

Exegesis of
The Holy Qur'ân
Commentary and Reflections

Reflections by Muslim Saints and Scholars



Commentary on Selected Verses by
ALLÂMAH NOORUDDÎN

Rendered into English
by
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ISBN 978-1-942043-04-1
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Funds raised from dissemination of this book
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1st Edition 2015

Noor Foundation International Inc.
P. O. Box 758, Hockessin, DE 19707

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Website: www.islamusa.org

Printed in P.R. China



The Holy Qur'ân
Commentary and Reflections
Selected Pearls

*In the memory of
our parents/grandparents*

*Allâmah Nooruddîn
and
Amatul Rahmân Omar
Abdul Mannân Omar*

وَهُوَ مَعَكُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ

“...and He will be with you wherever you may be” (57:4)

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PREFACE

The Holy Qur’ân is an ocean of sweet water without shore. Many become hesitant about plunging into it. Few have delved into it, appreciating its beauty and its vastness, and tasted its sweetness. It is the Self-Disclosure of the Mighty, Self-Sufficient, veiled Reality (*al-Haqîqat al-Ghaibîyya*). It is a Divine Discourse in its absolute purity. Its words are the Speech of the Exalted Deity (*Kalâm-i-Ilâhî* كلام إلهي) spoken to a human being - Muhammad (pbuh), the one who was worthy to hear that Voice, who understood it and conveyed it to humankind (53:3–5). Its verses are flawless Pearls, a gift from the Lord of Affluence, of unlimited Grace and immense Mercy (56:75–82). He is calling you from far and beyond, “*I am nearby indeed*” (2:186); I am nearer to you than your jugular vein (cf. 50:16); if you only pay heed and can listen to His call. He intends to exalt you in eminence by means of His Commandments (cf. 7:176), bless you with felicity and sanctify you. He invites you to leave behind your doubts, your conventional and limiting beliefs, go beyond blind faith, and follow His way that shall lead you to reach the certainty of the existence of the All-Merciful, His Awe (55:46), His Magnificent Greatness, His Grand Kingdom and His Sovereignty, and to raise you to take a seat in His presence (cf. 28:51; 81:27).

How can your limited intellect know the Limitless and Formless without His Self-Disclosure and how can you find your way groping in the utter darkness without a guiding Light? Those who have pondered on its verses, who have reflected on them with unprejudiced mind and pure heart, have discovered that guiding Light, which illuminates the path that leads to the proximity of the True Lord.

You can never know His Essence, but He discloses to you some of His Attributes, which closely adhere to His Essence, and He invites you to share them with Him. Once you have found the key that unveils this secret, you will be experiencing His Loving Powers, His overflowing Generosity, and His Majesty; you will at last overcome your own inability to know Him.

اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ

“Allâh is the Extensive Light of the heavens and the earth [the Light that envelopes all worlds of bodies and non-bodies, and it leaves no shadows]” (24:35).

When you open the closed door of your mind to admit this Light, that Light shall enter and shine on your heart and illuminate it. You will feel that you are sitting in His Company. “When you extend your graceful arms with cupped hands towards Him, you can look at all that amorous light you can catch that will lift your soul and let your soul get loose” (Hâfiż Shîrâzî).



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Qur’ân is the Word of God in its original purity. It was revealed to the Prophet of Islam (pbuh) in Arabic. This was his language, the language of Makkans of his time, and the language of the Bedouins of the Arabian Desert. A characteristic of their language - the classical Arabic and of the Holy Qur’ân, is Ellipticism (*i’jâz*). In an elliptical construction, a word or phrase implied by context is omitted from a sentence, usually because it appeared shortly before or could be a repetition. The elliptical style of the Holy Qur’ân exhibits extreme economy in Divine Speech and Writing. Its language shifts drastically between a highly “poetic” diction and metaphors and a “self-understood” sequence of the Message. It deliberately omits intermediate thoughts and words, and thereby focusing concisely on the core idea. This ellipticism was the integral part of the language of the Bedouins of the Arabian Desert, which reached its utmost perfection in the Holy Qur’ân.

In order to render the Qur’ân’s style into ordinary prose, the exegetes of the Holy Qur’ân had to provide missing links which are commonly interjected into the text in the form of frequent interpolations between parentheses. Otherwise, the Arabic phrases would lose their life and sense. A word-to-word translation in ignorance of these stylistic peculiarities, the grammar and sentence construction of the language of the Holy Book would often jumble the verses, render them meaningless, and make the Book seem confused. This subject has been dealt with in *Dalâ’il al-I’jâz* by Abû Bakr ‘Abd al-Qâhir bin ‘Abd al-Rahmân al-Jurjânî [Maktabat al-Qâhirah, Egypt, 1969].

Another powerful feature of the Qur’ânic and classical Arabic is the derivation of its vocabulary from its root alphabets. All root words of this language, without any exception, are composed of either one

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letter or a combination of two, three, and extremely seldom of four alphabets. For example, the alphabet *alif* is used for asking questions (“*â*” sound); alphabet *mîm* م similarly, as in *mâ* ما (what?) and *mamn* من (who?). *Lâm* ل is often used for negation, as in *la* لا (no) and *lâmm* لم (not). *Imâm Râzî* says that Arabs would name things after letters; for example, money as ر, clouds as س, and fish as ن. In short, the letters of the Arabic alphabet are words, and each one of them has its own simple meaning [see also commentary on verse 2:1, p. 278]

Another characteristic of this language is that many words with similar letters either agree in meaning or are approximate in it. For example, where in a word, *nûn* ن and *fâ* ف come together, their combination gives an indication of the meaning of *khurûj* خروج (- going out or letting out); like *nafara* نفرا (to go out in a group; to run away from fight; go forth from any business); *nafatha* نفث (- to blow on a thing and spit out of the mouth; to whisper out evil suggestion). *Nafaha* نفح (- to blow out; to diffuse and disperse). *Nafakha* نفح (- to blow or breathe out). *Nafaqa* نفق (- to come out of a hole or tunnel). *Nafida* نفدة (- consumed out; spent out) and *nafadha* نفدة (- to escape; to go beyond; to pass through a place). Also, for example, where *fâ* and *lâm* ل combine in a word, the combination indicates the meaning of “opening up”, such as *falaqa* فلق (- to split open; break of a day; to cleave through the darkness); *falahâ* فلاح (- to cleave a thing; to unfold something in order to reveal its intrinsic properties; to till and break open surface of the earth and make its productivity powers active), and *falaja* فالجا (- to split; to open up water reservoirs into water channels).

Mostly three consonants form the root of each Arabic word, and the permutation of these root elements opens up a rich and complex world of meanings and associations. The door opens for the student of the Holy Qur’ân to a wealth of potential meanings, both lexicological and symbolic, for every word or phrase. It is from here that masters in literature know that many a time the Arabs use one word in different shades of meaning by substituting similar letters as is found in *daqq*

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دَكْ and *dakk* (to knock; to crush and broken into pieces;), and in *laj* لَجْ and *laż* لَظَّ (to insist). This is the science of the language of the Arabs of the time of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). Many of those who have studied modern Arabic are fallen short of understanding these minute details in classical Arabic of the Holy Qur’ân.

The fluent transition between the root meaning of a word and the full range of its semantic extensions is another characteristic of Divine Speech. The eloquence of the Arabic language in the Holy Qur’ân radiates from every page, and in every chapter, every verse, and every word. You are encouraged to open your mind to the full spectrum of interpretations of any word with the help of its root word, as long as there is evidence and logic for those interpretations, evidence based on the various uses of that word in the Holy Book at various places and in different contexts.

What has been said so far, our intention is simply to alert the reader of the difficult task confronted by great exegetists of the Holy Qur’ân, and the fact that the human knowledge cannot fully fathom and comprehend the words (*kalimat*) of the All Mighty God:

فُلْ لَوْ كَانَ الْبَحْرُ مِدَادًا لِّكَلِمَاتِ رَبِّي لَنَفَدَ الْبَحْرُ قَبْلَ أَنْ تَنْفَدَ كَلِمَاتُ رَبِّي
وَلَوْ جِئْنَا بِمِثْلِهِ مَدَادًا

Say, If every ocean became ink for (recording) the words and creation of my Lord, surely, the oceans would be spent up before the words and creation of my Lord came to an end, even if we brought to add (therewith) as many more (oceans). (18:109)

The exegesis (*tafsîr* تفسير) of the Holy Qur’ân involves explaining the message of the Qur’ânic verse, clarifying its import, and discovering its significance. *Tafsîr* of the Holy Qur’ân was one of the earliest academic activities in Islamic history; it began with the Divine Revelation: “We have sent to you a great Messenger from among yourselves who recites to you Our Messages and purifies you and teaches you the Book and the wisdom and teaches you what you did

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not know” (2:151). The Holy Prophet (pbuh) was himself the first exegete. He explained and put into practice the Divine Commands. After his death, his Companions—those close to him, such as Abû Bakr^(rz), ‘Umar^(rz), ‘Alî^(rz), ‘Uthmân^(rz), his wife ‘Âishah^(rz), and others—narrated how the Holy Prophet (pbuh) explained through his actions and behaviour the Qur’ânic verses and their injunctions. Later, young Companions of the Prophet (pbuh)—such as Ibn ‘Abbâs, ‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Umar, Ubayy ibn Ka‘b—took up this task.

In the early days, exegetes of the Holy Qur’ân confined themselves to explaining the practical aspects of its injunctions, the background of its revelation, and occasional interpretation of one verse with the help of another. This was a suitable approach, since the people who were listening to the Holy Words were Arabs, who were well acquainted with the Arabic expressions spoken in those days and understood well what was being conveyed to them. If the verse concerned historical events or contained such concepts as genesis or resurrection, then sometimes a few sayings (Traditions or *ahâdîth*) of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) were needed to make its meaning clear. This was also the style of the disciples of the Companions—such as Mujâhid, Qatadah, Sha‘bi, Suddî, and others, who lived in the first century of *Hijrah*.

Mu‘tazilî (*al-Mu‘tazillah* المعتزلة) theology originated in Baṣrah (Iraq) about a hundred years after the death of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), when Wâsil ibn Atâ left the teaching sessions of Hasan al-Bâṣrî after a theological dispute. Wâsil ibn ‘Atâ, also known as al-Ghazzal, was born probably around the year 80 AH / 699 CE and died in 131 AH / 748 CE. He is considered by the *Mu‘tazilî* biographers to be the founder of the their school. The *Mu‘tazilî* considered themselves to be rationalists. They debated philosophical questions such as whether the Qur’ân was created or eternal, whether Gods Attributes in the Qur’ân were to be interpreted allegorically or literally, whether humans had free will or their fate was predestined, whether evil had been created by God, and whether sinning believers would face eternal punishment in hell.

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The *Hanbali* school was founded by Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (164–241 AH / 780–855 CE) about eighty years later. His views were later upheld by Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahāb in his various works on theology (the *Wahābi* School) and are now prevalent in Saudi Arabia and most Gulf states. Today Wahhabism had slipped from the center of Sunnite orthodoxy to the margin, claiming to fix all the norms and rules. The *Hanbali* school teaches that salvation depends on ones believing in the apparent meanings of the Qur’ān and the Traditions. It avoids delving into extensive theological and philosophical speculation. This school explains Islam and Qur’ān with the help of the Traditions ascribed to the Companions of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) and their disciples. It looks only into the literal value of the words, and it leaves any questionable verses of the Qur’ān simply as they are, accepting the statements as they occur, without extending much effort to explain or expand upon them. You cannot, for example, cast doubt on the literal reading of the transformation of the “staff of Moses” into a snake. Interpreting stories that seem implausible, in the way in which they are presented, is perceived as a challenge to the divine word. Metaphor is little appreciated by its juris consults. Its adherents have closed the scriptural space and defend their belief with such verses as: “*We believe in it, it is all from our Lord*” (3:7). Thus no rereading is possible and anybody who attempts to do so leaves himself open to heavy sanctions.

When Islam spread well beyond the Arabian Peninsula, and Muslim empires were established in the Middle East, India, Central Asia, North Africa, and the Iberian Peninsula, some non-Muslim zealots wrote biographies of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) and accounts of his sayings in order to confuse Muslims and discourage non-Muslims from adopting the new faith. Such zealots as al-Wāqidī (d. 207 AH / 822 CE; *Kitāb al-Maghāzī*), his student and secretary Ibn Sad (d. 230 AH / 845 CE; *Kitāb al-Tabakāt al-Kabīr*), and Ibn Ishāq (d. 150–159 AH / 761–770 CE) composed fake biographies and “Traditions”. The following individuals, considered “theologists” by some, were notorious in forging Traditions: Ibn ‘Abd al-Iḥyā in the city of al-

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Madînah, Muqted bin Salâm in Khurasân, Muhammad bin Zaid in Syria, Ibn ‘Alî Aufa Kûfi, Ahmad al-Zubairî, Ibn Akshah, and Ibn Taimûr. They invented Traditions indiscriminately to adorn their writings, according to what they deemed the need of their society and their creed. They fabricated the sayings of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), added stories to his life, and twisted what he said in a way that suited the fancies of newly converted Muslims.

Some Muslim Tradition (*ahâdîth*) collectors copied these stories because of their Christian background or their own lack of sound knowledge. Typically, they would quote from the lores of previous nations – stories that were circulating in those parts of the world or that were described in the Bible—such stories as the creation of Hawwâ (Eve) from Âdam’s ribs or the ascent of ‘Isâ (Jesus) to heaven—and fitted them into Qur’ânic verses. They included in their exegesis the “sins” of Prophets mentioned in the Holy Bible, contrary to what the Holy Qur’ân teaches. Such biblical stories (*isrâ’iliyât*) crept into the beliefs of simple-minded Muslim religious teachers and, through them, to ordinary Muslims. These *isrâ’iliyât* are still prevalent among many Muslims. The fabricators committed their mischief to create discord among the Muslims and to misinform the non-Muslims. What they left behind was chaos and nonsense, contrary to the basic spirit of Islamic and Qur’ânic teachings. Their writings are still favourite sources for Christian historians and storywriters, but they are never referenced in the works of serious, informed Muslim historians.

Toward the end of the Umayyah period and well into the ‘Abbâsid era, Greek philosophical texts were translated into Arabic, which influenced Muslim religious thought. Muslim philosophers tried to fit into the divine verses the principles of Greek philosophy, which itself was a confused and self-contradictory hodgepodge. Without hesitation they considered the emerging but rudimentary scientific knowledge of astronomy, physics, and other related subjects as the absolute, final truth, to which the exegesis of the Qur’ân had to conform.

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The *Shî'a* belief emerged after the Prophets (pbuh) death in 10 AH / 632 CE. From the very start, this belief was based on Traditions—for example, “I am leaving behind among you two precious things: the Book of Allâh and my progeny, my family members, and these two shall never separate from each other”. The emergence of the *Shî'a* as a separate sect within the Muslim community, in opposition of the Caliphs, dates to the Battle of Karbala in the year 61 AH / 680 CE, and the first *Shî'a* government was established in North Africa under the Fâtimids (296–567AH / 909–1171CE). The *Shî'a* school of thought today includes many different groups holding various theological tenets, spiritual dogmas, philosophical beliefs, and schools of jurisprudence.

Before the end of the third century of the Islamic calendar, the Muslim society had split into several schools of thought and sects, and it has continued to split up well into modern times. Intellectual chaos has prevailed in the Muslim world. New *sharî'a* laws have been invented to legitimize the rulers. Muslims have continued to differ with one another in nearly every aspect of religious belief and they still continue. The meanings of the abbreviated letters before some chapters of the Holy Qur'ân (*fawâtih* or *al-Muqattâ'ât*) and the Names and Attributes of Allâh and His actions have been under dispute; there has been conflict about the reality of the heavens and the earth; and there have been controversies about the decree and the divine measure (predestination, *al-Qadzâ wa al-Qadr*). Muslims have differed about aspects of reward and punishment, and they have differed on the history of Prophets such as Jesus (Îsâ) and even their own Prophet (pbuh). They differed and fought on the position of the Companions of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) such as Abû Bakr^(rz), ‘Umar^(rz), ‘Alî^(rz), ‘Uthmân^(rz), his wife ‘Aishah^(rz) and his daughter Fâtima^(rz), and others. Some Companions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) were raised to the levels of “prophethood” – flawless, sinless, innocent and holy, or almost to divine status, god incarnates, as in the case of ‘Alî by some sects. Other Companions were degraded to a status they never deserved. The Muslims fought on these differences

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and are still fighting today. Not a single subject relating to religion has been left without discord, and each group has insisted that only the tenets it holds represent the genuine Truth.

Of course, this divergence has showed itself in interpretations of the Holy Qur'ân. Every group has tried to support its views and opinions from the Holy Book, and its exegesis has served this purpose. They remain divided among themselves, and they have divided the Muslim *ummah* (nation) into sects; each group has clung to the verses and the Traditions that seem to support its belief and has tried to explain away whatever is apparently against it. They have not cared about what the Qur'ân says; rather they have been concerned rather how a particular verse might be explained so as to fit into their personal beliefs or the views of their particular school of thought. In this way, explanation has turned into adaptation, and the Holy Qur'ân's manifest meanings have been sacrificed for self-serving "interpretations". All this has become the root cause of the contradictions in Qur'ânic explanations and has been the main cause of sectarian differences; such blind following has caused national or tribal prejudice, which often led to bloodshed and civil strife.

In response to the intellectual chaos that started to spread in the third century after, the *Ash'arî* (الأشعرية, *al-Asha'riyya*) school of thought emerged. This school was founded by Abû al-Hasan al-Ash'arî (d. 324 AH / 936 CE). It arose initially as a reaction to the *Mu'tazilî* school of thought, some of whose beliefs seemed strange to many Muslims and in contradiction to previously held opinions and practices. The *Ash'arî* School developed further during the fourth and fifth centuries AH (tenth and eleventh centuries CE). The movement was an attempt not only to purge Islam of all non-Islamic elements that had quietly crept into it but also to harmonize the religious consciousness with the religious practice at the time of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). In defense of the authority of Divine Revelation as applied to theological subjects, the *Ash'arî* School used a dialectical approach to resolve disagreement. This approach later laid the

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foundation of **Tasawwuf**. As opposed to the rationalist *Mu'tazilî*, and in opposition to the extreme orthodox class. Basically, *taṣawwuf* consists of dedication to worship, a total dedication to Allāh, the Most High, and disregard for the finery and ornaments of the world. The spirit of *taṣawwuf* has always been present in Islam. The term *taṣawwuf* was not known to the Companions of the Holy Prophet and the first generation of Muslims, though this was their general practice.

In time, **Sufism** arose from within *taṣawwuf* in the second and third centuries AH (eighth and ninth centuries CE) as an ascetic movement. Sufism cannot be traced back to any single person as its founder. The *sūfī* (صوفی) movement consists of fraternal orders wherein leaders train and assist disciples in the mastery of **Sufism's** philosophical principles and ritual practices. Its followers claimed to adhere to *taṣawwuf*, but they often deviated from the original practice, the practice of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) and his Companions. Christianity had a clear impact on the practices and explications of Sufism; in fact, Christian, Hindu, and Buddhist asceticism and monasticism were essential features of the landscape in which Sufism was formed and later practiced. Some *sūfī* orders made music central to their practice; others introduced narcotics to reach the “exalted state.” Some, influenced and impressed by the practices of music in temples and churches, and later by Western thought, propagated the notion that *sūfī* philosophy is universal in nature, that its roots predated the rise of both Islam and Christianity. All such adherents have misunderstood *taṣawwuf*, and they have deviated from the noble path to Divine Knowledge.

By the year 250 AH (about 860 CE), five schools of thought were being popularized and patronized in the regions controlled by the ‘Abbâsid Caliphate. They were founded by renowned Islamic scholars and such noble personalities as *Imâm Ja‘far ibn Muhammad al-Sâdiq* (صادق) 83–148 AH / 702–765 CE), *Imâm Abû Hanîfah* (80–148 AH / 699–767 CE), *Imâm Mâlik bin Anas* (مالك بن أنس 93–179 AH / 711–795 CE), *Imâm*

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ابو عبد الله محمد بن شافعی (Abû ‘Abdullâh Muhammad bin Idrîs al-Shâfi‘î (150–204 AH / 767–820 CE) and Imâm Hanbal (Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Hanbal Abû ‘Abdullâh al-Shaibâni (احمد بن محمد بن حنبل ابو عبد الله الشیبانی 164–241 AH / 780–855 CE). They were the learned of their time, and there is nothing wrong in their approaches to explain and interpret the Divine Book; however, their followers should not insist that the approach and interpretation of their *imâms* should be considered the only true foundation of exegesis, from which no deviation can be allowed. Such an insistence will limit the vast meanings and the immense knowledge embedded in the Divine Words.

Allâh taught the Holy Qur’ân to His Prophet (pbuh) and appointed him as the Teacher of His Book: “*He it is Who has raised among the Arabs a grand Messenger (who hails) from among themselves, who recites to them His revelations to rid them of their impurities and teaches them the Book and Wisdom*” (62:2). Thus, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) was the first exegete. He was an Arab and spoke to his followers and taught them what had been revealed to him in his own language, which was also their language. His language was the Arabic of that time, what we today call “classical” Arabic. The Arabic of the Holy Qur’ân is the “most eloquent speech,” as the very Qur’ânic Word ‘arabiyyan (see 12:2) in its literal sense means (Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*). One of the essential ingredient of eloquence is that the talk should be free from obscurity and abstruseness. Therefore, there should not be a single verse that is obscure or abstruse, and there should not be a single sentence in the Holy Book that forces the mind to wander in search of its meaning. There should not be any verse that can be considered “ambiguous,” “contradictory,” or “abrogated” because of some apparent contradiction in its meaning. Allâh says: “*Indeed, We have made the Qur’ân easy for admonition and to understand, follow and remember*” (54:17), and again: “*Verily, We have made it a Qur’ân, such (a Scripture) that brings (the nations) together, and (a Scripture) eloquently expressive so that you may make use of your understanding*” (43:3). Therefore, no verse should

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be assigned a meaning that would bring people apart, create discord, or become a source of bloodshed. Such contradictions would be created by giving the Qur’ânic Words ambiguous and inconsistent meanings.

Though, Arabic is still spoken in the Arab world, it is no longer the Arabic of the time of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). Names of objects are constantly changing, and the language is developing with new discoveries and with the passage of time. An object from the days of the Prophet (pbuh) has little in common (except its name) with an object having the same purpose or use that has been invented in our time. The same applies to translations of the Qur’ân that use modern Arabic incorrectly to apply inappropriate contemporary explanations to words and concepts that were used in the time of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). To understand and adhere to the original message of the Holy Qur’ân, you need to go back to the Arabic of the time of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) and leave aside the lexica of Modern Arabic.

Khalîl bin Ahmad (d. 169 AH / 786 CE) was the first to start composing the Arabic classical words in his monumental work *Kitâb al-'Ain*. After him, several dozen books on Arabic grammar and on Arabic words and their meanings were compiled. The list of credible classical Arabic dictionaries is long. Today, the best available books are *Lisân al-Arab* by Mukarram bin Manzûr; *Masâdir* by Yahya bin Abû Bakr, *Tâj al-'Arûs* by Murtadza Balgrâmî; *Mu'jam Maqâysi al-Lughah*. Cairo, 1371 AH. by Fâris Qazwinî; *Al-Qâmûs* by Majd al-Dîn Abû Tâhir Muhammâd bin Yaqûb, and *Al-Mufradât fi Gharâib al-Qur'ân* by Abû al-Qâsim Husain al-Râghib. There are a dozen more that can be regarded as credible and authentic. William Edward Lanes *Arabic-English Lexicon* is the most authentic translation of *Lisân al-Arab*. Dictionaries of Modern Arabic are not suitable for translating the Holy Qur’ân or for basing a religious argument on them.

Even mastering classical Arabic and having access to classical Arabic dictionaries, however, is not sufficient for writing a Qur’ânic exegesis.

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There are inherent dangers in basing an entire explanation on etymological usages. Terms such as *salât*, *saum*, *zakât*, *imân*, *hajj* and others can be understood and explained only in the right context of the practice (*Sunnah al-‘Ibâdiyyah* سُنْنَةِ الْعَبَادِيَّةِ) of the Holy Prophet (pbuh); (see 62:2). Moreover, one must be careful when rendering terms and expressions in the sense they have acquired after Islam had been institutionalized in countries outside the Arabian Peninsula. For instance, when the contemporaries of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) heard the word *Muslim*, they understood it as denoting “one who surrenders to Allâh and His laws.” In 3:67 Abraham (*Ibrâhîm*) is spoken of as the one who surrendered himself to God (كَانَ حَنِيفًا مُسْلِمًا). Similarly, in verse 3:52, the disciples of Jesus ('Isâ) said, آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَأَشْهَدُ بِأَنَا مُسْلِمُونَ “We have believed in Allâh. Bear witness that; we are the submitting ones (to His will).” To both common people and modern scholars, the term *Muslim* denotes the followers of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). Similarly, the term *kâfir* كافر, which originally meant the “one who hides (the truth)”, has become “unbeliever” in conventional translations and usage. The same is the case with the word *jihâd* جهاد (to exert ones efforts), which has nothing to do with “holy war.” Many Muslims, whether they claim to be liberal, modernist, or traditional, refuse to let the revealed text speak for itself.

Consensus (*ijmâ'* اجماع), or unanimous agreement of the community on the meaning of a Qur'ânic verse, is also not always the right approach for determining the genuine meaning of a particular verse. *Ijmâ'* was the consensus among the Companions of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), not a consensus among the “Learned” (علماء) of the later generations (Ibn Hazm). Even unanimous agreement of the community, determined by the votes of its legal specialists, or ‘*muftis*’, does not have the authority of *shari'a* (Qur'ânic Law) and does not guarantee genuine meaning. The *ijmâ'* of later periods can offer only an opinion on a special situation, a situation that was absent at the time of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). Moreover, *ijmâ'* was not seen among the Companions of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), except on a limited number of subjects and occasions. Decisions based on

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qiyâs (conjecture) and *ijmâ'* (consensus) should not add to the injunction of Divine Law (*sharî'a*), which is clearly defined in the Holy Book. Labels (*fatwâh*) given by the *ulema* and the '*muftis*' on a particular issue—what is forbidden (*harâm*), allowed (*halâl*), obligatory (*faradh*), or discouraged (*makrûh*)—cannot be part of *sharî'a* (Qur'ânic Law) if they are not clearly mentioned in the Holy Qur'ân.

In the Holy Qur'ân we read that only those who lead righteous lives and possess purity of heart come closer to its meanings (see 56:79). Personal opinion (*tafsîr bi-rây*) has no place in Qur'ânic exegesis. Allâh says, “*The responsibility of explaining it lies again on Us*” (75:19), and, “*We have revealed to you this perfect Book explaining every (basic) thing and (which serves as) a guidance and a mercy, and (gives) good tidings to those who submit (to God)*” (16:89). Therefore, to explain any particular verse with the help of other relevant verses is a better way for understanding the Qur'ânic Message. Meditating on their meanings provided by Muslim Saints and Scholars of high caliber (*al-Râsikhûn fil-'Ilm*, الرّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ, and *ûl al-Albâb*, أُولُو الْأَلْبَابَ; 3:7) is another way.

Some verses of the Holy Qur'ân contain statements that are clear and understandable to a reader (3:7). There are other verses in which, at first sight, only the exterior of the words are apparent, and explanations are required to reach the deeper meanings. Their veils are lifted and their meanings are disclosed, however, to those who see the Divine Reality in their hearts (*al-Râsikhûn fil-'ilm*, الرّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ, and *ûl al-Albâb*, أُولُو الْأَلْبَابَ ; 3:7). Such a witness of this unveiling is a Gnostic (*Ahl al-Wahî*, recipient of Divine Revelations), *Ahl al-Kashaf* (recipient of Divine Visions), and *Ârif bil-Allâh* (those who have been blessed with Divine Knowledge). These are the people who receive divine guidance and whose inner eyes recognize the meanings hidden in the Divine verses. The Most Exalted God has chosen them as He says, “*Allâh singles out for His mercy whomsoever He wishes (to receive His mercy)*,” (2:105) and “*He grants wisdom to whomsoever*

He will" (2:269). Those who do not see this reality in their hearts accuse those who are following the Illuminated Path of attempting to impose specific interpretations. You should remain silent if you cannot understand the subtlety of the veiled verses. Their explanation should be left to the people of unveiling, not to those who are using their conjecture (*qiyâs* قياس).

It is for this reason that the explanations given by the *imâms* of the era, the Saints (*auliyâ* and *autâd*), and the *mujaddadîn* (the Reformers appointed by God) and *muhammadathîm* (those with whom God spoke) are of great help in understanding the Qur'ânîc message (see 56:79). Many of these people are well known in Islamic history. Such people received Divine Knowledge and Divine Wisdom directly from Allâh because of their proximity to Him. Allâh held Divine Converse (*mukâlima*) with them, and through them some of the hidden Divine Knowledge was unveiled, the Qur'ânîc Wisdom made known, and the intricate questions of the era were resolved.

The Holy Qur'ân is a "clear exposition (of the truth) for humankind (to follow) and a (means to) guidance" (3:138), a "clear light" (4:174), and a "perfect Book explaining every (basic) thing" (16:89), so you should rely on this guidance and this light and ensure that its verses are illuminated by the verses themselves. Allâh has sent the Holy Qur'ân as "guidance for all the peoples" (3:96) and as "discrimination (between right and wrong)" (2:185). Is it conceivable that it would not guide people aright with its own light, in that it is their most important need? Why should such a guidance and clear light misguide and confuse and the religion that calls itself *Islam* – the "Religion of Peace" should create discord and cause bloodshed?

﴿أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ﴾

"Why do they not ponder over the Qur'ân?" (4:82).



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Works mentioned in this list have been published in many editions and in several countries. Many have been translated into other languages, including English. Therefore, mentioning any particular edition would be of little use for the reader. Other references that exist in identifiable, authentic editions are specified within the text. The explanation of Qur'ânic verses by classical commentators referred to; appear in the context of the commentary of that particular verse. Titles of the referred books are in *italics*. The **bolds** in the list below are used when the works are quoted in the texts. When the author has more than one book, the title of the book is given in italics, otherwise only the author is referred.

We have adhered to the English translation of the Holy Qur'ân by Amatul Rahmân Omar and Abdul Mannân Omar based on the explanation by Nooruddîn. Wherever we deviate from this translation for the sake of explanation, we have inserted those words in straight brackets.

When a Qur'ânic verse is quoted, only the relevant part of the verse is presented with its English translation. For complete verse and its translation into English, the reader is recommended to refer to the English Translation of the Holy Qur'ân by Ms. Amatul Rahmân Omar and Abdul Mannân Omar. Reference to the Qur'ânic verses begins with chapter number followed by a colon and the verse number; for example 25:30 would mean chapter 25 verse 30. Arabic words appear in *italics* within the text. References to Biblical quotes are with single dots (e.g. Mark 5.15).

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TRANSLITERATION

No transliteration can exactly express the vocal difference between two languages. Besides the inability of the alphabets of English language representing the exact pronunciations and sounds of Arabic, there are specific difficulties in Romanizing Arabic alphabets and words. There are some characters in Arabic alphabet such as: ث, ح, ق, خ, which have no equivalent in English. In

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combinations of words, Arabic pronunciation does not follow the written English characters. To this category belong: ت tâ (t), ث thâ (th), د dâl (d), ذ dhâl (dh); ر râ (r), ز zâ (z), س sîn (s), ش shîn (sh), ص sâd (s), ض dzâd (dz), ط tâ (t), ظ zâ (z), ل lâm (n), ن nûn (n). In transliteration of words we have followed the written form in Arabic for the facility of lay-reader, writing for example, *Al-Rahmân* instead of *Ar-Rahmân*. We have adopted the most common rules of transliteration recognized by Western Orientalists. The system of transliteration adopted in this book is as follows:

Arabic Alphabet		Transliteral Presentation
ا	Alif	A, a
ء	hamzah	(comma above the alphabet)
ب	bâ	b, B
ت	tâ	t, T
ث	thâ	th, Th
ج	jîm	j, J
ح	ha,	h, H
خ	khâ	kh, Kh
د	dâl	d, D,
ذ	dhâl	dh, Dh
ر	râ	r, R
ز	zâ	z, Z
س	sîn	s, S
ش	shîn	sh, Sh
ص	sâd	s, S
ض	dzâd	dz, Dz
ط	tâ	t, T
ظ	zâ	z, Z
ع	'ain	' (inverted comma above)
غ	ghain	gh, Gh
ف	fâ	f, F
ق	qâf	q, Q
ك	kâf	k, K

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ل	lâm	l, L
م	mîm	m, M
ن	nûn	n, N
ه	hâ	h, H
و	wâw	w, W
ي	yâ	y, Y

Long Fathah: A *fathah* in standing or upright position over a letter sounds like *a* in father. It will be written as â as in Allâh ﷺ. It is represented by â or Â.

Long Kasrah: A *kasrah* written perpendicularly under a letter sounds like the second *i* in civilian. It will be written as î as in *Injîl*. It is represented by î or ī.

Long Dzammah: An inverted *dzammah* above the letter. It sounds like *u* in ruby. It is represented by û or Û.

Fathah before wâw و is pronounced like the *au* in *taurât*. It is represented by *au* or *Au*. *Fathah* before yâ ي makes a diphthong like sound *ai* as said. It is represented by *ai* or *Ai*.



ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Nooruddîn was born in 1840, in Bhera, Panjab (at that time part of British India). He received his early religious and medical education in India, and later spent many years of his life in the cities of Makkah and Madînah. He lived there in a spiritually close and long association with scholars like Shah ‘Abdul Ghani, (grandson of Shah Wallîullâh Mu Dehlavî) and other Islamic scholars whose daily speech mirrored the genuine spirit of Islam. While in Makkah he was able to feel, hear, and read Arabic prose and poetry of the time when the Qur’ân was being revealed.

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His influence on the modern Islamic thought is profound and widespread. Several modern English translations and exegeses of the Qur’ân have been done by his students under his direct or indirect influence and guidance.

He was one of the clearest and wisest Islamic thinkers of his age. His knowledge of the Qur’ân was vast and his learning on Islam thorough. His numerous lectures, learned sermons, and Qur’ânic seminars were published during his life time. He pursued a scholarly and an academic interpretation of Islam under the guiding principles of the Holy Qur’ân. He followed and taught the Qur’ânic religious injunctions (*Sunnah ‘ibâdîya*) as it was understood, explained, and practiced by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). He not only collected and consulted the previous commentaries of the Qur’ân but also referred to the oldest and most reliable Arabic lexicons and poetry of pre-Islamic time to ascertain the real, classical and root meanings of the Arabic words used in the Qur’ân. He had an invaluable collection of classical Islamic books in his personal library, which was considered one of the best personal Islamic libraries (*Oriental College Magazine, Punjab University, 1914, India*). He was aware that all chapters of the Holy Qur’ân are interconnected by a central theme that reflects the wisdom and unity of purpose of God and we are not permitted to make any change in the sequence of the text. He not only followed the sober and rational approach shown by the great classical commentators like Ibn Jarîr, Ibn Kathîr, Abû Hayyân, al-Baidzâwî, Râzî, Ibn Qayyim and others, but also his own conscious probing for the genuine. He consulted the previous Scriptures, books of *Hadîth*, Muslim history and jurisprudence, but never paid any attention to the mystic beliefs, exegesis based on personal opinion (*tafsîr-bi-raiy*), and religious stories (*qasâs*) of the Bible. He was of the opinion that verses of the Qur’ân do not contradict each other. Hence, a Qur’ânic verse cannot be abrogated by any other Qur’ânic verse or replaced by a Tradition of Prophet (pbuh).

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He very well knew that an important requisite for a profitable study of the Qur’ân is Prayer (*al-Salât*). He never neglected supplication to God whenever he had difficulty in understanding a verse. He also knew that a multiplicity of meanings of the Qur’ânic verses should not and do not create any contradiction, the message of the Qur’ân could not be confined to the few meanings, which may be set out in a commentary. It is because of this fact that we find in his exegesis many new insights and verities. However, his attempts were not against the fundamental rules and standards for the correct interpretations of the Holy Qur’ân.

Nooruddîn was an intellectual who stands out as an extraordinary figure in the ranks of literates and religious scholars. A great personality, pure in morals, earnest and tireless in his search for Truth. His Qur’ânic insight was deep and his observational faculties keen. There was sincerity in his word and in his writings. His veracity and enthusiasm imbued his audience with feelings akin to his own. Correctness of thought and action was always the goal of his striving.

He was of healthy and firm physique, retentive memory, great tenacity and capacity for methodical work. Throughout his life he was strictly honest, and generous to the poor. He was also a renowned physician and spent sixteen years of his life as the personal physician of the *Maharaja* (ruler) of Kashmir. He was of the opinion that there is a deep relationship between the principles of spiritual medicine and physical medicine.

Mrs. Amatul Rahmân Omar is probably the first Muslim woman in the Islamic history to translate the Holy Qur’ân in English. Handwritten notes of ‘Allâmah Nooruddîn, his published Friday-Sermons and lectures on subjects of Qur’ân; his books and Qur’ânic explanations are the basis of her English translation. The Qur’ân thus explained and interpreted by him was rendered into English by his daughter-in-law. She earned her Master’s Degree in Arabic from the University of the Panjab, Lahore, Pakistan in 1950. She was awarded gold medals and other awards from the University for her Outstanding

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Distinction and achievement in the Arabic language. She spent most part of her life in teaching Arabic and English.

