

MA'ĀRIFUL-QUR'ĀN

BY

MAULĀNĀ MUFTI MUḤAMMAD SHAFI، رحمه الله عليه

Translated by

Maulānā Aḥmed Khalīl Azīz

Revised by

Maulānā Muḥammad Taqī 'Usmānī

Volume 8

Sūrah Muḥammad to Sūrah An-Nās

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Preface

الحمد لله رب العالمين، والصلاة والسلام على رسوله الكريم، وعلى آله وصحبه
أجمعين وعلى كل من تبعهم بإحسان إلى يوم الدين

By the grace of Allah Ta'ālā this last volume of Ma'āriful Qur'an is now in your hands. When presenting it to the readers, I am unable to find suitable words to express my gratitude to Allah Ta'ālā who has enabled us to accomplish this project. It was a long journey that I commenced more than thirty years ago with numerous obstacles in my way. Alhamdulillah, it is reaching its final destination today. Ma'āriful Qur'an, with all its eight volumes, is perhaps the first complete and comprehensive commentary on the Holy Qur'an that appeared in English, and I hope it will help the English speaking people to fully understand the message of the last Divine Book in its true perspective.

I am extremely grateful to Maulānā Aḥmed Khalīl Azīz who translated this volume in such a speedy manner that the work did not stop for a moment. May Allah grant him the best of health and bless him with the best of rewards both here and in the hereafter.

Acknowledgements are due to Mr. Ibrāhīm Nafīs who composed the whole work, to Mr. Rafat Saghīr Farooqui and Maulānā 'Abdullāh Memon who were responsible for proofreading, and to Mr. Yūsuf Ghani who not only rechecked the final proof but also prepared the basic material for the Index.

I am also thankful to Mr. Khalīl Ashraf 'Usmānī, Mr. Ishāq Noor and Mr. Yousuf Noor whose financial contributions facilitated the process of translation and publication of this volume. May Allah bless all of them with His pleasure and His rewards in the hereafter.

Lastly, I would request the readers to remember the esteemed author of the book, all the translators and this humble servant in their prayers. May Allah make this book beneficial to all those who wish to understand the message of their Creator and to order their lives in accordance with its guidance. A'min.

Muḥammad Taqī Usmānī

11 Rajab 1425 - 28th August 2004

Transliteration Scheme

Arabic Letter	Name of Letter	English Transliteration
ا	الف -- Alif	a
ب	باء -- bā	b
ت	تاء -- tā	t
ث	ثاء -- thā	th
ج	جيم -- jīm	j
ح	حاء -- ḥā	ḥ
خ	خاء -- khā	kh
د	دال -- dāl	d
ذ	ذال -- dhāl	dh
ر	راء -- rā	r
ز	زاي -- zā	z
س	سين -- sīn	s
ش	شين -- shīn	sh
ص	صاد -- ṣād	ṣ
ض	ضاد -- dād	ḍ
ط	طاء -- ṭā	ṭ
ظ	ظاء -- ḏā	ḏ
ع	عين -- 'ayn	'
غ	غين -- ghayn	gh
ف	فاء -- fā	f
ق	قاف -- qāf	q
ك	كاف -- kāf	k
ل	لام -- lām	l
م	ميم -- mīm	m
ن	نون -- nūn	n
ه	حاء -- hā	h
و	واو -- wāw	w
ء	همزة -- hamzah	'
ي	ياء -- yā	y

Short Vowels

: Fathah	a
: Kasrah	i
: Dammah	u

Long Vowels

ا	: Shortened Alif	ā
آ	: Maddah Alif	ā
ي	: Maddah Yā	ī
و	: Maddah Wāw	ū

Diphthongs

اي	: Alif and Yā	ay (also ai in some cases)
او-اؤ	: Alif and Wāw	aw (also au in some cases)

Sūrah Muḥammad

Sūrah Muḥammad was revealed in Madīnah It has 38 Verses and 4 Sections.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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

Verses 1 - 3

الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَصَدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَضَلَّ أَعْمَالَهُمْ ﴿١﴾ وَالَّذِينَ
 آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَآمَنُوا بِمَا نُزِّلَ عَلَيْنَا مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ لَا كَفَرَ عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ وَأَصْلَحَ بَالَهُمْ ﴿٢﴾ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ الَّذِينَ
 كَفَرُوا اتَّبَعُوا الْبَاطِلَ وَأَنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّبَعُوا الْحَقَّ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ
 كَذَلِكَ يَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ لِلنَّاسِ أَمْثَالَهُمْ ﴿٣﴾

Those who disbelieved, and prevented (others) from Allah's way, He (Allah) has rendered their deeds vain. [1] And those who believed and did righteous deeds and believed in that which is revealed to Muḥammad-and it is the truth (that has come) from their Lord-, He will write off their evil deeds, and will set aright their state of affairs. [2] That is because the disbelievers have followed falsehood, while the believers have followed the truth (that has come) from their Lord. This is how Allah explains their (respective) situations to the people. [3]

Commentary

Another name of Sūrah Muḥammad is Sūrah Al-Qitāl [Sūrah of war] because this Sūrah lays down the rules of Jihād and Qitāl [i.e. armed struggle in the cause of Allah]. This Sūrah was revealed immediately

after migration to Madīnah. Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه is reported to have said regarding Verse 13 "كَأَيِّنْ مِنْ قَرْيَةٍ" "And how many a city ... have We destroyed!..." that it was revealed in Makkah, because it was revealed at a time when the Holy Prophet ﷺ left Makkah with the intention of migration, and looked at the sacred city of Makkah and the Holy Ka'bah and said: "You are the dearest of all cities to me in the world. Had it not been for Makkans driving me out from this place, I would never have given up this Holy City." According to the technical parlance of the Qur'anic commentators, verses revealed in the course of migration from Makkah to Madīnah are regarded as Makkī. In sum, the Sūrah was revealed immediately after migration to Madīnah, reaching there, ordinances relating to *jihād* and war with infidels were revealed.

In the phrase "صَدُّوا عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ" "prevented (others) from Allah's way" (47:1), "Allah's way" refers to Islam. The phrase "أَضَلَّ أَعْمَالَهُمْ" "He (Allah) has rendered their deeds vain" (47:1) includes actions which are good in themselves, as for instance, helping and assisting the destitute, supporting and protecting the neighbours, generosity, charity and other good deeds. These deeds are, though, good and righteous in themselves, in the Hereafter they will yield benefit only if blessed with faith, because faith is a necessary condition for the credibility of good actions. Thus these righteous deeds will be of no use to the infidels in the Hereafter. The disbelievers take their comfort in this worldly life as a reward of their good deeds. In the Hereafter they will be punished with Hell-fire.

وَأَمَنُوا بِمَا نُزِّلَ عَلَىٰ مُحَمَّدٍ

...and believed in that which is revealed to Muḥammad ...(47:2)

Although the previous sentence has referred to faith and righteous deeds which includes faith in the messengership of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and the revelation that was sent down to him, this sentence specifies explicitly the fact that the actual basis of faith is to embrace all the teachings of the Last Holy Prophet ﷺ.

The word "بال" (*bāl*) in "وَأُضِلَّ بِأَلْسِنَتِهِمْ" "...and will set aright their state of affairs..(47:2)" is sometimes used in the sense of state of affairs and condition, and at other times in the sense of heart. Here it could refer to both the senses. In the first sense, it means that Allah has set all their affairs aright, that is, He has set aright all their matters of this world and

of the Hereafter. In the second sense, it would mean that Allah has improved their hearts. This also has the same implication, that is, corrected all their works, because correction of works is a logical result of improvement of heart, both being necessary to each other.

Verse 4...

فَإِذَا لَقِيتُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَضَرْبَ الرِّقَابِ ۖ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَثْخَتْتُمُوهُمْ فَسُدُّوا
الْوُثَاقَ ۚ فَمَا مَنَّا بَعْدَ وَإِنَّا فِدَاءٌ ۚ حَتَّىٰ تَضَعَ الْحَرْبُ أَوْزَارَهَا ۚ

So, when you encounter those who disbelieve, then (aim at) smiting the necks, until when you have broken their strength thoroughly, then tie fast the bond, (by making them captives). Then choose (to set them free) either (as) a favour, or (after receiving) ransom, until the war throws down its load of arms...

Commentary

This verse lays down two points of law: first, it lays down that when war breaks the might and power of the enemy, and does away with their pomp and glory, they should be arrested rather than being killed. The Muslims are then given two options regarding the prisoners of war - either confer favour on them and release them without ransom or compensation; or release them against payment of ransom. There are several ways in which ransom may be taken, for instance by exchanging Muslim prisoners of war for non-Muslim prisoners of war. It is also possible to set them free after accepting pecuniary ransom. This injunction is apparently in conflict with the rule mentioned in Sūrah Al-Anfāl. The prisoners of the battle of Badr were released against the payment of ransom, but Allah disapproved and expressed His displeasure against those who opined in favour of releasing them on ransom. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ is reported to have said: "A grave punishment of Allah for this action of ours was very close, and if it had been meted out, no one besides 'Umar Ibn Khaṭṭāb and Sa'd Ibn Mu'adh would have been spared, because only these two companions had disagreed with the idea of accepting pecuniary compensation for the release of the Prisoners of War (POW). (For details, see Ma'āriful Qur'ān, vol 4, pp 272-281). In short, the verses of Sūrah Al-Anfāl prohibits release of prisoners against ransom,

consequently their release without ransom would be prohibited all the more.

On the other hand, this verse of Sūrah Muḥammad permits both the alternatives. Therefore, most of the Companions and jurists express the view that this verse of Sūrah Muḥammad has abrogated the verse of Sūrah Al-Anfāl. Tafsīr Mazharī records this to be the opinion of Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Umar, Ḥasan, ‘Atā’ رضی اللہ عنہم اجمعین and majority of the Companions and majority of the jurists. Among the jurists, Thawrī, Shāfi‘ī, Aḥmad and Ishāq also hold this view.

Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās ؓ says that on the occasion of the battle of Badr, the number of Muslims was small. Therefore, releasing the prisoners against ransom or releasing them as a gesture of grace were both prohibited. Finally, when Islam and Muslims went on to achieve total ascendancy, Allah Ta‘ālā abrogated the earlier injunction, and revealed this verse which permits both options. Qāḍī Thanā’ullah cites this in his Tafsīr Mazharī confirming that this is the authentic and preferred view, because the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself acted upon it, and after him the Righteous Caliphs also did the same. Therefore, this verse repeals the verse of Sūrah Al-Anfāl - the reason being that the verse of Sūrah Al-Anfāl was revealed on the occasion of the battle of Badr which took place in the 2nd year of Hijrah. The prisoners that were released by the Holy Prophet ﷺ in the battle of Ḥudaibiyah without ransom in the 6th year of Hijrah was in accordance with this verse of Sūrah Muḥammad.

It is recorded in Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim on the authority of Sayyidnā Anas ؓ that about eighty Makkans climbed down the mount Tan‘īm with the intention of launching a sudden attack on the Messenger of Allah and the Muslim camp. They were all captured, but the Messenger of Allah set them free without any compensation, lest it became the cause of war on that critical occasion. At this, the following verse of Sūrah Al-Faṭḥ [48:24] was revealed:

وَهُوَ الَّذِي كَفَّ أَيْدِيَهُمْ عَنْكُمْ وَارْتَمَتْهُم مِّنْ مَّكَّةَ بَعْدَ أَنْ أَظْفَرْتُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ

"It is He who held their hands back from you, and your hands from them in the valley of Makkah, after giving you victory² over them."

According to one version, a popular view of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah is that setting the prisoners of war free with or without ransom is not lawful. Therefore, the Ḥanafī scholars regard this verse of Sūrah Muḥammad as abrogated by the verse of Sūrah Al-Anfāl. But Tafsīr Maẓharī made it clear that the verse of Sūrah Al-Anfāl was revealed first, and the verse of Sūrah Muḥammad later - thus the later verse repealing the earlier verse. Therefore, the preferred view of Imām A'ẓam - in keeping with the opinion of the great majority of the Companions ﷺ and leading jurists - it is lawful, if it is in the best interest and well-being of the Muslims. From amongst the Ḥanafī scholars, 'Allāmah Ibn Humām shows his inclination towards this view in his Faṭḥ-ul-Qadīr. He writes that according to the version cited in Qudūrī and Hidāyah, Imām Abū Ḥanīfah does not see it permissible to set prisoners of war free against payment of ransom. But according to another version of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, cited in As-Siyar-ul-Kabīr, it is permitted in conformity with the majority view. Among these two versions, the latter is more likely to be his preferred view. Imām Ṭaḥāwī in his Ma'ānī-l-'Athār has also regarded the latter version as that of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah.

In sum, according to the majority of Companions ﷺ and jurists, neither of the verses under discussion is abrogated. The wordings of the verses of Sūrah Al-Anfāl and Sūrah Muḥammad leave us with the impression that none of these two can be called the abrogator or the abrogated. In fact, they are two injunctions for different situations. The leader of the Muslims may adopt either of the options depending on the conditions and needs of the Muslims. Qurṭubī, on the basis of the Holy Prophet's ﷺ practice and that of the Righteous Caliphs ﷺ, has shown that the prisoners of war were sometimes killed, sometimes enslaved, at other times they were set free against ransom, and yet at other times they were released without compensation. Exacting ransom includes exchange of non-Muslim POWs for Muslim POWs or setting non-Muslim POW free against pecuniary compensation. Having cited these cases, he says that verses that have been regarded as abrogator and abrogated are in fact *Muḥkam* or operative and perspicuous. Thus none of them is abrogated, because when the disbelievers are arrested and come into our control, the leader of the Muslims has four options: [1] if he deems appropriate, he may kill them ; [2] if he feels that it is in the best interest of the Muslims,

he may hold them in bondage; [3] if it is appropriate, he may release them in lieu of pecuniary ransom or in exchange of Muslim POWs ; and [4] if it seems proper, they may be released.

"This is the view of the scholars of Madīnah, Imām Shāfi'ī and Abū 'Ubayd. Imām Ṭaḥāwī cites this as the opinion of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah as well, although his generally known view is that which we have already mentioned. [Qurṭubī: V. 16, p. 228; sentence 16].

Four Options Regarding POW

The foregoing discussion makes clear that the leader of the Muslims has four options regarding prisoners of war. There is a consensus of the entire Ummah on the permissibility of killing them and holding them in bondage. Although there is some difference of opinion on the issue of setting them free against ransom or without ransom, majority of the jurists holds the latter options lawful as well.

The Issue of Slavery in Islam

A question arises here regarding prisoners of war. There are some juristic differences whether they could be set free, but there is no difference of opinion with regard to the permissibility of the latter two cases, i.e. killing them or holding them in bondage. Why did the Qur'ān not mention these two cases explicitly? It merely mentions the two cases where it is permissible to release them. Imām Fakhr-ud-dīn Rāzī responds to this in his Tafsīr Kabīr. He says that only those two options have been mentioned here which are not permissible to enslave Arab POW. Killing of the crippled is not lawful either. Besides, the question of killing has been dealt with elaborately earlier. [Tafsīr Kabīr: p. 508; v. 7].

Another point needs consideration: the permissibility of killing and enslaving was a common knowledge; all knew that the two cases are lawful. As opposed to this, the setting free of POW was prohibited on the occasion of the battle of Badr. On the present occasion, however, the intention was to permit them to be released with or without compensation. Here, there was no need to mention cases that were already known to be permissible. Therefore, these verses are silent about them. Thus, it is not correct to conclude from these verses that after their revelation, the permission to kill or enslave them has been abrogated. If the injunction to enslave had been abrogated, its prohibition would have been mentioned

somewhere in the Qur'ān or in a Ḥadīth. If this verse was an indication of its prohibition, then why were POW held in bondage by the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and after him by the Companions ﷺ so ardently dedicated to Qur'ān and Ḥadīth, in a large number of battles after the revelation of the present verses? The narratives of enslaving are recorded in such large numbers in Ḥadīth and history with chains of transmission effectively uninterrupted that denying them would be unreasonable obstinacy.

An objection and its rebuttal

Let us now address the objection that Islam is the great upholder of human rights. Then how is it that it allows the enslaving of human beings?

This objection is a fallacy based on the false analogy drawn between Islamic concept of slavery and its practice in other religions and communities; whereas in Islam after the rights given to the slaves and the social status granted to them, they can hardly be called slaves in the generally accepted sense of the word. They in fact constitute a brotherhood. If the reality and spirit of Islamic concept of slavery is analyzed, we will realize that no better treatment can be meted out to POW than these instances found in Islamic history. A famous orientalist in his book Arab Civilization writes:

"When the word 'slave' is uttered in the presence of a European who is used to reading American writings, he conceives in his mind those helpless people who are shackled with chains, around whose necks are iron collars, who are lashed with whips and driven forth, whose food is barely enough to subsist, and for whom nothing more than dark dungeons are available to live in. I am not concerned here with how far this is true and to what extent atrocities committed by the British in America for the past several years fit the description . . . However, there is absolutely no doubt about the fact that Islam's concept of slavery is completely different from the Christian concept of slavery."

The truth of the matter is that in many instances there is no better solution than enslaving the POW, because if they are not enslaved, then logically there are three ways of sorting out the problem: either kill them, or set them free, or keep them as prisoners permanently. More often than not, all these three possibilities might not be in the best interest of the

Muslim Ummah. Killing them might not be appropriate because the POW might be a talented person and his talent would be wasted and lost. Setting him free might be risking the danger of his going away to Dar-ul-ḥarb and once again conspiring against the Muslims. Now there remains two options only: Either to keep him as a prisoner for good and confine him to some remote and separate island as has been the practice nowadays, or enslave him, make use of his talent and take full care of his human rights. It is obvious to every one which of these options is the best, especially since the Islamic viewpoint regarding slaves has been made plain in a famous Ḥadīth of the Holy Prophet ﷺ as follows:

أخوانكم جعلهم الله تحت إيديكم فمن كان أخوه تحت يديه فليطعمه مما يأكل
وليلبس مما يلبس ولا يكلفه ما يغلبه فان كلفه ما يغلبه فليعنه (بخارى، مسلم،
ابوداود وغيرهم)

"Your slaves are your brothers, and Allah has put them under your control. So whoever has a brother under his command should feed him of what he eats, and dress him of what he wears. Do not overburden them [slaves] to do things beyond their capacity, and if you do so, then help them." [Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dawūd and others]

The social and civil rights that Islam has accorded to the slaves are almost equal to free individuals. Thus, as opposed to other nations, Islam has not only permitted the slaves to marry but also emphasized that the masters should marry off those of their slaves and slavegirls who are righteous [24:32] so much so that he can even marry a free woman. A slave's share from the spoils of war is equal to that of a free *mujāhid*. If he gives refuge to an enemy, it would be respected in the same way as given by a free individual. There are so many injunctions in Qur'ān and Ḥadīth regarding good treatment of slaves that if they are collected together, they can be compiled into a voluminous book. Sayyidnā 'Alī رضي الله عنه says that the last words of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ before his departure from this earthly life were:

الصَّلَاةُ الصَّلَاةُ، اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ فِيمَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ

"Take care of prayer; take care of prayer. Keep your duty to Allah regarding slaves under your command".

Islam organized education and training programme for slaves: its

effect was seen during the reign of ‘Abd-ūl-Mālik Ibn Marwān in almost all the provinces of Islamic State. Some of the best and greatest authorities on education and intellectual development were slaves whose chronicles are narrated in several history books. Furthermore, this nominal slavery was gradually abolished or reduced. There is a huge number of Qur’ānic verses and Holy Prophetic Traditions which set out the virtues and merits of setting the slaves free. There is no act better than emancipation of slaves. In juristic injunctions, pretexts have been looked for to emancipate slaves: expiation for violating fast, for murder, for *zihār*, for violating oaths and vows - in all these cases the first compulsory command is to emancipate a slave. A Ḥadīth tells us that if a person has slapped a slave, its expiation is to set him free. Thus, the Companions used to emancipate slaves in large numbers. The author of al-Najm-ul-Wahhāj gives us the following table of the slaves set free by the Companions:

1. Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah رضى الله عنها	69
2. Sayyidnā ‘Abbās ﷺ	70
3. Sayyidnā Ḥakīm Ibn Ḥizām ﷺ	100
4. Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Umar ﷺ	1000
5. Sayyidnā ‘Uthmān Ghani ﷺ	20
6. Sayyidnā Dhul-Kilā’ Al-Himyari ﷺ	8000 [in a day]
7. Sayyidnā ‘Abdurrahmān Ibn ‘Auf ﷺ	30 000 ¹¹

This table shows that only seven Companions ﷺ set free 39, 259 slaves. Obviously, thousands of other Companions ﷺ must have emancipated countless slaves.

To sum up: anyone who looks impartially at the comprehensive reforms Islam introduced in the system of slavery, he cannot escape the conclusion that drawing analogy between Islamic concept of slavery and its practice among other nations is absolutely false. In fact, permission to enslave POW after these reforms is a great boon to them.

Furthermore, holding POW in bondage is only up to the point of permissibility which means that if an Islamic State deems it appropriate, it may hold them in bondage, but it has not been taken as an obligatory or as a commendable act. As a matter of fact, the collective teachings of

Qur'an and Ḥadīth lead us to believe that emancipating them is more meritorious. Then this permission, too, extends up to the time the Muslims have not entered into a compact with the enemies. If there is an agreement with the enemies which includes a clause to the effect that neither the enemies will enslave Muslim POW nor will the Muslims enslave the enemy POW, the clause will be binding. In our times, many countries have entered into such covenants. If Muslim countries have participated in such covenants, it would not be lawful for them to enslave as long as this agreement stands.

Verses ...4 - 11

ذٰلِكَ ۙ وَلَوْ يَشَاءُ اللّٰهُ لَانتَصَرْتُمْ ۗ وَلٰكِنْ لِّيَبْلُوَ بَعْضَكُمْ بِبَعْضٍ ۙ
 وَالَّذِينَ قَاتَلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللّٰهِ فَلَنْ يُضِلَّ اَعْمَالَهُمْ ﴿٤﴾ سَيَهْدِيهِمْ
 وَيُصْلِحْ بَالَهُمْ ﴿٥﴾ وَيُدْخِلُهُمُ الْجَنَّةَ عَرَفَهَا لَهُمْ ﴿٦﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ
 آمَنُوا اِنْ تَنْصُرُوا اللّٰهَ يَنْصُرْكُمْ وَيُثَبِّتْ اَقْدَامَكُمْ ﴿٧﴾ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
 فَتَعَسَا لَهُمُ الْاَعْمَالُ ۗ وَاضَلَّ اَعْمَالَهُمْ ﴿٨﴾ ذٰلِكَ بِاَنَّهُمْ كَرِهُوا مَا اَنْزَلَ اللّٰهُ
 فَاحْبَطَ اَعْمَالَهُمْ ﴿٩﴾ اَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْاَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ
 عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ۗ دَمَّرَ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِمْ ۗ وَلِلْكَافِرِينَ اَمْثَالُهَا ﴿١٠﴾
 ذٰلِكَ بِاَنَّ اللّٰهَ مَوْلَى الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَاَنَّ الْكٰفِرِينَ لَا مَوْلَى لَهُمْ ﴿١١﴾

That (is the law). And if Allah willed, He would have (Himself) taken vengeance upon them, but (Allah ordered you to fight,) so that He may test some of you through some others. And those who are killed in Allah's way, He will never let their deeds go in vain. [4] (Instead,) He will guide them, and will set aright their state of affairs, [5] and will admit them to the Paradise He has identified for them. [6] O those who believe, if you will help (the religion prescribed by) Allah, He will help you, and will stabilize your footings. [7] As for those who disbelieve, (destined) for them is destruction, and He has rendered their deeds vain. [8] That is because they hate what Allah has sent down; therefore Allah has nullified their deeds. [9] Have they not travelled in the land so that they might

see how was the end of those before them? Allah brought utter destruction on them. And (ready) for (these) disbelievers are the likes thereof. [10] That is because Allah is the supporter of those who believe. As for the disbelievers, there is no supporter for them. [11]

Commentary

Wisdom in the Legality of Jihād

وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَأَنْتَصَرْنَا لَهُمْ (And if Allah willed, He would have [Himself] taken vengeance upon them,...- 47:4) In this verse Allah says that legalizing of armed struggle in His cause against the infidels is a blessing as it replaces celestial punishments. The previous nations were punished with celestial and earthly calamities for their infidelity to Allah, for idolatry and for rebellion against Allah. The Ummah of Muḥammad ﷺ could have suffered the same fate but the Holy Prophet ﷺ is a mercy unto mankind. as a result, the Ummah has been spared destruction by such general calamities. In place of them, *jihād shar'i* has been instituted. This, compared to general calamities, has many facilities and expedience. First of all, in general calamities the entire nation including men, women and children are decimated whereas in the case of Jihād according to the rules of war, women and children are safe and secure. As far as men are concerned, only those of the unbelieving men will have to face the believers who commit aggression and violence against those who protect the religion of Allah. Even among them not all men are killed, because many of them develop the ability to embrace Islamic faith, (or submit themselves as subjects of an Islamic state). Another wisdom in the institution of *Jihād* is that both the sides of war - Muslims and the enemies - are tested: which side is willing to sacrifice his life and wealth at the command of Allah and which side obstinately and stubbornly continues to reject the Truth or, having seen the crystal-clear evidence of Truth and being convinced by the Qur'anic arguments, embraces Islam.

وَالَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَلَنْ يُضِلَّ أَعْمَالَهُمْ (And those who are killed in Allah's way, He will never let their deeds go in vain. - 47:4) At the beginning of the Sūrah it was asserted that those who persist in infidelity and idolatry and obstruct others from practising Islam, Allah rendered all their good deeds void, such as charity, alms, donations, and philanthropic and public welfare activities, because these deeds are not worthy of reward in the Hereafter without faith. Faith is a necessary condition for good works to

be rewarded in the next world. As opposed to the case of the infidels, this verse asserts that those who sacrificed their lives to acquire the glorious privilege of a martyr in the cause of Allah - Allah will never imprint their works with irreverence, profanity or damnation. Even if they did commit sins, their sins will not have a negative impact on their good actions. In fact, often these good deeds of theirs will serve as an expiation for their sins.

سَيَهْدِيهِمْ وَيُصْلِحُ بَالَهُمْ (He will guide them, and will set aright their state of affairs - 47:5). This sentence refers to two of Allah's bounties: First, He will steer them by His guidance; and secondly, He will improve their conditions. The word "state of affairs" includes the conditions of both the worlds - those of this world and those of the Hereafter. Even if a Muslim did not acquire the glorious privilege of a martyr in this world, he too will receive the reward of a martyr; and in the Hereafter he will be spared the torment of the grave and the anxiety of resurrection. If he violated the rights of some human beings, Allah will take upon Himself the responsibility of vindicating him and clearing him of all blame. Steering them by His guidance through the Holy Prophet ﷺ means causing them to reach their desired destination which is the Paradise. The Qur'ān says that the inmates of Paradise, having entered the gardens of Paradise, will show their gratitude to Allah by saying:

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي هَدَانَا لِهَذَا

"All praise to Allah who has led us unto this. [7:43].

وَيُدْخِلُهُمُ الْجَنَّةَ عَرَفَهَا لَهُمْ (and will admit them to the Paradise He has identified for them. - 47:6). This is the third bounty of Allah. He will not only admit them into Paradise but will identify for them the gardens of bliss and will make them familiar with such bounties as houris and mansions in a way that it would seem to them that they have been living there since eternity. If such an acquaintance was not made, Paradise would have seemed a strange world. It would have taken them time to find their abode, to accustom themselves with the new environment, and they would not overcome the sense of unfamiliarity for a period of time.

Abū Hurayrah رضي الله عنه reports that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "By Him who sent me with the religion of Truth! As you are closely familiar with your wives and homes in this world, so you will know your abode

and your wives of Paradise - rather even better. Some reports of Ḥadīth tell us that an angel will be appointed for every single inmate of Paradise who will introduce them to their abode and wives in Paradise. Allah knows best.

وَلِلْكَافِرِينَ أَمَثَالَهَا (And [ready] for [these] disbelievers are the likes thereof. - 47:10). Grammatically, the article "*alif lām*" in *al-kafirīna*" in this context is used to indicate some specific disbelievers, and refers to the infidels of Makkah. The purpose of this sentence is to warn them: as the previous generations were punished for their iniquity, so will you meet similar fate for your iniquitous behavior. Do not be unconcerned!

وَأَنَّ الْكَافِرِينَ لَا مَوْلَى لَهُمْ (As for the disbelievers, there is no supporter for them. - 47:11). The word مولى "*mawlā*" is used in several different senses. One of its meanings is "protector" or "supporter". This is the sense in which it is used here. Another sense of the word is "owner/master". In Qur'an [10:30] we come across: رُدُّوْا اِلَى اللّٰهِ مَوْلٰهُمُ الْحَقَّ "They will be returned to Allah, their Master, the Truth" (10:30). In this phrase, Allah is called the "*mawlā*" of the infidels, that is, their Master / Owner because the mastership / ownership of Allah extends over all - the believers as well as the non-believers; without any exclusion.

Verses 12 - 15

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُدْخِلُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ
تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يَتَمَتَّعُونَ وَيَأْكُلُونَ كَمَا تَأْكُلُ الْأَنْعَامُ
وَالنَّارُ مَثْوًى لَهُمْ ﴿١٢﴾ وَكَأَيِّنْ مِنْ قَرْيَةٍ هِيَ أَشَدُّ قُوَّةً مِنْ قَرْيَتِكَ
الَّتِي أَخْرَجْتِكَ ۖ أَهْلَكْنَاهُمْ فَلَا نَاصِرَ لَهُمْ ﴿١٣﴾ أَفَمَنْ كَانَ عَلَىٰ بَيْنَةٍ
مِّن رَّبِّهِ كَمَنْ زَيْنَ لَهُ سُوءَ عَمَلِهِ وَاتَّبَعُوا أَهْوَاءَهُمْ ﴿١٤﴾ مَثَلُ الْجَنَّةِ
الَّتِي وُعِدَ الْمُتَّقُونَ ۖ فِيهَا أَنْهَارٌ مِّن مَّاءٍ غَيْرِ آسِنٍ ۖ وَأَنْهَارٌ مِّن لَّبَنٍ لَّمْ
يَتَغَيَّرْ طَعْمُهُ ۖ وَأَنْهَارٌ مِّنْ خَمْرٍ لَّذَّةٍ لِلشَّرَّابِينَ ۖ وَأَنْهَارٌ مِّنْ عَسَلٍ مُّصَفًّى
ۖ وَلَهُمْ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ ۖ كَمَنْ هُوَ خَالِدٌ فِي

النَّارِ وَسُقُوا مَاءً حَمِيمًا فَقَطَّعَ أَمْعَاءَهُمْ ﴿١٥﴾

Surely, Allah will admit those who believe and do good deeds to the gardens beneath which rivers flow. And those who disbelieve enjoy (the worldly life), and eat as cattle eat, and the Fire is the final abode for them. [12] And how many a town, stronger in might than your town that has expelled you, have We destroyed! Then, there was none to help them. [13] Then, can one who holds on to a clear proof from his Lord be like those for whom their evil deeds are beautified, and who followed their desires? [14] (Here is) a description of the Paradise that is promised for the God-fearing! In it there are rivers of water, never spoiling, and rivers of milk the taste of which would not go bad, and rivers of wine, delicious to the drinkers, and rivers of honey, fully purified. And for them there are all sorts of fruits, and forgiveness from their Lord. Are they like those who will live in Fire forever, and will be given boiling water to drink, and it will tear their bowels into pieces. [15]

Commentary

Essential Characteristics of Paradise

Verse sixteen mentions four kinds of favours and blessings in the next world, that is, rivers of pure water, rivers of milk of which the taste does not change, rivers of wine which gives delight and rivers of purified honey which will be given to the righteous in plenty.

Worldly waters become polluted by getting mixed with earth, vegetation and other adulterating substances which make them stink. But in Paradise, there will be rivers having un-pollutable water. The river of pure, clean water that will not go bad in taste, smell or colour, (and will flow uninterruptedly without layers of dregs, scum or any other unpleasant- looking substances).

Milk, in this world, is secreted by the mammary glands of female mammals, such as the cow's udders or the breasts of the human female, and soon it starts to deteriorate. In Paradise it will flow in rivers and the Heavenly milk will never be spoilt. Its taste will be eternally delicious, relishing and delightful.

Worldly wine has a foul smell and a bitter taste, (though the ones

addict to it do not feel its bitterness, being accustomed to it). But the Heavenly wine will give endless delight to the drinker. In Sūrah As-Ṣaffāt [37:47] the Qurʾān describes the Heavenly wine as لَا فِيهَا غَوْلٌ وَلَا هُمْ عَنْهَا يُنْزَفُونَ : "which has no headache in it, nor from it will they be intoxicated."

Honey, in this world, is the secretion derived principally from the nectaries of flowers, from which it is extracted by bees in the form of nectar and deposited in their honey-sacs, where it undergoes a certain change prior to storage in the cells of the comb. When it is ripe, that is, it has become sufficiently thick by evaporation, it may now be extracted or thrown from the honey-comb by centrifugal force or by gravity. When it is so extracted, it needs to be clarified of the accompanying particles of wax, scum and other unwanted substances. However, the honey in Paradise will be pure and clean and will be available amply, as rivers of honey will flow uninterruptedly without layers of dregs, scum or any other unpleasant-looking substances.

All four kinds of rivers - of water, milk, wine and honey - are used in their primary senses. There is no need to apply them unnecessarily in their figurative sense. However, it is obvious that the bounties of Paradise cannot be compared to things of this world. The taste and quality of the bounties of Paradise will be unique and can only be experienced in the gardens of Paradise.

Verses 16 - 18

وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَسْتَمِعُ إِلَيْكَ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا خَرَجُوا مِنْ عِنْدِكَ قَالُوا لِلَّذِينَ
 أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ مَاذَا قَالَ آنِفًا ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ طَبَعَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ
 وَاتَّبَعُوا أَهْوَاءَهُمْ ﴿١٦﴾ وَالَّذِينَ اهْتَدَوْا زَادَهُمْ هُدًىٰ وَآتَاهُمْ تَقْوَاهُمْ
 ﴿١٧﴾ فَهَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا السَّاعَةَ أَنْ تَأْتِيَهُمْ بَغْتَةً ۖ فَقَدْ جَاءَ أَشْرَاطُهَا
 فَأَنَّىٰ لَهُمْ إِذَا جَاءَهُمْ ذِكْرُهُمْ ﴿١٨﴾

And among them there are ones who (pretend to) give ear to you, until when they go out from your presence, they say to those who have been given knowledge, "What

did he say just now?" Those are the ones on whose hearts Allah has put a seal, and they have followed their desires. [16] As for those who have adopted right path, Allah improves them in guidance, and gives them their piety. [17] They are waiting for nothing but the Hour that it should come upon them suddenly. So, its signs have already come. Then, once it will come upon them, how would they have an opportunity to accept the advice (already) given to them? [18]

Commentary

The lexical item اشراط "ashrāt" occurring in this passage means "signs". The portents of the last Hour starts with the very advent of Khatam-un-Nabiyyīn [the Last of the Holy Prophets] as the end of the Holy Prophethood is the sign of the approach of the last Hour. The miracle of the splitting of the moon by the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been described thus in the Holy Qur'ān [54:1]: اقترَبَتِ السَّاعَةُ "The hour has drawn near and the moon has split." - indicating that this miracle is also one of the signs of the last Hour. These are initial portents of the Hour which appeared at the time of the revelation of the Qur'ān. Besides, there are many other portents that have been predicted in authentic Aḥādīth, one of which is reported by Anas ؓ in which he says that I have heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say: "Among the signs of the last hour is the removal of knowledge, abundance of ignorance, the prevalence of fornication, the prevalence of wine-drinking, the small number of men and the large number of women so that fifty women will have one man to look after them". (Bukhari and Muslim) A version has "knowledge will dwindle and ignorance will be widespread."

Abū Hurayrah ؓ reports Allah's Messenger ﷺ as saying: "When the spoils of war are taken as personal wealth, property given in trust is treated as spoil, *zakāh* is treated as a fine, learning is acquired for other than religious purpose, a man obeys his wife and is undutiful towards his mother, brings his friend near and drives his father far off, voices are raised in the mosques, the most wicked member of a tribe becomes its ruler, the most worthless member of a people becomes its leader, a man is honored through fear of the evil he may do, singing-girls and stringed-instruments make their appearance, wines are drunk, and the last members of this community curse the earlier ones, look at that time for a violent wind, an earthquake, being swallowed up by the earth,

metamorphosis, pelting rain, and signs following one another like bits of a necklace falling one after the other when its string is cut. (Tirmidhi)

Verse 19

فَاعْلَمْ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لِذَنْبِكَ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ
وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مُتَقَلَّبَكُمْ وَمَثْوَاكُمْ ﴿١٩﴾

So, know for sure that there is no god but Allah, and seek forgiveness for your fault, and for (the faults of) the believing men and believing women. And Allah knows your moving from place to place and your permanent abode. [19]

Commentary

In this verse the address is to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and he is, through an imperative verb, commanded to know that there is no object of worship besides Allah. It is quite obvious that every Muslim has the knowledge of this - let alone the leader of the Holy Prophets ﷺ who should have its knowledge more profoundly. Then why is he enjoined to acquire this knowledge? There can be two responses to this question: it can either mean that the Holy Prophet ﷺ is enjoined to be steadfast in his worship of Allah or it could mean that he must fulfill the demands of his knowledge. Qurtubī cites the incident of Sufyān Ibn ‘Uyaynah رحمه الله تعالى who was asked about the significance of knowledge, he replied: Did you not read verse 19 of Sūrah Muḥammad: "فَاعْلَمْ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لِذَنْبِكَ" So, know for sure (O Holy Prophet ﷺ) that there is no god but Allah, and seek forgiveness for your fault. It is required in this verse that knowledge should be acquired before action. Similarly, on other occasions in the Qur’ān, first it is enjoined to acquire knowledge and then to fulfil its corresponding demands. For example, in [57:20] the Holy Qur’ān has said, "إِغْلُظُوا إِنَّمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا لَعِبٌ وَلَهْوٌ" "Know that the present life is but a sport and a diversion ..." Then it was said, "سَابِقُوا إِلَى مَغْفِرَةٍ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ" "Race to forgiveness from your Lord (57:21)". In Sūrah Anfāl, (verse) the Qur’ān says: "وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَأَوْلَادُكُمْ فِتْنَةٌ

"Know that your wealth and children are a trial..." The demand of this knowledge is mentioned in Sūrah At-Taghābun (Verse 14): "فَاخْذُوا وَهُمْ" "...so be fearful of Him.". Thus on these occasions first the knowledge of

different things are imparted, and then it is enjoined to fulfil the demands of that knowledge.

In this context, although the Holy Prophet ﷺ had prior knowledge of the Oneness of Allah, the injunction here is for the Holy Prophet ﷺ to fulfil the demand of this fundamental knowledge, that is, "وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ لِدُنُوبِكَ" and ask forgiveness for your faults (47:19)". The Holy Prophet ﷺ is infallible and immune from sin, and therefore the possibility that he would commit sins is unthinkable. Despite this, the possibility of Allah's Holy Prophets ﷺ committing misjudgment in *Ijtihād* cannot be ruled out. But, according to the sacred law, such mistakes are not regarded as sins. In fact, they are rewarded, though the prophets عليهم السلام are told about the correct position, and keeping in view the high status of the prophets, such mistakes too are sometimes referred to as "*dhanb*" (fault or sin), as for instance in Sūrah 'Abasa [80] the Holy Prophets] was criticized for his misjudgment. The details will be set out when discussing that Sūrah. The error of judgement referred to in that Sūrah was not really a sin. In fact, a reward was promised to him for that, but because it was not in conformity with his high status, Allah Ta'ālā expressed His dislike. This type of "*dhanb*" (fault) is referred to in the current verse.

Note

Sayyidnā Abū Bakr Ṣiddīq ؓ reports that Allah's Messenger ﷺ said: Recite *لا اله الا الله* *lā-ilāha-illallāh* and *استغفار* *istighfār* frequently because Iblīs (Satan) says, 'I got people involved in sins and destroyed them, but they destroyed me by reciting *illallāh*, so I got them involved in false and baseless thoughts and notions which they pursue as true, authentic and righteous, (for instance, the common religious innovations (*bid'āt*), because they treat them as righteous,) hence, they do not feel any need to repent for their practice of innovations.

مُتَقَلِّبِكُمْ, last line (your moving from place to place and your permanent abode.) The word *مُتَقَلِّبٌ* *mutaqallab* lexically means "turning around or turning over". The word *mathwā* means "permanent resting place". It is open to several interpretations. As a result, the commentators have assigned different meanings to the phrase. As a matter of fact, all the meanings attached to the phrase are correct, sound, authentic and true, because human beings are confronted by two types of conditions: in

the one case their involvement in something is temporary, and in the other case it is permanent. Likewise, in some places man's stay is temporary and in other places it is permanent. In the concluding phrase of the current verse, the word مُتَقَلَّبٌ *mutaqallab* has been used to describe "temporary" and مَثْوًى *mathwā* is used to describe "permanent". Thus this verse signifies that Allah is fully aware of all conditions of human beings.

Verses 20 - 31

وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَتْ سُورَةٌ ۚ فَإِذَا أُنزِلَتْ سُورَةٌ مُّحْكَمَةٌ
 وَذُكِرَ فِيهَا الْقِتَالُ لَا رَأَيْتَ الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَيْكَ
 نَظَرَ الْمَغْشَىٰ عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الْمَوْتِ ۗ فَأُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ ﴿٢٠﴾ طَاعَةٌ وَقَوْلٌ
 مَّعْرُوفٌ ۚ فَإِذَا عَزَمَ الْأَمْرُ فَلَوْ صَدَقُوا اللَّهَ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ ﴿٢١﴾
 فَهَلْ عَسَيْتُمْ إِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ أَنْ تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَتَقَطَّعُوا أَرْحَامَكُمْ
 ﴿٢٢﴾ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ فَأَصَمَّهُمْ وَأَعَمَّىٰ أَبْصَارَهُمْ ﴿٢٣﴾
 أَفَلَا يَتَذَكَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ أَمْ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبٍ أَقْفَالُهَا ﴿٢٤﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ارْتَدُّوا
 عَلَىٰ أَدْبَارِهِمْ مِن بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الْهُدَىٰ ۗ الشَّيْطَانُ سَوَّلَ لَهُمْ ۗ
 وَأَمَلَىٰ لَهُمْ ﴿٢٥﴾ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا لِلَّذِينَ كَرِهُوا مَا نَزَّلَ اللَّهُ
 سَنُطِيعُكُمْ فِي بَعْضِ الْأَمْرِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ إِسْرَارَهُمْ ﴿٢٦﴾ فَكَيْفَ إِذَا
 تَوَفَّتْهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ يَضْرِبُونَ وُجُوهَهُمْ وَأَدْبَارَهُمْ ﴿٢٧﴾ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ
 اتَّبَعُوا مَا أَسْخَطَ اللَّهَ وَكَرِهُوا رِضْوَانَهُ فَاحْبَطَ أَعْمَالَهُمْ ﴿٢٨﴾ أَمْ
 حَسِبَ الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ أَنْ لَنْ يُخْرِجَ اللَّهُ أَضْغَانَهُمْ ﴿٢٩﴾
 وَلَوْ نَشَاءُ لَأَرَيْنَاكُمْ فَلَعَرَفْتَهُمْ بِسِيمَاهُمْ ۗ وَلَتَعْرِفَنَّهُمْ فِي لَحْنِ
 الْقَوْلِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ أَعْمَالَكُمْ ﴿٣٠﴾ وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ حَتَّىٰ نَعْلَمَ
 الْمُجَاهِدِينَ مِنكُمْ وَالصَّابِرِينَ ۗ وَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ خَبَارَكُمْ ﴿٣١﴾

And the believers say, "Why has a (new) *sūrah* not been revealed?" Then, once an operative *sūrah* is sent down, and fighting (in Allah's way) is mentioned in it, you notice those who have disease in their hearts, looking to you like one who is faint because of death. So, destruction is very close to them. [20] The (reality of their) obedience and (truthfulness of their) speech is fully known (as being mere deception). So, had they been truthful to Allah, once the matter had become serious, it would have been much better for them. [21] So, (O hypocrites,) do you not apprehend that, in case you turn away (from Jihād), you will spread disorder in the land, and will sever your ties of kinship? Those are the ones whom Allah has cursed; so He has made them deaf, and made their eyes blind. [23] Then, do they not give serious thought to the Qur'ān, or do they have locks on their hearts? [24] Surely those who turn back after the guidance has appeared to them clearly, it is Satan who has tempted them and involved them in far-fetched fancies. [25] That is because they say to those who hate that which Allah has revealed, "We will obey you in some respects." And Allah knows their secret talk. [26] So, how (will it be) when the angels will exact their souls, smiting their faces and their backs. [27] That is because they followed that which has angered Allah, and they disliked His pleasure; therefore He has nullified their deeds. [28] Do those having disease in their hearts rather think that Allah will never expose their grudges (against Islam)? [29] And if We will, We would show them to you, so as you would definitely recognize them by their features. And (still) you will recognize them by the tone of (their) speech. And Allah knows (all) your deeds. [30] And We will certainly test you until We know those of you who carry out Jihād (struggle in Allah's way) and observe patience, and until We check the reports about you. [31]

Commentary

سُورَةٌ مُّحْكَمَةٌ (an operative *sūrah*): The word مُّحْكَمَةٌ *muḥkamah* lexically means "firm". In this lexical sense, every *sūrah* is *muḥkam*, but here it is used in its technical sense. In the technical parlance of the sacred law, the term *muḥkam* is used as an antonym of *mansūkh*, ("abrogated"). Here the word *Sūrah* has been qualified by the adjective *muḥkamah* so that the eagerness of the believers for a new *Sūrah* is understandable only when it embodies an operative divine commandment that is not abrogated.

Qatādah رضي الله عنه says that all Sūrahs which contain the injunctions of *Jihād* and *Qitāl* are operative and not abrogated. As the main objective of this Sūrah is to enjoin fighting and to persuade people to carry out the injunction, the adjectival phrase is: Sūrah *muḥkamah* - indicating the injunction of *Jihād*. (Qurtubi)

أَوْلَىٰ لَهُمْ (So, destruction is very close to them - 47:20] The Arabic word used in the text, according to Asma'ī, means that the causes of destruction have approached or drawn near to them (Qurtubi).

فَهَلْ عَسَيْتُمْ إِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ أَنْ تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَتَقَطَّعُوا أَرْحَامَكُمْ (So, [O hypocrites,] do you not apprehend that, in case you turn away (from *Jihād*), you will spread disorder in the land, and will sever your ties of kinship? - 47:22). The word تَوَلَّى *tawalla'* used in the text lexically has two senses: it could mean *I'rād*, that is, "turning away" and it could also mean to be placed in authority over the people. Some of the commentators of the Qur'ān assigned the first meaning to this word in the context of this verse, and Abū Ḥayyān in his *Al-Baḥr-ul-Muḥīṭ* prefers this interpretation, (and the translation given above is based on it.) From this point of view the meaning of the verse would be: If you turned away from *Jihād* [struggling in the cause of Allah] and other injunctions of *Sharī'ah*, you would return to the ancient system of ignorance which Islam has abolished. In the Pre-Islamic Days, according to the practices of *jāhiliyyah*, for centuries they caused corruption and severed ties of kinship. For example, they practiced injustice; they cut each other's throat; one tribe attacked another tribe; they committed carnage and massacre; and they buried alive their daughters with their own hands. Islam abolished and wiped out all these and other heinous practices of the Days of Ignorance. In order to wipe out these heinous crimes of those days, Islam enjoined *Jihād* which apparently seems to be bloodshed, but in reality it is analogous to amputation of the diseased limb of a body, so that the rest of the body may remain healthy. *Jihād* establishes justice and equity and maintains ties of kinship and relationship.

Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī, Qurtubī and others take the second meaning of the word *tawallī* in this context, that is, to be placed in authority over people. From this point of view, the meaning of the verse would be: if your ambitions of being placed in authority over people and the affairs of the world are entrusted to you whilst you are morally unhealthy, you would

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cause corruption in the land and cut off ties of kinship and relationship.

Strict Maintenance of Kinship Ties

The word *أَرْحَام* 'arḥām' is the plural of *رَحِم* 'raḥīm' (womb). This is a receptacle or repository in the mother where the young humans are conceived, held, protected and developed before birth. Because that is the source of all relationships and kinship, it is idiomatically used in the sense of human relationship and kinship. Tafsīr Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī, on this occasion, has explained in detail the relations covered by the term *dhawil arḥām* or *arḥām*. Islam has laid great stress on fulfilling the rights of relationship. Bukhārī records a Ḥadīth on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه and two other Companions to the effect that whoever maintains good relations with the kith and kin Allah will keep good relations with him, but whoever severs his bonds of kinship, Allah too will sever His relations with him. This Ḥadīth indicates how important it is to treat relatives kindly in terms of words, deeds and wealth. In the same Ḥadīth, Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه refers to the verse under discussion [47:22] and says "Read it if you wish to". In another Tradition, the Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said that there is a sin for which one will be punished, not only in the Hereafter, but also in this world, that is, ... breaking kinship bonds. In Thawbān رضي الله عنه Ḥadīth, the Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said: "Whoever wishes to have his life prolonged and his sustenance blessed should treat his relatives kindly." We come across the following Ḥadīth in Bukhārī:

ليس الواصل بالمكافى ولكن الواصل الذى اذا قطعت رحمه وصلها

"The person who perfectly maintains the ties of kinship is not the one who does it because he gets recompensed by his relatives for being kind and good to them, but the one who truly maintains the bonds of kinship is he who treats his kinsmen fairly, even though others have severed the ties of kinship with him." (Ibn Kathīr)

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ (Those are the ones whom Allah has cursed - 47:23) In other words, people who cause corruption in the land and break bonds of kinship have been cursed by Allah, that is, Allah has driven them away from His mercy. On the basis of this verse, Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنه regarded the sale of *ummul-walad* unlawful. *Ummul-walad* is a term used in Islamic law for a female slave who has borne a child to her master, and

who is consequently free at his death. Thus the sale of the mother would result in separating the child from the mother, and this would lead to severing kinship tie between mother and child which necessitates the curse of Allah. Therefore, the sale of *ummul-walad* was declared unlawful²³.

Law Relating to Cursing a Particular Person: The Issue of Cursing Yazīd

When ‘Abdullāh asked his father Imām Aḥmad about the permissibility of cursing Yazīd, the Imām replied: "Why should we not curse a person whom Allah has cursed in the Qur’ān?" ‘Abdullāh said that he read the Qur’ān in its entirety but he did not find Yazīd is cursed anywhere. The father recited the present verse and said, 'Who could be worse than Yazīd in breaking up relationships? He did not even care for the Holy Prophet's ﷺ relations.' However, majority of the Ummah hold the view that it is not permissible to curse any particular person unless we know for sure that he died in the state of disbelief. We can nevertheless use cursing phrase with general characteristics, such as curse of Allah be upon the liars, curse of Allah be upon the mischief-makers, and curse of Allah be upon the breaker of kinship]. Rūḥ-ul-Ma‘ānī on this occasion has discussed this issue elaborately.

أَمْ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبٍ أَقْفَالُهَا (or do they have locks on their hearts? - 47:24) The meaning of this phrase is synonymous with similar phrases in other verses of the Qur’ān where words like *khatm* or *ṭab'* "[Allah] has set a seal [on their hearts] have been used to describe how the disbelievers refuse to employ their hearts for the comprehension of truth, as a natural consequence their capacities to distinguish right from wrong have become atrophied. Carelessly, committing sins all the time is the main cause of this. Allah forbid!

الشَّيْطَانُ سَوَّلَ لَهُمْ ط وَأَمَلَىٰ لَهُمْ (it is Satan who has tempted them and involved them in far-fetched fancies. - 47:25). In this sentence, two acts have been ascribed to the devil: - *taswīl* [meaning the act of decking out evil works fair to some people, and *imlā'* meaning the act of giving respite. First, he made their evil works look good and beautiful to them, and then prolonged their false hopes which will never be fulfilled.

أَمْ حَسِبَ الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ أَنْ لَنْ يُخْرِجَ اللَّهُ أَضْغَانَهُمْ (Do those having disease in

their hearts rather think that Allah will never expose their grudges [against Islam]? - 47:29)" The word *adghān* is the plural of *dighn* which means secret enmity, rancour, malice or spite. This verse was revealed in connection with hypocrites to expose their bitter hatred and rancour against Islam which they were hiding in their hearts. Outwardly, they expressed their love for the Holy Prophet ﷺ and inwardly they harbored violent hatred and enmity for him. They knew that Allah is the knower of the unseen, yet they were not concerned that He would expose their inner secret and covert enmity to the people. Ibn Kathīr says in Sūrah Barā'ah that Allah has described their works, actions and activities which expose their hypocrisy and they would be identified as hypocrites. Therefore, another name of that Sūrah is *fāḍiḥah* meaning exposing to shame or disgrace, because specific qualities of the hypocrites are set out in it.

وَلَوْ نَشَاءُ لَأَرَيْنَهُمْ فَلَعَرَفْتَهُمْ بِسِيمَتِهِمْ (And if We will, We would show them to you, so as you would definitely recognize them by their features - 47:30). In other words, if Allah wishes, He could pinpoint and define precisely who the hypocrites are and describe their features so that the Holy Prophet ﷺ could identify each hypocrite personally. Grammatically, the Qur'ān has introduced this clause by the hypothetical particle *lau* "if". Thus introduced, the sentence implies that what is supposed either does not occur or is not likely to take place. From this point of view, the clause implies that if Allah had willed, He would have pinpointed every hypocrite to you personally, but His wisdom and clemency did not wish to expose them to shame and disgrace in this way, and thus maintain the principle that all worldly matters be decided by their outer appearance, and the inner conditions and matters of the heart be left to the All-Knowing Allah. However, Allah has given to the Holy Prophet ﷺ the insight, so that he is able to perceive into the inner nature and real character of the hypocrites by the style of their speech. This is the meaning of *وَلَعَرَفْتَهُمْ فِي لَحْنِ الْقَوْلِ* "... And (still) you will recognize them by the tone of (their) speech. - 47:30]...". (Ibn Kathir)

Sayyidnā 'Uthmān Ibn 'Affān ؓ says that anyone who conceals a secret in his heart, Allah displays it on his face, and brings it out by the slip of his tongue. In other words, in the course of conversation, some such words slip out which express their inner secrets. Likewise there is a Ḥadīth which reports that any person harboring a secret thought in his

heart, Allah puts a cover on it; if it is good, it becomes manifest, and if it is evil, that too becomes manifest. Some narrations of *aḥādīth* have described that the Holy Prophet ﷺ was imparted the knowledge of a group of the hypocrites by name. For example, it is recorded in Musnad of Imām Aḥmad on the authority of ‘Uqbah Ibn ‘Amr ؓ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ in one of his sermons called out the names of particular hypocrites and asked them to leave the congregation. Thirty-six names were counted altogether. (Ibn Kathir)

حَتَّى نَعْلَمَ الْمُجْهِدِينَ مِنْكُمْ (...until We know those of you who carry out Jihād,... - 47:31) Allah's knowledge of every person's works and deeds is all-encompassing and eternal. It may be noted here that knowledge is of two kinds: [i] a *priori* knowledge or fore-knowledge, knowledge about a thing before its occurrence; and [ii] a *posteriori* knowledge or -in Mariam knowledge, knowledge about a thing after it has actually happened. Here knowledge refers to the second category. Allah's knowledge of things is since eternity. In this context, the knowledge about things is a *posteriori*, after the occurrence of the events in the external world. (Ibn Kathir) (The purport of this part of the verse is that Allah has enjoined fighting on the believers so that sincere believers may become distinguished from the hypocrites who shrink in horror at the very thought of fighting). Allah knows best.

Verses 32 - 38

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَصَدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَشَاقُّوا الرَّسُولَ مِنْ بَعْدِ
 مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الْهُدَىٰ لَنْ يَضُرُّوا اللَّهَ شَيْئًا وَسَيُحِطُّ أَعْمَالَهُمْ
 ﴿٣٢﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَاطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَلَا تُبْطِلُوا
 أَعْمَالَكُمْ ﴿٣٣﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَصَدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ مَاتُوا
 وَهُمْ كُفَّارٌ فَلَنْ يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ ﴿٣٤﴾ فَلَا تَهِنُوا وَتَدْعُوا إِلَى السَّلْمِ ۗ
 وَأَنْتُمْ الْأَعْلَوْنَ وَاللَّهُ مَعَكُمْ وَلَنْ يَتْرُكَكُمْ أَعْمَالَكُمْ ﴿٣٥﴾ إِنَّمَا
 الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا لَعِبٌّ وَلَهُوَ ۗ وَإِنْ تَوَمَّنُوا وَتَتَّقُوا يُؤْتِكُمْ أَجُورَكُمْ وَلَا
 يَسْئَلْكُمْ أَمْوَالَكُمْ ﴿٣٦﴾ إِنْ يَسْئَلْكُمْوهَا فَيُحْفِكُمْ تَبْخَلُوا وَيُخْرِجْ

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أَضْغَانِكُمْ ﴿٣٧﴾ هَآأَنْتُمْ هَؤُلَاءِ تُدْعُونَ لِتُنْفِقُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ؕ
 فَمِنْكُمْ مَنْ يَبْخُلُ ؕ وَمَنْ يَبْخُلْ فَإِنَّمَا يَبْخُلُ عَن نَّفْسِهِ ؕ وَاللَّهُ
 الْغَنِيُّ وَأَنْتُمُ الْفُقَرَاءُ ؕ وَإِن تَوَلَّوْا يَسْتَبْدِلْ قَوْمًا غَيْرَكُمْ لَئِنَّم لَا
 يَكُونُوا أَمْثَالِكُمْ ﴿٣٨﴾

Those who disbelieve and prevent (others) from Allah's way, and oppose the Messenger, after the Guidance has appeared to them clearly, shall never bring harm to Allah in the least, and He will render their deeds vain. [32] O those who believe, obey Allah and obey the Messenger, and do not nullify your deeds. [33] Those who disbelieve and prevent (others) from Allah's way, then die as unbelievers, Allah will never forgive them. [34] So, do not lose heart, and do not appeal for peace; you will be the uppermost, and Allah is with you; and He will never deprive you of your deeds. [35] The worldly life is but play and pastime. And if you believe and be God-fearing, He will give you your rewards, and will not ask you your riches. [36] If He were to ask you of it, and were to press you, you would show miserliness, and He would expose your grudges. [37] Yes, you are such that you are called upon to spend in Allah's way, but some of you withhold in miserliness_ and he who withholds in miserliness withholds against himself_ and Allah is the Need-Free, and you are the needy. And if you turn away, He will replace you by some other people, then they will not be like you. [38]

Commentary

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَصَدُّوا عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ (Those who disbelieve and prevent (others) from Allah's way ... - 47:32) This verse also refers to the hypocrites, and the Jewish tribes of Banū Quraizah and Banū Naḍīr. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه says that this verse refers to those hypocrites who, on the occasion of the battle of Badr, joined forces with the infidels of Quraysh and helped them in such a way that twelve men of the two tribes took upon themselves the responsibility of feeding the entire army. Each one of the twelve men took turns to organize meal for the enemy camp on different days.

وَسَيُحِطُّ أَعْمَالَهُمْ (...and He will render their deeds vain - 47:32)

Ḥabt-ul-a'māl (rendering deeds vain) could have one of the two meanings: [i] their efforts to undermine Islam would be unsuccessful and fail as explained in the foregoing commentary of this verse; and [ii] on account of their disbelief and hypocrisy, their good deeds - such as charity, free will offerings, philanthropic activities and so on - will all be rendered void and will not be acceptable.

لَا تُبْطِلُوا أَعْمَالَكُمْ (... and do not nullify your deeds... - 47:33) Here the Qur'an has employed the phrase *ibtāl-ul-a'māl* instead of *ḥabt-ul-a'māl* because the scope of the former phrase is much wider than the latter phrase, because *ibtāl-ul-a'māl* may be interpreted in two ways: In the one case it takes place on account of disbelief which was described in the foregoing verse by the phrase *ḥabt-ul-a'māl* because no action of a die-hard infidel is ever acceptable on account of disbelief. If anyone embraced Islam and later abandoned it, all his good actions performed during the days of Islam will be rendered vain albeit good works of the days of Islam are acceptable. The good works, in this case, will be made vain because of the subsequent disbelief and apostasy.

The other case of *ibtāl-ul-a'māl* is that the acceptability of some righteous deeds is sometimes conditional upon other righteous acts. If the condition is not fulfilled, the righteous deeds will be rendered fruitless. For example, for every righteous action to be acceptable, the necessary condition is that it must be performed exclusively and sincerely for Allah. It must not be performed to make an ostentatious display to people. Let us take a few examples of this rule from the Qur'an: In [98:5] we read:

وَمَا أُمِرُوا إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ

"They were commanded only to worship Allah, making their submission sincere for Him, (98:5)".

On another occasion in the Qur'an [39:3] we read:

الْإِلَهَ الدِّينِ الْخَالِصُ

"Unquestionably, for Allah is the pure religion" [39:3].

This goes to show that all good works - to be acceptable - must be done with the sincerity of heart and honesty of purpose. Otherwise they will be rendered void by Allah. On a third occasion in the Qur'an [2:264] we read: لَا تُبْطِلُوا صَدَقَاتِكُمْ بِالْمَنِّ وَالْأَذَى "O those who believe, do not nullify your charities

by boasting about favour, and teasing (2:264)". This shows that giving charity to a needy person and then following it up by demands of gratitude or insulting words or hurting him in some other way will only nullify his charitable act. This probably could be the meaning of what Ḥasan Baṣrī has said when interpreting this verse: "Do not render vain your own good works by means of sins." Although the apparent sense of this statement is that if one commits a sin, all his good deeds are nullified, yet this being against the well-established position, its real purpose cannot be other than it refers only to those sins that are relevant to a particular virtuous act and which nullify that particular act only. It is similar to what Ibn Jurayj has said to explain this verse: "(Do not nullify your virtuous acts) by doing them only to show off and to win a good name among the people." Likewise, Muqātil and others have explained it by saying: *bil-manni*, that is, (Do not nullify your deeds) by boasting about your favour. Otherwise, according to the unanimity of *ahl-us-sunnah wal-jamā'ah*, no sin - not even a major sin other than *kufr* or *shirk* -- can destroy the righteous acts of a believer. For example, if a believer, who performs his prayer regularly and keeps his fasts, were to steal something, the sacred law does not declare his prayers and fasts null and void or demand him to repeat them. Therefore, in the statement of Ḥasan Baṣrī the word 'sins' refers only to those sins refraining from which is a necessary condition for the acceptability of good works. For example, the acceptability of good works, it is necessary to refrain from *riyā'*, that is, to avoid showing off or making an ostentatious display of accomplishments. Moreover, it is also possible that Ḥasan Baṣrī statement regarding refers to the deprivation of the blessings of righteous works, and not to the absolute nullification of a righteous work itself. This may apply to all types of sin in the sense that if a believer's sins are much more than his good deeds, the few good deeds that he has to his credit will be devoid of the blessing that may save him from the punishment of his sins. According to the rule of retribution, he will be punished first for his sins and finally through the virtue of his faith he will attain salvation and be admitted into the gardens of Paradise.

Ruling:

If a believer starts a *nafl* (an act of worship that is not obligatory), and then deliberately disrupts it before its completion, this too is deemed

by Imām Abū Ḥanīfah as nullifying the deed, and is impermissible according to him. Therefore, if a person commences righteous acts that were initially not compulsory or obligatory, their completion, according to this interpretation of the verse, becomes obligatory. Otherwise he would be committing *ibṭāl-ul-a'māl* [nullification of actions]. If anyone does this without a legitimate reason or nullifies them purposely, he would be a sinner, and it would be obligatory for him to make *qaḍā'* for such nullification. According to Imām Shafi'ī, neither he is a sinner nor is it obligatory for him to make *qaḍā'*. His argument is that the act was not initially compulsory or obligatory, therefore its abandonment or nullification would not entail a sin. Ḥanafīs argue that the wordings of the current verse are general in their scope embracing all righteous acts, whether obligatory or supererogatory. Therefore, if a supererogatory act is initiated, its completion becomes obligatory. On this occasion, in Tafsīr Mazharī, a large number of *aḥādīth* are quoted and the issue is discussed in detail.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَصَدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ مَاتُوا وَهُمْ كُفَّارٌ (Those who disbelieve and prevent (others) from Allah's way, Allah will never forgive them...- 47:34): verse [32] has a similar warning in similar words. The present verse [34] seems to repeat almost the same warning. But the difference is probably that verse 32 describes the loss of the infidels in this world, and the current verse describes their loss in the next world as indicated in the commentary. It is also possible that in the earlier verse the reference was to infidels in general which included those people who embraced Islam later on. The ruling regarding them was that all the good works which they had done in the state of disbelief would go to waste. Even after embracing Islam they would not be rewarded for them. The current verse refers in particular to those infidels who persisted in their disbelief and idolatry until their dying day. The ruling regarding them is that Allah will never forgive them in the next world. Allah knows best.

فَلَا تَهِنُوا وَتَدْعُوا إِلَى السَّلْمِ (So, do not lose heart, and do not appeal for peace;) ... - 47:35". This verse prohibits the Muslims to invite the infidels to enter into peace treaty. But on another occasion in the Qur'an such a treaty is allowed : "وَأِنْ جَنَحُوا لِلسَّلْمِ فَاجْنَحْ لَهَا" "And if they tilt towards peace, you tilt towards it..." (9:61). This verse indicates that if the infidels want peace, it is permissible to enter into peace agreement with them. Therefore, some

scholars think that the permission in this verse is conditional upon the assumption that the infidels take initiative for peace negotiations. The current verse prohibits the Muslims from taking initiative for peace. Thus there is no conflict between the two verses. However, the authentic ruling is that it is permissible for Muslims even to take initiative in negotiating peace with the infidels if it could be in the best interest of the Muslims - not by reason of cowardice and involvement in a life of luxury. The Qur'an by the employment of the imperative sentence *falā-tahinū* [do not lose heart] in this verse indicates that the prohibition is meant for such an appeal for peace that is based on cowardice and escaping from Jihād. In this case too there is no conflict between the two verses, because the direction of tending to peace in verse 9:61 is restricted to a situation where it is based on the interest of the Muslims, and not on cowardice or leisure. Allah knows best.

وَلَنْ يَنْزِلَ عَلَيْكُمْ عَمَلَكُمْ (...and He will never deprive you of your deeds...47:35) It means that Allah will not diminish the reward of the believers. This indicates that if they were to suffer any pain or loss in this world, they will receive a huge reward in the next world. Thus a believer is never unsuccessful even in the face of pain or difficulty.

إِنَّمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا (The worldly life is but play and pastime - 47:36.) As Muslims have been enjoined to fight in the cause of Allah, they will, for this purpose, have to make sacrifices of life and money. But the love of this world is the only thing that can prevent man from fighting. In this verse we are told that neither of these mundane benefits is permanent. After all, they all will perish and come to an end. Even if we succeed in saving them for now, they will be lost another time. The bounties of the next world are permanent and eternal: the believers need to develop love for them - not for the perishable things of this ephemeral world.

وَلَا يَسْأَلُكُمْ أَمْوَالَكُمْ (...and will not ask you your riches... 47:36). The apparent meaning of this verse is that Allah does not demand or urge you to hand over your wealth. But the Qur'an is replete with verses relating to payment of *zakāh*, charities and spending wealth in the way of Allah. Even in the next verse, the reader is emphatically called upon to expend in Allah's way. Thus there appears to be conflict between these verses. Some scholars resolve the conflict by saying that the present verse means that Allah does not need their money for His benefit, but it is for their

own benefit that sacrifices of life and money are demanded of them. Earlier in this very verse, it has been declared expressly: *يُؤْتِكُمْ أَجُورَكُمْ* (...He will give you your rewards, (47:36)". The believers are required to spend in Allah's way which will help them in the Hereafter where they will need their righteous works most pressingly. That is where they will be rewarded. This interpretation of the verse has been preferred by Maulānā Thanawī رحمه الله تعالى. A verse of identical meaning is *مَا أُرِيدُ مِنْهُمْ مِنْ رِزْقٍ* (I do not desire [to receive] any provision from them, nor do I desire that they should feed Me...51:57)

Other scholars, however, assign another meaning to the words, "and will not ask you your riches". They say that "asking your riches" means to demand all of one's wealth. Their argument is that this clause needs to be read in conjunction with the next verse [37] which says, *إِنْ يَسْأَلْكُمْوهَا فَيُحْفِكُمْ* (If He were to ask you of it, and were to press you,...) the word *yuhfi* is derived from *ihfā'* which means to pursue a work persistently and insistently until it is accomplished. All scholars agree that the meaning of verse [37] is that if Allah demands for all of their wealth, they would become niggardly and acting upon this injunction would displease them. This displeasure would become visible at the time of expending. To sum up: the meaning of verse [36] is the same as verse [37]. The general meaning of the former verse is restricted by the latter verse. The meaning of these two verses is as follows: The pecuniary obligations, such as *zakāh*, that Allah has imposed on the believers is for their own benefit - Allah does not need their money or wealth. Further, Allah, through His grace and compassion, has imposed a nominal percentage for expending. For example, only $1/40^{\text{th}} = 2.5\%$ for *zakāh*, $1/10^{\text{th}} = 10\%$ or $1/20^{\text{th}} = 5\%$ for agricultural produce, and one goat out of every hundred goats, have been imposed. Thus it is clear that Allah is not demanding for all of our wealth because that would be displeasing and a burden and it would weigh heavily on us. In fact, He has asked for so little of our wealth that we should discharge our obligation readily and happily. The concluding clause in verse [37] *يُخْرِجُ أَضْعَانَكُمْ* "...you would show miserliness, and He would expose your grudges." contains the word *adghān* which is the plural of *dighn*. It refers to secret malice, grudge or hatred. Naturally, man feels unhappy to part with all of his wealth. Even if he does not express his unhappiness openly, he would procrastinate at the time of

payment. Procrastination would disclose his unhappiness. In short, if Allah had demanded from people all of their wealth, they would be tight-fisted and because of tight-fistedness their hearts will harbor rancour, malice and spite against spending in the cause of Allah which would be exposed. Therefore, He has imposed upon their wealth a small and nominal percentage to expend in the cause of Allah, but people are niggardly even in this case. This is what the Qur'ān says in the last verse: *تُدْعَوْنَ لِتُنْفِقُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ۚ فَمِنْكُمْ مَنْ يَبْخُلُ* Allah's way, but some of you withhold in miserliness.". Further the verse reads: *وَمَنْ يَبْخُلْ فَإِنَّمَا يَبْخُلُ عَن نَفْسِهِ* (and he who withholds in miserliness withholds against himself - 47:38) it means that any person practising miserliness will himself suffer loss or detriment because he will have to carry the burden of failing to fulfil his obligation and thus will be deprived of reward in the Hereafter. This point is made even more clear by saying " _ and Allah is the Need-Free, and you are the needy." In other words, Allah is free of want and beyond any need but man is in need of means of comfortable subsistence. So spending in the way of Allah is for man's own good and to fulfil his own needs.

وَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا يَسْتَبَدِلْ قَوْمًا غَيْرَكُمْ لَا تُمْ لَّا يَكُونُوا أَمْثَالِكُمْ (...And if you turn away, He will replace you by some other people, then they will not be like you. - 47:38) This verse has explained that Allah is the most need-free of all. This attribute is described so lucidly that it brings to our mind the fact that let alone people's wealth, He does not even need their existence. If they stop acting upon His injunctions, He will bring another people who will not turn away from the sacred injunctions, but will obey Him completely as long as Allah wants to maintain the religion of truth, Islam. Sayyidnā Ḥasan Baṣrī says that the reference in this verse is to non-Arabs and Sayyidnā 'Ikramah says that the reference is to Persians and Romans. Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه reports that when Allah's Messenger recited this verse in the presence of the Companions رضي الله عنهم they asked him: "Who are those people that will be brought instead of us if we, God forbid, turn away from Allah's injunctions and those people will not turn away like us?" Sayyidnā Salmān Fārisī رضي الله عنه was sitting among the Companions رضي الله عنهم, the Holy Prophet صلوات الله عليه slapped on his thigh and said: "If Faith [i.e. the religion of truth] were to go up to the Pleiads [accessibility to which is difficult], a man of Persian descent will acquire it from there and

act upon it." .

Shaikh Jalāl-ud-Dīn Suyūṭī wrote a book on the biography of Abū Ḥanīfah where he identifies him and his disciples as being the people referred to in the Ḥadīth quoted earlier, because no group among the Persians reached that high point of knowledge where Abū Ḥanīfah and his disciples reached .

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
The Sūrah Muḥammad
ends here.

Sūrah Al-Fatḥh

(The Victory)

Sūrah Al-Fatḥh was revealed in Madīnah. It has 29 Verses and 4 Sections.

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

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

Verses 1 - 3

إِنَّا فَتَحْنَا لَكَ فَتْحًا مُّبِينًا ﴿١﴾ لِيَغْفِرَ لَكَ اللَّهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِكَ وَمَا
تَأَخَّرَ وَيُتِمَّ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكَ وَيَهْدِيَكَ صِرَاطًا مُسْتَقِيمًا ﴿٢﴾ وَيَنْصُرَكَ
اللَّهُ نَصْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٣﴾

Surely, We have granted you an open victory, [1] so that Allah may forgive you of your previous and subsequent faults, and may complete His favour upon you, and may guide you to a straight path, [2] and so that Allah may support you with a mighty support. [3]

Preliminary Remarks

According to the consensus of scholarly opinion of Ṣaḥābah (Companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ), Tabi'in (Pupils of ṣaḥābah) and the leading authorities on Qur'ānic commentary, the Sūrah was revealed when, after signing the Treaty of Ḥudaibiyah, the Holy Prophet ﷺ was on his way back to Madīnah, in the 6th year of Hijrah in the month of Dhul Qa'dah. In other words, the Holy Prophet ﷺ with a party of his Companions set out for Makkah with the intention of performing the 'Umrah. When he approached the sanctuary of Makkah he halted at a place called Ḥudaibiyah.

The Quraish, however, debarred his entry into Makkah. Later they were willing to compromise that he must go back home that year and make up for the missed 'Umrah the following year. Many companions, especially Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنه, were greatly upset but the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم accepted it under Divine direction because he felt that this would pave the way to Muslim success. The details are set out later in the Sūrah. When the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم put off his *Ihrām*, this Sūrah was revealed on his return journey from Ḥudaibiyah in which it is pointed out that his vision is true which will most certainly be fulfilled at the appropriate time. But this is not the right time for it. It will happen after the conquest of Makkah. The Treaty of Ḥudaibiyah in this Sūrah is described as "an open victory" because this Treaty was in fact the forerunner of the conquest of Makkah. Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه and some other Companions say "you think the conquest of Makkah is 'Victory'" but we regard "The very Treaty of Ḥudaibiyah as the real 'Victory'". Likewise Sayyidnā Jābir رضي الله عنه says "We think the Treaty of Ḥudaibiyah is 'Victory'". Barā' Ibn 'Āzib says "You think 'Victory' refers to the conquest of Makkah. No doubt, it does, but we think the Pledge of Ridwān on the occasion of Ḥudaibiyah is the real 'Victory' where the Companions [some 1400] were asked by the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم under an acacia tree to declare on solemn oath that they would stand by him at all costs and would fight under his banner to the bitter end. The Pledge of *Jihād* is referred to later on in this Sūrah. (Ibn Kathīr) As mentioned earlier, this Sūrah was revealed on the occasion of Ḥudaibiyah, and since some parts of this incident are referred to in this Sūrah, it seems pertinent to first give details of this incident. Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr elaborates on the event and gives many small details. Tafsīr Maḥzarī develops it even more elaborately. He has, on this occasion, written about fourteen pages, narrating the story from the beginning to the end with reference to authentic collections of Ḥadīth. The narrative comprises many miracles, pieces of advice, and educational, religious and political points of wisdom. We intend to give the details of those parts of the narrative which are referred to in the Sūrah itself, or are profoundly relevant to the Sūrah, so that it may facilitate the understanding of those verses which are related to the incident. The details given below are mainly adopted from Tafsīr Maḥzarī, and reference is made to other commentaries from where other details are taken.

The Event of Ḥudaibiyah:

Ḥudaibiyah is a plain situated outside Makkah on the way to Jeddah which is very close to the boundaries of Ḥaram. It is now called *Shumaisiyy*. This is the site where the incident took place.

Part [1]: The Prophet's ﷺ Vision

It is reported by Ibn Jarīr, 'Abd Ibn Ḥumaid, Baihaqī, and others that the Holy Prophet ﷺ saw in a dream in Madīnah that he had gone to Makkah with his Companions, entered it peacefully and performed the 'Umrah (shorter pilgrimage). He and his Companions put off their pilgrim-garb and, according to the rule, some had their heads shaven and others had their hair cut short. The Holy Prophet ﷺ then entered the House of Allah, and the key of the House fell into his hand. This part of the event is referred to later on in this Sūrah [48:27]. The dream of the Prophets عليهم السلام is not a mere dream or fiction. It is a Divine revelation, acting upon which is necessary. Therefore, this vision of the Holy Prophet ﷺ was not merely a dream, but a Divine inspiration which he had to strictly obey and follow. However, no time or date was specified for this. In fact, this vision was to be fulfilled at the time of the conquest of Makkah. But when the Holy Prophet ﷺ narrated this vision to his companions, they in their enthusiasm to visit Makkah and perform the *tawāf* (circumambulation) of the House, started preparations forthwith. When a party of the Companions was in full readiness to depart, the Holy Prophet ﷺ too made up his mind to accomplish his vision, since no time or date was specified, it is possible, he thought, that this purpose could be achieved instantly (Bayān-ul-Qur'ān, citing from Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī).

Part [2]: The Prophet ﷺ Invites his Companions and Bedouins to Join him: Some refused

It is reported on the authority of Ibn Sa'd and others that when the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his Companions made up their mind to perform 'umrah, the Holy Prophet ﷺ had the apprehension that the pagans of Makkah might hinder them from performing 'umrah, and it was possible also that an armed clash might ensue. Therefore, he invited people from the neighbouring villages to join him for the pilgrimage. Many of the village bedouins refused to join him claiming that Muḥammad ﷺ and his Companions wanted to push them into the jaws of death. They said that Muḥammad and his Companions wanted to get them into an armed clash

with Makkans who were superior to them in terms of weapons and power. They felt that as a result of this superiority, the Muslims would not come back alive (Maḥzarī).

Part [3]: Setting out for Makkah

According to the versions of Imām Aḥmad, Bukhārī, Abū Dāwūd, Nasa'ī and others the Holy Prophet ﷺ before setting out for the journey, took a bath, put on his new clothes and mounted his camel Qaṣwā'. He was accompanied by his blessed wife 'Umm Salamah رضي الله عنها. A large number of the *Muhājirīn*, *Anṣār* and the village folks was with him. This constituted, according to most versions, 1400 people altogether. No one doubted that Makkah will be conquered on that day on account of the Holy Prophet's ﷺ vision, whereas they did not have any weapons except swords. The Holy Prophet ﷺ and his Companions set out for this journey on Monday at the beginning of Dhul-Qa'dah. He reached Dhul-Ḥulaifah and donned the pilgrim-robe with the intention of 'Umrah (Shortened from Maḥzarī).

Part [4] : Preparing for Confrontation with Makkans

When the people of Makkah received news about the Prophet's ﷺ journey to Makkah with a large number of his Companions, they gathered together, and expressed their concern that if Muḥammad was allowed entry into Makkah, the entire Arabia would be under the impression that the Makkans were subdued by him, while several battles had been fought between them and Muḥammad. As such, they were not willing to allow him entry into the city. Thus they dispatched an advance cavalry towards Kura'-ul-Ghamīm under the command of Khālīd Ibn Walīd رضي الله عنه [who until then was not a Muslim] to intercept him. The neighboring villagers were also attached to the cavalry, and the tribe of Banū Thaḳīf from Ṭā'if joined them as well. They pitched their tents in a place called Baldaḥ. They pledged to debar the Holy Prophet ﷺ from entering into Makkah and to declare war against him.

A Strange and Simple Network of Communication

The enemies set up a network of communication from Baldaḥ to the place where the Holy Prophet ﷺ had reached. They placed a few men on the top of each mountain to observe the movement, activity and position of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and inform the people on the adjacent mountain in a loud voice, they in turn relayed the message to the people on the next

mountain, they would then convey the information to the third mountain, and so on. In this way they communicated the details of the Holy Prophet's ﷺ activities to the people of Baldah within a few minutes.

The Informants of Holy Prophet ﷺ

The Holy Prophet ﷺ dispatched Bishr Ibn Suḡyān ؓ to Makkah in advance as a secret informer, so that he may secretly observe the activities and movements of the Quraish and keep him fully informed of their intentions and activities. When he returned from Makkah, he informed the Holy Prophet ﷺ that the Makkans were preparing for an all-out war. The Holy Prophet ﷺ expressed his regret that several wars had already weakened the strength of Quraish, and yet they would not give up fighting. The Prophet ﷺ said: "This was an ideal opportunity for them to leave me and the other Arabs alone. If these Arabs had vanquished me, they would have accomplished their objective without any pain; and if I had vanquished them, one of two things could have happened - either they would have embraced Islam or if they intended to fight me they would have braced themselves to face me. But nobody knows what is wrong with them! By Him who has sent me with His commands, I shall never cease to fight them until my neck is separated from the rest of my body."

Part [5]: The Camel of the Holy Prophet ﷺ Refuses to Move

After that the Holy Prophet ﷺ gathered the people and delivered a sermon in which he consulted them whether they should start the fight against the enemies then and there, or press forward and make forced entry into Makkah, and "if they debar us we shall fight them." Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ؓ and other companions said, " You have come out on a peaceful mission with the intention of visiting the House of Allah, not with the belligerent intention of fighting. Therefore, adhere to your peaceful intention. However, if anyone bars us from entering Makkah, then we shall fight." Sayyidnā Miqdād Ibn Aswad ؓ stood up and said: "O Allah's Messenger! We are not like the children of Israel who would say إِذْهَبْ أَنْتَ وَرَبِّكَ فَقَاتِلَا إِنَّا هُنَا قَاعِدُونَ - {5:24} 'So go, you and your Lord, and fight. As for us, we are sitting here'. We shall fight with you at all costs." Having seen the Companions' determination, Allah's Messenger ﷺ responded that they should press forward in the direction of Makkah in the name of Allah. When the Holy Prophet ﷺ approached the Holy City,

and Khālīd Ibn Walīd ﷺ and his cavalry noticed them moving forward in the direction of *qiblah*, he arrayed his army into regiments and stood up there like adamantine walls. Allah's Messenger ﷺ appointed 'Abbād Ibn Bishr ﷺ as the commander of a unit that was arrayed in opposition to Khālīd Ibn Walīd. In the meanwhile it was time for *Zuhr Ṣalāh*. Sayyidnā Bilāl ﷺ called the *adhān*, and the Holy Prophet ﷺ led the congregation in prayer. Khālīd and his cavalry looked on. Later on Khālīd Ibn Walīd said: "We lost a golden opportunity to wipe them out whilst they were praying. It does not matter, wait for another time, because soon they will be praying again." But in the meantime Jibra'īl ﷺ brought down the injunction of *Ṣalāt-ul-Khawf*. Having made Allah's Messenger ﷺ aware of their intentions, he was shown how the army should be divided into two groups in times of danger. Allah's Messenger ﷺ followed the direction of the Qur'ān. Each group performed the prayer in alternation. (When one group prayed, it was guarded and protected by the armed regiment who remained on the alert for a possible attack by the enemy. It took its turn when the praying group had finished.)

Part [6] : A Miracle at Ḥudaibiyah

When Allah's Messenger ﷺ was nearing Ḥudaibiyah, the forelegs of his she-camel (named *Qaṣwā*) slipped and it sat down. The Companions tried to urge it up, but in vain. The Companions thought that *Qaṣwā* was enraged, but Allah's Messenger ﷺ said that it was no fault of *Qaṣwā* nor is it its usual habit to do this. In fact, it has been stopped by the same One who had blocked the men of elephant. [Probably Allah's Messenger ﷺ by then had discerned that the time was not up for the fulfillment of his vision.] With this discernment, Allah's Messenger ﷺ declared: "By Him in whose hand is Muḥammad's life, today I shall accept all the demands of the Quraish in which the Symbols sanctified by Allah are held in full esteem." Then he called out the she-camel and it stood up. Allah's Messenger ﷺ moved away from the spot where Khālīd Ibn Walīd ﷺ was staying, and stationed himself on the other side of Ḥudaibiyah where there was very little water. Khālīd Ibn Walīd and the people of *Baldah* had occupied the places where water was available in abundance. Here a miracle of Allah's Messenger ﷺ shown by Allah Ta'ālā. At this place there was a well in which very little water trickled. He rinsed his mouth in it, and got one of his arrows pitched therein. As soon as this happened, its

water bubbled almost up to the brim of the well. People on the upper side of the well drew water and quenched their thirst.

Part [7]: Negotiation with the Deputations of the People of Makkah

In this way all the Companions were satisfied and settled there, and started negotiations with the people of Makkah through their deputations. First, Budail Ibn Warqa' [who later on embraced Islam] along with his companions paid a visit to Allah's Messenger ﷺ and informed him, as a well-wisher, that the entire Makkah had come out in full force to confront him. They have occupied all the water spots. "They will never allow you to enter into Makkah." He said. Allah's Messenger ﷺ replied, "We have not come to fight anyone. However, if they block us from performing 'umrah, we will fight". Then he repeated what he had said to his spy Bishr ؓ: "Several wars have weakened the Quraish. If they wish, a peace treaty could be arranged for a specified period of time, so that they may peacefully prepare themselves. In the meantime they should leave us and the rest of the Arabs alone. If these Arabs vanquish me, they would have accomplished their objective without any pain; and if I vanquish them, and they started entering into the fold of Islam, then the Quraish will have two options: either they too will embrace Islam, or if they will intend to fight me, they will have braced themselves to face me. But if they refuse this, then I swear by Him who has sent me with His commands, I shall never cease to fight them until my neck is left separated from the rest of my body." Budail, saying that he will convey the message to the Quraish leaders, went back. When he returned to the Quraish and communicated the Holy Prophet's ﷺ response, some of them did not want to even hear him, and were in a fit of war, while others, like 'Urwah Ibn Mas'ud, the leader of his tribe, advised them to at least hear him. Then when Budail conveyed the message of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, 'Urwah said to the leaders of Quraish that Muhammad's suggestions were fair and satisfactory, and therefore, they should be accepted. He opted to negotiate and asked for their permission to confer with the Holy Prophet ﷺ with the aim of reaching an agreement of peace. Thus the second person to pay a visit to the Holy Prophet ﷺ in an attempt to negotiate was 'Urwah who said to the Holy Prophet ﷺ: "If you wipe out your own people, the Quraish, will it be good for you? Have you ever heard anyone

destroying his own people?" Then there was a heated and protracted parleys between 'Urwah and the Companions, and while this was going on, 'Urwah observed that when the Holy Prophet ﷺ performed his ablutions, his companions would not allow the water to fall on the ground but would rub it on their bodies and clothes. When the Holy Prophet ﷺ spoke, they would lower their voices. 'Urwah went back to the Quraish leaders, and described the whole scenario to them, adding that "I have been to the courts of the Caesar and Khosroes, and the Negus also, but by God, never have I seen any people so devoted to a king as are the Companions of Muḥammad to him. He is suggesting a correct proposal, and I suggest that you accept it." But the people replied that they could not accept it; "Muḥammad must go back this year, and may come again the following year." When 'Urwah's suggestion was not accepted, he returned with his people. After him a person by the name of Jalīs Ibn 'Alqamah, the leader of the bedouins, visited the Holy Prophet ﷺ. He saw the Companions in pilgrim-ropes with sacrificial animals. He too returned and explained to his people that these people had come to perform their 'Umrah in the House of Allah. "It is not proper in any way to debar them." The people did not pay heed to his suggestion either. He too went away back with his deputation. A fourth person arrived to confer with the Holy Prophet ﷺ and persuade him to give up his intention to enter Makkah. But the Holy Prophet ﷺ repeated the same reply to this deputation that he had made to Budail and 'Urwah. He went back to Quraish and communicated the Holy Prophet's ﷺ reply to them.

Part [8] : Sayyidnā 'Uthmān Despatched as a Special Envoy

Imām Baihaqī reports on the authority of 'Urwah Ibn Zubair ؓ that when Allah's Messenger ﷺ settled in Ḥudaibiyah, it unnerved the Quraish. He decided to send an envoy with the message that he had not come to fight, but to perform 'Umrah. Therefore, they should not block his way. He called upon Sayyidnā 'Umar ؓ for this task. He said, "Quraish are my implacable enemy, because they are fully aware of my ardent support for Islam, and there is not a single member of my tribe in Makkah that will support me. As a result, I will not be able to change their mind. I propose the name of 'Uthmān for this task. He is the most appropriate person who, because of his tribe, holds a special power and honour in the whole of Makkah." Allah's Messenger ﷺ accepted the proposal and sent

off Sayyidnā 'Uthmān ؓ for the task. He also advised him to visit the socially and economically disabled Muslim men and women who were not able to migrate from Makkah and were suffering hardships. He was to console them that they should not be distressed. Soon, Allah willing, Makkah will be conquered and their difficulties will end. First, Sayyidnā 'Uthmān ؓ went to those people who had gathered in Balḍah to block the way of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and confront him. He communicated to them the same message that was conveyed to them by Budail and 'Urwah. They replied that they had heard the message and that it was not acceptable. Having received their reply, he attempted to get into Makkah. Abān Ibn Sa'īd [who later on embraced Islam] met him and welcomed him warmly. He took him into his refuge and allowed him to convey his message anywhere in Makkah without any fear of hindrance. Then he gave his mount to Sayyidnā 'Uthmān ؓ which he rode and entered Makkah, because his tribe Banū Sa'īd was eminently powerful.

Sayyidnā 'Uthmān ؓ met each one of the Quraish leaders, and conveyed the Holy Prophet's ﷺ message: "We have not come to fight, but to perform *'umrah*. After completing the rites of pilgrimage we shall return home. Indeed, if the road is blocked, we shall fight. Quraish themselves have been debilitated by several wars. Therefore it would be to their advantage to leave us and other Arabs alone. Then we shall see who overpowers the other. If the Arabs overpower us, then their objective would be accomplished. If we overpower them, then too they will have a choice to fight at that stage. During this time they will have the opportunity to improve and preserve their strength." But they rejected his proposal. Then 'Uthmān ؓ visited the helpless Muslims and conveyed to them the Holy Prophet's ﷺ message. This communication pleased them immensely, and they asked him to convey their *salam* to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Having communicated the Holy Prophet's ﷺ message, the Makkans allowed Sayyidnā 'Uthmān ؓ to perform the *ṭawāf* of the House if he wished. But he refused saying he would not do that unless the Holy Prophet ﷺ would have first performed it. 'Uthmān ؓ stayed in Makkah for three nights, and continued to invite the Quraish leaders to accept the Holy Prophet's ﷺ message.

Part [9] : Tension between Quraish and Muslims: Seventy Makkans Captured

In the meanwhile Quraish selected fifty men and asked them to be on

the look-out for the Holy Prophet ﷺ. As soon as they find an opportunity, their task was to assassinate him. Whilst the men were on the look-out for the Holy Prophet ﷺ, Muḥammad Ibn Maslamah ﷺ, the Holy Prophet's ﷺ body-guard, captured them and brought them to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. On the other hand, Sayyidnā 'Uthmān ﷺ was already in Makkah and ten more Muslims joined him in the Holy City. When the Quraish heard that fifty of their men have been captured, they detained 'Uthmān ﷺ and other Muslims. A cavalry of Quraish marched towards the Muslim caravan and shot arrows and threw stones at them. One Companion - Ibn Zanīm by name - was martyred. The Muslims captured ten of the Quraish horse-riders. In the meantime a rumour reached the Holy Prophet ﷺ that 'Uthmān ﷺ has been assassinated.

Part [10] : The Pledge of Riḍwān

Having received this rumour, the Holy Prophet ﷺ gathered his Companions under an acacia tree and took a solemn pledge from them that they would fight the Quraish to the last breath of their lives. This pledge came to be known as *bai'at-ur-Riḍwān*, which signified those lucky people who had taken the oath had obtained Allah's pleasure. This is referred to later on in the Sūrah. Authentic Prophetic Traditions speak eminently of the people who participated in this pledge. Since 'Uthmān ﷺ was on a mission to Makkah under the direction of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, he was absent at the time of the solemn pledge. So the Holy Prophet ﷺ placed one of his own hands on the other hand of his and said, "This is 'Uthmān's pledge." This illustrates the distinction of Sayyidnā 'Uthmān ﷺ.

Part [11] : Peace Treaty at Ḥudaibiyah

A distinct event or episode of the scenario of Ḥudaibiyah is that through, the grace of Allah, the Quraish were overawed and subdued by the Muslims. As a result, they themselves were then willing to make peace. Thus they sent three of their men as representatives, namely, Suhail Ibn 'Amr, Ḥuwaiṭib Ibn 'Abdul 'Uzzā and Mikraz Ibn Ḥafṣ. (Later the first two of the representatives embraced Islam.) They apologised to the Holy Prophet ﷺ on behalf of their people. Suhail Ibn 'Amr said to the Holy Prophet ﷺ "The report that 'Uthmān ﷺ and his companions have been killed is absolutely false. They are being sent to you. Set free our men you have captured." The Holy Prophet ﷺ set them free. It is

recorded in Musnad of Aḥmad and Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim on the authority of Sayyidnā Anas رضي الله عنه that verse 24 of this Sūrah **كَفَّ هُوَ الَّذِي كَفَّ أَيْدِيَهُمْ عَنْكُمْ** refers to this episode. Then Suhail and his deputation went to Quraish and described to them the amazing scene of *bai'at-ur-Riḍwān* where the *ṣaḥābah* showed their readiness to lay down their lives and willingness to make the supreme sacrifice. The opinion-makers of Quraish suggested that nothing would be better for them than they would compromise on Muslims' retiring that year without entering Makkah, but the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his Companions may visit Makkah the following year only for three days to perform 'Umrah. On that occasion they may slaughter the sacrificial animals and put off their pilgrim-ropes, otherwise the impression created would be that attempts were made to block the Holy Prophet's ﷺ way, but he forced his entry into Makkah, which would be tantamount to a humiliating defeat for them. When Suhail arrived again with message, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "It seems that Quraish has decided to make peace. That is why they have sent Suhail again." The Holy Prophet ﷺ sat up cross-legged. Two of his Companions, 'Abbād Ibn Bishr and Salamah, رضي الله عنهم اجمعين armed themselves with weapons and stood on his sides to guard him. Suhail came, whilst sitting courteously in front of him, delivered the message of Quraish. The Companions generally were not happy to put off the pilgrim-garb without performing 'Umrah. They spoke harshly to Suhail - the voices sometimes became loud and at other times low. 'Abbād Ibn Bishr رضي الله عنه reprimanded Suhail for raising his voice in the presence of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. After heated and protracted parleys, the Holy Prophet ﷺ agreed to enter into Peace Treaty. Suhail wanted to have the Peace Treaty reduced to writing. The Holy Prophet ﷺ called Sayyidnā 'Alī رضي الله عنه and dictated to him to write the words, **بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ** *bismil-lāhir-raḥmanir-raḥīm*. Suhail objected to this - saying that the words *rahmān* and *rahīm* do not exist in our idiom. He said they should write the words that used to be written before, that is, **بِسْمِکَ اللّٰهُمَّ** *bismika-allāhumma*. The Holy Prophet ﷺ agreed to this and asked Sayyidnā 'Alī رضي الله عنه to erase the **بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ** *bismil-lāhir-rahmanir-raḥīm* and insert **بِسْمِکَ اللّٰهُمَّ** *bismika-allāhumma*. Then the Holy Prophet ﷺ asked Sayyidnā 'Alī رضي الله عنه to write "This is the Peace Treaty into which Muḥammad, the Messenger of Allah entered." Suhail objected to this as well, and argued that they did not recognise him as the 'Messenger of Allah'. If they had, they would never have prevented

him from visiting Allah's House. There should be no such expression in the Treaty that would be in defiance of any party's belief system. Therefore, it should read Muḥammad, the son of 'Abdullāh. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ granted this and dictated to Sayyidnā 'Alī ؑ to erase the words, 'the Messenger of Allah' and replace it with 'the Son of 'Abdullāh.' Sayyidnā 'Alī ؑ, despite being an embodiment of obedience, said he could not erase the attributive title *rasūl* [Messenger] of Allah from his name. Sayyidnā 'Usaid Ibn Ḥuḍair and Sa'd Ibn 'Ubadah ؑ withheld Sayyidnā 'Alī's ؑ hand so that he might not rub the attributive title out. He should not write any appellation with his name other than the *rasūl* [Messenger] of Allah. "If they do not accept it, then the sword will decide the matter" they said. Voices arose all around. Despite the fact that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was an Ummi who had never written before, took the document in his hand and wrote with his own pen the following preamble:

هذا ما قاضى محمد بن عبد الله وسهيل بن عمر واصلحا على وضع الحرب عن
الناس عشر سنين يأمن فيه الناس ويكف بعضهم عن بعض

"This is the Treaty into which Muḥammad the Son of 'Abdullāh and Suhail Ibn 'Amr entered. They agree that war shall be suspended for ten years, during which time people would be able to live peacefully and no party would indulge in any hostility against the other."

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ wanted that the treaty should have a clause to the effect that the Muslims would not be hindered from performing *ṭawāf* that year, but Suhail swore by God to say that it was not possible. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ conceded that to him. Suhail then inserted his own clause: if a Makkan [even if he is a believer] were to go over to Muḥammad ﷺ without his guardian's permission, he shall be sent back to his guardian; but should any of Muḥammad's followers return to the Quraish, he shall not be sent back. At this, the common Muslims raised their voices and exclaimed that it was not tolerable to send one of their own Muslim brethren back to the pagans. However, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ accepted this clause as well, and explained that if any of the believers is gone over to the Quraish of his own accord, Allah has distanced him from the Muslims, and they should not bother about him. If any of their men comes over to the Muslims and they send him back to

the pagans, Allah will pave the way for him.

Sayyidnā Barā' ؓ summarises that the Treaty contained three clauses: [1] If anyone during that period from among the Quraish went over to the Holy Prophet ﷺ, without his guardian's permission, he would return him to them; [2] if a Companion of the Holy Prophet ﷺ came over to the Quraish, they would not return him; and [3] the Holy Prophet ﷺ, together with his men, should retire that year, and visit Makkah the following year only for three days to perform 'Umrah, but they shall carry no arms save sheathed swords. Towards the end of the Treaty, the concluding statement was appended: "This Agreement between the people of Makkah and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is a guarded document which none shall violate. Whosoever would like to join the Holy Prophet ﷺ and make himself a party to the Treaty from his side, shall have the liberty to do so; and likewise whosoever would like to join the Quraish and make himself a party to the Treaty from their side, shall have the liberty to do so."

As soon as this proclamation was made, Banū Khuza'ah jumped at the opportunity, and entered into alliance with the Holy Prophet ﷺ, but Banū Bakr, on the other hand, sided with the Quraish and allied themselves with them.

Terms and Provisions of the Treaty Upset the Companions

The Muslims were noticeably perturbed over the terms of the Treaty that were apparently tilted against their interests. Sayyidnā 'Umar ؓ exclaimed in extreme grief and indignation: "O Messenger of Allah! are you not the True Prophet of Allah?" He replied: "Why not!" Then Sayyidnā 'Umar ؓ asked: "Are we not on the right path and they on the wrong?" He replied: "Why not!" Sayyidnā 'Umar ؓ asked: "Is it not a fact that our martyrs are in the Paradise and their slain ones in the Fire?" He replied: "Why not!" Sayyidnā 'Umar ؓ then said: "Why should we submit to this humiliation and return without observing 'Umrah or Allah decides the matter through war?" The Messenger of Allah ﷺ replied: "I am the servant of Allah and His Messenger. I can never violate His command. He will never destroy me. He is my Helper. Sayyidnā 'Umar ؓ posed more questions to the Prophet ﷺ: "O Messenger of Allah! did you not promise us that we would visit Allah's House and perform *tawāf*?" He replied: "Yes, indeed, I did promise, but did I promise that it will happen this

year?" Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنه replied: "No, you did not promise that." The Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم responded: "The event will definitely happen as I promised. You will visit the House and perform the *tawāf*."

Sayyidnā 'Umar Ibn Khaṭṭāb رضي الله عنه kept quiet, but his grief and indignation did not subside. After the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم, he went to Sayyidnā Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه and repeated his questions to him as he had posed them to the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. He replied that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم is the servant of Allah and His Messenger. He is not at liberty to violate any Divine decree. Allah is his Helper. Therefore, hold on to his stirrup until the last breath of your life. By Allah! he is on the path of Truth. In short, Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنه was in intense grief and pain because of the seemingly unfavourable terms and provisions of the Treaty. In fact, he is reported to have said: "I never gave way to doubt since I embraced Islam, but on this occasion I could not avoid it." (Transmitted by Bukhārī) Sayyidnā Abū 'Ubaidah رضي الله عنه allayed his misgivings and suggested to seek refuge with Allah from the evils of Shaiṭān. Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنه said: "I seek refuge in Allah from the evils of the Shaiṭān." He says that since he realised his misgivings, he continued to observe voluntary prayers, keep voluntary fasts, emancipate slaves and give alms, so that Allah may pardon his error.

