefrom will then salt be obtained?"

There is another noteworthy side of the matter. The part played by the Leader and the Follower and the Muslim Society in this incident is unique. The Leader inflicts the most severe punishment but with the feelings of affection and without any tinge of anger or hatred in it. It is like the punishment which a father gives to his son, it is always understood that the punishment is given for the good of the son, who knows that as soon as he mends his ways, he will regain the fatherly love. And the Follower sets an excellent example of obedience under very trying circumstances. He suffers hard from the severity of the chastisement but never thinks of rebelling against the Leader because of any false personal or clannish pride; nay, he does not cherish in his heart any complaint against his beloved Leader, but begins to love him even more than before. During this saddest period of his life the only thing he yearns for is a look of affection from his Leader. For he is like a famine-stricken farmer whose only hope is the piece of cloud which he sees floating in the sky.

Now let us have a glimpse of the Muslim society, which displayed the greatest discipline and the highest moral spirit that had ever been shown by any society. No sooner does the Leader order the boycott than the whole community becomes a stranger to the follower not only in public but also in private. So much so that his nearest relatives and closest friends do not even speak to him; nay, his own wife leaves him alone. He implores them on oath to tell him if they suspected his sincerity, but even his lifelong companions make a point-blank refusal, saying that he should ask Allah and His Messenger for that testimony. But in spite of the show of this strict discipline, the moral spirit of the community is so high and so pure that not a single person tries to take advantage of the position of the fallen brother by adding insult to his injury; nay, every one feels sorry for his brother in disgrace, and is impatient to embrace him as soon as he is forgiven. That is why the people run in haste to tell him the good news.

The above is the model of the Righteous community that the Qur'ān aims to build.

This background makes it plain why Allah not only forgave them but also manifested His Kindness, Gentleness and Compassion in His Forgiveness to these

people. It was because of their sincerity which they proved during the fifty days of their chastisement. Had they shown arrogance after the commission of their offence and retaliated by taking angry and hostile actions as does every self-worshipper whose pride is wounded: had they behaved during their boycott in a manner as if they would break away from the community but never bow down before it: had they passed this period in spreading dissatisfaction in the community and gathering around them all the disgruntled people in order to organize a strong "opposition" against the Leader, then they would have most certainly been expelled from the community, as if to say, "Go you now and worship the idol of your self, for henceforth you will never be given any opportunity for exerting to raise the Word of Allah". But these Three did not adopt this way though it was open to them. On the contrary, they took a different way, as has been seen, and proved that God-worship had destroyed every idol that might have remained hidden in their hearts: that they had dedicated themselves entirely to the exertion in the Way of Allah: that while joining the Islamic community they had burnt their boats to make it impossible for themselves to go back anywhere: that they would put up with every kind of treatment but would remain in the community and die as a member of it and would scornfully reject any offer of an honorable place outside it; and would rather bear disgrace in it. That was why they were again taken in the community with the same honour as before. This is the explanation of the kind words of forgiveness: "Allah turned to them with kindness so that they should turn to Him." In these concise words, the Qur'ān has depicted the true picture of the matter. The Master had at first turned away His attention from His Three servants but when He saw that they had not left His door but had remained there with broken hearts, He again turned to them in appreciation of their fidelity so as to bring them back into the fold.

120. In order to comprehend the meaning of this verse, v. 97 with which it is connected, should be kept in view:

"These Bedouins are most stubborn in unbelief and hypocrisy, and, in all probability, will remain ignorant of the laws of the Way which Allah has sent down to His Messenger."

In v. 97, the Qur'ān merely diagnosed the disease and pointed out its symptoms. The Bedouins were suffering from the disease of hypocrisy because of their ignorance of the laws of the Way of Allah. This was so because they had not had any connections with the Centre of that knowledge. Here in this concluding portion of the Sūrah, the remedy of that disease has been prescribed so that they should have an understanding of Islam and its implications. It is not necessary that for this purpose all of them should leave their homes and come to Al-Madīnah to learn that knowledge, but some of them should come from each habitation, clan and region to the Centres of the Knowledge (Al-Madīnah, Makkah and the like)

and understand Islam. Then they should go back to their own habitations and create its understanding among the common people.

This was a very important instruction that was given at the opportune moment to strengthen the Islamic Movement for, at that time, the people were entering into the fold of Islam in large numbers without its proper understanding. Obviously, this instruction was not needed in the initial stages of the Movement, for at that time everyone who embraced Islam did so with its full understanding. No one would think of becoming a Muslim without this as this was an invitation to persecution. When the Movement became successful and won power in the land, the clans and the habitations began to enter *en bloc* into the fold of Islam. Naturally very few of them understood the full implications of the Faith before accepting it, but the majority of them were being carried into the fold, as it were, by the strong current that had been generated by the Movement. Outwardly this immense increase in numbers appeared to be a source of strength to Islam, but in reality such people as had no true understanding of Islam and were, therefore, not prepared to fulfil its moral obligations, were not only useless for the Islamic System but were actually harmful to it. This side of the matter became quite apparent during the preparations for the Tabūk expedition. That is why Allah sent down the instruction that necessary steps should be taken for the integration of the Islamic Community so that it may keep pace with the immense increase in its number. Therefore some people should be brought out from every habitation and taught and trained in the requirements of Islam and these in their turn should teach and train their own people so that the whole Muslim population should understand Islam and obtain the knowledge of the limits prescribed by Allah.

In this connection, it should also be clearly understood that *the Command about mass education given in this verse is not merely about literacy but it had the definite aim of imparting the understanding of the Way of Islam among the masses and enabling them to refrain from un-Islamic Ways.* This is the real and permanent aim of education that has been set before the Muslims by Allah Himself. Therefore every system of their education shall be judged by this criterion and shall be regarded Islamic only to the extent it fulfils this aim. It does not, however, mean that Islam is against the spreading of literacy and teaching of the purely mundane subjects to the masses, but it simply means that the primary aim of the Islamic Education shoud be the achievement of the objective which has been mentioned above in italics. Without this, it does not consider any education to be education at all, even if it were to produce Einsteins and Freuds of the age.

It will be worthwhile to consider the true significance of the words (لِيَتَفَقَّهُوا فِي الدِّينِ) used in the context, for they created a strange misunderstanding among the people of the later period, and produced lasting poisonous effects on

the religious education of the Muslims, nay, on their whole religious life in general. It is obvious that Allah used these words in order to lay down the objective of education before the Muslims, which was this: to understand the Islamic Way of life and have an insight into its system: to be familiar with its true nature and spirit so as to be able to judge and differentiate between the Islamic and the un-Islamic ways of thought and conduct in every aspect of life. But later on when the knowledge of the Muslim Law was given the technical name of فقہ (*fiqh*), it gradually developed into the science of the details of external form (as opposed to the spiritual aspect of the Islamic Law). As the word فقہ (*fiqh*) is of the same root فقہ as لِيَتَفَقَّهُوا used in this verse, a misunderstanding was created that this Command of the Qur'ān was about acquiring the knowledge of *fiqh* in the above-mentioned sense. It is true that this knowledge is of great importance in the Islamic System of life, but it is not all that is required by the Qur'ān but only a part of the objective. It is not possible to recount here all the damages that the Muslim Community has suffered because of this misunderstanding, but suffice it to say that this is the thing, which is responsible for reducing the religious education of the Muslims to the knowledge and interpretation of the external form of Islam without paying any attention to the spirit of Islam. This inevitably resulted in making lifeless formalism the ultimate goal of the life of the Muslims.

121. From the apparent wording of this verse, it may be inferred that only those Muslims have at first been held responsible to fight with those enemies of Islam who live near their territory. But if we read this verse along with the succeeding passage, it becomes clear that here "disbelievers who are near you refers to those hypocrites who were doing great harm to te Islamic Society by mixing up with the sincere Muslims. This very thing was stated in v. 73 at the beginning of this discourse. The Command has been repeated at its end in order to impress on the Muslims the importance of the matter and to urge them to do *Jihād* and crush these internal enemies, without paying the least regard to the racial, family and social relations that had been proving a binding force with them. The only difference between the two Commands is that in v. 73, the Muslims were asked to do *Jihād* with them, while in this verse stronger words, "fight with them", have been used, which were meant to impress on them that they should crush the hypocrites thoroughly and completely. Another difference in the wordings is that in v. 73, two different words, "disbelievers and hypocrites", have been used, while in this verse only one word, "disbelievers", has been used so that the hypocrites should forfeit all their claims as Muslims, for there was room for this concession in the word "hypocrite".

122. This is meant to impress that they should not, in future, show the lenient treatment they had been meting out to them up to that time. This has already been commanded in v. 73: "be firm and stern with them".

123. This warning has two-fold meanings and both are implied here. First, "If you show any kind of leniency towards them because of your personal or family or economic connections with them, you should know that such a thing shall be against 'the fear of God', for the fear of God and friendly relations with the enemies of Allah are contradictory things. Therefore, you should give these up, if you desire to obtain Allah's help". Secondly, "You should scrupulously observe the moral and humane limits in doing *Jihād*, and in fighting with them. For you should always keep yourselves within the prescribed limits in everything. If you transgress these in any way, you should know that Allah will forsake you for He helps only those who are Godfearing.

124. As regards the increase and decrease in Faith, disbelief and hypocrisy, please refer to E.N. 2 of Sūrah *Al-Anfāl*.

125. That is, during the course of every year such circumstances are created as put to test once or twice their claim to the Faith, and these disclose that their profession of Islam was like a counterfeit coin. For instance, some time their Faith is tested by (a) a Commandment of the Qur'ān which lays some new restriction on their lust; or by (b) a demand of the Faith that hits hard at their self-interests, or by (c) an internal dispute which discloses their preference for worldly interests and for their personal, family and clannish relations to Allah, His Messenger and the Faith, or by (d) a war that requires the sacrifice of their lives, wealth, time and energies. All these tests help bring to the open that filth of hypocrisy that lay hidden in their hearts under the garb of the profession of Islam. Besides, these things increase that filth which had already gathered in their hearts because of their deviations from the implications of the Faith.

126. This happened when the hypocrites had to attend a meeting that was specially held for the recital of some new sūrah. The Holy Prophet used to recite as an address every new sūrah before the assembly. The true believers would listen to it very attentively and respectfully. But the hypocrites, who had to attend the meeting to show that they were "Muslims", would sit listlessly in the meeting for they had no interest in the recital. But when they would be assured that their "attendance" had been marked, they would look for an opportune moment to slip away without being seen and noticed.

127. "Allah has turned away their hearts from the Qur'ān, because they do not understand that it is in their own interest to listen to the Qur'ān and to act upon its teachings. These foolish people do not realize that by ignoring the Qur'ān and the Holy Prophet, they in fact, deprive themselves of a great blessing. As they

are deeply engaged in their own narrow interests, they do not see that the great knowledge of the Qur'ān and the right guidance of the Holy Prophet has the potentiality of making them the leaders of this world, and of bringing salvation to them in the Next World. As a result of their folly and neglect of the great blessing, Allah has, in accordance with His Law, deprived them of the capacity of making use of this blessing and "turned away their hearts" from it. That is why these unfortunate, people do not even feel the great loss they are suffering, while the blessed people are taking full advantage of this great fountainhead of power and strength and are preparing themsleves for achieving the greatest success that human beings could ever achieve.



X

YŪNUS
(JONAH)

يُونس

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

X

YŪNUS (JONAH)

يُونُس

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name from V. 98, in which there is a reference to Prophet Yūnus (Jonah). The name, as usual, is symbolical and does not indicate that the Sūrah deals with the story of Prophet Jonah.

Place of Revelation

We learn from traditions, and this is supported by the contents of the Sūrah itself, that the whole of this Sūrah was revealed at Makkah. But there are some people who are of the opinion that some of its verses were revealed at Al-Madīnah. This is, however, a superficial view. The continuity of the theme clearly shows that this does not comprise isolated verses or discourses that were revealed at different times and on different occasions. On the contrary, it is, from the beginning to the end, a closely connected discourse which must have been revealed at one sitting. Besides this, the nature of its theme is itself a clear proof that the Sūrah belongs to the Makkan period.

Time of Revelation

We have no tradition in regard to the time of its revelation, but its subject-matter gives clear indication that it must have been revealed during the last stage of the Holy Prophet's residence at Makkah. For the mode of the discourse suggests that at the time of its revelation, the antagonism of the opponents of the Message had become so intense that

they could not tolerate even the presence of the Holy Prophet and his followers among themselves, and that things had come to such a pass as to leave no hope that they would ever understand and accept the Message of the Prophet. This indicates that the last stage of the Prophe's life among those people had come, and the final warning like the one in this Sūrah had to be given. These characteristics of the discourse are a clear proof that it was revealed during the last stage of the Movement at Makkah.

Another thing that determines more specifically the order of the Sūrahs of the last stage at Makkah is the mention (or absence) of some open or covert hint about *Hijrat* (Emigration) from Makkah. As this Sūrah does not contain any hint whatsoever about this, it is a proof that it preceded those Sūrahs which contain it.

Now that we have specified the time of its revelation, there is no need of repeating its historical background because that has already been stated in Sūrahs VI and VII.

Subject

This discourse deals with the invitation to the Message, admonition and warning. In the very introductory verses, the invitation has been extended like this:—

"The people consider it a strange thing that this Message is being conveyed by a human being and charge him with sorcery, whereas there is nothing strange in it nor has it any connection with sorcery or sooth-saying. It simply informs you of two realities. First, Allah, Who has created the universe and manages it, is, in fact, your Master and Lord, and He alone is entitled to your worship. The second reality is that after the life in this world, there will be another life in the Next World, where you shall have to render full account of the life of this world and be rewarded or punished according to whether you adopted the righteous attitude as required by Him after acknowledging Him as your Master, or acted against His will. Both of these realities, which the Messenger is presenting before you, are "realities" in themselves whether you acknowledge them as such or not. He is inviting you to accept these and regulate your lives in accordance with them; if you accept these, you will have a very blessed end; otherwise you shall meet with evil consequences."

Topics

After the introduction, the following topics have been dealt with in an appropriate order:—

(1) Proofs of the doctrines of *Taubīd*, Providence and Life-after-death have been given by such arguments as may satisfy the minds and hearts of those who listen to the Message without prejudice and bigotry with the sole intention of safeguarding themselves against deviation and its evil results and not for the sake of seeking opportunities for useless discussions.

(2) Those misunderstandings which were (and always are) hindering people from accepting the doctrines of *Tauhīd* and the Hereafter, have been removed and they have been warned to guard against those negligences that stand in their way.

(3) Those doubts have been removed and answers to those objections given which were being raised about the Prophethood of Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) and the Message brought by him.

(4) Graphic descriptions of the life in the Hereafter have been presented in order to warn the people beforehand so that they should mend their ways here and be not sorry afterwards for their conduct in this world.

(5) They have been admonished and warned that the life in this world is really a test and a trial, and that the time allowed for it is only up to the last moment of the earthly life, and that this is the only opportunity that shall be given to them for accepting the Message and achieving success in the test. Therefore, they should make the best use of the opportunity that has been provided for them by the appointment of Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) for their guidance and obtain the true knowledge of the Reality from the Qur'ān that is being sent down to him. Otherwise, they shall be remorseful for ever and ever.

(6) Their attention has been drawn to some of their acts of manifest ignorance and deviation which were the direct result of discarding Divine Guidance from their lives.

In this connection, the story of Prophet Noah has been related in brief and that of Prophet Moses in detail in order to impress four things on the minds:

First, "As your behaviour towards Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) is like that of the peoples of Prophet Noah and Prophet Moses towards them, you should know it for certain that you also shall meet with the same consequences which they met with." Secondly, "You should not be deluded into believing by the helpless and weak condition of the Prophet and his followers, you are witnessing today, that it will always remain like this. You should know that the same All-Powerful Allah Who supported Prophets Moses and Aaron, is supporting them and that He changes the circumstances in such a sudden and thorough manner that none can foresee it." Thirdly, "If you do not make use of the term that has been granted to you by Allah and mend your ways now, and postpone this to the last moment like Pharaoh, your repentance shall not be accepted." Lastly, the followers of the Holy Prophet have been reassured that they should not lose heart because of the severity of the circumstances created by their opponents, especially at the time when they themselves were in an utterly helpless condition. They have also been given instructions as to how they should carry on their Mission under those harsh conditions. Moreover, they have been warned to be on their guard against the kind of behaviour which was adopted by the Israelites, when they were rescued by Allah from the tyranny of the People of Pharaoh.

(7) At the end of the Sūrah, the Holy Prophet has been commanded to make a declaration to this effect: "This is the Creed and this is the rule of conduct that has been prescribed for me by Allah: no change can be made at all in this: whoso will accept this will do so for his own good and whoso will reject this will do so at his own peril."



الٓرٰ ۚ تِلْكَ اٰيٰتُ الْكِتٰبِ الْحَكِيْمِ ۝١ اَكَانَ لِلنَّاسِ عَجَبًا اَنْ اَوْحَيْنَآ اِلٰى
رَجُلٍ مِّنْهُمْ اَنْ اَنْذِرِ النَّاسَ وَبَشِّرِ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا اَنَّ لَهُمْ قَدَمَ
صِدْقٍ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ ۗ قَالَ الْكٰفِرُوْنَ اِنَّ هٰذَا لَسٰحِرٌ مُّبِيْنٌ ۝٢ اِنَّ رَبَّكُمُ
اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ فِيْ سِتَّةِ اَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوٰى عَلَى
الْعَرْشِ يُدَبِّرُ الْاَمْرَ ۭ مَا مِنْ شَفِيْعٍ اِلَّا مِنْۢ بَعْدِ اِذْنِهٖ ۭ ذٰلِكُمُ اللّٰهُ
رَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُوْهُ ۭ اَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُوْنَ ۝٣ اِلَيْهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ جَمِيْعًا ۭ وَعْدَ اللّٰهِ حَقًّا ۭ
اِنَّهٗ يَبْدَؤُا الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيْدُهٗ لِيَجْزِيَ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ
بِالْقِسْطِ ۭ وَالَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا لَهُمْ شَرَابٌ مِّنْ حَمِيْمٍ وَّعَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌۢ بِمَا
كَانُوْا يَكْفُرُوْنَ ۝٤ هُوَ الَّذِيْ جَعَلَ الشَّمْسَ ضِيَاۗءً وَّالْقَمَرَ نُوْرًا وَّقَدَّرَهٗ
مَنَازِلَ لِتَعْلَمُوْا عَدَدَ السِّنِيْنَ وَالْحِسَابَ ۭ مَا خَلَقَ اللّٰهُ ذٰلِكَ اِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ ۚ
يُفَصِّلُ الْاٰيٰتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَّعْلَمُوْنَ ۝٥ اِنَّ فِي اخْتِلَافِ الَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَمَا
خَلَقَ اللّٰهُ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَّتَّقُوْنَ ۝٦ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ لَا
يَرْجُوْنَ لِقَاۗءَنَا وَرَضُوْا بِالْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَاطْمَاَنُّوْا بِهَا وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ
عَنْ اٰيٰتِنَا غٰفِلُوْنَ ۝٧ اُولٰۗىِٕكَ مَاْوٰىهُمُ النَّارُ بِمَا كَانُوْا يَكْسِبُوْنَ ۝٨ اِنَّ
الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ يَهْدِيْهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ بِاِيْمَانِهِمْ ۚ تَجْرِيْ مِنْ
تَحْتِهِمُ الْاَنْهٰرُ فِيْ جَنّٰتِ النَّعِيْمِ ۝٩ دَعْوٰىهُمْ فِيْهَا سُبْحٰنَكَ اللّٰهُمَّ وَ
تَحِيَّتُهُمْ فِيْهَا سَلٰمٌ ۚ وَاٰخِرُ دَعْوٰىهُمْ اَنِ الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ۝١٠

X

YŪNUS

يُونُس

Verses" 109 *Revealed at Makkah*

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

Alif Lām Rā. These are the verses of the Book, which is full of wisdom and knowledge.[1] 1

Did it seem strange to the people that We should have inspired a man from among themselves to warn the (neglectful) people, and to give the Believers the good news that they will have real honour and success with their Lord ?[2] (Is this the thing that) led the unbelievers to say, "This man is a manifest enchanter?"[3] 2

The fact is that your Lord is the same Allah Who created the heavens and the earth in six days, then sat Himself upon the Throne of His Kingdom, and is directing the affairs of the universe.[4] None can intercede with Him except after His permission.[5] That is Allah, your Lord: so worship Him.[6] Will you not then understand?[7] 3

To Him you shall all return:[8] this is the true and sure promise of Allah. Indeed He originates creation and He will bring it back to life[9] so that He may recompense with perfect justice those who believed and did righteous deeds. As for those who disbelieved, they shall drink boiling water and undergo a painful chastisement for their rejection of the Truth.[10] 4

It is He Who gave the sun his brightness and the moon her light, and ordained her phases precisely so that you may calculate years and dates from this. Allah has not created all this (for mere fun) but for a serious end. He makes His Signs manifest for those people who possess knowledge. In the alternation of the night and day and in all that Allah has created in the heavens and the earth, surely there are Signs for those who intend avoiding (deviation from the Truth[11]). 5-6

7-8 The fact is that the ultimate abode of those, who expect not to meet Us and are well pleased and satisfied with this worldly life and pay no heed to Our Signs, shall be Hell in consequence of the evils they earned (because of this erroneous creed and wrong conduct[12]).

9-10 And it is also a fact that, because of their faith, Allah will guide aright those who believe (sincerely in the Truths that have been presented in this Book) and do righteous deeds; and canals will be flowing underneath them in the Gardens of bliss.[13] Therein their prayers will be, "Glory to Thee, O Lord," and their greeting, "Peace be to you," and the burden of their hymn will be, "Praise is for Allah alone, the Lord of the universe."[14]

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1. This introductory verse contains a subtle answer to those foolish people who presumed that the discourses, which the Messenger was presenting as the Qur'ān, were nothing more than eloquent speeches, poetic lofty thoughts, and some predictions like those of the sooth-sayers. They are being warned that the Qur'ān is not what they supposed it to be but this is the Book of wisdom, and that if they did not pay due attention to it, they would deprive themselves of wisdom.

2. This question has been posed to impress on them that if they considered the matter coolly, they themselves would come to the conclusion that:

(a) there is nothing strange in appointing a man to warn his fellow men of the consequences of neglecting the Message. For it is obvious that a man, and not a *jinn* or an angel or any other being, was the proper messenger for human beings.

(b) there is nothing strange in it that the Creator and Lord of mankind should make arrangements for the guidance of erring human beings; nay, it would have been strange if He had made no such arrangements, and

(c) there is nothing strange in this that real honour and success should come to those who accept the guidance and not to those who reject it.

3. They dubbed him "enchanter" but did not consider whether the epithet appropriately applied to him or not. It is obvious that the mere fact that he was moving the hearts and influencing the minds of the believers with his eloquence, was not a sufficient proof that he was using magic to achieve this object. And it is not difficult at all to distinguish rhetoric of a Messenger from that of an enchanter for these are quite distinct from each other in their nature, in the objectives for which they are used and in the effect they produce on the lives of the believers. The irresponsible "enchanter" does not care at all whether what he utters is correct, just and righteous because his only object is to influence the hearts of the

hearers in order to achieve his own unlawful ends. That is why he does not hesitate at all to utter any false, exaggerated or unjust thing, if it serves his purpose. For his only aim is to produce an emotional effect in order to deceive the people by using an artificially ornamented and exaggerated language rather than to state things of wisdom. As a result of this, his talk is contradictory, imbalanced and unsystematic. As his sole object is self-interest, he abuses his rhetoric for exploitation, or for sowing seeds of discord or for setting one party against the other. Therefore, the "enchanter" fails to produce any high moral effects on the lives of the people or to imbue them with any righteous thoughts or to urge them to noble deeds or to bring about any healthy change in their lives; nay, as a result of his "magic" the people begin to exhibit even worse qualities than they did before.

Thus it is implied that by the application of this criterion, the charge of the unbelievers that, "This man is a manifest enchanter" is refuted, for it means to say to them, "You yourselves are witnessing that the talk of 'this person' is wise, systematic, balanced, right and just. Every word he utters is well-thought out and everything he says is most valuable and precious. His eloquence aims at nothing but reform of the people. There is not the least tinge of personal, family, national or any other worldly interest in his talk. His only intention and desire is to warn the people of the consequences of their negligence and to invite them to the way of their own good. Then consider the effects of his eloquence and you will find that they are quite different from those produced by the rhetoric of the 'enchanters'. The lives of all those who have been influenced by him have been so reformed that they have become models of high moral character and excellent conduct. Therefore, you should consider the matter and decide for yourselves whether he is an enchanter or a prophet."

4. This is to impress the fact that after creating the universe, Allah has not cut off connection with it, but has sat Himself upon His Throne and is practically directing and conducting and governing each and every part of it. The foolish people think that after creating the universe, Allah has left it to itself or to others to exploit it as they will. But the Qur'ān refutes this and says that Allah Himself is governing the whole of His creation and He has kept all the powers and the reins of government in His own hands and whatever is taking place in each and every part of the universe is happening with His command or permission. In short, He is not only the Creator but also the Ruler, Designer and Supporter of the universe, which is working in accordance with His will. (Please see also E.N.'s 40, 41 of *Al-A'arāf.*)

5. This is to emphasize the other side of the matter. He is All-Powerful and there is none who dare make even a recommendation to Him about anything not to speak of interfering with His management of affairs so as to cause any

change in His decrees or in the making or marring of anyone's fate. The most one can do is to make a supplication to Him but it all depends on His will to grant or reject it. There is none so powerful in His Kingdom as to have his own way in anything or to get his recommendations through anyhow.

6. After stating the bare fact that Allah alone is the Lord, people are being told the kind of conduct that 'fact' demands from them, that is, "When Allah alone is your Lord, you should worship Him alone." In this connection, it should also be noted that just as the Arabic word ربّ (*Rab*) implies three things—Providence, Supremacy and Sovereignty—likewise the Arabic word عبادت (*'ibādat*) also contains three corresponding implications: (1) worship, (2) servitude and (3) obedience:

(1) As Allah is his sole Providence, man should show his gratitude to Him by worshipping Him alone. He should pray and supplicate to Him and bow his head in reverence to Him and none else.

(2) As Allah is the only Supreme Being, man should behave like His servant and slave and should not adopt the attitude of independence towards Him nor should he subject himself to the mental or practical servitude of anyone else.

(3) As Allah is his sole Sovereign, man should obey His Commands, and follow His Law, and he should neither become his own sovereign nor should he acknowledge anyone else as his sovereign.

7. That is, "Will you not then understand the implications of the Reality that has been expounded? Will you not open your eyes and see the misunderstandings which have been misleading you into wrong ways opposed to Reality? Will you persist in them?"

8. This is the second basic principle of the teachings of every prophet; "You shall have to return to your Lord and render an account of all you did in this world." The first principle has been stated in the preceding verse: "Allah alone is your Lord: therefore worship Him only."

9. This sentence contains both a statement and its proof. The statement is, "Allah will again bring to life all human beings," and the proof is, "This is as easy for Allah as it was to create them first." The one who acknowledges that Allah has originated all creation (and who can deny this except those atheists who accepted the absurd theory of "Creation without a Creator" merely to get a plea for discarding the religion of the Christian clergy?) cannot consider this as impossible or irrational.

10. The reason why Allah will again bring the whole mankind to life is to reward the believers and to punish the disbelievers. After showing that this is

possible to raise the dead, it is stated that it is absolutely necessary to fulfill the demands of common sense and justice, for full justice cannot be done without this. Common-sense and justice demand that those who believe and do righteous deeds should be given their full rewards, and those who disbelieve and reject the Truth and do evil deeds, should be duly punished. As every sensible and just person knows that this demand of justice is not fulfilled in its entirety, and cannot be fulfilled in this world, it is absolutley essential that the whole of mankind should again be brought to life for this purpose. (Please see also E.N. 30, *Al-A'arāf* and E.N. 105, *Hūd*.)

11. This is the third argument in proof of the doctrine of the life in the Hereafter. It is based on Allah's manifestations in the heavens and on the earth. The greatest and most manifest of these are the sun, the moon and the alternation of the night and day, for these are ever present before each and every human being. All these clearly show that the Creator of this great and vast universe is not a child who has made all this for mere fun and will break it up when he is satiated with it. These manifestations of His are a clear proof of the fact that the Creator is All-Wise, for there is a system, a wisdom, a design and a serious object in each and every particle of His creation. These seem, as it were, to say. "When you yourselves learn from the signs and manifestations of His wisdom that He is All-Wise, how can you, then, expect that He will not call man to account after granting him common-sense, moral feelings, independent responsibility and authority to exploit His endless resources, and that He will not reward those who make the right use of these and punish those who abuse them?"

Thus, it has become obvious that in vv. 4-6, three arguments have been given in their logical order to present the doctrine of the Hereafter:

(1) The fact of the origination of life in this world is a proof that life in the Next World is also possible.

(2) There must be life in the Hereafter, because it is essential for the recompense of the deeds that one does, and of the use or abuse one makes of the moral responsibilities that have been entrusted to man. Therefore, it is the demand of common-sense and justice that there must be another world in which one should bear the consequences of one's deeds, for this is not possible in this world.

(3) When common-sense and justice demand that there must be life in the Hereafter, this need will surely be satisfied, for the Creator of man and the universe is All-Wise, and it cannot be conceived that the All-Wise will not satisfy the demands of common-sense and justice.

A deep thinking will show that these are the only possible arguments for the proof of the life in the Hereafter and these suffice, too. After this the only

thing that might be demanded in this connection is that it should be actually demonstrated before man to convince him that this thing is possible, necessary and demanded by the Wisdom of Allah. But it is obvious that this will not be done in this world for this is for the trial of man and not for recompense, and Allah wills to test whether man believes in the Hereafter without seeing it, merely by his reasoning on the right lines.

Besides this, the words, "He makes His Signs manifest for those people, who possess knowledge" and "...in all that Allah has created... there are Signs for those, who intend avoiding (deviation from the Truth)" are worthy of serious consideration. These words imply this: "Allah has in His wisdom spread such signs in each and every manifestation of His as clearly point to the realities that are hidden behind them; but only those people can reach to those realities, who (a) free themselves from the prejudices of ignorance and acquire knowledge from the sources with which Allah has provided man for this purpose, and (b) have the intention of avoiding wrong ways and following the Right Way."

12. This passage also contains both a statement and its proof. The statement is that those who reject the doctrine of the Hereafter shall inevitably go to Hell and its proof is that those who reject or pay no heed to this, commit such evil deeds as deserve nothing less than the fire of Hell. The fact which is supported by the experience of thousands of years, is that those who do not consider themselves responsible and accountable to God in the Hereafter, go astray into wrong ways for lack of any control over themselves, and commit immoralities and fill God's earth with tyranny, chaos and filth and thus merit Hell. This is inevitable. If a man leads his life on the presumption that there is no other life, he will have no fear that he shall have to render a full account of all his deeds in this world. Therefore his sole aim in this life will be to win, by hook or by crook, prosperity, happiness, fame and power in this world. Naturally these materialistic attitudes make people heedless of the Signs of Allah and mislead them into wrong ways that lead to Hell.

The above argument for the doctrine of the Hereafter is in its nature different from the previous three arguments. This is based on the knowledge gained by human experience while the former were based on rational reasoning. Though here only a hint has been given about it, the same has been stated in detail in other places in the Qur'ān. This is the argument in brief. Human beings cannot adopt individually or collectively the right attitude towards life unless the doctrine of accountability to God is deeply embedded in their hearts. The fact that human beings begin to behave erroneously, if and when their belief in this doctrine disappears or becomes weak, is borne out by a long experience. Had not the creed of the Hereafter been real, its acceptance or rejection would not have produced the results inevitably and continuously for centuries. The fact that the acceptance of a

doctrine should have continuously produced right sort of results, and its denial wrong results, is a clear proof that it is real. Though the premises of the above argument and the conclusion drawn from these are clear and closely connected, there are some people who do not agree with this proposition. They argue their point like this. There are many instances of people who deny the Hereafter and base their moral philosophy and their rule of conduct on atheism and materialism: still they possess high moral characters and abstain from every sort of evil; in short, they are virtuous in their affairs and render great services to the people. But a little thinking will show that this is a weak argument. If we probe into the materialistic philosophies and systems, we shall find that all these lack solid foundations for the moral excellence and practical virtuous deeds; therefore they cannot produce those qualities with which the atheists and the materialists are credited. Indeed no such motivating factors exist in those philosophies as may produce the qualities of righteousness, honesty, trust-worthiness, justice, compassion, generosity, sacrifice, sympathy, self-control, purity, the fulfilment of duties, obligations and pledges and the like. The only alternative to the doctrines of *Tauhīd* and the Hereafter is "utilitarianism" which might become the basis for a practical moral system, for all the other philosophies are merely hypothetical and impracticable. It is quite obvious that the motivating power of utilitarianism is very limited because it is incapable of carrying a person farther than "utility" itself. Therefore the one who believes in this doctrine will consider a virtue a "virtue" only as long as it is useful to his own person, family, society etc., and will direct all his efforts towards promoting their welfare and happiness and will adhere to moral qualities only as long as they are conducive to his own good or to that of his own people. But he will discard these "virtues", when he is convinced that these will be harmful. That is why a utilitarian does not believe in absolute morality but adopts truth or falsehood, honesty or dishonesty, faithfulness or treachery, justice or injustice, in short, any virtue or vice that may suit the occasion and be useful for his own interests. The English people are the most appropriate example of utilitarian morality. Their example will serve our purpose as they are cited by its supporters to prove their proposition that one may possess a high moral character even though one were to deny the existence of God and the Hereafter for, they say, the English people in general are more truthful, more honest, more just and more trust-worthy than others though they are materialists; whereas the fact is that the English people provide the most appropriate practical proof of the instability of utilitarian character. Is it not a fact that the representatives of the English nation make a very poor show of their morality in regard to international affairs? They tell brazen-faced lies and are guilty of treachery, tyranny, injustice and dishonesty, and the whole nation backs them up as its champions. Had their

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وَلَوْ يُعَجِّلُ اللّٰهُ لِلنَّاسِ الشَّرَّ اسْتِعْجَالَهُمْ بِالْخَيْرِ لَقُضِيَ إِلَيْهِمْ أَجَلُهُمْ ۚ
فَنَذَرُ الَّذِينَ لَا يَرْجُونَ لِقَاءَنَا فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ ﴿١١﴾ وَإِذَا مَسَّ
الْإِنسَانَ الضُّرُّ دَعَانَا لِجَنبِهِ أَوْ قَاعِدًا أَوْ قَائِمًا ۖ فَلَمَّا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُ
ضُرَّهُ مَرَّ كَأَن لَّمْ يَدْعُنَا إِلَىٰ ضُرٍّ مَّسَّهُ ۚ كَذَٰلِكَ زُيِّنَ لِلْمُسْرِفِينَ مَا
كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٢﴾ وَلَقَدْ أَهْلَكْنَا الْقُرُونَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَمَّا ظَلَمُوا ۙ وَجَاءَتْهُمْ
رُسُلُهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَمَا كَانُوا لِيُؤْمِنُوا ۚ كَذَٰلِكَ نَجْزِي الْقَوْمَ الْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿١٣﴾
ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ خَلَائِفَ فِي الْأَرْضِ مِن بَعْدِهِمْ لِنَنظُرَ كَيْفَ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤﴾
وَإِذَا تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُنَا بَيِّنَاتٍ ۙ قَالَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَرْجُونَ لِقَاءَنَا ائْتِ بِقُرْآنٍ
غَيْرِ هَٰذَا أَوْ بَدِّلْهُ ۚ قُلْ مَا يَكُونُ لِي أَنْ أُبَدِّلَهُ مِن تِلْقَاءِ نَفْسِي ۖ إِنْ
أَتَّبِعُ إِلَّا مَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ ۖ إِنِّي أَخَافُ إِنْ عَصَيْتُ رَبِّي عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿١٥﴾
قُل لَّوْ شَاءَ اللّٰهُ مَا تَلَوْتُهُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَا أَدْرَاكُم بِهِ ۖ فَقَدْ لَبِثْتُ فِيكُمْ
عُمُرًا مِّن قَبْلِهِ ۚ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٦﴾ فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَىٰ عَلَى اللّٰهِ
كَذِبًا أَوْ كَذَّبَ بِآيَاتِهِ ۚ إِنَّهُ لَا يُفْلِحُ الْمُجْرِمُونَ ﴿١٧﴾ وَيَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ
اللّٰهِ مَا لَا يَضُرُّهُمْ وَلَا يَنفَعُهُمْ وَيَقُولُونَ هَٰؤُلَاءِ شُفَعَاؤُنَا عِندَ اللّٰهِ ۚ
قُلْ أَتُنَبِّئُونَ اللّٰهَ بِمَا لَا يَعْلَمُ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۚ سُبْحَانَهُ وَ
تَعَالَىٰ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿١٨﴾ وَمَا كَانَ النَّاسُ إِلَّا أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً فَاخْتَلَفُوا ۚ وَ
لَوْلَا كَلِمَةٌ سَبَقَتْ مِن رَّبِّكَ لَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ فِيمَا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿١٩﴾ وَ
يَقُولُونَ لَوْلَا أُنزِلَ عَلَيْهِ آيَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِ ۖ فَقُلْ إِنَّمَا الْغَيْبُ لِلّٰهِ فَانتَظِرُوا ۖ
إِنِّي مَعَكُم مِّنَ الْمُنتَظِرِينَ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَإِذَا أَذَقْنَا النَّاسَ رَحْمَةً مِّن بَعْدِ ضَرَّاءَ

Had Allah[15] hastened in dealing out evil to people as they hastened in asking good of the world, the term allowed to them for action would have been terminated long before this. (But this is not Our Way:) We let wander in their rebellion those people who do not expect to meet Us. Strange is the behaviour of man! When he is in affliction, he calls Us, standing or sitting or lying down, but when We remove his affliction from him, he behaves as if he had never called Us at the time when affliction came upon him. Thus the evil deeds of such transgressors have been made seeming fair to them. O mankind, We destroyed before you those communities[16] (which were in power in their time,) when they adopted the attitude of transgression,[17] for their Messengers came to them with clear signs but they would not believe in them. This is how We recompense the criminals for their crimes. Now We have appointed you in their place on the earth so that We may test how you conduct yourselves.[18] 11-14

When Our clear revelations are recited to them, those who do not expect to meet Us say, "Bring another Qur'ān in its stead or make some amendment in it."[19] O Muhammad, say to them, "It is not for me to make any alteration in it of my own accord. I follow only what is revealed to me. Indeed, if I disobey my Lord, I fear the chastisement of a dreadful Day."[20] Say also, "Had Allah willed so, I would never have recited this Qur'ān to you, nor would I have told you anything (about its existence). I have already lived a lifetime among you before its revelation. Do you not use your common-sense?[21] And Who can be a greater sinner than the one who himself forges a lie and then ascribes it to Allah or falsifies[22] His real Revelations? Indeed, criminals can never attain (true) success."[23] 15-17

These people worship besides Allah those which can neither harm nor benefit them, and say, "These are our intercessors with Allah". O Muhammed, say to them, "Do you presume to inform Allah of that thing which He knows not to be either in the heavens or in the earth ?"[24] He is absolutely free from and exalted above what they associate with Him. 18

In the beginning all the people were one community, but afterwards they invented different creeds and ways.[25] And had not your Lord ordained a decree, that thing in which they differ would have been resolved.[26] 19

20 As regards their saying, "Why has not a Sign been sent down to this Prophet from his Lord?"[27] tell them, "The unseen belongs wholly and solely to Allah. Well, wait (for it): I, too shall wait with you."[28]

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morality been founded on sound basis, it could not have been possible that as individuals they should be truthful, honest, just, righteous and observe pledges, but as a nation they would discard all these moral values. This is a clear proof that these people do not believe in moral values as such but only if these are useful for their self-interest: otherwise they could not have adopted two contradictory positions as individuals and as a nation. Morality is morality only if it is absolute, otherwise it is a policy and expediency.

Nevertheless, if there be any up-holders of absolute morality from among the disbelievers of Allah and the Hereafter, they could not have got these virtues from the doctrine of utilitarianism but from those latent religious influences that might have remained embedded in their hearts without their conscious knowledge. Such a person is, in fact, indebted to religion for his moral excellences, though he be attributing these to secularism and materialism, for he cannot point out anything, whatsoever, in them that might have motivated those virtues.

13. We should not pass cursorily over this verse and should consider it deeply in the order it has been presented:

(1) Why will they be given Gardens of bliss in the life of the Hereafter? This will be because they followed the Right Way in the life of this world and adopted the right ways in every aspect of life, both as individuals and as a community, and discarded the false and erroneous ways.

(2) How did they obtain at every step, at every turning and at every crossroad the correct criterion of judging between the right and the wrong, the true and the false, the righteous and the erroneous? Then wherefrom did they get the power to remain stead-fast on the Right Way, avoiding scrupulously wrong ways, after getting the right sort of discernment? It was their Lord Who is the real source of everything, Who gave them the guidance and the power of doing good works on every critical occasion.

(3) Why did their Lord give them that guidance and power? He gave them these things because of their Faith.

(4) What is that characteristic of the Faith which produces the above results ? The Faith which produces those results does not comprise mere profession

but it is that Faith which becomes the moving spirit of one's conduct and character and has the power of reforming one's morals and deeds.

In order to illustrate this point, let us consider, in the physical life of man, the case of food that is consumed for nourishment, health, energy and happiness. It is obvious that these results cannot be produced by the mere taking in of any food, but by that "food" which is so digested as turns into blood and circulates into every vein to provide energy to every part of the body for its proper functioning. In the same way, in the moral life, guidance, righteous attitude and pure conduct and true success, depend on those right creeds that get deeply embedded in the mind, heart and soul. Otherwise, creeds which are merely professed by the tongue or lie dormant in some corner of the mind and the heart, cannot produce such results, for they cannot influence one's conduct, character, way of thinking and attitude towards life for the better. Just as one may eat food and still not obtain those useful results which are produced only if it is digested properly according to the physical laws of God, in the same way, one who professes those right creeds merely with his tongue, but does not make them a part of his mind, heart and soul, does not deserve those rewards which are only for those whose deeds correspond to the creeds.

14. These facts about the life in Paradise have been stated in order to make conspicuous the high thinking and the noble qualities of the Believers. When they enter Paradise after coming out successful in this worldly test they will manifest the same high qualities of character that they had in this world. Instead of making urgent and immediate demands for beautiful articles of luxury, musical instruments, wine and women, they will sing hymns of praise to their Lord. This also belies that picture of the life in Paradise that some crooked people have formed of it. The fact is that the noble personalities which the Believers build in this world and the high ways of thinking and the excellent moral characters they form in this world and the great and rigid training they give to their feelings, emotions and desires, will become all the more prominent in the pure surroundings and environments of Paradise. That is why they will love it most to sing hymns of praise to Allah and glorify His name just as they did in this world. Besides this, their greatest wish and desire in Paradise will be peace for one another, as it was in their collective life in this world.

15. After the introductory verses (1-10), the Qur'ān takes up admonition which is the main subject of the Sūrah. In order to understand this fully we should keep two things in view as its background:

First, a little before its revelation, the continuous horrible famine, which had afflicted Makkah for seven long years and humbled the haughty Quraish, had come to an end. Naturally this had given a blow to idol-worship and acted as a

stimulus to God-worship: for in their utter helplessness, they had to supplicate to Allah and cry meekly for help. So much so that Abū Sufyān had to approach the Holy Prophet with this request: "Please pray to Allah to remove this affliction from us. But when the famine was over, and rains began to fall, and prosperity returned, they began to show rebellion and do evil deeds and started their hostile activities against the believers. Thus the hearts that had turned to Allah, again became neglectful of Him. (See XVI: 113, XXIII: 75-77, XLIV: 10-16).

Secondly, the Qur'ān answered the question with which they confronted the Holy Prophet whenever he warned them of the consequences of rejecting the Truth. They would say, "You are always threatening us with Allah's wrath; why doesn't the Divine torment visit us and why is it being delayed?"

Keeping the above background in view, vv. 11-12 may be expanded like this: "Allah does not hasten in punishing and seizing the people for their sins as He hastens in showing kindness and compassion to them. Do they, then, want Him to hasten His torment for their rebellions, as He hastened to remove famine in answer to their supplications? As this is not Our Way, We give them time to mend their evil ways in spite of their transgressions and rebellions. We send warning after warning and give them respite until their term comes to an end. Then the law of requital comes into force. In contrast to this, their way is the way of mean and narrow-minded people. When affliction comes, they remember Allah, begin to cry and call Him meekly, but forget it all during the time of prosperity. Such bad ways as these are leading them to Divine torment."

16. The Arabic word قَرْن (*qarn*) is commonly used for "the people living during the same period." But from the way the Qur'ān has used this word on different occasions, it is evident that by *"qarn"* is meant the community which had been invested with power and authority and appointed wholly or partially to the position of leadership of the world. One way in which such a community is destroyed is that it is totally exterminated but there are other forms of its destruction also.

17. Here the word ظُلْم (*zulm*) has not been used in its commonly known limited sense, but it covers all sorts of sins that are committed, when people transgress the boundaries of Allah's slavery. (Please refer to E.N. 49 of *Al-Baqarah*.)

18. vv. 13-14 have been pointedly addressed to the Arabs so as to say, "O Prophet of Arabia, learn a lesson from the communities that have passed before you. They were given an opportunity for doing good deeds in their time but instead of this they adopted the attitude of transgression and rebellion and rejected the teachings of the Messengers who had been sent for their guidance. As they

failed in Our test, We dismissed them from leadership. Now, O people of Arabia, your turn has come and you have replaced them and have got the opportunity for doing the same work under the guidance of Our Prophet Muhammad. You must understand that you are undergoing the same test in which your predecessors have failed. If you do not want to meet with the end they met, you should make the right use of this opportunity by learning a lesson from their end and by avoiding the errors, which became the ultimate cause of their destruction."

19. They implied two things when they said these words. First, they meant that what Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) was presenting as Divine Revelation was really the product of his own mind but he was ascribing it to Allah merely to make his claim weighty. Secondly, they implied this: "If you want to be the leader of your people, present something that may make them prosperous in the world and give up the doctrines of *Tauhīd* and the Hereafter and the moral restrictions you are prescribing in your teaching. And if it be not possible, make some amendments in the Qur'ān so that a compromise may be effected between you and us on the principle of give and take so that there should be some scope for our *shirk* in your *Tauhīd* and for our self-worship and for our salvation in the Hereafter, irrespective of what we do in this world. You should also note it well that we cannot accept your absolute morality: therefore you should make an allowance for our prejudices, our rites and customs, our personal and national interests and our lusts. We propose that with mutual agreement we should make a list of those religious demands which should be obligatory on us for the fulfilment of Allah's rights, and beyond that we should be free to conduct our worldly affairs in any way we like. This compromise is necessary because we cannot accept your demand that human life in all its aspects should entirely be led in accordance with the implications of the doctrines of *Tauhīd* and the Hereafter and the regulations of the Islamic Code of life."

20. This is the answer to the two above-mentioned demands: "I have no authority of making any alterations in this Book for I am not its author but Allah is the One Who is sending it down to me. Therefore there is no question of any compromise about it. If you want to accept its Way, you will have to accept it as it is; otherwise you are free to reject it."

21. This is a very strong argument against their accusation that Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) was himself the author of the Qur'ān but was ascribing it to Allah, and in support of the Holy Prophet's claim that it was being sent down to him by Allah, Who was its Author. The argument is this: "You yourselves have witnessed the forty years of his life before his appointment to Prophethood. He was born in your own city and passed his boyhood, youth and middle age before your very eyes. He lived among you and had all kinds of relations—social, marital, economic, etc. with you. So much so that no aspect of

his life was hidden from you. Did you notice anything in his whole life that might show that he could be the author of this Book? Do you not use your commonsense?"

The question posed in the Qur'ān implied two things which were well known to everyone in Makkah about the Holy Prophet:

First, during the forty years of his life before Prophethood, he had neither received any education nor training nor sat in any company that should have enabled him to become the author of such a Book as was full of unique things that were unknown to the people around him. No one had ever heard from him anything about the problems that had been dealt with in different Sūrahs of the Qur'ān. So much so that not even a relative or close friend of his had ever noticed anything in his talk or in anything about him that might have shown any signs of gradual development towards it, before he made his great claim to Prophethood when he reached the age of forty. This was a clear proof of the fact that the Qur'ān was not the invention of his own brain and that it must have been sent down to him from outside. For it is impossible for a human being to produce anything like this, all of a sudden and without ever manifesting any signs of its evolution and development in his earlier life. That is why when some intelligent people of Makkah felt the absurdity of this accusation, they began to say that it was some other person who taught these things to him. But this was even more absurd than the first thing because they could not point out specifically a single person in the whole of Arabia, not to say of Makkah, who had the ability of producing such unique things as were contained in the Qur'ān. They also knew that a person of his high calibre could not have remained obscure in some unknown corner for forty years.

The second thing, that had distinguished him during those forty years of his life, was his noble character both from the negative and from the positive aspects. He was never known to have told a single lie or practised any kind of deceit, forgery, cunning, craftiness and the like in any way whatsoever. On the other hand, all those people with whom he had come into contact in any capacity bore witness to the fact that he had been truthful, honest, and trustworthy without any blemish whatsoever. As an instance, a most well-known historical fact may be cited. Only five years before his Prophethood, the Ka'abah was damaged by rains. When they were re-building it, a quarrel arose among the different clans of the Quraish as to who should have the honour of setting *Hajr-i-Aswad* (the Black Stone) in its proper place. Therefore it was agreed that the one who would be the first to enter into the *Haram* next morning should arbitrate in the quarrel. Next morning the first person who entered the *Haram* was Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him). At this all the people cried out with joy, "He is an absolutely trustworthy man, and we are fully satisfied with him; he is Muhammad." This is how

Allah had made that large gathering of the Quraish bear witness to the fact that he was "The Trustworthy", before appointing him as His Messenger. Therefore there was no justification for anyone to accuse the man who had never told a lie nor ever practised forgery nor craftiness in his whole life, of ascribing falsely to Allah his own literary creation, and claiming categorically and persistently that it was of Divine Origin.

That is why Allah has asked His Messenger to refute their absurd charge by saying, as it were, only this: "O my people, use your commonsense before making this absurd accusation, for I am not a stranger or a foreigner among you. I have lived a life time of forty years among you before making a claim that I have received Revelation from Allah. How can you expect from my past that I would present the Qur'ān to you as Allah's Book, without gaining knowledge from Him and without His Command?" (For further details see Sūrah *Al-Qasas,* E.N. 109).

22. That is, "If these Revelations are not from Allah and I myself compose them and present them as Revelations from Him, there can be no greater sinner than I. On the other hand, if these Revelations are truly from Allah and you are falsifying these, then there can be no greater sinner than you."

23. Some foolish people draw wrong and misleading conclusions from this verse, by a fallacious reasoning. They confine the meanings of فلاح *(falāh)* to "long life" or "worldly prosperity" or "worldly success" and argue like this: This verse declares categorically that "criminals can never attain success." The converse of this propositon, that is, "anyone who is successful cannot be a criminal" must also be true. Hence, if a claimant should live a long life after his claim to Prophethood or prosper in the world or his claim receives a good response in the world from the people, he should be acknowledged as a true prophet. For they argue, if he had been a false prophet he could not have "prospered," but would have been killed or starved to death or rendered unsuccessful in his mission, as soon as he had claimed to be a prophet. But even a little thinking will show that this "argument" is fallacious on the face of it. Firstly, the converse of every proposition is not always true. Secondly, the Qur'ān does not use the word *falāh* in this limited sense. Thirdly, Allah deals with the criminals according to His Divine Law of respite.

Now let us consider the matter in detail. The words "Indeed the criminals cannot attain success", have not been used, in the context they occur, to prescribe a criterion for judging a true Prophet from a false one, so that if a claimant is "successful", he should be accepted, and if he is not, he should be rejected. As a

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مَسَّتْهُمْ إِذَا لَهُمْ مَّكْرٌ فِيْ اٰيَاتِنَا ۭ قُلِ اللّٰهُ اَسْرَعُ مَكْرًا ۭ اِنَّ رُسُلَنَا
يَكْتُبُوْنَ مَا تَمْكُرُوْنَ ﴿٢١﴾ هُوَ الَّذِيْ يُسَيِّرُكُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ ۭ حَتّٰٓى اِذَا
كُنْتُمْ فِي الْفُلْكِ ۚ وَجَرَيْنَ بِهِمْ بِرِيْحٍ طَيِّبَةٍ وَّفَرِحُوْا بِهَا جَاۗءَتْهَا رِيْحٌ
عَاصِفٌ وَّجَاۗءَهُمُ الْمَوْجُ مِنْ كُلِّ مَكَانٍ وَّظَنُّوْٓا اَنَّهُمْ اُحِيْطَ بِهِمْ ۙ
دَعَوُا اللّٰهَ مُخْلِصِيْنَ لَهُ الدِّيْنَ ۚ لَىِٕنْ اَنْجَيْتَنَا مِنْ هٰذِهٖ لَنَكُوْنَنَّ مِنَ
الشّٰكِرِيْنَ ﴿٢٢﴾ فَلَمَّآ اَنْجٰىهُمْ اِذَا هُمْ يَبْغُوْنَ فِي الْاَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ ۗ يٰٓاَيُّهَا
النَّاسُ اِنَّمَا بَغْيُكُمْ عَلٰٓى اَنْفُسِكُمْ ۙ مَّتَاعَ الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا ۡ ثُمَّ اِلَيْنَا مَرْجِعُكُمْ
فَنُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾ اِنَّمَا مَثَلُ الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَاۗءٍ اَنْزَلْنٰهُ
مِنَ السَّمَاۗءِ فَاخْتَلَطَ بِهٖ نَبَاتُ الْاَرْضِ مِمَّا يَاْكُلُ النَّاسُ وَالْاَنْعَامُ ۭ
حَتّٰٓى اِذَآ اَخَذَتِ الْاَرْضُ زُخْرُفَهَا وَازَّيَّنَتْ وَظَنَّ اَهْلُهَآ اَنَّهُمْ قٰدِرُوْنَ
عَلَيْهَآ ۙ اَتٰىهَآ اَمْرُنَا لَيْلًا اَوْ نَهَارًا فَجَعَلْنٰهَا حَصِيْدًا كَاَنْ لَّمْ تَغْنَ بِالْاَمْسِ ۭ
كَذٰلِكَ نُفَصِّلُ الْاٰيٰتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَّتَفَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَاللّٰهُ يَدْعُوْٓا اِلٰى دَارِ السَّلٰمِ ۭ وَ
يَهْدِيْ مَنْ يَّشَاۗءُ اِلٰى صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيْمٍ ﴿٢٥﴾ لِلَّذِيْنَ اَحْسَنُوا الْحُسْنٰى وَزِيَادَةٌ ۭ
وَلَا يَرْهَقُ وُجُوْهَهُمْ قَتَرٌ وَّلَا ذِلَّةٌ ۭ اُولٰۗىِٕكَ اَصْحٰبُ الْجَنَّةِ ۚ هُمْ فِيْهَا
خٰلِدُوْنَ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ كَسَبُوا السَّيِّاٰتِ جَزَاۗءُ سَيِّئَةٍ بِمِثْلِهَا ۙ وَتَرْهَقُهُمْ ذِلَّةٌ ۭ
مَا لَهُمْ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ مِنْ عَاصِمٍ ۚ كَاَنَّمَآ اُغْشِيَتْ وُجُوْهُهُمْ قِطَعًا مِّنَ الَّيْلِ
مُظْلِمًا ۭ اُولٰۗىِٕكَ اَصْحٰبُ النَّارِ ۚ هُمْ فِيْهَا خٰلِدُوْنَ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَيَوْمَ نَحْشُرُهُمْ
جَمِيْعًا ثُمَّ نَقُوْلُ لِلَّذِيْنَ اَشْرَكُوْا مَكَانَكُمْ اَنْتُمْ وَشُرَكَاۗؤُكُمْ ۚ فَزَيَّلْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ
وَقَالَ شُرَكَاۗؤُهُمْ مَّا كُنْتُمْ اِيَّانَا تَعْبُدُوْنَ ﴿٢٨﴾ فَكَفٰى بِاللّٰهِ شَهِيْدًۢا بَيْنَنَا وَ

This is how people behave: No sooner do We show mercy to 21-28
them after some calamity had afflicted them than they begin to practise deceptions[29] concerning Our Signs. Say to them, "Allah is more swift in His plans than you: indeed His angels are keeping a full record of your acts of deception."[30] It is Allah Who enables you to travel over land and by sea. So you set sails in ships, rejoicing over a fair breeze. Then all of a sudden a strong wind begins to rage against the passengers and billows begin to surge upon them from every side and they realize that they have been encircled by the tempest. At that time they pray to Allah with sincere faith, saying, "If Thou deliverest us from this peril, we will become Thy grateful servants."[31] But when He delivers them, the same people begin to rebel in the land against the Truth. O people, this rebellion of yours is harmful only to yourselves. (You may enjoy) the transitory pleasures of this world, then you have to return to Us: then We will let you know what you have been doing. This worldly life (which has so enamoured you that you have become neglectful of Our Signs) may be likened to the produce of the earth: We sent rain-water from the sky, and the crops of which man and animals eat, grew up luxuriantly. Then at that very time, when the land was at its best, and the crops had ripened and decked out and the owners were presuming that they would be able to benefit from them, Our Command came all of a sudden by night or by day, and We destroyed it so thoroughly as though nothing had existed there the previous day.[31a] Thus We expound Our Signs in detail for the consideration of those people who are thoughtful. (You are being deluded by this transitory life,) and Allah invites you to the Abode of Peace.[32] (Guidance is in His power,) and He guides to the Right Way whomsoever He pleases. Those who have done excellent works will get excellent rewards, and even more than their merits:[33] neither gloom nor disgrace shall cover their faces. They deserve the Garden, where they will abide for ever. And those who have earned evil deeds shall have their recompense according to the evil they earned: [34] disgrace shall set over them: there shall be none to protect them from Allah: their faces shall be covered with such gloom[35] as if the black veils of the night had fallen over them: they deserve Hell, wherein they shall abide for ever. On the Day We will muster them together (in Our Court,) We will say to those who committed *shirk*, "Stay where you are, you and those whom you set as partners

with Us." Then We will remove the state of strangeness from among them,[36] and the partners they had set up will say, "You did not worship us."

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matter of fact, these words have been put in the mouth of the Messenger to make a declaration like this: "I know it for certain that the criminals cannot attain (true) success: therefore I cannot commit the crime of making a false claim to Prophethood. But as regards you, I am absolutely sure that you cannot attain true success because you are guilty of falsifying me who is a true Prophet of Allah."

The other thing is that the *word falāh* is not used in the limited sense of "worldly success", but it has been used to denote the permanent 'success' which never suffers any loss whatsoever irrespective of the fact whether the claimant gains or does not gain any worldly success in the initial stage. Nay, it is just possible that a false "claimant" who invites people to misguidance should attain great worldly "success" and his misguidance might also prosper. This is, however, not success in the terminology of the Qur'ān, but this would be an utter failure. On the other hand, it is also possible that the inviter to the Truth should suffer untold afflictions or fall a prey to the persecutions of the transgressors, and leave this world without winning over anyone to the side of the Truth, but this will be, in the terminology of the Qur'ān, true success and not a failure.

The other thing that refutes the fallacy of these foolish people is that they do not take into consideration the "Divine Law of Respite", according to which the mere fact that a false prophet enjoyed a long "prosperous" life is not a proof that he was a true prophet. The Qur'ān has made it clear at many places that Allah does not expedite the matter of the punishment of the criminals, but gives them respite to mend their ways; nay, He also lets them loose in their deviation if they abuse that respite and become more corrupt. Sometimes He makes them even more "prosperous" so that they should fully manifest all the evils they had hidden in their hearts and incur full punishment which they really deserve for their evil deeds. The "Divine Law of Respite" takes its due course in the case of false prophets as it does in the case of other criminals. And there is no reason why they should be an exception to this. Satan, the greatest of all criminals, has been allowed to practice every kind of deception up to the Day of Judgement, and there is no mention of any exception to this effect that he will not be allowed to set up a false prophet.

As a last resort, such perverse interpreters of the Qur'ān turn to vv. 44-47 of Sūrah *Al-Hāqqah:* "If Muhammad had fabricated something himself and ascribed that to Us, We would have seized his hand and cut off his heart's vein." But these cannot serve their purpose, for what they imply is only this: "If the true

Prophet appointed by Allah were to ascribe any false thing to Allah, he would be seized forthwith". Therefore it is no more than a fallacy to argue from this to the erroneous conclusion that the impostor who is not seized is a true prophet, for this Divine principle applies only to a true Prophet and not to an impostor. In order to grasp this point, let us take the instance of the government servants. It is obvious that the rules and regulations which are prescribed for government servants apply only to those who are actually government servants and not to impostors. Those who pretend to be government servants are dealt with according to the criminal code like other criminals and villains and not according to the code of employment. Besides this, the context in which these verses occur clearly shows that these are not laying down any criterion of judging whether a claimant is a true Prophet or an impostor. For, in continuation of the preceding verse (43), the passage will, so to say, read like this: "This is the Revelation sent down from the Lord of the universe. If Muhammad had himself fabricated this and ascribed that to Us, We would have....." Moreover, a true Prophet can easily be distinguished from an impostor by his high character, his noble mission and the unique Message he presents. Hence there was no need of setting up such an irrational and unnatural standard of distinguishing a true Prophet from an impostor.

24. This is a fine way of saying that no such intercessors exist as can plead their cases with Allah. For if "something" is not in the knowledge of Allah, it implies that it does not exist at all, for everything that exists anywhere in the heavens and the earth is in His knowledge.

25. Please see E.N. 230 of *Al-Baqarah* and E.N. 24 of *Al- An'ām*.

26. The "decree" that Allah has ordained is that "the Reality" shall be kept hidden from man's senses in order to test whether he recognizes this by using his common-sense, intelligence, conscience and intuition, and if he does not, he shall be allowed to tread the wrong ways he chooses. That is why their differences about the Reality are not being resolved by uncovering it today.

This thing has been stated here to remove a common misunderstanding about the diversity of religions in the world.

At that time, there was a confusion in the minds of the people (and is even today) concerning this. They said, "Different people profess different religions, and the followers of each religion claim that their religion alone is the true one. How may then a seeker after truth judge which one of these is the true religion?" The answer is: "In the beginning all mankind had one religion only, and that was the true religion. Then people strayed away from it and invented different religions of their own with different creeds and ways. Now if you desire that Allah

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بَيْنَكُمْ إِنْ كُنَّا عَنْ عِبَادَتِكُمْ لَغٰفِلِيْنَ ﴿٢٩﴾ هُنَالِكَ تَبْلُوْا كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّآ
أَسْلَفَتْ وَرُدُّوْٓا إِلَى اللّٰهِ مَوْلٰىهُمُ الْحَقِّ وَضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَّا كَانُوْا يَفْتَرُوْنَ ﴿٣٠﴾
قُلْ مَنْ يَّرْزُقُكُمْ مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَمَّنْ يَّمْلِكُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَ
مَنْ يُّخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَيُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتَ مِنَ الْحَيِّ وَمَنْ يُّدَبِّرُ
الْأَمْرَ ۚ فَسَيَقُوْلُوْنَ اللّٰهُ ۚ فَقُلْ أَفَلَا تَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿٣١﴾ فَذٰلِكُمُ اللّٰهُ رَبُّكُمُ الْحَقُّ ۚ
فَمَاذَا بَعْدَ الْحَقِّ إِلَّا الضَّلٰلُ ۖ فَأَنّٰى تُصْرَفُوْنَ ﴿٣٢﴾ كَذٰلِكَ حَقَّتْ كَلِمَتُ
رَبِّكَ عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ فَسَقُوْٓا أَنَّهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٣٣﴾ قُلْ هَلْ مِنْ شُرَكَآئِكُمْ
مَّنْ يَّبْدَؤُا الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيْدُهٗ ۚ قُلِ اللّٰهُ يَبْدَؤُا الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيْدُهٗ فَأَنّٰى
تُؤْفَكُوْنَ ﴿٣٤﴾ قُلْ هَلْ مِنْ شُرَكَآئِكُمْ مَّنْ يَّهْدِيْٓ إِلَى الْحَقِّ قُلِ اللّٰهُ يَهْدِيْ
لِلْحَقِّ ۗ أَفَمَنْ يَّهْدِيْٓ إِلَى الْحَقِّ أَحَقُّ أَنْ يُّتَّبَعَ أَمَّنْ لَّا يَهِدِّيْٓ إِلَّآ أَنْ
يُّهْدٰى ۚ فَمَا لَكُمْ ۖ كَيْفَ تَحْكُمُوْنَ ﴿٣٥﴾ وَمَا يَتَّبِعُ أَكْثَرُهُمْ إِلَّا ظَنًّا ۚ إِنَّ الظَّنَّ
لَا يُغْنِيْ مِنَ الْحَقِّ شَيْئًا ۚ إِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلِيْمٌۢ بِمَا يَفْعَلُوْنَ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَمَا كَانَ هٰذَا
الْقُرْاٰنُ أَنْ يُّفْتَرٰى مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ وَلٰكِنْ تَصْدِيْقَ الَّذِيْ بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَ
تَفْصِيْلَ الْكِتٰبِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيْهِ مِنْ رَّبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٣٧﴾ أَمْ يَقُوْلُوْنَ افْتَرٰىهُ ۚ قُلْ
فَأْتُوْا بِسُوْرَةٍ مِّثْلِهٖ وَادْعُوْا مَنِ اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ
صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿٣٨﴾ بَلْ كَذَّبُوْا بِمَا لَمْ يُحِيْطُوْا بِعِلْمِهٖ وَلَمَّا يَأْتِهِمْ تَأْوِيْلُهٗ ۚ كَذٰلِكَ
كَذَّبَ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَانْظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٣٩﴾ وَمِنْهُمْ
مَّنْ يُّؤْمِنُ بِهٖ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ لَّا يُؤْمِنُ بِهٖ ۚ وَرَبُّكَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُفْسِدِيْنَ ﴿٤٠﴾
وَإِنْ كَذَّبُوْكَ فَقُلْ لِّيْ عَمَلِيْ وَلَكُمْ عَمَلُكُمْ ۚ أَنْتُمْ بَرِيْٓئُوْنَ مِمَّآ أَعْمَلُ وَ

Allah suffices as a witness between you and us and (even if you worshipped us,) we were utterly unaware of your worship."[37] At that time everyone will taste of what he did. All shall be brought back to Allah, their real Lord, and all the lies they had invented would vanish from them. 29-33

Ask them "Who provides for you from the heavens and the earth? Who has power over the faculties of hearing and sight? Who brings forth the living from the dead and the dead from the living? Who directs the system of the universe?" They will surely reply, "Allah". Say "Will you not, then, refrain from (going against the Truth)?" The same Allah is your true Lord:[38] then, what remains there after the Truth except deviation? Well, whither are you being turned away?"[39] O Prophet, behold! thus has the Word of your Lord come true in regard to the evil-doers that they would not believe.[40]

Ask them "Is there any of the partners you have set up with Allah who originates creation and then brings it back again?"[41]—Say "It is Allah Who originates creation and brings it back again. How then are you being perverted to the wrong ways of *shirk*?"[42] 34

Ask them, "Is there any of the partners you have set up with Allah, who guides to the Truth?"[43]—Say "It is Allah alone Who guides to the Truth." Very well, then tell: "Who is more worthy to be followed: He Who guides to the Truth or the one who cannot guide unless he himself be guided? What has then gone wrong with you that you make perverted judgements?" 35

The fact is that most of them are following mere conjecture,[44] whereas conjecture cannot in any way fulfil the requirements of the true knowledge. Allah has full knowledge of what they are doing. 36

And this Qur'ān is not a thing that could be composed without Allah's Revelation: nay, it is the confirmation of what was revealed before it, and full explanation of 'the Book'.[45] There is no doubt about this that it is from the Lord of the universe. 37

Do they say that the Prophet has composed it himself? Tell them, "If what you say be true, then produce one sūrah like this and you may call to your assistance anyone you can other than Allah."[46] The fact is that they have denied (on mere conjecture) what was not 38-41

within the reach of their knowledge nor had they, as yet, tasted its consequences.[47] Likewise, the people who went before them declared as false the Revelations, but behold, what was the end of those unjust people! Some of these people will believe in it and others will not, and your Lord knows these mischief-makers[48] very well indeed. If these people declare that you are an impostor say to them "I am responsible for my deeds and you are for yours: you are not accountable for what I do, and I am not for what you do."[49]

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Himself should uncover the Truth and present it to you to enable you to decide which religion is the true one, you should know that this will not be done in this life, because you are required to decide this by using your commonsense and intelligence. This worldly life is a trial to see whether or not you yourselves recognize the Truth by using your common-sense and intelligence."

27. That is, "Though they demanded a sign as a proof of the fact that he was a true Prophet and was presenting true Revelations, this was not based on a genuine desire for recognizing and accepting the Truth but was merely a pretext for rejecting it. For they had no intention of moulding their habits, their morality, their social system, in short, reforming every aspect of their life in accordance with the implications of the acceptance of the Message of the Prophet. As they did not intend to believe in it, they would say, even after seeing a Sign, that no Sign had been shown to them. Obviously, they would not give up that "freedom" which they were enjoying in following their desires and lusts, by accepting the Unseen (the creeds of *Tauhīd* and the Hereafter), which would bind them to the absolute moral principles."

28. That is, "I have presented before you what Allah has sent down to me; but what He has not sent down to me, is "unseen" both for me and for you, and it is entirely with Allah to reveal or not to reveal it. Now if you will not believe unless Allah sends down what He has not sent down, you may wait for it: I, too, shall wait and see whether your persistent demand is or is not satisfied".

29. They practised deceptions regarding "the Sign of the famine" that had been inflicted on them (vv. 11, 12). This verse alludes to the same, as if to say, "How dare you demand a Sign again, whereas recently the Sign of the famine has been shown to you ? At that time you invoked the help of your deities but in vain, though you had set them up as intercessors with Allah and believed that offerings to their shrines would prove very effective in removing the famine. But you yourselves learnt by first hand experience that those so-called gods possessed no power at all. Therefore when you were convinced that all power belongs to Allah

alone, you turned to Him and began to invoke His help. This experience ought to have convinced you of the Truth of the Message of Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) for this was the very fundamental thing which he was teaching. Instead of learning a lesson from this Sign, you began to practise deceptions to explain it away, as soon as the famine was over and there had come the blessed rainfall. You invented many explanations (deceptions) concerning the causes of the famine and its subsequent end in order to 'escape' from the doctrine of *Tauhīd* and stick to your *shirk*. The verse is meant to declare that no Sign would convince such people as those who had not benefited from the great Sign of the famine. Therefore there was no use of showing any sign to them.

30. "Allah is more swift in His plans than you....." means this: "If you practise deceptions in order to explain away the Sign of the famine so that you might find excuses to evade the implications of its acceptance, in order to continue your rebellious attitudes, Allah is more swift in carrying out His plans to out-do your deceptive methods. He will leave you free to move in your wrong ways: He will even bestow upon you the worldly prosperity, which will so delude you that you will forget that you were being closely watched and will, therefore, commit evil deeds with apparent immunity and enjoy yourselves to your heart's content. But His angels will go on keeping a full and complete record of your deeds, which will be presented for your prosecution after your death."

31. The fact that even the most obdurate *mushriks* and the most hardened atheists who forget Allah when things go well with them, begin to invoke Allah's help when they are pressed hard from all sides and despair of help from any other quarter, is a clear evidence that there is the All-Powerful Allah Who is controlling each and every thing in the universe. (Please refer to E.N. 29, *Al-An'ām.*)

31a. The parable is meant to warn those who are utterly neglectful of the Life-after death because of their apparent "success" in this worldly life. They have been likened to the owners of the land who were happy to presume that the crop was ripe and luxuriant and it was within their power to reap it and enjoy the produce of their harvest. They were so sure of this that they began to enjoy the fore-taste of the ripened crops, unaware of the Decree of Allah which destroyed their crops and all their great expectations also. Like-wise those who neglect to make preparations for the life-after-death will find to their sorrow that all they did to earn for the enjoyments of this world was, in relation to the Next World, like the ripe crop that was destroyed all of a sudden.

32. That is, "Allah invites to the Way that leads to the Abode of Peace in the Hereafter."

"The Abode of Peace" here means Paradise, where there will be no fear whatsoever of any loss, calamity, sorrow, pain and trouble.

33. That is, "Allah by His grace will give to those who did good deeds more than their due reward."

34. That is, "In contrast to the additional rewards to the good people, those who earned evil deeds, shall be punished only in proportion to their crimes." (For further explanation see E.N. 109a of XXVII).

35. It shall be that kind of gloom that overspreads the faces of the criminals when they are caught, and they despair all hope of escape.

36. Some commentators are of the opinion that the original words of the text (فَزَيَّلْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ) mean this: "We will cut off every kind of connection and relation between them so that they are not able to show any concern for one another." But these meanings are opposed to the Arabic usage, according to which they mean: "We will distinguish them from one another" or "We will cause a distinction among them." That is why these have been translated into English like this: "We will remove the state of strangeness from among them." That is, the *mushriks* and their deities shall stand in front of each other and recognize their mutual and respective positions. The *mushriks* shall come to know the whole truth about those whom they worshipped and their deities will learn everything about their worshippers.

37. That is, "Their deities—the angels, the jinns, the spirits, the fore-fathers, the prophets, the saints, the martyrs and all others—whom they had set up as partners with God and rendered those rights to them which belonged to God alone, will dissociate themselves from their worshippers and declare, "We did not know at all that you worshipped us, for no reverence, no respect, no honour, no admiration, no regard, no adoration, no homage, that you paid to us; no prayer, no supplication, no request, no offering, no gift, you presented to us; and no praise, no prostration, no bowing down, no remembrance, no religious service, or ceremony or ritual you made in our name ever reached us."

38. That is, "As you yourselves admit that Allah alone is your real Providence, Owner and Master, He alone is your true Lord, and, therefore, entitled to your servitude and worship. How have you, then, made others as partners with Him?"

39. It should be kept in mind that these questions have been posed to the common people: therefore they are not being asked, "Whither are you turning away?" but "Whither are you being turned away?" The passive voice clearly shows that there must be some person (or persons) who was turning away the people from the right direction to the wrong one. That is Why this appeal is being

made to the people: "Why are you blindly following those who are misguiding you? Why don't you use your own commonsense? When you yourselves admit the Truth about Allah, why don't you consider the fact that you are being turned away from Him?"

This question has been posed at many places in the Qur'ān to bring home the Truth to the common people, but at every place the passive voice has been employed in order to keep back the names of the misguiding ones so that their followers should consider the matter coolly and objectively. This also contains a valuable piece of advice for those engaged in propagation work. By avoiding the names of the misguiding ones, the Qur'ān has taken away a very strong weapon from the hands of those, who could otherwise incite the followers that their revered leaders were being made the target of ridicule and criticism.

40. That is, "This Word of your Lord has come true that those who have made up their minds that they would not believe in any case would never believe because of their obduracy, even if the Truth were to be presented before them with very plain and clear arguments."

41. It is to be noted that the answers to the questions posed in this and the following verse have been put in the mouth of the Holy Prophet in contrast to the answers posed in the preceding verses. This is because the *mushriks* themselves believed, and therefore could not deny, that Allah originated the creation and that their gods had no share in this. But they would not admit that He could or would bring it back, for they could not in that case reject the doctrine of the Life-after-death, though it was obvious that the One Who originated the creation could also bring it back again and not any one of those who had not originated it. That is why the answer has been put in the mouth of the Holy Prophet that he should declare it openly and boldly that Allah originated the creation and could and would bring it back again.

42. This question has been posed to bring home to them the folly of the doctrine of *shirk*. The argument is this: "When Allah originates the creation and has the power to bring it back again, where do the gods you have set up come in? If you think a little, you yourselves will realize that there is no room for any one in the universe for any claim or title to your reverence or worship or servitude."

43. This is one of the series of questions that have been posed to refute the doctrine of *shirk* and to establish the doctrine of *Tauhīd*. Besides, it is also meant to focus attention on the importance of the guidance to the Truth, which is one of the greatest human necessities. For it is obvious that the human needs and requirements are not confined to food, clothes and the like necessities of the physical life nor to its protection from losses, distresses, calamities etc. But one of

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أَنَا بَرِيٓءٌ مِّمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٤١﴾ وَمِنْهُم مَّن يَسْتَمِعُونَ إِلَيْكَ ۚ أَفَأَنتَ تُسْمِعُ
الصُّمَّ وَلَوْ كَانُوا لَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾ وَمِنْهُم مَّن يَنظُرُ إِلَيْكَ ۚ أَفَأَنتَ تَهْدِي
الْعُمْيَ وَلَوْ كَانُوا لَا يُبْصِرُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَظْلِمُ النَّاسَ شَيْئًا وَلَٰكِنَّ
النَّاسَ أَنفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾ وَيَوْمَ يَحْشُرُهُمْ كَأَن لَّمْ يَلْبَثُوٓا إِلَّا سَاعَةً
مِّنَ النَّهَارِ يَتَعَارَفُونَ بَيْنَهُمْ ۚ قَدْ خَسِرَ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِلِقَآءِ اللَّهِ وَمَا
كَانُوا مُهْتَدِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾ وَإِمَّا نُرِيَنَّكَ بَعْضَ الَّذِي نَعِدُهُمْ أَوْ نَتَوَفَّيَنَّكَ
فَإِلَيْنَا مَرْجِعُهُمْ ثُمَّ اللَّهُ شَهِيدٌ عَلَىٰ مَا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾ وَلِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ
رَّسُولٌ ۚ فَإِذَا جَآءَ رَسُولُهُمْ قُضِيَ بَيْنَهُم بِالْقِسْطِ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَ
يَقُولُونَ مَتَىٰ هَٰذَا الْوَعْدُ إِن كُنتُمْ صَٰدِقِينَ ﴿٤٨﴾ قُل لَّآ أَمْلِكُ لِنَفْسِي
ضَرًّا وَلَا نَفْعًا إِلَّا مَا شَآءَ اللَّهُ ۚ لِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ أَجَلٌ ۚ إِذَا جَآءَ أَجَلُهُمْ فَلَا
يَسْتَأْخِرُونَ سَاعَةً وَلَا يَسْتَقْدِمُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾ قُلْ أَرَءَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَتَىٰكُمْ عَذَابُهُ
بَيَٰتًا أَوْ نَهَارًا مَّاذَا يَسْتَعْجِلُ مِنْهُ الْمُجْرِمُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾ أَثُمَّ إِذَا مَا وَقَعَ آمَنتُم
بِهِۦٓ ۚ آلْـَٰٔنَ وَقَدْ كُنتُم بِهِۦ تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ ﴿٥١﴾ ثُمَّ قِيلَ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا ذُوقُوا
عَذَابَ الْخُلْدِ ۚ هَلْ تُجْزَوْنَ إِلَّا بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾ وَيَسْتَنۢبِـُٔونَكَ
أَحَقٌّ هُوَ ۚ قُلْ إِي وَرَبِّيٓ إِنَّهُۥ لَحَقٌّ ۚ وَمَآ أَنتُم بِمُعْجِزِينَ ﴿٥٣﴾ وَلَوْ أَنَّ
لِكُلِّ نَفْسٍ ظَلَمَتْ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ لَافْتَدَتْ بِهِۦ ۗ وَأَسَرُّوا النَّدَامَةَ لَمَّا
رَأَوُا الْعَذَابَ ۚ وَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُم بِالْقِسْطِ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٥٤﴾ أَلَآ إِنَّ لِلَّهِ
مَا فِي السَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۗ أَلَآ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَلَٰكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا
يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾ هُوَ يُحْيِۦ وَيُمِيتُ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ

There are many among them who hear what you say: but will you make the deaf listen to you even though they be incapable of understanding it?[50] Then there are many others among them who see you: but will you show the way to the blind, even though they be bereft of sight?[51] The fact is that Allah does not in any way wrong the people but they wrong themselves.[52] (Today these people are intoxicated with the life of this world but) on the Day when Allah will muster them they will feel as if they had stayed (in this world) for only an hour [53] or so in order to have acquaintance with one another. (At that time they will realize that) they who disbelieved in their meeting with Allah were losers [54] indeed and were not rightly guided. Maybe, We let you witness some of thê dire consequences with which We threaten them or raise you to Ourselves before this. Anyway they shall have to return to Us and Allah is a witness to what they are doing. 42-46

There is a Messenger for every *ummat*:[55] then, when its Messenger comes a just judgement is passed on its people and they are not wronged in the least.[56] 47

They ask "When will this threat come to pass ? Tell us if what you say be true." Say "I have no power to bring benefits or to avert evils from myself: everything depends upon Allah's will.[57] Every *ummat* has its appointed term: when that term expires it is neither delayed nor advanced for them by a single hour."[58] Ask them "Have you ever considered this? (What can you do to avert it,) if His scourge comes upon you suddenly by night or by day ? Why is it that the criminals are seeking to hasten it?" What! will you believe in it, when it actually overtakes you?—Do you want to escape from it now, when you yourselves were demanding it? Then it will be said to the transgressors, "Now taste the everlasting torment; what other recompense than this do you expect to get for what you have been earning?" 48-52

Then they ask, "Is what you say really true ?" Tell them, "Yes by my Lord, it is absolutely true, and you have no power to avert it." And every person who has transgressed would gladly give all the wealth of the earth as ransom, if he possessed it, to redeem himself from the torment. When they will see the torment they will be remorseful in their hearts.[59] And the judgement will be passed on them 53-56

with justice and no wrong will be done to them. Listen! all that is in the heavens and the earth belongs to Allah. Note it well that Allah's word is true, yet most of them know it not. It is He Who ordained life and death, and to Him you shall all return.

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man's needs (nay, his greatest need) is to have the knowledge of the right way of life so that he may, on the whole, achieve success in it. It is obvious that in order to be successful in life, man should have the correct knowledge of the use he should make of and the way he should employ his own physical, mental and spiritual powers and capabilities and natural resources. He should also know the nature and the kind of behaviour he should adopt towards other human beings (and as a whole, towards the system of the universe in which he has inevitably to live and work), with whom he comes into contact in different capacities. The Qur'ān calls that right way "The Truth" and the guidance that leads to that way, "The Guidance to the Truth".

Now let us turn to the question that has been posed in this verse. The Qur'ān asks the *mushriks* and all those people who reject the teachings of the Holy Prophet: Is there any of the partners and gods you have set up besides Allah, who guides you to the Truth or can do so? Obviously the answer to this will surely be in the negative for neither of the classes of gods is capable of this: First, let us consider this with regard to those gods and goddesses and living or dead human beings, who are worshipped as gods. Though it is true that people turn to them for the fulfilment of their needs or for their protection from calamities in some supernatural way, yet they never turn to them to seek guidance to the Truth nor have they themselves ever sent it nor do their devotees ever claim that their deities teach them the principles of morality, sociology, culture, economics, politics, law, justice and the like.

Then there is the case of those who make rules, regulations and laws which others accept and follow. It is true that such persons are accepted and followed as leaders, but the pertinent question is this: Are they the real guides to the Truth, or are they capable of becoming guides to it? Does any one of them possess the kind of knowledge that comprehends all those truths that are a pre-requisite for formulating right principles for the guidance of human life ? Can anyone of them have full vision of the vast field of activities over which the human problems spread? Is there anyone of them who is absolutely free from the weaknesses, prejudices, personal or communal interests, which become hindrances to the formulation of just laws? If the answers to these questions are in the negative (and obviously no one in his senses can answer otherwise), how can

then people with such limitations be expected to be the source of guidance to the Truth?

In the light of the above questions, we are able to grasp the signification of the question that has been posed in the Qur'ān: "Is there any of the partners you have set up with Allah who can guide you to the Truth ?"

This shows conclusively that Allah alone has the power to satisfy all the human needs and requirements, which may be divided into two categories. First, man stands in need of a providence, a protector, a being to hear and grant his prayers, in short, a permanent support to which he may turn whenever other supports should fail him. The above question inevitably leads to the conclusion that there is no god other than Allah who can fulfil these needs. The other human needs and requirements demand that there should be a guide to lay down such principles for the conduct of human life in its entirety as should be obeyed with perfect confidence and peace of mind. The question posed in v. 35 implies that that "Being" can be none other than Allah. Therefore there remains no argument in support of the point that the principles of culture, morality, and politics should be based on *shirk* or secularism except that one should persist in obduracy and obstinacy.

44. It means that neither the authors of religion, nor philosophers, nor law-makers based their opinions on knowledge but on mere guesswork and conjecture. Likewise, those who followed these religious or worldly leaders did it on the mere assumption that their authors were great people; therefore they must be right. That was why their forefathers and the common people followed them.

45. The arguments contained in v. 37 may be elaborated like this:

(1) The Qur'ān confirms that which had been revealed before ... and presents the same fundamental principles and teachings which were taught by the Prophets who came before Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him). Had he invented the Qur'ān, he would have made additions to the truths of the former books in order to make himself conspicuous.

(2) The Qur'ān explains in detail and amplifies the fundamental principles and teachings contained in "the Book", that is, the Scriptures brought by the former Prophets, and adds more evidence and explanations to it so that it may be better understood and practised.

46. There is a general misunderstanding that the challenge of the Qur'ān to produce (a book, nay,) a Sūrah like this, is in regard to its eloquent, pure and unique literary excellence. This has been the natural result of the way in which discussions have been carried on to prove the miracle of the Qur'ān. But the Qur'ān is far above this that it should claim to be a unique and matchless book because of its excellent diction. There is no doubt at all that it is unique and

matchless in this respect also, but the real basis of its claim and challenge, that no human brain is capable of producing a book like this, is its subject-matter and teachings. The Qur'ān itself has stated at different places those aspects which are a sure proof of its revelation from Allah and the refutation of the false aspersions that it was a human invention. This has already been explained at appropriate places and will be explained in the succeeding pages. (For further explanation see E.N. 26, 27 of LII).

47. They could declare the Qur'ān as forged on two grounds only but neither of these existed: First, if they had had a proof that the Book had not been revealed by Allah, but had been forged by someone; secondly, that the Truths enunciated in it and the information given in it were false. But no one could say on the basis of true knowledge that the Book had been really forged and then ascribed to God: nor could anyone say that he had peeped behind the curtains of the "unseen" and discovered that there was not One God (as taught in this Book) but many gods in the heavens: nor could anyone assert on the basis of true knowledge that there were no angels, no Revelations and no God, but these were mere fictions that had been invented by some fertile imagination: nor had anyone witnessed by actually visiting the "Hereafter" that the information about rewards and punishments was utterly wrong. But in spite of the lack of any proof to the contrary; they were challenging the genuineness of the Qur'ān with the boldness and impudence of one who had made a thorough research into the matter and proved it to the hilt.

48. Those who do not believe in the Qur'ān have been called "mischief-makers" because their rejection is not based on any sound reason but on prejudice and selfishness and because it prevents others from believing in it.—"And your Lord knows them very well" because there is nothing that is hidden from Him. They can deceive the people that they are rejecting the Qur'ān because they are convinced that it is not the Book of God, but they cannot deceive Allah that they are doing this with good intentions for he knows that it is because of their mischief. They are obdurate and obstinate and are suppressing the voice of their consciences and hearts: they deliberately shut their ears and minds against the Truth and prefer their worldly interests their fancies, their lusts and desires to it. That is why they cannot be regarded as "innocent" sinners, but they are, in fact, the "mischief-makers."

49. This is to say, "I don't want to enter into useless discussions and disputes with you on this score. If I am an impostor, I alone shall bear the consequences for it; and if you are rejecting the truth, you are not doing any harm to me but to yourselves alone."

50. Though this and the succeeding verse have been addressed to the Holy Prophet, these are meant to reprove those people who were not paying attention to the Message. For they only heard the sounds of the words he spoke to them, just as the animals hear the sound of the words, but pay no attention to understand what is said to them. This was because they were prejudiced against him and had decided before-hand that they would not acknowledge anything, however, reasonable that may be, if it went against the creeds and ways they had inherited, and against their own desires, lusts, and interests. Likewise those people who live like animals hear the sounds of his words, but pay no attention to their meaning for they are not interested in anything other than "eating, drinking and making merry." They are so engaged in and intoxicated with the gratification of their lusts that they never bother to find out whether what they are doing is right or wrong. All such people are deaf to the Message, though they might have ears for other things.

51. Here again they may be likened to animals which see with their eyes but cannot perceive anything beyond what appears on the surface. Likewise those people saw the Holy Prophet and his Companions, but did not perceive their pure life for they had not got the mind's eyes to see the wonderful change that was coming in the lives of those who had listened to and accepted the Message.

As has been pointed out in E.N. 50, though these verses were addressed to the Holy Prophet, they were really meant to reprove and admonish the disbelievers in a subtle manner so as to arouse their dormant faculties of hearing and seeing and open these for the reception and acceptance of the rational and sympathetic Message. In order to understand the wisdom of this indirect method of admonition, let us take the example of two righteous friends. One of them who lived among corrupt people did his very best to convey the righteous message both by precept and by practice. He set the model of the highest moral conduct and character before them, and urged them in a sincere and sympathetic manner to consider their own moral condition, and admonished them in a very sincere and rational manner to make them realize that they were living in a very corrupt moral state, and advised them to adopt the right way of life. But none of them would pay any attention to his admonition nor learn any lesson from his pure life. Suppose his friend came there at that time and said: "Why are you giving advice to these deaf people and showing the way to these blind ones, who have no ears for good things and no eyes for the right way ?" It is obvious that these words would not have been uttered by way of dissuading the first friend from doing his reform work but for arousing the dormant faculties of the corrupt people by this subtle indirect method.

52. "Allah does not in any way wrong the people" because He gives them ears to hear, eyes to see and hearts to feel and ponder, and everything that is

required to enable them to discriminate between right and wrong, truth and falsehood. But it is "they who wrong themselves" by refusing to make the right and proper use of their faculties and by following their lusts and enjoying the things of this world. Naturally this has made their eyes so blind and their ears so deaf and their hearts so dead that they are incapable of distinguishing between right and wrong, good and bad, for their conscience has also become dead.

53. That is, "When they will enter the Hereafter and contrast its eternal life with the transitory life they lived in this world, they will realize that their past life was nothing in comparison with the eternal future life of the Hereafter. Then they will see clearly that it was a big folly to spoil the eternal life for the sake of transitory joys and paltry gains of the world."

54. They were losers because they forgot that one Day they would have to present themselves before Allah and as a result of this disbelief committed evil deeds.

55. Here the word أُمَّت (*ummat*) does not merely mean a nation or a community but includes all those people whom the Message of a Messenger reaches after his appointment, even though he be not alive among them. More than this: as long as his teachings remain intact and within the reach of everyone to ascertain what they really are, all such people will be treated and judged as his *ummat* and their cases decided with justice in accordance with v. 47. According to this standard, all the people of the world are the *ummat* of Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him), and will remain so, as long as the Qur'ān continues to be published in its original and complete form as today. That is why it has not been said, "There is a Messenger in every *ummat*" but "There is a Messenger for every *ummat*."

56. That is, when the Message of a Messenger reaches a people, they should know that henceforth they are on trial and that no excuse would be accepted that they were ignorant of it. Then judgement is passed on them with scrupulous justice. Those, who accept the Message and mend their way in accordance with it, are declared to be worthy of Allah's blessings, and those who reject it are doomed to a torment that may be inflicted both in this world and in the next World or only in the Hereafter.

57. This is to say, "I never said that I will sit in judgement on you and inflict torment on those who do not believe in me. Therefore, I am not in a position to tell when the threat will be made good. As the threat has been held out by Allah, He will pass His judgement on you when He wills, and in whatever way He wills, for everything depends on His will."

58. That is, "Allah passes His judgement on individuals and communities after the expiry of the term that He Himself has set and He alone knows how long it lasts for a community. He is not hasty in giving rewards or punishments. When He sends His Messenger to deliver His Message, He allows sufficient time to each individual and to each community to consider it and ponder over it and mend his (or its) way, during the appointed term. The period of the term may extend to centuries in the case of a community and He knows best how long it should be.

When that term, which is based on justice, expires, and that person or community does not repent of its rebellious conduct, then Allah passes His judgement. When the time of the judgement comes it is neither advanced nor delayed even by a single hour."

59. "They will be remorseful," when all of a sudden, they face the torment on the Day, which they had denied throughout their lives, and on that presumption had gone on doing wrong deeds. Not only this: they will also feel very sorry, that they had denied the Messengers and brought baseless charges against them, who had warned them of it. Therefore when they witness it against all their expectations, they will find the ground slipping from under their feet and will feel utterly helpless and guilty in their minds because of the remembrance of their wrong doings and of the pricking of their conscience. In short, their condition will be that of a gambler, who turns a deaf ear to the counsel of his well-wishers and stakes his all on mere speculation and goes bankrupt. But such a person has to blame none but himself only for his sad plight.

60. It has been purposely avoided to translate the Arabic word رِزْق (*rizq*) into "provisions" for it is liable to create a very serious misunderstanding regarding the implications of this verse. For in this sense *rizq* will be confined to food and eatables only, whereas it is very comprehensive in its meaning and it covers everything that Allah has given to man—food, children, knowledge, law etc. etc. Instances can be cited from the Qur'ān and the Traditions in support thereof. Thus it has become, obvious that according to this verse, in Allah's sight it is wrong and sinful to adopt the attitude of independence towards every kind of *rizq*, including articles of food.

Thus it has become clear that the consequences of this misunderstanding about the meaning of *rizq* are far-reaching. As a result of this limited meaning of *rizq*, it will be sinful only to make the unlawful articles of food lawful and *vice versa* but it will not be sinful if the people become their own law-makers in regard to the social, economic, political and international matters. It is because of this misunderstanding that even some scholars of the Islamic Law do not consider it

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جَآءَتْكُمْ مَّوْعِظَةٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ وَشِفَآءٌ لِّمَا فِي الصُّدُوْرِ ۙ وَهُدًى وَّرَحْمَةٌ
لِّلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٥٧﴾ قُلْ بِفَضْلِ اللّٰهِ وَبِرَحْمَتِهٖ فَبِذٰلِكَ فَلْيَفْرَحُوْا ۭ هُوَ خَيْرٌ مِّمَّا
يَجْمَعُوْنَ ﴿٥٨﴾ قُلْ اَرَءَيْتُمْ مَّآ اَنْزَلَ اللّٰهُ لَكُمْ مِّنْ رِّزْقٍ فَجَعَلْتُمْ مِّنْهُ حَرَامًا
وَّحَلٰلًا ۭ قُلْ آٰللّٰهُ اَذِنَ لَكُمْ اَمْ عَلَى اللّٰهِ تَفْتَرُوْنَ ﴿٥٩﴾ وَمَا ظَنُّ الَّذِيْنَ
يَفْتَرُوْنَ عَلَى اللّٰهِ الْكَذِبَ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَذُوْ فَضْلٍ عَلَى النَّاسِ
وَلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿٦٠﴾ وَمَا تَكُوْنُ فِيْ شَاْنٍ وَّمَا تَتْلُوْا مِنْهُ مِنْ
قُرْاٰنٍ وَّلَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ مِنْ عَمَلٍ اِلَّا كُنَّا عَلَيْكُمْ شُهُوْدًا اِذْ تُفِيْضُوْنَ فِيْهِ ۭ وَ
مَا يَعْزُبُ عَنْ رَّبِّكَ مِنْ مِّثْقَالِ ذَرَّةٍ فِي الْاَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَآءِ وَلَآ
اَصْغَرَ مِنْ ذٰلِكَ وَلَآ اَكْبَرَ اِلَّا فِيْ كِتٰبٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿٦١﴾ اَلَآ اِنَّ اَوْلِيَآءَ اللّٰهِ لَا
خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُوْنَ ﴿٦٢﴾ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَكَانُوْا يَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿٦٣﴾
لَهُمُ الْبُشْرٰى فِي الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْاٰخِرَةِ ۭ لَا تَبْدِيْلَ لِكَلِمٰتِ اللّٰهِ ۭ ذٰلِكَ
هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيْمُ ﴿٦٤﴾ وَلَا يَحْزُنْكَ قَوْلُهُمْ ۘ اِنَّ الْعِزَّةَ لِلّٰهِ جَمِيْعًا ۭ هُوَ
السَّمِيْعُ الْعَلِيْمُ ﴿٦٥﴾ اَلَآ اِنَّ لِلّٰهِ مَنْ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَنْ فِي الْاَرْضِ ۭ وَمَا
يَتَّبِعُ الَّذِيْنَ يَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ شُرَكَاۗءَ ۭ اِنْ يَّتَّبِعُوْنَ اِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَ
اِنْ هُمْ اِلَّا يَخْرُصُوْنَ ﴿٦٦﴾ هُوَ الَّذِيْ جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الَّيْلَ لِتَسْكُنُوْا فِيْهِ وَ
النَّهَارَ مُبْصِرًا ۭ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَّسْمَعُوْنَ ﴿٦٧﴾ قَالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللّٰهُ
وَلَدًا سُبْحٰنَهٗ ۭ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ ۭ لَهٗ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْاَرْضِ ۭ اِنْ عِنْدَكُمْ
مِّنْ سُلْطٰنٍۢ بِهٰذَا ۭ اَتَقُوْلُوْنَ عَلَى اللّٰهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٦٨﴾ قُلْ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ
يَفْتَرُوْنَ عَلَى اللّٰهِ الْكَذِبَ لَا يُفْلِحُوْنَ ﴿٦٩﴾ مَتَاعٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا ثُمَّ اِلَيْنَا

O mankind, there has come to you the Admonition from your Lord: this is the remedy for the diseases of the heart, and guidance and blessing for those who believe in it. O Prophet, say, "It is the bounty of Allah and His mercy that He has sent this thing: let the people rejoice over it for it is better than what they amass." O Prophet, ask them, "Have you ever considered that you yourselves have made something unlawful and the other lawful out of what [60] Allah has given you?"[61] Then ask them, "Has Allah allowed you this or do you ascribe a false thing to Him?"[62] What treatment do they think Allah will mete out to them who ascribe this false thing to Him on the Day of Resurrection ? Indeed Allah is bountiful to mankind, but most of them are not grateful.[63] 57-60

O Prophet, We are witnessing whatever work you may be engaged in and whatever portion you may be reciting from the Qur'ān; We are also keeping a watch, O people, over whatever you are doing: for there is not an iota of anything, small or big, in the earth and the heavens that is hidden from your Lord, and everything is on record in the clear Register.[64] Listen: those, who are Allah's friends and who believe and fear God, shall have no occasion for fear or sorrow: there is nothing but good news for them in this world and in the Hereafter: Allah's words cannot be changed—this is the greatest success. O Prophet, let not their remarks grieve you, for honour wholly rests with Allah. He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing. 61-65

Note it well that all the dwellers of the heavens and of the earth belong to Allah: and those who invoke, besides Allah, partners (they have set up with Him) follow nothing but surmises and merely indulge in guess-works. It is He Who ordained the night for you to repose in it, and gave to the day its light. Indeed there are Signs in this for those who listen[65] (to the Message). 66-67

They remarked, "Allah has taken a son to Himself."[66] Allah is All-Pure![67] He is Self-Sufficient: He is the Owner of everything that is in the heavens and the earth.[68] Have you any authority for what you say? What! do you ascribe to Allah that of which you have no knowledge? O Prophet, say to them, "Those, who ascribe false things to Allah, can never prosper." Well, they may enjoy the transitory pleasures of this life, but after this they have to return to Us and then 68-70

We will make them taste a severe torment because of this blasphemy they are committing.