Abdul Mannân Omar: Amatul Rahmân Omar was assisted in her difficult task of translation of the Holy Qur'ân by her learned husband Abdul Mannân Omar. Because of his erudition and knowledge of Islamic studies, this fact, among many others, is a living testimony that for years he has been the Editor of the Encyclopedia of Islam (20 Volumes). He is also the author of more than hundred scholarly articles on Islam, published in the Encyclopedia of Islam. Moreover, he authored “Dictionary of the Holy Qur'ân” (Arabic to English). This scholarly masterpiece combines classical Arabic dictionaries in one. The dictionary explains the real, classical, and root meanings of all the Qur'ânic words with their derivatives. It includes index of all Qur'ânic words and their roots.

He also had the honour of arranging, indexing, and subject-wise codifying, for the first time, the classical work of the original Musnad of *Imâm Ahmad bin Hanbal*, comprising of approximately 30,000 *ahâdîth* (Traditions and sayings of the Prophet pbuh). The original Musnad was arranged according to the name of the narrator and not according to the subject and topic. This new work is published under the title, “Subject Codification of the Musnad *Imâm Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Hanbal*” in 10 volumes (Arabic only). Both migrated from their country of origin, India, later Pakistan and lived in Germany and the USA to complete their work on Qur'ân and *Hadîth*.

There is no claim of infallibility and no claim that this commentary/Tafsîr (تفسیر) cannot be improved further. It is not to be expected that all the transcendent excellencies and miraculous beauties of the Holy Qur'ân could be unveiled here.

The Progeny
Germany and USA (2015)

REFLECTIONS



REFLECTIONS

Selected Pearls

WHO IS ALLÂH?

Hastî Bârî Ta‘âla

هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهٌ إِلَّا هُوَ

“He is Allâh, He is the One besides whom there is no other, cannot be and will never be one worthy of worship but He”.
(59:22)

"Allâh" is the word used for God in Arabic. The word *Allâh* cognates in many Semitic languages. The corresponding Aramaic form is *Alah* (אֱלֹהָ), but its emphatic state is *Alaha* (אֱלֹהָה). It is written as ﷺ - *Elâhâ* in Biblical Aramaic and ﻻـھـا (*Alâhâ*) in Syriac and *El* in Canaanite. The name *Allal* (or *Ellil*) is to be found in the Epic of Atrahasis (or Atramhasis) engraved on several tablets dating back to around 1700 BC in Babylon. This shows that a Deity *Allal* was being worshipped since ages (Stephanie Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia: Creation, the Flood, Gilgamesh and others*, Oxford University Press: 1989, Pages: 3-10). Many inscriptions containing the name *Allâh* have been discovered in Northern and Southern Arabia as early as the 15th century BC., including Lihyanitic, Thamûdic and other South Arabian inscriptions (F. V. Winnett, *A Study of the Lihyanite and Thamudic Inscriptions*; Toronto: 1937, Page 30). From Nabataean inscriptions, we know that "Allâh" was regarded as the "High and Main God".

The concepts associated with the term Allâh (as a deity) differ among religious traditions. The pagan Meccans used the name Allâh for the creator, the supreme deity besides other deities. Arab Christians have been using it since pre-Islamic times. Today's Arab Christians modified it to *Allâh al-Ab* (الله الأبا - God the Father) to distinguish their usage from Muslim usage. This expression was also used by

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some Mizrahi (Eastern) Jews. There are similarities as well as differences between the concept of God as portrayed in the Holy Qur'ân and the Hebrew Bible. In the Holy Qur'ân Allâh is the name of the Self-Existing and Self-Sufficient (6:133) veiled Reality (*al-Haqîqat al-Ghaybiyya*) and Qur'ân is His Holy speech. He says:

إِنَّنِي أَنَا اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا

"I and I alone am Allâh. There cannot be, is no other and will never be one worthy of worship but I." (20:14)

Allâh is thus His personal name (*ism al-Dhât*). In the Arabic idiom calling someone who is present, by his proper name shows acknowledgement and respect. He discloses Himself to humankind in many of His beautiful awe-inspiring verses:

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُ الْقَيُومُ لَا تَأْخُذُهُ سَنَةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ لَّهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَتَشَفَّعُ عَنْهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفُهُمْ وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ وَسَعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَلَا يَئُودُهُ حِفْظُهُمَا وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ

"Allâh is He, there is no other, cannot be and will never be one worthy of worship but Him, the Ever-Living, Self-Subsisting and All-Sustaining (Lord). Neither sleep nor slumber overtakes Him. Whatsoever is in the heaven and whatsoever is on the earth belongs to Him. Who is there that will intercede with Him, save by His leave? He knows your future and your past, and you encompass nothing of His knowledge of the things except of such things as He Himself please to tell. His knowledge and sovereignty extends over the heavens, the earth, and the care of them both tires Him not. He is the Most Supreme (subordinate to no one), immense in His Greatness." (2:255)

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هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ ۖ عَالَمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ ۖ هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ
هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمَلِكُ الْفَدُوسُ السَّلَامُ الْمُؤْمِنُ الْمُهَمِّمُ الْعَزِيزُ
الْجَبَارُ الْمُتَكَبِّرُ ۖ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُشَرِّكُونَ هُوَ اللَّهُ الْخَالِقُ الْبَارِئُ
الْمُصَوِّرُ ۖ لَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ ۖ يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۖ
وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

“He is Allâh, He is the One besides whom there is no other, cannot be and will never be one worthy of worship but He. He is the knower of the unseen and the seen. He is the Most Gracious, the Ever Merciful. He is Allâh besides whom there is no other, cannot be and will never be one worthy of worship but He. (He is) the Supreme Sovereign, the Holy One, the Most Perfect, the Bestower of peaceful security, the Guardian, the All-Mighty, the Compensator of losses, the Possessor of all Greatness. Holy is Allâh, far beyond they associate with Him. He is Allâh, the Creator of matter and the spirit, the Maker, the Bestower of Forms. All perfect and beautiful Attributes belong to Him. All that lies in the heavens and the earth declare His Glory (by affirming: Yes! You are our Lord). He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.” (59:22-24)

لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ هُوَ
الْأَوَّلُ وَالآخِرُ وَالظَّاهِرُ وَالبَاطِنُ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ۖ

“The kingdom of the heavens and the earth belong to Him. He gives life and causes death and He is the Possessor of power to do all that He wills (and desires). He is the very First (He is as He always was), and (He is) the Last (when nothing remains He will remain), and He is Manifest [for His Servants] and He is Hidden (from the worlds of bodies; He being the Eternal Being), and He has full knowledge of everything.” (57:1-3)

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَى عَلَى
الْعَرْشِ ۝ يَعْلَمُ مَا يَلْجُ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا يَحْرُجُ مِنْهَا وَمَا يَنْزَلُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ
وَمَا يَعْرُجُ فِيهَا وَهُوَ مَعْكُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ

"It is He Who has created the heavens and the earth in six periods and He is established on the thrown (of Power). He knows what goes down to the earth and what comes out of it, and what descends (Divine Revelations) from above and what ascends to it (deeds and actions). He is with you wherever you may be. Allâh is watchful of all what you do." (57:4)

يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تُسِرُّونَ وَمَا تُعْلَمُونَ ۝ وَاللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ
بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ

"He knows whatever lies in the heavens and the earth and He knows what you conceal in your hearts and what you utter openly. Allâh knows the innermost thoughts of the hearts." (64:4)

The word "Allâh" is not a construction of *al-ilâh* as some people think, but an independent word. The word Allâh is *jâmid* that means it is neither derived from any other word nor has it any root. The first letters *All* آل in Allâh are an integral, inseparable part of the word. They do not denote the definite article *al* ال of Arabic, which is equivalent to the English *the*. Renowned scholars of the Arabic language including Sibwaih, the famous grammarian, and Khalîl, the respected linguistic, confirm that *All* آل in the beginning of the word Allâh is inseparable from it. If *All* آل in Allâh were an additional prefix, the common exclamation *Yâ Allâh*, (O Allâh!), would not be permitted according to the rules of Arabic grammar, as the form *Yâ al-ilâh* or *Yâ al-Rahmân*, *Yâ al-Rahîm* would be grammatically incorrect. Moreover, this supposition would mean that there were different gods - *âlihah* (plural of *ilâh*), one of which became gradually known as *al-Ilâh* and was then contracted into Allâh. This supposition is not correct. The word Allâh is a simple substantive, a proper name, not

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derived from any other word. In contrast, the word deity is applied to any religious object of worship. The word god was originally used to refer to pagan deities of the Nordic nations. It has a plural and both a masculine and feminine form, therefore this word cannot strictly and properly satisfy the monotheistic requirements of a deity.

God is another way of saying “Allâh”. Unlike the word God, Allâh has no plural, masculine or feminine form, and is never used for any other object or being (19:65). It is a substantive name, neither attributive nor descriptive. It has no parallel or equivalent in any other language. Jehovah is the latinisation of Tetragrammaton YHWH. Its Aramaic form *Yâ Huwâ*, literally means O That! or O Thou! or O He! This was the permitted expression used to address the Deity of the Israelites. This Deity’s name was not to be pronounced in fear of profaning the "ineffable name". In “Jehovah”, the emphasis is on *hova* (- *huwa*), stressing “that Existence” or “that He”. Therefore, Jehovah can hardly be a proper name. The name found in other languages for Supreme Being is either attributive or descriptive. Hindus give their senior Deity the name Par-Mâtma (the Super Soul), Par-Barahman (the Super and the Great), *Par-Mishwar* (the Great King or Owner). The Parsis give their supreme God the name of Yazdan (the Spirit of goodness). The Sikh call their great Deity that means the Truth.

There are a few verses in the Holy Qur’ân where Allâh calls Himself **Al-Rahmân** الْرَّحْمَن (the Most Gracious). “The Most Gracious gives those who are steeped in error long respite,” (19:75), “The Day when the Most Gracious shall gather those who guard against evil before Him as honoured delegates” (19:85). A closer look at these verses reveals that here the Divine grace and Mercy are emphasized.. Al-Rahmân is in its essence very close to the proper name Allâh in that this name cannot be shared by any. On the other hand, the servants of Allâh can share Allâh’s Attributes of similarity, like He sees, He speaks and He hears. *Rahmâniyyat* is a kind of mercy beyond the

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power of the human mind. To this end, He has combined His two names by saying:

اَدْعُو اللَّهَ اَوْ اَدْعُو الرَّحْمَنَ ۖ اَيَا مَا تَدْعُوا فَلَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ

“Call upon (Him by the name of) Allâh, or call upon (Him by the name of) al-Râhmân. Call upon Him in whatsoever name you like; all beautiful names belong to Him”. (17:110)

The use of the word Father for the Self-Subsisting and All-Sustaining Deity does not fall into the category of beautiful names. When father is taken to mean one who produces his offspring from a female, then how can we call a Deity the Self-Sufficient when He has to depend on the womb of a woman to produce a son. In this context, this name can be rather disrespectful to Him.

وَقُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي لَمْ يَتَّخِذْ وَلَدًا وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ شَرِيكٌ فِي الْمُلْكِ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ
وَلِيٌّ مِنَ الذُّلُّ ۖ وَكَبِيرٌ تَكْبِيرًا

“All true and perfect praise belong to Allâh, Who has not taken to Himself a son, and Who has no associate partner in His kingdom, nor has He any helper because of weakness, and extol His glory with repeated glorification.” (17:111)

If one goes through the pages of the Holy Qur’ân, the reader soon realizes that this Book is not introducing a new Deity. It is presenting the same Eternal Being Who has always been present in the illuminated human heart, in human conscience (30:8; 30:30), and in many heavens and many earths (6.12), Who is visible in the mirror of the laws of cosmos and is discernible in the book of nature (30:8; 39:5-6; 41:9-12; 65:12). He is the same God Who was worshipped by Noah, Abraham, Ismâ‘il, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Jesus and all other Prophets, be they known or unknown to us (4:163-164; 2:132-133,136; 3:84; 40:78; 42:13). All divinely revealed paths lead to the same summit, and that is the religion of the Prophets (3:31).

People have an individual concept of their Lord, and they ascribe a name to Him in which they seek Him. So long as a Deity is presented to them that fits into their fancy and concept, they accept it and affirm it, whereas when the Deity is presented in any other form with another name, they deny it, flee from it and often treat it in an improper manner. When a worshipper, no matter to what faith he belongs, engages in worship with his sincere heart, devotion, and attention, he begins to experience Allâh's embracing Power and Mercy. He hardly escapes from true monotheist belief, even if in his outward appearance he displayed idolatrous behaviour. He becomes overwhelmed by gratefulness, praise and love for Him, temporarily forgetting his traditional beliefs. God says، صَوَّامُ وَبَيْعُ وَصَلَواتُ وَمَسَاجِدُ يُذْكَرُ فِيهَا اسْمُ اللَّهِ، كَثِيرًا - *in cloisters and churches and synagogues and mosques wherein it is the name Allâh is being mentioned frequently* (22:40). Thus, it is He who is being worshipped in the places of worship according to the upbringing and intellect of the worshipper (22:40; 2:114). Whom you think that they are worshipping besides God, for them they are not besides God. They imagine their God in those objects. They see their outward to be Gods outward and their inward to be His inward. They see in these objects His essence without asking how and why? On the Day of Resurrection, Allâh will present to His worshipper with all His Glories and Lights (50:22), the worshipper will not be able to recognize Him. Then He will present to him in the form He was worshipped by him, the worshipper will recognize Him.

تَبَارَكَ اسْمُ رَبِّكَ ذِي الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ

"Blessed is the Name of your [All-Sustaining] Lord, [the Possessor and Master] of all Glory and Honour." (55:78)



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Haqîqat al-Dhât Ilâhiyah

لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ

“*Nothing is as His exegesis*” (42:11)

In other words, He is not in His Essence similar to any other essence (42:11). The name Allâh denotes His Essence, which is the “Absolute Reality” (*Haqîqat al-Dhât* حقيقة الذات) and the Fountainhead of all creation, veiled from the worlds of bodies. His Essence is known only to Him, and He is existing through His own Essence, unbounded. The knowledge of His Reality (*ma'rifat Dhât Ilâhiya* معرفة ذات الهي) can be known neither through logical proof (*dalîl* دليل) nor through rational considerations (*burhân-i-'aqlî*). برهان عقلي He is the Only One Who knows His own Reality. He is Incomprehensible (*al-Latîf*, اللطيف, 6:103); no soul (*nafs* نفس) can comprehend His Gnosis, and no body (*jasd* جسد) can contain Him.

لَا تُنْرِكُهُ الْأَبْصَارُ وَهُوَ يُدْرِكُ الْأَبْصَارَ ۖ وَهُوَ الْلَّطِيفُ الْخَبِيرُ

“*The physical vision comprehends Him not, but He comprehends all visions, He is the All-Subtle Being (incomprehensible and imperceptible), the All-Aware.*” (6:103)

It is only He Who sees, hidden from His creation. He calls Himself the All-Knower (*al-'Alîm*), the Hearer (*al-Sam'î* السمعي), the Well-Aware (*al-Khabîr* الخبري). He listens the unspoken, He is aware of the conscious thoughts and has full knowledge of all that goes on within human subconscious, and all those ideals, ideas and ambitions that lie

hidden in the womb of futurity and which have never crossed his mind.

وَإِن تَجْهَرْ بِالْفَوْلِ فَإِنَّهُ يَعْلَمُ السُّرَّ وَأَحْفَى

“If you speak aloud, (He does not stand in need of it to let Him know), He knows the secret (thought) as well that which is yet deeper hidden [in your mind]” (20:7)

He calls Himself the First (*al-Awwal*) and the Last (*al-Âkhir*), the Manifest (*al-Zâhir*) and (*al-Bâtin*) (الظاهر والباطن) the Hidden. He unites in Himself the two polarities. He is the Elevated One (*al-'Aliy*), but above whom or what? More elevated than what and whom? He is elevated in Himself. His elevation is absolute and not relative, unrelated to other. His elevation is neither of degree nor of position, as these are the Attributes of person in power.

He exists of Himself, and He depends upon nothing to endow non-existence with existence. He is Holy - that is He is free from the weaknesses and limitations of bodily existence. He is infinite; He cannot be grasped by any imagination (عالم خيال). He is not only above all material limitations but also even beyond the limitations of metaphor. The cosmos is just a small bubble in the limitless Ocean that is He, so where do you stand. Your intellect is fitted for learning about the things that you can see, touch, taste or hear. “*This is the highest attainment of (your) knowledge*” ذَلِكَ مَتْلَعُّهُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ (53:30). How can you encompass Him when your own knowledge is like a scattered dust? Your qualities have limits. “The looks fall short, the intellects are perplexed, the hearts get blind, the knowledge lost in the desert of bewilderment (*hayrah* حيرة), the reason and the understanding plunges into stupidity, incapable of grasping the least secrets of His Grandeur (*Jalâl* جلال) and Majesty (*Jamâl*; جمال; 53:28). The realities in the cosmos are only a metaphor in the corner of His infinite Knowledge” (Ibn al-'Arabî). He alone is the source of all knowledge (68:1; 96:4-5; 55:4), of all perfections (76:3; 87:2), of all lights (24:35) of all

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beauties, and it is He Who origins creation and then guides it to Himself (87:3).

He is *al-Akbar* (- the Great), size is irrelevant to Him. He is *al-Azîm*, He cannot be measured. He is without limits, without dimension, not limited to a form, and no form can limit Him. His Essence is free from bodily attributes. Whatever that has a body, a location or space is not Him or a part of Him. He created the cosmos with His two hands, similar but opposite; but His Hands are not like other hands (39:67). He is the author of all creation, but neither His Pen (96:3–5) nor His Ink (68:1) are like any other ink and pen, nor is His Writing like other writing, nor is His Speech like other speech (55:4). He is the only One Who is Exalted and Glorified (الجلال), and Possessor of all Beauty (الجمال). Every moment He manifests Himself in a new state of Glory (55:29). “Reflection recedes, reason is inadequate, imagination is bewildered, and understanding is blank in the face of the Exaltation of Him who possesses Exaltation, Majesty and Greatness” (Ibn al-‘Arabî). Your knowledge is not capable of grasping the Infinite in any full and concrete sense. If you had to depend upon your mind alone, or are obliged to be content only with the evidence of your senses, you would never know Him. “Understanding and reasoning and imagining may do their utmost. But beyond, ever beyond, remain the Truth, the Essence and the Being” (Rûmî). Therefore, if you are aware that there is One Existential Who cannot be known (*maujûd lá ya’rafu* موجود لا يعرفوا), then verily “you know,” and when you acknowledge your inability to arrive at His Essence (*haqîqat al-Dhât* حقيقة الذات), and then “you have arrived.”

Every form and all entities in the universe come under the sway of His All-Comprehensive Knowledge (2:234). He is Who takes possession and cannot be possessed. He is the only Presence that comprehends all presences (*al-Wajûd al-Jâmi’i* الوجود الجامع), and no worshipper worships anything but this Presence in the houses of worship—may they be synagogues, cloisters, churches, temples, or mosques—with a

worship according to his intellect and upbringing (2:114; 22:40). He is neither above you nor below on the place of your prostration. “Wherever you turn your face, you will find Him there” (2:115) and “He will be with you wherever you may” in your state of existence or of non-existence.

People have raised His creatures to the level of divinity. This claim has split them into factions, and each group is satisfied with what it has (23:53). How dare we imagine that He would step down from His Throne of immense Powers to enter in the form of a being like us or to give birth to a son through the womb of a woman?

سُبْحَانَ رَبِّكَ رَبِّ الْعِزَّةِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ

“Holy is your Lord, the Lord of all honour and [immense] power. He is far above the things they attribute (to Him).” (37:180)

We become knowingly ignorant of Him. How can a limitless, infinite Being be contained in the mind or a body of such a limited being as a we are? He has no resemblance with His creation in form, nor do any of His creatures resemble Him. He is not like anything else (42:11). So transcendent is He and so far above all material conception that a likeness of Him cannot be conceived. He is beyond all comparison. How can we claim and maintain that “someone” like us can also be like Him? They who make such claims are misguided and they misguide others;

وَمَا لَهُمْ بِهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ ۝ إِنْ يَتَبَعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنُّ ۝ وَإِنَّ الظَّنَّ لَا يُعْنِي مِنَ الْحَقِّ
شَيْئًا

“And they have no knowledge of the matter (concerning Him). They follow nothing but conjecture; yet by no means can a conjecture be a substitute for the established Truth.” (53:28)

They keep on wandering in utter darkness with their conjectures about Him, because they keep their eyes shut and make their hearts heedless, and their ears become sealed (2:18) to listen to the Real One (*al-Haqq* الحُقْقُ when He speaks (2:7) through His Revelations and through His Prophets (57:9). He is the One without beginning (57:3), contradicting any priority in the sense of existence or non-existence. He is the Unique One (*Ahad* أَحَدٌ) and the Only One in His Existence (*al-Wāhid* الْوَاحِدُ), His Unique One-ness (*Ahadiyyat* أَحَدِيَّةٌ) cannot be shared, added to, or subtracted from by any other number (112:1). He is neither three in one nor one in three. He is beyond equal or similar, free from any reality other than His own Reality. He is the One without oneness. Only the servitude ('*abûdiyyat* عَبُودِيَّةٌ) of a worshipper has a link to His Oneness (- *ahadiyyat* أَحَدِيَّةٌ).

He alone possesses the Attributes of Mighty Glory (*al-Jalâl*) and Beautiful Majesty (*al-Jamâl*). He is the Only Reality (*al-Haqq* الحُقْقُ), invisible and concealed by the veil of protecting Might (*hijâb al-Izza* حِجَابُ الْعَزَّةِ). He has veiled His entire creation with “seventy thousand” veils. His Veils are part of His Oneness, not separated from Him. The Light of His Theophany (*tajallî* تَجْلِي) covers Him, and the most brilliant of the lights in the cosmos will turn into obscurity before His Light (24:35). No body (*jasd* جَسَدٌ) will be able to bear His brilliance (7:143). If He would remove just one veil and manifests a glimpse of His Lordship (*tajallî-i-Rabûbiyyat* تَجْلِي رَبوبِيَّةٌ), we would be unable to stand it; we would be crushed down into thousand pieces, like that mountain consumed by fire (7:143). This was the lot of the Mount where Moses stood, so where do we suppose we will be when He manifests a glimpse of the Uniqueness of His Divine Theophany and Glory (*tajallî-i-Ûlûhiyya* تَجْلِي أَلْوَهِيَّةٌ)? So praised be He Who veils Himself from the mortals. How can we enumerate His Praise as it deserves to be appreciated? We have our limits. He has, therefore, praised Himself with His own words ﴿الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ﴾ “*all praise is due to the rightfully worshipped Being whose name is Allâh, Who combines in Himself the aggregate of all Perfect Excellences and Praise*” (1:2).!

His worshippers endowed with insight and understanding (*ahl al-Basîr wa Ûl'albâb*، اهل البصیر والباب), treading on the path illuminated by Him, can arrive at only the last veil of His Glory and Might (*hijâb al-'Izzâ*), which He will never lift, for there is no way to raise that veil (53:7-12). They will stand before His last veil of Glory and Might (53:14), that is *sidrat al-Muntahâ*، سِدْرَةُ الْمُنْتَهَى, the farthest end of Knowledge, *near there is the Garden, which is the real eternal abode* عِنْدَهَا جَنَّةُ الْمَأْوَى and He, the Lord of Glory and Might (*Rabb al-'Izzâ*; ربُّ الْعِزَّة; 37:180), will call to them and respond to them in abundance, for they will be sanctified and exalted by Him.

Our eyes shall continue to stray far and wide, looking for Him. Our questions and cries “O! Where are You?” melt into tears of a thousand streams, though He deluges the world with assurances: فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ “I am nearby indeed!” (2:186); وَأَنْحَنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ حَبْلِ الْوَرِيدِ; We are nearer to him [the human being] than even (his) jugular vein” (50:16); وَنَعْلَمُ مَا تُوَسِّعُ بِهِ نَفْسُهُ “and We know what suggestions (your) mind makes” (50:16). When the eyes are finally shut down, we shall hear Him say, لَدَّا كُنْتَ فِي غَفَّةٍ مِنْ هَذَا فَكَشَفْنَا عَنْكَ غِطَاءَكَ فَبَصَرُكَ الْيَوْمَ حَدِيدٌ “Certainly, you were heedless of this day. But (now) We have removed from you your veil and your sight is very sharp this day [to look beyond the veils that covered you]” (50:22). Your soul’s existence shall never cease but his ignorance about Him shall cease (56:35). Extol, therefore, the Holiness of the Name of your Lord (87:1):

سُبْحَانَ رَبِّكَ رَبِّ الْعِزَّةِ

“Holy is your Lord, the Lord of all honour and power”
(37:180)।



SELF-DISCLOSURE OF THE VEILED REALITY

Wahî - Ilhâm – Nazûl

هُوَ الَّذِي يُنَزِّلُ عَلَىٰ عَبْدِهِ آيَاتٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ لِّيُخْرِجَكُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ ۝

“It is He Who sends down clear signs to His servant that He may lead you from all kinds of darkness (of ignorance) into the light (of faith).” (57:9)

When you say, “*God is He Who created the heavens and the earth*” (14:32), you acknowledge Him reflected in His creation, but the ultimate knowledge of Him comes only through His unveiling, His Self-Disclosure and His Speech. Only through these do you find the ultimate proofs of His Presence. Allâh, Who desires to be known by you, reveals Himself out of the Grace of His Mercy (*Rahmânîyyat* (رحمانیت) by which humanity is surrounded. In other words, you come to know Him through Him. He calls you to Him, and you are directed to Him through Him. Without His call, you would not have known Him.

وَمَا كَانَ لِبَشَرٍ أَنْ يُكَلِّمَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا وَحْدَهُ أَوْ مِنْ وَرَاءِ حِجَابٍ أَوْ يُرْسِلَ رَسُولًا فَيُؤْخِي بِإِذْنِهِ مَا يَشَاءُ ۝

“It is not given to a human being that Allâh should speak to him except by direct revelation [wahî] or from behind a veil or by sending a messenger [an angel] who should reveal (to him) by His command what He pleases.” (42:51)

That means Allâh addresses the human being with a message fitting the capacity of the individual who receives it. In the Qur’ânic narration about Moses, you read:

فَلَمَّا جَاءَهَا نُودِيَ أَنْ بُوْرِكَ مَنْ فِي النَّارِ وَمَنْ

“**حَوْلَهَا وَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ**” So when he came (close) to it [the fire] he was called by a voice, Blessed be he who is in quest of the fire (of Divine light) and blessed are those around this (place of the fire), Holy is Allâh, the Lord of the worlds” (27:8). Here the One Who calls Himself the Lord of the worlds, speaks to a human being, not “face to face” (cf. 6:103), but from behind a veil of Light. You also read, وَنَادَيْنَاهُ وَنَادَيْنَاهُ مِنْ جَانِبِ الطُّورِ الْأَيْمَنِ وَقَرَبَنَاهُ تَجْيِيًّا “And We called out to him from the blessed side of the Mount” (19:52), that is He spoke to Moses from behind the veil of the mountain, and so He spoke to Mary from the veil of a slope, (cf. 19:24, where you read: فَنَادَاهَا مِنْ تَحْتِهَا أَلَا تَحْزَنِي قَدْ جَعَلَ رَبُّكَ تَحْتَكِ سَرِيًّا “Then a voice called her from the side of the slope by her (saying), ‘Do not grieve, your Lord has placed a rivulet on the side of the slope by you.’” The Holy Prophet (pbuh) said, “There is knowledge that has the guise of the hidden [maknûn]; none knows it but those who are Allâh’s true servants and have the knowledge of Him through Him. When they speak of it, none denies it but those who are deluded about Him.”

Words of Allâh come down in the language of nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs (cf. 2:124, 259, 260; 11:36–37, 44, 46; 20:12–47; 27:9–12; 28:7). Many refuse to accept the existence of Divine Discourse. The philosophers negate it, because they have no access to Faith. Others accept it and affirm it according to their consideration. The Saints, the Gnostics, the Prophets, and seekers of Allâh affirm it through their own tasting of His unveiling. You will find words like *tanzîl* تَنْزِيل (2:185; 44:3; 46:2; 97:1), *rûh* رُوح (15:29; 21:91; 32:9; 38:72; 42:52), *wahî* وَحْيٌ (4:163; 8:12; 16:68; 41:12), and *ilhâm* إِلهَام (91:8) are used for Divine Revelation. They do not have the same meaning. They are mentioned in the Holy Qur’ân in different places and in different contexts. Their use is to express different level, type and purpose of Divine Revelation.

The Word *tanzîl* تَنْزِيل is derived from *nazala*, which means “to descend” or “to come down.” *Anzala* means “to send down” or “to

send a Revelation.” You will read: “تَنْزِيلُ الْكِتَابِ مِنَ اللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَكِيمِ [The gradual revelation /tanzîl; descent] of this perfect Book precedes from Allâh the All-Mighty, the All-Wise” (46:2).

The literal meaning of the Word **rûh** روح is “breath of life” and “life giving and soothing mercy”. Its root word is *rahata*, meaning “to rest from grief and sadness.” This Word is often used in the Holy Qur’ân in the sense of Divine Mercy, as in 15:29, 21:91, 32:9, and 38:72. It وَكَذَلِكَ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ رُوحًا مِّنْ أَنْفُسِنَا also means “Word of the All-Mighty,” as in, “أَنْفُسًا (Prophet!) Just so (as We sent revelations to other Prophets), We revealed to you the Word [Rûh] by Our command” (42:52). *Rûh* is thus the life-giving Command امر of the All-Mighty, since it gives life to hearts that were full of grief, that were sad and dead. This word is also used for “angel,” as in 19:17 and Archangel Gabriel (*rûh al-Quds* رُوح الْقُدْسٍ, 16:102). *Al-Rûh* الرُّوحُ is used for divine inspiration, as in 16:68 and *al-Rûh al-Amin*, الرُّوحُ الْأَمِينُ (26:193), as they are the messengers of Divine Revelations. In order to give proper meaning to the word *rûh* you have to consider if it occurs without the Arabic suffix *al* as *rûh* روح or with *al* as *al-Rûh* الرُّوحُ.

The literal meaning of the Word **wahî** (أَوْحَيْنَا) in 42:52) throws light on the phenomenon of Revelation and its operation. It is derived from *waha*, which means “to tell someone something in a hushed tone or a whisper,” which is easily understood by the one who is addressed even though the people who happen to be nearby cannot understand or hear it (Ibn Duraid). This quality operates in all types of Revelations. This very fundamental quality of *wahî* provides sceptical people reasons to deny its existence. The Word **ilhâm** إلهام literally means instinct, intimation or innate faculties. You are told:

وَنَفْسٌ وَمَا سَوَّا هَافَالَّهُمَّهَا فُجُورُهَا وَنَقْوَاهَا

“And the (human) soul [nafs] and That (Mighty Lord) Who made it perfect. Then He revealed to it [the soul] (the ways of) its evil and its righteousness” (91:7–8)

It is through *ilhâm* the human soul knows the two ways: the way of *fujûr* (of evils) and the way of *taqwâ* (of piety). In the Holy Qur'ân, the Word *ilhâm* is also used for Divine inspiration, Revelation, and Command. Sayed Ismâ'îl Shahîd in his book *Mansab-i-Imâmat* stated that in the Book of Allâh *ilhâm* in its perfect sense, when used with regards to the Prophets or Saints, is called *wahî*. In *Tâj al-'Arûs*, you find the same mention. Sayûtî and Ibn Athîr hold the same view. According to them, *ilhâm* is a form of *wahî* vouchsafed by the All-Mighty to whomsoever He pleases of His servants (30:48). *Wahî* is thus the higher form of *ilhâm*, or inspiration. Metaphorically, in the Divine Book, the “sending of rain” and the “sending of laden winds” also denote Divine Revelation. For example, you read:

اللَّهُ الَّذِي يُرْسِلُ الرِّيَاحَ فَتَثِيرُ سَحَابًا فَيَسْطُطُهُ فِي السَّمَاءِ كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ وَيَجْعَلُهُ كَسَقًا فَتَرَى الْوَدْقَ يَخْرُجُ مِنْ خَلَالِهِ ۝ فَإِذَا أَصَابَ بِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ إِذَا هُمْ يَسْتَبِّرُونَ وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يُنَزَّلَ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ لُمْبُسِينَ فَانْظُرْ إِلَى آثَارِ رَحْمَتِ اللَّهِ كَيْفَ يُحِيِّي الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا

“It is Allâh alone who sends forth the winds and they raise (the vapours to form) a cloud which He spreads out in the sky as He will and sets it layer upon layer, and you see the rain falling from its midst. And no sooner does He cause it [the Divine Revelation] to fall on whom He will of His servants, then they (the people) are filled with joy (because of the glad tidings). Though shortly before it was sent down upon them they were in a state of despondency. Look, therefore, at the evidences of Allâh’s mercy! how He breathes life into the earth (making it green and flourishing) after its (state of) death.” (30:48–50)

The water is of two types (see 25:53; 35:12). One type of water is that of springs and rivers mixed with salts and mud (25:53), though its origin is of the wholesome, pure, cool, and fresh rainwater. This water symbolizes the knowledge that comes from your rational thinking and

intellect, which can vary in quality according to the amount of mud and sediment mixed in it. Those who drink from the river water make different statements about the same thing at different times and different places, since their knowledge may be clouded by preconceived notions and prejudices. The other type is rainwater described in 30:48-50, that is pure, free from any contamination, with the highest degree of clarity and refinement. It is the water converted from dense vapours and clouds. This water is compared with the Divine Knowledge and Divine Revelation, which is pure and which purifies your essence for intimate Divine Converse (*mukâlimah* مكالمة) with your Lord. The water descending from the One Most High is pure, and those who taste it make the same statements and do not differ; rather they confirm one another.

Divine Revelation is the ultimate source of knowledge

The All-Mighty has endowed each human being with two types of faculties; one is the rational faculty, whose source is the human intellect, and the other is the spiritual faculty, whose source is the human “heart” (*qalb* قلب, plural: *qulûb* قلوب) (2:7; 6:46; 8:24; 22:46; 50:33). The issues that cannot be resolved with your rational faculty are unraveled by your spiritual faculty. According to *Imâm Abû al-Qâsim Husain al-Râghib*, Revelation is a certain knowledge that is received from an unknown source. Guidance through intellect is limited, but the guidance from Revelation brings to fore those dimensions that are beyond the grasp of your ordinary comprehension. Revelation thus compensates certain deficiencies in the laws of nature.

The All-Knowing (*al-'Alîm* العليم) is the source of all knowledge that you (and all human beings) receive. He enables you to acquire knowledge through several sources and in many stages. They are, for example, instinct, intuition, comprehension, preliminary discrimination, feelings, ideas, thinking, reasoning, deliberation, inspiration (*ilhâm*), Revelation (*wahi*) and Divine Communication

(*mukâlimah*). The acquired knowledge has three states, as mentioned in the Holy Qur'ân. They are: '*ilm al-Yaqîn*', عِيْنُ الْيَقِيْنِ, '*ain al-Yaqîn*' حقُّ الْيَقِيْنِ and '*haqq al-Yaqîn*' حَقُّ الْيَقِيْنِ.

'Ilm al-Yaqîn عِلْمُ الْيَقِيْنِ is the state of knowledge acquired through inference (102:5). This is the elementary state of knowledge that comes out of experience of causes and inference through logic and intellect, like how you can infer the presence of fire by seeing the smoke. This state of knowledge is exemplified in the Holy Qur'ân with these Words:

اَللّٰهُ اَكْمَلَ التَّكَاثُرُ حَتَّى زُرْتُمُ الْمَقَابِرَ كَلَّا سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ ثُمَّ كَلَّا سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ
كَلَّا لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ عِلْمَ الْيَقِيْنِ

"(O people! your) vying with one another to excel in multiplying worldly possessions diverts you (from God and true values of life), Until (on your death) you embrace the graves. Nay, (you should never hanker after worldly gains, power and position,) you shall come to know in time (that you have been chasing a shadow). Nay, again (We repeat, never should you misuse your life of probation,) you shall come to know (the consequences of it) in time. No, never! If you only knew the consequences thereof with sure and certain knowledge (borne out of your experience and inference [‘ilm al-Yaqîn])" (102:1–5)

'Ain al-Yaqîn عِيْنُ الْيَقِيْنِ is the knowledge acquired through sight (102:7). This is a higher state of knowledge, which comes from the subjective experience of nature and the laws of nature or is deduced from external facts, like how you can deduce (prove) the presence of the sun by seeing its rising. '*Ain al-Yaqîn*' is the knowledge from the "eye of certainty," which is illustrated in the Holy Qur'ân with these Words:

لَتَرَوْنَ الْجَحِيْمَ ثُمَّ لَتَرَوْنَهَا عِيْنُ الْيَقِيْنِ

“You will certainly see the very Hell-Fire (in this present life by seeing the sad fate of the wicked). Again, you shall most certainly see it (in the Hereafter) with the eye of certainty [‘ain al-Yaqîn].” (102:6–7)

The events occurring to you after your death shall be opened to you, and you shall see them as if you are looking at them, and no doubt of any kind will be left for what you see.

