

Sūrah Al-Mumtaḥinah

(The Examiner)

This Sūrah is Madanī, and it has 13 verses and 2 sections

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 6

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا عَدُوِّي وَعَدُوَّكُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ تُلْقُونَ إِلَيْهِمُ
بِالْمَوَدَّةِ وَقَدْ كَفَرُوا بِمَا جَاءَكُمْ مِنَ الْحَقِّ يُخْرِجُونَ الرَّسُولَ
وَإِيَّاكُمْ أَنْ تُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ رَبِّكُمْ ۖ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ خَرَجْتُمْ جِهَادًا فِي سَبِيلِي
وَابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِي تُسِرُّونَ إِلَيْهِمُ بِالْمَوَدَّةِ ۗ وَأَنَا أَعْلَمُ بِمَا أَخْفَيْتُمْ
وَمَا أَعْلَنْتُمْ ۖ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْهُ مِنْكُمْ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ سَوَاءَ السَّبِيلِ ﴿١﴾ إِنْ
يَتَّقَوْكُمْ يَكُونُوا لَكُمْ أَعْدَاءً وَيَبْسُطُوا إِلَيْكُمْ أَيْدِيَهُمْ وَالسِّنَنَهُمْ
بِالسُّوءِ وَوَدُّوا لَوْ تَكْفُرُونَ ﴿٢﴾ لَنْ تَنْفَعَكُمْ أَرْحَامُكُمْ وَلَا
أَوْلَادُكُمْ ۖ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ يَفْصِلُ بَيْنَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ
﴿٣﴾ قَدْ كَانَتْ لَكُمْ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ فِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ إِذْ قَالُوا
لِقَوْمِهِمْ إِنَّا بُرَءُؤُا مِنْكُمْ وَمِمَّا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ كَفَرْنَا بِكُمْ
وَبَدَا بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ الْعَدَاوَةُ وَالْبَغْضَاءُ أَبَدًا حَتَّى تُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَحْدَهُ
إِلَّا قَوْلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لِأَبِيهِ لَا اسْتَغْفِرَنَّ لَكَ وَمَا أَمْلِكُ لَكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ
شَيْءٍ ۖ رَبَّنَا عَلَيْنَا تَوَكَّلْنَا وَإِلَيْكَ أَنَبْنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿٤﴾ رَبَّنَا لَا

تَجْعَلُنَا فِتْنَةً لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَاعْفِرْ لَنَا رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٥﴾ لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِيهِمْ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ
الْآخِرَ وَمَن يَتَوَلَّ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ ﴿٦﴾

O you who believe, do not take My enemies and your enemies for friends, expressing love with them, while they have rejected the Truth that has come to you, expelling the Messenger and your selves (from Makkah), merely because you have faith in Allah, your Lord, if you have set out to do *jihād* (struggle) in My way, and to seek My pleasure. You express love with them secretly, while I know what you have concealed and what you have revealed. And any of you who does this has missed the straight path. [1] Should they have access to you, they will become your enemies, and will stretch their hands and tongues towards you with evil; and they desire that you should reject the (True) faith. [2] Neither your womb-relations nor your children will avail you on the Day of Judgment. He will decide between you, and Allah is watchful of what you do. [3] Indeed, there is an excellent example for you in Ibrāhīm and those with him, when they said to their people, "We disown you and what you worship instead of Allah. We disbelieve in you. Enmity and hatred has arisen between us and you forever, unless you believe in Allah alone", – but (his example is) not (to be followed) in what Ibrāhīm said to his father, "I will pray to my Lord for your forgiveness, and I have no power from Allah (to do any thing) for you." – "O our Lord, in you alone we trust, and to you alone we turn for help, and to you is the final return. [4] Our Lord, do not make us persecuted by those who disbelieve, and forgive us, our Lord! You, only You, are the All-Mighty, the All-Wise." [5] Indeed, for you there is an excellent example in them, for anyone who hopes (to meet) Allah and the Last Day. And whoever turns away, then Allah is Free of all needs, Worthy of all Praise. [6]

Commentary

The Sūrah opens with a prohibitory injunction to Muslims against having close and intimate friendship with disbelievers and those who

associate partners with Allah. This injunction was revealed in the context of a particular incident which is mentioned below:

Background of Revelation

The *tafsīr* of Qurṭubī, with reference to Qushairi and Tha'labī, records that after the battle of Badr, before the Conquest of Makkah, a Makkan female vocalist whose name was Sārah, first arrived in Madīnah. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ asked her whether she had migrated to Madīnah. She replied in the negative. Then he asked her whether she had embraced Islam. Again her reply was in the negative. Then he asked her to explain the reason why she arrived in Madīnah. She explained, 'You belong to the high society of Makkah and I used to do my living amongst you. The great leaders of Makkah were killed in the battle of Badr, and you have moved here. My living has become impossible. I am down-and-out and hard-pressed. I have come to you for help.' The Holy Prophet ﷺ said to her, 'You are a professional female singer of Makkah and where are the Makkan youngsters who used to shower money on you?' She said that after the battle of Badr all her functions and singing sessions had come to an end. "Since that time", she said, "nobody has invited me." The Holy Prophet ﷺ encouraged Banū 'Abd-ul-Muṭṭalib to assist her. They helped her with money, clothing and other things and sent her off.

This happened at a time when the pagans of Makkah had failed to honour the treaty of Ḥudaibiyah, and the Holy Prophet ﷺ was making secret preparations to march on Makkah. He had also prayed to Allah that his secret plan must not be prematurely divulged to the people of Makkah. However, from amongst the foremost *Muhājirīn* (Refugees) there was a Companion Sayyidnā Ḥaṭīb Ibn Abī Balta'ah ؓ. He was originally from Yemen, who had settled in Makkah where he had no relatives and had embraced Islam. After migration, he settled in Madīnah, but his family was still in Makkah. The pagans of Makkah used to persecute the Muslims tortuously who had remained in Makkah after the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and his blessed Companions migrated to Madīnah. The Refugees who had relatives in Makkah had some degree of protection. But Sayyidnā Ḥaṭīb Ibn Abī Balta'ah ؓ was worried that he had no relatives to protect his family from the persecution. He seized this opportunity to have his family protected from Makkan persecution. So, he

thought if he did a favor to the Makkans, they would feel obliged to him, and in return they will take care of his family and protect them.

Sayyidnā Ḥaṭīb Ibn Abī Balta'ah ؓ was sure that Allah would grant victory to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and leaking the secret information would not harm the Holy Prophet ﷺ or Islam. He thought if he were to write a letter and inform the Makkans that the Holy Prophet ﷺ intends to attack them, his children would be safe. He thus committed the mistake of writing a letter to the people of Makkah telling them the intention of the Holy Prophet ﷺ to invade upon Makkah. He dispatched the letter with the singing woman, Sārah, who was on her way to Makkah. [Qurṭubī and Maḏharī].

Allah Ta'ālā informed the Holy Prophet ﷺ about it through revelation, and he was also informed that the bearer of the letter, a woman, has reached the place known as *Rauḍah Khākh*. According to a narration in the two Ṣaḥīḥs on the authority of Sayyidnā 'Alī ؓ, the Holy Prophet ﷺ called for him, Abū Marthad and Zubair Ibn 'Awwām ؓ and commanded them to ride their horses and pursue the woman who would be found in Rauḍah Khākh. He said: "There you will find a pagan woman bearing a letter from Sayyidnā Ḥaṭīb Ibn Abī Balta'ah ؓ addressed to the pagans of Makkah. Overtake her and bring back the letter." The Companions, in pursuance of the command, galloped on their horses and went after the woman and found her in the place where the Holy Prophet ﷺ had named. She was seen there riding a camel. They made the camel sit and searched for the letter, but to no avail. They said to themselves that she must have the letter with her because the information of the Holy Prophet ﷺ could never be wrong. She must have hidden it somewhere. They asked her to produce the letter, but she denied any knowledge of it. They then had to adopt a sterner attitude and threatened to remove all her clothes, if she did not surrender the letter. When she saw their determination, she produced it from her loincloth. The letter was brought back to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. When Sayyidnā 'Umar Al-Fārūq ؓ heard the story, he exclaimed seeking the Holy Prophet's ﷺ permission to behead the one who betrayed Allah, His Messenger and all the Muslims.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ asked Sayyidnā Ḥaṭīb Ibn Abī Balta'ah ؓ: 'O Ḥaṭīb! What has prompted you to do this?' Sayyidnā Ḥaṭīb Ibn Abī

Balta'ah ﷺ replied that his faith was not shaken in the least. He explained that he intended to do a favor to the residents of Makkah, so that they might not harm his family. He pleaded that all other *muhājirīn* (Emigrants) had their clans in Makkah, while his family had no one to take care of them.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ said to his Companions: "He has told you the truth." Sayyidnā 'Umar Al-Fārūq ؓ was not convinced on account of his zeal of faith, and repeated his request to kill him. The Holy Prophet ﷺ put forward more compelling arguments. He said:

'He attended Badr. What can I tell you, perhaps Allah looked at those who attended Badr and said, "O People of Badr, do what you like, for I have forgiven you.'

Having heard this, tears rolled down from Sayyidnā 'Umar's ﷺ eyes and he said: "Allah and His Messenger alone has the knowledge of reality." [This narration of Bukhārī is recorded in the Book of Mghāzī: The Battle of Badr, as quoted by Ibn Kathīr]. Some of the versions also have the additional statement of Sayyidnā Ḥaṭīb Ibn Abī Balta'ah ؓ: "I never did this to harm Islam or the Muslims because I knew for sure that Allah will grant victory to the Holy Prophet ﷺ irrespective of whether or not the Makkans came to know about the impending attack."

It was with reference to this incident that Allah revealed the opening verses of Sūrah Al-Mumtaḥinah forbidding the Muslims vehemently to have friendly relations with the infidels.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا عَدُوِّي وَعَدُوَّكُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ تُلْقُونَ إِلَيْهِم بِالْمَوَدَّةِ (O you who believe, do not take My enemies and your enemies for friends, expressing love with them...60:1). The immediate occasion of the revelation of the verse under comment was the incident stated earlier. Such a letter written to the disbelievers amounted to having friendly intimacy with them. This verse uses the expression عَدُوِّي وَعَدُوَّكُمْ "My enemy and your enemy" instead of *kuffār* [infidels] presumably to indicate the underlying cause of the injunction, in that hopes of friendship from your enemy and Allah's enemy are illusory. It needs to be avoided. Furthermore, this expression is an indication that an infidel, as long as he is an infidel, can never be a friend of a Muslim as long as he is a Muslim. An infidel is the enemy of Allah, whereas a Muslim loves Allah. How can there be an intimate

friendship between the two?

(...while they have rejected the Truth that has come to you, expelling the Messenger and your selves [from Makkah], merely because you have faith in Allah, your Lord...60:1). The word *ḥaqq* [truth] refers either to the Qur'ān or to Islam. This part of the verse refers to their *kufr* (rejection of Truth) as the real reason of their enmity. Then it points out even to their hostile attitude, proved on the ground, that they drove the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his followers out of their dear homes, not for any worldly grudge, but for one and only one reason, that is, their faith. Thus it becomes clear that believers as long as they are believers, the non-believers cannot be their intimate friends. This also clarifies that the position Ḥaṭīb had taken was inappropriate. He was wrong in his thinking that if he did them a favor, they would be obliged to him and take care of his family, because they were enemies of the faith. Unless [God forbid!] one loses one's faith, the hope of friendly intimacy with the enemies of Allah is illusory and virtually impossible.

(...if you have set out to do *jihād* (struggle) in My way, and to seek My pleasure...60:1). This statement also points out that if the migration was indeed for the sake of Allah and His good pleasure, it is impossible for an infidel, the enemy of Allah, to take care of Allah's friend.

(...You express love with them secretly, while I know what you have concealed and what you have revealed 60:1). This statement makes it clear that anyone who secretly maintains a friendly intimacy with the unbelievers should not think that it will remain secret. Allah is fully aware of what people do secretly and openly, as it happened in the story recounted above. Allah informed the Holy Prophet ﷺ by revelation and had the secret plot thwarted.

(Should they have access to you, they will become your enemies, and will stretch their hands and tongues towards you with evil;...60:2). The verse indicates how bitter are the feelings of disbelievers towards Muslims. They would use all means, their hands and their tongues, and would spare no effort to harm the Muslims. Therefore, it is impossible that when they find an

opportunity in their favor and overpower Muslims, they will ever exercise tolerance towards them.

وَدُّوا لَوْ تَكْفُرُونَ (...and they desire that you should reject the (true) faith...60:2). The greatest desire of the non-believers' hearts is to see the Muslims revert to disbelief. Thus when the Muslims stretch their hand of friendship towards them, it will be at the cost of their belief. They will never be happy with the Muslims unless they give up their faith.

لَنْ تَنْفَعَكُمْ أَرْحَامُكُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُكُمْ ۚ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ يُفْصَلُ بَيْنَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ (Neither your womb-relations nor your children will avail you on the Day of Judgment. He will decide between you, and Allah is watchful of what you do...60:3). The verse refutes the plea of Sayyidnā Ḥaṭīb رضي الله عنه He did what he did for the love of his children, but they will be of no help on the Day of Resurrection. All relations on that day will come to an end. Parents will flee from their children, and children from their parents, and no secret will ever remain hidden from Allah.

فَدَكَانَتْ لَكُمْ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ فِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ.....حَتَّى تَوَمَّنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَحْدَهُ (Indeed, there is an excellent example for you in Ibrāhīm and those with him, when they said to their people, "We disown you and what you worship instead of Allah. We disbelieve in you. Enmity and hatred has arisen between us and you forever, unless you believe in Allah alone",....60:4). This verse supports and emphasizes the abstaining from maintaining close friendly relations with non-believers. This rule of law is illustrated by the excellent example of Holy Prophet Ibrāhīm عليه السلام whose entire family worshipped idols, but he not only washed his hands of them and disowned them, but also announced, and erected a wall of, enmity and hatred with them for ever, unless and until they give up idol-worship and have belief in Allah alone.

Allaying a Doubt

The current verse emphasizes that Muslims should follow the excellent model of Holy Prophet Ibrāhīm عليه السلام and, it is established in Sūrah Taubah and in other places in the Qur'an that, he prayed for the forgiveness of his father who was an idol-worshipper. This could create doubt that, in pursuance of the command of Allah to follow the example of Prophet Ibrāhīm عليه السلام, it is permitted to pray for the forgiveness of one's parents or other relatives who are idol-worshippers. But the later part of Verse [4] makes an exception to the command of following Ibrāhīm عليه السلام.

إِلَّا قَوْلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لِأَبِيهِ لَا اسْتَغْفِرَنَّ لَكَ (...but [his example is] not [to be followed] in what Ibrāhīm said to his father, "I will pray to my Lord for your forgiveness... 60:4). This implies that it is imperative to follow the model of Holy Prophet Ibrāhīm عليه السلام in all respects, except in the case of prayer for his father's forgiveness. It is not permitted to emulate his *sunnah* in this respect. His reason for praying for his father's forgiveness has been explained in Sūrah Taubah. He prayed for his father's forgiveness before the prohibitory injunction was ordained, or probably when he felt that faith has entered into his father's heart, but when it became plain to him that he was Allah's enemy he washed his hands of him and disowned him, thus فَلَمَّا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ أَنَّهُ عَدُوٌّ لِلَّهِ تَبَرَّأَ مِنْهُ (...and when it became clear to him that he was an enemy of Allah, he renounced him....9:114)

Some of the scholars analyze the phrase إِلَّا قَوْلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ (but not in what Ibrāhīm said ...) grammatically as *istithna' munqaṭi'*, that is, exceptive sentence in which the exception is severed from, or wholly different in kind from, the general term. In terms of this grammatical analysis, praying for his father's forgiveness is not contrary to Abrahamic model. Holy Prophet Ibrāhīm عليه السلام was under the impression that his father had become a Muslim, so he prayed for the forgiveness of his Muslim father. Later when he learnt the truth, he gave up praying for him and renounced him. If anyone believes, even today, that a particular unbeliever has most probably embraced Islam, there is no harm in praying for his pardon. [Qurṭubī]. Allah knows best!

Verses 7 - 9

عَسَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يَجْعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَ الَّذِينَ عَادَيْتُمْ مِنْهُمْ مَوْدَّةً وَاللَّهُ قَدِيرٌ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٧﴾ لَا يَنْهَكُمُ اللَّهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَلَمْ يُخْرِجُوكُمْ مِنْ دِيَارِكُمْ أَنْ تَبَرُّوهُمْ وَتُقْسِطُوا إِلَيْهِمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ ﴿٨﴾ إِنَّمَا يَنْهَكُمُ اللَّهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ قَاتَلُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَأَخْرَجُوكُمْ مِنْ دِيَارِكُمْ وَظَاهَرُوا عَلَى إِخْرَاجِكُمْ أَنْ تَوَلَّوهُمْ وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّهُمْ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٩﴾

Hopefully Allah will bring about love between you and those of them with whom you have enmity. And Allah is Powerful, and Allah is Most-forgiving, Very-Merciful. [7] Allah does not forbid you from doing good and justice to those who did not fight you because of faith, and did not expel you from your homes. Surely Allah loves those who maintain justice. [8] Allah forbids you only from having friendship with those who fought you on account of faith, and expelled you from your homes, and helped (others) in expelling you. And those who develop friendship with them, it is they who are the wrongdoers. [9]

Commentary

The preceding verses vehemently prohibited Muslims to maintain any friendly intimacy with non-believers, even though they had very near blood relationships with them. The noble Companions used to carry out the commands of Allah and His Messenger in letter and spirit. In this matter, they did not care about their personal desires, or about their near and dear ones. This command was also carried out with the result that in some homes the father was a Muslim and the son was an unbeliever or *vice versa*. Friendly relations were severed. Obviously, this situation was not easy for their human nature. That is why Allah gives them the assurance that soon the hardship will be over.

According to some *aḥādīth*, when a servant of Allah gives up his favorite thing for the sake of Allah, Allah delivers it to him in a lawful manner, and at times he is granted something better than it.

The present verses give an indication that those who are implacable enemies of Muslims because of their disbelief would soon become their friends. In other words, Allah will grant the enemies the ability to embrace the Faith and thus restore the mutual relationships. This prophecy was fulfilled on the occasion of the Conquest of Makkah when, besides the unbelievers who were killed, the rest of the people became Muslims. [Maḏharī]. The Holy Qur'ān describes it thus **يَدْخُلُونَ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ أَفْوَاجًا** (...and you see people entering Allah's [approved] religion in multitudes..) [110:2]

It is recorded in Sahih of Bukhari, on the authority of Sayyidah Asmā' bint Abū Bakr رضي الله عنها, that her mother arrived in Madīnah from

Makkah in the state of disbelief. According to a narration in Musnad of Aḥmad, this incident occurred when peace treaty of Ḥudaibiyah with the Makkan Quraish had been concluded and was in force. Her mother's name was Qutailah. She brought gifts for her daughter Sayyidah Asmā' رضي الله عنها, but she refused to accept them. She did not even allow her to enter her house unless she sought the permission of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Sayyidah Asmā' رضي الله عنها asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ how to treat her mother who came to her while still disbeliever. The Holy Prophet ﷺ advised her to treat her kindly, politely and courteously. On that occasion, the following verse was revealed لَا يَنْهَكُمُ اللَّهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ (Allah does not forbid you from doing good and justice to those who did not fight you because of faith 60:8)

Some reports indicate that Sayyidah Asmā's رضي الله عنها mother Qutailah was divorced by Sayyidnā Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه in the Days of Ignorance. Sayyidah Asmā's sister, Sayyidah 'A'ishah رضي الله عنها, was born of the second wife of Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه, namely, Umm Rūmān, who had embraced Islam. [Ibn Kathīr and Maḥzarī].

The verse directs that justice and good behavior should be maintained with those unbelievers who did not fight the Muslims. As for justice, it is obligatory to maintain with every non-Muslim, whether he is a citizen of an Islamic State, or the Muslims have peace agreement with him, or a citizen of an un-Islamic State, even though he is at war with Muslims. Rather, Islam enjoins upon Muslims to do justice even to animals. We are not allowed to lay a burden on them more than they can bear. We need to take care of their fodder and comfort. The focus of the verse, therefore, is upon the direction that they should be treated, not only with justice, but also in good and courteous manner.

Ruling

This verse proves that optional charities may be spent on non-Muslim citizens of an Islamic State and on non-Muslims with whom the Muslims have a peace pact. It is, however, forbidden to spend on non-believers who are at war with Muslims.

إِنَّمَا يَنْهَكُمُ اللَّهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ قَاتَلُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَأَخْرَجُوكُمْ مِنْ دِيَارِكُمْ وَظَاهَرُوا عَلَىٰ إِخْرَاجِكُمْ أَنْ تَوَلَّوْهُمْ
(Allah forbids you only from having friendship with those who fought you on account of faith, and expelled you from your homes, and helped

(others) in expelling you....60:9) This verse speaks of those unbelievers who fought the Muslims in the matter of religion, drove them from their homes or supported their expulsion. These are hostile disbelievers and the Divine injunction in connection with them is to abstain from having friendly or cordial intimacy with them. This verse does not forbid just and kind treatment of them. It merely forbids friendly intimacy and relations. Prohibition of having such friendly intimacy is not restricted only to those enemies who actively wage war against Muslims, but it is extended to *ahludh-dhimmah* [non-Muslim citizens of an Islamic State] and to *ahluṣ-sulḥ* [non-Muslims with whom there is a peace pact]. Intimate and heart-felt friendship is not allowed with them too. On the basis of this juristic principle, Maḏharī has ruled that justice, equity and fairness are necessary even with the hostile disbelievers who are at war with Muslims. Prohibition applies only in the case of cordial and friendly intimacy, not in the case of courteous attitude and kindness. This shows that it is permissible to be polite and courteous to those hostile enemies who are at war with Muslims. However, treating them with tenderness and courtesy should not cause danger, threat, harm or loss to Muslims. Wherever courtesy or tenderness might pose such a danger, it is not permitted to be tender or courteous towards them. Of course, justice and equity in all cases and under all circumstances are necessary and imperative. Allah, the Pure and Exalted, knows best!]

Verses 10 - 13

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا جَاءَكُمُ الْمُؤْمِنَاتُ مُهَجِرَاتٍ فَامْتَحِنُوهُنَّ ط
 اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِإِيمَانِهِنَّ ؕ فَإِنْ عَلِمْتُمُوهُنَّ مُؤْمِنَاتٍ فَلَا تَرْجِعُوهُنَّ إِلَى
 الْكُفَّارِ ط لَا هُنَّ حِلٌّ لَّهُمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحِلُّونَ لَهُنَّ ط وَأَتَوْهُنَّ مَا آنَفَقُوا ط
 وَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْ تَنْكِحُوهُنَّ إِذَا آتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ أَجُورَهُنَّ ط وَلَا
 تُمْسِكُوا بِعَصَمِ الْكُوفَرِ وَسَلُّوا مَا آنَفَقْتُمْ وَلَيْسَلُّوا مَا آنَفَقُوا ط
 ذَلِكُمْ حُكْمُ اللَّهِ ط يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَكُمْ ط وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿١٠﴾ وَإِنْ
 فَاتَكُمْ شَيْءٌ مِّنْ أَزْوَاجِكُمْ إِلَى الْكُفَّارِ فَعَابْتُمْ فَاتُوا الَّذِينَ الَّذِينَ ذَهَبَتْ

أَزْوَاجُهُمْ مِّثْلَ مَا أَنْفَقُوا ۖ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي أَنْتُمْ بِهِ مُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١١﴾
يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِذَا جَاءَكَ الْمُؤْمِنَاتُ يُبَايِعْنَكَ عَلَى أَنْ لَا يُشْرِكْنَ بِاللَّهِ
شَيْئًا وَلَا يَسْرِقْنَ وَلَا يَزْنِينَ وَلَا يَقْتُلْنَ أَوْلَادَهُنَّ وَلَا يَأْتِينَ بِبُهْتَانٍ
يَفْتَرِيهِ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِنَّ وَأَرْجُلِهِنَّ وَلَا يَعْصِيَنَّ فِي مَعْرُوفٍ فَبَايِعُهُنَّ
وَأَسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُنَّ اللَّهُ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٢﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
لَا تَتَوَلَّوْا قَوْمًا غَضِبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ قَدْ يَئِسُوا مِنَ الْآخِرَةِ كَمَا يَئِسَ
الْكُفَّارُ مِنَ أَصْحَابِ الْقُبُورِ ﴿١٣﴾

O you who believe, when the believing women come to you as emigrants, put them to a test. Allah knows best about their faith. So, if you find them faithful, do not send them back to the disbelievers. Neither these (women) are lawful for them, nor are those (disbelievers) lawful for these (women). And give them (the disbelievers) that (dower) which they had paid (to these women). And there is no sin for you if you marry them, when you give them their dowers. And do not hold on to the ties of marriage with the disbelieving women, and ask (their new non-muslim husbands to pay to you) that (dower) which you had paid (to such women), and they (the previous non-muslim husbands of the Muslim women) should ask (their new Muslim husbands) to pay that (dower) which they had paid (to their previous wives). That is the decision of Allah. He decides between you. And Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise. [10] And if some of your (non-muslim) wives have slipped from you, (and their present non-muslim husbands do not pay to you the dower as aforesaid,) and you have your turn (of paying dower to the previous non-muslim husbands of your present wives), then (instead of paying dower to them,) give those whose wives have slipped the like amount of what they had paid (to them). And fear Allah, the One in whom you believe. [11]

O Prophet, when the believing women come to you, seeking *bai'ah* (a pledge of allegiance) with you that they will not ascribe any thing as a partner to Allah, and will not commit theft, and will not commit

fornication, and will not kill their children, and will not come up with a calumny that they falsely attribute between their hands and their feet, and will not disobey you in what is recognized (in Shari'ah), then effect *bai'ah* with them (i.e. accept their pledge) and pray Allah for their forgiveness. Surely Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful. [12]

O you who believe, do not have friendship with a people with whom Allah is angry. They have despaired from the Hereafter as the infidels have despaired from those (buried) in the graves. [13]

Commentary

Cause of Revelation

Peace Treaty of Hudaibiyah and an Analysis of some of its Clauses

These verses are related to the event of the treaty of Hudaibiyah which was discussed at length in Sūrah Al-Fath. After protracted negotiation, a treaty was concluded between the Quraish of Makkah and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ for ten years. Some of the terms of the treaty were accepted only under pressure and the Muslims apparently felt subdued and thus were greatly disturbed. Therefore, the noble Companions expressed extreme grief and indignation but the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was working under Divine direction, in that the temporary feeling of defeat is actually a prelude to 'a clear victory', so he conceded to the fragile terms and conditions of the treaty, and eventually the blessed Companions also accepted.

One of the terms of the treaty was that if any person goes away to Madīnah from Makkah, the Holy Prophet ﷺ will send him back to Makkah, but if any person goes away to Makkah from Madīnah, he will not be returned. The wordings of this clause are general, apparently covering both men and women. In other words, if a Muslim man or woman goes to the Holy Prophet ﷺ from Makkah, he shall send him or her back.

The treaty had hardly been concluded while the Holy Prophet ﷺ was still in Hudaibiyah, several incidents occurred that were trying for the Muslims. One such incident was that of Sayyidnā Abū Jandal ؓ who was imprisoned and held captive by the pagan Quraish in Makkah.

Somehow he managed to escape and appeared before the Holy Prophet ﷺ in the Muslim camp with his feet in fetters. When the blessed Companions saw him, they were totally puzzled. They felt that he should be returned in terms of the treaty but, on the other hand, they thought it would be improper for them to hand their oppressed brother back to the oppressive enemies. But the Holy Prophet ﷺ had already concluded the treaty and the protection and firmness of the principles of Sharī'ah could not be sacrificed on account of an individual. The Holy Prophet ﷺ was, at the same time, foresighted and farsighted. He could foresee the victory of the oppressed Muslims and their salvage very soon. The Holy Prophet ﷺ for sure must have felt natural grief about returning Sayyidnā Abū Jandalؓ, but as he was bound by the terms of the treaty, he explained to him the situation and sent him off.

A similar incident was that of Sayyidah Sa'īdah bint al-Ḥārith al-Aslamiyyah رضى الله عنها, a Muslim lady. She was married to Ṣaifi Ibn Anṣab who was a non-believer. Some reports give his name as Musāfir al-Makhzūmī. Up to this point, marriage relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims was not forbidden. This Muslim lady escaped from Makkah and went to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. The husband followed her and demanded that the Holy Prophet ﷺ should restore his wife to him because he [the Holy Prophet ﷺ] has accepted this condition and the seal of the treaty is still fresh. On that occasion, the above verses were revealed, which declare that marriage tie between Muslims and idol-worshippers is forbidden. Consequently, if a Muslim lady, whether her Islam was known from beforehand, as in the case of Sayyidah Sa'īdah bint al-Ḥārith رضى الله عنها, or her Islam is verified at the time of migration, emigrates and joins the Holy Prophet ﷺ, she will not be returned to her non-Muslim husband, because she is forbidden to him. [Qurṭubī cited this incident in his commentary on the authority of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ].

Hence, these verses clarify that the assumption that the general sense of the wordings of the treaty cover both genders, males as well as females, is incorrect. This condition is acceptable in the case of men, and not in the case of women. The best that can be done in their case is as follows: If a lady becomes Muslim and emigrates to the Muslim land, her *mahr* [dower] should be returned to her non-Muslim husband which he had spent on

her. On the basis of these verses, the Holy Prophet ﷺ clarified the meaning of the clause. Hence, he did not restore the aforementioned Sa'īdah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا to her non-Muslim husband.

According to some reports, Umm Kulthūm, the daughter of the notorious 'Utbah Ibn Abī Mu'ait, emigrated from Makkah and came to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. The disbelievers invoked the treaty and demanded her return. Some reports also indicate that she was married to 'Amr Ibn al-Āṣ [who had not become a Muslim until then]. Her two brothers along with her escaped from Makkah and reached the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Her husband 'Amr Ibn al-Āṣ came to Madīnah to take her back. In compliance with the terms of the treaty, the two brothers, 'Umarah and Walid, were sent back, but the Holy Prophet ﷺ did not send Sayyidah Umm Kulthūm رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا and said that the clause applied to men, not to women. At this, the verses were revealed and confirmed the Holy Prophet's ﷺ interpretation.

Besides, several other reports relate similar incidents of other women who reached the Holy Prophet ﷺ after embracing Islam. Obviously, there is no contradiction in these narratives. Possibly all these incidents have taken place.

Exemption of Women from the Terms of the Treaty is not a Breach of Treaty. It is a clarification by Mutual Agreement of Parties Concerned.

Qurṭubī's above narration indicates that the wordings of the relevant clause were, though general, did not, according to the Holy Prophet ﷺ, cover women. Therefore, he clarified this position in Hudaibiyah, and these verses were revealed to confirm it. According to other versions, it seems that the Holy Prophet ﷺ went along with the general import of the clause, which covered women as well as men. These verses abrogated the general meaning of it, and the Holy Prophet ﷺ made it clear to the Quraish of Makkah, then and there, that the women are exempted from the clause. Consequently, he did not send them back. This shows that this exception was neither a breach of the treaty, which was highly unlikely from the Holy Prophet ﷺ, nor was it the case of ending the treaty. It was, in fact, a case of clarifying the true import of the clause. It does not matter whether this was the Holy Prophet's ﷺ understanding from the outset or whether he restricted the generality of the clause to men, to the exclusion

of women, after the revelation of the verse. At any rate, even after the clarification, both parties confirmed the peace treaty and acted upon it for a period of time. As a result of the peace pact, roads were safe and secure. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ wrote letters to the kings and emperors of the world. Abū Sufyān's trading caravan freely went into the Syrian territory where Heraclius invited him to his royal court and investigated about the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

In short, even after the clarification both parties took the treaty as a valid document and acted upon it for a period of time. Therefore, it is not true to construe the clarification of the clause as a breach or termination of the treaty. Allah knows best!

Let us now study the meaning of the verses:

Testing the Believing Emigrant Women

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا جَاءَكُمُ الْمُؤْمِنَاتُ مُهَاجِرَاتٍ فَامْتَحِنُوهُنَّ ط اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِإِيمَانِهِنَّ (O you who believe, when the believing women come to you as emigrants, put them to a test, Allah knows best about their faith...60:10). The verse purports to say that women are exempted from the relevant clause of the treaty because of their being Muslims. Since it was possible that a woman had fled from Makkah, not because of her faith, but on account of displeasure with her husband or being in love with some person in Madīnah or for some other mundane motive. Such women are not exempted from the terms of the treaty, but it is incumbent to send her back. Therefore the Muslims were ordered by this verse that they should put such a woman to a test to discover whether she was sincere and honest in her faith. Allah further states : اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِإِيمَانِهِنَّ (Allah knows best about their faith... 60:10) It indicates that real faith belongs to human heart which none besides Allah knows. It is possible to estimate a man's faith by his verbal confession and circumstantial evidence. Muslims are legally obliged to do just this much.

Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās ؓ has explained the method of their testing as follows: An oath used to be taken from an emigrant woman to assert that she had not come because of hatred for her husband, or for the love of any man in Madīnah, or for any mundane reason, but purely and solely for the sake of Allah and for the love and pleasure of His Messenger ﷺ. When she swore an oath to this effect, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ would permit her to reside in Madīnah and would return to her disbelieving

husband the dower [*mahr*] etc. that he might have spent on the believing emigrant wife. [Qurṭubī]

Sayyidah Ṣiddiqah رضي الله عنها reports, as recorded in Tirmidhī [and he grades it as '*ḥasan ṣaḥīḥ*'], that the method of testing them was the pledge of allegiance as in the forthcoming verse: إِذَا جَاءَكَ الْمُؤْمِنَاتُ يَبَايَعُكَ (... when the believing women come to you, seeking *bai'ah* [a pledge of allegiance] with you ...60:12). In other words, the methodology of testing the faith of the emigrant women was the pledge the women swore on the blessed hands of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ as set out in this verse. It is not inconceivable that they had first to take an oath as mentioned in the narration of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه and then they had to accomplish it by giving an oath of loyalty as mentioned in the verse 12. And Allah knows best!

فَإِنْ عَلِمْتُمُوهُنَّ مُؤْمِنَاتٍ فَلَا تَرْجِعُوهُنَّ إِلَى الْكُفَّارِ (...So, if you find them faithful, do not send them back to the disbelievers. . .60:10). In other words, when you have tested the emigrant women according to the above method and ascertained to your satisfaction that they were sincere and honest in their faith, then it is not permissible to send them back to the unbelievers.

لَا هُنَّ حِلٌّ لَّهُمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحِلُّونَ لَهُنَّ (...Neither these [women] are lawful for them, nor are those [disbelievers] lawful for these [women]. ..60:10). That is to say, neither the believing women are permitted to remain in marriage with the unbelieving men nor are the unbelieving men permitted to marry them again.

Ruling

The verse states that any woman who was married to an unbeliever, but later she embraced Islam while her husband did not, the marriage tie between a believing woman and her disbelieving husband was *ipso facto* dissolved. This is the reason why women were exempted from the relevant clause of the treaty, as she was no longer permitted to her disbelieving husband.

وَأَتُواهُم مَّا أَنفَقُوا (...And give them [the disbelievers] that [dower] which they had paid [to these women]...60:10) In other words, the emigrant believing woman's unbelieving husband should be refunded the dower etc. that he spent on her at the time of marriage. The relevant clause of treaty merely exempted women from being returned to their disbelieving husbands, because the relationship is not permitted, but the wealth or

money the latter had spent on the former should be paid back. The verse does not address the emigrant women to refund what their former husbands have spent on them. It addresses the Muslim Community as a whole to return the wealth or money, because it was possible, rather most likely that the wealth that was given to her might have finished or might have been depleted and they might be left with nothing to return. Hence, the Muslim Community as a whole was entrusted with the responsibility of paying back on her behalf to fulfil the terms of the treaty. If this responsibility could be carried out by the State from its public treasury [*bai-ul-māl*], it would be so much the better, or it should have been paid by contributions of the Muslims. [Qurtubī]

وَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْ تَنْكِحُوهُنَّ إِذَا آتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ أَجُورَهُنَّ (...And there is no sin for you if you marry them, when you give them their dowers....60:10) The previous verse made it clear that the marriage tie between the emigrant believing woman and her disbelieving husband dissolves, and thus she is forbidden to him. The current verse clarifies that it is possible for a Muslim man to marry this emigrant lady, although her former husband is still alive and did not divorce her, but in terms of the sacred law of Shari'ah, the marriage with him stands dissolved. Marriage, therefore, with another Muslim is permitted.

It is clear from the above verse that if an unbeliever's wife becomes Muslim, the marriage tie is automatically broken. The question now is when will it be possible for her to marry another Muslim man. According to Imām Abū Ḥanīfah رحمه الله تعالى, the basic principle is as follows: When the wife becomes a convert to the Islamic faith and her husband remains an infidel, the Muslim ruler should call upon the husband to embrace the faith also. If he accepts, the woman continues to be his wife; but if he refuses, the Muslim ruler must separate them. Thus separation is completed between them. She may then marry any Muslim man of her choice. But obviously, a Muslim ruler can approach the husband only in an Islamic country. It is not possible to approach him, if he is in a non-Muslim country, to make any such requisition and decide on separation in case of refusal. In such an instance, the way out is for the woman to migrate to the Islamic State or join the Muslim army base, in which case the separation will be accomplished. This situation, in the legal parlance of the jurists, is referred to as *ikhtilāf-ud-dārain* or difference of

states. It means that if there is a difference of states between an unbelieving husband and a believing wife, the former being in un-Islamic State and the latter in the Islamic state, the separation is accomplished, and the wife is free to marry someone else. [Hidāyah and others]

The verse, while permitting the Muslims to marry such women, has added: إِذَا آتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ أَجُورَهُنَّ "when you give them their dowers". This in fact is not a condition of marriage, because the jurists unanimously agree that the validity of marriage is not conditional upon payment of dower [*mahr*], though its payment is compulsory on or after marriage. It has been mentioned here as a condition presumably because one *mahr* has already been returned to the unbelieving husband, and the Muslim who wished to marry her might think that there was no need for him to pay another *mahr*, since her *mahr* has already been paid. Hence, the verse clarifies that the previous *mahr* was in lieu of the previous marriage. When the next marriage would take place, another *mahr* would be compulsory.

وَلَا تُمْسِكُوا بِعِصَمِ الْكُوفِرِ (...And do not hold on to the ties of marriage with the disbelieving women....60:10) The word '*isam*' is the plural of '*ismah*', which originally means 'protection/bond' and it refers to the marriage bond that is protected. The word *kawāfir* is the plural of *kāfirah* and it refers to a 'pagan woman'. It cannot refer to an unbelieving woman who is a *kitābiyyah* [a follower of a previously revealed scripture, like a Jew or a Christian], because it is permitted to marry her by the express text of the Qur'an. The purport of the verse is to explain that the marriage between the Muslims and the pagans that was allowed so far is now repealed. It is forbidden for a Muslim now to marry a pagan woman. Such marriages that had been contracted previously have also been cancelled. It is not lawful for any Muslim man to carry on marriage ties with women who are polytheists. When this verse was revealed, the blessed Companions gave up their wives who were polytheists. Sayyidnā 'Umar ؓ had two pagan wives who were with him until the migration, but when the migration took place, they remained in Makkah. When this verse was revealed, Sayyidnā 'Umar ؓ divorced them. [Transmitted by al-Baghawī from Zuhri, as quoted by Mazhari]. The word *ṭalāq* (divorce) used in this narration means to 'sever relationship'. *Ṭalāq* in its technical sense was not needed here, because by virtue of this verse the marriage tie or bond has already been broken.

وَاسْأَلُوا مَا أَنْفَقْتُمْ وَلْيَسْأَلُوا مَا أَنْفَقُوا (... , and ask that which you had paid, and they should ask to pay that which they had paid 60:10). It was stated previously that when a woman converts to Islam and emigrates to Madīnah, she is not sent back to Makkah, but becomes part of the Muslim Community, and the marriage tie between an emigrant believing woman and her disbelieving husband becomes dissolved in this way. However, it is necessary to give back the *mahr* (dower) of the disbelieving husband that he paid to her. Similarly, if [God forbid!] a Muslim woman becomes an apostate and absconds to Makkah, or if she was an infidel from beforehand and flees from her Muslim husband, the pagans of Makkah will not send her back, but they would be legally responsible to return the *mahr* that the Muslim husband had paid to her. Therefore, the amounts thus obligated should be determined by mutual understanding of the accounts. The Muslims acted upon this law willingly, because they sincerely believed that adherence to the command of the Qur'ān is binding. Thus they paid back the *mahr* to all unbelieving husbands who had paid it to their women. The pagans of Makkah, however, did not believe in the Qur'ān. Therefore, they did not act upon it, on which occasion the following verse was revealed. [Mentioned by al-Baghawī on the authority of Zuhri, as quoted by Maẓharī]

وَأَنْفَقُوا شَيْءٌ مِّنْ أَزْوَاجِكُمْ إِلَى الْكُفَّارِ فَعَأَبْتُمْ فَأَتُوا الَّذِينَ ذَهَبَتْ أَزْوَاجُهُمْ مِّثْلَ مَا أَنْفَقُوا وَاللَّهُ الَّذِي أَنْتُمْ بِهِ مُؤْمِنُونَ

And if some of your [non-Muslim] wives have slipped from you, [and their present non-Muslim husbands do not pay to you the dower as aforesaid,] and you have your turn [of paying dower to the previous non-Muslim husbands of your present wives], then [instead of paying dower to them,] give those whose wives have slipped the like amount of what they had paid [to them]. And fear Allah, the One in whom you believe. (60:11)

The verb *'aqabtum* is derived from *mu 'aqabah*. It means 'to retaliate'. This meaning is possible here [as reported by Qatādah, Mujāhid and Qurṭubī]. In this case, it implies that if some of the wives of the Muslims desert to disbelievers, it was legally binding on them in terms of the treaty to pay back the dowers given to them by the Muslim husbands, just as the Muslims gave them back the dowers given by the pagan husbands to the emigrant Muslim women. But since the pagans failed to reciprocate, and

did not pay the dower money, the believing husbands are entitled to retaliate by withholding an amount equal to what was due on the disbelieving husbands who married the deserting wives of the Muslims, and did not pay it. How this withheld amount will be spent is mentioned in the following sentence: فَآتُوا الَّذِينَ ذَهَبَتْ أَرْوَاجُهُمْ مِثْلَ مَا أَنْفَقُوا (... then [instead of paying dower to them,] give those whose wives have slipped the like amount of what they had paid.) This means that the amounts withheld as aforesaid shall be given to the Muslims whose wives had gone to the pagans, and they did not pay back their dowers to their Muslim husbands.

Another sense of the verb *'aqabtum*, *'āqqabtum* and *a'qabtum* in its variant form is 'to acquire spoils of war'. The verb *'aqabtum* is read in these variant forms (*qirā'āt*) by various master readers of the Qur'ān. Authorities like Qatādah and Mujāhid رحمهم الله have said that all these three forms of the verb mean to 'acquire spoils of war'. In this case the verse means: if the Muslim husbands' wives fled to the unbelievers and, in terms of the treaty, they did not return the dowers to the Muslim husbands, they would be compensated from the booty acquired in war.⁽¹⁾

Did some of the Muslim Women become Apostates and flee to Makkah?

Some of the authorities believe that the situation mentioned in this verse arose only in one incident. The wife of Sayyidnā 'Iyād Ibn Ghanam Quraishī, Umm-ul-Hakam bint Abī Sufyān, abandoned the Islamic Faith and fled to Makkah. However, later on she reverted to Islam.

Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رحمهم الله reports that about six women altogether abandoned Islam and deserted to the unbelievers, one of whom is the woman whose name has been given in the previous paragraph. The other

(1) A third interpretation of the word is that it is derived from *'aqibah* which means 'turn', and the infinitive *mu'aqabah* means 'to take turn in riding a horse etc.' In this case the verb *'aqabtum* in the verse would mean: 'you have your turn', and the sense would be that when it is your turn to pay the dowers to the unbelievers, you should, instead of paying it to them, pay it to those Muslims whose wives have deserted them and joined the unbelievers who did not return to their husbands the dower they had paid to deserting wives and were entitled, by virtue of the treaty, to take it back from the unbelievers. This interpretation is adopted by 'Ālūsī in *Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī*, and by Maulana Ashraf 'Alī Thanawī رحمه الله تعالى. The translation in the text is based on it. (Muḥammad Taqī Usmānī)

five of them were infidels from outset and remained in Makkah at the time of migration. When this verse was revealed dissolving the marriage between Muslims and pagans, they stubbornly clung to their disbelief and were not willing to embrace the Faith. As a result, these women were also counted among those whose dowers should be paid to their Muslim husbands by the pagans of Makkah. But they did not pay, so the Messenger of Allah ﷺ compensated for the loss of their dowers from the spoils of war.

This indicates that there is only one incident where a woman actually became an apostate and fled to Makkah from Madīnah. The rest of the five women were unbelievers from beginning. As reported earlier, even the woman who abandoned Islam and fled to Makkah later on reverted to Islam. [Qurṭubī]. Baghawī cites, on the authority of Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه, that all five women who are counted as apostates reverted to Islam later on. [Maḏharī].

Bai'ah of Women

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِذَا جَاءَكَ الْمُؤْمِنَاتُ يُبَايِعْنَكَ عَلَى أَنْ لَا يُشْرِكْنَ بِاللَّهِ شَيْئًا (O Prophet, when the believing women come to you, seeking *bai'ah* [a pledge of allegiance] with you that they will not ascribe any thing as a partner to Allah, ...60:12). This verse requires the Holy Prophet ﷺ to take a pledge from the Muslim women not only to adhere to Islamic articles of faith, but also to all the Islamic precepts. Previously, in verse [10] Allah had directed that when the emigrant women come to the believers, they should be tested and examined. The pledge of allegiance in the present verse is a complement to this test of the faith. But the words of the verse are general, and not confined to new Muslim emigrants. In fact, it covers all Muslim women. Accordingly, when the pledge was actually taken, it was not restricted to the emigrant new Muslim women, but the earlier Muslim women joined it as well, as is recorded in Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī, on the authority of Sayyidah Umm ‘Atiyyah رضي الله عنها. It is also recorded by Baghawī from Sayyidah Umaimah bint Ruqaiqah رضي الله عنها who adds that in the company of a few other women she gave *bai'ah* (pledge) to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. The Holy Prophet ﷺ added the following over-rider *فِيمَا اسْتَطَعْتُنَّ وَأَطَقْتُنَّ* (In as much as you have the ability and strength to carry them out.) Sayyidah Umaimah رضي الله عنها says: "This shows that the Holy Prophet ﷺ had more mercy and

compassion for us than ourselves, as we wanted to pledge without any restriction or condition, but by utterance of this sentence he reduced the burden and tension of the terms of the loyalty, so that we may not be held guilty for any violation under compelled circumstances." [Maẓharī].

Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها says, as recorded in Bukhārī, that the loyalty of women was their verbal pledge of allegiance, not by touching the hand of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, as was the custom in the case of men's loyalty. The Holy Prophet's ﷺ blessed hand never touched the hand of any non-*maḥram*. [Maẓharī]

Reports indicate that the *bai’ah* (pledge of allegiance) of women took place not only on this occasion after Ḥudaibiyah, but several times later as well. Such a pledge was taken on the day of the Conquest of Makkah. At first, the Holy Prophet ﷺ took pledge of loyalty from men, then he took it from women at mount Ṣafā. Sayyidnā ‘Umar Ibn Khaṭṭāb رضي الله عنه used to relay the words of loyalty, on behalf of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, to the women gathering at the foot of the mountain, who participated in this pledge. Abū Sufyān's wife, Hind, also participated in this pledge. At first, she felt embarrassed and wanted to hide herself. But the pledge contained some injunctions of Shari’ah, and she was forced to speak and asked several questions. Maẓharī sets out a detailed account of this incident.

Men's *bai’ah* was Concise and Women's *bai’ah* Elaborate

Generally, the *bai’ah* taken from men was about Faith and Islam. Their pledge did not contain the details of injunctions of Shari’ah, unlike the pledge of women, which contained the details that are forthcoming. The difference between the two pledge is that men's pledging for faith and obedience secures an undertaking to practice the entire system of Shari’ah and religion, and therefore there was no need for details. Women, on the other hand, are generally less intelligent than men. Therefore, details were thought to be necessary. This is the *bai’ah* that started with women, but later on was not confined to them. As time went on, the same detailed *bai’ah* was taken from men as well. Prophetic Traditions confirm this [as transmitted by Sayyidnā ‘Ubādah Ibn Ṣāmit رضي الله عنه] [Qurtubī]. Furthermore, the injunctions mentioned in the *bai’ah* of women in this verse are those regarding which they are normally lax.

That is another reason why the following details had to be set out. There are six injunctions mentioned in the verse; يُبَايِعُكَ عَلَى أَنْ لَا يَشْرِكََنَّ بِاللَّهِ شَيْئًا (... seeking *bai'ah* (pledge of allegiance) with you that they will not ascribe any thing as a partner to Allah,...60:12) The first is that they will not ascribe any partner to Allah. Affirmation of faith and avoidance of *shirk* are vows common to men as well as women. The second pledge is that they shall not commit theft. Many women are wont to stealing from their husband's possessions. Therefore, this vow has been taken. The third vow is that they shall avoid committing adultery. If the women are firm in this, it shall make men's salvation from this sin easier. The fourth vow is that they shall not kill their children. In the Days of Ignorance, it was a common practice to bury infant girls alive and destroy their lives. This clause of the vow is a bar to it. The fifth vow is that they shall not bring calumny against anyone. While referring to this injunction, following words are added: بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَرْجُلِهِمْ (...that they falsely attribute between their hands and their feet") This phrase has been added in order to indicate that on the Day of Resurrection man's hands and feet will bear witness against his actions. The verse thus warns that he is committing such sins in the presence of four witnesses who will bear witness against him.

The word *buhtān* [calumny] is used in its general sense and it is totally forbidden, whether against the husband or any other person or even against a non-believer. *Buhtān* is even more severe sin if it is against the husband. Commentators have interpreted that the clause of *buhtān* may take place in the following ways: [1] a woman may claim that a child born to her from another man is her husband's; [2] a woman may take custody of another child and claim that it is her husband's; and [3] God forbid! a woman may commit adultery and conceive, and when the child is born, she may impute it to her husband. In short, it is prohibited to give a false ascription of paternity in anyway whatsoever.

The sixth vow is a general rule: وَلَا يَعْصِيَنَّكَ فِي مَعْرُوفٍ (...and will not disobey you in what is recognized [in Sharī'ah]...60:12) This vow means that they shall obey Allah's Messenger ﷺ and will not disobey him. But the obedience is qualified by the words, "in what is recognized in Sharī'ah" that is, the right and good things, although we know for sure

that Allah's Messenger ﷺ will only command people to do right and good. This is because the Muslims in general are made to understand clearly that obedience to any creation in disobedience to Allah is absolutely forbidden, so much so that even obedience to the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been qualified by this condition.

Another reason for adding this phrase may be that since this pledge of obedience was taken from women, the Satan could whisper evil thoughts into their minds and create deviant ways for them to go awry. The restriction blocked the way. Allah, the Pure and Exalted, knows best!

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Mumtaḥinah
Ends here

سَبَّحَ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْاَرْضِ ۚ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيْمُ ﴿١﴾ يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لِمَ تَقُوْلُوْنَ مَا لَا تَفْعَلُوْنَ ﴿٢﴾ كَبُرَ مَقْتًا عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ اَنْ تَقُوْلُوْا مَا لَا تَفْعَلُوْنَ ﴿٣﴾ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يُحِبُّ الَّذِيْنَ يُقَاتِلُوْنَ فِيْ سَبِيْلِهِ صَفًا كَانْتَهُمۡ بُنَيّٰن مَّرْصُوْصٍ ﴿٤﴾ وَاِذْ قَالَ مُوْسٰى لِقَوْمِهٖ يَقُوْمۡ لِمَ تُوْذُوْنِيْ وَقَدْ تَعْلَمُوْنَ اَنِّيْ رَسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ اِلَيْكُمْ ۖ فَلَمَّا زَاغُوا زَاغَ اللّٰهُ قُلُوْبُهُمْ ۖ وَاللّٰهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفٰسِقِيْنَ ﴿٥﴾ وَاِذْ قَالَ عِيْسٰى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ يٰبَنِيْ اِسْرَآئِيْلَ اِنِّيْ رَسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ اِلَيْكُمْ مُّصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيَّ مِنَ التَّوْرَةِ وَمُبَشِّرًا بِرَسُوْلٍ يَّآتِيْ مِنْۢ بَعْدِي اَسْمُهُۥ اَحْمَدُ ۖ فَلَمَّا جَآءَهُم بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ قَالُوْا هٰذَا سِحْرٌ مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿٦﴾ وَمَنْ اَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرٰى عَلَى اللّٰهِ الْكُذِبَ وَهُوَ يُدْعٰى اِلَى الْاِسْلَامِ ۖ وَاللّٰهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٧﴾ يُرِيْدُوْنَ لِيُطْفِئُوْا نُوْرَ اللّٰهِ بِاَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَاللّٰهُ مُتِمُّ نُوْرِهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكَافِرُوْنَ ﴿٨﴾ هُوَ الَّذِيْ اَرْسَلَ رَسُوْلَهٗ بِالْهُدٰى وَدِيْنِ الْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهٗ عَلَى الدِّيْنِ كُلِّهٖ ۚ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُشْرِكُوْنَ ﴿٩﴾

Allah's purity has been proclaimed by all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth, and He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise. [1] O those who believe, why do you say what you do not do? [2] It is severely hateful in Allah's sight that you say what you do not do. [3] Surely Allah loves those who fight in His way in firm rows, as if they were a solid edifice. [4] And (remember) when Mūsā said to his people, "O my people, why do you hurt me, while you know that I am a messenger of Allah towards you." So, when they adopted crookedness, Allah let their hearts become crooked. And Allah does not guide the sinful people. [5] And (remember) when 'Isā, son of Maryam, said, "O children of Isrā'īl, I am a messenger of Allah towards you, confirming the Taurah that is (sent down) before me, and giving you the good news of a messenger who will come after me, whose name is Aḥmad." But when he came to them with manifest signs, they said, "This is a clear magic." [6] And who is more unjust than the one who forges a lie against Allah, while he is invited to Islam? And Allah does not guide the unjust people. [7] They wish to extinguish the light of Allah with their mouths, but Allah is to perfect His light, even though the disbelievers dislike (it). [8] He is the One who has sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth, so that He makes it prevail over all religions, even though the *mushriks* (those who ascribe partners to Allah) dislike (it). [9]

Commentary

Background of the revelation

Tirmidhī has recorded, on the authority of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Salām ؓ, that a group of Companions discussed among themselves that if we come to know which is the dearest of actions in the sight of Allah, we shall act upon it. Ḥakīm reported this Tradition and graded its chain as '*ṣaḥīḥ*'. Baghawī in his citation added the following words: "If we come to know which is the dearest of actions in the sight of Allah, we shall dedicate our lives and wealth to it." [Maḡharī].

Ibn Kathīr, with reference to Musnad of Aḥmad, reports that some of the Companions gathered and wanted someone to go to Allah's Messenger ﷺ and ask him about the action that is dearest to Allah, but no one dared to do so. Whilst this discussion was going on, the Holy Messenger ﷺ sent a man to call each one of them by name. When they all arrived, the Holy

Prophet ﷺ recited the entire Sūrah Aṣ-Ṣaff which had been revealed just then. This Sūrah shows that the 'dearest action' they were looking for was 'jihād in the cause of Allah' and their statement that 'if we come to know about it, we shall dedicate our lives in acting upon it' was a sort of claim of having ability to do it. At this, they are admonished that it is not proper for any believer to make such a claim, because no one can for sure know whether he will be able to implement his intentions when the time arrives. It is not in his power that all the causes of action are made effective and all impediments are removed. Nor are the abilities and strengths of his hands or arms or limbs or organs altogether in his power. Nor is his determination or intention completely in his control. Therefore, even the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been instructed in the Qur'an, thus:

وَلَا تَقُولَنَّ لِشَيْءٍ إِنِّي فَاعِلٌ ذَلِكَ غَدًا إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ

"And never say about anything, 'I am going to do this tomorrow, unless [you say - 'if] Allah wills.) [18: 23-24]

Although the intention of the blessed Companions was not to make a boastful claim, it did seem apparently as a claim, which Allah dislikes. If a person makes a commitment to do something in the future, he needs to surrender it to the Divine will and affirm it by saying 'If Allah wills'. The following verses are revealed to admonish the believers.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لِمَ تَقُولُونَ مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٢﴾ كَبُرَ مَقْتًا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَنْ تَقُولُوا مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٣﴾

(O those who believe, why do you say what you do not do? It is severely hateful in Allah's sight that you say what you do not do...61:2-3)

Apparently, the phrase 'what you do not do' implies that one should not claim to do something he does not intend to do. From this it may be deduced that it is prohibited to make a commitment to do a work while a person does not have the genuine intention to really do it, because this would be ostentation and a false commitment. Obviously, the blessed Companions, in the story of the background of revelation, were not making such promises without having intention to fulfill them. Instead, their intention was genuine. From this we learn that the verse includes a situation where a person commits to do something with true intention to do it, but relies solely on his own strength, it is not in keeping with his

station of '*abdiyyah* or 'servitude'. First of all, there is no need to make such a claim. If the occasion does arise to do something, he may go ahead and do it. If, for some reason or the other, a person has to make a promise or claim, he may affirm it by saying 'If Allah wills'. In this way, it would not be a boastful claim.

Ruling

It follows from the above discussion that if a person claims that he will do something in future but has no intention to do it, it is a major sin (*kabīrah*) and a cause of incurring Allah's wrath. The sentence: *كَبْرَمَفْتًا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ* "It is severely hateful in Allah's sight that you say what you do not do...[61:3]" applies to this situation. However, in a situation where one makes a claim to do something in future with real intention to do it, it is *makrūh* [reprehensible] and forbidden only if he makes the claim relying on his own strength and ability.

Difference between a Claim (*Da'wā*) and Preaching (*Da'wah*)

It is learnt from the foregoing discussion that these verses are related to false claims (*Da'wā*) to do something in future without intention to do it, which incurs Divine displeasure and indignation. This verse is not related to a situation where a preacher invites others to do something, while he himself does not do it. The rules of this situation are mentioned in other verses and Aḥadīth. For example: *أَتَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْبِرِّ وَتَنْسَوْنَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ* (Do you bid others to righteousness while you ignore your own selves) [2:44] This verse puts to shame such preachers who do not practice what they preach. The import of this verse is that when they are preaching to others, they should preach to themselves with greater force, and if they are calling other people to do good deeds, they too should practice them.

All this does not imply that if a person has been lax in the performance of good deeds, he should abandon preaching to others. Or if he has been indulging in any kind of sin, he should not forbid others from indulging in such sins. It needs to be borne in mind that the performance of a righteous deed is one form of virtue, and urging others to perform this righteous deed is another form of virtue in its own right. Obviously, if one has abandoned one form of virtue, it does not necessarily follow that he should abandon the other form as well. It is possible that through the blessing of the preachment, the preacher might develop the ability to perform the righteous deed. This has been experienced widely and on a

large scale. However, if the deed belongs to the category of *wājib* or *sunnah mu'akkadah*, it is obligatory, in the light of the verses, to continuously show remorse and regret on one's not practicing it. And if the action belongs to the category of *mustahabbāt*, it is *mustahab* [rewardable] to show remorse and regret.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِهِ صَفًّا كَانَهُمْ بُنْيَانٌ مَرْصُورٌ (Surely Allah loves those who fight in His way in firm rows, as if they were a solid edifice...61:4) The main subject of this Sūrah for which it was revealed is to mention the dearest action in the sight of Allah. This verse states that it is *jihād* in Allah's way, and that the best row of battle in the sight of Allah is the one firmly established against Allah's enemies to make Allah's word prevail, and which, on account of the valor and unshaken determination of Mujāhidīn, looks like a strong structure cemented with molten lead.

This is followed by a description of the Jihāds which Prophets Mūsā and 'Īsā عليهما السلام fought in Allah's Cause, and how they suffered at the hands of the enemies. After this description, the Muslims are directed to undertake *jihād*. The stories of Prophets Mūsā and 'Īsā عليهما السلام have many academic and practical lessons and guidance to offer. For instance, it is described in the story of 'Īsā عليه السلام that when he invited the Children of Israel to accept his prophet-hood and obey him, he mentioned two things in particular. First, he said that he was not a unique Prophet who came with unique teachings. In fact, his teachings were the same as those of the previous prophets. They are mentioned in the earlier celestial scriptures, and the same teachings will be imparted later by the Final Messenger of Allah ﷺ. From among the earlier Scriptures, Torah is specially mentioned in this context, probably because that was the latest Scripture that was revealed to the Children of Israel. Otherwise belief in the Prophets embraces all the previous Scriptures of Allah. This also points out that the Shari'ah of 'Īsā عليه السلام was, though an independent Shari'ah, its most rules conformed to the sacred laws of Mūsā عليه السلام and the Torah. Only a few laws had been changed. This theme covered the subject of belief in the previous Prophets and their Books.

The second thing 'Īsā عليه السلام mentioned in particular was the good news of the advent of the Final Messenger ﷺ. This too points out that his teachings will also be the same as those of the previous Prophets, and therefore it is the demand of reason and honesty to believe in him.

Prophet 'Īsā ﷺ foretold the Children of Israel that a Final Messenger ﷺ will come after him by the name of Aḥmad. When he appears, it would be obligatory for them to embrace faith in him and obey him مَبَشِّرًا بِرَسُولٍ يَأْتِي مِنْ بَعْدِي اسْمُهُ أَحْمَدُ (...and giving you the good news of a messenger who will come after me, whose name is Aḥmad."...6) The name of the Final Messenger is given here as Aḥmad. The name of the Final Messenger ﷺ was Muḥammad and Aḥmad. He had some other names as well. However, the name given in Injīl is Aḥmad rather than Muḥammad, perhaps because Muḥammad was a common name in Arabia since time immemorial. There was a possibility that the people might take the reference to some other person, rather than the Final Messenger of Allah. The name Aḥmad, on the other hand, was an uncommon name in Arabia, and was exclusive to the Final Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

Prophecy of The Final Messenger of Allah in Injīl

It is a known fact that the previously revealed Divine scriptures have been changed and distorted. The Jews and the Christians themselves had to admit that Torah and Injīl have been subjected to changes and distortion. As a matter of fact, the distortions made in these scriptures are so drastic that it is hardly possible to make out the original texts of the scriptures. Based on the distorted version of Injīl, the Christians today challenge the correctness of the Qur'ānic version of the prophecy, asserting that no prophecy in the name of Aḥmad is found in the Injīl. An elaborate response to Christian challenge has been prepared by Maulana Raḥmatullah Kairānwī رحمه الله تعالى. The name of his book is *Izhār-ul-Ḥaqq*. He has thoroughly analyzed Christianity and changes made in the Bible. He concludes that despite drastic changes in the present Biblical version the prophecy about the Prophet Aḥmad ﷺ is still available.

This book was originally written in Arabic, later its translations appeared in Turkish and English. Christian missionaries attempted their utmost to destroy it. Its Urdu translation was not available until recently. A little while back, Maulana Akbar 'Alī, a lecturer at Dārul Uloom Karachi, translated it into Urdu, with in-depth research into current versions of the Bible by Maulana Muḥammad Taqī, lecturer at Darul Uloom, and published in three volumes. Volume [3] from pages 182 to 362 elaborates on the prophecies pertaining to the Holy Prophet ﷺ with

reference to the currently published Bibles, and rebuts their doubts and allays their suspicions.

Verse 10 - 14

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا هَلْ أَدُلُّكُمْ عَلَىٰ تِجَارَةٍ تُنْجِيكُمْ مِّنْ عَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ﴿١٠﴾ تُوْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَتُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنفُسِكُمْ ۖ ذَٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١١﴾ يَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَيُدْخِلْكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرَىٰ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ وَمَسْكِنَ طَيِّبَةٍ فِي جَنَّاتٍ عَدْنٍ ۖ ذَٰلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿١٢﴾ وَأُخْرَىٰ تُحِبُّونَهَا ۖ نَصْرٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَفَتْحٌ قَرِيبٌ ۖ وَبَشِيرٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٣﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا أَنْصَارَ اللَّهِ كَمَا قَالَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ لِّلْحَوَارِيِّينَ مَنْ أَنْصَارِي إِلَى اللَّهِ ۖ قَالَ الْحَوَارِيُّونَ نَحْنُ أَنْصَارُ اللَّهِ فَاْمَنْتَ طَائِفَةٌ مِّنْ بَنِي إِسْرَٰئِيلَ وَكَفَرْتَ طَائِفَةٌ ۖ فَأَيَّدْنَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا عَلَىٰ عَدُوِّهِمْ فَأَصْبَحُوا ظَاهِرِينَ ﴿١٤﴾

O those who believe, shall I tell you about a trade that saves you from a painful punishment? [10] (It is that) you believe in Allah and His Messenger, and carry out *jihad* in His way with your riches and your lives. That is much better for you, if you but know. [11] (If you do this,) He will forgive for you your sins, and will admit you to gardens beneath which rivers flow, and to pleasant dwellings in gardens of eternity. That is the great achievement. [12] And (He will give you) another thing that you love: Help from Allah, and a victory, near at hand. [13] O those who believe, be supporters of (the religion of) Allah, just as 'Īsā, son of Maryam, said to the Disciples, "Who are my supporters towards Allah?" The Disciples said, "We are the supporters of (the religion of) Allah." So a group from the children of Isrā'īl believed, and another group disbelieved. Then We supported those who believed against their enemy, and they became victorious. [14]

Commentary

(...you believe in Allah and His Messenger, and carry out *jihād* in His way with your riches and your lives....61:11) This verse refers to 'faith and *jihād* (struggle) in Allah's way with one's wealth and life' as a trade, because when man invests wealth in trade and works hard, he gains profit. Likewise, when man believes in Allah and invests his life and wealth in His cause, he incurs Allah's pleasure and attains the eternal blessings of the Hereafter, which is mentioned in the forthcoming verse that whoever carries out this trade, Allah will forgive his sins and provide him with dwellings in the Gardens of Eternity with all sorts of luxuries and comforts, as is mentioned by the Holy Prophet ﷺ in explanation of 'pleasant dwellings'. Alongside the blessings of the Hereafter, the next verse promises some blessings of this world too:

وَأُخْرَىٰ تُحِبُّونَهَا ۖ نَصْرٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَفَتْحٌ قَرِيبٌ (And [He will give you] another thing that you love: Help from Allah, and a victory, near at hand ...61:13) This verse adds that the blessings of this trade are not restricted to the Hereafter. There is one blessing that will be granted right here in this world, which is the Divine help and an imminent victory, that is, conquests of enemy territories. If the word *qarīb* (near) is taken as the opposite of Hereafter, it would include all later Islamic conquests of Arab and non-Arab territories. And if the word *qarīb* (near) is taken in its normal sense, it would, in the first instance, apply to the conquest of Khaibar, and in the second instance it would apply to the Conquest of Makkah. This 'near victory' is referred to as *تُحِبُّونَهَا* "that you love". It implies that this worldly blessing is dear to man, because he is by nature haste-prone as the Qur'an says *وَكَانَ الْإِنْسَانُ عَجُولًا* "...and man is prone to haste. [17:11] This, however, does not imply that the blessings of the Hereafter are not dear to him. It simply means that the love of seeking the blessings of the Hereafter is quite obvious, but he naturally would love to have the blessings of this world as well. They too will be granted to him.

كَمَا قَالَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ لِحَوَارِيِّنَ مَنْ أَنْصَارِي إِلَى اللَّهِ (..just as 'Īsā, son of Maryam, said to the Disciples, "Who are my supporters towards Allah?" ...[61:14]) The word *حَوَارِيْن* *hawāriyyīn* is the plural of *hawāriyy* which connotes a 'sincere friend who is free from any kind of adulteration' [Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī,

referring to Azharī]. This is the reason why people who believed in Prophet Jesus ﷺ are called *hawāriyy*. They were twelve in number, as is already discussed in Sūrah 'Al-'Imrān. This verse refers to an incident of Prophet 'Īsā ﷺ and urges the Muslims to gird up their loins to unselfishly help and support the religion of Allah, as when Prophet 'Īsā ﷺ was hurt by the enemies, he asked his disciples *مَنْ أَنْصَارِي إِلَى اللَّهِ* "Who are my supporters towards Allah?" ...[14] In other words, 'who will help and support me in propagating the religion of Allah?' Twelve people volunteered and pledged to his loyalty and helped him in preaching the religion. Following this example, the Muslims ought to help and support Allah's religion. The blessed Companions of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ followed this example to the fullest extent, and acted upon this command to the highest degree, so much so that the example of the Holy Prophets' Companions stands unparalleled in the history of other ummahs. They helped the Holy Prophet ﷺ and, in the process, incurred the wrath and enmity of Arab and non-Arab communities for the sake of Allah's religion. They bore their tortures and persecution. They dedicated their lives, wealth and children to the cause. Eventually, Allah granted them help and victory. He granted them triumph and mastery of the world, and the territories of the enemies fell into their hands.

Three Groups of Christians

فَأَمْنَتْ طَائِفَةٌ مِّنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ وَكَفَرْتُ طَائِفَةٌ ۚ فَأَيَّدْنَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا عَلَىٰ عَدُوِّهِمْ
فَاصْبَحُوا ظَاهِرِينَ

(So, a group from the children of Isra'il believed, and another group disbelieved. Then We supported those who believed against their enemy, and they became victorious...61:14)

Baghawi interprets this verse in the light of a narration of Sayyidna 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās ؓ that when Prophet 'Īsā ﷺ was raised to the heaven, his followers disagreed and became three groups. A group claimed that He was Himself God who went back to the heaven. The second group claimed that He Himself was not God, but God's son. God lifted him up and salvaged him from the enemies and granted him superiority. The third group proclaimed the truth and said that he was neither god nor the son of god, but he was Allah's servant and His Messenger. Allah took him away to the heaven to protect him from the enemies, and to raise his status. These people were the true believers.

Different sectors of the general public attached themselves to each one of these groups. The groups clashed with one another. The two of the non-believing groups overpowered the third group, which was a group of true believers. Eventually, Allah raised the Final Messenger of Allah ﷺ who supported the group of the true believers. This group thus dominated the others because of their correct belief and its solid proofs confirmed by the Qur'an. [Maẓharī].

In this interpretation, the phrase الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا "those who believed [14]" would refer to the believers of the Ummah of the Prophet 'Īsā عليه السلام who would triumph against the unbelievers with the help and support of the Final Messenger ﷺ. [Maẓharī]. Some scholars hold that when Prophet 'Īsā عليه السلام was raised to the heaven, his followers were divided into two groups. One of them believed that he was God or God's son and thus they became polytheists. The other group believed that he was the servant of Allah and His Messenger, and thus they stuck to the right religion. Then there was a war between the believers and the unbelievers. Allah granted victory to the believing faction of Prophet 'Īsā عليه السلام against the unbelieving faction. But it is popularly understood that in the religion of Prophet 'Īsā عليه السلام the institution of *jihād* did not exist. Therefore, it is inconceivable that believers would have waged a war. [Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī]. However, it is possible that the unbelieving Christians might have started the war and the believing Christians were forced to defend themselves. This will not fall under the category of war.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Aṣ-Ṣaff
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Jumu'ah (The Friday)

This Sūrah is Madanī, and it has 11 verses and 2 sections

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 8

يُسَبِّحُ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ الْمَلِكُ الْقُدُّوسُ الْعَزِيزُ
 الْحَكِيمُ ﴿١﴾ هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ
 آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ
 لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ ﴿٢﴾ وَآخَرِينَ مِنْهُمْ لَمَّا يَلْحَقُوا بِهِمْ ۗ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ
 الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٣﴾ ذَلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ
 الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٤﴾ مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ حُمِّلُوا التَّوْرَةَ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَحْمِلُوهَا كَمَثَلِ
 الْحِمَارِ يَحْمِلُ أَسْفَارًا بِئْسَ مَثَلُ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ ۗ
 وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٥﴾ قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ هَادَوْا إِن زَعَمْتُمْ
 أَنْكُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ لِلَّهِ مِنْ دُونِ النَّاسِ فَتَمَنُّوا الْمَوْتَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ
 ﴿٦﴾ وَلَا يَتَمَنَّوْنَهُ أَبَدًا بِمَا قَدَّمْتُمْ أَيْدِيهِمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالظَّالِمِينَ
 ﴿٧﴾ قُلْ إِنَّ الْمَوْتَ الَّذِي تَفِرُّونَ مِنْهُ فَإِنَّهُ مُلَاقِيكُمْ ثُمَّ تُرَدُّونَ إِلَىٰ
 عِلْمِ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٨﴾

All that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth

proclaim the purity of Allah, the Sovereign, the Supreme in Holiness, the All-Mighty, the All-Wise. [1] He is the One who raised amidst the unlettered people a messenger from among themselves who recites to them His verses, and purifies them, and teaches them the Book and the wisdom, although they were in an open error before. [2] And (this Messenger is sent also) to others of them who did not join them so far, and He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise. [3] That is Allah's bounty that He gives to whomsoever He wills, and Allah is the Lord of the great bounty. [4] The example of those who were ordered to bear (the responsibility of acting upon) the Torah, then they did not bear it, is like a donkey that carries a load of books. Evil is the example of those who have rejected the verses of Allah. And Allah does not guide the wrongdoing people. [5] Say, "O those who are Jews, if you claim that you are the friends of Allah to the exclusion of all other people, then express your desire for death, if you are true. [6] And they will never express this desire, because of what their hands have sent ahead. And Allah is fully aware of the wrongdoers. [7] Say, "Indeed, the death from which you (try to) run away has to visit you, then you will be sent back to the Knower of the unseen and the seen, and He will tell you what you used to do. [8]

Commentary

يُسَبِّحُ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ (All that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth proclaim the purity of Allah,...62:1) Surahs of the Qur'an that begin with 'sabbaha' or 'yusabbihu' [proclaiming Allah's purity] are called *Musabbihāt*, in all of which it is established that everything in the heaven and earth proclaims the purity of Allah.

That all creatures in the heavens and the earth declare the purity of Allah in a symbolic way is understandable. Everyone may understand that every single particle created by Allah bears testimony to the wisdom and power of the Wise Creator in their circumstantial language, which is their *tasbīḥ* (proclamation). However, the fact is that, every thing proclaims *tasbīḥ* in its real sense in its own way, because Allah has bestowed some sort of sense and perception to every particle of this universe, even to stones and trees, according to their ability. Since the first demand upon sense and perception is to recognize its Creator and Maker, and glorify Him, therefore, it is not far-fetched to conceive that

everything in nature really declares the purity of Allah in its own peculiar language, though human ears might not be able to hear it. Thus the Qur’ān on one occasion says: وَلَكِنْ لَا تَفْقَهُونَ تَسْبِيحَهُمْ (...but you do not understand their extolling ...[17:44] At the commencement of most Surahs called *Musabbiḥāt* the past indefinite tense *sabbaḥa* is employed. Only at the beginning of Sūrah Al-Jumu‘ah and At-Taghābun the present form *yusabbiḥu* is used. The different forms at the beginning of different Surah have fresh rhetorical elegance and refinement. The past tense connotes certitude, and therefore mostly this tense has been used. The present form connotes continuity, which is employed in two places for this purpose.

هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ (He is the One who raised amidst the unlettered people a messenger from among themselves...62:2) The word *ummiyyin* is the plural of *ummiyy*, which denotes 'unlettered'. The Arabs were known by this title, because they did not know how to read and write. Very few of them had the knowledge of reading and writing. The Arabs in this verse are specially referred to in order to express the great power of Allah. The Holy Prophet ﷺ is also sent amongst them, who is himself unlettered. The duties and reformative functions of a Prophet [as set out in the forthcoming verse] are based on knowledge and education. These reforms are such that no unlettered individual can ever teach them, nor is it possible for an unlettered nation to learn. It was only through the Divine Supreme Power and the miracle of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ that when these reforms started, great scholars, intellectuals, men of letters, savants and sages were born among the unlettered people, and their knowledge, wisdom, sagacity and erudition was recognized by the entire world.

The Three Objectives of the Advent of the Prophet ﷺ

يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ (...to recite His verses to them, and to make them pure, and to teach them the Book and the Wisdom....62:2) In the context of the Divine blessings bestowed to the mankind, three qualities of the Holy Prophet ﷺ have been mentioned. One, to recite the verses of the Qur’ān to his Ummah. Two, to purify them of all the outer and inner defilements. This includes outer purification that relates to one's body and dress, and also the inner purification that relates to one's faith, actions and moral attitude. Three, to teach the Book

and the wisdom. These three factors are Divine blessings to the mankind on the one hand, and these are the basic objectives and the terms of reference of the Holy Prophet ﷺ for which he was sent to this world.

يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ (...to recite His verses to them) The word *tilāwah* lexically signifies 'to follow, to obey' but in the terminology of the Qur‘ān, it signifies 'recitation or reading of the Divine Words'. The word *‘āyāt* refers to the verses of the Qur‘ān. The prepositional phrase *‘alaihim* [to them] signifies that one of the objectives or duties of the Prophet ﷺ is to recite the verses of the Qur‘ān to the people.

In the current verse, the second objective of the Holy Prophet ﷺ is to: يُزَكِّيهِمْ (make them pure) which is derived from *tazkiyah* and it means 'to make pure'. Often it is used exclusively for inner cleanliness, that is, to be free from such inner adulterating matter as *kufr*, *shirk* and free from inner moral defilement. But occasionally, it is used in the general sense of both outer and inner cleanliness. Probably, in this context it is used in the general sense of the term.

يُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ (...to teach them the Book and the Wisdom...62:2) The word *al-Kitāb* refers to the Holy Qur‘ān, and the word *al-ḥikmah* refers to all the teachings and guidance that have been received from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ orally or practically. As a result, many of the commentators have interpreted the word *ḥikmah* as the Approved Way [Sunnah of the Holy Prophet ﷺ].

A Question and its Answer

A question arises here that the natural order of wording in the verse should have been thus: [1] recitation or teaching of words; followed by [2] teaching of meaning; and consequently [3] making pure by inculcating righteous deeds and high morals. However, in most places the Qur‘ān has changed the sequence by inserting '[3] *tazkiyah* or making pure' between '[1] *tilāwah* (recitation) and '[2] *ta‘līm* (teaching). Rūḥ-ul-Ma‘ānī explains that if the natural order of wording were to be maintained in all verses, all three elements would have combined together and become 'one', as it happens in pharmaceutical mixing of many substances, the aggregate of which loses the separate identity of each element, and becomes a single 'compound' whereas probably Allah wanted to maintain separate identities of the Divine blessings and the three Prophetic duties separately

identifiable. By changing the natural order in most places, the Holy Qur'an has probably alluded to this fact.

Please see Ma'arif-ul-Qur'an Vol. 1/pp 331-343, under the Surah Al-Baqarah Verse 129, for fuller explanation of this verse.

(...And [this Messenger is sent also] to others of them who did not join them so far. And He is the All-mighty, the All-wise...62:3) The word 'ākharīn means 'other people' and the phrase لَمَّا يَلْحَقُوا بِهِمْ means 'those people who have not yet joined the unlettered people'. This refers to all those Muslims who will enter the fold of Islam until the Last Hour [as transmitted by Ibn Zaid, Mujāhid and others]. This indicates that the succeeding generations of Muslims will be appended to the earlier generations of believers, that is, the noble Companions. This is great good news for the succeeding generations of Muslims. [Rūḥ].

Grammatically, there are two views regarding the conjoining of the word 'ākharīn. One view holds that it is conjoined to *ummiyyīn* and it means that 'Allah has sent his Messenger among the unlettered people and also among those who have not yet joined them'. Sending the Prophet among the present unlettered people is quite obvious, but 'sending him among those who have not yet come' needs explanation. Bayan-ul-Qur'an explains that 'sending among them' stands for 'sending for them' because the preposition *fī* in Arabic is also used in the sense of 'for'. According to some other grammarians, however, the word 'ākharīn is conjoined to the objective pronoun him attached to the verb *yu'allimu-hum*, in which case the interpretation would be 'the Prophet teaches the unlettered people and also the people who have not joined them so far'. [Maẓharī prefers the latter interpretation].

Sayyidna Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه narrates, as recorded in Bukhārī and Muslim, that they were sitting in the company of the Holy Prophet ﷺ when Sūrah Al-Jumu'ah was revealed. He recited it to them, and when he reached the verse (وَآخَرِينَ مِنْهُمْ لَمَّا يَلْحَقُوا بِهِمْ ...and others of them who have not joined them so far...62:3) they asked him who are these 'others'. He remained silent. They asked him the second time and he remained silent. They asked him the third time, and he put his blessed hand on the back

of Sayyidna Salmān Al-Fārisī ؓ [who was at that time in the gathering] and said: "If faith were on Pleiades, even then some men or a man from these people would attain it." [Maẓharī]. This narration does not specify people of Persia, but it does prove that they are included in the general sense of 'others'. This narration speaks greatly of all non-Arabs who embrace Islam. [Maẓharī].

مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ حُمِّلُوا التَّوْرَةَ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَحْمِلُوهَا كَمَثَلِ الْحِمَارِ يَحْمِلُ أَسْفَارًا (The example of those who were ordered to bear (the responsibility of acting upon) the Torah, then they did not bear it, is like a donkey that carries a load of books...5) The word *asfār* is the plural of *sifr*, which means a 'large book'. The preceding verses described that the Holy Prophet ﷺ was raised up among the unlettered people having three main objectives of his mission. The previous Divine Book Torah described the Holy Prophet ﷺ almost with the same qualities as are described in the Qur'an, which required that as soon as the Jews saw the Holy Prophet ﷺ, they should have recognized him and believed in him. But the material position and possessions blinded them to the teachings of Torah. Despite their knowledge of Torah, they acted as practical ignoramus. The verse describes their block-headed behaviour with the example of a donkey loaded with weighty tomes. The donkey carries its loads, but it is neither aware of its subject-matter, nor does it benefit by it. Similarly, the Jews carry around the Torah for material gains and to seek position and status among people, but they do not benefit by its guidance.

The Example of a Non-Practicing Scholar

Commentators have stated that the example given by the verse for Jews applies to any religious scholar who does not act upon his knowledge. A Persian poet has put it thus:

نه محقق بود نه دانش مند.....چار پایی بروکتا ہے چند

'He is neither a scholar, nor a knowledgeable person.

He is but an animal of four legs, carrying the load of some books'

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ هَادَوْا إِن زَعَمْتُمْ أَنَّكُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ لِلَّهِ مِنْ دُونِ النَّاسِ فَتَمَنَّوْا الْمَوْتَ إِن كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

(Say, "O those who are Jews, if you claim that you are the

friends of Allah to the exclusion of all other people, then express your desire for death, if you are true...62:6)

Despite their *kufr*, *shirk* and moral aberration, the Jews claimed نَحْنُ أَبْنَاؤُ اللَّهِ وَأَحِبَّاؤُهُ (...We are the sons of Allah and His favourites) [5:18] and they also claimed لَنْ يَدْخُلَ الْجَنَّةَ إِلَّا مَنْ كَانَ هُودًا (...no one shall ever enter Paradise unless he is a Jew) [2:111] In other words, they believed themselves to be safe and immune from the punishment of the Hereafter, and thought that the blessings of Paradise are their personal property. Obviously, if a person believes that the blessings of the Hereafter are a zillion times better than the blessings of this world, he must, of necessity, wish for death, so that he is able to enter Paradise sooner and start enjoying its blessings forthwith. He sees with his own eyes that this world is not free from miseries, sorrows and hardships and one has to suffer from certain diseases as long as he is living here. Then if he believes that, as soon as he dies, he will certainly receive those numerous and eternal blessings, a wise man should naturally wish for death in his heart, so that he may be set free from this miserable world and reach the next world where he will reside for ever in eternal peace and comfort. That is why the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is instructed in the present verse to challenge the Jews that if they are Allah's children and His beloved ones and they do not have any fear of punishment in the Hereafter, then the reason demands that they should wish for death. Then the Holy Qur'an itself falsified them in the following words:

وَلَا يَتَمَنَّوْنَهُ أَبَدًا بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ (And they will never express this desire, because of what their hands have sent ahead...62:7) In other words, they will not wish for death because of the *kufr* and *shirk* and the evil deeds they have committed . They fully know that there will be nothing for them in the Hereafter but the punishment of Hell. Their claim that they are Allah's children and His loved ones is absolutely false, a claim that they themselves know is false. They make such claims for worldly and material gains. They also know that if they accept the Holy Prophet's ﷺ challenge and invoke death upon themselves, it would be readily accepted and they would die instantly. Being convinced of the falsity of their position, the Jews will refuse to accept the challenge. A Prophetic

Tradition reports that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ has stated that if any one of them at that time had wished for death, he would have died instantly. [Rūh]

Is Longing for Death Permissible?

This subject has been fully discussed in Sūrah Al-Baqarah. Traditions forbid anyone to wish for death. The most important reason behind this is that no one has the right to believe that as soon as he dies, he will certainly enter Paradise and will have no fear of any punishment. Wishing for death in such a state of mind is tantamount to show bravery before Allah.

قُلْ إِنَّ الْمَوْتَ الَّذِي تَفِرُونَ مِنْهُ فَإِنَّهُ مُلْقِيكُمْ (Say, "Indeed, the death from which you [try to] run away has to visit you,...62:8) In other words, the Jews' running away from longing for death despite their aforesaid claim is tantamount to running away from death itself. The Holy Prophet ﷺ is instructed in the verse to tell them that the death from which they are fleeing would inevitably catch up with them. If that would not happen instantly, it would certainly happen sometime later. Thus it is impossible for anyone to avoid or avert death in any way.

Laws pertaining to Avoiding the Causes of Death

There are many normal causes of death, from which both reason and Sharī'ah require man to avoid. Once the Holy Prophet ﷺ passed under a bent wall [as if it was about to fall down or collapse] and he passed it quickly, lest it should fall down or collapse on him. Likewise, if fire breaks out at some place, both reason and Sharī'ah dictate that one should run away from there. These circumstances of fleeing from death do not fall under fleeing from death denounced in the above verse, if our faith is sound and we believe that when the predetermined time of our death will approach, we will not be able to escape. Since we do not know for sure whether fire, or poison, or some other obnoxious thing will be the destined cause of our death in a particular situation, running away from them would not amount to fleeing from death that is denounced in the verse.

As far as bubonic plague or epidemic is concerned, it is a separate issue. The details appear in books of jurisprudence and Ḥadīth which may be consulted. The author of Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī has on this occasion discussed

this issue exhaustively and clarified it to a great degree. Some of its details have already been given in this book under the verses 2:243 to 244. See vol. 1, pp. 619-622.

Verses 9 - 11

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا نُودِيَ لِلصَّلَاةِ مِنْ يَوْمِ الْجُمُعَةِ فَاسْعَوْا إِلَى
ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَذَرُوا الْبَيْعَ ۚ ذَلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٩﴾ فَإِذَا
قُضِيَتِ الصَّلَاةُ فَانْتَشِرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَابْتَغُوا مِنْ فَضْلِ اللَّهِ
وَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٠﴾ وَإِذَا رَأَوْا تِجَارَةً أَوْ لَهْوًا
انْفَضُّوا إِلَيْهَا وَتَرَكُوكَ قَائِمًا ۚ قُلْ مَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ مِنَ اللَّهِوِ وَمِنَ
التِّجَارَةِ ۚ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الرَّازِقِينَ ﴿١١﴾

O you who believe, when the call for *ṣalāh* (prayer) is proclaimed on Friday, hasten for the remembrance of Allah, and leave off business. That is much better for you, if you but know. [9] Then once the *ṣalāh* is finished, disperse in the land, and seek the grace of Allah. And remember Allah much, so that you may be successful. [10] And when they see some merchandise or amusement, they break away to it, and leave you standing. Say, "What is with Allah is much better than the amusement and the merchandise, and Allah is the best giver of sustenance." [11]

Commentary

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا نُودِيَ لِلصَّلَاةِ مِنْ يَوْمِ الْجُمُعَةِ فَاسْعَوْا إِلَى ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَذَرُوا الْبَيْعَ

O you who believe, when the call for *ṣalāh* (prayer) is proclaimed on Friday, hasten for the remembrance of Allah, and leave off business....[62:9]

The Arabic word for Friday is 'Yaum-ul-Jumu'ah' and is so called because it is the day of congregation for Muslims. Allah created the heavens, the earth and the entire universe in six days, and Friday was the last day when the creation was completed. Prophet 'Ādam عليه السلام was created on that day; he was admitted into Paradise on that day; he was

sent down to the earth on that day; the Last Hour or the Day of Resurrection will occur on that day; and on the same day there is a moment when supplications are readily accepted. All this is established on the authority of authentic Traditions. [Ibn Kathīr]

Allah had appointed Friday as the day of congregation and festivity for the people, but the previous nations were not fortunate enough to appoint it as their sacred day. The Jews regarded Saturday as their day of congregation. The Christians made Sunday their day of congregation. Allah gave this Ummah the ability to elect Friday as their day of congregation. [as transmitted by Bukhārī and Muslim on the authority of Abū Hurairah  as quoted by Ibn Kathīr]

During the Days of Ignorance, Friday was known as 'Yaum-ul-'Arubah'. The first Arab to change the name of this day to 'Yaum-ul-Jumu'ah' was Ka'b Ibn Lu'ayy. The Quraish used to gather or congregate on this day, and Ka'b ibn Lu'ayy used to deliver his sermon. This happened 560 years before the advent of the Holy Prophet . Ka'b Ibn Lu'ayy was among the Holy Prophet's  forefathers. Even during the Days of Ignorance, Allah had kept him away from idol worship and granted him the ability to believe in the Oneness of Allah. He had also given people the glad tidings of the advent of the Holy Prophet . His greatness among Quraish may be judged from the fact that the year of his death, which occurred 560 years before the Holy Prophet , was marked as the new calendar era for computation of dates. In Arabia, at first the calendar era was established when Ka'bah was built and dates were computed accordingly. Then Ka'b Ibn Lu'ayy's death marked another era, and the dates were computed on that basis. When the Event of the Elephant occurred in the year of the birth of the Holy Prophet , that set in a new era of Arab calendar, and the dates were computed accordingly. In sum, the importance of 'Yaum-ul-Jumu'ah' had been recognized in Arabia before Islam in the time of Ka'b Ibn Lu'ayy, to whom is ascribed the naming of the day as 'Yaum-ul-Jumu'ah'. [Maḏharī] According to some narrations, the Ansar of Madīnah used to gather and pray, before migration, on Friday before Jumu'ah prayer became obligatory, and they organized this on the basis of their own *Ijtihād* (assessment). [as transmitted by Abd-ur-Razzāq with an authentic chain of

narrators on the authority of Muḥammad Ibn Sīrīn, as quoted by Mazharī]

إِذَا نُودِيَ لِلصَّلَاةِ مِنْ يَوْمِ الْجُمُعَةِ (...when the call for salah (prayer) is proclaimed on Friday, hasten for the remembrance of Allah, and leave off business ...62:9) The word *nidā'* refers to *adhān* or call for prayer. In the sentence فَاسْعَوْا إِلَى ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ (...hasten to Allah's remembrance...) the word *sa'y* means to 'run or rush' as well as to 'take care of a task consciously'. In this context, the word is used in the latter sense, because the Holy Prophet ﷺ has prohibited to go to prayer running or walking quickly. He said when anyone hears the *iqāmah*, he should proceed to offer the prayer with calmness and dignity. The verse implies that when believers are called to prayer on the Day of Jumu'ah, they should proceed to the remembrance of Allah, that is, they should carefully go to the mosque for Jumu'ah prayer and its Sermon. Just as a person running towards something does not pay heed to anything else, a Muslim should not pay attention, after the call, to anything besides *adhān* and *khuṭbah*. [Ibn Kathīr]. The phrase ذِكْرُ اللَّهِ (...Allah's remembrance...) could refer to Jumu'ah prayer as well as to Jumu'ah Sermon, which is one of the conditions of the validity of Jumu'ah prayer. Therefore, the phrase may most appropriately be interpreted as referring to the package of Jumu'ah prayer and Jumu'ah Sermon. [Mazharī and others].

وَذَرُوا الْبَيْعَ (...and leave off business...) The literal meaning of the word '*bai*' is 'sale'. Although the intent is to ban all activities of buying and selling, the verse has mentioned 'sale' only, because when one aspect of trading is abandoned, the other aspect would automatically come to an end. If there is no one to sell, there will be no one to buy, because trade is a bilateral transaction..

The verse under comment indicates that the bar on the activities of buying and selling after the *adhān* of Jumu'ah needs to be implemented for practical purposes in such a way that the shops are closed at that particular time, so that all trading activities automatically come to a halt. The underlying wisdom is that there are uncountable number of customers and buyers, and it would not be possible to stop them all. The sellers and shopkeepers, however, are limited and they can be stopped. If they are stopped from selling, the buyers automatically will stop buying. Hence, the verse deemed it sufficient to impose the bar on 'sale'.

Special Note

The purport of the verse is to forbid, after the *adhān* of Jumu'ah, all activities that hamper preparation for Jumu'ah prayer and sermon activities such as trading, agriculture, labour or anything else, - but the Qur'ān mentions only selling. This could imply that only people living in towns and cities are commanded to offer the Jumu'ah prayer, and not the people residing in small villages, rural areas and jungles. Thus activities that are carried out by people in towns and cities, that is, trade activities, have been forbidden. But activities related to land, such as agricultural activities, are generally carried out in rural areas where Jumu'ah prayer is not required. Therefore, such activities are not mentioned here. However, The jurists of the Ummah unanimously agree that the word 'ba' occurring in the verse does not refer only to 'selling' but to all such activities that can hinder preparing for and proceeding to the Jumu'ah prayer. Thus eating, drinking, sleeping, talking, and even studying are forbidden after Jumu'ah *adhān*. Only activities related to Jumu'ah may be carried out.

Adhān of Jumu'ah

In the beginning, there was only one *adhān* for Jumu'ah, which was called at the time of the Khuṭbah in front of the Imam. This situation existed in the time of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and this practice continued in the time of Sayyidna Abū Bakr ؓ and 'Umar ؓ. However, the Muslim population grew by leaps and bounds in the time of Sayyidna 'Uthmān ؓ and spread in the outskirts of Madīnah. The *adhān* that was given in front of the Imam at the time of the khuṭbah could not be heard by the large Muslim population in the distance. He therefore initiated another *adhān* that was called in the trading area further from the mosque at his house in az-Zaura', which could be heard throughout Madīnah. None of the noble Companions objected to this. Thus this first *adhān* by consensus of the Companions became instituted. All trading and other activities that were forbidden after the Jumu'ah *adhān* before the Imam are now forbidden after the first *adhān* introduced by Sayyidna 'Uthman ؓ, taking into account the wordings of the Qur'ān نُوَدَىٰ لِلصَّلَاةِ مِنْ يَوْمِ الْجُمُعَةِ (when the call for ṣalāh (prayer) is proclaimed on Friday,). Details are available in the canonical collections of Traditions, commentaries and jurisprudence. There is no disagreement on the issue.

There is consensus of the entire Ummah that on Friday Ṣalāt-ul-Jumu'ah shall be performed instead of Ṣalāt-uz-Ḍuhur and there is also consensus that Ṣalāt-ul-Jumu'ah is not like the five daily prayers. There are some additional pre-requisites attached to it. The five daily prayers can be performed individually without congregation, or they could be performed in congregation with only two individuals. Ṣalāt-ul-Jumu'ah, on the other hand, is not valid without congregation. There is disagreement among the jurists about the number of individuals that can constitute a congregation. The five daily prayers may validly be held anywhere, on the sea, ocean, mountains or in the jungles. But Ṣalāt-ul-Jumu'ah on the other hand, is not valid in jungles or deserts according to any of the jurists. It is not obligatory on women, the sickly or the wayfarers. The latter should perform Ḍuhur prayer instead of Jumu'ah. There is disagreement among the jurists about the type of locality where Jumu'ah prayer may be held. According to Imām Shafi'ī, Ṣalāt-ul-Jumu'ah is valid in a habitation where forty free, sane and adult men reside. If there are less than forty such men, it is not valid. According to Imām Mālik, the habitation must be such as to have houses adjacent to one another, and it must also have a bazaar or a market-place. According to Imām Abū Hanīfah رحمه الله تعالى, for Ṣalāt-ul-Jumu'ah to be held validly the following pre-requisites are necessary: The habitation must be a town, city or a very large village which has streets, market places, a Muslim ruler and a judge who can restore the rights of people and decide cases of dispute. This is no occasion to go into details of the issue and proofs thereof. Venerable scholars have written separate books on the topic and clarified the position.

In brief, the generality of the command to attend Ṣalāt-ul-Jumu'ah is restricted to a specific sector of the addressees. It is not obligatory on every members of the Muslim community, but for it to be compulsory, there are some conditions and pre-requisites. The disagreement exists only in identifying the pre-requisites. But where the pre-requisites apply and Ṣalāt-ul-Jumu'ah becomes obligatory according to any school of thought, it is very important to observe it, and there is grave warnings for those who neglect it without any valid reason in terms of Shari'ah. On the other hand, there is a promise of great reward and blessings for those who offer it fulfilling all its conditions and pre-requisites.

Blessings in Business after Jumu'ah

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَجَبْتُ دَعْوَتَكَ وَصَلَّيْتُ فَرِيضَتَكَ وَأَنْتَشَرْتُ كَمَا أَمَرْتَنِي فَأَرْزُقْنِي مِنْ فَضْلِكَ وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الرَّازِقِينَ. (Then once the *ṣalāh* is finished, disperse in the land, and seek the grace of Allah...62:10). The preceding verses prohibited trading and all other worldly activities, after the *adhān* of Jumu'ah. The present verse permits those activities after the Jumu'ah prayer is over; we are allowed to spread throughout the land in search of our livelihood and sustenance.

When Sayyidna 'Irāk Ibn Mālik رضي الله عنه finished his Jumu'ah prayer, he would come out and, standing on the threshold of the mosque, he would pray:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَجَبْتُ دَعْوَتَكَ وَصَلَّيْتُ فَرِيضَتَكَ وَأَنْتَشَرْتُ كَمَا أَمَرْتَنِي فَأَرْزُقْنِي مِنْ فَضْلِكَ وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الرَّازِقِينَ. (رواه ابن أبي حاتم، از ابن كثير)

"O Allah, I responded to Your call and performed the Salah which You have prescribed for me as an obligation, and I am going out as You have commanded me in search of livelihood. So, grant me my livelihood out of Your grace. And You are the best giver of sustenance." [Transmitted by Ibn Abī Ḥātim, as quoted by Ibn Kathīr]. Some of the righteous elders have reported that anyone who performs his trading activities after Jumu'ah, Allah will grant him blessings seventy folds. [Ibn Kathīr]

It is reported from the righteous elders that whoever carries out his commercial activities after the prayer of Jumu'ah is favoured by Allah with seventy blessings. (Ibn Kathīr)

وَادْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا لَّعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ (And remember Allah much, so that you may be successful - 62:10). It means that commercial activities are though allowed after the prayer, one should not neglect Allah's remembrance during these activities as the infidels do. Even during such activities one must remain mindful of Allah and His remembrance.

Admonishing those who abandon the Imām while he is delivering the Jumu'ah Khuṭbah [Sermon]

وَإِذَا رَأَوْا تِجَارَةً أَوْ لَهْوًا انفَضُّوا إِلَيْهَا وَتَرَكُوكَ قَائِمًا ط قُلْ مَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ مِنَ اللَّهِو
وَمِنَ التِّجَارَةِ ط وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الرَّازِقِينَ

And when they see some merchandise or amusement, they

break away to it, and leave you standing. Say, "What is with Allah is much better than the amusement and the merchandise, and Allah is the best giver of sustenance." (62:11)

The verse admonishes those who once abandoned the Friday sermon and attended some trade activity. Imām Ibn Kathīr says that this incident took place when the Holy Prophet ﷺ used to deliver the Friday sermon after the Jumu'ah prayer, as it happens on 'Īdain even in our days. It once happened that the Friday prayer had finished and the Holy Prophet ﷺ was delivering his sermon. Suddenly a trading caravan arrived in the market-place of Madīnah. Drums were beaten to announce the arrival of the caravan. The Friday prayer had finished and the sermon was in progress. Many of the noble Companions went away to the market-place. Only a few of them had remained behind with the Holy Prophet ﷺ who were about twelve in number [according to a narration in Marāsīl of Abū Dāwūd]. According to some narratives, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "If all had gone, the entire valley of Madīnah would have been filled with the fire of punishment". [Transmitted by Abū Ya'fā, as quoted by Ibn Kathīr].

Muqatil, the leading scholar of Qur'ānic commentary, says that this was the trading caravan of Diḥyah Ibn Khalaf Kalbī, which had come from Syria. This caravan normally came to Madīnah with all the essentials, especially essential foodstuff. Whenever it arrived in Madīnah, and the people came to know about it, men and women all rushed towards it. Diḥyah Ibn Khalaf was not a Muslim until then. He became a Muslim later on.

Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and Abū Mālīk said that that was a time when there was scarcity and dearth of things. [Maḏharī]. There were several factors on account of which a large group of the blessed Companions left the mosque when they heard the sound of the caravan. First, the *fard* prayer had already finished, and they did not know until then the status of the Friday sermon whether it was part of the *fard* prayer. Second, there was scarcity and dearth of essential goods and items. Third, buyers would rush to the caravan and they feared that if they did not make it in time, they would not be able to obtain their essentials. As a result, the noble Companions committed the mistake and the above Tradition sounded a warning, that is, if all of them had gone the Divine punishment would

have overtaken them. The current verse إِذَا رَأَوْا تِجَارَةً was revealed to admonish them and put them to shame. For this reason, the Holy Prophet ﷺ, since that day, changed the order of Friday sermon and prayer, delivering the sermons before the prayer. This is now the approved way [Sunnah]. [Ibn Kathīr]

The verse under comment instructs the Holy Prophet ﷺ to tell the people that what is with Allah is better than the merchandise and amusement of this world, that is, the reward of the Hereafter. It is not far-fetched to conceive that people who forsake business and earning of livelihood for the sake of prayer and sermon will attract ample blessings in their provision from Allah, even in this world, as was cited earlier from the righteous elders on the authority of Ibn Kathīr.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Jumu‘ah
Ends here.

Sūrah Al-Munāfiqūn

(The Hypocrites)

This Sūrah is Madanī, and it has 11 verses and 2 sections

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 8

إِذَا جَاءَكَ الْمُنَافِقُونَ قَالُوا نَشْهَدُ إِنَّكَ لَرَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ إِنَّكَ
لَرَسُولُهُ وَاللَّهُ يَشْهَدُ إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ لَكَاذِبُونَ ﴿١﴾ اتَّخَذُوا أَيْمَانَهُمْ
جُنَّةً فَصَدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ إِنَّهُمْ سَاءَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٢﴾ ذَلِكَ
بِأَنَّهُمْ آمَنُوا ثُمَّ كَفَرُوا فَطُبِعَ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ ﴿٣﴾ وَإِذَا
رَأَيْتَهُمْ تُعْجِبُكَ أَجْسَامُهُمْ وَإِنْ يَقُولُوا تَسْمَعُ لِقَوْلِهِمْ كَانَتْهُمْ
خُشْبٌ مُسْنَدَةٌ يَحْسَبُونَ كُلَّ صَيْحَةٍ عَلَيْهِمْ هُمُ الْعَدُوُّ
فَاحْذَرْهُمْ قَاتَلَهُمُ اللَّهُ أَنْتَ يَأْتِي يُؤْفِكُونَ ﴿٤﴾ وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْا
يَسْتَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ لَوَّا رُءُوسَهُمْ وَرَأَيْتَهُمْ يَصُدُّونَ وَهُمْ
مُسْتَكْبِرُونَ ﴿٥﴾ سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أَسْتَغْفَرْتَ لَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تَسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ
لَنْ يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴿٦﴾ هُمُ الَّذِينَ
يَقُولُونَ لَا تَنْفِقُوا عَلَى مَنْ عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ حَتَّى يَنْفَضُوا وَلِلَّهِ
خَزَائِنُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَكِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ ﴿٧﴾

يَقُولُونَ لئن رَجَعْنَا إِلَى الْمَدِينَةِ لَيُخْرِجَنَّ الْأَعَزُّ مِنْهَا الْأَذَلَّ وَلِلَّهِ
الْعِزَّةُ وَلِرَسُولِهِ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَلَكِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٨﴾

When the hypocrites come to you, they say, "We bear witness that you are indeed the messenger of Allah." And Allah knows that you are really His messenger. And Allah bears witness that the hypocrites are actually liars. [1] They have made their oaths a shield, and thus they have prevented (others) from the way of Allah. Surely evil is what they have been doing. [2] That is because they declared their faith (apparently), then disbelieved (secretly). Therefore a seal has been set on their hearts, and thus they do not understand. [3] And if you see them, their bodies would attract you, and if they speak, you would listen to their speech. (Yet, being devoid of substance,) it is as if they were propped up pieces of wood. They deem every shout (they hear) to be against them (out of cowardice). They are the enemy; so beware of them. May Allah destroy them. How perverted are they! [4] And when it is said to them, "Come on, Allah's Messenger will pray for your forgiveness", they twist their heads, and you see them turning away in arrogance. [5] It is equal in their case, whether you pray for their forgiveness or do not pray, Allah will not forgive them. Indeed Allah does not guide the sinning people. [6] They are the ones who say, "Do not spend on those who are with Allah's Messenger so that they disperse." And to Allah belong the treasures of the heavens and the earth, but the hypocrites do not understand. [7] They say, "If we return to Madīnah, the more honourable ones will drive out the meaner ones from there." And to Allah belongs the honour, and to His Messenger, and to the believers, but the hypocrites do not know. [8]

Commentary

Background of Revelation

The incident, in which this Sūrah was revealed, took place in the campaign against Banul-Muṣṭaliq which happened, according to Muḥammad Ibn Ishāq, in Sha'bān 6 AH and, according to Qatādah and 'Urwah, in Sha'bān 5 AH. [Maḥzarī]. According to Muḥammad Ibn Ishāq and most historians, the details of the incident is as follows: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ received the news that the leader of

Banul-Muṣṭaliq, namely, Ḥārith Ibn Dirar, is preparing for a campaign against him. Ḥārith Ibn Dirar was the father of Sayyidah Juwairiyah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا who later on embraced Islam and became one of the Holy wives of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Ḥārith Ibn Dirār himself later on embraced Islam.

Nevertheless, when the messenger of Allah ﷺ received the news about the campaign against him, he gathered a group of Muslims and went out to face them. Many hypocrites joined the Muslims to fight the *jihād* in the hope that they will receive a share in the spoils of war, because they, despite having disbelief in their hearts, were sure that Divine help will be on the Prophet's side, and he will attain victory.

When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ reached Banul-Muṣṭaliq's settlement, he faced Ḥārith Ibn Dirār's army near a well that was known as Muraisī'. Therefore, the campaign is also known as the battle of Muraisī'. The combatants arrayed themselves and shot arrows at each other. Many of the Banul-Muṣṭaliq's men were killed and others fled; and some men and women were captured as prisoners of war. Some of their belongings fell into Muslim hands as spoils of war. Allah granted victory to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the *jihād* came to an end.

Co-operation on the basis of Tribal, Racial, National or Regional Bias is the Slogan of Pre-Islamic Paganism

Whilst the Muslim army was still at the well of Muraisī', an unpleasant scene broke out between a *Muhājir* (emigrant) and an *Anṣārī* (helper). They quarrelled over the same water where the battle was fought. The Emigrant called their fellow-Emigrants for help, and the Helpers called the fellow-Helpers for help. Some individuals came forward to help their respective sides, and the dispute might have led to a fight between the Emigrants and the Helpers. When the Holy Prophet ﷺ came to know about this, he immediately went to the scene of dispute, and expressed his indignation, saying مَابَالُ دَعْوَى الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ "What is this slogan of paganism [that you call for defence on the basis of regional, racial and national bias]?" دَعُوْهَا فَإِنَّهَا مُنْتَبَةٌ "Give up the slogan. It stinks." He said that every Muslim should help another Muslim brother, whether oppressor or oppressed. Helping the oppressed is quite obvious, but helping the oppressor implies to stop him from oppression. In all matters it is necessary to find out who is the oppressed and help him and who is the oppressor and stop him from oppressing, even though he may be his own

brother or father. The racial, lineal, regional or national pride and prejudice is a filthy slogan, and it gives out nothing but bad odour.

The speech of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ brought the quarrel to an end, and the dispute was thus quelled. The two people involved in this dispute were Jahjah, the Emigrant, and Sinān Ibn Wabrah al-Juhani, the Helper. In this matter, the former was more on the wrong, and the latter was wounded. Sayyidnā 'Ubādah Ibn Ṣamit ؓ explained to Sinān Ibn Wabrah al-Juhani ؓ, and he took understanding and pardoned Jahjah ؓ. The oppressor and the oppressed thus became brothers.

The hypocrites had joined the Muslims for greed of receiving a share from the spoils. Their leader was 'Abdullah Ibn Ubayy. Like other hypocrites, he called himself a Muslim for mundane benefits, but concealed enmity in his heart against the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and the Muslims. When he came to know about the clash between the Muhājirs (Emigrants) and Anṣār (the Helpers), he found this an ideal opportunity to cause friction among the Muslims. So he addressed an assembly in which there were hypocrites and a Muslim Zaid Ibn Arqam ؓ where he strongly provoked the Helpers with his fiery speech against the Emigrants, saying: "You have brought all this on yourselves. You have let them settle in your land and share your wealth and property. They are fed on your breads until they became strong and now they rival you. If you do not realize the consequences of your helping them, they will make your life miserable. Therefore, in future you should abandon them and stop helping them with your property, and they would themselves disperse to other areas. By Allah, when we go back to Madīnah the most honourable of the inhabitants of Madīnah shall drive out the meanest of them from there." He termed his own group and the Anṣār as 'the honourable ones', and [God forbid!] the Holy Prophet ﷺ along with the *muhajirin* as 'the meanest ones'. When Sayyidnā Zaid Ibn Arqam ؓ heard his speech, he retorted instantly: "By Allah, you are mean, low and despicable. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ is successful by God-given honour, and by the love of the Muslims.

Since 'Abdullāh Ibn Ubayy wanted to keep his hypocrisy under a veil, he concealed his intention under the cover of the vague expression of 'the most honoured and the meanest'. When Sayyidnā Zaid Ibn Arqam ؓ made a sharp retort, he realized that his disbelief would be uncovered, he

apologized to Sayyidna Zaid Ibn Arqam ؓ that he was merely joking and did not mean to do anything against the Messenger of Allah ؐ.

Sayyidnā Zaid Ibn Arqam ؓ left the assembly and went to the Messenger of Allah ؐ and reported to him the whole story about ‘Abdullah Ibn Ubayy. This news was very disturbing and trying for the Holy Prophet ؐ. The colour of his blessed countenance changed. Sayyidnā Zaid Ibn Arqam ؓ was a young Companion at the time. The Holy Prophet ؐ asked him: "Boy! Are you not perhaps lying?" Sayyidnā Zaid Ibn Arqam ؓ swore by Allah and said: "I heard these words with my own ears." The Holy Prophet ؐ said to him: "Are you sure you are not saying this on the basis of some suspicion?". Sayyidnā Zaid Ibn Arqam ؓ made the same reply. After that, the news of Ibn Ubayy's fiery speech spread throughout the Muslim army. No one spoke anything but about this speech. On the other hand, the Helpers reproached Sayyidnā Zaid Ibn Arqam ؓ. They said that he has accused the venerable leader of the nation (that is, Ibn Ubayy) and severed kinship ties with him. Sayyidnā Zaid Ibn Arqam ؓ swore by Allah and said that in the entire tribe of Khazraj, Ibn Ubayy was the dearest person to him, but when he uttered the unpleasant words against the Messenger of Allah ؐ, he could not hold himself. "Even if that were my father," he went on, "I would have certainly reported his speech to the Messenger of Allah ؐ."

When Sayyidnā ‘Umar ؓ heard the story, he said: "O Allah's Messenger! Permit me to behead this hypocrite." According to another narration, Sayyidnā ‘Umar ؓ said: "Permit ‘Abbād Ibn Bishr to cut off his head and present it to you." The Messenger of Allah ؐ said that if he were to permit them to do that, the news will spread among people that Muḥammad ؐ kills his own Comrades. As a result, he did not allow Ibn Ubayy to be killed. When this news about Sayyidnā ‘Umar ؓ reached ‘Abdullah Ibn Ubayy's son who also bore the same name as his father's, ‘Abdullah, but he was a sincere Muslim, he immediately went up to the Messenger of Allah ؐ and said: "If you wish my father to be killed because of his speech, then allow me to kill him and bring his head to you before you arise from your assembly. The entire tribe of Khazraj is a witness to the fact that no one is more serving and obedient to my parents than myself. But I will not tolerate any of their mischief against Allah and His Messenger ؐ. If you allow anyone else to kill my father and he

kills him, then, I am afraid, when I see my father's killer walking freely, my tribal jealousy may overcome me and I may be tempted to kill him, and that might be the cause of my punishment." The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "I do not have the intention of killing him, nor have I instructed anyone else to kill him."

After this incident, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ announced, at an unusual time against his normal habit, that he would immediately set out on his journey back to Madīnah. So he mounted his she-camel Quṣwā' and started his journey at an unusual time. When the general body of the blessed Companions had set out on the journey, the Holy Prophet ﷺ called 'Abdullah Ibn Ubayy and asked him: "Did you say this?" He took oath and denied everything that was imputed to him, and claimed that the boy, Zaid Ibn Arqam, was a liar. 'Abdullah Ibn Ubayy was the respectable chief of his people. All the people felt that may be Zaid Ibn Arqam ﷺ was under some misconception, and Ibn Ubayy did not say it as was conveyed.

In any case, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ accepted Ibn Ubayy's oath and explanation. The reproach of the people against Zaid Ibn Arqam ﷺ was further aggravated. This embarrassed him and he hid himself from the people. Then the Messenger of Allah ﷺ travelled with the entire Muslim army the whole day and night and the next morning, until the bright sun was out. Then he, together with the army, halted in a place. They were all exhausted on account of the long and strenuous journey. As soon as they touched the ground, they fell into deep sleep.

The narrator reports that the purpose of this unusually immediate and long journey was to close the chapter of the story of Ibn Ubayy, which had by and by spread among the entire Muslim community, and they talked about it all the time.

After that, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ started the journey, in the course of which Sayyidnā 'Ubādah Ibn Ṣāmit ﷺ suggested to Ibn Ubayy to approach the Holy Prophet ﷺ and admit his guilt before him who would pray Allah for his pardon and he would attain salvation. When he heard this suggestion, he turned his head away. No Qur'ānic verses pertaining to Ibn Ubayy were revealed until then, but when he turned himself away in haughty arrogance, Sayyidnā 'Ubādah Ibn Ṣāmit ﷺ

said: "Certainly, the Qur'an will reveal verses pertaining to your turning down the advice."

While the Holy Prophet ﷺ was on his journey, Sayyidnā Zaid Ibn Arqam ؓ came near him again and again, and he was firm that since this hypocrite has called him a liar and embarrassed him in front of the entire nation. Allah would surely reveal verses to clear him and give the lie to the hypocrite. Suddenly Sayyidnā Zaid Ibn Arqam ؓ noticed that the Holy Prophet ﷺ entered into the state that he experienced when he received revelation: He started breathing heavily, his forehead dripped with perspiration and his mount, the she-camel, began to feel the weight of the revelation. Sayyidnā Zaid Ibn Arqam ؓ sensed that some revelation was coming down regarding that matter. When that state of revelation was over, and, because his own mount was closer to the mount of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, he held the ear of Zaid ؓ and said **يَا غُلَامُ صَدَقَ اللَّهُ** "O Boy, Allah has confirmed the veracity of your statement, and the entire Sūrah Al-Munāfiqūn - from the beginning to the end - has been revealed in connection with Ibn Ubayy's incident."

This shows that Sūrah Al-Munāfiqūn was revealed in the course of the journey. According to Baghawī's narration, however, the Holy Prophet ﷺ had reached Madīnah and Sayyidnā Zaid Ibn Arqam ؓ was hiding himself in the house for fear of reprisal, when this Surah was revealed. And Allah knows best!

According to another narration, when the Messenger of Allah ﷺ approached Madīnah at the valley of 'Aqiq, 'Abdullah, the son of the hypocrite 'Abdullah Ibn Ubayy, who was a faithful believer, went forward and searched through the throng of mounts and, finding his father's mount, made it sit. He placed his foot on its knees and said to his father: "By Allah! You cannot enter Madīnah unless the Messenger of Allah permits you, and unless you clarify who are the most honourable inhabitants of Madīnah that will expel the meanest ones. Tell me who is the most honourable one, the Messenger of Allah or you?" Passers-by were reproaching 'Abdullah as to how unkindly he was treating his father. By then the mount of Allah's Messenger ﷺ came near. He inquired what was happening. People said that 'Abdullah has barred his father's entry into Madīnah unless Allah's Messenger permits him. The

Holy Prophet ﷺ saw that the hypocritical Ibn Ubayy declared to his son that he himself was the meanest of the citizens of Madīnah, even meaner than children and women, and the Holy Prophet ﷺ the most honourable of them. At this, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said to the son: "Leave his way; let him enter." The son then let him enter.

Only this much is the story of the revelation of Sūrah Al-Munāfiqūn. At the beginning of the story, a concise reference was made to the campaign of Banul-Muṣṭaliq where it was shown that the real person responsible for the campaign was Ḥārith Ibn Ḍirār who at that time was not a Muslim but embraced Islam later. He was the father of Sayyidah Juwairiyah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا who too was not a Muslim but embraced Islam later, and became one of the noble wives of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

Musnad of Aḥmad, Abū Dāwūd and others record that when Banul-Muṣṭaliq were defeated, spoils of war, together with prisoners of war, fell into Muslim hands. According to Islamic Law, all prisoners and spoils of war were distributed among the Mujāhidīn. Among the prisoners of war was Juwairiyah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا the daughter of Ḥārith Ibn Ḍarār. She fell to the lot of Sayyidnā Thābit Ibn Qais Ibn Shammās. He entered into the contract of *kitābah* to set her free in lieu of a specified sum of money.¹

According to Sayyidah Juwairiyah's رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا contract of *kitābah*, the sum specified was very large and she could not pay off the large sum of money to purchase her freedom. She came to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and said: "I have embraced Islam and I bear witness that there is only One Allah and He has no partners, and that you are Allah's Messenger." Then she went on to narrate her story: "I fell to the lot of Thābit Ibn Qais Ibn Shammās, but we entered into the contract of *kitābah* and the sum specified in the contract is so large that I cannot manage. Please do help me." The Holy Prophet ﷺ acceded to her request. In addition, he expressed his intention to emancipate her and marry her. For Sayyidah Juwairiyah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا, this was a great boon. How could she refuse to accept this offer? She accepted the offer whole-heartedly, and thus became one of the noble wives of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. The Mother of the Faithful, Sayyidah Juwairiyah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا says that three days before the Holy Prophet ﷺ came for the campaign of Banul-Muṣṭaliq, 'I saw in my dream that the moon arose in Yathrib and it

(1) For fuller explanation of the contract of *kitābah*, see volume 6, pp.426-427 of this book under the commentary of Sūrah 24:33. (Muḥammad Taqī Usmani)

came and fell in my lap. I did not narrate this dream to anyone at that time. Now I have seen its interpretation with my own eyes.'

She was the daughter of the leader of her nation. When she became one of the wives of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, it exerted a great influence on the entire tribe. One advantage that accrued to all women captured with her was that all of them were emancipated. They were relatives of the Mother of the Faithful. The Muslims set free all slave-girls related to her when they came to know of her joining the rank of the Mother of the Faithful. They felt that it is disrespectful to keep any of her relatives as a slave-girl. About one hundred of them were emancipated with her. Her father saw a miracle of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and embraced Islam.

The Above Story Imparts Guiding Principles on Important Issues

The circumstances, under which Sūrah Al-Munāfiqūn was revealed, indeed help us understand the basic interpretation of the Sūrah. Additionally, they bring out some important guiding principles related to moral or ethical, political and social issues. That is why the full story has been fully recounted here. The guiding principles derived from this story are given below:

The Foundation Stone of Islamic Polity: Establishment of Islamic Brotherhood which Aims at Ending Colour, Racial and Linguistic Discriminations, and Indigenous-Alien Prejudices

The episode of the dispute that broke out between an Emigrant and a Helper, and each side calling their fellow-Emigrants and their fellow-Helpers respectively for help was the icon of paganism which the Holy Prophet ﷺ destroyed. He established the principle that all believers are brothers, regardless of their race, colour, language, or nationality. The bond of brotherhood the Holy Prophet ﷺ established between the Refugees and the Helpers had made them like real brothers. It is, however, the ancient Satanic network to get people involved in mutual dispute and quarrel on the basis of nationality, race, language, colour and regionalism. Satan calls for mutual co-operation and help on this basis alone. This necessarily results in blocking out the Islamic concept of mutual co-operation which is based on Truth, justice, fair play and equity *vis-à-vis* the un-Islamic co-operation based on race and nationalism taken place. In this way, the Satan causes friction among Muslims. In this

instance also a similar situation would have developed if the Holy Prophet ﷺ did not arrive on the scene in time and quell the dispute and said to them that it was the stinking slogan of paganism and that they should give it up. He re-established them on the Qur'ānic principle of mutual co-operation تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ (And help each other in righteousness and piety, and do not help each other in sin and aggression....5:2) In other words, the standard for Muslims to help others or to receive help from others is good will, justice, fair play and equity. They should co-operate mutually on this basis, even though the others may belong to another race, ethnic group, or to another region. They should not unite in one conjoint to co-operate in sin and injustice, even though he may be father or brother. This is the just and rational foundation which Islam has laid, and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ himself took care of this every step of the way and commanded everyone to follow the principle. In his Farewell Address, he said that all customs of paganism are trampled under his feet. The idols of discrimination of Arab-non-Arab, white-black and indigenous- aliens have been broken. Islamic principle of mutual help and co-operation is Truth and justice. All should apply it.

Another lesson that stems from this story is that the enemies of Islam since time immemorial use nationalism and regionalism to cause friction, and break up the Muslim Community. Whenever the opportunity arises, they split them up.

Alas, the Muslims have long forgotten this lesson, and the enemies have once more set up the same Satanic network to break up Islamic unity. The Muslims all over the world have put the religion and the religious principles into oblivion. As a result, they have become victims of civil wars. Their united front to fight disbelief has been smashed. The Muslim world is divided not only into Arabs and non-Arabs, but further divided into Egyptian, Syrian, Hījāzī and Yemeni. In the Indo-Pak sub-continent, the Punjabis, Bengalis, Sindhis, Hindis, Pathans and Balochis are victims of mutual differences. To Allah we direct our complaint! The enemies of Islam are toying with our differences. As a result, they are overcoming us in all fields, and we are defeated everywhere. We have developed a slavish mentality and are forced to take refuge in them. Even today we can see with our open eyes Divine

help and assistance coming to us, provided we adopt the Qur'ānic principles and the guidance of Allah's Messenger ﷺ; provided we adhere to a strong Islamic brotherhood instead of showing a slavish devotion to the lifestyle of others; and provided we break down the idols of colour, race, language and region.

The Noble Companions' Unparalleled Adherence to Islamic Principles and their Lofty Station

This incident further shows that though the Satan made some people raise the slogan of paganism temporarily, the ʾImān was so engrossed in their hearts that the slightest admonition was sufficient to jolt them into repenting. They had such a high degree of love and reverence for Allah and His Messenger ﷺ that no relationship and sense of nationality could act as a barrier against it. An eloquent testimony of that is contained in the statement of Zaid Ibn Arqam ؓ. He himself was a member of the tribe of Khazraj and Ibn Ubayy was the leader of that tribe, and the former loved and venerated the latter most dearly, but he could not tolerate the provocative words uttered against the Refugee Muslims and Allah's Messenger ﷺ by his leader, and he made a blunt reply then and there. Then he went up to Allah's Messenger ﷺ and complained to him about the hypocrite. The tribal-worshippers of the present age would never have dared to take the complaint of their leaders to the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

The attitude of Ibn Ubayy's son 'Abdullah in this incident makes it crystal clear that his real love and veneration was dedicated to Allah and His Messenger ﷺ. When he heard him utter words against them, he went to Allah's Messenger ﷺ and sought his consent to cut off his father's head. When the Holy Prophet ﷺ did not permit him, he made his father's mount sit, when he approached Madīnah, blocked his way and forced him to admit that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is 'the most honourable' and that he himself is 'the meanest one'. He did not open the way for his father before the Holy Prophet's ﷺ permission.

Besides, the idols of nation-worship and land-worship were broken to pieces in the battles of Badr, Uhūd and Aḥzāb, which proved that all Muslims are brothers, no matter which nationality, country, colour or language group they belong to. Anyone who does not believe in Allah and His Messenger ﷺ is an enemy, even though he may be his own real

brother or father.

هزار خویش که بیگانه از خدا باشد..... فدائی يك تن بیگانه كاشنا باشد

Thousands of relatives who are alien to Allah

May be sacrificed to an alien who is faithful to Allah.

Taking Care of General Welfare of Muslims: Protecting them from Misunderstanding

Another point illustrated by this incident is that an act which is permissible in itself should be avoided if it may create a misunderstanding in the mind of a Muslim, or may provide an opportunity for the enemies to spread misunderstanding among them. Thus, despite the fact that Ibn Ubayy's hypocrisy was exposed openly, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not permit Sayyidnā 'Umar ؓ to behead him when he sought his permission, because the enemies could create misunderstanding in the public minds that Muḥammad ﷺ killed his own Comrades. But it should be noted that, as other traditions prove, such acts may be abandoned only when they are not from the basic objectives of Shari'ah, though they may be laudable. As for the basic objectives of Shari'ah, they cannot be abandoned for such an apprehension. Instead, attempts must be made to remove the danger and do the work dictated by the objectives of Shari'ah.

Let us now study some specific sentences of the Sūrah:

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْا يَسْتَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (And when it is said to them, "Come on, and Allah's Messenger will pray for your forgiveness"...63:5) When this Sūrah exposed the false oaths of 'Abdullah Ibn Ubayy, the leader of the hypocrites, people went up to him to advise him to approach the Holy Prophet ﷺ and admit his guilt. They said that he has still time to request the Holy Messenger ﷺ to pray to Allah to forgive him. To this, he responded by turning his head around and saying arrogantly: "I believed when you asked me to believe; I paid *Zakāh* when you asked to; and now the only thing left is for you to ask me to prostrate to Muḥammad ﷺ." The above verses were revealed on this occasion, which make plain that he has no faith, and therefore asking forgiveness for him cannot benefit him in any way.

Ibn Ubayy, after this incident, returned to Madīnah, lived for a few days, and died soon thereafter. [Mazharī].

هُمُ الَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ لَا تُنْفِقُوا عَلَى مَنْ عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ حَتَّى يَنْفَضُوا (They are the ones who say, "Do not spend on those who are with Allah's Messenger, so that they disperse...63:7) This verse points out to the foolish statement that Ibn Ubayy had made at the time of the dispute between Jahjah, the Emigrant, and Sinan, the Helper. Allah Ta'ala has responded to it that these foolish people have presumed that the Emigrants need their donations and they are their sustainers, while all treasures of heavens and the earth belong to Allah. If He wills, He can provide to them everything without any contribution from their side. Since the statement made by Ibn Ubayy was an evidence of his foolishness, the Holy Qur'an states: لَا يَفْقَهُونَ "...but the hypocrites do not understand [7]."

يَقُولُونَ لَئِنْ رَجَعْنَا إِلَى الْمَدِينَةِ لَيُخْرِجَنَّ الْأَعَزُّ مِنْهَا الْأَذَلَّ (They say, "If we return to Madinah, the more honourable ones will drive out the meaner ones from there."...63:8) This too is the statement of Ibn Ubayy, the hypocrite. Although the words used by him were ambiguous, the intention was clear. He termed himself and the natives of Madinah as 'honourable' and the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the Emigrant Companions as (God forbid!) the 'meanest'. He thus provoked the Helpers of Madinah against the Emigrants that the former should drive out the latter from their city. In answer to this, Allah recoiled his boastful statement against himself by pointing out that if those who are really 'honourable' drive out those who are really the 'meanest', it will go against themselves, because all honour belongs to Him, His Messenger and the believers. The hypocrites, however, are unaware of this because of their ignorance. The concluding phrase of this verse is لَا يَعْلَمُونَ '...but the hypocrites do not know. [8]' This may be contrasted with the concluding phrase of verse لَا يَفْقَهُونَ 'but they do not understand'. The reason for the distinction between 'do not understand' and 'do not know' is as follows: If a person thinks that he is the provider of others, this is completely irrational. This is the sign of his foolishness. Honour and dishonour, on the other hand, can fall to anyone's lot. Therefore, if he errs in his judgement, this is ignorance of facts or true state of affairs. Thus we have here لَا يَعْلَمُونَ '...but the hypocrites do not know. [8]'

Verses 9 - 11

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تُلْهِكُمْ أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُكُمْ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ ۚ

وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ فَاُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْخٰسِرُونَ ﴿٩﴾ وَاَنْفِقُوا مِنْ مَّا رَزَقْنٰكُمْ مِنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ يَّاتِيَ اَحَدُكُمْ الْمَوْتُ فَيَقُولَ رَبِّ لَوْلَا اٰخِرَتِيْٓ اِلٰى اَجَلٍ قَرِيْبٍ ۚ فَاَصَدَّقَ ۚ وَاَكُنْ مِنَ الصّٰلِحِيْنَ ﴿١٠﴾ وَلَنْ يُؤَخَّرَ اللّٰهُ نَفْسًا اِذَا جَآءَ اَجَلُهَا ۗ وَاللّٰهُ خَبِيْرٌۢ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿١١﴾

O those who believe, your riches and your children must not divert you from the remembrance of Allah. And those who do that are the losers. [9] And spend out of what We have given to you before death overtakes one of you and he says, "My Lord, would you not respite me to a near term, and I will pay *ṣadaqah* (alms) and will become one of the righteous." [10] And Allah will never respite anyone, once his appointed time will come. And Allah is All-Aware of what you do. [11]

Commentary

Linkage between Sections [1] and [2]

يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَا تَلْهٰكُمْ اَمْوَالُكُمْ وَلَا اَوْلَادُكُمْ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللّٰهِ

O those who believe, your riches and your children must not divert you from the remembrance of Allah. (63:9)

The preceding section dealt with the hypocrites, their false oaths and their conspiracies. In sum, their nefarious activities were based on their excessive love for the worldly gains. They outwardly claimed to be Muslims, so that they might not suffer loss at the hands of the sincere Muslims, and might share the spoils of war with them. One of the consequences of this mentality was their design to stop spending on the Emigrant Companions. Now, this second section addresses the sincere and faithful believers, and warns them against being intoxicated with the love of this world, as the hypocrites foolishly did. There are two major objects in this world that divert a person from the remembrance of Allah: [1] wealth; and [2] children. Therefore, these two things have been named in particular. Otherwise, it refers to all the means of enjoyments in the world. The import of the verse is that love of wealth and children to some extent is not bad. Being engaged with them to a certain degree is not only permissible but also obligatory. But there is a dividing line between permissible and impermissible love that must always be borne in mind.

The criterion is that this love must not deviate one from Allah's remembrance. The word *dhikr* (remembrance) in this context has been variously interpreted by different commentators. Some say it refers to the five daily prayers, while others say it refers to Zakāh or Ḥajj. Some refer it to the Qur'ān. Ḥasan Baṣrī expresses the view that the word *dhikr* here refers to all forms of obedience and worship. This is the most comprehensive interpretation. [Qurtubī]

In short, we are permitted to be involved in the material wealth up to the degree that it does not divert us from Allah's obedience. If one becomes engrossed in the material wealth or become absorbed in the forbidden or abominable things, which divert him from our duties and obligations towards Allah, the sentence "أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ" "...they are the losers" will apply, because he has sold the great and eternal reward of the Hereafter for the petty and perishable enjoyment of this world. What loss could be greater than this!