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sinful if people do not take guidance from the *"Shari'at"* in regard to matters other than those of food; whereas in this verse, Allah has taken to task all those people, who arrogate to themselves the right of making lawful or unlawful not only the articles of food but anything that has been made lawful or unlawful by the *"Shari'at."*

61. The question has been posed to impress how horrible and rebellious their crime is, as if to say, "How dare you make your own regulations contrary to those which Allah has given you, when, in fact, you yourselves are His creation? What do you think about the servant, who claims that he himself has the right to prescribe the limits concerning the things which his master has entrusted to his care, and therefore, there is no need of consulting him? How will you treat your own servant if he were to claim that he had every right to use and expend as he will all that belongs to you? Leave alone the case of that servant, who does not acknowledge at all that he has any master or that he is a servant and the things that are in his possession are not his but belong to some one else; for the case under discussion does not concern such a villainous usurper. The question has been posed concerning that servant, who himself acknowledges that he is a servant of some master and that the things in his possession belong to the master and not to himself. Yet he claims that he has the right to make rules and regulations and set limits for himself regarding the use of those things, and that there is no need for him to consult his master.

62. This question has been posed to corner the transgressors who arrogate to themselves the right to make rules and regulations in regard to the use they could make of the things of their Master. It is meant to impress on them that they have placed themselves in an awkward position by arrogating that right without any lawful authority. Their claim would have been valid, if the Master had Himself authorized them to make whatever laws they liked concerning the use of the things entrusted to the servants by Him. The pertinent question is whether they possessed any such authority from the Master, or were putting forward this claim without any delegation of such rights to them. If they had any such warrant they should show it: otherwise they would be guilty of two crimes—rebellion and forgery.

63. It is a pity that most of the servants are not grateful to the Master for this great favour that He has given them full instructions about the way they should live in His 'house' and the use they should make of His things and the

conduct they should adopt, as if to say, "If you live in the world according to My instructions, you will win My approval and deserve the greatest rewards, but if you live as rebels, you would incur My wrath and merit a painful chastisement." Nay, instead of showing gratitude for this favour, many of the servants seem to think like this: "The Master ought to have left us in the world without any guidance and secretly watched us to see which of us was living in rebellion against His Law, and then punished the criminals.". They do not seem to realize that if the Master had put them to this hard test none would have escaped punishment.

64. These things have been mentioned here in order to comfort the Holy Prophet and give a warning to his enemies. These are meant to lessen his worry and to strengthen him, as if to say, "We see all that you are doing in propagating the Message of the Truth with great patience and fortitude, and exerting your utmost to reform mankind. Rest assured that We have not left you alone after entrusting you with this arduous duty. We are not unaware of whatever you are doing for the performance of your mission, and also whatever your enemies are doing to oppose you." On the other hand, a warning has also been administered to his opponents: "Don't remain under the delusion that no one is seeing what you are doing in opposing the Messenger of the Truth and the reformer of mankind? We are seeing whatever mischiefs you are doing and whatever obstacles you are placing in the way of the mission. We are keeping a detailed and accurate record of all these things. Therefore beware that you shall be called upon to render an account of all your doings".

65. This is a concise statement of a very important subject and requires a detailed explanation. The Qur'ān declares in a few words that all religions other than the Revealed one are false because they have been founded on mere philosophical research for the primary cause of the origin of the universe. The philosophical research is after all based on guess-work, and is in its very nature incapable of reaching the Truth. The right way of arriving at the Truth is to make a study of the signs (*e.g.* day and night) and of the Message of the Prophets in a dispassionate manner. For this is the only way of discovering the Truth: otherwise, if one follows wrong ways one shall always arrive at wrong conclusions. Let us now consider the several methods that different people have adopted in search of this knowledge:

The *mushriks* base their search wholly and solely on superstition.

The hermits and ascetics pretend and claim that they acquire that knowledge by means of contemplation and meditation and see the reality by peeping into the hidden. But the fact is that they do not see the reality; it is only a trick of their own imagination. They form a mental image and then concentrate their mind on it and eventually it takes the shape of the "reality."

The so-called philosophers claim to base their researches on rationalism but it is really only surmise and guess-work, even though they may give "logical" arguments and "sound" reasons in its support.

Then there are the scientists: though they follow the scientific method of research in the physical world, they abandon it completely in regard to their investigation into metaphysics and start to follow conjectures, surmises, and guess-work.

Then these groups invariably suffer from prejudices and are not inclined to understand the point of view of those who differ with them, and, therefore, obstinately stick to their own theories.

In this passage (vv. 66-67) the Qur'ān declares that this way of search after knowledge is basically wrong, as if to say, "The real cause of your deviation is that you base your search of Reality on mere surmise and guess-work, and then, because of your prejudices, refuse to listen even to reasonable things. The result is that you have not only failed to arrive at the truth but also to judge rightly the Revealed Religion, presented by the Messengers."

In contrast to the above ways of research, the Qur'ān presents its own way and asserts that it alone is the correct, rational and scientific way of arriving at the Truth. It is this: "The prerequisite for research is that you should give up your preconceived prejudices and listen to the Message of those who claim that their information about the Reality is based on "Knowledge" and not on surmises, guess-works, meditations and contemplations, abstract deductions etc. Then consider deeply the Signs in the universe to which the Qur'ān invites your attention. If these also point to the Reality they claim to reveal, then there is no reason why you should deny the Truth taught by those Messengers." This is the basis of the philosophy of Islam. What a pity that even the Muslim philosophers have forsaken this way and followed in the footsteps of Plato and Aristotle!

The Qur'ān has inculcated this method at many places and has over and again presented many a phenomenon as a proof of the Reality, and taught the people how to arrive at the right conclusion so as to perceive the Reality. Accordingly, in verse 67, the Sign of the night and the day has been presented for the deep consideration of the people. The change of day and night is a wonderful Sign and, clearly points to the Universal Designer and the All-Powerful Ruler; for it takes place by the turning of the earth on its axis and in relation to the sun with mathematical precision. This change is due to the great wisdom of the Designer and has a great purpose behind it because of its innumerable benefits for all that exists on the earth. This points out also to the Providence of the Creator for it demonstrates conclusively that He has made perfect arrangements for the existence of His creation. Moreover, this also shows that the Universal Designer is One and

also that He is not playful but Wise and purposeful. This change points also towards the great Reality that He, being the Benefactor and Lord, is worthy of worship and none else. This is because every other being is provided with its requirements by this change of day and night and none provides others; therefore none of them can be the Lord and the Master. In the light of these Signs, how can, any other religion, based on mere surmise and guess-work, be considered to be true when it is compared with the Revealed Religion which is based on such clear Signs as these?

66. In the preceding passage people were taken to task for founding false religions on mere surmise and guess-work. In this passage the Christians and others, who believe that God has begotten a son, have been taken to task for this blasphemy which has no authority other than mere presumption.

67. The Arabic phrase سُبْحَانَ اللّٰهِ *(subhān-Allah)* is used to express astonishment at something apparently inexplicable. But its literal meaning is, "Allah is All-Pure, and is absolutely free from any defect, blemish and flaw". Here it implies both these things. It expresses astonishment at their blasphemy that Allah has taken a son to Himself, and also refutes it, saying, "Allah, being perfect in every way, does not stand in need of a son."

68. Three things have been put forward to refute their blasphemy: (1) Allah is pure and without any defect, (2) Allah is Self-sufficient in every way, and (3) Allah is the Owner of everything in the heavens and the earth. Let us now briefly explain how these three things refute that blasphemy.

It is obvious that a son is either sprung from the loins or is adopted. In the first case, such a conception of Allah amounts to this: He is mortal like every other being: therefore He stands in need of a spouse in order to propagate His offspring like other beings. In the second case, it shall have to be presumed that Allah stands in need of a son to inherit His Kingdom in order to make up, to some extent, for the deficiency that is caused by His childlessness. Or that Allah also cherished paternal love like human beings, and therefore, adopted as son one of the millions of His slaves.

Whatever be the case, it is obvious that the blasphemy shall have to be based on such a creed which presumes that Allah suffers from many defects, many weaknesses, many shortcomings and many wants. The Qur'ān refutes all such blasphemous creeds, saying, "He is All-Pure" and therefore, is free from all such defects; and by "He is Self-sufficient", the Qur'ān asserts that He does not suffer from any of those weaknesses and wants which impel the mortals to have children. Lastly, it says clearly that all the beings in the heavens and the earth belong to

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مَرْجِعُهُمْ ثُمَّ نُذِيْقُهُمُ الْعَذَابَ الشَّدِيْدَ بِمَا كَانُوْا يَكْفُرُوْنَ ﴿٧٠﴾ وَاتْلُ
عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَاَ نُوْحٍ ۘ اِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهٖ يٰقَوْمِ اِنْ كَانَ كَبُرَ عَلَيْكُمْ مَّقَامِيْ وَ
تَذْكِيْرِيْ بِاٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ فَعَلَى اللّٰهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ فَاَجْمِعُوْٓا اَمْرَكُمْ وَشُرَكَآءَكُمْ ثُمَّ
لَا يَكُنْ اَمْرُكُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ غُمَّةً ثُمَّ اقْضُوْٓا اِلَيَّ وَلَا تُنْظِرُوْنِ ﴿٧١﴾ فَاِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ
فَمَا سَاَلْتُكُمْ مِّنْ اَجْرٍ ۭ اِنْ اَجْرِيَ اِلَّا عَلَى اللّٰهِ ۙ وَاُمِرْتُ اَنْ اَكُوْنَ
مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِيْنَ ﴿٧٢﴾ فَكَذَّبُوْهُ فَنَجَّيْنٰهُ وَمَنْ مَّعَهٗ فِي الْفُلْكِ وَجَعَلْنٰهُمْ
خَلٰۗىِٕفَ وَاَغْرَقْنَا الَّذِيْنَ كَذَّبُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَا ۚ فَانْظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ
الْمُنْذَرِيْنَ ﴿٧٣﴾ ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَا مِنْۢ بَعْدِهٖ رُسُلًا اِلٰى قَوْمِهِمْ فَجَاۗءُوْهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ
فَمَا كَانُوْا لِيُؤْمِنُوْا بِمَا كَذَّبُوْا بِهٖ مِنْ قَبْلُ ۭ كَذٰلِكَ نَطْبَعُ عَلٰي قُلُوْبِ
الْمُعْتَدِيْنَ ﴿٧٤﴾ ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَا مِنْۢ بَعْدِهِمْ مُّوْسٰى وَهٰرُوْنَ اِلٰى فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَا۟ئِهٖ
بِاٰيٰتِنَا فَاسْتَكْبَرُوْا وَكَانُوْا قَوْمًا مُّجْرِمِيْنَ ﴿٧٥﴾ فَلَمَّا جَاۗءَهُمُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ
عِنْدِنَا قَالُوْٓا اِنَّ هٰذَا لَسِحْرٌ مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿٧٦﴾ قَالَ مُوْسٰٓى اَتَقُوْلُوْنَ لِلْحَقِّ لَمَّا
جَاۗءَكُمْ ۭ اَسِحْرٌ هٰذَا ۭ وَلَا يُفْلِحُ السّٰحِرُوْنَ ﴿٧٧﴾ قَالُوْٓا اَجِئْتَنَا لِتَلْفِتَنَا عَمَّا
وَجَدْنَا عَلَيْهِ اٰبَاۗءَنَا وَتَكُوْنَ لَكُمَا الْكِبْرِيَاۗءُ فِي الْاَرْضِ ۭ وَمَا نَحْنُ لَكُمَا
بِمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٧٨﴾ وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ ائْتُوْنِيْ بِكُلِّ سٰحِرٍ عَلِيْمٍ ﴿٧٩﴾ فَلَمَّا جَاۗءَ السَّحَرَةُ
قَالَ لَهُمْ مُّوْسٰٓى اَلْقُوْا مَآ اَنْتُمْ مُّلْقُوْنَ ﴿٨٠﴾ فَلَمَّآ اَلْقَوْا قَالَ مُوْسٰى مَا
جِئْتُمْ بِهِ ۙ السِّحْرُ ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ سَيُبْطِلُهٗ ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يُصْلِحُ عَمَلَ الْمُفْسِدِيْنَ ﴿٨١﴾
وَيُحِقُّ اللّٰهُ الْحَقَّ بِكَلِمٰتِهٖ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُجْرِمُوْنَ ﴿٨٢﴾ فَمَآ اٰمَنَ لِمُوْسٰٓى اِلَّا
ذُرِّيَّةٌ مِّنْ قَوْمِهٖ عَلٰي خَوْفٍ مِّنْ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَا۟ئِهِمْ اَنْ يَّفْتِنَهُمْ ۭ وَ

Recite[69] to them Noah's story, when he said to his people, "O my brethren, if it has become intolerable for you that I should dwell in your midst and preach to you the Revelations of Allah, then (note it well that) I have put my trust in Allah. You may muster all the partners you have set up and come to a united decision about me and consider your scheme well so that no aspect of the matter should remain hidden from you. Then bring that into action against me without giving me any respite.[70] If you have turned away from my Message, (I have lost nothing) for I did not demand any reward from you: my reward is with Allah, and I have been commanded to behave like a Muslim, (whether any other does so or not.)" But they disbelieved in him and the result was that We rescued those of them, who were with him in the Ark and made them successors on the earth and drowned those who rejected Our Revelations. So consider the end of those who were warned (but did not believe). After Noah We sent different Messengers to their peoples and they came to them with manifest Signs, but they would not believe in what they had disbelieved before. This is how We set a seal on the hearts of the transgressors.[71] 71-74

Then after them We sent Moses and Aaron with Our Signs to Pharaoh and his chiefs.[72] But they showed arrogance,[73] for they were criminals. So when the Truth came to them from Us, they said, "This is clear sorcery."[74] Moses replied, "What, do you call the Truth sorcery, when it has come to you? Is this sorcery? The fact is that sorcerers can never attain true success."[75] In reply to this, they said, "Have you come to turn us away from the faith of our forefathers so that you two may dominate over the land?[76] We are not going to believe in what you say." And Pharaoh said (to his people), "Bring every expert sorcerer to me."— When the sorcerers came, Moses said to them, "Cast down whatever you have to cast." When they cast down their appliances, Moses said to them, "This is sorcery what you have cast down:[77] Allah will surely render it in vain for He does not let the plans of mischief-makers succeed. And Allah vindicates the Truth by His Commands, though the guilty ones may dislike it." 75-82

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Him and that He has no particular relation with anyone of them so as to make such a one His "son" or "only son" or heir apparent. Though it is true that Allah loves some of His slaves more than the others because of their excellences, it does not in any way mean that He raises such a one from the rank of a slave to that of a partner in His Godhead. For, the highest rank He bestows on them is that they are Allah's friends, "....who believe and fear Allah; (and therefore they) shall have no occasion for fear and sorrow. There is nothing but good news for them in this world and in the Hereafter." (*vv.* 62-63).

69. The story of Prophet Noah has been related here to serve as a warning to those who were rejecting the Message of Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him). Up to this place, arguments had been presented before them to show the errors of their creeds, thoughts and ways, and impressive appeals had been made to them to adopt the Right Way. But from here onward they are being warned of the consequences of the attitude they had adopted towards their Messenger and admonished indirectly to learn a lesson from the fate of Prophet Noah's people, who had behaved towards their Prophet like the Quraish, the addressees. The Holy Prophet had been pointing out to them in a very befitting manner their errors and deviations, and was trying to correct them. But instead of considering and re-considering these things, they had become his mortal enemies, though he had no self-interest in his Mission and was extending the Message for their good, but they responded to his arguments with rudeness, abuses and stones. So much so that his very person had become intolerable and unbearable for them. This was because of their prejudices against the Right Way, which had so blinded them that they could not tolerate even the presence of the one who was following the Right Way. At this Allah commanded His Messenger to recite to them the story of Prophet Noah so that they might get in it the answer to their misbehaviour towards him.

70. This was a challenge that amounted to this: "I am not going to give up my Mission at all, whatever you may do against me, for I have my full trust in Allah." (For contrast please See I. 55 of *Hūd*).

71. The transgressors whose hearts are sealed are those obstinate and obdurate people who are so hardened against persuasion that they firmly and perversely adhere to the opinion they have once formed erroneously. As they themselves refuse to listen to counsel and admonition, Allah's curse falls on them and they are deprived of the ability of ever coming to the Right Way.

72. Explanatory Notes (84-111) concerning the story of Prophet Moses and Pharaoh, already added to Chapter VII, should be kept in view, as the things explained therein will not be repeated here.

73. "They showed arrogance" because of their wealth, power, pomp and show, and considered themselves above subjection to the Message. Therefore they showed haughtiness instead of surrender and obedience to it.

74. The story of Prophet Moses and Pharaoh is being related also to serve as an object-lesson for the Quraish, who were behaving towards Prophet Muhammad in the same way as Pharaoh and his people had behaved towards Prophet Moses (Allah's peace be upon them); for the response to the Message by the Quraish was similar to that of Pharaoh's people. (Please refer to *v.* 2 of this Sūrah.)

In this connection, it will also be worthwhile to note that the Mission of Prophets Moses and Aaron was not merely to liberate the Israelites from the slavery of Pharaoh, as some people have opined. If we keep in view the context in which the story occurs here, it will be quite clear that they, too, were appointed to pursue the same Mission that was entrusted to all the Prophets from Noah to Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon them all). The theme of this Sūrah from its very beginning has been this: "Acknowledge Allah alone as your Lord and Deity for He is the Lord of the whole universe. Believe in the life-after-death in which you shall have to present yourselves before Allah and render the account of all you did in this world." Then the Sūrah makes it clear to those who rejected the Message that history bears witness to this that the true success of humanity has always followed the acceptance of this Message. Therefore it admonished them: "You should also accept the Message which has always been put forward by all the Messengers, and establish your life in its entirety on these Articles of Faith. For those who rejected the Message were destroyed in the end."

Thus it has become quite clear from the context in which their story occurs, that the main object of the Mission of Prophets Moses and Aaron was the same as that of all the other Prophets. It is true that one of their objects was also to liberate the Israelites (a Muslim Community) from the domination of a *kāfir* community, if it persisted in its unbelief. But this had a secondary place in their Mission, and was not its main object. The real object has been stated explicitly in LXXIX, *vv.* 17-19, wherein his Lord said to Moses: "Go to Pharaoh for he has transgressed the bounds of subjection and say to him, "Are you prepared to reform yourselves and fear your Lord, if I guide you towards Him' ?"

The part played by the two Prophets in liberating the Israelites from

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إِنَّ فِرْعَوْنَ لَعَالٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ ۖ وَإِنَّهُ لَمِنَ الْمُسْرِفِينَ ﴿٨٣﴾ وَقَالَ مُوسَىٰ
يَا قَوْمِ إِن كُنتُمْ آمَنتُم بِاللَّهِ فَعَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلُوا إِن كُنتُم مُّسْلِمِينَ ﴿٨٤﴾
فَقَالُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ تَوَكَّلْنَا ۚ رَبَّنَا لَا تَجْعَلْنَا فِتْنَةً لِّلْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٨٥﴾ وَنَجِّنَا
بِرَحْمَتِكَ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٨٦﴾ وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ وَأَخِيهِ أَن تَبَوَّآ
لِقَوْمِكُمَا بِمِصْرَ بُيُوتًا وَاجْعَلُوا بُيُوتَكُمْ قِبْلَةً وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ ۗ وَبَشِّرِ
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٨٧﴾ وَقَالَ مُوسَىٰ رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ آتَيْتَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَأَهُ زِينَةً وَ
أَمْوَالًا فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا ۙ رَبَّنَا لِيُضِلُّوا عَن سَبِيلِكَ ۖ رَبَّنَا اطْمِسْ عَلَىٰ
أَمْوَالِهِمْ وَاشْدُدْ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ فَلَا يُؤْمِنُوا حَتَّىٰ يَرَوُا الْعَذَابَ الْأَلِيمَ ﴿٨٨﴾
قَالَ قَدْ أُجِيبَت دَّعْوَتُكُمَا فَاسْتَقِيمَا وَلَا تَتَّبِعَانِّ سَبِيلَ الَّذِينَ لَا
يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٨٩﴾ وَجَاوَزْنَا بِبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ الْبَحْرَ فَأَتْبَعَهُمْ فِرْعَوْنُ وَجُنُودُهُ
بَغْيًا وَعَدْوًا ۖ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَدْرَكَهُ الْغَرَقُ ۙ قَالَ آمَنتُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا الَّذِي
آمَنَتْ بِهِ بَنُو إِسْرَائِيلَ وَأَنَا مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٩٠﴾ آلْآنَ وَقَدْ عَصَيْتَ قَبْلُ
وَكُنتَ مِنَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٩١﴾ فَالْيَوْمَ نُنَجِّيكَ بِبَدَنِكَ لِتَكُونَ لِمَنْ خَلْفَكَ
آيَةً ۚ وَإِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ النَّاسِ عَنْ آيَاتِنَا لَغَافِلُونَ ﴿٩٢﴾ وَلَقَدْ بَوَّأْنَا بَنِي
إِسْرَائِيلَ مُبَوَّأَ صِدْقٍ وَرَزَقْنَاهُم مِّنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ ۖ فَمَا اخْتَلَفُوا حَتَّىٰ جَاءَهُمُ
الْعِلْمُ ۚ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ يَقْضِي بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فِيمَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿٩٣﴾
فَإِن كُنتَ فِي شَكٍّ مِّمَّا أَنزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ فَاسْأَلِ الَّذِينَ يَقْرَءُونَ الْكِتَابَ مِن
قَبْلِكَ ۚ لَقَدْ جَاءَكَ الْحَقُّ مِن رَّبِّكَ فَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُمْتَرِينَ ﴿٩٤﴾ وَلَا
تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ فَتَكُونَ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٩٥﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ

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(Then behold that) none but a few youths[78] from his own people obeyed and followed[79] Moses because of the fear of Pharaoh and their own chiefs; for they apprehended that Pharaoh would afflict them with a torment. And the fact is that Pharaoh was mighty in the land: indeed he was one of those who do not hesitate to transgress any limit.[80] 83

Moses said to his people, "O my people, if you sincerely believe in Allah, put your trust in Him, if you are Muslims."[81] They answered,[82] "We have put our trust in Allah: 'Our Lord, do not make us a cause of trial [83] for the unjust people, and deliver us by Thy mercy from the unbelievers'." 84-86

And We inspired Moses and his brother: "Provide some houses for your people in Egypt, and make those houses of yours as *qiblah,* and establish *Salāt* [84] and fill the Believers with hope and courage."[85] 87

Moses prayed [86] and said, "Our Lord, Thou hast bestowed on Pharaoh and his chiefs splendour[87] and possessions [88] in the worldly life; our Lord, hast Thou done this that they may lead astray the people from Thy Way ? Lord, destroy their wealth and harden their hearts in a manner so that they may not believe till they see the painful torment."[89] Allah replied, "The prayer of you both has been granted; so be steadfast and follow not the way of those who have no knowledge."[90] 88-89

And We led the children of Israel across the sea. Then Pharaoh and his hosts pursued them with the intention of cruelty and oppression to them until, when he was drowning, he cried, "I have believed that there is no god but the real God in Whom the children of Israel have believed and I am of those who surrender."[91] (In answer it was said :) "Now you believe! Whereas hitherto you had been rebellious and of the mischief-makers. Now We will preserve your dead body [92] only to be a sign of warning for the succeeding generations, though there are many people who give no heed to Our Signs."[93] 90-92

We gave an excellent abode[94] to the children of Israel and provided them with the best things of life. Then they caused not dissensions among themselves until the knowledge had come to them.[95] Surely your Lord will decide between them on the Day of Resurrection concerning that in which they had been differing. 93

If you are in doubt regarding the Guidance We have sent down 94-95

to you, you may enquire about this from those people who have been reading the Scriptures before you. In fact, it is the very Truth that has come to you from your Lord; so be not of those who doubt and join not those who treat Allah's Revelations as false; otherwise you shall be of the losers.[96]

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Pharaoh's slavery became prominent in history because he and his nobles rejected the Message and the Prophets had to rescue their people from their slavery. Accordingly, the Qur'ān gave it the same prominence as in history. But if one does not commit the error of isolating the details of the Qur'ān from its fundamental principles but studies them in the light of these principles, one cannot fall a prey to the misunderstanding that the mere liberation of a community could be the main object of the mission of a Prophet and the propagation of the Message its secondary object only. (For further explanation see XX: 44-52, XLIII: 46-56, LXXIII : 15-16).

75. ".....The sorcerers can never attain true success" is meaningful for this is the answer to their charge: "This is a clear sorcery." It means this. "You have called the Signs of Moses a "sorcery" on account of its apparent likeness to it. You have not considered the clear and marked distinctions between the characteristics of the Prophets and sorcerers. Otherwise you would never have dared to make such an absurd charge. Have you ever seen a sorcerer go before a tyrant and talk boldly and fearlessly to him as Moses did, and admonish him for his deviation and invite him to adopt the way of purity and God-worship? You know that a sorcerer behaves quite differently. He starts with the flattery of the courtiers so that they may obtain for him the permission to show his tricks. After this he goes to the presence of "His Majesty" and makes obsequious bows and very humbly requests him to see his tricks. Then he prays for his long life and prosperity and begs for his reward. Now, you can judge for yourselves whether the Prophet is a sorcerer or a far greater and far higher personality than even kings and the like."

76. It is obvious that if this demand had been merely for the liberation of the Israelites, there could have been no question of any threat to Pharaoh's kingdom. The threat was because of the Message which demanded subordination to the Truth, for it threatened the system which was based on *shirk* and on which depended the domination of Pharaoh and his chiefs and priests. (For further explanation see E.N. 66 of VII and E.N. 43 of XL.)

77. That is, "What I showed was not sorcery but sorcery is that which you are showing."

78. Though literally ذُرِّيَّة (*Zur-riyyah*) means offspring, it has been translated into youths because the Qur'ān has used this word here to point out a specific aspect of the matter. It is this: during that fearful period of persecution only a few young men and women showed the moral courage of acknowledging the Messenger of the Truth as their leader and becoming his standard bearers. On the contrary, their fathers, mothers and elders had not the courage to follow him and endanger their worldly interests and even their lives. They not only followed the way of ease and expediency, but also discouraged their youth, saying, "Don't go near Moses: for you will thus invite trouble both for yourselves and your elders."

The Qur'ān has mentioned this particular aspect of the matter because the same was the case of the response to the Mission of Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him). In its initial stage, those who came forward were not the elders and the old people but some courageous youth. These first Muslims who were boldly facing persecution and enduring hardships for the sake of Islam were the young people. For instance, 'Alī-ibn-Abī Tālib, Ja'afar Tayyār, Zubair, Talhāh, Sa'ad bin Abī Waqqās, Mus'ab bin 'Umair, 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, etc., were under twenty years when they embraced Islam. 'Abdur-Rahmān bin 'Auf, Bilāl, Suhail were under thirty years, and Abū 'Ubaidah-bin-al-Jarrah, Zaid bin Hārithah, 'Uthmān bin 'Affān and 'Umar Fārūq were under thirty-five years. Abū Bakr was no more than 38 when he embraced Islam. Among the early Muslims, there is only one instance of a Companion, 'Ammār bin Yāsir, who was of the same age as the Holy Prophet and another of 'Ubaidah bin Hārith Muttalabī, who was older than the Holy Prophet.

79. Some people have misinterpreted the Arabic words "فَمَآ اٰمَنَ لِمُوسٰى" and say that all the people of Israel were unbelievers and at first only a few of them believed in the Message. But when اٰمَنَ (*Īmān*) is followed by the letter لِ (*lām*), it grenerally means obeying and following. Thus the original words of the text will mean (as translated) "----a few youth from his own people obeyed and followed Moses," that is, "Only a few young people from the whole tribe of the Israelites had the courage to accept and acknowledge Prophet Moses as their leader and guide and stand by him in his struggle with Pharaoh and his chiefs." The words that follow make it quite clear that the Israelites refrained from this not because they did not believe in Prophet Moses or his Message but because they (specially their elders) were afraid of exposing themselves to the persecution of Pharaoh. This state of fear was the result of their moral degeneration. Though all of them racially and religiously belonged to the community of Prophets Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph and, therefore, were Muslims, yet slavery of centuries had so much degraded them that they had lost that spirit of Islam which impels one to

become the standard-bearer of Islam against the domination of unbelief and deviation, or imbues one with the courage to stand by the one who had raised that banner.

The Bible has described their degraded condition at the time of the conflict with Pharaoh in *Exodus* 5: 20-21: "And they met Moses and Aaron, who stood in the way, as they came forth from Pharaoh: And they said unto them, the Lord look upon you, and judge; because ye have made our saviour to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to slay us." The *Talmud* (Selections by H. Polano, page 152) confirms the same:

"Yea" said the overburdened children of Israel to Moses and Aaron, "We are like a lamb which the wolf has carried from its flock, the shepherd strives to take it from him, but between the two the lamb is pulled to pieces; between ye and Pharaoh will we all be killed."

The Qur'ān also refers to this in VII: 129:

"His people answered, 'We were oppressed before you came and now again we are being oppressed after you have come."

80. The Arabic word مُسْرِفِيْن (*musrifīn*) literally means "transgressors". As this could not express the true spirit, it has been translated into "....those who are not bound by any limits". They are the people who do not hesitate to employ even the most wicked methods to achieve their object: who practise without any pangs of conscience cruelty, immorality, barbarism etc., if these serve their purpose, and who cross all limits in pursuit of their desires. In short, they are such people as know no limits to stop at.

81. The fact that Prophet Moses in his address called his people "Muslims" shows that all the people of the community of Israel were Muslims; otherwise he could not say to them, "—if you are Muslims". He meant to urge them to be brave, saying, "If you are true Muslims, as you profess to be, do not fear the might of Pharaoh but put your trust in the might of Allah."

82. Those, who responded to the appeal of Prophet Moses, were those "youth" who obeyed and followed him, and not the Israelites, as a community, as is obvious from the context.

83. The prayer, "Our Lord, do not make us a cause of trial for the unjust people," is very comprehensive in meaning. Whenever the standard-bearers of the Truth rise up to establish virtue and eradicate the prevalent evil, they come into conflict with unjust people, who, for one reason or the other, are always on the look-out to find fault with them. First, there are the champions of falsehood, who

try their level best to crush down with full force the champions of the Truth. Then there are the so-called champions of the Truth who profess to believe in it but are not prepared to enter into conflict with the powerful government of the time. Therefore they declare it to be a useless and foolish effort, and begin to invent excuses to justify the wrong stand they take in regard to the struggle with falsehood in order to silence the prick of conscience they feel for their criminal attitude of cowardice. Accordingly, they try to prove that it is these standard-bearers of the Truth who are in the wrong and not they. Lastly, there are the common people, who watch the conflict as by-standers and join forces with those who prove to be more powerful of the two, whether they are the supporters of the Truth or of falsehood.

Now let us consider how the champions of the Truth are liable to become a cause of trial for these unjust people. If they are crushed down or defeated, the first group declares, "We were in the right and not these foolish people: otherwise they could not have been defeated." The second group says, "Their defeat has proved that they did not make the correct estimate of the circumstances and caused the destruction of valuable lives by coming in conflict with the mighty powers. Moreover, the Shari'at has not made it obligatory on us to expose ourselves to risk, when we are fulfilling the most essential religious duties without any restrictions from the tyrants of the day." As regards the common people, their criterion of judging the Truth is this: "Whatever triumphs is truth. Therefore their defeat has proved that the champions of the Truth must be in the wrong." Likewise every mistake and error the champions of the Truth commit, every weakness they show in the face of overwhelming odds against them, every moral fault to which anyone of them succumbs, becomes a good excuse for those who intend to stick to falsehood. Consequently, the "invitation" to the Truth becomes dormant for years after their "defeat".

Thus it has become quite clear that this prayer of the companions of Prophet Moses was well-timed and meaningful: "Our Lord, have mercy upon us so that we might not become a cause of trial for the unjust people: protect us from errors, defects and weaknesses and make our efforts successful in this world so that we may become a source of goodness to Thy creatures and not a source of evil for the unjust people."

84. There is a difference of opinion among the Commentators in regard to the meaning of this verse. As for me, I have considered deeply its wording and the circumstances under which this was sent down, and have come to the conclusion that Prophet Moses was commanded to build or acquire some houses for the establishment of *Salāt* in congregation This was necessitated because the system

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حَقَّتْ عَلَيْهِمْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٩٦﴾ وَلَوْ جَآءَتْهُمْ كُلُّ اٰيَةٍ حَتّٰى
يَرَوُا الْعَذَابَ الْاَلِيْمَ ﴿٩٧﴾ فَلَوْلَا كَانَتْ قَرْيَةٌ اٰمَنَتْ فَنَفَعَهَآ اِيْمَانُهَآ اِلَّا
قَوْمَ يُوْنُسَ ؕ لَمَّآ اٰمَنُوْا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُمْ عَذَابَ الْخِزْيِ فِى الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا
وَمَتَّعْنٰهُمْ اِلٰى حِيْنٍ ﴿٩٨﴾ وَلَوْ شَآءَ رَبُّكَ لَاٰمَنَ مَنْ فِى الْاَرْضِ كُلُّهُمْ
جَمِيْعًا ؕ اَفَاَنْتَ تُكْرِهُ النَّاسَ حَتّٰى يَكُوْنُوْا مُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٩٩﴾ وَمَا كَانَ لِنَفْسٍ
اَنْ تُؤْمِنَ اِلَّا بِاِذْنِ اللّٰهِ ؕ وَيَجْعَلُ الرِّجْسَ عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ لَا يَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿١٠٠﴾
قُلِ انْظُرُوْا مَاذَا فِى السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ؕ وَمَا تُغْنِى الْاٰيٰتُ وَالنُّذُرُ عَنْ
قَوْمٍ لَّا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿١٠١﴾ فَهَلْ يَنْتَظِرُوْنَ اِلَّا مِثْلَ اَيَّامِ الَّذِيْنَ خَلَوْا مِنْ
قَبْلِهِمْ ؕ قُلْ فَانْتَظِرُوْٓا اِنِّىْ مَعَكُمْ مِّنَ الْمُنْتَظِرِيْنَ ﴿١٠٢﴾ ثُمَّ نُنَجِّىْ رُسُلَنَا وَ
الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا كَذٰلِكَ ۚ حَقًّا عَلَيْنَا نُنْجِ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿١٠٣﴾ قُلْ يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ
اِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِىْ شَكٍّ مِّنْ دِيْنِىْ فَلَآ اَعْبُدُ الَّذِيْنَ تَعْبُدُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ
وَلٰكِنْ اَعْبُدُ اللّٰهَ الَّذِىْ يَتَوَفّٰىكُمْ ۖ وَاُمِرْتُ اَنْ اَكُوْنَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿١٠٤﴾ وَاَنْ
اَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّيْنِ حَنِيْفًا ۚ وَلَا تَكُوْنَنَّ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ ﴿١٠٥﴾ وَلَا تَدْعُ مِنْ
دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ مَا لَا يَنْفَعُكَ وَلَا يَضُرُّكَ ۚ فَاِنْ فَعَلْتَ فَاِنَّكَ اِذًا مِّنَ
الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿١٠٦﴾ وَاِنْ يَّمْسَسْكَ اللّٰهُ بِضُرٍّ فَلَا كَاشِفَ لَهٗٓ اِلَّا هُوَ ۚ وَاِنْ يُّرِدْكَ
بِخَيْرٍ فَلَا رَآدَّ لِفَضْلِهٖ ؕ يُصِيْبُ بِهٖ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهٖ ؕ وَهُوَ الْغَفُوْرُ
الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿١٠٧﴾ قُلْ يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَآءَكُمُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَّبِّكُمْ ۚ فَمَنِ اهْتَدٰى
فَاِنَّمَا يَهْتَدِىْ لِنَفْسِهٖ ۚ وَمَنْ ضَلَّ فَاِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهَا ۚ وَمَآ اَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ
بِوَكِيْلٍ ﴿١٠٨﴾ وَاتَّبِعْ مَا يُوْحٰٓى اِلَيْكَ وَاصْبِرْ حَتّٰى يَحْكُمَ اللّٰهُ ۚ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الْحٰكِمِيْنَ ﴿١٠٩﴾

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The fact is that whatsoever Signs are shown to those who have fallen under Allah's decree,[97] they will not believe till they see the painful torment. Then, is there any instance of a habitation that, seeing the torment, accepted the faith and that faith profited it? (There is no instance of this) except that of Jonah's people.[98] When they believed, We warded off the torment of ignominy from them in this worldly life[99] and allowed them to make use of the things of life for a whil.[100] 96-98

Had your Lord willed (that all the people of the world should be believers,) all the dwellers of the earth would have believed in Him.[101] Will you, then, force the people to become believers ?[102] No one can believe without Allah's permission,[103] and it is the way of Allah that He throws filth on those who do not use their commonsense.[104] 99-100

Say to them, "Make a keen observation of all that is in the heavens and the earth." And (the fact is that) the Signs and warnings are of no avail to those who would not believe.[105] Now what do they wait for but the evil days that befell the peoples before them? Say to them, "Well, wait and see, I, too, wait with you." Then, (when such a time comes,) We deliver Our Messengers and those who believed in them—This is Our Way: We have laid it on Ourselves to deliver the believers. 101-103

O Prophet say,[106] 'O mankind! if you are still in doubt concerning my Faith, know that I do not worship those whom you worship beside Allah, but I worship that Allah alone, Who has the power to cause your death.[107] 'I have been commanded that I should be of the believers. I have also been bidden: 'Dedicate yourself sincerely, and exclusively and steadfastly to this Faith'[108] and be not at all of those who associate other gods with Allah.'[109] And do not invoke beside Allah any being that can neither do you good nor harm: for if you will do so, you shall be one of the workers of iniquity. If Allah afflicts you with a calamity, there is none to remove it but He Himself. Likewise if He wills to bestow a favour on you, there is none to withhold His bounty. He bestows His bounty on anyone of His servants He wills. And He is Forgiving and Mereifu'." 104-107

O Muhammad, tell them, "O mankind ! the Truth has come to you from your Lord. Now, whosoever follows the Right way, he does so for his own good, and whosoever goes astray, he does so to bring 108-109

about his own ruin; and I am not a keeper over you." And, O Prophet, go on following the Guidance that has been revealed to you; persevere steadfastly till Allah passes His judgement, for He is the best of judges.

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of Salāt in congregation had been abandoned by the Israelites and the Egyptian Muslims as a result of their persecution by the government, and owing to the weakness of their faith. As this had brought about their disintegration and killed their religious spirit, it was essential to re-establish the system of *Salāt* in congregation, which is indeed the first and foremost thing for the revival of that spirit and the integration of a scattered Muslim community and its powers.

As regards " .... appoint your houses as *qiblah*", I am of the opinion that it means: ".... set apart these houses as common places of worship for offering *Salāt* in congregation and the central places for holding their meetings. That is why it is followed by 'and establish *Salāt*'," which means that they should offer their *Salāt* collectively in congregation instead of individually.

85. The Arabic word بَشِّرْ (*bashshir*) means: "Fill them with hope and courage by giving them the good news of success by the grace of Allah." And they needed that very badly at that time, for they were full of despair, fear and depression.

86. This prayer was offered by Prophet Moses during the last period of his stay in Egypt. There was a long interval between this and the events mentioned in the preceding verse which happened during the early days of his Mission. The details of this intervening period are available at other places in the Qur'ān.

87. The Arabic word زِينَة (*zīnat*) includes the magnificence, grandeur, glory and the apparent brilliance of their culture and civilization which attracted other people towards them with the desire of imitating them.

88. "Possessions": resources and means which help the people like Pharaoh to put into practice all their devices and plans, and the lack of which prevents the standard-bearers of the Truth from carrying out their plans.

89. As it has already been stated, Prophet Moses made this prayer during the last period of his stay in Egypt. When he had shown many Signs, one after the other, to Pharaoh and his chiefs and pointed out the Way clearly to them, but they had persisted obdurately in their antagonism to the Truth, the Prophet begged his Lord to destroy their possessions and harden their hearts. And this was in accordance with the decree of Allah. As they had merited this punishment according to the Divine Law of retribution, Allah decreed that they should not get

the light of Faith, which they themselves had extinguished with their persistent disbelief.

90. In this verse, Allah has urged Prophet Moses and his followers to guard against a common misunderstanding that is likely to arise in such cases. It so happens that those people who have no knowledge of the reality and who do not understand the wisdom of Allah's ways are liable to believe from the apparent success of His rebels that perhaps it is His will that they should dominate in the world. When they witness the failures of the upholders of the Truth in their conflict with falsehood in contrast to the splendour and vast possessions of the champions of falsehood, they begin to think that Allah does not will to help the Truth in its conflict with falsehood. Therefore some foolish people further conclude from these wrong suppositions that it is useless to exert for the establishment of the Truth. Then they consider it to be the best and most proper thing to rest content with the little religiosity that the sovereignty of falsehood and unbelief allows them. That is why Allah has urged Prophet Moses and his followers to guard against such a misunderstanding and to carry on the Mission entrusted to them with patience under the adverse circumstances.

91. The Bible does not mention this happening but the Talmud says explicitly that when he was drowning he said, "Who is like Thee, O Lord, among the gods?"

92. Even today the place, where the dead body of Pharaoh was found floating, is pointed out by the inhabitants of that region. It lies on the western coast of the Sinai Peninsula and is now known by the name of Jabl-i-Fir'aun (Pharaoh's Mount). There is also near it a hot spring called Hammām-i-Fir'aun (Pharaoh's Bath), which is situated at a distance of a few miles from Abū Zenīmah, where, they say, Pharaoh's dead body was found lying.

If the Pharaoh who was drowned was Mineptah, who ruled over Egypt when Prophet Moses was sent to him, his embalmed dead body is still lying in the Cairo Museum. When Sir Grafton E. Smith removed the bandages from his mummy, a layer of salt was found on the body, which was a clear proof that he was drowned in the sea.

93. That is, "We show Signs to the people over and over again so that these should serve as warnings and be the means of teaching them lessons, but it is a pity that they do not learn lessons even from such Signs as the dead body of Pharaoh."

94. That is, "in Palestine after their exodus from Egypt"

95. This refers to the dissensions the Israelites had caused in the Divine Way and the new religions they had invented. This verse accuses them of falling

into variances, even though they possessed the Divine Knowledge, which had provided them with the criterion of judging between the Right Way and the wrong ways. They did this because of mischiefs of their hearts in spite of the fact that the Right Way had been made clear to them, and its fundamental principles had been imparted to them and instructions had been given about its implications and demands and its boundaries had been distinctly demarcated from those of the ways of unbelief. Besides, they had been admonished to follow the path of obedience and guard against the paths of disobedience, and establish their lives entirely in accordance with the rules and regulations based on that Knowledge, for they shall have to render an account of all they did in this life. But in spite of all the instructions that were given to them, they divided one original Religion into many divergent sects and built different ways on foundations other than those laid down by Allah.

96. Though these words were addressed to the Holy Prophet, they were meant for those who expressed doubts about his Message. As regards the reference to the people of the Book, it is because they possessed the Knowledge of the Scriptures, whereas the common people of Arabia lacked this, and were, therefore, strangers to the voice of the Qurān. It was also expected that their just and pious scholars would testify that its Message was the same as that of the Scriptures of the former Prophets.

97. Allah's decree that had become applicable to them was this: Allah does not thrust the Faith on those who do not seek after the Truth: who obstinately and obdurately shut their hearts against it with prejudice: who are so lost in the love of this world that they do not care at all about the Hereafter.

98. Though Prophet Jonah (860-784 B.C.) was an Israelite Prophet, he was sent to 'Iraq for the guidance of the Assyrians, who have been called the people of Jonah for this reason. At that time, Nineveh, a very ancient and famous city, was their capital. Its vast remains are scattered on the left bank of the Tigris, opposite to the city of Mosul, and one of the mounds bears the name of 'Prophet Jonah'. In order to form an estimate of the glory of these people, suffice it to say that the circumference of their capital Nineveh was 60 miles or so.

99. As regards the question why the threatened torment was warded off from the people of Jonah as an exception to the Divine principle, "After the decision of the torment, the profession of faith by any community does not benefit it," the Qur'ān does not give any details of this, but merely refers to the story at three places. (See XXI: 87, 88; XXXII: 139-148; LXVIII: 48-50). Though the story contained in the Book of Jonah gives some details, these cannot be depended upon because it was neither composed by Prophet Jonah nor it is a Revealed Book but was written by some unknown person and then inserted in the Bible. Besides

this, it contains some apparently absurd things which cannot be accepted as true. Nevertheless if we consider this deeply in the light of the allusions made in the Qur'ān and details in the Book of Jonah, the explanation given by various commentators of the Qur'ān seems to be correct.—Prophet Jonah left the place of his Mission without Divine permission after warning the people of the torment. Therefore Allah forgave the Assyrians, when they repented after seeing some Signs of the coming torment. This was in accordance with the Divine principles as stated in the Qur'ān. For, according to one of these, Allah does not inflict any torment on any people, till He has the Message fully demonstrated to them. As the Prophet did not continue his admonition in accordance with the appointed term and left the place of his Mission of his own accord, Allah's justice did not inflict the chastisement because the legal argument against his people had not been fulfilled. (For further explanation see E.N. 85 of XXXVI).

100. When the Assyrians believed in the Message, they were given a new lease of life. But after some time, they adopted the wrong ways of thought and deed. Prophet Nahum (720-698 B.C.) warned and admonished them but without any effect. Then Prophet Zephaniah (640-609 B.C.) gave them the last warning that "he .... will destroy Assyria and will make Nineveh a desolation" but it also proved in vain. At last in about 612 B.C., Allah made the Medes dominant over them.

The Median king, with the help of the Babylonians, invaded Assyria, and their army was defeated and was besieged within the walls of Nineveh. They put up a stiff resistance for some time but then the floods in the Tigris swept away the city wall and the invaders swarmed into the city and burnt it to ashes along with the surrounding countryside. The Assyrian king set fire to his palace and was himself burnt to death. Thus the Assyrian Empire and its culture came to an end for ever. The recent archaeological excavations reveal widespread effects of the fire.

101. This refers to the freedom that Allah has granted to mankind to believe or not to believe in Him. Otherwise He could have very easily created all the people as born believers and obedient servants and there would have been no disbelief and disobedience at all on the earth. Or He could have very easily inspired them to turn towards belief and obedience. But these methods would have defeated the wisdom that underlies the creation of mankind.

102. This does not at all mean that the Holy Prophet desired to force people to become believers, and that Allah was forbidding him to do this. In fact, the Qur'ān has here adopted the same method of admonishing the people that it has adopted at many other places, that is, though the words have apparently been addressed to the person of the Holy Prophet, in fact, these have been addressed to

the people. The implication is this: "O people! Our Messenger has made the distinction between the Guidance and deviation quite clear and plain by argument and pleading. Now, therefore, it is for you to believe or not to believe in the Guidance. If you accept that some one should force you to adopt the Right Way, you should know that this 'duty' has not been assigned to Our Prophet. Had Allah willed this, He could have done it Himself: then there would have been no need of sending any Prophet to you."

103. This is to emphasize the principle that the bestowal of all these blessings is in the power of Allah alone: therefore none can acquire or bestow on anyone any blessing without the permission of Allah. As faith and guidance also are blessings, they, too, can be acquired only with Allah's permission; and no one can acquire these without His permission nor bestow these on anyone else, even though one should desire to do so. That is why, even if the Prophet had sincerely desired to make people believers forcibly, he could not have done this, for this could be done only with Allah's permission and help.

104. This points out clearly that the above principle is not applied blindly and irrationally so as to bestow the blessing of faith on or withhold it from anyone without any rhyme or reason, but it works according to a system which is based on wisdom. Allah bestows this on anyone who uses his common sense properly in search of the Truth, for Allah provides for such a one the means of attaining it in proportion to the sincerity of his intention and the extent of his exertion and grants him its correct knowledge required for faith. But He throws the filth of ignorance, deviation, wrong thinking and wrong doing on the one who is not a seeker after the Truth and does not seek the Truth and does not use his common-sense properly because of his prejudices, or does not use it at all in search of the Truth. And this is what such people deserve.

105. This is the answer to the condition that they would believe him to be a true Prophet, if a Sign would be shown to them. The Holy Prophet has been asked to say to them, "There are countless Signs in the heaven and the earth, which confirm and testify the Message I am giving you. You could have easily recognized them, had you observed and considered them with open eyes and open hearts. But if you lack this urge and desire for the Truth, you will not accept and acknowledge it, however wonderful, miraculous and supernatural the sign may be, for you will declare that it was a piece of sorcery like Pharaoh and his chiefs. The fact is that the people, who suffer from this malady, see the Truth only when the torment with all its horrors overtakes them, just as Pharaoh came to believe only when he was drowning. But you should note it well that the repentance at the time of punishment is of no avail.

106. In this concluding portion, the same thing that was stated at the beginning of the discourse, has been reiterated. Therefore it will be worthwhile to keep in view the introductory passage (*vv.* 1-10).

107. The Arabic word يَتَوَفّٰكُم literally means "gives you death", but it has been purposely translated into "who has power to cause your death" in order to convey its real spirit in the context it occurs. It implies this: "I worship only that One, who has full power over your life: He has complete authority and power to let you live as long as He wills and cause you to die at any moment He wills. That is why I am fully convinced that I should submit and surrender, worship, serve and obey Him alone."

Now let us consider why of all His characteristics, this quality of Allah was specifically cited here. This was to bring home to the *mushriks* of Makkah that the doctrine of *shirk* was absolutely false. For they also believed (and all the *mushriks* have always believed) that death is entirely in the hands of Allah, the Lord of the universe, and none else has any power over it; so much so that they confessed that even those beings, whom they believed to be partners with God in other qualities and powers of His, could not avert death even from themselves. Thus the mention of this quality of Allah along with the statement of the Doctrine of *Tauhīd* has been made to serve as a proof of that creed. That is, "I serve Him only for He alone has the full power over life and death. Why should, then, I serve others who have no power at all over their own lives and deaths, not to mention the lives and deaths of others?" The eloquence and force of the statement has been enhanced manifold by saying, ".....Who gives you life and death" instead of ".....Who gives me life and death". For this contains the statement of the Doctrine, its proof and invitation to it, all the three combined in one concise sentence. Had it been said, "...I serve that one Who gives me death," then it would have implied, "I alone should serve Him". But by saying, ".....Who gives you death" the implication is: "It is not only I, who should serve Him, but you also should serve Him. For it is absolutely wrong to serve any other than Allah, Who alone has such powers."

108. The force of the Arabic words of the text (أَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّيْنِ حَنِيفًا) "Dedicate yourself sincerely, exclusively and steadfastly to this Faith", is worth deep consideration. The purpose might have been served by the use of such words as "Adopt this Faith" or "Follow this Faith". But Allah considered such expressions as weak and incapable of serving the real purpose, which is implied in the wording of the Text. For the literal meaning of أَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ is "Set your face steadfastly", which implies, "You should steadfastly turn your face in one direction only, without turning it even slightly to right or left, or backward, and go on marching in the same direction." Though these words were in themselves quite

sufficient, the addition of the word حَنِيفًا made it all the more forceful. For حَنِيف (*Hanīf*) is one who turns away from all others and exclusively turns to one direction. Thus what Allah demands is this: "Adopt this Faith, this Way of the worship of Allah and this way of life in such a manner that your worship, subjection, submission, servitude and obedience should be dedicated exclusively to Allah, the Lord of the universe, so that you do not deviate in the least after adopting this Way, you should have nothing to do with those ways that you have discarded and that you should not even have a look at the crooked paths that erroneous people follow."

109. This negative way of forbidding *shirk* has been purposely adopted. It implies this: "You should not at all be one of those, who set up in any way whatsoever other gods as partners with Allah in His essence, His attributes, His rights and His powers, whether that god be one's ownself or another man or a group of men or some spirit or *jinn* or angel or some material or imaginary being." The demand of *Tauhīd* has been made both in the positive form, "Dedicate.... Faith", and in the negative form, "and be not....other gods with Allah." Thus it forbids *shirk* both in creed and in deed, in individual and in collective life, in places of worship and in education, in courts and in legislative assemblies in political and in economic activities. Therefore it demands from the worshipper of *Tauhīd* to adopt a different way in every aspect of life from the way of those who adulterate God-worship with ungodly worships, for the former can never be a fellow traveller with those who practise *shirk*. As such things can never be expected from him, it can never be imagined that he would follow them.

Thus it is clear that it cuts at the very root of *shirk*, both (*jalī*) open and (*khafī*) hidden. As a matter of fact, *shirk* in its latter form is even more dangerous and should therefore be avoided most scrupulously. This warning is necessary, as some foolish people consider it to be almost harmless just because it is hidden. The fact is that open *shirk* is like an avowed enemy who makes an attack in the open and hidden *shirk* is like an enemy in the guise of a friend. Or the former is like a disease of which the symptoms are quite apparent and the latter like the hidden disease that gradually undermines one's health. Thus it is obvious that when the 'open' *shirk* comes into conflict with the Faith of *Tauhīd*, it may be cured. But the one who suffers from the 'hidden' *shirk* does not realize the threat posed by it and slowly and gradually succumbs to it, while the victim remains quite unaware that his Faith is being devoured by the deadly secret enemy.



XI

HŪD

هُوْد

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XI

HŪD

هُوْد

INTRODUCTION

Name

This Sūrah has been named after Prophet Hūd whose story has been related in vv. 50-60.

Period of Revelation

If we consider its theme deeply, we come to the conclusion that it was revealed during the same period as Sūrah Yūnus and most probably followed it immediately.

Subject

The Sūrah deals with the same subject as Sūrah Yūnus, that is, invitation to the Message, admonition and warning, with this difference that the warning is sterner. This is also supported by a Tradition:

It is related that after its revelation, once Hadrat Abū Bakr said to the Holy Prophet, "Of late I have been noticing that you are growing older and older. What is the cause of it ?" The Holy Prophet replied, "Sūrāh Hūd and the like Sūrahs have made me old." This shows that it was a very hard time for the Holy Prophet and these stern warnings added greatly to his anxieties that were caused by the persecution from the Quraish, who were doing their worst to crush down the Message of Islam. For it was obvious to the Holy Prophet that the last limit of the respite given by Allah was approaching nearer and nearer, and he was afraid lest the term of the respite should expire and his people be seized by the torment.

The invitation is this: Obey the Messenger of Allah; discard *shirk*, and worship Allah and Allah alone: establish the entire system of your life on the belief that you shall be called to account in the Hereafter.

The admonition is this: Remember that those people who put their faith in the outward appearance of this worldly life and rejected the Message of the Prophets met with dire consequences. Therefore you should consider it seriously whether you should follow the same way that history has proved to be the path to ruin.

The warning is this: You should not be deluded by the delay in the coming of the punishment: it is because of the respite that Allah has granted you by His grace so that you might mend your ways: if you do not make use of this opportunity, you shall be inflicted with an inevitable punishment that will destroy you all except the Believers.

Instead of addressing the people directly, the Qur'ān has used the stories of the people of Noah, Hūd, Sālih, Lot, Shu'aib and Moses to achieve the above-mentioned objects. What is most prominent in their stories is that when Allah passes His judgement on the people, He does not spare anyone whatsoever, even if he be the nearest relative of the Prophet of the time. Only that one is rescued who had believed in the Prophet, and none else, not even his own son or wife. More than that: the Faith demands from each and every Believer that he should totally forget his relationships when that judgement comes and remember only the relationship of the Faith. For it is against the spirit of Islam to show any regard whatsoever for the relationships of blood and race. And the Muslims demonstrated these teachings practically in the Battle of Badr, four years after the revelation of this Sūrah.



الٓرٰ ۟ كِتٰبٌ اُحْكِمَتْ اٰيٰتُهٗ ثُمَّ فُصِّلَتْ مِنْ لَّدُنْ حَكِيْمٍ خَبِيْرٍ ۟ اَلَّا تَعْبُدُوْٓا
اِلَّا اللّٰهَ ؕ اِنَّنِيْ لَكُمْ مِّنْهُ نَذِيْرٌ وَّ بَشِيْرٌ ۟ وَّ اَنِ اسْتَغْفِرُوْا رَبَّكُمْ ثُمَّ تُوْبُوْٓا
اِلَيْهِ يُمَتِّعْكُمْ مَّتَاعًا حَسَنًا اِلٰٓى اَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى وَّ يُؤْتِ كُلَّ ذِيْ فَضْلٍ
فَضْلَهٗ ؕ وَ اِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَاِنِّيْٓ اَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ كَبِيْرٍ ۟ اِلَى اللّٰهِ
مَرْجِعُكُمْ ۚ وَ هُوَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ۟ اَلَآ اِنَّهُمْ يَثْنُوْنَ صُدُوْرَهُمْ
لِيَسْتَخْفُوْا مِنْهُ ؕ اَلَا حِيْنَ يَسْتَغْشُوْنَ ثِيَابَهُمْ ۙ يَعْلَمُ مَا يُسِرُّوْنَ وَ مَا
يُعْلِنُوْنَ ۚ اِنَّهٗ عَلِيْمٌۢ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُوْرِ ۟

وَ مَا مِنْ دَآبَّةٍ فِي الْاَرْضِ اِلَّا عَلَى اللّٰهِ رِزْقُهَا وَ يَعْلَمُ مُسْتَقَرَّهَا وَ الجزء ١٢

مُسْتَوْدَعَهَا ؕ كُلٌّ فِيْ كِتٰبٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ۟ وَ هُوَ الَّذِيْ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ
الْاَرْضَ فِيْ سِتَّةِ اَيَّامٍ وَّ كَانَ عَرْشُهٗ عَلَى الْمَآءِ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ اَيُّكُمْ اَحْسَنُ
عَمَلًا ؕ وَ لَئِنْ قُلْتَ اِنَّكُمْ مَّبْعُوْثُوْنَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ الْمَوْتِ لَيَقُوْلَنَّ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْٓا
اِنْ هٰذَآ اِلَّا سِحْرٌ مُّبِيْنٌ ۟ وَ لَئِنْ اَخَّرْنَا عَنْهُمُ الْعَذَابَ اِلٰٓى اُمَّةٍ
مَّعْدُوْدَةٍ لَّيَقُوْلُنَّ مَا يَحْبِسُهٗ ؕ اَلَا يَوْمَ يَاْتِيْهِمْ لَيْسَ مَصْرُوْفًا عَنْهُمْ وَ
حَاقَ بِهِمْ مَّا كَانُوْا بِهٖ يَسْتَهْزِءُوْنَ ۟ وَ لَئِنْ اَذَقْنَا الْاِنْسَانَ مِنَّا رَحْمَةً
ثُمَّ نَزَعْنٰهَا مِنْهُ اِنَّهٗ لَيَـُٔوْسٌ كَفُوْرٌ ۟ وَ لَئِنْ اَذَقْنٰهُ نَعْمَآءَ بَعْدَ ضَرَّآءَ
مَسَّتْهُ لَيَقُوْلَنَّ ذَهَبَ السَّيِّاٰتُ عَنِّيْ ؕ اِنَّهٗ لَفَرِحٌ فَخُوْرٌ ۟ اِلَّا الَّذِيْنَ
صَبَرُوْا وَ عَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ ؕ اُولٰٓئِكَ لَهُمْ مَّغْفِرَةٌ وَّ اَجْرٌ كَبِيْرٌ ۟ فَلَعَلَّكَ تَارِكٌ

XI

HŪD

هود

Verses: 123 *Revealed at Makkah*

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

Alif Lām Rā. It is an Edict[1] whose contents have been made firm and issued in detail[2] by the All-Wise and All-Aware: (it is this): "You should worship none but Allah—I am indeed a warner and also a bearer of good news from Him to you—And you should ask forgiveness of your Lord: then return to Him and He will provide you with good provisions of life till an appointed term.[3] And He will bestow His favours on everyone who deserves His favours.[4] But if you turn away I am afraid you shall meet with the torment of a dreadful day. To Allah you shall all return and He has power over everything." 1-4

Behold! They turn aside their chests in order to hide themselves from him.' Beware! Even when they cover themselves with clothes Allah knows alike what they conceal and what they show; indeed He knows even the secrets they conceal in their breasts. There is no moving creature on the earth whose sustenance does not depend on Allah: He knows its dwelling place and its repository.[6] Everything has been recorded in an open register. 5-6

And it is He Who created the heavens and the earth in six days—whereas before this His Throne rested upon water[7] so that He may test which of you does the best deeds.[8] Now O Muhammad, if you tell them "You will, O people, be raised again after death," those who disbelieve promptly exclaim, "This is plain sorcery!"[9] And if We defer their punishment to some definite and reckoned time, they say, "Well, what is it that is delaying this?" Listen! When the day of that punishment comes, no one shall be able to avert it from them, and that very thing which they are ridiculing shall encircle them on all sides. 7-8

If We show man Our mercy and then deprive him of it, he is filled with despair and shows ingratitude. And if after the adversity that had visited him, We bestow favours upon him, he says, "All my 9-11

sorrows have gone from me," and grows over-jubilant and arrogant.[10] Only those are free from this, who are steadast[11] and do good deeds: they are the ones who will have forgiveness and a rich reward.[12]

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1. The Arabic word كِتَاب *(kitāb)* has been translated into "Edict" because of the context. For its meaning is not confined to "book" or "something written" but it includes "command" and "sovereign decree" as well and has been used in several places in the Qur'ān in the same sense.

2. The contents of this "Edict" are firm, strong, and unchangeable: they are well-balanced and measured: there is no tinge of verbosity, pedantry, volubility, poetic fancy and rhetorical exaggeration. The truth has been stated accurately, and there is nothing more and nothing less than the truth. Moreover, the contents have been given in detail and everything has been made so clear and plain that there is neither confusion nor complication nor ambiguity in it.

3. The assurance that "He will provide you with good provisions of life..." has been given to remove the misunderstanding which Satan has imbued in the heart of every foolish worshipper of the world that piety ruins one's worldly life, though it might lead to one's success in the Hereafter. Allah has re-assured the true believers that He will shower His blessings on God-fearing people and they will live happy and peaceful lives and will be honoured and respected everywhere. The same thing has been stated in a different manner in XVI: 97: "Whoso will do good deeds, whether a man or a woman, provided the one is a believer, We will surely make such a one lead a pure and clean life in this world." Allah has refuted this theory of Satan and his disciples that piety inevitably brings poverty, distress and affliction and ignominy to the person who adopts truth, righteousness and virtue. He has assured that He will make the life of the one who will believe in Him and adopt a righteous life truly successful both in this world and in the Hereafter. And it is common experience that only those people enjoy real peace of mind and are honoured and respected who are God-fearing and possess a pure character; who are fair and generous in all their affairs and dealings and who are free from evil. For they are trusted by all and none fears any wrong or wickedness from them.

According to the Qur'ān, the provisions of life are either "good provisions" (مَتَاعٌ حَسَنٌ) or "deceptive provisions" (مَتَاعُ غُرُورٌ). Here those, who return to Allah, have been assured that they will be given "good provisions" of life and not "deceptive ones". The provisions are "good" if their recipient becomes even more grateful to Allah than before and uses these for fulfilling His rights and the rights of mankind and of his own self. Such "good provisions" make his life truly successful in this world and also in the Next World. On the

contrary, the provisions are "deceptive", if they become a temptation for the recipient, and get him involved in the worship of the things of this world more than before. Though "the deceptive provisions" might appear to be a blessing and a "favour", these are, in fact, a curse and means of some future torment.

4. This verse enunciates a fundamental Divine Principle. The higher a person rises in character and conduct, the higher is the rank he obtains in the sight of Allah. That is to say that Allah does not let go waste the good deed of anyone. He does neither appreciate any evil deed, nor detracts from any good deed. Everyone will be given the honour which he deserves for his deeds.

5. They were those people of Makkah, who though not very active in their antagonism against the Message of the Holy Prophet, nevertheless were very averse to it. Therefore they did not like to hear it nor come face to face with him, and did their very best to avoid him. If, by chance, they found him sitting somewhere and talking to the people, they would at once turn back on their heels. Or if they saw him coming towards themselves they would slink away or hide their faces with cloth for fear that he might address them and convey his Message to them. As they did not have the courage to face the Truth, they would bury their heads ostrich-like and make believe that the Reality from which they were hiding had disappeared, whereas it was all along there and watching their ridiculous attempts to hide from it.

6. That is, "It is foolish on your part to deceive yourselves that you can escape punishment by hiding yourselves from Allah Who has full and perfect knowledge of everything: Who knows the nest where the tiniest sparrow lives and the hole where the smallest insect resides, and provides their sustenance to them wherever they be: Who knows the dwelling place and the final resting place of every creature and gives life and death to them at the appointed time. Do you think that by hiding yourselves from His Messenger, you can also hide yourselves from the All-Knowing Sovereign Who has sent him? Do you think that Allah does not see His Messenger doing his very best to convey His Message to you and you are trying to turn a deaf ear to it?"

7. This is a parenthetical clause that has probably been inserted in answer to a question, which has not been cited: if the heavens and the earth were created afterwards in six days, what was there before their creation? The answer is: then there was water. It is not possible for us to say what exactly was the nature of that water. It might have been the common liquid known by that name. Or perhaps, the word "water" has been used as a symbol for the fluid state of the matter before it was changed to its present form. As regards "His Throne rested on water", I am of the opinion that it means: "His Kingdom was over water."

[Contd on p.330

بَعْضَ مَا يُوْحٰٓى اِلَيْكَ وَضَآئِقٌۢ بِهٖ صَدْرُكَ اَنْ يَّقُوْلُوْا لَوْلَآ اُنْزِلَ عَلَيْهِ
كَنْزٌ اَوْ جَآءَ مَعَهٗ مَلَكٌ ؕ اِنَّمَآ اَنْتَ نَذِيْرٌ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَّكِيْلٌ ﴿١٢﴾ اَمْ
يَقُوْلُوْنَ افْتَرٰىهُ ؕ قُلْ فَاْتُوْا بِعَشْرِ سُوَرٍ مِّثْلِهٖ مُفْتَرَيٰتٍ وَّادْعُوْا مَنِ
اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿١٣﴾ فَاِلَّمْ يَسْتَجِيْبُوْا لَكُمْ
فَاعْلَمُوْٓا اَنَّمَآ اُنْزِلَ بِعِلْمِ اللّٰهِ وَاَنْ لَّآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ ۚ فَهَلْ اَنْتُمْ مُّسْلِمُوْنَ ﴿١٤﴾ مَنْ
كَانَ يُرِيْدُ الْحَيٰوةَ الدُّنْيَا وَزِيْنَتَهَا نُوَفِّ اِلَيْهِمْ اَعْمَالَهُمْ فِيْهَا وَهُمْ فِيْهَا لَا
يُبْخَسُوْنَ ﴿١٥﴾ اُولٰٓئِكَ الَّذِيْنَ لَيْسَ لَهُمْ فِى الْاٰخِرَةِ اِلَّا النَّارُ ۖ وَحَبِطَ مَا صَنَعُوْا
فِيْهَا وَبٰطِلٌ مَّا كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿١٦﴾ اَفَمَنْ كَانَ عَلٰى بَيِّنَةٍ مِّنْ رَّبِّهٖ وَيَتْلُوْهُ شَاهِدٌ
مِّنْهُ وَمِنْ قَبْلِهٖ كِتٰبُ مُوْسٰٓى اِمَامًا وَّرَحْمَةً ؕ اُولٰٓئِكَ يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِهٖ ؕ وَمَنْ يَّكْفُرْ
بِهٖ مِنَ الْاَحْزَابِ فَالنَّارُ مَوْعِدُهٗ ۚ فَلَا تَكُ فِىْ مِرْيَةٍ مِّنْهُ ۚ اِنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَّبِّكَ وَ
لٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿١٧﴾ وَمَنْ اَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرٰى عَلَى اللّٰهِ كَذِبًا ؕ اُولٰٓئِكَ
يُعْرَضُوْنَ عَلٰى رَبِّهِمْ وَيَقُوْلُ الْاَشْهَادُ هٰٓؤُلَآءِ الَّذِيْنَ كَذَبُوْا عَلٰى رَبِّهِمْ ۚ اَلَا لَعْنَةُ
اللّٰهِ عَلَى الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿١٨﴾ الَّذِيْنَ يَصُدُّوْنَ عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ وَيَبْغُوْنَهَا عِوَجًا ؕ وَهُمْ
بِالْاٰخِرَةِ هُمْ كٰفِرُوْنَ ﴿١٩﴾ اُولٰٓئِكَ لَمْ يَكُوْنُوْا مُعْجِزِيْنَ فِى الْاَرْضِ وَمَا كَانَ لَهُمْ مِّنْ
دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ مِنْ اَوْلِيَآءَ ؕ يُضٰعَفُ لَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ ؕ مَا كَانُوْا يَسْتَطِيْعُوْنَ السَّمْعَ وَمَا
كَانُوْا يُبْصِرُوْنَ ﴿٢٠﴾ اُولٰٓئِكَ الَّذِيْنَ خَسِرُوْٓا اَنْفُسَهُمْ وَضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَّا كَانُوْا يَفْتَرُوْنَ ﴿٢١﴾
لَا جَرَمَ اَنَّهُمْ فِى الْاٰخِرَةِ هُمُ الْاَخْسَرُوْنَ ﴿٢٢﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ وَ
اَخْبَتُوْٓا اِلٰى رَبِّهِمْ ۙ اُولٰٓئِكَ اَصْحٰبُ الْجَنَّةِ ۚ هُمْ فِيْهَا خٰلِدُوْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾ مَثَلُ الْفَرِيْقَيْنِ
كَالْاَعْمٰى وَالْاَصَمِّ وَالْبَصِيْرِ وَالسَّمِيْعِ ؕ هَلْ يَسْتَوِيٰنِ مَثَلًا ؕ اَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَ

وقف لازم



So O Prophet, be on your guard lest you should omit (to recite) 12
some of the things which are being revealed to you and be not distressed at heart that they would say Why has no treasure been sent down to him?" Or "Why has no angel come with him?" You are only a warner and Allah has everything in His power and charge.[13]

Do they say, "He has invented the Book himself?" Say to them 13-14
"Very well, if it is so, bing ten fabricated Surāhs like this: and you may call to your assistance whomsoever (of your deities) you can except Allah, if you be right (in considering them your deities). Now if they (your deities) do not come to your help you should know that this Book has been revealed with Allah's knowledge and that there is no true deity other than Allah. Do you then surrender to this (which is the very Truth) ?"[14]

Those who desire this worldly life and its splendours[15] are given 15-16
the full reward of their works here and nothing is detracted from it. But there is nothing except the Fire[16] for them in the Next World. (There they shall come to know) that all that they did in this world had come to nought and whatever they did was useless and worthless.

In contrast (to the worshippers of the world) there was one who 17
had a clear evidence from his Lord;[17] then came a witness from Him (testifying that evidence [18]) and there existed before him the Book of Moses as a Guidance and a blessing: (can such a one also reject the Message? Nay,) such people will believe in it.[19] And whosoever of the peoples will reject it he shall have that promised abode which is Hell. So O Prophet have no doubt at all about this: for this is indeed the Truth from your Lord though most people do not believe in it.

And who can be more unjust than the one who ascribes false 18-24
things to Allah?[20] Such persons shall be brought before their Lord and the witnesses will say "These are the people who ascribed false things to their Lord." Beware! Allah's curse rests upon the unjust people[21]—on those unjust people[22] who debar others from Allah's Way and seek to make it crooked;[23] and who disbelieve in the Hereafter. They were unable to frustrate Allah on the earth,[24] nor had they protectors to defend them against Allah. Now they shall be given double chastisement:[25] for they would neither listen to others nor see the Truth for themselves. These are the people who brought about their own loss

and all that they had invented vanished from them.[26] No doubt they shall be the greatest losers in the Hereafter. As regards those who believed and did righteous works and dedicated themselves exclusively to their Lord most surely they shall be the dwellers of Paradise and shall abide there for ever.[27] These two groups may be likened to two men, one of whom is blind and deaf, and the other can see and hear. Can they be alike and equal ?[28] Do you not learn a lesson (from this example) ?

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8. This enunciates the purpose of the Creation: Allah created the heavens and the earth for the sake of the creation of mankind and He created mankind to test human beings by delegating to them the powers of vicegerency and making them morally responsible for using or abusing them, just as they liked. Thus it has been emphasized that the sole purpose of the Creation is the moral trial of man and his consequent accountability to the Creator for the use or abuse of the delegated powers, and the award of rewards and punishments. For without this basic purpose, the whole work of Creation would have become meaningless and useless.

9. That is, "The disbelievers very foolishly considered the purpose of the Creation to be no more than a pastime in which they themselves were mere playthings. They were so absorbed in their foolish conception that when the Holy Prophet told them what the real purpose of Creation was and what part they were required to play in it, they would scoff at him, saying, "Your Message is like a piece of sorcery and beyond our understanding."

10. This disgraceful characteristic of man has been mentioned here because the disbelievers were exhibiting it at that time. When the Holy Prophet warned them of the consequences of their disobedience to Allah, they would scoff at him as if to say, "Are you mad? Can't you see our prosperity and power? We are enjoying all the good things of life and dominating over everything and everyone all around us. How is it that you are prophesying torment for us?"

The above-mentioned arrogant behaviour was due to the disgraceful human characteristic which has been mentioned in this verse. It is this: Man is, by nature, shallow and superficial and lacks the depth of thought. Therefore, when he enjoys prosperity and power he becomes joyous, arrogant and boastful; so much so that he never even dreams of any possibility that his happy condition would ever come to an end. And if and when adversity befalls him, he becomes an embodiment of despair and begins to complain of his misfortune here, there, and everywhere; so much so that he does not hesitate even to abuse God and taunt at His Godhead. But whenever there is a change for the better in his fortune, he

again begins to brag of his foresight, wisdom and success. That is why the disbelievers were exhibiting such a shallow and superficial characteristic in answer to the warning of the Holy Prophet. They forgot that Allah was deferring their punishment because of His mercy to give them sufficient time to consider well their absurd attitude and mend their ways during the respite given to them, and not to delude themselves by imagining that their prosperity had very deep foundations and would last for ever.

11. Here صَبْر (*sabr*) (fortitude) implies another meaning also, that is, "steadfastness" the antonym of shallowness etc. etc., that has been mentioned in the preceding verse. Those "who are steadfast" remain firm and unwavering in their purpose in spite of the vicissitudes of life. They are not influenced by the changes of circumstances, but stick to the right, reasonable and correct attitudes they have adopted. They do not give themselves airs nor become intoxicated nor over-jubilant and boastful, if they win power, prosperity and name. On the contrary, they are neither subdued nor depressed if they are visited by adversity. In short, they come out successful in their trial by Allah, whether it be in the shape of favour or adversity and remain steadfast in both the cases.

12. This is the favour that Allah shows to such people; He forgives their shortcomings and gives them rich rewards for their good deeds.

13. In this verse, Allah has comforted and urged His Messenger to propagate the Message without the least hesitation and not to waver in his determination for fear of ridicule or for lack of response from his people. He should convey the Message in its entirety and leave the result to Allah for He has full power over everything. In order to grasp its full significance, we should keep in view the circumstances that necessitated it.

At the time of this Revelation, the Quraish were the most powerful and influential of all the clans. As they were the guardians of the Ka'abah (Makkah), the religious centre of the Arabs, they enjoyed religious, economic, and political superiority over the whole of Arabia. Thus it was quite natural that they should resent and oppose that Message which proclaimed, "The religion of which you are the leaders is absolutely false, and the system of life you are following is rotten to the core. As you are rejecting the Message, torment of Allah is threatening you. The only way of escape from it is that you should accept the Right Way and the righteous system of life I have brought from Allah." Obviously this Message struck a hard blow at their "superiority" and therefore they were averse to it from the very beginning.

The second reason why they did not accept it was that the Messenger possessed nothing extraordinary to convince the people of his Prophethood except

his pure character and his rational, and understandable Message. Then for the Quraish, there was nothing to warrant a torment from Allah except the rotten condition of their religion, morality and culture. On the contrary, there was "prosperity" to delude them that that was a sure sign of the favours of Allah and of their "gods" and "goddesses", which was a clear proof that the ways they were following were the "right" ways. The inevitable result was that only a small minority of those people, who had sound minds and hearts, accepted the Message and the remaining large majority became hostile to it. Then some of them tried to suppress the Message by persecutions and some did their worst to defame it by false accusations and frivolous objections and others resorted to calculated indifference to discourage it. There were still others who adopted an attitude of ridicule, derision, taunt and mockery in order to make light of it.

The above condition went on for many years and was liable to fill one with despair and discouragement. Therefore the Sovereign reassured His Messenger, as if to say, "We disapprove of these shallow, superficial and mean people, who are trying to make your mission a failure by their prejudice, indifference, ridicule, mockery and frivolous objections. You should go on following the Right Way with perseverance and courage: you should go on proclaiming the Truth that has been revealed to you without the least hesitation: you should never be afraid of propagating the Message for fear of ridicule or indifference: you should go on inculcating the Truth in its entirety whether anyone accepts it or rejects it for it is Allah Who has everything in His power and charge and He alone affords guidance to everyone He considers fit for it."

14. Here one and the same argument has been advanced to prove two things. First, the Qur'ān has been revealed by Allah. Secondly, it proves the truth of the doctrine of *Tauhid*. The argument is this:

(1) "You say that the Qur'ān has not been revealed by Allah but has been devised and invented by myself and ascribed to Him. If your claim had been genuine you would have been able to invent a book like this in answer to the challenge I have given you over and over again. As you have failed to do so even with your combined resources and forces, my claim that it has been revealed with Allah's knowledge has been proved absolutely, fully and completely."

(2) "Then there was a two-fold challenge from the Qur'ān to your deities but they utterly failed to meet it. They were challenged to come to your aid and help produce a book like the Qur'ān. As they have not helped you, it is a clear proof that they are absolutely powerless and have no share at all in Godhead. You have seen that they have not only failed in this decisive test, but have also proved to be impotent to defend themselves against the open attacks made on them in this Book, which asks the people not to

worship them for they have no share in the powers of Godhead. These things have proved that there is nothing Divine in them and you have made them your deities without rhyme or reason".

Incidentally, this verse shows that chronologically this Sūrah was revealed earlier than Sūrah Yūnus. For at first they were challenged in this Sūrah to bring ten Sūrahs like the Sūrahs of the Qur'ān, but they failed to do so. Then in Sūrah Yūnus they were challenged (*v.* 38) to bring even one Sūrah like this. (X: 38 and E.N. 46).

15. This general statement has been made in continuation of the theme of the preceding verses, to refute the false excuses of the disbelievers mentioned therein for rejecting the Message of the Qur'ān. This verse says that in general those people who rejected the Qur'ān then (and are rejecting it now) were the worshippers of this world and its pleasures. As the root cause of their rejection was (and is) this false creed that there is nothing more valuable than the pleasures of this world and its material gains, there should be no restrictions (like the ones imposed in the Qur'ān) on their acquisition. They first made this choice, and afterwards invented arguments (like the ones mentioned in the Qur'ān) to deceive their own minds and those of others.

16. This is a clear and stern warning to the worshippers of the world. They should know that they will get the full reward for the exertions (whatever they be) they put forth in order to acquire the worldly gains but they should note it well that they would get nothing in the Next World. As they confined their efforts to the benefits of this world, and did nothing to earn the benefits of the Next World, they should expect nothing for the deeds they have done for the material gains of this world. In order to illustrate this, let us take the case of a person who desires to build a palace for himself in this world and adopts all those devices, measures and means which help build such a palace. Most surely, he will succeed in building a grand palace, for no brick will refuse to stick to its place simply because he was an unbeliever. But it is equally obvious that he shall have to leave behind in this world that grand palace along with all its furnishings as soon as he breathes his last breath. For there is no reason why the palace he had built (or done anything else) for this world, should be credited to him in the Next World, if he had done nothing to provide himself with a palace in the Next World. For only those who provide for themselves with the necessary material for a palace in the Next World in accordance with the Divine Law, deserve to get a palace there.

Now a question arises in regard to the logical conclusion of this argument, according to which he should not get a palace in the Next World. It is this: "Well, he may not get a palace, but why should he be thrown into the Fire of Hell? The

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لَقَدْ اَرْسَلْنَا نُوْحًا اِلٰى قَوْمِهٖٓ اِنِّيْ لَكُمْ نَذِيْرٌ مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿٢٥﴾ اَنْ لَّا تَعْبُدُوْٓا اِلَّا اللّٰهَ ۭ اِنِّيْٓ
اَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ اَلِيْمٍ ﴿٢٦﴾ فَقَالَ الْمَلَاُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا مِنْ قَوْمِهٖ مَا نَرٰىكَ اِلَّا
بَشَرًا مِّثْلَنَا وَمَا نَرٰىكَ اتَّبَعَكَ اِلَّا الَّذِيْنَ هُمْ اَرَاذِلُنَا بَادِيَ الرَّاْيِ ۚ وَمَا نَرٰى
لَكُمْ عَلَيْنَا مِنْ فَضْلٍۭ بَلْ نَظُنُّكُمْ كٰذِبِيْنَ ﴿٢٧﴾ قَالَ يٰقَوْمِ اَرَءَيْتُمْ اِنْ كُنْتُ عَلٰي بَيِّنَةٍ
مِّنْ رَّبِّيْ وَاٰتٰىنِيْ رَحْمَةً مِّنْ عِنْدِهٖ فَعُمِّيَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ ۭ اَنُلْزِمُكُمُوْهَا وَاَنْتُمْ لَهَا
كٰرِهُوْنَ ﴿٢٨﴾ وَيٰقَوْمِ لَآ اَسْـَٔـلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مَالًا ۭ اِنْ اَجْرِيَ اِلَّا عَلَي اللّٰهِ وَمَآ اَنَا بِطَارِدِ
الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا ۭ اِنَّهُمْ مُّلٰقُوْا رَبِّهِمْ وَلٰكِنِّيْٓ اَرٰىكُمْ قَوْمًا تَجْهَلُوْنَ ﴿٢٩﴾ وَيٰقَوْمِ مَنْ
يَّنْصُرُنِيْ مِنَ اللّٰهِ اِنْ طَرَدْتُّهُمْ ۭ اَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٣٠﴾ وَلَآ اَقُوْلُ لَكُمْ عِنْدِيْ
خَزَاۗىِٕنُ اللّٰهِ وَلَآ اَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبَ وَلَآ اَقُوْلُ اِنِّيْ مَلَكٌ وَّلَآ اَقُوْلُ لِلَّذِيْنَ تَزْدَرِيْٓ
اَعْيُنُكُمْ لَنْ يُّؤْتِيَهُمُ اللّٰهُ خَيْرًا ۭ اَللّٰهُ اَعْلَمُ بِمَا فِيْٓ اَنْفُسِهِمْ ۚ اِنِّيْٓ اِذًا لَّمِنَ
الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٣١﴾ قَالُوْا يٰنُوْحُ قَدْ جٰدَلْتَنَا فَاَكْثَرْتَ جِدَالَنَا فَاْتِنَا بِمَا تَعِدُنَآ اِنْ
كُنْتَ مِنَ الصّٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿٣٢﴾ قَالَ اِنَّمَا يَاْتِيْكُمْ بِهِ اللّٰهُ اِنْ شَاۗءَ وَمَآ اَنْتُمْ
بِمُعْجِزِيْنَ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَلَا يَنْفَعُكُمْ نُصْحِيْٓ اِنْ اَرَدْتُّ اَنْ اَنْصَحَ لَكُمْ اِنْ كَانَ اللّٰهُ
يُرِيْدُ اَنْ يُّغْوِيَكُمْ ۭ هُوَ رَبُّكُمْ ۣ وَاِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُوْنَ ﴿٣٤﴾ اَمْ يَقُوْلُوْنَ افْتَرٰىهُ ۭ قُلْ
اِنِ افْتَرَيْتُهٗ فَعَلَيَّ اِجْرَامِيْ وَاَنَا بَرِيْۗءٌ مِّمَّا تُجْرِمُوْنَ ﴿٣٥﴾ وَاُوْحِيَ اِلٰى نُوْحٍ اَنَّهٗ
لَنْ يُّؤْمِنَ مِنْ قَوْمِكَ اِلَّا مَنْ قَدْ اٰمَنَ فَلَا تَبْتَىِٕسْ بِمَا كَانُوْا يَفْعَلُوْنَ ﴿٣٦﴾
وَاصْنَعِ الْفُلْكَ بِاَعْيُنِنَا وَوَحْيِنَا وَلَا تُخَاطِبْنِيْ فِي الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا ۚ اِنَّهُمْ
مُّغْرَقُوْنَ ﴿٣٧﴾ وَيَصْنَعُ الْفُلْكَ ۤ وَكُلَّمَا مَرَّ عَلَيْهِ مَلَاٌ مِّنْ قَوْمِهٖ سَخِرُوْا مِنْهُ ۭ
قَالَ اِنْ تَسْخَرُوْا مِنَّا فَاِنَّا نَسْخَرُ مِنْكُمْ كَمَا تَسْخَرُوْنَ ﴿٣٨﴾ فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُوْنَ ۙ مَنْ

And (such was the state of affairs when) We had sent Noah to his people.[29] (He said,) "I warn you plainly not to worship anyone but Allah: otherwise I am afraid that a fearful torment shall visit you one day."[30] In answer to this, those chiefs of his people, who had rejected his Message, said, "We see that you are no more than a mere man like ourselves,[31] and we also see that only the meanest from among us have become your followers without due consideration,[32] and we find nothing in you that might give you superiority over us.[33] Nay, we consider you to be liars." He replied, "O my people, just consider it yourselves: If my Lord had sent a clear Sign to me and then bestowed His special blessing on me,[34] but you did not see it, how can we compel you to accept that, when you are averse to it ? O my people, I do not ask of you any wealth for this work:[35] for I look only to Allah for its reward. And I am not going to drive away those who have believed in me. Indeed they are going to meet their Lord,[36] (Who knows their worth). But I see that you are adopting the attitude of ignorance. And, O my people, who will help save me from Allah, if I drive them away? Don't you understand this simple thing? And I do not say to you that I possess treasures from Allah: nor do I say that I have the knowledge of the unseen: nor do I claim to be an angel:[37] nor can I say about those whom you disdain, 'Allah has not bestowed on them any good'. Allah knows best what is in their minds: for I shall be unjust, if I utter anything like this." 25-31

At last those people said, "O Noah, you have already argued with us and argued too much. Now you bring down on us that scourge with which you threaten us, if what you say be true." Noah replied, "Allah will bring down that on you if He will and you have no power to frustrate it. Now, even if I wished to do you some good it cannot profit you even if I wanted to be your well wisher, when Allah has decided that you should go astray:[38] He is your Lord and to Him you shall return." 32-34

O Muhammad! do they say, "He himself has forged all this?" Say to them, "If I have forged this myself, I shall bear all its consequences, and I am clear of the crime you are committing."[39] 35

And it was revealed to Noah: "No more of your people will believe in you now than those who have already believed. So do not 36-39

grieve at their misdeeds, but start to build an Ark under Our supervision in accordance with Our Revelation. And beware that you do not plead with Me for those who had been unjust: indeed now they shall all be drowned."[40] So he began to build the Ark. And whoso of the chiefs of his people passed by him, he jeered at him. Noah said, "Laugh at us, if you will; we, too, are laughing at you; for soon you shall come to know who is visited by the torment that will disgrace him, and who is afflicted with the inevitable and lasting calamity."[41]

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answer is this (and the Qur'ān itself has given this same answer in different places) that the one who exerts and works only for a palace in this world in utter disregard of the Hereafter, naturally and inevitably adopts such measures and means as help build a large Fire for himself in the Hell. (Please refer to E.N. 12 of YŪNUS.)

17. This was the one who believed in the open evidence he got from his own self, from the structure of the heavens and the earth, from the system of the Universe that there must be One, and only One Creator, Owner, Providence, Sovereign and Ruler of this world. Then these things which had already been confirmed by his heart, led him naturally to the belief that after this life of the world, there should be another life wherein man should render an account of this life to his Lord and be rewarded or punished according to what one did in this life.

18. That witness was the Qur'ān which testified to the natural and rational evidence one had received from one's inner self and surroundings.

19. The preceding verses (12-16) dealt with the worshippers of the world who rejected the Message of the Qur'ān on one pretext or the other. This verse contrasts them with the one who saw the clear evidence of One Allah and of the Hereafter in his own existence and in the whole system of the Universe and found that the same evidence was testified by the Qur'ān and by the Book of Moses that had been sent before him. That is why such people cannot shut their eyes and minds against the strong evidences they see all around them, and believe in the Message.

Incidentally, this verse makes it clear that before the revelation of the Holy Qur'ān, the Holy Prophet had gained the knowledge and belief of the "Unseen" like Prophet Abraham (*vi:* 75 79) by observation and deep contemplation of the phenomena of Nature. Then the Qur'ān not only confirmed and testified it, but also directly imparted the knowledge of the Reality to him.

20. The false things which unjust people ascribed to Allah were such as these: "There are other partners with Allah in His Godhead, rights and worship. Or He has nothing to do with the guidance or deviation of His servants, and has sent no Messenger, no Prophet and no Book for their guidance but has left people free to adopt any way of life they like. Or God has created mankind for mere fun and will not call them to account for what they did in this world. Or there is no reward or punishment in the Hereafter."

21. This will happen in the Next World.

22. This is a parenthetical clause that has been inserted to point out some of the characteristics of the unjust people that make them accursed.

23. That is, "They do not like to follow the Right Way and wish that it should become crooked so as to suit their desires, lusts, prejudices, superstitions and caprices." (See X: 15)

24. This declaration (vv. 20-23) will be made in the Hereafter.

25. They shall be given double chastisement, because they themselves deviated from the Way and made others deviate from it and left the heritage of deviation for the coming generations. (Please refer to E.N. 30 of *Al-A'Arāf*.)

26. The things they have invented and which proved to be baseless were their theories about God, the Universe and their own life and the confidence, reliance and trust they had imposed in their deities, guardians, intercedes and recommenders, and the conjectures they had made about the Life-after-death. All these things turned out to be absolutely false.

27. Here the declaration that began from v. 20 comes to an end.

28. The answer to this question is contained in the question itself. It is obvious that the one who does not see the way, nor listens to the one who is able to show him the way, will most surely stumble over a stone or obstacle and meet with a fearful accident. On the other hand, the one who himself sees the way and makes use of the guidance of the one who knows the way, will most surely reach his destination in perfect safety. This is exactly the difference between those who observe keenly the signs of the Reality in the Universe and listen to the Message of the Prophets appointed by Allah and those who neither observe the Signs of God nor listen to the Messengers. Obviously neither can their behaviours and conducts be alike here nor shall their ultimate ends be equal and the same.

29. E.N.'s 47-50 of *Al-A'arāf* should be kept in view.

30. This is the same thing that has been put into the mouth of Muhammad (God's peace be upon him) in vv. 2-3.

31. The same foolish objection was being raised by the people of Makkah against the Holy Prophet. They argued like this: "You are a man like ourselves: you eat and drink, walk and sleep and have a family like us, and there is nothing in you that might show that you have been sent by God." (See E.N. 11 of XXXVI).

32. The "big" people of Makkah passed the same remarks about those who followed the Holy Prophet. They taunted him with things like these: "Your followers consist of mere inexperienced boys or slaves or the lowest strata of society, in short, of such people as are credulous and lack commonsense and wisdom." (Please refer to E.N.'s 34-37 of *Al-An'ām* and E.N. 75 of *Yūnus*).

33. This is to say, "You claim that you are the favoured ones of God Whose blessings are on you, and that those who do not follow your way are under His wrath. But the reverse of this is true for it is we who have been favoured with wealth, servants and power and you possess nothing of the sort. Please point out anything in which you are superior to us."

34. This is the same thing that has been put into the mouth of the Holy Prophet in v. 17. That is, "At first I recognized the reality of *Tauhīd* by observing keenly the Signs of God in the universe, and in my own self. Then the same was confirmed by Revelation to me". This shows that all the Prophets acquired the knowledge of the "Unseen" by observation and contemplation. Then Allah blessed them with the actual knowledge of the same at the time of their appointment as Prophets.

35. This was to bring home to them the fact that he had no selfish motive in the performance of his mission, as if to say, "I am conveying the admonition to you without any demand or hope or expectation of worldly gains. Nay, I am bearing all the sufferings in the hope that you may at last realize that I have no axe to grind. And you cannot point out anything to show that I have any personal or selfish interest before me in the mission of the Message". (See. E.N. 70 of XXIII, E.N. 17 of XXXVI and E.N. 41 of XLII).

36. That is, "Their true worth will be known only when they shall meet their Lord. Therefore it is not proper for you to treat them with contempt here in this world. Maybe they are precious stones—their Lord alone knows—and you are treating them as mere worthless stones". (See VI: 52, XVIII: 28).

37. This is the answer to their objection that he was no more than a man like themselves. Prophet Noah admitted this: "In fact I am a man and I never claimed to be more than this. My only claim is that God has shown me the Right Way of knowledge and action and you are welcome to test this in any way you like. But instead of this, you are asking me questions about the "Unseen", though

I never claimed to have its knowledge. You ask me to produce such things as can be produced only by that person who possesses God's treasures and I never claimed to possess them. You object that my physical life is like that of other men, though I never claimed that I was an angel and not a man. The true test of my claim is that you should ask me about the true creeds, the principles of morality and culture and not about frivolous things about the future events for I never claimed to possess their knowledge."

38. That is, "All my efforts to do good to you cannot prove effective, if Allah has decided to withhold the right way from you because of your obduracy in evil and the lack of interest in good ways. For Allah lets people go astray on the way they choose for themselves."

39. The wording of the verse shows that during the recital of the story of Prophet Noah, the opponents of the Holy Prophet might have felt that he himself had invented that story in order to hit them hard indirectly. So they might have interrupted him, saying, "You are inventing such stories as these in order to apply these to us and hit us hard indirectly." That is why the narration of the story has been broken to answer their false accusation.

And the fact is that the mean people always behave like this: As they have no interest in goodness, they would turn to the dark side of everything. Even if one gives them wise counsel or teaches them a useful lesson or warns them of an error, they would never benefit from these nor mend their ways. Instead of this, they would search out for that aspect of the matter which will not only undo the wisdom and goodness of the counsel but also bring an accusation against the admonisher. It is obvious that in this way, even the best of counsels can be made void and ineffective, if the hearer dubs that as a "hit," and takes it ill as an affront. Moreover, their thinking is always based on suspicion and mistrust. Supposing there is a certain story which appears to be true. A wise man will take it as a fact and learn a lesson from it, even if it applies exactly to his own condition and points out his error. On the contrary, a suspicious and crooked man will at once jump to the conclusion without any proof at all that the story had been invented for the sole purpose of applying it to him in order to hit him hard.

The same was the condition of those who accused the Holy Prophet that he himself had forged the story and ascribed it to Allah to make it more effective. Allah has asked him to say to them, "If I have forged the story, I shall have to bear its consequences, but this cannot lessen the punishments of the crimes you are committing for which you alone will be held responsible."