Haqq al-Yaqîn is the state of knowledge with perfect, true and absolute certainty. This is the highest state of knowledge (56:95), which is based on direct experience and taste, rather than by inference or by sight. In this final, highest stage, the All-Mighty manifests Himself in all His Glory and with His voice:

وَأَمَّا إِنْ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُكَذِّبِينَ الضَّالِّينَ فَنُرْثُ مِنْ حَمِيمٍ وَتَصْلِيَةً جَحِيمٍ إِنْ هَذَا
لَهُوَ حَقُّ الْيَقِينِ فَسَبِّحْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الْعَظِيمِ

“But if he belongs to those who deny the truth and are steeped in error, then (he will be offered) boiling water for an entertainment, and burning in Hell. Verily, this (fact) is a perfect certainty حَقُّ الْيَقِينِ [haqq al-Yaqîn] (not merely a certainty by inference or sight), Therefore glorify the name of your Lord, the Incomparably Great.” (56:92)

This verse refers to a knowledge that cannot be known to a human being without Divine Revelation. Divine Revelation is the only source for you to know something with perfect and true certainty (حَقُّ الْيَقِينِ), not merely a certainty by inference about that Reality Who is hidden (*al-Haqîqat al-Ghaibiyah*). With this kind of knowledge, you feel divine existence from every direction and in every moment that you are conscious of His presence. This knowledge is imparted to you directly from above, and logical reasoning and the knowledge of nature are left far behind.

Deliverance from sin, which is a deed or a thought that causes disquiet in your heart and feelings of guilt in your mind, can only be achieved through guidance coming directly from Allâh's guidance and not from intercession by someone. Righteousness, and sublime morals, having no poisonous adulteration of selfish desires, can only be obtained through worship and prayer while treading on the path as shown in the form of Revelation to the Prophets. Their guidance is the only true guidance through which these high qualities can come to you. Underneath the apparently pure exterior of some sermon readers, self-proclaimed religious guides, and ascetics, whose hearts are unaware of Divine Revelation, there is a lot of dirt. These guides misguide, as their inner condition is tainted with ugly traits; no sooner are they alone than they become prone to commit such misdeeds, which is clear evidence of their being far removed from the pure fountain of genuine morals. Jalâl al-Dîn Rûmî said: “No one can find the deliverance from sin without perfect certainty (حَقُّ الْيَقِين), for I know the inside stories of many an old and many a young man.”

The necessity of Divine Revelation

Some say that human intellect, your instinct, or your intuitive ecstatic perception can lead to Divine Knowledge and to a state of spiritual exaltation, and that there is no need for Divine Revelation. The impact of the human intellect, however, is limited. It gives knowledge only of nature's phenomena through your physical senses. Such knowledge remains within the limitations of time and space. Through it you can neither easily understand life nor understand it with perfection. On the other hand, through your human instinct you can understand life more easily, because instinct is nurtured and perfected in life's mold. But instinct also has its own limitations.

The intuitive, ecstatic perception called *wijdân* وجدان is yet a more developed faculty than either intellect or instinct; it is a faculty that could be considered cosmic intellect, or illuminated wisdom. It

occupies an important place in Hinduism and Buddhism and even in early Christian monasticism. In the mid-centuries of Islam, the period of deviation, practices to reach the state of *wijdân* replaced worship in the retreats of errant *sūfīs*. Since *wijdân* also had some escapist aspects, the spark of piety in such *sūfīs* was extinguished, and they started to experience ecstasies and hallucinations that were often triggered by consumption of narcotics or by music or dance.

The self-reproaching spirit (*nafs al-Lawwāmah* نفّس الواامة) is the voice of your conscience, which becomes loud when an act of indecency is committed. It is the voice arising from the innermost recesses of the human mind, a voice worthy of being heeded. You receive guidance through it for setting up standards of good and evil. If this voice is kept alive, and if it is heeded, many knotty problems of morality can be unraveled through it. That is why the Holy Prophet (pbuh) is reported to have said: “A sin can be defined as a deed that causes disquiet in your heart.” However, the conscience of this voice alone is neither enough to purify the self nor is a reliable guide for us humans. Very often this voice is muted because of one’s constant inattention to it. Moreover, your ideas, sentiments, and emotions are shaped by your environment. When such ideas and inclinations become ingrained in the mind, one’s conscience is also cast into their mold, and then a person cannot understand or think in any manner counter to the environment in which he is brought up, and that environment may have corrupted the righteous voice of the conscience. In short, mere conscience is insufficient for attaining piety and God-Gnosis.

The human senses, intellect, *wijdân*, instinct, and the voice of the conscience are very limited, and the guidance provided by them to human beings cannot go beyond a certain stage in comprehending the hidden realties. What lies beyond this stage where you cannot reach? What lies hidden behind the veil beyond where your physical eyes cannot see, and where your intellect cannot perceive? What universes exist beyond the stars? Here fails all human intellect, here fail all your

physical and logical powers. You get tired and lost if no further light and guidance can be provided. You are told:

وَعَلَى اللَّهِ قَصْدُ السَّبِيلِ وَمِنْهَا جَائِرٌ

“And (because He is our Creator) upon Allâh lies (the responsibility of) leading to the right path, for there are some (paths) deviating (from the right and moderate course and so they lead astray).” (16:9).

How wonderful is this Message, which creates hope in you. You start off with your perceptions, become aroused with lofty flights of your intellect, listen to the voice of nature, admit the existence of *wijdân*, recognize the human conscience; but above all these, you harken to the voice of your Lord: فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ أُحِبُّ دُعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ “I am nearby indeed, I answer the Prayer of the supplicant when he prays to Me” (2:186). Only this Voice leads you from what you think is the certainty (*Ilm al-Yaqîn* or ‘ain al-Yaqîn) to the real and perfect knowledge of truth with absolute certainty (*haqq al-Yaqîn*). The spring of life’s knowledge gushes out of this very *haqq al-Yaqîn*. The wings that enable you to fly high to the spiritual realms are these very wings of certainty that come directly from the Divine Revelation. It is this voice of certainty that leads you to the Presence of the All-Mighty in your very life. You do not put your hand in the fire, because you are certain that it will burn. You do not eat poison, because you are certain that it will kill you. Similarly, if there is a perfect certainty (*haqq al-Yaqîn*) in your heart about the existence of the All-Mighty, about His Awesomeness, His Magnificent Greatness, His Sovereignty, and His being the Master of the Day of Requital, then such certainty would definitely save you from fire and punishments in this very world as well as in the hereafter.

The extent of all possible realities is not confined only to the realities that you can perceive through your five senses. It would be foolish to assert that you admit to the existence of only those things that you can

see with your eyes, or can taste with your tongue, or smell with your nose, or hear with your ears, or touch with your hands. Nor should your realities be limited to those that your intellect can deduce. Logic, too, in itself, is not free of errors. Even a sound logical argument is only as strong as the assumptions on which it rests. Many philosophers master logic, but in contrast to the natural sciences, which are founded on observations and measurements, and in contrast to Islamic theology, which is founded on the revelation of the Holy Qur'ân, moral philosophy has no sound foundation for axioms on which philosophers apply their logic. Therefore the morals and ethical standards advocated by philosophers and secular societies are subject to fashions and follow the currents of the zeitgeist. You need a guide who sets you on to the right path leading to the knowledge about your Creator. Human beings need such a guide whose vision and perceptions, whose understanding of this life and of the hereafter, are free of errors, a guide who can lead to perfect certainty, like this one, when he saw the Divine Manifestation, his

مَا زَاغَ الْبَصَرُ وَمَا طَغَىٰ لَقْدَ رَأَىٰ مِنْ آيَاتِ رَبِّهِ الْكَبِيرِ

"Eye deviated not (from the certainty of the Truth) nor did it wander away (from the invincible faith on which he stood). (It was the moment when) he saw the greatly important signs of his Lord". (53:17–18)

You need the blessing and direction of Divine Revelation through such a chosen guide, because societies whose individuals are immersed in their own self-interests and whose ideological bases are resting on the prejudices of race and colour, on nationality and patriotism without moral guidance, are plagued by the exploitation of some groups by others. This lack of moral direction eventually leads to societal struggle along class and other lines of separation. The failures of colonialism, fascism, Nazism, communism, and apartheid are just a few recent examples of failed, misguided social ideologies.

It is essential that a messenger with the strength of Divine Revelation be sent according to the Divine Law mentioned in 16:9 and that he should be assisted in this mission. You read:

رَبُّنَا الَّذِي أَعْطَى كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلْقَةً ثُمَّ هَدَى

“Our Lord is He Who gives every creation its (proper) form and character and then guides them along the path” (20:50).

Thus, Divine Revelation is a human need. If you look closely, you find that both the physical and the spiritual systems of human beings operate under the same laws of nature. Just as He, the High, has provided for you according to your physical needs, similarly has He catered to the needs of your spirit and has provided means for you to meet those needs.

“Revelation” is a Divine Command

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الرُّوحِ قُلِ الرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي وَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا

“And they question you about the revelation and the human soul. Say, The revelation and the soul is by the command of my Lord (because) little is the knowledge thereof that you have been given.” (17:85)

Divine Revelation is a Divine Command (42:52) and is therefore not subjected to any law that is known to human beings or to any unknown law of physics. It comes directly from the High, without going through the stages of reasoning, with a “sure and direct descent.” The universe is ruled by this very Command, and you cannot define the existence of the universe without Divine Command. You read: وَأَوْحَى فِي كُلِّ سَمَاءٍ أَمْرَهَا “And He assigned [أَوْحَى] to each (heaven) its (relevant) function” (41:12). Similarly, in chapter 99, you read: يَوْمَنِ تُخَدَّثُ أَخْبَارَهَا بِأَنَّ رَبَّكَ أَوْحَى لَهَا “That Day she [the earth] will

relate all her news (pertaining to every action done on it). For your Lord will have inspired [أَوْحَى] her (to do so)" (99:4–5). You read at another place: وَأَوْحَىٰ رَبُّكَ إِلَيْكَ أَنَّ الْجَنَّاتِ مِنَ الْجَنَّاتِ بَيْتُنَا وَمِنَ الشَّجَرِ وَمِمَّا يَعْرُشُونَ "And your Lord inspired [أَوْحَى] the bees (saying), Make your hives in the hills and in the trees and in the trellises which the people erect" (16:68). These places all use the word أَوْحَى, whose root word *wahâ*, which stands for Divine Revelation, and in all these places there is a Divine Command.

Stages of Divine Revelation

Divine Revelation (17:85; 41:12; 42:51; 99:2–5) evolved in stages in the same manner as the human intellect evolved, till it covered all aspects of human life. In its perfection it covered the aspects to satisfy all human requirements. In its evolutionary stages it begins from its primitive form, the *malaka fitrî* (natural faculty; 99:5), *wahî taskhî* (instinctive inspiration; 16:68), *wahî ikhtiâr* (the inspiration to choose between good and evil; 91:8), *nafs fi al-Rau* (installment into the mind; 8:12), *dâ il al-Khair* (calling to good), and it rises qualitatively to a level that can be considered as actual Revelation, from *ru'ya sâliha* (true dreams; 12:4), *kashaf* (visions; 2:259), *wahî malfûz* (Revelation with definite words; 20:38), and *mukâlimah* (Divine Discourse, dialogue with the All-Mighty; 20:11–45), *wahî matlûw* (Revelation that comes down in words with a message for many).

The very initial and crude form of Revelation is dreams that turn out to be true. They are called *ru'ya sâliha*. This type of Revelation can be compared with sunlight, which falls on all the inhabitants of the world. It falls on a heap of dirt as well as on a diamond, and according to the respective capabilities; its effect can be seen. Even the transgressor is not deprived of this. An example of this can be found in the Qur'anic chapter Joseph (12:36; 12:43), where even a convicted criminal received a true dream, which was then interpreted by Joseph. The true dreams make it easy for "ordinary" people to accept the

existence of Divine Revelation and so that no excuse is left not to follow the call of the Prophets. Such Revelations are sent to encourage you to tread the path of purity and righteousness.

Ru'ya sâliha or true dreams are the elementary stage of *wahî*. They are the exposition or the manifestation of some truth in a dream. This type of dream should not be confused with *izghâth* (confused dreams) and *ahlâm* (sexual dreams; see 12:44), nor with dreams that are influenced by diseases, unsatisfied desires, and other unconscious processes in the human mind. This difference has been known to Arab scholars for centuries, and they have coined different words for different qualities of dreams. In their attempts to interpret dreams, Western psychoanalysts and interpreters such as Thomas Brown (17th Century), Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung (19th Century), Calvin Hall (20th Century) and others have come forward with theories and explanations that have already been dealt with in detail in the past by Muslim scholars through much more comprehensive analyses. Nablûsî, Ibn ‘Abbâs , Khâlid Isfahânî, Ibn Shâhîn, and Abû Sa‘îd Wais are some of Muslim analysts who excelled in this field (see *Ta’lîr al-Anâm* by Nablûsî). Al-Kindi (Alkindus) (801–873 CE) wrote a treatise on dream interpretation: *On Sleep and Dreams*. On consciousness studies Al-Farâbî (872–951 CE) wrote *On the Cause of Dreams*. In *The Canon of Medicine* Avicenna extended the theory of temperaments to encompass "emotional aspects, mental capacity, moral attitudes, self-awareness, movements and dreams". Ibn Khaldûn (732–808 AH/1332–1406 CE) wrote the following on dream interpretation: Often, we may deduce [the existence of] that high spiritual world, and the essences it contains, from visions and things we had not been aware of while awake but which we find in our sleep and which are brought to our attention in it and which, if they are true [dreams], conform with actuality. We thus know that they are true and come from the world of Truth. "Confused dreams," on the other hand, are pictures of the imagination that are stored inside by perception and

to which the ability to think is applied, after [man] has retired from sense perception. (*Muqaddimah*, translated by F. Rosenthal)

The vast world of *ru'ya sâliha* has not been correctly grasped by Western thinkers and psychologists. *Ru'ya sâliha* have a direct relationship with *wahî* and *ilhâm* but have nothing to do with dreams that result from disturbed minds. A most definitive statement about dreams has been given by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), who said that dreams are of three kinds: self-suggestion, satanic instigation (*takhfîf al-shaitân*), and glad tidings from Allâh (*bushrâ min Allâh*). *Ru'ya sâliha* have their base in human nature. They are a special faculty of Prophets and Saints, and their true interpretation and meaning are taught to them: You can read, “(*Remember the time when Joseph said to his father, My dear father! I have seen (in a vision) eleven stars and the sun and the moon. I saw them falling down prostrate (before God) because of me*)” (12:4). The interpretation of his dream was at once understood by his father, Jacob, who advised him not to narrate his dream to his brothers.

Kashaf كشف is a form of Revelation higher in grade than the true dream. Literally, the root *kashafa* كشف means “to open” or “to unveil.” *Kashaf* is an experience wherein a person in a state of consciousness and wakefulness enters a spiritual world and gets information about some truths from the All-Mighty. This is the kind of a dream that occurs within a wakeful, conscious state. Normally, the physical eye cannot see beyond a veil, and the physical ear cannot hear a distant voice, but in the state of a *kashaf*, these veils are lifted, and the distance of time and space are overcome. In the Books of Tradition, there is a mention of a *kashaf* of ‘Umar Ibn al-Khattâb^(rz), the second Caliph. While delivering a sermon in the mosque of Madînah, he suddenly shouted twice, “O Sâriyâ! Look towards the mountain!” All those who were listening to his sermon witnessed his cry. Sâriyâ was the commander of the Muslim forces fighting in Syria, hundreds of miles away, who reported to his troops that he had heard the voice of

‘Umar^(rz) warning him of his enemy from the side of the mountain. His troops witnessed that Sâriyâ told them what he heard. He obeyed the voice of ‘Umar^(rz) and delivered the Muslim forces from an attack from the side of the mountain. Such visions are backed by historical evidence, and none should dismiss them as fables of the past. Nor should they be dismissed as visual or acoustic hallucinations, because their quality is quite different. The Holy Qur’ân describes a vision of Ezekiel in the following words:

أَوْ كَالَّذِي مَرَّ عَلَىٰ قُرْبَةً وَهِيَ حَاوِيَةٌ عَلَىٰ عُرُوشَهَا قَالَ أَنَّىٰ يُحْبِي هَذِهِ اللَّهُ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا ۝ فَأَمَاتَهُ اللَّهُ مِائَةً عَامٍ ثُمَّ بَعَثَهُ ۝ قَالَ كَمْ لَبِثْتُ ۝ قَالَ لَبِثْتُ يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ ۝ قَالَ بَلْ لَبِثْتُ مِائَةً عَامٍ فَانظُرْ إِلَى طَعَامِكَ وَشَرَابِكَ لَمْ يَسْتَئِنَ ۝ وَانظُرْ إِلَى حِمَارِكَ وَلَنْجَعَلَكَ آيَةً لِلنَّاسِ ۝ وَانظُرْ إِلَى الْعُظَامِ كَيْفَ تُنْشِرُ هَا نَمْ نَكْسُوْهَا لَحْمًا ۝ فَلَمَّا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ قَالَ أَعْلَمُ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

“Or consider the case of him [Ezekiel] who passed by a town [Jerusalem as it was left in desolation by Nebuchadnezzar] and it had fallen in upon its roofs. He said, when will Allâh restore this (town) to life after its destruction? So (in his vision) Allâh kept him in a state of death for a hundred years, then He raised him (to life). Then (God) said, how long have you stayed (in this state of death)? He replied, I may have stayed a day or a part of a day (in this state). (God) said, (Yes this too is correct) but (as you have witnessed in your vision) you have stayed for a hundred years. Now look at your food and drink, they have escaped the action of time, and look at your donkey (too, years have not passed over it). And (We have made you visualize all this) that We may make you a sign to the people. And look at the (dead) bones how We set them together and then clothe them with flesh. Thus when the fact of the matter became clear to him, he said, I

know that Allâh is the Possessor of full power to do all that He will” (2:259).

The highest stage of *kashaf* is described in the Holy Qur’ân, as experienced by the Holy Prophet (pbuh):

سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي أَسْرَى بِعَبْدِهِ لِيَلَّا مِنَ الْمُسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ إِلَى الْمُسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَى
الَّذِي بَارَكْنَا حَوْلَهُ لِنَرِيهِ مِنْ آيَاتِنَا

“Glory be to Him Who carried His servant (Muhammad) by night from the Holy Mosque (at Makkah) to the Distant Mosque (at Jerusalem), the precincts of which (too) We have blessed, that We might show him some of Our signs” (17:1).

The Books of Tradition describe in detail this visionary experience by the Holy Prophet (pbuh), as narrated by him. Another *kashaf*, in its ultimate perfection, is described in the Holy Qur’ân in chapter 53. An English translation can never reach the sublimity, the power, the nobility, and the mighty Glory that is embedded in the original Divine Words:

وَلَقَدْ رَأَهُ نَزْلَةً أُخْرَىٰ عِنْدَ سِدْرَةِ الْمُنْتَهَىٰ عِنْدَهَا جَنَّةُ الْمَأْوَىٰ إِذْ يَغْشَىٰ
السِّدْرَةَ مَا يَغْشَىٰ مَا زَاغَ الْبَصَرُ وَمَا طَغَىٰ لَقَدْ رَأَىٰ مِنْ آيَاتِ رَبِّهِ الْكُبْرَىٰ

“And, of course, he [the Prophet] saw Him (in His another manifestation to him) yet another time. It was near the Sidrah, which stands at the farthest end (of knowledge). Near where also is the Garden that is the real eternal abode. (This was) when the sublime thing [the Divine Manifestation] which was to cover Sidrah had covered it. (When he saw the Divine Manifestation) his eye deviated not (from the certainty of the Truth) nor did it wander away (from the invincible faith on which he stood). (It was the moment when) he saw the greatest signs of his Lord” (53:13–18).

Wahî malfûz is a Revelation spoken in Divine Words. It is a Revelation in which the Words of the All-Mighty come down directly from the Source. There is a mystery how they descend. The recipient not only feels that his ear has heard these Words but also feels their descent in his mind. At times, Divine Words manifest on the tongue, and the recipient begins to utter these Words and then keeps on repeating them. Sometimes the eyes become the recipient of Divine Revelation, and written sentences appear before one's eyes. Sometimes all the five senses are the recipient of the Divine Revelation. Thus, this form of Revelation has many ways of manifesting itself. We read:

وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى أُمّ مُوسَى أَنْ أَرْضِعِيهِ ۝ فَلَدَا خَفْتَ عَلَيْهِ فَأَقْبَيْهِ فِي الْيَمِّ وَلَا
تَخَافِي وَلَا تَحْزَنِي ۝ إِنَّا رَادُوهُ إِلَيْكَ وَجَاعَلُوهُ مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ

“And We revealed to the mother of Moses (saying), Give him [Moses] suck. But when you have fear about him [his life] cast him (placing him in a chest) into the river and entertain no fear, nor grief (about his welfare). Verily, We shall restore him to you and shall make him (one) of the Messengers” (28:7).

Sometime the Revelation is brought by an “angel” who appears in the shape of a human being. In the account of Mary you read:

فَأَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْهَا رُوحًا فَتَمَثَّلَ لَهَا بَشَرًا سَوِيًّا قَالَتْ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِالرَّحْمَنِ مِنْكَ
إِنْ كُنْتَ تَقِيًّا قَالَ إِنَّمَا أَنَا رَسُولٌ رَبِّكَ لَا هَبَ لَكَ غَلَامًا زَكِيًّا قَالَتْ أَنَّى
يُكُونُ لِي غَلَامٌ وَلَمْ يَمْسِسْنِي بَشَرٌ وَلَمْ أَكُ بَغِيًّا قَالَ كَذَلِكَ قَالَ رَبُّكَ هُوَ عَلَيَّ
هِينٌ ۝ وَلَنْ جَعَلْهُ أَيَّهًا لِلنَّاسِ وَرَحْمَةً مَنَا ۝ وَكَانَ أَمْرًا مَقْضِيًّا

“Then We sent to her [Mary] Our (angel of) revelation and he presented himself to her in the form of a perfect and well-proportioned man. Mary said, I invoke the Most Gracious (God) to defend me from you. If you guard the least against evil (leave

me alone). He said, I am but a messenger of your Lord. I give you (glad tidings of) a most pure son. She said, How can I bear a son while no man (has married me and) has yet touched me, nor have I been unchaste. (The angel) said, So the fact is (just as you describe). Your Lord has said, “It is easy for Me. (We shall do it when the time comes) so that We make him a sign and a (source of) blessing from Us for the people. It is a matter ordained.” (19:17–20).

Mukâlimâh is Divine Discourse. This type of Revelation takes the form of a dialogue with the All-Mighty. The Holy Qur’ân cites a marvelous example of such Divine Discourse in 20:11–46: In this condition Moses talks to the All-Mighty as if he were talking to his companion (20:10–46). Divine Words are marked by their elegant perspicuity, eloquence, majesty, relish, and beauty, and the power of Divinity can be felt shining in them. The recipient enjoys an indescribable feeling of happiness, liveliness, and contentment (27:7; 28:29; 89:27). During such spiritual encounters, the perception of time and space disappears, and events and incidents are witnessed that may actually be spread out over centuries.

Wahî Matlûw - a Revelation that comes down in Words containing a message for many. The Holy Qur’ân in its essence and meanings, its formation and arrangement, its language, its words, sentences, and diction is *wahî matlûw*. The Prophets (pbuh) position was only that of a receptacle, and his function was to convey this Revelation to the people, in total, in its complete form.

وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ تِبْيَانًا لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً وَبُشْرَى لِلْمُسْلِمِينَ

“And (that is why) We have revealed to you (O Prophet) this perfect Book explaining every (basic) thing and (which serves as) a guidance (for humankind) and a mercy (from Us), and (gives) good tidings to those who submit (to God)” (16:89).

It is not the Holy Prophet (pbuh) who makes use of the Revelation; rather, it is the Revelation and the Sender of the Revelation that is making use of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). The Holy Prophet (pbuh) was unable to resist the great force of the Divine Words flowing from his mouth. There were no personal views or wishes of the Prophet (pbuh) in it. “*A great Messenger [Muhammad] from Allâh reciting (to them) written leaves of the Book, free from all impurities, consisting of eternal laws and commandments*” (98:2–3). Its Source was the same, whose depth no one has been able to reach: “*It is from One All-Wise, All-Aware (God)*” (11:1); and “*This (Qur’ân) is a clear exposition (of the truth) for humankind (to follow) and a (means to) guidance, and an exhortation to those who guard against evil (and are dutiful to God and people)*” (3:138). People of veil deny it. Allâh says of such: “*And they strongly rejected them [the signs] out of spite and arrogance, although their minds were convinced of (the truth in) them. Look, then how (evil) was the end of those who acted corruptly*” (27:14).

It is stated in a Tradition (*Hadîth-i-Qudsî*) regarding the Holy Prophet (pbuh), that Allâh said: “Were it not for your sake, I would not have created the heavens [*laulâka le mā khalaqtu al-Aflâq*].” The recipient was transported into another realm, and veils were lifted between his human mind and the Divine Knowledge, and the Divine Realities were disclosed to him directly and not through his senses. His physical and his spiritual realms become one. It was as if he were standing before the All-Mighty and his soul had merged with the Divinity. When you call the Holy Qur’ân the Word of Allâh, its significance is much greater, higher, and clearer than what the Christians conceive of when they call the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John the “words of God.” Christians acknowledge that the Gospels are the words of the authors of these books, but they believe the inherent meanings of them were conveyed by God to these men, who provided the words for those meanings. The Holy Ghost supposedly aided the writers of the Gospels in their composition. He did not reveal the words themselves or the style of composition.

Therefore, the words of the New Testament cannot be considered as being revealed by the All-Mighty.

Qur'ân - The Most Exalted Revelation

As the universe has evolved gradually and continues to evolve, so does His Self-Disclosure continued to evolve in stages. Likewise the human mind evolves, so does the divine teaching. It develops in stages in order to cover the ever-emerging aspects of human life. The Qur'ânic Revelation is the most perfect of all Revelations. No other Revelation equals it in its purity of communication and decisiveness. You read:

وَالنَّجْمٌ إِذَا هَوَىٰ مَا ضَلَّ صَاحِبُكُمْ وَمَا غَوَىٰ وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ عَلَمٌ شَدِيدُ الْفُرْقَىٰ ذُو مِرَّةٍ فَاسْتَوْىٰ وَهُوَ بِالْأَعْلَىٰ لَمْ دَنَ فَنَدَلَّىٰ فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَىٰ فَأَوْحَىٰ إِلَىٰ عَبْدِهِ مَا أَوْحَىٰ

“I call to witness every part of the Qur'ân when it is revealed, That your comrade (Muhammad) has neither deviated (from true guidance in his practices) nor has he erred (in his beliefs). He does not say anything out of (his own) fanciful desire. This (Qur'ân) is nothing but (pure) revelation, revealed (to him by God). The Lord of Mighty Powers has taught him (this discourse). (The Lord) Whose powers become manifest in manifold and frequent ways, with the result that he [this Messenger of God] attained perfection and fullest vigor (both intellectually and physically). And he attained to the zenith of heights (in his spiritual ascension). Then he drew near to Him and afterwards he descended (to humankind, for their guidance). So that he became (as it were) one chord to two bows or closer still. Then He revealed this excellent and mighty (Qur'ânic) revelation which He had to send to His servant (Muhammad)”
(53:1–10)

فَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِمَا وَاقَعَ النُّجُومُ وَإِنَّهُ لَقَسَمٌ لَّوْ تَعْلَمُونَ عَظِيمٌ إِنَّهُ لِقْرآنٌ كَرِيمٌ

“As to me, I swear by the places and times of the revelation of the portions of the Qur’ân; and behold! It is a mighty oath, if you only care to know. That this is most surely a Holy Qur’ân (bestowing bounteous blessings of God)” (56:75–77)

The Qur’ân in its entirety is the Word of God. Its source does not lie in the Vedas, the Zend, the Payand, the Torah or the Gospels. The achievement of human knowledge and intellect cannot compete with the exaltedness, grandeur and quality of this Book, and no intellectual brilliance and vastness of knowledge can be on par with the excellence of this Book. There is no human effort involved in its creation, neither by way of thought, nor by endeavors, nor by words. It is not a stream of thought nor is it the inspiration of a poet.

تَنْزِيلٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ أَفَهَذَا الْحَدِيثٌ أَنْتُمْ مُّذَهِّنُونَ

“It [this Qur’ân] is a revelation from the Lord of the worlds [Rabb al-‘Âlamîn]. Is it this (Divine) discourse that you are the deniers of? And do you make the denial of it your lot?” (56:80–)

There is a big claim in the Book of Allâh, and this claim stands for all times, as it stands today. It says:

فُلَّئِنْ اجْتَمَعَتِ الْإِنْسُ وَالْجِنُّ عَلَى أَنْ يَأْتُوا بِمِثْلِ هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ لَا يَأْتُونَ بِمِثْلِهِ وَلَوْ كَانَ بَعْضُهُمْ لِيَعْضُ طَهِيرًا

“Say, If there should join together all human beings and the jinn to produce the like of this Qur’ân, they would never be able to produce anything like it, even though some of them might be the helpers of others.” (17:88)

Similar challenges are repeated in verses 10:38, 11:13, 17:88, and 52:33 and stand for all people. The Holy Qur’ân is a living Book. It is a luminous Lamp, a glorious Reality, an eternal Truth, and a Law that

will never be abrogated. It has no parallels, neither in its essence nor in its history. No book can ever compete with it. It is a complete code of life and a universal net of wisdom, which provides all the necessary ingredients for the completion and fulfilment of human intellectual and practical requirements. It is full of articles of belief as well as sermons, admonitions, discipline, laws, and regulations.

وَإِن كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِّمَّا نَرَرْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا فَأْثُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِّنْ مِّنْهِ وَادْعُوا شُهَدَاءَكُمْ مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِن كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

“And if you have any doubt as to (the truthfulness of the Qur’ân) which We have revealed to Our servant [Muhammad] from time to time, produce a single Sûrah [Qur’ânic chapter] like any of (the chapters of) this, summoning (to your assistance) all your helpers (that you have) beside Allâh, if you are right (in your doubts), (2:23).

The sublime simplicity of the Holy words of the Qur’ân, its piercing force into your human mind, its enchanting beauty and melody of its verses, the nobility of its call, and the magnanimity of its Message are unmatched and cannot be reproduced by human effort. Even a single word or its component, such as definiteness, indefiniteness, repetition, ellipsis, or similar facet, when omitted from the verse, will often render the verse meaningless or diminish its impact. In addition, a word shifted from its original position or replaced by a synonym will alter the entire subject meaning and the beauty of the verse; no congruity will be left, and the “thread of rough jute will patch the fine silken brocade.” It is the grammatical structure of each verse that when taken together gives the idea of what is being conveyed (*-ma ‘âni al-Nahw*).

The Holy Qur’ân is inimitable, because its verses employ the most eloquent words in ideal form and composition (*ahsan nuzum al-Talîf*). Every Qur’ânic Word is interconnected to provide a precise meaning.

It frequently uses such literary devices as emphatic statements (*mubâlighah*), contrasting pairs (*mutâbiqah*), digression (*istidrâd*), and others, all appropriate for the basic aim of conveying the message (Abû Bakr Muâmmad Ibn al-Tayyib al-Baqillânî in *I'jaz al-Qur'ân*, Ahmâd Sakar [ed.], Dâr al-Mâ'rif, Egypt). When you reflect on the sublime selection of these words and their perfect grammatical order, you sink deeper into the Divine Realities and you may fall down on your face before your Lord (17:109).

Continuity of the Divine Revelation

Some believe that Divine Revelation (*wâhi*) ceased. With such a belief, these people strip Allâh of His Attribute of Speech and dethrone Him from those Attributes that make Him a Living Deity. They make Him mute, destitute of the power of speech, and incapable of revealing any knowledge. They have not enough faith to believe that their God can reveal His existence and His Divinity to any human being of His choice. Even among the Muslims, believe that with the advent of the last of Prophets - the Holy Prophet (pbuh) the doors of Revelations and Divine Self-Disclosure - *wâhi* and *ilhâm*, have been closed forever. In the eyes of some Muslims, a person who is the recipient of Divine Words cannot announce Allâh's Words to the world, or if he does announce them, he must be punished for blasphemy.

Human speech, actions, and words make you known to others. Is it not disgraceful to Living Truth to assert that He, with His limitless Attributes and Powers, no longer speaks to humans and that no relationship can exist between a mortal and the Eternal and Ever-Living Allâh? How can you seal up Allâh's Mouth and His power of Speech? Is it not true that there are some hearts that have an attraction, a desire, and a love for their Creator that demands nearness and sweet Converse? The Most Gracious, the Ever Merciful, has certainly inspired the hearts of His servants with untold eagerness for

Him and has drawn them close to His Love, affection, and devotion. To propose that in such a condition, the Ever Merciful (*al-Rahîm*) would not desire to converse with them would be the equivalent of saying that all their love, devotion, and worship were in vain and that all their eagerness were only one-sided. The recipients of Divine Revelation are conclusive evidence that your soul has been fashioned for the delicious Converse with your Supreme Creator. Unless Allâh provides solace by His Words, the mere supplications, worships, formal Prayers, and admiration of His handiworks alone cannot provide the real comfort being sought after by the seeker.

You are inclined through your innate nature to love piety and virtue and to hate evil and unrighteousness. You have not inherited any eternal sin. The Creator has created you in the “*finest make and the best proportions* with enormous capabilities for all-round advancement through the process of evolution” (95:4), and it is in consideration of these capabilities (لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَفْوِيمٍ) that Allâh draws you so powerfully to His love, affection, and devotion. Allâh is the Being Who has ever called humankind to Himself by announcing:

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكُ عِبَادِي عَنِّي قَرِيبٌ ۖ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ ۖ
فَلَيْسُ تَحْيِيْبُهُ لِي وَلَيُؤْمِنُوا بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ

“And When My servants ask you concerning Me (tell them) I am nearby indeed. I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he prays to Me, so they should respond to My call, and believe in Me (that I possess all these Attributes) so that they may proceed in the right way” (2:186).

“I am nearby indeed” is what He says, and He still says these Words if anyone would listen. He speaks to His favoured ones and bestows satisfaction and contentment upon their hearts with His majestic and

delicious Words. He listens to them and responds to them, and in hearing their supplications, He informs them of their acceptance.

It is only through Allâh's verbal manifestation that you acquire a true living Faith and that a new relationship is established between you and your Creator. Your inner darkness is dispelled, and a wonderful change becomes evident in your heart. The All-Merciful ignites in His servant the "Light of Knowledge" (*nûr al-'Ilm* نور العلم). The Divine Converse (*kalâm* كلام) does not automatically arise through seeking, asking, or formal Prayers. The guaranteed recompense of sincere seeking and asking and Prayers will be the "Gardens of Paradise" in the hereafter, but Divine Speech is a blessing, and He blesses His servant with it as a gift without being asked. You cannot demand from Allâh Revelation because of your nobility or heritage, nor can you earn it by virtue of your deeds. His Self-Disclosure is a sheer gift and Grace, which He gives to whomsoever He wishes among His servants (30:48). No human being, nor any church or organization, can judge the nobility or saintliness of a person. Only the Ever-Merciful judges through His own measure who it is that is noble (53:32), and it is He alone who chooses in His Judgment with whom He talks.

Our Creator is kind to us, for He has left the door of Sainthood (- *walâyat*) open. Sainthood will not end. Only the legislating prophethood (- *nabûwwat*) and apostleship (*risâlat*) has ended, but not sainthood. Divine Self-Disclosure (*wahî-i-ilâhi*) and the Lordly Sending Down (*anzâl al-Rabbâni* أنزال الرباني) cannot end, since the preservation of entire cosmos (*hifz al-'Âlam* حفظ العالم) depends on it. The door of Allâh's blessings of Divine Converse has always been open, and it shall remain open. It is open in this age, just as it was open in the past, in the age of Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, his mother, Aaron, Jesus, his mother Mary, and his disciples, and maybe also Laozi (of the *), Confucius, Buddha, Rama, Krishna, and others whom you do not know, and finally, of course, Muhammad (pbuh) and his Companions and reformers*

(*mujaddadîn* and *muhaddathîn*), and so many other men and women of the *ummah* of the Holy Prophet (pbuh).

Divine disclosure is not limited to Prophets

Allâh created the human being in the finest make and the best proportions (95:4) and taught him the art of intelligent and clear speech and reason (55:2-3). These faculties set him apart from the rest of His creation on this earth. Not only this, Allâh breathed into him His Spirit (32:9) which made him capable of being the recipient of the Divine words. Now this human being who carries His Spirit feels love for Him, seeks His nearness and a desire to hear His voice and longs for His glimpse, like a lover who wants to reach his beloved, like Moses when he spoke: *My Lord! Reveal yourself to me that I may look at you* (7:143). Such a yearning cannot be left unattended, without guidance, speech and sight. Now, if the Creator did not guide you, did not pay heed to your supplications, did not open for you who are knocking at His door, and did not cover you with His Love, He would be cruel and could not claim that He is *al-Rahîm* and *al-Wadûd*, the One full of Mercy and Love. Either you would have to deny His existence, or you must accept His Mercifulness, His Graciousness, His Power of Speech, His Power of listening to and answering your supplications, and His Power of Converse (*kalâm*; see 28:31–34). Therefore, attending to you is a requirement of His Attribute.

He is invisible but manifests Himself to His chosen servants. Just as He hears, so does He speak. To whomsoever He wants to speak to, He discloses Himself. He sends His Revelation to His chosen ones because of their yearning for Him and there always exists a person who is “more pleasing to Him” (89:27–30) because of his yearning. “*It is He Who sends down clear signs to His servant*” (57:9). The All-Mighty is the Nourisher to Perfection of all the worlds (*Rabb al-‘Âlâmiñ*), both in the physical and in the spiritual sense. His physical and spiritual nurturing (*Rabûbîyyat*) is not limited to a particular

creation. Revelation (*wahi*) is a special manifestation of Divine *Rabûbiyyat* that is not restricted to any particular period of time or to any particular people or race. It is manifested in every period to His selected servants from among all nations. To believe that the process of Revelation has stopped after such and such a Prophet, or that this blessing was limited to one chosen people or one chosen language, amounts to rejecting His universal Lordship.