وَأَنْفِقُوا مِنْ مَّا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ أَحَدَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ (And spend out of what We have given to you before death comes to one of you...63:10) 'Coming of death' in this verse refers to 'witnessing the signs of death'. The verse exhorts the believers to make the best of their opportunities to spend in the way of Allah, in the state of good health and strength, before the signs of death appear, and thus they should have their degrees of rank elevated in the Hereafter. Once death overtakes them, the opportunity to spend will be lost, and the wealth will be of no use. Earlier on it was learned that the word *dhikr* (remembrance of Allah) refers to all forms of obedience and following the dictates of Shari'ah, which include spending wealth as due. Despite that, spending wealth on this occasion has been mentioned separately. There may be two reasons for it: Firstly, one of the major objects that divert man from acting upon the sacred laws of Shari'ah is wealth. Therefore, spending wealth, in the form of Zakāh, 'Ushr, Ḥajj and so on, is specifically mentioned. Secondly, when a person sees the signs of death, it is not in his power to perform his missed prayers, or his missed Ḥajj, Ramaḍān fasts. However, the wealth is in front of him, and he is sure that soon it will slip out of his hand. So he may spend the wealth to compensate his shortfalls in worship and so attain salvation from such shortcomings. Furthermore, charity [*ṣadaqah*] is efficacious in averting calamities and punishment.

Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī and Muslim record on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ؓ that a person asked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ: "Which *sadaqah* attracts most reward?" The Messenger of Allah ﷺ replied: "To spend in Allah's way when a person is in a state of good health, and yet he fears, in view of future needs, that if he spends the wealth he may become poor." Then he continued: "Do not delay spending in Allah's way until such time when your death reaches your throat, and at that moment you instruct (your heirs), 'Give this much to so-and-so and give this much for such and such work.'"

فَيَقُولُ رَبِّ لَوْلَا أَخَّرْتَنِي إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ قَرِيبٍ (...and he says, "My Lord, would you not respite me to a near term, and I will pay *sadaqah* (alms) and will become one of the righteous....63:10) Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās ؓ says, in the interpretation of this verse, that if *Zakāh* was due on a person and he failed to pay it, and *Hajj* was obligatory and he failed to perform it, he will express this desire when death approaches him. He will want a little more time so that he can give *sadaqah* and أَكُن مِّنَ الصَّالِحِينَ 'become one of the righteous' [10] In other words, he will also desire that he is given a little more time so that he may act righteously by fulfilling his obligations that he has missed out and repent and ask pardon for the forbidden and abominable acts he might have indulged in. But Allah makes it clear in the next verse that once his time has come, He will not give any more time to anyone. This desire at that stage is futile.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Munāfiqūn
Ends here

Sūrah At-Taghābun

(Loss and Gain)

This Sūrah is Madanī, and it has 18 verses and 2 sections

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 10

يُسَبِّحُ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۚ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ ۗ
وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١﴾ هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ فَمِنْكُمْ كَافِرٌ
وَمِنْكُمْ مُؤْمِنٌ ۗ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٢﴾ خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ وَصَوَّرَكُمْ فَأَحْسَنَ صُورَكُمْ ۗ وَإِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿٣﴾
يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تُسِرُّونَ وَمَا تُعْلِنُونَ ۗ وَاللَّهُ
عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ﴿٤﴾ أَلَمْ يَأْتِكُمْ نَبَأُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ
فَذَاقُوا وَبَالَ أَمْرِهِمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٥﴾ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُ كَانَتْ تَأْتِيهِمْ
رُسُلُهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَقَالُوا أَبَشَرٌ يَهْدُونَنَا فَكَفَرُوا وَتَوَلَّوْا ۖ وَاسْتَغْنَى اللَّهُ
وَاللَّهُ غَنِيٌّ حَمِيدٌ ﴿٦﴾ زَعَمَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنْ لَنْ يُعْثُوا ۖ قُلْ بَلَى
وَرَبِّي لَتُعْثُنَّ ثُمَّ لَتَنْبُوَنَّ بِمَا عَمِلْتُمْ ۗ وَذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ ﴿٧﴾
فَامْنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَالنُّورِ الَّذِي أَنْزَلْنَا ۗ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ
﴿٨﴾ يَوْمَ يَجْمَعُكُمْ لِيَوْمِ الْجَمْعِ ذَلِكَ يَوْمُ التَّغَابُنِ ۗ وَمَنْ يُؤْمِنْ

بِاللَّهِ وَيَعْمَلُ صَالِحًا يُكَفِّرْ عَنْهُ سَيِّئَاتِهِ وَيُدْخِلْهُ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ
تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿٩﴾ وَالَّذِينَ
كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَبِئْسَ
الْمَصِيرُ ﴿١٠﴾

Allah's purity is pronounced by all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth. To Him belongs the kingdom, and for Him is all praise, and He is powerful over every thing. [1] He is the One who created you, then some of you are disbelievers, and some of you are believers. And Allah is Watchful of what you do. [2] He has created the heavens and the earth with truth, and shaped your figures, and made your figures good, and to Him is the final return. [3] He knows all that is in the heavens and the earth, and He knows whatever you conceal and whatever you reveal. And Allah is All-Aware of what lies in the hearts. [4] Did the news of those people not come to you who disbelieved earlier, and tasted (in this world) the evil consequence of their conduct, and for them (in the Hereafter) there is a painful punishment? [5] That is because their messengers used to bring them clear proofs, but they said, "Shall some mortals give us guidance?" Thus they disbelieved and turned away, and Allah did not care. And Allah is All-Independent, Ever-Praised. [6] The disbelievers claim that they will never be raised again (after death). Say, "Why not? By my Lord, you will be raised again, then you will be told about what you did. And that is easy for Allah." [7] So, believe in Allah and His Messenger, and in the light We have sent down. And Allah is All-Aware of what you do. [8] (Be mindful of) the day He will gather you for the Day of Gathering. That will be the Day of loss and gain. And whoever believes in Allah, and does righteously, He will write off his evil deeds, and will admit him to gardens beneath which rivers flow, where they will live forever. That is the great achievement. [9] And those who disbelieve and reject Our signs—they are the people of the Fire. And it is an evil place to return. [10]

Commentary

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ فَمِنْكُمْ كَافِرٌ وَمِنْكُمْ مُؤْمِنٌ (He is the One who created you, then

some of you are disbelievers, and some of you are believers...64:2) In the phrase *fa-minkum*, the particle '*fa*' [translated here as 'then'] denotes 'one thing happening after another'. In this instance, the phrase '*khalaqakum*' [created you] indicates that at the inception of creation there were no unbelievers [*kāfirs*]. Human beings were, subsequently, divided into believers and non-believers by their own free will and choice with which Allah has invested them. They are rewarded or punished on account of exercising the free will and choice. A Prophetic Tradition states: كُلُّ مَوْلُودٍ يُوَلَّدُ عَلَى الْفِطْرَةِ فَأَبَوَاهُ يُهَوِّدَانِهِ وَيُنَصِّرَانِهِ (Everyone is born a Muslim, but his parents make him a Jew, a Christian...) [Qurṭubī].

Two Nations Theory

The Holy Qur'ān has divided mankind here into two groups: a believing group and a non-believing one. This indicates that the children of 'Ādam عليه السلام is one single brotherhood, and all human beings are members of this brotherhood. *Kufr* [unbelief] is the only dividing line that severs relationship with this brotherhood and creates another group. He who becomes a *Kāfir* has severed the relationship of human brotherhood. Thus group-formation can only take place on the basis of '*Īmān* and *Kufr*. Neither colour nor language, neither lineage nor family, neither land, territory or geographical region can divide human brotherhood into rival groups. The offspring of one father may live in different cities, or use different languages, or have different colours, but it does not divide them into different groups. Despite differences of colour, language, country or territory, they are members of the same brotherhood. No sane person will ever regard them as different groups.

In the Days of Ignorance, ethnicity and tribal divisions had become the basis of factionalism, but the Messenger of Allah ﷺ broke down these idols, which they pursued. By the express text of the Holy Qur'ān إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ 'All believers are but brothers' irrespective of their country or territory, their colour or family, or their language. They all belong to one brotherhood. So likewise, the non-believers, in the sight of Islam, belong to a single community.

The above verse also bears evidence to the fact that Allah has divided all mankind into two groups - the believers and the non-believers. The variety of languages and colours, according to the Qur'ān, is no doubt a sign of the perfect power of Allah, and having many socio-economic

benefits, it is a great blessing, but it is not permitted to use it as the basis of factionalism or group-formation among mankind.

Moreover, the binary division of mankind on the basis of *'Īmān* and *Kufr* is a matter of free will and choice. Both *'Īmān* and *Kufr* may be adopted by one's free will. If a person chooses out of his own free will to abandon his group and join another, he can do it very easily: He may give up his articles of faith, choose another faith and thus join the other group. On the other hand, the affiliations of race, lineage, colour, language or territory are not within the power or control of anyone. No one can change his affiliation with his race, colour or language.

It was this Islamic brotherhood that, in a short span of time, joined uncountable members of believers in a single string, from east to west, north to south, white and black, and Arabs and non-Arabs, whose might and power could not be resisted by the nations of the world, and therefore they revived once again the idols that were shattered by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and Islam. They partitioned the one mighty *ummah* of Muslims into small bits and pieces of nations based on territory, homeland, language and colour, race and lineage, and caused them to collide with one another. This cleared the way for the enemies of Islam to attack, the consequences of which are visible to every eye today. The Muslims of east and west were one nation and one heart, but are now divided into small groups fighting one another. As against this, the Satanic forces of *Kufr*, despite mutual disagreements, look like a united force against the Muslims.

وَصَوَّرَكُمْ فَأَحْسَنَ صُوَرَكُمْ (...and shaped your figures, and made your figures good...64:3) Shaping the figures of the creatures is one of the exclusive attributes of Allah, That is why *Al-Musawwiru* [the Shaper] is one of His attributive names. If we analyze or look carefully into the universe, there are several classes of things. Each class has several species and each species has several sexes. Each sex has billions of members. No single shape ever resembles another shape. Among humankind, for instance, on account of differences of country or territory, or differences of stock and nations, there is clear distinction in the shapes and faces of individuals. The face and shape of each individual is so amazingly unique and that it baffles the human imagination. The human face is no more than six to seven square inches, and there are uncountable faces of the same type,

and yet one face does not look exactly like the other one so that distinguishing one from the other would be difficult. The present verse mentions figure-making as one of the Divine blessings and immediately thereafter it goes on to say *فَأَحْسَنَ صُورَكُمْ* (and made your figures good). In the entire universe, Allah made the human shape the most beautiful. No matter how ugly a man or an individual might seem in his community, he is still beautiful in his own right, relative to the shapes of all other non-human creatures.

فَقَالُوا أَبَشَرٌ يَهْدُونَنَا (...but they said, "Shall some mortals give us guidance?"...64:6) Though the word *bashar* [mortal(s)] is singular, but in meaning it is plural. Therefore, the verb *يَهْدُونَنَا* 'give us guidance' is plural. All unbelievers held the notion that prophets and messengers cannot be human beings. The Qur'an has time and again falsified and refuted this notion of the unbelievers. Alas, there is also a group of Muslims who denies the mortality of the Allah's Messenger. They need to think in which direction they are moving. His mortality is not contradictory to his prophet-hood, nor is it incompatible with his high station of messenger-ship, nor is his being a Messenger inconsistent with his being a *Nūr* (light). He is *Nūr* (light) as well as a mortal. It is a false analogy to compare his light with that of a lamp or of the sun or the moon.

فَآمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَالنُّورِ الَّذِي أَنْزَلْنَا (So, believe in Allah and His Messenger, and in the light We have sent down...64:8) The word *Nūr* [light] in this context refers to the Qur'an. 'Light' fulfils two functions: In the first place it is itself luminous and in the second place it makes other things luminous and bright. The Qur'an, on account of its miraculous nature, is itself luminous, and it illuminates what pleases or displeases Allah, the sacred laws, injunctions and commands, and the realities of the Hereafter, which human beings ought to know.

The Reason Why the Day of Gathering is called the Day of Loss and Gain

يَوْمَ يَجْمَعُكُمْ لِيَوْمِ الْجَمْعِ ذَلِكَ يَوْمُ التَّغَابُنِ ([Be mindful of] the day when He will gather you for the Day of Gathering. That will be the Day of loss and gain...64:9) 'The Day of Gathering' and 'The Day of Loss and Gain' are both the names of the Day of Judgement. The reason why that day is called 'The Day of Gathering' is quite obvious. On that day all creations, the earlier generations as well as the later generations, will be brought

together to give account of their deeds and for reward and punishment. The reason for calling the day as 'The Day of Loss and Gain' is because the word *taghābun* is derived from *ghabn* which means 'loss'. Financial loss as well as mental deficiency is referred to as *ghabn*. Imām Rāghib Iṣfahānī in his *Mufradā-ul-Qur'ān* says that when the word refers to financial loss, it is expressed in the passive voice thus *ghubina fulānun* 'so-and-so suffered financial loss' When one wants to say that 'he was or became deficient in his opinion or judgement', one would express it thus *ghabina* from the triliteral verb form, the second radical being vowelised with *kasrah* [-i-] on the measure of *sami'a*. The word *taghābun* is a two-way process and signifies 'mutuality of actions', where two parties mutually cause loss to each other, or they make manifest each other's loss. In the context of this verse, however, it is one-sided or one-way process of making manifest of non-believer's loss. The latter sense is also its recognized use. 'The Day of Loss and Gain' is so called because, according to authentic Traditions, Allah has created two abodes for everyone in the Hereafter—one in Hell and another in Paradise. Before admitting the righteous believers to Paradise, they will be shown the abode in Hell, which they would have received if they failed to believe and act righteously, so that they may appreciate their abode in Paradise more highly and thank Allah more profoundly. On the other hand, the non-believers will be shown their abode in Paradise, which they would have received had they believed and acted righteously, so that they may regret more bitterly and be more remorseful. These narratives also tell us that the abodes in Paradise that were prepared for the non-believers will be given to the believers in Paradise, and the abodes in Hell that were prepared for the believers will be given to the non-believers in Hell. These Traditions are elaborately recorded in the two Ṣaḥīḥs and other collections of Traditions. When the inmates of Paradise will attain the places originally prepared for the disbelievers, the latter will realize what they have lost and what they have gained.

Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Tirmidhī and others record on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ؓ that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ asked the noble Companions: "Do you know who is a pauper?" They replied: "One who has no possessions." The Messenger ﷺ said that a pauper in my community is one who will come on the Day of Judgement with a heap of

righteous deeds, such as prayers, fasting, alms-giving and so on, but he might have reviled someone in the world, or he might have slandered another person, or he might have killed or murdered some other person, and he might have taken away someone's property unlawfully. All these people will gather around him and demand their rights. One will take away his prayers, another will snatch away his fasts, someone will take away his alms and a third person will carry away his other good deeds. When all his good deeds would be exhausted, the sins of the oppressed will be loaded on the oppressor, and in this way the score will be settled. Consequently, he will be pushed into the Fire of Hell. [Maḏharī].

It is recorded in the Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said, "Whoever has an obligation towards someone should discharge it or ask his obligor to forgive it here in this world. Otherwise, he will have no dirhams or dinars (money) there in the Hereafter to set off his liabilities. The obligors will be given the good deeds of the debtor in lieu of their unfulfilled rights. When his good deeds will be exhausted, the sins of the oppressed will be added to the account of the oppressor."

Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ and other leading authorities on Tafsīr have given the foregoing reason for naming the Day of Judgement as 'The Day of Loss and Gain'. Other authorities express the view that the grief of loss will not only be felt by the miserable non-believers, but also by the righteous believers. The latter will feel a sense of loss in that they will bitterly regret that they wasted much of their time in life and failed to carry out more good deeds, so as to attain more blessings and favours in Paradise, as is stated in a Prophetic Tradition.

مَنْ جَلَسَ مَجْلِسًا لَمْ يَذْكُرِ اللَّهَ فِيهِ كَانَ عَلَيْهِ تَرَةٌ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ

(He who sits in an assembly and does not remember Allah in the entire session, this assembly will be a source of bitter regret for him.)

Qurṭubī writes that on that Day every believer will feel a sense of loss on account of shortcomings in the fulfillment of his duties and obligations in life. Naming the Judgement Day as the 'Day of Loss and Gain' is like its being named as 'The Day of (Bitter) Regret' in Sūrah Maryam, thus وَأَنْذِرْهُمْ يَوْمَ الْحَسْرَةِ إِذْ قُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ 'And warn them of the Day of (Bitter) Regret when the affair will be resolved...19:39) Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī interprets this

verse as implying that on that day the unjust and unrighteous people will bitterly regret their shortcomings, and the righteous believers will regret their shortcomings in the performance of their righteous deeds. In this way, everyone on the Day of Judgement will regret and have a feeling of loss at his shortcomings. Therefore, this day is named as the 'Day of Loss and Gain'.

Verses 11 - 18

مَا أَصَابَ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ ۖ وَمَنْ يُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ قَلْبَهُ ۖ
وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١١﴾ وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ ۚ فَإِنْ
تَوَلَّيْتُمْ فَإِنَّمَا عَلَى رَسُولِنَا الْبَلْغُ الْمُبِينُ ﴿١٢﴾ اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ ۖ
وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٣﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّ مِنْ
أَزْوَاجِكُمْ وَأَوْلَادِكُمْ عَدُوًّا لَكُمْ فَاحْذَرُوهُمْ ۚ وَإِنْ تَعَفَّوْا
وَتَصَفَّحُوا وَتَغْفِرُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٤﴾ إِنَّمَا أَمْوَالُكُمْ
وَأَوْلَادُكُمْ فَتَنَةٌ ۖ وَاللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٥﴾ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ
وَأَسْمِعُوا وَأَطِيعُوا وَأَنْفِقُوا خَيْرًا لِّأَنْفُسِكُمْ ۖ وَمَنْ يُوقِ شُحَّ نَفْسِهِ
فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٦﴾ إِنْ تُقْرِضُوا اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا يُّضْعِفْهُ
لَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ۖ وَاللَّهُ شَكُورٌ حَلِيمٌ ﴿١٧﴾ عَلِيمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ
الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿١٨﴾

And no calamity befalls (one), but with the leave of Allah. And whoever believes in Allah, He guides his heart. And Allah is All-Knowing about every thing. [11] And obey Allah, and obey the Messenger. But if you turn away, then Our Messenger has only to convey the message clearly. [12] Allah is such that there is no god but He. And in Allah alone the believers must place their trust. [13] O those who believe, among your wives and your children there are some enemies for you, so beware of them. And if you forgive and overlook and pardon, then Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful. [14]

Your riches and your children are but a trial. As for Allah, with Him is a great reward. [15] So, observe *taqwā* (total obedience to Allah in awe of Him) as far as you can, and listen and obey, and spend (in Allah's way), it being good for you. And those who are saved from the greed of their souls are the successful. [16] If you advance a good loan to Allah, He will multiply it for you, and will forgive you. And Allah is Appreciative, Forbearing, [17] the Knower of the unseen and the seen, the All-Mighty, the All-Wise. [18]

Commentary

مَا أَصَابَ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ يُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ يَهْدِ قَلْبَهُ (And no calamity befalls [one], but with the leave of Allah. And whoever believes in Allah, He guides his heart...64:11) In other words, it is a reality that not even a particle can move without the Divine will. Without the will of Allah no one can harm or benefit anyone. If a person does not believe in Allah and the Divine destination, he would not have any means of comforting himself when a calamity befalls him. He receives it with despair, and gropes for means of alleviating it. A believer, on the other hand, who reposes his faith in Divine will and destination is guided by Allah, and his heart is filled with peace and tranquility. Allah will guide his heart to certainty of faith. Therefore, he will know with certainty that whatever difficulty afflicts him could never have missed him, and whatever adversity has missed him could never have afflicted him. As a result of this belief, he is promised a reward in the Hereafter, which he keeps in view all the time. This strong belief in the promise of a reward in the Hereafter alleviates the worst calamity of this world.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّ مِنْ أَزْوَاجِكُمْ وَأَوْلَادِكُمْ عَدُوًّا لَكُمْ فَاحْذَرُوهُمْ (O those who believe, among your wives and your children there are some enemies for you, so beware of them...64:14) Tirmidhī, Hākim and others have recorded, with authentic chain of transmitters, on the authority of Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه, that this verse was revealed regarding those Muslims who embraced Islam in Makkah after the migration of the Holy Prophet ﷺ to Madīnah. They intended to migrate to Madīnah and join the Holy Prophet ﷺ, but their wives and children refused to allow them. [Rūḥ] This was the time when it was compulsory for every Muslim to migrate from Makkah. Therefore, the wives and children who stood in way of loyalty and obedience to Divine laws are referred to as their enemies, and it was

emphasized that they should beware of them, because none can be greater enemy than one who involves a person in the eternal punishment and everlasting Fire of Hell. 'Aṭā' Ibn Rabāḥ reports that this verse was revealed in connection with 'Auf Ibn Mālīk Ashja'ī ؓ. He was in Madīnah. Whenever the occasion arose to go to war or *jihād* and he would intend to participate in the *jihād*, his wife and children would complain: "In whose care are you leaving us?" He would be influenced by their complaint and change his mind. [Rūḥ and Ibn Kathīr]

These two narratives are not in conflict with each other. Both narratives, in their own right, can be the cause of revelation, because wife and children that stand in the way of obeying Allah's laws, whether migration or *Jihād*, they become the enemies of Allah.

وَإِنْ تَغْفُوا وَتَصْفَحُوا وَتَغْفِرُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ (And if you forgive and overlook and pardon, then Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful...64:14) The Muslims who were warned by the previous verse that their wives and children were their enemies, decided that they would treat their family members harshly. On that occasion, this part of the verse was revealed. The verse purports to say that 'although your wives and children behaved like enemies and stood in your way to perform your duty towards Allah, do not treat them harshly and mercilessly, but rather treat them politely and leniently. This is better for you because Allah loves forgiving and showing mercy.'

Ruling

Scholars have deduced from the above verse that if the family members do anything in violation of the sacred laws, it is not appropriate to be disappointed with them totally, or to be hostile towards them, or to hate or curse them. [Rūḥ]

Wealth and Children are a Trial

إِنَّمَا أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَأَوْلَادُكُمْ فِتْنَةٌ (Your riches and your children are but a trial...64:15) The word *fitnah* means 'test or trial'. The purport of the verse is to say that Allah tests man by means of his wealth and children as to whether he is so much engrossed in the love of wealth and children as to become heedless of Divine laws and injunctions, or he maintains his love for them within limits and remains heedful of his duties and obligations towards Allah.

The truth of the matter is that the love of wealth and children is a great trial for man. He mostly commits sins for their love, especially when he indulges in earning livelihood through unlawful means. According to a *ḥadīth*, some people will be brought on the Day of Judgment, and the people will look at him and say اَكَلَ عِيَالَهُ حَسَنَاتِهِ (His family ate up his good deeds.) [Rūḥ]. In another narration, the Holy Prophet ﷺ, referring to the children, said: مَبْخَلَةٌ مُّجِبَّةٌ (They are the cause of one's miserliness and cowardice.) It means that on account of their love, man fails to spend in Allah's way, and on account of their love he fails to participate in Jihād. Some righteous elders have said, اَلْعِيَالُ سُوسُ الطَّاعَاتِ (Family is the weevil of obedience". A weevil is a small beetle that feeds on grain and seeds and destroys crops. Likewise, a family feeds on man's good deeds and destroys them.

فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ (So, observe *taqwā* [total obedience to Allah in awe of Him] as far as you can...64:16) When the verse اِتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تُقَاتِهِ (...Observe *taqwā* as is His due...3:102] was revealed, the blessed Companions felt it very difficult, because it was impossible for anyone to observe *taqwā* of Allah 'as is due to Him'. On that occasion, the present verse was revealed which clarified that no imposition is made on man more than he can bear. *Taqwā* too must be observed as far as it is possible for man to observe. If a person tries to obey Allah totally in awe of Him, that will be sufficient in fulfilling Allah's due. [Rūḥ - condensed]

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah At-Taghābun
Ends here

Sūrah Aṭ-Ṭalāq

(The Divorce)

This Sūrah is Madanī, and it has 12 verses and 2 sections

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 7

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِذَا طَلَّقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَطَلِّقُوهُنَّ لِعَدَّتِهِنَّ وَأَحْصُوا الْعِدَّةَ ۚ
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ رَبَّكُمْ ۚ لَا تُخْرِجُوهُنَّ مِنْ بُيُوتِهِنَّ وَلَا يَخْرُجْنَ إِلَّا أَنْ
يَأْتِيَنَّ بِفَاحِشَةٍ مُبَيَّنَةٍ ۚ وَتِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ ۚ وَمَنْ يَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَ اللَّهِ
فَقَدْ ظَلَمَ نَفْسَهُ ۚ لَا تَدْرِي لَعَلَّ اللَّهَ يُحْدِثُ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ أَمْرًا ﴿١﴾
فَإِذَا بَلَغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ فَأَمْسِكُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْفَارِقُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ
وَأَشْهَدُوا ذَوَىٰ عَدْلٍ مِّنكُمْ وَأَقِيمُوا الشَّهَادَةَ لِلَّهِ ۚ ذَلِكَ يُوعَظُ بِهِ
مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ۚ وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجًا
﴿٢﴾ وَيَرْزُقْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ ۚ وَمَنْ يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَهُوَ
حَسْبُهُ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بَالِغُ أَمْرِهِ ۚ قَدْ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدْرًا ﴿٣﴾
وَالَّذِي يُمَسِّنَ مِنَ الْمَحِيضِ مِنْ نِسَائِكُمْ إِنْ ارْتَبْتُمْ فَعِدَّتُهُنَّ ثَلَاثَةُ
أَشْهُرٍ وَالَّذِي لَمْ يَحْضَنْ ۚ وَأُولَاتُ الْأَحْمَالِ أَجَلُهُنَّ أَنْ يَضَعْنَ
حَمْلَهُنَّ ۚ وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِ يُسْرًا ﴿٤﴾ ذَلِكَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ
أَنْزَلَهُ إِلَيْكُمْ ۚ وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يُكَفِّرْ عَنْهُ سَيِّئَاتِهِ وَيُعْظِمْ لَهُ أَجْرًا ﴿٥﴾

أَسْكِنُوهُنَّ مِنْ حَيْثُ سَكَنْتُمْ مِنْ وَجْدِكُمْ وَلَا تُضَارُّوهُنَّ لِتُضَيِّقُوا
 عَلَيْهِنَّ ۖ وَإِنْ كُنَّ أُولَاتٍ حَمْلٍ فَأَنْفِقُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ حَتَّى يَضَعْنَ
 حَمْلَهُنَّ ۚ فَإِنْ أَرْضَعْنَ لَكُمْ فَآتُوهُنَّ أُجُورَهُنَّ ۚ وَاتَّمِرُوا بَيْنَكُمْ
 بِمَعْرُوفٍ ۚ وَإِنْ تَعَاَسَرْتُمْ فَسْتَزِضِعْ لَهُ أُخْرَى ۖ ﴿٦﴾ لِيُنْفِقَ ذُو سَعَةٍ
 مِنْ سَعَتِهِ ۖ وَمَنْ قُدِرَ عَلَيْهِ رِزْقُهُ فَلْيُنْفِقْ مِمَّا آتَاهُ اللَّهُ ۖ لَا يَكْلِفُ
 اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا مَا آتَاهَا ۚ سَيَجْعَلُ اللَّهُ بَعْدَ عُسْرٍ يُسْرًا ۖ ﴿٧﴾

O prophet, when you people divorce women, divorce them at a time when the period of 'iddah may start.¹ And count the period of 'iddah, and fear Allah, your Lord. Do not expel them from their houses, nor should they go out, unless they come up with a clearly shameless act. And these are the limits prescribed by Allah. And whoever exceeds the limits prescribed by Allah wrongs his own self. You do not know (what will happen in future); it may be that Allah brings about a new situation thereafter. [1] So, when they (the divorced women) have (almost) reached their term, then either retain them with fairness, or part with them with fairness. And make two just men from among you witnesses (of your either decision). And (O witnesses,) keep your testimony upright for the sake of Allah. That is what anyone who believes in Allah and the Last Day is exhorted to do. And whoever fears Allah, for him Allah brings forth a way out, [2] and gives him provision (of his needs) from where he does not even imagine. And whoever places his trust in Allah, He is sufficient for him. Surely Allah is to accomplish His purpose. Allah has set a measure for every thing. [3] And those women from among you who have despaired of (further) menstruation, if you are in doubt, their 'iddah is three months, as well as of those who have

(1) 'iddah means the waiting period prescribed for a divorced woman before she can marry another man. In the case of a divorcee, it is three periods of menstruation. The verse indicates that divorce should be given during *tuhr* (when the woman is not in her menstruation period), so that 'iddah may start from her immediate menstruation period. Conversely, if she is divorced during menses, 'iddah will start from the next menses period, and she will have to wait for long time before her 'iddah may start. (Muhammad Taqi Usmani)

not yet menstruated. As for those having pregnancy, their term (of 'iddah) is that they give birth to their child. And whoever fears Allah, He brings about ease for him in his affair. [4] This is the command of Allah that He has sent down to you. And whoever fears Allah, He will write off his evil deeds, and will give him a huge reward. [5] Provide them (the divorced women) residence from where you reside according to your means, and do not hurt them to straiten (life) for them. And if they are pregnant, spend on them till they give birth to their child. Then if they suckle the child for you, give them their fees, and consult each other (for determining the fee) with fairness, and if you have a deadlock between you, then another woman will suckle him. [6] A man of vast means should spend according to his vast means. And anyone whose sustenance is limited should spend from whatever Allah has given to him. Allah makes no one liable beyond what He has given to him. Allah will soon bring ease after a difficulty. [7]

Commentary

The Status of Marriage and Divorce in Shari'ah: The Wise Legal Framework

In Ma'ariful Qur'an, Volume [1], p 573, in Sūrah Al-Baqarah, full details of the subject under similar heading are given. The gist of the matter is that marriage and divorce in any given religion is not like a mutual transaction or contract similar to transactions in buying and selling or in loans and repayments, which the contracting parties may conclude as they wish. In all ages there has always been a consensus among followers of all religions that these contracts have a special sacred nature, far above ordinary contracts. Marriage and divorce must, of necessity, follow the sacred laws. The People of the Book, Jews and Christians, have a celestial religion and a heavenly book. Despite countless changes and distortions, they still retain the religious value of marriage, consider it sacrosanct and are unwilling to change its ceremonial rites. They maintain that traditional restrictions are binding. Idol-worshippers, who do not have any celestial book or religion, but do believe in the Supreme Being, like Hindus, Aryahs, Sikhs, Magi, Fire-worshippers and star-worshippers, all believe in the sacred nature of marriage and divorce and feel bound to fulfil their religious rites when

getting married. All family laws are based on these principles of the various religions.

Only the atheistic group, which rejects outright the existence of God or does not see the need for a religion, feel that marriage and divorce are like any other commercial transaction like 'hiring contract'. The purpose of marriage is no more than gratification of one's carnal desires. Alas, this theory seems to be gaining momentum throughout the world nowadays, which has made man to join the beastly queue. To Allah we belong and to Him we direct our complaint!

The sacred law of Islam is a complete and chaste system of life. Islam has not treated marriage as a civil contract only, but has endowed it with the status of a kind of worship. The institution thus not only allows the satisfaction of carnal desires of husband and wife in a chaste manner, with which they are naturally endued, but it also binds them in a wise and just system of mutual rights and obligations essential to the proper functioning of family life and solving the sociological problems like preserving the human race and upbringing of the children.

Since the proper functioning of human race depends on the proper maintenance of marital relationship, Islam has focused attention on family issues most exhaustively. By a careful analysis of the Holy Qur'ān we notice that commercial contracts like sale, partnership, hiring and so on are though among the most important socio-economic problems, the Holy Qur'ān has restricted itself to setting down their basic principles, and the bye-laws are rarely ever touched upon. In matters of marriage and divorce, on the other hand, not only the fundamental principles have been laid down, but their detailed laws have also been directly revealed by Allah in the Qur'ān and entrenched.

These laws have been scattered in various Chapters, and Sūrah An-Nisā' deals with them more elaborately. The current Sūrah, known as Sūrah At-Ṭalāq, specifically deals with 'divorce', 'the period of *'iddah*' and so on. Thus, according to some narratives, this Sūrah is also called as Sūrah An-Nisā' Aṣ-Ṣuḡhrā or the Short Sūrah An-Nisā' [Qurṭubī with reference to Bukhārī]

According to the drift of Islamic teachings, when a man and a woman contract marriage, it should establish a permanent relationship for the

whole lifetime. This will maintain stability of husband and wife in mundane, as well as, in religious affairs, and also in the up-bringing of the children born of this wedlock, so that their moral conduct is proper and upright. Therefore, Islam, at every step of the way, guides marriage partners to avoid bitterness in their marital relationship, and even if it does arise, utmost efforts are made to remove it and to patch up differences and reconcile. However, despite all these attempts, it is possible in some cases that there remains no way out for the welfare of the estranged parties except to terminate this relationship. Religions that do not allow divorce cause hardship for their followers when faced with such complicated situations and lead to serious consequences. For that reason, Islam has, like the laws of marriage, laid down principles and rules for divorce as well. However, it has at the same time declared to its followers the guiding principle that, out of all permissible acts, divorce is the most detested one in the sight of Allah. [narrated by Sayyidnā ‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Umar رضي الله عنه], meaning that people should avoid it as far as possible. They should use this provision only as a last resort, only when they are compelled to do it. Sayyidnā ‘Alī رضي الله عنه has narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said **تَزَوَّجُوا وَلَا تَطْلُقُوا فَإِنَّ الطَّلَاقَ يَهْتَزُّ مِنْهُ عَرْشُ الرَّحْمَنِ** (Marry; do not divorce because divorce causes the Throne of the All-Merciful to shudder.) Sayyidnā Abū Mūsā Ash‘arī رضي الله عنه narrates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Do not divorce women without their committing the evil act, because Allah does not love men who merely wish to experience the taste of sex, nor does He love women who merely wish to experience the taste of sex ." [Qurṭubī vide Tha‘labī]

Sayyidnā Mu‘adh Ibn Jabal رضي الله عنه narrates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Allah has created nothing on the face of the earth dearer to Him than emancipation of slaves, and Allah has created nothing on the face of the earth more hateful to Him than divorce." [Qurṭubī]

Nevertheless, Islam has though discouraged divorce and has advised its followers to avoid it as far as possible, it has allowed it in cases of necessity under special rules and regulations which require that if termination of marital relationship becomes necessary, it should be done in a fair and dignified manner. Divorce should not be taken as a means of satisfying anger and revenge.

This Sūrah opens with the vocative expression **يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ** (O Prophet),

which, according to Imām Qurṭubī, is generally used where the rule declared after that is intended to apply to the entire body of the believers. Where the injunction is exclusively meant for the person of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, he is addressed as يَا أَيُّهَا الرُّسُولُ (O Messenger).

In this context, the vocative expression يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ *Yā-ayyuhā-Nabiyu* is singular and as such it required that the verb should be singular as well to comply with the Arabic grammatical rule of concordance, but we notice that the verb used is the second person plural thus إِذَا طَلَقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ (O prophet, when *you people* divorce women)

In terms of literary usage and rules of eloquence, there are two types of plural: plural of number and honorific plural. Plural of number applies to three or more persons, but often the plural may refer to one person only, in which case it expresses respect or honour and is called honorific plural. In the light of this rule, the plural verb addresses the 'prophet' directly as a mark of respect and honour, and at the same time it indicates that the injunction is not restricted to him exclusively, but it applies to the entire body of believers.

Some scholars, however, are of the view that a sentence is understood here in the following way: يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذَا طَلَقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ which means: O prophet, say to the believers that when they divorce their wives, they should observe the following procedure'.

Then the verse has laid down some rules relating to divorce as follows:

Rule [1]

فَطَلِّقُوهُنَّ لِعَدَّتِهِنَّ (...divorce them at a time when the period of "*iddah* may start.[1] Literally the word [*iddah* means to 'count' and in the terminology of Shari'ah the term "*iddah* means the waiting period prescribed for a divorced woman before she can marry another man. There are two ways in which a woman's marriage may be terminated. [1] When her husband dies, in which case the period of waiting is four months and ten days. [2] Her marriage ends when the husband divorces her. In the case of a divorcee that is not pregnant, "*iddah* is three periods of menstruation according to Imām Abū Ḥanīfah and other leading authorities. According to Imām Shafi'i and other scholars, the waiting period for a divorcee is three tuhrs (i.e. three periods of purity after menses). However, there are no days or months fixed for her. Whenever

her three menstrual cycles or clean cycles complete, her waiting period of divorce will be over. Women who do not menstruate, because they have not yet attained puberty, or because they have attained menopausal age, rule about them is forthcoming. Likewise, the rule for pregnant women is also forthcoming, in which case the waiting period for death and divorce is the same. The verse indicates that divorce should be given during *tuhr* (when woman is not in her menstruation period), so that "*iddah* may start from her immediate menstruation period. Conversely, if she is divorced during menses, "*iddah* will start from the next menses period, and she will have to wait for a longer time before her "*iddah* may start.

Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī and Muslim record that Sayyidna Ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنه divorced his wife while she was menstruating. When Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنه mentioned this to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, he became very indignant and said:

ليراجعها ثم يمسكها حتى تطهر ثم تحيض فتطهر، فان بدا له فليطلقها طاهراً قبل ان يمسها، فتلك العدة التي امرها الله تعالى ان يطلق بها النساء.

"He must take her back and keep her till she is purified, then has another menstrual cycle and is purified. If it then seems proper for him to pronounce another divorce to her, he may do so when she is pure from the menstrual discharge before having conjugal relations with her, for that is the "*iddah* that Allah has commanded for the divorce of women." [Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī and Muslim as quoted by Maḥzarī].

This Ḥadīth clarifies several points. [1] It is forbidden to divorce a woman while she is menstruating. [2] If a person does this, it is necessary for him to retract the divorce, provided that it is revocable as was in the case of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنه. [3] If a husband wishes to divorce his wife during the clean-period, he must not have had conjugal relations with her. And [4] this is the interpretation of the verse [1] of this Sūrah: *فَطَلُّوهُنَّ لِعَدَّتِهِنَّ*.

From what is cited above the meaning of the verse is explained, in that if a husband wishes to pronounce divorce on his wife, he must do so before her waiting period can commence. Since, according to Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, the waiting period will start with the menstrual cycle that follows the divorce, the meaning of the verse would be that in the clean period in which divorce is intended to be pronounced, no intercourse

should take place, and that it should be pronounced towards the last part of the clean period before the start of the menstrual cycle. But since according to Imām Shāfi'ī, the waiting-period starts with the clean-period, the phrase *لِقَبْلِ عِدَّتِهِنَّ* (before their waiting-period) implies: 'Divorce them at the start of the clean-period'. This difference of opinion hinges on the differential interpretation of the word *qurū'* occurring in verse *خَلْفَهُ قُرُوءٌ* [228] of Sūrah Baqarah. The details are available in Volume [1] of Ma'ariful Qur'an under [2:228]

In sum: The first rule as derived from the verse under comment is that, according to unanimity of the Ummah, it is forbidden to pronounce divorce during the monthly courses. It should be pronounced in the interval between two monthly courses during which the husband and wife should not have had sexual intercourse. If they had intercourse during the interval, it is forbidden to pronounce the divorce. The reason for the prohibition in both cases is that the waiting-period of the wife will be unnecessarily prolonged and will cause her undue hardship. If she is divorced during her monthly course, it will not be counted. She will have to complete her days of menstruation and, according to the Ḥanafī school, the next clean-period or interval will not be counted either. When the second monthly course commences, her *'iddah* will start. This will obviously lengthen her period greatly. According to the Shāfi'ī school, at least the rest of the menstrual days, which passed before the waiting-period, will be increased.

This very first rule about divorce ensures that divorce is not a source of satisfying a fit of anger or revenge. It is rather an arrangement adopted as a last resort for the comfort of both the parties. It is necessary, therefore, to keep in mind from the very outset that the wife should not be unduly harmed by prolonging her waiting period.

This procedure applies in the case of the women whose *'iddah* is calculated by menstrual cycles or clean cycles. It does not apply to women for whom waiting-period is not compulsory, as in the case of a woman who did not have privacy with her husband. If a man and a woman got married but they did not get together in privacy, *'iddah* is not necessary for her at all when she is divorced. Therefore, it is permissible to divorce such women during their monthly courses. Likewise, *'iddah* for a woman who does not menstruate on account of minority of age, or because she

has attained menopausal age, is computed on monthly basis. Their 'iddah is three months. Their menstrual or pure cycles are not taken into account. It is permissible to divorce them in any state, and even after having intercourse with them, as the forthcoming verses will clarify. [[Maḏharī] paraphrased]

Rule [2]

وَأَحْصُوا الْعِدَّةَ (And count the period of 'iddah...1) The word *Iḥsā'* means 'to count'. The verse purports to say that the believers, men and women, should keep a careful count of the passing days of the waiting period, lest they forget the exact days and feel, before time, that the waiting-period is over. The responsibility of keeping count of the days has been imposed on both men and women, although only masculine form has been used here. Generally, when the Qur'ān imposes injunctions on men and women, it uses the masculine form but it includes women as well. Another reason for using masculine gender here may be that women are generally more heedless, and therefore, the responsibility has been put directly on the shoulders of men.

Rule [3]

لَا تُخْرِجُوهُنَّ مِنْ بُيُوتِهِنَّ وَلَا يَخْرُجْنَ (Do not expel them from their houses, nor should they go out...65:1). The construction in this verse contains the phrase *بُيُوتِهِنَّ* 'their houses', and implies that, so far as the residence of divorced women is due on men, they have a rightful claim in the home of their former husbands. Letting them reside there is no favour to them, but it is one of the basic rights of a wife that has been imposed upon the husband as an obligation. This verse shows that this right of hers does not end with divorce, but continues till the completion of waiting-period. Expelling a woman from her house before the completion of the waiting-period is unjust and forbidden. Likewise, it is forbidden for women to leave their houses on their own, even though the husband may permit her to leave, because spending the waiting-period in their houses is not only the husband's right, but also the Divine right, in that Allah has imposed on a woman in her period of 'iddah. This is the rule according to the Ḥanafī school.

Rule [4]

إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِيَنَّ بِفَاحِشَةٍ مُبَيَّنَةٍ (...unless they come up with a clearly shameless act...65:1). It is forbidden to expel divorcees from their homes when they

are passing their period of 'iddah. However, an exception is made in this part of the verse. The exception applies to a situation when they come up with a clearly shameless act, in which case they may be expelled. What is meant by 'a clearly shameless act'? There are three views regarding this question:

The first view is that 'leaving husband's home on her own' is in itself an act of committing an outright indecency. In this interpretation, the 'exception' is not meant as a real exception. It does not purport to allow women to leave the homes, but to emphasise its prohibition with greater force. Its example is as follows: 'None shall do such-and-such certain work "unless" he has lost his human quality', or 'Do not use obscene language against your mother "unless" you wish to become out-and-out disobedient to your mother'. The first example of 'exception' does not purport to legalise the act, nor does the second example purport to legitimise it. Both examples eloquently emphasise prohibition of the acts. In brief, the injunction in the verse sets down that divorcees are not permitted to leave their husband's homes, unless they have reached the ultimate point of indecency and run away. Thus it does not allow to run away, but stresses its shamelessness and confirms its prohibition. This interpretation of 'clearly shameless act' is ascribed to Sayyidnā 'Abdullah Ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنه, Suddī, Ibn-us-Sa'ib, an-Nakha'ī and others. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah has also preferred this interpretation. [Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī]

The second interpretation of the phrase فَاحْشَةً مُبِينَةً 'a clearly shameless act' is that it refers to 'adultery' in which case the use of 'exception' would be in its normal sense. If a divorced woman commits adultery and it is proved that she is guilty of the crime, she will have to be taken away from her home to implement the prescribed punishment of adultery. This interpretation is attributed to Qatādah, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Sha'bī, Zaid Ibn Aslam, Ḍaḥḥāk, 'Ikrimah and others. Imām Abū Yūsuf has preferred this interpretation.

The third view about the phrase 'a clearly shameless act' is that it refers to the 'use of abusive language' or 'quarreling'. The sense is that if the woman uses abusive language or is quarrelsome, it is permissible to evict her from her home of 'iddah. This interpretation of the phrase is ascribed to Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه on the authority of several chains of transmitters. According to Sayyidnā 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه and Ubayy

Ibn Ka'b رضي الله عنه, the exceptive phrase is read thus **إِلَّا أَنْ يَفَحَشَ**. The apparent meaning of this reading is 'indecent speech'. This reading confirms the third interpretation. [Rūḥ] In this case as well, the 'exception' is employed in its primary sense - in that if a divorced woman is obscene in words and actions, she can be evicted from her home of waiting-period.

Thus far four rules of divorcing procedure have been set down. More rules are forthcoming, but between them there are a few sentences to stress upon the strict adherence to these rules and to exhort people to carefully refrain from their violation. It is a unique style of the Qur'ān that after every command or injunction, its violation is prevented by instilling Allah's awful reverence in the hearts, and by invoking concern about the Hereafter. Especially the relationship between husband and wife is so delicate that their mutual rights cannot be fulfilled merely by legislation. The only thing that can prevent spouses from violation of the rules is the fear of Allah and the Hereafter.

وَتِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ ^ط وَمَنْ يَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَقَدْ ظَلَمَ نَفْسَهُ ^ط لَا تَدْرِي لَعَلَّ اللَّهَ يُحْدِثُ
بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ أَمْرًا

(And these are the limits prescribed by Allah. And whoever exceeds the limits prescribed by Allah wrongs his own self. You do not know [what will happen in future]; it may be that Allah brings about a new situation thereafter...65:1)

The phrase **حُدُودُ اللَّهِ** (the limits prescribed by Allah) refers to the sacred laws set down by the Shari'ah of Islam. The phrase **وَمَنْ يَتَعَدَّ** (And whoever exceeds the limits prescribed by Allah) implies 'whoever violates the sacred laws'. The phrase **فَقَدْ ظَلَمَ نَفْسَهُ** (wronging his own self) implies that he has not damaged Allah's sacred laws or the Shari'ah. In fact, he has caused loss to himself. The loss could be religious, or it could be mundane. The religious loss means that he has sinned by violating the sacred laws, in consequence of which he will suffer in the Hereafter. The mundane loss means that any person who pronounces divorce in violation of the rules prescribed by the Shari'ah will most probably end up with three pronouncements of divorce, after which it cannot be revoked and even a fresh marriage is not possible. Such a person regrets bitterly and suffers tremendous hardship in this very world, especially if he has children. Many people divorce their wives with the intention of causing harm to them. It may cause some harm to the wives, but such cruel husbands will

be liable to double punishment: firstly for breaking the sacred laws of Allah, and secondly for the cruelty exercised against women. Such a situation has been so eloquently versified by a Persian poet:

پنداشت ستمگر جفا برما کرد.....برگردن وے بماند و برما بگذشت

The oppressor thinks that he has caused misery for us

However our misery comes to an end, but the liability of punishment remains stuck with the neck of the oppressor for good.

لَا تَدْرِي لَعَلَّ اللَّهَ يُحْدِثُ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ أَمْرًا (You do not know; it may be that Allah brings about a new situation thereafter....65:1). These words signify that after estranged relations between the spouses, Allah may create a situation where the husband may recall the comforts he enjoyed in her wife's company, and realise the services offered by her in taking care of children and the home. On realising this, He may be remorseful on what he did, retract the divorce and retain her as his wife. This is possible only if at the time of divorcing the limits prescribed by the Shari'ah is kept in view and instead of making the divorce *bā'in*, a revocable divorce is pronounced, in which case the husband has the right to retract it and retain the wife. Irrevocable divorce should not be resorted to unnecessarily because it terminates the marriage at once. Nor should three divorces should be pronounced, because after the third pronouncement, the husband does not have the right to retract, nor is it possible to renew the marriage contract, even if the divorced parties agree mutually.

Rule [5]

فَإِذَا بَلَغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ فَأَمْسِكُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ فَارِقُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ (So, when they [the divorced women] have [almost] reached their term, then either retain them with fairness, or part with them with fairness...65:2). The word *ajal* means 'term of *'iddah*' and 'reaching the term' means 'nearing the end of the *'iddah*'. The fifth rule laid down by this verse is that when a divorced woman's term of *'iddah*' is approaching the end, the time has almost come for the absolute termination of the marriage. By now the temporary impulse or momentary fit of anger should have dissipated, and it is the time to make the major decision with a cool and calm head whether it is better to retain the wife, or to terminate the marriage with her finally. If

the decision is to retain the wife, then she should be retained in all fairness with dignity and courtesy, the *masnūn* procedure of which is indicated in the forthcoming verse and in Prophetic Traditions: utter verbally that 'I have revoked the divorce I pronounced to you' and call two upright men as witnesses. If, however, the decision is to end the marriage, the woman should be released with fairness, dignity and courtesy. That is, the '*iddah*' should be allowed to expire, and once it expires, she is free to contract marriage with someone else.

Rule [6]

At the end of term, whether it is decided to retain the wife or release her, the Qur'ān has restricted either of the decisions with the word *ma'rūf*. Literally, the word *ma'rūf* means 'a recognised way' and it implies that the Muslims are required to implement the approved procedure of Sharī'ah and Sunnah, as recognised by Islam. If the decision is to revoke the divorce and retain the wife, she should not be hurt in future verbally or physically, nor should this be shown as a favour to her. The husband should resolve to bear her weakness that led to divorce in the past, so that it may not cause bitterness to arise again. If, on the other hand, the decision is to release her, then the recognised procedure is as follows: Do not evict her in disrespectful manner, but release her in a courteous manner. When she is made to leave the house, it is at least *mustahab* [rewardable] in some cases to give her a suit of clothes, and in other cases it is *wājib* [compulsory] to do so, as other verses of the Qur'ān show. The details are available in books of jurisprudence.

Rule [7]

The seventh rule is derived directly from the above verse that gives the husband two options of retaining the wife or parting with her in fairness, and also indirectly from the preceding verse that says لَعَلَّ اللَّهَ يُحْدِثَ لَكُمْ بَعْثًا مِّنْهُم مَّا تَرْضَوْنَ "...it may be that Allah brings about a new situation thereafter." Both these verses indicate that if the husband is forced into a situation of divorcing, it is the divine will that he should keep the option of revoking the divorce open. The approved method of divorce is that he should pronounce the divorce only once in express or clear words. The pronouncement of divorce should not contain any word or phrase expressive of anger that might denote absolute termination of marriage tie, as for instance he might say 'Get out of my house', or say 'I pronounce

severe divorce on you', or say 'No relationship exists between me and you'. When such expressions are uttered as part of the pronouncement of express divorce, or these expressions are uttered with the intention of divorce, the divorce becomes effective at once, and he loses the right of revocation. This in the terminology of Shari'ah is known as *Ṭalāq Bā'in* or irrevocable divorce. Even worse situation is when the husband pronounces three divorces upon his wife after which the husband not only loses his right of revocation, but they [husband and wife] also lose their right to enter into a fresh marriage, even if they mutually agree as we have seen in Sūrah Al-Baqarah: *فَإِنْ طَلَّقَهَا فَلَا تَحِلُّ لَهُ مِنْ بَعْدُ حَتَّى تَنْكِحَ زَوْجًا غَيْرَهُ* (Thereafter, if he divorces her, she shall no longer remain lawful for him unless she marries a man other than him. [2:230])

Three Simultaneous Divorces: Unlawful but Effective

Nowadays, total indifference to religion and heedlessness of its injunctions is widespread, in the society. Not only the illiterate and ignoramus, but also the literate people, like pleaders think that a divorce pronounced or written less than three times is no divorce at all. It is noticed daily that people who pronounce three simultaneous divorces regret bitterly and are in search of legal loopholes, so that they do not lose their wives.

Imām Nasā'ī reports, on the authority of Sayyidnā Maḥmūd Ibn Labīd رضي الله عنه, in an authentic Tradition that the Holy Prophet ﷺ was informed about a person who had pronounced three divorces on the spur of the moment to his wife. The Holy Prophet ﷺ having heard this became angry. Therefore, pronouncing three divorces simultaneously, by consensus of the Ummah, is prohibited. Even if a person pronounces three divorces separately in three different clean periods, that too is reprehensible, by consensus of the Ummah. Qur'ānic verses themselves confirm this by indication. The only disagreement lies in whether or not this procedure of divorce is as prohibited and counted as *bid'ah* as divorcing three times simultaneously. Imām Mālik holds this procedure as prohibited. Imāms Abū Ḥanīfah and Shāfi'ī do not view it as prohibited or as *bid'ah*. In fact, they view it as an approved [*sunnah*] procedure of divorce, but an abominable act nonetheless. Please see Ma'āriful Qur'ān, Vol. [1], PP 578-590 for detailed injunctions regarding three simultaneous divorces.

But just as the Ummah holds by consensus that pronouncing three divorces simultaneously is prohibited, it is also a point of consensus among the entire Ummah that despite being prohibited, if a person pronounces three simultaneous divorces, all the three divorces become effective, and fresh marriage between them, in future, would not be possible. The only people that disagree with the consensus of the four major schools are some of the followers of the *Ah-ul-Ḥadīth* group and the *Shī'ite* group. The four major schools argue that if something is abominable or unlawful, it does not necessarily imply that its legal consequences will not follow. For instance, if a person kills an innocent victim, the latter would die as a result of killing, despite the act of killing being unlawful. Likewise, despite three simultaneous divorces being unlawful, they necessarily take effect. On this issue, not only the four major schools agree unanimously, but there is also overwhelming consensus of the noble Companions. Please see Ma'āriful Qur'ān, Vol. [1], PP 586-590 for a detailed discussion on the action taken by Sayyidnā 'Umar Al-Fārūq رضي الله عنه on the issue of three simultaneous divorces.

Rule [8]

وَأَشْهِدُوا ذَوَىٰ عَدْلٍ مِّنكُمْ وَأَقِيمُوا الشَّهَادَةَ لِلَّهِ (And make two just men from among you witnesses [of your either decision]. And (O witnesses,) keep your testimony upright for the sake of Allah...65:2) This verse purports to say that towards the end of the period of '*iddah*, when a decision is made either to revoke the divorce and retain the wife, or to release her, it is commendable in both cases to call two upright persons to witness the decision. This procedure of having two witnesses is, according to most jurists, a commendable (*mustaḥabb*) practice, and not mandatory. Therefore, revocation of divorce is not contingent upon appointment of witnesses. The underlying wisdom of such appointment is to resolve the possible dispute that may arise later. In case the husband decides to revoke the divorce, it is possible that the wife may deny it, whereupon the witnesses may prove revocation. And in case he decides termination of marriage, a conflict can still arise where the husband himself may make mischief and, being overcome by the wife's love, claim that he had revoked the divorce before the expiration of '*iddah*. The witnesses then may prove that he had decided to release the wife.

The adjectival phrase ذَوَىٰ عَدْلٍ (...two just men) refers to reliable

witnesses in terms of Shari'ah. If the witnesses are not reliable in terms of Shari'ah, that is, if they are not morally upright, pious and truthful, the Qādi would not be able to pass judgement on the basis of such unreliable, impious and untruthful witnesses.

أَقِيمُوا الشَّهَادَةَ لِلَّهِ (...keep your testimony upright for the sake of Allah...65:2) The verse addresses all Muslims in general that should they be required by a court to bear witness in a disputed case of revocation of divorce or complete termination of marriage, they should be unbiased in their testimony.

ذَلِكُمْ يُوعَظُ بِهِ مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ (That is what anyone who believes in Allah and the Last Day is exhorted to do...65:2) This verse particularly mentions the Hereafter because the mutual rights and obligations of husband and wife cannot be fulfilled without God-consciousness and the thought of the Hereafter.

The Wise and Educative style of the Qur'an in the laws of Crime and Punishment

The system of punishment for crimes and compiling their laws is in place among the states of the world since ancient times. Obviously, the Qur'an is also the Book that explains the divine laws, but its style is unique. Before and after every piece of law, man is made conscious of Allah and the Hereafter, so that he may follow the law, not for fear of police or inspector or, but for fear of Allah, irrespective of whether anyone else sees him, not. In all situations, whether in private or in public, he finds the laws binding. This is the reason why even the harshest law was not difficult to implement among those who have proper faith in the Qur'an. There was no need for a network of police and its special or secret services.

This unique Qur'anic style is used in all laws, but it has been especially applied to the laws relating to the marital relations and their mutual rights and obligations, because due to the delicate nature of these relations, it is not possible to secure evidence for every shortcoming on either side, nor is it possible for the judicial system to investigate and estimate the full extent of the shortcomings in the relationship. Proper fulfilment of mutual rights depends only on the inner qualities of the couple and their actions and deeds. Therefore, the *Masnūn Khuṭbah* or

approved sermon that is recited at marriage contains three verses of the Qur'an, and each one of them begins with laying stress on *taqwā* and ends with laying stress on *taqwā* to indicate that the marrying parties must appreciate that Allah is fully aware of all their covert and overt actions, whether or not they are seen by someone else. Rather, He is well-aware of the innermost thoughts hidden in their minds or hearts. If they fall short of fulfilling the mutual rights and obligations or hurt each other, they will be answerable to the knower of secrets. In the same strain, a few injunctions have been laid down in Sūrah Aṭ-Ṭalāq. Immediately after the first injunction the believers are exhorted: **وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ** (And fear Allah, your Lord') After this exhortation, four more injunctions are set down and then they are admonished that anyone who oversteps Allah's limits will be wronging himself and will have to bear the disastrous consequences, thus **وَمَنْ يَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَقَدْ ظَلَمَ نَفْسَهُ** Four more indirect injunctions are set down after that, and the admonition is repeated, thus: **ذَلِكُمْ يُوعَظُ بِهِ مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ** ('That is what anyone who believes in Allah and the Last Day is exhorted to do...65:2) Followed by this is a verse in which the merits of *taqwā* are mentioned, describing its religious and mundane blessings and benefits. Towards the end of the same verse the blessings and benefits of trust in Allah have been described. Thereafter, a few more injunctions pertaining to waiting-period are set down. Then in two more verses additional benefits and blessings of *taqwā* are described. This is followed by injunctions pertaining to marriage, divorce, the wife's maintenance, children's fosterage and so on. In the course of all these injunctions, the mention of the Hereafter, the virtue of *taqwā*, and the blessings of trust in Allah are interspersed repeatedly. This Qur'ānic style of alternating injunctions with the virtues of *taqwā* apparently seems disjointed, but having grasped the wisdom of the prudent style of the Qur'an, the close linkage becomes clear.

Now have a look at the interpretation of the foregoing verses:

وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجًا وَيَرْزُقْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ (And whoever fears Allah, for him Allah brings forth a way out, and gives him provision (of his needs) from where he does not even imagine...2/3) The word *taqwā* primarily and literally means 'to guard' or 'to refrain'. In Islamic terminology it signifies 'to guard against sins'. When the word is related to Allah, it is translated as 'to fear Allah' and implies 'to avoid disobedience of Allah and

guard against sins'.

There are two benefits of تَقْوَى *taqwā* mentioned in this verse: [1] By exercising *taqwā*, Allah creates a way out to guard oneself. The question is 'Guard against what?' The correct answer is that it is general, 'against all mundane difficulties and hardships as well as all hardships and difficulties of the Hereafter' and the verse implies that for a God-fearing person Allah paves the way to salvage him from the difficulties and hardships of this world as well as from the horrors of the next world. [2] By exercising *taqwā*, Allah will provide for the God-fearing person *rizq* [literally 'provision'] from where he does not expect. The *rizq* in this context refers to anything one needs, whether any mundane need or any need of the Hereafter. Allah has promised the righteous believers in this verse that He will ease every difficulty of theirs and provide for them all their needs from resources they never expected or thought about. [Rūḥ]

In keeping with the present context, some of the commentators interpret the verse thus: The divorcing husband or the divorced wife, both or whoever of them is God-fearing, Allah will give them salvation from the horrors of divorce or termination of marriage experienced at the time of its happening. In other words, the man will be given a compatible wife and the woman will be given a compatible husband. Obviously the primary meaning of the verse comprehends all kinds of adversities and needs, including the horrors and needs of the husband and wife. [Rūḥ-ul-Maʿānī]

The Cause of Revelation of the Above Verse

Sayyidnā ‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Abbās ؓ reports that ‘Auf Ibn Mālīk Ashjaʿī ؓ came up to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and said that the enemies had arrested and kidnapped his son Sālīm. His mother is very anxious and he wanted to know what he should do. The Holy Prophet ﷺ ordered him and his wife to recite لا حول ولا قوة الا بالله (There is no strength nor power but with Allah) abundantly. The husband and wife complied with the order. They recited the formula abundantly. It produced its desired effect. One day the enemies became unmindful, and the boy somehow managed to escape and drove a herd of goats that belonged to them to his father. According to other narratives, he found one of their camels and he mounted it and drove the other camels to his father. The father reported the incident to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Another narration has it that he enquired

from the Holy Prophet ﷺ whether the goats and camels the son brought with him were lawful for them. On that occasion, the verse وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ (And whoever fears Allah, for him Allah brings forth a way out, and gives him provision from where he does not even imagine...2/3)

According to other versions of the report, when Sayyidnā ‘Auf Ibn Mālik Ashja‘ī ؓ and his wife became very restless and anxious because of separation from the son, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ advised them to exercise *taqwā* and recite abundantly لَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ (There is no strength nor power but with Allah). [All these narratives are cited in Rūḥ-ul-Ma‘ānī from Ibn Mardūyah through the chain of al-Kalbī from Abī Ṣāliḥ from Ibn ‘Abbās]

This occasion of revelation indicates that this verse, though related to divorcing situation in this context, has general application for all circumstances.

Ruling

This Tradition proves that when a Muslim is captured by the non-believers, the captive takes their property and returns home, such a property would be treated as booty, and as such their use would be lawful. It is a general rule of spoils to give 1/5th [*khums*] to the public treasury, but in this case he is not obligated to give 1/5th [*khums*] to the public treasury, because in the narration reported above, the *khums* of the property was not exacted from them. The jurists have ruled that if a Muslim secretly goes away to the Domain of War without seeking permission from them, snatch their property and somehow bring it into the Domain of Islam, the above ruling will apply. However, if he officially sought permission to enter their territory [as it happens nowadays by obtaining a visa] and entered their country, then it is not permissible for him to take their property without their consent. Likewise, if a person is captured and taken into the non-Muslim territory, and a non-Muslim deposits with him an article for safe custody, it is not permissible for him to take it away to the Domain of Islam. In the first case, it is not permissible because by seeking official permission a pact is entered into between them, and he has no authority to dispose of their property without their prior consent. If he does, it would be a breach of the pact. In the second case, there is a practical pact with the depositor, in that whenever he demands his deposited article back, it should be returned.

Failure to return his deposited item is tantamount to breach of contract that is unlawful in Shari'ah. [[Maḏharī]]

Before the Holy Prophet ﷺ migrated, many non-believers used to keep their deposits with him. At the time of migration, he still had with him some of these deposits. As long as he was in Makkah, he kept them himself, but when he was migrating, he committed them to the care of Sayyidnā 'Alī ﷺ and did not take them with him to Madīnah. In fact, Sayyidnā 'Alī ﷺ was left behind for the sole reason of returning the deposits to the rightful people.

A Proven Prescription to avert calamities and achieve the objectives

According to the above Tradition, Sayyidnā 'Auf Ibn Mālīk Ashja'ī ﷺ and his wife were advised to recite لَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ (There is no strength nor power but with Allah) abundantly to avert afflictions and obtain benefits. Mujaddid Alf Thānī رحمه الله تعالى says that abundant recitation of this formula is a proven prescription to avert all kinds of religious and mundane afflictions and to obtain all religious and mundane objectives and benefits. According to him, its proper way is to recite five hundred times لَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ, and to recite Ṣalāh (*durūd*) one hundred times before, and one hundred times after the formula, and then to supplicate to Allah for one's need. [Tafsīr [Maḏharī]] Imām Aḥmad, Ḥākim [grading the chain as *ṣaḥīḥ*], Baihaqī, Abū Na'īm and others have transmitted on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Dharr ﷺ that one day the Messenger of Allah ﷺ continuously recited the verse وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجًا وَيَرْزُقْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ ('And whoever fears Allah, for him Allah brings forth a way out, and gives him provision from where he does not even imagine...2/3) until the reporter started feeling sleepy. The Holy Prophet ﷺ said: " Abū Dharr, if all people choose only this verse, it would be sufficient for them all." [Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī] 'Sufficient' in this statement means it would be sufficient for all people to accomplish their religious and mundane objectives, if they practice it.

(...And whoever places his trust in Allah, He is sufficient for him. Surely Allah is to accomplish His purpose. Allah has set a measure for every thing....65:3) In this verse Allah promises those who put their trust in Him that He shall suffice for them against all odds, because Allah will execute His

decisions that He made for them, in whatever way He wills and chooses. Allah set a measure for all things. It is in accordance with this set measure that He decrees all acts. Tirmidhī and Ibn Mājah record from Sayyidnā ‘Umar رضي الله عنه that Allah's Messenger ﷺ said:

لَوْ أَنَّكُمْ تَوَكَّلْتُمْ عَلَى اللَّهِ حَقَّ تَوَكُّلِهِ لَرَزَقَكُمْ كَمَا يَرْزُقُ الطَّيْرَ تَغْدُوا خُمَاصًا وَتَرُوحُ
بَطَانًا.

"If you trust in Allah as He ought to be trusted, He will provide for you in the same way as He provides for the birds. They leave their nests while hungry in the mornings, but come back in the evenings with their bellies full."

Ṣaḥīḥs of Bukhārī and Muslim transmit on the authority of Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه that Allah's Messenger ﷺ said: "Seventy-thousand of my followers will be admitted to Paradise without account." Among their other qualities, they will be characterised by having trust in Allah." [Maḏharī]

Tawakkul (Trust in Allah) does not mean to forsake the causes and means Allah has created for us to acquire things. One should utilise the means at our disposal. However, instead of relying solely on them, one should rather put his trust in Allah, in that no task shall be accomplished unless Allah wills it. After describing the virtues and blessings of *taqwā* and *Twakkul*, the next verses lay down some more rules about divorce and "iddah."

Rule [9]

وَالَّذِي يَسْنَنَ مِنَ الْمَحِيضِ مِنْ نِسَائِكُمْ إِنْ ارْتَبْتُمْ فَعِدَّتُهُنَّ ثَلَاثَةُ أَشْهُرٍ وَالَّتِي لَمْ
يَحْضُنَّ وَأُولَاتُ الْأَحْمَالِ أَجَلُهُنَّ أَنْ يَضَعْنَ حَمْلَهُنَّ

(And those women from among you who have despaired of [further] menstruation, if you are in doubt, their "iddah" is three months, as well as of those who have not yet menstruated. As for those having pregnancy, their term [of "iddah"] is that they give birth to their child...65:4)

This verse deals with additional rules pertaining to the waiting-period of divorced women. It subdivides divorced women and their waiting-periods into three different categories. Under normal circumstances, the waiting-period of a divorced woman is three menstrual cycles as mentioned in Sūrah Al-Baqarah. In the case of women who have stopped menstruating for good on account of advanced age, or due

to some disease etc. their "*iddah* is three months instead of three menstrual cycles. The same is the "*iddah* of young women who have not yet started menstruating on account of being under age. The "*iddah* for women who are pregnant at the time of divorce continues until they give birth to their child irrespective of the length of the period.

The words *إِنْ ارْتَبْتُمْ* (if you are in doubt) refer to the doubt or confusion such women may have because the real "*iddah* is counted on the basis of menstruation, but these women's menstruation has ceased, so they are doubtful about how to count their "*iddah*.

وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِ يُسْرًا (And whoever fears Allah, He brings about ease for him in his affair....65:4) The verse further speaks of the virtues and blessings of *taqwā* in that whoever has *taqwā*, Allah will make matters easy for him in this world as well as in the next world. Then the verse emphasises strict adherence to the above laws pertaining to divorce and waiting-period, thus: *ذَلِكَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ أَنْزَلَهُ، إِلَيْكُمْ* (This is the command of Allah that He has sent down to you...5) After this, the verse again draws attention to another virtue of *taqwā*. *وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَكْفِرْ عَنْهُ سَيِّئَاتِهِ وَيُعْظِمْ لَهُ أَجْرًا* (And whoever fears Allah, He will write off his evil deeds, and will give him a huge reward...65:5)

Five Blessings of *taqwā*

The merits and blessings of *taqwā* mentioned in the above verses may be summarised in five things: [1] He who has *taqwā* will be given a way out of difficulties and adversities; [2] He will be provided with all his needs from resources that he does not anticipate or expect; [3] Allah will make matters and tasks easy for him; [4] Allah will expiate his sins; and [5] He will grant him an immense reward.

Another blessing of *taqwā* mentioned by the Holy Qur'an at another place is that a God-fearing person finds it easier to distinguish between right and wrong, thus: *إِنْ تَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ فُرْقَانًا* (...if you fear Allah, He will provide you with a criterion to distinguish between right and wrong...8:29) The next verses deal with further rules about the waiting period and maintenance of the divorced women and their other rights.

أَسْكِنُوهُنَّ مِنْ حَيْثُ سَكَنْتُمْ مِنْ وَجْدِكُمْ وَلَا تَضَارُّوهُنَّ لِنُصِيْقَتِهِنَّ عَلَيْهِنَّ (Provide to them [the divorced women] residence where you reside according to your means...65:6) This injunction is related to Rule [3] above which states that

divorced women must not be expelled from their homes. This verse states the positive aspect of the injunction, in that the husbands, according to their means, should let their divorced wives live in some portion of the residence where they themselves live. If the wife is given a revocable divorce, there is no need for any *ḥijāb* or veil. However, if she is given an irrevocable divorce, whether of minor degree [*bā'in*] or of major degree by pronouncing divorce thrice, then marriage tie stands broken. She is required to be in *ḥijāb* in the presence of her former husband. Therefore, the arrangement in the residence should be made in such a way that she lives in the same residence with full observance of the rules of *ḥijāb*.

Rule [10]: Do not Hurt Divorced Women during their "iddah

لَا تَضَارُّوهُنَّ (...and do not hurt them to straiten [life] for them...65:6) This verse sets down that all the possible needs of a divorced woman must not be harassed by taunts or by curtailing her needful things, so that she is compelled to leave the home.

Rule [11]: Maintenance of Divorcees during their "iddah

وَإِنْ كُنَّ أُولَاتٍ حَمْلٌ فَأَنْفِقُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ حَتَّى يَضَعْنَ حَمْلَهُنَّ (...And if they are pregnant, spend on them till they give birth to their child...65:6) This verse lays down the rule that if a divorcee is pregnant at the time of divorce, her maintenance is obligatory on the husband. On the basis of this verse, there is a complete consensus of the Ummah on this point. Similarly, if she is not pregnant, and the divorce given to her is revocable, her maintenance too is compulsory on the husband till the expiry of her "iddah. This point too is agreed upon by all the jurists of the Ummah. However, if a wife is given irrevocable divorce, whether a *bā'in* divorce or the divorce pronounced three times, or if a woman has got her marriage terminated by way of *khul'* [got herself separated from the husband for a compensation], will not have to be maintained by the husband according to Imāms Shāfi'ī, Aḥmad and others. However, according to Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, her maintenance is also incumbent upon the husband. He argues that just as she is entitled to residence during the term of "iddah as is provided in verse 6, she is entitled to sustenance too. The husbands are obligated to provide them with these necessities of life during "iddah. This is further supported by those Traditions in which it has been reported that when Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنه heard the report of Fāṭimah bint Qais who claimed that her husband was not obligated to maintain her

after divorce, he said: "We cannot abandon the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ, on the basis of this narration. [Muslim]

'The Book of Allah' apparently refers to this verse (6). According to Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنه, the verse includes maintenance. 'Sunnah' refers to the Tradition reported by Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنه himself and transmitted by Ṭaḥāwī, Darquṭnī and Ṭabarānī. Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنه reports that he heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say that women divorced by three pronouncements are also entitled to maintenance and lodging.

The details are available in Tafsīr [Maḥzarī].

Rule [12]: Fees for Suckling the Child

فَإِنْ أَرْضَعْنَ لَكُمْ فَآتُوهُنَّ أُجُورَهُنَّ (...Then if they suckle the child for you, give them their fees...65:6). In other words, divorcees who are pregnant, their term of 'iddah ends with the birth of the child. Consequently, their maintenance is not incumbent upon the husband. However, if they are suckling the baby, it is permissible for the mother to claim a fee for suckling the baby from her former husband, and it is incumbent on him to pay it to her, if she claims it. The principle is that as long as the marriage between the parents of the baby is intact, it is the responsibility of the mothers to suckle the children as the Qur'ān states وَالْوَالِدَاتُ يُرْضِعْنَ أَوْلَادَهُنَّ (And the mothers suckle their children...2:233) One cannot receive a fee for an act that is obligatory on him or her, because it amounts to *rishwah* (bribery) which in itself is unlawful to give or take. The period of 'iddah is akin to the marriage in this respect, because the husband is obligated to maintain her, and therefore she cannot claim a fee for suckling a child during this period too. But once she has delivered the baby, her term of 'iddah is over and she is absolutely released from the tie of marriage. Consequently, it is not incumbent upon the former husband to maintain her. In this instance, if she suckles the baby, the verse under comment permits giving and taking a payment for the service.

Rule [13]

وَاتِمِرُوا بَيْنَكُمْ بِمَعْرُوفٍ (...and consult each other [for determining the fee] with fairness...65:6) The word *I'timar* means 'to consult each other' and 'to accept each other's suggestion'. The verse directs the spouses to avoid any conflict in determining the fee for suckling. The divorced wife should not

demand more than the normal rate, nor should the former husband of the divorcee refuse to pay the normal fee. They are advised to settle the issue with mutual understanding and tolerance.

Rule/Injunction [14]

وَإِنْ تَعَاَسَرْتُم فَمَسْرُوعٌ لَهُ أُخْرَى (...And if you have a deadlock between you, then another woman will suckle him...65:6) In other words, if the husband and wife cannot agree on the fee of suckling with mutual consent, or the wife refuses to suckle the child even for a remuneration, then the mother cannot be forced by a court for the service of suckling. Normally, the mother has the most compassion for the child. Despite this, if she is refusing to suckle him, she probably has a genuine reason for that. If she has no genuine reason, and she is refusing merely on account of anger and displeasure, she is a sinner in the sight of Allah, but an Islamic court cannot force her to do the suckling. Likewise, if the husband, on account of abject poverty, is unable to pay the fee for suckling and a wet-nurse is willing to suckle the child without remuneration or for a lesser fee than what the divorcee mother is demanding, he cannot be forced to agree to the demand of the mother and get her to do the suckling. In fact, in either of the cases it is possible to have the child suckled by the wet-nurse. However, if the fee the mother is demanding is the same as the wet-nurse's remuneration, preference would be given to the mother rather than the wet-nurse. This is a point of consensus between all the Muslim jurists.

Ruling

If it is agreed that the wet-nurse would do the suckling, it is incumbent that the wet-nurse should do the suckling while the child is in the custody of the mother. It is not lawful to separate the mother and the baby, because the custody of the child is the right of the mother according to the law of Ḥiḍānah as stated in the authentic Traditions. It is not permissible to usurp this right from her. [Tafsīr [Maḏharī]].

Rule [15]: Quantum of Divorcee's Maintenance

لِيُنْفِقْ ذُو سَعَةٍ مِّنْ سَعَتِهِ ط وَمَنْ قُدِرَ عَلَيْهِ رِزْقُهُ فَلْيُنْفِقْ مِمَّا آتَاهُ اللَّهُ (A man of vast means should spend according to his vast means. And anyone whose sustenance is limited should spend from whatever Allah has given to him...65:7) In other words, in determining the quantum of the divorced wife's maintenance the financial position of the husband will be taken into

account. If the husband is wealthy, he should spend on his divorcee according to his affluence; and if he is indigent, he should spend according to his limited resources - even if the wife is wealthy. This is the ruling of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah. Other schools of jurisprudence hold differing views. [Tafsīr [Maḏharī]]

لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا مَا آتَاهَا ۚ سَيَجْعَلُ اللَّهُ بَعْدَ عُسْرٍ يُسْرًا (Allah makes no one liable beyond what He has given to him. Allah will soon bring ease after a difficulty....65:7) This is an elaboration of the preceding statement, in that Allah does not demand from anyone more than what he can afford. Therefore, if the husband is indigent, it is incumbent upon him to provide for her according to his level of indigence at that time. The wife, on the other hand, is advised to be content, for the time being, with the amount of sustenance her indigent husband is able to provide. She should not think that the present state of indigence will last for all times to come, because ease and difficulty are in the hands of Allah, and as such He can change indigence into affluence.

Special Note

The verse under comment bears an indication that Allah will create a condition of ease for husbands who try to provide for their wives the obligatory amount of sustenance to the best of their ability, and are not in the habit of keeping their wives under straitened circumstances. [Rūḥ-ul-Maʿānī] And Allah knows best!

Verses 8 - 12

وَكَانَ مِنْ قَرْيَةٍ عَتَتْ عَنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّهَا وَرُسُلِهِ فَحَاسَبْنَاهَا حِسَابًا شَدِيدًا وَعَذَّبْنَاهَا عَذَابًا نُكَرًا ﴿٨﴾ فَذَاقَتْ وَبَالَ أَمْرِهَا وَكَانَ عَاقِبَةُ أَمْرِهَا خُسْرًا ﴿٩﴾ أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا ۖ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَا أُولِيَ الْأَلْبَابِ ۚ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ۚ قَدْ أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكُمْ ذِكْرًا ﴿١٠﴾ رَسُولًا يَتْلُوا عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ مُبَيِّنَاتٍ لِيُخْرِجَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ ۚ وَمَنْ يُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ وَيَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا يُدْخِلْهُ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرَى مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا ۖ قَدْ أَحْسَنَ اللَّهُ

لَهُ رِزْقًا ﴿١١﴾ اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَوَاتٍ وَمِنَ الْأَرْضِ مِثْلَهُنَّ
يَتَنَزَّلُ الْأَمْرُ بَيْنَهُنَّ لِتَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ۖ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ
قَدْ أَحَاطَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا ﴿١٢﴾

And how many a township rebelled against the command of their Lord, and against His messengers, so We called them to a severe account, and punished them with an evil punishment. [8] Thus they tasted the evil consequence of their acts, and the end of their conduct was loss. [9] Allah has prepared for them a severe punishment; so fear Allah O men of understanding who have believed! Allah has sent down to you a Reminder, [10] a messenger who recites to you the verses of Allah, making (the truth) clear, so that He may bring forth those who believe and do righteous deeds from the layers of darkness into the light. And whoever believes in Allah, and acts righteously, He will admit him to the gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein such people will live forever. Allah has made for him a good provision. [11] Allah is the One who has created seven skies, and their like from earth. The Command descends among them, so that you may know that Allah is powerful over every thing, and that Allah has encompassed every thing in knowledge. [12]

Commentary

فَحَاسَبْنَهَا حِسَابًا شَدِيدًا وَعَذَّبْنَاهَا عَذَابًا نُكْرًا (so We called them to a severe account, and punished them with an evil punishment...65:8). The severe account and evil punishment of nations mentioned in this verse refers to what will happen in the Hereafter. However, the past tense has been employed presumably to indicate the occurrence of these events is as certain as if it has already been materialised. [Rūḥ]. The other possibility is that the *Hisāb* or 'account' in this context does not refer to interrogation, but to the determination of punishment, (in which case it may refer to the punishment faced by the infidels right here in this world.) Another possibility is that the 'severe account' will though take place in the Hereafter, it has already been recorded and is being recorded on daily basis in the ledger of deeds and is therefore described as 'called them to a severe account'. In this interpretation, the 'punishment' refers to the past nations who were destroyed by Divine punishment in this world because

they defied Allah's and His Messengers' commandments. In this case, only the next statement **أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا** (Allah has prepared for them a severe punishment...10) would refer to the terrible punishment of the Hereafter.

قَدْ أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكُمْ ذِكْرًا. رَسُولًا (Allah has sent down to you a Reminder, a messenger...65:10-11). The verb *arsala* 'sent' needs to be understood preceding the object *rasūlan* 'a messenger' which appears at the commencement of verse [11]. The simplest way in which these verses can be interpreted is to translate them thus: 'Allah has sent down to you a Reminder, (the Qur'an and He has also sent to you) a messenger...65:11) Other commentators have preferred other interpretations. For instance some say that the word *dhikr* ('Reminder') refers to the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself, and the word 'messenger' is an explanatory complement to the word '*dhikr*', because abundance of his remembering Allah made him a personified Remembrance of Allah. [Rūḥ]¹

Where are the Seven Earths and in What Form?

اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ وَمِنَ الْأَرْضِ مِثْلَهُنَّ (Allah is the One who has created seven skies, and their like from earth...65:12). This verse indicates that there are seven earths as there are seven heavens, but the question is where these earths are and in what shape or form. Are they in the form of seven layers one above the other, or each earth is separate from the other. If they form layers one above the other, is there a distance between two earths, just as there is a distance between two heavens? Are there separate creatures living on each earth, just as separate types of angels are residing in every heaven? Is there air, wind, atmosphere and so forth on each earth? Or, are these layers of earth joined and compact with each other? The Qur'an is silent on these questions. There are Traditions reported on these questions, but the leading authorities of Traditions disagree about their authenticity. Some scholars have authenticated them and others have graded them as 'fabricated'. Rationally all findings are possible, and none of our religious or mundane needs are dependent on resolving these issues, nor will we be questioned about them in the grave

[1] This explanation is based on the premise that '*dhikr*' in this verse means 'Allah's remembrance'. However, it also means 'reminder'. Taken in this sense, the word 'messenger' in the verse can be easily interpreted as an explanatory complement to the word '*dhikr*', because the Holy Prophet ﷺ is a 'Reminder' to the entire mankind. Our translation in the text is based on this connotation. (Muhammad Taqi Usmani)

or at Resurrection, so that we need to do research about the seven earths, their locale or their inhabitants. The safest position is to believe that there are seven earths as there are seven skies. Allah has created them with His Supreme Creative Power. Qur'ān has mentioned this much only. If the Qur'ān did not find it necessary to give a detailed account of it, there is no need for us to think about it or research it. This was the attitude of our pious predecessors. They formulated the following policy اِهْمُوا مَا اِيْهَمَهُ اللّٰهُ "Leave unexplained what Allah has left unexplained" as long as it does not contain any injunction for us to follow, nor does it concern our religious or mundane need. This commentary has been written for the common readers. Purely academic issues have not been included here which might not be needed for them.

يَنْزِلُ الْأَمْرُ بَيْنَهُنَّ (The Command descend among them...65:12) The verse purports to say that Divine commands and decrees are revealed and work in the seven heavens and in the seven earths. The Divine commands or decrees operate in two ways: [1] *Tashrī'ī*; and [2] *Takwīnī*. *Tashrī'ī* command refers to laws Divinely prescribed for people who are legally obligated to observe them. The Divinely legislated laws are revealed through the angels to the Prophets عليهم السلام to be passed on to the humans and *jinnns*. These laws pertain to articles of faith, worship, good morals, transactions and way of living. Adherence to them attracts reward and flouting them entails punishment. *Takwīnī* laws pertain to the Divine decrees in connection with the creation of the universe or bringing it into existence from the realm of non-existence, its gradual growth and development, its phenomena of depletion and replenishment, and the phenomena of life and death. These decrees encompass the entire Divine creation. Therefore, if it be proved that between two earths there is atmosphere and distance, and that some kind of creatures inhabits it, even if that kind of creature is not legally bound by the Shari'ah laws, the description يَنْزِلُ الْأَمْرُ "The Command descend among them...65:12) will still apply, because Allah's *Takwīnī* decrees encompass them as well. And Allah, the Pure and Exalted, knows best!

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Aṭ-Ṭalāq
Ends here

Sūrah At-Taḥrīm (The Prohibiting)

This Sūrah is Madani, and it has 12 verses and 2 sections

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 5

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ لِمَ تُحَرِّمُ مَا أَحَلَّ اللَّهُ لَكَ ۚ تَبْتَغِي مَرْضَاتَ أَزْوَاجِكَ ۚ
وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١﴾ قَدْ فَرَضَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ تَحِلَّةَ أَيْمَانِكُمْ ۚ وَاللَّهُ
مَوْلَاكُمْ ۚ وَهُوَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٢﴾ وَإِذْ أَسْرَ النَّبِيُّ إِلَىٰ بَعْضِ
أَزْوَاجِهِ حَدِيثًا ۚ فَلَمَّا نَبَأَتْ بِهِ وَأَظْهَرَهُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ عَرَفَ بَعْضُهُ
وَأَعْرَضَ عَنْ بَعْضٍ ۚ فَلَمَّا نَبَأَهَا بِهِ قَالَتْ مَنْ أَنْبَاكَ هَذَا ۖ قَالَ نَبَاَنِي
الْعَلِيمُ الْخَبِيرُ ﴿٣﴾ إِنْ تَتُوبَا إِلَى اللَّهِ فَقَدْ صَغَتْ قُلُوبُكُمَا ۚ وَإِنْ
تَظَاهَرَا عَلَيْهِ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ مَوْلَاهُ وَجِبْرِيلُ وَصَالِحُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۚ
وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ ظَهِيرٌ ﴿٤﴾ عَسَىٰ رَبُّهُ إِنْ طَلَّقَنَّ أَنْ يُبْدِلَهُ
أَزْوَاجًا خَيْرًا مِنْكُنَّ مُسْلِمَاتٍ مُّؤْمِنَاتٍ قَنَاطٍ تَحِيَّتٍ عِيدَاتٍ سَمِعَتْ
نَبِيَّتٍ وَأَبْكَارًا ﴿٥﴾

O Holy Prophet, why do you ban (on your self) something that Allah has made lawful for you, seeking the pleasure of your wives? And Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very Merciful. [1] Allah has prescribed (the way of) absolution from your oaths. And Allah is your protector, and He is the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.

[2] And (remember) when the Holy Prophet told one of his wives something in secret. So, when she disclosed it (to another wife), and Allah made it known to him, he told (the disclosing wife) part of it, and bypassed another part. So when he informed her about it, she said, "Who told you about this?" He said, "It is told to me by the All-Knowing, the All-Aware. [3]

(O two wives of the Holy Prophet,) If both of you repent to Allah, then (your conduct calls for it, because) your hearts have diverted. And if you back each other against him (the Holy Prophet), then Allah is his supporter, and Jibrīl and righteous believers and, after all that, angels are his helpers. [4] It is hoped that, if he divorces you, Allah will give him in your place wives better than you, submissive to Allah, believing, devout, penitent, steadfast in worship, fasting, previously married and virgins. [5]

Commentary

Cause of Revelation

It is recorded in Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī and in other collection of Aḥādīth, on the authority of Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها, that it was a daily practice of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to visit each of his wives after ‘aṣr prayer for a short time inquiring about their welfare. Once he visited Sayyidah Zainab رضي الله عنها and spent more time with her than normal and had some honey offered by her. Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها says: "I developed some envy and in consultation with Hafṣah رضي الله عنها decided that when the Messenger of Allah ﷺ would visit any one of us, she should say to him 'you have had *Maghāfir*', (a herb that resembled gum with a slightly unpleasant smell.)"¹ They executed their plan. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "I have not had any *Maghāfir*. I only had some honey." The Holy wife said: "It is possible that the honeybee might have sat on the *Maghāfir* shrub and drank its nectar. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ, because of his natural dislike for unpleasant odour, swore and promised not to take honey any more. However, he did not want the feelings of Sayyidah Zainab رضي الله عنها to be hurt, and therefore he said to his wife that the incident should be kept secret and should not be recounted to anyone else. But she told about it to another wife.

[1] It should be noted here that these words were spoken by them in an interrogative accent, and therefore it was not a false statement. (Muhammad Taqi Usmani).

Some reports say that it was at the house of Sayyidah Ḥafṣah رضي الله عنها that he was served with honey, and that the wives who planned were Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah, Saudah and Ṣafīyyah رضي الله عنهن. Other reports recount the incident in other ways. It is possible that many incidents of similar nature might have taken place and these verses were revealed after them. [Bayān-ul-Qur'ān].

In brief, these verses tell us that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ banned a lawful thing [honey] on himself by swearing an oath. If such an act is done for a genuine need or expedience, [*maṣlahah*], it is permissible; it is not a sin. But the incident does not show that there was no such need for him to have the trouble of banning a lawful thing on himself. He had done this for the pleasure of his holy wives. In such circumstances, it was not necessary for him to have pleased them. Therefore, the verse, compassionately addresses the Holy Prophet ﷺ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ لِمَ تُحَرِّمُ مَا أَحَلَّ اللَّهُ لَكَ تَبْتَغِي مَرْضَاتَ أَزْوَاجِكَ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ (O Prophet, why do you ban (on your self) something that Allah has made lawful for you, seeking the pleasure of your wives? And Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very Merciful...66:1) According to the principles of general stylistics, the Qur'ān does not address the Holy Prophet ﷺ by his name but by his Prophetic title thus: 'O Prophet' which is his special honour. Although this is a loving question posed by way of compassion, it could have created the misunderstanding that he has committed a major error and he is being questioned about it. The concluding phrase allays this suspicion: وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ meaning that even if it would have been a sin (for the sake of argument), then 'Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very Merciful.'

Ruling

There are three ways in which one can prohibit a 'lawful thing' for himself, the details of which were given under verse [87] of Sūrah Al-Mā'idah in Ma'āriful Qur'ān Vol.3/pp239-241. يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَحَرِّمُوا طَيِّبَاتِ مَا أَحَلَّ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ 'O those who believe, do not make unlawful good things that Allah has made lawful for you__[5:87] The three ways may be summarised here thus: [1] If someone holds a lawful thing as unlawful as part of his religious belief, it is *kufr* and an enormous sin. [2] If he does not believe it as unlawful in religion, but bans something on himself by swearing an oath without any need to do so, it is a sinful act, and it is necessary for him to break the oath and expiate, which will be discussed

later. However, If this is done for some need or advantage, it is permissible but undesirable. [3] If someone neither believes a lawful thing to be unlawful, nor swears an oath to ban it on himself, but makes a resolve in his/her mind to abandon the lawful thing for ever. If this resolution for permanent abandonment is with the intention of reward, it would be an innovation (*bid'ah*) in the established religion and monasticism which is a reproachable sin. If such a restriction is not with the intention of reward, but rather for some other reason, such as for treatment of a physical ailment or spiritual malady, it is absolutely permissible. Reports about some noble Ṣūfīs who abandoned some lawful things fall under this last category.

In this incident, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ swore an oath to abstain from honey. After the revelation of the verse, he broke the oath and expiated for it. As reported in Ad-Durr-ul-Manthūr, he emancipated a slave in payment of his expiation. [Bayān-ul-Qur'ān]

قَدْ فَرَضَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ تَحِلَّةَ أَيْمَانِكُمْ (Allah has prescribed [the way of] absolution from your oaths....66:2). This verse reminds that where it is necessary or better to break the oath, Allah has prescribed a way to absolve oneself from the liability of the oath by expiation, the details of which are given in other verses.

وَإِذْ أَسَرَّ النَّبِيُّ إِلَى بَعْضِ أَزْوَاجِهِ حَدِيثًا (And [remember] when the Prophet told one of his wives something in secret...66:3). The Holy Prophet ﷺ confided a certain secret in one of his wives. According to most versions of the authentic report, the 'secret' in this verse refers to the ban the Holy Prophet ﷺ imposed on himself about honey, but at the same time he did not want Sayyidah Zainab's رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا feelings to be hurt and therefore he directed the wife to keep it secret from others, but the disclosing wife divulged the secret to another wife, as follows in the next verse. Although there are some other reports that explain the 'secret' in some other way, what has been mentioned above is in accordance with the most authentic narrations.

فَلَمَّا نَبَّأَتْ بِهِ وَأَظْهَرَهُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ عَرَفَ بَعْضُهُ وَأَعْرَضَ عَنْ بَعْضٍ (So, when she disclosed it [to another wife], and Allah made it known to him, he told [the disclosing wife] part of it, and bypassed another part...66:3). In other words, when the disclosing wife divulged the secret to another wife, and Allah disclosed

this fact to the Holy Prophet ﷺ, he complained to the disclosing wife about her disclosure, but he did not convey to her the whole information. Instead, he communicated part of it to her and withheld part of it. This was because of the Holy Prophet's ﷺ magnanimity and high morals. If he had disclosed the entire information he had received from Allah, it would have embarrassed her most profoundly. Who was the disclosing wife and who was the one to whom the secret was disclosed? The Qur'ān is silent on their identity and does not name them. According to the best received narratives, it would appear that it was Sayyidah Ḥafṣah رضي الله عنها whom the Holy Prophet ﷺ directed to keep the matter secret, and she divulged it to Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها, as recorded in Bukhārī on the authority of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه which will be narrated later.

Some narratives report that when Sayyidah Ḥafṣah رضي الله عنها divulged the secret, the Holy Prophet ﷺ decided to divorce her, but Allah sent Jibrā'il عليه السلام to him, preventing him from divorcing her on the ground that she offered many prayers and kept fasts abundantly. Her name appears in the list of his wives in Paradise. [Maḥzarī]

إِنْ تَوْبَا إِلَى اللَّهِ فَقَدْ صَغَتْ قُلُوبُكُمَا [O two wives of the Prophet,] If both of you repent to Allah, then [your conduct calls for it, because] your hearts have diverted....66:4). The reference here is made to two of his blessed wives who, as mentioned above in brief, contrived to draw the Holy Prophet ﷺ into swearing an oath and making the aforementioned promise to abstain from honey. Who are they? Bukhārī and other collections of Traditions record a lengthy Tradition about this on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه who narrates that he was always on the look-out to enquire of Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنه as to who were the two wives to whom reference had been made in the above verse. So, when Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنه was on his way to pilgrimage, the former joined him. One day, in the course of the journey, the latter went to answer the call of nature. When he returned, the former had arranged water for the latter's ablution. He poured water on his hands. Whilst pouring the water for ablution, he enquired as to who were the two wives to whom reference is made in the dual verb إِنْ تَوْبَا (If both of you repent) Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنه asked him in surprise: 'Do you not know who they were?' Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه said: 'No!' Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنه said they were Ḥafṣah and 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها, and then proceeded to recount a lengthy story related to this incident which also contained some incidents

that took place earlier. The details of the incident are available in Tafsīr Mazharī. This verse addresses the two blessed wives of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and requires them to turn to Allah as their hearts have deviated, albeit what they did, stem from their love for the Holy Prophet ﷺ, but in the process they, in consultation with one another, adopted a way that hurt the Holy Prophet ﷺ. This is a sin for which repentance was necessary.

وَإِنْ تَظْهَرَا عَلَيْهِ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ مَوْلَاهُ وَجِبْرِيلُ (And if you back each other against him [the Prophet], then Allah is his supporter, and Jibrīl and righteous believers and, after all that, angels are his helpers....66:4). The current verse warns the wives that if they do not repent and please the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, they will not cause any loss to him, because Allah is his Protector, and so are Jibril, every right-acting believer and, furthermore, the other angels too will come to his support, and it will be the wives themselves who will suffer loss.

عَسَىٰ رُءُؤُهُ إِنْ طَلَّقَكُنَّ أَنْ يُبَدِّلَهُ أَزْوَاجًا خَيْرًا مِنْكُنَّ (It is hoped that, if he divorces you, Allah will give him in your place wives better than you, submissive to Allah, believing, devout, penitent, steadfast in worship, fasting, previously married and virgins....66:5). The verse refutes the possible thought of the wives that if they are divorced, the Holy Prophet ﷺ will probably not get women better than themselves. The verse under comment responds to their assessment of the situation. It purports to say that nothing is beyond Allah's power. If he divorces them, Allah will give him in exchange better wives than he has at the moment. This does not necessarily imply that there were better wives than the present holy wives at that time. Possibly such women were not available at that point of time, but, should the need have arisen, He could make other women better than they are. These verses specifically dealt with the holy wives of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, their deeds, their moral reform, their discipline and training. Similar injunctions are given in the verses that follow for the general body of Muslims and believers.

Verses 6 - 7

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ
وَالْحِجَارَةُ عَلَيْهَا مَلَائِكَةٌ غِلَاظٌ شِدَادٌ لَا يَعْصُونَ اللَّهَ مَا أَمَرَهُمْ

وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ ﴿٦﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَا تَعْتَذِرُوا الْيَوْمَ
إِنَّمَا تُجْزَوْنَ مَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٧﴾

O those who believe, save yourselves and your families from a fire, the fuel of which is human beings and stones, appointed on which are angels, stern and severe, who do not disobey Allah in what He orders them, and do whatever they are ordered to do. [6] O those who disbelieve, do not make excuses today. You will only be recompensed for what you have been doing. [7]

Commentary

قُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ (O those who believe, save yourselves and your families from a fire...66:6). This verse addresses the general body of Muslims and enjoins upon them to safeguard themselves and their families from a fire of Hell whose fuel is people and stones. Then the verse goes on to describe the intensity and horror of the Hell-Fire. Towards the end of it the angels in charge of it, whose name is Zabaniah, are described. They are harsh and terrible from whom no inmate of Hell will be able to rescue himself by force, power, strength, flattery or bribery.

The word أَهْلِيكُمْ (your families) comprehends wife, children and slaves [males as well as females]. It is not inconceivable to include full-time servants in the imperative like slaves. When this verse was revealed, Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنه inquired: "O Messenger of Allah, we understand how to save ourselves from Hell, that is, we guard ourselves against sins and carry out the Divine injunctions, but how do we safeguard our families from Hell?" The Messenger of Allah ﷺ replied: "Instruct them to refrain from deeds that Allah has prohibited, and ask them to carry out deeds that Allah has enjoined. This will rescue them from the Hell-Fire." [Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī]

Education and Training of Wife and Children:

Every Muslim's Responsibility

The jurists have pointed out that, according to the verse under comment, it is the responsibility of every Muslim to educate the wife and children in matters of Shar'ī obligations, and in matters of *ḥalāl* and *ḥarām* and train them diligently to act upon them. A *ḥadīth* says, "May

Allah shower His mercy upon a person who says: 'O my wife and children, (be mindful of) your prayers, your fasting, your alms, your indigent, your orphan, your neighbour! It is hopeful that Allah will gather all these with him in Paradise' 'Your prayers, your fasting' and so on' implies 'Take care of them. Do not ignore them.' The phrase **مَسْكِينِكُمْ يَتِيمِكُمْ** 'Your indigent, your orphan and so on' implies 'Fulfil their rights towards them willingly and readily.' Righteous elders have said that the person deepest in punishment on the Day of Judgement will be the one whose family is ignorant and unaware of the religion. [Rūḥ]

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَا تَعْتَذِرُوا الْيَوْمَ إِنَّمَا تُجْزَوْنَ مَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ (O those who disbelieve, do not make excuses today. You will only be recompensed for what you have been doing....66:7) After advising the general body of believers, the current verse turns attention to the non-believers who are asked not to try to make excuses, because they will not be accepted. They will be told that they are merely being repaid for what they did.

Verses 8 - 12

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا تَوْبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ تَوْبَةً نَّصُوحًا ۖ عَسَىٰ رَبُّكُمْ أَن يُكَفِّرَ عَنْكُم سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَيُدْخِلَكُم جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ ۚ
يَوْمَ لَا يُخْزِي اللَّهُ النَّبِيَّ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ ۖ نُورُهُمْ يَسْعَىٰ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَبِأَيْمَانِهِمْ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا أَتِمِّمْ لَنَا نُورَنَا وَاغْفِرْ لَنَا ۖ إِنَّكَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٨﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ جَاهِدِ الْكُفَّارَ وَالْمُنَافِقِينَ وَاغْلُظْ عَلَيْهِمْ ۚ وَمَا لَهُمْ جَهَنَّمَ ۖ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿٩﴾ ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا امْرَأَتَ نُوحَ وَامْرَأَتَ لُوطَ ۚ كَانَتَا تَحْتَ عَبْدَيْنِ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا صَالِحِينَ فَخَانَتُهُمَا فَلَمْ يُغْنِيا عَنْهُمَا مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا وَقِيلَ ادْخُلَا النَّارَ مَعَ الدَّٰخِلِينَ ﴿١٠﴾ وَضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا امْرَأَتَ فِرْعَوْنَ إِذْ قَالَتْ رَبِّ ابْنِ لِي عِنْدَكَ بَيْتًا فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَنَجِّنِي مِنَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَعَمَلِهِ وَنَجِّنِي مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١١﴾ وَمَرْيَمَ ابْنَتَ

عِمْرَانَ الَّتِي أَحْصَنَتْ فَرْجَهَا فَنَفَخْنَا فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِنَا وَصَدَّقَتْ
بِكَلِمَةٍ رَبِّهَا وَكُتِبَ عَلَيْهَا مِنَ الْقَنَاتَيْنِ ﴿١٢﴾

O those who believe, turn to Allah with a faithful repentance. It is hoped from your Lord that he will write off your faults, and will admit you to the gardens beneath which rivers flow, on the Day when Allah will not disgrace the Prophet and those who believed with him. Their light will run before them and to their right hands. They will say, "Our Lord, perfect for us our light, and forgive us. Indeed you are powerful over every thing." [8] O Prophet, carry out *jihād* (struggle) against the disbelievers and the hypocrites, and be harsh with them. And their final abode is *Jahannam* (Hell), and it is an evil end. [9]

Allah has cited for the disbelievers the example of the wife of Nūḥ and the wife of Lūṭ. Both were married with two of Our righteous slaves, but betrayed them. So they could not avail them at all, and it was said, "Enter the Fire along with those who enter." [10] And Allah has cited for the believers the example of the wife of Fir'aun (the Pharaoh), when she said, "My Lord, build for me, near You, a house in the Paradise, and deliver me from Fir'aun and his deeds, and deliver me from the unjust people.", [11] and (also the example of) Maryam, daughter of 'Imrān who guarded her chastity, so We breathed into her Our spirit, and she testified to the truth of the words of her Lord and His books, and she was one of the devout. [12]

Commentary

تَوْبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ تَوْبَةً نَصُوحًا (...turn to Allah with a faithful repentance...66:8). The word *taubah*, literally, means 'to turn' or 'to return', in the sense of turning or withdrawing from sins. In the terminology of the Qur'an and *Sunnah*, it signifies 'to regret committing sins in the past and to firmly resolve abstaining from them in future'. *Taubah* is qualified in the verse by the word *نصوح* *naṣūḥ*. If it is taken as the infinitive of *naṣaḥa* / *naṣīḥah*, it signifies 'to make pure and sincere'; and if it be derived from *naṣāḥah*, it signifies 'to repair clothes by sewing'. In terms of the first meaning, the expression *naṣūḥ* signifies sincere/faithful [repentance], free from pretence and hypocrisy. In this interpretation, a sinner is

required to regret the sins he has committed and give them up purely for the pleasure of Allah and for fear of Divine chastisement. In terms of the second meaning, *nāṣūḥ* would signify that 'the sinner is required to repair the torn clothes of righteous deeds'. Sayyidnā Ḥasan Baṣrī ؓ says that *taubatan nāṣūḥā* signifies that a person should regret his past evil actions, and make a firm resolve never to repeat them. *Kalbī* says the phrase *taubatan nāṣūḥā* signifies that a person should pray for pardon with his tongue, regret in his heart, and should prevent the limbs of his body from committing sins in the future.

Sayyidnā 'Alī ؓ was asked as to what is '*taubah*' and he replied that it consists of six elements: [1] to regret one's past evil deeds; [2] to carry out Divine duties that were missed; [3] to restore the rights that were usurped; [4] to ask forgiveness of a person who has been wronged by him physically or verbally; [5] to make a firm resolve of avoiding the sin in future; and [6] to consume one's self in obedience of Allah as one thus far consumed one's self in His disobedience. [Maḏharī]. In fact, all of the conditions of '*taubah*' put forward by Sayyidnā 'Alī ؓ are recognized by all the scholars. However, some have described them concisely and others in details.

عَسَىٰ رَبُّكُمْ أَن يُكَفِّرَ عَنْكُمْ (It is hoped from your Lord that he will write off your faults...66:8). The verb '*asā*' means 'it is hoped'. In this context, it purports to mean 'promise', but the expression of 'hope' is used to indicate that *taubah* or any other righteous deeds are not the just and equal price for the Paradise or the divine forgiveness. In fact, one compensation for man's good deeds has already been given to him in this world in the form of worldly blessings. Therefore, as regards the law of equality, it is not necessary that he is further compensated by the Jannah. It entirely depends on Divine grace and favour as is mentioned in a Ḥadīth which says: 'Your actions alone cannot salvage you.' The Companions inquired: 'O Messenger of Allah, not even you?' He replied: 'No, not even me unless the Divine grace and mercy covers me.' [Bukhārī and Muslim as quoted by Maḏharī]

ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا امْرَأَتِ نُوحٍ (Allah has cited for the disbelievers the example of the wife of Nūḥ and the wife of Lūṭ...66:10). Towards the end of this Sūrah, Allah has set forth examples of four women. The first example comprises two women who were the wives of two Holy Prophets

عليهما السلام. They, in matters of religion, opposed their husbands and secretly sided with the unbelievers and pagans. As a result, they ended up in the abyss of Hell, and their marital relation with the prophets could not save them from the punishment. The name of the wife of Nūḥ عليه السلام is said to be Wāghilah, while the name of the wife of Lūṭ عليه السلام is said to be Wālihah. [Qurtubī] Some scholars have attributed other names to them.

The third woman is the one who was the wife of the Pharaoh, the worst disbeliever and claimant of godhead, but she believed in Mūsā عليه السلام. She was given such a high rank by Allah that she was shown her place in the Paradise, right here in this world, and the infidelity of her husband did not prove to be an impediment in her achieving this high rank.

The fourth woman is Maryam عليها السلام. She was not wife of anyone, but her faith and virtuous deeds earned for her such a high degree that she was invested with perfections of the prophets, even though she was not a prophet according to the majority of scholars. Verse [11] serves as a warning to the unbelievers who think that they will attain salvation merely by their companionship with believers, the good company will not rescue them in the Hereafter if they persist in their disbelief. So likewise, a disbeliever's disbelief will not harm a believing relative. Therefore, the *auliyas*' and *ambiyas*' wives should not carelessly take for granted that they will attain salvation on account of their husbands nor should the wife of a disbeliever think that his disbelief will harm her. Every person, man or woman, should be concerned about his/her own faith and action.

(And Allah has cited for the believers the example of the wife of Fir'aun (the Pharaoh), when she said, "My Lord, build for me, near You, a house in the Paradise...66:11) This is the example of the wife of Fir'aun (the Pharaoh) whose name was 'Āsiyah bint Muzāḥim. When Mūsā عليه السلام accomplished his task in defeating the sorcerers who embraced Mosaic faith, she too embraced the Mosaic faith and became a Muslim. Fir'aun ordered that she should be tortured severely and tormented harshly. According to some reports, her hands and feet were pegged with nails to the ground and a huge rock was placed on her chest, so that she might not be able to move. In this state she supplicated to Allah as mentioned in this verse. According to other reports, it was suggested that a huge rock be dropped on her. They had hardly dropped the rock and she prayed to

Allah as quoted in the verse. Allah then showed Sayyidah ‘Āsiyah عليها السلام her house in Paradise. and while looking at this vision her soul departed. When the rock fell on her body, it was lifeless. [Maḏharī].

وَصَدَّقَتْ بِكَلِمَاتِ رَبِّهَا وَكُتِبَ (and she testified to the truth of the words of her Lord and His books, and she was one of the devout....66:12) The phrase 'Words of her Lord' refers to scriptures that were revealed to the Holy Prophets. The word *kutub* [Books] refers to the well-known celestial books - *Injīl*, *Zabūr* and *Torah*. The concluding statement وَكَانَتْ مِنَ الْقَانِتِينَ (and she was one of the devout....66:12) describes the quality of Sayyidah Maryam عليها السلام. The word *qānitīn* is the plural of *qānit* and signifies 'devout and obedient'. Sayyidnā Abū Mūsā رضي الله عنه narrates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Whilst many men have attained spiritual perfection, among women only Sayyidah ‘Āsiyah, wife of Fir‘aun, and Sayyidah Maryam, daughter of ‘Imrān عليهما السلام, achieved this perfection." [Bukhārī and Muslim as quoted by Maḏharī]. Apparently, 'perfection' in this context refers to 'characteristics of Prophethood'. Despite being a woman, she achieved them. [Maḏharī]. And Allah knows best!

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah At-Taḥrīm
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Mulk

(The Kingdom)

This Sūrah is Makki, and it has 30 verses and 2 sections

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 30

تَبْرَكَ الَّذِي بِيَدِهِ الْمُلْكُ ۚ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١﴾ ۚ الَّذِي
 خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا ۗ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ
 الْغَفُورُ ﴿٢﴾ ۚ الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ طِبَاقًا ۚ مَا تَرَىٰ فِي خَلْقِ
 الرَّحْمَنِ مِنْ تَفَوُّتٍ ۖ فَارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ ۖ هَلْ تَرَىٰ مِنْ فُطُورٍ ﴿٣﴾ ۚ ثُمَّ
 ارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ كَرَّتَيْنِ يَنْقَلِبْ إِلَيْكَ الْبَصَرُ خَاسِئًا وَهُوَ حَسِيرٌ ﴿٤﴾ ۚ
 وَلَقَدْ زَيَّنَّا السَّمَاءَ الدُّنْيَا بِمَصَابِيحَ وَجَعَلْنَاهَا رُجُومًا لِلشَّيَاطِينِ
 وَأَعْتَدْنَا لَهُمْ عَذَابَ السَّعِيرِ ﴿٥﴾ ۚ وَلِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ عَذَابُ
 جَهَنَّمَ ۖ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿٦﴾ ۚ إِذَا أُلْقُوا فِيهَا سَمِعُوا لَهَا شَهِيقًا وَهِيَ
 تَفُورُ ﴿٧﴾ ۚ تَكَادُ تَمَيِّزُ مِنَ الْغَيْظِ ۖ كُلَّمَا أُلْقِيَ فِيهَا فَوْجٌ سَأَلَهُمْ
 خَزَنَتُهَا أَلَمْ يَأْتِكُمْ نَذِيرٌ ﴿٨﴾ ۚ قَالُوا بَلَىٰ قَدْ جَاءَنَا نَذِيرٌ ۖ فَكَذَّبْنَا
 وَقُلْنَا مَا نَزَّلَ اللَّهُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ ۖ إِنَّا أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ كَبِيرٍ ﴿٩﴾ ۚ وَقَالُوا
 لَوْ كُنَّا نَسْمَعُ أَوْ نَعْقِلُ مَا كُنَّا فِي أَصْحَابِ السَّعِيرِ ﴿١٠﴾ ۚ فَاعْتَرَفُوا
 بِذُنُوبِهِمْ ۖ فَنُفِخَ فِي سُوحُفٍّ لَّأَصْحَابِ السَّعِيرِ ﴿١١﴾ ۚ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ

بِالْعَيْبِ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرٌ كَبِيرٌ ﴿١٢﴾ وَأَسِرُوا قَوْلَكُمْ أَوِ اجْهَرُوا بِهِ ۖ
 إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ﴿١٣﴾ أَلَا يَعْلَمُ مَنْ خَلَقَ ۖ وَهُوَ اللَّطِيفُ
 الْخَبِيرُ ﴿١٤﴾ هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ ذَلُولًا فَامْشُوا فِي
 مَنَاكِبِهَا وَكُلُوا مِنْ رِزْقِهِ ۚ وَإِلَيْهِ النُّشُورُ ﴿١٥﴾ ءَأَمِنْتُمْ مَنْ فِي
 السَّمَاءِ أَنْ يَخْسِفَ بِكُمُ الْأَرْضَ فَإِذَا هِيَ تَمُورُ ﴿١٦﴾ أَمْ أَمِنْتُمْ مَنْ
 فِي السَّمَاءِ أَنْ يُرْسِلَ عَلَيْكُمْ حَاصِبًا ۖ فَسَتَعْلَمُونَ كَيْفَ نَذِيرِ
 ﴿١٧﴾ وَلَقَدْ كَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ نَكِيرِ ﴿١٨﴾ أَوَلَمْ
 يَرَوْا إِلَى الطَّيْرِ فَوْقَهُمْ صَفْتٍ وَيَقْبِضْنَ ۚ مَا يَمْسِكُهُنَّ إِلَّا الرَّحْمَنُ ۚ
 إِنَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ بَصِيرٌ ﴿١٩﴾ أَمِنْ هَذَا الَّذِي هُوَ جُنْدٌ لَكُمْ يَنْصَرُّكُمْ
 مِنْ دُونِ الرَّحْمَنِ ۚ إِنَّ الْكَافِرُونَ إِلَّا فِي غُرُورٍ ﴿٢٠﴾ أَمِنْ هَذَا الَّذِي
 يَرْزُقُكُمْ إِنْ أَمْسَكَ رِزْقَهُ بَلْ لَجُّوا فِي عُتُوٍّ وَنُفُورٍ ﴿٢١﴾ أَفَمَنْ
 يَمْشِي مُكِبًّا عَلَى وَجْهِهِ أَهْدَىٰ أَمَّنْ يَمْشِي سَوِيًّا عَلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ
 مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٢٢﴾ قُلْ هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْشَأَكُمْ وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ
 وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ ۚ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾ قُلْ هُوَ الَّذِي ذَرَأَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ
 وَإِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَىٰ هَذَا الْوَعْدُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ
 ﴿٢٥﴾ قُلْ إِنَّمَا الْعِلْمُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ ۖ وَإِنَّمَا أَنَا نَذِيرٌ مُبِينٌ ﴿٢٦﴾ فَلَمَّا رَأَوْهُ
 زُلْفَةً سَيِّئَتْ وُجُوهُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَقِيلَ هَذَا الَّذِي كُنْتُمْ بِهِ تَدْعُونَ
 ﴿٢٧﴾ قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَهْلَكْنِي اللَّهُ وَمَنْ مَعِيَ أَوْ رَحِمَنَا ۖ فَمَنْ يُجِيرُ
 الْكَافِرِينَ مِنْ عَذَابِ إِلِيمٍ ﴿٢٨﴾ قُلْ هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ أَمَّنَّا بِهِ وَعَلَيْهِ
 تَوَكَّلْنَا ۖ فَسَتَعْلَمُونَ مَنْ هُوَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ ﴿٢٩﴾ قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ
 أَصْبَحَ مَاؤُكُمْ غَوْرًا ۖ فَمَنْ يَأْتِيكُمْ بِمَاءٍ مَعِينٍ ﴿٣٠﴾

the whole universe), and He is powerful over every thing, [1] the One who created death and life, so that He may test you as to which of you is better in deeds. And He is the All-Mighty, the Most-Forgiving, [2] Who has created seven skies, one over the other. You will see nothing out of proportion in the creation of the Raḥmān (the All-Merciful). So, cast your eye again. Do you see any rifts? [3] Then cast your eye again and again, and the eye will come back to you abased, in a state of weariness. [4] And We have decorated the nearest sky with lamps, and have made them devices to stone the devils, and We have prepared for them the punishment of Hell. [5] And for those who disbelieve, there is the punishment of *Jahannam*, and it is an evil end. [6] When they will be thrown in it, they will hear a terrible sound from it, and it will be boiling, [7] seeming as if it will burst out of fury. Whenever a group is thrown into it, its keepers will say to them, "Had no warner come to you?" [8] They said, "Yes, a warner had come to us, but We had rejected, and said, 'Allah has not revealed any thing. You are only in great error'." [9] And they will say, "Had we been listening or understanding, we would not have been among the people of Hell." [10] Thus they will confess their sin. So, be the people of Hell away (from Allah's mercy). [11] Surely, for those who have awe of their Lord without seeing (Him), there is forgiveness and a big reward. [12] And whether you keep your talk secret or make it aloud, He knows well what lies in the hearts. [13] Is it (imaginable) that He who has created (them) will not have (such a) knowledge, while He is the Knower of the finest things, the All-Aware? [14] He is the One who has made the earth submissive for you, so walk on its shoulders, and eat out of His provision, and to Him will be the Resurrection. [15] Have you become fearless of Him who is in the sky if He makes you sink into the earth, and it starts trembling at once? [16] Or, have you become fearless of Him who is in the sky if He looses a violent wind with stones against you? So, you will soon come to know how was My warning! [17] And of course, those before them (also) rejected (the truth). So, how was My censure? [18]

Have they not looked to the birds above them spreading their wings, and (at times) they fold (them) in? No one holds them up except the Raḥmān (the All-Merciful). Surely He is watchful of every thing. [19] Now, who is

there to become a force for you to help you, except the Raḥmān? The disbelievers are in nothing but delusion. [20] Or, who is there to give you sustenance, if He withholds His sustenance? Still, they persist in rebellion and aversion. [21] Then, tell me whether the one who walks falling down (frequently) on his face is better guided or the one who walks on a straight path? [22]

Say, "He is the One who has originated you, and made for you the ears and the eyes and the hearts. How little you pay gratitude" [23] Say, "He is the One who has scattered you on the earth, and to Him you will be assembled." [24] And they say, "When will this promise (of the Day of Judgment) be fulfilled, if you are true?" [25] Say, "The knowledge (of that day) is only with Allah, and I am only a plain warner. [26] Then, once they will see it approaching, the faces of the disbelievers will be turned awkward, and it will be said, "This is what you were calling for!" [27] Say, "Tell me, if Allah destroys me and those who are with me (as you wish), or has mercy on us (as we wish), who can (in either case) save the disbelievers from a painful punishment?" [28] Say, "He is the Raḥmān; we have believed in Him, and in Him we placed our trust. So, you will soon come to know who is in an open error." [29] Say, "Tell me if your water were to vanish into the earth, who will bring you a flowing (stream) water? [30]

Commentary

The Virtues of Sūrah Al-Mulk

Prophetic Tradition has named this Sūrah as Wāqiyah (protector) and *Munjiyah* (saviour) as well. In a Tradition, the Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said:

هِيَ الْمَانِعَةُ الْمُنْجِيَةُ تَنْجِيهِ مَنْ عَذَابِ الْقَبْرِ

"It [the Sūrah] is the protector and saviour which will rescue and redeem him who recites it from the torment of the grave." [Transmitted by Tirmidhī who has graded it as 'ḥasan, gharīb' as quoted by Qurṭubī]

Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ reports that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

"It is my heart's desire that Sūrah Al-Mulk be in every believer's heart." [[Tha'labī]

Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ؓ narrates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ

has said:

"Verily, there is a Surah in the Book of Allah (Qur'an) containing thirty verses that will intercede on behalf of him who recites it until he is rescued from Hell and admitted to Paradise; and it is Sūrah Tabāarak." [Qurṭubī cites it from Tirmidhī].

تَبَرَّكَ الَّذِي بِيَدِهِ الْمُلْكُ ۚ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ (Glorious is the One in whose hand is the Kingdom [of the whole universe], and He is powerful over every thing...67:1). The word *Tabāraka* is derived from *barakah*, which literally means 'to grow' or 'increase'. When it is related to Allah, it signifies 'to be highest in all respects' and it conveys a meaning similar to *Allahu Akbar* 'Allah is the Highest'.

بِيَدِهِ الْمُلْكُ (in Whose hand is the Kingdom): The word *Yad* (hand) is attributed to Allah at many places in the Qur'ān, whereas He is beyond having a body, limbs or organs. As a result, the word must, of necessity, be taken as one of the *mutashābihāt*. We need to believe in its reality, but it is not possible for anyone to grasp its exact nature. It is improper to pursue this subject. The word *Mulk* (Kingdom) refers to the Kingdom of the whole universe, of the heavens and the earth and of the mortal world as well as of the Hereafter.

The verse under comment refers to four of the Divine attributes. Firstly, His existence; secondly, His comprehending all the attributes of perfection and being most Exalted; thirdly, His being the ruler of the heavens and earth; and fourthly, His having power over everything. The verses that follow are adduced as proofs of these attributes, which become clear by pondering over the creation of Allah. Therefore, the next verses refer to the various types of creation in the universe as proofs positive of the existence and Oneness of Allah and His all-encompassing knowledge and power. To begin with, reference is made to those proofs of the divine omnipotence that are available in human beings themselves who are the noblest creation in the universe. The words الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ (the One who created death and life) are meant for this purpose, (as will be explained shortly). Then, several verses (3 to 5) invite consideration to the creation of heavens to find proofs of Allah's omnipotence. Thereafter, verses 15 and 16 call our attention to the creation of the earth and its

benefits. Lastly, the creatures living in the heavenly atmosphere, that is, the birds are mentioned in verse 19.

In short, the basic subject of the Sūrah is to prove the existence of Allah and His perfect knowledge and power by inviting consideration to the marvels of this universe. However, as a subsidiary subject, some other realities are also mentioned like punishment for unbelievers and reward for believers.

The proofs of the divine knowledge and power found in the man himself are indicated in the following two words:

The Reality of Life and Death

خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ (...the One who created death and life...67:2) Out of the human conditions, only two phenomena, i.e. life and death are mentioned here, because they cover all of human conditions and actions of his entire life. The creation of 'life' is quite obvious, because life is a positive reality that can be the object of creation and bringing into existence. However, one may ask how 'death' can be 'created', while it is a negative concept that refers to a state of non-existence. In answer to this question, the leading commentators have come up with different explanations. The most plausible one is that 'death' is not a state of pure non-existence. It actually refers to the removal of soul from the body and its transfer from one place to another. Thus it is a positive phenomenon. Just as 'life' is a phenomenon that relates to a human body, 'death' too is a phenomenon that overtakes him. Sayyidnā 'Abdullah Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه and other leading commentators have mentioned that 'life' and 'death' are two corporal entities. 'Death' has the corporal shape of a ram, and 'life' that of a mare. This statement apparently interprets the authentic Tradition which states that when the inmates of Paradise will have entered Paradise, and the inmates of Hell will have entered Hell, death will be brought in the form of a ram and will be slaughtered near *Ṣirāt* (the Bridge) and it will be announced that there shall be no more death, and every one shall remain in the same state eternally as he or she will have attained. It may not necessarily be deduced from this Tradition that 'death' is a corporal entity in the mortal world also. There are many abstract conditions and actions in this world, which will assume concrete shapes and bodies in the Hereafter. This is verified by many authentic

Traditions. 'Death', which is a condition that overtake man, will also assume the shape of a concretised ram and will be slaughtered. [Qurṭubī]

Tafsīr Maẓharī has stated that although 'death' is a negative phenomenon, it is not pure non-existence. It is a state of non-existence for a thing that will at some time come into existence. All such non-existent things have shapes in the World of Similitudes *عالم المثل* [*Ālam-ul-Mithāl*] before coming into existence in the realm of creation *عالم الناسوت* [*Ālam-un-Nāsūt*]. Such non-existent things are called *الاعيان الثابتة* *al-A'yān-uth-Thābitah*. On account of these shapes, they do have some sort of existence even before they come into perceived existence. The existence of the World of Similitude [*Ālam-ul-Mithāl*] has been proved by the commentator through various *aḥādīth*. And Allah knows best!

Various Categories of Death and Life

It is stated in Tafsīr Maẓharī that Allah, with His Supreme Power and Consummate Wisdom, has divided His creation into different types. Each one is awarded 'life' befitting its type. The perfect and consummate life is awarded to man, which has been invested with the capability to recognise the Divine Being and His Attributes to a specific degree. It is on the basis of this recognition that he is made liable to carry out the sacred laws of Sharī'ah, which has been termed by the Qur'ān as a 'trust'. The heavens, the earth and the mountains feared to bear the burden of this trust but man, on account of his God-given capability, bore it. The antonym of this type of 'life' is the particular type of 'death', which is mentioned in the verse:

أَوْ مَن كَانَ مَيِّتًا فَأَحْيَيْنَاهُ

'Could it be that the one who was dead and We gave him life.
[6:122]'

In this verse, a non-believer is referred to as 'dead' and a believer as 'alive', because a non-believer has wasted his 'recognition of Allah' that was the essential characteristic of this type of life. In other types or species of creation, this quality of life is absent, but they do possess senses and capability of movement, which is the second category of life. The antonym of this degree of life is the 'death' referred to by the Qur'ān thus:

كُنْتُمْ أَمْوَاتًا فَأَحْيَاكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمِيتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُحْيِيكُمْ

'...you were lifeless and He gave you life, then He will make you die, then make you live again. [2:28]

In this context, 'life' refers to the ability to sense and move, and 'death' refers to its cessation. Some of the existent entities do not even possess the ability of sensing and movement. They merely possess the capability of growth as in the case of trees and vegetables. 'Life' is attributed to them as well in a limited sense (of growing), and as opposed to this, their 'death' is to lose the ability to grow. In this sense, the Holy Qur'an has used the words 'life' and 'death' in the following verse:

يُحْيِي الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا

'...how He brings the dead earth back to life. [30:50]'

These degrees of life are confined to humankind, the animal kingdom and the vegetable kingdom. No other species of creation possesses these qualities of life. Therefore, idols made of stones are referred to in the Qur'an as

أَمْوَاتٌ غَيْرُ أَحْيَاءٍ

'- dead, having no life__[16:21]

Nevertheless, inorganic matters too have a special (though very limited) element of 'life', which is necessary to the concept of existence. It is due to this element of 'life' that the Holy Qur'an says:

وَأَنْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا يُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِهِ

'...And there is not a single thing that does not extol His purity and praise. [17:44]

This analysis also explains why 'death' in the above verse has been mentioned before 'life'. The reason seems to be that death or non-existence is the state that comes before life. In other words, everything that came into existence was in the beginning in a state of lifelessness or non-existence, then it was awarded life.

Another explanation of mentioning 'death' before 'life' could be that the verse itself has declared that the purpose of creating human death and life is 'test',

لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا

'...so that He may test you as to which of you is better in deeds.

[2]

This test is more important and is of greater significance in 'death' rather than in 'life', because the one who thinks of death constantly will have the tendency to do more and more righteous deeds. No doubt, the element of test is available in 'life' too, because every step of one's life reminds him of his own inability and powerlessness as against Allah's absolute power, which creates in him the tendency to act righteously. The thought of death, however, is most effective in correcting one's conduct. Sayyidnā 'Ammār Ibn Yāsir رضي الله عنه reports a Prophetic Ḥadīth which says:

كفى بالموت واعظا وكفى باليقين غنى

"Death is sufficient as a preacher, and certitude is sufficient as a cause of being free from needs." [Transmitted by Tabārani]

This signifies that witnessing the death of friends and relatives is the most effective preacher. If that does not exert any influence on one, nothing else will. And he whom Allah has granted the wealth of faith and certitude is the most need-free person.

Sayyidnā Rabi' Ibn Anas رضي الله عنه has stated that the thought of 'death' makes man disgusted with this world and makes him inclined towards the Hereafter.

لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا (...so that He may test you as to which of you is better in deeds....67:2). It should be noted here that Allah did not say 'which of you does *more* deeds', but said 'which of you is *better* in deeds'. This indicates that it is not the quantity of actions that counts, but rather the quality of actions, that is, their being righteous and acceptable in the sight of Allah. That is why man's actions will not be counted on the Day of Judgement, but they will be weighed. In some instances, the weight of one action would be heavier than a thousand actions.

What is a Good Action?

Sayyidnā Ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنه said that once the Holy Prophet ﷺ recited verse [2] and when he reached the words " better in deeds", he stopped and explained that 'better in deeds' is the person who abstains most from

the things Allah has forbidden and is always ready to obey Him. [Qurṭubī]

فَارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ هَلْ تَرَى مِنْ فُتُورٍ (So, cast your eye again. Do you see any rifts?...67:3). Apparently, this verse shows that it is possible to see the nearest sky with the naked eyes. Sky, in this context, does not necessarily refer to the bluish atmosphere seen over the earth. In fact, the sky may be very much higher than this, and the bluish colour may be that of the upper atmosphere, as claimed by the scientists. This, on the other hand, does not necessarily imply that the sky cannot be seen at all. It is possible that the bluish atmosphere, on account of being transparent, may not block the vision of the actual sky. However, if it is proved by any evidence that the sky cannot be seen with eyes, then the 'casting ones eyes' in this verse would refer to 'intellectual observation'. [Bayān-ul-Qur'ān]

وَلَقَدْ زَيَّنَّا السَّمَاءَ الدُّنْيَا بِمَصَابِيحَ وَجَعَلْنَهَا رُجُومًا لِلشَّيْطَانِ (And We have decorated the nearest sky with lamps, and have made them devices to stone the devils, and We have prepared for them the punishment of Hell....67:5). The word '*maṣābīḥ*' (translated above as 'lamps') stands for 'stars'. The fact that the sky is decorated with stars does not necessarily imply that they should be studded with them inside or under the sky. The decoration is available also to the situation when the stars are far below the sky in space as modern research has proved it by observation. This is not contradictory to the classical interpretation.

The statement '[We] have made them [stars] devices to stone the devils' probably implies that some fiery matters originating from the stars are used to shoot at them, and the stars themselves remain intact in their position. Since this illuminated matter seems to the common people as 'falling stars'. [Qurṭubī]. This further shows that devils who attempt to eavesdrop on celestial conversations for information are driven away before they can reach the stars. [Qurṭubī]. Thus far evidence and proofs of Allah's consummate knowledge and power were adduced with reference to the various types of creation. In the verses that follow the subject of punishment for unbelievers and of reward for believers and the obedient is taken up, thus:

وَاللَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِهِمْ عَذَابُ جَهَنَّمَ (And for those who disbelieve, there is the punishment of *Jahannam* ...67:6). The subject runs through seven verses.

Thereafter, the subject of Divine knowledge and power is revisited.

هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ ذَلُولًا (He is the One who has made the earth submissive for you ...67:15) The word *dhalūl* signifies 'submissive'. When *dhalūl* is used for an animal, it means that it is not insolent when someone is riding it. The word *manākib* is the plural of *mankib*, which means 'shoulder', which in animals refer to the upper part of their front legs. Normally, this is not the part of the animals where a rider would sit to ride them. Their back or neck are involved in riding. But an animal that offers its shoulders as well to the riders is very obedient and submissive. Therefore, the verse says that Allah 'has made the earth submissive for you, so walk on its shoulders'. Allah has made the structure of earth such that it is not liquid like water so that it flows, nor is it like mud, mire or slime, because if the earth were to be in any of these states, it would not have been possible for man to live in it. Nor is it made hard like rocks or iron, for in that state it would not have been possible for him to plough the fields to sow his crops and derive various other types of benefit from the earth. Wells and rivers could not have been dug. It would not have been possible to dig trenches into the ground to lay foundations of huge buildings. With such well-balanced infrastructure, He granted him tranquillity that it is possible for buildings to stand on it and for people, moving on its surface, to avoid slipping.

وَكُلُوا مِنْ رِزْقِهِ (...and eat out of His provision ...67:15). After directing man to travel on earth, it is said 'eat out of His provision'. This probably indicates that commercial trips carried out for import and export are the doors for obtaining livelihood from Allah.

وَالْيَوْمِ النَّشُورِ (...and to Him is the Resurrection...67:15). This warning tells us that man is permitted to draw benefits of eating, drinking and living from the earth, but he is reminded at the same time not to be neglectful of death and life-after-death. Eventually, he will have to leave this world for the Hereafter. Whilst living on the earth, he must prepare for life-after-death. In this verse, man is warned that eventually he will return to Allah on the Day of Resurrection. The next verse warns that the Divine punishment can overtake him, even when living on the earth.

ءَأَمِنْتُمْ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاءِ أَنْ يَخِفَّتْ بِكُمْ الْأَرْضُ فَإِذَا هِيَ تَمُورُ (Have you become fearless of Him who is in the sky if He makes you sink into the earth, and it starts

trembling at once?...67:16). It means: Though Allah has granted the earth such a balanced infrastructure that man cannot go into it without digging, yet Allah has the power to make the earth swallow up all the communities living on its surface.

The next verse warns people of another type of punishment:

أَمْ أَمِنْتُمْ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاءِ أَنْ يُرْسِلَ عَلَيْكُمْ حَاصِبًا ۖ فَسَتَعْلَمُونَ كَيْفَ نَذِيرٍ (Or, have you become fearless of Him who is in the sky if He looses a violent wind with stones against you? So, you will soon come to know how was My warning! - 67:17). In other words, they at the moment feel secure that the Supreme Being in the heaven will not release against them a sudden squall of stones together with violent wind. Soon they will realise how true the Divine warning was, but by the time they realise its veracity it would be too late. Now that they are safe, sound and secure, it is the time for them to give it a thought.

The next verse refers to the former nations who denied and rejected the truth and how they were annihilated by Divine scourge. Every person needs to draw a lesson from the punishment meted out to them.