40. This verse lays down the limits of the Divine Law of respite. When

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يَّاْتِيْهِ عَذَابٌ يُّخْزِيْهِ وَيَحِلُّ عَلَيْهِ عَذَابٌ مُّقِيْمٌ ﴿٣٩﴾ حَتّٰٓى اِذَا جَآءَ اَمْرُنَا وَ
فَارَ التَّنُّوْرُ ۙ قُلْنَا احْمِلْ فِيْهَا مِنْ كُلٍّ زَوْجَيْنِ اثْنَيْنِ وَاَهْلَكَ اِلَّا مَنْ سَبَقَ
عَلَيْهِ الْقَوْلُ وَمَنْ اٰمَنَ ۭ وَمَآ اٰمَنَ مَعَهٗٓ اِلَّا قَلِيْلٌ ﴿٤٠﴾ وَقَالَ ارْكَبُوْا فِيْهَا
بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ مَجْرٖىهَا وَمُرْسٰىهَا ۭ اِنَّ رَبِّيْ لَغَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿٤١﴾ وَهِيَ تَجْرِيْ بِهِمْ فِيْ
مَوْجٍ كَالْجِبَالِ ۡ وَنَادٰى نُوْحُ ابْنَهٗ وَكَانَ فِيْ مَعْزِلٍ يّٰبُنَيَّ ارْكَبْ مَّعَنَا وَلَا
تَكُنْ مَّعَ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿٤٢﴾ قَالَ سَاٰوِيْٓ اِلٰى جَبَلٍ يَّعْصِمُنِيْ مِنَ الْمَاۗءِ ۭ قَالَ لَا عَاصِمَ
الْيَوْمَ مِنْ اَمْرِ اللّٰهِ اِلَّا مَنْ رَّحِمَ ۚ وَحَالَ بَيْنَهُمَا الْمَوْجُ فَكَانَ مِنَ الْمُغْرَقِيْنَ ﴿٤٣﴾
وَقِيْلَ يٰٓاَرْضُ ابْلَعِيْ مَاۗءَكِ وَيٰسَمَاۗءُ اَقْلِعِيْ وَغِيْضَ الْمَاۗءُ وَقُضِيَ الْاَمْرُ وَ
اسْتَوَتْ عَلَي الْجُوْدِيِّ وَقِيْلَ بُعْدًا لِّلْقَوْمِ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٤٤﴾ وَنَادٰى نُوْحٌ رَّبَّهٗ فَقَالَ
رَبِّ اِنَّ ابْنِيْ مِنْ اَهْلِيْ وَاِنَّ وَعْدَكَ الْحَقُّ وَاَنْتَ اَحْكَمُ الْحٰكِمِيْنَ ﴿٤٥﴾ قَالَ
يٰنُوْحُ اِنَّهٗ لَيْسَ مِنْ اَهْلِكَ ۚ اِنَّهٗ عَمَلٌ غَيْرُ صَالِحٍ ۡ فَلَا تَسْـَٔلْنِ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ
بِهٖ عِلْمٌ ۭ اِنِّىْٓ اَعِظُكَ اَنْ تَكُوْنَ مِنَ الْجٰهِلِيْنَ ﴿٤٦﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ اِنِّىْٓ اَعُوْذُ بِكَ اَنْ
اَسْـَٔلَكَ مَا لَيْسَ لِيْ بِهٖ عِلْمٌ ۭ وَاِلَّا تَغْفِرْ لِيْ وَتَرْحَمْنِيْٓ اَكُنْ مِّنَ الْخٰسِرِيْنَ ﴿٤٧﴾
قِيْلَ يٰنُوْحُ اهْبِطْ بِسَلٰمٍ مِّنَّا وَبَرَكٰتٍ عَلَيْكَ وَعَلٰٓى اُمَمٍ مِّمَّنْ مَّعَكَ ۭ وَاُمَمٌ
سَنُمَتِّعُهُمْ ثُمَّ يَمَسُّهُمْ مِّنَّا عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ ﴿٤٨﴾ تِلْكَ مِنْ اَنْۢبَاۗءِ الْغَيْبِ نُوْحِيْهَآ اِلَيْكَ ۚ
مَا كُنْتَ تَعْلَمُهَآ اَنْتَ وَلَا قَوْمُكَ مِنْ قَبْلِ هٰذَا ۛ فَاصْبِرْ ۭ اِنَّ الْعَاقِبَةَ لِلْمُتَّقِيْنَ ﴿٤٩﴾
وَاِلٰى عَادٍ اَخَاهُمْ هُوْدًا ۭ قَالَ يٰقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللّٰهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ اِلٰهٍ غَيْرُهٗ ۭ اِنْ اَنْتُمْ
اِلَّا مُفْتَرُوْنَ ﴿٥٠﴾ يٰقَوْمِ لَآ اَسْـَٔلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ اَجْرًا ۭ اِنْ اَجْرِيَ اِلَّا عَلَي الَّذِيْ فَطَرَنِيْ ۭ
اَفَلَا تَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿٥١﴾ وَيٰقَوْمِ اسْتَغْفِرُوْا رَبَّكُمْ ثُمَّ تُوْبُوْٓا اِلَيْهِ يُرْسِلِ السَّمَاۗءَ عَلَيْكُمْ

Thus was it until Our Command came to pass and *At-Tannūr*[42] began to boil up. Then We said, "Take into the Ark a pair from every species, and embark your own people —save those who have already been specifically marked[43]— and also those who have believed;[44] and those who had believed with Noah were only a few. Noah said, "Embark in the Ark: in the name of Allah will it move and cast anchor. Surely my Lord is very Forgiving and Compassionate."[45] 40-41

As the Ark was moving on with them amid waves like mountains, Noah cried out to his son, who was at a distance, "My son! Embark with us and be not with the unbelievers." He answered, "I am going to climb up a mountain that will protect me from waters." Noah said, "Today there is nothing to protect from Allah's judgement except that He Himself should take pity on anyone." In the meantime a wave came between them and he was among the drowned. 2-43

It was commanded, "O Earth! Swallow up thy waters, and O Sky, cease thy rain!" Accordingly the waters sank into the Earth. The decree was carried out; and the Ark rested upon Mount *Jūdi*.[46] And it was proclaimed: "Gone are the workers of iniquity!" 44

Noah called out to his Lord, saying, "My Lord! My son is of my family, and Thy promise is surely true[47] and Thou art the greatest and the best of all rulers."[48] In answer it was said, "O Noah! He is not of your family; he has turned out to be a worthless act.[49] So do not ask Me anything of which you have no knowledge. I admonish you that you should not behave like ignorant people."[50] Noah meekly replied, "My Lord, I seek Thy protection lest I should ask of Thee anything of which I have no knowledge. For if Thou forgivest me not for my presumption, and hast not mercy on me, I shall be totally ruined."[51] 45-47

It was said, "O Noah, go down:[52] Peace and blessings from Us are on you and on the communities that are with you. But there are other communities, whom We shall give the provisions of life for some time: then a painful torment from Us shall visit them." 48

O Muhammad! These are some of the tidings of the "Unseen" which We are revealing to you. You did not know these before this nor did your people. So practise fortitude, for ultimately, the God-fearing people shall come out successful.[53] 49

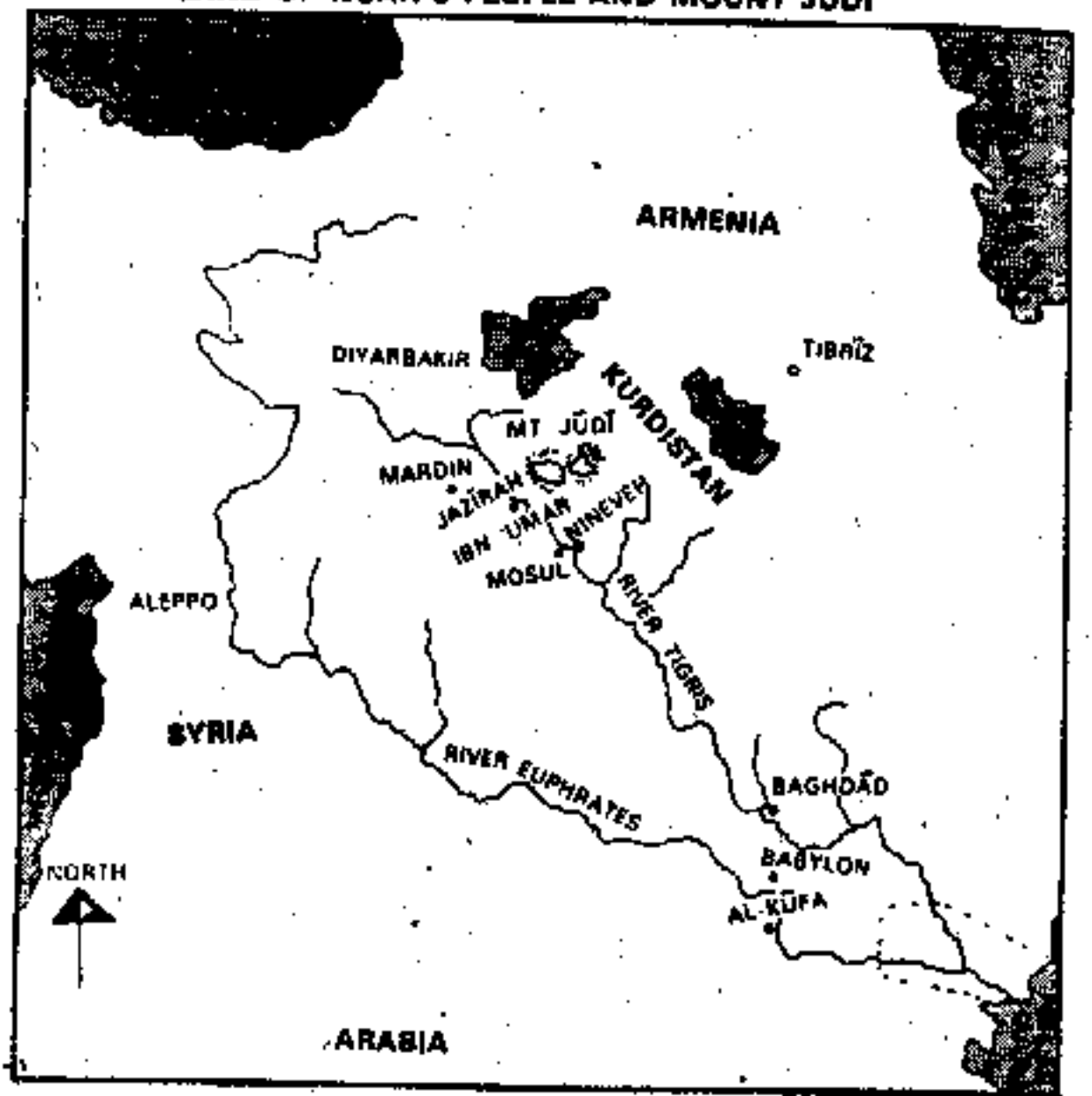
0-52 And to 'Ād We sent their brother Hūd;[54] he said, "O my people! Serve Allah: you have no god other than He: it is nothing but falsehood that you have forged.[55] O brethren! I do not ask of you any recompense for this service: my recompense is with Him who has created me. Do you not then use your common-sense?[56] And O my people, beg forgiveness of your Lord; then turn to him in repentance, and He will open the gates of the heavens for you and add more strength to your present strength.[57] Do not turn away as guilty people."

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the Message of a Prophet has been conveyed to a people and is rejected, they are granted respite from punishment only as long as there is the possibility that some of them might accept it. But when there remains no such possibility and there is left nothing but evil element among them, Allah does not grant them any further respite. And this is a manifestation of His mercy, just as for the safety of the good fruit the rotten ones should be thrown away and discarded. Conversely, it shall be an act of cruelty to the good people and the future generations, if pity is shown to those wicked people who are incorrigible.

41. This is a very appropriate example of the points of view of those who look merely at the surface of things and of others who know the reality about them. It appears that when Prophet Noah was building the Ark on the land, it looked to be a ridiculous act to those wicked people who did not believe in him. They jeered at him as if to say, "Just see the madness of the old man ! He wishes to float a ship on the land !" For they could never imagine that after a few days, a ship would actually float there. Therefore naturally they regarded that act of Prophet Noah to be a clear proof of his madness. Probably they might be pointing their fingers at him and the Ark he was constructing, saying to one another, "Have you any doubt now, if you had any before, that he is really a mad man, who is constructing a ship to float on the waterless land?" But the one, who had the knowledge of the reality and who knew that a ship would actually be needed there in the near future, was laughing at their ignorance and lack of knowledge of the real matter and their arrogant self-satisfaction, as if to say, "How foolish these people are! The catastrophe is threatening them overhead but they are not only self-satisfied but also regard me mad, who has warned them of it and who is himself making preparations to meet it." And these are exactly the two ways, in general, of judging the wisdom or folly of things. One man judges an act to be wise by looking merely at the surface, while the other goes down deep into it and knows it to be foolish. Likewise the former considers an act to be foolish and mad while the latter who has the real knowledge of the matter, knows that it is based

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on wisdom and foresight, and is the very same thing that was required under the circumstances.

42. Different interpretations have been given of this, but we are of the opinion that the correct one is the one that is based on the plain words of the Text. The Deluge started from *At-Tannūr*, a particular oven from under which water began to boil up. At the same time heavy rain began to fall and springs began to gush up water from many places in the earth. This is given in detail in vv. 11-12 of Sūrah Al-Qamar: "We opened the gates of the sky from which it began to rain heavily and constantly, and We tore open the earth and springs began to gush forth water from every side: Thus the two kinds of water gathered together to fulfil the destined doom."

In this connection, it should also be noted that the prefix اَلْ *(al-)* (the) before تَنُّوْر *(tannūr)*, oven, shows that a particular oven had been specifically marked by God for the purpose of starting the Deluge. This began to boil up water as soon as it was commanded to do so, and afterwards it began to be called اَلتَّنُّوْر (The Oven). It has been explicitly stated in v. 7 of XXIII that the said *Tannūr* was specified before hand.

43. That is, "Don't embark in the Ark those who had specifically been marked as unbelievers from your household, for they do not deserve to be shown Our Compassion. Most probably they were two persons. One was his son who was drowned (v. 43), and the other was his wife: (LXVI: 10). And if there were any others, they have not been mentioned in the Qur'ān.

44. Incidentally, this refutes the theory of the historians and genealogists who trace the genealogy of the whole human race to the three sons of Prophet Noah. This wrong theory became prevalent because of the stories in the Bible that none other than Prophet Noah, his three sons and his wife were rescued from the deluge. (Genesis 6: 18, 7: 7, 9, and 9: 19). But the Qur'ān contradicts this in many places, saying that besides the people of his own household, some other people of his community, though small in number, were also rescued along with him. Moreover, the Qur'ān declares that the generations which came after Prophet Noah were his descendants and of all those people who were rescued in the Ark: "You are the descendants of those whom We bore in the Ark with Noah— (XVII: 3) "....they were from the descendants of Adam, and from the seed of those whom we carried in the Ark with Noah...." (XIX: 58).

45. This humility shown by Prophet Noah that his delivery from the Deluge was not due to his own plans, measures and efforts but to the Mercy and Compassion of his Lord, who is most Forgiving, is the true characteristic of a Believer. The Servant of God adopts all necessary measures as a man of the world

does, but he does not put his trust in those measures alone. Along with these he puts his trust in his Lord for their success, because he knows well that no measure can be adopted without His sanction, nor can it be put into practice nor can it achieve the required object unless it is helped by the Compassion and Favour of Allah.

46. According to the Qur'ān, the Ark rested upon Mount *Jūdī*, which is situated to the North-east of Jazīrah Ibn 'Umar in Kurdistan. But according to the Bible its resting place was Mount Ararat in Armenia, which is one of the ranges of mountains of the same name that extends from Armenia to southern Kurdistan. Mount *Jūdī* is one of the mountains of the Ararat range, and is known by the same name even today. The ancient histories confirm that the resting place of the Ark was Mount *Jūdī*. For instance, Berasus, a religious leader of Babylonia, who lived about 250 years before Christ, says in his history of the Chaldeans that Noah's Ark rested upon Mount *Jūdī*. Abydenus, a pupil of Aristotle, not only confirms the same but also says that many people of 'Iraq of his time possessed pieces of the Ark, which they ground in water and gave to the sick as a medicine.

Now let us consider the question: Did the Deluge mentioned here cover the whole earth or was it confined to that particular region where Prophet Noah lived? This is a question which has not been finally settled up to this day. As far as the Bible and the Israelite traditions are concerned, this was universal. (Genesis 7: 18-24). But the Qur'ān is silent about it, though it does say things which show that the whole human race after the Deluge was the descendant of Prophet Noah and of those with him in the Ark, but this does not mean that the Deluge covered all the earth. It may be explained like this: at that time of the history the only region of the earth, which was inhabited by the human race, was the region in which Noah lived, and the generations which came after the Deluge, gradually spread over other parts of the earth. This theory is supported by two things. First, there is a conclusive proof that a great flood did come over the land of the Tigris and the Euphrates. This is confirmed by historical traditions, archaeological remains and geological evidence. But there are no such proofs in the other parts of the earth as might show that the Deluge was universal. Secondly, traditions have come down to almost all the peoples of the earth living even in distant places like America and Australia, that once a great flood had come all over the earth. The only conclusion which can be drawn from the above is that at one time the forefathers of all the people of the earth lived at one place. But, when afterwards they spread over different lands in the earth, they carried the traditions of the Deluge along with them. (Please refer to E.N. 47 of *Al-A'rāf*).

47. That is, "Thou promised that Thou wilt save the members of my family from this calamity; so save my son for he is also a member of my family."

48. That is, "Thou art the greatest of all rulers: therefore Thy decision is final and there can be no appeal against it." And "Thou art the best of all rulers: therefore all Thy decisions are based on perfect knowledge and absolute justice."

49. Allah has called the wicked son of Prophet Noah "a worthless act", for children are entrusted by the Creator to the care of parents so that they may bring them up and train them to become "good persons" and fulfil the purpose for which He created man. If a father does his very best to "process" and turn the child into a righteous person, but fails in his efforts, the child, who was a sort of raw material in his hands, would be likened to a "worthless act". It is obvious that the wicked son was a "worthless act", for he was not the sort of "good work" which his father had desired him to be. So in this sense he did not belong to the family of Prophet Noah, whom the Creator had sent to mould all his people into "Good acts", especially those who were of his own flesh and blood. Thus that unrighteous son had forfeited all the rights of blood he had with the Prophet as far as the torment of "the Deluge" was concerned.

Now let us consider the other question: Why was not the request of the Prophet regarding his own flesh and blood granted? The answer is this: If any part of the body of a man becomes so rotten that the surgeon is of the definite opinion that that part must be cut off for the sake of the safety of the rest of the body, the surgeon will not comply with the request of the man not to cut that part of his body, but will say, "It is not a part of your body because it is rotten." This will not, however, mean that it was never actually a part of the body but will imply only this: "As it has ceased to function rightly as a part of the body, it is no more a part of the body in the sense and for the purpose the healthy parts of the body are its parts". Likewise, when it was said to Prophet Noah, "He is not of your family," it did not negate the fact that he was from his loins but implied, "He does not deserve to be treated as a member of your righteous family because of his spoilt morals and conduct. As the torment of the Deluge has been brought about to punish those who had sided with the unbelievers in the conflict of *kufr* and Faith, your son does not deserve to be rescued from it along with the believers. Had it been a conflict between your descendants and those of the unbelievers, the result would have been different, but this being a conflict between the righteous and the unrighteous, the former alone will be delivered from it."

The epithet, "a worthless act", has been purposely applied to the son of Noah, for it is very meaningful. It points to the two different objects that the parents have in view in bringing up their children. Those parents who look merely at the surface of things, bring up and love their children because they are from their loins or their wombs, irrespective of the fact whether they are righteous or unrighteous. But this epithet requires the believers to look upon their children as "pieces of work" entrusted to them in a natural way by their Creator, so that they

should prepare and mould them so as to fulfil the object for which Allah has created man. Therefore, if a certain parent fails in his efforts to mould his child in a way to fulfil the very object for which the child was entrusted to him and the latter becomes a servant of Satan instead of his Lord, the parent should regard all his efforts for the child to have gone utterly waste. In that case there is no reason why that parent should have any consideration for that "worthless act".

As a corollary to the above, the same rule will apply to the other relationships of a believer. As a believer is one who believes in certain creeds and behaviours, all his relationships with the other people will be determined by those creeds and behaviours. If his blood relations have the qualities of a believer, their relationship with him becomes doubly stronger. But if they are void of the qualities of a believer; the believer will confine his relationship with them only to the extent of blood relationships and will have no spiritual relationship with them. Consequently, if such a relative comes face to face with the believer in the conflict between *kufr* and the Faith, the believer should fight with him just as he would with any other unbeliever.

50. This warning from his Lord does not mean that Prophet Noah was suffering from the lack of "Faith" or that his Faith had any tinge of weakness or that he had beliefs like those of the ignorant people. His response to this is rather a proof of his high moral character. As Noah was like the other Prophets, a human being, he also suffered from the common human weakness, that is, natural parental love for children. So he begged his Lord to deliver his son from the Deluge. Allah admonished him because the high character of a Prophet demanded that he ought not to have made such a request even for his own flesh and blood. That is why no sooner was the warning administered to him than he realized that he had come down from the high position of a Prophet to the level of a mere father because of the critical psychological human weakness. Therefore immediately after the warning, he repented of his weakness, and behaved as if his own son had not been drowned in the Deluge a moment before this. This character shown by him is a clear proof that he was a true Prophet. He returned to the same height and meekly asked his Lord's forgiveness for showing any concern for his own son who had forsaken the Truth and sided with falsehood.

51. The Qur'ān has cited the story of the drowning of the son of Prophet Noah to bring home to the people that Allah's decrees are absolutely just and final.

This also served as a warning to the Quraish who considered themselves to be immune from the torment of Allah simply because they were the descendants of Prophet Abraham, and had several gods and goddesses as their interceders. Likewise it was a warning to the Jews and the Christians who cherished, and still

cherish, such beliefs, nay, even to those Muslims, who foolishly believe that their saintly ancestors and holy people will guard them against the consequences of the justice of Allah. For the tragic scene depicted here categorically refutes such false expectations and beliefs, saying, "O foolish people ! Why do you cherish such false hopes? When Our Prophet Noah could not save his son who was drowned before his very eyes, and his prayer for the son was not only rejected but he was rebuked for making such a prayer, how can you then expect that anyone much less than a Prophet can deliver you from the justice of Allah?"

52. That is, ".....go down from the Mountain on which the Ark is resting."

53. That is, "You and your companions will come out successful at the end of the conflict just as Prophet Noah and his companions did. For this is the Divine Law that those who exert for the right cause, avoiding erroneous ways for fear of Allah, should come out successful in the end, even though they should meet with failures in the beginning of the conflict at the hands of the enemies of the truth. Therefore you should patiently bear the afflictions which you are suffering and stand steadfast against the obstacles you are encountering in the way, and you should not be in the least disheartened by the painful and superficial successes of your enemies. If you practise fortitude, you will come out successful in the end like Noah and his companions."

54. Please keep in view E.N.'s 51-56 of *Al-A'rāf*.

55. That is, "You have forged falsehood about all the deities you worship beside Allah, for in fact they possess no powers and no qualities that might entitle them to Godhead. As they have absolutely nothing in them which might make them the objects of worship and service, you have put in them false hopes that they would fulfil your desires and needs."

56. This concise sentence contains a very strong argument: "The fact that you are taking a superficial view of my Message and rejecting it without paying due and deep consideration to it is a clear proof that you are not using your common-sense. Had you tried to understand the matter, you would have found much material for your consideration. You would have noticed that I have absolutely no personal interests: nay, I am suffering hardships in conveying the Message which cannot bring any benefit to me or to the members of my family. This is a conclusive proof that my Faith has very sound bases which are strong enough to enable me to forsake all the worldly joys and comforts and encounter the enmity of the whole world by waging a war against the centuries-old, established rites, customs and ways of life. Do these things not demand a deep and

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مِّدْرَارًا وَّيَزِدْكُمْ قُوَّةً إِلٰى قُوَّتِكُمْ وَلَا تَتَوَلَّوْا مُجْرِمِيْنَ ﴿٥٢﴾ قَالُوْا يٰهُوْدُ مَا
جِئْتَنَا بِبَيِّنَةٍ وَّمَا نَحْنُ بِتَارِكِيْٓ اٰلِهَتِنَا عَنْ قَوْلِكَ وَمَا نَحْنُ لَكَ بِمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٥٣﴾
إِنْ نَّقُوْلُ إِلَّا اعْتَرٰىكَ بَعْضُ اٰلِهَتِنَا بِسُوْٓءٍ ۭ قَالَ إِنِّيْٓ أُشْهِدُ اللّٰهَ وَاشْهَدُوْٓا أَنِّيْ
بَرِيْٓءٌ مِّمَّا تُشْرِكُوْنَ ﴿٥٤﴾ مِنْ دُوْنِهٖ فَكِيْدُوْنِيْ جَمِيْعًا ثُمَّ لَا تُنْظِرُوْنِ ﴿٥٥﴾ إِنِّيْ
تَوَكَّلْتُ عَلَى اللّٰهِ رَبِّيْ وَرَبِّكُمْ ۭ مَا مِنْ دَآبَّةٍ إِلَّا هُوَ اٰخِذٌۢ بِنَاصِيَتِهَا ۭ إِنَّ رَبِّيْ
عَلٰى صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيْمٍ ﴿٥٦﴾ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَقَدْ أَبْلَغْتُكُمْ مَّآ أُرْسِلْتُ بِهٖٓ إِلَيْكُمْ ۭ وَ
يَسْتَخْلِفُ رَبِّيْ قَوْمًا غَيْرَكُمْ ۚ وَلَا تَضُرُّوْنَهٗ شَيْـًٔا ۭ إِنَّ رَبِّيْ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ
حَفِيْظٌ ﴿٥٧﴾ وَلَمَّا جَآءَ أَمْرُنَا نَجَّيْنَا هُوْدًا وَّالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا مَعَهٗ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِّنَّا ۚ وَ
نَجَّيْنٰهُمْ مِّنْ عَذَابٍ غَلِيْظٍ ﴿٥٨﴾ وَتِلْكَ عَادٌ ۣ جَحَدُوْا بِاٰيٰتِ رَبِّهِمْ وَعَصَوْا
رُسُلَهٗ وَاتَّبَعُوْٓا أَمْرَ كُلِّ جَبَّارٍ عَنِيْدٍ ﴿٥٩﴾ وَأُتْبِعُوْا فِيْ هٰذِهِ الدُّنْيَا لَعْنَةً وَّيَوْمَ
الْقِيٰمَةِ ۭ أَلَآ إِنَّ عَادًا كَفَرُوْا رَبَّهُمْ ۭ أَلَا بُعْدًا لِّعَادٍ قَوْمِ هُوْدٍ ﴿٦٠﴾ وَإِلٰى ثَمُوْدَ
أَخَاهُمْ صٰلِحًا ۘ قَالَ يٰقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللّٰهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ إِلٰهٍ غَيْرُهٗ ۭ هُوَ أَنْشَأَكُمْ مِّنَ
الْأَرْضِ وَاسْتَعْمَرَكُمْ فِيْهَا فَاسْتَغْفِرُوْهُ ثُمَّ تُوْبُوْٓا إِلَيْهِ ۭ إِنَّ رَبِّيْ قَرِيْبٌ مُّجِيْبٌ ﴿٦١﴾
قَالُوْا يٰصٰلِحُ قَدْ كُنْتَ فِيْنَا مَرْجُوًّا قَبْلَ هٰذَآ أَتَنْهٰنَآ أَنْ نَّعْبُدَ مَا يَعْبُدُ اٰبَآؤُنَا
وَإِنَّنَا لَفِيْ شَكٍّ مِّمَّا تَدْعُوْنَآ إِلَيْهِ مُرِيْبٍ ﴿٦٢﴾ قَالَ يٰقَوْمِ أَرَءَيْتُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُ عَلٰى
بَيِّنَةٍ مِّنْ رَّبِّيْ وَاٰتٰىنِيْ مِنْهُ رَحْمَةً فَمَنْ يَّنْصُرُنِيْ مِنَ اللّٰهِ إِنْ عَصَيْتُهٗ ۭ فَمَا
تَزِيْدُوْنَنِيْ غَيْرَ تَخْسِيْرٍ ﴿٦٣﴾ وَيٰقَوْمِ هٰذِهٖ نَاقَةُ اللّٰهِ لَكُمْ اٰيَةً فَذَرُوْهَا تَأْكُلْ
فِيْٓ أَرْضِ اللّٰهِ وَلَا تَمَسُّوْهَا بِسُوْٓءٍ فَيَأْخُذَكُمْ عَذَابٌ قَرِيْبٌ ﴿٦٤﴾ فَعَقَرُوْهَا فَقَالَ
تَمَتَّعُوْا فِيْ دَارِكُمْ ثَلٰثَةَ أَيَّامٍ ۭ ذٰلِكَ وَعْدٌ غَيْرُ مَكْذُوْبٍ ﴿٦٥﴾ فَلَمَّا جَآءَ أَمْرُنَا نَجَّيْنَا

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They answered "O Hūd! You have not brought us any clear evidence,[58] and we are not going to give up our gods at your word, nor are we going to believe in you. We rather believe that some of our gods have smitten you with some evil."[59] Hūd replied, "I bring Allah's evidence.[60] And you should bear witness to it that I have nothing to do with the gods you have set up beside Allah in His Godhead.[61] So all of you may do whatever you can against me and give me no respite;[62] I have full trust in Allah Who is my Lord and your Lord as well. There is no living creature which He does not hold by its forelock. Indeed straight is the way of my Lord![63] You may turn away, if you will; now that I have conveyed to you the Message with which I was sent to you, my Lord will raise up some other community in your place and you shall not be able to do Him any harm whatsoever.[64] Indeed my Lord keeps watch over everything." 53-57

And when Our Command came We delivered through Our Mercy Hūd and those who had believed with him and rescued them from a woeful scourge. 58

These are 'Ād! They rejected the Revelations of their Lord and disobeyed His Messengers[65] and followed every tyrannous enemy of the Truth; so they became accursed in this world and in the Next World as well. Listen! 'Ād disbelieved in their Lord! Listen! Cast away were 'Ād the people of Hūd ! 59-60

And to Thamūd We sent their brother Sālih.[66] He said "O my people! worship Allah: you have no other Deity than He. It is He Who has created you from the earth and made it a living place for you.[67] So ask His forgiveness[68] and turn to Him in repentance. Most surely my Lord is near at hand and answers prayers.[69] 61

They replied "O Sālih, till now you were such a person among us of whom we had great expectations.[70] What! do you forbid us to worship gods whom our forefathers worshipped ?[71] Indeed we have a strong doubt about the way to which you are calling us and this has caused a feeling of distraction in us."[72] 62

Sālih said, "O my people! Just consider it yourselves: if my Lord had sent me with a clear Sign and bestowed His special blessings on me, who will help save me from Allah if, after this, I become 63-65

disobedient to Him? You cannot help me any way, but might hasten my ruin.[73] And O my people, behold: here is Allah's she-camel, a Sign for you. So let her graze at will in Allah's land, and do not touch her with evil intention, lest a scourge should seize you from your Lord in the near future."

But they killed the she-camel. At this Sālih warned them, "Well, you have only three more days to enjoy yourselves in your houses. This is a time limit that will not prove false."

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serious consideration? Why don't you then use your common-sense before rejecting the Message out-right?"

57. It is the same thing that has been put into the mouth of the Holy Prophet in v. 3. This is a clear proof that moral values count not only in the life of the Hereafter but also determine the rise and fall of nations in this world. This is because Allah rules over the world in accordance with moral principles and not on the basis of His physical laws alone. That is why Allah has declared in many places in the Qur'ān that the fate of a community hangs on the Message which He sends to it through His Prophet. If it accepts the Message, He opens the gates of His favours and blessings for it, but if it rejects the Message, then it is destroyed.

In short, this verse is an article of the moral Law in accordance with which Allah deals with man. Conversely, the other article of the same principle of the Law is that the community which, deluded by its worldly prosperity, begins to tread the paths of sin and iniquity is ultimately destroyed. But if, during its headlong race towards its doom, it realizes its erroneous behaviour and gives up its disobedience and turns in repentance towards Allah, its evil fate is changed and the impending scourge is averted and it is given a further term of respite along with blessings and favours.

58. That is, "You have not brought a clear Sign as evidence to prove conclusively to us that you have been sent by Allah and that the Message you are presenting before us is the Truth."

59. That is, "It appears that you had behaved rudely towards a god or goddess or saint: Consequently you have been smitten with madness and are being abused, dishonoured and pelted with stones in the same streets in which you were respected and honoured before this."

60. This was the refutation of their charge that he had not brought any clear evidence to them. It implied: "You say that I have brought no evidence to

prove that I have been sent by Allah Who is a standing witness everywhere in His universe and giving evidence with the phenomena of Nature to show that the truths I have stated before you are absolutely correct. These also prove conclusively that there is no sign of truth in what you falsely ascribe to your gods."

61. This is the answer of Prophet Hūd to their assertion, "We are not going to give up our gods at your word....." (V: 53). His reply implied, "Note it well that I, too, feel a strong disgust at the gods you have set up beside Allah....."

62. This is his answer to their threat: "..... some of our gods have smitten you with some evil ....." (compare this with X: 71).

63. That is, "Whatever my Lord does is always right and correct for all His ways are straight and just, and the judgements He passes are based entirely on truth and justice. Therefore you cannot come out successful in your conflict with me: for you have deviated from the Right Way and are committing wicked deeds, while I am on the Right Way."

64. This is his answer to their obdurate denial: "..... nor will we believe in you...."

65. Though only one Messenger had come to them, he had presented the same Message that had been presented by every Messenger in every age to every community. Therefore disobedience to one Messenger has been declared to be disobedience to all the Messengers.

66. Please keep in view E.N.'s 57-62 of *Al-A'Aarāf.*

67. This is the proof of the claim: " .... you have no other Deity than Allah". The argument is based on the fact which the *mushriks* themselves acknowledged that it is Allah Who is their Creator. Therefore Prophet Sālih argued like this: "You yourselves acknowledge that it is Allah Who has created your wonderful human body out of the life-less particles of the earth and that it is Allah Who has made the earth a suitable place for you to live. How can then there be any Deity other than Allah Who may be worthy of Godhead, service and worship?"

68. That is, "So ask His forgiveness for the sin you have been committing by worshipping others."

69. In this concise sentence, the Qur'ān has refuted a grave misunderstanding of the *mushriks*, which has in every age misled people into wrong creeds. They presumed that Allah lived far away from them and, therefore, was unapproachable like their own rulers on the earth. As the only way of approach to them was an intercessor who alone could receive and present their

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صٰلِحًا وَّالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا مَعَهٗ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِّنَّا وَمِنْ خِزْيِ يَوْمِئِذٍ ؕ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ
الْقَوِيُّ الْعَزِيْزُ ﴿٦٦﴾ وَاَخَذَ الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوا الصَّيْحَةُ فَاَصْبَحُوْا فِيْ دِيَارِهِمْ جٰثِمِيْنَ ﴿٦٧﴾
كَاَنْ لَّمْ يَغْنَوْا فِيْهَا ؕ اَلَا اِنَّ ثَمُوْدَا كَفَرُوْا رَبَّهُمْ ؕ اَلَا بُعْدًا لِّثَمُوْدَ ﴿٦٨﴾ وَلَقَدْ جَآءَتْ
رُسُلُنَآ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ بِالْبُشْرٰى قَالُوْا سَلٰمًا ؕ قَالَ سَلٰمٌ فَمَا لَبِثَ اَنْ جَآءَ بِعِجْلٍ حَنِيْذٍ ﴿٦٩﴾
فَلَمَّا رَاٰۤ اَيْدِيَهُمْ لَا تَصِلُ اِلَيْهِ نَكِرَهُمْ وَاَوْجَسَ مِنْهُمْ خِيْفَةً ؕ قَالُوْا لَا تَخَفْ
اِنَّاۤ اُرْسِلْنَاۤ اِلٰى قَوْمِ لُوْطٍ ﴿٧٠﴾ وَامْرَاَتُهٗ قَآئِمَةٌ فَضَحِكَتْ فَبَشَّرْنٰهَا بِاِسْحٰقَ ۙ وَ
مِنْ وَّرَآءِ اِسْحٰقَ يَعْقُوْبَ ﴿٧١﴾ قَالَتْ يٰوَيْلَتٰۤى ءَاَلِدُ وَاَنَا عَجُوْزٌ وَّهٰذَا بَعْلِيْ
شَيْخًا ؕ اِنَّ هٰذَا لَشَيْءٌ عَجِيْبٌ ﴿٧٢﴾ قَالُوْۤا اَتَعْجَبِيْنَ مِنْ اَمْرِ اللّٰهِ رَحْمَتُ اللّٰهِ وَ
بَرَكٰتُهٗ عَلَيْكُمْ اَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ ؕ اِنَّهٗ حَمِيْدٌ مَّجِيْدٌ ﴿٧٣﴾ فَلَمَّا ذَهَبَ عَنْ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ
الرَّوْعُ وَجَآءَتْهُ الْبُشْرٰى يُجَادِلُنَا فِيْ قَوْمِ لُوْطٍ ﴿٧٤﴾ اِنَّ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ لَحَلِيْمٌ اَوَّاهٌ
مُّنِيْبٌ ﴿٧٥﴾ يٰۤاِبْرٰهِيْمُ اَعْرِضْ عَنْ هٰذَا ۚ اِنَّهٗ قَدْ جَآءَ اَمْرُ رَبِّكَ ۚ وَاِنَّهُمْ اٰتِيْهِمْ
عَذَابٌ غَيْرُ مَرْدُوْدٍ ﴿٧٦﴾ وَلَمَّا جَآءَتْ رُسُلُنَا لُوْطًا سِيْٓءَ بِهِمْ وَضَاقَ بِهِمْ ذَرْعًا
وَّقَالَ هٰذَا يَوْمٌ عَصِيْبٌ ﴿٧٧﴾ وَجَآءَهٗ قَوْمُهٗ يُهْرَعُوْنَ اِلَيْهِ ؕ وَمِنْ قَبْلُ كَانُوْا
يَعْمَلُوْنَ السَّيِّاٰتِ ؕ قَالَ يٰقَوْمِ هٰۤؤُلَآءِ بَنَاتِيْ هُنَّ اَطْهَرُ لَكُمْ فَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَلَا تُخْزُوْنِ
فِيْ ضَيْفِيْ ؕ اَلَيْسَ مِنْكُمْ رَجُلٌ رَّشِيْدٌ ﴿٧٨﴾ قَالُوْا لَقَدْ عَلِمْتَ مَا لَنَا فِيْ بَنٰتِكَ مِنْ
حَقٍّ ۚ وَاِنَّكَ لَتَعْلَمُ مَا نُرِيْدُ ﴿٧٩﴾ قَالَ لَوْ اَنَّ لِيْ بِكُمْ قُوَّةً اَوْ اٰوِيْۤ اِلٰى رُكْنٍ
شَدِيْدٍ ﴿٨٠﴾ قَالُوْا يٰلُوْطُ اِنَّا رُسُلُ رَبِّكَ لَنْ يَّصِلُوْۤا اِلَيْكَ فَاَسْرِ بِاَهْلِكَ بِقِطْعٍ مِّنَ
الَّيْلِ وَلَا يَلْتَفِتْ مِنْكُمْ اَحَدٌ اِلَّا امْرَاَتَكَ ؕ اِنَّهٗ مُصِيْبُهَا مَاۤ اَصَابَهُمْ ؕ اِنَّ مَوْعِدَهُمُ
الصُّبْحُ ؕ اَلَيْسَ الصُّبْحُ بِقَرِيْبٍ ﴿٨١﴾ فَلَمَّا جَآءَ اَمْرُنَا جَعَلْنَا عَالِيَهَا سَافِلَهَا وَاَمْطَرْنَا

So when Our judgement came to pass, We delivered through Our mercy Sālih and those who had believed with him, and kept them safe from the ignominy of that Day.[74] Indeed your Lord is All-Mighty and All-Powerful. As regards those who were iniquitous, a dreadful shock overtook them and they lay lifeless and prostrate in their homes, as if they had never flourished there. Listen ! Thamūd disbelieved their Lord: listen! cast away were Thamūd. 66-68

And lo, Our Messengers came to Abraham with good news. They said, "Peace be upon you." Abraham answered, "Peace be also upon you." And before long he brought a roasted calf for them.[75] But when he saw that they did not stretch out their hands towards it, he had a mistrust about them and felt a fear of them[76] in his heart. They said, "Don't have any fear: for we have been sent to the people of Lot."[77] And his wife was standing by; hearing this, she laughed.[78] Then We gave her the good news of Isaac, and after Isaac of Jacob.[79] She said, "Woe is me![80] shall I bear a child now when I have grown extremely old, and this husband of mine has also become old?[81] This is indeed a strange thing." The angels said, "What! Are you surprised at Allah's decree?[82] O people of Abraham's household ! Allah's mercy and blessings are upon you. Indeed Allah is worthy of all praise and glory." 69-73

So when Abraham's fear was allayed and his heart was filled with joy (because of the good news of a child), he began to dispute[83] with Us concerning the people of Lot, for Abraham was tender-hearted and merciful and always turned to Us. (At last Our angels said to him), "O Abraham, desist from this now that your Lord's decree has been issued and the scourge which cannot be averted by anyone shall overtake them."[84] 74-76

And when Our Messengers came to Lot,[85] he was greatly perturbed and distressed in mind because of their visit and said, "This is a day of woe!"[86] (No sooner did the visitors come to him than) his people spontaneously rushed towards his house, for they had previously been addicted to wicked deeds. Lot said to them, "O my people, here are my daughters, who are purer for you.[87] So fear God and don't degrade me by committing evil to my guests. What ! Is there not a single good man among you ?" They replied, "You know it well that we have no need of your daughters,[88] and you also know what we 77-80

want." Lot cried, "I wish I had the power to set you right or I could find some strong support for refuge."

81 Then the angels said, "O Lot, We are messengers sent by your Lord. They shall not be able to do you any harm. So depart from here with the people of your household in the last hours of the night. And look here: none of you should turn round to look behind;[89] but your wife (who will not accompany you) shall meet with the same doom as they.[90] The morning has been appointed for their destruction—the morning has almost come."

Contd. from p. 351]

requests and applications to their rulers, and convey their answers to them, they presumed that there should be some intercessor to help approach Allah and bring to them the answers to their prayers. Obviously this is a false presumption, which has been endorsed and encouraged by clever people that Allah is out of the reach of common people and it is not possible for them to reach Him and present their prayers and get their answers. So they should search for such sacred beings as may have an approach to Him. Accordingly, they tried to secure the services of those who were well-versed in the art of conveying the requests with the necessary presents and gifts to the Highest Authority. This misunderstanding created hosts of intercessors, and the establishment of the system of priesthood, which has so incapacitated the followers of *mushrik* creeds of ignorance that they cannot perform by themselves any religious ceremony from birth to death.

Now let us consider the concise answer of Prophet Sālih, by which he broke asunder the false presumption of the *mushriks*. It is this: "Allah is near at hand: so you can invoke His help directly without the help of any interceder. He answers prayers: so you can yourselves receive the answer to your prayer. Though He is the Highest, each one of you will find Him so near yourself that you will be able to convey your request even in a whisper, nay, you are permitted to convey your requests openly or secretly to Him. Therefore give up the folly of seeking intercedders and setting them up as His partners, and address your prayers to Him Who is near at hand and answers prayers." (Please refer also to E.N. 188 of *Al-Baqarah*.)

70. That is, "We had expected that by your wisdom, intelligence, foresight, serious behaviour and dignified personality, you would become a great and prosperous man. So we had looked forward to the great success you would achieve and to the manifold advantages we would gain over other clans and tribes because of you. But you have brought to nought all of our hopes by adopting the Way based on *Tauhīd* and the Hereafter which is bound to lead us to utter ruin."

It may be noted here that the people of Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) have had the same great expectations of him. They, too, had a very high opinion of his abilities and capabilities before his appointment as a Prophet. For they expected that he would become a great leader, and his foresight would bring innumerable benefits to them also. But when, contrary to their expectations, he began to invite them to the doctrines of *Tauhid* and the Hereafter, and preach the principles of high morality, they lost not only all hope in him, but began to entertain and express quite the reverse views. They said, "What a pity! this man who was quite good till now has, under the influence of some charm, not only ruined his own career but has destroyed all of our hopes as well".

71. That was their argument for the worship of their gods. They said that they would worship them because their forefathers worshipped them. Prophet Sālih, argued like this: "Worship Allah.....Who has created you from the earth, and Who made it a living place for you." In answer to this they argued, as if to say, "These deities are also worthy of worship, and we will not give them up, because our forefathers have been worshipping them since a long time." This is an apt example of the type of arguments employed by the supporters of Islam and "ignorance". The former base their arguments on sound reasoning, while the latter base them on blind imitation.

72. The Qur'ān has not specified the nature of the doubts and "feelings of distraction". This is because, though all of them had these feelings, these were different in different persons. For it is one of the characteristics of the Message that it takes away the peace of mind of all these people to whom it is addressed. Though the feelings of distraction are of various kinds, everyone gets a portion of them. This is because it becomes simply impossible for anyone to continue treading the paths of deviation with that peace of mind which one had before the coming of the Message. For it impels everyone to think whether one is following the Right Way or any of the wrong ways of "ignorance". No one can shut one's ears and eyes against the penetrating and merciless criticism of the weaknesses of the ways of "ignorance"; and the strong and rational arguments for the Right Way. Then the high moral character of the Messenger, his perseverance, his nobility, his gentle conduct, his frank and righteous attitude and his dignity cannot fail to make their impressions even on the most obdurate, and prejudiced opponents. The Message by itself attracts the best elements from that society and brings about the most revolutionary changes in the characters of its followers so as to make them models of excellence. Naturally all these things combine to produce the feelings of distraction in the minds of those who desire to uphold the ways of "ignorance" even after the coming of the Truth.

73. This is the answer to the preceding question: "If I disobey Allah by discarding the Guidance I have received from Him in order to please you, you

cannot defend me against Him. You will rather add to the intensity of my guilt of disobedience to Him. Thus I shall incur additional punishment from Him for misleading you instead of showing the Right Way for which I had been sent to you."

74. According to the traditions that are current in the Sinai Peninsula, Allah delivered them from the Torment and led them there. There is a Mount near Jabal-i-Mūsa, known by the name of Prophet Sālih where, it is said, the Prophet took refuge after the destruction of his people.

75. This shows that the angels had come to Prophet Abraham in the shape of human beings and had not disclosed their identity. Therefore he took them for strangers and brought a roasted calf for their entertainment.

76. Some commentators are of the view that Prophet Abraham was afraid of them because, from their refusal to eat his meal, he had concluded that they had come to him with some evil intention. For, according to the Arab tradition, if some strangers refused hospitality, it meant that they had not come as guests but as enemies to plunder. But this view is not supported by the succeeding verse.

77. The wording of their answer shows that Prophet Abraham had understood from their refusal to eat that they were angels. But he was afraid of their visit because he knew that the coming of the angels in the human shape did not bode well. So he was fearful that they might have come to take them to task for some offence committed by the people of his household or of his habitation or by himself. Had it been the same thing that the commentators presumed, then their answer should have been, "Don't fear us for we are angels from your Lord." But the answer they gave to remove his fear, "Don't have any fear for we have been sent to the people of Lot (and not to you)," shows that Abraham knew that they were angels but was troubled in his mind as to the reason of their visit in the human shape. This was because the angels came in human shape when some one was either to be put to a hard trial or punished severely for some offence.

78. It appears from this that the news of the visit of the angels in the human shape had made the people of the house uneasy. So Prophet Abraham's wife had also come there to know what the matter was. She laughed with joy when she learnt that the angels were sent not to punish their people but the people of Lot.

79. The angels told the good news of a son to Hadrat Sārah instead of Prophet Abraham because he already had a son, Hadrat Ismāil ,from Hadrat Hājirah but had no child from her. Therefore to remove her sorrow they told her the good news that a son, Isaac, will be born to her, who will have a son, Jacob, both of whom will be great Messengers of Allah.

80. These words were not used by her in their literal sense as an exclamation of grief and lamentation. She uttered these words merely to express surprise at the news.

81. According to the Bible, Prophet Abraham was 100 years old at the time and Hadrat Sārah was 90 years.

82. The question was posed to her to remind her, that, though people of old age, do not bear children, it is not beyond Allah's power to bring this about. Therefore a true believer like her should not show any surprise at the good news, when it is conveyed to her from Allah.

83. "....he began to dispute with Us" is the expression of affection and endearment, which manifests the nature of close relationship of Prophet Abraham with his Lord. This helps depict the picture of the argument that the Servant had with his Lord for pleading the case of the people of Lot. He pleaded persistently, "Lord avert the coming scourge from the people of Lot". The Lord replied, "These people have become so degraded that no good was left in them and their crimes have become so heinous that they deserve no leniency at all." But the Servant still persisted, "Lord, give them more respite, even if a little good yet remains in them; maybe it should bear some fruit." This dispute has been recorded in the Bible rather in detail, but the concise mention in the Qur'ān is more meaningful. (For comparison please refer to *Genesis* 18: 23-32).

84. A superficial view of this incident from the life of Prophet Abraham in the context it occurs might lead one to consider it to be irrelevant, especially as an introduction to the coming scourge on the people of Lot. But if one reviews this in the light of the object for which these historical events have been related here, one will come to the conclusion that its mention is most apt here. In order to understand its relevancy we should keep in view the following two things:

(1) These historical events have been related here to warn the Quraish that they were absolutely wrong in their self-delusion that they were quite immune from the scourge with which the Qur'ān was threatening them because of their relationship with Prophet Abraham and their guardianship of the Ka'abah and their religious, economic and political leadership of Arabia. They thought that Prophet Abraham, whose descendants they were, was a beloved servant of Allah and, would, therefore, intercede for them and defend them against any scourge from Him. That is why the graphic picture of the death of Prophet Noah's son has been drawn to show that the prayer of a great Prophet like him could not save his own son from the scourge. Not only was his prayer rejected but he was also taken to task for making a request for his wicked son. Then this second incident from the life of Prophet Abraham has been *[Contd. on p.360*

عَلَيْهَا حِجَارَةً مِّنْ سِجِّيْلٍ ۙ مَّنْضُوْدٍ ﴿٨٢﴾ مُّسَوَّمَةً عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ ۭ وَمَا هِيَ مِنَ
الظّٰلِمِيْنَ بِبَعِيْدٍ ﴿٨٣﴾ وَاِلٰى مَدْيَنَ اَخَاهُمْ شُعَيْبًا ۭ قَالَ يٰقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللّٰهَ مَا
لَكُمْ مِّنْ اِلٰهٍ غَيْرُهٗ ۭ وَلَا تَنْقُصُوا الْمِكْيَالَ وَالْمِيْزَانَ اِنِّىْٓ اَرٰىكُمْ بِخَيْرٍ وَّاِنِّىْٓ
اَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ مُّحِيْطٍ ﴿٨٤﴾ وَيٰقَوْمِ اَوْفُوا الْمِكْيَالَ وَالْمِيْزَانَ بِالْقِسْطِ
وَلَا تَبْخَسُوا النَّاسَ اَشْيَاۗءَهُمْ وَلَا تَعْثَوْا فِى الْاَرْضِ مُفْسِدِيْنَ ﴿٨٥﴾ بَقِيَّتُ اللّٰهِ خَيْرٌ
لَّكُمْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِيْنَ ۚ وَمَآ اَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ بِحَفِيْظٍ ﴿٨٦﴾ قَالُوْا يٰشُعَيْبُ اَصَلٰوتُكَ
تَاْمُرُكَ اَنْ نَّتْرُكَ مَا يَعْبُدُ اٰبَاۗؤُنَآ اَوْ اَنْ نَّفْعَلَ فِيْٓ اَمْوَالِنَا مَا نَشٰۗؤُا ۭ اِنَّكَ لَاَنْتَ
الْحَلِيْمُ الرَّشِيْدُ ﴿٨٧﴾ قَالَ يٰقَوْمِ اَرَءَيْتُمْ اِنْ كُنْتُ عَلٰي بَيِّنَةٍ مِّنْ رَّبِّيْ وَرَزَقَنِيْ مِنْهُ
رِزْقًا حَسَنًا ۭ وَمَآ اُرِيْدُ اَنْ اُخَالِفَكُمْ اِلٰي مَآ اَنْهٰىكُمْ عَنْهُ ۭ اِنْ اُرِيْدُ اِلَّا الْاِصْلَاحَ
مَا اسْتَطَعْتُ ۭ وَمَا تَوْفِيْقِيْٓ اِلَّا بِاللّٰهِ ۭ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَاِلَيْهِ اُنِيْبُ ﴿٨٨﴾ وَيٰقَوْمِ لَا
يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شِقَاقِيْٓ اَنْ يُّصِيْبَكُمْ مِّثْلُ مَآ اَصَابَ قَوْمَ نُوْحٍ اَوْ قَوْمَ هُوْدٍ اَوْ
قَوْمَ صٰلِحٍ ۭ وَمَا قَوْمُ لُوْطٍ مِّنْكُمْ بِبَعِيْدٍ ﴿٨٩﴾ وَاسْتَغْفِرُوْا رَبَّكُمْ ثُمَّ تُوْبُوْٓا
اِلَيْهِ ۭ اِنَّ رَبِّيْ رَحِيْمٌ وَّدُوْدٌ ﴿٩٠﴾ قَالُوْا يٰشُعَيْبُ مَا نَفْقَهُ كَثِيْرًا مِّمَّا تَقُوْلُ وَ
اِنَّا لَنَرٰىكَ فِيْنَا ضَعِيْفًا ۚ وَلَوْلَا رَهْطُكَ لَرَجَمْنٰكَ ۡ وَمَآ اَنْتَ عَلَيْنَا بِعَزِيْزٍ ﴿٩١﴾
قَالَ يٰقَوْمِ اَرَهْطِيْٓ اَعَزُّ عَلَيْكُمْ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ ۭ وَاتَّخَذْتُمُوْهُ وَرَاۗءَكُمْ ظِهْرِيًّا ۭ اِنَّ رَبِّيْ
بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ مُحِيْطٌ ﴿٩٢﴾ وَيٰقَوْمِ اعْمَلُوْا عَلٰي مَكَانَتِكُمْ اِنِّىْ عَامِلٌ ۭ سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُوْنَ ۙ
مَنْ يَّاْتِيْهِ عَذَابٌ يُّخْزِيْهِ وَمَنْ هُوَ كَاذِبٌ ۭ وَارْتَقِبُوْٓا اِنِّىْ مَعَكُمْ رَقِيْبٌ ﴿٩٣﴾ وَ
لَمَّا جَاۗءَ اَمْرُنَا نَجَّيْنَا شُعَيْبًا وَّالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا مَعَهٗ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِّنَّا وَاَخَذَتِ الَّذِيْنَ
ظَلَمُوا الصَّيْحَةُ فَاَصْبَحُوْا فِيْ دِيَارِهِمْ جٰثِمِيْنَ ﴿٩٤﴾ كَاَنْ لَّمْ يَغْنَوْا فِيْهَا ۭ اَلَا بُعْدًا

Accordingly, when the time of the execution of judgement came, We turned the habitation upside down and rained on it stones of baked clay,[91] and each one of these stones had been specifically marked[92] by your Lord. And such scourge is not far from the workers of iniquity.[93] 82-83

And to the people of Madian, We sent their brother Shu'aib.[94] He said, "O my people, serve Allah: you have no deity other than He. Do not give short measure and weight. Though I see you now in a state of prosperity, I fear for you the scourge of a day that will encircle you. And, O my people, give full measure and weight justly and do not defraud people of their goods, and do not spread mischief in the land. The residue (after giving full measure) left over by Allah is best for you, if you are believers. Anyhow I am not a guardian over you."[95] 84-86

They replied, "O Shu'aib! Does your *Salāt* teach you this[96] that we should give up all those deities whom our forefathers worshipped or that we should have no right on our goods to dispense with them as we please?[97] Indeed you are the only generous and righteous man (left in the land)!" 87

Shu'aib said, "O my people! Just consider it yourselves if I had a clear evidence from my Lord, and then had been bestowed good provisions[98] from Him, (how can I, then, be a party to your evil and unlawful practices?") And I do not want at all to commit those evil practices, which I forbid you.[99] I desire only to reform you as far as it lies in my power. And this work of mine depends entirely on Allah's help: and in Him I have put my trust and to Him I turn for everything. And O my people, let not your obduracy against me be conducive to bring upon you the doom that overtook the peoples of Noah, Hūd and Sālih. And the people of Lot are not far from you.[100] Listen ! Ask forgiveness of your Lord and turn to Him in penitence. Indeed my Lord is Merciful and loves His Creation."[101] 88-90

They answered "O Shu'aib! We do not understand much of what you say.[102] Indeed we see that you are a powerless man among us. Had it not been for your family, we would have stoned you to death long before this, for you are not strong enough to prevail over us."[103] 91

Shu'aib said, "O my people! Do you regard my family to be 92-93

more powerful for you than Allah (that you are afraid of it) but have disregarded Him totally? Note it well that whatever you are doing is within Allah's grasp. O my people, you may go on following your way and I will follow my way. You will come to know in the near future who shall be visited by an ignominous scourge and who is the liar; wait if you will and I, too, shall wait with you."

94 And when Our decree came to pass, We delivered through Our mercy Shu'aib and those who had believed with him. As regards those who were iniquitous, a dreadful shock overtook them and they lay lifeless and prostrate in their homes as if they had never flourished in them.

95 Listen! Cast away were also the people of Madian as were Thamūd cast away

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Contd. from p.357]

related to show that, though Allah was very kind to him, He rejected his appeal for the people of Lot because he had tried to intercede for the wicked people, which was against the requirements of justice.

(2) This incident from the life of Prophet Abraham has been related along with the destruction of the people of Lot for another object as well. The Quraish had forgotten that the Law of Divine Justice had always been operating continuously and regularly and there were open proofs of this all around them. On the one hand, there was the case of Prophet Abraham. He had to leave his home for the sake of the Truth and righteousness and to live in a foreign country where to all appearances, he had no outward power to support him. But Divine Justice rewarded him for his righteousness with a son like Isaac and a grandson like Jacob (Allah's peace be upon them) whose descendants, the Israelites, reigned supreme for centuries over the same Palestine where he had taken refuge as a stranger. On the other hand, there were the people of Lot who were living nearby in great prosperity, which had intoxicated them so much that they lived in open wickedness, totally forgetting that they would be overtaken by retribution from Allah. So much so that they scoffed at the admonition of Prophet Lot. But Divine Justice came into operation at the same time, when it was conveying the good news to Prophet Abraham and decreed that those wicked people should be annihilated from the face of the earth. As a result of this, no vestige of their habitations was left on the surface of the earth. This fact should serve as a lesson to the wicked people for all times.

85. Please keep in view E.N.'s 63-68 of *Al-A'rāf*.

86. From the tenor of the details of the story as given in the different parts of the Qur'ān, it becomes quite plain that the angels came to Prophet Lot in the shape of handsome boys and that he was unaware that they were angels. That is why he was troubled and distressed in his mind, for he knew how wicked and shameless were his people.

87. By "my daughters" Prophet Lot might have meant either of the two things. He might have referred to the daughters of the community as "my daughters" because the relationship of a Prophet to his people is as of a father to his children. But it is also possible that he might have meant by this his own daughters. Anyhow this could not have been an offer of adultery, for the succeeding sentence "..these are purer for you" leaves no room for such a misunderstanding. This makes it quite obvious that Prophet Lot admonished them in this way so as to turn them to the females for the lawful gratification of their sexual desires instead of seeking unnatural ways.

88. This answer of the people of Lot shows that they had gone to the lowest depth of depravity and openly and brazen-facedly declared that they did not want females but males. This was the proof that they had not only left the natural way of purity and strayed into the unnatural way of impurity but had also lost all interest in the natural way of gratification. Such a depraved condition is the worst form of moral degradation, for it shows that no good has been left at all. Supposing a person has fallen a victim to an unlawful and sinful behaviour but at the same time considers it to be a wrong behaviour which should be avoided. There is hope for the reform of such a person, and even if he does not mend his way the utmost that can be said about him is that 'he is a depraved person'. On the other hand, if a person gives himself wholly to the unlawful because he has no interest in the lawful, such a filthy person is not worthy of being considered a man at all, and therefore should be wiped out of the earth. That is why Allah decreed that the people of Lot should be completely annihilated from the face of the earth.

89. This meant to impress on them the urgency of the matter so that they should get out of the doomed place and should not even turn round to look behind to see what was happening there. They were warned lest they should be attracted by the loud noises caused by the explosions and by the wailing of the people and thus lag behind in the territory that had been marked for the scourge and was to be overtaken by it.

90. The doom of the wife of Prophet Lot is the third incident related in this Sūrah to serve as a lesson that no relationship can deliver a people from the horrible consequences of their sin.

91. Probably the scourge came in the form of a horrible earthquake which turned their habitations upside down and the explosion of a volcano which rained stones on them.

"Stones of baked clay" probably refers to the stones that are formed by the underground heat and lava in the volcanic regions. The signs of such a formation are found even today near the Lot Sea.

92. That is, "Every stone had been specified by Allah to do some particular work of destruction there, and to hit a particular offender".

93. This was meant to warn the workers of iniquity who were engaged in their evil work, as if to say, "You should not consider yourselves immune from scourge as though it were far from you. If it could visit the people of Lot, it could overpower you as well. Neither the people of Lot were able to defend themselves against Allah, nor can you frustrate Him now."

94. Please keep in view E.N.'s 69-76 of *Al-A'rāf*.

95. That is, "I have no power over you. The most I can do for you is to admonish you as a well-wisher, but it rests with you to accept my advice or reject it. As you are accountable to Allah and not to me for your deeds, therefore you should fear Him and desist from your mischievous deeds, if you sincerely believe in Him."

96. This taunting question was an expression of the feelings of hatred those un-godly people cherished against the religious observances of Prophet Shu'aib and other God-fearing, pious people. They selected *Salāt* as a target of their taunt because it is the first and foremost outwardly observance of true religion which naturally has always been strongly hated by all un-godly wicked people. This hatred may also be noticed today among those who deliberately intend to follow the wicked ways, for they consider religious observances to be the greatest threat to their evil ways. As they regard *Salāt* to be a symbol of the coming trouble, they begin to taunt the one who observes it. For they know that the victim of the "disease" of religiosity will not rest content with his own reformation but will exert his utmost to reform others as well. They fear that he will preach piety and righteous ways to them and criticise their ungodly and immoral ways. That is why *Salāt* becomes the target of the taunts of wicked people. And if the person who observes *Salāt* actually begins to preach the observance of virtues and criticise their evil ways just as they had feared, then they condemn it even more vehemently as though it were the cause of the whole trouble.

97. These two things clearly distinguish the theory of the way of "ignorance" from the theory of the way of "Islam". The way of "ignorance" is

based on the assumption that one should follow the way of one's forefathers: and for the mere reason that it has been inherited from one's forefathers. Its second assumption is that one's faith and religion are concerned only with worship, and these have nothing to do with the worldly affairs of life, in which one is absolutely free to do as one pleases. On the other hand, the basic theory of Islam is that every way that is not founded on the submission to Allah is wrong, and, therefore, should not be followed, for no other way has got any proof of its truth from reason, knowledge and revelation. Besides, Islam is not confined to the worship of Allah but it covers in its entirety all aspects of life—cultural, social, economic and political. This is because all that man possesses really belongs to Allah and, therefore, man has absolutely no right to do as he pleases with his possessions.

Incidentally, this demand of the people of Prophet Shua'ib that they had every right to do as they pleased with their goods and possessions shows that there is nothing new about the theory of the division of life into separate compartments, religious and mundane. Some three thousand years or so ago they insisted on this division just as Western and Westernised people insist on it today. And they are absolutely wrong to presume that their division is the result of the 'light' that had dawned upon humanity because of the "intellectual progress" that man has made as a result of the evolutionary process. Thus it is clear that it is not light but darkness which prevailed with the same intensity thousands of years ago as it is today and that the conflict of Islam against it is also as old as that.

98. Here رِزْق (*rizq*) implies two things: provision of the knowledge of the Truth and provision of the necessities of life from Allah. In the first sense, it refers to the same thing that has been declared in this Sūrah by Prophets Muhammad, Noah and Salih (Allah's peace be upon them all), that is, "Allah bestowed on me by revelation that knowledge of the Truth, which I already had gained by making keen observations of my own self and of the phenomena of Nature. Therefore I cannot be a party to your evil creeds and unlawful practices." In the second sense, it is the answer to this taunt of theirs: "Indeed you are the only generous and righteous person left in the land!" It meant, so to say, this: "When my Lord has bestowed on me both the knowledge of the Truth and the good and lawful provisions of life, your taunts cannot turn this favour into disfavour. Therefore I cannot be so ungrateful to Him as to declare your deviations to be the truth and your unlawful practices lawful."

99. That is, "It is a proof of the truth of my claim that I myself practise what I preach to you. For instance, if I had forbidden you to visit the shrines of gods and goddesses but had myself become the guardian of some such shrine, you would have been justified in bringing this charge against me that I was preaching the Doctrine of *Tauhid* merely for the sake of ruining the "business" of others in

order to make room for my own trade. Likewise, if I had prohibited the use of unlawful means for you but had myself applied the same in my own trade, you would have been justified in charging me with preaching honesty merely for winning good reputation for the prosperity of my own trade; But you youlselves are a witness to this that I myself abstain from those evils which I forbid you to practise and I keep myself pure from those blemishes of which I desire to cleanse you and I follow the way to which I invite you. All this is a clear proof that I believe in the truth of the Message I am conveying to you."

100. That is, "Your land is not far from the land of the people of Lot, which has been totally destroyed. It is quite near and what happened did not take place long ago."

101. Prophet Shu'aib brought the attribute of love of Allah for His creation specially to the notice of his people in order to induce them to give up despair and turn to Allah for forgiveness for their evil deeds, so as to say, "Allah is not hard-hearted and cruel, and cherishes no feelings of enmity towards His creatures. He does not desire to punish them anyhow as if He were to derive pleasure from their torture. As a matter of fact, He inflicts punishment on you only when you transgress all limits and that, too, for the good of mankind. Therefore if you feel ashamed of your sins and repent of these, you will find Him Forbearing, for He loves His creation very much."

The Holy Prophet has explained the same thing by citing a parable. He said, "Suppose one of you was travelling in a waterless desert and lost his camel on whom he had laden all his provisions for the journey. He made a thorough search for the missing camel, but in vain. Then, in despair of his life, he lay down under a tree. When, lo, the camel with all the provisions intact on it appeared all of a sudden before him. Just imagine his happiness. Allah is more pleased than that man, when a sinful servant returns to Him in penitence." There is another incident even more effective than this related by Hadrat 'Umar: "Once some prisoners of war were brought before the Holy Prophet. One of them was a mother whose infant child had been lost. This had made her so restless and uneasy that she would hold any child she came across close to her breasts and suckle it. When the Holy Prophet saw this, he put this question to the bystanders: 'Can you imagine that this mother would ever throw her own child into the fire?' We replied, 'Never'; not to speak of throwing it into the fire, she would do her utmost in every possible way to prevent it from falling into the fire'." Then the Holy Prophet said, "Allah is much more merciful to His servants than this mother is to her child."

Let us consider the same thing from another point of view. It is Allah Who has created love in the hearts of the mother and the father for their child, and

without this parental love, they would never have shown the care and the sacrifice they shower on their child; nay, they would have even become its enemies because of the trouble and inconvenience they have to bear for it. From this it is quite evident that the love of the Creator of this parental affection for His own Creation must be far greater than this parental love.

102. They did not understand what Prophet Shu'aib said to them not because he talked to them in some foreign language or because the theme was too difficult or complicated for them, for he talked to them in their own language and his theme was simple and clear. As a matter of fact, they did not understand because they would not. Their crooked thinking left neither any desire nor any aptitude for understanding his talk. And this is true of all those people who become such slaves of their prejudices and lusts as render them incapable of accepting anything against their preconceived notions. For they are neither inclined to listen to such things nor understand them as though these things were not for them nor were they for them.

103. While studying this part of the story of Prophet Shu'aib, it should be kept in view that similar conditions were prevalent at Makkah at the time of the revelation of this story. The Quraish were as blood thirsty to kill the Holy Prophet as were the people of Madian to take the life of Prophet Shu'aib. Just as the people of Prophet Shu'aib desisted from this evil design because they were afraid of his family, likewise the Quraish were afraid of Bani Hashim and refrained from executing their evil designs. So this story was being related to warn the Quraish that they should learn a lesson from the answer of Prophet Shu'aib (vv. 92-93), as if to say, "O people of Quraish ! This same is the answer to you from Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him)".

لِّمَدْيَنَ كَمَا بَعِدَتْ ثَمُوْدُ ﴿٩٥﴾ وَلَقَدْ اَرْسَلْنَا مُوْسٰى بِاٰيٰتِنَا وَسُلْطٰنٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿٩٦﴾
إِلٰى فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَا۟ئِهٖ فَاتَّبَعُوْۤا اَمْرَ فِرْعَوْنَ ۚ وَمَاۤ اَمْرُ فِرْعَوْنَ بِرَشِيْدٍ ﴿٩٧﴾ يَقْدُمُ
قَوْمَهٗ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ فَاَوْرَدَهُمُ النَّارَ ؕ وَبِئْسَ الْوِرْدُ الْمَوْرُوْدُ ﴿٩٨﴾ وَاُتْبِعُوْا فِيْ هٰذِهٖ
لَعْنَةً وَّيَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ ؕ بِئْسَ الرِّفْدُ الْمَرْفُوْدُ ﴿٩٩﴾ ذٰلِكَ مِنْ اَنْۢبَآءِ الْقُرٰى نَقُصُّهٗ
عَلَيْكَ مِنْهَا قَآئِمٌ وَّحَصِيْدٌ ﴿١٠٠﴾ وَمَا ظَلَمْنٰهُمْ وَلٰكِنْ ظَلَمُوْۤا اَنْفُسَهُمْ فَمَاۤ اَغْنَتْ
عَنْهُمْ اٰلِهَتُهُمُ الَّتِيْ يَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ لَّمَّا جَآءَ اَمْرُ رَبِّكَ ؕ
وَمَا زَادُوْهُمْ غَيْرَ تَتْبِيْبٍ ﴿١٠١﴾ وَكَذٰلِكَ اَخْذُ رَبِّكَ اِذَاۤ اَخَذَ الْقُرٰى وَهِيَ ظَالِمَةٌ ؕ
اِنَّ اَخْذَهٗۤ اَلِيْمٌ شَدِيْدٌ ﴿١٠٢﴾ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيَةً لِّمَنْ خَافَ عَذَابَ الْاٰخِرَةِ ؕ ذٰلِكَ
يَوْمٌ مَّجْمُوْعٌ ۙ لَّهُ النَّاسُ وَذٰلِكَ يَوْمٌ مَّشْهُوْدٌ ﴿١٠٣﴾ وَمَا نُؤَخِّرُهٗۤ اِلَّا لِاَجَلٍ
مَّعْدُوْدٍ ﴿١٠٤﴾ يَوْمَ يَاْتِ لَا تَكَلَّمُ نَفْسٌ اِلَّا بِاِذْنِهٖ ۚ فَمِنْهُمْ شَقِيٌّ وَّسَعِيْدٌ ﴿١٠٥﴾
فَاَمَّا الَّذِيْنَ شَقُوْا فَفِي النَّارِ لَهُمْ فِيْهَا زَفِيْرٌ وَّشَهِيْقٌ ﴿١٠٦﴾ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا مَا
دَامَتِ السَّمٰوٰتُ وَالْاَرْضُ اِلَّا مَا شَآءَ رَبُّكَ ؕ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ فَعَّالٌ لِّمَا يُرِيْدُ ﴿١٠٧﴾ وَاَمَّا
الَّذِيْنَ سُعِدُوْا فَفِي الْجَنَّةِ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا مَا دَامَتِ السَّمٰوٰتُ وَالْاَرْضُ اِلَّا مَا
شَآءَ رَبُّكَ ؕ عَطَآءً غَيْرَ مَجْذُوْذٍ ﴿١٠٨﴾ فَلَا تَكُ فِيْ مِرْيَةٍ مِّمَّا يَعْبُدُ هٰۤؤُلَآءِ ؕ مَا
يَعْبُدُوْنَ اِلَّا كَمَا يَعْبُدُ اٰبَآؤُهُمْ مِّنْ قَبْلُ ؕ وَاِنَّا لَمُوَفُّوْهُمْ نَصِيْبَهُمْ غَيْرَ
مَنْقُوْصٍ ﴿١٠٩﴾ وَلَقَدْ اٰتَيْنَا مُوْسَى الْكِتٰبَ فَاخْتُلِفَ فِيْهِ ؕ وَلَوْلَا كَلِمَةٌ سَبَقَتْ
مِنْ رَّبِّكَ لَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ ؕ وَاِنَّهُمْ لَفِيْ شَكٍّ مِّنْهُ مُرِيْبٍ ﴿١١٠﴾ وَاِنَّ كُلًّا لَّمَّا
لَيُوَفِّيَنَّهُمْ رَبُّكَ اَعْمَالَهُمْ ؕ اِنَّهٗ بِمَا يَعْمَلُوْنَ خَبِيْرٌ ﴿١١١﴾ فَاسْتَقِمْ كَمَاۤ اُمِرْتَ وَمَنْ
تَابَ مَعَكَ وَلَا تَطْغَوْا ؕ اِنَّهٗ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ بَصِيْرٌ ﴿١١٢﴾ وَلَا تَرْكَنُوْۤا اِلَى الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا

And We sent Moses with Our Signs and a manifest authority of appointment to Pharaoh and the chiefs of his kingdom. But they followed the command of Pharaoh and unrighteous was Pharaoh's command. On the Day of Resurrection, he will head his people and lead them to Hell.[104] What a wretched goal for one to reach! Curse has fallen on them in this world and shall also fall on them on the Day of Resurrection. What an evil reward for one to receive ! 96-99

This is the story of some of the habitations We are relating to you; some of these are still standing while the others have been mown down. We were not unjust to them but they were unjust to themselves. And when the judgement of your Lord came to pass, those deities of theirs, whom they worshipped instead of Allah, availed them not at all: they only hastened their ruin. They did them no good but caused their destruction and ruin. 100-101

And when your Lord seizes a sinful town, He seizes it like this: indeed His seizure is very terrible and painful. In fact, there is a Sign in this for everyone who dreads the Torment of the Hereafter:[105] that will be the Day when all the people shall gather together and will witness everything that will happen there. We are deferring that only for a fixed term. When that Day will come, no one shall dare speak a word except with Allah's permission.[106] Then some people shall be damned, while others blessed. Those who shall be damned shall go to Hell: here they will pant and hiss (because of thirst). Therein they shall abide for ever as long as the earth and the heavens shall last[107] unless your Lord ordains otherwise. Indeed your Lord has full powers to do as He will.[108] As for those who shall be blessed they will go to the Garden and dwell therein for ever as long as the earth and the heavens shall last, unless your Lord wills something else.[109] They will be blessed with a boon that will be imperishable. 102-108

So, O Prophet have no doubt concerning the deities they worship for they blindly imitate and worship what their forefathers worshipped before them.[110] And We will give them the full measure of their share without detracting anything from it. 109

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104. From this verse and some other narrations of the Qur'ān it appears that the leaders of a community in this world will be its leaders also on the Day of Resurrection. If they guided and led the people towards virtue, righteousness and

truth in this world, their followers will gather together under their banner on the Day of Resurrection and march to the Garden under their leadership. On the other hand, if they called people to some deviation, immorality or unrighteous ways their followers will follow them there also, and march to the fire of Hell under their leadership. The Holy Prophet explained this thing in a Tradition: "On the Day of Resurrection, the banner of the poets of "Ignorance" will be in the hands of Imra-ul-Quais, and all of them will march towards Hell under his leadership."

Now let us try to picture the march-past of these two processions. It is obvious that the first procession will march happily and joyously, praying for and praising their leaders whose guidance had led them to this happy state of marching to the blessed Paradise. On the other hand, when the followers of the leaders of errors will find themselves in the miserable plight, to which the leaders had brought them, naturally their anger against them will be beyond description. For the followers will march towards Hell, abusing and cursing their leaders, who had brought them to that horrible state of torture.

105. That is, "In these historical events there is a sign which will show conclusively to the one who considers this deeply that the torment of the Hereafter is inevitable, as warned by the Messengers. One can also judge from this how terrible it will be. This knowledge will fill one with such fear that will keep one on the Straight Way."

Now let us consider the question: How are these historical events a Sign of the Hereafter and the chastisement therein. Everyone who makes a critical study of history with this consideration that it is not merely a collection of events but also a means of drawing logical conclusions, will find that the rise and fall of communities and nations has been taking place in a regular succession. Moreover, one will find that this rise and fall takes place in accordance with some moral laws in an extraordinary way. This is a clear proof that man is subordinate to the Sovereign, Who is ruling over the universe in accordance with some rational moral laws. Accordingly, He raises up those who keep the moral limits above a certain minimum standard set for this purpose and degrades those who fall below it. Then He gives respite to the latter to mend their ways, but if they do not avail of it and continue their downward march and fall below the limit set for their complete degradation, He annihilates them in a way as to serve as a lesson for others. The fact that these events always take place in a regular cycle leaves no shadow of doubt that rewards and punishments are permanent parts of the law of His Kingdom.

A further consideration of the chastisements that were inflicted on different communities shows that, though these punishments fulfilled the demands of justice to some extent, there was still need of more to fulfil all the demands of

justice, for these criminals were punished only for those sins which they themselves committed but not for those committed by the succeeding communities, which followed the bad example left by them as their predecessors. It is obvious from the study of history that the law of retribution must take its course and justice demands that they should be punished for the evil legacy they left for others to follow after them. Commonsense and justice demand that life in this world should be reproduced in its entirety in order to fulfil all the demands of the law of retribution. The just Sovereign will, therefore, bring into existence all those people for this purpose and award them due punishments.

(Please see also E.N. 10 of *Yūnus*).

106. This is to warn these foolish people who depend on the promises of their intercessors that they would protect them from the torment of the Day. They have been warned to desist from the evil deeds they are committing in the hope that their intercessors would not rest content till they succeed in obtaining from Allah permits of forgiveness for their sinful followers. This is because they believe them to be the beloved favourites of Allah Who cannot afford to displease them at any cost. Then they have been told that, not to speak of wielding any such influence, they shall not dare utter a word except with His permission. No saint, no angel, howsoever high, is so powerful or influential as to speak a word or make any recommendation in the Court of the Highest Sovereign unless He Himself permits it. Therefore such people as make offerings to others than Allah will be utterly disillusioned and disappointed on that Day, for they will come to know that they were foolish in relying on their intercessors and committing evil deeds in the world in the hope that they would deliver them from the torment of the Day.

107. In vv. 105-106, the words "the earth and the heavens" might have been used idiomatically to denote the everlasting state of their torment or they might refer to the new earth and the heavens that will be made in the Next World. Any how these cannot be the earth and the heavens in the existing state for two reasons. First, according to the Qur'ān, they shall be changed on the Day of Resurrection. Secondly, the events that are being related in these verses will happen in the Hereafter.

108. This is to emphasize that there is no power that can deliver them from that everlasting torment. Of course, Allah has full powers to forgive anyone He wills or to make a change in the term of the torment of anyone, for He Himself devises laws for Himself and there is no law higher than His Law so as to limit His powers.

[Contd. on p. 372

فَتَمَسَّكُمُ النَّارُ ۙ وَمَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ مِنْ اَوْلِيَآءَ ثُمَّ لَا تُنْصَرُوْنَ ﴿113﴾ وَاَقِمِ
الصَّلٰوةَ طَرَفَيِ النَّهَارِ وَزُلَفًا مِّنَ الَّيْلِ ۭ اِنَّ الْحَسَنٰتِ يُذْهِبْنَ السَّيِّاٰتِ ۭ ذٰلِكَ
ذِكْرٰى لِلذّٰكِرِيْنَ ﴿114﴾ وَاصْبِرْ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يُضِيْعُ اَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿115﴾ فَلَوْلَا كَانَ
مِنَ الْقُرُوْنِ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ اُولُوْا بَقِيَّةٍ يَّنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْفَسَادِ فِي الْاَرْضِ اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا
مِّمَّنْ اَنْجَيْنَا مِنْهُمْ ۚ وَاتَّبَعَ الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا مَآ اُتْرِفُوْا فِيْهِ وَكَانُوْا مُجْرِمِيْنَ ﴿116﴾
وَمَا كَانَ رَبُّكَ لِيُهْلِكَ الْقُرٰى بِظُلْمٍ وَّاَهْلُهَا مُصْلِحُوْنَ ﴿117﴾ وَلَوْ شَآءَ رَبُّكَ
لَجَعَلَ النَّاسَ اُمَّةً وَّاحِدَةً وَّلَا يَزَالُوْنَ مُخْتَلِفِيْنَ ﴿118﴾ اِلَّا مَنْ رَّحِمَ رَبُّكَ ۭ وَ
لِذٰلِكَ خَلَقَهُمْ ۭ وَتَمَّتْ كَلِمَةُ رَبِّكَ لَاَمْلَــَٔنَّ جَهَنَّمَ مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ
اَجْمَعِيْنَ ﴿119﴾ وَكُلًّا نَّقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ اَنْۢبَاۗءِ الرُّسُلِ مَا نُثَبِّتُ بِهٖ فُؤَادَكَ ۚ وَ
جَاۗءَكَ فِيْ هٰذِهِ الْحَقُّ وَمَوْعِظَةٌ وَّذِكْرٰى لِلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿120﴾ وَقُلْ لِّلَّذِيْنَ لَا
يُؤْمِنُوْنَ اعْمَلُوْا عَلٰي مَكَانَتِكُمْ ۭ اِنَّا عٰمِلُوْنَ ﴿121﴾ وَانْتَظِرُوْا ۭ اِنَّا مُنْتَظِرُوْنَ ﴿122﴾ وَ
لِلّٰهِ غَيْبُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَاِلَيْهِ يُرْجَعُ الْاَمْرُ كُلُّهٗ فَاعْبُدْهُ وَتَوَكَّلْ
عَلَيْهِ ۭ وَمَا رَبُّكَ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿123﴾

We gave the Book to Moses also before this and there arose differences regarding this (just as they are arising regarding the Book We have given to you.[111]) If a decree had not been made beforehand by your Lord, a judgement would have been passed long before this on those who have created differences.[112] It is a fact that they are in doubt and uncertainty about this, and it is also a fact that your Lord will give them full measure for their deeds, for He is fully aware of what they are doing. So, O Muhammad, you and your companions, (who have turned back from unbelief and rebellion to Faith and obedience), should stick firmly to the Right Way, as you have been enjoined, and should not transgress the bounds of submission. Allah is watching over what you are doing. Do not incline even in the least towards the workers of iniquity lest you should come within the reach of the Fire. Then you will find no protector to defend you against Allah nor will you get any help from any quarter. And listen ! Establish *Salāt* at the two ends of the day and in the early part of the night.[113] Indeed virtues remove evils. This is a reminder for those who remember Allah.[114] And practise fortitude, for Allah does not let go waste the reward of those who do good. 110-115

Then, why were there not among the communities before you such righteous persons who should have forbidden the people to make mischief in the land? If there were any, they were very few whom We saved from among those communities. The wrong-doers, however, pursued their worldly pleasures for which they had been abundantly provided, and became confirmed criminals. Your Lord is not such a One as to destroy the habitations without just cause, the while their inhabitants are doing right.[115] Your Lord could have made mankind one community had He so willed, but now they will continue to follow different ways but only those on whom Allah has His mercy (escape wrong ways). It will be so because He has created them for this (very freedom of choice and action).[116] And the word of your Lord, that He will fill the Hell with *jinns* and human beings, has been fulfilled. 116-119

And, O Muhammad, We relate the stories of the Messengers to you to strengthen your heart by these. And you have received the knowledge of the reality through these and the Believers have got an admonition and a reminder from them. 120

121-123 As regards those who do not believe, say to them, "You may go on following your way and We will follow our way. You may wait for its ultimate end, and we, too, will wait for it." Everything that is hidden in the heavens and the earth is in the power of Allah and everything shall return to Him. So, O Prophet, serve Him and put your trust in Him, for your Lord is not unaware of what you are doing.[117]

Contd. from p.369]

109. That is, "They will not be sent to the Garden nor will dwell there in accordance with any extraneous law which might have forced Allah to let them dwell therein anyhow. They shall dwell there simply because of His favour. He has full powers to make any changes, if He will, about them."

110. It does not mean at all that the Holy Prophet had any doubts concerning their deities. Though these words have been addressed to the Holy Prophet, as a matter of fact they are meant for the common people. What they mean is this: "No reasonable person should entertain any presumption that the people who worship the deities must have been convinced of their miraculous powers, otherwise they would not have worshipped them nor offered gifts to them nor invoked their help". The fact of the matter is that their worship, their offerings and their prayers are not based on any knowledge nor any experience,nor any real observation, but are the result of blind imitation of their forefathers. The proof of their falsehood is that the deities could not save them,when Allah's scourge visited their worshippers who were completely annihilated in spite of them.

111. It means this: "There is nothing new in the different opinions expressed by different people regarding the Qur'ān. They behaved in the same manner towards the Book that was given to Prophet Moses. Therefore, O Muhammad, do not be disheartened by their rejection of the Qur'ān, though its teachings are simple and plain."

112. This is to reassure the Holy Prophet and the believers that they should patiently wait for the consequences of the misbehaviour of the unbelievers towards the Qur'ān ways. But this will happen in due course as previously ordained by Allah for Allah does not make haste in passing judgement, though the people demand haste.

113. This was to urge *Salāt* at three times, that is, Morning, Evening and 'Isha. This shows that this was revealed before *Salāt* had been made obligatory for five times a day during the *Mi'rāj*. (For explanation, see E.N. 95 of XVII, E.N. 111 of XX, and E.N. 124 of XXX).

114. This is the remedy for eradicating evil from the world: "Do good deeds and defeat evil with them. The best way of making you virtuous is to establish *salāt*, which will remind you of Allah over and over again: which will produce those good characteristics in you that shall help you fight successfully against the systematic and united front of evil that has been formed against the Mission of the Truth. This will also enable you to establish practically the system of virtue and reform." (For explanation see E.N.'s 77-79 of XXIX).

115. In this passage, the real cause of the fall of the communities mentioned in vv. 25-99 has been pointed out in a very instructive manner. In reviewing their history Allah declares that the cause of the downfall of not only these but of all the former communities was this: when Allah bestowed His favours on them, they abused these favours and were so intoxicated with their own prosperity that they began to make mischief in the land. By and by their collective conscience became so corrupt that no righteous persons were left among them to forbid evil, and, if a few were left, their voice was so weak that they could not prevent them from causing mischief. As a result of this, evil became so strong and prevalent among them as to warrant the scourge of Allah. Otherwise Allah bears no enmity against His servants that He should destroy them without any just cause, while they were performing righteous works. This has been mentioned here for impressing the following three things:

First, it is imperative that there should be some persons who should invite the people to virtue and forbid evil. For Allah approves virtue only and tolerates evil for its sake so long as there is any potential good left in them. But when a community has no righteous persons left in it and contains only wicked ones, or even if there be some such righteous persons in it as are so weak that nobody pays any heed to them, and the community as a whole rushes headlong towards moral degradation, then Allah's scourge becomes its inevitable doom.

Second, a community, which tolerates everything and everyone except those few who invite it to righteous deeds seals its own doom and invites its destruction.

Third, it is clear from this passage that the destiny of a community is determined by the influence the righteous people can wield in it. If it contains such a number of good persons as may be able to eradicate evil and mischief and establish virtue and righteousness, a general scourge is withheld from it so as to afford an opportunity to them for carrying on their work of reform. On the other hand, if the number of the righteous persons in it remains too small to carry on the reform work, and the community does not tolerate them at all and does not allow them to perform their reform work, then that community incurs its own

destruction, for thus it proves itself to be a worthless community which has no justification for its existence. (For further explanation, See E.N. 34 of LI).

116. This is the answer to the objection raised in the name of تَقْدِیر *(taqdīr)* (destiny) against the principle that has been laid down in the preceding verse for the destruction of the wicked communities. It is this: Why should these communities be punished for lack of a sufficient number of righteous persons in them? Why didn't Allah Himself will to produce that sufficient number of righteous persons in it? Allah has answered this objection, so as to say: "It is not the will of Allah to bind mankind inherently to a fixed course of life as He has bound the vegetable and animal life. Had it been so, there would have been no need of sending the Messengers and the Books for inviting mankind to the Faith. For in that case all human beings would have been born-Muslims and born-Believers and there would have been no unbelief and no disobedience. But it is the will of Allah to grant freedom of choice and action to man so that he may be free to choose and follow any way of life. That is why He has left open both the way to Paradise and the way to Hell for man and given every individual and every community the opportunity to choose and follow either of the two ways with full freedom and win any of the two abodes as a result of one's own efforts and exertions. It is obvious that this scheme of Allah demands that it should be based on the freedom of choice and the option to adopt Faith or unbelief. This is why Allah does not compel a community to the right way if it itself intends to follow the wrong way, and plans and works for it. Allah's scheme does not interfere with the plans and works of such a community. When it makes deliberate arrangements to mould the wicked, unjust, and sinful people, He does not supply it with righteous persons by birth to set it right. Every community is free to produce good or bad people as it wills. And if a community wills to follow a wrong way as a community, leaving little room for the production and the development of the righteous people in order to raise up the standard of virtue, God does not will to coerce it to follow the righteous way. He will let it follow the way it chooses for itself with its inevitable consequences. On the contrary, Allah shows His mercy to that community which produces a sufficiently large number of such people as accept the invitation to virtue, and leaves room in its collective system for such people to work for its reform and purification. (For further explanation, See E.N. 24 of VI).

117. At the end of the discourse, Allah has warned the champions of *kufr*, and comforted the believers, so as to say, "Allah is closely watching the behaviours of both the parties in the conflict between *kufr* and Islam, and the Sovereign is fully aware of all that is happening in His Kingdom. He is watching and controlling everything with perfect wisdom. He will reward richly the champions of the Truth and will not let go waste their efforts and exertions. And

though He is showing tolerance to the champions of *kufr*, and giving them respite, He will take them to task because they are unjustly persecuting the standard bearers of the Truth and are spreading chaos in the land, and exerting their utmost to put obstacles in the way of the work of reform. All these things are in the knowledge of Allah and the evil-doers shall have to bear the consequences of their misdeeds, and the true believers will ultimately come out successful."



XII

YŪSUF (JOSEPH)

يُوسُف

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XII

YŪSUF (JOSEPH)

يُوسُف

INTRODUCTION

When and Why Revealed?

The subject-matter of this Sūrah indicates that it was revealed during the last stage of the Holy Prophet's residence at Makkah, when the Quraish were considering the question of killing or exiling or imprisoning him. At that time some of the unbelievers put this question (probably at the instigation of the Jews) to test him: "Why did the Israelites go to Egypt?" This question was asked because they knew that their story was not known to the Arabs for there was no mention of it whatever in their traditions and the Holy Prophet had never even referred to it before. Therefore they expected that he would not be able to give any satisfactory answer to this question or would first evade it, and afterwards try to enquire about it from some Jew, and thus he would be totally exposed. But, contrary to their expectations, the tables were turned on them, for Allah revealed the whole story of Prophet Joseph then and there, and the Holy Prophet recited it on the spot. This put the Quraish in a very awkward position because it not only foiled their scheme but also administered a warning to them by aptly applying it to their case, as if to say, "As you are behaving towards this Prophet, exactly in the same way the brothers of Prophet Joseph behaved towards him; so you shall meet with the same end."

Objects of Revelation

From the above it is clear that this Sūrah was sent down for two objects:

The first object was to give the proof of the Prophethood of Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him), and that too, the one demanded by the opponents themselves so as to prove conclusively that his knowledge was not based on mere hearsay, but was gained through Revelation. This aspect has been stated explicitly in its introductory verses and explained plainly in its concluding portion.

The second object was to apply it to the Quraish and warn them that ultimately the conflict between them and the Holy Prophet would end in his victory over them. As they were then persecuting their brother, the Holy Prophet, in the same way the brothers of Prophet Joseph had treated him. The Quraish were told indirectly that they would also fail in their evil designs just as the brothers of Prophet Joseph had failed in his case, even after casting him into the well. This is because none has the power to defeat the Divine will. And just as the brothers of Prophet Joseph had to humble themselves before him, so one day the Quraish shall have to beg forgiveness from their brother whom they were then trying to crush down. This, too, has been made quite plain in v. 7: "Indeed there are signs in this story of Joseph and his brothers for these inquirers from among the Quraish."

The fact is that by applying this story to the conflict, the Qur'ān had made a bold and clear prophecy, which was fulfilled literally by the events that happened in the succeeding ten years. Hardly two years had passed after its revelation, when the Quraish conspired to kill the Holy Prophet like the brothers of Prophet Joseph, and he had to emigrate from Makkah to Al-Madīnah, where he gained the same kind of power as Prophet Joseph had gained in Egypt. Again, in the end the Quraish had to humble themselves before him just like the brothers of Prophet Joseph, when they humbly requested, "Show mercy to us for Allah rewards richly those who show mercy" (*v.* 88), and Prophet Joseph generously forgave them, (though he had complete power to wreak vengeance on them,) saying, ". . . today no penalty shall be inflicted on you. May Allah forgive you: He is the greatest of all those who forgive" (*v.* 92). The same story of mercy was repeated, when after the conquest of Makkah, the crest-fallen Quraish stood meekly before the Holy Prophet, who had full power to wreak his vengeance on them for each and every cruelty committed by them. But instead, he merely asked them, "What treatment do you expect from me now?" They replied,

"You are a generous brother and the son of a generous brother." At this, he very generously forgave them, saying, "I will give the same answer to your request that Joseph gave to his brothers: '. . . today, no penalty shall be inflicted on you: you are forgiven'."

Topics of Discussion

Moreover, the Qur'ān does not relate this story as a mere narrative but uses it, as usual, for the propagation of the Message in the following ways:

Throughout the narrative the Qur'ān has made it clear that the faith of Prophets Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph (Allah's peace be upon them all) was the same as that of Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) and they invited the people to the same Message to which Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) was inviting them.

Then it places the characters of Prophet Jacob and Prophet Joseph side by side with the characters of the brothers of Joseph, the members of the trade caravan, the court dignitary, Al-'Azīz of Egypt and his wife, the "ladies" of Egypt and the rulers of Egypt and poses a silent question to the reader, as if to say, "Contrast the former characters moulded by Islam on the bedrock of the worship of Allah and accountability in the Hereafter with the latter moulded by *kufr* and "ignorance" on the worship of the world and disregard of Allah and the Hereafter, and decide for yourselves which of these two patterns you would choose."

The Qur'ān has used this story to bring forth another truth: whatever Allah wills, He fulfils it anyhow, and man can never defeat His plan with his counter-plans nor prevent it from happening nor change it in any way whatever. Nay, it often so happens that man adopts some measure to fulfil his own design and believes that he has done that very thing which would fulfil his design, but in the end he finds to his dismay that he had done something which was against his own and conducive to the Divine purpose. When the brothers of Prophet Joseph cast him into the well, they believed that they had once for all got rid of the obstacle in their way, but in fact, they had paved the way for the Divine purpose of making him the ruler of Egypt, before whom they would have to humble themselves in the end. Likewise, the wife of 'Azīz had sent Prophet Joseph to the prison, gloating over the thought

that she had wreaked her vengeance on him, but, in fact, she had provided for him the opportunity for becoming the ruler of Egypt and for putting herself to the shame of confessing her own sin publicly.

And these are not the solitary instances which prove the truth that even if the whole world united to bring about the down-fall of the one whom Allah willed to raise high, it could not succeed. Nay, the very "sure and effective" measures that were adopted by the brothers to degrade Joseph were used by Allah for the success of Joseph and for the humiliation and disgrace of his brothers. On the other hand, if Allah willed the fall of one, no measure, howsoever effective, could raise him high: nay, it helped to bring about his fall and the disgrace of those who adopted them.

Moreover, the story contains other lessons for those who intend to follow the way of Allah. The first lesson it teaches is that one should remain within the limits, prescribed by the Divine Law, in one's aims and objects and measures, for success and failure are entirely in the hands of Allah. Therefore if one adopts pure aims and lawful measures but fails, at least one will escape ignominy and disgrace. On the other hand, the one who adopts an impure aim and unlawful measures to achieve it, shall not only inevitably meet with ignominy and disgrace in the Hereafter, but also runs the risk of ignominy and disgrace in this world.

The second lesson it teaches is that those who exert for the cause of truth and righteousness and put their trust in Allah and entrust all their affairs to Him, get consolation and comfort from Him, for this helps them face their opponents with confidence and courage and they do not lose heart, when they encounter the apparently terrifying measures of the powerful enemies. They will persevere in their task without fear and leave the results to Allah.

But the greatest lesson this story teaches is that if the Believer possesses true Islamic character and is endowed with wisdom, he can conquer a whole country with the strength of his character alone. The marvellous example of Prophet Joseph teaches us that a man of high and pure character comes out successful even under the most adverse circumstances. When Prophet Joseph went to Egypt, he was only a lad of seventeen years, a foreigner, all alone and without any provisions;

nay, he had been sold there as a slave. And the horrible condition of the slaves during that period is known to every student of history. Then he was charged with a heinous moral crime and sent to prison for an indefinite term. But throughout this period of affliction, he evinced the highest moral qualities which raised him to the highest rank in the country.

Historical and Geographical Background

The following historical and geographical details will help understand the story:

Prophet Joseph was a son of Prophet Jacob and a grandson of Prophet Isaac and a great grandson of Prophet Abraham (Allah's peace be upon them all). The Bible says (and the allusions in the Qur'ān also confirm this) that Prophet Jacob had twelve sons from four wives. Prophet Joseph and his younger brother Benjamin were from one wife and the other ten from the other wives. Prophet Jacob had settled at Hebron (Palestine) where his father Prophet Isaac and before him Prophet Abraham lived and owned a piece of land at Shechem as well.

According to the research scholars of the Bible, Prophet Joseph was born in or about 1906 B.C. and the incident with which this story begins happened in or about 1890 B.C. He was seventeen when he saw the dream and was thrown into the well. This well was near Dothan to the north of Shechem according to Biblical and Talmudic traditions, and the caravan, which took him out of the well, was coming from Gilead (Trans-Jordan), and was on its way to Egypt.

At that time Fifteenth Dynasty ruled over Egypt, whose rulers are known in history as the Hyksos kings. They belonged to the Arab race, but had migrated from Palestine and Syria to Egypt in or about 2000 B.C. and taken possession of the country. The Arab historians and the commentators of the Qur'ān have given them the name of *'Amālīq* (the Amalekites), and this has been corroborated by the recent researches made by the Egyptologists. They were foreign invaders who had got the opportunity of establishing their kingdom because of the internal feuds in the country. That is why there was no prejudice in the way of Prophet Joseph's ascendancy to power and in the subsequent settlement of the Children of Israel in the most fertile region of Egypt.

They could gain that power and influence which they did, because they belonged to the same race as the foreign rulers of Egypt.