The Case of Abū Jandal: The Prophet's Commitment to the Treaty

The terms and provisions of the Treaty had just been concluded, and Companions were still grieving over them. Suhail Ibn 'Amr was the chief negotiator on behalf of Quraish. Abū Jandal was Suhail's son. He embraced Islam and was imprisoned by his father. He used to persecute him harshly; fetters were put about his ankles; and there were signs of violence on his body. He could not bear the persecution, so somehow he managed to escape to the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and sought asylum. Some of the Muslims went forward and granted him the asylum. Suhail yelled out: "This is the first instance of the violation of a proviso of the Treaty. If he is not returned, I shall never accept any of the other provisions in the document". The Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم had already entered into the Treaty and was bound by its terms and provisions, therefore he called Abū Jandal and asked him to be patient for a little while longer. Soon Allah will pave the way for him and other helpless Muslims, who are detained in

Makkah, to live in easier circumstances and in a peaceful atmosphere. This case of Abū Jandal really rubbed salt into the wound or added fuel to the fire. The Companions were sure that Makkah will be conquered instantaneously, but when they experienced the apparently unfavourable situation, their grief and disappointment knew no bounds. They were on the brink of disaster and ruination. However, the Treaty was concluded, and on behalf of the Muslims Abū Bakr, 'Umar, 'Abdur-Raḥmān Ibn 'Awf, 'Abdullāh Ibn Suhail Ibn 'Umar, Sa'd Ibn Abī Waqqās, Muḥammad Ibn Maslamah, 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭalib and others رضى الله عنهم اجمعين had appended their signatures. Likewise on behalf of the idolaters, Suhail and a few others appended their signatures.

Putting Off the Pilgrim-Garb and Slaughtering the Sacrificial Animals

When the document was finalised, the Holy Prophet ﷺ addressed the Companions, and asked them to slaughter their sacrificial animals in that very place, shave their heads and put off the pilgrim-ropes, but they were so overwhelmed by grief that no one moved from his position to comply. This depressed the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and he went up to his blessed wife Umm Salamah رضى الله عنها and expressed his grief to her. She gave him the most apt advice, saying: "Do not reprimand them at this time, because they are acutely grieved by the terms of the Treaty and by returning without observing 'Umrah. Call the barber in the presence of all, and get your own head shaved, put off your pilgrim-garb and slaughter your own camel." He followed her advice. When the Companions saw this, they followed suit. They started shaving each other's head, slaughtered their animals and put off their pilgrim-ropes. The Holy Prophet ﷺ earnestly supplicated for all.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ stayed on the plain of Ḥudaibiyah for nineteen days and, according to other versions, twenty days. He then started his return journey. With his Companions he first went to Marr Ḥahrān, and then arrived in 'Uṣfān. When they reached here, their provisions were depleted: very little food and water had been left for them. The Holy Prophet ﷺ spread a dining-sheet and asked everyone to put the little they had on the sheet. In this way the left-overs were collected on the sheet. There were 1400 people: they all sat around the sheet, the Holy Prophet ﷺ supplicated and asked them to eat. The noble Companions

report that 1400 people ate to the full and in addition they filled their bowls - yet nothing had diminished. This was the Holy Prophet's second miracle that appeared on this plain. The Holy Prophet ﷺ, seeing this, was highly delighted.

The Noble Companions' Strength of Faith and Obedience of the Holy Prophet ﷺ Tested Once Again

It was noticed in the foregoing sections that the Companions were extremely unhappy at the terms and provisions of the Treaty. They found it even more difficult and painful to return without performing 'Umrah or fighting a war. It was their strength of faith that despite all odds and the awkward situation, they persisted in their faith in and obedience of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. On his way back from Ḥudaibiyah, at Kura'-ul-Ghamīm Sūrah Al-Fath was revealed which the Prophet ﷺ recited to the blessed Companions. Despite the terms and provisions of the Treaty and returning home without 'Umrah wounding their hearts, this Sūrah calls the trip "a manifest Victory". Sayyidnā 'Umar ؓ could hardly contain himself and inquired: "Messenger of Allah! is this 'victory'?" He replied: "By Him in whose Hand is my life, this is indeed 'a manifest Victory!'" The noble Companions submitted to him and thus were assured that it was "a manifest Victory".

The Effects and Advantages of the Treaty

One immediate effect of this Treaty was that the misplaced obstinacy of Quraish and their followers became manifest, and a schism arose among themselves, and they were divided into different groups as a result of differences in thinking and attitudes. Budail Ibn Warqā' separated himself with his comrades from the Quraish. Following his example, 'Urwah Ibn Mas'ūd separated with his group.

Secondly, the Quraish of Makkah were highly impressed by the unparalleled self-sacrifice of the noble Companions. They were also profoundly touched by the unwavering obedience of, and love and reverence for, the Holy Prophet ﷺ. This inclined them to make peace. This was an ideal opportunity for them to wipe out the Muslims, because they were at home with all its conveniences, and the Muslims were on a journey with all its inconveniences. The Quraish had captured all the water spots, whereas the Muslims had to occupy waterless spots - lacking in foodstuffs. They were in full force, whereas the Muslims were

ill-equipped in weaponry. Allah infused terror into their hearts. Many members of their group had the opportunity to meet and mingle with the Holy Prophet ﷺ, as a result the cheerfulness of Islamic faith was infused into their hearts. Later on they embraced it.

Thirdly, the Peace Treaty made the road safe and secure. The way was opened for the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the blessed Companions to call the people towards Islam. Arab delegations visited the Holy Prophet ﷺ. The blessed Companions, together with the Holy Prophet ﷺ, spread Islam rapidly in every nook and corner. Letters were sent to the rulers of the world - inviting them to the call of Islam. Some of the prominent rulers were impressed. On the occasion of Ḥudaibiyah, there were not more than 1500 Muslims with him, despite the Holy Prophet's ﷺ general invitation for all Muslims to join him to observe 'Umrah. But after the Treaty, people entered Allah's religion in throngs. In the year 7 Hijri Khaibar was conquered, and considerable amount of booty fell into the hands of the Muslims. This strengthened their material power. Hardly two years had passed during which time an unprecedented large number of people joined the Islamic camp. When the Quraish violated the terms of the Treaty, the Holy Prophet ﷺ secretly started preparing for the conquest of Makkah. The Quraish came to know about this, and were unnerved. They sent Abū Sufyān to apologise and to negotiate the renewal of the Treaty, but the Holy Prophet ﷺ refused. As a result of violation by the Quraish of the terms of the Treaty, the Holy Prophet ﷺ within twenty-one months marched towards Makkah with ten thousand strong faithful soldiers of Allah. The Quraish were so overwhelmingly subdued that no fighting took place. There are differing views among the leading jurists whether Makkah was conquered by force of arms or by peaceful means. Nevertheless while in Makkah, the Holy Prophet ﷺ had the following announcement made: "Whoever shuts his door shall be safe; whoever enters the mosque shall be safe; whoever enters Abū Sufyān's house shall be safe." This announcement made them concerned about saving themselves. This, on the part of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, was a master-stroke of political sagacity, strategy and ingenuity. As a result, no fighting took place. In sum, Makkah was conquered easily and very comfortably. Thus the Holy Prophet's ﷺ vision turned into a reality. The Companions fearlessly performed the *ṭawāf* of the House, then had their heads shaved or cut short, the Holy Prophet ﷺ, together with his Companions, then entered the Ka'bah where he received its keys. At that

moment, the Holy Prophet ﷺ addressed Sayyidnā 'Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ؓ in particular and other Companions in general, saying: "This is the incident that I have been narrating to you." On the occasion of the Farewell Pilgrimage, the Holy Prophet ﷺ repeated his address to Sayyidnā 'Umar Ibn Khaṭṭāb ؓ who replied: "Undoubtedly there is no better and greater 'Victory' than the Treaty of Ḥudaibiyah." Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ؓ believed from the very outset that the Treaty of Ḥudaibiyah was indeed the 'Victory', but people did not have the insight and foresight to discern the reality that was determined between Allah and His Messenger. Allah does not do anything because of people's impatience. Instead, He does what His wisdom demands that everything should take place at the right moment. Therefore, 'a manifest Victory' in this Sūrah refers to the Treaty of Ḥudaibiyah.

These were the most important elements of the event of Ḥudaibiyah. This will facilitate the understanding of forthcoming verses of this Sūrah.

Analysis of Verses

لِيَغْفِرَ لَكَ اللَّهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِكَ وَمَا تَأَخَّرَ (so that Allah may forgive you of your previous and subsequent faults...." - 48:2). If the particle "*lam*" (translated above as 'so that') is taken to be for "*ta'līl*", it indicates the purpose for which, and the reason why, such a manifest Victory is given to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. It is mentioned in this verse that the victory was given to him to bless him with three different bounties. The first bounty is forgiveness of all his past and future shortcomings. Attention was drawn in Sūrah Muḥammad that all Prophets عليهم السلام are infallible. Wherever words like *dhanb* ذنب and *'aṣyān* عصيان ('sin' or 'fault') are attributed to them in the Qur'ān, they are in relation to their lofty status. Works that are merely unadvisable contrary to the preferred practice are also referred to as *dhanb* in relation to the high status of the Prophets by way of reprimand. 'Previous' refers to shortcomings committed before conferment of prophethood, and 'subsequent' refers to shortcomings committed after the conferment of prophethood (Maḥzarī). The reason why this victory caused forgiveness for such shortcomings is that large masses of people entered the fold of Islam after it, and naturally the credit of spreading the call of Islam goes to the Holy Prophet ﷺ for which he deserved the divine reward, and an increase in reward always entails forgiveness of the shortcomings.

وَيَهْدِيكَ صِرَاطًا مُسْتَقِيمًا ("...and may guide you to a straight path," 48:2.)

This is the second bounty which resulted from the manifest victory. Here arises a question of the highest significance: The Holy Prophet ﷺ was established in the right path from the very outset. Not only was he himself on the right path, but also a source of guidance for the entire world. His night-and-day preoccupation was to call the people towards the Straight Path. So what then is the meaning of guidance to the straight path through manifest victory in the 6th year of Hijrah? A detailed answer to this question can be found in Ma'āriful-Qur'ān Vol 1/pp 71-81 - particularly look at the definitions and the three degrees of Hidāyah [guidance].

Definition of Hidāyah

Hidāyah has been defined as to show the path or to lead someone gently and kindly towards his destination. The real destination of man is to attain Allah's pleasure and his proximity. The degrees of pleasure and proximity are unlimited. Having attained the first degree, man needs to go for the next one, then he should aim for the third one and so on to no end. Not any man, Muslim, saint or prophet is above the need of such spiritual and moral attainment. Therefore, the instruction to pray for right guidance in the first Sūrah is not only to the Muslim Community, but also to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. He is to soar higher and higher in the path of spiritual and moral attainment. Allah has, in this manifest victory, raised the Holy Prophet ﷺ to the highest pinnacles of spiritual eminence which is described by the clause *yahdiyaka*.

وَيَنْصُرَكَ اللَّهُ نَصْرًا عَظِيمًا (and so that Allah may support you with a mighty support - 48:3.) This is the third bounty which follows naturally from the preceding circumstance of the manifest victory. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has always had help from Allah, but on this occasion he received a very large share.

Verses 4 - 7

هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ السَّكِينَةَ فِي قُلُوبِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ لِيَزْدَادُوا إِيمَانًا مَعَ
 إِيمَانِهِمْ ۗ وَلِلَّهِ جُنُودُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا
 ﴿٤﴾ لِيَدْخُلَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ
 خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَيُكَفَّرُ عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ ۗ وَكَانَ ذَلِكَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا

﴿٥﴾ وَيُعَذِّبُ الْمُنْفِقِينَ وَالْمُنْفِقَاتِ وَالْمُشْرِكِينَ وَالْمُشْرِكَاتِ
 الظَّالِمِينَ بِاللَّهِ ظَنَّ السَّوْءِ ۗ عَلَيْهِمْ ذَاتُ السَّوْءِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ
 وَلَعَنَهُمْ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ جَهَنَّمَ ۗ وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا ﴿٦﴾ وَلِلَّهِ جُنُودُ
 السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ۗ وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا ﴿٧﴾

He (Allah) is such that He sent down tranquility into the hearts of the believers, so that they grow more in faith along with their (existing) faith - And to Allah belong the hosts of the heavens and the earth, and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise - [4] so that He admits the believing men and the believing women to the gardens beneath which rivers flow, to live therein for ever, and so that He may write off their evil deeds and that is a great achievement in Allah's sight, [5] and so that He may punish the hypocrites, men and women, and the *mushriks*, men and women, who think evil thoughts about Allah. Upon them there is a vicious circle, and Allah has become angry with them, and He has prepared *Jahannam* for them, and it is an evil destination. [6] And to Allah belong the hosts of the heavens and the earth. And Allah is Mighty, Wise. [7]

Bounties of Allah upon the Participants of Ḥudaibiyah

In the first three verses of this Sūrah, reference was made to Allah's particular bounties bestowed upon the Holy Prophet ﷺ in the wake of the manifest victory. Some of the participants of Ḥudaibiyah congratulating the Holy Prophet ﷺ, asked him that the favours are conferred exclusively upon him, but what is there in it for them? In response to this query, verses 4-7 were revealed. They distinctly refer to the good graces of Allah upon the participants of Ḥudaibiyah and the Pledge of Ridwān. These favours were generously bestowed upon them because of faith in, and obedience to, the Holy Prophet ﷺ. All believers whose faith and obedience are complete and perfect will receive similar good graces of Allah.

Verses 8 - 10

إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ شَاهِدًا وَمُبَشِّرًا وَنَذِيرًا ﴿٨﴾ لِّتُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ

وَتُعْزِرُوهُ وَتُقِرُّوهُ ۖ وَتُسَبِّحُوهُ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا ﴿٩﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ
يُيَايِعُونَكَ إِنَّمَا يُيَايِعُونَ اللَّهَ ۗ يَدُ اللَّهِ فَوْقَ أَيْدِيهِمْ ۖ فَمَنْ نَكَثَ
فَإِنَّمَا يَنْكُثُ عَلَىٰ نَفْسِهِ ۖ وَمَنْ أَوْفَىٰ بِمَا عَاهَدَ عَلَيْهِ اللَّهُ فَمَسِيْرِيْهِ
أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿١٠﴾

Indeed, We have sent you (O Prophet,) as a witness and as a bearer of good news and as a warner, [8] so that you (O people,) believe in Allah and His Messenger, and support him and revere him, and pronounce His (Allah's) purity morning and evening. [9] Those who pledge allegiance with you by placing their hands in your hand they, in fact, pledge allegiance with Allah. Allah's hand is over their hands. Then, whoever breaks his pledge breaks it to his own detriment, and whoever fulfils the covenant he has made with Allah, He will give him a great reward. [10]

Injunctions and Related Considerations

In the preceding verses, Allah referred to the favours he bestowed generously upon the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his *Ummah*, especially upon those who participated in the pledge of *Riḍwān*. The Bestower of the favours is Allah and the medium is the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Therefore, in the current set of verses, the right of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the obligation of the *Ummah* to honour and revere him is entrenched. First, three attributes of the Holy Prophet ﷺ are referred to: *shāhid*, *mubashshir*, *nadhīr*. *Shāhid* means 'witness' and its sense here is the same as that of *shahid* which occurs in [4:41].

كَيْفَ إِذَا جِئْنَا مِنْ كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ بِشَهِيدٍ وَجِئْنَا بِكَ عَلَىٰ هَؤُلَاءِ شَهِيدًا

"How would it, then, be when We shall bring a witness from every community and shall bring you over them as a witness.

Both forms of the word mean "a witness". Every Prophet will bear testimony to the fact that he has delivered Allah's message to his particular community - some accepted and others rejected. See *Ma'āriful Qur'ān*, Vol 2/pp 442-3 for details. Likewise the Holy Prophet ﷺ will bear witness for his community. *Qurtūbī* writes under [4:41] that the prophets' testimony will be for the people of their respective time as to who accepted

their call to the Truth and who defied it. Likewise the Holy Prophet's ﷺ testimony will be for the people of his particular time. Other scholars express the view that the Holy Prophet ﷺ will bear witness to the entire community's good and bad works, and to its obedience and defiance, because, according to some versions, angels present to the Holy Prophet ﷺ morning and evening the works of the community. Thus he is aware of the entire community's works.

Mubashshir and *Nadhīr*: *Mubashshir* connotes bearer of good tidings and *nadhīr* means a warner. That is to say, he gives glad tidings of Paradise to the believing and obedient sector of the community. On the other hand, he is a Warner to those who rejected the message - making them aware of the punishment of such defiance. Further, the purpose of sending the Messenger has been indicated - that is, to believe in Allah and his Messenger. In addition, it is mentioned that the believers must be characterized by three more qualities:

- [1] that they should "support him"
- [2] "and revere him"; and
- [3] "pronounce His (Allah's) purity morning and evening."

The first phrase contains a verb which is derived from the infinitive or verbal noun *ta'zīr* which denotes to help or support. Punishment is also called *ta'zīr* because the idea underlying punishment is to give real help to the criminal by punishing him (Rāghib: Mufradatul Qur'ān). The second phrase contains a verb which is derived from the infinitive or verbal noun *tawqīr* which means to show reverence. The third phrase contains a verb which is derived from the infinitive or verbal noun *tasbīḥ* which connotes to declare the purity of Allah. In this phrase, the third person anaphoric pronoun attached to the verb refers, by consensus of Qur'ānic grammarians, to "Allah", and there can be no other possibility. Therefore, most of them believe that the third person anaphoric pronouns attached to the respective verbs of the first two phrases also refer to "Allah". From this point of view, the three phrases mean: believe in Allah and help His religion and His Messenger, revere Him and pronounce His purity.

Other scholars refer the third person anaphoric pronouns attached to the verbs of the first two phrases to the "Messenger". From this point of view, the phrases mean: Help the Messenger and revere him; and

pronounce the purity of Allah. However, there is a third group of scholars who feel that in this interpretation there is *intishār-ud-damā'ir* or unconcentrated distribution of pronouns - leading to pronominal ambiguity and vagueness, and making it difficult to follow the meaning of the constructions which is not in conformity with the rules of Arabic rhetoric or *'ilm-ul-balāghah*. Allah knows best.

After that, there is reference to the pledge of Riḍwān which was narrated in part [10] of the story of Ḥudaibiyah. The purpose of the believers in entering into the pledge at the hands of the Holy Prophet ﷺ was to act upon the command of Allah and to receive His good pleasure. Therefore, when the blessed Companions placed their hands on the hand of the Holy Prophet ﷺ it was tantamount to taking the pledge at the hands of Allah. 'Allah's hand' is in any case something falling in the category of *mutashābihāt* the correct nature of which is cannot be known to us, nor should we attempt to investigate its reality. The significance of the pledge of Riḍwān is described later in the Sūrah. The word *bai'ah*, lexically, connotes a pledge to do some particular work. The ancient and traditional method of this pledge is for the pledging parties to place their hands upon each other, although the placing of hands is not a necessary condition. Nevertheless once the pledge is consummated, juristically it is binding, and its violation is unlawful. Therefore, it is later laid down that whoever violates the pledge will cause loss to himself. It will not cause loss to Allah and His Messenger. Whoever fulfils the terms of the pledge will receive a mighty reward from Allah.

Verses 11 - 14

سَيَقُولُ لَكَ الْمُخَلَّفُونَ مِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ شَغَلَتْنَا أَمْوَالُنَا وَأَهْلُونَا
فَاسْتَغْفِرْنَا ۖ يَقُولُونَ بِالسِّنْتِهِمْ مَالِيَسَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ ط قُلْ فَمَنْ
يَمْلِكُ لَكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا إِنْ أَرَادَ بِكُمْ ضَرًّا أَوْ أَرَادَ بِكُمْ نَفْعًا ۗ بَلْ
كَانَ اللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا ﴿١١﴾ بَلْ ظَنَنْتُمْ أَنْ لَنْ يَنْقَلِبَ الرَّسُولُ
وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِيهِمْ أَبَدًا وَزَيَّنَ ذَلِكَ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَظَنَنْتُمْ ظَنَّ
السَّوْءِ ۗ وَكُنْتُمْ قَوْمًا بُورًا ﴿١٢﴾ وَ مَنْ لَمْ يُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ

فَإِنَّا أَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكَافِرِينَ سَعِيرًا ﴿١٣﴾ ۞ وَلِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۗ
يَغْفِرُ لِمَن يَشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَن يَشَاءُ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا ﴿١٤﴾ ۞

Those of the Bedouins who remained behind will say to you, "Our possessions and our families kept us busy, (hence we could not accompany you in your journey to Ḥudaibiyah). So, pray to Allah for our forgiveness." They say with their tongues what is not in their hearts. Say, "Then, who has power to avail you in any thing against Allah, if He intends to do you harm, or intends to do you good? Rather, Allah is fully aware of what you do. [11] No, but you thought that the Messenger and the believers would never ever return to their families, and it seemed good to your hearts, and you thought an evil thought and became a ruined people." [12] And if one does not believe in Allah and His Messenger, then We have prepared a blazing fire for the disbelievers. [13] And to Allah belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth. He forgives whomsoever He wills, and punishes whomsoever He wills. And Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful. [14]

Related Considerations

Reference in this passage is to those Bedouin tribes who were invited by Allah's Messenger ﷺ to join the party of 1400 Muslims who were marching to Ḥudaibiyah but on one pretext or another, they requested to be excused. This was narrated in part [1] of the story of Ḥudaibiyah. According to some versions, some of those people later repented and became sincere Muslims.

Verses 15 - 17

سَيَقُولُ الْمُخَلَّفُونَ إِذَا انْطَلَقْتُمْ إِلَىٰ مَغَانِمَ لِتَأْخُذُوهَا ذَرُونَا نَتَّبِعْكُمْ ۗ
يُرِيدُونَ أَن يُبَدِّلُوا كَلِمَ اللَّهِ ۗ قُلْ لَن تَتَّبِعُونَا كَذَلِكُمْ قَالَ اللَّهُ مِنْ
قَبْلُ ۗ فَسَيَقُولُونَ بَلْ تَحْسُدُونَنَا ۗ بَلْ كَانُوا لَا يَفْقَهُونَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا
﴿١٥﴾ ۞ قُلْ لِلْمُخَلَّفِينَ مِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ سَتُدْعُونَ إِلَىٰ قَوْمٍ أُولَىٰ بِأَسِ
شَدِيدٍ تَقَاتَلُوهُمْ أَوْ يُسَلِّمُوا ۗ فَإِنْ تَطِيعُوا يُؤْتِكُمُ اللَّهُ أَجْرًا حَسَنًا ۗ

وَأِنْ تَوَلَّوْا كَمَا تَوَلَّيْتُمْ مِنْ قَبْلُ يُعَذِّبْكُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ﴿١٦﴾ لَيْسَ
 عَلَى الْأَعْمَى حَرْجٌ وَلَا عَلَى الْأَعْرَجِ حَرْجٌ وَلَا عَلَى الْمَرِيضِ
 حَرْجٌ ۗ وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ يُدْخِلْهُ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا
 الْأَنْهَارُ ۗ وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّ يُعَذِّبْهُ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ﴿١٧﴾

And those who remained behind will say, when you will proceed to the spoils (of war) to receive them, "Let us follow you." They wish to change the statement of Allah. Say, "You shall not follow us. Allah had said like this beforehand." Then they will say, "No, but you are jealous of us." On the contrary, they do not understand (the reality) but a little. [15] Say to those of the Bedouins who remained behind, "You will be called against a people possessed of strong fighting power; you will have to fight them, or they will submit. So if you obey, Allah will give you a good reward, and if you turn away, as you had turned away before, He will punish you with a painful punishment. [16] There is no blame on the blind, nor is there any blame on the lame, nor is there any blame on the sick. And whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger, He will admit him to the gardens beneath which rivers flow. And whoever turns away, He will punish him with a painful punishment. [17]

Injunctions and Related Issues

The reference in this passage is to the incident which took place in the 7th year of Hijrah after the Holy Prophet ﷺ returned from Hudaibiyah. When he intended to march on Khaibar, he took with him only those sincere Muslims who were with him at Hudaibiyah and participated in the Pledge of Ridwan. When Allah promised His Messenger the conquest of Khaibar and great spoils, those Bedouin tribes who had contrived to remain behind when the Holy Prophet ﷺ went for 'Umrah, requested the Holy Prophet ﷺ to be allowed to join the Muslim army, either because they guessed that Khaibar would be conquered and they would receive a good share of the booty, or because they perceived the divine blessings bestowed on the Muslims as a result of the expedition of Hudaibiyah' and being remorseful on their wrong decision, they intended to join the new expedition. In response to their request, the Qur'an says: **يُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يُبَدِّلُوا كَلِمَ اللَّهِ** "They wish to change the statement of Allah...[48:15]" **اللَّهُ**

statement' refers to the injunction that the right to participate in the expedition of Khaibar and receiving a share in its spoils is reserved exclusively for those sincere Muslims who were with the Holy Prophet ﷺ at Ḥudaibiyah. The same injunction is again referred to by saying, كَذَلِكَ قَالَ اللَّهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ "Allah had said like this beforehand.... [48:15]" It means that the injunction of restricting the right of participation in Khyber to the participants of Hudaibiah had been revealed by Allah before the revelation of these verses. However, this injunction is not available in the Qur'ān anywhere else. So the question is: how is it then correct to refer this injunction as a 'statement of Allah' or as 'Allah has said like this'? Answer to this question depends on understanding the different kinds of the divine revelation which follow:

Divine Revelation is not restricted to the Qur'ān; Many injunctions are revealed without being a part of the Qur'ān, and Prophetic aḥādīth have also the status of being 'Allah's injunctions'

Wahy [revelation] is divisible into two types: [1] *Wahy Matluww* or recited revelation; and [2] *Wahy Ghayr-Matluww* or unrecited revelation. *Wahy Matluww* refers to the Qur'ān - the words and meanings of which are both from Allah. *Wahy Ghayr-Matluww* refers to the Ḥadīth of the Holy Prophet ﷺ - the wordings of which are from the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the meanings of which are from Allah (See Ma'āriful Qur'ān: Vol. 2/570). *Wahy Ghayr-Matluww*, like *Wahy Matluww*, is one of the fundamental sources of Islamic injunctions.

With this juristic principle in mind, scholars have explained that the restrictive injunction made to the participants of Ḥudaibiyah is nowhere asserted explicitly in the Qur'ān or *Wahy Matluww*. However, it was made for them to the Holy Prophet ﷺ through *Wahy Ghayr-Matluww* on his way to Ḥudaibiyah to which the Qur'ān refers by the phrases *Kalāmullah* (the statement of Allah) and *qālallah* (Allah said). From this a general juristic rule may be deduced that the injunctions entrenched in *aḥādīth ṣaḥīḥah* [Authentic Prophetic Traditions] have the status of being 'Allah's statement' and 'Allah's saying'. These verses are sufficient to unmask the deviation of those who turned aside from the truth by refusing to accept *aḥādīth* as a religious authority.

Some people have tried to argue that the restrictive injunction is found in the Qur'an itself, that is in verses 18 and 19 of this very Sūrah "so He sent down tranquillity upon them, and rewarded them with a well-nigh victory, and many spoils that they would receive." This verse was revealed in the beginning of the journey to Ḥudaibiah, and "well-nigh victory" refers, according to consensus of Qur'ānic scholars, to the victory of Khaibar. Thus the phrases *Kalāmullah* (the statement of Allah) and *qālallāh* (Allah said) could refer to verses 18 and 19, and it is not necessary that it is construed as an injunction conveyed through *Wahy Ghayr-Matluww*. But this argument is misconceived because verse 18 and 19 contain a promise that the participants of Ḥudaibiah would receive many spoils in the victory of Khaibar, but it is nowhere mentioned in these verses that these spoils will be restricted to the participants of Hudaibiah and no one else will participate in them. Therefore, No doubt, this restriction was made by *Wahy Ghayr-Matluww* or the Ḥadīth of the Holy Prophet ﷺ which is meant by the Qur'ānic phrases *Kalāmullah* and *qālallāh*.

Some people have applied the words, 'the statement of Allah' occurring in verse 15 to verse 83 of Sūrah At-Taubah:

فَاسْتَأْذَنُوكَ لِلْخُرُوجِ فَقُلْ لَنْ تَخْرُجُوا مَعِيَ أَبَدًا وَلَنْ تُقَاتِلُوا مَعِيَ عَدُوًّا إِنَّكُمْ رَضِيتُمْ بِالْقُعُودِ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ

They sought disorder even earlier and tried to upset matters for you, until the Truth arrived and the will of Allah prevailed, though they disliked it. [Sūrah Taubah: 48]

This is not true, because the verses of Sūrah At-Taubah pertain to the battle of Tabūk which took place in the 9th year of Hijrah whereas the expedition of Khaibar took place two years earlier in the 7th year of Hijrah (Qurtubī; and others).

فُلْ لَنْ تَتَّبِعُونَا ("...say: 'You shall not follow us' - 48:15".) In this clause, the laggards who contrived to be left behind are emphatically told that they could not be allowed to march against the Jews of Khaibar and partake of the booty. However, this prohibition is restricted to the expedition of Khaibar, but in the near future they would be allowed to fight other battles. This is the reason why from among the laggards, the tribes of Muzainah and Juhainah later on fought in the company of the Holy

Prophet ﷺ (al-Rūḥ citing from al-Baḥr; Bayān).

Some of the Laggards Repent and Become Sincere Muslims

All the laggards that did not march towards Ḥudaibiyah were prohibited from taking part in the expedition of Khaibar, whereas not all of them were hypocrites, some were sincere Muslims. And some at that particular time were hypocrites, but later on, through the Grace of Allah, they became sincere Muslims. Verse [16] consoles and comforts the laggards that though, because of Allah's promise made to the participants of Ḥudaibiyah, they cannot be allowed to take part in the expedition of Khaibar, yet in the near future the sincere Muslims would be called upon to fight against much more powerful enemies. Thus the Qur'ān predicts "سَتُدْعَوْنَ إِلَىٰ قَوْمٍ أُولَىٰ بَأْسٍ شَدِيدٍ تُقَاتِلُونَهُمْ أَوْ يُسْلِمُونَ" You will be called against a people possessed of strong fighting power; you will have to fight them, or they will submit". (48:16)

We need to bear in mind the verse foretells that they will be invited to take part in battles that will be fought against a formidable militant nation. Islamic history bears ample testimony to the fact that this prediction was not fulfilled during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. There are several reasons for this. First of all, though battles did take place during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet ﷺ after the expedition of Khaibar, there is no proof that the Holy Prophet ﷺ called upon the Bedouins to fight. Secondly, after that no battle took place with such a nation whose fighters were so brave, chivalrous and formidable as the Qur'ān describes. Although in the battle of Tabūk the encounter was with a formidable force, neither is there any evidence that the Bedouins were invited to fight, nor did any actual fighting take place in Tabūk, because Allah had infused terror in the minds of the opponents, and they did not turn up. As far as the battle of Ḥunain is concerned, there is no proof of their being invited, nor was the opponent so powerful. Therefore, some of the leading scholars of Tafsīr express the view that the prediction in the verse refers to the fierce and protracted wars with the Byzantine and Iranian empires which took place during the reign of Sayyidnā Al-Farūq-ul-A'ẓam ﷺ (Ibn 'Abba, 'Ata, Mujāhid, Ibn Abī Laila, and Hasan in Qurtubī'). Sayyidnā Rāfi' Ibn Khadij ﷺ says: " We read this verse in the Qur'ān in which the word 'qawm' (people) occurs, but we did not know to which 'qawm' reference is made, until after the Holy Prophet ﷺ when Abū Bakr

Ṣiddīq ﷺ took over the reign of Caliphate and invited us to take up arms against Banū Ḥanīfah, the people of Yamāmah, that is, Musailimah Al-Kadhdhāb. So we thought the Qur'an refers to this 'qawm' (people)." However, there is no conflict or contradiction between these views. The word 'qawm' (people) could comprehend all these nations. Having cited all these views, Imām Qurṭubī asserts that this verse confirms the legitimacy of the Caliphate of Sayyidnā Abū Bakr and Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ. The Qur'an itself asserts in the above-quoted verse their calling upon the people to fight.

تَقَاتِلُونَهُمْ أَوْ يُسَلِّمُوا ("...you will have to fight them, or they will submit") According to the *qirā'ah* (reading) of Sayyidnā 'Ubaiyy ﷺ in the second disjunctive clause *أَوْ يُسَلِّمُوا* *au yuslimū* the *nūn* has been omitted. Therefore, Imām Qurṭubī takes the disjunctive particle *au* originally standing for "or" in the sense of *ḥattā* (until). In other words, the fighting will carry on with that nation until they surrender - whether by embracing Islam or by submitting to the Islamic rule.

لَيْسَ عَلَى الْأَعْمَى حَرَجٌ (There is no blame on the blind, nor is there any blame on the lame, nor is there any blame on the sick...48:17) Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ reports that when some sincere Muslimss who were physically unable to fight read the concluding clause of verse 16: *وَأَنْ تَتَوَلَّوْا* "And if you turn away, as you had turned away before, He will punish you with a painful punishment. [48:16]" they expressed their concern about the warning. Verse [17] was revealed to exempt them from the injunction of *jihād*. These people included blind, lame or sick persons (Qurṭubī). And Allah knows best!

Verses 18 - 21

لَقَدْ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ يُبَايِعُونَكَ تَحْتَ الشَّجَرَةِ فَعَلِمَ مَا فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ فَأَنْزَلَ السَّكِينَةَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَثَابَهُمْ فَتْحًا قَرِيبًا ﴿١٨﴾
 وَمَغَانِمَ كَثِيرَةً يَأْخُذُونَهَا ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا ﴿١٩﴾ وَعَدَّكُمْ
 اللَّهُ مَغَانِمَ كَثِيرَةً يَأْخُذُونَهَا فَعَجَّلَ لَكُمْ هَذِهِ وَكَفَّ أَيْدِيَ النَّاسِ
 عَنْكُمْ ۗ وَلِتَكُونَ آيَةً لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَيَهْدِيَكُمْ صِرَاطًا مُّسْتَقِيمًا ﴿٢٠﴾

وَأُخْرَى لَمْ تَقْدِرُوا عَلَيْهَا قَدْ أَحَاطَ اللَّهُ بِهَا وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرًا ﴿٢١﴾

Allah was pleased with the believers when they were pledging allegiance with you by placing their hands in your hands under the tree, and He knew what was in their hearts, so He sent down tranquility upon them, and rewarded them with a well-nigh victory, [18] and many spoils that they would receive. And Allah is Mighty, Wise. [19] Allah had promised you many spoils that you would receive, so He gave these to you sooner, and stopped the hands of the people from (harming) you. And (He did this) so that it becomes a sign for the believers, and so that He guides you to the right path. [20] And (there are) other (victories) that have not come within your power as yet, (but) Allah has encompassed them. And Allah is Powerful over every thing. [21]

Commentary

لَقَدْ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ يُبَايِعُونَكَ تَحْتَ الشَّجَرَةِ (Allah was pleased with the believers when they were pledging allegiance with you by placing their hands in your hands under the tree,...48:18). The reference in this verse is to the same pledge that was given at Ḥudaibiyah and which was referred to earlier in verse 10. Verse [18] reinforces verse [10.]. In verse [18] Allah announces that those sincere participants who took this solemn oath have obtained His pleasure. Therefore, the oath came to be known as *bai'at-ur-Riḍwān* (that is, the pledge that earned Allah's pleasure). The purpose of this is to compliment the participants of the allegiance and to emphasise the obligation of fulfilling the covenant. It is recorded in Bukhārī and Muslim on the authority of Sayyidnā Jābir رضي الله عنه that on the day of Ḥudaibiyah, the companions were 1400 people, and the Holy Prophet ﷺ said to them: "أَنْتُمْ خَيْرُ أَهْلِ الْأَرْضِ" "You are the best of people living on the surface of the earth." It is recorded in Muslim on the authority of Umm Bishr رضي الله عنها that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said, لَا يَدْخُلُ النَّارَ أَحَدٌ مِمَّنْ بَايَعَ تَحْتَ الشَّجَرَةِ "None of those who swore fealty under the tree will enter the Fire" (Maḥzarī). Therefore, the participants of this allegiance are like the participants of the battle of Badr. The Qur'an and Ḥadīth give glad tidings of Allah's pleasure and Paradise to the participants of the battle of Badr. Likewise the sources give glad tidings of Allah's pleasure and

Paradise to the participants of *bai'at-ur-Riḍwān*. These tidings bear testimony to the fact that these sincere participants meet their end in the state of faith, righteousness, and with deeds that please Allah, because this announcement of Allah's pleasure guarantees that.

Vilification of, and Finding Fault with, the Noble Companions Prohibited

Tafsīr Mazharī says that the noble Companions are among the best of the Prophet's ﷺ followers, and as such Allah has announced forgiveness of their sins, shortcomings and slips - if they committed any. Therefore, it is against the declaration of this verse to investigate into those of their deeds that are not laudable, and to make it a subject of debate. It is also a crystal clear denunciation of the attitude of *Rawāfiḍ*, the Shi'ites, who reject the legitimacy of the caliphs Abū Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthmān, ﷺ and vilify them and other blessed Companions - condemning them as unbelievers and hypocrites.

The Tree of *Riḍwān*

The tree that is mentioned in this verse refers to *mimosa arabica* or the gum-acacia tree. It is reported that after the Holy Prophet ﷺ some people used to take walk there and perform *ṣalāh*. Sayyidnā 'Umar ﷺ came to know about this and feared that the future generation lacking in knowledge might start worshipping the very tree, as it happened in the past generations. Therefore, he had the tree felled. However, it is recorded in Bukhārī and Muslim on the authority of Sayyidnā Ṭāriq Ibn 'Abdur-Raḥmān ﷺ who reports: "I once went for Ḥajj, and I passed by some people who had gathered in a place and were performing *ṣalāh*. I asked them: 'Which mosque is this?'. They replied: 'This is the tree under which the Holy Prophet ﷺ took *bai'at-ur-Riḍwān*.' After that I went up to Sayyidnā Sa'īd Ibn Muṣayyab ﷺ and narrated this incident to him. He said: 'My father was one of those who participated in *bai'at-ur-Riḍwān*. He said to me that when he went to Makkah the following year he looked for the tree, but could not find it.' Then Sayyidnā Sa'īd Ibn Muṣayyab ﷺ added: 'Companions who participated in *bai'at-ur-Riḍwān* at the hands of the Holy Prophet ﷺ themselves are unaware of the location of the tree, but it is strange that you should know about it. Are you more knowledgeable than they are?' (Ruh-ul-Ma'ānī). This goes to show that later on people must have determined conjecturally -

based on incomplete and doubtful evidence - about a particular tree that it was the tree under which the pledge was taken. As a result, they frequented the place and performed *ṣalāh*. Sayyidnā 'Umar ؓ knew that it was not the real tree. Then he apprehended people's involvement in shirk. Therefore, he had the tree felled.

Conquest of Khaibar

Khaibar is the name of a province which comprises many settlements, fortresses and gardens (Maẓharī). Verse 18 refers to the victory of Khaibar by saying, "وَأَنَّا لَهُمْ فَتْحًا قَرِيبًا" and rewarded them with a well-nigh victory, ". There is consensus of the scholars on that 'well-nigh victory' in this verse means the victory of Khaibar which occurred after returning from Ḥudaibiyah. According to some versions, the Holy Prophet ﷺ stayed in Madinah after returning from Ḥudaibiyah only for ten days, and according to other versions, he stayed for twenty days. Then he marched against Khaibar. According to Ibn Ishāq's version, he returned to Madīnah in the month of Dhulḥijjah and set out for Khaibar in the month of Muḥarram in the 7th year of Hijrah.

Khaibar was conquered in the month of Ṣafar in the 7th year of Hijrah. This is reported by Waqidi's Maghāzī. According to Ḥāfiẓ Ibn-Hajar, this is the preferred opinion. (Tafsīr Maẓharī)

In any case, this shows that the conquest of Khaibar took place many days after the march to Ḥudaibiyah. According to consensus of scholarly opinion, Sūrah Al-Faṭḥ was revealed in the course of his return journey from Hudaibiya. However, there is a difference of opinion whether the Sūrah was revealed in its entirety or some of its verses were revealed later. If the first view is preferred, then the conquest of Khaibar is a prophecy that Muslims will definitely achieve and is described in past perfect tense to denote that it is as certain as an event that has already happened in the past. If the second view is preferred, it is possible that these verses were revealed after the conquest of Khaibar. Allah knows best!

وَمَعَانِمَ كَثِيرَةً يَأْخُذُونَهَا (and many spoils that they would receive...48:19) This clause refers to the great booty that fell into the hands of Muslims during the conquest of Khaibar.

وَعَدَّكُمْ اللَّهُ مَعَانِمَ كَثِيرَةً تَأْخُذُونَهَا فَعَجَّلَ لَكُمْ هَذِهِ

spoils that you would receive, so He gave these to you sooner - 48:20). The phrase "many spoils" mentioned here refers to the sizeable spoils that fell into the hands of Muslims in the conquests which followed the victory at Khaibar, in the rest of Arabia and the neighbouring countries. This verse embodies a prophecy that Muslims will achieve other great victories after the victory of Khaibar, and in consequence many spoils until the end of the world. However, before those numerous conquests, the conquest of Khaibar was given first, the spoils of which were reserved by Allah exclusively for the participants of Ḥudaibiyah. But the spoils to be achieved in all the next conquest would be common to all. This shows that the injunction of reserving the right of participating in Khaibar is not laid down explicitly in these verses. That injunction was laid down, as detailed earlier, in a separate category of revelation, that is, in the unrecited revelation. The Holy Prophet ﷺ acted upon the injunction and imparted its knowledge to the noble Companions.

وَكَفَّ أَيْدِيَ النَّاسِ عَنْكُمْ (...and stopped the hands of the people from (harming) you. ... 48:20). This refers to the unbelievers of Khaibar. In this battle, Allah did not allow them the opportunity to show much strength or force. Imām Baghawī says that the tribe of *Ghatafan* was the ally of the Jews of Khaibar. When it heard of the Holy Prophet's march against the Jews of Khaibar, it equipped itself with heavy arms to defend the Jews. But Allah infused terror into their minds, and they were worried that if they went forward, it was possible that a Muslim army might attack their homes in their absence. As a result, they got cold feet and did not have the courage to proceed (Mazhari).

وَيَهْدِيكُمْ صِرَاطًا مُسْتَقِيمًا (...And (He did this) so that He guides you to the right path.... 48:20) It is clarified earlier (in the commentary on verse 2 of this Sūrah that there are several degrees of guidance. From that point of view, they were all already guided on the straight path. Here it refers to the degree of guidance which they had not yet attained, that is, full reliance on Allah and increase in the power of faith.

وَأُخْرَى لَمْ تَقْدِرُوا عَلَيْهَا قَدْ أَحَاطَ اللَّهُ بِهَا (And (there are) other (victories) that have not come within your power as yet, (but) Allah has encompassed them...." (48:21). This verse embodies a prophecy that Muslims will achieve many more great victories after the victory of Khaibar. But Allah says that they were unable to achieve them at that time; they would happen in

future. Among these victories, Makkah was the first one to be achieved. Therefore, some scholars refer this to the victory of Makkah. However, the wordings are general and refer to all the victories that will be achieved till the end of the world (Maẓharī).

Verses 22 - 26

وَلَوْ قَاتَلَكُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوَلَّوْا الْأَدْبَارَ ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُونَ وَلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيرًا ﴿٢٢﴾ سُنَّةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِ مِجٍّ وَلَنْ تَجِدَ لِسُنَّةِ اللَّهِ تَبْدِيلًا ﴿٢٣﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِي كَفَّ أَيْدِيَهُمْ عَنْكُمْ وَأَيْدِيَكُمْ عَنْهُمْ بِبَطْنِ مَكَّةَ مِنْ بَعْدِ أَنْ أَظْفَرَكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرًا ﴿٢٤﴾ هُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَصَدُّوكُمْ عَنِ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَالْهَدْيِ مَعْكُوفًا أَنْ يَبْلُغَ مَحَلَّهُ ۗ وَلَوْلَا رِجَالٌ مُؤْمِنُونَ وَنِسَاءٌ مُؤْمِنَاتٌ لَمْ تَعْلَمُوهُمْ أَنْ تَطَّوَّهُمْ فِتْصِبِيكُم مِّنْهُمْ مَّعْرَةٌ ۚ بَغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ ۚ لِيُدْخِلَ اللَّهُ فِي رَحْمَتِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۚ لَو تَزَيَّلُوا لَعَذَّبْنَا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ﴿٢٥﴾ إِذْ جَعَلَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْحَمِيَّةَ حَمِيَّةَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ وَعَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَأَلْزَمَهُمْ كَلِمَةَ التَّقْوَى وَكَانُوا أَحَقَّ بِهَا وَأَهْلَهَا ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا ﴿٢٦﴾

And had the disbelievers fought you, they would have certainly turned their backs, then they would have found neither a supporter nor a helper - [22] - according to the consistent practice of Allah that went on since before, and you will never find a change in Allah's consistent practice. [23] And He is the One who restrained their hands from you and your hands from them in the valley of Makkah after He had let you prevail over them, and Allah is watchful over what you do. [24] They are those who disbelieved and prevented you from the Sacred Mosque (Al-Masjid-ul-Ḥarām), and

(prevented) the sacrificial animals that were detained from reaching their due place. And (Allah would have allowed you to fight,) had there not been believing men and believing women whom you did not know that you might have trampled them, and thus an embarrassing situation might have befallen you because of them unknowingly, (but this was avoided) so that Allah may admit to His mercy whom He wills. And if they (the believing men and women) had been separate (from disbelievers), We would surely have punished those of them who disbelieved with a painful punishment. [25] When the disbelievers developed in their hearts indignation, the indignation of ignorance; then Allah sent down tranquility from Himself upon His Messenger and upon the believers, and made them stick to the word of piety, and they were very much entitled to it, and competent for it. And Allah is All-Knowing about every thing. [26]

Commentary

بَيْطِنِ مَكَّةَ (...in the valley of Makkah...) The Arabic word used here is *batn* which means 'belly' and in relation to a city, it refers to its center. However, in the present context it is used for Ḥudaibiyah, because of its close proximity to Makkah. This supports the Ḥanafī view that some parts of Ḥudaibiyah are included in the *ḥaram*. The relevant details may be found in our commentary on the verse 2:196.

فَتُصِيبُكُمْ مِنْهُمْ مَعْرَةٌ بَغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ (and thus an embarrassing situation might have befallen you because of them unknowingly....48:25): According to some authorities on lexicology *ma'arrāh* connotes "sin"; according to others it means "*harm*"; and other authorities say it denotes "shame" or "embarrassment". In this context, apparently the last meaning appears to be apt. There was a nucleus of Muslims in Makkah and if the fight had broken out, Muslim army would have unwittingly killed their own Muslim brethren in faith, thereby causing great injury to their own cause, and incurring *obloquy* and *opprobrium* for themselves.

Natural Safeguard of the Noble Companions against Mistakes

Imām Qurtubī says that if a Muslim unknowingly kills another Muslim, it is not a sin or crime. It is, however, certainly a source of shame, embarrassment and regret. Since it is a *Qatl Khata'*, the laws of *diyāh* [blood-wit] will apply. Allah has protected the noble Companions against

Verses 27 - 29

لَقَدْ صَدَقَ اللَّهُ رَسُولَهُ الرُّءْيَا بِالْحَقِّ ۚ لَتَدْخُلَنَّ الْمَسْجِدَ الْحَرَامَ إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ آمِنِينَ ۙ مُحَلِّقِينَ رُءُوسَهُمْ وَمُقَصِّرِينَ ۙ لَا تَخَافُونَ ۗ فَعَلِمَ مَا لَمْ تَعْلَمُوا فَجَعَلَ مِنْ دُونِ ذَلِكَ فَتْحًا قَرِيبًا ﴿٢٧﴾ هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ ۗ وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا ﴿٢٨﴾ مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ۗ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ أَشِدَّاءُ عَلَى الْكُفَّارِ رُحَمَاءُ بَيْنَهُمْ تَرَاهُمْ رُكَّعًا سُجَّدًا يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانًا ۚ سِيمَاهُمْ فِي وُجُوهِهِمْ مِّنْ أَثَرِ السُّجُودِ ۗ ذَلِكَ مَثَلُهُمْ فِي التَّوْرَةِ ۚ وَ مَثَلُهُمْ فِي الْإِنْجِيلِ ۚ كَزَرْعٍ أَخْرَجَ شَطْأَهُ فَآزَرَهُ فَاسْتَغْلَظَ فَاسْتَوَىٰ عَلَىٰ سُوقِهِ يُعْجِبُ الزُّرَّاعَ لِيُغَيِّظَ بِهِمُ الْكُفَّارَ ۗ وَعَدَّ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنْهُمْ مَغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٢٩﴾

Indeed, Allah has made true to His Messenger the dream (shown) with truth: You will most definitely enter the Sacred Mosque inshaallah (if Allah wills,) peacefully, with your heads shaved, and your hairs cut short, having no fear. So He knew what you did not know, and He assigned before that a well-nigh victory. [27] 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. And Allah suffices as a witness. [28] Muhammad is the messenger of Allah, and those who are with him are hard against the disbelievers, compassionate among themselves; you will see them bowing down in Rukū', prostrating in Sajdah, seeking bounty from Allah and (His) good pleasure; their distinguishing feature is on their faces from the effect of Sajdah (prostration). This is their description in the Torah; and their description in the Injil is: like a sown crop that brings forth its shoot, then makes it strong, then it grows thick and stands straight on its stem, looking good to the farmers, – so that He may enrage the disbelievers through them. Allah has promised forgiveness and a huge reward to those of them who

believe and do good deeds. [29]

Recapitulation of the Event of Ḥudaibiyah

When the Peace Treaty of Ḥudaibiyah was completed, it was decided that the Muslims would not enter Makkah that year, and would return to Madīnah without performing 'Umrah. They were highly upset at this, because the blessed Companions' determination to perform 'Umrah was on account of the Holy Prophet's ﷺ vision, which is also a kind of revelation. The fact that everything was apparently happening contrary to the vision, they could not understand how the Holy Prophet's ﷺ journey had served its purpose. Some of the noble Companions, as a result, began to doubt, God forbid!, whether the vision was not fulfilled. The non-believers and hypocrites, on the other hand, taunted the believers that their Prophet's dream was not translated into reality. At this, the current set of verses was revealed (Transmitted by Baihaqī and others from Mujāhid).

لَقَدْ صَدَقَ اللَّهُ رَسُولَهُ الرُّؤْيَا بِالْحَقِّ (Indeed, Allah has made true to His Messenger the dream (shown) with truth...48:27). *Ṣidq* [truth] is, lexically, the antonym of *kidhb* [lie or falsehood]. Both these words are used for statements. If a statement is conformable to existing fact or reality, it is *ṣidq*. If it lacks accord with fact or reality, it is *kidhb*. Sometimes this word is used in relation to actions. In that case the word connotes the realization of an action, as for instance in [33:23], رَجَالٌ صَدَقُوا مَا عَاهَدُوا اللَّهَ (Among the believers are men who were true to their covenant with Allah;...). In this case the word *ṣidq* takes two grammatical objects, as in this verse the first object of the verb *ṣadaqa* is *rasūlahū* and its second object is *ru'yā*. The verse says that Allah has made true the dream. Here the event that was to take place in future has been expressed in the past perfect tense because of its certainty of occurrence. A reinforcing context that this event is definitely going to take place in future is expressed in energetic aorist thus: "لَتَدْخُلَنَّ الْمَسْجِدَ الْحَرَامَ" "You will most definitely enter the Sacred Mosque." (The construction under analysis *la-tadkhulu-anna* is made up of the following constituents: The corroborative *la* is prefixed to the aorist denoting "Certainly" + the doubled energetic or corrobative *nun* reinforcing the sense of "most definitely" appended as a suffix to the future tense *tadkhulu* "you shall most definitely enter"). That is to say, the vision you had seen that you

Have entered the sacred Mosque will most definitely happen. It will not happen this year. It will happen at a future date. The date had not been specified in the dream. The blessed Companions in their enthusiasm made up their mind to set out for the journey that very year, and the Holy Prophet ﷺ concurred with their determination. There was much Divine wisdom in it which became manifest at the time of the Treaty of Hudaibiyah and served many useful purposes to which reference is already made. For example, when Sayyidnā 'Umar ؓ questioned the whole situation and expressed his doubt, Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ؓ allayed his suspicions and misgivings. He said no particular date and year was specified in the Holy Prophet's ﷺ vision. If it did not happen now, it does not matter; it will happen at some other time (Qurtubī).

Importance of *insha-allāh* for the Performance of Future Works

In this verse Allah promises the Muslims that they will most definitely enter the sacred precincts of Makkah at a future time, and in making His promise He employed the phrase *إِنشَاءَ اللَّهِ insha-allāh* [If Allah wills or God willing]. Allah being fully aware of His Will, there was no need for Him to have used the phrase, yet He used it (Qurtubī). This has been done for the purpose of teaching the Messenger and the people the importance of *insha-allāh*. (Qurtubī)

مُحَلِّقِينَ رُءُوسَكُمْ وَمُقَصِّرِينَ (...your heads shaved, your hair cut short... 48:27). It is recorded in Bukhārī that when 'Umrah that was missed in the sixth year of Hijrah was performed in Dhul Qa'dah of the following year [7 .H.] and came to be known in history as 'Umrāt-ul-Qaḍā', Sayyidnā Mu'āwiyah ؓ says he trimmed the blessed hair of the Holy Prophet ﷺ with a pair of scissors. This incident took place in 'Umrāt-ul-Qaḍā', not in *hajja-tul-wadā'* [farewell pilgrimage] because on the latter occasion he had his head shaved (Qurtubī).

فَعَلِمَ مَا لَمْ تَعْلَمُوا (So He knew what you did not know...48:27). It was within Allah's power to have allowed the Muslims to enter the sacred Mosque and perform their 'Umrah that very year. However, there was great wisdom in deferring it until the following year which Allah only knew and the Muslims generally did not know. Among these benefits was the conquest of Khaibar which Allah had willed must be achieved first, so that the Muslims may become a powerful force in terms of material resources. This would make it possible for them to perform their 'Umrah

peacefully and with tranquility. Thus the Qur'an says: فَجَعَلَ مِنْ دُونِ ذَلِكَ فَتْحًا قَرِيبًا (and He assigned before that a well-nigh victory.) [27]" *Dūna dhālika* (before that) in this context stands for *دُونِ الرُّوْيَا Dunar-ru'yā*, that is to say, before the fulfilment of this vision, the Muslims must achieve the conquest of Khaibar which is near at hand.* Some scholars have expressed the view that *فَتْحًا قَرِيبًا fathān qarīban* [nigh victory] refers to the Peace Treaty of Ḥudaibiyah itself, because that opened the gate for the victory of Makkah and all subsequent victories. Eventually, all the noble Companions acknowledged the Treaty to be the greatest of all victories. The meaning of the verse would be: you did not know what wisdom and good lay hidden in your determination to march, then your apparent failure to accomplish it, and eventually in reaching a peace settlement the terms of which seemed to be hurtful to your self-respect but Allah was fully acquainted with it. He had ordained that before the Holy Prophet's ﷺ vision should manifest itself, you might be blessed with another victory in the form of the Peace Treaty of Ḥudaibiyah - a victory near at hand. As a result of this victory, it was seen by all that while on the occasion of Ḥudaibiyah the noble Companions did not number more than 1500, later they increased in number to about 10000 (Qurṭubī).

هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ (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....48:28). In the preceding verses, promises were made about conquests and spoils of war; reference was made to the special merits of the participants of Ḥudaibiyah and general merits of all the noble Companions; and glad tidings were given to them. Now at the conclusion of the Sūrah all these themes are summarized and emphasized. Because these blessings were showered and the glad tidings were given as a result of accepting and obeying the Holy Prophet ﷺ, the verse lays further stress on strengthening the acceptance and obedience of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. It also denounces those who reject the messengership of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and allays suspicions of those Muslims who were dissatisfied with the terms and provisions of the Treaty

*. This was necessary because the Jews of Khaibar always conspired with the disbelievers of Makkah against the Holy Prophet ﷺ who was encircled by the Makkans from the South, and by the Jews of Khaibar from the North. Any possible battle with any of them would entail the danger from the backside. The Treaty of Hudaibiah made the South safe for the Muslims, and they were able to conquer Khaibar on the North without any fear from their back. (Muhammad Taqi Usmani)

of Ḥudaibiyah. The verse in addition confirms the messengership of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and, giving glad tidings, makes a very bold prophecy to the effect that not only would Islam prevail in Arabia but would also eventually triumph over all other religions.

مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah...48:29). The general style of the Qur'ān is that, instead of referring to the Holy Prophet ﷺ by his name, he is normally called by one or another of his characteristic or attributive names especially in vocative cases, as for example, *yā ayyuhan-nabiyyu*, *yā ayyuhar-rasūlu*, *yā ayyuhal-muzzammilu* and so on, unlike other prophets who are addressed by their personal names, as for instance, *yā ibrahīmu*, *yā mūsā*, *yā 'īsā*. The Holy Prophet ﷺ is addressed four times only in the entire Qur'ān by his personal name Muḥammad. This is done only where there is a special reason for it. Here the reason is that when at Ḥudaibiyah, the Peace Treaty was being written, the unbelievers had objected to the use of the characteristic or attributive name [*rasūlul-lāh*] with the personal name of the Messenger of Allah. The pagan Quraish wiped off Muḥammad *rasūl-ul-lāh*, and insisted that it be replaced with Muḥammad Ibn 'Abdullāh. By the command of Allah, the Messenger accepted it. However, Allah on this occasion, in the Qur'ān, especially attached the characteristic phrase *rasūlul-lāh* [Messenger of Allah] to his personal name [Muḥammad] and thus entrenched it permanently in His Last Book, the Holy Qur'ān, so that it will be written and recited like that until the Judgement Day.

(...and الَّذِينَ مَعَهُ أَشِدَّاءُ عَلَى الْكُفَّارِ رُحَمَاءُ بَيْنَهُمْ تَرَاهُمْ رُكَّعًا سُجَّدًا يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانًا) (...and those who are with him are hard against the disbelievers, compassionate among themselves; you will see them bowing down in *rukū'*, prostrating in *sajdah*, seeking bounty from Allah and (His) good pleasure;.... 48:29). From this point onwards the merits of the noble Companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ are described. Although the immediate addressees of the verse are the noble participants of Ḥudaibiyah and *bai'at-ur-Riḍwān*. But on account of the generality of words, all blessed Companions are included in the description, because a *ṣaḥābī* or Companion is one who embraced Islam, saw the Holy Prophet ﷺ and accompanied him, even for a short time.

The Qualities, Merits and Special Marks of the Noble Companions

Allah Ta'ālā, on this occasion, describes the messengership of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and makes a prophecy to the effect that not only would Islam prevail in Arabia, but would also eventually triumph over all other religions. In addition, He has described the qualities, the merits and the special marks of the noble Companions ﷺ. The severe test which they had to undergo at the time of the Treaty of Ḥudaibiyah has also been described. The passage describes that they never wavered from the path of rectitude despite the fact that the Treaty was against their firm belief and heart-felt emotions, and despite the fact that they could not enter the sacred Mosque, and had to return without performing 'Umrah. In these unfavourable circumstances, they displayed an unusual obedience of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and their strength of faith. The blessed Companions have been described here fully, because the Holy Prophet ﷺ is the Final Messenger and there shall be no prophet or messenger after him. He left behind him the Book of Allah and the paradigm of noble Companions to follow. Specific injunctions have been laid down to emulate their pattern of life. Therefore, the Qur'ān too describes the merits of the blessed Companions, and encourages and emphasizes to follow their model of life.

The first quality of the Companions mentioned here is that they are hard against the unbelievers, and merciful to one another. It was proven time and again that they were harsh against the unbelievers. They sacrificed all their ethnic and tribal relations for the sake of Islam. This was especially demonstrated on the occasion of Ḥudaibiyah. The tenderness of the blessed Companions was especially demonstrated when Islamic brotherhood [*mu'ākhāt*] was created between *muhājirs* [emigrants from Makkah] and *anṣār* [helpers from Madīnah]. Anṣār invited the *muhājirīn* to share with them in their holdings. The Qur'ān describes this quality of the blessed Companions first, because nothing they practiced - whether friendship or enmity, love or hatred - was for any selfish reasons. Everything was for the sake of Allah and His Messenger - and this is the highest degree of perfect faith. In a Ḥadīth recorded by Bukhārī, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said,

من أحبَّ لله وابغض لله فقد استكمل إيمانه

"He who loves for the sake of Allah and hates for the sake of

Allah has attained the highest degree of faith."

This means that anyone who has subjugated his friendship, love, hatred and enmity under the Will of Allah has perfected his faith. This clarifies another point: The Companions' being hard against the unbelievers does not imply that they were never tender towards any non-believer. In fact it means that where Allah and His Messenger enjoins them to be hard against the non-believers, they would simply comply without taking into account the relations of kinship or friendship. As far as kind and equitable dealing with them is concerned, the Qur'an itself promulgates:

لَا يَنْهَىكُمُ اللَّهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَلَمْ يُخْرِجُواكُم مِّن دِيَارِكُمْ

"Allah does not forbid you from those who did not fight you on account of faith, and did not expel you from your homes, that you do good to them, and deal justly with them." (60:8).

There is a large number of incidents where Allah's Messenger and the blessed Companions displayed their kindness and compassion to the helpless and needy unbelievers. Treating them with justice and equity is the general injunction of Islam. No activity flouting justice and equity is permissible even in the field of pitched battle.

The second quality of the blessed Companions is that they are generally preoccupied with bowing and prostrating. The first quality is the mark of their perfection in faith and the second quality is the mark of their perfection in deeds, because *ṣalāh* is the most meritorious of all the good deeds.

سِيمَاهُمْ فِي وُجُوهِهِمْ مِّنْ أَثَرِ السُّجُودِ (their distinguishing feature is on their faces from the effect of *sajdah* (prostration)...48:29). That is to say, *ṣalāh* has become such a permanent routine of their life that the special effects of *ṣalāh* and *sajdah* are evident on their faces. These distinguishing features do not necessarily refer to any physical sign on the forehead on account of constant prostration. This in fact refers to the light and brightness that is reflected naturally on the faces of the devout as a result of humility, meekness and gentleness of disposition. Particularly this is one of the effects that follow from offering *tahajjud ṣalāh* regularly. It is recorded in Ibn Mājah on the authority of Syyidna Jābir رضي الله عنه that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said,

من كثر صلواته بالليل حسن وجهه بالنهار

"He who offers his *ṣalāh* abundantly at night, his face looks good during the day."

Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan Baṣrī رضى الله تعالى عنه has said that the "features" in the verse refer to the light that the faces of those who pray will emit on the Day of Judgement.

ذَلِكَ مَثَلُهُمْ فِي التَّوْرَةِ صَلَّى وَ مَثَلُهُمْ فِي الْإِنْجِيلِ فَكَزْرَعٍ أَخْرَجَ شَطْأَهُ فَازْرَعَهُ فَاسْتَغْلَظَ فَاسْتَوَى عَلَى سُوقِهِ يُعْجِبُ الزُّرَّاعَ لَيَغِيظَ بِهِمُ الْكُفَّارَ وَعَدَّ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنْهُمْ مَغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا

(This is their description in the Torah; and their description in the Injil is: like a sown crop that brings forth its shoot, then makes it strong, then it grows thick and stands straight on its stem, looking good to the farmers, so that He may enrage the disbelievers through them. Allah has promised forgiveness and a huge reward to those of them who believe and do good deeds.... 48:29)

This part of the verse states the description of the noble Companions given above about the light of their prostration and prayers on their forehead is the same description as was given in the Torah for the Companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. And another parable of them is put in the Gospel [*injīl*]: When a farmer sows a seed in his field, it grows over a period of time - especially so that it changes from its original form into a form which is at first weak like a thin needle, then it develops into branches getting stronger, larger and more complicated. Eventually when it is fully grown, it is the strongest of shrubs and becomes a tree. Likewise the Companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ in the beginning were very few. At one time, besides the Holy Prophet ﷺ there were only three Muslims: Among men, Sayyidnā Abū Bakr Aṣ-Ṣiddīq رضى الله عنه; among women, Sayyidah Khadijah رضى الله عنها, and among children, Sayyidnā 'Alī رضى الله عنه. Gradually, but progressively, the strength of the Muslims continued to grow, so much so that the number of the noble Companions who performed the farewell pilgrimage with the Holy Prophet ﷺ is said to be about One hundred and fifty thousand (150,000).

There are three possibilities in this verse: First, the grammatical pause be observed at *fit-tawrāh* in which case it will mean that the previous likeness, that is, the light of the faces is described in the Torah. In this

case, a grammatical pause would not be observed at *fil-injīl*, but one should proceed without stopping, and it will mean that the parable of the noble Companions in the Gospel is like a field or tree which at the beginning is very weak but gradually it grows strong.

The second possibility is that the pause be observed at *فى الإنجيل* *fil-injīl* rather than at *فى التوراة* *fit-tawrah*, in which case the meaning would be that the description of the light of their faces is found both in Torah and the Gospel, as here in the Qur'ān. Then *Ka-zar-in* "like a sown crop" may be treated as a separate parable.

The third possibility is that the statement does not end at *fit-tawrah* nor at *fil-injīl*. In this case *dhalika*, the demonstrative pronoun, would point to the next parable, and it would mean that the description of the Companions is given in both the Torah and the Gospel "like a sown crop". If the Torah and the Gospel had been intact in their original form, we could have compared the parables as given in those books with those given here in the Qur'ān and determined its exact meaning. However, the present-day Torah and the Gospel have been subjected to many alterations and distortions. Therefore, its true import cannot be determined with any degree of certainty. Nevertheless, most commentators prefer the first possibility according to which the first description is found in the Torah and the second parable is found in the Gospel. Imām Baghawī says that this description of the noble Companions is found in the Gospel in the following way : At the beginning they will be few in number, then the number will grow and become strong. Qatādah quotes from the Injīl as follows: "Such a people will emerge who will grow like a crop; they will enjoin good works and forbid evil works" (Maẓharī). Despite changes in the present-day Torah and Gospel, the following prophecy is found:

"He said: The Lord came from Mount Sinai; and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them. Yea, he loved the people; all his saints are in thy hand: and they sat down at thy feet; every one shall receive of thy words." [Deut. 33:2]

As pointed out earlier, at the time of the conquest of Makkah there were 10000 Companions who entered the City of Khalīl Ibrāhīm عليه السلام

(Makkah) with the embodiment of light [Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ] whose advent was from the mount Paran (in which the Cave of Ḥirā' is situated). The expression "in his hand will be a fiery sacrosanct law [Sharī'ah]" probably refers to أَشَدَّاءَ عَلَى الْكُفَّارِ "hard against the unbelievers". The expression "he will love his people" is understood to refer to رُحَمَاءَ بَيْنَهُمْ "compassionate to one another". The details are set out together with other references in a work Izhār-ul-ḥaq, Vol. 3/ chap. 6: p.256. This book was written by Maulānā Raḥmatullāh Kairānwī against the Priest Fonder . In this book, the parable of Injīl is quoted as follows:

Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof. [Matthew 13:31-32]

The following passage is quoted from Mark 4:26 in Izhār-ul-ḥaq, Vol 3/chap 6:p. 310:

And he said, so is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; And should sleep, rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come. (Mark 4: 27-29)(*)

The expression "kingdom of heaven" on various occasions in the Gospel seems to refer to the Final Messenger. Allah knows best!

لِيَغِيظَ بِهِمُ الْكُفَّارَ (...so that He may enrage the disbelievers through them...48:29). That is, Allah has characterized the blessed Companions by some noble qualities. He made them strong after being weak and multiplied them into large numbers after being small in numbers. Seeing the growth and expansion of Islam and Muslims, the unbelievers became furious and angry towards them, and envious of them, burning in the fire of jealousy. Abū 'Urwah Zubairi says he was sitting in one of the sessions of Imām Mālik when a person uttered a belittling statement against the blessed Companions. The Imam recited this entire verse. When he came to the clause "so that He may enrage the disbelievers through them. [29]", he

(*) These quotations are taken from King James Version of the Bible.

said this warning will apply to anyone who belittles the blessed Companions (Qurṭubī). The Imām did not say that such a person would become *kāfir*, however he said that the warning applies to such a person. It means that the conduct of such a person will be like that of unbelievers.

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنْهُمْ مَغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا (Allah has promised forgiveness and a huge reward to those of them who believe and do good deeds...48:29). The preposition *min* in the prepositional phrase *min-hum* is by consensus of Qur'ānic scholarly opinion an explicative or *min lil-bayān* or *tabyīn*. Therefore, it means that it is Allah's promise to those Muslims who are selfless in faith and strong in character that He will forgive them and give them a great reward. The preposition *min* serves to make clear and explains that all the blessed Companions - without any exception - believe and do deeds of righteousness. The second point this verse clarifies is that Allah has promised them all without any exception forgiveness and a mighty reward. *Min lil-bayān* or *tabyīn* is frequently used in the Qur'ān. For example, the command in [22:30] فَاجْتَنِبُوا الرِّجْسَ مِنَ الْأَوْثَانِ وَاجْتَنِبُوا قَوْلَهُ الزُّورِ "So, refrain from the filth of the idols and refrain from a word of falsehood" (22:30). In this clause, the preposition *min* explicates the obscure noun *rijs* as referring to the "idols". Likewise the prepositional phrase *min-hum* here is explicative of "those who believe". *Rawāfiq*, however, treat the preposition *min* as partitive denoting a part as distinct from the whole - meaning the promise of forgiveness and mighty reward applies only to a part of those who believed and worked deeds of righteousness. This is completely incompatible with the context and in conflict with the above verses. This verse undoubtedly comprehends all the blessed Companions. However, the immediate application of this verse is to the participants of Ḥudaibiyah and the Pledge of Ridwān. In the preceding verses Allah has announced that they have incurred His pleasure:

لَقَدْ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ يُبَايِعُونَكَ تَحْتَ الشَّجَرَةِ

"Allah was pleased with the believers when they were pledging allegiance with you by placing their hands in your hands under the tree,..."(18)

This verse is a guarantee that they will all be firmly established in their faith and righteousness, because Allah is All-knowing and Well-Aware of what is going to happen. If Allah knows that anyone at

anytime will turn away from the faith, He will never announce about His pleasure. Ibn 'Abdul Barr, quoting this verse in the introduction to his book *istī'āb*, writes:

ومن رضى الله عنه لم يسخط عليه ابداً

"He with whom Allah is pleased, He will never be displeased with him."

On the basis of this verse, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that no one from among the participants of the Pledge of Ridwān will ever enter the Fire. It is absolutely invalid to exclude some of those who were originally promised forgiveness and a mighty reward. Hence there is unanimity among *ummah* on the point that all the noble Companions are impartial, unbiased and worthy of confidence.

All Companions Are Inmates of Paradise: Their Sins Are Forgiven and to Belittle them is a Major Sin

Many verses of the Qur'ān bear testimony to this fact. Some of the verses are part of this Sūrah. For instance,

لَقَدْ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

"Allah was pleased with the believers...48:29"

and

الزَّمَهُمْ كَلِمَةَ التَّقْوَىٰ وَكَانُوا أَحَقَّ بِهَا وَأَهْلَهَا

"...and made them stick to the word of piety, and they were very much entitled to it, and competent for it." (48:26)

Besides, in several verses scattered in various other Sūrahs the same position has been affirmed for all the Companions:

يَوْمَ لَا يُخْزِي اللَّهُ النَّبِيَّ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ،

"on the Day when Allah will not disgrace the Prophet and those who believed with him." [66:8]

وَالسَّابِقُونَ الْأُولُونَ مِنَ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالْأَنْصَارِ وَالَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُمْ بِإِحْسَانٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ

"As for the first and foremost of the Emigrants and the Supporters, and those who followed them in goodness, Allah is pleased with them, and they are pleased with him; and He has

prepared for them gardens berneath which rivers flow..."[9:100]

And in Sūrah Al-Ḥadīd, Allah has promised the Companions as follows:

وَكُلًّا وَعَدَّ اللَّهُ الْحُسْنَىٰ

"...Allah has promised Husna (the good) for each." (57:10)

And about Ḥusnā it is said in Sūrah Anbiyā':

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 (the Hell) [21: 100]

The Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said:

خير القرون قرنى ثم الذين يلونهم ثم الذين يلونهم.

"The best of generations is my generation, then that which follows it immediately and then that which follows it immediately (Bukhārī)."

In a Ḥadīth the Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said: "Do not revile my Companions, for if one of you contributed as much gold as the mount 'Uḥud, it would not amount to as much as the *mudd* of one of them, or half of it (Bukhārī). A *mudd* in Arabia was a measure which, according to the Ḥanafī school of Fiqh, is equal to 1.032 litre or 815.39 grams and, according to the other three major schools, it is equal to 0.687 litre or 543 grams. Bazzār records with a sound chain of transmitters that Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said: "Of all the people in the entire world Allah has chosen my Companions, and of all the Companions He has particularly chosen four for me - Abū Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmān and 'Alī (See Jam'ul-Fawā'id)

There is a Ḥadīth recorded in Tirmidhī on the authority of 'Abdullāh Ibn Mughaffal (رضي الله عنه). In it the Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

اللَّهُ في أصحابي لا تتخذوهم غرضا من بعدى فمن أحبهم فبحبي أحبهم ومن أبغضهم فببغضى أبغضهم ومن آذاهم فقد آذانى ومن آذانى فقد آذى الله ومن آذى الله فيوشك ان يأخذه (راه الترمذى عن عبد الله بن المغفل از جمع الفوائد)

"Fear Allah, fear Allah regarding my Companions! Do not make them a target of your criticism after me. He who loves

them does so on account of my love; he who hates them does so on account of hating me; and he who injures them has injured me, and he who injures me has injured Allah. He who intends to injure Allah will soon be punished by Him."

I have written a book entitled *maqām-e-ṣaḥābah* in which I have collected relevant Qur'ānic verses and Prophetic Traditions pertaining to the status of the Companions. This book has already been published in Urdu. The 'Ummah is unanimous on the point that all the blessed Companions are righteous and worthy of confidence. The book deals elaborately with their disagreements and the civil wars that took place among them. It also explains how a Muslim critic should deal with the differences of the *ṣaḥābah* and whether it should be made a subject of debate and investigation or one should avoid commenting on them. Some of these issues to the degree necessary have been included in the commentary of Sūrah Muḥammad. Please refer to the relevant section there. Allah's help is sought and on Him is our reliance!

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Faṭḥ
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Ḥujurāt

(The Apartments)

Sūrah Al-Ḥujurāt was revealed in Madīnah. It has 18 Verses and 2 Sections.

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

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

Verses 1 - 5

يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَا تَقْدَمُوْا بَيْنَ يَدِيْ اللّٰهِ وَرَسُوْلِهِ وَاَتَقُوْا اللّٰهَ ۗ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ سَمِيْعٌ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿۱﴾ يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَا تَرْفَعُوْا اَصْوَاتَكُمْ فَوْقَ صَوْتِ النَّبِيِّ وَلَا تَجْهَرُوْا لَهُ بِالْقَوْلِ كَجَهْرِ بَعْضِكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ اَنْ تَحْبَطَ اَعْمَالُكُمْ وَاَنْتُمْ لَا تَشْعُرُوْنَ ﴿۲﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ يَغْضُوْنَ اَصْوَاتَهُمْ عِنْدَ رَسُوْلِ اللّٰهِ اُولٰٓئِكَ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَتَحَنَ اللّٰهُ قُلُوْبَهُمْ لِتَقْوٰى ۗ لَهُمْ مَّغْفِرَةٌ وَّاَجْرٌ عَظِيْمٌ ﴿۳﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ يِنَادُوْنَكَ مِنْ وَّرَآءِ الْحُجُرٰتِ اَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿۴﴾ وَلَوْ اَنَّهُمْ صَبَرُوْا حَتّٰى تَخْرُجَ اِلَيْهِمْ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَّهُمْ ۗ وَاللّٰهُ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿۵﴾

O those who believe, do not proceed ahead of Allah and His Messenger, and fear Allah. Surely Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. [1] O those who believe, do not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet, and be not loud when speaking to him, as you are loud when speaking to one another, lest your good deeds become void while you are not aware. [2] Surely, those who lower their voices before Allah's Messenger are the

ones whose hearts Allah has tested for piety; for them there is forgiveness, and a great reward. [3] As for those who call you from behind the apartments, most of them lack understanding. [4] Had they remained patient until you come out to them, it would have been much better for them. And Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful. [5]

Background of Revelation

According to Qurṭubī, there are six narratives cited as the background of revelation of these verses. Qāḍī Abū Bakr Ibn ‘Arabī confirms that all the narratives are correct, because they all are included in the general meaning of the verses. One of the narratives, reported by Bukhārī, is that once some people from the tribe of Tamim came to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. During their stay, one of the issues under discussion was to appoint someone as a ruler of this tribe. Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ﷺ suggested the name of Qa‘qā’ Ibn Ma‘bad, while Sayyidnā ‘Umar ﷺ proposed the name of Aqra’ Ibn Ḥābis. Both of them discussed the issue for a while during which the voices of both became loud. These verses were revealed in this background.

لَا تَقْدَمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيِ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ (...do not proceed ahead of Allah and His Messenger - 49:1) The phrase بَيْنَ الْيَدَيْنِ, literally, means "between the two hands", but in Arabic usage it means 'in front of' or 'ahead of'. It means: do not go ahead of or in front of Allah's Messenger. The Qur‘ān does not say in what matter they are prohibited from preceding him. It would appear that the general prohibition includes preceding by word or deed. Wait for the Messenger's reply unless he himself appoints someone to reply. Likewise if he is walking, no one should overtake him. If they are sitting in a dining session, no one should start eating before him. If there is a clear indication or strong evidence that he himself wants to send someone forward, this would be possible, for example some people used to be asked to go on a journey or war ahead of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

Respect for Islamic Scholars and Religious Leaders

Some of the scholars have ruled that Muslims should observe the same rule in respect of Islamic scholars and spiritual masters as enjoined by the Qur‘ān, because they are the heirs of the Holy Prophet's ﷺ. One day the Holy Holy Prophet ﷺ saw Sayyidnā Abūd-Dardā’ ﷺ walking in front of Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ﷺ, he reprimanded him saying: "you are walking in front of a person who is better than you in this world and in

the hereafter". Then he added : "The Sun did not rise or set on any man better than Abū Bakr ؓ in the world besides the Prophets". (Rūḥ-ul-Bayān on the authority of Kashf-ul-Asrār). Therefore, scholars have ruled that teachers and spiritual guides should be treated with similar respect.

لَا تَرْفَعُوا أَصْوَاتَكُمْ فَوْقَ صَوْتِ النَّبِيِّ (...do not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet. - 49:2) This is another etiquette to be observed while in the presence of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. This verse teaches the believers that they should not raise their voices above the voice of the Holy Prophet ﷺ nor speak aloud to him as one speaks aloud to another in general discussions. The verse warns that neglecting this etiquette may entail nullification of one's virtuous deeds, because this is a kind of disrespect to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Thus when this verse was revealed, the blessed Companions became very apprehensive and very cautious. Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ؓ said: "By God! O Messenger of Allah, from now till my last breath, I shall speak to you as if someone is whispering." (Ad-Durr-ul-Manthūr on the authority of Baihaqī) When this verse was revealed, Sayyidnā 'Umar's ؓ voice became so low that the Holy Prophet ﷺ had to ask him to repeat what he said, so that he could understand what he was saying to him (Ṣiḥāḥ). Thābit Ibn Qays ؓ had a naturally loud voice. When he heard this verse, he feared that his good deeds would be rendered void, he wept and lowered his voice (Ad-Durr-ul-Manthūr on the authority of Baihaqī).

It is Prohibited to Greet and Speak Aloud in front of the Holy Prophet's ﷺ Mausoleum

Qāḍī Abū Bakr Ibn 'Arabī says that respect for the Holy Prophet ﷺ after his demise is just as compulsory as it was during his life-time. Therefore, some of the scholars have expressed the view that it is disrespectful to say *salām* or speak very loudly in front of the Holy Prophet's ﷺ mausoleum. Likewise it is discourteous to make noise where Prophetic traditions are recited, because when the blessed words of the Holy Prophet ﷺ are being recited, it is compulsory to listen to them silently. In the same manner, it is an unmannerly behaviour to raise voices after his demise when his noble words are repeated.

Ruling

As the Qur'ānic injunction "do not proceed ahead of Allah and His Messenger" applies to 'Ulamā' as the heirs of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, likewise the injunction "do not raise your voices above the voice of the

Prophet." is applicable to the great scholars of Islam also. When sitting in their assembly, it is impolite to raise voices so loudly that their voices are suppressed (Qurṭubī).

أَنْ تَحْبِطَ أَعْمَالِكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَشْعُرُونَ (lest your good deeds become void while you are not aware - 49:2.) This clause is indicating the reason why the Muslims are directed not to raise their voices above the voice of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. They are warned that non-compliance of the rule may nullify their virtuous deeds. According to the axioms of Sharī'ah and universally established principles, a few perturbing questions arise here. First of all, according to the unanimous view of *Ahl-us-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah*, the only thing that can destroy righteous deeds is *kufr* or disbelief. No sin can destroy good deeds. Here the Qur'an addresses the noble Companions and the believers. It addresses them by calling them "O believers" which goes to show that they are "believers" and not "disbelievers" - so how can their righteous works be rendered void? The second point is that "faith" is an act of free will. A person cannot be a believer unless he embraces faith with his own free will. Likewise "disbelief" [*kufr*] is an act of free will. A person does not become *kāfir* [unbeliever] unless he adopts disbelief with his own free will. The concluding phrase "while you are not aware" seems to be against this principle: Failure of good deeds is the punishment of disbelief which ought to be a result of one's own free will and the phrase shows that the punishment lacks "free will". So how can the good deeds go to waste?

My master, the honorable sage of the Ummah has in his Bayān-ul-Qur'an explicated the passage in such a manner that all these perturbations are resolved. He says the meaning of the verse is thus: O Muslims, avoid raising your voices above the voice of the Holy Prophet ﷺ or speaking loudly to him, because in so doing there is the fear that your deeds should be thwarted. The danger in raising your voices above that of the Holy Prophet ﷺ lies in the fact that it is tantamount to discourtesy to the Holy Prophet ﷺ which is the same as vexing him. It is unthinkable that the noble Companions would intentionally attempt to hurt him. However, it is possible that certain deeds and actions, such as "advancing forward" and "raising voices", without the intention of hurting could upset or offend him. Therefore, all such conducts have been absolutely prohibited, forbidden and regarded as sin. The essential characteristics of

some of the sins are such that the people who commit them lose the Divine aid of repentance and the ability or capacity to perform righteous works. As a result, he gets so engrossed in sins that they lead him to "disbelief" and thus the righteous deeds fail. Likewise hurting one's religious leader, teacher or spiritual guide is a sin that runs the risk of losing the Divine aid. Thus conducts such as "advancing before the Holy Prophet ﷺ" or "raising voices" are such sinful conducts that can cause the Divine help to be taken away. This situation eventually leads one to "disbelief" which destroys one's good works. Because the believer may not have intentionally performed the act of hurting, thus he would not even perceive how he got involved in the process of "disbelief", and "thwarting of good deeds". Some of the scholars have expressed the view that if someone has taken a righteous, holy person as his spiritual guide, then he shows disrespect to him, then such a person may suffer the same consequences: that is, sometimes it becomes the cause of Divine aid being removed and of incurring His wrath which eventually destroys the treasure of "faith". We seek refuge with Allah from it!

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُنَادُونَكَ مِنْ وَرَاءِ الْحُجُرَاتِ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ (As for those who call you from behind the apartments, most of them lack understanding. - 49:4) In this verse, Allah Ta'ālā has mentioned a third etiquette about dealing with the Holy Prophet ﷺ. It is directed that when he is at home, one should not call him from outside. Particularly calling him by his name is an unmannered attitude. Reasonable persons would not do it. The term *hujurāt* (translated above as 'apartments') is the plural of *hujrah*. Lexically, it refers to a four-walled apartment or dwelling, comprising a courtyard and a roofed building. In Madīnah, the Holy Prophet ﷺ had nine wives. Each one of them had a separate apartment, where on different days, he used to stay in succession.

The Apartments of the Mothers of the Faithful

Ibn Sa'd on the authority of 'Aṭā' Al-Khurāsānī gives a description of these dwellings. He writes that these apartments were built of palm branches and their doors were covered with thick black woolen curtains. Imām Bukhārī in Al-'Adab-ul- Mufrad and Baihaqī in his collection record that Dāwūd Ibn Qais reports that he had visited these "apartments" and estimated that from the door of the "apartment" to the roofed part of the

building, it must be about seven cubits, the room about ten cubits and the height of the roof about eight cubits¹. These apartments of the Mothers of the faithful were included in the Holy Prophet's ﷺ mosque during the reign of Walīd Ibn 'Abd-ul-Malik at his own command. On that day in Madīnah, people were lamenting and bewailing.

Occasion of Revelation

Imām Baghawī, on the authority of Qatādah ؓ, reports that the delegation of Banū Tamīm arrived in Madīnah in the afternoon and came up to the Holy Prophet ﷺ when he was resting in one of his apartments. These bedouins were not acquainted with the social manners and etiquette of a civil society. They stood outside the apartment and called out: O Muḥammad, come out to us! On this occasion, verse [4] was revealed (Musnad of Aḥmad, Tirmidhī, and others record similar reports in differential wordings as quoted by Mazḥarī).

Additional Notes

The noble Companions and their followers showed the same respect and courtesy to their scholars and spiritual masters as enjoined by the Qur'ān for the Holy Prophet ﷺ. It is recorded in Bukhārī and other collections that when Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ wanted to inquire about any Prophetic Tradition from any knowledgeable Companion, he would go to his house and sit at the threshold without calling him or knocking at the door. He would wait there until the Companion himself comes out. When he came out on his own, he would ask him about the Tradition. However, the scholar himself would say to Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ: "O cousin of Allah's Messenger, why did you not knock at the door and inform me about your arrival?" Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ would reply: "A scholar in his community is like a prophet, and Allah has directed us that we should wait until he comes out on his own. Sayyidnā Abū 'Ubaidah ؓ says, "I never knock on the door of any scholar at any time, but I wait until he himself has emerged and then meet him (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī).

Ruling

In the clause of verse "حَتَّى تَخْرُجَ إِلَيْهِمْ" "...until you come out to them ...49:5", the prepositional phrase *ilaihīm* "to them" is a restrictive phrase, and it implies that people must wait until the Holy Prophet ﷺ emerges to talk to them, but if he has emerged for some other reason or purpose,

(1) One Cubit= about 18 inches

even in this case it is not appropriate to talk to him. The speakers should wait until a suitable situation or occasion arises for them to speak: that is, they should speak about their particular issue when the Holy Prophet ﷺ turns his attention to them for that purpose.

Verse 6

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَأٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوا أَن تُصِيبُوا قَوْمًا
بِجَهَالَةٍ فَتُصِحُّوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلْتُمْ نَادِمِينَ ﴿٦﴾

O those who believe, if a sinful person brings you a report, verify its correctness, lest you harm a people out of ignorance then become remorseful on what you did. [6]

Background of Revelation

According to Ibn Kathir, it is reported in Musnad of Ahmad that Ḥārith Ibn Ḍirār Ibn Abī Ḍirār, the leader of the tribe of Banul-Muṣṭaliq, whose daughter Sayyidah Juwairiyah رضى الله عنها was one of the blessed wives of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, came up to the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and he called him towards Islam and asked him to pay his Zakah. He says, "I embraced Islam and pledged to pay *Zakāh*, and said to the Holy Prophet ﷺ that I would go to my people, call them towards Islam and ask them to pay *Zakāh*. Those who would accept my invitation and pay the compulsory alms, I would collect their alms. I requested that on a designated date of a designated month, a collector be sent to me, so that the alms might be handed over to him." Accordingly, when Ḥārith had collected the alms of the believers and the alms collector did not arrive on the designated date or even long after that, he feared that may be the Holy Prophet ﷺ is displeased with them for some reason or the other. Otherwise it was unlikely for the Holy Prophet ﷺ not to keep his promise. Harith expressed his apprehension to the leaders of the new Muslims, and wanted them to go to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. On the other hand, the Holy Prophet ﷺ had sent Walīd Ibn 'Uqbah to collect the *Zakāh* from them. However, on his way he thought that the members of that tribe are his old enemies and feared that they might kill him. With this fear he

returned to Madīnah, and said to the Holy Prophet ﷺ that they refused to pay *Zakāh*, and wanted to kill him. On hearing this, the Holy Prophet ﷺ became very angry, and under the command of Khālīd Ibn Walīd ؓ he dispatched a force of fighters in the way of Allah. On the one hand, this contingent was dispatched, and on the other hand Ḥārith Ibn Dirār with his people was on his way to meet the Holy Prophet ﷺ. The two groups met near Madīnah. Ḥārith inquired: "To whom have you been sent?" They replied: "We are sent to you". Ḥārith inquired: "for what purpose?" They narrated the mission of Walīd Ibn 'Uqbah who reported to the Holy Prophet ﷺ that the tribe of Banul-Muṣṭaliq refused to pay *Zakāh* and planned to kill him. Ḥārith said on oath, "I swear by Allah who sent Muḥammad as His true Messenger, Walid did not arrive in the location, nor did I see him. Since no envoy had come to us at the appointed location, I apprehended that you are annoyed with me due to some shortcoming on my part. Therefore, I have come here. Ḥārith says that the present verse of Sūrah Al-Ḥujurāt was revealed on this occasion (Ibn Kathīr).

Other versions have it that Walīd Ibn 'Uqbah did go to the tribe of Banul-Muṣṭaliq. As the tribe was expecting the Holy Prophet's ﷺ envoy to arrive on a designated date, they came out of their settlement as a mark of respect to welcome him. Walīd Ibn 'Uqbah suspected that they might have come out to kill him on account of their old hostility. Therefore he returned instantly from there, and went up to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and reported to him, according to his suspicion, that they were not willing to pay the alms and wanted to kill him. On hearing this report, the Holy Prophet ﷺ dispatched Sayyidnā Khālīd Ibn Walīd ؓ to make a thorough investigation, so that appropriate measures could be taken. Sayyidnā Khālīd Ibn Walīd ؓ arrived near the settlement at night and encamped there. He selected a few of his men and sent them furtively as spies into the location to investigate. They returned and reported that the members of the tribe were Muslims and believers; they were regular with their prayers and in paying their alms; and they did not find the tribe doing anything contrary to Islam. Sayyidnā Khālīd Ibn Walīd ؓ came back, and reported the whole story to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. This verse was revealed on that occasion (Ibn-Kathīr - summary of several reports).

Ruling

On the basis of this verse, it may be ruled that if a mischief-monger, sinner, wicked or corrupt person complains about any person or nation, or accuses them of any wrong-doing, it is not lawful to act upon the sole information or evidence of such a person without making a thorough investigation.

Injunctions and Rulings Related to Verse [6]

Imām Jaṣṣāṣ in *Aḥkām-ul-Qurʿān* says that this verse indicates that it is not lawful to accept any information conveyed by a sinful person and act upon it unless it is investigated by other sources and confirmed. This verse contains the injunction *fatabayyanu* (verify its correctness). In another reading the word '*tathabbatu*' conveys the same meaning. The sense is: "Do not rush into taking actions or measures; be stable, and stand firmly in your place; and do not be easily moved or shaken. Wait until the news or information is confirmed by other independent sources. Since it is not lawful to accept the information or report of an ungodly sinful person, then the testimony of such a person would not be acceptable with greater force, because every testimony is a statement which is confirmed by a kind of oath.

Therefore, according to majority of scholars a statement or evidence of an ungodly person, in terms of Shari'ah, is not acceptable. However, all scholars agree that as far as the common worldly affairs are concerned, it is not necessary to ascertain the accuracy or truth of every news and the reliability of every informer. The jurists are clear that this rule of law does not apply in the case of ordinary matters, because the rule is governed by an effective cause which is laid down in the explicit text of this verse: **أَنْ تُصِيبُوا قَوْمًا بِجَهَالَةٍ** (lest you harm a people out of ignorance - 49:6). Thus matters which are not governed by the effective cause will be an exception to, and excluded from, the rule of this verse. For instance, if a wicked person, or for that matter even an unbeliever, delivers a gift to someone, stating that this gift has been sent by a certain person, it would be lawful to accept the gift and the statement. Details may be found in books of Fiqh, such as in *mu'īn-ul-hukkām* and others. I have given the details in part six of *Aḥkām-ul-Qurʿān* [Arabic version]. Learned scholars may peruse them there.

An Important Question and Answer Regarding the Truthfulness of the Companions

Authentic *Aḥādīth* verify that this verse was revealed in connection with Walīd Ibn 'Uqbah, and in the verse he is referred to as *fāsiq* (sinner). Apparently, it goes to show that a *ṣaḥābi* (Companion) can be a *fāsiq*. This is in conflict with the universally established maxim *الصَّحَابَةُ كُلُّهُمْ عَدُول*, (the Companions are all truthful and reliable). None of their statements, reports or testimony can be doubted. 'Allāmah 'Alusī in *Rūḥ-ul- Ma'ānī* says that the truth of the matter is according to the majority of the scholars, the blessed Companions are not infallible; it is possible for them to commit sins - major sins which is *fīsq*; at the time of committing the sin they will be dealt with in the appropriate manner in terms of the punishment prescribed for that act; and if any of them is found guilty of lying, his news, information, report or testimony will be rejected. However, on the basis of the express texts of the Qur'ān and Sunnah, *Ahl-us-suunnah wal-Jama'ah* believe that Companion can, though, commit sins, they do not persist in it. There is no companion of the Holy Prophet ﷺ who has not repented and purified himself after committing a sin. The Qur'ān, referring to the general class of the Companions, announces in general terms *رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ* (...Allah is well-pleased with them and they are well-pleased with Him - 98:8). The pleasure of Allah is not possible without forgiveness of sins. Qāḍī Abū Ya'la says that Allah's pleasure is one of His eternal attributes. He expresses His pleasure only for those about whom He knows they will die whilst seeking His pleasure (Ibn-Taimiyyah in *Aṣ-ṣārim-ul-Maslūl*).

In sum: From amongst the magnificent group of the noble Companions, it is possible for a handful of them to commit a sin sometime or the other, but Divine aid comes to their rescue and they immediately repent. Through the blessing of the Holy Prophet's ﷺ company, Allah had made Shari'ah their nature. As result, it was very rare for them to do anything contrary to Shari'ah and very unlikely to commit sins. It was natural for them to dedicate themselves to performing righteous deeds in conformity with the Holy Prophet's ﷺ paradigm and the principles established by Islam. They exerted such efforts in obeying Allah and His Holy Prophet ﷺ in all matters of life, the example of which is never found in any of the previous religious communities. In comparison to the

uncountable good works, merits and excellence to their credit, even if they commit a sin once in a life-time, it would be quashed or would be counted as non-existent. Furthermore, *ḥadīth* collections record a number of incidents where the noble Companions expressed their supreme love and devotion for Allah and His Holy Prophet ﷺ. They expressed their highest degree of fear for Allah at the time of committing the most minor sins and repented forthwith. We have on record that some of the Companions presented themselves for punishment when they did something wrong and others tied themselves up to the column of the mosque; and so on. A *ḥadīth* informs us that "He who repents on a sin is like him who has not committed any sin". The Qur'ān says:

إِنَّ الْحَسَنَاتِ يُذْهِبْنَ السَّيِّئَاتِ

Surely, good deeds erase bad deeds. [Surah Hud: 114]

This rule applies to them with greater force, since their good deeds are not like the good deeds of the general class of people. In fact, the status of their good deeds has been described in the collections of Abū Dāwūd and Tirmidhī on the authority of Sa'īd Ibn Zaid رضي الله عنه:

والله لمشهد رجل منهم مع النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم يغير فيه وجهه خير من عمل احدكم ولو عمر عمر نوح

"By Allah, anyone of them who participated in a *jihād* with the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his face got covered with dust is better than your life-long obedience and worship, even if you attained the age of Nūḥ عليه السلام."

Therefore, they will receive the same punishment that is prescribed for a sin or crime which they might have committed. However, despite this it is not lawful for any of us to regard any of them as *fāsiq*. Consequently, if any Companion during the time of the Holy Prophet ﷺ committed a sin or crime which could be the cause of producing in him the effect of *fiṣq*, as a result of which he might have been referred to as a *fāsiq* on that account, it does not become possible for that *fiṣq* to be regarded as his permanent characteristic to call him, God forbid!, as a *fāsiq* for all times to come (Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī).

Nevertheless, it is not at all necessary that in the current verse, Walīd Ibn 'Uqbah is categorically referred to as *fāsiq*. Despite the fact that the

verse is supposed to have been revealed in his incident, it does not mean that the word '*fāsiq*' is used for him, because before this incident, Walīd Ibn 'Uqbah had not done any such thing on account of which he could be referred to as *fāsiq*. An analysis of the incident of Banul-Muṣṭaliq indicates that he conveyed an incorrect information about that tribe which, acting in good faith, he thought was true whereas in reality it was not. Therefore, the plain import of the current verse would be that it simply establishes the general rule that the news conveyed by a *fāsiq* would be unacceptable. However, it may be emphasized that Walīd Ibn 'Uqbah was not a *fāsiq*, but his information, because of strong external context, did not seem acceptable. As a result, the Holy Prophet ﷺ refrained from taking any measures merely on his information, and sent Khālīd Ibn Walīd ؓ for proper investigation. If this is the case of the news conveyed by a *bona fide* reliable and righteous person, then with the stronger reason a *fāsiq*'s news should be rejected and should not be acted upon. The truthfulness of the Companions is discussed fully by this author in his book "The Status of the Companions" which is already published in Urdu. It will partly be discussed under forthcoming verses 9-10.

Verses 7 - 8

وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ فِيكُمْ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ۗ لَوْ يُطِيعُكُمْ فِي كَثِيرٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْرِ لَعَنِتُّمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ حَبَّبَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْإِيمَانَ وَزَيَّنَهُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَكَرَّهَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْكُفْرَ وَالْفُسُوقَ وَالْعِصْيَانَ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الرَّشِدُونَ ﴿٧﴾
فَضْلًا مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَنِعْمَةً ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٨﴾

And know that among you there is the Messenger of Allah. If he obeys you in many a matter, you will certainly fall into hardship. But Allah has endeared to you the Faith, and caused it to look beautiful to your hearts, and made detestable to you the disbelief and sins and disobedience. Such people are rightly guided, [7] as a grace from Allah, and as a blessing. And Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise. [8]

The Holy Prophet's ﷺ Decision is Better

According to the previous verse, Walīd Ibn 'Uqbah reported that

Banul-Muṣṭaliq had turned apostate and refused to pay Zakāh. At this the blessed Companions were disturbed and infuriated. They expressed the view that *jihād* should be declared on them immediately, but the Holy Prophet ﷺ rejected his report on the basis of strong circumstantial evidence to the contrary. He sent Khālīd Ibn Walīd ؓ for investigation. In the foregoing verse, the Qur'ān enjoined that if there are strong reasons to doubt the report conveyed by any person, it is not lawful to act upon it before investigation. In this verse the noble Companions are given one more guideline: 'Although when you heard the news about Banul-Mustaliq's apostasy, you reacted the way you reacted, and that was on account of your religious zeal and enthusiasm, yet your view was not right and proper. The decision taken by the Holy Prophet ﷺ proved to be better (Mazhari). Thus in matters requiring consultation it is proper to express a view but it is not proper for you to exert efforts to get the Holy Prophet ﷺ to act upon your opinion. Although there is a rare possibility that an opinion expressed by the Holy Prophet ﷺ in some worldly matters comes to be against worldly expedience, and this is not contrary to the station of his prophethood, yet Allah has gifted him with such insight, perspicacity and discernment which you do not have. Therefore, if the Holy Prophet ﷺ were to follow your opinion, in many matters, you will suffer loss and fall into difficulties. If rarely ever your opinion is right or proper, it is still better to abandon your opinion and obey the Holy Prophet ﷺ. By doing so it is possible that you may suffer some worldly loss, but it would not be as harmful as his following your opinion. In this case, even if you suffer any worldly loss, the reward of obedience to the Holy Prophet ﷺ is a better compensation.

Lexically, the word عَيْتٌ is derived from عَنَتٌ and it connotes "to commit a sin or crime" and it also means "to suffer from hardship". In this context, both connotations appropriately fit (Qurṭubī).

Verses 9 - 10

وَإِنْ طَائِفَتَيْنِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فَاصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا ۚ فَإِنْ بَغَتْ
 إِحْدَاهُمَا عَلَى الْأُخْرَى فَقَاتِلُوا الَّتِي تَبْغِي حَتَّى تَفِيءَ إِلَى أَمْرِ اللَّهِ ۚ
 فَإِنْ فَأَتْ فَاصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا بِالْعَدْلِ وَأَقْسِطُوا ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ

الْمُقْسِطِينَ ﴿٩﴾ إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

And if two groups of the believers fight each other, seek reconciliation between them. And if one of them commits aggression against the other, fight the one that commits aggression until it comes back to Allah's command. So if it comes back, seek reconciliation between them with fairness, and maintain justice. Surely Allah loves those who maintain justice. [9] All believers are but brothers, therefore seek reconciliation between your two brothers, and fear Allah, so that you may be blessed with mercy. [10]

Linkage

In the foregoing verses the rights of the Prophet ﷺ were set out. They also laid down the mannerism in which he should be treated. The verses prohibited any act that would annoy or hurt him. Now this set of verses [9-10] establishes the manners, mores, injunctions, and mutual rights and obligations to be observed in individual and social life. The common value of all these rules is to avoid causing any inconvenience to the members of the society.

Occasion of Revelation

The commentators have narrated several incidents as a background of the revelation of these verses. Among them is the clash that took place between two Muslim groups. It is not inconceivable that the totality of these incidents might have been the occasion of revelation. It is also possible that one of these incidents has been the cause of revelation and the other incidents, being similar, were also termed as the occasion of revelation.

Although the immediate addressees of this verse are rulers and those in authority who have the means to fight and wage war, [as stated by Abū Ḥayyān in Al-Baḥr and preferred by 'Ālusī in Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī] all Muslims are addressed in this verse indirectly to assist those in authority in this matter. Where there is no leader, 'amir, king or president, the rule is that the two warring parties should be advised, as far as possible, to cease war. If this is not possible, common people are ordered to stay away from both warring groups: they should neither oppose nor aid any one of them.