وَلَقَدْ كَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ نَكِيرٍ (And of course, those before them [also] rejected [the truth]. So, how was My censure?...67:18)

The next verse turns once again to the central theme of the Sūrah, that is, the description of various forms and functions of Allah's creation to prove His Oneness, His knowledge and power. Thus far human souls, forms and functions of the sky, the stars, the earth and so on were discussed. The next verse mentions birds that fly about in the atmosphere above us.

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا إِلَى الطَّيْرِ فَوْقَهُمْ صَفَّتٍ وَتَبَضَّنَ ۖ مَا يُمْسِكُهُنَّ إِلَّا الرَّحْمَنُ ۚ إِنَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ بَصِيرٌ (Have they not looked to the birds above them spreading their wings, and (at times) they fold (them) in? No one holds them up except the Raḥmān (the All-Merciful). Surely He is watchful of every thing...67:19)

This verse invites attention to the fact that the birds have weight, and in terms of the law of gravity, weighty bodies should fall down on the earth, if they are released from above. Normally, it is not possible for the air to hold them up. But Allah, through His consummate power, has created these birds in such a way that they can hold themselves up in the

air. Apparently, they have no intellect, but Allah has taught them the art to make the air carry their burden and to fly in it by manoeuvring their wings in such a way that at times they outspread them and at other times they fold them back. In this way they subjugate the air to their benefit. It is obvious that enabling air to hold them up, designing the wings of the birds on this particular shape and teaching them the art of controlling the air, all these functions were possible only by Allah's Supreme Creative Power.

Thus far the conditions of various categories and species of existent beings were analysed and considered in order to provide evidence of Divine existence, His Oneness, His unique knowledge and power. If a fair-minded person were to consider them carefully, he will have no choice but to believe in Allah. From the next verse up to the end of the Surah, the non-believers and the unrighteous people of all categories are warned of the Divine scourge. First, they are admonished that if Allah decides to punish any nation, there is no power in the world that can stop Him. There is no fighting force or army of soldiers that can come to the support of the disbelievers and save them. Thus the next verse says:

أَمَّنْ هَذَا الَّذِي هُوَ جُنْدٌ لَّكُمْ يَنْصُرُكُمْ مِّنْ دُونِ الرَّحْمَنِ ط إِنَّ الْكَافِرُونَ إِلَّا فِي غُرُورٍ (Now, who is there to become a force for you to help you, except the Raḥmān? The disbelievers are in nothing but delusion...67:20).

Then the next verse warns the disbelievers that the sustenance Allah grants them by sending down rain from the clouds and by growing plants/ vegetation in the earth is not their personal property. It is a gift and bounty from Allah. If He wills, He can withhold it. This is the import of the following verse:

أَمَّنْ هَذَا الَّذِي يَرْزُقُكُمْ إِنْ أَمْسَكَ رِزْقَهُ بَلْ لَّجُوا فِي عُتُوٍّ وَنُفُورٍ (Or, who is there to give you sustenance, if He withholds His sustenance? Still, they persist in rebellion and aversion. [67:21]).

The last sentence of the verse purports to express the unbelievers' sad state of affairs. They neither consider the Signs of Allah nor do they pay heed to other people's good advice. They obstinately persist in insolence and deviation from the Truth.

Next, the conditions of non-believers and believers on the field of

Resurrection are described. It is mentioned that the unbelievers will be brought to the field of Resurrection, crawling on their faces instead of walking on their feet. Bukhārī and Muslim record on the authority of Sayyidnā Anas رضي الله عنه that the noble Companions asked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ: "How will the non-believers walk on their faces on the Day of Resurrection?" The Messenger of Allah ﷺ replied: "Is Allah who made them walk on their feet not powerful enough to make them walk on their faces and their heads?" The following verse depicts the scene of such crawling:

أَفَمَنْ يَمْشِي مُكِبًّا عَلَى وَجْهِهِ أَهْدَىٰ أَمَّنْ يَمْشِي سَوِيًّا عَلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ (Then, tell me whether the one who walks falling down [frequently] on his face is better guided or the one who walks on a straight path...67:22).

The phrase 'the one who walks on a straight path' refers to the believer who is rightly guided. The next verse describes the manifestation of Divine power and wisdom in the creation of man, thus:

قُلْ هُوَ الَّذِي أَنشَأَكُمْ وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ ط قَلِيلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ (Say, "He is the One who has originated you, and made for you the ears and the eyes and the hearts. How little you pay gratitude"...67:23).

Specifying ears, eyes and Heart

Of all the human sense organs, only three are mentioned here on which depends knowledge and perception of the external world. Philosophers have identified five sources of knowledge and perception that are called 'five senses': to see, hear, smell, taste or feel something. Allah has equipped man with 'nose' to smell, with 'tongue' to taste, with 'ears' to hear and with 'eyes' to see; Allah has spread 'skin' throughout man's body to feel. But out of the five physical senses, only two have been mentioned, namely, ears and eyes, because man receives a very limited range of knowledge by smelling, tasting and feeling. Man depends for information largely on hearing and seeing. Of the two organs, his sense of hearing is mentioned first, because a careful analysis shows that most of the information gathered in human life is through hearing, not so much by seeing. The third organ mentioned specifically is the 'heart', because that is the centre of knowledge. Knowledge received through hearing and seeing depends on the human 'heart', unlike the theory of the philosophers and scientists who believe that the centre of knowledge is the

human 'brain'.

After this, the non-believers are threatened with punishment. Towards the end of the Sūrah, a statement is once again repeated to remind them which purports to say: 'O you who live on the earth, dig wells and drink water from it to quench your thirst and grow plants and vegetation, do not forget that none of these things is your personal property. They are a Divine gift. He sent down water, and loaded it in the form of ice and reserved it on the peaks of mountains, so that it may not putrefy. Then He caused the congealed water to melt gradually and allow it to seep or soak into the earth through the pores or small interstices of the mountains and allowed a network of melted water to spread throughout the earth without any pipeline. Whenever man requires, he could dig a few meters deep into the earth from its upper surface to obtain water. This is a Divine gift. If He wills, He could send the water down into the depths of the earth, and it would not be accessible to anyone. This is the import of the following verse.

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَصْبَحَ مَاؤُكُمْ غَوْرًا فَمَنْ يَأْتِيكُمْ بِمَاءٍ مَعِينٍ (Say, "Tell me, Should your water vanish into the earth, who will bring you a flowing [stream] water?"... (67:30).

In other words, if all the water, which people draw from the wells easily, were to disappear into the depths of the earth, do they have any power through which they will be able to obtain pure running water? Obviously, the answer is negative.

It is recorded in a Tradition that when a person recites this verse, he should say

اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ "Allah, the Lord of the worlds" That is, it is Allah alone who can bring it back to us. None of us has the power.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Mulk
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Qalam

(The Pen)

This Sūrah is Makki. It contains 52 verses and 2 sections

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 52

نَ وَالْقَلَمِ وَمَا يَسْطُرُونَ ﴿١﴾ مَا أَنْتَ بِمُجْنُونٍ ﴿٢﴾
 وَإِنَّ لَكَ لَأَجْرًا غَيْرَ مَمْنُونٍ ﴿٣﴾ وَأَنْتَ لَعَلَى خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿٤﴾
 فَسَتُبْصِرُ وَيُبْصِرُونَ ﴿٥﴾ بِأَيْسِكُمُ الْمَفْتُونُ ﴿٦﴾ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ
 بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ ۖ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ ﴿٧﴾ فَلَا تُطِعِ
 الْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٨﴾ وَذُوا لَوْ تَذَهْنُ فَيَذَهْنُونَ ﴿٩﴾ وَلَا تُطِعْ كُلَّ
 حَلَّافٍ مَهِينٍ ﴿١٠﴾ هَمَّازٍ مَشَّاءٍ بِنَمِيمٍ ﴿١١﴾ مَنَّاعٍ لِلْخَيْرِ مُعْتَدٍ
 أَثِيمٍ ﴿١٢﴾ عُتْلٍ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ زَنِيمٍ ﴿١٣﴾ أَنْ كَانَ ذَا مَالٍ وَنَدِينٍ ﴿١٤﴾
 إِذَا تَتَلَّى عَلَيْهِ آيُنَا قَالَ أَسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿١٥﴾ سَنَسِمْهُ عَلَى
 الْخُرْطُومِ ﴿١٦﴾ إِنَّا بَلَوْنَهُمْ كَمَا بَلَوْنَا أَصْحَابَ الْجَنَّةِ ۖ إِذْ أَقْسَمُوا
 لَيَصْرِمُنَّهَا مُصْبِحِينَ ﴿١٧﴾ وَلَا يَسْتَنْوُونَ ﴿١٨﴾ فَطَافَ عَلَيْهَا
 طَائِفٌ مِّنْ رَبِّكَ وَهُمْ نَائِمُونَ ﴿١٩﴾ فَأَصْبَحَتْ كَالصَّرِيمِ ﴿٢٠﴾
 فَتَنَادُوا مُصْبِحِينَ ﴿٢١﴾ أَنْ اغْدُوا عَلَىٰ حَرْثِكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ
 ﴿٢٢﴾ فَانْطَلَقُوا وَهُمْ يَتَخَفَتُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾ أَنْ لَا يَدْخُلْنَهَا الْيَوْمَ عَلَيْكُمْ

مَسْكِينٌ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَعَدُّوا عَلَىٰ حَرْدٍ قَدْرَيْنَ ﴿٢٥﴾ فَلَمَّا رَأَوْهَا قَالُوا إِنَّا
لَضَالُّونَ ﴿٢٦﴾ بَلْ نَحْنُ مَحْرُومُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾ قَالَ أَوْسَطُهُمْ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ
لَكُمْ لَوْلَا تُسَبِّحُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾ قَالُوا سُبحَنَ رَبِّنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا ظَالِمِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾
فَاقْبَلْ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ يَتَلَوْمُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾ قَالُوا يَؤْيَلْنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا
ظَالِمِينَ ﴿٣١﴾ عَسَىٰ رَبُّنَا أَنْ يُبَدِّلَنَا خَيْرًا مِّنْهَا إِنَّا إِلَىٰ رَبِّنَا رَاغِبُونَ
﴿٣٢﴾ كَذَلِكَ الْعَذَابُ ۚ وَلَعَذَابُ الْآخِرَةِ أَكْبَرُ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ
﴿٣٣﴾ إِنَّ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ جَنَّاتٍ النَّعِيمِ ﴿٣٤﴾ أَفَنَجْعَلُ
الْمُسْلِمِينَ كَالْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿٣٥﴾ مَا لَكُمْ تَكْفُرًا ۖ كَيْفَ تَحْكُمُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾ أَمْ
لَكُمْ كِتَابٌ فِيهِ تَدْرُسُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾ إِنَّ لَكُمْ فِيهِ لَمَا تَخَيَّرُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾ أَمْ
لَكُمْ آيْمَانٌ عَلَيْنَا بَالِغَةٌ إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ الْقِيَمَةِ ۚ إِنَّ لَكُمْ لَمَا تَحْكُمُونَ
﴿٣٩﴾ سَلِّمُوا إِلَيْهِمْ بِذَلِكَ زَعِيمٌ ﴿٤٠﴾ أَمْ لَهُمْ شُرَكَاءُ ۚ فَلْيَأْتُوا
بِشُرَكَائِهِمْ إِنْ كَانُوا صَادِقِينَ ﴿٤١﴾ يَوْمَ يُكْشَفُ عَنْ سَاقٍ
وَيُذْعَنُ إِلَى السُّجُودِ فَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾ خَاشِعَةً أَبْصَارُهُمْ
تَرْهَقُهُمْ ذِلَّةٌ ۚ وَقَدْ كَانُوا يُدْعَوْنَ إِلَى السُّجُودِ وَهُمْ سَلِيمُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾
فَذَرْنِي وَمَنْ يُكَذِّبُ بِهَذَا الْحَدِيثِ ۚ سَنَسْتَدْرِجُهُمْ مِّنْ حَيْثُ
لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾ وَأُمْلِي لَهُمْ ۚ إِنَّ كَيْدِي مَتِينٌ ﴿٤٥﴾ أَمْ تَسْأَلُهُمْ
أَجْرًا فَهُمْ مِّنْ مَّغْرَمٍ مُّثْقَلُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾ أَمْ عِنْدَهُمُ الْعِيبُ فَهُمْ يَكْتُمُونَ
﴿٤٧﴾ فَاصْبِرْ لِحُكْمِ رَبِّكَ وَلَا تَكُنْ كَصَاحِبِ الْحُوتِ إِذْ نَادَىٰ
وَهُوَ مَكْظُومٌ ﴿٤٨﴾ لَوْلَا أَنْ تَدَارَكَهُ نِعْمَةٌ مِّنْ رَبِّهِ لَنُبِذَ بِالْعَرَاءِ وَهُوَ
مَذْمُومٌ ﴿٤٩﴾ فَاجْتَبِهْ رَبُّهُ فَجَعَلَهُ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٥٠﴾ وَإِنْ يَكَادُ
الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَيُزْلِقُونَكَ بِأَبْصَارِهِمْ لَمَّا سَمِعُوا الذِّكْرَ وَيَقُولُونَ إِنَّهُ
لَمَجْنُونٌ ﴿٥١﴾ وَمَا هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ لِلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٥٢﴾

Nūn, by the pen and what they write, [1] with the grace of your Lord, you are not insane. [2] And you will definitely have a reward that will never end. [3] And you are surely on exalted quality of character. [4] So, you will see, and they will see [5] which of you is demented. [6] Surely your Lord knows best who has strayed from his way, and He is well-aware of those who are on the right path. [7] So, do not obey those who reject (the true faith.) [8] They wish that you become flexible (in your faith), and they will become flexible (in their hostile attitude.) [9] And do not obey any contemptible one who swears much, [10] a slanderer who goes about with calumnies, [11] one who prevents good, (and who is) transgressor, sinful, [12] harsh, (and) after all that, notorious, [13] (do not obey such a person merely) because he is a man of wealth and sons. [14] When Our verses are recited to him, he says, "(These are) the tales of the ancient." [15] We will soon brand him on the snout. [16] We have tested them as We had tested the Owners of the Garden, when they had sworn an oath that they would pluck its fruits on the next morning, [17] and did not make any exception (by saying '*insha'allah*'). [18] Then, there whirled around it a whirl (of calamity) from your Lord, while they were asleep. [19] Thus, on the next morning, it was like a harvested field. [20] So, they called out each other as the morning broke, [21] saying, "Set out early, if you are going to pluck (the fruits)." [22] So they set out while they were whispering to each other, [23] saying, "Let no poor man enter into it upon you today." [24] And in early hours they rushed quickly, while they were (assuming themselves) powerful (to pluck the fruits and prevent the poor.) [25] But when they saw it (the place of the ruined garden), they said, "We have missed the way." [26] (Then, once they realized that the garden is the same, but it has been destroyed, they said,) "No, but we are deprived (of the fruits)." [27] Said he who was the best among them, "Did I not say to you, 'Why do you not pronounce *tasbīḥ* (Allah's purity)?" [28] They said, "We pronounce the purity of our Lord. No doubt, we were wrongdoers." [29] Then, (at the beginning,) they started reproaching one another; [30] (and at last,) they said, "Woe to us! In fact, we (all) were outrageous. [31] We hope that our Lord will give us in exchange something better than this. Truly we turn to Allah." [32]

In this way the punishment comes. And, of course, the

punishment of the Hereafter is even greater, if they but realize! [33] Surely, for the God-fearing are the gardens of bliss. [34] Otherwise, shall We make the obedient like the sinners? [35] What has happened to you? How do you judge? [36] Do you have a book in which you read [37] that for you there is what you choose? [38] Or do you have oaths sworn by Us, remaining effective up to the Day of Judgment, that you will get what you decide? [39] Ask them which of them stands surety for that. [40] Or do they have associate-gods (who have guaranteed safety for them? Then, let them bring their associate-gods, if they are true, [41] on the Day when the Shin will be exposed,¹ and they will be called upon to prostrate themselves, but they will not be able to. [42] With their eyes downcast, they will be enveloped by ignominy. And they used to be called upon to prostrate when they were healthy (but they did not.) [43]

So, leave Me alone with those who reject this discourse. We will draw them on little by little (towards Hell) from a way they do not know. [44] And I give them respite. Indeed, My plan is firm. [45] Is it that you ask them for a fee, due to which they are burdened with debt? [46] Or do they have the (knowledge of the) Unseen, and they write it down? [47]

So, remain patient with your Lord's judgment, and be not like the Man of the Fish,² he cried out while he was

- (1). This is the literal translation of the Qur'anic phrase used here. The exegetes have explained it in two different ways. Some of them are of the view that, according to the Arabic usage, 'exposure of the shin' is an idiomatic expression for a severe state of distress. When a person is confronted with such a distress, he normally lays his shins bare. Therefore, exposure of the shin has been taken as indicative of such a state. Given this interpretation, the verse means that on the day when the disbelievers will face the severe distress, they will be called upon to prostrate themselves, but they will not be able to do so, because their backs will be made flat, with no elasticity to bow down. Some other commentators, however, take the phrase in its literal sense. They say that the 'Shin' referred to here is the Shin of Allah Ta'ala, which is one of His attributes, the exact nature of which is neither known to anybody, nor discoverable in this world. (But obviously, it is not like the shins of human beings). According to this interpretation, the verse means that, at some stage on the Day of Judgment, Allah Ta'ala will expose this attribute of His which is called 'Shin', and they will be called upon to prostrate before it. This interpretation is supported by an authentic *hadith* reported by Bukhari and Muslim.
- (2). It refers to Sayyidnā Yūnus عليه السلام who was devoured by a fish after he left his nation. Full description of the event has been given in Surah Yūnus.

in anguish. [48] Had not a favour from His Lord come to his help, he would have been cast in the wilderness in a reproachable state. ³ [49] Then his Lord chose him, and made him one of the righteous. [50]

And indeed the disbelievers seem to trip you up with their glances ⁴ when they hear the Reminder, and say, "He is a madman indeed." [51] And it is nothing else but a Reminder for all the worlds. [52]

Commentary

Linkage of Sūrahs

The preceding Sūrah dealt with the existence of Allah, His Oneness, and His knowledge and power, and adduced, as a positive proof of these attributes, was the fact that Allah is the Creator of death and life, and of the entire universe through whose component parts there runs the beautiful order that pervades the cosmos. He has created man to serve a sublime object and to achieve a noble goal. But man in his ingratitude has always rejected the Divine Message and consequently has been incurring Divine scourge. This is mentioned, in Sūrah Al-Mulk, with particular reference to the pagans of Makkah. The present Sūrah deals with the truth of the Holy Prophet's ﷺ claim, and gives sound and solid proof of it. Thus it rebuts the criticisms and taunts of the pagans against the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Their first criticism was that he is [God forbid!] insane whereas he was perfectly sane person, an embodiment of knowledge and a paragon of virtues. Another reason why they probably called him insane is that whenever an installment of revelation descended upon the Holy Prophet ﷺ, a physical change came over him. For instance the

- (3). According to the explanation given to this verse by Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanawi, 'Favour from His Lord' means the acceptance of his repentance, and 'wilderness' refers to the place where he was thrown by the fish. If this verse is read in juxtaposition with Verses 143,144 of Sūrah As-Şaffāt, the sense appears to be that if Yūnus ؑ had not offered *tasbiḥ* and *taubah*, he would have remained in the belly of the fish for good, and if he had repented, but was not favoured by Allah with the acceptance of his *taubah*, he would have been cast by the fish into the wilderness, due to his repentance, but in a reproachable state. However, since Allah favoured him with accepting his *taubah*, he was no more reproachable. Some other scholars, however, suggest that 'wilderness' in this verse refers to the plain of Ḥashr, and the verse means that if Allah had not accepted his *taubah*, he would have been cast into the plain of Ḥashr in a reproachable state.
- (4). It means that they glare at you with such a hatred and anger as if they were to make you slip from your standpoint due to their aversion.

colour of his face would change and become red, or he would sometimes snore or he would at other times appear to be in grief, or there were times when he would hang his head down. When any of these states was over, he would recite the revealed verses to the people. This matter was beyond the understanding and perception of the pagans. Therefore, they regarded this experience of receiving revelation as insanity. Or they called him insane presumably because he put forward to his people and to the whole world that there is no object worthy of worship except Allah. He put it to them that their self-carved idols cannot be gods because they are insensate and lacking knowledge; and they lack the ability to benefit or harm anyone. His voice of Truth sounded alone yet with this lone voice of Truth without any apparent means and support, he stood unwaveringly against the whole world. People without any insight or foresight did not think that it was possible for him to achieve his goal and they called it insanity. Some called him insane for the sake of calling him insane, without any reason. Having no excuse to refute the teachings of Allah's Messenger, all the pagans could do was to dub him insane. The initial verses of Sūrah Al-Qalam refute under emphatic oath their false charges.

ن وَالْقَلَمِ وَمَا يَسْطُرُونَ. مَا أَنتَ بِمَجْنُونٍ (Nūn, by the pen and what they write, with the grace of your Lord, you are not insane....68:2). The letter Nūn is one of the isolated letters that have been revealed at the beginning of many Sūrahs. They are the secret signs and symbols and mysteries of Allah. Allah alone knows their hidden meaning, or Allah made their mysterious meanings known to His Messenger. The Ummah is not permitted to investigate the hidden meaning of such isolated letters.

Pen and its Significance

In the phrase *wal-qalami*, the *waw* is the particle of oath [translated here as 'by the pen']. 'Qalam' refers to 'pen', and there are three types of pen: [1] the pen of destinies; [2] the pen of angels; and [3] the pen of human beings. It could refer to any or all of these types of pen. A pen is an object that is used for writing anything [as is the view of Abū Ḥatīm Al-Bustī]. According to Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ, it specifically refers to the pen of destinies. Sayyidnā 'Ubadah Ibn Ṣāmit ؓ narrates regarding the pen of destinies that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "The first thing Allah created was the pen, and He told it to write, and when it asked Him what it should write, He told it to write what was predestined, so it wrote

what would take place to all eternity." [Transmitted by At-Tirmidhī, saying that this is a Tradition whose chain of narrators is *gharīb*]. Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Umar رضي الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Allah recorded the destiny of all creatures 50000 years before creating the heavens and the earth." [Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim]. Qatādah رحمه الله تعالى says that pen is a great gift of Allah that He has endowed upon His servants. Some scholars say that Allah first created the pen, and that was the pen of decrees which recorded the destinies of the entire universe and all the creatures. Then He created the second pen that is used by the inhabitants of the earth. The second pen is referred to in Sūrah Iqra’ in verse [96:4], thus: **عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ** '{He who} taught by the pen'. And Allah knows best!

If *qalam* 'pen' in the verse under comment refers to the pen of destinies, its greatness and its superiority over everything is quite obvious and swearing by it is quite understandable. If it is taken to refer to all pens in general, including the pen of destinies, the pen of angels, and also the pen of human beings, swearing an oath by it is apt because all great tasks are accomplished by pen. In the conquests of territories, pen play a mighty role: 'The pen is mightier than the sword' goes the famous saying. Abū Ḥatīm Al-Bustī has encapsulated this idea in two short verses:

إذا أقسم الابطال يوما بسيفهم وَعَدُّوه مِمَّا يَكْسِبُ الْمَجْدَ وَالْكَرَمَ

When the brave people swear by their sword some day,
And count it among things that give honour and veneration to men,

كفى قلم الكتاب عزًّا ورفعة.....مدى الدهر إنَّ الله أقسم بالقلم

The writers' pen is sufficient for their honour and superiority
For all times to come, because Allah has sworn oath by the pen

In any case, it is immaterial whether the pen in the verse refers to the pen of destinies or it refers to the pen of creation in general. Then it swears an oath by **مَا يَسْطُرُونَ** 'what they write [1]'.

In other words, swearing an oath by what the pens have written or what they will record in the future, Allah refutes the unbelievers' false charge of madness that they made against the Holy Prophet ﷺ, thus:

مَا أَنْتَ بِمَجْنُونٌ (with the grace of your Lord, you are not insane....68:2). The verse contains the phrase **بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّكَ** (with the grace of your Lord....68:2). It states not only the claim, but also evidence to support

and substantiate the statement of claim. [See special note below.] Man is required to turn the pages of history, and he will realize that a person as great as the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, upon whom Allah has conferred great blessings and grace, cannot be insane. Calling such a sane person insane is itself insanity

Special Note

Scholars have explained the Qur'ānic concept of 'oath': Wherever Allah has sworn an oath by an object or a phenomenon, its subject has been cited as evidence or testimony to support and substantiate the claim. Here the phrase مَا يَسْطُرُونَ 'what they write [1]'. Is the proof of the claim, that is, world history has been cited as testimony for critics to look into the pages of history, if they can ever find a person of such lofty calibre as the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, with high morals insane. He takes care of other people's sanity. The next verse reinforces the subject.

وَأَنَّ لَكَ لَآجِرًا غَيْرَ مَمْنُونٍ (And you will definitely have a reward that will never end....68:3). The verse exposes the absurdity of the charge of madness. It purports to say that the actions of a madman produce no useful result, but the Holy Prophet ﷺ will eminently succeed in fulfilling the object of his Divine mission, and in bringing about a wonderful revolution in the lives of his degenerate and demented people. This is the significance of the words in the verse 'and for you is a reward that will never end.' No insane person is ever rewarded for his actions. The next verse constitutes a further eloquent comment on the charge of insanity imputed to the Holy Prophet ﷺ, thus:

وَأَنَّكَ لَْعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ (And you are surely on exalted quality of character.....68:4). In this verse, the demented people are invited to think carefully about the lofty morals of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

The Holy Prophet's ﷺ Exalted Quality of Character

Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ has said that 'exalted quality of character' signifies a 'great religion, and it is Islam, a religion dearest to Allah'. Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها was asked about the Holy Prophet's ﷺ character. She replied: "The Holy Prophet's ﷺ character was the Qur'ān itself". In other words, he is the living example of the Qur'ān that teaches high morals. Sayyidnā 'Alī ؓ said that 'exalted quality of character' signifies the 'good manners which the Qur'ān has taught'. All these

interpretations have almost the same significance. That is to say, not only that the Holy Prophet ﷺ is not an insane person, but he is the sublime and noblest of men possessing in full measure all the moral excellence that combine to make their possessor a perfect image of his Creator. The Holy Prophet's ﷺ humanity was of the most perfect character. He was a complete embodiment of all good moral qualities that a man is capable of possessing. The Holy Prophet ﷺ himself said:

بعثت لاتمم مكارم الاخلاق

"I have only been sent to perfect noble character/conduct." [Abū Ḥayyān].

Sayyidnā Anas ؓ said:

"I served Allah's Messenger for ten years, and he never said a word of displeasure to me, nor did he ever say to me concerning something I had done: 'Why did you do that?' And he never said to me concerning what I had not done: 'Why did you not do this?'" [Bukhārī and Muslim].

Obviously, a ten-year period is a long time during which some unpleasant or objectionable thing might have happened.

Sayyidnā Anas ؓ said:

"As a result of the Holy Prophet's ﷺ noble character, any slave-girl of Madīnah would hold his hand and take him wherever she would like to."

Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها said: "Allah's Messenger never struck anyone with his hands except when he was fighting in *jihād* in the cause of Allah." It is confirmed that when he fought *jihād* in the cause of Allah, he killed unbelievers. Otherwise he did not hit any servant, nor any woman. He would never take revenge for any harm or mistake done. He would only implement *Shar'ī* punishment on those who violated Allah's laws. [Transmitted by Muslim].

Sayyidnā Jābir ؓ says that the Messenger of Allah was never asked for anything for which he said 'No'. [Bukhārī and Muslim].

Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها said:

"Allah's Messenger was never vulgar, never pretended to be vulgar and he never shouted in the marketplaces. He never

responded to evil by evil, but always pardoned and overlooked."

Sayyidnā Abū-ḡ-Dardā' ؓ narrates that Allah's Messenger ﷺ said:

"Noble character will be the heaviest thing on a Muslim's scale of good deeds on the Day of Resurrection. Allah detests the rude and foul-mouthed person." [Transmitted by Tirmidhī, grading it as a Tradition which is 'ḡasan'].

Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها narrates that Allah's Messenger ﷺ said:

"Indeed by virtue of good character, a believer can attain the status of votaries who spend their nights in worship and their days in fasting." [Abū Dāwūd].

Sayyidnā Mu'ādh Ibn Jabal ؓ narrates that when he placed his foot into the stirrup of his mount, as he was departing for Yemen as the governor of that province, Allah's Messenger ﷺ advised him:

يَا مَعَاذَ أَحْسَنُ خُلُقِكَ لِلنَّاسِ

"O Mu'ādh, display your best character with people."
[Transmitted by Mālik].

All narratives cited here have been adopted from Tafsīr Maḡharī.

فَسَتُبْصِرُ وَيُبْصِرُونَ. بِآيِكُمْ الْمَفْتُونُ (So, you will see, and they will see which of you is demented....68:5-6). The word *maftūn*, in this context, means 'demented'. In the preceding verses, the Holy Prophet ﷺ was accused of being an insane and demented. This verse turns tables upon the accusers of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and making a prophecy, tells them in challenging words that time will show whether it was he or they who suffered from insanity, or whether his claim to be Allah's Messenger was the outpouring of heated brain, or whether they themselves were so demented as not to read the signs of time, and thus refuse to believe in him. These were the unfortunate, wretched ones who did not see the light of Truth and were thus disgraced and defeated in this world. But, on the other hand, there were thousands of other lucky ones who, at first did not see the light of Truth and denounced him as demented, soon saw the light and embraced the Faith of Islam. They took the love and obedience of the Holy Prophet ﷺ as the capital asset of success, prosperity and happiness.

فَلَا تُطِيعِ الْمُكَذِّبِينَ. وَدُّوا لَوْ تَدَّهِنُ فَيَدْهِنُونَ (So, do not obey those who reject [the true faith]. They wish that you become flexible [in your faith], and they

will become flexible [in their hostile attitude.]...68:8-9]. The interpretation of this verse as adopted in this translation is based on the interpretation of Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه as reported by Qurṭubī.

Ruling

This verse indicates that any such compromise with the unbelievers is tantamount to *mudāhanah fid-dīn*, flexibility in religion, and this is forbidden. [Maḏharī]. Such a pact of leniency in matters of religion is not permissible, unless compelled by necessity.

وَلَا تُطِيعُ كُلَّ حَلَّافٍ مَّهِينٍ ﴿١٠﴾ هَمَّازٍ مَّشَاءٍ بِنَمِيمٍ ﴿١١﴾ مَنَاعٌ لِلْخَيْرِ مُعْتَدٍ أَلِيمٍ ﴿١٢﴾ عُتْلٍ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ زَنِيمٍ ﴿١٣﴾

(And do not obey any contemptible one who swears much, a slanderer who goes about with calumnies, one who prevents good, [and who is] transgressor, sinful, harsh, [and] after all that, notorious,...68:10-13)

The word *zanīm* refers to 'a person whose legitimate birth from a father is not proved'. The person referred to in this verse was of doubtful birth or his lineage was uncertain.

The preceding verse prohibited any compromise with the unbelievers in general in matters of religion. The current verse prohibits specifically yielding to such mean leader of falsehood as Walīd Ibn Mughīrah, who possessed the base characteristics as listed in verses [10] to [13], the worst mischief-maker. [As transmitted by Ibn Jarīr on the authority of Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه. Having described this person's bad manners and his arrogance in several verses that follow, verse [16] says:

سَنَسِمْهُ عَلَى الْخُرْطُومِ (We will soon brand him on the snout...68:16). That is, as, disbelievers, out of pride and false sense of power rejected the Divine Message in this world, Allah will disgrace and humiliate them on the Day of Resurrection so that the earlier and later generations will be able to see it. His nose has been described by way of reproach as *khurṭūm* (snout). This refers specifically to the long nose of a pig or a trunk of an elephant.

إِنَّا بَلَوْنَهُمْ كَمَا بَلَوْنَا أَصْحَابَ الْجَنَّةِ (We have tested them as We had tested the Owners of the Garden....68:17). The preceding verses rebutted the criticisms of pagan Arabs levelled against Allah's Messenger ﷺ and gave reasons why the charges are not only unfounded, but also absurd. The

present set of verses mentions a story of the past and the unbelievers of Makkah are threatened with punishment. 'Testing them' could refer to the forthcoming story, in which the owners of a garden were blessed with Divine favours, but they behaved ungratefully. As a result, a punishment came upon them and the favours were destroyed. The greatest Divine favour upon the Makkans was the advent of the Holy Messenger ﷺ. Besides, their businesses flourished and they prospered. This was a test for them to see whether they would behave gratefully to Allah and believe in Him and in His Messenger ﷺ, or whether they would obstinately persist in disbelief. In the other case, they should draw lessons from the story of the owners of the orchard, lest they be visited by a similar punishment on account of ingratitude. This interpretation would apply even in the case where these verses are taken as Makkī, but most commentators take them to be Madanī. The 'test' referred to here is the terrible famine that held Makkah in its grip, as a result of the Holy Prophet's ﷺ prayer against them, for several years during which time people died of hunger and starvation, they were forced to eat carrion and leaves of trees till the Makkans begged the Holy Prophet ﷺ to pray for their deliverance from the scourge. This incident took place after the migration.

The Story of the Owners of a Garden

Some elders, such as Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ, mentioned that this orchard was in Yemen. According to one version of Sayyidnā Sa'īd Ibn Jubair's narration, it was about six miles away from Ṣan'ā', the famous capital city of Yemen. Other scholars think that it was in Ethiopia [formerly known as Abyssinia] [Ibn Kathīr]. They were from amongst the People of the Book. This incident took place a while after the Ascension of Sayyidnā 'Isā ؑ. [Qurṭubī].

They are referred to as the 'Owners of the Garden' in the above verse. The description of the story given in the verses indicates that they did not only have a garden, but they also had large tracts of land which they cultivated and had fields of crops. Possibly, side by side with the orchard there were tracts of cultivated land and fields of crops in between the trees. However, they were called the owners of the garden on account of the popularity of the garden. The incident is reported according to the narration of Muḥammad Ibn Marwān on the authority of Sayyidnā Ibn

‘Abbās عليه السلام as follows: There was a garden about two *farsakhs* (six miles) away from Ṣan‘ā’ of Yemen. Its name was *Ḍarawān*. This garden was set up by a pious and righteous person. His practice was to pick the fruits or harvest the crops with sickle. He would give some of the crop to the poor and indigent who gathered grains for themselves and did their living.

Likewise, when the crop was thrashed, and the grain separated from the chaff, he would leave the grain for the poor. So also when fruits were picked from the trees of the orchard, some fruits would fall down, and he would leave them for the indigent. For this reason, the poor always gathered at the orchard at the time of picking the fruit, and separating the grain from the chaff. When the righteous person passed away, he had three sons who inherited the orchard and crop-fields. They held a family meeting and discussed that their family has grown large, and the produce of the orchard and land is not sufficient for them. Therefore, it is no longer possible for them to spare any fruit or grain for the poor. According to other narratives, these boys, like other youngsters, felt that their father was a fool to give so much of fruits and grains to them. They thought it was necessary to put a stop to this. The rest of the story is told in the following verses of the Qur’ān.

إِذْ أَقْسَمُوا لَيَصْرِمُنَّهَا مُصْبِحِينَ وَلَا يَسْتَثْنُونَ (...when they had sworn an oath that they would pluck its fruits on the next morning, and did not make any exception (by saying '*inshā'allah*').... 68:17-18). In other words, they swore that they would harvest very early in the morning and return with it before the throng of poor people could arrive at the garden. They had so much of confidence in their plan that they did not say the redeeming words 'If Allah wills' whereas it is *sunnah* to say '*inshā'allah*' when one mentions that one will do a particular work tomorrow.

وَلَا يَسْتَثْنُونَ (and did not make any exception (by saying '*inshā'allah*'). [68:18]. The word *isthisnā* in the original Arabic means 'to make an exception by saying "*inshā'allah*". However, some scholars interpret this word, in this context, to mean that 'they would devour the entire harvest themselves, with no exception for the poor. [Maẓharī].

فَطَافَ عَلَيْهَا طَائِفٌ مِّن رَّبِّكَ (Then, there whirled around it a whirl (of calamity) from your Lord, while they were asleep....68:19). The word 'whirl' refers to 'a whirl of calamity' as a result of which Divine

punishment overtook the garden in a sudden and swift sweep. Some narratives report that it was a fire which burnt every standing crop, and reduced it to black ashes.

وَهُمْ نَامُونَ (...while they were asleep.... 68:19). In other words, the devastating disaster overtook the entire garden while its owners were asleep.

فَاصْبَحَتْ كَالصَّرِيمِ (Thus, on the next morning, it was like a harvested field....68:20). The word *ṣarm* means 'to harvest or to collect a crop from the fields'. The word *ṣarīm* in the context of the verse is used in the sense of *masrūm* or *maqṭū'*, meaning 'harvested or cut'. This signifies that the fire burnt the field and stripped it bare. The word *ṣarīm* also means 'night'. From this point of view, the verse signifies 'the field became burnt up and black like night'. [Maḏharī].

فَتَنَادَوْا مُصْبِحِينَ (So, they called out each other as the morning broke 68:21). This means that they starting waking up each other in the early morning that they should set out early if they wanted to harvest.

وَهُمْ يَتَخَفَتُونَ (...while they were whispering to each other ... 68:23). They were speaking in a low voice, lest a poor man should hear their talk and accompany them.

وَعَدَوْا عَلَىٰ حَرْدٍ قَدِيرِينَ And in early hours of the day they rushed quickly, while they were (assuming themselves) powerful (to pluck the fruits and prevent the poor.) [68:25]'. The word *ḥard* means 'to prevent' and 'to express anger'.⁵ In other words, they thought they had the power to pick the fruit for themselves and prevent the poor people from having a share in it, and even if they do come to the garden, the owners of the garden decided to chase them out.

فَلَمَّا رَأَوْهَا قَالُوا إِنَّا لَضَالُّونَ (But when they saw it [the place of the ruined garden], they said, "We have missed the way."....68:26). In other words, when they did not find their garden on that spot, they first thought that they must have lost their way and gone to the wrong place. But when they saw the surroundings, they realized that it was the right place they have gone to, but the garden had been burnt up and destroyed. So, they

(5). This word also means 'to rush quickly'. This meaning of the word has been adopted in the translation of the text. (Muhammad Taqi Usmani)

exclaimed: *بَلْ نَحْنُ مَحْرُومُونَ* "No, but we are deprived [of the fruits]....68:27)

قَالَ أَوْسَطُهُمْ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ لَّكُمْ لَوْلَا تُسَبِّحُونَ (Said he who was the best among them, "Did I not say to you, 'Why do you not pronounce *tasbīḥ* (Allah's purity)?"....68:28). The middle brother was the best of them. He was righteous like his father. It used to please him to spend in the cause of Allah. He was not niggardly or stingy like the other brothers. He had advised them to recite *tasbīḥ* which, literally, means to pronounce Allah's purity. He told them that they were withholding the share of the poor with the fear that their fruit will be depleted and will not be replenished by Allah, if they gave the poor their share. He told them that Allah is pure from such pettiness. Instead, those who spend in the way of Allah, He will not only make their wealth full again or replace what they have spent, but also will give them over and above what they have spent. [Mazhari].

قَالُوا سُبْحَنَ رَبِّنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا ظَالِمِينَ (They said, "We pronounce the purity of our Lord. No doubt, we were wrongdoers."..... 68:29). Neither of the brothers had paid heed to this brother's advice at that point. But when the damage was done, they admitted that Allah is Pure, Free from any qualities of weaknesses and shortcomings, and that they were the wrongdoers, in that they were unjust to the poor intending to deprive them of their share and devour it themselves.

Warning

Although the best of the three brothers offered the right advice, he joined the other brothers in following their wrong opinion. So he suffered the same loss. This indicates that anyone who prevents other people from committing sins but does not abstain from them himself and joins them in doing the wrong acts, he will suffer the same fate as the others.

فَاقْبَلْ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ يَتَلَوْمُونَ (Then, (at the beginning,) they started reproaching one another;..... 68:30). That is to say, at the beginning they made admission of guilt, but then they turned to face each other in mutual accusation, blaming each other for the punishment that visited them, whereas the crime was not committed by only a single person from among them, but it was committed jointly by all or most of them.

A note of caution

A common misdeed, in our days, is that when a calamity befalls a

group of people due to their collective conduct, an additional scourge that befalls them is that, (instead of reforming themselves,) they start wasting their time in accusing each other.

فَالُوا يَوْمَئِذٍ إِنَّا كُنَّا ظُفَيْرٍ ([and at last,] they said, "Woe to us! In fact, we [all] were outrageous....68:31). At the beginning, they accused one another of the sin. Then when they considered the matter carefully, they admitted that they were all on the wrong. As a result, they lamented and admitted their guilt that amounted to repentance. On the basis of this repentance they hoped that Allah will give them in exchange a garden better than the one destroyed.

Imām Baghawī reports from Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh Ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه that, according to his information, when these brothers repented truly, Allah blessed them with a better vineyard that bore such large bunches of grapes that a single bunch could be loaded on a mule. [Maḏharī].

كَذَلِكَ الْعَذَابُ (In this way the punishment comes. And, of course, the punishment of the Hereafter is even greater, if they but realize!....68:33). After a brief reference to the famine faced by the Makkans and a detailed account of the People of the Garden whose garden was burnt as a punishment, the present verse sets down a general rule. When a Divine punishment visits, it visits in this way, and this kind of punishment in the mortal world does not serve as an expiation for the punishment in the Hereafter. The punishment of the Hereafter is greater and more severe.

The following verses give a description of the reward of the righteous, followed by refutation of another false claim of the pagans of Makkah. They denied that Resurrection will ever occur. They thought the story of Resurrection and accountability is fiction. Even if that does happen, they thought, they will get the same type of blessings and wealth as they have in this world. Several verses respond to their false belief. In verse [35] Allah poses the rhetorical question to the disbelievers: 'Shall We make the obedient like the sinners?' [35] This is a strange sort of assertion for which they have no authority, nor proof nor any celestial book. Nor is there any promise from Allah that they will get the same type of blessings.

A Rational Proof of Resurrection

These verses give a solid proof to the necessity of the Day of Judgement, because accountability, rewarding the righteous and

punishing the evil are all rationally necessary. It is witnessed by every person in this mortal world, and no one can deny, that the wicked, the evil, the unjust, the thieves and the bandits generally lead a comfortable and enjoyable life in the mortal world. A thief or a bandit sometimes in one night gains so much of wealth that a righteous person might not gain as much in his entire life. The former has no fear of Allah or the Hereafter, nor does he have any sense of shame. He fulfills his selfish desires as he likes - by hook or by crook. The latter fears Allah, and if he does not have that, his sense of shame among his brotherhood overwhelms him. In short, in the mortal world the wicked and the evil ones seem to be successful, and the good people seem to be unsuccessful. If there does not arise an occasion where fair play and justice is established - where the good people would be rewarded and the evil ones would be punished? It would be meaningless to refer to evil as evil. There would be no reason to stop a person from fulfilling his selfish desires and doing the evil acts. On the other hand, justice will have no meaning or significance. How will the believers in God's existence respond to the following question: Where is God's justice?

One may argue that a criminal is apprehended, he is exposed to disgrace and is punished. This distinguishes the innocent persons from the evil ones right here in this world. Laws and statutes of a governments establish standards of justice and fair play. But this is incorrect, because it is not possible for a government to keep an eye on every one, everywhere and in all circumstances. Wherever it does happen, it is not an easy task to gather the necessary judicial evidence, so that the guilty person may be convicted and punished. And even if the judicial evidence could be gathered, there are several escape doors through which the guilty person could get away, such as force, bribery, intercession and pressure. If we review the punishment history of the present-day governments and courts, it would appear that nowadays only those people are punished who are fools, brainless and helpless or without support. They are not cunning enough to find a loophole in the legal system, or an escape route, nor do they have enough money to pay for bribery, nor do they have an influential person to back them or intercede on their behalf or they cannot use these things because of their foolishness. The rest of the criminals are moving freely.

This verse: *أَفَنَجْعَلُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ كَالْمُجْرِمِينَ* (Otherwise, shall We make the obedient like the sinners?... 68:35). Clarifies that it is rationally necessary that there should come a time when people will have to give account of their deeds, a place where the guilty ones will find no escape routes, an ideal world where there will be absolute justice and fair play, where good and evil will be clearly distinguished. If this is not the state of affairs in the Hereafter, then no evil should be evil, and no sin should be sin in this mortal world. Divine justice would thus be rendered meaningless.

Since it is established that Resurrection is a reality and inevitable, the reward of good deeds is a reality and the punishment of evil deeds is a reality, the verses that follow describe the horrors of the Day of Judgement and the punishment of the evil ones, including the description of the exposure of the Shin [*kashf-us-sāq*] in Verse 42 (the explanation of which may be seen in the foot-note given in the translation of that verse.)

فَدَرَبْنِي وَمَنْ يُكَذِّبُ بِهَذَا الْحَدِيثِ (So, leave Me alone with those who reject this discourse. We will draw them on little by little (towards Hell) from a way they do not know.... 68:44). Here the phrase 'So, leave me alone' in the original Arabic is an idiomatic expression which signifies 'Rely on Allah'. The disbelievers often demanded Divine punishment arguing that if they are really guilty in the sight of Allah, and if He has the power to punish, then why the punishment does not befall them forthwith. These were heart-rending demands on account of which the thought probably must have crossed the mind of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and he might have prayed to Allah to punish them sometime, in the hope that the rest of the people might draw lessons and amend their conduct. On that occasion, Allah revealed [in verse, 45] that He is the best aware of the wisdom behind His decisions. He does not punish them immediately, but He gives them respite to test them and to give them an opportunity to believe.

Towards the end, the story of Sayyidnā Yūnus عليه السلام is concisely told that when his people constantly demanded punishment, he became indignant and prayed for the punishment to be sent down. The signs of the punishment started appearing. Sayyidnā Yūnus عليه السلام left the place and transferred himself elsewhere. In the meantime the entire nation wept, wailed, sincerely repented and begged refuge from the Divine punishment. Allah pardoned them and took away the punishment. Sayyidnā Yūnus عليه السلام felt embarrassed and thought that if he goes back

to his people, they might think he was a liar. As a result, without the clear permission of Allah, he acted purely on his *ijtihad* [independent judgement] that he would not go back to his people. At this, Allah, in order to caution him, created a situation where he had to undertake sea voyage, and then was lowered into the sea where he was swallowed up by a fish. Being thus cautioned, Sayyidnā Yūnus عليه السلام sought the Divine pardon. Consequently, Allah once again opened the doors of the former blessings to be restored to him. Full description of the event has been given in Sūrah Yūnus (Verse 10:98) and other Sūrahs. The Holy Prophet ﷺ is comforted by this story not to be impressed by people's demands nor to be anxious to get them punished hastily. Allah's wisdom is profound and unfathomable. Allah alone knows what is in the best interests of the world. Allah should be trusted and relied on.

وَلَا تُكِنُّ كَصَابِحِ الْخَوْتِ (So, remain patient with your Lord's judgment, and be not like the Man of the Fish...68:48). It refers to Sayyidnā Yūnus عليه السلام. He is named here as 'Man of Fish' because he was devoured by a fish and remained in its belly for some time.

وَأِنَّ يَكَادُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنْ يُزْلِقُونَكَ بِأَبْصَارِهِمْ (And indeed the disbelievers seem to trip you up with their glances when they hear the Reminder, and say, "He is a madman indeed....68:51). The verb '*layuzliqūnaka*' is derived from *izlāq* which means 'to trip up or to cause someone to fall or make a mistake' [*Rāghib*]. The verse says to the Holy Prophet ﷺ that disbelievers cast angry looks at him that they might frighten him into giving up his mission or intimidate him into yielding to their pressure tactics. When they listen to Divine words, they call him a madman. But far from it, his teaching contains the quintessence of wisdom - the Qur'an puts it thus:

وَمَا هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ لِلْعَالَمِينَ (And it is nothing else but a Reminder for all the worlds.... 68:52). Divine words are a Reminder and an admonition for the entire universe. The Reminder will lift the people from the lowest depths of degradation to the highest summits of greatness and glory. It would also cleanse them and free them from moral blemishes and raise their spiritual stature. Is it possible for an insane person to receive and deliver such a Sublime Divine Message? Can a Prophet of such a high caliber be called a madman? The earlier verses of this Sūrah rebutted the charge of insanity against the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Towards the end of the Sūrah, the same charge of lunacy is rebutted again in a different style.

Imām Baghawī رحمه الله تعالى and some other commentators have reported another event as background of this verse. The evil eye is a reality which causes loss, illness and destruction. Authentic Traditions report that it is a reality. The Arabs also believed that an evil eye is a reality. There was a person famous in Arabia to cast an evil eye on camels or animals to cause instant death or destruction. The pagans of Arabia were enemies of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and in every possible way they were after persecuting him and killing him. They left no stone unturned in harming him. They even contemplated afflicting him with an evil eye. They therefore decided to secure the services of the particular person who could effectively cast an evil eye. He was instructed to cast the evil eye on the Messenger of Allah ﷺ so that he would become ill. He exerted himself to the utmost, but to no avail. Allah protected him and he was unaffected. The verses were revealed in connection with this incident.

Special Note

Sayyidnā Ḥasan Baṣrī reports that if anyone is affected by the evil eye, these verses (51 & 52) may be recited and blown on the person: the ill effect will be dispelled.

Alhamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Qalam
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Hāqqah

This Sūrah is Makki. It contains 52 verses and 2 sections

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 52

الْحَاقَّةُ ﴿١﴾ مَا الْحَاقَّةُ ﴿٢﴾ وَمَا أَذْرُكَ مَا الْحَاقَّةُ ﴿٣﴾ كَذَّبَتْ
 ثَمُودُ وَعَادٌ بِالْقَارِعَةِ ﴿٤﴾ فَأَمَّا ثَمُودُ فَأَهْلِكُوا بِالطَّاغِيَةِ ﴿٥﴾ وَأَمَّا
 عَادٌ فَأَهْلِكُوا بِرِيحٍ صَرْصَرٍ عَاتِيَةٍ ﴿٦﴾ سَخَّرَهَا عَلَيْهِمْ سَبْعَ لَيَالٍ
 وَثَمْنِيَةَ أَيَّامٍ ۖ حُسُومًا فَتَرَى الْقَوْمَ فِيهَا صَرْعَى ۚ كَانَهُمْ أَعْجَازُ
 نَخْلٍ خَاوِيَةٍ ﴿٧﴾ فَهَلْ تَرَى لَهُمْ مِّنْ بَاقِيَةٍ ﴿٨﴾ وَجَاءَ فِرْعَوْنُ وَمَنْ
 قَبْلَهُ وَالْمُؤْتَفِكَةُ بِالْخَاطِئَةِ ﴿٩﴾ فَعَصُوا رَسُولَ رَبِّهِمْ فَاخَذَهُمْ
 أَخَذَةً رَّابِيَةً ﴿١٠﴾ إِنَّا لَمَّا طَغَا الْمَاءُ حَمَلْنَاكُمْ فِي الْجَارِيَةِ ﴿١١﴾
 لِنَجْعَلَهَا لَكُمْ تَذْكِرَةً وَتَعِيَهَا أُذُنٌ وَاعِيَةٌ ﴿١٢﴾ فَإِذَا نُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ
 نَفْخَةٌ وَاحِدَةٌ ﴿١٣﴾ وَحُمِلَتِ الْأَرْضُ وَالْجِبَالُ فَدُكَّتَا دَكَّةً وَاحِدَةً
 ﴿١٤﴾ فَيَوْمَئِذٍ وَقَعَتِ الْوَاقِعَةُ ﴿١٥﴾ وَانْشَقَّتِ السَّمَاءُ فَهِيَ يَوْمَئِذٍ
 وَاهِيَةٌ ﴿١٦﴾ وَالْمَلَكُ عَلَى أَرْجَائِهَا ۚ وَيَحْمِلُ عَرْشَ رَبِّكَ فَوْقَهُمْ
 يَوْمَئِذٍ ثَمْنِيَةٌ ﴿١٧﴾ يَوْمَئِذٍ تُعْرَضُونَ لَا تَخْفَى مِنْكُمْ خَافِيَةٌ ﴿١٨﴾
 فَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ بِيَمِينِهِ فَيَقُولُ هَؤُلَاءِ أَقْرَأُوا كِتَابِيَةَ ﴿١٩﴾ إِنِّي

ظَنَنْتُ أَنِّي مُلْكٌ حِسَابِيَّةٌ ﴿٢٠﴾ فَهُوَ فِي عِيشَةٍ رَاضِيَةٍ ﴿٢١﴾ فِي جَنَّةٍ
 عَالِيَةٍ ﴿٢٢﴾ قُطُوفُهَا دَانِيَةٌ ﴿٢٣﴾ كُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا هَنِيئًا ۖ بِمَا أَسْلَفْتُمْ
 فِي الْأَيَّامِ الْخَالِيَةِ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ بِشِمَالِهِ ۖ فَيَقُولُ
 يَلَيْتَنِي لَمْ أُوتِ كِتَابِيهِ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَلَمْ أَذِرْ مَا حِسَابِيهِ ﴿٢٦﴾ يَلَيْتَهَا كَانَتْ
 الْقَاضِيَةَ ﴿٢٧﴾ مَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنِّي مَالِيهِ ﴿٢٨﴾ هَلَكَ عَنِّي سُلْطَانِيهِ ﴿٢٩﴾
 خُدُّوه فَغُلُّوه ﴿٣٠﴾ ثُمَّ الْجَحِيمَ صَلُّوهُ ﴿٣١﴾ ثُمَّ فِي سِلْسِلَةٍ ذَرْعُهَا
 سَبْعُونَ ذِرَاعًا فَاسْلُكُوهُ ﴿٣٢﴾ إِنَّهُ كَانَ لَا يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٣٣﴾
 وَلَا يَحْضُ عَلَىٰ طَعَامِ الْمِسْكِينِ ﴿٣٤﴾ فَلَيْسَ لَهُ الْيَوْمَ هُنَا حَمِيمٌ
 ﴿٣٥﴾ وَلَا طَعَامٌ إِلَّا مِنْ غِسْلِينٍ ﴿٣٦﴾ لَا يَأْكُلُهُ إِلَّا الْخِطِئُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾
 فَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِمَا تُبْصَرُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَمَا لَا تُبْصَرُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾ إِنَّهُ لَقَوْلُ
 رَسُولٍ كَرِيمٍ ﴿٤٠﴾ وَمَاهُوَ يَقُولُ شَاعِرٌ ۖ قَلِيلًا مَّا تُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٤١﴾ وَ
 لَا يَقُولُ كَاهِنٌ ۖ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَذْكُرُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾ تَنْزِيلٌ مِنْ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ
 ﴿٤٣﴾ وَلَوْ تَقَوَّلَ عَلَيْنَا بَعْضُ الْأَقَاوِيلِ ﴿٤٤﴾ لَأَخَذْنَا مِنْهُ بِالْيَمِينِ
 ﴿٤٥﴾ ثُمَّ لَقَطَعْنَا مِنْهُ الْوَتِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾ فَمَا مِنْكُمْ مِنْ أَحَدٍ عَنْهُ حَاجِزِينَ
 ﴿٤٧﴾ وَإِنَّهُ لَتَذِكْرَةٌ لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٤٨﴾ وَإِنَّا لَنَعْلَمُ أَنَّ مِنْكُمْ مُّكَذِّبِينَ
 ﴿٤٩﴾ وَإِنَّهُ لَحَسْرَةٌ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٥٠﴾ وَإِنَّهُ لَحَقُّ الْيَقِينِ ﴿٥١﴾
 فَسَبِّحْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٥٢﴾

The Imminent Happening! [1] What is the Imminent Happening? [2] And what can let you know what the Imminent happening is? [3] Thamūd and 'Ad had denied (the happening of) the Shocking Event (the Day of Judgment). [4] As for Thamūd, they were destroyed by that (dreadful cry) which exceeded all limits. [5] And as for 'Ad, they were destroyed by a violent windstorm [6] that He imposed on them for seven nights and eight consecutive days, so you could see them thrown on the

ground, as if they were trunks of hollow palm-trees. [7] So, do you see any remnant of them? [8] And Fir'aun (the Pharaoh) and those before him and the overthrown towns came up with evil. [9] And they disobeyed the messenger of their Lord, so He seized them with an extremely severe seizure. [10] When the water overflowed (in the Deluge of Nūḥ ﷺ), We let you (O mankind,) board the floating ship, [11] so that We make it for you a reminder, and so that a preserving ear may preserve it. [12] Then, when the Trumpet will be blown for the first time, [13] and the earth and the mountains will be lifted and crushed into pieces with a single blow, [14] then on that Day the Happening will happen, [15] and the sky will burst apart, while it will have become frail on that day. [16] And the angels will be on its borders. And on that Day, the Throne of your Lord will be carried above them by eight (angels). [17] On that day, you will be brought forward in a way that no secret of yours will remain secret. [18] Now, as for him who is given his book in his right hand, he will say (to his colleagues), "Come here, read my book. [19] I was sure that I would encounter my reckoning." [20] So he will be in a well-pleasing life [21] in a lofty garden, [22] the fruits of which will be close at hand. [23] (It will be said to such people,) "Eat and drink with pleasure, as a reward for what you did in advance during past days." [24] As for him who will be given his book in his left hand, he will say, "Oh, would that I had not been given my book, [25] and I had never known what my account is! [26] Oh, would that it (death) had been the end of the matter! [27] My wealth has not been of any use to me. [28] My power has gone from me for good." [29] (Then it will be said to angels,) "Seize him, then put a collar around his neck, [30] then, in the blazing fire let him burn. [31] Thereafter, fasten him with a chain the measure of which is seventy hands." [32] Indeed, he did not believe in Almighty Allah, [33] and did not persuade (others) to feed the needy. [34] So, he has no friend here today, [35] nor any food except from that which flows from wounds when washing, [36] which is eaten by none but the sinners. [37]

I swear by what you see, [38] and what you do not see, [39] it is surely the speech of a noble Messenger, (that he conveys from Allah). [40] and it is not the speech of a poet, (but) little you believe, [41] nor is it the speech of a soothsayer, (but) little you heed to the advice. [42] It is

a revelation from the Lord of the worlds. [43] And had he forged some statements in Our name, [44] We would have certainly seized him by the right hand, [45] and then severed his life-artery, [46] so no one from you would have been an impediment against it. [47] And it is a Reminder for the God-fearing. [48] And, of course, We know that among you there are deniers. [49] And surely, it is an anguish for the disbelievers. [50] And it is surely an absolute truth. [51] So, pronounce the purity of the name of your magnificent Lord. [52]

Commentary

This Sūrah is almost wholly devoted to the subject of inevitability of the Resurrection, its horrors, the punishment of unbelievers and the reward of believers. The Day of Judgement is variously referred to in the Qur'an, and in this Sūrah we encounter the following three names: *الْحَاقَّةُ* Al-Ḥāqqah 'Imminent Happening', *الْقَارِعَةُ* Al-Qāri'ah 'Shocking Event' and *الْوَاقِعَةُ* Al-Wāqi'ah 'Happening'.

The word *الْحَاقَّةُ* Al-ḥāqqah means an 'established fact, or inevitable event, reality or truth'. The word *Al-ḥāqqah* also means 'Something that provide evidence that something is true.' It can be applied to the Day of Judgement in both senses of the word, because in the first sense the Day of Judgement itself is an established truth, and its occurrence is a certainty. And in the other sense the Day of Judgement will prove to the believers the reality of Paradise and to the unbelievers the reality of Hell. This name of the Day of Judgement is followed by two questions regarding it. The questions have been put to make the readers realise how horrifying the experience would be - beyond normal experience or even imagination.

The word *الْقَارِعَةُ* Al-Qāri'ah, literally, means 'rumbling'. The Day of Judgement is so called because there will be rumbling sound which will cause agitation or terror in the hearts of people, and will dreadfully destroy the heavenly and earthly bodies and scatter them apart.

The word *الطَّائِفَةُ* At-Ṭāghiyah is derived from *ṭughyān* which means 'to exceed the limit', signifying an extremely severe punishment, that is, 'it would be such high pitched sound which would exceed the limit of any of the sounds of the mortal world, and the human heart or brain would not be able to bear'. When Thamūd exceeded the limit in denying the Day of

Judgement, they were destroyed by that dreadful cry which exceeded all limits. It was a combination of most high pitched sound of thunderbolt together with a flash of lightning that struck them which rent their hearts.

The phrase رِيحٍ صَرُصِرٍ (*rīḥin ṣarṣarin*) (in verse 6) refers to a violent windstorm which is also severely cold.

سَبْعَ لَيَالٍ وَتَنْبِيَةَ أَيَّامٍ (seven nights and eight consecutive days'... 69:7). According to some of the narratives, the punishment of windstorm started on Wednesday morning, and lasted till the following Wednesday evening. In this way, it makes up eight days and seven nights.

The word *ḥusūman* (in verse 7) is the plural of *ḥāsīm* and means 'cutting them off entirely' or 'causing them to perish completely'.

The word مُوتَفِكَتٍ *mu'tafikāt* (in verse 9) means 'adjacent to one another'. The towns of Sayyidnā Lūṭ عليه السلام, Sodom and Gomorrah, are so called because they were adjacent to each other or because when the punishment overtook the disbelievers and criminals overthrowing their towns], they were all jumbled up.¹

فَإِذَا نَفَخَ فِي الصُّورِ نَفْخَةً وَاحِدَةً (Then, when the Trumpet will be blown for the first time...69:13). Tirmidhī records a Ḥadīth on the authority of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنه that *ṣūr* 'trumpet' is a horn-like object which will be blown on Doomsday.

نَفْخَةً وَاحِدَةً ('for the first time...69:13). It means that it will be a sudden and a single continuing sound that will last until all die. The texts of Qur'ān and Sunnah show that the trumpet will be blown twice on the Day of Judgement. The first trumpet is called *naḥkhat-uṣ-ṣa'aq* 'the trumpet of swoon', in connection with which the Qur'ān says:

فَصَبَقَ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ

And all those in the heavens and all those in the earth will faint... [39:68]

With this trumpet all angels residing in the heavens and all Jinns and human beings and animals residing on earth will become unconscious

(1) Another possible meaning of *mu'tafikāt* is 'overthrown' as mentioned by several exegetes. The translation in the text is based on this meaning.

and fall to the ground. Whilst they are in the state of unconsciousness, they will die. The second trumpet is called *naḥkhat-ul-ba'th* 'trumpet of Resurrection'. The word *ba'th* means 'to rise'. With this trumpet all the dead will rise from death and stand up. The Qur'ān describes this situation thus:

ثُمَّ نَفَخَ فِيهِ أُخْرَىٰ فَإِذَا هُمْ قِيَامٌ يَنْظُرُونَ

Thereafter, it will be blown once again, and suddenly they will stand up, looking around. [39:68]

In other words, then the trumpet will be blown a second time and at once they will be standing upright looking on.

According to some narratives, a third 'trumpet' will also be blown before the two trumpets, which is referred to as *naḥkhat-ul-faza* ('the trumpet of fright or panic). By a careful analysis of all the narratives and texts, it appears that the first trumpet in its initial stage is *naḥkhat-ul-faza* and in its final stage it will become *ṣa'aq* 'the trumpet of swoon or death'. [Maḥhari]

وَيَحْمِلُ عَرْشَ رَبِّكَ فَوْقَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ ثَمَنِيَّةٌ (...And on that Day, the Throne of your Lord will be carried above them by eight [angels]...69:17). In other words, on the day of Judgement, eight angels will bear the Throne of the Raḥmān above their heads. According to some of the Prophetic narratives, before the Judgement Day this task will be carried out by four angels. On the Judgement Day, four more angels will be added to carry out the task.

As to what is the Throne of the Raḥmān, what is its reality, its form and shape, how the angels carry it - are transcendental matters and are all beyond human intellect. Allah is beyond time, space and matter, and therefore we are not permitted to pursue these matters pertaining to Him to determine its exact meaning. The noble Companions, their pupils and the righteous elders took the attitude that they simply believed in all transcendental matters and never questioned about them. Whatever Allah means by them is the Truth. Their nature and reality are unknown.

يَوْمَئِذٍ تُعْرَضُونَ لَا تَخْفَىٰ مِنْكُمْ خَافِيَةٌ (On that day, you will be brought forward in a way that no secret of yours will remain secret...69:18). In other words, on the Day of Judgement people will be exposed - no concealed act they did will stay concealed. Nothing is concealed from Divine knowledge and

sight even today. The Plain of Gathering has been particularly mentioned in this connection probably because the entire ground will be levelled out as a plain surface. There will be no caves nor mountains, no buildings nor houses nor barriers of any trees. These are the things behind which people normally hide in the mortal world. On the Day of Judgement, none of these things will be available and there will be no possibility of hiding.

هَآؤُمْ أَقْرَأُوا كِتَابِيَهٗ (Come here, read my book... 69:19). The word *hā'umu*, literally means, "come" but, idiomatically, it is used in the sense of the plural imperative verb *khudhū* "take". In other words, one who is given his record book in his right hand, he will be elated and, looking at the people around him, will say 'Here, take my account book and read it!'

هَلَكَ عَنِّي سُلْطَانِيَهٗ (My power has gone from me for good...69:29). The word *sulṭān*, literally, yields the sense of 'power or overpowering'. Therefore, a government or state is referred to as *salṭānah* and a ruler is referred to as *sulṭān*. In other words, when people gain power and political ascendancy in the world, they become proud, hold sway over other people, perpetrate injustices and commit atrocities. But in the Hereafter all that will vanish and be lost, and the unjust and proud rulers will have no army to obey or support them. They will be miserable and helpless creatures who will not be able to defend themselves.

The word *sulṭān* also stands for 'authority, proof or argument' in which case it would mean : 'Today I have no argument in favour of protecting myself against punishment'.

خُذُوهُ فَغُلُّوهُ (Seize him, then put a collar around his neck... 69:30). This instruction will be given to the angels to seize the guilty one and truss him up by putting a collar around his neck - though, however, the wordings of the verse do not mention who will seize and who will truss him up. Narratives indicate that when this order will be issued, everything, like submissive and obedient servants, will rush to apprehend him.

ثُمَّ فِي سِلْسِلَةٍ ذَرْعُهَا سَبْعُونَ ذِرَاعًا فَاسْلُكُوهُ (Thereafter, make him enter into a chain, the measure of which is seventy hands....69:32). The phrase 'make him enter into a chain' could be interpreted metaphorically as 'bind him in a chain' but it could be taken in its primary sense, that is, to pierce the chain through one side of the body, so that it could come out from the

other side of it like a string is passed through a pearl or the bead of a rosary. Traditional narratives seem to support the primary sense. [Maḏharī]

فَلَيْسَ لَهُ الْيَوْمَ هُنَا حَمِيمٌ ۖ وَلَا طَعَامٌ إِلَّا مِنْ غِسْلِينٍ (So, he has no friend here today, nor any food except from that which flows from wounds when washing...69:35-36]. The word *hamīm* means 'a sincere or bosom friend'. The word *ghislīn* with 'gh' bearing the *kasrah* [= i] refers to the water with which the pus and blood of the wounds of the inmates of Hell will be washed. The verses signify that on the Day of Resurrection he will have no friend that will support him or save him from punishment, nor will he have anything to eat except the filthy water with which pus exuding from the wound of the inmates of Hell might have been washed. The words 'nor any food' mean that they will not have any delectable food to eat. This statement does not negate things like *ghislīn* which are distasteful and reprehensible. Therefore, it does not contradict another verse which states that the inmates of Hell will eat *zaqqūm*.

فَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِمَا تُبْصَرُونَ. وَمَا لَا تُبْصَرُونَ (I swear by what you see, and what you do not see....69:38-39). This comprehends the entire body of creation. Some say 'what you do not see' refers to the Being of Allah Ta'ālā and His attributes. Others say 'what you see' refers to things of the mortal world, and 'what you do not see,' refers to things of the Hereafter. [Maḏharī] And Allah, the Pure and Exalted, Knows best!

وَلَوْ تَقَوَّلَ عَلَيْنَا بَعْضُ الْأَقَاوِيلِ ﴿٤٤﴾ لَأَخَذْنَا مِنْهُ بِالْيَمِينِ ﴿٤٥﴾ ثُمَّ لَقَطَعْنَا مِنْهُ الْوَتِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾ ^{صله}

And had he forged some statements in Our name, We would have certainly seized him by the right hand, and then severed his life-artery,... (69:44-46)

The word *taqawwul* means 'to forge, fabricate or concoct' and the word *watīn* refers to 'aorta or life-artery'. This is the main artery that carries blood from the heart to other parts of the body. Once this artery is cut off, death occurs instantly.

The foregoing verses refute the outrageous thoughts of the disbelievers. They used to accuse the Prophet ﷺ of being a poet and a soothsayer. They said that the Qur'ān was the word of a poet or the word of a soothsayer. The Qur'ān denounces their argument - it is not the word

of a poet nor the word of a soothsayer; it is a revelation from Allah to His Messenger. In other words, in verses [37-38] it was claimed that all visible and invisible things prove that the Prophet ﷺ is Allah's true Messenger and that the Qur'ān is Allah's revealed Word and not the imaginary flight of a poet's mind or the wild conjectures of a diviner. In this and the preceding three verses another invincible argument is given in support of his claim. The argument is to the effect that if the Prophet ﷺ had been a forger of lies against Allah, Allah's strong hand would have seized him by the throat and cut off his life-artery and he would have certainly met with a violent death. The invincible argument is put forward in a strong language - assuming the impossible - to make the ignorant realise the worst-case scenario. The expression 'right hand' is used probably because when a convicted criminal is to be executed, the executioner stands in front facing the condemned person. The executioner's left hand faces the guilty person's right hand. The executioner holds the condemned person with his left hand and attacks him with his right hand.

A Cautionary Note

This verse refers to a theoretical situation relating to the Apostle of Allah ﷺ in particular that lest, God forbid, if he were to concoct a word and impute it to Allah, this is the way he would have been dealt with. A hypothetical situation is a possible situation, not an actual situation. Thus this does not necessarily set down a universal principle that any and every impostor, who lays claim to prophethood, would be destroyed as a matter of general rule. History records that many impostors laid claim to prophethood, but no such destructive punishment was ever imposed on them.

فَسَبِّحْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الْعَظِيمِ 'So, pronounce the purity of the name of your magnificent Lord. [69:52]'. It was shown in the preceding verses that Allah's Messenger never speak from his own whims and fancies. He only conveys pure revelation revealed to him by Allah. The Divine Word is a reminder and an admonition for the God-conscious people. Allah knows that despite knowing the absolutely incontestable truth many people will continue to reject it. Consequently, it will be a source of eternal remorse, disappointment and punishment in the Hereafter for the disbelievers. In the end, Allah says:

وَأَنَّهُ لَحَقُّ الْيَقِينِ 'And it is surely an absolute truth. [69:51]'. In other words,

the Qur'ān is undeniably the Truth of Certainty. There is no room for any doubt or suspicion in it.

Finally, Allah addresses the Prophet ﷺ to say:

فَسَبِّحْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الْعَظِيمِ 'So, pronounce the purity of the name of your magnificent Lord.' [69:52]. This signifies that the Prophet ﷺ should not pay any heed to the criticisms of the obdurate disbelievers nor should he feel distressed. He should rather pronounce the purity of Allah's name. This will relieve his distress and grief. On another occasion, the Qur'ān says:

وَلَقَدْ نَعْلَمُ أَنَّكَ يَضِيقُ صَدْرُكَ بِمَا يَقُولُونَ فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ وَكُنْ مِنَ السَّاجِدِينَ 'And We know that your heart feels distressed for what they say. [15:97]. So, proclaim the purity, and glory of your Lord and be among those who prostrate. [98]' The Prophet ﷺ is advised not to pay any attention to the disbelievers talking nonsense. The best remedy for his distress and grief is to glorify Allah, praise Him and prostrate before Him.

Abū Dāwūd records a narration from Sayyidnā 'Uqbah bin Āmir Juhanī رضي الله عنه that when the verse. فَسَبِّحْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الْعَظِيمِ 'So, pronounce the purity of the name of your magnificent Lord. [52]' was revealed, the Prophet ﷺ instructed this *tasbīḥ* to be reserved for the posture of *rukū'* and when the verse سَبِّحْ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ الْأَعْلَى 'Pronounce the purity of the name of your most Exalted Lord. [87:1]' was revealed, he instructed this *tasbīḥ* to be reserved for the posture of *sajdah*. Therefore, by common consent of the *Ummah* these *tasbīḥāt* are recited in *rukū'* and *sajdah* respectively. According to overwhelming majority, it is *Sunnah* to recite them and repeat them thrice. Some scholars say it is obligatory.

Alhamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Ḥāqqah
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Ma'ārij

(The Stairways)

This Sūrah is Makkī. It contains 44 verses and 2 sections

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 44

سَالَ سَائِلٌ ۚ بِعَذَابٍ وَاقِعٍ ﴿١﴾ لِلْكَافِرِينَ لَيْسَ لَهُ دَافِعٌ ﴿٢﴾ مِنَ اللَّهِ
ذِي الْمَعَارِجِ ﴿٣﴾ تَعْرُجُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَالرُّوحُ إِلَيْهِ فِي يَوْمٍ كَانَ مِقْدَارُهُ
خَمْسِينَ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ ﴿٤﴾ فَاصْبِرْ صَبْرًا جَمِيلًا ﴿٥﴾ إِنَّهُمْ يَرَوْنَهُ بَعِيدًا
﴿٦﴾ وَنَرَاهُ قَرِيبًا ﴿٧﴾ يَوْمَ تَكُونُ السَّمَاءُ كَالْمُهْلِ ﴿٨﴾ وَتَكُونُ
الْجِبَالُ كَالْعِهْنِ ﴿٩﴾ وَلَا يَسْأَلُ حَمِيمٌ حَمِيمًا ﴿١٠﴾ يُبْصِرُونَهُمْ ۖ
يَوَدُّ الْمُجْرِمُ لَوْ يَفْتَدِي مِنْ عَذَابٍ يَوْمِئِذٍ بِبَنِيهِ ﴿١١﴾ وَصَاحِبَتِهِ
وَآخِيهِ ﴿١٢﴾ وَفَصِيلَتِهِ الَّتِي تُؤَيِّسُ لَهُ ﴿١٣﴾ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا لَا تُم
يُنْجِيهِ ﴿١٤﴾ كَلَّا ۖ إِنَّهَا لَظَىٰ ﴿١٥﴾ نَزَّاعَةً لِّلشَّوْىِ ۖ ﴿١٦﴾ تَدْعُوا مَنْ
أَدْبَرَ وَتَوَلَّىٰ ﴿١٧﴾ وَجَمَعَ فَأَوْعَىٰ ﴿١٨﴾ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ خُلِقَ هَلُوعًا
﴿١٩﴾ إِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ جَزُوعًا ﴿٢٠﴾ وَإِذَا مَسَّهُ الْخَيْرُ مَنُوعًا ﴿٢١﴾ إِلَّا
الْمُصَلِّينَ ﴿٢٢﴾ الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَىٰ صَلَاتِهِمْ دَائِمُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَالَّذِينَ
فِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ مَّعْلُومٌ ﴿٢٤﴾ لِّلسَّائِلِ وَالْمَحْرُومِ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَالَّذِينَ
يُصَدِّقُونَ بِيَوْمِ الدِّينِ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ مِنْ عَذَابِ رَبِّهِمْ مُشْفِقُونَ

﴿٢٧﴾ إِنَّ عَذَابَ رَبِّهِمْ غَيْرُ مَأْمُونٍ ﴿٢٨﴾ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِفُرُوجِهِمْ
 حَافِظُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾ إِلَّا عَلَىٰ أَزْوَاجِهِمْ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ غَيْرُ
 مَلُومِينَ ﴿٣٠﴾ فَمَنِ ابْتَغَىٰ وَرَاءَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْعُدُونَ ﴿٣١﴾
 وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَمْنَتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رَاعُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ بِشَهَادَتِهِمْ
 قَائِمُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَىٰ صَلَاتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾ أُولَٰئِكَ
 فِي جَنَّةٍ مُّكْرَمُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾ فَمَالِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا قِبَلَكَ مُهْطِعِينَ ﴿٣٦﴾
 عَنِ الْيَمِينِ وَعَنِ الشِّمَالِ عِزِينَ ﴿٣٧﴾ أَيُطْمَعُ كُلُّ امْرِئٍ مِنْهُمْ أَنْ
 يُدْخَلَ جَنَّةَ نَعِيمٍ ﴿٣٨﴾ كَلَّا ۖ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاهُمْ مِّمَّا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾ فَلَا
 أَقْسِمُ بِرَبِّ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ إِنَّا لَقَدِيرُونَ ﴿٤٠﴾ عَلَىٰ أَنْ نُبَدِّلَ خَيْرًا
 مِنْهُمْ ۖ وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمَسْبُوقِينَ ﴿٤١﴾ فَذَرُهُمْ يَخَوْضُوا وَيَلْعَبُوا حَتَّىٰ
 يُلْقُوا يَوْمَهُمُ الَّذِي يُوعَدُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾ يَوْمَ يَخْرُجُونَ مِنَ الْآجِدَاثِ
 سِرَاعًا كَانَهُمْ إِلَىٰ نُصَبٍ يُوَفُّضُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾ خَاشِعَةً أَبْصَارُهُمْ تَرْهُفُهُمْ
 ذَّلَّةٌ ۖ ذَلِكَ الْيَوْمُ الَّذِي كَانُوا يُوعَدُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾

A demanding person has asked for the punishment that is going to befall [1] the disbelievers, for which there is no one to avert [2] from Allah, the Lord of the stairways [3] to whom ascend the angels and the Spirit, in a day the length of which is fifty thousand years. [4] So, observe patience, a good patience. [5] They see it far off. [6] and We see it near. [7] (This punishment will befall) on the Day when the sky will be like dregs of oil, [8] and the mountains will be like dyed wool, [9] and no friend will ask about any friend, [10] (though) they will be made to see each other. A guilty person will desire that he may ransom himself from the torment of that day even by his sons, [11] and his wife and his brother, [12] and his kindred that sheltered him, [13] and all those on earth, then he may redeem himself. [14] By no means! It is the flaming fire [15] that will pull out the skin of the scalp. [16] It will call him who had turned his back and fled away (from the Truth,) [17] and accumulated

(wealth) and hoarded (it). [18]

Indeed man is created weak in courage, [19] very upset when touched by evil, [20] and very niggard when visited by good (fortune), [21] except the performers of *ṣalāh*, [22] who are regular in their *ṣalāh*, [23] and those in whose riches there is a specified right [24] for the one who asks and the one who is deprived, [25] and those who believe in the Day of Judgment as true, [26] and those who are fearful of the torment of their Lord - [27] - Indeed the torment of their Lord is not something to be fearless from. [28] and those who guard their private parts, [29] except from their wives and those (slave-girls) owned by their hands, because they are not to be blamed, [30] but the one who seeks (sexual gratification) beyond that, then such people are the transgressors, [31] and those who are careful about their trusts and covenants, [32] and those who are upright in their testimonies, [33] and those who take due care of their *ṣalāh*. [34] Those will be honored in gardens (of Jannah). [35]

So what has happened to those who disbelieve that they are rushing towards you [36] from the right and from the left, in groups? [37] Does every one of them aspire to be admitted to the garden of bliss? * [38] By no means! We have created them from what they know. [39]** So, I swear by the Lord of the points of sunrise and those of sunset, We are powerful [40] to bring those better than them in their place, and We are not to be frustrated. [41] So, leave them involved in pastime and play until they encounter their Day which they are promised, [42]__ the Day they will come out of the graves quickly, as if they were rushing toward idols, [43] with their eyes downcast, enveloped by ignominy. That is the Day which they were being promised. [44]

*. The disbelievers used to come to the Holy Prophet ﷺ in groups mocking at the Muslims, and denying the Islamic beliefs, including Resurrection. But at the same time, they used to claim, in ironical style, that they would enter the Paradise, and enjoy its bliss. This verse refers to this attitude of the disbelievers.

**. Since their pretended aspiration to enter Paradise was merely a mockery, and in fact they intended to deny Resurrection, their denial is refuted in this verse by saying that admittedly Allah has created them from a lifeless drop of semen, as they knew it well, and a drop of semen is more difficult to be transformed into a perfect human being. If Allah has power to make it a living man, how easy it is for Him to give life to a dead body! Still, they do not believe in Resurrection. Then, how can they enter Paradise?

Commentary

سَأَلَ سَائِلٌ (A demanding person has asked for the punishment that is going to befall....70:1). The Arabic word *suwāl* / *su'āl* means to 'ask a question'. The word is used in more than one sense: [1] It could mean to inquire about something. In this sense, the Arabic word is followed by the preposition 'an' [about]; and [2] It is used in the sense of 'request'. In this sense, the word is followed by the preposition 'bi' [for] as in this instance.

Nasā'ī transmits a narration from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ that this demanding person was Naḍr Ibn Ḥārith. In rejecting the Qur'ān and the Prophet ﷺ, he daringly demanded:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنْ كَانَ هَذَا هُوَ الْحَقُّ مِنْ عِنْدِكَ فَأَمْطِرْ عَلَيْنَا حِجَارَةً مِنَ السَّمَاءِ أَوْ تُنَبِّئْنَا بِعَذَابٍ
الْبَئِيسِ .

'O Allah, if this be indeed the truth [revealed] from You, then, rain down upon us stones from the heavens, or bring upon us a painful punishment. [8:32]

The result of this demand was that Naḍr Ibn Ḥārith was killed by Muslims in the Battle of Badr. (Maḥzarī, citing the narration of Ibn Abī Ḥatīm). The Qur'ān, further setting down the factual position of the demanded punishment, says that the punishment is inevitable and will most certainly occur in this world or in the Hereafter or in both the worlds. It cannot be averted. The impending punishment is from Allah, the Lord of the stairways. The last statement is also the proof of the preceding statement, in that the punishment is from the Lord of the Ascending Steps. It is not possible for anyone to avert it.

The word *ma'ārij* is the plural of *mi'rāj* or *mi'raj*. It means a 'ladder or a staircase, having steps for reaching high places. The Divine attribute given in this verse as '*dhīl-ma'ārij*' [Lord of the stairways] means that He is the Lord of high degrees. This is the interpretation given by Sa'īd Ibn Jubair ؓ. Sayyidnā Ibn Mas'ūd ؓ says that these stairways or higher rungs are seven heavens one above another, and '*dhīl-ma'ārij*' means '*dhīs-samāwāt*', that is to say, *mālik-us-samāwāt* [Lord of the heavens].

تَعْرُجُ الْمَلَكُوتُ وَالرُّوحُ (to whom ascend the angels and the Spirit ...70:4). In other words, the angels and Jibra'īl ؑ ascend these levels which are one on top of the other. Although the word 'angels' include 'Jibra'īl ؑ',

his name is singled out specifically on account of his special honour.

(in a day the length of which is fifty thousand years.. ...70:4). This statement, grammatically, is connected to an understood verb, which is *yaqa‘u* [will occur]. The sense is that the inevitable punishment mentioned earlier will occur on a day the measure of which is fifty thousand years. Sayyidnā Abū Sa‘īd Khudrī ؓ narrates that the blessed Companions asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ about the length of the day that measures fifty thousand years. He replied: "I swear by the Being in Whose control is my life! The day for the believers will be lighter and less than the time during which they would perform an obligatory *ṣalāh*." (Transmitted by Aḥmad, Abū Ya‘lā, Ibn Ḥibbān, Baihaqī through a ‘*hasan*’ chain of narrators - Maḏharī)

And the following *Ḥadīth* is reported from Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ؓ:

يكون على المؤمنين كمقدار ما بين الظهر والعصر اخرجهم الحاكم والبيهقي مرفوعاً وموقوفاً. (مظهرى)

"The time on this day for the believers will be like that between ‘*aṣr* and *maghrib*’. (This *Ḥadīth* is reported both in *marfū‘* and *mauqūf* ways, that is, in some versions, this is the statement of Abū Hurairah ؓ himself, while in others it is attributed by him to the Holy Prophet ﷺ.)

These *aḥādīth* indicate that the length of fifty thousand years is a ‘relative term’. In relation to unbelievers the day would be as long as five thousand years, and in relation to the believers it would be as short as the time between ‘*aṣr* and *maghrib*’ or even shorter.

The Length of the Day of Judgement - A thousand years or Fifty Thousand Years? An Analysis

According to the above verse, the measure of the Day of Judgement is fifty thousand years but, according to the following verse of Sūrah As-Sajdah, the length of the day is mentioned as one thousand years:

يُدَبِّرُ الْأَمْرَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ يَعْرُجُ إِلَيْهِ فِي يَوْمٍ كَانَ مِقْدَارُهُ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ مِمَّا تَعْلَوْنَ.

He manages (every) matter from the sky to the earth, then it (every matter) will ascend to Him in a day the measure of

which is a thousand years according to the way you count. [32:5]

Apparently, there seems to be a discrepancy between the two verses. The narratives cited earlier resolve this apparent contradiction. Length and shortness of time are relative concepts. It will be different according to different groups and their varying conditions. Relative to the entire body of die-hard unbelievers, it will measure fifty thousand years, and relative to the entire body of righteous believers, the day will be made so easy that it will seem easier than a person performing *ṣalāh* in this world. In between the two bodies of believers and unbelievers there may be some groups of unbelievers for whom the day will seem to be one thousand years. It is also relative to varying psychological conditions that a person might be experiencing. If a person is feeling upset or is experiencing excruciating pain, time will hardly seem to move for him. An hour sometimes seems like more than a day or even more than a week. When a person, on the other hand, is in comfort and peace, the longest time will seem the shortest.

Mazḥarī has interpreted verse [5] of Sūrah As-Sajdah differently. He says that the day of a thousand years mentioned here refers to one of the days of the phenomenal world. Jibra'il عليه السلام and other angels with him descend from the heavens to the earth and then ascend from the earth to the heavens. This is such a long journey that if man were to undertake it, it would take him a thousand years. Authentic *aḥādīth* report that the journey from heavens to earth takes five hundred years and the journey back from earth to the heaven takes another five hundred years, totalling a thousand years according to human travelling. Assuming man were to conquer this distance, a return journey would take him a thousand years between heavens and earth and back, although the angels cover this distance in a very short time. In short, verse [5] of Sūrah As-Sajdah refers to a day of the phenomenal world while the verse of Sūrah Al-Ma'arij refers to the Day of Judgement which will be very much longer than the days of this world, the length and shortness of which will be experienced differently by different people according to their conditions. And Allah, the Pure and Exalted, knows best!

إِنَّهُمْ يَرَوْنَهُ بَعِيدًا. وَنَرَاهُ قَرِيبًا (They see it far off, and We see it near....70:6-7). In this context, the expressions 'far off' and 'near' do not refer to time or space, but 'far off' in terms of possibility and occurrence. The verse

purports to describe that the pagans see the occurrence of Resurrection as impossible, and Allah sees its occurrence not only possible, but a certain reality.

وَلَا يَسْتَلْ حِمِيمٌ حِمِيمًا. يُبْصِرُونَهُمْ (and no friend will ask about any friend, (though) they will be made to see each other...70:10,11). The word *hamīm* means a 'sincere friend'. The context describes the horrors of the Day of Resurrection. On that Day, no bosom friend will inquire about his friend - let alone helping him. This is not because they will not be able to see each other. The Divine power, in fact, will make them see each other. Every person will be in a state of 'each for himself'. No person will be able to pay heed to the comfort or discomfort, pleasure or pain of others.

كَلَّا ط إِنَّهَا لَظَى. نَزَاعَةٌ لِّلشُّوَى (By no means! It is the flaming fire, that will pull out the skin of the scalp...70:15,16). The pronoun of *innahā* (it) refers to 'Fire' and the word *lazā* means 'the flaming fire'. The word *shawā* is the plural of *shawāh* and it refers to 'the scalp or the skin of the human head, and also the skin of the hands and the legs'. The verse describes that the Fire of Hell would be a raging blaze that will pull out the skin of the scalp.

تَدْعُوا مَن آذَرَ وَتَوَلَّى. وَجَمَعَ قَاوَعَى (It will call him who had turned his back and fled away (from the truth.) and accumulated (wealth) and hoarded (it)...70:17,18). The phrase 'accumulated wealth' signifies 'wealth accumulated by unlawful means' and the phrase 'hoarded it' signifies 'not fulfilling the pecuniary obligations as imposed by the Sharī'ah', as is confirmed by authentic *aḥādīth*.

إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ خُلِقَ هَلُوعًا (Indeed man is created weak in courage...70:19). The *halū'*, literally, means 'one who is greedy, impatient, lacking courage'. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه says that the word *halū'* in the verse refers to a 'person who is greedy about unlawful wealth'. Sayyidnā Sa'īd Ibn Jubair رضي الله عنه says that the word refers to a 'miserly person'. Muqatil says that it refers to a 'person who is impatient and miserly'. All meanings attached assigned to this word are near-synonyms. The word *halu'* comprehends all these meanings. The verses that follow elaborate on the meaning of this word. In the meantime a doubt might arise here which needs to be disposed of. If it is objected that, according to this verse of the Holy Qur'an, man is created weak in courage, in other words, it is man's nature

or his natural weakness, to be impatient, greedy and miserly - then it is not his fault, and why is he declared 'guilty'? This doubt may be allayed thus: Allah has created human nature such that it has the innate capacity to do good as well as evil. He has endowed him with intellect and intelligence. He has raised His Prophets with His Message and sent down His Books clearly stating the consequences of every action chosen by his free will. He has the right to choose between good and bad. Man, in this sense, will be declared 'guilty', and consequently punished on account of freely choosing to do the wrong deed, not on account of his inborn capacity. This interpretation is confirmed by the following verses that speak only of actions of choice.

إِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ جَزُوعًا . وَإِذَا مَسَّهُ الْخَيْرُ مَنُوعًا (very upset when touched by evil, and very niggard when visited by good (fortune)...70:20-21). This verse describes the fickle nature of man. When bad things happen to him he becomes desperate and upset, and loses patience. When good things come to him, such as wealth and comfort, he becomes begrudging and miserly in spending his wealth for good causes. 'Impatience', in this context, signifies 'that which is outside the limits of Shari'ah'. 'Niggard', in this context, signifies 'failing to fulfill pecuniary obligations imposed by the Shari'ah' as explained previously. The verses that follow make an exception of the righteous believers to the characteristics of the general body of human beings. This exception starts from إِلَّا الْمُصَلِّينَ (except the performers of *ṣalāh*...70:22) and ends at عَلَى صَلَاتِهِمْ دَائِمُونَ (regular in their *ṣalāh*.... 70:23)

The first exception is expressed with the words 'the performers of *ṣalāh*' [22]. Obviously, it means the believers, but referring to them as 'performers of *ṣalāh*' indicates that '*ṣalāh*' is the greatest sign and the essential characteristic of a believer. In fact, the only people worthy of the name 'believers' are 'the performers of *ṣalāh*'. The following verses describe the qualities of the performers of *ṣalāh*.

الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَى صَلَاتِهِمْ دَائِمُونَ (who are regular in their *ṣalāh*...70:23). This means that the entire *ṣalāh* needs to be performed with due concentration. Imām Baghawī, on the basis of his own chain of narrators, transmits a narration on the authority of Abūl-Khair that they asked Sayyidnā 'Uqbah Ibn 'Āmir رضي الله عنه about the meaning of this verse (23) whether it implies that they perform their *ṣalāh* constantly and always

without any break or non-stop, he replied that is not its meaning. It means they, from the outset to the end, perform it with due concentration - without an intentional deviation. This is similar to the verse 2 of Sūrah Mu‘minūn:

الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ

'who are concentrative in their *ṣalāh* [23:2]'

Thus Verse 23 describes the quality of *Khushū‘* ('humbleness) while Verse 34 وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَى صَلَاتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُونَ (and those who take due care of their *ṣalāh*) speaks of those who regularly offer it on its due time and take care of its general etiquette. Thus it may not be surmised that the subject-matter has been repeated. The qualities of the righteous believers given in forthcoming verses are almost the same as those given in Sūrah Al- Mu‘minūn.

Rates of *Zakāh* are Specified by Allah

وَالَّذِينَ فِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ مَّعْلُومٌ (and those in whose riches there is a specified right...70:24). This verse shows that the quantifications of *Zakāh* have been fixed by Allah. The details are recorded in authentic *aḥādīth*. These quantifications, whether relating to the *niṣāb* (the minimum limit on which *Zakāh* is payable) or to the rate of payment, being fixed by Allah Ta‘ālā cannot be changed by anyone at any time.

فَمَنِ ابْتَغَىٰ وَرَاءَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْعَادُونَ (but the one who seeks [sexual gratification] beyond that, then such people are the transgressors...70:31). The preceding verse permitted to have sex with their wives and with slave-girls who are lawfully in their possession. The current verse prohibits sexual gratification beyond this limit. This verse also excludes women who, according to Shari‘ah, fall within the prohibited degree. Similarly, *Mut‘ah* (hiring a woman for a temporary period for the purpose of enjoying sex with her) is not a marriage according to Shari‘ah, therefore, it is also included in the meaning of this verse.

Masturbation is Forbidden

According to most jurists, masturbation falls under the generality of verse [31], hence forbidden. Ibn Juraij says that he asked Sayyidnā ‘Aṭā’ رضي الله عنه about it and the latter replied that it is *makrūh* (reprehensible), adding that he heard that on the Plain of Ḥashr some people will come

whose hands will be pregnant. He feels these will be the people who used to satisfy their sexual lust with their hands. Sayyidnā Sa'īd Ibn Jubair رضي الله عنه says that Allah punished a nation who used to fondle with their private parts with their hands. A *Ḥadīth* reports that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ has said:

ملعون من نكح يده

"Cursed is he who marries his hand."

The chain of authorities of this *Ḥadīth* is weak. [Maḥzarī].

Rights of Allah and Rights of Human beings both are included in Trust Obligations

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَمْتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رِعُونَ (and those who are careful about their trusts and covenants...70:32). The word *amānāt* is the plural of *amānah* 'trust and covenant' as in:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تُؤَدُّوا الْأَمَانَاتِ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهَا

'Surely, Allah commands you to fulfill trust obligations towards those entitled to them. [4:58]'

The use of plural number indicates that *amānah* does not only refer to 'that which people might deposit with a trustee for safe-keeping' but it also refers to 'all obligatory rights that are necessary to fulfill'. Breach of trusts and covenants is dishonesty. Trust obligations include all Divine rights, such as *ṣalāh*, *ṣiyām*, *ḥajj* and *Zakāh*, as well as all human rights, such as rights that Allah has imposed between human beings, or human beings themselves might have entered into binding contracts and covenants. Fulfilment of them is obligatory. Failure to comply with their terms and conditions would amount to breach, or dishonesty. [Maḥzarī, condensed].

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ بِشَهَادَتِهِمْ قَائِمُونَ (...and those who are upright in their testimonies, [70:33]). The word *shahādāt* is the plural of *shahādah*. The use of plural number in this verse too indicates that there are many types and categories of 'testimony', and it is necessary to stand firm by one's testimony of any type. This includes testifying to the faith of Islam, Divine existence and His Oneness, and testifying that Sayyidnā Muḥammad ﷺ is His Final Messenger. It is obligatory to testify to the crescent of Ramaḍān, if one has seen it. Giving a true and accurate

account of Sharī‘ah matters as expert witness, and in all judicial hearings is also implied. Everyone is duty-bound to offer the testimony when summoned. It is prohibited to add or omit any part thereof. According to this verse, it is obligatory to bear testimony, to be upright in it and stand firm by it.

**Alhamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Ma‘ārij
Ends here**

Sūrah Nūh

(Noah)

This Sūrah is Makki. It contains 28 verses and 2 sections

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 28

إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ أَنْ أَنْذِرْ قَوْمَكَ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَهُمْ عَذَابٌ
 أَلِيمٌ ﴿١﴾ قَالَ يَقَوْمِ إِنِّي لَكُمْ نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٢﴾ أَنْ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاتَّقُوهُ
 وَأَطِيعُوا ۖ يَغْفِرَ لَكُمْ مِنْ ذُنُوبِكُمْ وَيُخْرِجْكُمْ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ۖ
 إِنَّ أَجَلَ اللَّهِ إِذَا جَاءَ لَا يُؤَخَّرُ ۚ لَوْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي
 دَعَوْتُ قَوْمِي لَيْلًا وَنَهَارًا ﴿٥﴾ فَلَمْ يَزِدْهُمْ دُعَائِي إِلَّا فِرَارًا ﴿٦﴾
 وَإِنِّي كُلَّمَا دَعَوْتُهُمْ لِتَغْفِرَ لَهُمْ جَعَلُوا أَصَابِعَهُمْ فِي آذَانِهِمْ
 وَاسْتَعْشَوْا ثِيَابَهُمْ وَأَصْرُوا وَاسْتَكْبَرُوا اسْتِكْبَارًا ﴿٧﴾ ثُمَّ إِنِّي
 دَعَوْتُهُمْ جِهَارًا ﴿٨﴾ ثُمَّ إِنِّي أَعْلَنْتُ لَهُمْ وَأَسْرَرْتُ لَهُمْ إِسْرَارًا ﴿٩﴾
 فَقُلْتُ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ غَفَّارًا ﴿١٠﴾ يُرْسِلِ السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْكُمْ
 مِدْرَارًا ﴿١١﴾ وَيُمْدِدْكُمْ بِأَمْوَالٍ وَبَنِينَ وَيَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ وَيَجْعَلْ
 لَكُمْ أَنْهَارًا ﴿١٢﴾ مَا لَكُمْ لَا تَرْجُونَ لِلَّهِ وَقَارًا ﴿١٣﴾ وَقَدْ خَلَقَكُمْ
 أَطْوَارًا ﴿١٤﴾ أَلَمْ تَرَوْا كَيْفَ خَلَقَ اللَّهُ سَبْعَ سَمَوَاتٍ طِبَاقًا ﴿١٥﴾
 وَجَعَلَ الْقَمَرَ فِيهِنَّ نُورًا وَجَعَلَ الشَّمْسَ سِرَاجًا ﴿١٦﴾ وَاللَّهُ

أَنْبَأَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ نَبَاتًا ﴿١٧﴾ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُكُمْ فِيهَا وَيُخْرِجُكُمْ إِخْرَاجًا
 ﴿١٨﴾ وَاللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ الْأَرْضَ بِسَاطًا ﴿١٩﴾ لَتَسْلُكُوا مِنْهَا سُبُلًا
 فِجَاجًا ﴿٢٠﴾ قَالَ نُوحٌ رَبِّ إِنَّهُمْ عَصَوْنِي وَاتَّبَعُوا مَنْ لَمْ يَزِدْهُ مَالَهُ
 وَوَلَدَهُ إِلَّا خَسَارًا ﴿٢١﴾ وَمَكْرُؤًا مَكْرًا كَبِيرًا ﴿٢٢﴾ وَقَالُوا لَا تَذَرُنَّ
 آلِهَتَكُمْ وَلَا تَذَرُنَّ وَدًّا وَلَا سُوَاعًا ۖ وَلَا يَغُوثَ وَيَعُوقَ وَنَسْرًا
 ﴿٢٣﴾ وَقَدْ أَضَلُّوا كَثِيرًا ۖ وَلَا تَزِدِ الظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا ضَلَالًا ﴿٢٤﴾ مِمَّا
 خَطَبَيْتَهُمْ أُغْرِقُوا فَأَدْخَلُوهَا نَارًا ۖ فَلَمْ يَجِدُوا لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ
 أَنْصَارًا ﴿٢٥﴾ وَقَالَ نُوحٌ رَبِّ لَا تَذَرْ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ دَيَّارًا
 ﴿٢٦﴾ إِنَّكَ إِنْ تَذَرَهُمْ يُضِلُّوا عِبَادَكَ وَلَا يَلِدُوا إِلَّا فَاجِرًا كَفَّارًا
 ﴿٢٧﴾ رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيَّ وَلِمَنْ دَخَلَ بَيْتِيَ مُؤْمِنًا وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ
 وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ ۖ وَلَا تَزِدِ الظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا تَبَارًا ﴿٢٨﴾

We sent Nūh to his people saying (to him), "Warn your people before a painful punishment comes to them." [1] He said, "O my people, I am a plain warner for you [2] to say that you must worship Allah, and fear Him, and obey me, [3] and Allah will forgive you your sins, and will defer you to an appointed term. Indeed when Allah's term comes, it is not deferred, if you only know!" [4] He said, "My Lord, I have called my people night and day, [5] but my call did not cause them to progress but in running away. [6] And whenever I called them, so that You forgive them, they put their fingers into their ears, and wrapped their clothes around themselves, and grew obstinate, and waxed proud in extreme arrogance. [7] Then I called them loudly, [8] then I spoke to them in public and spoke to them in private. [9] So I said, "Pray to your Lord for your forgiveness, Indeed He is Very-Forgiving, [10] and (if you do so,) He will cause the heavens to rain upon you in abundance, [11] and will help you with riches and sons, and will cause gardens to grow for you, and cause rivers to flow for you. [12] What has happened to you that you do not appreciate Majesty of Allah, [13] while He has created you in different phases? [14] Did you not see how

Allah has created seven heavens one upon another, [15] and has made the moon a light therein, and made the sun a lamp? [16] And Allah has caused you to grow out of the earth a perfect growth, [17] then He will send you back into it, and will bring you forth once again. [18] And Allah has made the earth a spread for you, [19] so that you may go about its broad ways." [20]

And said Nūḥ, "My Lord, they disobeyed me, and followed him whose wealth and children added nothing to him but loss, [21] and they devised an enormous plan, [22] and said, "Never forsake your gods, and never forsake *Wadd*, nor *Suwā'*, nor *yaghūth* and *Ya'ūq* and *Nasr*. [23] And they have led many astray. And (O my Lord,) let not the wrongdoers progress in anything but deviation from the right path." [24] Because of their sins, they were drowned, and then admitted into the Fire. So they found no helpers for them besides Allah. [25] And said Nūḥ, "My Lord, do not leave on earth even a single inhabitant from the disbelievers (surviving). [26] If You leave them (surviving), they will lead Your slaves astray, and will beget none but a sinful disbeliever. [27] My Lord, grant pardon to me, and to my parents, and to everyone who enters my home as a believer, and to all the believing men and believing women, and do not increase the wrongdoers but in ruin. [28]

Commentary

يَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ مِّنْ ذُنُوبِكُمْ (and Allah will forgive you your sins, __ 71:4). The particle *mīn* is often used to indicate division into parts, that is, to refer to only a part of an amount, group or number. If it is taken in that sense here, it would signify that by embracing the faith only those sins would be forgiven which pertains to the Divine rights because violation of human rights would be forgiven only when the believer fulfills the human rights which he has violated [such as pecuniary obligations] and if they cannot be fulfilled [such as hurting somebody physically or verbally], then the person who has been so hurt must first be requested to forgive. The *ḥadīth* which reports that by embracing the faith all sins are forgiven must be understood in the light of the foregoing explanation. In other words, the *ḥadīth* has the same conditions attached to it as the verse under comment, that is, violation of the rights of the human beings is not forgiven except upon fulfillment of those rights or seeking forgiveness from the victims of that violation. Other scholars of Tafsīr

interpret the particle *min* as *zā'idah*, (having no meaning, and added only because of usage). In this way, it signifies that all their sins would be forgiven. However, on the basis of other texts, this general expression is subject to the conditions mentioned above.

وَيُؤَخِّرُكُمْ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى (and will defer you to an appointed term. __ 71:4). The word *ajal* means 'term' or 'period' and the word *musammā* means 'appointed'. The verse purports to say that if they embrace the faith, Allah will defer them until a specified time and will not destroy them before their appointed time in this world. On the other hand, if they do not embrace the faith, it is likely that they might be punished and destroyed before their appointed term. In other words, when the Divine decree of punishment is in active operation, it cannot be deferred. This indicates that at times the appointed term or life span has a condition attached to it. If a particular person fulfills the attached condition, his life span, for instance, will be eighty years; and if he did not fulfill the condition, he will meet his death at the age of seventy years. If a person is ungrateful to Allah, his life span will decrease; and if he is grateful to Him, his life span will increase. Authentic *aḥādīth* report that maintaining family ties and obedience to parents increase the life span. In short, the verse is proof of the fact that obedience to Allah, righteousness and maintaining the family ties truly increase the life span of a person.

Fluctuation in Man's Life Span

Mazḥarī explains in his commentary that there are two categories of Predestination. One of them is termed *taqdīr mubram* 'Final and Definitive Destiny' and the other is termed *taqdīr mu'allaq* 'Conditional Destiny'. The former is defined as the decisive and unalterable Destiny that is never changed; and the latter is defined as the Decree to which is attached a condition. It would be recorded in the Preserved Tablet as conditional statements thus: If a person obeys Allah, then his life span will be extended to, for example, seventy years. 'If he disobeys Him, then he will die at the age of fifty years.' The latter category is alterable. The Qur'ān mentions both the types of Destiny thus:

يَمْحُوا اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَيُثَبِّتُ وَعِنْدَهُ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ

Allah wipes off what He wills and affirms (what He wills). And with Him is the Mother Book. [13:39]

The term 'Mother Book' refers to that Book in which is recorded the 'Final Destiny' and Allah is fully aware of whether or not the condition that is recorded in 'Conditional Destiny' will be fulfilled. The 'Final Destiny' is the exclusive domain of Divine knowledge. Recorded there are the decisions, and commands that issue forth as the final outcome after the conditions of deeds have been fulfilled or supplication has been answered. Therefore, that is totally free of obliteration and assertion and addition and deletion.

Sayyidnā Salmān al-Fārisī رحمته الله has reported Allah's Messenger ﷺ as saying:

لا يرد القضاء إلا الدعاء ولا يزيد في العمر إلا البرّ رواه الترمذی (مظہری)

"Nothing but supplication averts the decree, and nothing but good treatment of parents increases life span." [Transmitted by Tirmidhī, as quoted by Maẓharī]

The word *al-birr* means 'to treat parents kindly'. The purport of the *ḥadīth* is to show that on account of these deeds the 'Conditional Destiny' can be changed. In short, the verse under comment says: أَجَلٌ مُّسَمًّى (and will defer you to an appointed term ... 71:4).

The deferment is contingent upon embracing the faith. This describes the 'Conditional Destiny' about their life span, the knowledge of which probably was given to Nūḥ عليه السلام. As a result, he explained to his people that they are given respite till their full term during which, if they embraced the faith, Allah will not destroy them by worldly punishment. If they failed to embrace the faith, Allah will destroy them in this world before their appointed term. In addition, they will suffer eternal perdition of the Hereafter. It further shows that death is inevitable when the time specified by Allah in the final destiny arrives, even if they embrace the faith. Death in any case is inescapable. Allah has, in His consummate wisdom, not made this world immortal. It must, of necessity, perish. Faith and obedience, on the one hand, and infidelity and sinning, on the other, do not make any difference. The fragment of the verse that reads:

إِنَّ أَجَلَ اللَّهِ إِذَا جَاءَ لَا يُؤَخَّرُ (Indeed when Allah's term comes, it is not deferred_ 71:4) refers to this immutable destiny.

Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه reports that Nūḥ عليه السلام was commissioned as a

Prophet at the age of forty years and, according to the explicit text of the Qur'ān, he lived for nine hundred and fifty years. During this long life, he neither gave up his attempt at reform nor did he lose hope. His nation persecuted him but he exercised patience.

On the authority of Ḍaḥḥāk's  narration, Ibn 'Abbās  reports that Nūḥ's  people would beat him up until he falls. They would then wrap him up in a blanket and put him into a house, thinking that he was dead. When he comes to his senses the next day, he would call them towards Allah and preach to them. Muḥammad Ibn Ishāq narrates from 'Ubaid Ibn 'Amr Laithī that according to a report he has received, when his nation would throttle him, he would fall faint and when he recovered from his fainting, he would pray for them, thus:

رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِقَوْمِي أَنَّهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

"O Allah, forgive my people because they do not know."

When the first generation of Nūḥ  failed him, he still held out hope that their children might embrace the faith, but that generation too passed away without faith. Expecting that the third generation might embrace the faith, he continued with his arduous task of preaching the truth, but that generation too frustrated him. Miraculously, Prophet Nūḥ  was granted a long life [950 years] but the different generations of his people did not have such long lives.

Prophet Nūḥ  preached to his people day and night and spoke to them in public and in private, individually and collectively. He reminded them of the great favours and gifts that Allah had bestowed upon them, and the great blessings that await them in Paradise if they chose the path of rectitude. He also preached to them that if they embraced the faith and acted righteously, the doors of comfort, prosperity, welfare and well-being will open up for them in this world as well. He drew their attention to the manifestation of Allah's perfect power. But they did not pay heed. On the other hand, Allah informed Prophet Nūḥ  through revelation that none of his people were going to embrace the faith except for those who have already done so, describing it thus:

إِنَّهُ لَنْ يُؤْمِنَ مِنْ قَوْمِكَ إِلَّا مَنْ قَدْ آمَنَ

'And it was revealed to Nūḥ that none of your people would ever

believe except those who have already believed__ [11:36]'

He warned them of the evil consequences of rejection of the Divine Message. But all his preaching and warning, his sympathy with and solicitude for, their well-being only met with ridicule, opposition and abuse; and instead of following one whose heart was full of love for them, they chose to follow those leaders who led them to destruction. Prophet Nūḥ's ﷺ exhortations and preaching of a whole lifetime proved a voice in the wilderness, generation after generation passed away, every coming generation proved to be worse and more wicked than the previous generation. So, he prayed to Allah to ruin and destroy the enemies of the Truth. As a result, the prayer was answered and the entire nation was drowned and destroyed except for the believers who were asked to embark upon the ark. Prophet Nūḥ ﷺ invited them to believe in, and pray to Allah, to seek His pardon for their past sins and explained to them the worldly advantage of this:

يُرْسِلُ السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِدْرَارًا. وَيُمْدِدْكُمْ بِأَمْوَالٍ وَبَنِينَ

(and He will cause the heavens to rain upon you in abundance, and will help you with riches and sons, ...71:11-12)

Most scholars have deduced from this verse that, by repenting and asking for pardon of sins, Allah sends down rain in abundance according to the need of time; no famine occurs; and through the blessings of praying for pardon of sins, Allah will reinforce people with more wealth and children. Occasionally, the consummate wisdom of Allah [which is unfathomable] wills the contrary situation. Generally, however, the Divine custom with people is to alleviate calamities if they repent, pray for pardon and give up sins. Versions of *aḥādīth* confirm this.

أَلَمْ تَرَوْا كَيْفَ خَلَقَ اللَّهُ سَبْعَ سَمَوَاتٍ طِبَاقًا. وَجَعَلَ الْقَمَرَ فِيهِنَّ نُورًا

(Did you not see how Allah has created seven heavens one upon another, and has made the moon a light therein? 71:15-16)

These verses are adduced as proof positive of Divine Oneness and His power. He has created seven heavens, one on top of the other, and placed the moon as a light in them. The prepositional phrase in the verse apparently indicates that the moon is placed in the body of the heavens. The subject is fully discussed in Sūrah Al-Furqān under the following verse:

تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ فِي السَّمَاءِ بُرُوجًا وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا سِرَاجًا وَقَمَرًا مُنِيرًا ﴿٦١﴾

Glorious is the One who made stellar formations in the sky and placed therein a lamp (sun) and a bright moon. [25:61]

Complaining about his people, Prophet Nuh عليه السلام said:

وَمَكَرُوا مَكْرًا كَبِيرًا (and they devised an enormous plan....71:22). In other words, they hatched a mighty plot. They rejected the message and persecuted Prophet Nuh عليه السلام. In addition, they let loose hooligans and hoodlums on him. They agreed that they will not abandon their gods, especially the five major idols whose names appear in the following verse:

لَا تَذَرْنِ وَدًّا وَلَا سُوَاعًا وَلَا يَغُوثَ وَيَعُوقَ وَنَسْرًا (and never forsake Wadd, nor Suwā', nor yaghūth and Ya'ūq and Nasr.....71:23). Imām Baghawī reports that these five were in fact righteous servants Allah who lived in the intervening period between Prophets 'Ādam and Nuh عليه السلام. There were many people who held them in high regard and followed their footsteps. Even after their death, they followed their footsteps and complied with Divine injunctions. A while later, Satan misled them. He put it to them that if they make pictures of their righteous elders and place them in front, their worship would be perfect and they would attain the quality of humility and humbleness. Those people fell into the Satanic trap and carved statues of them and placed them in their temples. When they saw the statues of their elders, their memories were refreshed and experienced a special feeling. That generation gradually died and a new generation came up. Satan played another trick with them. He imparted to them that the object of worship of their elders were statues and idols. They fell for this trick and worshipped them. This is the beginning of idol-worship or idolatry. People of Prophet Nuh عليه السلام gradually got steeped in idolatry. They had many idols, the five mentioned in the verse under comment being the most popular because of the deep love they had for them.

وَلَا تَزِدِ الظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا ضَلَالًا (...let not the wrongdoers progress in anything but deviation from the right path.....71:24). This is the supplication of Prophet Nuh عليه السلام against his people. It may not be surmised that the duty and obligation of a Prophetic office is to guide the people, but here Prophet Nuh عليه السلام is praying for increase in his people's misguidance. Prophet Nuh عليه السلام did not invoke this curse out of despair or impatience. In fact, he

invoked it when, after doing full justice to his mission for many centuries, his people chose the path of deviation, rebellion, disbelief and obstinacy and persisted in it until they had reached a point of no return, of which Allah informed him thus, 'And it was revealed to Nūḥ that none of your people would ever believe except those who have already believed__ [11:36]'. This situation made it clear to him that his people would definitely and certainly die in the state of disbelief. So he prayed for their final destiny to overtake them sooner and destroy them.

مِمَّا خَطَبْتَهُمْ أُغْرِقُوا فَأَدْخِلُوا نَارًا، فَلَمْ يَجِدُوا لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَنْصَارًا (Because of their sins they were drowned, and then admitted into the Fire. So they found no helpers for them besides Allah.....71:25). The 'sins' referred to here are unpardonable sins of '*kufr* and '*shirk*'. They were drowned in water and emerged in fire, an opposing punishment which is not impossible for Divine power. Obviously, the 'fire' mentioned in the verse does not refer to the fire of Hell, but refers to the fire in the realm of '*Barzakh*' (the existence between the worldly life and the life of the Hereafter). The Qur'ān speaks of the fire in the realm of '*Barzakh*'. It is evident that Sayyidnā Nūḥ's ﷺ people will be punished in Hell-Fire in the Hereafter after resurrection and accounting for their deeds.

Qur'ān Confirms Punishment in the Grave

The verse under comment confirms that people will be punished in the realm of *Barzakh*, usually referring to the period of stay in the grave. This further proves that, since the evil-doers will be punished in the grave, the righteous believers will also be rewarded and blessed with favours. Authentic and successively transmitted *aḥādīth* report about the reward and punishment in the grave so abundantly and clearly that its reality cannot be denied or rejected. Therefore, there is a total agreement of the Ummah on this issue; and belief in it is the symbol of *Ahl-us-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah*.

Alhamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Nūḥ
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Jinn

(The Jinns)

This Sūrah is Makki. It contains 28 verses and 2 sections

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 28

قُلْ أُوحِيَ إِلَيَّ أَنَّهُ اسْتَمَعَ نَفَرٌ مِّنَ الْجِنِّ فَقَالُوا إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا قُرْآنًا
عَجَبًا ﴿١﴾ يَهْدِي إِلَى الرُّشْدِ فَآمَنَّا بِهِ ۖ وَلَنْ نُشْرِكَ بِرَبِّنَا أَحَدًا ﴿٢﴾
وَأَنَّهُ تَعَلَّى جَدُّ رَبِّنَا مَا اتَّخَذَ صَاحِبَةً وَلَا وَلَدًا ﴿٣﴾ وَأَنَّهُ كَانَ يَقُولُ
سَفِيهُنَا عَلَى اللَّهِ شَطَطًا ﴿٤﴾ وَأَنَّا ظَنَنَّا أَنْ لَّنْ تَقُولَ الْإِنْسُ وَالْجِنُّ
عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا ﴿٥﴾ وَأَنَّهُ كَانَ رِجَالٌ مِّنَ الْإِنْسِ يَعُوذُونَ بِرِجَالٍ مِّنَ
الْجِنِّ فَزَادُوهُمْ رَهَقًا ﴿٦﴾ وَأَنَّهُمْ ظَنُّوا كَمَا ظَنَنْتُمْ أَنْ لَّنْ يَبْعَثَ اللَّهُ
أَحَدًا ﴿٧﴾ وَأَنَّا لَمَسْنَا السَّمَاءَ فَوَجَدْنَاهَا مُلَيَّتٌ حَرَسًا شَدِيدًا
وَشُهْبًا ﴿٨﴾ وَأَنَّا كُنَّا نَقْعُدُ مِنْهَا مَقَاعِدَ لِلسَّمْعِ ۖ فَمَنْ يَسْتَمِعِ الْآنَ
يَجِدْ لَهُ شِهَابًا رَّصَدًا ﴿٩﴾ وَأَنَّا لَآنْذِرِي أَشْرَارٍ بِمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَمْ
أَرَادَ بِهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ رَشَدًا ﴿١٠﴾ وَأَنَّا مِنَّا الصُّلْحُونَ وَ مِنَّا دُونَ ذَلِكَ ۖ
كُنَّا طَرَائِقَ قِدْدًا ﴿١١﴾ وَأَنَّا ظَنَنَّا أَنْ لَّنْ نُعْجِزَ اللَّهَ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَكِنْ
نُعْجِزُهُ هَرَبًا ﴿١٢﴾ وَأَنَّا لَمَّا سَمِعْنَا الْهُدَى آمَنَّا بِهِ ۖ فَمَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِرَبِّهِ
فَلَا يَخَافُ بَخْسًا وَلَا رَهَقًا ﴿١٣﴾ وَأَنَّا مِنَّا الْمُسْلِمُونَ وَ مِنَّا

الْقِسْطُونَ ۖ فَمَنْ أَسْلَمَ فَأُولَئِكَ تَحَرَّوْا رَشَدًا ﴿١٤﴾ وَأَمَّا الْقَاسِطُونَ
 فَكَانُوا لِجَهَنَّمَ حَطَبًا ﴿١٥﴾ وَأَنْ لَّوِ اسْتَقَامُوا عَلَى الطَّرِيقَةِ
 لَأَسْقَيْنَهُمْ مَّاءً غَدَقًا ﴿١٦﴾ لِنَفْتِنَهُمْ فِيهِ ۚ وَمَنْ يُعْرِضْ عَنْ ذِكْرِ رَبِّهِ
 يَسْلُكْهُ عَذَابًا صَعَدًا ﴿١٧﴾ وَأَنْ الْمَسْجِدَ لِلَّهِ فَلَا تَدْعُوا مَعَ اللَّهِ
 أَحَدًا ﴿١٨﴾ وَأَنَّهُ لَمَّا قَامَ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ يَدْعُوهُ كَادُوا يَكُونُونَ عَلَيْهِ لِبَدًا
 ۖ قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَدْعُوا رَبِّي وَلَا أُشْرِكُ بِهِ أَحَدًا ﴿٢٠﴾ قُلْ إِنِّي لَا أَمْلِكُ
 لَكُمْ ضَرًّا وَلَا رَشَدًا ﴿٢١﴾ قُلْ إِنِّي لَنْ يُجِيرَنِي مِنَ اللَّهِ أَحَدٌ ۚ وَلَنْ
 أَجِدَ مِنْ دُونِهِ مُلْتَحَدًا ﴿٢٢﴾ إِلَّا بَلَاغًا مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرِسَالَاتِهِ ۚ وَمَنْ يَعْصِ
 اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَإِنَّ لَهُ نَارَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدًا فِيهَا أَبَدًا ﴿٢٣﴾ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا رَأَوْا
 مَا يُوعَدُونَ فَيَسْئَلُونَ مَنْ أَضْعَفُ نَاصِرًا وَّاقِلُّ عَدَدًا ﴿٢٤﴾ قُلْ إِنْ
 أَدْرَىٰ أَقْرَبُ مَا تُوعَدُونَ أَمْ يَجْعَلُ لَهُ رَبِّي أَمَدًا ﴿٢٥﴾ غَلِمْ الْغَيْبِ
 فَلَا يُظْهِرُ عَلَىٰ غَيْبِهِ أَحَدًا ﴿٢٦﴾ إِلَّا مَنِ ارْتَضَىٰ مِنْ رَسُولٍ فَإِنَّهُ
 يَسْلُكُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِ رَصَدًا ﴿٢٧﴾ لِّيَعْلَمَ أَنْ قَدْ أَبْلَغُوا
 رِسَالَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ وَأَحَاطَ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ وَأَحْصَىٰ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عَدَدًا ﴿٢٨﴾

Say, "It has been revealed to me that a group from Jinn has listened (to the Qur'an), and said (to their people), 'Indeed we have heard an amazing Recital (Qur'an) [1] that guides to the right way, so we have believed in it, and we will never associate a partner with our Lord.' [2] and (then the Jinns started talking to each other) that exalted is the Glory of our Lord; He has taken neither a wife, nor a son, [3] and that the fools among us used to attribute to Allah extremely wrong things, [4] and that we thought that the humans and the Jinn would never tell a lie about Allah, (therefore, we had followed them in *shirk* under this impression), [5] and that some people from human beings used to seek refuge with some people of the Jinn, and thus they increased them (the Jinns) in arrogance, [6] and that they (humans)

thought as you (O Jinns) thought that Allah would never resurrect anyone, [7] and that we sought (to reach) the sky, but we found it filled with stern guards and flames, [8] and that we used to sit at places therein to listen; but if one will (try to) listen now, he will find a flame in ambush for him, [9] and that we do not know whether it is a bad end that is intended for those on earth, or their Lord has intended for them a right thing, [10] and that some of us are (already) righteous, and some of us are otherwise, and we were on different ways. [11] And that we have now believed that we can never frustrate Allah on the earth, nor can we baffle Him by escape, [12] and that when we heard the Guiding Discourse, we believed in it; so if one believes in his Lord, he will have no fear of either any curtailment (in his reward) or any excess (in his punishment), [13] and that some of us are Muslims, and some of us are unjust; so those who submitted to Islam have found out the right path, [14] As for the unjust, they have become firewood for Hell." [15]

"(And it is also revealed to me) that if they (the people of Makkah) had stood firm on the (right) way, We would have supplied water to them in abundance, [16] so that We test them thereby; and if one turns away from the remembrance of his Lord, He will thrust him into a severe torment, [17] and that *masājids* (mosques) belong to Allah; so, do not invoke anyone along with Allah, [18] and that when Allah's slave stood invoking Him, they almost rushed on him in crowds." [19]

Say, "I invoke my Lord, and do not associate with Him anyone." [20] Say, "I possess no power to cause you any harm or bring you to a right way." [21] Say, "No one can ever save me from Allah, and I can never find a refuge save with Him. [22] However, (I have been given mandate) to convey (commands) from Allah, and His messages. And the one who disobeys Allah and His Messenger, for him there is the fire of Hell, wherein they will live forever. [23] (And the disbelievers will continue to deny the truth and mock at it) until when they will see what they are promised, they will know whose supporters are weaker, and whose numbers are less. [24] Say, "I do not know whether that which you are promised is near, or my Lord has appointed for it a distant term. [25] (He is the) Knower of the Unseen. So He does not let anyone know His Unseen, [26] except a

messenger whom He chooses (to inform through revelation), and then He appoints (angels as) watching guards before him and behind him, (so that devils may not tamper with the divine revelation,) [27] so that He knows that they (angels) have conveyed the messages of their Lord. And He has encompassed all that is with them, and has comprehensive knowledge of every thing by numbers. [28]

Commentary

Preliminary Remarks

It seems necessary to know a few facts before the start of the study of the Sūrah, which are as follows:

Fact [1]

Before the advent of the Holy Prophet ﷺ the devils used to go up to the heavens and eavesdrop on the conversations of the angels. After his advent, they were pelted with a piercing flame if they attempted to go up and eavesdrop. It is mentioned in Sūrah Al-Aḥqāf that a group of jinn went up to the Holy Prophet ﷺ to investigate the reason for this new phenomenon.

Fact [2]

It was customary in the Days of Ignorance that when people halted in a jungle or valley in the course of a journey, they uttered the following words:

اعوذ بعزیز هذا الوادی من شر سفهاء قومه

"I seek refuge in the leader of this valley from the foolish mischief-makers of his nation" --

believing that the leader of the valley (a Jinn) would protect them.

Fact [3]

A terrible famine held Makkah in its grip for several years as a result of the Holy Prophet's ﷺ prayer.

Fact [4]

When the Holy Prophet ﷺ called the pagans towards Islam, they opposed him tooth and nail. The first two incidents are taken from Tafsīr Durr Manthūr and the last two incidents are taken from Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr.

نَفَرٌ مِّنَ الْجِنِّ (...a group from Jinn....72:1). The word *nafar* is used for a

group consisting of three to ten people. The Jinn referred to here are said to be a group of nine Jinns from a place called Naṣībīn.

Reality of Jinn

Jinn is one of the Divine creatures. They have body and soul. They, like human beings, have intellect and senses, but they are hidden from human eyes. This species of creation is called 'Jinn' because it literally means 'hidden' or 'invisible'. They, like human beings, are created from the four primal elements: dust, water, air and fire, but the element of fire predominates in them, whereas in man the element of dust predominates. They, like human beings, are males and females; and they, like human beings, marry and procreate. Apparently, the word *shaiṭān* [pl. *shayāṭīn*] 'Satan' refers to the 'arrogant mischief-making Jinn'. The existence of Jinn and angels is established by conclusive and incontestable evidence in the Qur'ān and Sunnah, the denial or rejection of which amounts to disbelieving the Qur'ān. [Tafsīr Mazḥarī].

قُلْ أُوحِيَ إِلَيَّ Say, (It has been revealed to me.....72:1). This shows that the Holy Prophet ﷺ did not see the group of Jinn who heard him recite the Qur'ān. Allah informed him by the revelation of Sūrah Al-Jinn.

Circumstances of Revelation

Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ narrates, as recorded in Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī, of Muslim, and in Tirmidhī and other collections, that Allah's Messenger ﷺ did not by deliberate design make the Jinn listen to the Qur'ān, nor did he see them. The true story is that the Holy Prophet ﷺ, with his Companions, was going to the marketplace of 'Ukāẓ. This incident took place at a time when the devils were barred from going to the skies and eavesdropping on the conversations of the angels by being pelted with piercing flames. When the Jinn realised that they were no longer free to eavesdrop, they discussed among themselves that the incident could not be coincidental. There must be a genuine reason for that. So they divided themselves into groups and each group went in different direction to investigate the cause of the new phenomenon. One of the groups arrived at a place called Nakhlāh in Tihāmāh where Ḥijāz is situated. At that juncture, the Holy Prophet ﷺ was leading the Ṣaḥābah in Fajr *ṣalāh* and the Jinn had the opportunity to hear the Qur'ān. When this group of Jinn heard the Qur'ān, they listened to it very attentively and concluded on oath that it was the Qur'ān that prevented them from eavesdropping in the heavens. Then they returned to their fellow Jinns and recounted to

them the entire episode, which is mentioned in the following verse:

فَقَالُوا إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا قُرْآنًا عَجَبًا (...and said [to their people], 'Indeed we have heard an amazing Recital [Qur'an]....72:1). Allah informed His Messenger about the entire incident of the Jinn in the verses under discussion.

Abū Ṭalib's Death and the Holy Prophet's Journey to Ṭā'if

Most commentators say that after the death of Abū Ṭalib the Holy Prophet ﷺ felt lonely, having no friend or supporter in Makkah. So, he undertook a journey to Ṭā'if where he approached Banū Thaḳīf for assistance against the hostility and persecution of his people. According to Muḥammad Ibn Ishāq's narration, when the Holy Prophet ﷺ arrived in Ṭā'if, he approached the three brothers of Banū Thaḳīf. They were recognized as the leaders and honorable members of the tribe. The three brothers were 'Umair's sons, their names being 'Abd Yālil, Sa'ūd and Ḥabīb. They had a Quraishite lady in their house. Allah's Messenger ﷺ invited them to the call of Islam and mentioned about his people's hostility and persecution and asked for help. But they responded very harshly and did not speak to him about anything.

Allah's Messenger ﷺ saw that these three people were the most respected leaders of Banū Thaḳīf, from whom he expected a favourable response, but he was disappointed. He said to them that if they did not wish to help him, they should at least keep his arrival and request for help confidential and not tell his people; because if they came to know about it, they would persecute him even more harshly. But the oppressors did not concede to this either. On the contrary, they let loose on him foolish hooligans, slaves and hoodlums, so that they may revile him and make violent noises in public places against him. When they made violent noises, more hoodlums and young violent criminal elements joined in. In order to save himself from the mischief of the hooligans and hoodlums, the Holy Prophet ﷺ took refuge in a vineyard which belonged to two brothers, namely 'Utbah and Shaibah. The brothers themselves were in the vineyard at the time. The hooligans and hoodlums left him and went back. The two brothers were watching him, and they also watched how violently the foolish people behaved towards him. Just then the Quraishite lady, who was in the house of the oppressors, came to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. He complained to her how her in-laws persecuted him.

When the Holy Prophet ﷺ felt a bit settled in the vineyard, he prayed to Allah. The wordings of the supplication are unusual and on no other

occasion such wordings are recorded:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَشْكُو إِلَيْكَ ضَعْفَ قُوَّتِي وَقِلَّةَ حِيلَتِي وَهَوَانِي عَلَى النَّاسِ وَأَنْتَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ وَأَنْتَ رَبُّ الْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ فَأَنْتَ رَبِّي إِلَى مَنْ تَكَلِّمُ إِلَى بَعِيدٍ يَتَهَجَّمُنِي أَوْ إِلَى عَدُوٍّ مَلَكَتْهُ أَمْرِي إِنْ لَمْ تَكُنْ سَاحِطًا عَلَيَّ فَلَا أُبَالِي وَلَكِنَّ عَافِيَتَكَ هِيَ أَوْسَعُ لِي. أَعُوذُ بِنُورِ وَجْهِكَ الَّذِي أَشْرَقَتْ لَهُ الظُّلُمَاتُ وَصَلَحَ عَلَيْهِ أَمْرُ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ مِنْ أَنْ تُنْزِلَ لِي غَضَبَكَ لَكَ الْعُتْبَى حَتَّى تَرْضَى وَلَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِكَ. (مظهري باختصار)

"O Allah, I complain to you the weakness of my strength and the shortage of my options, and lack of respect for me in the sight of people. You are the Most Merciful of all, and You are the Cherisher and Sustainer of the weaklings. You are my Cherisher. To whom are You handing me over? - to a stranger who would attack me? Or to an enemy whom You have given control over me (so that he may do as he wishes)? If You are not angry with me, I do not care. Your caring about me is better (which I pray for). I seek refuge in the light of Your blessed Being which dispels all darkness and on the foundation of which all matters related to this world and the next world are set aright. If You send down Your wrath on us, our task is to exert ourselves until we gain Your good pleasure. And there is neither strength nor power except through You." [condensed from Mazhari].