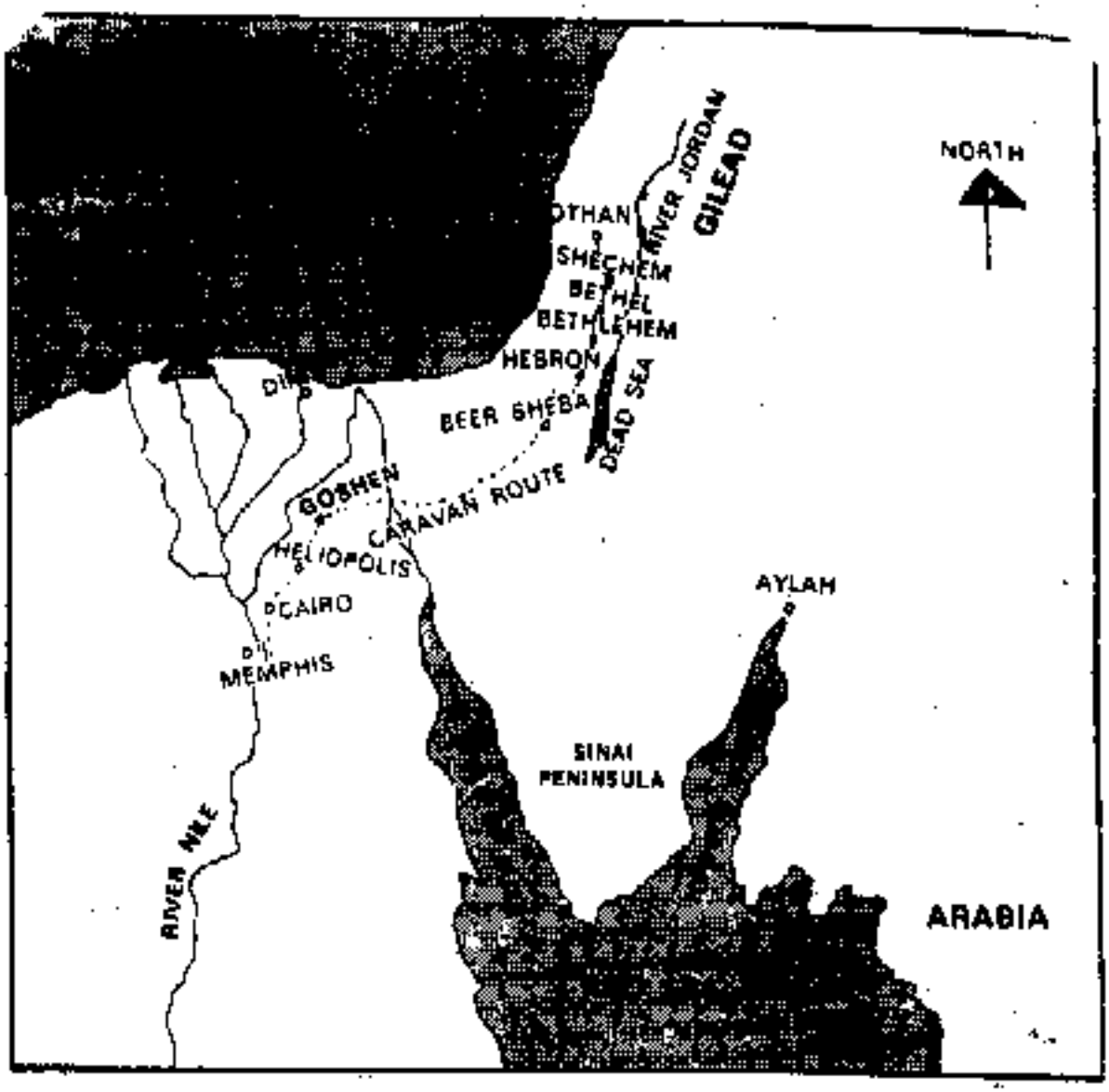
The Hyksos ruled over Egypt up to the end of the fifteenth century B.C., and practically all the powers remained in the hands of the Israelites. The Qur'ān has made a reference to this in v. 20 of *Al-Mā'idah:* "....He raised Prophets among you and made you rulers..." Then there arose a great nationalist movement which overthrew the power of this dynasty and exiled 250,000 or so of the Amalekites. As a result of this, a very bigoted dynasty of Copts came into power and uprooted everything connected with the Amalekites. Then started that persecution of the Israelites which has been mentioned in connection with the story of Prophet Moses.

We also learn from the history of Egypt that the "Hyksos kings" did not acknowledge the gods of Egypt and, therefore, had imported their own gods from Syria, with a view to spreading their own religion in Egypt. This is the reason why the Qur'ān has not called the king who was the contemporary of Prophet Joseph by the title of "Pharaoh," because this title was associated with the religion of the original people of Egypt and the Hyksos did not believe in it, but the Bible erroneously calls him "Pharaoh". It appears that the editors of the Bible had the misunderstanding that all the kings of Egypt were "Pharaohs."

The modern research scholars who have made a comparative study of the Bible and the Egyptian history are generally of the opinion that Apophis was the Hyksos king, who was the contemporary of Prophet Joseph.

At that time Memphis was the capital of Egypt, whose ruins are still found on the Nile at a distance of 4 miles south of Cairo. When Prophet Joseph was taken there, he was 17 or 18 years old. He remained in the house of 'Azīz for three years and spent nine years in prison, and then became the ruler of the land at the age of thirty and ruled over Egypt independently for eighty years. In the ninth or tenth year of his rule he sent for his father, Prophet Jacob, to come from Palestine to Egypt with all the members of his family and, according to the Bible, settled them in the land of Goshen, where they lived up to the time of Prophet Moses. The Bible says that before his death, Prophet Joseph bound his kindred by an oath: "when you return from this country to the

MAP RELATING TO THE STORY OF PROPHET JOSEPH



1. Dothan is the place where according to the Old testament, the brothers of Prophet Joseph "cast him into a pit" (Gen. 37:24)

2. Shechem: Here Prophet Jacob had his ancestral piece of land. Now it is called Nablus

3. Hebron is the place where Prophet Jacob lived is called Al-Khalil also.

4. Memphis was the capital of ancient Egypt, which is now called Minif

5. Goshen is the land where Prophet Joseph settled his father and brothers in Egypt. (Gen. 47:6,11)

house of your fore-fathers you must take my bones out of this country with you. So he died a hundred and ten years old, and they embalmed him....."

Though the story of Prophet Joseph as given in the Qur'ān differs very much in its details from that given in the Bible and the Talmud, the Three generally agree in regard to its component parts. We shall explain the differences, when and where necessary, in our Explanatory Notes.



الٓرٰ ۚ تِلْكَ اٰيٰتُ الْكِتٰبِ الْمُبِيْنِ ۙ﴿۱﴾ اِنَّاۤ اَنْزَلْنٰهُ قُرْءٰنًا عَرَبِيًّا لَّعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُوْنَ ۚ﴿۲﴾
نَحْنُ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ اَحْسَنَ الْقَصَصِ بِمَاۤ اَوْحَيْنَاۤ اِلَيْكَ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنَ ۖ وَاِنْ كُنْتَ
مِنْ قَبْلِهٖ لَمِنَ الْغٰفِلِيْنَ ۚ﴿۳﴾ اِذْ قَالَ يُوْسُفُ لِاَبِيْهِ يٰۤاَبَتِ اِنِّيْ رَاَيْتُ اَحَدَ
عَشَرَ كَوْكَبًا وَّالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ رَاَيْتُهُمْ لِيْ سٰجِدِيْنَ ۚ﴿۴﴾ قَالَ يٰبُنَيَّ لَا تَقْصُصْ

XII

YŪSUF (JOSEPH)

يوسف

Verses. 111 *Revealed at Makkah*

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

1-3 *Alif Lām Rā.* These are the verses of the Book that makes its object perfectly clear. We have sent it down as Qur'ān[1] in Arabic so that you (Arabs) may understand it well.[2] O Muhammad, by revealing this Qur'ān to you, We narrate to you events and truths in the best manner: though before this you were utterly unaware (of these things).[3]

4 This is the narrative of that time, when Joseph said to his father, "O father, I have seen in a dream eleven stars and the sun and the moon; I saw that they were prostrating themselves before me."

1. The Arabic word قُرْآن *(Qur'ān:* "to read") is originally the infinitive form of the verb قَرَأَ When the infinitive form of a verb in Arabic is used as a name, it implies that that thing (or person) possesses the characteristics in their perfection. This Book has been named "Qur'ān" to indicate that it is meant to be read by all and sundry and is to be read often and over and over again.

2. This does not mean that this Book has been sent down exclusively for the Arabs. What it means is only this: "Of all the people, O Arabs, you should understand the excellences of the Qur'ān, which are a sure proof of its being Divine Revelation, for it is in your own language and you have no excuse to put forward that it is in a foreign language which you do not understand."

Some people wrongly infer from this verse that this Book had been sent down for the Arabs and not for the non-Arabs; therefore, they assert, it cannot be claimed that it is the Guidance for the whole mankind. But obviously this is a frivolous objection raised by those who do not understand its real significance. It is obvious that a book, though meant for universal guidance, will necessarily have to be put in words in some language so that the people speaking that language should understand its teachings and then become the means of conveying its guidance to other peoples. This is the only natural way of spreading the message of a movement on a universal scale.

3. This was to impress indirectly on the unbelievers of Makkah the fact that the Messenger did not know anything about the story of the settlement of the Israelites in Egypt, but was being informed of this by Revelation from Allah. This introduction was necessary because, as has been stated in the preface to this Sūrah, the disbelievers had put an abrupt question concerning this matter in order to "expose" the Holy Prophet by this test. The answer is to this effect: "Tell them, O Muhammad, that, though you did not know anything about the settlement of the Israelites in Egypt before this, you have now received a Revelation about this from Us."

رُءْيَاكَ عَلٰٓى اِخْوَتِكَ فَيَكِيْدُوْا لَكَ كَيْدًا ۭ اِنَّ الشَّيْطٰنَ لِلْاِنْسَانِ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِيْنٌ ۝
وَكَذٰلِكَ يَجْتَبِيْكَ رَبُّكَ وَيُعَلِّمُكَ مِنْ تَاْوِيْلِ الْاَحَادِيْثِ وَيُتِمُّ نِعْمَتَهٗ
عَلَيْكَ وَعَلٰٓى اٰلِ يَعْقُوْبَ كَمَآ اَتَمَّهَا عَلٰٓى اَبَوَيْكَ مِنْ قَبْلُ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ وَاِسْحٰقَ ۭ
اِنَّ رَبَّكَ عَلِيْمٌ حَكِيْمٌ ۝ لَقَدْ كَانَ فِيْ يُوْسُفَ وَاِخْوَتِهٖٓ اٰيٰتٌ لِّلسَّاۗىِٕلِيْنَ ۝
اِذْ قَالُوْا لَيُوْسُفُ وَاَخُوْهُ اَحَبُّ اِلٰٓى اَبِيْنَا مِنَّا وَنَحْنُ عُصْبَةٌ ۭ اِنَّ اَبَانَا لَفِيْ
ضَلٰلٍ مُّبِيْنِۨ ۝ اقْتُلُوْا يُوْسُفَ اَوِ اطْرَحُوْهُ اَرْضًا يَّخْلُ لَكُمْ وَجْهُ اَبِيْكُمْ وَ
تَكُوْنُوْا مِنْۢ بَعْدِهٖ قَوْمًا صٰلِحِيْنَ ۝ قَالَ قَاۗىِٕلٌ مِّنْهُمْ لَا تَقْتُلُوْا يُوْسُفَ وَاَلْقُوْهُ
فِيْ غَيٰبَتِ الْجُبِّ يَلْتَقِطْهُ بَعْضُ السَّيَّارَةِ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ فٰعِلِيْنَ ۝ قَالُوْا يٰٓاَبَانَا مَا
لَكَ لَا تَاْمَنَّا عَلٰي يُوْسُفَ وَاِنَّا لَهٗ لَنٰصِحُوْنَ ۝ اَرْسِلْهُ مَعَنَا غَدًا يَّرْتَعْ وَيَلْعَبْ
وَاِنَّا لَهٗ لَحٰفِظُوْنَ ۝ قَالَ اِنِّيْ لَيَحْزُنُنِيْٓ اَنْ تَذْهَبُوْا بِهٖ وَاَخَافُ اَنْ يَّاْكُلَهُ
الذِّئْبُ وَاَنْتُمْ عَنْهُ غٰفِلُوْنَ ۝ قَالُوْا لَىِٕنْ اَكَلَهُ الذِّئْبُ وَنَحْنُ عُصْبَةٌ اِنَّآ
اِذًا لَّخٰسِرُوْنَ ۝ فَلَمَّا ذَهَبُوْا بِهٖ وَاَجْمَعُوْٓا اَنْ يَّجْعَلُوْهُ فِيْ غَيٰبَتِ الْجُبِّ ۚ وَاَوْحَيْنَآ
اِلَيْهِ لَتُنَبِّئَنَّهُمْ بِاَمْرِهِمْ هٰذَا وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُوْنَ ۝ وَجَاۗءُوْٓ اَبَاهُمْ عِشَاۗءً
يَّبْكُوْنَ ۝ قَالُوْا يٰٓاَبَانَآ اِنَّا ذَهَبْنَا نَسْتَبِقُ وَتَرَكْنَا يُوْسُفَ عِنْدَ مَتَاعِنَا فَاَكَلَهُ
الذِّئْبُ ۚ وَمَآ اَنْتَ بِمُؤْمِنٍ لَّنَا وَلَوْ كُنَّا صٰدِقِيْنَ ۝ وَجَاۗءُوْ عَلٰي قَمِيْصِهٖ بِدَمٍ
كَذِبٍ ۭ قَالَ بَلْ سَوَّلَتْ لَكُمْ اَنْفُسُكُمْ اَمْرًا ۭ فَصَبْرٌ جَمِيْلٌ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ الْمُسْتَعَانُ
عَلٰي مَا تَصِفُوْنَ ۝ وَجَاۗءَتْ سَيَّارَةٌ فَاَرْسَلُوْا وَارِدَهُمْ فَاَدْلٰى دَلْوَهٗ ۭ قَالَ
يٰبُشْرٰى هٰذَا غُلٰمٌ ۭ وَاَسَرُّوْهُ بِضَاعَةً ۭ وَاللّٰهُ عَلِيْمٌۢ بِمَا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ۝ وَشَرَوْهُ
بِثَمَنٍۢ بَخْسٍ دَرَاهِمَ مَعْدُوْدَةٍ ۚ وَكَانُوْا فِيْهِ مِنَ الزّٰهِدِيْنَ ۝ وَقَالَ

In response to this, his father said, "My little son, say nothing of this dream to your brothers, lest they should plot any evil scheme against you.[4] Be on your guard, for Satan is the avowed enemy of man. And it will happen so (as you have seen in your dream) that your Lord will choose you (for His work[5]) and impart you the full understanding of problems,[6] and will perfect His blessing upon you and upon the children of Jacob as He perfected it on your forefathers— Abraham and Isaac; surely your Lord is All-Knowing, All-Wise.[7] 5-6

Indeed there are Signs in this story of Joseph and his brothers for these inquirers. This is how the story begins: his brothers (held a consultation and) said to one another, "This Joseph and his brother[8] are dearer to our father than ourselves, even though we are a band. Truly our father seems to have lost his balance of mind.[9] Let us, therefore, kill Joseph or throw him somewhere so that your father's attention should be turned exclusively towards you. After this, you should again become righteous people."[10] At this one of them said, "Don't kill Joseph; but if you are bent on doing something, cast him into some dark well. Maybe some caravan passing by will take him out of it." After this consultation, they said to their father, "Father, why is it that you do not trust in us in regard to Joseph, though we are his sincere well-wishers? Send him with us tomorrow that he may freely eat and enjoy sport: we will take good care of him."[11] The father replied, "It troubles me that you should take him away with you, for I fear lest a wolf should eat him up, when you are off your guard." They replied, "If a wolf should eat him up in our company, when we are a band, we shall be worthless people indeed!" When, after persisting like this, they took him away with them, and decided to cast him into a dark well. We revealed this to Joseph: "A time will surely come when you will admonish them about this act of theirs; now they do not comprehend its consequences."[12] At nightfall they returned to their father, weeping and wailing, and said, "O father! we were absorbed in running races, and we had left Joseph with our things, when a wolf came and devoured him: but you will never believe us, even though we were truthful". And (in proof thereof) they had brought his shirt with the false blood upon it. Hearing this, the father said, "No! your evil souls have made this heinous act easy for you. I, however, will bear this patiently with a good grace."[13] And Allah alone can be asked for help regarding what 7-18

you are concocting."[14]

19-20 A caravan came there; they sent their water carrier and he let down his bucket in the well. (Seeing Joseph in it,) he cried aloud, "Good news! Here is a young lad." So they hid him as merchandise, but Allah knew well what they were doing. Then they sold him for a paltry price,[15] a few *dirhams*. And they did not expect a big price for him.

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4. As the meanings of the dream were quite obvious, Prophet Jacob had a genuine fear that Joseph's ten step-brothers would become all the more envious of him when they would hear this: So he warned his righteous son not to mention his dream to his brothers, for he knew that those sons of his did not bear the moral character worthy of the sons of a Prophet, and, therefore, they were up to any evil design against him out of mere envy. As regards the dream, the "sun" in it was Prophet Jacob, the "moon" his wife, (Prophet Joseph's step-mother) and the "eleven stars" his eleven brothers.

5. That is, "Bless him with Prophethood."

6. The Arabic words تَاوِيْلُ الْاَحَادِيْث of the Text do not mean merely "the interpretation of dreams", as has been generally understood. They are comprehensive and imply also this: "Allah will bless you with the full understanding of the problems of life and their solutions and will give you the insight to reach at the reality of every matter."

7. Here it should be noted that the response of Prophet Jacob to the dream of Prophet Joseph, according to the Bible and the Talmud, was quite different from this: "And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?" (*Gen.* 37: 10). Even a little thinking will help one to arrive at the conclusion that his reaction as narrated in the Qur'ān is worthy of the high character of Prophet Jacob and not the one found in the Bible and the Talmud. For Prophet Joseph had not expressed any personal ambition of his but merely narrated his dream. If the dream was a true one, and it is obvious that Prophet Jacob interpreted it, believing it to be true, there was no reason why he should rebuke his own son, for it meant that it was the will of God and not his own ambition that he should one day rise to a high rank. Can then one expect from any reasonable person, not to mention a Prophet, that he would take it ill and rebuke the one who dreamed such a dream? And can there ever be such a noble "father" who would say bitter and stinging things to his own son for the "sin" of telling him a true dream, prophesying his future greatness?

8. This brother was Benjamin. He was the real younger brother of Prophet Joseph, and was his junior by many years. Their mother had died at the birth of Benjamin. That is why Prophet Jacob paid special attention to these two motherless children. Besides, Joseph was the only son, in whom he had discerned signs of righteousness and capabilities. Accordingly, when Prophet Joseph narrated his dream to him, he was all the more convinced of his future greatness, and was perturbed at the idea lest his brothers conspired against him out of envy, if they came to know of his dream, which was self-explanatory. For Prophet Jacob knew that his other ten sons were not of the right type, and this was proved by the subsequent events. Therefore, naturally he was not happy with them. It is, however, strange that the Bible gives a different reason for the envy his brothers bore against Prophet Joseph. They were filled with envy against him because "Joseph gave unto his father their evil report."

9. In order to grasp the full significance of the "grievance" the ten sons had against their father for "neglecting" them, we should keep in view the conditions of the clannish life. As there was no established state, each clan led its own independent life side by side with other clans. It is obvious that the power of the head of the clan depended entirely on the number of sons and grand-sons, and brothers and nephews he had to defend the life, honour and property of the family. Therefore, the one leading the clannish life naturally paid more attention to one's own grown up sons, etc., than to children and women of the family. As Prophet Jacob was leading clannish life, these sons of his expected a preferential treatment from him, but the Prophet thought otherwise. So they remarked, "Truly our father seems to have lost his balance of mind; otherwise he could not have neglected us, and loved our two younger brothers more than us, for we are strong young men and can stand him in good stead at the time of need while these youngsters are useless as they themselves stand in need of protection."

10. This sentence depicts the true psychology of those people who give themselves up to the lusts of their hearts, and, at the same time, do not want to break away completely from faith and religion. This is how a person of this type behaves. Whenever he is tempted to do a certain evil thing, he makes up his mind to do it first and puts off the demands of his faith for the time-being. And if his conscience pricks him, he tries to soothe it, saying, "Have a little patience. Let me first do this evil thing, which is an obstacle in my way. Then I will repent and become as good as Thou desirest to see me." As the brothers of Prophet Joseph belonged to this type, they soothed their pricking consciences, saying, "After doing away with Joseph, who is the chief obstacle in our way, we will again become righteous."

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الَّذِي اشْتَرَاهُ مِن مِّصْرَ لِامْرَأَتِهِ أَكْرِمِي مَثْوَاهُ عَسَىٰ أَن يَنفَعَنَا أَوْ
نَتَّخِذَهُ وَلَدًا ۚ وَكَذَٰلِكَ مَكَّنَّا لِيُوسُفَ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلِنُعَلِّمَهُ مِن تَأْوِيلِ
الْأَحَادِيثِ ۚ وَاللَّهُ غَالِبٌ عَلَىٰ أَمْرِهِ وَلَٰكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢١﴾ وَلَمَّا
بَلَغَ أَشُدَّهُ آتَيْنَاهُ حُكْمًا وَعِلْمًا ۚ وَكَذَٰلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٢٢﴾ وَرَاوَدَتْهُ الَّتِي
هُوَ فِي بَيْتِهَا عَن نَّفْسِهِ وَغَلَّقَتِ الْأَبْوَابَ وَقَالَتْ هَيْتَ لَكَ ۚ قَالَ مَعَاذَ
اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ رَبِّي أَحْسَنَ مَثْوَايَ ۖ إِنَّهُ لَا يُفْلِحُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَلَقَدْ هَمَّتْ بِهِ ۖ وَ
هَمَّ بِهَا لَوْلَا أَن رَّأَىٰ بُرْهَانَ رَبِّهِ ۚ كَذَٰلِكَ لِنَصْرِفَ عَنْهُ السُّوءَ وَالْفَحْشَاءَ ۚ
إِنَّهُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُخْلَصِينَ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَاسْتَبَقَا الْبَابَ وَقَدَّتْ قَمِيصَهُ مِن دُبُرٍ
وَأَلْفَيَا سَيِّدَهَا لَدَا الْبَابِ ۚ قَالَتْ مَا جَزَاءُ مَنْ أَرَادَ بِأَهْلِكَ سُوءًا إِلَّا أَن
يُسْجَنَ أَوْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٥﴾ قَالَ هِيَ رَاوَدَتْنِي عَن نَّفْسِي وَشَهِدَ شَاهِدٌ
مِّنْ أَهْلِهَا ۖ إِن كَانَ قَمِيصُهُ قُدَّ مِن قُبُلٍ فَصَدَقَتْ وَهُوَ مِنَ الْكَاذِبِينَ ﴿٢٦﴾
وَإِن كَانَ قَمِيصُهُ قُدَّ مِن دُبُرٍ فَكَذَبَتْ وَهُوَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ ﴿٢٧﴾ فَلَمَّا رَأَىٰ
قَمِيصَهُ قُدَّ مِن دُبُرٍ قَالَ إِنَّهُ مِن كَيْدِكُنَّ ۖ إِنَّ كَيْدَكُنَّ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٢٨﴾ يُوسُفُ
أَعْرِضْ عَنْ هَٰذَا ۖ وَاسْتَغْفِرِي لِذَنبِكِ ۖ إِنَّكِ كُنتِ مِنَ الْخَاطِئِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾
وَقَالَ نِسْوَةٌ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ امْرَأَتُ الْعَزِيزِ تُرَاوِدُ فَتَاهَا عَن نَّفْسِهِ ۖ قَدْ
شَغَفَهَا حُبًّا ۖ إِنَّا لَنَرَاهَا فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٣٠﴾ فَلَمَّا سَمِعَتْ بِمَكْرِهِنَّ أَرْسَلَتْ
إِلَيْهِنَّ وَأَعْتَدَتْ لَهُنَّ مُتَّكَأً وَآتَتْ كُلَّ وَاحِدَةٍ مِّنْهُنَّ سِكِّينًا وَقَالَتِ
اخْرُجْ عَلَيْهِنَّ ۚ فَلَمَّا رَأَيْنَهُ أَكْبَرْنَهُ وَقَطَّعْنَ أَيْدِيَهُنَّ وَقُلْنَ حَاشَ لِلَّهِ مَا
هَٰذَا بَشَرًا ۚ إِنْ هَٰذَا إِلَّا مَلَكٌ كَرِيمٌ ﴿٣١﴾ قَالَتْ فَذَٰلِكُنَّ الَّذِي لُمْتُنَّنِي فِيهِ ۖ وَ

The person[16] who bought him in Egypt said to his wife,[17] "Deal kindly with him: maybe he proves useful to us, or we may adopt him as our son."[18] Thus We made a way for establishing Joseph in the land and arranged to teach him the understanding of affairs.[19] Allah does whatever He wills but most peeople do not understand this. 21

And when he reached his full maturity, We bestowed on him judgement and knowledge.[20] This is how We reward the righteous people. 22

Now the woman in whose house he was began to tempt him, and one day she closed the doors and said, "Come here." Joseph replied, "May Allah protect me from this! My Lord has given me a good abode: (and should I, then, misbehave like this?) Such workers of iniquity never fare well."[21] She advanced towards him, and he also would have advanced towards her, had he not perceived his Lord's argument.[22] This was so that We may remove indecency and immodesty from him;[23] indeed he was one of Our chosen servants. At last Joseph and she raced towards the door one behind the other and she rent his shirt (pulling it) from behind, and they met her husband at the door. Seeing him, she cried out, "What punishment does the one deserve who shows evil intentions towards your wife? What else than this that he should be put in prison or tortured with painful torment ?" Joseph said, "It was she who solicited me." At this a member of her own family gave the circumstantial evidence,[24] saying, "If the shirt of Joseph is rent from the front, the woman speaks the truth and he is a liar. And if his shirt is rent from the back, she speaks a lie and he is truthful."[25] When the husband saw that the shirt was rent from the back, he said, "This is one of your cunning devices; your devices are very cunning indeed ! Joseph ! leave this matter. And, O woman, beg forgiveness for your sin, for you were indeed the wrong-doer."[25a] 23-29

The women of the town began to talk about this matter, saying, "The wife of Al-'Azīz has been soliciting her young slave, for she has passionately fallen in love with him. We think that she is manifestly doing the wrong thing." When she heard about their cunning talk, she invited them to a banquet at her house and got ready pillows for the party[26] and placed before each of them a knife. Then, (when they were engaged in cutting fruit) she made a sign to Joseph, as if to say, "Come 30-31

out before them." When they caught sight of him, they were so amazed that they cut their hands, and exclaimed spontaneously, "Good God! He is no man; he is a noble angel!"

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11. In this thing also the Qur'ān differs from the Bible and the Talmud, according to which it was not the brothers, who requested their father to send Joseph with them but Prophet Jacob himself sent him with an errand to Shechem, where they were feeding their father's flocks. Obviously the version of the Qur'ān is more realistic, for Prophet Jacob could never have thought of sending his beloved son with them, because he knew it full well that they were envious of him, and sending him there would have been sending Joseph deliberately into the jaws of death.

12. The Arabic words وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ("they do not understand") may very appropriately mean three things. First, "We were comforting Joseph, and his brothers were quite unaware of this that a Revelation was being sent to him." Second, "You will let them know of this evil act of theirs in such circumstances that they can never even imagine you to be there." Third, "Today they are committing an evil act, but they do not know its future consequences."

There is no mention of this in the Bible and the Talmud that Allah sent a Revelation to comfort Prophet Joseph at that time of his affliction. On the contrary, the Talmud says that when he was thrown into the well, Prophet Joseph wept and cried aloud and implored his brothers for mercy, as if he was no better than any other lad of the desert, who would weep and cry if he were to be thrown into a well. But the picture the Qur'ān depicts is that of a young man, who is destined to play the part of a great personality in history.

13. The literal meaning of صَبْرٌ جَمِيلٌ "good patience" which implies a patience that enables one to endure all kinds of troubles and afflictions in a calm, self-possessed and unrepining manner, without complaining or crying or weeping, as is worthy of great minds.

14. Prophet Jacob's reaction to the news of Joseph's death, as depicted in the Qur'ān, is also different from that given in the Bible and the Talmud. According to them he was upset by the sad news and behaved like an ordinary father. The Bible says, "And Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days." (Gen: 37: 34). And the Talmud says that at the sad news Jacob gave himself up to the abandonment of grief, and lay with his face to the ground.... and refused to be comforted, and cried, 'Some wild

beast has devoured Joseph and I shall never see him more'; and he mourned for Joseph for many years. (The Talmud, H. Polano, pp. 78, 79).

When we contrast this picture with the one depicted in the Qur'ān, we clearly see that the Qur'ānic picture is that of a dignified and great personality. He is not upset in the least at hearing the sad news of his beloved son but at once gets to the bottom of the matter, and tells the envious brothers, "Your tale is false and fabricated." Then he shows "good patience" as a Prophet should and puts his trust in the help of God.

15. Though the matter of the disposal of Prophet Joseph by his brothers was simple, the Bible has made this very complicated. It is obvious that the brothers threw Joseph into the well and went away. Afterwards a caravan came there and pulled him out and carried him to Egypt where they sold him. But the Bible says that the brothers cast him into a pit; then a company of Ishmaelites came there and they agreed to sell him to them. But in the meantime the Midianite merchantmen had drawn and lifted up Joseph and sold him to the Ishmaelites who brought him into Egypt. (Gen. 37: 25-28). But the authors of the Bible forget this sale transaction and further on in v. 36 say that Prophet Joseph was sold in Egypt by the Midianites and not by the Ishmaelites as stated in v. 28. But the Talmudic version of the mauer is a little different from this. It says that the Midianites drew Joseph up from the pit and carried him along with them. As they passed by, the sons of Jacob saw Joseph with them and accused them of stealing their slave. At this a furious quarrel arose and they were ready to enter upon a bloody fray. But a bargain was concluded and the sons of Jacob sold their brother to the Midianites for twenty pieces of silver, who afterwards sold him to the Ishmaelites for the same amount. Then the Ishmaelites took him into Egypt and sold him there. Incidentally, it is this Talmudic version that has given rise to the tradition among the Muslims that the brothers of Joseph had sold him. But it should be noted that the Qur'ān does not confirm this tradition.

16. According to the Bible his name was Potiphar. But the Qur'ān mentions him merely by the title الْعَزِيز (Al-'Azīz). As the Qur'ān uses the same title for Prophet Joseph, when he rose to a high rank, it appears that the person held a high office or rank in Egypt, for the word عَزِيز ('Azīz) stands for a powerful person who cannot be opposed and disobeyed. The Bible and the Talmud say that he was an officer of Pharaoh's body guards and captain of the guard. And according to a tradition from Hadrat Ibn 'Abbās, related by Ibn Jarīr, he was the officer of the royal treasury.

17. According to the Talmud the name of his wife was Zelicha and she is known by the same name in the Muslim traditions. As regards the other tradition

among the Muslims that Prophet Joseph married her afterwards, it is neither based on the Qur'ān nor on the history of the Israelites. And the fact is that it is below the dignity of a Prophet to have married such a woman about whom he had personal knowledge that she was of a bad character. And this opinion is confirmed by this general statement of the Qur'ān: "Women of bad character are for men of bad character and men of bad character are for women of bad character. And the women of pure character are for men of pure character, and the men of pure character for the women of pure character...." (XXIV: 26.)

18. The fact that Potiphar had a very high opinion of Prophet Joseph from the very beginning is also confirmed by the Talmud and the Bible. The Talmud says that at this time Joseph was about eighteen years of age (and) Potiphar was very favourably impressed with his bearing and appearance. So he came to the conclusion that he belonged to some noble family and had been made a slave by the force of adverse circumstances. When the Midianites carried him before Potiphar, he said.... "He does not look like a slave and I fear he has been stolen from his country and his home." That is why Potiphar did not treat him like a slave, but put him incharge of his house and all his possessions. Likewise the Bible says, "And he left all that he had in Josep's hand; and he knew not ought he had, save the bread which he did eat." (Gen. 39: 6).

19. This verse alludes to the special training Prophet Joseph needed at that time for the performance of the duties of the high rank to which he was destined to rise. Up to that time, he had been brought up in the desert, under the environment of a semi-nomadic life of a shepherd. There was neither any settled state in Cana'ān and Northern Arabia nor had there been any appreciable progress in culture and civilization, for it was inhabited by different independent clans with no settled government. Thus it is obvious that the training that Prophet Joseph had received in Cana'an, had equipped him with the good characteristics of nomadic life coupled with the qualities of God-worship and high morality of the family of Prophet Abraham. But this was not enough to enable him to direct the affairs of Egypt, which was at that time one of the most cultured and civilized countries of the known world and required a different experience and training for the conduct of its affairs. The All-Powerful Allah made arrangements for this training and sent him to the house of an officer of a very high rank in Egypt, who entrusted him with full powers over his house and estate. This enabled him to develop all those latent abilities that were needed to fulfil his destiny, and he gained the experience that was required for the efficient conduct of the affairs of the kingdom of Egypt in the years to come.

20. By the use of such words as آتيناهُ حُكْمًا وعِلْمًا the Qur'ān usually means, "We bestowed on him Prophethood," for the Arabic word حُكْمًا *(hukmun)* stands

for both judgement and "authority" and عِلْماً *('ilman)* here stands for that Knowledge which is directly revealed to the Prophets by Allah. Thus, the Arabic words of the Text will mean: "We gave him the power and the authority and the knowledge needed for judging rightly the affairs of the people."

21. Generally the commentators and translators are of the opinion that Prophet Joseph used رَبِّي *(Rabbi:* "My Lord") for the master of the house, and what he meant to imply by way of argument was this: "My Lord has treated me very kindly and kept me well in the house. How can I, then, be so disloyal and ungrateful as to commit adultery with his wife?" I, however, strongly differ with such a translation and commentary. Though the Arabic usage of رَبّ *(rabb)* admits of such a meaning, I have two strong reasons against this here. First, it is far below the dignity of a Prophet to refrain from a sin because of the regard he had for some person other than Allah. Second, there is not a single instance in the Qur'ān that a Prophet ever called anyone other than Allah his "rabb." Prophet Joseph himself differentiates between his creed and that of the Egyptians making it plain that his رَبّ (*"rabb"*: Lord) was Allah, while they had made other human beings their "rabb". Then this verse should be considered from another point of view: when رَبِّي *("rabbi")* may also mean "My Lord", Prophet Joseph might have invoked Allah. Why should then one take the other meaning, "my master", which most surely implies something that is against the right creed?

22. "His Lord's argument" means inspiration from Allah to rouse his conscience to the fact that it was not worthy of him to yield to the temptation by the woman. As regards the question, "What was that argument", it has been stated in the preceding verse, that is, "My Lord has shown much kindness towards me. Should I, then, misbehave like this? Such workers of iniquity never fare well." This was the "Divine argument" that saved Prophet Joseph in the prime of youth from that great temptation.

The significance of "Joseph also would have advanced towards her, had he not seen his Lord's argument" is this: "Even a Prophet like Joseph (Allah's peace be upon him) could not have been able to save himself from sin, had not Allah guided him rightly with His argument. Incidentally, this verse makes plain the nature of the "Immunity" of Prophets from sin. It does not mean that a Prophet is infallible and incapable of committing any error, offence or sin or doing wrong or making a mistake. What it means is this: though a Prophet possesses passions, emotions, and carnal desires like other human beings, and is capable of committing a sin, he is so virtuous and God-fearing that he never deliberately cherishes any evil intentions, for he is endowed with such great arguments from

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لَقَدْ رَاوَدْتُّهٗ عَنْ نَّفْسِهٖ فَاسْتَعْصَمَ ؕ وَ لَئِنْ لَّمْ يَفْعَلْ مَاۤ اٰمُرُهٗ لَيُسْجَنَنَّ وَ
لَيَكُوْنًا مِّنَ الصّٰغِرِيْنَ ﴿۳۲﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ السِّجْنُ اَحَبُّ اِلَيَّ مِمَّا يَدْعُوْنَنِيْۤ اِلَيْهِ ۚ وَ
اِلَّا تَصْرِفْ عَنِّيْ كَيْدَهُنَّ اَصْبُ اِلَيْهِنَّ وَ اَكُنْ مِّنَ الْجٰهِلِيْنَ ﴿۳۳﴾ فَاسْتَجَابَ لَهٗ
رَبُّهٗ فَصَرَفَ عَنْهُ كَيْدَهُنَّ ؕ اِنَّهٗ هُوَ السَّمِيْعُ الْعَلِيْمُ ﴿۳۴﴾ ثُمَّ بَدَا لَهُمْ مِّنْۢ بَعْدِ
مَا رَاَوُا الْاٰيٰتِ لَيَسْجُنُنَّهٗ حَتّٰى حِيْنٍ ﴿۳۵﴾ وَ دَخَلَ مَعَهُ السِّجْنَ فَتَيٰنِ ؕ قَالَ اَحَدُهُمَاۤ
اِنِّيْۤ اَرٰىنِيْۤ اَعْصِرُ خَمْرًا ۚ وَ قَالَ الْاٰخَرُ اِنِّيْۤ اَرٰىنِيْۤ اَحْمِلُ فَوْقَ رَاْسِيْ خُبْزًا
تَاْكُلُ الطَّيْرُ مِنْهُ ؕ نَبِّئْنَا بِتَاْوِيْلِهٖ ۚ اِنَّا نَرٰىكَ مِنَ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿۳۶﴾ قَالَ لَا يَاْتِيْكُمَا
طَعَامٌ تُرْزَقٰنِهٖۤ اِلَّا نَبَّاْتُكُمَا بِتَاْوِيْلِهٖ قَبْلَ اَنْ يَّاْتِيَكُمَا ؕ ذٰلِكُمَا مِمَّا عَلَّمَنِيْ رَبِّيْ ؕ
اِنِّيْ تَرَكْتُ مِلَّةَ قَوْمٍ لَّا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِاللّٰهِ وَ هُمْ بِالْاٰخِرَةِ هُمْ كٰفِرُوْنَ ﴿۳۷﴾ وَ
اتَّبَعْتُ مِلَّةَ اٰبَآءِيْۤ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ وَ اِسْحٰقَ وَ يَعْقُوْبَ ؕ مَا كَانَ لَنَاۤ اَنْ نُّشْرِكَ بِاللّٰهِ
مِنْ شَيْءٍ ؕ ذٰلِكَ مِنْ فَضْلِ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْنَا وَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَ لٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا
يَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿۳۸﴾ يٰصَاحِبَيِ السِّجْنِ ءَاَرْبَابٌ مُّتَفَرِّقُوْنَ خَيْرٌ اَمِ اللّٰهُ الْوَاحِدُ
الْقَهَّارُ ﴿۳۹﴾ مَا تَعْبُدُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِهٖۤ اِلَّاۤ اَسْمَآءً سَمَّيْتُمُوْهَاۤ اَنْتُمْ وَ اٰبَآؤُكُمْ مَّاۤ
اَنْزَلَ اللّٰهُ بِهَا مِنْ سُلْطٰنٍ ؕ اِنِ الْحُكْمُ اِلَّا لِلّٰهِ ؕ اَمَرَ اَلَّا تَعْبُدُوْۤا اِلَّاۤ اِيَّاهُ ؕ
ذٰلِكَ الدِّيْنُ الْقَيِّمُ وَ لٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿۴۰﴾ يٰصَاحِبَيِ السِّجْنِ اَمَّاۤ
اَحَدُكُمَا فَيَسْقِيْ رَبَّهٗ خَمْرًا ۚ وَ اَمَّا الْاٰخَرُ فَيُصْلَبُ فَتَاْكُلُ الطَّيْرُ مِنْ رَّاْسِهٖ ؕ
قُضِيَ الْاَمْرُ الَّذِيْ فِيْهِ تَسْتَفْتِيٰنِ ﴿۴۱﴾ وَ قَالَ لِلَّذِيْ ظَنَّ اَنَّهٗ نَاجٍ مِّنْهُمَا اذْكُرْنِيْ
عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ ۖ فَاَنْسٰىهُ الشَّيْطٰنُ ذِكْرَ رَبِّهٖ فَلَبِثَ فِي السِّجْنِ بِضْعَ سِنِيْنَ ﴿۴۲﴾ وَ
قَالَ الْمَلِكُ اِنِّيْۤ اَرٰى سَبْعَ بَقَرٰتٍ سِمَانٍ يَّاْكُلُهُنَّ سَبْعٌ عِجَافٌ وَّ سَبْعَ سُنْۢبُلٰتٍ

She said, "Well, this is he concerning whom you blamed me. No doubt, I sought to seduce him and he escaped. Yet if he does not yield to my bidding, he shall be cast into prison, and shall be humbled and disgraced."[27] Joseph said, "My Lord! I prefer imprisonment to that to which they invite me. If Thou dost not ward off their cunning devices from me, I may be caught in their snare, and become one of the ignorant."[28] His Lord granted his prayer and warded off their guile from him.[29] Indeed, He hears everyone and knows everything. 32-34

Then it occurred to them that they should cast him into prison for a time, even though they themselves had seen manifest signs[30] (of his innocence and of the guilt of their women). 35

Two[31] other slaves also entered into the prison along with him.[32] One day one of them said, "I have dreamt that I am pressing grapes into wine," and the other said, "I have dreamt that I am carrying loaves of bread on my head, of which birds are eating." Then both of them said, "Tell us their interpretations, for we have seen that you are a righteous man."[33] Joseph replied, "I will tell you their interpretations before the food you get comes to you. This ability of making interpretations is a part of the knowledge that my Lord has bestowed on me. The fact is that I do not follow the ways of those people who do not believe in Allah, and deny the Hereafter. I follow the Way of my forefathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob: it is not for us to associate anyone with Allah as partner. This is Allah's bounty upon us and upon all mankind (that He has not made us the servants of any other than Himself), yet most people are not grateful. O my fellow prisoners, say, which is better: various gods or the One Omnipotent Allah? The gods you worship other than Him are nothing more than mere names you and your forefathers have invented, for Allah has sent down no authority for them. Sovereignty belongs to none but Allah. He has commanded that you shall not worship anyone but Him. This is the right and straight Way, but most people do not know this. My fellow prisoners, here are the interpretations of your dreams. One of you will serve wine to his lord (the king of Egypt): as for the other, he shall be crucified and birds will eat of his head. Thus has that matter been decreed whereof you enquired."[34] 36-41

Then to the one who he thought would be released, Joseph said, 42

"Mention me to your lord (the king of Egypt)". But Satan made him so neglectful that he forgot to mention him to his lord, and so Joseph remained in the prison for several years.[35]

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his Lord as do not allow the lusts of the flesh over-power the voice of his conscience. And if ever he succumbs inadvertently to any of the human weaknesses, Allah at once sends a Revelation to him to set him on the right path. For the consequences of his error do not remain confined to his own person but react on the whole mankind, for even his slightest error might mislead the world to the most horrible sins.

23. "....so that We may remove indecency and immodesty from him" implies two things. First, "It was because of Our grace that he could perceive Our argument, and save himself from sin, for We willed to remove indecency and immodesty from Our chosen servant." The second meaning is rather deeper: This incident took place in the life of Joseph because this was essential for his spiritual training: "It was Our will to pass him through this hard test so that he should become immune from indecency and immodesty, for he would have to apply all his powers of piety to withstand such a great temptation, and thus become really so strong as not to yield to such things in future as well". The importance and the need of such a hard training becomes quite obvious, if we keep in view the moral conditions of the Egyptian society of that period. We can have a glimpse of this from vv. 30-32. It appears that the women in general and the "ladies" of high society in particular, enjoyed almost the same sexual freedom as is rampant today in the "civilized" West and in the Westernized East. Allah made arrangements for the special training of Prophet Joseph in the house of his master because he had to perform his Divine Mission in a perverted society, and that too as a ruler and not as a common man. It is thus obvious from the behaviour of those "ladies" of high rank, who did not feel any shame nor modesty in openly admiring the beauty of the young slave and from that of the "lady" of the house who was not ashamed of confessing openly that she did her best to tempt him and would continue to do so, that they would have done all they could to allure the young handsome ruler. Thus Allah not only made Prophet Joseph strong enough to resist such temptations in future by passing him through the hard test, but also filled the ladies with despair of gaining any "success" in this matter.

24. It appears that when the master of the house came on the scene, he was accompanied by a person of his wife's household. When he heard the story of the incident, he made this proposal: "As each of them accuses the other and there is no eye-witness of what happened between the two, the matter should be decided by the help of the circumstancial evidence, by examining the condition of Joseph's

shirt." Obviously this was a very reasonable way of deciding the matter, and there was, therefore, no need to resort to a miracle. According to some traditions this witness was an infant, lying in the cradle, whom Allah had given the power of speech for giving this evidence. As this story is not supported by any authority, there is no reason why the obvious, plain and reasonable thing should not be accepted that the witness was a wise and experienced member of the family of the wife, instead of having resort to a miracle based on an unauthentic tradition.

25. This is what was implied in the evidence: "If Joseph's shirt is rent from the front, it means that Joseph is the aggressor and she has struggled to defend her honour. But if the shirt is rent from the back, it is obvious that he must have been running away from her and she must have been tugging from behind". The circumstancial evidence implied another thing. As the witness invited the master's attention to Prophet Joseph's shirt only, it meant that there was no sign at all of violence on the garments of the woman, for had he been the aggressor, there must have been some signs of violence on her garments.

25a. A comparative study of the story as given in the Qur'ān and in the Bible and the Talmud will be worthwhile.

The Bible says, "And she caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me: and he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out. And it came to pass, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand, and was fled forth, that she called unto the men of her house, and spake unto them, saying, See, he hath brought in an Hebrew unto us to mock us; he came in unto me to lie with me, and I cried with a loud voice: And it came to pass, when he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled, and got him out. And she laid up his garment by her, until his lord came home...And it came to pass, when his master heard the words of his wife, which she spake unto him, saying, After this manner did thy servant to me; that his wrath was kindled. And Joseph's master took him, and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were bound." (Gen. 39: 12-16, 19-20).

The clumsy manner of the above version is obvious. It appears from this that Prophet Joseph's garment was so shaped that the whole of it fell into her hands when she tugged it. Then he ran away all naked, leaving it with her, as if to supply her with a clear proof of his own guilt.

Now let us turn to the Talmud. It says '....hearing the accusation, Potiphar commanded at once that the lad should be whipped severely. Then he carried Joseph before the judges.....They ordered that the rent garment should be brought to them and upon an examination of the same, they pronounced Joseph "not guilty".' (The Talmud Selections, H. Polano, pp. 81-82). Obviously this version is also faulty, for it cannot be imagined that a person of such a high

rank would himself take the case to a court that his own slave had tried to assault his wife criminally. Incidentally, this Qur'ānic version of the story is a clear proof of the fact that it has no copied stories from the Israelite traditions as the pseudo-orientalists allege, but has, on the other hand, corrected them and told the real facts to the world.

26. The ancient Egyptians used to place pillows and cushions in such feasts for the guests to recline. And this is confirmed by the archaeological remains in Egypt.

There is no mention at all of this banquet in the Bible but it has been described in the Talmud in a way quite different from that of the Qur'ān. Needless to say that while this narrative in the Qur'ān is natural, life-like and teaches moral lessons, the one in the Talmud lacks all these things.

27. This open demonstration of her love and declaration of her immoral designs show that the moral condition of the higher class of the Egyptian society had declined to the lowest ebb. It is quite obvious that the women whom she had invited must have been ladies belonging to the upper most stratum of the society. The very fact that she presented her beloved before them without any hesitation in order to convince them of his beauty and youth that had urged her to fall in love with him, shows that there was nothing uncommon in this demonstration. Then these ladies did not reproach her but themselves practically demonstrated that, in those circumstances, they themselves would have done the same that she did. Above all, the hostess did not feel that it was immodest to declare openly, "No doubt, I sought to seduce him and he succeeded in escaping from me. Yet I am not going to give him up. If he will not do as I bid him, he shall be cast into prison and humbled and disgraced". Incidentally, this also shows that the modern Western people and their Westernised disciples in the East are not justified in claiming the credit for giving full "freedom" to the woman. For this "progress" is no new thing: it was in vogue in Egypt in its full glory thousands of years before this.

28. In order to grasp the full significance of this prayer of Prophet Joseph, we should try to form a mental picture of the circumstances in which he was placed at that time. In the light of this passage the picture will be something like this. "There is the handsome young man of twenty in the prime of his life, who has brought health and vigour of youth from the desert into Egypt, after passing through the ordeal of forced slavery and exile. Fortune has placed him in the house of one of the highest dignitaries in the capital of the most civilized country of the world at the time. There this handsome young man meets in the prime of life with a strange experience. The lady of the house in which he has to live day and night falls passionately in love with him and begins to tempt and seduce him.

Then the fame of his beauty spreads all over the capital and the other ladies of the town also become enamoured of him. Now this is the critical position. He is surrounded on all sides by hundreds of beautiful snares that have been spread to entrap and catch him unawares. All sorts of devices are employed to excite his passions and entice him: wherever he goes he encounters sin lying in ambush with all its charms and allurements and waiting for an opportune moment to make a surprise attack upon him. Such are the circumstances that are tempting him with sin, but the pious young man successfully passes through the ordeal, set for him by Satan, with the self-control that is praiseworthy indeed. But it is all the more praiseworthy that he does not feel any pride for showing such extraordinary piety in such trying and tempting circumstances. On the other hand, he very humbly invokes his Lord to protect him from those traps of sin, for he is afraid of the common human weaknesses and cries out, "My Lord, I am weak ! I fear lest these temptations should over-power me. I would rather prefer imprisonment to doing such an evil thing into which they are tempting to ensnare me."

In fact, that was the most important and critical period of Prophet Joseph's training, and this hard ordeal helped to bring forth all his latent virtues of which he himself was unaware up to that time. Then he himself realized that Allah had endowed him with the high and extraordinary qualities of honesty, fidelity, piety, charity, righteousness, self-control, balance of mind, and he made full use of these when he gained power in Egypt.

29. Allah warded off their guile from Prophet Joseph by strengthening his character in such a way as to make ineffective all their devices to ensnare him. This also implies that Allah opened the door of prison for him in order to keep him safe from their tricks and temptations.

30. It occurred to them to imprison Prophet Joseph in order "to save face" after they had seen clear proofs of his innocence and of the guilt of their own women, for no other alternative was left, in their opinion, to undo the scandal that was spreading fast in the land. But it did not occur to them that in fact his imprisonment was his moral victory and the moral defeat of the rulers and the dignitaries of Egypt. By that time, Prophet Joseph had not remained an unknown person, for all and sundry had heard stories of his beauty and piety, and of the love the "ladies" had shown towards him. Therefore when those "wise" courtiers put into practice their plausible device to imprison him in order to reverse the doings of their "ladies", the common people must have drawn their own conclusions for they knew Prophet Joseph to be a man of pure, strong and high character. So it was obvious to them that he had committed no "crime" to merit imprisonment, and that he had been imprisoned because it was an easier way of escape for the chiefs of Egypt than to keep their own ladies under control.

Incidentally, this shows that imprisonment of innocent people without trial and due procedure of law is as old as "civilization" itself. The dishonest rulers of to-day are not much different from the wicked rulers who governed Egypt some four thousand years ago. The only difference between the two is that they did not imprison people in the name and for the cause of "democracy" but they committed unlawful acts without any pretext of law. On the contrary, their modern descendants make use of the specious pretences of honesty when they are acting unjustly. They first enact the necessary unlawful laws to justify their unlawful practices and then "lawfully" imprison their victims. That is to say, the Egyptian rulers were honest in their dishonesty and did not hide the fact that they were imprisoning people to safeguard their own interests, and not those of the community. But these modern disciples of Satan cast innocent people into prison to ward off the "danger" they feel from them, but proclaim to the world that their victims are a menace to the country and the community. In short, they were mere tyrants but these are shameless liars as well.

31. At the time when Prophet Joseph was sent to prison, probably he was about twenty years old. This has been inferred from two statements in the Qur'ān and the Talmud. The Qur'ān (v. 42) says that '....he remained in the prison for a decade or so' and the Talmud says that '....Joseph was thirty years old when he was elevated to his honourable and trustworthy position'.

32. One of the two prisoners, according to the Bible, was the chief of the butlers of the king of Egypt, and the other the chief of the bakers. And according to the Talmud, they were condemned to the prison because during a feast stone grits were found in the bread and a fly in the wine.

33. The fact that two prisoners attested his righteousness shows that Prophet Joseph was held in high esteem in the prison. Otherwise there was no reason why the two should have requested him alone to interpret the dreams and paid their homage like this: "We have seen that you are a righteous man". It clearly means that the events narrated in the preceding verses had reached all and sundry and the people inside the prison and outside it, knew that he had not been guilty of any crime or sin. On the other hand, he had proved himself to be a noble soul who had come out successful in the hardest test of his piety. So much so that there was not the like of him in piety, not even among their own religious leaders in the whole country. That was why not only the prisoners but also the officers and officials of the prison looked upon him as an honourable man and had full confidence in him. The Bible confirms this: "And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison; and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it. The keeper of the prison looked not to anything that was under his hand." (Gen. 39: 22-23).

34. This discourse, which is the soul of this story, and is one of the best on the doctrine of *Tauhīd* in the Qur'ān itself, finds no place at all in the Bible and the Talmud. This is because they regard him merely as a wise and pious man and not as a Prophet. That is why Rev. Rodwell has, in regard to this passage, accused Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) of putting his own doctrine and conviction into the mouth of Joseph (Allah's peace be upon him). But the Qur'ān not only puts forward and presents these two aspects of his life in a much better and clearer way but also presents him as a Prophet, who had started propagating the Message even in the prison.

As this discourse suggests several very important things, it will be worthwhile to consider these one by one:

(1) This is the first occasion on which Prophet Joseph appears to have begun the preaching of the true Faith. For before this, the Qur'ān reveals him in the different stages of his life as a man of high morality but does not say anything to show that he conveyed the Message also. From this it is clear that those stages were of a preparatory nature and the mission of Prophethood was entrusted to him at the stage of his imprisonment and this was his first discourse as a Prophet.

(2) Moreover, this was the first occasion when he revealed his identity to others. Before this, we find him bearing patiently everything that happened to him without revealing anything about his relationships with Prophet Abraham and others. He kept silent when the caravan made him a slave and carried him to Egypt: when Al-'Azīz bought him and when he was sent to prison. As Prophet Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Allah's peace be upon them all) were quite well-known, he might have used their names to advantage. The members of the caravan, both the Ishmaelites and the Midianites, were closely related to his family, and the Egyptians were, at least, familiar with the name of Prophet Abraham. Nay, the way in which Prophet Joseph mentioned their names in this discourse, shows that the fame of his father, grandfather and great grandfather had reached Egypt. But in spite of this, Prophet Joseph did not use their names on any of the critical occasions to save himself from the plight in which he was placed. This shows that probably he himself knew that these things were inevitable for his training for the Mission for which Allah had chosen him. Now it was absolutely necessary for him, for the sake of his Mission, to reveal this fact in order to show that he was not presenting any new Faith but the same Faith that was preached by Prophets Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Allah's peace be upon them all). This was necessary because the Message demanded that it should not be presented with the claim that it was a new and novel thing but that it was the same universal and eternal

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خُضْرٍ وَّاُخَرَ يٰبِسٰتٍ ۭ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الْمَلَاُ اَفْتُوْنِيْ فِيْ رُءْيَايَ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ لِلرُّءْيَا تَعْبُرُوْنَ ﴿٤٣﴾
قَالُوْٓا اَضْغَاثُ اَحْلَامٍ ۚ وَمَا نَحْنُ بِتَاْوِيْلِ الْاَحْلَامِ بِعٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٤٤﴾ وَقَالَ الَّذِيْ
نَجَا مِنْهُمَا وَادَّكَرَ بَعْدَ اُمَّةٍ اَنَا اُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِتَاْوِيْلِهٖ فَاَرْسِلُوْنِ ﴿٤٥﴾ يُوْسُفُ اَيُّهَا
الصِّدِّيْقُ اَفْتِنَا فِيْ سَبْعِ بَقَرٰتٍ سِمَانٍ يَّاْكُلُهُنَّ سَبْعٌ عِجَافٌ وَّسَبْعِ سُنْۢبُلٰتٍ
خُضْرٍ وَّاُخَرَ يٰبِسٰتٍ ۙ لَّعَلِّيْٓ اَرْجِعُ اِلَى النَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٤٦﴾ قَالَ تَزْرَعُوْنَ
سَبْعَ سِنِيْنَ دَاَبًا ۚ فَمَا حَصَدْتُّمْ فَذَرُوْهُ فِيْ سُنْۢبُلِهٖٓ اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا مِّمَّا تَاْكُلُوْنَ ﴿٤٧﴾
ثُمَّ يَاْتِيْ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ ذٰلِكَ سَبْعٌ شِدَادٌ يَّاْكُلْنَ مَا قَدَّمْتُمْ لَهُنَّ اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا مِّمَّا
تُحْصِنُوْنَ ﴿٤٨﴾ ثُمَّ يَاْتِيْ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ ذٰلِكَ عَامٌ فِيْهِ يُغَاثُ النَّاسُ وَفِيْهِ يَعْصِرُوْنَ ﴿٤٩﴾
وَقَالَ الْمَلِكُ ائْتُوْنِيْ بِهٖ ۚ فَلَمَّا جَاۗءَهُ الرَّسُوْلُ قَالَ ارْجِعْ اِلٰى رَبِّكَ فَسْـَٔـلْهُ مَا
بَالُ النِّسْوَةِ الّٰتِيْ قَطَّعْنَ اَيْدِيَهُنَّ ۭ اِنَّ رَبِّيْ بِكَيْدِهِنَّ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿٥٠﴾ قَالَ مَا خَطْبُكُنَّ
اِذْ رَاوَدْتُّنَّ يُوْسُفَ عَنْ نَّفْسِهٖ ۭ قُلْنَ حَاشَ لِلّٰهِ مَا عَلِمْنَا عَلَيْهِ مِنْ سُوْۗءٍ ۭ
قَالَتِ امْرَاَتُ الْعَزِيْزِ الْـٰٔنَ حَصْحَصَ الْحَقُّ ۡ اَنَا رَاوَدْتُّهٗ عَنْ نَّفْسِهٖ وَاِنَّهٗ لَمِنَ
الصّٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿٥١﴾ ذٰلِكَ لِيَعْلَمَ اَنِّيْ لَمْ اَخُنْهُ بِالْغَيْبِ وَاَنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يَهْدِيْ كَيْدَ الْخَاۗىِٕنِيْنَ ﴿٥٢﴾

وَمَآ اُبَرِّئُ نَفْسِيْ ۚ اِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَاَمَّارَةٌۢ بِالسُّوْۗءِ اِلَّا مَا رَحِمَ رَبِّيْ ۭ اِنَّ رَبِّيْ
غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿٥٣﴾ وَقَالَ الْمَلِكُ ائْتُوْنِيْ بِهٖٓ اَسْتَخْلِصْهُ لِنَفْسِيْ ۚ فَلَمَّا كَلَّمَهٗ قَالَ
اِنَّكَ الْيَوْمَ لَدَيْنَا مَكِيْنٌ اَمِيْنٌ ﴿٥٤﴾ قَالَ اجْعَلْنِيْ عَلٰي خَزَاۗىِٕنِ الْاَرْضِ ۚ اِنِّيْ حَفِيْظٌ
عَلِيْمٌ ﴿٥٥﴾ وَكَذٰلِكَ مَكَّنَّا لِيُوْسُفَ فِي الْاَرْضِ ۚ يَتَبَوَّاُ مِنْهَا حَيْثُ يَشَاۗءُ ۭ نُصِيْبُ
بِرَحْمَتِنَا مَنْ نَّشَاۗءُ وَلَا نُضِيْعُ اَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿٥٦﴾ وَلَاَجْرُ الْاٰخِرَةِ خَيْرٌ لِّلَّذِيْنَ
اٰمَنُوْا وَكَانُوْا يَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿٥٧﴾ وَجَاۗءَ اِخْوَةُ يُوْسُفَ فَدَخَلُوْا عَلَيْهِ فَعَرَفَهُمْ وَهُمْ

One[36] day the king said, "I saw in a dream seven fat cows whom seven lean cows were devouring. Likewise I saw seven green ears of corn, and seven withered ones. O my courtiers, tell me the interpretation of my dream, if you understand the meanings of dreams".[37] They answered, "These are the result of confused nightmares and we do not understand their meaning." 43-44

Then one of the two prisoners who had been released remembered the thing after a long time and said, "I will tell you its interpretation: just send me (to Joseph in the prison.[38])" 45

Going to Joseph, he said, "Joseph, O man of righteousness![39] tell me the meaning of the dream of seven fat cows whom seven lean cows are devouring, and of seven green ears of corn and seven withered ones. Maybe I go back to those people and they might understand it."[40] Joseph answered, "You will cultivate land for seven consecutive years as usual. During this period thrash out of the harvest you reap only that much grain that might suffice for your food and leave the rest in the ears. Then, after this, there shall come upon you seven hard years. Then you will eat up all that corn you might have kept for that period except that you will have reserved in the store. After that will come another year in which there will be abundant rainfall in answer to the prayer of the people and they will press (juice and oil.)"[41] 46-49

The king said, "Bring him to me." But when the royal envoy came to him, Joseph said,[42] "Go back to your lord and ask him to enquire about the matter of the women who cut their hands. Indeed my Lord has full knowledge of their cunning."[43] 50

The king questioned the women,[44] saying, "What do you say about the incident when you tried to entice Joseph?" They all cried out with one voice, "God protect us! we found no tinge of evil in him." Then the wife of Al-'Azīz also confessed, "Now that the truth has come to light, it was I who tried to entice him. In fact, he is absolutley in the right."[45] 51

(Joseph said,[46]) "By this enquiry, I meant to let him (Al-'Azīz) know that I did not play him false secretly and that Allah does not lead to success the machinations of deceivers. Yet I am not holding my soul to be immune from sin, for the soul incites to evil, except of the one on 52-53

whom my Lord shows mercy. Indeed my Lord is Forgiving and Merciful."

54 The king said, "Bring him to me so that I may attach him exclusively to myself."

55 When Joseph had a talk with the king, he said, "From now you have an honourable place with us, and you will enjoy our full confidence."[47] Joseph said, "Please place all the resources of the land under my trust for I know how to guard them and also possess knowledge."[47a]

56-57 Thus did We give power to Joseph in the land: he had every right to take possession of any piece of it that he desired.[48] We bestow Our bounty upon anyone We will. We do not let go waste the reward of the righteous people; yet the reward of the life in the Hereafter is much better for those who believed and behaved in a God-fearing manner.[49]

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Truth that has always been presented by its bearers.

(3) This teaches us that one can, like Prophet Joseph, carve out a way for the propagation of the Message, if one has the intention and the required wisdom.

The two men pay their homage to him and request him to interpret their dreams. In answer to this he says, "I will tell their interpretations but let me first inform you about the source of my knowledge that enables me to understand dreams". Thus he takes advantage of their request and preaches his own Faith to them. We learn from this that if a person is imbued with the true and strong desire for propagating the Truth, he can very gracefully turn the direction of the conversation towards the Message he desires to convey. On the contrary, if a person has no strong desire for the propagation of the Message, he never "finds" any opportunity for it, even though hundred and one such opportunities might have come his way which could have been utilized for this purpose. But one must be on one's guard to discriminate between the right use of an opportunity by a wise man from the crude "propagation" of a foolish and un-cultured person, who tries to thrust the Message into the ears of unwilling hearers and succeeds only in creating aversion for it in their minds because of his crude way of presentation.

(4) This also teaches the right procedure that should be followed in presenting the Message. Prophet Joseph does not present, at the very start, the details

of the creed and regulations of the Faith but the most fundamental thing that distinguishes a Believer from a non-Believer, that is, the distinction between *Tauhīd* and *shirk*. Then he presents it in such a rational manner as cannot fail to convince any man of common sense. And his argument must have impressed deeply on the minds of the two slaves. "Which is better: various gods or One Omnipotent Allah?" They knew it from their personal experience that it was much better to serve one master than a number of them. Therefore it was far better to serve the Lord of the universe than His servants. Moreover, he does not invite them directly to accept his Faith and discard their own faith, but he very wisely draws their attention to this fact: "This is Allah's bounty upon us and upon all mankind that He has not made us the servants of any other than Himself, yet most of the people are not grateful to Him. Instead of serving Him alone, they invent gods for themselves and worship them". Then it is also noteworthy that his criterion of the faith of his addressees is based on wisdom and has no tinge of bitterness in it. He says, "The gods whom you call 'the god of wealth' or 'the god of health' or 'the god of prosperity' or 'the god of rain' etc. are mere names you have given them without any reality behind them. The real Owner of everything is the Supreme Allah Whom you also acknowledge as the Creator and the Lord of the whole universe. He has sent no authority and given no sanction to anyone for Godhead and worship, but has reserved all the powers, all the rights and all the authorities for Himself, and commanded, 'Serve and worship none but Me.'"

(5) It may also be inferred from this discourse that Prophet Joseph must have made full use of this "opportunity" of a decade for the propagation of the Message. Some people think that that was the only time when he extended the invitation to the Message. This is wrong for two reasons. First, it is absurd to imagine that a Prophet could have been neglectful of his Mission for a long period. Second, it cannot be imagined that the person who availed himself of the opportunity when two men approached him for the interpretation of their dreams, could ever have passed a decade of imprisonment without propagating the Message entrusted to him by his Lord.

35. Some commentators have interpreted it like this: "Satan made Prophet Joseph neglectful of his Lord, Allah, so he placed his confidence in a man rather than Allah and desired him to mention him to his lord, the king, for his release. So Allah punished him by letting him languish several years in the dungeon". In fact, such an interpretation is absolutely erroneous for as 'Allāmah Ibn Kathīr and some early commentators like Mujahid, Muhammad-bin-Ishāq and some others say, the pronoun "him" refers to that person who he thought would be released. Therefore

it will mean: "Satan made him (the would-be free man) so neglectful that he forgot to mention him (Prophet Joseph) to his lord (the king)." They also cite a tradition in support of their interpretation to this effect. The Holy Prophet said, "If Prophet Joseph had not said that which he said, he would not have remained in imprisonment for several years." But 'Allāmah Ibn Kathīr says, "This *Hadīth* cannot be accepted because all the ways in which it has been reported are weak. Moreover, two of the reporters, Sufyān-bin-Wakī'i and Ibrahīm-bin-Yazīd, are not trustworthy". Besides being weak on technical grounds, it is also against the dictates of common sense: if a wronged person adopted some measures for his release, he cannot be considered to be neglectful of God and guilty of the lack of trust in Allah.

36. Leaving the account of the events of the intervening years of imprisonment, the story has been resumed from the time when Prophet Joseph began to rise in worldly rank.

37. According to the Bible and the Talmud, the king was greatly disturbed troubled and confused in mind because of these dreams. So he proclaimed throughout the whole land of Egypt, and called upon all the wise men, and the sooth-sayers, and magicians of the land to interpret his dreams.

38. The Qur'ān has told in brief the essence of the request of the chief butler, but the Bible and the Talmud have given its details. According to these (and it stands to reason that it must have been so), he told the king of the life of Prophet Joseph in prison and how he interpreted their dreams rightly and prayed the king to give him leave to see Prophet Joseph in prison for that purpose.

39. The Arabic word Þöíøïãõ *(Siddīq)* is used for the one who is an embodiment of truth and righteousness. Thus it shows that the butler had been so deeply impressed with the pure character of Prophet Joseph that even years had failed to blot it from his heart. (For its fuller meaning please refer to E.N. 99 of *An-Nusā*).

40. That is, "They might understand your true worth and realize their own error in keeping you in prison without any just cause. And in a way I may get the opportunity of fulfilling the promise I made with you during my imprisonment."

41. The literal meaning of يَعْصِرُوْنَ is: "they will press." Here it has been used to denote that state of verdure which was going to prevail after the famine years because of rainfall and flood in the Nile. For, when the land will be watered, there will be abundance of seed to press oil, and abundance of fruit to press juice and abundance of fodder for cattle to press milk out of them. It should be noted that Prophet Joseph not only interpreted the king's dream but also told

them how to preserve and reserve grain during the first seven years of prosperity for the subsequent seven years of famine. Moreover he foretold the good news of prosperity after the seven years of famine, though there was no hint of this in the dream of the king.

42. There is no mention in the Bible and the Talmud of this most important part of the story that Prophet Joseph declined to quit the prison till his character was cleared. On the other hand, according to the Bible, "Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon; and he shaved himself, and changed his raiment, and came in unto Pharaoh". And the Talmud depicts even a more degrading picture of the event. It says, "The king ordered that Joseph should be brought before him. But he commanded his officers to be careful not to frighten the lad, lest through fear he should be unable to interpret correctly. And the servant of the king brought Joseph forth from his dungeon, and shaved him and clothed him in new garments, and carried him before the king. The king was seated upon his throne, and the glare and glitter of the jewels which ornamented the throne dazzled and astonished the eyes of Joseph. Now the throne of the king was reached by seven steps, and it was the custom of Egypt for a prince or noble who held audience with the king, to ascend to the sixth step; but when an inferior or a private citizen of the land was called into his presence, the king descended to the third step and from there spoke with him." (The Talmud, H. Polano, pp. 87-88).

A comparison of the degrading picture in the Talmud with this self-respecting, grand, and noble picture depicted in the Qur'ān will convince every unbiased critic that the one in the Qur'ān is worthy of a Prophet of God. Moreover the picture in the Talmud is open to a grave objection: Had Prophet Joseph behaved like a frightened and cringing lad who was so dazzled by the glitter and glare of the jewels of the throne that he bowed to the ground, how was it that the king and the courtiers were so impressed by him that they declared, "..... the Hebrew has proved himself wise and skilful and through his wisdom shall our country be saved the pangs of want"? So much so that the king appointed him, without demur, as "governor" over the land, "second only to himself". All this shows that by that time he had proved his moral and mental superiority and had enhanced it by his refusal to quit the prison without proving his innocence. Otherwise, they would have never raised him to the highest rank in such a civilized and advanced country as Egypt.

43. He demanded an enquiry into the matter not because he himself had

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لَهٗ مُنْكِرُوْنَ ﴿٥٨﴾ وَلَمَّا جَهَّزَهُمْ بِجَهَازِهِمْ قَالَ ائْتُوْنِيْ بِاَخٍ لَّكُمْ مِّنْ اَبِيْكُمْ ۚ
اَلَا تَرَوْنَ اَنِّيْٓ اُوْفِي الْكَيْلَ وَاَنَا خَيْرُ الْمُنْزِلِيْنَ ﴿٥٩﴾ فَاِنْ لَّمْ تَاْتُوْنِيْ بِهٖ فَلَا
كَيْلَ لَكُمْ عِنْدِيْ وَلَا تَقْرَبُوْنِ ﴿٦٠﴾ قَالُوْا سَنُرَاوِدُ عَنْهُ اَبَاهُ وَاِنَّا لَفٰعِلُوْنَ ﴿٦١﴾
وَقَالَ لِفِتْيٰنِهِ اجْعَلُوْا بِضَاعَتَهُمْ فِيْ رِحَالِهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَعْرِفُوْنَهَآ اِذَا انْقَلَبُوْٓا
اِلٰٓى اَهْلِهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُوْنَ ﴿٦٢﴾ فَلَمَّا رَجَعُوْٓا اِلٰٓى اَبِيْهِمْ قَالُوْا يٰٓاَبَانَا مُنِعَ مِنَّا
الْكَيْلُ فَاَرْسِلْ مَعَنَآ اَخَانَا نَكْتَلْ وَاِنَّا لَهٗ لَحٰفِظُوْنَ ﴿٦٣﴾ قَالَ هَلْ اٰمَنُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ
اِلَّا كَمَآ اَمِنْتُكُمْ عَلٰٓى اَخِيْهِ مِنْ قَبْلُ ۭ فَاللّٰهُ خَيْرٌ حٰفِظًا ۠ وَّهُوَ اَرْحَمُ الرّٰحِمِيْنَ ﴿٦٤﴾
وَلَمَّا فَتَحُوْا مَتَاعَهُمْ وَجَدُوْا بِضَاعَتَهُمْ رُدَّتْ اِلَيْهِمْ ۭ قَالُوْا يٰٓاَبَانَا مَا نَبْغِيْ ۭ
هٰذِهٖ بِضَاعَتُنَا رُدَّتْ اِلَيْنَا ۚ وَنَمِيْرُ اَهْلَنَا وَنَحْفَظُ اَخَانَا وَنَزْدَادُ كَيْلَ
بَعِيْرٍ ۭ ذٰلِكَ كَيْلٌ يَّسِيْرٌ ﴿٦٥﴾ قَالَ لَنْ اُرْسِلَهٗ مَعَكُمْ حَتّٰى تُؤْتُوْنِ مَوْثِقًا مِّنَ
اللّٰهِ لَتَاْتُنَّنِيْ بِهٖٓ اِلَّآ اَنْ يُّحَاطَ بِكُمْ ۚ فَلَمَّآ اٰتَوْهُ مَوْثِقَهُمْ قَالَ اللّٰهُ عَلٰي
مَا نَقُوْلُ وَكِيْلٌ ﴿٦٦﴾ وَقَالَ يٰبَنِيَّ لَا تَدْخُلُوْا مِنْۢ بَابٍ وَّاحِدٍ وَّادْخُلُوْا
مِنْ اَبْوَابٍ مُّتَفَرِّقَةٍ ۭ وَمَآ اُغْنِيْ عَنْكُمْ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ ۭ اِنِ الْحُكْمُ
اِلَّا لِلّٰهِ ۭ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ ۚ وَعَلَيْهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُتَوَكِّلُوْنَ ﴿٦٧﴾ وَلَمَّا دَخَلُوْا مِنْ حَيْثُ
اَمَرَهُمْ اَبُوْهُمْ ۭ مَا كَانَ يُغْنِيْ عَنْهُمْ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ اِلَّا حَاجَةً فِيْ نَفْسِ
يَعْقُوْبَ قَضٰىهَا ۭ وَاِنَّهٗ لَذُوْ عِلْمٍ لِّمَا عَلَّمْنٰهُ وَلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٦٨﴾
وَلَمَّا دَخَلُوْا عَلٰي يُوْسُفَ اٰوٰٓى اِلَيْهِ اَخَاهُ قَالَ اِنِّيْٓ اَنَا اَخُوْكَ فَلَا تَبْتَىِٕسْ بِمَا
كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٦٩﴾ فَلَمَّا جَهَّزَهُمْ بِجَهَازِهِمْ جَعَلَ السِّقَايَةَ فِيْ رَحْلِ اَخِيْهِ
ثُمَّ اَذَّنَ مُؤَذِّنٌ اَيَّتُهَا الْعِيْرُ اِنَّكُمْ لَسٰرِقُوْنَ ﴿٧٠﴾ قَالُوْا وَاَقْبَلُوْا عَلَيْهِمْ مَّاذَا

Joseph's brothers came to Egypt and presented themselves before him.[50] He recognized them but they did not.[51] When he had them given the provisions due to them and they were leaving, he said, "Bring your step brother to me. Do you not see that I give full measure and am the best of hosts? But if you do not bring him to me you shall have no grain from me: nay you should not even come near me.")[52] They replied "We will try our very best to persuade his father to send him with us. This we will surely do." Joseph spoke aside to his slaves. "Place secretly in their saddle bags the goods they have bartered for corn." Joseph did this in the hope that when they would return home to their people, they would come to know of it; maybe they should come back again. 58-62

When they returned to their father, they said "Dear father now that corn has henceforth been denied to us, please send our brother with us so that we may fetch corn, and we take full responsibility for his safety." The father replied "Should I entrust him to you as I entrusted his brother to you before? Allah is the best Guardian and He is the most Merciful." When they opened their saddle-bags they found that their merchandise had also been returned to them. Seeing this, they cried with joy, "Dear father, look here! What more do we desire? Here is our merchandise returned to us. Therefore we will go back and bring provisions of food for our family; we will take good care of our brother and obtain an extra camel load of corn. Such an addition will be made easily." Their father replied, "I will never send him with you until you give me a pledge in Allah's name that you shall bring him back to me unless it be that you are rendered helpless by circumstances." When they had given him their solemn pledges he said, "Note it well that Allah is guarding and watching over this pledge of ours." Then he said "O my children, do not enter the capital of Egypt by one gate but go into it by different gates.[53] However know it well that I cannot ward off from you Allah's will for none other than He has any authority whatsoever. In Him I have put my trust and all who want to rely upon anyone should put their trust in Him alone." And it so happened that when they entered the city by different gates as their father had advised them the precautionary measure proved ineffective against Allah's will. Of course Jacob had done his best to avert the fear he had in his heart. Indeed he possessed knowledge because of what We 63-68

had taught him: but most people do not understand the reality of the matter.[54]

69 When they presented themselves before Joseph he called his brother alone to himself and said to him "I am the same brother of yours (who was lost). Now you need not grieve for what they have been doing."[55]

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any doubt of his innocence, but because he was perfectly confident of this: "My Lord has full knowledge of my innocence and of their cunning. But your lord should also make a thorough inquiry as to why I had been sent to prison, for I do not want to go before the public with any blemish or blot on my reputation. Therefore a public enquiry should be held to prove that I was an innocent victim of the injustice of the chiefs and nobles of the country, who had cast me into prison in order to cover up the guilt of their own ladies."

The words in which the demand was made clearly show that the king was already fully acquainted with the details of the incident that had happened at the banquet of the wife of Al-'Azīz. That is why a mere reference to it was enough.

Another note-worthy thing in this demand was that Prophet Joseph did not in any way hint at the part the wife of Al-'Azīz had played in the event. This is another proof of his noble character that he did not like to involve and entangle the wife of his benefactor in the matter, even though she had done him her worst.

44. As regards the way in which this enquiry was held, it is just possible that the king might have summoned the women to his presence or got their evidence through a trusted officer of his court.

45. The enquiry and the evidences must have helped to pave the way for Prophet Josep's rise in the land by concentrating the public attention on him, especially under the circumstances when the enquiry had been demanded by him. He had interpreted the dream of the king, when all the wise men, sooth-sayers and the magicians had failed. Then he had refused to quit prison even though the king himself had ordered that he should be brought before him, and, instead of this, demanded an enquiry of the matter which had been the cause of his imprisonment. Naturally this thing would have filled the people with wonder and they would have been looking eagerly for the result of the enquiry. Thus it can be imagined how the evidences and the result of the enquiry raised his prestige so high that the king and his courtiers declared that he was the only fit person to save the country from the coming calamity. It is no wonder, then, that Prophet Joseph proposed that all the resources of the land should be placed in his hands, and the king accepted this

proposal as soon as it was made. For, had it been merely the matter of the interpretation of a dream, the most he would have deserved was some reward and his release from prison. But he could not have said, "Place the resources of the land in my hands" and the king would not have readily acceded to his proposal and given him all the powers in the land, as is contained in vv. 55-56, and confirmed by the Bible and the Talmud.

46. Prophet Joseph might have said these words in the prison when he came to know the result of the enquiry. But some commentators, including great scholars like Ibn Taimiyyah and Ibn Kathīr, regard this sentence to be a continuation of the preceding speech of the wife of Al-'Azīz. They argue that this sentence has been placed contiguous to her preceding speech without any dividing word between them to indicate that her speech had ended at "he is absolutely in the right", and that the succeeding words were spoken by Prophet Joseph. They construe that if two speeches made by two different persons are placed in contiguity, they must be separated by means of some definite word, or there must be some definite clue to it. As neither of these two things exists in this case, it may rightly be construed that the words contained in v. 52 are the continuation of her preceding speech in v. 51. I, however, am surprised how a great scholar of Ibn Taimiyyah's insight has missed this point that the characteristic of a speech is in itself a clear and self-sufficient clue. Her confession in v. 51 fits in with her low character, but obviously the succeeding dignified and grand speech in v. 52 is too high for her. That fits in only with the noble character of Prophet Joseph. It is obvious that this must have been uttered by one, who was righteous, generous, humble and God-fearing. It is by itself a clear evidence that it could not have come out of the mouth of the one, who said, "Come here", and "What punishment does the one deserve, who shows evil intentions towards your wife?" and ".....if he will not yield to my bidding, he shall be cast into prison." On the other hand, such a pure speech fitted in with the one who said, "May Allah protect me! My Lord has shown so much kindness towards me. Should I, then, misbehave like this?" and " my Lord! I prefer imprisonment to that to which they invite me. If Thou dost not ward off their cunning devices from me, I might be caught in their snares." Therefore one cannot ascribe such a pure speech to the wife of Al-'Azīz unless there is a clear clue showing that by that time she had repented and believed and mended her ways, but there is no such clue. Thus it is clear that this speech must have been made by Prophet Joseph (Allah's peace be upon him).

47. It implied this: "We have such a high opinion of you that we can safely entrust you with the highest office of responsibility in the country."

47a. As this verse has given rise to some important questions, let us consider these one by one.

The first question is: "Was it an application made by Prophet Joseph to the king for some post ?" In the light of the preceding Explanatory Notes, it would have become obvious that it was neither an application nor a request made by an ambitious person who had been on the look-out for an opportune moment for its submission, and no sooner did the king express his approval of him than he presented his request before him. As a matter of fact, this was a sort of proposal, giving his assent to the great desire of the king and the courtiers that he should be appointed as governor over the land. For, according to the Talmud, "the Hebrew has proved himself wise and skilful," and " ....surely there can be none more discrete than myself to whom God has made known all these things." The king, his courtiers, his princes, officers, and men of rank, had by that time, come to know and recognize his true worth and had had experience of his moral superiority during the last decade of the vicissitudes of his life. He had proved that there was none equal to him in honesty, righteousness, forbearance, self-discipline, generosity, intelligence and understanding. They knew and believed that he was the only one who knew how to guard and utilize the resources of the land and could be safely entrusted with them. Therefore, as soon as he showed his willingness, they heartily put these in his trust. This is also confirmed by the Bible that the king had formed a very high opinion of Prophet Joseph. He said to his servants, "Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the spirit of God is?" Above all, he said to Prophet Joseph, "There is none so discreet and wise as thou art." (Gen. 41: 38-39). Accordingly, therefore, the king, of his own accord, set him over his house and land. (Gen. 41: 41).

Let us now take up the second question: "What was the nature of the powers that were entrusted to Prophet Joseph?" This is important because those who are not well versed in the Qur'ān have been misled by the words ãÆÇÔÎ ÖÑÇáÇ in this verse and by his subsequent work of the distribution of grain. They wrongly conclude from these that this post was like the present day posts of a "Treasury Officer" or a "Famine Commissioner" or a "Finance Minister" etc. etc. In fact, it was none of these, for, according to the Qur'ān and the Bible and the Talmud, Prophet Joseph had been invested with the full powers and privileges of a ruler. That is why he sat on the throne (*v.* 100) and they used the title of malik (king) for him. (*v.* 72). He himself was grateful to Allah for bestowing the kingdom on him. (*v.* 101). Above all, Allah Himself testifies to this fact: "Thus We gave power to Joseph in the land, so he had every right to take possession of any piece of it, if he so desired." (*v.* 56). As regards the Bible, it says, "And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, 'Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt.... and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt,' and called Joseph's name Zaphnath-paaneah (saviour of the world)."

(Gen. 41: 40-45). And according to the Talmud, when his brothers returned to their father, Prophet Jacob, from Egypt, they said about Prophet Joseph, "The king of Egypt is mighty potentate, over his people he is supreme; upon his word they go out and upon his word they come in; his word governs, and the voice of his master, Pharaoh, is not required."

Another pertinent question is: What was the object for which Prophet Joseph made a proposal for powers in the land? Did he offer his services for the enforcement of the laws of a non-Muslim state? Or did he intend to establish the cultural, moral and political systems of Islam by taking the powers of government in his own hands? As for its answer let us quote the comments on this verse (55) by 'Allāmah Zamakhsharī in his "Kashshāf". He says, "When Prophet Joseph proposed, 'Please place all the resources of the country under my trust', he meant to get an opportunity for enforcing the Commandments of Allah and for establishing truth and justice, and to gain that power which is essential for fulfilling the Mission for which the Messengers are sent. He did not make this demand for the love of kingdom or for worldly desires and ambitions. He did this because he knew full well that there was none else who could perform that work."

To be frank, the above question leads to very important and basic issues. These are: Was Joseph a Prophet of Allah or not ? If he was, does the Qur'ān put forward such a conception of a Prophet that he himself should (as they allege Prophet Joseph did) offer his services to a system of unbelief to carry on its work on un-Godly principles? Nay, it leads to a more delicate and important question : Was he a righteous person or not ? and, if he was, could it ever be expected that he would (according to their interpretation,) practically accept the theory that Sovereignty belongs to the king and not to Allah, whereas in the prison he preached, "Sovereignty belongs to none but Allah (*v.* 40) ?" for if, as they interpret, he submitted an application for service to the king, it meant that he did so against his own principles which he inculcated while in prison: "....which is better: various gods or the One Omnipotent Allah?" As the king of Egypt was one of the "gods" they had set up, so to offer services to carry on the work of the un-Islamic system under the existing un-Islamic law would have been tantamount to acknowledging the king as his Lord. Are they prepared to place Prophet Joseph in that position?

It is an irony that such Muslims as interpret this verse in this way, lower the character of Prophet Joseph. They have evinced the same mentality that the Jews had developed during the period of their degeneration. When they became morally and mentally depraved, they deliberately began to represent their Prophets and saints as people of low character like themselves in order to justify their own degraded characters and to make room for excuses for going still lower. Likewise, when the Muslims came under the sway of non-Muslim governments,

they wanted to serve under them, but the teachings of Islam and the patterns of their worthy forefathers stood in their way and they felt ashamed of this. So, in order to pacify their consciences, they sought refuge in this verse and by its misinterpretation thought that that great Prophet had made an application for a post to serve under a non-Muslim under un-Islamic laws. Whereas the Prophet's own life taught the lesson that even a single Muslim could all by himself bring about the Islamic revolution in a whole country by his pure Islamic character, his Faith, intelligence and wisdom and that a true Believer is able to conquer, by the proper use of his moral character, a whole country without any army, ammunition or material provisions.

48. This is to show that the whole land of Egypt was under his complete control, as if it belonged to him and he could claim any piece of it as his, and there was no piece of it that could be withheld from him. The early commentators have also made the same comment on this verse. For instance, 'Allāmah Ibn Jarīr Tabarī, on the authority of Ibn Zaid, says that this verse means: "We made Joseph the owner of all those things that were in Egypt, and in this part of the world he could do whatever he liked and wherever he liked for he had been given complete authority over this land. So much so that he could bring Pharaoh under his sway and become his master, if he so desired". He has quoted another thing from Mujāhid, who is one of the most learned commentators, to the effect that the king of Egypt had embraced Islam through Prophet Joseph.

49. This is a warning against a misunderstanding that one might have had from the preceding verse that kingdom and power were the real ultimate rewards for virtue and righteousness, for the best reward that a Believer should desire and strive for will be the one that Allah will bestow upon Believers in the Hereafter.

50. The events of several years after his coming into power have been left out for the sake of brevity, and the story has been resumed from the time when the brothers of Prophet Joseph came to Egypt, and paved the way for the eventual settlement of the Israelites in Egypt. It will, however, be worthwhile to have a glimpse of those events. During the first seven years of his reign, there was abundance of corn as he had predicted while interpreting the dream of the king. Accordingly he adopted all the measures he had put before the king concerning the years of plenty. Then the seven years of scarcity began and famine reigned not only over Egypt but all over the adjoining countries. Accordingly, Syria, Palestine, Trans-Jordan and the Northern part of Arabia began to suffer from the scarcity of food, but there was plenty of it in Egypt in spite of famine because of the wise steps Prophet Joseph had taken as a safeguard. That was why his brothers, like other neighbouring people, were forced by circumstances to go to Egypt and present themselves before him. It appears that Prophet Joseph had so arranged things that no foreigner was allowed to buy corn without a special permit

from him. Therefore when the brothers reached Egypt, they might have had to present themselves before him for obtaining the special permit for buying the fixed quantity allowed under the famine regulations.

51. It is no wonder that his brothers could not recognize Prophet Joseph, for, when they cast him into the well, he was merely a lad of seventeen and at the time of their meeting, he was a grown up man of thirty-eight years or so. Naturally, he must have changed in form during this long period. Besides, they could never have imagined that the brother whom they had cast into the well had become the ruler of Egypt

52. As the Qur'ān has omitted the details, someone might be at a loss to know as to how he brought Benjamin into the conversation with his brothers, and why he insisted on them to bring him with them, when he intended to keep his own identity secret from them. For, obviously these things might have led to the revelation of that secret. But a little thinking will show that he could have very easily and naturally led the conversation up to Benjamin without arousing their curiosity. As there were strict restrictions on the purchase of corn, everyone was permitted to buy only a fixed quantity of it. Most probably the ten brothers had applied for corn for their father and the eleventh brother as well. At this Prophet Joseph might have asked the reason why their father and brother had not personally come for it. Then he might have accepted the excuse for their father that he was old and blind but he would have expressed his doubts about their excuse for their brother that he was their step-brother and the father would not send him with them and so forth. Then he might have declared, "Well, this time we give you as much corn as you have asked for, but the next time you come here you should bring your step-brother with you; otherwise you will not get any corn at all because of this false statement of yours." Along with this threat, he tried to win them over by reminding them of his liberal and generous treatment with them, because he yearned for the sight of his younger brother, and was anxious to know how his family had fared during his absence.

The above is a simple and natural explanation of the matter. Thus this part of the story as given in the Bible (Gen. chapters 42 and 43) appears to be far-fetched, exaggerated, unreal and, therefore, un-reliable.

53. Prophet Jacob's great concern over this journey of his sons was due to the fact that his youngest son, Benjamin, was to accompany them. He was anxious about his safety because he had already had a sad experience of his son, Joseph. Naturally his heart must have been full of such misgivings that that might be his last meeting with his other beloved son. Though he had full trust in Allah and was patiently resigned to His will, he, as a human being, advised his sons to take

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تَفْقِدُوْنَ ﴿71﴾ قَالُوْا نَفْقِدُ صُوَاعَ الْمَلِكِ وَلِمَنْ جَآءَ بِهٖ حِمْلُ بَعِيْرٍ وَّاَنَا بِهٖ
زَعِيْمٌ ﴿72﴾ قَالُوْا تَاللّٰهِ لَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمْ مَّا جِئْنَا لِنُفْسِدَ فِي الْاَرْضِ وَمَا كُنَّا
سٰرِقِيْنَ ﴿73﴾ قَالُوْا فَمَا جَزَآؤُهٗٓ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ كٰذِبِيْنَ ﴿74﴾ قَالُوْا جَزَآؤُهٗ مَنْ وُّجِدَ
فِيْ رَحْلِهٖ فَهُوَ جَزَآؤُهٗ ؕ كَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِي الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿75﴾ فَبَدَاَ بِاَوْعِيَتِهِمْ قَبْلَ
وِعَآءِ اَخِيْهِ ثُمَّ اسْتَخْرَجَهَا مِنْ وِّعَآءِ اَخِيْهِ ؕ كَذٰلِكَ كِدْنَا لِيُوْسُفَ ؕ مَا كَانَ
لِيَاْخُذَ اَخَاهُ فِيْ دِيْنِ الْمَلِكِ اِلَّآ اَنْ يَّشَآءَ اللّٰهُ ؕ نَرْفَعُ دَرَجٰتٍ مَّنْ نَّشَآءُ ؕ وَفَوْقَ
كُلِّ ذِيْ عِلْمٍ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿76﴾ قَالُوْٓا اِنْ يَّسْرِقْ فَقَدْ سَرَقَ اَخٌ لَّهٗ مِنْ قَبْلُ ۚ فَاَسَرَّهَا
يُوْسُفُ فِيْ نَفْسِهٖ وَلَمْ يُبْدِهَا لَهُمْ ۚ قَالَ اَنْتُمْ شَرٌّ مَّكَانًا ۚ وَاللّٰهُ اَعْلَمُ بِمَا
تَصِفُوْنَ ﴿77﴾ قَالُوْا يٰٓاَيُّهَا الْعَزِيْزُ اِنَّ لَهٗٓ اَبًا شَيْخًا كَبِيْرًا فَخُذْ اَحَدَنَا مَكَانَهٗ ۚ
اِنَّا نَرٰىكَ مِنَ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿78﴾ قَالَ مَعَاذَ اللّٰهِ اَنْ نَّاْخُذَ اِلَّا مَنْ وَّجَدْنَا مَتَاعَنَا
عِنْدَهٗٓ ۙ اِنَّآ اِذًا لَّظٰلِمُوْنَ ﴿79﴾ فَلَمَّا اسْتَيْـَٔسُوْا مِنْهُ خَلَصُوْا نَجِيًّا ؕ قَالَ كَبِيْرُهُمْ
اَلَمْ تَعْلَمُوْٓا اَنَّ اَبَاكُمْ قَدْ اَخَذَ عَلَيْكُمْ مَّوْثِقًا مِّنَ اللّٰهِ وَمِنْ قَبْلُ مَا
فَرَّطْتُّمْ فِيْ يُوْسُفَ ۚ فَلَنْ اَبْرَحَ الْاَرْضَ حَتّٰى يَاْذَنَ لِيْٓ اَبِيْٓ اَوْ يَحْكُمَ اللّٰهُ
لِيْ ۚ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الْحٰكِمِيْنَ ﴿80﴾ اِرْجِعُوْٓا اِلٰٓى اَبِيْكُمْ فَقُوْلُوْا يٰٓاَبَانَآ اِنَّ ابْنَكَ سَرَقَ ۚ
وَمَا شَهِدْنَآ اِلَّا بِمَا عَلِمْنَا وَمَا كُنَّا لِلْغَيْبِ حٰفِظِيْنَ ﴿81﴾ وَسْـَٔلِ الْقَرْيَةَ الَّتِيْ
كُنَّا فِيْهَا وَالْعِيْرَ الَّتِيْٓ اَقْبَلْنَا فِيْهَا ؕ وَاِنَّا لَصٰدِقُوْنَ ﴿82﴾ قَالَ بَلْ سَوَّلَتْ لَكُمْ
اَنْفُسُكُمْ اَمْرًا ؕ فَصَبْرٌ جَمِيْلٌ ؕ عَسَى اللّٰهُ اَنْ يَّاْتِيَنِيْ بِهِمْ جَمِيْعًا ؕ اِنَّهٗ هُوَ
الْعَلِيْمُ الْحَكِيْمُ ﴿83﴾ وَتَوَلّٰى عَنْهُمْ وَقَالَ يٰٓاَسَفٰى عَلٰى يُوْسُفَ وَابْيَضَّتْ عَيْنٰهُ
مِنَ الْحُزْنِ فَهُوَ كَظِيْمٌ ﴿84﴾ قَالُوْا تَاللّٰهِ تَفْتَؤُا تَذْكُرُ يُوْسُفَ حَتّٰى تَكُوْنَ

While Joseph was arranging for the loading of the packs of his brothers, he put his cup in the pack of his own brother.[56] Afterwards a herald shouted, "Ho, caneleers ! you are thieves."[57] Turning back, they asked, "What is it that you are missing?" The royal servants replied, "We do not find the cup of the king." (And their headman added,) "The one, who would restore it, will be awarded a camel load of corn. I guarantee this." The brothers replied, "By God, you know it well that we have not come for spreading disorder in this country, and we are no thieves." At this, they said, "Very well, what shall be the punishment of the thief, if you are found to be liars?" They replied, "His punishment should be that he himself be made a bondsman, if the thing is found in his pack. At home we punish such offenders like this."[58] Then Joseph first began to search the packs of his step-brothers before searching the pack of his own brother. At last he took it out from the pack of his brother. Thus We supported Joseph with Our plan:[59] for it did not behove Joseph to seize his brother (by the king's law) except that Allah willed it so.[60] We raise high the ranks of those We will, and there is the One Whose knowledge is far greater than the knowledge of all others. 70-76

At this discovery the brothers remarked, "There is nothing strange in it that he has committed a theft, for his brother (Joseph) also committed a theft before this."[61] Hearing this, Joseph suppressed his feelings and did not reveal the secret to them, but said only this in an under tone, "What a bad people you are! you are accusing me (to my face) of the thing the truth of which Allah knows best." 77

Then they said, "O exalted sir,[62] he has a very aged father: therefore take one of us in his stead. We see that you are a very generous man." Joseph replied, "God forbid that we should seize any other than the one with whom we have found our property[63]: for, if we do this, we shall be unjust." 78-79

When they despaired of moving Joseph, they went to a corner and conferred together. The eldest of them said, "You know that your father has taken a solemn pledge from you in the name of Allah, and you also know that you had wronged Joseph before this. I will not, therefore, leave this land until my father gives me permission or Allah decides in my favour, for Allah is the best of all those who decide. Go 80-82

back to your father and say, 'Dear father, your son committed a theft. We did not see him stealing: we are simply stating what we have come to know and we could not guard against the unforeseen. You may enquire from the people of that town and from the caravan in which we travelled back home. We are surely telling the truth'."

Contd. from p. 419]

certain precautionary measures. In order to understand the significance of this precautionary measure of entering the capital by different gates, we should have a glimpse of the political conditions of that period. As the Israelites lived on the Eastern frontier of Egypt as independent clans, they were looked at with suspicion like all frontier people. Therefore Prophet Jacob feared that if they entered the city in a group, they might be taken for a gang of suspects, especially during that time of famine. Thus there was an apprehension of some severe action being taken against them as if they had come there for organized robbery. That was why he gave them this allowance that if under such adverse circumstances there was any trouble, he would not accuse them of breach of the pledge for the safety of Benjamin.

54. "Most people do not understand...." how Prophet Jacob was able to hold the balance between "trust in Allah" and adoption of precautionary measures. This was because Allah had favoured him with the real knowledge. That was why he took all those measures which were dictated by common sense, deep thinking and experience. He admonished them for their ill treatment with their brother Joseph so that they should not dare repeat it in the case of Benjamin. He took a solemn pledge from them in the name of Allah that they would take good care of the safety of their step-brother. Then he advised them to be on their guard against the dangerous political situation and to enter the capital by different gates so as not to give cause for alarm and suspicion. In short, as far as it was humanly possible, he took all the precautionary measures to avoid every possible risk. On the other hand, he always kept this thing in view (and expressed it) that no human precautionary measure could avert the enforcement of Allah's will, and that the real protection was Allah's protection: and that one should not rely on the precautionary measures but on the favour of Allah. Obviously only that person who has the real knowledge can keep such a balance in his words and deeds, who knows what kind of efforts are demanded of his human faculties bestowed by Allah for the solution of worldly problems, who also realizes that it is Allah alone Who has the power to make them a success or a failure. This is "what most people do not understand". Some of them rely merely on their efforts and measures and discard trust in Allah; while there are others who rely merely on "trust in Allah" and do not adopt any practical measure to solve their problem.