[Bayān-ul-Qur'ān].

Related Issues and Injunctions

There are several forms of mutual fighting between two Muslim parties: [1] both parties are subjects of a Muslim government; [2] neither of the parties is the subject of a Muslim government; [3] one of the parties is the subject of a Muslim government, but not the other. In the first case, it is compulsory for common Muslims to bring about an understanding between them and try to stop the mutual fighting. If they do not cease fighting by negotiations, then it is imperative for the Muslim ruler to take measures against them. If both parties cease fighting by the intervention of the Islamic government, then the laws of retaliation, retribution and blood-wit will apply. If they do not cease, then both parties will be treated like rebels. If one of the parties withdrew and the other persisted in oppression and transgression, then the persistent group will be treated like a rebel group. The obedient group will be designated as "Adil" (just). The detailed laws pertaining to rebels may be perused in books of Islamic law. Briefly, the law comprehends the following: Before fighting, their weapons must be seized and confiscated. Then they must be arrested and kept in prison until they repent. Neither in the course of fighting nor after fighting should their children be enslaved. Their wealth should not be treated like the spoils of war. In fact, their wealth will be held in trust until they repent. After repentance their belongings will be returned to them. In the above verses, we come across the following directive:

فَإِنْ فَاءَتْ فَاصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا بِالْعَدْلِ وَأَقْسِطُوا

'...So if it comes back, seek reconciliation between them with fairness, and maintain justice.' [49:9]

It means that if the belligerent party ceases fighting, then do not only stop fighting but also think about eliminating the cause of war and mutual dissatisfaction, so that the heart-burnings may come to an end. All enmity and hostilities will thus cease and an atmosphere of brotherhood may prevail for all times to come. Since these people have fought against the Muslim ruler, it was possible that they would not be treated by him equitably. Therefore, the Qur'an lays stress on setting things right between them equitably and justly, so that the rights of no one are violated [Adapted from Bayān-ul-Qur'ān with reference to Hidāyah].

Ruling

If a very powerful group of Muslims revolts against the Muslim ruler, then it is necessary for the ruler to first hear out their complaint or cause of their dissatisfaction. If a doubt or a misunderstanding has arisen in their mind about some matter, it should be removed. If they show such cause on the basis of which it is permissible in Shari'ah to oppose a Muslim leader or ruler, like unjust behavior on the part of the government, it is essential for the general body of Muslims to assist the group, so that the leader or ruler may refrain from his tyranny, provided that his tyranny is proved beyond any shadow of doubt (Ibn-ul-Humam; Maḥzarī). If they cannot show any clearly legitimate reason for their dissatisfaction, revolt, disobedience, and waging war against the Muslim ruler, it is permitted for Muslims to wage war against the rebels. Imām Shafi'ī رحمه الله تعالى held that the Muslims should not initiate fight against the rebels unless they first start the fight [Maḥzarī]. This law applies when it is positively and unquestionably clear that the group is rebellious. However, if it is difficult to determine which group is rebellious and which is just, because each party has a valid Shar'ī argument to justify its course of action, then the pros and cons of both parties may be weighed to determine the party that is "just" on the principle of probability. If the juristic argument of one party seems to someone more convincing, it is permitted for him to assist such a group. If someone cannot prefer the standpoint of any one of them, he should remain neutral, as it happened in the civil wars of the Battle of Camel and the Battle of Siffin when many noble Companions remained aloof.

Conflicts of the Noble Companions ﷺ

Imām Abū Bakr Ibn-ul-'Arabī says that this verse of battle between Muslims covers all cases. It includes the case where both parties prepare for war on grounds of a principle of Shari'ah. Civil wars of the noble Companions ﷺ were of this nature. Qurṭubī, quoting this view of Ibn-ul-'Arabī, explains the actual situation of the Battle of Camel and the Battle of Siffin and gives guidelines for later generations of Muslims to follow in the light of the battles of the blessed Companions. This author has dealt with this subject in "Aḥkām-ul-Qur'an" in Arabic and his Urdu book "Maqāme-Ṣaḥābah". The summary of the discussion given in that book with reference to Qurṭubī (V.16, P.322) is as follows:

It is not permitted to attribute categorically, and with certainty,

to any of the Companions that he was absolutely wrong in his action, because each of them acted according to his own Ijtihād. Their objective was to seek the pleasure of Allah. The Companions are all our leaders, and it is enjoined upon us that we should hold back our tongue from talking about their mutual differences, and always speak the best things about them. Prophet's companionship is a highly honourable position which should not be violated. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has prohibited to revile them or talk bad about them, and informed us that they have been forgiven and that Allah is pleased with them. Besides, there is the *Hadith* regarding Sayyidnā Ṭalḥah reaching us through several transmitting authorities that:

انّ طلحة شهيد يمشى على وجه الارض

"Ṭalḥah is a martyr walking on the face of the earth."

If Sayyidnā Ṭalḥah ﷺ was committing a clear sin by going out to wage war against Sayyidnā 'Alī ﷺ, he could not attain the high status of a martyr. In the same way, if his act might be regarded as a failure to perform his duty on the basis of a clearly wrong interpretation, he would still not attain the status of martyrdom. Martyrdom is attained only when a person is killed in obedience of Allah. Therefore, it is necessary to construe the matter of the Companions in terms of the principle mentioned above.

Another proof of this is available in authentic and well-established *Aḥādīth* which are reported by Sayyidnā 'Alī ﷺ himself where the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "The killer of Zubair is in Hell." Furthermore, Sayyidnā 'Alī ﷺ reports that the Prophet ﷺ said: "Give news to the killer of Sayyidah Ṣafīyyah's رضى الله عنها son that he will be in Hell." In the light of this we need to believe that Sayyidnā Zubair ﷺ and Sayyidnā Ṭalḥah ﷺ were not sinners or disobedient to Allah in the position taken by them in the battle. Otherwise the Holy Prophet ﷺ would not have referred to Sayyidnā Ṭalḥah ﷺ as a martyr, nor would he predict about the killer of Zubair that he would be in Hell. Also, he is counted among the ten who were given the glad tidings of attaining Paradise. Traditions relating to this subject have almost reached the grade of continuity [*tawātur*] and the Traditions are referred to as *ḥadīth mutawātir*.

Likewise the noble Companions, who did not participate in the battles on either side, cannot be regarded as defaulters because their behaviour,

conduct and attitude in this matter was also based on their *ijtihād*, and Allah maintained them thus. Therefore, it is not proper in any sense of the word to curse them, to taunt them, to hold them as sinners, and to neglect their virtues, their struggles and their great religious stations. Some of the scholars were posed the question: what is your view regarding the blood that was shed in the battles that took place among the blessed Companions? They simply recited the following verse of the Qur'an:

تِلْكَ أُمَّةٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَلكُمْ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ وَلَا تُسْأَلُونَ عَمَّا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

"Those are a people who have passed away. For them what they earned, and for you what you earned. And you shall not be questioned as to what they have been doing. [2:134]"

The same question was posed to another scholar. He replied: "Allah saved my hands from being soiled with that blood. Now I will not soil my tongue with it." He meant that he does not wish to make the mistake of categorically adjudging any one of the groups as the defaulter.

'Allāmah Ibn-Fuwarrak رحمه الله تعالى says:

"Some of our colleagues feel that the example of the conflicts that took place between the noble Companions is like that of the episodes of conflict that occurred between Sayyidnā Yūsuf عليه السلام and his brothers. They, despite their mutual differences, did not lose their status of *wilāyah* and *nubuwwah*. The same principle applies to the matter of conflicts that occurred between the Companions."

Sayyidnā Muḥasibi رحمه الله تعالى says: "As far as this blood-shed is concerned, it is difficult for us to say anything because there was a difference of opinion in this regard among the noble Companions themselves."

When Ḥasan Al-Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى was asked the question concerning the wars between the noble Companions, he replied:

"Those were fights in which the Companions were present and we were not. They knew all the circumstances and we do not know them. The matter in which the Companions are unanimous, we follow; and the matter in which there is difference of opinion, we observe silence."

Sayyidnā Muḥasibi رحمه الله تعالى says:

"We concur with Ḥasan Al-Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى. We know that when the noble Companions meddled in any matter, they knew fully well why they were doing it. Our task is merely to follow them where they are unanimous, and where they differ we observe silence. We should not on our own introduce new ideas. We are assured that they must have exercised *ijtihād* and sought the pleasure of Allah. Therefore, in matters of religion they are all beyond doubt."

Verses 11

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَسْخَرُ قَوْمٌ مِّنْ قَوْمٍ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُونُوا خَيْرًا
مِّنْهُمْ وَلَا نِسَاءٌ مِّنْ نِّسَاءٍ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُنَّ خَيْرًا مِّنْهُنَّ ۚ وَلَا تَلْمِزُوا
أَنفُسَكُمْ وَلَا تَنَابَزُوا بِالْأَلْقَابِ ۗ بِئْسَ الْإِسْمُ الْفُسُوقُ بَعْدَ الْإِيمَانِ ۚ
وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَتُبْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿١١﴾

O those who believe, no men should ever mock at other men, since it is possible that the latter are better than the former, nor (should) women (ever mock) at other women, since it is possible that the latter women are better than the former ones. And do not find fault with one another, nor call one another with bad nicknames. Bad is the name of sinfulness after embracing Faith. * And whoever does not repent, such people are the wrongdoers. [11]

Prohibition of Ridiculing One Another

The beginning part of this chapter laid down the Prophet's ﷺ rights and the etiquettes to be observed when dealing with him. Then the Holy Qur'an has started mentioning the mutual rights and good manners for the general body of Muslims to be observed among themselves. The injunctions laid down in the preceding two verses related to the collective reformation of the society. Now the current verse mentions the rights and etiquettes to be observed between individuals. Thus the verse prohibits three social evils: [1] ridiculing one another; [2] finding fault with one

(*). It means that calling others with bad nicknames is a sinful act, and the real bad name for a person after embracing Faith is that he is known among people for sinful acts. Therefore, if a Muslim commits the sin of calling others with bad nicknames, and it is known among people, then the real bad name is earned by himself, and not by the person whom he has abused with that nickname.
(Muhammad Taqi Usmani)

another; and [3] reviling one another with nicknames.

According to Qurṭubī, mocking or scoffing does not only connote mocking with the tongue, but it also implies mimicking someone, making pointed references to him, laughing at his words, his works, his appearance, his dress or calling people's attention to some of his defects, so that they may laugh at him. Mocking includes all of this. By the clear text of the Qur'ān, poking fun at someone or ridiculing him is absolutely forbidden.

Stylistically, the Qur'ān has, on this occasion, addressed men and women separately. Men are referred to as *qawm*, a word that is specifically reserved for male members of the human society, though by extension the word most often includes the female members of the human society as well. The Qur'ān, however, generally employs the word *qawm* for both men and women, but here it is specifically used for men in contradistinction to the word *nisa'* which specifically refers to women. Here both men and women are reminded that mocking one another is a disdainful and evil act. They must refrain from it, because it is very likely that the man who is mocked at may be better than the mocking person and the woman who is mocked at may be better than the mocker. Here the Qur'ān prohibits men from mocking other men, and women from mocking other women. This, however, does not mean that it is permitted for men to mock at women or for women to mock at men. The actual reason for making separate mention of the two sexes is that Islam does not allow free intermingling of the two sexes. Ridiculing each other generally occurs where there is such an intermingling. Therefore, in a Muslim society it is inconceivable that men would mock a woman or women would mock a man in an intermingling situation.

In short: no one dare make mockery of a person whose body, face, shape and stature are defective, imperfect, impaired or deformed, because he does not know that the other person, in the sight of Allah, might be better than him on account of his sincerity and purity of heart. When the righteous predecessors heard this verse, they adopted a conducive attitude: For example, Sayyidnā 'Amr Ibn Shurahbil رضي الله عنه said that he would not laugh at a person when he sees him drink milk direct from the udders of a goat, lest he should become one like him. Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه said: "I would not like to scoff at a dog, lest I be

metamorphosed into a dog (Qurtubī)."

It is recorded in Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "Allah does not look at your faces and your wealth; He looks at your hearts and your works." Qurtubī derives a legal maxim from this tradition of the Holy Prophet ﷺ that in any matter it is not proper to pass a categorical judgment on the basis of overt evidence or circumstances, because it is possible that a person's overt actions might seem to be good but in the sight of Allah, on account of the insincerity and impurity of his heart, they could be bad, as He is fully aware of the inner state of people's hearts. On the contrary, a person's overt actions might seem to us bad, but in the sight of Allah, on account of the sincerity and purity of his heart, they could serve as an expiation of the bad actions, as He is fully aware of the inner state of people's heart.

The next thing that is prohibited in the verse is *lamz* which connotes to find fault with someone or to upbraid him. The verse says, *وَلَا تَلْمِزُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ* and literally it means, "Do not find fault with your selves." But the intention is: "Do not find fault with one another-" [49:11] as is seen in the translation above. This expression is similar to the expression *لَا تَقْتُلُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ* '...And do not kill yourselves - [4:29]'. Although the verse commands "do not kill yourselves", it purports to say "do not kill one another". This expression indicates that, from one point of view, killing another person amounts to killing oneself. Often it happens that if one person kills another person, the victim's supporters kill the murderer. Even if this does not happen, a Muslim is the brother of another Muslim. Killing one's brother is like killing oneself and rendering oneself crippled, helpless and powerless. Similarly, the expression *لَا تَلْمِزُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ* 'and not find fault with yourselves' means when you find fault with others and upbraid them, others will find fault with you and upbraid you, because no man is normally free from any fault. Scholars have formulated the maxim: *وفيكم عيوب وللتناس اعين* "You have faults and people have eyes" with which they see them. Thus if someone seeks out the imperfections of some other person and broadcasts them, the latter will do the same in return. If, however, he exercises patience and evades retaliation to his verbal attacks, it comes down to the same thing: If one considers carefully, he will find that defaming and despising one's Muslim brother is actually casting aspersions on oneself.

Scholars have suggested that the satisfaction, well-being and happiness of man lies in examining his own faults and finding ways of mending them. This approach to life will give him no time to find fault with others and broadcast it. How well the last king of India Bahadur Shah Zafar has versified it!

نہ تھی حال کی جب ہمیں اپنی خبر، رہے دیکھتے لوگوں کے عیب و ہنر
پڑی اپنی بُرائیوں پر جو نظر، تو جہاں میں کوئی بُرا نہ رہا

As long as we were unaware of our own faults, we looked into the faults and failings of others; But when we looked at our own faults there remained no one faulty in the world.

The third thing that is prohibited in the verse is reviling one another with nicknames which are offensive to them, e.g. calling a person lame, hands cropped, blind or one-eyed; or referring to him by other offensive nicknames. Sayyidnā Abū Jabirah Anṣārī ؓ says, "This verse was revealed in connection with us. When we migrated to Madinah, most of us had two or three names. Some of them were popularised in order to denigrate, defame or belittle the bearer of the name. The Holy Prophet ﷺ was not aware of this situation; as a result he sometimes called them by one of these offensive names unwittingly. The noble Companions informed the Prophet ﷺ that the name offends the bearer of that name. This verse was revealed on that occasion." Sayyidnā Ibn-‘Abbās ؓ says that prohibition of *tanābuz bil-alqāb* means that if a person committed a sin or performed an evil deed from which he repented and mended his ways, it is unlawful for anyone to call him by denigrating names, such as thief, an adulterer, a drunkard or any such name. The Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said: "Anyone who denigrates a Muslim who has committed a sin of which he has repented, Allah takes it upon Himself that He will get the person to commit the very same sin and expose him to embarrassment and humiliation in this world and in the Hereafter [Qurṭubī].

Exception to the Rule

There are some nicknames, which though apparently offensive, are not intended to defame or insult the bearer of that name, but they rather serve as a symbol of identification. That is why scholars have permitted to attach titles to the names of the traditionalists - like A'raj [lame, cripple]

or *ahḍab* [humpbacked, hunchbacked] provided they are not intended to insult or defame. The Holy Prophet ﷺ himself named a Companion *dhul-yadain* because his hands were relatively long. ‘Abdullāh Ibn Mubārak was posed the question: " In the *asanid* [chains of authorities on which a tradition is based] we come across names to which are attached titles like Ḥamid At-Ṭawil [Ḥamid, the Tall], Sulaimān al-A‘mash [Sulaimān the weak-eyed] and

Marwān al-Aṣfar [Marwān, the Yellow]: are these titles allowed?" He replied: " If your intention is not to insult or defame, but rather to complete identification, it is permitted." [Qurtubī]

It is Sunnah to call people by Good Titles

The Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said that it is the right of a believer to call his fellow-believers by good names and titles which they like the best. Therefore the use of *kunniyyah* [agnomen/cognomen] had become commonplace in Arabia. The Holy Prophet ﷺ also favoured this, and consequently he himself bestowed appropriate titles on some of the individual Companions, e.g. Abū Bakr Ṣiddiq ؓ received the title of ‘*Atīq* [the noble], Sayyidnā ‘Umar ؓ, the title of *Fārūq* [he who distinguishes truth from falsehood], Sayyidnā Ḥamzah the title of *Asadullāh* [the lion of Allah] and Khālīd Ibn Walīd, the title of *Saifullāh* [the sword of Allah].

Verse 12

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا وَلَا يَغْتَبَ بَعْضُكُم بَعْضًا أَيُحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَنْ يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٢﴾

O those who believe, abstain from many of the suspicions. Some suspicions are sins. And do not be curious (to find out faults of others), and do not backbite one another. Does one of you like that he eats the flesh of his dead brother? You would abhor it. And fear Allah. Surely Allah is Most-Relenting, Very-Merciful. [12]

Analysis of the Verse

This verse too comprises injunctions relating to mutual rights and manners to be observed in social life. It prohibits three things: [1] *ẓann* [unfounded suspicion], the details to follow: [2] *tajassus* [spying, looking secretly into the faults of others]; and [3] *ghibah* [backbiting, speaking ill of a person behind his back which if he heard would hurt or injure his feelings].

[1] Prohibition of Unfounded Suspicion

Ẓann primarily denotes assumption on probable evidence. In the first instance, the Qur'ān sets down "Abstain from many of the suspicions." and gives reason for that: "some suspicion are sins.". This shows that not all types of suspicion is a sin. Thus it is incumbent on the readers to investigate which type is a sin, so that they may avoid it. If the uneasy feeling and the conviction that something is wrong, someone is guilty, or some danger is afoot is based on partial evidence, and not confirmed by out-and-out evidence, it is not permitted to act on it. Scholars and jurists have given a detailed account of it. Qurṭubī says that in this context *Ẓann* connotes "accusation", that is, a charge of wrongdoing, as with guilt, crime, offense or blame without any strong evidence. Imām Abū Bakr Jaṣṣāṣ in *Aḥkām-ul-Qur'ān* gives the following details. *Ẓann* is divisible into four categories. [1] prohibited; [2] imperative; [3] recommended, desirable; and [4] permissible. Distrust of Allah or suspecting His trust is prohibited. For instance, it is not permitted to think ill of Allah in that He will punish him or keep him in calamity all the time without forgiving him or showing mercy to him, thus despairing of His grace. Sayyidnā Jabir رضي الله عنه reports that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

لا يموتن احدكم الا وهو يحسن الظن بالله

"None of you should die without having favourable thoughts about Allah."

According to another *ḥadīth*, Allah Ta'ālā says:

أنا عند ظنّ عبدي بي

"I treat my servants the way they think about me."

This shows that holding favourable thoughts about Allah is compulsory and thinking ill of Him is prohibited. Likewise it is prohibited

to entertain suspicion, without rational grounds, about Muslims whose outer conditions show that they are good and noble.

Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه reports that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

يَاكُمْ وَالظَّنَّ فَإِنَّ الظَّنَّ أَكْذَبُ الْحَدِيثِ

"Avoid suspicion, for suspicion is the worst of false talks..."

In this context, *Zann* by common consent of scholars stands for thinking ill of a Muslim without any concrete proof. However, if there is a matter in which it is necessary to take a decision in either way, and there is no absolute and clear-cut proof based on the Qur'an and Sunnah for that particular situation, it is imperative to act on the strength of the best possible assessment, termed in Islamic jurisprudence as '*Az-zann-ul-ghalib*'. This is the approved practice in cases that come to the law-courts for settlement. In a court of law, a judge has to deliver his decision on the basis of the principle of "the best possible assessment" relying on the testimony of people worthy of confidence, even though there is the possibility that one of the witnesses at that particular moment might have lied. The testimony of the witness is based on "best assessment" and not on "absolute certainty". The judge does not have direct knowledge of the facts of the matter, nor is there a transparent text of the Qur'an and Sunnah. In cases like these where one or the other decision has to be taken, and the absolute knowledge of the reality cannot possibly be attained, there is no way out but to formulate a judgement on the basis of 'best possible assessment.'

Likewise when the direction of *qiblah* is not known, nor is there a person that can show one the direction of *qiblah*, it is compulsory for him to determine it on the basis of "best possible assessment". If a person has destroyed a valuable thing of someone, and a compensation has been imposed on him, he is liable to pay the value of it on the basis of 'best possible assessment'.

The example of permissible *Zann* is like that of a person performing prayers and in the course of it suspects whether he has performed three *rak'āt* or four, he is permitted to apply the 'best possible assessment' and complete the prayers accordingly. If, however, he does not wish to apply this principle, but wishes to act on the principle of 'certainty', thinking

that he has certainly performed three *rak'āt*, and thus completes the fourth one, that too is possible.

And desirable *Zann* refers to having favourable thoughts about every Muslim. That is rewardable [condensed from Jaṣṣāṣ].

Qurṭubī quotes the Qur'ānic verse

لَوْلَا إِذْ سَمِعْتُمُوهُ ظَنَّ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ خَيْرًا

'...why, when you (O believers,) heard of it, did the believing men and women not think well on their own selves - [24:12]'

This verse emphasizes to have good thoughts about the believers. The following aphorism apparently seems contrary to this rule:

أَنَّ مِنَ الْحَزْمِ سُوءَ الظَّنِّ

"It is prudence to have ill thoughts about every person."

But this means to be as precautionous when dealing with others as one would deal in suspicious cases: e.g. one should not hand over one's thing to anyone without strong reliance. It does not mean that he should regard anyone as a thief or run him down. In brief, one should take precautionary measures in the predicament one is placed in without labeling people as thieves or perfidious.

[2] Prohibition of Spying

The second social evil that is prohibited in the verse is *tajassus*, spying or prying secretly into the faults of others. An alternative reading of تَجَسُّسُ *tajassus* [with "J"] is تَحَسُّسُ *tahassus* [with "H"]. In a *ḥadīth* recorded in *Ṣaḥīḥain* on the authority of Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه the Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

لَا تَجَسَّسُوا وَلَا تَحَسَّسُوا

"...do not spy on one another; do not look for other's faults..."

The two words in Arabic are near-synonyms. *Akhfash* draws attention to the nuances or subtle differences in their meaning: *tajassus* connotes looking into the affairs of people which they have kept hidden, whilst *tahassus* connotes searching in general as in the following verse of the Holy Qur'ān.

تَحَسَّسُوا مِنْ يُوسُفَ وَأَخِيهِ

'...search for Yūsuf and his brother' - [12:87]

However, the term *taḥassus* [searching], like *tajassus* [spying], could have an evil connotation in which case the Holy Prophet ﷺ has prohibited it. The verse signifies that one may take into account what is presented in evidence, but it is not permitted to search for faults that are not overt. The Holy Prophet ﷺ says:

لا تَغْتَابُوا الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا عَوْرَاتِهِمْ فَإِنَّ مَنْ اتَّبَعَ عَوْرَاتِهِمْ يَتَّبِعِ اللَّهُ عَوْرَتَهُ وَمَنْ يَتَّبِعِ اللَّهُ عَوْرَتَهُ يَفْضَحْهُ فِي بَيْتِهِ (قرطبي)

"Do not speak ill of Muslims behind their backs, and do not search out their faults, for he who searches out their faults will have his faults searched out by Allah, and he whose faults are searched out by Allah will be exposed by Him, even though he should be in the interior of his house" [Qurṭubī].

Bayān-ul-Qur'ān interprets that *tajassus* [spying] and *taḥassus* [searching] include the sense of listening to people without their permission when they are talking, or eavesdropping at their doors. However, if there is an apprehension that some member of the Muslim community may be harmed by some mischief-makers, it is permitted for others to spy to protect the innocent and peaceful people, and search furtively for the intentions and conspiracies of such people who are a danger to the society.

[3] Prohibition of Backbiting

The third social evil this verse prohibits is *ghibah* [backbiting]. This connotes speaking ill of a person behind his back which if he heard would hurt or injure his feelings, even if what was said about him was the truth; if what was said about him was untruth, it is slander or false accusation. The prohibition of slander is prohibited elsewhere in the Qur'ān. In the definition of backbiting the phrase "behind his back / in his absence" appears. This does not mean that it is permissible to say hurtful things in the presence of somebody. This may not be backbiting, but it certainly falls under *lamz* which is prohibited in the preceding verse.

أَيُّجِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَنْ يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا

(Does one of you like that he eats the flesh of his dead brother? - 49:12)

This verse sternly warns against disgracing a Muslim and compares it to eating the flesh of a human being. If the victim of disgrace is present

before the offender, it is like eating the flesh of a living person, and the Holy Qur'ān has termed it as '*lamz*' which is prohibited in verse 11, as well as in another Sūrah by saying,

وَيْلٌ لِّكُلِّ هُمَزَةٍ لُّمَزَةٍ

'Woe to every backbiter, derider [104:1]'

And if the victim is not present, and someone speaks ill of him in a way that he is insulted, then it is like eating the flesh of a dead human being. Just as it does not cause any physical torture to a dead body, backbiting does not hurt the victim when he is not aware of it, but just as eating the flesh of a dead body is an extremely inhuman act, so is the backbiting. Both are prohibited. Otherwise also, speaking ill of someone in his absence is an unkind, mean and malicious act; it is not an act of valour and bravery.

This verse prohibits three social evils: unfounded suspicion, unjustifiable search for faults and backbiting. However, backbiting is most severely and harshly condemned. It is compared to eating the flesh of a dead Muslim, thus bringing out the gravity of its prohibition, unkindness and meanness. The wisdom of it lies in the fact that saying hurtful things to the face of someone is prohibited, but the man, being present, will be able to defend himself. Further, for fear of defense not everybody will have the courage to utter hurtful things to the face of someone, and usually it does not last long. It is unlike backbiting where there is no one to defend it, and thus the most mean person would pluck the courage to backbite the greatest of men. Because it is not defended, generally the ball keeps rolling, and more and more people get involved. Therefore, backbiting is prohibited most severely and harshly. It is necessary for the general body of Muslims to defend their brother, if possible, when people speak ill of him in his absence. If that is not possible, they should at least abstain from listening to it, because listening to it willfully and intentionally is like backbiting itself.

Some Issues Related to Backbiting

Sayyidnā Maimūn رضي الله عنه says that once he saw in a dream that there is a dead body of a Negro. A caller addressed him and said: "Eat this." Sayyidnā Maimūn رضي الله عنه says: "I said: 'O servant of God! Why should I eat this?'" The caller replied: "Because you have been backbiting a certain

person's Negro slave." Sayyidnā Maimūn رضي الله عنه said: "By God, I did not do that." The caller replied: "Yes, you did: you listened to people backbiting him and remained silent as if you were in agreement with them." After this dream, Sayyidnā Maimūn رضي الله عنه composed himself and he himself stopped backbiting and he did not allow anyone else in his presence to backbite.

In a narration of Sayyidnā Anas Ibn Mālik رضي الله عنه relating to Holy Prophet's صلى الله عليه وسلم experience of Mi'rāj, the Messenger of Allah said: "When I was taken up to the heaven, I passed by people who had fingernails of copper and were scratching their faces and breasts violently. I asked Jibrā'īl : 'Who are these people?' He replied: 'They are those people who were given to backbiting their brothers and who aspersed their honour.' [transmitted by al-Baghawī as cited in Maḥzarī]. Sayyidnā Abū Sa'īd and Jābir رضي الله عنه report that the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم has said:

"Backbiting is worse than adultery. The noble Companions inquired: 'How so, Messenger of Allah?' He replied: 'A person may commit fornication, repent of it and his sin is forgiven. But the sin of backbiting is not forgiven unless the injured party forgives.'" [Transmitted by Tirmidhī and Abū Dāwūd, as cited in Maḥzarī].

This *ḥadīth* indicates that backbiting is not only a violation of the Divine right, but also a violation of human right. Therefore, it is necessary to seek the forgiveness of the injured party. Some of the scholars express the view that backbiting does not become a human right unless the injured party comes to know about it. Therefore, seeking his pardon is not necessary [Quoted in Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī from Ḥasan, Al-Khayyāṭī, Ibn-uṣ-ṣabbāgh, An-Nawawī, Ibn-uṣ-ṣalāh, Az-Zarakshī, Ibn 'Abd-ul-Barr from Ibn-ul-Mubārak]. This is quoted in Bayān-ul-Qur'ān and explained as follows: If the victim of backbiting is not aware that someone has spoken ill of him, it might not be necessary for the backbiter to beg pardon of the victim, but it is necessary that he falsifies himself before the person whom he addressed when backbiting, or at least confesses his guilt before him. If the victim is dead or has disappeared, the atonement is recorded in a narration of Sayyidnā Anas رضي الله عنه where the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم has said:

ان من كفارة الغيبة ان يستغفر لمن اغتابه تقول اللهم اغفر لنا وله

"The atonement of backbiting is to invoke forgiveness of Allah

for the victim in the following words: O Allah, forgive our sins and his sins". [Transmitted by Baihaqī and cited in Mazharī].

Ruling [1]

It is prohibited to backbite children, insane and non-Muslim citizens of an Islamic state, because hurting them is prohibited. Hurting *ḥarbī* infidels who are the inhabitants of Dār-ul-Ḥarb [hostile country] is not prohibited. However, backbiting them, on account of wastage of time, is *makrūh*, and reprehensible.

Ruling [2]

Backbiting does not only connote speaking ill of a person behind his back, but it also connotes an action or pointed reference to him, as for instance if someone imitates the limp or uneven walking of a lame person to make fun of him, it is not permitted.

Ruling [3]

Some narrations show that the general prohibition of backbiting in the verse is subject to exceptions in special cases and specific circumstances. It is permitted if the need for backbiting is real and genuine from the Shari'ah point of view. Examples are as follows:

- [a] Complaining against a tyrant before a person who can relieve him from the tyranny and injustice.
- [b] Complaining about the wife and children to the father and husband who can put them right.
- [c] Giving a full account of the case in order to obtain a *fatwa* (ruling of Shari'ah)
- [d] Warning the Muslims of the mischief of a mischief-monger so that they may ward off the evil.
- [e] When someone consults another person in any matter, it is obligatory for him to apprise him of all aspects, including weaknesses, so that he is not deceived because of ignorance.
- [f] If a person commits sins openly and publishes his ungodly behaviour himself, it is not prohibited to make mention of his bad deeds. However, it is abominable and reprehensible to indulge in it on account of wastage of time [Bayān-ul-Qur'ān with reference to

Rūḥ-ul-Maʿānī].

But the necessary condition for invoking these exceptions is that speaking ill of someone is not with the intention of insulting or disgracing him, but only to fulfill a genuine need.

Verse 13

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ
لِتَعَارَفُوا ۗ إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَىٰكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ ﴿١٣﴾

O mankind, We have created you from a male and a female and made you into races and tribes, so that you may identify each other. Surely the noblest of you, in Allah's sight, is the one who is most pious of you. Surely Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware. [13]

All of Mankind are the Children of 'Ādam and Ḥawwā' عليهما السلام

In the preceding verses, six social evils in connection with human and Islamic rights were prohibited, and principles of good manners were laid down to be observed in social life. The current verse proceeds to set down the basis of an all-comprehensive and all-pervading principle of human equality. It has firmly laid the axe at the false and foolish notions of superiority, born of racial arrogance or national conceit. All men have been created from a single male [ʿĀdam ﷺ] and a single female [Ḥawwā'] as human beings. Therefore, all people are the descendants of 'Ādam and Ḥawwā' عليهما السلام and have been declared equal in the sight of Allah. No one is allowed to take pride nor to degrade others on the basis of pigment of his skin, the amount of wealth he possesses or by his rank or by his social status, descent or pedigree, but by his moral uprightness and the way he discharges his obligations to Allah and man. The entire human race is but one family. Division into nations, tribes and sub-tribes of all sizes, and races is meant only to give a better identification of one another.

Circumstances of Revelation

This verse was revealed on the occasion of the conquest of Makkah. When it was time for prayer, the Holy Prophet ﷺ asked Sayyidnā Bilāl ؓ to call the *adhān*. One of the pagan Quraish cynically remarked:

Thank God that my father died before this happened, and he did not have to see this bad day. Ḥārith Ibn Hishām remarked: Could Muḥammad not find anyone better than this black crow to sound the *adhān* in the Sacred Mosque! Abū Sufyān said: I do not wish to utter anything for fear that the master of the heavens will inform him. Thus Jibra'īl عليه السلام came down and informed the Holy Prophet ﷺ about this conversation. The Holy Prophet ﷺ called them and asked them about it. They admitted. At this, the current verse was revealed.

Taqwā of Allah is the basis of Honour

This verse made it plain that human beings can earn honour on account of their faith and righteousness. The immediate application of the verse was to Sayyidnā Bilāl رضي الله عنه, and therefore the Holy Prophet ﷺ said to those people: "You are empty (i.e. you have no moral leg to stand on.) Sayyidnā Bilāl رضي الله عنه, on the other hand, is equipped (with high moral qualities); and he is better and more honourable than any of you." [Baghawī, as cited in Mazḥarī]. Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنه reports that on the day when Makkah was conquered, the Holy Prophet ﷺ performed *ṭawāf* (circumambulation of Ka'bah) in the state of riding on his she-camel, [so that all the people could see him]. Then having completed his *ṭawāf*, he delivered a sermon in which he said:

الحمد لله الذي اذهب عنكم عبية الجاهلية وتكبرها. الناس رجلان برّ تقى كريم
على الله وفاجر شقى هين على الله ثم تلا: يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ (ترمذى وبعوى)

"O people! Allah has removed from you the pride of Jāhiliyyah and its arrogance. People are of two types: a man who is righteous, fearful of Allah and he is honourable to Allah; or a man who is sinful, wretched, and he is disgraced and little to Allah [Timidhī and Baghawī]."

Then he recited the current verse.

Sayyidnā Ibn-'Abbās رضي الله عنه says: For people "honour" lies in wealth, whilst in the sight of Allah it lies in righteousness.

Analysis of Important Words in the Verse

The word *شُعُوبًا* *Shu'ūb* is the plural of *Sha'b* which refers to a large group of persons of the same origin, (like a nation). Then it consists of clans and tribes. The largest group in this arrangement is called *sa'b*, and the smallest is called *'ashīrah*. Abū Ruwāq says that the words *Shu'ūb*

and Sha'b refer to non-Arab nations whose lineage is not preserved, whilst *qabāil* refers to Arabs whose lineage is well-preserved. The word *asbāt* is used to refer to the children of Israel.

Lineal, National and Linguistic Division of Mankind: The Underlying Divine Wisdom is identification

The Qur'an in this verse has made it clear that Allah has created all mankind from a single mother and a single father, and made them into a single brotherhood. But he has divided them into different tribes, nations, races, lineage and language-speakers/linguistic groups. The underlying Divine wisdom in such a division is mutual identification. For example, if there are two persons bearing the same name, they could be differentiated by family name. It can also show the near and remote relations. Their Shar'ī rights can be fulfilled on the basis of near and distant lineage. It is incumbent to determine the near and remote agnate heirs when applying the law of succession or dividing the estate of a deceased. In short, reference to one's lineage for the purpose of identification is not deemed to be pride and conceit.

Verses 14 - 18

قَالَتِ الْأَعْرَابُ آمَنَّا ۗ قُلْ لَمْ تُؤْمِنُوا وَلَكِنْ قُولُوا أَسْلَمْنَا وَلَمَّا
يَدْخُلِ الْإِيمَانُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ ۗ وَإِنْ تُطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ لَا يَلِتْكُمْ مِنْ
أَعْمَالِكُمْ شَيْئًا ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٤﴾ إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ
آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَرْتَابُوا وَجَاهَدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فِي
سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الصَّادِقُونَ ﴿١٥﴾ قُلْ أَتَعْلَمُونَ اللَّهَ بِدِينِكُمْ ۗ
وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ
عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٦﴾ يَمُنُونَ عَلَيْكَ أَنْ أَسْلَمُوا ۗ قُلْ لَا تَمُنُوا عَلَيَّ إِسْلَامَكُمْ ۗ
بَلِ اللَّهُ يَمُنُّ عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْ هَدَيْتُكُمْ لِلْإِيمَانِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿١٧﴾ إِنَّ
اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ غَيْبَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ بَصِيرٌ ۗ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٨﴾

The Bedouins say, "We have come to believe." Say, "You have not come to believe; instead you (should) say, 'We

have surrendered' and the belief has not entered your hearts so far. And if you obey Allah and His Messenger, He will not curtail (the reward of) any of your deeds in the least. Surely Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful. [14] Believers, in fact, are those who believe in Allah and His Messenger, then have no doubt, and struggle, with their riches and their lives, in the way of Allah. Those are the truthful. [15] Say, "Would you apprise Allah of your religion, while Allah knows all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth, and Allah is All-Knowing about every thing?" [16] They oblige you that they have accepted Islam, (as if it was a favour shown to you). Say, "Do not oblige me for your accepting Islam. Rather, Allah makes you obliged for His having guided you to the Faith, if you are truthful. [17] Surely Allah knows the Unseen of the heavens and the earth, and Allah keeps in sight whatever you do. [18]

Sequence of Verses in the Sūrah

In the preceding verses of the Sūrah it was stated that the basis of honour in the sight of Allah is righteousness which is an inner quality, and Allah alone knows it. It is improper for any man to claim self-sanctification. In the current set of verses, it is stated, on account of a particular incident, that the real basis of faith is the inner acceptance of the heart. Mere lip-service to faith does not count the person as a faithful believer. In the entire Sūrah, first the rights of the Prophet were set out and then the rules of how to respect and honour him. Next the individual and collective rights and rules of mannerism were set down to be applied in social life. Now at the conclusion of the Sūrah it is reiterated that in the Hereafter good deeds will be accepted and rewarded on the basis of faith, sincere belief of the heart and obedience to Allah and His Messenger.

Circumstances of Revelation

According to Imām Baghawī, this verse was revealed in connection with the tribe of Banu Asad. A few members of that tribe came up to the Holy Prophet ﷺ in Madīnah during a severe drought. These people were not sincere believers. They had expressed their Islam merely to demand financial help from the Muslim *Ṣadaqāt* funds. As they were not believers in the real sense of the word, they were unaware of Islamic injunctions and manners. They spread filth and excrement on the streets of Madīnah. In the marketplaces they increased the prices of necessary items. First they made a false claim of faith in the presence of the Holy Prophet ﷺ,

second they wanted to deceive him; and third they regarded their Islam as a favour to him. They said: "We embraced Islam without any conflict: we did not fight against you as did other tribes for a length of time and then they became Muslims; therefore you should value us." This was a sort of disrespect to the Messenger ﷺ, because they considered their Islam as a favour to him. Their sole purpose was to derive financial aid from the Muslim *Ṣadaqāt* funds, enrich themselves and eradicate their poverty. True and sincere faith is the most precious possession of a Muslim. By accepting Islam, he does not show a favour to anybody; on the contrary, it is a favour of Allah that he is guided to the Truth. On this occasion, the current set of verses was revealed in which their false claim is refuted and they have been taken to task for boasting of their so-called kindness and favour conferred upon the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

وَلَكِنْ قَوْلًا أَسْمَنَّا ('...Say, 'We have surrendered'- 49:14). They had not achieved the reality of faith. Thus they were claiming falsely to be Muslims on the basis of their outward actions. The Qur'an first negates their false claim of faith: You cannot claim "*āmannā*" ['We have come to believe']; the most you can say is "*aslamnā*" ['We have surrendered'], because the literal meaning of Islam is to recite the *kalimah* of Islam, enter the fold of the religion and surrender. Obviously, being devoid of the true spirit, this kind of Islam is mere superficial, not real and total. As far as faith is concerned, it is related to the real belief by heart. Therefore, mere verbal claim or lip-profession is meaningless, if it is not supported by the heart.

Lexical and Technical Analysis of the Concepts "Islām" and "Īmān"

The foregoing discussion clarifies that the term "Islam" in this verse bears the literal meaning of outward submission and not the technical sense. Therefore, the verse does not show the technical difference between the terms "Islām" and "Īmān". The two terms, technically, connote different senses. "Īmān", in the technical sense of Shari'ah, refers to the belief by heart and thus connotes a firm and unshakable belief in the Oneness of Allah and in His Messenger. "Islam", on the other hand, stands for complete surrender and obedience to Allah and His Messenger. However, "Islām" and "Īmān" of a person need to complement each other. In Shari'ah, the belief of the heart must manifest itself by performing

deeds outwardly, the least degree of which is to proclaim the *kalimah* of Islām verbally. But the outward performance of deeds is not recognised by Sharī'ah unless the faith goes deep down into his heart. Otherwise it would be hypocrisy. Thus in the original and final analysis "Islam" and "Īmān" are different concepts. "Īmān" is the inner quality of the heart and manifests outwardly whilst "Islām" starts out in outward actions and culminates in the inner sincere affirmation of the heart. But in terms of their goal, they are mutually necessary and complementary in that "Īmān" without "Islām" is not possible, nor is "Islam" possible without "Īmān". Hence, it is not true to say that "Muslim" and "*Mu'min*" are antonyms and mutually contradictory concepts. In Sharī'ah, it is not possible for a person to be a "Muslim" but not a "*Mu'min*" or be a "*Mu'min*" but not a "Muslim". However, this is possible only lexically, as is the case of all hypocrites who used to be treated like Muslims, because of their outward obedience of Islamic injunctions, but their hearts were devoid of sincere faith, belief and affirmation. They were not believers. Allah, the Pure and Exalted, knows best.

Alhamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Ḥujurāt
Ends here

Sūrah Qāf

This Sūrah Qāf is Makkī. It contains 45 verses and 3 sections

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

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

Verses 1 - 15

قَدْ نَبَّأَ الْوَالِدِينَ وَالْقُرْآنِ الْمَجِيدِ ﴿١﴾ بَلْ عَجِبُوا أَنْ جَاءَهُمْ مُنْذِرٌ مِنْهُمْ فَقَالَ
 الْكٰفِرُونَ هَذَا شَيْءٌ عَجِيبٌ ﴿٢﴾ ءَا إِذَا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا ذَلِكُمْ رَجْعٌ
 بَعِيدٌ ﴿٣﴾ قَدْ عَلِمْنَا مَا تَنْقُصُ الْأَرْضُ مِنْهُمْ ۖ وَعِنْدَنَا كِتَابٌ حَفِیْظٌ
 ﴿٤﴾ بَلْ كَذَّبُوا بِالْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ فَهُمْ فِي أَمْرٍ مَّرِیْجٍ ﴿٥﴾ أَفَلَمْ
 يَنْظُرُوا إِلَى السَّمَاءِ فَوْقَهُمْ كَيْفَ بَنَيْنَاهَا وَزَيَّنَّاهَا وَمَا لَهَا مِنْ فُرُوجٍ
 ﴿٦﴾ وَالْأَرْضَ مَدَدْنَاهَا وَأَلْقَيْنَا فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ وَأَنْبَتْنَا فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ
 زَوْجٍ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ ﴿٧﴾ تَبَصَّرَةٌ وَذِكْرَىٰ لِكُلِّ عَبْدٍ مُّنِيبٍ ﴿٨﴾ وَنَزَّلْنَا مِنَ
 السَّمَاءِ مَاءً مُّبْرَكًا فَأَنْبَتْنَا بِهِ جَنَّاتٍ وَحَبَّ الْحَصِيدِ ﴿٩﴾ وَالنَّخْلَ
 بَسِطَتْ لَهَا فُجُورًا وَظِلًّا ۖ رِزْقًا لِلْعِبَادِ ۗ وَأَحْيَيْنَا بِهِ بَلَدَةً مَّيْتًا ۗ
 كَذَلِكَ الْخُرُوجُ ﴿١٠﴾ كَذَّبَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ نُوحٍ وَأَصْحَابُ الرَّسِّ
 وَثَمُودُ ﴿١١﴾ وَعَادٌ وَفِرْعَوْنُ وَإِخْوَانُ لُوطٍ ﴿١٢﴾ وَأَصْحَابُ الْاِيْكَةِ
 وَقَوْمُ تُبَّعٍ ۗ كُلُّ كَذَّبَ الرُّسُلَ فَحَقَّ وَعِيدِ ﴿١٣﴾ أَفَعَيْنَا بِالْخَلْقِ
 الْأَوَّلِ ۗ بَلْ هُمْ فِي لَبْسٍ مِّنْ خَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ ﴿١٤﴾

Qāf. (I swear) by the glorious Qurʾān, (you are sent as a messenger.) [1] But they wonder that a warner has come to them from among themselves, so the disbelievers said, "This is something strange. [2] Is it when we die and become dust (that we will be brought to life again?) That is a return, far (from understanding)." [3] We know very well how much of them is diminished by the earth, and We have a Book that records every thing. [4] Rather, they rejected the truth when it came to them; so they are in a confused state. [5] Did they not, then, look to the sky above them, how We have built it and beautified it, and it has no cracks? [6] And the earth—We have spread it out, and cast on it firm hills, and caused to grow therein every kind of delightful things, [7] as a source of vision and as a lesson to every slave (of Allah) who turns (to Him for guidance). [8] And We sent down blessed water from the sky, and caused to grow therewith gardens and grain of harvest, [9] and towering date palms that have spadices, put one upon another, [10] as a provision to the slaves (of Allah). And We gave life with it to a dead land. Similar will be the exit (of the dead from their graves). [11] It (resurrection) was rejected prior to them by the people of Nūḥ, and the people of Rass and Thamūd, [12] and ʿĀd, and Firʿaun, and the brothers of Lūṭ, [13] and dwellers of Aykah, and the people of Tubbaʿ. Each one of them rejected the messengers; so My threat came true. [14] Is it then that We were worn out by the first creation? No, but they are in confusion about the new creation. [15]

Linkage with the preceding Sūrah

This Sūrah mostly contains subjects relating to the Day of Judgment, Resurrection, the Reckoning, Paradise, the Fire, Allah's reward and punishment etc. Thus this Sūrah is linked with Sūrah Al-Ḥujurāt because the concluding part of the latter Sūrah dealt with these subjects.

Characteristics and Virtues of Sūrah Qāf

It is reported in Muslim, as cited in Qurtubī, that Umm Hishām Bint Ḥārithah Ibn Nuʿmān رضي الله عنها said: "For around two years, or a year and a part of another year, we shared one single oven with the Holy Prophet ﷺ. I memorized Sūrah Qāf from the Holy Prophet ﷺ who used to recite it every Friday while standing on the pulpit delivering the Friday sermon to the people."

Sayyidnā ʿUmar Ibn-ul-Khaṭṭāb ﷺ asked Abū Wāqid Al-Laithī:

"What did the Holy Prophet ﷺ recite during the 'Īd prayers?" He replied: "Sūrah Qāf and Sūrah Qamar." Sayyidnā Jābir رضي الله عنه reports that the Holy Prophet ﷺ used to recite Sūrah Qāf often in the morning prayer. (Despite that this Sūrah is rather long,) the prayer was felt light (Qurtubī). It was the special trait of the recitation of the Holy Prophet ﷺ that praying behind him caused no stress, even when he recited the long Sūrahs.

Is it Possible to Observe the Heaven?

أَفَلَمْ يَنْظُرُوا إِلَى السَّمَاءِ (Did they not, then, look to the sky above them? - 50:6). Apparently this sentence indicates that it is possible to see the sky, while the general impression is that the blue colour that we see above is the colour of the atmosphere, and not that of the heaven. However, there is no proof for non-existence of the sky, nor of the presumption that the colour of the heaven is not blue. Besides, the word *nazar* (seeing) used in the verse could mean perceiving through reason, that is, thinking, pondering etc. (Bayān-ul-Qur'ān)

Removal of a Doubt relating to Resurrection

قَدْ عَلِمْنَا مَا تَنْقُصُ الْأَرْضُ مِنْهُمْ (We know very well how much of them is diminished by the earth,... 50:4). The disbelievers wondered at the idea that when they are dead and reduced to broken bones and particles of dust and scattered all over the world, whether it is possible that, on the Day of Resurrection, they will be raised up again. They thought that it was impossible when they are dead, disintegrated, with their organs torn apart that they will be brought back to their original shape and bodies. The verse refutes the disbelievers' objection: Allah says that He knows that which the earth takes of them, meaning He knows what the earth consumes of their dead bodies; where and how the bodies disintegrated, what they turned into and how they have become. Man's knowledge is limited and narrow in scope which should not be compared to Allah's vast, unlimited and encompassing knowledge - even the particles of objects which the earth disintegrates are well preserved in Allah's infinite knowledge. And a little reflection may reveal that even the body of a living person is composed of innumerable particles that have been joined together by Allah from different places. Whatever a person intakes in the form of food or medicine is derived from different parts of the earth, and all this forms part of his body. Then why should it be difficult for Him if He recollects all these parts after they are disintegrated? Not only this, he had a perfect and full knowledge of every man's destiny even before

creating him as to what transformation will come about in every moment of his life and what phases he will go through after his death. All this is precisely recorded in the Preserved Tablet.

It is astonishing indeed that the disbelievers wonder at Him whose knowledge is so perfect, full, complete and encompassing and whose power is so infinite and discount the possibility of Resurrection!

This interpretation of 'diminishing by earth' is reported from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbas رضي الله عنه, Mujāhid and majority of the interpreters (Al-Baḥr-ul-Muḥīṭ).

فِي أَمْرٍ مَّرِيجٍ (so they are in a confused state... 5). The word *Marij*, (translated above as 'confused') means something mixed up with different elements. Such a thing generally becomes corrupt or spoiled. Therefore, Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه translates the word *marij* as "corrupt". Sayyidnā Ḍaḥḥāk, Qatādah رضي الله عنه, Ḥasan Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى and others interpret the word *marij* to mean "in disarray, in a confused state". This is the state of those who deny the prophethood of the Holy Prophet ﷺ: whatever they say and utter is no more than confusion. They are not even consistent in their claims. Sometimes they call the Holy Prophet ﷺ a sorcerer, at other times a poet; and yet at other times they refer to him as a soothsayer or an astrologer. They were so confused that they could not extricate themselves from their perplexity.

After mentioning the confused state of the infidels, Allah draws man's attention to His infinite power which He demonstrated by creating what is bigger than that which they wondered about and whose possibility they discounted. Referring to the heaven, the Qur'an says: وَمَا لَهَا مِنْ فُرُوجٍ (...and it has no cracks...50:6). Lexically, the word *furūj* is the plural of *farj* which means a crack, or an opening. This and the following few verses draw attention to the marvels of Allah's creation, the wonderful design in the universe, and to the flawless celestial firmament. If this was made by man there would have been patches, cracks, clefts or rifts. But no one can find any sort of patchwork or stitching in the sky. This, however, does not negate the existence of doors in the heaven. A door is not referred to as a crack:

Consoling the Holy Prophet ﷺ

كَذَّبَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ نُوحٍ وَأَصْحَابُ الرَّسِّ (It [resurrection] was rejected prior to them by the people of Nuḥ, and the people of Rass - 50:12). It was mentioned in the preceding verses that the infidels rejected the Prophethood of

Sayyidnā Muḥammad ﷺ and the Hereafter. This obviously perturbed and upset him. In this verse Allah comforts him by narrating the stories of the previous prophets and their communities. Every community in the past persecuted their respective prophets. This was the behavior pattern of all disbelieving nations against their prophets throughout history. Thus the Holy Prophet ﷺ is consoled that he should not be disheartened by this behavior. The story of the people of Nūḥ عليه السلام is repeated several times in the Qur'an in that the Holy Prophet Nūḥ عليه السلام preached to his people for 950 years but in response they not only rejected him but also subjected him to various hardships.

Who are people of Rass?

Lexically, the word *rass* in Arabic has several meanings. Most prominently it refers to a well that has not been built by bricks or stones. People of Rass were the remnants of Thamūd who had remained alive after the punishment. Ḍaḥḥāk عليه السلام and other commentators narrate their story that follows. When the people of Ṣāliḥ عليه السلام were destroyed by Allah's punishment, a remnant [about 4000] of them escaped it, because they had reposed faith in him and obeyed him. They left their original place and took shelter in Ḥaḍramaut (a city in Yemen). Holy Prophet Ṣāliḥ عليه السلام was with them. They went to a well and stayed there. Ṣāliḥ عليه السلام passed away here; therefore this place is called *Ḥaḍara Maut* [death overcame] and the people settled there permanently.

Later their descendants took to idol-worship, to whom a prophet was sent to preach and reform, but they killed him. The community was annihilated by Divine punishment. Their well, on which their lives depended, was rendered useless; and their buildings and dwellings were desolated. The Qur'an has described it in the following words, فَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلَىٰ عُرُوشِهَا وَيَبُرُ الْأَرْضَ يَدْرُسُهَا فَتَرَىٰ بَنَاتِكُنَّ خَائِيَةً عَلَىٰ عَلْوَتِكُنَّ فَاذْكُرْنَ أَصْنَانِكُنَّ فَتَرَىٰ فِيهَا مَدَائِنَ غَالِيَةً وَمَأْتِنًا لِلْكَافِرِينَ فَذُكِّرْنَ لَعْنَتَهُنَّ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرْنَ بِآيَاتِنَا فَهُنَّ مِنَ الْمَدْمُونَاتِ (22:45). "So, there they are, fallen down on their roofs, and how many a deserted well and well-built castle!" (22:45). For discerning eyes the abandoned well and desolate lofty palaces are sufficient to judge and decide on the consequences of one's deeds.

Thamūd

These are the people of the Prophet Ṣāliḥ عليه السلام whose story has been repeated several times in the Qur'an.

‘Ād

The nation of ‘Ād was proverbial in their size, physical strength and power as well as the strength that came to them in the wake of their

increased wealth and children. Holy Prophet Hūd عليه السلام was sent to them. Eventually, they were annihilated by the Divine punishment of a wind storm.

Fir'aun

This is the title of the Egyptian king (The Pharaoh) notorious for his tyranny.

Brothers of Lūṭ

It means the community of the Prophet Lūṭ عليه السلام, whose story is narrated several times in the Qur'an.

Dwellers of Aikah

Aikah means a dense bush; wood; forest; jungle, These people resided in such a place. Holy Prophet Shu'aib عليه السلام was sent to this nation. They disobeyed him and were destroyed by Divine punishment.

People of Tubba'

Tubba' was the title of the king of Yemen. The necessary explanation has been given in volume seven in Sūrah Ad-Dukhān under [44:37].

Verses 16 - 29

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ وَنَعَلْمُ مَا تُوسَّوْسُ بِهِ نَفْسُهُ ۖ وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ
إِلَيْهِ مِنْ حَبْلِ الْوَرِيدِ ﴿١٦﴾ إِذْ يَتَلَقَّى الْمُتَلَقِينَ عَنِ الْيَمِينِ وَعَنِ
الشَّمَالِ قَعِيدٌ ﴿١٧﴾ مَا يَلْفِظُ مِنْ قَوْلٍ إِلَّا لَدَيْهِ رَقِيبٌ عَتِيدٌ ﴿١٨﴾
وَجَاءَتْ سَكْرَةُ الْمَوْتِ بِالْحَقِّ ۗ ذَلِكُمْ مَا كُنْتُمْ مِنْهُ تَحِيدُونَ ﴿١٩﴾
وَنُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ ۗ ذَلِكُمْ يَوْمُ الْوَعِيدِ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَجَاءَتْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ
مَعَهَا سَائِقٌ وَشَهِيدٌ ﴿٢١﴾ لَقَدْ كُنْتُمْ فِي غَفْلَةٍ مِّنْ هَذَا فَكَشَفْنَا
عَنْكَ غِطَاءَكَ فَبَصَرُكَ الْيَوْمَ حَدِيدٌ ﴿٢٢﴾ وَقَالَ قَرِينُهُ هَذَا مَا لَدَى
عَتِيدٍ ﴿٢٣﴾ أَفَلْيَا فِي جَهَنَّمَ كُلٌّ كَفَّارٍ عَنِيدٍ ﴿٢٤﴾ مَنَّاعٍ لِلْخَيْرِ مُعْتَدٍ
مُّرِيبٍ ﴿٢٥﴾ إِلَٰذِي جَعَلَ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ فَأَلْقِيهِ فِي الْعَذَابِ
الشَّدِيدِ ﴿٢٦﴾ قَالَ قَرِينُهُ رَبَّنَا مَا أَطْعَمْتُهُ وَلَكِنْ كَانَ فِي ضَلَالٍ بَعِيدٍ

﴿٢٧﴾ قَالَ لَا تَخْتَصِمُوا لَدَيَّ وَقَدْ قَدَّمْتُ إِلَيْكُمْ بِالْوَعِيدِ ﴿٢٨﴾ مَا
يُبَدِّلُ الْقَوْلَ لَدَيَّ وَمَا أَنَا بِظَلَّامٍ لِلْعَبِيدِ ﴿٢٩﴾

And indeed We have created man, and We know whatever thoughts his inner self develops, and We are closer to him than (his) jugular vein, [16] when the two receiving angels receive (every human act to record it), seated (one) on the right and (one) on the left. [17] Not a single word is uttered by one, but there is a watcher near him, ready (to record). [18] And the daze of death has (to) come with truth. That is what you tried to escape. [19] And the Horn will be blown. That will be the day of (which) threat (was given). [20] And everybody will come, along with one (angel) to drive (him to the field of reckoning) and one (angel) to testify (about his deeds). [21] "You were heedless of this. Now We have removed your veil from you; so your sight today is sharp." [22] And his companion (i.e. the angel who recorded his deeds) will say, "This is what I have with me, ready (to be presented as his record of deeds)." [23] (Then it will be said,) "Cast, both of you (O angels,) into Jahannam (hell) every stubborn disbeliever [24] who used to prevent (others) from good, who transgressed all bounds, who cast doubts (in true faith), [25] who set up another god along with Allah. So cast him (O angels) in the painful punishment." [26] His (evil) companion (i.e. the Satan) will say, "O our Lord, I did not cause him to rebel, but he was himself (involved) in straying far from the track. [27] He (Allah) will say, "Do not quarrel before Me, while I had sent to you My threat well in advance. [28] The Word is not changed with Me, and I Am not a wrongdoer to My slaves." [29]

Linkage

The preceding verses purported to quell the doubt of those who denied the possibility of Resurrection and who thought that raising the dead was inconceivable. As a result, the unbelievers drew a false analogy between their finite knowledge and power and the infinite knowledge and power of Allah. Therefore, the perplexity arose in their mind: 'after we die, disintegrate, with our organs torn apart, our bodies reduced to particles of dust and scattered or spread all over the world, how is it possible to gather them together and recompose them back into our original shape and

bodies?'

The preceding verses responded that the Divine knowledge is all-encompassing and He knows every single particle of the universe, and therefore it is not difficult for Him to recollect these particles. The same subject has been further elaborated in the present verses by declaring that Allah not only has the complete knowledge of man's scattered particles, but He also has the full knowledge of all thoughts that cross the mind of man. The verse explains the reason for that: Allah is nearer to him than his jugular vein, on which is dependent his very life. Therefore, He knows man's conditions and circumstances more than man himself.

Allah is Nearer to Man than his Jugular Vein: An Analysis

The concluding part of verse [16] says: نَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ حَبْلِ الْوَرِيدِ (We are closer to him than [his] jugular vein). The 'closeness' in the verse, by consensus of scholars, refers to "nearness in terms of all-encompassing knowledge" not in terms of physical closeness. In this manner, the verse means that Allah's power and knowledge has so encompassed man from within and without that His power and knowledge is nearer to him than his own jugular vein.

The term *warīd* [pl. *awridah*] in the Arabic language are animal veins which supply blood to the entire body. Medically, there are two types of veins: [1] the veins that emerge from the liver and supply pure blood to the entire human body. Medically, only these veins are referred to as *warīd* [*awridah*]; and [2] the veins that emerge from animal heart and supply the subtle vapor of blood to the entire human body which in medical terminology is referred to as *rūḥ* [soul]. These veins are called in Arabic *shiryān* [which actually refers to an artery]. The first type of veins is thick-walled and the second type is thin-walled.

The word *warīd* in the above verse does not necessarily apply to the vein that comes from the liver in the medical sense. In fact it could well apply, in the literal sense, to the vein that comes from the heart because in that too a type of blood circulates. As the purport of this verse is to show that Allah possesses full knowledge of all thoughts that cross the mind of man, the literal sense of the term seems more appropriate. Nevertheless, whether the word *warīd* is taken medically in the sense of a vein coming from the liver or in the sense of an artery coming from the heart is immaterial. In both cases the living creatures' life depends on it.

If the veins or arteries are cut, they lose their soul and die. In short, Allah encompasses complete and full knowledge about everything of man, because He is closer to him than his neck-vein.

According to the Honourable Ṣūfīs, here the term *qurb* (closeness) goes beyond the concept of nearness in terms of knowledge. It is a special type of *ittiṣāl* [contact or bond or relationship between Allah and His creation, including man who is placed at the centre of the wonderful universe], the reality and nature of which is not known to anyone, but it does necessarily exist *bilā kaif* "without how" or indescribably. Various Qur'ānic verses and authentic Prophetic Traditions bear ample testimony to this fact. For example, the Qur'ān commands: *وَاسْجُدْ وَاقْتَرِبْ* (and bow down in *sajdah*, and come closer....Al-'Alaq: 18) This is just like what the Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said: "The closest that a servant can be to his Lord is when he is in prostration. Therefore, make abundant supplications (i.e. while prostrating)." Another Tradition reports that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "When My servant performs supererogatory prayers, he attains proximity to Me." On the occasion of migration to Madīnah, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said to Sayyidnā Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه *إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَنَا* "Allah is with us. (9:40)" Holy Prophet Mūsā عليه السلام said to the children of Israel: *إِنَّ مَعِيَ رَبِّي* "My Lord is with me." (26:62)

This *qurb* [nearness or proximity to Allah], which man attains through nearness of obligatory and supererogatory works and through his efforts, is reserved exclusively for a believer. Such believers are called *awliyā'ullah* [the friends of Allah: they are those whom Allah has chosen as His friends]. This special bond with Allah is different from the general relationship between Allah and man, whether believer or non-believer. In brief, the above verses and narrations bear testimony to the fact that man has a special type of proximity to his Creator and Master though its reality and nature cannot be perceived. Maulānā Rūmī رحمه الله تعالى has versified this concept thus:

تصالے کے مثال کے قیاس.....ہست رب الناس رابا جان ناس

The Lord of the people has a special contact with the people which is beyond one's perception and has no other example.

This nearness and proximity cannot be perceived by the ordinary sensation of physical sight, but it is attained through *farāṣah* of 'īmān

[perspicacity through faith]. Tafsīr Maḥzarī interprets *qurb* and *ittiṣāl* in this verse in the same sense. We have learnt earlier the interpretation of the majority of the commentators that it is not physical proximity, but rather the all-encompassing, full and complete knowledge of Allah. Apart from these two interpretations, Ibn-Kathīr interprets it in a third way. He says that the pronoun "We" does not refer to the "Being" of Allah, but to His angels who are all the time with man. They know man's soul so closely that man himself is not so well aware of it. Allah knows best!

The Two Recording Angels with every Man

إِذْ يَتَلَقَّى الْمُتَلَقِّينَ (when the two receiving angels receive (every human act to record it - 50:17) In the phrase *idh yatalaqq al-mutalaqqiyāni*, (when the two receiving angels receive) the verb *yatalaqqā* is aorist from the infinitive *talaqqī* which denotes to take, to accept, to receive, to learn as in the verse فَتَلَقَّى آدَمُ مِنْ رَبِّهِ كَلِمَاتٍ "Thereafter 'Ādam received a few words from his Lord (2:37)". The word *mutalaqqiyani* in the verse is the dual of *al-mutalaqqī* and refers to the two angels that accompany every human being all the time to receive and record the deeds of mankind. The phrase عَنِ الْيَمِينِ وَعَنِ الشِّمَالِ قَاعِدٌ (seated [one] on the right and [one] on the left. 50:17) means that the angel sitting on the right records one's good actions, and that on the left, his bad actions. The word *qa'id* is used in the sense of *qa'id*, like *jalīs* in the sense of *jalīs* - both meaning "sitting". The word *qa'id* is used for singular as well as plural. However, there is a difference in the usage of *qa'id* and *jalīs* as opposed to *qa'id* and *jalīs* in that the former means a person who is actually sitting. But *qa'id* and *jalīs* are used in the general sense of the words, that is, he who accompanies someone whether sitting, standing or moving around. The word *qa'id* is used in the verse to describe the two angels, because they accompany human beings all the time and in every state - whether sitting or standing, whether moving or sleeping. The angels move out only when the humans undress their private parts for purposes of responding to the call of nature or having sexual intercourse. However, Allah has equipped them with a special innate sensing device, so that they realize the sins, or become aware of the sins that are being committed in their absence. Ibn Kathīr states that, according to the narration of Aḥnāf Ibn Qais, the angel sitting on the right records the good deeds, and he is also the supervisor over the angel on the left. If a person commits a sin, the angel

on the right says to the one on the left, "Do not write it yet; give him a chance; may be he will repent; if he does, then let it go; otherwise record it in your record of deeds". (Ibn-Abī Ḥātim transmitted it)

Explanation of Ḥasan Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى

Ḥasan Baṣrī recited the above verse containing the phrase *عَنِ الْيَمِينِ وَعَنِ الشَّمَالِ قَعِيدٌ* (seated one on the right, and one on the left) and said:

"O son of 'Ādam! Your record of deeds has been spread, and two honorable angels have been appointed. One on your right side and the other on your left. The one on your right side records your good deeds, and the one on your left records your evil deeds and sins. Focus on this reality, and do what you desire, increase it or decrease it. When you die, your record of deeds will be folded, and put around your neck. It will go with you in the grave, and remain there. When you will rise from your grave on the Day of Judgement, Allah will say:

وَكُلُّ إِنْسَانٍ أَلْزَمْنَاهُ طَائِرَهُ، فِي عُنُقِهِ وَنُخْرِجُ لَهُ، يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ كِتَابًا يَلْقَاهُ مَنْشُورًا. أَقْرَأُ
كَتَبِكَ كَفَىٰ بِنَفْسِكَ الْيَوْمَ عَلَيْكَ حَسِيبًا .

"And every human's (deeds determining his) fate We have tied up to his neck, and We shall bring forth for him, on the day of Resurrection, a book he will receive wide open. [13] "Read your book. This day you yourself are enough to take your own account." [14] (Sūrah Banī Isra'īl - 13, 14).

Then Ḥasan Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى said:

"By God! The Supreme Being has done a great justice in that He has appointed you to take account of your own actions". (Ibn Kathīr)

Obviously the book or the ledger of deeds would not be made up of mundane paper, so that there should be any difficulty in understanding how it will go with him in the grave and remain there with him until the Day of Resurrection. It is a transcendental reality, the actual nature of which is known only to Allah. Therefore, it should not be surprising if the book is put as a garland round the neck and remains there until the Day of Resurrection.

Every Utterance of Man is Recorded

مَا يَلْفُظُ مِنْ قَوْلٍ إِلَّا لَدَيْهِ رَقِيبٌ عَتِيدٌ (Not a single word is uttered by one, but there is a watcher near him, ready [to record]...50:18) In other words,

there is always a supervising angel [the scribe] whose responsibility is to record any word that the human utters or speaks. Sayyidnā Ḥasan Baṣrī and Qatādah said that this angel records every single word - whether or not it is sinful or rewardable. Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه said that only those utterances are recorded that are sinful or rewardable. Ibn Kathīr, having quoted both these views, preferred the first view on the basis of the general words of the verse that every utterance is recorded. According to another narration of Sayyidnā Abū Ṭalḥah رضي الله عنه from Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه both the views can be accommodated. This narration states that in the first instance every utterance is recorded, whether or not it is sinful or rewardable. Once a week on Thursdays, the angels review the recorded utterances and retain only those that are sinful or rewardable, good or bad; the rest are discounted. Thus the Qur'an says: *يَمْحُوا اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَيُثَبِّتُ* "Allah wipes off what He wills and affirms (what He wills). And with Him is the Mother Book." (Ar-Ra'd 39)

Imām Aḥmad has reported from Sayyidnā Bilāl Ibn Ḥarīth Al-Muzanī رضي الله عنه that the Messenger of Allah has said:

"Verily, a man sometime utters a good word that pleases Allah, unaware of how highly it will be rewarded, and on its account Allah decrees His pleasure of him until the Day he meets Him. Similarly, a man might utter a word that angers Allah, unaware of how dreadful its punishment will be, and on its account Allah decrees for him His anger until the Day he meets Him."

Sayyidnā 'Alqamah رضي الله عنه, after narrating this from Bilāl Ibn Ḥarīth رضي الله عنه, used to say: "How many words did I not utter because of this *ḥadīth*." (Ibn Kathīr)

Daze of Death

وَجَاءَتْ سَكْرَةُ الْمَوْتِ بِالْحَقِّ ط ذَلِكَ مَا كُنْتَ مِنْهُ تَحِيدُ (And the daze of death has [to] come with truth. That is what you tried to escape...50:19) The phrase *sakrat-ul-mawt* denotes the agony and the stupor or daze of death that a dying person experiences. Abū Bakr Ibn-ul-Anbārī رضي الله تعالى عنه with his own transmitting authorities reports from Masrūq that when the signs of death appeared on Sayyidnā Abū Bakr Ṣiddīq رضي الله عنه, Ṣiddīqah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها was called. She came and when she saw her father's condition, she spontaneously versified and recited:

إِذَا حَشْرَجَتْ يَوْمًا وَضَاقَ بِهَا الصَّدْرُ

"When the soul one day will be uneasy and the breast thereby will become narrow".

Sayyidnā Abū Bakr Ṣiddīq رضي الله عنه heard this and said: "You recited this verse inappropriately; why did you not recite the Qur'ānic verse [19] وَجَاءَتْ سَكْرَةُ الْمَوْتِ بِالْحَقِّ ط ذَلِكَ مَا كُنْتَ مِنْهُ تَحِيدُ (And the daze of death has [to] come with truth. That is what you tried to escape...) When the Holy Prophet ﷺ faced the same state, he would put his hand in the water and wipe it over his blessed face, reciting سَكْرَاتٍ لِّمَوْتٍ إِنَّ اللَّهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ "There is no god but Allah, indeed death has its pangs or stupor."

In the prepositional phrase بِالْحَقِّ "with truth", through the preposition *bi*"ba" the action of the verb is passed on to the object, meaning "the pangs of death brought forth things that are true and real which none can escape or avoid" (Maḥzarī).

ذَلِكَ مَا كُنْتَ مِنْهُ تَحِيدُ (That is what you tried to escape...50:19) *taḥīdu* is derived from *ḥaid* which denotes to incline; to turn aside or escape from a place; to avoid or shun it; and to acknowledge. Apparently, this verse addresses the entire mankind. Every man is naturally afraid or scared of, or alarmed and terrified by, the thought of death. Life is dear to him and death is a calamity for him. As a result, he makes plans to run away from death. This is from Shar'ī point of view not wrong or a sin. Death, however, is inevitable. The purport of the verse is to show that 'this is the end you were trying to escape or avert or flee from; it has come to you. Therefore, your desire will not be completely fulfilled; you will have neither a shelter nor a refuge nor a sanctuary nor an asylum from it.'

Two Angels to Lead Man to the Plane of Ḥashr

وَجَاءَتْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَعَهَا سَائِقٌ وَشَهِيدٌ (And everybody will come, along with one [angel] to drive [him to the field of reckoning] and one [angel] to testify [about his deeds] 50:21). The verse before this depicts the way the Day of Judgement will be established. This verse describes the way in which all human beings will be brought to the plane of Ḥashr. With every man there will be a *Sā'iq* and a *Shahīd*. *Sā'iq*, literally, denotes a person who remains behind a herd of animals or behind a group of people and drives them to a particular place. And *Shahīd* refers to a witness. As for *Sā'iq*, by the consensus of traditions, it refers to an angel. But there are

different views of scholars of Tafsīr regarding *Shahīd*. Some say that it too refers to an angel. In this way, there are two angels - *Sā'iq* and *Shahīd*. *Sā'iq's* duty is to drive the people to the gathering place, and *Shahīd's* task is to bear witness when the people's deeds will be presented. Another possible interpretation is that these two angels refer to the "honorable scribes" who used to accompany human beings all the time in the world on the right and left to record their deeds. A third possibility is that they refer to some other angels besides the ones mentioned here.

Some scholars interpret *Shahīd* as referring to man's action, and other scholars think that the reference is to man himself. Ibn Kathīr opines that the apparent context of the verse indicates that *Shahīd* is also an angel who will bear witness to man's actions. Sayyidnā 'Uthmān Ibn 'Affān ؓ whilst delivering a sermon recited this verse and said: "*Sā'iq* will drive every person to Allah, and *Shahīd* will testify about what one has done." Interpreters like Sayyidnā Mujāhid, Qatādah and Ibn Zaid ؓ placed the same interpretation on the two names. Ibn Jarīr has preferred this interpretation.

The Unseen World Becomes Visible at Death

فَكَشَفْنَا عَنْكَ غِطَاءَ كَفَبَصْرِكَ الْيَوْمَ حَلِيدٌ (Now We have removed your veil from you; so your sight today is sharp...50:22). There is a difference of opinion regarding the addressees of this verse. The preferred opinion is that Allah addresses mankind in general. This includes the believers, the unbelievers, the pious and the wicked. Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Kathīr and others have adopted this interpretation. The analogy drawn here is that this world is like the dream-world and the Hereafter is like the state of wakefulness. When man is in the dream-world, his eyes are closed and cannot perceive by his physical organs of sight the stark realities of the next world. When the physical organs of sight close, his dream-world ends and the state of wakefulness begins, and he is able to discern the stark realities of the Hereafter. Therefore, scholars have formulated the following aphorism:

النَّاسُ نِيَامٌ فَإِذَا مَاتُوا انْتَبَهُوا

"People are sleeping in this world; when they die, they will wake up."

قَالَ قَرِينُهُ هَذَا مَا لَدَىٰ عَيْنِي (And his companion will say, "This is what I have

with me, ready (to be presented as his record of deeds)... 50:23]. The word *qarīn* (translated above as 'companion') refers to the recording angel that accompanies man all the time. Earlier we have learnt that there are two angels that record deeds. In the preceding verse they were referred to as *Sā'iq* and *Shahīd*. The context indicates that, on the Day of Resurrection, the two scribes will be entrusted with two different tasks. One, named as *Sā'iq*, will drive the people to the gathering place, and the second, named as *Shahīd* will carry the records of deeds and it is this angel who, after reaching the plane of Ḥaṣhr, will say, هَذَا مَا لَدَيَّ عَتِيدٌ "This is what I have with me, ready (to be presented as his record of deeds)." Ibn Jarīr, in his *tafsīr*, states that the word *qarīn* comprehends both the angels *Sā'iq* and *Shahīd*.

اَلْقِيَا فِي جَهَنَّمَ كُلَّ كَفَّارٍ عَنِيدٍ (Cast, both of you [O angels,] into Jahannam every stubborn disbeliever.... 50:24). The verb *alqiyā* is grammatically dual in number, that is, addressed to two persons. It appears that Allah will say these words to the *Sā'iq* and *Shahīd* angels; Allah will order them to throw him in the fire of Hell. Some other scholars explain it differently (Ibn Kathīr).

Man and Devil Dispute before Allah

قَالَ قَرِينُهُ رَبَّنَا مَا أَطَعَيْنَهُ (His (evil) companion (i.e. the Satan) will say, "O our Lord, I did not cause him to rebel,... 50:27). The word *qarīn* literally denotes a companion, that is, one who accompanies or associates with another. From this point of view, *qarīn* in the preceding verse referred to the two angels that accompany human beings and record their deeds. Just as there are two angels in the company of man, there is a devil entrusted to every man, who calls him towards commission of sins, and thus leads him astray. In this verse *qarīn* refers to that devil. When it will be ordered that the person be thrown into Hell, it seems that he will say that the devil had led him astray, otherwise he would have done righteous deeds. In response, the devil will disown him and say about the human who came on the Day of Resurrection as an unbeliever that "I did not lead him astray. In fact he himself was misguided, paying no heed to the truth". In response Allah will say what follows in the next verse.

لَا تَخْتَصِمُوا لَدَيَّ وَقَدْ قَدَّمْتُ إِلَيْكُمْ بِالْوَعِيدِ ("Do not quarrel before Me, while I had sent to you My threat well in advance.... 50:28) It means :

"I have given you sufficient proof by the words of the past Messengers, and I have sent down the Divine Books; the evidences, signs and proofs have thus been established against you; your flimsy excuses, arguments and disputes will not work today.'

مَا يَبْدُلُ الْقَوْلُ لَدَيَّ وَمَا أَنَا بِظَلَّامٍ لِّلْعَبِيدِ (The Word is not changed with Me, and I Am not a wrongdoer to My slaves." [50:29]

That is, 'I have made my decision which will certainly be implemented: it will never be changed. I will not punish anyone, except on account of their sins after the proof has been established against them. This is an absolutely fair and just decision.'

Verses 30 - 35

يَوْمَ نَقُولُ لِحَجَهَنَّمْ هَلِ امْتَلَأْتِ وَتَقُولُ هَلْ مِنْ مَزِيدٍ ﴿٣٠﴾ وَأَزْلَفْتِ
الْجَنَّةَ لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ غَيْرَ بَعِيدٍ ﴿٣١﴾ هَذَا مَا تُوعَدُونَ لِكُلِّ أَوَّابٍ حَفِيظٍ
﴿٣٢﴾ مَنْ خَشِيَ الرَّحْمَنَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَجَاءَ بِقَلْبٍ مُنِيبٍ ﴿٣٣﴾
إِذْخُلُوهَا بِسَلَامٍ ۗ ذَٰلِكَ يَوْمُ الْخُلُودِ ﴿٣٤﴾ لَهُمْ مَا يَشَاءُونَ فِيهَا
وَلَدَيْنَا مَزِيدٌ ﴿٣٥﴾

(Remind them of) the Day when We will say to *Jahannam* (hell), "Are you filled up?" and it will say, "Are there some more?" [30] And the *Jannah* (Paradise) will be brought close for the God-fearing, no longer distant. [31] (And it will be said,) "This is what you were promised for everyone oft-returning to Allah, vigilant (against sins), [32] the one who fears the Raḥmān (The All-Merciful), without seeing Him, and comes up with a heart oriented towards Him. [33] Enter it in peace. That is the Day of Eternity." [34] For them there will be whatever they wish, and with Us there is even more. [35]

Analysis of "Awwāb" and "Ḥafīz"

لِكُلِّ أَوَّابٍ حَفِيظٍ (" This is what you were promised for everyone oft-returning to Allah, vigilant....50:32). That is to say, Paradise has been promised to every person who is *awwāb* and *ḥafīz*. *Awwāb* refers to the

person who turns to Allah. Here it means who turns to Him in repentance against sins. Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh Ibn Masūd رضي الله عنه, Sha‘bī and Mujāhid رحمهم الله تعالى said that *Awwāb* refers to a person who recalls his sins in loneliness, private and secret, and seeks Allah's forgiveness. ‘Ubaid Ibn ‘Umair رضي الله عنه said that *Awwāb* is one who seeks Allah's forgiveness of his sins in every sitting. And he further said that we are advised to recite the following invocation:

سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَبِحَمْدِهِ اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْتَغْفِرُكَ مِمَّا أَصَبْتُ فِي مَجْلِسِي هَذَا

"Pure is Allah and praise be to Him. O Allah, I seek Your forgiveness of the evil that I might have committed in this sitting."

In a Prophetic Tradition, we are advised to recite the following supplication when dispersing. Allah will forgive all the sins that might have been committed in that session:

سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ وَبِحَمْدِكَ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ أَسْتَغْفِرُكَ وَأَتُوبُ إِلَيْكَ

"Pure are You, O Allah, and praise be to You. There is no god but You. I seek Your forgiveness and turn to You in penitence."

Ḥafīẓ (حَفِیْظُ), according to Sayyidnā ‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه, is one who remembers his sins, so that he may return to Allah in penitence and make amends. Another report from him defines *ḥafīẓ* هُوَ الْحَفِیْظُ هُوَ الْحَافِظُ لِأَمْرِ اللَّهِ as one who remembers his covenant with Allah, and does not break or betray it. Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه reports from the Holy Prophet صلی الله علیه و آله who said: "Whoever performs four *rak‘āt* of *Ishrāq* prayer early in the day is *Awwāb* and Ḥafīẓ (Qurtubī).

In verse [33] we have the statement *وَجَاءَ بِقَلْبٍ مُنِيبٍ* (...and comes up with a heart oriented towards Him...50:33]. Abū Bakr Warrāq رحمه الله تعالى says that the characteristics of a *munīb* is that he always maintains respect for Allah and humbles himself to Him and gives up his sensual and base desires.

Verse [35] depicts the delights of Paradise: The first part states *لَهُمْ* لَهُمْ مَا يَشَاءُونَ فِيهَا (For them there will be whatever they wish,,,,, 50:35]. In other words, the righteous will have whatever delights they wish brought forthwith without any delay. It is recorded in Musnad of Aḥmad on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Sa‘īd Khudrī رضي الله عنه that the Holy Prophet صلی الله علیه و آله

said: "If anyone in Paradise wishes for children, the conception, delivery of the baby and its growth will all take place in a short span of time." (Ibn Kathīr)

The second part of the verse states: **وَلَدَيْنَا مَزِيدٌ** (and with Us there is even more.) In other words, there are with Allah such desirable delights which have not been conceived of by any man and, therefore, they could not wish or desire for them. Sayyidnā Anas and Jābir رضي الله عنهما said that "more" in this context refers to the greatest reward of enabling the people of Jannah to see Allah *bila kaif* [without "how" or in an indescribable manner]. This, according to the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, is similar to His other statement in [10:26] **لِلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا الْحُسْنَىٰ وَزِيَادَةٌ** "For those who have done good is the best and even more." Some reports narrate that the inmates of Paradise will see Allah on Friday [Qurṭubī].

Verses 36 - 40

وَكَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا قَبْلَهُمْ مِنْ قَرْنٍ هُمْ أَشَدُّ مِنْهُمْ بَطْشًا فَنَقَّبُوا فِي الْبِلَادِ
 هَلْ مِنْ مَّحِيصٍ ﴿٣٦﴾ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَذِكْرٍ لِمَنْ كَانَ لَهُ قَلْبٌ
 أَوْ أَلْقَى السَّمْعَ وَهُوَ شَهِيدٌ ﴿٣٧﴾ وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ
 وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ۚ وَمَا مَسَّنَا مِنْ لُغُوبٍ ﴿٣٨﴾ فَاصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ
 مَا يَقُولُونَ وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ قَبْلَ طُلُوعِ الشَّمْسِ وَقَبْلَ الْغُرُوبِ
 ﴿٣٩﴾ وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَسَبِّحْهُ وَأَدْبَارَ السُّجُودِ ﴿٤٠﴾

And how many a generations We have destroyed before them who were stronger than these in their grip on power, and they searched out the cities: Was there any place to escape? [36] Indeed, there is a lesson in all this for him who has a heart and gives ear (to the truth) attentively. [37] And We created the heavens and the earth and all that is between them in six days, and no weariness even touched Us. [38] So, bear with patience what they say, and proclaim His purity along with your Lord's praise before sunrise and before sunset. [39] And in hours of night, do proclaim His purity, and at the ends of prostration. [40]

Warning the Disbelievers of the imminent Torment

In the concluding sentence of verse [36] نَقَّبُوا فِي الْبِلَادِ ط هَلْ مِنْ مَّجِيصٍ (and they searched out the cities: Was there any place to escape?), the verb نَقَّبُوا *naqqabū* is derived from the infinitive *tanqīb* which literally means to make a hole, to perforate or pierce. Idiomatically, it connotes to go or go away through the distant land or country or journey or traverse. (al-Qāmūs).

The word *maḥīṣ* means asylum or a place of refuge. In this verse Allah poses a rhetorical question to the unbelievers: How many generations We have destroyed before you! They were more numerous and mightier than you, and they traveled throughout the land for trade and business, but they could not find shelter from their destined death. No land could give them shelter.

Channels of Acquiring Knowledge

لِمَنْ كَانَ لَهُ قَلْبٌ (who has a heart - 50:37). Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه has said that here the word *qalb* [heart] means '*aql* [intellect], because the centre of intellect is heart. Some scholars of Qur'ān say that "heart" here refers to life, because the axis of life is heart. Thus the verse means only that person will be able to benefit from the advice and lesson of the Qur'ān who has life or a sound understanding with which he comprehends. The one devoid of intellect cannot benefit from the Qur'ān.

أَوْ أَلْقَى السَّمْعَ وَهُوَ شَهِيدٌ (and gives ear [to the truth] attentively....50:37). The phrase *Ilqā'-us- sam'* connotes to listen to someone attentively and the word *Shahīd* means present. The message of the above verses is that two types of people benefit: [1] a person who has the mind and the intellect who understands it in his mind and accepts it; and [2] a person who gives his ears and listens to the Divine verses with an attentive heart, while his heart is present and not absent. Mazḥarī interprets that the first type is called *kamīlin* [thoroughly proficient members of the Islamic community]. The second type are their followers and sincere seekers of Reality who are under the direction of a spiritual guide who, on account of their sincerity and purity of heart, accept the teachings of the religion.

وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ قَبْلَ طُلُوعِ الشَّمْسِ وَقَبْلَ الْغُرُوبِ (and proclaim His purity along with your Lord's praise before sunrise and before sunset... 50:39). The

imperative verb *sabbih* is derived from the infinitive *tasbih* which originally means to declare or proclaim the purity of Allah. This comprehends the verbal declaration or proclamation and the worship, such as prayer. Therefore, some scholars say that *tasbih* before sunrise refers to the morning prayer, and *tasbih* before sunset refers to 'Asr (late afternoon) prayer. Sayyidnā Jarīr Ibn 'Abdullāh reports from the Holy Prophet ﷺ [as part of a long Tradition]

إِنْ اسْتَطَعْتُمْ أَنْ لَا تَغْلَبُوا عَلَى صَلَاةٍ قَبْلَ طُلُوعِ الشَّمْسِ وَقَبْلَ غُرُوبِهَا، يَعْنِي الْعَصْرَ وَالْفَجْرَ ثُمَّ قَرَأَ جَرِيرٌ وَسَبَّحَ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ قَبْلَ طُلُوعِ الشَّمْسِ وَقَبْلَ الْغُرُوبِ . (بخارى
و مسلم واللفظ لمسلم)

"So if you can avoid missing the prayer before the sunrise and the prayer before sunset, that is the 'Asr prayer and the morning prayer, you must do so." (Bukhārī and Muslim - the wordings of Muslim: vide Qurṭubī)

Although according to the majority of commentators, *tasbih* in the verse refers to *ṣalāh* (prayer), yet the general words of *tasbih* include all those invocations also the recitation of which is encouraged by authentic *āḥadīth* at the time of morning and evening. Bukhārī and Muslim have recorded a Tradition on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ؓ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

"If you recite morning and evening *subḥānallāh* a hundred times, no one will bring, on the Day of Judgement, a virtuous act better than it, except those who would recite the same *tasbih* in the same number or even more than that."

In the same collections, a narration by the same authority, says that whosoever recites *subḥānallāhi wa bi ḥamdihī* one hundred times in a day, his sins will be forgiven, even though they may be more than the waves of the sea. (Maḥzarī)

رحمه الله Mujāhid (...and at the ends of prostration.... 50:40) Mujāhid الله تعالى interprets *sujud* in this verse to refer to the five obligatory prayers, and the phrase "at the ends of the prostrations", according to him, refers to all those *tasbihāt* which authentic *āḥadīth* encourage us to recite after every prayer. Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ؓ reports that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "Whosoever recites after every obligatory prayer 33 times *subḥānallāh* (سبحان الله), 33 times *al-ḥamdulillāh* (الحمد لله) and 33 times

allāhu 'akbar (الله أكبر), and once:

لا إله إلا الله وحده لا شريك له، له الملك وله الحمد وهو على كل شيء قدير
*lā ilāha illallāhu waḥdahū lā-sharīka lahū lah-ul-mulku
 wa-lah-ul-ḥamdu wa huwa 'alā kulli shai'in qadīr.*

- all his sins will be forgiven, even though they may be equal to the waves of the sea (Bukhārī and Muslim). The phrase "at the ends of the prostrations" could also refer to the supererogatory prayers to be performed after the obligatory prayers as authentic Traditions testify (Maḥzarī).

Verses 41 - 45

وَاسْتَمِعْ يَوْمَ يُنَادِ الْمُنَادِ مِنْ مَّكَانٍ قَرِيبٍ ﴿٤١﴾ يَوْمَ يَسْمَعُونَ
 الصَّيْحَةَ بِالْحَقِّ ۗ ذَلِكَ يَوْمُ الْخُرُوجِ ﴿٤٢﴾ إِنَّا نَحْنُ نُحْيِي وَنُمِيتُ
 وَإِلَيْنَا الْمَصِيرُ ﴿٤٣﴾ يَوْمَ تَشَقُّقُ الْأَرْضُ عَنْهُمْ سِرَاعًا ۗ ذَلِكَ حَشْرٌ
 عَلَيْنَا يَسِيرٌ ﴿٤٤﴾ نَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَقُولُونَ وَمَا أَنْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِجَبَّارٍ
 فَذَكِّرْ بِالْقُرْآنِ مَنْ يَخَافُ وَعِيدِ ﴿٤٥﴾

And listen: The Day when the caller will call out from a near place, [41] the Day they will hear the Cry in reality—that will be the Day of Resurrection. [42] Surely We alone give life and bring death, and to Us is the final return [43] on the Day when the earth will burst apart exposing them, while they will be hurrying up (to come out). That is a mustering, so easy for Us. [44] We know well what they say, and you are not one to compel them. So give advice, through the Qur'an, to the one who fears My warning. [45]

(...the Day when the caller will call from a near place - 50:41). Sayyidnā Ibn 'Asākir رحمته الله reports from Zaid Ibn Jābir Shaffī that the "caller" referred to here is the angel Isrāfīl عليه السلام who will stand on the Dome of the Rock (Ṣakhrāh) and will address all the dead people of the entire world : "O you rotten bones! O you decomposed skins! O you scattered hair! Listen, Allah commands you to reassemble to render account of your actions (Maḥzarī)." This scene depicts how, after the second blowing of the trumpet, the world will be resurrected. The phrase "a near place" refers to the fact that the voice of the angel will reach everybody

who rises from death anywhere on the surface of the earth, and will feel as though the angel had called him from a nearby place. 'Ikrimah رضي الله عنه says that the voice will be heard in such a way as if someone is speaking to us in our ears. Other scholars have said that "a near place" refers to the Dome of the Rock, because that is the centre of the earth, and is equidistant, being separated by equal distances from all sides of the globe. (Qurtubī)

يَوْمَ تَشَقَّقُ الْأَرْضُ عَنْهُمْ سِرَاعًا (...on the Day when the earth will burst apart exposing them, while they will be hurrying up. - 50:44). The Prophetic Tradition indicates that this 'hurrying up' will be towards Syria where the Dome of the Rock is situated. Isrāfīl عليه السلام will stand on it, and call the people on the Day of Judgement. It is recorded in Jāmi' Tirmidhī, on the authority of Sayyidnā Mu'āwiyah Ibn Ḥayadah رضي الله عنه, that the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, pointing towards Syria, said:

مِنْ هَهُنَا إِلَى هَهُنَا تُحْشَرُونَ رُكْبَانًا وَمُشَاةً وَتُجْرُونَ عَلَىٰ وُجُوهِكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ

"From here towards that [pointing towards Syria] you will be raised, some riding, and others on foot, and yet others will be dragged on the faces on the Day of Judgement..."

فَذَكِّرْ بِالْقُرْآنِ مَنْ يَخَافُ وَعِيدِ (So give advice, through the Qur'ān, to the one who fears My warning... 50:45). This means that the message of the Qur'ān is to be conveyed to the entire mankind, to all and sundry. However, only those who fear Allah and dread His torment will remember and heed. Qatādah رضي الله عنه used to recite this verse and supplicate in the following words:

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْنَا مِمَّنْ يَخَافُ وَعِيدِكَ وَيَرْجُوا مَوْعُودَكَ يَا بَارِئُ يَا رَحِيمُ

"O Allah! Make us among those who fear Your threat, and hope for Your promise, O the One who fulfills His promise, O Raḥīm [the Most Merciful]."

Alhamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Qāf
Ends here

Sūrah Adh-Dhāriyāt

(The Scatterers)

This Sūrah was revealed in Makkah. It contains 60 verses and 3 sections

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

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

Verses 1 - 23

وَالذَّرِيَّتِ ذُرُورًا ﴿١﴾ فَالْحَمِلَتِ وَقْرًا ﴿٢﴾ فَالْجَرِيَّتِ يُسْرًا ﴿٣﴾
فَالْمُقَسِّمَتِ أَمْرًا ﴿٤﴾ إِنَّمَا تُوعَدُونَ لَصَادِقٍ ﴿٥﴾ وَإِنَّ الدِّينَ لَوَاقِعٌ
﴿٦﴾ وَالسَّمَاءِ ذَاتِ الْحُبُكِ ﴿٧﴾ إِنَّكُمْ لَفِي قَوْلٍ مُّخْتَلِفٍ ﴿٨﴾
يُؤْفِكُ عَنْهُ مَنْ أَفِكَ ﴿٩﴾ قُتِلَ الْخَرْصُونَ ﴿١٠﴾ الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي غَمْرَةٍ
سَاهُونَ ﴿١١﴾ يَسْأَلُونَ أَيَّانَ يَوْمُ الدِّينِ ﴿١٢﴾ يَوْمَ هُمْ عَلَى النَّارِ
يُفْتَنُونَ ﴿١٣﴾ ذُوقُوا فَتَنَتَكُمْ ۗ هَذَا الَّذِي كُنْتُمْ بِهِ تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ ﴿١٤﴾
إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي جَنَّةٍ وَعُيُونٍ ﴿١٥﴾ اخْدِينِ مَا آتَاهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ ۗ إِنَّهُمْ
كَانُوا قَبْلَ ذَلِكَ مُّحْسِنِينَ ﴿١٦﴾ كَانُوا قَلِيلًا مِّنَ اللَّيْلِ مَا يَهْجَعُونَ
﴿١٧﴾ وَبِالْأَسْحَارِ هُمْ يَسْتَغْفِرُونَ ﴿١٨﴾ وَفِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ لِّلسَّائِلِ
وَالْمَحْرُومِ ﴿١٩﴾ وَفِي الْأَرْضِ آيَاتٌ لِّلْمُوقِنِينَ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَفِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ ۗ
أَفَلَا تُبْصِرُونَ ﴿٢١﴾ وَفِي السَّمَاءِ رِزْقُكُمْ وَمَا تُوعَدُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾ فَوَرَبِّ
السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِنَّهُ لَحَقٌّ مِّثْلَ مَا أَنَّكُمْ تَنْطِقُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

(I swear) by those (winds) that scatter dust, [1] then by those (clouds) that bear loads, [2] then by those (boats) that sail with ease, [3] then by those (angels) who distribute things, [4] whatever you are being promised is surely true, [5] and Recompensing (of deeds) is sure to happen. [6] By the sky, having paths, [7] you are (involved) in a contradictory statement. [8] Turned away from this (Qur'ān) is the one who is turned away (totally from the Truth.) [9] Death upon those who make conjectures (against the true faith), [10] those who are drowned in ignorance, forgetful! [11] They ask, "When shall be the Day of Recompense?" [12] (It will be) the Day when they will be heated on the Fire, [13] (and it will be said to them,) "Taste (the punishment of) your mischief. This is what you have been asking to be brought sooner." [14] The God-fearing (on the other hand) will be in gardens and springs, [15] receiving what their Lord will have given to them. Indeed, prior to this, they were good in their deeds. [16] They used to sleep little in the night, [17] and in the hours before dawn, they used to pray for forgiveness, [18] and in their wealth, there was a right for the one who asks and the one who is deprived. [19]

And in the earth, there are signs for those who (seek truth to) believe, [20] and in your own selves! So, do you not perceive? [21] And in the heavens, there is your sustenance and all that you have been promised. [22] So, by the Lord of the heavens and the earth, it (the Day of Recompense) is a reality, as sure as that you speak. [23]

Affirmation of After-Life

The subject-matter of Sūrah Adh-Dhāriyāt, like its predecessor Sūrah Qāf, is mainly the Hereafter, Resurrection, Reckoning, Judgement, and Allah's reward and punishment. The first few verses contain an oath from Allah that the promise of Resurrection is true, and shall come to pass. In these verses Allah swears an oath by four phenomena, as follows:

وَالذَّرِيَّتِ ذُرْوًا . فَالْحَمَلِ وَقُرًا . فَالْجَرِيَّتِ يُسْرًا . فَالْمَقِيَّتِ أَمْرًا .

(I swear) by those (winds) that scatter dust, then by those (clouds) that bear loads, then by those (boats) that sail with ease, then by those (angels) who distribute things, (51:1-4)

There is a Ḥadīth whose attribution to the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been held by Ibn Kathīr as *ḍa'īf* [weak], but it is also reported as a saying of

Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنه and 'Alī رضي الله عنه. It explains these four things as follows: The expression Dhāriyāt [scatterers] refers to the wind that blows up dust; the expression ḥāmilāt-i-wiqrān literally denotes burden-bearers and contextually refers to the clouds that carry the burden of water or rain; the expression jāriyāt-i-yusran refers to the ships that sail smoothly and with ease in the water; and the expression muqassimāt-i-amran refers to the angels who distribute to all creatures their sustenance and water, and different kinds of difficulties and comfort as determined by Allah's orders and decrees (Ibn Kathīr, Qurṭubī and Ad-Durr-ul-Manthūr quote these narrations both as *marfū'* and *mawqūf*).

(By the sky, having paths, you are (involved) in a contradictory statement - 51:7-8) *Ḥubuk* is the plural *ḥabīkah* and primarily denotes thin irregular lines or streaks on fabrics when woven. They resemble tracks and pathways; therefore pathways are also referred to as *ḥubuk* in Arabic. Most interpreters take this to be the meaning in this context. Some scholars say that the 'tracks' refer to pathways used by the angels for entrance and exit. Others say that the tracks or paths of heaven are those orbits of planets and stars that are visible in the sky.

As the streaks of the woven fabric is its beauty, some scholars tend to interpret the verse as 'By the heaven full of beauty, grace, magnificence and perfection'.

Differing Beliefs of the Pagans

إِنَّكُمْ لَفِي قَوْلٍ مُّخْتَلِفٍ (you are [involved] in a contradictory statement... 51:8) Verse [7] was an oath and this verse is the statement for which oath is sworn. Apparently, the verse addresses the pagans of Makkah who assigned contradictory attributes to the Holy Prophet ﷺ, calling him at different times a madman, a sorcerer, a poet and other discordant names. According to another possible interpretation, the verse addresses the entire humankind - Muslims as well as non-believers. Thus 'contradictory statement' would mean that a sector believed in the Holy Prophet ﷺ and accepted him; and another sector rejected him and opposed him (Maḥḥarī).

يُؤْفِكُ عَنْهُ مَنْ أُفِكَ (Turned away from this (Qur'ān) is the one who is turned away....51:9). The word 'ufik literally denotes to turn away. The pronoun in 'anhu has two possibilities: [1] it could be referring to Qur'ān and Rasūl. In this case, the verse would mean that only that person turns

away from the Qur'ān who has been destined to be deprived of their guidance. And [2] the pronoun could be referring to the 'contradictory statement' in which case the meaning would be: he who turns away from the truth because of your discordant thoughts, is the one deprived of truth.

قُتِلَ الْخَرَّصُونَ (Death upon those who make conjectures - 51:10). The expression *kharrāsūn* is the plural of *kharrāṣ* which means one who estimates or say things by conjecture. In this context the word refers to those stubborn and obstinate infidels who, without any reason or evidence, say discordant things about the Messenger ﷺ. Thus it would not be out of turn to interpret *kharrāsūn* as *kadhdhābūn*, meaning 'the great liars' as they are condemned, denounced, cursed and imprecated (Mazharī) in this statement. After the mention of infidels, several verses that follow describe the qualities of the righteous people and the pleasant consequences of their righteousness.

Remaining Awake at Night for Voluntary Prayers

كَانُوا قَلِيلًا مِّنَ اللَّيْلِ مَا يَهْجَعُونَ (They used to sleep little in the night,... 51:17). The imperfect verb *yahja'un* is derived from the infinitive *hujū'* which means to sleep at night. The verse describes the quality of the righteous believers is that they spend their nights in voluntary worship of Allah. They sleep little at night and remain awake during the greater part of it. Ibn Jarīr preferred this interpretation. Sayyidnā Ḥasan Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى said: "The righteous perform voluntary night prayers, and do not sleep during the night except a little." Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās, Qatādah رحمه الله تعالى, Mujāhid رحمه الله تعالى and other leading scholars of Tafsīr have taken the particle *mā* in the sense of negation, that is, grammatically they treat it as *mā nāfiyah* or negative particle, meaning they spend a little part of every night awake, and not sleeping. They would worship Allah and perform voluntary prayers every night, even during a small part of the night. From this point of view, it includes all those people who pray to Allah during any part of the night - whether in the beginning, or in the middle, or at the end of it. Therefore, Sayyidnā Anas Ibn Mālik رحمه الله تعالى and 'Abul-'Āliyah said: "They used to pray between Maghrib and 'Ishā'." Imām Abū Ja'far Baqir said that this includes those people who do not sleep before 'Ishā' prayer (Ibn Kathīr).