When Rabī'ah's sons 'Utbah and Shaibah saw this, they felt compassion for him in their heart. They called one of their Christian slaves, 'Addās by name, and asked him to break a bunch of grapes, place it in a plate and give it to that person and ask him to eat. Complying with the instructions, 'Addās kept the plate of grapes in front of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. He recited *bismil-lah* 'In the name of Allah' and stretched his hand towards it. 'Addās was watching all this and said: By Allah! this speech [referring to the formula of *basmalah*] is not used by the inhabitants of this city. The Holy Prophet ﷺ asked him as to where he was from and what his religion was. He replied that he was a Christian and hailed from Nineveh. Then the Holy Prophet ﷺ said to him that this means 'you are from the village of Yūnus Ibn Mattā العنبر. He asked: "What do you know about Yūnus Ibn Mattā." The Holy Prophet ﷺ replied: "He was my brother. He was Allah's Prophet. I too am Allah's Prophet." At this, 'Addās fell to the Holy Prophet's ﷺ feet. He kissed the blessed head of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his hands and legs. 'Utbah and Shaibah watched the whole incident. One of them said to the other: "I

hope he has not set our slave awry." When 'Addas returned to them, they asked him: "What has happened? You were kissing his hands and feet?" He replied: "My masters, at this time there is no person better than he on the face of the earth. He has taught me something which none other than a Prophet can teach." They said: "You miserable wretch, may it not happen that this man turns you away from your religion, because your religion in any case is better than his." When the Holy Prophet ﷺ was completely despaired of Thaqīf's assistance, he returned from Ṭā'if to Makkah. On his way back, he halted at Nakhlah and towards the latter part of the night he performed *ṣalāt-ut-tahajjud*. The delegation of Jinns of Naṣībīn of Yemen had also gone there. They heard the Qur'ān and embraced the faith. They went back to their people and recounted to them the whole incident which Allah has mentioned in the verses under comment. [Mazharī]

A Jinn Companion of the Holy Prophet ﷺ

Ibn Jauzī, in his book *Ṣifat-uṣ-Ṣafwah*, through his own chain of authorities, reports from Sahl Ibn 'Abdullāh ؓ that he saw an old Jinn, in a place, who was performing *ṣalāh* in the direction of Ka'bah. He was wearing a woolen cloak that looked beautiful on him and in which he looked graceful. After he completed his prayer, Sayyidnā Sahl ؓ greeted him. Replying to his greeting, he said: 'You seem to be admiring the beauty of this cloak. This cloak is on my body for seven hundred years. I have met Holy Prophet 'Isā ؑ in this cloak, and in the same cloak I met Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and I am from among those Jinns about whom Sūrah Al-Jinn was revealed.' According to the Ḥadīth narratives that recount the incident of the 'Night of Jinn', (i.e. the night in which the Jinns visited the Holy Prophet ﷺ Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ؓ was with the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and the Holy Prophet ﷺ met the Jinns in a valley near Makkah for the specific purpose of inviting them to the call of Islam and making them hear the Qur'ān by deliberate design. Apparently, this incident occurred after the incident mentioned in Sūrah Al-Jinn. 'Allāmah Khafājī has said that reliable Aḥādīth confirm that the Jinn delegations met the Holy Prophet ﷺ six times. Thus there is no contradiction between the two versions of the incident, because they are two separate incidents. The Holy Prophet ﷺ was not even aware of the incident of the Jinn's coming to him and listening to the Qur'ān that is

mentioned in Sūrah Jinn. He only learnt about it later through revelation. This incident happened at Nakhlah on his way back from Ta'if. The other narratives from which we gather that the Holy Prophet ﷺ met the Jinn by deliberate design in a valley near the city of Makkah to preach to them and make them hear the Qur'ān - is a separate incident which took place after that.

وَأَنَّهُ تَعَالَى جَدُّ رَبِّنَا (and [then the Jinns started talking to each other] that exalted is the Glory of our Lord;...72:3). The word *jadd* means 'majesty/glory' used for Allah. Instead of saying '*jadduhū*' with a third person pronoun referring to Allah, the attributive name '*rabb*' 'Lord' is expressly retained which indicates the exalted position of Allah. The Being who is the Cherisher and sustainer of His creation must, of necessity, occupy the lofty position. Commentators have discussed the grammatical conjunctive construction '*wa annahū*' at length in this verse. It might be of no interest to the general readers.

وَأَنَّهُ كَانَ يَفُولُ سَفِيهِنَا عَلَى اللَّهِ شَطَطًا ﴿٤﴾ وَأَنَا ظَنَنَّا أَنَّ لَنْ تَقُولَ الْإِنْسُ وَالْجِنُّ عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا ﴿٥﴾

...and that the fools among us used to attribute to Allah extremely wrong things, and that we thought that the humans and the Jinn would never tell a lie about Allah, [therefore, we had followed them in shirk under this impression]. (72:5)

The word *shataṭ* means 'vile words, extravagant or exorbitant or enormous lies'. The word also means 'to transgress or act wrongfully, unjustly or exceed the legitimate bounds'. The believers from amongst Jinn used to put forward their excuse for being involved in disbelief and idolatry thus: The foolish people from amongst their nation uttered vile slander against Allah, whilst they did not think it possible for a human being or a Jinn to impute a lie to Allah. They were thus far caught up in the foolish people's vile words and committed *kufr* and *shirk*, but they had now heard the Qur'ān and the reality had later opened up.

وَأَنَّهُ كَانَ رِجَالٌ مِنَ الْإِنْسِ يَعُوذُونَ بِرِجَالٍ مِنَ الْجِنِّ فَزَاوُوهُمْ رَهَقًا ﴿٦﴾

(...and that some people from human beings used to seek refuge with some peoples of the Jinn, and thus they increased them (the Jinns) in arrogance, [72:6])

This verse describes the situation that it was customary for people in the Days of Ignorance that when they halted in a valley in the course of a

journey, they sought refuge in the Jinn leader of that valley from the foolish mischief-makers of his nation believing that the leader of the valley will protect them. This made the Jinn think that they are better than human beings. That is why, they seek refuge in their leader but this increased the wickedness of the Jinn.

Rāfi' Ibn 'Umair's ﷺ Islam on account of the Jinn

Mazharī cites in his Tafsīr that it is reported in *Hawātif-ul-Jinn* through his chain of narrators on the authority of Sayyidnā Sa'īd Ibn Jubair ﷺ that the Holy Prophet's ﷺ Companion Rāfi' Ibn 'Umair ﷺ recounts an incident of his embracing the Islamic faith, thus:

'One night I was travelling in a desert. Suddenly I was overcome by sleep. So, I alighted from my camel, and before I went off to sleep I uttered the following formula in keeping with the custom of my people:

اَنِّىْ اَعُوْذُ بِعَظِيْمِ هٰذَا الْوَادِىْ مِنَ الْجِنِّ

"I seek refuge in the leader of the Jinn of this valley from the foolish mischief-makers of his nation."

I saw in my dream that there is a sword in a person's hand who wants to place it on my camel's chest. I woke up in a shock and looked around in all directions, but found nothing. So, I said to myself that this was some Satanic nightmare. It was not a true dream and fell back into deep sleep and became completely oblivious to my surrounding. I experienced the same dream again. I got up and looked all around the camel, but found nothing. This time, however, I found the camel shivering. I went back to my place and slept away and saw the same dream. I awoke and found my camel tossing about restlessly. Then I saw a youngster in whose hand was a weapon. This was the same person whom I had seen attacking the camel the first time. I saw he was holding the hand of an old man who is stopping him from attacking the camel. Just then three wild zebras appeared. The old man said to the youngster, 'Choose any one of these zebras, and let go this man's camel.' The youngster took one of the zebras and took leave. The old man then looked at me and said, 'You fool, when you seek refuge in a valley, and you fear any danger from the jinn or devils, recite thus:'

اَعُوْذُ بِاللّٰهِ رَبِّ مُحَمَّدٍ مِنْ هٰذَا الْوَادِىْ

"I seek refuge in Allah, the Lord of Muḥammad, from the

horrors of this valley. Do not seek refuge in any Jinn because that time is gone when human beings used to seek refuge in Jinn."

I asked him who that person was. He replied that he was the Arabian Holy Prophet ﷺ, neither eastern nor western. He was raised with his Prophetic mission on a Monday. I asked him where he lived. He replied that he lived in Yathrib which is an area where dates grow abundantly. As soon as the morning dawned, I set for Madīnah and urged my mount to move faster and faster until I reached Madīnah. When the Holy Prophet ﷺ saw me, he recounted to me the entire episode before I could tell him anything. He invited me to the call of Islam and I embraced the Islamic faith.

Having narrated this story, Sayyidnā Sa'īd Ibn Jubair رضي الله عنه said that the following verse was revealed in this connection. **وَأَنَّهُ كَانَ رِجَالٌ مِنَ الْإِنسِ** (and that some people from human beings used to seek refuge with some people of the Jinn.....72:6)

وَأَنَا لَمَسْنَا السَّمَاءَ فَوَجَدْنَاهَا مُلِئَتْ حَرَسًا شَدِيدًا وَشُهُبًا (...and that we sought [to reach] the sky, but we found it filled with stern guards and flames....72:8). The word *sama'* is used in two different senses: 'sky' as well as 'cloud'. It would appear that here the word is used in the latter sense.

The Jinn Used to Go only up to the Clouds to Eavesdrop, Not to the Sky

The Jinn and the devils used to go up to the sky means that they used to go to the 'clouds', take up positions there to sit and eavesdrop. The proof of this is found in Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī on the authority of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها who reports:

سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول ان الملائكة تنزل في العنان و هو السحاب فتذكر الاموالذي قضى في السماء فتسترق الشياطين السمع فتسمعه فتوجه الى الكهّان فيكذبون معها مائة كذبة من عند انفسهم (از مظهری).

" I have heard the Messenger of Allah say that the angels descended in the '*anan* of *sama*' meaning the 'cloud'. There they discussed the decisions Allah has issued in the sky. The devils listened to their private conversations without them knowing about it and passed the information to the soothsayers, mixing it with a hundred lies from their side." [Mazḥarī].

A narration is recorded in Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī on the authority of

Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه and in Muslim on the authority of Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه to the following effect:

When Allah issues an order in the sky, the angels flap their wings in readiness to obey the order. When the issuance of the order is over, they discuss among themselves. The devils eavesdrop on this discussion, and pass the information to the soothsayers, admixing it with many lies.

This Hadīth apparently contradicts the narration of Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها but in actual fact, there is no conflict between the two narratives. This narrative does not prove that the devils go inside the sky to eavesdrop. Probably, when the order is issued in the first instance by Allah, it filters down to the angels from the upper level to the lower level, until the angels come down to the cloud where they discuss it. The devils steal the information from here as mentioned by Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها [Mazhari].

At any rate, before the advent of the Holy Prophet ﷺ the Jinn and devils had free access to the heavenly information. They used to position themselves in the cloud and eavesdrop on the conversations of the angels and pass the information to the soothsayers. At the advent of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, there arose the need to protect the heavenly revelation. As a result, the access of devils to the upper region was stopped in such a way that if a devil attempted to go up, he would be repelled by piercing flames. This was the new phenomenon that excited the curiosity of the devils and Jinn and, dividing themselves into groups, they went to the east and to the west to investigate. One of the groups arrived at a place called Nakhlah where its members heard the Qur’ān and embraced the faith of Islam as mentioned in Sūrah Al-Jinn.

Meteors Existed Since the Inception of Time, but were not Used to Repel the Devils before the Advent of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. It happened only after his Advent

A doubt that may arise here is that the existence of Meteors, which in common parlance are called *inqiḍāḍ-ul-kaukab* the 'falling stars', is not a new phenomenon. This verse, however, indicates that they showed up to repel the devils as if they are new-age phenomena of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. In response, it may be stated that there is no denying that the meteors did exist since the inception of time and space before the advent of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and that there is no contradiction between what

humanity experienced since the beginning of the world, scientific explanations and the Qur'ānic statement. Philosophers and scientists explain that the meteors may originate from the earth or stars or disintegrating planets, and wander in space at enormous speeds and fall to the earth. Some fiery matter may arise from the surface of the earth and heat up at some point, or the speed of the meteors makes them glow and burn, or a flame emits from a star - and this may have habitually continued ever since. These flames, however, were not used to serve a particular purpose before the advent of the Holy Prophet ﷺ; they were merely a natural phenomena. After the advent of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, meteoric flames were used to serve the purpose of shooting the devils if they attempted to go up and listen furtively the conversation of the angels. See also Ma'ariful Qur'an, Vol. 5/pp 303-305, under [15:17-18].

وَأَنَّا لَا نَدْرِي أَشَرٌّ أُرِيدَ بِمَن فِي الْأَرْضِ أَمْ أَرَادَ بِهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ رَشَدًا (and that we do not know whether it is a bad end that is intended for those on earth, or their Lord has intended for them a right thing,...72:10). The Jinn and devils were barred from having access to heavenly news. In this case it would be a punishment for the inhabitants of the earth. However, if Allah intends them to be rightly guided, He has barred the Jinn and Satan from having access to the heaven, so that they do not interfere with Divine revelation. Therefore, they expressed their reservations about this to the effect that they had no idea as to whether it was a bad end that was intended for the inhabitants of the earth or whether Allah intended them to be rightly guided.

فَمَنْ يُؤْمِنْ بِرَبِّهِ فَلَا يَخَافُ بَخْسًا وَلَا رَهَقًا (...so if one believes in his Lord, he will have no fear of either any curtailment [in his reward] or any excess [in his punishment]...72:13). The word *bakhs*, with *bā'* carrying *fatha* and *khā'* carrying *sukūn*, means 'to reduce the right' and the word *rahaq* means 'disgrace'. In other words, anyone who believes in Allah need fear neither curtailment in the reward of his good deeds, nor disgrace by excess in his punishment in the Hereafter.

وَأَنَّ الْمَسَاجِدَ لِلَّهِ فَلَا تَدْعُوا مَعَ اللَّهِ أَحَدًا (...and that *masājīd* (mosques) belong to Allah; so, do not invoke anyone along with Allah....72:18). The word *masājīd* is the plural of *masjid*. Here the word, could be taken in its popular sense, that is, mosques or places of worship dedicated for the performance of prayers. In this case, it would mean that all mosques belong to Allah, dedicated to His sole worship and therefore we are not

permitted to call on anyone else besides Allah, like the Jews and Christians commit *shirk* in their places of worship. In sum, the mosques must be kept clear of all false beliefs and vile deeds.

The word *masājīd* could also have another sense. It could be the plural of *masjad*, with the letter *jīm* carrying *fath*, in which case it would be *maṣḍar mīmī* 'infinitivity' and mean 'to prostrate or prostration'. The verse in this sense would signify that worship is reserved exclusively for Allah. It is not permitted to prostrate to anyone, because if he calls on anyone else for help, it is as though he is prostrating to him which must be avoided.

Ruling

By common consent of the scholars, prostration to anyone other Allah is totally forbidden. According to some scholars, it is tantamount to *kufr/shirk*.

قُلْ إِنْ أَدْرِي أَقْرَبُ مَا تُوْعَدُونَ أَمْ يَجْعَلُ لَهُ رَبِّي أَمَدًا. عَلِيمُ الْغَيْبِ فَلَا يُظْهَرُ عَلَى
غَيْبِهِ أَحَدًا

(Say, "I do not know whether that which you are promised is near, or my Lord has appointed for it a distant term. [He is the] Knower of the Unseen. So He does not let anyone know His Unseen....72:25-26)

The non-believers demanded that the Holy Prophet ﷺ should show them the exact time and date when the Resurrection will occur. In verse [25] he is enjoined to say to them that it was not for him to say when the threatened punishment would come, but come it must. Verse [26] is the proof of the preceding verse. The Holy Prophet ﷺ does not know whether the promised day is close or whether a longer time is appointed for it, because Allah alone is the knower of the Unseen. That is His exclusive characteristics, and therefore He does not divulge His Unseen to anyone. The definite article *alif lam* in *al-ghaib* 'the Unseen' is grammatically referred to as *alif lam* for *istighrāq lil-jins* 'the article encompassing and indicating the entire genus' [as stated in *Rūḥ* with reference to *Raḍī*], that is, He is Omniscient - knowing every species of the Unseen and all genera of the Unseen. In the *iḍāfah* [possessive case] construction *ghaibihī* 'His Unseen', the possessive pronoun refers to 'Allah' and reinforces His predominance over the Unseen. Allah's knowledge comprehends and encompasses every *infima species* [species of species]

and every *summum genus* [genus of genera] of His creation. This is a specialized attribute of Allah. He does not divulge His Unseen to anyone indiscriminately, so that he may store and retrieve the secrets of the unknown world as and when he wishes.

The purport of the verse under comment is to affirm the totality of Allah's knowledge of the Unseen so that He alone is fully aware of every particle of His creation, and to negate such total knowledge of the Unseen for anyone other than Allah. It was possible that an unintelligent person might surmise that the Holy Prophet ﷺ did not have any knowledge of the Unseen - so, how can he be a Messenger? Allah reveals to a Messenger thousands of secrets of the Unseen. Anyone to whom no revelation comes down cannot be a Prophet or a Messenger. Thus the following verse makes an exception:

إِلَّا مَنِ ارْتَضَىٰ مِنْ رَسُولٍ فَإِنَّهُ يَسْلُكُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِ رَصَدًا ﴿٢٧﴾

(...except a messenger whom He chooses [to inform through revelation], and then He appoints [angels as] watching guards before him and behind him, [so that devils may not tamper with the divine revelation,].... 72:27)

Difference between 'Knowledge of the Unseen' and 'Reports of the Unseen Events'

The exception made here is the response to the doubt raised by unintelligent people. The negation of the total knowledge of the Unseen does not necessarily entail absolute negation of every unknown secret. For the office of *risālah*, a Messenger needs a certain amount of knowledge of unseen things which Allah grants him through revelation. When Allah sends down the revelation to His Holy Prophet ﷺ, He sends it down under His special protection, and is completely secure against being distorted or tampered with by devils. First of all, the word *rasūl* [Messenger] determines the type of knowledge granted to a Prophet or a Messenger. Evidently, it is the knowledge of the sacred laws and injunctions in its totality, and of the unseen events according to the exigency of time. The next statement states the heavily protected manner in which the unseen knowledge is granted. It is sent down through angels around whom are posted other angels as sentinels. This explanation clarifies the point that the exceptive sentence that affirms the unseen knowledge granted to a Holy Prophet ﷺ and a Messenger is a specialized unseen knowledge which is essential and relevant to the

proper functioning of a Prophetic office.

Technically, this 'exception', in Arabic grammar, is referred to as *istiṭhnā' munqatī'* which may be defined as the exceptive sentence in which the exception is severed from, or wholly different in kind from, the general description given before. In this sense, whilst the basic sentence negated total Unseen Knowledge in general terms for anyone besides Allah, the exceptive sentence does not affirm it. It merely affirms specialized acquaintance with some reports of the unseen events which the Qur'an frequently describes as *anbā'ul ghaib*, thus, for instance:

تِلْكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الْغَيْبِ نُوحِيهَا إِلَيْكَ

'These are some reports from the unseen [events] which We reveal to you. [11:49]'

Some unintelligent people do not grasp the distinction between 'Knowledge of the Unseen' and 'reports of the unseen events'. As a result, they attempt to prove 'total knowledge of the Unseen' for the Prophets of Allah, especially for the Last Prophet ﷺ. They believe that the Holy Prophet ﷺ, like Allah, is omniscient - having knowledge of every particle of the universe. This is clearly *shirk* - assigning to the Holy Prophet ﷺ the status of Godhead, God forbid! If any person discloses a secret to a friend of his, of which no one else has that piece of knowledge or information, such a friend cannot be described as omniscient. Likewise, Allah has granted thousands of pieces of information of the unseen world through revelation to His Holy Prophets ﷺ, but it is not true to say that they are omniscient. The ignorant laity do not understand the difference between the concepts. When they are told that the Holy Prophet ﷺ is not omniscient, they understand this statement to imply that the Holy Prophet ﷺ [God forbid!] did not have any information about anything unseen. No believer in the world ever holds such a belief, nor can he ever do so because if anyone does so the whole structure of *nubuwwah* and *risālah* would come crumbling down. It is not possible for any believer to behave in this way.

The concluding part of the last verse says:

وَاحْصِ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عَدَدًا (...and has comprehensive knowledge of every thing by numbers....72:28). In other words, Allah alone encompasses the perfect knowledge of everything and keeps a meticulous count of it. He has the knowledge of the exact number of particles in the mountains. He has the

knowledge of the exact number of drops in all the oceans of the world. He has the knowledge of the exact number of drops in every rain. He alone has the knowledge of the exact number of leaves on all the trees in the world. Thus it is made clear that the totality of the knowledge of the Unseen is reserved exclusively for Allah, so that there should be no misunderstanding about the above 'exception' clause.

The question of the Unseen Knowledge is fully discussed under [27:65]

قُلْ لَا يَعْلَمُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ الْغَيْبَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ

Say, "No one in the heavens and the earth has the knowledge of the Unseen except Allah." [27:65]

Alhamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Jinn
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Muzzammil

(The Wrapped up one)

This Sūrah is Makki, and it has 20 verses and 2 Sections.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1-20

يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُزَّمِّلُ ﴿١﴾ قُمْ اللَّيْلَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴿٢﴾ نِصْفَهُ أَوِ انْقُصْ مِنْهُ قَلِيلًا ﴿٣﴾ أَوْزِدْ عَلَيْهِ وَرَتِّلِ الْقُرْآنَ تَرْتِيلًا ﴿٤﴾ إِنَّا سَنُلْقِي عَلَيْكَ قَوْلًا ثَقِيلًا ﴿٥﴾ إِنَّ نَاشِئَةَ اللَّيْلِ هِيَ أَشَدُّ وَطْأً وَأَقْوَمُ قِيلًا ﴿٦﴾ إِنَّ لَكَ فِي النَّهَارِ سَبْحًا طَوِيلًا ﴿٧﴾ وَاذْكُرِ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ وَتَبَتَّلْ إِلَيْهِ تَبْتِيلًا ﴿٨﴾ رَبُّ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ فَاتَّخِذْهُ وَكِيلًا ﴿٩﴾ وَاصْبِرْ عَلَى مَا يَقُولُونَ وَاهْجُرْهُمْ هَجْرًا جَمِيلًا ﴿١٠﴾ وَذَرْنِي وَالْمُكَذِّبِينَ أُولِيَ النَّعْمَةِ وَمَهِّلْهُمْ قَلِيلًا ﴿١١﴾ إِنَّ لَدَيْنَا أَنْكَالًا وَجَحِيمًا ﴿١٢﴾ وَطَعَامًا ذَا غُصَّةٍ وَعَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ﴿١٣﴾ يَوْمَ تَرْجُفُ الْأَرْضُ وَالْجِبَالُ وَكَانَتِ الْجِبَالُ كَثِيرًا مَّهِيلًا ﴿١٤﴾ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ رَسُولًا ۖ شَاهِدًا عَلَيْكُمْ كَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ رَسُولًا ﴿١٥﴾ فَعَصَىٰ فِرْعَوْنُ الرَّسُولَ فَأَخَذْنَاهُ أَخْذًا وَبِيلًا ﴿١٦﴾ فَكَيْفَ تَتَّقُونَ إِنْ كَفَرْتُمْ يَوْمًا يَجْعَلُ الْوِلْدَانَ شِيبًا ﴿١٧﴾ ۖ السَّمَاءُ مَنفُطْرٌ ۖ بِهِ ۖ كَانَ وَعْدُهُ مَفْعُولًا

﴿١٨﴾ إِنَّ هَذِهِ تَذْكِرَةٌ ۖ فَمَنْ شَاءَ اتَّخَذَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِ سَبِيلًا ﴿١٩﴾ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ يَعْلَمُ أَنَّكَ تَقُومُ أَدْنَىٰ مِنْ ثُلُثَيِ اللَّيْلِ وَنُصْفَهُ وَثُلُثَهُ وَطَائِفَةٌ مِّنَ الَّذِينَ مَعَكَ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يُقَدِّرُ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ ۗ عَلِمَ أَنْ لَّنْ تَحْصُوهُ فَتَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ فَاقْرَءُوا مَا تَيَسَّرَ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ ۗ عَلِمَ أَنْ سَيَكُونُ مِنْكُمْ مَّرْضَىٰ ۚ وَآخَرُونَ يَضْرِبُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ يَبْتَغُونَ مِن فَضْلِ اللَّهِ ۚ وَآخَرُونَ يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ۚ فَاقْرَءُوا مَا تَيَسَّرَ مِنْهُ ۚ وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَاقْرَأُوا اللَّهَ قُرْآنًا حَسَنًا ۚ وَمَا تُقَدِّمُوا لِأَنفُسِكُمْ مِن خَيْرٍ تَجِدُوهُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ هُوَ خَيْرٌ وَأَعْظَمَ أَجْرًا ۚ وَاسْتَغْفِرُوا اللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٢٠﴾

O you wrapped up in clothes,* [1] stand at night (for prayer) except a little [2] half of it, or make it a little less, [3] or make it a little more; and recite the Qur'an clearly with *tartil* (in a distinct and measured tone). [4] We are going to send down to you a weighty discourse. [5] Truly, rising by night (for prayer of *tahajjud*) is the most effective way to subdue (one's self) and to make speech more upright. [6] Surely, in daytime, you have a lengthy work to do. [7] And remember the name of your Lord, and devote yourself to Him with exclusive devotion. [8] He is the Lord of the East and the West; there is no god but He; so take Him for (your) Guardian. [9] And bear patiently what they say, and part with them in a beautiful manner. [10] And leave Me (to deal) with the deniers, the people of luxury, and give them respite for a while. [11] Surely with Us are fetters and

* The Holy Prophet ﷺ is addressed in this verse with reference to a particular style of wrapping himself in his clothes. The first event of this kind occurred when the Holy Prophet ﷺ received first revelation in the cave of Hira'. Being his first experience, he felt it very hard, and was caught by a shivery cold, and once he reached home, he asked his blessed wife Khadijah (رضي الله عنها) to wrap him in a blanket which she did. Some narrations have reported another event: When the Holy Prophet ﷺ was accused, by the pagans of Makkah, of being a magician who separated between friends, he felt aggrieved, and wrapped himself in his clothes out of grief. Addressing him with reference to these events is a loving style adopted by Allah Ta'ala to console him. (Muhammad Taqi Usmani)

flaming fire, [12] and food that chokes, and a painful punishment, [13] on the Day when the earth and the mountains will quake, and the mountains will turn into a slipping heap of sand. [14] We have sent to you a messenger, as a witness over you, just as We sent a messenger to Fir'aun (the Pharaoh). [15] Then, Fir'aun disobeyed the messenger; so We seized him with a severe seizure. [16] So, if you disbelieve, how will you save yourself from a day that will turn the small boys into grey-headed old men, [17] whereby the sky will burst apart. His promise has to be fulfilled. [18] Indeed, this is a reminder; so let anyone who so wishes, adopt a way to his Lord. [19]

Your Lord knows that you stand (in prayer) for nearly two thirds of the night, and (at times) for half of it, and (at times) for one third of it, and (so do) a group of those who are with you. And Allah measures the night and the day. He knows that you cannot do it regularly, therefore He turned to you in mercy. Now, recite as much of the Qur'ān as is easy (for you). He knows that some of you may be sick, and others travelling in the land, seeking the grace of Allah, and yet others fighting in Allah's way. Therefore, recite as much of it as is easy. And establish *ṣalāh*, and pay *zakāh*, and advance to Allah a goodly loan. And whatever good you will send ahead for your own selves, you will find it with Allah much better in condition, and much greater in reward. And seek forgiveness from Allah. Indeed Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful. [20]

Commentary

يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَزْمِلُ 'O you wrapped up in clothes [73:1]'. The word *muzzammil* literally means 'one wrapped up in clothes' and its near-synonym '*muddaththir*' comes in the next Sūrah. The Holy Prophet ﷺ is addressed in this verse with reference to a particular style of wrapping himself in his clothes. The first event of this kind occurred when the Holy Prophet ﷺ received first revelation in the cave of Ḥirā'. Being his first experience, he felt it very hard, and was caught by a shivery cold, and once he reached home, he asked his blessed wife Khadijah رضى الله عنها to wrap him in a blanket which she did. A detailed account of this event is reported by Bukhārī in the very first chapter of his book. Then the revelation stopped for some time. Speaking of this temporary break in the revelation [termed as *fatrat-ul-wahy*], Sayyidnā Jabir رضى الله عنه reports that the

Messenger of Allah ﷺ said in his narrative:

"Whilst I was walking along, I heard a voice from heaven and I raised up my eyes. Lo! The Angel that had appeared to me in Hira' was sitting on a chair between heaven and earth, and I was struck with awe on account of him and returned home and said, Wrap me up, wrap me up [*zammilūnī, zammilūnī*]. Then Allah revealed the first five verses of Sūrah Al-Muddththir (chapter 74)." [Bukhārī and Muslim]

According to this narrative, the Holy Prophet ﷺ is affectionately addressed as 'O you, enveloped in a mantle,' whereas in this Sūrah he is addressed as 'O you wrapped up in clothes'. Both forms of address are used affectionately and endearingly to console him. The latter title of address '*muzzammil*' as it appears in this Sūrah could probably be connected to another incident (referred to in the footnote) but it, nonetheless, shows deep love and affection for the Holy Prophet ﷺ. [Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī]. Having addressed him with this special title, the Holy Prophet ﷺ is told in the following verses that praying to Allah in the stillness of night [*ṣalāt-ut-tahajjud*] will prepare him for the heavy task entrusted to him. Some details of the night-prayer have also been set out.

Injunctions Pertaining to *Ṣalāt-ut-Tahajjud* and its Abrogation

Reading into the titles *muzzammil* and *muddaththir* a consensus of scholarly opinion assigns the revelation of this Surah to the earliest period when the five daily prayers had not become obligatory. They were prescribed on the night of Holy Prophet's ﷺ Ascent to heavens. [*mi'rāj*].

Imām Baghawī رحمه الله تعالى says, on the basis of *Aḥādith* reported by Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah Ṣiddiqah رضى الله عنها and others, that 'night-prayer' was compulsory for the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the entire Muslim community until the five prayers were not prescribed.

This verse not only prescribes the night-prayer but it also prescribes to stand up in prayer from at least one quarter of the night, because the verse under comment basically commanded to stand up all night to pray except a little portion of it.

Imām Baghawī رحمه الله تعالى says, on the basis of narration of *Aḥādīth*, that the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the noble Companions رضي الله عنهم, in compliance with this command, spent the major portion of the night in *tahajjud*, so

much so that their feet would swell and this exertion caused hardship and difficulty to them. This situation continued for a year. After that, towards the end of the Sūrah, the following injunction was revealed:

فَاقْرَأْ وَ مَا يَسِّرَ مِنْهُ

'...Therefore, recite as much of it as is easy__[73:20]

It repealed the obligation of staying up for a long time, and granted them concession and permission to stay up for prayer as much as they could easily manage. This is transmitted by Abū Dāwūd and Nasa'ī on the authority of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه says that when the five prescribed prayers became obligatory on the night of *mi'rāj*, the obligatory nature of *tahajjud* was abrogated. It was, however, retained as *sunnah*, because the Holy Prophet ﷺ performed it most regularly. Most of the blessed Companions رضي الله عنهم were regular with their *tahajjud* as well. [Mazharī] Let us now analyze the wordings of the verses.

فُتِمِ اللَّيْلُ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا 'stand at night (for prayer) except a little__[73:2]'. The word *al-lail* with the definite article 'al' connotes 'the entire night', signifying that he should stay up the whole night for prayer except a little portion of it. As the word 'little' is indefinite, the verse further clarifies:

أَوْزِدْ عَلَيْهِ [3] نِصْفَهُ أَوْ انْقُصْ مِنْهُ قَلِيلًا 'half of it, or make it a little less, [3] or make it a little more [73:4]'. This is explicative of the exception 'except a little'. A question may be raised here that 'a little' cannot be 'half'. The answer is that the earlier portion of the night is spent in the prayer at *maghrib* and '*ishā'*'. 'Half' then refers to the half of the rest of the night. Its total in relation to the whole night amounts to 'a little'. The verse permits to reduce it a little less than half and it also permits to add to it a little more than half. Thus it was compulsory to stay up at least for a little over one fourth of a night for prayer.

وَرَتَّلِ الْقُرْآنَ تَرْتِيلًا '...and recite the Qur'an clearly with *tartīl* (in a distinct and measured tone). [73:4]'. The word *tartīl*, according to Imām Rāghib as explicated in *al-Mufradāt*, originally means 'to put together and arrange well the component parts of a word and speech and make it distinct'. The purport of the verse is to say that the Qur'an must not be recited in haste, but in a leisurely manner, distinctly, deliberately and in well-measured tone. At the same time, it is necessary to reflect on its meaning and

message. [Maẓharī]. The clause *wa rattil* is grammatically conjoined to *qumil lail* and signifies what is required to be done in tahajjud prayer. Although it comprises many components like *tasbīḥ*, *rukū'* (bowing), *sujud* (prostration) and so on, the verse indicates that the basic component of prayer is recitation of the Qur'ān. The authentic Traditions bear testimony to the fact that the *tahajjud* prayer of the Holy Prophet ﷺ used to be prolonged very much. The noble Companions and their pupils followed the same pattern.

Ruling [1]

The verse under comment clarifies that the recitation of the Qur'ān is required to be with *tartīl* [distinct recitation in well-measured tone]. The Holy Prophet's ﷺ recitation fulfilled the requirements of *tartīl*. Some people inquired from Sayyidah 'Umm Salamah رضى الله عنها about the Holy Prophet's ﷺ recitation of Qur'ān in night-prayers. She emulated his recitation in which every single letter was clear and distinct. [Tirmidhī, Abū Dāwūd, Nasa'ī - as quoted by Maẓharī].

Ruling [2]

Tartīl includes slow rhythmic recitation and beautification of the voice while reciting. Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ؓ narrates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Allah does not listen to any recitation as much as he listens to the recitation of a Prophet who recites with a beautiful voice." [Maẓharī].

Sayyidnā 'Alqamah ؓ saw a person reciting with a beautiful voice and he exclaimed:

لقد رتل القرآن فداه أبى وأُمى

"He has recited the Qur'an with *tartīl*: May my parents be sacrificed to him!" [Qurṭubī].

In short, *tartīl* basically signifies that the letters and the words must be pronounced clearly and distinctly that will help understanding the Qur'ān, and paying due care to its meaning. Ḥasan al-Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى reports that Allah's Messenger ﷺ passed by a person who was reciting a verse of the Qur'ān and weeping. He said to the people, 'Have you heard of the command of Allah' وَرَتِّلِ الْقُرْآنَ تَرْتِيلاً '...and recite the Qur'ān clearly with *tartīl* (in a distinct and measured tone). [73:4]'? This is *tartīl* which this person is doing. [Qurṭubī]

إِنَّا سَنُلْقِي عَلَيْكَ قَوْلًا ثَقِيلًا ('We are going to send down to you a weighty discourse... 73:5') The word *thaqīl* means 'heavy' and the phrase 'weighty discourse' refers to the Qur'ān, because the Qur'ānic teachings of lawful and unlawful are permanently binding and carrying them out is the weightiest task for human nature, except those for whom Allah makes it easier. According to oft-quoted *Aḥādīth*, whenever a revelation descended upon the Holy Prophet ﷺ, he went into a trance and felt a peculiar sensation, so that even on an extremely cold day drops of sweat fell from his forehead, and he felt his body has become heavier. The Qur'ānic revelation being 'a weighty discourse', his paroxysm was due to this sensation. If the Holy Prophet ﷺ received revelation while he was on his riding animal, it would begin to move the bottom of its neck intensely. [Bukhārī and others].

The verse under comment prescribes *tahajjud* prayer on man, so that he may become accustomed to the difficulty of waking at night. This is a struggle against excess sleep and comfort of the carnal self. This exercise will make it easier to abide by the injunctions contained in the 'weighty discourse', that is, the Holy Qur'ān.

إِنَّ نَاشِئَةَ اللَّيْلِ ('Truly, rising by night [for prayer of *tahajjud*] is the most effective way to subdue (one's self) and to make speech more upright.... 73:6). The word *nāshi'ah*, on the grammatical measure of *ʿāfiyah*, is an infinitive noun which signifies 'to rise by night for prayer'. Sayyidah ʿĀishah رضي الله عنها said that *nāshi'at-ul-lail* means 'to rise by night for night-prayer after sleeping'. According to this definition, *nāshi'at-ul-lail* refers to *tahajjud* prayer. Furthermore, the word *tahajjud* itself, literally, means 'to sleep at night and then wake up to perform the prayer'. Ibn Kaisān رحمه الله تعالى has said that prayer at the later part of the night is called *nāshi'at-ul-lail*. Ibn Zaid رحمه الله تعالى says that performing prayer at any part of the night is *nāshi'at-ul-lail*. Ḥasan al-Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى says that any prayer after the 'Ishā' prayer is *nāshi'at-ul-lail*. Ibn Abī Mulaikah رحمه الله تعالى says that he asked Sayyidnā Ibn ʿAbbās and Ibn Zubair رضي الله عنهما about the meaning of *nāshi'at-ul-lail*, they replied as follows: اللَّيْلُ كُلُّهَا نَاشِئَةٌ (The entire night is *nāshi'ah*." - Maḥzarī)

There is no conflict in these interpretations. The point is that the terms *nāshi'ah* of the night and *qiyām* of the night are general, and may refer to any hour of night. Thus the two terms apply equally to

performing night-prayer in any part of the night, especially the one performed after 'Ishā' prayer as explained by Sayyidnā Ḥasan al-Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى. However, the constant practice of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, that of the overwhelming majority of the Companions and their pupils, and that of the righteous predecessors of the 'Ummah was that they performed this prayer in the later part of the night after waking from sleep, and therefore it is more virtuous, more meritorious and attracts more blessings. Performing any *nafl* [voluntary] prayer after 'Ishā' prayer fulfills the *sunnah* requirement of *nashi'ah* of the night and *qiyām* of the night.

هِيَ أَشَدُّ وَطْأً (...is the most effective way to subdue (one's self) and to make speech more upright... 73:6). The word *waṭ'an*, with the letter *waw* carrying *fath* [=a], is an infinitive which means 'to subdue' or 'to suppress'. Given this meaning, the sense is that this time of night helps one to suppress his evil desires and keep them under control. This meaning is adopted by Maulānā Ashraf Alī Thānawī رحمه الله تعالى, and the translation of the text is based on this interpretation. In another *qirā'ah* (version), however, the word is pronounced '*wiṭā'an*'. It is an infinitive that means 'to conform'. On another occasion in the Qur'ān, we come across the following verse wherein a verb derived from this root is contained. The word in that verse is used in the same sense, thus:

لِيُؤَاطِفُوا عِدَّةَ مَا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ

'...so that they may conform (only) to the number of what Allah has sanctified - [9:37]'

Leading authorities on Tafsīr, like Ibn Zaid and Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنهما, have interpreted the word in the same sense here. Ibn Zaid رضي الله عنه said that getting up in the night for prayer is the most effective means of making the heart, eye, ear and tongue to mutually correspond and conform. Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه said that the phrase means that during this time there is the closest degree of conformity and harmony between the ear and the heart. This is because there is no noise at the time of night when most people are asleep and one will not be disturbed as one is during the daytime. At night time when the tongue recites the Qur'ān, the ears will be conducive to listening to the recitation with due concentration, and the heart will be conducive to understanding and considering its meaning and message .

وَأَقْوَمُ قِيلًا (And to make speech more upright - 73:6) The word *aqwām* means 'more upright'. The verse signifies that the recitation of the Qur'an is more upright and concentrated, because during the night there are no noises and commotion to distract the heart or the mind.

In sum, the purport of the verse is to put forward the wisdom underlying the injunction of the 'night-prayer' for the common people. The preceding verse put forward its wisdom for the Holy Prophet ﷺ:

إِنَّا سَنُلْقِيْ عَلَيْكَ قَوْلًا ثَقِيْلًا

'We are going to send down to you a weighty discourse.[73:5]'

The 'weighty discourse' was concerned specifically with the Holy Prophet ﷺ as it was revealed to him. But for common people, Night-Prayer has two characteristics: [1] bringing harmony between the heart and the tongue; and [2] peace of mind - making it easier to recite the Qur'an.

إِنَّ لَكَ فِي النَّهَارِ سَبْحًا طَوِيْلًا (Surely, in daytime, you have a lengthy work to do... 73:7). The word *sabḥun*, literally means, 'to flow, walk or move about' from which we also get the sense 'of swimming in the water' because when a swimmer swims in the water, he moves about in it freely without any obstruction. Here the word signifies 'long chain of engagements in the day' which refers to multifarious duties to be performed with alacrity, such as educating the people, preaching to them, reforming humanity, performing domestic chores, discharging social responsibilities and moving about to many other tasks and obligations .

The current verse explicates the third point of wisdom as to why night-prayer was enjoined. This relates both to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the general body of the Muslim community. During the day the Holy Prophet ﷺ as well as other people have a long chain of engagements for which they disperse and move about as explained in the foregoing paragraph. As a result, it is difficult for them to concentrate on their worshipping activity. The night should be reserved for this purpose. A person should sleep according to his need and perform his night-prayer as well.

A Special Note

Jurists have said that the verse under comment confirms that scholars

and saintly guides, who are engaged in the service of education, training and human reform, should render their services during the day. It is better to reserve the night for Divine worship and devotional activities. The practice of the righteous scholars and predecessors bear testimony to this fact. If a temporary need arises to serve the cause of education and propagation at night, it may be carried out to the degree of necessity, but this would be an exception. The practice of many scholars and jurists confirm this exception .

وَاذْكُرْ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ وَتَبَتَّلْ إِلَيْهِ تَبْتِيلًا (And remember the name of your Lord, and devote yourself to Him with exclusive devotion... 73:8). The word *tabattul*, literally, means 'to cut off oneself from entire creation to focus attention solely on the Creator to detach oneself from worldly things and devote oneself exclusively and sincerely to the service of Allah' The sentence: وَاذْكُرْ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ (And remember the name of your Lord...73:8) is grammatically conjoined to the sentence: قُمْ اللَّيْلَ (Stand at night [for prayer].... 73:2) which enjoins upon the Holy Prophet ﷺ to perform the night-prayer, and incidentally his attention is drawn in the following verse to special devotional activities in the course of the day: إِنَّ لَكَ فِي النَّهَارِ سَبْحًا طَوِيلًا 'Surely, in daytime, you have a lengthy work to do. [73:7]' But the verse 8 enjoins a devotional activity (remembering Allah) that can be performed at any time of day or night. In fact, it can be performed at all times and under all circumstances. Since it is inconceivable that the Holy Prophet ﷺ would never remember Allah, the purport of enjoining *Dhikr* (Remembrance of Allah) is to emphasise 'keeping to it consistently' in the sense that there should be no laxity in it. [Maẓharī]. This is possible only if 'remembering Allah' is taken in its widest possible sense to include 'Reciting His name with tongue', 'Remembrance by heart' and also 'keeping one's body engaged in complying with the commands of Allah'. A narration of Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah Ṣiddīqah رضى الله عنها reports the following:

كَانَ يَذْكُرُ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ حِينٍ

"The Holy Prophet ﷺ used to remember Allah at all times."

This Ḥadīth is correct in terms of the wider concept of 'remembrance of Allah' just explained above. Obviously, the Holy Prophet ﷺ did not make *dhikr* by his tongue when answering the call of nature as Aḥādīth distinctly confirm this, but *Dhikr* by heart is possible at all times. There

are, however, two types of *Dhikr* by heart: [1] It may be done through 'imagined words'; [2] by reflecting and pondering on the Divine attributes of perfection. [Shaikh Thanawī].

The next injunction in this verse is:

تَبَتَّلْ إِلَيْهِ تَبْتِيلًا...and devote yourself to Him with exclusive devotion. [73:8]. In other words, the Holy Prophet ﷺ is to detach himself from worldly things and devote himself exclusively and sincerely to Allah. The general import of the verse imparts the injunction that when worshipping Allah, no partners should be associated with Him and the total worship and devotion should be solely for Him. In all his actions and movements, he should single out Allah for reliance. He should not take any creature as possessing the power of benefit and harm or as possessing the power of granting wishes and solving problems. Sayyidnā Ibn Zaid رحمته الله said that *tabattul* signifies 'to abandon the world and what is in it and focus attention on what is with Allah'. [Maḥzarī]. The *tabattul* which this verse enjoins is completely different from the concept and practice of monasticism which the Qur'ān denounces elsewhere, thus:

وَرَهْبَانِيَّةً ابْتَدَعُوهَا

'...As for monasticism, it was invented by them__ [57:27]

and a Ḥadīth denounces it thus:

لا رهبانية في الاسلام

"There is no monasticism in Islam."

Rahbāniyyah or 'monasticism', in the technical language of Sharī'ah, signifies 'to abandon the world and sever all ties which involves the giving up of all pleasures and all lawful and pure things, believing that doing so is 'worship' and thinking that without avoiding them one would not be able to attain the good pleasure of Allah. It also means to sever human relationships in such a manner that human rights are not taken care of or they are violated. This verse enjoins a different type of *tabattul* or severance of relationship. It means that one's relationship with human beings should not overpower his relationship with Allah - whether in terms of belief or in terms of practice. Such a detachment is not contradictory to any business relations, or social contracts and transactions, like marriage and family ties. In fact, they can be combined. *Tabattul*, in this sense, is the characteristic of all Prophets عليهم السلام,

especially that of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. Their lives bear ample testimony to this type of *tabattul* which the pious elders alternatively term as *Ikhlāṣ* (sincerity). [Maḥzarī]

An Important Note

In the matter of 'Allah's Remembrance' and 'detachment from the world', the venerable Ṣūfīs, whether belonging to the earlier generation or later generation, have always been forward. They said that there are only two steps with which they are exerting their effort to cover the distance and conquer the path day and night. The first step is to detach themselves from the creation and the second step is to reach Allah [i.e. their destination]. The two steps are inseparable, in that where one is operational the other must operate; and if one does not operate, the other will not operate either. The two steps have been stated as two conjoined sentences, thus: *وَاذْكُرْ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ وَتَبَتَّلْ إِلَيْهِ تَبَتُّلاً* 'And remember the name of your Lord, and devote yourself to Him with exclusive devotion. [73:8]'. In this context, *dhikr* Allah refers to constant Remembrance of Allah where there should be no failing, and at no time there should be forgetfulness. This *maqām* 'station' in Ṣūfī terminology is referred to as *wuṣūl ila-Allah* 'reaching out to Allah. The first statement states the second step and the second statement states the first step. Thus the statements state the order in reverse probably because in practice *tabattul*, in the sense given above, is prior to *wuṣūl ila-Allah* which is achieved after the operation of the former. The main object of a *sālik* (the spiritual traveller) is to achieve the second step, therefore the naturally occurring order has been changed and remembrance of Allah has been mentioned first. This also is meant to show the importance and virtue of remembrance of Allah. How well Shaikh Sa'dī رحمه الله تعالى has versified the two steps:

تعلق حجاب است و بے حاصلی☆..... چو پیوند ها بُگسلی واصلی

Worldly relationship is a barrier and brings no (eternal) benefit.
When you abandon these relations, you will be the one who reaches out to Allah.

Remembrance of Allah through Repetition of His Personal Name

The verse under comment whilst enjoining *dhikrullah* (remembrance of Allah) has referred to it as 'remembrance of the name of Allah by saying: *وَاذْكُرْ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ* 'And remember the name of your Lord - [73:8]' and not *وَاذْكُرْ رَبِّكَ* 'And remember your Lord'.

This indicates that the repetition of Allah's personal name 'Allah, Allah' is also desired and required form of *dhikr* and worship. [Maḥḥarī]. Some scholars say that such repetition of His personal name is an 'innovation' (*bid'ah*), but this opinion is not correct. And Allah knows best!

رَبُّ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ فَاتَّخِذْهُ وَكِيلًا (He is the Lord of the East and the West; there is no god but He; so take Him for [your] Guardian...73:9). The word *wakīl*, lexicologically, refers to a 'person who has been given a task to do'. 'To take Allah as guardian' means that all matters and affairs should be entrusted to Allah. Technically, this is called *tawakkul* 'trust'.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ is given several injunctions in this Sūrah. This is the fifth injunction. Imām Ya'qūb Karkhī رحمه الله تعالى says that from the beginning of the Sūrah up to this verse there is reference to the *maqāmāt sulūk* 'journeying or a methodical travelling along the spiritual path through the various states and stations under the direction of a spiritual master or adept'. The references are as follows: [1] solitude at night to worship Allah; [2] preoccupation with Qur'ān; [3] constant Remembrance of Allah; [4] severance of relationship with "everything-other-than-Allah, and [5] total trust in Allah. Preceding the last injunction about trust, Allah's attribute is given, thus: رَبُّ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ 'He is the Lord of the East and the West__[73:9]'. In other words, Allah is the Cherisher and Sustainer of the entire universe. He is responsible to fulfill the needs of all from the beginning to the end. He alone can assist in all matters. Just as He has been singled out for worship, so should He be singled out for reliance, and full trust must be put in Him. Anyone who trusts and relies on Allah will never be deprived of his needs as the Qur'ān puts it:

وَمَنْ يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَهُوَ حَسْبُهُ

'...And whoever places his trust in Allah, He is sufficient for him. __[65:3]'

The Correct Concept of *Tawakkul* [Trust]

Trust in Allah does not imply for anyone to avoid the apparent means of acquiring livelihood, or giving up the normal ways of saving oneself from any affliction. The ways and means that Allah has created for a particular purpose should not be abandoned while placing total trust in Allah. On the contrary, in order to achieve our purpose it is necessary for

us to utilize the God-given power and causes at our disposal to the fullest extent, but we should not repose blind faith in material causes and means. But having adopted actions of choice, the result should then be left with Allah whose will is the Ultimate Cause of everything.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ himself has explained *tawakkul* in this way. Imām Baghawī, in his *Sharḥ-us-Sunnah*, and Baihaqī, in his *Shu'ab-ul-ʾImān*, have cited the following Ḥadīth:

ان نفسا لن تموت حتى تستكمل رزقها، الا فاتقوا الله واجملوا في الطلب

"Jibra'īl (عليه السلام) has inspired me with the thought that no person will ever die until he receives, in full, his sustenance that Allah has decreed for him. Therefore, fear Allah and be moderate in your search."

In other words, we should not be over-absorbed in quest for our needs so deeply that the attention of the heart is totally focused on the material causes and means. Instead, after adopting the ways and means to fulfill our needs, we should repose our total trust in and reliance upon Allah in the sense that without His will, no cause can bring any effect.

Tirmidhī transmits a Ḥadīth on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Dharr Al-Ghifārī (رضي الله عنه) that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "*Zuhd* (Renunciation of the world) does not mean to turn lawful things into unlawful or squander the wealth Allah has given you. Renunciation of the world means to have more faith in the things that are in Allah's hands than what are in your hands." [Maṣḥarī]

وَاصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا يَقُولُونَ وَاهْجُرْهُمْ هَجْرًا جَمِيلًا (And bear patiently what they say, and part with them in a beautiful manner...73:10). According to Imām Karkhī رحمه الله تعالى, this is the sixth injunction given to the Holy Prophet ﷺ that he should bear with patience and fortitude the jibes, opposition and persecution of his enemies. Perfect patience is the supreme station of *sulūk* (methodical travelling along the spiritual path). Spiritual reformers expend their entire strength, energy and life in reforming the deviant people. In return, they have to hear vile language, they are persecuted and wronged in many different ways. In return, they exercise *ṣabr* (patience) in a beautiful manner. In other words, they do not even entertain the thought of revenge. This is the supreme station, which in Sūfī terminology, is attained only after *fanā' kāmīl*: 'complete negation of

selfish desires'.

وَاجْزِهِمْ هَجْرًا جَمِيلًا (...and part with them in a beautiful manner...73:10). The word *hajr*, literally, denotes 'to give up something in a state of grief, anger and temper'. The verse means that rejecters of Truth utter words that hurt. He should not take revenge, but maintain no relations with them either. At the time of severing relations, it is natural for man to utter words of complaint and disgust. Therefore, Allah's Messenger ﷺ is told to cut off relations with the rejecters of Truth, but he must maintain his dignity and integrity. Hence, the verse contains the grammatically restricted cognate accusative, *hajran jamīlan*, 'in a beautiful manner'. The high status and the exalted standard of character require that the Holy Prophet ﷺ should restrain himself from making any abusive remarks at the deniers of Truth.

Some scholars of Tafsīr say that the injunction of this verse is repealed by verses of *jihād* which were revealed later on. But a careful analysis indicates that the injunction is not repealed. The above verses enjoin patience and steadfastness in the face of what the enemies say and cutting off from them courteously. This is not in conflict with verses that deal with reproof, punishment and armed struggle that were revealed subsequently. The injunction of this verse is applicable at all times and under all circumstances, whereas *jihād* is reproof and punishment, and is a specific injunction to be applied under specific conditions. Islamic *jihād* and armed struggle is not a matter of taking revenge or expression of anger, which could be in conflict with patience and fortitude or courteous severance. It is purely acting on the Divine command as is patience and courteous severance under general circumstances. Up to this point the Holy Prophet ﷺ was commanded to be steadfast and to abstain from revenge. The next verse, reprimands the deniers of Truth that instead of being grateful to Allah for "ease and plenty" provided for them, they reject the Divine Message:

وَذَرْنِي وَالْمُكَذِّبِينَ أُولَى النَّعْمَةِ وَمَهَلُكُمْ قَلِيلًا (And leave Me [to deal] with the deniers, the people of luxury, and give them respite for a while....73:11). The 'deniers' are referred to as 'the people of luxury'. The word *na'mah*, the first letter [n] bearing *fath* [=a], signifies 'ease and plenty; abundance of wealth and children'. This indicates that people who live a life of ease, plenty and luxury can only be the ones who deny the Hereafter. These

things do often fall to the lot of the believers, but they do not intoxicate them. Therefore, even when they live a life of luxury, their hearts are never, at any time, empty of the thought of the Hereafter. Only the deniers of the Hereafter will live a life of luxury that is neglectful of the Hereafter.

إِنَّ لَدَيْنَا أَنْكَالًا وَجَحِيمًا وَطَعَامًا ذَا غُصَّةٍ وَعَذَابًا أَلِيمًا (Surely with Us are fetters and flaming fire, and food that chokes, and a painful punishment...73:12-13). The terrible punishment of the Hereafter is described in these verses. First, there is the mention of *ankāl* which is the plural of *nakāl*. It denotes 'fetter, chain, shackle'. Then, there is the mention of 'flaming fire'. Then, verse [13] describes the 'choking food' the inmates of Hell will be given to eat.

The word *ghuṣṣah* literally denotes 'a thing by which one is choked'. For example, a morsel may block the throat in such a way as it can neither be swallowed nor can it be brought up. The inmates of Hell will be given *ḍarī'* and *zaqqūm* (thorny fruits) to eat. These fruits fit the description.

Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه said: "In it will be thorns of fire that will choke." [God save us!]. The verse says in conclusion: وَعَذَابًا أَلِيمًا (...and a painful punishment...73:13).

Having described specific forms of punishment, this description is general - indicating that there will be many more horrible and terrible forms of punishment which man cannot even imagine. [O Allah, save us from all forms of punishment!]

The Righteous Elders' Fear of the Hereafter

Imām Aḥmad, Ibn Abī Dāwūd, Ibn 'Adīyy and Baihaqī record a narration that a person heard this verse and fell fainted. One day Ḥasan al-Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى was fasting. When the food was brought to him at the time of *iftār* (ending the fast), this verse occurred in his mind and he could not eat. As a result, he sent it away. The following day he was fasting again. The same thing happened in the evening and he sent the food away. On the third day the same thing happened. So, his sons went to Thābit Bunānī, Yazīd Ḍabbāī, and Yaḥyā Al-Bakkā' and recounted the story. All three personalities went to Ḥasan and insisted on his eating something. At their insistence, the latter ate a little. [Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī]

يَوْمَ تَرْجُفُ الْأَرْضُ وَالْجِبَالُ وَكَانَتِ الْجِبَالُ كَثِيرًا مَّهِيلًا ﴿١٤﴾ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ رَسُولًا لَا شَاهِدًا عَلَيْكُمْ كَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ رَسُولًا ﴿١٥﴾ فَعَصَىٰ فِرْعَوْنُ الرَّسُولَ لَا يَصِلُ فَآخَذْنَاهُ أَخَذًا وَبِيلًا ﴿١٦﴾ فَكَيْفَ تَتَّقُونَ إِن كَفَرْتُمْ يَوْمًا يَجْعَلُ الْوِلْدَانَ شِيبًا ﴿١٧﴾

(on the Day when the earth and the mountains will quake, and the mountains will turn into a slipping heap of sand. [14] We have sent to you a messenger, as a witness over you, just as We sent a messenger to Fir'aun (the Pharaoh). [15] Then, Fir'aun disobeyed the messenger; so We seized him with a severe seizure. [16] So, if you disbelieve, how will you save yourself from a day that will turn the small boys into grey-headed old men...17).

These verses describe the horrors and terrors of the Day of Resurrection. Verse [14] describes that the punishment will take place on the Day when the earth and mountains will shake and the mountains will be reduced to a heap of dust or shifting dunes. Thereafter, reference is made to the story of Mūsā عليه السلام and Fir'aun in order to threaten the pagans of Makkah. Allah sent a Messenger, Muḥammad ﷺ, to bear witness against the pagans of Makkah just as He sent a Messenger, Mūsā عليه السلام, to Fir'aun. But Fir'aun disobeyed Mūsā عليه السلام and Allah seized him with terrible severity right in this world. Likewise, if the pagans of Makkah persist stubbornly in their pagan conduct, they too can be seized similarly with terrible severity in this very world. Towards the conclusion, the verse says that if no torment is inflicted in this world, no one can escape the horrors and terrors and length of the Day of Resurrection that will turn the children grey. This could be a metaphor for the most calamitous happenings which bring about disastrous changes. But some scholars say that this is a description of reality, in that the Day of Resurrection will be so long that a little child will grow old. [Qurtubī and Rūh].

The Obligatory Nature of *Tahajjud* Prayer Abrogated

At the beginning of the Sūrah, the command 'stand at night (for prayer)' prescribed the night-prayer for Allah's Messenger as well as for the general body of Muslims. It was also obligatory for the prayer to be long, but they had a choice in its length. They had to pray for half the night or one-third of the night or two-thirds of the night. A group of noble Companions in the performance of this duty mostly followed the '*azimah*' (preferred original rule of law). As a result, they spent almost two-thirds

of the night in prayer. They performed this prayer every night. During the day they would invite people to Islam and preach and attend to their personal needs. Most of the Companions were either labourers or businessmen. The Messenger's as well as the Companions' feet would swell on account of the long prayers. Waking at night was extremely difficult, and Allah was fully aware of the entire set-up, but it was pre-decreed in His knowledge that the difficulty is temporary and a passing phase. The purpose of this exercise is *riyāḍah* 'ascetic discipline' of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his Companions. In the initial stages, they were in a condition of disequilibrium. Therefore, they were required to exert themselves in spiritual struggle and ascetic discipline, thus:

إِنَّا سَنُلْقِيْكَ عَلَيْكَ قَوْلًا ثَقِيْلًا 'We are going to send down to you a weighty discourse. [73:5]'. The Holy Prophet ﷺ was going to be handed over the service of the Qur'ān which is much more difficult than this ascetic discipline. According to the Pre-eternal knowledge of Allah, when the ascetic discipline was completed and with His grace perfect balance was attained, asceticism was replaced by moderation. As a result, the obligatory nature of night-prayer was repealed. According to Ibn 'Abbās ؓ, the above verses merely cancelled the obligatory nature of night-prayer, but the basic *tahajjud* prayer remained intact as obligatory. When the five daily prayers were prescribed on the night of *mi'rāj*, the obligatory nature of *tahajjud* prayer too was cancelled. And Allah knows best!

Apparently, this obligation was cancelled for Allah's Messenger as well as for the entire 'Ummah. However, it is still a supererogatory and laudable deed in the sight of Allah. Furthermore, there is no time or recitation constraint. Every person may perform the prayer according to his own ability in the time available to him and recite the Qur'ān as much of it as is easy for him.

The Concept of Abrogation in Shari'ah

Legislating laws and abrogating them to proclaim new ones in their place is a routine practice in human governments and institutions. However, abrogation occurs sometimes in a piece of human legislation because the legislators did not fully comprehend the situation at the time of formulating a certain law, and are forced to amend it when they realize that the situation has changed and the law is no longer applicable in the

new circumstances. At other times, a law might be proclaimed in the government gazette in keeping with the prevailing circumstances, but the legislators might not have foreseen that the circumstances might change. When that happens, the old law will have to be repealed and a new one will have to be legislated and promulgated. It is inconceivable that these two forms of repeal will ever apply to Divine injunctions.

A third situation is that when the legislator formulates a law, he foresees that in time to come conditions will change, as a result the law will no longer apply *in toto* in the changed condition. So, when the conditions alter, as the legislator had foreseen, he legislates a new law and makes it public as he had forethought. This is the only form of abrogation that can take place, and has been taking place in Divine injunctions. It has always been the case that a certain piece of Divine law was intended, from the very beginning, to remain in force for a limited time, but Divine Wisdom chose not to disclose this time limit from the people. Because of the general wordings of the legislation, the general community of people thought it was an immutable law whereas Allah had pre-decreed it as a temporary law for a limited period of time. When its temporary period was over, the law was withdrawn. People took this as the abrogation of law whereas in reality it merely defined the time period. In other words, at that time it is made publicly known to the people that the law was not an immutable one, but promulgated for a limited period of time. Thus the period is now over and the law is no longer applicable.

There are many verses of the Qur'an that have been repealed, and the commoners find it difficult to grasp the wisdom underlying the repeal, but the foregoing explanation should allay the difficulty. However, the question remains: Was *tahajjud* prayer specially obligatory on the Holy Prophet ﷺ after the verse under comment was revealed? Some scholars of Tafsir answer it in the affirmative and they base their argument on the following verse:

وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَتَهَجَّدْ بِهِ نَافِلَةً لَّكَ

'And during the night, wake up for *Ṣalāh*, an additional prayer for you [17:79]'

This verse prescribes *tahajjud* as an additional prayer specially for the

Holy Prophet ﷺ. The word *nāfilah* literally denotes 'additional', meaning 'additional obligation'. But according to the overwhelming majority, the correct view is that the obligatory nature of *tahajjud* prayer has been abrogated for Allah's Messenger, as well as the general body of Muslims. However, it still remains an act of supererogation for all. The above verse contains the phrase نَافِلَةً لَّكَ *nāfilatan lak* 'an additional prayer for you'. The word *nāfilah* is used in its technical sense of *nafl* 'supererogatory'. If *tahajjud* is a *nafl* prayer for all, then it is not clear why addressing the Holy Prophet ﷺ the verse adds *lak* 'for you' as if it is a distinctively voluntary act for the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Please see Ma'āriful Qur'ān, Vol. 5/pp533-543 for fuller explanation, especially pp536-537 for whether *tahajjud* is a mere *nafl* (voluntary) or *sunnah mu'akkadah* (the emphasised practice of the Holy Prophet ﷺ)

The verse that abrogates the obligatory nature of *tahajjud* prayer starts from -

إِنَّ رَبَّكَ يَعْلَمُ

'Your Lord knows__[73:20]'

and ends at - 'فَاقْرَأْ وَ مَا تيسَّرَ مِنْهُ'...Now, recite as much of the Qur'ān as is easy (for you) [73:20]' This verse was revealed one year or eight months after the initial verses of this Sūrah. Thus the obligatory nature of night-prayer was abrogated after a year. Musnad of Aḥmad, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, Ibn Mājah and Nasa'ī record a narration of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى who stated that at the commencement of this Sūrah, Allah had prescribed the night-prayer. The Messenger of Allah and the blessed Companions constantly and consistently carried out the obligation for a year. Allah held back the last part of the Sūrah in the sky for twelve months. It was revealed after a year which abrogated the obligatory status of night-prayer and made concession - reducing its status to supererogation. [Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī]

عَلِمَ أَنْ لَنْ تُحْصُوهُ (...He knows that you cannot do it regularly...73:20). The word *iḥṣā'* literally denotes 'to count'. Some commentators interpret this verse as follows: Allah had not fixed the exact time for night-prayer. They were given the option of choosing time between one-third of the night to two thirds of it. But when the Companions were preoccupied with the prayer, it was difficult for them to calculate whether they had stayed up

half the night, or one-third of the night, or two-thirds of the night, because in those days there were no watches or clocks to measure the time. Even if there were, it was not in keeping with their conditions of involvement in prayers to look at the time repeatedly. They would be absorbed in their prayers, so as to be oblivious to their environment. This is the significance of the phrase *lan tuḥṣūhu*. Other scholars say that the word *iḥṣā'* connotes 'the act of counting', signifying that Allah knows that you will not be able to keep count of the constant prayers during the lengthy hours and hours of sleep. The word *iḥṣā'* is also used in this sense, as is used in a Ḥadīth in connection with the beautiful names of Allah, thus:

من احصاها دخل الجنة

"He who keeps count of them will enter Paradise"

meaning, to act fully according to the attributes and qualities of Allah, as indicated in His beautiful names. For fuller explanation, please see Ma'ariful Qur'ān, Vol. 5/pp272-273 under the following verse:

وَأِنْ تَعَدُّوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ لَا تَحْصُوهَا

'...And if you count the bounties of Allah, you cannot count them all. [14:34]'

فَتَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ (...therefore He turned to you in mercy...73:20). The word *taubah* originally means 'to turn'. Repentance for sins is also called *taubah* in Arabic, because the sinner turns away from his past sins and crimes. In this context, the word simply means 'to turn', that is, Allah took back the obligatory nature of the injunction of night-prayer. Then He says: فَاقْرَءُوا مَا يَسَّرَ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ (...Now, recite as much of the Qur'ān as is easy ... 73:20). That is, recite in *tahajjud* prayer which is no longer obligatory. It is supererogatory enjoying the status of *sunnah* or *mustaḥab*. No particular number of verses has been fixed for recitation of the Holy Qur'ān in *tahajjud* prayer. So a worshipper may recite as much of it as is easy for him. This verse answers many legal questions that are available in books of jurisprudence.

وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَاقْرَءُوا اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا (And establish *ṣalāh*, and pay *zakāh*, and advance to Allah a goodly loan....73:20). According to majority of the commentators, *ṣalāh* in this context refers to the five prescribed

prayers that were made obligatory on the Night of Ascent (*Mirāj*). This indicates that the night-prayer was obligatory for a year. In the meantime, the nocturnal journey took place, and the five daily prayers were prescribed. After that, the above verses were revealed and the obligatory nature of *tahajjud* prayer was abrogated. Towards the conclusion of the Sūrah, where it speaks of establishment of prayer, it refers to the five prescribed prayers. [Ibn Kathīr, Qurṭubī and Al-Baḥr-ul-Muḥīṭ].

وَأَتُوا زَكَاةً (...and pay zakah....73:20). *Zakāh* refers to the prescribed *zakāh*. However, it is popularly understood that *zakāh* was prescribed two years after migration to Madīnah whereas this verse is Makkī and, as was said earlier, a consensus of scholarly opinion assigns the revelation of this Sūrah to the earliest period of the call. In response, some commentators express the view that this particular verse was revealed in Madīnah. Ibn Kathīr, however, says that *zakāh* was prescribed in the earliest days of Islam, although its details, like exemption limit and the rate, were fixed in the second year of migration at Madīnah. Even if the verse is treated as Makkī, there should be no problem in taking the word *zakāh* in its technical sense of prescribed *zakāh* as Rūḥ-ul- Ma'ānī explains in detail. Its full analysis will be found in this author's booklet entitled '*Nizām-e-Zakāt*'.

وَأَقْرَضُوا اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا (...and advance to Allah a goodly loan....73:20). In other words, spend in the way of Allah as charitable donations. This would be as if one is advancing a loan to Allah who will multiply it many times and reward him most abundantly. This indicates Divine favour and grace towards him, and it also describes that Allah is the richest of all. The loan will not be lost, but will be richly returned. The command for *Zakāh* has already been mentioned previously, therefore advancing a loan to Allah refers, according to most scholars, to other voluntary charitable donations in the cause of Allah as, for instance, spending on friends and relatives or utilizing for entertainment of guests or investing in the service of scholars and righteous people. Some scholars point out that besides the prescribed *Zakāh*, there are other financial obligations imposed on man, such as maintenance of parents, wife and children. Thus the command to pay *zakāh* in verse 20 covers the injunction of paying out the prescribed *Zakāh*, while other financial obligations are covered by the

words: '...advance to Allah a goodly loan [20]'.
 وَمَا تُقَدِّمُوا لِأَنفُسِكُمْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ (...whatever good you will send ahead for your

own selves [73:20]. In other words, if man does good in his lifetime, it is better for him than advising someone else to do the good deed at the time of his death. This advice for doing good on behalf of the deceased includes financial worship and voluntary charitable donations. It also includes prescribed prayers, fasts and other prescribed worship or duties that were missed out or neglected, it is better to pay out the *fidyah* and/or *kaffārah* with one's own hands while he is living and be absolved of the responsibility rather than expecting the heirs to discharge it. They may do it or they may neglect to do it.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ once asked the blessed Companions: "Which of you holds his wealth to be dearer to himself than the wealth of his heirs?" They replied: "O Allah's Messenger, there is not a single one of us who does not hold his wealth to be dearer to himself than the wealth of his heir." Allah's Messenger then said: "Consider carefully what you are saying." They submitted: "This is indeed our considered opinion. We do not know any better." He then said: "The wealth of one of you is only that which he sends forth, and the wealth of his heir is that which he leaves behind." [Ibn Kathīr from Abū Ya'lā al-Mawṣilī and said al-Bukhārī transmitted it, reporting from Ḥaḍī Ibn Ghīyāth and so on].

Alḥamdulillāh
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Muzzammil
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Muddaththir

(The Enveloped One)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 56 verses and 2 sections

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 56

يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُدَّثِّرُ ﴿١﴾ قُمْ فَأَنْذِرْ ﴿٢﴾ وَرَبِّكَ فَكَبِّرْ ﴿٣﴾ وَتِيَابَكَ فَطَهِّرْ ﴿٤﴾
وَالرُّجْزَ فَاهْجُرْ ﴿٥﴾ وَلَا تَمْنُنْ تَسْتَكْثِرُ ﴿٦﴾ وَلِرَبِّكَ فَاصْبِرْ ﴿٧﴾ فَإِذَا نُفِرَ
فِي النَّافُورِ ﴿٨﴾ فَذَلِكَ يَوْمٌ عَسِيرٌ ﴿٩﴾ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ غَيْرُ يَسِيرٍ
﴿١٠﴾ ذُرْنِي وَمَنْ خَلَقْتُ وَحِيدًا ﴿١١﴾ وَجَعَلْتُ لَهُ، مَا لَا مَمْدُودًا ﴿١٢﴾
وَبَيْنَ شُهُودًا ﴿١٣﴾ وَمَهَّدْتُ لَهُ تَمْهِيدًا ﴿١٤﴾ ثُمَّ يَطْمَعُ أَنْ أَزِيدَ ﴿١٥﴾
كَلَّا إِنَّهُ كَانَ لِآيَاتِنَا عَنِيدًا ﴿١٦﴾ سَأَرْهُقَهُ صَعُودًا ﴿١٧﴾ إِنَّهُ فَكَّرَ وَقَدَّرَ
﴿١٨﴾ فَقَتَلَ كَيْفَ قَدَّرَ ﴿١٩﴾ ثُمَّ قَتَلَ كَيْفَ قَدَّرَ ﴿٢٠﴾ ثُمَّ نَظَرَ ﴿٢١﴾ ثُمَّ
عَبَسَ وَبَسَرَ ﴿٢٢﴾ ثُمَّ أَذْبَرَ وَاسْتَكْبَرَ ﴿٢٣﴾ فَقَالَ إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ يُؤْتَرُ
﴿٢٤﴾ إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا قَوْلُ الْبَشَرِ ﴿٢٥﴾ سَأَصْلِيهِ سَقَرٌ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا سَقَرُ
﴿٢٧﴾ لَا تُبْقَى وَلَا تَذَرُ ﴿٢٨﴾ لَوَاحٍ لِّلْبَشَرِ ﴿٢٩﴾ عَلَيْهَا تِسْعَةُ عَشْرَ ﴿٣٠﴾
وَمَا جَعَلْنَا أَصْحَابَ النَّارِ إِلَّا مَلَائِكَةً ۖ وَمَا جَعَلْنَا عِدَّتَهُمُ إِلَّا فِتْنَةً لِّلَّذِينَ
كَفَرُوا ۚ لَيَسْتَخْفِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ وَيَزْدَادَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِيمَانًا وَلَا
يَرْتَابَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ ۚ وَلَيَقُولَ الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَّرَضٌ

وَالْكَافِرُونَ مَاذَا أَرَادَ اللَّهُ بِهَذَا مَثَلًا ۖ كَذَلِكَ يُضِلُّ اللَّهُ مَن يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي
 مَن يَشَاءُ ۚ وَمَا يَعْلَمُ جُنُودَ رَبِّكَ إِلَّا هُوَ ۚ وَمَا هِيَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ لِلْبَشَرِ ﴿٣١﴾
 كَلَّا وَالْقَمَرَ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَاللَّيْلَ إِذَا أَدْبَرَ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَالصُّبْحَ إِذَا أَسْفَرَ ﴿٣٤﴾ إِنَّهَا
 لَأَحَدَى الْكُبَرِ ﴿٣٥﴾ نَذِيرًا لِلْبَشَرِ ﴿٣٦﴾ لِمَن شَاءَ مِنْكُم أَن يَتَقَدَّمَ أَوْ يَتَأَخَّرَ
 ﴿٣٧﴾ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ رَهِينَةٌ ﴿٣٨﴾ إِلَّا أَصْحَابَ الْيَمِينِ ﴿٣٩﴾ فِي
 جَنَّتٍ ۖ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ ﴿٤٠﴾ عَنِ الْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿٤١﴾ مَا سَلَكَكُمْ فِي سَقَرٍ
 ﴿٤٢﴾ قَالُوا لَمْ نَكُ مِنَ الْمَصْلِيِّينَ ﴿٤٣﴾ وَلَمْ نَكُ نُطْعِمِ الْمِسْكِينَ ﴿٤٤﴾
 وَكُنَّا نَخُوضُ مَعَ الْخَائِضِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾ وَكُنَّا نُكَذِّبُ بِيَوْمِ الدِّينِ ﴿٤٦﴾ حَتَّىٰ
 آتَنَا الْيَقِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾ فَمَا نَنْفَعُهُمْ شَفَاعَةُ الشَّفَاعِينَ ﴿٤٨﴾ فَمَالَهُمْ عَنِ
 التَّذْكَرَةِ مُعْرِضِينَ ﴿٤٩﴾ كَانَهُمْ حُمْرٌ مُّسْتَنْفَرَةٌ ﴿٥٠﴾ فَرَّتْ مِنْ قَسْوَرَةٍ
 ﴿٥١﴾ بَلْ يُرِيدُ كُلُّ امْرِئٍ مِّنْهُمْ أَن يُؤْتَىٰ صُحُفًا مُّنْشَرَةً ﴿٥٢﴾ كَلَّا ۚ بَلْ
 لَا يَخَافُونَ الْآخِرَةَ ﴿٥٣﴾ كَلَّا إِنَّهُ تَذْكِرَةٌ ﴿٥٤﴾ فَمَن شَاءَ ذَكَرْهُ ﴿٥٥﴾ وَمَا
 يَذْكُرُونَ إِلَّا أَن يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ ۚ هُوَ أَهْلُ التَّقْوَىٰ وَأَهْلُ الْمَغْفِرَةِ ﴿٥٦﴾

O you, enveloped in a mantle, [1] stand up and warn, [2] and pronounce the greatness of your Lord, [3] and purify your clothes, [4] and keep away from filth, [5] and do no favour (to anyone merely) to ask more (in exchange), [6] and for the sake of your Lord, observe patience. [7] For when the trumpet is blown, [8] that day will be a difficult day, [9] not easy for the disbelievers. [10] Leave me (to deal) with the one whom I have created lonely, [11] and I gave him extensive wealth, [12] and sons present before (his) eyes, [13] and extended (power and honour) to him fairly well. [14] Still, he aspires that I should give him more. [15] Never! He is inimical towards Our verses. [16] I will force him to climb (the mountain) sa'ud. [17] He pondered and suggested. [18] Death unto him! How (bad) is the suggestion he has put forward! [19] Again, death unto him! How (bad) is the suggestion he has put forward! [20] Then he looked (to those around him,) [21] then he frowned and scowled, [22] then turned his back, and waxed proud, [23] then said, "This is nothing but traditional magic; [24] this is

nothing but saying of a mortal." [25] I will put him into Saqar (Hell). [26] And what can let you know what Saqar is? [27] It neither spares (anything inside it from burning) nor leaves (any disbeliever outside). [28] It will disfigure the skins. [29] Appointed on it are nineteen (wardens). [30] And We did not make wardens of the Fire but (from among) angels, and did not fix their number but as a test for those who disbelieve, so that those who are given the Book may come to believe, and those who believe may increase in belief, and so that those who are given the Book and those who believe may not doubt (its correctness), and so that those having malady in their hearts and the disbelievers say, "What has Allah meant by this (sentence that is as strange as a) proverb?" Thus Allah lets go astray whomever He wills, and leads to the right path whomever He wills. And no one knows the hosts of your Lord but He. And this is nothing else but a reminder for mankind. [31] Truly, I swear by the moon, [32] and by the night when it goes back, [33] and by the morning when it becomes bright, [34] it (*saqar*: Hell) is one of the greatest things [35] as a warning to the mankind, [36] to the one who wishes to come forward (towards good deeds) or to go back (from them). [37] Everyone will be detained (in the Hell) because of what he did, [38] except the People of the Right, (i.e. those who will be given their Book of Deeds in their right hands) [39] who will be in gardens, asking [40] about the guilty persons, [41] "What has brought you to? (*Saqar*: Hell)" [42] They will say, "We were not among those who offered *ṣalāh*, (obligatory prayer) [43] and we used not to give food to the needy, [44] and we used to indulge (in mocking at the truth) along with those who indulged, [45] and used to deny the Day of Requit, [46] until when we were overtaken by that which is certain." [47] Then intercession of intercessors will not avail them. [48] So what has happened to them that they are turning away from the Reminder, [49] as if they were wild donkeys, [50] fleeing from a lion? [51] Rather, every one of them wishes that he should be given unrolled (divine) scriptures. [52] Never! But they do not fear the Hereafter. [53] Never! Indeed, this is a Reminder. [54] So, whoever so wishes may take advice from it. [55] And they will not take advice unless Allah so wills. He is worthy to be feared, and worthy to forgive. [56]

Commentary

Sūrah Al-Muddththir is one of the Sūrahs that was sent down in very early days of the revelation. Therefore, some of the scholars considered this Sūrah to be the first one in order of revelation. However, according to the well-known authentic *aḥādīth*, the first instalment of revelation

comprised the initial verses of Sūrah Iqra'. Traditions show that after a few verses of this Sūrah had been revealed, further revelation stopped for a period of time. The period of time during which there was a temporary cessation of revelation is termed as *fatrat-ul-wahy*. Towards the end of this period, an incident took place that is recounted by the Holy Prophet ﷺ thus:

While I was walking, I heard a voice from the sky. So I lifted my gaze towards the sky and saw the same angel who had come to me in the cave of Hira'. He was sitting on a chair between the sky and the earth. So I was struck with awe until I fell down to the ground. Then, I went to my family and I said, زَمُونِي زَمُونِي "Wrap me up, wrap me up" So, they wrapped me up! Allah revealed the initial verses of Sūrah Al-Muddaththir. (Ṣaḥīḥain).

The Holy Prophet ﷺ is addressed in this Sūrah as : -

يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُدَّثِّرُ (O you, enveloped in a mantle...74:1) The word *al-Muddaththir* is derived from *dithār* which refers to a 'thick, warm over-garment [such as a cloak or mantle] which a person wears in winter over his other clothes in order to protect himself from cold.' The form of address is affectionate and endearing as was explained under *Al-Muzzammil* in the preceding Sūrah. The two forms of address, *al-Muzzammil* and *al-Muddaththir*, are near-synonyms. Rūḥ-ul-Maʿānī cites a report from Jābir Ibn Zaid who says that *Al-Muddaththir* was revealed after *Al-Muzzammil*. Some scholars attribute this narration to Sayyidnā Ibn ʿAbbās ؓ as well. However, according to the narration previously reported from Ṣaḥīḥain, it is clear that the first Sūrah to be revealed [after the temporary cessation] was *Al-Muddaththir*. If *Al-Muzzammil* was revealed before this, Sayyidnā Jābir Ibn ʿAbdullāh ؓ [the narrator of the Ḥadīth] would have narrated it. Clearly, *Al-Muzzammil* and *Al-Muddaththir*, are near-synonyms. Therefore, it is very likely that the two Sūrahs might have been revealed in connection with the same incident - when the Holy Prophet ﷺ, whilst walking, heard a voice from the sky and saw Jibraʿīl Amīn ؑ sitting on a chair between the sky and the earth, and then went to the house and wrapped himself in a mantle. This at least confirms the point that the initial verses of the two Sūrahs were among the first verses to be revealed after the temporary break in the revelation. It is however not clear as to which set

of the verses was revealed first, and which was revealed subsequently. Authentic narratives confirm that the initial verses of Sūrah Iqra' were first to be revealed. *Al-Muzzammil* and *Al-Muddaththir* were though revealed approximately the same time in connection with the same incident, there is a difference between the two: The injunctions given at the beginning of *Al-Muzzammil* are related to the Holy Prophet's ﷺ personal purification and perfection, and in *Al-Muddaththir* the injunctions are related to preaching, propagation and human reform.

Sūrah Al-Muddaththir lays down the following six injunctions:

Injunction [1]

فُتِّمْ (stand up and warn...74:2) 'Stand up' could be taken in its primary sense. It will mean: 'Remove the additional clothes in which you have wrapped yourself'. It is also not unlikely that 'stand up' means 'Prepare yourself for the onerous task of reforming the creation of Allah'. The command *fa-andhir* (and warn) comes from the infinitive *indhār* (warning) which is based on love and affection', such as a father's warning his children against the dangers of a snake, scorpion or fire. The Prophets proclaim the Divine Message and warn its rejecters of the evil consequences of rejection. Therefore, they have received the titles of *nadhīr* and *bashīr*. '*Nadhīr*' means 'the one who affectionately and endearingly warns [people] against harmful things' and '*Bashīr*' refers to 'the one who gives glad tidings'. The Qur'ān has conferred both the titles on the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the Holy Book is replete with them. Here, however, the Qur'ān takes it as sufficient to mention *indhār* 'to warn' because at the time of revelation of this verse there were only a handful of Muslims. The rest of the people were all rejecters and disbelievers. They needed to be warned and did not merit glad tidings.

Injunction [2]

وَرَبِّكَ فَكَبِّرْ (..and pronounce the greatness of your Lord...74:3) It means: "Proclaim the greatness of your Lord both orally and practically. The attribute *rabb* (Lord) has been used in this context because it is itself the effective cause of the injunction, in that He is the Sustainer, Cherisher and Nourisher of the entire world. He alone is worthy of *Kibriyā'*. The word *takbīr* literally signifies 'to say *Allāhu Akbar*'. This includes *takbīr* of *taḥrīmāh* in the beginning of prayers and other *takbīrs* also. *Takbīr* is recited outside the prayers as well, such as in *adhān* and *iqāmāh*. There

is no indication in the Qur'an that this injunction specifically refers to uttering *Allāhu Akbar* to commence the prayers.

Injunction [3]

وَيَبَاكُ فَطَهِّرْ (and purify your clothes...74:4) The word *thiyāb* is the plural of *thaub*. In its primary sense, it refers to 'clothes or garment'. Metaphorically, the words *thaub* and *libās* at times refer to 'action, heart, soul, moral character and religion.' Man's body may also be referred to as '*libās*'. The Holy Qur'an and Arabic idioms bear ample testimony to this. Scholars of tafsir have taken all these senses into account when interpreting this verse. The variant interpretations may not be suspected of contradiction or conflict. The different interpretations attached to the verse enrich its significance. Thus the verse would signify that the body and clothes must be kept clean from all kinds of physical impurity. The heart and soul must be kept clean from false beliefs and adulterating thoughts, and free from base morals or from moral decadence. From this it is deducible that it is forbidden to trail the pants or loin-cloth below the ankle, because this is likely to pollute the garment. The injunction of cleansing the garment may signify that the garment must not be made or bought of unlawful money. It must not be made in such a way as the sacred law does not permit. Apparently, the injunction of cleansing the clothes is not specific to prayers. The injunction applies under all conditions. Thus the jurists have ruled that it is not permitted to keep the body and clothes unclean, without necessity, even outside prayers. Likewise, it is not permitted to sit in an unclean place. In times of necessity, it would be an exception. [Maḥzarī]. The Holy Qur'an says:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ وَيُحِبُّ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ

'...Surely Allah loves those who are most repenting, and loves those who keep themselves pure.[2:222]'

And according to a *ḥadīth* narrative 'Cleanliness is half the faith'. Therefore, a Muslim, under all conditions and circumstances, needs to keep his body, clothes and house clean and pure and also maintain his inner cleanliness of the heart. And Allah knows best!

Injunction [4]

وَالرُّجْزَ فَاهْجُرْ (...and keep away from filth...74:5). The letters 'RJZ' may be read as *rujz* or *rijz*, and in either case the word has the same significance.

Mujāhid, 'Ikramah, Qatādah, Zuhri, Ibn Zaid and other leading authorities of Tafsīr interpret the word *rujz* as 'idols' in this context. According to a narration of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ, it signifies 'any sin'. The verse enjoins to give up idols or sins. Although the Holy Prophet ﷺ never indulged in idolatry at any time in his life, he is commanded, for emphasis, to abstain from it in future as he kept away from it in the past. This command is in actual fact directed to the idolaters, so that they may realise the importance of abstaining from idol-worship, as it enjoins the Holy Prophet ﷺ to shun all filth [idols and sins] despite being sinless and infallible.

Injunction [5]

وَلَا تَمْنُنْ تَسْتَكْبِرُ (...and do no favour [to anyone merely] to ask more [in exchange]....74:6). In other words, no gift should be given to anyone seeking to get back in return more than what was given. This indicates that it is reprehensible to give to someone a gift with the intention that the person will give him a higher gift. Although it seems to be allowed, by another verse of the Qur'an, for common people, yet it is reprehensible and morally unrighteous - especially for the Holy Prophet ﷺ, it is unlawful, as explained by Ibn 'Abbās ؓ.

Injunction [6]

وَلِرَبِّكَ فَاصْبِرْ (and for the sake of your Lord, observe patience.....74:7) The word *ṣabr* literally signifies 'to restrain oneself'. In the Qur'anic context, the word has a very wide scope. It signifies to bind oneself to the laws of Allah, to restrain oneself from things made unlawful by Allah, and to control oneself, as far as possible, from unnecessary bewailing and complaining in times of difficulties and hardships. Thus this injunction is rather comprehensive which embraces almost the entire religion. On this occasion, the Holy Prophet ﷺ is directed to observe patience, particularly because the earlier verses have directed him to invite the people towards the true faith and to avoid the infidelity and *shirk*. It is obvious that he will be opposed and persecuted by the forces of evil, as the result of his missionary efforts. He should, therefore, be ready to bear all opposition and persecution with patience and fortitude.

Having given these few injunctions to the Holy Prophet ﷺ, the verses further refer to the Hereafter and its horrors. The word *nāqūr* means 'trumpet' and the verb *nuqira* means 'to blow into the trumpet so that it

makes a loud high sound'. After stating that the Day of Doom will be very horrible for all the infidels, a particular arrogant and conceited disbeliever has been described. He was a great mischief-maker and the gravity of his punishment will befit the enormity and gravity of his sins.

The Annual Income of Walīd Ibn Mughīrah: Ten Million Guineas

The disbeliever referred to here is Walīd Ibn Mughīrah. Allah had favoured him with abundant wealth, property and children. According to Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه, his land, property and gardens stretched from Makkah to Ṭā'if. According to Thaurī, his annual income was ten million Dinars. Some scholars have estimated less than this amount. It is, nonetheless, agreed that the income and yearly produce of his fields and gardens were available in every season, winter or summer. Thus the Qur'ān says:

وَجَعَلْتُ لَهُ مَالًا مَمْدُودًا. وَبَيْنَ شُهُودًا (and I gave him extensive wealth, [12] and sons present before (his) eyes...74:12-13) He was recognised as the Arab leader. He was known among his fellow citizens by the title of *raiḥānah* (the Fragrance) of the *Quraish*. He himself used to boastfully refer to himself as Waḥīd Ibn-ul-Waḥīd 'Unique, the son of the Unique', meaning 'Neither I have any match in my nation, nor my father Mughīrah.'. [Qurṭubī]. But he was ungrateful to Allah for His favours. Despite accepting Qur'ān as the Word of Allah, he imputed a lie to the Qur'ān, calling it sorcery and calling the Holy Prophet ﷺ a sorcerer. Tafsīr of Qurṭubī recounts the story thus: When the following passage of the Qur'ān was revealed, the Holy Prophet ﷺ was reciting it:

حَمْدًا ﴿١﴾ تَنْزِيلُ الْكِتَابِ مِنَ اللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ ﴿٢﴾ غَافِرِ الذُّنُوبِ وَقَابِلِ التَّوْبِ شَدِيدِ الْعِقَابِ ذِي الطَّوْلِ ط لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ ط إِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿٣﴾

Hā Mīm. [1] This is revelation of the Book from Allah, the Mighty, the All-Knowing, [2] the One who forgives sins and accepts repentance, the One who is severe in punishment, the One who is the source of all power. There is no god but He. To Him is the ultimate return (of all) [3]. [40:1-3].

Walīd Ibn Mughīrah, hearing the recitation, exclaimed spontaneously, in which he was forced to concede as follows:

والله لقد سمعت منه كلامًا ماهو من كلام الانس ولا من كلام الجن وان له لحلاوة وان عليه لطاوة وان اعلاه لثمر وان اسفله لمغدق وانه ليعلو ولا يعلو

عليه وما يقول هذا بشر.

'By Allah! I have heard such a speech from him [Muḥammad] as can neither be the speech of a mortal, nor of Jinn. It has sweetness and elegance. Its upper part is fruit-bearing, and its lower part causes water to flow. Its beauty, no doubt, surpasses the beauty of all speeches, and cannot be superseded. It is not the speech of any human being.'

When the Quraish heard about what the great wealthy Arab leader had to say, it created a great convulsion in the Quraish, because it resulted in a wide inclination of the people towards Islam. This was a cause for concern for the leaders of the Quraish. They gathered and discussed (that if Walīd were to embrace the Islamic faith, the rest of the Quraish would soon follow suit.) Abū Jahl put their mind at ease when he took upon himself the responsibility of speaking to him and solving the problem.

Dialogue between Abū Jahl And Walīd: They Concur on the Holy Prophet's Veracity

Abū Jahl went to Walīd and sat next to him, pretending to be very sad. Walīd enquired, 'What is the matter? Why do you look so sad?' Abū Jahl made the reply, 'The Quraish decided to collect money for you and help you in your old age. Now they have learnt that you visit Muḥammad ﷺ and son of Abū Quḥāfah [ie Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ؓ] so that you may have some eatables from them, and to this end you flatter them. You praise their speech. (Obviously, it was a lie that the Quraish was collecting money to help Walīd. The lie was invented merely to make him angry. Similarly it was also a lie that he was getting food from the Holy Prophet ﷺ.)' Walīd was highly enraged on hearing this. His anger knew no bounds and said in arrogance and conceit, 'How can the Quraish think this? I swear by Lāt and 'Uzzā [the two Arabian idols], I am not in need of their food. Do they not know that I am superior to them in abundance of wealth? However, when you say that Muḥammad ﷺ is insane, nobody would believe it. Did you ever see him perform any any act of insanity?' Abū Jahl replied لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ 'Never, by God!' He said, 'You claim that Muḥammad ﷺ is a soothsayer. Did you hear him speak like a soothsayer?' Abū Jahl's reply was again in the negative. Then Walīd said, 'You say that he is a poet. Did you hear him recite poetry?' When Abū Jahl declared that he had not, Walīd added, 'You say that he is a

liar. Did you ever heard him telling a lie? Abū Jahl was forced to concede that they had never heard him tell a lie. (In fact, they had conferred upon him the titles of *Aṣ-Ṣādiq* 'The Truthful' and *Al-ʿAmīn* 'The Honest'). Then Walīd said, 'You say that he is a soothsayer. Have you then seen him uttering such words or doing such acts as the soothsayers are accustomed to? We know well the utterings of the soothsayers. Muḥammad's discourse cannot be held as the utterance of a soothsayer.' Abū Jahl again had to admit. 'No, by God!' Now Abū Jahl had to withdraw from all such false allegations, but he was wondering what he should say to the people about the Holy Prophet ﷺ to stop them from following him. So, he said to Walīd, "Then, you tell me what we should say about him?" Walīd started thinking, then he raised his eyes towards Abū Jahl, frowned in a hateful manner, and ultimately replied, 'I think he is certainly a magician'. He knew well that the Holy Prophet ﷺ is not a magician either. But in order to devise an excuse for saying so, he argued, 'Do you not see how his speech separates husband from wife, brother from brother and father from son? This is the magical effect of faith. As soon as a person embraces the faith, he begins to hate his unbelieving mother, father and other relatives.' The verses describe him thus:

إِنَّهُ فَكَّرَ وَقَدَّرَ. فَقَتَلَ كَيْفَ قَدَّرَ. ثُمَّ قَتَلَ كَيْفَ قَدَّرَ. ثُمَّ نَظَرَ. ثُمَّ عَبَسَ وَبَسَرَ. ثُمَّ أَدْبَرَ
وَأَسْتَكْبَرَ. فَقَالَ إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ يُؤْتَرُ. إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا قَوْلُ الْبَشَرِ.

(He pondered and suggested. [18] Death unto him! How [bad] is the suggestion he has put forward! [19] Again, death unto him! How [bad] is the suggestion he has put forward! [20] Then he looked [to those around him,] [21] then he frowned and scowled, [22] then turned his back, and waxed proud, [23] then said, "This is nothing but traditional magic; [24] this is nothing but saying of a mortal."...25)

The word *qaddara* is derived from *taqdīr*, and literally denotes 'to suggest'. The wretched Walīd was fully convinced of the veracity of the Messengership of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, but his anger got the better of him, and being vanquished by his arrogance and conceit, he had decided to oppose him. However, he wanted to abstain from lying openly, so that he might not be exposed to shame and disgrace. Therefore, he pondered very carefully, and suggested that he should be labelled a 'magician' on the grounds that his speech causes separation between father and son,

and between brothers, as it happens in the case of sorcery. He is therefore cursed repeatedly in the verses cited above.

Unbelievers Abstained from Telling Lies

When we analyse, it would appear very clearly that all unbelievers and transgressors were involved in committing all kinds of sins and shameful deeds, but they abstained from the enormity of telling lies. Abū Sufyān's statement in the royal court of Heraculus shows that the pagans were willing to sacrifice their lives and children in opposing the Holy Prophet ﷺ, but they were not willing to tell lies lest they are socially stigmatised as liars. Alas, in this so-called progressive world where everything moves retrogressively 'telling lies' is no sin. It is in fact treated as a great art. Let alone unbelievers, even the pious and religious Muslims do not find it hateful. They pride upon telling lies and getting others to tell lies. We seek Allah's refuge from such an attitude.

Children's Stay with the Father is a Great Boon

While mentioning the favours Allah had bestowed on Walīd, the Holy Qur'ān has said,

بَيْنَ شُهُودًا

'and sons present before (his) eyes, [13]'

This shows that just as the birth of children and their being alive are a boon of Allah, their staying with parents is also a great divine blessing, because it is the cause of coolness of their eyes and a satisfaction of their heart. Additionally, abiding in their presence, children can be of assistance to the parents in their service and businesses. But the progress which this retrogressive age is making is based on gold and silver currencies. Comfort and peace are founded on promissory notes. Parents throw away their children in foreign countries. They are happy at their children's staying overseas for years, and it does not matter if they do not see their faces all their lives as long as they receive news of their huge earnings and salaries or income, enabling them to express their superiority to their family members. This indicates that they are unaware of the concept of peace and comfort. This should be the result of forgetting Allah as the Qur'ān says:

نَسُوا اللَّهَ فَنَسِيَهُمْ أَنْفُسَهُمْ

'...those who forgot Allah, so He made them forget their own

selves__[59:19]'

وَمَا يَعْلَمُ جُنُودَ رَبِّكَ إِلَّا هُوَ (...And no one knows the hosts of your Lord but He ... 74:31) Muqātil, among the leading authorities, says that this is rebuttal to Abū Jah'l's statement. When he heard this verse which says that there are nineteen angels in charge of Hell, he addressed the youth of Quraish and said that Muḥammad ﷺ has only nineteen companions, so there is nothing to worry about. Baihaqī records a narrative from Suddi that when verse 30 was revealed, a foolish Quraishi unbeliever, Abūl-Asalaīn by name, spoke out: 'O nation of Quraish, I alone am sufficient for the nineteen. I will take care of ten with my right arm, and nine with my left arm. Thus I will put an end to all nineteen of them.' On this occasion, this verse was revealed. 'O fools, first of all one angel is sufficient for all. Moreover, the number nineteen refers to the chiefs of angels. Under each of these angels, the number of Allah's angels is legion beyond human count or computation. Allah alone knows their number. They are ready at hand to carry out the punishment to the unbelievers and transgressors.'

In the next verses, there is the mention of the Hereafter and its horrors.

إِنَّهَا لَاحِدَى الْكُبَرِ (it (*saqar*: Hell) is one of the greatest things....74:35) The pronoun in the phrase *innahā* refers to *saqar* 'Hell' which has been mentioned in one of the preceding verses. The word *kubar* is the plural of *kubrā* which is an adjective for *dāhiyah* or *muṣībah* 'calamity'. The verse purports to say that Hell which the unbelievers will enter will be one of the greatest calamities. Besides, there will be many different kinds of torments and tortures.

لِمَنْ شَاءَ مِنْكُمْ أَنْ يَتَقَدَّمَ أَوْ يَتَأَخَّرَ (to the one who wishes to come forward [towards good deeds] or to go back [from them]...74:37) In this context, 'to come forward' signifies 'coming forward towards faith and obedience' and *ta'akhhur* 'to go backward' signifies 'moving away from faith and obedience'. The verse purports to warn against the torment and torture of the Hellfire. This applies to all human beings in general. Some accept the warning and are guided by the truth, and the unfortunate ones hold back from accepting the warning, turn away from it and reject it.

كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ رَهِينَةٌ إِلَّا أَصْحَابَ الْيَمِينِ (Everyone will be detained [in the

Hell] because of what he did, [38] except the People of the Right, [i.e. those who will be given their Book of Deeds in their right hands].....74:38-39) The word *rahīnah* is used in the sense of *marhūnah* 'will be detained'. The word is derived from *rahn* 'to give something valuable to a pawnbroker as a security for a debt. The valuable thing is thus merely detained by the pawnbroker. He cannot use it or take advantage of it'. Likewise, every person on the Day of Judgement will be detained in lieu of his sins, except those who will be given their Book of Deeds in their right hands. In this context, 'detention' could refer to being detained in Hell. In this case, the statement would mean that every person will be held in pledge in Hell against his sins to receive punishment, except the People of the Right. The context indicates that the People of the Right are those who have repaid their debt, i.e. they have fulfilled their obligations in this world towards Allah and other human beings. In these instances there is no need for them to be detained. This interpretation seems to be plain, simple and straightforward. However, if 'detention' refers to being held at some other place before giving account or before admission into Paradise or Hell, it signifies that every person will be held to give an account of his deeds. No person will be permitted to move out unless the account is taken. In this case, the exception of the People of the Right could refer to the sinless who are not accountable, such as minors or immature children as explained by Sayyidnā 'Alī عليه السلام. According to a Tradition, a segment of the Holy Prophet's ﷺ community would be exempted from accountability. They will enter Paradise without having to account for actions. Possibly, it could be referring to this segment. According to Sūrah Al-Wāqī'ah, there will be three categories of people on the Plain of Gathering: [1] *sābiqūn* 'the Foremost' and *muqarrabūn* 'who have attained nearness to Allah'; [2] the People of the Right; and [3] the People of the Left. On this occasion, the *muqarrabūn* have been merged with 'the People of the Right', and only the latter people have been mentioned. From this point of view, there is no express text which states that all the People of the Right will be excepted, and will not be detained for accountability. The first interpretation, that is being held in Hell, appropriately fits the context. And Allah knows best!

فَمَا تَنْفَعُهُمْ شَفَاعَةُ الشَّافِعِينَ (Then intercession of intercessors will not avail

them...74:48) The attached pronoun of *tanfa'uhum* refers to those sinners who have been mentioned in the preceding verses. They confessed to four crimes: [1] they did not perform obligatory prayers; [2] they did not feed the poor, that is, they did not spend on the necessities of the poor; [3] they indulged (in mocking at the truth) along with those who indulged in opposing Islam or committing sins and shameful deeds; and [4] they denied the Day of Requitul.

This verse purports to say that whoever has these characteristics, including denial of the Day of Requitul, is an infidel. The intercession of anyone who tries to intercede for an infidel will be of no benefit to him on the Day of Judgement. Even if all the intercessors join forces to intercede, it will not help. This is because intercession is only useful if the conditions for it are met. Therefore, the verse uses the plural expression, thus:

شفاعة الشافعين

'intercession of intercessors'

No Intercession will Benefit an Unbeliever, but will Benefit a Believer

It is deducible from the verse under comment that, besides infidels, all Muslims, even though they may be sinners, will benefit from intercession as many authentic *aḥādīth* bear ample testimony to this. The intercessors will be the Prophets of Allah, Allah's friends and righteous personalities. It is confirmed that the general body of believers will intercede for one another, and their intercession will be accepted.

A Special Note

Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه narrates that Allah's angels and Prophets, the martyrs and the righteous will intercede for sinners in the Hereafter, and they will be delivered from Hell by virtue of their intercession, except the four types of sinners who have been classified above, that is, those who failed to perform their obligatory prayer and to pay their Zakāh, those who opposed Islam with the opponents of Islam and denied the Hereafter. This shows that intercession will not be accepted for those who fail to perform their obligatory Ṣalāh and pay their Zakāh. However, other narratives indicate that the correct view with regard to the verse under comment is that the unacceptability of

intercession refers to those sinners who commit the four types of crimes that include the rejection of the Hereafter. Besides the rejection, it is not necessary that sinners committing other sins should be punished in the same way. However, there are other *Ḥadīth* narratives that refer to certain major sins which deprive people of intercession. For instance, if a person denies the veracity of intercession, or if he denies the existence of the Pond of Kauthar, he will have no share in either of the two.

فَمَا لَهُمْ عَنِ التَّذِكْرَةِ مُعْرِضِينَ (So what has happened to them that they are turning away from the Reminder...74:49)

The word *tadhkirah* (Reminder), in this context, refers to the Holy Qur'ān, because the word literally signifies a 'reminder or something that reminds'. The Qur'ān is unique in reminding Allah's attributes of perfection, His mercy and wrath, and the reward and punishment. Towards the end, the verse 54 has explained that the 'Reminder' is the Holy Qur'ān that is rejected by them. The allergy of the infidels against the Holy Qur'ān has been mentioned in verses 50 and 51 in the following words, "كَانَهُمْ حُمْرٌ مُسْتَنْفِرَةٌ. فَرَّتْ مِنْ قَسْوَرَةٍ" as if they were wild donkeys, fleeing from a lion?" The word *qaswarah* used in verse 51 has two meanings: [1] a 'lion'; and [2] an 'archer' or a 'hunter'. Both meanings have been reported from the noble Companions.

هُوَ أَهْلُ التَّقْوَىٰ وَأَهْلُ الْمَغْفِرَةِ (...He is worthy to be feared, and worthy to forgive... 74:56) Allah is 'Ahl-ut-taqwā' in the sense that 'He alone is worthy to be feared and entitled to be obeyed'. *Ahl-ul-Maghfirah* signifies that 'He alone is the Being Who forgives the sins of even the greatest sinners whenever He so wishes': No one else has the power to do this .

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Muddaththir
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Qiyāmah

(The Resurrection)

This Sūrah is Makki. It contains 40 verses and 2 sections

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 40

لَا أُقْسِمُ بِيَوْمِ الْقِيَمَةِ ﴿١﴾ وَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِالنَّفْسِ اللَّوَّامَةِ ﴿٢﴾ أَيَحْسَبُ
الْإِنْسَانُ أَنْ نَجْمَعَ عِظَامَهُ ﴿٣﴾ بَلَىٰ قَدَرِينٌ عَلَىٰ أَنْ نُسَوِّيَ بَنَانَهُ
﴿٤﴾ بَلْ يُرِيدُ الْإِنْسَانُ لِيَفْجُرَ أَمَامَهُ ﴿٥﴾ يَسْأَلُ أَيَّانَ يَوْمُ الْقِيَمَةِ
﴿٦﴾ فَإِذَا بَرِقَ الْبَصَرُ ﴿٧﴾ وَخَسَفَ الْقَمَرُ ﴿٨﴾ وَجُمِعَ الشَّمْسُ
وَالْقَمَرُ ﴿٩﴾ يَقُولُ الْإِنْسَانُ يَوْمَئِذٍ أَيْنَ الْمَفْرُ ﴿١٠﴾ كَلَّا لَا وَزَرَ
﴿١١﴾ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ يَوْمَئِذٍ الْمُسْتَقَرُّ ﴿١٢﴾ يُنبِئُوا الْإِنْسَانُ يَوْمَئِذٍ بِمَا
قَدَّمَ وَآخَرَ ﴿١٣﴾ بَلِ الْإِنْسَانُ عَلَىٰ نَفْسِهِ بَصِيرَةٌ ﴿١٤﴾ وَلَوْ أَلْقَىٰ
مَعَاذِيرَهُ ﴿١٥﴾ لَا تَحْرِيكَ بِهِ لِسَانِكَ لِتَعَجَّلَ بِهِ ﴿١٦﴾ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا جَمْعَهُ
وَقُرْآنَهُ ﴿١٧﴾ فَإِذَا قَرَأْنَاهُ فَاتَّبِعْ قُرْآنَهُ ﴿١٨﴾ ثُمَّ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا بَيَانَهُ ﴿١٩﴾ كَلَّا
بَلْ تُحِبُّونَ الْعَاجِلَةَ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَتَذَرُونَ الْآخِرَةَ ﴿٢١﴾ وَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ
نَّاصِرَةٌ ﴿٢٢﴾ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهَا نَاطِرَةٌ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ بِاسِرَةٌ ﴿٢٤﴾ تَظُنُّ
أَنْ يُفْعَلَ بِهَا فَاقِرَةٌ ﴿٢٥﴾ كَلَّا إِذَا بَلَغَتِ التَّرَاقِيَ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَقِيلَ مَنْ سَكَتْ
رَاقٍ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَظَنَّ أَنَّهُ الْفِرَاقُ ﴿٢٨﴾ وَالتَّفَّتِ السَّاقُ بِالسَّاقِ ﴿٢٩﴾

إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ يَوْمَئِذٍ الْمَسَاقُ ﴿٣٠﴾ فَلَا صَدَقَ وَلَا صَلَّى ﴿٣١﴾ وَلَكِنْ
 كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلَّى ﴿٣٢﴾ ثُمَّ ذَهَبَ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِ يَتَمَطَّى ﴿٣٣﴾ أَوْلَىٰ لَكَ
 فَأَوْلَىٰ ﴿٣٤﴾ ثُمَّ أَوْلَىٰ لَكَ فَأَوْلَىٰ ﴿٣٥﴾ أَيَحْسَبُ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنْ يُتْرَكَ
 سُدىٰ ﴿٣٦﴾ أَلَمْ يَكْ نُطْفِئْهُ مِنْ مَّيِّ يُمْنَىٰ ﴿٣٧﴾ ثُمَّ كَانَ عِلْقَةً
 فَخَلَقَ فَسَوَّىٰ ﴿٣٨﴾ فَجَعَلَ مِنْهُ الزَّوْجَيْنِ الذَّكَرَ وَالْأُنثَىٰ ﴿٣٩﴾
 أَلَيْسَ ذَلِكَ بِقَدِيرٍ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يُحْيِيَ الْمَوْتَىٰ ﴿٤٠﴾

I swear by the Day of Resurrection, [1] and I swear by the self-reproaching conscience, (that Resurrection is a reality.) [2] Does man think that We will never reassemble his bones? [3] Yes, We are able to reset (even) his fingertips perfectly. [4] But man wishes to go on violating Allah's injunctions (even in future) ahead of him. [5] He asks, "When will be this Day of Resurrection?" [6] So, when the eyes will be dazzled, [7] and the moon will lose its light, [8] and the sun and the moon will be joined together, [9] on that day man will say, "Where to escape?" [10] Never! There will be no refuge at all. [11] On that day, towards your Lord will be the destination (of everyone.) [12] Man will be informed of what he sent ahead and what he left behind. [13] Rather, man will be a witness against himself, [14] even though he may offer his excuses. [15]

(O Prophet,) do not move your tongue (during revelation) for (reciting) it (the Qur'ān) so as you receive it in hurry. [16] It is surely undertaken by Us to store it (in your heart), and to let it be recited (by you after revelation is completed). [17] Therefore, when it is recited by Us (through the angel), follow its recitation (by concentration of your heart). [18] Then, it is undertaken by Us to explain it. [19]

Never! (think that your denial of Resurrection is correct) But you like that which is immediate, [20] and neglect the Hereafter. [21] Many faces, that day, will be glowing, [22] looking towards their Lord, [23] and many faces, that day, will be gloomy, [24] realizing that a back-breaking calamity is going to be inflicted on them. [25] Never! (think that you will remain in this world forever) When the soul (of a patient) reaches the

clavicles, [26] and it is said, "Who is an enchanter (that can save him?)" [27] and he realizes that it is (the time of) departure (from the world,) [28] and one shank is intertwined with the other shank, [29] then on that day, it is to your Lord that one has to be driven. [30]

So (the denier of the Hereafter) neither believed, nor prayed, [31] but rejected the truth and turned away (from it), [32] then he went to his home puffed up with pride. [33] (It will be said to such a man,) Woe to you, then woe to you! [34] Again, woe to you, then woe to you! [35] Does man presume that he will be left unchecked? [36] Was he not an ejaculated drop of semen? [37] Then he became a blood-clot, then He created (him) and made (him) perfect, [38] and made from him two kinds, male and female. [39] Has He no power to give life to the dead? [40]

Commentary

لَا أَقْسِمُ بِيَوْمِ الْقِيَمَةِ. وَلَا أَقْسِمُ بِالنَّفْسِ اللَّوَامَةِ (I swear by the Day of Resurrection, [1] and I swear by the self-reproaching conscience, (that Resurrection is a reality.)...75:1-2). The negative particle *lā* 'nay' prefixed to the oath in this context has no meaning. When the object of oath is to refute the false thought of an opponent, this redundant negative particle is used before oath. This usage is commonplace in Arabic idiom. Such usage is sometimes employed in our language [in Urdu] as well [as an answer to some objection or in repudiation of what is said before or] to emphasize an important subject. This Sūrah refutes and rebuts doubts about the possibility of the Resurrection by the rejecters. The Sūrah first swears an oath by the Resurrection, and then by the self-reproaching conscience. The complement or subject of oath is contextually understood - the Day of Resurrection is a reality and it shall come to pass. The object of oath in verse [1] is to affirm and emphasize the importance of the subject about which an oath is taken. In this instance, it is the Resurrection. In verse [2], the object of oath is to lay emphasis on the importance of self-reproaching conscience and its acceptability in the sight of Allah. The word *nafs* means 'soul' or 'life' and the word *lawwāmah* is derived from *lawm* signifying 'reproach or upbraid'. The phrase refers to the human conscience that upbraids him for doing bad deeds. It upbraids him not only for doing bad deeds, but also for doing good deeds - 'why did you not do more good, and attain higher stages [of development]?' In short, a

perfect believer reproaches and upbraids himself all the time whether doing good or bad. His reproaching himself for bad deeds is quite understandable, but why should he reproach, blame or criticize himself for good deeds? He should try to reach for higher goals in life by doing better deeds. He upbraids himself for missing out on that score. This interpretation is reported from Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه and other leading authorities on Tafsīr [Ibn Kathīr and others].

On the same basis, Sayyidnā Ḥasan al-Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى interpreted *nafs lawwāmah* as *nafs mu’minah* meaning, the 'believing soul' and said that 'By Allah! A believer at all times upbraids his own self. It is obvious why he should reproach himself when he commits evil. He reproaches himself when he does good deeds as well, because he feels that he has not performed his duties of servitude and Divine worship adequately. He feels that he has not fulfilled and consummated his obligations of slave-hood perfectly. Therefore, he reproaches himself for his shortcomings in the performance of his duties and obligations.'

Interpretation of Lawwāmah

Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى and others have expressed the view that Allah has sworn an oath by the self-reproaching conscience in order to show honour for the believing souls who take account of their deeds, regret, and feel sorry for, their shortcomings and reproach themselves.

Three kinds of Nafs

The foregoing interpretation of *An-nafs-ul-lawwāmah* embraces *An-nafs-ul-muṭma‘innah*. The two terms are titles of a God-fearing person.

In Ṣūfī terminology, we come across the following concepts. The noble Ṣūfis say that man in his nature goes through three stages of human development. The first stage is called] *An-nafs-ul-ammārah* 'the self that tempts (to evil)' as said by the Holy Qur’ān:

إِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَأَمَّارَةٌ بِالسُّوءِ

'...Surely, man's inner self often incites to evil__ [12:53]'

The second stage of development is called *An-nafs-ul-lawwāmah* 'the self that blames' - translated above as 'the self-reproaching conscience'.

The first stage is developed into the second stage when the traveler perform righteousness, and exerts himself in *riyāḍah* 'ascetic discipline' and *mujāhadah* 'spiritual struggle'. This Self is conscious of its own imperfections. It regrets its evils and shortcomings, but it is not completely cut off from the evils. The third and highest stage of development is called *An-nafs-ul-muṭma'innah* 'the self at peace'. This self develops into this stage when it progressively performs righteousness and attains Divine nearness and applies the sacred laws of Shari'ah so rigorously that Shari'ah becomes his nature and develops a natural hatred for anything contrary to Shari'ah. The title of the self at this stage is *muṭma'innah*.

Then an oft-repeated objection of the disbelievers is mentioned, that is, when they are dead and reduced to bones and dust, how will they be raised again to life. The following verse rebuts this objection, thus:

بَلَىٰ قَدِيرِينَ عَلَىٰ أَنْ تُسَوَّىٰ بَنَانُهُ (Yes! We are able to reset [even] his fingertips perfectly...75:4). Man is amazed and surprised and thinks that Allah is unable to gather his tiny particles that have been scattered and reassemble his decomposed bones and give him a new life. The verse effectively rebuts this objection by saying that this has happened once before. Every man who grows and develops in the world, his body is composed of particles and elements gathered from different parts of the world. Allah has infinite power to do anything. He will gather the disintegrated bones and the scattered particles of man from different parts of the world and give them life again, as he did the first time. It is not impossible for Him to breathe soul into his structure the second time, as it was not impossible the first time. Why should it be surprising?

Divine Wonders in the Resurrection of Bodies

Allah is able not only to raise man's dead body again, but also to reconstruct every part of his body perfectly up to the minute detail of the very delicate fingertips and individual fingerprints. Man will be given the same body as he had in his worldly life without the slightest difference. Since the inception of time until the end of the world, zillions of human beings of different shapes and sizes come and die. Even if anyone remembers them, it is an impossible task to recompose them precisely. But Allah says in the verse under comment that He is quite able to recreate not only the large limbs, members and organs of the dead, but He is also able to put together his fingertips. The word *Banān* 'fingertips' is specially

mentioned here because they are among the smallest parts of the body. If Allah is able to recreate such small parts [with such precision], it would not be impossible for Him to recreate the larger limbs of the body, such as arms or hands or legs or feet.

Another reason why *banān* 'fingertips' finds a special mention is that Allah has characterized every human body with some identification marks through which one person could be distinctly recognized and distinguished from the other. For instance, the human face is no more than a few square centimeters; yet it has such distinctive characteristics that no two faces look exactly alike. Despite man's tongue and throat being alike, the sounds and voices of young and old, and of men and women are easily distinguishable. Even more amazing than this, are the fingertips and fingerprints. No two thumbprints or fingerprints are alike. Fingertips look alike, but the fingerprints are different. There are zillions of human beings, but the patterns of lines on the skins of the fingers is distinctly recognizable. Thumbprints have played a decisive role in court decisions and judgements. Technical analysis reveals that the patterns of lines are not only on the skin of the thumbs, but also on the skins of all the fingers - distinguishable and recognizable.

In sum, man is amazed as to how Allah will reassemble his bones and give him a new life again, but he should think further than this. He will be raised with the same face, shape and size, and with the same distinctive features, so much so that his fingertips and fingerprints will be reshaped as they were in the first instance of his creation. *Fa-tabārak Allahu Aḥsanul khāliqīn* - 'Glorious is Allah, the Best of Creators!'

بَلْ يُرِيدُ الْإِنْسَانُ لِيَفْجُرَ أَمَامَهُ (But man wishes to go on violating Allah's injunctions [even in future] ahead of him...75:5). The word *amām* signifies 'ahead or future'. The verse purports to say that the unbeliever or the unmindful man does not ponder over the manifestations of Divine Omnipotence, so that he may regret his denial in the past and make amends for the future. In fact, he wishes to persist in his denial, polytheism and sins even in the future.

فَإِذَا بَرِقَ الْبَصَرُ. وَخَسَفَ الْقَمَرُ. وَجُمِعَ الشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ (So, when the eyes will be dazzled, and the moon will lose its light, and the sun and the moon will be joined together,...75:7-9). This describes the scenes of the Resurrection.

The verb *bariqa* means for the eyes 'to be dazzled and unable to see'. On the Day of Resurrection, the eyes of all will be dazzled and will not be able to see consistently. The verb *khasafa* is derived from *khusūf* which means 'to lose light and become dark'. The verse purports to say that the moon will lose its light or will be eclipsed. The statement that 'the sun and the moon will be joined together' signifies that not only the moon will lose its light, but also the sun will be eclipsed. Astronomers have discovered that the sun has the original light, and the light of the moon is borrowed from the sun. Allah says that the sun and the moon on the Day of Resurrection will be fused together, so that they both will lose their lights. Some scholars interpret this statement to mean that on that Day the sun and the moon will rise from the same point, as some narratives report. And Allah know best!

يُنَبِّئُ الْإِنْسَانَ يَوْمَئِذٍ بِمَا قَدَّمَ وَأَخَّرَ (Man will be informed of what he sent ahead, and what he left behind....75:13). Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh Ibn Mas‘ūd and Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنهما are reported to have said that 'what he sent ahead' refers to the good deeds he has sent forth before his death. The words 'what he left behind' refers to the good or bad, useful or harmful custom he invented and left behind which people follow. He will continue to receive its reward or punishment. Qatādah رضي الله عنه said that 'what he sent ahead' refers to a good deed he did in his lifetime; and 'what he left behind' refers to a good deed he could have done but did not do and wasted his time or opportunity.

بَلِ الْإِنْسَانُ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ بَصِيرَةٌ. وَلَوْ أَلْقَى مَعَاذِيرَهُ (Rather, man will be a witness against himself, even though he may offer his excuses....75:14-15). One meaning of the words *baṣīr* and *baṣīrah* is 'to see'. Another meaning of *baṣīrah* is 'evidence', as for instance in:

قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بَصَائِرُ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ

'...There have come to you evidences¹ from your Lord__[6:104]

In this verse the word *baṣā'ir* is the plural of *baṣīrah* and it means 'evidence, proof, argument or insight'. The word *ma'adhīr* is the plural of *mi'dhār* meaning, 'excuse'. The verse purports to say that for purposes of following the procedures of fairness and justice, man will be shown each

(1). Another meaning of the word is 'insights' according to which we have translated the verse 6:104 in the text. (Muhammad Taqi Usmani)

of his deeds on the Plain of Reckoning, although in fact this will not be necessary for him, because every man knows what he does in this world, and he will recall his deeds in the Hereafter, even though he will make excuses. Furthermore, he will see all his good and bad actions on the Plain of Reckoning as the Qur'an says:

وَوَجَدُوا مَا عَمِلُوا حَاضِرًا

'...And they will find what they did all there__[18:49]

If the word *baṣīrah* is taken in the sense of 'evidence, or proof', the verse signifies that man will be a clear proof against himself, in spite of any excuses he might offer. However, man fails to realize that in this situation, the limbs of his own body [his hearing, his sight, his two hands and his two legs] will testify against him. This is the meaning of the words 'وَلَوْ أَلْقَى مَعَاذِيرَهُ' even though he may offer his excuses. [75:15].

Thus far, there was the description of the conditions and horrors of the Day of Resurrection. The next four verses are a special guidance for the Messenger ﷺ of Allah to be followed by him at the time of revelation. When Jibra'il Amīn ﷺ descended with a set of verses, the Holy Prophet ﷺ feared that there might be discrepancy in his listening and reciting it accordingly. His other fear was that he might forget some portion of it, or some word might escape his memory. As a result, when Jibra'il Amīn ﷺ recited a verse, he would exert himself in repeating the words immediately upon hearing them. In this manner, the strain would be multiplied. Allah revealed four verses in which he is advised not to exert himself so strenuously, because the matter has been simplified for him. Allah has taken upon Himself the responsibility of collecting it in his heart, making him recite it and conveying it to the people, thus:

لَا تَحْرِكْ بِهِ لِسَانَكَ لِتَعْجَلَ بِهِ ﴿١٦﴾ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا جَمْعَهُ وَقُرْآنَهُ ﴿١٧﴾ فَإِذَا قَرَأَهُ فَاتَّبِعْ قُرْآنَهُ ﴿١٨﴾

([O Prophet,] do not move your tongue [during revelation] for [reciting] it [the Qur'an] so as you receive it in hurry. It is surely undertaken by Us to store it [in your heart], and to let it be recited [by you after revelation is completed]. Therefore, when it is recited by Us [through the angel], follow its recitation [by concentration of your heart]...75:16-18).

The word Qur'ān here means 'recitation'. In other words, when Jibra'īl (عليه السلام) recites the Qur'ān, you should not recite it along with him, but listen to it attentively. When its recitation is completed, follow its recitation. Here the words 'follow its recitation', by general consensus of the scholars, means 'when Jibra'īl (عليه السلام) recites, be silent and listen to it.'

Muqtadīs (those praying behind an Imām) should not recite the Qur'ān in ṣalah

According to an authentic Ḥadīth, Imām (one who leads a congregational prayer) in prayer is supposed to be followed by *muqtadīs* (those who follow Imām). Therefore, they follow him. When the former bows, the latter must bow; and when he prostrates, the latter must all fall in prostration. In line with this principle, a Ḥadīth in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim adds: اذا قرأ فانصتوا 'When he [the Imām] recites, be silent and listen.'

This explains the function of an Imām. In matters of bowing and prostrating, the followers should do as he does, that is, they should perform the acts of bowing and prostrating along with him. However, following him in the matter of recitation is different. When the Imām recites, the followers should be silent and listen. This is the argument of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah and some other Imāms in holding that the *muqtadīs* should not recite when following an Imām in prayer. And Allah knows best!

In conclusion, the passage says: إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا بَيَانَهُ (Then, it is undertaken by Us to explain it...75:19). In other words, it is Allah's concern to explain the true message of the verses. In fact, the meaning of every single word of the Qur'ān will be made plain to the Holy Prophet (ﷺ). He need not be concerned about it. These four verses laid down the injunctions pertaining to Qur'ān and its recitation. Now the Sūrah reverts to its basic theme of Resurrection. It describes the conditions and horrors of the Hereafter. Here a question arises as to the contextual relationship between the four verses and the rest of the Sūrah where they have been studded. Before the four verses, while describing the Resurrection, it was made plain that Allah's knowledge is infinite, so much so that every man will be resurrected in the same state, the same shape and size, in which he was created the first time. His fingertips will be reconstructed with the same precision that they were created the first time; and his fingerprints will be redesigned with the same patterns of lines on their skins as were designed

the before. There will be not a hair's breadth of a difference. This is possible only because Allah is Omniscient; His knowledge is infinite and all-encompassing; and His preserving capacity is incomparable, unparalleled and unique. On the basis of these attributes, the four verses were revealed to console and comfort the Holy Prophet ﷺ. The Holy Prophet ﷺ is told: 'You can forget, and it is possible that you could make a mistake in transmission. But Allah is beyond these things. Allah has taken upon Himself the responsibility of storing the words of the Qur'ān in your heart or explaining the message to you. Do not worry about all this. It is Our concern.' After these four verses, the Sūrah resumes the description of the conditions of Resurrection.

وُجُوهُ يَوْمَئِذٍ نَّاصِرَةٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهَا نَاطِرَةٌ (Many faces, that day, will be glowing, looking towards their Lord,...75:23). The word *nāḍirah* means 'fresh'. In other words, many faces that day will be happy, fresh and radiant. The words 'looking towards their Lord' mean 'gazing at their Lord'. This proves that the inmates of Paradise will see Allah in the Hereafter with physical eyes. The scholars of *Ahlus-sunnah* (those following the classic way of interpreting the religion) are unanimous on this issue. The *Mu'tazilites* and the *Kharijites* deny the possibility of seeing Allah, even in Paradise. Their reasoning is philosophical scepticism. They say that there are certain conditions of distance that must be met between the one who sees with his physical eyes and the object that is seen. But these conditions cannot be met between the Creator and the created. The *Ahlus-sunnah* respond that in the Hereafter the Beatific Vision of Allah will be beyond the need of these conditions. He will be seen [unlike any material being] beyond space, direction, shape or form. Ḥadīth narratives make the subject even clearer. The inmates of Paradise will occupy different positions. Consequently, some will see Allah on a weekly basis, on Fridays. Others will see Him daily, morning and evening. Yet others will see Him all the time under all conditions. [Maḥzarī].

كَلَّا إِذَا بَلَغَتِ التَّرَافِيَ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَقِيلَ مَنْ سَكَّتْ رَاقٍ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَظَنَّ أَنَّهُ الْفِرَاقُ ﴿٢٨﴾
وَالْتَفَتِ السَّاقُ بِالسَّاقِ ﴿٢٩﴾ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ يَوْمَئِذٍ الْمَسَاقُ ﴿٣٠﴾

(When the soul [of a patient] reaches the clavicles, and it is said, "Who is an enchanter [that can save him?]", and he realizes that it is [the time of] departure [from the world,] and one shank is intertwined with the other shank, then on that day, it

is to your Lord that one has to be driven....75:26-30]

In the preceding verses, reckoning on the Day of Reckoning and conditions of the inmates of Paradise and Hell were described. In these verses, man's attention is drawn to his approaching death, which he should not neglect. He should embrace the faith and do deeds of righteousness before death overtakes him, so that he may attain salvation in the Hereafter. The above verse depicts the scene of death. The unmindful man forgets his death until his soul comes up to his collar-bone [throat]. The healers fail to heal him, and the people look for enchanters to save him. When one shank is entwined with the other, he realizes that it is the final moments of his parting. At this juncture neither is his repentance acceptable nor a righteous deed. Therefore, it is necessary for a wise person to make amends before this moment arrives. In the statement, *وَالْتَفَتِ السَّاقُ بِالسَّاقِ* (and one shank is intertwined with the other shank) the word *sāq* means 'shank'. This statement could mean that, being agitated and restless, he strikes one shank on the other, or rubs one shank against the other. It could also signify that if one leg is placed on the other, and the dying person wants to move it, he would not be able to do so. [Sha'bī and Ḥasan have interpreted it in this way].

Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه says that the two 'shanks' refer to the two worlds: the Here and the Hereafter. The verse signifies 'the last day of the days of this world and the first day of the days of the Hereafter; one affliction will be joined to another, and the agony of leaving this world will be joined to the agony of the punishment awaiting the disbeliever in the next world'. And Allah knows best!

أُولَىٰ لَكَ فَأُولَىٰ ﴿٣٤﴾ ثُمَّ أُولَىٰ لَكَ فَأُولَىٰ ﴿٣٥﴾

'[It will be said to such a man,] Woe to you, then woe to you!
Again, woe to you, then woe to you!...(75:34-35)

The word *aula* is the inverted form of wail which means 'destruction'. The expression 'woe' has been mentioned four times for the person who has made it his habit to deny and reject, and was steeped in wealth, and died in that state. Therefore, destruction has been heaped on him four times: [1] at the time of death; [2] in the grave; [3] at the time of Resurrection; and finally [4] at the time of entering Hell.

أَلَيْسَ ذَٰلِكَ بِقَدِيرٍ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يُحْيِيَ الْمَوْتَىٰ (Has He no power to give life to the

Sūrah Ad-Dahr

(The Time)

This sūrah is Makki, and it has 31 verses, and 2 sections

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 31

هَلْ أَتَى عَلَى الْإِنْسَانِ حِينٌ مِّنَ الدَّهْرِ لَمْ يَكُنْ شَيْئًا مَّذْكُورًا ﴿١﴾
 إِنَّا خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ أَمْشَاجٍ مَّا نَبْتَلِيهِ فَجَعَلْنَاهُ سَمِيعًا بَصِيرًا ﴿٢﴾
 إِنَّا هَدَيْنَاهُ السَّبِيلَ إِمَّا شَاكِرًا وَإِمَّا كَفُورًا ﴿٣﴾ إِنَّا أَعْتَدْنَا
 لِلْكَافِرِينَ سَلَاسِلًا وَأَغْلَالًا وَسَعِيرًا ﴿٤﴾ إِنَّ الْأَبْرَارَ يَشْرَبُونَ مِنْ
 كَأْسٍ كَانَ مِزَاجُهَا كَافُورًا ﴿٥﴾ عَيْنًا يَشْرَبُ بِهَا عِبَادُ اللَّهِ
 يُفَجِّرُونَهَا تَفْجِيرًا ﴿٦﴾ يُوفُونَ بِالْأَنْذَرِ وَيَخَافُونَ يَوْمًا كَانَ شَرُّهُ
 مُسْتَطِيرًا ﴿٧﴾ وَيُطْعَمُونَ الطَّعَامَ عَلَى حُبِّهِ مِسْكِينًا وَيَتِيمًا وَأَسِيرًا ﴿٨﴾
 إِنَّمَا نُنْطِئُكُمْ لَوْجِهِ اللَّهُ لِأَنرِيدُ مِنْكُمْ جَزَاءً وَ لَا شُكُورًا ﴿٩﴾
 إِنَّا نَخَافُ مِنْ رَبِّنَا يَوْمًا عَبُوسًا قَمْطَرِيرًا ﴿١٠﴾ فَوَقَّهْمُ اللَّهُ شَرَّ
 ذَلِكَ الْيَوْمِ وَلَقَّهْمُ نَصْرَةً وَرُورًا ﴿١١﴾ وَجَزَاهُمْ بِمَا صَبَرُوا جَنَّةً
 وَحَرِيرًا ﴿١٢﴾ مُتَّكِئِينَ فِيهَا عَلَى الْأَرَائِكِ ۚ لَا يَرُونَ فِيهَا شَمْسًا
 وَ لَا زَمْهَرِيرًا ﴿١٣﴾ وَدَانِيَةً عَلَيْهِمْ ظِلُّهَا وَذَلَّلَتْ قُطُوفُهَا تَذْلِيلًا

﴿١٤﴾ وَيُطَافُ عَلَيْهِمْ بِانِيَّةٍ مِّنْ فِضَّةٍ وَّاَكْوَابٍ كَانَتْ قَوَارِيرًا ﴿١٥﴾
 قَوَارِيرًا مِّنْ فِضَّةٍ قَدَّرُوهَا تَقْدِيرًا ﴿١٦﴾ وَيُسْقَوْنَ فِيهَا كَاْسًا كَانَ
 مِزَاجُهَا زَنْجَبِيلًا ﴿١٧﴾ عَيْنًا فِيهَا تُسَمَّى سَلْسَبِيلًا ﴿١٨﴾ وَيَطُوفُ
 عَلَيْهِمْ وِلْدَانٌ مُّخَلَّدُونَ ؕ إِذَا رَأَيْتَهُمْ حَسِبْتَهُمْ لُؤْلُؤًا مَّنثُورًا ﴿١٩﴾
 وَإِذَا رَأَيْتَ ثُمَّ رَأَيْتَ نَعِيمًا وَمُلْكًا كَبِيرًا ﴿٢٠﴾ عَلَيْهِمْ ثِيَابٌ سُنْدُسٍ
 خُضْرٌ وَّاَسْتَبْرَقٌ وَّحُلُواْ أَسَاوِرَ مِّنْ فِضَّةٍ ؕ وَسَقَاهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ شَرَابًا
 طَهُورًا ﴿٢١﴾ إِنَّ هَٰذَا كَانَ لَكُمْ جَزَاءً وَكَانَ سَعْيُكُمْ مَّشْكُورًا ﴿٢٢﴾
 اِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْآنَ تَنْزِيلًا ﴿٢٣﴾ فَاصْبِرْ لِحُكْمِ رَبِّكَ
 وَلَا تُطِيعْ مِنْهُمْ اِثْمًا اَوْ كُفُورًا ﴿٢٤﴾ وَاذْكُرْ اِسْمَ رَبِّكَ بُكْرَةً وَّاَصِيْلًا
 ﴿٢٥﴾ وَّمَنْ فَاَسْجُدْ لَهُ وَسَبِّحْهُ لَيْلًا طَوِيْلًا ﴿٢٦﴾ اِنَّ هَٰؤُلَاءِ يُجِبُّوْنَ
 الْعَاجِلَةَ وَيَذَرُوْنَ وَرَآءَهُمْ يَوْمًا ثَقِيْلًا ﴿٢٧﴾ نَحْنُ خَلَقْنَاهُمْ وَشَدَدْنَا
 اَسْرَهُمْ ؕ وَاِذَا شِئْنَا بَدَّلْنَا اَمْثَالَهُمْ تَبْدِيْلًا ﴿٢٨﴾ اِنَّ هَٰذِهِ تَذْكِرَةٌ ؕ
 فَمَنْ شَاءَ اتَّخَذْ اِلَىٰ رَبِّهِ سَبِيْلًا ﴿٢٩﴾ وَمَا تَشَاءُوْنَ اِلَّا اَنْ يَّشَاءَ اللّٰهُ
 ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ عَلِيْمًا حَكِيْمًا ﴿٣٠﴾ يَدْخُلُ مَنْ يَّشَاءُ فِى رَحْمَتِهِ ط
 وَالظَّالِمِيْنَ اَعَدَّ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا اَلِيْمًا ﴿٣١﴾

There has come upon man a period of time in which he was nothing worth mentioning. [1] We have created man from a mixed sperm-drop to put him to a test, so We made him able to hear, able to see. [2] We have shown him the way to (let him) become either grateful or ungrateful. [3] We have prepared for the disbelievers shackles and iron-collars and a blazing Fire. [4] Indeed, the righteous will have a drink from a goblet, blended with (a drink from) Camphor [5] that will be a spring from which Allah's slaves will drink, making it flow (wherever they wish) profusely. [6] They (are the ones who) fulfil the vows, and fear a day whose evil (events) will be widespread, [7] and they give food, despite their

love for it, to the needy, and the orphan, and the captive, [8] (saying to them,) "We feed you only for the sake of Allah; we have no intention of (receiving) either a return from you or thanks. [9] In fact, we are fearful of a day, from our Lord, that will be frowning, extremely frowning." [10] So Allah will save them from the evil of that day, and will grant them bloom and delight, [11] and will give them, in return for their patience, garden and (garments of) silk, [12] wherein they will be reclining on couches, feeling neither heat of the sun, nor intense cold, [13] and shades of gardens will be hanging low on them, and its fruits will be put entirely into their service. [14] And circulated among them will be vessels of silver, and cups that will be (as transparent as) crystals, [15] __crystals (as shining as if made) of silver, measured by those (who filled them) with due measure. [16] And they will be served with a goblet of drink blended with ginger, [17] a spring therein called Salsabil. [18] And circling around them will be serving boys, blessed with eternal youth; when you would see them, you would take them as scattered pearls. [19] And when you will look around there, you will see the Bliss, and a magnificent realm. [20] Upon them will be garments of green *sundus* (a kind of fine silk), and of *istabraq* (a kind of thick silk). And they will be adorned by bracelets of silver, and their Lord will give them a pure beverage to drink. [21] (It will be said to them,) "This is a reward for you, and your effort has been appreciated." [22]

Indeed we have revealed to you the Qur'ān through a gradual process. [23] So, submit patiently to your Lord's decision, and do not obey any one of them who is sinner or ungrateful. [24] And pronounce the name of Allah morning and evening. [25] And in some parts of night, prostrate before Him, and pronounce His purity for long times at night. [26] In fact these people love that which is immediate, and neglect a Heavy Day ahead of them. [27] We have created them, and have made their joints strong. And whenever We will, We would replace them with others like them, a total replacement. [28] Indeed, this is a reminder; so let anyone who so wishes, adopt a way to his Lord. [29] And you will not so wish, unless Allah so wills. Indeed Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise. [30] He admits whomsoever He wills to His

mercy. As for the wrongdoers, for them He has prepared a painful punishment. [31]

Commentary

Sūrah Ad-Dahr has also been called Sūrah Al-Insān (Man) and Sūrah Al-Abrār (The Righteous) [Rūḥ]. The Sūrah describes in a very effective, eloquent and elegant style the inception and end of human creation, reward and punishment of deeds, and the conditions of the Hereafter, Paradise and Hell.