55. The whole story of their reunion after a separation of twenty years or so has been summed up in this brief sentence. In all probability Prophet Joseph might have told him the story of the vicissitudes that ultimately had led to his high rank, and Benjamin in his turn might have related the story of the ill-treatment of the heartless step-brothers. Then Prophet Joseph might have reassured him that he would not be allowed to go back with them but remain with him. It is also possible that the plan to retain him there, without disclosing the secret of Prophet Joseph's identity, would have then been thought out and decided upon.

56. In all probability, Prophet Joseph put the cup in his brother's pack with his knowledge and consent, as may be inferred from the preceding verse. Obviously, Prophet Joseph desired to free his brother from the oppression of the cruel step-brothers and he himself was reluctant to go back with them. But this could not be done directly and openly without disclosing his own identity, which was not then expedient under the circumstances. Therefore both the brothers might have thought out this plan, though this would have put the younger brother in an embarrassing situation for the time being because of his involvement in a case of theft. But they had adopted this plan because afterwards both the brothers could clear it easily by disclosing the real matter.

57. There is nothing in this verse nor in the succeeding verses to show that Prophet Joseph took his servants in his confidence in regard to this matter, and instructed them to bring a false accusation against the travellers. The simple explanation of the incident may be this. The cup might have been quietly and secretly put in the pack. Afterwards when the servants did not find it, they might have come to the inevitable conclusion that it must have been stolen by the travellers who were staying there.

58. It should be kept in mind that these people were the descendants of Prophet Abraham. Therefore they put forward his law regarding a thief, that is, the thief should be made the bondsman of the one whose goods he had stolen.

59. Now let us consider the question: How did Allah directly support Prophet Joseph with His plan? It is obvious that the plan of placing the cup in Benjamin's pack was thought out and executed by Joseph himself. And it is also obvious that the royal servants checked their packs as a matter of routine for such is the procedure that is generally followed on such occasions. There is nothing in this passage that might be called supernatural support by Allah except that the servants asked the brothers to prescribe the punishment for the thief, and they answered that he should be made a bondsman. The sentence that follows also confirms this interpretation.

60. Had Allah willed it, He would not have removed the flaw in the plan of Prophet Joseph. It was this: he could seize his brother according to his plan

only by the help of the king's law, but it was not worthy of a Prophet of Allah to apply that un Islamic law to his own personal case. For he had taken political power in his hands in order to establish gradually the Islamic law and not to enforce and keep the king's law in vogue. Had Allah willed it, He would have left no other course for His Prophet except to have resort to the un-Islamic law. But He did not will it so because He did not like to tarnish the fair name of His Prophet. Therefore he made the servants enquire from the brothers (an unusual thing) about the punishment of a thief and they stated the Law of Prophet Abraham. Thus not only was the flaw removed, but also no room was left for the brothers to raise any objection against this on the plea that they were not Egyptians, and therefore the law of the land could not be applied against them. As has already been pointed out, this was the support of Allah to which He has referred in the two subsequent verses as a token of His favour and a sign of the perfection of His knowledge.

The favour of Allah was that He saved Prophet Joseph from applying the un-Islamic law of the king of Egypt to his personal case, for he was liable to do so under the stress of human weakness. And there can be no greater favour for one than this that Allah Himself should arrange to guard his high moral position. It should, however, be noted that such a high rank is awarded only to those who prove themselves to be "righteous" in very hard trials.

By removing the flaw in his plan, Allah showed that His knowledge was far superior to the knowledge of those, whom (like Prophet Joseph) He had endowed with knowledge.

In this connection, there are some other points worthy of consideration and we will deal with them briefly:

(1) Generally the words ßáäáÇ äfÎ ìÝ ÐÎÇíá óäÇóßÇóã are translated like this: "Joseph could not seize his brother by the law of the king", or "Joseph was not authorized to seize his brother according to the law of the king." In other words, it means, "He could not do this, as there was no provision for it in the king's law." Whereas it means this: "He ought not to have seized him by the king's law, as it did not behove him to do so." This version is open to two objections. Firstly, this is against the Qur'anic usage of âá äÇß Çã which usually means, "It did not behove him", "It was not right for him" and "He ought not to have done this." For instance, this is what it means in the following verses

"Indeed, Islam alone is the Right Way in the sight of Allah." (III: 18). "Whosoever will adopt any other way than the way of Islam, it shall not be accepted...." (III: 85).

Secondly, such a version is meaningless, for there could have been no reason why he had not the power to seize him for theft according to the law of the king. Can there be any kingdom without having a law for taking action against a thief?

(2) As the Qur'an uses the word ßáãáÇ äÍ which connotes "the king's way of life" in addition to "the king's law", it helps to understand the meaning of the sentence under discussion. For it is obvious that the Prophet was sent to establish the way of Allah and not the un-Islamic way of the king. Though by that time he had only partially succeeded in this Mission, it was not proper and worthy of a Prophet to adopt "the way of the king" for his own personal case. Though there was no legal hindrance in his way to seize his brother according to the king's law, nevertheless, it was inappropriate for him, as a Prophet, to adopt the king's way which he had hitherto scrupulously avoided as far as his own person was concerned. Thus it is clear that its appropriate interpretation will be this: "It did not behove Joseph to seize his brother by the king's law."

(3) Besides this, by using the word دين الملك for the "law of the land", Allah has denoted the vast comprehension of the word äÍ (*dīn*) and this cuts at the root of the conception of *dīn* of those people who confine the scope of the Message of the Prophets to mere worship of One Allah and believe that it has nothing to do with the cultural, political, social, judicial, legal and other mundane affairs of life. Or, they opine that, if at all it has any concern with those matters, it is merely to give some instructions of an optional nature in regard to these, and leave it to the believers to adopt these or their own man-made laws, because, they think, there is no harm even in adopting the latter course. This erroneous conception of *dīn*, which has been in vogue among the Muslims for a long time, has been responsible for rendering them neglectful of making exertions for the establishment of the Islamic Way of life. As a result of this misconception of *dīn*, they became reconciled to un-Islamic ways of unbelief and ignorance. Nay, they considered this misconception of theirs to be the pattern set by Prophet Joseph and became willing helpers and servants of these un-Islamic systems. Whereas this verse categorically refutes this misconception by declaring that the "law of the land" is as much a part of the *dīn* of Allah as *Salāt*, Haj, Fast, and *Zakat* are. Therefore, the demand of the acceptance of äÍáÇ (*ad-Dīn*) made in v. 19 and v. 85 of *Āl-i-'Imrān*, that is, "Indeed, Islam alone is äÍáÇ the Right Way, in the sight of Allah" and "Whosoever will adopt any other way (äÍ), than the Way of Islam, it shall not be accepted", includes laws as well as Salāt and other obligatory duties prescribed by Allah. Therefore the exclusion of this part of *dīn* from any system would incur the displeasure of Allah.

duties prescribed by Allah. Therefore the exclusion of this part of *dīn* from any system would incur the displeasure of Allah.

(4) The above interpretation, however, is open to one objection. It does, at least, imply that an un-Islamic way was in vogue in Egypt at the time, when Prophet Joseph was, even according to the present commentator, the supreme head of the country. It is, therefore, a proof that that Prophet himself was enforcing the un-Islamic law of the king. What difference, then, could it have made, if Prophet Joseph had followed, in his personal case too, the system of law of the king which he himself was enforcing instead of the system of law of Prophet Abraham? Most certainly this would have made a vast difference because it would have compromised his position as a Prophet, because he was trying to establish the Islamic Way of life, which naturally could have been accomplished gradually in course of time, during which the king's law would have inevitably remained in vogue. The same thing happened in Arabia during the Mission of the Holy Prophet in Madinah, which took nine years to establish the Islamic System in its entirety. During that period, several un-Islamic laws remained in vogue. For instance, drinking, interest, the un-Islamic laws of inheritance and marriage and some wrong ways of trade, etc., had to continue for some time. Likewise the civil and penal codes of Islam took some time for their complete introduction. So there is nothing strange in this that the king's law continued to be in vogue during the first nine years or so of Prophet Joseph's reign. But the continuance of the un-Islamic law of the king during the period of transition is no argument to prove that Allah's Prophet was sent to follow the way of the king and not to establish the Way of Allah.

As regards the question why it was not worthy of Prophet Joseph to apply the king's law to his personal case, its best answer is again found in the practice of the Holy Prophet. During the interim period, when the laws of ignorance had not yet been replaced by Islamic Laws, other Muslims went on drinking wine and taking interest as before, but the Holy Prophet never practiced any of these things. Likewise some un-Islamic laws of marriage, such as taking in marriage of real sisters at one and the same time, were practised, but the Holy Prophet never practised any such thing. Thus it is clear, that there was a difference between leaving in vogue some un-Islamic laws during the period of the evolution of the Islamic Law and practising the same. Had Prophet Joseph applied the king's law to his own case, it would have meant that he had lent his seeming sanction to that law. But it is obvious that a Prophet, who is sent to eliminate the ways of ignorance, cannot follow these even under the temporary leave that is given to others.

their position and dissociated themselves from Benjamin, declaring that he was a thief like his brother Joseph. It is obvious that this was a false accusation the clever brothers had invented on the spot. But it is an instance of the malice these brothers bore to their two step-brothers, and is also the answer to the question why Prophet Joseph desired to keep his brother with him.

62. The use of the title ÒíÒÚáÇ ("The exalted one") with which they addressed Prophet Joseph has given rise to the confusion that he held the same office as the husband of Zelicha held before him. Then this misunderstanding let the commentators to the invention of further comments, such as, Al-'Azīz had died and Prophet Joseph was appointed in his place, and Zelicha was rejuvenated by a miracle and married to him by the king. They have not stopped at this: they have, somehow or other, discovered even the conversation that took place between Prophet Joseph and Zelicha in the first night of their marriage. In fact, all this is mere fiction, for, as has already been pointed out, the word عزيز was the Arabic translation or equivalent of some Egyptian title, and was not the designation of any particular office. It was merely a title used for the high ones in Egypt like "His Excellenay" or "Your Excellency", etc. As regards the said marriage, this fiction has been built on the story of Prophet Joseph's marriage in the Bible and the Talmud. According to these, he was married with Asenath, the daughter of Poti-pherah. As the name of the husband of Zelicha was Potiphar, the two names got confused together. Accordingly, when the story was handed down from the traditions of the Israelites from one commentator to the other, the name Potiphar got interchanged with Poti-pherah because the two were so like each other in sound. Consequently, the daughter in the story was replaced by "wife". Then Potiphar was "killed" in order to facilitate the marriage. Then the only remaining difficulty, that is, the disparity of their ages, was got over with the help of a miracle. She was rejuvenated so completely as to enable her to become the worthy wife of the "ruler" of the land.

63. The use of the words "with whom we have found our property" instead of the word "thief" is very significant. Prophet Joseph avoided the use of the word "thief" for his brother because he was not really a thief. This is called åíÑæÊ (*touriyah*), that is, to put a cover over a reality or "to hide a reality." Such a practice is allowed by the Muslim Law under certain conditions and with certain limitations. It may be practised not to gain any selfish end, but to ward off some evil or to protect and save an oppressed person from some oppressor, provided

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حَرَضًا اَوْ تَكُوْنَ مِنَ الْهٰلِكِيْنَ ﴿85﴾ قَالَ اِنَّمَآ اَشْكُوْا بَثِّيْ وَحُزْنِيْٓ اِلَى اللّٰهِ وَ
اَعْلَمُ مِنَ اللّٰهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿86﴾ يٰبَنِيَّ اذْهَبُوْا فَتَحَسَّسُوْا مِنْ يُّوْسُفَ وَ
اَخِيْهِ وَلَا تَايْـَٔسُوْا مِنْ رَّوْحِ اللّٰهِ ۭ اِنَّهٗ لَا يَايْـَٔسُ مِنْ رَّوْحِ اللّٰهِ اِلَّا الْقَوْمُ
الْكٰفِرُوْنَ ﴿87﴾ فَلَمَّا دَخَلُوْا عَلَيْهِ قَالُوْا يٰٓاَيُّهَا الْعَزِيْزُ مَسَّنَا وَاَهْلَنَا الضُّرُّ وَ
جِئْنَا بِبِضَاعَةٍ مُّزْجٰىةٍ فَاَوْفِ لَنَا الْكَيْلَ وَتَصَدَّقْ عَلَيْنَا ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَجْزِي
الْمُتَصَدِّقِيْنَ ﴿88﴾ قَالَ هَلْ عَلِمْتُمْ مَّا فَعَلْتُمْ بِيُوْسُفَ وَاَخِيْهِ اِذْ اَنْتُمْ جٰهِلُوْنَ ﴿89﴾
قَالُوْٓا ءَاِنَّكَ لَاَنْتَ يُوْسُفُ ۭ قَالَ اَنَا يُوْسُفُ وَهٰذَآ اَخِيْ ۡ قَدْ مَنَّ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْنَا ۭ
اِنَّهٗ مَنْ يَّتَّقِ وَيَصْبِرْ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يُضِيْعُ اَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿90﴾ قَالُوْا تَاللّٰهِ لَقَدْ
اٰثَرَكَ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْنَا وَاِنْ كُنَّا لَخٰطِـِٕيْنَ ﴿91﴾ قَالَ لَا تَثْرِيْبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْيَوْمَ ۭ يَغْفِرُ
اللّٰهُ لَكُمْ ۡ وَهُوَ اَرْحَمُ الرّٰحِمِيْنَ ﴿92﴾ اِذْهَبُوْا بِقَمِيْصِيْ هٰذَا فَاَلْقُوْهُ عَلٰي وَجْهِ
اَبِيْ يَاْتِ بَصِيْرًا ۚ وَاْتُوْنِيْ بِاَهْلِكُمْ اَجْمَعِيْنَ ﴿93﴾ وَلَمَّا فَصَلَتِ الْعِيْرُ قَالَ
اَبُوْهُمْ اِنِّيْ لَاَجِدُ رِيْحَ يُوْسُفَ لَوْلَآ اَنْ تُفَنِّدُوْنِ ﴿94﴾ قَالُوْا تَاللّٰهِ اِنَّكَ لَفِيْ
ضَلٰلِكَ الْقَدِيْمِ ﴿95﴾ فَلَمَّآ اَنْ جَاۗءَ الْبَشِيْرُ اَلْقٰىهُ عَلٰي وَجْهِهٖ فَارْتَدَّ بَصِيْرًا ۚ
قَالَ اَلَمْ اَقُلْ لَّكُمْ ۚ اِنِّيْٓ اَعْلَمُ مِنَ اللّٰهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿96﴾ قَالُوْا يٰٓاَبَانَا اسْتَغْفِرْ
لَنَا ذُنُوْبَنَآ اِنَّا كُنَّا خٰطِـِٕيْنَ ﴿97﴾ قَالَ سَوْفَ اَسْتَغْفِرُ لَكُمْ رَبِّيْ ۭ اِنَّهٗ هُوَ الْغَفُوْرُ
الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿98﴾ فَلَمَّا دَخَلُوْا عَلٰي يُوْسُفَ اٰوٰٓى اِلَيْهِ اَبَوَيْهِ وَقَالَ ادْخُلُوْا مِصْرَ
اِنْ شَاۗءَ اللّٰهُ اٰمِنِيْنَ ﴿99﴾ وَرَفَعَ اَبَوَيْهِ عَلَي الْعَرْشِ وَخَرُّوْا لَهٗ سُجَّدًا ۚ وَ
قَالَ يٰٓاَبَتِ هٰذَا تَاْوِيْلُ رُءْيَايَ مِنْ قَبْلُ ۡ قَدْ جَعَلَهَا رَبِّيْ حَقًّا ۭ وَقَدْ اَحْسَنَ
بِيْٓ اِذْ اَخْرَجَنِيْ مِنَ السِّجْنِ وَجَاۗءَ بِكُمْ مِّنَ الْبَدْوِ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ اَنْ نَّزَغَ

Hearing this story, the father said, "Your souls have made another thing easy for you.[64] Well, I will bear this, too, patiently with a good grace. Maybe Allah will bring them all to me, for He knows everything and all His works are based on wisdom." Then he turned his face from them and cried, "Alas for Joseph!"—He was sorely oppressed with suppressed sorrow and his eyes had become white with grief.— The sons exclaimed, 'By Allah ! You have not ceased to think of Joseph and now things have come to such a pass that you will ruin your health or kill yourself with grief for him." He replied, "I complain to Allah alone of my sorrow and grief. And I know from Allah what you do not know. My children, go and make a search for Joseph and his brother. Don't despair of Allah's mercy, for it is the unbelievers alone who despair of His mercy." 83-87

When they went back to Egypt and presented themselves before Joseph, they humbly said, "Exalted sir ! we and our family are in great distress: though we have been able to bring only goods of scant worth for barter, we request you to give us full measure of grain, and be charitable to us:[65] for Allah rewards richly those who are charitable." At this Joseph, who could contain himself no longer, exclaimed, "Do you know what you did with Joseph and his brother, when you were ignorant?" This took them by surprise and they cried, "Why ! are you indeed Joseph"? He replied, "Yes, I am Joseph, and here is my brother. Allah has been very gracious to us. The fact is that Allah does not let go waste the recompense of such righteous people as practise piety and fortitude." They said, "By God ! Allah has exalted you above us, and we have indeed been sinful." He replied, "Today no penalty shall be inflicted on you. May Allah forgive you ! He is the most Merciful of all. Go, take this shirt of mine, and cast this over the face of my father and he shall recover his sight. Then bring all the members of your family to me." 88-93

When this caravan departed (from Egypt), their father said (in Cana'ān), "I am surely perceiving the smell[66] of Joseph, though you might think me to be in the dotage." The people of the house answered, "By God, you are still suffering from your old illusion."[67] 94-95

But when the bearer of the good tidings arrived there, he cast Joseph's shirt on Jacob's face, and his sight came back to him. Then he

said, "Didn't I say to you that I know from Allah what you do not know?" They exclaimed all together" Dear father, pray for the pardon of our sins, for we have indeed been sinful." He replied, "I will implore my Lord to forgive you, for He is Forgiving and Merciful."

99 And when they came to Joseph,[68] he seated his parents along with himself and said (to the people of his family), "Now proceed to the city. God willing, you will live in peace."

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that no other course might have been left except saying something against the truth or of having a resort to a deceitful device. It is obvious that in such a case, a righteous person will not tell a blunt lie or resort to an open deceit. Instead, he will say something or do something that might not be strictly truthful or strictly right, yet at the same time is not a blunt lie, so that he might hide the reality to ward off the evil. Such a practice is lawful, legally and morally, provided that it is not practised to gain some personal or selfish ends but to ward off a greater evil with a lesser evil. Accordingly, Prophet Joseph scrupulously fulfilled all the conditions in this case. He placed the cup in the pack of his brother with his consent, but he did not ask his servants to make a search of his pack and accuse him of theft. After this, when the servants brought the brothers before him as suspects, he quietly rose from his seat and began to make a search of their packs. Then afterwards, when the brothers requested that one of them should be taken instead of Benjamin, he answered them back in their own words that he would detain only that person in whose possession the cup was found and none else.

Instances of such a practice during his campaigns are found in the life history of the Holy Prophet. And this cannot be regarded as morally objectionable according to any moral or legal standard.

64. That is, "You readily believed that my son, whom I know to be of a noble character, had committed the theft of a cup: you have behaved in his case just as you behaved in the case of his elder brother. You made away with him and then pretended, without any pangs of conscience, that a wolf had devoured him and now, with the same ease, you tell me that the other brother has committed a theft".

65. That is, "It will be charitable of you if you give us that much grain as we require to fulfil our needs, because the goods we have brought for its barter are of less value than of the grain we require."

66. This is an instance of the extraordinary powers the Prophets possess. Prophet Jacob perceive in Çana'ān the smell of Prophet Joseph's shirt from such a

distant place as Egypt as soon as the caravan started on the journey. At the same time it also shows, by contrast, that these powers of the Prophets are not inherent or personal characteristics but are bestowed on them by Allah as and when He wills. That is why Prophet Jacob could not perceive the smell of the clothes of Prophet Joseph as long as Allah did not will it, when he had been living in Egypt.

In this connection, it should also be noted that in contrast to the Qur'ān which represents Prophet Jacob as a great Prophet who was able to perceive the smell of Prophet Joseph from such a long distance, the Bible represents him as an ordinary uncultured father. According to *Genesis* 45: 26-27, when they told him, saying, "Joseph is yet alive and he is governor over all the land of Egypt—Jacob's heart fainted, for he believed them not .... and only when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived."

67. This remark shows that no member of his family except Prophet Joseph appreciated the true worth of Prophet Jacob. He himself was aware of the low state of their mental and moral condition. And it is one of the ironies of fate that the majority of the great personalities who made history got very little appreciation at home.

68. It is worthwhile to take notice of the total number of Prophet Jacob's family members that migrated to Egypt with him, for it is closely connected with the problem that is raised concerning the total number of the Israelites who emigrated from there some five hundred years after this. According to the Bible, the total number of the family members was 70, including Prophet Joseph and his two sons, and excluding those daughters-in-law who did not belong to the family of Prophet Jacob. But according to the census figures given in *Numbers*, their number was about two million when they were counted in the wilderness of Sinai in the second year, "after they were come out of the land of Egypt". The problem is this: how is it possible that "these three score and ten souls of his house" had multiplied into two million souls during five hundred years or so?

It is obvious that no family can multiply to such a large number in five hundred years merely by the generative process. Thus the only other way in which their number could have been increased was proselytism. And there are sound reasons to believe that this must have been so. The Israelites were the descendants of Prophets. They had migrated to Egypt because of the power Prophet Joseph enjoyed there. And we have seen that he made full use of every opportunity he got for carrying out the work of the Mission of Prophethood. Therefore it may reasonably be expected that the Israelites would have done their very best to convert the Egyptians to their faith of Islam during the five centuries of their

[Contd. on p. 434

الشَّيْطٰنُ بَيْنِيْ وَبَيْنَ اِخْوَتِيْ ؕ اِنَّ رَبِّيْ لَطِيْفٌ لِّمَا يَشَآءُ ؕ اِنَّهٗ هُوَ الْعَلِيْمُ
الْحَكِيْمُ ﴿١٠٠﴾ رَبِّ قَدْ اٰتَيْتَنِيْ مِنَ الْمُلْكِ وَعَلَّمْتَنِيْ مِنْ تَاْوِيْلِ الْاَحَادِيْثِ ۚ
فَاطِرَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ۚ اَنْتَ وَلِيّٖ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْاٰخِرَةِ ۚ تَوَفَّنِيْ مُسْلِمًا وَّ
اَلْحِقْنِيْ بِالصّٰلِحِيْنَ ﴿١٠١﴾ ذٰلِكَ مِنْ اَنْۢبَآءِ الْغَيْبِ نُوْحِيْهِ اِلَيْكَ ۚ وَمَا كُنْتَ
لَدَيْهِمْ اِذْ اَجْمَعُوْٓا اَمْرَهُمْ وَهُمْ يَمْكُرُوْنَ ﴿١٠٢﴾ وَمَآ اَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ وَلَوْ حَرَصْتَ
بِمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿١٠٣﴾ وَمَا تَسْـَٔلُهُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ اَجْرٍ ؕ اِنْ هُوَ اِلَّا ذِكْرٌ لِّلْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿١٠٤﴾ وَكَاَيِّنْ
مِّنْ اٰيَةٍ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ يَمُرُّوْنَ عَلَيْهَا وَهُمْ عَنْهَا مُعْرِضُوْنَ ﴿١٠٥﴾ وَمَا
يُؤْمِنُ اَكْثَرُهُمْ بِاللّٰهِ اِلَّا وَهُمْ مُّشْرِكُوْنَ ﴿١٠٦﴾ اَفَاَمِنُوْٓا اَنْ تَاْتِيَهُمْ غَاشِيَةٌ مِّنْ
عَذَابِ اللّٰهِ اَوْ تَاْتِيَهُمُ السَّاعَةُ بَغْتَةً وَّهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُوْنَ ﴿١٠٧﴾ قُلْ هٰذِهٖ سَبِيْلِيْٓ
اَدْعُوْٓا اِلَى اللّٰهِ ۣ عَلٰى بَصِيْرَةٍ اَنَا وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَنِيْ ؕ وَسُبْحٰنَ اللّٰهِ وَمَآ اَنَا مِنَ
الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ ﴿١٠٨﴾ وَمَآ اَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ اِلَّا رِجَالًا نُّوْحِيْٓ اِلَيْهِمْ مِّنْ اَهْلِ
الْقُرٰى ؕ اَفَلَمْ يَسِيْرُوْا فِي الْاَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوْا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ
قَبْلِهِمْ ؕ وَلَدَارُ الْاٰخِرَةِ خَيْرٌ لِّلَّذِيْنَ اتَّقَوْا ؕ اَفَلَا تَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿١٠٩﴾ حَتّٰٓى اِذَا
اسْتَيْـَٔسَ الرُّسُلُ وَظَنُّوْٓا اَنَّهُمْ قَدْ كُذِبُوْا جَآءَهُمْ نَصْرُنَا ۙ فَنُجِّيَ مَنْ
نَّشَآءُ ؕ وَلَا يُرَدُّ بَاْسُنَا عَنِ الْقَوْمِ الْمُجْرِمِيْنَ ﴿١١٠﴾ لَقَدْ كَانَ فِيْ قَصَصِهِمْ عِبْرَةٌ
لِّاُولِي الْاَلْبَابِ ؕ مَا كَانَ حَدِيْثًا يُّفْتَرٰى وَلٰكِنْ تَصْدِيْقَ الَّذِيْ بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَ
تَفْصِيْلَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَّهُدًى وَّرَحْمَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يُّؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿١١١﴾

(After entering the town,) he raised his parents to the throne,[69] and seated them along with himself and all of them spontaneously bowed down before him.[70] Joseph said, "Dear father, This is the interpretation of the dream I dreamt long before: my Lord has now turned that into reality. It is His grace that He took me out of the prison and brought you to me from the desert after Satan had stirred up strife between me and my brothers. It is a fact that my Lord fulfils His designs in mysterious ways, for He is All-Knowing, All-Wise. Lord, Thou hast given me kingdom and taught me how to probe into problems. Creator of the earth and the heavens ! Thou art my Guardian in this world and the Hereafter: Let me die as a Muslim, and join me with the righteous in the end."[71] 100-101

O Muhammad! this story which We are revealing to you is of those things that were not known to you: for you were not with the brothers when they had conspired together a plot against Joseph. Yet most of the people are not going to believe it, howsoever eager[72] you may be, and may even demand no recompense for this Message: it is simply an instruction for all the people of the world.[73] 102-104

And[74] many are the Signs in the heavens and the earth; yet they pass by and pay no heed to them.[75] So, most of them who believe in Allah join other deities also with Him.[76] Do they feel secure that Allah's scourge shall not overwhelm them, or that the hour of Doom will not come upon them suddenly when they are unaware?[77] 105-107

Tell them plainly, "This is my way. I invite you to Allah. I myself see my Way in full light and my followers see it, too. And Allah is free from any defect,[78] and I have nothing to do with those who practice *shirk*". 108

O Muhammad ! all the Messengers, whom We sent before you, were also human beings, and lived in the same habitations, and to them We sent Our Revelations. Have these people, then, not travelled in the land and seen what has been the end of those who have passed away before them ? Surely, the abode of the Hereafter is far better for those who (believed in the Messengers and) adopted the attitude of piety. What! will you not understand it even now ?[79] (It also happened like this with the former Messengers: they went on conveying the Message for a long time but the people did not listen to them,) till the 109-110

Messengers despaired of the people and the people also thought that a falsehood had been presented to them: then suddenly Our succour reached the Messengers. And when such an occasion comes, We deliver whomsoever We will, but Our scourge cannot be averted from the criminals.

111 There is an object lesson in these stories of the former people for those, who possess common sense. That thing which is being sent down in the Qur'ān is not a forgery, but (is absolutely genuine and) it confirms the previous Scriptures, gives details[80] of everything, and is a guidance and blessing for the Believers.

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power in Egypt. As a result of this the Egyptian converts to Islam would not only have changed their religion but also their culture so as to make them look quite different from the other Egyptians and look like the Israelites. Naturally the non-Muslim Egyptians would have declared them to be foreigners just as the Hindus treat the Indian Muslims of today. By and by they themselves would have accepted this position and become members of the Israelite nationality. Afterwards, when the Egyptian nationalists began to persecute the alien Israelites, the Muslim Egyptians were also made a target of their tyranny. So when the Israelites migrated from Egypt, they, too, left their country along with them and began to be counted among them.

The above mentioned explanation is confirmed by the Bible also. For instance, it says that when they left Egypt, "the children of Israel journeyed from Remases to Succoth....and a mixed multitude went up also with them...." (*Exodus* 12: 37-38) and "the mix multitude that was among them fell a lusting". (*Numbers* 11: 4). Then by and by these non-Israelite converts to Islam began to be called "the stranger". "One ordinance *shall be both* for you of the congregation, and also for the stranger that sojourneth *with you*, an ordinance for ever in your generations: as *ye are*, so shall the stranger be before the Lord. One law and the one manner shall be for you, and for the stranger that sojourneth with you." (NUMBERS 15: 15-16). "And I charged your judges at that time, saying, Hear *the causes* between your brethren, and judge righteously between every man and his brother, and the stranger that is with him." (DEUT. 1: 16).

Now it is not an easy thing to find out the exact term which was applied in the original Scriptures to the Egyptian converts to Islam, and which was afterwards changed into the "stranger" by the translators.

69. According to the Talmud, "When Joseph learned that his father was upon the way, he gathered together his friends and officers, and soldiers of the realm, attired in rich garments,....and formed a great company to meet Prophet Jacob on the way and escort him to Egypt. Music and gladness filled the land, and all the people, the women and the children, assembled on the house-tops to view the magnificent display." (H. Polano, p. 111).

70. The interpretation of this verse has given rise to some serious misunderstandings, which are against the very fundamentals of the Divine Guidance. So much so that some people have gone to the extreme of making it lawful to prostrate before kings and saints as a mark of respect. Others more strict on this point have explained it away, saying, "In the former Divine Laws, it was unlawful only to prostrate in worship before others than Allah, though it was permissible to prostrate before others if it was done without the intention of worship, but now in the Divine Law given to Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) it has been made absolutely unlawful".

Such misunderstandings as these have resulted from taking the words وخرّوا له سجّدا in this verse to mean "to perform *sajadah*" in the technical sense in which it is now used in the Islamic code, that is, "lying flat in such a way that the hands, the knees and the forehead touch the ground," whereas the word سجّدا (*sujjadan*) has been used here in its literal meaning of *sajūd* "to bow down". The parents and brothers of Prophet Joseph bowed down before him in accordance with the ancient custom among the people of the age, (and the custom is still in vogue among some people), who used to bow down before others to show their gratitude, or welcome them, or merely to salute them by placing their hand on the breast. There are many instances of this in the Bible. "....and when he (Abraham) saw them (the three men) coming towards him, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself towards the ground." (Please refer to Arabic translation: Gen. 18: 32). Further on it says that when the children of Heth gave a field and a cave as a burying place for Sarah, Prophet Abraham was so grateful to them that "he stood up and bowed himself to the people of the land, even to the children of Heth," (Gen. 23: 7) and "Abraham bowed down himself before the people of the land." (Gen. 23: 12). In both cases the words 'bowed down' have been translated into سجد (*Sajada*).

These and other like instances in the Bible are a conclusive proof of the fact that in this verse (100), the Qur'ān has not used the word سجدہ in its technical Islamic sense but in its literal sense.

Besides, those commentators are absolutely wrong who suppose that in the former laws, *sajadah* in the present Islamic sense was allowed as a mark of respect

laws. For instance; during the Babylonian captivity of the Children of Israel, king Ahasuerus promoted Haman above all the princes and commanded all his servants to bow and reverence him, but Mordecai, who was a holy and righteous man among the Jews, bowed not, nor did him reverence. (*Esther* 3: 1-2). The Talmud has elaborated this point in a way that is worth reading:

The servants of the king said to Mordecai: "Why wilt thou refuse to bow before Haman, transgressing thus the wishes of the king? Do we not bow before him?" "Yea are foolish," answered Mordecai, "aye, wanting in reason. Listen to me. Shall a mortal, who must return to dust be glorified? Shall I bow down before one born of woman, whose days are short? When he is small he cries and weeps as a child; when he grows older sorrow and sighing are his portion; his days are full of wrath and anger, and at the end he returns to dust. Shall I bow to one like to him? No. I prostrate myself before the Eternal God, who lives for ever. To Him the great Creator and Ruler of the Universe, and to no other will I bow." (The Talmud Selections by H. Polano, p. 172).

This speech which was made by a Believer from among the Israelites a thousand years before the Revelation of the Qur'ān, is conclusive on the point. Thus there is absolutely no room for the performance of "sajadah" before any other than Allah.

71. The few sentences that were uttered by Prophet Joseph (Allah's peace be upon him) at the happiest occasion of his life help depict the most graceful pattern of the virtues of a true Believer. There is the man from the desert, whom his own brothers had, out of jealousy, attempted to kill, now sitting on the throne after passing through many vicissitudes of life. All the members of his family have been forced by famine to come before him for help. The same jealous brothers, who had made an attempt on his life, are now standing before him with down-cast heads. Had there been a "successful man of the world" in his place, he would have used this opportunity for boasting of his greatness and bragging of his successes, and giving vent to his grievances and hurling malicious taunts at his defeated enemies. In utter contrast to this, the true man of God behaves in a quite different way. Instead of boasting and bragging of his own greatness, he is grateful to his God Who had shown grace to him by raising him to such a high position of power, and for arranging his meeting with his people after such a long period of separation. Instead of giving vent to his grievances against his brothers, making taunts at them for their ill-treatment, he does not make even a mention of such things but puts up a defense for them, saying that it was all due to Satan, who had stirred up strife between them: nay, he even puts it forward as a blessing in disguise, being one of the mysterious ways of Allah by which He had fulfilled His design of raising him to the throne. After saying these things in a few concise sentences, he at once turns to his Lord in gratitude for bestowing on him kingdom

and wisdom, instead of letting him rot in the prison, and prays to Him to keep him as His faithful and obedient servant as long as he was alive, and to join him with the righteous people after his death. What a pure and high pattern of character!

It is strange that this speech of Prophet Joseph has neither found a place in the Bible nor in the Talmud, though these books are full of irrelevant and unimportant details of this story and others. It is an irony that these Books are void of those things that teach moral values and throw light on the real characters and the Mission of the Prophets.

Now that this story has come to an end, the readers are again reminded that this story of Prophet Joseph as given in the Qur'ān is not a copy of the story given in the Bible and the Talmud for there are striking differences between them. A comparative study of these Books will show that the story in the Qur'ān differs from that given in the other two Books in several very important parts. The Qur'ān contains additional facts in some cases and omits certain facts in other cases or even refutes some parts as contained in the Bible and the Talmud. Therefore there is absolutely no room for anyone to allege that Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) related this story merely in the form he heard it from the Israelites.

72. In order to grasp the full significance of the underlying admonition implied in it, we must keep in view the background of the Revelation of this story given in the introduction to this Sūrah. The Quraish themselves had invited the Holy Prophet to a meeting that had been arranged for putting him to a test which was to show whether he was a true Prophet or not. When he arrived there, they put him this question without any previous notice or intimation: why did the Israelites go to Egypt? In answer to this, the Holy Prophet recited this Sūrah then and there. As they themselves knew that this was an abrupt question and there had been no preparation for its answer beforehand, it was expected that they would believe in his Prophethood: But they were so obdurate that they did not believe in him even then. As Allah was aware of their intentions, he informed His Messenger beforehand, as if to say, "Though you have come out successful in the test, to which they themselves put you, yet most of them are not going to believe it because they are not sincere in their quest for the truth. That is why they will not believe even now when the revelation of this Sūrah has proved conclusively that the Qur'ān is not being forged by you but is being sent down by Allah Himself. As their real aim and intention is to reject your Message anyhow, they will now invent another excuse for their denial."

This is not meant to remove any misunderstanding the Holy Prophet might have cherished, but is merely an indirect warning to the questioners that Allah knew their intentions well. This was meant to warn them like this: "O obdurate

people ! this Sūrah has been placed before you to serve as a mirror for you. You demanded a proof from Our Messenger that he was not forging the Qur'ān: had you been reasonable and sincere people, you would have accepted the truth that has been established according to your own test, but you are obdurate people and are still denying it."

73. This is another admonition more subtle than the one given above. Though this, too, has been addressed to the Holy Prophet, it is meant for the unbelievers, as if to say, "O people ! consider your attitude towards the Message from another point of view. Had you noticed anything in the Mission and the Message of Our Prophet that might have smelt of any self-interest whatever, you would have been justified in rejecting it as the work of a selfish person. But you yourselves have experienced it that he has absolutely no self-interest in his work and demands no recompense for the Message, which is nothing but instruction for all the people of the world. Therefore you should listen to it and consider it without prejudice and make your decisions about it on merit and merit alone."

74. Now that the story of Prophet Joseph (Allah's peace be upon him) has come to an end, the Qur'ān has made use of the opportunity for conveying its basic Message, for it does not tell stories merely for the sake of story-telling. As they themselves had invited the Prophet and were attentively listening to the story, the essence of the Message was presented in a few concise sentences (*vv.* 105-111).

75. This is to arouse people from their apathy towards the Signs of Allah that lie scattered all over the earth and the heavens and to urge them to make a search for the Reality by making right observations. As each and everything is not merely a "thing" but also a Sign which points to the Reality, a seeker after it should look at these with a look different from that of animals. This is because even an animal sees a tree, a mountain and water and takes it as a mere tree, a mountain or water, and with the help of his senses makes use of these according to his needs. But Allah has endowed man with a mind that is able to consider things in other than their physical and material aspects so that he may think deeply and make a search for the Reality by means of these Signs of Allah. The reason why people fail to discover the Reality and go astray is that they do not consider things as "Signs" and pay no heed to this aspect. Had they not deliberately shut their minds against the Message of the Prophets, it would not have been difficult for them at all to understand it and get guidance from it.

76. They associate other deities with Allah because they do not pay heed to His Signs, which serve as pointers to the Right Way. So they go astray from it and get lost in thorny bushes. Nevertheless, many of them do not lose sight of the Reality entirely, and do not disbelieve in Allah as their Creator and Sustainer, but

they get involved in *shirk*. That is, they do not deny the existence of God, but they believe that there are other deities who are also partners in His Being, His Attributes, His Powers, and His Rights. They should never have been involved in *shirk*, had they considered these Signs in the heavens and the earth from this point of view, for in that case they would have discovered everywhere, in each and every one of them, the proofs of the Oneness of Allah.

77. This question has been posed to rouse the people from their care-free attitude towards life produced by temporary security from dangers, and by a feeling that there is a long life to enjoy: so the problems can be postponed safely to a distant "future". This is obviously a wrong attitude, for no man has any guarantee that he will live up to a certain age: for no one knows when, where and how one would die. Therefore the questions meant to ask, "Does not your daily experience tell you that you knew nothing even a minute beforehand what your future was hiding for you ? Therefore, wisdom demands that you should make preparations for it now, and consider seriously whether the path you are treading is the right path. Have you any real proof to show that it is right? Do you find any sound argument in the heavens and the earth to support your decision? Did the people who trod such a path before you reach their destinations safely and securely? Finally, do the results of following such a path, which are appearing in your own time and culture, confirm that you are treading the right path?"

78. That is "Allah is absolutely free from such things that are ascribed to Him: He is free from the weaknesses and shortcomings which every believer in *shirk* ascribes to Him; He is free from all defects, evils and errors that must necessarily be ascribed to Him as a logical result of the conception of God held by *mushriks*."

79. A very comprehensive subject has been condensed here into a couple of sentences, which may be expanded like this: "O Muhammad ! these people do not listen to you because it is not an easy thing for them to believe you to be a Messenger of Allah just because you are a mere human being who was born in their own city among themselves and brought up like other people. But there is nothing strange in this, for this is not the first instance of its kind. All the Prophets, whom We sent before you, were also human beings and lived in the same habitations to which they were sent. It never happened that a stranger came to a town and declared, "I have been sent as a Messenger to you. On the other hand, all the Prophets—Jesus, Moses, Abraham and Noah (Allah's peace be upon them all)—who were raised for the reform of the people, were human beings who were born and brought up in their own habitations". Then it addresses the disbelievers directly, as if to say, "Now it is for you to judge and decide whether you should accept the Messenger or reject him on such flimsy grounds as these. You have travelled abroad and seen the end of those people who rejected the

Message of their Prophets and followed their own lusts. You have seen, on your journeys, the ruined habitations of the people of 'Ād, Thamūd, Midian, Lot, and others. Have you not observed these as object lessons, for these warn you that they would meet with far worse consequences in the Hereafter, and that conversely, those who are pious and God-fearing will have a very happy life?"

80. That is, "It gives details of everything that is required for the guidance of man." Some people take "details of everything" to mean the details of everything in the world. So, when they do not find in it the details of mathematics, physics, medicine etc. etc. they become skeptical. Whereas the Qur'ān claims to give the details of only one 'subject', "Guidance", for which it has been sent down, and it does give the details of everything that is essential for it.



XIII

AR-RA'AD

الرعد

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XIII

AR-RA'AD

الرعد

INTRODUCTION

Name

This Sūrah takes its name from the word الرعد (*ar-Ra'ad*) (thunder) that occurs in v. 13. It is merely the symbolic name of the Sūrah and does not in any way mean that the Sūrah deals with the scientific problems connected with thunder.

Period of Revelation

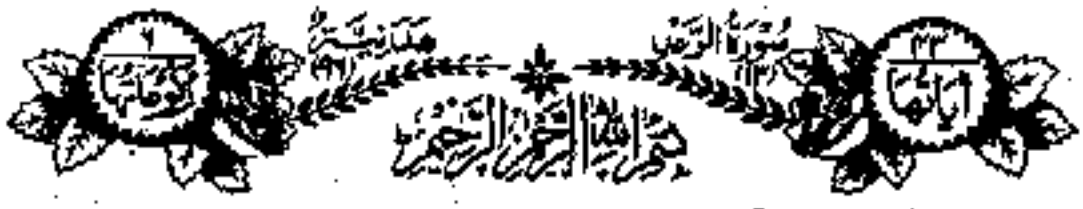
The internal evidence (vv. 27-31 and vv. 34-48) shows that this Sūrah was revealed in the last stage of the Mission of the Holy Prophet at Makkah and during the same period in which Sūrahs *Yūnus*, *Hūd* and *Al-A'arāf* were sent down. The manner of speech indicates that a long time had passed since the Holy Prophet had been conveying the Message. On the one hand, his opponents had been contriving different devices to defeat him and his Mission, and, on the other, his followers had been expressing a desire that by showing a miracle the disbelievers might be brought to the Right Way. In answer, Allah impressed on the Believers that it is not His way to convert people by this method and that they should not lose heart, if He is giving the enemies of the Truth a rope long enough to hang themselves. Otherwise, He is able to show such signs as may bring the dead out of their graves and make them speak (v. 31), but even then these obdurate people will invent an excuse to explain this away. All this decisive evidence clearly proves that this

Sūrah was revealed during the last stage of the Prophet's Mission at Makkah.

Central Theme

The first verse enunciates the main theme of this Sūrah, that is, "The Message of Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) is the very Truth, but it is the fault of the people that they are rejecting it." This is the pivot on which the whole Sūrah turns. This is why it has been shown over and over again in different ways that the basic components of the Message—*Tauhīd*, Resurrection and Prophethood—are a reality: therefore they should believe sincerely in these for their own moral and spiritual good. They have been warned that they shall incur their own ruin if they reject them, for *kufr* by itself is sheer folly and ignorance. Moreover, the aim of the Sūrah is not merely to satisfy the minds but also to appeal to the hearts to accept the Faith. Therefore it does not merely put forward logical arguments in support of the truth of the Message and against the people's wrong notions, but at appropriate intervals it makes frequent use of sympathetic and earnest appeals to win over their hearts by warning them of the consequences of *kufr* and by holding out the happy rewards of Faith so that the foolish people should give up their obduracy.

Besides this, the objections of the opponents have been answered without any mention of them, and those doubts which are proving a hindrance in the way of the Message or were being created by the opponents have been removed. At the same time, the Believers who had been passing through a long and hard ordeal and were feeling tired, and waiting anxiously for Allah's succour, have been comforted and filled with hope and courage.



الٓمّٓرٰ ۚ تِلْكَ اٰيٰتُ الْكِتٰبِ ؕ وَ الَّذِيْۤ اُنْزِلَ اِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَّبِّكَ الْحَقُّ وَلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَ

XIII

AR-RA'AD

الرعد

Verses: 43 *Revealed at Makkah*

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

Alif. Lām. Mīm. Rā. These are the verses of the Divine Book, and that which has been sent down to you from your Lord is the very truth, but most (of your) people do not believe in this.[1] 1

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1. This is the introduction to this Sūrah, in which its aim and object has been enunciated in a few words. Allah has addressed the Holy Prophet to this effect: "O Prophet ! most of your people are rejecting the teachings of the Qur'ān for one reason or the other, but the fact is that what We are sending down to you is the Truth whether people believe it or not."

After this brief introduction, the discourse deals with the main subject of the Sūrah, which consists of three basic things. First, "The whole of the universe belongs to Allah alone, and none besides Him has any right to service and worship". Second, "There is another life after this life, in which you shall have to render an account of all your actions." Third, "I am a Messenger of Allah: whatever I am presenting before you is not from myself but from Allah." As the people were rejecting these three things, these have been reiterated over and over again in various forms to remove doubts and objections from the minds of the disbelievers.

النَّاسِ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ۝١ اَللّٰهُ الَّذِيْ رَفَعَ السَّمٰوٰتِ بِغَيْرِ عَمَدٍ تَرَوْنَهَا ثُمَّ
اسْتَوٰى عَلَى الْعَرْشِ وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ ۭ كُلٌّ يَّجْرِيْ لِاَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ۭ
يُدَبِّرُ الْاَمْرَ يُفَصِّلُ الْاٰيٰتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ بِلِقَاۗءِ رَبِّكُمْ تُوْقِنُوْنَ ۝٢ وَهُوَ الَّذِيْ مَدَّ
الْاَرْضَ وَجَعَلَ فِيْهَا رَوَاسِيَ وَاَنْهٰرًا ۭ وَمِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرٰتِ جَعَلَ فِيْهَا زَوْجَيْنِ
اثْنَيْنِ يُغْشِي الَّيْلَ النَّهَارَ ۭ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَّتَفَكَّرُوْنَ ۝٣ وَفِي
الْاَرْضِ قِطَعٌ مُّتَجٰوِرٰتٌ وَّجَنّٰتٌ مِّنْ اَعْنَابٍ وَّزَرْعٌ وَّنَخِيْلٌ صِنْوَانٌ وَّغَيْرُ
صِنْوَانٍ يُّسْقٰى بِمَاۗءٍ وَّاحِدٍ ۣ وَنُفَضِّلُ بَعْضَهَا عَلٰي بَعْضٍ فِي الْاُكُلِ ۭ اِنَّ فِيْ
ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَّعْقِلُوْنَ ۝٤ وَاِنْ تَعْجَبْ فَعَجَبٌ قَوْلُهُمْ ءَاِذَا كُنَّا تُرٰبًا
ءَاِنَّا لَفِيْ خَلْقٍ جَدِيْدٍ ۭ اُولٰۗىِٕكَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا بِرَبِّهِمْ ۚ وَاُولٰۗىِٕكَ الْاَغْلٰلُ فِيْٓ
اَعْنَاقِهِمْ ۚ وَاُولٰۗىِٕكَ اَصْحٰبُ النَّارِ ۚ هُمْ فِيْهَا خٰلِدُوْنَ ۝٥ وَيَسْتَعْجِلُوْنَكَ
بِالسَّيِّئَةِ قَبْلَ الْحَسَنَةِ وَقَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمُ الْمَثُلٰتُ ۭ وَاِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَذُوْ
مَغْفِرَةٍ لِّلنَّاسِ عَلٰي ظُلْمِهِمْ ۚ وَاِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَشَدِيْدُ الْعِقَابِ ۝٦ وَيَقُوْلُ الَّذِيْنَ
كَفَرُوْا لَوْلَآ اُنْزِلَ عَلَيْهِ اٰيَةٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّهٖ ۭ اِنَّمَآ اَنْتَ مُنْذِرٌ وَّلِكُلِّ قَوْمٍ هَادٍ ۝٧
اَللّٰهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَحْمِلُ كُلُّ اُنْثٰى وَمَا تَغِيْضُ الْاَرْحَامُ وَمَا تَزْدَادُ ۭ وَكُلُّ
شَيْءٍ عِنْدَهٗ بِمِقْدَارٍ ۝٨ عٰلِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ الْكَبِيْرُ الْمُتَعَالِ ۝٩ سَوَاۗءٌ
مِّنْكُمْ مَّنْ اَسَرَّ الْقَوْلَ وَمَنْ جَهَرَ بِهٖ وَمَنْ هُوَ مُسْتَخْفٍۢ بِالَّيْلِ وَسَارِبٌۢ
بِالنَّهَارِ ۝١٠ لَهٗ مُعَقِّبٰتٌ مِّنْۢ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهٖ يَحْفَظُوْنَهٗ مِنْ اَمْرِ اللّٰهِ ۭ
اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتّٰى يُغَيِّرُوْا مَا بِاَنْفُسِهِمْ ۭ وَاِذَآ اَرَادَ اللّٰهُ بِقَوْمٍ
سُوْۗءًا فَلَا مَرَدَّ لَهٗ ۚ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِهٖ مِنْ وَّالٍ ۝١١ هُوَ الَّذِيْ يُرِيْكُمُ

It is Allah Who raised up the heavens without such pillars as you could see:[2] then He sat Himself upon the Throne of His Kingdom:[3] He subjected the sun and the moon to a law.[4] Everything in the universe is running its course to its fixed term.[5] And Allah alone is directing the whole affair. He makes His signs plain:[6] perhaps you may be convinced of meeting your Lord.[7] 2

And it is He Who has spread out the earth, and fixed the immovable mountains in it, and made the rivers flow on it. He has created in pairs every kind of fruit, and He covers the day with the veil of night.[8] Surely there are great Signs in these for those who reflect upon them. 3

And behold! there are different regions on the earth close to one another;[9] there are vineyards, corn fields and groves of date-palm with single or double trunk.[10] All are irrigated with the same water, but We make some more tasteful than others. Most surely there are many Signs in all these things for those who use their common sense.[11] 4

Now, if there is anything for you to marvel at, you should marvel at their saying: "What! when we have become dust, shall we then be raised to a new life again?" These are the people who have denied their Lord:[12] they are those who shall have collars around their necks:[13] they shall be the dwellers of Hell and therein they shall dwell for ever. 5

They demand from you the hastening of evil rather than good,[14] though indeed there have been instances of exemplary punishments before them (of the wrath of God on the people who adopted the same attitude.) The fact is that your Lord shows forbearance to the people despite their transgressions, and it is also the fact that your Lord is stern in retribution. 6

These people who have rejected your Message, say, "Why has no Sign been sent down to this person from His Lord ?"[15] —You are a warner only and every people has its guide.[16] 7

Allah knows what every female bears in her womb: He is fully aware of what is taking shape in the womb and also what decrease or increase occurs therein.[17] Everything has its fixed measure with Him. He has perfect knowledge both of the visible and the invisible. He is 8-11

the Great and the Supreme Being. Alike to Him are all of you, whether one of you whispers or speaks aloud or one hides oneself under the cover of the darkness of night or walks about in the broad day light. For each person has guardians before him and behind him, who watch over him by Allah's command.[18] The fact is that Allah does not change a people's lot unless they themselves change their own characteristics: and when Allah decides to bring about retribution to a people, none can ward it off, nor can they find any defender or helper against Allah.[19]

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2. In other words, "Allah keeps the myriad's of heavenly bodies in space without any visible and perceptible support." Though there is nothing apparent and visible that is supporting these bodies, yet there is an invariable and imperceptible Power which is not only holding and keeping each and everyone of these huge bodies including the earth we inhabit in their proper places and orbits but also does not let any collision take place between them.

3. For the fuller details of "He sat Himself on the Throne of His Kingdom," please refer to E.N. 41 of *Al-A'rāf*. Here the purpose will be served if it is understood that this thing has been mentioned in the Qur'ān at many places in order to bring out clearly the fact that Allah has not only created the earth, but also rules over His Kingdom, and that His universe is a factory that is not working automatically as some ignorant people seem to think nor is it being ruled by many gods as other ignorant people seem to believe. But it is a regular system that is being run and ruled over by its Creator.

4. It should be noted here that the addressees themselves accepted the truth of all the claims that have been made in this verse. Therefore no proofs were required of the facts that it is Allah Who raised up the heavens without any visible support and subjected the sun and the moon to a fixed order. These things have been mentioned here only as arguments to prove that Allah is the sole Sovereign and ruler of the whole universe.

Now let us consider this question: How can such an argument as this convince those who do not believe at all in the existence of God nor acknowledge that He is the Creator of the universe and the Director of all its affairs ? The answer is that the arguments in support of the Doctrine of *Tauhīd* advanced in the Qur'ān to convince the *mushrikūn* equally apply against the atheists to prove the existence of God. It is like this: The whole of the universe—the earth, the moon, the sun and the countless heavenly bodies—constitute a perfect system which is working under the same all-powerful Law. This is a proof that such a system must have been designed by some All-Powerful Sovereign, Who possesses wisdom and unerring knowledge. This proves conclusively the existence of that Allah Who has

no other equal nor associate nor partner. For there can be no system without an administrator, no law without a ruler, no wisdom without a sage, and no knowledge without the possessor of that knowledge. Above all, no one can ever conceive that there can be any creation without a Creator except the one who is obdurate or has no sense left in him at all.

5. This system is not only a standing proof of the fact that an All-Powerful Sovereign is ruling over it, but is also an evidence of the great wisdom underlying it; it also bears witness that there is nothing ever-lasting in it. Everything in it remains for a fixed term after which it comes to an end. This is equally true for each and every component part of it as well as for the whole system. It is quite evident from its physical structure that there is nothing ever-lasting and immortal. There must be some fixed term for the system as a whole, after the expiry of which it shall come to an end. Then there shall be another world: therefore it is most likely that there shall be Resurrection as predicted in the Qur'ān: nay, its inevitability is beyond any doubt.

6. Allah makes plain those Signs which help prove the truth of what the Holy Prophet was informing them. These Signs are spread all over the universe and everyone who observes these with open eyes can perceive that the realities towards which the Qur'ān invites the people are testified by these Signs.

7. The preceding Signs have been cited to prove two things. First, the universe has only one Creator and Administrator. Second, there shall be life in the Hereafter in which everyone shall be judged in the Divine Court and awarded rewards and punishments on merit. As the first thing was quite obvious, it has not been mentioned in the conclusion drawn from the Signs. But the second thing, life in the Hereafter, has been mentioned because that was rather hidden from perception. Therefore it has specifically been stated that these Signs have been made plain in order "to convince you that you shall meet your Lord in the Hereafter and render an account of all your actions in this world."

Now let us consider how these Signs help prove life in the Hereafter. These make it evident in two ways:

(1) When we consider how big heavenly bodies as the sun and the moon are completely subject to the will of Allah, our hearts feel convinced that Allah Who has created these things and regulated their movements so orderly around their orbits, has undoubtedly the power to bring to life the whole human race after its death.

(2) The terrestrial system also proves that its Creator is All-Wise. Therefore it can never be imagined that the All-Wise Creator could have created man and endowed him with wisdom and intelligence and invested him with power and authority, and then left him free to do what he liked with these, without being

responsible and accountable for their use or abuse. For His Wisdom demands that He should take full account of all the acts and deeds of man in this world. It requires that He should take to task those who committed aggressions and compensate their victims and He should give rewards to those who practised virtue and punishments to those who did wicked deeds. In short, His Wisdom requires that He should call to account every human being and demand: "How did you carry out the trust that was placed in your hands in the shape of your wonderful body with its wonderful faculties and the numerous resources of the earth?" It may be that a foolish and unjust ruler of this world might entrust the affairs of his kingdom in the hands of his agents and then forget to call them to account, but such a thing can never be expected from the All-Wise and All-Knowing Allah.

It is this way of observing and considering the heavenly bodies that can convince us that life in the Hereafter is both possible and inevitable.

8. After citing some heavenly Signs in support of the doctrines of *Tauhīd* and the Hereafter, a few Signs are being cited from the earth for the same purpose. Briefly the following are the arguments for *Tauhīd*, Resurrection and Accountability:

(1) *Tauhīd*: The fact that the earth is closely connected with the heavenly bodies (which help create life on it), and the fact that the mountains and the rivers are so inter-related with that life are clear proofs that all these things have not been created by separate and different gods nor are being governed by gods with independent powers and authorities. Had it been so, there could not have been so much harmony, congruity, accord and unity of purpose among them; nor could these relationships have continued for such a long time. For it is quite obvious that if there had not been One All-Powerful and All-Wise Allah, it could not have been possible and practicable for different gods to sit together and evolve out such a harmonious system of the universe without any discord or conflict between its myriad's of bodies.

(2) *Resurrection*: This wonderful planet, the earth, is itself a great proof that its Creator is All-Powerful and can, therefore, raise the dead whenever He will. For it is floating in space round the sun and it has high mountains fixed in it and has large rivers flowing on its surface: it produces countless fruit-bearing trees and it brings about the cycles of the day and the night with precise regularity.

All these things bear witness to the boundless power of its Creator. It would, therefore, be sheer folly to doubt that such All-Powerful Creator is incapable of raising mankind to life after death.

(3) *Accountability*: The earth, with all its wonderful and purposeful signs, is a clear evidence of the fact that its Creator is All-Wise. Therefore it cannot even be imagined that He has created man, His noblest creation, without any purpose. Just as His wisdom is apparent from the structure of the earth, its mountains, its rivers, the pairs of its trees and fruits, its night and day, so it is quite obvious that it has not been made the habitation of man without any purpose, nor will it be brought to nought without the fulfilment of that purpose. Clearly mankind shall be accountable to its Creator for the fulfilment of that Divine purpose.

9. That is, "If you observe carefully, you will find Divine wisdom, design and purpose in the diversity of the structure of the earth. Though it has countless regions adjoining one another, they are different from one another in their shapes, colours, component parts, characteristics, potentialities, productive capacity and source of minerals. This diversity has countless points of wisdom and advantage. Let alone other creatures, if we consider the diversity of regions from the point of the good it has done to mankind, we shall have to acknowledge that this is the result of the well-thought and well-planned design of the All-Wise Creator. For this diversity has helped the growth of human civilization so much that only an unreasonable person can assign this to mere accident.

10. Some of the date-palm trees have only a single trunk from the root while others have two or more stems from the same root.

11. The things mentioned in this verse contain many other Signs besides the proofs of *Tauhid* and the boundless powers and All-Comprehensive Wisdom of Allah. Let us consider one of these, that is the diversity in the universe, including mankind. There is the one and the same earth but all its regions are quite different from one another. Then there is one and the same water but it helps to produce different kinds of corn and fruits. Then one and the same tree bears fruits which, in spite of likeness, differ from one another in shapes, sizes, and other features. Then there is one and the same root from which sometimes one and at others two trunks sprout up, with their own different characteristics. If one considers these aspects of diversity, one shall come to the conclusion that the Divine wisdom demands the same kind of diversity in the natures, temperaments and inclinations of human beings, and, therefore, in their conducts. So, one need not worry about the existence of this diversity. As it has been stated in v. 31, if Allah had willed, He could have created all human beings alike and virtuous by birth. But the wisdom that underlies the creation of the universe, including mankind, requires diversity and not uniformity. Otherwise, all this creation would have become meaningless.

[Contd. on p.456

الْبَرْقَ خَوْفًا وَّطَمَعًا وَّيُنْشِئُ السَّحَابَ الثِّقَالَ ﴿١٢﴾ وَيُسَبِّحُ الرَّعْدُ بِحَمْدِهٖ وَ
الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ مِنْ خِيْفَتِهٖ ۚ وَيُرْسِلُ الصَّوَاعِقَ فَيُصِيْبُ بِهَا مَنْ يَّشَآءُ وَهُمْ يُجَادِلُوْنَ
فِي اللّٰهِ ۚ وَهُوَ شَدِيْدُ الْمِحَالِ ﴿١٣﴾ لَهٗ دَعْوَةُ الْحَقِّ ۭ وَالَّذِيْنَ يَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ
دُوْنِهٖ لَا يَسْتَجِيْبُوْنَ لَهُمْ بِشَيْءٍ اِلَّا كَبَاسِطِ كَفَّيْهِ اِلَى الْمَاۗءِ لِيَبْلُغَ فَاهُ وَمَا
هُوَ بِبَالِغِهٖ ۭ وَمَا دُعَاۗءُ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ اِلَّا فِيْ ضَلٰلٍ ﴿١٤﴾ وَلِلّٰهِ يَسْجُدُ مَنْ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ
وَالْاَرْضِ طَوْعًا وَّكَرْهًا وَّظِلٰلُهُمْ بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالْاٰصَالِ ﴿١٥﴾ قُلْ مَنْ رَّبُّ السَّمٰوٰتِ
وَالْاَرْضِ ۭ قُلِ اللّٰهُ ۭ قُلْ اَفَاتَّخَذْتُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِهٖٓ اَوْلِيَاۗءَ لَا يَمْلِكُوْنَ لِاَنْفُسِهِمْ
نَفْعًا وَّلَا ضَرًّا ۭ قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الْاَعْمٰى وَالْبَصِيْرُ ۙ اَمْ هَلْ تَسْتَوِي الظُّلُمٰتُ
وَالنُّوْرُ ۚ اَمْ جَعَلُوْا لِلّٰهِ شُرَكَاۗءَ خَلَقُوْا كَخَلْقِهٖ فَتَشَابَهَ الْخَلْقُ عَلَيْهِمْ ۭ قُلِ اللّٰهُ
خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَّهُوَ الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ ﴿١٦﴾ اَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاۗءِ مَاۗءً فَسَالَتْ اَوْدِيَةٌۢ
بِقَدَرِهَا فَاحْتَمَلَ السَّيْلُ زَبَدًا رَّابِيًا ۭ وَمِمَّا يُوْقِدُوْنَ عَلَيْهِ فِي النَّارِ ابْتِغَاۗءَ
حِلْيَةٍ اَوْ مَتَاعٍ زَبَدٌ مِّثْلُهٗ ۭ كَذٰلِكَ يَضْرِبُ اللّٰهُ الْحَقَّ وَالْبَاطِلَ ۭ فَاَمَّا الزَّبَدُ
فَيَذْهَبُ جُفَاۗءً ۚ وَاَمَّا مَا يَنْفَعُ النَّاسَ فَيَمْكُثُ فِي الْاَرْضِ ۭ كَذٰلِكَ يَضْرِبُ اللّٰهُ
الْاَمْثَالَ ﴿١٧﴾ لِلَّذِيْنَ اسْتَجَابُوْا لِرَبِّهِمُ الْحُسْنٰى ۚ وَالَّذِيْنَ لَمْ يَسْتَجِيْبُوْا لَهٗ لَوْ اَنَّ
لَهُمْ مَّا فِي الْاَرْضِ جَمِيْعًا وَّمِثْلَهٗ مَعَهٗ لَافْتَدَوْا بِهٖ ۭ اُولٰۗىِٕكَ لَهُمْ سُوْۗءُ الْحِسَابِ ۙ
وَمَاْوٰىهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ ۭ وَبِئْسَ الْمِهَادُ ﴿١٨﴾ اَفَمَنْ يَّعْلَمُ اَنَّمَآ اُنْزِلَ اِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَّبِّكَ
الْحَقُّ كَمَنْ هُوَ اَعْمٰى ۭ اِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ اُولُوا الْاَلْبَابِ ﴿١٩﴾ الَّذِيْنَ يُوْفُوْنَ بِعَهْدِ اللّٰهِ
وَلَا يَنْقُضُوْنَ الْمِيْثَاقَ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ يَصِلُوْنَ مَآ اَمَرَ اللّٰهُ بِهٖٓ اَنْ يُّوْصَلَ وَ
يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ وَيَخَافُوْنَ سُوْۗءَ الْحِسَابِ ﴿٢١﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ صَبَرُوا ابْتِغَاۗءَ وَجْهِ

It is He Who makes the lightning flash before you to fill you both with fear and with hope: it is He Who produces clouds laden with water. The thunder glorifies Him with His praise[20] and the angels, too, glorify Him in awe of Him.[21] He lets loose thunderbolts and (often) smites with them whomsoever He wills, while they are wrangling about Allah. The fact is that His plan is very effective.[22] 12-13

To invoke Him alone is the right thing.[23] As regards the other deities whom they invoke apart from Him, they cannot give any answer to their prayers. It is as if a man were to stretch his hands towards water and ask it to come to his mouth, when it cannot reach his mouth in this way; likewise the prayers of the disbelievers are nothing but aimless efforts. For it is Allah alone before Whom everything in the heavens and the earth bows down willingly or un-willingly,[24] and the shadows of all things bow down before Him in the morning and the evening.[25] 14-15

Ask them, "Who is the Lord of the heavens and the earth ?" Say, "Allah".[26] Then say to them, "When this is the fact, have you then made beside Him such deities your protectors as can do neither good nor harm even to themselves ?" Say, "Are the blind man and the seeing man alike ?[27] Are light and darkness alike ?"[28] And if it is not so, have the partners, they have set up with Allah, created anything like His creation so as to make the matter of creation doubtful for them?[29] Say, Allah alone is the Creator of everything; and He is the Unique, the Almighty.[30] 16

Allah sent down water from the sky and every system carried it along according to its capacity: then there was flood and a swelling foam[31] came to the surface. Likewise there arises a scum out of the metals which are melted in the furnace for making ornaments and utensils.[32] By such similitudes, Allah makes the truth distinct from falsehood. That which is the foam vanishes and that which is beneficial for the people remains on the earth. In this way Allah cites similes to make His Message clear. 17

There is an excellent reward for those who responded to the call of their Lord. As for those who rejected His call, they would willingly give for their ransom all the wealth the earth contained, if they possessed it, and as much more besides (in order to escape 18

retribution).[33] Those are the people who shall have the heavy reckoning;[34] their abode shall be Hell—a wretched resting place.

19-21 Well, how can the one who believes that this Book which has been sent down to you from your Lord, is the Truth, be like the one who is blind to this fact ?[35] It is the wise people alone who take advice from this:[36] they fulfil their Covenant with Allah, and break it not after confirming it.[37] They join together what Allah has bidden to join:[38] they fear their Lord and dread lest they should be called upon to render a heavy reckoning.

Contd. from p. 453]

12. They "have denied their Lord": their denial of the Hereafter is, in fact, the denial of the Power and Wisdom of Allah. As they say that it is impossible to bring them again to life after their death, it implies that, God forbid, their Allah Who has created them lacks not only power but wisdom, too.

13. As a collar around the neck is a symbol of imprisonment, the words "collars around their necks" have been used here idiomatically to show that they are slaves of ignorance, obduracy, lust and are blind followers of their forefathers. As their thinking is influenced by their prejudices, they cannot believe in the Hereafter and would deny this, though there is every reason to believe that it is inevitable.

14. This refers to the demand of the Quraish from the Holy Prophet "If you are a true Prophet of God, why don't you hasten to bring that scourge of God on us of which you have been threatening us, when we are flouting and denying you ?" They did this in different ways. Sometimes they would invoke God mockingly and say, "O Lord, settle our accounts now and do not postpone these to the Day of Resurrection". At another time, they would say, "Our Lord, if what Muhammad says be true, and be from Thee, then stone us from the sky or send down some other scourge upon us from the sky or send down some other painful torment upon us." In this verse an answer has been given to such impudent demands of the disbelievers. They have been admonished to refrain from such foolish demands and avail of the respite that was being given to them and mend their ways, for they were incurring the wrath of God by adopting the attitude of rebellion.

15. This showed their mentality. The only criterion of judging whether Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) was a true Prophet or not according to these disbelievers, was whether he would perform a miracle to order. This was because they would not judge his Message by rational arguments; they would not

learn a lesson from his high character nor from the moral revolution that was being brought about among his Companions by his Message and noble example: nor would they carefully consider the rational arguments given in the Qur'ān to prove the errors of their religion of *shirk* and superstitions of ignorance. They would ignore these rational things and demand a miracle to decide the issue.

16. This is the concise answer to their demand, though it has not been directly addressed to the disbelievers but to the Messenger. It is this: "O Prophet, you should not worry at all about some miracle which you might show to these people in order to convince them, for it is not a part of your Mission. Your duty is only to warn the people of their negligence and of the evil consequences of their wrong ways. And for this purpose, We have always sent a guide to every people. Now you, too, are performing this duty, and it is for them to open their eyes and judge the truth of your Message." After giving this concise answer, Allah overlooks their demand but warns them, in the succeeding verses, that they have to deal with the All-Knowing Allah Who has full knowledge about everyone of them from the time they were in the wombs of their mothers, and Who keeps a keen watch over everything they do. Therefore their fates shall be decided strictly with justice in accordance with their merits and that there is no power on the earth and in the heavens that can influence in the least His decisions and judgements.

17. When amplified the verse will mean : Allah remains fully aware of all the developments that take place in the child while in its mother's womb, and He watches over the decrease or increase in each of its limbs, and its potentialities, capabilities and powers.

18. That is, "Allah not only directly watches over whatever each person does, and is fully aware of everything he does, but He has also appointed such Guardians as accompany him everywhere and keep a full record of all his deeds." This has been stated here to warn those people who live their lives under the delusion that they have been left absolutely free to do whatever they like and shall not be required to render an account of what they did in this worldly life. The warning is that such people invite their own retribution.

19. This is to warn them further that they should not remain under any delusion that some holy person or saint or angel has the power to rescue them from Divine Retribution, for there is none who could defend them against Allah, even though they might have been paying homages and making offerings to their so-called patrons and protectors in the hope that they would rescue them from punishment from Allah on the Day of Judgement.

20. The thunder is a proclamation of *Tauhīd* for those who have ears to hear the real meaning of its loud noise which follows the flash of lightning, though it is merely a kind of noise for those who hear it like animals. For it proclaims that

Allah Who raises clouds from the oceans and carries them wherever He wills, and makes the lightning flash from the clouds and then turns them into rain so as to supply water to the dwellers of the earth, is perfect and worthy of all praise, is All-Wise and All-Powerful and is flawless in every respect and has no partner whatsoever.

21. The mention of the fact that the angels are filled with awe of their Lord, and they proclaim His praise has a special significance here. This is to refute the *shirk* of the ignorant people who have always worshipped the angels as gods and deities and believed them to be partners with God in His Godhead. It has been stated that they are not partners with Allah but His most obedient servants; so much so that they praise Him and are filled with awe of Him.

22. He has countless plans and measures which are so effective and sudden that He can smite any one with any one of them from any side He will. So much so that the intended victim is absolutely unaware of it. This is a proof that those people, who say absurd things about such All-Powerful Being, are absolutely void of sense.

23. "To invoke Him alone is the right thing," for Allah alone has the power and the authority to give help and remove difficulties.

24. " . . . everything in the heavens and the earth bows down before Allah" in the same sense that every creation of His has to obey and submit to His Physical Law in every detail. The only difference between the submission of a Believer and an unbeliever is that the former submits to it with a willing heart while the latter is forced to do so against his will, for it is absolutely beyond his power to oppose it.

25. "The shadows bow down" in the sense that they fall to the west in the morning and to the east in the evening and so on. This shows that they, too, have to submit to some Law.

26. It will be worth while to note that though the question, "Who is the Lord of the heavens and the earth?" was put to the disbelievers, Allah told the Holy Prophet to answer it himself and say, "Allah". This was because the disbelievers hesitated to answer it one way or the other. They could not say that it was not Allah for they themselves believed that Allah was the Creator of everything. On the other hand, they could not acknowledge this fact in so many words in answer to such question, for, they would, then, have to acknowledge the doctrine of *Tauhīd* for no basis could have been left in favour of *shirk*. As they realised their weak position, they would not give any answer to such questions. That is why Allah asks His Messenger to put such questions to the disbelievers: "Who is the Creator of the heavens and the earth? Who is the Lord of the

Universe? Who sustains you with provisions of life?" When they do not give any answer to such questions, Allah asks His Messenger to say "Allah" in answer. He then proceeds on with this argument: "When Allah does all these things, how do the deities you worship come in?"

27. The blind man is the person who cannot see any of the countless signs of the Oneness of Allah, though these lie spread over before him in the universe. On the other hand, the seeing man is the person who can see in every particle of the universe and in every leaf of grass and tree Signs pointing to their Creator. Thus the question that has been posed means: "O disbelievers ! if you are blind to the Signs, why should the one who can see the Signs should behave like a blind man and stumble along like you?"

28. Here "light" means the light of the knowledge of the Truth which the Holy Prophet and his followers possessed. In contrast to this, there was the "darkness" of ignorance in which the disbelievers were wandering about. The question that has been posed means to ask this: "Why should those, who have got the 'light', extinguish it and wander about in the darkness like you? Well, if you do not know the worth of the 'light', you may choose to wander in the darkness, but how can you expect the one who has got the 'light', who appreciates the difference between the light and the darkness, and who is seeing the right way as if in broad daylight, to leave the light and wander about in the darkness?"

29. The question is intended to impress on the disbelievers that there is absolutely no reason why they should practice *shirk*. When they themselves admit that their gods did not create even an iota in the universe and that they have not even the smallest and most insignificant share in the creation, there remains no ground for them to cherish any doubts about it. Why should, then, their false gods and deities share the rights and powers of the Real Creator?

30. The Arabic word القهار (*Qah-hār*) literally means "the one who rules over all by virtue of one's own power, and keeps all under one's complete control."

This fact that "He is the Unique, the Almighty" follows naturally from the preceding fact that "Allah alone is the Creator of everything," for this fact was also acknowledged by the *mushriks* and was never denied by them. This is so because the Creator of everything should logically be Unique, and every other thing or being must necessarily be His creation. Therefore nothing could be the equal of the Creator or partner in His Being, attributes, powers and rights. Likewise, the Creator must have complete power and control over His Creation.

[Contd. on p. 462

رَبِّهِمْ وَاَقَامُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَاَنْفَقُوْا مِمَّا رَزَقْنٰهُمْ سِرًّا وَّعَلَانِيَةً وَّيَدْرَءُوْنَ
بِالْحَسَنَةِ السَّيِّئَةَ اُولٰٓئِكَ لَهُمْ عُقْبَى الدَّارِ ﴿22﴾ جَنّٰتُ عَدْنٍ يَّدْخُلُوْنَهَا وَمَنْ
صَلَحَ مِنْ اٰبَآئِهِمْ وَاَزْوَاجِهِمْ وَذُرِّيّٰتِهِمْ وَالْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ يَدْخُلُوْنَ عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنْ
كُلِّ بَابٍ ﴿23﴾ سَلٰمٌ عَلَيْكُمْ بِمَا صَبَرْتُمْ فَنِعْمَ عُقْبَى الدَّارِ ﴿24﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ
يَنْقُضُوْنَ عَهْدَ اللّٰهِ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مِيْثَاقِهٖ وَيَقْطَعُوْنَ مَآ اَمَرَ اللّٰهُ بِهٖٓ اَنْ
يُّوْصَلَ وَيُفْسِدُوْنَ فِى الْاَرْضِ ۙ اُولٰٓئِكَ لَهُمُ اللَّعْنَةُ وَلَهُمْ سُوْٓءُ الدَّارِ ﴿25﴾
اَللّٰهُ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَّشَآءُ وَيَقْدِرُ ۚ وَفَرِحُوْا بِالْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا ۗ وَمَا الْحَيٰوةُ
الدُّنْيَا فِى الْاٰخِرَةِ اِلَّا مَتَاعٌ ﴿26﴾ وَيَقُوْلُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا لَوْلَآ اُنْزِلَ عَلَيْهِ اٰيَةٌ
مِّنْ رَّبِّهٖ ۚ قُلْ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يُضِلُّ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ وَيَهْدِىْٓ اِلَيْهِ مَنْ اَنَابَ ﴿27﴾ اَلَّذِيْنَ
اٰمَنُوْا وَتَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوْبُهُمْ بِذِكْرِ اللّٰهِ ۗ اَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللّٰهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوْبُ ﴿28﴾ اَلَّذِيْنَ
اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ طُوْبٰى لَهُمْ وَحُسْنُ مَاٰبٍ ﴿29﴾ كَذٰلِكَ اَرْسَلْنٰكَ فِىْٓ
اُمَّةٍ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهَآ اُمَمٌ لِّتَتْلُوَا عَلَيْهِمُ الَّذِىْٓ اَوْحَيْنَآ اِلَيْكَ وَهُمْ
يَكْفُرُوْنَ بِالرَّحْمٰنِ ۗ قُلْ هُوَ رَبِّىْ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ ۗ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَاِلَيْهِ
مَتَابِ ﴿30﴾ وَلَوْ اَنَّ قُرْاٰنًا سُيِّرَتْ بِهِ الْجِبَالُ اَوْ قُطِّعَتْ بِهِ الْاَرْضُ اَوْ كُلِّمَ
بِهِ الْمَوْتٰى ۗ بَلْ لِّلّٰهِ الْاَمْرُ جَمِيْعًا ۗ اَفَلَمْ يَايْئَسِ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا اَنْ لَّوْ يَشَآءُ
اللّٰهُ لَهَدَى النَّاسَ جَمِيْعًا ۗ وَلَا يَزَالُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا تُصِيْبُهُمْ بِمَا صَنَعُوْا
قَارِعَةٌ اَوْ تَحُلُّ قَرِيْبًا مِّنْ دَارِهِمْ حَتّٰى يَاْتِيَ وَعْدُ اللّٰهِ ۗ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا
يُخْلِفُ الْمِيْعَادَ ﴿31﴾ وَلَقَدِ اسْتُهْزِئَ بِرُسُلٍ مِّنْ قَبْلِكَ فَاَمْلَيْتُ لِلَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا
ثُمَّ اَخَذْتُهُمْ ۖ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عِقَابِ ﴿32﴾ اَفَمَنْ هُوَ قَآئِمٌ عَلٰى كُلِّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا

They show fortitude to win the approval of their Lord.[39] They establish Salāt and expend openly and secretly out of what We have bestowed upon them and ward off evil with good.[40] Their's shall be the abode of the Hereafter: Gardens wherein they will live for ever. They will enter into them along with the righteous from among their forefathers, wives and descendants. The angels will come to welcome them from every side, saying, "Peace be upon you.[41] You have won this blessing because of what you steadfastly endured in the world." How blessed is this abode of the Hereafter! As for those who break their Covenant with Allah after confirming it, who cut asunder what Allah has bidden to be joined, and spread chaos on the earth, their's shall be the curse, and they shall have a wretched abode in the Hereafter. 22-25

Allah gives abundantly His provisions to whom He will and sparingly to whom He pleases.[42] These people are wholly absorbed in the joys of this life, whereas the life of this world is but a paltry thing as compared with the life of the Hereafter. 26

Those people who have rejected (Muhammad as a Prophet) say, "Why has no Sign been sent down to him from his Lord?"[43]—Say, "Allah leads astray whom He will; and He leads to Himself only those who turn to Him."[44] Such are the people who have accepted (the Message of this Prophet,) and their hearts find comfort in the remembrance of Allah. Note it well that it is Allah's remembrance alone that brings comfort to hearts. Blessed are those who have accepted the Message and done righteous deeds: they have a good end. 27-29

O Muhammad! We have sent you as a Messenger in this way[45] among a people before whom many peoples have passed away so that you should recite to them the Message which We have sent down to you; yet they are rejecting the most Compassionate Lord.[46] Say to them, "My Lord is He: there is no deity but He: I have placed my full trust in Him and He is my sole Resort." 30

And what (do you think) would have been the result, if We had sent a Qur'ān that would have caused the mountains to move or cleft the earth asunder or made the dead speak?[47] (It is not difficult at all to show such Signs) for Allah has full power over everything.[48] Have the Believers (still any expectations of a Sign in answer to the demand of 31-32

the disbelievers and) not given up all hope, (knowing) that Allah could have guided all mankind aright,[49] if He had so desired? As for the disbelievers, because of their misdeeds, one affliction or the other does not cease to visit them every now and then, or come near their home. It will go on like this untill Allah's threat come to pass. Indeed, Allah does not fail to bring about His threat. Other Messengers have also been mocked before you, but I have always given respite to the disbelievers and then seized upon them at its end. Just see how terrible had been My Scourge!

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For it can never be imagined that the Creator would create anything over which He has not full control. Therefore, the one who acknowledges Allah to be the Creator must also acknowledge Him to be the Unique and the All-Powerful. After this, there remains no reason why one should worship any one other than the Creator or invoke some one else for help in resolving one's difficulties and fulfilling one's needs.

31. In this simile the Knowledge which had been sent down by Allah to the Holy Prophet has been likened to the rain from the sky, and the Believers to the streams, rivulets and rivers. Just as the streams etc., fill themselves with rain-water, each according to its capacity, so his followers gained knowledge from him, each according to his ability. On the other hand, the hue and cry that was raised by the opponents of the Islamic Movement has been likened to the swelling foam etc., that begins to dance about on the surface of flood water, but soon vanishes away.

32. As it is but natural that scum should appear on the surface when metals are melted in the furnace for purification, likewise bad people would come to the surface and take prominent part in persecuting the good people who are passed through the furnace of persecution for their purification.

33. This shows that the disbelievers would be in such a sad plight that they would not hesitate to give their all for their redemption.

34. "... they shall have the heavy reckoning": they shall have to bear the full consequences of their evil deeds. No sin, no shortcoming, in short, nothing will be forgiven and no evil shall go un-punished.

We learn from the Qur'ān that the rebels of Allah shall have to render a heavy reckoning, whereas there shall be a "light" reckoning from those who have been faithful and obedient to their Lord. In consideration of their loyal services,

their cases will be dealt with leniently, and taking their general goodness into account many of their shortcomings will be forgiven.

This is further amplified by a Tradition of the Holy Prophet. Hadrat 'Ā'ishah relates, "I said, O Messenger of Allah ! the most dreadful verse of the Qur'ān is this: Whoso shall commit an evil, he shall be punished for it'. (IV :123). The Holy Prophet answered, 'O 'Ā'ishah! don't you know how Allah clears the accounts of His faithful and obedient servant? Whatever harm or trouble he receives in this world—even so much as the pricking of a thorn—is taken by Allah as atonement for one or the other of his sins. As regards the Hereafter, everyone, who shall be called upon to render an account of any sin, shall be punished for it'. At this Hadrat 'Ā'ishah asked, 'Then what is meant by light reckoning in this verse: 'Whoso shall be given his 'Conduct Register' in his right hand, he will render a light reckoning?' (LXXXIV:7-8). The Holy Prophet answered, 'This means merely the presentation of his whole conduct, that is, all his deeds—good and bad—shall be presented before Allah but he shall not be called upon to clear the account of all his deeds; for the one who shall be called upon to clear the whole of his account, shall be totally ruined'."

The same thing is happening even in this world. A master deals very leniently with his faithful and obedient servant and connives at his minor faults and even forgives his major faults in consideration of his meritorious services. On the other hand, if a servant is proved to be treacherous and dishonest, no consideration is given even to his services, and he is punished both for his minor and for major faults.

35. That is, "As the attitude of the two in this world will be different from each other, so shall be their ultimate end in the Hereafter."

36. That is, "Those who listen to the Message that has been sent down by Allah, and accept His Messenger, are really very wise people. This is why their conduct in this world is quite different from those foolish people who are blind to its merits: and so is their ultimate end in the Hereafter, as stated in the subsequent verses".

37. This Covenant is the same that was made by Allah with the whole of mankind at the beginning of the creation that they would worship Him alone. (Please refer to E.N.'s 134 and 135 of *Al-A'rāf*). As this Covenant has been made with every human being, it has been imbued firmly in human nature. When a human being is born in this world, he, so to say, confirms the same Covenant because he owes his creation to the same Allah with Whom he had made that Covenant: then he is brought up by His Providence and fed and nourished with His Provisions, and uses the powers and faculties endowed by Him. All these things bind him by themselves into a covenant of bondage with his Lord. It is

obvious that wise, loyal and faithful people fulfil their Covenant and dare not break it except that they might break it unconsciously and unwillingly.

38. That is, "All those social and civil relations that are conducive to the correct and right conduct of collective human life."

39. "They show fortitude": they remain self-possessed and keep under control all their desires and lusts and do not transgress the bounds, and they do not yield to temptations to disobey their Lord in order to gain advantages and gratify their desires: nay, they bear with calm courage and endurance losses and afflictions that are inevitable in the obedience of Allah. If we consider the life of a believer from this point of view, we shall find that the whole of his life is the life of endurance and fortitude, for he keeps himself under control in very trying circumstances in this world in the hope of winning the approval of his Lord and in the expectation of gaining permanent benefits in the Hereafter: so he fights with fortitude every temptation to sin.

40. That is, "If others do evil to them, they do not do evil in return but do good instead: they do not fight mischief with mischief but with virtue. Howsoever unjust one may be to them, they do justice in every case. Likewise, they remain truthful and honest even in the case of those who tell lies against them and show dishonesty towards them."

There is a Tradition of the Holy Prophet to the same effect: "You should not imitate others in your conduct towards other people, for it is wrong to say, 'We will do goodness to others, if they do goodness to us and we will do injustice to them if they are unjust to us.' (On the other hand,) you should follow this principle: if others do goodness to you, you should do goodness to them, but if they do evil to you, you should not be unjust to them'."

There is another Tradition, which begins with the words: "My Lord has bidden me to do nine things. Four of these things are, 'I should behave justly towards everyone whether I am pleased or offended with him. I should render the right even of the one who violates my rights. I should pay the dues even of the one who deprives me of my due. I should forgive the one who has been unjust to me'." There is yet another Tradition to the same effect: "Don't be faithless even to the one who has been faithless to you." There is also a saying of Hadrat 'Umar that amounts to the same thing. "The best way of punishing the one, who does not fear God in his dealings with you, is that you should fear God in your dealings with him."

41. This implies two things. The angels will come in large numbers from every side and give them this good news: "Now you have come to a place where there is peace for you. Here you are immune from every affliction, every trouble,

every hardship, and every danger and worry." (For details please see E.N. 29 of *Al-Hijr*).

42. This verse refutes the wrong criterion by which the disbelievers of Makkah (and all other foolish people of the world) judged whether one was or was not a favorite of God. They judged a man's worth by his wealth and worldly prosperity and not by his faith and righteous conduct. They thought that the one who was enjoying all the good things of life was a favorite of God, even if he had erroneous beliefs and did wicked deeds. On the other hand, they considered the one who was poor and indigent to be under the wrath of God, even though he was righteous. That is why in their judgement the chiefs of the Quraish were far superior to the followers of the Holy Prophet. They would say, "You can see for yourselves that God is with the chiefs of the Quraish."

In this verse, Allah has warned them that they are absolutely wrong in drawing such a conclusion from the worldly conditions of the people. Allah gives His provision to the people abundantly or sparingly for reasons different from those which they presumed and richness or poverty is no criterion by which to judge the worth of people. The real criterion of judging the worth of people is their beliefs and deeds. The one, who has righteous beliefs and does good deeds, shall be higher in rank than the one who has wrong beliefs and does evil deeds. Thus the real criterion is the quality of one's deeds and not the possession or the lack of wealth.

43. Please also keep in view the answer that has been given to this question in v.7.

44. This is the answer to their question. It is not due to the lack of signs that they were going astray, but it is the lack of any desire in them to seek right guidance. For Allah does not force one to follow the Right Way, if he deliberately turns away from it. He lets such persons wander on the wrong ways they choose to wander. Nay, even all those things that should serve as a means to guidance for a seeker of truth, become the means of deviation for the one who seeks deviation. So much so that that very torch which helps show the way to the former, dazzles the eyes of the latter. This is how Allah leads astray a person.

This answer to the demand of a Sign is matchless in its eloquence. It says to them, "O foolish people! it is not due to the lack of Signs that you are not finding the right path, but it is due to the lack of any desire in you for it. You do not see any of the countless Signs that lie scattered all around you because you have no desire to go to the Right Way. How can then any Sign be helpful to you ? For you would not see any of those Signs. However, those who seek the Right Way to Allah, see these Signs and find the Right Way with their help."

[Contd. on p.468

كَسَبَتْ وَجَعَلُوْا لِلّٰهِ شُرَكَآءَ ۭ قُلْ سَمُّوْهُمْ ۭ اَمْ تُنَبِّـُٔوْنَهٗ بِمَا لَا يَعْلَمُ فِي
الْاَرْضِ اَمْ بِظَاهِرٍ مِّنَ الْقَوْلِ ۭ بَلْ زُيِّنَ لِلَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا مَكْرُهُمْ وَصُدُّوْا
عَنِ السَّبِيْلِ ۭ وَمَنْ يُّضْلِلِ اللّٰهُ فَمَا لَهٗ مِنْ هَادٍ ۝ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ فِي الْحَيٰوةِ
الدُّنْيَا وَلَعَذَابُ الْاٰخِرَةِ اَشَقُّ ۚ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ مِنْ وَّاقٍ ۝ مَثَلُ الْجَنَّةِ
الَّتِيْ وُعِدَ الْمُتَّقُوْنَ ۭ تَجْرِيْ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ ۭ اُكُلُهَا دَاۗىِٕمٌ وَّظِلُّهَا ۭ
تِلْكَ عُقْبَى الَّذِيْنَ اتَّقَوْا ۠ وَّعُقْبَى الْكٰفِرِيْنَ النَّارُ ۝ وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰتَيْنٰهُمُ
الْكِتٰبَ يَفْرَحُوْنَ بِمَآ اُنْزِلَ اِلَيْكَ وَمِنَ الْاَحْزَابِ مَنْ يُّنْكِرُ بَعْضَهٗ ۭ قُلْ
اِنَّمَآ اُمِرْتُ اَنْ اَعْبُدَ اللّٰهَ وَلَآ اُشْرِكَ بِهٖ ۭ اِلَيْهِ اَدْعُوْا وَاِلَيْهِ مَاٰبِ ۝
وَكَذٰلِكَ اَنْزَلْنٰهُ حُكْمًا عَرَبِيًّا ۭ وَلَىِٕنِ اتَّبَعْتَ اَهْوَاۗءَهُمْ بَعْدَ مَا جَاۗءَكَ
مِنَ الْعِلْمِ ۙ مَا لَكَ مِنَ اللّٰهِ مِنْ وَّلِيٍّ وَّلَا وَاقٍ ۝ وَلَقَدْ اَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلًا مِّنْ
قَبْلِكَ وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُمْ اَزْوَاجًا وَّذُرِّيَّةً ۭ وَمَا كَانَ لِرَسُوْلٍ اَنْ يَّاْتِيَ بِاٰيَةٍ اِلَّا
بِاِذْنِ اللّٰهِ ۭ لِكُلِّ اَجَلٍ كِتَابٌ ۝ يَمْحُوا اللّٰهُ مَا يَشَاۗءُ وَيُثْبِتُ ۚ وَعِنْدَهٗٓ اُمُّ
الْكِتٰبِ ۝ وَاِنْ مَّا نُرِيَنَّكَ بَعْضَ الَّذِيْ نَعِدُهُمْ اَوْ نَتَوَفَّيَنَّكَ فَاِنَّمَا عَلَيْكَ
الْبَلٰغُ وَعَلَيْنَا الْحِسَابُ ۝ اَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا اَنَّا نَاْتِي الْاَرْضَ نَنْقُصُهَا مِنْ اَطْرَافِهَا ۭ
وَاللّٰهُ يَحْكُمُ لَا مُعَقِّبَ لِحُكْمِهٖ ۭ وَهُوَ سَرِيْعُ الْحِسَابِ ۝ وَقَدْ مَكَرَ الَّذِيْنَ
مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَلِلّٰهِ الْمَكْرُ جَمِيْعًا ۭ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَكْسِبُ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ۭ وَسَيَعْلَمُ الْكُفّٰرُ
لِمَنْ عُقْبَى الدَّارِ ۝ وَيَقُوْلُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا لَسْتَ مُرْسَلًا ۭ قُلْ كَفٰى بِاللّٰهِ
شَهِيْدًۢا بَيْنِيْ وَبَيْنَكُمْ ۙ وَمَنْ عِنْدَهٗ عِلْمُ الْكِتٰبِ ۝

What! are they (so audacious that they are) setting up partners with Him Who is watching minutely over the actions of each and every soul?[50,51] O Prophet say to them. "(If God has Himself set them up as His partners) just tell me their names. Do you mean to inform Him of something new that He Himself is unaware of on His earth? Or do you merely utter empty words?[52] Indeed for those who rejected the Message their fraud[53] has been made to appear fair to them and they have been debarred from the Right Way;[54] and there is none to show the Right Way to those whom Allah lets go astray. There is a torment for them in the life of this world but the torment in the Hereafter is still more painful; and there is none to protect them from Allah. As regards the Paradise which the God fearing have been promised it is like this: canals flow beneath it, its fruits are eternal and its shade is perpetual. Such is the reward of the righteous but the reward of the disbelievers is the fire of Hell. 33-35

O Prophet ! some of those people whom We gave the Book before you rejoice in the Book We have sent down to you while there are others among the different sections who reject some of the things contained in this. Tell them plainly "I have been commanded to worship Allah alone and prohibited from setting up a partner with him. Therefore I invite you to Him and myself turn to Him."[55] It is with this instruction that We have sent this Command in Arabic to you. Now if you follow the desires and lusts of the people in spite of the knowledge you have received there shall be none to defend you nor to protect you against Allah. 36-37

We have sent many Messengers before you and We assigned to them also wives and children:[56] and no Messenger had the power to show any Sign without the sanction of Allah.[57] Every age had its Book: Allah abrogates whatever He pleases and keeps intact whatever He wills and He has the Original Book[58] with Him. 38-39

And O Prophet! rest assured that We will carry out the threat We are holding out to them whether a part of it should happen during your lifetime or We should cause you to die before its fulfilment. Anyhow your duty is only to convey the Message and it is for Us to do the reckoning.[59] Do these people not see how We are advancing in the land and shrinking its boundaries (for them) on all sides ?[60] Allah rules 40-42

and there is none to revise His decrees and He is swift at His reckoning. Indeed those who went before them also devised schemes, [61] but the decisive plan is wholly in the hand of Allah. He knows what every soul earns and the disbelievers will soon come to know who will have a good end.

43 These disbelievers say, 'You are not a Messenger of Allah." Say, "Allah suffices for a witness between me and you, and every such person who has the knowledge of the Book."[62]

Contd. from p.465]

45. That is, "In this way that We have not given you a Sign they demanded.

46. That is, "Instead of serving that most Compassionate Lord, they are discarding His service and setting up other partners in His attributes, powers, rights and giving thanks to others for His blessings."

47. This verse has been addressed to the Believers who were feeling uneasy that no such Sign was being sent as was demanded by the disbelievers. They thought that such a Sign would convince the disbelievers and they would accept Islam. Therefore when no such Sign was sent, they became all the more uneasy for the lack of the fulfilment of the demand that gave rise to doubts about the Prophethood of the Messenger. The question posed in this verse is meant to remove that uneasiness of the Muslims. It is like this: "Do you think that they would have embraced Islam if such and such Signs had been shown to them all of a sudden along with a Sūrah of the Qur'ān ? Are you under the delusion that they are quite ready to accept Islam and are waiting only for such a Sign ? Do you think that those people who have failed to see the light of the Truth in the teachings of the Qur'ān, in the phenomena of the universe, in the pure and spotless life of the Holy Prophet and in the wonderful change in the lives of his Companions, would see the light of the Truth in the moving of the mountains, in the cleavage of the earth and in the coming out of the dead from the graves?"

48. "Allah has full power over everything" and can show any Sign if He so desires. He is not showing any Sign for it does not fit in the scheme laid down for the guidance of Man. As the real object is to show Guidance to mankind through the Prophet and not to compel them to believe in the Prophethood of a Prophet; He desires that the people should gain guidance by thinking and observing wisely and not by seeing Signs.

49. That is, "If the object had been to make human beings Believers even without consciously understanding it, Allah could have created them Believers by birth."

50. That is, "They are so audacious that they set up partners with Allah Whose knowledge is All-Comprehensive and Who is aware of even the minutest details of the good and bad actions of each individual..."

51. These are the audacious things they do. They ascribe partners and equals to Him: they believe that some of His creatures are a part and parcel of His Being, and have attributes and rights like Him: they presume that they shall not be called to account for whatever they do, even though they live in His Kingdom.

52. That is, "You give empty names to the partners you ascribe to Him for you have no real knowledge about them". For you could get this knowledge only in one of the three following ways:

First, You might have received some authentic information that Allah had made such and such people as His partners in His attributes, powers and rights. If it is so, please let us also know their names and the source of your information.

The second possibility is that Allah might have remained ignorant that some beings have become His partners. Therefore you are going to inform Him about this. If it is so, please say it clearly in so many words so that it may be decided whether there are some foolish people who can believe in such a nonsensical claim.

Obviously the above two suppositions are absurd. Therefore the only alternative is that, "You are ascribing partners to Him without any rhyme or reason, and you without any knowledge make one the relative of God, another the hearer of supplications, and still another the helper and fulfiller of certain needs and the ruler of a certain region etc. etc."

53. *Shirk* has been called "fraud" because none of the angels, spirits, saints, heavenly bodies, to whom they ascribe Divine attributes and powers or render Divine rights, ever claimed to possess these attributes or powers, nor did they ever demand these rights from the people nor told the people that they would fulfil their desires and wants, if they would perform some rituals of worship before them. As a matter of fact, some clever people invented these gods in order to practice wilful deception and dishonesty so that they might wield powerful influence over the common people and exploit them and deprive them of a part of their hard earned possessions. Accordingly, they made the common people credulous followers of the gods of their inventions and set themselves up as their representatives to get money, etc., from them by this fraud.