Ḥasan Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى reports from Aḥnaf Ibn Qais who used to say: "When I compared my deeds with those of the inmates of Paradise, I

found that they are a people who occupy a very high, lofty and elevated status; and they are a people whose deeds are incomparable and our deeds cannot match theirs, because they sleep little at nights and worship much. When I compared my deeds with those of the inmates of Hell , I found that they give the lie to Allah and His Holy Prophet ﷺ and are sceptical about the Hereafter [from which Allah has protected us]. Therefore, in comparison, our deeds match neither with those of the real inmates of Paradise, nor [praise be to Allah] with those of the inmates of Hell. Thus we learn that from the viewpoint of action, our position is what the Qur'an describes: خَلَطُوا عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَآخَرَ سَيِّئًا ...'(They had mixed a good deed with another that was evil. - 9:102) Thus the best person amongst us is the one who would at least remain within the boundaries of this class of people."

'Abd-ur-rahmān Ibn Zaid Ibn Aslam ؓ says that a member of the tribe Banū Tamīm said to my father: "O Abū 'Usāmah, we do not find that quality in us which Allah mentions in describing the righteous, that is, كَانُوا قَلِيلًا مِنَ اللَّيْلِ مَا يَهْجَعُونَ "They used to sleep little in the night," because our position is quite the contrary: قَلِيلًا مِنَ اللَّيْلِ مَا نَقُومُ 'We are very little awake at night to worship Allah'. My father replied:

طوبى لمن رقد اذا نعس واتقى الله اذا استيقظ

'Good tidings for him who sleeps away when he feels sleepy and exercises righteousness when he is awake, that is, does not do any work that is contrary to Shari'ah."

In other words, acceptance in the sight of Allah is not necessarily restricted to protracted waking hours at night for worship. If a person is impelled to sleep, and does not remain awake for long, but abstains from any sinful activities when awake, he is also worthy of felicitation.

'Abdullāh Ibn Salām ؓ reports from the Holy Prophet ﷺ who said:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ أَطْعِمُوا الطَّعَامَ وَصَلُّوا الْأَرْحَامَ وَأَفْشُوا السَّلَامَ وَصَلُّوا بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّاسُ نِيَامٌ تَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ بِسَلَامٍ . (ابن كثير)

"O people, feed people, do good to kith and kin, greet each other with *salām*, pray at night while people are asleep, and you will enter Paradise in peace." (Ibn Kathīr)

Merits of Seeking Forgiveness in the hours before dawn

وبالأسحارهم يستغفرون (and in the hours before dawn, they used to pray for

forgiveness..., 51:18) The word *ashār* is the plural of *sahar*, and it refers to the latter sixth part of the night. This verse speaks of the significance of seeking forgiveness in the latter part of the night. Another verse [3:17] also speaks of the significance of seeking forgiveness at the last hours of the night thus: وَالْمُسْتَغْفِرِينَ بِالْأَسْحَارِ (...and who seek forgiveness in pre-dawn hours. - 3:17) It is confirmed in the Ṣaḥīḥ collections as well as others, from several Companions, that the Messenger of Allah said:

"Allah, the Most High, descends each night to the lowest heaven when the last third of the night remains. He says: 'Is there anyone who is repenting, so that I may accept his repentance? Is there anyone seeking forgiveness, so that I may forgive him? Is there anyone asking of Me, so that I may grant him his request?'

Here it may be noted that in this verse Allah is describing the pre-dawn prayer of forgiveness of those righteous ones who, according to the preceding verse, are preoccupied for the major part of the night with the worship of Allah and sleep very little. Thus there seems to be no link between their previous description and their description of asking for forgiveness in this verse, because forgiveness is sought when there are sins. People who spent the entire night in worshipping Allah - what does it mean to seek forgiveness of sins? The answer to this question is that these people have the true appreciation of Allah's majesty, dignity and splendour, and they realise that there are shortcomings in their night-long worship. Therefore they seek Allah's forgiveness for failing to perform His worship as due. (Maẓharī)

Special Guidance for Philanthropists

وَفِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ لِّلسَّائِلِ وَالْمَحْرُومِ (and in their wealth, there was a right for the one who asks and the one who is deprived...51:19) The word *sā'il* means the poor or needy who begs others, that is, he expresses his needs to people who help him. The word *maḥrūm* also refers to a poor or needy, but who cannot express his needs from a sense of self-respect or a feeling of shame, and thus is deprived of people's help. In this verse another quality of the believers and the righteous is mentioned, that is, their quality of spending in charity in Allah's way. When spending, they do not only give to those who ask for help, but they also make it their responsibility to find out who are needy ones and do not disclose their needs to others.

The purpose of the verse is to show that the believers and the righteous do not only perform bodily worship, such as prayers and remaining awake at night, but they also play a major role in performing pecuniary worship, in that besides helping the people who beg they also look for, and help, those who out of self-respect do not express their needs to anyone. When mentioning this pecuniary worship, the expression used by the Qur'an is the following, "وَفِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ" and in their wealth, there was a right". It means that when they meet the needs of the poor, they do not deem it a favour shown to them, but they appreciate that the poor have a 'right' in the wealth Allah has blessed them with, and fulfilling one's right is not a favour; it is rather a duty and responsibility that one has to discharge.

Allah's Signs on the Earth and in Mankind

وَفِي الْأَرْضِ آيَاتٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ (And in the earth, there are signs for those who [seek truth to] believe,... 51:20). In the preceding verses in the first instance a description of the infidels and rejecters and their evil fate was given. As against those who flounder in the welter of wrong beliefs and evil deeds and deny the possibility of the Day of Judgement, the qualities of the believers and the righteous were subsequently given, and their elevated position was described. Now once again attention is drawn to those who deny the possibility of Judgement Day. They are invited to ponder on the signs of Allah on earth that testify to the might of the Creator and His boundless power, and thus the skeptics are advised to desist from denying the Judgement Day. In this way the statement is connected to the preceding statement in verse [8] "You are involved in contradictory statement."

Tafsīr Mazharī is of the view that this verse too describes the quality of the believers and the righteous. The word *mūqinīn* (those who have certainty of faith) refers to the same God-fearing people mentioned in an earlier verse. The sense is that these people keep pondering on the divine signs spread on earth and in their own beings, and it increases their belief. In another verse they are described as *وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ* "...and ponder on the creation of the heavens and the earth..." (3:191)

Allah's signs on earth include what Allah has placed on the earth, the various plants, animals, valleys, mountains, deserts, rivers and oceans. He also created mankind with different languages, colours, intentions and abilities, and a variety among them, differences in the power of

understanding and comprehension, their deeds, and ultimately earning happiness or misery. Allah put every organ in their bodies in its rightful place where they most need it to be. Thus Allah says: **وَفِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ، أَفَلَا تُبْصِرُونَ** (... and in your own selves! So, do you not perceive?51:21). Out of the innumerable signs of Allah's power which are present everywhere in the universe, including the heavenly and celestial beings and creatures, only those signs are referred to here which are available on earth, because they are very close to man's experience, and he resides and moves about among them. The present verse now speaks of man himself. Man is required to ponder on his own body, its limbs and organs. Every single part of the body testifies to the boundless Wisdom of Allah, and it will make him realize that his small being represents and encompasses almost all the divine signs that are scattered in the vast universe. That is why man is termed as 'the universe in miniature', because all types of creation are present in his existence. If a man thinks of all phases he has passed through right from his birth till his death, he may perceive the power of Allah Ta'ālā as if he discerns Him clearly.

The Development of the Sperm and Embryo in the Womb

Human microscopic sperm and egg is an amazing phenomenon. It is made up of foodstuff and tenuous particles from various parts of the world. If the sperm establishes itself in the mother's womb, then more material is added to it, and it changes into a red clot. It then changes and becomes a shapeless lump of flesh, like a piece of meat with no form or shape. Then out of this shapeless lump bones are fashioned; then the bones are clothed with flesh; and it starts to take on a form and shape, developing a head, arms, chest, stomach, thighs, legs, feet and all its members. A wonderful brain is placed under its skull in whose complicated layers lie all mental abilities. Thus equipping it, Allah sends an angel to it who breathes the soul into it. After the completion of its creation, it is brought into this world where he develops from infancy to full adulthood to old age. Then he gradually progresses from zero level of knowledge and consciousness to an intelligent, rational and active being. The human forms and shapes are so different that no two faces are identical in millions and billions of people even in a small area. Furthermore, there are differences in their temperaments, dispositions and habits. There is unity in this diversity. All this is the marvel of the perfect power of Allah who has neither partners nor rivals: **فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِينَ** "So blessed is Allah, the Best Creator!"(23:14)

Man experiences all this not from outside himself, but within himself, day and night. Only a person who is absolutely blind and senseless will ever deny the existence of Allah. Therefore, at the conclusion of the verse, the Qur'an poses the rhetorical question: أَفَلَا تُبْصِرُونَ "So, do you not perceive?" (21) A person need not be very intelligent to understand the facts of life. If his sight is intact, he can arrive at the right conclusion.

وَفِي السَّمَاءِ رِزْقُكُمْ وَمَا تُوعَدُونَ (And in the heavens, there is your sustenance and all that you have been promised.... 51:22). The plain and simple interpretation of this is that 'in heaven' here means what has been written in the Preserved Tablet (*Al-Lauh-ul-Mahfūz*). It is clear that man's sustenance, what has been promised to him and whatever its consequences will be - are all preserved in the Preserved Tablet. Sayyidnā Abū Sa'īd Khudrī رضي الله عنه reports that the Holy Messenger ﷺ said: "Even if someone tries to avoid and run away from his designated sustenance, he will not succeed, because his sustenance will pursue him just as he cannot run away from his death". (Qurṭubī) Some scholars say that 'sustenance' here signifies "rain". In this case 'heaven' will not refer to the body, arch or vault of the sky. It refers to anything that hangs overhead and covers things in its shade, including the celestial atmosphere and clouds from where the rain falls. The expression 'all that you have been promised' refers to Paradise and its delights. Allah, the Pure and Exalted, knows best.

إِنَّهُ لَحَقُّ مِثْلَ مَا أَنْتُمْ تَنْطَفِقُونَ (...it [the Day of Recompense] is a reality, as sure as that you speak....51:23). It means that all of the matters relating to Judgement, Resurrection and Recompense that they have been promised shall certainly occur. Therefore, it is the truth, there being no doubt about it, so they should not doubt its coming, just as they do not doubt that they can speak. There are five physical sensations of perception: sight, hearing, tasting, feeling and smelling. Here 'speaking' has been singled out probably because the faculty of speech is the only one where there can be no trace of deception or illusion, whereas the other sensations, on account of ailments, can get contorted. Differences in hearing and seeing are known. In sickness the sensation of tasting gets reversed or distorted in some other way. Sometimes sweet things taste bitter and bitter things taste sweet. (Qurṭubī)

Verses 24 - 46

هَلْ أَتَاكَ حَدِيثُ ضَيْفِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ الْمُكْرَمِينَ ﴿٢٤﴾ إِذْ دَخَلُوا عَلَيْهِ

فَقَالُوا سَلَامًا ۖ قَالَ سَلَامٌ ۖ قَوْمٌ مُنْكَرُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾ فَرَاغَ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِ فَجَاءَ
بِعِجْلٍ سَمِينٍ ﴿٢٦﴾ فَقَرَّبَهُ إِلَيْهِمْ قَالَ أَلَا تَأْكُلُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾ فَأَوْجَسَ
مِنْهُمْ خِيفَةً ۖ قَالُوا لَا تَخَفْ ۖ وَبَشَرُوهُ بِعِلْمٍ عَلَيْهِمْ ﴿٢٨﴾ فَأَقْبَلَتْ
أَمْرَاتُهُ فِي صَرَّةٍ فَصَكَّتْ وَجْهَهَا وَقَالَتْ عَجُوزٌ عَقِيمٌ ﴿٢٩﴾ قَالُوا
كَذَلِكَ ۗ قَالَ رَبُّكَ ۗ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْحَكِيمُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٣٠﴾ قَالَ فَمَا خَطْبُكُمْ
أَيُّهَا الْمُرْسَلُونَ ﴿٣١﴾ قَالُوا إِنَّا أُرْسِلْنَا إِلَىٰ قَوْمٍ مُّجْرِمِينَ ﴿٣٢﴾
لِنُرْسِلَ عَلَيْهِمْ حِجَارَةً مِّنْ طِينٍ ﴿٣٣﴾ مُّسَوِّمَةً عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ
لِلْمُسْرِفِينَ ﴿٣٤﴾ فَأَخْرَجْنَا مَنْ كَانَ فِيهَا مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٣٥﴾ فَمَا
وَجَدْنَا فِيهَا غَيْرَ بَيْتٍ مِّنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَتَرَكْنَا فِيهَا آيَةً لِلَّذِينَ
يَخَافُونَ الْعَذَابَ الْأَلِيمَ ﴿٣٧﴾ وَفِي مُوسَىٰ إِذْ أَرْسَلْنَاهُ إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ
بِسُلْطَنِ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٣٨﴾ فَتَوَلَّىٰ بِرُكْنِهِ وَقَالَ سِحْرٌ أَوْ مَجْنُونٌ ﴿٣٩﴾
فَأَخَذْنَاهُ وَجُنُودَهُ فَنَبَذْنَاهُمْ فِي الْيَمِّ وَهُوَ مُلِيمٌ ﴿٤٠﴾ وَفِي عَادٍ إِذْ
أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ الرِّيحَ الْعَقِيمَ ﴿٤١﴾ مَا تَدْرُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ آتَتْ عَلَيْهِ إِلَّا
جَعَلَتْهُ كَالرَّمِيمِ ﴿٤٢﴾ وَفِي ثَمُودَ إِذْ قِيلَ لَهُمْ تَمَتَّعُوا حَتَّىٰ حِينٍ
﴿٤٣﴾ فَتَعَتُوا عَنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّهِمْ فَاخَذَتْهُمْ الصَّعِقَةُ وَهُمْ يَنْظُرُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾
فَمَا اسْتَطَاعُوا مِنْ قِيَامٍ وَمَا كَانُوا مُتَّصِرِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾ وَقَوْمَ نُوحٍ مِّنْ
قَبْلُ ۗ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَوْمًا فَسِيقِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾

Has there come to you the story of the honoured guests of Ibrāhīm? [24] When they entered unto him and said, "We greet you with *salām*." He said, "*salām* on you." (And he said to himself,) "(They are) unknown people." [25] Then he slipped off to his home, and fetched a fattened calf. [26] So he brought it close to them (to eat, but being angels, they refrained.) He said, "Would you not eat?" [27] So he felt some fear in his heart. They said, "Be

not scared." And they gave him the good news of (the birth of) a knowledgeable boy. [28] So his wife came forward with a clamour and slapped her own face and said, "(How can I have a child when I am) a barren old woman?" [29] They said, "This is how your Lord has said. Surely, He is All-Wise, All-Knowing." [30] He (Ibrāhīm) said (to the angels), "Then, what is your mission O messengers?" [31] They said, "We are sent to a guilty people, [32] so that we may send down upon them stones of clay, [33] marked, with your Lord, for the transgressors." [34] So, We let the believers who were there to come out (from danger), [35] but We did not find in it any Muslims, except one house. [36] And We left in this (event) a sign (of deterrence) for those who fear the painful punishment. [37] And (We left a similar sign) in (the story of) Mūsā, when We sent him to Fir'aun (the Pharaoh) with a clear proof. [38] So he turned away along with his chiefs and said, "(Mūsā is) a magician or a madman!" [39] So We seized him and his army, and cast them into the sea, as he was the one who came up with culpable behaviour. [40] And (a similar sign was left) in (the story of) 'Ād, when We sent upon them the wind that was barren (from any benefit); [41] it spared nothing it came upon, but rendered it like a stuff smashed by decay. [42] And (a similar sign was left) in (the story of) Thamūd, when it was said to them, "Enjoy yourselves for a while." [43] Then they rebelled against the command of your Lord; so the thunderbolt (of divine punishment) seized them, while they were looking on. [44] Then they were neither able to stand upright, nor could they defend themselves. [45] And (We have destroyed) the people of Nūḥ before; indeed they were a sinful people. [46]

Comforting the Messenger of Allah ﷺ

فَقَالُوا سَلَامًا ط قَالَ سَلَامٌ ("We greet you with *salām*." He said, "Salām on you." 51:25). The angels greeted him with *salāman* in the accusative case, whereas Holy Prophet Ibrāhīm ﷺ responded to the greeting in the nominative case thus: *salāmun*. The nominative case in Arabic is a nominal sentence which carries the sense of greater strength, continuity and persistence. The Qur'ānic injunction is that 'when you are greeted with a salutation, greet one better than it...', so Holy Prophet Ibrāhīm

ﷺ, the Friend of Allah chose a better reply, implementing Allah's command: reciprocating the greeting with the term *salāmun* is stronger than the greeting using the term *salāman*.

قَوْمٌ مُنْكَرُونَ ("[They are] unknown people..." 51:25). The word *munkar*, the letter [m] carrying *ḍammah* and the letter [k] carrying *fath* means "unknown". As sin or sinful work is unknown in Islām, it is also referred to as *munkar*. The angels came to Holy Prophet Ibrāhīm ﷺ in the image of handsome young wonderfully graceful men; therefore he could not recognize them. He thought to himself that these are strangers and said to himself 'They are unknown to me'. Or it is possible that he might have mentioned this to the guests in the form of a question and the purpose might have been to find out who they were.

رَاغٍ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِ (Then he slipped off to his home - 51:26). *Rāgha* is derived from *rawgh* which means to slip out quietly. In other words, Holy Prophet Ibrāhīm ﷺ discreetly went in the house in haste to arrange for meal for his guests, so that they do not sense it. Otherwise they would have stopped him.

Rules of Entertaining Guests

Ibn Kathīr says that this verse indicates proper manners for entertaining guests: Holy Prophet Ibrāhīm ﷺ, the host, did not first mention that he would make food for them. He slipped out quietly, and brought the food to his guests quickly, while they were unaware that it was being prepared for them. Rather, he discreetly had it prepared and placed before them. He prepared the best kind of food he had, a young, fat roasted calf. Moreover, he did not place the food far from them and invite them to come close to it to eat. Rather, he placed it close to them 'فَقَرَّبَهُ إِلَيْهِمْ' 'brought it close to them' and refrained from ordering them to eat. Instead he invited them politely, kindly and cordially to partake thus 'أَلَا تَأْكُلُونَ' 'Would you not eat?' This statement in the form of a question is similar to one of us saying to a guest, 'Would you kindly partake of it - even if you are not hungry, at least for my sake?'

فَأَوْجَسَ مِنْهُمْ خِيفَةً (So he felt some fear in his heart...51:28). When the guests did not eat the food, the Holy Prophet Ibrāhīm ﷺ conceived fear of them. In those days it was the custom of the noble people to entertain the guests who were expected to accept the hospitality of the host. If they

did not, the host would become apprehensive that there is some danger afoot - probably they are enemies who came to cause some kind of trouble for them. In those days, even the rogues and wrongdoers had the noble quality that they would not cause any harm to anyone whose food they had eaten. Hence refusing to eat was a sign of hostility or danger.

فَأَقْبَلَتِ امْرَأَتُهُ فِي صَرَوةٍ (So his wife came forward with a clamour,...51:29). The word *ṣarrah* means vociferation or clamour or most vehement clamour of crying. *Ṣarīr* is the sound of a pen when it is writing. When Sayyidah Sārah رضى الله عنها heard that the angels were giving good news to her husband Ibrāhīm عليه السلام of the birth of a son, she thought that this news was as good to her as it was to her husband, for the son would be theirs, and therefore, they both were getting some good news. As a result, she involuntarily screamed loudly, she struck herself upon her forehead as women do when confronted with an amazing thing and said: and slapped her own face and said, "عَجُوزٌ عَقِيمٌ" "A barren old woman?" meaning 'How can I give birth while I am an old woman? And even when I was young I was barren and could not have children.' The angels replied that Allah has power over all things and therefore this would happen even so: "This is how your Lord has said." Thus when Holy Prophet Ishāq عليه السلام was born, Sayyidah Sārah رضى الله عنها was ninety-nine years old and Holy Prophet Ibrāhīm عليه السلام was one hundred years old. (Qurṭubī)

When, in the course of the conversation, Holy Prophet Ibrāhīm عليه السلام discovered that the guests were angels, he asked them what was their mission and they replied that they had been sent to the people of Lūt عليه السلام to destroy them as a punishment for their unspeakable crime. They would be stoned to death, but not with large stones. Small pebbles of baked clay would be sent down upon them: "مُسَوَّمَةٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ" "marked, with your Lord, for the transgressors."... 51:34), that is, pebbles conspicuously marked by Allah. Some scholars say that each stone bore the name of the person with which he was to be destroyed, and if he ran in any particular direction, he was pursued by the same stone. Other verses say that these people were destroyed by Jibra'il's عليه السلام turning their territory upside down. The two descriptions of the punishment are not mutually contradictory: Probably, the stoning incident took place first, and then the earth was turned upside down.

After the mention of the people of Lūt عليه السلام, the people of Mūsā عليه السلام,

Fir'aun and others are taken up briefly. When Mūsā عليه السلام delivered the message of truth to Fir'aun, the latter reacted thus: فَتَوَلَّىٰ بِرُكْنِهِ (So he turned away along with his chiefs,...51:39) The original word used for 'his chiefs' is *rukn* which means power. Here it is used to refer to his army and chiefs of his government. In the story of Lūṭ عليه السلام he has been mentioned saying, أَوَاوَيْتُ إِلَىٰ رُكْنٍ شَدِيدٍ (or that I had the backing of a strong group' The word *rukn* is used there in the same sense. (See Ma'āriful Qur'ān, Vol. 4/p. 658, 661: '...or that I had the backing of some strong group...')

After this, the stories of the people of 'Ād, Thamūd and Nūh عليه السلام are told. These stories were narrated many times before.

Verses 47 - 55

وَالسَّمَاءَ بَنَيْنَاهَا بِأَيْدٍ وَإِنَّا لَمُوسِعُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَالْأَرْضَ فَرَشْنَاهَا فَنِعْمَ الْمُهَيِّدُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾ وَمِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَا زَوْجَيْنِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾ فَفِرُّوْا إِلَى اللَّهِ ط إِنِّي لَكُمْ مِنْهُ نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٥٠﴾ وَلَا تَجْعَلُوا مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ ط إِنِّي لَكُمْ مِنْهُ نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٥١﴾ كَذَلِكَ مَا آتَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِنْ رَسُولٍ إِلَّا قَالُوا سَاحِرٌ أَوْ مُجْنُونٌ ﴿٥٢﴾ اتَّوَصَوْا بِهِ ط بَلْ هُمْ قَوْمٌ طَاغُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾ فَتَوَلَّىٰ عَنْهُمْ فَمَا أَنْتَ بِمَلُومٍ ﴿٥٤﴾ وَذَكَرْ فَإِنَّ الدِّكْرَىٰ تَنْفَعُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٥٥﴾

And the sky was built by Us with might, and indeed, We are the One who expands. [47] And the earth was spread by Us as a floor; so excellent Spreader are We. [48] And from every thing We have created (a pair of) two kinds, so that you may receive advice. [49] So flee to Allah. Indeed I am a plain warner sent by Him for you. [50] And do not make up any other god along with Allah. Indeed I am a plain warner sent by Him for you. [51] In similar way, no messenger came to those before them, but they said, "(He is) a magician or a madman." [52] Have they handed down (this saying) to each other as a legacy? No, but they are a rebellious people. [53] So, turn away from them, for you are not blamed. [54] And

keep reminding, because reminding benefits the believers. [55]

Proofs of Allah's Oneness abound in the Creation of the Heavens and Earth

The preceding verses mentioned the reality of the Hereafter and the Judgement Day, and the punishment of those who denied the reality. The present set of verses reaffirm the perfect power of Allah, reminding us about the reality of the Day of Resurrection and allaying the doubt and suspicion of those who deny the reality. It proves the oneness of Allah and reiterates emphatically to believe in the Messenger ﷺ.

بَنَيْنَهَا بِأَيْدِيَنَا وَلَنَا لَمُوسِعُونَ (And the sky was built by Us with might, and indeed, We are the One who expands.... 51:47). The word *aidin*, according to Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه, means strength or power in this context.

فَفِرُّوا إِلَى اللَّهِ (So flee to Allah....51:50). Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه said: "It means: Flee from your sins and take shelter in Allah for repentance." Abū Bakr Warrāq and Junaid Baghdādī رحمهما الله تعالى said that the base self of man and the devil invite him to commit sins, and they deceive him. He needs to take refuge in Allah who will protect him against their evil. (Qurṭubī)

Verses 56 - 60

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ ﴿٥٦﴾ مَا أُرِيدُ مِنْهُمْ مِنْ رِزْقٍ
وَمَا أُرِيدُ أَنْ يُطْعَمُوا ﴿٥٧﴾ إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الرَّزَّاقُ ذُو الْقُوَّةِ الْمَتِينُ ﴿٥٨﴾
فَإِنَّ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا ذُنُوبًا مِثْلَ ذُنُوبِ أَصْحَابِهِمْ فَلَا يَسْتَعْجِلُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾
فَوَيْلٌ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ يَوْمِهِمُ الَّذِي يُوعَدُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾

And I did not create the Jinns and the human beings except that they should worship Me. [56] I do not want any sustenance from them, nor do I want them to feed Me. [57] In fact, Allah is the All-Sustainer, Possessor of power, the Strong. [58] So, those who did wrong deserve a share (in the punishment) like the share of their companions. So, they should not ask Me to hasten on. [59] Woe, then, to those who disbelieve because of the Day of

theirs that they are promised (for punishment). [60]

The Purpose of Jinn's and Mankind's creation

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ (And I did not create the Jinns and the human beings except that they should worship Me."...51:56). This apparently may raise two questions: [1] If Allah has created a creature for a particular task, and it is His will that it should perform that task, rationally it is impossible for it to deviate from that task, because doing anything contrary to the will of Allah is inconceivable. [2] The purpose of *jinn's* and man's creation has been restricted to the worship of Allah whereas there are many other underlying reasons and benefits in their creation.

Scholars have made different approaches to solve these problems. Some say that this verse pertains to the believers only, that is, only believing *jinn* and believing mankind are created for worship and for no other task. It is obvious that the believers are more or less steadfast to worship. This is the view of Ḍaḥḥāk, Sufyān Thawrī and others. According to one version of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه, the word *mu'minīn* does occur in the verse thus: 'وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ' 'And I have not created the believing *jinn* and mankind except that they should worship Me'. This version supports the view that the verse is only in connection with the believers.

Another answer to the question, given by Moulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thanawī رحمه الله تعالى, is that: Allah has commanded all to worship, but at the same time He has equipped them with free will. Some of them exercised their God-given free will correctly and chose to worship Him, but others used their God-given free will incorrectly and deviated from worshipping Him. This is what Sayyidnā 'Alī رضي الله عنه has said, as quoted by Baghawī. Tafsīr Mazharī gives a plain and simple explication of this verse: Allah has equipped every *jinn* and man with the innate capacity to worship. Some use the capacity rightly and succeed, while others employ it wrongly in sinning and fulfilling their base emotions, and thus destroy it. The Messenger ﷺ is reported to have said:

كُلُّ مَوْلُودٍ يُوَلَّدُ عَلَى الْفِطْرَةِ فَأَبَوَاهُ يُهَوِّدَانِهِ أَوْ يمجسانِهِ

"Every child is born according to the *fitrah* but his parents [cause him to deviate from the unadulterated propensity] and

turn him into a Jew or a Christian or a Magian."

According to the majority of the scholars, *fitrah* here refers to the religion of Islam. Just as this Tradition tells us that every man is born with the natural capacity for Islam and true faith, but his parents adulterate and destroy that capacity, and put him on to the ways of disbelief, in the same way the phrase 'except that they should worship Me' could mean that every member of jinn and mankind has the natural, inborn capacity to worship. Allah, the Pure and Exalted, knows best.

Answer to the second question is that bringing any creation into being for the purpose of worship does not necessarily imply that they are unfit for other functions of life.

مَا أُرِيدُ مِنْهُمْ مِنْ رِزْقِي (I do not want any sustenance from them, nor do I want them to feed Me...51:57). It means that by creating *jinn* and mankind, Allah does not stand in need of them, so that they will have to produce sustenance for Him or for themselves or for any of His other creations or that they earn to feed Him. This has been stated according to the general trend of people. The most affluent of men buys a slave and spends on him not for nothing, but he has an underlying purpose: He expects the slaves to work for him, help him in his tasks, fulfil his needs and earn livelihood for his master. Allah is immaculate, pure and above all these things. In creating human beings, He does not profit or benefit anything.

The word ذُنُوبٍ *dhanūb* in verse 59 is with *fath* on the letter [dh] which means a large bucket that is kept at the common wells of a locality for the purpose of drawing and filling water. A turn is designated for each of the persons using the large common bucket to draw out water from the well, so that he is conveniently able to fill it in his own private bucket in his turn. Thus the word here is employed in the sense of turn, share or portion. Hence it is translated above as follows: "So, those who did wrong deserve a share (in the punishment) like the share of their companions." The verse purports to warn the disbelievers that the past communities were given an opportunity to work. When each of these communities did not take advantage of the opportunity in their respective time and persisted in their evil course, they were punished and destroyed. Likewise, the present pagans of Makkah are designated a time and opportunity. If

they do not take advantage of the allocated time and opportunity and persist in their paganism, they will be punished in this world; otherwise the punishment of the Hereafter is most certain. They will thus meet with a fate similar to that of the opponents of former Prophets. Like them they will come to a sad end. This verse, in which the word *dhanūban* occurs, indicates that they will receive their due share of the torment, and it will surely come in due time; so they should not ask for it to be hastened on or rushed to them.

Alḥamdulillāh
The Commentary on
Sūrah Adh-Dhāriyāt
Ends here

Sūrah Aṭ-Ṭūr

(The Mount)

Sūrah Aṭ-Ṭūr was revealed in Makkah It has 49 Verses and 2 Sections.

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

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

Verses 1 - 28

وَالطُّورِ ﴿١﴾ وَكِتَابٍ مَّسْطُورٍ ﴿٢﴾ فِي رَقٍ مَّنْشُورٍ ﴿٣﴾ وَالْبَيْتِ
 الْمَعْمُورِ ﴿٤﴾ وَالسَّقْفِ الْمَرْفُوعِ ﴿٥﴾ وَالْبَحْرِ الْمَسْجُورِ ﴿٦﴾ إِنَّ
 عَذَابَ رَبِّكَ لَوَاقِعٌ ﴿٧﴾ مَّالَهُ مِنْ دَافِعٍ ﴿٨﴾ يَوْمَ تَمُورُ السَّمَاءُ مَوْرًا
 ﴿٩﴾ وَتَسِيرُ الْجِبَالُ سَيْرًا ﴿١٠﴾ فَوَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿١١﴾
 الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي خَوْضٍ يَلْعَبُونَ ﴿١٢﴾ يَوْمَ يُدْعَوْنَ إِلَىٰ نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ دَعَا
 ﴿١٣﴾ هَذِهِ النَّارُ الَّتِي كُنْتُمْ بِهَا تُكْذِبُونَ ﴿١٤﴾ أَفَسِحْرٌ هَذَا أَمْ أَنْتُمْ
 لَا تُبْصِرُونَ ﴿١٥﴾ إِصْلَوْهَا فَاصْبِرُوا أَوْ لَا تَصْبِرُوا ۗ سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْكُمْ ۗ
 إِنَّمَا تُجْزَوْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٦﴾ إِنَّ الْمُتَكِبِينَ فِي جَهَنَّمَ وَنَعِيمٍ
 ﴿١٧﴾ فَكِهِينَ بِمَا آتَاهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ ۗ وَوَقَّاهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ عَذَابَ الْجَحِيمِ
 ﴿١٨﴾ كُلُّوْا وَاشْرَبُوا هَنِيئًا بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٩﴾ مُتَكِبِينَ عَلَىٰ
 سُرُرٍ مَّصْفُوفَةٍ ۗ وَزَوَّجْنَاهُمْ بِحُورٍ عِينٍ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
 وَاتَّبَعَتْهُمْ ذُرِّيَّتُهُمْ بِإِيمَانٍ أَلْحَقْنَا بِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَمَا أَلَتْنَاهُمْ مِنْ

عَمَلِهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ ۖ كُلُّ امْرِئٍ بِمَا كَسَبَ رَهِينٌ ﴿٢١﴾ وَأَمَدَدْنَاهُمْ
بِفَاكِهَةٍ وَلَحْمٍ مِمَّا يَشْتَهُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾ يَتَنَزَّعُونَ فِيهَا كَأَسَا لَا لَعْوُ
فِيهَا وَلَا تَأْتِيهِمْ ۖ وَيَطُوفُ عَلَيْهِمْ غِلْمَانٌ لَهُمْ كَأَنَّهُمْ لُؤْلُؤُ
مَكْنُونٌ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَأَقْبَلَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾ قَالُوا إِنَّا
كُنَّا قَبْلُ فِي أَهْلِنَا مُشْفِقِينَ ﴿٢٦﴾ فَمَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَيْنَا وَوَقَدْنَا عَدَابَ
السَّمُومِ ﴿٢٧﴾ إِنَّا كُنَّا مِنْ قَبْلُ نَدْعُوهُ ۗ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْبَرُّ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿٢٨﴾^ع

By the mount of Ṭūr, [1] and by a book, written [2] on an unrolled scroll, [3] and by the Populated House (Al-Bait-ul-Ma'mūr), [4] and by the roof, raised high, [5] and by the sea, filled up with fire, [6] the punishment of your Lord is sure to fall. [7] There is nothing to push it back, [8] the Day when the sky will tremble, a horrible trembling, [9] and the mountains will move about, a terrible movement. [10] So, woe to those who reject (the true faith), [11] who are indulged in vain talk, playing (with truth), [12] the Day they will be pushed to the Fire forcefully, [13] (and it will be said to them,) "This is the Fire you used to deny. [14] Is it then magic, or do you not see? [15] Enter it. Now, whether you act patient or impatient, it is all the same for you; you are merely rewarded for what you used to do." [16] Of course, the God-fearing will be in gardens and bliss, [17] enjoying what their Lord will give to them, and their Lord will save them from the punishment of Hell. [18] (It will be said to them,) "Eat and drink pleasantly because of what you used to do, [19] relaxing on lined up couches". And We will marry them with big-eyed houris. [20] And those who believed and their children followed them in belief, We will join their children with them, and will not curtail (the reward of) any of their deeds at all. Every person will be pledged for what he earned. [21] And We will give them a lot of what they desire from fruits and meat. [22] They will snatch from one another (in a friendly manner) a glass (of wine) in which there is neither an absurd talk, nor something leading to sin. [23] And they will be frequented by the serving boys of their own, (neat and clean) as if they were hidden pearls. [24] And they will advance to one another, asking (about each other). [25] They will say, "Indeed we were

afraid (of Allah's punishment) when we were amidst of our family, [26] but Allah did favour to us and saved us from the torment of Fire's scorching breath. [27] We used to pray to Him before. He is surely the Most-Kind, the Very-Merciful. [28]

Commentary

وَالطُّورِ (By the Mount Ṭūr,...52:1) The word Ṭūr in Hebrew means a mountain that has trees [as opposed to *jabal* a mountain that does not have trees {Trn.}]. Here Ṭūr stands for mount Sinai which is situated in the land of Madyan where the Holy Prophet Mūsā عليه السلام had the honour of Allah's speaking to him. Some reports narrate that there are four mountains of Paradise in this world, and one of them is Ṭūr (Qurtubī). Swearing an oath by Ṭūr carries a special significance and honour of the mount. It also signifies that certain injunctions have been revealed by Allah for people to follow. Compliance with them is obligatory.

وَكِتَابٍ مَّسْطُورٍ فِي رَقٍّ مَّنشُورٍ (and by a book, written on an unrolled scroll....52:2-3) The word *raqq* means fine parchment or fine piece of skin, used for the purpose of writing on it. It is, therefore, usually translated as paper. Here it could be referring to man's account-book of deeds or, according to some of the scholars, it stands for the Qur'an. (Qurtubī)

Al-Bait-ul-Ma'mūr

وَالْبَيْتِ الْمَعْمُورِ (and by the Populated House [Al-Bait-ul-Ma'mūr],...52:4) *Al-Bait-ul-Ma'mūr* is the *Ka'bah* in the heaven meant for the angels' service and is parallel to the *Ka'bah* on earth. According to a Tradition in Ṣaḥīḥain that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said about his Ascension to the seventh heaven: "Then, I was taken to *Al-Bait-ul-Ma'mūr*. It is visited every day by seventy thousand angels who will not come back to visit it again " because every day other new angels take their turn to visit it. (Ibn Kathīr)

Al-Bait-ul-Ma'mūr is the *Ka'bah* of the angels who reside in the seventh heaven. When the Holy Prophet ﷺ reached the seventh heaven on the Night of Ascension, he saw Holy Prophet Ibrāhīm عليه السلام reclining with his back on *Al-Bait-ul-Ma'mūr*. It was Holy Prophet Ibrāhīm عليه السلام who built the *Ka'bah* on earth, and thus the reward is compatible with his action in that Allah Ta'ālā has blessed him with a special connection with *Al-Bait-ul-Ma'mūr* (Ibn Kathīr).

وَالْبَحْرِ الْمَسْجُورِ (and by the sea, filled up with fire...52:6) The word *baḥr* means sea and the passive participle *masjūr* is derived from *sajr* which is used in several different senses, one of which is to kindle with fire. Some of the commentators interpret the participle in this sense here, that is, by the sea which will be kindled with fire on the Day of Resurrection, just as Allah said in another verse وَإِذَا الْبِحَارُ سُجِّرَتْ "And when the seas will be kindled with fire". In other words, it will be kindled with fire and become a raging fire surrounding the people in the plain of hashr. This was reported by Sayyidnā Sa'id Ibn Musayyab from Sayyidnā 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib ؓ. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās, Mujāhid, and 'Ubaidullāh Ibn 'Umair ؓ also report likewise. (Ibn Kathīr)

A Jewish person asked Sayyidnā 'Alī ؓ 'where is the Hell?'. He replied 'the sea'. The Jew, who was the scholar of the previous scriptures, confirmed this. (Qurṭubī) Sayyidnā Qatādah ؓ and others interpreted the phrase to mean 'filled sea'. Ibn Jarīr رحمه الله تعالى preferred this interpretation (Ibn Kathīr). ' This is the interpretation adopted by Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thanawī رحمه الله تعالى.

إِنَّ عَذَابَ رَبِّكَ لَوَاقِعٌ لَّا مَالَهُ مِنْ دَافِعٍ (the punishment of your Lord is sure to fall. There is nothing to push it back,...52:7-8) Verses 1-6 constituted swearing of an oath, and the present verse is *jawab-ul-qasam* or the fact for which the oath is sworn, assuring that the torment of Allah will come to pass, and none will be able to avert it.

The Incident of Sayyidnā 'Umar ؓ

Sayyidnā 'Umar ؓ one day recited Sūrah Ṭūr. When he came to these verses, he heaved a cool sigh after which he fell ill for about twenty days. During his illness the people would visit him, not knowing what caused his illness. (Ibn Kathīr)

Sayyidnā Jubair Ibn Muṭ'im ؓ says that before embracing Islam, he once went to the holy city of Madinah to negotiate regarding the prisoners of the battle of Badr. When he arrived there, the Holy Prophet ﷺ was reciting Sūrah Ṭūr in Maghrib *ṣalāh* and his voice could be heard outside the mosque. When he recited verses [7] and [8]: 'The punishment of your Lord is sure to fall. There is nothing to push it back,' He suddenly felt that his heart would burst through fear. He instantly embraced Islam. He felt at the time that he would not be able to move unless the torment would descend on him. (Qurṭubī)

يَوْمَ تَمُورُ السَّمَاءُ مَوْرًا (...the Day when the sky will tremble, a horrible trembling, ...52:9) The lexicographical denotation of the word *mawr* is violent shaking, or movement caused by unrest. This verse describes the violent movement of the heavens on the Day of Resurrection.

The Believing Children of the Righteous will benefit from their relationship with their Believing Parents in Paradise

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَاتَّبَعَتْهُمْ ذُرِّيَّتُهُمْ بِإِيمَانٍ أَلْحَقْنَا بِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ (And those who believed and their children followed them in belief, We will join their children with them,... 52:21) Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbas رضي الله عنه reports from the Holy Prophet ﷺ who said:

"Verily, Allah elevates the ranks of the believers' children to the rank of their parents, even though the latter do not deserve the same rank as their parents deserve, so that the eyes of the parents are comforted." (Ḥākīm, al-Baihaqī in his Sunan, al-Bazzār, Abū Nu'aim in al-Ḥilyah, ibn-Jarīr and ibn-Abī Ḥātim as quoted by Mazharī [Tr.]

It is recorded in Ṭabarānī that Sa'īd Ibn Jubair رضي الله عنه reports "Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه said, [and I think he reports this from the Holy Prophet ﷺ]:

"When a person enters Paradise, he will inquire about his parents, and wife and children [as to where they are]. He will be told that they have not attained your grade. [Therefore, their place is elsewhere in Paradise]. The person will say: 'O Lord! I had worked not only for myself, but for all of them.' Allah will command that they all be kept together with him in the same rank of Paradise." (Ibn Kathīr)

Ḥāfiẓ Ibn-Kathīr, having quoted all these Traditions, says that it is certainly Allah's grace and favour that He grants the children this blessing because of the righteous deeds of their parents. He also grants His favour to parents on account of their children's praying Allah for them. Imām Aḥmad has recorded that Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه has reported the following statement of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

"Verily, Allah shall elevate the grade of a righteous servant in Paradise, who will ask: 'O Lord! How did I earn this?' Allah will reply: 'Through your son's invoking Me to forgive you.'" (ibn-Kathīr says that this Tradition has an authentic chain of transmitters, but was not recorded in Ṣaḥīḥain this way. However there is a corroborating narration (*shāhid*) for it in

Muslim on the authority of Abū Hurairah. [Tr.]

وَمَا أَلْتَنَّهُمْ مِنْ عَمَلِهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ (...and will not curtail (the reward of) any of their deeds at all...52:21) The past perfect verb *alatna* is the first person plural of *alāta* which literally means to decrease, to reduce or to diminish (Qurṭubī). The verse means that for upgrading the children of the believers who died in the state of true faith, no part of the reward of their parents will be diminished for them to make up for the children's deeds. In fact, this equalization will take place as a result of Allah's grace.

Allah's Fairness to Sinners

كُلُّ امْرِئٍ بِمَا كَسَبَ رَهِينٌ (Every person will be pledged for what he earned.) After Allah mentioned His favour of elevating the children to the ranks of their parents, even though the deeds of the former did not qualify them, He affirmed His fairness in that, He does not punish anyone for the sins of others. Therefore, every person will be responsible for his actions. No sins committed by others shall ever be added to one's load, even if committed by his parents or children. (Ibn Kathīr)

Verses 29 - 49

فَذَكِّرْ فَمَا أَنْتَ بِنِعْمَتِ رَبِّكَ بِكَاهِنٍ وَلَا مَجْنُونٍ ﴿٢٩﴾ أَمْ يَقُولُونَ
شَاعِرٌ تَتَّبِصُ بِهِ رَيْبَ الْمُنُونِ ﴿٣٠﴾ قُلْ تَرَبَّصُوا فَإِنِّي مَعَكُمْ مِنَ
الْمُتَرَبِّصِينَ ﴿٣١﴾ أَمْ تَأْمُرُهُمْ أَحْلَامُهُمْ بِهَذَا أَمْ هُمْ قَوْمٌ طَاغُونَ
﴿٣٢﴾ أَمْ يَقُولُونَ تَقَوَّلَهُ ۚ بَلْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾ فَلْيَأْتُوا بِحَدِيثٍ مِثْلَهُ
إِنْ كَانُوا صَادِقِينَ ﴿٣٤﴾ أَمْ خُلِقُوا مِنْ غَيْرِ شَيْءٍ أَمْ هُمُ الْخَالِقُونَ
﴿٣٥﴾ أَمْ خَلَقُوا السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ ۚ بَلْ لَا يُوقِنُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾ أَمْ عِنْدَهُمْ
خَزَائِنُ رَبِّكَ أَمْ هُمُ الْمَصْطَرُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾ أَمْ لَهُمْ سُلْمٌ يَسْتَمِعُونَ فِيهِ ۚ
فَلْيَأْتِ مُسْتَمِعُهُمْ بِسُلْطَنِ مُبِينٍ ﴿٣٨﴾ أَمْ لَهُ الْبَنَاتُ وَلَكُمُ الْبُنُونَ
﴿٣٩﴾ أَمْ تَسْأَلُهُمْ أَجْرًا فَهُمْ مِنْ مَغْرَمٍ مُثْقَلُونَ ﴿٤٠﴾ أَمْ عِنْدَهُمْ
الْغَيْبُ فَهُمْ يَكْتُبُونَ ﴿٤١﴾ أَمْ يُرِيدُونَ كَيْدًا ۗ فَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هُمْ

الْمَكِيدُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾ ۞ أَمْ لَهُمْ إِلَهٌ غَيْرُ اللَّهِ ۗ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ
 ﴿٤٣﴾ ۞ وَإِنْ يَرَوْا كِسْفًا مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ سَاقِطًا يَقُولُوا سَحَابٌ مَّرْكُومٌ
 ﴿٤٤﴾ ۞ فَذَرَهُمْ حَتَّىٰ يُلَاقُوا يَوْمَهُمُ الَّذِي فِيهِ يُصْعَقُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾ ۞ يَوْمَ
 لَا يُغْنِي عَنْهُمْ كَيْدُهُمْ شَيْئًا وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾ ۞ وَإِنَّ لِلَّذِينَ
 ظَلَمُوا عَذَابًا دُونَ ذَلِكَ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾ ۞ وَأَصْبِرْ
 لِحُكْمِ رَبِّكَ فَإِنَّكَ بِأَعْيُنِنَا وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ حِينَ تَقُومُ ﴿٤٨﴾ ۞
 وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَسَبِّحْهُ وَإِدْبَارَ النُّجُومِ ﴿٤٩﴾ ۞

So keep reminding (them), because by the grace of your Lord, you are neither a soothsayer, nor a madman. [29] Do they rather say, "He is a poet for whom we are awaiting the accident of death."? [30] Say, "Wait! I am waiting with you, too." [31] Do their intellects direct them to (say) this, or are they a rebellious people? [32] Do they rather say, "He has forged it (the Qur'an.)"? No, but they do not believe. [33] So, let them bring a discourse like this, if they are truthful. [34] Is it that they are created by none, or are they themselves the creators? [35] Or have they created the heavens and the earth? No, but they are sure of nothing. [36] Or do they have the treasures of your Lord, or have they acquired control (over them)?¹ [37] Or have they a stairway (to the heavens) by means of which they listen (to the divine decrees)? If so, their listener must bring a clear proof.² [38] Is it that He has daughters and you have sons? [39] Or is it that you (O prophet) ask them for a

- (1) This is an answer to one of the objections frequently raised by the disbelievers of Makkah against the prophethood of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. They used to ask why he was chosen for messengership, and not one of the outstanding chiefs of the tribe. The answer given in this verse is that the selection of prophets is the exclusive prerogative of Allah. He has the treasures of knowledge, and it is He who decides to whom they should be given. The attitude of those who raise objections against His decision is tantamount to claiming that the disposal of these treasures should have been in their hands, and they should have the decisive power to select prophets. (Muhammad Taqi Usmani)
- (2) It means that their arguments against Islam having failed on rational grounds, the only possibility was that they had a direct link with Allah whereby they have ensured that their faith was true, but no one could bring any proof of having such a link with Allah. (Muhammad Taqi Usmani)

fee, and therefore they are burdened with a debt? [40] Or have they the knowledge of the Unseen, and they are recording it? [41] Or do they intend to conspire (against the prophet)? Then the disbelievers themselves shall be the victim of the conspiracy. [42] Or do they have a god other than Allah? Pure is Allah from what they associate with Him. [43] And even if they see a piece falling down from the sky, they would say, "It is a cumulated cloud." [44]³ So, leave them until they face their Day in which they will be struck by a thunderbolt, [45] the Day their planning will not avail them in the least, nor will they be helped. [46] And for those who did wrong there is another punishment before that,⁴ but most of them do not know. [47] And (O prophet) be patient about the decision of your Lord, because you are before Our Eyes. And proclaim the purity of your Lord along with His praise when you stand (in Prayer), [48] And, in parts of night too, proclaim His purity, and at setting of the stars. [49]

Commentary

فَإِنَّكَ بِأَعْيُنِنَا (...you are before Our Eyes....) The hostility of the enemies towards, and their opposition to, and rejection of the Holy Prophet ﷺ depressed him. At the conclusion of the chapter, the Qur'an says 'You are before Our eyes', that is, under Our care and We shall protect you from every evil. Do not be anxious about it. On another occasion, the Qur'an says, وَاللَّهُ يَعْصِمُكَ مِنَ النَّاسِ 'And Allah shall protect you from the people'.

Then the verse goes on to say, وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ حِينَ تَقُومُ (And proclaim the purity of your Lord along with His praise when you stand [in Prayer]... 48). To proclaim the purity and praise of Allah is the real purpose of life, and also the real cure of every calamity. Thus the Qur'an enjoins it upon the Holy Prophet ﷺ. 'When you stand' could mean to stand up for the *Ṣalāh* or to arise or get up from sleep or bed. The latter meaning is

{3} This points out to the demand of the pagans of Makkah that they would not believe in the Holy Holy Prophet ﷺ unless he brings some pieces of the sky falling down from above. (See 17:92 and 26:187 in the Qur'an) The answer given is that even if Allah fulfils this absurd demand, they would still not believe and would seek other excuses like claiming that the mass they are seeing is nothing but a cloud. (Muhammad Taqi Usmani)

{4} It refers to the punishments faced by the disbelievers right in this world, like famines and the deterrent defeat in the battle of Badr. (Muhammad Taqi Usmani).

preferred by Ibn Jarīr. This view is supported by the Tradition recorded in the Musnad of Imām Aḥmad Ibn Hanbal on the authority of Sayyidnā ‘Ubadah Ibn Samit رضي الله عنه who reports that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "Whoever gets up at night and recites:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ، لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ،
سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ وَلَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ

"There is no God except Allah. He is One without partners. For Him is the kingdom and all praise is due to Him. He has power over all things. Glory be to Allah and all praise is due to Allah, and there is no God except Allah, and Allah is the Greatest. There is neither might nor power except with Allah."

Then, if he intends to pray, and performs prayer after ablution, the prayers will be accepted. (Ibn Kathīr)

Kaffārat-ul-Majlis : A recitation at the end of a meeting that expiates sins

Sayyidnā Mujāhid, Abūl Aḥwaṣ and other leading authorities on Tafsīr have interpreted "when you stand" in this verse to mean that when a person wants to stand from a gathering or a meeting, he should recite: سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ وَبِحَمْدِكَ 'I proclaim Your Purity, O Allah, along with Your praise'. Sayyidnā ‘Aṭā’ Ibn Abī Rabāḥ, interpreting this verse, has said:

"When you stand from a gathering, proclaim the purity and praise of Allah. If you have done any good work, your good work will be increased and enhanced. If you had done any bad deed, these words of proclamation will serve as an expiation and atonement".

On the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه, the Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said:

"Whoever sits in a gathering in which he speaks idle excessively, but says before he stands up to depart that gathering, سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ وَبِحَمْدِكَ أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ أَسْتَغْفِرُكَ وَأَتُوبُ إِلَيْكَ (I proclaim Your Purity, O Allah, along with Your praise', I testify that there is no God except You, I seek Your forgiveness, I repent to You.) Allah will forgive him what he has said in that gathering".

وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَسَبِّحْهُ (And, in parts of night too, proclaim His purity, and at setting of the stars...52:49) 'Proclaiming the purity of the Lord in parts of

night' includes Maghrib and 'Isha' prayers, as well as the general *tasbīḥāt* (proclamation of the purity of the Lord). The concluding part of this verse; "وَإِذْ بَارَ النُّجُومَ" ...and at setting of the stars" refers to the *Fajr* prayer and the *tasbīḥāt* recited at that time. (Ibn Kathīr)

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Aṭ-Ṭūr
Ends here

Sūrah An-Najm (The Star)

This Sūrah is Makkī. It contains 62 verses and 3 sections

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

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

Verses 1 - 18

وَالنَّجْمِ إِذَا هَوَىٰ ﴿١﴾ مَا ضَلَّ صَاحِبُكُمْ وَمَا غَوَىٰ ﴿٢﴾ وَمَا يَنْطِقُ
عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ ﴿٣﴾ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ ﴿٤﴾ عَلَّمَهُ شَدِيدُ الْقُوَىٰ
﴿٥﴾ ذُو مِرَّةٍ ۖ فَاسْتَوَىٰ ﴿٦﴾ وَهُوَ بِالْأُفُقِ الْأَعْلَىٰ ﴿٧﴾ ثُمَّ دَنَىٰ
فَتَدَلَّىٰ ﴿٨﴾ فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَىٰ ﴿٩﴾ فَأَوْحَىٰ إِلَىٰ عَبْدِهِ مَا
أَوْحَىٰ ﴿١٠﴾ مَا كَذَبَ الْفُؤَادُ مَا رَأَىٰ ﴿١١﴾ أَفَتَمْرُونَهُ عَلَىٰ مَا يَرَىٰ
﴿١٢﴾ وَلَقَدْ رَأَهُ نَزْلَةً أُخْرَىٰ ﴿١٣﴾ عِنْدَ سِدْرَةِ الْمُنْتَهَىٰ ﴿١٤﴾ عِنْدَهَا
جَنَّةُ الْمَأْوَىٰ ﴿١٥﴾ إِذْ يَغْشَى السِّدْرَةَ مَا يَغْشَىٰ ﴿١٦﴾ مَا زَاغَ الْبَصَرُ
وَمَا طَغَىٰ ﴿١٧﴾ لَقَدْ رَأَىٰ مِنْ آيَاتِ رَبِّهِ الْكُبْرَىٰ ﴿١٨﴾

By the star when it goes down to set, [1] your companion (the Holy Prophet ﷺ) has neither missed the way, nor did he deviate. [2] And he does not speak out of (his own) desire. [3] It is not but revelation revealed (to him). [4] It is taught to him by one (angel) of strong faculties, [5] one of vigour. So he stood poised, [6] while he was on the upper horizon. [7] Then he drew near, and came down, [8] so as he was at a distance between two bows (joined together), rather even nearer. [9] Thus He (Allah) revealed to His slave what He

revealed. [10] The heart did not err in what he saw. [11] Do you quarrel with him in what he sees? [12] And indeed he saw him another time [13] by *sidrat-ul-muntaha* (the lote-tree in the upper realm), [14] near which there is *Jannat-ul-ma'wa* (the Paradise of Abode), [15] when the lote-tree was covered by that which covered it. [16] The eye neither went wrong, nor did exceed the limit. [17] He has indeed seen a part of the biggest signs of your Lord. [18]

Characteristics of Sūrah An-Najm

Sūrah An-Najm is the first chapter that the Holy Prophet ﷺ proclaimed in Makkah ('Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ؓ has transmitted it - as in Qurtubī) and this is the first Sūrah in which a verse of *sajdah* (prostration) is revealed. The Holy Prophet ﷺ recited it and prostrated. A strange thing happened on this occasion: When the Holy Prophet ﷺ finished reciting the Sūrah before a mixed gathering of Muslims and disbelievers, and, along with his followers, he prostrated himself on the ground. The disbelievers too prostrated, except one proud and arrogant man (regarding whose name there is a difference of opinion (Tr.)) who took a handful of soil and, having applied it on his forehead, said, 'this is enough'. 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ؓ [the transmitter of the Tradition] said that he saw this man lying dead in the state of disbelief [*kufr*]. (Bukhārī, Muslim and other compilers of Sunan - Ibn-Kathīr [condensed])

At the outset of this Sūrah, the truth of the Qur'ānic revelation and of the Divine claim is sought to be established. In a very exquisite and forceful style, it is stated that the Holy Prophet ﷺ is a true Messenger of Allah, and there is no room for any doubt about this.

Allah Swears that the Messenger is True

وَالنَّجْمِ إِذَا هَوَىٰ (By the star when it goes down to set,.... 53:1) The word *najm* means a star, and as a common noun every star is referred to as *najm*, and in that case the plural is *nujum*. There are however occasions when *najm* specifically refers to *thurayyā*. In this case it is used as a proper noun and it signifies "the Pleiades" which is a loose cluster of many (hundred) stars, (six of which are visible to ordinary sight). In this context, some scholars, taking the word as a proper noun, interpret *najm* as *thurayyā*. Farrā' and Ḥasan Baṣrī prefer the first interpretation, and take the word as a common noun (Qurtubī). This is the interpretation that

is adopted in the translation.

The verb *hawā* means to fall or plunge. When stars fall, they set. In this verse Allah swears an oath to show that the Messenger is true, and his words are a revelation from Allah, in which there is no room for any doubt. In Sūrah Aṣ-Ṣāffāt it has been explained in detail that the Creator, for various wise reasons, swears by whatever He wills among His creation, but His created beings only swear by the Creator. They are not allowed to swear by anything else. Here Allah has sworn an oath by the stars. Probably, the underlying wisdom in this is that as the Arabs are used to determine the course and direction of, and are guided in their travels by the movements of the stars in the sandy waste of Arabia, so they would now be led to the goal and end of their spiritual journey by the star *par excellence*, that is, by the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

مَا ضَلَّ صَاحِبُكُمْ وَمَا غَوَى (your companion [the Holy Prophet ﷺ] has neither missed the way, nor did he deviate. [53:2] Verse [1] was *qasam* or oath and verse [2] is *jawāb-ul-qasam* or the subject for which oath is sworn. The verse means that the path towards which the Holy Prophet ﷺ is calling the people is the perfectly straight path leading to the desired goal of Allah's good pleasure. He is following the right guidance and has not deviated from the path of righteousness.

The Reason for Describing the Holy Prophet ﷺ as 'your companion'

The Qur'ān on this occasion, when referring to the Holy Prophet ﷺ, does not refer to him by his blessed name or refer to him as a Messenger or a Holy Prophet. In fact, it refers to him as *Ṣāhibukum* or "your companion". In this there seems to be a subtle rebuke to the pagans of Makkah, telling them in effect that the Holy Prophet ﷺ is not an outsider, nor a stranger to them. He was their constant companion. He was born amongst them, he spent his childhood amongst them, and he grew up as a youth amongst them. He has lived among them a whole life-time, and they had always looked upon him as a paragon of honesty, integrity and truthfulness calling him "امين" (The Honest One). But now – after his claim of Prophethood – they dare impute to him such a heinous sin as forging lies against Allah. A man who withheld himself from telling lies about men, how could he possibly forge lies against Allah? How inconsistent is their attitude?

The Holy Prophet's Words are a Revelation from Allah

وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ (And he does not speak out of (his own) desire. It is not but revelation revealed [to him]...53:3-4) The verses tell us that it is absolutely impossible for the Messenger ﷺ to forge lies and impute them to Allah. Nothing he utters is of his own wish or desire. He only conveys to the people what he was commanded to convey, in its entirety, without additions or deletions. An analysis of the various Traditions in Bukhārī indicates that there are many categories or types of *wahy* [inspiration or revelation]. Type one is that in which the wordings and the meaning are both directly from Allah. This is called Qur'ān. Type two is the one in which only the meaning comes from Allah, and the Messenger ﷺ expresses the meaning in his own words. This is called Ḥadīth or Sunnah [Tradition]. The subject of Ḥadīth, which comes from Allah, sometimes lays down injunctions or rules of conduct in clear and express terms, and at other times it establishes a general principle from which the Messenger ﷺ derives laws on the basis of *ijtihād* or analogy, and promulgates them. In this there does exist the possibility of mistake of judgement. But it is the characteristic of the Messenger ﷺ and other Prophets ﷺ that if they commit any error of judgement, Allah sends down a revelation to amend it, so that they do not unwittingly persist in their mistaken *ijtihād*. Unlike other scholars of *ijtihād*, who can persist in their erroneous conclusions. However, their error is not only forgiven, but they also receive one reward for exerting their utmost effort in comprehending the rule of religion to the fullest extent, as authentic and well-known Traditions bear testimony to this fact.

The foregoing discussion also allays the following doubt: It seems, according to the above verses, that the Messenger ﷺ does not speak of his own desire, but whatever he conveys to the people is a revelation from Allah. It follows from this that he does not exercise independent reasoning in any matter whatsoever, whereas authentic Traditions show otherwise. There are incidents recorded that at the beginning, he promulgated one law, but, later on, revelation descended and the law was changed. This is an indication that the earlier law was not the law of Allah, but it was based on his *ijtihād*. The foregoing paragraph already responded to this objection: The second type of revelation establishes a general principle of law from which the Messenger ﷺ derives laws on the basis of *ijtihād*, and

promulgates them. Because the general principle has descended from Allah, all the laws are said to be the revelation from Allah. Allah knows best!

عَلَّمَهُ شَدِيدُ الْقُوَى (It is taught to him by one [angel] of strong faculties,... 53:5) From here upto the eighteenth verse, لَقَدْ رَأَىٰ آيَاتِ رَبِّهِ الْكُبْرَى the subject-matter is the revelation from Allah. It has been established that the Qur'an is a record of verbal revelation vouchsafed to the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. There is no room for doubt about the fact that it is the very Words of Allah. It was sent down in such a way that no possibility of confusion or error ever existed.

Divergent Interpretation of the Verses of Najm

Regarding these verses of Sūrah Najm, two divergent interpretations of the leading commentators are reported. The summary of one interpretation is that all these verses relate to the incident of Mi'rāj (Ascension of the Holy Prophet ﷺ to the heavens). As a result, words and phrases like شَدِيدُ الْقُوَى *shadīd-ul-quwā* (One of strong faculties), *dhū mirrah* (one of vigour) فَاسْتَوَى *fastawā* (he stood poised), and دَنَى فَتَدَلَّى *danā fatadallā* (then he drew near, and came down,) are all qualities and actions of Allah. (It means that Allah Ta'ālā has taught the Holy Prophet ﷺ directly without any media, and that he came close to Him. The Qur'an further speaks of Vision [*ru'yah*] and Witnessing [*mushāhadah*]. They too have been taken to mean the Vision and Witnessing of Allah. Among the noble Companions, Sayyidnā Anas and Ibn 'Abbās ؓ have adopted this interpretation. In Tafsīr Maḥzarī too this interpretation has been given preference. Many noble Companions, *tabi'īn* [Companions' pupils] and other leading commentators, however, take these verses to refer to the event when the Holy Prophet ﷺ saw the noble angel Jibra'īl ؑ in his original shape. According to them, شَدِيدُ الْقُوَى *shadīd-ul-quwā* (one of strong faculties), and other qualities and acts mentioned in these verses are the qualities of Jibra'īl ؑ. There are many factors in support of this interpretation. Historically, Sūrah An-Najm is one of the very early Sūrahs and, according to Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ؓ, this is the first Sūrah the Holy Prophet ﷺ recited in public in the Sacred city of Makkah. Obviously, the incident of Mi'rāj took place much later. This argument, however, may be debatable. But the stronger proof in favor of the second interpretation is that in a tradition recorded in the Musnad of

Aḥmad, the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself interprets these verses that they relate to seeing the noble Jibra'īl عليه السلام

عَنِ الشَّعْبِيِّ عَنْ مَسْرُوقٍ قَالَ كُنْتُ عِنْدَ عَائِشَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا فَقُلْتُ أَيْسَ اللَّهُ يَقُولُ (وَلَقَدْ رَأَاهُ بِالْأَفْقِ الْمُبِينِ، وَلَقَدْ رَأَاهُ نَزْلَةً أُخْرَى) فَقَالَتْ أَنَا أَوَّلُ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ سَأَلْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَنْهَا فَقَالَ إِنَّمَا ذَاكَ جِبْرَائِيلُ لَمْ يَرَهُ فِي صُورَتِهِ الَّتِي خُلِقَ عَلَيْهَا إِلَّا مَرَّتَيْنِ رَأَاهُ مُنْهَبِطًا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ سَادًّا عِظَمَ خَلْقِهِ مَا بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ، أَخْرَجَاهُ فِي الصَّحِيحِينَ مِنْ حَدِيثِ الشَّعْبِيِّ. (ابن كثير)

Masrūq reports from Sha'bi رحمه الله تعالى: Masrūq ﷺ said: "One day I was sitting with Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها and I asked her. 'Did not Allah say (وَلَقَدْ رَأَاهُ بِالْأَفْقِ الْمُبِينِ، وَلَقَدْ رَأَاهُ نَزْلَةً أُخْرَى) 'And indeed he saw him in the clear horizon' and 'Indeed he saw him another time' she replied: 'I was the first among the Ummah to ask the Holy Prophet ﷺ about it.' He said: 'That was Jibra'īl. He only saw him twice in his actual and real figure. He saw Jibra'īl descend from heaven to earth, and he was so huge that he covered the entire horizon between the sky and the earth.'" (Ibn-Kathīr)

The wordings of this narration in Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim are almost the same as recorded above. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Hajar, in the chapter of Tafsīr of Faṭḥ-ul-Bārī, has narrated this tradition on the authority of Ibn Marduwayh in the following words:

أَنَا أَوَّلُ مَنْ سَأَلَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَنْ هَذَا، فَقُلْتُ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ هَلْ رَأَيْتَ رَبَّكَ؟ فَقَالَ: لَا، إِنَّمَا رَأَيْتُ جِبْرَائِيلَ مُنْهَبِطًا. (فتح الباري، ص ٤٩٣ ج ٨)

Ṣiddīqah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها says: "I asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ about It, and I said, 'Did you see your Lord?' He replied, 'No: I saw Jibra'īl descending.'" (Faṭḥ-ul-Bārī vol, 8/p, 493)

Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī records that Shaibani asked Sayyidnā Zirr about the meaning of the verses فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَى فَأَوْحَى إِلَى عَبْدِهِ مَا أَوْحَى (so as he was at a distance between two bows (joined together), rather even nearer. Thus He [Allah] revealed to His slave what He revealed - 53:9,10) He replied that 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه narrated to us that Muḥammad ﷺ saw Jibra'īl عليه السلام having six hundred wings. Ibn Jarīr, with his own chain of transmitters, reports that Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه, interpreting the verse 11: مَا كَذَبَ الْفُؤَادُ مَا رَأَى ("The heart did not err in what he saw") says that the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ saw Jibra'īl عليه السلام clad

in *rafrāf* [green] garment filling the entire space between heaven and earth.

Ibn Kathīr's Findings

Ibn Kathīr has quoted all these narrations in his Tafsīr and said that in all the above-quoted verses perception and proximity refer to seeing and being close to Jibrā'īl عليه السلام. From among the noble Companions, this is the view of the Mother of the Faithful Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها and of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd, Abū Dharr Ghifārī, Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه and others. This is why Ibn Kathīr says:

Vision and proximity in these verses refer to seeing and being close to Jibrā'īl عليه السلام when the Holy Prophet ﷺ had seen him for the first time in his original shape. Then he saw him for the second time on the night of Mi'rāj near *Sidrat-ul-Muntaha* (Lote-tree of the Uppermost Boundary). He saw him the first time at the very beginning of his Prophethood when Jibrā'īl عليه السلام descended with the very first installment of revelation, and delivered to him Sūrah Iqra'. After that, there was an interval which caused terrible grief and [spiritual] depression. As a result, time and again, the thought crossed his mind that he should go to the top of the mountain and fall from there and give his life away. Whenever such a situation arose, Jibrā'īl عليه السلام called out to him invisibly from the air: 'O Muḥammad! You are Allah's Messenger; you are true; and I am Jibrā'īl.' The voice would calm his heart, and recompose it. Whenever such a thought crossed his mind, Jibrā'īl عليه السلام would comfort him by his voice. But the comforting and consoling were always invisible. One day Jibrā'īl عليه السلام was in an open field at Bathā' in his original shape with six hundred wings which had covered the entire horizon. Then Jibrā'īl عليه السلام came close to Allah's Messenger, and delivered the Divine revelation to him. On that occasion, the reality of the greatness of Jibrā'īl عليه السلام and his majestic value in the sight of Allah became manifest to Allah's Messenger ﷺ.

In short, Imām Ibn Kathīr himself, on the basis of the statement of the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself and the views of the blessed Companions, preferred this interpretation of the above verses of Sūrah An-Najm, that

is, it refers to seeing Jibra'īl عليه السلام and being close to him. This was the Holy Prophet's ﷺ first experience of seeing Jibra'īl عليه السلام in this world on the horizon of Makkah. Some of the versions narrate that when the Messenger of Allah ﷺ saw him in his actual and real shape for the first time, he became unconscious. Then Jibra'īl عليه السلام came very close to him in the shape of a human being [and he regained consciousness].

The second incident of Holy Prophet's ﷺ seeing Jibra'īl عليه السلام is mentioned in Verse 13 and 14 of this Sūrah in the following words: وَقَدْ رَأَاهُ نَزَلَهُ أُخْرَىٰ عِنْدَ سِدْرَةِ الْمُنْتَهَىٰ (And indeed he saw him another time [13] by *sidrat-ul-muntaha* (the lote-tree in the upper realm), [14]). This verse mentions that the Holy Prophet ﷺ saw Jibra'īl عليه السلام for the second time, and this happened on the Night of Ascension (Mi'rāj). On the basis of reasons stated above, the commentators generally adopt this interpretation. Ibn Kathīr's arguments have just been put forward. Qurṭubī, Abū Ḥayyān, Imām Rāzī and others normally prefer this interpretation. My mentor Maulānā Ashraf Alī has also preferred this interpretation, the summary of which is that the earlier verses of Sūrah An-Najm which makes mention of *ru'yah* (seeing) does not refer to having a Vision of Allah, but of Jibra'īl عليه السلام. Nawawī, in his commentary on Muslim, and Ḥāfiẓ in Faṭḥ-ul-Bārī also have preferred this interpretation.

ذُو مِرَّةٍ فَاسْتَوَىٰ وَهُوَ بِالْأُفُقِ الْأَعْلَىٰ (one of vigour. So he stood poised, while he was on the upper horizon...53:6-7] The word *mirrah* means 'strength' or 'vigour'. This is another quality of Jibra'īl عليه السلام, in that he is no weakling, but strong, mighty in power and firm, so that it may not be suspected that the devil may intercept the angel carrying the Divine revelation and snatch it away from him. Jibra'īl عليه السلام is so mighty in power and strength that the devil dare not come anywhere near him. The word *استوى* *istawā* means to be or become straight or to level. The verse means that when he saw Jibra'īl عليه السلام the first time, the latter was descending from the heaven. Having descended, he sat or settled straight on the highest part of the horizon. *Ufuq* [horizon] is qualified by *a'lā* [the highest part or uppermost] and it signifies that Jibra'īl عليه السلام was shown on the uppermost horizon, [so that he could be seen clearly] because the lower part of the horizon which seems to be adjacent to the earth is normally hidden from the sight [as a result he would not have been visible to the Holy Prophet ﷺ].

ثُمَّ دَنَى فَتَدَلَّى (Then he drew near, and came down,... 53:8). The word *danā* means to draw near and *tadalla* means to hang or to come down. The verse means that Jibra'īl عليه السلام drew near by coming down.

فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَى (so as he was at a distance between two bows (joined together), rather even nearer....53:9). The noun *qāb* refers to the distance between the curved handle of a bow and the tight chord that releases arrows. This distance is estimated about the length of one hand. The expression *qāba qawsain* is based on an ancient Arab custom, according to which when two persons pledged themselves to firm friendship, each one of them would turn the wooden part of their bows towards themselves, but they would turn the chord part towards the other. In this way when the chords of their bows were joined together, this used to be regarded as the proclamation of proximity, love and affection at the time of which the distance between the two persons would be two bows' length - approximately the length of two arms or one cubit. The expression *aw adnā* ('rather even nearer') signifies that the relationship of closeness was no ordinary one, it in fact was more intimate than could be conceived. The reason for the mention of such intimacy with Jibra'īl عليه السلام in the above verses is to confirm that the revelation which he delivered is indubitably and truly from Allah, and he heard it with absolute accuracy in every detail: There is no room for any doubt in this. This closeness and intimacy further allays the suspicion that the Holy Prophet ﷺ might have not recognized Jibra'īl عليه السلام and that the devil might interfere.

فَأَوْحَىٰ إِلَىٰ عَبْدِهِ مَا أَوْحَىٰ (Thus He [Allah] revealed to His slave what He revealed... 53:10) The subject pronoun understood in the past perfect verb *awḥā* (He revealed) refers to Allah, and so does the pronoun in '*abdiḥī*' (His slave), and the verse means: Allah revealed to His servant Muḥammad ﷺ whatever He revealed through the medium of Jibra'īl عليه السلام by attaching him so intimately to the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

An Academic Problem and its Solution

Here an apparent problem arises which at best can be described as academic, because it does not relate to a real situation. According to an overwhelming consensus of the *Mufasssirīn* and *Muḥaddithīn*, all the pronouns in the above verses refer to Jibra'īl عليه السلام. Likewise, all the pronouns in the sentences from *فَأَسْتَوَىٰ fastawā* to *فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَىٰ fa kāna qāba qawsaini aw adnā* refer to him. The forthcoming verses,

according to consensus of the commentators, also speak of Jibra'īl عليه السلام. Therefore, referring the intervening pronouns of *awhā* and 'abdihi' is contrary to the context and causes *intishār-uḍ-ḍamā'ir* (inconsistency of the pronouns).

Our honourable mentor Maulānā Sayyid Muḥammad Anwar Shah Kashmirī رحمه الله تعالى has responded to this problem thus: There is neither any contextual confusion here, nor any pronominal ambiguity. In point of fact, early part of Sūrah An-Najm in verse [4] it was mentioned إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ (It is not but revelation revealed [to him]...4). Now in verse [10] أَوْحَىٰ إِلَىٰ عَبْدِهِ مَا أَوْحَىٰ (So He [Allah] revealed to His servant whatever He revealed.) the same theme is continued, reinforced and consolidated in this way: Obviously, the One who sends down revelation is Allah Ta'ālā and none else. However, there is a medium through whom the revelation is delivered to the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. Verse [4] may be treated as a preamble to the theme of revelation. Verses [5-9] describe the strong qualities and other characteristics of the medium of revelation Jibra'īl عليه السلام. Verse [10] is thus the complement or epilogue to the preamble. In this verse there cannot be *intishār-uḍ-ḍamā'ir* because the antecedents of the pronouns in verse 10 cannot possibly be anyone but Allah. Thus the antecedent of these pronouns was determined from the very outset. In the phrase *māawḥā* 'whatever He revealed' is obscure or vague. *Mā* [whatever] is sometimes used to denote honour, surprise, magnificence, grandeur, splendor, opulence or for emphasis. Here it is employed to indicate 'the majestic or glorious status of revelation'.

It is learnt from a Ḥadīth recorded in chapter [1] of the Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī, that the revelation which was sent down at this time was the initial verses of Sūrah Al-Muddaththir [Chapter 74]. Allah knows best!

Thus marked by thematic and structural coherence, the Qur'ān confirms that it is an absolutely true and veritable words of Allah. This may be compared to the Muhaddithins' study of Ḥadīth. In order to verify the authenticity of the Traditions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ they trace in full the chains of authorities from themselves [that is, the last of the authorities] to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. In these verses Allah sets up the chain of authorities: [1] Allah is the *Mūḥī*, that is, He is the Ultimate Source from where the revelation originates; and [2] Jibra'īl عليه السلام is the transmitting authority between Allah and the Messenger of Allah. The

above verses describe Jibra'īl عليه السلام as magnificent in status and mighty in power: This confirms his honesty and integrity as the transmitting authority.

مَا كَذَّبَ الْفُؤَادُ مَا رَأَى (The heart did not err in what he saw....53:11) *Fu'ād* means heart, and the verse means whatever the eyes saw, the heart did not err in its grasping. This erring in the verse is described as *kidhb* [lying]. In other words, the heart did not lie in connection with the perceived objects. It did not err or slip up. In the phrase *mā ra'ā* 'what he saw', the Qur'ān does not specify what it saw. The blessed Companions and their followers, and the leading authorities on Tafsīr hold two divergent views as was discussed in detail earlier: [1] The phrase means it [the Holy Prophet's ﷺ heart] saw Allah (and this is the view of Ibn 'Abbās); and [2] others (like Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah, Ibn Mas'ūd, Abū Hurairah and Abū Dharr Ghifārī رضي الله عنه) express the view that the Holy Prophet ﷺ saw Jibra'īl عليه السلام in his original shape. The Arabic verb *ra'ā* originally means to see with physical eyes, and after having seen with physical eyes the heart grasps and comprehends. Thus the Holy Prophet ﷺ first saw Jibra'īl عليه السلام with his physical eyes, and then grasped and comprehended him with his heart. Therefore, there is no need to take the word *ru'yah* in the figurative or metaphorical sense of *ru'yah qalbiyah* [to see with the heart] as did Al-Qurṭubī.

One more question remains: In this verse *idrāk* [grasping, comprehending, discerning, cognizing and perceiving] has been attributed to the heart, whereas according to most famous philosophers, it is related to 'aql [the intellect] or the soul endowed with the faculty of speech. Answer to this question is that many verses of the Qur'ān show that the real centre of *idrāk* is the heart. Therefore, sometimes the word 'qalb (heart) is used for 'aql (intellect), as for example the word *qalb* (plural: *qulūb*) in the following verses bear ample testimony to this fact: لِمَنْ كَانَ لَهُ قَلْبٌ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ بِهَا (for him who has a heart - 50:37) and لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ بِهَا (they have hearts with which they do not comprehend' - (7:179). *Qalb* (heart) here refers to 'aql (intellect) because heart is the centre of intellectual activities.

وَلَقَدْ رَأَاهُ نَزْلَةً أُخْرَى، عِنْدَ سِدْرَةِ الْمُنْتَهَى (And indeed he saw him another time by *sidrat-ul-muntahā* [the lote-tree in the upper realm]...53:13-14). Here too there are two views regarding the antecedent of the pronoun *hu* (him):

[1] that it refers to seeing Allah; or [2] that it refers to seeing Jibra'īl (جبرائيل). The adverb نَزْلَةً أُخْرَى *nazlatan 'ukhrā* [another time or at another descent], according to overwhelming majority, this *nuzūl* refers to the second descent of Jibra'īl (جبرائيل). The first vision was experienced in this world on the uppermost horizon of Makkah. The second vision was experienced on the seventh heaven near the Lote-Tree of the Uppermost Realm. Obviously, the Holy Prophet ﷺ went up to the seventh heaven on the Night of Mi'rāj. Thus it is possible to determine the approximate time of the second experience, which took place on that occasion. The word *sidrah* literally denotes lote-tree and *muntaha* means the place of *intihā'* [end]. Thus *sidrat-ul-muntahā* is the Lote-Tree on the seventh heaven under the Throne of the Gracious Allah. According to a narration in Muslim, the Tree is on the sixth heaven. Reconciliation is possible between the two apparently conflicting versions in that its root is on the sixth heaven and its branches are spread on the seventh heaven (Qurtubī). Generally the access of angels ends at this point, and therefore, it is called *muntahā* (the end). Some Traditions inform us that the Divine injunctions first descend from the Divine Throne to the *sidrat-ul-muntahā* which are handed over to the relevant angels. Similarly, angels going up from the earth to the heaven with Books of Deeds etc. convey them to this point. Then there may be some other way for their presentation to Allah Almighty. This subject is reported from 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd (رضي الله عنه) as recorded by Imām Aḥmad in his Musnad.

عِنْدَهَا جَنَّةُ الْمَأْوَى (near which there is *Jannat-ul-ma'wā* [the Paradize of Abode],... 53:15) The word *ma'wā* means 'abode' and a place where one resides or reposes comfortably. The *Jannah* (Paradize) is called *مَأْوَى ma'wa* because this is man's original abode. This is where 'Ādam and Ḥawwa' عليهما السلام were created; from here they were sent down to the earth; and this is where the people of Paradise will be sent back to reside permanently.

The Present Locale of Paradise and Hell

This verse verifies that Paradise exists at the present moment, as is the belief of the overwhelming majority of the Ummah. They believe that Paradise and Hell have been created and are already in existence. This verse pointed out that the location of Paradise is on the seventh heaven under the Divine Throne. In other words, the seventh heaven is, as though, the floor of Paradise and its roof is the Divine Throne. The

location of Hell is not explicitly stated anywhere in the Qur'ān or Prophetic Traditions. Some scholars of the Qur'ān deduce from the verse [6] of Sūrah Aṭ-Ṭūr وَالْبَحْرِ الْمَسْجُورِ (and by the sea, filled up with fire,) that Hell is situated beneath the sea in the deep recesses of the earth which are presently hidden under some heavy covering. On the Day of Resurrection, it will be split asunder, and the sea will be kindled, thus turning the entire ocean into a raging and blazing fire.

Many European excavators and explorers of the current age made attempts to dig into the ground in order to build roads so as to travel around from place to place for many long years. For this task, they invented the largest and most sophisticated machinery. Various groups of scientists and experts exerted efforts in this direction. The most successful group was the one who by means of various types of machinery was able to dig six miles deep into the recesses of the earth, but beyond that they came across immovable rocks which frustrated them. They attempted to excavate in another place and dug for six miles and again came across unshakeable rocks beyond which they could not dig. In this way they experimented in many places and came to the conclusion that beyond the depth of six miles into the recesses of the earth there is a rocky covering on the entire earth at that level where no machinery can penetrate. The earth covers thousands of miles in diameter but despite advances and strides made in sciences they could have access only to the depth of six miles. Beyond that point they acknowledged the existence of impenetrable rocky covering and abandoned their attempts. This scientific experiment to excavate and explore supports the notion that the entire earth is covered with adamantine rocks, and access beyond them is not possible. If any authentic narration proves the location of Hell in this rocky covering, it should not come as a surprise. Allah knows best!

إِذْ يَغْشَى السِّدْرَةَ مَا يَغْشَى (when the lote-tree was covered by that which covered it...53:16) Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim records a Tradition on the authority of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه who said: "Golden butterflies were at that time falling on *sidrat-ul-muntahā* from all sides, and it seemed as if it was specially decorated for that occasion in honour of the most revered guest, the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ."

مَا زَاغَ الْبَصَرُ وَمَا طَغَى (The eye neither went wrong, nor did exceed the limit...53:17) The verb *zāgha* is derived from the infinitive *zaigh* which

denotes to become crooked or go astray. *Ṭaghā* is derived from *ṭughyān* which means to transgress or exceed the limit. The two expressions purport to say that in whatever the Holy Prophet ﷺ saw, his eyes did not err or slip up. This verse allays the suspicion that sometimes human sight errs or slips up, especially when some wonderful or unusually marvelous thing is seen. In response to this suspicion the Qur'ān uses two expressions because there are two ways in which human sight can go awry: [1] not looking at the object directly that one was supposed to see, and turning the eye to some other side. *Mā zāgha* (neither went wrong) negates this situation. The Holy Prophet's ﷺ sight did not swerve or turn right or left, and thus did not miss the intended object. He saw exactly what was meant for him to see. [2] looking at the desired object, but at the same time looking at other objects also. In this situation too there is sometimes the fear of losing sight of the main object and causing confusion. *Mā ṭaghā* (nor did it exceed the limit) in the verse is used to remove this doubt that the Holy Prophet ﷺ might have looked at other things in addition to what he was ordained to see.

Scholars who interpret the preceding verses as referring to the vision of Jibrā'il عليه السلام explain this verse to mean that the eye of the Holy Prophet ﷺ did not err in seeing him. This had to be clarified because Jibrā'il عليه السلام is the transmitting medium. If the Holy Prophet ﷺ did not see him clearly and recognize him, the revelation would not be beyond doubt.

Scholars who interpreted the preceding verses as speaking of Allah's Vision interpret this verse too in the same vein that the eyes of the Holy Prophet ﷺ did not err or slip up in the Vision of Allah. This verse further clarifies that the Vision was with the physical eyes, not only with the eyes of the heart.

Another Approach to Interpreting the Preceding Verses: A Useful Analysis

Our venerable mentor Maulānā Sayyid Muḥammad Anwar Shah Kashmirī رحمه الله تعالى was a typical example of the Traditionalists who preceded him. He no doubt was a symbol of Allah and His proof on earth. His grasp of knowledge and Islamic sciences was without a doubt an exact replica of the leading authorities on the sciences of Prophetic Tradition like Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar and Dhahabī. His *Mushkilāt-ul-Qur'ān* is an invaluable treasure trove of the profoundest study of Islamic knowledge

and sciences. The noble Companions and their followers, and subsequently the scholars of Tafsīr and Ḥadīth have interpreted the verses of Sūrah An-Najm differently which gave rise to some scholarly questions. *Mushkilāt-ul-Qur'ān* interprets the verses in such a way that most of the different views have been reconciled.

Then when my another mentor Shaikh-ul-Islam Maulānā Shabbīr Aḥmad 'Uthmānī رحمه الله تعالى wrote his *Fath-ul-Mulhim*, the commentary of Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, he came across the description of the Holy Prophet's nocturnal journey of *Isrā'* and *Mi'rāj* with reference to the verses of Sūrah An-Najm. In view of the complexity of the problem, he requested the venerable Allāmah Anwar Shah رحمه الله تعالى to write the interpretation and made it a part of his *Fath-ul-Mulhim*, and adopted it in his *fawā'id-ul-Qur'ān*. In this way this research is the unanimous outcome of the two of my most distinguished teachers and mentors. Before reading on, it is necessary to keep in mind a few principal points which are recognized by almost all the scholars and leading authorities: [1] the Holy Prophet ﷺ saw *Jibra'il* (جبرائيل) twice in his original shape. The vision on both the occasions is mentioned in this chapter. We were able to determine that the second vision took place on the seventh heaven near *sidrat-ul-muntahā*. Obviously, this happened on the Night of *Mi'rāj*. In this way, we know the time and locale of the vision. The locale and time of the first vision cannot be determined by these verses, but they can be determined by the following narration of *Jābir Ibn 'Abdullāh* as recorded in *Ṣaḥīḥ* of *Bukhārī*, chapter entitled: 'How the revelation started':

قال وهو يحدث عن فترة الوحي فقال في حديثه بينا انا امشي اذ سمعت صوتا من السماء فرفعت بصري فاذا الملك الذي جاءني بحراء جالس على كرسي بين السماء والارض فرعبت منه فرجعت فقلت زملوني فانزل الله تعالى يا ايها المدثر قم فأنذر (الى قوله) والرجز فاهجر فحمي الوحي وتتابع.

Jābir Ibn 'Abdullāh ﷺ said, speaking of the temporary break in revelation, [the Holy Prophet] said in his narrative: "Whilst I was walking along, I heard a voice from heaven and I raised up my eyes, and lo! The Angel that had appeared to me in [the cave of] *Hira'* was sitting on a chair [suspended] between heaven and earth, and I was struck with awe on account of him and I returned and said, 'Wrap me up, Wrap me up,' then Allah sent down [74: 1-5] يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُدَّثِّرُ قُمْ فَأَنْذِرْ، وَرَبِّكَ فَكْبِّرْ. وَبَيْنَاكَ فَطَهِّرْ وَالرُّجْزَ فَاهْجُرْ. O you, enveloped in a mantle, stand up and warn, and pronounce

the greatness of your Lord, and purify your clothes, and keep away from filth, "Then revelation became copious and came in succession."

This narration indicates that the first occasion on which the Holy Prophet ﷺ saw Jibra'īl عليه السلام in his original shape was in the course of temporary break in revelation in Makkah when he was walking along in the city of Makkah. This confirms that the first incident took place before Mi'rāj on this earth in Makkah, and the second incident took place on the seventh heaven on the Night of Mi'rāj.

Another point on which all concur is that the initial verses of Sūrah An-Najm, at least from verse [13] to verse [18], all relate to the incident of Mi'rāj.

In view of the foregoing points, the venerable mentor, Maulana Sayyid Muḥammad Anwar Shah Kashmiri رحمه الله تعالى has interpreted the initial verses of Sūrah An-Najm in the following way:

The Qur'ān, according to its normal style, has mentioned two incidents in the initial verses of Sūrah An-Najm. One incident relates to seeing Jibra'īl عليه السلام in his original shape in Makkah when the Holy Prophet ﷺ was going somewhere when there was a temporary break in revelation. This incident took place before the incident of Isra' and Mi'rāj. The second incident relates to the night of Mi'rāj. Here it is mentioned that he saw Jibra'īl عليه السلام in his original shape together with some of the other greatest, wonderful, marvelous and glorious signs of Allah, and the possibility cannot be ruled out that these signs included the Vision of Allah Ta'ala Himself.

The main theme of the initial verses of Sūrah An-Najm is to confirm the prophethood of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and to remove doubts about the authenticity of his revelation. Thus swearing an oath by the stars, Allah says that there are neither any voluntary nor involuntary errors in his instructions to the Ummah, nor does he say anything out of his own selfish desires. He only transmits to the people what he was commanded to convey, in its totality without additions or omissions. Jibra'īl عليه السلام was the transmitting agent, therefore his special characteristics and high position have been described in several verses. Another reason for giving a greater account of this Angel is probably

because the pagans of Makkah were not aware of this Angel, though they were aware of the Angels Isrāfīl and Mīkā'īl. At any event, having described the imposing and majestic qualities of Jibra'īl عليه السلام in full, attention is drawn to the main theme of revelation. 'فَاَوْحَىٰ إِلَىٰ عَبْدِهِ مَا أَوْحَىٰ' 'So He [Allah] revealed to His servant whatever He revealed.' (verse 10). Up to this point there are ten verses, in the course of verifying the authenticity of revelation and messenger-ship, Jibra'īl's عليه السلام qualities have been portrayed. If we analyze Jibra'īl's عليه السلام qualities, it will be seen that they apply to the Angel directly and candidly. If we say that the qualities apply to Allah - as did some of the commentators - they can hardly apply to Him without a labored interpretation. For example, phrases like 'شَدِيدُ الْقُرَىٰ' 'one of strong faculties', 'ذُو مِرَّةٍ' 'one of vigour', 'ثُمَّ دَنَا، فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَىٰ' 'Then he drew near, and came down, so as he was at a distance between two bows, rather even nearer.' can, though, be applied to Allah, but not without labored interpretation. However, they do apply appropriately to Jibra'īl عليه السلام without any far-fetched interpretation. Therefore, with regard to the initial verses - in which there is reference to 'vision', 'closeness' and 'proximity'- it seems more appropriate to refer them to the 'vision' of Jibra'īl عليه السلام.

However, from verse [11] 'مَا كَذَبَ الْفُؤَادُ مَا رَأَىٰ' 'The heart did not err in what he saw' to verse [18] 'لَقَدْ رَأَىٰ مِنْ آيَاتِ رَبِّهِ الْكُبْرَىٰ' 'He has indeed seen a part of the biggest signs of your Lord.' describes the incidents of Isrā' and Mī'rāj. Though in this passage too the vision of Jibra'īl عليه السلام is mentioned, yet it is a part of 'many great signs' The possibility cannot be ruled out that the phrase 'greatest Signs' includes the 'ru'yat' (vision) of Allah' which is supported by authentic Traditions and the views of noble Companions and their followers, which cannot be overlooked or ignored. Verse [11] 'مَا كَذَبَ الْفُؤَادُ مَا رَأَىٰ' "The heart did not err in what he saw", means that what the Holy Prophet ﷺ saw with his eyes his blessed heart confirmed that he saw correctly, with no mistakes. 'Mā kadhaba' describes this situation and the particle 'Ma' [whatever] is general, referring to the vision of Jibra'īl عليه السلام and whatever else he saw on the Night of Mī'rāj and above all the Vision of Allah Himself. This is supported by verse [12] 'أَفْتَمَّأَ رُؤُونَهُ عَلَىٰ مَا يَرَىٰ' 'Do you quarrel with him in what he sees?' This verse addresses pagans of Makkah that they should not dispute or be sceptical about what he saw [in the past] or will see in the future. Everything he

saw was the veritable truth and whatever he will see in the future will be a veritable reality. This verse did not say قَدْ رَأَى [...*qad ra'ā*] '...he saw' [using the past perfect tense] but rather عَلَى مَا يَرَى [*'alā mā yara*] which may be translated as '...will see' [using the future tense] which indicates that he will see him on the Night of Mi'raj. Thus verse [13] وَقَدْ رَأَاهُ نَزْلَةَ أُخْرَى 'And indeed he saw him another time' is explicit on the point. This verse too has two possible interpretations: [1] he saw Jibra'il عليه السلام; and [2] he saw Allah. That he saw Jibra'il عليه السلام is perfectly obvious to any scholar. But there may be a hint to the fact that he saw Allah also, because seeing requires proximity and closeness to Allah, and the verse 14 عِنْدَ سِدْرَةِ الْمُنْتَهَى 'by *sidrat-ul-muntahā* (the lote-tree in the upper realm) indicates this closeness, meaning when the Holy Prophet ﷺ was near *sidrat-ul-muntahā* and had reached a high stage of nearness to Allah, he saw Him. The Tradition cited below supports the notion of the Vision of Allah:

وَأَتَيْتُ سِدْرَةَ الْمُنْتَهَى فَعَشِيتُنِي ضَبَابَةٌ خَرَزْتُ لَهَا سَاجِدًا وَهَذِهِ الضَّبَابَةُ هِيَ الظُّلُّ
مِنَ الْعَمَامِ الَّتِي يَأْتِي فِيهَا اللَّهُ وَيَتَجَلَّى.

'When I reached *sidrat-ul-muntahā*, I was overshadowed by something like the cloud and I fell prostrate for it. On the Day of Resurrection, there will be something like clouds overshadowing in which His Majestic Descent will manifest.'

Likewise, verse [53:17] مَا زَاغَ الْبَصَرُ وَمَا طَغَى (The eye neither went wrong, nor did exceed the limit.) includes both possibilities - vision of Jibra'il عليه السلام and Vision of Allah - and it further proves that the this vision took place in the state of wakefulness with his physical eyes [that is, it was not a dream experience].

In sum, verses that relate to the Night of Mi'raj and contain words pertaining to 'seeing' carry the equal possibility of seeing Jibra'il عليه السلام and seeing Allah Ta'ālā Himself. Other scholars too have interpreted them as the Vision of Allah. The Qur'ānic words have possibility to be interpreted in that way.

The Question of the Beatific Vision of the Creator

All Companions, their immediate followers and overwhelming majority of the Ummah concur that the inmates of Paradise and the believers in general will see Allah. Authentic Traditions bear ample testimony to this

fact and verity. They indicate that the Vision and Witnessing of Allah is not impossible. However, human sight cannot bear to see Him in this mundane world, because the capacity of the eyes is not powerful enough. Thus nobody can see Allah in this world. Regarding the Hereafter, the Qur'an says

فَكَشَفْنَا عَنْكَ غِطَاءَكَ فَبَصَرُكَ الْيَوْمَ حَدِيدٌ

"You were heedless of this. Now We have removed your veil from you; so your sight today is sharp." [50:22]

Venerable Imām Mālik رَحِمَهُ اللهُ تَعَالَى says that it is not possible for any human being to see Allah in this world, because his sight is perishable, and Allah is Eternal. In the Hereafter, man will be given non-perishable sight, as a result nothing will prevent it from the seeing Allah. Venerable Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ says something similarly. A narration recorded in Muslim in the following words makes the point explicit:

وَاعْلَمُوا أَنكُمْ لَنْ تَرَوْا رَبَّكُمْ حَتَّى تَمُوتُوا

"And know that you shall never see your Lord, until you die"
(Fath-ul-Bārī: vol 8/p. 493)

This indicates the possibility that if the Holy Prophet ﷺ is equipped with extraordinarily powerful faculty of sight, he should be able to see Allah in this world too on a special occasion. But on the Night of Ascension he was called in the most distinguishable manner from this world to see and witness the heavens, Paradise and Hell, and other great Signs of Allah and manifestation of His power. On this occasion, the Vision of Allah is an exception to the general rule, because he is out of the mundane world. The possibility of the Vision of Allah has thus been confirmed and verified.

So far we have proved that the possibility does exist, but the question is whether it really occurred. In this matter, the Traditions vary, and the Qur'anic verses are interpretable in two possible ways. Therefore, this question was always debatable among the Companions, their followers and leading authorities on religion. Ibn-Kathīr says that under the interpretation of these verses Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ verifies that the Holy Prophet ﷺ saw Allah and a group of righteous predecessors have followed him. Other groups of Companions and their followers have

differed from this viewpoint. He further adduced the evidences of both the groups.

Likewise, Ḥāfiẓ رحمه الله تعالى in Fath-ul-Bārī [vol 8/p.494] under the Tafsīr of Sūrah An-Najm has cited the differences of the Companions and their followers and then quoted some such statements which reconcile the divergent views. He further says that Qurṭubī in his work *muḥim* prefers to observe silence in the matter and not to decide either way, because this question does not concern our practical life so that we have to choose a particular direction. The question concerns our belief system, in which case incontestable evidence is required. In any matter which cannot be proved incontestably, the rule is to observe silence. This author believes that this is the most sound and circumspect approach to the issue. Therefore, the arguments of the two groups have not been cited. Allah, the Pure and the Exalted, knows best!

Verses 19 - 28

أَفَرَأَيْتُمُ اللَّاتَ وَالْعُزَّىٰ ﴿١٩﴾ وَمَنُوءَ الثَّالِثَةَ الْأُخْرَىٰ ﴿٢٠﴾ أَلَكُمُ
الذَّكْرُ وَلَهُ الْأُنثَىٰ ﴿٢١﴾ تِلْكَ إِذَا قِسْمَةٌ ضِيزَىٰ ﴿٢٢﴾ إِنْ هِيَ إِلَّا
أَسْمَاءٌ سَمِيَّتُوهَا أَنْتُمْ وَأَبَاؤُكُمْ مَّا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ بِهَا مِنْ سُلْطٰنٍ ؕ إِنْ
يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَمَا تَهْوَى الْأَنفُسُ ؕ وَلَقَدْ جَاءَهُمْ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ
الهُدَىٰ ﴿٢٣﴾ أَمْ لِلإِنسَانِ مَا تَمَنَّىٰ ﴿٢٤﴾ فَلِللَّهِ الْآخِرَةُ وَالْأُولَىٰ
﴿٢٥﴾ وَكَمْ مِنْ مَلَكٍ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ لَا تُغْنِي شَفَاعَتُهُمْ شَيْئًا إِلَّا مِنْ
بَعْدِ أَنْ يَأْذَنَ اللَّهُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَرْضَىٰ ﴿٢٦﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ
بِالْآخِرَةِ لَيَسْمُونَ الْمَلَائِكَةَ تَسْمِيَةَ الْإِنثَىٰ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَمَا لَهُمْ بِهِ مِنْ
عِلْمٍ ؕ إِنْ يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ ؕ وَإِنَّ الظَّنَّ لَا يُغْنِي مِنَ الْحَقِّ شَيْئًا ﴿٢٨﴾

Have you ever considered about the (idols of) *Lāt* and '*Uzzā*, [19] and about the other, the third, the *Manāt*,? [20] Is it that you have males and He (Allah) has females? [21] If so, it is a totally unjust division. [22] These are nothing but names you and your fathers have

invented; Allah has sent down no authority attached to them. They are following nothing but conjecture and what their own souls desire, while guidance from their Lord has surely reached them. [23] Is it that man gets whatever he wishes? [24] (No,) because to Allah alone belongs the (good of) the Hereafter and the former life (of this world). [25] And how many angels there are in the heavens whose intercession cannot benefit (any one) at all, but after Allah allows (it) for whomsoever He wills and pleases. [26] Those who do not believe in the Hereafter name the angels after the names of the females. [27] And they do not have knowledge about it. They follow nothing but conjecture, and conjecture is of no use in (the matter of) Truth. [28]

Refuting Idolatry

The preceding verses declared the Glory of Allah, His Majesty and Dignity. They further confirmed and verified in the fullest details the Prophet-hood and messenger-ship of Muḥammad ﷺ, and the preservation of his revelation. The present two verses imply a subtle rebuke to the Makkan pagans. The purport of the verses is to say to them that without any proof, instead of adoring such a Mighty and Powerful Creator and Lord, they stoop so low as to worship gods made of wood and stone. They allege that the angels are the daughters of God. According to other narratives, they also alleged that these idols are the daughters of God.

Pagans of Arabia had countless idols that they worshipped. However, there were three of them that were most popular, and they were worshipped by strong and powerful tribes of Arabia. The three idols were Lāt, 'Uzzā and Manāt. Lāt was the idol of the tribe of Thaḳīf or of the residents of Ṭā'if, 'Uzzā was the idol of Quraish, and Manāt was the idol of Banū Hilāl. They built houses for their idols to resemble the Ka'bah. After the conquest of Makkah, the Holy Prophet ﷺ demolished them. (Qurtubī)

قِسْمَةٌ ضِيزَى (If so, it is a totally unjust division.... 53:22)" *Dīzā* means to act or behave unjustly or to defraud one of one's right or due. Therefore, Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه interprets the phrase as unjust or unfair division.

Various Types of Zann

إِنَّ يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ ۗ وَإِنَّ الظَّنَّ لَا يُغْنِي مِنَ الْحَقِّ شَيْئًا (and conjecture is of no use in [the

matter of] Truth.... 53:28) The Arabic word *Zann* is used in several different senses, and one of them is baseless thoughts. This is the sense in which it is employed in the verse, because baseless thoughts were the cause of idolatry. And the verse purports to remove the cause. *Zann* is also used as the antonym of *yaqīn*. *Yaqīn* refers to assured or definitive knowledge about something that really exists, not the figment of someone's imagination. In this case, there is no room for any doubt or suspicion, as for instance knowledge gained from the Qur'ān and Prophetic Traditions uninterruptedly reported by an indefinite number of people or by such a large number that it is impossible that they should agree upon falsehood. As opposed to this certain knowledge, *zann* is sometime used for the knowledge that is based on a proof, and not on baseless thoughts, but the proof is not so certain as may rule out other possibilities, as for example, injunctions based on general narratives of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. The first type of injunctions is referred to as *qaṭ'iyyāt* or *yaqīniyyāt* and the second type is referred to as *ẓanniyyāt*. This type of *Zann* is recognized by Sharī'ah. There is ample evidence in Qur'ān and Sunnah of its recognition. The entire Ummah concurs that it is obligatory to act upon it. The above verse when denouncing *zann*, refers to the first type of *zann* which connotes baseless thoughts. Thus there is no contradiction.