هَلْ أَتَى عَلَى الْإِنْسَانِ حِينٌ مِّنَ الدَّهْرِ لَمْ يَكُنْ شَيْئًا مَّذْكُورًا (There has come upon man a period of time in which he was nothing worth mentioning.....76:1). The interrogative particle *hal* is used [linguistically] to introduce an interrogative sentence. Often, however, an interrogative construction is used to emphasise a self-evident truth. Such an interrogative means that whenever this question is put to anyone at anytime, the same answer is likely to come forth. There can be no other possibility. For instance, if a question is posed to anyone in the middle of day 'Is it not a day?', it is an interrogative sentence, but the answer is predictable and will emphasise its obviousness. Therefore, some scholars say that the particle *hal* is used here in the sense of *qad* 'indeed'. In both cases, the verse signifies that there has come upon man a period of time in which he was nothing worth mentioning. The word *ḥīnun* with nunation [which is the sign of 'indefiniteness'] signifies 'a long indefinite period of time; The verse mentions that a long period of time came upon man. This indicates that man essentially did exist at that time in one form or another, (but he was not worth mentioning), because time could not have come upon 'man' if he was in a state of pure non-existence [Al-'adam-ul- mahd]. Therefore, most commentators say that the 'period of time' here refers to the period when he was conceived in the mother's womb till his birth, which normally is nine months. This period covers all the stages of his creation, right from his being a sperm-drop up to his having a body and organs, and then his acquiring life and soul. During this time, he is thought existent, neither his gender is known to anyone, nor his name or his shape or size. Therefore, he is unmentionable.

The statement of the verse may also be taken in a wider sense. The inception of human creation takes place with the sperm that is produced by food. This food and its source and substance was existent in one or

other form. If the period of that time is calculated, this long indefinite period of time can stretch into thousands of years. In any case, Allah has drawn man's attention in this verse to a particular fact. If he uses his sense, he will discover his own reality. In addition, he will have no choice but to have complete faith and unshaken belief in the Allah, His Omniscience and His Omnipotence. Suppose, a person of seventy years reflects that he was unmentionable in any way about seventy-one years ago, even his grand parents had not imagined his particular existence, though they might have had a general concept of a child, then what caused his creation, what bewildering power drew together particles from different parts of the world to form a perfect human being, making him an intelligent, a hearing and seeing creature? Such a reflection will spontaneously force such a person to confirm the Persian poet who says:

ما نبودیم و تقاضا ما نبود..... لطف تو نا گفته ما می شنود

Neither we were there, nor was there any demand from us.
It is only Your mercy that listened to what we never said.

Verse [2] describes the inception of human creation thus:

إِنَّا خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ أَمْشَاجٍ (We have created man from a mixed sperm-drop __76:2). The word *amshāj* is the plural of *mashj* or *mashīj* which means a 'mixture'. Here obviously it refers to the male and female gametes according to most commentators, but some commentators say, as cited in Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī, that *amshaj* refers to the four fluids of the body [blood, phlegm, choler and melancholy] of which the sperm is composed .

Man Is Made up of Particles from Different Parts of the World

If we reflect carefully, the cardinal fluids are made up of various kinds of nutriment. If we reflect further on man's food, it contains elements of water and air from distant parts of the globe. Thus, if we were to analyse man's present body, we will discover that it is composed of elements and particles that were scattered in every nook and corner of the world. A marvellous system set by Allah has, in a wonderful way, put them together in human structure. If this sense of *amshāj* 'mixed' is taken into account here, it allays the greatest doubt of the rejecters of Resurrection. Their main objection is that when they are dead, reduced to crumbled bones and dust, how will they be raised to life again? They thought this was impossible.

The interpretation of *amshāj* as 'cardinal humours/fluids' allays their doubt once and for all. At the inception, when man was created, he was composed of particles and elements from all parts of the world. Allah did not find this difficult the first time. Why should He find its recreation difficult the second time. According to this interpretation, the addition of the word '*amshāj*' (mixed) could have a special significance of its own. And Allah knows best!

نَبْتَلِيْهِ (to put him to a test...76:2). The Arabic verb is derived from *ibtala'* which means 'to put to test'. This phrase puts forward the Wisdom underlying human creation. Allah has created man to put him to a test. This test is defined in forthcoming verses. Allah sent Prophets and celestial Books for the purpose of showing him both ways, one leading to Paradise, and the other to Hell. Man has been given a choice to adopt any one of the two ways. This led mankind into two groups, thus:

إِنَّا هَدَيْنَاهُ السَّبِيلَ إِمَّا شَاكِرًا وَإِمَّا كَفُورًا (We have shown him the way to (let him) become either grateful or ungrateful...76:3). The first group was of those who, appreciating Allah's bounties, offered gratitude to Allah, and believed in Him, while the second group was of those who remained ungrateful to Allah's favours, disbelieved. After the description of the two groups, the next verse describes the punishment and evil consequences of the disbelievers. Allah has prepared, for the disbelievers, shackles and iron-collars and a blazing Fire. On the other hand, huge bounties are mentioned for the believers and righteous people. Out of these bounties, drinkables are mentioned first. They will have a drink from a goblet, blended with (a drink from) Camphor.

إِنَّ الْأَبْرَارَ يَشْرَبُونَ مِنْ كَأْسٍ كَانَ مِزَاجُهَا كَافُورًا (The righteous will have a drink from a goblet, blended with [a drink from] Camphor....76:5). Some of the commentators say that *kāfur* (Camphor) refers to a fountain in Paradise. In order to enhance the taste and pleasure of this drink, it will be mixed with water from this spring. If the word 'camphor' is taken in its popular sense, it does not necessarily signify that the camphor of Paradise be equated with the camphor available in this world, because the latter is not palatable.

عَيْنًا يَشْرَبُ بِهَا عِبَادُ اللَّهِ (that will be a spring from which Allah's slaves will drink...76:6). Grammatically, '*ainan* (spring) is a complement [*badal*] to *kāfurān* which explains *Kāfur*. Given this construction, it becomes certain

that *Kāfur* is the name of a spring. However, if the word '*ainan*' is taken as an explanation to *ka*'s (goblet), the meaning would be that the goblet will contain a drink from a spring specified for Allah's slaves. In this case, it is also possible that the term 'Allah's slaves' refers to a category other than 'Abrār' (Righteous).

يُؤْتُونَ بِالْذِّكْرِ (They [are the ones who] fulfil the vows...76:7). This describes the reason why the righteous believers and Allah's slaves will receive these favours and bounties. This verse signifies that whenever they vow to do a good act, they invariably fulfil the vow. The word 'vow' literally means 'to take upon oneself an obligation which Shari'ah has not obligated on him'. Once a vow is taken, it becomes obligatory to fulfil it. Here it is stated that great rewards and favours for the inmates of Paradise would be apportioned to them because they fulfilled the vow. The verse indicates that when they are so particular about fulfilling their vows that are taken by them upon themselves, they would be even more particular about fulfilling the obligations enjoined upon them by Allah. Thus 'the fulfilment of vows' covers the entire spectrum of religious obligations. They would receive the favours of Paradise, if they completely obey Allah and rigorously apply His sacred laws. In any case, this statement emphasises the importance and obligation of fulfilment of vows.

Ruling

There are several conditions that must be met before a vow can be constituted: [1] The vow must be legitimate and permissible - not a sin. If a person swears an oath to commit a sinful act, it is necessary for him to break the oath, and pay the expiation for violating it.⁽¹⁾ [2] It must not be legislated by Allah as an obligatory duty, as for instance if a person were

- (1) It should be noted that in the original text of Ma'ārif-ul-Qur'ān, the expression is such that the vow may be confused by a layman with oath. To understand the point, it should be borne in mind that if a person makes a vow to commit a sin, like telling a lie, or drinking liquor, this vow is not recognized in Shari'ah. It is necessary for such a person to abstain from the sin, and since the vow is not recognized by the Shari'ah, no expiation (*kaffārah*) is needed. However, it is the rule about oath that has been mentioned in the text above. That is, if someone swears an oath to tell a lie, for example, he has to break the oath and offer *kaffārah*.

to vow that he will perform the prescribed prayer or *witr* prayer, the vow would be null and void, because it is already a prescribed obligation. [3] According to Imām A'zam Abū Ḥanīfah رَحِمَهُ اللهُ تَعَالَى, it is also a condition that the vowed act must be an act of worship in itself, and such act of worship should belong to those forms of worship which have been made obligatory in some way or the other, as for instance prayers, fasting, charity, sacrifice and so on. If the vowed act is not prescribed as a worship, such a vow will be void. For instance, if a person were to vow that he will pay a visit to a sickly patient, or follow a funeral procession, this vow will not be valid, because although these acts carry rewards as acts of worship, yet they are not acts, of worship in themselves (*Al-'Ibādāt-ul- Maqsūdah*). Detailed rules and principles related to vows and oaths are available in books of jurisprudence.

وَيُطْعَمُونَ الطَّعَامَ عَلَى حُبِّهِ مِسْكِينًا وَيَتِيمًا وَأَسِيرًا (and they give food, despite their love for it, to the needy, and the orphan, and the captive...76:8). The other reason why the inmates of Paradise will receive these favours is given in this verse, that is, their feeding the needy, the orphans and the captives.

على حُبِّهِ (despite their love for it). This would mean that they give food to the needy while they themselves love it and desire it__ not that they eat to their fill and give the left-over food to the needy and poor. That feeding the poor and orphans is a form of worship and attracts reward is obvious. The word 'captive' refers to all prisoners, Muslim criminals, as well as infidels who are kept in prisons according to the principles of Shari'ah. It is the responsibility of the Islamic government to feed them. Anyone who feeds them is actually assisting the government and the public treasury. Therefore, feeding the prisoners, even Non-Muslims, is an act of reward. In the early days of Islam, especially, feeding the prisoners and taking care of them or protecting them was a responsibility that was shared by the general body of Muslims, as it happened with the prisoners of the Battle of Badr.

فَوَاقِرَ مِنْ فِضَّةٍ (vessels of silver...76:16). Silver vessels in this world are dense which can never be like glass, and that which is made of glass can never be silver. Thus silver and glass are two contradictory concepts in this world. However, it is a characteristic of Paradise that its glasses will be as bright as silver, and as transparent and sparkling as crystal.

Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه said: "The blessings given in Paradise have their likes in this world also, except these vessels that are made of silver, but as transparent as a mirror."

وَيُسْقَوْنَ فِيهَا كَأْسًا كَانَ مِزَاجُهَا زَنْجَبِيلًا (And they will be served with a goblet of drink blended with ginger...76:17). The word *zanjabīl* means 'ginger'. The Arabs loved that their drink should be mixed with ginger. Therefore, it is mentioned in the context of Paradise [so that they are served with drinks flavoured with ginger of paradisiacal quality and splendour]. Some scholars say that the only thing the blessings of Paradise and the blessings of this world share in common is their name, and they have nothing else in common. Therefore, the 'ginger' of this world cannot be equated with the 'ginger' of Paradise.

وَحُلُوعًا أَسَاوِيرَ مِنْ فِضَّةٍ (...And they will be adorned by bracelets of silver...76:21). The *asāwir* is the plural of *siwar* that refers to a 'bracelet'. It is a piece of jewellery worn around the wrist. This verse speaks of 'silver bracelets'. On another occasion [22:23], the Qur’ān speaks of *asāwira min dhahab* 'gold bracelets'. There is no discrepancy between the two verses, because sometimes the silver bracelets will be worn, and at other times the gold bracelets, or some will wear gold bracelets and others will wear silver bracelets.

However, a question arises in any case: A bracelet looks good on women, but does not suit men. Why will the men of Paradise wear bracelets? The Answer is that suitability of any piece of jewellery to men or women depends on custom. The style and appeal of jewellery differ from country to country and vary from nation to nation. In some cultures, a piece of jewellery is treated as highly inappropriate for men, and in other cultures it is regarded as highly beautiful and elegant. The Chosros [Persian kings] used to wear bracelets around their wrists, and various kinds of jewellery used to be studded on their chest and crown. This was counted as a distinctive feature of their prestige and honour. After the conquest of Persian empire, the treasures that fell into Muslims' hands contained the Persian Emperor's bracelets. Thus the various cultures and nations differ in their taste for jewellery in this very world. The flair and taste for jewellery for men in Paradise cannot be equated with their flair for it in this world.

إِنَّ هَذَا كَانَ لَكُمْ جَزَاءً وَكَانَ سَعْيُكُمْ مَشْكُورًا ([It will be said to them,] "This is a reward for you, and your effort has been appreciated....76:22). Allah will address the inmates of Paradise once they have entered Paradise, and will announce to them that the amazing bounties are granted to them as a reward for their good deeds they had done in the world, and their deeds have been appreciated by Allah. These expressions will be made to them by way of congratulation. For the people of love, the Divine congratulatory expressions will outweigh all the other blessings of Paradise put together. The congratulatory words are a proof positive of Divine pleasure.

Having mentioned the general blessings of the inmates of Paradise, special blessings that are conferred on the Holy Prophet ﷺ are listed. Firstly, the blessing in the form of the revelation of the Qur'ān is mentioned. The Holy Prophet ﷺ is, then, directed that the opponents and obdurate non-believers will obstinately reject the message and persecute him. So, he is to submit patiently to Allah's decision, and he should not obey any sinner or ungrateful person. Secondly, he is commanded to pronounce the name of Allah, and worship Him day and night. Further, he should prostrate before Him, during the night, and pronounce His purity for long times at night. This preoccupation will serve as a remedy for the non-believers' persecution. Towards the conclusion of the passage, the verse shows the reason for the persistence of the obdurate infidels. These ignoramus are intoxicated with the fleeting pleasures of this world, and have neglected the Hereafter, whereas if they had pondered in their own being or existence, they would have recognised and understood their Creator and Maker.

نَحْنُ خَلَقْنَاهُمْ وَشَدَدْنَا أَسْرَهُمْ وَإِذَا شِئْنَا بَدَّلْنَا أَمْثَلَهُمْ تَبْدِيلًا. (We have created them and have made their joints strong. And whenever We will, We would replace them with others like them, a total replacement....76:28)

Miracles of Nature Respecting Human Joints

This verse alludes to the fact that even though man's limbs and organs are perpetually in motion, and the wear and tear on them is phenomenal, they continue to function from birth to death. When machines made of iron or steel wear out and require regular servicing to

remain functioning for even a short period, man's body, made of soft tissues and muscles, functions for decades and scores of years without maintenance. Let us take the joints of the fingers [or other joints of the human body]. They are moved vigorously in different ways in an uncountable number of times. Heavy pressure and force is applied to them for seventy to eighty years [on an average], yet the finger-joints [and other joints] remain intact. It is certainly only Allah Who makes this possible. 'Glorious is Allah, the Best of Creators!'

Alḥamdulillāh
The Commentary on
Sūrah Ad-Dahr
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Mursalāt

(Those Sent)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 50 verses and 2 sections

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 50

وَالْمُرْسَلَاتِ عُرْفًا ﴿١﴾ ۖ فَالْعَصْفِ عَصْفًا ﴿٢﴾ ۖ وَالنَّشْرِ نَشْرًا ﴿٣﴾ ۖ
فَالْفَرْقَتِ فَرَقًا ﴿٤﴾ ۖ فَاَلْمُلْقِيَتِ ذِكْرًا ﴿٥﴾ ۖ عُذْرًا أَوْ نَذْرًا ﴿٦﴾ ۖ إِنَّمَا
تُوْعَدُونَ لَوَاقِعٌ ﴿٧﴾ ۖ فَإِذَا النُّجُومُ طُمِسَتْ ﴿٨﴾ ۖ وَإِذَا السَّمَاءُ
فُرِجَتْ ﴿٩﴾ ۖ وَإِذَا الْجِبَالُ نُسِفَتْ ﴿١٠﴾ ۖ وَإِذَا الرُّسُلُ اقْتَتَتْ ﴿١١﴾ ۖ
لَا يَوْمَ أُجِلَّتْ ﴿١٢﴾ ۖ لِيَوْمِ الْفَصْلِ ﴿١٣﴾ ۖ وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا يَوْمُ
الْفَصْلِ ﴿١٤﴾ ۖ وَيَلْ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿١٥﴾ ۖ أَلَمْ نُهْلِكِ الْأَوَّلِينَ
﴿١٦﴾ ۖ ثُمَّ نَتَّبِعُهُمُ الْآخِرِينَ ﴿١٧﴾ ۖ كَذَلِكَ نَفْعَلُ بِالْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿١٨﴾ ۖ
وَيَلْ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿١٩﴾ ۖ أَلَمْ نَخْلُقْكُمْ مِّنْ مَّاءٍ مَّهِينٍ ﴿٢٠﴾ ۖ
فَجَعَلْنَاهُ فِي قَرَارٍ مَّكِينٍ ﴿٢١﴾ ۖ إِلَىٰ قَدَرٍ مَّعْلُومٍ ﴿٢٢﴾ ۖ فَقَدَرْنَا فَنِعْمَ
الْقَدَرُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾ ۖ وَيَلْ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٢٤﴾ ۖ أَلَمْ نَجْعَلِ الْأَرْضَ
كِفَاتًا ﴿٢٥﴾ ۖ أَحْيَاءَ وَآمُوتًا ﴿٢٦﴾ ۖ وَجَعَلْنَا فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ شَامِخَاتٍ
وَأَسْقَيْنَكُم مَّاءً فُرَاتًا ﴿٢٧﴾ ۖ وَيَلْ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٢٨﴾ ۖ انْطَلِقُوا
إِلَىٰ مَا كُنتُمْ بِهِ تُكَذِّبُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾ ۖ انْطَلِقُوا إِلَىٰ ظِلِّ ذِي ثُلُثِ شُعْبٍ

﴿٣٠﴾ لَا ظَلِيلٍ وَلَا يُغْنِي مِنَ اللَّهَبِ ﴿٣١﴾ إِنَّهَا تَرْمِي بِشَرَرٍ كَالْقَصْرِ
 ﴿٣٢﴾ كَأَنَّهُ جِمَلَتٌ صُفْرٌ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٣٤﴾ هَذَا
 يَوْمٌ لَا يَنْطِقُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾ وَلَا يُؤْذَنُ لَهُمْ فَيَعْتَذِرُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ
 لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٣٧﴾ هَذَا يَوْمُ الْفَصْلِ ۚ جَمَعْنَكُمْ وَالْأُولَىٰ ﴿٣٨﴾ فَإِنْ
 كَانَ لَكُمْ كَيْدٌ فَكِيدُونِ ﴿٣٩﴾ وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٤٠﴾ إِنَّ
 الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي ظِلَالٍ وَعُيُونٌ ﴿٤١﴾ وَفَوَاكِهِ مِمَّا يَشْتَهُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾ كُلُوا
 وَاشْرَبُوا هَنِيئًا بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾ إِنَّا كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي
 الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٤٤﴾ وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾ كُلُوا وَتَمَتَّعُوا
 قَلِيلًا إِنَّكُمْ مُّجْرِمُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾ وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَإِذَا قِيلَ
 لَهُمْ ارْكَعُوا لَا يِرْكَعُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾ وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٤٩﴾ فَبَايَ
 حَدِيثٍ ۚ بَعْدَهُ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾

(I swear) by those (winds) that are sent one after the other, [1] and by those that blow violently, [2] and by those that spread (clouds) all over, [3] and by those (angels) who differentiate (between right and wrong) distinctly, [4] then bring down the advice, [5] providing excuses (for the believers) or giving warnings (to the disbelievers), [6] that which you are promised is sure to happen. [7] So, when the stars will be extinguished, [8] and when the sky will be split, [9] and when the mountains will be blown away as dust, [10] and when the messengers will be assembled at the appointed time, (then all matters will be decided.) [11] (Do you know) for which day has all this been delayed? [12] For the Day of Decision! [13] And what may let you know what the Day of Decision is? [14] Woe, that Day, to the deniers! [15]

Did We not destroy the earlier people? [16] Then We will cause the later ones to follow them. [17] Thus We deal with the guilty ones. [18] Woe, that Day, to the deniers! [19] Did We not create you from a worthless fluid? [20] Then We put it in a firm place of rest [21] for a known

period. [22] Thus, We did (all this with perfect) measure; so We are the best to measure. [23] Woe, that Day, to the deniers! [24]

Did We not make the earth a container that collects [25] the living and the dead? [26] And We placed towering mountains therein, and provided you with sweet water to drink. [27] Woe, that Day, to the deniers! [28] (It will be said to them that day,) "Push on to what you used to deny. [29] Push on to a canopy (of Hell's smoke) having three branches, [30] that neither has a comfortable shade, nor is it of any use against the scorching heat. [31] It emits sparks (as huge) as castles, [32] as if they were yellowish camels. [33] Woe, that Day, to the deniers! [34] This is a day when they will not speak, [35] nor will they be allowed to offer excuses. [36] Woe, that Day, to the deniers! [37] (It will be said to them,) "This is the Day of Decision. We have assembled you and the earlier ones together. [38] Now, if you have a trick, use the trick against Me." [39] Woe, that Day, to the deniers! [40]

Of course, the God-fearing will be amid shades and streams, [41] and fruits of their desire. [42] It will be said to them, "Eat and drink with pleasure because of what you used to do." [43] This is how We reward those who do good. [44] Woe, that Day, to the deniers! [45] "(O disbelievers,) eat and drink for a while! You are guilty ones." [46] Woe, that Day, to the deniers! [47] And when it is said to them, "Bow down (i.e. submit to Allah's commands)", they do not bow down. [48] Woe, that Day, to the deniers! [49] Now, in which discourse, after this, will they believe? [50]

Commentary

Occasion of Revelation

Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī records from Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh Ibn Mas‘ūd  that he said:

"While we were with Allah's Messenger in a cave at Minā, the Sūrah 'wal-Mursalāt' was revealed to him. He was reciting it, and I was learning it from his mouth. Verily, his mouth was moist with it, when a snake leaped out at us. The Holy Prophet  said, 'Kill it!' So we quickly went after it, but it got away. Then the Holy Prophet  said, 'It was saved from your harm, just as you all were saved from its harm'." [Ibn Kathīr].

Allah swears oaths in this Sūrah by various phenomena to assert that the Resurrection will certainly take place. The names of the phenomena are not mentioned in the Qur'ān, but their five attributes are given in the following manner (The translation is given below without explanatory brackets for a better understanding of the point):

[1] (I swear) by those that are sent one after the other, (77:1)

[2] and by those that blow violently, (77:2)

[3] and by those that spread all over, (77:3)

[4] and by those who differentiate (between right and wrong) distinctly, (77:4)

[5] then bring down the advice, (77:5)

There is no traceable Ḥadīth that gives the exact interpretation of the phenomena described. Therefore, the interpretation assigned to them by the Companions and their pupils differ. Some scholars say that all five attributes refer to angels. Others say that possibly different groups of angels are bearers of the attributes. Yet other scholars say that they refer to various types of winds. Some authorities on Tafsīr say that they refer to Allah's Prophets and Messengers. Ibn Jarīr Ṭabarī says that, in this matter, it is safer to observe silence. He says that both possibilities exist, but he prefers not to side with any particular interpretation. There is no doubt about the fact that some of the attributes are more appropriately applicable to the angels of Allah, and cannot fit the winds without unusual stretch of imagination, and others are more appropriately applicable to winds, and cannot apply to angels without a fanciful stretch of imagination. Therefore, Ibn Kathīr's approach seems to be the best. He says that in the first three verses of this Sūrah, Allah swears oaths by various types of winds. In verses [4] and [5], Allah swears oaths by the angels.

If verses [4] and [5] are applied to the winds, then the imagination will have to be stretched far to interpret them. Likewise, if the first three verses [*mursalāt*, *ʿAṣīfāt* and *nashirāt*] are applied to the angels, they have no choice but to assign far-fetched interpretation. According to Ibn Kathīr, the verses signify '(I swear) by those (winds) that are sent one after the other'. The word '*urfan*' could signify 'beneficial and useful'. The

winds that bring rain are obviously beneficial and useful. Another meaning of the word '*urfan*' is 'one after another'. In this interpretation, the verse signifies 'those winds that bring rain and clouds consecutively'. The word '*ʿaṣīfāt*' is derived from '*ʿaṣf*' that literally means 'winds that blow violently or vehemently'. This refers to fiercely blowing winds that sometimes do occur in the world. The word '*nashirāt*' refers to 'winds that spread (clouds) all over after the rain is over'. The word '*fāriqāt*' is the attribute of the angels 'who differentiate (between right and wrong) distinctly by bringing down the Divine revelation'. The phrase '*fal-mulqiyāti dhikran*' also refers to the 'angels'. The word '*dhikr*' 'Reminder' refers to the Qurʾān or revelation in general. The verse signifies 'I swear by angels who [by bringing down revelation] separate between truth and falsehood, right and wrong, [and the lawful and the forbidden]'. Likewise, I swear by angels who bring down revelation or Qurʾān to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. This interpretation is plain and simple, and does not require any undue stretch of imagination.

In this interpretation, the question arises as to the contextual relationship between swearing oaths by various types of winds and the angels. First of all, it is not possible to fathom the Wisdom of Divine speech. However, it is possible to hypothesise. Allah swears oaths by useful winds and harmful winds. Winds that bring rain and clouds are useful, while those that blow fiercely and cause destruction are harmful. These belong to the perceptible world. All human beings can observe them. The perceptible things are mentioned first for reflection. The imperceptible world is mentioned later, such as the angels and revelation. If man reflects carefully on them, he will develop certainty of belief in them as well.

عُدْرًا أَوْ نُذْرًا (to provide excuses [for the believers] or giving warnings (to disbelievers...77:6) This phrase is complement to verse [5]: فَأَنزَلْنَاهُ فَيُذَكِّرُ then bring down the advice, [77:5] The 'advice' refers to the 'revelation' that came down upon the Prophets. Verse 6 says that it serves two purposes. In the case of the people of truth and believers, it persuades them to seek excuse from Allah for their shortcomings, and pray for forgiveness; and in the case of the people of falsehood and disbelievers, it contains a warning for them of Allah's torment, if they oppose His command.

إِنَّمَا تَوَعَّدُونَ لَوَاقِعٌ (...that which you are promised is sure to happen...77:7)

This is the subject of these oaths. It means that the Day of Judgement, Reckoning, and Reward and Punishment that is promised by the Prophets has certainly to be fulfilled. Allah then describes some of the events that will occur on the Day of Judgement. The stars will be extinguished, which could mean that they will be completely destroyed, or they will exist, but their lights will be lost. In this way the entire world will be plunged in absolute darkness. The second event to occur is the splitting of the sky. The third event to occur is that the mountains will be blown away as dust. The fourth event is described in the following verse:

وَإِذَا الرُّسُلُ أَقْبَتْ (and when the messengers will be assembled at the appointed time, [then all matters will be decided.] [77:11]) The word *uqqitat* is derived from *tauqīt* which primarily means 'appointment of time'. According to Zamakhsharī, it signifies 'to arrive at an appointed time' [as cited in Rūḥ]. In this context, the second meaning appears to be more appropriate. The verse signifies that the appointed time for the Prophets and Messengers to assemble with their communities will arrive, so that all matters concerning them may be decided. The verses further describe the Day of Judgement as the great and horrible day and the Day of Decision. It shall be the day of destruction for the deniers and rejecters, thus:

وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ (Woe, that Day, to the deniers!...77:15) The word *wail* means 'destruction'. According to certain Ḥadīth narratives, the word *wail* is a 'valley of Hell where the pus of the wounds of the inmates of Hell will be collected. This is the place where the deniers will live. After this, the present-day people are asked to learn a lesson from [the destruction] of the former generations, thus:

أَلَمْ نُهْلِكِ الْأَوَّلِينَ (Did We not destroy the earlier people?...77:16) It refers to the nations of 'Ād, Thamūd, nation of Lūṭ ﷺ and Fir'aun (The Pharaoh) who were destroyed because of their obstinacy.

ثُمَّ نُنْعِمُهُمُ الْآخِرِينَ (Then We will cause the later ones to follow them....77:17) According to popular reading, Verse 17 purports to say that the present-day infidels, the people of Makkah, will receive punishment soon. They were punished and destroyed by Muslims in the Battle of Badr and so on. The difference between the punishment of former nations and the community of the Holy Prophet ﷺ is as follows: The former nations used

to be destroyed by celestial punishment with all their habitations. The infidels in the community of the Holy Prophet ﷺ do not receive celestial punishment, because of the Holy Prophet's ﷺ special honour. They are punished by the weapons of Muslims. Furthermore, the destruction is not general. Only the obdurate criminal leaders are destroyed.

أَلَمْ نَجْعَلِ الْأَرْضَ كِفَاتًا. أَحْيَاءَ وَأَمْوَاتًا (Did We not make the earth a container that collects the living and the dead?...25, 26) The word *kifāt* is derived from *kaft*. It means 'to gather things together'. Thus *kifāt* is a thing that embodies many things within itself. Earth is created by Allah in a fashion that humans when alive, remain on its back, and when dead, in its belly.

إِنَّهَا تَرْمِي بِشَرَرٍ كَالْقَصْرِ. كَأَنَّهُ جِدَلَتِ صُفْرًا (It emits sparks [as huge] as castles...77:32) The word *qaṣr* means a 'huge, magnificent castle'. The word *jimālah* is used in the sense of *jamal*, and means 'camel'. The word *ṣufr* is the plural of *aṣfar* which means 'yellow'. The verse describes the fire of Hell. It will emit such huge sparks of fire, as if they were huge and magnificent castles. Then they will break up into little splinters, as if they were yellowish camels. Some scholars have translated the word '*ṣufr*' as 'black' because yellowish colour of camels tends to blackness. [Rūḥ].

هَذَا يَوْمٌ لَا يَنْطِقُونَ. وَلَا يُؤَدِّنُ لَهُمْ فِعْتَدِرُونَ (This is a day when they will not speak, nor will they be allowed to offer excuses....77:35, 36) In other words, this is the Day in which they will not be able to talk, nor will they be permitted to offer pleas for their misdeeds. However, other verses of the Qur'ān inform us that they will speak and will be permitted to offer excuses. There is no discrepancy between the two verses, because there will be various stages on the Plain of Gathering (*Maḥshar*) through which people will have to pass. Sometimes they will pass through a stage where it would be forbidden for them to speak or offer excuses; and at another stage they will be permitted. [Rūḥ].

كُلُوا وَتَمَتَّعُوا قَلِيلًا إِنَّكُمْ مُجْرِمُونَ ("Eat and drink for a while! You are guilty ones...77:46) This verse addresses the infidels through the Holy Prophet ﷺ. They may eat and drink and enjoy themselves in this world, but the span is short, and then there will be nothing but punishment for them. [Abū Ḥayyān].

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمُ ارْكَعُوا لَا يَرْكَعُونَ (And when it is said to them, "Bow down", they do not bow down...77:48) According to most commentators, the word *rukū'*

is used here in its primitive sense 'to bow down and submit'. The verse signifies that when they were told to submit to the Divine commands, they refused to comply. Some scholars take the word *rukū'* in its technical sense and interpret the verse to signify 'when they are called to prayer, they refused to pray.' The *rukū'* is a part of the prayer, but it refers here to the whole prayer . [Rūḥ]

فَبِأَيِّ حَدِيثٍ بَعْدَهُ يُؤْمِنُونَ (Now, in which discourse, after this, will they believe? ...77:50) The Holy Qur'ān is the last Book of Allah which explains its message and wisdom most lucidly, excellently, eloquently, elegantly, and its arguments most convincingly. Its style is extremely effective and the admonition soul-capturing. If they do not believe in such a Book, then for which word are they waiting? This is to express disappointment in them. A Ḥadīth narrative instructs that when one recites this verse, he should say 'I believe in Allah'. This statement must be made outside the prayer, or in voluntary prayer. He must abstain from this statement in obligatory and *Sunnah* prayer. Ḥadīth narratives are clear on this point. And Allah knows best!

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Mursalāt
Ends here

Sūrah An-Naba'

(The Great Event)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 40 verses and 2 sections

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 40

عَمَّ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ ﴿١﴾ عَنِ النَّبَاِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٢﴾ الَّذِى هُمْ فِيهِ مُخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿٣﴾
 كَلَّا سَيَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤﴾ ثُمَّ كَلَّا سَيَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٥﴾ اَلَمْ نَجْعَلِ
 الْاَرْضَ مِهْدًا ﴿٦﴾ وَالْجِبَالَ اَوْتَادًا ﴿٧﴾ وَخَلَقْنٰكُمْ اَزْوَاجًا ﴿٨﴾
 وَجَعَلْنَا نَوْمَكُمْ سُبَاتًا ﴿٩﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا اللَّيْلَ لِبَاسًا ﴿١٠﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا النَّهَارَ
 مَعَاشًا ﴿١١﴾ وَبَنَيْنَا فَوْقَكُمْ سَبْعًا شِدَادًا ﴿١٢﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا سِرَاجًا
 وَهَّاجًا ﴿١٣﴾ وَاَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ الْمُعْصِرَاتِ مَاءً ثَجَّاجًا ﴿١٤﴾ لِّنُخْرِجَ بِهِ
 حَبًّا وَنَبَاتًا ﴿١٥﴾ وَجَنَّتٍ اَلْفَافًا ﴿١٦﴾ اِنَّ يَوْمَ الْفَصْلِ كَانَ مِيقَاتًا
 ﴿١٧﴾ يَوْمَ يُنفَخُ فِى الصُّوْرِ فَتَأْتُونَ اَفْوَاجًا ﴿١٨﴾ وَفُتِحَتِ السَّمَاءُ
 فَكَانَتْ أَبْوَابًا ﴿١٩﴾ وَسُيِّرَتِ الْجِبَالُ فَكَانَتْ سَرَابًا ﴿٢٠﴾ اِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ
 كَانَتْ مِرْصَادًا ﴿٢١﴾ لِلطَّغْيَيْنِ مَابًا ﴿٢٢﴾ لِّبِشْنٍ فِيْهَا اَحْقَابًا ﴿٢٣﴾
 لَا يَذُوقُونَ فِيْهَا بَرْدًا وَلَا شَرَابًا ﴿٢٤﴾ اِلَّا حَمِيمًا وَغَسَّاقًا ﴿٢٥﴾ جَزَاءً
 وَفَاقًا ﴿٢٦﴾ اِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا لَا يَرْجُونَ حِسَابًا ﴿٢٧﴾ وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا
 كِذَابًا ﴿٢٨﴾ وَكُلَّ شَيْءٍ اَحْصَيْنَاهُ كِتَابًا ﴿٢٩﴾ فَذُوقُوا فَلَنْ نَّزِيدَكُمْ

إِلَّا عَذَابًا ﴿٣٠﴾ إِنَّ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ مَفَازًا ﴿٣١﴾ حَدَائِقَ وَأَعْنَابًا ﴿٣٢﴾
 وَكَوَاعِبَ أَتْرَابًا ﴿٣٣﴾ وَكَأْسًا دِهَاقًا ﴿٣٤﴾ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ فِيهَا لَغْوًا وَلَا
 كِذْبًا ﴿٣٥﴾ جَزَاءً مِّن رَّبِّكَ عَطَاءً حِسَابًا ﴿٣٦﴾ رَبِّ السَّمَوَاتِ
 وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا الرَّحْمَنُ لَا يَمْلِكُونَ مِنْهُ خِطَابًا ﴿٣٧﴾ يَوْمَ
 يَقُومُ الرُّوحُ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ صَفًّا ۖ لَا يَتَكَلَّمُونَ إِلَّا مَنْ أَذِنَ لَهُ الرَّحْمَنُ
 وَقَالَ صَوَابًا ﴿٣٨﴾ ذَلِكَ الْيَوْمُ الْحَقُّ ۚ فَمَنْ شَاءَ اتَّخَذْ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِ مَآبًا
 ﴿٣٩﴾ إِنَّا أَنْذَرْنَاكُمْ عَذَابًا قَرِيبًا ۖ يَوْمَ يَنْظُرُ الْمَرْءُ مَا قَدَّمَتْ يَدَاهُ
 وَيَقُولُ الْكَافِرُ يَلَيْتَنِي كُنْتُ تُرَابًا ﴿٤٠﴾

About what are they asking each other? [1] About the Great Event [2] in which they dispute! [3] Truly, they will soon know. [4] Again, truly, they will soon know. [5] Did We not make the earth as a floor, [6] and the mountains as pegs? [7] And We have created you in pairs, [8] and made your sleep a source of rest, [9] and made the night a covering, [10] and made the day a source of livelihood. [11] And We have built seven strong (skies), [12] and created a luminous lamp (the sun). [13] And We have sent down from the rain-laden clouds abundant water, [14] so that We bring out therewith grain and vegetation, [15] and thick gardens. [16]

Surely the Day of Decision is an appointed time, [17] a day when the trumpet will be blown, so you will come in multitudes, [18] and the sky will be opened, so it will become as gates, [19] and the mountains will be set in motion, so they will be as mirage. [20] Surely Jahannam (the Hell) is set in ambush. [21] (It is) an abode for the rebellious people [22] who will be abiding in it for ages. [23] They will taste nothing cool in it, nor a drink, [24] except boiling water and pus, [25] this being a recompense in full accord (with their deeds). [26] They did not expect (to face) accounting (of their deeds), [27] and they rejected Our signs totally. [28] And everything (from their deeds) is thoroughly recorded by Us in writing. [29] "So now taste! We will never add to you

anything except torment." [30]

For the God-fearing there is sure achievement, [31] gardens and grapes, [32] and buxom maidens of matching age, [33] and goblets filled up to the brim. [34] They will not hear therein any vain talk, nor lies, [35] this being a reward from their Lord, a sufficing grant, [36] (from) the Lord of the heavens and the earth and what is between them, the All-Merciful. No one will have power to address Him, [37] on the Day when the Spirit and the angels will stand in rows. They will not speak, except the one who is permitted by the Raḥmān (the All-Merciful) and speaks aright. [38] That is the Day which is sure to come. So whoever so wishes may take refuge with his Lord. [39] We have warned you of an approaching torment (that will be inflicted) on a day when one will see what his hands have sent ahead, and the disbeliever will say, "O would that I had become dust!" [40]

Commentary

عَمَّ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ (About what are they asking each other?...78:1). The word 'amma is made up of two particles: [1] The preposition عَنْ 'an (about); and [2] the interrogative particle مَا 'mā' (what?) (the last letter, that is, 'mā' has been omitted according to the grammatical composition. The sense is : About what are they asking each other?' Allah Himself replies to the question when He says:

عَنِ النَّبَاِ الْعَظِيمِ الَّذِي هُمْ فِيهِ مُخْتَلِفُونَ (About the Great Event in which they dispute!....78:2,3). The word *naba'* means 'news' but not every news is *naba'*. It means a 'momentous news of a great event'. This refers to the news of the Day of Judgement. The verse purports to convey that the inhabitants of Makkah ask about the Day of Judgement in which they dispute [while some of them believed in Resurrection, others did not.]

Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه reports that when the revelation of Qur'ān started, the pagan Arabs used to form circles and discuss and criticise it, especially about the tremendous import of Resurrection and Judgement referred to in the Qur'ān. The pagans thought this was impossible, and they used to have protracted discussion. The disbelievers persuaded themselves to believe that the predicted event will never take place,

though there were others who believed in the event. The Sūrah opens by shunning the enquirers and the enquiry, it wonders that anyone should raise any doubts about Resurrection and Judgement. Some of the commentators express the opinion that their enquiry was not a genuine one where they were keen to learn about the truth. So they ask half-mockingly and half in doubt, when that event, so loudly pronounced, will happen. Qur'ān has responded by asserting one statement twice for emphasis, thus:

كَلَّا سَيَعْلَمُونَ. ثُمَّ كَلَّا سَيَعْلَمُونَ (Truly, they will soon know. Again, truly, they will soon know....78:5) The particle *kallā* is negative, and means 'never, by no means'. It means here that this matter cannot be understood by question and answer or by disputation and debate. Its reality will be understood by them when they will face it. It is such a reality that has no room for questions, disputation or denial. The Qur'ān says that soon they will come to know about it [and this statement is repeated twice for emphasis]. In other words, when they die, they will discover the realities of the next world. They will see the horrors of the Hereafter with their eyes.

Then the Holy Qur'ān has pointed to different demonstrations of His power to prove that it is not impossible for Allah to destroy this entire world and re-create it once again. Reference is made to the creation of earth, mountains, human beings, males and females and the creation of suitable conditions for human life, health and activities. One of the things mentioned in this connection is :

وَجَعَلْنَا نَوْمَكُمْ سُبَاتًا (and made your sleep a source of rest,...78:9). The word *subāt* is derived from *sabt* which means 'to cut off'. Sleep is something that cuts off the worries and tensions one may have, and thus gives him such a rest that cannot be attained from anything else. Therefore, some scholars translate the word *subāt* as 'rest'.

Sleep Is a Great Gift

After mentioning in verse [8] that Allah has created mankind in pairs, Allaah Ta'ālā states in verse [9] that among the means of their comfort, He created sleep, which is a great divine gift. Sleep is a great source of relaxation for the entire creation - for rich as well as for poor, for learned

people, as well as for the illiterate ones, for kings as well as for labourers. This gift is made available equally and simultaneously for all. Rather, experience shows that this gift is most readily available to the poor and labouring class, as compared to the affluent and the elite class. The latter class has all the means of comfort, they have comfortable homes, they have moderately warm and cold places, they have comfortable mattresses and pillows that are rarely available to the poor. But the gift of sleep is not dependent upon the mattresses, pillows, cottages and bungalows. It is purely a divine gift that is given directly by Allah. Often the poor, with no means of comfort and without bed or bedding, enjoy the best sleep in an open space. Sometimes, the affluent and the men of means suffer from insomnia and can only get sleep when they take sleeping pills. Often the pills do not work either. Not only that this great gift is given to all creatures - humans as well as animals - and it is given free of charge, without working for it. Allah has made it compulsory for everyone in a way that even if he wishes to keep awake because of load of work, sleep is imposed on him by Allah's mercy, so that his tiredness is removed and he is refreshed to work further. This arrangement is a wonderful means of providing rest and peace for man.

وَجَعَلْنَا اللَّيْلَ لِبَاسًا (and made the night a covering...78:10) This points to the fact that man naturally feels sleepy when light decreases and darkness prevails, when there is tranquillity all around and there is absence of noises. The verse under comment additionally signifies that Allah did not only give man sleep, but created in the entire world conditions that are suitable for sleep. That is to say: [1] darkness of night; [2] the state of sleep is imposed on all humans and animals simultaneously, so that they sleep at the same time. In this way, there will be peace and tranquillity throughout the world. Like other works, if there are different times for different people to sleep, no one will have peace and tranquillity.

Thereafter the verse reads:

وَجَعَلْنَا النَّهَارَ مَعَاشًا (and made the day a source of livelihood...78:11). Man requires, together with sleep, other essentials of life, such as livelihood. Otherwise, the sleep will turn into death. If the world would have had only nights and no days, and man would have continued to sleep all the time, how would he have obtained his livelihood and other essentials,

whereas day is the time when he could work hard and make activities in the daylight in order to earn a living. Thus the verses under comment purport to say that Allah has, in order to complete the comforts of life, made the night a cloak and the day for earning a living. وَجَعَلْنَا سِرَاجًا وَهَّاجًا

Now attention is drawn to the comforts we get from the sky. The most useful thing in the sky is the light of the sun. It is mentioned in the following verse: وَجَعَلْنَا سِرَاجًا وَهَّاجًا (and created a luminous lamp [the sun]....78:13). Then, among the useful things below the sky, the most beneficial and the most essential thing is the raining clouds which are mentioned thus: وَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ الْمُعْصِرَاتِ مَاءً ثَجَّاجًا (And We have sent down from the rain-laden clouds abundant water,...78:14). The word *mu'shirāt* is the plural of *mu'shirah* 'rain-laden cloud'. This indicates that rain comes down from the cloud. There are verses, however, that indicate that rain comes down from the sky. Those verses too probably refer to 'upper atmosphere'. There are many verses in the Qur'ān where the word *samā'* is used in that sense. Having mentioned these Divine blessings, the Sūrah reverts to its original theme of Resurrection and Judgement:

إِنَّ يَوْمَ الْفُصْلِ كَانَ مِيقَاتًا (Surely the Day of Decision is an appointed time...78:17). 'The Day of Decision' refers to the Day of Resurrection. It is a fixed appointment. Other verses indicate that the trumpet will be blown twice. When it is blown the first time, the entire world will come to an end. When it is blown the second time, people of the entire world, the earlier generations as well as the latter generations, will be resurrected and come in multitudes and droves. Sayyidnā Abu Dharr Ghifārī رضي الله عنه reports that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "On the Day of Resurrection, people will come in three different groups: [1] a group will come in the Plain of Gathering whose stomach will be full, wearing clothes and riding mounts; another group will come to the Plain of Gathering bare feet; and a third group will be brought on the Plain of Gathering being dragged on their faces." [Maḏharī cites the following authorities: Nasā'ī, Ḥākim and Baihaqī]

Some narratives report ten types of group. Some scholars say that the groups on the Plain of Gathering will be divided according to their deeds and character. The narratives are not conflicting. All of them may be true.

وَسُيِّرَتِ الْجِبَالُ فَكَانَتْ سَرَابًا (and the mountains will be set in motion, so they will be as mirage....78:20). The word *suyyirat* 'set in motion' signifies that mountains, which are taken as an example of firmness and strength, will

be shifted from their positions, and will become like little particles of dust flying about in the atmosphere. The word *sarāb* literally means 'to disappear' and it also refers to 'mirage' or an optical illusion, as of a sheet of water, that sometimes appears in a desert, because it seems to be a sheet of water from a distance, but when a person comes near it, it disappears. [Ṣiḥāḥ and Rāghib].

إِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ كَانَتْ مِرْصَادًا (Surely Jahannam [the Hell] is set in ambush. 78:21). The word *mirsād* means 'an ambush' or 'lying in wait to attack unawares' or 'a secret position for surprise attack'. Here Hell refers to the bridge of Hell. The angels of reward and punishment will lie in wait. The angels of punishment will make a surprise attack on the inmates of Hell, and the angels of reward will lie in wait to accompany the inmates of Paradise and take them to their abode. [Maḏharī]

Sayyidnā Ḥasan Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى said that there will be an outpost of guardian angels on the bridge of Hell. If anyone has a permit to enter Paradise, he will be permitted to enter; but if anyone does not have the permit to enter Paradise, he will be prevented from entering it. [Qurtubī]

لِلطَّغْيَانِ مَأْبَا ([It is] an abode for the rebellious people...78:22). The combined sense of verses 21 and 22 is that the bridge of Hell is set in ambush for all, the good and the bad. They will have to go over it. But Hell is the abode of the rebellious people. The word *ṭaghīn* is the plural of *ṭaghī*, being derived from *tughyan*, meaning 'rebellion'. Thus the word *ṭaghī* refers to a 'person who exceeds the limit in disobeying the authority [of Allah]'. This is possible only when he gives up his faith. Hence, the word *ṭaghīn* in this context would refer to the disbelievers. It may also refer to the stray groups of Muslims who have deviated from the limits of Qur'ān and Sunnah, though they may not have adopted *kufṛ* expressly, such as Rawafīḍ, Khawārij, Mu'tazilah and others. [as in Maḏharī].

لَبِثْنَ فِيهَا أَحْقَابًا (who will be abiding in it for ages....78:23). The word *lābithīn* is the plural of *lābith* which means 'one who abides'. The word *aḥqāb* is the plural of *ḥiqbah* and means 'ages or a long time'. Scholars differ on the exact length or specific amount of time meant by this word. Ibn Jarīr has recorded that Sayyidnā 'Alī ؑ states that *ḥiqbah* is eighty years, and the year constitutes twelve months, and every month comprises thirty days, and each day is equivalent to one thousand years, thus one *ḥiqbah* totalling about twenty million and eighty-eight hundred

thousand years . Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah, 'Abdullah Ibn 'Umar, Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنهم and others say that one *hiqbah* is seventy years instead of eighty years. The rest of the calculation remains the same. [Ibn Kathīr]. In Musnad of Bazzār, Sayyidnā 'Abdullah Ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنه traces the following Ḥadīth to the Holy Prophet ﷺ:

لا يخرج احدكم من النار حتى يمكث فيه احقاباً، والحقب بضع' وثمانون سنة،
كل سنة ثلثمائة وستون يوماً مما تعدّون

"Those who will be put in Hell for punishment of their sins, they will not be able to come out until they tarry therein for a few *Aḥqāb*. One *hiqbah* will be a little over eighty years, and the year has three hundred and sixty days according to your reckoning [in this life]."

This Tradition, though does not interpret this verse, it does explain the sense of the word *aḥqāb*. Some of the Companions mention that one day is equivalent to a thousand years. If they had heard this from the Holy Prophet ﷺ, there is conflict in the narratives. In the face of such conflict, it is not possible to settle on one narration. However, there is a common denominator between the two conflicting narratives, that *hiqbah* means 'an extremely long period of time'. Therefore, Baidawī has interpreted the word as 'many long periods of time successively following the others.

Problem of Eternity of Hell

If it be argued, as some do, that the inmates of Hell, after serving the long ages in Hell, will be released because no matter what the length of *hiqbah*, it is, nonetheless, finite and limited and will come to an end some time or other. But looking at other clear verses of the Qur'ān, the argument does not hold up. We come across express text like:

خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا

[They, the disbelievers] shall remain therein [in the Fire] for ever'.

Therefore, there is the consensus of Ummah that neither Hell will perish, nor will the disbelievers be released at anytime.

Suddi reports from Sayyidnā Murrah Ibn 'Abdullah رضي الله عنه that if the inmates of Hell are informed that they will abide in Hell for the number of pebbles in the entire world, they will be happy even at this information,

because these pebbles though will count into billions or zillions, still they are finite. If so, their punishment will, some time or the other, come to an end. If the same information is given to the inmates of Paradise that they will abide therein to the count of billions of pebbles in the entire world, it will sadden them, because, in that case, no matter how long the space of time they will live in Paradise, they will be expelled after this period. [Maḏharī]

In any case, the notion that after a few *aḥqāb* the disbelievers will be released from Hell is contrary to the explicit texts and common consent of the Ummah, and as such it is unworthy of consideration, because the verse does not mention what will happen after the *aḥqāb*. It merely mentions that they will have to abide in Hell 'for ages [*aḥqāb*]'. This does not necessarily imply that there will be no Hell after *aḥqāb* or its non-believing inmates will be released. Therefore, Sayyidnā Ḥasan ؓ says that no specific period has been defined for the inmates of Hell, so that they will be released after that. It is that which has no end to it. Whenever one *ḥiqbah* [era] is over, a new *ḥiqbah* will start; when the second era come to an end, a third *ḥiqbah* will start; when the third *ḥiqbah* ends, the fourth *ḥiqbah* will start; and it will carry on ad infinitum. Sayyidnā Sa'īd Ibn Jubair ؓ also interprets the word *aḥqāb* as referring to 'the time which has no end to it. Whenever one era ends, a new era follows it until eternity'. [Ibn Kathīr and Maḏharī]. Ibn Kathīr describes another possibility which Qurṭubī supports and Maḏharī adopts. The possibility is that the word *ṭāghīn* 'rebellious people' probably does not refer to the disbelievers, but to the people of *Tauḥīd*, who, on account of their false beliefs, fall into one of the categories of deviant groups. Traditionalists refer to them as *ahl-ul-ahwa'* 'heretics whose beliefs are not in keeping with the common consent of the People of *Ahl-us-sunnah wal-jama'ah*'. In this case, the verse purports to say that they are the people of *Tauḥīd*, but bordered on the boundary of disbelief on account of false beliefs. They, however, did not cross into the boundary of explicit disbelief. They will therefore abide in Hell for the period of *aḥqāb*, and then discharged therefrom by virtue of the creed of *tauḥīd*.

Maḏharī, in support of this possibility, has cited the Prophetic Ḥadīth which was reported earlier on the authority of Sayyidnā 'Abdullah Ibn 'Umar ؓ with reference to Musnad of Bazzār, in which the Holy Prophet

ﷺ said that after the period of *aḥqāb* has passed, these people will be taken out of Hell. Abū Ḥayyān, however, disputes this on the grounds of the verses that follow the present verse:

إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا لَا يَرْجُونَ حِسَابًا. وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا كِذَابًا

(They did not expect [to face] accounting [of their deeds], and they rejected Our signs totally....78:28)

These verses contradict the possibility that *ṭāghīn* 'rebellious people' could be referring to people of Tauhid and deviant groups, because in the concluding verses it is expressly mentioned that they explicitly reject reckoning and utterly deny the Prophets عليهم السلام. Likewise Abū Ḥayyān rejects out of hand Muqatil's opinion that this verse is abrogated.

A group of commentators find a third interpretation of this verse. A statement after this verse, namely, لَا يَذُوقُونَ فِيهَا بَرْدًا وَلَا شَرَابًا إِلَّا حَمِيمًا وَغَسَّاقًا (They will taste nothing cool in it, nor a drink, except boiling water and pus...78:25) - is circumstantial clause to *aḥqāb*, in which case the verse purports to say that for the countless aeons of *aḥqāb* that they will be in Hell they will not be tasting any coolness of air nor any food or drink excepting for boiling water and [scalding] pus. When the *aḥqāb* is over, the condition may change, and other kinds of punishment may be imposed. The word *ḥamīm* means 'intensely boiling water if brought near the face, it would burn its flesh, and when put into the stomach it would cut into pieces the internal organs'. The word *ghassāq* means 'blood and pus, and washings of wounds that will ooze from the inmates of Hell'.

جَزَاءً وَفَاتًا (this being a recompense in full accord [with their deeds]....78:26). The punishment given to them in Hell will be based on justice and equity - a fitting recompense - on account of their false beliefs and evil deeds. They will not be wronged in the least.

فَذُوقُوا فَلَنْ نَزِيدَكُمْ إِلَّا عَذَابًا ("So now taste! We will never add to you anything except torment."....78:30). In other words, in the world they continued to add disbelief. If death did not overtake them by coercion, they would have continued to add disbelief, and today their punishment will be increased.

Thus far the punishment of disbelievers was depicted. As opposed to this, the reward and blessings of the righteous believers are depicted below.

جَزَاءً مِّن رَّبِّكَ عَطَاءً حِسَابًا (this being a reward from their Lord, a sufficing

grant...78:36). The blessings of Paradise described above is the reward of the believers and is an abundant grant from their Lord. Here two things are mentioned. First, these blessings are a reward of their deeds. Secondly, they are a Divine grant. Apparently, they seem to be contradictory, because reward means receiving something in lieu of doing some service, whereas grant is given gratis. The Qur'ān has combined the two words in order to indicate that the blessings of Paradise are reward for the inmates of Paradise only apparently, and in reality they are a Divine grant given to them gratis, because human deeds cannot be the reward of even those blessings which were given to him in the world, let alone the blessings of the Hereafter which depend entirely on Divine grace as is confirmed by the Tradition of the Holy Prophet ﷺ: "No one can enter Paradise merely by virtue of his deeds, unless Allah shows His grace." The Companions asked: "What about you, Messenger of Allah." He replied: "Nor will I enter Paradise merely by virtue of my action."

The word *hisāban* has two meanings: [1] a grant [that is] sufficient [and] abundant. This meaning is adapted from the following idiom: *أَحْسَبْتُ* *أَحْسَبْتُ* فَلَانَا أَىْ أَعْطَيْتُهُ، مَا يَكْفِيهِ حَتَّى قَالَ حَسْبِي *ahsabt* means that I gave him so much so that it was sufficient for him until he yelled out "enough, this is too much for me"; and [2] the second meaning 'balancing of account' and 'comparing'. Sayyidnā Mujāhid رضي الله عنه says that in this context the verse purports to say that the Divine grant will be given gratis to the inmates of Paradise. The grant will be in keeping with the degree of sincerity as reported in authentic Traditions. The deeds of the noble Companions are greater than the deeds of the rest of the Ummah. If a Companion were to spend in the way of Allah one *mudd* = [815,39 grams] and a non-Companion were to spend to the equivalent of Mount Uhud, the Companion's one *mudd* will weigh heavier than the mountain. And Allah knows best!

لَا يَمْلِكُونَ مِنْهُ خِطَابًا (...No one will have power to address Him,...78:37)

This sentence is probably connected to the preceding verse: *جَزَاءً مِّن رَّبِّكَ* *عَطَاءً حِسَابًا* (this being a reward from their Lord, a sufficing grant...78:36) In this case, it would mean that when Allah grants a certain grade of reward, no one dare speak about the grade as to why someone got more and others got less. But if this sentence is treated as an isolated one, it will mean that no one in the Plane of Gathering will have the power to speak to Him without His permission. This permission will be granted in some of

the positions of Gathering, and not in others.

يَوْمَ يَقُومُ الرُّوحُ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ صَفًّا لَا يَتَكَلَّمُونَ إِلَّا مَنْ أَذِنَ لَهُ الرَّحْمَنُ وَقَالَ صَوَابًا (on the Day when the Spirit and the angels will stand in rows. They will not speak, except the one who is permitted by the Raḥmān [the All-Merciful] and speaks aright -78:38). Rūḥ (Spirit), according to some of the commentators, refers to the angel Jibrā'īl عليه السلام. He has been mentioned before the other angels in general in order to show the greatness of his status. According to certain Prophetic traditions, Rūḥ is not an angel but a huge army of Allah. They have heads, hands and legs. In this interpretation, there will be two rows. One row will be that of Rūḥ and the other will be that of the angels.

يَوْمَ يَنْظُرُ الْمَرْءُ مَا قَدَّمَتْ يَدَاهُ (...on a day when one will see what his hands have sent ahead....78:40) Apparently, this refers to the Day of Judgement. Every person will see his deeds with his own eyes in the Plane of Gathering. This might happen in one of two ways: [1] his ledger of deeds will be given in his hands and he will see it; or [2] his deeds will appear in the Plane of Gathering, epitomized in a visible shape, as certain narratives confirm this. Still a third possibility exists. The word 'day' may refer to 'the day of death'. And the words 'will see' means to see in the grave or barzakh, as explained by Maḥzarī.

وَيَقُولُ الْكَافِرُ يَلْبِئْتَنِي كُنْتُ تَرَبًّا (and the disbeliever will say, "O would that I had become dust...78:40) Sayyidnā ‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Umar رضي الله عنه reports that on the Day of Resurrection the entire earth will become a plane surface where all human beings, *Jinn*, domesticated animals and wild animals will be gathered. If one animal had wronged another animal in the world, it will be given the opportunity to take its revenge. If a goat with horns had wronged a goat without horns, it will be granted the opportunity to take its avenge. When this phase is over, all animals will be commanded to become dust. They will become dust. At that moment the disbelievers will wish that they were also animals and would become dust like them, so that they would have been spared the torment of reckoning and punishment of Hell. We seek refuge in Allah from it! Allah knows best!

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah An-Naba'
Ends here

Sūrah An-Nāzi‘at

(Those Who Pull Out)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 46 verses and 2 sections

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 46

وَالنَّازِعَاتِ غَرْقًا ﴿١﴾ وَالنَّشِيطَاتِ نَشْطًا ﴿٢﴾ وَالسَّابِقَاتِ سَبَاحًا ﴿٣﴾
فَالسَّابِقَاتِ سَبَاحًا ﴿٤﴾ فَالْمُدَبِّرَاتِ أَمْرًا ﴿٥﴾ يَوْمَ تَرْجُفُ الرَّاجِفَةُ ﴿٦﴾
تَتْبَعُهَا الرَّادِفَةُ ﴿٧﴾ قُلُوبٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ وَاجِفَةٌ ﴿٨﴾ أَبْصَارُهَا خَاشِعَةٌ ﴿٩﴾
يَقُولُونَ ءَإِنَّا لَمَرْدُودُونَ فِي الْحَافِرَةِ ﴿١٠﴾ ءَإِذَا كُنَّا عِظَامًا نَّخِرَةً ﴿١١﴾
قَالُوا تِلْكَ إِذًا كَرَّةٌ خَاسِرَةٌ ﴿١٢﴾ فَإِنَّمَا هِيَ زَجْرَةٌ وَاحِدَةٌ ﴿١٣﴾
فَإِذَا هُمْ بِالسَّاهِرَةِ ﴿١٤﴾ هَلْ أَتَاكَ حَدِيثُ مُوسَى ﴿١٥﴾ إِذْ
نَادَاهُ رَبُّهُ بِالْوَادِ الْمُقَدَّسِ طُوًى ﴿١٦﴾ إِذْهَبْ إِلَى فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّهُ طَغَى ﴿١٧﴾
فَقُلْ هَلْ لَكَ إِلَى أَنْ تَزَكَّى ﴿١٨﴾ وَأَهْدِيكَ إِلَى رَبِّكَ فَتَخْشَى ﴿١٩﴾
فَإِنَّهُ الْآيَةُ الْكُبْرَى ﴿٢٠﴾ فَكَذَّبَ وَعَصَى ﴿٢١﴾ ثُمَّ أَذْبَرَ ﴿٢٢﴾
يَسْعَى ﴿٢٣﴾ فَحَشَرَ فَنَادَى ﴿٢٤﴾ فَقَالَ أَنَا رَبُّكُمُ الْأَعْلَى ﴿٢٥﴾
فَأَخَذَهُ اللَّهُ نَكَالَ الْآخِرَةِ وَالْأُولَى ﴿٢٦﴾ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَعِبْرَةً لِّمَنْ
يَخْشَى ﴿٢٧﴾ ءَأَنْتُمْ أَشَدُّ خَلْقًا أَمْ السَّمَاءُ بُنِيَ بِهَا ﴿٢٨﴾ رَفَعَ
سَمَكَهَا فَسَوَّيْتُهَا ﴿٢٩﴾ وَأَغْطَشَ لَيْلَهَا وَأَخْرَجَ ضُحَاهَا ﴿٣٠﴾

وَالْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ دَحِيهَا ﴿٣٠﴾ أَخْرَجَ مِنْهَا مَاءَهَا وَمَرْعَهَا ﴿٣١﴾
وَالْجِبَالَ أَرْسَبَهَا ﴿٣٢﴾ مَتَاعًا لَّكُمْ وَلِأَنْعَامِكُمْ ﴿٣٣﴾ فَإِذَا جَاءَتِ
الطَّامَّةُ الْكُبْرَى ﴿٣٤﴾ يَوْمَ يَتَذَكَّرُ الْإِنْسَانُ مَا سَعَى ﴿٣٥﴾ وَبُرَزَتِ
الْجَحِيمُ لِمَنْ يَرَى ﴿٣٦﴾ فَأَمَّا مَنْ طَغَى ﴿٣٧﴾ وَآثَرَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا
﴿٣٨﴾ فَإِنَّ الْجَحِيمَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَى ﴿٣٩﴾ وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ
وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوَى ﴿٤٠﴾ فَإِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَى ﴿٤١﴾
يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ السَّاعَةِ أَيَّانَ مُرْسَاهَا ﴿٤٢﴾ فِيمَ أَنْتَ مِنْ ذِكْرِهَا
﴿٤٣﴾ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ مُنْتَهَاهَا ﴿٤٤﴾ إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُنْذِرٌ مَّنْ يَخْشَاهَا ﴿٤٥﴾
كَانَهُمْ يَوْمَ يَرَوْنَهَا لَمْ يَلْبُثُوا إِلَّا عَشِيَّةً أَوْ ضُحَاهَا ﴿٤٦﴾

I swear by those (angels) who pull out (the souls of the infidels) vigorously [1] and by those (angels) who untie the knot (of the souls of the believers) smoothly, [2] and by those who float (in the atmosphere) swiftly, [3] then proceed forward quickly, [4] then manage (to do) everything (they are ordered to do,) [5] (you will be resurrected) on the Day when the shocking event (i.e. the first blowing of the trumpet) will shock (everything), [6] followed by the next one (i.e. the second blowing of the trumpet.) [7] Hearts, on that Day, will be throbbing, [8] (and) their eyes will be downcast. [9]

They say, "Are we going to be brought back to our former state (of Life)? [10] Is it when we will have turned into decayed bones?" [11] They say, "If so, that will be a harmful return." [12] So, it will be only a single harsh voice, [13] and in no time they will be (brought) in the plain (of *hashr*). [14]

Has there come to you the narrative of Mūsā? [15] (Recall) when his Lord called to him in the blessed valley of Tuwa: [16] "Go to Fir'aun (the Pharaoh). Indeed, he has crossed all bounds (in making mischief). [17] And say (to him,) "Would you like to purify yourself, [18] and that I guide you to your Lord, so that you fear (Him)?" [19] So he showed him the biggest sign. [20] But he rejected and disobeyed, [21] then he turned back, and

tried hard (to refute the Messenger), [22] then he gathered (his people) and shouted [23] and said, "I am the supreme lord of yours." [24] So, Allah seized him for the deterrent punishment in the Hereafter and the present world. [25] Indeed, there is a lesson for him who fears (Allah). [26]

Are you more difficult to be created or the sky? He has built it, [27] He has raised its height, then made it proper, [28] and darkened its night, and brought forth its daylight, [29] and, after that, He spread out the earth. [30] From it, He brought out its water and its meadows, [31] and firmly fixed the mountains, [32] (all this) as a benefit to you and your cattle. [33] So when the Biggest Havoc will come [34] on the day when man will recall what he did, [35] and the Hell will be exposed for all who see, [36] then for the one who had rebelled, [37] and preferred the worldly life (to the Hereafter), [38] the Hell will be the abode, [39] whereas for the one who feared to stand before his Lord, and restrained his self from the (evil) desire, [40] the Paradise will be the abode. [41]

They ask you about the Hour (the Day of Judgment) as to when it will take place. [42] In which capacity are you to tell this? [43] With your Lord is the final word about it. [44] You are only a warner for anyone who fears it. [45] The day they will see it, it will seem to them as if they did not live (in the world), but only for one afternoon or for the morning thereof. [46]

Commentary

وَالَّذِينَ نَزَّغْتَ غَرَقًا (I swear by those [angels] who pull out [the souls of the infidels] vigorously ...79:1). The word *nāzi‘āt* is derived from *naz‘* and it means 'to draw vigorously'. The word *gharqan* is its corroborative because the word *gharq* is used here in the sense of *ighrāq* and means 'to exert oneself much or to the utmost extent in the thing'. The Arabic idiom has it اغرق النّازع في القوس 'He drew the bow with great vigour'. The Sūrah begins with an oath by certain characteristics of the angels to affirm that the Resurrection is a certainty. The subject of the oath, however, has been contextually deleted. The oath of the angels is probably apt on this occasion because they are all the time involved in the administration and running of the world. They are executing their duties loyally. On the Day of Judgement, all material causes will be severed. Unusual events will

occur and the angels will be involved in them.

Five characteristics of the angels are mentioned which are concerned with or related to the extraction of the soul at the time of death. The purport of the verses is to affirm that Resurrection is a certainty. It starts with human death. Every man's death is his partial Day of Doom, and this has an important impact on his belief in Resurrection. The five qualities are as follows:

The first quality of the angels:

الَّذِينَ عَرَفُوا I swear by those (angels) who pull out (the souls of the infidels) vigorously.

This refers to the angels of punishment who draw the souls of the infidels vigorously and harshly. The words 'vigorously' refer to spiritual pain. The humans around the dying person may not be sensitive to the pain. Often it is noticed that the soul of an infidel apparently slips out easily, but this ease is perceived by humans around the dying man. The pain is felt by the soul of the dying person. Who can perceive it? We are aware of it only because Allah has informed us about it in this verse.

The second quality of the angels :

وَالَّذِينَ نَسِطُوا (and by those [angels] who untie the knot [of the souls of the believers] smoothly, [2]) The word *nashiṭāt* is derived from *nasht* and it means 'to untie the knot'. This signifies 'to untie the knot of something which contains water or air, so that it may be released easily'. This is metaphor for drawing out the souls of the believers gently, unlike the souls of the infidels which are plucked out harshly. In this case too the adverb 'smoothly' refers to the spiritual smoothness, and not to the physical experience. Sometimes, it happens that there is a delay at the time of death of a righteous believer. This may not be suspected to mean that he is undergoing some sort of suffering, although physically it may seem so. When the soul of an infidel is extracted, the entire scene of the punishment of *barzakh* comes in front of him. It is frightened by it, disperses throughout the body and tries to hide or escape. The angels forcefully extract the soul just as wet wool wrapped around a skewer is forcefully removed. When the soul of a believer is extracted, on the other hand, the reward, the blessings and the welcome news of the *barzakh*

come in front of him.

The third quality of the angels :

وَالسَّيِّحَاتِ سَبِيحًا (and by those who float [in the atmosphere] swiftly...79:3). The word *sabḥ* literally means to 'swim' or 'float'. Here it signifies 'to glide along swiftly as in the sea where there is no mountain barrier'. The one who swims fast and goes far in swimming or a boatman who moves directly towards his final destination. The 'angels who float swiftly' refer to the quality of the angels of death who extract human souls and take them quickly towards the sky.

The fourth quality of the angels :

فَالسَّيِّفَاتِ سَبِيحًا (then proceed forward quickly...79:4). According to Divine instruction, the angels do not delay in transporting the souls of people to their good or their bad abodes. The soul of a believer is transported to the atmosphere and blessings of Paradise, and that of an unbeliever to the atmosphere and torment of Hell.

The fifth quality of the angels :

فَالْمُدَبِّرَاتِ أَمْرًا (then manage [to do] everything [they are ordered to do,...79:5). In other words, the last task of these angels of death will be as follows: Those who are commanded to reward and comfort the deserving souls, will gather means of reward and comfort for them; and those who are commanded to punish and cause pain to [the evil souls] will organise means for that.

Reward and Punishment in the Grave

The Sūrah thus far confirms that at the time of death, the angels will arrive and extract human souls. Then they will take them to the sky and swiftly transport them to their abodes, the good souls to the good abode and the bad souls to the bad one. There they will organise means of reward or punishment and pain or comfort for them. The verses show that the reward and punishment will take place in the grave or *barzakh*. Thereafter the reward and punishment will be meted out on the Day of Judgement. Authentic Traditions give elaborate details of this. There is a lengthy Tradition of Sayyidnā Barā' Ibn 'Āzib رضي الله عنه cited in Mishkāt-ul-Maṣābiḥ with reference to Musnad of Aḥmad.

Nafs [Self] Rūḥ [Spirit - Soul]: Qāḍī Thanā‘ullah's Research and Analysis

The readers are referred to a special research and analysis by the Baihaqī of his time, Qāḍī Thanā‘ullah Pānīpatī, that was presented in this book under verse [29] of Sūrah Hījr. Here the learned commentator has added some more details which dispose of many doubts which arise from the above Tradition: The human soul is a refined body which permeates the dense material body. The [ancient] doctors and philosophers called it as *rūḥ* or soul. But the real spirit is an abstract substance and a subtle divine creature connected in a special way with this physical soul or *nafs*, the life of which is dependent on the Divine Spirit. The pure, abstract and non-material spirit is the life of the first soul on which depends the life of the body, and therefore it is called the 'soul of soul'. The real nature of the connection between these two kinds of soul is not known to anyone. It is known to Allah alone. Perhaps an illustration would clarify the matter. If we were to hold a mirror against the sun, then, despite that the sun is 149.6 million kilometres away from the earth, its reflection comes into the mirror. And because of the light, that too starts glowing like the sun. The same thing applies to the human soul. If it exerts itself in spiritual struggle and ascetic discipline in keeping with the teachings of [Divine] revelation, he will be enlightened. Otherwise he would be polluted with the bad effects of the physical body. This is the refined bodily soul that the angels transport to the heaven and transport him back with honours if he is enlightened. Otherwise the doors of the heaven are not opened for him and is thrown down from top. This is the refined bodily soul, the Tradition notes, which Allah created from dust and to it He will return him and from it. He resurrect him. It is this refined bodily soul that gets enlightened and becomes fragrant. But the same body can stink because of [the filth of] disbelief and idolatrous practices. The 'abstract spirit' is connected with the dense body through the refined bodily soul. The abstract spirit never dies. The reward or punishment of grave is experienced by the refined bodily soul which keeps connected with the grave whereas the abstract spirit remains in '*illiyyūn*', and it feels the effects of reward and punishment indirectly. Thus the statement that 'the soul is in the grave' is true in the sense that 'soul' in this context refers to the bodily soul. The statement that 'the soul is in '*Ālam-ul-arwāḥ* or '*illiyyūn*' is also true, because the 'soul' in this context refers to *rūḥ*

mujarrad or 'abstract spirit'. Thus it is possible to reconcile the apparently conflicting statements.

فَإِذَا هُمْ بِالسَّاهِرَةِ (and in no time they will be [brought] in the plain [of *hashr*]...79:14). The word *sāhirah* refers to 'the surface of the earth'. When the earth will be re-created at Resurrection, it will be a completely level surface. There will be no mountain barriers, no buildings or caves. This is referred to as '*sāhirah*'.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ used to be hurt by the stubbornness of the obdurate rejecters of Resurrection. The next verses recount the story of Mūsā عليه السلام and Fir'aun to console him, and to show that the adverse attitude of the pagans is not confined to him. The previous prophets have also faced similar situations, but they endured them with patience. The Holy Prophet ﷺ too should exercise patience and fortitude.

فَأَخَذَهُ اللَّهُ نَكَالَ الْآخِرَةِ وَالْأُولَى (So, Allah seized him for the deterrent punishment in the Hereafter and the present world....79:25). The word *nakāl* means an 'exemplary punishment' or 'an extremely severe punishment given to an offender to deter others against committing a similar offence or sin'. The phrase 'punishment of the '*ākhirah*' refers to the punishment of the Hereafter that will be meted out to Fir'aun (the Pharaoh). The phrase 'punishment of the '*ulā*' refers to the punishment meted out to Fir'aun (the Pharaoh) and his army in this world whereby they were destroyed by drowning.

Further, the Qur'ān again disposes of the doubt of the rejecters of resurrection who pose the question: "Are we going to be brought back to our former state (of life)? Is it when we will have turned into decayed bones?" [10-11] In other words, this is a negative rhetorical question. They purport to say that it is not possible for them to be restored to life after death when they have become perished and worm-eaten bones. Allah responds that the Supreme Creator, Who drew out this universe without any pre-existing matter and without any instrument, certainly has the Supreme power to give existence to things after destroying them. Why should it be a surprise?

In the verses that follow, the horrors of the Day of Judgement are depicted. It is mentioned that on that Day, every person will be presented with his deeds. Described also are the abodes of the inmates of Paradise

and Hell. Towards the end, special traits of the people of Paradise and those of Hell are portrayed by which a man can decide in this very world whether, according to the rules, his abode would be Paradise or Hell. The expression 'according to the rules' has been used because many verses and narratives indicate that there could be 'exceptions to the rules'. For example, a person might attain freedom from Hell and enter Paradise by virtue of intercession or directly through the grace of Allah. This is an exception to the rule. The general rule is the same as has been mentioned in these verses.

First, the special marks of the inmates of Hell are described. They have two characteristics:

فَأَمَّا مَنْ طَغَىٰ وَآثَرَ الْحَيٰوةَ الدُّنْيَا (then for the one who had rebelled, and preferred the worldly life [to the Hereafter]...79:38). In other words, [1] instead of remaining loyal to Allah and His Messenger and following their commands, they adopt the line of rejection and rebellion; and [2] prefer the life of this world to that of the Hereafter. In other words, if he were to do a deed that gives comfort and pleasure in this world but punishment in the Hereafter, he would prefer the comforts and pleasure of this life to the pleasure of the next life. Those who are characterised by these two qualities the Blazing Fire, that is Hell, will be their abode, thus: فَإِنَّ الْجَحِيمَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَىٰ (the Hell will be the abode...79:39).

Thereafter, the special marks of the inmates of Paradise are described. They too have two characteristics:

وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ وَنَهَىٰ النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ (whereas for the one who feared to stand before his Lord, and restrained his self from the [evil] desire, 79:40). In other words, [1] the first characteristic of a God-fearing person is that, in this life, he shudders at the thought of appearing before Allah to account for his deeds on the Day of Reckoning; and [2] forbids the baser self from its evil desires. Those who are characterised by these two qualities have the good news that the Paradise will be their abode, thus: فَإِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَىٰ (the Paradise will be the abode....79:41)

Three Levels of Suppressing [the Base] Self

The verse under comment lays down two conditions of attaining the abode in Paradise, but carefully considered, the two conditions, in terms of consequence, are one. The first condition is the fear of accountability in

the presence of Allah. The second condition is to restrain oneself from the evil desires. As a matter of fact, fear of Allah causes one to restrain oneself from evil desires. Qāḍī Thanā‘ullah Pānipatī has written in his Tafsīr Maḥzarī that there are three levels of suppressing evil desires, as follows:

The first level is that one avoids false beliefs which are in conflict or incompatible with express texts [of the Holy Qur‘ān and established Sunnah] and consensus of [the righteous] predecessors. In this level, a person deserves to be called 'Sunnī Muslim'.

The second level is the middle one. A person, in this stage, may think of committing sin. Then he may remember that he has to account for his deeds before Allah [on the Day of Reckoning]. As a result, he abandons the thought of committing sin. The complement to this level is that one abstains from doubtful things and those acts that are permissible in themselves, but there is apprehension that if committed, they may lead one to slip into impermissible acts. Sayyidnā Nu‘mān Ibn Bashīr  narrates that the Holy Prophet  said: "He who abstained from doubtful things has protected his honour and religion. He who indulged in doubtful things will eventually indulge in forbidden things." The expression 'doubtful things' signifies those acts about which one is not certain whether they are permissible or not, both possibilities being equal. Let us consider a few examples: if a person is ill and can take [wet] ablution, but he is not sure whether taking [wet] ablution in this state would be harmful. Thus the permissibility of dry ablution (*tayammum*) becomes doubtful. Likewise a person is able to perform prayers in a standing position, but feels great difficulty. He is now in doubt whether or not it is permissible for him to perform prayers in a sitting position. On such occasions, one should abandon the doubtful thing or act, and prefer what is definitely certain. This is *taqwa* and the middle course of suppressing the selfish desires.

Tricks of the Base Self

There are acts whose sinful nature is obvious to every one. The selfish desires prompting to such sinful acts may be suppressed by one's deliberate efforts and firm resolution. However, there are evils prompted by one's base self even during his acts of worship and other good deeds, such as self-conceit, (*‘Ujb*) vanity, (*Kibr*), and show off (*Riyā‘*). These are such sins whose sinful nature is often not discoverable to a common

person, still they are very severe and firmly ingrained evil desires of one's base self. One is at times deceived by them, because he continues to think that his actions are right. It is extremely necessary that first and foremost this lower self must be suppressed. But this cannot be achieved by one on his own. It is necessary for one to search for a perfect spiritual master (*Ash-shaikhul-kāmil*), and hand himself over to him for guidance. He acts as the authentic guide and the only one to whom a seeker of Truth should turn in his quest and follow his advice. In turning to the spiritual master, the seeker is turning to Allah Almighty. The *shaikh* engages him in the spiritual struggle and endeavour [*mujāhadah*] against the passions and tendencies of the lower self [*'uyūb-un-nafs*].

Shaikh Imām Ya'qūb Karkhī رحمه الله تعالى says that in his young age he was a carpenter. He found laziness, and felt darkness in his inner self. So, he intended to keep fasts for a few days so that he may get rid of the laziness and darkness. Co-incidentally, one day, while he was fasting, he went up to Shaikh Imām Bahā'uddīn Naqshbandī. The Shaikh called for meals for his guests. He was also invited to partake of the meal, and the Shaikh said: "He is a very bad slave who is the slave of his base self that misleads him. It is better to partake of meal than to keep fast with evil desires of the base self." Shaikh Karkhī says that at that moment he realised that (by fasting) he was falling prey to self-complacency, self-conceit and pride, which the Shaikh Naqshbandī perceived. On that occasion, Shaikh Karkhī realised that a spiritual master's permission and guidance is needed to take up an optional act of worship, because the spiritual master is aware of the hidden tricks of the evil desires of the base self. If an optional act of worship will be accompanied by such motives, the will put a stop to it [for remedial purposes]. He asked Shaikh Naqshbandī: "If I cannot find a Shaikh who is called in Ṣūfī terms as *fānī fillah* and *bāqī billah*, (the explanation is coming in the next paragraph.) what must I do?" He replied: "Recite *istighfār* abundantly and recite *istighfār* [seek Allah's pardon] twenty times regularly after every prayer, so that it works out to a hundred times reciting it five times a day." The Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said: "Sometimes I feel my heart disturbed, and I recite *istighfār* [seek Allah's pardon] a hundred times a day."

The third and the highest level of suppression of the base self is that

by abundant *dhikrullah* [remembrance of Allah] and constant *mujāhadah* [spiritual struggle and endeavour against the evil passions] and *riyāḍah* [ascetic discipline], one's self (*nafs*) is so much cleansed and purified that the desires that tempts him to evil are totally eliminated. This is the special stage of *wilāyah* [Divine friendship], which in Ṣūfī Terminology is called *fānī fillah* and *bāqī billah*. The Qur‘ān says regarding such people [addressing the Satan]:

إِنَّ عِبَادِي لَيْسَ لَكَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطٰنٌ

'My servants are such that you have no power over them
[15:42]'

The following Tradition applies to the same category of *walī*:

لَا يُؤْمِنُ أَحَدُكُمْ حَتَّىٰ يَكُونَ هَوَاهُ تَبَعًا لِمَا جِئْتُ بِهِ

'None of you can be a [perfect] believer unless his [base] desires of self follow my teachings.'

Towards the end of the Sūrah, the Holy Qur‘ān responds to the *mala fide* demand of the infidels that the Holy Prophet ﷺ should let them know the exact date and time of the Day of Judgement. They are told that knowledge of the time and date is within Allah's own special prerogative. Allah's consummate wisdom did not pass the information to any angel or Prophet عليهم السلام. Therefore, the demand is futile.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah An-Nāzi‘āt
Ends here

Sūrah 'Abas

(Frowning)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 42 verses and 1 section.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 42

عَبَسَ وَتَوَلَّى ﴿١﴾ أَنْ جَاءَهُ الْأَعْمَى ﴿٢﴾ وَمَا يُدْرِيكَ لَعَلَّهُ يَزَّكَّى ﴿٣﴾
 أَوْ يَذَّكَّرُ فَتَنْفَعَهُ الذِّكْرَى ﴿٤﴾ أَمَّا مَنِ اسْتَغْنَى ﴿٥﴾ فَإِنَّ لَهُ
 تَصَدَّى ﴿٦﴾ وَمَا عَلَيْكَ إِلَّا يَزَّكَّى ﴿٧﴾ وَأَمَّا مَنِ جَاءَكَ يَسْعَى ﴿٨﴾
 وَهُوَ يَخْشَى ﴿٩﴾ فَإِنَّ عَنْهُ تَلَهَّى ﴿١٠﴾ كَلَّا إِنَّهَا تَذْكِرَةٌ ﴿١١﴾
 فَمَنْ شَاءَ ذَكَرْهُ ﴿١٢﴾ فِي صُحُفٍ مُكَرَّمَةٍ ﴿١٣﴾ مَرْفُوعَةٍ مُطَهَّرَةٍ ﴿١٤﴾
 بِأَيْدِي سَفَرَةٍ ﴿١٥﴾ كِرَامٍ بَرَرَةٍ ﴿١٦﴾ قَتَلَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا اكْفَرَ ﴿١٧﴾
 مِنْ آيِ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَهُ ﴿١٨﴾ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ خَلَقَهُ فَقَدَرَهُ ﴿١٩﴾ ثُمَّ
 السَّبِيلَ يَسْرَهُ ﴿٢٠﴾ ثُمَّ أَمَاتَهُ فَأَقْبَرَهُ ﴿٢١﴾ ثُمَّ إِذَا شَاءَ أَنْشَرَهُ ﴿٢٢﴾
 كَلَّا لَمَّا يَقْضِ مَا أَمَرَهُ ﴿٢٣﴾ فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْإِنْسَانُ إِلَى طَعَامِهِ ﴿٢٤﴾
 أَنَا صَبَبْنَا الْمَاءَ صَبًّا ﴿٢٥﴾ ثُمَّ شَقَقْنَا الْأَرْضَ شَقًّا ﴿٢٦﴾ فَأَنْبَتْنَا فِيهَا
 حَبًّا ﴿٢٧﴾ وَعَبَا وَقَضْبًا ﴿٢٨﴾ وَزَيْتُونًا وَنَخْلًا ﴿٢٩﴾ وَحَدَائِقَ غُلْبًا ﴿٣٠﴾
 وَفَاكِهَةً وَأَبًّا ﴿٣١﴾ مَتَاعًا لَكُمْ وَلِأَنْعَامِكُمْ ﴿٣٢﴾ فَإِذَا جَاءَتِ
 الصَّاحَةُ ﴿٣٣﴾ يَوْمَ يَفِرُّ الْمَرْءُ مِنْ أَخِيهِ ﴿٣٤﴾ وَأُمِّهِ وَأَبِيهِ ﴿٣٥﴾

وَصَاحِبَتِهِ وَبَنِيهِ ﴿٣٦﴾ لِكُلِّ أَمْرٍ مِّنْهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ شَأْنٌ يُغْنِيهِ
 ﴿٣٧﴾ وَجُودٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ مُّسْفِرَةٌ ﴿٣٨﴾ ضَاحِكَةٌ مُّسْتَبْشِرَةٌ ﴿٣٩﴾ وَوُجُوهٌ
 يَّوْمَئِذٍ عَلَيْهَا غَبَرَةٌ ﴿٤٠﴾ تَرْهَقُهَا قَتَرَةٌ ﴿٤١﴾ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْكُفَرَةُ
 الْفَجَرَةُ ﴿٤٢﴾

He (the Holy Prophet ﷺ) frowned and turned his face, [1] because the blind man came to him! [2] And what could tell you (O Holy Prophet about the prospects of the blind man?) May be, (if you had attended him properly,) he would have attained purity, [3] or have taken to the advice, and the advice would have benefited him. [4] As for the one who does not care (about faith), [5] you are anxious to pursue him, [6] while there is no blame on you, if he does not attain purity. [7] As regards the one who has come to you rushing eagerly, [8] while he fears (Allah), [9] to him you pay no heed! [10]

Never! (you should never act in this way,) Indeed this (Qur'an) is an advice. [11] So, whoever so wills, let him remember it. [12] It is (recorded) in those scripts (of the Preserved Tablet) that are honoured, [13] exalted, purified, [14] in the hands of those scribes [15] who are honourable, righteous. [16]

Death be unto the man! How ungrateful he is! [17] From which stuff did He (Allah) create him? [18] From a drop of semen! He created him, and designed him in due proportion, [19] then He made the way easy for him, [20] Later, he made him die, and put him into the grave, [21] thereafter, when He will intend, He will raise him up. [22] No! He has not yet fulfilled what He (Allah) had commanded him. [23]

So, let the man look to his food, [24] how well We poured water, [25] then how nicely We split the earth, [26] then We grew in it grain, [27] and grapes and greens, [28] and olive and date-palms, [29] and gardens, full of thick trees, [30] and fruits and fodder, [31] as a benefit for you and your cattle. [32]

So when there will come the Deafening Noise, [33] the Day when one will flee from his brother, [34] and from his mother and father, [35] and from his wife and sons, [36] every one of them will have enough concern to make

him careless of others. [37] Many faces, on that day, will be bright, [38] laughing, rejoicing, [39] and many faces, on that day, will be stained with dust, [40] covered by darkness. [41] Those are the disbelievers, the nefarious. [42]

Commentary

Circumstance of Revelation

Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Umm Maktūm ؓ, the companion of the Holy Prophet ﷺ was a blind man. It once happened that the Holy Prophet ﷺ was engaged in a talk with the leaders of Quraish about some matters of belief. Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Umm Maktūm ؓ arrived there. Imam Baghawi adds that being blind and unable to see the surroundings, he did not realise that the Holy Prophet ﷺ was occupied with the others. He, therefore, burst into the circle and called the Holy Prophet ﷺ repeatedly. [Maẓharī]. According to Ibn Kathīr, he requested the Holy Prophet ﷺ to teach him a verse of the Qur'ān and insisted an immediate enlightenment on the question. On that occasion, the Holy Prophet ﷺ was occupied with the non-believing leaders of Makkah in the hope that they would embrace the faith of Islam. The leaders to whom the Holy Prophet ﷺ was speaking were 'Utbah Ibn Rabi'ah, Abū Jahl Ibn Hishām and the Holy Prophet's ؓ uncle 'Abbās ؓ [who had until then not embraced the Islamic faith].

The Holy Prophet ﷺ disliked the intrusion, and showed his displeasure by turning aside from Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Umm Maktūm, thinking that he was a committed Muslim who frequently visited him, and therefore he could speak to him at another appropriate time. There was no religious loss in postponing the response to him. On the other hand, the Quraish leaders neither frequented the Holy Prophet's ؓ company, nor could the Word of Allah be conveyed to them at any time. At that particular moment, they were listening to the Holy Prophet's ؓ discourse and there was hope that they would embrace the Islamic faith. But if the conversation was rashly interrupted, apparently they would have been deprived of the faith. In view of this situation, the Holy Prophet ﷺ showed adverse reaction by turning aside from 'Abdullāh Ibn umm Maktūm ؓ, and continued his discourse with the Quraish leaders. When the assembly broke up, the verses of Sūrah 'Abas were revealed to record Allah's dislike for this attitude, and to give directions for future.

This attitude of the Holy Prophet ﷺ was based on *ijtihad* or 'an

opinion based on personal reasoning'. He thought that if a Muslim were to adopt a speech style that is not in keeping with etiquettes of a gathering, he needs to be reprimanded, so that in future he may be careful in future. That is the reason why Holy Prophet ﷺ turned his face away from Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Umm Maktūm. Secondly, disbelief (*kufr*) and polytheism (*shirk*) are the most severe sins, and an effort to eradicate them should take priority over the subsidiary precepts of Islam on which Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Umm Maktūm asked for enlightenment. Allah Almighty, through this Surah, did not confirm the correctness of this *ijtihad* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and explained to him that educating a genuine seeker will most certainly benefit him, while the benefit of discussion with the opponents (who disdainfully turn away their face when the Holy Prophet ﷺ talks to them) is shaky and doubtful. Doubtful thing cannot be preferred over certainty. As for the violation of etiquette committed by Sayyidnā 'Abdullah Ibn Umm Maktūm, its excuse is pointed out by the Holy Qur'ān in the word 'blind'. It is indicated by this word that being a blind man, he could not see what the Holy Prophet ﷺ was doing and with whom he was engaged in conversation. Thus he was excusable, and was not liable to be subjected to aversion. This indicates that if an excusable person were to break any rule of etiquette unwittingly, he should not be reprimanded.

عَبَسَ وَتَوَلَّى (He [the Holy Prophet ﷺ] frowned and turned his face, 80:1). The word '*abasa*' means 'he frowned' and the word '*tawallā*' means 'he turned aside'. Since the reference here is to the Holy Prophet ﷺ who himself is addressed, the verbs should have been in the second person: 'you frowned and you turned aside'. But the Holy Qur'ān on this occasion uses the third person in order to maintain the honour of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, as if this attitude were shown by some other person, and in a subtle way it alludes to the point that what the Holy Prophet ﷺ did was not befitting his high status. Then the next sentence وَمَا يُدْرِيكَ (and what could tell you? ...80:3) alludes to the fact that the Holy Prophet ﷺ was excusable, because it did not come to his attention that the Companion is asking something whose effect will be certain and the effect of conversation with others is dubious. The second sentence abandons the third person, and switches to the second person in order to maintain the

honour of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Had he not been addressed in second person at all, it might have created the impression that he is not addressed directly because of his unapproved conduct, which would have been an unbearable pain and grief for the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Just as the third person in the first statement is meant to show respect to him, the second person in the following sentence is also meant to honor and console him.

لَعَلَّهُ يَرْتَضَىٰ أَوْ يَذْكُرُ فَتَنْفَعَهُ الذِّكْرَىٰ (May be, [if you had attended him properly,] he would have attained purity, or have taken to the advice, and the advice would have benefited him....80:4).

In other words, because Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Umm Maktūm ؓ was a genuine believer, any advice given to him would have benefited him and served to purify him. The companion sought enlightenment and its benefit was certain. If the Holy Prophet ﷺ enlightened him on the topic, he would have purified himself and attained perfection. If that did not happen, he would have at least attained the basic benefit of Divine remembrance. He would have improved the love and fear of Allah in his heart. The word *dhikrā* means 'to remember Allah abundantly' [Ṣiḥāḥ].⁽¹⁾

On this occasion, the Qur'ān has used two sentences *yazzakkā* and *yazzakkaru*. The first statement signifies 'to be purified' and the second statement signifies 'he may take heed and the reminder may benefit him'. The first stage is that of the 'righteous' who cleanse their inner and outer selves. The second stage is that of *mubtadī* 'beginners on the spiritual journey'. At this stage, the beginner is reminded of Allah which enhances the greatness and awe of Allah in his heart. The two sentences are disjoined by disjunctive particles *au* (or) and technically they are not necessarily exclusive to one another. The sense is that 'Abdullāh Ibn Umm Maktūm ؓ would have attained either both benefits, or at least, the second one, that is, increase in Allah's remembrance and in His awe, which is the initial step towards perfection [Maẓharī]

An Important Qur'ānic Principle of Teaching and Preaching

On this occasion, the Holy Prophet ﷺ was faced with two different

(1) This interpretation is based on taking the word '*dhikrā*' in the sense of remembrance of Allah'. However, some other exegetes have taken this word to mean 'advice', and the translation of the text, as well as the explanation following in the next paragraph, is based on it. (Muḥammad Taqī Usmānī)

requirements at the same time. On the one hand, he was required to teach a Muslim and to encourage him on attaining perfection. On the other hand, he had to provide guidance to non-Muslims. The principle laid down here makes it clear that the first requirement takes priority over the second one. It is improper to delay the first task (educating Muslims) because of the second task. This indicates that education of Muslims and their reform are more important than, and take priority over, getting the non-Muslims to embrace the faith.

Scholars should avoid any such indulgence when disposing of any doubts of the non-Muslims, which may create doubts or complaints in the minds of the general body of Muslims. The teachers, preachers and reformers need to keep in mind these Qur'anic guidelines to maintain the welfare and priority of the Muslims. How beautifully Akbar Allahabadi, the Urdu poet, versifies this principle:

بے وفا سمجھیں تمہیں اہل حرم اس سے بچو..... دُیر والے کج ادا کہدیں یہ بدنامی بھلی

'Protect yourselves from a position where people of the Hāram (Muslims) call you unfaithful.

As opposed to this, if People of temple [non-Muslims] call you 'ill-mannered', (because of your faithfulness to your religion), this dishonor is better.

The following verses clarify the principles more elaborately:

أَمَّا مَنِ اسْتَغْنَىٰ فَأَنَّىٰ لَهُ تَصَدَّىٰ (As for the one who does not care [about faith], you are anxious to pursue him!...80:6).

In other words: "Those who turn away from you and your religion, you are pursuing them under the hope that some how they should become Muslims, while this is not your responsibility. If they do not embrace the faith, there will be no blame on you.

Thereafter, in verses 13 and 14, Allah Almighty has described the high status of the Holy Qur'ān, thus:

فِي صُحُفٍ مُّكَرَّمَةٍ مَّرْفُوعَةٍ مُّطَهَّرَةٍ (It is [recorded] in those scripts [of the Preserved Tablet] that are honoured, [13] exalted, purified - 14).

The word *ṣuḥuf* refers to *lauḥ mahfūẓ* 'the Preserved Tablet'.

Although it is a single thing, but *ṣuḥuf*, the plural form of *ṣaḥīfah* is used because all divine scriptures are written in it, or because the angels copy their scriptures from them. The word *marfū'ah* means 'exalted in the sight of Allah'. The word *muṭahharah* (purified) means 'people in the state of sexual defilement, menstrual discharge, post-natal bleeding and people in the state of minor uncleanness are not permitted to touch it'.

بِأَيْدِي سَفَرَةٍ. كِرَامٍ بَرَرَةٍ (in the hands of those scribes who are honourable, righteous. [80:15-16])

The word *safarah*, with *fathah* [=a+a] on the first two letters, may be the plural of *safir* which means a 'scribe'. In this case, it would refer to the recording angels, or to the Prophets عليهم السلام and those of their aides who write down the revelation. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ and Mujāhid hold this view.

The word *safarah* may be used as the plural of *safir* in the sense of 'envoy'. In this case, it would refer to the angels who convey the revelation, and Prophets عليهم السلام and their companions who write the revelation. The 'ulama' (knowledgeable persons) of the Muslim community' are also included in this term, because they too are envoys between the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the Muslim community. The messenger of Allah ﷺ is reported to have said that he who recites the Qurān and is an expert in the art of recitation, he will be with the honorable, righteous envoys. He who is not an expert in the art of recitation, but recites it correctly with difficulty, he shall receive double reward.[Transmitted by Shaikhain from 'Ā'ishah - Mazharī]. This shows that a non-expert will receive double reward - one for recitation of Qurān, and the other for bearing the difficulty. This also indicates that an expert will receive countless rewards. [Mazharī]

The preceding verses mentioned that the Qurān is exalted and that belief in it is incumbent. Subsequently, the rejecters of Qurān are cursed and they are warned against showing ingratitude towards Divine favours. That the Holy Qur'an is a great Divine blessing is understood only by the men of Divine knowledge and understanding. Further, there is the mention of those Divine favours that Allah confers on man since his inception to the end of his life. These are material and physical things

that a man with basic intellect can understand. Human creation is mentioned, thus:

مِنْ أَيْ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَهُ. مِنْ نَظْفَةٍ (From which stuff did He [Allah] create him? From a drop of semen! ..80:18-19).

First a question is raised: 'O man! Consider what Allah has created you from?' Since its reply is so obvious that there can be no other reply, the next verse itself says: 'From a drop of semen!' Thus the verse draws pointed attention to the very humble beginning of man, so that it may be brought home to him that Allah having created him from such an insignificant thing as a sperm-drop, created him and proportioned him:

خَلَقَهُ، فَقَدَرَهُ (He created him, and designed him in due proportion..80:19). In other words, He has made him with a special design and with great wisdom. His stature, body-structure, his face, his length and breadth of the limbs, his joints, his eyes, nose and ears are all well-proportioned in their creation. If any limb or organ loses its proportion, man's face will go awry, and every activity will become a problem.

The word *qaddara* is derived from *taqdīr* which is also used in the sense of 'predestination'. Taking the word in this sense, the verse may also mean here that when man is under creation in his mother's womb, Allah predetermines four things for him: his life span, his sustenance, his deeds and whether he would be miserable or happy [as in the ḥadīth of Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه recorded by Shaikhain].

ثُمَّ السَّبِيلَ يَسْرَهُ (then He made the way easy for him...80:20) Allah through His consummate wisdom creates man in his mother's womb, creation after creation, within three layers of darkness [i.e. the belly, the womb and the amniotic membrane]. It is kept in a safe place in the belly. The mother in whose belly all this is happening is totally unaware of any of the details of this process. Thereafter, when the baby becomes perfect with all its limbs and organs, Allah made it possible that a body weighing 3 to 4 kg comes out through an extremely narrow passage, and the mother does not suffer unduly. So blessed be He Who is the best Creator!

ثُمَّ أَمَاتَهُ، فَأَقْبَرَهُ (Later, he made him die, and put him into the grave..80:21) After mentioning the inception of human life, Allah points to its end, that is, death and grave. Death has been mentioned here in the context of

blessings of Allah. It indicates that death is a blessing rather than a calamity. The Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have put it thus: تحفة المومن الموت "The gift of a believer is death." Moreover, there is a profound wisdom in death at macro level for the entire world.

The phrase فاقبره *fa-aqbarah* (and put him into the grave) describes another blessing of Allah, in that when man is dead, he is not left lying on the earth like other animals where he might rot, blow up and burst [and probably be ravaged by vultures or beasts]. But, even after death, he is honoured in the most befitting manner. His body is washed ceremonially, enshrouded in clean cloths, and buried in a grave with respect.

This verse also indicates that it is obligatory to bury a dead human body.

كَلَّا لَمَّا يُقْضَىٰ مَا أَمَرَهُ (No! He has not yet fulfilled what He [Allah] had commanded him...80:23).

Having mentioned in the preceding verses the beginning and the end of human life, Divine Omnipotence and Divine blessings, the current verses warn the non-believing man that the demand of Divine Signs and blessings was to carefully ponder and believe in Allah, and comply with His injunctions, but the unfortunate creature failed to do so. Further, the Divine favours are mentioned that were conferred on man between the beginning and end of his life. Man is then asked to consider the sources of his food. Allah showers down water abundantly from the clouds. He cleaves the earth with new growth. Thereupon He causes grain to grow out of it. At first, a fragile shoot germinates and sprouts. Then many different kinds of grain, fruits and gardens come into existence. Having warned man several times about these Divine blessings, the Sūrah concludes with the mention of Resurrection, thus:

فَإِذَا جَاءَ تِ الصَّاحَّةُ (So when there will come the Deafening Noise...80:33). The word *ṣākhkhah* means 'deafening cry or shout' and it refers to the blowing of the trumpet, which will be a deafening sound.

يَوْمَ يَفِرُّ الْمَرْءُ مِنْ أَخِيهِ (the Day when one will flee from his brother...80:34). This depicts the scene when all the people will have gathered in the Plain of Gathering. Each person will be worried about himself, and the

situation will be so horrifying and tense that it will make people heedless of anything around them. In the world, there are relationships between people that make one willing to lay down his life for the other, but on the Day of Resurrection there will be such horror and chaos that they will be unable to take care of anyone. In fact, even if one sees the other in front of him, he will turn away from him. They will try to flee from their brothers, from their mothers and fathers, from their spouses and their children. They will not be able to help any of them in the Hereafter, despite the natural attachment they had with them in the world. Normally, one is more anxious in this world about his parents than about his brothers, and he is more anxious about his wife and children than about his parents. Keeping this in view, the relationships, in the present verse, are arranged from lower order to higher order.

The Chapter ends on a note of warning to disbelievers that if they reject the Qur’ānic message and persist in opposition to the Holy Prophet ﷺ they will have to face a day of reckoning when misery, shame and ignominy will be their lot. The righteous believers, however, will reside in Gardens of Bliss, their faces beaming with joy and happiness.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah ‘Abas
Ends here

Sūrah At-Takwīr (The Folding)

This Sūrah is Makki, and it has 29 verses and one sections

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 29

إِذَا الشَّمْسُ كُوِّرَتْ ﴿١﴾ وَإِذَا النُّجُومُ انْكَدَرَتْ ﴿٢﴾ وَإِذَا الْجِبَالُ
 سُيِّرَتْ ﴿٣﴾ وَإِذَا الْعِشَارُ عُطِّلَتْ ﴿٤﴾ وَإِذَا الْوُحُوشُ حُشِرَتْ ﴿٥﴾
 وَإِذَا الْبِحَارُ سُجِّرَتْ ﴿٦﴾ وَإِذَا النُّفُوسُ زُوِّجَتْ ﴿٧﴾ وَإِذَا
 الْمَوْءُودَةُ سُئِلَتْ ﴿٨﴾ بِأَيِّ ذَنْبٍ قُتِلَتْ ﴿٩﴾ وَإِذَا الصُّحُفُ
 نُشِرَتْ ﴿١٠﴾ وَإِذَا السَّمَاءُ كُشِطَتْ ﴿١١﴾ وَإِذَا الْجَحِيمُ سُعِّرَتْ ﴿١٢﴾
 وَإِذَا الْجَنَّةُ أُزْلِفَتْ ﴿١٣﴾ عَلِمَتْ نَفْسٌ مَّا أَحْضَرَتْ ﴿١٤﴾
 فَلَا أُقْسَمُ بِالْخَنَّسِ ﴿١٥﴾ الْجَوَارِ الْكُنَّسِ ﴿١٦﴾ وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا عَسْعَسَ ﴿١٧﴾
 وَالصُّبْحِ إِذَا تَنَفَّسَ ﴿١٨﴾ إِنَّهُ لَقَوْلُ رَسُولٍ كَرِيمٍ ﴿١٩﴾ ذِي قُوَّةٍ
 عِنْدَ ذِي الْعَرْشِ مَكِينٍ ﴿٢٠﴾ مُطَاعٍ ثَمَّ أَمِينٍ ﴿٢١﴾ وَمَا صَاحِبُكُمْ
 بِمَجْنُونٍ ﴿٢٢﴾ وَلَقَدْ رَآهُ بِالْأَفْقِ الْمُبِينِ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَمَا هُوَ عَلَى الْغَيْبِ
 بِضَنِينٍ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَمَا هُوَ بِقَوْلِ شَيْطَانٍ رَجِيمٍ ﴿٢٥﴾ فَأَيْنَ تَذْهَبُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾
 إِنَّ هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ لِلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٢٧﴾ لِمَنْ شَاءَ مِنْكُمْ أَنْ يَسْتَقِيمَ ﴿٢٨﴾
 وَمَا تَشَاءُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾

When the sun will be folded up, [1] and when the stars will swoop down, [2] and when the mountains will be set in motion, [3] and when the ten-months pregnant she-camels will be abandoned, [4] and when the wild beasts will be gathered together, [5] and when the seas will be flared up, [6] and when the people will be arranged in categories, [7] and when the girl-child that was buried alive will be asked, [8] for what sin she was killed, [9] and when the scrolls (of deeds) will be unrolled, [10] and when the sky will be stripped off, [11] and when the Hell will be set ablaze, [12] and when the Paradise will be brought close, [13] then everyone will know what he (or she) has put forward, [14]

So, I swear by those (stars) that recede, [15] that proceed, that withdraw from the scene, [16] and by the night when it departs, [17] and the morning when it starts breathing, [18] it (the Qur'ān) is surely the word of a noble messenger (Jibra'īl عليه السلام), [19] the one possessing power, and a high status with the Lord of the Throne, [20] the one obeyed there, trusted. [21] And your companion (Muhammad ﷺ) is not a madman. [22] And he did see him (Jibra'īl عليه السلام) on the clear horizon. [23] And he (the Prophet ﷺ) is not stingy about (the news of) the unseen. [24] Nor is it the word of an outcast satan (devil). [25] Then where are you going? [26] It is nothing else but a message of advice for all the worlds, [27] for the benefit of any one from among you who intends to go straight. [28] And you cannot intend (to do anything) unless it is so intended by Allah, the Lord of all the worlds. [29]

Commentary

إِذَا الشَّمْسُ كُوِّرَتْ (When the sun will be folded up...81:1) The word *kawwara* is derived from *Takwīr* which denotes for the sun 'to lose its light'.¹ Sayyidnā Ḥasan Baṣṭī رحمه الله تعالى has attached this interpretation to it. Another sense of the word is 'to cause to fall'. Rabi' Ibn Khaitham assigns the following interpretation to this verse: The Sun will be thrown into the ocean, and as a result of its heat the entire ocean will turn into fire. The two interpretations are not contradictory. They may be reconciled thus: first, its light will be put off and then it may be thrown

(1) Another meaning of *Takwīr* is 'to fold', and the translation in the text is based on this meaning. The sense of folding the sun is that its function will come to an end, and it will lose its light. As such, it comes to mean same thing as mentioned in first interpretation. Muhammad Taqi Usmani

into the ocean. Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī records from Sayyidnā Abū Huharirah ؓ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that on the Day of Resurrection the Sun and the Moon would be thrown into the ocean. Musnad of Bazzār has the addition that they will be thrown into Hell. Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Ibn Abid-Dunyā and Abush-Shaikh stated that on the Day of Resurrection Allah will throw the Sun, the Moon and all stars into the ocean. Then a violent wind will blow over them, as a result of which the entire ocean will turn into fire. Thus it is correct to say that the Sun and the Moon will be put into the ocean. It is likewise correct to say that they will be put into Hell, because the entire ocean at that time will have been turned into Hell. [Derived from Maḏharī and Qurṭubī]

وَإِذَا النُّجُومُ انْكَدَرَتْ (and when the stars will swoop down...81:2). The word *inkadarat* is derived from *inkidār* and it denotes 'to fall'. The righteous predecessors have interpreted it thus. It signifies that all the stars from the sky will fall into the oceans as explained in the preceding verses.

وَإِذَا الْعِشَارُ عُطِّلَتْ (and when the ten-months pregnant she-camels will be abandoned...81:4). The Arabic word '*ishār*' is the plural of the word '*usharā*' and is applied to she-camels having ten months pregnancy. Such she-camels were considered by the Arabs to be a very valuable asset, because they expected her to give birth to more camels and abundant milk. As such, they used to protect her and never left her free. The verse referring to this custom of the Arabs, who were the immediate addressees, depicts the horrible scene of the Doomsday when even the most favorite wealth, like such a she-camel, will be abandoned and neglected by its owners because of the calamity they will be facing.

وَإِذَا الْبِحَارُ سُجِّرَتْ (and when the seas will be flared up...81:6). The word *sujjirat* is derived from *tasjīr* and it signifies 'to set ablaze'. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ assigns this interpretation to the word in this context. Another sense of the word is 'to fill' and a third sense of the word is 'to mix or admix'. Some commentators have interpreted it in this sense. None of these interpretations is contradictory to each other. First, the salt and sweet water are admixed and the rivers are made to flow forth into the sea; then the seas will meet together and become one and having more water; then the seas will be set on fire; and then the Sun and the Moon and the stars will be thrown into the water. Then all the water will be turned into fire which will become part of Hell. [Maḏharī]

وَإِذَا النُّفُوسُ رُجِّعَتْ (and when the people will be arranged in categories...81:7). It means that the people on the Plain of Gathering will be grouped, like with like, in terms of belief and deeds. Disbelievers will be grouped together and believers will be grouped together. There are differences between the deeds and habits of believers and there are differences between the deeds and habits of disbelievers. The non-believers will be re-grouped according to their essential characteristics and the Muslims too will be re-grouped according to their essential characteristics as is reported in Baihaqī on the authority of Sayyidnā Nu'mān Ibn Bashīr رضي الله عنه that Sayyidnā 'Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb رضي الله عنه said that the people doing similar deeds, good or bad, will be joined together. For example, the knowledgeable persons from among the Muslims who were serving Islamic studies will be made into one group; the people who devoted themselves for worship will be made into another group; the people performing *jihād* will be together, and the people whose main characteristic was to spend in charities will be gathered in one place. On the other hand, those who were involved in wicked activities like thieves, robbers, adulterers will also be assembled in their respective groups. Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنه based this statement on the verse of the Holy Qur'ān in which Allah says in Sūrah Al-Wāqī'ah: وَكُنْتُمْ أَزْوَاجًا ثَلَاثَةً [and you will be (divided into) three categories. (56:7) It is mentioned further in that Sūrah that out of the three categories, two will attain salvation who are named as the 'foremost' and 'people of the right' while another group, namely the 'people of the left' will be comprised of the infidels.

وَإِذَا الْمَوْءُودَةُ سُئِلَتْ (and when the girl-child that was buried alive will be asked, for what sin she was killed...81:8-9) The word *mau'ūdah* is the girl-child buried alive. It was a common practice in pre-Islamic time of ignorance that people would take the birth of a girl as a matter of shame for their fathers, and therefore they would bury them alive as soon as they were born. Islam has abolished this barbaric practice completely. This verse, while depicting the scene of Resurrection, mentions that the girls who were buried alive will be questioned for what crime they were killed. Apparently, it seems that the question will be posed to the girl herself. This will give the victim an opportunity to prove her complete innocence and thus the perpetrators of this crime will be hauled up in the Divine Court of Justice, and will be duly punished for their wrongdoing.

It is also possible that the question will be posed to the killers of the girls why they committed infanticide.

Important Note

In any case, one question may arise here: The day referred to in these verses is named as the 'Day of of Requital' and the 'Day of Judgement'. This name itself sows that every person, on that day, will be put to a trial where he will be asked all sorts of questions about his deeds. Why has the Holy Qur'ān, at this place, singled out only the question asked about the girl that was buried alive. Carefully considered, it would appear that such a girl was the victim of the barbarism of her own parents. As such, there was no one to raise a plaint against such a brutal act, and to demand retaliation, especially when she was buried secretly with no evidence left. The verse, therefore, signifies that on the Day of Reckoning, even those criminals will be exposed and hauled up in the Divine Court of Justice against whom there was no evidence, nor was there anyone who could stand up on their behalf to demand justice. Allah knows best!

Abortion After Four Months is Tantamount to Infanticide Ruling [1]

Burying alive infants or killing them is a major sin and a heinous brutality. Aborting a foetus after four months falls under the same category in Sharī'ah, because within four months the foetus receives the soul and treated as a living human being. Likewise, if a person strikes on the stomach of a pregnant woman which causes the baby to abort, then, according to the common consent of the Muslim jurists, it would be incumbent upon him to set free a slave or pay its price in blood-wit or *diyah*. If the baby was alive at the time of aborting and then died, full *diyah* will be incumbent. Abortion before four months is also unlawful, except in cases of necessity, but compared to the first case, it is a sin of lesser degree, because it does not amount to killing of a living human being clearly.

Ruling [2]: Birth Control

Birth control, whose many forms are invented today, is also termed by the Holy Prophet ﷺ as 'hidden infanticide' in a *ḥadīth* reported by Muslim from *Judhāmah* bint Wahb رضي الله عنها. There are, however, some ahadith in which the Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have allowed '*azl*' (coitus interruptus) or to have observed silence when asked about it,

which is a sign of permissibility of such an act. But it should be remembered that its permissibility is restricted to genuine needs, and that too in a way that productivity of the woman is not permanently blocked. [Maẓharī]. The present-day medical science has invented some measures that prevent pregnancy forever. The Shari'ah does not permit such measures under any circumstances. Allah knows best!

وَإِذَا السَّمَاءُ كُشِطَتْ (and when the sky will be stripped off...81:11) The word *kushiṭat* is derived from *kashṭ*, and it literally means 'to strip off' the skin of an animal. Probably, this condition will prevail at the first blowing of the Horn, which will happen in this world. The stars, the Sun and the Moon that contributed to the beauty of the sky will all lose their light and lustre and will be thrown into the ocean. The outlook of the sky will be changed. This phenomenon is termed in this verse as: 'The sky will be stripped off'. Some commentators interpret the word *kashṭ* in the sense of 'folding up'. The verse, according to them, purports to say that the sky that surrounds the upper atmosphere over our heads will be folded up.

عَلِمْتُ نَفْسٌ مَّا أَحْضَرْتُ (then everyone will know what he [or she] has put forward...81:14). It means that when Resurrection, with all the horrors mentioned above, will take place, man will realise what he has brought with him. The word 'what' here refers to his good and bad deeds, all of which will be in front of him, either in the form of the Record of Deeds that will be given in his hands or his deeds will assume a specific body shape as is understood from certain Traditions. Allah knows best!

Having described the horrors of Resurrection, and the accountability of deeds, Allah swears an oath by a few stars to confirm that the Qur'ān is the truth that has been sent down, fully protected from any interruption or distortion, and that the Prophet ﷺ who has received it is a great personality, and the angel (Jibra'īl عليه السلام) who descended with it was known to him before hand. Therefore, there can be no room for any doubt about its veracity. The verses here swear an oath by five stars which the ancient Greeks called *khamṣah mutahayyirah* or 'the five wandering stars', since they seemed to stray irregularly across the sky. At times they are seen moving from East to West, and at others, from West to East. Different reasons have been assigned to their irregular movements. The ancient Greeks hold several contradictory explanations for this. The research of modern scientists concurs with some of the ancient

philosophers, and differs from some others. The Creator alone knows the truth and reality. The scientists merely guess and conjecture which may be wrong. The Qur'ān has, therefore, not involved its readers in such a useless debate. Allah showed us what was beneficial, that is, to observe the Divine Omnipotence, His Consummate Wisdom and to repose our faith in Him.

إِنَّهُ لَقَوْلُ رَسُولٍ كَرِيمٍ. ذِي قُوَّةٍ عِنْدَ ذِي الْعَرْشِ مَكِينٍ (it [the Qur'ān] is surely the word of a noble messenger [Jibra'īl], the one possessing power and a high status with the Lord of the Throne...81:19-20). This is the subject of oath that affirms that Qur'ān is the word brought by a noble messenger. Then three qualities are attributed to this noble messenger. The first quality is that he possesses power. The second quality is that he has high status and lofty rank with Allah, and he is obeyed in the upper realm. The third quality is that he is trusted, and there is no possibility of his committing any breach of trust or tampering with the message he conveys. The word 'noble messenger' obviously refers to the angel Jibra'īl عليه السلام, because the word 'messenger' is used for angels as it is used for prophets, and all the three qualities attributed to the 'messenger' in the next verses are truly present in Jibra'īl عليه السلام. His being powerful is mentioned in Sūrah An-Najm in the following words;

عَلَّمَهُ شَدِيدُ الْقُوَى

It is taught to him by one (angel) of strong faculties.[53:5]

It is established through the *ḥadīth* of Mi'rāj that he is obeyed by other angels, because when he accompanied the Holy Prophet ﷺ to the sky and ordered the angels appointed on its doors to open them he was obeyed by them. That he is trust-worthy is too obvious to need a proof.

Some commentators, however, take the phrase 'honourable messenger' to refer to the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and accordingly have made an attempt to take all the three qualities referring to the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

In the next verses, the Holy Qur'ān has mentioned the high status of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and has refuted the silly objections raised against him by the infidels.

وَمَا صَاحِبُكُمْ بِمَجْنُونٍ (And your companion [Muḥammad ﷺ] is not a

madman...81:22) This is rebuttal to the foolish criticism of the enemies who said that Muḥammad ﷺ is [God forbid!] insane.

وَلَقَدْ رَأَاهُ بِالْأَفُقِ الْمُبِينِ (And he did see him [Jibra'il عليه السلام] on the clear horizon. ...81:23) In other words, Muḥammad saw Jibra'il عليه السلام on a clear horizon. A similar statement occurs in Sūrah An-Najm as follows:

وَهُوَ بِالْأَفُقِ الْأَعْلَى

while he was on the upper horizon....53:7)

The purpose of mentioning this is to show that the Holy Prophet ﷺ was well-acquainted with Jibra'il عليه السلام, the angel of revelation. He had seen him in his original shape. Therefore, there can be no room for doubt in the veracity of revelation he brings to him.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah At-Takwīr
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Infiṭār

(Cleaving)

This Sūrah is Makki. and it has 19 verses.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 19

إِذَا السَّمَاءُ انْفَطَرَتْ ﴿١﴾ وَإِذَا الْكَوَاكِبُ انْتَثَرَتْ ﴿٢﴾ وَإِذَا الْبِحَارُ
فُجِّرَتْ ﴿٣﴾ وَإِذَا الْقُبُورُ بُعْثِرَتْ ﴿٤﴾ عَلِمْتَ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمَتْ وَأَخَّرَتْ
﴿٥﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الْإِنْسَانُ مَا غَرَّكَ بِرَبِّكَ الْكَرِيمِ ﴿٦﴾ الَّذِي خَلَقَكَ فَسَوِّدَكَ
فَعَدَلَكَ ﴿٧﴾ فِي أَيِّ صُورَةٍ مَّا شَاءَ رَكَّبَكَ ﴿٨﴾ كَلَّا بَلْ تُكَذِّبُونَ
بِالدِّينِ ﴿٩﴾ وَإِنَّ عَلَيْكُمْ لَحَافِظِينَ ﴿١٠﴾ كِرَامًا كَاتِبِينَ ﴿١١﴾ يَعْلَمُونَ
مَا تَفْعَلُونَ ﴿١٢﴾ إِنَّ الْأَبْرَارَ لَفِي نَعِيمٍ ﴿١٣﴾ وَإِنَّ الْفُجَّارَ لَفِي جَحِيمٍ
﴿١٤﴾ يَصْلَوْنَهَا يَوْمَ الدِّينِ ﴿١٥﴾ وَمَاهُمْ عَنْهَا بِغَائِبِينَ ﴿١٦﴾ وَمَا
أَدْرَاكَ مَا يَوْمَ الدِّينِ ﴿١٧﴾ ثُمَّ مَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا يَوْمَ الدِّينِ ﴿١٨﴾ يَوْمَ لَا
تَمْلِكُ نَفْسٌ لِّنَفْسٍ شَيْئًا وَالْأَمْرُ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلَّهِ ﴿١٩﴾

When the sky will be cleft asunder, [1] and when the stars will disperse, [2] and when the seas will be burst forth, [3] and when the graves will be overturned, [4] then one will know what he sent ahead and what he left behind. [5] O man! What has deceived you about your Gracious Lord, [6] who created you, then perfected you, then brought you in due proportion? [7] He composed you in whichever form He willed. [8] Never! (i.e. one should never be heedless

towards him.) But you deny the Requital, [9] while (appointed) over you there are watchers, [10] who are noble, writers (of the deeds), [11] who know whatever you do. [12] Surely the righteous will be in bliss, [13] and surely the sinners will be in Hell, [14] in which they will enter on the Day of Requital, [15] and they will not (be able to) keep away from it. [16] And what may let you know what the Day of Requital is? [17] Again, what may let you know what the Day of Requital is? [18] A Day when no one will have power to do any thing for another! And all matters, on that Day, will belong to Allah (alone). [19]

Commentary

عَلِمْتُ نَفْسًا مَّا قَدَّمْتُ وَآخَرْتُ (...then one will know what he sent ahead and what he left behind....82:5) In the preceding verses [1-4] of the Sūrah, Allah depicts the scene of the Day of Judgement that when the sky splits, the stars fall, the seas are poured forth [ie the fresh and salt water bodies will merge to form one mass of water] and the graves are overturned [ie corpses will emerge from their graves], every soul shall come to know what it had sent ahead and what it had left behind. The phrase 'what he sent ahead' means the good or evil act which he has done in his life; and the phrase 'what he left behind' means what he failed to do or refrained from doing. It is also possible that 'what he sent ahead' refers to the acts he has done himself, and 'what he left behind' refers to the acts one has not done himself, but he has laid down a custom in the society. The Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said: "If anyone establishes a good tradition in Islam, he will have a reward for it and the equivalent of the rewards of those who act upon it after him, without theirs being diminished in any respect; but he who establishes a bad custom in Islam will bear the responsibility of it and the responsibility of those who act upon it after him, without theirs being diminished in any respect." This subject was dealt with earlier under the following verse: يُنبِئُ الْإِنْسَانَ يَوْمَئِذٍ بِمَا قَدَّمَ وَأَخَّرَ 'Man will be informed of what he sent ahead and what he left behind. [53:13]'

يَا أَيُّهَا الْإِنْسَانُ مَا غَرَّبَكَ (O man! What has deceived you about your Gracious Lord...82:6) The opening of the Sūrah mentions the violent events that will take place at the end of this worldly life, and the current set of verses reminds us of the inceptive stages of our creation. The sum total of the verses purport to say that if man had considered carefully, he would have believed in Allah and His Messenger, and he would not have deviated a

hair's breadth from Divine injunctions, but he slumped into heedlessness and forgetfulness. In the present verse, he is reprimanded by a rhetorical question and by means of gentle remonstrance as to what has lured him away from His Gracious Lord, and led him to disobedience, despite he knows his beginning, and he knows his end.

The verse further goes on to remind man of the inceptive stages of his creation. First, it says: خَلَقَكَ فَسَوَّكَ (who created you, then perfected you, ...82:7). The sense is that not only did Allah create man, but He also perfected his creation and proportioned his body, limbs and organs. Every limb and organ is well placed. The body, height, length and breadth of every limb are kept in harmony, symmetry and balance. Any deviation from the symmetrical construction of the human body, the organs will become dysfunctional. Then the verse says: فَعَدَّلَكَ (...then brought you in due proportion?...82:7). Man is granted such symmetry, harmony and balance that no other animal in the world is granted to that degree. Along with physical and physiological symmetry and harmony, he has been granted well-balanced disposition, despite the fact that man is made up of opposing humours – blood, phlegm, black bile and yellow bile. Some are hot and others are cold, and yet the perfect wisdom of Allah prepared a well-balanced disposition. Thereafter a third characteristic is mentioned as follows:

فِي أَيِّ صُورَةٍ مَّا شَاءَ رَكَّبَكَ (He composed you in whichever form He willed....82:8). This is to indicate that since the basic structure of all human beings is the same, it was expected that the zillions of members of the human society would have shared the same shape, size and features, but the perfect mastery and the wonderful acumen of the Supreme Creator has created them so differently that each one of them has its own unique features that make him clearly distinct from all others, and no one is confused with another.

Having stated the creative acumen of the Great Creator, the verse states: يَا أَيُّهَا الْإِنْسَانُ مَا غَرَّبَكَ بِرَبِّكَ الْكَرِيمِ (O man! What has deceived you about your Gracious Lord,...82:6). Allah has endowed man with such natural faculties and abilities that every limb and every joint of his body was enough to remind him of His Creator, and to make him obedient. But he is lured away from his gracious Lord, has forgotten Him and disobeyed Him. The question is: How did he forget his Lord, how did he become

heedless of Him, and how is he lured away from his Lord? On this occasion, the adjective *karīm* (Gracious) used for the 'Lord' points to the answer. The reason for such an ungrateful attitude is that Allah is Gracious and does not punish man immediately after his committing a sin. Rather, his sustenance, welfare and well-being, and worldly comforts [and pleasures] are not curtailed. He misinterprets Allah's magnanimity, and thus falls into deception. If man were to think rationally, he would adopt a grateful attitude and obedient behaviour, rather than adopting an ungrateful attitude and impudent behaviour. Sayyidnā Ḥasan Al-Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى says:

كَمْ مِنْ مَغْرُورٍ تَحْتَ السَّتْرِ وَهُوَ لَا يَشْعُرُ

'How many humans are there whose faults are put [by Allah] under cover, (i.e. He did not disgrace them), yet they do not appreciate (and are deluded by His grace).'

إِنَّ الْآبِرَارَ لَفِي نَعِيمٍ وَإِنَّ الْفُجَّارَ لَفِي جَحِيمٍ (Surely the righteous will be in bliss, and surely the sinners will be in Hell,...82:13-14) These two statements are connected with verse [5] above: 'عَلِمْتُ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمْتُ وَأَخَّرْتُ' 'then one will know what he sent ahead and what he left behind. [5]'

The verse informs us that each person, on the Day of Reckoning, will know what he has done, and what will be the consequences of his deeds. The present verse says that the righteous will be in perfect bliss, while the sinners will be in a Blazing Fire of Hell.

وَمَا هُمْ عَنْهَا بِغَائِبِينَ (and they will not [be able to] keep away from it...82:16) The inmates of Hell will never be able to get away from it, because the torment will be eternal, as the concluding verse of the Surah asserts: يَوْمَ لَا تَمْلِكُ نَفْسٌ لِّنَفْسٍ شَيْئًا (A Day when no one [with his own free will in the Plain of Gathering] will have power to do any thing for another!). This does not negate intercession, because that will not happen with one's own free will, unless Allah grants permission to someone to intercede on someone's behalf, and then accepts the intercession. And all matters, on that Day, will belong to Allah (alone). [19]' Allah knows best!

Alhamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Infiṭār
Ends here

Sūrah At-Taṭfīf

(Curtailing the Rights)

Sūrah At-Taṭfīf was revealed in Makkah It has 36 Verses and 1 Section.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 36

وَيْلٌ لِّلْمُطَفِّفِينَ ﴿١﴾ الَّذِينَ إِذَا اكْتَالُوا عَلَى النَّاسِ يَسْتَوْفُونَ ﴿٢﴾
وَإِذَا كَالُوهُمْ أَوْ وَزَنُوهُمْ يُخْسِرُونَ ﴿٣﴾ أَلَا يَظُنُّ أُولَٰئِكَ أَنَّهُمْ
مَبْعُوثُونَ ﴿٤﴾ لِيَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿٥﴾ يَوْمَ يَقُومُ النَّاسُ لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٦﴾
كَلَّا إِنَّ كِتَابَ الْفُجَارِ لَفِي سَجِّينٍ ﴿٧﴾ وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا سَجِّينٌ ﴿٨﴾
كِتَابٌ مَّرْقُومٌ ﴿٩﴾ وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿١٠﴾ الَّذِينَ يُكَذِّبُونَ
بِیَوْمِ الدِّينِ ﴿١١﴾ وَمَا يُكْذِبُ بِهِ إِلَّا كُلُّ مُعْتَدٍ أَثِيمٍ ﴿١٢﴾ إِذَا تُتْلَىٰ
عَلَيْهِ آيَاتُنَا قَالَ أَسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿١٣﴾ كَلَّا بَلْ سَكَرَ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ
مَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿١٤﴾ كَلَّا إِنَّهُمْ عَنْ رَبِّهِمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ لَّمْ حُجُّوْا
﴿١٥﴾ ثُمَّ إِنَّهُمْ لَصَالُوا الْجَحِيمِ ﴿١٦﴾ ثُمَّ يُقَالُ هَٰذَا الَّذِي كُنْتُمْ بِهِ
تُكَذِّبُونَ ﴿١٧﴾ كَلَّا إِنَّ كِتَابَ الْأَبْرَارِ لَفِي عِلِّيِّينَ ﴿١٨﴾ وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ
مَا عِلِّيُّونَ ﴿١٩﴾ كِتَابٌ مَّرْقُومٌ ﴿٢٠﴾ يَشْهَدُهُ الْمُقَرَّبُونَ ﴿٢١﴾ إِنَّ
الْأَبْرَارَ لَفِي نَعِيمٍ ﴿٢٢﴾ عَلَى الْأَرَآئِكِ يَنْظُرُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾ تَعْرِفُ فِي

وَجُوهِهِمْ نَضْرَةَ النَّعِيمِ ﴿٢٤﴾ يُسْقَوْنَ مِنْ رَحِيقٍ مَخْتُومٍ ﴿٢٥﴾
 خِتْمُهُ مِسْكٌ وَفِي ذَلِكَ فَلْيَتَنَافَسِ الْمُتَنَفِسُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَمِمَّا جَاءُ مِنْ
 تَسْنِيمٍ ﴿٢٧﴾ عَيْنًا يَشْرَبُ بِهَا الْمُقَرَّبُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ أَجْرَمُوا
 كَانُوا مِنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يَضْحَكُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾ وَإِذَا مَرُّوا بِهِمْ يَتَغَامَزُونَ
 ﴿٣٠﴾ وَإِذَا انْقَلَبُوا إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِمْ انْقَلَبُوا فَكِهِينَ ﴿٣١﴾ وَإِذَا رَأَوْهُمْ
 قَالُوا إِنَّ هَؤُلَاءِ لَضَالُّونَ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَمَا أُرْسِلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ خَفِظِينَ ﴿٣٣﴾
 فَالْيَوْمَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنَ الْكُفَّارِ يَضْحَكُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾ عَلَى الْأَرَائِكِ لَا
 يَنْظُرُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾ هَلْ نُوبَ الْكُفَّارِ مَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

Woe to the curtailers [1] who, when they measure something to receive from people, take it in full, [2] and when they measure or weigh something to give it to them, give less than due. [3] Do they not think that they have to be raised up [4] on a Great Day, [5] the Day when all the people will stand before the Lord of the worlds? [6] Never! (i.e. they should never forget that Day.) Indeed the Record of Deeds of the sinners is in *sijjīn*. [7] And what may let you know what *sijjīn* is? [8] A register, inscribed! [9] Woe that day to the deniers, [10] who deny the Day of Requital! [11] And none denies it but every sinful transgressor. [12] When Our verses are recited to him, he says, "(These are) tales of the ancients." [13] No! But that which they used to commit has covered their hearts with rust. [14] No! Indeed they will be screened off from their Lord on that Day. [15] Then they will have to enter the Hell. [16] Then it will be said, "This is what you used to deny." [17]

No! The record of deeds of the righteous is in *'ilīyyūn*. [18] And what may let you know what *'ilīyyūn* is? [19] A register inscribed, [20] attended by those (angels) who are blessed with nearness to Allah! [21] Indeed the righteous will be in absolute bliss. [22] While (sitting) on thrones, they will be watching (the scenes of Paradise). [23] You will recognize on their faces the glamour of bliss. [24] They will be served with a pure sealed wine to drink, [25] the seal of which will be of musk. And in aspiring for this, the competitors should

compete. [26] and it will be blended with (a drink from) Tasnīm, [27] a spring from which will drink those who are blessed with nearness. [28]

Indeed those who were guilty used to laugh at those who believed, [29] and when they passed by them, they used to wink at one another, [30] and when they went back to their family, they went enjoying their mockery, [31] and when they saw them, they said, "Surely these are the ones who have gone astray" [32] while they were not sent as watchmen over them. [33] So, today those who believed will laugh at the disbelievers. [34] While (sitting) on thrones, they will be seeing [35] whether the disbelievers have been paid back for what they used to do. [36]

Commentary

According to Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh Ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه, Sūrah Taṭfīf was revealed in Makkah. Therefore, most of the copies of the Qur’ān refer to it as the Makkī Sūrah. According to Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās, Qatādah, Muqātil and Ḍaḥḥāk رضي الله عنه, it is a Madanī Sūrah, but only about eight verses are Makkī. Imām Nasā’ī transmits a narrative from Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه that when the Holy Prophet ﷺ arrived in Madīnah, the people of Madīnah whose most transactions were based on measurements used to cheat and short measure. For this reason, Allah revealed the Sūrah. It is reported from Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه that this is the first Sūrah that was revealed as soon as the Holy Prophet ﷺ arrived at Madīnah. The reason is that it was a common practice in Madinah that the people used to be very strict in measuring when they had to receive something from others, but when they sold something, they used to cheat the buyers. After the revelation of this Sūrah, all of them abandoned this bad custom totally, and mended themselves in a way that they are now well-known in their honesty in weighing and measuring. (Reported by Ḥākim, Nasā’ī, and Ibn Mājah, with sound chain of narrators)

وَيْلٌ لِّلْمُطَفِّفِينَ (Woe to the curtailers...83:1) The word *muṭaffifīn* 'those who give short measure or weight' is derived from *Taṭfīf* 'to give short measure or short weight'. The Qur’ānic expression 'Woe to the curtailers' is indicative of the injunction that this practice is prohibited.

Taṭfīf has a Wider Scope

The Qur’ān and Sunnah have prohibited *Taṭfīf* which primarily

signifies 'giving short measure and weight', because generally all transactions are carried out by things that can be measured or weighed. But the basic purpose of weighing or measuring is none else but to give a person what he deserves. It, therefore, indicates that the rule is not restricted to weights and measures only, but it includes all other means through which the rights of someone are evaluated, assessed or appraised. It is obligatory that all rights are given to the deserving persons in full, whether they are assessed by weight, measure, number or any other means. In terms of this concept of *Tatfīf*, it is prohibited to give to any person less than his due.

It is recorded in Muwāṭṭā' of Imām Mālik that Sayyidnā 'Umar Ibn-ul-Khaṭṭāb ؓ saw a person curtailing [cutting short] his bowing and prostration postures in prayers, he said to him:

لَقَدْ طَفَفْتَ

'You have committed *Tatfīf* (curtailed the right) of Allah.'

Having cited this statement of Sayyidnā 'Umar Ibn-ul-Khaṭṭāb ؓ, Imām Mālik formulates the following postulate:

لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ وِفَاءٌ وَتَطْفِيفٌ

'Everything has a full due and a short measure.'

This postulate can apply even to prayers, ablution, cleanliness and all the rights of Allah and the ways of worship. If someone is deficient in fulfilling these rights of Allah, he is guilty of *Tatfīf*. Similarly if one cuts short human rights [by failing to perform duties imposed upon him or keeping to the terms of agreement duly], he is covered by the rule laid down by the verse regarding *Tatfīf*. For example, if an employee has entered into a contract with the employer that he shall work for specified time, it is imperative for him to work for the stipulated hours. If he curtails the hours, he is guilty of *Tatfīf*. Generally, people - even scholars - are lax in this matter. They do not regard curtailment of their obligations relating to service or labour as sin. May Allah protect us from it!

HADĪTH: Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās ؓ has narrated that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said:

خمس بـخمس

'There are five sins, for which there are five punishments.'

[1] He who breaks his covenant, Allah will cause his enemy to subdue him.

[2] The nation that abandons the sacred laws of Allah, and decides cases according to other laws, poverty will prevail commonly among them.

[3] The nation among whom promiscuity and *zinā* (fornication or adultery) becomes rampant, Allah will punish them with epidemics and endemic diseases.

[4] Those who curtail measures and weights, Allah will cause famine to break out amongst them. and

[5] Those who fail to pay their *Zakāh*, Allah will withhold rain from them.

[Cited by Qurṭubī who said that Al-Bazzār has narrated the over-all sense of this *ḥadīth*, though with different words; and Mālik Ibn Anas has also narrated it from Ibn 'Umar].

Ṭabarānī narrates from Ibn 'Abbās ؓ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "When it becomes rampant in a community to steal from the spoils of war, Allah will cast terror of enemies into their hearts; when usury becomes a common practice in a community, death becomes a frequent occurrence in that society; a community that gives short measure and weight, Allah cuts off their sustenance; those who decide against the truth, murder becomes common among them; and those who betray their agreement, Allah causes their enemies to prevail upon them." [Mālik has also transmitted it, but as a saying of Ibn 'Abbās. See Mazḥarī].

Various Forms of Poverty, Famine and Curtailment of Sustenance

The Ḥadīth (cited above) states that people's 'sustenance' may be Cut Off as a punishment to short measuring: This can take different forms. They may be completely deprived of their sustenance; or sustenance may be available, but they may not be able to eat or use it, as it commonly happens nowadays in the case of many diseases. Likewise, 'famine' might take different forms: Items of necessity might be lacking; or they might be

available abundantly, but it might be difficult to purchase them, because the prices are unbearably exorbitant, as is experienced nowadays. The Ḥadīth says that in certain situations *faqr* will prevail in the society. *Faqr* is generally translated as 'poverty', but its real meaning in Arabic is 'being in need' or 'being dependent on someone'. Keeping this meaning in view, the situation of *faqr* pointed out in the Ḥadīth is not confined to lack of money and other necessary things, but it also includes a situation where people depend on others in their business and other necessities of life. The more a person is in need of others, the greater is his degree of *faqr*. Let us consider the conditions of the present age. Man is bound by the most complicated laws that restrict his living, his movement and his intentions, so that he is unable to eat what he wants to eat, or utter what he wants to utter. He possesses money, but he is not free to buy of his choice from where he wants to. He is not free to undertake a journey [or to travel] as and when he wants to. He is bound so much by these restrictive laws that he has no choice but to follow the official procedure for which he has to flatter the officials [at every level] including the peons. Without this, life is difficult. This entire system of dependence on others is a part of *faqr*. This elaborate explanation should dispel the doubts that might apparently arise regarding the statement of the Ḥadīth.

***Sijjīn* and 'illiyīn**

كَلَّا إِنَّ كِتَابَ الْفُجَّارِ لَفِي سِجِّينَ (Never! [i.e. they should never forget that Day.] Indeed the Record of Deeds of the sinners is in *sijjīn*. [83:7] The word *sijjīn* is derived from *sajana* which means to 'imprison in a narrow place'. According to Qāmūs, the word *sijjīn* means 'eternal imprisonment'. Traditions indicate that *sijjīn* is a special place where the souls of the non-believers are kept, and in the same place, the Record of the evil deeds of every wicked person is kept separately. It is also possible that in this there is a consolidated book in which the deeds of all the non-believers of the world are recorded.

Where is this place? According to a lengthy *ḥadīth* reported by Sayyidnā Bara' Ibn 'Azib ؓ, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said that *sijjīn* is beneath the seventh level of the earth, and 'illiyīn is in the seventh heaven beneath the Divine Throne. [Baghawī, and Aḥmad etc., as quoted by Maḥzarī]. According to certain Traditions, *sijjīn* is the seventh earth which

contains the souls of the disbelievers, and 'illiyīn is the seventh heaven which contains the souls of the believers.

The Locale of Paradise and Hell

Baihaqī has recorded a narration from Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Salām ؓ that Paradise is in the heaven, and Hell is in the earth. Ibn Jarīr cites in his commentary on the authority of Sayyidnā Mu'adh Ibn Jabal ؓ a narrative of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, according to which he was asked about the meaning of the following verse:

وَجَايَءُ يَوْمَئِذٍ بِجَهَنَّمَ

'and Jahannam (Hell), on that day, will be brought forward,
[89:23]'

The Holy Prophet ﷺ was asked from where the Hell be brought forward? He replied: "From the seventh earth." These narratives indicate that Hell will be brought forward from the seventh earth. It will suddenly flare up there, and all the oceans will join its blazing fire, and come forward in full view of all. This interpretation is reconcilable with narratives that define *sijjīn* as the name of a place in Hell. [Maḏharī]. And Allah knows best!

كُتِبَ مَرْقُومٌ (A register inscribed!...83:9) The word *marqūm* (translated above as 'inscribed') signifies here *makhtūm* meaning 'sealed'. Imām Baghawī and Ibn Kathīr say that this statement is not the interpretation of *sijjīn*, but rather the explication of a phrase before that, namely:

كُتِبَ الْفُجَّارِ

'Indeed the record of deeds of the sinners is in *sijjīn*. [83:7]'

It is a book inscribed and sealed. No one can add anything to it, nor can anyone remove anything from it, nor is any alteration possible in it. The place where it will be kept for safe-custody is called *sijjīn*, and it is the place where the souls of the wicked unbelievers are gathered.

كَأَلَّا بِلْ سَكَّ رَانَ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ (No! But that which they used to commit has covered their hearts with rust...83:14). The word *rāna* is derived from *rain* and it means 'rust' or 'dust' or 'filth'. In other words, the rust of committing many sins has covered up their hearts. Just as rust consumes the iron, and turns it into dust, in the same way, the rust of

sins has destroyed their innate capacity to distinguish right from wrong. Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه narrates that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "Surely, when the servant commits a sin, a black dot appears on his heart. If he repents from it, his heart is polished clean. However, if he increases in the sin, the blackness continues to increase. That is the statement of Allah: **كَلَّا بَلْ سَكَنَ رَانَ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ** 'No! But that which they used to commit has covered their hearts with rust. [83:14]'. [Baghawī, Aḥmad, Tirmidhī, Nasā'ī, Ibn Mājah, Ibn Ḥibbān and al-Ḥākim have recorded it, and Tirmidhī has rated it as *sahih*, asquoted by Maḥzarī]. The particle *kallā*, in Arabic grammar, is called *ḥarf-ur-rad'* 'particle of disapproval, particle of repelling or averting'. In the preceding verses, mention was made of the attitude of the unbelievers towards the Qur'ānic verses, in that when they are recited to them, they say, "(These are) tales of the ancients." [13]. The present verse uses *kallā* to repel the false idea of the ignoramus [that Qur'ān is the tale of the ancients]. In fact, [the heavy] load of their sins have eclipsed the light and innate capacity to separate the right and the wrong. This capacity is innate and inborn in man. The verse purports to say that their rejection is not based on any logical or intellectual evidence, but their hearts have become blind, as a result they are unable to see the good and the bad.

إِنَّهُمْ عَنْ رَبِّهِمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ لَمَّحْجُوبُونَ (No! Indeed they will be screened off from their Lord on that Day...83:15). This will be their punishment for their failure to recognise Allah in the world. The unbelievers will remain deprived of seeing their Lord on the Day of Judgement, and a screen will fall between them and their Lord. Imāms Shāfi'ī and Mālik said that in this verse is a proof that the believers and friends of Allah will be able to see Him. Otherwise, the wording that the unbelievers will be screened off from their Lord on that Day will have no real sense.

Special Note

According to some of the learned predecessors, this verse is a proof that man, by virtue of his innate nature, is forced to love Allah. Therefore, all unbelievers in the world, no matter how deeply they are steeped in their form of disbelief or hold false beliefs regarding the [Supreme] Being and attributes of Allah, there is a common denominator in their hearts. They love, respect and honour Allah. They worship Him according to their belief system in quest of Him and His pleasure. Because they have taken the wrong road, they are unable to reach their

destination, but they are, nonetheless, in search of the same destination of truth. If they did not have the desire to see their Lord, it would not have been said, in their punishment, that they will remain deprived of seeing Allah, because if a person is not desirous [rather he is hateful] of seeing Him, it would be no punishment for him.

كَلَّا إِنَّ كِتَابَ الْأَبْرَارِ لَفِي عِلِّيَّيْنَ (No! The record of deeds of the righteous is in 'illiyyūn....83:18). According to some authorities, 'illiyyūn is the plural of 'uluww and it signifies the 'highest point'. According to Farrā', this is the name of a place. It is not a plural, but on the measure of plural. When analysing the word *sijjīn* in the foregoing paragraphs, the traceable Tradition of Sayyidnā Barā' Ibn 'Āzib ؓ was cited to prove that 'illiyyīn is a place on the seventh heaven beneath the Divine Throne where the souls of the believers and their registers of deeds are kept. The phrase: كِتَابٌ مَّرْقُومٌ (A register inscribed...83:20) is not the interpretation of 'illiyyīn, but rather an explication their records of deeds, as in the verse that precedes it:

يُسْهَدُهُ الْمُرَقَّبُونَ (...attended by those [angels] who are blessed with nearness to Allah!...83:21) The verb *yash-hadu* is derived from *shuhūd* which means 'to attend, to witness, to be present, to observe'. The verse purports to say that the record of deeds of the righteous will be in the custody of angels who are blessed with nearness to Allah. [Qurtubī]. If *shuhūd* is taken in the sense of 'being present', then the attached pronoun will refer to 'illiyyīn instead of *kitāb* or 'register' (and 'those who are blessed with nearness to Allah' will refer to the righteous people, and not to the angels), and the verse in that case will mean: 'The souls of those blessed with nearness to Allah will be in the place called 'illiyyīn' because that is the abode of their souls, as *sijjīn* is the abode of the unbelievers. The proof of this is the narrative of 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ؓ recorded in Muslim in which the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that the souls of the martyrs are in the crops of green birds, enjoying the rivers and gardens of Paradise, and their abode will be the lamps suspended from [the Divine] Throne. This indicates that the souls of the martyrs will be under the Divine Throne, and will be able to stroll in Paradise. In Sūrah Yāsīn, we came across the incident of Ḥabīb Najjār, where it is stated that:

قِيلَ ادْخُلِ الْجَنَّةَ قَالَ يَا لَيْتَ قَوْمِي يَعْلَمُونَ بِمَا غَفَرَ لِي رَبِّي

'He was told, "Enter the Garden!" He said, "If my people only knew how my Lord has forgiven me [36:26]"'

This indicates that no sooner he passed away than he entered Paradise. Similarly, some Prophetic narratives also show that the souls of the believers are in Paradise. The sum total of these verses and narratives is that the abode of all the souls is in the seventh heaven beneath the Divine Throne. This is the locale of Paradise, and the souls have been given freedom of movement within the Paradise. Here reference has been made particularly to 'those souls who are blessed with nearness to Allah' because of the most exalted ranks they will enjoy. [This does not, however, mean that souls at the lower ranks will not be in this abode.] In fact, this will be the abode of the souls of all the believers as is narrated by Sayyidnā Ka'b Ibn Mālīk رضي الله عنه that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

انما نسمة المؤمن طائر يعلق في شجر الجنة حتى ترجع الى جسده يوم القيامة.
(رواه مالك والنسائي بسند صحيح)

'The soul of a believer is a bird that will be hanging in the tree of Paradise, until it returns to its body on the Day of Judgement.' [Mālīk and Nasā'ī through an authentic chain of narrators. A Tradition of Umm Hānī' to the same effect is recorded in Musnad of Aḥmad and in Ṭabarānī. See Maẓharī].

The Abode of Human Souls After Death

What is the abode of human souls after death? In answer to this question, reports seem apparently different. Narratives were cited in explanation of *sijjīn* and *'illiyyūn* above which showed that the souls of the unbelievers are in *sijjīn* which is beneath the seventh earth, and the souls of the believers are in *'illiyyūn* which is in the seventh heaven beneath the Divine Throne. Some traditions indicate that the souls of the unbelievers will be in Hell, and the souls of the believers will be in Paradise. Some narratives, like the lengthy narrative of Barā' Ibn 'Āzib, suggest that the souls of all the deceased, believers and non-believers, will be in the graves. When the angels carry the soul of a believer to the sky, Allah says: 'Keep the record of deeds of this servant of mine in *'illiyyūn* and return him to the earth, because I have created him from earth, and to it I shall return him, and from it I shall resurrect him.' Complying with this command, the angels return his soul to the grave. Likewise, the soul

of the non-believer is carried to the sky, but the doors are not opened for him. The angels will be commanded to return the soul to its grave. Imām ‘Abdul Barr prefers this narrative and believes that the souls of all [believers and non-believers] remain in their graves. As for the first two sets of traditions, there is no contradiction because, carefully considered, ‘*illīyyūn* is in the seventh heaven beneath the Divine Throne, and this is exactly the locale of Paradise, as is clear from the Qur’ānic text:

عِنْدَ سِدْرَةِ الْمُنتَهَى عِنْدَهَا جَنَّةُ الْمَأْوَى

'by sidrat-ul-muntaha (the lot-tree in the upper realm), near which there is Jannat-ul-ma'wa (the Paradise of Abode), [53:14-15]

This clearly states that Paradise is near the lot-tree in the upper realm, and *aḥādīth* confirm that the lot-tree is in the seventh heaven. Thus it may be argued that since the abode of the souls is ‘*illīyyūn*, Paradise must be near it. These souls will stroll in and along the Gardens of Paradise. Therefore, their abode may be said to be Paradise.

Similarly, the souls of the unbelievers remain in *sijjīn* which is situated beneath the seventh earth. It is also proved by *ahādīth* that Hell is beneath the seventh earth, and the dwellers of *sijjīn* will receive the heat and torture of the Hell. Therefore, it would be correct to say that their abode is in Hell.

However, the *hadith* that informs us that the souls of the unbelievers will remain in the graves, is apparently contradictory to the preceding two narratives. The Baihaqī of his time, Qāḍī Thanā’ullah Pānī Patī, in his *Tafsīr Maḥzarī*, has reconciled them thus: It is not far-fetched to assume that ‘*illīyyūn* and *sijjīn* are the real abodes of the souls, but they have a special connection with their graves. None, besides Allah, knows the actual nature of the connection. However, there is the sun and the moon in the sky, but their rays fall on the earth and provide to it light and heat. Similarly, the souls of ‘*illīyyūn* and *sijjīn* may have some spiritual connection with the graves. The scholarly view of Qāḍī Thanā’ullah Pānī Patī has just been discussed in Sūrah Nāzi‘āt, the sum total of which is as follows: There are two types of soul: The one is a subtle substance that permeates the human body. Despite being a material substance, it is too subtle to be visible, and its other name is *nafs*. The other soul is abstract and non-material, pure essence. The pure, abstract and non-material soul

is the life of the first soul, and therefore it is called the 'soul of soul'. Both the categories of souls are connected to human body, but the first type of soul resides in the human body. When the soul leaves the body, death occurs. The second type of soul is connected with the body more closely than the first type, but Allah alone knows the nature of the connection. The first soul, after death, is taken to the heaven, and then returned to the grave. Grave is its abode where it is rewarded and punished. The abstract soul remains in *'illiyyūn* or *sijjīn* [as the case might be]. Thus we have several views on the issue. The final destination of souls is Paradise or *'illiyyūn*, or its opposite Hell or *sijjīn*. The abode of the abstract souls is *'illiyyūn* or *sijjīn*. The souls of the first type, the *nafs*, or the body, remains in the grave after death. And Allah knows best!

وَفِي ذَلِكَ فَلْيَتَنَافَسِ الْمُتَنَافِسُونَ (and in aspiring for this, the competitors should compete....83:26) The word *tanāfus* means for a few people 'to try or strive to gain some desirable things before others can get them.' Having mentioned the bounties of Paradise, the attention of heedless people are drawn to the fact that they are thinking that certain material things are desirable, and therefore they are competing one another to obtain them before others. They are told that the material blessings [after which they are running] are perishable. They should not be made the ultimate goal of life, nor the object of racing. Man should be content with what he has for the comfort of the fleeting period of this life. If he loses the means, it should not hurt him much, because it is not a loss that cannot be recovered. However, people with aspiration should aspire, race and compete for the blessings of Paradise that are perfect and eternal in every possible dimension. How aptly the late poet Akbar has put it:

یہ کہاں کا فسانہ ہے سود و زیاں، جو گیا سو گیا جو ملا سو ملا
کہو دل سے فرصت عمر ہے کم، جو دلا تو خدا ہی کی یاد دلا

'Gain and loss - what fiction is this?

What is lost is lost, what is gained is gained

Say to the mind, the life is little.

If you wish to remind me, remind me of God.'

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ أَجْرَمُوا كَانُوا مِنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يَضْحَكُونَ (Indeed those who were guilty used to laugh at those who believed, 83:29). In these verses, Allah depicts fully the attitudes of the followers of falsehood [non-believers] towards the

upholders of truth [the believers]. The non-believers used to laugh at the believers in the worldly life. In other words, they would mock at them and despise them. Whenever they would pass by the believers, they would wink at each other in contempt of them. When the non-believers returned home, they would take great pleasure in describing the mocking manner in which they treated the poor believers, saying that Muḥammad has misled the simpletons.

If we review the situation today, [it is no better.] People whose minds are contaminated with contemporary secular education, are careless about the religion and the Hereafter. Belief in Allah and the Holy Prophet ﷺ is nominal. They treat the [religious] scholars and righteous people exactly in the same manner as the non-believers used to treat the Companions in the days of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. May Allah salvage the Muslims from this painful scourge. There is much solace in this verse for the righteous believers. Never bother about their laughter and mockery. How well a poet puts it:

ہم نے جانے سے جب تک ہم ڈریں گے
زمانہ ہم پہ ہنستا ہی رہے گا

'So long as we fear people's laughter [at us],
the people will continue laughing at us'

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah At-Taṭfīf
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Inshiqāq (The Splitting)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 25 verses and 1 section.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 25

إِذَا السَّمَاءُ انْشَقَّتْ ﴿١﴾ وَأَذْنَتْ لِرَبِّهَا وَحُقَّتْ ﴿٢﴾ وَإِذَا الْأَرْضُ
 مُدَّتْ ﴿٣﴾ وَأَلْقَتْ مَا فِيهَا وَتَخَلَّتْ ﴿٤﴾ وَأَذْنَتْ لِرَبِّهَا وَحُقَّتْ
 ﴿٥﴾ يَأْتِيهَا الْإِنْسَانُ إِنَّكَ كَادِحٌ إِلَى رَبِّكَ كَدْحًا فَمُلْقِيهِ ﴿٦﴾ فَمَا
 مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ بِيَمِينِهِ ﴿٧﴾ فَسَوْفَ يُحَاسَبُ حِسَابًا يَسِيرًا ﴿٨﴾
 وَيَنْقَلِبُ إِلَى أَهْلِهِ مُسْرُورًا ﴿٩﴾ وَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ وَرَاءَ ظَهْرِهِ
 ﴿١٠﴾ فَسَوْفَ يَدْعُوا ثُبُورًا ﴿١١﴾ وَيَصْلَى سَعِيرًا ﴿١٢﴾ إِنَّهُ كَانَ فِي
 أَهْلِهِ مُسْرُورًا ﴿١٣﴾ إِنَّهُ ظَنَّ أَنْ لَنْ يَحُورَ ﴿١٤﴾ بَلَى إِنَّ رَبَّهُ كَانَ بِهِ
 بَصِيرًا ﴿١٥﴾ فَلَا أَقْسِمُ بِالشَّفَقِ ﴿١٦﴾ وَاللَّيْلِ وَمَا وَسَقَ ﴿١٧﴾
 وَالْقَمَرِ إِذَا اتَّسَقَ ﴿١٨﴾ لَتَرْكَبُنَّ طَبَقًا عَنْ طَبَقٍ ﴿١٩﴾ فَمَا لَهُمْ لَا
 يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَإِذَا قُرِئَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقُرْآنُ لَا يَسْجُدُونَ ﴿٢١﴾ بَلِ الَّذِينَ
 كَفَرُوا يَكْذِبُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يُوعُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾ فَبَشِّرْهُمْ
 بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ﴿٢٤﴾ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ أَجْرٌ غَيْرُ
 مَمْنُونٍ ﴿٢٥﴾

When the sky will split apart, [1] and will listen to (the command of) its Lord, and it ought to, [2] and when the earth will be stretched (to give room to more people), [3] and it will throw up whatever it contains, and will become empty, [4] and will listen to (the command of) its Lord, and it ought to, (then man will see the consequences of his deeds.) [5] O man, you have to work hard constantly to reach your Lord, then you have to meet Him. [6] So, as for him whose book (of deeds) will be given to him in his right hand, [7] he will be called to account in an easy manner, [8] and he will go back to his people joyfully. [9] As for the one whose book (of deeds) will be given to him from his back side, [10] he will pray for death, [11] and will enter the blazing fire. [12] He had been joyful among his people. [13] He thought he would never revert (to Allah). [14] Why not? Indeed his Lord was watchful over him. [15] So, I swear by the twilight (after sunset), [16] and by the night and what it envelops, [17] and by the moon when it develops at the full, [18] you shall certainly ascend from stage to stage. [19] So, what has happened to them that they do not believe, [20] and when the Qur'ān is recited to them, they do not offer *sajdah* (prostration)? [21] Rather, those who disbelieve deny (the truth). [22] And Allah is most aware of what they store. [23] So give him the 'good news' of a painful punishment, [24] but those who believed and did righteous deeds, for them there is a reward that will never be interrupted. [25]

Commentary

The present Sūrah depicts the conditions that will prevail on the Day of Judgement, such as reckoning and accountability, reward of good and torment of evil. The heedless man is asked to look into himself and his environs, which will lead him to believe in Allah and the Qur'ān. [The powerful opening of the Sūrah sketches some of the scenes of universal upheaval]. First, it speaks about the sky that will split apart. Then it goes on to speak about the earth that will be stretched and will throw up whatever it contains - whether natural treasures, or buried treasures, or dead human bodies, and then it will become empty. A new earth will be prepared for *Ḥashr* (Gathering of the Day of Requit). It will have neither caves nor mountains, neither buildings nor trees. It will be flat and smooth. It will be stretched so that there is ample room for the former as well as the latter generations to gather on the plain. This description

has been given in other Sūrahs with different styles, but in the present verses, there is an addition. About what Allah will demonstrate about the heaven and earth on the Day of Judgement, the following comment is made:

وَإِذْنُ لِرَبِّهَا وَحُقَّتْ (and will listen to (the command of) its Lord, and it ought to,...84:5) The verb *adhinat* means 'it will listen'. Here listening includes obedience. The verb *huqqat* may be interpreted as 'It had an obligation to listen and obey Allah's command'.

Two Categories of Divine Commands

The obedience of the heaven and the earth, referred to here, may have two meanings, because the Divine commands are of two kinds: [1] the Divinely legislated [*tashrī'ī*] injunctions; and [2] the cosmic and destined [*takwīnī* and *taqdīrī*] commands. In the former case, the command appears as a law the violation of which is punishable. However, men are not practically coerced in the sense that they become practically unable to violate it. Instead, they have their free will to choose whether to abide by the law or to violate it. Such laws are imposed upon those who are endowed with intellect like humans and Jinn. This divides them into believers and non-believers, obedient and disobedient. In the former case, the commands are implemented by force. No one can deviate from them in the least. The entire universe, including humans and Jinn, follow them by force. The cosmic commands [which Allah has decreed] are applied forcefully and all the creatures, whether believers or unbelievers, pious or impious, have no choice or will but to do according to that command.

زّره زّره دهر کا پاستہ تقدیر ہے
زندگی کے خواب کی جّامی یہی تعبیر ہے

'Every particle in this world is bound by the Divine Decree.
Jāmī, this is the interpretation of the dream of life.'

It is possible that Allah will, on that day, endow the sky and the earth with special sense and perception like humans and Jinn. When they receive a command from Allah, they, of their own volition choose to act upon it. Alternatively, the command may refer to the second kind, that is, the cosmic command that no one can violate. But the words, *وَإِذْنُ لِرَبِّهَا وَحُقَّتْ* "and will listen to [the command of] its Lord, and it ought to," are closer to the first meaning of command, while the second one is possible, if these

words are taken in their figurative sense.

وَإِذَا الْأَرْضُ مُدَّتْ (and when the earth will be stretched [to give room to more people]...84:3) The word *madda* means 'to stretch, spread, expand out'. Sayyidnā Jābir ibn 'Abdullāh ؓ narrates that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that on the Day of Judgement the earth will be stretched out like leather (or rubber) and expanded into a smooth plain, and there will be just enough space on it for all individuals of human race to keep their feet. To understand this tradition, it is necessary to keep in mind that on the Day of Resurrection all individuals who will have been born from the inception of creation till resurrection will be brought back to life simultaneously. Thus each individual will have just enough space on the earth where he could place his feet. [Transmitted by Ḥākim with a good chain of authorities - Maḏharī].

وَأَلْقَتْ مَا فِيهَا وَتَخَلَّتْ (and it will throw up whatever it contains, and will become empty...84:4) The earth will, with one convulsion, throw up whatever it contains in its belly, whether natural treasures or buried treasures, or mines, or dead human bodies and their remains and particles.

يَا أَيُّهَا الْإِنْسَانُ إِنَّكَ كَادِحٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ كَدْحًا فَمُلَاقِيهِ (O man, you have to work hard constantly to reach your Lord, then you have to meet Him...84:6) The word *kadh* means to 'exert one's efforts fully', and 'to your Lord' means 'to meet your Lord'. In other words, every effort of man would end at his Lord.

Return to Allah

Mankind is addressed in this verse and shown a road that if he were to think about it carefully, and use his sense and intelligence, he could exert his efforts in the right direction that will ensure for him welfare, well-being and safety in this world, as well as in the Hereafter. First, it has been pointed out that man, whether he is good or bad, believer or non-believer, has the natural tendency to exert himself in order to achieve his goal. A good-natured person will work hard and adopt lawful means to acquire his livelihood and necessities of life. A bad person cannot obtain his needs and objective without working hard. Thieves, robbers, rouses, cheats and looters apply their minds and exert their physical strength in order to achieve their objective. Secondly, it has been pointed

out that if the intelligent man were to think carefully, all his movements and pauses are stations of a long journey he is going through, though unconsciously. This journey will end at his presence before Allah, that is, at death. This is stated in the phrase *ilā rabbika* 'to your Lord'. This is a statement of reality which none can deny. All efforts, [good or bad], must end with death. The third point is that after death, in the presence of his Lord, he will have to give an account of his movements and deeds, and of his efforts. This is rationally necessary and justified, so that the consequences of good and bad may be separately known, because such distinction is not known in this life. A good person may work hard for a month or so in order to obtain his livelihood and necessities of life, but thieves and looters may obtain them overnight. If there is no time of reckoning or punishment, both of them [the good and the bad] will be equal, which is contrary to reason and justice. At the end, the verse says: *فَمُتِّبِهِ* (then you have to meet Him.) The translation given above is based on the assumption that the attached pronoun (*hi*) refers to Allah. The sense is that every person has to meet his Lord and to present himself before him to give the account of his deeds. Another possible interpretation is that the attached pronoun (*hi*) refers to '*kadh*' (working hard). Given this interpretation, the translation of the verse would be: "O man, you have to work hard constantly to reach your Lord, then you have to meet it." And the sense would be: 'you have to meet the good or bad consequences of your working hard.'

The verses that follow depict separately the consequences of the good and the bad people, of the believers and the non-believers. First, the ledger of deeds must be received in the right or the left hand. Those who receive the ledgers in their right hands will be the inmates of Paradise with its eternal blessings. Those who receive the ledgers in their left hands will be the inmates of Hell. The point for careful consideration is that necessities of life, as well as unnecessary desires are fulfilled by both righteous and wicked people in this world, and thus both spend their lives in some way or the other, but the consequences of the two [for the Hereafter] are diametrically opposite to each other. One results in eternal and unending comfort, and the other results in eternal perdition, torture and torment. Man still has the chance [while he is living] to redirect his attention to working hard towards switching the situation in a direction

that not only fulfils his legitimate needs and desires in this world, but also attains the eternal pleasures of the Hereafter.

فَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ بِيَمِينِهِ ﴿٧﴾ فَسَوْفَ يُحَاسَبُ حِسَابًا يَسِيرًا ﴿٨﴾ وَيَنْقَلِبُ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِ مَسْرُورًا ﴿٩﴾

(So, as for him whose book [of deeds] will be given to him in his right hand, he will be called to account in an easy manner, and he will go back to his people joyfully....7-9)

This verse describes the condition of the believers. Their books of deeds will be given to them in their right hands. An easy reckoning will be taken from them and the welcome news of Paradise will be given to them. They will return to their families joyfully.

It is reported in the Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī from Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah رضى الله عنها that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said:

من حوسب يوم القيامة عذب

"He who is required to account for [or questioned about] his deeds will have to be punished."

At this Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah رضى الله عنها asked, "What is the meaning of the [following] verse ?" يُحَاسَبُ حِسَابًا يَسِيرًا (he will be called to account in an easy manner,...84:8). The Holy Prophet ﷺ explained that the verse signifies 'the deeds will merely be presented before Allah without being questioned. As for the person whose deeds are scrutinised, he will never be able to escape torment'.

This explanation of the Holy Prophet ﷺ clarifies that the deeds of the believers will also be presented before Allah, but by virtue of their faith, not all of their actions will be scrutinised. This is referred to as 'account in an easy manner'. The words 'he will go back to his people joyfully' may be interpreted in one of two ways. This may refer to the Houris who will be his family members in Paradise, or it may refer to his family members in the world who will be present in the Plain of Gathering, and he, after knowing about his success, will impart to them, according to the custom of this life, the welcome news of his achievement. The commentators have mentioned both possibilities in interpreting this sentence. [Qurṭubī].

كَانَ فِي أَهْلِهِ مَسْرُورًا (He had been joyful among his people...84:13). This verse tells us that those who will be given their Record in their left hands

from behind their backs, they will desire death and destruction under the impression that this might end their misery. But it will not be possible for them to die. One of the reasons given here for his misery is that he used to live joyfully among his people in the world, and he was completely oblivious of the Hereafter. The believers, on the other hand, never for a moment were oblivious of the Hereafter in the life of this world. At every moment of pleasure and comfort, they were anxious and worried about the Hereafter. The Qur'an quotes the believers on another occasion as saying:

إِنَّا كُنَّا قَبْلُ فِي أَهْلِنَا مُشْفِقِينَ

'Indeed we were afraid (of Allah's punishment) when we were amidst of our family, [Aṭ-Ṭūr 26]

In other words, they lived among their families and yet were fearful and conscious of the Hereafter. The consequences of the two groups will be appropriate to their respective positions. Those who led a life of luxury and pleasure in this world with their families oblivious of the Hereafter, their portion will be punishment of Hell in the next world. Those who were aware of reckoning and feared punishment in the next world will live with their families in eternal luxury, pleasure and happiness. This indicates that a believer should not be immersed in the comforts of this life. At no time and in no circumstance should he be oblivious to the reckoning of the Hereafter.

فَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِالشَّفَقِ وَاللَّيْلِ وَمَا وَسَقَ. وَالْقَمَرِ إِذَا اتَّسَقَ (So, I swear by the twilight [after sunset], and by the night and what it envelops, and by the moon when it develops at the full...84:16-18) In these verses Allah takes oath by four phenomena and reinforces what was asserted in :

إِنَّكَ كَادِحٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ

'you have to work hard constantly to reach your Lord'

If we consider the four phenomena by which oath is taken, it bears evidence to the subject which is forthcoming in the complement of the oath, that is, the condition of man never remains the same at all times. He undergoes changes and unexpected phases all the time. The first phenomenon that brings about a change in his life is the twilight after the sunset, or the red glow that remains on the west side of the sky after

the sunset in the evening. This is the beginning of the night. This is the harbinger of a massive change in human conditions, that is, the light is disappearing and a flood of darkness is setting in. The second phenomenon by which oath is taken is night itself which completes the change in his life. The third phenomenon by which oath is taken includes all things that night envelops or shrouds. The primitive sense of the word *wasāqa* means to 'pile, gather, heap up the thing'. If it is taken in general sense, it embraces every member of the entire universe which the darkness of night covers, such as animals, vegetation, minerals and inorganic matter, mountains and oceans. By extension, the word would comprehend all things that normally disperse in the light of day and retreat to their own places at night. Human beings return to their homes, animals to their habitats and birds to their nests. Business goods and merchandise are or piled up in one place. This massive change is related to man himself. The fourth phenomenon by which oath is taken is in the following verse: وَالْقَمَرِ إِذَا اتَّسَقَ (and by the moon when it develops at the full...84:18). The word *ittisāq* is also derived from *wasāqa* and it means 'to gather'. The 'gathering of moon' signifies that it gathered its light, and it became complete and full [*badr*] the moon of the 14th night. The phrase إِذَا اتَّسَقَ *idhat-tasaqa* in relation to moon points to the phenomenon that it goes through various phases. First, it appears as a very fine semicircle. Then its light grows progressively night after night, until it becomes *badr kāmīl* [full moon of the 14th night]. Having taken oath by the vicissitudes of the four phenomena, the Sūrah asserts the subject: لَتَرْكَبُنَّ طَبَقًا عَنْ طَبَقٍ (you shall certainly ascend from stage to stage....84:19) The word *ṭabaq* or *ṭabqah* refers to a 'stage'. Its plural is *ṭabaqāt*. The verb لَتَرْكَبُنَّ *latarkabunna* is derived from *rukūb* which means 'to mount or mount up'. The verse purports to say that mankind from the inception to the end of his life will continue to mount up stage by stage, or will pass through all the conditions, gradually and in stages referred to in the preceding verses, that is, periods of light and darkness and other phenomena. He never remains in one condition all the time. He gradually goes through the vicissitudes of life.

Vicissitudes of Human Life, His Eternal Journey and His Final Destination

In the first instance the male sperm is united with the female egg to

form a new human organism. This is turned into a blood-clot which transforms into a lump of flesh, and the lump is formed into bones, and the bones are clothed in flesh. The limbs of the human body thus were completed. Then the soul was breathed into him, and he became a living human being. His first food in the womb of his mother was the unclean blood of the mother's womb. Nine months later, Allah made his way easy to come into the world. Now instead of the unclean blood, he got the [pure] milk of his mother's [breast]. When he saw the wide atmosphere and air of the world, he began to grow and develop. Within the first two years of his life, he started moving and walking about, and was able to talk. He weaned and began to eat more delicious and different types of food. As he grew a little older, he made play and amusement his daily preoccupation. When his intelligence developed [sufficiently], he was tied up in educational and training activities. When he grew into a youth, he abandoned all previous activities and replaced them with youth activities and ushered himself in a new era where marriage, children and house-keeping became his day-to-day preoccupation. Eventually, this era too neared its end. His physical and other prowess began to give up, and every day he fell prey to new ailments. Old age set in. The final stage of this life, that is, death, began to mount. All this happens in full view of everyone. No one dare deny this. But the ignoramus assumes that death or grave is his final stage, and there is nothing beyond. Allah, the Creator of the universe, the Omniscient, made it known, through the various Prophets [through the ages], to the heedless man that grave is not the final stage of his life, but it is merely a waiting-room to enter an enormously large and gigantic world that is yet to come, where the final examination will be conducted and the final stage of his life will be determined. In this world, he will celebrate the Divine remembrance and enjoy eternal comfort and pleasure or he will suffer eternal perdition and damnation [depending on the final assessment]. This is where the vicissitudes of his life will end. Thus the Qur'an says:

إِنَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ الرُّجْعَىٰ

'Surely, to your Lord is the return [96:8]'

إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ الْمُنْتَهَىٰ

'and that to your Lord is the end (of every one), [42]'

إِنَّكَ كَادِحٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ كَدْحًا

'you have to work hard constantly to reach your Lord [84:6]'

The ignoramus and unmindful man is made aware of the fact that the vicissitudes of life are stages in the journey to his final destination. Man ought to realise that walking, moving about, sleeping, waking, and standing and sitting are conditions, in the process of which he is covering the stages of his journey. Eventually, he will reach his Lord and, accounting for his life-long deeds, he will find his final abode that will be a place of never-ending comfort, luxury and pleasure, or [God forbid!] a place of never-ending retribution, torture and torment. A wise person should treat himself in this world as a traveller and prepare himself for the next world. His main goal in this life should be to cultivate for the next life as the Prophet ﷺ said:

كُنْ فِي الدُّنْيَا كَأَنَّكَ غَرِيبٌ أَوْ عَابِرُ سَبِيلٍ

"Be in this world as though you are a stranger or a wayfarer."

Under the phrase above *tabaqan* 'an *ṭabaq* 'from stage to stage', a similar narration is cited by Abū Nu'aim from Sayyidnā Jābir Ibn 'Abdullāh رضي الله عنه that the Holy Prophet ﷺ stated that these verses remind the unmindful of his creation, the vicissitudes of his life and instructs him to reconsider his position and the consequences [of his attitude in this life as there is still time] and to prepare for next life. However, despite these clear guidelines, there are people who never desist from their heedlessness. Therefore, the verse concludes:

فَمَا لَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ، وَإِذَا قُرِئَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقُرْآنُ لَا يَسْجُدُونَ

So, what has happened to them that they do not believe, and when the Qur'ān is recited to them, they do not offer *sajdah* [prostration]? (84:20-21)

It means that when the Qur'ān, replete with clear guidelines, is recited to them, they do not bow in submission.

The word *sajdah* / *sujūd* literally denotes 'to bow' and it connotes 'obedience'. Obviously, the word here is not used in its technical sense. It is used in the sense of bowing in submission with respect, humbleness and humility. The reason [for this interpretation] is quite clear. This verse does not command to prostrate at the time of recitation of a particular

verse. It is related to the entire Qur'ān. If the word *sajdah* had referred to the technical prostration, it would necessarily entail that prostration be offered at every verse of the entire Qur'ān, which by unanimous agreement of the Ummah is not the case. Neither *salaf* nor *khalaf* subscribe to this view. Now remains the question whether or not a *sajdah* is obligatory when this verse is recited. (There is a disagreement among the jurists on this point) By a long stretch of imagination, it is possible to use this verse in evidence or support of arguing in favour of prostration being obligatory on recitation of this verse, as some of the Ḥanafī jurists have done. According to them, the definite article al- 'the' in the word al-Qur'ān stands for the article that is used to indicate previous knowledge, and thus the word al-Qur'ān here refers to this particular verse under comment, not to the entire al-Qur'ān or the Holy Book. However, this interpretation is after all merely a possibility, but the clear context of the verse indicates that it seems to be far-fetched to take the verse in this sense. And Allah knows best! The true interpretation can be determined by prophetic narratives, the practice of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and that of the noble Companions. The narratives pertaining to *sajdah* of *tilāwah* differ. Some indicate that it is an obligatory duty to make *sajdah* on this verse, and others indicate that it is not. As a result, there is a difference of opinion among jurists. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah holds the view that prostration at this verse is an obligatory duty as is obligatory at other verses of *mufaṣṣal*. Imām A'ẓam adduces the following Aḥādīth in favour of his opinion:

Bukhārī recorded from Abū Rāfi' ؓ that he prayed the 'Ishā' [Night] prayer behind Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ؓ, and the latter recited: إِذَا السَّمَاءُ انْشَقَّتْ (When the sky will split apart) and at the relevant verse, he prostrated. So, Sayyidnā Abū Rāfi' ؓ asked him what type of prostration it was. Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ؓ replied: "I prostrated at this verse behind Abul Qāsim in a *ṣalāh*, and I will never cease prostrating during its recitation until I meet him on the Plain of Gathering." Muslim transmitted a narrative from Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ؓ that they prostrated with the Holy Prophet ﷺ at relevant verses of this Sūrah, and of اِقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ

Qurtubī reports from Ibn-ul-'Arabī that the veritable view is that this verse is one of the verses at which it is an obligatory duty to prostrate

when read or recited or heard being recited. However, the people among whom Ibn-ul-‘Arabī lived' it was not customary among them to prostrate at this verse. They probably followed an Imam, according to whom the prostration was not obligatory. As a result, Ibn-ul-‘Arabī says that whenever he led the congregational prayer, he would avoid reciting Sūrah Al-Inshiqāq, because in his view prostration at the relevant verse is obligatory. If he does not perform the prostration, he would be sinning. If he does perform the prostration, the entire congregation would regard it an unnecessary act. Therefore, he felt he should not unnecessarily split the community. And Allah knows best!

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Inshiqāq
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Burūj (Stellar Formations)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 22 verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 22

وَالسَّمَاءِ ذَاتِ الْبُرُوجِ ﴿١﴾ وَالْيَوْمِ الْمَوْعُودِ ﴿٢﴾ وَشَاهِدِ
وَمَشْهُودِ ﴿٣﴾ قَتَلَ أَصْحَابُ الْأُخْدُودِ ﴿٤﴾ النَّارِ ذَاتِ الْوَقُودِ ﴿٥﴾
إِذْهُمْ عَلَيْهَا قُوعُودٌ ﴿٦﴾ وَهُمْ عَلَى مَا يَفْعَلُونَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ شُهُودٌ ﴿٧﴾
وَمَا نَقَمُوا مِنْهُمْ إِلَّا أَنْ يُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَمِيدِ ﴿٨﴾ الَّذِي لَهُ
مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۖ وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ ﴿٩﴾ إِنَّ
الَّذِينَ فَتَنُوا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَتُوبُوا فَلَهُمْ عَذَابُ جَهَنَّمَ
وَلَهُمْ عَذَابُ الْحَرِيقِ ﴿١٠﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ
جَنَّاتُ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ ۚ ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْكَبِيرُ ﴿١١﴾ إِنَّ بَطْشَ
رَبِّكَ لَشَدِيدٌ ﴿١٢﴾ إِنَّهُ هُوَ يُبْدِئُ وَيُعِيدُ ﴿١٣﴾ وَهُوَ الْغَفُورُ الْودُودُ
﴿١٤﴾ ذُو الْعَرْشِ الْمَجِيدُ ﴿١٥﴾ فَعَالٌ لِمَا يُرِيدُ ﴿١٦﴾ هَلْ أُنْتُكَ
حَدِيثُ الْجُنُودِ ﴿١٧﴾ فِرْعَوْنُ وَثَمُودُ ﴿١٨﴾ بَلِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي
تَكْذِيبٍ ﴿١٩﴾ وَاللَّهُ مِنْ وَرَائِهِمْ مُحِيطٌ ﴿٢٠﴾ بَلْ هُوَ قُرْآنٌ مَجِيدٌ
﴿٢١﴾ فِي لَوْحٍ مَحْفُوظٍ ﴿٢٢﴾

I swear by the sky, the one having stellar formations, [1] and by the Promised Day, [2] and by that which attends, and that which is attended, [3] cursed were the People of the Trench, [4] the (people of the) fire that was rich with fuel, [5] when they were sitting by it, [6] and were watching what they were doing with the believers. [7] And they had blamed them for nothing but that they believed in Allah, the All-Mighty, the Worthy of All Praise, [8] the One to whom belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth. And Allah is witness over every thing. [9] Surely, those who persecuted the believing men and the believing women, then did not repent, for them there is the torment of Jahannam (Hell), and for them there is the torment of burning. [10] As for those who believed and did righteous deeds, for them there are gardens beneath which rivers flow. That is the big achievement. [11]

The seizure of your Lord is severe indeed! [12] Surely He originates (creation) and repeats (it after death). [13] And He is the Most-Forgiving, the Most-Loving, [14] the Master of the Throne, the Glorious. [15] He is ever doer of what He intends. [16]

Has the come to you the story of the forces, [17] of Fir'aun (the Pharaoh) and Thamud? [18] But those who disbelieve are (engaged) in denying (the truth). [19] And Allah has encircled them from all sides. [20] The reality is that it is the glorious Qur'an, [21] (recorded) in the Preserved Tablet (Lauh Mahfuz). [22]

Commentary

وَالسَّمَاءِ ذَاتِ الْبُرُوجِ (I swear by the sky, the one having stellar formations....85:1) The word *burūj* is the plural of *burj* which means 'a large mansion or fortress'. The Qur'an says:

وَلَوْ كُنْتُمْ فِي بُرُوجٍ مُّشِيدَةٍ

'...even though you are in fortified castles [4:78]'

Here the word *burūj* means 'castles'. The primitive sense of the word *barj* is to become manifest'. The word *tabarruj* means 'to display one's beauty' as in the verse:

وَلَا تَبَرَّجْنَ تَبَرُّجَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ الْأُولَى

'...and do not display your beauty as it was previously displayed

in the Time of Ignorance [33:33]

According to the majority of commentators like Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās, Mujāhid, Dahḥāk, Ḥasan Al-Baṣrī, Qatādah, Suddī ﷺ and others, the word *burūj*, in this verse, refers to 'giant stars'. Other commentators take the word *burūj*, in this place, to refer to mansions and castles that are reserved in the sky for the guardian angels. Some of the later commentators chose the astronomical view in which the sky is divided into twelve parts, each one called a *burj*. The primitive philosophers believed that the *thawabit* (stationary) stars are fixed in these *burūj*. The planets move with the movement of their particular sky and the planets descend in these *burūj*. But this is absolutely incorrect. According to the Qur’ān, Allah has not fixed the stars and planets in the skies. In fact, every star and planet has its own orbit and revolves by itself as in Sūrah Yā Sīn:

وَكُلٌّ فِي فَلَكٍ يَسْبَحُونَ

'...And each one is floating in an orbit. [36:40]

The word *falak* in this verse does not refer to the sky, but rather to the orbits of the stars and planets in which they move. [Mazharī]

وَالْيَوْمِ الْمَوْعُودِ. وَشَاهِدٍ وَمَشْهُودٍ (and by the Promised Day, and by that which attends, and that which is attended...85:2,3) With reference to a prophetic *Ḥadīth* reported by Tirmidhī, the phrase 'the Promised Day' refers to the Day of Judgement; the phrase 'that which attends' refers to 'Friday'; and the phrase 'that which is attended' refers to the day of ‘Arafah. Thus in this verse, Allah has taken oath by four objects: [1] 'the sky, the one having stellar formations'; [2] 'the Day of Judgement'; [3] 'Friday'; and [4] 'the Day of ‘Arafah'. The relationship between the objects of oath and the subject of oath is as follows: They bear evidence to the Divine omnipotence, and they are a proof of reckoning and reward and punishment on the Day of Judgement. Friday and the day of ‘Arafah (the main day of Hajj that is 9th Zul-Hijjah of the Islami Calender) are blessed days for the believers to accumulate treasures for the Hereafter. Further, the subject of oath curses the infidels who burned the Muslims on account of their faith, and gives cheerful news to the righteous believers of securing elevated ranks in the Hereafter.

The Story of the People of Trench

Verse 4 refers to the People of the Trench. Their story is recounted in a

Hadīth reported by Imām Muslim as follows: There was an infidel king who lived in bygone times. He had a soothsayer , or, according to some narrations, a magician. The infidel king is identified as the ruler of Yemen. His name, according to Ibn ‘Abbās ؓ, was Yūsuf Dhu Nuwās, and he lived about seventy years before the birth of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. The soothsayer or magician [occult teacher] said to the king that he should be given an intelligent boy, so that he could train him in the skill of foretelling or the black magic. Accordingly, the king sent a boy, ‘Abdullāh Ibn Tāmīr by name, to be trained by the soothsayer or magician [occult teacher]. Whenever the boy went to his teacher, he had to pass by a Christian monk. He followed the true religion of ‘Isā ؑ and worshipped Allah. Since the religion of ‘Isā ؑ was the true religion in those days, the monk was, in fact, a Muslim. The boy sat with the monk and was very much impressed by his teachings. As a result, he frequented the monk's house and sat with him for long hours before proceeding to his teacher, and ultimately embraced Islam. Allah had blessed him with such a strong faith that he was prepared to bear any pain and persecution for the sake of Allah. His teacher used to beat him for his coming late. On his way back from the occult teacher, he would spend some time again with the monk and used to go home late. The family would then beat him up for being late. But he was so keen to have the company of the monk that he managed to sit regularly with the monk without fear of persecution. Through the blessings of this, Allah had gifted him with many miracles [*karamah*]. Once it happened that the boy saw a lion has blocked the path and prevented people from passing. They were perturbed. He picked a stone and prayed: "O Allah! If the religion of the monk is true, then kill this beast with this stone [so that people may pass]. And if the soothsayer or magician is true, then the beast must not die with my stone." So praying, he aimed at the lion and it died instantly. The news spread among the people that the boy possesses wonderful knowledge. A blind man heard about this and came up to him. He requested him to restore his sight. The boy conceded on the condition that he embraces Islam. The blind man agreed. The boy prayed and Allah restored his sight. The blind man became Muslim. The king came to know about these incidents, and he got the boy, the monk and the blind were apprehended. They were brought before the king. He got the blind and the monk killed, and ordered that the boy be taken to the summit of a mountain and be thrown

from there. But those who had taken him up there fell and died. The boy went home safely. Then the king ordered to have him drowned in the sea. The boy escaped safely, while the people who took him to the sea were drowned. The boy then himself told the king how to kill him. He told him to take an arrow from his quiver and place it in his bow, and reciting, بِاسْمِ اللَّهِ رَبِّي 'In the name of Allah, my Lord' they should shoot. They did that and they boy finally died. In this way, the boy gave his life away but seeing this, the entire nation of the king cried out spontaneously: "We believe in Allah." At this, the king was greatly enraged and, after consultation with his cabinet, ordered for deep trenches to be dug and filled with fire. An announcement was then made that the people must renounce their faith in Allah. If they refuse, they would be thrown into the fiery furnace. Eventually, a woman carrying her infant child was brought to a trench, but she hesitated. Allah granted speech to her child who said: "O mother, be steadfast, because you are certainly on the truth." In this way, many people were burned. According to some reports, about twelve thousand people were burned to ashes and, according to other reports, the number is put more than this. Consequently, Divine wrath descended on the People of the Trench and fiery furnace. Reference in verse 4 is made to this incident after taking an oath.

In a narration of Muḥammad Ibn Ishāq, it is reported that the place where the boy ‘Abdullāh Ibn Tāmīr was buried had to be dug up for some important reason during the time of Sayyidnā ‘Umar رضي الله عنه. It was found that the body of ‘Abdullāh Ibn Tāmīr was intact, and he was sitting up. His hand was placed on his hip joint, where the arrow struck him. Someone moved his hand out from that place, and his wound started bleeding. When the hand was placed back in its position, the bleeding stopped. There was a ring in his finger which had the inscription: اللَّهُ رَبِّي "Allah is my Lord." The governor of Yemen informed Sayyidnā ‘Umar رضي الله عنه about this, and he wrote back in reply: "Bury the body back as it was with his finger-ring." [Ibn Kathīr]

Special Note

Ibn Kathīr, with reference to Ibn Abī Ḥātim, writes that the incidents of 'trenches of fire' took place many times in history in different parts of the world. Then Ibn Abī Ḥātim specifies three particular incidents: [1] a trench in Yemen. [This incident took place during the period of *fatrah*

(the interval between 'Isā عليه السلام and the Holy Prophet ﷺ), about seventy years before the advent of the Prophet ﷺ; [2] a trench in Syria; and [3] a trench in Irān. He further states that the incident the Qur'ān refers to here in Sūrah Burūj is the first one that occurred in Najrān, the trench of the kingdom of Yemen, because that was in Arabia.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ فَتَنُوا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَتُوبُوا (Surely, those who persecuted the believing men and the believing women, then did not repent,...85:10) This verse describes the torment of the wrong-doers who burned the Muslims in the fire pit only on account of their faith. The description points out two things: [1] فَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ جَهَنَّمَ (for them there is the torment of Jahannam) and [2] وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ الْحَرِيقِ (and for them there is the torment of burning). The second sentence may be treated as explicative of the first sentence, a statement for emphasis. It signifies that they will be put into Hell and will have to suffer eternal torment of the fire. Another possible interpretation is that the second statement describes the wrong-doers' torment in this world, as is narrated in some reports. The believers, who had been cast in fire pits, were spared the torture of fire, in that the souls of the believers were taken out before the fire could touch them. Only their dead bodies were lying in the fiery furnace. After that the fire flared up so high that it spread out wildly through the city and burned all those who were watching the fun of burning the Muslims. Only Yūsuf Dhu Nuwās managed to run away, and threw himself into the sea in order to save himself from the rage of the fire, but he got drowned and died. [Maẓharī].

Attached to the torment of Hell and the torment of burning for the wrong-doers is the restrictive phrase: ثُمَّ لَمْ يَتُوبُوا (then did not repent). That is, this torment is for those who did not repent of their deed and did not offer *taubah*. Thus this part of the verse invites people to repent. Sayyidnā Ḥasan رضي الله عنه states: "Look at Allah's compassion and benevolence. They burned Allah's friends alive, yet He invites them towards repentance and forgiveness." [Ibn Kathir].

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Burūj
Ends here

Sūrah Aṭ-Ṭariq (The Night-Comer)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 17 verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 17

وَالسَّمَاءِ وَالطَّارِقِ ﴿١﴾ وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الطَّارِقُ ﴿٢﴾ النَّجْمُ الثَّاقِبُ ﴿٣﴾
 إِنَّ كُلَّ نَفْسٍ لَّمَّا عَلَيْهَا حَافِظٌ ﴿٤﴾ فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْإِنْسَانُ مِمَّ خُلِقَ ﴿٥﴾
 خُلِقَ مِنْ مَّاءٍ دَافِقٍ ﴿٦﴾ يَخْرُجُ مِنْ بَيْنِ الصُّلْبِ وَالتَّرَائِبِ ﴿٧﴾
 إِنَّهُ عَلَى رَجْعِهِ لَقَادِرٌ ﴿٨﴾ يَوْمَ تُبْلَى السَّرَائِرُ ﴿٩﴾ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ
 قُوَّةٍ وَلَا نَاصِرٍ ﴿١٠﴾ وَالسَّمَاءِ ذَاتِ الرَّجْعِ ﴿١١﴾ وَالْأَرْضِ ذَاتِ
 الصَّدْعِ ﴿١٢﴾ إِنَّهُ لَقَوْلُ فَضْلٍ ﴿١٣﴾ وَمَا هُوَ بِالْهَزْلِ ﴿١٤﴾ إِنَّهُمْ
 يَكِيدُونَ كَيْدًا ﴿١٥﴾ وَآكِيدُ كَيْدًا ﴿١٦﴾ فَمَهْلِكُ الْكَافِرِينَ أَمْهَلُهُمْ
 رُوَيْدًا ﴿١٧﴾

I swear by the sky and the Night-Comer, [1] and what may let you know what the Night-Comer is? [2] The star of piercing brightness! [3] there is no human being, but there is a watcher over him. [4] So, let man consider of which stuff he is created. [5] He is created of a spouting water [6] that comes out from between the loins and the chest-bones. [7] Surely He is Powerful to bring him back [8] on a day when all the secrets will be searched out, [9] and he will have no strength (to defend), nor a supporter. [10] I swear by the sky that rains, [11] and

the earth that cracks open (for plants), [12] this is a decisive word, [13] and it is not a joke. [14] They are devising plans, [15] and I Am devising plans. [16] So leave the disbelievers at the moment; give them respite for a while. [17]

Commentary

After swearing an oath by the sky and stars, in this Sūrah, Allah asserts that He has assigned a guardian angel to every human being who watches over his deeds and actions, and accurate and immediate record is kept on the basis of which the reckoning will be made, and on the Day of Reckoning, all secrets will be revealed. The rational conclusion is that man must ponder over the consequences of the deeds he is doing in this life. Therefore, he should not, at any moment of his life, lose sight of what is to happen on the Day of Reckoning. Thereafter, the verse disposes of a doubt that the Satan perennially casts into the people's hearts. When they are dead and have become dust and decomposed particles, how will they be recomposed and life be brought back? This seems to be an imaginary thought, rather, in the view of the general public, it is impossible. In answer to this doubt, man is invited to reflect on his origin. At the inception, he was created from various elements collected from throughout the world, and Allah's Power transformed them into a human being who is able to listen and see. Allah Who has created him and looked after him is well able to bring him back to life after death. Then some events of the Day of Judgement are mentioned. Then, after swearing an oath by the earth and the sky, the negligent man is told that the Hereafter he is urged to care about is no joke or amusement, but it is a reality that has to come to pass. Towards the end of the Sūrah, the unbelievers pose the question: If Allah abhors disbelief, idolatry and sins, why then does He not punish us in this life? The Sūrah ends with a rebuttal to this question. Let us now explain some expressions used in the Sūrah:

The first oath, in the beginning of the Sūrah, is by the sky and *ṭāriq*. The word *ṭāriq* means the 'Night-Comer'. Stars normally disappear during the day and only appear at night, therefore they are called *ṭāriq*. The Qur'an itself raises the question:

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الطَّارِقُ (and what may let you know what the Night-Comer is?...86:2) and then answers the question thus: النَّجْمُ الثَّاقِبُ (The star of

piercing brightness!...86:3). The word *najm* means 'star'. The Qur'ān does not specify any particular 'star'. Therefore, it may be applied to any star. Some of the commentators say that *najm* refers to the Pleiades or Saturn, and they quote specimens of Arabic speech to confirm their argument. The word *thāqib* means 'piercing brightness'.

إِنْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ لَّمَّا عَلَيْهَا حَافِظٌ (there is no human being, but there is a watcher over him....86:4). This is the subject of the oath. The particle *in* at the beginning of the statement is used in the sense of 'no', that is, a negative particle; and the particle *lammā* is used in the sense of 'but/except', that is, it is an exceptive particle in the dialect of Baḥr Hudhail. The verse purports to say that there is not a single person over whom there is not a watcher [*ḥāfiẓ*]. The word *ḥāfiẓ* may mean 'guardian' who may watch over someone's actions and deeds, so that the reckoning is made on that basis. The word *ḥāfiẓ* may also be used in the sense of 'one who protects from calamities'. In the first sense, the word *hafiz* refers to the angels who record the deeds. Here the word *ḥāfiẓ*, although appears in the singular form, it is used in the generic sense, because there is not just a single recording angel, but there is a host of them as another verse testifies to this fact:

إِنَّ عَلَيْكُمْ لَحَافِظِينَ كِرَامًا كَثِيرِينَ

'While [appointed] over you there are watchers, who are noble, the writers [of the deeds], [82: 10-11]

According to the second sense of the word, *ḥāfiẓ* refers to the angels who have been appointed to protect man from all kinds of calamities that befall him day and night, except the calamities that Allah has decreed for him, as the following verse explicitly states:

لَهُ مُعَقِّبَاتٌ مِّنْ أَيْمَنِ يَدِهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِ يَحْفَظُونَهُ، مِّنْ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ

'For him there are angels replacing each other, before him and behind him, who guard him under the command of Allah [13:11]

A tradition has reported the Messenger of Allah ﷺ saying that Allah has appointed three hundred and sixty angels for every believer. They protect every limb of his. Of the three hundred and sixty, seven angels alone protect man's eye. These angels defend man from every calamity that is not decreed, like a fan chases away the flies coming to a vessel containing honey. If there are no security guards for man, the devils will

snatch them away. [Qurtubī].

خُلِقَ مِنْ مَّاءٍ دَافِقٍ يُخْرَجُ مِنْ بَيْنِ الصُّلْبِ وَالتَّرَائِبِ (He is created of a spouting water that comes out from between the loins and the chest-bones...86:6,7). The general body of commentators have explained that the spouting water (sperm) comes out from the loins of men and the chest-bones of women. However, the research of embryological science on the subject shows that the seminal fluid comes out from every part of human body, and every part of the foetus is made of the seminal fluid that has come out from that part of the man's and woman's body. The brain, of course, plays the greatest role in this matter. Thus experience shows that people who indulge in excessive cohabitation mostly suffer from weakness of mental weakness. The embryologists have at the same time discovered that the seminal fluid separates from all parts of the body, and through the spinal cord, collects in the testes and from there it spouts.

If these findings have any value, it is not far-fetched to reconcile them with the explanation of some of the commentators. Embryologists agree that the brain plays the most important role in the preparation of seminal fluid. The representative of the brain is the spinal cord that has come into the backbone from the brain, up to the loins and the testes. Some of its branches have come into the chest-bones. It is likely that the seminal fluid coming from the chest-bones into the woman's seminal fluid and the seminal fluid coming from the loins into a man's seminal fluid have a greater role to play. (Baidawi)

If we analyse the verse of the Qur'ān carefully, we notice that it does not specify 'man or woman'. It merely says 'He is created of a spouting water that comes out from between the loins and the chest-bones.' This may simply signify that the seminal fluid comes out from the entire body of both men and women. The expression 'the entire body' is understood from the mention of the principal organs of front and back. The front part of the body is chest and the back part of the body is the loin. These are the principal parts of the body. The expression, 'the spouting water that comes out from between the loins and the chest-bones' may mean 'comes out from the entire body'.

إِنَّهُ عَلَى رَجْعِهِ لَقَادِرٌ (Surely He is Powerful to bring him back...86:8) The word *rajf* means 'to bring back'. The verse signifies that Allah Who has

created him from a drop of seminal fluid is well able to bring him back to life after death a fortiori.

يَوْمَ تُبْلَى السَّرَائِرُ (on a day when all the secrets will be searched out..86:9). The word *tubla* literally means 'to test/examine' and *sarā'ir* means 'secrets'. On the Day of Reckoning, the secrets will be tested and examined and laid bare. Man's beliefs, his thoughts, and his motives and intentions that were hidden in this life, and no one knew about them, will be revealed in the Hereafter.

Likewise, his deeds and actions that he had done secretly, and no one was aware of them in this world, all of them will be tested and scrutinised on the Plain of Gathering and will be laid bare. Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنه has said that on the Day of Judgement Allah will disclose the secrets of all human beings. The sign of every good or bad belief and action will be displayed on man's face, in the form of beauty or darkness or gloom [depending on each individual's situation]. [Qurṭubī].

وَالسَّمَاءِ ذَاتِ الرَّجْعِ (I swear by the sky that rains...86:11) The word *raj'* refers to 'the rain that comes down repeatedly'. In other words, the rain that comes down and stops and then returns.

إِنَّهُ لَقَوْلُ فَضْلٍ (this is a decisive word..86:13) In other words, the Qur'an is truly a Decisive Word that decides between truth and falsehood, and there is no room for any doubt in it.

Sayyidnā 'Alī رضي الله عنه says that he heard the Holy Prophet ﷺ as saying about the Holy Qur'an:

كتاب فيه خبر ما قبلكم وحكم ما بعدكم وهو الفصل ليس بالهزل

'[It is] a book which describes the stories of past communities and [it contains] injunctions for future generations. It is truly a Decisive Word. It is no joke.'

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Aṭ-Ṭāriq
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Aʿlā (The Most Exalted)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 19 verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 19

سَبِّحِ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ الْأَعْلَى ﴿١﴾ الَّذِي خَلَقَ فَسَوَّى ﴿٢﴾ وَالَّذِي قَدَّرَ
فَهَدَى ﴿٣﴾ وَالَّذِي أَخْرَجَ الْمَرْعَى ﴿٤﴾ فَجَعَلَهُ غُثَاءً أَحْوَى ﴿٥﴾
سَنُقْرِئُكَ فَلَا تَنْسَى ﴿٦﴾ إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ ۖ إِنَّهُ يَعْلَمُ الْجَهْرَ وَمَا
يَخْفَى ﴿٧﴾ وَنُيْسِرُكَ لِلْيُسْرَى ﴿٨﴾ فَذَكَرْ إِنَّ نَفْعَ الذِّكْرِى ﴿٩﴾
سَيَذَكُرْ مَنْ يَخْشَى ﴿١٠﴾ وَيَتَجَنَّبُهَا الْأَشْقَى ﴿١١﴾ الَّذِي يَصْلَى
النَّارَ الْكُبْرَى ﴿١٢﴾ ثُمَّ لَا يَمُوتُ فِيهَا وَلَا يَحْيَى ﴿١٣﴾ قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ
تَزَكَّى ﴿١٤﴾ وَذَكَرَ اسْمَ رَبِّهِ فَصَلَّى ﴿١٥﴾ بَلْ تُؤْثِرُونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا
﴿١٦﴾ وَالْآخِرَةَ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَى ﴿١٧﴾ إِنَّ هَذَا لَفِي الصُّحُفِ الْأُولَى
﴿١٨﴾ صُحُفٍ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَى ﴿١٩﴾

Pronounce the purity of the name of your Most Exalted Lord, [1] who created (everything), then made (it) well, [2] and who determined a measure (for everything), then guided (it), [3] and who brought forth pasturage, [4] then turned it into blackening stubble. [5] We will make you recite, then you will not forget [6] except that which Allah wills. Indeed He knows what is manifest and what is hidden. [7] And We will facilitate for you (to reach)

the easiest way. [8] So, extend advice (to people) if advice is useful. [9] The one who fears (Allah) will take to the advice, [10] and it will be avoided by the most wretched [11] who will enter the Biggest Fire, [12] then he will neither die therein, nor live (a life worth mentioning). [13] Success is surely achieved by him who purifies himself, [14] and pronounces the name of his Lord, then offers prayer. [15] But you prefer the worldly life, [16] while the Hereafter is much better and much more durable. [17] Indeed this is (written) in the earlier divine scripts, [18] the scripts of Ibrahim and Musa. [19]

Commentary

Ruling [1]

Scholars have ruled that when anyone recites the verse: سُبِّحَ اسْمُ رَبِّكَ الْأَعْلَى (Pronounce the purity of the name of your most exalted Lord...87:1) it is commendable to say:

سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْأَعْلَى

'I pronounce the purity of my most exalted Lord.'

This was the practice of all the noble Companions, like Sayyidna 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbaā, Ibn 'Umar, Ibn Zubair, Abū Mūsā and 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنهم اجمعين. Whenever they started reciting the Sūrah, they would recite:

سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْأَعْلَى

'I pronounce the purity of my most exalted Lord.' [Qurṭubī].

It should be noted that the desirability of reciting this is outside of the prayer.

Ruling [2]

Sayyidnā 'Uqbah Ibn 'Āmir Al-Juhānī رضي الله عنه narrates that when the Sūrah Al-A'la was revealed, the Holy Prophet ﷺ instructed:

اجعلوها في سجودكم

'Say this (Subhāna Rabbiyal-A'la) in your *sujūd* [prostrations]'

سُبِّحَ اسْمُ رَبِّكَ الْأَعْلَى (Pronounce the purity of the name of your Most exalted Lord.) The word *tasbiḥ* means 'to pronounce the purity' and سُبِّحَ اسْمُ رَبِّكَ signifies to 'honour the name of your Lord'. When the name of Allah is pronounced, it should be done with utmost humility and respect.

His name should be kept pure and free from anything that is unbecoming to His sublime status. Allah should be called by the names He Himself has stated or taught the Holy Prophet ﷺ. It is not permitted to call Him by any other name.

Ruling [3]

Besides, it is also included in the above imperative that there are some names exclusively meant for Allah; calling human beings or any other creation by those specific names is contrary to declaring the purity of Allah. Therefore, it is not permissible. [Qurtubī]. Nowadays, people are not particular about names like 'Abdur Raḥmān, 'Abdur-Razzāq, 'Abdul Ghaffār and 'Abdul Quddūs. They call the persons bearing these names 'Raḥmān', 'Razzāq', 'Ghaffār', 'Quddus' and so on, for short. People have got into the habit of shortening such names without realising that the speakers as well as the listeners are committing a sin. People commit this joyless sin day and night without any reason.

Some commentators interpret the word '*ism*' does not mean 'name' in this verse. Instead, they say, it is referring to the *Dhāt* or the 'Being' of Allah. According to the Arabic expressions, this interpretation is not unlikely, and the Qur'ān has used the word '*ism*' in that sense also. The Ḥadīth that instructs us to recite the *tasbīḥ* in *sajdah* [prostration] is not "I pronounce the purity of the name of my most exalted Lord, but "I pronounce the purity of my most exalted Lord". This indicates that in this context '*ism*' is not used in the sense of 'name' but it refers to the Being of Allah Himself. [Qurtubī]

Subtle and Profound Wisdom in the Creation of the Universe

الَّذِي خَلَقَ فَسَوَّى وَالَّذِي قَدَّرَ فَهَدَى (who created [everything], then made [it] well, and who determined a measure [for everything], then guided [it]...87:2,3). All these are the attributes of the 'Most Exalted Lord'. The first attribute is *khalāqa* which does not simply mean 'to make' or 'manufacture'. It has a deeper significance: 'to bring out something from pure non-existence into the realm of existence without the help of any pre-existing matter'. (This is the correct meaning of 'creation'. If something is made with the help of some pre-existing matter, it cannot be called 'creation' in its original sense.) This is not within the power of anyone else. Only the perfect power of Allah can bring things into existence, whenever He wills, without the help of any pre-existing matter.

The second attribute, which is connected with *takhliq* (creation), is *sawwā*. This word is derived from *taswiyah*, and it literally means 'to make well or equal'. The verse signifies that Allah made the constitution of everything symmetrical or made it congruously consistent in its several parts, the body structure, shape and size, limbs and organs. Man and every other animal is adapted to the requirements of wisdom. The hands and legs, the tips of the fingers and toes have joints with different types of springy connective tissues that make it possible to bend and fold in different ways. If we look at another limb or organ of human body, its symmetry and balance baffles our imagination and is sufficient for us to believe in the consummate wisdom and power of the Creator of the universe.

The third attribute is *qaddara* which is derived from *taqdīr* and it means 'to determine; to measure; to balance; to design symmetrically; to decree/ decide'. The word is used in the last sense here. The verse purports to say that things in the world have not been created without purpose. Everything has been created for a specific purpose, and has been endowed with natural capacities to fit its function. If we look carefully, the principle does not apply only to specific species. Every member of the universe has been assigned a specific function to perform. We witness the manifestation of the assignments in the sky, the stars, lightning, rain, humans, animals, vegetation and minerals.

Maulānā Rūmī رحمه الله تعالى says:

خاک و باد و آب و آتش بنده اند..... با من و تو مُردہ با حق زندہ اند

"The earth, the wind, the water and the fire—all of them are slaves of Allah.

According to me and you, they are senseless, but according to Allah, all of them are alive and sensible.

Allah has especially geared man and every species of animals to do particular works and they perform them according to their natural inclination, and their predisposition pivots around their respective tasks.

ہر کچے راہر کارے ساختند..... میل اور اور دلش اند اختند

Allah has created everything for a particular purpose
And has filled its heart with inclination towards it.

The fourth attribute of Allah is *fa-hadā* 'then guided it'. In other words, The Creator of the universe did not create things and left them to their own mercy to perform their particular function as they like, but they are shown the way in which they should be performed. As a matter of fact, He guided the entire creation by equipping each member of it with suitable nature to function for which it was created, whether the member is the sky or celestial creation, or it is the earth or the earthly creation. They all possess a special type of sense, though it is of a lower than that of man. The Qur'an says:

رَبُّنَا الَّذِي أَعْطَى كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلْقَهُ، ثُمَّ هَدَى

'Our Lord is He Who gave to each thing its form and nature, then guided it aright . [20:50]'

As a result, since the inception of their creation, the skies, the earth, the stars and planets, mountains and oceans are all performing their functions accurately, without any failure or deviation. Humans and animals, in particular, whose intellect and sensibility can be observed easily, have been invested with capabilities of fulfilling their minute needs and repelling harmful things in a way that baffles the one who thinks about it. Since man possesses sense and intelligence of a higher degree, his capabilities may not be so much surprising, but let us look into wild animals, ferocious animals or beasts of prey, birds and insects. Each and everyone of them is able to obtain its necessities of life. They are able to find their habitats. They have not acquired the skills of fulfilling their individual and communal needs through a teacher that may educate or train them, nor did they need any school or college to acquire this knowledge and skill. Their education and training comes directly from the Creator of the universe. It is this divine guidance that has been referred to in the Holy Qur'an by saying,

رَبُّنَا الَّذِي أَعْطَى كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلْقَهُ، ثُمَّ هَدَى

'Our Lord is He Who gave to each thing its form and nature, then guided it aright . [20:50]'

and in this Sūrah thus:

وَالَّذِي قَدَّرَ فَهَدَى

'and who determined a measure (for everything), then guided (it), [3]'

The Knowledge of Science is a Divine Gift to Man

Allah has equipped man with the higher order of intelligence and sense. The entire universe is made subservient to him, __the earth, mountains and oceans and everything created therein are made to serve man and created for his benefit. However, full advantage of them is not possible unless man acquires knowledge and skill to put various things together and produce a new item. Nature has provided man with intelligence and understanding to excavate mountains and dive into the oceans to obtain minerals and marine objects. He composes certain items like wood, iron, steel, copper, brass and so on and makes new items of his need. This knowledge and technology is not dependent on scientific research and college or university education. Even illiterate people have been doing this since the inception of human existence . This is intrinsic science that Allah has endowed upon man as a natural gift. Later, man developed the capability of doing technical and scientific research. He thus made progress in various fields of science and technology. The capability to do this is also a Divine gift.

Obviously, science and technology does not create anything, but it merely shows the way to use the created things. The initial knowledge about their use is taught by Allah, but there is a wide scope to make progress in it by the capabilities Allah has bestowed to man, the manifestation of which we are witnessing in this scientific age day by day, and what further range of these abilities and talents will manifest in future is unknown. All this is the interpretation of *hadā* '[He] guided (it), [3] In other words, Allah has placed in them potentials and capabilities to perform their natural functions. But alas! the scientists are getting more and more negligent, rather blind to these realities day by day.

وَالَّذِي أَخْرَجَ الْمَرْعَىٰ. فَجَعَلَهُ غُثَاءً أَحْوَىٰ (and who brought forth pasturage, then turned it into a blackening stubble....87:4, 5)

The word *mar'ā* means 'pasturage'. This is the land that has grass growing on it, and that is used for animals to graze. The word *ghuthā'* refers to 'stubble, and scum borne upon the surface of a torrent'. The word *aḥwā* is derived from the root *ḥuwwah* which refers to 'a kind of black colour that comes upon a dense vegetation'. The verse purports to depict the Divine power and wisdom related to herbage and vegetation. He grows the green vegetation and then He gradually turns it into black

colour, and it loses its freshness. This directs man's attention also to his end. His body radiating with health, beauty, smartness and alertness is a Divine gift, but its tenure of life is limited. Eventually it will come to an end.

إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ سَنُقَرِّئُكَ فَلَا تَنْسَى. (We will make you recite, then you will not forget, except that which Allah wills. Indeed He knows what is manifest and what is hidden....87:6,7). In the preceding verses, Allah depicted the manifestation of His Omnipotence and [profound] wisdom. Thereafter, a few guidelines are given to the Holy Prophet ﷺ regarding his prophetic obligation. Before putting forth the guidelines, he is given the cheerful news of making his task easier. When the Qur'an was revealed initially, and as Jibra'il عليه السلام began to recite, the Holy Prophet ﷺ made haste to repeat, lest any word or sentence should be lost. He was, therefore, told not to make haste with it, and to wait until the angel had delivered the whole message, and then to repeat the words of the revelation, being assured that it was a Divine arrangement, and that nothing would be lost. On this occasion, he is still more plainly told: 'then you will not forget, except that which Allah wills.'

While Allah made the Holy Prophet ﷺ remember all of the Qur'an, there were certain verses which Allah made him forget, because they had been abrogated. This was done by Allah's command, and is not done without reason. There are several ways in which this is done. One way of doing this is that a second clear injunction is revealed contrary to the first injunction. Another way of abrogating a particular verse is to obliterate a verse from the memory of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the memory of all other Muslims, as stated in:

مَا نَنْسَخْ مِنْ آيَةٍ أَوْ نُنسِهَا

'Whenever We abrogate a verse or cause it to be forgotten.
[2:106]'

Some scholars interpret the exceptive sentence 'except that which Allah wills' differently. They say that for some reason Allah blots out temporarily a verse from Holy Prophet's ﷺ memory, but he may remember it again, in support of which the following narrative may be adduced: One day the Holy Prophet ﷺ recited a Sūrah, but omitted one of the verses. Sayyidnā Ubayy Ibn Ka'b رضي الله عنه, one of the Prophet's scribes,

was present. He thought it might have been abrogated. On inquiry, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that it was not abrogated, but that it was omitted by mistake. [Qurtubī]. In this interpretation, it may be summarised that forgetting a verse temporarily, and then remembering it again, does not go against the promise made in this verse. [In fact, it is an exception from this promise.] Allah knows best!

وَنُيَسِّرْكَ لِلْيُسْرَى (And We will facilitate for you [to reach] the easiest way....87:8). The phrase 'the easiest way' refers to the sacred laws of Islam. Apparently, according to the demand of the context, it should have been stated 'We will make the Shari'ah easy for you'. But the Qur'an chose, instead, to state 'And We will facilitate for you (to reach) the easiest way. [8]'. The reason for that, probably, is to indicate that Allah will predispose him to the sacred laws, so that they will become part of his nature, and he will become an embodiment of Shari'ah.

فَذَكِّرْ إِن نَّفَعَتِ الذِّكْرَى (So, extend advice [to people] if advice is useful....87:9) The preceding verses described the facilities created by Allah for the Holy Prophet ﷺ in performing his Prophetic obligation. This verse commands him to perform his obligation. The verse contains the conditional particle '*in*' (if) that apparently makes the sentence a conditional statement. But, in fact, the command is not intended to be made conditional. It is rather an emphatic statement. This is similar to the grammatical phenomenon in many languages. The particle 'if' is sometimes used when something is always true. It is used for introducing a situation that always has the same meaning, result or effect. For example: "If you are a 'man' [obviously he is a man], then you will have to do this work," In neither of such sentences, the particle 'if' is conditional, but rather emphatic. Likewise, the verse purports to say that preaching truth and righteousness is certainly useful. Therefore, the beneficial thing should never be abandoned at anytime.

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ تَزَكَّى (Success is surely achieved by him who purifies himself,...87:14) The word *tazakkā* is derived from *zakāh*, the primitive meaning of which is 'to purify'. The *zakāh* of wealth is so called because it purifies the rest of man's wealth for him. In this context, the word *tazakkā* is used in a general sense, which comprehends the purity of faith and character, and purity of wealth.

وَذَكَرَ اسْمَ رَبِّهِ فَصَلَّى (and pronounces the name of his Lord, then offers prayer....87:15). This covers all categories of prayer, obligatory as well as supererogatory. Some commentators say that it refers especially to 'Id prayers. This interpretation too can fall under the preceding category.

بَلْ تُوْثِرُوْنَ الْحَيٰوةَ الدُّنْيَا (But you prefer the worldly life,...87:16). Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه says that people generally prefer the worldly blessings and comforts to the blessings and comforts of the Hereafter, because the former is visible and readily available, while the latter is invisible and unavailable readily. People unaware of reality preferred the visible to the invisible, which became the cause of eternal loss. In order to spare them the eternal loss, Allah, through His Messengers and Books, described to them the blessings and comforts of the Hereafter so clearly as if they can perceive them [through their sense organs]. It has been made plain to them that what they think is readily available and preferred, is actually fragile and will very soon perish. It is unwise to put one's heart into, or faith in, it and waste one's energy on it. Thus the Qur'an says:

وَالْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَى (while the Hereafter is much better and much more durable...87:17). The verse purports to warn those who prefer this life to the Hereafter that they should use their intelligence to find out what they have preferred and what they have abandoned. They are, first of all, made to realise that the highest degree of comfort and pleasure in this life is not free from the mixture of grief and hardship. In the second place, it is not permanent. We experience in our daily life that a king of today becomes a pauper tomorrow. A vigorous youth of today becomes old tomorrow. In the Hereafter, on the other hand, there will be freedom from both these defects. All its blessings and comforts will be 'much better' and they cannot be compared to the blessings and comforts of this life. Most importantly, it is *abqa* 'much more durable'.

Let us consider the following scenario: It is said to a person that there are two houses in front of him, one of which is a magnificent mansion, fully furnished and another an ordinary, substandard house, not properly furnished. He has the choice to take the mansion, but only for a month or two. Thereafter, he will have to vacate the mansion. Or he may take the underdeveloped house that he will own permanently. Which of the two houses a wise person will prefer? The answer is obvious that he will prefer the second option. On this analogy, one should prefer the blessings of the

Hereafter even if, for argument's sake, they are substandard, because they are permanent and eternal. But the fact is that they are not only permanent, but also much better and far more superior to the worldly comforts. In this situation only an unfortunate fool will prefer the blessings of this life to the bounties of the Hereafter.

إِنَّ هَذَا لَفِي الصُّحُفِ الْأُولَى صُحُفِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَى (Indeed this is [written] in the earlier divine scripts, the scripts of Ibrāhīm and Mūsā....87:18, 19] In other words, either all the themes of this Sūrah or its last theme, that the Hereafter is much better and much more durable than this life, was written in the earlier Divine scriptures. It is further explicated that this theme was written in the scriptures of Prophets Ibrāhīm and Mūsā (عليه السلام). Probably, it refers to other scriptures that were given to Prophet Mūsā (عليه السلام) before Torah. It is also possible that it refers to Torah itself.

Themes of the Scripts of Prophet Ibrāhīm (عليه السلام)

Ājurī transmits a narration from Sayyidnā Abū Dharr Al-Ghifārī (رضي الله عنه) that he inquired from the Prophet (ﷺ) as to the contents of the scripts of Prophet Ibrāhīm (عليه السلام) and the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) replied that they contained educating parables. A story is told in it about a tyrant king where he is addressed and told: You haughty, arrogant and oppressive ruler! I did not give you kingdom so that you may amass wealth, but I had given you power so that you may let the supplication of the oppressed against the oppressor reach me, because my law does not reject the supplication of an oppressed, even though it may be uttered by an unbeliever.

Another parable addresses the general public thus: A wise person should divide his time into three parts. One part should be reserved for the worship of his Lord and supplication to Him. The second part should be reserved for self-assessment of his deeds, and reflection on the Omnipotence and creation of Allah. The third part should be allocated for acquisition of livelihood and fulfilling the natural needs. It further imparts that a wise person should keep himself abreast of the circumstances of his time, and keep himself busy in performing his intended work. He should take care of his tongue. He who takes speech as one of his works, his speech will be confined only to the things of real need.

Themes of the Scripts of Prophet Mūsā ﷺ

Sayyidnā Abū Dharr Al-Ghifārī ؓ says that he then inquired from the Holy Prophet ﷺ as to the contents of the scripts of Prophet Mūsā ؑ and the Holy Prophet ﷺ replied that they contained lessons of wisdom. Some of them are as follows:

- I am surprised at the person who believes that he will certainly die, and yet he is lives happily.
- I am surprised at the person who believes in Divine destiny, and yet he is despondent and aggrieved.
- I am surprised at the person who experiences the vicissitudes of life and rise and fall of nations, and yet he is content with the world.
- I am surprised at the person who believes in the Reckoning of the Hereafter, and yet he abandons [good] deeds.

Sayyidnā Abū Dharr Al-Ghifārī ؓ says that he asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ whether anything from these scriptures was revealed to him, he replied in the affirmative and asked Sayyidnā Abū Dharr Ghifārī ؓ to recite verses 14-19 of this Sūrah. [Qurṭubī]

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-A'la
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Ghāshiyah (The Overwhelming Event)

This Sūrah is Makki, and it has 26 verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 26

هَلْ أَتَاكَ حَدِيثُ الْغَاشِيَةِ ﴿١﴾ وَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ خَاشِعَةٌ ﴿٢﴾ عَامِلَةٌ
 نَاصِبَةٌ ﴿٣﴾ تَصَلَّى نَارًا حَامِيَةً ﴿٤﴾ تُسْقَى مِنْ عَيْنٍ آنِيَةٍ ﴿٥﴾ لَيْسَ
 لَهُمْ طَعَامٌ إِلَّا مِنْ ضَرِيعٍ ﴿٦﴾ لَا يُسْمِنُ وَلَا يُغْنِي مِنْ جُوعٍ ﴿٧﴾
 وَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ نَاعِمَةٌ ﴿٨﴾ لِسَعْيِهَا رَاضِيَةٌ ﴿٩﴾ فِي جَنَّةٍ عَالِيَةٍ ﴿١٠﴾ لَا
 تَسْمَعُ فِيهَا لَاغِيَةً ﴿١١﴾ فِيهَا عَيْنٌ جَارِيَةٌ ﴿١٢﴾ فِيهَا سُرُرٌ مَرْفُوعَةٌ
 ﴿١٣﴾ وَأَكْوَابٌ مَوْضُوعَةٌ ﴿١٤﴾ وَنَمَارِقُ مَصْفُوفَةٌ ﴿١٥﴾ وَزَرَابِيُّ
 مَبْثُوثَةٌ ﴿١٦﴾ أَفَلَا يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَى الْإِبِلِ كَيْفَ خُلِقَتْ ﴿١٧﴾ وَإِلَى
 السَّمَاءِ كَيْفَ رُفِعَتْ ﴿١٨﴾ وَإِلَى الْجِبَالِ كَيْفَ نُصِبَتْ ﴿١٩﴾ وَإِلَى
 الْأَرْضِ كَيْفَ سُطِحَتْ ﴿٢٠﴾ فَذَكِّرْ إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُذَكِّرٌ ﴿٢١﴾ لَسْتَ
 عَلَيْهِمْ بِمُصَيْطِرٍ ﴿٢٢﴾ إِلَّا مَنْ تَوَلَّى وَكَفَرَ ﴿٢٣﴾ فَيَعَذِّبُهُ اللَّهُ الْعَذَابَ
 الْأَكْبَرَ ﴿٢٤﴾ إِنَّ إِلَيْنَا إِيَابَهُمْ ﴿٢٥﴾ ثُمَّ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا حِسَابَهُمْ ﴿٢٦﴾

Has there come to you the description of the Overwhelming Event? [1] Many faces on that day will be humbled, [2] working hard, exhausted. [3] They will enter

into the scorching fire. [4] They will be made to drink water from a boiling spring. [5] There will be no food for them except from a thorny plant [6] that will neither nourish, nor satisfy hunger. [7] Many faces on that day will be full of glamour, [8] well pleased with their endeavour, [9] in a lofty garden, [10] in which they will not hear any absurd talk. [11] In it there is a running spring. [12] In it there are couches, elevated, [13] and goblets, well placed [14] and cushions, arrayed [15] and carpets, spread around. [16]

So, do they not look at the camels how they are created, [17] and at the sky, how it is raised high, [18] and at the mountains, how they are installed, [19] and at the earth, how it is spread out? [20] So, keep on preaching; you are only a preacher. [21] You are not a taskmaster set up over them, [22] but whoever turns away and disbelieves, [23] Allah will punish him with the greatest torment. [24] Surely towards Us they have to return, [25] then it is Our job to call them to account. [26]

Commentary

وَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ خَاشِعَةٌ. عَامِلَةٌ نَّاصِبَةٌ (Many faces on that day will be humbled, working hard, exhausted...88:3). On the Day of Judgement, there will be two separate groups of people, believers and unbelievers, and their faces will be different. This verse describes the faces of the unbelievers. They will be downcast. The word *khāshi'ah* from the root word *khushā'* means 'to humble, humiliate, cast down'. This is the meaning of casting oneself down before Allah in prayer. People who did not cast themselves down before Allah in this world, their faces on the Day of Judgement will be downcast with humiliation and disgrace.

The other conditions of the unbelievers are *'āmilah* and *nāṣibah*. The word *'āmilah* from *'āmal* means 'to work hard' and *'āmil* or *'āmilah* in Arabic is used for 'a person who works continuously, so as to become completely tired'. The word *nāṣibah* is derived from *nasab*. This word also refers to 'one who toils unceasingly so as to become totally exhausted'. It seems that the latter two conditions of the unbelievers relate to this world, because Hereafter is not a realm in which one has to work to become so tired and exhausted. Therefore, Qurṭubī and other commentators are of the view that the humbleness of their faces relates to the Hereafter, but their working hard and being exhausted refers to their work in this world. Given this interpretation, the sense is that many unbelievers exert

themselves in their false rituals, and work hard in their presumed acts of worship in the world, as for instance the Hindu Yogis and many Christian monks do. They endure many difficulties in the devotional acts of worship sincerely in order to seek the good pleasure of Allah, but being on wrong and idolatrous ways, they are not acceptable to, or rewarded by, Allah. Thus their faces show signs of exhaustion in this world; and in the Hereafter they will show signs of disgrace and humiliation.

Sayyidnā Ḥasan Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى reports that when Sayyidnā 'Umar ؓ went to Syria, a Christian monk came to him. He was an old man, and on account of his religious exercises and great endeavours, his face was exhausted, his body was dry and his dressing was miserable. When Sayyidnā 'Umar ؓ looked at him, he began to weep. People asked him about the cause of his weeping. He replied: "I pity the condition of this old man. This poor soul worked so hard and showed such readiness to lay down his life to achieve a particular purpose (that is, to gain the pleasure of Allah) but, alas! He could not achieve it. Then he recited the following verse:

وَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ خَاشِعَةٌ. عَامِلَةٌ نَّاصِبَةٌ

Many faces on that day will be humbled, 'working hard, exhausted. [88:2-3]

نَارًا حَامِيَةً (...[the] scorching fire...88:4). The word *ḥāmiyah* literally means 'hot' and 'scorching'. Although this is the natural property of fire that needed no mention, yet the specific reference to this quality of the fire brings out the point that the fire of Hell cannot be compared to the fire of this world. The heat of the fire of this world, some time or the other, is reduced or ends. But the fire of Hell is everlasting and eternal. Its heat will neither reduce nor end.

لَيْسَ لَهُمْ طَعَامٌ إِلَّا مِنْ ضَرِيعٍ (There will be no food for them except from a thorny plant...88:6) The only food available for the inmates of Hell would be *ḍarī'*. In the world, this is a kind of thorny grass that spreads on the ground. No animal goes near it. It is foul-smelling, poisonous and thorny. [As interpreted by 'Ikrimah, Mujāhid, and quoted by Qurṭubī].

How will Grass or Tree Survive in Hell

One may ask the question that the grass or trees are among things that burn in fire. How will they survive in Hellfire? The answer is that

the Supreme Creator Who cherished and sustained them in this world with water and air, has the power and ability to make the fire itself the nutrient of these trees, so that they may flourish.

Another question may be raised here. The Qur'ān mentions several things as the food of the inmates of Hell. Here it refers to their food as *ḍarī'*. On another occasion, it refers to *zaqqūm*, and on a third occasion it refers to *ghislīn*. This verse restricts their food to *ḍarī'*, thus: 'There will be no food for them except from a thorny plant...88:6)

The answer is that the restriction in this verse is in contrast to a palatable food that may be fit for [human] consumption. *Ḍarī'* is cited here as an example. The verse means that the inmates of Hell will not get any palatable food. They will get worst, most disgusting and loathsome food like *ḍarī'*. Thus the purpose of mentioning *ḍarī'* is not restriction. In fact, *ḍarī'* includes *zaqqūm* and *ghislīn*. Qurṭubī says that it is possible there will be different levels in Hell, and on different levels there will be different kinds of food. On one level, there will be *ḍarī'* and on another level, *ghislīn*, and so on.

لَا يُسْمِنُ وَلَا يُغْنِي مِنْ جُوعٍ (that will neither nourish, nor satisfy hunger...88:7). When the preceding verse was revealed in which it was stated that the inmates of Hell will get food like *ḍarī'*, some of the pagans of Makkah [mockingly] said that their camels eat *ḍarī'* and yet they are fat and healthy. In response to their statement, the following verse of the Qur'ān was revealed which means that they should not compare the *ḍarī'* of this world with that of the Hereafter. The latter will neither provide nutrition, nor satisfy their hunger.

لَا تَسْمَعُ فِيهَا لَافِيَةً (in which they will not hear any absurd talk...88:11). It includes the words of disbelief, futile or idle talk, obscene language, calumny or false accusation, or any other talk that hurts people's feelings. On another occasion, the Qur'ān puts it thus:

لَا يَسْمَعُونَ فِيهَا لَغْوًا وَلَا تَأْثِيمًا

'They will hear neither an absurd talk therein, nor something leading to sin, [56:25]

This shows that false accusation and absurd talks are hurtful. That is why the Holy Qur'ān has described it as a blessing to the inmates of Paradise that no such foolish words will come across their ears that may

pollute their hearts.

Etiquette of Living

وَآكَوَابٌ مُّوضُوعَةٌ (and goblets, well placed...88:14) The word *akwāb* is the plural of *kūb* and it refers to a 'goblet', a 'glass' or a cup for drinking water. It has been qualified by the adjective *mauḍū'ah* and it means 'well placed'. This signifies that the glasses or cups or containers will be set in their due places close to water. This description opens an important chapter in setting down some of the rules of correct behaviour in social situations. The drinking containers for water ought to be placed near the water in the designated place. They should not be misplaced so that the other members of the household will have to look for them when they wish to drink water. This situation is irritating. Other household items of daily use, such as cans, glasses, towels, and so on, should be arranged in their designated places, and after using them, they must be kept back in their respective places, so that the other members of the household do not face any difficulty in finding them out. All this is deducible from the word *mauḍū'ah* 'well placed', because Allah has arranged the goblets near the water for the comfort of the inmates of Paradise.

أَفَلَا يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَى الْإِبِلِ كَيْفَ خُلِقَتْ (So, do they not look at the camels how they are created...88:17) The Qur'ān first described the conditions of the Hereafter; and it then went on to depict the reward of the believers and the retribution of the unbelievers. Now it turns attention to rebuff the obdurate unbelievers' foolish denial of the Hereafter. They reject it on the ground that after death and decomposition of the body and bones it is inconceivable that they would be recomposed and resurrected. For their guidance, Allah invites their attention to reflect carefully on a few of His Signs. There are uncountable Signs of Allah in the universe. These verses refer to four of them specifically which suited the condition of the desert Arabs. They often travelled through the desert. In such a situation, all they saw were camels they travelled on. They mounted camels and covered long journeys. Above them was the sky and beneath them was the earth. All around them [left, right, front and back] they saw mountains. The Arabs are commanded to ponder over these four natural phenomena which make Allah's might manifest.

Among animals, the camel has certain peculiar characteristics that can be a reflection of Divine wisdom and power. It is the largest, most

robust and durable animal. Although elephant is a much larger animal than the camel, Allah has mentioned the camel rather than the elephant, because the Arabs knew camels and scarcely saw an elephant. Despite the fact that a camel is such a huge animal, a Bedouin Arab will not find it difficult to look after it even if he is poor. If he is unable to gather or afford food for it, it has to be let loose and will gather its own nutriment and live on leaves. It has a long neck to reach the tops of the high trees. The food of elephants and other animals work out expensive. In Arabian deserts, water is a scarce commodity. It is not available everywhere or anytime. Yet it can survive for about a week without water as Allah's Power has provided it with a small narrow-mouthed pouch in its paunch in which it stores up extra water [which it uses up gradually for seven to eight days]. Thus it is a superb draught beast. Nature has created it uniquely, so that it is perfectly adapted to survive the hazards of the harsh climate of the desert.

There is no need to set up a ladder to climb up the high animal. Allah has divided its legs into three levels. Each leg has two knees that it manoeuvres to sit down so that it becomes easier for riders to climb up and down. It is the chief beast of burden in deserts, and as such, it is able to carry large loads. It is most difficult to travel in daytime in Arabia because of scorching sunlight. Allah has made it possible for the camel to keep on travelling the whole night. Camels are so obedient that that even a little child can lead them along anywhere. Camels are very valuable to them in many other ways that teach man that Allah is Omnipotent and has consummate wisdom.

In conclusion of the Chapter, the Messenger of Allah is comforted thus:

لَسْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِمُصَيِّرٍ (You are not a taskmaster set up over them,....88:22)
The Holy Prophet ﷺ is told that he is only a preacher, and as such he must keep on preaching. He should not worry beyond that. It is for Allah to call the unbelievers to Him to render account of their deeds and actions, and punish them accordingly.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Ghāshiyah
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Fajr

(The Dawn)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 30 verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 30

وَالْفَجْرِ ﴿١﴾ وَلَيَالٍ عَشْرٍ ﴿٢﴾ وَالشَّفْعِ وَالْوَتْرِ ﴿٣﴾ وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا يَسِرُ ﴿٤﴾ هَلْ فِي ذَلِكَ قَسَمٌ لِّذِي حَجْرِ ﴿٥﴾ أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِعَادٍ ﴿٦﴾ إِرَمَ ذَاتِ الْعِمَادِ ﴿٧﴾ الَّتِي لَمْ يُخْلَقْ مِثْلُهَا فِي الْبِلَادِ ﴿٨﴾ وَثُمُودَ الَّذِينَ جَابُوا الصَّخْرَ بِالْوَادِ ﴿٩﴾ وَفِرْعَوْنَ ذِي الْأَوْتَادِ ﴿١٠﴾ الَّذِينَ طَغَوْا فِي الْبِلَادِ ﴿١١﴾ فَاكْثَرُوا فِيهَا الْفُسَادَ ﴿١٢﴾ فَصَبَّ عَلَيْهِمْ رَبُّكَ سَوْطَ عَذَابٍ ﴿١٣﴾ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَبِالْمِرْصَادِ ﴿١٤﴾ فَأَمَّا الْإِنْسَانُ إِذَا مَا ابْتَلَاهُ رَبُّهُ فَأَكْرَمَهُ وَنَعَّمَهُ ۖ فَيَقُولُ رَبِّي أَكْرَمَنِ ﴿١٥﴾ وَأَمَّا إِذَا مَا ابْتَلَاهُ فَقَدَرَ عَلَيْهِ رِزْقَهُ ۖ فَيَقُولُ رَبِّي أَهَانَنِ ﴿١٦﴾ كَلَّا بَلْ لَّا تَكْرُمُونَ الْيَتِيمَ ﴿١٧﴾ وَلَا تَحْضُونَ عَلَى طَعَامِ الْمُسْكِينِ ﴿١٨﴾ وَ تَأْكُلُونَ الثَّرَاثَ أَكْلًا لَّمًّا ﴿١٩﴾ وَتُحِبُّونَ الْمَالَ حُبًّا جَمًّا ﴿٢٠﴾ كَلَّا إِذَا دُكَّتِ الْأَرْضُ دَكًّا دَكًّا ﴿٢١﴾ وَجَاءَ رَبُّكَ وَالْمَلَكُ صَفًّا صَفًّا ﴿٢٢﴾ وَجِئَاءَ يَوْمٍ يُؤْمَذُ ۖ بِهِ جَهَنَّمَ ۖ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَتَذَكَّرُ الْإِنْسَانُ وَأَنَّى لَهُ الذِّكْرَى ﴿٢٣﴾ يَقُولُ يَلَيَّتَنِی قَدَمْتُ لِحَيَاتِي ﴿٢٤﴾ فَيَوْمَئِذٍ لَا يُعَذِّبُ

عَذَابُهُ أَحَدٌ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَلَا يُوثِقُ وَثَاقَهُ أَحَدٌ ﴿٢٦﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ
 اَرْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً ﴿٢٧﴾ فَادْخُلِي فِي عِبَادِي
 ﴿٢٨﴾ وَادْخُلِي جَنَّتِي ﴿٢٩﴾

I swear by the dawn, [1] and by the Ten Nights, [2] and by the even and the odd, [3] and by the night when it moves away, [4] Is there (not) in that an oath (enough) for a man of sense? [5] Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with (the people) of 'Ad [6] of *Iram*, the men of tall pillars, [7] the like of whom were never created in the lands, [8] and (how He dealt) with (the people of) *Thamūd* who had carved out the rocks in the Valley (of *Qura*), [9] and with *Fir'aun* (the Pharaoh), the man of the stakes, [10] all those who had rebelled in the cities, [11] and spread a lot of mischief therein. [12] So, your Lord unloosed on them the whip of torment. [13] Surely your Lord is ever on the watch. [14] As for man, when his Lord tests him, and thus gives him honour and bounties, he says, "My Lord has honoured me." [15] But when he tests him, and thus straitens his provision for him, he says, "My Lord has disgraced me." [16] No! But you do not honour the orphan, [17] and do not encourage one another to feed the needy. [18] And you devour the inheritance with a sweeping gulp, [19] and love wealth, with an excessive love. [20] No! When the earth will be crushed thoroughly to be turned into bits, [21] and your Lord will come, and the angels as well, lined up in rows, [22] and *Jahannam* (Hell), on that day, will be brought forward, it will be the day when man will realise the truth, but from where will he take advantage of such realisation? [23] He will say, "O Would that I had sent ahead (some good deeds) for (this) my life!" [24] So, that day, no one can punish as He will punish, [25] nor can anyone shackle like He will shackle. [26]

(As for an obedient man, it will be said to him,) "O content soul, [27] come back to your Lord, well-pleased, well-pleasing. [28] So, enter among My (special) servants, [29] and enter My Paradise." [30]

Commentary

This Sūrah, by swearing five oaths in its beginning, emphasises the

following fact:

إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَبِالْمُرْصَادِ

Surely your Lord is ever on the watch. [89:14]

This means that Allah is watching over whatever you do, and reward or punishment for your deeds is certain and inevitable.

The first among the five oaths sworn at the beginning is Fajr (dawn). It may refer to the dawn of every day that brings about a great change in the world, and thus directs man's attention to the absolute Omnipotence of Allah. It is also possible that it refers to the dawn of some specific day. Commentators like Sayyidnā 'Alī, Ibn 'Abbās and Ibn Zubair رضي الله عنه say that the word is general, and it refers to any dawn. According to another narration of Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه, it refers to the dawn of the first of Muḥarram which is the start of the lunar-Islamic calendar. Sayyidnā Qatādah رضي الله عنه, among others, has interpreted it in the same way.

Some commentators, like Mujāhid and 'Ikramah, refer this to the dawn of 'the Day of Sacrifice' on the tenth of Dhul Ḥijjah. A narration from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه concurs with this view. The reason for this specification is that according to Islamic principles, Allah has made a night to precede the day. All days are preceded by their respective nights, except the 'the Day of Sacrifice', because the night that precedes the Day of Sacrifice is not the night of Sacrifice. In fact, the preceding night, according to Shari'ah, is the night of 'Arafah. Staying at 'Arafāt is the most important and foremost rite of Ḥajj. If a pilgrim is not able to reach 'Arafāt on the 9th of Dhul Ḥijjah, any time in the day or in the night following it to halt there for a while, he will not be considered to have performed Ḥajj at all. However if he arrives there any time during the night before the break of dawn on the 10th of Dhul Ḥijjah, his halt in 'Arafah will be acceptable and his Hajj will be considered valid. This shows that the day of 'Arafah has two nights, one preceding it, and another following it. The Day of Sacrifice [10th of Dhul Ḥijjah] has no night. From this point of view, the dawn of the day of Sacrifice, among all the days of the year, occupies a special position. [Qurtubī].

Next, it says:

لَيَالٍ عَشْرٍ (and by the Ten Nights...89:2) According Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās

ﷺ, Qatādah, Mujāhid, Suddi, Daḥḥāk, Kalbī and other leading commentators, the 'ten nights' refers to the [first] ten nights of Dhul Ḥijjah. It is recorded in Ḥadīth that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that the first ten days of Dhul Ḥijjah are the most meritorious days for Allah's worship. Every fast of the day is equivalent to fasts of the whole year. Worshipping Allah every night during this period is equivalent to worshipping Him on the night of Qadr. [Transmitted by Tirmidhī and Ibn Mājah with a weak chain of authorities from Abū Hurairah ؓ - Maḥzarī]. Abū-z-Zubair narrated from Sayyidnā Jabir ؓ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said : وَالْفَجْرِ وَلَيَالٍ عَشْرٍ (I swear by the dawn and by the Ten Nights' refers to the first ten days of Dhul Ḥijjah. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ said that these are the ten nights that are mentioned in the story of Prophet Mūsā ؑ: ... then We supplemented them with ten' [7:142]. Thus these are the ten nights in the whole year which are most meritorious. Imām Qurṭubī says that the Ḥadīth reported by Sayyidnā Jabir ؓ indicates that the ten nights of Dhul Ḥijjah are most meritorious, and that the same ten nights of Dhul Ḥijjah were designated for Prophet Mūsā ؑ.

وَالشَّفْعِ وَالْوَتْرِ (and by the even and the odd,...89:3). The Qur'ān has not specified what the words 'the even' and 'the odd' refer to. Therefore, the commentators have assigned different interpretations to them. Nevertheless, it has been mentioned in a Prophetic Ḥadīth narrated by Abū-z-Zubair from Sayyidnā Jabir ؓ thus:

(وَالْفَجْرِ. وَلَيَالٍ عَشْرٍ) هُوَ الصَّبْحُ وَعَشْرُ النَّحْرِ وَالْوَتْرُ يَوْمَ عَرَفَةَ وَالشَّفْعُ يَوْمَ النَّحْرِ
'Fajr' refers to the dawn, and 'the ten nights' refer to the first ten nights of Dhul Ḥijjah [which include the Day of Sacrifice], and that *al-watr* [the odd] refers to the day of 'Arafah [because it falls on the ninth] and *ash-shaf'* refers to the Day of Sacrifice [because it falls on the 10th day of Dhul Ḥijjah].'

Qurṭubī cites this narration and confirms that its chain of authorities is more authentic than the other tradition narrated by Sayyidnā 'Imrān Ibn Ḥusain ؓ which talks about odd [three] and even [two/four] units of prayers. Therefore, Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ 'Ikramah and Naḥḥās رَحِمَهُمَا اللّٰهُ تَعَالٰی have preferred the view that 'even' refers to the Day of Sacrifice and 'odd' refers to the day of 'Arafah.

Some commentators like Ibn Sīrīn, Masrūq, Abū Ṣāliḥ and Qatādah رَحِمَهُمَا اللّٰهُ تَعَالٰی said that 'even' refers to the entire creation, because Allah

has created them in pairs, and thus He says:

وَمِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَا زَوْجَيْنِ

'And from everything We have created (a pair of) two kinds
[51:49]'

- belief/disbelief, happiness/unhappiness, light/darkness, night/day, cold/heat, sky/earth, human/Jinn and male/female as against all of these pairs, Allah is the only One Being 'odd' that does not have a pair:

هُوَ اللَّهُ الْوَاحِدُ الصَّمَدُ

'He, is Allah, the One, Besought of all, needing none'

وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا يَأْسُرُ (and by the night when it moves away...89:4). The word *yasr* is derived from *sarā* and means 'to walk in the night' or 'travel by night'. The verse says when the night itself moves away. It signifies 'when the night departs and goes away.' After taking oath by these five items, the next verse says:

هَلْ فِي ذَلِكَ قَسَمٌ لِذِي حِجْرٍ (Is there [not] in that an oath (enough) for a man of sense?...89:5). An intelligent person is, in a very special style, invited to think and reflect. The word *hijr* literally denotes 'to prevent'. The intellect has been called *hijr* because it prevents the person from doing which is unbecoming of him – actions or statements. Are these oaths not sufficient for a man possessed of intellect, sound reasoning, understanding and religious discernment? This sentence is in the form of interrogation to awaken man from his slumber. The subject of oaths is implied, though not stated explicitly. The verse purports to say that when man considers into the Majesty of Allah and reflects on the greatness of objects of oaths, it would be confirmed and verified that everyone has to give account of his deeds, and reward and punishment in the Hereafter is sure. In this connection, reference is made to the destruction of three previous nations: [1] the nation of 'Ād; [2] the nation of Thamūd; and [3] the nation of Fir'aun (the Pharaoh). 'Ād and Thamūd are two nations whose genealogy link up with Iram. Thus Iram may refer to both, 'Ād as well as Thamūd. Here however with 'Ād only the name Iram is linked for genealogical reasons:

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِعَادٍ. إِرَامَ دَاتِ الْعِمَادِ (Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with [the people] 'Ād of Iram, the men of tall pillars...(89:6-7). The word

'Iram' in verse [7] is, grammatically speaking, either *'atf bayān* (syndetic explicative) or *badal* (complement). The purpose of the construction is to specify one of the two tribes of 'Ād. This statement specifies that it refers to *'Ad-ul-'ulā* (the early generation of 'Ād). A remnant from the former generation is referred to as *'Ā-ul-'Ukhrā*, because they are linked with their great-grand father Iram more closely than *'Ad-ul-'Ukhrā*. Here the Qur'ān refers to the first tribe as 'Ād Iram. In Surah An-Najm, they are described as: عَادِ الْأُولَى (the earlier 'Ād,) [53:50]

They are introduced here by the epithet: ذَاتِ الْعِمَادِ (the men of tall pillars)

The word *'imād* and *'amūd* means 'pillar'. The people of 'Ād are mentioned as the men of tall pillars because they were very tall in stature. They were a stronger and more powerful people than any other nations. The Qur'ān describes them explicitly, thus:

لَمْ يَخْلُقْ مِثْلَهَا فِي الْبِلَادِ (the like of whom were never created in the lands...89:8) The Qur'ān made it clear that this nation was the tallest and the strongest in their physical stature, but the Qur'ān did not state the exact measurement of the people because it was unnecessary [for Qur'ānic purposes]. Therefore, that detail has been left out. Israelite traditions, however, narrate such incredible reports about their stature, height and power that are difficult to believe. It is reported from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه and Muqatil that they were six yards or eighteen feet [5.46] tall. This too seems to be derived from Israelite reports. And Allah knows best!

Some commentators say that 'Iram' is the name of the 'paradise' which 'Ād's son Shaddād had built. The epithet 'possessor of tall pillars' [translated above as 'men of tall pillars'] is used for him. The [so-called paradise] was a lofty structure standing on tall pillars built with gold and silver and studded with jewels, gems and other precious stones, so that people may prefer an instant and ready at hand paradise instead of Paradise of the Hereafter. When this magnificent palace was ready for use, and Shaddād, together with the leaders of his kingdom, wanted to enter, Divine punishment overtook them. They, together with the palaces, were completely destroyed. [Qurṭubī]. In this interpretation, the verse refers to a specific punishment which descended upon the paradise built by 'Ād's son Shaddād. In the first interpretation, which the majority of

the commentators prefer, it refers to all the punishments that descended upon the nation of 'Ād.

وَفِرْعَوْنَ ذِي الْأَوْتَادِ (and with Fir'aun [the Pharaoh], the man of the stakes...89:10). The word *autad* is the plural of *watad* that means 'peg or stake or nail'. Fir'aun (the Pharaoh) is referred to as 'the man of the stakes'. There are several reasons for this. Majority of the commentators hold the view that he was so called because of the brute torture and cruel torment he inflicted on the people. When he was angry with people, he would hammer stakes into the ground and tie them to these, so that they could be tortured; or he would hammer stakes into their hands and feet, as they lay on the ground in the scorching heat of the sun, and leave them to the mercy of snakes and scorpions. Other commentators have recounted a lengthy story about his wife 'Āsiyah. She embraced 'Imān (the True Faith) and expressed it to Fir'aun (the Pharaoh). This angered him and he inflicted on her the same type of brute torture and destroyed her. [Maẓharī].

فَصَبَّ عَلَيْهِمْ رَبُّكَ سَوْطَ عَذَابٍ (So, your Lord unloosed on them the whip of torment....89:13). The punishment inflicted upon them as a result of their mischief is referred to here as a 'whip of torment'. It signifies that just as lashes are inflicted across different parts of the body, the torment these nations received was similar to it in that they suffered different kinds of punishment.

إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَبَالْمُرْصَادِ (Surely your Lord is ever on the watch....89:14). The word *mirṣād* or *marṣad* [is derived from the root *raṣada* which means 'to lie in wait or on watch']. Thus it means 'an ambush, or a place of observation; it is usually used for a place where persons have to travel through a pass in which someone is lying in wait to strike them'. The verse purports to say that Allah is ever watching and observing their movements and activities. No one should think that he could escape Divine torment, because all are under His authority and Power, and He may administer His punishment whenever He wills. Some commentators state that this verse is the subject of the five oaths mentioned taken in the first five verses of this Sūrah.

Wealth and Poverty are no Signs of One's Acceptance or Rejection

لَا يَقُولُ رَبِّي ۚ فَمَا الْإِنْسَانُ إِذَا مَا ابْتَلَاهُ رَبُّهُ فَأَكْرَمَهُ وَنَعَّمَهُ، فَيَقُولُ رَبِّي أَكْرَمَنِ وَأَمَّا إِذَا مَا ابْتَلَاهُ فَقَدَرَ عَلَيْهِ رِزْقَهُ

أَمَانٍ (As for man, when his Lord tests him, and thus gives him honour and bounties, he says, "My Lord has honoured me. But when he tests him, and thus straitens his provision for him, he says, "My Lord has disgraced me...89:15-16). The word 'man' here primarily refers to an 'unbelieving man' who may form any thought about Allah as he feels like, but in its general sense, the word may include a Muslim as well who has the same thought as an unbeliever. When Allah gives abundant wealth and good health to such people, the devil puts into their head two false ideas. First, they succumb to their baser instincts; they become haughty and arrogant; and they think that the wealth and health is the result of their superior intellect, personal capability, efforts and achievement. Secondly, they think that they are enjoying a favourable status with Allah. If they did not enjoy the favourable position with Him, they would not have been granted such an abundance of wealth. By the same token, if Allah curtails their sustenance i.e. they suffer some degree of poverty, they regard it as a curse from Allah, and complain that He is humiliating or dishonouring them, while they deserved honour and respect. The unbelievers and idolaters do hold such thoughts and ideas, as the Qur'ān has pointed out on many occasions, but it is regrettable that many Muslims nowadays fall into similar ideas. Allah refutes man's belief by the expression كَلَّا Kallā 'No/never!' The matter is not as he claims. Wealth does not indicate acceptance of a man by Allah, nor does poverty indicate rejection. [For indeed Allah gives wealth to those whom He loves and those whom He does not love. Likewise, He withholds sustenance /wealth from those whom He loves and those whom He does not love.] Often the matter is quite the contrary. Fir'aun (the Pharaoh) claimed godhead and lordship, yet he never suffered from any headache. Some of Prophets ﷺ were sliced, by enemies, into two pieces with a saw. The Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said that the poor refugees will enter Paradise forty years before the wealthy *muhājirs* (Immigrants). [Imām Muslim has transmitted it from 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar ؓ - Maḏharī]. In another narration, the Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said that whomever Allah loves, He keeps him away from the worldly luxuries as people keep away their sickly patients from water. [Aḥmad and Tirmidhī transmitted it on the authority of Qatādah Ibn Nu'mān__ Maḏharī].

Spending on the Orphan is not Sufficient. Their respect is also necessary

لَا تَكْرُمُونَ الْيَتِيمَ (No! But you do not honour the orphan....89:17). The

unbelievers are warned, in these verses, against some of their evil character traits. First, as is mentioned in this verse, they do not honour and treat the orphans kindly. The basic objective of the verse is that they deprive them of their rights, and do not spend on them what is due to them, but the expression used is that they do not honour them, probably to indicate that the requirement of Allah's gratitude, and also of humanitarian sense, is not only that the orphans are given their dues by spending wealth on them, but it is also necessary to honour them and treat them kindly. The guardians should not despise and look down upon their wards, and to discriminate them against their own children. This is apparently a rebuff to the unbelievers who think that wealth is an 'honour' and poverty is a 'dishonour'. After refuting their thoughts and ideas with the expression *Kallā* 'No/ never!', the verse under comment progresses to say *bal* 'But' that they are deprived of sustenance, because they squander it in immoral pursuits, depriving the orphans of their rights in it.

وَلَا تَحْضُوهَا عَلَى طَعَامِ الْمُسْكِينِ (and do not encourage one another to feed the needy....89:18). This is the second evil trait of the unbelievers. The style of this verse, in condemning the evil trait of the unbelievers, indicates that it is an obligation of the affluent to spend on the poor and indigent from their own wealth. Obviously, the poor are unable to spend owing to lack of means, but they should at least encourage others to feed the needy.

وَتَأْكُلُونَ التُّرَاثَ أَكْلًا لَمًّا (And you devour the inheritance with a sweeping gulp...89:19). The word *lamm* means to 'gather, amass, concentrate the thing'. This is the third evil trait of the unbelievers, and the verse signifies that they devour inheritance with voracious appetites however they can get it, whether by lawful means or unlawful means. They gather them all together to make a sweeping gulp. When someone passes away, they take their own shares, together with the shares of others, regardless of whether the shares belong to orphans, widows or people who are absent. [As a matter of principle,] it is not permitted to mix up lawful and forbidden wealth in any transaction. Here, however, 'inheritance' has been particularly mentioned, probably because having a greedy eye on it and pursuing it are a proof of man's greed and voracity for wealth. He stares at it like a beast of prey waiting for the person to die, and looking for the opportunity to distribute the estate. But an honourable man of

principle and a noble person would not look at the wealth of the deceased with greedy eyes.

وَتُحِبُّونَ الْمَالَ حُبًّا جَمًّا (and love wealth, with an excessive love....89:20). The word *jamm* means 'excessive'. This verse refers to the fourth evil trait of the unbelievers. They have an insatiable love for wealth. The word 'excessive' indicates that love of wealth in itself, in a sober sense, is a natural instinct of man. That has not been condemned here. What is denounced is the excessive or insatiable love of wealth. After describing the evil traits of the unbelievers, the passage reverts to the main theme that was emphasised in the earlier part of the Sūrah with five oaths, that is, the punishment of the Hereafter. In this connection, it first mentions the process of the end of the world, and subsequently the establishment of the Day of Resurrection, thus:

كَلَّا إِذَا دُكَّتِ الْأَرْضُ دَكًّا دَكًّا (No! When the earth will be crushed thoroughly to be turned into bits...89:21). The word *dakk* literally means 'to pound or crush a thing into bits and pieces'. This refers to the earthquakes that will crush and ground the mountains to dust. The world will thus be dissolved. This will be the first stage of Resurrection. When this stage of Resurrection ends, the second stage of Resurrection will begin. The word *dakkan* is repeated in order to show that there will be a series of earthquakes before the dissolution of the world.

وَجَاءَ رَبُّكَ وَالْمَلَكُ صَفًّا صَفًّا (and your Lord will come, and the angels as well, lined up in rows....89:22) They will arrive in the Plain of Gathering. The words 'your Lord will come' is an allegorical expression. No one, besides Allah, knows the nature of His coming. The words 'and the angels [will arrive] as well, lined up in rows' are clear in meaning.

وَجِئَ يَوْمَئِذٍ بِجَهَنَّمَ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَتَذَكَّرُ الْإِنْسَانُ وَأَنَّى لَهُ الذِّكْرَى (and *Jahannam* [Hell], on that day, will be brought forward, it will be the day when man will realise the truth, but from where will he take advantage of such realisation?... 89:23). No one, besides Allah, knows how exactly 'Hell' will be brought forward in the Plain of Gathering. Apparently, 'Hell' which is at the moment beneath the seventh earth will at that moment will flare up, and the oceans become part of the flame. In this way, Hell during the gathering will be in front of all.

يَوْمَئِذٍ يَتَذَكَّرُ الْإِنْسَانُ وَأَنَّى لَهُ الذِّكْرَى (it will be the day when man will realise the

truth, but from where will he take advantage of such realisation? - 89-23). The word *tadhakkur* in this context means 'to realise'. The unbelievers will realise the errors of their ways in the Hereafter, but it will be too late, because it is this present world where 'Īmān and good deeds benefit the people. The Hereafter is the place only for reckoning and retribution. Man will express his remorse thus:

يَقُولُ يَلَيْتَنِي قَدَّمْتُ لِحَيَاتِي (He will say, "O Would that I had sent ahead [some good deeds] for [this] my life!"....89:24). When he faces the torment of disbelief and idolatry on that day of devastation, man will lament that he should have carried out good deeds and refrained from sin in this world to be saved from punishment in the Hereafter. But it will be of no avail. Allah says: 'So, that day, no one can punish like He will punish, nor can anyone shackle like He will shackle....89:26] Having described the torment of the unbelievers, the conclusion of the Sūrah gives cheerful news to the believers that they will be admitted into Paradise. Thus it says:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ ("O contented soul...89:27). Here the soul of the believer is referred to as *nafs muṭma'innah* 'the contented soul'. The word *muṭma'innah* literally means 'calm'. It refers to the soul that is 'peaceful and tranquil' as a result of remembrance and obedience of Allah. When he abandons it, he feels restless. This is probably the same soul as is made pure, through spiritual exercises and discipline, from the evil traits and bad conduct. Obedience of Allah and His remembrance becomes his predisposition. Sharī'ah becomes his nature.

إِرْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكِ (come back to your Lord....89:28). The words 'come back' indicate that his first place was with his Lord, and now he is commanded to go back to Him. This confirms the narration that the souls of the believers, together with their Book of Deeds, will be in *'illiyīn*. *'Illiyīn* is a place on the seventh heaven in the shade of the Throne of the Most-Merciful Lord. This is the original resting-place of all human souls, from where they are brought out and put into human body. After death, the souls are returned to that place.

رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً (...well-pleased, well-pleasing....89:28). [The true believer's] soul is well-pleased with decrees destined by Allah and His legislative commands, and Allah too is well-pleased with His slave. The slave's being pleased with Allah's decrees and injunctions is a sign that Allah is pleased

with him. Had Allah not been pleased with him, he would not have had the ability to be pleased with Allah's decree. The true believer's soul is pleased even on his death at the moment of death. Sayyidnā 'Uḡādah Ibn Ṣāmit ؓ narrated from the Holy Prophet ﷺ, as follows:

من أحب لقاء الله أحب الله لقاءه، ومن كره لقاء الله كره الله لقاءه.

"He who loves to meet Allah, Allah loves to meet him; and he who dislikes to meet Allah, Allah dislikes to meet him."

When Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها heard this, she asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ: "We will be able to meet Allah only after death, but we do not like death." The Holy Prophet ﷺ replied: "That is not the case. The truth of the matter is that when death approaches a believer, the angels give him the cheerful news of Paradise and Allah's pleasure. This news makes death dearer to him. Likewise, when death approaches an unbeliever, the torment and punishment is presented to him. This situation makes the death a hateful and reprehensible thing to him." [Transmitted by Bukhārī and Muslim - Maḡharī]. In short, the love and hatred for death of the present time is not counted. What counts is [the love of] death, or [the love of] meeting Allah at the time of the extraction of soul [from the physical body] and [the love of] Allah's pleasure. This is the significance of the phrase: "Well-pleased, well-pleasing"

فَادْخُلِيْ فِيْ عِبَادِيْ (So, enter among My [special] servants...89:29). In other words, the contented soul will be addressed [compassionately], and first asked to enter the fold of righteous and sincere slaves, and then to enter Paradise. This indicates that entry into Paradise depends on their being, first and foremost, in the fold of the righteous believers. Then they will enter Paradise all together. This shows that joining the company of the righteous in this world is a sign that he will enter Paradise with them. Thus Prophet Sulaimān ؑ prayed:

وَادْخُلْنِيْ بِرَحْمَتِكَ فِيْ عِبَادِكَ الصَّالِحِيْنَ

'...and admit me, by Your mercy, among Your righteous slaves...[27:19]'

Prophet Yūsuf ؑ prayed:

وَالْحَقِّنِيْ بِالصَّالِحِيْنَ

'...and make me join the righteous. [12:101]'

The above supplications indicate that the company of the righteous is such a great blessing that even the Holy Prophets ﷺ cannot do without, as a result they pray for it.

وَادْخُلِيْ جَنَّتِيْ (and enter My Paradise.....89:30). In this verse, Paradise is attributed to Allah, and Allah said 'My Paradise'. This is a great honour, and indicates that Paradise will not only have all sorts of eternal comfort, but above all it is a place of Allah's pleasure.

The preceding verses describe the reward of the believers in such a manner that on behalf of Allah, the angels will address their souls honourably and in a befitting manner, as in the verses. It is not clear when they will be addressed. Some commentators say that they will be addressed on the Day of Reckoning after the reckoning is over. The context of the verses confirms this. The punishment of the unbelievers was described above. That will take place in the Hereafter after the Judgement has been passed. It is obvious that the believers will be addressed at the same time. Other scholars indicate that the believers will be addressed in this world at the time of death. Many authentic traditions bear testimony to the veracity of this view. Ibn Kathīr, on the other hand, reconciles the apparently conflicting statements thus: Allah will address the soul of the believers twice with these words. Once at the time of death, and again on the Day of Judgement.

Sayyidnā 'Ubādah Ibn Ṣāmit's ﷺ narration cited earlier supports the view that the address will be at the time of death. In a lengthy narration of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ﷺ, recorded in Musnad of Aḥmad, Nasā'ī and Ibn Mājah, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "When death approaches a believer, the angels of mercy bring to him a piece of white silk and say: اخرجى راضية 'Come out [from this body], well-pleased and well-pleasing, to Divine mercy and to the eternal comforts of Paradise' [to the end of narration.]" Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ says that one day he recited the verse يَا أَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ (O contented soul) in the presence of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, Abū Bakr ﷺ who was present in the assembly, said: "O Allah's Messenger, what a fine address and honour!" The Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "Behold, the angel will address you thus after your death."

A Few Strange Incidents

Sa'īd Ibn Jubair ﷺ reports that Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ passed

away in Ṭā'if. After the funeral was prepared, a strange bird, the like of which was never seen before, came and entered the body, but no one saw it coming out of it. When it was lowered into the grave for burial, an invisible voice was heard reciting from the side of the grave: **يَا أَيُّهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ** Everyone looked around, but could not find anyone. Another incident is recorded by Ḥāfiẓ Ṭabarānī in his book *Kitāb-ul-'Aja'ib*. He narrates with his chain of authorities, an incident about Fattān Ibn Razīn Abī Ḥāshim that once they were imprisoned in a Roman city. They were presented before their king. The king was an infidel. He coerced them to adopt his religion, and threatened them that if anyone refuses to comply with his command, he would be beheaded. They were a few people. Three of them feared for their lives, adopted his religion and thus became apostates. The fourth person refused to adopt the king's religion. He was beheaded and his head was thrown into a nearby river. When it was thrown, the head went to the bottom of the river. Later, it emerged from the water and came to the surface. Then it looked at the other three persons, and calling each one of them by name, recited:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ ﴿٢٧﴾ ارْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً ﴿٢٨﴾ فَادْخُلِي فِي عِبَادِي ﴿٢٩﴾ وَادْخُلِي جَنَّاتِي ﴿٣٠﴾

"O contented soul, [27] come back to your Lord, well-pleased, well-pleasing. [28] So, enter among My (special) servants, [29] and enter My Paradise." [30]

After that it dived back into the water.