The second reason why *shirk* has been called "fraud" is that a worldly man pretends to believe in it not because he wants to believe in it but in order to free himself from all moral restraints to enable him to lead an irresponsible life of greed and lust.

The third reason is given below in E.N. 54.

54. *Shirk* is also 'fraud' in the sense that it has been made to appear fair for them and so leads them into deviation and prevents them from coming back to the Right Way. It is like this: When *mushriks* adopt wrong ways of deviation that suit the kind of lives they wish to lead, they have to invent arguments to pacify their consciences and convince other people that they are on the right way. Naturally this fraud confirms them on the way of deviation and they are debarred from the Right Way.

55. This is in reply to a specific objection which was then raised by the disbelievers. They would say, "If he has brought the same Message that was brought by the Messengers before him (as he claims), why don't the Jews and the Christians who are the followers of the former Prophets come forward and welcome it?" The verse answers the objection and says that the true followers of the former Prophets really rejoice in the Message of the Qur'ān, but the false ones have been offended at it. Then it asks the Holy Prophet not to worry at all about this, saying, "O Prophet, you should not mind at all whether they are pleased or offended at it. Tell them plainly that this is the Guidance I have received from my Lord and I will follow it at all costs."

56. This is the answer to another objection. The disbelievers said that he could not be a Prophet of Allah because he had wives and children, for they argued that Prophets had nothing to do with carnal desires.

57. This is the answer to yet another objection: "Had he been a true Prophet, he would have shown a Sign like the shining hand and the miraculous staff of Prophet Moses or he would have restored sight to the blind or cured lepers like Prophet Jesus, or brought a Sign like the she-camel of Prophet Salih". The answer is this: "None of the former Messengers had any power to show any Sign nor has this Prophet: Allah showed a Sign whenever and through whomsoever He considered it to be necessary and will show any Sign whenever He will consider it necessary, and that I have not claimed to possess any such power that such a demand might be made from me."

58. This is the answer to another objection raised against the Revelation of the Qur'ān. The disbelievers said, "What was the need of this new Book, when there already existed the former revealed Books? You say that this need has arisen because the former Books have been tampered with; therefore Allah has abrogated

them and commanded that this new Book should be followed. This position you have taken is wrong for how can any one tamper with the Book of Allah and how is it possible that any Book of Allah might be tampered with? Why did not Allah protect these Books from such things as these? You say that this Book has been revealed by the same Allah Who revealed the Torah and the Gospel. How is it then that your way is different from that of the Torah? You consider certain things lawful while they are unlawful according to the Torah, etc. etc." Detailed answers to these objections have been given in other Sūrahs but here only a brief and comprehensive answer has been given to them.

The Arabic word ام الكتاب (*Umm-ul Kitāb*) literally means "the Mother Book", that is, the Original Book which is the Source and Origin of all the revealed Books.

59. This is to console the Holy Prophet, as if to say, "O Prophet, you need not concern yourself as to the end of these disbelievers who have rejected the Truth. You should go on performing with peace of mind the Mission that has been entrusted to you and leave it to Us to give them suitable punishment." Though this has been addressed to the Holy Prophet, it is obvious that it is really meant to warn the opponents of the Truth, who were demanding definitely from the Holy Prophet by way of a challenge to bring about the scourge about which threats were being held out to them.

60. " .....We are advancing in the land .....": this is a very subtle way of warning the opponents of the Truth: "The fact that Our Message is spreading fast in Arabia does, in fact, mean that We Ourselves are advancing very fast in the country against you for We are with those who are carrying Our Message."

".....We are shrinking its boundaries for them.....": "We are causing the influence of Islam to spread fast in the land and are thus reducing the boundaries of the influence of its opponents. Are not these things the portents of their coming disaster?"

61. That is, "These people, who are now devising schemes to defeat the Message of the Truth, do not take a lesson from the sad end of the people who devised similar schemes before them to suppress the voice of the Truth by falsehood, fraud and persecution."

62. That is, "Everyone who has the knowledge of the Divinely revealed Books will bear witness to the fact that my teachings are the same that were imparted by the former prophets."


IBRĀHĪM
(ABRAHAM)
ابراهيم

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XIV
IBRĀHĪM (ABRAHAM)

INTRODUCTION

Name

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

Period of Revelation

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

Central Theme and Purpose

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

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سُوْرَةُ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ مَكِّيَّةٌ

اٰيَاتُهَا ١٢ رُكُوْعَاتُهَا ٧

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

الٓرٰ ۟ كِتٰبٌ اَنْزَلْنٰهُ اِلَيْكَ لِتُخْرِجَ النَّاسَ مِنَ الظُّلُمٰتِ اِلَى النُّوْرِ ۙ بِاِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ
اِلٰى صِرَاطِ الْعَزِيْزِ الْحَمِيْدِ ۙ﴿١﴾ اللّٰهِ الَّذِيْ لَهٗ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْاَرْضِ ؕ
وَوَيْلٌ لِّلْكٰفِرِيْنَ مِنْ عَذَابٍ شَدِيْدِ ۙ﴿٢﴾ الَّذِيْنَ يَسْتَحِبُّوْنَ الْحَيٰوةَ الدُّنْيَا
عَلَى الْاٰخِرَةِ وَيَصُدُّوْنَ عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ وَيَبْغُوْنَهَا عِوَجًا ؕ اُولٰٓئِكَ فِيْ ضَلٰلٍ
بَعِيْدٍ ﴿٣﴾ وَمَآ اَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ رَّسُوْلٍ اِلَّا بِلِسَانِ قَوْمِهٖ لِيُبَيِّنَ لَهُمْ ؕ فَيُضِلُّ
اللّٰهُ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ وَيَهْدِيْ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ ؕ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ ﴿٤﴾ وَلَقَدْ
اَرْسَلْنَا مُوْسٰى بِاٰيٰتِنَآ اَنْ اَخْرِجْ قَوْمَكَ مِنَ الظُّلُمٰتِ اِلَى النُّوْرِ ۙ وَذَكِّرْهُمْ
بِاَيّٰىمِ اللّٰهِ ؕ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّكُلِّ صَبَّارٍ شَكُوْرٍ ﴿٥﴾ وَاِذْ قَالَ مُوْسٰى
لِقَوْمِهِ اذْكُرُوْا نِعْمَةَ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْكُمْ اِذْ اَنْجٰىكُمْ مِّنْ اٰلِ فِرْعَوْنَ يَسُوْمُوْنَكُمْ
سُوْٓءَ الْعَذَابِ وَيُذَبِّحُوْنَ اَبْنَآءَكُمْ وَيَسْتَحْيُوْنَ نِسَآءَكُمْ ؕ وَفِيْ ذٰلِكُمْ بَلَآءٌ مِّنْ
رَّبِّكُمْ عَظِيْمٌ ﴿٦﴾ وَاِذْ تَاَذَّنَ رَبُّكُمْ لَئِنْ شَكَرْتُمْ لَاَزِيْدَنَّكُمْ وَلَئِنْ كَفَرْتُمْ
اِنَّ عَذَابِيْ لَشَدِيْدٌ ﴿٧﴾ وَقَالَ مُوْسٰٓى اِنْ تَكْفُرُوْٓا اَنْتُمْ وَمَنْ فِي الْاَرْضِ
جَمِيْعًا ۙ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَغَنِيٌّ حَمِيْدٌ ﴿٨﴾ اَلَمْ يَاْتِكُمْ نَبَؤُا الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ
قَوْمِ نُوْحٍ وَّعَادٍ وَّثَمُوْدَ ۛ وَالَّذِيْنَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ ۛ لَا يَعْلَمُهُمْ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ ؕ
جَآءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ فَرَدُّوْٓا اَيْدِيَهُمْ فِيْٓ اَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَقَالُوْٓا اِنَّا كَفَرْنَا
بِمَآ اُرْسِلْتُمْ بِهٖ وَاِنَّا لَفِيْ شَكٍّ مِّمَّا تَدْعُوْنَنَآ اِلَيْهِ مُرِيْبٍ ﴿٩﴾ قَالَتْ رُسُلُهُمْ
اَفِي اللّٰهِ شَكٌّ فَاطِرِ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ؕ يَدْعُوْكُمْ لِيَغْفِرَ لَكُمْ مِّنْ ذُنُوْبِكُمْ

XIV

IBRĀHĪM (ABRAHAM)

ابراهيم

verses: 52 *Revealed at Makkah*

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

Alif Lām Rā. O Muhammad ! this is a Book which We have sent down to you so that you may bring mankind by the help of their Lord out of the dark ways (of ignorance) into the Light (of knowledge) to the Way of that God,[1] Who is All-Powerful and inherently worthy of All Praise[2] and the Owner of whatever is in the heavens and the earth. 1-2

And there is a painful torment for those who reject the Truth: 3
who love the life of this world more than the life of the Hereafter;[3] who debar people from Allah's Way and want to make this Way crooked[4] (to suit their wishes). They have gone far astray from the Way of Allah.

Whenever We sent a Messenger to convey Our Message, he 4
delivered it in the language of his people so that he may make it plain to them.[5] Then Allah lets go astray whomsoever He wills and shows Guidance to whomsoever He desires:[6] 'He is All-Powerful, All-Wise.[7]

We sent Moses also before this with Our Signs: and We 5
commanded him, "Bring your people out of all kinds of darkness into Light and admonish them to learn lessons from the Divine History."[8] There are great Signs[9] in this for every steadfast and grateful person.[10]

Recall (the time) when Moses said to his people, "Remember 6-8
Allah's favour on you: He delivered you from Pharaoh's people who oppressed you with cruel afflictions: they slaughtered your sons and let your females live. In this there was a hard trial for you from your Lord. And remember also that your Lord forewarned, 'If you be grateful[11] I will increase My favours on you, and if you be ungrateful (you should know that) My chastisement is severe indeed'!"[12] And

Moses said, "If you prove thankless, you and all the dwellers of the earth know that Allah does not stand in need of any of you, for He is All Sufficient and worthy of all praise by Himself."[13]

9 Has[14] not the story reached you of those who have gone before you of the people of Noah and 'Ad and Thamūd, and of those who came after them? Allah alone knows their number. When their Messengers came to them with plain teachings and manifest Signs, they thrust their hands into their mouths,[15] saying, "We reject the Message with which you have been sent and we have a disquieting doubt about that thing[16] to which you are inviting us."

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

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

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

3. Those who reject the Truth are the people whose interests are entirely bound with the life of this world, and who do not care at all for the interests of the

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up...." (*Deut.* 6: 4-7)

"And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord

thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, to keep the commandments of the Lord, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good ? Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is thy Lord's thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is." (*Deut.* 10: 12-14)

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

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

13. It should be noted that a reference to Prophet Moses and his people has been made here to warn the people of Makkah of the consequences of their ingratitude towards this favour of Allah that He had raised Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) from among them. This was a timely warning, for at

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وَ يُؤَخِّرَكُمْ إِلٰٓى أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ۭ قَالُوْٓا إِنْ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُنَا ۭ تُرِيْدُوْنَ أَنْ
تَصُدُّوْنَا عَمَّا كَانَ يَعْبُدُ اٰبَآؤُنَا فَأْتُوْنَا بِسُلْطٰنٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ۝١٠ قَالَتْ لَهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ
إِنْ نَّحْنُ إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ وَ لٰكِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَمُنُّ عَلٰى مَنْ يَّشَآءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهٖ ۭ
وَ مَا كَانَ لَنَآ أَنْ نَّأْتِيَكُمْ بِسُلْطٰنٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللّٰهِ ۭ وَ عَلَى اللّٰهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ
الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ ۝١١ وَ مَا لَنَآ أَلَّا نَتَوَكَّلَ عَلَى اللّٰهِ وَ قَدْ هَدٰىنَا سُبُلَنَا ۭ وَ لَنَصْبِرَنَّ
عَلٰى مَآ اٰذَيْتُمُوْنَا ۭ وَ عَلَى اللّٰهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُتَوَكِّلُوْنَ ۝١٢ وَ قَالَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا
لِرُسُلِهِمْ لَنُخْرِجَنَّكُمْ مِّنْ أَرْضِنَآ أَوْ لَتَعُوْدُنَّ فِيْ مِلَّتِنَا ۭ فَأَوْحٰٓى إِلَيْهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ
لَنُهْلِكَنَّ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ۝١٣ وَ لَنُسْكِنَنَّكُمُ الْأَرْضَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِهِمْ ۭ ذٰلِكَ لِمَنْ خَافَ
مَقَامِيْ وَ خَافَ وَعِيْدِ ۝١٤ وَ اسْتَفْتَحُوْا وَ خَابَ كُلُّ جَبَّارٍ عَنِيْدٍ ۝١٥ مِّنْ
وَّرَآئِهٖ جَهَنَّمُ وَ يُسْقٰى مِنْ مَّآءٍ صَدِيْدٍ ۝١٦ يَّتَجَرَّعُهٗ وَ لَا يَكَادُ يُسِيْغُهٗ وَ
يَأْتِيْهِ الْمَوْتُ مِنْ كُلِّ مَكَانٍ وَّ مَا هُوَ بِمَيِّتٍ ۭ وَ مِنْ وَّرَآئِهٖ عَذَابٌ
غَلِيْظٌ ۝١٧ مَثَلُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا بِرَبِّهِمْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ كَرَمَادِ نِ اشْتَدَّتْ بِهِ الرِّيْحُ
فِيْ يَوْمٍ عَاصِفٍ ۭ لَا يَقْدِرُوْنَ مِمَّا كَسَبُوْا عَلٰى شَيْءٍ ۭ ذٰلِكَ هُوَ الضَّلٰلُ
الْبَعِيْدُ ۝١٨ أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللّٰهَ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ ۭ إِنْ يَّشَأْ
يُذْهِبْكُمْ وَ يَأْتِ بِخَلْقٍ جَدِيْدٍ ۝١٩ وَّ مَا ذٰلِكَ عَلَى اللّٰهِ بِعَزِيْزٍ ۝٢٠ وَ بَرَزُوْا لِلّٰهِ
جَمِيْعًا فَقَالَ الضُّعَفٰٓؤُا لِلَّذِيْنَ اسْتَكْبَرُوْٓا إِنَّا كُنَّا لَكُمْ تَبَعًا فَهَلْ أَنْتُمْ مُّغْنُوْنَ
عَنَّا مِنْ عَذَابِ اللّٰهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ ۭ قَالُوْا لَوْ هَدٰىنَا اللّٰهُ لَهَدَيْنٰكُمْ ۭ سَوَآءٌ
عَلَيْنَآ أَجَزِعْنَآ أَمْ صَبَرْنَا مَا لَنَا مِنْ مَّحِيْصٍ ۝٢١ وَ قَالَ الشَّيْطٰنُ لَمَّا قُضِيَ
الْأَمْرُ إِنَّ اللّٰهَ وَعَدَكُمْ وَعْدَ الْحَقِّ وَ وَعَدْتُّكُمْ فَأَخْلَفْتُكُمْ ۭ وَ مَا كَانَ لِيَ

The Messengers said, "Do you have doubt about the existence of Allah, Who is the Creator of the heavens and the earth?[17] He calls you that He may forgive you your sins and give you respite till your appointed term."[18] They answered, "You are no more than human beings like ourselves.[19] You intend to debar us from the worship of the deities whom our forefathers have been worshipping. Well, bring a clear Sign."[20] The Messengers replied, "It is true that we are no more than human beings like you, but Allah shows His favour to anyone of His servants He pleases.[21] And it is not in our power to bring any Sign for you. A Sign can come only by Allah's permission. And in Allah alone should the believers put their trust. And why should we not put our trust in Allah when He has guided us in the ways of our lives? We will bear with fortitude your persecutions of us and the trustful should have trust in Allah alone." 10-12

At last the disbelievers said to their Messengers, "You shall either return to our religion[22] or we will banish you from our land." Then their Lord revealed to them, "We will destroy these evil-doers and after them settle you in the land.[23] This is the reward of the one who dreads that he is accountable to Me and is afraid of the threat of My punishment." They had sought a judgment (and the judgment was passed on them) and every tyrant, the enemy of the Truth, suffered ignominy.[24] Then after this Hell lies before him where he shall get tainted water to drink, which he shall try to gulp down, but will scarcely swallow it. Death shall surround him on all sides, yet he shall not die; and before him there shall be a grievous torment. 13-17

The works of those who disbelieved may be likened to the ashes which the wind scatters on a stormy day. They shall not be able to gain anything from what they did.[25] This is the extreme deviation. Do you not see that Allah has based the creation of the heavens and the earth on truth ?[26] If He will, He can put you away and bring in a new creation in your place. And that is not at all a difficult thing for Allah.[27] 18-20

And when those people shall all be exposed together before Allah,[28] then those who were weak in this world will say to those who had posed as big ones, "As we followed you in the world, can you now do anything to relieve us from the torment of Allah?" They will reply, "Had Allah guided us to the way of salvation, we would have certainly 21

guided you to it. Now it is all the same whether we bewail it or bear it with patience: there is for us no way of escape."[29]

22 And when Our judgment has been passed, Satan will say, "The fact is that the promises Allah had made with you were all true. I, too, made some promises with you but I failed to keep any of them.[30]

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that time they were showing ingratitude by rejecting that Message. They were, therefore, warned to learn a lesson from the miserable condition of the Israelites, which was the result of their ingratitude to and rebellion against Allah's favours.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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عَلَيْكُمْ مِّنْ سُلْطٰنٍ اِلَّآ اَنْ دَعَوْتُكُمْ فَاسْتَجَبْتُمْ لِيْ ۚ فَلَا تَلُوْمُوْنِيْ وَلُوْمُوْٓا
اَنْفُسَكُمْ ۭ مَآ اَنَا بِمُصْرِخِكُمْ وَمَآ اَنْتُمْ بِمُصْرِخِيَّ ۭ اِنِّيْ كَفَرْتُ بِمَآ اَشْرَكْتُمُوْنِ
مِنْ قَبْلُ ۭ اِنَّ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ ﴿22﴾ وَاُدْخِلَ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا
الصّٰلِحٰتِ جَنّٰتٍ تَجْرِيْ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا بِاِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ ۭ تَحِيَّتُهُمْ
فِيْهَا سَلٰمٌ ﴿23﴾ اَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ ضَرَبَ اللّٰهُ مَثَلًا كَلِمَةً طَيِّبَةً كَشَجَرَةٍ طَيِّبَةٍ
اَصْلُهَا ثَابِتٌ وَّفَرْعُهَا فِي السَّمَاۗءِ ﴿24﴾ تُؤْتِيْٓ اُكُلَهَا كُلَّ حِيْنٍۢ بِاِذْنِ رَبِّهَا ۭ
وَيَضْرِبُ اللّٰهُ الْاَمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿25﴾ وَمَثَلُ كَلِمَةٍ خَبِيْثَةٍ
كَشَجَرَةٍ خَبِيْثَةِ ۣ اجْتُثَّتْ مِنْ فَوْقِ الْاَرْضِ مَا لَهَا مِنْ قَرَارٍ ﴿26﴾ يُثَبِّتُ اللّٰهُ
الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا بِالْقَوْلِ الثَّابِتِ فِي الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْاٰخِرَةِ ۚ وَيُضِلُّ اللّٰهُ
الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ۙ وَيَفْعَلُ اللّٰهُ مَا يَشَاۗءُ ﴿27﴾ اَلَمْ تَرَ اِلَى الَّذِيْنَ بَدَّلُوْا نِعْمَتَ اللّٰهِ كُفْرًا
وَّاَحَلُّوْا قَوْمَهُمْ دَارَ الْبَوَارِ ﴿28﴾ جَهَنَّمَ ۚ يَصْلَوْنَهَا ۭ وَبِئْسَ الْقَرَارُ ﴿29﴾ وَجَعَلُوْا
لِلّٰهِ اَنْدَادًا لِّيُضِلُّوْا عَنْ سَبِيْلِهٖ ۭ قُلْ تَمَتَّعُوْا فَاِنَّ مَصِيْرَكُمْ اِلَى النَّارِ ﴿30﴾ قُلْ
لِّعِبَادِيَ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا يُقِيْمُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَيُنْفِقُوْا مِمَّا رَزَقْنٰهُمْ سِرًّا وَّعَلَانِيَةً
مِّنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ يَّاْتِيَ يَوْمٌ لَّا بَيْعٌ فِيْهِ وَلَا خِلٰلٌ ﴿31﴾ اَللّٰهُ الَّذِيْ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ
وَالْاَرْضَ وَاَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاۗءِ مَاۗءً فَاَخْرَجَ بِهٖ مِنَ الثَّمَرٰتِ رِزْقًا لَّكُمْ ۚ وَ
سَخَّرَ لَكُمُ الْفُلْكَ لِتَجْرِيَ فِي الْبَحْرِ بِاَمْرِهٖ ۚ وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمُ الْاَنْهٰرَ ﴿32﴾ وَسَخَّرَ
لَكُمُ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ دَاۗىِٕبَيْنِ ۚ وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمُ الَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ ﴿33﴾ وَاٰتٰىكُمْ مِّنْ كُلِّ
مَا سَاَلْتُمُوْهُ ۭ وَاِنْ تَعُدُّوْا نِعْمَتَ اللّٰهِ لَا تُحْصُوْهَا ۭ اِنَّ الْاِنْسَانَ لَظَلُوْمٌ
كَفَّارٌ ﴿34﴾ وَاِذْ قَالَ اِبْرٰهِيْمُ رَبِّ اجْعَلْ هٰذَا الْبَلَدَ اٰمِنًا وَّاجْنُبْنِيْ وَبَنِيَّ

Yet I had no power over you; I did nothing but to invite you to my way and you accepted my invitation.[31] So do not now blame me, but blame yourselves. I cannot help you here, nor can you help me. I dissociate myself from your making me a partner with God before this.[32] Such wrong-doers are sure to receive a grievous torment." 22

And (in contrast to the transgressors), those who have believed and done righteous deeds, 'shall be admitted to Gardens underneath which canals flow. They shall abide there for ever by the permission of their Lord, and they shall be welcomed there by "peace be on you."[33] Do you not see to what Allah' has likened the 'Pure Word'[34] ? It is like a good tree which has got deep roots into the earth and whose branches have spread high up into heaven.[35] It bears good fruit every moment by the permission of its Lord.[36] Allah cites these parables for the benefit of people so that they learn a lesson from them. And an 'evil word'[37] may be likened to an evil tree, which is torn out from the earth and has no stability.[38] Allah makes the believers steadfast in the life of this world and of the Hereafter with the firm Word[39] but lets the transgressors go astray.[40] Allah has full power to do as He will. 23-27

You have seen those people who repaid the bounty of Allah with ingratitude and hurled their people (along with themselves) into the abode of perdition—Hell, wherein they shall enter and it is the most wretched abode to live! And they set up equals with Allah so that they should lead them astray from the way of Allah. Tell them, "Well, you may enjoy yourselves for a while for ultimately you shall have to return to the Fire of Hell." 28-30

O Prophet! tell My servants who have believed, to establish Salāt, and expend openly and secretly (on good works) out of what We have given them[41] before that Day comes when there shall be no buying and selling and no friendly help.[42] 31

Allah is He[43] Who has created the heavens and the earth, and He sent down rain water from the sky where with He produced different kinds of fruits to provide you with food. It is He Who subdued the ship for you that it may sail in the seas by His order and likewise He subdued the rivers for you. It is He Who subdued the sun and the moon so that they should steadfastly pursue their courses and He subdued day and night for you.[44] It is He Who fulfilled all your 32-34

requirements ;[45] so much so that you cannot count His bounties, if you tried to number them. The fact is that man is very unjust and ungrateful.

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where such people, whom you are following or obeying, are themselves going and where they are leading you."

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

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

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

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

(a) It charges the Jews and Christians with *shirk* because they set up their priests and monks as their "Lords" besides Allah. (IX: 31).

(b) Those who follow the superstitious customs have been called *mushriks*. (VI: 136-139).

(c) Those who follow their lusts have been charged with making their "selves" their "god". (XXV: 43).

(d) Those who are disobedient to Allah have been accused of worshipping "Satan". (XXXVI: 60).

(e) Those who follow man-made laws without Allah's sanction have been reproved for setting up the makers of the laws without Allah's sanction as partners with God. (XLI: 21).

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

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

34. Though the expression كلمة طيبة literally means "Pure Word," here it stands for "Truthful Saying and Righteous Creed". According to the Qur'ān, this 'Saying' and 'Creed" are the acceptance of the doctrine of *Tauhid*, belief in Prophethood and Revelation, and in the life of the Hereafter, for it declares these things to be the fundamental truths.

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

36. That is, the "Pure Word" is so fruitful that every person (or community) who bases his system of life on it, gets benefit from it every moment.

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

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

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

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

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

In this connection, it should also be noted that the parable of the "Pure Word" and the "evil word" explains the same theme that had been explained by the similitudes of the mound of ashes that is blown away by the "wind" of the

stormy day (v. 18) and of the "foam of flood", and the "scum of the melted metals." (XIII: 17)

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

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

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

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

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

44. The words of the Text سَخَّرَ لَكُمْ in vv. 32-33 have misled those people, who have translated these into "subjected to you". So much so that some of them interpret these verses to mean that the chief aim of the life of man is to bring the earth and heavens under his subjection, whereas their real meaning is "subjected to (laws) for you". As a matter of fact Allah has subjected all these things to such laws as are beneficial for man. Had not a ship been subjected to certain physical

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أَنْ نَّعْبُدَ الْأَصْنَامَ ﴿35﴾ رَبِّ إِنَّهُنَّ أَضْلَلْنَ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ النَّاسِ ۖ فَمَن تَبِعَنِي
فَإِنَّهُ مِنِّي ۖ وَمَنْ عَصَانِي فَإِنَّكَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿36﴾ رَبَّنَا إِنِّي أَسْكَنتُ مِن ذُرِّيَّتِي
بِوَادٍ غَيْرِ ذِي زَرْعٍ عِندَ بَيْتِكَ الْمُحَرَّمِ ۙ رَبَّنَا لِيُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ فَاجْعَلْ
أَفْئِدَةً مِّنَ النَّاسِ تَهْوِي إِلَيْهِمْ وَارْزُقْهُم مِّنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَشْكُرُونَ ﴿37﴾
رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ تَعْلَمُ مَا نُخْفِي وَمَا نُعْلِنُ ۗ وَمَا يَخْفَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ مِن شَيْءٍ فِي
الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَاءِ ﴿38﴾ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي وَهَبَ لِي عَلَى الْكِبَرِ إِسْمَاعِيلَ
وَإِسْحَاقَ ۚ إِنَّ رَبِّي لَسَمِيعُ الدُّعَاءِ ﴿39﴾ رَبِّ اجْعَلْنِي مُقِيمَ الصَّلَاةِ وَمِن
ذُرِّيَّتِي ۚ رَبَّنَا وَتَقَبَّلْ دُعَاءِ ﴿40﴾ رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيَّ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَوْمَ
يَقُومُ الْحِسَابُ ﴿41﴾ وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ اللَّهَ غَافِلًا عَمَّا يَعْمَلُ الظَّالِمُونَ ۚ إِنَّمَا
يُؤَخِّرُهُمْ لِيَوْمٍ تَشْخَصُ فِيهِ الْأَبْصَارُ ﴿42﴾ مُهْطِعِينَ مُقْنِعِي رُءُوسِهِمْ لَا
يَرْتَدُّ إِلَيْهِمْ طَرْفُهُمْ ۖ وَأَفْئِدَتُهُمْ هَوَاءٌ ﴿43﴾ وَأَنذِرِ النَّاسَ يَوْمَ يَأْتِيهِمُ
الْعَذَابُ فَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا رَبَّنَا أَخِّرْنَا إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ قَرِيبٍ نُّجِبْ دَعْوَتَكَ
وَنَتَّبِعِ الرُّسُلَ ۗ أَوَلَمْ تَكُونُوا أَقْسَمْتُم مِّن قَبْلُ مَا لَكُم مِّن زَوَالٍ ﴿44﴾ وَسَكَنتُمْ
فِي مَسَاكِنِ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ وَتَبَيَّنَ لَكُمْ كَيْفَ فَعَلْنَا بِهِمْ وَضَرَبْنَا لَكُمُ
الْأَمْثَالَ ﴿45﴾ وَقَدْ مَكَرُوا مَكْرَهُمْ وَعِندَ اللَّهِ مَكْرُهُمْ ۚ وَإِن كَانَ مَكْرُهُمْ
لِتَزُولَ مِنْهُ الْجِبَالُ ﴿46﴾ فَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ اللَّهَ مُخْلِفَ وَعْدِهِ رُسُلَهُ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ
ذُو انتِقَامٍ ﴿47﴾ يَوْمَ تُبَدَّلُ الْأَرْضُ غَيْرَ الْأَرْضِ وَالسَّمَاوَاتُ وَبَرَزُوا لِلَّهِ الْوَاحِدِ الْقَهَّارِ ﴿48﴾
وَتَرَى الْمُجْرِمِينَ يَوْمَئِذٍ مُّقَرَّنِينَ فِي الْأَصْفَادِ ﴿49﴾ سَرَابِيلُهُم مِّن قَطِرَانٍ وَتَغْشَىٰ
وُجُوهَهُمُ النَّارُ ﴿50﴾ لِيَجْزِيَ اللَّهُ كُلَّ نَفْسٍ مَّا كَسَبَتْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ ﴿51﴾

Recall the time, when Abraham prayed,[46] saying, "Lord ! make 35-41
this city[47] a city of peace, and protect me and my descendants from the worship of idols. Lord! these have turned away[48] many people from the Right Way (and they might turn away my descendants as well. Therefore, only those of them) who follow my way, belong to me, but (I leave to Thee) those who follow a different way from mine, for Thou art very Forgiving and Merciful.[49] Lord! I have settled some of my descendants in a barren valley near Thy Sacred House. Lord! I have done this in the hope that they would establish *Salāt* there. So turn the hearts of the people towards them, and provide fruits for their food[50]; it is expected that they will become grateful. Lord! Thou hast full knowledge of all that we hide and disclose."[51] And[52] the fact is that nothing in the earth and heavens is hidden from Allah. "All praise be to Allah Who has given me sons like Ismā'il and Isaac in my old age. Indeed, my Lord hears all prayers. Lord! help make me establish *Salāt* and from among my descendants (raise those who should do this work). Lord! grant my prayer. Lord! forgive me and my parents and the believers on the Day when reckoning will take place."[53]

Do not think that Allah is unaware of what these unjust people 42-46
are doing; He is only deferring their case to the Day when all eyes shall stare with consternation. They shall be running in terror with heads uplifted and eyes fixed upwards[54] and hearts becoming void. O Muhammad, fore-warn them of the Day when Our scourge will overtake them: then these wrong-doers will say, "Our Lord! give us a little more respite: we will respond to Thy Message and follow the Messengers." (But it will be said to them decisively,) "Are you not the same people who swore before this that you will never meet with a decline, whereas you had lived in the habitations of those who had wronged their souls and seen how We had dealt with them; and We held them up to you as examples? They had tried all their cunning devices to outwit Us but Allah had the remedy to counteract their devices, even though these were so powerful as to move mountains."[55]

So, O Prophet, never imagine that Allah will ever go against the 47-51
promises made to His Messengers.[56] Allah is All Powerful and capable of revenge. Warn them of the Day when the Earth and the Heavens shall be totally transformed,[57] and all of them shall stand exposed before Allah, the One, the Almighty. On that Day you will see the criminals

with their hands and feet in fetters. They shall be in garments of tar[58] and the flames of fire shall be covering their faces. This will happen so that Allah may recompense everyone for what one earned: Allah is prompt at reckoning.

Contd. from p.493]

laws, there could have been no navigation at all: had not a river been subjected to certain laws, it could not have been possible to take out canals from them; likewise if the heavenly bodies (the sun and the moon, etc.) and the earth and day and night had not been subjected to certain fixed laws, life could not have been possible, not to speak of civilized life!

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

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

47. Makkah.

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

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

50. Allah granted this prayer of Prophet Abraham. That was why people from the whole of Arabia used to come there for *Hajj* and *'Umrah* at the time of the revelation of this Sūrah, and now people gather there from all over the world.

Besides this, there is plenty of food and fruit in all-seasons of the year, though the valley is absolutey barren and no vegetation grows in it even for animals.

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

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

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

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

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

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

57. It is obvious from this verse and some hints in the Qur'ān that on the occasion of Resurrection, the Earth and the Heavens will not be totally destroyed but at the blowing of the "First Trumpet", the existing physical system shall be disarranged. After this, between the blowing of the "First" and the "Last Trumpet" (Allah alone knows how long this interval will last), the present form and aspect of the earth and the heavens shall be transformed and a new physical system with new physical laws will come into existence. That will be the world of the Hereafter. When the "Last Trumpet" will be blown, all human beings from Adam to those born before the "First Trumpet", shall be brought to life and

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هٰذَا بَلٰغٌ لِّلنَّاسِ وَلِيُنْذَرُوْا بِهٖ وَلِيَعْلَمُوْٓا اَنَّمَا هُوَ اِلٰهٌ وَّاحِدٌ وَّلِيَذَّكَّرَ اُولُوا الْاَلْبَابِ ﴿٥٢﴾

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

Contd. from p. 497]

appear before Allah. The Qur'ān calls this حشر *(Hashr)* which literally means "to muster and gather together". It appears from the wording of the Qur'ān and some clear statements in the Traditions that this will take place on this Earth. The "Seat of Judgment" and the "Scales" will be established on the Earth and the decisions will be passed here. This is also clear from the Qur'ān and the Traditions that the life in the Hereafter will not merely be a spiritual life but the very physical and spiritual life which we are living now on this earth; and every individual shall receive his reward or punishment exactly in that "personality" in which he or she is living in the life of this world.

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

.....



XV

AL-ḤIJR

الحِجر

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XV

AL-ḤIJR

الحِجر

INTRODUCTION

Name

This Sūrah takes its name from v 80.

Period of Revelation

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

Topics and the Central Theme

Though the main topics of the Sūrah are: (a) warning to those who rejected his Message, opposed it tooth and nail, and ridiculed him, and (b) comfort and encouragement to the Holy Prophet, it does not mean that this Sūrah does not contain admonition and instructions. As a matter of fact, the Qur'ān never confines itself to mere warning, rebuke

and censure, but resorts to precept in every suitable place. Accordingly, this Sūrah contains brief arguments for *Tauhid* on the one hand; and admonition in the story of Adam and Satan on the other.



الٓرٰ ۚ تِلْكَ اٰيٰتُ الْكِتٰبِ وَقُرْاٰنٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ۝١

رُبَمَا يَوَدُّ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا لَوْ كَانُوْا مُسْلِمِيْنَ ۝٢ ذَرْهُمْ يَاْكُلُوْا وَيَتَمَتَّعُوْا

وَيُلْهِهِمُ الْاَمَلُ فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُوْنَ ۝٣ وَمَآ اَهْلَكْنَا مِنْ قَرْيَةٍ اِلَّا وَلَهَا كِتَابٌ
مَّعْلُوْمٌ ۝٤ مَا تَسْبِقُ مِنْ اُمَّةٍ اَجَلَهَا وَمَا يَسْتَاْخِرُوْنَ ۝٥ وَقَالُوْا يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْ
نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ الذِّكْرُ اِنَّكَ لَمَجْنُوْنٌ ۝٦ لَوْ مَا تَاْتِيْنَا بِالْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ اِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ
الصّٰدِقِيْنَ ۝٧ مَا نُنَزِّلُ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةَ اِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَمَا كَانُوْٓا اِذًا مُّنْظَرِيْنَ ۝٨ اِنَّا
نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَاِنَّا لَهٗ لَحٰفِظُوْنَ ۝٩ وَلَقَدْ اَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ فِيْ شِيَعِ
الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ۝١٠ وَمَا يَاْتِيْهِمْ مِّنْ رَّسُوْلٍ اِلَّا كَانُوْا بِهٖ يَسْتَهْزِءُوْنَ ۝١١ كَذٰلِكَ
نَسْلُكُهٗ فِيْ قُلُوْبِ الْمُجْرِمِيْنَ ۝١٢ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِهٖ وَقَدْ خَلَتْ سُنَّةُ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ۝١٣ وَ
لَوْ فَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ بَابًا مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ فَظَلُّوْا فِيْهِ يَعْرُجُوْنَ ۝١٤ لَقَالُوْٓا اِنَّمَا سُكِّرَتْ
اَبْصَارُنَا بَلْ نَحْنُ قَوْمٌ مَّسْحُوْرُوْنَ ۝١٥ وَلَقَدْ جَعَلْنَا فِي السَّمَآءِ بُرُوْجًا وَّ
زَيَّنّٰهَا لِلنّٰظِرِيْنَ ۝١٦ وَحَفِظْنٰهَا مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْطٰنٍ رَّجِيْمٍ ۝١٧ اِلَّا مَنِ اسْتَرَقَ السَّمْعَ
فَاَتْبَعَهٗ شِهَابٌ مُّبِيْنٌ ۝١٨ وَالْاَرْضَ مَدَدْنٰهَا وَاَلْقَيْنَا فِيْهَا رَوَاسِيَ وَاَنْۢبَتْنَا
فِيْهَا مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مَّوْزُوْنٍ ۝١٩ وَجَعَلْنَا لَكُمْ فِيْهَا مَعَايِشَ وَمَنْ لَّسْتُمْ لَهٗ
بِرٰزِقِيْنَ ۝٢٠ وَاِنْ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ اِلَّا عِنْدَنَا خَزَآئِنُهٗ ۖ وَمَا نُنَزِّلُهٗٓ اِلَّا بِقَدَرٍ مَّعْلُوْمٍ ۝٢١
وَاَرْسَلْنَا الرِّيٰحَ لَوَاقِحَ فَاَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً فَاَسْقَيْنٰكُمُوْهُ ۚ وَمَآ اَنْتُمْ لَهٗ

XV

AL-ḤIJR

الحِجر

Verses: 99 *Revealed at Makkah*

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

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

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

They say, "You, upon whom the Divine word[3] has been sent down, are surely insane. Why do you not bring angels before us, if what you say be true?" We do not send down angels in this way. When they come down,[4] they come down with truth, and then the people are not given respite.[5] As regards this Admonition, it is We Who have sent it down, and We Ourself will preserve it.[6] 6-9

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

16-18 It is We Who have divided the heavens into many fortified spheres[8] for the sake of administration and adorned and decked them out fair to the beholders,[9] and guarded them from every accursed Satan.[10] No Satan can pass through them except that an eaves-dropper might hear something[11], but a fiery flame pursues that eaves-dropper.[12]

19-20 We stretched forth the Earth, and set mountains firmly upon it, and caused to grow therein every kind of vegetable in balanced measure.[13] And We provided therein means of sustenance for you and for many other creatures for whom you do not provide.

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

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

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1. This verse is the brief introduction to the Sūrah, and immediately after this begins its theme. "These are the verses of the lucid Qur'ān": These are the verses of that Qur'ān which makes its meaning lucid and understandable.

2. This is to refute the fallacious argument of the disbelievers that Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) was not a true Prophet because they had received no prompt punishment for their disbelief. It is like this: "We have never seized a community at the first commital of *kufr*.

We prescribe a limit for every community to hear and understand the message and reform its ways. Then We tolerate its mischief and evil deeds up to that limit and allow it full freedom to do as it likes, and give it respite till the term expires. That is why We are tolerating their attitude of ridicule and denial. (For the full meaning of respite, please refer to E.N. 18 of Sūrah *Ibrāhīm*).

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

4. This was a sarcastic remark that was made by the opponents, for they did not acknowledge that the "Admonition" had been sent down to the Holy Prophet: otherwise they could not say that he was "insane". What they really meant by this remark was: "You, who claim that the "Admonition" has been sent down to you, are insane". A similar remark was also made by Pharaoh concerning

Prophet Moses. Addressing his courtiers, he said, "The Messenger who has been sent to you is insane". (XXVI: 27)

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

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

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

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

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

"Fortified spheres" *(burūj)* are Signs of Allah for it is not possible to pass through one sphere of the Heaven into another, as each sphere of the space has been fortified by invisible boundaries. In this connection, it may be noted that literally the Arabic word *burj* means "a fortified place" but as a technical term of ancient astronomy this stood for each of the twelve Signs of the Zodiac, which marked the sun's path through the heavens. This has led some of the commentators to form the opinion that in this verse the word *burūj* refers to the same. But there are some others who think that it means "planets". However, if we consider this word in the context of v. 19, we are led to the conclusion that probably it stands for "spheres".

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

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

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

12. In Arabic the word *shihāb-i-mubin* literally means "fiery flame". In XXXVII: 10, the same thing has been called *shihāb-i-thāqib* ("flame that pierces through darkness"). This may or may not necessarily be a "meteor" for it is just possible that it may be some type of rays such as "Cosmic Rays" or even a stronger type which we have not been able to discover as yet. Anyhow if the

"fiery flame" that pursues Satans may be taken to be a meteor, a countless number of these can form a fortification around our sphere of the universe. Scientific observations made with the help of the telescope have shown that billions of these meteors are rushing from space in mass of "rainfall" towards the earth's atmosphere. Such a scene was witnessed in an eastern part of North America on November 13, 1833. This is so strong a fortification that it can prevent Satans from passing through any fortified sphere.

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

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

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

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بِخٰزِنِيْنَ ﴿٢٢﴾ وَاِنَّا لَنَحْنُ نُحْيٖ وَنُمِيْتُ وَنَحْنُ الْوٰرِثُوْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَلَقَدْ عَلِمْنَا
الْمُسْتَقْدِمِيْنَ مِنْكُمْ وَلَقَدْ عَلِمْنَا الْمُسْتَاْخِرِيْنَ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَاِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ يَحْشُرُهُمْ ؕ
اِنَّهٗ حَكِيْمٌ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْاِنْسَانَ مِنْ صَلْصَالٍ مِّنْ حَمَاٍ مَّسْنُوْنٍ ﴿٢٦﴾
وَالْجَآنَّ خَلَقْنٰهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ مِنْ نَّارِ السَّمُوْمِ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَاِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ اِنِّيْ
خَالِقٌۢ بَشَرًا مِّنْ صَلْصَالٍ مِّنْ حَمَاٍ مَّسْنُوْنٍ ﴿٢٨﴾ فَاِذَا سَوَّيْتُهٗ وَنَفَخْتُ فِيْهِ مِنْ
رُّوْحِيْ فَقَعُوْا لَهٗ سٰجِدِيْنَ ﴿٢٩﴾ فَسَجَدَ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ كُلُّهُمْ اَجْمَعُوْنَ ﴿٣٠﴾ اِلَّآ اِبْلِيْسَ ؕ اَبٰٓى
اَنْ يَّكُوْنَ مَعَ السّٰجِدِيْنَ ﴿٣١﴾ قَالَ يٰٓاِبْلِيْسُ مَا لَكَ اَلَّا تَكُوْنَ مَعَ السّٰجِدِيْنَ ﴿٣٢﴾
قَالَ لَمْ اَكُنْ لِّاَسْجُدَ لِبَشَرٍ خَلَقْتَهٗ مِنْ صَلْصَالٍ مِّنْ حَمَاٍ مَّسْنُوْنٍ ﴿٣٣﴾ قَالَ
فَاخْرُجْ مِنْهَا فَاِنَّكَ رَجِيْمٌ ﴿٣٤﴾ وَّاِنَّ عَلَيْكَ اللَّعْنَةَ اِلٰى يَوْمِ الدِّيْنِ ﴿٣٥﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ
فَاَنْظِرْنِيْٓ اِلٰى يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُوْنَ ﴿٣٦﴾ قَالَ فَاِنَّكَ مِنَ الْمُنْظَرِيْنَ ﴿٣٧﴾ اِلٰى يَوْمِ الْوَقْتِ
الْمَعْلُوْمِ ﴿٣٨﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ بِمَآ اَغْوَيْتَنِيْ لَاُزَيِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ فِي الْاَرْضِ وَلَاُغْوِيَنَّهُمْ
اَجْمَعِيْنَ ﴿٣٩﴾ اِلَّا عِبَادَكَ مِنْهُمُ الْمُخْلَصِيْنَ ﴿٤٠﴾ قَالَ هٰذَا صِرَاطٌ عَلَيَّ مُسْتَقِيْمٌ ﴿٤١﴾
اِنَّ عِبَادِيْ لَيْسَ لَكَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطٰنٌ اِلَّا مَنِ اتَّبَعَكَ مِنَ الْغٰوِيْنَ ﴿٤٢﴾ وَاِنَّ
جَهَنَّمَ لَمَوْعِدُهُمْ اَجْمَعِيْنَ ﴿٤٣﴾ لَهَا سَبْعَةُ اَبْوَابٍ ؕ لِكُلِّ بَابٍ مِّنْهُمْ جُزْءٌ
مَّقْسُوْمٌ ﴿٤٤﴾ اِنَّ الْمُتَّقِيْنَ فِيْ جَنّٰتٍ وَّعُيُوْنٍ ﴿٤٥﴾ اُدْخُلُوْهَا بِسَلٰمٍ اٰمِنِيْنَ ﴿٤٦﴾ وَ
نَزَعْنَا مَا فِيْ صُدُوْرِهِمْ مِّنْ غِلٍّ اِخْوَانًا عَلٰى سُرُرٍ مُّتَقٰبِلِيْنَ ﴿٤٧﴾ لَا يَمَسُّهُمْ
فِيْهَا نَصَبٌ وَّمَا هُمْ مِّنْهَا بِمُخْرَجِيْنَ ﴿٤٨﴾ نَبِّئْ عِبَادِيْٓ اَنِّيْٓ اَنَا الْغَفُوْرُ
الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿٤٩﴾ وَاَنَّ عَذَابِيْ هُوَ الْعَذَابُ الْاَلِيْمُ ﴿٥٠﴾ وَنَبِّئْهُمْ عَنْ ضَيْفِ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ ﴿٥١﴾
اِذْ دَخَلُوْا عَلَيْهِ فَقَالُوْا سَلٰمًا ؕ قَالَ اِنَّا مِنْكُمْ وَجِلُوْنَ ﴿٥٢﴾ قَالُوْا لَا تَوْجَلْ

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

We created Man from dried clay of rotten earth:[17] and before him We had created *jinn* from the flame of heat.[18] Then recall to mind the time when your Lord said to the angels, "I am going to create a man from dried clay of rotten earth. When I have brought him to perfection and breathed of My spirit[19] into him, you should bow down before him all together." Accordingly all the angels bowed down except Iblis: he refused to join those who bowed down.[20] The Lord said, "O Iblis! What is the matter with you that you have not joined those who have bowed down ?" He replied, "It does not behove me to bow down before this man whom you have created from dried clay of rotten earth." The Lord said, "Get away from here, for you have become accursed: the curse shall rest upon you till the Day of Retribution."[21] At this he requested, "My Lord! then give me respite till that Day when mankind shall be resurrected." Allah said, "Well! you are given respite till the Day of predestined time." Iblis replied, "Lord, because Thou hast beguiled me, I will create allurements for them[22] and seduce them except those of Thy servants whom Thou hast chosen for Thyself from amongst them." Allah replied, "This is the straight way that reaches Me.[23] Indeed, thou shalt have no power over My sincere servants. Thou wilt succeed only in beguiling those who shall follow thee,[24] and they shall all be destined for Hell."[25] 26-43

This Hell (with which the followers of Iblis have been threatened) has seven gates, and each gate has been specified for a separate group of them.[26] In contrast to them the pious people[27] shall go to the gardens and fountains. (It will be said to them), "Enter into these in peace and security." We will remove from their hearts even the little bit of spite that will be therein,[28] and they will become like brethren, and sit face to face on couches. They will have no toil to weary them nor will they be cast out from there.[29] 44-48

O Prophet! tell My servants, "I am Forgiving and Merciful, but at the same time My chastisement is also a severe chatisement." 49-50

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many gods, it was impossible to have such a perfect balance and appropriate proportion with perpetual consistence in so many different things and powers.

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

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

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

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

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

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

19. "....(when I have) breathed of My spirit into him....": "....(when I have) cast a reflection of My Divine characteristics on him...." This shows that the soul of man implies "life, knowledge, power, will, discretion and other human characteristics in the aggregate. These are in reality a slight reflection of Divine characteristics that has been cast on the human body, which was originally created

from dried clay. And it is this Divine reflection on the human body which has raised him to the position of the Vicegerent of Allah and made him that worthy being before whom angels and every earthly thing should bow down.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

According to the first rendering, these verses will mean this: "The way followed by My sincere servants is the only straight way to reach Me. Satan will have no power over those people who follow it, for I will choose them to be My own servants." Satan himself admitted that he will not be able to entice them. On

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إِنَّا نُبَشِّرُكَ بِغُلٰمٍ عَلِيْمٍ ﴿٥٣﴾ قَالَ أَبَشَّرْتُمُوْنِيْ عَلٰٓى أَنْ مَّسَّنِيَ الْكِبَرُ فَبِمَ تُبَشِّرُوْنَ ﴿٥٤﴾
قَالُوْا بَشَّرْنٰكَ بِالْحَقِّ فَلَا تَكُنْ مِّنَ الْقٰنِطِيْنَ ﴿٥٥﴾ قَالَ وَمَنْ يَّقْنَطُ مِنْ رَّحْمَةِ
رَبِّهٖٓ إِلَّا الضَّآلُّوْنَ ﴿٥٦﴾ قَالَ فَمَا خَطْبُكُمْ أَيُّهَا الْمُرْسَلُوْنَ ﴿٥٧﴾ قَالُوْٓا إِنَّآ أُرْسِلْنَآ
إِلٰى قَوْمٍ مُّجْرِمِيْنَ ﴿٥٨﴾ إِلَّآ اٰلَ لُوْطٍ ۭ إِنَّا لَمُنَجُّوْهُمْ أَجْمَعِيْنَ ﴿٥٩﴾ إِلَّا امْرَأَتَهٗ
قَدَّرْنَآ ۙ إِنَّهَا لَمِنَ الْغٰبِرِيْنَ ﴿٦٠﴾ فَلَمَّا جَآءَ اٰلَ لُوْطِ ۨ الْمُرْسَلُوْنَ ﴿٦١﴾ قَالَ إِنَّكُمْ
قَوْمٌ مُّنْكَرُوْنَ ﴿٦٢﴾ قَالُوْا بَلْ جِئْنٰكَ بِمَا كَانُوْا فِيْهِ يَمْتَرُوْنَ ﴿٦٣﴾ وَأَتَيْنٰكَ بِالْحَقِّ
وَإِنَّا لَصٰدِقُوْنَ ﴿٦٤﴾ فَأَسْرِ بِأَهْلِكَ بِقِطْعٍ مِّنَ الَّيْلِ وَاتَّبِعْ أَدْبَارَهُمْ وَلَا
يَلْتَفِتْ مِنْكُمْ أَحَدٌ وَّامْضُوْا حَيْثُ تُؤْمَرُوْنَ ﴿٦٥﴾ وَقَضَيْنَآ إِلَيْهِ ذٰلِكَ الْأَمْرَ
أَنَّ دَابِرَ هٰٓؤُلَآءِ مَقْطُوْعٌ مُّصْبِحِيْنَ ﴿٦٦﴾ وَجَآءَ أَهْلُ الْمَدِيْنَةِ يَسْتَبْشِرُوْنَ ﴿٦٧﴾
قَالَ إِنَّ هٰٓؤُلَآءِ ضَيْفِيْ فَلَا تَفْضَحُوْنِ ﴿٦٨﴾ وَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَلَا تُخْزُوْنِ ﴿٦٩﴾ قَالُوْٓا
أَوَلَمْ نَنْهَكَ عَنِ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٧٠﴾ قَالَ هٰٓؤُلَآءِ بَنٰتِيْٓ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ فٰعِلِيْنَ ﴿٧١﴾ لَعَمْرُكَ
إِنَّهُمْ لَفِيْ سَكْرَتِهِمْ يَعْمَهُوْنَ ﴿٧٢﴾ فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ الصَّيْحَةُ مُشْرِقِيْنَ ﴿٧٣﴾ فَجَعَلْنَا
عَالِيَهَا سَافِلَهَا وَأَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ حِجَارَةً مِّنْ سِجِّيْلٍ ﴿٧٤﴾ إِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ
لِّلْمُتَوَسِّمِيْنَ ﴿٧٥﴾ وَإِنَّهَا لَبِسَبِيْلٍ مُّقِيْمٍ ﴿٧٦﴾ إِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيَةً لِّلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٧٧﴾ وَإِنْ
كَانَ أَصْحٰبُ الْأَيْكَةِ لَظٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٧٨﴾ فَانْتَقَمْنَا مِنْهُمْ ۘ وَإِنَّهُمَا لَبِإِمَامٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿٧٩﴾ وَ
لَقَدْ كَذَّبَ أَصْحٰبُ الْحِجْرِ الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ ﴿٨٠﴾ وَاٰتَيْنٰهُمْ اٰيٰتِنَا فَكَانُوْا عَنْهَا مُعْرِضِيْنَ ﴿٨١﴾
وَكَانُوْا يَنْحِتُوْنَ مِنَ الْجِبَالِ بُيُوْتًا اٰمِنِيْنَ ﴿٨٢﴾ فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ الصَّيْحَةُ مُصْبِحِيْنَ ﴿٨٣﴾
فَمَآ أَغْنٰى عَنْهُمْ مَّا كَانُوْا يَكْسِبُوْنَ ﴿٨٤﴾ وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَ
مَا بَيْنَهُمَآ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ ۭ وَإِنَّ السَّاعَةَ لَاٰتِيَةٌ ۭ فَاصْفَحِ الصَّفْحَ الْجَمِيْلَ ﴿٨٥﴾ إِنَّ

And tell them the story of the guests of Abraham.[30] When they came to him, they said, "Peace be to you". But he replied, "We are afraid of you."[31] They said, "Do not be afraid of us. We give you the good news of a sagacious son."[32] Abraham said, "What! do you give me the good news of a son in my old age? Just consider what kind of good news you are giving me." They replied, "We are giving you a true good news; you should not be of those who despair". Abraham replied, only those who go astray, despair of their Lord's Mercy?' Then he asked them, "O Messengers of Allah ! What is the expedition for which you have been sent?"[33] They said, "We have been sent to (punish) a criminal people[34] with the exception of Lot's family; we will rescue all of them except his wife, who (Allah says) has been destined to remain with those who will stay behind." 51-60

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

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

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

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

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

78-79 As the people of Al Aikah[43] were unjust, We took vengeance on them. And the ruined habitations of these two Communities lie upon the open highway.[44]

80-84 The people of Al Hijr[45] also treated the Messengers as impostors and We sent Our Revelations and showed Our Signs to them, but they went on ignoring all these things. They hewed their dwellings into the mountains and apparently lived in full security. But at last a violent blast over took them with the approach of the morning, and all that they had achieved proved of no avail to them.[46]

Contd. from p. 511]

the contrary, he will succeed in beguiling those people, who themselves will deviate from the way of obedience. They will then wander farther and farther away following his temptations and allurements.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"truth" which was sent to Prophet Abraham. Do you then desire that 'truth" which the angels brought to the people of Prophet Lot?"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

39. This shows that those People had gone to the lowest depths of immorality. No sooner did they hear the news of the arrival of handsome strangers in their town than they rushed rejoicing to the house of Prophet Lot and impudently demanded that he should hand over his guests to them for the gratification of their lust. The pity is that there had remained not a single person among them to make a protest against such a heinous sin. Moreover, this shows

that all of them, as a community, had totally lost every sense of decency, and they felt no shame at all to make such a wicked demand on him openly. The very fact, that they felt no hesitation in making such a wicked demand brazen- facedly from a pious and holy man like Prophet Lot, shows that the heinous crime was so common among them that they would not spare anyone.

The Talmud records many instances of the all-round moral degradation of the people of Lot. Once a stranger was passing through their territory. He was forced by coming darkness to pass the night near Sodom. As he had his own provisions with him, he did not stand in any need of help from the towns-folk; so he lay under a tree to pass the night. But a Sodomite entreated him to accompany him to his house. During the night he did away with the ass and merchandise of the stranger. When he began to cry for help in the morning, the towns-folk came there not to help him but to rob him of what had been left with him.

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

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

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

40. In E.N. 87 of Sūrah Hūd, it has been explained what Prophet Lot meant by this. It may also be added that such words as these were uttered by an

[Contd. on p. 519

رَبَّكَ هُوَ الْخَلّٰقُ الْعَلِيْمُ ﴿٨٦﴾ وَلَقَدْ اٰتَيْنٰكَ سَبْعًا مِّنَ الْمَثَانِيْ وَالْقُرْاٰنَ
الْعَظِيْمَ ﴿٨٧﴾ لَا تَمُدَّنَّ عَيْنَيْكَ اِلٰى مَا مَتَّعْنَا بِهٖۤ اَزْوَاجًا مِّنْهُمْ وَلَا تَحْزَنْ
عَلَيْهِمْ وَاخْفِضْ جَنَاحَكَ لِلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٨٨﴾ وَقُلْ اِنِّيْۤ اَنَا النَّذِيْرُ الْمُبِيْنُ ﴿٨٩﴾
كَمَاۤ اَنْزَلْنَا عَلَى الْمُقْتَسِمِيْنَ ﴿٩٠﴾ الَّذِيْنَ جَعَلُوا الْقُرْاٰنَ عِضِيْنَ ﴿٩١﴾ فَوَرَبِّكَ
لَنَسْـَٔلَنَّهُمْ اَجْمَعِيْنَ ﴿٩٢﴾ عَمَّا كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٩٣﴾ فَاصْدَعْ بِمَا تُؤْمَرُ وَاَعْرِضْ
عَنِ الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ ﴿٩٤﴾ اِنَّا كَفَيْنٰكَ الْمُسْتَهْزِءِيْنَ ﴿٩٥﴾ الَّذِيْنَ يَجْعَلُوْنَ مَعَ اللّٰهِ اِلٰهًا
اٰخَرَ ۚ فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٩٦﴾ وَلَقَدْ نَعْلَمُ اَنَّكَ يَضِيْقُ صَدْرُكَ بِمَا يَقُوْلُوْنَ ﴿٩٧﴾
فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ وَكُنْ مِّنَ السّٰجِدِيْنَ ﴿٩٨﴾ وَاعْبُدْ رَبَّكَ حَتّٰى يَاْتِيَكَ الْيَقِيْنُ ﴿٩٩﴾

85-93 We have not based the creation of the Earth and the Heavens and everything but truth, [47] and our judgment is sure to come. So O Muhammad, overlook (their misbehaviour) in a gracious manner. Indeed your Lord is the Creator of all and is All-Knowing.[48] We have given you seven verses that are worthy of recitation over and over again,[49] and We have also bestowed on you the glorious Qur'ān.[50] Do not even look at the worldly wealth We have given to different people from among them nor grieve at their condition.[51] Leave them alone and attend to the Believers. Tell (the disbelievers), "I am a plain warner only. This warning is like the warning We sent to the schismatics, who have caused divisions in their Qur'ān"[52] So by your Lord, We will surely take account from them concering what they had been doing.

94-96 So, O Prophet, proclaim publicly what you are being bidden, and never mind those who practise *shirk*. We suffice on your behalf to take to task those who have set up other gods along with Allah: they will come to know shortly (their folly).

97-99 We know that your heart is distressed at the things they say

against you. (This is the remedy:) you should glorify your Lord with His praise, and fall in prostration before Him, and serve your Lord till that last hour which is sure to come.[53]

Contd. from p.517]

honourable man like him in the last resort, when all his entreaties and earnest requests had failed to prevent those people from their evil designs towards his guests.

Here it will be worthwhile to clear the significance of the words which were uttered by Prophet Lot as they occur in Sūrah Hūd (v. 78). When he entreated those wicked people not to molest his guests, saying, "Here are my daughters....", he was unaware that his guests were angels in the disguise of handsome boys. The angels revealed their identity only when the wicked crowd gathered at the residence of his guests and began to threaten them with their wicked designs, and Prophet Lot began to lament, "I wish I had the power to set you right or I could find some strong support for refuge." It was then that the angels revealed themselves, saying, "We are envoys sent by your Lord.... " This sequence of events shows that Prophet Lot had made that "offer" only when he had felt to be utterly helpless.

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

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

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

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

43. The people of Al-Aikah were the community of Prophet Shu'aib and were called Midianites after the name of their capital city and their territory. As

regards Al-Aikah, it was the ancient name of Tabūk and literally means a "thick forest".

44. Midian lay on the route from Hijāz to Palestine and Syria.

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

When Ibn Batūtah reached there in the eighth century of Hijrah on his way to Makkah, he wrote: "I have seen the buildings of Thamūd hewed into red mountains; the paintings look so bright as if they have been put on only recently....and rotten bones of human beings are found in them even today." (See E.N. 57 of VII.)

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

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

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

49. These seven verses which are recited over and over again in every prescribed *salāt* are the verses of *Al-Fātihah*. Though some of the commentators are of the view that this *"Al-Mathāni,"* refers to the seven Sūrahs which contain two hundred or more verses, that is, II-VII and (VIII-IX) or X. But the majority

of the early commentators opine that it refers to *Al-Fātihah*. Imam Bukhari has cited two authentic Traditions in support of the view that it refers to *Al-Fātihah*.

50. The mention of the precious gift of the Glorious Qur'ān has been made also to console the Holy Prophet and his followers that they should not even look at the worldly wealth of their opponents because that was nothing as compared with this precious wealth. In order to grasp the full significance of this, one should keep in view the fact that at that time the Holy Prophet and his Companions were suffering badly from poverty. The trading activities of the Holy Prophet had almost come to an end during the period in which he had been engaged in his Mission. Besides this, he had almost used up the whole wealth of Hadrat Khaĭjah. As regards his Companions, some of the young men had been turned out of their homes and reduced to poverty. The economic boycott had ruined the business of those who were engaged in trade. There were others who were mere slaves or proteges of the Quraish and had no economic position whatever. In addition to their sad economic plight, all the Muslims, along with the Holy Prophet, were suffering persecution from the people of Makkah and its surroundings. In short, they were so much persecuted, ridiculed and insulted that no one of them was safe from physical and mental torture. On the other side, the Quraish, their opponents and persecutors, enjoyed all the good things of this world, and lived lives of happiness and luxury. This is the background of the reassurance given to the Believers, as if to say, "Why should you feel disheartened at this? We have given you "wealth" which surpasses all kinds of worldly riches. Therefore, your opponents should envy your knowledge and high morals; you need not envy their ill-earned wealth and their wicked enjoyments, for when they will go before their Lord, they themselves will find that they had not brought such wealth as carries any value there."

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

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

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

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

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



XVI

AN-NAHL

النّحل

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XVI

AN-NAHL

النحل

INTRODUCTION

Name

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

Period of Revelation

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

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

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

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

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

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

Central Theme

All the topics of the Sūrah revolve round different aspects of the

Message, *i.e.*, refutation of *shirk*, proofs of *Tauhid*, and warning of the consequences of the rejection of and opposition and antagonism to the Message.

Topics of Discussion

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

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

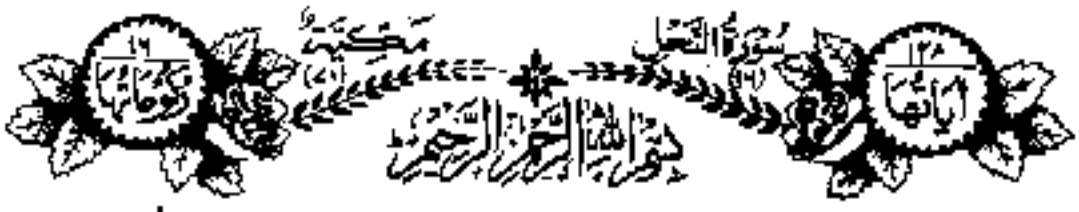
1. Very convincing proofs of *Tauhid* and refutation of *shirk* have been based on the plain signs in the universe and in man's own self.

2. The objections of the disbelievers have been answered, their arguments refuted, their doubts removed and their false pretexts exposed.

3. Warnings have been given of the consequences of persistence in false ways and antagonism to the Message.

4. The moral changes which the Message of the Holy Prophet aims to bring practically in human life have been presented briefly in an appealing manner. The *mushriks* have been told that belief in Allah, which they also professed, demanded that it should not be confined merely to lip-service, but this creed should take a definite shape in moral and practical life.

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



أَتَىٰ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ فَلَا تَسْتَعْجِلُوهُ ۚ سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿١﴾ يُنَزِّلُ الْمَلَائِكَةَ
بِالرُّوحِ مِنْ أَمْرِهِ عَلَىٰ مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ أَنْ أَنْذِرُوا أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا
أَنَا فَاتَّقُونِ ﴿٢﴾ خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ ۚ تَعَالَىٰ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٣﴾
خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ فَإِذَا هُوَ خَصِيمٌ مُبِينٌ ﴿٤﴾ وَالْأَنْعَامَ خَلَقَهَا ۗ لَكُمْ
فِيهَا دِفْءٌ وَمَنَافِعُ وَمِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ ﴿٥﴾ وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا جَمَالٌ حِينَ تُرِيحُونَ
وَحِينَ تَسْرَحُونَ ﴿٦﴾ وَتَحْمِلُ أَثْقَالَكُمْ إِلَىٰ بَلَدٍ لَمْ تَكُونُوا بَالِغِيهِ إِلَّا بِشِقِّ
الْأَنْفُسِ ۚ إِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ لَرَءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٧﴾ وَالْخَيْلَ وَالْبِغَالَ وَالْحَمِيرَ لِتَرْكَبُوهَا
وَزِينَةً ۚ وَيَخْلُقُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٨﴾ وَعَلَى اللَّهِ قَصْدُ السَّبِيلِ وَمِنْهَا جَائِرٌ ۚ
وَلَوْ شَاءَ لَهَدَاكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿٩﴾ هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً لَكُمْ مِنْهُ

XVI

AN-NAHAL

النحل

Verses: 128 *Revealed at Makkah*

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

Allah's "Judgment" has come:[1] so do not clamour for hastening it; He is free from every defect, and exalted high above the *shirk* that they are practising.[2] He sends down by His command through His angels the Spirit[3] on that one of His servants whom He chooses,[4] (bidding), "warn the people that there is no other deity than I: therefore, fear Me."[5] 1-2

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

4-9 He created Man from an insignificant sperm-drop, and behold, by and by he became a manifest disputant[7]. He has created cattle, which provide you with clothing and food, and there are other benefits also for you in them; they look pleasant when you drive them to the pasture in the morning and bring them home in the evening. They carry your burdens to far-off lands, which you could not reach without painful toil. Indeed your Lord is All-Compassionate and All-Merciful. He has created horses, mules and donkeys so that you may ride them, and they may add splendour to your life. He creates for you many other things, of which you have no knowledge at all.[8] Allah has taken upon Himself to show the Right Way, when there exist crooked ways, too.[9] He would have guided all of you aright, if He had so willed.[10]

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

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

2. In order to understand the interconnection between the first and the second sentences, one should keep in view the background. The challenge of the disbelievers to the Prophet, 'to hasten Divine Judgment', was really based on their assumption that their own religion of *shirk* was true and the religion of *Tauhid* presented by Muhammad (Allah's peace be on him) was false; otherwise, they argued, the Divine scourge with which he threatened them would have come upon them long before because of their disbelief and rebellion, if there had been the

authority of Allah behind it. That is why after the declaration of the "Judgment," their misunderstanding about the cause of delay in the punishment was removed, as if to say, "You are absolutely wrong to assume that punishment has not been inflicted on you because your creed of *shirk* is true, for Allah is free from and far above *shirk* and has no partner".

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

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

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

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

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

As a fitting sequence of this, proofs of *Tauhid* and refutation of *shirk* have been given from Man himself and from other signs in the universe, and it has also been shown that Prophethood is based on Truth. *[Contd. on p. 532*

شَرَابٌ وَّمِنْهُ شَجَرٌ فِيْهِ تُسِيْمُوْنَ ﴿١٠﴾ يُنْۢبِتُ لَكُمْ بِهِ الزَّرْعَ وَالزَّيْتُوْنَ وَ
النَّخِيْلَ وَالْاَعْنَابَ وَمِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرٰتِ ؕ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَّتَفَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿١١﴾
وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمُ الَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ ۙ وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ ؕ وَالنُّجُوْمُ مُسَخَّرٰتٌۢ بِاَمْرِهٖ ؕ
اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَّعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿١٢﴾ وَمَا ذَرَاَ لَكُمْ فِي الْاَرْضِ مُخْتَلِفًا
اَلْوَانُهٗ ؕ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَّذَّكَّرُوْنَ ﴿١٣﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِيْ سَخَّرَ الْبَحْرَ
لِتَاْكُلُوْا مِنْهُ لَحْمًا طَرِيًّا وَّتَسْتَخْرِجُوْا مِنْهُ حِلْيَةً تَلْبَسُوْنَهَا ۚ وَتَرَى الْفُلْكَ
مَوَاخِرَ فِيْهِ وَلِتَبْتَغُوْا مِنْ فَضْلِهٖ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿١٤﴾ وَاَلْقٰى فِي الْاَرْضِ
رَوَاسِيَ اَنْ تَمِيْدَ بِكُمْ وَاَنْهٰرًا وَّسُبُلًا لَّعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُوْنَ ﴿١٥﴾ وَعَلٰمٰتٍ ؕ وَ
بِالنَّجْمِ هُمْ يَهْتَدُوْنَ ﴿١٦﴾ اَفَمَنْ يَّخْلُقُ كَمَنْ لَّا يَخْلُقُ ؕ اَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿١٧﴾ وَ
اِنْ تَعُدُّوْا نِعْمَةَ اللّٰهِ لَا تُحْصُوْهَا ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَغَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿١٨﴾ وَاللّٰهُ يَعْلَمُ
مَا تُسِرُّوْنَ وَمَا تُعْلِنُوْنَ ﴿١٩﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ يَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ لَا يَخْلُقُوْنَ
شَيْـًٔا وَّهُمْ يُخْلَقُوْنَ ﴿٢٠﴾ اَمْوَاتٌ غَيْرُ اَحْيَآءٍ ۚ وَمَا يَشْعُرُوْنَ ۙ اَيَّانَ يُبْعَثُوْنَ ﴿٢١﴾
اِلٰهُكُمْ اِلٰهٌ وَّاحِدٌ ۚ فَالَّذِيْنَ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِالْاٰخِرَةِ قُلُوْبُهُمْ مُّنْكِرَةٌ وَّهُمْ
مُّسْتَكْبِرُوْنَ ﴿٢٢﴾ لَا جَرَمَ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا يُسِرُّوْنَ وَمَا يُعْلِنُوْنَ ؕ اِنَّهٗ لَا يُحِبُّ
الْمُسْتَكْبِرِيْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَاِذَا قِيْلَ لَهُمْ مَّاذَآ اَنْزَلَ رَبُّكُمْ ۙ قَالُوْٓا اَسَاطِيْرُ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿٢٤﴾
لِيَحْمِلُوْٓا اَوْزَارَهُمْ كَامِلَةً يَّوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ ۙ وَمِنْ اَوْزَارِ الَّذِيْنَ يُضِلُّوْنَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ
عِلْمٍ ؕ اَلَا سَآءَ مَا يَزِرُوْنَ ﴿٢٥﴾ قَدْ مَكَرَ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَاَتَى اللّٰهُ بُنْيَانَهُمْ
مِّنَ الْقَوَاعِدِ فَخَرَّ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّقْفُ مِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ وَاَتٰىهُمُ الْعَذَابُ مِنْ حَيْثُ
لَا يَشْعُرُوْنَ ﴿٢٦﴾ ثُمَّ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ يُخْزِيْهِمْ وَيَقُوْلُ اَيْنَ شُرَكَآءِيَ الَّذِيْنَ

It is He, Who sends down for you water from the sky, which provides drinking water for you and brings forth fodder for your cattle. And thereby He grows for you crops and olives and date-palms and vines and different kinds of many other fruits. Surely there is a great Sign in this for those people who ponder. 10-11

He has subjected to your service the day and the night and the sun and the moon; likewise all the stars are subjected by His Command. In this there are many Signs for those who make use of their common sense. And in the things of different colours He has created for you in the Earth, there is indeed a Sign for those who learn lessons from them. 12-13

It is He Who has subjected the sea to your service so that you may get fresh flesh from it to eat and bring out of it articles of ornament, which you wear, and you see that the ship ploughs her course through it. He has done all this so that you may seek of His bounty[11] and show gratitude to Him. 14

He has driven mountains firmly into the earth lest it should turn away from its usual course along with you;[12] He has caused rivers to flow and made natural ways[13] so that you may be directed aright. He has placed landmarks[14] to direct people, and by stars, too, they are directed aright.[15] 15-16

Is, then, He, Who creates, like those who create nothing?[16] Do you not understand even this much? If you try to reckon up Allah's blessings, you cannot count them. Indeed, He is Forgiving and Compassionate,[17] though He knows all that you conceal and all that you reveal.[18] 17-19

And the other beings, whom the people invoke, create nothing; nay, they are themselves created. They are dead, not living, and they do not know at all when they shall again be raised to life.[19] 20-21

Your Deity is One Allah, but the hearts of those, who do not believe in the Hereafter, are given to denial, and they are puffed up with pride.[20] Surely Allah has full knowledge of all their deeds, both secret and open. He does not like those people, who are puffed up with pride. 22-23

24-26 And[21] when they are asked, "What is it that your Lord has sent down"?, they say these are mere fairy tales of the ancients.[22] They say such things so that they should bear the full brunt of their own burdens on the Day of Resurrection together with some of the burdens of those whom they are leading astray in their ignorance. Behold! what a heavy responsibility they are taking on themselves! Many of those who have gone before them also contrived such cunning devices to defeat the Truth, but behold! Allah smote the edifice of their evil designs at its foundations and its roof fell down upon their heads from above them, and the scourge overtook them from the direction they little dreamed that it would come.

Contd. from p. 529]

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

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

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

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

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

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

There are many divergent ways of thought and action open for man to choose from. Obviously all these divergent ways cannot be straight ways, because there can be only one straight way; therefore, there can be only one right theory of life which is based on that way, and only one right way of life which is based on that right theory. Thus it is clear that the choice of the right way of life is man's most important and basic need, for its wrong choice would inevitably lead to his ruin. This is because all other things fulfil his animal needs only, but this is

the greatest necessity of his life as a human being and without its fulfilment his life would be an utter failure.

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

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

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

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

13. Natural ways are those routes which are formed along the banks of streams, ravines and rivers. Though the importance of these ways is great even in the plains, one feels their sore need, especially in the mountainous regions.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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كُنْتُمْ تُشَاقُّوْنَ فِيْهِمْ ۭ قَالَ الَّذِيْنَ اُوْتُوا الْعِلْمَ اِنَّ الْخِزْيَ الْيَوْمَ وَالسُّوْۗءَ
عَلَي الْكٰفِرِيْنَ ۙ۲۷ الَّذِيْنَ تَتَوَفّٰىهُمُ الْمَلٰۗىِٕكَةُ ظَالِمِيْٓ اَنْفُسِهِمْ ۠ فَاَلْقَوُا السَّلَمَ مَا
كُنَّا نَعْمَلُ مِنْ سُوْۗءٍ ۭ بَلٰٓى اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلِيْمٌۢ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ۲۸ فَادْخُلُوْٓا اَبْوَابَ
جَهَنَّمَ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا ۭ فَلَبِئْسَ مَثْوَى الْمُتَكَبِّرِيْنَ ۲۹ وَقِيْلَ لِلَّذِيْنَ اتَّقَوْا مَاذَآ
اَنْزَلَ رَبُّكُمْ ۭ قَالُوْا خَيْرًا ۭ لِلَّذِيْنَ اَحْسَنُوْا فِيْ هٰذِهِ الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةٌ ۭ وَلَدَارُ
الْاٰخِرَةِ خَيْرٌ ۭ وَلَنِعْمَ دَارُ الْمُتَّقِيْنَ ۳۰ جَنّٰتُ عَدْنٍ يَّدْخُلُوْنَهَا تَجْرِيْ مِنْ
تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ لَهُمْ فِيْهَا مَا يَشَاۗءُوْنَ ۭ كَذٰلِكَ يَجْزِي اللّٰهُ الْمُتَّقِيْنَ ۳۱
الَّذِيْنَ تَتَوَفّٰىهُمُ الْمَلٰۗىِٕكَةُ طَيِّبِيْنَ ۙ يَقُوْلُوْنَ سَلٰمٌ عَلَيْكُمُ ۙ ادْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ بِمَا
كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ۳۲ هَلْ يَنْظُرُوْنَ اِلَّآ اَنْ تَاْتِيَهُمُ الْمَلٰۗىِٕكَةُ اَوْ يَاْتِيَ اَمْرُ رَبِّكَ ۭ
كَذٰلِكَ فَعَلَ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ۭ وَمَا ظَلَمَهُمُ اللّٰهُ وَلٰكِنْ كَانُوْٓا اَنْفُسَهُمْ
يَظْلِمُوْنَ ۳۳ فَاَصَابَهُمْ سَيِّاٰتُ مَا عَمِلُوْا وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ مَّا كَانُوْا بِهٖ يَسْتَهْزِءُوْنَ ۳۴
وَقَالَ الَّذِيْنَ اَشْرَكُوْا لَوْ شَاۗءَ اللّٰهُ مَا عَبَدْنَا مِنْ دُوْنِهٖ مِنْ شَيْءٍ نَّحْنُ وَ
لَآ اٰبَاۗؤُنَا وَلَا حَرَّمْنَا مِنْ دُوْنِهٖ مِنْ شَيْءٍ ۭ كَذٰلِكَ فَعَلَ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ۚ
فَهَلْ عَلَي الرُّسُلِ اِلَّا الْبَلٰغُ الْمُبِيْنُ ۳۵ وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِيْ كُلِّ اُمَّةٍ رَّسُوْلًا اَنِ
اعْبُدُوا اللّٰهَ وَاجْتَنِبُوا الطَّاغُوْتَ ۚ فَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ هَدَى اللّٰهُ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ حَقَّتْ
عَلَيْهِ الضَّلٰلَةُ ۭ فَسِيْرُوْا فِي الْاَرْضِ فَانْظُرُوْا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكَذِّبِيْنَ ۳۶
اِنْ تَحْرِصْ عَلٰي هُدٰىهُمْ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يَهْدِيْ مَنْ يُّضِلُّ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِّنْ
نّٰصِرِيْنَ ۳۷ وَاَقْسَمُوْا بِاللّٰهِ جَهْدَ اَيْمَانِهِمْ ۙ لَا يَبْعَثُ اللّٰهُ مَنْ يَّمُوْتُ ۭ بَلٰى
وَعْدًا عَلَيْهِ حَقًّا وَّلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ۳۸ لِيُبَيِّنَ لَهُمُ الَّذِي يَخْتَلِفُوْنَ

Then on the Day of Resurrection Allah will disgrace and degrade them. He will say to them: "Now where are My partners concerning whom you used to dispute (with the truthful)?"—Those,[23] to whom Knowledge had been given in the world, will say, "Today there is ignominy and misery for the disbelievers." Yes[24], this is for those disbelievers, who, while they are still engaged in wronging themselves, shall surrender themselves when seized by the angels,[25] saying, "We were doing nothing wrong at all." The angels will retort, "What, dare you deny this! Allah is fully aware of what you were doing. Now, go and enter the gates of Hell, where you shall abide for ever."[26] The fact is that a very miserable abode it is for the haughty ones. 27-29

On the other hand, when the God-fearing people are asked, "What is it that has been sent by your Lord?" they say, "It is the best thing that has been sent down."[27] There is good for those righteous people who do good works in this world, and far better is their abode in the Hereafter." Blessed indeed is the dwelling place for the pious people. There will be gardens for their permanent residence into which they will enter: canals will be flowing underneath them: above all, they will find there everything as they would desire:[28] this is the reward for those pious people whose souls are received in a pure state, by the angels, who welcome them, saying, "Peace be on you: enter into Paradise as the reward of your good deeds". 30-32

O Muhammad! are these people still waiting, though now nothing has been left but that angels should come or your Lord's judgment be passed on them?[29] Many people before them behaved audaciously like them, and had to take the consequence: it was not Allah Who was unjust to them but they were unjust to themselves. In the end their evil deeds brought upon them the consequences and that very thing, they used to scoff at, overwhelmed them. 33-34

The *mushriks* say, "Had Allah willed, neither we nor our forefathers would have worshipped any other than Allah nor made anything unlawful without His will.".[30] Such excuses were put forward also by those who went before them.[31] Have the Messengers any more responsibility than to convey the Message clearly? Accordingly, we sent to every community a Messenger, saying, "Worship Allah and 35-37

keep away from the *tāghūt*."[32] After that Allah showed guidance to some of them, while deviation took hold of others.[33] So, roam about in the earth and behold what has been the end of the rejectors of the Messengers.[34] O Muhammad! howsoever desirous you may be of their guidance, (know) that Allah does not show guidance to those whom He lets go astray, and such people have no helpers.

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

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

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

used to pass His winter with Lāt and summer with 'Uzzā. But "Allah is absolutely free from such (absurd) things they attribute to Him."

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

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

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

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

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

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

26. This verse (28) and verse 32, and several other verses in the Qur'ān, clearly and definitely assert that immediately after death, souls suffer torment or enjoy peace in the world of Barzakh. The Traditions use the word "*qabar*" (grave) metaphorically for this existence of the souls. This is the world in which souls

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

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

This has been further elucidated in Chapter XXX.

As the guilty ones will be under the delusion that they had been lying in their death-bed for an hour or so and had been roused from given Knowledge and Faith, will say, "According to the Record of Allah, you have remained after death

till this Day of Resurrection and this is the same Day of Resurrection, but you did not know this." (XXX: 55-56).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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فِيْهِ وَ لِيَعْلَمَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْٓا اَنَّهُمْ كَانُوْا كٰذِبِيْنَ ﴿٣٩﴾ اِنَّمَا قَوْلُنَا لِشَيْءٍ اِذَآ
اَرَدْنٰهُ اَنْ نَّقُوْلَ لَهٗ كُنْ فَيَكُوْنُ ﴿٤٠﴾ وَ الَّذِيْنَ هَاجَرُوْا فِي اللّٰهِ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مَا
ظُلِمُوْا لَنُبَوِّئَنَّهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً ؕ وَ لَاَجْرُ الْاٰخِرَةِ اَكْبَرُ ۘ لَوْ كَانُوْا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٤١﴾
الَّذِيْنَ صَبَرُوْا وَ عَلٰى رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُوْنَ ﴿٤٢﴾ وَ مَآ اَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ اِلَّا رِجَالًا
نُّوْحِيْٓ اِلَيْهِمْ فَسْـَٔلُوْٓا اَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٤٣﴾ بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ وَ الزُّبُرِ ؕ
وَ اَنْزَلْنَآ اِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ اِلَيْهِمْ وَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٤٤﴾
اَفَاَمِنَ الَّذِيْنَ مَكَرُوا السَّيِّاٰتِ اَنْ يَّخْسِفَ اللّٰهُ بِهِمُ الْاَرْضَ اَوْ يَاْتِيَهُمُ
الْعَذَابُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَشْعُرُوْنَ ﴿٤٥﴾ اَوْ يَاْخُذَهُمْ فِيْ تَقَلُّبِهِمْ فَمَا هُمْ
بِمُعْجِزِيْنَ ﴿٤٦﴾ اَوْ يَاْخُذَهُمْ عَلٰى تَخَوُّفٍ ؕ فَاِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ لَرَءُوْفٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿٤٧﴾ اَوَ لَمْ
يَرَوْا اِلٰى مَا خَلَقَ اللّٰهُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ يَّتَفَيَّؤُا ظِلٰلُهٗ عَنِ الْيَمِيْنِ وَ الشَّمَآئِلِ سُجَّدًا
لِّلّٰهِ وَ هُمْ دٰخِرُوْنَ ﴿٤٨﴾ وَ لِلّٰهِ يَسْجُدُ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ مَا فِي الْاَرْضِ مِنْ
دَآبَّةٍ وَّ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ وَ هُمْ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُوْنَ ﴿٤٩﴾ يَخَافُوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ مِّنْ فَوْقِهِمْ وَ
يَفْعَلُوْنَ مَا يُؤْمَرُوْنَ ﴿٥٠﴾ ۩ وَ قَالَ اللّٰهُ لَا تَتَّخِذُوْٓا اِلٰهَيْنِ اثْنَيْنِ ۚ اِنَّمَا هُوَ
اِلٰهٌ وَّاحِدٌ ۚ فَاِيَّايَ فَارْهَبُوْنِ ﴿٥١﴾ وَ لَهٗ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الْاَرْضِ وَ لَهُ الدِّيْنُ
وَاصِبًا ؕ اَفَغَيْرَ اللّٰهِ تَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿٥٢﴾ وَ مَا بِكُمْ مِّنْ نِّعْمَةٍ فَمِنَ اللّٰهِ ثُمَّ اِذَا مَسَّكُمُ
الضُّرُّ فَاِلَيْهِ تَجْـَٔرُوْنَ ﴿٥٣﴾ ثُمَّ اِذَا كَشَفَ الضُّرَّ عَنْكُمْ اِذَا فَرِيْقٌ مِّنْكُمْ بِرَبِّهِمْ
يُشْرِكُوْنَ ﴿٥٤﴾ لِيَكْفُرُوْا بِمَآ اٰتَيْنٰهُمْ ؕ فَتَمَتَّعُوْا ۫ فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٥٥﴾ وَ يَجْعَلُوْنَ
لِمَا لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ نَصِيْبًا مِّمَّا رَزَقْنٰهُمْ ؕ تَاللّٰهِ لَتُسْـَٔلُنَّ عَمَّا كُنْتُمْ تَفْتَرُوْنَ ﴿٥٦﴾
وَ يَجْعَلُوْنَ لِلّٰهِ الْبَنٰتِ سُبْحٰنَهٗ ۙ وَ لَهُمْ مَّا يَشْتَهُوْنَ ﴿٥٧﴾ وَ اِذَا بُشِّرَ اَحَدُهُمْ

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

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

O Muhammad! whenever We sent before you Messengers to whom We revealed Our Messages, they were but human beings.[38] You (people of Makkah) may inquire from the people who possess Admonition[39] if you do not know this yourselves. We sent the former Messengers with clear Signs and Books, and now We have sent the Admonition to you (O Muhammad!), so that you should make plain and explain to the people the teachings of the 'Book which has been sent for them ;[40] and so that they (themselves) should ponder over it. 43-44

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

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

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

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

53-55 Whatever blessing you enjoy is from Allah alone; then, when you have a hard time, you with your supplications, run to Him for help.[46] But no sooner does He relieve you of your distress than some of you begin to associate others with Him (in gratitude[47] for this favour), to show ingratitude for Allah's favour. Well! you may enjoy yourselves for a while for you shall soon come to know (its consequences.)

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

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

Contd. from p.541]

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

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

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

(2) Those who rejected it and stuck to their deviation". (For fuller explanation, please consult E.N. 28 of *Al-An'ām* VI.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

thing is the Book and not any "Exposition" thereof by the Prophet, or that (c) now the Book alone suffices us, for its "Exposition" by the Prophet has lost its utility or that (d) now the Book alone is authentic for the "Exposition" by the Prophet has ceased to exist, or if it does exists, it cannot be relied upon.

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

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

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

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

[Contd. on p.550

بِالْاُنْثٰى ظَلَّ وَجْهُهٗ مُسْوَدًّا وَّهُوَ كَظِيْمٌ ﴿٥٨﴾ يَتَوَارٰى مِنَ الْقَوْمِ مِنْ سُوْٓءِ
مَا بُشِّرَ بِهٖ ؕ اَيُمْسِكُهٗ عَلٰى هُوْنٍ اَمْ يَدُسُّهٗ فِى التُّرَابِ ؕ اَلَا سَآءَ مَا يَحْكُمُوْنَ ﴿٥٩﴾
لِلَّذِيْنَ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِالْاٰخِرَةِ مَثَلُ السَّوْءِ ۖ وَلِلّٰهِ الْمَثَلُ الْاَعْلٰى ؕ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ
الْحَكِيْمُ ﴿٦٠﴾ وَلَوْ يُؤَاخِذُ اللّٰهُ النَّاسَ بِظُلْمِهِمْ مَّا تَرَكَ عَلَيْهَا مِنْ دَآبَّةٍ وَّلٰكِنْ
يُّؤَخِّرُهُمْ اِلٰٓى اَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ۚ فَاِذَا جَآءَ اَجَلُهُمْ لَا يَسْتَاْخِرُوْنَ سَاعَةً وَّلَا
يَسْتَقْدِمُوْنَ ﴿٦١﴾ وَيَجْعَلُوْنَ لِلّٰهِ مَا يَكْرَهُوْنَ وَتَصِفُ اَلْسِنَتُهُمُ الْكَذِبَ اَنَّ
لَهُمُ الْحُسْنٰى ؕ لَا جَرَمَ اَنَّ لَهُمُ النَّارَ وَاَنَّهُمْ مُّفْرَطُوْنَ ﴿٦٢﴾ تَاللّٰهِ لَقَدْ اَرْسَلْنَآ
اِلٰٓى اُمَمٍ مِّنْ قَبْلِكَ فَزَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطٰنُ اَعْمَالَهُمْ فَهُوَ وَلِيُّهُمُ الْيَوْمَ وَ
لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ ﴿٦٣﴾ وَمَآ اَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتٰبَ اِلَّا لِتُبَيِّنَ لَهُمُ الَّذِى اخْتَلَفُوْا
فِيْهِ ۙ وَهُدًى وَّرَحْمَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يُّؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٦٤﴾ وَاللّٰهُ اَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً فَاَحْيَا
بِهِ الْاَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا ؕ اِنَّ فِىْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَّسْمَعُوْنَ ﴿٦٥﴾ وَاِنَّ لَكُمْ فِى
الْاَنْعَامِ لَعِبْرَةً ؕ نُسْقِيْكُمْ مِّمَّا فِىْ بُطُوْنِهٖ مِنْۢ بَيْنِ فَرْثٍ وَّدَمٍ لَّبَنًا خَالِصًا
سَآئِغًا لِّلشّٰرِبِيْنَ ﴿٦٦﴾ وَمِنْ ثَمَرٰتِ النَّخِيْلِ وَالْاَعْنَابِ تَتَّخِذُوْنَ مِنْهُ سَكَرًا
وَّرِزْقًا حَسَنًا ؕ اِنَّ فِىْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَّعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿٦٧﴾ وَاَوْحٰى رَبُّكَ اِلَى النَّحْلِ
اَنِ اتَّخِذِىْ مِنَ الْجِبَالِ بُيُوْتًا وَّمِنَ الشَّجَرِ وَمِمَّا يَعْرِشُوْنَ ﴿٦٨﴾ ثُمَّ كُلِىْ مِنْ
كُلِّ الثَّمَرٰتِ فَاسْلُكِىْ سُبُلَ رَبِّكِ ذُلُلًا ؕ يَخْرُجُ مِنْۢ بُطُوْنِهَا شَرَابٌ مُّخْتَلِفٌ
اَلْوَانُهٗ فِيْهِ شِفَآءٌ لِّلنَّاسِ ؕ اِنَّ فِىْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَّتَفَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٦٩﴾ وَاللّٰهُ خَلَقَكُمْ
ثُمَّ يَتَوَفّٰىكُمْ ؕ وَمِنْكُمْ مَّنْ يُّرَدُّ اِلٰٓى اَرْذَلِ الْعُمُرِ لِكَيْ لَا يَعْلَمَ بَعْدَ عِلْمٍ
شَيْـًٔا ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلِيْمٌ قَدِيْرٌ ﴿٧٠﴾ وَاللّٰهُ فَضَّلَ بَعْضَكُمْ عَلٰى بَعْضٍ فِى الرِّزْقِ ۚ

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

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

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

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

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

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

And behold ! .Your Lord has inspired the bee[56] with this "Build thy hive in the mountains, trees and in the creepers over trellises: then 68-69

drink nectar from every kind of fruit, and follow the ways made smooth by the Lord."[57] From its belly comes out a fluid of varying hues wherein is healing for mankind.[58] Here is indeed a Sign for those people who ponder over it.[59]

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

Contd. from p.547]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

51. That is, "sons".

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

smoothly their factory with their collective effort for thousands of years with perfect accuracy.

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

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

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

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

[Contd. on p. 556

فَمَا الَّذِيْنَ فُضِّلُوْا بِرَآدِّيْ رِزْقِهِمْ عَلٰى مَا مَلَكَتْ اَيْمَانُهُمْ فَهُمْ فِيْهِ سَوَآءٌ ۭ
اَفَبِنِعْمَةِ اللّٰهِ يَجْحَدُوْنَ ۝ وَاللّٰهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِّنْ اَنْفُسِكُمْ اَزْوَاجًا وَّجَعَلَ
لَكُمْ مِّنْ اَزْوَاجِكُمْ بَنِيْنَ وَحَفَدَةً وَّرَزَقَكُمْ مِّنَ الطَّيِّبٰتِ ۭ اَفَبِالْبَاطِلِ يُؤْمِنُوْنَ
وَبِنِعْمَتِ اللّٰهِ هُمْ يَكْفُرُوْنَ ۝ وَيَعْبُدُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ مَا لَا يَمْلِكُ لَهُمْ
رِزْقًا مِّنَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ شَيْـــًٔا وَّلَا يَسْتَطِيْعُوْنَ ۝ فَلَا تَضْرِبُوْا لِلّٰهِ
الْاَمْثَالَ ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَعْلَمُ وَاَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ۝ ضَرَبَ اللّٰهُ مَثَلًا عَبْدًا مَّمْلُوْكًا
لَّا يَقْدِرُ عَلٰى شَيْءٍ وَّمَنْ رَّزَقْنٰهُ مِنَّا رِزْقًا حَسَنًا فَهُوَ يُنْفِقُ مِنْهُ سِرًّا
وَّجَهْرًا ۭ هَلْ يَسْتَوٗنَ ۭ اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ ۭ بَلْ اَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ۝ وَضَرَبَ اللّٰهُ
مَثَلًا رَّجُلَيْنِ اَحَدُهُمَآ اَبْكَمُ لَا يَقْدِرُ عَلٰى شَيْءٍ وَّهُوَ كَلٌّ عَلٰي مَوْلٰىهُ ۙ اَيْنَمَا
يُوَجِّهْهُّ لَا يَاْتِ بِخَيْرٍ ۭ هَلْ يَسْتَوِيْ هُوَ ۙ وَمَنْ يَّاْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ ۙ وَهُوَ عَلٰي
صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيْمٍ ۝ وَلِلّٰهِ غَيْبُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ۭ وَمَآ اَمْرُ السَّاعَةِ اِلَّا
كَلَمْحِ الْبَصَرِ اَوْ هُوَ اَقْرَبُ ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلٰي كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ۝ وَاللّٰهُ اَخْرَجَكُمْ
مِّنْۢ بُطُوْنِ اُمَّهٰتِكُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ شَيْـــًٔا ۙ وَّجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْاَبْصَارَ وَالْاَفْـِٕدَةَ ۙ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُوْنَ ۝ اَلَمْ يَرَوْا اِلَى الطَّيْرِ مُسَخَّرٰتٍ فِيْ جَوِّ السَّمَاۗءِ ۭ مَا يُمْسِكُهُنَّ
اِلَّا اللّٰهُ ۭ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يُّؤْمِنُوْنَ ۝ وَاللّٰهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِّنْۢ بُيُوْتِكُمْ
سَكَنًا وَّجَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِّنْ جُلُوْدِ الْاَنْعَامِ بُيُوْتًا تَسْتَخِفُّوْنَهَا يَوْمَ ظَعْنِكُمْ وَيَوْمَ
اِقَامَتِكُمْ ۙ وَمِنْ اَصْوَافِهَا وَاَوْبَارِهَا وَاَشْعَارِهَآ اَثَاثًا وَّمَتَاعًا اِلٰى حِيْنٍ ۝
وَاللّٰهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِّمَّا خَلَقَ ظِلٰلًا وَّجَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِّنَ الْجِبَالِ اَكْنَانًا وَّجَعَلَ
لَكُمْ سَرَابِيْلَ تَقِيْكُمُ الْحَرَّ وَسَرَابِيْلَ تَقِيْكُمْ بَاْسَكُمْ ۭ كَذٰلِكَ يُتِمُّ نِعْمَتَهٗ

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

It is Allah alone, Who has made wives for you from your own species and He alone bestowed upon you sons and grandsons from those wives, and provided you with good things to eat. What, do they then (even after seeing and knowing all this,) believe in falsehood,[63] and deny Allah's favours[64] and, instead of Allah, worship those who do not provide them with anything from the heavens or the earth, nor have any power to do so? Make no comparisons, therefore, with Allah.[65] Allah knows but you do not know. 72-74

Allah cites a similitude[66] (of two men): one of them is a slave, who is owned by another and has no power over anything. There is the other man whom We Ourselves have provided with a fair provision from which he freely spends openly and secretly. (Ask them): "Are these two men equal?"—May God be praised![67] But most people do not understand (this simple thing).[68] 75

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

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

Allah brought you out of your mothers' wombs in this state that you knew nothing: He gave you ears and eyes and thinking minds[72] so that you may be grateful.[73] 78

Have they never observed how the birds are poised in the vault of heaven? Who holds them up but Allah ? There are many Signs in this for those people who believe.

80 Allah has made your homes places of rest and peace for you: and from the skins of cattle He has made for you houses[74] which you find light during your journey and at the time of your halt.[75] And from their soft fur and wool and hair, He has furnished you with many things for clothing and domestic service which are very useful to you during your prescribed term of life.

Contd. from p.553]

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

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

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

therefore, have no right in your worship of Allah, for they are after all His slaves and servants."