Verses 29 - 32

فَاعْرِضْ عَنْ مَنْ تَوَلَّى ۖ عَنْ ذِكْرِنَا وَلَمْ يُرِدْ إِلَّا الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا ﴿٢٩﴾
 ذَلِكَ مَبْلُغُهُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ ۗ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ
 وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ اهْتَدَى ﴿٣٠﴾ ۗ وَلِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ
 لَا لِيَجْزِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسَاءُوا بِمَا عَمِلُوا وَيَجْزِيَ الَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا
 بِالْحُسْنَى ﴿٣١﴾ ۗ الَّذِينَ يَجْتَنِبُونَ كَبِيرَ الْإِثْمِ وَالْفَوَاحِشَ إِلَّا اللَّمَمَ ۗ
 إِنَّ رَبَّكَ وَاسِعُ الْمَغْفِرَةِ ۗ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِكُمْ إِذْ أَنْشَأَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ وَإِذْ
 أَنْتُمْ أَجْنَةٌ فِي بُطُونِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ ۗ فَلَا تُزَكُّوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ ۗ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ
 اتَّقَى ﴿٣٢﴾

So, turn away from him who turns away from Our advice, and seeks nothing but (pleasure of) the worldly life. [29] That is the limit of their excess in knowledge. Indeed only your Lord knows well about the one who has gone astray from his way, and He knows well about the one who has adopted the right path. [30] And to Allah belongs whatever there is in the heavens and whatever there is in the earth, so that He gives punishment to evil-doers for what they did and rewards those who did good for their good deed, [31] those who abstain from the major sins and from shameful acts, except minor involvements. Indeed your Lord is One of extensive forgiveness. He knows you more than anyone else (from a time) when He created you from the earth and when you were embryos in the wombs of your mothers. So, do not claim purity (from faults) for yourselves. He knows best who is God-fearing. [32]

Necessity of turning away from the Misguided People

فَاعْرِضْ عَنْ مَنْ تَوَلَّى لَا عَنْ ذِكْرِنَا وَلَمْ يُرِدْ إِلَّا الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا. ذَلِكَ مَبْلَغُهُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ (So, turn away from him who turns away from Our advice, and seeks nothing but (pleasure of) the worldly life.... 53:29-30)

A Special Warning

The Qur'an here describes the condition of those unbelievers who denied the Hereafter and the Day of Judgement. Regretfully, nowadays the Muslims have characterized themselves by the same condition as a result of Western education and material needs and desires. All our attempts to make progress in the fields of various branches of knowledge, sciences and arts pivot on, or revolve around, economics. They do not think even by mistake about *ma'ādiyyāt* (matters relating to the Life Hereinafter). We believe in the Holy Prophet ﷺ and hope for his intercession. But Allah commands the Holy Prophet ﷺ to withdraw from the people of misguidance and shun them. We seek refuge in Allah from such misguidance!

Allah Forgives the Small Faults, *Al-Lamam*

الَّذِينَ يَجْتَنِبُونَ كَبِيرَ الْأَثْمِ وَالْفَوَاحِشَ إِلَّا اللَّمَمَ (those who abstain from the major sins and from shameful acts, except minor involvements....53:32) The preceding verse praises those who follow the right guidance of Allah and do good deeds. In the present verse, it is stated that the good-doers are those who avoid major sins and, especially immoral sins and shameful

deeds. There is one exception made by the expression *lamam* [which will be elaborated upon later]. It means that they sometimes do commit minor sins [*lamam*] but that does not exclude them from the category of being *muḥsinīn* [good-doers].

The Companions and their followers interpret the word *لَمَّم* *lamam* in two different ways:

[1] Some commentators are of the view that it refers to small faults and minor errors which in Sūrah An-Nisā' has been described as *sayyi'at*:
 "إِنْ تَحْتَبُوا كَبَائِرَ مَا تُنْهَوْنَ عَنْهُ نُكَفِّرْ عَنْكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ
 out of what you have been forbidden from We shall write off your minor sins - 4:31". Ibn-Kathīr has reported this from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās and Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه;

[2] Some other scholars have held that *lamam* means, a sin that a person commits incidentally and then repents. After repentance, he never repeats it. Ibn Kathīr has reported a narration from Ibn Jarīr, first through Sayyidnā Mujāhid, and again through Sayyidnā 'Aṭā', from Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه, and through Hasan Basri from Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه. The gist of that narration too is that even if a person were to commit a major sin incidentally and repents, he will not be excluded from the ranks of the God-fearing people. Verse [135] of Sūrah 'Al-'Imrān:

وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا فَعَلُوا فَاجِشَةً أَوْ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ ذَكَرُوا اللَّهَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا لِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَمَنْ يَغْفِرَ
 الذُّنُوبَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَلَمْ يُصِرُّوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلُوا وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ .

And those who, when they happen to commit a shameful act or wrong themselves, remember Allah, then, seek forgiveness for their sins - and who is there to forgive sins except Allah? - and do not persist in what they have done, knowingly. [3:135]

It should be noted that overwhelming majority of scholars concur that if a person persists in a minor sin and continues to do it in a determined way so that it becomes a habit, it will no longer be a minor sin, but will turn into a major sin. Therefore, Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thanawī has explained the word *lamam* as those small sins in which the doer does not persist.

Definition of Major and Minor Sins

This subject is taken up in full detail in Sūrah An-Nisā' in this book Vol. 2/pp404-410, under verse [31] "إِنْ تَحْتَبُوا كَبَائِرَ مَا تُنْهَوْنَ عَنْهُ [31] "If you abstain

from major [sins] out of what you have been forbidden from, We shall write off your minor sins..." , [q.v.].

هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِكُمْ إِذْ أَنْشَأَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ وَإِذْ أَنْتُمْ أجنةٌ فِي بُطُونِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ (He knows you more than anyone else [from a time] when He created you from the earth and when you were embryos in the wombs of your mothers...53:32) The word *ajinnatun* is the plural of *janīn* which means embryo or foetus. This verse purports to say that man does not have knowledge of himself as much as Allah knows him. When he went through the various phases of his creation in his mother's womb, he did not have any knowledge or sense. But his Creator knows fully well how wisely He was creating him. Thus he is made aware of his inability and lack of sufficient knowledge. Having said this, he is further made aware of the fact that any good he does is not his personal accomplishment. The ultimate source of his achievement is Allah: It is Allah who has given him limbs, organs and other parts of the body to perform the righteous deeds; it is He who has equipped him with the ability to move his limbs; then He has created the urge, will and determination to perform righteous actions. Hence, not even the greatest righteous, pious and God-fearing person has the right to pride upon his works and behave arrogantly. Besides, no one yet knows what the end result of his activities will be. Yet the end result is the most important factor in our life. Therefore, pride and arrogance is meaningless.

The concluding part of the verse puts it thus:

فَلَا تَزْكُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ ط هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنِ اتَّقَى

So, do not claim purity [from faults] for your selves. He knows best who is God-fearing... (53:32).

In other words, the merit of a person lies not only in his outer actions, but in *taqwā* in one's heart and in his inner moral excellence and uprightness which endures till his death. Only Allah knows who is perfect in this quality.

Sayyidah Zainab bint Abī Salamah رضى الله عنها was named by her parents as *Barrah* which means 'righteous or upright'. The Holy Prophet ﷺ recited the concluding part of this verse فَلَا تَزْكُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ (Do not claim purity for your selves.) and suggested the name be changed. Therefore, they changed her name to 'Zainab'. Imām Aḥmad records on the authority of 'Abdur-Raḥmān Ibn Abī Bakrah رضى الله عنه that a person praised

another person in the presence of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. He stopped him and said "If you have to praise a person, then say, 'according to my knowledge the person appears to be upright and God-fearing اللَّهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَلَا أَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ and I cannot say that he is so in the sight of Allah as well'.

Verses 33 - 62

أَفَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي تَوَلَّى ﴿٣٣﴾ وَأَعْطَى قَلِيلًا وَأَكْدَى ﴿٣٤﴾ أَعِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ
الْغَيْبِ فَهُوَ يَرَى ﴿٣٥﴾ أَمْ لَمْ يُنَبَّأْ بِمَا فِي صُحُفِ مُوسَى ﴿٣٦﴾
وَأِبْرَاهِيمَ الَّذِي وَفَّى ﴿٣٧﴾ أَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَى ﴿٣٨﴾ وَأَنْ لَيْسَ
لِلْإِنْسَانِ إِلَّا مَا سَعَى ﴿٣٩﴾ وَأَنْ سَعْيُهُ سَوْفَ يُرَى ﴿٤٠﴾ ثُمَّ يُجْزَاهُ
الْجَزَاءَ الْآوْفَى ﴿٤١﴾ وَأَنْ إِلَى رَبِّكَ الْمُنْتَهَى ﴿٤٢﴾ وَأَنَّهُ هُوَ
أَضْحَكَ وَأَبْكَى ﴿٤٣﴾ وَأَنَّهُ هُوَ أَمَاتَ وَأَحْيَا ﴿٤٤﴾ وَأَنَّهُ خَلَقَ
الرُّوحَ الْجَيْنَ الذَّكَرَ وَالْأُنثَى ﴿٤٥﴾ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ إِذَا تُمْنَى ﴿٤٦﴾ وَأَنْ عَلَيْهِ
النَّشْأَةُ الْآخِرَى ﴿٤٨﴾ وَأَنَّهُ هُوَ أَغْنَى وَأَقْنَى وَأَنَّهُ هُوَ رَبُّ الشُّعْرَى ﴿٤٩﴾
وَأَنَّهُ أَهْلَكَ عَادًا الْأُولَى ﴿٥٠﴾ وَتَمُودًا فَمَا أَبْقَى ﴿٥١﴾ وَقَوْمَ
نُوحٍ مِمَّنْ قَبْلُ ۗ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا هُمْ أَظْلَمَ وَأَطْغَى ﴿٥٢﴾ وَالْمُؤْتَفِكَةَ
أَهْوَى ﴿٥٣﴾ فَغَشَّهَا مَا غَشَّى ﴿٥٤﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آيَةٍ رَبِّكَ تَتَمَارَى ﴿٥٥﴾
هَذَا نَذِيرٌ مِّنَ النَّذِيرِ الْأُولَى ﴿٥٦﴾ أَرَفَتِ الْأَرْفَةَ ﴿٥٧﴾ لَيْسَ لَهَا مِنْ
دُونِ اللَّهِ كَاشِفَةٌ ﴿٥٨﴾ أَفَمِنْ هَذَا الْحَدِيثِ تَعْجَبُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾
وَتَضْحَكُونَ وَلَا تَبْكُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾ وَأَنْتُمْ سَمِدُونَ ﴿٦١﴾ فَاسْجُدُوا لِلَّهِ
وَاعْبُدُوا ﴿٦٢﴾ سجدہ

Did you see the one who turned away, [33] and gave a little, and stopped? [34] Does he have knowledge of the Unseen whereby he sees (what he believes)? [35] Has he not been told of what was (revealed) in the scriptures of Mūsā [36] and of Ibrāhīm who fulfilled (his covenant)?

[37] (It was) that no bearer of burden shall bear the burden of the other, [38] and that a man does not deserve but (the reward of) his own effort, [39] and that his effort will soon be seen, [40] then he will be recompensed for it in full, [41] and that to your Lord is the end (of every one), [42] and that He is the One who makes (one) laugh and makes (him) weep, [43] and that He is the One who gives death and gives life, [44] and that He creates the pairs, male and female, [45] from a sperm-drop when it is poured (into a womb), [46] and that the second creation is undertaken by Him, [47] and that He is the One who gives wealth and preserves (it), [48] and that He is the One who is the Lord of Sirius (the star worshipped by pagans), [49] and that He has destroyed the earlier 'Ad, [49] and Thamūd, so spared none, [51] and (destroyed) the people of Nuḥ even before. Surely they were more unjust and more rebellious. [52] And He destroyed the overturned towns (of the people of Lūṭ) also, [53] so covered they were by that which covered. [54] Then, concerning which of your Lord's bounties would you remain in doubt? [55] This (Holy Prophet) is a warner from the (genus of the) previous warners. [56] The Imminent (Hour) has approached. [57] There is no one, beside Allah, to remove it. [58] Do you then wonder at this discourse, [59] and laugh (at it), and not weep, [60] while you are engaged in vain play? [61] Now, fall down in prostration and worship (Allah). [62]

Background of Revelation

Ad-Durr-ul-Manthūr reports from Ibn Jarir that a person embraced Islam and one of his friends rebuked him for having abandoned his forefather's religion. He responded that he fears Allah's chastisement. The friend told him to make a certain payment to him, and he will take upon himself his punishment of the Hereafter. Thus he [the new Muslim] will be spared from the chastisement, and consequently he made the payment to him. The friend demanded more payment. After a scuffle, he made the additional payment to him, and for the balance a document was drawn up with signatures of witnesses. That person, according to Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī, was Walīd Ibn Mughīrah who was inclined towards Islam. But his friend reproached him and took the responsibility of punishment upon his own shoulders.

أَفَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي تَوَلَّى (Did you see the one who turned away,... 53:33) The

word *tawalla* literally means 'to turn the face away', and it connotes in this context a person who turns away from Allah's obedience.

وَأَعْطَى قَلِيلًا وَأَكْتَدَى (and gave a little, and stopped? ...53:34) The word *akda* is derived from *kudyah* which refers to a hard or stony piece of ground or clod that appears in the course of digging a well or a trench. As a result, the digger cannot dig any further. Thus the meaning of the verse is that at first he gave a little, then he stopped giving. In view of the incident narrated under the heading of "Background of Revelation", the meaning is quite clear. [For the person in that incident paid a little amount and then stopped payment.] Apart from this meaning, Sayyidnā Mujāhid, Sa'īd Ibn Jubair, 'Ikrimah, Qatādah and others interpret this word to imply that a person spent a little in Allah's way, then stopped it; or at first he was somewhat inclined towards Allah's obedience, and he obeyed Him for a while, and then gave it up [vide Ibn Kathīr].

أَعْنَدَهُ، عِلْمُ الْغَيْبِ فَهُوَ يَرَى (Does he have knowledge of the Unseen whereby he sees [what he believes]?...53:35) According to the story recounted in connection with the occasion of revelation, the verse means: The person who embraced Islam and later abandoned it because his friend assured him that he would bear the punishment in the Hereafter on his behalf, and spare him the pain. The fool believed him and took for granted the assurance given to him. Does he have the knowledge of the Unseen, so that he is able to see that the chastisement he deserves for disbelief will be taken over for sure by his friend? This is wholly a make-believe situation. He neither has the knowledge of the Unseen, nor can he take on the punishment of somebody else and save him. Apart from the story recounted in connection with the occasion of revelation, the verse would mean: Does this person, who stopped giving for fear of poverty and ended his acts of charity have knowledge of the Unseen and thus knows that if he does not stop spending, his wealth will go away? No. This is absolutely false. Such a person has neither the knowledge of the Unseen so that he is able to see that if he goes on spending, his wealth will be depleted and not replenished. He stopped spending in charity for righteous causes, and did not keep relations with kith and kin because of his miserliness, being stingy and out of fear of poverty. The Qur'an makes plain in [34:39]

مَا أَنْفَقْتُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَهُوَ يُخْلِفُهُ ۖ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الرَّازِقِينَ

And whatever thing you spend, He replaces it. And He is the best of the sustainers. [34:39]

If man thinks carefully, this verse does not only concern wealth and money, but it also concerns every power, strength and energy of our body. When we expend it and it gets depleted, Allah replaces it and has arranged for its replenishment. Imagine even if our limbs, organs and other body parts were made of steel and worked constantly for 60-70 years, they would have diminished long ago. However, as they diminish, Allah replenishes them inwardly as though by means of an automatic machine. Likewise, man keeps spending and it is constantly replenished.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said:

أَنْفَقَ يَا بِلَالُ وَلَا تَخَشَ مِنْ ذِي الْعَرْشِ إِقْلَالًا

"O Bilāl, spend and do not fear that the Lord of the Throne will render you indigent." (Ibn Kathīr)

أَمْ لَمْ يُنَبَّأْ بِمَا فِي صُحُفِ مُوسَى. وَإِبْرَاهِيمَ الَّذِي وَفَّى [revealed] in the scriptures of Mūsā and of Ibrāhīm who fulfilled [his covenant]?... 53:37- 38) In verse [37], the Prophet Ibrāhīm عليه السلام has been described by the expression *waffā* which is derived from the root word *wafā'* and it means to fulfill faithfully the covenant one has made with someone.

Special Characteristic of Ibrāhīm عليه السلام: fulfillment of Covenant

Holy Prophet Ibrāhīm عليه السلام had a covenant with Allah that he will obey Him and convey His Message to all the people. He fulfilled faithfully the covenant: He obeyed Allah and delivered His Message to His creatures. As a result, he was made to pass through severe trials and tribulations. This is the interpretation placed upon the expression *waffā* (fulfilled) by Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Kathīr and others.

Several narratives describe particular works of Holy Prophet Ibrāhīm عليه السلام as a purport of the expression *waffā*, but the two versions are not contradictory, because fulfillment of covenant is general. It comprehends acting upon all the Divine injunctions, obeying Allah in all actions, fulfilling the duties of Prophet-hood and messenger-ship and reforming the creation of Allah.

Let us consider the narrative which Ibn Abī Ḥātim has reported on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū 'Umāmah رضي الله عنه that the Holy Prophet ﷺ recited the verse 37, and asked: Do you know what is the meaning of

waffā (fulfilled)? Sayyidnā Abū 'Umāmah رضي الله عنه replied: Allah and His Rasūl know best. The Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

وَفِي عَمَلٍ يَوْمِهِ بِأَرْبَعِ رَكَعَاتٍ فِي أَوَّلِ النَّهَارِ. (ابن كثير)

"He fulfilled the day's work by starting it with the performance of four *rak'at* [that is, *ṣalāt-ul-ishrāq*]."

This is supported by the Tradition recorded in Tirmidhī on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Dharr رضي الله عنه, according to whom the Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

إِنَّ أَدَمَ أَرَكَعَ لِي أَرْبَعَ رَكَعَاتٍ مِنْ أَوَّلِ النَّهَارِ أَكْفَكَ آخِرَهُ. (ابن كثير)

"O Son of 'Ādam! Perform four *rak'at* of prayer in the early part of the day, I shall take of you in all your affairs till the end of the day."

Ibn Abī Ḥātim reports another Tradition from Sayyidnā Mu'adh Ibn Anas رضي الله عنه that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "Do you know why Allah gave Ibrāhīm عليه السلام the title of *al-ladhi waffā* (the one who fulfilled)? Then, he said, 'Because he used to recite the following *dhikr* every morning and evening:

فَسُبِّحْنَ اللَّهَ حِينَ تُمْسُونَ وَحِينَ تُصْبِحُونَ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَعَشِيًّا وَحِينَ تُظْهِرُونَ. (ابن كثير)

Scriptures of Mūsā and Ibrāhīm عليه السلام: Special Guidance and Teachings

Whenever any command, statement, action or teaching of Allah is quoted in the Qur'an from the scriptures of the former Prophets عليه السلام, it means that it is obligatory for this 'Ummah to act upon it, unless there is an explicit text abrogating the previous teachings. Forthcoming eighteen verses elaborate on the special teachings of the scriptures of Holy Prophets Mūsā and Ibrāhīm عليهما السلام. Of them only two of the previous teachings are concerned with practical life. The rest are meant to advise, warn and draw attention to the Signs of Allah. The two verses [38] and [39] concerned with prescriptive teachings are as follows:

None shall carry the Burden of Any Other on the Day of Resurrection

﴿٣٨﴾ وَأَنْ لَيْسَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ إِلَّا مَا سَعَى ﴿٣٩﴾

(It was) that no bearer of burden shall bear the burden of the

other, [38] and that a man shall not deserve but (the reward of) his own effort, [39]

The word *wizr* originally means a burden, and the verse purports to say that every man shall have to carry his own wrongdoings, whether disbelief or sin, and none else shall carry his burden of sin, as Allah states in [35:18].

وَأَنْ تَدْعُ مُثْقَلَةٌ إِلَىٰ جَمِيلًا لَا يُحْمَلُ مِنْهُ شَيْءٌ

And if a person carrying a heavy load calls (someone) to (share) his load, nothing from it shall be carried (by the latter), even though he be a near of kin. [18]

By load or burden is meant the load or burden of sin and its punishment, signifying that on the Day of Resurrection the punishment of one will not be given to another, nor will anyone have the choice to pay for another's sin as the verse quoted above clearly indicates.

This verse also refutes the thinking of the person which was narrated above as Background of Revelation: He had become a Muslim or was going to become one, and his friend rebuked him, saying that if any punishment is meted out to him, he guarantees him that no harm will come to him. The friend assured him that he would bear the burden of his punishment, and save him. This verse further clarifies that in matters, such as these, there is no possibility that one person may commit the sin and another is held accountable to pay the price.

As for the Ḥadīth of Ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنهما, as recorded in Ṣaḥīḥain, that the dead are punished because of the weeping and wailing of their families on his death, it relates to the person who himself used to weep and wail for the deceased and was wont to it, or who had advised his heirs to weep and wail for him after his death. (Maḏhari). In this case he is punished for his own deed, not on account of other people's deed.¹

The second injunction is contained in verse [39] وَأَنْ لَّيْسَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ إِلَّا مَا سَعَىٰ

(1). It should be noted here that if one weeps on the death of a person in a way that he or she cannot control his or her emotions, it is not a sin in Shari'ah. The wailing that has been prohibited is a particular type of wailing that was customary in Pre-Islam Arab society, and is still in vogue in some areas, in which one would cry loudly, often in an artificial manner, and would invite others to weep, slapping his face, tearing his clothes and complaining of the destiny. It is this type of formal wailing that is meant here by the esteemed author. (Muhammad Taqi Usmani)

(and that a man does not deserve but [the reward of] his own effort,....53:39) The summary of this verse is that just as no person shall carry the burden of sin of any other, so shall he benefit only from the good that he himself has done. It is not the case that a person performs a righteous act instead of someone else, and the latter is absolved of his responsibility. For example, if a person performs the obligatory prayers and fasts on behalf of somebody else, the latter will not be absolved of his religious duties and obligations. He is still liable for them. Likewise, if a person embraces faith on behalf of somebody else, the latter cannot be regarded as a believer.

Thus interpreted, no juristic problems arise in connection with this verse. However, some superficial questions do arise regarding Hajj and *Zakāh*. In times of necessity Shari'ah permits to perform Hajj on behalf of somebody else, or pay *Zakāh* on his behalf with his permission. How is this possible? A careful analysis of the two situations does not pose any problem: In the case of *Hajj-e-Badal*, the sender of a person to perform this type of pilgrimage bears the expenses himself,² and thus it is his [the sender's] own act for which he will be rewarded. In the case of *Zakāh*, appointing someone to pay is also the act of the person who made the appointment, and not that of the appointee. Therefore, the two cases are not in conflict with verse [39].

Offering Reward of Good Deeds to others

In the foregoing section we have explained that verse [39] means that no person can perform an obligatory act, such as faith, prayers and fasts, on behalf of some other person to free him of his religious duties. He will be able to benefit only from the good he himself has done. This, however, does not imply that a person cannot perform supererogatory acts and proffer their reward to someone else. There is ample textual evidence of Shari'ah that a person can supplicate or give charity or do any other good deed and proffer its reward to others. Further, there is an overwhelming consensus of the Ummah on this issue. (Ibn Kathīr)

However, only Imām Shāfi' رحمه الله تعالى differs on this issue. He says that the reward of recitation of the Qur'an cannot be proffered to anyone

(2). It should be kept in mind that this is allowed only when one is unable to perform Hajj due to a physical constraint, and therefore his obligation becomes limited to sending someone else with his own expense. (Muhammad Taqi Usmani)

else. He takes the above verse in a general sense and argues that the rewards of the purely bodily acts of worship, such as the prayer, fasting and recitation of the Qur'an and so on, cannot be passed on to any other person. According to Imām Abū Hanifah رحمه الله تعالى and majority of the leading jurists, it is permissible. They argue that just as it is possible to pray for and proffer the reward of charity to another person, so likewise it is possible to recite the Qur'an and perform other voluntary prayers to pass the reward to another person who will receive it. Qurṭubī says, in his Tafsīr, a large number of Traditions bear testimony to the fact that a believer will receive the reward of the righteous acts of another person. Tafsīr Maẓharī has, on this occasion, collected all the relevant Traditions which prove that another person does receive the benefit of *Iṣāl-e-Thawāb* (proffering the reward of good acts).

The foregoing verses have elaborated on two issues with reference to the scriptures of Prophets Mūsā and Ibrāhīm عليهم السلام: [1] No one will bear the burden of another's sin and punishment; and [2] No one shall be freed of his Shar'ī obligations, unless he himself performs them. These two rules of law were available in the Shari'ah of all the Prophets. However, they are especially mentioned in relation to Mūsā and Ibrāhīm عليهم السلام probably because in their days an evil custom had taken deep root that the son used to be killed instead of the father; and father, brother, sister or some other member of the family used to be killed instead of the son. The Shari'ah of these prophets abolished all the evil customs of the dark age.

وَأَنَّ سَعْيَهُ سَوْفَ يُرَى (and that his effort will soon be seen...53:40) In other words, outer actions of a person are not sufficient. Allah will take into account the real, inner motive and driving force behind them whether they were performed with the sincerity of purpose, or they were done with some ulterior motive. The Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said:

إِنَّمَا الْأَعْمَالُ بِالنِّيَّاتِ

"Actions shall be judged only by the intentions."

That is, the outer aspect of actions is not sufficient. The inner aspect is also necessary. Actions must be performed purely for the good pleasure of Allah and in compliance with His command.

وَأَنَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ الْمُنْتَهَىٰ (and that to your Lord is the end [of every one],... 53:42) This means that ultimately every one will return to Allah on the Day of Resurrection, and give an account of his actions.

Some of the commentators interpret that this statement purports to say that the access of human thought and imagination ends with Allah. The reality of His Being and attributes cannot be discovered by human imagination, because they are beyond conceptualization. Thus we are clearly prohibited from deliberating (See Ma'āriful Qur'ān, Vol.2/pp 277-280 [Tr.]) in His Being and His Attributes. There are narrations that tell us to ponder over the manifestation of His Attributes and bounties, and not to conceptualize His Being and His Attributes or Qualities, the reality of which should be left to the Divine Knowledge only.

وَأَنَّهُ هُوَ أَضْحَكَ وَأَبْكَى (and that He is the One who makes [one] laugh and makes [him] weep,...53:43) Mankind experiences happiness and grief, and consequently laughing and weeping. Man assigns this to the secondary causes [which refer to every existent thing in this universe, and that is where he ends the matter. If we analyze carefully and profoundly, the whole system of cause and effect ends with Allah, the Primary and Supreme Cause. No secondary cause makes anyone happy or sad, nor does it make him to laugh or weep. Both of these things are created by Allah. He created the series of secondary causes and effects in our finite world. But as the Primary and Supreme Cause, He can at any moment make the laughing person weep, and make the weeping person laugh. How well it has been versified!

گوش گل چرخن گفتم کن خندان است..... بعد لب چرموده که نالان است

What have You whispered to the ear of a flower (O Allah) whereby it is smiling?

And what have You said to the nightingale whereby it is weeping all the times?

وَأَنَّهُ هُوَ أَعْنَىٰ وَأَقْنَىٰ (and that He is the One who gives wealth and preserves [it]...53:48) The word *ghinā* means affluence, and *ighnā'* means to give wealth to somebody else, and enrich him. The word *aqnā* is derived from *qinyatun* which means preserving and reserve wealth. The meaning of the verse is that it is Allah Who enriches His servants and grants wealth to them to their satisfaction, so that they are able to use some and keep

some in their reserve fund for future use.

وَأَنَّهُ هُوَ رَبُّ الشِّعْرَى (and that He is the One who is the Lord of Sirius ...53:49) The word *shi'ra* with the diacritical symbol *kasrah* under the letter *shin* is the name of a star, called Sirius which is behind Jauzā'. Some of the Arab tribes worshipped the mighty star, Sirius, because they regarded it as a source of good or bad luck for them. Allah mentions this star in particular in order to refute their false notion and to affirm that He is the Lord and Master of this star as well, although He is the Creator, Master and Lord of all the stars, heavens and the earth.

وَأَنَّهُ أَهْلَكَ عَادًا لِأُولَىٰ وَتَمُودًا فَمَا أَبْقَى (and that He has destroyed the earlier 'Ād, and Thamūd, so spared none,...53:50-51) The people of 'Ād were among the strongest, fiercest people and the most rebellious against Allah. There are two branches of this people: one of them is known as *'ulā* [the first] and *'ukhrā* [the latter or the second]. Holy Prophet Hūd عليه السلام was sent to 'Ād, but they disobeyed him, as a result Allah annihilated the entire nation by a violently furious wind. This is the first nation that was destroyed in punishment after the destruction of the people of Holy Prophet Nūḥ عليه السلام. (Maḥzarī) Holy Prophet Ṣāliḥ عليه السلام was sent to the tribe of Thamūd, being the second 'Ād, but they too disobeyed their Prophet. Those who transgressed were caught by the awesome Cry of Jibra'īl عليه السلام and their hearts were burst by the horrific sound resulting in the mass destruction of those people. (See Ma'āriful Qur'ān Vol. 4/p. 651 and the cross-reference given there. [Tr.]

وَالْمُؤْتَفِكَةَ أَهْوَى (And He destroyed the overturned towns also,... 53:53) The word *Mu'tafikah* literally means *mu'talifah* (joined together). These were a few settlements adjacent to the city. Holy Prophet Lūṭ عليه السلام was sent to them. Because of disobedience and commission of shameful and unspeakable sins, their cities [of Sodom and Gomorrah] were turned upside down by Jibra'īl عليه السلام.

فَعَشَّهَا مَا عَشَّتْ (so covered they were by that which covered.... 53:54). This refers to the fact that the cities were first overturned, and after that stones of hard clay were sent down on them, which covered them.

Here ends the teachings of the scriptures of Mūsā and Ibrāhīm عليهما السلام.

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكَ تَتَمَارَى (Then, which of your Lord's bounties would you dispute?...53:55). *Tamārā* means to dispute and oppose. According to Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه, the verse is addressed to every human being. After seeing so many and so clear and invincible arguments in the preceding verses and the Signs in the scriptures of Mūsā and Ibrāhīm عليهما السلام that support and substantiate the claims of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ about the truth of his revelation, the verse says to the obstinate disbelievers: How long will you continue to deny the truth and wander in the wilderness of disbelief? The verse further makes it abundantly clear for those who think and deliberate that there should be no room for any doubt in the Messenger of Allah, his revelation and his teachings. Having heard about the stories of destruction and punishment of past nations, this is an opportune occasion for them to straighten out. This well-timed occasion is a favour of Allah. They should take advantage of it instead of fighting and opposing it.

هَذَا نَذِيرٌ مِّنَ النَّذْرِ الْأُولَى (This [Holy Prophet] is a warner from the (genus of the) previous warners...53:56). *Hādha* is a demonstrative pronoun and points either to the Holy Prophet ﷺ or to the Qur'ān. With reference to the Holy Prophet ﷺ, it means that in the past, many Prophets were sent to their respective nations, and the Holy Prophet ﷺ is sent to all mankind, and he is not a new thing among the Messengers. He is well-established in the straight path. With reference to the Qur'ān, it means that he has come with a book of guidance which, if complied with, assures them of success in this world and in the Hereafter. The opponents should fear the Divine punishment.

أَزَفَتِ الْأَرْفَةُ لَيْسَ لَهَا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ كَاشِفَةٌ (The Imminent (Hour) has approached. [53:57] There is no one, beside Allah, to remove it...53:58). The verb *'azifa* is used in the sense of *qaruba* which means to draw near. *Āzifah* is the feminine active participle from the verb *azifa* and it refers to the Imminent Event. In other words, the Imminent Event has drawn near, referring to the Day of Resurrection. No one besides Allah can prevent it from happening, nor does anyone know when it will happen, except Him. The imminence of Resurrection is in relation to the age of the entire world. The Ummah of Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ is right at the end of it near the Day of Judgement.

أَفَمِنْ هَذَا الْحَدِيثِ تَعْجَبُونَ وَتَضْحَكُونَ وَلَا تَبْكُونَ (Do you then wonder at this

discourse, and laugh [at it], and not weep....53:59-60). The phrase 'this discourse' refers to the Qur'ān. That is, the Qur'ān, the Divine Discourse, which is itself a miracle, has already come to them. They are surprised at it and laugh in jest and mock at it, and do not weep at their sins and shortcomings.

وَأَنْتُمْ سَاهُونَ (while you are engaged in vain play?53:61). *Sāmidūn* is the plural of "*sāmid*" from the root word *sumud* which literally denotes to be heedless. *Sāmidūn* is used in the sense of *ghafilun*, meaning unmindful. Some of the Imāms have interpreted the word *sumud* to mean to sing. That meaning can equally fit or apply in this context.

فَاسْجُدُوا لِلَّهِ وَاعْبُدُوا (Now, fall down in prostration and worship [Allah]...53:62). It means that preceding verses have a lesson for everyone who considers them seriously that he should worship Allah and bow down before him in humbleness.

It is recorded in Bukhārī on the authority of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ that when the Holy Prophet ﷺ recited this verse he prostrated, and all those around him also prostrated along with him-Muslims, pagans, Jinns and mankind. Another report from 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd, as recorded in Bukhārī and Muslim, narrates that when the Holy Prophet ﷺ finished reciting the Sūrah before a mixed gathering of Muslims and disbelievers, and, along with his followers, he prostrated himself on the ground, the disbelievers too prostrated, except one old Quraishi man who took a handful of soil and, having applied it on his forehead said, 'This is enough for me.' 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ؓ said that he saw this man later on killed as a disbeliever. Following the example of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, the Muslims were expected to prostrate. As far as the idolaters are concerned, having been profoundly impressed with the solemnity of the occasion and being overawed by the august recitation of the Qur'ānic words, as well as by the Divine Majesty and Glory, might also have fallen in prostration. However, since this prostration was performed in the state of disbelief, it did not carry any reward, but it did leave a deep impression on them; and as a result of this impact, they all later on embraced the Islamic faith, except one person who died in the state of *kufr*, because he arrogantly refrained from performing the *sajdah*.

Ṣaḥīḥain record a report from Sayyidnā Zaid Ibn Thābit ؓ to the

effect that he recited the entire Sūrah An-Najm in the presence of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, but he [the Holy Prophet ﷺ] did not perform the *sajdah*. It does not necessarily follow from this that the *sajdah* is not obligatory or compulsory. It is possible that at that particular moment, he did not have his ablution or there must have been some other legitimate reason for not performing the *sajdah*. In such situations, it is not obligatory to perform the *sajdah* forthwith. It can be delayed until the reason has ceased. And Allah, the Pure and Exalted, knows best!

Sūrah An-Najm, through the help and grace of Allah, the Pure, the exalted, ended on Friday night 1st Rabi'-uth-Thānī 1391, in one week. Allah willing, this chapter will be followed by Sūrah Al-Qamar. Allah grants success!

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah An-Najm
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Qamar

(The Moon)

This Sūrah is Makki. It contains 55 verses and 3 sections

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

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

Verses 1 - 8

اِقْتَرَبَتِ السَّاعَةُ وَاَنْشَقَّ الْقَمَرُ ﴿١﴾ وَاِنْ يَرَوْا آيَةً يُعْرِضُوا وَيَقُولُوا
 سِحْرٌ مُّسْتَمِرٌّ ﴿٢﴾ وَكَذَّبُوا وَاتَّبَعُوا اَهْوَاءَهُمْ وَكُلُّ امْرٍ مُّسْتَقِرٌّ ﴿٣﴾
 وَلَقَدْ جَاءَهُمْ مِنَ الْاَنْبَاءِ مَا فِيهِ مُزْدَجَرٌ ﴿٤﴾ حِكْمَةٌ بَالِغَةٌ فَمَا تُغْنِ
 النَّذْرُ ﴿٥﴾ فَتَوَلَّ عَنْهُمْ يَوْمَ يَدْعُ الدَّاعِ اِلَى شَيْءٍ نُّكْرٍ ﴿٦﴾ خُشَعًا
 اَبْصَارُهُمْ يَخْرُجُونَ مِنَ الْاَجْدَاثِ كَانَهُمْ جَرَادٌ مُّنتَشِرٌ ﴿٧﴾
 مُهْطِعِينَ اِلَى الدَّاعِ ط يَقُولُ الْكٰفِرُونَ هٰذَا يَوْمٌ عَسِرٌ ﴿٨﴾

The Hour (of doom) has drawn near, and the moon has been split asunder. [1] And when these people see a sign, they turn away and say, "(This is) a transient magic." [2] And they have rejected (the Truth) and followed their desires, while every matter has to be settled (at some time). [3] And there has come to them as much news (of the earlier communities) as contains enough to warn, [4] a perfect wisdom, but the warnings are of no avail (to them). [5] Therefore, turn aside (O Prophet,) from them. (They will see the reality) on the Day when the caller will call to a terrible thing. [6] With their eyes humbled, they will come out of the graves like locusts spread all over, [7] rushing quickly towards the caller. (On that Day) the disbelievers will say, "This is a

difficult day." [8]

Linkage between Sūrah An-Najm and Sūrah Al-Qamar

Whereas the preceding Sūrah An-Najm had ended on a note of warning to disbelievers in the words: *أَزِفَةُ الْأَازِفَةِ* *azifat-il-‘āzifah*, i.e., the Hour of their doom has drawn near, the present Sūrah opens with a similar sentence, "The Hour (of doom) has drawn near" and this statement is followed by one of its proofs, that is, the appearance of the miracle of the moon being split asunder. There are many signs of the Day of Doom; one of them is the advent of the last of the Prophets Sayyidnā Muḥammad ﷺ himself, as reported in a *ḥadīth* 'I was sent like this with the last Hour' and he pointed with his middle and index fingers. There are many other Traditions mentioning that the advent of the Holy Prophet ﷺ is close to the Day of doom. Likewise, a great sign of Doomsday is the miracle of the Prophet ﷺ when he split the moon into two pieces, then he rejoined them. Also, the miracle of 'moon-splitting' is significant from another point of view: Just as Allah's power split the moon into two, so will planets and stars be destroyed by Him by breaking them into very small pieces which is not impossible, as has been proved by the miracle of splitting the moon.

The Phenomenon of Moon-Splitting : A Miracle

The disbelievers of Makkah asked the Messenger of Allah to produce a proof in support of his claim, and he, with the dispensation of Allah, split the moon into two parts. This miracle is verified by the concluding part of verse 1: 'and the moon has been split asunder.'. The incident has been narrated successively in Traditions of reliable authority, and reported by such learned Companions as ‘Abdullāh Ibn Mas‘ūd, ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Umar, Jubair Ibn Muṭ‘im, ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Abbās, Anas Ibn Mālīk ﷺ and others. ‘Abdullāh Ibn Mas‘ūd ﷺ reports that he himself was present and witnessed when the Messenger of Allah performed this miracle. Imāms Ṭaḥāwī and Ibn Kathīr رحمهما الله تعالى have stated that the reports narrating the phenomenon of 'moon-splitting' are *mutawātir* (i.e. it has been reported successively and uninterruptedly by such a large number of authorities that their concurrence on falsehood is inconceivable.) Therefore, this Prophetic miracle has been proved by incontrovertible evidence.

It was mentioned earlier that a large number of Traditions report the

incident of 'moon-splitting', which may be summarized as follows: Whilst the Messenger of Allah was sitting at Minā in Makkah, the pagans demanded that the Messenger of Allah should produce a proof substantiating his claim. Allah split the moon in two parts. A part of the moon was over one mountain on the eastern side, and another part was over another mountain on the western side. Thus there was a mountain between the two parts. This incident took place on a moonlit night. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said to all who were present: 'Be witnesses'. When all the people saw the miracle clearly, the two pieces rejoined. It was not possible for any person with eyes to deny this clear miracle. However, the pagans said: 'Muḥammad has ensorcelled us, but he cannot bewitch the whole world; so let us wait for people to come from the neighboring parts of the country and hear what they have to say'. (Baihaqī and Abū Dāwūd Ṭayālīsī) Ṭayālīsī records on the authority of 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ؓ that when travelers from the neighboring parts of the country arrived, they confirmed that they did see the moon in two parts. Some reports indicate that the miracle of 'moon-splitting' occurred twice, but more authentic reports confirm that the miracle occurred once only. (Bayān-ul-Qur'ān) The following Traditions are worth noting, which have been taken from Ibn Kathīr:

(1) Sayyidnā Anas Ibn Mālīk ؓ narrates, as recorded in Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī:

إِنَّ أَهْلَ مَكَّةَ سَأَلُوا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَنْ يُرِيَهُمْ آيَةً فَأَرَاهُمُ الْقَمَرَ شَقِيْنًا حَتَّى رَأَوْا حِرَاءَ بَيْنَهُمَا. (بخارى ومسلم)

'The people of Makkah asked the Messenger of Allah to show them a sign, and he split the moon into two parts until they saw the mount of Hira' between them'.

(2) Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ؓ narrates, as recorded in Ṣaḥīḥs of Bukhārī and Muslim, and in Musnad of Aḥmad,

إِنْشَقَّ الْقَمَرُ عَلَى عَهْدِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ شَقِيْنًا حَتَّى نَظَرُوا إِلَيْهِ فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَشْهَدُوا.

"The moon was split in two parts during the time of Allah's Messenger, and they saw its two parts. Allah's Messenger said: 'Be witnesses'."

Ibn Jarīr has cited this report with the following addition:

كُنَّا مَعَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بِمِنَى فَأَنشَقَّ الْقَمَرَ فَأَخَذَتْ فِرْقَةٌ خَلْفَ الْجَبَلِ فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ اشْهَدُوا اشْهَدُوا .

"Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ؓ says: 'We were with Allah's Messenger at Minā. Suddenly the moon split in two pieces, and one piece went away behind the mountain. Allah's Messenger said: "Be witnesses; be witnesses."'

(3) The narration of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd ؓ is recorded by Baihaqī and Abū Dāwūd Ṭayālīsī in the following words:

إِنْشَقَّ الْقَمَرُ بِمَكَّةَ حَتَّى صَارَ فِرْقَتَيْنِ فَقَالَ كُفَّارُ قُرَيْشٍ أَهْلُ مَكَّةَ هَذَا سِحْرٌ سَحَرَكُمْ بِهِ ابْنُ أَبِي كَبْشَةَ أَنْظَرُوا السُّفَارَ فَإِنْ كَانُوا رَأَوْا مَا رَأَيْتُمْ فَقَدْ صَدَقَ وَإِنْ كَانُوا لَمْ يَرَوْا مِثْلَ مَا رَأَيْتُمْ فَهُوَ سِحْرٌ سَحَرَكُمْ بِهِ فَسُئِلَ السُّفَارُ قَالَ وَ قَدِمُوا مِنْ كُلِّ جِهَةٍ فَقَالُوا رَأَيْنَا . (ابن كثير)

'In Makkah, the moon was split into two parts. The disbelieving Quraish claimed: 'This is sorcery. Ibn Abī Kabshah [the Prophet] has ensorcelled you. Therefore, wait for the neighboring travelers to arrive. If they too have seen the two pieces of the moon, so he has spoken the truth. But if they have not seen the parts of the moon, then this is indeed a magical illusion which he has performed on you.' When the travelers arrived and were asked about it, they all confirmed that they did see the two parts of the moon.' : (Ibn Kathir)

Criticism against the Miracle of 'Moon-Splitting'

The critics have raised two types of criticism against the miracle: one is based on the assumptions of Greek philosophers, and the other is based on layman's thinking.

The deviant Greek philosophers assume that it is not possible for the heaven and other celestial bodies to split or crack, and rejoin. But this is merely an idea unsubstantiated by any solid or concrete proof. Whatever proof or evidence the philosophers have advanced is flimsy, shaky, inadequate and unsubstantial. The Islamic philosophers [*mutakallimīn*] have broken down their arguments and have shown that they are baseless, false and absurd. They could not prove by any rational argument that 'moon-splitting' is impossible. Indeed, illiterate people regard every unusual thing as impossible. Obviously, the very meaning of

mu'jizah or a prophetic miracle is that it is an unusual event that is abnormal and out of general habit, which cannot be performed by common people. Any ordinary work which can be performed at any time cannot be called *mu'jizah* or miracle.

The other criticism based on a layman's thinking is that if such a wonderful event had taken place, its knowledge would have been commonplace and would have found its mention in the books of history, but they say that they have found no such thing recorded.

Such a thinking is too simplistic which lacks careful analysis. A careful analysis shows that the event had occurred in Makkah at night. At that particular moment, in many parts of the world it must have been day time where and when the question of witnessing this event does not even arise. In many other countries, it must have been middle of the night, or last part of the night when the people normally sleep. Furthermore, people who are awake also do not stare at the moon all the time. Splitting of the moon would not make any difference on the moonlight spread on the earth, so that it would attract people's attention. The event took place suddenly and lasted for a short while. It is a daily experience that in particular countries at different times lunar eclipse takes place. Nowadays a forecast is made about its occurrence well in advance, yet there are hundreds of thousands of people who are absolutely unaware of it. Can this be the proof that the lunar eclipse did not take place? Thus if the event is not recorded in world history books, its occurrence cannot be denied or refuted.

Besides, the event is recorded in the famous and reliable history book of India called 'Tarikh-e-Farishtah'. It has been mentioned in this book that the Mahārājah, a native ruler, of Malabār had witnessed this phenomenon that night with his own eyes, and had it entered in his diary. This incident was the cause of his embracing Islam. Earlier on the narratives of Abū Dāwūd Ṭayālīsī and Baihaqī were quoted about the pagans of Makkah themselves who inquired from the people arriving from the neighboring parts of the country and they confirmed and verified that they had seen it. Allah, the Pure and the Exalted, knows best!

وَإِنْ يَرَوْا آيَةً يُعْرِضُوا وَيَقُولُوا سِحْرٌ مُّسْتَمِرٌّ (And when these people see a sign, they

turn away and say, "[This is] a transient magic.... 54:2). The word *mustamirr*, in the popular sense of the word, as used in Persian and Urdu, means something lasting or enduring. However, in the Arabic language it is sometimes used in the sense of passing away or coming to an end, being derived from *marra* and *istamarra*. Leading authorities on Tafsīr, like Mujāhid and Qatādah رَحْمَهُمَا اللهُ تَعَالَى, have applied this sense of the word in the present context. Thus the verse means that the Quraish alleged that the sign of moon-splitting they saw was an illusion and false; its effect will soon diminish and fade away. Another meaning of the word *mustamirr* is strong and firm. Abūl-‘Āliyah and Ḍaḥḥāk رَحْمَهُمَا اللهُ تَعَالَى interpret the word in this sense, meaning that this is a very potent sorcery.

وَكُلُّ أَمْرٍ مُسْتَقَرٌّ (...while every matter has to be settled....54:3). The literal meaning of the word *istiqrār* is to settle. The verse means that everything must ultimately reach its end and the matter must become clear. If a veil is fabricated and cast over the truth or reality, eventually [in its designated time] the false veil will be removed and the truth and falsehood will be clearly distinguished.

مُهَاطِعِينَ إِلَى الدَّاعِ (rushing quickly towards the caller....54:8). The word *muḥṭi‘īn* literally denotes walking quickly with one's head raised above. This, together with the two preceding verses, gives a graphic picture of the Day of Gathering or Reckoning. The people will hasten hurriedly in the direction of the voice of the Caller towards the *maḥshar* (area of Reckoning). The words: "With their eyes humbled," in preceding verse (7) are in no conflict with the present verse, because there will be many different occasions in *maḥshar*. On some of these occasions, the eyes of all the people will be cast down.

Verses 9 - 17

كَذَّبَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ نُوحٍ فَكَذَّبُوا عَبْدَنَا وَقَالُوا مَجْنُونٌ وَازْدُجِرَ ﴿٩﴾
 فَدَعَا رَبَّهُ أَنِّي مَغْلُوبٌ فَانتَصِرْ ﴿١٠﴾ فَفَتَحْنَا أَبْوَابَ السَّمَاءِ بِمَاءٍ
 مُنْهَمِرٍ ﴿١١﴾ وَفَجَّرْنَا الْأَرْضَ عُيُونًا فَالْتَقَى الْمَاءُ عَلَى أَمْرٍ قَدْ قُدِرَ
 ﴿١٢﴾ وَحَمَلْنَاهُ عَلَى ذَاتِ الْأَوَاحِ وَدُسِّرِ ﴿١٣﴾ تَجْرِي بِأَعْيُنِنَا جَزَاءً

لَمَنْ كَانَ كُفِرَ ﴿١٠﴾ وَلَقَدْ تَرَكْنَهَا آيَةً فَهَلْ مِنْ مُدَكِّرٍ ﴿١٠﴾
 فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عَذَابِي وَنُذْرٍ ﴿١٦﴾ وَلَقَدْ يَسْرْنَا الْقُرْآنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِنْ
 مُدَكِّرٍ ﴿١٧﴾

The people of Nūḥ denied (the truth) before them. So they rejected Our slave, and said, "(He is) a madman", and he was (also) threatened (by them). [9] So he prayed to his Lord saying, "I am overpowered, so defend (me)." [10] So We opened the gates of the sky with water pouring forth profusely, [11] and We caused the earth to gush forth as springs; so the water (of both kinds) met together for a destined event. [12] And We caused him (Nūḥ) to board that (ship) which had planks and nails, [13] which sailed under Our Eyes, as a reward for the one who was rejected (by the infidels). [14] And We left it (the ship) as a sign. So, is there one to take lesson? [15] How then was My torment and My warnings? [16] And indeed We have made the Qur'an easy for seeking advice. So, is there one to seek advice? [17]

The Story of the People of Nūḥ عليه السلام and the Lesson Learnt from it

مَجْنُونٌ وَازْدَجَرَ (and said, "(He is) a madman", and he was threatened... 54:9). The word *wazdujira* literally denotes 'he was rebuked'. It refers to the attitude of the people of Nūḥ عليه السلام who rebuked and threatened him to stop him from preaching. On another occasion in the Qur'an, we read that the people of Nūḥ عليه السلام threatened and warned him that if he does not stop propagating his message, he would be stoned to death.

'Abd Ibn Ḥumaid reports from Mujāhid that when some of his people found him somewhere, they would choke him, as a result he would become unconscious. But when he recovered, he would pray to Allah, 'O Allah! Forgive my people, for they do not know the truth'. In this way, he endured the persecution of his people patiently for nine hundred and fifty years, prayed for their forgiveness and understanding of the truth. Eventually, when the situation became intolerable, and he could no longer resist his people, he invoked Allah to help him against them. As a result, Allah opened the gates of the heaven with torrential rain, and the entire nation was drowned which is mentioned in the forthcoming verse.

فَالْتَقَى الْمَاءُ عَلَىٰ أَمْرٍ قَدْ قُدِرَ (so the water [of both kinds] met together for a

destined event...54:12). In other words, the rain water pouring down from the skies in torrents and also bubbling water gushing forth from under the ground, caused the Deluge [a huge flood] which engulfed the entire land, and thus the Divine decree was fulfilled, destroying the people of Nūḥ عليه السلام to the last man, and even the peaks of the mountains could not give them any shelter.

ذَاتِ الْوَاحِ وَدُسُرٍ (to board that [ship] which had planks and nails...54:13). The word *alwāḥ* is the plural of *lawḥ* and it refers to a board or a plank. The word *dusur* is the plural of *disār* and it stands for nail. It also means a cord of fibres of the palm tree with which the planks of a ship are bound together.

وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْآنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِنْ مُدَكِّرٍ (And indeed We have made the Qur'an easy for seeking advice. So, is there one to seek advice?...54:17). The word *dhikr* in the prepositional phrase '*lidh-dhikr*' has several shades of meaning: to remember or memorize or by-heart; and to take heed of admonition and warnings. Both these meanings are equally applicable here. Allah has made it easy to memorize the Holy Qur'an. The followers of the previous scriptures were not privileged to memorize their entire book, word by word - whether Torāh, Injīl or Zabūr. It is one of the privileges conferred on Muslims that He has made it easy, even for the tender-aged children, to commit the entire Qur'an to memory, word for word, without missing out a single letter. The Qur'an is preserved in the hearts of hundreds of thousands of Ḥuffaẓ for the past fourteen hundred years in every age, people and their children of every level, in every region or territory of the world.

The verse could also mean that Allah has made the Qur'an so simple that just as an intellectual and knowledgeable person benefits from its contents, so does a layman, having no expertise in relevant sciences. He too can benefit from its admonition and warnings (at his own level).

Qur'an is Made Simple to Memorize and to Take Heed; Not for Ijtihād or Istinbāt

In this verse the verb يَسَّرْنَا *yassarnā* [We have made easy] is qualified by the prepositional phrase لِلذِّكْرِ *lidh-dhikri* [for seeking advice]. This implies that the Qur'an has been made easy to the extent of memorizing it and paying heed to its advice and warnings, from which all can benefit -

whether a learned scholar or an unlearned person, whether young or old. This does not necessarily imply that derivation or deduction of laws and injunctions from the Qur'an is easy for everybody. *Ijtihād* or *Istinbāt* (deduction) of injunctions from the Qur'an is a science, having its own complex rules. Scholars well-grounded in knowledge have spent years of their life to attain to the position where they could exercise *Ijtihād* and *Istinbāt*. It is not a field where every ordinary person or layman can play his role

This indicates the error of some of the deviant people who, on the strength of this statement, wish to pose as *mujtahid* and derive laws and injunctions with their own reasoning, without acquiring complete and profound knowledge of the Qur'an, and without fully grasping its methodological principles and rules. This is clear deviation!

Verses 18 - 42

كَذَّبَتْ عَادٌ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عَدَابِي وَنُذِرِ ﴿١٨﴾ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِيحًا
صَرْصَرًا فِي يَوْمِ نَحْسٍ مُّسْتَمِرٍّ ﴿١٩﴾ تَنْزِعُ النَّاسَ ۚ كَانْتَهُمْ أَعْجَازُ
نَخْلٍ مُّنْقَعِرٍ ﴿٢٠﴾ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عَدَابِي وَنُذِرِ ﴿٢١﴾ وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا
الْقُرْآنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِنْ مُّذَكِّرٍ ﴿٢٢﴾ كَذَّبَتْ ثَمُودُ بِالنُّذُرِ ﴿٢٣﴾
فَقَالُوا أَبَشْرًا مِّنَّا وَاحِدًا نَّتَّبِعُهُ ۗ إِنَّا إِذًا لَّفِي ضَلَالٍ وَسُعُرٍ ﴿٢٤﴾ ءَأَلْقَى
الذِّكْرَ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ بَيْنِنَا بَلْ هُوَ كَذَّابٌ أَشِرٌّ ﴿٢٥﴾ سَيَعْلَمُونَ غَدًا مِّنَ
الْكَذَّابِ الْأَشِرِّ ﴿٢٦﴾ إِنَّا مَرْسَلُوا النَّاقَةَ فِتْنَةً لَهُمْ فَارْتَقِبْهُمْ وَاصْطَبِرْ
﴿٢٧﴾ وَنَبِّئْهُمْ أَنَّ الْمَاءَ قِسْمَةٌ بَيْنَهُمْ ۖ كُلَّ شَرِبٍ مُّحْتَضِرٍ ﴿٢٨﴾
فَنَادُوا صَاحِبَهُمْ فَتَعَاطَى فَعَقَرَ ﴿٢٩﴾ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عَدَابِي وَنُذِرِ
﴿٣٠﴾ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ صَيْحَةً وَاحِدَةً فَكَانُوا كَهَشِيمِ الْمُحْتَظِرِ
﴿٣١﴾ وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْآنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِنْ مُّذَكِّرٍ ﴿٣٢﴾ كَذَّبَتْ قَوْمُ
لُوطٍ بِالنُّذُرِ ﴿٣٣﴾ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ حَاصِبًا إِلَّا آلَ لُوطٍ ۗ نَجَّيْنَاهُمْ

بِسْحَرٍ ﴿٣٤﴾ نِعْمَةٌ مِّنْ عِنْدِنَا ۖ كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي مَنْ شَكَرَ ﴿٣٥﴾ وَلَقَدْ
 أَنْذَرَهُمْ بَطْشَتَنَا فَتَمَارَوْا بِالنُّذُرِ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَلَقَدْ رَاوَدُوهُ عَن ضَيْفِهِ
 فَطَمَسْنَا أَعْيُنَهُمْ فَذُوقُوا عَذَابِي وَنُذِرِ ﴿٣٧﴾ وَلَقَدْ صَبَّحَهُم بُكْرَةً
 عَذَابٌ مُّسْتَقِرٌّ ﴿٣٨﴾ فَذُوقُوا عَذَابِي وَنُذِرِ ﴿٣٩﴾ وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْآنَ
 لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِنْ مُّدْكِرٍ ﴿٤٠﴾ وَلَقَدْ جَاءَ آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ النُّذُرُ ﴿٤١﴾
 كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا كُلِّهَا فَأَخَذْنَاهُمْ أَخْذَ عَزِيزٍ مُّقْتَدِرٍ ﴿٤٢﴾

(The people of) 'Ad rejected (their prophet). How then was My torment and My warnings? [18] We did send to them a furious wind in a day of lasting bad luck, [19] plucking people away, as if they were trunks of uprooted palm-trees. [20] How then was My torment and My warnings? [21] And indeed We have made the Qur'an easy for seeking advice. So, is there one to seek advice? [22] (The people of) Thamūd rejected the warners. [23] So they said, "Shall we follow a single human being from among us? Then we will be in error and insanity. [24] Is it that the advice has been cast upon him alone out of all of us? No, but he is a bragging liar." [25] Tomorrow they will know who is the bragging liar! [26] We are going to send the She-camel as a trial for them; so watch them (O Ṣāliḥ,) and keep patience, [27] and tell them that water (of the well) is to be shared between them (and the She-camel), so as the right of having water shall be attended by each (alternatively). [28] Then they called their man (to kill the She-camel,) so he undertook (the task) and killed (the She-camel). [29] How then was My torment and My warnings? [30] We sent upon them a single Cry, and they were like crushed leafs of a hedge-builder. [31] And indeed We have made the Qur'an easy for seeking advice. So, is there one to seek advice? [32] The people of Lūṭ rejected the warners. [33] We sent upon them a rain of stones, except the family of Lut whom We saved in the last hours of night, [34] as a grace from Us. This is how We reward the one who offers gratitude. [35] And he (Lut) had certainly warned them of Our grasp, but they disputed the warnings. [36] And they had even tried to tempt him against his guests (so that they may snatch them away for bad purpose,) but We blinded their eyes: "Now taste

My torment and My warnings!" [37] And on the next morning, a lasting torment overtook them: [38] "Now taste My torment and My warnings." [39] And indeed We have made the Qur'an easy for seeking advice. So, is there one to seek advice? [40] And the warners came to the family of Fir'aun (Pharaoh). [41] (But) they rejected all Our signs; so We seized them – a seizure by a Mighty, a Powerful Being. [42]

Lexicological Analysis

The word *su'ur* سُعْر has appeared twice in this Sūrah. First it has appeared in verse 24 in connection with the people of Thamūd where it is their own word, and means 'madness or insanity'. The second time, the word appears in connection with the punishment of the sinners where it is the word of Allah in the forthcoming verse [47] فِي ضَلَالٍ وَسُعْرٍ Here the word *su'ur* may also be taken in the sense of Hell-Fire. According to lexicologists, the word *su'ur* is used in both these senses.

رَاوِدُوهُ عَنْ ضَيْفِهِ (And they had even tried to tempt him against his guests...54:37). The word *murawadah* signifies to entice someone to satisfy one's lust. This verse refers to the night when the angels came to Prophet Lūtؑ in the shape of handsome young men, as a test from Allah for his people who were addicted to homosexuality. Prophet Lūtؑ hosted his guests. The licentious people came to him from every direction, and the Prophet Lūtؑ had to shut the door to protect his guests. They came during the night and tried to break the door down and scale the walls to come in. The immoral behaviour of his people distressed Prophet Lūtؑ but when the guests revealed to him that they were angels and have been sent by Allah to inflict destructive punishment on his people, he felt comforted; they assured him that they will not be able to hurt them in any way.

Sūrah Al-Qamar started on the note that Doomsday is fast approaching, so that the infidels and pagans, who have lust and greed for this world and are unaware of the Hereafter, come to their senses. First, the punishment of the Hereafter is mentioned. Then the evil consequences of their misdeeds in the present life are cited. Reference is made to the conditions of world-famous nations, their opposition to their respective prophets and its evil consequences. The people of Nūhؑ were the first people who were destroyed by Divine punishment. Many different kinds of devastating torments were inflicted on the people of Nūhؑ, the tribes of 'Ad, Thamud and Lūtؑ and the people of Fir'aun in

this world. Their stories and histories are recounted in detail on several occasions in the Qur'ān. Here they have been condensed.

All these five nations were the strongest and resourceful. It was not possible for any of the subdued nations to overcome any of these superpowers. The current set of verses show how the superpowers were destroyed by Divine punishment. After describing the punishment of each nation, the Qur'ān repeats the following statement as a refrain: فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عَذَابِي وَنُذُرِ (How then was My torment and My warnings?). That is, when the Divine chastisement overtook these nations who were very powerful in terms of might, wealth and number were killed like flies and mosquitoes. In addition, the following verse is repeated to advise the Muslims and the infidels in general: وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْآنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِنْ مُدَّكِرٍ (And indeed We have made the Qur'ān easy for seeking advice. So, is there one to seek advice?) This is to indicate that the only way to avoid the terrible chastisement is to take to the advice of the Qur'ān. Allah has made the Qur'ān easy to the extent of paying heed to the admonition and warnings. Only the most ill-fated person will not take advantage of the warnings.

The forthcoming verses address the people of the time of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ that they are not more powerful in terms of wealth, number and might than the people of Prophet Nūḥ عليه السلام, the tribes of 'Ad and Thamū, Prophet Lūṭ's عليه السلام people and the people of Fir'aun. Then how are they sitting in a careless manner?

Verses 43 - 55

اَكْفَارُكُمْ خَيْرٌ مِنْ اَوْلَائِكُمْ اَمْ لَكُمْ بَرَاءَةٌ فِي الزُّبُرِ ﴿٤٣﴾ اَمْ يَقُولُونَ
 نَحْنُ جَمِيعٌ مُنتَصِرُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾ سَيُهْزَمُ الْجَمْعُ وَيُوَلُّونَ الدُّبُرَ ﴿٤٥﴾ بَلِ
 السَّاعَةُ مَوْعِدُهُمْ وَالسَّاعَةُ اَدْهَىٰ وَاَمَرٌ ﴿٤٦﴾ اِنَّ الْمُجْرِمِينَ فِي
 ضَلَالٍ وَسُعُرٍ ﴿٤٧﴾ يَوْمَ يُسْحَبُونَ فِي النَّارِ عَلٰى وُجُوهِهِمْ ذُوقُوا
 مَسَّ سَقَرَ ﴿٤٨﴾ اِنَّا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَاهُ بِقَدَرٍ ﴿٤٩﴾ وَمَا اَمْرُنَا اِلَّا
 وَاِحْدَةٌ كَلَمٰحٍ بِالْبَصْرِ ﴿٥٠﴾ وَلَقَدْ اَهْلَكْنَا اَشْيَاعَكُمْ فَهَلْ مِنْ
 مُدَّكِرٍ ﴿٥١﴾ وَكُلُّ شَيْءٍ فَعَلُوهُ فِي الزُّبُرِ ﴿٥٢﴾ وَكُلُّ صَغِيرٍ وَكَبِيرٍ

مُسْتَطَرٌّ ﴿٥٣﴾ إِنَّ الْأُمْتَقِينَ فِي جَنَّتٍ وَنَهْرٍ ﴿٥٤﴾ فِي مَقْعَدِ صِدْقٍ
عِنْدَ مَلِيكٍ مُّقْتَدِرٍ ﴿٥٥﴾

(Now) are the disbelievers among you in a better position than all of them (the aforesaid punished people), or do you have immunity (recorded) in the sacred books? [43] Or do they say, "We are a large group, well-defended." [44] Soon shall this 'large group' be defeated, and all will turn their backs. [45] Rather the Hour (of judgment) is their appointed time (for their full recompense), and the Hour is more calamitous and more bitter. [46] Surely the guilty ones are in error and madness. [47] On the Day when they will be dragged into the Fire on their faces, (it will be said to them,) "Taste the touch of Hell." [48] Verily, We have created every thing according to (Our) predestination. [49] And (implementation of) Our command is no more than a single act like the twinkling of an eye. [50] And We have destroyed people like you; so, is there one to take lesson? [51] And every thing they have done is recorded in the books (of deeds). [52] And every thing, small and big, is written down. [53] Of course, the God-fearing will be in gardens and rivers, [54] in a seat of Truth, near to the Omnipotent Sovereign. [55]

Lexicological analysis

The word *زُبُرٌ* *zubar* (in verse 43) is the plural of *zabūr*, which stands for any written book. It specifically refers to the Scripture that was revealed to Prophet Dāwūd عليه السلام.

أَذْهَى وَأَمْرٌ (...more calamitous and more bitter...54:46). The word *adhā* means more or most calamitous. The word *amarr* is derived from *murr* which originally means 'bitter'. By extension anything 'difficult' or 'painful' is also referred to as *amarr* and *murr*. In the phrase *فِي ضَلَالٍ وَسُعُرٍ* *fī ḍalālin wa su'ur*, *ḍalāl*, as is known, means 'error' or 'deviation' and the word *su'ur* in the present context means the 'Hell-Fire'.¹ In the phrase *ashyā'akum*, (verse 51) *ashyā'* is the plural of *shi'ah*, and it means a 'follower', that is, those who follow their pattern of life.

(1). This is according to one interpretation. The other meaning of the word is 'madness' and the translation in the text is based on this meaning. (Muhammad Taqi Usmani)

In the phrase *مَقْعَدٍ صِدْقٍ maq'adi-ṣidqin*, the word *maq'ad* means 'seat' and the word *ṣidq* means 'truth' and implies the 'seat of truth' where there will be no idle and obscene talks.

إِنَّا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَاهُ بِقَدَرٍ (Verily, We have created every thing according to [Our] predestination...54:49). In the prepositional phrase *bi-qadar*, the word *qadar* literally denotes to 'measure' and to create something with a proper measure and proportion. It is possible for this literal sense of the word to apply in the current verse: Allah is the Supreme Sage Who created every species of the existent entity wisely with proper measurement - whether big or small, and in different shapes and sizes. Having created, He maintains the structure of every individual in a very wise measurement: The fingers and toes are not equal in size; the lengths are different; the length and breadth of hands and legs are wisely structured; and their bones, muscles and skins are created flexible to stretch and contract. When we analyze every single part of every single limb and organ of [human] body, we discern the wondrous vistas of Divine wisdom opening up.

As a theological term, *qadar* is used in the sense of *taqdīr* [Divine predetermination, predestination, preordainment, preordering or decree]. Most authorities on Tafsīr, on account of some versions of *ḥadīth*, take the word *qadar* here in this sense. It is recorded in Musnad of Aḥmad, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim and Tirmidhī on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه that once the pagans of Quraish came to the Holy Prophet ﷺ debating and arguing with him on the question of *taqdīr* (Predestination). On that occasion this verse was revealed. In the light of this tradition, the verse purports to say that Allah has predetermined the total sum of everything. He created everything with predestined limits before they were created. He knew everything that will occur before it occurred, and recorded everything [time and place, growth and decline] that will occur, before they occurred. Everything that occurs in this world, occurs according to the Divine Plan worked out in Pre-Eternity or Eternity-without-Beginning.

The question of *taqdīr*, according to *Ahl-us-sunnah wal-jamā'ah*, is one of the affirmed and standard articles of faith in Islam. Anyone who denies it outright is an atheist or goes out of the pale Islam, and the sects that deny it by convoluted or twisted interpretation are *fāsiqīn* [sinners or

transgressors]. Imām Aḥmad, Abū Dāwūd and Ṭabarānī record a Tradition on the authority of Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Umar رضي الله عنه that the Holy Messenger ﷺ said: "Some members of every community are Magians, and the Magians of my Ummah are those who deny *taqdīr*. If they fall ill, do not visit them; and if they die, do not attend their funerals." (Rūḥ al-Ma‘ānī.) Allah, the Pure and Exalted, knows best!

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Qamar
Ends here

Sūrah Ar-Raḥmān (The All-Merciful)

This Sūrah is Madanī, and it has 78 verses and 3 sections

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

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

Verses 1 - 25

الرَّحْمٰنُ ﴿١﴾ عَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ ﴿٢﴾ خَلَقَ الْاِنْسَانَ ﴿٣﴾ عَلَّمَهُ الْبَيَانَ ﴿٤﴾ الشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ بِحُسْبَانٍ ﴿٥﴾ وَالنَّجْمُ وَالشَّجَرُ يَسْجُدَانِ ﴿٦﴾ وَالسَّمَاءَ رَفَعَهَا وَوَضَعَ الْمِيزَانَ ﴿٧﴾ اَلَّا تَطْغَوْا فِي الْمِيزَانِ ﴿٨﴾ وَاَقِمْوْا الْوَزْنَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا تُخْسِرُوْا الْمِيزَانَ ﴿٩﴾ وَالْاَرْضَ وَضَعَهَا لِلْاَنَامِ ﴿١٠﴾ فِيْهَا فَاكِهَةٌ وَالنَّخْلُ ذَاتُ الْاَكْمَامِ ﴿١١﴾ وَالْحَبُّ ذُو الْعَصْفِ وَالرَّيْحَانُ ﴿١٢﴾ فَبِاَيِّ اِلٰهٍ رَبِّكُمْ تُكَذِّبْنَ ﴿١٣﴾ خَلَقَ الْاِنْسَانَ مِنْ صَلْصَالٍ كَالْفَخَّارِ ﴿١٤﴾ وَخَلَقَ الْجَانَّ مِنْ مَّارِجٍ مِّنْ نَّارٍ ﴿١٥﴾ فَبِاَيِّ اِلٰهٍ رَبِّكُمْ تُكَذِّبْنَ ﴿١٦﴾ رَبُّ الْمَشْرِقَيْنِ وَرَبُّ الْمَغْرِبَيْنِ ﴿١٧﴾ فَبِاَيِّ اِلٰهٍ رَبِّكُمْ تُكَذِّبْنَ ﴿١٨﴾ مَرَجَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ يَلْتَقِيْنَ ﴿١٩﴾ بَيْنَهُمَا بَرْزَخٌ لَا يَبْغِيْنَ ﴿٢٠﴾ فَبِاَيِّ اِلٰهٍ رَبِّكُمْ تُكَذِّبْنَ ﴿٢١﴾ يَخْرُجُ مِنْهُمَا اللُّؤْلُؤُ وَالْمَرْجَانُ ﴿٢٢﴾ فَبِاَيِّ اِلٰهٍ رَبِّكُمْ تُكَذِّبْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَلَهُ الْجَوَارِ الْمُنشَآتُ فِي الْبَحْرِ

كَأَلْأَعْلَامِ ﴿٢٤﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٢٥﴾

The Raḥmān (The All-Merciful) [1] has taught the Qur'ān. [2] He has created man. [3] He has taught him (how) to express himself. [4] The sun and the moon are (bound) by a (fixed) calculation. [5] And the vine and the tree both prostrate (to Allah). [6] And He raised the sky high, and has placed the scale, [7] so that you should not be wrongful in weighing. [8] And observe the correct weight with fairness, and do not make weighing deficient. [9] And the earth is placed by Him for creatures, [10] in which there are fruits and the date-palms having sheaths, [11] and the grain having chaff, and fragrant flowers. [12] So, (O mankind and Jinn,) which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [13] He has created man from dry clay, ringing like pottery, [14] and created Jann (father of the Jinn) from a smokeless flame of fire. [15] So, (O mankind and Jinn,) which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [16] He is the Lord of both points of sunrise and both points of sunset. [17] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [18] He has set forth the two seas that meet together, [19] while between them there is a barrier they do not transgress. [20] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [21] From both of them come forth the pearl and the coral. [22] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [23] And His are the sailing ships raised up in the sea like mountains. [24] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [25]

Linkage of the Sūrah and the Wisdom of Repeating the words, 'Which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny?'

The preceding Sūrah Al-Qamar was mainly concerned with some of the rebellious nations of antiquity who were punished for rejecting the Divine Message. The description of every punishment was followed by the sentence: فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عَذَابِي وَنُذْرِي (Then how was My torment and My warnings? ...54:16). This sentence was repeated many times in order to warn people against similar Divine punishment. Another verse that was repeated as a refrain at telling intervals is وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْآنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِنْ مُدَكِّرٍ "And indeed We have made the Qur'ān easy for seeking advice. So, is there one to seek advice?...54:17). This verse urges people to accept the Qur'ānic Message, believe in it and follow its right guidance.

Sūrah Ar-Raḥmān, on the other hand, mainly describes the boons and bounties of Allah, of this world as well as of the Hereafter. Thus when a particular bounty of Allah is described, the verse *فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ* (*fa-bi-ayyi' ālā'i Rabbikumā tukadhdhibān* (So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny?) is used deliberately as a refrain in order to awaken the people and urge them to give thanks to Allah for His favours. This verse is repeated thirty-one times in the Sūrah. According to the rules of stylish usage, repetition of an expression serves the deliberate purpose of 'emphasis'. Especially, the repetition in these two Sūrahs of the Qur'ān is repetition only in apparent form. In reality, the repeated sentence is each time related to a new subject, and having its own significance, cannot be taken as redundant. In Sūrah Al-Qamar, the *نَكِيفَ* *كَانَ عَذَابِي* (Then how was My torment 54:16) has followed the description of each new torment. Likewise, in Sūrah Ar-Raḥmān, after the description of every new bounty the verse *فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ* (So, (O mankind and Jinn,) which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny?) is repeated, which being related to a new subject is not redundant. 'Allāmah Suyūṭī رحمه الله تعالى terms this device of repetition as *At-tardīd*. Arab masters of eloquence, regard this device as aesthetically beautiful, polished, effective, moving, forceful and persuasive use of language. The device is used both in prose as well as in poetry. It is used not only in Arabic but [almost in all the languages of the world, as for instance] the most accomplished and consummate poets of Persian and Urdu have used them. This is no occasion to collect samples of their compositions here. Tafsīr Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī has collected its several examples on this occasion.

Was Sūrah Ar-Raḥmān Revealed in Makkah or Madinah?

On the basis of a few narratives Imām Qurṭubī concluded that this Sūrah was revealed in Makkah, and he prefers this view. Tirmidhī records from Sayyidnā Jābir ؓ that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ recited this Sūrah before some people who remained silent. The Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

"I recited this Sūrah to the Jinns, on the night of Jinn, and their receptive response was better than yours! Whenever I recited Allah's statement *فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ* (So, (O mankind and Jinn,) which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny?) They said: *لَا بَشِيءَ مِنْ نَعِيمِكَ رَبَّنَا نَكُذِّبُ فَلكَ الْحَمْدُ* 'None of your bounties do we deny, our Lord! All praise is due to You'".

This narrative indicates that this Sūrah was revealed in Makkah, because 'the night of the Jinn' refers to the night when the Messenger of Allah ﷺ met the Jinns to convey to them the Message of the Qur'ān and impart knowledge to them. This incident took place in Makkah. Likewise, Imām Qurṭubī refers to a few more narratives which indicate that this Sūrah was revealed in Makkah .

The opening word of the first verse of the Sūrah is Ar-Raḥmān (The All-Merciful). One of the reasons for beginning the Sūrah with this name of Allah is presumably that the infidels of Makkah were unaware of this name of Allah. They used to say, "ما الرَّحْمَنُ؟" "What is Ar-Raḥmān?" [as mentioned in 25:60] This name has been selected here to let them know it.

The second reason could be to indicate that teaching the Qur'ān, which has been mentioned in the next verse as Allah's act, was a sheer gift flowing from Allah's beneficence, and not because this or any other act is obligatory on Allah for which He could be held responsible, nor because He is in need of anyone.

In the entire Sūrah, Allah's bounties - worldly as well spiritual - are continuously recounted. The greatest of all bounties is the knowledge of the Holy Qur'ān, because it is an all-comprehensive Book directing man in temporal and spiritual matters and in matters relating to this world and the next. Those who heeded the Holy Qur'ān and fulfilled its right, like the blessed Companions, Allah raised their status in the Hereafter and blessed them with inconceivable bounties and favours. In this world too they are promoted to such high stations as the greatest of kings were not able to attain.

Grammatically speaking, the verb عَلَّمَ 'allama [to teach] requires two objects, the direct and the indirect: [1] that of which the knowledge is imparted; and [2] he to whom the knowledge is imparted. Here the first object [the Holy Qur'ān] is explicitly stated, but the second object is not. Some of the exegetes express the view that the second object is the Messenger of Allah ﷺ who was taught the Qur'ān directly by Allah, and through him the entire creation. It is possible to look at it from another point of view: The purpose of the Holy Qur'ān is to give guidance to the entire creation of Allah, and to teach them good morals and the righteous deeds. Therefore, no particular object has been specified. The fact that the

second object has not been explicitly specified indicates its generality, that is, it refers to the totality of human beings.

خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ عَلَّمَهُ الْبَيَانَ (He has created man. He has taught him [how] to express himself...55:4) Man's creation itself is a great boon of Allah and in the natural order of things he is first and foremost, so much so that even imparting the knowledge of the Qur'ān, which is mentioned first, can only take place after his creation. However, the bounty of Qur'ānic knowledge is mentioned first, and the creation of man later, because the fundamental object of man's creation is to impart to him the knowledge of the Holy Qur'ān, and for him to follow its guidance as stated elsewhere in the Qur'ān: وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ (And I did not create the Jinns and the human beings except that they should worship Me.) [51:56] Surely, worship without Divine guidance is not possible. The source of the Divine guidance is the Holy Qur'ān. Thus Qur'ānic knowledge is mentioned before man's creation.

Having created man, uncountable bounties are bestowed upon him. Of them, imparting the knowledge of expression has been mentioned especially, because the bounties necessary for man's growth and development, and his existence and survival like his food and water, his protection against cold and heat, his dwelling arrangements and so on are bounties in which all creatures are equal partners. Among the bounties that are peculiar to human beings Knowledge of the Qur'ān has been mentioned first, and it was followed by the knowledge of expressions, because deriving benefit from the Qur'ān, and imparting it to others, is dependent on the knowledge of expression. The word *bayān* ('how to express himself') comprehends all the means of communication created by Allah, like speech, writing etc. There are various languages and dialects of various nations in various regions of the world. All these are constituent parts of linguistic knowledge which is the practical interpretation or application of the verse عَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا (And He taught Adam the names, all of them) [2:31] فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنَ الْخَالِقِينَ

Allah's Signs

الْقَمَرُ بِحُسْبَانٍ (The sun and the moon are [bound] by a [fixed] calculation...55:5) This verse draws attention to two of the celestial bodies from among the bounties of Allah. They are especially mentioned presumably because the entire system of this world depends on the

movement of these bodies in their orbits in perfect succession, according to precise calculation that is never delayed nor disturbed.

The word حُسْبَان *hūsban* with *ḍammah* [=u] on the first letter is, according to some lexicologists, used in the sense of *ḥisāb*, the infinitive, meaning 'to calculate', like غفران *ghufrān* [to forgive], سُبْحَانَ *sūbhan* [to declare purity], قرآن *Qur'ān* [to recite or read]. Other lexicologists feel that *hūsban* is the plural of *ḥisāb*. The meaning of the verse, according to the former lexicologists, would be: The two bodies, on which depends man's entire life, run on fixed courses. They are subject to certain laws and they perform regularly, punctually and unerringly their allocated tasks - alternation of night and day, change of seasons and determination of years and months. If we go by the latter lexicologists' interpretation that *hūsban* is the plural of *ḥisāb*, then it will refer to the fact that each of the sun and the moon has its own calculated orbits. The entire solar system is proceeding on the basis of different calculations, and each one of them is so firm and accurate that no deviation has ever occurred, since millions of years, even for a second.

This age is regarded as an age of ascension for science. The marvelous new inventions of the scientific age have caused wonders even for the philosophers. However, there is a clear difference between human inventions and Divine creation, which every discerning person can observe. Human inventions are subject to a series of continuous breakdown and damage, which require to be serviced, repaired, overhauled or refurbished. A machine, no matter how strong or sophisticated, needs to be repaired or at least serviced after a while. If this is not done in time, it will remain useless. The huge Divine creation, on the other hand, needs no repairs, no service nor refurbishing at any time. Neither the solar system overtakes the lunar movement, nor does the lunar movement outstrip the solar system. The sun and the moon and other celestial bodies, each float and move in its own orbit.

وَالنَّجْمُ وَالشَّجَرُ يَسْجُدَانِ (And the vine and the tree both prostrate [to Allah]....55:6). The word *najm* refers to the 'plants having no stem' and the word *shajar* refers to any 'tree' with stems or trunk, twigs and branches. All of them prostrate to Allah. *Sajdah* or prostration is the supreme symbol of humility, respect, surrender and unconditional love and obedience of Allah. In this context, the verse means that Allah has

assigned a specific task to every tree, plant, creeper, and their leaves and fruits for the benefit of mankind and they are performing their tasks without the slightest deviation from their assigned duties. The plants without stems and the trees humbly submit themselves to Allah's will. Verse [6], read along with the preceding verse [5], shows that everything, from the largest celestial body to the smallest plant, is subject to His laws manifest in nature. A little disturbance in or deviation from their set course would bring down in pieces the whole universe, which has been created for the service of man. It is inconceivable, therefore, that man for whose service this vast and complicated but perfectly regulated universe has been brought into being would have been created without a purpose. The life of man surely has a grand Divine aim to which repeated reference has been made in this entire Surah and in other parts of the Qur'ān. There are two types of obedience: [1] obedience that is carried out by free will, as for instance, man and *jinn* are given free will to choose between obeying Allah's laws or disobeying them; and [2] all other creation of Allah are assigned specific tasks or duties to perform without any choice. The latter is referred to as *iṭā'ah takwīniyyah* or *jabriyyah* 'compelled or coerced obedience'. In the current verse, the word *sajdah* refers to this type of 'obedience to Allah's laws in nature' where the natural objects have no choice.

وَالسَّمَاءَ رَفَعَهَا وَوَضَعَ الْمِيزَانَ (And He raised the sky high, and has placed the scale....55:7) The verbs *rafa'a* and *wada'a* are antonyms: *rafa'a* means 'to raise up' and *wada'a* means 'to put down'. The verse first describes that Allah has raised the heavens. This could have its obvious or outer meaning referring to the physical height of the sky, and it could also have its metaphorical meaning, referring to the high status of the heaven: In relation to the earth, the heaven occupies a higher position. Normally, the earth is understood to be the opposite of the heaven. From this point of view, the heaven and the earth are treated as opposites and mentioned throughout the Holy Qur'ān in that way. Having described the high position of the heaven, the Qur'ān goes on to describe that Allah has set the balance, but 'placing the scale' *vis-à-vis* 'raising the heaven' does not seem to form a suitable pair according to the linguistic norm. As a matter of fact, a closer analysis of the context indicates that the verse is describing the 'placing of the earth'. Three verses later, verse (10) reads

وَالْأَرْضَ وَضَعَهَا لِلْأَنَامِ (And the earth is placed by Him for creatures...55:10) Thus the Qur'an is actually describing the heaven and the earth as opposites. In between the two, a third factor [that of placing the scale] is inserted for a sage reason. The wisdom in this seems to lie in the fact that the verses that follow lay stress on observing justice and fairness. They do not allow violation of rights and practice of injustice. Following the verses referring to 'raising the heaven' and 'placing the earth' are verses that describe the scale and enjoin the correct use of it. This implies that the ultimate purpose of creating the heaven and the earth was to establish justice, peace and harmony. Peace, safety, security and harmony cannot prevail on earth without establishing justice. Without justice, chaos, disorder, mischief and corruption will hold sway in the land. Allah, the Pure and the Most High, knows best!

The word مِيزَانٌ *mizān* has been interpreted variously. In the current verse, scholars like Mujāhid, Qatādah, Suddī and others interpret it in the sense of 'justice', because that is the purpose of *mizān* [scale]. Other scholars have taken the word in its obvious sense of a piece of equipment used to determine the weights of people or things. This equipment could be a pair of scales, consisting of a bar with a pan or a dish at each end or it may be some modern equipment used for the purpose of measuring and weighing. The ultimate sense of this interpretation in any case is maintaining rights and establishing justice and fair play.

أَلَّا تَطْغَوْا فِي الْمِيزَانِ (so that you should not be wrongful in weighing...55:8). The earlier verse stated the creation of the scale, and this verse states the reason for its creation. The imperfect verb تَطْغَوْا *tatghaw* is derived from تَطْغَى *ṭughyān* which stands for 'injustice'. Thus verses [7] and [8] put together mean: '[The '*mizān* or scale' has been created so that you may not transgress the balance and thus practice injustice'].

وَأَقِيمُوا الْوَزْنَ بِالْقِسْطِ (And observe the correct weight with fairness, ...55:9). The word قِسْطٌ *qisṭ* literally means 'justice'. The meaning is obvious: 'And observe the weight with equity'.

وَلَا تُخْسِرُوا الْمِيزَانَ (and do not make weighing deficient...55:9). The word خُسْرٌ *khusr* means 'to skim or make deficient'. The opening part of verse [9] was the positive aspect of the injunction, and the concluding part is its negative aspect, in that it is unlawful to fall short of measure or weight.

The two parts, positive and negative, put together the verse as a whole means 'Do not cheat in weights and measures, but rather observe justice and fairness'.

وَالْأَرْضَ وَضَعَهَا لِلْأَنَامِ (And the earth is placed by Him for creatures...55:10). The word أَنَام *'anām* with *fatha* [=a] on the first letter on the grammatical measure of سَحَاب *saḥāb*, refers to all the creatures that are on the surface of the earth. Baiḍāwī translates the word as 'everything having a soul'. Evidently, the word *'anām* in the verse refers to mankind and the *jinn*, because only these two species of Allah's creation are obligated to observe the precepts of Sharī'ah. Furthermore, they are addressed throughout the Sūrah. For instance in the refrain verse فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَنِ (So, [O mankind and Jinn,] which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny?...55:13) The dual second person attached pronouns and the dual forms of the verbs second person sustained throughout Sūrah Ar-Raḥmān are addressed to Jinn and mankind.

فِيهَا فَاكِهَةٌ (in which there are fruits ...55:11). The word فَاكِهَةٌ *fākihah* refers to fruits that are normally eaten after food for pleasure.

وَالنَّخْلُ ذَاتُ الْأَكْمَامِ (...and the date-palms having sheaths...55:11). The word أَكْمَام *akmām* is the plural of كِمَم *kimm*, and refers to 'the cover that surrounds and protects dates and other fruits in the beginning'.

وَالْحَبُّ ذُو الْعَصْفِ (and the grain having chaff, ...55:12). The word حَب *ḥabb* means grain, as for instance 'wheat', 'gram', 'rice', 'a kind of vetch', 'lentil' and so on. The word *'aṣf* is the outer cover of some type of grains, like rice or wheat husk, which Allah creates with His power and consummate wisdom. Man's attention is drawn to the fact that each grain of the food he eats several times a day has been created by Allah, out of His unbounded grace and beneficence, from soil and water in inconceivably wonderful ways. He protected every grain against insects with the outer cover until maturity, so that it was prepared as a morsel of food. The current verse, thus, briefly points to all those natural things that are so essential for the physical development of man. The mention of *'aṣf* [husk] is to remind that it is the fodder for your animals. This is another bounty of Allah because man needs the milk of the animals for nourishment. Furthermore, animals are used as a means of transportation to convey human beings from place to place as well as to

carry load, cargo and luggage.

وَالرَّيْحَانُ (...and fragrant flowers...55:12). The popular meaning of the word الرَّيْحَانُ *raiḥān* is fragrance or fragrant plant or sweet-scented plants. Ibn Zaid has interpreted the word thus in the current verse. Allah has produced a variety of fragrances and sweet-smelling flowers on plants and trees. Sometimes the word *raiḥān* is used in the sense of livelihood and sustenance. It is said in Arabic: خَرَجْتُ أَطْلُبُ رَيْحَانَ اللَّهِ (I came out looking for sustenance provided by Allah.) Sayyidna Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه interprets it in this strain.

Mankind and Jinn are surrounded by Divine Bounties

فَيَا أَيُّهَا آلاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ (So, [O mankind and Jinn,] which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny?...55:13). The word آلاءِ 'alā' is the plural and it means 'benefits, benefaction, favour, boon, blessing or bounty'. The address is to the two species of Jinn and men referred to in verse 33 below and many other verses of Sūrah Ar-Raḥmān where Jinn are specifically mentioned.

The Creation of Humans and Jinns

خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ صَلْصَالٍ كَالْفَخَّارِ (He has created man from dry clay, ringing like pottery...55:14). The word *insān* [man] in this context refers unanimously to 'Ādam عليه السلام. The word *ṣalṣāl* [clay] refers to the wet soil when it becomes dry and heavy. The word *fakḥkḥār* refers to the wet soil when it is baked.

وَخَلَقَ الْجَانَّ مِنْ مَارِجٍ مِنْ نَارٍ (and created *Jānn* [father of the *Jinns*] from a smokeless flame of fire...55:15) The word جَانَّ *jann*, refers to the class of beings called '*jinn*'. The word مَارِجٍ *mārij* refers to the ' smokeless flame of fire'. The major element in the creation of *jinn* is the smokeless flame of fire, just as the major element in the creation of man is dry sounding clay.

Allah is the Lord of the Two Points of Sunrise and the Two Points of Sunset

رَبُّ الْمَشْرِقَيْنِ وَرَبُّ الْمَغْرِبَيْنِ (He is the Lord of both points of sunrise and both points of sunset...55:17) The sun rises at different cardinal points in the east in winter and in summer: Thus we have the two easts [*mashriqain*]. Similarly, the sun sets at different cardinal points in the west in winter and summer: Thus we have two wests [*maghribain*].

Allah created Different Types of Water

مَرَجَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ يَلْتَقِينِ (He has set forth the two seas that meet together...55:19). Literally, the verb *maraja* means 'to let loose'. The word *bahrain* [two seas or two types of waters] refers to sweet and salty waters. Allah has created two types of waters. In some places the two seas meet together, the samples of which are available in every region of the world. However, where the sweet and salty waters meet, there is a distinct barrier between the sweet and salty waters. In some cases, the two types of waters are seen distinctly in higher or lower position. If the salty water overrides the sweet water, the characteristics of the sweet water will not be spoiled; nor will the characteristics of the salty water be affected in any way if the sweet water overrides it. Thus the Qur'an states: مَرَجَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ يَلْتَقِينِ "He has set forth the two seas that meet together, while between them there is a barrier they do not transgress....55:20)

يَخْرُجُ مِنْهُمَا اللُّؤْلُؤُ وَالْمَرْجَانُ (From both of them come forth the pearl and the coral...55:22). The meaning of لُؤْلُؤُ *lu'lu'* is quite well-known, that is, 'pearl'. The word مَرْجَانُ *marjan* too is one of the 'precious jewels or gems'. It is a hard substance formed from coral which has branches like trees. Both these precious jewels or gems are produced in the waters. It is generally understood that pearls and corals are both hunted or fished for in the salty waters, not in the fresh waters, whereas the verse states that they are fished for in both kinds of waters. It is possible to reconcile the verse with the general understanding: Pearls as well as corals originate in sweet waters where it is not easy to hunt for or from which to fish out the gems or jewels. The sweet waters flow into the salty waters where the substances are carried and deposited. The pearls and corals are brought out from there. Therefore, the source of the pearls and corals is said to be the salty seas.

وَلَهُ الْجَوَارِ الْمُنشَآتُ فِي الْبَحْرِ كَالْأَعْلَامِ (And His are the sailing ships raised up in the sea like mountains...55:24). The word جَوَارِي *jawari* is the plural of جَارِيَة *jariyah*. One of its meanings is ship and that is the sense in which it is used in the current verse. The word مُنْشَأَتْ *munsha'at* is derived from نَشَأَ *nasha'a* which means 'to rise up or high, be lofty'. *Al-munsha'at* thus refers to 'sails of the ships that are lofty'. The verse describes the wisdom of making the ship and its running on the surface of the water.

Verses 26 - 45

كُلُّ مَنْ عَلَيْهَا فَانٍ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَيَبْقَىٰ وَجْهُ رَبِّكَ ذُو الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ
 ﴿٢٧﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آيَةِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكذِّبِينَ ﴿٢٨﴾ يَسْأَلُهُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ
 وَالْأَرْضِ كُلُّ يَوْمٍ هُوَ فِي شَأْنٍ ﴿٢٩﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آيَةِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكذِّبِينَ
 ﴿٣٠﴾ سَنَفْرُغُ لَكُمْ أَيَّةَ الثَّقَلَيْنِ ﴿٣١﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آيَةِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكذِّبِينَ ﴿٣٢﴾
 يَمْعُشَرُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِنْ اسْتَطَعْتُمْ أَنْ تَنْفُذُوا مِنْ أَقْطَارِ السَّمَوَاتِ
 وَالْأَرْضِ فَانْفُذُوا لَا تَنْفُذُونَ إِلَّا بِسُلْطَنِ ﴿٣٣﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آيَةِ رَبِّكُمَا
 تُكذِّبِينَ ﴿٣٤﴾ يُرْسَلُ عَلَيْكُمَا شَوْاظٌ مِّن نَّارٍ ۖ وَنَحَاسٌ فَلَا تَنْصِرِينَ
 ﴿٣٥﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آيَةِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكذِّبِينَ ﴿٣٦﴾ فَإِذَا انشَقَّتِ السَّمَاءُ فَكَانَتْ
 وَرْدَةً كَالدِّهَانِ ﴿٣٧﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آيَةِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكذِّبِينَ ﴿٣٨﴾ فَيَوْمَئِذٍ
 لَا يُسْئَلُ عَنْ ذَنْبِهِ إِنْسٌ وَلَا جَانٌّ ﴿٣٩﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آيَةِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكذِّبِينَ
 ﴿٤٠﴾ يُعْرَفُ الْمُجْرِمُونَ بِسِيمِهِمْ فَيُؤْخَذُ بِالنَّوَاصِي وَالْأَقْدَامِ
 ﴿٤١﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آيَةِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكذِّبِينَ ﴿٤٢﴾ هَذِهِ جَهَنَّمُ الَّتِي يُكَذِّبُ بِهَا
 الْمُجْرِمُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾ يَطُوفُونَ بَيْنَهَا وَبَيْنَ حَمِيمٍ إِنْ ﴿٤٤﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آيَةِ
 رَبِّكُمَا تُكذِّبِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾

Every one who lives on it (the earth) has to perish. [26] And your Lord's Countenance will remain, full of majesty, full of honour. [27] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [28] All those in the heavens and the earth beseech Him (for their needs.) Every day He is at some task. [29] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [30] Soon We are going to spare Ourselves for you (to reckon your deeds), O two heavy species (of Jinns and mankind)! [31] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [32] O genera of Jinns and mankind, If you are able to penetrate beyond the realms of the heavens and the earth, then penetrate. You cannot penetrate except with an authority. [33] So, which of the bounties of your Lord

will you deny? [34] A flame of fire and a smoke will be loosed against you, and you will not (be able) to defend. [35] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [36] So, (it will be a terrible event) when the sky will be split apart and will become rosy, like (red) hides. [37] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [38] On that day, neither a man will be questioned about his sin, nor a Jinn, (because every thing is known to Allah). [39] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [40] The guilty ones will be recognized (by the angels) by their marks and will be seized by foreheads and feet. [41] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [42] This is the Jahannam (Hell) that the guilty people deny. [43] They will circle around between it and between hot, boiling water. [44] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [45]

Allah is the Ever-living, Free of all Need

كُلُّ مَنْ عَلَيْهَا فَانٍ وَيَبْقَىٰ وَجْهُ رَبِّكَ ذُو الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ (Every one who lives on it (the earth) has to perish, and your Lord's Countenance will remain, full of majesty, full of honour...55:26-27). The attached pronoun [it] refers to الأرض *al-ard* [the earth] which has been explicitly mentioned antecedently in verse [10] وَالْأَرْضُ وَضَعَهَا لِلْأَنَامِ (And the earth is placed by Him for creatures..). Furthermore, 'the earth' is one of those general things that can be referred to by a pronoun even if they are not mentioned explicitly as an antecedent. Verse [26] means that man and *jinn* that dwell on the earth are subject to decay and death. *Jinn* and man have specifically been singled out in this verse, because in this Surah these two species of Allah's creation are mainly addressed. This, however, does not necessarily imply that the heaven and the celestial beings are not perishable. In fact, on another occasion in the Qur'ān Allah has stated in general terms: كُلُّ شَيْءٍ هَالِكٌ إِلَّا وَجْهَهُ (Everything is going to perish except His Face). (28:88)

وَجْهُ رَبِّكَ (...your Lord's Countenance55:27). The word *wajh* [Face], according to majority of the exegetes, stands for the 'Being of Allah'. The attached second person pronoun in *rabb-i-kā* [=your Lord] refers to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. It is a great honour for him that he should be remembered by Allah in special ways when praising him, as for instance, 'abduhū (His servant). Here, Allah, the Lord of lords, declares His direct special relationship with the Holy Prophet ﷺ and addresses him thus:

rabb-i-kā [your Lord].

According to the well-known exegetes, the verse purports to convey that since everything [including *jinn* and mankind] dwelling on earth will be reduced to nothing, and the heavenly bodies all brought to naught, and the whole material universe made non-existent, still human reason demands that there should be a Being who should remain and who should never die. Such a Being is Allah Who created the whole universe and Who is the First and the Final Cause of all things. He alone will abide because He is Self-Subsisting, All-Sustaining, Independent and Besought of all.

The word *fanā'* has two possible meanings: [1] everything is potentially subject to decay and death and is eventually destined to perish, having no capacity for permanence and immortality; and [2] all things will actually pass away on Doomsday.

Other exegetes have interpreted the phrase *وَجْهَ رَبِّكَ* 'your Lord's Countenance' to mean 'your side', that is, out of all existent beings only those things will attain permanence that are on the side of Allah. This includes the Being of Allah and His Attributes. It also includes the actions and conditions of Allah's creation that remain firmly attached to Allah and is never separated from Him in any situation. In sum, the verse means: 'Everything that man, *jinn* and angels do for Allah's pleasure will remain under His care and protection and as such will attain permanence, never to perish.' This interpretation is supported by another verse: *مَا عِنْدَكُمْ يَنْفَدُ وَمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ بَاقٍ* (What is with you shall end and what is with Allah shall last....16:96) The phrase 'what is with you' refers to 'wealth and power, comfort and discomfort, love and hatred'. All these states and matters are transitory and must perish. The phrase 'what is with Allah' refers to 'man's actions and states which remain firmly attached to Allah and is never separated from Him in any situation are destined to last, never to perish. Allah, the Pure and Most Exalted, knows best!

ذُو الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ (...full of majesty, full of honour...55:27). In other words, the Lord is the Master of Greatness, Grandeur and Tremendousness. This is Allah's Majesty that overwhelms His creation and fills them with awe. The Lord is also the Master of Honour, signifying that those who benefit by the great favours Allah has bestowed upon them and walk in the path

of truth and righteousness will be granted more favours by the Lord of Honour. Despite being the Lord of Greatness and Majesty, Allah is not like the worldly kings and rulers who would not pay attention to others or the indigent people. He grants their petition and invocation. The next verse [to be analysed in the forthcoming paragraph] bears testimony to this interpretation. The current phrase under discussion constitutes one of those special Attributes of Allah which if a suppliant were to invoke before calling upon Allah for help, protection, inspiration and a host of other things, the supplication will be readily granted as recorded in Tirmidhi, Nasa'ī and Musnad of Ahmad. Ibn 'Amir رضي الله عنه has transmitted that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: **الْطُّوْا بِمَا ذَا الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ** (Persist [in invoking Allah] with 'O Lord of Majesty and Honour'.") The imperative *alizzū* is derived from the infinitive *ilzāz* which means 'to continue firmly in some course of action'. [Mazharī]

يَسْئَلُهُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ هُوَ فِي شَأْنٍ (All those in the heavens and the earth beseech Him. Every day He is at some task...55:29) The verse signifies that all creatures stand in need of Allah, in all conditions and situations. They all seek His help willingly or unwillingly. The earthly creatures ask for their specific needs. In this world, they need sustenance, health and welfare, and comfort; and in the Hereafter, they need forgiveness, mercy and Paradise. The celestial creatures do not eat and drink, they do however need Allah's mercy and grace. Allah's grace, forgiveness and so on surround them all the time. The phrase **كُلَّ يَوْمٍ** 'every day' is the adverb of time of the verb **يَسْئَلُهُ** 'beseech'.⁽¹⁾ The 'day' is not used in its popular sense, but in the sense of 'time' in general. All His creation, in different regions, in different languages implore for their needs all the time. Obviously, each member of the earthly and celestial beings has countless needs. Who else besides the Absolutely Powerful Being, the Lord of Majesty, is able to respond to their needs every moment of the time? Therefore, 'every day' is followed by the sentence **هُوَ فِي شَأْنٍ** 'He is at some task', that is, His Attributes know no limit or count, and keep finding their manifestations in diverse ways all the time. He gives life to some and causes others to die. He elevates some and others He abases. Some He

(1) This is according to one construction of the sentence. Other exegetes have taken the phrase 'every day' as relating to 'He is at some task'. The translation of the verse given above is based on this latter construction, which is also adopted by Moulana Thanawi رحمه الله تعالى. (Muhammad Taqi Usmani).

causes to become ill and others He cures. He alleviates the adversity of some; He causes the aggrieved ones to smile; He grants the requests of supplicants; He forgives the sins of the sinners and makes them deserving of Paradise; He gives power to some, and He snatches it away from others and abases them. In sum, every Attribute of Allah keeps finding its manifestation in diverse ways all the time.