Revelation is possible only through “*Muhammadan*” Light

The Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is the last of all the Prophets. With him ends the Divine Rulings, and no further modification or addition can be made. He is the *khâtim al-Nabbiyîn*, “the Seal of the Prophets” (33:40), and nothing can enter through this seal without breaking it. He is the last of the long chain of Prophets. After him, the Saints ('auliyâ') and reformers (*mujaddadîn*) are the recipients of Divine Reports (*akhbâr*), where Divine Providence discloses to them according to their needs and capacities. They become recipients of the Divine Revelation only through the “*Muhammadan*” heritage and “*Muhammadan* Light,” and they can follow only the Divine Laws revealed by the Holy Prophet (pbuh).

No exalted level of Divine Revelation (*wahi*) is possible to anyone “*who does not accept (the call of) one calling to Allâh*” (46:32) and who rejects the Message of Allâh given to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). Today the blessing of *wahi* and Divine Discourse is reserved exclusively for the followers of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). The door of Divine Revelation (*wahi*) through the Light of Moses was closed by the advent of Jesus, and the door of Divine Revelation from the Light of Jesus was closed by the advent of Muhammad (pbuh). Though you read in the Holy Qur’ân that “*those who follow the Jewish faith, the Christians and the Sabians, whosoever (of these truly) believes in Allâh and the Last Day and acts righteously shall have their reward with their Lord*” (2:62), these rewards do not

include special divine favours that are reserved for the followers of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). If you reject the messengership of Muhammad (pbuh), you will be denied the great blessings of Converse with Him, and if there is a false claimant to Divine Discourse or Revelation, he will be a liar in the eyes of Allâh and be subjected to His punishment (69:44–47).

Types of Revelation granted to Saints

Mujaddadîn are the Reformers of the age who are the appointees (*ma'mûr*) of Allâh, selected by the All-Mighty for the reformation of the community (*ummah*) of Muhammad (pbuh). They are the *imâms* of their time. According to the sayings of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), his *ummah* will be blessed every hundred years with such Appointees. Having passed through all stages of *sulûk*, (the *sûfî* term for a spiritual stage of a *sâlik*, a searcher of Truth), they reach the stage of *finâ fil-rasûl*, the stage of being lost in the person of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). On the one hand, they have a tremendous love for the All-Mighty; on the other hand, they have a tremendous passion for the reformation and welfare of the *ummah* of Muhammad (pbuh). These persons are shown their spiritual station and divine office (*muqâm*) by God. They enjoy the honour of conversing with the All-Mighty. Their revealed prophecies enjoy the status of the “unveiled of the unseen.” Anyone who calls their claims fabrications is held accountable by Allâh and is liable for punishment.

These reformers are positioned in the middle, between the Prophet (pbuh) and their *ummah*, the followers of the Prophets (pbuh). There is only a thin line of difference between these persons and the Prophets of Allâh. In the case of the Prophets, the reality that is called a “miracle” is termed *karâmat*, the reality that is called “innocence and chastity” is termed *mahfûzîyyat* (being secured and guarded), and the reality that is called *nabûwwat* (the prophethood) is termed *muhaddathîyyat* (being honoured with Converse with the All-Mighty).

Though they are not Prophets, they wear the cloak of *zallî nabûwwat* (reflective prophethood), because perfect *walâyat* (sainthood) is a reflective prophethood. Ibn al-‘Arabî coined a special term for them. He called their *walâyat nabûwwat ‘amma*, common prophethood (Ibn al-‘Arabî in *Fatûhât al-Makîyya* 73:9). *Shaikh* ‘Abdul Qâdir al-Jilânî said: “The Prophets are given the name Prophet [*nabî*] or Apostle [*rasûl*], but we are given the title of *muhaddathîyyat*” (*Saif al-Râhmânî* by Syed Muhammad Makkî). *Imâm Abd al-Wahâb Shâirânî* said that *nabûwwat mutlîqa* continues (see *Al-Bawâqî al-Jawâhir* 2:35). Jalâl al-Dîn Rûmî said in his Persian couplet (*Mathnawî Daftâr* 5): “O Disciple! He is the prophet of this time, because the Light of prophethood emanates from him. So try to excel in service and obedience, in order to attain prophethood within the *ummah*.” There are many Muslim scholars who are of the same opinion (for example, *Muftî Kifâyatullâh*, President of the Jamî‘at ‘Ulemâ Hind, in *Majalas al-Ahrâr*; *Muhammad Ismâ‘îl Shahîd Dehlavî*; *Shabbîr Ahmad Uthmânî* in *Al-Sha‘ab*; *Muftî Muhammad Shâfi‘* in *Khatam Nabûwwat*; and *Muhammad Idrîs Kandhalvî* in *Masku al-Khitâm*). They have termed these persons “non-law-bearing Prophets.”

Manifest prophethood (*nabîwwat-i-zâhîrî*) has come to an end, as the Holy Prophet (pbuh) said: “There will be no Prophet after me.” But the hidden (*bâtinî*) spirit of prophethood has not come to an end. *Muhaddathîyyat* and *walâyat* contain strong aspects of prophethood. Those Saints can be called heirs of the Messengers of Allâh. In spite of the prestige and honour they enjoy in divine court, and in spite of the fact that Divine Revelation rains upon them, they do not belong to the category of the Prophets (*zumrâh anbiyâ*) in the strict sense. They are members of the category of Saints. Their Revelation (*wahî walâyat*) is not identical with the prophetic Revelations. Ibn Asâkar narrated from Anas that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) said, “There has certainly been no Prophet in the past except that there shall be a like of them in my *ummah*.” In the context of what has been said previously, you know the claim of *Mujjaddid Hadzrat Mu‘înuddîn*

Chishtî about his likeness to Jesus: “Every moment the Holy Spirit shines within Mu‘inuddîn. Though I do not proclaim it, but I have become the second Jesus” (Chishtî).

According to Islamic tradition, the word *rasûl*, or *nâbi*, is used for Prophet, a person who conveys a Divine Law, or the one who abrogates some earlier Divine Commandment and replaces it with a new one and who is not *ummâtî* or a follower of any other Prophet. It is therefore not appropriate to use the term *nâbi* for *muhaddithin*, *mujaddidin*, or *walîullahs*, because it may confuse the common Muslim understanding of the word *nâbi*. Revelation granted to the Prophets (*wahî nabûwwat*) is a special category of Revelation that is granted only to the Prophets. The Holy Qur’ân mentions the names of some of these Prophets, but not all of them (40:78); it requires from you not only the belief in the Holy Prophet of Islam (pbuh) but in all of the Prophets of Allâh (2:4) sent to all nations all over the world. The doctrine of belief in all the Prophets is taught repeatedly in the Holy Qur’ân (2:4, 177; 3:84; 42:13). Now, rejection of the Prophets of Allâh, or calling any one of them a liar, renders a Muslim a disbeliever (*kâfir*), according to the teachings of the Holy Qur’ân. On the other hand rejection or refusal of a *muhaddith* or a *mujaddid* or a Saint does not render any Muslim a *kâfir*, although calling such a person a liar creates undue mischief and may bring about divine displeasure on the accuser.

All Prophets, the Saints, and others who have received Revelation from Allâh made the same statement about Allâh and His absolute Unity. They have not differed. They have confirmed one another. Water from the sky is always the same when it descends, free from all impurities. You should understand and grasp their knowledge, since they have received this knowledge from your Lord.

Revelation is unasked Divine reward of righteousness

You have been created for attaining to the true Gnosis and for being imbued with hues of those Divine Attributes, the knowledge of which has been given to you in the Holy Qur'ân. It is because of this very special relationship of the Creator with His creation, whom He created in the finest make (95:4), that the angels received the Divine Command, "*Make obeisance to Adam*" (2:34). Spiritual insight and God-Gnosis can be achieved only through righteousness, and the unasked-for reward of that is Revelation, with its different stages on which the servant has no claim. Treading on the road of rectitude and piety (*taqwâ*; 2:2) with other heights of good morals, and avoidance of evils, leads to the spiritual experience in the form of Divine Revelation. You reach that special stage at which you can comprehend the reality of Divine Communication. Its witnesses are the apostles, the *mujaddadin* (reformers), the *Sûfîs* - the Saints, and thousands among the true followers of the Messengers. All these were imbued with gnosis and knowledge and bear testimony through their personal experiences that Allâh, the High and Exalted, communicates with them through dreams, visions, and Revelation, and there are occasions when they hear their Creators delicious Words.

Spiritual experience of the recipient of Revelation

The process of *wahî* takes place when the person is awake and is in a state of extraordinarily aroused perception, and in spiritual and physical purification. Without the intervention of any physical cause a state of transportation and drowsiness overtakes him and the recipient enters into a state of deep trance and feels the special attraction and the love of the All-Mighty and loses all consciousness of his physical thinking self. There is a lot of sweetness and feelings of love in this discourse accompanied by a strong yearning to have a look at His Lord. He forgets his own self and his five senses go into a state of abeyance. The slate of the conscious mind is wiped clean. With the

disappearance of consciousness comes a new consciousness, which is more powerful and is felt as a real state. In this state you delve deeply into the mysteries of the Being. You do not consider this state to be unreal as compared with the real world you were in before, nor do you consider it to be a figment of your imagination (see 20:11–46). There is much sweetness and feelings of love in this Divine Discourse, accompanied by a strong yearning to have a look at His Lord. There exists no human language, no writing, and no speech other than the Divine Speech that can describe this state to a non-recipient.

The veils that cover the servant from his Lord may be many or may be few, each time the same or each time different. This explains the diverse reactions of the servant while receiving a Revelation. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) described that sometimes the Revelation came down to him “like a chain crossing on the pebbles.” Sometimes it was the Angel Gabriel (- *Jibra’îl*) who brought it down (26:193–194). This was an extremely intense experience for him. He felt very cold and would shiver on hot summer days; sometimes on cold days, he would perspire. ‘Âishah^(rz), the wife of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), described the physical condition of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) while he was receiving Revelation. She says that he was lying with his head on her thighs when a Revelation came. She felt a very heavy, almost unbearable pressure on her thighs, and she thought for a while that they were going to fracture. She also described how the face of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) became red and how his body was covered with sweat each time he received the Divine Words. Another tradition tells that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) was riding a camel when a Revelation came and that under the pressure of this Revelation, the camel he was riding became immobilized.

Allâh spoke to Moses from behind the veil of a burning bush. Moses spoke and he was spoken to without being thunderstruck. However, when Moses asked Allâh to show Himself to him, Moses and the mountain were thunderstruck. Therefore, the intensity of Divine Self-

Revelation depends on the preparedness of the soul for Divine Self-Disclosure.

Misconceptions about Revelation

Some psychologists have tried to explain the experience of Revelation as phenomenon of the subconscious. Ibn Khaldûn accepted the existence of the subconscious in his book *Muqaddima*, but he rejected the idea that the Divine Revelation originates from this source. The vast and limitless experience of Divine Revelation cannot be limited to the confines of the subconscious. “We have to concede the presence of superconscious and alerted state of perception in addition to the presence of subconscious and conscious.” God says: “*And those who do not know (the wisdom implied in Divine revelation) say, Why does not Allâh (Himself) speak to us or give us a (convincing) sign?*” (2:118). They deny the existence of Divine Revelation solely on the grounds that they do not see Divine Revelation coming down, and they do not hear its sound, or they have not personally experienced it nor have they ever seen any miracle being performed. This does not prove that it has no existence. The absence of knowledge is no argument for the nonexistence of something. That is the same as denying the existence of light merely because one’s eyes cannot see it. There have always been holy ones from time immemorial who have had this spiritual experience, whose ears heard the Highs voice, whose eyes saw visions, whose “sense of smell detected the divine fragrance that swept gently and smoothly through the air and over waters. Just as a person who is born blind cannot understand the difference between light and darkness, similarly one who has not had any spiritual experience and has not undergone the experience of receiving Divine Revelation cannot be fully aware of the reality of this phenomenon. It is better to accept the guidance of wise men blessed with spiritual sight than to wander and stumble around in darkness.



“WE-NESS”, “HE-NESS” AND “I-NESS” OF ALLÂH

Mâhiyyat al-Haqq - Huwiya – Inniya

When you go through the pages of the Holy Qur’ân, you will find verses where the Divine Grace addresses you in We-form, in others in He-form and a few time in I-form. These are, respectively, the “We-ness” (*mâhiyyat al-Haqq*), the “He-ness” (*huwiya*), and the “I-ness” (-*anniya*, or *inniya*) of Allâh.

The “We-ness” of Allâh (*Mâhiyyat al-Haqq*): The “We-ness” of Allâh expresses His Might, His Power, His Glory and His Majesty (-*Jalâl*). Typical verses in this “We-form” you read is as follows:

اَلْمُرِّوَا كَمْ اَهْكُنَا مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِنْ قَرْنٌ مَكَنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَا لَمْ نُمَكِّنْ لَكُمْ
وَأَرْسَلْنَا السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْهِمْ مَدْرَارًا وَجَعَلْنَا الْأَنْهَارَ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهِمْ فَاهْكُنَا
بِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَأَنْشَأْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ قُرْنًا اَخْرَى

“Have these people not considered how many generation We have destroyed before them to whom We had given them so firm a hold and power on the earth, such a firm hold as We have not given you? And We sent clouds over them pouring down abundant rain, and We caused rivers to flow subject to their command and control. Yet We destroyed them owing to their sins and raised other generations after them” (6:6).

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْ أُمُّ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ فَلَا خَذَنَهُمْ بِالْبُلْسَاءِ وَالصَّرَاءِ لَعَلَهُمْ
يَتَضَرَّرُونَ فَلَوْلَا اِذْ جَاءَهُمْ بَاسْتَنَا تَضَرَّرُ عُوَا وَلَكِنْ قَسْتُ فُؤُبُهُمْ وَرَزَّيْنَ لَهُمْ
الشَّيْطَانُ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ فَلَمَّا نَسُوا مَا ذُكْرُوا بِهِ فَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ أَبْوَابَ كُلِّ
شَيْءٍ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا فَرِحُوا بِمَا أَوْتَنَا اَحْذَنَهُمْ بَعْثَةٌ فَإِذَا هُمْ مُبْلِسُونَ

“We have already sent (Messengers) towards the communities before you, then (on their rejecting the Messengers) We afflicted them with destitution, calamities and adversities so that they might become humble (before Us). Why did they not then, when Our punishment overtook them, grow humble? (It was for the fact that) their hearts had hardened and satan had made their deeds seem fair to them. Then, when they abandoned that whereof they had been reminded, We opened to them the gates of everything. Until when they began to boast over what they were given, We seized them unawares; then behold! They were in sole despair (of all good). In this way the last remnants of these people who had acted wrongfully were completely rooted out” (6:42–45).

The We-form of usage can be called the “Who-is-it-ness” and “How-is-it-ness” of the Absolute Reality (*mâhiyyat al-Haqq*). The Majesty, the Glory and the Might hidden in the “We-ness” is made known only to those whose conduct remains in obedience to His commands, and those who have a link to Him. You can get lost in the “How-is-it-ness” of these verses while reflecting on them.

The “He-ness” of Allâh (*Huwiya*): You will encounter many verses in which the Supreme Being addresses the humankind in “He-Form,” - where the pronoun “*Huwa*,” translated as “He,” is used. The “He-ness” requires the existence of two – the hidden one and that from which He is absent. “Hiddenness” necessarily occurs in relation to another. For example we read:

وَهُوَ اللَّهُ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَفِي الْأَرْضِ

“And He (هُوَ) is Allâh Who is in the heavens and in the earth” (6:3).

The “He-ness,” or the *huwiya*, of Allâh refers to His Hidden Essential Reality (*al-Haqîqat al-Ghaybîyya*). With *huwiya* He describes Himself and refers to His own Reality when He says, قُنْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَكَدْ

Say! He (هُوَ) is Allâh, the One and Alone in His Being” (112:1), The word *Qul* (- Say!) is to be understood as Command. Because of His being hidden (*al-Bâtinîyah*), these verses are accompanied with one or more of His Attributes that describe Him. You will read for example:

هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ ۖ عَالَمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ ۖ هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ
هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمَلِكُ الْفَدُوسُ السَّلَامُ الْمُؤْمِنُ الْمُهَمَّمُ الْعَزِيزُ
الْجَبَارُ الْمُتَكَبِّرُ ۖ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ هُوَ اللَّهُ الْخَالِقُ الْبَارِئُ
الْمُصَوِّرُ ۖ لَمْ أَلْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ ۖ يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۖ
وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

“He is Allâh, beside Whom there is no other, cannot be and will never be one worthy of worship but He. He is the Knower of unseen and seen, He is the Most Gracious and Ever Merciful. (He is) the Supreme Sovereign, the Holy One, the Most Perfect, Bestower of peaceful security, the Guardian, the All-Mighty, the Compensator of losses, the Possessor of all greatness. Holy is Allâh, far beyond and above the things they associate with Him. He is Allâh, the Creator (of the matter and the spirit), the Maker, the Bestower of forms (and fashioner of everything suiting to its requirement). All fair Attributes belong to Him. All that lies in the heavens and the earth declares His glory; He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.” (59:22–24)

There are many other similar verses such as: “He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing” (6:13); “He is the Possessor of every power to do all that He will. And He is the All-Dominant over His servants. And He is the All-Wise, the All-Aware” (6:17–18); “He has perfect knowledge of everything” (6:101); “He is All-Powerful, All-Mighty” (42:19); “It is He Who accepts penitence of His servants and pardons (them their) evil deeds, and He knows all that you do” (42:25); and “He it is Who sends down rain after the people have lost all hope and unfolds His mercy. He alone is the Patron, the Praiseworthy” (42:28).

When you reflect on creation, you use your reason and reflect on its Creator, and your reflection is based on your experience. There is no way of escaping this kind of limited anthropocentrism, thinking about Allâh in human terms and in terms of your human life. If you try to avoid thinking about Allâh in this fashion, you will be obliged to imagine Him as though He were either a machine or a blind force. However, you do not, in reality, speak of “it” when you talk of Allâh; you speak of Him. That means that Allâh is better understood as being personal rather than impersonal. Obviously, He is not a person in just the same sense in which you are a person. That would be quite absurd, for it would negate the infinite nature and His inscrutable quality. He is far above that which any human being can perceive or reflect (*see chapter on p. 8*). The Attributes of Allâh are the most valuable clue you have in order to know Him.

When you ascribe personality to Allâh, you are saying that He is One (*Wâhid*; 2:163). He is free in His nature and not bound by chains of imposed necessity (2:255). He has a Will (3:26) and a Purpose (51:56). He is a Being without a physical body (24:35). He is not bound by the limitations of time and space, which beset you with your physical body. He is both immeasurable and eternal, beyond measurement by watches, clocks, or calendars. In spite of all this, the whole of the scriptural record, as well as the experience of Prophets and Saints, testify to the personal relationship, which they had with Him. He can and does enter into communion with that who is not Himself (2:186).

The “I-ness” of Allâh (*Anniya, Inniya*): There are not many verses in the Holy Qur’ân in which the All-Merciful addresses a human being while referring to Himself in the “I-form.” This is the “I-ness” (*anniya*, or *inniya*) of Allâh. The “I-ness” corresponds to what is expressed in the English first-person pronoun “I.” This use of first person, unlike that of the third person, does not necessitate the existence of anything hidden. The *anniya*, or *inniya* (20:14) of Allâh is

limited to express the Lords special nearness to His servant in a way that shows His intimacy and close relationship. In the Qur’ân, Moses (*Mûsâ*) was addressed while he was “on the quest of fire” with the following Words: يَا مُوسَى إِنَّهُ أَنَا اللَّهُ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ , “O Moses! The fact is that I am Allâh, the All-Mighty [al-‘Azîz], the All-Wise [al-Hakîm]” (27:9), and again: إِنِّي أَنَا اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ , “I am, Allâh, the Lord of the worlds” (28:30). What an expression of love, beauty, and nearness you read in the verse when Allâh addresses Moses: وَأَفْيَتُ عَلَيْكَ مَحَبَّةً مَّنِي “And I endowed you with My love (with the result) that you were brought up before My eyes and under My protection” (20:39), and again: وَاصْطَنَعْتُكَ لِنَفْسِي “I, (having made you perfect,) have chosen you for Myself” (20:41). The same I-form is used in Allâh’s response to Jesus when Jesus prayed for his followers for a “sure and lasting food from heaven that it may be to us (a source of) festival ever recurring, to the first of us and the last of us” (5:114). Jesus received the good tidings and a warning for future generation (5:115). In his I-form, God addresses the soul who has attained His nearness:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَةُ ارْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَرْضِيَةً فَادْخُلِي فِي عِبَادِي وَادْخُلِي جَنَّتِي

“O you soul at peace! Come back to your Lord well-pleased with Him and He well-pleased with you. Enter the fold of My chosen servants, And enter the Garden made by Me.” (89:27–30)

In some verses you find a change from the “We-ness” to the first-person “I-ness”:

وَلَنْسِكِنَّكُمُ الْأَرْضَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ ۝ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ خَافَ مَقَامِي وَخَافَ وَعِيدَ

“And We will surely make you occupy the country after them. That (promise) shall hold good for everyone of him who fears to stand before My tribunal and fears My threatening warning.” (14:14; see also 31:10-11)

Here is a change from His Majesty and Power into His Mercy and Reward. In some other places, (e.g. see 25:45), you find similar abrupt change from “He-ness” into “We-ness.” These shifts show His Attributes of Power and at the same time His closeness to a human being. Change from “He-ness” to “We-ness” also indicates the employment of several Divine forces in that particular process. Such transitions also show that Allâh is indefinable and it is the inadequacy of human speech that makes it necessary to refer to the Supreme Being by pronouns applicable only to finite, created beings. These shifts are neither haphazardous nor accidental; rather they are deliberate linguistic intentions. Where Allâh’s Self-Sufficiency and Independence are intended to be emphasized, or where a work is to be performed through His divine decree, and His Power and the Majesty is expressed, the “We-form” appears, and when it is to be emphasized that Allâh will bring about a result through the agency of angels in association with one or more of His Attributes, the “He-form” is used. The “I-ness” is always to denote Allâh’s intimacy with His servant, with a message not only of hope and of love for him, but also of awe and fear as He says:

فَادْكُرُونِي أَدْكِرْكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوا لِي وَلَا تَكْفُرُونَ

“Therefore, Glorify Me and I will grant you eminence and be thankful to Me, and be not ungrateful (for My favours to you)”
(2:152)



MONOTHEISM IN ITS ABSOLUTE PURITY

Aḥadīyyat and Wahdānīyyat

وَإِلَهُكُمْ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ لَا إِلَهٌ إِلَّا هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ

“And your God is One God, there is no other, cannot be and will never be one worthy of worship but He, the Most Gracious, the Ever Merciful” (2:163).

The main theme of the Holy Qur’ân, the one that predominates over all other themes, is that of Oneness of His Being His *Aḥadīyyat* and *Wahdānīyyat*. “He lets none associate with Him, and share His judgment” (18:26). “So let him who hopes to meet his Lord do deeds of righteousness and let him associate no one in the worship of his Lord” (18:110). “Indeed, he who associates anything with Allâh falls, as it were, from on high, and either the birds snatch him away or the wind blows him off to some deep place very far away” (22:31), and “associate no partners with Allâh, surely this (act of) associating partners (with Him) is a grievous wrong” (31:13). These statements and many similar others constitute the cornerstone of all statements in the Holy Qur’ân. *Ilâhun Wâhid*, إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ (the only One Deity; 2:163), is the basic Attribute of Allâh and the foundation of the Muslim confession *La ilâha ill-Allâh*, لَا إِلَهٌ إِلَّا اللهُ: “There is no other, cannot be and will never be one worthy of worship but He.” It is this confession, which when combined with the confession of the prophethood of Muḥammad (pbuh), admits a person into the fold of Islam.

The Unity of Allâh implies that He is One and Unique in His Being, One and Unique in His Attributes, and One and Unique in His works. His Oneness means that there is neither plurality of gods nor plurality

of persons in His Godhead. His Oneness in His Attributes implies that no other being possesses one or more of His Divine Attributes in its perfection. His Oneness in works implies that none can do that which Allâh has done or that which He may do, and no other being has influence over His intentions and Holy desires (*irâdat al-Muqaddas* (ارادة المقدّس)). Multiplicity exists only in His Names and Attributes, but His every attributive Name is invested with all His other Names. This is because His every Name implies His essence as well as a particular aspect it enshrines. Allâh is the Name that combines all His Names.

There are two Arabic words stated that signify the oneness - *Ahad* and *Wâhid*. Allâh says, He is *Ahad* أَحَد (the Unique One; 112:1) and says, He is *Ilâhun Wâhid*, إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ (the Only One Deity; 2:163). These Divine names lack the typical Arabic article *al*, which is added in Arabic as prefix to an adjective to denote perfection. For example, Allâh is not simply *Rahmân* (Gracious) but *al-Rahmân* (the Most Gracious). Allâh's Attribute *Ahad* أَحَد and *ilâhun Wâhid*, إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ lack the prefix of *al*. This is because these Arabic words stand for perfection inherent in them. They do not need any further perfection. This doctrine of Unity is beautifully summed up in one of the shortest chapter of the Holy Qur'ân:

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُوَلَّ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَّهُ كُفُواً أَحَدٌ

“Say! [The fact is] He is Allâh, the One and Alone in His Being [Ahad]. Allâh is that Supreme Being Who is the Independent and Besought of all and Unique in all His Attributes [al-Samad]. He begets none and is begotten by no one; and there is none His equal.” (112:1–4).

The above verses (112:1-4) mention two basic Divine Attributes - the Attribute of *Ahad* and that of *al-Samad*. *Ahad* أَحَد stands for perfect uniqueness in its oneness. It is one of the wonders of the Arabic language and of the Qur'ân that this word is used as an Attribute of Allâh. Because of the perfection inherent in this word, it can never be

used to describe anyone else. Allâh is *Ahad* in the sense of absolute Uniqueness, not in a numerical sense that has its second and third. Unlike His Attributes of Resemblance—such as He sees (*huwa al-Basir*) and He listens (*huwa al-Sami*), Attributes that can be shared by his creation to some extent, the Attribute of *Ahadiyyat* أحاديّة cannot be shared. This Attribute adheres to His Essence, and no other language has any one word that can give the meaning imbedded in this word.

Ahadiyyat – Unity in its Uniqueness: Allâh is such a unique One (*Ahad*) that even His Attributes are not separate from Him. He is not of a composite nature like the God of the Trinity. He is All-Compact in His Unity, and all human intellect becomes helpless in trying to conceive His uniqueness in His Oneness (*Ahadiyyat*). There is no place in *Ahadiyyat* to allow for being one of many, nor does His *Ahadiyyat* admit another one to dissolve in it and become a part of it, nor does it allow any differentiation or distinction, and none can have any share in His Lordship. Shiblî (d. 335 AH / 946 CE) said, “Whoever tells about *Ahadiyyat* using clear statements is deviating from the straight path. Whoever is silent about it is ignorant. Whoever presumes that he has arrived at understanding *Ahadiyyat* has not arrived. Whoever speaks of it is unaware. Whoever thinks he is near to understand it is distant, whoever thinks he has found it has lost it. Everyone that you describe from your imagination or perceive through your intellect comes from you, not from Him, and it returns to you, because it is contingent and fabricated like you. He is veiled in His *Ahadiyyat*. Only the servitude (‘abûdiyyat) of a Gnostic has a link to His *Ahadiyyat*.”

The word *al-Samad* الصَّمَدُ occurs in the Holy Qur’ân only once (112:2) and is applied to Allâh alone. *Samad* is something that has no hollow space in it, and nothing can enter it or come out of it. This Attribute rejects outright the dogma of Trinity. *Samad* is clean, transparent, and invisible, something on which no dust can fall (William Edward Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*). *Al-Samad* is that

Supreme Being Who is beyond all philosophical conceptions, a Being that is eternal and everlasting and is the Sustainer, on Whom everything depends, whereas He Himself is Independent. The word *Al-Samad* comprises the concept of Primary Cause, “Eternalship,” and Independence, combined with the idea that everything existing or conceivable goes back to Him as its source and is dependent on Him for its beginning as well as for its continued existence (*Lisân al-'Arab* by Mukarram bin Manzûr; *Tâj al-'Arîs* by Murtaza Balgrâmî; *Al-Mufradât fi Gharâib al-Qur'ân* by Abû al-Qâsim Husain al-Râghib).

Chapter 112:1–4 of the Holy Qur'ân cited above points out the fundamental errors of many religions and rejects outright all forms of polytheism, including the doctrine of Trinity, “sonship,” and partnership or need for an intercessor. The simple words from Chapter 112 reject the belief of the Hindus that soul and matter are eternal and coexist with God. They also negate the belief of incarnation, according to which a mere human being is likened to God. These verses illuminate the heart of a human being with the true Divine Unity and His Glory and tell him that no defective qualities can be attributed to the Deity he is worshipping. It tells him that his Deity has no second to share in His Lordship, nor in His Essence or His Love; the idea of a second being is inconceivable. His Deity is neither the starting link of any chain nor its last link. Soul and matter are not coeternal with Him but rather are His creation. To Him alone obedience is rendered; without Him no affair is accomplished. He will continue to exist beyond time,. He is above time, for time is also His creation (103:1). When the creation has ceased to exist, He will exist as He existed before creation. He is above conception and conjecture. His Attributes have no limit. He does not require the assistance of any other being to carry on His work. Everything existing or conceivable goes back to Him as its source. Any attempt at depicting Him by means of figurative representation or by abstract symbols is wrong. None sees Him other than Him. None perceives Him other than He.

This is Allâh, the One and Only Deity to be adored and worshipped. This is the Deity as presented by the Holy Qur’ân.

Wahdânîyyat of Allâh: The word *wâhid*, وَاحِدٌ denotes the number one, which is followed by the second (number two) and then the third (number three) and so on. The Christians say that God is one (*Wâhid*), and to this number another two are added to make three, yet the three, according to them, are one. The Hindus are not much different with their “*Trimutri*” – the three gods. Allâh says, He is *al-Wâhid* (13:16) – (with the Arabic prefix *al* denoting perfection according to Arabic rules), meaning the Only One, that is no number can be added to His Oneness. When the word *wâhid* – without the prefix *al*, is used for Allâh, it is always in combination with another word like *ilâha* إِلَهٌ as in *ilâhun Wâhid*, إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ - that is, no other deity can be added or associated with Him. This association is called *shirk* in the Holy Qur’ân (18:26; 18:110). Belief in the Unity of God (*Wahdânîyyat* وَهَدَانِيَّةُ of Allâh) is to believe that His Being is free from every associate, whether that associate is an idol or a human being as God incarnate, the sun, the moon, a river, fire, a tree, ones ego, ones desires or deceit, a Holy Ghost or any other spirit. It is against the claim of belief in *Wahdânîyyat* of Allâh to conceive of something or someone as possessing any power similar to Him or any attribute equal to Him, or to accept anyone else as co-sustainer or co-provider. Similarly, to hold anyone as bestowing honour or disgrace; to consider anyone as helper; or to confine your love, your worship, your humility, your hopes, and your awe to anyone other than Him—be he Jesus, Mary, Krishna, Buddha, Muhammad, ‘Alî, Hussein or anyone else—contradicts this belief. No Unity can be complete without the following three types of particularization: (1) there is the Unity of Being. (2) There is the Unity of Attributes—that is to say, all good Attributes (*al-Asmâ’ al-Husnâ*) are confined to His Being, and those other Attributes of resemblance, which are shared with His creation, which may offer to sustain benefits, are only a part of the system set

up by Him. (3) No one is to be considered His associate in the matters of love, worship, and awe. We read in the chapter *Al-Â'râf*:

أَيْشُرُكُونَ مَا لَا يَخْلُقُ شَيْنَا وَهُمْ يُخْلِقُونَ وَلَا يَسْتَطِيغُونَ لَهُمْ نَصْرًا وَلَا
أَنْفُسُهُمْ يَتَصْرُّونَ وَإِنْ تَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَى الْهُدَىٰ لَا يَتَبَعُو كُمْ سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْكُمْ
أَذْعَوْنَمُو هُمْ أَمْ أَنْتُمْ صَانِعُونَ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ عِبَادٌ أَمْ تَالِكُمْ
فَادْعُوهُمْ فَلَيُسْتَحِيِّبُوا لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ لَهُمْ أَرْجُلٌ يَمْشِيْنَ بِهَا أَمْ لَهُمْ
أَيْدٍ يَبْطِشُونَ بِهَا أَمْ لَهُمْ أَعْيُنٌ يُبَصِّرُونَ بِهَا أَمْ لَهُمْ آذَانٌ يَسْمَعُونَ
بِهَا قُلْ ادْعُوا شُرَكَاءَكُمْ ثُمَّ كَيْدُونَ فَلَا تُنْتَظِرُونَ إِنَّ وَلِيَّ اللَّهِ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ
الْكِتَابَ وَهُوَ يَتَوَلَّ الصَّالِحِينَ وَالَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ لَا يَسْتَطِيغُونَ
نَصْرَكُمْ وَلَا أَنْفُسُهُمْ يَتَصْرُّونَ وَإِنْ تَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَى الْهُدَىٰ لَا يَسْمَعُوا
وَتَرَاهُمْ يَنْظَرُونَ إِلَيْكَ وَهُمْ لَا يُبَصِّرُونَ

“Do they associate (with Him as partners) those who create nothing but are themselves created? They (the associated gods) will have no power to give them (who associate partners with God) any help, nor can they help themselves. And if you invite these (associated gods) for (your) guidance, they will not respond to you. It makes no difference to you whether you call them or you remain silent. “Verily, those whom you call on beside Allâh are (merely helpless maids or) servants like yourselves. (If it is not so then) call on them, they should then make a response to you if you are right. Have these (gods) feet with which they walk, or have they hands with which they hold, or have they eyes with which they see, or have they ears with which they hear? Say, Call upon your associate gods, then contrive you all against me and give me no respite, (yet you will see that I am triumphant because), My Protecting-Friend is Allâh Who has revealed this perfect Book and He takes into (His) protection all the righteous. And those whom you call upon besides Him have no power to help you, nor can they help themselves. And if you call these (associates) to guidance they will not even be able to hear (you

speak). And though you see them (as if they are) looking at you while (as a matter of fact) they do not see” (7:191–199).

Association of other gods with Allâh (*shirk* شرک) is not limited to the worship of god incarnates and spirits, and idols in houses of worship. It is also a form of *shirk* to suppose that other objects, dead or alive, possess one or more of the Attributes as the Supreme Being to the same extent. For example, to believe that there are three Persons in the Godhead and that the Son and the Holy Ghost are eternal, omnipotent, and omniscient, or that there is a creator of evil along with a creator of good, or that matter and soul are self-existing and coeternal. How can you feel comfortable taking another human being, one who slept, walked, ate, and got rid of what he had eaten, as an object of worship, adoring him or bowing before him? It is also a form of *shirk* to blindly obey religious leaders, assenting in what they enjoin and what they forbid, submitting to their behest. Such obedience perpetuates a slaved mind who has no power of judging what is good and great and what is wrong and inferior (16:75). Allâh says:

اَتَّخَذُوا اَحْبَارَهُمْ وَرُهْبَانِهِمْ اُرْبَابًا مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَالْمُسِيَّحَ ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ وَمَا
أُمِرُوا إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا إِلَهًا وَاحِدًا لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ سُبْحَانَهُ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

“They have taken their learned men and their monks for lords apart from Allâh, and (similarly they have taken) the Messiah, son of Mary, whilst they were enjoined to worship none but One God. There is no other, cannot be and will never be One worthy of worship but He. Too glorified is He for what they associate (with Him).” (9:31)

To go after your desires—making these desires an object of your ultimate goal and worship—is yet another form of *shirk*. We read:

أَرَأَيْتَ مَنْ اتَّخَذَ إِلَهَهُ هَوَاهُ

“Have you considered (over the plight of) one who has taken his own low desires for his deity?” (25:43)

Your desires are apt to become objects of your adoration. You clothe your desires in a divine garb. Your worldly wishes goad you to place them at the altar of divinity. Intellectually, human beings may have advanced far enough so as not to bow before stones and stars, but they have not outgrown their worship of wealth, their excessive love for tribe or nation, their heroes, their flags, their leaders. These new idols still lie enthroned in the depth of many hearts, and humans are ready to sacrifice their lives for it.

وَاثْنُ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَأُ الدَّيْنِي أَتَيْنَاهُ آيَاتِنَا فَانسَلَخَ مِنْهَا فَاتَّبَعَهُ الشَّيْطَانُ فَكَانَ مِنَ الْغَاوِينَ وَلَوْ شِئْنَا لَرَفَعَنَا بِهَا وَلَكِنَّهُ أَخْذَ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ ۝ فِمْثُلُهُ كَمَثْلِ الْكَلْبِ إِن تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْهِ يَلْهَثُ أَوْ تُنْرُكُهُ يَلْهَثُ □

“Relate to them the news of him (the human being) to whom We gave Our commandments but he withdrew himself there from, the satan followed him (in his pursuit of the world and his impulses), with the result that he became one of those led astray. We would have exalted him (in ranks) thereby (- by means of these Our commandments) if he willed, but he remained inclined to this world and followed his low desires. His case therefore is like that of a dog [- symbol of greed], if you bear down upon it, it lolls its tongue out or if you leave it alone, it still lolls out its tongue.” (7:175-77)

You may not fall into the error of those who believe in incarnation of God. He is not in an object nor is any object within Him. He is now as He always was, the Unique One without oneness or manyness. Think of Him in this fashion.