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

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

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

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

64. " .... they deny Allah's favours" by associating others with Allah in offering gratitude to Him for His favours, though they did not have any proof or authority that their false gods had played any part in regard to those favours. The Qur'ān considers such an association to be the denial of Allah's favours. It puts forward the fundamental principle: It is the denial of the favour of the real benefactor to offer gratitude for his favour to anyone who has not done that

favour, or to presume without any proof or reason that the real benefactor has not granted that favour of his own accord but because of the mediation or regard or recommendation or intercession of this or that person.

Even a little thinking will show that both of the above-mentioned fundamental things are absolutely just and rational. Let us suppose, for the sake of illustration, that A, out of sympathy, helps B, a needy person, but at that very moment B stands up in A's presence, and offers gratitude for that kind act to another person who had no share at all in it. A being a generous person may not take any notice of B's absurd response, and may even continue to help him as before, but he cannot help having a very low opinion of B character and considering him to be an ungrateful wretch. Then on inquiry B reveals that he was grateful to the other person for A had done that kindness to B because of him. Naturally A will take it ill, for he knows that B's assumption is absolutely wrong: nay, he will take this as an insult to himself because it means that B has a very low opinion of him that he is not a generous and kind-hearted man but merely does such deeds to please his friends. It means that A helps a needy person only if he brings recommendation of his friends: otherwise none can expect any goodness from him.

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

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

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

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

69. In the first similitude, distinction between Allah and false gods has been made clear in regard to the possession of powers and the lack of these. In the second one, the emphasis is on the use of those powers. Allah is not only All-Powerful, but also hears all the prayers and fulfils all the needs, while the slave is utterly powerless. He does not and cannot hear prayers, nor can make a response to them nor has the power to do anything at all. He is totally dependent on the Master and quite incapable of doing anything by himself. On the other hand, the Master is All-Powerful and All-Wise. He enjoins justice on the world: whatever He does is right and accurate. Ask them, "Is it then a point of wisdom to regard such Master and such a slave as equal?"

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

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

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

[Contd. on p. 562

عَلَيْكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُسْلِمُوْنَ ﴿٨١﴾ فَاِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَاِنَّمَا عَلَيْكَ الْبَلٰغُ الْمُبِيْنُ ﴿٨٢﴾ يَعْرِفُوْنَ
نِعْمَتَ اللّٰهِ ثُمَّ يُنْكِرُوْنَهَا وَ اَكْثَرُهُمُ الْكٰفِرُوْنَ ﴿٨٣﴾ وَ يَوْمَ نَبْعَثُ مِنْ كُلِّ اُمَّةٍ
شَهِيْدًا ثُمَّ لَا يُؤْذَنُ لِلَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا وَ لَا هُمْ يُسْتَعْتَبُوْنَ ﴿٨٤﴾ وَ اِذَا رَاَ الَّذِيْنَ
ظَلَمُوا الْعَذَابَ فَلَا يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمْ وَ لَا هُمْ يُنْظَرُوْنَ ﴿٨٥﴾ وَ اِذَا رَاَ الَّذِيْنَ اَشْرَكُوْا
شُرَكَآءَهُمْ قَالُوْا رَبَّنَا هٰٓؤُلَآءِ شُرَكَآؤُنَا الَّذِيْنَ كُنَّا نَدْعُوْا مِنْ دُوْنِكَ ۚ فَاَلْقَوْا
اِلَيْهِمُ الْقَوْلَ اِنَّكُمْ لَكٰذِبُوْنَ ﴿٨٦﴾ وَ اَلْقَوْا اِلَى اللّٰهِ يَوْمَئِذِ ِۨ السَّلَمَ وَ ضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ
مَّا كَانُوْا يَفْتَرُوْنَ ﴿٨٧﴾ اَلَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا وَ صَدُّوْا عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ زِدْنٰهُمْ عَذَابًا
فَوْقَ الْعَذَابِ بِمَا كَانُوْا يُفْسِدُوْنَ ﴿٨٨﴾ وَ يَوْمَ نَبْعَثُ فِيْ كُلِّ اُمَّةٍ شَهِيْدًا
عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنْ اَنْفُسِهِمْ وَ جِئْنَا بِكَ شَهِيْدًا عَلٰى هٰٓؤُلَآءِ ۭ وَ نَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتٰبَ تِبْيَانًا
لِّكُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَّ هُدًى وَّ رَحْمَةً وَّ بُشْرٰى لِلْمُسْلِمِيْنَ ﴿٨٩﴾ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَاْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ
وَ الْاِحْسَانِ وَ اِيْتَآئِ ذِي الْقُرْبٰى وَ يَنْهٰى عَنِ الْفَحْشَآءِ وَ الْمُنْكَرِ وَ الْبَغْيِ ۚ
يَعِظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٩٠﴾ وَ اَوْفُوْا بِعَهْدِ اللّٰهِ اِذَا عٰهَدْتُّمْ وَ لَا تَنْقُضُوا
الْاَيْمَانَ بَعْدَ تَوْكِيْدِهَا وَ قَدْ جَعَلْتُمُ اللّٰهَ عَلَيْكُمْ كَفِيْلًا ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا
تَفْعَلُوْنَ ﴿٩١﴾ وَ لَا تَكُوْنُوْا كَالَّتِيْ نَقَضَتْ غَزْلَهَا مِنْۢ بَعْدِ قُوَّةٍ اَنْكَاثًا ۭ تَتَّخِذُوْنَ
اَيْمَانَكُمْ دَخَلًۢا بَيْنَكُمْ اَنْ تَكُوْنَ اُمَّةٌ هِيَ اَرْبٰى مِنْ اُمَّةٍ ۭ اِنَّمَا يَبْلُوْكُمُ اللّٰهُ
بِهٖ ۭ وَ لَيُبَيِّنَنَّ لَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ مَا كُنْتُمْ فِيْهِ تَخْتَلِفُوْنَ ﴿٩٢﴾ وَ لَوْ شَآءَ اللّٰهُ
لَجَعَلَكُمْ اُمَّةً وَّاحِدَةً وَّ لٰكِنْ يُّضِلُّ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ وَ يَهْدِيْ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ ۭ وَ لَتُسْـَٔلُنَّ
عَمَّا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٩٣﴾ وَ لَا تَتَّخِذُوْٓا اَيْمَانَكُمْ دَخَلًۢا بَيْنَكُمْ فَتَزِلَّ قَدَمٌۢ بَعْدَ
ثُبُوْتِهَا وَ تَذُوْقُوا السُّوْٓءَ بِمَا صَدَدْتُّمْ عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ ۚ وَ لَكُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيْمٌ ﴿٩٤﴾

Allah has made for you from the many things He has created shelter from the sun. He has created for you places of refuge in the mountains and blessed you with such garments as protect you from heat[76] and garments which shield you in your fights.[77] Thus He perfects His blessings on you,[78] so that you should submit to Him. But if they give no heed to you, O Muhammad!, (you need not worry) for, your only responsibility is to convey the plain Message of truth. They recognise the blessing of Allah, yet they deny it,[79] for the majority of them are not inclined to accept the Truth. 81-83

(Do they realize what will happen) on the Day when We shall raise up a witness[80] from every community? Then the disbelievers shall not be given any opportunity to put forward any excuses[81] nor shall they be asked to show penitence.[82] When once the transgressors will see the torment, their punishment shall neither be lightened for them after this nor shall any respite be given to them. When the people, who had committed *shirk* in this world, will see those whom they had made associates with Allah, they will say, "Our Lord! here are those associate-deities whom we used to invoke beside Thee". At this their deities will retort, "You are liars."[83] At that time all of them will proffer submission before Allah and all they used to forge in this world shall vanish from them.[84] We will inflict double torment[85] on those who followed the way of disbelief and hindered others from the Way of Allah on account of the chaos they spread in this world. 84-88

(O Muhammad, warn them of) the Day when We shall call a witness from among every community to testify against it. And We shall call you to testify against these people; (that is why) We have sent down to you this Book which makes plain everything[86] and is guidance, blessing and good news to those who have surrendered themselves entirely.[87] 89

Allah enjoins justice, generosity and kind treatment with kindred,[88] and forbids indecency, wickedness and oppression.[89] He admonishes you so that you may learn a lesson. Fulfil your covenant with Allah when you have made a Covenant with Him, and do not break your oaths after they have been confirmed and you have made Allah your witness. Allah is fully aware of all your actions. Do not behave like that woman who had spun yarn laboriously and then had herself 90-93

broken it into pieces.[90] You make your mutual oaths a means of mutual deceit in your affairs so that one people might take undue advantage over the other whereas Allah puts you to trial by these pledges.[91] Allah will certainly reveal to you the truth about all your differences on the Day of Resurrection.[92] Had Allah so willed (that you may not have any differences,) He would have made you all a single community,[93] but He leads astray whom He will and shows guidance to whom He will.[94] And be sure that He will take you to account for all your doings.

94 And (O Muslims,) do not make your oaths the means of deceiving one another lest (someone's) foot should slip after being firmly fixed[95] and you may suffer the consequences of debarring other people from the Way of Allah, and undergo a severe torment.

Contd. from p.559]

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

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

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

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

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

77. That is, "Armour".

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The first of these is justice which has two aspects.

To make such arrangements as may enable everyone to get one's due rights without stint. Justice does not, however, mean equal distribution of rights,

for that would be absolutely unnatural. In fact, justice means equitable dispensation of rights which in certain cases may mean equality. For example, all citizens should have equal rights of citizenship but in other cases equality in rights would be injustice. For instance, equality in social status and rights between parents and their children will obviously be wrong. Likewise those who render services of superior and inferior types cannot be equal in regard to wages and salaries. What Allah enjoins is that the full rights of everyone should be honestly rendered whether those be moral, social, economic legal or political in accordance with what one justly deserves.

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

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

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وَلَا تَشْتَرُوْا بِعَهْدِ اللّٰهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيْلًا ۭ اِنَّمَا عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ هُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ
تَعْلَمُوْنَ ۝ مَا عِنْدَكُمْ يَنْفَدُ ۚ وَمَا عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ بَاقٍ ۭ وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّ الَّذِيْنَ صَبَرُوْٓا
اَجْرَهُمْ بِاَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ۝ مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ اَوْ اُنْثٰى وَ
هُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيٰوةً طَيِّبَةً ۚ وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ اَجْرَهُمْ بِاَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوْا
يَعْمَلُوْنَ ۝ فَاِذَا قَرَاْتَ الْقُرْاٰنَ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللّٰهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطٰنِ الرَّجِيْمِ ۝ اِنَّهٗ
لَيْسَ لَهٗ سُلْطٰنٌ عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَلٰى رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُوْنَ ۝ اِنَّمَا سُلْطٰنُهٗ
عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ يَتَوَلَّوْنَهٗ وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ بِهٖ مُشْرِكُوْنَ ۝ وَاِذَا بَدَّلْنَآ اٰيَةً مَّكَانَ
اٰيَةٍ ۙ وَّاللّٰهُ اَعْلَمُ بِمَا يُنَزِّلُ قَالُوْٓا اِنَّمَآ اَنْتَ مُفْتَرٍ ۭ بَلْ اَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ۝
قُلْ نَزَّلَهٗ رُوْحُ الْقُدُسِ مِنْ رَّبِّكَ بِالْحَقِّ لِيُثَبِّتَ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَهُدًى وَّ
بُشْرٰى لِلْمُسْلِمِيْنَ ۝ وَلَقَدْ نَعْلَمُ اَنَّهُمْ يَقُوْلُوْنَ اِنَّمَا يُعَلِّمُهٗ بَشَرٌ ۭ لِسَانُ
الَّذِيْ يُلْحِدُوْنَ اِلَيْهِ اَعْجَمِيٌّ وَّهٰذَا لِسَانٌ عَرَبِيٌّ مُّبِيْنٌ ۝ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ لَا
يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِاٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ ۙ لَا يَهْدِيْهِمُ اللّٰهُ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ ۝ اِنَّمَا يَفْتَرِي الْكَذِبَ
الَّذِيْنَ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِاٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ ۚ وَاُولٰۗىِٕكَ هُمُ الْكٰذِبُوْنَ ۝ مَنْ كَفَرَ بِاللّٰهِ
مِنْۢ بَعْدِ اِيْمَانِهٖٓ اِلَّا مَنْ اُكْرِهَ وَقَلْبُهٗ مُطْمَىِٕنٌّۢ بِالْاِيْمَانِ وَلٰكِنْ مَّنْ
شَرَحَ بِالْكُفْرِ صَدْرًا فَعَلَيْهِمْ غَضَبٌ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ ۚ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيْمٌ ۝ ذٰلِكَ
بِاَنَّهُمُ اسْتَحَبُّوا الْحَيٰوةَ الدُّنْيَا عَلَى الْاٰخِرَةِ ۙ وَاَنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ
الْكٰفِرِيْنَ ۝ اُولٰۗىِٕكَ الَّذِيْنَ طَبَعَ اللّٰهُ عَلٰي قُلُوْبِهِمْ وَسَمْعِهِمْ وَاَبْصَارِهِمْ ۚ وَ
اُولٰۗىِٕكَ هُمُ الْغٰفِلُوْنَ ۝ لَا جَرَمَ اَنَّهُمْ فِي الْاٰخِرَةِ هُمُ الْخٰسِرُوْنَ ۝ ثُمَّ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ
لِلَّذِيْنَ هَاجَرُوْا مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مَا فُتِنُوْا ثُمَّ جٰهَدُوْا وَصَبَرُوْٓا ۙ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِهَا

Do not barter away the Covenant[96] of Allah for paltry gains;[97] 95-97
Indeed what is with Allah is far better for you if you knew it. Whatever is with you is transitory and whatever is with Allah is ever-lasting. And We will reward those, who practise fortitude[98] according to their best deeds. Whosoever does righteous deeds, whether male or female, provided he is a Believer, We will surely grant him live a pure life in this world.[99] And We will reward such people (in the Hereafter) according to their best deeds.[100]

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

And when We send down one verse to elaborate upon the 101-102
other—and Allah knows best what to send down—they say, "You forge this Qur'ān yourself."[102] The fact is that most of them do not know the reality. Tell them, "The Holy Spirit has brought it down piecemeal[103] intact from my Lord so that He may make firm the faith of those who have believed,[104] and to show the Right Way,[105] and to give good news to those who surrender themselves to Allah."[106]

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

Whoso is forced to disbelieve after believing, while his heart is 106-109
convinced of the Faith, (he shall be absolved) but whosoever accepts disbelief willingly, he incurs Allah's wrath, and there is severe torment for all such people.[109] This is because they preferred the life of this world to the life in the Hereafter, and Allah does not show the Way of salvation to those people who are ungrateful! Allah has sealed the hearts, the ears and the eyes of such people and they have become neglectful: therefore, it is inevitable that they should be losers in the Hereafter.[110]

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condition of the society every unit of which supports its every needy individual in this way—most surely that society will become high and pure economically, socially, and morally.

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

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

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

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

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

91. In this connection it should be noted that Allah has rebuked the people for the worst form of violation of treaties which has been creating the greatest disorder in the world. It is a pity that even "big" people consider it to be a virtue to violate treaties in order to gain advantages for their people in political, economic and religious conflicts. At one time the leader of one nation enters into a treaty with another nation for the interest of his own people but at another time the same leader publicly breaks the very same treaty for the interest of his people, or secretly violates it. It is an irony that such violations are made even by those people who are honest in their private lives. Moreover, it is regretable that their own people do not protest against them; nay, they eulogize them for such

shameful feats of diplomacy. Therefore, Allah warns that every such treaty is a test of the character of those who enter into it, and of their nations. They might gain some apparent advantage for their people in this way, but they will not escape their consequences on the Day of Judgment.

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

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

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

95. That is, "Someone, who might have been convinced of Islam, seeing your dishonest conduct should become disgusted and hold back from joining the Believers". For he might argue like this: "As these Muslims are not much

different from the disbelievers in their morals and dealings, there is no reason why I should join them."

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

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

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

99. This verse removes the wrong notions of both the Muslims and the disbelievers who are of the opinion that those who adopt a just honest and pious attitude, are most surely losers in this world, though they might be gainers in the Hereafter. Allah removes this misunderstanding, as if to say, "This presumption of yours is wrong. The righteous attitude not only leads to a happy life in the Hereafter, but it also guarantees, by Allah's grace, a pure and happy life even in this world." And this is a fact: those people who are sincerely righteous, honest, pure and fair in their dealings, enjoy a much better life in this world, for they enjoy that confidence and real honour and respect because of their spotless character, which is not enjoyed by those who lack these virtues. They obtain such pure and outstanding successes as are denied to those who employ dirty and disgusting ways to win success. Above all, they enjoy, even though they might be living in huts, that peace of mind and satisfaction of conscience which is denied to the wicked dwellers of mansions and palaces.

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

101. This does not mean that one should merely repeat the Arabic words: اعوذ باللہ من الشیطن الرجیم (I seek Allah's refuge against the accursed Satan). It means that one should have a sincere desire and do one's utmost to guard against Satan's evil suggestions when one is reciting the Holy Qur'ān and should not allow wrong and irrelevant doubts and suspicions to enter one's heart. One should try to see everything contained in the Qur'ān in its true light, and refrain from mixing it

up with one's self-invented theories or ideas foreign to the Qur'ān so as to construe its meaning against the will of Allah. Moreover, one should feel that the most sinister and avowed design of Satan is that the reader should not obtain any guidance from the Qurān. This is why Satan tries his utmost to delude the reader and pervert him from getting guidance from it, and mislead him into wrong ways of thinking. Therefore, the reader should be fully on his guard against Satan and seek Allah's refuge for help so that Satan should not be able to deprive him of the benefits from this source of guidance, for one who fails to get guidance from this source, will never be able to get guidance from any where else. Above all, the one who seeks to obtain deviation from this Book, is so entangled in deviation that he can never get out of this vicious circle.

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

102. This may also mean, "To send down one Commandment to elaborate upon the other, for the Commandments were sent down piecemeal in the Qur'ān". For instance, the Commandments about "prohibition" and fornication were sent down gradually one after the other during several years. But We hesitate to accept this interpretation because *An-Nahl* is a Makki Sūrah and to the best of our information there is no instance to show that Commandments were sent down piecemeal at Makkah. Therefore, we prefer the other interpretation. The Qur'ān has added details of one theme and explained the same with different kinds of illustrations at different places. Likewise it has related a story in different words at different places and presented its different aspects and details at other places. It has put forward one argument at one place to prove a theme and another at another place to prove the same theme. It has related one theme concisely at one place and in detail at the other. That is what the disbelievers of Makkah put forward as proof that Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) forged the Qur'ān himself. They argued like this: "Had the Qur'ān been the Word of Allah it would have related in full one thing at one place, for Allah's knowledge is not defective that He should have to think out gradually the details of a theme and to give different versions to explain the same thing. In contrast to this, the knowledge of a human being is defective. A man has to think out gradually as has been done in the case of the Qur'ān which is a clear proof that you have forged it yourself".

[Contd. on p. 574

لَغَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿١١٥﴾ يَوْمَ تَاْتِيْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ تُجَادِلُ عَنْ نَّفْسِهَا وَتُوَفّٰى كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا
عَمِلَتْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُوْنَ ﴿١١١﴾ وَضَرَبَ اللّٰهُ مَثَلًا قَرْيَةً كَانَتْ اٰمِنَةً مُّطْمَئِنَّةً
يَّاْتِيْهَا رِزْقُهَا رَغَدًا مِّنْ كُلِّ مَكَانٍ فَكَفَرَتْ بِاَنْعُمِ اللّٰهِ فَاَذَاقَهَا اللّٰهُ لِبَاسَ
الْجُوْعِ وَالْخَوْفِ بِمَا كَانُوْا يَصْنَعُوْنَ ﴿١١٢﴾ وَلَقَدْ جَآءَهُمْ رَسُوْلٌ مِّنْهُمْ فَكَذَّبُوْهُ
فَاَخَذَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ وَهُمْ ظٰلِمُوْنَ ﴿١١٣﴾ فَكُلُوْا مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللّٰهُ حَلٰلًا طَيِّبًا ۖ وَّ
اشْكُرُوْا نِعْمَتَ اللّٰهِ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ اِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُوْنَ ﴿١١٤﴾ اِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةَ وَ
الدَّمَ وَلَحْمَ الْخِنْزِيْرِ وَمَآ اُهِلَّ لِغَيْرِ اللّٰهِ بِهٖ ۚ فَمَنِ اضْطُرَّ غَيْرَ بَاغٍ وَّلَا عَادٍ
فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿١١٥﴾ وَلَا تَقُوْلُوْا لِمَا تَصِفُ اَلْسِنَتُكُمُ الْكَذِبَ هٰذَا حَلٰلٌ
وَّهٰذَا حَرَامٌ لِّتَفْتَرُوْا عَلَى اللّٰهِ الْكَذِبَ ۭ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ يَفْتَرُوْنَ عَلَى اللّٰهِ الْكَذِبَ
لَا يُفْلِحُوْنَ ﴿١١٦﴾ مَتَاعٌ قَلِيْلٌ ۠ وَّلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ ﴿١١٧﴾ وَعَلَى الَّذِيْنَ هَادُوْا حَرَّمْنَا
مَا قَصَصْنَا عَلَيْكَ مِنْ قَبْلُ ۚ وَمَا ظَلَمْنٰهُمْ وَلٰكِنْ كَانُوْٓا اَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُوْنَ ﴿١١٨﴾
ثُمَّ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ لِلَّذِيْنَ عَمِلُوا السُّوْٓءَ بِجَهَالَةٍ ثُمَّ تَابُوْا مِنْۢ بَعْدِ ذٰلِكَ وَ
اَصْلَحُوْٓا ۙ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِهَا لَغَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿١١٩﴾ اِنَّ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ كَانَ اُمَّةً قَانِتًا
لِّلّٰهِ حَنِيْفًا ۭ وَلَمْ يَكُ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ ﴿١٢٠﴾ شَاكِرًا لِّاَنْعُمِهِ ۭ اِجْتَبٰىهُ وَهَدٰىهُ اِلٰى
صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيْمٍ ﴿١٢١﴾ وَاٰتَيْنٰهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً ۭ وَاِنَّهٗ فِي الْاٰخِرَةِ لَمِنَ
الصّٰلِحِيْنَ ﴿١٢٢﴾ ثُمَّ اَوْحَيْنَآ اِلَيْكَ اَنِ اتَّبِعْ مِلَّةَ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ حَنِيْفًا ۭ وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ
الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ ﴿١٢٣﴾ اِنَّمَا جُعِلَ السَّبْتُ عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ اخْتَلَفُوْا فِيْهِ ۭ وَاِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَيَحْكُمُ
بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ فِيْمَا كَانُوْا فِيْهِ يَخْتَلِفُوْنَ ﴿١٢٤﴾ اُدْعُ اِلٰى سَبِيْلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحِكْمَةِ
وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِيْ هِيَ اَحْسَنُ ۭ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ اَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ

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

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

So, O people, eat of the lawful and pure provisions with which Allah has blessed you and show gratitude[113] to Allah for His favours, if you are sincerely obedient to Him.[114] Allah has forbidden only these things: do not eat what dies of itself nor blood nor swine flesh nor what has been slaughtered in any name other than Allah. But if forced by hunger one eats of any of these forbidden things, provided he has no intention of breaking the Divine Law or of transgressing the limits by taking more than what is absolutely indispensable, one may expect mercy, for Allah is very Forgiving and very Compassionate.[115] Do not ascribe lies to Allah by decreeing with your tongues, "This is lawful and that is unlawful,"[116] for those people who ascribe lies to Allah can never come to any good. (They should remember that) the pleasures of this world are transitory and in the end there is a painful torment for them. 114-117

To the Jews We had especially forbidden the things[117] We have already related to you,[118] and it was not We who imposed this hardship on them, but they imposed the hardship themselves. Nevertheless, your Lord is Forgiving and Compassionate towards those who have repented and mended their ways after they had committed evil in ignorance. The fact is that Abraham was a community in himself :[119] he was obedient to Allah and had turned to Him exclusively. He was never a *mushrik*: he 118-124

was always grateful for Allah's favours. Accordingly Allah chose him and showed him the Right Way. Allah blessed him with goodness in this world and most surely he will be among the righteous in the Hereafter. Then We sent down this Revelation to you: "Follow the way of Abraham exclusively" and he was not one of the *mushriks.*[120] As regards the Sabbath, We imposed this on those who differed about its observance.[121] Surely your Lord will decide between them on the Day of Resurrection about all those things in which they have been differing.

Contd. from p. 571]

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

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

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

106. The third practical wisdom of not sending down the Qur'ān as a whole at one and the same time was to give good tidings and encouragement to the obedient servants who were suffering from persecution and encountering great obstacles because they needed it over and over again. That is why they were

assured of ultimate success time and again to fill them with hope to carry on their mission.

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

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

109. This verse deals with the case of those Muslims who were being persecuted with cruelty and were being-subjected to unbearable torments to force them to give up their Faith. They are being told that if at any time they are forced to utter words of disbelief to save their lives, when in fact in their hearts they are secure against disbelief, they will be pardoned. On the other hand, if they accepted unbelief from the core of their hearts, they shall not escape the torment of Allah even if they succeed in saving their lives.

It does not, however, mean that one should utter words of disbelief to save one's life. This is merely a permission but not the ideal thing for a Believer. According to this permission if one utters such a thing, he shall not be taken to account. In fact, the ideal for a Believer is to utter words of truth in any case whether his body is cut into pieces. There are instances which show that during the period of the Holy Prophet some acted upon the ideal while others took advantage of the permission. There was Khabbāb bin Art (May Allah be pleased with him) who was made to lie on embers of fire until the fire was extinguished by the melting of his fat, but he remained firm in his Faith. Then there was Bilāl Habashi (May Allah be pleased with him) who was made to put on an armour and stand in the scorching heat. Then he was dragged on the burning sand but he went

on saying, "Allah is one." There was another Believer, Habib bin Zaid bin 'Āsim, whose limbs were cut one by one by the order of Musailimah, the Liar. Each time his limb was severed it was demanded of him that he should acknowledge the Liar as a prophet but each time he refused to bear witness to his claim of prophethood until he breathed his last. On the other hand, there was the instance of 'Ammār bin Yāsir (May Allah be pleased with him) whose parents were mercilessly butchered before his eyes. After this he himself was put to such unbearable torture that, in order to save his life, he had to utter the same words of unbelief that were demanded of him. Afterwards when he came crying to the Holy Prophet, he said, "O Messenger of Allah, they did not let me go until I spoke evil of you and praised their deities". The Holy Prophet asked him, "How do you feel about this in your heart?" He replied humbly, "My heart is fully convinced of the Faith." At this the Holy Prophet replied, "If they put you to the same torture again, you may utter the same words".

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

111. They were those Believers who migrated to Habashah.

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

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

114. Here the observation of the lawful and the unlawful has been made the test of worship of Allah. Those who claim to be the servants of Allah will eat what is lawful and pure and show gratitude to Him and will scrupulously refrain from what is forbidden and impure.

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

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

ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيْلِهٖ وَهُوَ اَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِيْنَ ﴿١٢٥﴾ وَاِنْ عَاقَبْتُمْ فَعَاقِبُوْا بِمِثْلِ
مَا عُوْقِبْتُمْ بِهٖ ؕ وَلَئِنْ صَبَرْتُمْ لَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لِّلصّٰبِرِيْنَ ﴿١٢٦﴾ وَاصْبِرْ وَمَا صَبْرُكَ
اِلَّا بِاللّٰهِ وَلَا تَحْزَنْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا تَكُ فِيْ ضَيْقٍ مِّمَّا يَمْكُرُوْنَ ﴿١٢٧﴾ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ
مَعَ الَّذِيْنَ اتَّقَوْا وَّالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ مُّحْسِنُوْنَ ﴿١٢٨﴾

O Prophet invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and excellent admonition[122] and discuss things with people in the best manner.[123] Your Lord knows best who has gone astray from His Way and He knows best who is rightly guided. And if you retaliate, let your retaliation be to the extent that you were wronged, but if you endure it with patience, it is indeed best for those who endure with patience. O Muhammad, go on performing your mission with fortitude—and you can practise fortitude only with the help of Allah—do not be grieved at their doings and do not distress yourself at their intrigues, for Allah is with those people who fear Him and adopt the righteous attitude.[124] 125-128

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(2) Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) was commanded to follow the way of Abraham and not the way of the Jews, and they themselves knew than these things were not unlawful in the law of Abraham. For instance, the Jews did not eat the flesh of camel but this was lawful according to Abraham. Likewise, ostrich, hare, duck, etc., were unlawful in the Jewish law, but they were lawful according to Abraham. Incidentally the disbelievers of Makkah have been warned that neither they nor the Jews had any relationship with Prophet Abraham for

he was not a *mushrik* while both of them were practising *shirk*. Prophet Muhammad and his followers were the only true followers of Prophet Abraham (Allah's peace be upon them) for there was no tinge of *shirk* in their creed or in their practice.

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

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

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

123. "Best manner" implies that one should have a sweet tongue, show noble character and give reasonable and appealing arguments, and refrain from

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

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



XVII

BAĪ ISRĀ'ĪL

بنی اسرائیل

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XVII

BANĪ ISR'ĪL

بنی اسرائیل

INTRODUCTION

Name

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

Period of Revelation

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

Background

The Holy Prophet had been propagating *Tauhid* for the previous twelve years and his opponents had been doing all they could to make his Mission a failure, but in spite of all their opposition, Islam had spread to every corner of Arabia and there was hardly any clan which had not been influenced by his invitation. In Makkah itself the true Believers had formed themselves into a small community and were ready and willing to face every danger to make Islam a success Besides them, a very large number of the people of Aus and Khazraj (two influential clans of Al-Madīnah) had accepted Islam. Thus the time had come for the Holy Prophet to emigrate from Makkah to Al-Madinah and there

gather together the scattered Muslims and establish a state based on the principles of Islam.

These were the conditions when *Mi'rāj* took place and on his return the Holy Prophet brought down the Message contained in this Sūrah.

Theme and Topics

This Sūrah is a wonderful combination of warning, admonition and instruction, which have been blended together in a balanced proportion.

The disbelievers of Makkah had been admonished to take a lesson from the miserable end of the Israelites and other communities and mend their ways within the period of respite given by Allah, which was about to expire. They should, therefore, accept the invitation that was being extended by Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) and the Qur'ān; otherwise they shall be annihilated and replaced by other people. Incidentally, the Israelites, with whom Islam was going to come in direct contact in the near future at Al-Madīnah have also been warned that they should learn a lesson from the chastisements that have already been inflicted on them. They were warned, "Take advantage of the Prophethood of Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) because that is the last opportunity which is being given to you: If even now you behave as you have been behaving, you shall meet with a painful torment."

As regards the education of mankind, it has been impressed that human success or failure, gain or loss, depends upon the right understanding of *Tauhīd*, life-after-death and Prophethood. Accordingly, convincing arguments have been put forward to prove that the Qur'ān is the Book of Allah and its teachings are true and genuine; the doubts of the disbelievers about these basic realities have been removed and on suitable occasions they have been admonished and rebuked in regard to their ways of ignorance.

In this connection, those fundamental principles of morality and civilization on which the Islamic System of life is meant to be established have been put forward. Thus this was a sort of the Manifesto of the intended Islamic State which had been proclaimed a year before its actual establishment. It has been explicitly stated that that was the

sketch of the system on which Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) intended to build human life first in his own country and then in the world outside.

Besides these, the Holy Prophet has been instructed to stick firmly to his stand without minding the opposition and difficulties which he was encountering and should never think of making a compromise with unbelief. The Muslims who sometimes showed signs of impatience, when they met with persecution, calumny, and crooked arguments, have also been instructed to face adverse circumstances with patience and fortitude and keep full control over their feelings and passions. Moreover, *Salat* was prescribed in order to reform and purify their souls, as if to say, "This is the thing which will produce in you those high qualities of character which are essential for everyone who intends to struggle in the righteous way". Incidentally, we learn from Traditions that Mi'rāj was the first occasion on which the five daily Prayers were prescribed to be offered at fixed times.



الْاَقْصَا الَّذِیْ بٰرَكْنَا حَوْلَهٗ لِنُرِیَهٗ مِنْ اٰیٰتِنَا ؕ اِنَّهٗ هُوَ السَّمِیْعُ الْبَصِیْرُ ۝ وَ
اٰتَیْنَا مُوْسَی الْكِتٰبَ وَ جَعَلْنٰهُ هُدًی لِّبَنِیْۤ اِسْرَآءِیْلَ اَلَّا تَتَّخِذُوْا مِنْ دُوْنِیْ
وَكِیْلًا ۝ ذُرِّیَّةَ مَنْ حَمَلْنَا مَعَ نُوْحٍ ؕ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ عَبْدًا شَكُوْرًا ۝ وَ قَضَیْنَاۤ
اِلٰی بَنِیْۤ اِسْرَآءِیْلَ فِی الْكِتٰبِ لَتُفْسِدُنَّ فِی الْاَرْضِ مَرَّتَیْنِ وَ لَتَعْلُنَّ عُلُوًّا
كَبِیْرًا ۝ فَاِذَا جَآءَ وَعْدُ اُوْلٰىهُمَا بَعَثْنَا عَلَیْكُمْ عِبَادًا لَّنَاۤ اُولِیْ بَاْسٍ شَدِیْدٍ
فَجَاسُوْا خِلٰلَ الدِّیَارِ ؕ وَ كَانَ وَعْدًا مَّفْعُوْلًا ۝ ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَا لَكُمُ الْكَرَّةَ
عَلَیْهِمْ وَ اَمْدَدْنٰكُمْ بِاَمْوَالٍ وَّ بَنِیْنَ وَ جَعَلْنٰكُمْ اَكْثَرَ نَفِیْرًا ۝ اِنْ اَحْسَنْتُمْ
اَحْسَنْتُمْ لِاَنْفُسِكُمْ ۟ وَ اِنْ اَسَاْتُمْ فَلَهَا ؕ فَاِذَا جَآءَ وَعْدُ الْاٰخِرَةِ لِیَسُوْٓءٗا
وُجُوْهَكُمْ وَ لِیَدْخُلُوا الْمَسْجِدَ كَمَا دَخَلُوْهُ اَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَّ لِیُتَبِّرُوْا مَا عَلَوْا
تَتْبِیْرًا ۝ عَسٰی رَبُّكُمْ اَنْ یَّرْحَمَكُمْ ۚ وَ اِنْ عُدْتُّمْ عُدْنَا ۘ وَ جَعَلْنَا جَهَنَّمَ
لِلْكٰفِرِیْنَ حَصِیْرًا ۝ اِنَّ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنَ یَهْدِیْ لِلَّتِیْ هِیَ اَقْوَمُ وَ یُبَشِّرُ
الْمُؤْمِنِیْنَ الَّذِیْنَ یَعْمَلُوْنَ الصّٰلِحٰتِ اَنَّ لَهُمْ اَجْرًا كَبِیْرًا ۝ وَّ اَنَّ الَّذِیْنَ

XVII
BANĪ ISRĀ 'ĪL
بنی اسرائیل

Verses:111 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate,

Glory be to Him, Who transported His Servant one night from 1
the Masjid-i-Harām to the distant Temple, whose surroundings We have

blessed, so that we might show him some of Our Sings;[1] the fact is that He alone is All-Hearing and All-Seeing.

2-8 Before this We had given the Book to Moses and made it a means of guidance for the Israelites[2] with this Command: "Do not make any other guardian than Myself.[3] You are the descendants of those whom We bore in the Ark with Noah,[4] and .he was truly a grateful servant". Besides this, We forewarned the Israelites in the Scriptures :[5] You will work great mischief twice in the land and will become overbearingly arrogant.[6] When the occasion of the first of the two mischiefs came, O Israelites, We raised against you such of Our servants who were very mighty and formidable; so they penetrated through all parts of your country. This was a warning that was bound to be fulfilled.[7] Then after this We afforded you an opportunity to over-power them and helped you with abundance of riches and children and increased you far more in numbers than before.[8] Behold! If you did good it proved to be good for yourselves and if you committed evil it proved to be bad for your own selves. Then, when the time came for the fulfilment of the second warning, We set other enemies on you so that they might disfigure your faces and enter into the Temple just as the former enemies had entered and destroyed whatever they could lay their hands on[9] .....Now again your Lord may show compassion on you, but if you again repeat your former behaviour; We will again visit you with. Our punishment, for We have prepared Hell to serve as a prison-house for the ungrateful people.[10]

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1. The event referred to in this verse is known "Mi'rāj" and "Isrā'". According to authentic traditions, this took place a year before Hijrah. In the traditional and biographical literature, its details have been related by a large number (25) of the Companions. Anas bin Mālik, Mālik bin Sa'asa'ah, Abūzar Ghifārī, and Abū Huraīrāh (Allah be pleased with them all) have related details of the event. Besides them, 'Umar, 'Ali, 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd.....(Allah be pleased with them) have also related some parts of this event.

In this verse, the Qur'ān mentions only a part of the Journey, i.e., from Masjid-i-Harām to the Temple at Jerusalem. The object of this journey as stated here was that Allah willed to show His aervant some of His signs. The Qur'ān does not give any details other than this but we find further details in the traditions, which are to this effect:

One night the Angel Jibrīl transported the Holy Prophet on al-Burāq from Masjid-i-Harām to Masjid-i-Aqsā (the Temple). There the Holy Prophet offered his prayers along with the other Prophets. Then he took him towards the higher spheres, where he met some of the great Prophets in different spheres. At last he

reached the Highest Place in the Heavens, and was received in audience by Allah. It was there that besides other important instructions five daily Prayers were prescribed. Then he returned to the Temple and from there came back to Masjid-i-Harām. During this Journey, according to many traditions, Paradise and Hell were shown to him. We also learn from authentic traditions that on the following day when he mentioned this event, the disbelievers of Makkah scoffed at him, and some of the Muslims also were sceptical about this.

The above additional details based on the traditions cannot be said to be against the Qur'ān, for these are additions to the details given in the Qur'ān; therefore, the details related in the traditions cannot be rejected on the plea that they are against the Qur'ān. Nevertheless, if one rejects any part of those details which are given in the traditions, one cannot be declared a renegade. On the other hand, if one rejects the details given in the Qur'ān, one does become a renegade.

There are different versions of this Journey. Some say that this happened in a dream, while others are of the opinion that the Holy Prophet was fully awake and went on the Journey with his own physical body; some others say that it was merely a mystic vision which was shown to him. The opening words of this verse: "Glory be to Him, who transported His Servant....." however, clearly show that it was a super-natural event which was brought about by the unlimited power of Allah. It is quite obvious that if the event had been merely a mystic vision, it would not have been introduced by the words سُبْحَانَ الَّذِيْ which imply that the Being Who brought about this event is free from each and every kind of weakness and defect. Again the words "transported His servant one night" also show that this was not a dream or a vision but a physical journey in which Allah arranged that the Holy Prophet should make observation of His Signs with his physical eyes. Therefore, one is bound to admit that this was not a mere spiritual experience but a physical journey and visual observation which Allah arranged for His Prophet.

It is strange that some people are of the opinion that this extraordinary journey could not be possible, but now when man with his limited—very limited—power has been able to reach the moon, it is absurd to deny that Allah with His limitless powers could enable His Messenger to make this journey in the extraordinary short time it took.

Above all, the question whether a thing is possible or not, can arise only in the case of human beings whose powers are after all limited, but such questions cannot be raised where the All-Powerful Allah is concerned. Only such a person who does not believe that Allah is able to do everything can raise objections against this wonderful Journey about which Allah Himself says that He transported His Servant one night from Masjid-i-Harām to Masjid-i-Aqsā.

Likewise all the objections raised against the various details which are given in the traditions are frivolous, except two, which are plausible:

First, if we accept these details, then we shall have to admit that Allah is confined to a certain place; otherwise there was no need that His Servant should be transported for this purpose to a certain place. Secondly, according to traditions, the Holy Prophet was enabled to observe Paradise and Hell where he saw some people suffering from torment. The objection is: why should some people be awarded punishments or rewards before the Final Judgement after Resurrection?

As regards the first objection, it is true that Allah is Infinite by Himself, but in dealing with His creation, He employs those means which suit His imperfect creation not because of any limitation of His, but because of the limitations of His creation. For instance, when He speaks to any of His creature, He adopts the same limited mode of conversation as the addressee can understand, though He has limitless modes of speech. Likewise, when He desires to show some of the wonderful Signs of His Kingdom to a servant. He transports him to the place where the Signs are to be shown. It is obvious that the servant cannot see at one and the same time the whole of the universe as Allah does, for Allah has no need to go to any place at all for this purpose but the servant has. The same applies to the appearance of the servant before the Creator. Though Allah is not confined to any locality, it is necessary for the servant to go to the place where His manifestations have been concentrated for his observation because it is not possible for the servant with his limited powers to go in His Presence in His Infinite Capacity.

As regards the second objection, it is based on the lack of understanding the thing: many of the Signs which were shown to the Holy Prophet were symbolical. For instance, a small hole from which a fat ox came out but could not go back into it, represented mischief personified. In the same way the adulterers were shown as if they had fresh meat before them but instead of that they were eating rotten flesh. Similarly punishments for evil deeds shown to him were only symbolic observations of the punishments in the Hereafter so that he might see in advance the things which would take place in the Hereafter.

In regard to the *Mi'rāj* it should be kept in view that all the Prophets were enabled by Allah to see His Signs in the heavens and the earth according to their ranks. And for this purpose all the material curtains were lifted so that they could see with their naked eyes the unseen realities, to which they were required to invite the people.

This was done so that the Prophets could say with full conviction what they had seen with their own eyes. For this experience would distinguish them from a philosopher who bases all his theories on guess-work and cannot say that

he bears witness to what he claims. In contrast to philosophers, Prophets could say that they bore witness to the things which they presented because they had seen them with their own eyes

2. As this verse has no apparent connection with the event of *Mi'rāj*, it may appear to a cursory reader that either of the two verses has been misplaced here. But if we try to understand the matter in the context of the theme of the whole Sūrah, we can easily understand the connection between the two. .The main object of this Sūrah is to give a warning to the disbelievers of Makkah. That is why the mention of Mi'rāj has been made in the very first verse, as if to say, "The person whom you dub as an impostor and reject the Book sent down to him, has just now seen with his naked eyes great Signs of Allah. So you should learn a lesson from the history of the Israelites who discarded the Book of Allah and therefore, were given painful punishment."

3. The Arabic word *"vakīl"* (guardian) denotes a person who is trustworthy and can be depended upon in regard to one's affairs and may be turned to for guidance and help.

4. That is, "You are the descendants of Noah and his companions;" therefore ,you should behave in a manner as behoves such people. You should make Allah alone your Guardian, for your ancestors escaped death from the Flood only because they had made Allah their Guardian."

5. The original Arabic word *"Al-kitāb"* does not stand here for the Torah but for all the Divine Books.

6. Such warnings have been given in different Books of the Bible. As regards their first mischief and its evil consequences, the Israelites were warned in the Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel and the warnings about their second mischief and its severe punishments are found in Matthew and Luke. Below are given extracts to confirm this statement of the Qur'ān.

Prophet David was the first to warn the Israelites in his Psalms of their first mischief:

"They did not destroy the nations, concerning whom the Lord commanded them: But were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works. And they served their idols which were a snare unto them. Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils, And shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters ....Therefore, was the wrath of the Lord kindled against his people, insomuch that he abhorred his own inheritance. And he gave them into the hand of the heathen ;" Psalms: Chapter 106, vv. 34-38, 40, 41.

The above events have been described in the past tense as if they had already actually happened. The Scriptures employ this mode of expression to emphasize the importance of the prophesies.

When this mischief actually came to pass, Prophet Isaiah warned them of its ruinous consequences: "Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil-doers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: How is the faithful city become an harlot! it was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers. Thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves: everyone loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them. Therefore, saith the Lord, the Lord of hosts, the mighty One of Israel. Ah I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies: they be replenished from the east, and are soothsayers like the Philistines, and they please themselves in the children of strangers. Their land also is full of idols; they worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made: Moreover the Lord saith, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet: Therefore, the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the Lord will discover their secret parts. Thy men shall fall by the sword,. and thy mighty in the war. And her gates shall lament and mourn: and she being desolate shall sit upon the ground. Now therefore, behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria, and all his glory: and he shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks: That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the Lord: Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits: Wherefore thus saith the Holy One of Israel, Because ye despise this word, and trust in oppression and perverseness, and stay thereon: Therefore, this iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall,....And he shall break it as the breaking of the potters' vessel that is broken in pieces; he shall not spare: so that there shall not be found in the bursting of it a shred to take fire from the hearth, or to take water withal out of the pit." (Isaiah, Chapter 1:verses 4-5; 21-24,Chapter 2:verses 6,8; Chapter 3: verses 16-17, 25-26; Chapter 8: verse 7; Chapter 30: verses 9-10, 12-14.)

After this Prophet Ieremiah raised his voice when the flood of corruption swept away everything before it.

"Thus saith the Lord, What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity and are become vain?

And I brought you into a plentiful country to eat the fruit thereof and the goodness thereof; but when ye entered, ye defiled my land, and made my heritage an abomination. For of old time I have broken thy yoke, and burst thy bands; and thou saidst, I will not transgress; when upon every high hill and under every green tree thou wanderest, playing the harlot. As the thief is ashamed when he is found, so is the house of Israel ashamed: they, their kings, their princes, and their priests, and their prophets, Saying to a stock, Thou art my father; and to a stone, Thou hast brought me forth: for they have turned *their* back unto me, and not *their* face: but in the time of their trouble they will say, Arise, and save us. But where *are* thy gods that thou hast made thee? let them arise, if they can save thee in the time of thy trouble; for according to the number of thy cities are thy gods, O Judah. The Lord said also unto me in the days of Josiah the king, Hast thou seen that which backsliding Israel hath done? She is gone up upon every high mountain and under every green tree, and there hath played the harlot. And her treacherous sister Judah saw it. And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also. And it came to pass through the lightness of her whoredom, that she defiled the land, and committed adultery with stones and with sticks. Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if can find a man, if there be *any* that executeth judgments that seeketh the truth; and I will pardon it. How shall I pardon thee for this? thy children have forsaken me, and sworn by them that are no gods: when I had fed them to the full, they then committed adultery, and assembled themselves by troops in the harlots' houses. They were as fed horses in the morning: every one neighed after his neighbour's wife. Shall I not visit for these *things*? Saith the Lord: and shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this? Lo, I will bring a nation upon you from far, O house of Israel, saith the Lord: it *is* a mighty nation, it is an ancient nation, a nation whose language thou knowest not, neither understand what they say. Their quiver is an open sepulchre, they *are* all mighty men. And they shall eat up thine harvest, and thy bread, *which* thy sons and thy daughters should eat: they shall eat up thy flocks and thine herds; they shall eat up thy vines and thy fig trees: they shall impoverish thy fenced cities, wherein thou trustedst, with the sword. And the carcases of this people shall be meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beasts of the earth; and none shall fray *them* away. Then will I cause to cease from the cities of Judah, and from the streets of Jerusalem, the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride: for the land shall be desolate.

And it shall come to pass, if they say unto thee, Whither shall we go forth? then thou shalt tell them, Thus saith the Lord; Such as are for death, to

death; and such as are for the sword, to the sword; and such as are for the famine, to the famine; and such as are for the captivity, to the captivity. And I will appoint over them four kinds, saith the Lord: the sword to slay, and the dogs to tear, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the earth, to devour and destroy." (Jeremiah, Chapter 2: verses 5-7, 20, 26-28; Chapter 3: verses 6-9; Chapter 5: verses 1,7-9 15-17; Chapter 7: verses 33, 34; Chapter 15: verses 2, 3.)

Then Prophet Ezekiel was raised to warn them in time. Addressing Jerusalem he said:

The city sheddeth blood in the midst of it, that her time may come, and maketh idols against herself to defile herself. Behold, the princes of Israel, every one were in thee to their power to shed blood. In thee they have set light by father and mother: in the midst of thee have they dealt by oppression with the stranger: in thee have they vexed the fatherless and the widow. Thou hast despised mine holy things, and hast profaned my sabbaths. In thee are men that carry tales to shed blood: and in thee they eat upon the mountains: in the midst of thee they commit lewdness. In thee have they discovered their fathers' nakedness: in thee have they humbled her that was set apart for pollution. And one hath committed abomination with his neighbour's wife; and another hath lewdly defiled his daughter-in-law; and another in thee hath humbled his sister, his father's daughter. In thee have they taken gifts to shed blood; thou hast taken usury and increase, and thou hast greedily gained of thy neighbours by extortion and hast forgotten me, can thine hands be strong, in the days that I shall deal with thee? And I will scatter thee among the heathen, and disperse thee in the countries, and will consume thy filthiness out of thee. And thou shalt take thine inheritance in thyself in the sight of the heathen, and thou shalt know that I am the Lord." (Ezekiel, Chapter 22: verses 3, 6-12, 14-16.)

Besides the above mentioned warnings which were given to Israelites at the time of their first mischief, Prophet Jesus Christ warned them of the consequences of their second great mischief. In a forceful address he criticized their moral degeneration like this:

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." (Matthew, Chapter 23: verses 37, 38; Chapter 24: verse 2.)

Then, when the Roman officials were taking Prophet Jesus out for crucifixion, and a great company of people including women were following him bewailing and lamenting, he addressed them and gave his final warnings:

But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For, behold, the days are coming, in which they shall say; Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the paps which never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us. (Luke, Chapter 23: verses 28-30.)

7. This refers to the terrible destruction that the Israelites suffered at the hands of the Assyrians and Babylonians. One cannot fully appreciate the historical background of this merely from the extracts that have been reproduced above from the Books of the Prophets. A brief history of the Israelites is also needed so that a student may become acquainted with all the causes and circumstances on account of which Allah removed this nation, that professed to believe in a revealed Book, from the leadership of mankind and turned it into a humiliated, condemned and backward community.

When, after the death of Prophet Moses, the Israelites entered Palestine it was inhabited by the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzittes, Hivites, Jebusites, the Philistines, etc. These communities had adopted the worst kind of idolatry, their supreme deity being Ayl whom they regarded as the father of gods and who was usually represented by the bull-images. His consort was called Asherah from whom had descended a whole line of gods and goddesses, about 70 in number. The most powerful god among them was Baal who was regarded as the god of rain and growth and the lord of the earth and heavens. In the northern regions his consort was called Anathoth and in Palestine Ashtaroth. These two were the goddesses of love and procreation. Besides them, there was a god of death, a god of disease and famine, and a goddess of health, and thus all the worldly powers and agencies stood divided among a large number of deities. The people had ascribed such dirty and base qualities and acts to these deities that even a worst offender against morality would shun being known by them. Obviously the people who have adopted such mean deities for worship and devotion cannot remain secure from the worst kind of moral degeneration and the modern excavations have shown this conclusively.

Child sacrifice was a common thing among them. Their places of worship had turned into brothels, where women were kept as religious prostitutes and illicit relations with them were regarded as a part of worship and devotion.

The Israelites had clearly been told in the instructions given in the Torah that they should destroy those communities and wrest the land of Palestine from them, and that they should avoid mixing up with those people and ward off their moral and ideological weaknesses:

But when the Israelites entered Palestine they set this guidance aside. They not only did not establish a united kingdom of their own but fell a prey to tribal parochialism. Each of their tribes was content to take a part of the captured land and become a separate and independent state. This disunity among them did not leave any of the tribes strong enough to purge its territory completely of the idolaters, and therefore they had to allow them to live side by side with them in the same land. Not only this, but there had remained in the conquered territories a number of small city states of these idolatrous communities which the Israelites had not been able to subjugate. It is this very thing which has been complained against in the extract of the Psalms reproduced above in the beginning of E.N. 6.

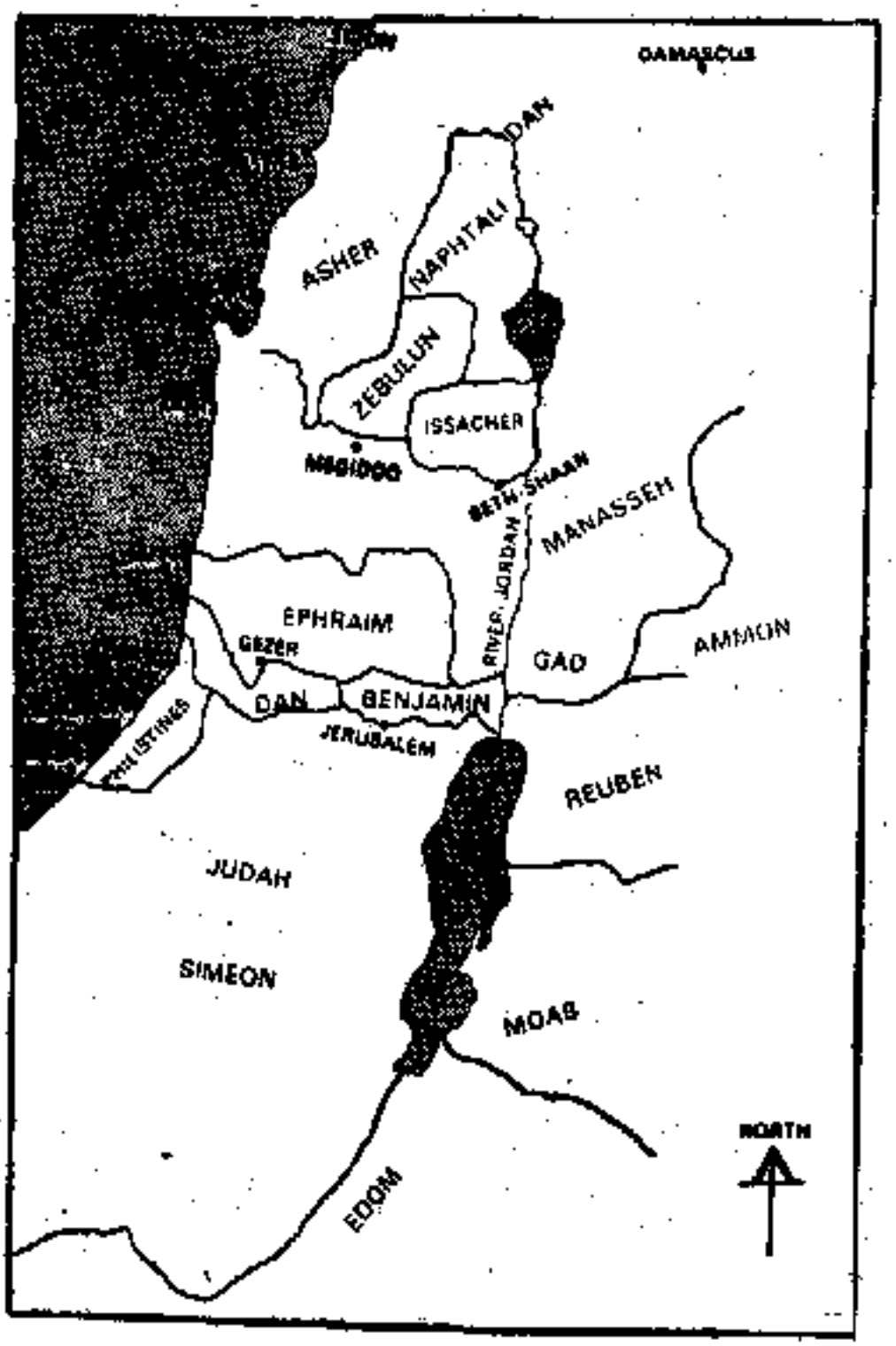
The first consequence of intermixing with those communities, was that the Israelites also became idolatrous, and gradually began to adopt other moral evils also. This has been complained about in the Book of Judges as below: "And the children of Israel did evil, in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim: And they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the Lord to anger. And they forsook the Lord, and served Baal and Ashtaroth". (Judges, 2: 11-13.)

The second consequence suffered by the Israelites was that the communities whose city-states they had left unconquered and the Philistines whose land they had not at all touched set up a united front against them and drove them out of a major part of Palestine by incessant attacks, so much so that they deprived them of the Holy Ark of their Lord. At last, the Israelites felt the need of establishing a united kingdom of their own under one ruler, and on their request Prophet Samuel appointed Saul as their king in 1020 B.C. (For details see vv. 246-48 and E.N.'s. 268-270 of Al-Baqarah.)

This united kingdom was ruled by three kings: Saul (1020 B.C. to 1004 B.C.), Prophet David (1004 to 965 B.C.) and Prophet Solomon (365 to 926 B.C.). These kings brought to completion the mission that had been left incomplete by the Israelites after the death of Prophet Moses. They annexed all the territories except the Phoenician state on the northern and the Philistine state on the southern coast, which, of course, became tributaries.

After the death of Prophet Solomon the Israelites again adopted the ways of the world and fought among themselves and split into two independent kingdoms, the kingdom of Israel in the northern Palestine and Jordan with Samaria as its capital, and the kingdom of Judah in the southern Palestine and Edom with Jerusalem as its capital. These kingdoms were strife-ridden from the very beginning and this state of affairs persisted till the end.

PALESTINE AFTER PROPHET MOSES



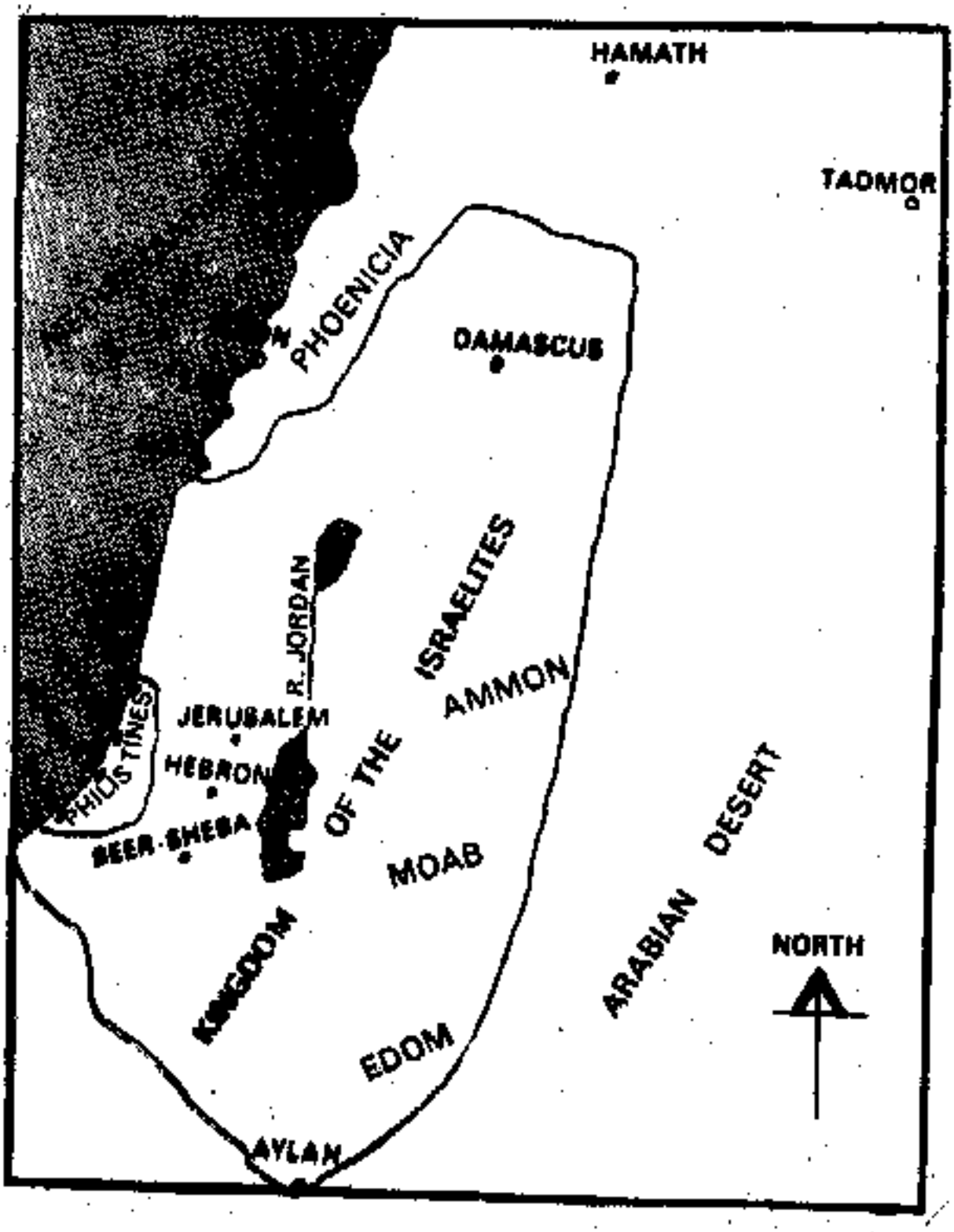
Explanation.—After the death of Prophet Moses, the Children of Israel conquered the whole of Palestine under Joshua, but instead of establishing a united kingdom they divided the land among themselves as inheritance.

This map shows how the land of Palestine was divided into lots and taken over by the 12 tribes of the Israelites, who were : the Children of Judah, Simeon, Dan, Benjamin, Ephraim, Reuben, Gad, Manasseh, Issacher, Zebulun, Naphtali and Asher.

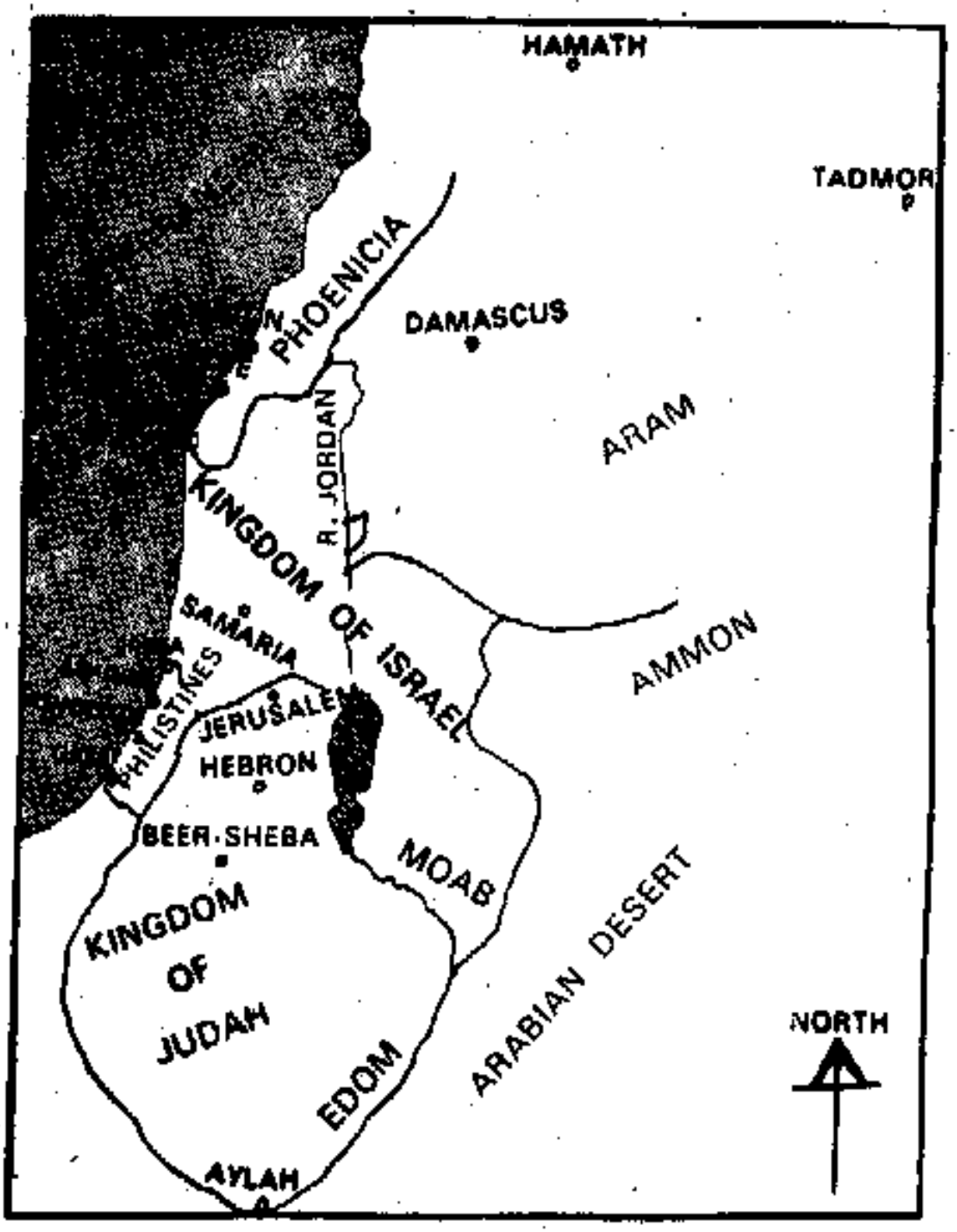
Being weak and divided, they could not fulfil the mission of the Torah, which was to drive out the idolatrous Canaanites from Palestine. The Canaanites still dwelt among them and retained strong-holds in the shape of city states. According to the Bible, up to the time of Saul, the cities of Sidon, Tyre, Dor, Megiddo, Beth-Shaan, Gezer, Jerusalem, etc. were still in the hands of the Canaanites and their idolatrous culture was influencing the Israelites.

Furthermore, on the borders of the Israelite territories, there still existed powerful states of the Philistines, the Edomites, the Moabites, and the Ammonites, who subjected them later to incessant attacks and annexed large chunks of their lands. The Israelites might even have been driven out of Palestine had they not been shown grace by God and united in time under Saul.

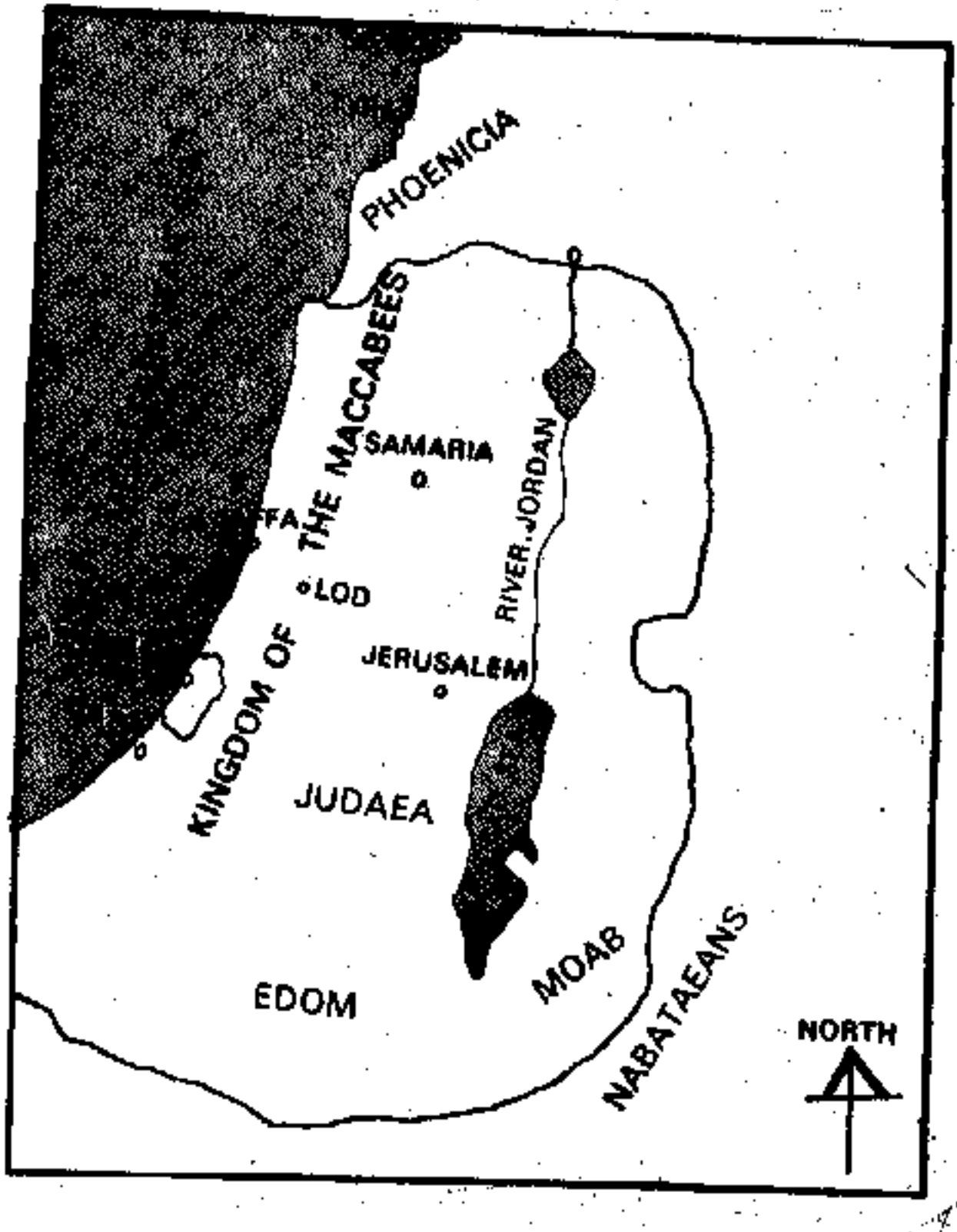
THE KINGDOM OF PROPHETS DAVID
AND SOLOMON (1000.930 B.C



ISRAELITE KINGDOMS OF JUDAH
AND ISRAEL (869 B.C)



PALESTINE UNDER THE MACCABEES
(168-63 B.C)



The rulers and people of the kingdom of Israel were the first to be affected grievously by the ideological and moral weaknesses of the neighbouring communities. Specially after the marriage of its ruler, Ahab, with the idolatrous princess Jezebel of Zidon, idolatry and other evils began to spread unchecked among the Israelites under the official patronage. Prophets Elias and Elisha tried their very best to check this deluge but the Israelites who were rapidly degenerating, did not heed their warning. At last the wrath of Allah overtook the kingdom of Israel in the shape of the Assyrians who started subjecting Palestine to incessant attacks from 900 B.C. downward. During this period, Prophet Amos (787-747 B.C.) and them Prophet Hosea(747-735 B.C.) rose and warned the Israelites again and again but the wretched, depraved people did not heed their warnings at all, and transgresssed all limits. Prophet Amos was banished by the king of Israel from the realm of Samaria and warned not to preach his mission in the country Not very long after this the wrath of Allah burst upon the kingdom of Israel and its people. The Assyrian king Sargon took Samaria in 721 B.C.and put an end to this northern kingdom.Thousands of Israelites were put to the sword and 27 thousand of their leading men were driven out of their homeland and scattered in the eastern districts of the Assyrian empire and replaced by settlers from other parts of the empire. When the retnaining Israelites intermixed with the settlers they also lost gradually their national and cultural identity.

The other kingdom of the Israelites, called the kingdom of Judah, which was set up in southern Palestine also began to adopt godless ways soon after the death of Prophet Solomon, though its moral degeneration took place at a slower pace than that of Israel. Therefore, it was allowed to exist for a longer period. Then, like the kingdom of Israel, it also began to be subjected to continual attacks, its cities ruined and its capital besieged, but this kingdom could not be wholly destroyed by the Assyrians; it only became a tributary. Afterwards, when inspite of the best reformatory effforts of Prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah the people of Judah did not give up idol-worship and other moral evils, king Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon attacked and captured the whole of Judah in 598 B.C.including Jerusalem and took the king of Judah as prisoner. Even then the Israelites did not mend their ways and paid no heed to the warnings and guidance of Prophet Jeremiah. Instead of reforming their ways, they started making plans to change their fate by revolting against Babylon. At last in 587 B.C.Nebuchadnezzar punished them heavily by invading Judah and destroyed all its important cities. He razed Jerusalem and Solomon's Temple to the ground and did not leave a wall of it standing in place. He drove a large part of the Israelite population out of their land and scattered them into the adjoining countries. The people who were left behind were cursed and subjected to all kinds of humiliations by the neighbouring communities.

This was the first calamity that came as a warning to the Israelites and the first chastisement that they suffered as a result therof.

8. This refers to the lease of time that the Israelites (That is the people of Judah) got after their release from the captivity of Babylon. As for the people of Israel and Samaria, they did not rise again after their moral and spiritual degeneration. But among the people of Judah there still were some people who practised the truth and invited others also to follow it. They carried on their work of invitation to the truth among the remaining Israelites in Judah and exhorted those also to repent and follow the truth who had been driven out into Babylon and other lands. At last the mercy of Allah came to their help. The downfall of Babylon started. The Persian king, Cyrus, took Babylon in 539 B.C.and in the following year issued a decree allowing the Israelites to return to and re-settle in their homeland. The Israelites began to return home in caravan after caravan, and this continued for a long time. Cyrus also allowed the Israelites to rebuild the Temple of Solomon but the neighbouring communities who had settled in this land resisted it. At last Darius I appointed Zerubbabel, a grandson of the last king of Judah, governor of Judah in 522 B.C.who got the Temple rebuilt under the care of Prophet Haggai, Prophet Zechariah and Joshua. In 458 B.C. Ezra arrived in Judah along with an exiled group and the persian king Artaxerxes made the following decree.

"And thou, Ezra, after the wisdom of thy God that is in thine hand, set magistrates and judges, which may judge all the people that are beyond the river, all such as know the laws of thy God; and teach ye them that know them not.

And whosoever will not do the law of thy God and the law of the king let judgment be executed speedily upon him whether it be unto death, or to banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment."(Ezra, 7:25-26).

Taking advantage of this decree, Ezra carried out the revival of the religion of Prophet Moses. He gathered together all the righteous and good people from the Israelites and set up a strong organisation. He compiled and spread the Pentateuch which contained the Torah, made arrangements for the religious education of the Israelites, enforced the law and started purging the people of moral and ideological weaknesses which the had adopted by intermixing with the other communities. He compelled they Jews to divorce the idolatrous wives they had married, and took a covenant from them that they would worship God alone and follow His Law only.

In 455 B.C.an exiled group came back to Judah under Nehemiah whom the Persian king appointed as the ruler of Jerusalem and ordered him to build the wall round the city.Thus, after 150 years the Holy city was fully restored and became the centre of Jewish religion and culture. But the Israelites of northern

Palestine, and Samaria did not benefit by the work of revival done by Ezra. They built a rival sanctuary on Mount Gerizim, and tried to make it the religious centre for the people of the Book. This caused a further, and perhaps the final, split between the Jews and the Samaritans.

The Jews suffered a set-back for a while with the fall of the Persian Empire and the conquests of Alexander the Great and the rise of the Greeks. After the death of Alexander, his kingdom was subdivided into three empires. Syria fell to the lot of the Seleucide empire, with Antioch as its capital, whose ruler Antiochus III incorporated Palestine into his dominions in 198 B.C. These Greek conquerors who were idolatrous by precept and freelance morally felt greatly ill at ease with the Jewish religion and culture. So, they began to propagate the rival Greek way of life and culture by political and economic pressure, and were able to win over a strong section of the Israelites who became their helpers. This external interference caused a split in the Jewish nation. One group among them readily adopted the Greek dress, the Greek language, the Greek way of life and the Greek sports, while the other persistently stuck to their own culture and way of life.

In 175 B.C. when Antiochus IV (who was called Epiphanes, that is, the manifestation of God) came to the throne, he used all his power and authority to stamp out the Jewish religion and culture. He got idols installed in the Holy Temple at Jerusalem and forced the Jews to prostrate themselves before them. He strictly forbade the rite of offering the sacrifices at the altar, and commanded the Jews to offer sacrifices to idolatrous deities instead. He proposed death penalty for those who would keep the Torah in their houses, or observe the Sabbath or perform circumcision of their children. But the Jews did not yield to this coercion, and started a powerful resistance movement, known in history as the revolt of the Maccabees. Though in this struggle the sympathies of the Greece-oriented Jews were with the Greeks, and they fully cooperated with the despots of Antioch to crush the Maccabean revolt, the common Jews who still retained the religious fervour of the days of Ezra sided with the Maccabees, who were ultimately able to drive out the Greeks and establish a free religious state which remained in power till 67 B.C. This state prospered and in time extended to all those territories which had once been under the control the kingdoms of Judah and Israel. It was able to annex a part of the land of the Philistines which had remained unconquered even in the days of Prophets David and Solomon (Peace be upon them).

This is the historical background of the verse of the Qur'ān under commentary.

9. The historical background of the second degeneration and its chastisement is as follows:

[Contd. on p. 602

لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِالْاٰخِرَةِ اَعْتَدْنَا لَهُمْ عَذَابًا اَلِيْمًا ﴿١٠﴾ وَيَدْعُ الْاِنْسَانُ بِالشَّرِّ
دُعَآءَهٗ بِالْخَيْرِ ؕ وَكَانَ الْاِنْسَانُ عَجُوْلًا ﴿١١﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا الَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ اٰيَتَيْنِ
فَمَحَوْنَآ اٰيَةَ الَّيْلِ وَجَعَلْنَآ اٰيَةَ النَّهَارِ مُبْصِرَةً لِّتَبْتَغُوْا فَضْلًا مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ
وَلِتَعْلَمُوْا عَدَدَ السِّنِيْنَ وَالْحِسَابَ ؕ وَكُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَصَّلْنٰهُ تَفْصِيْلًا ﴿١٢﴾ وَكُلَّ
اِنْسَانٍ اَلْزَمْنٰهُ طٰٓئِرَهٗ فِيْ عُنُقِهٖ ؕ وَنُخْرِجُ لَهٗ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ كِتٰبًا يَّلْقٰىهُ
مَنْشُوْرًا ﴿١٣﴾ اِقْرَاْ كِتٰبَكَ ؕ كَفٰى بِنَفْسِكَ الْيَوْمَ عَلَيْكَ حَسِيْبًا ﴿١٤﴾ مَنِ اهْتَدٰى فَاِنَّمَا
يَهْتَدِيْ لِنَفْسِهٖ ۚ وَمَنْ ضَلَّ فَاِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهَا ؕ وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِّزْرَ
اُخْرٰى ؕ وَمَا كُنَّا مُعَذِّبِيْنَ حَتّٰى نَبْعَثَ رَسُوْلًا ﴿١٥﴾ وَاِذَآ اَرَدْنَآ اَنْ نُّهْلِكَ
قَرْيَةً اَمَرْنَا مُتْرَفِيْهَا فَفَسَقُوْا فِيْهَا فَحَقَّ عَلَيْهَا الْقَوْلُ فَدَمَّرْنٰهَا تَدْمِيْرًا ﴿١٦﴾ وَ
كَمْ اَهْلَكْنَا مِنَ الْقُرُوْنِ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ نُوْحٍ ؕ وَكَفٰى بِرَبِّكَ بِذُنُوْبِ عِبَادِهٖ خَبِيْرًۢا
بَصِيْرًا ﴿١٧﴾ مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيْدُ الْعَاجِلَةَ عَجَّلْنَا لَهٗ فِيْهَا مَا نَشَآءُ لِمَنْ نُّرِيْدُ
ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَا لَهٗ جَهَنَّمَ ۚ يَصْلٰىهَا مَذْمُوْمًا مَّدْحُوْرًا ﴿١٨﴾ وَمَنْ اَرَادَ الْاٰخِرَةَ وَ
سَعٰى لَهَا سَعْيَهَا وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ كَانَ سَعْيُهُمْ مَّشْكُوْرًا ﴿١٩﴾ كُلًّا نُّمِدُّ
هٰٓؤُلَآءِ وَهٰٓؤُلَآءِ مِنْ عَطَآءِ رَبِّكَ ؕ وَمَا كَانَ عَطَآءُ رَبِّكَ مَحْظُوْرًا ﴿٢٠﴾ اُنْظُرْ
كَيْفَ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلٰى بَعْضٍ ؕ وَلَلْاٰخِرَةُ اَكْبَرُ دَرَجٰتٍ وَّاَكْبَرُ تَفْضِيْلًا ﴿٢١﴾
لَا تَجْعَلْ مَعَ اللّٰهِ اِلٰهًا اٰخَرَ فَتَقْعُدَ مَذْمُوْمًا مَّخْذُوْلًا ﴿٢٢﴾ وَقَضٰى رَبُّكَ اَلَّا
تَعْبُدُوْٓا اِلَّآ اِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ اِحْسَانًا ؕ اِمَّا يَبْلُغَنَّ عِنْدَكَ الْكِبَرَ اَحَدُهُمَآ اَوْ
كِلٰهُمَا فَلَا تَقُلْ لَّهُمَآ اُفٍّ وَّلَا تَنْهَرْهُمَا وَقُلْ لَّهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيْمًا ﴿٢٣﴾ وَ
اخْفِضْ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ الذُّلِّ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ وَقُلْ رَّبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيٰنِيْ

Indeed the Qur'ān shows that way which is perfectly straight: To those who believe in it and do good deeds, it gives the good news that there is a great reward for them and to those who do not believe in the Hereafter, it gives the warning that a painful torment has been made ready for them.[11] 9-10

Man invokes evil instead of goodness for he is very hasty and impatient.[12] 11

Behold! We have created day and night as two signs: We have deprived the sign of night of light and made the sign of day bright to enable you to seek bounty of your Lord and to reckon months and years. Thus We have made everything manifestly distinct.[13] 12

We have fastened the augury of every man to his own neck,[14] and on the Day of Resurrection We will bring forth a writing which he will find like an open book. (It will be said to him,) "Here is your record: read it. Today you yourself suffice as reckoner against yourself." 13-14

Whosoever adopts the righteous way, his righteous conduct will be for his own good, and whosoever goes astray, his deviation shall bring its consequences on him.[15] No bearer will bear the burden of another.[16] And We do not inflict punishment until We have sent a Messenger[17] (to make Truth distinct from falsehood.) 15

When We decree that a habitation should be destroyed, We give Commands to its well-to-do people and they show disobedience; then that habitation incurs just torment and We totally exterminate it.[18] Just see how many generations have been destroyed by Our Command after Noah. Your Lord is fully aware of the sins of his servants and is seeing everything. 16-17

If a person hankers after the immediate good things of this worldly life,[19] We give him whatever We will; then We condemn such a one to Hell, wherein he will burn, accursed and deprived of mercy.[20] On the other hand, whoso desires the life of the Hereafter and strives for it as best as one should strive, and is a believer, the endeavour of every such person will be appreciated.[21] As regards the provisions of this worldly life, We bestow them on these and on those; this is a gift of your Lord and there is none to withhold the gift of your Lord.[22] But in 18-21

spite of this you can see that We have exalted one people above the others and in the Hereafter these grades will be far greater, and their superiority will be far higher.[23]

22 Do not associate another deity with Allah,[24] otherwise you shall be reduced to a state of ignominy and helplessness.

23-24 Your Lord has enjoined the following:[25]

1. You should not worship anyone but Him.[26]

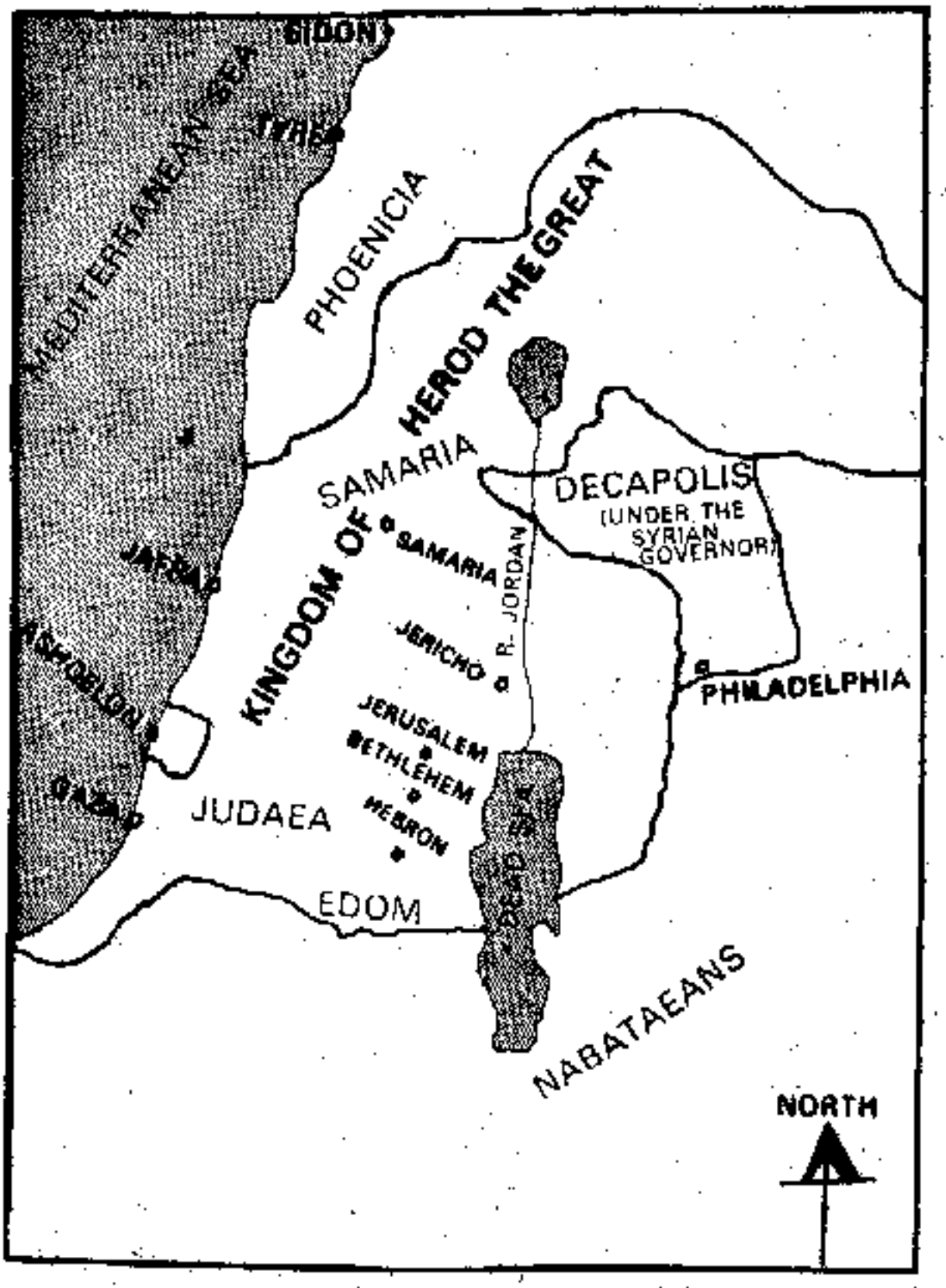
2. Treat your parents with great consideration; if either or both of them live with you in their old age, do not say even "fie" to them; nor rebuke them, but speak kind words to them; treat them with humility and tenderness and pray: "Lord, be merciful to them just as they brought me up with kindness and affection."

Contd. from p.599]

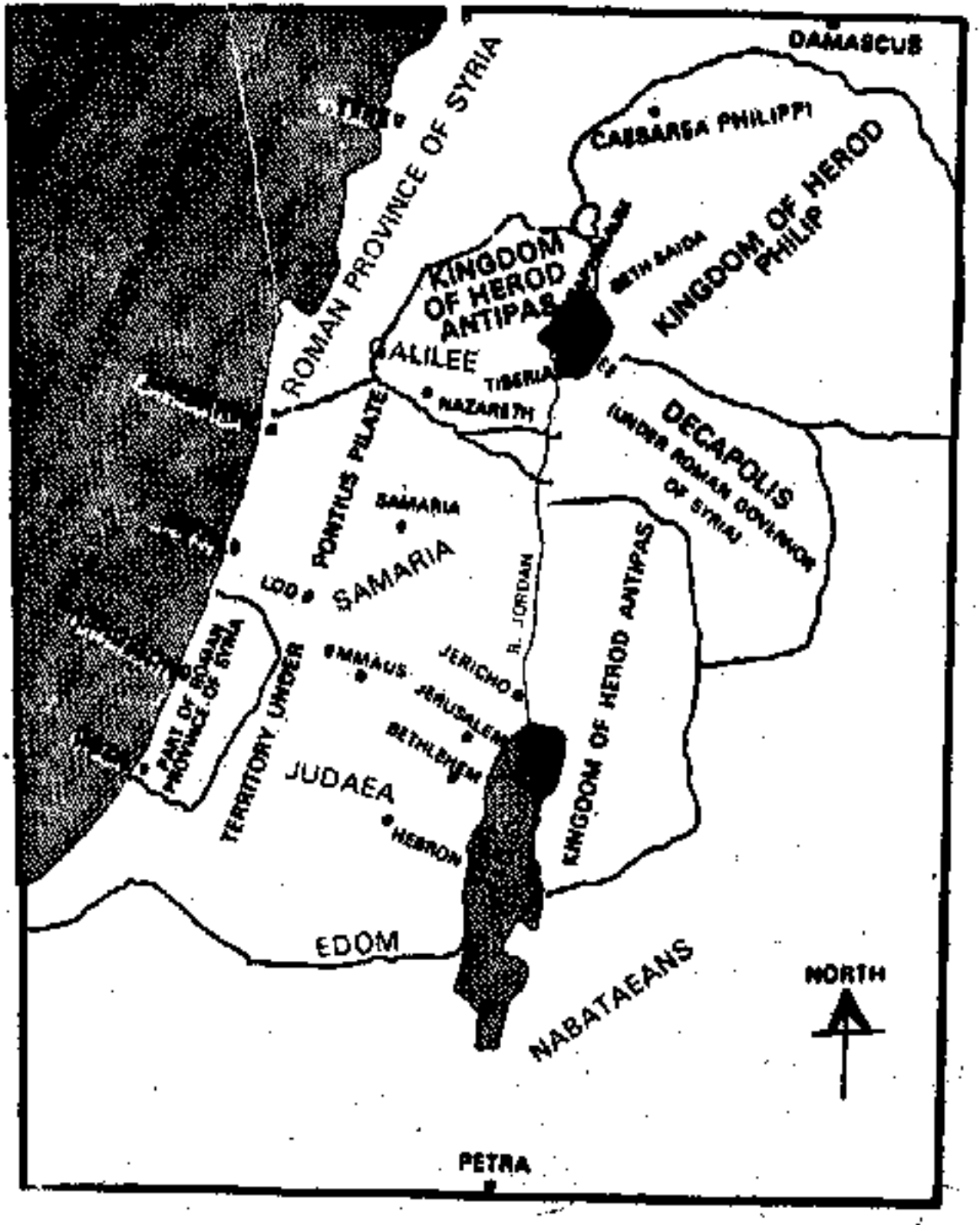
The moral and religious fervour with which the Maccabees had started their movement gradually cooled down and was replaced by love of the world and empty external form. A split appeared among them and they themselves invited the Roman General, Pompey, to come to Palestine. Pompey turned his attention to this land in 63 B.C. and, taking Jerusalem, put an end to the political freedom of the Jews. But the Roman conquerors preferred to rule their dominions through the agency of the local chiefs rather than by direct control. Therefore, a local government was set up in Palestine which eventually passed into the hand of Herod, a clever Jew, in 40 B.C. This ruler is well known as Herod the Great. He ruled over the whole of Palestine and Jordan from 40 to 4 B.C. On the one hand Herod patronised the religious leaders to please the Jews, and on the other, he propagated the Roman culture and won the goodwill of Caesar by showing his loyalty and faithfulness to the Roman Empire. During, his reign, the Jews degenerated and fell to the lowest ebb of moral and religious life.

On the death of Herod his kingdom, was subdivided into three parts. His son, Archelaus, became the ruler of Samaria, Judaea and northern Edom. In A.D. 6. however, Caesar Augustus deprived him of his authority and put the state under his Roman governor, and this arrangement continued up till A.D. 41. This was precisely the time when Prophet Jesus (Peace be upon him) appeared to reform the Israelites whose religious leaders opposed him tooth and nail and even tried to get him the death sentence by the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate.

KINGDOM OF HEROD THE GREAT (40-0 B.C)



PALESTINE IN THE TIME OF PROPHET JESUS CHRIST
(168-63 B.C)



The second son of Herod, Herod Antipas, became the ruler of Galilee and Jordan in northern Palestine, and he was the person who got Prophet John (Peace be upon him) beheaded at the request and desire of a dancing girl.

Herod's third son, Philip, succeeded to the territories bounded on one side by river Yermuk and on the other by Mount Hermon. Philip had been much more deeply influenced by the Roman and Greek cultures than his father and brothers. Therefore the preaching of the truth could not have even so much effect in his land as it had in the other parts of Palestine.

In A.D. 41, the Romans appointed Herod Agrippa, the grandson of Herod the Great, ruler of the territories that had once been under Herod himself. Coming into power this man did whatever he could to persecute the followers of Prophet Jesus (Peace be upon him) and used all the forces at his disposal to crush the movement that was functioning under the guidance of the Disciples to inculcate fear of God in the people and reform their morals.

In order to have a correct estimate of the condition of the common Jews and their religious leaders, one should study the criticisms levelled by Prophet Jesus on them in his sermons contained in the four Gospels. Even a religious man like Prophet John was beheaded before their eyes and not a voice was raised in protest against this barbarity. Then all the religious leaders of the community unanimously demanded death sentence for Prophet Jesus, and none but a few righteous men were there to mourn this depravity. Above all, when Pontius Pilate asked these depraved people, 'which condemned prisoner he should release, according to the custom, at Passover, Jesus or Barabbas the robber', they all cried with one voice 'Barabbas'. This was indeed the last chance Allah gave to the Jews, and then their fate was sealed.

Not long after this, a serious conflict started between the Jews and the Romans, which developed into an open revolt by the former between A.D. 64 and 66. Both Herod Agrippa II and the Roman procurator Floris failed to put down the rebellion. At last, the Romans crushed it by a strong military action and in A.D. 70 Titus took Jerusalem by force. About 1,33,000 people were put to the sword, 67 thousand made slaves, and thousands sent to work in the Egyptian mines and to other cities so that they could be used in amphitheatres for being torn by wild beasts or become the "practice-target" for the sword fighters. All the tall and beautiful girls were picked out for the army of conquest and the Holy City of Jerusalem and the Temple were pulled down to the ground. After this the Jewish influence so disappeared from Palestine that the Jews could not regain power for two thousand years, and the Holy Temple could never be rebuilt. Afterwards the Roman Emperor, Hadrian, restored Jerusalem but renamed it Aelia. The Jews,

however, were not allowed to enter it for centuries. This was the calamity that the Jews suffered on account of their degeneration for the second time.

10. Though this admonition has been given as a parenthesis at the end of the address to the children of Israel, it does not mean that this and the address itself are solely meant for them. As a matter of fact, the whole address is really directed towards the disbelievers of Makkah but, instead of addressing them directly, some important historical events from the history of the children of Israel have been cited in order to serve as admonition for them.

11. This means to warn those persons or people or nations who do not take a lesson from the admonitions of the Qur'ān to be ready to undergo that chastisement which Israelites had to suffer.

12. This is in answer to the foolish demands of the disbelievers of Makkah who repeatedly demanded from the Holy Prophet to bring about that torment with which he threatened them. It is closely connected with the preceding verse, as if to say, "O foolish people instead of asking goodness you demand the torment: can't you realise the sufferings of the community which is visited by God's torment?"

It also contains a subtle warning to those Muslims who prayed for punishment for those disbelievers who persecuted them and rejected the Message obdurately; there were still among those disbelievers many such people who afterwards embraced Islam and became its standard bearers in the world. That is why Allah says, "Man does so because he is very hasty and impatient; " He prays to Allah for all such things as are the immediate need of the time, though often subsequent experience shows that if Allah had granted his prayer, it would have been very harmful to him.

13. Allah invites man to study the wisdom that underlies variety in the world and not get confused and long for monotonous uniformity. In fact, the whole system is based on variety, distinctiveness and diversity in things. For the sake of illustration let us take the case of the signs of day and night: "You see these underlying opposite things daily in your life. If you just consider the underlying wisdom, you will find that without this variety there would have been hardly any activity in the world. Likewise great wisdom lies in the creation of the people with different temperaments, thoughts and inclinations. If Allah had made all men righteous by birth or annihilated disbelievers and wicked people and left only believers and submissive people in the world, the purpose of men's creation could not have been realized. Therefore,. it is wrong to desire that there should only be day and no night. The righteous thing is that these people, who have got the light of guidance, should exert their utmost to remove the darkness of deviation. It is their duty that if they find darkness like that of night, they should pursue it like the sun so that the light of guidance should re-appear".

14. "We have fastened the augury of every man to his own neck": therefore one does not need to take omens from a bird.: This is to remove the superstition of the disbelievers who used to take omens from birds etc., as if to say, "The causes and consequences of good fortune or bad fate exist in man's own person. He merits good fortune because of his own good conduct and good judgment, and likewise, suffers the consequences of evil fate by the lack of these". This was necessitated because foolish people always try to attribute their misfortunes to external causes, when in fact our fate depends on our own deeds, good or bad. If they probe into the causes, they will find that their fate was decided by their own good or bad qualities and judgments.

15. This is to impress that if a person adopts the right way, he does not do any favour to God or His Messenger or a reformer but he himself gets its benefits. On the other hand, if a person deviates from the right way, he can do no harm to God or His Messenger or a reformer, for they desire only to protect men from wrong ways and guide him on to the Right Way, and not for any selfish ends. Therefore, the right course for a wise man is to adopt the righteous way, when it becomes distinct to him what is truth and what is falsehood. On the other hand, if he rejects Truth because of his prejudices and self-interest, he will be his own enemy and not a well-wisher.

16. The Qur'ān has laid great stress on the doctrine of personal responsibility at several places, for one cannot follow the Right Way scrupulously without understanding fully its implication. It means that, everyone is solely responsible for one's moral conduct and is accountable to God as an individual in one's own person and no other person can share the burden of responsibility with him. As an instance, we may take the case of a particular action or a particular way of conduct in which a generation or a community or a large number of people had collaborated. When the people will assemble before Allah on the Day of Judgment their collective action will be analysed so as to lay the burden of its responsibility on each and every person who had been conducive to it, and rewarded or punished in accordance with it. Neither will a person be punished for the part another had played in its performance nor shall the burden of the sin of one individual laid on the shoulders of another. This doctrine has been emphasized over and over again so that a wise man should not act in imitation of another or justify his own conduct by similar deeds of others. If a particular person feels the sense of his own responsibility, he will act in such a way as to come out successful on the Day of Judgment, regardless of what the others do.