A Warning for Humans and Jinn

سَنَفْرُغُ لَكُمْ أَيُّهَ الثَّقَلَيْنِ (Soon We are going to spare Ourselves for you [to reckon your deeds], O two heavy species! ...55:31) The word ثَقْلَانِ *thaqalān* is the dual of ثَقْل *thaqal* which denotes 'burden or load'. Thus the word *ath-thaqalān* [the dual form] denotes 'the two heavy or weighty things', and signifies 'the men' and 'the *Jinn*' as the context shows. In Arabic, the word *thaqal* refers to anything the weight or value of which is well-known. It is in this sense that the word has occurred in the following Prophetic Tradition: إِنِّي تَارِكٌ فِيكُمْ الثَّقَلَيْنِ (Indeed I leave amongst you two weighty and valuable things... which will continue to guide you.) Some versions of the Tradition state that those two weighty and valuable things are: كِتَابُ اللَّهِ وَعَترَتِي "Allah's Book and my family" and others state: كِتَابُ اللَّهِ وَ سُنَّتِي "Allah's Book and my normative Sunnah [practices]". The end result of both the versions amount to the same thing because *'itrah* refers to both types of family, lineal or spiritual. Therefore, it refers to all the noble Companions. The end result of the Tradition is that after the Prophet ﷺ there are two things that will serve to guide and set aright the Muslims: [1] the Book of Allah; and [2] the example of the blessed Companions in all their mutual dealings and transactions. The version that uses *'itrah* instead of *Sunnah* means the teachings of the Prophet ﷺ that reached the Muslims through the noble Companions.

Be that as it may, the word ثَقَلَيْنِ *thaqalain* in the Tradition refers to the two weighty and valuable things. From this point of view, *Ath-thaqalān*, in the current verse, refers to the two species of Allah's creation, *Jinn* and human beings, because they are the weightiest and most valuable beings [possessed of soul] dwelling on earth.

Then the verse says, 'Soon We are going to spare Ourselves for you' The verb سَنَفْرُغُ *sanafrughu* is derived from فَرَاغَ *farāgh*, which means to be free from occupation. The antonym of *farāgh* is شُغِلَ *shughl* [to occupy]. The word *farāgh* informs us of two things: [1] that one was occupied with

something; and [2] now he has become free from that occupation. This type of *farāgh* is common in human beings. However, neither of these senses apply to Allah. He is above them. Surely, nothing will occupy Allah from attending to anything else, nor does He become free or unoccupied like human beings do. Therefore, the verb *sanafrughu* [We are going to spare Ourselves to you] is employed as a metaphor. This metaphorical use of the word is common in human speech. This expression is used to show the importance of some work: 'We are now free to attend to you, being fully focused on you'. Anyone who fully focuses attention on any work, idiomatically it is said that 'he has no other work or he has nothing else to do'. In a verse preceding this [29], it was mentioned that the earthly beings ask for their specific needs, such as sustenance, health and welfare, and comfort; and forgiveness, mercy and Paradise. The celestial beings need Allah's mercy, grace and forgiveness which surround them all the time. From this point of view, Allah is, every moment, in a state of characteristic manifestation of His Divinity and Divine Attributes. The verse *sanafrughu* [We are going to spare Ourselves for you...] indicates that on the Day of Judgement all petitions, their acceptance and acting on them will come to an end. Of all the manifestations, there shall remain only one manifestation and that is taking account of deeds and passing judgement with absolute justice and equity. [Rūh]

يَمْعَشَرُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسِ إِنْ اسْتَطَعْتُمْ أَنْ تَنْفُذُوا مِنْ أَقْطَارِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ فَانْفُذُوا
لَا تَنْفُذُونَ إِلَّا بِسُلْطَنٍ ﴿٣٣﴾

(O genera of Jinns and mankind, If you are able to penetrate beyond the realms of the heavens and the earth, then penetrate. You cannot penetrate except with an authority....55:33)

In the preceding verse *jinn* and mankind were addressed as *Ath-thaqalan* and warned that their deeds will be reviewed and every single one of them will attract reward or punishment. The current verse purports to say that no one will be able to hide from death, nor will anyone be able to escape from attendance or giving account of actions on the Day of Judgement. This verse does not use the expression *تَقْلَنُ* *Thaqalan* as in the preceding verse but explicitly uses the expression *يَمْعَشَرُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسِ* (O genera of *Jinns* and mankind) '*Jinn*' is mentioned first followed by 'men' presumably because a high-power energy is required to pass through the confines of heaven and earth. Allah has given Jinns

more power than human beings in such matters. The meaning of the verse is: 'O Company of *Jinn* and human beings, if you think that you will be able to find refuge and thus avert death by avoiding the angel of death or run away from the Plains of Gathering or the Plains of Reckoning, then try to cross the bounds of the heavens and the earth if you have the power and ability to do so.' This is no mean task. This requires high-powered energy. The combined forces of Jinns and mankind will not be able to harness the energy to go beyond the confines of the heavens and the earth. The purport of the verse is not to show the possibility or probability of passing beyond the zones of the heavens and the earth. The proposition is hypothetical. The purport of the verse is to demonstrate the utter powerlessness and inability of men and Jinns to achieve this feat.

If the purpose of 'penetrating through the heavens and the earth' mentioned in the verse is to escape death, then it refers to this world and means: It is not within the power of any man or *Jinns* to cross the bounds of the heavens and the earth and escape death. This is stated according to human thinking. Otherwise, no one is outside the power and the authority of Allah, even if he crosses the bounds of the heaven and the earth. And if the escape intended by 'penetrating through the heavens and the earth' stands for 'escaping accountability on the Day of Reckoning', the purport of the verse is to demonstrate its absolute impossibility. For according to other Qur'ānic verses and Traditional narratives the heaven will crack open, on the Day of Judgement, and all the angels will border on the sides of the earth and the people will be hemmed in from all sides. The Jinn and human beings will experience the horrors of the Day of Resurrection and run in different directions. In whichever direction they run the angels will lay siege to the areas that Allah has fortified for the purpose of recapturing the escapees. [Rūḥ]

This Verse does not point to Space Exploration by Rockets and Sputniks

In the present scientific age, experiments are being conducted in an effort to come out of the gravity of the earth and to explore the heavenly bodies by rockets, sputniks and other spacecrafts. Obviously, none of these experiments are conducted beyond the bounds of the heaven. In fact, they are far below the surface of the heaven, let alone crossing the

heavenly confines. Thus this verse has no bearing on space travels and reported incidents of reaching some of the heavenly bodies. Some simple-minded people posit this verse as the basis of demonstrating the possibility of space travels, whereas these simpletons are merely displaying ignorance about the actual meaning of the Qur'ān.

يُرْسَلُ عَلَيْكُمَا شُوَاظٌ مِّنْ نَّارٍ وَنُحَاسٌ فَلَا تَنْتَصِرْنَ (A flame of fire and a smoke will be loosed against you, and you will not [be able] to defend...55:35) Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه and other leading authorities on Qur'ānic exegesis have said that the word *shuwaz* with refers to 'flame or fire without smoke' and the word *nuhās* refers to 'smoke in which there is no flame'. This verse too addresses the two species of creation, the *jinn*s and mankind. It addresses them and describes how fire and smoke will be unleashed against them. The verse could mean that after the reckoning is over, and the disbelievers are sent to the Hell, they will experience two different types of punishment. In some places there will be only fire and flame, with no smoke at all. In other places there will be only smoke and no flame or fire. Other Qur'ānic exegetes regard this verse as a supplement to the preceding one, and assign the following meaning to it: O *jinn* and mankind; it is not within your power to cross the bounds of the heavens. If you do attempt to escape on the Day of Resurrection, then the angels [including those guarding the Hellfire] will bring you back by directing the flames of fire and smoke. The verb *فَلَا تَنْتَصِرْنَ* *falā-tantaṣirān* is derived from *إِنْتِصَارٌ* *intiṣār* which means 'to help someone to defend him against a calamity' and thus the words *فَلَا تَنْتَصِرْنَ* *falā-tantaṣirān* signify that the *jinn*s and mankind will not be able to help each other against Divine punishment, try as they might.

The Horrors of the Day of Resurrection

فَيَوْمَئِذٍ لَا يُسْأَلُ عَنْ ذَنْبِهِ إِنْسٌ وَلَا جَانٌّ (On that day, neither a man will be questioned about his sin, nor a *Jinn*...55:39) One interpretation of this verse is that no one will be asked whether or not he had committed the sin, because it will have already been recorded by the angels in the ledger of deeds, and Allah has the Pre-Eternal knowledge of it. The question will be 'why' did they commit the sin? This is the interpretation of Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه. Mujāhid رحمه الله تعالى interprets it as follows: There will be no need for the angels of punishment to question the criminals whether or not they committed the sin. They will be known by their special marks [See verse

(41) below] clearly showing on their faces. The angels will be able to recognize them by their distinguishing marks and hurl them into the Hellfire according to the type of misdeeds they might have committed. A composite interpretation of the two explanations is as follows: This event will take place when people will have given account of their deeds, and judgment will have been passed against the criminals to go to Hell on the Day of Reckoning. They will not be questioned nor will any negotiation be held about their sins at that stage. Their characteristic signs will be seen on their faces, and accordingly they will be hurled into Hell.

Qatādah رَحِمَهُ اللهُ تَعَالَى says that the verse refers to a stage after they will have been questioned about their sins, but they will have refused under oath. Then their mouths and tongues will be sealed, and their hands and feet will be asked to bear witness. At that stage no more questions will be asked from them. Ibn Kathīr notes all three explanations. They are close to each other, and thus there is no conflict.

يُعْرَفُ الْمُجْرِمُونَ بِسِيمَاهُمْ فَيُؤْخَذُ بِالنَّوَاصِي وَالْأَقْدَامِ (The guilty ones will be recognized [by the angels] by their marks and will be seized by foreheads and feet...55:41) The word *sima* means 'a sign'. Ḥasan Baṣrī رَحِمَهُ اللهُ تَعَالَى says that the day when sentence will be passed against the guilty to go to Hell, the following will be their signs: They will be known by their dark faces and their blue eyes. Through grief their faces will turn pale. The angels will recognize the guilty by these signs and seize them.

The word نَوَاصِي *nawāṣī* is the plural of نَاصِيَةٌ *nāṣiyah*, and means 'forelock'. Some will be dragged by their forelocks, and others will be dragged by their feet. Or it could mean that sometimes they will be dragged by their forelocks and at other times they will be dragged by their feet. The third explanation could be that the angels of punishment will bend their foreheads down to their feet and tie the forelocks to the feet, and throw them into the Hellfire. Allah knows best!

Verses 46-78

وَلَمَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ جَنَّتٍ ﴿٤٦﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾
 ذَوَاتَا أَفْنَانٍ ﴿٤٨﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٤٩﴾ فِيهِمَا عَيْنِينَ

تَجْرِبِينَ ﴿٥٠﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٥١﴾ فِيهِمَا مِنْ كُلِّ فَاكِهَةٍ
رَوْحٍ ﴿٥٢﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٥٣﴾ مُتَّكِعِينَ عَلَى فُرُشٍ
بَطَائِنُهَا مِنْ إِسْتَبْرَقٍ ۗ وَجَنَّا الْجَنَّتَيْنِ دَانٍ ﴿٥٤﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا
تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٥٥﴾ فِيهِنَّ فِصْرُ الْطَرَفِ ۗ لَمْ يَطْمِئُنَّ أَنْسُ قَبْلَهُمْ وَلَا
جَانٌّ ﴿٥٦﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٥٧﴾ كَانَهُنَّ الْيَاقُوتُ
وَالْمَرْجَانُ ﴿٥٨﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٥٩﴾ هَلْ جَزَاءُ
الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ ﴿٦٠﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٦١﴾ وَمِنْ
دُونِهِمَا جَنَّتَيْنِ ﴿٦٢﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٦٣﴾ مُدْهَامَتَيْنِ
﴿٦٤﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٦٥﴾ فِيهِمَا عَيْنِينَ نَضَّاحَتَيْنِ ﴿٦٦﴾
فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٦٧﴾ فِيهِمَا فَاكِهَةٌ وَنَخْلٌ وَرُمَّانٌ ﴿٦٨﴾
فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٦٩﴾ فِيهِنَّ خَيْرٌ حِسَانٌ ﴿٧٠﴾ فَبِأَيِّ
الْآلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٧١﴾ حُورٌ مَّقْصُورَاتٌ فِي الْخِيَامِ ﴿٧٢﴾ فَبِأَيِّ
الْآلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٧٣﴾ لَمْ يَطْمِئُنَّ أَنْسُ قَبْلَهُمْ وَلَا جَانٌّ ﴿٧٤﴾
فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٧٥﴾ مُتَّكِعِينَ عَلَى رَفْرَفٍ خُضْرٍ
وَعَبْقَرِيٍّ حِسَانٍ ﴿٧٦﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٧٧﴾ تَبْرَكَ اسْمُ
رَبِّكَ ذِي الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ ﴿٧٨﴾

And for the one who is fearful of having to stand before his Lord, there are two gardens [46] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [47] both having lot of branches. [48] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [49] In both there are two flowing springs. [50] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [51] In both there are two kinds of every fruit. [52] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [53] (The people of these gardens will be) reclining on floorings whose (even) linings are of thick silk, and the fruits plucked from the two gardens will be at hand.

[54] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [55] In them there are maidens restraining their glances, whom neither a man will have touched before them, nor a Jinn. [56] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [57] They look like rubies and corals. [58] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [59] Is there any reward for goodness other than goodness? [60] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [61] And lesser than these two, there are two other gardens (for the second category of the God-fearing), [62] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [63] both dark green! [64] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [65] In both there are two springs gushing forth profusely. [66] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [67] In both there are fruits and date-palms and pomegranates. [68] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [69] In them there are women, good and gorgeous, [70] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [71] the houris, kept guarded in pavilions [72] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [73] whom neither a man will have touched before them, nor a Jinn. [74] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [75] (The people of these gardens will be) reclining on green cushions and marvelously beautiful mattresses. [76] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [77] Glorious is the name of your Lord, the Lord of Majesty, the Lord of Honour. [78]

The Delight of the Righteous in Paradise

The foregoing verses spoke of the horrible punishments to be faced by the disbelievers. In the current set of verses we are told about the rewards and bounties reserved for the righteous believers. The verse 46 speaks of two Gardens that are exclusively reserved 'for those who are fearful of having to stand before their Lord'. This phrase refers to those fortunate believers who are, at all times, concerned about reckoning on the Day of Judgement and, as a result, keep away from all sorts of sins under all circumstances. Obviously, these are the people who enjoy special nearness to Allah. In verse [62] below we read: وَمِنْ دُونِهِمَا جَنَّاتٍ (And lesser than these two, there are two other gardens...55:62) This verse does not specify the class of righteous believers who will receive these gardens. However, the phrase مِنْ دُونِهِمَا *min dunihimā* ('and lesser than these two') indicates that

the Gardens mentioned in verse [62] are for the general body of believers who are lesser in their spiritual attainment than the foremost believers who are granted special nearness to Allah.

The Qur'ānic exegetes have explained the two sets of pairs of Gardens in other ways as well. Here we have adopted the most plausible and preferable explanation: that is, the first two Gardens are reserved exclusively for the foremost believers who are granted special nearness to Allah; and the second two Gardens are reserved for the general body of believers. That the two Gardens mentioned in Verse 62 are inferior to the first two is supported by authentic Traditions. Bayān-ul-Qur'ān cites the Prophetic Tradition from Ad-Durr-ul-Manthūr to the effect that while interpreting verses [46] and [62] the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: *جَنَّاتٍ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ لِلْمُقَرَّبِينَ وَجَنَّاتٍ مِنْ وَرَقٍ لِأَصْحَابِ الْيَمِينِ* "There are two Gardens made of gold for believers who are granted special nearness to Allah; and there are two Gardens made of silver for the People of the Right [that is, for general body of righteous believers]." Also, it is recorded in Ad-Durr-ul-Manthūr that Sayyidnā Barā' Ibn 'Āzib رضي الله عنه said: *الْعَيْنَانِ الَّتِي تَجْرِيَانِ خَيْرٌ مِنَ النَّصَاطِينِ* "The two springs that are flowing freely [in the first two Gardens] are better than the two other springs that are mentioned as 'gushing forth' (in the second two gardens). In verse [50] springs (in the first two gardens) promised to the believers have been described as flowing freely and ceaselessly *تَجْرِيَانِ [tajriyān]* while in verse [66] the springs (in the second two gardens) are described as 'gushing forth' *نَضَاطِينِ [naddākhatān]*. The quality of 'gushing forth' is the characteristic of all springs, but the quality of 'flowing' is an additional characteristic of specific springs. This is the concise description of all four springs that the inmates of Paradise will be given.

Related Considerations

In Verse 46, the phrase, *وَلِمَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ* (for the one who is fearful of having to stand before his Lord...55:46) refers, according to most exegetes of the Qur'ān, to standing before Allah on the Day of Resurrection to give the account of one's deeds. The word 'fearful' signifies that he is mindful under all conditions, whether in public or in private, that one day he has to appear in the Court of Allah to give an account of his deeds. Evidently such a person will never go near the sinful acts.

Other exegetes, like Qurtubī and others, interpret this to mean : 'the

one who is fearful of the Station of His Lord'. That is, he is mindful of the High Station of Allah whereby He is watchful and keeps guard over his words and deeds, overt or covert. All his movements and activities are known to Him. This explanation is close to the previous explanation, in that Allah's keeping guard over him will keep him away from sins.

ذَوَاتَا أَفْنَانٍ (both having lot of branches...55:48). This describes the first two Gardens. There will be plenty of trees abounding in branches and consequently their shade will be dense, and the fruits will be in abundance. The other two Gardens are described later. No such qualities are mentioned about them, which may imply their relative deficiency in this quality.

فِيهِمَا مِنْ كُلِّ فَاكِهَةٍ زَوْجَيْنِ (In both there are two kinds of every fruit...52). The phrase "of every fruit" denotes that the first two gardens will comprehend all kinds of fruit. As opposed to this, verse [68] simply states *fākīhah* [=fruits] about the second two gardens. The word *زَوْجَيْنِ* *zawjān* [two kinds] means every fruit will be of two types. This may be referring to one kind of dried fruits, and the other of fresh ones. It could also mean that one kind will be of normal taste, and the other of some extra ordinary flavor. [Mazḥarī]

لَمْ يَطْمِئِنَّهُنَّ أَنْسٌ قَبْلَهُمْ وَلَا جَانٌّ (...whom neither a man will have touched before them, nor a *Jinn*...55:56). The word *طَمَّتْ* *ṭamth* has different meanings. 'Menstrual discharge' is termed as *ṭamth*, and the menstruating woman as *طَامِثٌ* '*ṭamith*'. It also means 'sexual intercourse with a virgin'. This second sense is meant here in this verse.

هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ (Is there any reward for goodness other than goodness?...55:60). Having described the two Gardens for the intimate believers, it is declared as a principle that a good deed attracts a good reward. The righteous believers will be blessed, therefore, with good rewards.

مُدْهَامَّتَيْنِ (both dark green!...55:64). This is one word verse, and it means 'dark green with foliage'. The word is derived from *idhimām* signifying, for a meadow or garden, to become of dark green hue inclining to black by reason of abundance of moisture or irrigation. This description is not assigned to the first two Gardens. This does not necessarily imply that they do not have this quality. The former Gardens are described as ذَوَاتَا

افْتَانَ 'having lot of branches'. This comprehends the quality of 'dark green' as well.

فِيهِنَّ خَيْرَاتٌ حِسَانٌ (In them there are women, good and gorgeous,...55:70) The word خَيْرَاتٌ *khairāt* (translated above as 'good') refers to 'the good character of those women'; and the word حِسَانٌ *hisān* (translated above as 'gorgeous') refers to 'women who have beautiful features'. These qualities too will be common with the maidens of both the Gardens, to which reference was made in the foregoing verses.

مُتَّكِئِينَ عَلَى رَفْرَفٍ خُضِرٍ وَعَبَقَرِيِّ حِسَانٍ (...reclining on green cushions and marvelously beautiful mattresses....55:76) Qāmūs explains that the word رَفْرَفٌ *rafrāf* means 'silk fabric greenish in colour' which is used in making carpets, pillows, cushions and other items of decoration. It is mentioned in the Arabic lexicon *Ṣiḥāḥ* that they are embellished with arboreal and floral patterns, which, in Urdu, is called مُشَجَّرٌ *mushajjar*. The noun عَبَقَرِيٌّ *‘abqariyy* refers to 'every fine, beautiful fabric or material' and the adjective *hisān* [beautiful] qualifies it.

تَبَرَّكَ اسْمُ رَبِّكَ ذِي الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ (Glorious is the name of your Lord, the Lord of Majesty, the Lord of Honor....55:78) Sūrah Ar-Raḥmān is replete with verses that call attention to Allah's blessings, boons and bounties, and His favors upon man. In conclusion, this verse has been appended as a synopsis: What can one say about the Pure Being? Even His Name is Glorious. All Divine boons and bounties subsist by virtue of His Name. Allah, the Pure and the Most High, knows best!

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Ar-Raḥmān
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Wāqī'ah (The Imminent Event)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 96 verses and 3 sections

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

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

Verses 1 - 56

إِذَا وَقَعَتِ الْوَاقِعَةُ ﴿١﴾ لَيْسَ لِيُوقِعَتِهَا كَاذِبَةٌ ﴿٢﴾ خَافِضَةٌ رَّافِعَةٌ ﴿٣﴾ إِذَا رُجَّتِ الْأَرْضُ رَجًا ﴿٤﴾ وَبُسَّتِ الْجِبَالُ بَسًا ﴿٥﴾ فَكَانَتْ
 هَبَاءً مُّنبَثًّا ﴿٦﴾ وَكُنْتُمْ أَزْوَاجًا ثَلَاثَةً ﴿٧﴾ فَأَصْحَبُ الْمِئْمَنَةِ لَا مَا
 أَصْحَبُ الْمِئْمَنَةِ ﴿٨﴾ وَأَصْحَبُ الْمَشْأَمَةِ لَا مَا أَصْحَبُ الْمَشْأَمَةِ ﴿٩﴾
 وَالسَّبِقُونَ السَّبِقُونَ ﴿١٠﴾ أُولَئِكَ الْمُقَرَّبُونَ ﴿١١﴾ فِي جَنَّتِ
 النَّعِيمِ ﴿١٢﴾ ثَلَاثَةٌ مِنَ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿١٣﴾ وَقَلِيلٌ مِنَ الْآخِرِينَ ﴿١٤﴾ عَلَى
 سُرُرٍ مَّوْضُونَةٍ ﴿١٥﴾ مُتَّكِنِينَ عَلَيْهَا مُتَقَلِّبِينَ ﴿١٦﴾ يَطُوفُ عَلَيْهِمْ
 وِلْدَانٌ مُّخَلَّدُونَ ﴿١٧﴾ بِأَكْوَابٍ وَأَبَارِيقٍ وَكَأْسٍ مِّنْ مَّعِينٍ ﴿١٨﴾
 لَا يَصِدَّعُونَ عَنْهَا وَلَا يُنْزِفُونَ ﴿١٩﴾ وَفَاكِهَةٍ مِّمَّا يَتَخَيَّرُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾
 وَلَحْمِ طَيْرٍ مِّمَّا يَشْتَهُونَ ﴿٢١﴾ وَحُورٍ عِينٍ ﴿٢٢﴾ كَأَمْثَالِ اللُّؤْلُؤِ
 الْمَكْنُونِ ﴿٢٣﴾ جَزَاءً لِّبِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ فِيهَا
 لَغْوًا وَلَا تَأْتِيهَا إِلَّا قِيلًا سَلَمًا سَلَمًا ﴿٢٥﴾ وَأَصْحَبُ الْيَمِينِ لَا

مَا أَصْحَبَ الْيَمِينِ ﴿٢٧﴾ فِي سِدْرٍ مَّخْضُودٍ ﴿٢٨﴾ وَطَلْحٍ مَّنْضُودٍ ﴿٢٩﴾
 وَظِلِّ مَمْدُودٍ ﴿٣٠﴾ وَمَاءٍ مَّسْكُوبٍ ﴿٣١﴾ وَفَاكِهِةٍ كَثِيرَةٍ ﴿٣٢﴾
 لَّامَقْطُوعَةٍ وَلَا مَمْنُوعَةٍ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَفُرْشٍ مَّرْفُوعَةٍ ﴿٣٤﴾ إِنَّا
 أَنشَأْنَهُنَّ إِنشَاءً ﴿٣٥﴾ فَجَعَلْنَهُنَّ أَبْكَارًا ﴿٣٦﴾ عُرْبًا أْتْرَابًا ﴿٣٧﴾
 لِأَصْحَابِ الْيَمِينِ ﴿٣٨﴾ ثَلَاثَةٌ مِّنَ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿٣٩﴾ وَثَلَاثَةٌ مِّنَ الْآخِرِينَ ﴿٤٠﴾
 وَأَصْحَابُ الشِّمَالِ لِمَا أَصْحَبُ الشِّمَالِ ﴿٤١﴾ فِي سَمُومٍ
 وَحَمِيمٍ ﴿٤٢﴾ وَظِلِّ مِّنْ يَّحْمُومٍ ﴿٤٣﴾ لَّابَارِدٍ وَلَا كَرِيمٍ ﴿٤٤﴾ إِنَّهُمْ
 كَانُوا قَبْلَ ذَلِكَ مُتْرَفِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾ وَكَانُوا يُصِرُّونَ عَلَى الْحِنثِ
 الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٤٦﴾ وَكَانُوا يَقُولُونَ لَا إِذَا مِنَّا وَكَانَّا تُرَابًا وَعِظَامًا إِنَّا
 لَمَبْعُوثُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾ أَوْ آبَاؤُنَا الْأَوَّلُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾ قُلْ إِنَّ الْأَوَّلِينَ وَالْآخِرِينَ
 ﴿٤٩﴾ لَمَجْمُوعُونَ إِلَىٰ مِيقَاتِ يَوْمٍ مَّعْلُومٍ ﴿٥٠﴾ ثُمَّ إِنَّكُمْ أَيُّهَا
 الضَّالُّونَ الْمُكْذِبُونَ ﴿٥١﴾ لَأَكْلُونَ مِنْ شَجَرٍ مِّنْ زُقُومٍ ﴿٥٢﴾
 فَمَالِئُونَ مِنْهَا الْبُطُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾ فَشَرِبُونَ عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الْحَمِيمِ ﴿٥٤﴾
 فَشَرِبُونَ شُرْبَ الْهَيْمِ ﴿٥٥﴾ هَذَا نُزُلُهُمْ يَوْمَ الدِّينِ ﴿٥٦﴾

When the Imminent Event (of Doom) will occur, [1] there will be no one to deny its occurrence. [2] It will be abasing (some), exalting (others) [3] when the earth will be jolted with a quake, [4] and the mountains will be crumbled with a thorough crumbling, [5] until they will become dust, scattered in the air, [6] and you will be (divided into) three categories. [7] As for the People of the Right, how (lucky) are the people of the Right! [8] And the People of the Left? How (wretched) are the People of the Left! [9] And the Foremost are the foremost. [10] Those are the ones blessed with nearness (to Allah) [11] in gardens of bliss, [12] many from the earlier generations, [13] and of a small number from the later ones. [14] (They will be sitting) on thrones woven

with gold, [15] reclining on them, facing each other. [16] They will be served in rounds by Immortal boys [17] with bowls and jugs and a goblet of pure wine, [18] from which they will neither suffer headache, nor will they be intoxicated, [19] and with fruits of their choice, [20] and the meat of birds that they desire. [21] And (for them there will be) houris, having lovely big eyes, [22] all (neat and clean) like a hidden pearl, [23] as a reward for what they used to do. [24] They will hear neither an absurd talk therein, nor something leading to sin, [25] but the words of *salām*, *salām* (as greetings). [26] As for the People of the Right, how (lucky) are the People of the Right! [27] (They will be) amid lote-trees with no thorns, [28] and the trees of *ṭalh*, (banana, or a fragrant tree) having layers one upon the other, [29] and a shade, spread all over, [30] and water, poured forth, [31] and a lot of fruits, [32] neither interrupted (in any season), nor prohibited, [33] and mattresses of high quality. [34] Surely We have created those (females) a fresh creation, [35] and have made them virgins, [36] amorous to their husbands, matching them in age, [37] for the People of the Right, [38] (comprising) many from the earlier generations, [39] and many from the later ones. [40] As for the People of the Left, How (wretched) are the People of the Left! [41] (They will be) in burning wind and boiling water, [42] and in a shade of black smoke, [43] neither cool nor graceful. [44] They were before that indulged in luxuries, [45] and used to persist in major sins, [46] and used to say, "Is it that when we die and become dust—is it that we will be raised again, [47] and our ancient fathers as well?" [48] Say, "All the earlier and the later ones [49] will be gathered together for a fixed time of a specified Day. [50] Then O you, the erring, the denying people, [51] you will have to eat from the tree of *Zaqqūm*, [52] and to fill with it the bellies, [53] then you will have to drink boiling water on top of it, [54] and to drink like camels suffering from the disease of over-thirst. [55] This will be their entertainment on the Day of Requit. [56]

Special Characteristic of Sūrah Al-Wāqī'ah: Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd's Didactic Story on his Deathbed

Ibn Kathīr cites a story on the authority of Ibn 'Asakir from Abū Zābyah that when Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه was lying on his deathbed, Sayyidnā 'Uthmān رضي الله عنه paid him a visit and the following

conversation ensued.

'Uthmān رضي الله عنه: "مَا تَشْتَكِي؟" "What are you suffering from?"

Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه: "ذُنُوبِي" "from my sins."

'Uthmān رضي الله عنه: "مَا تَشْتَهِي؟" "Do you desire anything?"

Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه: "رَحْمَةَ رَبِّي" "Yes, Allah's mercy."

'Uthmān رضي الله عنه: "أَلَا أَمْرُكَ بِطَيْبٍ؟" "Shall I call a doctor for you?"

Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه: "الطَّيِّبُ أَمْرَضَنِي" "It is the doctor who has given me the ailment."

'Uthmān رضي الله عنه: "أَلَا أَمْرُكَ بِعَطَاءٍ؟" "May I send you an allowance from the public treasury?"

Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه: "لَا حَاجَةَ لِي فِيهِ" "I have no need for it."

'Uthmān رضي الله عنه: "يَكُونُ لِبَنَاتِكَ مِنْ بَعْدِكَ" "Accept it, [please]. You are leaving daughters behind you. It will help them."

Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه: "إِنِّي لَأَخْشَى عَلَى بَنَاتِي الْفَقْرَ إِنِّي أَمَرْتُ بَنَاتِي يَقْرَأْنَ كُلَّ لَيْلَةٍ سُورَةَ الْوَاقِعَةِ. إِنِّي سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ: مَنْ قَرَأَ سُورَةَ الْوَاقِعَةِ كُلَّ لَيْلَةٍ لَمْ تُصِبْهُ فَاقَةٌ أَبَدًا. (ابن كثير ٣٠٢:٤)" "You are worried about my daughters that they must not suffer from poverty. I have no such worry, because I have instructed them to recite Sūrah Al-Wāqī'ah every night. I have heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say, 'Whoever recites Sūrah Al-Wāqī'ah every night will never suffer from poverty'."

Ibn Kathīr, after citing this story from Ibn 'Asākir, has supported it with other chains of transmitters and other sources.

Horrors of the Day of Resurrection

إِذَا وَقَعَتِ الْوَاقِعَةُ (When the Imminent Event (of Doom) will occur...56:1). Ibn Kathīr says Al-wāqī'ah is one of the names of the Day of Resurrection, because there is no room for doubt in its occurrence. It is real and will surely come to pass.

لَيْسَ لَوْفَعَتِهَا كَاذِبَةٌ (...there will be no one to deny its occurrence...56:2). The word *kādhībah* in this context is the verbal noun, like 'āfiyah and 'āqībah. The sense of the verse is that 'the news of the occurrence of this event cannot be a false news'. Some authorities have taken the word

kādhībah in the sense of *takdhīb* [to deny] and the meaning, in that case, is clear that 'no one can deny the fact that it will come to pass'.

خَافِضَةٌ رَّافِعَةٌ (It will be abasing [some], exalting [others]...56:3). The verse means that the 'Inevitable Event' referred to in the previous verse will bring about a great revolution in the lives of men, as is witnessed at the time of revolution of governments. The high and the mighty will be laid low and the despised and down-trodden will be exalted; the poor become rich and the rich become poor. This is how Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه interprets this statement. The purpose is to depict the horrors of the Day of Resurrection .

Three Categories of People on the Day of Resurrection

وَكُنْتُمْ أَزْوَاجًا ثَلَاثَةً (and you will be [divided into] three categories...56:7). Ibn Kathīr says that people will be divided into three different categories on the Day of Resurrection. One group will be on the right side of Allah's Throne, and they are those who were brought forth from the right side of the loin of 'Ādam عليه السلام. These people will be given their Ledgers of Deeds in their right hands and will be taken to the right side of the Divine Throne. They are the inmates of Paradise.

The second category comprises those who will be placed to the left of Allah's Throne. These are people who were brought forth from the left side of the loin of 'Ādam عليه السلام. This category will be given their Ledgers of Deeds in their left hands and will be taken to the left side of the Divine Throne. They are the inhabitants of the Fire. [We seek refuge in Allah from their behaviour pattern!]

The third category consists of *As-sābiqūn* [the foremost] who are described as *Al-muqarrabūn* [the fortunate believers who are granted special nearness to Allah]. They will be placed in front of the Divine Throne. They include the Messengers, the Prophets, *Siddiqīn*, martyrs and the friends of Allah. They are fewer than those on the right side. Towards the end of the Surah, the description of the three categories will be taken up again to mention that some signs start appearing, right from the time of death of a person, to indicate in which category he or she is going to fall.

وَالسَّابِقُونَ السَّابِقُونَ (And the Foremost are the foremost....56:10) Imām Aḥmad رضي الله تعالى عنه has recorded a Tradition on the authority of Sayyidah

'A'ishah Ṣiddīqah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ asked the noble Companions: "Do you know who will be the first to be accommodated in the Divine Shade on the Day of Resurrection?" The noble Companions replied: اللهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَعْلَمُ "Allah and His Messenger know best." The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "They are those who accept the truth when it is presented to them; when they are asked for the rights due from them, they fulfill them; and they judge about the matters of others as they would judge about themselves."

Mujāhid says that *As-sābiqūn* (the Foremost) refers to 'the Prophets'. Ibn Sirin says that it refers to early Muslims who performed their prayers facing the two qiblas, namely, *baytul-maqdis* and *baitullah*. Ḥasan and Qatādah say that in every Ummah there will be *As-sābiqūn*. Some of the commentators express the view that they are people who go first to the mosque.

Ibn-Kathīr cites all these views and concludes that they are all correct and authentic in their own right. The opinions are not in conflict with one another, because *As-sābiqūn* are those who must have been foremost in their invincible faith and righteous deeds in this world, and as such they would be the 'Foremost' in the Hereafter in terms of reward which will befit their faith and good deeds.

ثَلَاثَةٌ مِنَ الْأَوَّلِينَ وَفَلِيلٌ مِنَ الْآخِرِينَ (...many from the earlier generations, and of a small number from the later ones....56:13-14) The word ثَلَاثَةٌ *thullatun*, means 'a party, group, company'. Zamakhsharī says that *thullatun* refers to 'a throng or a large number of people'.

Who are أَوَّلِينَ **Awwalin** (earlier generations) and آخِرِينَ **'Akhirin** (later ones)?

The words '*awwalīn*' (earlier generations) and '*ākhirīn*' (later ones) are used twice: First, in connection with *As-sābiqūn* (the Foremost) who are favoured with special Divine nearness; and secondly, in connection with Ashab-ul-yamin [the People of the Right, or the general body of believers]. In the case of the 'Foremost' it is mentioned that there will be 'many' from amongst the '*awwalīn*' (earlier generations) who will be categorized as 'the Foremost', but from amongst the later generations, the number of the 'Foremost' will be smaller. As opposed to this, in the description of the People of the Right, the word '*thullah*' (many) is

applied to both 'earlier' and 'later' generations in the following words: **ثُلَّةٌ مِنَ الْأَوَّلِينَ وَثُلَّةٌ مِنَ الْآخِرِينَ** (many from the first generations, and many from the later ones...56:39-40)

The question now is: Who are 'earlier generations' and 'later generations'? In this connection, two views of the commentators have been recorded: The first view is that 'earlier generations' include all the creation of Allah from the time of 'Ādam **عليه السلام** to the time just prior to the advent of the 'Holy Prophet **ﷺ**'. And 'later generations' include all the creation of Allah from the time of the advent of the Holy Prophet to the Doomsday. This interpretation is recorded by Ibn Abi Hatīm [with a chain of transmitters] from Mujāhid and Ḥasan Baṣrī. Ibn Jarīr has preferred this interpretation. This interpretation has also been adopted in the Bayān-ul-Qur'ān. This is supported by the Prophetic Tradition transmitted on the authority of Sayyidnā Jābir **رضي الله عنه**. Ibn 'Asākir reports the Tradition [with his chain of transmitters] thus: "When the first pair of verses regarding 'the Foremost' was revealed stating that they will comprise 'many from the first generations, and of a small number from the later ones, **ثُلَّةٌ مِنَ الْأَوَّلِينَ وَقَلِيلٌ مِنَ الْآخِرِينَ** [56:13-14], Sayyidnā 'Umar Ibn Khaṭṭāb **رضي الله عنه** enquired: 'O Messenger of Allah, will there be a larger number of 'the Foremost' from among the earlier generations and a small number from amongst us?' For about a year, no revelation in this connection came down. A year later, verses [39] and [40] **ثُلَّةٌ مِنَ الْأَوَّلِينَ وَثُلَّةٌ مِنَ الْآخِرِينَ** "many from the first generations, and many from the later ones." were revealed. The Messenger of Allah **ﷺ** called Sayyidnā 'Umar **رضي الله عنه** and said to him:

إِسْمَعْ يَا عُمَرُ مَا قَدْ أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ ثُلَّةً مِنَ الْأَوَّلِينَ وَثُلَّةً مِنَ الْآخِرِينَ الْأَوَّلَانِ مِنْ آدَمَ إِلَى ثُلَّةٍ
وَأُمَّتِي ثُلَّةٌ. (الحديث) - ابن كثير.

"O 'Umar, listen to what Allah has revealed many from the first generations, and many from the later ones). Behold! From 'Ādam to me is one *thullah* (throng) and my Ummah is another *thullah*' (throng)."

The theme of this Tradition is supported by the Tradition recorded by Imām Aḥmad and Ibn Abī Ḥatīm **رحمهم الله تعالى** on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah **رضي الله عنه** that when verses [13] and [14] were revealed, the Companions **رضي الله عنهم** found this painful, because they understood them to mean that the foremost believers from earlier nations are more numerous

than those of this Ummah. As a result, verses [39] and [40] were revealed and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ stated 'I hope that you will comprise a quarter of the inmates of Paradise, a third of the inmates of Paradise. Rather, you are a half of the inmates of Paradise, and will have a share in the other half.' (Ibn Kathīr) Thus, collectively, majority of the inmates of Paradise will be the followers of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. However, a question arises about both these Traditions. The question is that verse 40 relates to the People of the Right, while verse 13 was about the Foremost. Then, how can verse 40 remove the concern of the Companions about verse 13?

Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī resolves the problem thus: The noble Companions, in general, and Sayyidnā 'Umar ؓ in particular, were saddened by the verse 13 presumably because they thought that the proportion of the later generations in the 'People of the Right' will be the same as it is in the Foremost, and thus the later generations will be small in number even among the 'People of the Right'. From this point of view, they thought their number in relation to all the inmates of Paradise, put together, will be very small. But when verses [39] and [40] were revealed, the point was clarified that collectively the majority of the inmates of Paradise will be the followers of the Holy Prophet ﷺ even though the collective number of later generations in the category of 'the Foremost' may be smaller as compared to the previous nations, especially since a large number of the previous nations will comprise the Prophets. In relation to them, it does not matter if the followers of the Holy Prophet ﷺ are fewer.

However, Ibn Kathīr, Abū Ḥayyān, Qurtubī, Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī, Mazharī and others prefer another interpretation: 'the earlier generations' and 'the later generations' imply, according to them, the earlier and the latter followers of the Holy Prophet's ﷺ own Ummah. 'Earlier generations', in their view, are the Companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and their pupils, who are termed in a Ḥadīth as '*khair-ul-qurūn*' (the best generation), and 'later generations' include all those who came after them.

As for the Ḥadīth narrated by Jābir ؓ quoted above from Ibn Kathīr, in support of the first interpretation, Ibn Kathīr himself has expressed his reservation about its chain of transmitters. He writes *وَلَكِنْ فِي إِسْنَادِهِ نَظَرٌ* "In its chain of transmission, there is some defect." In support of his own interpretation, he quotes verses relating to Ummah of the Holy Prophet

ﷺ being the best of nations, as for instance كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ "You are the best of nations...". (3:110) Therefore, it is not possible that the foremost believers from earlier nations are more numerous than those of this Ummah. Thus ثُلَّةٌ مِنَ الْأَوَّلِينَ 'many from the earlier generations' refers to the earlier generation of this Ummah and قَلِيلٌ مِنَ الْآخِرِينَ 'of a small number from the later generations' refers to the later generation of this Ummah from whom a small number will be included in the category of the 'Foremost'.

In support of this view, Ibn Kathīr has cited the statement of Sayyidnā Ḥasan Baṣrī, as recorded by Ibn Abī Ḥātim, to the effect that he recited the Verse 10 about 'the Foremost' and said, 'They have predeceased, but O Allah! make us from amongst the People of the Right hand'. In another statement, Sayyidnā Ḥasan Baṣrī is reported to have said in explanation of Verse 13: ثُلَّةٌ مِّمَّنْ مَضَىٰ مِنْ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ 'Those foremost Faith are all from this Ummah'. Likewise, Muḥammad Ibn Sirin said in connection with Verse 13 and 14: 'The scholars stated and hoped that they (the Foremost of earlier and later generations) will all be from amongst this Ummah.'

Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī puts forward the following Prophetic Ḥadīth with a good chain of transmitters in support of the second interpretation:

أَخْرَجَ مُسَدَّدٌ فِي مُسْنَدِهِ وَابْنُ الْمُثَنَّى وَالطَّبْرَانِيُّ وَابْنُ مَرْدُوَيْهِ بِسَنَدٍ حَسَنٍ عَنْ أَبِي بَكْرَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِي قَوْلِهِ سُبْحَانَ ثُلَّةٍ مِنَ الْأَوَّلِينَ وَثُلَّةٍ مِنَ الْآخِرِينَ قَالَ هُمَا جَمِيعًا مِنْ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ.

"Musaddad in his Musnad, Ibn-ul-Mundhir, Ṭabarānī and Ibn Marduyah report with a good chain on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Bakrah ﷺ that, while interpreting verses [39] and [40] (Many from the earlier generations and of a small number from the later ones), the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "They are both from this Ummah."

Many Scholars of Ḥadīth report another Prophetic Tradition with a weak chain on the authority of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ also. The wordings are: هُمَا جَمِيعًا مِنْ أُمَّتِي "They [the earlier and the later generations] are from my Ummah." From this point of view, verse [7] of this Chapter ثُلَّةٌ وَأَنْتُمْ أَرْوَاجُ ثُلَّةٍ "and you will be (divided into) three categories. [7]" addresses the Ummah of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and all three categories will be from this Ummah .

Mazharī has held the first interpretation as improbable, because according to the clear text of the Qur'an, this Ummah is the best and most honoured of all nations. Therefore, it is inconceivable that the foremost believers from earlier nations should be more numerous than those of this Ummah. The higher rank of this Ummah visa-vis the other nations is proved by the express texts of the Holy Qur'an. The Qur'anic verse [3:110] reads: "كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ" "You are the best Ummah raised for the good of mankind...". Verse [3:110] reads: "لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا" "...so that you should be witnesses over the people, and the Messenger a witness to you." Tirmidhī, Ibn Majah and Darimi have recorded a narration on the authority of Sayyidnā Bahz Ibn Ḥakīm رضي الله عنه in which the Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said:

أَنْتُمْ تَتِمُّونَ سَبْعِينَ أُمَّةً أَنْتُمْ أَحْيَرُهَا وَأَكْرَمُهَا عَلَى اللَّهِ تَعَالَى

"You are complement to the seventy nations of the days of yore.
You are the choicest one and the most honourable one in the sight of Allah."

Imām Bukhārī narrates a Tradition on the authority of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه in which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is reported to have said: "Will it please you if you are a quarter of the inmates of Paradise?" The Companions replied: "Yes, indeed, it would please us." The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ إِنِّي لَأَرْجُو أَنْ تَكُونُوا نِصْفَ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ

"By Him in Whose control is my life! I hope that you will comprise a half of the inmates of Paradise." (Mazharī)

Tirmidhī, Ḥakīm and Baihaqī report on the authority of Sayyidnā Buraidah رضي الله عنه that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

أَهْلُ الْجَنَّةِ مِائَةٌ وَعِشْرُونَ صَفًّا ثَمَانُونَ مِنْهَا مِنْ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ وَأَرْبَعُونَ مِنْ سَائِرِ الْأُمَمِ

"The inmates of Paradise will be ranged in 120 ranks: eighty of them will be from this Ummah, and forty from the rest of the nations." (Tirmidhī has rated this tradition as 'Ḥasan' and Ḥakīm as 'ṣaḥīh'.)

The ratio between this Ummah and other communities in Paradise is given differently at different times, ranging between one third, one quarter, a half and two-thirds. There is no conflict in the ratios mentioned on different occasions. That was based on the estimation of the Holy

Prophet ﷺ which has been increasing at different times.

The reward of As-Sabiqun

عَلَى سُرُرٍ مَّوْضُونَةٍ ([They will be sitting] on thrones woven with gold...56:15)
The word مَوْضُونَةٌ *mawdunah*, according to Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه, as recorded by Ibn Jarir, Ibn Abi Hatim, Baihaqi and others, means 'fabric woven or inwrought with gold thread'.

وَلَدَانٌ مُّخَلَّدُونَ (...by Immortal boys...56:17) meaning that the boys will never grow up, get old or change in shape. The preferred opinion is that the youths of Paradise, like the fair damsels of Paradise, will have been born in Paradise. They will be the servants of the inmates of Paradise. Ḥadīth narratives indicate that there will be thousands of such servants for each of the inmates of Paradise.

بِأَكْوَابٍ وَأَبَارِيقٍ وَكَأْسٍ مِّن مَّعِينٍ (with bowls and jugs and a goblet of pure wine...56:18). The word *akwāb*, plural of *kūb*, refers to 'cups or glasses used for drinking'. The word *abāriq*, plural of *ibriq*, refers to 'jugs with sprouts'. The word *ka's* refers to 'a wine glass'. The word *ma'īn* refers to the fact that the glasses will contain wine drawn from a flowing spring.

لَا يَصَدَّعُونَ عَنْهَا (from which they will neither suffer headache ...56:19). The Arabic verb is derived from *sudā'* which means 'headache'. When worldly wine is taken in large quantity, it gives the drinker excruciating headache and makes him feel dizzy. The Heavenly wine is free from such harmful effects.

لَا يَنْزِفُونَ (... , nor will they be intoxicated...56:19). The Arabic verb is derived from *nazf*, the root-meaning of which being 'the well became empty, all the water having been taken out of it.' Here it means 'the spring of his brain or mind or senses became exhausted.'

وَلَحْمِ طَيْرٍ مِّمَّا يَشْتَهُونَ (and the meat of birds that they desire....56:21). It is recorded in a Prophetic Tradition that the inmates of Paradise will get meat of whatever birds they desire, as and when they desire it.

The Reward of Those on the Right

وَأَصْحَابُ الْيَمِينِ مَا أَصْحَابُ الْيَمِينِ (As for the People of the right, How (lucky) are the People of the Right!...56:27). The People of the Right are initially the God-fearing and the righteous believers. Sinful believers will also join the People of the Right, some through the sheer grace of Allah, and others

will be forgiven through the intercession of a prophet or a friend of Allah. Some sinful believers will be punished for their sins, but after serving their punishment, they too will be purified and cleansed of the dross of their sins, after which they will join the People of the Right, because the fire of the Hell is not, in fact, a punishment; it is rather a way to cleanse him from the dross of his sins. (Maẓharī)

فِي سِدْرٍ مَّخْضُودٍ (...amid lote-trees with no thorns - 58:28). The word *sidr* refers to 'lote-tree' and *makhḍūd* refers to 'a tree having its thorns removed'. It also means 'a tree having the branches bent because of abundance of its fruit'. Unlike the lote-trees of this world, the Heavenly lote-trees have a different description. Their fruits will be as large as the clay jugs, and their taste cannot be compared to those found in this world, (as described in a Ḥadīth).

طَلْحٍ مَّنضُودٍ (and the trees of *tulh*, having layers one upon the other - 28:29). The word *ṭalḥ* refers to 'banana tree' and *mandūd* means 'clustered', fruits piled on top of each other as in a bunch of bananas.

ظِلِّ مَمْدُودٍ (and a shade, spread all over...56:30). The Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said, as recorded in Ṣaḥīḥain, that in Paradise there is a tree so large that a rider may travel for a hundred years under its shade, but would not be able to pass it.

وَمَاءٍ مَّسْكُوبٍ (...and water, poured forth...56:31) This means the water will be flowing constantly on the surface of the ground.

وَفَاكِهَةٍ كَثِيرَةٍ (and a lot of fruits...56:32). The word *Kathīrah* [abounding] has two senses: [1] there will be plenty of fruits; and [2] there will be an uncountable variety and kinds of fruits.

لَا مَقْطُوعَةٍ وَلَا مَمْنُوعَةٍ (neither interrupted [in any season], nor prohibited ...56:33) The word *maqṭū'ah* means the fruits the supply of which is cut off at the end of the season. In this world most fruits are seasonal; some bear in summer, some in winter and others in rainy season. Once the season of the fruit is over, it ceases to be available. However, the supply of the fruits of Paradise never runs out in any season. Rather they will always be available for those who want to eat from them. Whenever these fruits are desired, they will be available and easy to grasp by Allah's power. The word *mamnū'ah* (prohibited) means that in this world there are

caretakers appointed to look after the gardens, who stop and prohibit people from picking the fruits, but in the gardens of Paradise there will be no such hindrance. The inmates will be able to pick them whenever they wish.

وَقُرُشٍ مَّرْفُوعَةٍ (...and mattresses of high quality....56:34). The word *fūrūsh* is the plural of *firāsh* which means 'bed, couch, mattress'. The word *marfū'ah* lexically means 'upraised, elevated'. The couches could be upraised or elevated for one of several reasons: [1] because the place itself is high; [2] because the mattresses will not be on the ground, but on the thrones or beds; or [3] because the couches themselves will be thick (and of high quality). Some exegetes have taken the word '*fūrūsh*' in the sense of 'women', because it is one of the meaning of '*firāsh*' is referred as *firash*, as in the Prophetic Tradition *أَلَوْلَدٌ لِلْفِرَاشِ* 'The child belongs to the *firash*'. The word *firāsh* refers to 'wife'. This is corroborated by the characteristics of the women of Paradise described in the forthcoming verses. In this case, the word *marfū'ah* would mean 'high-ranking'.

إِنَّا أَنْشَأْنَاهُنَّ إِنشَاءً (Surely We have created those [females] a fresh creation...56:35) The word *insha'* means 'to create'. The pronoun *هُنَّ* *hunna* refers to the women of Paradise, although there is no mention of them in the immediately preceding verses. However, they have been mentioned in connection with 'the Foremost' in distantly foregoing verses [22-23]. If the word *firāsh* in the foregoing verse (34) refers to the women of Paradise, the antecedent of the pronoun is quite obvious. Likewise, the mention of beds, couches, thrones and other delightful items gives the pronoun the context to refer to women. The meaning of the verse is: 'We have created the Paradisiacal women in a special way, that is, the houris are created without being born biologically, and the women of this world who will enter the Paradise will also be reshaped in a way that the women who were ugly, dark-coloured or old in this world will be made beautiful, young and graceful.' It is recorded in Tirmidhī and Baihaqī on the authority of Sayyidnā Anas رضي الله عنه that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said in explanation of Verse 35 that the women who were old, blear eyed, with gray hair and ugly features in the world will be made beautiful and young in this new creation. Baihaqi also reports from Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها that an old lady asked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to pray to Allah that she may enter Paradise. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said in a humorous

way: لَا تَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ عَجُوزٌ "Old ladies will not enter Paradise." Hearing this the old lady got very sad, and according to some narrations, started weeping. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ then explained that she would not be old when she would enter Paradise; she would be transformed into a young beautiful woman. Then the Holy Prophet ﷺ recited this verse 35. [Mazharī]

أَبْكَارًا (...virgins... - 56:36). The word *abkārān*, being the plural of *bikr*, means 'virgins'. The sense is the creation of the maidens of Paradise will be of such a nature that, even after every sexual intercourse, they will remain like virgins.

عُرُبًا (...amorous to their husbands,...56:37). The word *'urub*, is the plural of *'arūbah*. This refers to a woman who loves her husband passionately and is his beloved.

أَتْرَابٍ (...matching them in age...56:37) The word *atrāb* is the plural of *tirb*, meaning 'a person of equal age who played together with his mate in dust'. The verse means that men and women will be made of equal ages in Paradise. Some narrations report that they will be about thirty-three years old. [Mazharī]

ثَلَاثَةٌ مِنَ الْأَوَّلِينَ وَثَلَاثَةٌ مِنَ الْآخِرِينَ (many from the earlier generations, and many from the later ones....56:39-40) In connection with *sābiqūn*, (the Foremost) two views of the commentators were quoted earlier as to the identity of 'the earlier' and the 'later' generations. If 'the earlier' refers to the generations from 'Ādam عليه السلام to the period just prior to the advent of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and 'the later generations' refers to the 'Ummah of the Holy Prophet ﷺ till the Day of Judgment, as some of the commentators have opined, then the verses would mean: 'the People of the Right' will constitute a 'large party' of believers and the righteous from all the previous communities combined together, while there will be a 'large party' from the Ummah of the Holy Prophet ﷺ alone. In this case, it is a great honor for the Ummah of the Holy Prophet ﷺ that, despite the short period they lived in this world, they could be compared to all the previous communities who were headed by hundreds of thousands of Prophets. Besides, the words 'many from the later generations' has the scope of being larger in number than the 'many from the earlier generations'.

If we go by the second view of the commentators, who say that both

'earlier' and 'later' generations are from the *ummah* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, then even the later generations of this *ummah* will not be totally deprived of 'the Foremost', though their number in later generations will be less. As for the People of the Right, their number will be large in both 'earlier' and 'later' generations. This fact is proved by a Ḥadīth reported by Bukhārī and Muslim from Sayyidnā Mu'āwiyah رضي الله عنه in which the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said, 'A group of my 'Ummah will always remain on the truth and dominant, unharmed by those who fail to support them and those who defy them, until the Last Hour begins.'

Verses 57-74

نَحْنُ خَلَقْنَاكُمْ فَلَوْلَا تُصَدِّقُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾ أَفَرَأَيْتُمْ مَاتُمُنُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾ ءَأَنْتُمْ
تَخْلُقُونَهُ أَمْ نَحْنُ الْخَالِقُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾ نَحْنُ قَدَرْنَا بَيْنَكُمْ الْمَوْتَ وَمَا
نَحْنُ بِمَسْبُوقِينَ ﴿٦٠﴾ عَلَىٰ أَنْ نُبَدِّلَ أَمْثَالَكُمْ وَنُنشِئَكُمْ فِي مَا لَا
تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٦١﴾ وَلَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمُ النَّشْأَةَ الْأُولَىٰ فَلَوْلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾
أَفَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا تَحْرُثُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾ ءَأَنْتُمْ تَزْرَعُونَهُ أَمْ نَحْنُ الزَّارِعُونَ ﴿٦٤﴾
لَوْ نَشَاءُ لَجَعَلْنَاهُ حُطَامًا فَظَلْتُمْ تَفَكَّهُونَ ﴿٦٥﴾ إِنَّا لَمُغْرَمُونَ ﴿٦٦﴾
بَلْ نَحْنُ مَحْرُومُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾ أَفَرَأَيْتُمُ الْمَاءَ الَّذِي تَشْرَبُونَ ﴿٦٨﴾
ءَأَنْتُمْ أَنْزَلْتُمُوهُ مِنَ الْمُزْنِ أَمْ نَحْنُ الْمُنزِلُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾ لَوْ نَشَاءُ جَعَلْنَاهُ
أُجَاجًا فَلَوْلَا تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾ أَفَرَأَيْتُمُ النَّارَ الَّتِي تُورُونَ ﴿٧١﴾ ءَأَنْتُمْ
أَنْشَأْتُمْ شَجَرَتَهَا أَمْ نَحْنُ الْمُنشِئُونَ ﴿٧٢﴾ نَحْنُ جَعَلْنَاهَا تَذَكِّرَةً
وَمَتَاعًا لِلْمُقْوِينَ ﴿٧٣﴾ فَسَبِّحْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٧٤﴾

We have created you; then why do you not appreciate it as true? [57] So, tell Me about the semen you drop (in the wombs): [58] Is it you who create it, or are We the Creator? [59] We have appointed (the times of) death among you, and We cannot be frustrated [60] from replacing you with others like you, and creating you (afresh) in that (form) which you do not know. [61] And you certainly know the first creation; then why do you

not take lesson? [62] Well, tell Me about that (seed) which you sow: [63] Is it you who grow it, or are We the One who grows? [64] If We so will, We can certainly make it crumbled, and you will remain wondering, [65] (and saying,) "We are laden with debt, [66] rather we are totally deprived." [67] Again, tell Me about the water you drink: [68] Is it you who have brought it down from the clouds, or are We the One who sends (it) down? [69] If We so will, We can make it bitter in taste. So why do you not offer gratitude? [70] Now tell Me about the fire you kindle: [71] Is it you who have originated its tree, or are We the Originator? [72] We have made it a reminder (of Our infinite power, and of the fire of hell) and a benefit for travelers in deserts. [73] So, proclaim the purity of the name of your Lord, the Magnificent. [74]

Proof of the occurrence of the Day of Resurrection

Thus far the Sūrah dealt with three categories of people on the Plain of Ḥashr (Gathering.) The verses so far described the reward and punishment of these three groups. The current set of verses warn the deviant skeptics and atheists who completely deny the Day of Judgement and life after death, or set up partners to Allah in His worship. The verses purport to tear down the curtain of negligence and ignorance that has kept man in the dark. Whatever exists, or is coming into existence at the present time, or will come into existence in the future in this cosmic world is as a result of the creative power of Allah. He brings them into existence, retains them and makes them subservient to man. The apparent causes of these events act as veils over Reality. Had these veils been removed and man is able to witness the creation of these things directly without the mediation of these apparent causes, he will be forced to believe in Allah. However, Allah has made this world a venue of test. Therefore, whatever comes into existence comes under the veils of causes.

Allah has, with His encompassing power and consummate wisdom, created a strong connection or relation between 'causes' and 'effects'. Wherever and whenever a secondary cause occurs, the effect necessarily follows. A casual observer assigns to every 'effect' a 'secondary or extrinsic cause', thus straying into the philosophy of 'causes' and 'effects'. Man does not seem to realize that the whole system of cause and effect ends with Allah. He is the First or Primary or Intrinsic Cause or Cause of all causes [*musabbib-ul-asbāb*]. It was explained earlier in Sūrah An-Najm that a

natural order of cause and effect pervades the entire universe. Every cause, which is not itself primary, is traceable to some other cause, and this to another and so on. But as the series of cause and effect in our finite world cannot be indefinite, it must terminate at some point. The Final Cause is, therefore, the Author of the universe. It is this Final Cause towards which the present verses call our attention.

نَحْنُ خَلَقْنَاكُمْ فَلَوْلَا تُصَدِّقُونَ. أَفَرَأَيْتُمْ مَتَمُنُونَ. ءَ أَنْتُمْ تَخْلُقُونَهُ، أَمْ نَحْنُ الْخَالِقُونَ (We have created you; then why do you not appreciate it as true? So, tell Me about the semen you drop [in the wombs]: Is it you who create it, or are We the Creator?...57-59). With verse 57 begins a series of arguments in support of Allah's Oneness and His power to raise the dead. The first argument in the current verse is taken from the very subtle and wonderful phenomenon of man's birth, starting with a drop of semen and developing into a full-fledged human being – the crown of all creation. Humans stop at thinking that male-female cohabitation in the process of their creation is the ultimate or real cause. Therefore, the Qur'ān poses the question to them in verse [58]: أَفَرَأَيْتُمْ مَتَمُنُونَ. ءَ أَنْتُمْ تَخْلُقُونَهُ، أَمْ نَحْنُ الْخَالِقُونَ 'So, tell Me about the semen you drop [in the wombs]: Is it you who create it, or are We the Creator? In other words, a male plays a very insignificant biological role in the birth of a child in that he delivers a drop of microscopic semen in the womb of a female to combine with the microscopic ovum. Once this is done, it goes through several stages of growth and development without anyone, besides Allah, knowing what is happening. Eventually it forms into a foetus with a bone-structure. The skeleton is then clothed with flesh and skin. The soul is infused into it and the little universe [microcosm] comes into being with various systems: The nutritive and digestive system, the blood and the circulatory system, a system of human senses [sight, touch, smell, hearing and taste] and communication and the ability to think and understand. Man thus becomes a moving factory, and in none of these biological processes he has any say.

Neither of the parents [especially the mother in whose womb all this is taking place] knows whether the child is a boy or a girl, until it is born. The question is: Who creates the child in the womb of the mother, creation after creation, within three darknesses [ie the darkness of belly, the darkness of womb and the darkness of amniotic membrane]? Who made it beautiful, gave it the power of hearing and sight? Who bestowed on it the

faculty of thinking and comprehension? Only mentally blind person will fail to exclaim: "Blessed is Allah, the Best of Creators!"

The forthcoming verses [60 and 61]

نَحْنُ قَدَرْنَا بَيْنَكُمْ الْمَوْتَ وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمَسْبُوقِينَ ﴿٦٠﴾ عَلَىٰ أَنْ نُبَدِّلَ أَمْثَالَكُمْ
وَنُنشِئَكُمْ فِي مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٦١﴾

"We have appointed (the times of) death among you, and We cannot be frustrated from replacing you with others like you, and creating you [afresh] in that [form] which you do not know....56:60-61]."

'Death' is the end of all physical life. This is the eternal law of Allah from which there is no escape. Allah pre-determines the time of human death. Man has no choice in the matter of death which frees the human soul from the fetters and shackles of its physical habitat. Allah has pre-designated a particular point in time up to which he could live. But one should not remain lulled into a fancy that he would continue to enjoy power and his free will. Allah has the power to eliminate him any time, and create another people in his place. This is the import of the words, "نَحْنُ قَدَرْنَا بَيْنَكُمْ الْمَوْتَ وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمَسْبُوقِينَ عَلَىٰ أَنْ نُبَدِّلَ أَمْثَالَكُمْ" "We have appointed (the times of) death among you, and We cannot be frustrated from replacing you with others like you," The concluding part of verse [61] وَنُنشِئَكُمْ فِي مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ "...and creating you (afresh) in that (form) which you do not know" implies that 'Allah has the power to reshape you in a form unknown to you at the moment.' It may happen either by one's turning into dust after death, or by his being metamorphosed into an animal shape as it happened in the past nations, some turned into monkeys and others into swine by way of punishment. It is also possible that they might be transformed into stones or minerals.

Creation of Plants, Sending down of Rain and Creation of Fire are Proof of Allah's Oneness

After referring to the birth of man from very insignificant beginning, the Sūrah, from verse [63] onwards, proceeds to give a brief account of things upon which man's life on earth depends. There are three principal things upon which man's life in this world depends - food, water and fire. The first thing is food to which verse [63] refers.

أَفَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا تَحْرُثُونَ (Well, tell Me about that [seed] which you sow:...56:63) In the matter of human creation, man was lost in the secondary or extrinsic causes and lost sight of his Real Creator and Master, the Primary or Intrinsic Cause of his creation. This unawareness was unveiled in a particular way. In a similar style, the reality of his source of nourishment is explicated. Allah poses the question to man: 'Indeed you till the land and plant the seeds but who causes them to sprout and grow - you or Allah?' When considered carefully, we will come up with the answer that the farmer or tiller has a very limited role to play. He ploughs the land and fertilizes the soil with manure, and thus softens it so that if the seed germinates, it will not be hampered by the hard ground. All of man's efforts move around this point. Once the plant sprouts, he takes care of it in that direction. But man is not the primary cause of the shoots pushing forth from the seed nor can he claim that he made the plant or tree. Therefore, we go back to the fundamental question: Who caused the seed lying under heaps and heaps of sand to germinate and come out to the surface of the earth so beautifully, comprising untold benefits? There can be only one answer to this question: The All-Encompassing Power and the Most Wonderful creation of the Master Creator of the universe.

Next to food, water is the most important thing upon which human life depends for its sustenance. Here too the Qur'an, in its inimitable style, poses the question: 'Have you considered the water you drink? Did you send it down from the clouds, or did We send it?' The answer is obvious: 'Allah'. Fire plays a most important part in the life of man. Much of his physical comfort depends upon it. [It is a thing of great utility. In this mechanistic age life is inconceivable without the use of fire. No industry, trade or travel is possible without it.] The Qur'an again, in its unique and unparalleled style, poses the question: 'Have you considered the fire you kindle? Did you make its timber to grow, or did We make it?' Here too the answer is obvious: 'Allah'. Of course, in both instances the Qur'anic answers are elaborate.

The last answer is summarized thus in verse [73] نَحْنُ جَعَلْنَاهَا تَذَكُّرًا وَرَمَاقًا "We have made it a reminder [of Our infinite power, and of the fire of hell] and a benefit for travelers in deserts....56:73) The word *muqwīn* is derived from the infinitive *iqwā'* and it comes from the root-word *qiwā'* which means 'waste, barren land, ruin or desert'. Thus the word *muqwī*

means 'a traveler or a wayfarer of a desert who alights to prepare his meals'. The verse purports to say that all these creations are the result of Allah's power and wisdom.

فَسَبِّحْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الْعَظِيمِ (So, proclaim the purity of the name of your Lord, the Magnificent...56:74) The logical and rational conclusion of the above considerations should be for man to believe in the All-Encompassing Divine Power and in His Oneness, and declare the Purity of the Great Lord; for that is the way to express His gratitude.

Verses 75 - 96

فَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِمَوَاقِعِ النُّجُومِ ﴿٧٥﴾ وَإِنَّهُ لَقَسَمٌ لَّو تَعْلَمُونَ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٧٦﴾
 إِنَّهُ لَقُرْآنٌ كَرِيمٌ ﴿٧٧﴾ فِي كِتَابٍ مَّكْنُونٍ ﴿٧٨﴾ لَا يَمَسُّهُ إِلَّا
 الْمُطَهَّرُونَ ﴿٧٩﴾ تَنْزِيلٌ مِّن رَّبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٨٠﴾ أَفَبِهَذَا الْحَدِيثِ
 أَنْتُمْ مُدْهِنُونَ ﴿٨١﴾ وَتَجْعَلُونَ رِزْقَكُمْ أَنَّكُمْ تُكَذِّبُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾ فَلَوْلَا
 إِذَا بَلَغَتِ الْحُلُقُومَ ﴿٨٣﴾ وَأَنْتُمْ حِينِيذٍ تَنْظُرُونَ ﴿٨٤﴾ وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ
 إِلَيْهِ مِنْكُمْ وَلَكِنْ لَا تُبْصِرُونَ ﴿٨٥﴾ فَلَوْلَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ غَيْرَ مَدِينِينَ
 ﴿٨٦﴾ تَرْجِعُونَهَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٨٧﴾ فَمَاذَا إِنْ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ
 ﴿٨٨﴾ فَرُوحٌ وَرِيحَانٌ ۖ وَجَنَّاتُ نَعِيمٍ ﴿٨٩﴾ وَأَمَا إِنْ كَانَ مِنَ
 أَصْحَابِ الْيَمِينِ ﴿٩٠﴾ فَسَلِّمْ لَّكَ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ الْيَمِينِ ﴿٩١﴾ وَأَمَا
 إِنْ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُكْذِبِينَ الضَّالِّينَ ﴿٩٢﴾ فَنُزِّلْ مِنْ حَمِيمٍ ﴿٩٣﴾
 وَتَصْلِيَةٌ جَاحِمٍ ﴿٩٤﴾ إِنَّ هَذَا لَهُوَ حَقُّ الْيَقِينِ ﴿٩٥﴾ فَسَبِّحْ بِاسْمِ
 رَبِّكَ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٩٦﴾

So, I swear by the setting places of the stars, [75] – and indeed it is a great oath, if you are to appreciate – [76] it is surely the Noble Qur'an, [77] (recorded already) in a protected book (i.e. the Preserved Tablet) [78] that is not touched except by the purified ones (the angels). [79] – a revelation from the Lord of the worlds. [80] Is it this

discourse that you take lightly, [81] and take your denial as your livelihood? [82] So why (do you) not (interfere) when the soul (of a dying person) reaches the throat, [83] and you are watching? [84] And We are closer to him than you, but you do not perceive. [85] So, if you are not going to be recompensed (in the Hereafter for your deeds), then why do you not [86] bring the soul back, if you are truthful? [87] So, in case he (the dying person) is from among those blessed with nearness, [88] then (for him) there is comfort and fragrance and garden of bliss. [89] And in case he is from among the People of the Right, [90] then, (it will be said to him,) "Peace is for you, being one of the People of the Right." [91] But if he is one of the deniers, the astray, [92] then (for him) there is entertainment from boiling water, [93] and burning in the Hell. [94] Indeed this is certainty in its true sense. [95] So, proclaim the purity of the name of your Lord, the Magnificent. [96]

Sequencing of Arguments

Preceding verses put forward rational arguments, in support of life after death, by inviting attention to Allah's infinite power. The current verses are meant to prove this fact by giving an authoritative reference, that is, the Qur'ān.

Allah swears to the Greatness of the Qur'ān

فَلَا أَقْسِمُ بِمَوَاقِعِ النُّجُومِ (So, I swear by the setting places of the stars...56:75)
 The words أَقْسِمُ 'I swear' are prefixed in the text by the particle لَا *lā* [no] which is not translated in the text, because it is idiomatically prefixed to 'oath', as for example لَا وَاللَّهِ *lā wallāh* [No, by Allah]. In pre-Islamic Arabic, we come across the idiomatic oath لَا وَآبِئِكَ *lā wa-abīk* [No, by your father]. Some lexicologists say that the particle *lā* is added only as an idiomatic expression [*zā'idah*] which carries no sense, and others say that when the refutation of an addressee's hypothesis is intended, لَا *lā* is used to signify that the assumption of the addressee is not correct, but the right thing is that which follows.

The word مَوَاقِعِ *mawāqī'* is the plural of مَوْقِعٍ *mawq'* and refers to the points where or times when the stars set. Here, like in Sūrah An-Najm وَالنَّجْمِ إِذَا هَوَىٰ "By the star when it goes down to set, [1]", the oath of stars is qualified by their setting-time. The wisdom underlying this is that when the stars set, their function seems to have been cut off from the horizon,

and we witness effects of their vanishing. This is the proof of their perishability and dependence on Divine power.

إِنَّهُ لَقُرْآنٌ كَرِيمٌ فِي كِتَابٍ مَكْنُونٍ. لَا يَمَسُّهُ إِلَّا الْمُطَهَّرُونَ (It is surely the Noble Qur'an (recorded already) in a protected book [i.e. the Preserved Tablet] that is not touched except by the purified ones [the angels]....77-79) Verses [75-76] constituted oath and the current set of verses is the subject of the oath [jawāb-ul-qasam]. The Qur'an is a noble and glorious Book. The verse refutes the assumption of the pagans that this Book has been forged by a human being or that [God forbid!] it is a speech inspired by the devil.

The phrase كِتَابٍ مَكْنُونٍ 'a protected book' refers to *lawh mahfūz* [i.e. the Preserved Tablet]. لَا يَمَسُّهُ إِلَّا الْمُطَهَّرُونَ (that is not touched except by the purified ones ...56:79). Two issues require clarification here. The commentators have different views about them, because the structure of verse 78 and 79 has two possibilities grammatically: The first possibility is that the phrase 'that is not touched except by the purified ones' is the qualification of the Preserved Tablet referred to in the previous verse. In this case, 'the purified ones' can refer only to angels, and the phrase 'not touched' cannot be taken in its literal sense of physical touch; it would rather mean 'being aware of'. The sense of the verse would be that no one is aware of the Preserved Tablet and its contents except the purified angels. (Qurtubī) This interpretation is adopted in Bayān-ul-Qur'an as well. The second possibility is that the phrase 'that is not touched except by the purified ones' is taken as a qualification of the Qur'an referred to in the previous verse. In this case the word Qur'an would refer to the scrolls or scripts in which it is written, and 'not touched', will remain in its literal sense of referring to physical touch by hand etc. The sense would be that the Script of the Qur'an is not touched by anyone except by the purified angels who bring revelation to the Prophet ﷺ. Since this interpretation does not need to take the word 'touch' in its figurative sense, Qurtubī and some other commentators have preferred this interpretation. Imām Mālik رحمه الله تعالى says, 'The best interpretation of verse [77 and 78] I have ever heard is what is mentioned in Sūrah 'Abas (80) verses [13-16]: فِي صُحُفٍ مُّكَرَّمَةٍ مَّرْفُوعَةٍ مُّطَهَّرَةٍ بِأَيْدِي سَفَرَةٍ كَرَامٍ بَرَّةٍ (It is [recorded] in those scripts [of the Preserved Tablet] that are honoured, exalted, purified, in the hands of those scribes who are honourable, righteous.)

The second issue that requires consideration in this verse is what is meant by the phrase 'the purified ones'. A large group of the Companions, their followers and leading authorities on Qur'ānic commentary think that the referent of 'the pure ones' are the angels who are purified of the dross and adulteration of sins, and who are innocent. This is the view of Sayyidnā Anas رضي الله عنه, Sa'īd Ibn Jubair رضي الله عنه and of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه. Imām Mālik رحمه الله تعالى has also adopted this view .

Some of the commentators think that Qur'ān refers to the copy of the Holy Book that is in our hands, and the referent of the word '*muṭahharūn*' ('purified ones) are people free from minor impurity and major impurity. Minor impurity means to be without *wuḍū'* and minor impurity can be cleansed by making *wuḍū'* or *tayammum* [cleaning with dust]. Major impurity refers to the state of impurity which is caused by sexual intercourse, lustful discharge of semen during sleep, and menstrual and postpartum discharges. *Ghusl* (having bath) is the only means of achieving purity from this state. This interpretation is placed on the text by 'Aṭā', Ṭā'ūs, Sālīm and Muḥammad Bāqir رحمهم الله تعالى . In this case, although verse "that is not touched except by the purified ones...56:79) is a declarative sentence, it is in fact used in the sense of prohibiting human beings to touch the Qur'ān without being free from the minor and major impurities: The person who wishes to touch the Qur'ān needs to be purified of the visible as well as the invisible impurities by taking *wuḍū'*, *tayammum* or *ghusl*, as required. Qurṭubī and Maḥzarī prefer this interpretation.

In the incident of Sayyidnā 'Umar's رضي الله عنه embracing Islam, we come across the part of the story where he asked his sister to give him the pages of the Qur'ān, she recited verse [79] of this Sūrah, refused to give him the pages and said 'only the pure ones can touch it'. As a result, he was forced to take a bath, and then recite the contents of the pages. This incident also lends support to the last interpretation. The versions of the Tradition that prohibit the impure people from touching the Qur'ān are put forward by some authorities to argue in favour of the last interpretation.

However, since Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه, Anas رضي الله عنه and others have a different view about the interpretation of this verse, as mentioned above, many scholars did not base the prohibition of touching the Qur'ān without ablution on verse [79]. Rather, the prohibition is established by

the following Traditions:

Imām Mālik cites, as evidence, the Holy Prophet's letter in his Muwatta' which he wrote to 'Amr Ibn Hazm. It contains the following statement: لَا يَمَسُّ الْقُرْآنَ إِلَّا طَاهِرٌ "Only a clean one may touch the Qur'an". Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī gives the following references: Musnad of 'Abdurrazzāq, Ibn Abī Dāwūd and Ibn-ul-Mundhīr, Ṭabarānī and Ibn Mardūyah record a Tradition on the authority of 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنه that the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم said: لَا يَمَسُّ الْقُرْآنَ إِلَّا طَاهِرٌ (Only a clean one may touch the Qur'an.)

Some Rulings about touching the Holy Qur'an

(1) On the basis of the foregoing Prophetic Aḥādīth, the overwhelming majority of the 'Ummah and the four major schools concur that 'purity' is a condition for the permissibility of touching the Holy Qur'an and it is not allowed to touch it in a state of impurity. It means that before touching the Holy Qur'an, one must make sure that no *najāsah* (i.e. things declared by Sharī'ah as filth) is attached to one's hand, and that he or she is in the state of *wuḍū'* and is not in the state of *Janābah* (the state in which it is obligatory to take bath.) The divergence of interpretation referred to earlier is only in connection with whether or not verse [79] can be the basis of such a prohibition. Some jurists think that the verse as well as the relevant Traditions bear the same sense, hence they use them as supportive of each other in evidence of their ruling. Others, on account of divergence of interpretation among the Companions, exercised precaution in using the Qur'anic text as evidence in support of their ruling. But because of the Traditions, they ruled that touching the Qur'an without ablutions is impermissible. In sum, there are no differences in their rulings. The differences are only in supportive evidence of these rulings.

(2) If the Qur'an is in a cover which is sewn or permanently attached to it in some way, it is not permitted - according to the four major schools - for an unclean person to touch it without ablutions. If however the Qur'an is covered in something that is not permanently attached to it, an unclean person may, according to Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, touch it without ablutions. However, according to Imāms Mālik and Shāfi'ī, an unclean person is not permitted to touch it before taking ablutions. [Mazharī]

(3) If a person is wearing a garment, it is not lawful for him to touch the Qur'an with his sleeves or skirt if he is unclean. However, he may touch it with a handkerchief or a sheet. [Maẓharī]

(4) Scholars have ruled it which is proved by this very verse with grater force that a person in the state of *janābah* (sexual defilement) and a woman in the state of menstruation or postpartum bleeding cannot recite it, even from memory until bath has been taken, because if it is obligatory to honour the written letters of the Holy Qur'an by touching them only in the state of purity, its spoken words deserve the same honour with greater importance. The requirement of this honour should have been that even in the state of minor impurity a person should not be allowed to recite the Holy Qur'an. But Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās and 'Alī رضي الله عنه report that the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم recited the Qur'an without *wuḍū'*. On this basis, the jurists have ruled that it is permissible to recite it without *wuḍū'*. (But in the case of major impurity the rule will remain intact.). [Maẓharī]

أَفَبِهَذَا الْحَدِيثِ أَنْتُمْ مُدْهِنُونَ (Is it this discourse that you take lightly,...56:81)
The word مُدْهِنُونَ *mudhinun* is the plural of *mudhin*, being the active participle from إِذْهَانَ *idhan*, which literally means 'to apply or rub oil on the body'. When oil is applied or rubbed on the body, the muscles are relaxed, and parts of the body become soft and supple. By extension, the word is employed in the sense of showing flexibility and softness on inappropriate occasions. Hence, it is used in the sense of hypocrisy. In the current verse the word is used in the sense of hypocrisy and rejection of Allah's verses carelessly.

فَلَوْلَا إِذَا بَلَغَتِ الْحُلُقُومَ ﴿٨٣﴾ وَأَنْتُمْ حِينِيذٍ تَنْظُرُونَ ﴿٨٤﴾ وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْكُمْ
وَلَكِنْ لَا تَبْصُرُونَ ﴿٨٥﴾ فَلَوْلَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ غَيْرَ مَدِينِينَ ﴿٨٦﴾ تَرْجِعُونَهَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ
صَادِقِينَ ﴿٨٧﴾

(So why [do you] not [interfere] when the soul [of a dying person] reaches the throat, and you are watching? And We are closer to him than you, but you do not perceive. So, if you are not going to be recompensed [in the Hereafter for your deeds], then why do you not bring the soul back, if you are truthful?...56:83-87)

The preceding verses proved two facts through rational arguments and by swearing an oath by the falling stars: [1] that the Holy Qur'an is

the word of Allah. Neither Jinn nor devil can ever tamper with it. Everything it contains is the truth; and [2] one of the most fundamental articles of faith enshrined in the Qur'ān is the Day of Resurrection and Reckoning. Towards the end of the passage, it is mentioned that the infidels and idolaters, in spite of clear arguments and evidence, reject life after death.

Their denial of Resurrection by the unbelievers, in a way, amounts to a claim that their lives and souls are under their own control, and they have a say in the matter of life and death. In order to refute this assumption, the above verses give the example of a dying person. When the soul reaches his throat, all of his near and dear ones look at him and express their desire that he may live longer, but none of them is able to intervene and save his life. All the people around him seem absolutely helpless. However, Allah is nearer to the dying person than the people around him even though they are unable to see Him. In other words, that is, He is nearer to him in terms of knowledge and power. He is fully aware of the person's inner and outer conditions and has complete control over him.

In short, it is not within people's power to get together and save a soul or life. Allah is nearer to a dying person than his soul or life. Allah has pre-designated a particular time for the soul to be separated from the body. None can avert it. In view of this graphic picture, the disbelievers are reminded that if they think that they cannot be resurrected after death, and they are too strong to come under Allah's grasp, then they must restore the soul when it has reached the throat and is about to depart from the body or it has already departed and died. If it is not possible to do any of these, how illogical or irrational it is for man to think that he can escape the Divine grasp and reject life after death!

فَأَمَّا إِنْ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ (So, in case he [the dying person] is from among those blessed with nearness...56:88). In the foregoing verses, it was made clear that one day the present world will come to an end. It was also testified that at the time of death the near and dear ones, friends and relatives, and doctors all stand helplessly around the dying person. Likewise, resurrection, reckoning, and reward and punishment, after account of deeds, are all a reality and certainty of the highest degree. At the commencement of the Sūrah, it was mentioned that there will be

three categories of the people in regard to their reward or punishment. The gist of this subject is again summarized here. If the dying person is among the Foremost believers, he will experience comfort, fragrance of happiness and a Garden of bliss. If he is not from the Foremost, but from the People of the Right hand, i.e. from the general body of believers, he will also experience the bounties and pleasures of Paradise. But if he is one of the People of the Left hand, the deniers and the deviant ones, then he will be in the blazing fire of Hell where he will be served with boiling water to drink.

At the end of this subject the Qur'ān says:

إِنَّ هَذَا لَهُوَ حَقُّ الْيَقِينِ (Indeed this is certainty in its true sense...56:95). None of the reward or punishment mentioned in the preceding verses is refutable because they are a dead certainty that has no room for any doubt or suspicion.

فَسَبِّحْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الْعَظِيمِ (So, proclaim the purity of the name of your Lord, the Magnificent...56:96). The Sūrah concludes with an imperative addressed to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to pronounce the *tasbiḥ* of His Lord. This includes all kinds of *tasbiḥāt* (rememberances)- within *ṣalāh* and outside *ṣalāh*. *Ṣalāh* itself is sometimes referred to as *tasbiḥ*. Thus this verse enjoins to keep up the regular performance of *ṣalāh*.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Wāqī'ah
Ends here.

Sūrah Al-Ḥadīd

(The Iron)

This Sūrah is Madanī, and it has 29 verses and 4 sections

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

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

Verses 1 - 6

سَبَّحَ لِلّٰهِ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ۚ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيْمُ ﴿١﴾ لَهُ
 مُلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ۚ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ ۚ وَهُوَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ
 قَدِيْرٌ ﴿٢﴾ هُوَ الْاَوَّلُ وَالْاٰخِرُ وَالظَّاهِرُ وَالْبَاطِنُ ۚ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ
 عَلِيْمٌ ﴿٣﴾ هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ اَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ
 اسْتَوٰى عَلٰى الْعَرْشِ ۗ يَعْلَمُ مَا يَلِجُ فِي الْاَرْضِ وَمَا يَخْرُجُ مِنْهَا وَمَا
 يَنْزِلُ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ وَمَا يَعْرُجُ فِيْهَا ۗ وَهُوَ مَعَكُمْ اَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ ۗ وَاللّٰهُ
 بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ بَصِيْرٌ ﴿٤﴾ لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ۗ وَالِى اللّٰهُ
 تُرْجَعُ الْاُمُوْرُ ﴿٥﴾ يُوَلِّجُ اللَّيْلَ فِي النَّهَارِ وَيُوَلِّجُ النَّهَارَ فِي اللَّيْلِ ۗ
 وَهُوَ عَلِيْمٌ بِذٰتِ الصُّدُوْرِ ﴿٦﴾

Allah's purity has been proclaimed by all that is in the heavens and the earth, and He is the Mighty, the Wise. [1] To Him belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth. He gives life and brings death, and He is Powerful to do every thing. [2] He is the First and the Last, and the Manifest and the Hidden, and He is All-Knowing about every thing. [3] He is the One who created the heavens and the earth in six days, then He positioned

Himself on the Throne. He knows whatever goes into the earth and whatever comes out therefrom, and whatever descends from the sky, and whatever ascends thereto. And He is with you wherever you are, and Allah is watchful of whatever you do. [4] To Him belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, and to Allah all matters are returned. [5] He makes the night enter into the day, and makes the day enter into the night, and He is All-Knowing about whatever lies in the hearts. [6]

Some of the Merits of Sūrah Al-Ḥadīd

It is recorded in Abū Dāwūd, Tirmidhī and Nasa'ī that Sayyidnā 'Irbāq Ibn Sāriyah رضي الله عنه said that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to recite Al-Musabbihat before he went to sleep and said: "In them there is a verse that is more meritorious than a thousand verses." The collective name of the series Al-Musabbihāt refers to the following five Sūrahs: [1] Al-Ḥadīd; [2] Al-Ḥashr; [3] Aṣ-Ṣaff; [4] Jumu'ah; and [5] At-Taghābun. Having cited this Ḥadīth, Ibn Kathīr says that the best verse referred to in Sūrah Al-Ḥadīd is verse [3] هُوَ الْأَوَّلُ وَالْآخِرُ وَالظَّاهِرُ وَالْبَاطِنُ ۚ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ (He is the First and the Last, and the Manifest and the Hidden, and He is All-Knowing about every thing....57:3) Among the five Sūrahs, the first three, namely Al-Ḥadīd, Al-Ḥashr and Aṣ-Ṣaff commence with the past perfect tense '*sabbaha*' [purity has been proclaimed] whilst the last two, namely Al-Jumu'ah and Al-Taghābun commence with the imperfect tense '*yusabbihu*' [purity is proclaimed]. This implies that the purity of Allah should be declared at all times, the past, the present and the future. [Mazharī]

Remedy for Diabolical Whisperings

Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه said that if the Satan casts an evil scruple in anyone's heart, and thus causes skepticism about Allah and the religion of truth, he should softly recite the following verse [3]: هُوَ الْأَوَّلُ وَالْآخِرُ وَالظَّاهِرُ وَالْبَاطِنُ ۚ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ (He is the First and the Last, the Manifest and the Hidden and He is All-Knowing about every thing.)

What is meant by Allah's being First and Last, and Manifest and Hidden? There are more than ten different interpretations of these attributes, and they are not contradictory. The scope is wide enough to accommodate all interpretations. The meaning of the attribute *al-awwal* [the First] is more or less fixed, signifying that ontologically there was

nothing before Allah, and that He created everything and He is the First Cause of all existent things. The attribute *Al-'ākhīr* [the Last] means that He will exist even after everything will perish, as the following verse testifies: 'كُلُّ شَيْءٍ هَالِكٌ إِلَّا وَجْهَهُ' (Everything has to perish except His Countenance... [28:88]) It should be noted that death or perishing covers two possibilities, either actual death or potential death. Therefore the verse means that all existent creatures will either actually perish on the Day of Judgment, or they may not actually perish, but potentially they could perish. They have the inherent capacity for death and destruction. Thus despite their being existent they may still be described as *ḥālik* or *fānī* [perishing]. As for instance. Paradise and Hell, and the righteous or unrighteous inmates entering them will not actually perish, but potentially they have the inherent capacity to perish. Only the Supreme Being of Allah is such that neither non-existence has ever occurred to Him, nor can death overtake Him. Thus Allah is *Al-'Ākhīr* [the Last].

Imām Ghazālī رحمه الله تعالى has another explanation. He interprets the attribute 'Ākhīr [the Last] from the point of view of *ma'rīfah* [Knowledge] in the sense that knowing Allah Ta'ālā is the ultimate goal which man hopes to achieve. He moves in the direction of this goal, passing on the way through all the different stages and stations until he attains the Divine Knowledge. [Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī].

The attribute *Az-zāhīr* [the Manifest] signifies a Being whose manifestation is superior to everything. Since 'manifestation' is an offshoot of 'existence', and the Existence of Allah is First and superior to all existent entities, the Divine Manifestation surpasses the manifestation of all other beings. Nothing in this universe is more manifest than Him. The manifestation of His wisdom and His power is visible in every particle of this world.

The attribute *Al-bāṭin* [the Hidden] means that the accurate nature and essence of Allah's Being is hidden in the sense that the Divine Essence [*dhāt*] is beyond human perception. No intellect or thought can ever reach the accurate and Intrinsic Essence of Allah.

اے برتر از قیاس و گمان و خیال و وهم
وزهرچہ دیدہ ایم شنیدہ ایم وخواندہ ایم

He is far beyond any hypothesis, any guess, any, assumption,
any imagination,

And who is far beyond whatever we have ever seen, heard or read about.

اے برون از جملہ قال وقیل من
خاک بر فرق من و تمثیل من

He is beyond all our discussions and debates.

Whatever example I cite to explain Him is no more than a sheer failure.

﴿...And He is with you wherever you are, ...57:4﴾ No man is able to comprehend the essential nature of Allah's company or His being with us, though it is absolutely true that He is with us, because no man can exist or do any work without it. The Divine Will [*mashiyyah*] and power is necessary for everything. Therefore, Allah is with every human being in every situation, at every place. Allah knows best!

Verses 7 - 11

اٰمِنُوۡا بِاللّٰهِ وَرَسُوْلِهِۦ وَاَنْفِقُوۡا مِمَّا جَعَلَكُمْ مُّسْتَخْلِفِيْنَ فِيْهِ ؕ فَالَّذِيْنَ
اٰمِنُوۡا مِنْكُمْ وَاَنْفَقُوۡا لَهُمْ اَجْرٌ كَبِيْرٌ ﴿٧﴾ وَمَا لَكُمْ لَا تُؤْمِنُوۡنَ بِاللّٰهِ
وَالرَّسُوْلُ يَدْعُوْكُمْ لِتُؤْمِنُوۡا بِرَبِّكُمْ وَقَدْ اَخَذَ مِيْثَاقَكُمْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ
مُّؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٨﴾ هُوَ الَّذِيۡ يُنَزِّلُ عَلٰى عَبْدِهٖ اٰيٰتٍۭ اٰبِيْنٰتٍ لِّيُخْرِجَكُمْ مِّنَ
الظُّلُمٰتِ اِلَى النُّوْرِ ؕ وَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ بِكُمْ لَرَؤُوفٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿٩﴾ وَمَا لَكُمْ اَلَّا
تُنْفِقُوۡا فِىۡ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ وَلِلّٰهِ مِيْرٰثُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ؕ لَا يَسْتَوِي
مِنْكُمْ مَّنْ اَنْفَقَ مِنْ قَبْلِ الْفَتْحِ وَقَاتَلٌ ؕ اُولٰٓئِكَ اَعْظَمُ دَرَجَةً مِّنَ
الَّذِيْنَ اَنْفَقُوۡا مِنْۢ بَعْدِ وَقَاتَلُوۡا ؕ وَكُلًّا وَّعَدَ اللّٰهُ الْحُسْنٰى ؕ وَاللّٰهُ
بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ خَبِيْرٌ ﴿١٠﴾ مَّنْ ذَا الَّذِيۡ يُقْرِضُ اللّٰهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا
فَيُضِعُّهُ لَهٗ وَاَلِهٖۤ اَجْرٌ كَرِيْمٌ ﴿١١﴾

Believe in Allah and His Messenger, and spend out of that (wealth) in which He has appointed you as

deputies.¹ So, for those of you who have believed and spent (in Allah's way), there is a big reward. [7] And what is wrong with you that you do not believe in Allah, while the Messenger invites you to believe in your Lord, and He has taken your covenant, if you are believers? [8] He is the One who reveals clear verses to His slave, so that He brings you out from layers of darkness towards the light. And to you, indeed, Allah is Very-Kind, Very-Merciful. [9] And what is wrong with you that you should not spend in the way of Allah, while to Allah belongs the inheritance of the heavens and the earth? Those who spent before the Conquest (of Makkah), and fought (in Allah's way), are not at par (with others). Those are much greater in rank than those who spent later and fought, though Allah has promised the good (reward) for each. And Allah is well aware of what you do. [10] Who is the one who advances a loan, a good loan, to Allah so that He multiplies it for him, and he may have a noble reward? [11]

Ordering Faith

وَقَدْ أَخَذَ مِيثَاقَكُمْ (...and He has taken your covenant57:8) This could refer to the covenant taken in 'azal' (pre-eternity). According to verses 172-174 of Sūrah Al-A'rāf, Allah gathered all the souls even before they took the form of their existence, and took the covenant of 'alast' [the pre-eternal covenant]. He asked them: أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ ("Am I not your Lord?")

[1] The original word used in the text is '*mustakhlafin*' which has two meanings: 'deputies' and 'successors'. Taken in the first meaning, the verse indicates that the wealth held by human beings originally belongs to Allah, but He has made them His deputies or representatives to use it according to His directions. Although He has allowed them to use it for their own benefit, it should always be subject to the rules prescribed by Him in Shari'ah. Once it is believed that one is not the absolute owner of this wealth, it should not be difficult for him to spend according to the command of its absolute Owner. This is the interpretation of the verse according to the majority of commentators. However, some other exegetes have taken the word '*mustakhlafin*' in the sense of 'successors'. In this case the verse reminds us that whatever wealth we have in our hands today has reached us from other people who owned it before us. We have succeeded them in its ownership, and ultimately it will be passed on to some others through any mode of transfer including inheritance. All kinds of wealth are thus in transit, moving from one person to another. Therefore, one should not hesitate in spending it in Allah's way, because it has to be passed on to some others in any case. (Muhammad Taqi Usmani)

They replied: بلى (Of course You are, we affirm). Another possibility is that this covenant could refer to the pledge taken from the previous prophets and their followers to believe in the final Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and support him. This covenant is mentioned by the Holy Qur'an in the following words:

ثُمَّ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مُّصَدِّقٌ لِّمَا مَعَكُمْ لَتُؤْمِنُنَّ بِهِ وَلَتَنْصُرُنَّهُ، قَالَ أَأَقْرَرْتُمْ وَأَخَذْتُمْ عَلَىٰ ذَٰلِكُمْ إِصْرِي قَالُوا أَقْرَرْنَا قَالَ فَاشْهَدُوا وَأَنَا مَعَكُمْ مِنَ الشَّاهِدِينَ.

"...then comes to you a messenger verifying what is with you; you shall have to believe in him and you shall have to support him. He said: 'Do you affirm and accept my covenant in this respect?' They said: 'We affirm.' He said: 'Then, bear witness, and I am with you among the witnesses.'" (3:81)

إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِينَ (...if you are believers - 57:8). A question may arise here: In the earlier part of this very verse [8], the infidels and idolaters were reprimanded in the following words, "And what is wrong with you that you do not believe in Allah" This goes to show that the addressees of this phrase are 'non-believers', then how is it appropriate to say 'if you are believers'?

The answer to this question is that the unbelievers did not deny the existence of the Creator. In point of fact, they claimed to believe in God, and thus they used to say مَا نَعْبُدُهُمْ إِلَّا لِيُقَرِّبُونَا إِلَى اللَّهِ زُلْفَى (We only worship them [the idols] that they may bring us nearer to Allah in position....39:3) In this context, the concluding phrase of verse [8] implies that 'If your claim [that you believe in God] is true, then go about the perfect and right way in "believing in God" which is not only to believe in God but also to believe in His Messenger.

وَلِلَّهِ مِيرَاثُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ (...while to Allah belongs the inheritance of the heavens and the earth?...57:10) The word *mīrāth* [inheritance, heritage] is the process by which the assets of a deceased person pass to the living heirs and beneficiaries. This transfer of ownership takes place automatically by virtue of the law of Shari'ah; the deceased has no choice in the matter. On this occasion, Allah has described the ownership of heaven and earth by the expression *mīrāth* [inheritance, heritage] presumably because all those assets deemed to be owned by men will ultimately return to Allah, no matter whether men like it or not. Although

the Real Owner and Master of the heavens and the earth is Allah, He transferred part-ownership of things to man by His grace, but on the Day of Judgment, even this outward and partial ownership will no longer remain in the hands of anyone. At that stage, all sorts of ownership, apparent and real, outward and inward, will belong to none but Allah. Therefore, if those who are apparently owners of some wealth today spend it in Allah's way, they will receive its compensation in the Hereafter, and thus anything spent in the way of Allah will become the eternal property of the spender.

It is recorded in Tirmidhī on the authority of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها that one day a goat was slaughtered. Most of it was distributed among other people, except for a foreleg. The Holy Prophet ﷺ wanted to know from her whether any part of it was spared from distribution. She said 'yes, a foreleg'. The Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "The entire goat is spared, except this foreleg." He meant that the entire goat was spent in the way of Allah and thus it was spared for their benefit in the Hereafter, because it would remain with Allah for compensation. On the contrary, there would be no compensation for the foreleg that had been kept for later use, because that would perish here. [Mazhari]

لَا يَسْتَوِي مِنْكُمْ مَنْ أَنْفَقَ مِنْ قَبْلِ الْفَتْحِ وَقَاتَلَ (...Those who spent before the Conquest [of Makkah], and fought [in Allah's way], are not at par [with others]. ...10) It means that there are two types of people who spend wealth in the way of Allah: [1] those who embraced Islam before the victory of Makkah and, being believers, spent their wealth in the cause of Allah; [2] those who participated in *jihād* after the conquest of Makkah and spent their wealth in Allah's way. The two types are not equal in the sight of Allah. They differ in status and reward. The first category is described as higher in status and reward than the second category who will receive reward commensurate with their status.

Conquest of Makkah: The Dividing Line in Determining the Status of the noble Companions رضي الله عنهم

The verse declares the Conquest of Makkah as the dividing line in determining the status of the two categories of the noble Companions, presumably because the political conditions of Makkah before the Conquest were very bleak and difficult for Muslims. In terms of extrinsic causes, the survival of Muslims was threatened and their progress was

doubted. The people at large could not rule out the possibility that, like other movements, Islam would soon erode and suffer a natural attrition or death. Wise men of the world would not join a movement where there was a fear of defeat or annihilation. They wait for results. When the movement shows signs of success, they join it. Some people, though think that it is the truth, do not pluck courage to join it for fear of persecution and on account of their own weaknesses. But when the courageous and determined people are convinced about the veracity of a theory or belief system, they accept it instantly. They do not bother about victory or defeat, and smaller or larger membership of the movement does not concern them.

The people, who embraced Islam before conquest of Makkah, were witnessing the small number and political weakness of the Muslims and the consequent hardships. Muslims were very small in number and they were weak, on account of which the pagans persecuted them. Especially in the early days of Islam, disclosing one's faith in Islam would amount to losing his life, hearth and home. It is obvious that those who put their lives at stake by embracing Islam in such circumstances, and offered their lives and wealth for the help of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and for the service of Islam had such a high level of sincerity in their faith and practice that no other people can be compared to them.

Gradually, conditions changed. Muslims grew in power, so much so that eventually Makkah was conquered, after which Islam spread tremendously throughout the Arab world, people embraced the religion of Allah en masse [as the Qur'ān says: *يَدْخُلُونَ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ أَفْوَاجًا* (...people entering Allah's [approved] religion in multitudes) [110:2] This happened because many people were convinced of the veracity of Islam, but reluctant to embrace it publicly on account of their own weaknesses, owing to the might and power of the opposition and for fear of their persecution. These hurdles were now out of their way, and they started entering the fold of Islam in multitudes.

Although such people too are shown respect and honour by this verse, and forgiveness and mercy is promised to them, it has been made clear that their status cannot be equal to those who, due to their unshaken faith and resolute courage, declared their Islam despite all apprehensions of extreme hardships and persecution, and offered themselves to Islam in

very difficult times.

Allah promises Paradise and Forgiveness to all Noble Ṣaḥābah ﷺ

In the current set of verses, a distinction is drawn between the different categories of the noble Ṣaḥābah (Companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, but towards the end of verse 10 it is declared that **كُلًّا وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْحُسْنَى** (...though Allah has promised the good [reward] for each ...57:10). The word *ḥusnā* [good reward] means that the promise of Paradise and forgiveness extends to all the noble Companions, whether they spent and fought before or after the Conquest. This includes almost the entire concourse of Companions, because it is hardly conceivable that, despite being Muslims, some of them might have not spent anything in Allah's way or not participated against the hostile foes of Islam. Thus the Qur'ānic proclamation of Paradise and forgiveness is for the general body of Companions.

Ibn Ḥazm **رحمه الله تعالى** says that the meaning of verse [10] becomes even clearer when we append to it verses [101-102] of Sūrah Al-Anbiyā': **إِنَّ الَّذِينَ سَبَقَتْ لَهُمْ مِنَّا الْحُسْنَىٰ أُولَٰئِكَ عَنْهَا مُبْعَدُونَ. لَا يَسْمَعُونَ حَسِيسَهَا وَهُمْ فِي مَا اشْتَهَتْ أَنفُسُهُمْ خَالِدُونَ** (Surely, those for whom the good (news) from Us has come earlier shall be kept far away from it (i.e. from the Hell). They will not hear the slightest of its sound, and they will remain forever in what their selves desire.) [21:101-102].