فَتَعَالَى اللَّهُ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

FOUR DIVINE GRACES OF MERCY

“*Allâh is Highly Exalted far above the things they associate (with Him)*” (7:190; see also 9:31, 10:18, 27:63, 28:68).



FOUR DIVINE GRACES OF MERCY

Rabûbîyyat - Rahmânîyyat - Rahîmîyyat – Mâlikîyyat

In the very first verses of the Holy Qur’ân (1:1–4), Allâh introduces Himself to humankind with His four Attributes - *Rabb al-‘Âlamîn*, رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ (Creator, Evolver, Nourisher and Sustainer of the worlds of bodies and non-bodies), *al-Rahmân* الرحمن (the most Gracious), *al-Rahîm*, الرحيم (the Ever Merciful) and *Mâlik-i-Yaum a(l)-Dîn*, مَالِكُ يَوْمِ الدِّين (King on the Day of Judgment). These are His four Attributes of Mercy. They are repeated several times during the five daily ritual Prayers of the Muslims, and are expounded in detail in the verses of the Holy Qur’ân. They rank above all His other Attributes made Him known to us. On these four Attributes rests the very existence of His entire creation. They are the fountainhead of His four Graces – the Grace of *Rabûbîyyat*, *Rahmânîyyat*, *Rahîmîyyat* and *Mâlikîyyat*.

He says, “(*He is*) the Most Gracious (God, Who) is firmly and flawlessly established on (His) Throne (of Power),” الرحمن على العرش اسْتَقْوِي (20:5). His “Throne of Power” is supported by these four Divine Graces. Each of these four Graces is related to Divine Mercy and Love. Together, the four Divine Graces may be called the mother of all Divine Graces, which are in operation at all times in the universe. The order in which they are mentioned in *al-Fâtihah* (1:1–4) is their

natural order, and they are being manifested in the order mentioned. These Graces of Mercy and Love are being bestowed on his entire creation, because He desires to have them bestowed, not because of anything His creation has done to earn them.

Rabûbîyyat – The First Divine Grace

The Fountainhead of Allâh’s *Rabûbîyyat* رَبُّوبِيت is His first Attribute, *Rabb al-Âlamîn* رَبُّ الْعَالَمِين meaning, Creator, Evolver, Nourisher, and Sustainer of all the worlds. The cosmos, the worlds of spheres and planets, of life in all its forms (see 26:23–24), of spirits, of knowledge, and of other realms of nonmatter—such as that of paradise (*jannât*), hellfire, angels, or anything that comes under the sway of Allâh’s Holy Intention (*al-Irâdat al-Muqaddas*) and His perfect Knowledge (*al-‘Alim*)—all are part of ‘alam-i-kabîr (the macrocosmos).

Every form of creation—living or nonliving, with forms or without forms—comes under the sway of Allâh’s *Rabûbîyyat*. All bodies were manifested and are still being manifested through it, and all were evolved and are still evolving through it. This Grace is the very origin of the universe. Were it to be withdrawn for even an instant, the universe would end, and had it not been for this Grace, there would have been no creation. Therefore, the Grace of *Rabûbîyyat* ranks above all other Graces, because it came into manifestation before other Graces were manifested. Even after the creation of the universe, the need for this Grace remains insistent in every moment, just as if Allâh had not yet created anything. His *Rabûbîyyat* continues to envelop all objects of His creation.

Allâh says, “*Our word to a thing when We intend it (to come into being) is only that We say to it Be and it comes to be*” (16:40; see also 2:117). Thus, His first word is the word “Be!”. All objects of creation are the result of obedience to the Command “Be!” Though in your faculty of imagination every impossible thing is possible through Him, still He brings into existence whatever He desires according to

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His eternal perfect Knowledge, His Will, and His merciful Intention (*al-Irâdat al-Muqaddas*). He desires all existing things, and He does not utter His Command unless He desires and intends it (2:117).

Allâh's creation is of two kinds. First is the creation prior to His existence-giving Command "Be!". The creation before this Divine Command "Be!" is in His eternal Knowledge, and we are not given any knowledge of it. The second creation is the one that comes into existence after the existence-giving Command "Be!". With this Command He brings into existence forms, which, in their state of nonexistence, were nonetheless pre-existing in His Knowledge. Moments of time are connected only to the existing things, but His Knowledge about them is from eternity, without any beginning (10:34). "*Allâh [is the] Originator of the heavens and the earth, Possessor of the knowledge of the unseen and the seen*" (39:46). He "*starts the cycle of creation and then continues it*" (10:34). He originates the "entities and forms" from His sacred Intention (- *al-Irâdat al-Muqaddas*) in accordance with His merciful Knowledge. Then, with His Command "Be!", "*He brings forth the living out of the lifeless and He brings forth the lifeless out of the living*" (6:95). "Be!" shall be His Command to bring forth the Day of Judgment (6:73).

According to 'Alî Ibn Abî Tâlib and other people of reflection, "dust" was the first universal reality. "*And He originated the creation of human being from clay [dust]*" (32:7). Then Allâh manifested Himself in Theophany to that "dust" through His Light (*Nûr*; 24:35). Within this dust was the entire cosmos in its potentiality and readiness (*salâhiya*). Ibn al-'Arabî said, "The origin of creation was the "cloud of dust", ('Amâ – the Urwolke) which came into existence from the Known Reality [*al-Haqq* أَحْقَّ], Who is described neither by what is existent nor by what is nonexistent. He manifested Himself in Theophany through His Light (24:35) to that dust, which contained the entire universe in potentiality and readiness (*al-Hayûlâ al-Kull*). Each thing in that dust received from His Light in accordance with its

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preparedness (*isti'dâd*). By bringing His Light and the dust together, Allâh made a mixture, and something of the one entered into the other.” Then there is a constant change from one state to the other, outwardly and inwardly (55:29) as you are told:

السَّمَاءُ وَهِيَ دُخَانٌ فَقَالَ لَهَا وَلِلأَرْضِ اتَّبِعَا طَوْعًا أَوْ كَرْهًا قَالَتَا أَتَيْنَا

“*He directed Himself towards the space [heaven]. Behold! It was (like) a mass of gas. (God) said to it [the space] and to the earth [dust], Come both of you (in obedience to Me) willingly or unwillingly. They said, We obey you with all our will.*” (41:11)

After Allâh brought the masses of gas, دُخَانٌ and “dust” together, there was a process of separation.

أَنَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ كَانَتَا رَتْقًا فَفَتَّقَاهُمَا ۖ

“... the heavens and the earth were (once) one mass all closed up, then We rent them apart.” (21:30).

Was this renting apart the “Big Bang” or was an “unrolling of the cosmos,” like the unrolling of the scrolls as the following verse indicates:

يَوْمَ نَطْوِي السَّمَاءَ كَطَّيِ السَّحْلَ لِلْكُتُبِ ۚ كَمَا بَدَأْنَا أَوَّلَ خَلْقٍ ثُمَّ عَدَدًا عَلَيْنَا ۚ إِنَّا كُنَّا فَاعِلِينَ

“*This is the Day when We shall roll up the heavens like the rolling up of the written scrolls by a scribe. Just as We started the process of the first creation so shall We reproduce it. This is a promise binding on Us; We shall certainly bring it about.*” (21:104)

From this verse, which describes the Day of Judgment, you can infer the mystery of the beginnings of creation, the mystery behind the “Big Bang.” Creation was an “unrolling of heavens,” like the unrolling of

the written scrolls of a “book.” The rolled scrolls have the potential of energy, which when unrolled is let loose. How was the cosmos created? Did the initial expansion of the so-called big bang resemble an unrolling of scrolls as indicated in verse 21:104? The scientific quest for the fundamental laws of nature has always resulted in unification. The laws of fall and the laws of planetary motion were unified into one theory of gravity and the apparently so distinct phenomena of electricity and magnetism are but two aspects of a unified electromagnetism. The theory of relativity has unified several ideas, intertwining time and space, energy and mass and more. Physicists have come a long way in their quest for a unified theory of all physical laws.

It is futile to explain the Holy Qur’ân by relying on scientific findings, which itself is continuously evolving. Nevertheless, this unmistakable reference to the unitary origin of the universe, metaphorically described here as the heavens and the earth, strikingly anticipates the view of almost all modern astrophysicists that this universe originated as a single entity from one single element. Then He says:

قُلْ أَئِنَّكُمْ لَنَكْفُرُونَ بِالذِّي خَلَقَ الْأَرْضَ فِي يَوْمَيْنِ وَتَحْجَلُونَ لَهُ أَنْدَادًا ۝
ذَلِكَ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَوَجَعَلَ فِيهَا رَوَاسِيًّا مِّنْ فَوْقِهَا وَبَارَكَ فِيهَا وَقَدَرَ فِيهَا
أَقْوَاتَهَا فِي أَرْبَعَةِ أَيَّامٍ سَوَاءً لِلْسَّائِلِينَ اسْتَوَى إِلَى

“Would you really disbelieve in Him Who created the earth in two eons (a time period which we cannot reckon)? And do you set up compeers with Him? He alone is the Lord of the worlds. He placed therein [in the earth] firm mountains rising above (its surface) and showered it with His blessings [cosmic particles] and placed in it various provisions according to a set measure, (provisions to which) all those who require them have equal rights, (and all this He created) in four eons.” (41:9–10)

فَقَصَاهُنَّ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ فِي يَوْمَيْنِ وَأَوْحَىٰ فِي كُلِّ سَمَاءٍ أَمْرَهَا ۚ وَزَيَّنَا السَّمَاءَ الدُّنْيَا بِمَصَابِيحَ وَحِفْظًا ۖ ذَلِكَ تَقْدِيرُ الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ

“So He ordained them seven heavens in two eons and assigned to each (heaven) its (relevant) function. And We decked the nearest heaven with lamps [shining stars for light] and made it to guard. Such is the decree of the All-Mighty, the All-Knowing” (41:12).

Thus, there was a continuous evolution in cosmic creations. The following verse points to the great upheavals and violent agitations that led to the formation of the mountains, before human beings existed on earth.

وَجَعَلْنَا فِي الْأَرْضِ رَوَاسِيَ أَنْ تَمِيدَ بِهِمْ وَجَعَلْنَا فِيهَا فِجَاجًا سُبُّلًا لَّعَلَّهُمْ يَهْتَدُونَ

“And We have made firm mountains on the earth so that they may be a source of benefit and provision for the people and lest it should quake with them. And We made on it wide pathways that people may find right guidance to reach the goal” (21:31)

The mountains owe their rise to the gradual balancing process to which the solid crust of the earth is subjected. The mountains are like pegs, symbols of the firmness and relative equilibrium that the surface of the earth has gradually achieved in the course of its geological history. In cosmic space are aggregations of matter, which form planets, stars, nebulae, or galaxies. Very little was known of biology in those days, but the Holy Qur’ân, in the clearest terms, speaks of water as being where life originated, and water as an essential requirement for life (21:30).

وَجَعَلْنَا مِنَ الْمَاءِ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ حَيٌّ

“And it is from water that We created all life” (21:30).

The Holy Qur'ân is not a treatise on science. It merely refers to certain phenomena in nature to elucidate the principles underlying nature. Since the Holy Qur'ân comes from the Omnipotent, All-Knowing Allâh, it cannot impart wrong knowledge. A number of scientific truths were mentioned in the Holy Qur'ân at a time when no one was aware of them. The Holy Qur'ân inspired the early Muslims to rescue astronomy from the clutches of astrology and place it on a strictly scientific basis, leading to many valuable discoveries.

Just as the cosmos depended upon His *Rabûbîyyat* رَبُوبِيَّةٍ for its coming into existence, it is equally dependent upon it for its continuation and sustenance. It is not that after having created the cosmos, Allâh withdrew from its control, that He committed it to the laws of nature so that He Himself never intervenes in any way, that He is taking some rest until the Day of Judgment. No, His *Rabûbîyyat* is continuously providing a means for the physical requirements and sustenance of creation, collectively and without discrimination:

The coming into being from nonexistence and its development from the crudest form on its way to perfection is through the manifestation of His Grace of *Rabûbîyyat*. Under the ever-present eye of His *Rabûbîyyat*, you can see the stage for the wise development of living things in their respective spheres. Then He tells us the developmental stages of human origin from dust to the embryonic stages:

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ سُلَالَةٍ مِّنْ طِينٍ ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاهُ نُطْفَةً فِي قَرَارٍ مَّكِينٍ ثُمَّ
خَلَقْنَا النُّطْفَةَ عَلَقَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْعَلَقَةَ مُضْعَفَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْمُضْعَفَةَ عَظِيمًا فَكَسَوْنَا
الْعِظَامَ لَحْمًا ثُمَّ أَنْشَأْنَاهُ حَلْقًا آخَرَ ۝ فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِينَ

"We create a human being from an extract of clay; then We reduce him to a drop of sperm (and place him) in a safe depository; then We form the sperm into a clot; then We develop the clot into a lump of flesh; then We fashion bones out of this lump of flesh, then We clothe the bones with flesh, thereafter We

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evolve him into another being. Therefore blessed be Allâh the Best of Creators.” (23:12–14)

These Divine Words describe the working out of a grand scheme through millions of years, in order to bring life to its current shape. The verse (21:30): وَجَعَلْنَا مِنَ الْمَاءِ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ حَيًّا “And it is from water that We created all life,” refers to water as the source of all living entities in His cosmos. Then your attention is drawn to the evolution of living species when you read, “It is He Who has evolved you from one living entity” (6:98).

Evolution did not replace God. Evolution is the process the Creator has used to bring life into being and into its perfection. The impressions of divine design are overwhelming everywhere in creation. In the scientific framework, it is not feasible to keep track of every gamma ray causing some mutation. This lack of knowledge or lack of control is paraphrased as “coincidence,” and an unavoidable consequence of this practical restriction is that you can make only punctual, local observations, which must be patched together. It is their failure to patch these together, which leads atheists to believe that evolution is supposedly “random” and – so they reason—whatever the process of evolution brings forth must therefore be without higher purpose. They fail to see that the Divine law permeating through the universe is purposeful and even the tiniest, most subtle change of state only happens in accordance with His Law, His Will and His Command. The care of the universe tires Him not (2:255). “Coincidence,” in the sense of an event that occurred surprisingly, unintentionally, or without control, corresponds to your lack of knowledge or power in some way or another. However, such a notion cannot exist for an All-Knowing Being, Who stands above even the time that He created. Evolution is no different from any other process in the universe. Powers working in the universe are not operating by themselves, but Divine Power operates through them. All the qualities and capacities with which the celestial bodies and earthly

elements are temporarily invested are but a reflection of the Divine Power and Attributes eternally possessed by Allâh, the Supreme.

There is nothing in the teachings of the Holy Qur'ân that is hostile or contradictory to established scientific truths, and the statements in the Holy Qur'ân on nature and creation are clear, requiring no lengthy explanations or hedging interpretations.

Never Ending Creation

There is no stillness whatsoever in the cosmos (31:29); there is a constant change from one state to another, outwardly and inwardly, a change that you may or may not perceive.

كُلَّ يَوْمٍ هُوَ فِي شَأنٍ

“Every moment He manifests Himself in a new state” (55:29).

The states come and go, and the changes leave their traces. The entire cosmos refuses to stay still, and His *Rabûbiyyat* is in operation all the time over His entire creation. At no time is the universe deprived of the benefit of His *Rabûbiyyat*

No doubt, the cosmos itself is a proof of His Names and His Attributes; we cannot say that the cosmos is a proof of His existence. We can only say that it is a proof of His Attributes. The cosmos signifies only that there is a Reality Who is the Designer and Regularizer (*Rabb*), but you do not have a proof that such a Reality exists and is living and controlling all the affairs. You cannot sense and perceive this Creator through reason or by inspecting His handiwork, the universe and its laws. The ultimate proof of His existence comes only through His Self-Disclosure and when He unveils and speaks. Allâh's *Rabûbiyyat* is constantly providing means for His Self-Disclosure (*wahî* and *ilhâm*) that gives you the knowledge about Him and the certainty of His existence. He says:

قُلِ اللَّهُ يَهْدِي لِلْحَقِّ ۝ أَفَمَنْ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْحَقِّ أَحَقُّ أَنْ يُتَّبَعَ أَمْنَ لَا يَهْدِي إِلَّا
أَنْ يُهْدَى ۝ فَمَا لَكُمْ كَيْفَ تَحْكُمُونَ

“Say, ‘It is Allâh alone Who leads to the Truth’. Is then He Who leads to the Truth more worthy to be followed or he (assumed to be god) that cannot find the way (himself) unless he be guided? What, then, is the matter with you? How do you judge?” (10:34)

The Truth (*al-Haqq*) is He alone. Be sure, His Revelations, His unveiling and His speaking is the only definite source that provides you the absolute certainty you need of His presence. At times the ‘Âlam (realm) of misguidance, disbelief, and transgression flourishes; the earth becomes dark, and dead, and the light of faith is pulverized under this affliction. Then Allâh brings forth another ‘Âlam (realm), and the dead earth throbs with a fresh life.

قُلْ هُنَّ مِنْ شُرَكَائِكُمْ مَنْ يَبْدَا الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ ۝ قُلِ اللَّهُ يَبْدَا الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ
يُعِيدُهُ ۝ فَإِنَّمَا تُؤْفَكُونَ

“Say, is there anyone of your (associated) partners (with God) who starts the cycle of creation and then continues it? Say, ‘It is Allâh Who starts the cycle of creation and then continues it’. Whither then are you being deviated away (from the truth)?”

Allâh alone starts the cycle of new creation. His Will and Decree descends from the heavens, and many are blessed with perceiving hearts and eloquent tongues to render Him thanks for His bounties. They make themselves lowly before the Lord of Greatness, and they run to Him in fear and hope, their eyes downcast with modesty and their faces turning wistfully to the Provider of all needs with resolute submissiveness.

الَّذِي يُرْسِلُ الرِّيَاحَ فَتُثِيرُ سَحَابًا فَيُبَسِّطُهُ فِي السَّمَاءِ كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ وَيَجْعَلُهُ
كِسْفًا فَتَرَى الْوَدْقَ يَخْرُجُ مِنْ خَلَلِهِ ۝ فَإِنَّمَا أَصَابَ بِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ

إِذَا هُمْ يَسْتَبِّرُونَ وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يُنَزَّلَ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ لَمْبُلِسِينَ
فَانظُرْ إِلَى آثَارِ رَحْمَتِ اللَّهِ كَيْفَ يُحِبِّي الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا

“It is Allâh alone who sends forth the winds and they raise (the vapours to form) a cloud which He spreads out in the sky as He will and sets it layer upon layer, and you see the rain falling from its midst. And no sooner does He cause it [the Divine Revelation] to fall on whom He will of His servants, then they (the people) are filled with joy (because of the glad tidings). Though shortly before it was sent down upon them, they were in a state of despondency. Look, therefore, at the evidences of Allâh’s mercy! How He breathes life into the earth (making it green and flourishing) after its (state of) death.” (30:48–50)

When the darkness of disbelief and ignorance prevails on earth, “and the night when it becomes (dark and) still” (93:2), that Divine Compassion and His eternal Mercy raises a person, one who is blessed with Divine Discourse and His Light. And with this Light, he dispels darkness and creates a new “world” (see 93:3). They are those who perceive this Light, those who are gifted with insight and whose hearts are clean, who are prepared for this reception. The most honoured of this group are the Prophets, their followers, apostles, and the righteous, the ones who are the true servants of Allâh, and they excel above all the rest. Many of them are reviled in the earth but are commended by Allâh in the heavens. When Allâh’s servant discards his own desires, empties his passion, is centered in Allâh and His worship, and glorifies Him with all the particles of his body, then the heart of such a one becomes a new ‘Âlam - a new world of its own; one of the ‘Âlam-i-Saghîr (the microcosmos).

You may think that your journey comes to its end when you die, that the path before you is now closed, and that the time has come for you to take shelter in the silent obscurity of your grave. However, this is not true; the grave is not the end. Rather, it is the commencement of

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the unfolding of soul. Hâfiż of Shirâz, the great Persian mystic, said, “If just a little dust and water mixed in His bowl can yield such exquisite scents, sights, music, and whirling forms, what unspeakable wonders must wait with the commencement of the unfolding of the infinite numbers of petals that is the soul.”

Raising the dead on the Day of Resurrection, or life after death, is one of the major themes of the Holy Qur’ân (see 23:16). On the Day of Judgment, the “job” and His involvement in affairs of Allâh does not come to an End after He simply assigns humankind to either the “Gardens of Paradise” or “hell,” as some may believe. Rather, resurrection is but a continuation of the cycle of creation (29:19). The life after death is a creation of Allâh, so His Grace of *Rabûbiyyat* will continue to operate in that life as well.

نَحْنُ قَدْرُنَا بَيْنَكُمُ الْمَوْتَ وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمَسْبُوقِينَ عَلَىٰ أَنْ تُبَدِّلَ أَمْثَالُكُمْ وَنُنْشِئُكُمْ فِي مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ وَلَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمُ النَّسَاءَ الْأُولَىٰ فَلَوْلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ

“It is We that have ordained death for all of you. And We cannot be stopped from (it), From replacing you with beings similar to you, (or from) evolving you into a form which is unknown to you (at present). And you certainly know of the first evolution. Then, why do you not reflect?” (56:60–62)

Many people mistakenly imagine death to be a state of nonexistence. This notion of theirs is not true, as the preceding verses explain. It is also incorrect to assume that resurrection will be like the first creation, with the body such as the one you have today. Resurrection is another kind of creation, but it is different and unrelated to the first. He says:

أَفَعَيْنَا بِالْخَلْقِ الْأَوَّلِ ۝ بَلْ هُمْ فِي لَبْسٍ مِّنْ حَقْقِ جَدِيدٍ

“Are We wearied with the first creation (that We will not be able to create them the second time on the Day of Resurrection)? The

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fact is that they are in confusing doubt about a new creation.” (50:15)

إِنَّا أَنْشَأْنَاهُنَّ إِنْشَاءً

“Verily, (on the Day of Resurrection,) We have made them (women and men) excellent and have raised them into a special new creation.” (56:35)

خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا مَا دَامَتِ السَّمَاوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ رَبُّكَ

“And they shall abide therein, unless your Lord otherwise will, so long as the heavens and the earth (thereof) endure. Surely, your Lord does bring about very well what He intends (to do)” (11:107)

According to Ibn Jarîr, the passage “so long as the heavens and the earth endure” means that time cannot endure beyond this limit. The passage “unless your Lord otherwise will” means unless Allâh decides to bestow on them yet another and a greater reward, and open up to them a new, yet higher stage of evolution (Râzî in *al-Tafsîr al Kabîr*). The new efforts and progress shall continue.

يَوْمٌ لَا يُحِزِّي اللَّهُ النَّبِيُّ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ نُورٌ هُمْ يَسْعَى بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ
وَبِأَيْمَانِهِمْ يَوْلُونَ رَبَّنَا أَتْمِمْ لَنَا نُورَنَا وَاغْفِرْ لَنَا

“On that day (when the human beings will be raised to life again) Allâh will not disgrace the Prophet nor those who have believed with him. Their light [Nûr] will advance swiftly (radiating) in front of them and on their right hands while they will go on (praying and) saying, Our Lord! (Continue to) perfect our light for us and protect us (against our lapses). Verily You are Possessor of prudential Power to do every desired thing” (66:8).

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In this verse the words أَثْبِمْ لَنَا نُورَنَا - *perfect our light*, are drawing your attention to how the development of human souls continues beyond death, though in a different form. There is yet another verse, which when read carefully, provides the same message:

يَوْمَ يَقُولُ الْمُنَافِقُونَ وَالْمُنَافِقَاتُ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا انظُرُونَا تَقْتِيسْ مِنْ نُورِكُمْ

"That day the hypocritical men and hypocritical women will say to those who believe, 'Wait for us so that we might obtain some illumination from (this) light'." (57:13).

The expression used by the hypocrites, "Wait for us" indicates that in paradise, souls will continue to pass through evolutionary processes, and there shall be no rest.

Ibn al-'Arabî writes, "At the end of his journey in this world, the servant desires to throw down the staff of the journey and does not want to remain a traveler anymore. However, his Lord tells him that this is not the end of the affair. At the time of death, He shows His servant His grand Kingdom. When the servant sees that grand Kingdom of his Lord, he runs towards his Creator, he wants to see everything that had been veiled from him. The Lord informs him that he will never cease to be a traveler and reach a place of permanent rest. He reminds him that just as he never ceased to be a traveler in the many stages of the cosmos, and as he was entering from one form into the other, so he will continue from one way station to the other. He will say, Just as you traveled with your elemental body each day and each night, crossing your lifespan till you reached the way station of your death, even after that, you will not stop traveling. You will cross the way station of *barzakh*, from your grave to the way station of resurrection. Then you will be carried to the abode of your felicity and from there to the dune of White Musk on your never ending journey." This is the bridge between *Rabûbîyyat* and *Rahmânîyyat*.

Rahmânîyyat – The Second Divine Grace

The operation of Allâh’s second Grace, His *Rahmânîyyat*, follows *Rabûbîyyat* but is involved only with the worlds of animates, not with inanimate. The Divine Grace of *Rahmânîyyat* رحمانیت is not the consequence of, or the reward of one’s actions. It is by the blessing of this Grace that everything lives and eats and has its sustaining needs fulfilled. It is through the operation of this Grace that you fulfil your life requirements: the sun for warmth, light, and energy; the air for breathing; and the water for drinking. It is by the blessing of this Grace that all prerequisites for your spiritual development have already been provided - the capacities of rational thinking and speech, the embedded love for God and the innate drive to worship, and the capacity to receive Divine Revelation. You read in the Holy Qur’ân such verses as: “*He has taken upon Himself (the rule of) mercy*” (6:12; 6:54), “*Your Lord is the Lord of All-Embracing Mercy*” (6:146), “*My mercy embraces all things*” (7:156), and “*Our Lord, You embrace each and everything in Your mercy*” (40:7). Every created living thing is the object of His *Rahmânîyyat*, and Mercy is His Essence, but being merciful is His Attribute.

You beg him for mercy by mentioning His Names and Attributes. You might say, “O All-Mighty! Have mercy on me,” or you might say, “O Merciful! Forgive me.” This is because the Attributive Names are referring to His Attribute of Mercy and the various associations that they bear. All Attributes can be appealed to for Mercy. Ibn al-‘Arabî said, “The Mercy of Allâh flows in all created things and courses through His Self and His Essences. The rank of Mercy is the epitome to those who perceive it, and is sublime to those with discursive mind.” (Ibn al-‘Arabî, *Fatûhât al-Makkîyya*). It is because of Allâh’s *Rahmânîyyat* that He gives respite to the disbelievers:

وَلَا يَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنَّمَا نُمْلِي لَهُمْ حَيْرًا لَّا نُغْسِلُهُمْ ۝ إِنَّمَا نُمْلِي لَهُمْ لَيْزَدَادُوا إِنَّمَا

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“And do not let those who disbelieve think that the respite We give them is good for them. Surely, We grant them respite (that they may have a chance to mend their ways and correct their evil actions,) but they do not avail it, with the result that they add to their sins” (3:178)

If He were to punish sinners for every wrong committed, “He would not leave any (unjust and polytheistic) living and crawling creature on the face of the earth, but He gives them respite till an appointed term” (16:61), so that the disobedient may have the opportunity to avail and correct, so that they have a chance to repent. His Mercy takes precedence over His Wrath (- *ghadzab* (غضب)—that is, His Mercy is attributed to Him before His Wrath. Many are aware of Allâh’s Mercy, and many are aware of His Wrath. Everyone flees from His Wrath and seeks His Mercy. Out of His *Rahmânîyyat*, He appoints Prophets for the guidance of humankind, Prophets who bring good tidings but also warnings, which are followed by punishment. Thus, Allâh has a hidden Wrath within His Mercy. He has also a hidden Mercy within His Wrath. This is His mystery and His Wisdom.

It is through this Grace of *Rahmânîyyat* that living beings enjoy the fulfilment of their wants. You cannot claim that the fulfilments of your demands and joys of life are because of your actions, or because you had been engaged in some virtuous pursuit in a previous incarnation that earned Gods favourable estimate so that He conferred all these innumerable bounties upon you. Nor is it because of your own requests and prayers, nor because of somebody else’s request for intercession on your behalf. It is this Grace, which reveals itself in thousands of ways that is meant to elevate the well-being of all living things. It is a bounty regardless of merit, claim, or demand on the part of anyone. It is but the upsurge of Divine Mercy, so that you (and every other animate creature) may attain your natural goal and may reach the state inherent in your nature. That the Divine Being possesses this Attribute is manifestly established through a study of

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the laws of nature. Your body owes its origin to His *Rahmâniyyat*. He provides His bounties out of His sheer Grace, even long before the birth of His creatures and before the commencement of their deeds and thinking.

His universal *Rahmâniyyat* رحمانیت refutes those who seek to confine the Providence and Grace of Allâh to their own religion, country and people, mistakenly believing that Allâh did not create other communities or peoples of other lands or ages, or that after creating them, Allâh rejected them or forgot about them. They may also believe that all Prophets and messengers were raised among their own people and that Allâh was so indifferent to other peoples that He did not have the least pity with them, even when He found them in error or in a state of unawareness. People may also mistakenly believe that Divine Revelation and Divine Speech has always remained restricted to certain chosen peoples or certain regions. But whoever believes this, is unaware of Allâh's universal *Rahmâniyyat*. He says:

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلًا مِّنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْهُمْ مَنْ قَصَصْنَا عَلَيْكَ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ لَمْ نَقْصُصْنَ
عَلَيْكَ

“And indeed We have already sent (Our) Messengers before you. There are some of them whom We have mentioned to you and of them there are some whom We have not mentioned to you”
(40:78)

وَإِنْ مَنْ أَمَّةٍ إِلَّا حَلَّ فِيهَا نَذِيرٌ

“There has been no people but have (been warned by) a Warner (from God)” (35:24).

This is so that no people may have cause to complain that Allâh was gracious only towards some nation and not towards another, or that some other people were given a book to guide them but they were not, or that He manifested Himself through His Words and Revelations

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and signs in a certain age but remained hidden and silent in another age. This passage demonstrates a sense of respect and honour for all the religious guides that have appeared among the various nations of the world. Accepting and respecting these various Prophets who have appeared all over the world paves the way for unity among the nations and peace through religion. Then He says:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا نُوحِيَ إِلَيْهِ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاعْبُدُونَ

“And We sent no Messenger before you but We revealed to him, (saying), The truth is that there is no other, cannot be and will never be One worthy of worship but Me, therefore worship Me (alone)” (21:25)

These Words tell us that Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, the Sikh faith, or any other faith are but different aspects of one and the same religion, which in its original purity conveyed the same message of the Unity of God. The purpose of the religions was the submission to the will of One Deity and to make peace with their Creator and His creation. Therefore, you should respect their religious founders, since this is the foundation of a universal brotherhood. His *Rahmâniyyat* abolishes all individual and racial distinctions and confirms that the noble among us in the sight of Allâh is he who guards against evil and who is the righteous (2:177).

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالنَّصَارَى وَالصَّابِئِينَ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمَ
الْآخِرِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَهُ أَجْرٌ هُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا حَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ
يَحْرَنُونَ

“Surely, those who (profess to) believe (in Islam), and those who follow the Jewish faith, the Christians and the Sabians, whosoever (of these truly) believes in Allâh and the Last Day and acts righteously shall have their reward with their Lord, and shall have nothing to fear, nor shall they grieve” (2:62)

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You can appreciate differences of opinion arising from differences of temperament and differences in upbringing. Such differences may lead to the existence of several schools of thought, but they cannot affect the real and basic Faith, as far as the cardinal principle of Oneness of Deity is concerned in its pure integrity. Nobody is to be deprived of any right on the score of the faith he professes or the language, race, colour, or sex he happens to be born into (2:4; 2:136; 3:84). We are told:

وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَّ مِنْ فُوْقَهَا وَبَارَكَ فِيهَا وَقَدَرَ فِيهَا أَقْوَاتَهَا فِي أَرْبَعَةِ أَيَّامٍ
سَوَاءً لِلسَّائِلِينَ

“He placed therein [in the earth] firm mountains rising above (its surface) and showered it [the earth] with His blessings and placed in it various provisions according to a set measure, (provisions to which) all those who require them have equal rights, (and all this He created) in four aeons” (41:10)

Rahîmîyyat – The third Divine Grace

It is out of the Grace of *Rahîmîyyat* رحيميت that your formal Prayers and supplications are accepted. He says:

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكُ عِبَادِي عَنِّي قَرِيبٌ ۖ أُحِبُّ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ ۖ
فَلْيَسْتَحِيُوا لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ

“And when My servants ask you concerning Me (tell them), I am nearby indeed, I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he prays to Me, so they should respond to My call, and believe in Me (that I possess all these Attributes) so that they may proceed in the right way” (2:186).

In order to become the beneficiary of the third Divine Grace, *Rahîmîyyat*, you are obliged to tread on the path of righteousness and

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virtue in an effort to bring your ego out of the coverings of darkness. Striving, effort, and purification of your heart through supplication and attention are needed. This Grace only descends upon those who seek it and work for it. He says, “*And those who strive hard in Our cause We will certainly guide them in the ways that lead to Us*” (29:69). Those who exert themselves in the direction of Allâh cannot be the same as those who do not care. Since the Attribute of *Rahîmîyyat* follows upon the fulfilment of certain conditions, it is mentioned after *Rahmânîyyat*. This Mercy can be acquired by obligations in the way that verse 7:156 continues to inform us:

قَالَ عَدَّا يٰ أَصِيبُ بِهِ مَنْ أَشَاءُ ۖ وَرَحْمَتِي وَسَعَتْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ ۚ فَسَأَكْتُبُهَا
لِلَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ وَيُؤْثُونَ الرَّكَاهَ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ بِآيَاتِنَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

“He (the Almighty) said, As for My punishment, I inflict on whom I will, but My mercy embraces all things. So I will ordain it for those who guard against evil and spend in charity and for those who believe in Our Messages.” (7:156)

It is because of this Attribute that it is said that he who seeks finds and that he who asks is given to. It is on account of this Grace that Allâh hears the prayers of supplicants and He says, “*Call on Me, I will answer your prayer*” (40:60). There are dozens of verses that remind you of this Attribute of Allâh. The Attribute of *al-Rahîm* is usually in association with His other Attributes. We read, “*Verily, my Lord is Ever Merciful, Most Loving*” (11:90); “*Surely, Allâh is Oft-Returning (with compassion and is) Ever Merciful,*” (49:12); and other Divine Attributes, such as the All-Mighty (*al-'Azîz*), the Most Beneficent (*al-Barr'*), the Great Protector (*al-Wâlî*), and the Ever-Loving (*al-Wadûd*).

According to a saying of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), the Attribute of *Rahmân* generally pertains to this life, whereas the Attribute of *Rahîm* also brings reward in the life to come (Abû Hayyân Gharnâtî in *Bahr*

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al-Muhît). This world is the world of actions, good or bad, and the next is a world where those actions shall be rewarded. The Attribute of *Rahmân* provides you with what you need for your life, whereas the Attribute of *Rahîm* brings about rewards in the hereafter as well as special blessings in this very life. The Qur'ânic message of *Rahîmîyyat* was summarized by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) in Divine Words, as follows: “O My servant, do not despair of Me. I am Ever Merciful and Benevolent and cover up your misgivings. No one will ever have mercy on you as I have. If you come to Me, I shall protect you from the bad consequences of your deeds. If you advance towards Me slowly, I shall run to you. If you seek Me, you shall find Me, and if you knock at My door, you shall find My door open. My Mercy upon you is greater than My Wrath. My Wrath is little, because you are My creatures. I have created you all, so My Mercy comprises all of you.” Ibn al-‘Arabî said in the symbols of the two dots below *yâ* in الرّجيم are the *two feet* of Allâh for those who get close to Him in their worship. They symbolize فَلَاخْعُ نَعْلَيْكَ “taking off the sandals” for the one who hears إِنِّي أَنَا رَبُّكَ (20:12)”.