17. This is another doctrine which has been impressed on the minds by the Qurān in different ways. This is to emphasize the basic importance that a Messenger has in the dispensation of Divine justice because this is determined in the light of the Message brought by him. This will be employed as an argument in

favour of or against the concerned people. Otherwise the infliction of punishment on the people would be unjust for in that case they could argue that they should not be punished as the knowledge of the righteous way had not been conveyed to them. But after the Message had been conveyed to a particular people, and they had rejected it, there would be left no excuse for them.

It is an irony that instead of accepting the Message some foolish people are misled by reading verses like these and they ask such absurd questions: "What will be the position of those, who might not have received the message of any Prophet?" The wise course for such persons would have been to ask themselves what their own position will be on the Day of Judgment, because they themselves had received the Message. As regards other people, Allah knows best who has received the Message, and when, how and to what extent and what attitude a certain person adopted towards it. In short, Allah alone is aware of whether a particular person received the Message in such a way as to fulfil the required condition for punishment.

18. Here a definite form of Divine procedure for the destruction of a people has been stated. When the well-to-do people of a habitation become disobedient, it is a portent that it is doomed to destruction. After their persistent and continuous transgression, the well-to-do people become so obdurate in their disobedience that they begin to discard the instinctive dictates of their conscience. The same thing has been stated in v. 16: "When We decree that a habitation should be destroyed We give Commands to its well-to-do people and they show disobedience." This is because Allah has created conscience for the guidance of man. Therefore, the dictates of conscience are really the commands of Allah. Thus it has become quite obvious that by "When We decree that a habitation should be destroyed ...." is not meant that Allah intends to destroy it without any reason. It is destroyed because after their disobedience "that habitation incurs Our just wrath and We totally exterminate it." The habitation deserves such a punishment because its common people follow the well-to-do people who are the factual leaders of a community and are mainly responsible for the corruption of the community. At first the well-to-do people commit acts of disobedience, wickedness, mischief, cruelty and tyranny and then the common people follow them and incur the torment of Allah. Incidentally, this is a warning for every community that it should be very discreet and prudent in choosing and electing its leaders and rulers, for if the latter are mean and wicked, they will inevitably lead the community to destruction.

19. The Arabic word *'Ājilah* literally means something which can be had immediately, but the Qur'ān employs it as a term for "This World" which yields its advantages and results in this worldly life. Its antonym is *'Ākhirat* (Hereafter)

which will yield its advantages and results after death in the life of the Next World.

20. The person who does not believe in the life of the Hereafter deserves Hell, because he strives only for the successes and good things of this world and his endeavours are confined to material objects. Consequently, such a person becomes a mere worshipper of this world and adopts wrong conduct, for he has no sense of personal responsibility and accountability to God and ultimately deserves the torment of Hell.

21. "His endeavours will be appreciated": he will be rewarded for the efforts he had made for success in the Hereafter.

22. Allah gives the provisions of this world both to those who strive for this world and to those who strive for the Hereafter, but it is the gift of Allah alone and not of anyone else. It does not lie in the power of the worshippers of the world to deprive the seekers after the Hereafter of these provisions: nor have the seekers after the Hereafter any power to withhold these provisions from the worshippers of the world.

23. This is to show that the seekers after the Hereafter have been exalted over the worshippers of the world even in this worldly life. However, this exaltation is not in regard to the good things of this world —rich food and dress, palatial dwellings, limousines, helicopters and other grand things, but it is from another point of view. They enjoy that true honour, love and good-will which is denied to the tyrants and the rich people in spite of the fact that they may be indigent. This is because whatever the seekers after the Hereafter get in this world, it is earned in righteous and honest ways, while the worshippers of the world amass wealth by employing dishonest and cruel ways. Then the former spend what they get with prudence and righteousness. They fulfil the obligations they owe to others. They spend their money in the Way of Allah and to please Allah on the needy and the indigent. In contrast to them, the worshippers of this world spend their money in the enjoyment of luxuries, wicked works, corruption and spreading other evil things. This makes the former models of God-worship and purity in every respect and distinguishes them so clearly from the worshippers of the world that they shine in exaltation over the latter. These things clearly indicate that in the next world the grades of the seekers after the Hereafter will be far greater and their superiority far higher than those of the worshippers of the world.

24. Or it can be rendered like this: "Do not invent another deity besides Allah", or "Do not set up another as a deity beside Allah."

[Contd. on p.610

صَغِيْرًا ﴿٢٤﴾ رَبُّكُمْ اَعْلَمُ بِمَا فِيْ نُفُوْسِكُمْ ؕ اِنْ تَكُوْنُوْا صٰلِحِيْنَ فَاِنَّهٗ كَانَ
لِلْاَوَّابِيْنَ غَفُوْرًا ﴿٢٥﴾ وَاٰتِ ذَا الْقُرْبٰى حَقَّهٗ وَالْمِسْكِيْنَ وَابْنَ السَّبِيْلِ وَ
لَا تُبَذِّرْ تَبْذِيْرًا ﴿٢٦﴾ اِنَّ الْمُبَذِّرِيْنَ كَانُوْٓا اِخْوَانَ الشَّيٰطِيْنِ ؕ وَكَانَ الشَّيْطٰنُ
لِرَبِّهٖ كَفُوْرًا ﴿٢٧﴾ وَاِمَّا تُعْرِضَنَّ عَنْهُمُ ابْتِغَآءَ رَحْمَةٍ مِّنْ رَّبِّكَ تَرْجُوْهَا
فَقُلْ لَّهُمْ قَوْلًا مَّيْسُوْرًا ﴿٢٨﴾ وَلَا تَجْعَلْ يَدَكَ مَغْلُوْلَةً اِلٰى عُنُقِكَ وَلَا
تَبْسُطْهَا كُلَّ الْبَسْطِ فَتَقْعُدَ مَلُوْمًا مَّحْسُوْرًا ﴿٢٩﴾ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ
يَّشَآءُ وَيَقْدِرُ ؕ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ بِعِبَادِهٖ خَبِيْرًا بَصِيْرًا ﴿٣٠﴾ وَلَا تَقْتُلُوْٓا اَوْلَادَكُمْ خَشْيَةَ
اِمْلَاقٍ ؕ نَحْنُ نَرْزُقُهُمْ وَاِيَّاكُمْ ؕ اِنَّ قَتْلَهُمْ كَانَ خِطْاً كَبِيْرًا ﴿٣١﴾ وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا
الزِّنٰٓى اِنَّهٗ كَانَ فَاحِشَةً ؕ وَسَآءَ سَبِيْلًا ﴿٣٢﴾ وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا النَّفْسَ الَّتِيْ حَرَّمَ اللّٰهُ
اِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ ؕ وَمَنْ قُتِلَ مَظْلُوْمًا فَقَدْ جَعَلْنَا لِوَلِيِّهٖ سُلْطٰنًا فَلَا يُسْرِفْ
فِّي الْقَتْلِ ؕ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ مَنْصُوْرًا ﴿٣٣﴾ وَلَا تَقْرَبُوْا مَالَ الْيَتِيْمِ اِلَّا بِالَّتِيْ هِيَ
اَحْسَنُ حَتّٰى يَبْلُغَ اَشُدَّهٗ ۪ وَاَوْفُوْا بِالْعَهْدِ ۚ اِنَّ الْعَهْدَ كَانَ مَسْئُوْلًا ﴿٣٤﴾
وَاَوْفُوا الْكَيْلَ اِذَا كِلْتُمْ وَزِنُوْا بِالْقِسْطَاسِ الْمُسْتَقِيْمِ ؕ ذٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَّ
اَحْسَنُ تَاْوِيْلًا ﴿٣٥﴾ وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهٖ عِلْمٌ ؕ اِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ
وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ اُولٰٓئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْئُوْلًا ﴿٣٦﴾ وَلَا تَمْشِ فِي الْاَرْضِ مَرَحًا ۚ
اِنَّكَ لَنْ تَخْرِقَ الْاَرْضَ وَلَنْ تَبْلُغَ الْجِبَالَ طُوْلًا ﴿٣٧﴾ كُلُّ ذٰلِكَ كَانَ
سَيِّئُهٗ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ مَكْرُوْهًا ﴿٣٨﴾ ذٰلِكَ مِمَّآ اَوْحٰٓى اِلَيْكَ رَبُّكَ مِنَ الْحِكْمَةِ ؕ
وَلَا تَجْعَلْ مَعَ اللّٰهِ اِلٰهًا اٰخَرَ فَتُلْقٰى فِيْ جَهَنَّمَ مَلُوْمًا مَّدْحُوْرًا ﴿٣٩﴾
اَفَاَصْفٰىكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ بِالْبَنِيْنَ وَاتَّخَذَ مِنَ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ اِنَاثًا ؕ اِنَّكُمْ لَتَقُوْلُوْنَ

Your Lord best knows what is in your minds. If you live righteously, He surely forgives and turns towards all such people as are penitent and obedient.[27] 25-27

3. Fulfil your obligations towards your relatives and the indigent and the wayfarer.

4. Do not be a spendthrift because the spendthrifts are the brethren of Satan and Satan has been ungrateful to his Lord.

5. If you have to put them (the needy persons) off because you are still waiting for Allah's favour that you are expecting, put them off with tenderness.[28] 28

6. Do not tie your hand to your neck nor stretch without any restraint lest you should become blameworthy and left destitute.[29] Your Lord provides plentifully to whom He wills and withholds His provisions from anyone He pleases, for He is fully aware of the condition of His servants and observes them closely.[30] 29-30

7. Do not kill your offsprings for fear of want: for it is We Who provide them and you as well. Indeed their killing is a heinous crime.[31] 31

8. Do not even go near fornication for it is a very indecent thing and a very evil way.[32] 32

9. Do not kill any soul whose killing has been forbidden by Allah[33] except by right[34]: and if one is killed unjustly We have granted the right of retribution to his guardian.[35] So he should not transgress the limits in retaliation,[36] for he shall be helped.[37] 33

10. Do not go near the property of an orphan except in the best manner until he reaches the age of maturity.[38] 34-35

11. Keep your pledges, for you shall be accountable for your pledges.[39]

12. Give full measure when you measure and weigh with even scales[40] when you weigh. This is the best way and will prove to be the best in the end.[41]

13. Do not follow that of which you have no knowledge for you shall be questioned for (the use) of your eyes, ears and minds.[42] 36

37 14. Do not strut about in the land for you can neither cleave the earth nor attain the height of the mountains.[43]

38-40 The evil aspect of each of these Commandments is odious in the sight of your Lord.[44] These are the things of wisdom which your Lord has revealed to you.

And behold! do not associate any other deity with Allah lest you should be cast into Hell reproached and deprived of every good[45]— What! has your Lord favoured you with sons and adopted angels as daughters for Himself?[46] Indeed it is a big lie that you are uttering.

Contd. from p.607]

25. In the succeeding verses, those main basic principles have been put forward on which Islam desires to build the whole structure of human life. These form, so to say, the Manifesto of the Invitation of the Holy Prophet declared by him at the end of the Makki stage of his mission, on the eve of the new stage at Al-Madinah so that it should be known to all that the new Islamic Society and State were going to be built on such and such ideological, moral, cultural economic and legal principles. (Please also refer to vv. 151-153 and E.N.'s thereof of Chapter VI).

26. This commandment is very comprehensive. It prohibits not only the worship of anyone except Allah but also implies that one should obey and serve and submit to Allah alone without question: one should accept His Commandments and Law alone to be worthy of obedience and His authority to be supreme above all. This was not merely an instruction confined to a religious creed and individual practice but it served as the foundation of the moral, cultural, and political system which was practically established in Al-Madinah by the Holy Prophet. Its first and foremost principle was that Allah alone is the Master, Sovereign and Law-giver.

27. This verse enjoins that after Allah's right, the greatest of all the human rights is the right of parents: therefore, the children should obey and serve and respect their parents. The collective morality of society should make it incumbent on children to be grateful and respectful to their parents, they should serve them as they nursed and brought them up in their childhood. Above all, this verse is not merely a moral recommendation but is the basis of the rights and powers of parents the details of which we find in the Books of *Hadith* and *Fiqh*. Moreover, respectful behaviour and obedience to and observance of the rights of parents comprise the most important element of the material education and moral training in the Islamic Society and civilization. Incidentally, all these things have determined for ever the principle that the Islamic State shall make the family life

sound and secure by laws, administrative regulations and educational policy and prevent its disintegration.

28. These three articles (3-5) are meant to impress that a man should not reserve his earnings and his wealth exclusively for his own person. He should do his utmost to fulfil his own necessities of life in a moderate way and render the rights of his relatives, neighbours and other needy persons as well. This attitude will help create the spirit of cooperation, sympathy and justice in the collective Islamic life. Thus every relative will cooperate with the other and every well-to-do person will help the needy in his neighbourhood and a wayfarer would find himself an honourable guest among generous hosts. The conception of rights should be so extensive that every person should consider that all other human beings have rights on his person and his property so that he should serve them with the idea that he is rendering their rights and is not doing any favour to them. In that case one would beg pardon of the other if one was unable to serve him and would pray to God to send his blessings upon him to enable him to serve His servants.

These articles of the Islamic Manifesto were not merely confined to moral teachings but these formed the basis of the Commandments of *Zakāt* and voluntary charity. The laws of inheritance and of making will and endowments were based on these articles. The rights of the orphans were determined by these and it was made obligatory on every habitation to entertain a wayfarer gratis for at least three days. Subsequently the whole moral system was formed so as to create the feelings of generosity, sympathy and cooperation. So much so that the people began to realize the importance of and observe voluntarily the moral rights which could neither be demanded legally nor enforced by law.

29. "Do not tie your hand to your neck" is the literal translation of the Text which means: "Do not be parsimonious" ; "nor stretch it without any restraint" means, "Do not be extravagant". If verses 27 and 29 are read together, it becomes obvious that the Qur'ān desires the people to follow the golden mean, i.e., they should neither be so parsimonious as to prevent the circulation of wealth nor so extravagant as to destroy their own economy. On the contrary, they should learn to behave in a balanced manner so that they should spend money wherever it should be spent and refrain from becoming spendthrifts so as to involve themselves into trouble. As a matter of fact, it is ingratitude towards Allah's favour to spend money for the sake of show, luxury and sinful acts and similar things which are neither man's real necessities nor useful. Therefore, those people who spend money lavishly on such things as these are the brethren of Satan.

These clauses too, are not merely meant to be moral instructions for individuals. They are intended to safeguard the Islamic Society against

extravagance by moral instruction, collective pressure and legal restrictions. Accordingly, in the Islamic State of Al-Madinah practical steps were taken to safeguard the community against extravagance. First, many forms of extravagance and luxury were forbidden by law. Secondly, legal measures were taken against it. Thirdly, social reforms were introduced to put an end to those customs which involved extravagance. The Government was empowered to prevent people from the obvious forms of extravagance. Above all, *Zakāt* and voluntary charity helped to break parsimony and the lust of hoarding money. Besides these measures, a public opinion was created that enabled the people to discriminate between generosity and extravagance and thrift and parsimony: so much so that parsimonious people were looked down upon as ignominious and the thrifty people were regarded as honourable. This moral and mental attitude became a part and parcel of the Muslim society, and even today the parsimonious people and hoarders are looked down upon in the Muslim society, while the generous people are respected everywhere.

30. That is, "Man cannot realize the wisdom of the disparity of wealth among the people": therefore, man should not try to interfere by artificial means with the natural distribution of wealth. It is wrong to level down natural inequality or to aggravate it by artificial means so as to make it unjust. Both the extremes are wrong. The best economic system is that which is established on the Divine Way of the division of wealth.

As a result of the realization of the wisdom of economic disparity, no such problems arose which might have made that disparity an evil in itself so as to demand the creation of a classless society. On the contrary, in the righteous society established at Al-Madinah on these Divine principles which are akin to human nature, the economic differences were not artificially disturbed. But by means of moral and legal reforms these became the means of many moral, spiritual and cultural blessings and benefits instead of becoming the means of injustice. Thus, the wisdom of the disparity created by the Creator of the Universe was practically demonstrated at Al-Madinah.

31. This verse cuts at the very root of the movement of birth control, which has been going on from ancient times to our present age. It was the fear of want that induced people to kill their children or resort to abortion. In our age another plan has been added to these, i.e., contraception. This article of the Islamic Manifesto prohibits the people from reducing the number of mouths by artificial means but exhorts them to increase the means of production according to the natural methods enjoined by .Allah. According to this article, it is one of the biggest mistakes of man to check birth rate as a solution to the want and scarcity of provisions: therefore, it warns him, as if to say, "O man, it is not you who make arrangement for food, but Allah, Who settled you in the land and has been

providing for you and will provide for those who will come after you". History tells us that the food resources have always expanded in proportion to the number of inhabitants of a country; nay, often they have exceeded far more than the needs of the inhabitants. Thus it is a folly on the part of man to interfere with the arrangements of Allah.

It is very significant that as a result of this teaching no movement has ever been started to control birth nor has there been any inclination to infanticide among the Muslims ever since the revelation of the Qur'ān.

32. "Do not even go near fornication." This commandment is meant both for individuals and society as a whole. It warns each individual not only to guard against adultery or fornication itself but against all those things that lead to or stimulate it. As regards society as a whole the commandment enjoins it to make such arrangements as prevent adultery and eradicate the means and stimulants that lead to adultery. Therefore, the society should employ all those legal and educative means that help develop such an environment as prevents and eradicates indecency.

Finally, this article formed the basis of laws and regulations of the Islamic system of life. In order to fulfil its implications adultery and false accusation of adultery were made criminal offences: regulations about "Purdah" were promulgated: the publication of indecent things was banned and drinking of intoxicants was made unlawful: restrictions on music, dancing and pictures which are conducive to adultery were imposed. Then such laws were enacted as made marriage easy; and cut at the root of adultery.

33. "Do not kill any soul" includes not only the prohibition of the killing of other souls but also one's own soul as well for it is also included in the prohibition that immediately follows this command. Thus suicide is regarded as heinous a sin as murder. Some foolish people object to the prohibition of suicide saying that they themselves are the masters of their souls. Therefore, there is nothing wrong in killing one's own self or in destroying one's own property. They forget that every soul belongs to Allah, and none has any right to destroy it, nay, even to abuse it, for this world is a place of trial, where we should undergo the test up to the end of our lives in accordance with the will of Allah. It does not matter whether our circumstances are favourable or adverse for trial. Therefore, it would be wrong to run away from the place of test, not to speak of committing such a heinous crime as suicide (which Allah has prohibited) to escape it, for it means that the one who commits suicide tries to run away from small troubles and ignominies towards greater affliction and eternal torment and ignominy.

[Contd. on p. 616

قَوْلًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٤٦﴾ وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَا فِي هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنِ لِيَذَّكَّرُوْا ؕ وَمَا يَزِيْدُهُمْ
اِلَّا نُفُوْرًا ﴿٤١﴾ قُلْ لَّوْ كَانَ مَعَهٗۤ اٰلِهَةٌ كَمَا يَقُوْلُوْنَ اِذًا لَّابْتَغَوْا اِلٰى ذِي
الْعَرْشِ سَبِيْلًا ﴿٤٢﴾ سُبْحٰنَهٗ وَتَعٰلٰى عَمَّا يَقُوْلُوْنَ عُلُوًّا كَبِيْرًا ﴿٤٣﴾ تُسَبِّحُ
لَهُ السَّمٰوٰتُ السَّبْعُ وَالْاَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيْهِنَّ ؕ وَاِنْ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ اِلَّا يُسَبِّحُ
بِحَمْدِهٖ وَلٰكِنْ لَّا تَفْقَهُوْنَ تَسْبِيْحَهُمْ ؕ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ حَلِيْمًا غَفُوْرًا ﴿٤٤﴾ وَاِذَا قَرَاْتَ
الْقُرْاٰنَ جَعَلْنَا بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَ الَّذِيْنَ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِالْاٰخِرَةِ حِجَابًا مَّسْتُوْرًا ﴿٤٥﴾ وَ
جَعَلْنَا عَلٰى قُلُوْبِهِمْ اَكِنَّةً اَنْ يَّفْقَهُوْهُ وَفِيْۤ اٰذَانِهِمْ وَقْرًا ؕ وَاِذَا ذَكَرْتَ رَبَّكَ
فِي الْقُرْاٰنِ وَحْدَهٗ وَلَّوْا عَلٰۤى اَدْبَارِهِمْ نُفُوْرًا ﴿٤٦﴾ نَحْنُ اَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَسْتَمِعُوْنَ بِهٖۤ
اِذْ يَسْتَمِعُوْنَ اِلَيْكَ وَاِذْ هُمْ نَجْوٰۤى اِذْ يَقُوْلُ الظّٰلِمُوْنَ اِنْ تَتَّبِعُوْنَ اِلَّا رَجُلًا
مَّسْحُوْرًا ﴿٤٧﴾ اُنْظُرْ كَيْفَ ضَرَبُوْا لَكَ الْاَمْثَالَ فَضَلُّوْا فَلَا يَسْتَطِيْعُوْنَ سَبِيْلًا ﴿٤٨﴾ وَ
قَالُوْۤا ءَاِذَا كُنَّا عِظَامًا وَّرُفَاتًا ءَاِنَّا لَمَبْعُوْثُوْنَ خَلْقًا جَدِيْدًا ﴿٤٩﴾ قُلْ كُوْنُوْا
حِجَارَةً اَوْ حَدِيْدًا ﴿٥٠﴾ اَوْ خَلْقًا مِّمَّا يَكْبُرُ فِيْ صُدُوْرِكُمْ ؕ فَسَيَقُوْلُوْنَ مَنْ يُّعِيْدُنَا ؕ
قُلِ الَّذِيْ فَطَرَكُمْ اَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ ؕ فَسَيُنْغِضُوْنَ اِلَيْكَ رُءُوْسَهُمْ وَيَقُوْلُوْنَ مَتٰى
هُوَ ؕ قُلْ عَسٰۤى اَنْ يَّكُوْنَ قَرِيْبًا ﴿٥١﴾ يَوْمَ يَدْعُوْكُمْ فَتَسْتَجِيْبُوْنَ بِحَمْدِهٖ وَ
تَظُنُّوْنَ اِنْ لَّبِثْتُمْ اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا ﴿٥٢﴾ وَقُلْ لِّعِبَادِيْ يَقُوْلُوا الَّتِيْ هِيَ اَحْسَنُ ؕ
اِنَّ الشَّيْطٰنَ يَنْزَغُ بَيْنَهُمْ ؕ اِنَّ الشَّيْطٰنَ كَانَ لِلْاِنْسَانِ عَدُوًّا مُّبِيْنًا ﴿٥٣﴾ رَبُّكُمْ
اَعْلَمُ بِكُمْ ؕ اِنْ يَّشَاْ يَرْحَمْكُمْ اَوْ اِنْ يَّشَاْ يُعَذِّبْكُمْ ؕ وَمَاۤ اَرْسَلْنٰكَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَكِيْلًا ﴿٥٤﴾
وَرَبُّكَ اَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ؕ وَلَقَدْ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَ النَّبِيّٖنَ
عَلٰى بَعْضٍ وَّاٰتَيْنَا دَاوٗدَ زَبُوْرًا ﴿٥٥﴾ قُلِ ادْعُوا الَّذِيْنَ زَعَمْتُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِهٖ فَلَا

We have admonished the people in different ways in the Qur'ān so that they may take warning, yet they are running further and further away from the Truth. O Muhammad, tell them that if there had been other deities beside Allah, as they assert, they would surely have tried to find a way to (dethrone) the Master of the Throne.[47] He is free from and far above the things they say about Him. The seven heavens and the Earth and all the things therein[48] are chanting hymns of His glory[49] along with His praise but you do not understand their hymns. The fact is that He is very Forbearing and Forgiving.[50] 41-44

When you recite the Qur'ān, we place an invisible curtain between you and those who do not believe in the Hereafter and we cover their hearts with a covering so that they understand nothing and we make their ears hard of hearing.[51] And when in the Qur'ān you mention your one Lord only, they turn their faces away in aversion.[52] We know best what they really wish to hear, when they listen to you, and also what they say, when they sit together in secret conversation. These wrongdoers say to one another, "The man you are following is really bewitched"[53]—Behold! what epithets they apply to you! They have gone astray, so they cannot find the Right Way.[54] 45-48

They say, "What ! shall we really be raised up again into a new creation, when we are reduced to bones and dust?" Say to them, ("yes, most certainly you shall be brought back to life,) even if you be stone or iron or even something harder than this which you consider in your minds impossible to be brought to life." At this they will ask, "Who is he who will bring us back to life?" Say to them, "The same Being Who brought you to life in the first instance." Then they will shake their heads at you and ask,[55] "Well, when will this happen?" Say, "That time may be near at hand. On the Day when He will call you, you will rise up in response to it, praising Him, and you will think, "We have remained in this state only for a little while."[56] 49-52

And O Muhammad!, say to My servants,[57] "They should utter only that which is the best of all.[58] In reality, it is Satan who tries to sow discord between human beings. The fact is that Satan is the avowed enemy of man.[59] Your Lord is fully aware of everything concerning you. If He will, He may show mercy to you, and if He will, He may 53-54

give you severe chastisement."[60] And, O Prophet, We have not sent you to be the guardian over people[61];

55 Your Lord is fully aware of all the creatures in the heavens and the earth. We have exalted some Prophets above the others in ranks,[62] and We gave the Psalms to David.[63]

Contd. from p.613]

34. When the Islamic State was established, "killing by right" was confined to five cases only: To punish (1) a wilful murderer for retribution, (2) opponents of the true religion during war, (3) those who attempt to overthrow the Islamic system of government, (4) a man or woman guilty of adultery and (5) an apostate.

35. We have translated the Arabic word *"sultān"* into "the right of retribution". Here it stands for "a ground for legal action". This also lays down the legal principle that in a case of murder, the real plaintiff is not the government but the guardian or the guardians of the murdered person who are authorized to pardon the murderer or receive blood-money instead of taking his life.

36. Transgression in killing would be to kill more persons than the murderer or to kill the criminal by degrees with torment or to disfigure his dead body or to kill him after receiving blood-money, etc., etc. All these things have been forbidden.

37. It has not been defined how succour will be given because at the time of its revelation the Islamic State had not yet been established. After its establishment it was made clear that a guardian was not authorised to enforce retribution by murdering the criminal. The Islamic Government alone is legally authorized to take retribution; therefore, succour for justice should be demanded only from it.

38. This too, was not merely a moral instruction. When the Islamic State was established, legal and administrative methods were adopted to safeguard the rights of orphans, the details of which are found in the literature of *Hadith* and *Fiqh*. Then this principle was extended to cover the cases of all those citizens who were unable to safeguard their own rights. The Holy Prophet himself declared, "I am the guardian of the one who has no guardian". And this is the basis of many rules and regulations of the Islamic Law.

39. "Fulfilment of pledges" was not meant to be merely a moral instruction for individuals but afterwards when the Islamic State was established, this became the guiding principle for the conduct of all internal; and external affairs by the Muslim Community and the Islamic Government.

40. This instruction was not confined to individuals only but it has been made a part of the duties of an Islamic Government to supervise transactions in the markets and streets to see that exact measures and weights are being observed, and prevent their breach and violation by the force of law. Afterwards it was made one of the duties of the government to eradicate dishonesty in all commercial dealings and economic transactions.

41. That is, "Its end will be best in this world and it will be best in the Hereafter." It is best in this world because it produces mutual rust between sellers and buyers. As a result of this, commerce prospers and there is a general prosperity. As regards the Hereafter, there the end depends wholly on honesty, piety and fear of God.

42 The meanings of "Do not follow that of which you have no knowledge" are very comprehensive. It demands that both in individual and collective life, one should not follow mere guess work and presumption instead of "knowledge". This instruction covers all aspects of Islamic life, moral, legal, political, administrative and applies to science, arts and education. It has thus saved the society from numerous evils which are produced in human life by following guesswork instead of knowledge. The Islamic moral code demands: Guard against suspicion and do not accuse any individual or group without proper investigation. In law, it has been made a permanent principle that no action should be taken against anyone without proper investigation. It has been made unlawful to arrest, beat or imprison anyone on mere suspicion during investigation. In regard to foreign relations, the definite policy has been laid down that no action should be taken without investigation, nor should rumours be set afloat. Likewise in education the so-called sciences based on mere guess-work, presumptions and irrational theories have been disapproved. Above all, it cuts at the very root of superstitions, for this instruction teaches the Believers to accept only that which is based on the knowledge imparted by Allah and His Messenger.

43. This instruction warns against the ways of tyrants and vain people and is not merely meant for the individual but also for the collective conduct of the Muslim Community. It was because of this guidance that the rulers, governors and commanders of the Islamic State which was established on the basis of this Manifesto, were free from every tinge of tyranny, arrogance, haughtiness, pride and vanity, so much so that even in the battlefield they never uttered a word which had the slightest indication of any of these vain things. Their gait, dress, dwelling and conveyance showed humility. In short, their ways of conduct were not those of "big ones" but those of humble persons. That is why they never tried to overawe the people of a conquered city by show of pomp and pride.

44. That is, "Allah disapproves of the commission of anything that has been prohibited" or, in other words, "He disapproves of disobedience to any of these Commadments."

45. Though this has been addressed to the Holy Prophet, the real addressee is every human being as in the case of many such verses.

46. Please refer to verses 57-59 and their E.N's.

47. That is, "They would have themselves tried their best to become masters of the Throne". This is because if there had been more than one partners in Godhead, it would produce one of the two results: (1) If they were all independent gods, it was not conceivable that they would agree and co-operate with one another in the management of the boundless universe and there could never have been unanimity, uniformity and balanced proportion in its functioning. There would have been conflict at every step and everyone would have tried to dominate others in order to become its sole master. or (2) if one of them had been the supreme god and the others his obedient servants whom he had delegated some of his powers, then, according to the maxim "power corrupts", they would never have been content with remaining obedient servants of the supreme god and would have conspired to become the supreme god themselves.

Whereas the fact is that in this universe not even a grain of wheat or a blade of grass can grow unless and until everything in the earth and the heavens cooperate with one another for its production. Therefore, only an utterly ignorant and blockheaded person can conceive that there are more than one independent or semi-independent rulers, who carry on the management of this universe. Anyone who has tried to understand the nature and functioning of the universe will most surely arrive at the conclusion that there is One and only One Sovereign ruling over this universe, and there is absolutely no likelihood of any one else to be a co-partner in this at any stage.

48. That is, "The whole of the universe and everything in it bear witness to the fact that their Creator and Guardian is free from each and every fault, defect and weakness, and that He is far above this that there should be any partner or associate in His Godhead."

49. Everything is not only singing hymns of the glory of its Creator but is affording the proof that He is perfect in every respect and worthy of all praise. Everything is an embodiment of the proof that its Creator and Administrator is the one in whom there is perfection of every quality. Therefore, He alone is worthy of praise.

50. That is, "It is due to His forbearance and forgiveness that though you are persistently insolent to Him and go on inventing one false thing or the other

against Him, He forbears and forgives you,. He neither withholds provisions from you nor deprives you of His favours nor strikes an insolent person instantly dead with a thunderbolt. Above all, He is so forbearing and forgiving that He gives long enough respite to the individuals and communities to mend their ways, sends His prophets and reformers for their admonition and guidance and forgives all the past mistakes and errors, if one sincerely repents and adopts the Right way.

51.This refers to the Divine law according to which those people, who do not believe in the Hereafter, cannot benefit from the Qur'ān. Allah has attributed this law to Himself, as if to say, "The natural result of disbelief in the Hereafter is that the heart of such a man becomes dull and his ears become deaf to the Message of the Qur'ān, for Qur'ān bases its invitation on the belief in the Hereafter. So it warns the people that they should not be deluded by this apparent aspect of the worldly life if there appears to be none to call them to account here; for it does not mean they are not at all accountable and answerable to anyone. Likewise if Allah allows freedom of belief to practise *shirk*, atheism, disbelief or *Tauhid* with impunity in this world, and their practice does not appear to make any practical difference in this world, it does not mean that these things do not produce any results at all. For, in fact, everyone shall be accountable and answerable but after death in the Next World. Then every one will realize that the doctrine of Tauhid alone is true and all other doctrines are false. For, if at present the consequences of deeds do not appear after death they shall inevitably appear, but now the Reality has been hidden behind an invisible curtain. There is an inevitable moral law according to which submission to it will bear its fruit and disobedience shall incur its losses. As decisions according to this moral law will be made in the Hereafter, you should not be enticed by the charms of this transitory life. You should, therefore, keep in view that ultimately you shall have to render an account of all your deeds in this world before your Lord, and adopt that true creed and moral attitude which may be conducive to your success in the Hereafter".

From this it must have become obvious that if a man does not believe in the Hereafter, he will never consider the message of the Qur'ān worth his while but will hanker after this world and its joys which he can feel and experience. Naturally his ears will not listen to the Message and it will never reach the depths of his heart. Allah has stated this psychological fact in this verse.

In this connection, it should be remembered that the words contained in this verse were uttered by the disbelievers of Makkah as quoted in verse 5 of Sūrah 41: "They say, O Muhammad, a covering has fallen over our hearts, and our ears are deaf for the Message you give and there is a curtain between you and us. You may go on with your work and we will do whatever we desire." Here the same words have been cited, as if to say, "You consider this state of yours to be a

virtue, whereas this is a curse which has fallen on you according to the Divine Law because of your disbelief of the Hereafter."

52. That is, "They do not like it at all that you should consider Allah alone as your Lord and not mention the Lords they have set up." They seem to think it strange that one should go on praising Allah and never mention the "miracles" of their elders and saints nor praise them for their favours. For, according to them, Allah has delegated the powers of His Godhead to their great ones. Therefore, they say, "What a strange fellow he is! He believes that the knowledge of the unknown, and all the power and authority belong to One Allah alone. Why does he not pay tribute to those who give us children, cure us of diseases and help make our commerce flourish, in short, fulfil all our wishes and desires?"

53. This refers to those devices which they conspired against the Message of the Holy Prophet. They would secretly listen to him, and then hold consultations in order to counteract this. Sometimes it so happened that they suspected that someone had been influenced by the Qur'ān. Then they would sit together and try to dissuade him, saying, "How is it that you have been influenced by a person who himself is bewitched by some enemy and talks like this?"

54. This is to say that they expressed different opinions at different times which contradicted each other. Sometimes they said, "You are a sorcerer" and at other times, "You have been bewitched by someone, or you are a poet or you are possessed of some evil spirit." These contradictory things were a proof that they did not know the reality. Otherwise, they would not have invented a different name to suit each occasion. This also shows that they themselves were not sure of the 'charge' they levelled against him. If they called him by one epithet one day, they themselves felt afterwards that it did not fit in. Then they would invent the second epithet and then the third and so on. Thus every new epithet contradicted the previous ones and showed that there was no truth in them, but in their enmity they were inventing one falsehood after the other.

55. "They will shake their heads at you" in astonishment or to express doubt or disapproval or to scoff at you.

56. That is; "You will feel as if the intervening period between death and coming again to life on the Day of Resurrection was only a few hours or so, for you will think that you had just woken up after a short sleep by the sudden noise produced on the Day."

As regards ".....you will rise up praising Him," it is a subtle hint towards a great reality: at the time of rising up from death both the believer and the unbeliever will be uttering the praise of Allah. The believer will do so because

in the worldly life also he believed in this creed and practised it. As regards the unbeliever, he will have the urge to do so because of the inherent and ingrained tendency in him which he had been suppressing by his folly. In the new life all those deliberate suppressions will vanish away and he will involuntarily utter the praise of Allah.

57. "The believers."

58. The believers have been enjoined to say only the best things even in their discussion with the disbelievers and other opponents of their Faith. They should neither use harsh words nor make exaggerated statements. They should be cool in their conversation and say only what is true and dignified inspite of the provoking behaviour of the opponents.

59. The believers have been forewarned to guard against the provocations of Satan, as if to say, "While answering your opponents, if you feel that you are being aroused to anger, you should at once understand that it is Satan who is exciting you in order to do harm to your dispute, in which he wants to engage human beings for sowing discord between them."

60. This is to warn the believers to refrain from making claims of piety so as to assign Paradise to themselves and Hell to their opponents. It is Allah alone Who has the power to decide these things because He is fully aware of the known and secret and the present and future things about all human beings. It is He Who will decide whether to show mercy to anyone or give chastisement. However, a man may say in the light of the Divine Book that a certain kind of human beings deserve mercy and another kind of people incur chastisement but none has any right to say specifically that a particular man will be given chastisement and another will get salvation.

61. This is to declare that a Prophet is sent to convey the Message and not to decide whether a person will receive mercy or get chastisement. It does not, however, mean that, God forbid, the Holy Prophet himself did such a thing and Allah had to warn him. In fact, this is to warn the Muslims that when the Prophet himself is not in a position as to decide the fates of the people, they should never think of such a thing as to assign Paradise and Hell to anyone.

62. Though this has apparently been addressed to the Holy Prophet, in fact the real addressees are the disbelievers of Makkah. This is to rebuke them for the low opinion they held in regard to the Holy Prophet. As it commonly happens contemporaries, in general, and opponents, in particular, do not see anything great and noble in a person of their own time. The same was the case with the contemporaries of the Holy Prophet who could not see anything extraordinary or

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يَمْلِكُوْنَ كَشْفَ الضُّرِّ عَنْكُمْ وَلَا تَحْوِيْلًا ﴿٥٦﴾ اُولٰٓئِكَ الَّذِيْنَ يَدْعُوْنَ يَبْتَغُوْنَ اِلٰى
رَبِّهِمُ الْوَسِيْلَةَ اَيُّهُمْ اَقْرَبُ وَيَرْجُوْنَ رَحْمَتَهٗ وَيَخَافُوْنَ عَذَابَهٗ ؕ اِنَّ عَذَابَ
رَبِّكَ كَانَ مَحْذُوْرًا ﴿٥٧﴾ وَاِنْ مِّنْ قَرْيَةٍ اِلَّا نَحْنُ مُهْلِكُوْهَا قَبْلَ يَوْمِ الْقِيٰمَةِ
اَوْ مُعَذِّبُوْهَا عَذَابًا شَدِيْدًا ؕ كَانَ ذٰلِكَ فِى الْكِتٰبِ مَسْطُوْرًا ﴿٥٨﴾ وَمَا مَنَعَنَآ اَنْ
نُّرْسِلَ بِالْاٰيٰتِ اِلَّآ اَنْ كَذَّبَ بِهَا الْاَوَّلُوْنَ ؕ وَاٰتَيْنَا ثَمُوْدَ النَّاقَةَ مُبْصِرَةً فَظَلَمُوْا
بِهَا ؕ وَمَا نُرْسِلُ بِالْاٰيٰتِ اِلَّا تَخْوِيْفًا ﴿٥٩﴾ وَاِذْ قُلْنَا لَكَ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ اَحَاطَ بِالنَّاسِ ؕ
وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الرُّءْيَا الَّتِىْٓ اَرَيْنٰكَ اِلَّا فِتْنَةً لِّلنَّاسِ وَالشَّجَرَةَ الْمَلْعُوْنَةَ فِى
الْقُرْاٰنِ ؕ وَنُخَوِّفُهُمْ ۙ فَمَا يَزِيْدُهُمْ اِلَّا طُغْيَانًا كَبِيْرًا ﴿٦٠﴾ وَاِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ
اسْجُدُوْا لِاٰدَمَ فَسَجَدُوْٓا اِلَّآ اِبْلِيْسَ ؕ قَالَ ءَاَسْجُدُ لِمَنْ خَلَقْتَ طِيْنًا ﴿٦١﴾ قَالَ
اَرَءَيْتَكَ هٰذَا الَّذِىْ كَرَّمْتَ عَلَىَّ ۖ لَئِنْ اَخَّرْتَنِ اِلٰى يَوْمِ الْقِيٰمَةِ لَاَحْتَنِكَنَّ
ذُرِّيَّتَهٗٓ اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا ﴿٦٢﴾ قَالَ اذْهَبْ فَمَنْ تَبِعَكَ مِنْهُمْ فَاِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ جَزَآؤُكُمْ
جَزَآءً مَّوْفُوْرًا ﴿٦٣﴾ وَاسْتَفْزِزْ مَنِ اسْتَطَعْتَ مِنْهُمْ بِصَوْتِكَ وَاَجْلِبْ عَلَيْهِمْ
بِخَيْلِكَ وَرَجِلِكَ وَشَارِكْهُمْ فِى الْاَمْوَالِ وَالْاَوْلَادِ وَعِدْهُمْ ؕ وَمَا يَعِدُهُمُ
الشَّيْطٰنُ اِلَّا غُرُوْرًا ﴿٦٤﴾ اِنَّ عِبَادِىْ لَيْسَ لَكَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطٰنٌ ؕ وَكَفٰى بِرَبِّكَ
وَكِيْلًا ﴿٦٥﴾ رَبُّكُمُ الَّذِىْ يُزْجِىْ لَكُمُ الْفُلْكَ فِى الْبَحْرِ لِتَبْتَغُوْا مِنْ فَضْلِهٖ ؕ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ
بِكُمْ رَحِيْمًا ﴿٦٦﴾ وَاِذَا مَسَّكُمُ الضُّرُّ فِى الْبَحْرِ ضَلَّ مَنْ تَدْعُوْنَ اِلَّآ اِيَّاهُ ۚ فَلَمَّا
نَجّٰىكُمْ اِلَى الْبَرِّ اَعْرَضْتُمْ ؕ وَكَانَ الْاِنْسَانُ كَفُوْرًا ﴿٦٧﴾ اَفَاَمِنْتُمْ اَنْ يَّخْسِفَ بِكُمْ
جَانِبَ الْبَرِّ اَوْ يُرْسِلَ عَلَيْكُمْ حَاصِبًا ثُمَّ لَا تَجِدُوْا لَكُمْ وَكِيْلًا ﴿٦٨﴾ اَمْ اَمِنْتُمْ
اَنْ يُّعِيْدَكُمْ فِيْهِ تَارَةً اُخْرٰى فَيُرْسِلَ عَلَيْكُمْ قَاصِفًا مِّنَ الرِّيْحِ فَيُغْرِقَكُمْ

Say to them, "You may invoke for help those deities whom you consider to be (your helpers) beside Allah: They will not be able to relieve you of any trouble nor change it."[64] In fact those whom these people invoke for help themselves seek means of approach to their Lord and vie with one another to be nearer to Him and hope for His mercy and fear His chastisement.[65] The fact is that the chastisement of your Lord is a thing to be dreaded. 56-57

There is no habitation which We shall not destroy before the Day of Resurrection or punish with a severe chastisement.[66] This has been ordained in the Eternal Record. 58

And nothing has hindered Us from sending Signs[67] except that the former people refused to acknowledge them as such. (For example,) We sent the She-camel as an open Sign to Thamūd but they treated her with cruelty;[68] whereas We send Signs only by way of warning.[69] Call to mind, O Muhammad! We told you at the very beginning that your Lord is encircling these people.[70] And We made what We have shown you now[71] and also the Tree which has been cursed in the Qur'ān[72] as a trial for these people." We are giving them warning after warning but each warning helps only to increase their insurrection. 59-60

And remember: when We commanded the angels, "Bow yourselves before Adam," all bowed down but Iblis.[74] He replied, "Should I bow before the one whom you have created of clay?" Then he added, "Just consider this: Was he worthy of this that you have exalted him over me ? If you give me respite up to the Day of Resurrection, I will uproot the whole of his progeny;[75] there shall be only a few of them who will be able to save themselves from me." Allah replied, "Well, get away. Hell is your ample reward and the reward of those who follow you. You may try to allure with your invitation whomsoever you can.[76] Rally against them your horsemen and your footmen;[77] set a partner with them in their wealth and children[78] and entice them with your false promises And Star's promises are nothing but deception—. Indeed you will have no power over my servants."[80] And your Lord suffices for you as a guardian.[81] 61-65

Your (real) Lord is the One, Who drives your ship across the sea[82] so that you may seek His bounty.[83] The fact is that He is very 66-68

merciful towards you. When a misfortune befalls you on the sea, all of those whom you invoke for help fail you but He (is there to help you[K4]): yet when He brings you safe to land, you turn away from Him. Indeed man is very ungrateful. What, do you feel quite secure that sometimes Allah would not cause you to sink underground even on land, or send a deadly whirlwind charged with stones toward you, and you may not find anyone to protect you from it ?

Contd. from p. 621

great in him. He appeared to be merely a common man of their habitation. On the other hand, they were full of praise in regard to the famous personalities who had lived in the past few centuries and imagined them to be the perfection of greatness. That is why, they raised frivolous objections against his claim to Prophethood, as if to say, "Look at this man who considers himself to be a Prophet whereas he cannot stand in comparison with the former great Prophets who are held in high esteem by all." Allah has answered their objection, as if to say, "We are fully aware of all Our creatures in the heavens and the earth, and We know their ranks but you do not know. We know whom to favour with Prophethood, as We have been favouring the former Prophets and exalting some Prophets above others in rank."

63. It appears that Prophet David has been particularly mentioned to show that Prophethood does not mean that one should have nothing to do with the life of this world. This was the answer to the objection they were raising against the claim to Prophethood by Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him), that he was a man of the world. It means to say, "Though David was a king who had to engage himself in worldly affairs more than a common man, he was favoured by Allah with Prophethood, and given the Book, the Psalms. Likewise Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) could be favoured with Prophethood inspite of the fact that he had wife and children and passed his life like other common people and was engaged in buying and selling in the market, in short, in performing all those duties that a man of the world has to perform to meet his necessities of life. This was necessitated because according to the disbelievers of Makkah, such a man of the world could not be considered to be even a pious man, much less a Prophet, for pious people should have nothing to do with the worldly affairs but should sit in seclusion and remember God whereas the Holy Prophet had to work to fulfil the necessities of life.

64. This warning helps to elaborate the Doctrine of *Tauhid* and negate *shirk*. According to this, *shirk* is not confined merely to falling prostrate before any other than Allah but it is also *shirk* to pray to or invoke the help of any other

than Allah; for praying to or calling for help any other than Allah is in reality a kind of worship. Therefore, the one who invokes for help any other than Allah is as much guilty of *shirk* as the worshipper of an idol. This verse also shows clearly that none other than Allah has any power to attend to prayers and relieve any one of trouble or alter any one's bad condition. Hence, if one believes that some one other than Allah has any power, he shall be guilty of *shirk*.

65. The words of the text are a clear proof that the deities and the helpers referred to in this verse were not idols of stone but were either angels or dead saints. It is clearly implied in this that no prophet, no saint and no angel, whom the people invoke for help, has the power to hear prayers and help anyone. They themselves hope for mercy from Allah and dread His punishment and vie with one another in seeking means for nearness to Him.

66. This is to remove the delusion of the disbelievers that their habitations were immune from danger or chastisement. This verse warns that every habitation will be destroyed as a matter of course or by Allah's chastisement.

67. Here "Signs" mean those visible miracles which are presented as a proof of Prophethood. The disbelievers from among the Quraish were demanding such Signs over and over again.

68. This is to warn the disbelievers, as if to say, "It is the mercy of Allah that He is not showing such a Sign so that you might mend your ways but in your folly you presume that such a Sign cannot be presented. You should know that a Sign is not being sent because its denial inevitably brings chastisement and the community is annihilated. You can learn from the past History that those communities which disbelieved in the open Signs were utterly destroyed, such as the people of Thamūd.

69. That is, "Miracles are not shown for fun. These are meant to warn the people that the Prophet is being helped by the Almighty and that they should realize the terrible consequences of disobedience."

70. That is, "At the very beginning of your Prophethood, when the disbelievers of the Quraish had started opposition to your message, We declared that We are encircling them. They might try their worst to obstruct your Message, but they will inevitably fail in this and your Mission will succeed in the teeth of opposition. Can't they see that this declaration has come out true as a miracle, for their opposition has failed to hinder your Message, and they have not been able to do any harm to you at all ? This was a clear Sign of the fact that the Mission of the Holy Prophet was being supported by the Almighty God."

As regards the declaration that Allah is encircling the disbelievers and

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بِمَا كَفَرْتُمْ ۚ ثُمَّ لَا تَجِدُوْا لَكُمْ عَلَيْنَا بِهٖ تَبِيْعًا ﴿٦٩﴾ وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِيْٓ اٰدَمَ وَ
حَمَلْنٰهُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَرَزَقْنٰهُمْ مِّنَ الطَّيِّبٰتِ وَفَضَّلْنٰهُمْ عَلٰى كَثِيْرٍ مِّمَّنْ
خَلَقْنَا تَفْضِيْلًا ﴿٧٠﴾ يَوْمَ نَدْعُوْا كُلَّ اُنَاسٍۢ بِاِمَامِهِمْ ۚ فَمَنْ اُوْتِيَ كِتٰبَهٗ بِيَمِيْنِهٖ
فَاُولٰٓئِكَ يَقْرَءُوْنَ كِتٰبَهُمْ وَلَا يُظْلَمُوْنَ فَتِيْلًا ﴿٧١﴾ وَمَنْ كَانَ فِيْ هٰذِهٖٓ اَعْمٰى
فَهُوَ فِي الْاٰخِرَةِ اَعْمٰى وَاَضَلُّ سَبِيْلًا ﴿٧٢﴾ وَاِنْ كَادُوْا لَيَفْتِنُوْنَكَ عَنِ الَّذِيْٓ
اَوْحَيْنَآ اِلَيْكَ لِتَفْتَرِيَ عَلَيْنَا غَيْرَهٗ ۖ وَاِذًا لَّاتَّخَذُوْكَ خَلِيْلًا ﴿٧٣﴾ وَلَوْلَآ اَنْ
ثَبَّتْنٰكَ لَقَدْ كِدْتَّ تَرْكَنُ اِلَيْهِمْ شَيْـًٔا قَلِيْلًا ﴿٧٤﴾ اِذًا لَّاَذَقْنٰكَ ضِعْفَ الْحَيٰوةِ وَ
ضِعْفَ الْمَمَاتِ ثُمَّ لَا تَجِدُ لَكَ عَلَيْنَا نَصِيْرًا ﴿٧٥﴾ وَاِنْ كَادُوْا لَيَسْتَفِزُّوْنَكَ
مِنَ الْاَرْضِ لِيُخْرِجُوْكَ مِنْهَا وَاِذًا لَّا يَلْبَثُوْنَ خِلٰفَكَ اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا ﴿٧٦﴾ سُنَّةَ مَنْ
قَدْ اَرْسَلْنَا قَبْلَكَ مِنْ رُّسُلِنَا وَلَا تَجِدُ لِسُنَّتِنَا تَحْوِيْلًا ﴿٧٧﴾ اَقِمِ الصَّلٰوةَ لِدُلُوْكِ
الشَّمْسِ اِلٰى غَسَقِ الَّيْلِ وَقُرْاٰنَ الْفَجْرِ ۭ اِنَّ قُرْاٰنَ الْفَجْرِ كَانَ مَشْهُوْدًا ﴿٧٨﴾ وَ
مِنَ الَّيْلِ فَتَهَجَّدْ بِهٖ نَافِلَةً لَّكَ ۖ عَسٰٓى اَنْ يَّبْعَثَكَ رَبُّكَ مَقَامًا مَّحْمُوْدًا ﴿٧٩﴾
وَقُلْ رَّبِّ اَدْخِلْنِيْ مُدْخَلَ صِدْقٍ وَّاَخْرِجْنِيْ مُخْرَجَ صِدْقٍ وَّاجْعَلْ
لِّيْ مِنْ لَّدُنْكَ سُلْطٰنًا نَّصِيْرًا ﴿٨٠﴾ وَقُلْ جَاۗءَ الْحَقُّ وَزَهَقَ الْبَاطِلُ ۭ اِنَّ
الْبَاطِلَ كَانَ زَهُوْقًا ﴿٨١﴾ وَنُنَزِّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْاٰنِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاۗءٌ وَّرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ۙ
وَلَا يَزِيْدُ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ اِلَّا خَسَارًا ﴿٨٢﴾ وَاِذَآ اَنْعَمْنَا عَلَى الْاِنْسَانِ اَعْرَضَ وَنَاٰ
بِجَانِبِهٖ ۚ وَاِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ كَانَ يَـُٔوْسًا ﴿٨٣﴾ قُلْ كُلٌّ يَّعْمَلُ عَلٰي شَاكِلَتِهٖ ۭ
فَرَبُّكُمْ اَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ هُوَ اَهْدٰى سَبِيْلًا ﴿٨٤﴾ وَيَسْـَٔلُوْنَكَ عَنِ الرُّوْحِ ۭ قُلِ الرُّوْحُ
مِنْ اَمْرِ رَبِّيْ وَمَآ اُوْتِيْتُمْ مِّنَ الْعِلْمِ اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا ﴿٨٥﴾ وَلَىِٕنْ شِئْنَا لَنَذْهَبَنَّ

Or, are you not afraid that God may again send you to the sea 69-72
and smite you with a violent tempest and drown you for your ingratitude, and you may not find any one to question Us in regard to this end of yours?—— It is a favour that We have honoured the sons of Adam and blessed them with conveyances on land and sea and provided them with good and pure things and exalted them above many of Our other creatures.[85] Just imagine the scene on the Day, when We will summon every community with its leader: then those, who will be given their records in their right hands, will read their records[86] and will not be wronged in the least; on the other hand, the one, who leads his life in this world as if he were blind shall be blind in the Hereafter, nay, he shall fare even worse than a blind person in finding the way.

O Muhammad these people have left no stone unturned to tempt 73-75
you away from that which We have revealed to you so that you might fabricate something in Our name.[87] Had you done that, they would have made you their friend. It was just possible that you might have inclined a little towards them, if We had not given you strength. But if you had done so, We would have made you taste double chastisement in this world as well as in the Hereafter: then you would have found no helper against Us.[88]

And these people have persistently been trying to uproot you 76
from this land and exile you from it, but if they do so, they will not be able to stay here much longer.[89]

This has always been our Way with the Messengers whom We 77
sent before you,[90] and you will find no change in Our way.

Establish *Salāt*[91] from the declining of the sun[92] to the darkness 78-79
of the night,[93] and be particular about the recital of the Qur'ān[94] at the dawn of the morning, for the recital of the Qur'ān at the dawn is witnessed.[95] Besides this, offer *Tahajjud* Prayer[96] at night: this is an additional prayer for you.[97] That time is not far when your Lord may exalt you to a laudable position.[98]

And pray, "Lord, whereto Thou takest me, take me with truth, 80
and wherefrom Thou takest me out cause me to go out with truth;[99] and grant me a power from Thee to help me."[100]

And declare, "The Truth has come and falsehood has vanished: 81

for falsehood is a thing that must by its nature vanish."[101]

82-84 We are sending down to you through the revelation of the Qur'ān what is a healing and mercy to the Believers, though it adds nothing but loss to the workers of iniquity.[102] Man is a (strange) creature: when We bestow favour on him, he behaves arrogantly and turns his back, but when misfortune befalls him, he begins to despair. O Prophet, say to them, "Everyone is following his own way but your Lord alone knows best who is on the right way."

85 They ask you about "The Spirit."[103] Say, "This Spirit comes by the Command of my Lord, but you have been given only a little of the 'Knowledge'."

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helping the mission of the Prophet, it occurs in several Sūrahs of the first stage of Prophethood at Makkah. For instance, in vv. 17-20 of LXXV, Allah says, "These disbelievers do not learn a lesson from the stories of the people of the Pharaoh and Thamūd but are rejecting the Message whereas Allah is encircling them on all sides."

71. This refers to *Mi'rāj* (Ascension) for here word *"ru'yā"* does not mean "seeing things in a dream" but seeing things actually with physical eyes. It is quite obvious that if it had been a mere "dream" and the Holy Prophet had presented it as a dream to the disbelievers, there was no reason why it should have become a trial for them. Everyday people see strange dreams and relate them to the people but these dreams never become such a curious thing as to make people scoff at the dreamer and accuse him of making a false claim or of being a mad person.

72. This cursed tree, *"Az-Zaqqūm"* which has been mentioned in vv 43-44 of Sūrah XLIV, grows at the bottom of Hell and its dwellers shall have to eat it. This has been called a cursed tree because it is not given to people to eat as a mercy from Allah but as a symbol of His curse so that the accursed people should eat it and get more sore, for this will, so to speak, burn in their bellies like the boiling water.

73. That is, "We showed you such things during the *Mi'rāj* so that they should have the first hand knowledge of the Reality from a truthful and honest man like you and be warned by it to the Right Way. They, however, began to make fun of you, though We had already warned them through you that their evil ways would force them to eat of the *Az-Zaqqūm*. Instead of this they began to scoff at you, saying, 'Just consider the logic of this man: on the one hand, he says

that there is an awful fire burning in Hell and, on the other, he says that trees are growing in it'."

74. Please also refer to II: 30-39, IV: 117-122, VII: 11-25, XIV: 22, XV: 26-43.

This story has been cited here to impress upon the disbelievers that their attitude of arrogance and indifference towards Allah is exactly the same as was adopted by Satan; As a matter of fact, they were following Satan who is the avowed enemy of man, and were being entangled in the snare spread by him who had challenged the progeny of Adam at the very beginning of human history that he would allure and ruin them.

75. That is, "I will uproot them from the high position of Divine Vicegerency which demands steadfastness in obedience. Their removal from that high position is just like the tearing of a tree from its roots."

76. The literal meaning of the Arabic Text is, "You may sweep away those whom you find superficial and weak-minded."

77. Here, Satan has been likened to that robber who assaults a habitation with horsemen and footmen, and orders one to rob this thing and the other to plunder that thing and so on—The horsemen and the footmen of Satan are those jinns and human beings who are engaged in numerous forms and positions in carrying out his mission.

78. This is a very meaningful sentence which depicts a true and perfect picture of the relationship between Satan and his followers. On the one hand, Satan becomes a partner with the one who follows him in the earning and spending of his money without putting in any labour in it; on the other, he does not become a partner in bearing the consequences of his error, crime and sin. But his foolish dupe follows his instructions as if he were a partner, nay, a stronger party. Again in regard to the children of such a man, the father himself bears the whole burden of bringing them up, but under the misguidance of Satan he trains them in wrong and immoral ways as if he alone was not their father but Satan as well was a partner in it.

79. Satan entices them with false promises of success and entangles them in the snare of false expectations.

80. It has two meanings: (1) "You will have no power over human beings to force them to follow your way. What you are allowed to do is that you may delude them by false counsel and entice them by false promises, but they will have the option to follow or not to follow your counsel. You will not have the power over them to force them to follow your way against their will." (2) "You will not

succeed in 'alluring My righteous people. Though the weak-minded will be enticed by you, My righteous people who are steadfast in My obedience will not succumb to you."

81. That is, "Those who will trust in Allah and believe in His guidance and help, will not stand in need of any other support in their trial by Satan for Allah will guide them, protect them and help them to be safe from his allurements. On the other hand, those people, who will place their trust in their own power or that of any other than Allah, will not come out successful in their trial by Satan."

82. This passage (vv. 66-72) is closely connected with the previous one. It tells man that if he wants to protect himself from the allurements, temptations and false promises of Satan who has been his avowed enemy from the day of his creation, he should recognize his real Lord and be steadfast in His obedience. Satan intends to prove that man is not worthy of the honour with which Allah has blessed him. Therefore if he follows any other way he cannot escape the snares of Satan.

In this passage, arguments of *Tauhid* have been put forward in order to make man steadfast in his Faith and refrain from *shirk*.

83. That is, "Try to avail of the economic, social, educational and intellectual benefits which are provided by the sea voyages."

84. That is, "This is a proof of the fact that your real nature knows no other Lord than Allah, and you feel in the depths of your hearts that He alone possesses the real power of every gain or loss. Had it not been so, man would never have invoked Allah at the time when he realized that no other helper could remove his misfortune."

85. That is, "It is an obvious fact that the superiority man enjoys over all other beings on the Earth and all that is in it, has not been bestowed upon him by a jinn or an angel or a prophet. Most surely that is Allah's blessing and favour. Is it not then the height of folly and ignorance that after having achieved such a high rank, man should bow down before any creature of Allah instead of Him?"

86. We learn from the Qur'ān that on the Day of Resurrection, the righteous people will be given their records in their right hands and they will be overjoyed to have a look at it and will show it to others. As regards the wicked people, they will get their records in their left hands and in their shame will try to hide it behind their backs. (Please refer to LXIX: 19-28, LXXXIV: 7-13).

87. In order to understand the significance of this verse, we should keep in view the circumstances through which the Holy Prophet had been passing at Makkah during the preceding decade or so. The disbelievers of Makkah were

exerting their utmost to turn the Holy Prophet away, somehow or other, from his Message of *Tauhid*, which he was presenting, and to force him to make a compromise with shirk and the customs of ignorance. In order to achieve this end, they tempted him in several ways. They practised deception upon him, and tempted him with greed, held out threats, and raised a storm of false propaganda against him, and persecuted him and applied economic pressure and social boycott against him. In short, they did all that could be done to defeat his resolve.

88. This review implies two things: (1) "If you had compromised with falsehood after recognizing the Truth, you might have pleased your degenerate people but would have incurred the wrath of Allah and would have received double chastisement both in this world and in the Hereafter." (2) "No man, not even a Messenger of Allah, can fight single-handed against the deceitful methods of falsehood, unless he receives the succour of Allah." It was the fortitude which Allah had bestowed upon the Holy Prophet, which helped him to remain steadfast on the right position he had taken, so that no persecution, howsoever great, could turn him away in the least from that position.

89. This was a clear prophecy which was made at the time when it appeared to be no more than a mere threat, but it was fulfilled literally in a decade or so. A year after the revelation of this Sūrah, the disbelievers of Makkah compelled the Holy Prophet to leave his home. Then within eight years he entered Makkah as a conqueror, and within two years after this, the whole of Arabia was totally freed from *mushriks*. Then whosoever stayed in that country, he remained there as a Muslim and not as a *mushrik*.

90. That is, "This is how Allah has always dealt with the people who killed or exiled His Messengers. They never survived in the land after this. They were either annihilated by the scourge of Allah or were brought under the sway of an enemy or were subdued by the followers of the Messenger."

91. The Muslims have been commanded to establish *Salāt* immediately after the mention of obstacles and adversities. This implies that the perseverance required to face adverse circumstances is obtained by the establishment of *Salāt*.

92. We have translated the words of the Arabic Text into "the declining of the sun." Though some of the Companions and their followers are of the opinion that it means "the sunset", the majority of them are of the opinion that it means "the declining of the sun from its zenith." Caliph 'Umar, Ibn 'Umar, Anas bin Mālik, Abu Barza-tal-Aslami, Hasan Basri, Sha'abi, Atā', Mujāhid and, according to a Tradition, Ibn 'Abbās (Allah be pleased with them all) are of this opinion and Imam Muhammad Bāqir and Imām Ja'afar Sādiq also are of the same opinion. Besides this, there are some Traditions from the Holy Prophet to the same effect, though they are not so authentic.

93. According to some, the original words of the Arabic text mean "complete darkness of the night", while others take it to mean "midnight" If the first opinion is accepted, it will imply the beginning of the time of the 'Ishā' Prayer and according to the other it will mean "the last limit of the time of "Ishā'."

94. The literal meaning of the word fajr is "dawn", that is, "the beginning of the morning after the darkness of night."

Here the "recital of the Qur'ān in the morning" stands for the Morning Prayer. At some places the Qurān has used the word *Salāt* for 'Prayer' and at other places a particular part of Salāt for Prayer as a whole, e.g., *tasbīh, hamd, zikr, qayām, rukū', sujūd* etc. Likewise, here "recital of the Qur'ān at dawn" does not mean the mere recital of the Qur'ān but its recital during the Prayer. Thus, the Qur'ān has also incidentally referred to the different parts of which *Salāt* is composed and these guided the Holy Prophet to prescribe the definite form of *Salāt* in which it is performed by the Muslims to-day.

95. The recital of the Qur'ān at dawn is witnessed by the angels of Allah to testify it, as has been explained in the Traditions. Though the angels witness each prayer and each good deed the special mention of their being witnesses at the time of the recital of the Qur'ān during the Morning Prayer gives it a particular Importance. That is why the Holy Prophet used to recite long passages from the Qur'ān during the Morning Prayer. His example was followed by the Companions, and the succeeding Muslim scholars held it to be a desirable thing.

In this verse, it has been briefly stated how to establish *Salāt* which was made obligatory on the occasion of *Mi'rāj* at the prescribed timings. It has been ordained that the first Prayer is to be offered before the sunrise and the remaining four after the declining of the sun till the darkness of the night. Afterwards Angel Jibril was sent to the Holy Prophet to define the limits of the timings of each Prayer. According to a Tradition of Abu Da'ūd and Tirmizi related by Ibn 'Abbās, the Holy Prophet said, "Jibril led me in the five Prayers twice near the Ka'abah. On the first day, he offered the *Dhuhr* Prayer just after the declining of the sun, when the shadow of everything was the shortest. Then he offered the 'Asr Prayer when the shadow of each thing was equal to its own length; then the Maghrib Prayer at the time when one breaks one's fast, and the *'Ishā'* Prayer was offered just at the time when twilight had disappeared, and *Fajr* Prayer at the time when it becomes unlawful to eat and drink anything for the one who intends to observe a Fast. The next day he offered the *Dhuhr* Prayer at the time when the shadow of each thing became equal to its own length and the *'Asr* Prayer when the shadow had doubled. The *Maghrib* Prayer was offered as on the previous day and the *'Ishā'* Prayer when one-third of the night had passed away, and the Morning

Prayer when light had spread all over. After this Jibril turned towards me and said, 'O Muhammad, these are the timings of *Salāt* of the Prophets and the right timings are between these two extreme limits."

The Qur'ān has also pointed to these five times of Salāt on different occasions:

(1) "And listen; establish *Salāt* at the two ends of the day and in the early parts of the night..." (IX: 114).

(2) "...And glorify your Lord with His praise before the sunrise *(Fajr)* and before sunset *('Asr)* and then glorify Him during the night *('Ishā')* and then at the ends of the day *(Fajr, Dhuhr and Maghrib)...*" (XX: 130).

(3) "So glorify Allah when it is evening for you *(Maghrib),* and when it is morning *(Fajr).* Praise is only for Him in the heavens and the earth and glorify him in the later part of the afternoon (*'Asr)* and in the afternoon *(Dhuhr).* " *(XXX:* 17-18).

There is great wisdom in this system of the timings of *Salāt.* One of these is to avoid the timings of the worship of the sun-worshippers. This is because the sun has always been in every age one of the greatest deities of the *mushriks,* who worshipped it especially at the time of sunrise and sunset. Therefore, these two times have totally been forbidden for *Salāt.* Besides this, they worshipped the sun at the time of its zenith. That is why Islam has ordained that the Muslims should offer their two Prayers during the day-time after the sun has declined and the *Fajr* Prayer before the sunrise. The Holy Prophet himself has stated this wisdom of the timings of Prayer in several Traditions. For instance, in the Tradition related by 'Amar bin 'Abasah, the Holy Prophet is reported to have replied to a question to this effect: "Offer your Morning Prayer, but refrain from it when the sun is about to rise until it has risen high. For the sun rises between the horns of Satan and the unbelievers fall prostrate before it at that time.

Then after mentioning the *'Asr* Prayer, he said:

"After *'Asr* Prayer, refrain from any Prayer until the sunset, for during that time the sun sets between the horns of Satan and the unbelievers fall prostrate before it."

The rising and the setting of the sun between the horns of Satan is a symbolic expression that has been used in this Tradition. This implies that both these times are used by Satan as temptations for the people. This is, as if to say, that Satan is so pleased with the worship of the unbelievers at the time of sunrise and sunset that he appears to carry the sun on his head as a mark of approval. This interpretation of the Tradition is based on this remark of the Holy Prophet: "The unbelievers fall prostrate before it."

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بِالَّذِیْٓ اَوْحَیْنَآ اِلَیْكَ ثُمَّ لَا تَجِدُ لَكَ بِهٖ عَلَیْنَا وَكِیْلًا ﴿86﴾ اِلَّا رَحْمَةً مِّنْ
رَّبِّكَ ؕ اِنَّ فَضْلَهٗ كَانَ عَلَیْكَ كَبِیْرًا ﴿87﴾ قُلْ لَّىِٕنِ اجْتَمَعَتِ الْاِنْسُ وَالْجِنُّ
عَلٰٓى اَنْ یَّاْتُوْا بِمِثْلِ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنِ لَا یَاْتُوْنَ بِمِثْلِهٖ وَلَوْ كَانَ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ
ظَهِیْرًا ﴿88﴾ وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَا لِلنَّاسِ فِیْ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنِ مِنْ كُلِّ مَثَلٍ ۫ فَاَبٰٓى اَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ
اِلَّا كُفُوْرًا ﴿89﴾ وَقَالُوْا لَنْ نُّؤْمِنَ لَكَ حَتّٰى تَفْجُرَ لَنَا مِنَ الْاَرْضِ یَنْۢبُوْعًا ﴿90﴾
اَوْ تَكُوْنَ لَكَ جَنَّةٌ مِّنْ نَّخِیْلٍ وَّعِنَبٍ فَتُفَجِّرَ الْاَنْهٰرَ خِلٰلَهَا تَفْجِیْرًا ﴿91﴾ اَوْ
تُسْقِطَ السَّمَآءَ كَمَا زَعَمْتَ عَلَیْنَا كِسَفًا اَوْ تَاْتِیَ بِاللّٰهِ وَالْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ قَبِیْلًا ﴿92﴾ اَوْ
یَكُوْنَ لَكَ بَیْتٌ مِّنْ زُخْرُفٍ اَوْ تَرْقٰى فِی السَّمَآءِ ؕ وَلَنْ نُّؤْمِنَ لِرُقِیِّكَ حَتّٰى
تُنَزِّلَ عَلَیْنَا كِتٰبًا نَّقْرَؤُهٗ ؕ قُلْ سُبْحَانَ رَبِّیْ هَلْ كُنْتُ اِلَّا بَشَرًا رَّسُوْلًا ﴿93﴾ وَ
مَا مَنَعَ النَّاسَ اَنْ یُّؤْمِنُوْٓا اِذْ جَآءَهُمُ الْهُدٰٓى اِلَّآ اَنْ قَالُوْٓا اَبَعَثَ اللّٰهُ بَشَرًا
رَّسُوْلًا ﴿94﴾ قُلْ لَّوْ كَانَ فِی الْاَرْضِ مَلٰٓئِكَةٌ یَّمْشُوْنَ مُطْمَىِٕنِّیْنَ لَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَیْهِمْ مِّنَ
السَّمَآءِ مَلَكًا رَّسُوْلًا ﴿95﴾ قُلْ كَفٰى بِاللّٰهِ شَهِیْدًۢا بَیْنِیْ وَبَیْنَكُمْ ؕ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ بِعِبَادِهٖ
خَبِیْرًۢا بَصِیْرًا ﴿96﴾ وَمَنْ یَّهْدِ اللّٰهُ فَهُوَ الْمُهْتَدِ ۚ وَمَنْ یُّضْلِلْ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهُمْ
اَوْلِیَآءَ مِنْ دُوْنِهٖ ؕ وَنَحْشُرُهُمْ یَوْمَ الْقِیٰمَةِ عَلٰى وُجُوْهِهِمْ عُمْیًا وَّبُكْمًا وَّ
صُمًّا ؕ مَاْوٰىهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ ؕ كُلَّمَا خَبَتْ زِدْنٰهُمْ سَعِیْرًا ﴿97﴾ ذٰلِكَ جَزَآؤُهُمْ بِاَنَّهُمْ
كَفَرُوْا بِاٰیٰتِنَا وَقَالُوْٓا ءَاِذَا كُنَّا عِظَامًا وَّرُفَاتًا ءَاِنَّا لَمَبْعُوْثُوْنَ خَلْقًا جَدِیْدًا ﴿98﴾
اَوَلَمْ یَرَوْا اَنَّ اللّٰهَ الَّذِیْ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ قَادِرٌ عَلٰٓى اَنْ یَّخْلُقَ مِثْلَهُمْ
وَجَعَلَ لَهُمْ اَجَلًا لَّا رَیْبَ فِیْهِ ؕ فَاَبَى الظّٰلِمُوْنَ اِلَّا كُفُوْرًا ﴿99﴾ قُلْ لَّوْ اَنْتُمْ
تَمْلِكُوْنَ خَزَآىِٕنَ رَحْمَةِ رَبِّیْٓ اِذًا لَّاَمْسَكْتُمْ خَشْیَةَ الْاِنْفَاقِ ؕ وَكَانَ الْاِنْسَانُ

O Muhammad, We may, if We so will, take back from you all 86-88
of what We have revealed to you: then you will find none to help you
in getting it back from Us. All that you have received is by the favour
of your Lord. Indeed His favour to you is very great.[104] Declare this,
"Even if human beings and jinns should cooperate with one another to
bring forth a book like the Qur'ān, they will never be able to bring
anything like it, even though all of them help one another."[105]

In this Qur'ān, We employed different ways to make the people 89-93
understand the Message, but the majority of them persisted in unbelief,
and they said, "We will not believe in what you say until you cause a
spring to gush forth from the earth for us, or a garden of date-palms
and vines be created for you, and you cause canals to flow in it; or until
you cause the sky to fall on us in fragments, as you threaten us; or you
bring Allah and the angels face to face before us or a house of gold
comes into being for you or you ascend the sky, and we are not going
to believe in your ascension until you bring down to us a writing that
we may read"—O Muhammad, Say to them, "My Lord be glorified!
have I ever claimed to be anything more than a human Messenger?"[106]

Whenever Guidance came before the people nothing prevented 94-95
them from believing in it except this (excuse): they said: "Did Allah
send a human being as His Messenger?"[107] Say to them, "Had angels
settled on the Earth and moved about in peace, We would certainly
have sent an angel as a Messenger to them."[108]

O Muhammad, say to them, "Allah suffices for a witness to 96
judge between you and me: for He is fully aware of and is observing
what His servants are doing."[109]

Whomsoever Allah guides, he alone is rightly guided and 97-99
whomsoever He lets go astray, you will find for such people no other
protector and helper besides Him.[110] On the Day of Resurrection, We
will muster them prostrate upon their faces, blind, dumb and deaf.[111]
Their abode will be Hell: whenever its fire abates, We will rekindle it
for them. This is their recompense, for they rejected Our Signs and said,
"What! shall we really be raised up anew, when we have been reduced
to bones and dust?" Could they not perceive that the same Allah, Who
created the Earth and the Heavens, has the power to create the like of

them? He has ordained a time for resurrecting them which shall inevitably come, but these workers of iniquity persist in their disbelief.

100 O Muhammad, say to them, "Had the treasures of your Lord's blessings been in your possession, you would have held them back lest they should be spent up. Indeed man is very narrow minded."[112]

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96. The literal meaning of *"Tahajjud"* is to rise up by breaking sleep. Therefore, the sentence has been translated into "Offer *Tahajjud* Prayer", which means "Rise up from sleep after the passing of a part of night and then offer your Prayer."

97. *"Nafl"* literally means "something done in addition to an obligatory duty". This shows that the *Tahajjud* Prayer is in addition to the five prescribed Prayers.

98. "..... may exalt you to a laudable position": "You may attain such a high position in this world and in the next world that people from everywhere may be full of praise for you, and you may become a praiseworthy personality." This is, as if to say, "Now your opponents are engaged in calling you names and are trying to defame you throughout the country, and have raised a storm of false accusations against you but that time is not far when the world will ring with the echoes of your praise and in the Hereafter you will become worthy of praise by all creatures." The exaltation of the Holy Prophet to the high position of intercession on the Day of Resurrection is also a part of that "laudable position."

99. This prayer clearly shows that the time of *Hijrah* (Migration) had come near. That is why Allah has instructed the Holy Prophet to this effect: You should follow the truth wherever and in whatever condition you be. If you migrate from a place, you should migrate for the sake of the truth, and wherever you go, you should go for the sake of the truth.

100. That is, "Either grant me power and authority or make some government my helper so that I may use its power to reform the corrupt world." This is because power is required to check indecency and sin and to enforce the law of justice.

Hasan Basri and Qatādah have made the same interpretation of this verse, and the great commentators like Ibn Jarir and Ibn Kathir have adopted the same. This is supported by a Tradition of the Holy Prophet: "Allah eradicates by the power of government those evils, which are not eradicated by the teachings of the Qur'ān." This is a clear proof that according to Islam, political power is also required to introduce reform, for admonition alone is not enough for this. Besides

this, when Allah Himself has taught this prayer to His Prophet for the establishment of His Way and enforcement of His Law, it is not only lawful but desirable to acquire power and those, who consider this to be a worldly thing, are obviously in the wrong. What is really "worldliness" is that one should desire and acquire power for one's own interest. On the contrary, the desire of power for the sake of Allah's Way is not the worship of the world but the worship of God.

101. At the time of this declaration, the persecution of the Muslims was at its height. A large number of them had emigrated to Habash, and those who had remained behind were suffering from untold hardships at Makkah and its suburbs: so much so that the life of the Holy Prophet himself was always in danger. Therefore, to all appearances, falsehood was prevailing everywhere and there was no sign to show that the truth would ever overpower falsehood. That is why the disbelievers took it for a boastful talk and scoffed at it when this declaration was made. But this prophecy of victory did come out true in less than a decade when the Holy Prophet entered the same city of Makkah as a conqueror, and entered the Ka'abah where he made the same declaration while he was breaking the three hundred and sixty idols. According to a Tradition of Bukhārī, related by Hadrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, "On the day of the conquest of Makkah the Holy Prophet went on striking idols and uttering these words: 'The Truth has come and falsehood has vanished; for falsehood is a thing that must by its nature vanish. The Truth has come and falsehood will never reappear nor return'."

102. That is, "Those people who make the Qur'ān their guide and their book of law, are favoured with the blessing of Allah and are cured of all their mental, psychological, moral and cultural diseases. On the other hand, those wicked people who reject this and turn their back on its guidance, in fact, are unjust to themselves. Therefore, the Qur'ān does not allow them to remain even in that bad condition in which they were before its revelation or its knowledge but involves them in a greater loss than before. This is because before the revelation of the Qur'ān or their acquaintance with it, they suffered from ignorance alone but when the Qur'ān came before them and made distinct the difference between Truth and falsehood, no excuse was left with them to remain in their previous condition of ignorance. After this, if they reject its guidance and persist in their deviation, it is a clear proof that they are not ignorant but workers of iniquity and worshippers of falsehood, which are averse to the Truth. For then their position is of the one who, when presented both poison and elixir, makes a choice of poison. Therefore, they themselves are in that case fully responsible for their deviation and whatever crimes they commit after that, shall incur their full punishment. It is obvious that the consequent loss of wickedness must be far greater than the loss of ignorance. The Holy Prophet has summed this up in this concise and

comprehensive sentence: "The Qur'ān is either an argument in your favour or against you."

103. It is generally understood that the Arabic word *"Rūh"* stands here for "soul" as if the people asked the Holy Prophet about the soul of man in regard to its nature, and the answer was that it came by the Command of Allah. But we have great hesitation in accepting this meaning for it could be taken only if the verse be isolated from its context; otherwise these words would become quite incoherent for there is no reason why the question about "soul" should have intervened between the preceding three verses and following verses which deal with the theme of the Qur'ān.

If we read the verse in its context, it becomes quite obvious that here the word *"Rūh"* (The Spirit) stands for the angel who brings Revelation. This was in answer to the question of the *mushriks*, "Where from do you bring the Qur'ān?" as if to say, "O Muhammad, these people ask you about "The Spirit', that is, the source of the Qur'ān or the means of acquiring it", so tell them, "This Spirit comes to me by the Command of my Lord but your knowledge is so little that you cannot distinguish between the nature of human words and the Divinely revealed words. That is why you suspect that this has been fabricated by some man."

The above interpretation is to be preferred, because it fits in excellently between the preceding and the succeeding verses. This is also supported by the Qur'ān itself: " ...He sends down by His Command "The Spirit" to any of His servants He wills so that they should warn the people of the Day, when they shall be assembled together." (XL: 15) "And likewise We have sent down "The Spirit' to you by Our Command: you did not know what the Book was and what the Faith ..." (XLII: 52).

Besides this, Ibn 'Abbās, Qatādah and Hasan Basri (may Allah bestow His mercy upon them all) have also adopted the same interpretation. Ibn Jarir has attributed the same thing to Ibn 'Abbās on the authority of Qatādah, but at the same time he tells a strange thing that Ibn 'Abbās stated this thing only in secret. Again the author of *Rūh-ul-Ma'ānī* cites these words of Hasan and Qatādah: "By rūh is meant Jibril: the question was about the nature of his coming down and inspiring the heart of the Holy Prophet with Revelation."

104. Though these words are apparently addressed by the Holy Prophet, they are in fact meant for the disbelievers who considered the Holy Qur'ān to be either the invention of the Holy Prophet himself or of some other man, who secretly taught him the Qur'ān. They are being told that this is the Word of Allah, as if to say, "Our Prophet has not fabricated the Qur'ān but We have bestowed this on him, and if We take it back from him, the Prophet has no power to invent

such a thing nor has any other man the power to help the Prophet to present such a miraculous Book."

105. This challenge occurs at several other places in the Qur'ān: (II: 23, X: 38-39, XL: 13-14, LII: 33-34). At all these places, this has been cited as an answer to the charge of the disbelievers that Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) has himself invented the Qur'ān but is presenting it as Allah's Word. Besides this, the same has also been refuted in X: 16: "Say also, 'Had not Allah willed that I should recite the Qur'ān to you, I could not have recited it to you, nor could I have been able to give you any information about it: already have I lived a lifetime among you before its revelation. Do you not use your common sense?'"

Now let us turn to the three arguments contained in these verses as a proof that the Qur'ān is the Word of Allah.

(1) The Qur'ān is such a miracle in regard to its language, style, arguments, themes, topics, teachings and prophecies that it is beyond any human power to produce the like of it, as if to say, "You say that a man has invented this but We challenge that even the whole of mankind combined cannot produce a Book like this: nay, even if the *jinns*, whom the *mushriks* worship as deities and whom this Book openly attacks, should come to the help of the disbelievers, they cannot produce a Book like this to refute this challenge."

(2) As regards the charge that Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) has himself invented this Book, the Qur'ān refutes their claim, as if to say, "Muhammad is one of you and not a foreigner. He has lived among you for forty years before the revelation of the Qur'ān. Did you ever hear words like those of the Qur'ān from him even a day before his claim of Prophethood, or did you ever hear him discussing themes and problems contained in the Qur'ān? If you consider the matter from this point of view, it will become obvious to you that the sudden change which has come about in the language, ideas, information, style and the way of thinking of Muhammad, could not take place without Divine Guidance."

(3) "Can you not see that after the recital of the Qur'ān he does not disappear but lives among you? You hear other things than the Qur'ān from him. Do you not notice that the distinction between the two different styles of expression is so obvious that no man can successfully adopt the two styles at one and the same time?" The distinction can also be noticed, even today, between the language of the Qur'ān and that of the Traditions of the Holy Prophet. Anyone well-versed in the Arabic language and literature notices the difference which is so marked that one can

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ع ١١ ١١

١٠٥ قَتُوْرًا ﴿١٠٠﴾ وَلَقَدْ اٰتَيْنَا مُوْسٰى تِسْعَ اٰيٰتٍۭ بَيِّنٰتٍ فَسْـَٔلْ بَنِيْٓ اِسْرَآءِيْلَ اِذْ جَآءَهُمْ
فَقَالَ لَهٗ فِرْعَوْنُ اِنِّيْ لَاَظُنُّكَ يٰمُوْسٰى مَسْحُوْرًا ﴿١٠١﴾ قَالَ لَقَدْ عَلِمْتَ مَآ اَنْزَلَ
هٰٓؤُلَآءِ اِلَّا رَبُّ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ بَصَآئِرَ ۚ وَاِنِّيْ لَاَظُنُّكَ يٰفِرْعَوْنُ مَثْبُوْرًا ﴿١٠٢﴾
فَاَرَادَ اَنْ يَّسْتَفِزَّهُمْ مِّنَ الْاَرْضِ فَاَغْرَقْنٰهُ وَمَنْ مَّعَهٗ جَمِيْعًا ﴿١٠٣﴾ وَّقُلْنَا
مِنْۢ بَعْدِهٖ لِبَنِيْٓ اِسْرَآءِيْلَ اسْكُنُوا الْاَرْضَ فَاِذَا جَآءَ وَعْدُ الْاٰخِرَةِ جِئْنَا
بِكُمْ لَفِيْفًا ﴿١٠٤﴾ وَبِالْحَقِّ اَنْزَلْنٰهُ وَبِالْحَقِّ نَزَلَ ۗ وَمَآ اَرْسَلْنٰكَ اِلَّا مُبَشِّرًا وَّ
نَذِيْرًا ﴿١٠٥﴾ وَقُرْاٰنًا فَرَقْنٰهُ لِتَقْرَاَهٗ عَلَى النَّاسِ عَلٰى مُكْثٍ وَّنَزَّلْنٰهُ تَنْزِيْلًا ﴿١٠٦﴾
قُلْ اٰمِنُوْا بِهٖٓ اَوْ لَا تُؤْمِنُوْا ۗ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ اُوْتُوا الْعِلْمَ مِنْ قَبْلِهٖٓ اِذَا يُتْلٰى عَلَيْهِمْ
يَخِرُّوْنَ لِلْاَذْقَانِ سُجَّدًا ﴿١٠٧﴾ وَّيَقُوْلُوْنَ سُبْحٰنَ رَبِّنَآ اِنْ كَانَ وَعْدُ رَبِّنَا
لَمَفْعُوْلًا ﴿١٠٨﴾ وَيَخِرُّوْنَ لِلْاَذْقَانِ يَبْكُوْنَ وَيَزِيْدُهُمْ خُشُوْعًا ﴿١٠٩﴾ قُلِ ادْعُوا اللّٰهَ
اَوِ ادْعُوا الرَّحْمٰنَ ۭ اَيًّا مَّا تَدْعُوْا فَلَهُ الْاَسْمَآءُ الْحُسْنٰى ۚ وَلَا تَجْهَرْ بِصَلَاتِكَ
وَلَا تُخَافِتْ بِهَا وَابْتَغِ بَيْنَ ذٰلِكَ سَبِيْلًا ﴿١١٠﴾ وَقُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِيْ لَمْ
يَتَّخِذْ وَلَدًا وَّلَمْ يَكُنْ لَّهٗ شَرِيْكٌ فِي الْمُلْكِ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَّهٗ وَلِيٌّ مِّنَ
الذُّلِّ وَكَبِّرْهُ تَكْبِيْرًا ﴿١١١﴾

ع ١٢ ١١ ١٢

And We gave to Moses nine Signs which were quite manifest.[113] 101-104
Now you yourself may inquire from the children of Israel about it: when those Signs came before Pharaoh, he uttered these very words: "O Moses, I consider you to be a bewitched man."[114] Moses replied, "You know it full well that none but the lord of the Heavens and the earth had sent down these signs as eye-openers, [115] and O Pharaoh, I consider you indeed to be a doomed person."[116] At last Pharaoh resolved to uproot Moses and the Israelites from the land but We drowned him and his followers all together. Then we said to the Israelites, "Now you should settle down in the land[117] and when the prescribed time of Resurrection comes about, We will gather all of you together."

We have sent down the Qur'ān with the truth and with the truth 105-109
it has come down; and O Muhammad, We have sent you only to give good news (to the Believers) and warning (to the disbelievers).[118] And we have sent down this Qur'ān piecemeal so that you may recite it to the people gradually piece by piece, and We have sent it down by gradual Revelations[119] (to suit particular occasions). O Muhammad, say to these people, "Whether you believe in it or not, those who were given the knowledge before this,[120] fall prostrate on their faces when it is recited to them and cry out, 'Our lord is glorious and His promise was surely to be fulfiilled'. "And they fall down on their faces, weeping when they listen to it, and this increases their Humility[121] all the more,[122]

O Prophet, say to them, "You may call Him by any name, Allah 110-111
or Rahmān, for it is all the same by whichsoever name you call Him because all His names are most excellent.[123] And do not raise your voice high in your Prayer nor make it very low but adopt the middle way[124] between these two and say, "Praise is for that Allah who has begotten no son nor has any partner in His Kingdom nor is helpless to need any supporter,"[125] And glorify Him in the most glorious way.

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categorically say that these modes of expression cannot belong to one and the same person. (For further reference please also see E.N. 21 of X : 16).

106. This is the second answer to the demand of the disbelievers for a miracle. The first answer is contained in V. 59. The eloquence of this concise answer is above praise: "You demand from me that I should cause a spring to gush forth, or in the twinkling of an eye should bring into being a garden in full bloom with canals flowing in it: or I should cause the heaven to fall into pieces on those of you who are rejecting the message: or I should cause to build a furnished palace of gold: or I should call Allah and the angels to stand before you and testify to this effect: 'We Ourselves have sent down Muhammad as Our Messenger': or I should go up to the sky in your presence and bring down, addressed to you, the letter of authority of my appointment duly signed by Allah so that you may touch it with your hands and read it with your own eyes." The concise answer to these big demands was this, "My Lord be glorified! Have I ever claimed to be anything more than a human Messenger?" It may be expanded like this: "O foolish people! have I claimed to be God that you are demanding such things from me? Did I ever say that I am all-powerful and am ruling over the Earth and the Heavens? From the very first day my claim has been that I am a human being who is bringing the Message from God. Therefore, if you want to judge the authenticity of my claim, you may judge it from my Message. If you are convinced that it is based on the Truth and is absolutely rational, then you should believe in it without making foolish demands. On the other hand, if you find any defect in it, you may reject it. If you want to test whether my claim is based on truth, you should judge it by the standard of my conduct and morals as a human being and my mission. Is it not a folly that, instead of this, you are demanding from me to cleave the earth and cause the sky to fall? Is there any connection whatsoever of Prophethood with things like these?"

107. It implies that this misunderstanding has always been common among the ignorant people of every age that a human being could not be a Messenger of Allah: They rejected a Messenger just because he was a human being and took his meals and had wife and children like themselves. In contrast to this, after the passage of the time the credulous followers of a Messenger began to claim that he was not a human being at all because he was a Messenger. That is why some people made their Messenger their God, others the son of God and still others the incarnation of God. In short, the ignorant people had never been able to understand that a human being could be a Messenger of Allah.

108. This is to say that Messenger does not merely convey the Message but is sent to reform human life in accordance with it. He has to apply the principles of the Message to the circumstances of human beings and has himself to demonstrate practically those principles. Moreover, he has to remove the misunderstandings of those people who try to listen to and understand his Message. Besides this, he has to organize and train the Believers to create a

society based on the teachings of his Message. He has to struggle against those who reject and oppose his Message in order to subdue those powers that are bent upon corruption, and bring about that reformation for which Allah has sent His Messenger. As all these things have to be done in a society of human beings only a human Messenger can perform the mission. If an angel had been sent as a Messenger, the most he could have done was to convey the message, for he could not live among human beings and share their life and problems in order to reform them. It is thus clear that a human Messenger only could be suitable for this purpose.

109. That is, "Allah is fully aware of all my efforts which I am expending in order to reform you, and He is fully aware of the efforts you are making against my mission. His witness is sufficient because He will pass the final judgement."

110. In this verse, the Qur'ān has enunciated a Divine principle. Allah guides to the Right Way only that person who intends to follow His Guidance, and lets go astray that person who intends to go astray. Thereafter none is able to bring back to the Right Way the one against whom Allah has closed the door of guidance because of his own persistent deviation and obduracy. It is obvious that if a man turns his back against the truth and rests content with falsehoods there is no power in the world to make him turn away from falsehood and come to the truth.

This is because after this depravity Allah provides for that wicked person such means as increase his aversion to truth and his love for falsehood.

111. On the Day of Resurrection, they will be raised up blind, dumb and deaf because they behaved like such people in this world and would not see the Truth nor listen to the Truth nor speak the Truth.

112. This verse also suggests the same thing that has already been mentioned in V. 55. This hints at the real psychological reason why the disbelievers of Makkah were not inclined to accept Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him), their contemporary, as a Prophet. For thus they would have to acknowledge his superiority and one does not easily acknowledge the superiority of one's contemporary. This verse may be expanded like this: "Those people who are so narrow-minded that they are unwilling even to acknowledge the real superiority of another, cannot be expected to be generous in spending on others, if they possessed the keys of the treasures of Allah's blessings."

113. It should be noted that this is the third answer to the demand of the disbelievers of Makkah for Signs. They said, "We will not believe in you until you do this and do that before our eyes." In answer to this demand, they are being warned: "Nine clear Signs, like the ones you are demanding, were shown one

after the other to Pharaoh before you and you also know full well what he said, simply because he did not want to believe in Moses; you also know that when he rejected the Prophet, even after seeing the Signs, We drowned him."

The nine Signs mentioned here have also been mentioned in VII: 133. These were: (1) The staff which turned into a monster snake. (2) Moses' bright hand which shone like the sun. (3) The public defeat of the sorcery of the magicians. (4) Universal famine. (5) Storm. (6) Locusts. (7) Lice. (8) Frogs. (9) Rain of blood.

114. This has been particularly mentioned here because the *mushriks* of Makkah attributed the same epithet to the Holy Prophet as contained in V. 47. "These wrong-doers say to each other, 'The man, you are following, is a bewitched person'. "Here they are being warned that in this they were following Pharaoh, who gave the same epithet to Prophet Moses.

In this connection, we want to make a brief reference to an objection which has been raised by the modernists against a Tradition according to which the Holy Prophet once came under the influence of sorcery. They say that this Tradition confirms that the epithet "bewitched" applied to the Holy Prophet by the Quraish was correct, whereas the Qur'ān refutes this as false. They forget that the same argument could be applied to the case of Prophet Moses whom Pharaoh accused of being bewitched, for the Qur'ān says, in XX: 66-67: "When the magicians threw down their cords and rods (instruments of their sorcery), it seemed to Moses as if they were running, as a result of which Moses conceived in his mind a sort of fear." If the words of the Tradition were to be considered against the Qur'ān, do not these words of the Qur'ān contradict its own words that the charge of Moses being bewitched was false? Do these modernists consider this verse to confirm Pharaoh's charge?"

As a matter of fact, these objectors do not know the sense in which the disbelievers of Makkah and Pharaoh called the Holy Prophet and Prophet Moses (Allah's peace be upon them) bewitched. What they meant was that some enemy had so bewitched them that they had lost their senses and so in their insanity claimed to be prophets and delivered a curious message. The Qur'ān refutes this charge as false. As regards the temporary influence of magic on some person or a part of him has not been denied, for the influence of magic is like the effect produced on a person who is hit with a stone. The fact that some prophet was temporarily influenced by magic, does not in any way affect his prophethood adversely. Just as poison produced its effect on a prophet, or a prophet was wounded, so a prophet could also temporarily come under the influence of magic. Such a temporary magic could not cause any defect in his prophethood. God forbid, had magic produced any adverse effect on his reasoning and thinking.

faculties, one might have been sceptical about the authenticity of the Message. And when Pharaoh and the disbelievers of Makkah said that Prophet Moses and the Holy Prophet were bewitched, they meant that they had lost their senses under the influence of magic. The Qur'ān refutes this charge brought against the Prophets.

115. Moses could say these words categorically that the Signs were from the Lord of the Universe because the calamities which visited Egypt could not be brought about by magic or by any human device. For it is not possible for any human power to bring about frogs over vast areas or to cause all granaries in the land to be eaten up by weevils. Then it should also be kept in view that Prophet Moses warned beforehand of an impending Sign, warning Pharaoh to give up his obduracy, and the calamity did come exactly as he had predicted. In these circumstances only a mad or obdurate person could say that those calamities were sent by any other than the Lord of the Heavens and the Earth.

116. That is, "I am not a bewitched man but you are indeed a doomed person. As you have been persistent in your disbelief even after seeing such obvious Divine Signs, you are surely doomed to destruction."

117. This part of the story of Pharaoh has been related here because it applied exactly to the *mushriks* of Makkah who were doing their worst to uproot the Holy Prophet and the Believers from the land of Arabia. This story, so to say, tells them, "Pharaoh resolved to uproot Moses and the Israelites but was himself completely annihilated along with his followers and Moses and his followers settled down in the land. Likewise, if you persist on the same way, you will surely meet with the same end."

118. That is, "It is not your responsibility to cause, in a supernatural manner, springs to gush forth or gardens to grow or pieces of the sky to fall down in order to convince those people who do not judge the Qur'ān by its teachings nor decide between the Truth and falsehood on merit. As the Qur'ān has been sent down with truth, you should present it before the people and tell them plainly that the one, who believes, does so for his own good and the one who rejects it, does it at his own peril."

119. This is an answer to this objection: "Why has not Allah sent down His Message as a whole? Why is He sending it piecemeal? Has Allah any need to think deliberately what to send down?" As the answer to this objection has been given in XVI: 101-102 and in the Explanatory Notes 104-106 added to them, there is no need to repeat the same here.

120. This refers to those people of the Book who were well-versed in the Scriptures and could judge them from their themes and wording.

121. That is, "When they listen to the Qur'ān, they at once recognize that its bearer is the promised Prophet mentioned in the Books of the former Prophets."

122. This attitude of the righteous people of the Book has been mentioned at several places in the Qur'ān, *e.g.*, III: 113-114, 199, V: 83-84.

123. This is the answer to another objection of the disbelievers. They said, "We have heard the name Allah for the Creator but where from have you brought the name *Rahmān*?" This was because the name "*Rahmān*" was not used for Allah and they did not like it.

124. This instruction was given at Makkah. Ibn 'Abbās relates that when the Holy Prophet or his Companions offered their Prayers, they recited the Qur'ān in a loud voice. At this the disbelievers would raise a hue and cry and often called them names. Therefore, they were enjoined that they should neither say their Prayers in such a loud voice as might incite the disbelievers nor should they say it in such a low voice that their own Companions might not hear it. This instruction was discontinued under the changed conditions at Al-Madinah. However, if the Muslims may have to face the same conditions, at any place or at any time, they should observe the same instruction.

125. A subtle sarcasm is implied in the sentence. The *mushriks* believed that Allah had appointed assistants and deputies for the administration of His Kingdom. Obviously this meant that Allah was helpless and powerless to carry out the administration of His Kingdom: therefore, He needed supporters to help Him in the work of His Godhead. This sentence negates their false creeds, saying, "He does not stand in need of any gods and saints in order to delegate to them the different departments of His Godhead or make them governors in different parts of His Kingdom."