The verses under comment contain the phrase **كُلًّا وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْحُسْنَى** (...though Allah has promised the good (reward) for each ...[57:10] In verses [21:101-102], Allah Ta'ālā proclaims that those who have received the good news of reward [*al-ḥusnā*] will be kept far away from Hell. The Qur'ān thus guarantees that all the Companions, whether from the first category or from the second one, are immune from Hell. Even if someone from them would commit a sin, he will not persist in it, but he will either repent from it, or will be forgiven for it because of the blessed company of the Holy Prophet ﷺ he enjoyed, his help offered to him, the good deeds he performed and many services he rendered to Islam. Therefore, he would not leave this world unless his sins would be forgiven and his account of deeds would have been clear. It is also possible that worldly calamities would serve as an expiation to wipe out his shortcomings or painful experience in the grave or '*Alam-ul-barzakh* will expiate his

faults.

There are Traditions that report torment for some of the noble Companions, but that does not refer to the torture of the Hereafter or punishment of the Hell. It refers to the chastisement of the grave or *'Alam-ul-barzakh*. It would not be far-fetched to assume that if a Companion committed a sin and did not find an opportunity to repent and cleanse himself, he would be purified by infliction of the grave, so that no chastisement will be inflicted on him in the Hereafter.

The Status of the Noble Ṣaḥābah in the light of Qur'ān and Sunnah, not in terms of Historical Narratives

The Noble Ṣaḥābah are not like the general body of the Muslim Community. They are a medium between the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the general body of the Muslim Community. Without them neither the Qur'ān nor its meaning or the teachings of the Holy Prophet ﷺ can reach the Ummah. Therefore, they enjoy a special status in Islam. The status of the blessed Companions cannot be recognized by the historical narrations that are a mixture of right and wrong. It is rather recognized in the light of Qur'ān and Sunnah.

If any of them slips up, in most cases it would not exceed a *khata'* *ijtihādī* or error in judgement, not a sin or willful transgression of law. In fact, according to the clear text of a Prophetic Tradition, if a *mujtahid* were to slip up or err in his judgement, he still receives one reward. Even if they committed a sin, it would be counted as nil in view of their life-long righteous deeds, and supporting the Holy Prophet ﷺ and Islam. The reverence and awe of Allah was engrossed in their hearts to such a high degree that they would shudder at the very thought of ordinary sins and would repent forthwith. As a result, they would inflict punishment on themselves. Some would tie themselves to the column of the mosque, and as long as they are not certain that their sins would be forgiven they would remain tied.

In addition, each one of them performed so many righteous deeds that they could expiate for their sins. Moreover, Allah has announced a general amnesty for their sins in this and other verses. He not only pardoned their sins, but also proclaimed رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ (Allah is well-pleased with them, and they are well-pleased with Him. 98:8). It is

absolutely forbidden to speak ill of them or taunt them or revile them because of their mutual differences and disagreements. According to a Prophetic Tradition, doing so is incurring Allah's curse and putting one's own faith in jeopardy.

Nowadays, on the basis of false and weak historical narratives some writers have made the noble and blessed Companions the target of taunts and reproach. First of all, the basis on which the historical narratives are founded are unreliable and questionable. Even if it is taken for granted that they have some historical substance, they are clearly in conflict with Qur'ān and Sunnah. Hence, they must be refuted in the strongest terms possible. The original statement stands: The noble and blessed Companions are forgiven and pardoned.

Unanimous Belief of the Ummah regarding the Noble Ṣaḥābah

It is obligatory on Muslims to show respect and honour to all the Companions, to love them and praise them. It is likewise imperative to observe silence regarding their mutual differences and disagreements. It is compulsory to abstain from making any of them the target of accusations and reproach. All texts of Islamic beliefs make plain this consensual belief of the Ummah. Imām Aḥmad رحمه الله تعالى has written a monograph on the subject which reached us on the authority of Iṣṭakhri. A section of it partly reads:

لَا يَجُوزُ لِأَحَدٍ أَنْ يَذْكَرَ شَيْئًا مِّنْ مَّسَاوِيهِمْ وَلَا يَطْعَنَ عَلَى أَحَدٍ مِّنْهُمْ بِعَيْبٍ وَلَا نَقْصٍ فَمَنْ فَعَلَ ذَلِكَ وَجَبَ تَأْدِيْبُهُ.

"It is not lawful for anyone to speak ill of the Companions, or cast aspersions against them, or find fault with them. Whoever does so should be punished." [Sharḥ-ul-'Aqīdah Al-Wāsiṭiyyah, known as Ad-Durrah Al-Mudi'ah]

Ibn Taimiyyah in his As-Ṣārim-ul-Maslūl has cited many verses of the Qur'ān and Prophetic Traditions regarding the virtues and characteristics of the noble Companions, after which he concludes:

وَهَذَا مِمَّا لَا نَعْلَمُ فِيهِ خِلَافًا بَيْنَ أَهْلِ الْفَقْهِ وَالْعِلْمِ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَالتَّابِعِينَ لَهُمْ بِإِحْسَانٍ وَسَائِرِ أَهْلِ السُّنَّةِ وَالْجَمَاعَةِ فَإِنَّهُمْ مُجْمَعُونَ عَلَى أَنَّ الْوَاجِبَ الشَّنَاءُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَالْإِسْتِغْفَارُ لَهُمْ وَالتَّرْحُمُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَالتَّرْضِي عَنْهُمْ وَاعْتِقَادُ مَحَبَّتِهِمْ وَمَوَالَاتِهِمْ وَعَقُوبَةُ مَنْ أَسَاءَ فِيهِمْ الْقَوْلَ.

"As far as we know, there is no difference of opinion in this issue among the scholars and the jurists from Companions and their followers, and the Ahl-us-sunnah wal-jama'ah. There is consensus of the Ummah that it is imperative to praise the Companions, to seek forgiveness for them, to remember them with compassion and pleasure, and to express love and friendship for them. Anyone who dishonours them should be punished."

Ibn Taimiyyah confirms, in Sharḥ-ul-'Aqīdah Al-Wāsiṭiyyah, the consensual belief of the *Ahl-us-sunnah wal-jama'ah* of the entire Ummah of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ relating to the mutual disagreement of the Companions:

وَيُمَسِّكُونَ عَمَّا شَجَرَ بَيْنَ الصَّحَابَةِ وَيَقُولُونَ هَذِهِ الْأَثَارُ الْمَرْوِيَّةُ فِي مَسَاوِيهِمْ مِنْهَا مَا هُوَ كَذِبٌ وَمِنْهَا مَا يَزِيدُ فِيهَا وَنَقِصَ وَغَيْرَ وَجْهٍ، وَالصَّحِيحُ مِنْهُ هُمْ فِيهِ مَعْدُورُونَ إِمَّا مُجْتَهِدُونَ مُصِيبُونَ وَإِمَّا مُجْتَهِدُونَ مُخْطِئُونَ، وَهُمْ مَعَ ذَلِكَ لَا يَعْتَقِدُونَ أَنَّ كُلَّ وَاحِدٍ مِنَ الصَّحَابَةِ مَعْصُومٌ مِنْ كِبَائِرِ الْإِثْمِ وَصَغَائِرِهِ بَلْ يَجُوزُ عَلَيْهِمُ الذُّنُوبُ فِي الْجُمْلَةِ وَلَهُمْ مِنَ الْفَضَائِلِ وَالسَّوَابِقِ مَا يُوجِبُ مَغْفِرَةً مَا يَصْدُرُ مِنْهُمْ حَتَّى أَنْتَهُمْ يُغْفَرُ لَهُمْ مِنَ السَّيِّئَاتِ مَا لَا يُغْفَرُ لِمَنْ بَعْدَهُمْ.

Ahl-us-sunnah wal-jama'ah observe silence relating to matters in which the noble Companions mutually disagreed. According to them, the position of the narratives that find fault with them may be summarized as follows: Some of them are absolutely false whilst others have been distorted or perverted. Reports that are authentic have a plausible explanation, (because they did what they did on the basis of '*ijtihad*' which Shari'ah recognizes). If they reached the right conclusion (by exercising reasoning), they would be rewarded doubly; and if they arrived at an incorrect conclusion (by exerting effort to derive the law on an issue by expending all the available means of interpreting at the jurist's disposal and by taking into account all the legal evidences related to the issue,) they are still excused (and deserve a single reward). Despite this situation, the Ummah does not believe that every Companion is innocent, infallible or sinless. In fact, it is possible for them to commit sins - major or minor, but their virtues and great services to Islam are such that they demand forgiveness. The scope of their forgiveness and pardon would be so wide that the later members of the Ummah would not have such a wide scope."

A detailed account of the status of the sahabah is given in Sūrah Al-Fath under verse [29]. I have written a book entitled *maqām-e-ṣaḥābah*

in which I have collected relevant Qur'ānic verses and Prophetic Traditions pertaining to the status of the Companions. This book has already been published. The Ummah is unanimous on the point that all the blessed Companions are impartial, unbiased, reliable and worthy of confidence. The book deals elaborately with their disagreements and the civil wars that took place among them. It deals with the status of the historical narratives and their true place in critical study. Some of these issues to the degree necessary have been included in the commentary of Sūrah Muḥammad and Sūrah Al-Fath. Please refer to the relevant sections there. Allah's help is sought and on Him is our reliance!

Verses 12 - 19

يَوْمَ تَرَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَسْعَى نُورُهُمْ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَ
بِأَيْمَانِهِمْ بُشْرَانِكُمْ الْيَوْمَ جَنَّتٌ تَجْرَى مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ
فِيهَا ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿١٢﴾ يَوْمَ يَقُولُ الْمُنْفِقُونَ وَالْمُنْفِقَاتُ
لَلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا انظُرُونَا نَقْتَبِسْ مِنْ نُورِكُمْ ۗ قِيلَ ارْجِعُوا وَرَاءَكُمْ
فَالْتَمِسُوا نُورًا ۗ فَضُرِبَ بَيْنَهُم بِسُورٍ لَهُ بَابٌ بَاطِنُهُ فِيهِ الرَّحْمَةُ
وَوَظَاهِرُهُ مِنْ قِبَلِهِ الْعَذَابُ ﴿١٣﴾ يُنَادُونَهُمْ أَلَمْ نَكُنْ مَعَكُمْ ۗ قَالُوا
بَلَىٰ وَلَكِنَّكُمْ فَتَنْتُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَتَرَبَّصْتُمْ وَارْتَبْتُمْ وَغَرَّتْكُمُ الْأَمَانِيُّ
حَتَّىٰ جَاءَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ وَغَرَّكُمْ بِاللَّهِ الْغُرُورُ ﴿١٤﴾ فَالْيَوْمَ لَا يُؤْخَذُ
مِنْكُمْ فِدْيَةٌ وَلَا مِنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ۗ مَأْوَانِكُمُ النَّارُ ۗ هِيَ مَوْلَاكُمْ ۗ
وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿١٥﴾ أَلَمْ يَأْنِ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْ تَخْشَعَ قُلُوبُهُمْ
لِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَمَا نَزَلَ مِنَ الْحَقِّ ۗ وَلَا يَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ
مِنْ قَبْلُ فَطَالَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْأَمَدُ فَقَسَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ ۗ وَكَثِيرٌ مِنْهُمْ فَسِقُونَ
﴿١٦﴾ اعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُحْيِي الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا ۗ قَدْ بَيَّنَّا لَكُمْ الْآيَاتِ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٧﴾ إِنَّ الْمُصَدِّقِينَ وَالْمُصَدِّقَاتِ وَأَقْرَبُوا اللَّهَ

قَرُضًا حَسَنًا يُضَعَفُ لَهُمْ وَلَهُمْ أَجْرٌ كَرِيمٌ ﴿١٨﴾ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ
 وَرُسُلِهِ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الصَّادِقُونَ ۖ وَالشَّهَادَةُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ ۖ لَهُمْ
 أَجْرُهُمْ وَنُورُهُمْ ۖ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ
 الْجَحِيمِ ﴿١٩﴾

On the Day when you will see the believing men and the believing women, their light proceeding in front of them and to their right hands, (it will be said to them,) "Good news for you today! Gardens beneath which rivers flow, to live therein for ever! That is the great achievement, [12] the Day when the hypocrite men and hypocrite women will say to those who believe, "Wait for us, so that we may have a share from your light.", it will be said (to them), "Go back to your rear, and search for light." Then a wall will be placed between them, which will have a gate. In its inner side, there will be the divine mercy, while towards its outer side, there will be the divine punishment. [13] They (the hypocrites) will call out to them (the believers), "Were we not with you?" They will say, "Yes, (you were,) but you led your souls to a wrong way, and kept waiting (for an evil end to the Muslims), and remained in doubt, and were deluded by fancies, until Allah's command came to pass, and you were deceived about Allah by the Big Deceiver (Iblīs). [14] So, no ransom will be accepted from you today, nor from those who disbelieved (openly). Your abode is the Fire, and it is an evil end." [15] Has the time not yet come for those who believe that their hearts should be humble for the remembrance of Allah and for the truth that has descended (through revelation)? And they must not be like those to whom the Book was given before, but a long period passed on them (in which they did not repent), therefore their hearts became hard, while many of them were sinners. [16] Know well that Allah revives the land after its death. We have made the signs clear for you, so that you may understand. [17] Surely those men who give *ṣadaqah* (charity) and those women who give *ṣadaqah* and have advanced a good loan to Allah, for them it will be multiplied, and for them there is a noble reward. [18] And those who believed in Allah and His Messengers, it is they who are the *ṣiddīqs* (the most righteous after prophets) and the *shuhadā'*

(martyrs) in the sight of your Lord. For them shall be their reward and their light. And those who disbelieved and rejected Our verses – those are the people of the Hell. [19]

The Believers will be awarded Light on the Day of Resurrection

يَوْمَ تَرَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَسْعَى نُورُهُمْ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَبِأَيْمَانِهِمْ (On the Day when you will see the believing men and the believing women, their light proceeding in front of them and to their right hands,...57:12) 'The day' refers to the 'Day of Resurrection'. The fact of 'light running before them' will take place just prior to people's passing over the bridge of *sirat*. The details are given in a Tradition reported by Sayyidnā Abū Umāmah Bāhilī  . Ibn Kathir has cited it on the authority of Ibn Abī Ḥātim. The Tradition is lengthy. It recounts that Sayyidnā Abū Umāmah Bāhilī   attended a funeral in Damascus. When it was over, he reminded people about death, the grave, the Resurrection and the Hereafter. A few of the statements are reproduced below in translation:

"Then you will be transferred from the graves to the plane of gathering where there will be different stages and spots to stand or wait. Then there will come a stage when some faces will brighten up and others will be darkened by the Divine command. Then there will come a stage when people - believers and non-believers - all will assemble on the Plane of Gathering. An intense darkness will prevail and nobody will be able to see anything. Thereafter light will be distributed. (Another report of Ibn Abī Ḥātim, reported by Ibn Kathir, which he narrates on the authority of Sayyidnā 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ūd   says that each believer will receive the light commensurate with his deeds; some will have light as large as a mountain, some as a date tree, some as big as the height of a man. The least among them will have a light as big as his index finger; it will lit at times and extinguished at other times.) Sayyidnā Abū Umāmah Bāhilī   then went on to say that the hypocrites and the infidels would not receive any light. The Holy Qur'an exemplifies it thus:

أَوْ كَظُلُمَاتٍ فِي بَحْرٍ لُجِّيٍّ يَعْشِبُهُ مَوْجٌ مِّنْ فَوْقِهِ مَوْجٌ مِّنْ فَوْقِهِ سَحَابٌ ظُلُمَاتٌ بَعْضُهَا فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ إِذَا أَخْرَجَ يَدَهُ لَمْ يَكَدْ يَرَهَا وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَجْعَلِ اللَّهُ لَهُ نُورًا فَمَا لَهُ مِن نُّورٍ

'or their deeds are like layers of darkness in a vast deep sea overwhelmed by a wave, above which there is another wave—layers of darkness, one above the other. When one puts forth his hand, he can hardly see it. And the one to whom Allah does not give light can have no light at all.' (24:40)

From this narration, it is learnt that the infidels and the hypocrites

will be deprived of the light from the very beginning point where Allah will distribute light to the believing men and women after the intensely dark spot. But Ṭabrānī reports a Tradition on the authority of Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

"Allah will send light to every believer at the bridge, and also to every hypocrite, but when the hypocrites reach the bridge, their light will be snatched away." (Ibn Kathīr)

This shows that the hypocrites will initially receive light, but when they reach the bridge, they will be deprived of it. Be that as it may, whether they will be deprived of light initially or it will extinguished later on after receiving it at an earlier stage, they will plead to the believers: 'Please wait for us! Let us take advantage of your light, because we were with you in the world when we performed *ṣalāh*, paid *zakāh*, performed *Hajj* and even participated in *jihād* expeditions?' The request will be declined. The rejoinder to this plea is forthcoming in full details. It is in keeping with the characteristic of the hypocrites that they should first be shown the light, then it should be extinguished to leave them in total darkness, just as they behaved deceitfully in the world, as the Qur‘ān states:

يُخَدِّعُونَ اللَّهَ وَهُوَ خَادِعُهُمْ

Surely, the hypocrites [try to] deceive Allah while He is the One who leaves them in deception ... [4:142]

Imām Baghawī says that 'deception' here means that first the light will be sent to them, but it will be snatched away from them just in the nick of time when they will be needing it most crucially. At that crucial moment, the believers too will fear lest their light should be snatched away. As a result, they would implore thus:

يَوْمَ لَا يُخْزِي اللَّهُ النَّبِيَّ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ نُورُهُمْ يَسْعَى بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَبِأَيْمَانِهِمْ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا آتِنَا نُورَنَا، وَاعْفِرْ لَنَا إِنَّكَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ.

"...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." [66:8] (Mazharī)

Muslim, Aḥmad and Darquṭnī record on the authority of Sayyidnā Jabir Ibn ‘Abdullah the Prophetic Ḥadīth that at first, light will be given

to both believers and hypocrites, but when the latter would reach the bridge, it will be snatched away from the hypocrites.

Mazḥarī reconciles the two versions thus: There are two types of hypocrites, one of whom appeared in the time of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. This type will be treated like the infidels. The non-believers will not receive light from the very outset. Likewise, the hypocrites of the time of the Holy Prophet ﷺ will be deprived of the light from the very outset. The second type of hypocrites appeared after the time of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, but they cannot be so called in the true sense of the word because revelation ended with the departure of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and without definitive evidence on the basis of revelation no one can be labeled, identified or classified as a *munāfiq* [hypocrite]. The *munāfiq* manifests the form of a man of faith in his outward practice, but his inner dimension is completely devoid of faith and belief. There is no way of knowing this for common people. However, Allah is fully aware of his inner and outer dimensions. He will treat each one accordingly. The *munāfiqs* will be shown the light in the beginning, but when they would arrive at the bridge, their light will be put out and they will be groping in total darkness.

In this category of *munāfiqs* fall those people of this Ummah who distort the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth twisting their meanings to suit their own purposes. We seek Allah's refuge from it.

Causes of Light and Darkness on the Plane of Gathering

Tafsīr Mazḥarī, on this occasion, has, on the basis of Qur'ān and Ḥadīth, described the causes of light and darkness on the Plane of Gathering. Below, we reproduce those causes the knowledge of which is more important than pure academic research, in the hope that Allah will grant us light:

[1] The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Give glad tidings to those who go to the mosque in the darkness of night that they will receive perfect light on the Day of Judgment." (Reported by Abū Dāwūd and Tirmidhī from Buraidah ؓ, and Ibn Mājah from Anas ؓ. This Ḥadīth is also reported by Sahl Ibn Sa'd, Zaid Ibn Harithah, Ibn 'Abbās, Ibn 'Umar, Harithah Ibn Wahb, Abū 'Umamah, Abu-ad-Dardā', Abū Mūsā, Abū Hurairah, 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنهم اجمعين)

[2] The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

مَنْ حَافَظَ عَلَى الصَّلَوَاتِ كَانَتْ لَهُ نُورًا وَبُرْهَانًا وَنَجَاةٌ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَمَنْ لَمْ يُحَافِظْ عَلَيْهَا لَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ نُورًا وَلَا بُرْهَانًا وَلَا نَجَاةٌ وَكَانَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ مَعَ قَارُونَ وَهَامَانَ وَفِرْعَوْنَ.

"He who takes care of his five daily prayers [that is, performs them regularly fulfilling all their essentials], it will serve as light, proof and salvation for him on the Day of Judgement. He who fails to take care of it, there will be no light, nor proof or salvation for him on the Day of Judgement. The latter will be in the company of Qārūn, Hāmān and Fir'aun."

(Reported by Aḥmad and Ṭabarānī from Ibn 'Umar ﷺ)

[3] The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Whoever recites Sūrah Al-Kahf, there will be so much of light for him on the Day of Judgement that it will spread from his place to Makkah." In another narration, "Whoever recites Sūrah Al-Kahf on a Friday, light will extend from his feet to the heights of the heaven on the Day of Judgment." (Reported by Ṭabarānī from Abū Sa'īd ᷺)

[4] The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Whoever recites just a single verse of the Qur'an, it will be a light for him on the Day of Judgement." (Reported by Aḥmad from Abū Hurairah ᷺)

[5] The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Whoever sends *ṣalāh* (*durūd*) to me, it shall be the cause of light on the Bridge of Ṣirāt." (Reported by Dailamī from Abū Hurairah ᷺)

[6] The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said when detailing the rules of Ḥajj: "The hair, that falls on the ground at the time of shaving it when coming out of the state of *iḥrām*, will be a light for him on the Day of Judgement" (Ṭabarānī from 'Ubādah Ibn samit ᷺)

[7] The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Stoning the *jamarāt* in Minā will be a light on the Day of Judgement." (Musnad of Bazzār from Ibn Mas'ūd ᷺)

[8] The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "He whose hair turns gray in Islam, it will be a light for him on the Day of Judgement." (Ṭabarānī, with a good chain, from Abū Hurairah ᷺)

[9] The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "He who shoots even one arrow in

Allah's way while fighting in *jihād*, it will be a light for him on the Day of Judgement." (Bazzār with a good chain from Abū Hurairah ﷺ)

[10] The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "He who remembers Allah in the marketplace will receive light for every strand of hair on the Day of Judgement." (Baihaqī in *Shu'ab-ul-Īmān* with an interrupted chain from Ibn 'Umar ﷺ)

[11] The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "He who alleviates the calamity of a Muslim, Allah will create two compartments of light for him at the bridge which will brighten up a whole world. No one besides Allah knows its number." (Ṭabarānī from Abū Hurairah ﷺ)

[12] The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: *إِيَّاكُمْ وَالظُّلْمَ فَإِنَّهُ هُوَ الظُّلْمَةُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ* "Beware of *zulm* [injustice] because that will yield *zulumāt* [layers of darkness] on the Day of Judgement." (Bukhārī and Muslim from Ibn 'Umar ﷺ, Muslim from Jābir ﷺ and Ḥakim from Abū Hurairah ﷺ and Ibn 'Umar, and Ṭabarānī from Ibn Ziyad ﷺ).

يَوْمَ يَقُولُ الْمُنْفِقُونَ وَالْمُنْفِقَاتُ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا انظُرُونَا نَقْتِسِمْ مِنْ نُورِكُمْ (...the Day when the hypocrite men and hypocrite women will say to those who believe, "Wait for us, so that we may have a share from your light...(57:13) The meaning is self-evident.

قِيلَ ارْجِعُوا وَرَاءَكُمْ فَالْتَمِسُوا نُورًا (...it will be said [to them], "Go back to your rear, and search for light57:13) This reply will be given by either the believers, or by the angels. [Ibn 'Abbās and Qatādah]

فَضْرَبَ بَيْنَهُمْ سُورًا لَهَا بَابٌ طَبَاطْنَةُ فِيهِ الرَّحْمَةُ وَظَاهِرُهُ مِنْ قِبَلِهِ الْعَذَابُ (...Then a wall will be placed between them, which will have a gate. In its inner side, there will be the Divine mercy, while towards its outer side, there will be the Divine punishment...57:13). Having received the reply from either the believers or the angels, the hypocrites will return to the place where the light was distributed. They will find nothing there, so they will attempt to go back to the believers but in the meantime a wall will be set up between the hypocrites and the believers. As a result, the hypocrites will be separated from the believers and will not be able to reach them. They will be left in complete darkness. On the side of the believers there will be Allah's mercy while on the side of the hypocrites there will be chastisement.

Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī cites Ibn Zaid's view that this wall refers to A'rāf,

which will be a barrier between the believers and the hypocrites. Other commentators express the view that the wall is not the barrier of A'raf, but it is some other wall or barrier. The door in the wall could serve one of two purposes: [1] It will be a way through which the believers and the hypocrites will communicate with one another; or [2] all the believers will pass through this door and then sealed off permanently.

Special Note

In the matter of light, the infidels are not mentioned anywhere, because in their case there is no question of having such a light. The hypocrites are, however, mentioned and there are two narrations concerning them: [1] That they will not receive light at all from the outset; or [2] They will receive it at first, but when they arrive at the Bridge of *Ṣirāṭ*, it will be extinguished. A wall will be erected as a barrier between them and the believers. This goes to show that only the believers will cross the Bridge of *Ṣirāṭ* from above the Hell. The infidels and pagans will not pass through the Bridge. They will be pushed into the Fire direct through the doors of Hell. The sinful believers, who will be kept in the Hell for a while to be cleansed of their sins, will fall into the Hell while crossing the Bridge. The rest of the believers will cross the bridge safely and enter Paradise, as explicitly stated by Shah 'Abdul-Qādir Dehlawī رحمه الله تعالى and supported by Durr. Allah knows best!

أَلَمْ يَأْنِ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْ تَخْشَعَ قُلُوبُهُمْ لِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَمَا نَزَلَ مِنَ الْحَقِّ (Has the time not yet come for those who believe that their hearts should be humble for the remembrance of Allah and for the truth that has descended [through revelation]?...57:16) The phrase *khushū'-ul-qalb* means 'for the heart to soften; to be receptive to advice; to be obedient; to submit'. [Ibn Kathīr] In the Qur'ānic context, it implies 'a complete willingness to yield to the Divine injunctions, or the Divine imperatives and prohibitions without allowing any laxity in following them. [Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī]

This verse admonishes the believers. Sayyidnā 'Abdullah Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه reports that some of the believers were found to be lacking in firmness, and somewhat laziness was felt in their practices. So this verse was revealed. Imām A'mash رحمه الله تعالى said: After settling down in Madīnah, the blessed Companions experienced socio-economic comfort and prosperity; as a result some of them relaxed in exerting their efforts to do good works as they used to do previously. Thus this verse was revealed.

[Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī]

Sayyidnā 'Abdullah Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه's narration also carries the additional information that this admonitory verse was revealed thirteen years after the revelation had started. [Recorded by Ibn Abī Ḥātim] Sayyidnā 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه narrates that this admonitory verse was revealed four years after they had embraced Islam to administer this mild reproof. Allah knows best!

In any case, the Muslims are cautioned in this verse that they should prepare themselves to turn to Allah totally and completely, and act upon the teachings of their religion. All actions revolve around *khushū'-ul-qalb* Sayyidnā Shaddād Ibn Aws رضي الله عنه narrates that the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم said: "The first thing that will be taken away from the people will be their humility or humbleness [*khushū'*]." [Ibn Kathīr]

Is every Believer a 'Ṣiddīq' and a 'Shahīd'?

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الصَّٰدِقُونَ وَالشَّٰهَدَاءُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ "And those who believed in Allah and His messengers, it is they who are the *ṣiddīqs* [the most righteous] and the *shuhadā'* (martyrs) in the sight of your Lord.57:19) This verse indicates that every 'believer' is a 'Ṣiddīq' and a 'Shahīd'. On the basis of this verse Qatādah and 'Amr Ibn Maimūn maintain that anyone who believes in Allah and His Messenger is a 'Ṣiddīq' and a 'Shahīd'. Ibn Jarīr reports that Sayyidnā Bara' Ibn 'Āzib رضي الله عنه narrates that the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم said: "مُؤْمِنُوا أُمَّتِي شُهَدَاءُ" "The believers of my Ummah are all Shahīds (martyrs)." In support of this, he recited the current verse.

Ibn Abī Ḥātim reports that Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه narrates that one day some of the Companions had gathered around him, and he stated "كُلُّكُمْ صِدِّيقٌ وَشَهِيدٌ" "Each one of you is a 'Ṣiddīq' and a 'Shahīd'". This startled them and they exclaimed: "What are you saying, Abū Hurairah?" He replied: "If you do not believe me, then read the present verse [19] وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الصَّٰدِقُونَ وَالشَّٰهَدَاءُ"

However, another verse of the Qur'ān seems to be against this concept. It is the verse [4:69]: فَأُولَٰئِكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَالصَّٰدِقِينَ وَالشَّٰهَدَاءِ (And those who obey Allah and the Messenger are with those whom Allah has blessed, namely, the Prophets, the Ṣiddiqīn, the

Shuhadā' and the righteous...) This indicates that not every believer is a 'Ṣiddīq' and a 'Shahīd' because in addition to the Prophets, the general body of Muslims comprise three categories of believers who are specially mentioned: [1] the Ṣiddīqin; [2] the Shuhadā'; and [3] the righteous. It would appear that the three categories are distinctly different. Otherwise, there would have been no need to mention them separately. Therefore, some scholars believe that the 'Ṣiddīqin' and the 'Shuhadā'' in fact constitute the highest and most sublime categories bearing the supreme attributes. Here all believers are referred to as 'Ṣiddīq' and 'Shahīd' in the sense that every believer is in some degree included in the group of 'Ṣiddīqin' and 'Shuhadā''. Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī states that it is appropriate to believe that the verse under comment refers to people who have perfect faith and perform deeds of righteousness. Otherwise, people who are believers but indulge in deeds that are not in keeping with the dictates of their faith can hardly be called 'Ṣiddīq' or 'Shahīd'.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said: *اللَّعَانُونَ لَا يَكُونُونَ شُهَدَاءَ* (The cursers cannot be 'Shuhadā'). This Tradition supports the notion. Sayyidnā 'Umar Al-Fārūq رضي الله عنه once said to the people: "What is the matter with you? You see someone defaming people, you neither stop him nor do you raise your eyebrows about it! They replied: 'We are afraid of his violent tongue. If we tell him something, he will also attack our honour.' Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنه made a rejoinder 'if that is the case, then you cannot be 'Shuhadā''. Ibn Athīr cited this narration and said: 'This means that such coward people will not be among the 'Shuhadā' who will bear witness against the communities of the previous Prophets.' [Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī]. Maḥzarī states that the word *الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا* 'believers' in verse [19] refers only to the Companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ who reposed their faith in Allah and His Messenger, saw him and had the pleasure of his company. As such, the restrictive phrase, *هُمُ الصِّدِّيقُونَ* 'it is they who are the Ṣiddīqs.' in Verse [19] indicate that the status of Ṣiddīq is limited or restricted to the noble Companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Mujaddid Alf Thānī states that all the noble Companions had a share in the noble qualities of prophet-hood. Any Companion who saw him in a state of faith even for a short time is absorbed and drowned in such qualities of perfection. Allah, the Pure and Exalted, knows best!

Verses 20 - 21

اَعْلَمُوا اَنَّما الْحَيَوةُ الدُّنْيَا لَعِبٌ وَلَهُوٌ وَّزِينَةٌ وَتَفَاخُرٌ بَيْنَكُمْ وَتَكَاثُرٌ
 فِي الْاَمْوَالِ وَالْاَوْلَادِ ط كَمَثَلِ غَيْثٍ اَعْجَبَ الْكُفَّارَ نَبَاتُهُ ثُمَّ يَهِيجُ
 فَتَرَاهُ مُصْفَرًا ثُمَّ يَكُونُ حُطَامًا ط وَفِي الْاٰخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ ۙ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ
 مِّنَ اللّٰهِ وَرِضْوَانٌ ط وَمَا الْحَيَوةُ الدُّنْيَا اِلَّا مَتَاعُ الْغُرُوْرِ ﴿٢٠﴾
 سَابِقُوا اِلَى مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا كَعَرْضِ السَّمَاءِ
 وَالْاَرْضِ ۙ لَدِدِنَ اٰمَنُوا بِاللّٰهِ وَرُسُلِهِ ط ذٰلِكَ فَضْلُ اللّٰهِ يُؤْتِيهِ
 مَن يَّشَاءُ ط وَاللّٰهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيْمِ ﴿٢١﴾

Know well that the worldly life is but a play and an amusement, and a show of beauty, and exchange of boastful claims between you, and a competition of increase in riches and children. (All this is) like a rain, the vegetation of which attracts the farmers, then it withers, and you see it turning yellow, then it becomes straw. And in the Hereafter there is a severe punishment (for the disbelievers), and forgiveness from Allah and (Allah's) pleasure (for the believers and the righteous). And the worldly life is nothing but a material of delusion. [20] Compete each other in proceeding towards forgiveness from your Lord, and to Paradise the width of which is like the width of the sky and the earth. It has been prepared for those who believe in Allah and His messengers. That is the bounty of Allah that He gives to whomever He wills, and Allah is the Lord of the great bounty. [21]

The Life of this World is Fleeting Enjoyment

The preceding verses described the conditions of the inmates of Paradise and those of the inhabitants of Hell, which will materialize in the Hereafter and will be permanent and eternal. Since the basic cause for one's deprivation of the bounties of the Hereafter and his being seized by the divine punishment is his involvement in the temporary pleasures of this worldly life that tempt him to forget the life to come, the verse under comment describes the reality of the worldly life and its being unreliable. The verse depicts the involvements of a human being that he

cheerfully enjoys from the inception of his life up to its end. The verse summarizes these involvements in the same order in which they occur. From the inception to the end of his life, man leads his life in the following order: *la'ib* [play], *lahw* [amusement], *zīnah* [show of beauty], *tafākhur* [exchange of boastful claims] and *takāthur* [competition of increase in riches and children].

The word *la'ib* (play) refers to a play that has no purpose at all, like the movements of little children. The *lahw* [amusement or pastime] is a game or sport meant initially for amusement and enjoyment, but it may serve also some other subsidiary purpose like physical exercise. It includes all the sports of the bigger children such as playing with a ball or swimming or target-shooting. Prophetic Traditions have termed swimming and target-shooting as good sports. The early stage of one's life is spent in play and amusement. Then comes a stage in his youth when man wants to adorn his body and dress and to show their beauty, which is described in the verse as '*zīnah*'. Then comes a stage in which man is tempted to prove his superiority over his mates and to make boastful claims. In old age, a keen competition and rivalry sets in to amass wealth and multiply children.

When man goes through a particular phase of life, he feels satisfied with it. But when that phase is over, he realizes its absurdity and hollowness and takes to the next phase of life. For example, a child is most fascinated with his phase of life and regards the stage of *la'ib* (play) the goal of his life. Should someone snatch one of his toys, he feels as much aggrieved as a big man is grieved by his valuable wealth and property being usurped. However, when he grows a little bigger, he realizes the things he deemed to be the goal of his life were nothing but some useless and absurd activities. The same thing happens in one's youth when he is attracted by adorned beauties. In old age, man gathers wealth and multiplies children. Power, prestige, pride and position are his capital goods and investments to wield dominance in life. The Qur'an reminds him that this phase too will pass away. The next stage is *barzakh* [grave] followed by the Day of Resurrection. Man needs to think about those stages or phases of life because they are really eternal without an end. Allah has described the fleeting enjoyment of this world in such an order that the appropriate parable given in verse [20] follows naturally.

كَمَثَلِ غَيْثٍ أَعْجَبَ الْكُفَّارَ نَبَاتُهُ، ثُمَّ يَهْبِجُ فَتَرَاهُ مُضْفَرًا ثُمَّ يَكُونُ حُطَامًا (...[All this is] like a rain, the vegetation of which attracts the farmers, then it withers, and you see it turning yellow, then it becomes straw....57:20) The word *ghaiṭh* means 'rain'. The word *kuffar*, being the plural of *kāfir*, is generally used as opposed to *mu'minin* [believers], in the sense of non-believers, but its literal sense carries the meaning of 'farmers' also. Some scholars have taken the word here in this literal sense, explicating that the farmers are happy to see the vegetation that grows in the aftermath of rain. Other commentators have taken the word *kuffar* in its popular sense of non-believers, explaining the verse to mean that the non-believers are attracted by the greenery. This explanation may be criticized on the ground that being happy with the greenery is not confined to non-believers, but also the believers admire the lush vegetation when it abounds in vigorous growth. The commentators have appraised the criticism thus: There is a world of difference between the happiness and admiration of a believer and that of a non-believer. A believer's pleasure is directed towards Allah. He believes that everything is the outcome of Allah's power, wisdom and mercy. He does not make it the goal of his life; he gives up the cherished and precious things of this mortal world in consideration for the higher, eternal things of the life yet to come in the Hereafter. That is the goal of his life he worries about. Therefore, any believer who fulfills the requirements of his faith is not attracted, even by the biggest wealth in this world as a *kāfir* does. That is why the attraction by the vegetation is attributed to a non-believer.

In short, the parable means that in the wake of rain vegetation of all sorts grows, and it pleases the farmers, especially the non-believers. But the vegetation soon turns yellow in colour, after being fresh and green. After that, the green fades away and become scattered particles of dust. This is example of mankind in this life. They are young and strong in the beginning. In this stage of life, they look youthful and handsome. Gradually, old age overcomes them which does away with all their beauty and freshness until they die and become dust. This parable indicates the end of this life, while in contrast, the Hereafter is surely coming, the significance of which is given in the following words:

وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ^{لَا} وَمَغْفِرَةٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانٌ (...And in the Hereafter there is a severe punishment [for the disbelievers], and forgiveness from Allah and

[Allah's] pleasure [for the believers and the righteous] ...57:20). In the Hereafter the people will certainly have to face one of two things: [1] severe punishment for the non-believers; and [2] forgiveness of Allah, His mercy and His good pleasure. Punishment has been mentioned here first, because the preceding verses described the behavior of the infidels that they are over-absorbed in worldly pleasures, the outcome of which is also severe chastisement. As opposed to this outcome, two things have been laid down for the believers: [1] Divine forgiveness; and [2] Divine pleasure. This indicates that forgiveness of sins is though a boon that saves one from the punishment, yet in addition to being saved from the punishment, he will attain Paradise and its eternal favors. This will be the manifestation of Divine pleasure.

وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَتَاعُ الْغُرُورِ (And the worldly life is nothing but a material of delusion....57:20) The current phrase states concisely the reality of this world. Having seen and understood all that has been explained in the foregoing verses about the transitory nature of this world, sound and intelligent people can come to only one conclusion: that is, the life of this world is a material of delusion; it is not a capital that may be useful in odd times. Therefore, after knowing the reality of the worldly life and the punishment of the Hereafter, a reasonable man should not be over-involved in worldly pleasures, and should be eager to obtain the bounties of the Hereafter. This is what the next verses say.

سَابِقُوا إِلَىٰ مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا كَعَرْضِ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ (Compete each other in proceeding towards forgiveness from your Lord and to Paradise, the width of which is like the width of the sky and the earth ...57:21) The competition or race referred to in this verse may have either of the two meanings: [1] No one has a guarantee for the continuance of his life, health and strength. One should not procrastinate, delay, defer, or put off performing righteous deeds for future, because the time might not come on account of illness, any inability or even death. One should race against inability, weakness and death, so that one may accumulate the treasure of good deeds that may lead one to Paradise before such disabilities may arrive and stop one from the good deeds. [2] Another meaning may be to compete with one another in good deeds, as Sayyidnā 'Alī عليه السلام advises: "Be among the first ones to go to the mosque and the last ones to come out." Sayyidnā 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه advises: "Go forward to be in the first

line of *jihād*." Sayyidnā Anas رضي الله عنه states: "Try to be present for the first *takbīr* of the congregational prayer." [Rūḥ]

The verse under comment defines that Paradise will be as wide as the heaven and the earth. A similar verse occurs in Sūrah Al-‘Imrān [3:133] where the word '*skies*' is plural, whereas here the word *sama'* (sky) is singular, from which we gather that both the words, the singular as well as the plural, refer to all the seven heavens, meaning if the vastness of the seven heavens and the earth are put together, that will be the width of Paradise. Obviously, the length of anything is greater than its breadth. This shows that the length of Paradise is greater than the length of the seven heavens and earth. Sometimes the word width or breadth is used in the general sense of 'vastness' irrespective of its length. In both cases, the purport of the verse is to describe that Paradise is very vast, so vast that it can accommodate the entire heavens and the earth in its vastness .

ذَلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ (That is the bounty of Allah that He gives to whomever He wills, and Allah is the Lord of the great bounty...57:21) The foregoing verse enjoined upon us to march forth and compete each other in marching to Paradise and its bounties. This could give rise to the thought that Paradise and its eternal pleasures and delights are the direct result of our actions. This verse clarifies the point that good actions are not necessarily the sufficient cause for the attainment of Paradise. Man's life-long actions cannot be an adequate price even for the bounties he has received in this world, let alone the everlasting bounties of Paradise and its eternal blessings. Anyone who enters Paradise will do so out of Allah's grace and mercy, as is mentioned in a Prophetic Ḥadīth, recorded in Ṣaḥīḥain on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه who reports that the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم has said: "No one will attain salvation by means of his actions only." The Companions enquired: "Not even you, O Messenger of Allah?" He replied: "No, not even I will attain Paradise because of my actions, unless Allah bestows His grace and compassion on me." [Maḥzarī]

Verses 22 - 24

مَا أَصَابَ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مِّنْ

قَبْلِ أَنْ نَبْرَأَهَا ۗ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ ﴿٢٢﴾ لِكَيْلَا تَأْسَوْا عَلَى
مَا فَاتَكُمْ وَلَا تَفْرَحُوا بِمَا آتَاكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُورٍ
﴿٢٣﴾ ۗ الَّذِينَ يَبْخُلُونَ وَيَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْبُخْلِ ۗ وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ
هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ ﴿٢٤﴾

No calamity befalls the earth or your own selves, but it is (pre-destined) in a Book before We bring it into being, Indeed it is easy for Allah. [22] so that you may neither grieve on what has escaped you, nor over-exult on what He has given you. And Allah does not love any self-admirer, over-proud, [23] those who are miserly and bid others to be miserly. And whoever turns away, then Allah is the All-Independent, the Ever-Praised. [24]

Factors affecting Mankind are duly measured and destined

There are two sets of factors that make man unmindful of Allah and the Hereafter: [1] wealth, comfort and other luxuries of this world; one's over-involvement in such luxuries makes him neglectful of Allah. The previous verses have warned against it. [2] calamities, problems and other hardships that cause one to be hopeless and in turn neglectful towards Allah. The current set of verses deal with this second cause of negligence.

مَا أَصَابَ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ نَبْرَأَهَا (No calamity befalls the earth or your own selves, but it is [pre-destined] in a Book before We bring it into being ...57:22) The expression 'Book' refers to 'Preserved Tablet [*lawḥ mahfūz*]' and the verse means that Allah had measured and decided the destiny of all things even before He created them. The expression 'No affliction befalls in the earth' refers to famine, earthquake, destruction of crops, loss in business, loss of wealth and property and loss of friends and loved ones. The expression 'in yourselves' refers to illnesses of all sorts, all kinds of wounds, hurt and injury.

Patience and Gratitude

لِكَيْلَا تَأْسَوْا عَلَى مَا فَاتَكُمْ وَلَا تَفْرَحُوا بِمَا آتَاكُمْ (...so that you may neither grieve on what has escaped you, nor over-exult on what He has given you ...57:23) This means that Allah has informed us of His encompassing knowledge, recording all things before they occur and creating all things in due measure known to Him, so that we may know that what has met us

would never have missed us, and what has missed us would never have met us. Therefore, we are commanded not to over-grieve on the good things we have missed, nor to over-exult on the comforts or wealth we enjoyed in this life, and in turn be neglectful about Allah and the Hereafter. Sayyidnā ‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه says that it is man's natural disposition that certain things cheer him up and other things make him miserable, whereas the true position should have been as follows: When any misery befalls him, he should endure it with patience and earn reward in the Hereafter, and when he experiences joy, he should experience it with gratitude to Allah and earn reward in the Hereafter. [Reported by Ḥākim who rates it as *ṣaḥīḥ*. See Rūḥ]

وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُورٍ (...And Allah does not love any self-admirer, over-proud...57:23) The expression "does not love" in fact implies that Allah 'hates' those who become proud of the bounties they enjoy in this world. But instead of using the word 'hates' the expression 'does not love' is perhaps an indication that an intelligent person should consider about all his actions whether or not the intended act is dear to Allah. This is the reason why the verse uses the phrase 'does not love'.

Verse 25

لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلَنَا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَنْزَلْنَا مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْمِيزَانَ لِيَقُومَ
النَّاسُ بِالْقِسْطِ ۖ وَأَنْزَلْنَا الْحَدِيدَ فِيهِ بَأْسٌ شَدِيدٌ وَمَنَافِعُ لِلنَّاسِ
وَلِيَعْلَمَ اللَّهُ مَن يَنْصُرُهُ وَرُسُلَهُ بِالْغَيْبِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ ﴿٢٥﴾

We have indeed sent Our messengers with clear proofs, and sent down with them the Book and the Balance, so that people may uphold justice. And We sent down iron in which there is strong power, and benefits for the people; and (We did it) so that Allah knows the one who helps Him and His messengers without seeing (Him). Surely Allah is Strong, Mighty. [25]

Establishing Justice: The Real Purpose of sending Prophets and Divine Books

لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلَنَا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَنْزَلْنَا مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْمِيزَانَ لِيَقُومَ النَّاسُ بِالْقِسْطِ ۖ
وَأَنْزَلْنَا الْحَدِيدَ فِيهِ بَأْسٌ شَدِيدٌ

We have indeed sent Our messengers with clear proofs, and sent down with them the Book and the Balance, so that people may uphold justice. And We sent down iron in which there is strong power, and benefits for the people; and [We did it] so that Allah knows the one who helps Him and His messengers without seeing [Him]. Surely Allah is Strong, Mighty (57:25)

The word *bayyināt* means 'clear' or 'evident' things. It could also mean 'clear injunctions'. It may refer to 'miracles, clear proofs and evidences of Prophet-hood and Messenger-ship. [Ibn Kathīr and Ibn Ḥayyān]. After *bayyināt*, the mention sending down the Book supports the last interpretation, that is, *bayyināt* refers to 'miracles and proofs' and that 'the Book' sets out details of injunctions. In addition to the Book, another thing has been mentioned, which is *mīzān* [Balance or Scale]. Originally, this word refers to an instrument of weighing. Besides the customary balance, there are other kinds of instruments that are invented from time to time to weigh and measure other things. For example, nowadays we have instruments with which to weigh and measure 'light', 'wind' and other things. All these instruments will fall under the category of '*mīzān* [Balance]

This verse speaks of sending down 'the Balance' like 'the Book'. The notion of the Book coming down from the heaven and reaching the prophets through the agency of the angels is quite understandable. But it is not clear what it means for the Balance to come down. Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī, Mazḥarī and others have explained that 'the coming down of Balance' refers to the Divine laws that were revealed pertaining to the use of the Balance and administration of justice. Qurṭubī explains that it was the Book that was sent down, the Balance has been merely appended to the same verb but connoting the sense of inventing and placing. This is quite common in Arabic language and literature. Thus this sentence in full will read as follows: *أَنْزَلْنَا الْكِتَابَ وَوَضَعْنَا الْمِيزَانَ* (We sent down the Book and placed the Scale.) The readers may compare this verse with verse [7] of Sūrah Ar-Raḥmān *وَالسَّمَاءَ رَفَعَهَا وَوَضَعَ الْمِيزَانَ* (And He raised the sky high, and placed the scale...55:7) where Scale is said to have been set up or placed.

Some Traditions narrate that a balance was actually sent down from the heavens to Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام and he was enjoined to weigh with it and fulfill the rights of people. Allah knows best!

Alongside 'the Book' and 'the Balance', a third thing was sent down, that is, 'the iron'. The verb 'sent down' in relation to the iron stands for 'created' because it was not sent down from the heaven. There are other occasions where the verb *anzala* [He sent down] is used in the sense of *khalafa* [He created], as for instance in this verse وَأَنْزَلَ لَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَنْعَامِ ثَمَنِيَةَ أَزْوَاجٍ (He sent down to you of the cattle eight couples...39:6) In this verse, the verb *anzala* [He sent down] is unanimously used in the sense of *khalafa* [He created]. This expression is adopted to indicate that everything in this world is 'sent down from the heaven' in the sense that everything that exists in the world was recorded in the Preserved Tablet long before it came into existence. [Rūḥ-ul-Maʿānī]

According to the verse, 'iron' serves two purposes: [1] it represent power and holds the hostile opponents in great awe, and may compel the rebellious people to abide by Divine laws and system of justice. [2] it also holds great benefits for man. In other words, iron is a thing of common utility as it is used on a large scale in various industries. It is indispensable for the invention of every device, machine, mechanical apparatus, contrivance, and there is some iron in almost everything man innovates. No contrivance is possible without iron.

Special Note [1]

The fundamental purpose of sending the Prophets, revealing the divine books and erecting the Balance is mentioned as follows: لِيُقِيمُوا النَّاسَ بِالْقِسْطِ (so that people may uphold justice...57:25) After that a third element is introduced: the creation of 'iron'. This, in fact, complements the same basic purpose of 'administration of justice' because the Prophets and the Divine Books set forth clear and sound arguments to establish justice. If the defiant group fails to establish it, it is warned about punishment in the Hereafter. The 'Balance' sets up the parameters within which justice should operate. If the defiant group obdurately refuses to accept the parameters of justice and is left free to go about violating them, he will not allow justice to be established. In this case, the higher authority of the state will have no choice but to take up arms against them.

Special Note [2]

Another point of consideration here is that the Holy Qurʾān has set forth two factors as fundamental to the establishment of justice: [1] the Book; and [2] the Balance. The Book sets forth the Divine rights and the

human rights, and the need to fulfil them; it prohibits their violation. The Balance lays down the system which maintains just equilibrium in human social relations. The purpose of revealing these two factors is *لِيُقْرَمَ* (so that people may uphold justice...57:25) The factor of 'iron' has been mentioned last. This indicates that in the establishment of justice iron may be used only as a last resort, not as the first step. The real purpose of improving human society and establishing justice among them is to improve them in intellectual development and growth. The government may not exert its might and power to achieve the purpose of developing them intellectually. It may use it, only as the ultimate option, if they stand in the way of justice. The main thing is to cultivate the minds of the people by educating them.

وَلِيَعْلَمَ اللَّهُ مَنْ يَنْصُرُهُ وَرُسُلَهُ بِالْغَيْبِ (...and [We did it] so that Allah knows the one who helps Him and His messengers without seeing57:25) Here the conjunction 'and', according to Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī, explains that this subjunctive phrase is conjoined to another subjunctive phrase that is understood in the context: *لِيَنْفَعَهُمْ* (so that it may benefit them) in their trade and industry; so that Allah may legally and outwardly know who will assist Him and His Messenger by carrying weapons of war made of iron and fight *jihād* in defence of His religion'. The restrictive adverbs 'legally and outwardly' have been added because Allah knows everything pre-eternally as He pre-recorded them in the Book of Decrees, and when man performs the action, it is recorded in his Account Book by the angels. In this way, its legal manifestation becomes plainly apparent.

Verses 26- 29

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا وَإِبْرَاهِيمَ وَجَعَلْنَا فِي ذُرِّيَّتِهِمَا النُّبُوَّةَ وَالْكِتَابَ
فَمِنْهُمْ مُهْتَدٍ ۖ وَكَثِيرٌ مِّنْهُمْ فَسِقُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾ ثُمَّ قَفَّيْنَا عَلَىٰ آثَارِهِم
بِرُسُلِنَا وَقَفَّيْنَا بِعِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ وَآتَيْنَاهُ الْإِنجِيلَ ۗ وَجَعَلْنَا فِي
قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ رَأْفَةً وَرَحْمَةً ۗ وَرَهْبَانِيَّةً ابْتَدَعُوهَا مَا كَتَبْنَاهَا
عَلَيْهِمْ إِلَّا ابْتِغَاءَ رِضْوَانِ اللَّهِ فَمَا رَعَوْهَا حَقَّ رِعَايَتِهَا ۖ فَآتَيْنَا الَّذِينَ
آمَنُوا مِنْهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ ۖ وَكَثِيرٌ مِّنْهُمْ فَسِقُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا

اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَآمِنُوا بِرَسُولِهِ يُؤْتِكُمْ كِفْلَيْنِ مِنْ رَحْمَتِهِ وَيَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ
نُورًا تَمْشُونَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٢٨﴾ لَيْلًا يَعْلَمُ أَهْلُ
الْكِتَابِ إِلَّا يَقْدِرُونَ عَلَى شَيْءٍ مِنْ فَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَإِنَّ الْفَضْلَ بِيَدِ اللَّهِ
يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٢٩﴾

And we have indeed sent Nuḥ and Ibrāhīm, and kept the Book and prophet-hood (continuing) in their progeny. So, some of those (to whom they were sent) were on the right path, and many of them were sinners. [26] Then We made Our messengers follow them one after the other, then We sent after them 'Īsā, the son of Maryam (Jesus, son of Mary), and gave him the Injīl, and placed tenderness and mercy in the hearts of his followers. As for monasticism, it was invented by them; We did not ordain it for them, but (they adopted it) to seek Allah's pleasure, then could not observe it as was due. So We gave those of them who believed their reward. And many of them are sinners. [27] O those who believe, fear Allah, and believe in His Messenger, and He will give you two shares (of reward) out of His mercy, and will make for you a light whereby you will walk, and will forgive you, And Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful. [28] so that the People of the Book may know that they have no power over any thing from Allah's bounty, and that bounty is in Allah's hand; He gives it to whom He wills, and Allah is the Lord of the great bounty. [29]

Many of the Nations of the Prophets were Rebellious

In the preceding verses it was mentioned that in order to give guidance to the world and to establish justice therein, Allah sent His Messengers and revealed to them the divine books and set up Balance. The current verses give specific names of some of those Divine Messengers. Among them, Prophet Nuḥ عليه السلام stands first in the list, because he is second 'Ādam عليه السلام in the sense that all human beings after the Deluge were from his progeny. Then the Prophet Ibrāhīm Khalīl-ullah عليه السلام is mentioned as he is the father of the prophets and recognized as an ideal for all the divine religions. It has been made plain here that all the Prophets and Messengers sent after these two prophets were from their offspring. Out of many branches of the progeny of

Nuḥ عليه السلام, the branch singled out for prophet-hood was that of Prophet Ibrāhīm Khalīl-ullah عليه السلام. After specific mention of these two Prophets, the whole chain of prophets is referred to by the words, *ثُمَّ فَفَعِينَا عَلَىٰ آثَارِهِمْ بِرُسُلِنَا*, "Then We made Our messengers follow them one after the other". Lastly, 'Īsā عليه السلام has been specifically mentioned, as he was the last among the Israelite prophets. Then the Last of all prophets Sayyidnā Muḥammad عليه السلام and his Shari'ah has a pointed reference in the next verse.

The special characteristics of the disciples of Prophet 'Īsā عليه السلام are given in part of verse 27 as follows: *وَجَعَلْنَا فِي قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ رَأْفَةً وَرَحْمَةً* (...and placed tenderness and mercy in the hearts of his followers) In other words, Allah inculcated two qualities in the hearts of the followers of Prophet 'Īsā عليه السلام and his Divine Book Injīl [Gospel]: [1] tenderness and [2] mercy. As a result, they showed tenderness and compassion to one another. Or it could mean that they showed tenderness and kindness to the entire creation of Allah.

Generally, the two words *ra'fah* (tenderness) and *rahmah* (mercy) are treated as synonyms or near-synonyms, but since they are employed here in opposition to each other, some lexicologists explained that the word *ra'fah* is stronger in degree than the word *rahmah*. Others have explained that there are two requirements of tenderness and mercy. The word *ra'fah* means to alleviate the calamity of someone, while the word *rahmah* means to give to someone what he needs. In short, *ra'fah* is concerned with repelling harm and *rahmah* is concerned with deriving benefit. As 'repelling harm' is normally prior to 'deriving benefit', *ra'fah* takes precedence over *rahmah* when the two words are expressed simultaneously.

On this occasion, 'tenderness' and 'mercy' are mentioned as the special characteristics of the disciples [*Howāriyyūn*] of the Prophet 'Īsā عليه السلام. Similarly, some characteristics of the blessed Companions of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad عليه السلام are given in Sūrah Al-Faṭḥ, one of which is *رُحَمَاءُ بَيْنَهُمْ* (...compassionate among themselves...48:29). But another characteristic of them is given before this as: *أَشِدَّاءُ عَلَى الْكُفَّارِ* (...hard against the disbelievers ...48:29). The reason for this difference seems to be that there were no laws pertaining to *jihād* against the non-believers in the Shari'ah of the Prophet 'Īsā عليه السلام. Therefore, there was no occasion for them to be hard against the disbelievers. Allah knows best!

Monasticism: An Analysis

وَرَهْبَانِيَّةً ابْتَدَعُوهَا (...As for monasticism, it was invented by them;). The word *rahbāniyyah* (monasticism) is attributed to *ruhban*. The words *rāhib* (singular) and *ruhban* (plural) mean 'the one who fears'. After Prophet ʿĪsā عليه السلام, transgression became common. In particular, the kings and the leaders publicly defied the laws of the Gospel. When the scholars and the righteous people among them attempted to stop them from doing evil deeds, they were put to death. Those that remained, felt that they would not be able to stop them, nor did they have the power of resistance. If they lived in society, there was every likelihood that their religion too would be destroyed. Therefore, they took upon themselves in earnest that they would give up all pleasures and comforts of this life including the legitimate ones. Thus they avoided marriage, abandoned any activity to earn livelihood and any effort to build homes, and took to jungles, mountains and caves, or took to nomadic life in order to protect their religion and follow their religious duties freely and completely. They did all this out of fear of God. Therefore, they were referred to as *rāhib* or *ruhban*. Their practice is referred to as *rahbāniyyah*.

As the Christians introduced monasticism under forced circumstances in order to protect their faith, it was not reproachable in its origin. But once anyone has imposed anything on himself, it becomes binding on him, and its violation is a sin. For example, making a vow for an act of worship is not obligatory. But if a person were to vow to do an act of worship or abstain from a lawful thing, it becomes binding on him in Shari'ah to maintain the vow; its violation becomes a sin. Some of the Christian monks invented monasticism with the best of intentions, but there were others who could not endure the hardships of monastic life and soon succumbed to the pursuit of material gains and physical pleasures when the general body of people believed in them, offered them gifts and oblations. History bears ample testimony to the fact that the monks who detested the system of marriage indulged in indecent acts and fornication. (The free intermingling of men and women in monasteries turned those places into centres of evil.)

The current verse denounces the practice of the monks who imposed monasticism upon themselves, and once they had imposed it, they should have observed its requirements which they did not.

That there was nothing wrong originally in what they had introduced as *rahbaniyyah* is proved by a Ḥadīth narrated by Sayyidnā ‘Abdullah Ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه and recorded by Ibn Kathīr with reference to Ibn Abī Ḥātim and Ibn Jarīr who have cited a lengthy narration in which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is reported to have said:

"Allah has split the Children of Israel into seventy-two sects. Only three of them were saved from punishment. These are groups who, after Prophet ‘Īsā عليه السلام, stopped the oppressive kings and affluent and powerful transgressors from violating the Divine laws. Among those who raised the voice of Truth against them and invited them to the religion of Prophet ‘Īsā عليه السلام, the first group faced the oppressors with whatever power they had at their command, but they were defeated and killed. Then after them a second group stood against the tyrants and aggressors who did not have even that much fighting strength as the first group had. However they conveyed the Truth without caring for their lives. This group too was killed. Some of them were ripped apart with saws and others were burnt alive. But they, for the sake of Allah's pleasure, bore all pains and attained salvation. Then a third group stood against them. But this group was weak: They had no resources to fight the tyrants nor could they live in that corrupt society and follow their religion. Therefore, they took to the jungles and mountains, and became monks. It is to this third group that Allah refers in the current verse وَرَهْبَانِيَّةً ابْتَدَعُوهَا مَا كَتَبْنَاهَا عَلَيْهِمْ 'As for monasticism, it was invented by them; We did not ordain it for them, ...!'"

This narration indicates that the people who originally adopted monasticism from among the Israelites and took care of its essentials and endured its hardships were among those who attained salvation.

According to this interpretation, the present verse shows that the monasticism initially adopted by such people was not bad or evil in itself, though it was not a religious obligation either. They had made it obligatory on themselves at their own will and wish. The element of evil

starts from the fact that after making it binding on themselves, most of them were not able to keep to its essentials. As a result, in keeping with the adage *يَلَاكُثْرَ حُكْمِ الْكُلِّ* (Majority takes the status of all), the Qur'ān attributed this evil aspect to the entire Israelites in that they invented it and could not practice it and did not take care of its requirements : *فَمَارَعَوْهَا : حَقَّ رِعَايَتِهَا* (...but [they adopted it] to seek Allah's pleasure, then could not observe it as was due.57:27).

It is also learnt from the above discussion that the word *ibtidā'*, derived from *bid'ah*, used in *إِبْتَدَعُوهَا* (...it was invented by them ...) is used in its literal sense of invention, and not in its technical or religious sense of heresy. The religious concept of *bid'ah* (which refers to a baseless faith or practice that is made part of the religion) has been denounced in the following narration of the Holy Prophet ﷺ: *كُلُّ بَدْعٍ ضَلَالَةٌ* (Every religious innovation is deviation).

The context of the verse is very clear about it. Let us first study the following sentence: *وَجَعَلْنَا فِي قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ رَأْفَةً وَرَحْمَةً وَرَهْبَانِيَّةً* (And We placed in the hearts of his followers tenderness and mercy and the monasticism they had invented; We did not prescribe it for them, except to seek Allah's pleasure. Then they did not observe it as was due...57:27) ⁽¹⁾ The context indicates that just as 'tenderness and mercy' are not evil qualities, likewise 'monasticism' which they adopted is not an evil quality in itself. Otherwise Allah would not have listed it alongside the favorable qualities of 'tenderness and mercy'. Scholars, like Qurṭubī, who held monasticism as absolutely prohibited, had to face grammatical difficulties. They had to go out of their way to show that *rahbaniyyah* is not a part of the conjunctive expression joined together by the conjunction '*waw*' [and] They treated the sentence starting with "...and monasticism..." as a separate sentence, and understood the verb *ibtadā'* as omitted. The interpretation adopted above renders this construction unnecessary. That is why the Holy Qur'ān does not reject their adoption of monasticism in principle, but their failure to keep it up, and take care of its rights and

(1) It should be noted that according to the grammatical construction of this verse, it can be translated in two ways. One translation is given above in the text. The second possible translation is that which is given here. Since the following discussion is based on this second translation, we have adopted it here instead of the translation given in the text. **Muhammad Taqi Usmani**

obligations. This interpretation is possible only if the word *ibtidā'* (invention) is taken in its literal sense. Had it been employed in its religious or technical sense, the Qur'an would have denounced adoption of monasticism in itself, because *bid'ah* (innovation in religion) in its technical sense is deviation.

Sayyidnā 'Abdullān Ibn Mas'ūd's ﷺ foregoing narration makes it clear that the groups that adopted monastic life attained salvation. If they were guilty of committing religious innovation, they would never have been counted among the saved ones, but rather among the deviant ones.

Is *rahbaniyyah* (Monasticism) absolutely Prohibited or is it a relative Concept?

The fact is that *rahbaniyyah* (translated as monasticism) generally means to give up some lawful things and pleasures. It has several stages, one of which is to treat a permissible thing as impermissible doctrinally or practically. This is distortion of religion. From this point of view, monasticism is absolutely prohibited as declared by the Holy Qur'an at several places, like verse [87] of Sūrah Al-Mā'idah that lays down the principle يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَحْرِمُوا طَيِّبَاتِ مَا أَحَلَّ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ (O believers, do not prohibit the good things which Allah has made lawful to you...) The prohibitive verb ('do not prohibit') in this verse indicates that it relates to a situation where a person holds unlawful what Allah has made lawful, either in his belief or in practice, and as such it will amount to distortion or perversion of the Divine laws.

The second stage is when a person does not, dogmatically or practically, turn a lawful thing into unlawful, but gives it up for some mundane or religious reason. In mundane affairs, a person might give up eating a lawful thing on account of some disease. In religious matters, a person might give up the company of people and mixing with them, lest he should commit moral sins like lying and backbiting, or he might abandon some permissible things temporarily in order to suppress his base desires. This restriction is no more than a treatment of a spiritual disease. When the treatment is over, the restriction is no longer observed. Some Ṣūfī adepts require a novice in the initial stages of his spiritual journey to exercise ascetic discipline, such as eating little, sleeping little and mixing little with people. This brings him to a state of greater harmony and balance [*I'tidāl*]. This ascetic discipline is a 'means' and not an 'end' in

itself. When the perfect balance is attained and the *nafs* (inner-self) is brought under control, and there is no longer the danger of committing sins, they are asked to give up the exercise. This in fact is not monasticism but *taqwā* or righteousness which the religion requires and was practiced by our predecessors, the blessed Companions, their followers and the leaders in religion.

The third stage is when a person does not turn a permissible thing into unlawful. However, he abstains from its use under the belief that its giving up has more virtue and carries more reward, while such use is proved through *Sunnah* (the practice of the Holy Prophet ﷺ) This is in fact *ghuluww* (over-indulgence). Many of the Prophetic Traditions prohibit *ghuluww*.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said: لَا رَهْبَانِيَّةَ فِي الْإِسْلَامِ (There is no monasticism in Islam.) This relates to a situation where someone abandons permissible things with the mistaken notion that it will bring him reward. If the Children of Israel initiated monasticism for the protection of their religion, it will fall under the second category of righteousness. But the people of the book were given to *ghuluww* or practicing religious fanaticism. If they turned lawful into unlawful, they fell under the first category and are guilty of committing *ḥarām*. If they fall under the third category, then too they are guilty of committing something that is condemned. Allah, the Pure and Exalted, knows best!

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَآمِنُوا بِرَسُولِهِ يُؤْتِكُمْ كِفْلَيْنِ مِنْ رَحْمَتِهِ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا (O those who believe, fear Allah, and believe in His Messenger, and He will give you two shares [of reward] out of His mercy,...28) The vocative expression يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا "O those who believe..." in this verse refers to the People of the Book who believed in Prophet 'Īsā عليه السلام. As a general rule, the Qur'ān uses this vocative expression for Muslims only, not for Jews or Christians. The expression used for them is *ahlul-kitāb* [People of the Book] because their believing in Prophets Mūsā and 'Īsā عليهم السلام is not tantamount to being 'believers'. They need to believe in the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. Only in that case can they be called الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا "O those who believe". But here the Qur'ān deviates from the general rule, and addresses them by the words, "O those who believe" presumably because the concluding verse reminds the Christians that believing in Prophet 'Īsā عليه السلام is not sufficient: the true meaning of believing in Prophet 'Īsā عليه السلام dictates that they should believe

in the Last Prophet ﷺ. If they do, then they deserve to be called as الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا 'those who believe'.

Then the verse promises the People of the Book that believe in the Holy Prophet ﷺ, their reward will be doubled. The first reward is on account of their believing in Prophet 'Īsā عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ or Mūsā عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ and following their Shari'ah, and the second reward is for their believing in the Holy Prophet ﷺ and acting upon his Shari'ah. The reason for their double reward is that Jews and Christians were unbelievers until they believed in the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and no worship of an unbeliever is acceptable. It required that any action they had performed according to a previous Shari'ah would go waste. But the present verse clarifies that when an unbeliever embraces Islam, all his good actions are restored, hence he is doubly rewarded.

لَعَلَّآ يَعْلَمَ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ (so that the People of the Book may know57:29) The negative particle *lā* [no] is grammatically redundant [but rhetorically it serves to emphasise the expression]. This final verse states that the People of the Book need to know that faith in Prophet 'Īsā عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ is not necessarily faith in the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. In the circumstances, they do not deserve any Divine grace unless they embrace faith in the Last Prophet ﷺ. Allah, the Pure and Exalted, knows best!

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Ḥadīd
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Mujādalah (The Debate)

This Sūrah is Madanī, and it has 22 verses and 3 sections

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

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

Verses 1 - 6

قَدْ سَمِعَ اللّٰهُ قَوْلَ الَّتِي تُجَادِلُكَ فِي زَوْجِهَا وَتَشْتَكِي اِلَى اللّٰهِ ۗ
وَاللّٰهُ يَسْمَعُ تَحَاوُرَ كُمَا ۗ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ سَمِیْعٌ بَصِیْرٌ ﴿١﴾ الَّذِيْنَ يُظْهِرُوْنَ
مِنْكُمْ مِّنْ نِّسَائِهِمْ مَا هُنَّ اُمَّهَاتِهِمْ ۗ اِنَّ اُمَّهَاتِهِمْ اِلَّا الٰهِي وَلَدْنَهُمْ ۗ
وَإِنَّهُمْ لَيَقُولُوْنَ مُنْكَرًا مِّنَ الْقَوْلِ وَزُورًا ۗ وَإِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَعَفُوٌّ غَفُوْرٌ ﴿٢﴾
وَالَّذِيْنَ يُظْهِرُوْنَ مِنْ نِّسَائِهِمْ ثُمَّ يَعُوْدُوْنَ لِمَا قَالُوْا فَتَحْرِیْرُ رَقَبَةٍ مِّنْ
قَبْلِ اَنْ يَّتَمَّاسَا ۗ ذٰلِكُمْ تُوعَظُوْنَ بِهٖ ۗ وَاللّٰهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ خَبِیْرٌ ﴿٣﴾
فَمَنْ لَّمْ یَجِدْ فَصِیَامُ شَهْرٍ مِّنْ مُّتَابَعٍ مِّنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ یَّتَمَّاسَا ۗ فَمَنْ لَّمْ
یَسْتَطِعْ فَاَطْعَامُ سِتِّیْنَ مِسْكِیْنًا ۗ ذٰلِكَ لِتُؤْمِنُوْا بِاللّٰهِ وَرَسُوْلِهٖ ۗ
وَتَلْكَ حُدُوْدُ اللّٰهِ ۗ وَلِلْكَافِرِيْنَ عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ ﴿٤﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ یُحَادِّثُوْنَ
اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهٗ كُتِبُوْا كَمَا كُتِبَ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ وَقَدْ اَنْزَلْنَا اٰیٰتِ
بَیِّنٰتٍ ۗ وَلِلْكَافِرِيْنَ عَذَابٌ مُّهِیْنٌ ﴿٥﴾ یَوْمَ یَبْعَثُهُمُ اللّٰهُ جَمِیْعًا
فَیَنْبِئُهُمْ بِمَا عَمِلُوْا ۗ اَحْصٰهُ اللّٰهُ وَنَسُوْهُ ۗ وَاللّٰهُ عَلٰی كُلِّ شَیْءٍ
شَهِیْدٌ ﴿٦﴾

Allah has heard the talk of the woman who was debating with you about her husband, and was complaining to Allah. And Allah was hearing the conversation between both of you. Indeed, Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. [1] Those of you who declare *zihār*¹ against their wives, they are not their mothers. Their mothers are but only those who have given birth to them. And undoubtedly they utter an evil word and a lie. And Allah is surely Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful. [2] And those who declare *zihār* against their wives, then retract what they said, obligated on them is to free the neck (of a slave) before the two (spouses) touch one another. This is what you are advised with, and Allah is Well-Aware of what you do. [3] But whoever does not find (a slave) has to fast for two consecutive moths before the two (spouses) touch one another. Then the one who is not able to do so has to feed sixty indigent persons. This is (laid down) so that you believe in Allah and His Messenger. And these are the limits set by Allah. And for the disbelievers there is a painful punishment. [4] Surely those who oppose Allah and His Messenger shall be disgraced, just as those before them were disgraced. And We have sent down clear verses, and for the disbelievers there is a humiliating punishment [5] on the Day when Allah will raise all of them, and will tell them what they did; Allah has its full account, while they have forgotten it. And Allah is witness to every thing. [6]

Commentary

Cause of Revelation

The initial verses of this Sūrah refer to a particular incident: Sayyidnā Aus Ibn Ṣāmīt رضي الله عنه said to his wife Sayyidah Khaulah bint Tha'labah رضي الله عنها *أَنْتِ عَلَيَّ كَظَهْرِ أُمِّي* which, literally, means 'You are to me like the back of my mother.' Its underlying meaning is 'You are unlawful to

(1) *Zihār* is a term denoting a custom of the Arabs in the days of Ignorance. In case of disagreement with their wives they used to say to them, "You are for me like the back of my mother." After saying this, they used to take their wives as their real mothers in being prohibited for them, and the ties of marriage were held to have been broken for good, with no possibility of their restoration. These verses have been revealed in a similar case where a husband (Aus ibn. Ṣāmīt) had declared *zihār* against his wife (Khawlah) who approached the Holy Prophet ﷺ and complained about her husband. The custom of the days of Ignorance was condemned, and the rules of Shari'ah about *zihār* were laid down by these verses. (Muhammad Taqi Usmani)

me for cohabitation just like my mother.' Such an utterance, in the days of ignorance, amounted to divorce - even worse because it was taken to imply that the husband is rescinding all marital ties with his wife and, in addition, he is classifying her within the prohibited degree or permanently forbidden women like his mother. According to pre-Islamic custom, reunion with the wife was possible after divorce, but not after *zihār*, as she became permanently and absolutely forbidden. When this incident took place, the aggrieved lady went to the Messenger of Allah complaining about her husband and seeking redress for her problem according to Shari'ah. Up to that point in time the Messenger of Allah had not received any revelation concerning that legal issue. Therefore, he pleaded his inability to do anything to help her in the absence of a revealed ordinance and said to her: "مَا أَمَرْتُ فِي شَأْنِكَ بِشَيْءٍ حَتَّى الْآنَ" "I have not yet received any ordinance regarding your matter." However he expressed his opinion according to common custom and said: "مَا أَرَاكَ إِلَّا قَدْ حُرِّمْتَ عَلَيْهِ" "In my opinion, you have become forbidden to him." Having heard this ruling, she pleaded: "O Allah's Messenger! He spent my wealth, exhausted my youth and my womb bore abundantly for him. When I became old, unable to bear children, he pronounced the *zihār* formula on me. Where shall I go and how will my children do their living?" According to another version, she said: "مَا ذَكَرَ طَلَاً" "My husband did not mention the word 'divorce', so how can this be counted as 'divorce'?" According to another version, she pleaded to Allah: "اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْكُوُ إِلَيْكَ" "O Allah! I direct my complaint to You . This was the cause of the revelation of verses [1-6] (Al-Durarul Manthūr and Ibn Kathīr) which clearly state that Allah heard Sayyidah Khaulah's ﷺ complaint and revealed the rule of Shari'ah to redress her grievances. Allah not only made matters easy for her, but the rule has been eternally enshrined in the Holy Qur'an for all sensible people to follow.

The noble Companions greatly respected Sayyidah Khaulah ﷺ because her case has been the cause of the revelation of the current set of verses, which abolished once and for all the long-standing social evil that was practiced in Arabia. Once Sayyidnā 'Umar Fārūq, the Great ﷺ, was on his way with some of the blessed Companions when he came across a woman who stopped him. He instantly stopped and listened attentively to her with his head bent down. He did not move till she completed what she

wanted to say. Some of the noble Companions said: "O Commander of the Faithful! You have held back such a large group of people for such a long time on account of this old lady!" Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنه said: "Do you know who this lady is? She is Sayyidah Khaulah رضي الله عنها, the lady whose complaint was heard in the seventh heaven. So, how can 'Umar not listen to her? She should be heard for a longer period of time and with greater attention. By Allah! If she did not take leave of her own accord, I would have stood with her here till the nightfall." [Ibn Kathīr]

اللَّهُ قَدْ سَمِعَ اللَّهُ (Allah has heard...1) The reference in the verse is to Sayyidah Khaulah رضي الله عنها, the wife of Sayyidnā Aus Ibn Ṣāmit رضي الله عنه, as mentioned above. Thus this verse and the rest of the verses lay down not only the rule of Sharī'ah pertaining to *ḡihār* and redress the grievances of women placed in such awkward situation, but the first verse also is in honour of the pleading lady which consoles her, in that it says that Allah was listening to her words when she was pleading her case. The word *mujādalah* means 'to plead, argue or dispute consistently and convincingly about one's problem or case'. According to some narratives, when the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم pleaded his inability to do anything for her, as noted above, the aggrieved lady uttered spontaneously that 'you receive ordinances in all matters, then how is it that no ordinance was revealed to you in my case?' Thus the verse was revealed: *وَتَشْتَكِي إِلَى اللَّهِ* "...and was complaining to Allah...[1]". [Qurṭubī]

Sayyidah 'A'ishah رضي الله عنها is reported to have said: "Pure is He, Whose hearing encompasses all things. I heard what Khaulah bint Tha'labah said about her husband while some of it I could not hear despite being so close to her in the same room, but Allah heard all her conversation and said: *اللَّهُ قَدْ سَمِعَ اللَّهُ* 'Allah has heard...'" [Bukhārī, Ibn Kathīr].

Zihār

الَّذِينَ يُظَاهِرُونَ مِنْكُمْ مِنْ نِسَائِهِمْ (Those of you who declare *ḡihār* against their wives...58:2) The aorist *yuzahirūna* is derived from *ḡihār*. There was a cruel custom in pre-Islamic Arabia, as pointed out earlier, where the husband would utter the *ḡihār* formula *أَنْتَ عَلَيَّ كَظَهْرِ أُمِّي* 'You are to me as my mother's back', and thus she would become permanently and absolutely unlawful to him for cohabitation like the mother. Here the word *zahr* (back) metonymically refers to *batn* 'stomach or womb'. [Qurṭubī]

Definition of *ḡihār* and its effect in Shari'ah

In order to understand the definition of *ḡihār* in terms of Shari'ah, it should be noted first that there are some women who are permanently forbidden for a man, such as mother, sister, daughter and others in the prohibited degree. Although looking at such women is permissible in general, yet looking at some parts of their body is not permissible, (like abdomen, back etc.) Now the definition of *ḡihār* is 'to compare one's wife with any of such parts of the body of such prohibited women'. According to the old Arab custom all conjugal relations ceased permanently between a man and his wife when he would use these words; rather it was worse than divorce. In the case of divorce, it was possible to retract and take back the wife. But in the case of *ḡihār*, according to the old Arab custom, it was not at all possible to restore the conjugal rights.

The current set of verses brought about reform in the custom in two ways: [1] *ḡihār* has been declared a sinful act. If a person is placed in a situation where he needs to separate from his wife, he must choose the method of 'divorce'. *ḡihār* should not be resorted to for this purpose, because the utterance of *ḡihār* formula is absurd, nonsense and false. Obviously, their wives are not their mothers, the Quran reads thus: مَا هُنَّ أُمَّهَاتُهُمْ إِلَّا اللَّائِي وَلَدْنَهُمْ "...Their mothers are but only those who have given birth to them ...[58:2]". The وَأَنَّهُمْ لَيَقُولُونَ مَنَّكَرًا مِّنَ الْقَوْلِ وَزُورًا further says: "...and undoubtedly they utter an evil word and a lie...[58:2]" In other words, their utterance is false, meaning 'calling one's wife mother' is contrary to truth and fact, and also a heinous sin.

[2] The second reform the Qur'an brought about is as follows: If an ignorant person or a person unacquainted with the legal formalities of Islam were to utter the *ḡihār* formula, his wife does not become permanently unlawful to him, nor does he have an open licence to do as he wishes - like enjoying intimacy with her. The guilty person will have to pay a penalty for uttering such evil, false and obnoxious words. He cannot take back his wife without first paying the prescribed expiation. The following verse prescribes this expiation.

The Expiation for *ḡihār*

وَالَّذِينَ يُظَاهِرُونَ مِن نِّسَابِهِمْ ثُمَّ يَعُودُونَ لِمَا قَالُوا (And those who declare *ḡihār* against their wives, then retract what they said, ...58:3). The preposition *lam* in the phrase يَعُودُونَ لِمَا قَالُوا "...retract what they said..." is used in the sense of

'an [from]. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه interprets 'retract' in the sense of 'regret': 'they regret what they said and wish to be intimate or cohabit with their wives'. [Mazharī]

The verse shows that the penalty has been imposed on the husband for the purpose of making the wife lawful - without it she cannot become lawful to him. *zihār* per se is not the cause of the expiation. In fact, *zihār* is a heinous sin for which repentance and seeking pardon and forgiveness is absolutely necessary. The concluding part of verse [2] **وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَعَفُوءٌ غَفُورٌ** "...Allah is surely Most-forgiving, Very-Merciful." points to this fact. In other words, Allah in His great mercy has made allowance for man's weaknesses and He is always ready to forgive his lapses, provided he comes to Allah with a penitent heart and makes amends. However, if a person did commit *zihār* and does not wish to take back his wife and enjoy intimacy with her, expiation is not obligatory on him. However, destroying a wife's conjugal rights is unlawful. If she demands, it is obligatory for him to pay the expiation and take her back, should he wish to do so; or if she demands, he must divorce her and set her free from the bond of marriage. If he does not divorce her and set her free, then she has the right to apply to a Qādī or an Islamic court to compel him to either pay the expiation and take her back or to divorce her and set her free so that she could contract a second marriage. Islamic works on jurisprudence set down details of the laws pertaining to *zihār*.

The penalty for *zihār* is obligatory, which is given in this and the next verse. There are three options: [1] **فَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ** (...obligated on them is to free the neck [of a slave]...) [2] If a person cannot afford to do that, he must keep fast for two consecutive months; and [3] if he is so weak or ill that he cannot fast, then he must feed sixty poor people. The expiation will be fulfilled if one poor person is given two meals for sixty days. Alternatively, it is possible to give two meals to sixty poor persons on a single day. In each case, the poor should be fed to their fill. Another possible alternative is to give to a poor person about 1.6 kg wheat or 2.12 kg dates or barley for sixty days or the equivalent price of these food items may be given. The details of the law appertaining to *zihār* and its expiation are available in the texts of Islamic jurisprudence.

It is recorded in Traditions that when Sayyidah Khaulah رضي الله عنها complained to Allah's Messenger ﷺ about her husband and pleaded her

case to Allah, verses relating to *zihār* and its expiation were revealed. So, Allah's Messenger called for the husband. When he came, the Holy Prophet ﷺ noticed that he was a weak-sighted old man. He recited to him the verses resolving his case, and commanded him to emancipate a slave, he said that he does not have the means to do that. The Holy Prophet ﷺ then asked him to fast two successive months, to which he replied: "By Him Who has sent you as the true Messenger, if I do not have two or three meals a day, I lose my sight completely." The Holy Prophet ﷺ said 'Then feed sixty poor people'. He said 'I do not have the ability for that either, unless you help me'. The Holy Prophet ﷺ gave him some food grain, and also other people gathered more food grain for him, which amounted to the measure of *ṣadaqatul-fiṭr* for sixty poor men, and in this way the expiation was made. [Ibn Kathir]

ذَلِكَ لِمُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ط وَتِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ ط وَلِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ (...This is [laid down] so that you believe in Allah and His Messenger. And these are the limits set by Allah. And for the disbelievers there is a painful chastisement. 58:4) This part of the verse contains the phrase 'so that you believe'. Belief here implies 'to act upon the sacred laws, ordinances and injunctions or obey the commandments of Allah and His Messenger'. Then the verse says that the laws of expiation are limits set by Allah. It is prohibited to exceed them. It indicates that in matters of marriage, divorce, incestuous comparison and so on, Islam has abolished all traces of pre-Islamic pagan elements of customs and practices, and set down the just and approved code of conduct. Man is required to stick strictly to the parameters of Islam. Those who oppose and deny the Divine limits will be tormented most severely.

The Fate of those who Challenge Allah and His Apostle

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُحَادُّونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ، كُتِبُوا كَمَا كُتِبَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ (Surely those who oppose Allah and His Messenger shall be disgraced, just as those before them were disgraced....58:5) In the preceding verse, stress was laid on keeping to Divine limits and to the sacred laws of Islam. The current verse warns those who oppose or reject them. Their profane designs shall be foiled and they shall be humiliated in this world and a condign torment shall be inflicted on them in the Hereafter.

أَحْصَاهُ اللَّهُ وَنَسَوهُ (...Allah has its full account, while they have forgotten it....58:6) Man is very forgetful. He persists in committing sins and

transgressions, but because he treats them as trivial and insignificant, he is unable to remember and recall them. However, they are all recorded and kept safely with Allah, even though the humans have done the actions and forgotten them. Allah will call them to give an account of them on the Day of Resurrection and chastise them.

Verses 7 - 13

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ط مَا يَكُونُ مِنْ
نَجْوَى ثَلَاثَةٍ إِلَّا هُوَ رَابِعُهُمْ وَلَا خَمْسَةَ إِلَّا هُوَ سَادِسُهُمْ وَلَا أَدْنَى
مِنْ ذَلِكَ وَلَا أَكْثَرَ إِلَّا هُوَ مَعَهُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كَانُوا ؕ ثُمَّ يَنْبِئُهُمْ بِمَا عَمِلُوا
يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ط إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٧﴾ أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ نُهُوا
عَنِ النَّجْوَى ثُمَّ يُعَادُونَ لِمَا نُهُوا عَنْهُ وَيَتَنَجَّوْنَ بِالْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ
وَمَعْصِيَةِ الرَّسُولِ ۖ وَإِذَا جَاءُوكَ حَيَّوْكَ بِمَا لَمْ يُحَيِّكَ بِهِ اللَّهُ ۖ
وَيَقُولُونَ فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ لَوْلَا يُعَذِّبُنَا اللَّهُ بِمَا نَقُولُ ط حَسْبُكُمْ جَهَنَّمُ ۚ
يَصْلَوْنَهَا ؕ فَبُئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿٨﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا تَنَاجَيْتُمْ فَلَا
تَتَنَاجَوْا بِالْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَمَعْصِيَةِ الرَّسُولِ وَتَنَاجَوْا بِالْبِرِّ
وَالتَّقْوَى ط وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ ﴿٩﴾ إِنَّمَا النَّجْوَى مِنَ
الشَّيْطَانِ لِيَحْزَنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَلَيْسَ بِضَارِّهِمْ شَيْئًا إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ ط
وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٠﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا قِيلَ
لَكُمْ تَفَسَّحُوا فِي الْمَجْلِسِ فَافْسَحُوا يَفْسَحِ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ ؕ وَإِذَا قِيلَ
انشُرُوا فَانشُرُوا يَرْفَعِ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ ۖ وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ
دَرَجَاتٍ ط وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ﴿١١﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا
نَاجَيْتُمُ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدِّمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ نَجْوَاكُمْ صَدَقَةٌ ط ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ
وَاطْهَرُ ط فَإِنْ لَمْ تَجِدُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٢﴾ ؕ أَسْأَلْتُمْ أَنْ

تَقَدِّمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ نَجْوَانِكُمْ صَدَقْتُمْ ۖ فَادْلُمُوا تَفْعَلُوا وَتَابَ اللَّهُ
عَلَيْكُمْ فَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ
خَبِيرٌ ۚ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٣﴾

Have you not seen that Allah knows all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth? No secret consultation takes place between three, but He is fourth of them, nor between five, but He is sixth of them, nor between fewer than that or more, but He is with them wherever they may be. Then He will tell them on the Day of Judgment what they did. Surely Allah is All-Knowing about every thing. [7]

Did you not see those who were forbidden from holding secret counsels, then they do again what they were forbidden to do? And they whisper for sinful act and wrongdoing and disobedience of the prophet, and when they come to you, they greet you the way Allah does not greet you, and say to themselves, "Why does Allah not punish us for what we say?" Enough for them is *Jahannam* (Hell); they will enter it, and it is an evil end. [8]

O those who believe, when you hold secret counsel, do not whisper for sinful act and wrongdoing and disobedience of the prophet, and do whisper for righteousness and *taqwā* (God-fearing). And fear Allah, before whom you will be gathered together. [9] Whispering (for sinful acts) comes from the *Shaiṭān* (Satan), so that he may grieve those who believe, while it is not harmful to them in the least, except with Allah's permission. And in Allah the believers must place their trust. [10] O those who believe, when it is said to you, "Make room (for others) in the sittings", then make room, and Allah will make room for you (in the Hereafter). And when it is said, "Rise up", then rise up, and Allah will raise those, in ranks, who have believed and are given knowledge. And Allah is well-aware of what you do. [11] O those who believe, when you consult the Messenger in private, then offer something in charity before your consultation. That is better for you and purer. But if you find nothing (to offer), then Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful. [12] Have you become afraid of offering charities before

your consultation? So when you did not do so, and Allah has forgiven you, then establish *ṣalāh*, and pay *zakāh*, and obey Allah and His Messenger. And Allah is well-aware of what you do. [13]

Commentary

Circumstances of Revelation

There are several incidents related to the revelation of the current set of verses. [1] there was a peace agreement between the Jews and Muslims. But when one of the Holy Prophet's ﷺ Companions would pass by a gathering of Jews, they would speak among themselves in secret, prompting the believer to think that they were plotting to harm or hurt him. The Holy Prophet ﷺ advised them to give up their secret plots and conspiracies but they did not heed. As a result, verse *أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ نُهُوا عَنِ النَّجْوَى* was revealed.

[2] Likewise, the hypocrites used to hold secret counsels or conferences, in consequence of which verses: *إِنَّمَا النَّجْوَى إِذَا تَنَا جَيْتُمْ فَلَا تَتَنَاجَوْا* and *مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ* were revealed.

[3] When the Jews came to see the Holy Prophet ﷺ, they, with a little twist of the tongue, would invoke curses upon him by greeting him mischievously 'As-Sāmu 'alaykum' *أَلْسَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ* [death to you!] instead of saluting him with the usual *أَلْسَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ* 'As-Salāmu 'alaykum' [peace be upon you]. On this occasion, verse *وَإِذَا جَاءُوكَ حَيَّوكَ* was revealed..

[4] Ibn Kathīr cites Imām Aḥmad's narration in which it is reported that the Jews used to greet in this way, changing the meaning of Islamic greeting into an abusive statement, and then say, *لَوْلَا يُعَذِّبُنَا اللَّهُ بِمَا نَقُولُ* 'Had he been a Prophet, Allah would have punished us for the sin we committed - why did He not punish us?'

[5] Once the Holy Prophet ﷺ was sitting in the *ṣuffah* of the mosque. The congregation was large in the mosque. Some of the participants of the battle of Badr arrived late and they could not find place to sit, nor did the people sitting in the mosque make room for the late-comers. The Holy Prophet ﷺ asked some of the people to stand up and leave. The hypocrites, however, found this objectionable. He also asked the people to spread out and make room for their fellow-believers and he prayed Allah for such people to show His mercy them. Verse *يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا قِيلَ لَكُمْ تَفَسَّحُوا*

was revealed on that occasion. [Transmitted by Abū Ḥātim]. Piecing all the elements of the narrations together, it is possible that at first the Holy Prophet ﷺ might have asked the Companions to spread out and make room for their companions. Some of them might have complied and others probably did not. So, the Holy Prophet ﷺ might have admonished them to stand up and leave as the students of seminaries are admonished to do in a similar situation. Probably, the hypocrites objected to this.

[6] Some wealthy people used to come to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and consult him in private for a long time which inconvenienced him and the poor people would not get much time to consult him. For this reason, verse إِذَا نَاجَيْتُمُ الرَّسُولَ was revealed. It is cited in Fathul Bayān from Zaid IbnAslam, without any authoritative source, that the Jews and hypocrites used to hold unnecessary private conferences with the Holy Prophet ﷺ. The Muslims were perturbed by this because they gained the impression that this type of consultation might be harmful. As a result verse نَهَوْا عَنْ النَّجْوَى was revealed. When they did not heed, verse 12 إِذَا نَاجَيْتُمُ الرَّسُولَ was revealed which required them to spend something in charity before their holding a private conference. At this point the fallacious people stopped from consulting the Holy Prophet ﷺ, because their greed for wealth did not allow them to do so.

[7] When verse إِذَا نَاجَيْتُمُ الرَّسُولَ was revealed requiring people to give alms before private conferences with the Holy Prophet ﷺ, many people stopped even the necessary private consultation with him. So, verse [13] ءَأَشْفَقْتُمْ أَنْ تُقَدِّمُوا was revealed. Maulānā Ashraf ‘Alī Thanawī رحمه الله تعالى says that the concluding part of verse [12] فَإِنْ لَمْ تَجِدُوا (...but if you find nothing [to offer], then Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful...58:12) had already given a concession to poor people from the requirement of charity before consultation with the Holy Prophet ﷺ. However some people are neither completely destitute nor are they completely wealthy, even though they might have the minimum *zakatable* wealth. Probably, people in this category might have felt it difficult to advance freewill alms, because on the one hand, their means were limited, and on the other hand, they were unsure whether they were indigent. As a result, they could neither pay the charity, nor could they deem themselves exempt from the requirement of the verse. They felt that consultation was not an act of worship or devotion; and if they abandoned it, it could not be the cause of reproach.

Therefore, they stopped consulting altogether. [All narratives are from Ad-Durr-ul-Manthūr]. These causes of revelation will help and facilitate the comprehension of this passage. [Bayān-ul-Qur'ān].

Ethics and Etiquette of Secret Consultation

Although the present verses were revealed in some particular events, as detailed above, the rules laid down by them are of general application, regardless of their cause of revelation. Thus the present verses contain instructions about secret or private consultations. They are explained below.

Secret conferences are normally convened with special confidants to whom secrets are imparted trustingly. Members of the secret society are satisfied that they will not be betrayed. It is on the basis of this confidence that evil people design plots to oppress someone, or to kill him, or to usurp his wealth and property, and so on. In verse [7], Allah mentions that His knowledge is All-encompassing - it encompasses the entire creation. He is observing or watching them, perfectly hearing their speech and seeing them - whether in public or private, wherever and in whatever condition they may be. No plots or conspiracies of any kind are hidden from Him. If they commit any sin, they will not be able to escape the Divine chastisement. Allah is present in all their secret meetings or conferences - no matter how few or many people constitute their assembly. For example, if there are three people in the assembly, Allah will be the fourth one; and if there are five people in the gathering, Allah will be the sixth one - nor numerically less or numerically more but He is with them wheresoever they may be.

Verse 7 specifies 'three' and 'five' numbers probably because Allah prefers that an assembly or congregation should comprise an odd number of members. This is the essence of verse [7].

Mischief of the Jews

It was narrated earlier that there was a peace treaty between the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the Jews. During this period, if one of the noble Companions passed by an assembly of the Jews, they would confer secretly among themselves in such a manner as to arouse suspicion and anxiety in the mind of the believer making him think that they were conspiring to injure or hurt him. Verse [8] أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ نُهُوا عَنِ النَّجْوَى (Did you

not see those who were forbidden to hold secret counsels,...58:8) prohibits the holding of such secret conferences. This rule applies not only to the enemies but also to the Muslims, in that they should not hold secret conference to harm or hurt another Muslim. However, the Muslims and others are allowed to hold secret conferences to promote good and righteous causes . A narration of Sayyidnā 'Abdullah Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه is recorded in Bukhārī, Muslim and other authentic collections, according to which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ has stated: إِذَا كُنْتُمْ ثَلَاثَةً فَلَا يَتَّجَا رَجُلَانِ دُونَ الْآخَرِ حَتَّى يَخْتَلِطُوا بِالنَّاسِ فَإِنَّ ذَلِكَ يَحْزُنُهُ (If you were three, then two of you should not hold secret conference leaving aside the third person [in another narration of Muslim : 'except with his permission'] because this bad manners would cause him anxiety and wound his feelings", [i.e. because he will feel estranged or alienated and possibly suspicions may arise that the two are plotting something against him and keeping it as a secret.] [Maḏharī]

Manners of the Secret Conference

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا تَنَاجَيْتُمْ فَلَا تَتَنَاجَوْا بِالْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَمَعْصِيَةِ الرَّسُولِ وَتَنَاجَوْا بِالْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَى (O those who believe, when you hold secret counsel, do not whisper for sinful act and wrongdoing and disobedience of the Messenger, and do whisper for righteousness and *taqwā* [God-fearing]... 58:9) In this and the preceding verses secret societies of the unbelievers have been condemned, but the condemnation is not unreserved or unqualified. The current verse guides the Muslims to be conscious of the fact that Allah is fully aware of their conversation and all of their conditions. Therefore, all their secret conferences must be held for good purposes. It is the object or motive of a particular conference that determines its nature. Thus in the present verse, as indicated earlier, the believers have been allowed to hold secret conferences only to promote good and righteous causes.

Return Good for Evil

It was narrated earlier that one of the evil practices of some of the Jews of Madīnah was that when they came to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, they greeted him by invoking curses upon him, thus: 'السَّامُ عَلَيْكُمْ' 'As-Sāmu 'alaykum' [death to you!] instead of saluting him with the usual 'السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ' 'As-Salāmu 'alaykum' [peace be upon you]. The word 'As-Sām' means 'death' instead of 'As-Salām' which means 'peace'. The latter word was distorted and pronounced with a little twist of the tongue, which

sounded like the former word, but the difference between the two words was so subtle that the Companions could hardly detect the difference. One day, however, Sayyidah Şiddīqah ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها detected that the Jews were invoking curses upon the Messenger of Allah ﷺ by saying *السَّامُ عَلَيْكُمْ* 'As-Sāmu ‘alaykum' [death to you!], so she replied: *السَّامُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَعَنْكُمْ اللَّهُ وَعَضِبَ عَلَيْكُمْ* 'As-Sāmu ‘alaykum wa la‘anakumullah wa ghaḍiba ‘alaykum' [death to you, and the curse of Allah be on you, and His wrath!]. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ prevented her from this and said: "O ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها, Allah does not like rudeness and foul speech." Sayyidah Şiddīqah ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها said: "O Messenger of Allah, did you not hear what they said." He said to her: "Did you not hear my answering them back by saying *وَعَلَيْكُمْ* 'wa ‘alaykum' [same to you]?" He further said to her 'Allah accepts our supplication against them, but not theirs against us'. This event tells us that even in response to the mischievous words of the infidels, the Muslims should always adopt a soft and noble way.

Manners for Assemblies

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا قِيلَ لَكُمْ تَفَسَّحُوا فِي الْمَجَالِسِ فَافْسَحُوا (O those who believe, when it is said to you 'Make room [for others] in the sittings', then make room, ...58:11) Allah teaches His servants good manners and enjoins upon them to be kind to each other when they are sitting together. There are two main rules of assemblies: The first rule states that people sitting in an assembly should make space for those who came late. They should sit together in such a way that there is enough room for others. If this is done, Allah promises that He will widen their scope in the Hereafter. However, it is not inconceivable that this space or room might be created for them in the life of this world as well.

The second rule states: إِذَا قِيلَ انْشُرُوا فَانْشُرُوا ('When it is said to you, 'Rise up', then rise up...58:11) This means when people sitting in an assembly are told to stand up and leave, they should stand up and leave. This verse uses the passive voice [it is said] but it is not mentioned who says it or who should say it. Authentic traditions make it plain that the late comer himself cannot move somebody out of his place and use it for himself, nor force his way into a gathering. Thus it is recorded in the Şaḥīḥain and in the Musnad of Aḥmad on the authority of ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Umar رضي الله عنهما that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: *لَا يُقِيمُ الرَّجُلُ الرَّجُلَ مِنْ مَجْلِسِهِ فَيَجْلِسُ فِيهِ وَلَكِنْ تَفَسَّحُوا وَتَوَسَّعُوا* "One of you should not move some other person up from his place

and sit in it, but instead, spread out and make space for the comer." This explicitly shows that it is not possible for the late-comer to tell anyone to move out of his place and take his place. Therefore, it would appear that the rule would apply to the master of ceremony or the organisers of the assembly or the host. Hence, the meaning of the verse is: When the host or his representative requests a member of the audience to stand up and leave for a legitimate reason, they should comply and avoid clash with the host. There are several reasons why this might become necessary. [1] Occasionally, the host himself might need privacy for his own reason. [2] He might need privacy to share confidential information with special guests. [3] The capacity of the room cannot accommodate the late comers, and no alternative arrangement can be made. So, the host is allowed to courteously request some of the familiar guests to leave the room to make space for the late-comers, provided it is certain that the leaving guests will not suffer any loss. They will be able to benefit in another session. However, the host or his representative must ensure that the guests do not feel belittled or hurt in the process.

It was alluded earlier that this verse was revealed when the Holy Prophet ﷺ was sitting in the *suffah* of the mosque. The congregation had filled up the *suffah*. Some of the participants of the battle of Badr arrived late and they could not find place to sit, and remained standing. As a mark of respect for them, the Holy Prophet ﷺ gave a general order to the entire congregation to spread out and make room for their fellow-believers, and prayed to Allah to make room for such people. Some of them might have complied and there was no problem with them; and probably others did not comply. So, the Holy Prophet ﷺ might have admonished them to rise up and leave.

At any rate, this verse and Traditions related to the verse yield several rules:

[1] The members of a conference must spread out and make space for the late comers. [2] The late comers should not remove other members of the conference and make room for themselves. [3] At times of need, the host or the master of ceremony may courteously request some of the members of the audience to leave. Late comers may not force their way into a congested congregation, but take their position in a corner or a side as recorded in Bukhārī: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was once sitting in the

mosque and the people with him, when three persons arrived, one of them could not find space in the congregation but found some space on one side or in a corner and sat there. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ lauded him or praised him highly.