Mâlikîyyat – The fourth Divine Grace

The next Qur'ânic verse (1:4) reads مَالِكُ يَوْمَ الدِّينِ *Mâlik-i-Yaum al-Dîn* - Master of the Day of Requital. You are told:

الْمُلْكُ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِّلَّهِ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَهُمْ ۝ فَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فِي جَنَّاتِ النَّعِيمِ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا فَأُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّهِينٌ

“On that day the kingdom [al-Mulk] shall belong to Allâh alone. He will judge between people so that those who believe and do deeds of righteousness will be (admitted) into blissful Gardens. But those who disbelieve and cried lies to Our Messages, shall suffer a humiliating punishment.” (22:56–57)

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Any command by a master requires obedience. Those who are commanded either obey or oppose the command. For the one who opposes, his opposition incites from his Master an action. The action can be either punishment or to pass over, depending on what the situation demands. One of the two must occur. Allâh says, “*We shall make him suffer a great punishment*” (25:19); He also says, “*Such are the people the best of whose deeds We accept and reward, and whose evil deeds We pass over*” (46:16). This is the essence of the fourth Divine Grace, *Mâlikiyat*. Therefore, the Law of Requital is not like a rigid law of nature or of a court; rather it is the dealing of a Most Gracious and Ever-Merciful Master. Abû Hurairah said that he heard Allâh’s Messenger say, “Allâh, Most High, had inscribed a document before bringing the creation into being: My Mercy has preceded my Wrath, and that this is written in His presence above the throne” (*Sahîh Bukhârî*). The attributive word *Mâlik* is to be translated as master, not as judge. The essential difference between a judge and a master is that the former is bound to punish the evildoers for the crime they commit, whereas the master can exercise his discretion; He may either punish or overlook his fault and pass over his crime. It is because of this fact that the Holy Qur’ân says:

فُلْ يَا عَبَادِي الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنُطُوا مِنْ رَحْمَةِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْفُرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

“Say, O My servants who have committed excesses against their own souls, do not despair of the mercy of Allâh (that Allâh is going to punish you at all costs, and cannot forgive your sins). Surely, Allâh forgives all sins. Verily, He is the Great Protector, the Ever Merciful.” (39:53)

Hence, in the Attribute of *Mâlik*, the Divine Mercy is incorporated to link the idea of forgiveness and protection with that of punishment. In the body of the Holy Qur’ân, Attributes like *Al-Ghafîr*, *Al-Ghâfir*, and *Al-Ghaffâr* along with its cognate verb forms, are mentioned 560

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times. These Divine Attributes are derived from *ghafara*, which means, “to protect,” “to forgive,” or “to cover up.” The Holy Qur’ân repeatedly gives prominence to the Divine Attributes of love, forgiveness, protection, and mercy. We read:

وَنُفَخَ فِي الصُّورِ فَصَعَقَ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا مَنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ ۖ ثُمَّ نُفَخَ فِيهِ أُخْرَىٰ فَلَدَّا هُمْ قِيَامٌ وَأَشْرَقَتِ الْأَرْضُ بِنُورٍ رَبِّهَا وَوُضِعَ الْكِتَابُ وَجَيَءَ بِالنَّبِيِّنَ وَالشُّهَدَاءِ وَفُضِّلَ بَيْنَهُمْ بِالْحَقِّ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ وَوُفِيتَ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَا عَمِلَتْ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَعْلَمُونَ

“(That Day) there shall be a blast on the trumpet and all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth will fall into a swoon except whom Allâh will like (to spare). Then there will be a blast another time and behold! These people shall stand up awaiting (judgment before their Lord).

“And the earth shall radiate with the light of her Lord. And the record (of their deeds) will be produced (before them), and the Prophets and the (other) witnesses shall be brought forward; people shall be judged in all fairness and no injustice shall be done to anyone of them. And every soul shall be repaid in full for its deeds; for He (the Almighty Lord) is well-aware of all that they do.” (39:68–70)

Then, “He (the Almighty) says, *As for My punishment, I inflict on whom I will, but My mercy embraces all things,*” قال عَذَابِي أَصِيبُ بِهِ مَنْ أَشَاءَ وَرَحْمَتِي وَسِعَتْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ (7:156). Our world of bodies lacks the capacities to serve as a sphere for the grand manifestation of *Mâlikîyyat* with its brilliant Lights, its beauties, and eternal bounties. And it cannot comprehend those full and enduring auroras of His manifestation. An altogether different realm is needed for the Manifestation of this perfect and enduring Grace of *Mâlikîyyat*, a realm independent and free from the opacity of physical spheres, a

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realm adequate to demonstrate the absolute and pure Might of the All-Powerful, Unique, Merciful Lord.

Yet a foretaste of this most special Grace is vouchsafed in this very life to those perfect and purified souls who tread on the path of righteousness in their efforts to reach the proximity of their Lord, discarding all other desires. They die a death before their actual death; their bodies are in this world, but their hearts are already with their Lord. They wean their minds away from all temporalities and make a break with human ways and values, and their faces are full of hope, looking towards their Lord. As for such seekers, it is said, “*Allâh is well pleased with them*” (5:119). The Beneficent Lord then treats them in a like manner. He manifests His Light upon them in a manner that He will not manifest it upon others, except after death. They already become the recipients of that very Light with which the earth shall radiate on the Day of Judgment. They receive in this very life a portion of the Light of this most special Grace.

In a similar manner, requital begins to takes place for the evildoers in this world. Allâh exercises His forbearance, overlooks their faults, and covers them up for a while (46:16). However, if they persist in their bad deeds, they suffer different kinds of afflictions in this very world, and their lives become a misery. This is a foretaste of the hell of the hereafter (25:19). In other words, it is the human being who bestows evil on himself, he being his own chastiser. The Holy Qur’ân stresses the fact that the Divine Law of Requital of deeds is working every moment and thus makes a human being feel the responsibility for what he does. On the other hand, it also gives prominence to the Attribute of Forgiveness in His Essence.

Abû Hamzah al-Thumâlî (d. approximately 150 AH / 767 CE) supplicated: “I pray to You, O my Master, with a tongue that has been paralyzed by its sin. O my Lord, I confide to You with a heart that has been doomed by its mischief. I pray to You, O my Lord, frightened but wishful, hopeful but fearful. If I contemplate my sins, O my Lord!

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I become scared, but when I remember Your generosity, I yearn, so if You forgive, You are the most Merciful, and if You punish, You have not unjustly judged. My excuse, O Allâh, in my daring to ask You, even though I have committed what You hate, is Your Benevolence and Generosity, and my preparation for my adversity, given that I lack shyness (in committing sin), is Your forbearance and Mercy. And I am wishful that my hope will not be disappointed, so fulfil my ambition and accept my prayer, O the Best Who was ever prayed to!"

The contemplation of these four Divine Attributes can inspire in you an irresistible longing to see your Creator, an intense desire to offer your wholehearted devotion to Him, and an irresistible feeling of love. Under the Attribute of *Rahîm*, and through good actions and formal Prayers, you are deemed worthy of this Divine Grace, but it is through the Attribute of *Mâlik-i-Yaum al-Dîn* that the Grace is bestowed. *Mâlikiyat* also indicates that He has not withdrawn Himself from the governance of the universe, committing it to some vice-regent (one such as Jesus, as some believe) with all authority to award recompense here and in the hereafter. The four Divine Graces described in this chapter rule out the doctrine of atonement and transmigration of souls in this very world.



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Asmâ' al-Sifât

وَلِلّٰهِ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا ۝ وَدَرُوا الَّذِينَ يُلْحِدُونَ فِي أَسْمَائِهِ ۝

"And to Allâh alone belong all the fairest and most perfect Attributes, so call on Him by these, and leave alone those who deviate from the right way with respect to His Attributes (and violate their sanctity)." (7:180)

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As the Essence of the Exalted Creator cannot be grasped by the human mind (see p. 8), and He cannot be known other than that, “He exists,” He manifests Himself to you through His Attributes (*asmâ’ al-Sifât*) and His beautiful Names (*asmâ’ al-Husnâ’*). He gives you the knowledge of some of His Attributes so that you know Him. He says:

هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ ۖ عَالَمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ ۖ هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ
هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمَلُكُ الْفَدُوسُ السَّلَامُ الْمُؤْمِنُ الْمُهَمَّدُ الْعَزِيزُ
الْجَبَّارُ الْمُتَكَبِّرُ ۖ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ هُوَ اللَّهُ الْخَالِقُ الْبَارِئُ
الْمُصَوِّرُ ۖ لَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ ۖ يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۖ
وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

“He is Allâh, He is the One beside Whom there is no other, cannot be and will never be one worthy of worship but He. (He is) the Knower of the unseen and the seen. He is the Most Gracious, the Ever Merciful. He is Allâh, beside Whom there is no other, cannot be and will never be one worthy of worship but He, (He is) the Supreme Sovereign, the Holy One, the Most Perfect, Bestower of peaceful Security, the Guardian, the All-Mighty, the Compensator of losses, the Possessor of all greatness. Holy is Allâh, far beyond and above the things they associate with Him.

“He is Allâh, the Creator (of the matter and the spirit), the Maker, and the Bestower of forms (and fashioner of everything suiting to its requirement). All fair Attributes belong to Him. All that lies in the heavens and the earth declares His glory; He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise” (59:22–24).

In these verses and many others are Names and Attributes that He has given to Himself, not given to Him by His creation. Regarding the names given to other deities, He says, إنْ هِيَ إِلَّا أَسْمَاءٌ سَمَّيْتُنَاهَا أَنْثُمْ وَآبَاؤُكُمْ “these are mere names (bearing no significance) which you have

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coined, you and your forefathers” (53:23). Just as a writer can be described by his writing, so the Creator describes Himself through His attributive Names. When you are asked, “Who is Allâh?” you can say, “He is عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ, the Knower of the unseen and the seen.” You can also say, He is the Supreme Sovereign (هُوَ الْمُلْكُ), the Holy One (الْقَوْسُ), or the Most Perfect Bestower of peaceful Security (السَّلَامُ). You can call Him with any of His beautiful and perfect Names: وَلَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا, “*And to Allâh alone belong all the fairest and most perfect Attributes, so call on Him by these*” (7:180).

He has given to Himself Attributes of Glory (*sifât-i-Jalâl*) and Attributes of Perfection (*sifât-i-Kamâl*). He calls Himself Lord of Majesty (*al-Jalâl*) and Beauty (*al-Jamâl*). If you reflect on His Attributes, they will inspire in you awe (*haibah*) and bewilderment (*hiyrah*). His Attributes are limitless, you cannot limit Him with any single one of them. Allâh is His proper Name, a Name that combines all of His beautiful Attributes. The name Allâh denotes His essence and *al-Rahmân*, (الرَّحْمَنْ) 17:110 is that Name, which is very close to His Essence. In fact, all attributive Names that Allâh has given to Himself are directly related to His Essence.

All His Attributes were always with Him, before creation as well as after creation. No new Name was added to them, and no Name subtracted. There are Attributes mentioned in the Holy Qur’ân that make Him known as the All-Powerful and All-Mighty (*al-'Azîz*; 22:74), the Self-Subsisting and All-Sustaining (*al-Qayyûm*; 3:2), and the Possessor of full power to do all He will (*al-Qâdir*; 2:284). Then there are mentioned those Attributes that are connected to His actions (*sifât al-Afâl*) such as, Originator of Creation (*al-Khâliq*), Evolver (*Rabb*) and Maker (*al-Bâri*), the Creator (*al-Khâliq*; 59:24), the Best and Constant Provider (*al-Razzâq*; 22:58), the Shaper (*al-Musawwir*; 59:24). Then there are His Names of similarity with His creation, such as the All-Hearing (*al-Samî*; 22:61), the All-Seeing (*al-Basîr*; 22:61), the Ever Living (*al-Hayy*; 2:255), the All-Knowing (*al-Alîm*;

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22:52,59), the High and Exalted (*al-*Aliy**; 22:62), the Great (*al-*Kabîr**; 22:62), the All-Protecting and All-Forgiving (*al-*Ghafîr**; 22:60), the Gracious Patron (*al-*Mawlâ**; 22:78), the Great Helper (*al-*Nasîr**; 22:78). There are His Names with apparent polarity such as, He is the First (*al-*Awwal**; 57:3), He is the Last (*al-*Âkhir**; 57:3), the Manifest (*al-*Zâhir**; 57:3), and the Hidden (*al-*Bâtin**; 57:3). There are Names of Incomparability, such as the Omnipotent (*al-*Qâdir**; 2:20), the Self-Sufficient (*al-*Ghanî**; 22:64), the Unfathomable Unique One (*Ahad*; 112:1), and the One Who is Independent and Besought of all and Unique in all His Attributes (*al-*Samad**; 112:2). He mentions His Attributes of Transcendence: “*Allâh is the Extensive Light [Nûr] of the heavens and the earth*” (24:35), He is the “*Lord of the Mighty Powers*” (*Shâdîd al-*Qawâ**; 53:5) and Only One Deity (*Ilâhun Wâhid*; 2:163).

The “One Who Speaks” (*al-*Kalîm**) is one of the prime Attributes of Allâh mentioned frequently in the Holy Qur’ân as Divine Revelations. Allâh spoke to (*kallama*) Moses (7:103;7:143; 19:52; 20:12-24), and Moses spoke to Him (20:25-35). He revealed Himself to other Prophets (3:55-57; 42:51) and non-Prophets (20:38). However, when He says, “*It is not given to a human being that Allâh should speak to him except by direct revelation [wahî] or from behind a veil or by sending a messenger [an angel] who should reveal (to him) by His command what He pleases*” (42:51), this explains that this form of speaking is different from that of his creatures. Nevertheless, it is one of the prime Attributes of Allâh. Similarly, when you say, “*Allâh is All-Knowing*,” *al-‘Alîm* (2:261), it is to say that Allâh has the knowledge of precreation and knows all the objects of His creation. He is the only One Who knows His own Essence. When you say that He is *al-*Khabîr**, the Omniscient, it is to say that He is aware of the visible and the invisible, the interior as well as the exterior. When you say that He is *al-*Sam’î**, the All-Hearing, it is to say that from His perception nothing audible is absent. He hears secrets as well as the whispers. He hears the praise of those who are praising Him. The

human being shares in some of these attribute, but this sharing is deficient. Allâh's Ear is not like your ears, and His Hearing is not like your hearing. When He says He is the One Who listens, it is that He listens to the supplications of the one who prays to Him. He hears the thoughts still unuttered and the words still unspoken. His Hearing is an expression of His Attribute by which the objects of His creation are made audible. When He says He is *al-Basîr*, the All-Seeing, it is to say that He sees all remote objects in a way that nothing remains remote to Him. It also means that nothing in the cosmos escapes His attention. His Light (*Nûr*) is also an expression of an Attribute by which the objects of His creation are disclosed and made visible.

That He is *al-Akbar* (Big) does not mean that He is physically big; it means that size is irrelevant to Him. He is *al-'Azîm* (the Great) in that He cannot be measured quantitatively, He is inseparable, and He cannot be grasped by human mind. Allâh is Omnipresent. This means that everything everywhere is always present to Allâh. His energizing power is everywhere at work in every range and level of creation; past, present, and future are present to His Knowledge. The Knowledge of Allâh's Omnipresence does not come from reason, the power of reflection, or consideration, but from His unveiling. The vision of His Omnipresence is granted to a few from among His servants. Before His unveiling, none of the Prophet knew Him through their rational consideration. They were directly chosen for His unveiling. He is *Qâdir al-Mutlaq*; that is, He possesses the full power to do all what He wills. He is free to choose between nothingness (*al-Adam*) and Being (*al-Wajûd*), and His Will opted for the second. You came into existence by virtue of His free choice without modality (*dûna kayfiyah*). Few words have been so misunderstood as *Qâdir al-Mutlaq*. Can Allâh speak a lie? Can He make squares that are circles? Can He do things that are self-contradictory? Can He make black out of white while it remains white? Can He make another God like Himself? The real answer of all such questions is in the Words that are used in the Holy Qur'ân: *yaf'alo mâ yashâ'*—that is, He can do all

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what He Will, and He does not will things that are contrary to His own Wisdom and Wish, Knowledge, Mercy, His status of Lordship, Grace and Beauty.

He calls Himself *al-Quddûs* الْقُدُّوسُ, the Holy One (59:22–24), the One Who is above any description that human perception could apprehend, that the imagination could grasp, that the reflection could reach, and that the innermost consciousness could pervade and thereby have an understanding of Him. *Al-Quddûs* is beyond all characteristics of perfection that you or any other human being can imagine and describe. *Al-Quddûs* has His own Perfection, such as His Knowledge, His Power, His Hearing, His Sight, and His Speech. *Al-Quddûs* is free from and exalted above every attribute that you could possibly ascribe, and above everything resembling Him. He calls Himself *al-Salâm* السَّلَامُ (59:22–24); the One Whose Essence is free from imperfection. His Attributes are devoid of any trace of deficiency, and His actions are free from any weakness. There is no perfect, unimpaired state of being in existence except that which is ascribed to and emanates from Him.

“*Naught is as His exegesis*” (لَيْسَ كَيْثِلَه شَيْءٌ) (42:11) is His Attribute of incomparability. Nothing in the entire cosmos is like Him. He alone possesses the Attributes of Incomparability. He is incomparable in His Essence in Himself, and He does not accept the “incomparability” of His creatures in their essence. Only the ignorant imagine the “incomparability” of His creature that he follows, adores, and calls “his lord.”

Many of the Divine Attributes are related to our knowledge of our self (like *Sam‘î*, who listens; *Khabîr*, who is aware; *‘Alîm*, who knows; *Basîr*, who sees; *Halîm*, who is not excited with anger; *Shakûr*, who is grateful; *Muqît*, who is nourisher and many others). Others are related to our knowledge of the cosmos (10:34; 35:1). Allâh has shared with us some of His own Attributes. If you say He is the Living, the Speaking, the Powerful, the Hearing, and the Seeing, you are also all

of that. When you say He is Compassionate and Merciful, these Attributes may be applied to you in some instances as well. You may often attribute to Him descriptions that somehow apply to your own essence. Whenever you ascribe any quality to Him, you yourself are a representative of this quality, but the real essence of His Attribute is unknowable and inaccessible to you. Allâh's Attributes that are related to seeing, hearing, forgiving, might, and the like can be shared with the objects of creation; still, these Attributes differentiate the Creator from the creation, Allâh on one side and the creation on the other. The attributes of the created are not the Attributes of the Creator; they are but similarities in their weak form (*salb al-Naqâis wa al-Tashbîh*). Never, at any time, can any Attribute of Allâh be discovered in its real Essence in any human being, may he be Jesus, Muhammad, Buddha, Rama, Krishna, or any other person. No human being has ever ceased to be human and risen to the level of divinity. The Attributes of Allâh are far beyond any accidental knowledge of a human being. Like His Essence, His Attributes closely adhere to His Essence, which cannot be separated.

Polarity in Divine Attributes

He unites in Himself the Attributes that show apparent polarity. He calls Himself the First (*al-Awwal*) and the Last (*al-Âkhir*), the Manifest (*al-Zâhir*) and the Hidden (*al-Bâtin*) (57:3). Some people regard these Attributes to be opposed to each other, thinking that what is first cannot be last and what is manifest cannot be hidden; however, a closer look at the meaning resolves this apparent paradox: He is the First (*al-Awwal*) with respect to existing things, for they emanate from Him one after the other. He is the Last (*al-Âkhir*) with respect to initiating new creations and new forms of His creation. He is the last point in your never-ending journey. He is *al-Bâtin* - hidden behind the veils, because the cosmos cannot perceive Him as He perceives Himself, nor can He ever be unveiled. Likewise, He is Hidden (*al-*

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Bâtin) from those who are veiled, trying to seek Him with their five senses and reasoning, but He is Manifest (*al-Zâhir*) for those who seek Him by His Light (*Nûr*) in their hearts. He has also attributed to Himself pleasure (*radzâ'*; 92:21) and displeasure (*ghadzab* غضب; 1:7), which finds its expression in you both as hope for His pleasure and fear of His displeasure. He has also described Himself as being possessed of Beauty (*Jamâl*; 16:6) and Attention (*Wajha*; 28:88), having created in you the combining awe of His Majesty (*Jalâl*) with the Intimacy of His Beauty (*Jamâl*).

He has given you a free choice, but also through His Coercive Power (*al-Qahhâr*; 13:16) He obliges you to acknowledge that He is your Lord, since if He had let you go, you would never have acknowledged His Lordship (*Rabûbiyyat*), and He would have remained hidden. He manifests Himself as the Most Gracious and All-Merciful (*al-Rahmân* and *al-Rahîm*). He says His Mercy encompasses all objects of His creation, but you are afraid of His wrath. His wrath (*ghadzab* غضب) is but a reflection of your own attitude. The true nature of Divine wrath is the state of Divine Mercy that you lose; otherwise termed as the state of Divine displeasure. When you abandon the His path, which is the means of receiving His special Mercy (*Rahîmiyyat*), He forfeits His Mercy, and if you lose the way to Divine Mercy, you are lost. This is the significance of the word Divine wrath (غضب) and going astray (2:36). Similarly, He says He is Just and decides accordingly, but He is also the Master and the King (*al-Mâlik*; 1:3), not bound to the His own laws of justice. He may let an infidel go, who otherwise deserves His punishment. He says He is *al-Jabbâr*, the One Who coerces everyone, but no one coerces Him, and Whose will is effective in respect to everyone by way of compulsion, whereas the will of no human is effective in respect to Him. He is the One from Whose Grasp no one is free. He says He is the Protector against our sins (*Ghâfir al-Zanb*) and Acceptor of repentance (*Qâbil al-Taubah*)

at the same time He is Severe in respect of punishment (*Shadîd al-Iqâb*) (40:3).

He has united His own polarity in the qualities of a human being to confer a distinction to him from Engels and satan. In verse 38:75 you read “[God said], O Iblîs! What prevented you from submitting to him whom I have created with My two hands”. His two hands are as if left hand and right hand. Both similar yet opposite. He composed human outer form from natural and cosmic realities and shapes, but his inner form, his essence; He composed to match His own polarities. In a wellknown *Hadîth-i-Qudsî* Allâh says, “I become his hearing and his sight”. He did not say “I am his eye and his ear” in order to show distinction between two forms – the perceptible and inperceptible. Allâh described Himself Manifest and Hidden, so are the two forms of a human being, manifest – his outward form, and hidden – his spiritual form. In your outward bodily form you are transient, but eternal in your essence that is your spiritual form. Why it could be otherwise, He has breathed into you His Spirit (see 32:9; 38:72). It is this synthesis that makes a human superior to Engels (see 2:34; 38:72) and his soul eternal.

Ranks (*Marâtib*) of Divine Attributes

His Attributes have ranks (*marâtib*), but they all are a part of the same Essence, whose name is Allâh. The Attribute of Creator (*al-Khâliq*; 59:24) is under the shelter of the All-Mighty (*al-'Azîz*, *al-Qawwî*; 22:74), as the Might of the All-Mighty is needed for the creation. The Might requires the Will, and what is to be “willed” (22:74) comes from His Knowledge (*al-'Alîm*; 22:52–59). The rank of the Attribute *al-Alîm* (22:52, 59), the All-Knowing, is thus higher than the rank of All-Mighty (22:74). The All-Knowing is Allâh, Who owns all these Attributes. All these are under the shelter of His Grace and Mercy

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(*Rahmânîyyat*), which is closest to His Essence of *Rabûbîyyat*, which is Allâh.

Ninety-Nine Names of Allâh: The Messenger of Allâh (pbuh) said, “Allâh has ninety-nine Names (or Attributes), one hundred less one.” These ninety-nine Holy Names and Attributes were mentioned by the Holy Prophet (pbuh) on the authority of Abû Hurairah and are found in the books of Islamic Traditions from such sources as *Bukhârî*, Abû Muslim, *Tirmidhî*, and *Musnad Ahmad*. *Imâm Ghazâlî* explained their meanings in his book *al-Maqṣad al-Asnâ' fî Sharh Asmâ' Allâh* (translated into English by David Burrel). There is no Divine Attribute in these ninety-nine names in which we humans do not participate; they all apply to human essence. They are such as can be read on the pages of nature. You can perceive them within the scope of your activities, and you can imbue yourself with them. They remind you of those divine molds in which you have to cast your daily life, since high morality consists in the reflection and doing of deeds in conformity with these Attributes and to a certain extent in imitating them. Allâh offers you an opportunity to assume the characteristics of one or more of His Attributes.

He says dye yourself in the colours and imbue yourself with these characters (2:138;7:180). For those who assumed of the characteristics of one or more of His Attributes, He will say, “*These are the blessed ones*” (56:27). The Messenger of Allâh (pbuh) said he who has memorized Allâh’s ninety-nine names, understands them, has become conscious of them, has implanted them in his character, has made them part and parcel of himself, and believes in those qualities, which are derived from those Names and which should be accompanied by good deeds, deeds that Allâh’s Names inspire you to do and to behave in accordance with their implications—that person will enter paradise.

From the Qur’ânic injunction “*Assume and share the hues and the Attributes of Allâh!*” صِبْغَةُ اللّٰهِ (2:138), it cannot be concluded that one or more of the Attributes of Allâh can become the attribute of the

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servant of Allâh or can be transferred to His servant. Although you can share with our Lord some of His Attributes, and although you can perform deeds in conformity with His Attributes, you do not cease being yourself, and you can never know the real Essence of those Attributes, because Allâh's Attributes closely adhere to His Essence. He is the only Knower of His own Essence. If you assume, for example, the attribute of creator (*khâliq*), that does not mean that you can create the heavens and the earth, as Allâh - the *al-Khâliq* الخالق has done. This interpretation would be a great error. Allâh's Attributes cannot become the attributes of Allâh's worshipper, and an attribute of a human being cannot become an Attribute of Allâh. What is meant by verse 2:138 is that when a servant of Allâh puts forth an effort to attain some compatibility with these Attributes, that when some of the ninety-nine Holy Names become attributes of the servant of Allâh, the servant is following the spiritual path.

Not all Divine Attributes mentioned in the Holy Qur'ân are listed in these ninety-nine names—for instance, *Rabb* (Sustainer and Evolver; 1:1); *Rafî' al-Darjât*, رَفِيعُ الدَّرَجَاتِ (Who Exalts the people in ranks; 40:15); *Shadîd al-Quwâ*, شَدِيدُ الْقُوَّى (Lord of Mighty Powers; 53:5); *Shadîd al-Mihâl*, شَدِيدُ الْمَحَالِ (Mighty in Prowess; 13:13); *al-Kabîr al-Mutâl*, الْكَبِيرُ الْمُنْتَعَلُ (the Incomparably Great, the Most Exalted; 13:9); *Rukn al-Shadîd*, رُكْنٌ شَدِيدٌ (Most Powerful Support; 11:80); *Ghâfir al-Dhanab*, غَافِرُ الذَّنَبِ (Granter of Protection against all sins; 40:3); *Qâbil al-Taub*, قَابِلُ التَّوْبَ (Acceptor of Repentance; 40:3); *Shadîd al-Iqâb*, شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ (Severe in respect of punishment; 40:3); *Dhiyy al-Tûl*, ذِي الطُّولِ (Lord of Beneficence; 40:3); *Dhî al-Mâ'ârij*, ذِي الْمَعَارِجِ (Master of the Ways of Ascent; 70:4); and *Fâlliq al-Habb wa al-Nawâ*, فَالِقُ الْحَبَّ وَالنَّوْءِ (One who causes the grain and the date-stone to germinate 6:97), *Fâlliq al-Ashbâh*, فَالِقُ الْأَصْبَاحِ (Cleaver of the daybreak; 6:96).

Some Attributes are included in the list of ninety-nine names but are not mentioned in the Holy Qur'ân, such as *al-Mannân*. There are

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further Names attributable to Allâh, which He has revealed to His choice creations, and there are others that may be read in the pages of nature. It would be wrong to think that the ninety-nine Names are the *only* Names Allâh has. His Attributes are Words, and each of His Word is His Attribute. His wonderful and glorious Attributes are numberless and surpass all description and understanding. He says:

**قُلْ لَوْ كَانَ الْبَحْرُ مِدَادًا لِكَلِمَاتِ رَبِّي لَنَفَدَ الْبَحْرُ قَبْلَ أَنْ تَنَفَّدَ كَلِمَاتُ رَبِّي
وَلَوْ جِئْنَا بِمِثْلِهِ مَدَادًا**

“Say, If every ocean became ink for (recording) the words and creation of my Lord, surely, the oceans would be spent up before the words and creation of my Lord came to an end, even if we brought to add (therewith) as many more (oceans)” (18:109).

He possesses Attributes that stand far beyond numbers, Attributes that cannot come within your comprehension. The traces and signs of His Attributes in human beings and upon His other creations are a reflection, a symbol, a word, a means, a path (كلمات) to understand and reach Him. Of each Attribute, less than an atoms weight of the knowledge of it is given to us. It is so that you know Him through His Attributes, which He has given to you in traces, in signs in and around you. And from these traces, it is so that you know Him and adore Him and love Him.

Human being can represent Allâh as His deputy (*khalîfah*; 2:30) and become worthy of receiving the homage, obeisance, and salutation of the angels (2:34). When you look at yourself, what you see, what you feel, and how you are, you will discover that there is a link between you and the Divine Attributes that cannot be overlooked. It is said he who succeeds in knowing, perceiving, learning, recognizing, judging, and becoming aware of his own self, his spirit, his desires, his attractions and repulsions, his freedom and obedience, his joy or anger, will recognize his Lord. A human being is the vice-regent of

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Allâh (2:30), and some of His Attributes are implanted in his soul (15:29) and will be manifested in his life in this world and some in the hereafter (2:30–31). “How could this be otherwise when your soul is derived from his Breath?” (Hâfiż).

Some object that the God of the Qur’ân possesses human morals and characteristics, that it is therefore a human being and not God who is portrayed in the Qur’ân. This thinking is not correct. It is beyond and above human power to count and reach the reality of every Name, His Attribute and His activity. Although many of Allâh’s Attributes are mirrored in human qualities, still none of His Attributes are like human qualities. When you are angry, you suffer from anger and your heart loses its comfort and perceives a burning sensation, your facial expression undergoes a change, your feelings bring you close to losing control over yourself, and your thinking is affected. However, Allâh is free from all such changes. His anger is His displeasure; that is, He removes His support from one who does not desist from evil. It is called Allâh’s Wrath (- *ghadzab*). In the same way, His Love is not as the love of a human being, for a human being feels sad when he is separated from his beloved. However, Allâh is not subject to such feelings. His Love is His *Rahîmiyyat* and *Rahmânîyyat* (see 1:1). He loves His creation but does not suffer if any of His creatures turn away from Him and become distant. His nearness to His servant is also not like the nearness of a lover to a beloved. Allâh’s Love is the bestowal of good things (*ni‘imâh*) and not an actual inclining of the heart. To indicate His Love, Power, Knowledge, and other Attributes, the same words had to be used that are in ordinary usage for human beings; however, the real concept is not quite the same. In short, every Divine Attribute is distinct from human qualities. There is only a verbal resemblance and no more.

The God of the Qur’ân possesses numberless blessings, powers, beauties, and beneficences. It is not within your power to comprehend all the Attributes of the Divine Being. They are above your intellect

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and your imagination. Allâh is unbounded, formless, and limitless, and so are His Attributes. Shah Wallîullâh, a great Saint from India, writes that their use in our language is only in the sense of the ultimate end of these words. No one can truly recognize Allâh until he understands that there are innumerable works and Names of Allâh that are far beyond and above human power, reason, and speculation. His Powers are so numerous that human reason cannot encompass them. Each of His Attributes have depth upon depth and is beyond comprehension. We believe in Allâh Whose powers and Attributes, like His Being, are unlimited, unconfined, and unending.

وَلِلّٰهِ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا ۖ وَدَرُوا الَّذِينَ يُلْحِدُونَ فِي أَسْمَائِهِ ۝

“And to Allâh alone belong all the fairest and most perfect Attributes, so call on Him by these, and leave alone those who deviate from the right way with respect to His Attributes (and violate their sanctity)” (7:180)

Allâh possessed all His Attributes even before He brought the worlds of particles and non-particles into existence, and no new Attribute of Him came into existence, and none of them did He gave up. In other words, before initiating the creation, He described and named Himself by the Names by which His creatures call Him now. Jalâl al-Dîn Rûmî said, “There are people who are unable to perceive and understand the essence of the Attributes of Divine Perfection. Nothing in existence is as mysterious as the essence of Divine Attributes and consciousness of Allâh. His Attributes are mysteries; the essence of His Attributes are mysteries. Only those who attain nearness to Allâh are able to come close to the mysteries of His Attributes” (*Mathnawî* III: 3650). When a servant of Allâh falls at His threshold with utmost devotion to win His pleasure and attract His attention, Allâh appears to him as a different Deity, closer to His Essence, different from the One perceived by an average person.

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For the declaration of His Attributes of Resemblance (*sifât al-Tashbîh*), the Holy Qur'ân mentions that He is the All-Seeing, and He is the All-Hearing (42:11), but then to remove any suspicion of resemblance, it continues that “*whichever way you may turn (you will find) there is Allâh's attention*” (2:115), and again “*He is beyond all comparison*” (42:11). Then He says, “(*He is*) the Most Gracious (God, Who) is firmly and flawlessly established on (His) Throne (of Power),” الرَّحْمَنُ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ اسْتَوَى (20:5). The “Throne,” *al-'Arsh* العَرْشُ, of the All-Merciful is neither a material object, nor does it signify any place, nor is it physically created. The expression is a figure of speech. When this figurative is used, it symbolizes His high Divine rank and conveys to you that He is high and above the understanding of human intellect, which lacks the strength to find Him and to comprehend His eternity, His limitlessness, and His Holiness (الْقُوَّسُ). Allâh's “Throne” العَرْشُ is the symbol of His power and rule. It signifies His Might, His controlling Authority, His Dominion, and His Mastery. The expression *astawâ* استَوَى stands for the flawlessness and perfection in all aspects of His Attributes in terms of what a human being can imagine. The four Divine Attributes of *Rabûbîyyat*, *Rahmânîyyat*, *Rahîmîyyat*, and *Mâlikîyyat*, mentioned in the Opening Chapter (*al-Fâtihah*) are upholding His throne here in this present world, where they are in full operation. In the hereafter, these four Attributes shall continue to operate.

He has His Attributes of Transcendence (*sifât al-Tanzîh*) just as He possesses the Attributes of Resemblance (*sifât al-Tashbîh*). *Al-Rahmân 'ala al-'Arsh astawâ* الرَّحْمَنُ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ اسْتَوَى is the Attribute pertaining to the transcendence (*sifât al-Tanzîh*) of Allâh. This Attribute expresses Allâh's state of Holy Supremacy—that is, the state when His transcendental Attribute of Holiness (*Quddûssîyyat*; 59:22–24) covers up all His other Attributes, placing Him far beyond every reach, totally hidden. This state is called the Throne of Allâh. If you insist only on His Attributes of Resemblance, you restrict Him. If you insist only on His Attributes of Transcendence, you limit Him again.

“LIGHT UPON LIGHT”

If you accept both aspects, you are right (43:80–82). You should perceive Him in the Attributes that are both boundless and limited.



“LIGHT UPON LIGHT”

Nûr ‘alâ Nûr

اللّهُ نُورُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ

“Allâh is the (Extensive) Light of the heavens and the earth”
(24:35)

Nûr (Light) is Allâh’s Attribute of incomparability (24:35; 39:69) generated from His essence. The word for ordinary light, like the light of the sun is *dziâ*. Were it not for Allâh’s Light (*Nûr*), no body and no form would become manifest. It pierces through every object in the cosmos, living or non-living. There is no shadow behind the object when this Light falls on it. It envelops all objects and all other lights in the entire cosmos, and nothing remains deprived of His Light. Every light—whether manifest or hidden, whether visible on the intellectual heights or buried deep in the seas of ignorance, whether in illuminated souls or in spiritual bodies, whether in the spoken words or in thoughts—is the bounty of this Grace. This Light is the very source of all other lights. The perception of beauty comes only when a light falls on an object. Ibn al-‘Arabî, referring to Qur’ânic verse 41:11 (“Again, He directed Himself towards the space. Behold! It was (like) a mass of dust”), said, “Allâh manifested Himself in Theophany through His Light to that dust, which contained the entire cosmos in

potentiality and readiness. Each potential object inside the dust received from His Light in accordance with its preparedness (-*isti'dâd*). By bringing the two together, Allâh blended the One into the other.” Hâfiż, the great mystic from Shirâz in Iran, put it in these beautiful words: “Beloved Lord, let us know what lights said when they first discovered Your Light.” Allâh describes His relationship to His worshipping servant with a lovely metaphor:

اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ مَثُلُّ نُورُهُ كَمْسَكَةً فِيهَا مَصْبَاحٌ ۝
الْمَصْبَاحُ فِي رُجَاجَةٍ ۝ الْزُّجَاجَةُ كَانَهَا كُوكَبٌ دُرِّيٌّ يُوقَدُ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ
مُبَارَكَةٍ زَيْتُونَةٍ لَا شَرْقَيَّةٌ وَلَا غَرْبَيَّةٌ يَكَادُ زَيْتُهَا يُضِيءُ وَلَوْ لَمْ تَمْسِسْهُ
نَارٌ ۝ نُورٌ عَلَى نُورٍ ۝ يَهْدِي اللَّهُ نُورُهُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۝ وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَالَ
لِلنَّاسِ ۝

“Allâh is the Extensive Light of the heavens and the earth. His light can be compared to a (lustrous) pillar on which is a lamp. The lamp is inside a crystal globe. The globe of glass is as if it were a glittering star. It (the lamp) is lit by (the oil of) a blessed olive tree, which belongs neither to the east nor to the west (rather welds the whole world in its fold). Its oil is likely to glow forth of itself even if no fire touches it. This (lamp) is a combination of many lights over and over. Allâh guides towards His light whoever desires (to be enlightened). And Allâh sets forth excellent parables for the people.” (24:35)

Here, Allâh compares His Light نُور to a “lustrous pillar” مشكّة, on which rests a “lamp” مصباح. Metaphorically, the “lamp” is the servant of Allâh raised in dignity by the “lustrous pillar.” Each servant can be of the following: His Prophets and His friends (*auliâ’*), the Saints appointed by Him (*ma’mûr min Allâh*), those with whom He spoke (*mu*), His appointed reformers, who were tasked to remove the corruption that had crept into His Faith (*mujuddadîn*), and many others who came close to Him and whom He favoured with His sweet

Converse. The “lamp” is inside a crystal globe **المِصْبَاحُ فِي زُجَاجَةٍ**, which protects the lamp from being extinguished. Divine Providence protects the servant of Allâh in the same way that a crystal globe protects a weak flame from a puff of wind. In this case, that wind refers to misguiding sermons and words of the faithless. Then He likens the crystal globe to a glittering star, **الزُّجَاجَةُ كَأَنَّهَا كَوْكَبٌ**. Allâh compares each of His beloved special servants to a star, and just as the stars are numberless, so are His servants.