This was an unusual incident which everyone witnessed and heard. When the Christians of that place witnessed this, almost all of them embraced Islam which shook up the king's throne. The three persons who had become apostates reverted to Islam. Caliph Abū Ja'far Maṣṣūr had them all released from their [enemy's] prison.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Fajr
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Balad

(The City)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 20 verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 20

لَا أُقْسِمُ بِهَذَا الْبَلَدِ ﴿١﴾ وَأَنْتَ حِلٌّ بِهَذَا الْبَلَدِ ﴿٢﴾ وَوَالِدٍ وَمَا وَلَدَ ﴿٣﴾
لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي كَبَدٍ ﴿٤﴾ أَيْحَسِبُ أَنْ لَنْ يَقْدِرَ عَلَيْهِ أَحَدٌ ﴿٥﴾
يَقُولُ أَهْلَكْتُ مَا لَا لُبَدًا ﴿٦﴾ أَيْحَسِبُ أَنْ لَمْ يَرَهُ أَحَدٌ ﴿٧﴾ أَلَمْ نَجْعَلْ لَهُ عَيْنَيْنِ ﴿٨﴾ وَلِسَانًا وَشَفَتَيْنِ ﴿٩﴾ وَهَدَيْنَاهُ النَّجْدَيْنِ ﴿١٠﴾
فَلَا اقْتَحَمَ الْعَقَبَةَ ﴿١١﴾ وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الْعَقَبَةُ ﴿١٢﴾ فَكُّ رَقَبَةٍ ﴿١٣﴾
أَوْ إِطْعَمٌ فِي يَوْمٍ ذِي مَسْغَبَةٍ ﴿١٤﴾ يَتِيمًا ذَا مَقْرَبَةٍ ﴿١٥﴾
أَوْ مَسْكِينًا ذَا مَتْرَبَةٍ ﴿١٦﴾ ثُمَّ كَانَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ ﴿١٧﴾
وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْمَرْحَمَةِ ﴿١٨﴾ أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْمَيْمَنَةِ ﴿١٩﴾ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
بِآيَاتِنَا هُمْ أَصْحَابُ الْمَشْأَمَةِ ﴿٢٠﴾ عَلَيْهِمْ نَارٌ مُؤَصَّدَةٌ ﴿٢١﴾

I swear by this city, [1] and (O Holy Prophet,) you are going to be allowed to fight in this city [2] and by the father and that which he begot, [3] Indeed We have created man (to live) in hard struggle. [4] Does he think that no one has power over him? [5] He says, "I have spent a lot of wealth." [6] Does he think that no one has seen him? [7] Did We not make for him two eyes, [8] and a tongue and two lips, [9] and showed him the two

ways? [10] Yet he did not make his way through the steep course, [11] And what may let you know what the steep course is? [12] (It is) freeing of the neck of a slave, [13] or giving food in a day of hunger [14] to an orphan near of kin, [15] or to a needy person lying in dust [16] then he did not join those who believe and advise each other to be patient and advise each other to be merciful. [17] Those are the People of the Right Hand. (i.e.their books of deeds will be given in their right hands) [18] As for those who reject Our verses, they are the People of the Left Hand. (i.e. their books of deeds will be given in their left hand.) [19] Upon them will be the Fire, enveloping them with closed exits. [20]

Commentary

لَا أَقْسِمُ بِهَذَا الْبَلَدِ (I swear by this city...90:1). The particle *lā* ('no') in the beginning of this sentence has no meaning here. Such particles in Arabic language are commonplace. However, the more appropriate view is that when a Sūrah begins with a *lā* (no) followed by an oath, it was revealed in refutation to a false assumption of the opponents. In other words, Allah is saying, 'No, what you [the unbelievers] are saying or thinking is not correct, but the truth is what We are swearing about...'. The word *al-balad* 'the City' refers to the Holy City of Makkah, as in Sūrah Aṭ-Ṭīn [95:3] where Allah swears an oath 'by this peaceful City [of Makkah] وَهَذَا الْبَلَدِ الْأَمِينِ'. The adjective attached to the 'City' is 'peaceful'. This shows the superiority and honour of Makkah over other cities. Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Adiyy رحمته الله reports that when the Holy Prophet of Allah ﷺ was migrating from Makkah to Madīnah, he addressed the city of Makkah and said: "By Allah, you are dearer to Allah than the entire earth. If I was not forced out of this place, I would never have abandoned you." [Transmitted by Tirmidhī and Ibn Mājah vide *Maḥzarī*].

وَأَنْتَ حِلٌّ بِهَذَا الْبَلَدِ (and [O Holy Prophet,] you are going to be allowed to fight in this city....90:2). The word *hillun* bears two possibilities: [1] It could be derived from *hulūl* which signifies to reside in or to descend on some place. In this sense, *hillun* signifies 'a dweller or resident' and the verse purports to say that the city of Makkah itself is sacred, and since Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ is the inhabitant of this city, it adds to the sanctity, honour and glory of the place. Thus, on account of the Holy Prophet's residing in that city its honour and sanctity has been enhanced and augmented. The second possibility is that it is derived from *hillatun*

which means 'the thing the doing of which is lawful'. From this point of view, *hillun* could signify one of two things: One that the pagans of Makkah consider it lawful to do the Holy Prophet ﷺ any harm, even to kill him, in this City of Makkah which is so sacred that the doing of harm to a living creature in its precincts, not to say of killing it or hunting it, is strictly forbidden even according to their own belief system. Secondly, this may be a prophecy that the city of Makkah is going to be made lawful for the Holy Prophet ﷺ in the sense that fighting in it will be allowed for him for a specified time, and He will alight in this City of Makkah, as it happened on the occasion of the Conquest of Makkah. On this occasion, all the injunctions and ordinances of the *haram* were suspended for one day, and it was made lawful to kill the disbelievers. Mazharī cites three possible meanings, and says that all three of them are equally possible.

وَوَالِدٍ وَمَا وَلَدَ (and by the father and that which he begot,...90:3) The word *walid* refers to Holy Prophet 'Ādam عليه السلام, the father of mankind, and the phrase مَا وَلَدَ 'that which he begot' refers to his children from the inception of the world to the end of the world. Thus this phrase swears an oath by Holy Prophet 'Ādam عليه السلام and all his children. The subject of the oath follows next, thus:

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي كَبَدٍ (Indeed We have created man [to live] in hard struggle...90:4) The word *kabad* means 'labour', 'toil' or 'difficulty'. The verse purports to say that man's life is a series of hard and toilsome works. Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه says: 'Man was conceived and held in his mother's womb. The mother bore the pangs of birth. The hardship of sucking the mother's milk and the difficulty of weaning. This is followed by seeking livelihood and other necessities of life with hardship. Then he endures hardships and long-suffering of old age, death, grave, resurrection, accountability of deeds before Allah, reward and punishment.' These difficulties and hardships are not confined to man. Other animals too share them. Man has particularly been mentioned in this connection because of his intelligence. The more the power of a creature's intelligence, the higher the degree of his legal obligation. Lastly, the greatest difficulty and hardship would be borne at resurrection and life-after-death, when we will be required to give an account of the deeds we might have done throughout our life. Other species of animals will not be required to do this.

Some scholars say that no creation suffers as much difficulties or hardships as human beings, despite the fact that his body is smaller and weaker than most other animals. Man's brainpower, however, is most powerful. Therefore, he has been specifically mentioned. Swearing an oath by Makkah, 'Ādam عليه السلام and his children, Allah has made it plain that man has been created in difficulties and to endure hardships. This is a proof that man did not come into existence on his own but his Creator is an All-Powerful Being who has, in His wisdom, created every species of creation with specific predisposition and capacity of actions. If man had any part in his own creation, he would never have allowed such difficulties and hardships for himself. [Qurṭubī]

Absolute Comfort, without Hardship, Is not Possible in the World: Man Must be Prepared to Endure Hardships

The oath and its subject makes plain to man that his desire to live peacefully and comfortably in this world, without enduring any hardship, is a silly idea and false notion, which is not possible to happen. Therefore, it is necessary for difficulty, hardship, distress and affliction to befall every person. Since they are bound to befall, a wise person should be in readiness to work hard for something that may help him for an eternal life. The only factor that will help him for this is faith and obedience to the Truth.

Then, after describing a few of the ignorant disbeliever's qualities, the following verse says about an unbeliever: *أَيَحْسَبُ أَنْ لَمْ يَرَهُ أَحَدٌ* (Does he think that no one has seen him?...90:7) that is, his evil deeds. He should realise that his Creator watches every action of his.

﴿٨﴾ وَلِسَانًا وَشَفَتَيْنِ ﴿٩﴾ وَهَدَيْنَهُ النَّجْدَيْنِ ﴿١٠﴾

(Did We not make for him two eyes, and a tongue and two lips,
and showed him the two ways?....90:8-10)

The word *najdain* is the dual form of *najd* which means an elevated or conspicuous road. The word *najdain* signifies the two high and conspicuous ways of good and evil, or of success and destruction. The preceding verse pointed out the ignorance and heedlessness of man. He thinks that Allah has no power over him, and that there is no one watching over his actions. The current verse mentions a few of the organs and abilities that Allah has endowed him with. If he reflects carefully on these endowments, he will appreciate His infinite wisdom and power within himself. He has a pair of eyes. The optic nerves and tissues are

rather delicate. They send nervous impulses to the brain when stimulated by light rays from external objects. The structure of the eye itself is most delicate. Each eye consists of a hollow, spherical capsule [eyeball], made up of several layers and structures. It is set into a socket in the skull, and is protected by eyelids and eyelashes, and eyebrows. It works like an automatic machine. When a harmful object is seen coming from the front, the eyelids close on their own. The eyelashes block the dust from getting into the eyes. The eyebrows help keep things away from falling into the eyes directly from top. The facial bones, especially the orbit [eye socket and the cheek bones], protect the eye, if one were to fall on one's face or something were to fall on the face.

The second gift that man is endowed with is the 'tongue'. This organ - the articulator - is the most amazing and important creation. It is the long piece of flesh fixed to the bottom of the mouth that can represent thoughts of the heart, the automatic and mysterious machine. The heart works in an amazing way. A thought occurs in the heart, the brain interprets it, and prepares appropriate topic and words. The words are uttered by the tongue. Such a complex task is performed so swiftly that the listener does not even realise how many systems have worked before the distinguishable sounds, letters and words were uttered. Nature has equipped man with two lips that play an important role in articulating the different sounds, letters and words. Nature has made the tongue such a swift-working articulator that within half a minute it may utter a word which may take him out from Hell and admit him into Paradise, as the word of faith, or may endear him to his enemy in the world, as by seeking forgiveness of his shortcomings. The same tongue within the same short span of time may take him to Hell, as by uttering the word of disbelief, or may make him his biggest enemy who was previously his closest friend, as by using obscene language against him. The tongue has many benefits as well as many ways of destruction. It is a double-edged sword that can operate against an enemy, and it can also cut one's own throat. Therefore, Allah has kept it covered within the case of two lips. Probably, this is the reason why the pair of lips is mentioned. The Creator Who has endowed man with tongue has equipped him with a pair of lips in order to protect it. Therefore, he should be careful in its use. He should not unsheathe it unnecessarily. Allah has equipped him with a pair of eyes, a pair of lips and a tongue, and has equipped him with the ability to distinguish good from evil and right from wrong, thus:

فَالْهَمَّهَا فُجُورُهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا

then inspired it with its [instinct of] evil and piety [91:8]

Thus in the first instance man receives guidance from his own conscience. This is supported by the guidance of the Holy Prophets عليهم السلام and celestial books that clarify it.

In sum, an ignoramus and heedless person, who denies the power of the Omnipotent, should look into his own being, he would be able to observe His attribute of perfect power and consummate wisdom. He should observe with his two eyes and confess with his tongue. He has been shown the two ways of good and evil; and of right and wrong so that he may choose between the two. Obviously, he should choose the good way. In his make-up, there exists the ability to take either way. All these bounties have not motivated man to attempt the steep course. Then the heedless man is warned that he should reflect on the clear proofs and arguments pertaining to Allah's Omnipotence, pertaining to the Day of Judgement, life after death and Reckoning, and believe in these articles of faith. This faith requires that man should be a source of benefit and comfort to others; he should abstain from hurting them; he should believe in Allah; he should amend his own conduct and think of reforming others also, so that, on the Day of Judgement, he may be among the people of the right hand, the inmates of Paradise, enjoying a happy recompense for what he has done in this life. The unfortunate ones who persistently denied the Truth shall be encircled by the Hell-fire. This theme has been taken up from this point onward to the end of the Sūrah. Failing to do a few of the good deeds have been [selectively] described in a unique style.

فَلَا اقْتَحَمَ الْعَقَبَةَ ﴿١١﴾ وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الْعَقَبَةُ ﴿١٢﴾

(Yet he did not make his way through the steep course. And what may let you know what the steep course is? ...90:11-12]

The word '*aqabah*' means 'hill, high place or a steep road'. It also refers to a 'low area of land between two hills or mountains, that is, a valley'. '*Aqabah*' helps a man in saving himself when pursued by an enemy by ascending the summit of the mountain, or in escaping by descending into the valley. Here the word '*aqabah*' refers to obedience and devotion. Just as it saves man from an enemy, righteous deeds save man from the punishment of the Hereafter. The righteous deeds are as follows:

فَكَرَّهَا ﴿١٣﴾ ([It is] freeing of the neck of a slave...90:13). This is a great

devotional act [and carries a great reward because] it moulds a man's life.

أَوْ إِطْعَمٌ فِي يَوْمٍ ذِي مَسْغَبَةٍ (or giving food in a day of hunger...90:14).

Although it is an act of great reward to feed any hungry person, it carries even a greater reward to feed certain people, as follows:

يَتِيمًا ذَا مَقْرَبَةٍ ﴿٥﴾ أَوْ مِسْكِينًا ذَا مَتْرَبَةٍ ﴿٦﴾

(to an orphan near of kin, or to a needy person lying in dust....90:15-16)

If an orphaned family member is given food to eat, its reward is two fold, for satisfying the hunger of a hungry person and for maintaining family ties and fulfilling his rights.

فِي يَوْمٍ ذِي مَسْغَبَةٍ (in a day of hunger...90:14). It means that feeding him in a day when he is hungry will attract more reward. If an orphan is not a close relative or family member, but he is so poor as to be wallowing in dust, spending on him will yield a greater reward. The poorer the person is, the greater will be the reward for the spender.

Obligations of a Believer

ثُمَّ كَانَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْمَرْحَمَةِ (then he did not join those who believe and advise each other to be patient and advise each other to be merciful...90:17). The verse points out that the doing only of good actions mentioned in the foregoing verse is not enough for raising the all round stature of the Muslim community. Good ideals and right principles, combined with continuous and sustained adherence to the path of moral rectitude and teaching of virtues to others, are equally essential for the attainment of the high aim. Thus the verse after 'faith' draws the attention of a believer to his socio-moral obligation to the effect that he ought to teach his other Muslim brothers to be patient and to be merciful. The word *ṣabr* signifies 'to withhold oneself from evil deeds and to act upon good deeds'. The word *marḥamah* signifies 'to show mercy to one another or to empathise with others and abstain from hurting them.' This embraces almost all the injunctions of the entire religion.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Balad
Ends here

Sūrah Ash-Shams

(The Sun)

This Sūrah is Makki, and it has 15 verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 15

وَالشَّمْسِ وَضُحَاهَا ﴿١﴾ وَالْقَمَرِ إِذَا تَلَّهَا ﴿٢﴾ وَالنَّهَارِ إِذَا جَلَّهَا ﴿٣﴾
وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا يَغْشَاهَا ﴿٤﴾ وَالسَّمَاءِ وَمَا بَنَاهَا ﴿٥﴾ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا طَحَاهَا ﴿٦﴾
وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا ﴿٧﴾ فَالْهَمَّهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا ﴿٨﴾ قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ
زَكَّاهَا ﴿٩﴾ وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسَّاهَا ﴿١٠﴾ كَذَّبَتْ ثَمُودُ بِطَغْوَاهَا ﴿١١﴾ إِذِ
أَنْبَعَثَ أَشْقَاهَا ﴿١٢﴾ فَقَالَ لَهُمْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ نَاقَةَ اللَّهِ وَسُقْيَاهَا ﴿١٣﴾
فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَعَقَرُوهَا ۖ فَدَمْدَمَ عَلَيْهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ بِذَنْبِهِمْ فَسَوَّاهَا ﴿١٤﴾ وَلَا يَخَافُ
عَقْبَاهَا ﴿١٥﴾

I swear by the sun and his broad light, [1] and by the moon when she follows him, [2] and by the day when it shows its brightness, [3] and by the night when it envelops him, [4] and by the sky, and the One who built it, [5] and by the earth, and the One who spread it, [6] and by the soul, and the One who made it well, [7] then inspired it with its (instincts of) evil and piety, [8] success is really attained by him who purifies it, [9] and failure is really suffered by him who pollutes it. [10] (The People of) Thamud denied the truth because of their transgression, [11] when rose up the one who was most wretched of them. [12] So, the Messenger of Allah said to them, "Be careful of Allah's she-camel and her right to drink."

[13] But they rejected him and killed her, so their Lord sent eradicating torment upon them, and made it equal for all. [14] And He has no fear of its consequence. [15]

Commentary

Allah swears by the objects and phenomena mentioned in verses [1-7], which gives these creations an added significance and draws man's attention to them. Man ought to reflect on these phenomena and try to appreciate their value and the purpose of their creation. The first oath is taken by:

وَالشَّمْسِ وَضُحَاهَا (I swear by the sun and his broad light,...91:1). The phrase 'and his broad light' is, though conjoined to 'by the sun' by means of the conjunctive particle 'and', the context indicates that 'broad light' is in adjectival position qualifying *shams* 'the sun', that is to say, 'I swear by the sun when it is in the time of forenoon. The word *duha* is that part of the day when the sun rises [early in the morning] and goes up slightly higher [on the sky], and its light spreads on the earth. Man observes it to be near to himself and observes it fully on account of lack of heat.

The second oath is taken by:

وَالْقَمَرِ إِذَا تَلَّهَا (and by the moon when she follows him,...91:2). This signifies one of two things: [1] The moon following the sun is seen clearly during the middle of the lunar months when the full moon rises to dominate the sky with its radiance after sunset. [2] The phrase 'when she follows him' could signify just as the sun is seen in full in broad light, so does the moon, following the sun, becomes full. The third oath is taken by:

وَالنَّهَارِ إِذَا تَجَلَّىهَا (and by the day when it shows its brightness...91:3). The attached pronoun *hā* 'its' may possibly refer to the earth or the world, although neither of the nouns precedes it. Such usage in Arabic is commonplace, especially if the phenomenon, such as the earth or the world, with which man is generally familiar. In such a case Arabs commonly refer to the phenomenon simply by using a pronoun without making prior reference to it. The addressee understands the meaning by implication. The Qur'ān has many examples of, and bears ample testimony to, this grammatical phenomenon. The verse thus signifies 'by the day and by the world or the earth which the day has brightened up'. In other words, 'by the day when it is fully bright'. Another possibility, which is more pertinent to the context, is that the pronoun 'its' refers to the 'sun' in which case it signifies 'by the day when it brightens up the

sun'. This relation of attribution, in this case, would be a metaphorical relationship. Although the sun is usually understood to be the cause of the day to come out, here the day is said to brighten up the sun. Thus the verse would signify 'when the sun is seen brightened up because the day is out'.

The fourth oath is taken thus:

وَالَّيْلِ إِذَا يَغْشَاهَا (and by the night when it envelops him,...91:4). In other words, when it [the night] sets in, the brightness of the sun is concealed [and only darkness prevails].

The fifth oath is:

وَالسَّمَاءِ وَمَا بَنَاهَا (and by the sky, and the One who built it...91:5). Most clearly the context suggests that the *mā* may be taken as infinitival particle [*masdariyyah*], signifying 'by the sky and its make ' as elsewhere in the Qur'an غَفَرَ لِي رَبِّي '...how my Lord has forgiven me [36:27]'⁽¹⁾

The sixth oath is:

وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا طَحَاهَا (and by the earth, and the One who spread it...91:6). The *mā* in this phrase too stands for *maṣdariyyah* or infinitival particle, signifying 'by the earth and its expanse'. The word *ṭaḥwun* means 'to spread'. Thus in the two verses above attention has been focused on the great Designer and Architect of the sky and earth [that is, the universe], and on the perfection and complete freedom from flaw or defect in the design and creation of the universe. Sayyidnā Qatādah رحمته الله and others reported this interpretation. Kashshāf, Baiḍāwī and Qurṭubī preferred this interpretation. Some of the commentators have taken *mā* in the sense of man 'the One Who' and refer it to 'Allah', signifying 'by the sky and its Maker and by the earth and One who spreads it. Thus far, all the oaths were taken by the created objects and phenomena. In between is taken oath by Allah. And Allah knows best! The seventh oath is taken thus:

وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا (and by the soul, and the One who made it well,...91:7) If, in this phrase, the particle *mā* is taken to function as infinitival particle, it signifies 'by the human soul and its perfection'. If *mā* is taken in the sense of *man* (مَنْ), it signifies 'by the soul and the One who proportioned it'. The

1. It should be kept in mind that the translation of the text is not based on this construction. It is based on taking '*mā*' as *mousulah* in the sense of 'the one' as adopted by Maulānā Thanawī, and explained by the author in the following verse.

word *taswiyah* means, to proportion, balance, perfect. The meaning of this word has been explained in the previous Sūrah.

فَالْهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا (then inspired it with its [instincts of] evil and piety...91:8) The word *ilhām* denotes 'to cast into the heart'. The word *fujūr* denotes 'open transgression'. The meaning of *taqwā* is well-known. This sentence is linked with the seventh oath 'وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا' and by the soul, and the One who made it well, [91:7]', signifying that Allah has equipped man with human soul which has the capacity to distinguish between good and bad, and right and wrong. In other words, in his make-up Allah has built in him a special ability to choose freely the righteous path or the sinful path. Whichever way he takes out of his own free will, he will be rewarded or punished. This interpretation is deducible from a traceable Ḥadīth which is transmitted by Muslim on the authority of Sayyidnā 'Imrān Ibn Ḥusain رضي الله عنه. The Holy Prophet ﷺ was sitting in the company of his followers. They asked him a question regarding Divine Destination. In response, the Holy Prophet ﷺ recited this verse. This verse will allay the doubt about Divine Destination only if the words 'then inspired it with its (instincts of) evil and piety, [91:8]' are taken in the sense that human soul has been inspired with conscience to distinguish between right and wrong, and has also been granted the ability to do good as well as the ability to commit sin. Man is not a creature of pure force or coercion. He has free will to choose his path of good or evil. He, in fact, has the option to do good or refrain from sin. The choice is his, for which he is rewarded or punished.

Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah and Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه report that whenever the Holy Prophet ﷺ recited the verses [91:7-8] under comment would stop and recite the following supplication aloud:

اللَّهُمَّ اِنِّ نَفْسِي تَقْوَاهَا اَنْتَ وَلِيُّهَا وَمَوْلَاهَا وَاَنْتَ خَيْرُ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا

'O Allah! Give my soul its good. You are its Guardian and Master, and the best to purify it.'

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسَّاهَا (success is really attained by him who purifies it, and failure is really suffered by him who pollutes it....91:10). This is the subject of the seven oaths. The primitive meaning of *tazkiyah* is 'inner cleanliness', signifying 'he who obeyed Allah and purified his inner and outer selves.' Verse [10] signifies 'he who caused his soul to sink in the swamp of sins will be deprived'. The word *dassa* is derived from the basic word *dass* which denotes 'to bury in the ground' as for instance it

occurs elsewhere in the Qur'an, thus:

أَمْ يَدُسُّهُ فِي التُّرَابِ

'...or put it away into the dust? [16:59]

Some of the commentators have analysed that the pronouns of *zakka* 'He purified' and *dassa* 'He caused to pollute' as referring to 'Allah', signifying that 'he is successful indeed whose soul Allah has purified and he has failed whose soul Allah pollutes'. This verse has divided the entire mankind into two groups: [1] successful; and [2] unsuccessful. An example of the second group has been cited to show how it rejected the message of Allah and consequently how Allah destroyed them. Such a group will receive severe punishment in the Hereafter. Sometimes, however, an instalment of punishment is meted out to them in this world as in the case of Thamūd. Their story is recounted fully in Sūrah A'rāf [S.7:73-79; S.11:61-68; S. 26:141-159; S.27:45-53; S..41:17-18; S.54:23-32; and S. 69:4-5]. Here a brief reference is made to that story and their punishment.

فَدَمْدَمَ عَلَيْهِمُ رَبُّهُمْ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ فَسَوَّاهَا (... so their Lord sent eradicating torment upon them, and made it equal for all. And He has no fear of its consequence....91:14-15). The word *damdama* refers to such tormenting scourge as is unleashed on a person or a nation again and again, until it destroys or crushes them completely. *Fa-sawwāhā* signifies that the scourge overtook the entire nation, men, women, children, and young and old.

In conclusion, the verse says: وَلَا يَخَافُ عُقْبَاهَا 'Allah has no fear of its consequence'. It means that Divine torment that destroys a nation completely cannot be compared to the torment inflicted by the greatest king of this world, because a tyrant king who destroys his people on a large scale, fears for his life, lest the survivors or the supporters of the people destroyed should revenge on him and rebel against him. Whoever destroys others is himself in danger of avenge. Those who attack others must necessarily bear the brunt of counter-attack except Allah. When a people incur Divine punishment and are thus destroyed, Allah has no fear from any one.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Ash-Shams
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Lail

(The Night)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 21 verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 21

وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا يَغْشَى ﴿١﴾ وَالنَّهَارِ إِذَا تَجَلَّى ﴿٢﴾ وَمَا خَلَقَ الذَّكَرَ
وَالْأُنثَى ﴿٣﴾ إِنَّ سَعْيَكُمْ لَشَتَّى ﴿٤﴾ فَمَا مِنْ آعْطَى وَآتَقَى ﴿٥﴾
وَصَدَّقَ بِالْحُسْنَى ﴿٦﴾ فَسَنِيْسِرُهُ لِلْيُسْرَى ﴿٧﴾ وَأَمَا مِنْ بَخِلَ
وَاسْتَغْنَى ﴿٨﴾ وَكَذَّبَ بِالْحُسْنَى ﴿٩﴾ فَسَنِيْسِرُهُ لِلْعُسْرَى ﴿١٠﴾
وَمَا يُغْنِي عَنْهُ مَالُهُ إِذَا تَرَدَّى ﴿١١﴾ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا لَلْهُدَى ﴿١٢﴾ وَإِنَّ لَنَا
لَلْآخِرَةَ وَالْأُولَى ﴿١٣﴾ فَأَنْذَرْتُكُمْ نَارًا تَلَظَّى ﴿١٤﴾ لَا لَصْلِبَهَا إِلَّا
الْأَشْقَى ﴿١٥﴾ الَّذِي كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلَّى ﴿١٦﴾ وَسَيُجَنَّبُهَا الْأَتْقَى ﴿١٧﴾
الَّذِي يُؤْتِي مَالَهُ يَتَزَكَّى ﴿١٨﴾ وَمَا لِأَحَدٍ عِنْدَهُ مِنْ نِعْمَةٍ تُجْزَى ﴿١٩﴾
إِلَّا ابْتِغَاءَ وَجْهِ رَبِّهِ الْأَعْلَى ﴿٢٠﴾ وَلَسَوْفَ يَرْضَى ﴿٢١﴾

I swear by the night when it covers (the sun), [1] and by the day when it is unveiled, [2] and by the One who created the male and the female, [3] your efforts are diverse: [4] As for the one who gives (in charity) and fears Allah, [5] and believes in the best (religion), [6] We will facilitate for him the way to extreme ease (i.e. the comforts of Paradise). [7] But the one who is miser and deems himself self-sufficient, [8] and rejects the best

(religion), [9] for him We will facilitate the way to extreme distress. [10] And his wealth will not help him when he will fall down (into Hell). [11] Of course, it is undertaken by Us to guide, [12] and in Our control is the Hereafter and the worldly life. [13] So I have warned you of a blazing fire. [14] None will enter it but the wretched one [15] who rejected (the truth) and turned away (from it). [16] And saved from it will be the most God-fearing one, [17] who gives his wealth (in charity) to become purified, [18] while no one has conferred any favour on him for which he would give a return, [19] but (he gave his wealth in charity) only to seek the Countenance of his Lord, the Most High. [20] And surely he will soon be happy. [21]

Commentary

إِنَّ سَعْيَكُمْ لَشَتَّى (your efforts are diverse....92:4). This statement is like the statement in Sūrah Inshiqāq, verse [6]:

إِنَّكَ كَادِحٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ كَدًّا

'O man, you have to work hard constantly to reach your Lord.
[84:6]

which has already been explained in that Sūrah. The sense is that man, by his nature, is used to making efforts for one objective or another. But the nature and the results of these efforts are different. Some people work hard for an objective that brings eternal happiness to them, and others work hard for an objective that makes them suffer eternal perdition. It is reported in a Tradition that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Each morning when a man gets up, he goes to conduct his business and keeps himself busy. His business is either successful and emancipates himself from Hell, or unsuccessful and his efforts become the cause of his destruction." Therefore, a wise person should first apply his mind to think whether his efforts will pay dividends, and he should never undertake those efforts that bring about temporary comfort and pleasure, but eternal perdition and grief.

The Two Diverse Types of Human Efforts Divide Humankind into Two Groups

The Qur'ān further shows that, broadly speaking, the humankind may be divided into two opposing groups in terms of their opposing efforts. Each of the two groups are characterised by three qualities. The

first group is a successful one, and its three characteristics are: [1] they give in charity in the cause of Allah; [2] fear Allah and avoid violating the injunctions of Allah in every aspect of life; and [3] believe in the 'best word'. The 'best words' refer to the credo of 'there is no god but Allah' [as Ibn 'Abbās, Ḍaḥḥāk  have explained]. Testifying to the *kalimah* signifies 'to profess the True Faith'. Faith or belief is the essence of all actions, and comes first in order of rank, but on this occasion, it is mentioned last, probably because the main theme in this context is that of physical exertion, efforts and actions. 'Īmān or faith, on the other hand, pertains to the heart. It signifies the acceptance and confirmation of Allah and His Messenger with one's heart. Confession of this must be made by means of reciting *kalimah shahādah* 'testimony of faith'. Obviously, none of these things involve physical exertion or effort, nor are they generally counted as actions.

The second group is [the unsuccessful one] and its three characteristics are: [1] they are misers to such an extent that they even fail to pay the *zakāh* and other obligatory alms; [2] they deem themselves self-sufficient rather than obeying Allah; and [3] they reject the 'best word' [that is, the *kalimah* of 'Īmān]. Referring to the first group, the verse says:

فَسَنِيِّرُهُ لَيْسُرَى (We will facilitate for him the way to extreme ease [i.e. the comforts of Paradise]...92:7). The word *yusrā* literally denotes 'ease and comfort' or a thing in which there is no difficulty, but here it refers to "Paradise". Likewise, referring to the second group it says:

فَسَنِيِّرُهُ لَيْعُسَى (for him We will facilitate the way to extreme distress...92:10). The opposite of *yusrā* is '*usrā*' which literally denotes 'extreme distress, referring to "Hell"'. The two statements signify that those who exert their efforts in the first three acts, that is, spending in the cause of Allah, fearing Allah and testifying to the *kalimah*, Allah will pave their way to extreme ease, that is, to deeds that will lead them to the comforts of Paradise. On the other hand, those who exert their efforts in the latter three acts, Allah will pave their way to extreme distress, that is, make easy for them to perform deeds that will lead them to Hell. By right, here it should have been said that the deeds of Paradise or Hell are made easy for them, because 'easy' or 'difficult' qualify deeds, and not persons or people. But the Qur'ān says that the people or the people themselves

will be made easy to do the deeds. This probably implies that the first group will be predisposed to behave in a particular way that behaving otherwise will make them feel uneasy. The second group will be predisposed to behave in a way that will make them feel comfortable to do deeds of Hell, and they will feel uneasy doing deeds of Paradise. Each of these two groups will have their own nature and predisposition, and will find it easier to behave in that particular way. A Ḥadīth confirms that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

اعملوا فكل ميسر لما خلق له، أما من كان من اهل السعادة فييسر لعمل السعادة
وأما من كان من اهل الشقاوة فييسر لعمل اهل الشقاوة

"Perform deeds, for everyone will have the deeds of what he was created for [Paradise or Hell] made easy for him. Those people who are the people of happiness, they will have the deeds of the people of happiness made easy for them. And those who are the people of misery, they will have the deeds of the people of misery made easy for them."

But both these things are the results of the use of the God-given choice and free will. Therefore, man is rewarded or punished.

Thereafter the unfortunate inmates of Hell are warned, thus:

وَمَا يَنْصُرُهُ مَالُهُ إِذَا تَرَدَّى (And his wealth will not help him when he will fall down...92:11). The word *taraddā* literally denotes 'to fall into a pit and perish'. The expression 'When he fall' signifies that when Divine decree regarding his destruction comes into operation, nothing - not even his wealth - will save him, whether in grave after his death, or on the Day of Judgement, when he will be falling into the abyss of Hell.

لَا يَدْخُلُهَا إِلَّا الْأَشْقَى. الَّذِي كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلَّى (None will enter it but the wretched one who rejected [the truth] and turned away....92:16). This describes the fire of Hell. It is quite clear that only a *kāfir* will reject Allah and His Messenger. Apparently, it seems that a sinful believer who does not reject the truth will not enter Hell, whereas the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth are replete with clear texts that a sinful believer will enter Hell, unless he had repented, or someone interceded for him, or was forgiven out of pure Grace. He will abide in Hell until he has received punishment for the sins he has committed. After paying for his sins, he will be taken out of Hell, and through the blessings of his faith, he will be admitted into Paradise.

Apparently, the wordings of the verse are contrary to this interpretation. Therefore, it is necessary that the interpretation of the verse under comment be brought in line with other Qur'ānic verses and authentic Aḥādīth. Its plain and simple interpretation would be that this verse refers to entering the Hell for good, which is peculiar to the unbelievers. They will be tortured eternally in the Hell-fire. The sinful believers, on the other hand, will receive punishment for their sins and will eventually - at some time or the other - be taken out of Hell. Other scholars of Tafsīr have given some other interpretations too, which can also be appropriate. Tafsīr Maḥzarī has come up with another explanation according to which 'the wretched one' and 'the most God-fearing one' should not be taken in its general sense. Both words refer particularly to people who lived during the blessed time of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. From amongst them, no Muslim, who lived at that time, will enter Hell through the blessings of the Holy Prophet's ﷺ company, even though he might have committed some sins incidentally.

All of The Blessed Companions will be Saved from the Ordeal of Hell

The reason for this is that the Companions rarely ever committed sins. Furthermore, even if they did commit sins, they must have repented by dint of the fear of the Hereafter - as their living conditions indicate . If any of them committed a sin, his good deeds are so many that they can wipe out the sin as the Qur'an says:

إِنَّ الْحَسَنَاتِ يُذْهِبْنَ السَّيِّئَاتِ

'...Surely good deeds erase bad deeds__[11:114]'

Adopting the company of the Holy Prophet ﷺ is an act that can outweigh all other good deeds. The Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said regarding the righteous members of the community:

هم قوم لا يشقى جلسهم ولا يخاف انيسهم

'The one who sits with them is never deprived, and the one who feels happy in their company is never unsuccessful.' [Ṣaḥīḥain]

Obviously, a person who sits in the company of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and is his intimate associate cannot be wretched. Therefore, there are express texts available in the authentic Traditions that all the noble

Companions are safe from the punishment of Hell. The Qur'an itself bears testimony that -

وَكُلًّا وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْحُسْنَى

'...and to each Allah has promised good [4:95]

Husnā in this statement refers to 'Paradise'. In another verse, the Qur'an says:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ سَبَقَتْ لَهُمْ مِنَّا الْحُسْنَىٰ أُولَٰئِكَ عَنْهَا مُبْعَدُونَ

Surely, those for whom the good (news) from Us has come earlier shall be kept far away from it. [21:101]

Husnā in this statement also refers to 'Paradise'. The pronoun 'it' in the phrase 'from it' refers to 'Hell', signifying that they will be far away from Hell. A Tradition says that 'Hell-Fire will not touch him who has seen me'. [Tirmidhī transmitted it from Jābir رضي الله عنه].

وَالَّذِي يُؤْتِي مَالَهُ يَتَزَكَّى (And saved from it will be the most God-fearing one who gives his wealth [in charity] to become purified,...92:17-18). This verse describes the reward of the most God-fearing person, as opposed to the punishment of the most wretched in the preceding verse. The word *atqā* is the superlative form and signifies a man of *taqwā*, that is, the most God-fearing person, who spends his wealth in obedience of his Lord in order to purify himself from sins, will be kept far away from the fire of Hell.

The wordings of the verse give good news, in general, to anyone who spends in Allah's cause in a state of faith, but the occasion of revelation indicates that *atqa* refers to Sayyidnā Abū Bakr Aṣ-Ṣiddiq رضي الله عنه in particular. Ibn Abī Ḥātim reports from Sayyidnā 'Urwah رضي الله عنه that seven Muslims had been enslaved by the Makkan disbelievers. When they became Muslims, they were persecuted in a variety of ways. Sayyidnā Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه spent a great amount of his money, and purchased them and set them free. Verses [17-21] were revealed on this occasion. [Maḏharī]

وَمَا لِأَحَدٍ عِنْدَهُ مِنْ نِعْمَةٍ تُجْزَى (while no one has conferred any favour on him for which he would give a return,...92:19) Sayyidnā Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه did this great favour by spending abundant wealth. The emancipated slaves had not done him any favour in the past, so that one could say that he was

returning their favour. He took this step for one purpose only as the verse says:

إِلَّا ابْتِغَاءَ وَجْهِ رَبِّهِ الْأَعْلَى (but [he gave his wealth in charity] only to seek the Countenance of his Lord, the Most High...92:20). Mustadrak of Hakim records that it was a usual practice of Sayyidnā Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه that he used to purchase Muslim slaves from the disbelievers and set them free whenever he found them in their bondage. Generally, these people were weak and helpless. Abū Qaḥāfah, the father of Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه, said to him: "Since you are emancipating slaves, why do you not set free strong and brave people, so that they may assist you in fighting the enemies and protect you." He replied: "My purpose of emancipating them is not to expect any benefit in return. My only purpose is to seek the pleasure of Allah." [Maḏharī]

وَلَسَوْفَ يَرْضَى (And surely he will soon be happy...92:21). Whoever spends in Allah's way with pure and good intentions of pleasing Allah, and not for any personal worldly gains, will acquire the pleasure of Allah in the Hereafter by achieving the wonderful and eternal blessings of Paradise. It is confirmed that these verses were revealed about Sayyidnā Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه. Therefore, this last verse of the Sūrah is a great and splendid news and honour for him given in this very world by Allah.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Lail
Ends here

Sūrah Aḍ-Ḍuḥā (The Forenoon)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 11 verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 11

۱ وَالضُّحَى ﴿١﴾ وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا سَجَى ﴿٢﴾ مَا وَدَّعَكَ رَبُّكَ وَمَا قَلَى ﴿٣﴾
وَلَلْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لَّكَ مِنَ الْأُولَى ﴿٤﴾ وَلَسَوْفَ يُعْطِيكَ رَبُّكَ فَتَرْضَى ﴿٥﴾
أَلَمْ يَجِدْكَ يَتِيمًا فَآوَى ﴿٦﴾ وَوَجَدَكَ ضَالًّا فَهَدَى ﴿٧﴾
وَوَجَدَكَ عَائِلًا فَأَغْنَى ﴿٨﴾ فَأَمَّا الْيَتِيمَ فَلَا تَقْهَرْ ﴿٩﴾ وَأَمَّا السَّائِلَ
فَلَا تَنْهَرْ ﴿١٠﴾ وَأَمَّا بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّكَ فَحَدِّثْ ﴿١١﴾

I swear by the forenoon, [1] and by the night when it becomes peaceful, [2] your Lord (O Holy Prophet,) has neither forsaken you, nor has become displeased. [3] And the Hereafter is much better for you than the present life. [4] And of course, your Lord will give you so much that you will be pleased. [5] Did He not find you an orphan, and give you shelter? [6] And He found you unaware of the way (the Shari'ah), then He guided you. [7] and He found you in need, then made you need-free. [8] Therefore, as for orphan, do not oppress him, [9] and as for the beggar, do not scold him. [10] And about the bounty of your Lord, do talk. [11]

Commentary

Occasion of Revelation

Bukhārī, Muslim and Tirmidhī have narrated from Sayyidnā Jundub

ﷺ that once a finger of the Holy Prophet ﷺ was wounded and started bleeding, he said:

ان انت الا اصبع دميت.....وفى سبيل الله مالقيت

'You are merely a finger that is bleeding; [what does it matter] if you are hurt: it all happened in Allah's cause.'

Sayyidnā Jundub ؓ narrated this incident and said that revelation of the Qur'ān to the Holy Prophet ﷺ came to a halt, and that Jibrā'il ؑ stopped coming to him for a while. The unbelievers taunted, saying: "Muḥammad's Lord has forsaken him, and is displeased with him." Sūrah Ad-Duḥā was revealed on this occasion. According to the narration in Bukhari by Sayyidnā Jundub ؓ, the Holy Prophet ﷺ was unable to wake up for a few nights for *tahajjud* prayer owing to illness. In this narration, there is no mention of 'delay in revelation'. In Timidhī's narration, there is mention about the 'delay in revelation' but no mention about his inability to wake up for *tahajjud* prayer. These reports are not conflicting. The narrator might have narrated one incident at one time, and reported another incident at another time. The lady who taunted the Holy Prophet ﷺ was Umm Jamīl, the wife of Abū Lahab, as other reports indicate. 'Delay in revelation' took place twice. Once in the very early stage of the call. This is known as *fatrah al-wahy* 'temporary break in the revelation'. This was the longest period. Another narration states that when the pagans or the Jews asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ about the soul, he promised them that he would give them a reply the next day. However, he forgot to add *insha 'Allah* (if Allah wills). As a result, revelation ceased for a few days. The pagans began to taunt the Holy Messenger ﷺ, saying that Allah had abandoned him, and is displeased with him. It was on this occasion that the Sūrah was revealed.

وَلَاخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لَّكَ مِنَ الْأُولَى (And the Hereafter is much better for you than the present life....93:4). The word '*akhirah*' may be taken in its popular sense of the 'Hereafter' and its opposite '*ulā*' may be taken in the sense of the present 'world'. With these words, Allah tells the Holy Prophet ﷺ not to be disturbed by the taunts of the pagans, because they will see in this world that their assumptions and accusations were absolutely false. In the Hereafter, he will be blessed with Divine favours to his heart's content -

much more than what he will receive in this fleeting world. The word *'āakhirah* may also be taken in its primitive sense i.e. 'the later state or condition' as opposed to *'ūlā* 'the former state or condition'. The verse, in this case, would mean that every succeeding moment of the Holy Prophet's ﷺ life is better than the preceding one. It includes progress in knowledge and wisdom, as well as in degrees of his nearness to Allah, and it also includes progress in economic and political fields.

وَلَسَوْفَ يُعْطِيكَ رَبُّكَ فَتَرْضَى (And of course, your Lord will give you so much that you will be pleased....93:5). Allah does not specify here what he will give him. The statement is open and general. The Holy Prophet ﷺ will be granted everything he desires so much that he will be pleased. Among his desired thing is the progress of Islam; the general spread of Islam in the world; fulfilment of every need of the Ummah; triumph of the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself over his enemies and raising the word of Allah in the land of the enemy. When this verse was revealed, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

إِذَا لَا أَرْضِي وَوَاحِدٌ مِّنْ أُمَّتِي فِي النَّارِ

'If that is the case, then I will not be pleased as long as one [single member] of my Ummah [remains] in Fire.' [Qurtubī].

In a narration by Sayyidnā 'Alī رضي الله عنه, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "Allah will accept my intercession for my Ummah [community]. Allah will ask: رَضِيتَ يَا مُحَمَّد 'O Muḥammad, are you pleased?'" He will reply: يَا رَبِّ رَضِيتُ "My Lord, I am pleased." Muslim records from Sayyidnā 'Amr Ibn-ul-'Āṣ to the effect that the Holy Prophet ﷺ recited a verse concerning the Prophet Ibrāhīm عليه السلام:

فَمَنْ تَبِعَنِي فَإِنَّهُ مِنِّي وَمَنْ عَصَانِي فَإِنَّكَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

'...So, one who follows me is surely mine, and the one who disobeys me, then You are Most Forgiving, Very Merciful. [14:36]'

Then he recited a verse which contains the words of Sayyidnā 'Isā عليه السلام

إِنْ تُعَذِّبْهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ عِبَادُكَ

'If You punish them, then, they are Your slaves [5:118]'

Then he raised his hands, he wept and prayed:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اُمَّتِيْ اُمَّتِيْ

'O Allah, my *ummah*, my *ummah*!'

Allah sent Jibrā'il عليه السلام to inquire as to why he was weeping [while Allah knows the reason]. Jibrā'il Amīn عليه السلام came and inquired why he was weeping. The Holy Prophet ﷺ replied: "I seek my *ummah*'s forgiveness." Allah sent Jibrā'il عليه السلام back to inform him that He has pardoned them, and that Allah would please him and would not displease him regarding his *ummah*.

In response to the unbelievers' taunts, it was briefly mentioned that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has already been blessed with many Divine favours. The Sūrah elaborates on three of them in particular.

Favour [1]

أَلَمْ يَجِدْكَ يَتِيْمًا فَآوَى (Did He not find you an orphan, and give you shelter?...93:6). The Holy Prophet ﷺ was an orphan. His father died before he was born, leaving no wealth or property to look after him. The words 'and gave you shelter' signify that the Holy Prophet ﷺ received such deep love and affection from his grand-father, 'Abd-ul-Muṭṭalib, and after him from his uncle, Abū Ṭalīb, who took care of him more than their own children.

Favour [2]

وَوَجَدَكَ ضَالًّا فَهَدَى (And He found you unaware of the way [the Shari'ah], then He guided you....93:7). The word *ḍāll* has two meanings: [1] stray; and [2] unaware. Here it stands for the second meaning. The verse signifies that before Muḥammad ﷺ was commissioned as the Prophet, he was unaware of Divine Shari'ah. He was granted the status of the Prophet ﷺ and thus was guided.

Favour [3]

وَوَجَدَكَ عَائِلًا فَأَغْنَى (and He found you in need, then made you need-free....93:8). The word '*ā'il*' is derived from '*ailah*' which means 'to be in need'. The verse signifies that Allah found him impoverished and enriched him. This happened in the beginning through a business partnership with Sayyidah Khadijah al-Kubrā رضي الله عنها, then once she became his wife and 'Mother of the Faithful', her entire wealth was

devoted to his service.

After elaborating on the three favours of Allah, three injunctions follow:

Injunction [1]

فَأَمَّا الْيَتِيمَ فَلَا تَقْهَرْ (Therefore, as for orphan, do not oppress him,...93:9). The word *qahr* means 'to treat people who are less powerful in an unfair and cruel way'. In the present context, the verse means: 'Since you were a poor orphan, and Allah sheltered you, do not oppress the orphan.' [In words, 'do not seize their wealth by force and squander it. Do not scorn them, humiliate them or despise them. Rather, you should be kind and gentle to them.'] As a result, the Holy Prophet ﷺ emphasised that the orphan be treated kindly and gently, and has forbidden any hurting attitude towards them. The Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said that the best house of a Muslim is the one in which there is an orphan who is treated kindly, and with love and affection. The worst house is the one in which there is an orphan who is treated badly. [This is transmitted by Bukhārī in Al-Adab-ul- Mufrad, and by Ibn Mājah and Baghawī, as quoted by Maḥzarī].

Injunction [2]

وَأَمَّا السَّائِلَ فَلَا تَنْهَرْ (and as for the beggar, do not scold him....93:10). The verb *tanhar* is derived from *nahr* which means 'to scold'. The word *sā'il* means 'one who asks'. It includes a person who asks people's wealth, that is, a beggar, and it also includes the one who asks a question of knowledge, that is, an academic investigator. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has forbidden to berate either of them. The best course of action is to give the beggar something. If one is unable to give a beggar anything, one should at least apologise to him politely [so as not to give him any further grief]. Likewise, anyone who is searching knowledge and asks questions, it is forbidden to respond to him harshly and unkindly. The teacher should reply kindly and politely. However, if the investigator is unreasonable in his approach, it is permissible to scold him to the degree that is necessary.

Injunction [3]

وَأَمَّا بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّكَ فَحَدِّثْ (And about the bounty of your Lord, do talk....93:11). The verb *ḥaddith* is derived from *taḥdīth* which means 'to talk' meaning,

'just as you were poor and needy, and Allah made you wealthy, then talk about Allah's favours upon you'. Talking about Divine favours to people is one way of thanking Allah. If a person has done something good to another, he should be thanked. Therefore, the Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said: "Whoever is not thankful to people on their favours is not thankful to Allah." [This is transmitted by Aḥmad. The chain of authorities are reliable - vide Maḏharī].

The Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said: "Whoever has done good to you, you ought to return the good. If you are unable to return the pecuniary good, then praise him in public, because he who praises people in public fulfils his moral obligation." [Al-Baghawī transmitted it from Jābir Ibn 'Abdullah, vide Maḏharī].

Ruling

It is obligatory to offer gratitude to Allah on every favour He has bestowed. (But the way of offering gratitude may be different.) If Allah has granted a person wealth, a part of that wealth may be spent with the sincerity in Allah's way. If Allah has given a person strong body, his bodily strength may be utilised in fulfilling Divine obligations. If Allah has granted a person Divine knowledge, he should impart it to others. [Maḏharī].

Ruling

It is *sunnah* to recite *takbīr* at the beginning of every Sūrah from Sūrah Ḍuḥā to the end of the Qur'ān. The wordings of the *takbīr*, according to Shaikh Ṣāliḥ al-Miṣrī, are as follows:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ

'There is no god except Allah and Allah is the greatest'
[Maḏharī].

According to Ibn Kathīr, the *takbīr* may be recited at the end of every Sūrah and, according to Baghawī, it may be recited once at the beginning of every Sūrah. [Maḏharī]. Either way the requirement of *sunnah* will be fulfilled. And Allah knows best!

Note

In most Sūrahs from Sūrah Ḍuḥā to the end of Qur'ān, Allah's special

favours upon the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his special virtues and characteristics are mentioned. In a few of the Sūrahs, the Day of Judgement and its conditions are mentioned. The earlier part of the Qur'ān asserts the greatness and authenticity of the Qur'ān, while the later part asserts the greatness of the personality to whom the Qur'ān was revealed.

**Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Aḍ-Ḍuḥā
Ends here**

Sūrah Al-Inshirāḥ

(Peace of Heart)

This Sūrah is Makki, and it has 8 verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 8

أَلَمْ نَشْرَحْ لَكَ صَدْرَكَ ﴿١﴾ وَوَضَعْنَا عَنْكَ وِزْرَكَ ﴿٢﴾ الَّذِي أَنْقَضَ
ظَهْرَكَ ﴿٣﴾ وَرَفَعْنَا لَكَ ذِكْرَكَ ﴿٤﴾ فَإِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا ﴿٥﴾ إِنَّ مَعَ
الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا ﴿٦﴾ فَإِذَا فَرَغْتَ فَانصَبْ ﴿٧﴾ وَإِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ فَارْغَبْ ﴿٨﴾

Did We not cause your bosom to be wide open for your benefit? [1] And We removed from you your burden [2] that had (almost) broken your back, [3] and We raised high for you your name. [4] So undoubtedly, along with hardship there is ease. [5] Undoubtedly, along with hardship there is ease. [6] So when you are free (from collective services), exert yourself (in worship), [7] and towards your Lord turn with eagerness. [8]

Commentary

It was mentioned at the end of the preceding Sūrah that twenty-two Sūrahs from Sūrah Ad-Ḍuḥā to the end of the Qur'ān are mainly concerned with Divine favours conferred upon the Holy Prophet ﷺ and with his greatness. Only a few Sūrahs are concerned with the conditions of the Hereafter or some other subject. Sūrah Al-Inshirāḥ is concerned with special favours that Allah conferred upon the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Its style is the same as that of the preceding Sūrah - the interrogative style. In the preceding Sūrah, the style was 'Did He not find you...?' [Here the style is]:

أَلَمْ نَشْرَحْ لَكَ صَدْرَكَ (Did We not cause your bosom to be wide open for your benefit?...94:1). The word *sharḥ* literally denotes 'to open, to cause the bosom to be widely opened'. [In the present context] it is to cause the bosom to be wide open to comprehend the Divine mysteries. The verse signifies that Allah illuminated his bosom with wisdom, Divine light and peace and made it spacious, vast and wide as is said in another verse:

فَمَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَهْدِيَهُ، يَشْرَحْ صَدْرَهُ، لِلْإِسْلَامِ

'So, he whom Allah wills to give guidance, He opens his heart for Islam [6:125]'

The Holy Prophet's ﷺ bosom was expanded to receive the knowledge and wisdom and the gracious morals and ethical qualities, which the greatest philosophers could not match. As a result of this expansion of heart, *tawajjuh ilal-makhlūq* (attentiveness to the creation) did not disturb his attentiveness to and concentration on Allah. Some of the authentic Traditions report that the angels, with Allah's permission, physically opened the blessed chest of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Some of the commentators interpret this 'expansion of the chest' to refer to the same miracle, as mentioned in Ibn Kathīr and others. And Allah knows best!

وَوَضَعْنَا عَنْكَ وِزْرَكَ الَّذِي أَنْقَضَ ظَهْرَكَ (And We removed from you your burden that had [almost] broken your back...94:2-3). The word *wizr* literally denotes 'burden' and the phrase *naqq-uz-zahr* means 'to break one's back as for instance when a heavy load is put on one's back, it bends'. This verse signifies that Allah had relieved him of his burden that was breaking his back. What was that burden or heavy load? One answer to this question is that now and then the Holy Prophet ﷺ did certain permissible deeds, thinking that they were of benefit and in the interest [of spiritual development]. Later on he discovered that they were not in keeping with wisdom, or they were undesirable. The Holy Prophet ﷺ was conscious of his high status and close proximity to Allah. He regarded even such things as serious infractions. This was naturally a very heavy load that made him grieved. But Allah relieved him of his burden in that a blanket pardon was granted to him and it was declared that he would not be held accountable for such things.

Some commentators say that *wizr* (burden) refers to the effect of revelation. It weighed heavily on him in the initial stages of the

Prophet-hood. He was saddled with a nerve-racking and back-breaking task of raising [a morally degenerated people], through propagation of *Tauḥīd* and elimination of *kufr* and *shirk*, [from the depths of moral turpitude to the peaks of spiritual excellence, and then through them to cleanse and purify the whole of mankind of the dross of iniquity, ignorance and superstition]. The task enjoined:

فَاسْتَقِمْ كَمَا أُمِرْتَ

'So, stand firm - as you have been commanded [11:112]'

The Holy Prophet ﷺ used to feel the heavy weight of this task and responsibility. Some narration report that a few strands of his beard had turned grey as a result of this command. The Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said that the following verse has made me old:

فَاسْتَقِمْ كَمَا أُمِرْتَ

'So, stand firm - as you have been commanded [11:112]'

Verses [2-3] give the cheerful news that Allah will remove from him the load which was weighing down his back. The following verses show how the back-breaking load will be removed, and every difficulty will be followed by ease and relief. By means of expansion of bosom, Allah gave the Holy Prophet ﷺ so much of courage that no instance of hardship seemed hardship, and no burden of any magnitude seemed a burden. And Allah knows best!

وَرَفَعْنَا لَكَ ذِكْرَكَ (and We raised high for you your name....94:4). The meaning of raising the name of the Holy Prophet ﷺ is that his blessed name is remembered together with the name of Allah in all the symbols of Islam, like the *kalimah*, the *adhān*, the *iqāmah*, and in sermons from the minarets and pulpits [throughout the world]:

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ
أَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ

(I bear witness that there is no God worthy of worship except Allah; I bear witness that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah.)

No sensible person utters the Holy Prophet's ﷺ name without respect and honour even though he may not be a Muslim.

Note Carefully

Here three verses mention three favours that are bestowed on the Holy Prophet ﷺ: [1] opening of the bosom widely; [2] removal of the burden; and [3] raising of the name high. Each of the sentence is composed of a verb, an object and between them is a prepositional phrase thus:

شرح صدر

'for your benefit? [1]'

وضع وزر

'from you your burden [2]'

رفع ذكر

'for you your name. [4]'

This indicates the essential characteristic and special greatness of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, in that all this is done for the sake of him.

(فَإِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا. إِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا) (So undoubtedly, along with hardship there is ease. Undoubtedly, along with hardship there is ease....94:6). Grammatically, if the Arabic definite article *al-* is prefixed to an Arabic noun and is repeated with the same definite article *al-*, they refer to the same antecedent. However, if the same noun is repeated without the definite article, they refer to different antecedents. The word *al-'usr* '[the] hardship' in verse [6] is the repetition of *al-'usr* '[the] hardship' occurring in verse [5]. It does not refer to a new hardship. In contrast to this, the word *yusr* 'ease' in both verses occur without the definite article. This indicates that the second *yusr* 'ease' in verse [6] is a different antecedent to the *yusr* 'ease' occurring in verse [5]. Thus it may be concluded that there is only one '*usr* 'hardship' and two *yusr* 'twofold ease'. 'Twofold ease' does not mean twice as much. In fact, it means 'manifold ease'. The verse signifies that only one kind of hardship will face him, but in the wake of it many kinds of ease are assured.

Sayyidnā Ḥasan Al-Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى reports that once the Holy Prophet ﷺ emerged from his home in a very happy mood and, giving cheerful news to his Companions on the basis of the current verse, said: "One hardship cannot overcome twofold ease". Thus history and

biographical books written by Muslims and non-Muslims - all bear ample testimony to fact that the most difficult task, even the seemingly impossible task, became easy for him. The above narration further indicates that the Arabic definite article *al-* signifies that it is an article used to indicate previous knowledge [that is, *al- lil 'ahd*] and refers to the hardship of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his Companions. Allah kept to His promise to them in such a way that the world saw it visibly how in the wake of every hardship the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his Companions experienced the manifold ease that made their task easy. If a person does not achieve 'ease' after 'hardship', it does not contradict this verse. In fact, even now Allah's universal principle applies. One needs to exercise fortitude against hardship, rely on Allah with purity of heart, devote oneself totally to Him, hold onto high hopes for His grace, and one should not despair of His mercy if there is delay in success - He certainly will grant relief after every instance of hardship. [Fawā'id-e-'Usmāniah]. Hadith narratives support this.

The Command for Teachers and Preachers to Remember Allah During Spare Hours

فَإِذَا فَرَغْتَ فَانصَبْ. وَإِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ فَارْغَبْ (So when you are free [from collective services], exert yourself [in worship], and towards your Lord turn with eagerness....94:8). The Holy Prophet ﷺ is commanded in these verses that when he has finished his day's work of teaching and training his followers and other temporal affairs, he should turn to Allah as ever with all his heart, that is, prayers, remembrance of Allah, supplication and seeking Allah's pardon. This is the interpretation assigned to this verse by most commentators. Some scholars have interpreted it differently, but the foregoing interpretation appears to be the closest. The sum total of this interpretation is as follows: The Holy Prophet ﷺ exerted himself greatly to spread the word of Allah and reform human beings. Exerting himself to human reform was his greatest form of 'worship' but it was 'indirect worship' through planning and executing the plan of human reform. The verse purports to say that the indirect worship is not sufficient. So, when he is free from collective services to humanity, he should devote time to turn to Him by carrying out 'direct worship' by turning to Allah in prayer for the success of his efforts, because this 'direct worship' is what man is created for. Probably, that is why the 'indirect worship' has been

mentioned as something that may be finished and one may be free from, because that is based on need, and a believer can free himself from it, but the 'direct worship' of Allah is such that he cannot free himself from it. He has to spend his entire life and expend all his energy in it.

Note

This indicates that scholars [who are involved in education, propagation and human reform] should not be unmindful of 'direct worship'. Some time should be devoted specifically, in privacy, to attentiveness to, and remembrance of Allah as the biography of the righteous predecessors bear testimony to the fact that without it neither education nor preaching can be effective. It would be devoid of light and blessings.

Note

The word *fanṣab* derived from *naṣab* means 'to be tired'. The verse signifies that one should tire oneself when carrying out acts of worship. One should not carry out acts of worship only when one finds it convenient. Binding oneself to a *waṣīfah* (a usual course of optional worships) is itself quite exerting and tiring, no matter how little.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Inshirāḥ
Ends here

Sūrah At-Tīn

(The Fig)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 8 verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 8

وَالَّتَيْنِ وَالزَّيْتُونِ ﴿١﴾ وَطُورِ سَيْنِينَ ﴿٢﴾ وَهَذَا الْبَلَدِ الْأَمِينِ ﴿٣﴾ لَقَدْ
خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ ﴿٤﴾ ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَاهُ أَسْفَلَ سَافِلِينَ ﴿٥﴾
إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فَلَهُمْ أَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُونٍ ﴿٦﴾ فَمَا
يُكَذِّبُكَ بَعْدَ بِالذِّينِ ﴿٧﴾ أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِأَحْكَمَ الْحَكَمِينَ ﴿٨﴾

I swear by the Fig and the Olive, [1] and by Tur, the mount of Sinai, [2] and by this peaceful city, [3] We have created man in the best composition, [4] then We turned him into the lowest of the low, [5] except those who believed and did righteous deeds, because for them there is a reward never ending. [6] So, what can make you, after all this, to deny the Requit? [7] Is Allah not the Greatest Ruler of all the rulers? [8]

Commentary

وَالَّتَيْنِ وَالزَّيْتُونِ (I swear by the Fig and the Olive...95:1). This verse takes an oath by four objects. Two of them are trees, the fig tree and the olive tree. [The third object] is Tur, the mount of Sinai, and the fourth object is the City of Makkah. The two trees have been specified because they possess abundant blessings and advantages in the same way as Tūr and the City of Makkah possess abundant blessings. Some authorities say that the 'fig' and the 'olive' symbolise, in this context, the lands in which these

trees predominate: that is, the countries bordering on the eastern part of the Mediterranean, especially Palestine and Syria. Most of the Prophets lived and preached in these lands, including Holy Prophet Ibrāhīm عليه السلام. The latter Prophet عليه السلام was made to migrate from here to Makkah. The oaths, in this way, comprehend all the holy places where Allah-inspired men were born and raised as Prophets عليهم السلام. Syria was the land and home of all the Prophets. Mount Sinai stresses specifically the messengership of Mūsā عليه السلام where Allah spoke to him. 'Peaceful City' refers to Makkah, the birth-place and residence of the Final Messenger of Allah عليه السلام.

The subject of the four oaths is: لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ (We have created man in the best composition...95:4). The word *taqwīm* literally denotes 'to set a thing aright or lay the foundation straight or even; or to form something into an appropriate shape in a moderate regulation'. The verse signifies that man has been endowed with the best natural powers and qualities which other creatures have not been endowed with. Physically too he is cast in the best composition - having no parallel in other creatures.

Man is the Most Beautiful of Allah's Creation

Allah has created man the most beautiful of all His creation. Ibn 'Arabī asserts that there is no creature of Allah more beautiful than man, because Allah, besides granting him life, he gave him knowledge, power, speech, hearing, sight, planning and wisdom. All these, in fact, are the qualities of Allah. It is mentioned in a ḥadīth of Bukhārī and Muslim:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَلَقَ آدَمَ عَلَى صُورَتِهِ

'Allah has created Adam in His image'

It could only mean that man has been characterised by some of the qualities of Allah, because Allah is beyond any [physical] shape or image. [Qurtubī].

A Wonderful Story of Human Beauty

Qurtubī, on this occasion, cites a story of 'Īsā Ibn Mūsā Hāshimī. He was a high ranking officer in the royal court of Caliph Abū Ja'far Maṣṣūr. The officer loved his wife very much. Once he was sitting with his wife in a moonlit night and suddenly cried out:

انت طالق ثلاثاً ان لم تكوني احسن من القمر

'You are divorced thrice if you are not more beautiful than the moon.'

As soon as the wife heard this, she went into seclusion and veiled herself, on the grounds that the husband has pronounced three express divorce on her. It was said in joke. However, the law of express divorce is that it becomes effective whether uttered jokingly or seriously. 'Īsā Ibn Mūsā spent the night restlessly and in grief. The next morning, he paid a visit to Caliph Abū Ja'far Manṣūr and recounted to him the whole story. Caliph Abū Ja'far Manṣūr invited all the jurists of the city and put the case before them. All the jurists unanimously agreed that the divorce has become effective, because no human being can possibly be more beautiful than the moon. There was, however, one scholar, a student of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, who remained silent. Manṣūr asked him: "Why are you so quiet?" He recited '*Bismillah* to the end' and then recited Sūrah Tīn and explained: "Ruler of the Faithful, Allah says that He has created man in the best composition or in the finest mould. Nothing can be more beautiful than man." Having heard this, all the scholars and jurists were perplexed. None of them opposed him. Manṣūr ordered that the divorce is not effective.

This indicates that man is the most beautiful creation of Allah outwardly and inwardly, in terms of elegance and attractiveness and in terms of bodily structure. Every limb of the human body is able to move in many different ways. He is able to hold, move and lift various things by moving his hands and arms. The thumb alone is a masterpiece of creation without which man will not be able to hold things. The functioning of the ears, the eyes, the mouth, the teeth, the nose, the chest and the stomach are all wonders in their own right. Gathered together on his head, they form a beautiful and coherent assortment, each one complementing the other. The flexibility of the tongue, the arrangement of the teeth and the mastery of the vocal cords allow him to roar like a lion and sing as beautifully as a nightingale. All this makes human body look like a sophisticated factory where automatic machines are able to accomplish the delicate work. This is the reason why philosophers call man 'microcosm' [a miniature universe as opposed to 'macrocosm' {a large universe}]. The microcosm epitomises the macrocosm. [Qurṭubī]

The Ṣūfīs have supported this concept. Some scholars have analysed in detail - from head to toe - to show how man is the epitome of the large universe.

ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَاهُ أَسْفَلَ سَافِلِينَ (then We turned him into the lowest of the low...95:5). In the preceding sentence, it was stated that man is created in the best composition and is the most beautiful being. In the prime of his life, man is brimming with strength and vigour and all his faculties are functioning at their best. As opposed to that, this sentence states that when man ages, he physically grows weaker and his health deteriorates all the time. He even begins to lose his physical beauty. He no longer has a good-looking and attractive face. He begins to look uglier. He becomes useless and a burden to others. Other animals, on the contrary, are useful to the end of their lives. Man utilises them for milk, for mounting, for luggage-loading and for myriad of other things. When they are slaughtered or dead, man still utilises their hide, hair, bones and every other part or fibre of theirs usefully. Man, on the other hand, becomes useless when he falls ill or grows old. From the worldly point of view he is unable to do anything. Even when he dies, no part of his body is of any benefit to any man or animal. In short, the phrase 'the lowest of the low' refers to bodily condition. His body bends over and legs can barely carry him. The man who was once supporting others now needs others to support him. [Ḍaḥḥāk and others vide Qurṭubī].

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فَلَهُمْ أَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُونٍ (except those who believed and did righteous deeds, because for them there is a reward never ending....95:6). The foregoing interpretation of the preceding verse should not be misunderstood. The exceptive sentence does not mean that the believers will not attain to decrepit old age. It would not be correct to exclude the believers from this, because some of them are also overcome by the senility of old age. The sense, however, is that they do not suffer a big harm due to their physical or mental deterioration in old age. Only those will suffer from it who spent their entire energy on improving their physical condition that has now ended. They shall have no portion of it in the Hereafter. The righteous believers will have an unfailing reward. This verse makes it clear that even after reaching old age, a believer never becomes useless. Even in decrepitude he can accumulate rewards -

comfort and high positions - for the Hereafter that are eternal. During the period of senility when he is unable to do righteous deeds, the good deeds will be recorded in his Record Book which he used to do in good health. Sayyidnā Anas رضي الله عنه narrates that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that when a Muslim falls ill Allah instructs the recording angels to record the good deeds he used to perform in good health. [Al-Baghawī transmitted it in Sharḥ-us-Suunah from Abū Mūsā, and Bukhārī has reported the same rewards for a traveller and a person suffering from a disease.] Here instead of mentioning the rewards and blessings of Paradise for the righteous believers, the verse reads: لَّهُمْ أَجْرٌ غَيْرٌ مَّمْنُونٍ (for them there is a reward never ending.) This could signify that their reward starts in this mortal world [and continues in the Hereafter eternally]. Allah gathers around them in their decrepit old age such sincere companions who benefit from them spiritually until the last moment of their life. They serve them in every possible way. The righteous servants of Allah in decrepitude are productive while generally the senile and people in bad health are thought to be unproductive.

Some commentators say that the statement - رَدَدْنَاهُ أَسْفَلَ سَافِلِينَ (We turned him into the lowest of the low) does not refer to human beings in general. It refers specifically to unbelievers who destroyed the God-given best composition, human perfection, honour and intellect by pursuing physical pleasures. As a result of their ingratitude, they will be turned into the lowest of the low. In this interpretation, the exception - إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا (except those who believed and did righteous deeds, because for them there is a reward never ending) will carry its basic interpretation, in that they will not be turned into the lowest of the low. For those who believed and did righteous deeds, there is a reward that is unending. [Thus in al-Maḥḥarī].

فَمَا يُكَذِّبُكَ بَعْدَ بِالذِّينِ (So, what can make you, after all this, to deny the Requital?...95:7). In the preceding verses man is made to realise that Allah created him, He bestowed on him special favours and the revolution that He brought about in his old age. Man will move from stage to stage, finally reaching the grave and the Hereafter. But he rejects the Hereafter, as a result he is warned. He has seen the scenes of Divine omnipotence and revolutions - how dare he denies and rejects the Hereafter! Is Allah not the Greatest Ruler of all the rulers? [8]

Ruling

Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه narrates that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that while reciting Sūrah At-Tīn, when one reaches the end of it:

أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِأَحْكَمَ الْحَكَمِينَ

'Is Allah not the Greatest Ruler of all the rulers? [8]'

one should recite:

بَلَىٰ وَأَنَا عَلَىٰ ذَٰلِكَ مِنَ الشَّاهِدِينَ

'Yes, indeed, Allah is the Ruler of the rulers, and I bear witness to it.'

The jurists have ruled that it is *mustahab* (preferable/desirable) to recite the words.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah At-Tīn
Ends here

Sūrah Al-‘Alaq (The Clot)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 19 verses and 1 section.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 19

اِقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ ﴿١﴾ خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ ﴿٢﴾ اِقْرَأْ
 وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ ﴿٣﴾ الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ ﴿٤﴾ عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ
 ﴿٥﴾ كَلَّا إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَيَطْغَىٰ ﴿٦﴾ أَنْ رَآهُ اسْتَغْنَىٰ ﴿٧﴾ إِنَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ
 الرُّجْعَىٰ ﴿٨﴾ أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي يَنْهَىٰ ﴿٩﴾ عَبْدًا إِذَا صَلَّىٰ ﴿١٠﴾ أَرَأَيْتَ
 إِنْ كَانَ عَلَى الْهُدَىٰ ﴿١١﴾ أَوْ أَمَرَ بِالتَّقْوَىٰ ﴿١٢﴾ أَرَأَيْتَ إِنْ كَذَّبَ
 وَتَوَلَّىٰ ﴿١٣﴾ أَلَمْ يَعْلَمْ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ يَرَىٰ ﴿١٤﴾ كَلَّا لَئِنْ لَمْ يَنْتَهِ لَنَسْفَعًا
 بِالنَّاصِيَةِ ﴿١٥﴾ نَاصِيَةٍ كَاذِبَةٍ خَاطِئَةٍ ﴿١٦﴾ فَلْيَدْعُ نَادِيَهُ ﴿١٧﴾ سَنَدْعُ
 الزَّبَانِيَةَ ﴿١٨﴾ كَلَّا لَا تَطِيعُهُ وَاسْجُدْ وَاقْتَرِبْ ﴿١٩﴾

Read with the name of your Lord who created (every thing), [1] He created man from a clot of blood. [2] Read, and your Lord is the most gracious, [3] who imparted knowledge by means of the pen. [4] He taught man what he did not know. [5] The fact is that man crosses the limits, [6] because he deems himself to be free of need. [7] Surely to your Lord is to return. [8] Have you seen him who forbids [9] a slave of Allah when he prays? [10] Tell me, if he is on the right path, [11] or bids to piety,

(would the former still forbid him?) [12] Tell me, if he rejects (the true faith) and turns away, [13] does he not know that Allah is watching (him)? [14] No! If he does not desist, We will certainly drag (him) by forelock, [15] a lying, sinful forelock. [16] So let him call the men of his council, [17] We will call the soldiers of the Hell. [18] No! Never obey him, and bow down in sajdah, and come closer. [19]

Beginning of The Qur’ānic Revelation

It is universally agreed that the first five verses of Sūrah Al-‘Alaq or Iqra’ mark the very beginning of Qur’ānic revelation. [Baghawī]. Bukhārī, Muslim, other authentic sources and overwhelming consensus of scholars, ancient and modern, all concur on this point. However, some scholars state that Sūrah Al-Muddaththir was the first Sūrah to be revealed, and yet others say that Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah [The Opening] was revealed first. It is possible to reconcile between these different views as follows: After the revelation of Sūrah Al-‘Alaq or Iqra’, there was a temporary break in the revelation during which the Holy Prophet ﷺ used to be very sad, but after some time, the Angel Jibra’īl appeared to him once again, and he faced the same situation as he faced when the first verses of Sūrah Iqra’ were revealed to him. On this occasion, the opening verses of Sūrah Al-Muddaththir were conveyed to him by the angel. From this point of view, it may be said that the first Sūrah to be revealed after the temporary break was Sūrah Al-Muddaththir. Some of the Companions held the view that Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah was the first Sūrah to be revealed. They probably meant to say that this was the first Sūrah to be revealed in a complete form. Undoubtedly, some verses (of Sūrahs Al-‘Alaq or Iqra’, Al-Muzzammil and Al-Muddaththir) were revealed earlier, but the rest of the verses of those Sūrahs were revealed at later dates. Al-Fātiḥah is the first Sūrah that was revealed to the Holy Prophet ﷺ in its entirety, all seven verses at once. [Maḏharī]

The Holy Prophet's ﷺ First Experience of Revelation

In a lengthy narration, as recorded in the Ṣaḥīḥs of Bukhārī and Muslim, the Mother of the Faithful, Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah رضى الله عنها says that revelation to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was started by true dreams. Whatever he saw in a dream would happen in reality as clearly as the light of dawn. Then solitude became dear to him, and he used to seclude

himself for worship in the cave Ḥirā', (a cave in the mount known today as 'Jabal-un-Nūr, which is clearly visible in front of Jannat-ul-Ma'lā, the famous graveyard of Makkah) and therein he devoted himself to Divine worship for several nights before he came back to his family and took provisions for his retirement; then he would return to the Mother of the Faithful, Sayyidah Khadijah رضي الله عنها and take more provisions for a similar period. (The period of his stay in the cave is mentioned differently by different reports, but the report of ṣaḥīḥain maintains that it was a month, the whole month of Ramaḍān. Authentic traditions are silent about the mode of worship he adopted during this period. Some scholars have opined that he used to worship according to the Sharī'ah of Nuh, Ibrāhīm and 'Isā عليهم السلام, but neither any authentic report supports it, nor is it likely, because he was an 'ummiyy (unlettered). It is, therefore, more likely that his worship was concentration and reflection on Allah Almighty and His omnipotence until the Truth, that is, the revelation came to him while he was in the cave of Ḥirā'; so the angel came to him and said, اقْرَأْ 'Read'. The Holy Prophet replied, ما انا بقارى 'I am not the one who can read'. (The Holy Prophet ﷺ was under the impression that he was directing him to read a written document. Since the Holy Prophet ﷺ could not read or write, he replied accordingly.) Then the angel embraced him and pressed him so hard that he felt extreme pain, then he released him and said, اقْرَأْ 'Read'. The Holy Prophet replied, 'I am not the one who can read'. Then he embraced him and pressed him a second time so hard that he felt extreme pain, then he released him again and said, اقْرَأْ 'Read'. The Holy Prophet ﷺ replied, ما انا بقارى 'I am not the one who can read'. Then he embraced the Holy Prophet ﷺ and pressed him a third time, then he released him and said,

اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ ﴿١﴾ خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ ﴿٢﴾ اقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ ﴿٣﴾ الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ ﴿٤﴾ عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ ﴿٥﴾

'Read with the Name of your Lord Who created [everything], He created man from a clot of blood. Read, and your Lord is the most gracious, who imparted knowledge by means of the Pen. He taught man what he did not know.'

The Messenger of Allah returned with this message [of five verses] while his heart trembled and he came to Sayyidah Khadijah رضي الله عنها, saying زملوني زملوني 'wrap me up, wrap me up', and she wrapped him up, until the awe left him. (It should be noted that the fear felt by the Holy

Prophet ﷺ was due to the great responsibility delegated to him, and due to the unusual event of seeing an angel in his original form.)

Then he said to Sayyidah Khadījah رضى الله عنها while he related to her what had happened: "I feared for myself." Sayyidah Khadījah رضى الله عنها said: 'Nay, by Allah, Allah will never expose you to disgrace, because you unite the ties of kinship, and bear the burden of the weak, and earn for the destitute, and offer hospitality to the guests, and help (people) in real distress.'

Then Sayyidah Khadījah رضى الله عنها took him to her cousin, Waraqah Ibn Naufal. He was a man who had adopted Christianity (which was a true religion at that time) during the days of Ignorance, and he used to write the Hebrew script, and translate it into Arabic. He was a very old man who had turned blind. Sayyidah Khadījah رضى الله عنها said to him, O Uncle's son! Listen to your brother's son. Waraqah asked him, My brother's son! What have you seen? So the Messenger of Allah related to him what he had seen. Waraqah said to him, This is the very same confidant [angel Jibrā'īl عليه السلام] whom Allah sent to Holy Prophet Mūsā عليه السلام; would that I were a young man at this time - would that I were alive when your people would expel you! The Messenger of Allah asked in surprise, "Will they expel me?" He replied. Yes; never has a man appeared with the like of that which you have brought, but he has been held in enmity; and if your time finds me alive, I shall help you with the fullest support. After that, not much time had passed before Waraqah died, and the revelation broke off temporarily. [Bukhārī and Muslim]

The temporary break of revelation, according to Suhailī, lasted for about a year and half. Other reports say that it lasted to about three years. [Maẓharī]

Verse [1] اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ (Read with the Name of your Lord, Who created [everything]) In the prepositional phrase *bismi rabbika* [with the name of your Lord], the addition of the word *ismi* is significant in two ways [1] that whenever the Qur'ān is being recited, the reader should begin by reciting the formula بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ "With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful". When Jibrā'īl أمين عليه السلام suddenly appeared to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and said 'iqra' (read) , he tendered

apology that he is unable to read or recite, because he is unlettered. The phrase *b-ismi rabbika* points to the fact that under present circumstances you, O Holy Prophet ﷺ, may be 'ummiyy' or unlettered, but Allah has the power to grant you the highest level of knowledge, the most elegant style of oration and eloquence, so that you would surpass and subdue the most educated or literate people, as it became manifest later on. [Mazhari].

[2] Allah has many Beautiful Names, but the blessed name *rabb* is particularly chosen in the verse here probably because it supports and emphasizes the theme that Allah cherishes and sustains the Holy Prophet ﷺ through all the different stages of his development, until he is fully consummated. He can make him read and recite, despite being unlettered. In the relative clause *al-ladhī khalaqa* [Who created], particularly contains the Divine attribute of *takhlīq* [creating] presumably because the first Divine favor is *wujūd* or 'existence' as a result of His drawing out beings from the realm of non-existence into the realm of existence. Many other favors of His follow. The verb *khalaqa* [created] is transitive and it requires an object that is absent here. This indicates the verb is used absolutely, and it signifies that the Creator has created the entire universe and every existent thing it contains.

Verse [2] خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ (Created man from a clot of blood.) The previous verse referred to the creation of macrocosm, the large or entire universe in general. In this verse, the phrase is *khalaqa'l-insān* which refers to the creation of microcosm 'the best, noblest or most honourable creation', Man. If analysed carefully, we notice that man is the epitome of macrocosm or the large universe. He is a small scale representation, analogue, or miniature of the large and complex universe. Another reason why man has been particularly mentioned is that the purpose of Prophet-hood, messenger-hood and revelation of the Qur'ān is the implementation of Divine ordinances, injunctions and laws and acting upon them: This is the essential peculiarity of mankind. The word '*alaq*', being the plural of '*alaqatun*', means 'congealed blood'. The creation of man has passed and passes through various phases. His primordial creation is from the four major elements, that is, earth, water, fire and air. His procreation is from an insignificant and humble state, the sperm which then transforms into congealed blood. This is the primary state of

the embryo which happens after the conception. Then it takes the shape of a lump of flesh and then the skeletal structure is created. ‘*Alaqah*’ is the middle phase in the whole process of creation. The specific mention of ‘*alaqah*’ covers the initial stage and the final stage of the process of creation.

Verse [3] **إِقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ** (Read, and your Lord is the most gracious.) The command *iqra’* [Read] has been repeated in this verse for two reasons: The first command in verse [1] was for the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself to read or recite. The second command in this verse is to proclaim, convey, communicate and teach or preach. It is not inconceivable that the command *iqra’* is repeated by deliberate design for emphasis. The Divine attribute *al-Akram* 'the Most Gracious' signifies that Allah did not create the world or man for any ulterior motive, for selfish motivation or for His own benefit. He has done it out of His infinite grace, generosity and magnanimity. He endowed upon the universe the great favour of existence without asking for it.

Verse [4] **الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ** (Who imparted knowledge by means of the Pen.) The preceding verse spoke of the creation of man. The current verse speaks of man's education or literacy, because knowledge, as part of education and literacy, distinguishes man from all other animals and creatures, and occupies the position of the crown of creation. There are two means, methods or media through which knowledge is imparted: [1] oral or spoken method or by word of mouth; and [2] Pen or written method. The command *iqra’* [read] at the beginning of Sūrah refers to the oral or spoken method. However, the current verse, which speaks more explicitly about imparting knowledge, speaks of the written method of recording and transmitting knowledge from generation to generation.

Pen and Writing: The First and Most Important Means of Transmitting Knowledge

An authentic narration of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه reports that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

لَمَّا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ الْخَلْقَ كَتَبَ فِي كِتَابِهِ فَهُوَ عِنْدَهُ فَوْقَ الْعَرْشِ، إِنَّ رَحْمَتِي غَلَبَتْ غَضَبِي

"When Allah created the creation, He inscribed a document which is with Him above the Throne: Indeed My mercy has preceded My anger."

In another narration, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is reported to have said:

أَوَّلَ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ الْقَلَمَ، فَقَالَ لَهُ: اكْتُبْ، فَكُتِبَ مَا يَكُونُ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَمَةِ فَهُوَ عِنْدَهُ فِي
الذِّكْرِ فَوْقَ عَرْشِهِ

"The first thing Allah created was the pen. He told it to write, so it wrote what was to take place till Doomsday. This is with Allah on His Throne." [Qurtubī]

Three Types of Pen

Scholars have said that there are three types of pen in the world: [1] a Pen that Allah created with His own hand and instructed it to write the decree of the universe; [2] the pen of the angels who record the events that are to occur and their magnitude, they also use it to record the deeds of human beings; and [3] the pen of human beings, which they use to reduce their speech to writing. Writing, in fact, is a kind of speech [or a manifestation of it]. Humans are biologically programmed by Allah for speech, and it is thus natural, inborn and innate faculty. [Qurtubī] The leading authority on Tafsīr, Mujāhid, cites from Abū ‘Amr that Allah created four things in the entire universe with His own Creative hand, and the rest of the creation came into being by His cosmic command of *kun* [be] and they became. The four things are: [1] the pen; [2] The Divine Throne; [3] the Garden of Eden; and [4] Holy Prophet ‘Adam ﷺ.

Who was First Trained in the Writing Skill and Art ?

Scholars have differed on this question. Some say the art and skill of writing was first imparted to the father of mankind, i.e. the prophet ‘Adam ﷺ and he was the first one to write. [Ka‘b Aḥbār]. Others say that this art was first taught to the Holy Prophet Idrīs ﷺ and he was thus the very first scribe. [Dahḥāk]. Some others have observed that the art and skill of writing is the Divine knowledge given as a gift to anyone whom Allah wills.

Writing Skill and Art: A Great Divine Gift

Sayyidnā Qatādah رحمه الله has stated that Pen is a great Divine gift. If Allah had not granted man the art and skill of writing with pen, it would not have been possible for him to preserve or protect the religion in its pristine form, nor would it have been possible for him to conduct his worldly affairs in the proper manner. Sayyidnā ‘Alī رحمه الله has stated that it

is a great generosity that Allah has granted His servants knowledge of things they did not know. He drew them out from the darkness of ignorance and brought them into the light of knowledge. He urged them to acquire the art and skill of writing as it accrues great benefits. Only Allah is able to keep count of the benefits of writing. All sciences and philosophies are codified by means of pen. The history of the former and latter nations are compiled by means of pen. Their chronicles and monographs are preserved in writing. The Divinely revealed Books are committed to writing, and shall be preserved till the world lasts. 'The pen' is thus able to make great contribution towards the propagation and dissemination of spiritual sciences and Divine secrets revealed by the Qur'ān and of physical sciences to which the study of the Qur'ān imparted a great stimulus. Without the pen, all worldly and religious works will come to a standstill.

Writing Skill and Art: Attitude of Scholars in All Ages

Scholars of the former and the latter times have always realised the stupendous role pen plays in the preservation and transmission of knowledge, as a result they made a great use of it and left behind a huge legacy of books and writings. It is regretful to notice that in this age students and scholars have ignored the importance of this skill and art. As a result, scarcely a few people in a few million people have mastered the art, or developed the skill, of writing. To Allah do we direct our complaint!

Writing Skill and Art: The Reason Why the Holy Prophet ﷺ was not Taught

It is really very significant that mention should have been made of 'Pen' in a Book which was revealed to a person, the Final Messenger ﷺ, who himself did not know how to read and write. The reason for this is the profound Divine wisdom underlying it. Allah had willed that the dignity and status of the Final Messenger should be far above the thinking of the general populace. Allah placed the Holy Prophet ﷺ in an environment which was not favourable for any spontaneous accomplishments, nor was it conducive to any achievements by natural exposure. His birth-place was the rugged and rocky mountainous terrain. The desert of Arabia had fewer plants apart from the date-palms, little water apart from the *zam zam* well and the weather was always dry, far away from civilisation, and completely cut off from the cradle of knowledge and wisdom. The communications system or network was

inaccessible; as a result, the people of Arabia had no contact with Syria, Iraq, Egypt and other civilised areas of the world. Hence, all the Arabs were referred to as 'unlettered' who generally had no respect for knowledge, wisdom and writing. Very rarely people had the opportunity to learn knowledge or to acquire the art and skill of writing. The Holy Prophet ﷺ was born in such bare region, among such illiterate tribes and in such harsh environment. He was never given the opportunity to become literate. It was inconceivable that a person born in such a surrounding will be gifted with knowledge, wisdom and high morals. He was, however, suddenly granted the cloak of Prophet-hood, together with incessant flow of knowledge and wisdom. The greatest of poets and orators of Arabia were subdued by the eloquence of the unlettered Holy Prophet ﷺ. This was his open and overt miracle. Every open-minded person should be able to see with his eye of certainty that his attainments were not the result of acquisition by his own efforts or human exertion, but they were the result of the invisible generosity of Allah Who endowed him with the Prophetic gift. This is the Divine wisdom underlying the reason why the Holy Prophet ﷺ was not trained in the skill and the art of writing. [Adapted from Qurṭubī]

Verse [5] عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ (Taught Man what he did not know." The preceding verse was concerned with a particular means of teaching, namely, 'pen', the written method.

Many other Means of Teaching

The present verse purports to say that the real teacher is Allah, and He has innumerable ways and means, besides pen, to impart knowledge. Therefore, the verse says that Allah taught man things with which he was unacquainted previously. The verse does not mention 'pen' or any other means of teaching. The reason for that is man is taught from the very inception of his life. First, he is gifted with intellect, the greatest means of receiving knowledge. Man, by the right use of intellect, is able to understand many things. Further, his entire environment is the manifestation of the perfect power of Allah and studded with the evidence of Divine power by witnessing which he is able to recognise his Creator. Revelation and inspiration are other means of knowledge. The knowledge of many essential things are learnt intuitively. Intuition is the God-given ability to know or understand things through feelings, rather than by considering facts or evidence. As a result, there is no need for tongue or pen. When a baby is born, it is not conscious of how its environment

operates. However, it instinctively reaches out for the mother's breast, when it feels hungry and feeds itself. Who teaches it and who can teach it? Allah has taught it the 'skill' of crying since its birth. The cry of the baby is the means of satisfying all its needs. When it cries, it becomes a cause of concern for the parents to find out what is wrong. The baby's cry satisfies its hunger, thirst, heat and cold. Who teaches the new-born baby how to cry? All this is instinctive knowledge with which Allah has programmed every living organism, especially man. After the instinctive knowledge, man's knowledge continues to increase by word of mouth, and then by the supra-rational organ of intuition, called the heart. Apparently, there was no need to say مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ (... what he did not know) because normally knowledge is imparted of things that are not known. It is explicitly stated here, probably because man may not assume that the God-given knowledge and skills are the results of his own efforts and exertion. The concluding phrase مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ "what he did not know" has been added in order to make man realise that there was a time when he knew nothing, thus in [16:78] we came across أَخْرَجَكُمْ مِّنْ بُطُونِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ لَتَعْلَمُونَ شَيْئًا (And Allah has brought you forth from your mothers' wombs when you knew nothing...). This shows that knowledge is not an ingrained personal excellence of man. It is the gift of the Creator and the Master. [Mazhari]. Some scholars interpret the word 'man' to be referring to the Holy Prophet 'Ādam عليه السلام because he was the first man to whom knowledge was imparted, thus in [2:31] وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا (And He taught 'Ādam the names, all of them...). And others say the reference is to the Final Messenger ﷺ whose knowledge embraces the knowledge of all the previous Prophets.

As stated earlier, these five verses of this Sūrah represent the very beginning of the revelation of the Qur'ān. Verses [6-19] of the Sūrah are of much later date. We assert this on the following grounds: These verses were revealed in connection with an incident in which Abū Jahl prevented the Holy Prophet ﷺ from offering *ṣalāh*. In the initial stages of revelation and Prophet-hood, the Holy Prophet ﷺ had no enemies in Makkah. All used to call him by the title of 'al-Amīn' [the honest or upright]. They respected and loved him. Abū Jahl's enmity and opposition obviously started when the Holy Prophet ﷺ proclaimed his propagation openly, called the people towards Islam publicly, and performed the *ṣalāh* in the Sacred Mosque. *Ṣalāh* was prescribed on the Night of Ascent, (Mi'rāj). Therefore, prevention from *ṣalāh*, referred to in these verses, may not be imagined before that time.

Verses [6-7] كَلَّا إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لِكَبِيرٍ. أَنْ رَأَاهُ اسْتَغْنَى. (The fact is that man crosses the limits, because he deems himself to be free of need.) Although the verse immediately refers to a particular person, namely, Abū Jahl who insulted the Holy Prophet ﷺ, the statement is general which draws man's attention to one of his weaknesses. So long as man is in need of others, he walks straight; but when he thinks that he does not need anyone, he tends towards transgression, and develops the tendency to wrong-doing, tyranny and oppression. This is generally the behavior of the affluent people, government officials, and people with abundant children and friends or servants. They become purse-proud and intoxicated with the leadership power they exercise on their groups. Abū Jahl was a typical example of this. He was one of the well-to-do and prosperous people of Makkah. All the members of his tribe and inhabitants of the city respected and obeyed him. He became arrogant and insulted the leader of all the Prophets ﷺ - the noblest of creation. The next verse warns such arrogant people about the evil consequences of their behavior.

Verse [8] إِنَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ الرُّجْعَى (Surely to your Lord is the Return.) The word *ruj'a*, like *bushrā*, is the verbal noun of infinitive - meaning all will be returning to their Lord. The apparent meaning is 'returning to the Lord after death and giving account of good and bad deeds and seeing with their own eyes the evil consequences of arrogance.' The profounder meaning of the verse is that though man has been endowed with great natural powers and has been created in the best make, he errs grievously if he thinks that he can ignore Allah's help and guidance. He constantly stands in need of Divine assistance, because his capacities and capabilities - either as an individual or in his collective capacity - are at best limited. The proud and arrogant man is thus not self-sufficient. If he thinks deeply, he will find that he needs Allah for every movement and pause. If He has apparently not made any member of the human species in need of another, he is at least in need of Allah for all his needs. Thinking that human beings are not in need of one another is also a fallacy. Allah has made man a social being, and as such he cannot satisfy all his needs by himself. Allah has made the social system or network such that all human beings need one another to satisfy their needs some time or the other. Let us consider an example: A fresh morsel of food that goes into our mouth and we swallow it unreflecting, is the result of thousands of human beings and animals who worked hard for a long period of time. It is not

possible for anyone to engage so many thousands of human beings in his service. The same applies to clothes and other needs which require the services of thousands of millions of humans and animals to prepare the needful things. None of them is his servant. Even if he hires them at a rate of wages to work for him, it would not be possible for him to pay them their wages or salary. This secret or mystery dawns upon man when he realizes that the system of preparing all his needs is set into motion by the consummate wisdom of the Creator of the universe. He inspired someone to become a farmer, He cast into another's mind to become a woodcutter or a carpenter, He kindled in someone else's mind to become a blacksmith, He stimulated others to be content with labouring or working for somebody else, He ignited in others the burning desire to be involved in commerce or business, trade or industry. In this way, Allah has set up a *bazaar* of human needs which no government, nor its legal system or an individual could ever set up. A careful thinking along this line must lead us to the natural corollary that إِنَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ الرُّجْعَىٰ (Surely to your Lord is the Return.", that is, we witness that ultimately all things are under Divine power and wisdom.

Verses [9-10] اَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي يَنْهَىٰ عَبْدًا إِذَا صَلَّى (Have you seen him who forbids a slave of Allah when he prays?) From here to the end of the Sūrah, the verses allude to an incident. When the Holy Prophet ﷺ was enjoined to perform the *ṣalāh*, he started performing it at first privately, later in public in the Sacred Mosque. Abū Jahl stopped him from performing *ṣalāh* and threatened him that if he were to perform *ṣalāh* and prostrate, he would [God forbid!] trample his neck. Verse [14] أَلَمْ يَعْلَم بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ يَرَىٰ (Does he not know that Allah is watching?) is in response to the threat made by Abū Jahl, and the verse does not mention whom He is watching. It is of general application - He is watching the pious personality who is performing the *ṣalāh*, as well as the wretched, miserable person who is obstructing the performance of the *ṣalāh*. Here the statement merely asserts that Allah is watching everything and everyone. It does not specify what will happen at Resurrection, because the horrible, terrible and dreadful scenes of that are unimaginable.

Verse [15 - concluding part] لَنَسْفَعًا بِالنَّاصِيَةِ (...We will certainly drag [him] by forelock.) The *nasfa'an* is derived from the infinitive *safuun* which means 'to seize and drag' and the word *nāṣiyah* means 'forelock', that is, the front part of a person's hair that falls forward over the

forehead. When a person's forelock is seized , he becomes helpless in the hands of the seizer.

Verse [19] كَلَّا لَا تَطِيعُہُ وَاسْجُدْ وَاقْتَرِبْ (No! never obey him, and bow down in *sajdah* {Prostration}, and come closer.) The Holy Prophet ﷺ is advised to ignore and disobey Abū Jahl when he stops him from praying. He is asked to be steadfast in prayer and prostration.

Acceptability of Supplication in the Posture of Prostration

It is recorded in Abū Dāwūd on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ؓ that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: اقرب ما يكون العبد من ربه وهو ساجد فاكثروا الدعاء (The closest that a servant can be to his Lord is when he is in prostration. Therefore, make abundant supplications [while prostrating]) Another authentic Tradition states: فإنه قمن ان يستجاب لكم (...because it is fitting and proper that supplications be accepted in the state of prostration.)

Ruling

It is valid to supplicate in the supererogatory (*nafl*) *ṣalāh* while prostrating. In certain narrations, special words of the supplications are recorded from the Holy Prophet ﷺ. It is better to recite those transmitted prayers of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. There is no proof or evidence of such supplications in the prostration of obligatory *ṣalāh*, because the obligatory *ṣalāh* needs to be short.

Ruling

A prostration is compulsory for one who recites this verse and listens to it. A narration of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ؓ states that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to prostrate when he recited this verse. Allah knows best!

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-‘Alaq
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Qadr (The *Qadr*)

This Sūrah is Makki, and it has 5 verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 5

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ ﴿١﴾ وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ ﴿٢﴾ لَيْلَةُ
الْقَدْرِ لَا خَيْرٌ مِّنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ ﴿٣﴾ تَنَزَّلُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَالرُّوحُ فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ
رَبِّهِمْ مِّنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ ﴿٤﴾ سَلَامٌ هِيَ حَتَّىٰ مَطْلَعِ الْفَجْرِ ﴿٥﴾

We have sent it (the Qur'an) down in the Night of *Qadr*.
[1] And what may let you know what the Night of *Qadr* is? [2] The Night of *Qadr* is much better than one thousand months. [3] The angels and the Spirit descend in it, with the leave of your Lord, along with every command. [4] Peace it is till the rising of dawn. [5]

Occasion of Revelation

Ibn Abī Ḥātim has reported from Mujāhid (as *mursal ḥadīth*) that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was told about a *mujāhid* [warrior in the cause of religion] from amongst the Children of Israel who carried weapons of war on his shoulders for a thousand months during which time he never laid down his arms. The Companions were amazed when they heard this. On that occasion, this Sūrah was revealed which describes that worship in the Night of *Qadr* granted to this *Ummah* exceeds by more than a thousand months of *jihād* persistently fought by that warrior. According to another narration of Mujāhid cited in Ibn Jarīr, a worshipper from among the Children of Israel used to worship Allah the whole night, and

as soon as the dawn broke, he would arm himself and fight the whole day. This continued consecutively for a thousand months. This Surah was thus revealed. This shows the superiority of the *Ummah* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and that the Night of *Qadr* is a special characteristic of this *ummah*. [Maḏharī].

Meaning of The Night of *Qadr*

One meaning of the word *Qadr* is 'greatness, honour or dignity'. Zuhri and other scholars have assigned this meaning to it. The night is called the Night of *Qadr* because it is a night of greatness, honour, majesty and dignity. Abū Bakr Warrāq has stated that this night is so called because a person becomes a man of honour and dignity on account of repentance, seeking pardon and righteous acts during this night, whilst prior to this he might have lacked honour and dignity on account of unrighteous life he might have led.

Another meaning of the word *Qadr* is 'predestination'. From this point of view, the night is so called because the destiny of individuals and nations that was decided in pre-eternity is assigned to the relevant angels who are appointed for cosmic planning. Every man's age, death, sustenance, rain and other things are measured out to the angels to be implemented for a complete year from one month of Ramaḏān to another. If an individual is destined to perform Ḥajj in the forthcoming year, it will be prescribed. According to Ibn 'Abbās ؓ, there are four angels in charge of cosmic planning: [1] Isrāfīl; [2] Mīkā'il; [3] 'Izrā'il; and [4] Jibra'il عليهم السلام.

It is clearly stated in [44:3-5]

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةٍ مُبَارَكَةٍ إِنَّا كُنَّا مُنْذِرِينَ ﴿٣﴾ فِيهَا يُفْرَقُ كُلُّ أَمْرٍ حَكِيمٍ ﴿٤﴾ أَمْرًا مِّنْ عِنْدِنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا مُرْسِلِينَ ﴿٥﴾

We have sent it down in a blessed night, (because) We had to warn (people). [3] In that (night), every wise thing is decided [4] through a command from Us. We were to send the Messenger [5]. (44:3-5)

'*Laylatun Mubārakah*' or the 'blessed', according to overwhelming scholars of the Qur'an, refers to the Night of *Qadr*. The angels record and

descend with whatever Allah has destined or decreed for the coming year. Some scholars hold that the 'blessed night' in 44: 3 refers to the fifteenth night of *Sha'bān*, that is, '*Laylatul Barā'ah*' or the 'Night of Immunity'. This view may be reconciled with the former one by holding that the initial Divine decrees are decided on the Night of Immunity, and the details are recorded and handed over to the relevant angels on the Night of *Qadr*. This is supported by a narration of Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه which Baghawī has recorded on the authority of Abūḍ-Ḍuḥā which states that Allah decrees all cosmic matters on the Night of Immunity, but they are only handed over to the relevant angels on the Night of *Qadr*. [Maḏharī].

Date of the Night of *Qadr*

It is explicitly stated in the Qur'ān that the Night occurs in the blessed or auspicious month of Ramaḍān, but its exact date has not been disclosed. As a result, it is disputed and debated among scholars. There are about forty opinions recorded. Maḏharī states that the most authentic opinion is that the Night of *Qadr* occurs in the last ten nights of *Ramaḍān*, but no specific date has been fixed. It could be any of the last ten odd nights which may alternate from year to year. According to authentic Traditions, it could be one of the following nights: 21, 23, 25, 27 and 29. Thus all the apparently conflicting Traditions relating to the odd nights are reconciled. All the Traditions pertaining to the date of the Night are authentic, and there is no need for any convoluted interpretation. Most eminent jurists - like Abā Qilābah, Imām Mālik, Imām Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, Sufyān Thawrī, Ishāq Ibn Rahwaih, Abū Thawr, Muzanī, Ibn Khuzaymah and others - agree that the Night occurs in the last ten odd nights, alternating. Imām Shāfi'ī has two opinions. In one he sides with the majority, and in another he holds that the night is fixed and does not alternate. [Ibn Kathīr].

Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah's رضي الله عنها narration is recorded in Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī, according to which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is reported to have said: *تحرّوا ليلة القدر في العشر الاواخر من رمضان* "Look for the Night of *Qadr* in the last ten nights of Ramaḍān." Ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنه narrates, as recorded in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: *فاطلبوها في الوتر منها* "Search for it in the last ten odd nights of Ramaḍān." [Maḏharī].

The Value and Importance of the Night and a Special Duʿā for the Night

The greatest virtue of the Night is mentioned in the Sūrah itself, that is, the acts of worship performed in this single night is better than worship in one thousand months which amounts to eighty-three years and four months. The figure here and elsewhere in the Qurʾān does not signify its precise number, but simply denotes a very large or high number. Allah alone knows how much more or better.

It is recorded in Bukhārī and Muslim on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "He who spends the Night of *Qadr* in the worship of Allah, all his past sins will be forgiven." Sayyidnā Ibn ʿAbbās رضي الله عنه narrates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "All the angels resident at the 'Lote Tree of the Uttermost Boundary' descend in the leadership of Sayyidnā Jibraʾīl عليه السلام and greet every believer, man or woman, except one who takes wine or eats pork." Another narration reports that anyone who is deprived of the good of the Night of *Qadr* is in fact deprived of all good. On the Night of *Qadr* some people experience and witness special *anwār* [lights]. However, it may be noted that this is not experienced or witnessed by all and sundry nor is it part of the blessings and reward of the Night. Therefore, people should not concern themselves about it.

Sayyidah ʿĀʾishah رضي الله عنها once asked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ what supplication she should make if she finds the Night. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ advised her to make the following supplication: **اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنَّكَ عَفُوٌّ تَحِبُّ الْعَفْوَ فَاعْفُ عَنِّيْ** "O Allah! Verily, You are the Oft-Pardoning, You love to pardon, so do pardon me." [Qurṭubī].

Revelation of the Holy Qurʾān

Verse [1] **اِنَّا اَنْزَلْنٰهُ فِيْ لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ** "We sent it [the Qurʾān] down in the Night of *Qadr*." This verse makes explicit that the Holy Qurʾān was revealed on the Night of *Qadr*. This could have one of two meanings: [1] the entire Holy Qurʾān was revealed on this Night from the Preserved Tablet. Then Sayyidnā Jibraʾīl عليه السلام, according to the exigency of circumstances, brought it down to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ piecemeal over a period of twenty-three years; and [2] it is related that the first revelation,

consisting of the opening verses of Sūrah [96], took place in the month of Ramaḍān on the Night of *Qadr*, when the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was at his devotion in the cave of Hira'. The rest of the Qur'ān was revealed little by little according to the need of different occasions.

All Heavenly Books were revealed in Ramaḍān

Sayyidnā Abū Dhar Ghifārī رضي الله عنه narrates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Holy Prophet Ibrāhīm's عليه السلام Scriptures were revealed on 3rd of Ramaḍān; Torah was revealed on 6th of Ramaḍān; Injīl was revealed on 13th of Ramaḍān; Zabūr was revealed on 18th of Ramaḍān; and the Holy Qur'ān was revealed on 24th of Ramaḍān." [Mazharī].

Descent of the Angels and the Spirit with Divine Decrees

Verse [4] تَنَزَّلُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَالرُّوحُ (The angels and the Spirit descend in it, with the leave of their Lord, along with every command.) 'Spirit' here refers to Jibra'il عليه السلام.

Sayyidnā Anas رضي الله عنه narrates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "When the Night of *Qadr* occurs, Jibra'il عليه السلام descends on the earth with a huge throng of angels and all of them pray for every servant of Allah, man or woman, busy in *ṣalāh* or *dhikr*, to be blessed by Allah." [Mazharī]. In the phrase مِنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ (along with every command), the preposition *min* is used in the sense of 'with' as in [13:11] مِنْ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ يَحْفَظُونَهُ. The verse under comment means the angels bring down, during the Night of *Qadr*, the decree for everything destined to occur in the coming year. Some of the commentators, like Mujāhid and others, say that the phrase مِنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ *min kulli amrin* is syntactically related to *salām*, and the word 'Amr means 'every thing'. Thus they interpret the statement to mean: 'The night is a security from every evil, harm and calamity.' [Ibn Kathīr].

Verse [5] سَلَامٌ (Peace it is till the rising of dawn.) The word *Salām* [peace] stands for a complete sentence meaning 'it is all peace, equanimity and complete goodness, having no evil in it.' [Qurṭubī]. Some scholars treat the word *Salāmun* as a sentence qualifying مِنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ *min kulli amrin*, meaning 'the angels come with every such matter which is good and peace'. [Mazharī].

هِيَ حَتَّى مَطْلَعِ الْفَجْرِ The concluding expression of the verse means the blessings of the Night of *Qadr* are not restricted to any particular part of

the night. They start descending at the fall of night and continue till the break of dawn.

Special Note

According to there verse 'The Night of Power is better than a thousand months' which equals eighty-three years and four months. Obviously, each year will contain a *laylatul Qadr* which will be better than a thousand months. As a result, the Night of *Qadr* will recur *ad infinitum*, that is, repeat or continue without an end. For this reason, some of the commentators say the expression 'more than a thousand months' does not include nights of *Qadr*. Thus this should not pose any problem. [Ibn Kathīr on the authority of Mujāhid].

On account of geographical positions, the time will vary from place to place. As a result, the Night of *Qadr* will not occur in all the regions of the world simultaneously. This is not a problem because people of each location should calculate and consecrate the night and receive its blessings according to their geographical position. Allah, the Pure and Exalted, knows best.

Ruling

If anyone performs the 'Ishā' and Fajr *ṣalāhs* in congregation, he will receive the blessings and reward of the Night of *Qadr*. The more one performs acts of worship in this night, the more he shall receive its blessings. It is recorded in Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim that Sayyidnā 'Uthmān  narrates that the Messenger of Allah  said: "If a person performs his 'Ishā' *ṣalāh* in congregation, he will attain the blessings of spending half the night in devotion; and if he performs Fajr *ṣalāh* in congregation, he will attain the blessings of spending the entire night in devotion."

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Qadr
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Bayyinah

(The Clear Proof)

This Sūrah is Madani, and it has 8 verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 8

لَمْ يَكُنِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ وَالْمُشْرِكِينَ مُنْفَكِّينَ حَتَّى تَأْتِيَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَةُ ﴿١﴾ رَسُولٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ يَتْلُوا صُحُفًا مُطَهَّرَةً ﴿٢﴾ فِيهَا كُتِبَ قِيمَةٌ ﴿٣﴾ وَمَا تَفَرَّقَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُمْ الْبَيِّنَةُ ﴿٤﴾ وَمَا أُمِرُوا إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ ۚ حُنَفَاءَ وَيُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَذَلِكَ دِينُ الْقِيَمَةِ ﴿٥﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ وَالْمُشْرِكِينَ فِي نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ۚ أُولَئِكَ هُمْ شَرُّ الْبَرِيَّةِ ﴿٦﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ ۖ أُولَئِكَ هُمْ خَيْرُ الْبَرِيَّةِ ﴿٧﴾ جَزَاءُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ جَنَّاتُ عَدْنٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا ۖ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ ۚ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ خَشِيَ رَبَّهُ ۚ ﴿٨﴾

Those who disbelieved from among the People of the Book, and the polytheists, were not (expected) to desist (from their wrong beliefs) unless there came to them a clear proof, [1] a messenger from Allah who recites the

purified scrolls [2] containing (right and) straight writings. [3] And those who were given the Book did not disagree but after the clear proof came to them, [4] while they were not ordered but to worship Allah, making their submission exclusive for him with integrity, and to establish *ṣalāh* and pay *zakāh*. And that is the way of the straight religion. [5] Surely those who disbelieved from among the People of the Book and the polytheists will be in the fire of Jahannam, in which they will be living forever. Those are the worst of all human beings. [6] As for those who believed and did righteous deeds, they are the best of all human beings. [7] Their reward, with their Lord, is gardens of eternity beneath which rivers flow in which they will be abiding forever. Allah is pleased with them, and they are pleased with Him. That is for him who has awe of his Lord. [8]

Situation of the People of the Book and of the Pagan Arabs before the advent of the Final Messenger of Allah ﷺ

Verse [1] draws attention to the situation of the world before the advent of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ: The entire world was sunk deeply in the darkness of ignorance, superstition, corruption, disbelief and paganism. When the whole world was so benighted, the infinite grace, mercy and wisdom of the Lord of the worlds bubbled up to dispel the darkness, to cure the obnoxious diseases and to dissipate the universally prevailing calamities. The moral and spiritual maladies were acute, excruciating, serious and severe. As a result, there was a need for an effective, expert and a competent healer who would be able to cure them. Such a healer was raised in the person of the Final Messenger of Allah ﷺ who is described as *al-Bayyinah* 'The Clear Proof'. The healer came with a Book. Now follows some of the important characteristics of the Holy Qur'ān.

Verses [2-3] **يَتْلُوا صُحُفًا مُطَهَّرَةً. فِيهَا كُتِبَ قَبِيْمَةٌ** (a messenger from Allah who recites the purified scrolls containing [right and] straight writings. - 98:2,3) The verb *yatlū* is derived from the infinitive *tilāwah*, meaning 'to read out or to recite'. However, not every reading or reciting is *tilāwah*, but only the one that is very closely followed according to the teacher's instruction. Probably, this is the reason why the word *tilāwah* is specifically used, in common idiom, for 'the recitation of the noble Qur'ān'

. The word *ṣuḥuf* is the plural of *ṣaḥīfah* and it refers to 'a leaf or a page of a book or some leaves of paper on which something is written'. The word *kutūb* is the plural of *kitāb* and it may mean: [1] a leaf or page of a book or some leaves of paper on which something is written. From this point of view, the words *kutūb* and *ṣuḥuf* are synonyms; or [2] now and then the word *kitāb* [pl. *kutūb*] is used in the sense of a 'writ' as in [8:68] *لَوْلَا كُتِبَ مِنَ اللَّهِ سَبَقٌ* "Had there not been a writ from Allah which came earlier..." the word *kitāb* is used in the sense of a 'writ'. In this context, the second sense seems to fit in more appropriately because if it is taken in the first sense, the words *kutūb* and *ṣuḥuf*, being synonyms, the prepositional phrase *fīhā* is rendered meaningless. The pronoun *-hā* in the phrase refers to *ṣuḥuf*, and the two statements would mean: 'reciting purified written pages in which are true written pages'. This is not in keeping with the lofty rules and principles of Qur'anic eloquence.

The word *مُطَهَّرَةٌ* *mutaḥharatan* [purified] is an adjective qualifying the noun *ṣuḥuf* [pages/scrolls]. According to Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه, the Scriptures are completely free from all possible flaws, forgeries, doubt, hypocrisy and deviations. The word *qayyimah* is used in the sense of 'straight', and is the adjective of the noun *kutūb*, and it means its laws, ordinances and injunctions are upright, straight, just and balanced. It could also mean 'lasting and permanent'. In this instance, the phrase would signify that the Divine injunctions of the Holy Qur'ān will last permanently till the Day of Judgement. The verse thus purports to say that the sending of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ [as the Clear Proof] was essential to the transformation of the people of earlier revelations and the pagans who had ended up in disbelief and could not have departed from their erring ways without the help of his ﷺ Prophetic mission. His ﷺ mission was to recite the pure scrolls to them which contained clear Divine injunctions. Initially he ﷺ did not recite from the Scriptures but from his memory, but the sense here is that he recited to them a discourse that was later written and preserved in scrolls. The Qur'ān [as the Clear Proof] is the compendium of all that is good, lasting and immutable teachings.

Verse [4] *وَمَا تَفَرَّقَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُمْ الْبَيِّنَةُ* (And those who were given the Book did not disagree but after the Clear Proof came to them.) The verb *tafarraqa* here means 'to deny, reject or differ and disagree'. The

verse means to say that the People of the Book had eagerly awaited the advent of a great Holy Prophet ﷺ about whom clear prophecies were found in their Scriptures, clear description of the Holy Prophet ﷺ was given, in that the Qur'ān would descend upon him and it would be compulsory for them to obey and follow him, but when he appeared in fact, then instead of accepting him, they rejected him. The Qur'ān points out that there was a complete agreement among the Jews and the Christians that the Final Messenger ﷺ will make his appearance, as in [2:89] "وَكَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ يُسْأَلُونَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ...while earlier, they used to seek help against those who disbelieved..." That is, the Torah had in several places foretold the coming of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. In fact, the Jews themselves used to tell the pagan Arabs that a new Prophet was soon to come who will vanquish them, and the Jews claimed that they would be with him, so they would be victorious. Further in [2:89] the Qur'ān states "فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ مَا عَرَفُوا كَفَرُوا بِهِ ...yet when there came to them that they did identify, they denied it..." The phrase 'that they did identify' could refer to the 'Final Messenger' ﷺ or the 'new Divine Book [the Qur'ān]' or the 'religion of Truth'. The same theme runs through the verse under comment: Many people accepted the new Prophet ﷺ, the new Book and the new religion in terms of the prophecies made in their revealed Scriptures, but a large number, especially the Christians, rejected them. It is a strange phenomenon that before his advent they believed in him without a single dissenting voice, but when he appeared as the Clear Proof, dissention arose and a large number rejected him while a small number believed in him.

Since this phenomenon was restricted to the People of the Book, it did not include the pagans, unlike verse [1] which includes the pagans also. Allah knows best!

Verse [5] **وَذَلِكَ دِينُ الْقَيِّمَةِ** (And that is the way of the straight religion.) The word *qayyimah* [the straight] is apparently the qualifier of the noun *kutūb* [Books] which occurred earlier. Some treat the adjective as qualifying the noun *millah* [religion]. The verse purports to say that Allah commanded the People of the former Scriptures that they should render full and sincere obedience to Divine commandments, that is, to worship Allah alone. They should also establish the regular prayers and

pay the obligatory alms. Then the Qur'an reminds them that this is not their distinctive feature exclusively. All former religions that are upright and received Books from Allah have the same features. This is the true religion of all the Prophets ﷺ that they preached to their respective people. It would appear that the phrase *kutubun qayyimah* [(right and) straight writings], contextually, refers to the Qur'ānic ordinances and injunctions. From this point of view, the verse would signify that the ordinances and injunctions of the Shari'ah of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ are exactly the same as those that were given to them in their revealed Scriptures. They were not divergent so that they could find a pretext to oppose.

Verse [8] رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ ط ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ خَشِيَ رَبَّهُ (Allah is pleased with them, and they are pleased with Him; that is for him who fears his Lord.) This verse points to the highest stage of spiritual development of the inmates of Paradise, that is, the Divine pleasure with no danger of Divine displeasure. This is the greatest reward with which the people of faith will be blessed. The God-fearing people are well-pleased with Him because of the comprehensive favours He has given them. Sayyidnā Abū Sa'īd Khudrī ؓ narrates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

"Undoubtedly, Allah shall address the inmates of Paradise: يَا أَهْلَ الْجَنَّةِ 'O Inmates of Paradise!'"

They will reply: لَبَّيْكَ رَبَّنَا وَسَعْدَيْكَ وَالْخَيْرُ كُلُّهُ، فَبِي يَدَيْكَ Our Lord, we are present and ready to carry out Your orders. All good is in Your control.'

Allah shall ask them: هَلْ رَضِيتُمْ Are you happy?'

They will submit: 'How can we not be happy when You have given us what You have not bestowed on any of Your creation?'

Allah will tell them: 'Shall I not grant you something superior to all of this?'

They will exclaim: 'What can be superior to this?'

Allah will reply: 'I shall grant you My pleasure, and I will never be angry with you in the future.' [Transmitted by al-Bukhārī vide Mazharī].

It should be noted here that there are two types of *riḍā'* [pleasure]:

one in general sense; and second in specific or higher sense. In the general sense, *riḍā' bil-qadr* (i.e. to be pleased with every decree of Allah) is part of the obligations of a servant of Allah. A consummated slave is only ever satisfied and content with Allah Himself, and thus sincerely accepts the Divine decree. However, here the word is used in the higher sense, that is, Allah bestows upon a slave all his specific wishes and ambitions without leaving out any of them as in [93:5] وَلَسَوْفَ يُعْطِيكَ رَبُّكَ فَتَرْضَى (And of course, your Lord will give you so much that you will be pleased.) Here also the word '*riḍā'*' means the fulfillment of every wish of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. When this verse was revealed, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ expressed his wish and ambition that he would not be pleased until every single believer is taken out of Hell. [Maḏharī]

Verse [8 - the concluding phrase] ذَلِكْ لِمَنْ خَشِيَ رَبَّهُ (...That is for him who has awe of his Lord.) The word 'fear' or 'awe' here is not used in the sense of an 'agitated, disturbed or perturbed feeling' which we naturally have for an enemy, a beast, a ferocious animal or an obnoxious thing that might harm us. '*Khashyatullah*' (Allah's awe) is, on the contrary, a feeling of deep, reverential awe that leads man to Allah's obedience. It is the awe of Allah's Majesty and His Incomparability that makes the perfect slave do every work under every circumstance to attain the Divine pleasure and evade every occasion of His displeasure. This is the axis on which rotates the religious perfection and all bounties of the Hereafter.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Bayyinah
Ends here

Sūrah Az-Zilzal

(The Quake)

This Sūrah is Madani, and it has 8 verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 8

إِذَا زُلْزِلَتِ الْأَرْضُ زِلْزَالَهَا ﴿١﴾ وَأَخْرَجَتِ الْأَرْضُ أَثْقَالَهَا ﴿٢﴾ وَقَالَ
الْإِنْسَانُ مَالَهَا ﴿٣﴾ يَوْمَئِذٍ تُحَدِّثُ أَخْبَارَهَا ﴿٤﴾ بِأَنَّ رَبَّكَ أَوْحَىٰ لَهَا
﴿٥﴾ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَصْدُرُ النَّاسُ أَشْتَاتًا لِّيُرَوْا أَعْمَالَهُمْ ﴿٦﴾ فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ
مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ ﴿٧﴾ وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ ﴿٨﴾

When the earth will be trembled with its quake, [1] and the earth will bring forth its burdens, [2] and man will say, "What has happened to it?" [3] That day it will describe all its happenings, [4] because its Lord will have so commanded it. [5] That day the people will come back (from the place of reckoning) in different groups, so that they may be shown (the fruits of) their deeds. [6] So, whoever does good (even) to the weight of a particle shall see it. [7] And whoever does evil (even) to the weight of a particle shall see it. [8]

The Merits of Surah Az-Zilzal

Sayyidnā Anas and Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنهما report that the Messenger of Allah said that Sūrah Al-Zilzāl equals half the Qur’ān, Sūrah Al-Ikhlāṣ equals a third of the Qur’ān and Sūrah Al-Kāfirun equals a quarter of the Qur’ān. [Transmitted by al-Tirmidhī, al-Baghawī and al-Maḥzarī].

The Scene of the Day of Resurrection

Verse [1] إِذَا زُلْزِلَتِ الْأَرْضُ زِلْزَالَهَا (When the earth will be trembled with its quake.) It is not clear whether this earthquake refers to the convulsion that will take place in the world before the 'first blowing of the trumpet', as is mentioned in connection with the portents of the Doomsday, or it refers to the quake that will occur after the 'second blowing' when the dead bodies will be resurrected and thrown out of their graves. Narratives and views of the commentators differ on this issue. It is not inconceivable that many quakes and convulsions would occur: first, before the 'first blowing'; and second, after the 'second blowing' at the time of raising the dead. Here it probably refers to the second quake, and the context supports it, because the Sūrah later on describes the scenes of the Day of Resurrection, such as reckoning, weighing and evaluating of deeds, and recompense. Allah knows best. [Maḏharī]

Verse [2] وَأَخْرَجَتِ الْأَرْضُ أَثْقَالَهَا (and the earth will bring forth its burdens.) Muslim has recorded in his Ṣaḥīḥ from Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

"The earth will throw out the pieces of its liver [contents]. Gold and silver will come out like columns. A murderer will come and say: 'I killed for this ?' The one who broke the ties of kinship will say: 'For this I severed the ties of kinship?' The thief will say: 'For this I got my hand amputated?' Then they will leave it there, and no one will take anything from it."

Verse [7] فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ (So, whoever does good [even] to the weight of a particle shall see it.) The word 'good' here refers to what is good in terms of Shari'ah, that is, only a good deed done in the wake of faith is recognized by Allah. Any good deed done in the state of disbelief is not recognized, and consequently it will not be rewarded in the Hereafter, though it might have been rewarded in this world. It is argued on the basis of this verse that anyone who has an atom's weight of faith will eventually be taken out of Hell. The reason being that, according to the promise made in this verse, man must reap the fruit of his righteousness in the Hereafter. If he has not done any righteous deeds, faith itself is a great righteousness. Thus no matter how sinful a believer may be, he will

not be condemned to Hell for good. On the other hand, if a non-believer has done tons of good deeds, they will be rendered vain in the Hereafter on account of lack of faith. He will, however, receive reward for them here in this world.

Verse [8] وَمَنْ يَّعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ (And Whoever does evil [even] to the weight of a particle shall see it.) By 'evil' here is meant the evil for which the evil-doer has not repented. The Qur'ān and the Sunnah bear ample testimony to the fact that any sinner who sincerely repents for his sins Allah will most certainly accept his repentance. However, the sins for which the sinners have not repented in this world shall certainly bring their results, no matter how trivial or petty they might have been in their appearance. That is why the Messenger of Allah ﷺ warned Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها to beware of the sins that are belittled, for indeed they will be taken account of by Allah. " [Transmitted by Nasā'ī and Ibn Mājah].

Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ؓ says that this verse is most robust and comprehensive verse of the Holy Qur'ān. Sayyidnā Anas ؓ in a lengthy narration reports that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ referred to this verse as الفأذة الجامعة "the unique, most comprehensive verse".

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Az-Zilzāl
Ends here

Sūrah ‘Al-Ādiyāt (The Running Horses)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 11 verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 11

وَالْعَدِيثِ ضَبْحًا ﴿١﴾ فَاَلْمُورِيتِ قَدْحًا ﴿٢﴾ فَاَلْمُغِيرَاتِ صُبْحًا ﴿٣﴾
فَاَثَرْنَ بِهِ نَقْعًا ﴿٤﴾ فَوَسَطْنَ بِهِ جَمْعًا ﴿٥﴾ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لِرَبِّهِ لَكَنُودٌ
﴿٦﴾ وَإِنَّهُ عَلَىٰ ذَٰلِكَ لَشَهِيدٌ ﴿٧﴾ وَإِنَّهُ لِحُبِّ الْخَيْرِ لَشَدِيدٌ ﴿٨﴾ أَفَلَا
يَعْلَمُ إِذَا بُعْثِرَ مَا فِي الْقُبُورِ ﴿٩﴾ وَحُصِّلَ مَا فِي الصُّدُورِ ﴿١٠﴾ إِنَّ
رَبَّهُمْ بِهِمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ لَّخَبِيرٌ ﴿١١﴾

I swear by those (horses) that run snorting, [1] then those that create sparks by striking (their hoofs) on the stones, [2] then those that invade at morning, [3] and raise a trail of dust therein, [4] then enter, at the same time, into the centre of the (opposing) host, [5] man is, indeed, very ungrateful to his Lord, [6] and he himself is a witness to that fact. [7] And in his love for wealth, he is very intense. [8] Does he not then know (what will happen) when all that is contained in the graves will be overturned, [9] and all that is contained in the hearts will be exposed. [10] Surely your Lord, that day, will be fully aware of them. [11]

Place of Revelation

According to Sayyidnā Ibn Mas‘ūd, Jābir, Ḥasan Baṣrī, ‘Ikramah and

‘Aṭā’ رَحِمَهُمُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى, Sūrah Al-‘Ādiyāt was revealed in Makkah and, according to Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās, Anas, Imām Mālik and Qatādah, the Sūrah was revealed in Madīnah. [Qurṭubī].

In this Sūrah Allah describes the special features of war-horses or chargers, and swears by them. The subject of the oath states that man is very ungrateful to his Lord. It has been explained time and again previously that it is the prerogative of Allah to swear oath by any of his creatures to recount an event or set down ordinances. It is not permitted for any of the human beings to take oath by any of the creatures. The purpose of swearing an oath is to confirm or give weight to a subsequently stated truth. It is also mentioned earlier that when the Holy Qur’ān swears an oath by an object, it has some nexus with the subject of the oath. Here the hard tasks of the war-horses are called to bear testimony to the fact that man is very ungrateful for Allah's favours. In other words, man needs to look at the horses, especially the war-horses, who risk their lives to travel under very dangerous and difficult conditions, especially in the battlefields where they follow the commands of their masters, whereas man has not created them, he has not even created the fodder he gives to them. His task is merely to give them the fodder that Allah has created. The horses recognize and acknowledge this little favor man does to them, and are prepared to risk their lives and bear the greatest of hardships. As against this, Allah has created man with an insignificant drop of sperm and endowed him with high faculties, abilities, intellect and senses to perform various types of tasks, thus making him the crown of His creation. He [Allah] provided him with all types of food. Facilities are created for all his needs and necessities in an amazing manner. But man does not recognize and acknowledge any of these sublime favors, nor does he express his gratitude to his Creator.

Lexicographical Analysis

The word عَادِيَات *‘ādiyāt* is derived from the root ‘*adw*’ which means ‘to run’. The دَابْح *dabh* means ‘the sound coming out of the chest of a horse when it runs fast and breathes laboriously; panting.’ The word مُؤْرِيات *mūriyāt* is the active participle of the infinitive of إِرَاءَ *‘irā’*. The infinitive means ‘to strike or produce fire with a particular piece of wood.’ The word قَذَح *qadh* means ‘to strike or produce fire with a flint; striking sparks of

fire when the horse runs fast on a rocky ground with horse-shoes on'. The word مُغِيرَات *mughīrāt* is active participle of the infinitive إِغَارَة *ighārah*. The infinitive means 'to attack, or make a sudden hostile excursion upon, an enemy'. The word *ṣubḥ* means 'morning or dawn'. This time has been specifically mentioned because it was the practice of Arabs to attack their enemy at dawn, and not at night in order to show off their bravery. They thought making a hostile excursion on the enemy in the darkness of night was an act of cowardice. The word أَثَرَنَ *atharna* is derived from 'ithārah, which means 'to raise dust'. The word نَفْعَ *naq'* means 'dust'. This implies that the dust became stirred up and spread upon the horizon, especially in the morning when the horses run fast. Normally, this is not the time for clouds of dust to fly in this way, unless it was caused by very fast running.

Verse [100:5] فَوَسَّطْنَ بِهِ جَمْعًا (then enter, at the same time, into the centre of the [opposing] host) In other words, they penetrate into the centre of the enemy forces without the least degree of fear.

The word *kanūd*, (100:6) according to Ḥasan Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى, refers to the one who counts the calamities that befall him, and forgets Allah's favours. Abū Bakr Wasiṭī said that *kanūd* is the one who spends the bounties of Allah for sinful purposes. Tirmidhi said that *kanūd* is the one who looks at the bounty, and not at the Bounteous Lord. In short, all these interpretations lead to the sense of 'ungratefulness to favours and bounties' and hence the expression *kanūd* means 'ungrateful'.

Verse [100:8] وَإِنَّهُ لِحُبِّ الْخَيْرِ لَشَدِيدٌ (and in his love for wealth, he is very intense.) Literally, the word *khair* means 'any good thing'. Idiomatically, the word *khair*, in Arabic, means 'wealth' implying that 'wealth' is an embodiment of goodness and benefit. However, some type of wealth can involve man in untold misery. In the Hereafter, this will be the position of all wealth acquired through unlawful means. Sometimes, wealth in this world too can prove to be nuisance and disaster. Nonetheless, according to Arabic idiom, worldly goods in this verse have been described as *khair* as the same word in another verse [2:180] إِنْ تَرَكَ خَيْرًا "...he leaves some wealth...". In this verse as well the word *khair* means 'wealth'.

To recap, having taken oath by war-horses, the subject states two

points: [1] man is ungrateful or he is a blamer of his Lord who remembers misfortunes and forgets His favours; and [2] he is passionate in his love for wealth. Both these points are evil, rationally as well as from the Shari‘ah point of view. These statements warn man against these evils. The evil of ingratitude is quite obvious and needs no elaboration, but the evil of man's violent love for wealth is not that obvious, and needs some elaboration. Wealth is the axis of man's needs and necessities. Shari'ah has not only permitted its acquisition, but it has also made its acquisition obligatory to the degree of his needs. Therefore, what is condemned in the verse is either the 'intense' or excessive love for wealth that makes one neglectful to one's obligations, and oblivious of the divine injunctions, or the sense is that earning wealth, even saving it according to one's needs is though permissible, having its love in the heart is bad. Let us consider the following illustration: When man feels the need to answer the call of nature, he does it out of necessity. In fact, he makes arrangements for it, but he does not develop love or passion for it in his heart. Likewise, when he falls sick and takes medication, or even undergoes surgery, but he does not develop attachment for it in his heart. He does it only out of necessity. The believer should treat the wealth in this way: A believer should acquire wealth, as Allah has commanded him, to the extent of his need, save it, look after it and utilize it whenever and wherever necessary, but his heart should not be attached to it. How elegantly Maulānā Rūmī رحمه الله تعالى has put it in one of his verses!

آب اندر زیر کشتی پُشتی است..... آب در کشتی هلاک کشتی است

"As long as the water remains under the boat, it helps the boat [to sail]; but if the water seeps into the boat, it sinks it."

Likewise, as long as the wealth floats around the boat of heart, it would be useful; but when it seeps into the heart, it will destroy it. Towards the conclusion of the Sūrah a warning has been sounded against these two evil qualities of man for which he will be punished in the Hereafter.

Verses [100:9-11] أَفَلَا يَعْلَمُ إِذَا بُعْثِرَ مَا فِي الْقُبُورِ وَحُصِّلَ مَا فِي الصُّدُورِ. إِنَّ رَبَّهُمْ بِهِمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ لَّخَبِيرٌ
(Does he not then know [what will happen] when all that is contained in the graves will be overturned, and all that is contained in the hearts will

be exposed. Surely your Lord, that day, is fully aware of them.) Divine retribution will be meted out, in the Hereafter, to each person commensurate with his deeds, good or bad, as Allah is well-aware of them. Therefore, it would be wise for man to abstain from ingratitude, and he should not have such a violently passionate love for wealth and indulgence in worldly riches as to be unable to separate the good from the bad.