Ruling

Another etiquette of an assembly is that if two persons are sitting closely, a new comer should not intrude between them. In a *ḥadīth*, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has explained this etiquette in the following words: لَا يَجْلُ لِرَجُلٍ أَنْ يُفَرِّقَ بَيْنَ اثْنَيْنِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِمَا "It is not permissible for any man to break up the meeting of two persons, who are sitting together, unless they themselves permit him." [Ibn Kathīr cited this Tradition and said that Abū Dāwūd and Tirmidhī transmitted it on the authority of Usamah Ibn Laithiy ؓ].

The reasoning behind the ruling is that sometimes two persons sit together for some specific purpose, and breaking them up might defeat that purpose.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا نَاجَيْتُمُ الرَّسُولَ (O those who believe, when you consult the Messenger of Allah, ...58:12) The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was preoccupied day and night with educating the people and improving their quality of life. In his general assemblies, all the members of the audience benefited from his teachings. However, there were people who wanted private meetings with the Holy Prophet ﷺ and he would grant them that. Obviously, it was not possible to grant everyone's request as it required time and effort, and that was difficult. The hypocrites made matters worse when they asked for private audiences with the Holy Prophet ﷺ in order to hurt the sincere Muslims. Besides, the hypocrites held protracted conferences with him. Some of the illiterate Muslims also held private audiences with him for a longer time than normal or necessary. This made things difficult for him. Allah provided a way to stop their irksome behaviour by this verse which lightened the burden of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Initially, the verse provided that anyone who wishes to hold a private conference with him must advance a freewill charity, the amount or measure of which is not specified in the Qur'ān. However, when this verse was revealed Sayyidnā 'Alī ؓ was the first Companion to act upon it: He offered one Dinar in charity and requested a private audience with the Prophet ﷺ.

Only Sayyidnā 'Alī عليه السلام Acted upon the verse

It is a remarkable co-incidence that most of the blessed Companions, because of financial constraints, were unable to act upon this verse. Its provision was repealed. Sayyidnā 'Alī عليه السلام used to say that there is a verse in the Qur'ān that none before me and none after me has ever acted upon it. The meaning of the phrase 'none before me' is obvious. The phrase 'none after me' means 'none after me will practise it' because the verse is abrogated. Although the ordinance is repealed, it achieved its basic purpose. The Muslims, because of the dictates of their sincere love, avoided their protracted audiences with the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم so that he is not inconvenienced in any way. The hypocrites avoided protracted audiences with him because they feared that they would be recognized for what they are and their hypocrisy would be exposed. Allah knows best!

Verses 14 - 22

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ تَوَلَّوْا قَوْمًا غَضِبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ ۖ مَا هُمْ مِنْكُمْ وَلَا مِنْهُمْ ۖ وَيَحْلِفُونَ عَلَى الْكُذِبِ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٤﴾ أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا ۖ إِنَّهُمْ سَاءَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٥﴾ اتَّخَذُوا أَيْمَانَهُمْ جُنَّةً فَصَدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُهِينٌ ﴿١٦﴾ لَنْ تَغْنِي عَنْهُمْ أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُهُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا ۖ أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ ۖ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿١٧﴾ يَوْمَ يَبْعَثُهُمُ اللَّهُ جَمِيعًا فَيَحْلِفُونَ لَهُ كَمَا يَحْلِفُونَ لَكُمْ وَيَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّهُمْ عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ ۖ أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ الْكَاذِبُونَ ﴿١٨﴾ اسْتَحَوْذَ عَلَيْهِمُ الشَّيْطَانُ فَأَنسَهُمْ ذِكْرَ اللَّهِ ۖ أُولَٰئِكَ حِزْبُ الشَّيْطَانِ ۖ أَلَا إِنَّ حِزْبَ الشَّيْطَانِ هُمُ الْخٰسِرُونَ ﴿١٩﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُحَادِّثُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ ۖ أُولَٰئِكَ فِي الْآذِلِينَ ﴿٢٠﴾ كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَأَغْلِبَنَّ أَنَا وَرُسُلِي ۖ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ ﴿٢١﴾ لَا تَجِدُ قَوْمًا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ يُوَادُّونَ مَنْ حَادَّ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ

وَلَوْ كَانُوا آبَاءَهُمْ أَوْ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ أَوْ إِخْوَانَهُمْ أَوْ عَشِيرَتَهُمْ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ
 كَتَبَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْإِيمَانَ وَأَيَّدَهُم بِرُوحٍ مِّنْهُ ۗ وَيَدْخُلُهُمْ جَنَّتٌ
 تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ۗ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ ۗ
 أُولَٰئِكَ حِزْبُ اللَّهِ ۗ أَلَا إِنَّ حِزْبَ اللَّهِ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾

Have you not seen who have friendship with a people with whom Allah is angry. They are neither of you nor of them. And they swear false oaths while they know. [14] Allah has prepared a severe punishment for them. Indeed, evil is what they used to do. [15] They have taken their oaths as a shield, then have prevented (people) from the way of Allah. Therefore, for them there is a humiliating punishment. [16] Their riches and their children will never benefit them against Allah. They are the people of the Fire. They will live there for ever [17] (It will be) on the Day when Allah will raise all of them, and they will swear before Him as they swear before you, and will think that they have some standing. Beware that they are sheer liars. [18] The *shaiṭān* (Satan) has prevailed upon them, so he has made them forget the remembrance of Allah. They are the party of *shaiṭān*. Be sure that it is (the members of the) party of *Shaiṭān* that are the losers. [19] Indeed, those who oppose Allah and His Messengers, they are among the lowest. [20] Allah has written (in His pre-destined decree), "I will certainly prevail, both I and My messengers." Surely Allah is All-Strong, All-Mighty. [21] You will not find those who believe in Allah and in the Hereafter having friendship with those who oppose Allah and His Messenger, even though they were their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their clan. They are such that Allah has inscribed faith on their hearts, and has helped them with a spirit from Him. And He will admit them to gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will live forever. Allah is pleased with them, and they are pleased with Allah. Those are the party of Allah. Be sure that it is (the members of) the party of Allah that are the successful.

Commentary

Chastising the Hypocrites for their Secret Alliance with the Jews

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ تَوَلَّوْا قَوْمًا غَضِبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ (Have you not seen those who have friendship with a people with whom Allah is angry?58:14) Allah condemns the hypocrites who secretly formed an alliance with the Jews who challenge Allah and His Apostle, while in effect they belong neither to the Muslims nor to the Jews. Consequently, Allah has prepared for them a humiliating and condign chastisement. It is not permissible to have a friendly intimacy with the enemies of Allah and His Messenger - whether the unbelievers are Jews, or Christians, or pagans or of any other creed. Even rationally this is not possible, because the capital asset of a believer is the love of Allah, while a non-believer relishes in opposing and challenging Him. It is not possible for a person to have sincere love and affection for someone and to love and have intimacy with the latter's enemy. Here 'love', 'affection' or 'intimacy' refers to the one coming from the heart involving intense emotional commitment (which necessarily includes having love with his way of life. Ed.). This is called *Muwālāh* or 'intimate friendship'. This type of friendship is limited to sincere Muslims. Therefore, the Qur'ānic verses on many occasions strictly prohibit Muslims from having this sort of relationship with non-Muslims. Any Muslim who has such intimate friendship with non-Muslims will be seen to fall in the circle of unbelievers.

In contra-distinction to *Muwālāh* [intimate friendship], there is a concept of *Muwāsāh* which refers to the relationship based on sympathy, kindness and concern. It includes charitable assistance and support, business, commercial, trade dealings and economic co-operation, condolence and consolation and any well-meaning attitude of well-being and welfare. Barring unbelievers who are at war with the believers, this kind of relationship is permissible with all other non-Muslims. The paradigm of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the noble Companions in this direction is ample testimony to this practice. However, it is necessary to ensure that the relationship of *Muwāsāh* is not harmful to the cause of religion; it should not create laxity in 'faith and practice' of Islam nor should it 'harm, hurt or injure' other Muslims. Please see Ma'āriful Qur'ān, Vol. 2/ pp 54-61: under Surah Al-Imran: v.28-30 for a detailed account of the distinction between *Muwālāt* [intimate friendship], *Muwāsāt*

[sympathy] and *Mu'āmalāt* [dealings] or *Mudārāh* [cordiality].

وَيَحْلِفُونَ عَلَى الْكَذِبِ (and they swear false oaths ...58:14). It means they swear oaths profanely. According to some reports, this verse was revealed in connection with 'Abdullah Ibn 'Ubayy and 'Abdullah Ibn Nabtal: One day the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was sitting with his noble Companions and said to them: "Soon a person will come to you whose heart will be the heart of a tyrant and who sees through the Satan's eyes." Soon afterwards 'Abdullah Ibn Nabtal, the hypocrite, entered. He was blue-eyed, wheat-coloured, short-statured and skimpy-bearded. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ asked him: "Why do you and your comrades use obscene words against me?" He swore that he did not do that. Then he called his comrades and they too took this false oath. Allah told the Holy Prophet ﷺ about their lie and profane oath. [Qurṭubī]

Believers cannot entertain intimacy with non-Believers

لَا تَجِدُ قَوْمًا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ يُوَادُّونَ مَنْ حَادَّ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَلَوْ كَانُوا آبَاءَهُمْ (You shall not find those who believe in Allah and in the Hereafter having friendship with those who oppose Allah and His Messenger, even though they were their fathers....58:22). The preceding verses showed that those [hypocrites] who are in intimate friendship with unbelievers and pagans shall incur Allah's wrath, indignation and severe torment. This verse describes the condition of sincere believers who would not take an enemy of Faith, the opponents of Allah, for intimacy and friendship, even though such people are their own fathers, children, brothers or any other blood relatives. The bond of belief transcends all other bonds, even the close ties of blood. This description fits all noble Companions. Commentators on this occasion have cited a number of incidents of the blessed Companions which describe how, when they heard their fathers, sons and brothers or other blood relations utter blasphemy against Islam or the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, they left all ties aside and punished them or even killed them.

'Abdullah, the son of 'Abdullah Ibn 'Ubayy, the leader of the hypocrites in Madīnah, heard his father make some blasphemous remarks against the Holy Prophet ﷺ. The son came up to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and sought his permission to kill his father. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ stopped him. Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ؓ heard his father, Abū Quḥāfah, uttering some insulting words against the Holy Prophet ﷺ. The

most compassionate Ṣiddīq ﷺ became indignant and unexpectedly gave him such a hard slap that he fell down. When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ heard about it, he advised Abū Bakr Ṣiddīq ﷺ not do it again. In the battle of Uḥud, Sayyidnā Abū 'Ubaidah's father, Jarrah, was fighting on the side of the unbelievers against the Muslims. In the battlefield, while the battle was on, he purposely came time and again face to face with Sayyidnā Abu 'Ubaidah ﷺ and pursued him. Every time his father came in front of him, Sayyidnā Abū 'Ubaidah ﷺ would, as a mark of respect, move out. But when he persisted, Sayyidnā Abū 'Ubaidah ﷺ had no choice but to kill him. The biography of the blessed Companions is replete with similar incidents. The present set of verses was revealed to laud them. [Qurṭubī]

Ruling

Many jurists have ruled that this rule applies equally to all Muslims who transgress or violate the sacred laws of Sharī'ah or in their practical life turn away from them, in that the sincere Muslims should not maintain an intimate friendship or relationship with such transgressors. As explained earlier, *Muwālāh* [intimate friendship] with a *fāsiq* [transgressors] is not possible because intimacy with them is possible if and only if the germs of *fiṣq* [transgression] are lurking in the people befriending them. *Muwāsāh* [sympathy] and *Mu'āmalāt* [dealings] or *Mudārāh* [cordiality] are, however, a different matter to the degree of necessity. This is the reason why the Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to pray: *اللَّهُمَّ لَا تَجْعَلْ لِفَاجِرٍ عَلَيَّ يَدًا* "O Allah, do not give any transgressor the upper hand over me." The Messenger of Allah ﷺ prayed thus because if anyone has the upper hand in a situation, he is most likely to get his own way. He will, for instance, show kindness to people and thus gain the upper hand; and the noble persons, on account of the kindness, will feel obliged or duty-bound to return his kindness with love. Thus the Messenger of Allah ﷺ sought refuge with Allah from this situation. [Qurṭubī]

وَإِيْدَهُمْ بِرُوحٍ مِّنْهُ (...and has helped them with a Spirit from Him....58:22)
The word *rūḥ*, according to some authorities on Tafsīr, stands for 'light', which radiates or emanates from Allah and enters the heart of a believer which urges him to perform righteous deeds, and is the source of peace and contentment of the heart. This tranquility and satisfaction is the source of great strength and power. Other authorities say that this word

stands for the Holy Qur'an and the arguments of the Holy Qur'an. This is the real strength and power of a believer. [Qurṭubī]. Allah, the Pure and Exalted, knows best!

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Mujādalah
Ends here.

Sūrah Al-Ḥashr

(The Mustering)

This Sūrah is Madanī, and it has 24 verses and 3 sections

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

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

Verses 1 - 5

سَبَّحَ لِلّٰهِ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْاَرْضِ ۗ وَهُوَ الْعَزِیْزُ الْحَكِیْمُ ﴿١﴾ هُوَ الَّذِیْ اَخْرَجَ الَّذِیْنَ كَفَرُوْا مِنْ اَهْلِ الْكِتٰبِ مِنْ دِیَارِهِمْ لِاَوَّلِ الْحَشْرِ ۗ مَا ظَنَنْتُمْ اَنْ يَّخْرُجُوْا وَظَنُّوْا اَنْهُمْ مَّانِعَتُهُمْ حُصُوْنُهُمْ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ فَاَتَتْهُمْ اللّٰهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَمْ يَحْتَسِبُوْا وَقَذَفَ فِيْ قُلُوْبِهِمُ الرُّعْبَ يُخْرِبُوْنَ بُیُوْتَهُمْ بِاَیْدِيْهِمْ وَاَیْدِی الْمُؤْمِنِیْنَ ۗ فَاعْتَبِرُوْا یٰٓاُولِی الْاَبْصٰرِ ﴿٢﴾ وَلَوْ لَا اَنْ كَتَبَ اللّٰهُ عَلَیْهِمُ الْجَلَاءَ لَعَذَّبَهُمْ فِی الدُّنْیَا وَلَهُمْ فِی الْاٰخِرَةِ عَذَابُ النَّارِ ﴿٣﴾ ذٰلِكَ بِاَنْهُمْ شَاقُّوْا اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهٗ ۗ وَمَنْ یُّشَاقِقِ اللّٰهَ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ شَدِیْدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٤﴾ مَا قَطَعْتُمْ مِّنْ لِّیْنَةٍ اَوْ تَرَكْتُمْوَهَا قَاِئِمَةً عَلٰی اُصُوْلِهَا فَبِاِذْنِ اللّٰهِ وَلِیُخْرِی الْفٰسِقِیْنَ ﴿٥﴾

Allah's purity has been proclaimed by all that is in the heavens and all that is on the earth. And He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise. [1] He is the One who expelled

the disbelievers of the People of the Book from their homes at the time of the first gathering.¹ You did not expect that they would leave, and they deemed that their fortresses would protect them from Allah. But Allah came to them from where they did not expect, and cast fear in their hearts when they were spoiling their homes with their own hands and with the hands of the believers. So, learn a lesson, O those who have eyes. [2] And if Allah had not destined exile for them, He would have punished them in the world. And for them in the Hereafter is the torment of the Fire. [3] That is because they were hostile to Allah and His Messenger. And whoever has hostility with Allah, then Allah is severe in punishment. [4] Whatever palm-trees you have cut down, or have left them standing on their roots, it was with Allah's permission, and so that He might disgrace the transgressors. [5]

Commentary

Sequencing of Sūrahs

The preceding Sūrah had condemned the close friendship developed by the hypocrites with the Jews. The present Sūrah describes the punishment faced by the Jews in this world in the form of exile and in the Hereafter in the form of grievous torment.

Cause of Revelation

The story of their banishment from Madīnah is that when the Messenger of Allah ﷺ migrated to Madīnah, he concluded a peace treaty with the Jews. Banū Naḍīr, one of the Jew tribes living around Madīnah, were one of the three signatories. The latter tribe lived about two miles

(1) The original word used in the text is 'ḥashr' which means 'gathering' or 'mustering' and after which this Sūrah is named. In the present context, it may be interpreted in two different ways. One, that it refers to the gathering of the Muslims who ordered the Jews to leave Madīnah due to their constant conspiracies and breaches of the treaty they had with the Muslims. According to this interpretation, the verse means that the Jews of Bani Naḍīr were made to leave the city at the first gathering of the Muslims without fighting and without any further attempt to attack them. The second interpretation is that it refers to the gathering of the Jews for the purpose of emigration. In this case the verse indicates that it was their first exile before which they did not face such a situation. It has another subtle indication to the fact that this was their first exile which will be followed by another one, i.e. the exile faced by the Jews in the days of Sayyidnā 'Umar ؓ. (Muhammad Taqi Usmani)

away from Madīnah. Once it happened that ‘Amr Ibn ‘Umayyah Ḍamurī killed two persons by mistake. According to Law, the Muslims jointly had to settle the blood-wit. The Holy Prophet ﷺ first collected money from the Muslims for this purpose. Then he decided to collect money from the Jews as well in terms of the treaty he already had with them. The Holy Prophet ﷺ visited the tribe of Banū Naḍīr for this purpose. Before his arrival, they conspired to put an end to his life. When he reached there, they made him sit against a wall and said to him that they were going to gather the blood money. In the meanwhile, they secretly plotted that someone should climb the particular wall in the shade of which the Holy Prophet ﷺ was sitting and drop a rock on him and kill him. But before the Jews could execute their sinister plan, Allah revealed to him in time about their plot and conspiracy. The Holy Prophet ﷺ instantly left the place, returned to Madīnah and sent a message to Banū Naḍīr that they have betrayed the treaty. Therefore, they are given ten days in which to leave the town and go into exile, and were warned that if they would not meet the deadline, they might be killed at sight. They decided to leave, but ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Ubayy prevented them. He said that they did not have to leave because he had an army of two thousand men who were willing to lay down their lives to protect the Jewish lives. It is stated in Rūḥ-ul-Ma‘ānī on the authority of Ibn Ishāq that along with ‘Abdullāh were Wadī‘ah Ibn Mālīk, Suwaid and Rā‘ish. The Jews fell into the trap of the three and sent a message to the Holy Prophet ﷺ that they would not leave. As a result, he together with the noble Companions marched on that tribe. The Jews locked themselves up in the fortresses, but the hypocrites, being essentially cowards, hid themselves. The Holy Prophet ﷺ laid a siege to the Jewish fortresses. Some of their date palms were felled and others were burnt down. Eventually, they agreed to go into exile. So, the Holy Prophet ﷺ forced them to evacuate and abandon their fortresses and, in kindness, allowed to take with them enough provisions, whatever their cavalry and camelry could carry except arms and weapons, which, they were told, would be confiscated. Some of them went to Syria, while others went to Khaibar. On account of their greed, they carried with them even beams, rafters, woods and the doors of their houses. This incident took place after the battle of Badr in Rabī‘-ul-Awwal 4 AH. Sayyidnā ‘Umar ؓ, during his caliphate, sent them away to Syria to live with the rest of the Jews. The two banishments go under

the names of the 'first banishment' and the 'second banishment'. [Zād-ul-Ma'ād].

The Characteristics of Sūrah Al-Ḥashr and the History of Banū Naḍīr

The entire Sūrah Al-Ḥashr was revealed in connection with Banū Naḍīr [Ibn Ishāq]. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه used to call this Surah, Sūrah Banī Naḍīr. [Ibn Kathīr]. Banū Naḍīr were the descendents of the Holy Prophet Hārūn عليه السلام. Their forefathers were scholars of Torah, which contained a full description of the Last Prophet ﷺ such as his physical features, his signs of Prophet-hood and his migration to Yathrib (Madīnah). This tribe was under the impression that the Last Prophet would be one of the descendents of Holy Prophet Hārūn عليه السلام and they would have the pleasure of being in his company. For this reason, they migrated from Syria and settled in Yathrib. Some of the contemporaries of the Holy Prophet ﷺ were also scholars of the Torah, who saw his physical features and other signs of Prophet-hood and recognized him as the Final Messenger but, as they thought that he would be one of the descendents of Hārūn عليه السلام, they were disappointed when he was raised among the descendents of Ismā'īl عليه السلام. They were jealous and, on account of their jealousy, they were inhibited from embracing the Faith. But in their heart of hearts they knew that Sayyidnā Muḥammad ﷺ was the Final Messenger of Allah. When, in the battle of Badr, they saw the amazing victory of the Muslims and the humiliating defeat of the pagan Quraish, their degree of certainty was somewhat augmented. They even expressed their amazement. But distinguishing between truth and falsehood on the basis, measurement, or standard of the apparent victory and defeat is a weak yardstick. As a result, when in the battle of Uḥud, Muslims initially suffered a temporary setback and some of the Companions were martyred, their certainty was shaken. After that they started conspiring with the pagan Arabs.

When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ migrated to Madīnah, as stated earlier, he with his political sagacity felt his first task was to enter into a peace treaty with the Jews of Madīnah and other neighbouring Jewish tribes, stipulating that he would not fight them and they would not fight him, nor would they aid and abet those who take up arms against the Muslims, and if the Jews were attacked, the Muslims would assist them.

There were many other clauses in the peace accord, the details of which are available in 'Sīrah of Ibn Hishām'. All the Jewish tribes, including Banū Naḍīr, had their area, strong fortresses and orchards at a distance of 3.2 kilometers from Madīnah.

Up to the point of the battle of 'Uḥud, they apparently kept to the terms of the treaty. But after that battle, they betrayed the treaty and started conspiring secretly, in that a leader of Banū Naḍīr, Ka'b Ibn Ashraf, went to Makkah with a caravan of forty Jewish members to curry favour with the pagan Quraish who were anxious to avenge the defeat of the battle of Badr, and had gone to the battle of 'Uhud for that reason but were eventually defeated in the latter battle as well. The defeated men returned and the Jews met them. They conspired and agreed to wage a war against the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and the Muslims. Ka'b Ibn Ashraf with his forty Jewish members and Abū Sufyān with his forty members of pagan Quraish entered the Sacred Mosque and, holding on the curtain of the House of Allah, pledged that they would jointly fight the Muslims and annihilate them.

When, after this pledge, Ka'b Ibn Ashraf returned to Madīnah, Jibra'īl ﷺ descended and informed the Messenger of Allah ﷺ about the entire episode and the details of the pledge. In the meantime, the Holy Prophet ﷺ issued the command to kill Ka'b Ibn Ashraf. A noble Companion Muḥammad Ibn Maslamah killed him.

Subsequently, Banū Naḍīr hatched many different plots to harm the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, one of which was, as reported earlier, their plot to kill him. The Holy Prophet ﷺ, after collecting blood money from the Muslims in a particular case of murder, decided to collect money from the Jews in terms of the treaty that was concluded between himself ﷺ, the tribes of Banū Naḍīr, Banū Qainuqā' and Banū Quraizah. Before his arrival, they planned to kill him, as detailed above. The person who was entrusted with the task of throwing a rock on the head of the Holy Prophet ﷺ was a Jew 'Umar Ibn Jaḥḥāsh by name who had volunteered himself for the task. Had it not been for the revelatory information the Holy Prophet ﷺ received from Allah, their plot would have worked. But Allah protected His Messenger ﷺ and the conspiracy was thus thwarted and their plan failed.

A Lesson

It is a remarkable co-incidence that subsequently the entire Banū Naḍīr clan was expelled from Madīnah except for two persons who embraced the Islamic Faith and were spared: One of them was 'Umar Ibn Jaḥḥāsh and the other was his paternal uncle Yamin Ibn 'Amr Ibn Ka'b. [Ibn Kathīr].

The Story of 'Amr Ibn Umayyah Ḍamurī

Under the rubric of 'cause of revelation' above, reference was made to the incident that 'Amr Ibn Umayyah Ḍamurī accidentally killed two men. The Muslims as well as the Jews had to jointly settle the blood-wit in terms of the treaty existing between them. The Holy Prophet ﷺ collected money from the Muslims for this purpose. Then he decided to collect money from the Jews. The Holy Prophet ﷺ visited the tribe of Banū Naḍīr in their area for this purpose. Ibn Kathīr writes that the enemy plans to harm the Muslims are many and long-drawn-out. One famous incident in Islamic history is that of Bi'r Ma'ūnah: Some of the hypocrites and the non-believers requested the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to send a band of the noble Companions to preach the religion of Islam. He dispatched about seventy Companions for the purpose. Later on it was discovered that this was a mere conspiracy. The plan was to surround them and kill them, in which they succeeded. Of the seventy Muslims, only 'Amr Ibn Umayyah Ḍamurī managed to escape. He had seen and experienced the dishonesty and treachery of the non-believers, and how they mercilessly massacred sixty-nine of his brethren. In the circumstances, one can imagine how his emotions would have been against the enemies. Co-incidentally, when he was returning to Madīnah he encountered two non-believers and killed them. Later on it was discovered that the two men killed were members of Banī 'Āmir, a tribe which was an ally of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Banū Naḍīr was also an ally of Banī 'Āmir tribe.

The agreements of Muslim politicians were not like the political agreements of today in which every effort is made at the very beginning to find out ways to escape or violate it. In the case of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the early sincere Muslims, whatever the tongue uttered or the pen wrote was treated as part of religion and Divine law and binding. When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ learnt about 'Amr Ibn 'Umayyah Ḍamurī's error of judgement, he decided to pay the blood-wit, in terms of the sacred

law of Shari'ah, for the two men killed. In this matter, he first collected money from the Muslims and then he had to go to Banū Naḍīr for collection. [Ibn Kathīr]

Tolerance and Human Rights in Islam: A Model for Present-day Politicians

There are many lessons in the incidents cited above for the heralds of human rights, and for the political leaders and the big powers who talk highly about them and are deemed as 'Champions of Human Rights'. Let us look at the case of Banū Naḍīr: They unceasingly were involved in conspiracies, endlessly behaved treacherously and continuously plotted to kill the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Would the present-day political leaders or heads of governments tolerate all this? How would they treat them? Nowadays, the opponents are killed even by sprinkling petrol on them or in some other execution style. There is no need for political leadership or government for that purpose. A few wicked hooligans gather together and carry out the executions. The official wrath and anger manifest itself much more grievously .

But here we are describing the government of Allah and His Messenger ﷺ: Even when the enemy conspiracies and treacheries reached the peak, no massacre was contemplated. No thought of usurping their property and wealth was ever considered. In fact, the following humane punitive measures were taken:

[1] They were allowed to take all their wealth with them, and were ordered only to evacuate the town.

[2] To do this, they were given ten days, so that they might be able to take their things comfortably and transfer themselves to some other place. When they did not comply, it became necessary to take a sterner measure at national level.

[3] Some trees were though cut down and others were burned down, but even at that stage, no edict was issued to burn down their fortresses or attack them and kill them on a large scale.

[4] When they expressed that it was in their best interests to go into exile, they were given the choice that each man could take with him as much provisions as his camel could carry. As a result, they carried their

hooks, latches, doors, planks, beams and rafters.

[5] No Muslim ever frowned upon any of the persons transferring his stuff. They took their things and moved out peacefully and safely.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ showed this kindness to them when they were completely subdued and he was in complete command of the situation. He had the power to fully avenge their treachery, dishonesty and conspiracy. But he did not do it. This behavior of the Holy Prophet ﷺ corresponds to his behavior with the pagans of Makkah when he entered the city after the triumph.

Let us now explain some expressions of these verses in the background of these events.

لَاوِلِ الْحَشْرِ (...at the time of the first gathering...59:2). The word *hashr* means 'to rise'. One reason for referring to it as the 'first mustering' is given by Maulānā Thanawi in his Tafsīr. They were settled at one place since ancient times. This event of banishment took place for the first time in their life. The second reason could be that all the non-Muslims of the Arabian peninsula would have to be evacuated in future, so that the peninsula might become a strong fortress of Islam. As a result, a second banishment was to take place at some later time. This happened during the caliphate of 'Umar رضي الله عنه, the Holy Prophet's صلى الله عليه وسلم Second Successor. He banished all the Jews who had settled in Khaibar. He ordered all the Jews to leave the Arabian peninsula. From this point of view, Banū Naḍīr's banishment is the 'first banishment' and the 'second banishment' took place in the time of Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنه.

فَاتَهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَمْ يَحْتَسِبُوا (...But Allah came to them from where they did not expect...59:2). The phrase 'Allah came' means 'the command of Allah and His obedient angels came'.

يُخْرِبُونَ بُيُوتَهُمْ بِأَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَيْدِي الْمُؤْمِنِينَ (...they were spoiling their homes with their own hands and with the hands of the believers...59:2) Banū Naḍīr had spoiled their houses by removing their doors and shutters. 'Spoiling their homes with the hands of the believers' means that when the Jews locked themselves up in their fortresses, the Muslims destroyed the trees and homes outside the fortresses to make them surrender.

مَا قَطَعْتُمْ مِّن لِّينَةٍ أَوْ تَرَكْتُمُوهَا قَائِمَةً عَلَىٰ أُصُولِهَا فَبِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَلِيُخْرِجَ الْفَاسِقِينَ (Whatever

palm-trees you have cut down, or have left them standing on their roots, it was with Allah's permission, and so that He might disgrace the transgressors....59:5). The word *līnah* refers to a 'palm-tree'. Another opinion states that besides '*ajwah*', all other palm trees are referred to as *līnah*. Banū Naḍīr's orchards were comprised of palm trees. The reference in the verse is to the cutting, by the orders of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, of the palm trees of Banū Naḍīr who had shut themselves in their fortresses in defiance of the Holy Prophet's orders to surrender. So, some of the blessed Companions, in order to anger them or cast terror into their hearts, cut and burned down some of their date trees. Other Companions felt that the palm-trees should not be destroyed because soon, God willing, the Muslims will be victorious and the orchards will fall to their lot as booty. Thus they did not participate in the destruction of the trees. This was a difference of opinion. Later on when this disagreement was discussed, the Companions who participated in the destruction of the trees or orchards felt guilty. They asked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ whether they were really guilty of a sin, in that they destroyed the property that was going to fall to the lot of the Muslims. Verse [5] was revealed on that occasion to assuage the guilt-feeling of the Muslims that whatever they have done, whether they cut the trees or left them uncut, was by Allah's leave and it was done to degrade the ungodly Jews.

Commandment of the Holy Prophet ﷺ is in fact the Commandment of Allah: A Warning for those who Refute the authority of the Aḥādīth

In verse [5], the cutting down of the trees or leaving them uncut is called *bi-idhni-llah* [with Allah's permission] whereas neither of the actions was the explicit command of Allah. Apparently, whatever each group did was on the basis of independent reasoning [*Ijtihād*]. At most, it is possible that they might have sought the permission of the Holy Prophet ﷺ which is a Ḥadīth. The 'Prophet's permission' is referred to as 'Allah's permission' in the Qur'ān. Thus the Qur'ān makes plain that Allah has given His Messenger the right to legislate laws. The forthcoming verse [7] of this Surah puts it that believers need to hold fast to what the Messenger bids them and abstain from what he forbids them. This shows conclusively that the Sunnah is an independent source of the Islamic Law .

Disagreement in *ijtihād* is not a sin

Another important principle derived from this verse is that if those who are competent to undertake *ijtihād* disagree with another on a particular issue, so as one of them holds something as permissible, while the other takes it as impermissible, neither of them would be counted as sinners, nor will the principle of *nahy 'anil-munkar* (forbidding evil) be applied to this situation, because none of the two rulings is an 'evil' in the sight of Allah. Under the concluding phrase of verse [5] **وَلِيُخْزِيَ الْفَاسِقِينَ** (...and that he might disgrace the transgressors) it was explained that the act of cutting or burning down the trees cannot be construed as disorderliness. But it was done to degrade the unbelievers, and therefore it carries reward in the Hereafter.

Ruling

Is it legitimate to demolish or burn down the homes of the infidels, or cut or burn down their trees, or destroy their fields and farms? The leading authorities on Islamic Jurisprudence are not unanimous on this question. Imām A'zam Abū Ḥanīfah رحمه الله تعالى rules that all of these actions are permitted. Shaikh Ibn Humam رحمه الله تعالى, however, qualifies the ruling and restricts it. He rules that all of the above are permitted if and only if the enemies cannot be vanquished or overpowered without resorting to the above measures, or if the victory of Muslims is not probable or likely. The whole purpose of this ruling is to break the might and power of the enemy. In the case where Muslims do not win the struggle, destruction of their moveable and immovable properties may be included in weakening their might and main. [Maẓharī]

Verse 6 - 10

وَمَا آفَاءَ اللَّهِ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ مِنْهُمْ فَمَا أَوْجَفْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ خَيْلٍ وَلَا رِكَابٍ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يُسَلِّطُ رُسُلَهُ عَلَى مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٦﴾ مَا آفَاءَ اللَّهِ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْقُرَى فَلِلَّهِ وَاللرَّسُولِ وَلِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ لَا كُفَىٰ لَا يَكُونُ دُولَةً بَيْنَ الْأَغْنِيَاءِ مِنْكُمْ وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ

وَمَا نَهَيْكُم عَنْهُ فَانْتَهَوْا ۗ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٧﴾
لِلْفُقَرَاءِ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ الَّذِينَ أُخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ وَأَمْوَالِهِمْ يَبْتَغُونَ
فَضْلًا مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانًا وَيَنْصُرُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ ۗ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ
الصُّدُقُونَ ﴿٨﴾ ۗ وَالَّذِينَ تَبَوَّءُوا الدَّارَ وَالْإِيمَانَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ يُحِبُّونَ مَنْ
هَاجَرَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَا يَجِدُونَ فِي صُدُورِهِمْ حَاجَةً مِمَّا أُوتُوا وَيُؤْثِرُونَ
عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ خَصَاصَةٌ ۗ وَمَنْ يُوقِ شُحَّ نَفْسِهِ
فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٩﴾ ۗ وَالَّذِينَ جَاءُوا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ يَقُولُونَ
رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا وَلِإِخْوَانِنَا الَّذِينَ سَبَقُونَا بِالْإِيمَانِ وَلَا تَجْعَلْ فِي
قُلُوبِنَا غِلًّا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ رَءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٠﴾

And whatever *fai'*¹ (left over property) Allah has passed on to His Messenger from them, you had not urged on your horses or camels for it, but Allah gives predominance to His messengers over whomsoever He wills, and Allah is Powerful over every thing. [6] Whatever *fai'* Allah has passed on to His Messenger from the people of the towns is for Allah and for the Messenger, and for the kinsmen and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer, so that it may not circulate only between the rich among you. And whatever the Messengers gives you, take it, and whatever thing he forbids you, abstain (from it). And fear Allah. Indeed Allah is severe in punishment. [7] (And *fai'* is especially) for the poor emigrants who were expelled from their homes and properties, while they were seeking the grace of Allah and (His) pleasure, and were helping Allah and His Messenger. They are the truthful. [8] And (*fai'* is also for) those who established themselves in the homeland (of Madīnah) and in faith before the former ones (arrived in Madīnah), who have love for those who emigrated to them, and do not feel in their hearts any

[1] *fai'* is a term for the properties left over by the non-Muslims and possessed by a Muslim state without fighting. As opposed to this, *ghanimah* (booty) is a property taken over by fighting. The properties of Bani Naḍīr were taken over without fighting, hence the word *fai'*. That is why we did not translate *fai'* as 'booty'.

need for what is given to the former ones (from *fai'*), and give preference to them over themselves, even though they are in poverty. And whoever is saved from the greed of his soul, then such people are the successful. [9] And (*fai'* is also) for those who came after them saying, "Our Lord, forgive us and those of our brothers who preceded us in faith, and do not place in our hearts any rancor against those who believe; Surely, Our Lord, you are Very-Kind, Very-Merciful." [10]

Commentary

The Concept of *Fai'* and its Law of Distribution

وَمَا آفَاءَ اللَّهِ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ مِنْهُمْ (And whatever *fai'* [left over property] Allah has passed on to His Messenger from them, ...59:6). The word *afā'a* is derived from *fai'un* which means 'to return'. Thus the time of the afternoon when the shade of things returns to the east is referred to as *fai'*. The real ownership of the entire universe belongs to Allah. The ownership of things can be ascribed to human beings when Allah Himself declares them, through His Law, to be under the ownership of a human being. However, when people rebel against Allah, indulging in disbelief and *shirk*, their lives and properties are confiscated through properly constituted Authority and their ownership return to the Real Owner, Allah. From this point of view, all properties acquired from the unbelievers should be called *fai'*. However, the sacred Law of Sharī'ah draws a distinction between the terms *ghanīmah* [spoils] and *fai'*. The former refers to a property which is acquired from non-Muslims through active armed struggle, as in [8:41] وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا غَنِمْتُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ (And know that whatever spoils you receive...). However, the word '*fai'*' refers to a property acquired without resorting to an actual fight, (like in a state of peaceful surrender.) These two terms have been used to set down rules of these two types in the Holy Qur'ān. Sūrah Al-Anfāl dealt with injunctions relating to *ghanīmah* or spoils, which is acquired from non-Muslims in the wake of armed struggle. The present Sūrah takes up the subject of *fai'* and the law of its distribution. The term *fai'* includes any property or wealth which the non-Muslims might leave behind and run away, or make over to the Muslim Authority willingly or with consent like *Khirāj*, *jizyah* or commercial duty.

مَا آفَاءَ اللَّهِ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْقُرَى (Whatever *fai'* Allah has passed on to His Messenger from the people of the towns... 59:7). The phrase *ahl ul-qurā*

or 'the people of the towns' refers to the Jewish tribes like Banū Naḍīr and Banū Quraizah whose wealth and property were obtained without armed struggle. The laws pertaining to the distribution of the two types of spoils are different. Unlike *ghanīmah* [spoils of war], *fai'* is not distributed among the *mujāhidin* (participants in fighting). The Holy Prophet ﷺ is granted full authority to give as much as he likes to whomsoever he likes or to retain for himself at his discretion. However, a few classes of beneficiaries have been clearly defined. The *fai'* must be distributed among the defined five classes.

The foregoing verses set down the rules pertaining to *fai'*, its beneficiaries and its method of distribution. Some details are available at the beginning of Sūrah Al-Anfāl in Volume 4 of Ma'āriful Qur'ān, pages 148-151 and more details of the injunctions are available in the same volume on pages 221-229, under verse 41. It needs to be borne in mind that the wordings of Sūrah Al-Anfāl regarding *Khums* [1/5th] of *ghanīmah* is almost identical to the wordings of *fai'* mentioned in the present verse. Let us compare: 8:41 reads: 'وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا غَنِمْتُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَإِنَّ لِلَّهِ خُمُسَهُ' وَالَّذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ (And know that whatever spoils you receive, its one-fifth is for Allah and His Messenger and for kinsmen and orphans and the needy and the wayfarer... 8:41). Verse [7] of the present Sūrah reads as above which means: "Whatever *fai'* Allah has passed on to His Messenger from the people of the towns is for Allah and for His Messenger, and for kinsmen and orphans and the needy and the wayfarer....59:7). In both these verses, six classes of beneficiaries are mentioned: Allah, the Messenger, kinsmen, orphans, the needy and the wayfarer. It is all too clear that Allah is the Real Owner and Master of this world, the next world and the entire creation. The name of Allah in relation to the shares has been mentioned by way of blessing or benediction, because the wealth or property thus associated with Allah's name attains honour and distinction. It also points to the permissibility and purity of the wealth. This is the view of Sayyidnā Ḥasan Al-Baṣrī, Qatādah, 'Aṭā', Ibrāhīm, Sha'bī and the commentators in general. [Maḥzarī]

In the commentary of Sūrah Al-Anfāl, it was fully and exhaustively explained how wealth attains honour and distinction by the mention of Allah's name which, in brief, amounts to the following: The prophets are

not allowed to avail of Ṣadaqāt or charities, even though they are derived from the pure wealth of the Muslims. The question might arise how the *ghanīmah* and *fai'* are made lawful for the Holy Prophet ﷺ, while they are derived from the infidels? By mentioning Allah's name at the beginning of the verse, this doubt has been removed. The point is that Allah is the real owner of the entire universe. Human beings come to own certain things when Allah by His own grace declares for them to pass into human ownership. However, when a certain segment of human beings rebels against Allah, Jihād is waged against them by Allah's command, which means that, during the war, their lives and properties are no longer sacred. In this way, all their wealth is confiscated in the name of the Authority in command. The confiscated properties are named *ghanīmah*, spoils or war booty - which goes out of the ownership of disbelievers and gets itself deposited separately as being under the ownership of Allah alone. And as stated earlier, the word *fai'* contains the meaning of 'return' and the wealth is so called because its ownership is restored to the original owner, Allah. No human being has any entitlement to it. The beneficiaries who will receive a share of it will receive it direct from Allah, and therefore it will be lawful and pure like water and self-growing grass which are direct Divine gift, lawful and pure.

In short, the mention of Allah's name in this context points to the fact that the entire wealth belongs to Allah, and it is granted to the beneficiaries on His behalf. It is no *ṣadaqah* or *khairāt* [charity].

This leaves us with five classes of beneficiaries: [1] The Messenger ﷺ; [2] kinsmen; [3] orphans; [4] the needy; and [5] the wayfarer. The same five classes of beneficiaries of *khums* [1/5th] were determined in [8:41] and now the same classes of beneficiaries are determined for *fai'* property. The rules relating to both *ghanīmah* and *fai'* properties are identical: They are in full authority of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and after him in the authority of the Caliphs. The Authority may retain them for the benefit of Muslims in general, or they may deposit them in *bait-ul-māl* [public treasury] and do not grant anything to anyone, or they may distribute them. If it is decided to be distributed, it must be done within the five classes defined. [Qurtubī]

The practice of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs and of other noble

Companions shows that *fai'* property was in the Authority of the Holy Prophet ﷺ during his time, and was left to his discretion. He may disburse it as he deemed fit. After him, his Caliphs controlled it and disbursed it according to their best judgement.

After the demise of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, his share of the booty fell into disuse. The word 'Kinsmen' in the verse means the kinsmen of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. There were two reasons why they were granted a share from this booty: Firstly, because they helped the Holy Messenger ﷺ and supported him in his Islamic activities. Therefore, even the rich kinsmen of the Holy Prophet ﷺ used to be granted a share from the booty. [2] Ṣadaqah [charity] was unlawful for the Holy Prophet's kinsmen. Therefore, the poor and needy relatives of the Holy Prophet ﷺ used to be granted a share from the *fai'* rather than from the Ṣadaqah [charity]. After the demise of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, helping and supporting him came to an end. The first reason no longer existed. Therefore, the share from the *fai'* of the rich relatives fell into disuse like that of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. However, the poor and the needy relatives continued to receive their share from the *fai'* on account of poverty and need. Priority was given to the poor and needy relatives of Allah's Messenger ﷺ over other poor and needy people. [Hidāyah]. See Ma'āriful Qur'an, Vol. 4/pp 228-229.

كَيْ لَا يَكُونَ دُولَةً بَيْنَ الْأَغْنِيَاءِ مِنْكُمْ (...so that it may not circulate only between the rich among you.59:7). The word *dūlatah* refers to the 'wealth or good fortune that exchange hands'. [Qurṭubī] The verse means that Allah has determined the heads of expenditure for the *fai'* in this way so that the wealth does not circulate among the wealthy, who would spend it as they wish and desire and give none of it to the poor. The verse is aimed at abolishing an old practice of the Days of Ignorance where the circulation of such wealth used to remain confined to the privileged and propertied class or caste. The poorer segment of the society had no entitlement to the wealth of the nation.

Effective Measures taken by Islam against concentration of wealth

Allah is the creator, cherisher and sustainer of the universe. He knows the human needs. All human beings, whether believers or non-believers, whether lineally rich or poor, are equal in the sight of

Allah. Allah has to a very large extent kept the distribution of man's natural and basic needs in His own Hands, so that every class, every region, every weak and strong people might be able to benefit equally. Allah has, through His consummate wisdom, kept all such needs beyond man's personal domination. No human being dare take possession of these things personally. Air, wind, atmosphere, the Sun, the Moon, the light of the stars and planets, the rain-laden clouds – all these things are such without which no human can survive for a moment. Allah, the Almighty, has declared all natural resources a public endowment for all. Not even the greatest of sovereign authorities, by virtue of their ruling powers, can ever monopolize or take possession of them. Allah's creation avails of them equally everywhere.

The second category of necessities of life is what the earth produces, as for instance water and other food-stuff. This is not commonly available. However, Islamic law has declared hills and mountains, unpopulated jungles and natural springs as public endowments. However, legitimate right of ownership of some parts of the earth are allowed under special laws to specific human beings. Some people illegitimately grab the land, but naturally even the greatest capitalist cannot derive benefit from the land without the help of the poor, the farmers or the laborers. Thus despite a sort of ownership of it, he is forced to give shares to other powerless and the indigent.

The third category is gold, silver and money, which do not fall under the basic and natural necessities of life. But Allah has made them the means of acquiring all essentials of life. People who mine gold and silver from the ground become their owners subject to certain rules. The right of their ownership is transferred in various ways to other people. If they are widely distributed and are in easy circulation in human society, no individual will go without food and clothing. But what happens in our days is that the greedy people want to benefit from the wealth to the exclusion of others. This led to miserliness and greed which, in turn, led to some old and some new systems of monopolization and concentration of wealth. As a result, people's wealth concentrated in the hands of a few capitalists and people at the helm of affairs. The rest of the population who were poor and indigent had to suffer, because they were deprived of their share in the nation's wealth. This economic situation, as a reaction, gave birth to such unreasonable economic systems as communism and

socialism.

Islamic economic system, on the one hand, shows the highest respect to individual property rights, in that an individual's lawful property is as sacred and inviolable as human life itself, and human life is as sacred and inviolable as the House of Allah. Its violation has been most strongly prohibited. On the other hand, if a hand filches or steals it, it is, under penal law, amputated. In the third place, all such doors have been shut, through which a particular individual or group of individuals might monopolize it and deprive the general public.

The unjust and unbalanced way of acquisition of wealth, such as by usury, speculation, gambling and betting, allows wealth to concentrate and circulate in the hands of a few individuals. Islam has declared all such gains as unlawful and cut at the root of all such transactions in trade and tenancy that are based on unlawful practices. Wealth that is gained through lawful means has specific ways of spending: The needy and the indigent are shareholders in the wealth in the form of *Zakāh*, *Ushr*, *Ṣadaqat-ul-Fiṭr* [*Id* charity], various forms of expiation and so on. The surplus wealth may be given away in voluntary charity. If a man leaves behind assets at the time of his death, Divine wisdom has set down specific rules according to which it must be distributed. The shareholders in the assets are the relatives of the deceased, the principle in this case being *al-'aqrab- fal-'aqrab*, that is 'relatives in order of relationship'. In other words, Islamic law of succession is based on blood relationship; the nearer in degree to the deceased excludes the more remote. The needy in general have not been made the shareholders, because if that were the case, the dying person would have felt the need to spend his assets anyhow, rightly or wrongly, before his death. When he sees only his near and dear ones receiving, this urge does not develop in his heart.

This means of acquiring wealth blocks the way to monopolization. The second means of acquiring wealth is war and *jihād*. The gains made in this way are distributed according to the Islamic rules. Some of them have been set down in Sūrah Al-Anfāl and others in this Sūrah. How unwise and short-sighted are those people who give up Islam's balanced system of economics based on justice, fair-play and compassion, and innovate new systems of wealth distribution, which are unjust and unbalanced, and disturb world peace?

وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ (... Whatever the Messenger gives you, take it; and whatever thing he forbids you, abstain [from it]. And fear Allah....59:7). This verse is in connection with *fai'* property, and it purports to say that Allah has set down the beneficiaries of this property. However, the question which beneficiary will receive how much have been left to the discretion of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Therefore, the Muslims are advised to happily accept the amount the Holy Prophet ﷺ grants them, and they should not be anxious to receive what he has not given to them. This has been further emphasized by the injunction اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ (Fear Allah). If anyone collects under false pretext more than what he is granted, Allah is fully aware and will punish him.

The Messenger's Command is Binding like the Qur'ānic Command

Although the verse was revealed in connection with *fai'*, its words are general. They are not specific to wealth. They cover all the commands as well. Hence, the generalized meaning of the verse is that whatever the Holy Prophet ﷺ gives to a person, be it wealth, any other grant or any command, the people must show their willingness to accept it. And whatever he forbids them, they should stay away from it.

Many of the Companions took the generalized sense of the verse, and on the basis of it, they took the Holy Prophet's ﷺ commandment as binding as the Qur'ānic commandment. Qurṭubī said that in this verse the antonym of *ātā* [gives] is *nahā* [forbids]. This shows that the verb *ātā* [gives] is used in the sense of *amara* [commands] which is the direct antonym of *nahā* [forbids]. The Qur'ān, instead of using the direct opposite of *naha* [forbids] which is *amara* [commands], employed the verb *ātā* [gives] presumably to embrace the context of the subject-matter where the verse occurs, that is, the disbursement of *fai'* property.

Sayyidnā 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ūd ؓ once saw a person in the state of *iḥrām* wearing sewn clothes (which is impermissible in that state). He asked him to take off the clothes. The person asked him to recite a Qur'ānic verse in support of his claim that a pilgrim is prohibited to put on a sewn garb. Sayyidnā 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ūd ؓ recited this very verse مَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ (Whatever the Messenger gives you, take it....").

Imām Shāfi'ī رحمه الله تعالى once said to his congregation: (Ask whatever question you wish, and I will answer from the Qur'ān.) A person said that

a pilgrim killed a wasp in the state of *iḥrām* and asked: "What is the rule about it?" Imām Shāfi'ī رحمه الله تعالى recited this verse of the Qur'an مَا آتَاكُمْ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ (Whatever the Messenger gives you, take it...." and coupled it with a Tradition which gives the injunction relating to the killing of a wasp. [Qurṭubī].

لِلْفُقَرَاءِ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ ([And *fai'* is especially] for the poor emigrants...[59:8]). The few verses from here till the end of the section describe the poor emigrants (*muhājirīn*), helpers (*Anṣār*) and the general members of Ummah that were yet to come in this world. Grammatically, the prepositional phrase 'for the emigrants' is a complement to the prepositional phrase 'for the kinsmen' occurring in verse [7] [Maḥzarī]. What this verse purports to say is that although the beneficiaries of *fai'* are orphans, the needy and the wayfarers as mentioned in the preceding verse, priority and precedence will be given to those whose service to religion, personal qualities and religious perfection are well-known.

Priority should be given to the Indigent Righteous and Religious Scholars serving the Cause of Islam when distributing Charity

This shows that although charities, especially *fai'* are meant to fulfill the needs of the indigent Muslims in general, the righteous, especially students and learned scholars serving the cause of religion should be given priority over all others. This is the reason why Islamic governments gave allowance from the *fai'* fund to learned scholars, *muftīs* and judges for serving the cause of education, propagation of Islam and reform of human beings, because these verses establish two categories of the noble Companions. Under the first category fall the emigrants who in the very first instance made great sacrifices for Islam and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. They endured great hardships, and eventually bid farewell to their wealth and property, to their land and country, and to their relatives and the near and dear ones, and emigrated to Madīnah. Under the second category fall the *Anṣār*, the natives of Madīnah who helped the emigrants and cooperated with them. They invited the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and with him the emigrants and thus caused the whole world around them to stand in their opposition. Their hospitality is unparalleled in the annals of the nations of the world. After these two major categories, comes a third category which comprises those people who embraced Islam after the blessed Companions and followed their footsteps closely. The last category

embraces all Muslims who will follow until the Last Hour. The three categories are discussed below, in succession.

The Merits of al-Muhājirīn [The Emigrants]

لِلْفُقَرَاءِ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ الَّذِينَ أُخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ وَأَمْوَالِهِمْ يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِنَ اللَّهِ
وَرِضْوَانًا وَيَنْصُرُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الصَّادِقُونَ

([And *fa'i* is especially] for the poor emigrants who were expelled from their homes and properties, while they were seeking the grace of Allah and (His) pleasure, and were helping Allah and His Messenger. They are the truthful....59:8)

This verse describes all the characteristics of the emigrants. The first of them is that they were driven from their homes and wealth, that is to say, their only crime was that they had embraced Islam and supported the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, as a result of which the pagans of Makkah persecuted them, so much so that they had to abandon their hearths and homes and emigrate to Madīnah. Some of them had to tie stones to their stomach on account of unbearable hunger, and others used to protect themselves against cold by digging holes in the ground, because they did not have clothes to save them from the chill of winter. [Maḏharī, Qurṭubī]

An Important Issue: The rule about the control of unbelievers over the wealth and property of the Muslims

This verse describes the emigrants as poor, whereas a *faqīr* [poor] in Islamic law refers to a person who has no property whatever, or a person who possesses a little property, but is poor because he does not possess the minimum amount of property constituting *niṣāb* of *Zakāh*. However, most of the emigrants were rich, wealthy and affluent while they were in Makkah. Even after migration, if the wealth had remained in their ownership, it would be inappropriate to refer to them as 'poor' because they had *niṣāb* of *Zakāh*. But the Qur'ān refers to them as 'poor' and thus points out that the wealth and property which they had left behind in Makkah, and the pagans subsequently took possession of them, became the property of the pagans and the Muslims lost its ownership.

Therefore, Imāms Abū Ḥanīfah and Mālik رحمه الله تعالى ruled that if Muslims abandon their homes and possessions and migrate to some other land, and the non-believers take control of their abandoned homes and property, the ownership passes into their hands and Muslims lose

ownership. Similarly, if - God forbid! - the unbelievers conquer an Islamic country, usurping Muslim property and wealth, then after having full control over it, they are deemed as owners of that property. Consequently, their transactions of sale and purchase of such properties are recognized in Shari'ah. Maḏharī has, on this occasion in his commentary, cited all the relevant Traditions supporting this view.

The second characteristic of the emigrants is described thus: **يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا** (...seeking the grace of Allah and [His] pleasure...59:8). When they embraced Islam, abandoned their country and wealth and migrated, they did not have any ulterior motive. They did all this only to seek Divine favour and gain His good pleasure. This indicates their perfect sincerity. The word *faql* [bounty, grace] is normally used for worldly blessings and *riḏwān* [good pleasure] for blessings of the Hereafter. From this viewpoint, the verse purports to describe that the emigrants gave up all their previous means of luxury, such as their hearths and homes, and now they were in quest of their worldly needs and the blessings of the Hereafter in the shade of Islam. Their objective was to seek the necessities of worldly life under the banner of Allah's and His Messenger's ﷺ efficacious grace.

The third characteristic of the emigrants is described thus: **وَيَنْصُرُونَ اللَّهَ** (...and were helping Allah and His Messenger...59:8). The phrase 'help Allah' means to help His religion, for which they made tremendous and amazing self-sacrifices.

The fourth characteristic of the emigrants is described thus: **أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الصَّادِقُونَ** (... They are the truthful...59:8). That is, such people are sincerely true in words and deeds. The covenant they made with Allah and His Messenger by reciting the *kalimah*, they duly fulfilled it and proved themselves to be true about it. This verse candidly testifies to the truthfulness of all emigrant Companions. Anyone calling any of them a 'liar' cannot be a Muslim, because he is rejecting this verse. God forbid! Rawāfiḏ call these Companions 'hypocrites'. This is a clear rejection of the verse. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ held the emigrant Companions in such high esteem that when he prayed to Allah, he would supplicate through their *wasīlah*. [as transmitted by Al-Baghawī and Maḏharī].

The Merits of Anṣār [The Helpers]

وَالَّذِينَ تَبَوَّءُوا الدَّارَ وَالْإِيمَانَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ (And [*fai*' is also for] those who established

themselves in the homeland [of Madīnah] and in faith before the former ones [arrived in Madīnah] ...59:9). The word *tabawwu'* means 'to make dwelling in the abode'. The word *dar* refers to Madīnah which has a special distinction. Therefore, Imām Mālik رحمته الله, from one point of view, regarded Madīnah Ṭayyibah as the most distinguishable of all the cities in the world. He used to say that wherever Islam reached and any city that was conquered, it was conquered by means of *jihād* - including Makkah Mukarramah. Madīnah Ṭayyibah is the only exception. It was conquered by means of *'Imān*. [Qurtubī].

In this verse, under the word *tabawwu'* [to settle in an abode] the words *dār* [home] and *'imān* [faith] are coupled. It could be objected that a 'home' can be found in a place where a person might settle in, but 'faith' is not an 'abode' where a person might find a place to settle in. Some of the scholars take the position that in this context the following verbs *أَخْلَصُوا* or *تَمَكَّنُوا* to be understood and they mean "These are the people who settled in their abode and became sincere and strong in their faith". It is possible to take the word 'faith' in its metaphorical sense, that is in the sense that 'it is a fortified house' where refuge is taken. The phrase *min qablihim* [before them] describes another characteristic of Anṣār, which means that they had settled in Madīnah before the Emigrants, while Madīnah was so important a city that all the Muslims living in Makkah were ordered to emigrate to it and it became the center of Islam.

The second characteristic of the Helpers is described in *يُحِبُّونَ مَنْ هَاجَرَ إِلَيْهِمْ* (...have love for those who emigrated to them...59:9) The Emigrants from Makkah came to the Helpers, deprived and denuded of all their possessions. Normally, no community is willing to allow such a large number of distressed people to settle in their city. Instead, the quarrels between natives and emigrants are found everywhere. But the Anṣār received them with open arms and made them equal partners in their belongings. The bond of love and brotherhood which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ established between the Emigrants and the Helpers, and to which this verse bears an eloquent testimony, stands unrivalled in the whole history of human relationships. There was no dearth of the Helpers who were eager to take on the Emigrants. In fact, for each Emigrant there were several applications to take him on. There were many instances in which lots had to be cast. When the lot of a particular Helper

fell in favour of a particular Emigrant, he was handed to him. [Mazharī]

The third characteristic of the Helpers is described in وَلَا يَجِدُونَ فِي صُدُورِهِمْ (...and do not feel in their hearts any need for what is given to the former ones [from *fai'*], ...[59:9]). This statement is concerned with the banishment of Banū Naḍīr and their orchards and homes falling into Muslim hands.

Distribution of Banū Naḍīr's properties

As stated earlier, the relevant verse has given discretionary powers to the Holy Prophet ﷺ in matters of distributing the *fai'* property. It was a time when the Muhājirīn (Emigrants) had neither homes of their own nor any property. They lived in the homes of the Anṣār, and worked on their farms to earn their livelihood. When the wealth of Banū Naḍīr and Banū Qainuqā' were obtained as *fai'*, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ called the leader of the Anṣār, Sayyidnā Thābit Ibn Qais Ibn Shammās ؓ, and asked him to bring his people to him. He asked: "O Messenger of Allah, should I call my tribe of the Anṣār, Banū Khazraj, or all of the tribes of the Anṣār?" He replied: "All of them." They all gathered. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ delivered a sermon in which he spoke highly of the Anṣār as to the manner in which they accommodated the Refugee brethren. He said it was a work of great determination and courage. After that he said: 'Allah has granted you the wealth of Banū Naḍīr. If you wish, I will divide the wealth between the Muhājirīn and the Anṣār; and the Refugees will remain as usual in the homes of the Anṣār. Or if you wish, the wealth may be distributed among the homeless Refugees; and they may move out of your homes and settle in their own homes.'

Having heard this sermon, two of the great chiefs of the Anṣār, Sayyidnā Sa'd Ibn 'Ubadah and Sa'd Ibn Mu'adh ؓ - stood and said: "O Messenger of Allah, we are of the view that the entire wealth of *fai'* be distributed among the Refugee brethren, and in addition they may continue to reside in our homes as usual." At this all the Anṣār unanimously said, "We concur with this decision and are happy with it." On that occasion, the Holy Prophet ﷺ supplicated for the Anṣār and their children. He then distributed the entire *fai'* among the Muhājirīn. Only two of the Anṣār received a grant from the *fai'*, because they were very poor. Their names are Sayyidnā Sahl Ibn Ḥunayf ؓ and Abū Dujānah ؓ. Sayyidnā Sa'd Ibn Mu'adh ؓ was given a sword which was a

distinguished sword of Ibn Abil-Ḥuqā'iq. [Maẓharī with reference to Sabī-ur-Rashād by Muḥammad Ibn Yūsuf As-Ṣāliḥī]

The present verse admires the Anṣār on this attitude by saying, وَلَا يَجِدُونَ فِي صُدُورِهِمْ حَاجَةً مِّمَّا أُوتُوا (...and do not feel in their hearts any need for what is given to the former ones [from *fai'*], ...59:9). The word 'need' means 'any item of need'. The verse means 'Whatever the Muhājirīn were granted in this distribution, the Anṣār happily accepted it as if they had no need for any of those items. It was inconceivable that they would complain about it enviously.' When Baḥrain was conquered, the same spirit of self-sacrifice was displayed again by the Anṣār. The Holy Prophet ﷺ expressed his intention to distribute the entire conquered lands of that territory among the Anṣār, but they courteously refused to accept any share of it unless a similar share was granted to the Muhājirīn.

The fourth characteristic of the Anṣār is described in the verse is: وَيُؤْتُونَ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ خَصَاصَةٌ (...and give preference (to them) over themselves, even though they are in poverty ...59:9). The word *khaṣāṣah* means 'poverty' and the word *'ithār* means 'to prefer the wish, need and desire of others above those of oneself'. The meaning of the verse is that the Anṣār used to prefer the needs of others (i.e. the Muhājirīn,) to their own needs. That is, the former used to fulfil the needs of the latter first, then they would fulfil their own needs, even though they themselves were poor and needy.

For the interpretation of the Qur'ānic verses, there is no need to recount incidents. But because they develop in human beings the highest degree of human qualities and bring about a reform in their lives, the commentators have recounted these events in detail on this occasion, especially Qurṭubī. We cite below a few of them from his commentary.

It is recorded in Tirmidhī on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ؓ that one night a guest came to an Anṣārī's house. The latter had only as much food as he and his children could eat. He said to his wife: 'Put the children off to sleep somehow, and put out the lamp. Then place the food in front of the guest, and sit next to him so that he may be under the impression that we too are eating, but we will not eat so that the guest may be able to eat comfortably.' At this, the present verse was revealed. [At-Tirmidhī has rated this *ḥadīth* as '*ḥasan, ṣaḥīḥ*'].

Tirmidhī records another narration on the authority of Sayyidnā Abu Hurairah ؓ that a person came to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and said: "I am hungry and distressed." The Holy Prophet ﷺ sent a message to one of his blessed wives, but she replied: "We do not have anything except water." Then he sent a message to his another wife, and she made the same reply. Then to a third one and then to a fourth one until the message went to all the mothers of the faithful, and they all replied that they had nothing besides water. Then he addressed the congregation and asked if any of them would be willing to entertain the guest, in response to which a venerable Anṣārī said: "O Messenger of Allah, I will entertain him." So he took him with and asked his wife whether there was anything to eat. She replied: "Only as much as our children could eat." He asked his wife to put the children to sleep and then said: "Place the food in front of the guest, sit and then get up and put out the lamp. The guest should not feel that we are not eating." The guest ate the food. In the morning, the Companion went to the Holy Prophet ﷺ who informed him that Allah was very pleased with the way he handled the situation the previous night.

Maḥdawī narrates a similar incident of Sayyidnā Thābit Ibn Qais ؓ, a venerable Anṣārī who entertained his guest one night by putting the light off. There is a common statement appended to all these incidents: 'The above verse was revealed in connection with this event.'

Qushairī cites a story on the authority of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar ؓ who reports that a person sent the head of a goat as a gift to a venerable personality from among the blessed Companions. He thought that about a Muslim brother that he and his family are more in need of this, so he sent the head to him. When the second venerable Companion received it, he sent it to a third person who in turn sent it to a fourth person. In this way it circulated in seven houses and eventually it returned to the first venerable personality. On this occasion, the verse was revealed. Tha'labī has also recorded this narration on the authority of Sayyidnā Anas ؓ.

It is recorded in Muwaṭṭā' of Imām Mālik رحمه الله تعالى on the authority of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah ؓ that a poor person wanted something to eat. She had only one bread, and she was fasting that day. She asked her maid to give him the bread. The maid said that if it was given away,

there would be nothing left for her to break her fast in the evening. Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها insisted and gave the bread to the poor person. The maid says: "It so happened after this that a person, who was not accustomed to send any gift, sent a whole roasted goat which was completely covered with batter on the outside, which is thought to be the best Arab dish." Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها called the maid and said: "Come, eat this. This is better than that bread of yours."

Nasā'ī has recorded that once Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنهما fell sick and he felt like eating grapes. A bunch of grapes was bought for him for a dirham. Co-incidentally, a poor person came begging. Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنهما said that the bunch be given to him. One of the Companions furtively followed him, and bought off the bunch from the beggar and gave it back to Sayyidnā Ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنهما, but the beggar came again and begged, Sayyidnā Ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنهما gave it to him again. Again someone went behind the beggar secretly and bought off the bunch from him for a dirham and gave it to Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنهما. The beggar wanted to turn up the third time and beg, but the people stopped him. If Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنهما knew that the bunch is the same one that he gave out in *ṣadaqah*, he would never have accepted it and eaten it. He probably thought that someone had brought it for him from the market-place, and therefore he had eaten it.

Sayyidnā Ibn Mubārak reports on the authority of his chain of transmitters that once Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنه sent four thousand Dīnārs in a moneybag to Sayyidnā Abu 'Ubaidah رضي الله عنه with his servant, with the message that the money was being sent as a gift. He should use it as he deemed fit. The servant was instructed to remain for a while in the house to see what he would do with the money. The servant, accordingly, gave the moneybag to him and waited for a while. Sayyidnā Abu 'Ubaidah رضي الله عنه took the bag full of money and supplicated for Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنه that Allah may reward him and shower his mercy upon him. Instantly, he called his slave-girl and instructed her to give seven Dīnārs to so-and-so, five Dīnārs to so-and-so until all four thousand Dīnārs were distributed then and there.

The servant came back and narrated the story. Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنه filled another moneybag with four thousand Dīnārs and sent it with the servant to Sayyidnā Mu'adh Ibn Jabal رضي الله عنه, with the same message to him

and with the same instruction to the servant. The servant followed the instruction. Sayyidnā Mu'ādh Ibn Jabal ؓ took the bag of money and supplicated to Allah for Sayyidnā 'Umar ؓ, thus: رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ وَ وَصَلَهُ "May Allah shower His mercy upon him and reward him." Then he too immediately sat down to distribute the money. He divided the money into many portions and sent them to different houses. His wife was watching all that was happening. She could not hold herself and eventually spoke out: "By Allah! We too are poor and we should also receive something." At that time only two Dīnārs had remained in the bag, and he gave them to her. The servant saw all this, returned to Sayyidnā 'Umar ؓ and reported to him all that he saw. He said: "They are all brothers, and they all have the same disposition."

Sayyidnā Ḥudhaifah 'Adawī ؓ narrates: "During the battle of Yarmūk, I went out in search of my paternal uncle's son [cousin] among the martyrs, and took with me some water just in case there was the last breath of life left in him, so I would give him a sip of water. When I reached him, there was the last spark of life left in him. I asked him whether he would like to have a sip of water, and he nodded 'yes'. Just as I was going to pour the water into his mouth, another martyr next to him heaved a sigh. My cousin indicated to give him the water. When I reached him and was about to give him the water, I heard the voice of a third martyr. The second martyr indicated to give the water to the third one. This series of events continued up to seven martyrs. When I reached the seventh martyr to give water, he had already breathed his last. From there I went back to my cousin, he had also met his end."

These are a few events, some of which relate to the Anṣār, and others to the Muhājirīn. About a number of these incidents, it is said that the verse under comment was revealed regarding them. In fact, there is no contradiction in these narrations, because it is a well-known habit of narrators that if a verse was revealed under a certain circumstance, and a similar incident took place on another occasion, they mention the second incident as a cause of revelation of that verse as well. In fact, all similar incidents can be said to be the cause of revelation of the verse or, at least, included in its purport.

Disposing of a Possible Doubt

Here we need to dispose of a possible doubt that might arise from the

noble Companions' narratives of self-sacrifice that were recounted above. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has prohibited for a Muslims to give away all his wealth in charity. For instance, it is reported in a Tradition that a person came with a piece of gold, about the size of an egg, so that it may be given in charity. The Holy Prophet ﷺ threw it towards himself and said: "Some of you bring all your wealth to be given away in charity, then they become poor and go around begging." The question is how and why did the Companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ give away whatever they had in the incidents cited above despite the prohibition of such an act?

Answer to this question can be inferred from these very narratives. In fact, people's conditions are different. Accordingly, the rulings differ from condition to condition. The ruling of prohibition applies to those people who, after giving away all their wealth in charity, regret, and cannot endure their poverty but go around begging. But those people who, after giving away all their wealth in charity, do not regret or feel distressed or agitated, they in fact face the situation with calm courage and resolute endurance. For such people, it is permitted to spend all their wealth in Allah's way. Let us take the case of Sayyidnā Ṣiddīq Akbar ؓ who donated all his belongings when fund was being collected for a *jihād*. The stories narrated above belong to this category. Such people trained and developed their families also to face the ordeals of life with the same calm courage and resolute endurance. Therefore, their rights were not usurped or destroyed either. If the wealth were in the control of their families, they too would have done the same thing.

Muhājirīn [The Refugees] Reciprocate the Anṣārs' Self-Sacrifice

No social activities or self-sacrifice is possible unilaterally. It has to be bilateral. Therefore, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ has urged the Muslims to exchange gifts with each other and thus enhance their mutual love. So likewise, if a Muslim has given a gift to another, he should repay the gift as a gesture of goodwill. If Allah has granted him abundant wealth, then he should use the wealth to reciprocate. Otherwise, supplication should be enough to reciprocate. It is not in keeping with the principles of ethics or good manners to owe a debt of gratitude to people.

The Anṣār displayed a great deal of self-sacrifice in the matter of the Muhājirīn. The former made the latter partners in their homes, their shops, their businesses, their land and their agriculture. When Allah gave

the Muhājirīn affluence, they did not fall short in doing a good turn in return for their favours.

Qurṭubī cites a narration of the two Ṣaḥīḥs on the authority of Sayyidnā Anas Ibn Mālīk رضي الله عنه that when the Muhājirīn arrived in Madīnah from Makkah, they were absolutely empty-handed. The Anṣār, on the other hand, had properties and lands, and they shared half-and-half of all their holdings with the Muhājirīn. The former gave half of their fruits to the latter annually. Umm Sulāim رضي الله عنها, the mother of Sayyidnā Anas رضي الله عنه, gave a few of her palm trees to the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم which he granted to Usāmah Ibn Zaid's mother, Umm 'Aiman رضي الله عنها.

Imām Zuhri says that Sayyidnā Anas Ibn Mālīk رضي الله عنه reports that when the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم returned successfully from the expedition of Khaibar to Madīnah, the Refugees - all of them - calculated all the gifts of the Anṣār and returned them. The Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم took back the trees that were granted to 'Umm 'Aiman and returned them to 'Umm Sulāim رضي الله عنها, and granted trees to 'Umm 'Aiman from his own orchard.

وَمَنْ يُوقِ شُحَّ نَفْسِهِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ (... And whoever is saved from the greed of his soul, then such people are the successful....59:9) After the mention of the Anṣār's selflessness and self-sacrifice, a general rule of law or a universal principle is being laid down in the concluding part of verse [9]. The words *shuḥḥ* [avarice] and *bukhl* [greed, miserliness] are near synonyms. The word *shuḥḥ*, however, yields the sense of intensive greed for money and possessions. *Shuḥḥ* [avarice] and *bukhl* [greed, miserliness] are absolutely forbidden when a person fails to fulfil obligatory rights, which might be Divine rights, such as *Zakāh*, *ṣadaqat-ul-fiṭr*, 'Ushr, oblation and so on, or they might be human rights, such as the maintenance of the family, needy parents and relatives. It is repugnant and reprehensible if *shuḥḥ* [avarice] and *bukhl* [greed, miserliness] prevent one from spending for laudable and rewardable acts. If one does not spend on customary things, it is not *shuḥḥ* [avarice] and *bukhl* in terms of the sacred laws of Shari'ah.

Avarice, niggardliness and jealousy are such evil qualities as the Qur'an and Prophetic Traditions have severely denounced. There are glad tidings for those who avoid them. The Anṣār have many good qualities, among which is their immunity from avarice and jealousy.

Being free of Malice and Jealousy is a sign of one's being in Paradise

Ibn Kathīr, with reference to Imām Aḥmad, cites the following narration on the authority of Sayyidnā Anas رضي الله عنه, who says:

"We were sitting with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ when he said, 'A man is about to arrive who is from among the inmates of Paradise'. One of the Anṣārs arrived, from whose beard dripped fresh water of minor ablution [*wuḍū'*] and in his left hand were his shoes. The same incident occurred the following day. The same person came in front in the same condition. The same incident happened the third day. The same person entered in the condition described above. When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ dissolved the assembly, Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Amr Ibn-ul-'Āṣ رضي الله عنه followed the Anṣārī [so as to find out the secret of his being an inmate of Paradise] and said to him: 'I had a quarrel in some matter and took an oath that I would not go home for three days. If possible, please accommodate me for three days at your home.' He agreed. Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Amr رضي الله عنه spent the three nights with him. But he noticed that he did not wake up for '*tahajjud*' (voluntary nightly prayers) at night. However, when he lied on bed, he recited some '*dhikr* of Allah'. Then he would wake up for *Fajr ṣalāh*. In the course of three days, he did not hear him utter a single word but that of good. 'Abdullāh رضي الله عنه says, 'When three nights were over, and I almost thought his actions were insignificant, I gave up my secret that I had no domestic quarrel. But I continuously heard for three days the Messenger of Allah ﷺ saying a man is about to arrive who is from among the inmates of Paradise'. And for three days you arrived. Therefore, I was curious to stay with you and find out your secret act, on account of which you have attained this high status. But strangely enough I did not see you do any extraordinary deed.' Then I asked him: 'What gave you this high status?' He said, 'I have no deed more than what you have seen.' I heard this and was about to return. He called me back and said: 'O Yes, there is something. I do not harbour in my heart any malice or evil against any Muslim, I am not jealous or envious of any Muslim, if Allah has given him anything good.' Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Amr Ibn-ul-'Āṣ رضي الله عنه said: 'That exactly is the quality that has taken you to the lofty status.'"

Having cited this narration, Ibn Kathīr says that Nasā'ī has also cited this narration in his '*Amal-ul-Yawm wal-Laylah*' and its chain of narrators is authentic according to the standard of Bukhārī and Muslim.

All Muslims after the Muhājirīn and the Anṣār are entitled to *fai'*

وَالَّذِينَ جَاءُوا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ
59:10) This verse lays down that all Muslims until the Last Hour, after the noble Companions from amongst the Muhājirīn and Anṣār, are entitled to a share in the *fai'* property. This was the reason why Sayyidnā 'Umar Al-Fārūq رضي الله عنه conquered great territories like 'Irāq, Syria, Egypt and so on, but did not distribute them among the fighters. He retained them as public endowment for next generations, so that the income might accrue to the Islamic public treasury, and the Muslims till the Last Hour may benefit from it. When some of the blessed Companions enquired about the distribution of the conquered territories, he referred to this verse and said: "Had it not been for the future generations of Muslims, I would have distributed all the conquered territories among the fighters as they were captured, following the example of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. When Khaibar was conquered, the Holy Prophet ﷺ distributed all its lands. If all the lands are distributed among the present Muslim generation, nothing will be left for future generations." [Transmitted by Mālik and Qurṭubi].

Love for the Blessed Companions is a sign that the Ummah is on Truth

On this occasion, Allah has put the Ummah of Muḥammad ﷺ into three different categories: [1] Muhājirīn; [2] Anṣār; and [3] the general body of the Ummah. The special characteristics of the Muhājirīn and the sterling qualities of the Anṣār are described in the relevant verses above. As for the merits of the rest of the Ummah, the verse merely mentions one quality of theirs that they recognize the high status of Muhājirīn and the Anṣār in that they had preceded them in faith and were means of communicating it to us. Further, they pray for forgiveness of all, and also pray that their own hearts be completely cleansed of all bitterness and spite towards true and sincere Muslims.

This shows that for the validity and acceptance of faith and Islam of all the coming generations of Muslims, after the blessed Companions, it is a necessary condition that they have love and respect for the Companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and pray for their brethren in Faith of earlier generations. Where this necessary condition is lacking, such people are not worthy of being called Muslims. Therefore, Sayyidnā Mus'ab Ibn Sa'd

ﷺ says that the Muslims of this Ummah are divided into three categories, of which two categories [those of Muhājirīn and Anṣār] have already been mentioned. The third category remains. If anyone wishes to have a place in the Ummah, he should join the third category by showing love, respect and honour to the blessed Companions.

Someone approached Sayyidnā Ḥusain ﷺ and inquired about Sayyidnā ‘Uthmān ﷺ [who had by then been martyred], the former asked the inquirer: "Are you one of the Muhājirīn?" He replied : "No". Then he asked him: "Are you one of the Anṣār?" He replied: "No." He then said: "There remains only the third verse *الَّذِينَ جَاءُوا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ*" "And... those who came after them...[59:10]": If you wish to create doubt about Sayyidnā ‘Uthmān ﷺ, then you will have to leave this category as well.'

Qurṭubī says that this verse is a proof that love of the blessed Companions is obligatory. Sayyidnā Imām Mālik رحمه الله تعالى says that any person who reviles a Companion or holds a grudge against him, will not have a share in the *fai'* property of the Muslims. Then he argues, on the basis of this verse, that every Muslim has a share in the *fai'* property, and anyone who has no share, his faith in Islam is doubtful.

Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Abbās ﷺ has stated that Allah has commanded all Muslims to pray for the Companions of Muḥammad ﷺ and for their forgiveness, whereas Allah knew that there would be conflicts and civil wars between them. Therefore, it is not permissible for any Muslim to hold evil thoughts about them on account of their conflicts.

Sayyidah ‘Ā’shah Şiddīqah رضي الله عنها says, "I have heard your Holy Prophet ﷺ say that this community will not perish unless the later generations curse the earlier generations."

Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Umar ﷺ says: "When you hear anyone reviling a Companion, tell him, 'May the curse of Allah be upon the one who is the worst of you.'" Obviously, no Companion can ever be worse. The one who is cursing would be the worst one. In a word, it is a cause of curse to revile a Companion.

‘Amr Ibn Haushab رحمه الله تعالى says: "I have found the earlier generations of this Ummah uniformly and strongly advise people to describe the merits of the noble Companions and their good qualities, so

that they may develop love for them. Do not ever talk about their conflicts and disagreements, so that people may become bold and show disrespect to them." [All these narratives have been adapted from Qurṭubī].

Verses 11 - 17

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ نَافَقُوا يَقُولُونَ لِإِخْوَانِهِمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ
الْكِتَابِ لَئِنْ أُخْرِجْتُمْ لَنَخْرُجَنَّ مَعَكُمْ وَلَا نُطِيعُ فِيكُمْ أَحَدًا أَبَدًا
وَإِنْ قُوتِلْتُمْ لَنَنْصُرَنَّكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَشْهَدُ إِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ ﴿١١﴾ لَئِنْ
أُخْرِجُوا لَا يَخْرُجُونَ مَعَهُمْ ۚ وَلَئِنْ قُوتِلُوا لَا يَنْصُرُونَهُمْ ۚ وَلَئِنْ
نَصَرُوهُمْ لَيُوَلِّنَنَّ الْأَذْبَانُ ثُمَّ لَا يَنْصُرُونَ ﴿١٢﴾ لَأَنْتُمْ أَشَدُّ رَهْبَةً فِي
صُدُورِهِمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ ۗ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ ﴿١٣﴾ لَا يِقَاتِلُونَكُمْ
جَمِيعًا إِلَّا فِي قُرَى مُحَصَّنَةٍ أَوْ مِنْ وَرَاءِ جُدُرٍ بَأْسُهُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ شَدِيدٌ
تَحْسَبُهُمْ جَمِيعًا وَقُلُوبُهُمْ شَتَّى ۗ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٤﴾
كَمَثَلِ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ قَرِيبًا ذَاقُوا وَبَالَ أَمْرِهِمْ ۚ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ
﴿١٥﴾ كَمَثَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِذْ قَالَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ اكْفُرْ ۚ فَلَمَّا كَفَرَ قَالَ إِنِّي
بَرِيءٌ ۗ مِنْكَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ اللَّهَ رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٦﴾ فَكَانَ عَاقِبَتُهُمَا
أَنَّهُمَا فِي النَّارِ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ۗ وَذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٧﴾

Did you not see the hypocrites saying to their brothers who disbelieve from the people of the Book, "If you are expelled, we will certainly go out with you, and we will not obey any one about you. And if you are fought against, we will definitely help you." And Allah bears witness that they are pure liars. [11] If they are expelled, they will not go out with them, and if they are fought against, they will not help them. And even if they help them, they will surely turn their backs; then they will not be helped. [12] In fact, your fear in their hearts is greater than (that of) Allah. That is because they are a people who do not understand. [13] They do not fight you, even assembled together, but in fortified

towns, or from behind the walls. Their battle between themselves is severe. You think that they are united, while their hearts are divided. That is because they are a people who have no sense. [14] The example (of Banū Naḍīr) is like those who were before them in near past, (i.e. the Jews of Banū Qainuqa') who tasted the evil consequence of their conduct, and for them (in the Hereafter) there is a painful punishment. [15] The example (of the hypocrites) is like the Shaiṭān when he says to a human being, "Become a disbeliever" then once he disbelieves, he says, "I disown you; I fear Allah, the Lord of the worlds." [16] So the end of both of them is that they will be in the Fire, living there forever. And that is the punishment of the wrongdoers. [17]

Commentary

كَمَثَلِ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ قَرِيبًا (...like those who were before them in near past ...59:15) This refers to the case of Banū Naḍīr, and Mujahid رحمه الله تعالى says that the phrase الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ قَرِيبًا "those who were before them in near past" refers to the Quraish of Makkah who sustained an ignominious defeat at Badr. According to Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه, it refers to Banū Qainuqa', a Jewish tribe, who were punished for their mischief and machinations after Badr. Banū Naḍīr were banished after the battles of Badr and 'Uḥud, and Banū Qainuqa' had been banished after Badr. At Badr seventy thousand pagan Arabs were killed, and the survivors returned home disgracefully. Since pagans of Makkah and Banū qainuqa', both of them faced a deterrent punishment after Badr, both can be the purport of the words, 'who were before them in the past, and of : ذَاقُوا وَبَالَ أَمْرِهِمْ "...tasted the evil consequence of their conduct...[59:15]"

The Expulsion of Banū Qainuqa'

As stated earlier, when the Holy Prophet ﷺ migrated from Makkah and settled in Madīnah, he concluded a peace treaty with the Jewish tribes of Madīnah, and of its neighbourhood. One of its conditions stipulated that they would not fight the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and the Muslims, or assist their enemies. Banū Qainuqa' was a party to this peace agreement and was the first one to break the pledged word, within a few months. On the occasion of the battle of Badr, they connived with the Quraish of Makkah, and some incidents of their connivance came out in the open. On that occasion, the following verse was revealed وَأَمَّا تَخَافَنَّ مِنْ قَوْمٍ خِيَانَةً فَأَنْبِذْ إِلَيْهِمْ عَلَى سَوَاءٍ (And if you apprehend a breach from a people, then,

throw [the treaty] towards them being right forward ...[8:58]". Banū Qainuqā', through their treachery, had already broken the treaty. Therefore, The Holy Prophet ﷺ declared war against them and the banner of *jihād* was given in the hands of Sayyidnā Ḥamzah ؓ and, appointing Sayyidnā Abū Lubābah ؓ his deputy in the city of Madīnah, the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself joined the fighting force. Having seeing the Muslim army, the Jews shut themselves up in the fortress. The Holy Prophet ﷺ laid a siege to it for fifteen days, and the Jews had no choice but to surrender. Eventually, Allah cast terror into their hearts and they realized that fighting would not pay off. So, they opened the gate of the fortress and expressed their willingness to abide by the decision of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

The Holy Prophet's ﷺ decision was to have the Jewish men executed. But 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Ubayy, the hypocrite, intervened and pleaded to the Holy Prophet ﷺ to pardon them. In the end, it was decided that they should leave the area and go into exile and their belongings would be the spoils falling to the lot of the Muslims. Accordingly, they left Madīnah and proceeded to settle in an area called Adhra'āt in Syria. In compliance with the law of spoils, one-fifth was retained for *Bait-ul-Māl* [public treasury] and the rest of the spoils was disbursed among the fighters. After the battle of Badr, this was the first one-fifth of the booties that was retained for the public treasury. This incident took place on Monday, 15th Shawwāl, in the 2nd year of Hijrah - twenty months after the migration.

كَمَثَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِذْ قَالَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ اكْفُرْ (The example [of the hypocrites] is like the Shaiṭān when he says to a human being, "Become a disbeliever" then once he disbelieves, he says, "I disown you; I fear Allah, the Lord of the worlds."...59:16) This is another example of the hypocrites who made false promises of solidarity and support to the Banū Naḍīr, and provoked the latter to fight against the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. But when the Muslims besieged them, not a single hypocrite came forward to assist. The Qur'ān here uses a simile to illustrate the similarity between a hypocrite and the Satan. The Satan incited man to disbelieve and promised him the world, but when he was seriously involved in disbelief, he said that he has nothing to do with him. Only Allah knows how many such episodes the devil must have been involved in, textually, however, we find one such episode narrated in the Qur'ān in Sūrah Anfāl, verse [48] :

وَإِذْ زَيْنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَعْمَالَهُمْ وَقَالَ لَا غَالِبَ لَكُمْ الْيَوْمَ مِنَ النَّاسِ وَإِنِّي جَارٌ لَكُمْ
فَلَمَّا تَرَأَتِ الْمُنْتَهِنِ نَكَصَ عَلَى عَقْبَيْهِ وَقَالَ إِنِّي بَرِيءٌ مِّنْكُمْ إِنِّي أَرَى مَا لَا تَرَوْنَ إِنِّي
أَخَافُ اللَّهَ وَاللَّهُ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ.

"And when the Satan beautified their deeds for them and said, 'None of the people is to overpower you today, and I am a protector for you.' But, when the two groups saw each other, he turned back on his heels and said, 'I have nothing to do with you. I am seeing what you do not see. I am scared of Allah, and Allah is severe in punishment.'"

This incident occurred on the occasion of the battle of Badr when the Satan misled the pagan Quraish, urged them to wage a war against Muslims, and then he withdrew, and left them in the lurch when they were in the middle of a pitched-battle. It is not clear how the Satan did all this, whether he cast suggestions into their minds or whether he came to them in human shape and spoke to them face to face. A full explanation is available in Volume [4] of Ma'āriful Qur'ān, pages 242-247.

If the verse refers to this incident, in which the Satan provokes man to disbelieve and when he does that, he washes his hands of them, it does not seem that the Satan asked them to commit *kufr*, because they were already *kāfirs*. He asked them to be firm in opposing the Messenger. The answer is all too obvious, in that it is all the same whether he asked them to commit *kufr*, or bids them to remain firm in their *kufr* or fight the Messenger of Allah, because it is also tantamount to *kufr*.

Tafsīr Maḥzarī, Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr and others have cited several incidents where monks and devotees were deceived into *kufr*. For example, one of the Israeli monks devoted himself to Allah in his synagogue, and fasted consecutively and broke his fast only once in ten days. In this way, he spent seventy years of his life. The accursed Satan pursued him. He sent after him the most cunning devil in the shape of a monk, a devotee of God. He went up to him and exerted himself in the worship of God and thus built up confidence in the genuine monk. Eventually, the impostor succeeded in teaching the monk a few of the prayers that are efficacious in curing the sickly people. Then the former exerted his influence on many people to fall sick, and gave them the monk's address. When the latter recited the prayers, the devil would remove his influence and thus they would feel cured. He kept up this

process for a long period of time, until one day he performed his exertion on the beautiful daughter of an Israeli leader. He sent her also to the monk. He succeeded in getting her into his synagogue and gradually he succeeded in getting him to commit fornication with the girl who, as a result, fell pregnant. He suggested that the girl be killed to save face. After the killing, the devil himself went around telling the story of the killing and put up the people against the monk. They, in their fury, demolished the synagogue and decided to kill him and crucify him. Then the Satan went back to the monk and said to him that there is no way out to save his life. 'Of course', he said to him, 'there is one way of saving your life, in that you prostrate to me and I will save your life.' The monk had already committed all the sins. The way to commit *kufr* was paved. So, he prostrated. At that juncture, the Satan said to him plainly, 'You were not falling into my trap. I adopted all these guiles for you to commit *kufr*. I cannot assist you in any way.' This story is recounted fully in Tafsīr Maḥzarī and Qurṭubī. Allah, the Pure and Exalted, knows best!

Verses 18 - 24

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلْتَنْظُرْ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمَتْ لِغَدٍ وَاتَّقُوا
 اللَّهَ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٨﴾ وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ نَسُوا
 اللَّهَ فَأَنْسَاهُمْ أَنْفُسَهُمْ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ ﴿١٩﴾ لَا يَسْتَوِي
 أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ وَأَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ ۗ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ هُمُ الْفَائِزُونَ
 ﴿٢٠﴾ لَوْ أَنْزَلْنَا هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ عَلَىٰ جَبَلٍ لَّرَأَيْتَهُ خَاشِعًا مُّتَصَدِّعًا مِّنْ
 خَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ ۗ وَتِلْكَ الْأَمْثَالُ لِنَضْرِبُهَا لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢١﴾
 هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ ۗ عِلْمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ ۗ هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ
 الرَّحِيمُ ﴿٢٢﴾ هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ ۗ الْمَلِكُ الْقُدُّوسُ السَّلَامُ
 الْمُؤْمِنُ الْمُهِيمُنُ الْعَزِيزُ الْجَبَّارُ الْمُتَكَبِّرُ ۗ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا
 يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾ هُوَ اللَّهُ الْخَالِقُ الْبَارِئُ الْمُصَوِّرُ لَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ

الْحُسْنَى ط يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۗ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ
الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٤٤﴾

O those who believe, fear Allah, and everybody must consider what he (or she) has sent ahead for tomorrow. And fear Allah. Surely Allah is fully aware of what you do. [18] And do not be like those who forgot Allah, so He made them forget their own selves. Those are the sinners. [19] The people of the Fire and the people of the Paradise are not equal. The people of the Paradise are the successful. [20] Had We sent down this Qur'an to a mountain, you would have seen it humbled, burst apart out of awe for Allah. And such examples are cited by Us for the people, so that they may ponder. [21] He is Allah, besides whom there is no god, the Knower of the unseen and the seen. He is the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful. [22] He is Allah, besides whom there is no god, the Sovereign, the Most Pure [from all defects], the Most Safe [from all defects], the Peace-Giver, the Guardian, the All-Mighty, the Restorer [of the losses], the Lord of Greatness. Pure is Allah from what they associate with Him. [23] He is Allah, the Creator, the Inventor, the Originator-Of-Shapes. His are the Most Beautiful Names. His purity is proclaimed by all that is in the heavens and the earth, and He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise. [24]

Commentary

The Command to Taqwā and to prepare for the Day of Resurrection

The earlier parts of Sūrah Al-Ḥaṣhr has described different events relating to the Jews, the pagans and the hypocrites and their punishments in this world and in the next. Now the concluding part of the Sūrah makes the believers conscious of their duty towards Allah and advises them to perform the righteous deeds regularly.

The first verse in this set reads يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلْتَنْظُرْ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمَتْ لِغَدٍ (O those who believe, fear Allah, and everybody must consider what he [or she] has sent ahead for tomorrow.59:18) In an eloquent style, the verse enjoins upon the believers to take care of the Hereafter and commands them to prepare for it. Here a few points need to be considered:

First: In this verse, the Hereafter is described as *ghad* [tomorrow], which means the 'day after today'. This points to two things. First of all, it means that the entire period of this world, compared to the Hereafter, is very short. That is, this entire world, in relation to the Hereafter, is like one day. In fact, in terms of pure calculation, this comparison too is difficult to imagine, because the Hereafter is eternal which will exist without an end. The age of human world is said to be a few thousand years old. If this is calculated with the creation of the heaven and the earth, it will extend to a few million years, which in any case will be a limited period. This is no comparison to an unlimited or infinite period of time. Some Traditions state *الدُّنْيَا يَوْمٌ وَلَنَا فِيهِ صَوْمٌ* (The entire world is a day and on that day we fast.) Whether we calculate from human creation or from the creation of the heaven and the earth, it does not matter, because neither of these factors is important for a human individual. In fact, every individual's world is made up of the days and years of his age. Every person should be able to realize how short a period that is in relation to the eternity of the Hereafter.

Second of all, this verse shows that the Day of Resurrection is as certain as the arrival of tomorrow after today which is a stark reality, and no one doubts it. Likewise the Hereafter is beyond any reasonable doubt.

Thirdly, the Day of Resurrection will happen very shortly. Just as tomorrow is not very far away from today, it is thought to be very near, likewise, the Day of Resurrection will happen very soon after this world. The first phase of the Hour is when an individual dies, his Hour is already established as stated in a Tradition: *مَنْ مَاتَ فَقَدْ قَامَتْ قِيَامَتُهُ* "He who dies, his Day of Judgement has been established" because the signs of the next world start from the grave and examples of reward and punishment come forward. The world of grave or the world of *barzakh* is like a waiting room in this world which accommodates all types of people, ranging from the first class to the third class. The waiting room of the criminals is the prison house. A person should be able to determine his position and status in the waiting room. Therefore, every person's Judgement Day starts with his death. Man's death has been made such a puzzling phenomenon that not even the greatest philosopher or scientist can with any degree of certainty determine the exact time of its occurrence. In fact, every coming moment is fraught with the danger that one may not live to see it,

especially in this time and age when it is moving at the pace of lightning and heart-failure is the order of the day. The second phase of the Hour is when the entire world, the heaven and earth and everything else, will perish, though this might take place after hundreds of thousands of years, it is very close in relation to the eternity of the Hereafter .

In short, this verse by describing *qiyāmah* [Doomsday] as *ghad* [tomorrow] made man conscious of the fact that the Doomsday is not very far off; it is very close like tomorrow. It is also possible that it might come even before tomorrow.

The second point put by this verse for consideration is that the arrival of Doomsday being certain and also near, everyone is invited to think what he has prepared for the Day of Resurrection. This shows that his original abode is the Hereafter. His residence in this world is like a wayfarer. It is necessary to send something from here for the eternal abode. The main purpose of man's residence is to live here, acquire and accumulate things and send them forward to the eternal abode of the Hereafter. It is quite obvious that no material wealth or property can be taken with from this world. There is only one way of transferring wealth [gold, silver, money and so on] from one country to another, that is to deposit it into the bank from where the currency of another country is obtained. In exactly the same manner, wealth is spent in the way of Allah and the sacred laws of Allah are implemented and deposited in the Divinely celestial bank, where the currency of reward is recorded in the celestial Account-Book. When a believer reaches the eternal abode, it is handed over to him without claim or demand.

The phrase مَا قَدَّمْتَ لِغَدٍ 'what he (or she) has sent ahead' carries the general sense of the good, as well as, the bad deeds. He who sends forth good deeds will obtain the currency of reward in the Hereafter; and he who sends forth evil deeds will be indicted in the Hereafter. The command of "...fear Allah...[18]" has been repeated. It could be for emphasis, or the first of such command is for man to fulfil the obligatory and imperative duties, and the repetition of the command is to abstain from sins. The second explanation is given by Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānawī رحمه الله تعالى.

Also, it is possible that the first command to fear Allah is to send forth good deeds for the Hereafter by acting upon imperatives set by Allah, and

the second command to fear is to ensure that what is being sent is not fake or counterfeit. Fake or counterfeit deeds, in relation to the Hereafter, would imply the deeds done seem to be genuinely righteous deeds, but they lack sincerity of purpose and the good pleasure of Allah. What was done ostentatiously or for ulterior motive or an ostensible action that seems like an act of worship, but having no base in religion, it is tantamount to innovation (*Bid'ah*). Thus the second command to fear Allah implies that for the Hereafter it is not sufficient to merely accumulate ostensible actions, but to send forth genuine deeds performed with sincerity according to the rules set in religion. Spurious actions will not be acceptable there.

فَانَسِيَهُمْ اَنْفُسَهُمْ (...so He made them forget their own selves....59:19) It means they did not forget Allah but themselves, because they are unaware of their own loss and gain.

لَوْ اَنْزَلْنَا هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ عَلَى جَبَلٍ (...59:21) This is a parable that Allah is using to illustrate the fact that if the Holy Qur'an were to be revealed on such strong, firm and unmovable mountain and endowed with intelligence like man, it would have submitted to the greatness of the Qur'an, nay, it would have crushed to pieces. But man is too selfish and proud. As a result, he has lost his natural intelligence and remains unaffected by the powerful message of the Qur'an. This, it would appear, is a hypothetical example, that is 'if mountains had sense or intelligence. Some scholars have stated that reason and revelation both bear testimony to the fact that everything in nature has sense, perception and intelligence, be it a mountain or a tree. Therefore, this is not a hypothetical example. It is a stark reality. [Maḥarī]. And Allah knows best!

A Few of Allah's Attributes of Perfection

Having urged the people to be concerned about the Hereafter and having asserted the greatness of the Qur'an, this Sūrah is concluded with a few of Allah's attributes of perfection, as follows:

عَلِيمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ (...the Knower of the unseen and the seen - 23). The attribute 'the Knower of the Unseen and the seen' means that Allah knows all things, visible or invisible.

الْقُدُّوسُ The attribute Al-Quddūs means 'the Most Pure from all defects',

that is, Allah is the Being Who is free from all kinds of defect, deficiency and imperfection which are not in conformity to His Supreme status.

المؤمن The word *mu'min*, when applied to a human being, means a believer, but when this attribute is applied to Allah, it means the one who provides peace and safety, as explained by Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه. It means that He provides safety and perfect peace to those who believe in Allah and His Messengers.

المُهَمِّينُ The attribute *Al-Muhaimin*, according to Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه, Mujāhid and Qatādah means 'Guardian'. The Arabic lexicon *Al-Qamus* has explained that its root is '*hamn*' which means 'to look after or take care of or watch over'. [Mazharī].

الْعَزِيزُ The attribute *Al-'Azīz* means 'the Almighty'.

الْجَبَّارُ The attribute *Al-Jabbār* means the One who is dominant. It could also be derived from the word *jabr*, meaning to 'join broken bones' and thus we have the word *jabīrah*, which refers to the bandage or plaster that is used in binding the broken bones. From this point of view, the attribute would mean that Allah is the Being Who sets aright every broken and useless things, matters or restores all losses and rectifies situations or mends every breakage.

الْمُتَكَبِّرُ The attribute *Al-Mutakabbir* [the Lord of Greatness] is derived from *takabbur* and that from *kibriyā'* meaning 'greatness' which is one of the peculiar characteristics of Allah. It implies that every greatness is attributable only to Allah who is not in need of anyone. Whoever is in need cannot be great. Therefore, if this word is used for a person other than Allah, it is a defect and sin, because the claim of greatness by a person who is not actually great is false and tantamount to a claim of being a partner of Allah, the Besought of all, in one of His exclusive attributes. That is why the word *Al-Mutakabbir*, when attributed to Allah is an attribute of perfection, but in respect of others it is no more than a false claim.

الْمُصَوِّرُ (...the Originator of all Shapes....59:24) In other words, He gives shape to every thing He creates. He has given particular shapes to all creatures whereby they are distinguished from one another. Every species has a shape distinguishable from all other species. Within one species too,

there are differences in shape between males and females. Then there are uncountable differences between the shapes of the individuals of even one sex. The excellence of shaping or fashioning is of such high degree that the shapes of zillions of men and women are different from one another in a way that no face is an absolute copy of some other face. Had it not been so, no one could be distinguished from the other. This excellence and perfection of creative power belongs to none but Allah. Just as *takabbur* (show of greatness) is not permissible for anyone other than Allah [as *kibriyā'* is His exclusive attribute'], likewise no one, besides Allah, is permitted to do picture-making, because that too is the exclusive characteristic of Allah, and picture-making is an implied claim of being associate with Allah in this attribute.

لَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ (... His are the Most Beautiful Names59:24). The Holy Qur'an has not given the exact number of these Most Beautiful Names of Allah. Authentic Prophetic *aḥādīth* have counted them ninety-nine. Tirmidhī has collected all the ninety-nine names in one Tradition. Many scholars have written full books on the subject of *Asmā'ul-Ḥusnā* or 'Most Beautiful Names of Allah'. The present writer has also compiled a concise monograph on the subject of 'Most Beautiful Names of Allah' published as an annexure to *Munājāt-i-Maqbūl* (by Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thanawī رحمه الله تعالى)

لَكِنْ لَا تَفْقَهُونَ تَسْبِيحَهُمْ (... His purity is proclaimed by all that is in the heavens and the earth59:24). That all creatures in the heavens and the earth declare the purity of Allah in unuttered language is self-evident: The wonderful, marvelous and amazing things created by Allah, and the awe-inspiring and staggering shapes fashioned by Him proclaim the praises of their Creator in unuttered language. However, it is possible too that the word '*tasbīḥ*' is used here in its real and literal sense, because according to the authentic view everything in this universe has some kind of sense that accords to its ability. Now, the foremost and primary requirement of this sense is to recognize one's Creator and paying gratitude to Him. Based on this premise, it is not far-fetched to conceive that everything in nature really declares the purity of Allah in articulate language, though human ears might not be able to hear it. Thus the Qur'an on one occasion says وَلَكِنْ لَا تَفْقَهُونَ تَسْبِيحَهُمْ (...but you do not understand their extolling.) (17:44)

Benefits and Blessings of the Concluding Verses of Sūrah Al-Ḥashr

It is recorded in Tirmidhī on the authority of Sayyidnā Ma‘qil Ibn Yasār رضي الله عنه that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ has stated that Allah appoints 70,000 angels who pray for Divine mercy for anyone who recites the following three times: **أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ السَّمِيعِ الْعَلِيمِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ** and the last three verses of Sūrah Al-Ḥashr **هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ**. If he dies the same day, he will attain the status of a martyr. If a person recites the same solemn words in the evening, he will attain the same status. [Maḏharī].

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Ḥashr
Ends here