The “lustrous pillar” can also refer to the chests of the pious, the “globe of glass” to their heart, which is a glittering star. The “olive tree” is the Faith, which welds the whole world within its fold, its Grace and blessing not being confined to any one place or age or direction, but rather being everlasting. The “blessed tree” belongs “neither to the east nor to the west”—that is, it is not limited to just one people or to just one nation.

The great *Sûfi* saint ‘Abdul Qâdir Jilâni says that the “blessed olive tree” is the Tree of Unity (*Ahadîyyat*), that it is neither of the east nor of the west—in other words, that it has neither a beginning nor an end, and, unlike the sun, this Source of the Light has no rising or setting. It was always there and will remain forever. The “*oil of a blessed olive tree*,” which fuels the “lamp” of Revelation, suffers neither from excess nor from deficiency. It has been made in the best mold of the fine, bright, and high moral qualities, nourished by the clear fountain of perfect human nature and reason. The Divine Light in the form of Revelation always descends in accordance with the requirement of time and the capacities (- *isti'dâd*) and preparedness of the person to whom it is vouchsafed. This person is already prepared to receive the Light; it is like “*oil that is likely to glow forth of itself even if no fire touches it*”—that is, it needs no ignition, because this oil is radiating by itself from the Divine Light.

Light upon light, “over and over” (*Nûr 'alâ Nûr*, نُورٌ عَلَى نُورٍ) refers to Divine Light when it falls on the Gnostic and the Prophets (see 5:15).

It also refers to other lights on which the Divine Light falls. One is the light of knowledge (*iyān*) when it shines on the path of wisdom, and the other is the light of guidance (*hadāya*), which shines upon the path that leads to His proximity.

Imagine asking for directions in the darkness of the night. One person may reply, “I do not know.” Another offers inexact directions, and yet another may misguide you. How can you be sure to reach your destination unless someone comes with a light and accompanies you there? A servant of Allāh has a yearning for his Lord to reach Him. In his daily formal Prayers, five times a day, he is asking for His Light of guidance [*hadāya*]: “*Lead us [ihdinā] on the exact right path till we reach the goal!*” (1:6) he repeats several times a day. When the Creator of the worlds (*Rabb al-‘Ālamīn* رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ), out of His special Mercy (*Rahīmīyyat* رَحْمَة), shows His servant the right path, He does it by illuminating that path with His Light. This is *hadāya*, the Light of guidance. The Guide then remains close to him and accompanies him.

The righteous human hearts of Prophets, Gnostics, or His servants (‘Ābid عَابِد) perceive Allāh’s Light when they reach the exalted level of true servanthood (‘abūdiyyat عَبُودِيَّة). Allāh then manifests Himself through His Light to such people (20:10); they themselves become illuminated, and then they carry with them the Divine Light. It is now Light upon light (*Nūr ‘alā Nūr* نُورٌ عَلَى نُورٍ; 24:35). Their light is not perceived by the “people of the veil”—that is, by people whose knowledge is founded solely on reading books, intellect, and reasoning without Faith. Just as light causes you to see with your own eyes, and as the witnessing by one’s eyes is the “testimony of an eyewitness,” constituting absolute certainty, so the servant of Allāh who receives His Light is an “eyewitness” (*shāhid* شَاهِد; see 39:69). The light by which he perceives His Lord is the “Light of Certainty”. When the “Light of Divine Knowledge” and the Light of Wisdom are combined, they illuminate the path of guidance that leads to Allāh’s proximity. The two combined are then “*Nūr ‘alā Nūr* نُورٌ عَلَى نُورٍ”,

Light upon Light.” This combined Light makes visible to Allâh’s servant the unseen angelic realms in the heavens and the earth.

Neither the moon nor the earth has its own light. The sun shines upon the moon, making it visible to you. When you see the light of the moon, it is as if you had seen the sun (91:1–2). The Prophets of Allâh and His Saints are like moons, who receive their light from the Real Sun and scatter it on the earth for the benefit of humankind (91:1–2). This is *Nûr ‘alâ Nûr*, Light upon Light “over and over.” Then Allâh says (24:35): “*Allâh guides towards His light whoever desires (to be enlightened)*,” يَهْدِي اللّٰهُ لِنُورِهِ مَن يَشَاءُ. Thus, His Light is the source of guidance for all people who desire that they be guided with Divine Light; it is not reserved only for the Prophets or His special servants. No eyesight can see this Light (6:103). It can be perceived only through Faith (*imân*). Confession alone is not sufficient. When you learn how to kindle this Light with Faith, it is then lit for you.

فِي بُيُوتٍ أَذْنَ اللّٰهُ أَنْ تُرْفَعَ وَيُذْكَرَ فِيهَا اسْمُهُ يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ فِيهَا بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالْأَصَابِلِ
رِجَالٌ لَا تُلْهِيهِمْ تِجَارَةٌ وَلَا بَيْعٌ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللّٰهِ وَإِقَامِ الصَّلَاةِ وَإِيتَاءِ الزَّكَاتِ
يَخَافُونَ يَوْمًا تَنَقَّلُ فِيهِ الْقُلُوبُ وَالْأَبْصَارُ

“(This Light is lit) in houses (of the servants), which Allâh has ordained to be exalted and His name be commemorated in them. Therein (are such as) glorify Him in the mornings and the evenings, Men whom neither trade nor sale distracts from exalting (the name of) Allâh and from the observance of Prayer and from presenting Zakât [purifying dues] regularly. They dread the day when the hearts and the eyes will be in a state of agitation and anguish.” (24:36–37)



GLORIFICATION OF THE ALL-SUSTAINING LORD

Tasbih

سَبِّحْ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ الْأَعْلَى

“Extol the holiness of the name of your Lord, the Most High!”

To glorify the holiness of the Name of All-Sustaining, immensely Great and Exalted Lord is an irrevocable Command, which issues from the Presence of the Majesty (87:1).. This is a Divine Command from the One Who is glorious (87:2-5), and demands from us to confess, *Yes we bear witness* (بَلٰى شَهُدْنَا) to it and acknowledge it that You are our Lord (7:172). This is the confession to His original call to His creation at the time of its creation: *Am I not your Lord Who sustains you?* (7:172). This very confession, with all His attributive Names is the Glorification (*tasbih*) of the Lord. He says:

تُسَبِّحُ لَهُ السَّمَاوَاتُ السَّبْعُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيهِنَّ ۚ وَإِنْ مَنْ شَيْءٌ إِلَّا يُسَبِّحُ
بِحَمْدِهِ وَلَكِنْ لَا نَفْقَهُونَ تَسْبِيحَهُمْ

“The seven heavens, the earth and all those inhabiting them (the heavens and the earth), extol His Glory. In fact, there is not even a single thing but glorifies Him with his true and perfect praise, but you do not understand their glorification.” (17:44)

All animate and inanimate objects in cosmos are making this confession and glorifying the Lord Who sustains them. Glorification (*tasbih*) by inanimate objects has been mentioned in many verses of the Holy Qur’ân - glorification by the mountains (21:79), glorification by the thunder (13:13), glorification by the angels (2:30), and glorification by all created things (17:44). Some may wonder and

object that glorification by a non-human, let alone an inanimate object is contrary to reason. What is it that they glorify, and what words can they use in their glorification? The answer to this is that you cannot subdivide your Lords creation into the “rational living beings,” who can glorify with the Names and Attributes of the Lord, and the inanimate objects, which cannot. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) said about Mount Uhud near Madînah: “This mountain loves us, and we love it” (*Bukhârî* in *I'tisâm* 16). This does not mean, however, that the mountain is a feeling, thinking being like you. Allâh is *al-Muhyî*, the Life Giver of His cosmos. Allâh’s cosmos is alive in its totality, and is under the process of continuous change. Is it not so that Allâh gives life to the earth after its death (16:65) and inspires the bees to collect honey (16:68)? So why should they not glorify their Sustainer? When it is said, “*Whatever is in the heavens and the earth declares the glory of Allâh*” (57:1), it means that everything in the universe is alive and glorifies Him, but we do not admit this fact because we *do not understand their glorification*” (17:44). The manifestation of the cosmos is the unfolding of the signs of Allâh (*âyât Allâh*), and these *âyât* are made up of *kalimât* (Words).

قُلْ لَوْ كَانَ الْبَحْرُ مِدَادًا لِكَلِمَاتِ رَبِّي لَنَفَدَ الْبَحْرُ قَبْلَ أَنْ تَنَفَّدَ كَلِمَاتُ رَبِّي
وَلَوْ جِئْنَا بِمِثْلِهِ مَدَادًا

“Say, If every ocean became ink for (recording) the words and creation of my Lord, surely, the oceans would be spent up before the words and creation of my Lord came to an end, even if we brought to add (therewith) as many more (oceans)” (18:109)

The glorification by the “*seven heavens, the earth and all those inhabiting them*” (17:44) is in the words that are derived from Allâh’s sea of words (*كَلِمَات*), from the words of the Most High, and they are inexhaustible. The objects of the universe, including the non-living ones, exchange among themselves the secrets of the cosmos in words that have their own letters and sounds that have no limits and no

وَلَهُ يَسْجُدُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مِنْ ذَبَابٍ “All that is in the heavens and on the earth of the crawling and moving creatures and the angels (too), make obeisance to Allâh and they do not disdain (to worship Him).” يَخَافُونَ رَبَّهُمْ مَنْ فَوْقُهُمْ وَيَعْلُوُنَ مَا يُؤْمِرُونَ “They fear (disobedience to) their Lord above them, and do whatever they are commanded” (16:49–50). Then أَوْلَمْ يَرَوْا إِلَى مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ يَقْيَأُ ظِلَالُهُ عَنِ الْيَمِينِ وَالشَّمَائِلِ سُجَّدًا لَهُ وَهُمْ He says: Have they not considered that the shadow of everything which Allâh has created shift from the right and from the left, prostrating themselves to Allâh (in obedience) in humble supplication?” (16:48). The words for glorification (see 2:32) as used by the Engels are the right words for us to glorify the Lord. They are:

سُبْحَانَكَ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ

Glory be to You, You only is the one Who All-Knowing and All-Wise (“Subhâna ka innaka anta al-‘Alîm al-Hakîm”)

When you extol and glorify our Lord, the Most High, with His Names you are praising and confessing the holiness of His exalted Name Allâh that is His essence and His high state. He reminds you to glorify Him with His great Attributes – the Attribute of His Might (الْعَزِيزُ) and that of His Knowledge (الْحَكِيمُ) when He says:

سَبَّحَ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

“Whatever is in the heavens and the earth declares the glory of Allâh. And He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise” (57:1).

You can also glorify Him with any combination of His Attributes. You can say سُبْحَانَكَ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ (Glory be to You, You only is the one Who is Mighty and Ever Merciful), or you can say, “*Subhâna Rabbî*” followed by His Attributes of immense Greatness and Exaltation, like *al-Azîm* or *al-Âlâ*. These words of Glorification are to be said with bent head and bodies (*rakû’*) or with

the face touching the earth (*sajadah*). When in the state of prostration (*sajadah*) you should say سُبْحَانَ رَبِّي الْأَعْلَى “*Subhâna Rabbî al-A’lâ*” (Glorified is my Sustaining Lord of immense Greatness and Exaltation). This is how the Holy Prophet has taught to his community to glorify the Lord. Prostration before your Lord is for His glorification, and the true glorification comes from worship in the state of obeisance and prostration. This is also what the Command, سُبْحَنَ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ الْأَعْلَى (“Extol the holiness of the name of your Lord, the Most High!”; 87:1) demands from us to confess. He says:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ لَا يَسْتَكِبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِهِ وَيُسَبِّحُونَهُ وَلَهُ يَسْجُدُونَ

“Verily, those who are near to your Lord (and feel His presence with them) do not wax too proud to worship Him but they glorify Him and prostrate themselves in obedience to Him” (7:206).

If you glorify your Lord, your glorifications will not exalt Him nor add to His Glory; He is already exalted and glorified, rather shall bestow purification and radiance to your own soul. Allâh’s glorification shall save your soul from the agonies of the Day of Judgment (see 88:1–8). “[Glorified] and Holy is your Lord, the Lord of all honour and power” سُبْحَانَ رَبِّكَ رَبُّ الْعَزَّةِ (37:180).



ALL PRAISE REVERTS TO ALLÂH

Al-Hamdu-li-Allâh

وَآتَاكُم مِّن كُلِّ مَا سَأَلْتُمُوهُ ۝ وَإِن تَعْدُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ لَا تُحْصُوهَا ۝ إِنَّ
الْإِنْسَانَ لَظُلْمٌ كَفَّارٌ

“He has given you of all that you wanted of Him (by your natural demand). And if you try to count Allâh’s bounties you will not be able to number them. Surely, a human being is very unjust, very ungrateful” (14:34).

Such gracious favour, which is not in return for any service rendered by any creature, should draw the hearts to praise, glorification, and thanksgiving to the One Who bestowed such favour. The human heart eulogizes his Benefactor, offering praise with true intent

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

“All type of perfect and true praise belongs to Allâh alone, the Lord of the worlds” (1:2)

With these words you, the servant, offer Him your thanks, with true praise in appreciation of His commendable action, action worthy of praise, and you laud Him for the favours being done by Him.

In the very opening chapter (*al-Fâtihah*) of the Holy Qur’ân, two beautiful Attributes of Allâh, *al-Rahmân*, الرَّحْمَن, and *al-Rahîm*, الرَّحِيم, are mentioned. If you understand the excellences hidden in them (see page 62, commentary verse 1:3), your heart yearns for Him Who possesses these Attributes with fervent devotion, and you feel an urge to love and worship Him with all your humbleness. You want to be

drawn closer to that peerless and unique Being with the words of praise **الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ**. *Al-Rahmân*, who is the Bestower of all bounties without any claim, is apt to become the object of adoration and praise. He becomes Praiseworthy of all those who are conscious of His favours. Rûmî once said, “Countless are His favours. A hundred thousand tongues cannot deliver the thanks that are due to Him. Favors upon favours He has showered on the handful of dust. All of life, under His universal care, is indebted to Him.” (Rûmî). If you try to count His excellences, His Graces, and His favours, you would not be able to number them, even with tireless exertion (31:27).

Many people praise created things or beings as their lords, believing them to be sources of favours and bounties. Mourning widows vie with one another in boastful enumeration of the valorous deeds of their dead in battlefields. At banquets, humans are praised in a manner in which Allâh, the real Bestower, should be praised. With the words “*Al-Hamdu-lil-Lâh Rabb al-‘Âlamîn*” Allâh reproaches all those who associate partners with Him in their praise, as if He were saying, “Why do you glorify your associate gods and why do you magnify your ancestors? Why are you so boastful of the dead? Are *they* your lords, who sustain you and your children? Are *they* the compassionate ones, who treat you mercifully, ward off calamities, avert evil and affliction, safeguard the good that has been your lot, wash off the dirt of your sins, and cure you of your diseases? Are *they* the lords of the Day of Judgment? No, Allâh alone sustains and shows Mercy by granting happiness in full measure, by granting guidance, by answering prayers, and by delivering you from your enemies. He shall certainly reward your works.”

True and perfect Praise (*al-Hamdu-lil-Lâh*)—whether relating to external aspects or to internal realities, whether relating to inherent excellence or to what is manifested in natural phenomena—is due only to the One with Overflowing Generosity (*al-Rahmân*), the One with immense Loving Powers (*al-Rahîm*). No other shares in it.

When He says He is *al-Rahmân* الرَّحْمَن, it is, as if He said, “If all intelligent beings, visible and invisible, gathered together and demanded their most sublime wishes from Me and I granted every one of them, this would in no way diminish the treasures that are with Me any more than the needle dipped in an ocean would decrease the ocean” (*Hadîth-i-Qudsî*, narrated by Abû Dharr). There is no excellence that the wisdom of the wise can imagine or that the mind of a thinker can contemplate but belongs to the Supreme Being, Who is the source of all bounties, the source of all Grace, and the source of the Light of guidance. Allâh alone is the One Who exercises Beneficences deliberately, not under compulsion. If the suspension of His *Rahmâniyyat* for a single moment were to be imagined, the entire cosmos would perish instantly. The words “*Al-Hamd-u-li(l)-Allâh Rabb al-‘Âlamîn*, الحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ” (“All type of perfect and true praise **belongs** to Allâh alone, the Lord of the worlds” (1:2) tell us that all true praises revert to Him. In every instance of true praise, the one who is praised his praise goes back to Allâh, Who is the origin and the cause of that praise, and the one who praises, also in reality praises Allâh, though unknowingly.

“*Al-Hamd-u-li(l)-Allâh Rabb al-‘Âlamîn*, الحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ” (- All type of perfect and true praise belongs to Allâh alone, the Lord of the worlds,) are the words of Allâh, spoken by Him. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) acknowledged, “I cannot enumerate your Praise, O Lord! You have praised yourself” (Tirmidhî, *Da‘awâh* 75). Such is the utmost degree of inability to count His favours. With His words “*Al-Hamd-u-li(l)-Allâh Rabb al-‘Âlamîn*, الحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ”, Allâh is praising Himself as if He were saying, “O My servants! Know Me through My *Rabûbiyyat* [sustenance for you all], and recognize Me through My excellent Graceful Attribute of *Rahmâniyyat*. Neither My creation nor I suffer from any defect or shortcoming. My Praiseworthiness far exceeds the highest limits of praise rendered by those who praise Me. You will not find in the heavens or in the earth any praiseworthy feature that is not to be found in My Countenance. If you tried to

count My Excellences, you would not be able to number them. And if all the trees on the earth were to be pens and the vast ocean is full of ink, and besides that many more such oceans to replenish it, to supply ink to write My works, even then My Words and works would not be finished [see 31:27]. Then search well to see if you can light upon a praiseworthy merit that you do not find in Me or can discover an excellence that is beyond My presence and Me. If you imagine that there is such, then you have no knowledge of Me and are bereft of vision. I am known through My Glories and excellences. The heavy clouds of rain and My Revelations saturated with My blessings indicate the plenitude of My bounties. Those who believe in Me and in what I say are indeed the people who are treading the paths that lead to My proximity. They have recognized and understood the Truth. They have sought earnestly for My Attributes, and My Glories reflect over them” (unknown Saint). Therefore, praised be He Who is distant and yet comes near, He Who is high (*ta’âla*) and yet descends (*nazala*), He Whom the servant knows in accordance with what He allows them to know about Him.

Just as the Most Gracious (*al-Rahmân* الرَّحْمَن) is Praiseworthy (*Muhammad*) by all those who are conscious of His favours, bestowed without having been asked, the Ever-Merciful (*al-Râhîm* الرَّحِيم) bestows his special Mercy upon those of His faithful servants who are His praisers (*Ahmad*) This Graciousness (*Râhîmîyyat*; 2:186) is in response to the praise (*hamd*) and thanks offered by His worshipper. He sends down His special Mercy upon you when He is pleased with your efforts of praise and when He determines that you have merited His all-embracing Grace of *Râhîmîyyat*. It is at this stage that a righteous worshipper, devout in duties of obedience, becomes a favourite in the Divine Presence (33:56).

Praise Allâh, Whom you call upon with your needs, and then He answers you, even though you heed little when He calls upon you to listen to His call. All praise is for Allâh, Whom you supplicate, and

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He grants you what you plead for, even though you are stingy when He asks a loan from you for the needy. Praise Allâh; on Him you entrust your secrets without an intercessor. Praise Allâh, to Whom you plead, for if you pleaded to others, they would not grant you anything. All praise is for Allâh, Who has dignified you by becoming the Disposer of your affairs instead of making you rely on others, who would then humiliate you. All praise is for Allâh, Who endeared you, even though He is not in need of you. All praise is for Allâh, Who treats you with clemency, just as if you had no sin. Therefore, your Lord is the most praised of all and the most worthy of praise. Seek your Sustainer diligently, and ponder every aspect of His perfection as you search for Him in His manifestation of this universe. When you begin to perceive His fragrance, it is then that you have found Him. This mystery is unveiled only to those who are earnest seekers. Praise therefore your Creator and Sustainer with all perfect praise in your joys and in your sorrows.



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'Abûdîyyat and *Ibâdat*

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اعْبُدُوا رَبَّكُمْ

“O people! Worship your Lord” (2:21).

This is the first command in the Holy Qur’ân and it addresses all of humanity. It is a universal command by the All-Sustaining Lord. This is a command of submission to *Rabb al-‘Âlamîn*, رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ, the One Who created many worlds and the means of their sustenance. He then

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perfected the human being in his evolutionary stages and then “breathed into him of His spirit,” (ثُمَّ سَوَّاهُ وَنَفَخَ فِيهِ مِنْ رُّوحِهِ) (32:9) in order to make him capable of receiving and understanding His Words. Then He said:

وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ

“Your Lord has enjoined you to worship none but Him” (17:23; cf. 51:56).

Worship is His Decree, which cannot be denied and must be followed. Jalâl al-Dîn Rûmî said: “A person imagines that he can rid himself of his bad and base characteristics by means of his own actions and endeavours. When he strives and expends his energy, he is disappointed. Allâh says that with your weak legs, you will never be able to reach the goal. In a hundred thousand years, you will not be able to finish even one stage of the way. Only when you fall down and bow before your Lord in worship, and while walking, be unable to get up, then you will be uplifted through His Grace and favour. Now if you ask His help, He will bestow upon you His Grace. When you receive His Grace and strength from Him, to get up and reach the goal, then glorify your Lord with His Praise and extol His Name and ask again and again His protection (*maghfirah*) and His favour (-*ni'mah*), seek forgiveness for your wrong thoughts, and realize that you were imagining that you would reach your goal (*fallâh*) (فلاح) with your own efforts. You did not realize before that all things come from the Grace of your Lord. Now fall down in His worship and seek His forgiveness, and you will find that He is Oft-Returning and inclined to forgiveness (*tawwâb al-Râhîm*)” (Jalâl al-Dîn Rûmî in *Fîhi ma Fîhi*).

The instinct and desire of adoration and worship of a deity has been made part of human nature (32:9). When he worships a deity; actually it is He, Allâh, Who is being worshipped. He is being worshipped in every place of worship, no matter to what religious grouping one belongs: “*Cloisters and churches and synagogues and mosques {are*

places] wherein the name of Allâh is mentioned very frequently” (22:40). Every worshipper imagines Him according to his opinion and beliefs, and worships Him in his places of worship. He says, فَإِنَّمَا تُؤْتُوا وَجْهَ اللَّهِ “Whichever way you may turn (you will find) Allâh’s attention” (2:115). Allâh is in every direction, and each direction represents a particular doctrine and belief regarding Him.

The commanding Word *I’budû*, اعبدوا, “Worship!” is derived from ‘*abada*, which means “to serve,” “to adore,” “to obey,” “to venerate,” “to submit,” “to devote,” or “to accept the impression of a thing” (*Lisân al-‘Arab* by Abû al-Fadzal Muhammad ibn Mukarram Ibn Manzûr; *Tâj al-‘Arûs* by al-Murtadzâ al-Husainî al-Zabîdî; and *Al-Mufradât fi Gharâib al-Qur’ân* by Abû al-Qâsim Husain al-Râghib). According to Ibn ‘Abbâs , the meaning of *I’budû*, اعبدوا, is in the sense of “know Me!” It can also mean, “be humble towards Me!” Thus, the Words يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اعْبُدُوا رَبَّكُم can be rendered as “O humankind! Know Me, and when you know Me, then be humble towards Me.” No one can be humble towards another unless he knows his status. Therefore, it is necessary to know Him and know the fact that He is the possessor of all Might before Whom all the mighty of the world are to be lowly. Ibn ‘Abbâs , in his explanation of the word ‘*abd*, عبْد, emphasized the meaning of knowledge and knowing. The following Qur’ânic verses support the view of Ibn ‘Abbâs :

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالْخَلَافَةِ لِلَّيلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لَآيَاتٍ لِّأُولَئِي الْأَلْبَابِ الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَامًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَى جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَكَبَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَاطِلًا سُبْحَانَكَ فَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ

“Surely, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and (in) the alternation of the night and the day there are many signs for people of pure and clear understanding. These are the persons who remember Allâh standing, and sitting and (lying) on their sides and reflect upon the creation of the heavens and the earth (and say,) Our Lord! You have not created (all) this in vain.

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Glory be to you, save us from the punishment of the Fire.”
(3:190–191)

When a believer uses his power of reflection (*quwwat al-Fikr*) and professes that Allâh is incomparable, One (*Wâhid*) and Alone (*Ahad*) (see p. 54) and Self-Sufficient and *nothing is like His likeness* (42:11), and that He stands high above any similarity with His creatures, he is consumed by bewilderment (*hayrat* حيرۃ) and awe. This state inspires in him a real desire for servitude ('*abûdîyyat* عبودیت). The servant ('*abd*) then feels an urge in his heart to submit to Him in worship. When he Prays (*Salât* صلاة), He glorifies Him in each of his bowings (*rakû'*) and in each of his prostration (*sajadah* سجدة 87:14-15). In his state of prostration and glorification he comes close to his Him. With this closeness, his heart melts and yearns with fervent devotion for his Creator and Sustainer. With his glorification (*tasbîh*) when he is bowing down and in his prostration he responds to His original call: قَالُوا بَلٰى “am I not your Lord who sustains you?” by saying, “Yes! You are” (7:172). This confession inspires love for the Supreme Being Who sustains him, and creates hopes and fear in his soul. “We are like lutes once held by God. Being away from His warm body fully explains this constant yearning.” (*Hâfiz*)

The human souls real and ultimate comfort (*râhat* راحت) lies in realizing that Allâh alone is his Sustainer and Nourisher (*Rabb al-'Âlamîn*). In expressing your love to Him in worship and prayer, in becoming lowly and humble towards Him, and in obeying Him you are adoring your beloved. At the time of the creation, Allâh infused in you His *rûh*, His spirit (38:72). He also called you *Nafs* – the soul (89:27–30), because you were able to attain a union with Him through Prayer, worship and love. The state of the souls union with Allâh is like that of a tree, which has its roots in the soil. Just as the tree sucks up water from the soil, so the yearning soul (*nafs*) sucks water from the spring of Allâh's Love. The soul continues to grow in holy progression through this union. Allâh refers to this ultimate state of

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His servant as “*nafs mutma’innah*” (نَفْسُ الْمَطْمُعَةِ -the soul at peace), with whom the Lord is well pleased, and the soul is well pleased with his Lord (89:27–30). This ultimate state of comfort and peace is the greatest blessing of prayer and worship that can be attained.

The one who goes to worship in a church, temple, cloister, synagogue, or even in a mosque worships a Deity he has in his mind, which he fits into his belief, his capacity, his aptitude and his upbringing (2:148). Many people worship their illusions, and by limiting the vastness of the Divine Attributes, they try to grasp Him. They create their own deities and small gods to fit into their limited minds, though they in reality intend to worship the One and only God (2:148). Such an object of worship, which those people assume is not proper, is actually poor in form; it is mostly an image in the form of a created thing—a star, the sun, an animal, a statue, or even a human being (see 35:13–15). In reality, they profess a belief in Gods similarity with His creatures.

وَيَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَضْرُرُهُمْ وَلَا يَنْفَعُهُمْ وَيَقُولُونَ هُوَ لَاءُ شُفَاعَوْنَ
عِنْدَ اللَّهِ فَلْأَتَبَّعُوا اللَّهَ بِمَا لَا يَعْلَمُ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ
سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

“And (some) people worship, apart from Allâh, things that can neither harm them (of their own accord) nor can help them. They say, These are our intercessors with Allâh. Say, Do you (presume to) inform Allâh of the things of whose existence in the heavens or in the earth He does not know? Glory be to Him! High be He, exalted above (all the things) they associate (with Him)” (10:18).

Some say that He is to be worshipped because He is All-Mighty, or because He is the Lord. Some worship Him for some reward or demand; such is the worship of traders. Some people worship Allâh because they fear His punishment; such is the worship of slaves. There are some who worship Him out of their gratitude to Him; such

is the worship of the noble. Actually, their worship is sometimes out of gratitude and sometimes out of love. They feel inclined and attracted towards the Beauty that they perceive in their hearts. They worship Him and love Him because they perceive Him as a “beautiful Beloved.” They take pleasure in worshipping Him, knowing that only through worship will they come into the Presence of that Beauty that they so intensely love. Many remain heedless. They go after the material things of this world, remain inclined to their animal instincts, and follow their low desires. They become the slaves of their impulses. We read:

وَاتْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَأً الَّذِي آتَيْنَا فَانسَلَخَ مِنْهَا فَاتَّبَعَهُ الشَّيْطَانُ فَكَانَ مِنَ
الْغَاوِينَ وَلَوْ شِئْنَا لَرَفَعْنَاهُ بِهَا وَلَكِنَّهُ أَخْدَى إِلَى الْأَرْضِ وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ ۝ فَمَثَلُهُ
كَمَثَلُ الْكُلْبِ إِنْ تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْهِ يَلْهَثُ أَوْ تَنْرُكْهُ يَلْهَثُ ۝ ذَلِكَ مَثَلُ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ
كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا ۝ فَاقْصُصُ الْقَصْصَنَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ سَاءَ مَثَلًا الْقَوْمُ الَّذِينَ
كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَأَنفَسَهُمْ كَانُوا يَظْلِمُونَ

“And relate to them the news of him to whom We gave Our commandments but he withdrew himself therefrom, the satan followed him [in his pursuit of worldly desires and his impulses] with the result that he became one of those led astray (and became a pervert). Had We so willed We would have exalted him (in ranks) thereby [by means of these Our commandments], but he remained inclined to (the material things of) this world and followed his low desires. His case therefore is like that of a dog, if you bear down upon it, it lolls its tongue out or if you leave it alone, it still lolls out its tongue. Such is the case with the people who cry lies to Our commandments; [they do not give up their evil ways]. So narrate to them the account (of the people of old) that they may reflect. Sad is the case of the people who cry lies to Our commandments and it is their own selves that they have wronged.” (7:175–177)

WHAT IS WORSHIP AND SERVITUDE?

Atheists think they have no need to worship, since they think they do not believe in any deity. They are mistaken. About them Allâh says, “*Have you considered (over the plight of) one who has taken his own low desires for his deity?*” (25:43). The deity that they worship is their pride, their wealth, their flag, their hero, their king, their president, their pet, their male or female partner, or any of the other created things. Again we read:

أَفَرَأَيْتَ مَنِ اتَّخَذَ إِلَهًا هُوَاهُ وَأَضَلَّهُ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ عِلْمٍ وَخَتَمَ عَلَىٰ سَمْعِهِ وَقَبَّلَهُ
وَجَعَلَ عَلَىٰ بَصَرِهِ غَشَاةً فَمَن يَهْدِيهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ اللَّهِ ۝ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ وَقَالُوا
مَا هِيَ إِلَّا حَيَاةُنَا الدُّنْيَا نَمُوتُ وَنَحْيَا وَمَا يُهَلِّكُنَا إِلَّا الدَّهْرُ ۝ وَمَا لَهُمْ بِذَلِكَ
مِنْ عِلْمٍ ۝ إِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَظْنُونَ

“*Have you considered the case of him who has taken his own low desires for his god and whom Allâh has forsaken and adjudged as lost on the basis of (His infinite) knowledge, and whose ears and heart He has sealed and whose eyes He has covered with a veil? Who then will guide him after Allâh (has condemned him for his being given to evil ways)? Will you then pay no heed?*

“*They say, We have only this present life (to live). We (people of one generation) die and we (people of a new generation from among us) come to life again (here in this very world). It is (the passage of) time alone that deals us death. But they have no real knowledge whatsoever about the matter [the Hereafter]. They merely make conjectures.*” (45:23–24)

Worship, according to the teachings of the Holy Qur’ân, consists of reflecting about the Divine Attributes and living accordingly.

صِبْغَةُ اللَّهِ ۝ وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ مِنَ اللَّهِ صِبْغَةً

“(Assume) the hues (and the Attributes) of Allâh! And who is fairer than Allâh’s hues (and Attributes)?” (2:138)

WHAT IS WORSHIP AND SERVITUDE?

Thus, worshipping our Sustainer means to fulfil the requirement of His Attributes. The Holy Qur’ân has placed some of the excellent Attributes of Allâh before you to help you build up your moral fabric. If you fulfil this Decree, as He desires, His special favour (*Rahîmîyyat* رحیمیت guides you. When you worship Him, you do so for your own good (17:7). You yourself are a recipient of the reward of worship. He commands you to:

فُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

“Say, ‘Surely, my Prayer and my sacrifice and my living and my dying are (all) for the sake of Allâh, the Lord of the worlds.’”
(6:162)

In other words, Allâh’s Attributes, when rendered into action in your daily life, constitute your worship. All your actions, your efforts, your sleeps and awakenings, as well as your relations with nature and with your family—are all acts of worship provided that you perform them for the goodwill of Allâh and to seek His pleasure.

Allâh says, “And We have prescribed certain rites of sacrifice for every people” (22:34). The rites of sacrifice (worship) for the Muslims are the five known pillars of Islam. The seven verses of *al-Fâtihah* (1:1–7) recited several times every day in five ritual Prayers (*al-Salât*) reminds a Muslim of those divine molds in which he has to cast his daily life. The first three verses of *al-Fâtihah* are the glorification of the Lord. They occupy the first place of worship.

Your acts of worship demand that you behave like *rabb*, *rahmân*, *rahîm*, and *mâlik* in your relations with Gods creation. You must look to the needs and requirements of Allâh’s creation, whether animate or inanimate; this is your *rabûbîyyat*. You must stretch your helping hands to the needy, even if they have not requested or deserved your help; this is your *Rahmânîyyat*. And if someone does you a favour, you should reward him more, many times more; this is your

WHAT IS WORSHIP AND SERVITUDE?

Rahîmîyyat. You must overlook the faults of others and whatever injustices you have suffered from them and practice forgiveness in your daily dealings; this is your *Mâlikîyyat*.

After mentioning the four Divine Graces, you say, ﴿إِنَّكَ نَعْبُدُكَ﴾, *Iyyâka na'bdu*, “(*Lord!*) You alone do we worship” (1:5). You mean thereby that you submit to His laws, His ways, His restrictions, and His Attributes. Your eating, sleeping, walking, sitting, standing, speaking, seeing, and hearing—in short, all your actions—become a kind of worship (6:162). By doing these actions, you are in fact “glorifying” the future human being who must be evolved out of your inner self. In reciting the Divine Attributes of perfection, you keep before you a sacred cast, in which you need to mould your character. To “please Allâh” is in fact to work out your own spiritual evolution and to bring to realization whatever capacities your Creator has placed in you. In this effort lies your whole success; this effort is your worship of the Lord. In short, the Qur’ânic model of worship is in your reflecting on the Divine Attributes and putting them into practice according to your capacities. You know nothing of Allâh except through the ways He works in nature. Hence, your worship of Him should find its real manifestation in following His ways in your life. Your Prayer or other forms of adoration should act as a reminder of that Great Truth concerning Who is Allâh.

The desire for worship does not arise from any supposed need on the part of the Creator, Who is Self-Sufficient; rather, it is designed as an instrument for the inner moral development of you, the worshipper. The object of worship should not be to glorify Allâh’s Names and Attributes by repeating them mindlessly on a rosary. Worship also misses its object when it is confined to mere bowing down in prostration in a mosque or to simply counting and repeating some Names of God. Allâh is far above such needs. If the worship of a deity produces no moral effect in your life, it need not be pursued.

WHAT IS WORSHIP AND SERVITUDE?

The recital of certain sacred words and names is not an act of worship. It is useless to sing hymns at the top of your voice if you do not lead a godly life. If your worship lies only in bringing offerings and sacrifices to an altar and to listen to the recital of hymns in His praise, then, it is either credible to Allâh nor profitable to you: “*It is neither their flesh nor their blood (of these sacrifices) which matters to Allâh but it is guarding against evil [taqwâ] and devotion to duty on your part that matters to Him*” (22:37). Allâh stands above offerings and rites that lack devotion and heartfelt love for the Creator and the creation. Allâh neither needs your worship, nor does He require any praise or thanksgiving from you for His acts of Mercy (31:12).

مَنْ اهْتَدَى فَإِنَّمَا يَهْتَدِي لِنَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ ضَلَّ فَإِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهَا وَلَا تَنْزِرُ
وَازْرَةً وَزْرَ أَخْرَى

“He who follows the right way follows it to his own good and he who goes astray, surely, he goes astray to his own loss. And no soul that bears the burden shall bear the burden of another (soul)” (17:15)

Your mindless extolling or praising Allâh does not contribute to His glory, nor does any blasphemy or disobedience take away any of His grandeur and dignity. Allâh said, “You may imagine you are benefitting Me through your worship, but acts of yours cannot add the least particle of goodness to My overflowing Goodness” (*Hadîth-i-Qudsî*, narrated by Abû Dharr). The purpose of the creation of all rational beings is their cognition of the existence of their Creator and their conscious willingness to conform their own existence to whatever they may perceive of His Will and plan. It is the twofold concept of cognition and willingness that gives meaning to what the Holy Qur’ân describes as ‘ibâdat or worship. Your worship of Him should consist of such acts as may help you use your own power and ability given by Him to the moulding of good moral character and benefitting His creation. If your worship inspires you to follow His

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ways and commands of love for His creation, you contribute to make possible the best of civilization on righteous lines.