Special Note

The current set of verses describes these evil qualities of man in general terms, while Prophets عليهم السلام, friends of Allah and many of His righteous servants are free from these evil qualities or from any earthly attachments. They acquire wealth through lawful means and abstain from acquiring it through unlawful means. They are ever so grateful to Allah for the wealth He has given them and spend it in the way of Allah. So how these evils are attributed to man in general terms? The answer is that most people have these evil qualities, but this does not imply that all, without any exception, are characterized by these qualities. The upright people are excluded from the general statement. Some of the scholars restrict the word 'man' to 'unbelievers'. These two evil qualities are the essential characteristics of unbelievers, and if they are found in a Muslim [God forbid!], he needs to reflect and be careful. Allah knows best!

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-‘Adiyāt
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Qāri'ah (The Striking Event)

This Sūrah is Makki, and it has 11 verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 11

الْقَارِعَةُ ﴿١﴾ مَا الْقَارِعَةُ ﴿٢﴾ وَمَا أَذْرُكَ مَا الْقَارِعَةُ ﴿٣﴾ يَوْمَ يَكُونُ
النَّاسُ كَالْفَرَاشِ الْمَبْثُوثِ ﴿٤﴾ وَتَكُونُ الْجِبَالُ كَالْعِهْنِ الْمَنْفُوشِ
﴿٥﴾ فَأَمَّا مَنْ ثَقُلَتْ مَوَازِينُهُ ﴿٦﴾ فَهُوَ فِي عِيشَةٍ رَاضِيَةٍ ﴿٧﴾ وَأَمَّا
مَنْ خَفَّتْ مَوَازِينُهُ ﴿٨﴾ فَأُمُّهُ هَاوِيَةٌ ﴿٩﴾ وَمَا أَذْرُكَ مَا هِيَةٌ ﴿١٠﴾ نَارُ
حَامِيَةٍ ﴿١١﴾

The Striking Event! [1] What is the Striking Event? [2] And what may let you know what the Striking Event is? [3] (It will happen) on a day when people will be like scattered moths, [4] and the mountains will be like carded wool. [5] Then, the one whose scales (of good deeds) are heavy [6] will be in a happy life. [7] But he whose scales are light, [8] his abode will be Abyss. [9] And what may let you know what that (Abyss) is? [10] A blazing fire! [11]

Human Deeds, Good or Bad, will be Weighed

This Sūrah mentions the weighing of human deeds. He whose scales are heavy will be led to Paradise, and he whose scales are light will be led to Hell. Please see Mā'ariful Qur'ān, Vol. 3/ pp 539-547, for a full and complete analysis of the Weighing of human deeds. The analysis also

allays the doubts raised against the concept of weighing of deeds.

We have also explained there that it appears from reconciliation of conflicting narrations and Qur'ānic verses that the weighing on Plain of Resurrection will take place twice. The first weighing will be to separate the believers from the non-believers. Anyone whose Book of Deeds is put on the scale and contains the belief (*'Īmān*) will be heavy, and the scale of anyone whose Ledger of Deeds does not contain *'Īmān* will be light. At this stage, the believers will be separated from the non-believers. Weighing on the second time will be to distinguish between good and evil deeds of the believers. The reference, in the present Sūrah, is probably to the first weighing in which the scale of every believer will be heavy regardless of his other deeds, while the scale of an unbeliever will be light, even though he might have performed some good acts.

It is explained in Mazḥarī that the Holy Qur'ān generally contrasts the unbelievers and righteous believers, when speaking of retribution [reward or punishment], because the latter are the perfect believers. As for the believers who have performed righteous as well as unrighteous deeds, the Qur'ān is generally silent on the issue. However, the principle may be noted that on the Day of Judgement human deeds will not be counted, but weighed. Fewer good deeds with high degree of faith and sincerity, and in accordance with Sunnah will be heavier than many good deeds - prayers, fasting, charity and pilgrimage with lesser degree of faith and sincerity, or not completely in accordance with Sunnah.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Qāri'ah
Ends here

Sūrah At-Takāthur (Competition in Amassing)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 8 verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 8

الْهَيْكُمُ التَّكَاثُرُ ﴿١﴾ حَتَّى زُرْتُمُ الْمَقَابِرَ ﴿٢﴾ كَلَّا سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣﴾ ثُمَّ كَلَّا سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤﴾ كَلَّا لَوِ تَعْلَمُونَ عِلْمَ الْيَقِينِ ﴿٥﴾ لَتَرَوُنَّ الْجَحِيمَ ﴿٦﴾ ثُمَّ لَتَرَوُنَّهَا عَيْنَ الْيَقِينِ ﴿٧﴾ ثُمَّ لَتُسْأَلُنَّ يَوْمَئِذٍ عَنِ النَّعِيمِ ﴿٨﴾

You are distracted by mutual competition in amassing (worldly benefits), [1] until you reach the graves. [2] No! (This is not a correct attitude.) You will soon know (the reality). [3] Again, you will soon know. [4] No! if you have had sure knowledge (of the Hereafter, you would not have been so distracted) [5] You will certainly see the Hell, [6] then you will see it with an eye of certainty. [7] Then you will be asked about all the pleasures (you enjoyed in the world). [8]

Special Merit of Sūrah At-Takāthur

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ is reported to have once asked the noble Companions: "Is there anyone from amongst you who has the strength to recite one thousand verses a day?" The blessed Companions replied: "Who can recite a thousand verses a day?" The Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "Can you not recite Sūrah At-Takāthur?" This implies that Sūrah At-Takāthur equals in weight and worth to a thousand verses, thus stressing its great

importance. [Maḥzarī with reference to Ḥākim and Baihaqī on the authority of Ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنه].

Warning Against Materialistic Attitude

Verse [1] **الْهَلِكُمُ النَّكَارُ** (You are distracted by mutual competition in amassing [worldly benefits].) The word *takāthur* is derived from the root *kathrah*, and means 'to amass much wealth'. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه and Ḥasan Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى have assigned this interpretation to it. Qatādah رضي الله عنه says that this word is also used in the sense of 'taking pride in the abundance of material goods'. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه reports that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ recited this verse and explained its meaning, thus: "Acquiring wealth but not paying out of it the obligatory dues." [Qurṭubī].

Verse [2] **حَتَّىٰ زُرْتُمُ الْمَقَابِرَ** (until you reach the graves.) Here the words 'reaching the graves' mean 'to die and be buried in the graves', as the following Prophetic Ḥadīth bears testimony to this interpretation. Referring to verse [2] of this Sūrah, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: **حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِيَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ** "until death overtakes you" [Ibn Kathīr, from by Ibn Abī Ḥatīm]. The verse thus implies that many people are engrossed in acquiring worldly goods and racing each other in wealth and children etc. and remain neglectful of the Hereafter till death comes upon them, and then they are seized by the divine punishment. Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Shikhhkhir رضي الله عنه reports that one day he visited the Holy Prophet ﷺ while the latter was reciting Sūrah At-Takāthur and was saying:

يقول ابن ادم مالى مالى وهل لك من مالك الا ما اكلت فافنيت اوليست فابلت
او تصدقت فامضيت، وفي رواية لمسلم وما سوى ذلك فذاهب وتاركة للناس.
(ابن كثير وقرطبي بروايت مسلم، ترمذى احمد)

"The Son of 'Ādam says: 'My wealth, my wealth.' But you do not reap any benefit from your wealth except for that which you ate and you finished it, or that which you clothed yourself with and you wore it out, or that which you gave as charity and you have spent it."

And in a narration by Muslim: "Everything else other than that will go away, and he will leave it for other people.(i.e. inheritors)" [Ibn Kathīr and Qurṭubī as transmitted by Muslim, Tirmidhī and Aḥmad].

Imām Bukhārī records from Sayyidnā Anas رضي الله عنه that the Messenger of

Allah ﷻ said:

لو كان لابن آدم واديًا من ذهب لاحتب أن يكون له واديان ولن يملأه إلا التراب
و يتوب الله على من تاب.

"If the Son of 'Ādam has a valley of gold, he would love to have two valleys, and nothing but the dust of grave will fill his mouth. And Allah accepts the repentance of him who turns to Him in penitence."

Sayyidnā 'Ubayy Ibn Ka'b رضي الله عنه, referring to the Tradition quoted above, says, "We used to think that this was a part of the Qur'ān until the first verse of Sūrah At-Takāthur was revealed." It seems that the Holy Prophet ﷺ recited the verse and interpreted it in his own words. As a result, some of the Companions were under the impression that the Prophetic words were part of the Qur'ān. Later on, when the Sūrah was recited in its entirety, it did not contain the Prophetic words. This made them realize that the Prophetic words were actually of explanatory nature, and not part of the Qur'ān.

Verse [102:5] كَلَّا لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ عِلْمَ الْيَقِينِ (No! if you have had sure knowledge..) The word 'if' requires a principal clause that seems missing here, but the context suggests that the sense is the following: "If you had the sure knowledge of accountability on the Day of Judgement, you would not have engrossed yourselves in mutual competition in acquiring worldly goods and taking pride in their abundance."

Verse [102:7] ثُمَّ لَتَرَوْهَا عَيْنَ الْيَقِينِ (...then you will see it with an eye of certainty.) The phrase '*ain-ul-yaqīn*' (translated above as 'eye of certainty') refers to the certainty attained by physical observation, and this is the highest degree of certainty. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه reports that when Holy Prophet Mūsā عليه السلام was on the mount of Ṭūr, his people started worshipping a calf. Allah informed him about this while he was still on the mountain. This piece of information did not affect Mūsā عليه السلام so much. However, when he returned and saw the Children of Israel, with his own eyes, worshipping the calf, he became so indignant that the tablets of Torah involuntarily fell from his hands. [Transmitted by Aḥmad and Ṭabarāni with an authentic chain of narrators, as quoted by Maḥzarī].

Verse [102:8] ثُمَّ لَتُسْأَلُنَّ يَوْمَئِذٍ عَنِ النَّعِيمِ (Then you will be asked about all the pleasures [you enjoyed in the world].) This means that, on the Day of

Judgment, all of you will be questioned whether you had shown gratitude towards Allah's favors, or did you misuse them and were ungrateful to Allah? Some of these favors and bounties are explicitly mentioned elsewhere in the Qur'ān:

إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُولَٰئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْئُولًا

(...Surely, the ear, the eye and the heart - each one of them shall be interrogated about.) [17:36]

These organs and their faculties comprehend millions of blessings of Allah, and man will be questioned as to how he used them every moment of his life.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ is reported to have said that first question that will be put by Allah to every person is: "Did I not give you good health, and did I not give you cold water to quench your thirst?" (Tirmidhī, and Ibn Ḥibbān, with rating as *ṣaḥīḥ*, from Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه, as quoted by Ibn Kathīr)

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ is also reported to have said that no man will be able to move from his place unless he answers five questions: [1] How did he spend his life?; [2] In what pursuits did he expend his youthful energy?; [3] How did he earn his wealth - (by lawful means or unlawful means?); [4] Where did he spend his wealth - (in lawful ways or unlawful ways?); and [5] Did he act upon the knowledge Allah gave him? (Bukhārī).

Mujāhid, the leading authority on Tafsīr, says that this question on the Day of Judgement relates to every delight of the world that he enjoyed - whether it is in connection with food, clothes, house, wife, children, kingdom, government or honor. Qurṭubī, having cited this, concludes that this is absolutely true, because the question does not specify any particular blessing.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah At-Takāthur
Ends here

Sūrah Al-‘Aṣr (The Time)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 3 verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 3

وَالْعَصْرِ ﴿١﴾ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ ﴿٢﴾ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ ﴿٣﴾

I swear by the Time, [1] man is in a state of loss indeed,
[2] except those who believed and did righteous deeds,
and advised each other for truth, and advised each
other for patience. [3]

Virtue of [Studying] Sūrah al-‘Aṣr

Sayyidnā ‘Ubaidullāh Ibn Hiṣn رحمته الله reports that whenever two Companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ met, they would not part company until one of them had recited Sūrah Al-‘Aṣr in its entirety to the other. [Transmitted by At-Tabarānī]. Imām Shāfi‘ī says that if people thought about Sūrah Al-‘Aṣr carefully, it would be enough for their guidance. It is a concise but comprehensive Sūrah, which in three verses, outlines a complete way of human life based on the Islamic worldview.

In this Sūrah, Allah swears an oath by the 'Time' and says that mankind is in a state of loss; exception, however, is made of people who are characterized by four qualities: [1] faith; [2] righteous deeds; [3] advising each other for Truth; and [4] advising each other for patience. This is the only path to salvation in this world, as well as in the next world. The Qur’ānic prescription comprises, as we have just seen, of four

elements. The first two of them relate to man's own personal betterment, and the other two relate to other people's guidance and reform. [Ibn Kathīr].

Relationship between 'Time' and 'Human Loss'

The first point we need to analyze here is the relationship between the 'oath of time' and 'its subject' because there needs to be a relationship between an 'oath' and its 'subject'. The commentators, generally, state that all conditions of man, his growth and development, his movements, his actions and morality - all take place within the space of 'Time'. Man will lose the capital of his existence. Hours, days, months, and years of life pass quickly, spiritual and material potentialities decline, and abilities fade. Man is like a person who possesses great capital and, without his permission and will, every day, a portion of that capital is taken away. This is the nature of life in this world; the nature of continual loss. How well this has been put poetically:

حَيَاتُكَ أَنْفَاسٌ تُعَدُّ فَكُلَّمَا.....مَضَى نَفْسٌ مِنْهَا انْتَقَصَتْ بِهِ جُزْءٌ

"Your life comprises a few breaths that can be counted; when one of them is sent out, a part of your life has diminished."

Allah has granted man the invaluable capital of his life, so that he may invest it in profitable business venture. If he invests his capital of life sensibly in good works, there will be no limit to the profitable returns; but if he invests it unwisely in evil works, then, let alone attracting profitable returns, he will even lose his capital, and. In addition, he will incur the dreadful scourge of committing numerous sins. If however a person did not invest his life-capital in good deeds or in evil deeds, then he, at least, loses both the profit as well as the capital. This is not merely a poetic imagery, but is supported by a Prophetic Ḥadīth, according to which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is reported to have said:

كُلٌّ يَغْدُو فَبَائِعٌ نَفْسَهُ، فَمُعْتِقُهَا أَوْ مُوْبِقُهَا

"When a person wakes up in the morning, he invests his soul or life in a business enterprise: some of the investors free or save the capital from loss and others destroy it."

The Qur'ān itself has used the word *tijārah* in relation to 'faith' and 'righteous deed', thus:

هَلْ أَذِلُّكُمْ عَلَى تِجَارَةٍ تُنْجِيكُمْ مِنْ عَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ

"...shall I tell you about a trade that saves you from a painful punishment? [61:10]"

Since 'Time' is man's capital of life, the man himself is the trader. Under normal circumstances, his capital is not a frozen thing that may be kept for a while and used up later when the need arises. The capital is fluid or flowing all the time, every minute and every second. The man who invests it needs to be very wise, intelligent and agile, so that he is able to swiftly and readily reap the profit from a flowing capital. One of the old scholars said that he had learnt the meaning of this verse from an ice-seller whose trade required utmost diligence, and if he were neglectful for a moment, his entire capital would melt away. That is why this verse has sworn an oath by the 'time' to indicate that it is a melting capital, and the only way to escape loss is to take every moment of his life as valuable, and use it for the four acts mentioned in the Sūrah.

Another possible reason for swearing by 'Time' may be that the 'Time' (in the sense of history) bears testimony to the fact mentioned in the Sūrah. If one thinks on the causes of the rise and decline of individuals and nations, he would certainly believe that it is only these four acts (mentioned in the forthcoming verses) that may ensure the real success and betterment of mankind. Whoever has ever abandoned them has suffered a great loss, as is evident from numerous events recorded by history.

Let us now study the 'four principles' mentioned in the Sūrah. As pointed out earlier, faith and righteous deeds are related to man's moral and spiritual growth and development. They are not in need of elaboration. However, the last two principles ['advising each other for truth'] and ['advising each other for patience'] require some elaboration.

The infinitive *tawāṣī* is derived from *waṣiyyah* which means 'to advise somebody strongly and effectively about the best thing to do in a particular situation'. The term *waṣiyyah* also refers to a 'will or testament' where a testator advises his executor regarding the disposal of his estate on his death.

The two parts are in fact two chapters of the same testament: [1] advice to truth; and [2] advice to patience and fortitude. These two concepts may be explained in different ways. One way to explain them is

that *ḥaqq* ('truth') refers to the package of 'correct faith' and 'good deeds', and *ṣabr* ('patience') refers to abstinence from all sins and evil deeds. Thus the first concept refers to 'enjoining good actions' and the second concept refers to 'forbidding evil actions'. The cumulative sense of the Sūrah is that believers have been enjoined not only to adopt right faith and good deeds themselves, but to advise others strongly and effectively to adopt them, and thus help in the creation of a healthy atmosphere around them.

It is also possible to interpret 'Truth' as referring to articles of faith, and to interpret 'patience' as referring to all good actions and abstinence from evil deeds. The word *ṣabr*, originally meaning 'to withhold oneself and to bind oneself', encompasses binding oneself down to the performance of righteous deeds and abstaining from sins.

Hāfiẓ Ibn Taimiyyah has stated in one of his monographs that there are normally two factors that restrain a person from faith and righteous deeds: The first cause is some doubts about the true faith. When such doubts arise in the mind of people, it destroys their faith and leaves them confused and confounded. As a result, it adversely affects their righteous deeds. The second cause is the selfish desires that stop man from doing good, and involve him in evil deeds. In this situation, he theoretically believes that he should do good and abstain from sins, but his selfish desires lead him to stray from the right path. The current verse indicates to remove both causes of one's distraction. By stressing upon 'advice of truth' it has catered to the first cause, and that it should be removed by reforming others on theoretical and academic level, and by emphasizing on 'advice of patience' it has taken care of the second cause by enjoining upon the Muslims to advise others to give up the base desires and remain firm against their evil demands. Put differently, 'enjoining the truth' means 'improving the knowledge of Muslims or their intellectual development' and 'enjoining patience' means 'improving the practical life of Muslims'.

Need to Salvage the Entire Muslim Society

This Sūrah lays down the important principle of guidance for the Muslims that inviting other Muslims to keep to the true faith and good deeds is as much necessary as their own submission to the Holy Qurʾān and Sunnah. Without sincere efforts, to the best of one's ability, to invite

others to the right path, one's own good deeds are not enough to one's salvation. Especially, if a person does not take care of the spiritual and moral welfare of his wife, children and family and turns a blind eye to their unrighteous deeds, he is blocking his way to salvation - no matter how pious he himself might be. Therefore, the Qur'ān and the Sunnah make it obligatory upon every Muslim to do his best to invite others to the good deeds, and warn them against the evil acts. Unfortunately, let alone the general public, many learned people are lax in this matter. They think it is sufficient for them to be concerned about their own moral and spiritual well-being. They are not concerned about the well-being of their family and children. May Allah grant us the ability to act upon this verse.

**Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-‘Aṣr
Ends here**

Sūrah Al-Humazah (The Backbiter)

This Sūrah is Makki, and it has 9 verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 9

وَيْلٌ لِّكُلِّ هُمَزَةٍ لُّمَزَةٍ ﴿١﴾ الَّذِي جَمَعَ مَالًا وَعَدَّدَهُ، ﴿٢﴾ يَحْسَبُ
أَنَّ مَالَهُ أَخْلَدَهُ، ﴿٣﴾ كَلَّا لَيُنْبَذَنَّ فِي الْحُطَمَةِ ﴿٤﴾ وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا
الْحُطَمَةُ ﴿٥﴾ نَارُ اللَّهِ الْمَوْقُودَةُ ﴿٦﴾ الَّتِي تَطَّلِعُ عَلَى الْآفِئَةِ ﴿٧﴾ إِنَّهَا
عَلَيْهِمْ مُّؤَصَّدَةٌ ﴿٨﴾ فِي عَمَدٍ مُمَدَّدَةٍ ﴿٩﴾

Woe to every backbiter, derider [1] who accumulates wealth and counts it. [2] He thinks that his wealth has made him eternal. [3] Never! He will certainly be thrown into the Crusher. [4] And what may let you know what the Crusher is? [5] It is Allah's kindled fire, [6] that will peep into the hearts. [7] It will be closed on them, [8] in outstretched columns. [9]

Warning against dreadful end of those committing three obnoxious sins

This Sūrah warns of the severe punishment on three grave sins, and then highlights the nature of that severe punishment. The three sins are backbiting, deriding and selfish hoarding of wealth. The words *hamz* and *lamz* are used in several senses. Most commentators agree that the word *hamz*, from which is derived the word *humazah*, means to 'backbite', that is, to speak ill of a person behind his back. The word *lamz*, from which is

derived the word *lumazah*, means to 'slander' or 'to deride', that is, to speak ill of a person to his face. Both these sins are morally and socially obnoxious and deadly. The Qur'ān and the Sunnah have sounded a stern warning against these sins. However, 'backbiting' is, from one perspective, worse than 'slander'. 'Backbiting' is worse because the ill of a person is spoken behind his back; the victim is not present to defend himself and put an end to it; thus the sin continues to be committed to a greater and increasing degree. 'Slander', on the other hand, though an obnoxious sin in itself, is relatively less in degree than backbiting, because the victim is present to defend himself and put an end to face-to-face insulting or fault-finding with him. From another perspective 'slander' is worse than 'backbiting', because to speak ill of a person to his face is tantamount to insulting him and denigrating him. This is morally and socially more harmful and hurting, and therefore its punishment is more dreadful. According to a *Hadīth*, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said,

شِرَارُ عِبَادِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى الْمَشَاءُ وَنَ بِالنَّيْمَةِ الْمَفْرُقُونَ بَيْنَ الْأَجَّةِ الْبَاعُونَ الْبِرَاءَ الْعَنْتِ

"The worst servants of Allah are those who speak ill of someone, creating enmity between friends and finding fault with innocent people."

The third evil quality denounced severely in this Sūrah is greed, that is, the selfish hoarding of wealth, against which is the stern warning of the dreadful end of those who have passion for worldly riches. This verse, however, refers to the love of, and passion for, wealth which is accumulated and counted over and over again. Other verses and *Aḥādīth* bear testimony to the fact that amassing of wealth in principle is not prohibited or sinful. Therefore, verse [2] must be interpreted in the light of those verses and traditions. This verse purports to say that anyone who accumulates wealth and does not pay his obligatory dues or has greed for wealth that leads him to pride and arrogance, or has love of wealth that engrosses him in the hoarding of wealth so profoundly that he forgets his religious obligations, his practice is condemned in the strongest terms, and a person attaching such profound love, greed and passion for material riches will suffer eternal perdition as described in the verses that follow.

Verse [104:7] تَطْلُعُ عَلَى الْأَفْنَدَةِ (that will peep into the hearts). In other words, the fire of Hell will reach their hearts. The basic property of fire is to burn every particle of the things that fall into it. When people are put

into the Hell-fire, it will devour every limb and organ of the body until it reaches their heart, but the person will not die. This characteristic of the Hell-fire is especially highlighted in the verse because the fire of this world kills the person even before reaching the heart. The fire of the Hell, on the other hand, will reach the heart in the state of life, and man will experience the torture of the burning of the heart while alive.

**Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Humazah
Ends here**

Sūrah Al-Fīl

(The Elephant)

This Sūrah is Makki, and it has 5 verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 5

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِأَصْحَابِ الْفِيلِ ﴿١﴾ أَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ كَيْدَهُمْ فِي
 تَضَلُّيلٍ ﴿٢﴾ وَأَرْسَلَ عَلَيْهِمْ طَيْرًا أَبَابِيلَ ﴿٣﴾ تَرْمِيهِمْ بِحِجَارَةٍ مِّنْ
 سِجِّيلٍ ﴿٤﴾ فَجَعَلَهُمْ كَعَصْفٍ مَّأْكُولٍ ﴿٥﴾

Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with the People of the Elephant? [1] Has He not turned their plan into nullity? [2] And He sent upon them flying birds in flocks, [3] throwing upon them stones of baked clay, [4] and thus He turned them into an eaten-up chaff. [5]

Commentary

The subject-matter of the Sūrah

This Sūrah refers to the story of the People of the Elephants who came with an army of elephants for the purpose of destroying the House of Allah in (The Holy Ka'bah) in Makkah. But their plan backfired and the Divine scourge overtook them. Allah destroyed the army with a flock of ordinary birds. Thus their plans were foiled and thwarted.

When did the event take place?

This event took place in the very year in which the Holy Prophet ﷺ was born at Makkah, according to some traditions and the popular view among the historians. [Ibn Kathīr]. The scholars of *ḥadīth* have taken this

event as a special type of *mu'jizah* (miracle) of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, but the term *mu'jizah*, in its real sense, refers to an abnormal event shown by Allah to prove the claim of a prophet to having been sent by Him. Therefore, a *mu'jizah* is shown after a prophet's Divine commission. However, sometimes it happens that a miraculous event takes place before a prophet's claim to prophet-hood. This, in the parlance of the scholars of *ḥadīth*, is called *irhāṣ* which means 'prologue or introduction'. The word *rahṣ* means a 'foundation stone' [Qāmūs]. As the miraculous events taking place before the advent of prophets or before their claim to prophet-hood are meant to introduce and affirm that soon a particular prophet will be Divinely commissioned, they are referred to as *irhāṣ*. Many miraculous incidents of this nature [*irhāṣāt*] occurred before the birth and the advent of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and one of them was the incident of the 'People of the Elephants' who were miraculously prevented by the Heavenly scourge from destroying the House of Allah.

Story of the People of the Elephants

Ibn Kathīr, the leading authority on Prophetic Tradition and history, recounts the story as follows: Yemen was under the control of the rulers of Ḥimyar. They were idolaters. Their last king was Dhū Nuwās, an idolater himself, was the enemy of the righteous Christians of his time, who believed in and worshipped One Allah. He persecuted the believers, who were opposed to idol-worship, by burning them alive. Most scholars agree that he killed, in cold blood, by throwing about 20 000 sincere and righteous Christians in his city into a large fire pit, burning them alive in an effort to get them to give up their sincere religion. This is the story of the 'People of Fire-Pit' referred to in [85:4-7]. Two men somehow managed to escape from him. They fled to Syria and took refuge with Caesar, who was himself a Christian and the emperor of Syria. They requested the emperor to avenge this cruel act of Dhū Nuwās. Caesar wrote to Najāshi (Negus), the king of Abyssinia [now Ethiopia], who was closer to the home of the man. Najāshi sent two governors with him: Arbāt and Abrahah, along with a huge army.

The army invaded Yemen and freed the whole country from the possession of Ḥimyar. Dhū Nuwās tried to escape, but was drowned in the sea and died. Yemen thus became part of the Abyssinian dominion and Abrahah was appointed its viceroy. However, he and Arbāt fought

each other until Arbāṭ was eventually killed and Abrahah emerged victorious. The latter was appointed the commander of the Abyssinian army in Yemen, and the governor of that region. Having captured Yemen, he built a superbly luxurious cathedral in his area. The purpose was to attract the people of Yemen to make pilgrimage to this cathedral instead of *Ka'bah* in Makkah. It was huge and tall so that a person standing at the bottom was not able to see the top. He decorated the structure with gold, silver and other precious gems. In short, he meant it to be an architectural masterpiece, second to none or unsurpassed in the world, to be revered by all and sundry and divert pilgrims from the Sacred Mosque in Makkah to his cathedral in Yemen. He did this after he had witnessed the love and enthusiasm of the Yemeni Arabs - which were the same as those felt all over the Arabia - for the *Ka'bah*, with the aim of making them forsake their attachment to the Mosque of Makkah and turn instead to his new luxurious cathedral. Thus he proclaimed throughout his kingdom that no one should ever visit the *Ka'bah* in Makkah, and that the pilgrimage should from now on take place to his so-called '*Ka'bah*' in Yemen.

Although the Arabs were idol-worshippers, the love and reverence for the religion of Prophet Ibrāhīm ﷺ and the *Ka'bah* had permeated their hearts. As a result, the 'Andān, Qaḥṭān and Quraish tribes were enraged and infuriated by this proclamation. One night, someone entered the church and defecated in it. According to other narratives, a nomadic tribe halted near the church and started a fire for their own needs. The wind on that day was blowing violently and the cathedral caught on fire and sustained much loss. When Abrahah came to know about it, and learnt that a Quraishi had done this, he swore to march to the House of Makkah and destroy it stone by stone. Thus he prepared himself and set out with a huge and powerful army, so that none might prevent him from carrying out his mission. He asked for Najāshī's permission. He permitted him and sent for him, particularly for this expedition, a special elephant whose name was Maḥmūd. It was unusually huge in size and powerful in strength the like of which had never been seen before. The king of Abyssinia sent in eight more elephants as reinforcements for the army. Their intention was to use this extraordinary elephant to demolish the *Ka'bah*. They planned to do this by fastening chains to the pillars of the

Ka'bah and placing the other ends around the neck of the elephant. Then they would make the elephant pull on them in order to tear down the walls of the *Ka'bah* [God forbid!] all at once. When the Arabs heard of Abrahah's expedition, they considered it their moral obligation to defend the Sacred House and thwart the evil plans of the conspirators. Thus, the Arabs raised a large army under the command of Dhū Nafr, a Yamenite Arab. He called the Arabs to go to war against Abrahah and fight in defense of the Sacred House, so that the enemy is unable to tear it down. The people responded to him readily and entered into battle with the enemy, but he defeated them. This was due to Allah's will that no humans should protect His House and His intent to expose the enemy to embarrassment and venerate the Sacred Sanctuary to the highest degree. Dhū Nafr was captured and taken prisoner.

The army continued on its way until it came to the settlement of the Banū Khath'am tribe. Their leader, Nufail Ibn Ḥabīb, led his entire tribe against the army, but they too were defeated and Nufail was taken prisoner. Abrahah at first decided to kill him, but at second thought he forgave him and took him as his guide to show him the way to Ḥijāz.

When the army approached Tā'if, the people of Thaqīf went out to Abrahah. They wanted to pacify him, because they had heard about the fate of those who had resisted him previously. Also, they were afraid that he would demolish their temple consecrated in the name of their idol Al-Lāt. Therefore, they did not resist him on the understanding that he would not touch the idol of Lāt. He was compassionate to them, and they sent a guide with him by the name of Abū Righāl. When they arrived in a place called Al-Maghmas, near Makkah, they settled there. This was the pasture where the camels of the Quraish grazed. Abrahah sent his troops on a foray to capture the camels and other grazing animals of the Makkans. They accomplished their mission. They also drove away about two hundred camels of 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib, grandfather of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and the leader of the Quraish. Abrahah then sent an emissary named Ḥanāṭah Al-Ḥimyari to enter Makkah and bring to him the leader of the Quraish. He mandated him to convey to the leader of the Quraish his message that the king did not come to fight with the Makkans unless they stood in his way of destroying their Sacred Sanctuary. Arriving in the city, Ḥanāṭah was directed to 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib

Ibn Hāshim, to whom he communicated Abrahah's message. According to Ibn Ishāq's narration, 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib replied: "By Allah! We too have no desire to fight him, nor do we have the might to do so. This is the Sacred Sanctuary of Allah built by His friend Prophet Ibrāhīm عليه السلام. If He wills to prevent Abrahah from pulling it down, He will protect it. And if He allows him to approach it, by Allah, we have no means to defend it." So Ḥanāṭah told him: "Come with me to Abrahah." So 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib went with him.

When Abrahah saw him, he was highly impressed, because 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib had the most handsome, charming and attractive personality. He descended from his throne and sat with the latter on a carpet on the ground. He then said to his interpreter to ask him: "What do you need?" 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib replied to the interpreter: "I want the king to give back my two hundred camels which his soldiers have taken from me." Then Abrahah told his interpreter to relay to him: "When I first set my eyes on you, I admired you greatly and had great respect for you. But all that is now lost. You speak only of your two hundred camels while you fully well know that I have come to tear down your *Ka'bah* which is the embodiment of your religion and the religion of your forefathers. You did not even say a single word to persuade me to spare it." 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib calmly responded: "I am the owner of my camels and am concerned about them. I am not the owner of Allah's House. The Master of the House knows how best to protect His House." Abrahah rudely rebuffed: "Your God cannot protect it from me." 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib made a rejoinder: "Then do as you like or [take your chance!]" According to other narratives, there were other chiefs of Quraish with 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib at the time of this negotiation. They proposed to Abrahah that if he withdrew from the Sanctuary, the entire region of Tihamah would pay him a third of their agricultural produce annually as tribute. But he turned down the offer. He then gave back 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib's camels to him. 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib took his camels and went back home, ordering his people to leave Makkah and seek shelter at the top of the mountains. He feared that atrocities might be committed by the army against them. Then he went with a few figures of the Quraish to the Sacred Sanctuary. He held the metal ring of the door of *Ka'bah* and prayed Allah to give them victory over Abrahah and his army. While hanging on to the ring of the *Ka'bah*'s door, he earnestly

implored: "We have no strength to face the army of Abrahah. So, O my Lord! Defend Your *Ka'bah*." Having so prayed in all earnestness, 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib led all the Makkans to the neighbouring mountains, because they were convinced that Allah's scourge would overtake Abrahah and his troops. This is the reason why they spoke to Abrahah about their camels, and not about the House of Allah.

When the next morning dawned, Abrahah prepared to enter the sacred city of Makkah. He prepared the elephant named Maḥmūd and mobilized his army, and they turned the elephant towards the *Ka'bah*. At that moment Nufail Ibn Ḥabīb, whom Abrahah had captured earlier, approached it and stood next to it, and taking it by its ear, he said: "Return safely where you came from, because you are, verily, in the Sacred City of Allah." Then he released the elephant's ear and it knelt and sat down forthwith. The elephant drivers exerted all efforts to persuade the elephant to enter the City, but their efforts were in vain. Then they tried striking it with large iron spears and putting iron arrowheads in its trunk. They beat it on its head with axes and used hooked staffs to pull it out of its resistance and make it stand, but it refused. So they turned it towards Yemen, and it rose and walked quickly. Then they turned it towards Syria, it walked fast. Then they turned it towards the east and it walked briskly. Then they turned it towards Makkah, it knelt and sat down again.

This was one aspect of the manifestation of the Divine power unfolding itself miraculously. On the other hand, some flocks of birds were seen coming from the sea. Each bird carried three pebbles of the size of gram seeds or lentils, one in each claw and two in its beak. According to Wāqidi's narration, the birds looked unusual which were never seen before. They looked smaller than pigeons, and their claws were red in colour. They flew over Abrahah's army and pelted them with the pebbles. Each pebble was more devastating than the bullet of a revolver. When it fell on anything, it tore directly through the body and settled deep in the ground. Seeing this scourge, the elephants fled in panic, except one which was harmed and destroyed by the pebble. Not all of Abrahah's men were destroyed instantly. People escaped in different directions. They died excruciatingly on their way back. As Allah had willed that the most distressful scourge should be inflicted upon Abrahah, He did not allow

him to die immediately. In fact, Allah afflicted him with a deadly disease. A kind of poison spread thoroughly through his entire body and caused every single part to decay - his limbs began to rot and separate from the rest of his body and he started losing one finger after another. His body was carried back in that state to Yemen. By the time they arrived back in Ṣan'ā', the capital of Yemen, his body was broken down limb by limb until he eventually died. Two of Maḥmūd's (name of elephant) drivers remained in Makkah, but both of them became blind and paralyzed. Muḥammad Ibn Ishāq reports that Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها narrates that she saw them blind and paralyzed. Her sister, Sayyidah Asmā' رضي الله عنها, says that she saw the two blind and paralyzed men begging. The 'People of the Elephants' is a momentous event in Arab history, which was witnessed by hundreds of Arabs. It is to this well-known historical incident that this Sūrah refers.

Lexical Analysis

Verse [105:1] أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِأَصْحَابِ الْفِيلِ (Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with the people of the Elephant?) In the phrase *alam tara* [have you not seen], the second person pronoun refers to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. It is interesting to note that the event took place before the blessed birth of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. He could not have seen or witnessed it with his own eyes. However, the incident was so widely known as if the Prophet ﷺ had seen it with his own eyes, which is a sign of the certainty of its happening. Such a knowledge is described by the word *ru'yat* [seeing]. As reported earlier, Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها and her sister, Sayyidah Asmā' رضي الله عنها, both say that they had seen the two camel drivers had become blind and paralyzed and used to go around begging. In this way, the traces of this event were seen even after the birth of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

Verse [105:3] طَيْرًا أَبَابِيلَ (... birds in flocks.) The word *abābīl* is plural and is said to have no singular. It means birds in flocks, or swarms of birds. It is not the name of a particular bird. In Urdu usually *abābīl* refers to 'swallows', they are not implied in the verse as indicated in the above narration. These birds were somewhat smaller in size than pigeon and they were birds that were never seen before. [Sa'īd Ibn Jubair, as quoted by Qurtubī].

Verse [105:4] بِحِجَارَةٍ مِّنْ سِجِّيلٍ (...stones of baked clay.) The word *sijjīl* is a

compound Persian word, Arabicized, made up of two Persian words: *sang* [stone] and *gil* [clay]. They refer to ordinary or common clay rolled into little balls and then baked to harden. These pebbles are not heavy or hard like rocks chipped off mountains. They in themselves did not have any devastating power, but it was Allah who created in these stones the high capability of explosion and blowing-up even more than the bullets of a revolver.

Verse [105:5] فَجَعَلَهُمْ كَعَصْفٍ مَّأْكُولٍ (And thus He turned them into an eaten-up chaff .) The word '*aṣf*' means 'chaff, straw, husk or bran'. Usually the '*aṣf*' is scattered and when it is eaten or devoured by animals, it does not remain in the same state. This is what happened to Abrahah and his army .

Conclusion

The miraculous event of the 'People of the Elephant' enhanced in the hearts of the entire Arabian society the love, respect and honor of the Quraish. When Arabia witnessed that Allah has, on their behalf, miraculously destroyed their enemy, they were convinced that the Quraish are men of God, and custodians of the Sacred House of Allah [Qurṭubī]. That is why they were respected and protected wherever they went; although other caravans in Arabia had to fear attacks from highway robbers, the Quraish travelled untouched and enjoyed high social status. As a result, they could freely and safely carry out their commercial activities in the neighboring states, and enjoy economic prosperity. The Sūrah that follows refers to these journeys and invites the Quraish to be thankful to Allah and worship Him alone for providing them with all of their needs.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Fīl
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Quraish

(The Quraish)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 4 verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 4

لَا يَلْفِ قُرَيْشٍ ﴿١﴾ إِلَّا فِيهِمْ رِحْلَةَ الشِّتَاءِ وَالصَّيْفِ ﴿٢﴾ فَلْيَعْبُدُوا رَبَّ
هَذَا الْبَيْتِ ﴿٣﴾ الَّذِي أَطْعَمَهُمْ مِنْ جُوعٍ ۖ وَآمَنَهُمْ مِنْ خَوْفٍ ﴿٤﴾

Because of the familiarity of the Quraish, [1] that is, their familiarity with the trips of winter and summer, [2] they must worship the Lord of this House, [3] who gave them food against hunger, and gave them security against fear. [4]

Commentary

The Subject-matter of Sūrah Al-Fīl and Sūrah Al-Quraish

All commentators concur that the subject-matter of the two Sūrahs is so closely related that in some of the copies of the Qur'ān they had been written as a single Sūrah without the insertion of *bismillah* between them. But when Sayyidnā 'Uthmān رضي الله عنه compiled a standard copy of the Holy Qur'ān with the consensus of all the companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, he separated these two Sūrahs and inserted *bismillah* between them, and the two Sūrahs.

Lexical Analysis

لَا يَلْفِ قُرَيْشٍ (Because of the familiarity of the Quraish 106:1). The particle *li* is a preposition. According to the rules of Arabic grammar, it should be linked with another sentence. What is that sentence here? In answer to this question, different possibilities are highlighted by the exegetes.

Keeping in view the close relation of the present Sūrah with the previous one, some of them have held that the following sentence should be taken as understood here: *أَنَا أَهْلَكْنَا أَصْحَابَ الْفِيلِ* "We [Allah] destroyed the 'people of the elephant' so that the Quraish, who were familiar with two commercial trips during winter and summer, may not have any obstacle in their trips, and by this trading activity they might develop a certain prestige for them and respect them." A second school of interpreters has taken the following sentence as understood: *اعجبوا* (One should wonder on the Quraish undertaking winter and summer journeys freely and safely.) A third school of interpreters says that this is the *lam* of *ta'lil* and it is syntactically related to the sentence that follows it *فَلْيَعْبُدُوا رَبَّ هَذَا الْبَيْتِ* (they must worship the Lord of this House.) The Sūrah draws attention to the fact that the Quraish used to make two trade-journeys - one in winter to Yemen and another in summer to Syria. These trade-journeys made them wealthy and affluent. This was possible because Allah annihilated their enemies, the people of the elephant, in an exemplary way and created in the hearts of the people an awe and reverence for them. People held them in high esteem, respect and honor in all the territories where they went.

Superiority of Quraish

This Sūrah indicates that Quraish, of all the tribes of Arabia, was most acceptable in the sight of Allah. The Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said: "Verily, Allah selected Kinānah from the offspring of Prophet Ismā'īl (عليه السلام) and selected Quraish from the progeny of Kinānah. From the Quraish, Allah selected Banū Hāshim and from Banū Hāshim He selected me." [Baghawī on the authority of Wāthilah Ibn Asqa]. Another Tradition reports that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "People will follow Quraish in matters of good as well as in matters of evil." [Muslim on the authority of Jābir, as quoted by Maẓharī]. The reason for the selection of the tribes mentioned in the first Tradition is presumably on account of their special abilities, innate capacities and natural endowments. Even in the days of paganism and ignorance, when people practiced *kufṛ* and *shirk*, their morals and inborn abilities were of a very high standard. They had the perfect capacity to accept the truth. This is the reason why most of the blessed Companions and Friends of Allah were Quraishites. [Maẓhari]

Verse [106:2] *رَحَلَةَ الشِّتَاءِ وَالصَّيْفِ* (...their familiarity with the trips of winter and summer.) It is a known fact that Makkah is situated in an utterly bleak and arid valley where no agricultural produce grows, nor are there any orchards where the people of Makkah could reap any kind

of fruits. Therefore, the founder of the House of Allah, Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm Khalīl-ullah ﷺ, prayed to Allah at the time of founding the city, thus: [2:126] رَبِّ اجْعَلْ هَذَا الْبَلَدَ آمِنًا وَارْزُقْ أَهْلَهُ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ (My Lord, make this a city of peace, and provide its people with fruits) and this fact is mentioned in [28:57], thus: يُجْبَىٰ إِلَيْهِ ثَمَرَاتُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ (to which the fruits of everything are drawn)". The Quraish thus needed to make these commercial trips out of Makkah into the neighboring territories to bring the necessities of life to their city. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه reports that the people of Makkah were in a state of abject poverty and Hāshim, the great grandfather of the Prophet ﷺ, exhorted the Quraish to undertake the trading caravans to the neighboring territories. As Syria was a cold region, they went there in summer; and Yemen had a warm climate, so they went there in winter to carry out their commercial activities. They, after their commercial ventures that brought to them great profits and gains, would return to their city safely due to the respect that the people had for them, because they were the keepers and custodians of Allah's sanctuary. Therefore, whoever knew them would honor them. Even those who came to them and traveled with them, would be safe because of them. Hashim was the leader of the Quraish and maintained the economic principle to distribute among the rich and the poor members of the Quraish the gains and the profits made in their business. As a result, even the poor people lived like the wealthy people. Furthermore, an additional Divine favor was granted to them: Allah spared them the trouble of making these annual trips, in that the areas adjacent to Makkah such as Yemen, Tabālah and Ḥarsh were made fertile, fecund and productive where corns, food grains and other agricultural produce grew abundantly - even more than their need. As a result, they had to carry these agricultural produce to Jeddah where they sold them. Thus most of the necessities were available in Jeddah. The people of Makkah, instead of undertaking the two long journeys, went to Jeddah, merely two stations away, to bring their necessities of life. In the current verse, Allah mentions His favor upon them.

Verse [106:3] فَلْيَعْبُدُوا رَبَّ هَذَا الْبَيْتِ (they must worship the Lord of this House.) Having mentioned the Divine favors, the Quraish are especially enjoined to express their gratitude to 'the Lord of this House'. Here, out of many attributes of Allah, 'the Lord of this House' is singled out, because it was this House that became the source and fountain of all blessings for them.

Verse [106:4] الَّذِي أَطْعَمَهُمْ مِنْ جُوعٍ وَآمَنَهُمْ مِنْ خَوْفٍ (Who gave them food against hunger, and gave them security against fear.) The verse comprehensively captures all that was needed for the Quraish to live

happily and peacefully in the world. The first phrase أَطْعَمَهُمْ مِنْ جُوعٍ (Who gave them food against hunger) implies that they were provided all year round with every kind of fruit and food. The security referred to in the second phrase أَمَّنَهُمْ مِنْ خَوْفٍ (and gave them security against fear) includes security from enemies and robbers (who, out of their respect to them as guardians of Ka'bah, spared them from their attacks), and it also includes security from the punishment in the Hereafter (for those who fulfilled the necessary conditions of faith).

Special Note

Ibn Kathīr says that whoever worships Allah according to the command given in this verse, Allah will give him safety, not only in this world, but also security from punishment in the Hereafter. And whoever deviates from this command, He will deprive him of both types of safety and security as exemplified in the following verse [16:112] :

ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا قَرْيَةً كَانَتْ آمِنَةً مُطْمَئِنَّةً يَأْتِيهَا رِزْقُهَا رَغَدًا مِنْ كُلِّ مَكَانٍ فَكَفَرَتْ بِأَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ فَأَذَاقَهَا اللَّهُ لِبَاسَ الْجُوعِ وَالْخَوْفِ بِمَا كَانُوا يَصْنَعُونَ ﴿١١٢﴾

(And Allah has given an example that there was a town, secure and satisfied, with its sustenance coming in plenty from every place. Then, it turned ungrateful to the bounties of Allah; so, Allah made it taste hunger and terror [cast over it] like a garment in return of what its people used to do. [16:112])

A Great Benefit

Abul Ḥasan Qazwīnī has stated that anyone who fears his enemy or an affliction, should recite Sūrah Al-Quraish. It will give him security from fear and calamity. This is cited by Imām Jazrī and he says that this Sūrah has been tried and tested successfully for this purpose. Qāḍī Thanā'ullah Pānī Patti رحمه الله تعالى cites this in his Tafsīr Maḥzarī and says that his Shaikh Mirzā Maḥzar Jān-i-Jānān instructed him to recite this Sūrah at the time of fear and danger, and said its recitation has been tested and tried to avert all kinds of calamities and afflictions. Qāḍī Thanā'ullah says that he has experienced it several times.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Quraish
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Mā'un

(The Small Gifts)

This Sūrah is Makki, and it has 7 verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 7

أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي يُكَذِّبُ بِالْإِيمَانِ ﴿١﴾ فَذَلِكَ الَّذِي يَدْعُ الْيَتِيمَ ﴿٢﴾ وَلَا
يَحُضُّ عَلَى طَعَامِ الْمُسْكِينِ ﴿٣﴾ فَوَيْلٌ لِلْمُصَلِّينَ ﴿٤﴾ الَّذِينَ هُمْ
عَنْ صَلَاتِهِمْ سَاهُونَ ﴿٥﴾ الَّذِينَ هُمْ يُرَاءُونَ ﴿٦﴾ وَيَمْنَعُونَ
الْمَاعُونَ ﴿٧﴾

Have you seen him who denies the Requital? [1] So he is the same one who pushes away the orphan. [2] and does not persuade (others) to feed the needy. [3] So, woe to those performers of *ṣalāh*, [4] who are neglectful of their *ṣalāh*, [5] who (do good only to) show off, [6] and refuse (to give even) small gifts. [7]

The love of the world causes nations to lose faith and consign Allah to oblivion

This Sūrah denounces some of the evil actions of the pagans and the hypocrites, and it holds out a threat of destruction to those who commit them. If these evil actions are committed by believers, who do not reject the true faith, they are still heinous and gravely sinful, but the threat of chastisement made in this sūrah does not apply to them. Therefore, verse [107:1] أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي يُكَذِّبُ بِالْإِيمَانِ (Have you not seen him who denies the Requital?), as a preamble, makes plain that the person who performs

these evil deeds is one who cries lies to the Doom, and thus the warning of punishment mentioned in this Sūrah is for those who deny the religion and the Day of Judgement. The verse contains a subtle indication that the moral sins condemned in this Sūrah are far too inconceivable from a believer; only a non-believer or hypocrite would commit them. The morally bad and sinful deeds mentioned here are: [1] oppressing and insulting the orphan, and being unkind to them; [2] despite the means, failing to feed the poor or failing to urge others to feed them; [3] praying [in public only, not in private] only to show the people; and [4] failing to pay the Zakāh [obligatory alms]. These actions are intrinsically bad and gravely sinful, but their commission in the wake of *kufr* [disbelief] and *takdhīb* [rejection] are even more aggravating, because they attract eternal perdition, which in this Sūrah is described as *wail* [heavy affliction or calamity or disaster or destruction].

Verses [107:4-6]. *فَوَيْلٌ لِلْمُصَلِّينَ. الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ صَلَاتِهِمْ سَاهُونَ. الَّذِينَ هُمْ يُرَاءُونَ.* (So woe to those performers of *ṣalāh* who are neglectful of their *ṣalāh*, who [do good only to] show off.) These verses describe the characteristics of the hypocrites who used to perform the prayers only to make a display of them to the people and prove that their claim of being sincere Muslims is true. As they do not believe in the obligatory nature of the prayers, they are not regular at them, and they do not observe the prescribed times, but offer them carelessly at the eleventh hour or completely out of time. They perform them only when they must to make a display of them, otherwise they have no place in their lives. The preposition 'an (translated above as 'of') in the prepositional phrase *عَنْ صَلَاتِهِمْ* "[neglectful] of their *ṣalāh*" is significant. It indicates that they [the hypocrites] are neglectful of the very concept of *ṣalāh*. This does not refer to the unintentional errors, slips and mistakes that Muslims make in their prayers. The Holy Prophet ﷺ also made this type of unintentional mistakes in his prayers. The warning of Hell by the expression of wail does not apply to such mistakes. If that was the case, the prepositional phrase would have been *fi salatihim* [in their prayers] instead of [*an Ṣalatihim* [neglectful of their prayers]].

Verse [107:7] *وَيَمْنَعُونَ الْمَاعُونَ* (And refuse [to give even] small gifts.) The word *mā'un* literally means 'any small or petty thing' and idiomatically it refers to 'small household articles of common use such as axe, hoe, cooking pot which at the time of need neighbors borrow from one another'.

Anyone who is unwilling to lend such small items is morally a very miserly and mean person. However, in the current verse the word *mā'ūn* is taken in the sense of *Zakāh* [obligatory alms] because it is a little amount out of much wealth - only 2½% out of the entire wealth. Majority of the commentators - like Sayyidnā 'Alī, Ibn 'Umar, Ḥasan Baṣrī, Qatādah, Ḍaḥḥāk  and others - hold the view that *mā'ūn* implies *Zakāh*. [Maḏharī]. The threat of *wail* (torment of Hell) can only be for failure to fulfil one's legal obligation. Giving small items to help out one's fellow human beings is a humanitarian and philanthropic gesture that carries much reward in the Hereafter, but it is not an obligation at all, the violation of which could lead to eternal perdition. Traditions reporting that *mā'ūn* refers to pots and pans, and other household items of daily use are to show that if a person is reluctant to part with such small items, how will he have the heart to part with 2½% of his wealth? The Traditions purport to say that these people are so narrow-minded that they are not willing to make the least bit of selfless sacrifice for the welfare and well-being of others. They are morally mean, low and miserly in the extreme. Therefore, they do not pay their legal alms. Thus the threat of punishment in Hell-fire is not on account of failure to do one's neighborly acts of kindness, but for failure to pay the legal alms and perhaps for their extreme niggardliness.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Mā'ūn
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Kauthar

(The Kauthar)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 3 verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 3

إِنَّا أَعْطَيْنَكَ الْكَوْثَرَ ﴿١﴾ فَصَلِّ لِرَبِّكَ وَانْحَرْ ﴿٢﴾ إِنَّ شَانِئَكَ
هُوَ الْأَبْتَرُ ﴿٣﴾

(O Prophet,) surely We have given to you Al-Kauthar (a river in Paradize). [1] So, offer *ṣalāh* (prayer) to your Lord, and sacrifice. [2] Surely it is your enemy whose traces are cut off. [3]

Cause of Revelation

It is reported by Ibn Abī Ḥatīm, on the authority of Suddī, and by Baihaqī, in *Dalā'il-un- Nubuwwah*, on the authority of Muḥammad Ibn 'Alī Ibn Ḥusain, that the Arabs used to taunt and revile people who have lost their male issues. They used to refer to such a person as '*abtar*', meaning 'having no male offspring or no male issue'. In keeping with this social evil, when the young son of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, namely Qāsim passed away, some leaders of Quraish, especially 'Aṣ Ibn Wa'il, started taunting the Holy Prophet ﷺ telling the people that they no longer need to bother about him, because he had no sons to carry on his name and that he would be forgotten after his death; he is '*abtar*', that is, his lineage is cut off. On this occasion, the Sūrah was revealed. [Baghawī, Ibn Kathīr, Maḏharī].

According to some narratives, Ka'b Ibn Ashraf, a Jew of Madīnah,

came to Makkah and the Quraish asked him: "You are the leader of the people. What do you think about this young man who claims that he is better than us (in religion), while we are the people who serve the pilgrims; we are the custodians of Ka'bah and supply water to the pilgrims." He replied: "You are better than him." This Sūrah was revealed on that occasion. [Ibn Kathīr cites this incident from Bazzār with an authentic chain of narrators; and Maḥzarī says that Muslim also transmitted the incident].

According to these narrations, this Sūrah was sent down when the unbelievers of Makkah taunted the Holy Prophet ﷺ because he had lost all his male issues, and called him 'abtar' or insulted him for some other reason. The present Sūrah gives an answer to the taunts of the unbelievers, and maintains that there is no justification for calling the Holy Prophet ﷺ an 'abtar' only because he had no male child alive, not only because his lineal offspring will remain till the Day of Judgment, though from his daughters, but he was destined to be the spiritual father of a multitude of sons in all ages to the end of time, sons who were to be far more faithful, obedient and loving than the sons of any father, and they will outnumber the followers of all the Prophets that came before him. The Sūrah has also dismissed the statement of Ka'b Ibn Ashraf, and highlights the great honor and respect given to him by Allah.

The River or Fountain of Kauthar

Verse [108:1] **إِنَّا أَعْطَيْنَكَ الْكَوْثَرَ** ([O Prophet,] surely, We have given you Al-Kauthar [a river in Paradise].) The word 'Al-Kauthar' literally means 'abundant goodness'. Imām Bukhārī has recorded on the authority of Sa'īd Ibn Jubair رضي الله عنه that Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه said about 'al-Kauthar': 'It is the abundant goodness that Allah gave to him [Holy Prophet ﷺ]'. A special pupil of Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه said: "I asked Sa'īd Ibn Jubair رضي الله عنه that people claim that it is a river in Paradise." Sa'īd Ibn Jubair رضي الله عنه replied that the river in Paradise is part of the goodness that Allah gave him. Therefore, Mujāhid interprets that it is the abundant goodness of this world, as well as of the next world. This explanation includes the river in Paradise and other things as well.

The following Ḥadīth is recorded in Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd and Nasa'ī from Sayyidnā Anas رضي الله عنه that he said:

بينما رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم بين أظهرنا في المسجد إذ اغفى اغفاءة، ثم

رفع رأسه متبسِّمًا. قلنا: ما أضحكك يا رسول الله؟ قال: لقد أنزلت عليّ أنفا سورة
 فقرأ بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم أنا أعطيتك الكوثر الخ ثم قال: اتدرون ما الكوثر؟ قلنا:
 الله ورسوله أعلم، قال: فأنه نهرٌ وعدنيهِ ربِّي عز وجل عليه خير كثير، وهو حوض
 ترد عليه امتي يوم القيامة، أنيته عدد نجوم في السماء، فيحتلج العبد منهم، فاقول
 ربّ أنه من امتي فيقول: أنّك لا تدري ما أحدث بعدك.

"While we were with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in the mosque, he went into some kind of slumber or doze. Then he lifted his head smiling. We asked : 'O Messenger of Allah! What has caused you to smile?' He replied: 'A Sūrah has just been revealed to me.' Then he recited Bismillah and Sūrah Al-Kauthar. Then he asked: 'Do you know what is Al-Kauthar?' We replied: 'Allah and His Messenger know best,' He said: 'It is a river that my Lord, the Mighty and Majestic, has promised me and it has abundant goodness. It is a fountain where my Ummah will come on the Day of Judgement. Its containers are as numerous as the stars in the sky. Then a servant of Allah from among them will be prevented from it, and I will say: 'O Lord! Verily, he is from my Ummah [followers.] ' Then Allah will say: 'You do not know what he introduced [or innovated] after you.'"

This is the wording of Muslim. Ibn Kathīr, having cited this Tradition, writes further:

وقد ورد في صفة الحوض يوم القيمة أنّه يشخب فيه ميزابان من السماء من نهر
 الكوثر وان أنيته عدد نجوم السماء.

"It is reported regarding the description of the fountain on the Day of Judgement that two channels will lead from the sky to supply the fountain with the water of Kauthar. It will have more cups than the stars in the sky."

The Tradition cited above clarifies many points.

- [1] It indicates the cause of the revelation of Sūrah Al-Kauthar.
- [2] It gives its authentic interpretation, that is, 'abundant goodness' and that it includes the fountain of Kauthar which will quench the thirst of the Prophet's ﷺ followers on the Day of Judgement.
- [3] The actual river of Kauthar is in Paradise, and the fountain of Kauthar will be on the Plain of Gathering. Two channels will flow from the river of Paradise into the fountain of Gathering, augmenting

its supply of water.

[4] It reconciles the narratives that tell us that the believers will arrive at the fountain of Kauthar before their entry into Paradise.

[5] Some people will be turned away from the fountain, because they later on turned away from Islam, or they were not Muslims at all, but expressed their Islam only hypocritically. Their hypocrisy was exposed after the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Allah knows best!

There are Traditions that describe the cleanness and sweetness of water of Kauthar, and that its banks are adorned with pearls. These qualities cannot be compared with anything in this world.

If the revelation of Sūrah Al-Kauthar is in response to the taunting of the heathens who called him 'abtar' because he had lost his sons, as explained earlier, this Sūrah comforts him. They used to say that when he would pass away, there shall be none to take his name on account of having no male offspring and his activities will cease. This Sūrah tells him that he has been granted Al-Kauthar and completely dismisses the reproach of his enemies, in that his lineage does not stop here in this world, but his spiritual lineage will continue till the Day of Gathering. His spiritual sons and daughters will outnumber the Ummahs of the previous Prophets. They will also enjoy the greatest respect and honor.

Prayer and Sacrifice

Verse [108:2] فَصَلِّ لِرَبِّكَ وَانْحَرْ (So, offer *ṣalāh* [prayer] to your Lord, and sacrifice.) The imperative *inḥar* is derived from *naḥr* which means 'to sacrifice by stabbing upwards into the jugular vein [the way of slaughter for camels as opposed to other cattle]'. As the Arabs generally used to sacrifice camels, the verse employs the imperative *wanḥar*. Occasionally, the word *naḥr* is used in the general sense of 'sacrifice'.

Verse [108:1] vehemently denounces the false notion of the unbelievers and gives glad tidings of Kauthar to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in this world as well as in the next world. He will have the abundant goodness in both the worlds immeasurably. The current verse directs the Holy Prophet ﷺ the way to express his gratitude to Allah on this good tiding: [1] prayer; and [2] sacrifice. *Ṣalāh* is the highest form of physical worship; and sacrifice is highest form of pecuniary or monetary form of worship.

Sacrifice in the name of Allah is a fight against idolatry, because the idolaters used to sacrifice in the name of their idols. On that basis, Islamic sacrifice is distinctive and important. On another occasion, the Qur'an jointly mentions prayer and sacrifice, thus: [6:162]

إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

My prayer, my offering, my life and my death are all for Allah, the Lord of the worlds. [6:162]

According to Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه, 'Ata', Mujāhid, Ḥasan Baṣrī رحمهم الله تعالى and others, the imperative *wanhar* means 'sacrifice or offer oblation'. Some people have attributed to some leading exegetes that they have taken this imperative to mean: 'Fold your hands or arms on the chest' Ibn Kathīr holds such narrations as '*munkar*', (that is, a narration which is narrated by a weak narrator and contradicts the narration of a stronger and more reliable authority.)

The Enemy of the Prophet ﷺ is Cut Off

Verse [108:3] إِنَّ شَانِئَكَ هُوَ الْأَبْتَرُ (Surely, it is your enemy whose traces are cut off.) The word *shāni'* as used in the original is derived from *sha'n* and means 'one who hates, traducer, insulter'. This verse was revealed in connection with the unbelievers who used to taunt the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and referred to him as '*abtar*'. Most narratives identify the traducer as 'Aṣ Ibn Wā'il, others identify him as 'Uqbah and yet others identify him as Ka'b Ibn Ashraf. Allah granted the Messenger of Allah ﷺ the Kauthar, that is, abundant goodness which includes a multitude of children. How wonderful are the works of Allah! There is no scarcity of lineal children of the holy Prophet ﷺ. Furthermore, a Prophet is the spiritual father of his entire Ummah which comprises his spiritual children. The Holy Prophet ﷺ is the spiritual father of his entire Ummah till the end of time and as such will have the largest number of spiritual children compared to the Ummahs of the previous Prophets. In this way, the enemy has been rebutted, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, their argument has been rebuffed that it is not the Prophet ﷺ, but his enemies are, '*abtar*' or cut off.

Note

Imagine how Allah has raised the name of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and exalted his reputation in every nook and corner of the world since the

inception of his prophet-hood till today, and it will continue to be so until the end of time. His blessed name is recited along with Allah's name five times a day from the minarets. In the Hereafter, he will be granted the (Al-Maqām Al-Maḥmūd) Praised Station where he will make the Grand Intercession on behalf of the entire progeny of 'Ādam عليه السلام. On the contrary, ask the world history: Where are the children of 'Āṣ Ibn Wā'il? Where are the children of Ka'b Ibn Ashraf ? where are the children of 'Uqbah, and what happened to their families? Their very own names have been lost to the world. No one cares to remember them. They have become unknown who thought that soon the Holy Prophet ﷺ will become unknown. They have left this world and the strings of their lineage have been cut off. Their names have been preserved in Islamic traditions only for purposes of interpretation of relevant verses. فَاعْتَبِرُوا يَا أُولِيَ الْأَبْصَارِ "So, O People of insight, take note !" [59:2].

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Kauthar
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Kāfirūn (The Disbelievers)

This Sūrah is Makki, and it has 6 verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 6

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا الْكَافِرُونَ ﴿١﴾ لَا أَعْبُدُ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿٢﴾ وَلَا أَنْتُمْ عَابِدُونَ مَا
أَعْبُدُ ﴿٣﴾ وَلَا أَنَا عَابِدٌ مَّا عَبَدْتُمْ ﴿٤﴾ وَلَا أَنْتُمْ عَابِدُونَ مَا أَعْبُدُ ﴿٥﴾
لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِينِ ﴿٦﴾

Say, "O disbelievers, [1] I do not worship that which you worship, [2] nor do you worship the One whom I worship. [3] And neither I am going to worship that which you have worshipped, [4] nor will you worship the One whom I worship. [5] For you is your faith, and for me, my faith." [6]

Virtues and Characteristics of the Sūrah

Sayyidah 'A'shah رضي الله عنها reports that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ has said that it is better to recite two sūrahs in the *sunnah* prayer of *fajr*, namely, the Sūrah Al-Kāfirūn and Sūrah Al-Ikhlāṣ. [Transmitted by Ibn Hishām as quoted by Maẓharī]. Ibn Kathīr cites several traditions in which a large number of Companions report that they heard the Messenger of Allah often recite Sūrah Al-Kāfirūn and Al-Ikhlāṣ in the *sunnah* prayer of *fajr* and *maghrib*. Some of the Companions requested the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to teach them some supplications to recite at the time of sleeping. He taught them to recite Sūrah Al-Kāfirūn and said that this will give them immunity from idolatry. [Transmitted by Tirmidhī and Abū Dāwūd]. Sayyidnā

Jubair Ibn Muʿīim ؓ says that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ asked him whether he wished to be the happiest, most prosperous and well-to-do person among his comrades when he goes out on a journey. He replied: "Yes, Messenger of Allah, I certainly do wish that." The Holy Prophet ﷺ asked him to recite the last five surahs of the Qurʾān starting from Sūrah Al-Kāfirūn to the end, and to start every surah with *Bismillah*, and to end with *Bismillah*. Sayyidnā Jubair ؓ says that in those days he used to be distressed, miserable and man of little provisions for journeys compared to his comrades. But when he started acting upon this teaching of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, he became more prosperous than others. [Maḏharī with reference to Abū Yaʿlā]. Sayyidnā ʿAlī ؓ reports that once a scorpion bit the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, so he asked for water and salt. He applied the water on the spot where the scorpion bit him, and he recited Sūrah Al-Kāfirūn, Sūrah Al-Falaq and Sūrah An-Nās. [Maḏharī]

Cause of Revelation

Ibn Ishāq reports from Sayyidnā Ibn ʿAbbās ؓ that Walīd Ibn Mughīrah, ʿAṣ Ibn Wāʿil, Aswad Ibn ʿAbdul-Muṭṭalib and Umayyah Ibn Khalaf approached the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and proposed a compromise to him to the effect that he should worship their idols for a year, and they would worship Allah for a year. [Qurtubī]. According to Sayyidnā Ibn ʿAbbās ؓ, as recorded in Ṭabarānī, the pagans of Makkah proposed to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ: "We shall give you so much of wealth that you will become the richest man in Makkah; we shall give you whichever woman you like in marriage; we are willing to follow and obey you as our leader on condition that you do not speak ill of our gods. If you do not agree to this, then let us agree that you worship our gods for a year and we would worship your God for another year" [Maḏharī].

According to Abū Ṣāliḥ's report, Sayyidnā Ibn ʿAbbās ؓ narrates that the pagans of Makkah made the following proposal for compromise: "At least touch some of our gods, we will believe in you." Upon this, Jibraʿīl ؑ descended with Sūrah Al-Kāfirūn.

This Sūrah is the Sūrah of disavowal from the actions of the pagans, and enjoins the Muslims to worship Allah alone to the exclusion of all forms of pagan worship.

The Traditions cited above indicate that the pagans had made many

proposals to the Holy Prophet ﷺ not once or in a single session, but on different occasions and in different sessions in the hope that at one time or another a compromise might be reached. Therefore, there was a need to respond to all the proposals definitely and decisively, and thus frustrate their hope once and for all. All these incidents might have taken place at different times and different places. The purport of the Sūrah is to prevent or prohibit any such compromise.

Verse [109:2] لَا أُعْبُدُ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ (I do not worship that which you worship.) In this Sūrah, the statements are repeated. The repetition has been explained in different ways by different authorities. Bukhārī explains it thus: When two identical, or near identical, expressions occur side by side, many commentators interpret one of them as happening in the present time and the other as going to happen in the future time. Thus there is no meaningless repetition. The second and the third verses refer to the present time, meaning 'I do not worship at the present time what you are worshipping, nor do you worship at the present time what I am worshipping'. That is, 'I believe in Oneness of Allah and worship Him only, whereas you believe in multiple gods and goddesses and worship them'. Verses [4 and 5] refer to the future time, meaning 'neither is there a possibility that I will ever worship what you are going to worship in the future, nor will you worship what I will persist in worshipping.' In other words, 'I will persist in my belief of Divine Oneness and worship of Him and you will persist in belief of multiple gods and goddesses and worship of them'. Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānawī رحمه الله تعالى has preferred this interpretation in Bayānul-Qur'ān, (and the translation given above is based on it.) However, he disagrees with Bukhārī's interpretation of the word *dīn*, which Bukhārī interprets as 'the religion of disbelief and the religion of Islam' respectively, in verse [6] لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِينِ "For you is your faith, and for me, my faith" meaning the proposed compromise or peace agreement is not acceptable. I shall continue to follow my faith and you may go on following your faith, and suffer its disastrous consequences. In Bayānul-Qur'ān, however, the word *dīn* has been interpreted as *jazā'* or 'retribution or requital'.

Ibn Kathīr prefers another interpretation. He expounds that the particle *ma* is used in two ways: [1] as *mawṣūlah* or relative pronoun in the sense of *al-ladhī* [that which]; and [2] as *masdariyah* transforming

into infinitive the verb it governs. In this Sūrah, the first *mā* is a relative pronoun in the sense of *al-ladhī*, and the second *mā* is an infinitival particle. Thus in verses [2 & 3] the particle is a relative pronoun and may be paraphrased thus: 'I do not worship the deities that you worship nor do you worship the One Whom I worship' and in verses [4 & 5] the particle is an infinitival particle and may be paraphrased thus: *ولا انا عابدٌ عبادتكم ولا انتم عابدون عبادتى* 'I will never adopt your mode or manner of worship, nor will you adopt the manner in which I worship'. In this way, verses [2 & 3] show that the objects of worship are different from each other, and verses [4&5] show the differences in the modes of worship. In sum, 'neither our objects of worship, nor our manner of worship, are commonly shared by us; they are different.' In this way, it is seen that there is no real repetition, because while the formal expressions might be identical or near identical, but deeper semantic meanings are different. The mode of worship was revealed to the Prophet by Allah ﷻ and passed on to the Muslims through him. The pagan manner of worship is self-fabricated. Ibn Kathīr prefers this interpretation, and says that this is the exact meaning that emanates from the credo of Islam: *لا اله الا الله محمد رسول الله* "There is no object worthy of worship except Allah, Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah". Only the mode and manner of worship sanctioned by Allah is credible, and should be followed by Muslims. Ibn Kathīr adds that the concluding verse *لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِينِ* (For you is your faith, and for me, my faith) yields the sense of other verses in the Qur'an, as for instance in [10: 41] *فَإِنْ كَذَّبُوكَ فَقُلْ لِي عَمَلِي وَلَكُمْ عَمَلُكُمْ* And if they belie you, say, for me, my deeds, and for you, your deeds and in [28:55] *لَنَا أَعْمَالُنَا وَلَكُمْ أَعْمَالُكُمْ* (For us, our deeds, and for you, your deeds). Thus the sum total of the word *din*, according to Ibn Kathīr, refers to the 'deeds of religion' and its purport would be the same as explicated in Bayān-ul-Qur'ān, in that each one will be requited for his own deeds.

Other commentators have interpreted the two sentences in a third way. According to them, the particle is retained in both places as a relative pronoun, and in both the sentence is taken as representing present tense. They in fact maintain that the repetition of the two sentences have been used as a rhetorical device and employed by deliberate design to secure emphasis. Not every repetition is unpleasant or meaningless, even though the same idea may be reiterated by the same

wording, as for instance in [94: 5-6] فَإِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا إِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا (Undoubtedly, along with hardship there is ease. Undoubtedly, along with hardship there is ease) Verse [6] is the repetition of verse [5] and is deliberately reiterated to secure emphasis, as well as to reject outright the several proposals made on different occasions. [Ibn Kathīr, Ibn Jarīr].

Peace Treaty with Unbelievers is Permissible in Some Cases but not in Others

Sūrah Al-Kāfirūn dismisses out of hand the many proposals of compromise offered by the pagans and declares dissociation from them. But the Holy Qur'an itself has said in [8:61] وَإِنْ جَنَحُوا لِلسَّلَامِ فَاجْعَلْ لَهَا (And if they tilt towards peace, you tilt towards it." that is, enter into peace treaty with the infidels or pagans or non-Muslims. Moreover, when the Holy Prophet ﷺ migrated to Madīnah, he entered into peace treaty with the Jews . Therefore, some of the commentators have opined that Surah Al-Kāfirūn has been abrogated. Their basic argument pivots around the verse لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِينِ (For you is your faith, and for me, my faith). They contend that this is apparently in conflict with the ordinances of *jihād*, but this is not true, because the verse does not guarantee, nor does it even permit, the infidels to maintain their infidelity. It simply means what is stated in [28:55] لَنَا أَعْمَالُنَا وَلَكُمْ أَعْمَالُكُمْ (For us, our deeds, and for you, your deeds), that is, as you sow, so shall you reap. In fact, the correct position held by the majority of the scholars is that this Sūrah is not abrogated. The proposals of compromise that were offered by the pagans at the time of the revelation of the present Sūrah are still prohibited, and the peace treaties allowed by 8:61 or entered into by the Holy Prophet ﷺ are still permissible. It is necessary to understand the circumstances and conditions of the treaty and take a proper decision accordingly. In one of his Traditions, the Holy Prophet ﷺ laid down the general principle of peace treaty with the infidels and pagans, thus: اَصْلَحُوا اَحْلَ حَرَامًا اَوْ حَرَّمَ حَلَالًا (Every compromise is permitted except the one which turns prohibited things into lawful and lawful things into forbidden.) If the various peace proposals made by the pagans are carefully analyzed, they were all certainly and definitely purported to mix elements of pagan beliefs and practices with Islamic beliefs and practices, thus creating confusion; and in some cases they required Muslims to renounce Islam [albeit temporarily] and commit themselves to paganism. Sūrah Al-Kāfirūn

denounces such treaties, and declares dissociation from paganism. Analyzing the peace pact with the Jews, on the other hand, it is seen clearly that it did not in anyway require Muslims to denounce or renounce Islam, nor did it require them to mix elements of un-Islamic beliefs with the true faith. Islam is the religion that stands for tolerance, kindness, politeness and peace more than any other religion. However, all these ethical principles can be applied in the matters of human rights. There is no room for compromise in the matter of Divine Law or the basic tenets of Divine religion . Allah knows best!

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Kāfirūn
Ends here

Sūrah An-Naṣr (The Help)

This Sūrah is Madnī, and it has 3 verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 3

إِذَا جَاءَ نَصْرُ اللَّهِ وَالْفَتْحُ ﴿١﴾ وَرَأَيْتَ النَّاسَ يَدْخُلُونَ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ
أَفْوَاجًا ﴿٢﴾ فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ وَاسْتَغْفِرْهُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ تَوَّابًا ﴿٣﴾

When there comes Allah's help and the Victory, [1] and you see people entering Allah's (approved) religion in multitudes, [2] then pronounce the purity and praise of your Lord, and seek forgiveness from Him. Surely He is Ever-Relenting. [3]

Name of the Sūrah and place of its revelation

According to the consensus of scholars, this Sūrah was revealed in Madīnah. Its other name is Sūrah At-Tawdī'. The word Tawdī' means 'to bid farewell'. As this Sūrah indicates the approach of the demise of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, it bids farewell to him and is thus entitled Sūrah At-Tawdī'.

The Last Sūrah and the Last Verses of the Noble Qur'ān

It is recorded in Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim on the authority of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ that Sūrah An-Naṣr was the last Sūrah to be revealed. [Qurtubī]. This means that this was the last complete Sūrah that was revealed to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. No complete Sūrah was revealed after this. Some individual verses reported to have been revealed after this are not in conflict with this statement, because no complete Sūrah was sent

down after the present one. It is like Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah which is said to be the first Sūrah, while a few verses of Sūrah Al-‘Alaḳ, a few verses of Sūrah Al-Muddaththir, and a few verses of other Sūrahs were revealed even before Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah, because it means that it was the first Sūrah to be revealed completely. No complete Sūrah was revealed before Al-Fātiḥah.

Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Umar رضي الله عنه reports that this Sūrah was revealed during the Farewell Pilgrimage, and shortly after that a fragment of verse [3] of Sūrah [5] الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ (...Today, I have perfected your religion for you__[5:3]) was revealed. After these two revelations, the Messenger of Allah lived only for eighty days, after which he passed away. After these two revelations, the Holy Prophet ﷺ received the verse of *kalalah*. Then the Holy Prophet ﷺ lived for fifty days. After that he received the following verse [9:128] of Sūrah [9] لَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ أَنفُسِكُمْ عَزِيزٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا عَنِتُّمْ (Surely, there has come to you a Messenger from amongst you , hard on whom is your suffering, for the good of you he craves...) After this revelation, he lived for 35 days. After this verse was revealed the following verse: [2:281] اتَّقُوا يَوْمًا تُرْجَعُونَ فِيهِ إِلَى اللَّهِ (And be fearful of a day when you shall be returned to Allah...). After this verse he lived only for twenty-one days, and according to Muqātil, he lived for seven days only and passed away. [Qurtubī].

Verse [110:1] إِذَا جَاءَ نَصْرُ اللَّهِ وَالْفَتْحُ (When there comes Allah's help and the victory). The expression 'victory' here is in reference to 'the promised Victory or Conquest of Makkah'. There is complete unanimity on this historical fact. However, the scholars disagree whether this Sūrah was revealed before or after the Conquest. The phrase *idhā jā’a* [when there comes] apparently indicates that its revelation took place before the Conquest. Rūḥ-ul-Ma‘ānī cites a narration from Al-Baḥr-ul-Muḥīṭ which concurs with this view, in which it is stated that this Sūrah was revealed while returning from the expedition of *Khaibar*. It is a known fact that the victory of *Khaibar* took place prior to the Conquest of Makkah. Rūḥ-ul-Ma‘ānī cites, on the authority of ‘Abd Ibn Ḥumaid, Sayyidnā Qatādah's رضي الله عنه statement that the Prophet ﷺ lived for two years after the revelation of this Sūrah. Narratives that report that it was revealed on the occasion of the Conquest of Makkah or on the occasion of the Farewell

Pilgrimage may be explained by saying that the Holy Prophet ﷺ might have recited this Sūrah and proclaimed it on one of those occasions; as a result people must have thought that it was revealed on that occasion. Please refer to Bayān al Qur'ān for fuller explanation.

Several Prophetic Traditions and statements of the Companions narrate that this Sūrah indicates that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has fulfilled his task, and accomplished his mission of life, and he could look forward to returning to his Lord in full favor as his death was approaching fast. The Sūrah teaches the Holy Prophet ﷺ the beautiful manners of asking Allah's forgiveness and offering constant praise and thanks to his Lord.

It is reported in Muqātil's narration that when this Sūrah was revealed, the Holy Prophet ﷺ recited it in a gathering of the blessed Companions, among whom were Sayyidnā Abū Bakr, 'Umar, Sa'd Ibn Abī Waqqāṣ ؓ. All were happy at the revelation of this Sūrah, because it contained the glad tidings of the Conquest of Makkah, but Sayyidnā 'Abbās ؓ began to weep. The Holy Prophet ﷺ asked him the reason for weeping, and he replied that it covertly conveys the termination of your life and nearness of your death. The Holy Prophet ﷺ confirmed this. Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī records a similar explanation of this Sūrah given by Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ in which there is the addition that when Sayyidnā 'Umar ؓ heard this, he concurred with him and said: 'I do not know anything about it other than what you [Ibn 'Abbās ؓ] have said'. [Transmitted by Tirmidhī who graded it as *ḥasan*, *ṣaḥīḥ* vide Qurṭubī]

Verse [110:2] وَرَأَيْتَ النَّاسَ يَدْخُلُونَ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ أَفْوَاجًا (And you see people entering Allah's [approved] religion in multitudes,) Before the conquest of Makkah there were many people who were almost convinced of the verity of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and Islam, but there were several factors that were obstructing them to embrace the religion. Some people were afraid of the Quraishite opposition, or they were hesitant for some other reason. The Conquest of Makkah removed those obstacles, and people entered the fold of Islam in throngs. Seven hundred people from Yemen embraced the religion, and joined the Holy Prophet ﷺ. On the way, they recited the call to prayer [*adhān*] and recited the Qur'ān. In this way, the populace of Arabia embraced the religion of Islam and entered into its fold

in droves.

When the approach of death is sensed, one needs to exert oneself immensely in *Tasbīḥ* and *Istighfār*

Verse [110:3] فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ وَاسْتَغْفِرْهُ (then pronounce the purity and praise of your Lord, and seek forgiveness from Him...) Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah Ṣiddiqah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا says that after the revelation of this Sūrah, whenever the Messenger of Allah ﷺ performed a prayer, he would recite the following supplication: سُبْحَانَكَ رَبَّنَا وَبِحَمْدِكَ اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي (I pronounce Your purity, O Allah, our Lord, and praise be to You, O Allah, forgive me.) [Bukhārī].

Sayyidah 'Umm Salamah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا says that after the revelation of this Sūrah, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to often recite the following supplication: سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَبِحَمْدِهِ أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ وَأَتُوبُ إِلَيْهِ (I pronounce the purity of Allah, and praise be to Him. I seek Allah's forgiveness and I repent to Him.) He used to say, "I have been commanded to do so." In evidence, he used to recite this Sūrah.

Sayyidnā Abu Hurairah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ says that after the revelation of this Sūrah, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to exert himself in the worship of Allah so immensely that his feet would swell. [Qurtubī].

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah An-Naṣr
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Lahab

(The Flame)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 5 verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 5

تَبَّتْ يَدَا أَبِي لَهَبٍ وَتَبَّ ﴿١﴾ مَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْهُ مَالُهُ وَمَا كَسَبَ ﴿٢﴾
 سَيَصْلَىٰ نَارًا ذَاتَ لَهَبٍ ﴿٣﴾ وَامْرَأَتُهُ حَمَّالَةَ الْحَطَبِ ﴿٤﴾ فِي
 جِيدِهَا حَبْلٌ مِّن مَّسَدٍ ﴿٥﴾

Perish the two hands of Abū Lahab, and perish he! [1]
 Neither his wealth availed him, nor what he earned. [2]
 He will soon enter a fire, full of flames, [3] and his wife
 as well, the wicked¹ carrier of firewood. [4] In her neck
 there is a rope of twisted palm-fibre. [5]

Name and Nickname of Abū Lahab

Abū Lahab [Father of Flame] was the Nickname of 'Abd-ul-'Uzzā, one of the sons of 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib. As he was ruddy in complexion, he was nicknamed Abū Lahab [Father of Flame]. The Qur'ān did not mention his real name, because it smacked of paganism, and the last element 'lahab' [Flame] in the nickname has also nexus with the flame of Hell. This person was the inveterate enemy and persecutor of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and violently opposed Islam. Whenever the Holy Prophet ﷺ invited the people to Islamic Faith, he would stand up and cry lie to his message. [Ibn

(1) The word 'wicked' is though not available in the text in express terms, the *naṣb* on *ḥammālah*, which is termed in Arabic grammar as '*naṣb 'aladh-dhamm*' carries this meaning. (Muhammad Taqi Usmani)

Kathīr]

Cause of Revelation

It is recorded in the two Ṣaḥīḥs that when the verse وَأَنْذِرْ عَشِيرَتَكَ الْأَقْرَبِينَ (Warn your closest relatives - 26:214) was revealed, the Holy Prophet ﷺ ascended the mount Ṣafā and cried out to the tribe of Quraish in a manner that was known among them for warning of an attack by the enemy. Some narratives maintain that he called the different Makkan clans by name, the clan of Banū 'Abd Munāf, Banū 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib and others. All the clans of Quraish gathered around him, and he said to them: 'If I were to tell you that the enemy is about to attack you in the morning or in the evening, would you believe me?' They all unanimously replied in the affirmative. Then he said: 'Verily, I am a warner sent to you before the coming of a severe torment (as a result of disbelief or paganism). Abū Lahab then responded: جَمَعْتَنَا يَا لَكَ إِلَهَذَا 'Ruin may seize you ! Is it for this purpose that you have called us together?' and picked up a stone to hit him. Thus this Sūrah was revealed.

Verse [111:1] تَبَّتْ يَدَا أَبِي لَهَبٍ وَتَبَّ (Perish the two hands of Abū Lahab, and perish he!) The word *yad* literally means a 'hand'. Because hands play a very important role in all of human works and actions, often *yad* (hand) refers to the human person, as in the phrase ذَلِكُمْ بِمَا قَدَّمْتُمْ يَدَاكُمْ (...All this is due to what your hands have sent forth...22:10). Baihaqī has recorded on the authority of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه that one day Abū Lahab said to the people that Muḥammad ﷺ says that such-and-such a thing will happen after death. Then, pointing to his hands, said that none of those things have come into these hands; then he addressed his hands and said: تَبَّتْ لَكُمَا مَارِي فِيكُمَا شَيْئًا مِمَّا قَالَ مُحَمَّدٌ (Perish you! I do not see any of the things Muḥammad ﷺ said in you.) Therefore, the Qur'ān attributes his destruction to his hands.

The verb *tabba* is derived from *tabab* which means 'to perish'. In verse [1], the first sentence تَبَّتْ يَدَا أَبِي لَهَبٍ (Perish the two hands of Abū Lahab) is in the form of a prayer invoking or imprecating destruction upon Abū Lahab, and the second sentence *wa tabba* is the declarative sentence prophesying the consequence of the invocation. The first sentence was invoked against him to satisfy the indignation of the Muslims, because when Abū Lahab imprecated destruction upon the Holy Prophet ﷺ, it was the desire of the Muslims that imprecation be invoked against him.

Allah thus fulfilled their desire, and also informed them that the invocation has taken effect and he perished. Seven days after the battle of Badr, he developed a terrible case of plague because of which people avoided him. They regarded the disease as infectious and were afraid that it might be transmitted by contact, so they forced him to live in an isolated house, and they did not come into contact with him at all. He at last died in this state. His dead body lay untouched in his house for three days. When his body began to rot giving out unbearable stench, people taunted his sons, and they hired laborers to take it away and bury it. They dug a pit in the ground, pushed his body into it with a stick and covered it with stones. [Bayān-ul-Qur'ān from Rūḥ].

Verse [111:2] مَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْهُ مَالُهُ، وَمَا كَسَبَ (Neither his wealth availed him, nor what he earned.) The phrase *mā kasab* [what he earned] could refer to the profits that accrued to him from investment of his wealth in business, and it could also imply 'children', for the children of a person are also referred to (in Arabic) as his earning. Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها reports that the Messenger of Allah said:

ان اطيب ما اكل الرجل من كسبه وان ولده من كسبه

"The best and the purest thing a man eats is from his earnings and his children are part of his earnings".

This means that eating from the earnings of one's children is tantamount to eating from one's own earnings. [Qurṭubī]

Therefore, Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها, Mujāhid, 'Aṭā', Ibn Sīrīn and others interpret *mā kasab* [what he earned] as referring to 'children'. Allah had granted Abū Lahab abundant wealth and many children, and these two factors led him to be ungrateful, and caused him to be proud and arrogant. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه says that when the Messenger of Allah ﷺ called his people to faith and warned them about the Divine punishment, Abū Lahab said: "Even if what my nephew says is true, I will save myself from the painful torment on the Day of Judgement with my wealth and my children." Thus Allah revealed verse [2] مَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْهُ مَالُهُ، وَمَا كَسَبَ, that is, when the Divine torment seized him in this world, neither his wealth nor his children benefited him!

Verse [111:3] سَيَصْلَىٰ نَارًا ذَاتَ لَهَبٍ (He will enter a fire, full of flames.) That is, either on the Day of Judgment or immediately after his death, while in

grave, he will be pushed into the blazing fire. There is a rhetorical relationship between Abū Lahab and *dhāta lahab* [full of flames].

The Fate of 'Umm Jamīl, the Wife of Abū Lahab

Verse [111:4] **وَأَمْرَأَتُهُ حَمَّالَةَ الْحَطَبِ** (And his wife as well, the wicked, the carrier of firewood.) As Abū Lahab was a vehement enemy of the Holy Messenger ﷺ, his wife too was supportive of her husband in his disbelief, rejection, obstinacy, and in persecuting the Holy Prophet ﷺ. She was a sister of Abū Sufyān, and daughter of Harb Ibn 'Umayyah. Her nickname was Umm Jamīl. The Qur'ān makes plain in this verse that this wretched woman will also roast with her husband in the fire of Hell. She is described as **حَمَّالَةَ الْحَطَبِ** which literally means 'the carrier of firewood'. Idiomatically, Arabs use this expression to refer to a 'tale-bearer', that is, one who gathers pieces of gossip and carries them between individuals and families in order to ignite the fires of discord and enmity between people, exactly as one would gather firewood to kindle the fire. This telltale woman improperly carried information concerning the private affairs of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and the blessed Companions in an attempt to ignite and instigate trouble. In this verse too, the phrase 'the carrier of firewood' has been interpreted by Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ, Mujāhid, 'Ikrimah رَحِمَهُمُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى and a group of commentators to mean that 'She was a tale-bearer' while Ibn Zaid, Ḍaḥḥāk and other commentators رَحِمَهُمُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى retain it in its original sense, and explain that she literally used to collect thorny branches from the jungle, and place them in the path of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in order to harm him - hence the description: 'carrier of firewood'. [Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr].

Some scholars explain that just as she used to help her husband in this world to promote disbelief and tyranny and to assist him in harming the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, she will add to the torment of her husband in the Hereafter. She will collect the branches of *zaqqūm* and other trees and add them as fuel to the fire of Hell in which her husband would be roasting. [Ibn Kathīr].

Tale-Bearing: A Gravely Major Sin

It is recorded in the two Ṣaḥīḥs that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is reported to have said that a tale-bearer (to harm others) will not enter Paradise. Fuḍail Ibn 'Iyāḍ رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى says that there are three evil deeds of man that destroy all his righteous actions. They are: [1] backbiting; [2]

tale-bearing; and [3] lying. 'Aṭā' Ibn Sā'ib رحمه الله تعالى says that he asked Sha'bi رحمه الله تعالى about the Prophetic Tradition in which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is reported to have said: لا يدخل الجنة سافك دم ولا مشاء بنميمه ولا تاجر يربى
 "Three types of people will not enter Paradise: [1] a murderer; [2] a tale-bearer; and [3] a trader who is involved in usury." 'Aṭā' رحمه الله تعالى says that I cited this Tradition to Sha'bi and asked him in a surprising tone that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has equated 'a tale-bearer' with a murderer and a usurer. He replied: "Indeed, tale-bearing is the root cause of murder and usurpation of wealth." [Qurṭubī]

Verse [111:5] فِي جِيدِهَا حَبْلٌ مِّن مَّسَدٍ (In her neck there is a rope of twisted palm-fibre.) The *masd* with the letter-s-bearing *sukūn* [quiescence or rest] is an infinitive which means 'to twist rope or cord, or to twist it strongly and tightly'. If the word is read as *māsād* with the letters *m-s* bearing *fatha* [= a-a], the word refers to fibres. It is also a rope made of 'twisted fibres of palm tree' or 'tightly braided fibres of coconut tree' or 'cord that has been woven strongly' or 'coil or cable formed by winding iron strands together'. [al-Qāmūs]. Some scholars have preferred to translate it specifically as 'a rope made of twisted fibres of palm tree' and no other string or twine. This is in conformity with the general usage of the Arabs. Basically, it refers to any string or twine or rope or cord or coil or cable formed by intertwining strands of any material. In keeping with this general sense of the word, Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه, 'Urwah Ibn Zubair رضي الله عنه and others said that in this context the phrase حَبْلٌ مِّن مَّسَدٍ "rope of masad" refers to 'rope formed by twisting iron strands'. This will be her condition in Hell where an iron-collar will be in her neck. Sayyidnā Mujāhid رضي الله عنه interprets *min masad* as *min ḥadīd*, that is, 'of iron'. [Maḥḥarī].

Sha'bi, Muqātil and other commentators have taken the phrase *min masad* to refer to 'a rope made of twisted fibres of palm tree' and said that Abū Lahab and his wife were extremely wealthy and were looked upon as leaders of their nation but, on account of his wife's mean disposition and miserliness, she used to collect firewood from the jungle, bind them together with a rope, place the bundle on her head and put its rope round her neck, so that it might not fall from her head. This practice of hers one day led to her destruction. She had a bundle of wood on her head and the rope in her neck. She felt tired and sat down. Then fell, was choked and

died. According to this second interpretation, the verse describes her mean disposition and the disastrous consequences of her sadistic behavior. [Maḏharī]. However, such a conduct in Abū Lahab's family, especially of his wife, was hardly conceivable; therefore, most commentators have preferred the first interpretation. Allah knows best!

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Lahab
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Ikhlāṣ

(The Sincerity)

This Sūrah is Makki, and it has 4 verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 4

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ ﴿١﴾ اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ ﴿٢﴾ لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ ﴿٣﴾ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ ﴿٤﴾

Say, "The truth is: Allah is One. [1] Allah is Besought of all, needing none. [2] He neither begot anyone, nor was begotten. [3] And equal to Him has never been any one." [4]

Cause of Revelation

Tirmidhī, Ḥākim and others have recorded that the pagans of Makkah asked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ: "O Muḥammad! Tell us about the ancestry of your Lord." So Allah revealed this Sūrah. Some narratives ascribe this inquiry to the Jews of Madīnah. In view of these conflicting reports, there is a divergence of opinion as to whether this is a Makki Sūrah or Madani Sūrah. According to Sayyidnā ‘Abdullah Ibn Mas‘ūd ؓ, Ḥasan Baṣrī, ‘Aṭā’, ‘Ikrimah and Jābir ؓ, the Sūrah is Makki and, according to Qatādah, Ḍaḥḥāk ؓ and others, it is Madani. According to one narration of Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Abbās ؓ, it is Makki and, according to another, it is Madani [Qurtubī].

According to another narration, the pagans added to their question whether Allah was made of gold, silver or some other stuff, in response to which this Sūrah was revealed.

Virtues of the Sūrah

Imām Aḥmad has recorded a narration in his Musnad that a person came up to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and said, "I love this Sūrah [Al-Ikhlāṣ] immensely." The Holy Prophet ﷺ replied: "Your love for it will cause you to enter Paradise." [Ibn Kathīr].

Tirmidhī has recorded on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ؓ that once the Messenger of Allah ﷺ asked the people to gather and said: "I shall recite to you a third of the Qur'ān?" When the people had congregated, he recited Sūrah Al-Ikhlāṣ and said: "This is equal to a third of the Qur'ān." [Muslim].

In a lengthy Ḥadīth, Abū Dāwūd, Tirmidhī and Nasā'ī have recorded that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Anyone who recites Sūrah Al-Ikhlāṣ and the *mu'awwadhatāin* (i.e. the last two *sūrahs* of the Holy Qur'ān) morning and evening, they shall be sufficient for him." In another narration, the wordings are: "They will suffice him against every affliction." [Ibn Kathīr]

Imām Aḥmad has recorded a narration in his Musnad on the authority of Sayyidnā 'Uqbah Ibn 'Amir ؓ that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "I shall show you three such Sūrahs that are revealed in Torah, Injīl, Zabūr and the Qur'ān. Do not sleep at night until such time that you have recited them. They are Sūrah Al-Ikhlāṣ and the *mu'awwadhatāin*." Sayyidnā 'Uqbah Ibn 'Amir ؓ says that since I have heard this, I did not miss reciting them. [Ibn Kathīr].

Oneness of Allah

Verse [112:1] قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ Say, (The truth is: Allah is One.) The imperative *qul* (Say) is directly addressed to the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, thus indicating that he is Allah's Prophet and Messenger. This verse directs and commands him to convey Allah's message to mankind. 'Allah' is the personal name of that Necessary Being Whose non-existence is inconceivable. He comprises all the attributes of perfection and is free from, or above, or overrides all kinds of imperfections. The epithets *aḥad* and *wāḥid* are both applied to Allah which are normally translated as 'One' but the word *aḥad* includes an additional sense which signifies that Allah is beyond composition, plurality and resemblance, which means that He is neither composed of

any elements, nor does He have any partner, nor has He any resemblance to anything. This is a response to those who asked about Allah whether He is made of gold or silver or pearls. This concise statement covers all aspects of discussion on the Divine Being and His attributes. The imperative *qul* [say] points to the messengership of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. If analyzed properly, this brief sentence covers all the detailed discussions expounded in voluminous books of theology.

Verse [112:2] **اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ** (Allah is Besought of all, needing none) The word *ṣamad* bears several literal senses. Therefore, the Qur'ānic exegetical scholars have assigned different meanings to this verse. Ṭabarānī, the leading authority on Prophetic Traditions, in his *kitāb-us-Sunnah*, has collected all the interpretations of the Divine attribute *Aṣ-ṣamad* and concluded that they are all authentic, and comprehend all the attributes of our Lord that have been assigned to Him, but originally it refers to 'the chief who has no superior and to whom the people turn for the fulfilment of their desires and needs; thus all people depend on him, but he does not depend on any one.' [Ibn Kathīr].

Allah is Above having Children and Procreating

Verse [112:3] **لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ** (He neither begot anyone, nor was begotten.) This verse responds to those who had questioned about the ancestry of Allah. There is no analogy between Allah, the Creator, and His creation. While His creation comes into being through the biological process of procreation, Allah Himself has no children, nor is He the child of anyone.

Verse [4] **وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ** (And equal to Him has never been any one.) The word *kufuwan*, as used in the original, means an 'example', a 'similar thing', 'one equal in rank and position'. Thus this verse means that there is no one in the entire universe, nor ever was, nor ever can be, who is similar to Allah, or equal in rank with Him, or resembling Him in His attributes, works and powers in any degree whatsoever.

Sūrah Al-Ikhlāṣ: A Comprehensive Concept of Allah's Oneness and a complete Negation of Shirk

There were many types of people who denied the Divine Oneness, and set up partners or rivals to Allah. Sūrah Al-Ikhlāṣ negates all types of such wrong belief systems, and imparts a comprehensive lesson of Divine Oneness. Among the unbelievers, several types may be identified. There

is a group that denies the very existence of God [the atheists]. Another group believes in the existence of God, but denies that His existence is 'Necessary'. A third group believes in God's existence and in His existence as 'Necessary' but denies His attributes of perfection. A fourth group believes in God's Necessary Existence and in His attributes of perfection, but denies Oneness of God and believes in and worship more than one gods and goddesses, and thus practices polytheism. Verse [1] refutes vehemently all such false belief systems. Verse [2] refers to the practices of those who do worship Allah alone, but believe that there are also other helpers who can fulfil their needs, desires and ambitions. The Divine attribute *Aṣ-ṣamad* denounces outright any such notion. A fifth group ascribes children to Allah and the phrase *lam yalid* [He neither begot anyone] repudiates this notion of theirs in the strongest terms. Allah, the Pure and Exalted, knows best!

**Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Ikhlāṣ
Ends here**

Sūrah Al-Falaq

(Break of Dawn)

This Sūrah is Madanī, and it has 5 verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 5

قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ الْفَلَقِ ﴿١﴾ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَ ﴿٢﴾ وَمِنْ شَرِّ غَاسِقٍ إِذَا وَقَبَ ﴿٣﴾ وَمِنْ شَرِّ النَّفَّاثَاتِ فِي الْعُقَدِ ﴿٤﴾ وَمِنْ شَرِّ حَاسِدٍ إِذَا حَسَدَ ﴿٥﴾

Say, "I seek refuge with the Lord of the daybreak [1] from the evil of everything He has created, [2] and from the evil of the dark night when it penetrates, [3] and from the evil of the women who blow on the knots, [4] and from the evil of an envier when he envies. [5]

Preliminary Remarks

This and the next Sūrah were revealed on the same occasion, and in the same event, as will be explained in the 'cause of revelation'. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn-ul-Qayyim has, therefore, written their commentary together. He writes that their blessings and benefits are abundant. All of the people require them and no one can dispense with them. They are very efficacious remedy for sorcery or magical spell, evil eye, and for all of the physical and spiritual calamities. In fact, if its reality is grasped fully, people will understand that they require it more than their breath, food, water, clothing and everything else.

Cause of Revelation

Musnad of Ahmad records that a Jewish person cast a magical spell on the Holy Prophet ﷺ, as a result of which he fell ill. Jibra'īl عليه السلام came

to him and informed him that a particular Jew had cast a spell on him, that he had tied knots in his hair to accomplish this objective, and it is thrown into a particular well. The Holy Prophet ﷺ sent some of his Companions to bring it from the well Jibra'īl عليه السلام had described. The Holy Prophet ﷺ untied the knots, and he was instantly cured. Jibra'īl عليه السلام informed him of the name of the Jew and the Holy Prophet ﷺ knew the culprit, but it was not in keeping with his compassionate disposition to avenge anyone in his personal matter. Therefore, this was never brought to the attention of the Jew guilty of the black magic, nor did any sign of complaint ever appear on the blessed face of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Being a hypocrite, he regularly attended the Holy Prophet's ﷺ gatherings.

The details of this incident are recorded in Sahih of Bukhari on the authority of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها that a Jewish man cast a magic spell on the Holy Prophet ﷺ, as a result of which he sometimes felt confused whether or not he had done something. One day the Holy Prophet ﷺ said to Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها that Allah has shown him what his illness was and added: "Two men came to me in my dream. One of them sat by my head side while the other sat by my feet, and the following conversation ensued:

Question: 'What is wrong with this man?'

Answer: 'He is bewitched.'

Question: 'Who has bewitched him?'

Answer: 'Labīd Ibn A'sam. He is a member of the tribe of Banū Zura'iq who is an ally of the Jews, a hypocrite.'

Question: 'With what did he bewitch him?'

Answer: 'With a comb and hair from the comb.'

Question: 'Where is the comb?'

Answer: 'In the dried bark of a male date palm under a rock in a well called *Dharwan*.' "

Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها says that the Holy Prophet ﷺ went to the well to remove the comb with the hair and said: "This is the well I was shown in my dream." He removed it from the well. Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها asked

the Holy Prophet ﷺ: "Will you not make this public?" He replied: "Allah has cured me and I hate to cause harm to anyone." This implies that the Holy Prophet ﷺ did not want to be the cause anyone's molestation, death or destruction, because this is what would have exactly happened if the incident was publicised.

According to a narration in Musnad of Aḥmad, this illness of the Holy Prophet ﷺ lasted for six months. According to other narratives, some of the Companions knew that this wicked act was performed by Labid Ibn A'sam, and they courteously said to the Holy Prophet ﷺ: "Why should we not kill this wicked person?" He made the same reply to them as he did to Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها. According to Imām Tha'labī's narration, a Jewish boy was the attendant of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, the hypocritical Jew flattered the boy and talked him into getting for him strands of the Prophet's ﷺ hair from his comb, and a few of its teeth. Having obtained these items, he tied eleven knots on a string and a needle was stuck into each knot. Labīd then placed this spell in the spathe of a male palm tree, and buried it under a stone in a well. On this occasion, the two Sūrahs were revealed, comprising eleven verses. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ recited one verse at a time and untied one knot each time, until all the knots were untied, and he felt freed from the tension of the witchcraft. [All these narratives have been adapted from Ibn Kathīr.]

Magic and its effect on the Holy Prophet ﷺ

Some people are surprised that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ should be affected by black magic. This is because some people do not have a complete grasp of how magic operates. It actually operates under physical causes, and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was not immune to the influence of physical causes, as for instance feeling the burning or heating sensation of fire, and feeling the cooling sensation of water; or certain natural factors causing fever or body temperature to rise; or other factors causing aches and pains, and other illnesses. The Holy Prophet ﷺ, or any other prophet for that matter, was not immune to the effects of such natural or physical causes. They can be affected by the hidden operations of magic which are no less natural or physical. Please see Sūrah Al-Baqarah, Ma'āriful Qur'ān, Vol. 1/ pp 264-278 for fuller explanation, especially p. 276 on 'Magic and Prophets'.

***Mu'awwadhatain* are Sūrahs that afford protection against physical and spiritual afflictions**

It is a settled doctrine of every believer that Allah is the intrinsic cause of every gain and loss in this world as well as in the next world. Without the Divine will not a jot of gain or loss can be caused to anyone. The only way to fortify against all physical and spiritual injuries and harm is for man to place himself under the protection of Allah, and by his actions he should attempt to make himself capable of entering the Divine shelter.

Sūrah Al-Falaq directs how to seek the Divine protection against worldly calamities, and Sūrah An-Nās tells the way to seek Divine protection against the calamities of the Hereafter.

Virtues of *Mu'awwadhatain*

Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim records a Tradition on the authority of Sayyidnā 'Uqbah Ibn 'Āmir رضي الله عنه who reports that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Do you not see that there have been revealed to me verses tonight the like of which has not been seen before? Those are Sūrah Al-Falaq and Sūrah An-Nās." According to another narration, the like of *Mu'awwadhatain* has not revealed even in Torah, Injīl, or Zabūr or anywhere else in the Qur'ān. Another narration of Sayyidnā 'Uqbah Ibn 'Āmir رضي الله عنه reports that the Messenger of Allah taught him *Mu'awwadhatain* while they were on a journey. Then he recited them in the *maghrib ṣalāh* and said: "Recite these two Sūrahs whenever you go to sleep and whenever you get up." [Nasā'ī] According to another report, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ has advised people to recite these two Sūrahs after every *ṣalāh* [Transmitted by Abū Dāwūd and Nasā'ī].

Imām Mālik recorded from Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها: "whenever the Messenger of Allah ﷺ suffered from an ailment, he would recite the *Mu'awwadhatain*, blow over his hands, and then wiped his whole body with those hands. When his pain became acute on his death-bed, I would recite the *Mu'awwadhatain*, blow over his hands, and then he wiped them over himself, because my hands could not be the fitting substitute for his blessed hands. [All these narratives have been adapted from Ibn Kathīr].

Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Khubayb رضي الله عنه reports that it was raining one night and the sky had become intensely dark. We went out looking for the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and when he was found, he said: "Say ." He

asked: "What should I say?" He said: "Recite **قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ** and *Mu'awwadhatain*. Reciting them thrice in the morning and thrice in the evening will fortify you against all kinds of perturbations."

In sum, it was the practice of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and his Companions to recite these two Sūrahs to protect themselves against all types of privations, trials and tribulations of life in this world, as well as of life in the next world.

Lexicological Analysis of important words and interpretation of the Sūrah

Verse [113:1] **قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ الْفَلَقِ** (Say, "I seek refuge with the Lord of the Daybreak.") The word *falaq* means 'to split or cleave' and here it is used in the sense of 'break of dawn'. In another verse, a similar quality of Allah is used in [6:96] **فَالِقُ الْإِصْبَاحِ** ([He is] the One who causes the dawn to break). Of all the Divine attributes, this particular attribute is used presumably because the darkness of night often causes evils and difficulties, and the daylight removes them. This attribute of Allah points to the fact that anyone who seeks protection in Allah, He will remove all afflictions from him. [Maḏharī]

The word *Sharr*: 'Allāmah Ibn Qayyim's Exposition

Verse [113:2] **مِنْ شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَ** (From the evil of everything He has created.) 'Allāmah Ibn Qayyim expounds that the word *sharr* (evil) is employed in two different senses: [1] pain, loss, injury, trouble, grief, distress and affliction which affect man directly, and they are by themselves troubles and afflictions; and [2] the factors that cause losses, injuries and afflictions. The second type covers unbelief, idolatry and all sins. The things from which the Qur'ān and Sunnah require man to seek refuge in Allah are either of these two types. The Traditional supplication that is *masnūn* after *ṣalāh* includes seeking of refuge from four things: [1] punishment of the grave; [2] punishment of the Hell-Fire; [3] hardships and privations of life; and [4] trials and tribulations of death. Of these, the first two are afflictions and punishments in their own right, and the last two are causes of afflictions and punishments.

Verse [113:2] **مِنْ شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَ** (From the evil of everything He has created) covers the evil of the entire creation. This verse was sufficient to guard against all mischief and calamities. But three particular forms of evil have

been singled out to seek protection which often cause calamities and afflictions.

The first thing singled out appears in verse [113:3] وَمِنْ شَرِّ غَاسِقٍ إِذَا وَقَبَ (and from the evil of dark night when it penetrates.) The word *ghāsiq* is derived from *ghasaq* (to become dark or intensely dark). Thus Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه, Ḥasan and Mujāhid say that the word *ghasiq* stands for 'night'. The verb *waqaba* is derived from *wuqūb* which means for utter darkness 'to overspread completely and intensely'. The verse means : 'I seek refuge in Allah from the night when its darkness has completely and intensely overspread'. The word 'night' has been specifically mentioned because this is the time when Jinn, Satans, harmful insects, animals and reptiles appear. Thieves and robbers emerge at this time to carry out their crimes of stealing and other acts of wickedness. The enemies attack at this time. Black magic has the worst effect when it is intensely dark at night. As soon as the dawn approaches, the effects of all these things disappear and fade away. [‘Allāmah Ibn Qayyim]

Verse [113:4] وَمِنْ شَرِّ النَّفَّاثَاتِ فِي الْعُقَدِ (and from the evil of the women who blow on the knots.) The word *naffāthāt* is derived from *naftḥ* which means 'to blow'. The word ‘*uqad* is the plural of ‘*uqdah* which means 'a knot'. The magicians usually tie knots on a string or piece of thread, recite magical incantations or formulae and blow on them as they do so. The phrase النَّفَّاثَاتِ فِي الْعُقَدِ (...the women who blow on the knots) refers to female magicians. It is possible that the pre-adjectival noun of the adjective *naffāthāt* be *nufūs* [souls]. Thus this verse may be translated as 'the evil souls who blow on knots'. This translation would include men and women who carry out this evil practice. But most probably its pre-adjectival noun is 'womenfolk'. Women have been specifically mentioned perhaps because generally womenfolk have the natural disposition to carry out the evil practice of witchcraft; or probably because Labīd Ibn A‘ṣam, whose black magic was the cause of revelation of this Sūrah, got this most heinous act done by his daughters. Hence, the act of witchcraft is ascribed to them.

The reason why protection is sought against magicians is firstly that the cause of revelation of these two Sūrahs was the incident of magic. Secondly, people are normally unaware of the act of magicians, and they do not pay attention to getting themselves exorcised. They are under the impression that it is some kind of medical ailment and try to get

themselves medically cured. In the meantime the magical effect continues to grow worse.

The third thing from which people are asked specifically to seek protection is *ḥasid* [jealous] and *ḥasad* [jealousy]. This has been specified for the same reasons as given above, because black magic was worked on the Prophet ﷺ on account of jealousy. The Jews and the hypocrites could not bear to see the rapid progress and expansion of Islam. They could not defeat him in outer combat; therefore they tried to satisfy their jealousy by performing witchcraft on him. There were uncountable number of green-eyed monsters against the Prophet ﷺ. That is the major reason why protection was sought against them. Jealousy of the jealous one gives him restless days and sleepless nights. He is at all times after causing loss to his envied person. Therefore, the harm he wishes to inflict is severe.

***Ḥasad* [Jealousy] and *Ghibṭah* [Envy]**

The Arabic word *Ḥasad*, the English equivalent of which is 'jealousy', is invariably used in the bad sense. It generally means to desire the deprivation of the other man rather than one's own acquisition of any bliss that he may possess. Simply put, *Ḥasad* means that a person should feel unhappy at the better fortune and good quality that Allah has granted to another, and wishes that it should be taken away from the other person and given to him, or at least the other should be deprived of it. *Ḥasad* in this sense is totally forbidden and a major sin. This is the first sin that was committed in the heaven and also the first one committed on the earth. The Iblīs was jealous of 'Ādam ﷺ in the heaven and the latter's son Qābīl was jealous of his brother Hābīl on earth. [Qurṭubī].

Ghibṭah, on the other hand, means to desire for oneself the same blessing as the other man has, without any idea of the latter's losing it. This is not only permissible but also desirable.

Summary and Conclusion

Apart from the general protection that is sought in this Sūrah, protection is sought from three specific evils. These are mentioned separately in verses three, four and five. Furthermore, in the first and the third specific evils particular restrictions are placed. The first specific evil *ghūsiq* [darkness] is restricted by the phrase إِذَا وَقَبَ "when it penetrates".

The third specific evil *ḥāsīd* is restricted by the phrase إِذَا حَسَدَ "when he envies". The practice of witchcraft is left unrestricted because its harmful effect is general. The harmful effect of darkness is felt when there is total absence of light, plunging the night in intense and utter darkness. Likewise, jealousy may not cause harm to its object until the jealous one takes a practical step with word or deed to satisfy his heart. For until he takes a practical step, his being unhappy may be harmful to himself, but it is not harmful for the other person so that he may seek refuge from it. Hence, restrictions are placed on the first and the third specific evils.

**Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Falaq
Ends here**

Sūrah An-Nās

(The Mankind)

This Sūrah is Madanī, and it has 6 verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 6

قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاسِ ﴿١﴾ مَلِكِ النَّاسِ ﴿٢﴾ إِلَهِ النَّاسِ ﴿٣﴾ مِنْ شَرِّ
الْوَسْوَاسِ الْخَنَّاسِ ﴿٤﴾ الَّذِي يُوَسْوِسُ فِي صُدُورِ النَّاسِ ﴿٥﴾
مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ ﴿٦﴾

Say, "I seek refuge with the Lord of mankind, [1] the King of mankind, [2] the God of mankind, [3] from the evil of the whisperer who withdraws (when Allah's name is pronounced), [4] the one who whispers in the hearts of people, [5] whether from among the Jinn or Mankind. [6]

Introductory Remarks

This Sūrah, the second of the *Mu'awwadhat*, constitutes an extension of its predecessor and is in a way complementary to it, in that in Sūrah Al-Falaq the believers were enjoined to seek refuge with Allah against the hardships and privations of life in this world, while in the current Sūrah protection is sought from the trials and tribulations of the Hereafter. It was explained in Sūrah Al-Falaq that the word *sharr* could stand for 'evil' or 'harm' or even 'that which causes harm, anguish or distress'. In the present Sūrah, we are to seek refuge from the evil that is the cause of all sins, namely, the whisperings and insinuations of Satan. As the anguish and distress of the Hereafter is most severe, the Qur'an

appropriately emphasizes at the end to seek Allah's protection against these evil powers.

Verse [114:1] قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاسِ Say, (I seek refuge with the Lord of mankind,) The attributive name of Allah *rabb* stands for 'one who nurtures', and implies that the Supreme Nurturer takes care of everything under all circumstances. In the present verse, He is referred to as 'the Lord of mankind', while in the previous Sūrah He was referred to as 'the Lord of the daybreak', because in the foregoing Sūrah the purpose was to seek protection against the outer bodily hardships and privations of life, and they are not confined to human beings. Animals also suffer bodily hardships and difficulties, unlike the Satanic instigations which are restricted to man, and the Jinn are subjoined to him. [Maẓharī from Baiḍāwī]

Verses [114:2 & 3] إِلَهَ النَّاسِ. مَلِكِ النَّاسِ. (the King of mankind, the God of mankind.) The reason for adding these two attributes is that the word *rabb*, attributed to a particular thing, could refer to someone other than Allah also, as for instance رَبُّ الدَّارِ *rabb-ud-dār* [land-lord] or رَبُّ الْمَالِ *rabb-ul-māl* [owner of wealth]. But not every master or owner is a king. That is why the attributive name *malik* [King] has been added to indicate that He is not only the 'Lord of mankind' but also the 'King of mankind'. Furthermore, not every king is worthy of worship. Thus the third attributive name *ilāh* [God] has been added to *nās* [people]. The Divine wisdom in combining all three Divine attributes is that each attribute motivates protection. Every master has servants and takes care of them. Likewise, every king has subjects and looks after them. That the worshipped God protects His worshipper is even more obvious. Only Allah, and no other being, is characterized by these three attributes simultaneously. Therefore, seeking Allah's protection by invoking these attributes is the greatest protection, and the invocation is readily acceptable.

Since the first sentence contains the word *nās* (people), the second and the third verses should apparently refer to them with the pronouns by saying, مَلِكِهِمْ *malikihim* [their king] rather than repeating the word *nās* (people). However, this is an occasion of supplication and praise, and as such repetition needs to be employed by deliberate design to add force and clarity to the sublime emotion by creating natural rhyme, rhythm and

melodic sequence. Some scholars have explained the repetition of the word 'nās' differently. They say that the word *nās* occurs five times in this Sūrah. In its first occurrence, it refers to the children. The word *rabb* that refers to nurturer-ship of Allah is a hint to this, because children need nurturing the most. Its second occurrence refers to youth, and the hint in the context is the word *malik* which refers to kingship of Allah. It bears political connotation and is appropriate to the youth. Its third occurrence refers to old age. Old people cut themselves off from the world and look up to Allah alone as the real support of life, and render Him alone true and unconditional obedience and to make Him alone the real object of his love and adoration. The context for this is *ilāh* [God] which points to the Divine worship. Its fourth occurrence refers to the righteous servants of Allah. The contextual hint for this is the word *waswasah* [evil whisperings] because the devil is the enemy of the righteous servants of Allah. His work is to cast evil prompting into the hearts of such people. Its fifth occurrence refers to mischief-makers because protection is sought from their mischief.

Verse [114:4] مِنْ شَرِّ الْوَسْوَاسِ الْخَنَّاسِ (from the evil of the whisperer who withdraws [when Allah's name is pronounced].) After invoking three attributes of Allah, the present verse describes the one from whom protection is sought. He is 'the whisperer who withdraws'. The word *waswās* is originally an infinitive in the sense of *waswasah* 'to whisper [that is, to use breath instead of voice, when saying something in barely audible way]'. But here it is used as an hyperbolic expression to refer to 'Satan' in the sense that 'he is an embodiment of whisper'. Whispering of the Satan means that he invites people to his obedience by a superstitious discourse in a way that its subject is cast into man's heart, but no voice is heard. [Qurtubī].

The word خَنَّاسُ *khannās* is derived from *khanasa* which means 'to sneak, recede or withdraw furtively'. The Satan is so named because he puts himself in a squatting [perched] position on the heart of man. So, when the latter becomes heedless, the former whispers, but when he remembers Allah, he withdraws furtively. When man becomes unmindful of Allah again, the Satan returns. Whenever man remembers Allah, he withdraws. This practice continues persistently. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ is reported to have said:

"Allah has built two houses in the heart of man, in one of which an angel resides and in the other the Satan. The angel urges him to do good works and the Satan induces him to do evil works. When man remembers Allah, the Satan withdraws. And when he stops remembering Allah, the Satan perches on the heart of man and pecks with his beak to whisper into it to do evil things." [Transmitted by Abū Ya'la on the authority of Anas رضي الله عنه, as quoted by Maḏharī].

Verse [114:6] *مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ* (whether from among the Jinn or Mankind.) This is explicative of the expression *waswās* occurring in verse [4], meaning that the devils from amongst mankind and the Jinn whisper into the breasts of mankind. Thus the Messenger of Allah ﷺ has been enjoined to constantly seek protection against the mischief of sneaking devils, whether from amongst the Jinn or from amongst human devils.

A question may arise here. It is obvious that the Satans can cast a voiceless evil prompting furtively into the hearts of people, but how the human devils can cast evil whisperings? They come forward publicly and use their voice, which is not *waswasah* [whisper]. The answer is that human beings too often cast doubts in the minds of people in an indirect way without uttering them explicitly. Shaikh 'Izzuddīn Ibn 'Abdus-Salām states, in his monograph 'al-Fawā'id fī Mushkilāt-il-Qur'ān', that the 'whisperer from mankind' refers to the whispering of one's own *nafs* (base faculties of the man himself). Just as the Satan casts evil thoughts into man's mind, likewise the base self of man urges him to do evil works. That is why the Messenger of Allah ﷺ has directed us to seek protection in Allah from the evil of our own self in the following supplication:

اللَّهُمَّ أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّ نَفْسِي وَشَرِّ الشَّيْطَانِ وَشَرِّكُمْ

"O Allah! I seek asylum in You from the evil of myself, from the evil of the Satan and from the evil of idolatry."

The Importance of Seeking Protection against Satanic Whisperings

Ibn Kathīr states that Allah invokes three of His attributive names in this Sūrah, *rabb* [Lord], *malik* [King] and *ilāh* [God], and instructs man to seek refuge with Him against diabolical whisperings, because a Satanic companion is attached to every man, and at every step of the way, the latter's attempt is to destroy the former in different ways. First of all, he induces him to commit sins, and paves the way for him to willfully violate

the Divine laws and injunctions. If he does not succeed in this, he tries to contaminate and destroy his acts of obedience and worship by casting the thoughts of dissimulation, hypocrisy, pride and arrogance. He attempts to create doubts about authentic beliefs and doctrines of Islam in the minds of the learned scholars. The only one who can be saved from the evil of such Satanic pranks is the one whom Allah gives His protection.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ is reported to have said: "There is not a single one of you, but his companion [a devil] has been assigned to him." The Companions enquired: 'Is such a devil companion joined to you also, O Messenger of Allah,?' He replied: 'Yes. However, Allah has helped me against him and he has become submissive to me. As a result, he only commands me to do good.'

It is also confirmed in the two Ṣaḥīḥs from Sayyidnā Anas رضي الله عنه, who reported the story of Sayyidah Ṣafiyyah رضي الله عنها. Once while the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was performing *I'tikaf* in the mosque, one of his wives Sayyidah Ṣafiyyah رضي الله عنها paid him a visit. When she decided to leave, he gave her company to the boundaries of the mosque. On the way, two men of the Anṣār saw them together, The Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "Wait! This is Ṣafiyyah bint Ḥuyayy [my wife!]" The two Companions exclaimed: سبحان الله "Pure is Allah, O Messenger of Allah, [how can we have ill thoughts about you?]" The Messenger of Allah ﷺ replied: "Indeed, the devil runs through man's veins like the blood circulates. I feared that he might whisper evil thoughts in your minds. [That is why I had to call you and clarify that the lady with me was no other than my own wife.]"

Special Note

Just as it is necessary for man to avoid evil deeds, it is essential for Muslims to avoid occasions that may cause others to have ill thoughts about them. Should there arise an occasion which may give rise to such bad thoughts, they should immediately clarify the situation, and put an end to it then and there. In sum: This Tradition indicates that Satanic pranks are highly dangerous. It is not easy to avoid them unless we seek refuge with Allah.

A Clarification

There are two types of evil thoughts: [1] voluntary; and [2] involuntary. Here we are warned against voluntary thoughts that

proceed from the will or from one's own free choice. The involuntary thoughts are thoughts that occur without one's will or free choice. Such thoughts come to mind involuntarily and pass away. They are not harmful, nor are they sinful as long as they do not act upon them or speak about them.

A subtle difference between the two Sūrahs of *Mu'awwadhatain*

In the present Sūrah, *rabb* [Lord], *malik* [King] and *ilāh* [God], three Divine attributes have been invoked, while the evil from which protection is sought is only one, that is, the whispering. Conversely, in the previous Sūrah, only one attribute of Allah is mentioned, that is, *rabb-il-falaq* [Lord of the daybreak], but the evils from which protection is sought are many which are mentioned in three verses. This goes to show that the mischief of the Satan is the worst type of evil. The hardships and calamities that befall man in this world, affect his body and mundane affairs, unlike the Satanic pranks which affect man's mundane affairs as well his affairs of the Hereafter. The Satan is always after destroying man's after-life, and that is the most dangerous situation. If man suffers from physical injury or harm, he can find cure or remedy for it; but because the Satan lurks or lies hidden in ambush in every nook and corner of man's life to assault him unnoticed and pull him downwards, away from the Divine, it is not possible to resist him except with the protection granted by Allah. (Therefore, protection from him is sought by invoking three attributes of Allah.)

Human and Satanic Enemies: their differential treatments

One may have some enemies from mankind, and some from Satanic origin. The Holy Qur'ān has directed us to deal with these two kinds of enemies in different ways.

Ibn Kathīr in the preface of his commentary of the Holy Qur'ān has cited three verses of the Holy Qur'ān pertaining to this subject. All three of them have two parts. In the first part, Allah has instructed man to treat his human enemy with kindness, politeness, patience, mercy and compassion. If he does not desist from his evil ways, then *jihād* is prescribed in other verses. We need to wage armed struggle against the devilish elements of human society. But the only way to resist the Satanic enemy is to seek refuge with Allah. The first verse to this effect is in Sūrah Al-A'rāf [7:199]:

خُذِ الْعَفْوَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْعُرْفِ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْجَاهِلِينَ

(Take to forbearance, and bid the Fair and ignore the ignorant.)

This pertains to defense against human enemy: In other words we need to grant courteous allowance for his offence, bid him to do good and forego revenge against injustice he might have committed. We must be easy in dealing with him and avoid causing him difficulty. This injunction is defence against human enemy and must be carried out in the first instance. But the next verse [7:200] of the same Sūrah pertains to the Satanic enemy as follows:

وَأَمَّا يَنْزَغَنَّكَ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ نَزْغٌ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

"And if you are stricken with a strike from the Satan, seek refuge with Allah. Surely He is All-hearing, All-knowing."

In other words, if an evil suggestion comes to us from the Satanic enemy, then we need to seek refuge in Allah.

The second verse is in Sūrah Al-Mu'minūn [23:96-98]:

ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ السَّيِّئَةِ

"Repel evil with that which is best.

وَقُلْ رَبِّ أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ هَمَزَاتِ الشَّيَاطِينِ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ رَبِّ أَنْ يَحْضُرُونِ

And say: 'O my Lord, I seek Your refuge from the from the strokes of the satans, and I seek Your refuge from that they come to me'.

In the first sentence of these verses, the direction is given to repel the evil caused by human beings with good behavior. But, when it comes to repel the evil caused by Satan, the direction given is to seek refuge in Allah.

The third verse dealing with the same subject is :[41:34]

ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ فَإِذَا الَّذِي بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُ عَدَاوَةٌ كَأَنَّهُ وَلِيٌّ حَمِيمٌ

Repel (evi) with what is best, and you will see that the one you had mutual enmity with him will turn as if he were a close friend." [34]"

This part of the verse directs how to repel the evil caused by human enemy. If we repel evil deed with a better deed, it would be possible for us

to win over our human enemies and they would become our most devoted friends. As opposed to a human enemy, the other part of the situation is contained in the next verse [36]. It deals with the slinking devil who is invisible, but effective in his attack. The verse reads:

وَأَمَّا يَنْزَغَنَّكَ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ نَزْعٌ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

"And should a stroke from Shaitan (Satan) strikes you, seek refuge with Allah. Surely, He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing." [41:36]

The wordings of this verse are more or less the same as they occur in Sūrah Al-A'raf. In other words, if an evil suggestion comes to us from the Satan, we are required to seek refuge in Allah, because that is the only defensive weapon against the invisible slinking, sly and cunning enemy.

[Ibn Kathir]

In sum, all three sets of verses discussed above enjoin that a human enemy needs to be treated at first kindly, politely, patiently and compassionately, because human nature was in the primordial state created uncorrupted, and as such kindness, politeness, mercy and pardon could subdue him. However, human beings who have lost their primordial state of innocence, and are deeply sunk in the ocean of ignorance, the passions and the vices of the lower self or base self drag man downwards away from Allah. Some have become infidels, unbelievers and tyrants. They have thus become frontal enemies and come out armed with weapons of war to wage a frontal combat against the believers. The Qur'an prescribes in other verses that such human enemies should be repelled by force of arms. Unlike the accursed Satan, he is evil in his primal nature, and as such kindness, compassion and pardon does not bring a good effect on him. It is also impossible to have an armed conflict with him. So, the only defence against such an enemy is the celestial weapon of *dhikrullah* [Allah's Remembrance] and *ta'awwudh* [seeking refuge with Allah], with which the entire Qur'an is replete and the Qur'an appropriately ends with it.

Moreover, while dealing with a human enemy, a believer is never a loser. If he overcomes the enemy and prevails upon him, his victory is obvious. If the enemy overcomes him or even kills him, then too he will attain high rewards, and a high degree of martyrdom in the Hereafter

which is far better than any worldly attainments. In other words, if a believer is defeated by a human enemy he has not lost anything nor is he harmed in anyway. But the case of the Satanic enemy is totally different. It is sinful to flatter him or please him; and if someone is defeated by him, it is to destroy his entire future in the Hereafter. This is the reason why the best defensive weapon against him is to seek refuge in Allah. This celestial weapon is so powerful and potent that all Satanic guile and treacherous cunning or craft are rendered weak and ineffective.

The Guile of Satan is Feeble

On account of the reasons given above, it may not be misunderstood that fighting the Satan is difficult. To dispel this misunderstanding, Allah has said:

إِنَّ كَيْدَ الشَّيْطَانِ كَانَ ضَعِيفًا

"...No doubt, the guile of the Satan is feeble." (4:76)

It is further clarified in Sūrah An-Nahl:

فَإِذَا قَرَأْتَ الْقُرْآنَ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ ﴿٩٨﴾ إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ لَهُ سُلْطَانٌ عَلَى
الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَلَى رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ ﴿٩٩﴾ إِنَّمَا سُلْطَانُهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ يَتَوَلَّوْنَهُ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ
بِهِ مُشْرِكُونَ ﴿١٠٠﴾

"So, when you recite the Qur'an, seek the protection of Allah against Satan, the accursed. He is such that he has no power over those who believe in Allah and place trust in their Lord. His power is only over those who befriend him and those who associate partners with Him. [16:98-100]"

Please see Ma'ariful Qur'an, Vol. 5/pp 412-415 for concise commentary and fuller details of related rulings.

Relationship between the Prologue and the Epilogue of the Qur'an

Allah prefaced the Qur'an with Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah which began with His Personal name. It further described His predominant attributes as being *Rabb* or Maintainer of the universe; as being the All-Merciful and Very Merciful and the Sole Judge of rights and wrongs. It defined religion as being His worship alone and imploring Him alone for help - all else being powerless in comparison. It further taught man to pray for true

guidance so that he is able to find the right path, and be established in it. He is taught to pray to be saved from being among those who are condemned and those who have lost the right path after having received it. These factors serve the purpose of man's success and prosperity in this world and in the next world, that is the Hereafter. However, in the process of achieving this purpose man is obstructed by the accursed Satan. He lays various traps inconspicuously utilizing people's different weak points, their sensual and unhealthy desires which he detects and exploits. The Satanic traps or snares need to be shattered or broken to pieces. Seeking refuge in Allah is the only effective protection against these evil powers. That is why the Qur'ān most fittingly ends on this.

Conclusion

All Thanks are due to Allah that the *tafsīr* of the noble Qur'ān has ended with the grace of Allah, and His kindness and help. Praise be to Allah from the beginning to the end, outwardly and inwardly non-manifestly and manifestly. We would not have found the way, had Allah not guided us. May Allah shower His blessings upon the best of creation, Muḥammad ﷺ, His chosen Messenger, the Seal and the leader of the Prophets and Messengers عليهم السلام. Upon him and the other Messengers be His blessings and peace, upon his family and his Companions, all of them. O 'Our Lord, accept from us! Indeed, You - and You alone - are the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing! This work completed on Saturday morning 21st of Sha'bān 1392 AH. Co-incidentally, this is the day I was born. I completed 77th year of my life and turned 78 years old. I pray to Allah and hope that the last days of my life would be the best part of my life, doing the best deeds; and that the best days of my life would be the day when I meet my Lord with the blessing of His clear Book and His trustworthy Prophet ﷺ; and that the efforts of this humble servant would be accepted, whose soul was exhausted by ailments, grief, distress and anxieties, and lack of strength; and that He would pardon my errors and shortcomings if the obligations toward His noble Book were not fulfilled; and that the Muslims would benefit by it for aeons of time; and that He makes this work a treasure-trove for the Day when there will be no trading and no friendship, when neither wealth nor family will be of any help. My ability and help to do things come from Him. Pure is Allah; praise be to Him; Pure is Allah, the Great!

The 8th volume of Tafsīr of Ma‘āriful Qur’ān was revised between 3rd of Ramaḍān 1392 AH and Friday 10th of Shawwāl 1392 AH, taking about forty days. Praise be to Allah!

Alḥamdulillah, the revision of the English version is completed on the night of 29 Ramadan 1424 A.H. corresponding to 25 November, 2003. May Allah bless this humble effort with His approval and pleasure, and make it beneficial for the readers. ‘Āmīn

صَدَقَ اللَّهُ الْعَظِيمُ

Ṣadaqaḥ-ul-‘Āzim

وَصَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى النَّبِيِّنَّ، مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ وَسَلَّمَ

Wa ṣallallāhu ‘ala nabīyyinā Muḥammadin wa ‘alā ‘Ālihī wa ṣahbihi wa sallam.

Alḥamdulillāhilladhī-ladhi Ibnī’matihī tatimmuṣṣāliḥāt

The translation of the text of the Holy Qur’ān completed on 16 Rabī‘ul-Awwal 1424 A.H. corresponding to 19 May 2003 at Karachi on 11:25 forenoon

Muḥammad Taqī Usmānī, May Allah forgive him, and accept this humble effort in the service of the Holy Qur’ān, His eternal book of guidance. May Allah give us tawfiq to recite it, understand

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah An-Nās
Ends here

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