Human beings did not give morals to this Deity, but He has planted His own morals in human beings. The whole of the Qur'ân is simply a commentary on the Attributes of Allâh taught to you (2:31). All the laws and regulations given in the Holy Book, when pursued, bring your life in accordance with the requirements of these Attributes. To be virtuous is to lead such a life. To walk humbly on earth (31:19) means to imbue yourself with His Divine Attributes. In adoring these Divine Attributes, you are reminded of the ways to acquire noble qualities yourself. To glorify Allâh is to edify yourself. When the Holy Qur'ân relates events of some great men, it is only to illustrate how such men lived up to these Attributes. Ibn al-'Arabî said: "At the true station of servitude ('abûdîyyat، عبودیت), Allâh is described by the attributes of the servant". This does not mean that Allâh lowers Himself to the state of the servant ('âbid عبد)، for there is nothing lower than the servant of Allâh ('âbid) before Allâh, or than the state of servitude ('abûdîyyat). This subject matter is explained by Jalâl al-Dîn Rûmî in his *Mathnawî* (III 3669–3673), where he said: "When a candle is burning in bright sunlight, its flame is overlapped by the brightness of the sun and is hardly visible. The flame does not cease to exist, nor is its light consumed by the sunlight. Similarly, when a person comes near to his Lord, his light is overwhelmed by the Light of the Lord. The persons light continues to exist, but its attributes are wholly absorbed into Gods Attributes."

Ibn al-'Arabî said: "When a worshipper enters into the state of servitude with Allâh's shared Attributes, He appears in Theophany (*Jalâlî*) to him with the same-shared Attributes. In this state of servitude, the servant comes to know the mystery of His relationship to his Lord". The Holy Prophet (pbuh) assures us of this when he says that through implicit worship ('Ibâdat) our God becomes our limbs with which we walk and ears with which we hear and our tongues

with which we speak and our eyes with which we see (*Hadîth-i-Qudsî*). This is an astonishing relationship with Allâh, and you will find very few who are able to taste it.



SUPPLICATIONS AND ITS BLESSINGS

Barkât al-Du‘â

وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمْ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ

“And your Lord says, *Call on Me, I will answer your prayer*” (40:60)

Calling upon your Creator and Sustainer (*Rabb*) is His Command. To call upon a deity for help is the essence of every religion. There has never been a Prophet or a religious guide who has not taught his people how to supplicate, for the Prophets knew that the effacement of all difficulties lay in the Divine Hands alone, and that it was only through supplications that the door to Gnosis was opened.

The Arabic word *du‘â* دُعَا means supplication. It is from the root *da‘â* meaning, “to call upon someone for help,” in the sense of someone who is in trouble and in great need calling out for help. When a servant calls Allâh for help, the response is immediate as He says

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ

“And when My servants ask you concerning Me (tell them), I am nearby indeed” (2:186)

Du'â (- Supplication) is the relationship between the supplicant and his Master (*Mâlik* مالك), a relationship that attracts the attention of the Master. At first, Allâh's *Rahmânîyyat* (-His Grace of providing without asking) comes into play and pulls the person to Him. Then the worshipper, through his Faith in the Master, and full of hope and in perfect loyalty and love for Him, by his bowing and prostrating before Him, draws even nearer to Him. Thence, by an attracting force, which is now embedded into his nature, he starts to attract Allâh's bounties, His Mercy, His Grace, and His Love towards him. All this, in turn, helps to create the means and circumstances that are essential to fulfil the needs of the supplicant. The servant has asked for something in secret, and He in turn manifests His responses openly.

“Call on Me” (اذْعُونِي) is a Divine Command. Some worshippers of Allâh simply conform to this Command. Such a caller in his supplication is treading the path of His servitude (‘abûdiyyat); there is no trace of self-interest. Such a one is telling His Lord that he is ready to serve Him without asking for any recompense. Divine gifts are bestowed on such people unasked. Such people yearn for more of the same selfless “servanthood.”

Sometimes, however, the dire state of a human being necessitates his making a desperate appeal, as was the case with the Job (Ayûb): “*He called out to his Lord, I am inflicted with some distress, and You are the Most Merciful of all who show mercy*” (21:83). Allâh says: أَسْتَجِبْ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِي لَكُمْ “I will answer you” (40:60). He says: إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِي سَيَذْخُلُونَ جَهَنَّمَ دَارِثِينَ “But those who wax too proud to worship Me will surely enter Gehenna, humbled and despised” (40:60). They will suffer, because they refused to call on Him in the time of their need, out of pride and lack of Faith in Him.

مَا يَعْبَأُ بِكُمْ رَبِّي لَوْلَا دُعَاؤُكُمْ

“*My Lord will not hold you to be of any worth if you do not call on Him (in your prayers)*” (25:77)

Etiquette and Code of behaviour in Supplication

وَلَا تَجْهَرْ بِصَلَاتِكَ وَلَا تُخَافِتْ بِهَا وَابْتَغِ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ سَبِيلًا

“And utter not your prayer in a loud voice nor utter it in too low tones (completely concealing it) but seek a middle course”
(17:110)

The One Whom you call upon, the One from Whom you ask for help, is neither deaf (17:110) nor remote (2:186). Rather, He comforts and assures you with His Words: فَإِنَّمَا قَرِيبٌ *“I am nearby indeed”* (2:186); وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ حَبْلِ الْوَرِيدِ *“We are nearer to him than even (his) jugular vein”* (50:16); وَنَعْلَمُ مَا تُوَسْوِسُ بِهِ نَفْسُهُ *“and We know what (dark) suggestions his mind makes to him”* (50:16). He has taught you how to present your case to Him in the seven verses of *al-Fâtihah* (1:1–7). As in *al-Fâtihah*, your every ritual Prayer and every supplication should begin not with a petition but with your glorification of the Lord, with your mentioning His most beautiful Attributes. Verses 17:110–111 He commands us through His Prophet:

قُلْ ادْعُوا اللَّهَ أَوْ ادْعُوا الرَّحْمَنَ ۖ أَيَاً مَا تَدْعُوا فَلَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ ۝
وَلَا تَجْهَرْ بِصَلَاتِكَ وَلَا تُخَافِتْ بِهَا وَابْتَغِ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ سَبِيلًا ۝ وَقُلْ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ
الَّذِي لَمْ يَتَخَذْ وَلَدًا وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَّهُ شَرِيكٌ فِي الْمُلْكِ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَّهُ وَلِيٌّ مِنْ
الذِّنْ ۝ وَكَبِرْهُ تَكْبِيرًا

“Say, Call upon (Him by the name of) Allâh or call upon (Him by the name of) Al-Râhmân (the Most Gracious). (In short) call upon Him by whatsoever name you like, all beautiful names belong to Him [the One God]. And utter not your prayer in a loud voice nor utter it in too low tones (completely concealing it) but seek a middle course.

“And say, All true and perfect praise belongs to Allâh Who has not taken to Himself a son, and Who has no associate-partner in

*His kingdom, nor has He any helper because of any weakness.
And extol His glory with repeated glorification.” (17:110–111)*

In these verses, you are taught the etiquette of supplications and ritual Prayers. Many people go beyond bounds in their ritual purification and supplication. But supplications do not have to be made with the tongue of eloquence. Many supplications are taught in the Holy Qur’ân, and you can pray to Allâh in those words. It is said that Saints used seven sentences more or less in their supplications, such as the Prayer taught to us by Allâh in the very first chapter of the Holy Qur’ân (*al-Fâtihah*). The supplication in verse 2:286 is an example:

رَبَّنَا لَا تُؤَاخِذْنَا إِن نَسِيْنَا أَوْ أَخْطَأْنَا ۝ رَبَّنَا وَلَا تَحْمِلْنَا عَلَيْنَا اصْرَارًا كَمَا
حَمَلْتَهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِنَا ۝ رَبَّنَا وَلَا تَحْمِلْنَا مَا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا بِهِ ۝ وَاعْفُ
عَنَا وَاغْفِرْ لَنَا وَارْحَمْنَا ۝ أَنْتَ مَوْلَانَا فَانصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ

“Our Lord! Take us not to task if we forget or (if) we make a mistake. Our Lord! Lay not upon us the burden (of disobedience) as You laid upon those before us. Our Lord! Charge us not with the responsibility which we have not the strength to bear; therefore overlook our faults and grant us protection and have mercy on us. You are our Master; therefore help us against the disbelieving people” (2:286).

Acceptance of Supplications

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ أَحِبُّ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ

“And when my servants ask you concerning Me (tell them), I am nearby indeed, I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he prays to Me” (2:186).

Allâh’s Mercy (*Rahmâniyyat*) is universal, and everyone through His Attributes and Names ever begs him for His Mercy. Acceptance of supplications is part of His Mercy; He calls it *Rahmatî* (My Mercy;

7:156), a Mercy that is all-encompassing. To deny that worship and formal Prayer is not a means for attaining your objectives, or that they are not efficacious in attaining your rightful wishes is to deny the Divine Existence of the Ever-Living, the Almighty. Allâh never lets your supplication go to waste, because that would be contrary to His own declaration أَسْتَجِنُ لَكُمْ “*I will answer you*” (40:60). Imâm Abû al-Qâsim Husain al-Râghib said that your supplications could be answered in two ways: If there is no demand in the supplication, the answer can be in the form of communication from Allâh in words, but if a petition has been made in the supplication, then fulfilling that need constitutes the answer to the supplication.

You ask for His favours by addressing Him with His Divine Attributes and Names. Favors associated with the Names of Allâh are of various kinds. Sometimes Allâh bestows His gift on His servant (*'abd*) in His Name “the Merciful” (*al-Râhîm*). In that case, the gift will in response to the servant’s petition at that time. Sometimes Allâh gives a gift in His Name “the Wise” (*al-Hakîm*), to serve the best interest of His servant. Many times He gives in His Name “the Gracious” (*al-Râhmân*), and in this case He bestows unasked as a favour, so that the recipient is under no obligation to render extra thanks. He may give in His Name “the Forgiver” (*al-Ghafîr*) so that if retribution is due, He will protect you from it, and if no punishment is due; He will protect you from incurring an infraction.

There are several accounts in the Holy Qur’ân that tell us about the supplications of the Prophets (for example, 54:10) and of others who were neither a Prophet (*nabî* نبی) nor a Messenger (*rasûl* رسول) of Allâh (for example, 19:2–7), as well as how their supplications were granted. In fact, the Holy Qur’ân provides several examples of the promises made by Allâh to His servants who asked Him, even begged Him, for His favours. The Holy Qur’ân cites one example of a plea made by a simple woman who complained before her Lord and before the Holy Prophet (pbuh) about her distress and agony: “*Allâh has*

indeed heard the plea of her [Khowlah, wife of Aus bin Sâmit] who pleads with you (O Muhammad!) with regard to her husband and makes her complaints to Allâh” (58:1).

Sometimes, the experience and expertise of a physician may fail to cure a disease, or you may see no way of relief and respite from worries, or it may seem impossible to achieve the high goals you have been striving for, or it appears that you are afflicted by perpetual calamities. In such situations, the weapon of supplications comes in handy. Though Allâh has created His universe out of His expediencies and has subjected His creation to His laws, this does not mean that He has finished His job and that He now has nothing to do with the day-to-day life of His creatures. Such a notion is wrong. It is one of His Attributes that He removes the afflictions of His servant who knowingly or unknowingly maneuvers himself into misfortunes.

أَمَّنْ يُحِبُّ الْمُضْطَرَّ إِذَا دَعَاهُ وَيَكْشِفُ السُّوءَ

“Or Who is it that answers the distressed person when he calls on Him, and removes (his) distress (and agony)?” (27:62)

In his supplication, the distressed person turns towards his Lord, calling repeatedly, “(Lord!) You alone do we worship and You alone do we implore for help” (إِلَيْكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِلَيْكَ نَسْتَغْفِرُ) (1:5). If a distressed adores Him and remembers His past favours and renders Him thanks, He out of His *Rahîmîyyat* (His special Mercifulness), will “answers the distressed person when he calls on Him, and remove (his) distress (and agony)” (27:62; see also 6:41). The incurable, apparently fatal disease vanishes, the troubles go away, financial burdens are removed, the mountains of difficulties disappear, the infertile woman is blessed with an offspring, and doors are opened for spiritual advancement. By accepting your supplications, Allâh invites you to enter these doors now wide open, which lead to the proximity of your Lord. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) said once, “On whomsoever from among you is opened the door of supplication, on him has been opened the doors of

mercy” (narrated by Ibn ‘Umar in *Sunnan al-Tirmidhi*). Numerous other good fortunes, bounties, and capabilities are the outcome of the accepted supplications, a fact to which innumerable chosen servants of Allāh have borne witness before and even now.

You should rest assured that there does exist a Seeing and a Hearing God, Who notices what you are asking for, Who watches over the compulsions of the distressed, Who listens to the beseeching, and Who grants acceptance out of His *Rahīmīyyat*, His special Mercy and Grace. Then you read His Words:

فُلْ مَنْ يُنَجِّيْكُمْ مِنْ ظُلْمَاتِ الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ تَدْعُونَهُ تَضَرُّعًا وَخُفْيَةً لَئِنْ أَنْجَانَا
مِنْ هَذِهِ لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الشَّاكِرِينَ فُلْ اللَّهُ يُنَجِّيْكُمْ مِنْهَا وَمِنْ كُلِّ كَرْبٍ ثُمَّ أَنْتُمْ
شُرْكُونَ

“Say, Who delivers you from the horrors of the land and the sea when you call upon Him in humility and in open supplication (saying), “If He delivers us from this (hardship) we shall ever be grateful (to Him)? Say, It is Allāh Who delivers you from these (horrors) and from every calamity, still you associate partners (with Him).” (6:63–64)

To beseech help from the All-Mighty, the Source of all Grace, at the commencement of every task and for the attainment of every striven-for goal, subservience is demanded from you by your Lord. Allāh commands, “Call on Me” وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمْ ادْعُونِي. Those who respond to this Command commence all actions by asking for His assistance and begin the task with His Name. He, undoubtedly, extends to them His assistance, and support begins to flow in their favour. Those who beseech help from their Master and Creator get His help. Those who beg for knowledge and power from His Knowledge and Power get knowledge and power. Moreover, those who beg for security get His security.

The Holy Prophet (pbuh) has said, “Nothing is more honourable unto Allâh than formal Prayer” (Abû Hurairah in *Jam‘i-Tirmidhî*). The ritual Prayer (*al-Salât*) is the right way of those who are careful of their obligations and are humble. It is the first right step on the way to practicing *tauhîd* (تَوْحِيد - absolute monotheism). The more you tread on this path, the more vivid the perception of *tauhîd* becomes while you are getting ever closer to Allâh. Denial of the institution of Prayer is, in fact, denial of the Ever Merciful and of His Mercy. People who deny the institution of Prayer are unaware of the marvelous effects that result from it. Their denial is the denial of a blind person about the presence of light. The problem is not the lack of light but the lack of the faculty that should perceive it.

You should not hesitate to supplicate even if you think you are unworthy. Allâh even accepted the supplication of the most unworthy of all creatures, Iblîs, who said, “*My Lord, then grant me respite till the day when these (human beings) shall be raised (to spiritual life)*” (15:36), and Allâh said, “*You are indeed of those already granted respite.*” (15:37).

The Holy Qur’ân has mentioned certain times for the acceptance of supplications. You read for example:

وَالْفَجْرِ وَلَيَالٍ عَشْرٍ وَالسَّفَّعِ وَالْوَثْرِ وَالْأَلْيَلِ إِذَا يَسْرِ هُنْ فِي ذَلِكَ قَسْمٌ لَذِي حِجْرٍ

“I call to witness (all the times and places especially important for the acceptance of prayers including) the dawn (of the twentieth of Ramadân), and the (last) ten Nights (of Ramadân), and (the Prayers which consist of) the even and odd (number of Raka‘ts performed during these nights). And the Night [Lailat al-Qadr, the Blessed Night], when it moves on (to its close). In it there is surely a strong evidence for one who has sense and understanding.” (89:1–5)

Access to Divine Precincts is without an Intermediary

وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمْ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ

“And your Lord says, *Call on Me, I will answer you*” (40:60).

Thus, the call for help must be addressed to the Lord, the Nourisher and the Sustainer directly, without any intermediary.

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكُ عِبَادِي عَنِّي قَرِيبٌ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ
فَلَيَسْتَحِبُّوا لِي وَلَيُؤْمِنُوا بِي

“And when My servants ask you concerning Me (tell them), I am nearby indeed, I (and no one else) answer the prayer of the supplicant when he prays to Me, so they should respond to My call, and believe in Me...” (2:186).

Allâh’s words “أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ” “I (and no one else) answer the call of the supplicant” (2:186), and the words “ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ” “Call on Me, I will answer you” (40:60), clearly tell you that the call for help must be addressed to Allâh and that He alone is to be sought, without any intermediary, that only He can answer your prayer. This is the condition embedded in His Words “أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ” “I will answer your,” and “أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ” “I answer the call of the supplicant when he calls Me.” “I” is none but Him, not Christ, not a Prophet, not a Saint. The word “I” establishes the truth that there is no intermediary between you and the Exalted Allâh. You are told by the All-Mighty not to call on those who do not hear, because they are dead. Only Allâh is Ever Living and Ever Listening:

إِن تَدْعُوهُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُوا دُعَاءَكُمْ وَلَوْ سَمِعُوا مَا اسْتَجَابُوا لَكُمْ وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ
يَكْفُرُونَ بِشِرْكِكُمْ وَلَا يُبَتَّلُوكُمْ مِثْلُ خَيْرٍ

“If you pray to them they do not hear your call; and even if they could hear it at all they could make you no response (so as to be of any use to you)” (35:14)

The divine precincts are accessible to everyone without an intermediary, just as numberless bounties of Allâh that have been created for you can be available to you without any intermediary. Only your personal efforts bring you near to Him. Your formal Prayers enlighten you to His ways and carry you to the divine precincts. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) said, “Anyone who does not beg at Allâh’s court, Allâh turns away from him” (narrated by ‘Umar al-Fârûq^(rz) in *Tirmidhî*).

The Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), Jesus, Buddha, Rama, Krishna, and similar others—each is a teacher, a guide, and an exemplar, but none is an intermediary. Belief in an intermediary weakens your sense of responsibility and destroys your self-reliance. The chief object of your belief in One God is to create in you a steadfastness of character and an independence of judgment, thereby encouraging your freedom of action. Why should anyone else do the job for you? Could belief in an intermediary be helpful in cultivating high morals?

Belief in an intermediary is, in fact, a remnant of paganism. This primitive belief has crept into almost all branches of theism, including various sects of modern Islam. No religion of divine origin has remained free from it in its subsequent stages. Not only has the founder of each of these accepted religions been corrupted into an intermediary, but also have many men of piety after him. Often, the self-proclaimed righteous of religious sects have been adopted as intermediaries. Christ is not the only intermediary in Christianity, for example, but many after him—Mary, Peter, Paul, the popes, the cardinals, and even ordinary have taken that role. The situation is no different in Islam, where self-proclaimed religious heads (so-called *khlifas*) and *pîrs* (caretakers of graves and shrines), asserting themselves to be pious and religious, offer to pray for others in

exchange for what they call “charity.” Some do not even hesitate to proclaim themselves intermediaries between man and God. Some even make these claims on TV shows, asking for money and other worldly benefits, directly or indirectly for the “service of their prayer.” With regards to such self-proclaimed pious, the Holy Qur’ân states:

الَّمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ يُزَكُونَ أَنفُسَهُمْ ۝ بَلِ اللَّهُ يُزَكِّي مَن يَشَاءُ وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ
فَتَبَّأْلًا انْظُرْ كَيْفَ يَقْتَرُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ ۝ وَكَفَىٰ بِهِ إِثْمًا مُّبِينًا

“Have you not considered those who assert themselves to be pure? Nay, only Allâh purifies whom He will; and they shall not be treated unjustly, not even a whit. Behold! How they forge lies against Allâh, and sufficient is that as a very flagrant sin (to prove their sinfulness)” (4:49–50)

Moreover, the dead—whether that dead person is Jesus, Buddha, or someone else, no matter how exalted that person may be in Gods court—cannot accept or respond to supplications. Allâh says, “And you cannot make the dead hear, nor can you make the deaf hear the call” (30:52). The Holy Qur’ân altogether dismisses such claims of any power or influence of these falsely deified people:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ عِبَادٌ أَمْثَالُكُمْ ۝ فَادْعُوهُمْ فَلَا يَسْتَجِيبُوْا لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ اللَّهُمَّ أَرْجُلٌ يَمْشُونَ بِهَا ۝ أُمُّ لَهُمْ أَيْدٍ يَبْطِشُونَ بِهَا ۝ أُمُّ لَهُمْ أَعْيُنٌ يُبَصِّرُونَ بِهَا ۝ أُمُّ لَهُمْ آذَانٌ يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا ۝

“Verily, those whom you call on (in prayer) beside Allâh are (merely helpless maids or) servants like yourselves. (If it is not so then) call on them, they should then make a response to you if you are right. Have these (false gods) feet with which they walk, or have they hands with which they hold, or have they eyes with which they see, or have they ears with which they hear?” (7:194–195)

وَمَنْ أَضَلُّ مِمَّنْ يَدْعُو مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَنْ لَا يَسْتَجِيبُ لَهُ إِلَيَّ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَهُمْ عَنْ دُعَائِهِمْ غَافِلُونَ

“And who is more misguided than the person who instead of (praying to) Allâh prays to those who will not answer him till the Day of Resurrection (because they are dead) and these (deities they worship) are even unaware of their prayers (to them)” (46:5).

The most important aspect of the Exalted Being of Allâh, as given in the Holy Qur’ân, is that He hears the supplications and sees the submissions of His servants and accepts them (see 2:186). A clear assertion is found in the Word *ujîbū* أَجِيبُ “I answer”; that is, He alone and no one else accepts your supplications. Verse 2:186 also establishes once again that there cannot be an intermediary between you and the Exalted Being of Allâh.

The absolute Dispenser has bestowed on all people an equal share of natural faculties. Just as the external features—nose, eyes, face, hands, legs—have been bestowed equally on all communities, so have all people been endowed with internal spiritual faculties. When you develop an urge to gain proximity to Allâh, you are granted this opportunity. “*I am nearby indeed*” He says (2:186), and since you are granted the capability of offering sincere supplications, such supplications are accepted by Allâh. “*I answer the call of the suppliant*” (2:186), for He is close to His servant when he prostrates, and He bestows His love and Mercy on anyone who comes closer to Him and vouchsafes His knowledge and power to him.

The only condition for your supplications being accepted is that you should be completely purged of all kinds of polytheism, you should address your supplications only to Allâh, and to Him you should explain your needs. No other deity, living or dead, no self-made spiritual leader, no guardian of shrines, nor any Pope, cardinal, or

rabbi is of any significance to function as an intermediary between you and your God:

فَتَعَالَى اللَّهُ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ أَيُشْرِكُونَ مَا لَا يَخْلُقُ شَيْئًا وَهُمْ يُخْلَقُونَ وَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ لَهُمْ نَصْرًا وَلَا أَنفُسَهُمْ يَتَصْرُونَ وَإِنْ تَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَى الْهُدَىٰ لَا يَتَبَعُوكُمْ ۝ سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْكُمْ أَذْعُونُهُمْ أَمْ أَنْتُمْ صَانِعُونَ

“Allâh is Highly Exalted far above the things they associate (with Him). Do they associate (with Him as partners) those who create nothing but are themselves created? And they (the associated gods) will have no power to give them (who associate partners with Allâh) any help, nor can they help themselves. And if you (O Polytheists!) invite these (associated gods) for (your) guidance, they will not respond to you. It makes no difference to you whether you call them or you remain silent” (7:190–193).

When the shutters of a window are opened, the light enters through it. Likewise, when you turn towards Allâh, and there is no veil of an intermediary between you and Allâh, a blaze of heavenly Light descends on you and illumines your soul. Why should you then, in superstition, believe and set up self-invented gods in your mind? Why should you waste your precious time in adoring or prostrating before statues, pictures, or shrines? They are nothing but lifeless objects and false deities (4:117).



RITUAL PRAYERS OF MUSLIMS

Al-Salât

وَأَنْ أَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَإِنَّهُ عَلَىٰ مِنْهُمْ لَذِكْرٌ

“Observe Prayer [*al-Salât*] and take Him as a shield” (6:72).

Religion is of two types, religion of Allâh which He has taught to His Messengers, and the religion of His created being. The religion with Allâh is Islam (3:19). The religion which comes from Allâh is your dispensation to which you should submit yourself. It is Allâh Who determines its actions. The formal or ritual Prayer (- *al-Salât*) is one of His Command for a Muslim, which must be obeyed. The Command of formal Prayer is second in rank after *shahâda*, the declaration of the unity of Allâh and the prophethood of Muhammad (pbuh). Allâh says He has “*prescribed certain rites of sacrifice (and worship) for every people*” (22:34). The rites of the Muslims are, besides fasting and *Hajj* (Pilgrimage to Makkah; 2:196), their ritual Prayers, exemplified by the Holy Prophet (pbuh). These are to be performed five times a day at specified times. Their time are prescribed in the Qur’ân (2:238; 4:103; 11:114; 17:78; 30:17).

The recitation of *al-Fâtihah*, the opening seven verses of the Holy Qur’ân (1:1–7), is the central element of each formal Prayer. The words and the movements of this Prayer (*al-Salât*) have been prescribed (22:26) and transmitted in all their details by the All-Mighty through the Holy Prophet (pbuh). When you reflect upon the Words of *al-Fâtihah*, it becomes clear that this act of worship attracts Allâh’s *Rahîmîyyat* (His special Mercifulness) that shows you the venue to His servanthood (‘*abûdîyyat*; 1:5), and demands that you

strive hard as you tread on this path in order to attain His nearness and attention (29:69). The Holy Prophet (pbuh), while referring to the seven verses of *al-Fâtihah*, said, “Allâh says, I have divided the Prayer (*al-Salât*) equally between Me and My servant. Half for Me and half for My servant, who may get from Me what he asks.” Referring to *al-Fâtihah*, Allâh said, “When My servant says, *With the Name of Allâh, the Most Gracious, the Ever Merciful* (1:1), My servant is remembering Me. When My servant says, *All type of perfect and true praise belongs to Allâh alone, the Lord of the worlds* (1:2), My servant is praising Me. When My servant says, *The Most Gracious, the Ever Merciful* (1:3), My servant is glorifying Me. When My servant says, *Master of the Day of Requital* (1:4), My servant has yielded himself to My Judgment.” This is the first half of *al-Fâtihah*, which relates to Allâh and belongs to Him. Allâh said, “Then the servant says, (*Lord!*) You alone do we worship, and You alone do we implore for help (1:5). This is shared between Me and My servant. When My servant says, *Lead us to the exact right path till we reach the goal, The path of those on whom You have bestowed (Your) blessings, those who have not incurred (Your) displeasure, and those who have not gone astray* (1:6–7), these words are reserved for My servants, who may have whatever they ask” (transmitted by Abû Muslim). Thus, the verses 6–7 of *al-Fâtihah* are for the servant of Allâh alone as the first four verses were for Allâh alone. Based on the foregoing, then, you may realize the necessity of reciting the verses of *al-Fâtihah* in all ritual Prayers. Allâh says, “*Different however is the case of those devoted to the Prayers, those persons who remain constant and steadfast in their Prayers*” (70:22–23). Here you should ponder over verses 70:22–35 to understand what the differences are and what status shall be granted as a reward of these differences.

The rituals of formal Prayer (*al-Salât*) are both internal and external by virtue of the words and actions. When performed properly and regularly, “*al-Salât restrains (its observer) from indecency and abominable things and loathsome deeds and from all that runs*

counter to reason" (29:45). Its gesticulations are the outward manifestation of your inner yearnings and longing for your Master. This does not mean, however, that if these postures were not enacted, Allâh would not know of your inner yearnings. He knows you better than you know yourself.

هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِكُمْ إِذَا نَسَأَكُمْ مِّنَ الْأَرْضِ وَإِذَا أَنْتُمْ أَجْنَةٌ فِي بُطُونِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ ۖ فَلَا
تُزَكُّوا أَنفُسَكُمْ ۖ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنِ اتَّقَىٰ

"He knows you full well (since) when He created you from the earth and when you were embryos in the wombs of your mothers. So make no pretensions to the purity of your souls. It is He Who knows best who (truly and fully) guards against evil" (53:32).

Al-Salât is an outward expression of the cords that are connected to your inner self. Therefore, it is just not possible that while there is a yearning and passion in the depths of your heart, there would be no corresponding outward manifestation of these inner conditions. *Al-Salât* is also the Prayer of your spirit (*nafs*). Your human spirit (*nafs*) also has a need to bow and prostrate before its Master. Therefore, bowing and prostration of the spirit must be manifested in external form, because there is a connection between substance and form of the body and the soul. If the two do not correspond, then there is little benefit to the Prayer.

Allâh says, "فَإِنَّمَا تُولُّوا قَبْطَمْ وَجْهَ اللَّهِ" so whatsoever way you may turn (you will find) there is Allâh's attention (2:115). "He is with you wherever you may be," وَهُوَ مَعْنَمْ أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ (57:4), signifying that you can perform the acts of worship anyplace, even in the houses of worship of unbelievers, provided that you are attending to Allâh alone and not to any other deity, and that the place of worship is clean for your prostrations. It matters not if you pray in a synagogue, a church, or a temple, because it is you who are speaking to your Exalted Creator,

and you are following His Divine Law, not following the law of whoever may be the caretaker of the building you worship in.

Some might balk with offering Prayer on the dust of the earth. Allâh made the earth submissive to you, you walk on it, and He commands you to place on that very earth the noblest part you have—that is, your face. The face of the earth and the face of the servant are joined in prostration. The earth is neither inferior, nor is the one who has placed his face on the earth superior, anymore. In this state of abasement and self-negation, you are nearer to Allâh than you are in any other state.

The Command, “*So stand you upright, as you have been commanded*” فَاسْتَقِمْ كَمَا أَمْرَتَ; 11:112), refers to the standing position in the formal Prayer (*iqâma*). Allâh has prescribed the state of standing before Him for Divine Conversation with Him, because of His Attribute of *al-Qayyûm* (the Self-Existing, whose Essence Suffices for His Self-Existence). Your access to this Attribute is in proportion to your detachment from everything that is not Allâh.

While standing before Him (*iqâma* اقْلَامًا), you utter only what your Lord has taught you to say - the Words of *al-Fâtihah*. Your standing (*iqâma*) soon transitions into bowing (*rakû'* رُكُوعٌ). Once again, the rising after the *rakû'* is yet another *iqâma*. This *iqâma* is the position to be taken before the ultimate humility, the prostration. You can prostrate into humility only from an otherwise firm *iqâma* (standing position) before. When humility gushes forth from a humbled self while prostrated, then that is not only basic humility but truly a melted ego before none but the All-Mighty. Jalâl al-Dîn Rûmî said, “The purpose of ritual Prayer is not that you should bow and prostrate yourself all the day. Its purpose is that you should develop a prayerful attitude, maintaining the spiritual state obtained in Prayer at all times, whether asleep, or awake, at work or rest, you should always remember Allâh, you should be one of those who are constantly at

their Prayers” (Rûmî in *Fîhi ma Fîhi*). The Holy Prophet (pbuh) said, “There is no Prayer without the presence of heart.”

Allâh addresses human beings in their totality, both in their outer and in their inner selves. Therefore, your outward cleanliness when you stand for Prayers is emphasized (4:43; 5:6). The inner spiritual purification can be achieved either through the source of life, which is water, or through an element of life, which is dust (5:6). Every rule of the Divine Law, such as washing before Prayers, has a transformative effect on the soul, and that includes every aspect of ablution, such as the washing of your hands, face, and feet and the rinsing of your mouth. Washing your hands inwardly means abandoning that which is required to be abandoned. It is to forgo what your hands possess of worldly things from which they are permitted to abstain. The inner meaning of washing your face corresponds to the washing of your heart for divine reception. Washing your feet would correspond to moving your feet to leave for such obligatory acts as going to Prayers and your not moving among people with pride but with moderate gait. Rinsing your mouth corresponds to cleansing the utterances of your tongue. Thus, the outward cleansing has a literal meaning for your body but a figurative and causative meaning of inward hygiene for your soul. You move from the outer sensory act to the inner spiritual act, and not vice versa.

Formal Prayer (*al-Salât*) has been termed a centerpiece of all worship, and *du’â* (supplication, or call for help) is the keystone of *al-Salât*. When you bow and prostrate yourself before Allâh with perfect conviction, immersed in deep love, full of hope, in extreme devotion, with a full resolve of loyalty, eliminating all types of heedlessness, shunning vanity, and advancing towards Him fully conscious, your *Salât* not only come to fruition, but you come close to Allâh. *Salât* prayer that is taught to Muslims, in its perfect form with all its gesticulation of bowing and prostrating, is a euphoric, ecstatic state. Through *Salât* prayer you fathom the existence of Allâh, and you

recognize with perfect certitude that He is here and He is Omnipresent.

The Morning Prayer (*al-Fajr*) is characterized by “the regular recital of the Qur’ân at dawn,” because the Holy Prophet (pbuh), under divine inspiration, used to lengthen his recitation then. Such recitation of the Holy Qur’ân is called *mashhûdân* (مشهوداً), meaning that it is “acceptable or witnessed by Allâh,” corresponding to the concentration of mind and thought at this time. Allâh says:

أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِذُلْكِ الشَّمْسِ إِلَى غَسَقِ اللَّيْلِ وَقُرْآنَ الْفَجْرِ ۖ إِنَّ قُرْآنَ الْفَجْرِ
كَانَ مَشْهُودًا

“Observe Prayer at the declining and paling of the sun, on to the complete darkness (in diverse hours) of the night, and recite the Qur’ân at dawn. Verily, the regular recital (of the Qur’ân) at dawn is (especially) acceptable (to God) and witnessed (by the angels)” (17:78).

Thus, the Morning Prayer becomes a means of attaining deeper insight into the realm of spiritual truths and of achieving communion with all that is holy. *Imâm Ibn al-Fadzal Muhammad Râzî* said that the “witness” (*mashhûd*, مشهود) to which the Holy Qur’ân refers here is the spark of God that illuminates the human soul (*rûh*). It heightens its inner perception at the time when the darkness and stillness of night begins to give way to life, just as the light of the day gives light to the darkness and removes it.

Then there is a Supererogatory (*tahajjûd* تهجد) Prayer, which you do after getting up from sleep (17:79). This is the best time for Divine Discourse (17:79; 32:16; 73:2). Such are the Prayers of lovers of Allâh, and of those who possess divine secrets and hidden knowledge (- *sîr’ al-awhîyat* سر الوهیات). As Hâfiż put it so eloquently: “The moon starts singing when everyone is asleep and the planets throw a bright robe around their shoulders, and whirl up close to her side. Once I

asked the moon, Why do you and your sweet friends not perform like that to a larger crowd? The whole sky chorus responded, The admission price to hear the lofty minstrels speech of Love is affordable only to those who have not exhausted themselves dividing God all day and now need rest.” Someone said: “Faith is like the bird that feels the light and sings when the dawn is still dark”. There are moments in this Prayer and worship where there is ascension of the human soul to experience the divine signs in ‘Ālam-i-mithāl; therein are the moments when the Exalted One descends from His Throne (20:5; 23:86) to the nearest heaven to greet those who are yearning for Him. This is the time when your human soul draws near to its Creator.

Adhān آذان is the call to the formal five daily Prayers and the Friday Prayer (62:9). This call is the announcement of the arrival of the time of ritual Prayer. It is also a notification of Divine Self-Disclosure, so that the human soul may have an opportunity to purify itself and prepare itself to come close to its Lord. *Iqāma* (standing up before the beginning of the Prayer) is the invitation for Divine Conversation. In *iqāma* you stand upright with folded hands, just as you will stand before your Lord on the Day of Judgment. When you are submerged in this state of worship, you experience a previously unknown pleasure. It is in this state that you speak out:

قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

“Surely, my Prayer and my sacrifice and my living and my dying are all for the sake of Allāh, the Lord of the worlds” (6:162).

Objections against the institution of Prayer

There are many who doubt the effect of ritual or formal Prayer. From their doubtful minds come many objections against the institution of Prayer; essentially, they say that these Prayers are said in vain, that they have no effect. Evidently, such sceptics assert that no sooner do

you give Him a command than He obligingly must carry it out. However, you must never forget that Allâh is your Master, not your servant, not an underling who must give you whatever you ask of Him. The condition imposed by Allâh is that your supplications should be presented before Him with great intensity and with sincerity in a way, which “pleases” Him:

بَلْ إِيَّاهُ تَدْعُونَ فَيَكْسِفُ مَا تَدْعُونَ إِلَيْهِ إِن شَاءَ وَتَنْسَوْنَ مَا تُشْرِكُونَ

“Nay, but you will call upon Him alone (and pray to Him), then He will, if He please, relieve (you) of that distress for (the removal of) which you called upon Him” (6:41)

Unfortunately, Prayers and supplications are often not submitted with the required earnest and requisite conditions. They may be on the lips, but the heart is full of neglect, laziness, or pride, and the mind is busy with mundane issues. Such cannot be called true Prayer; rather it is a mere show of Prayer. Allâh admonishes such: *“So woe to those who Pray, but are unmindful of their Prayer (and ignore the spirit and aim of it)”* (107:4–5). Such is the practice of many, including the practice of many self-declared spiritual leaders. You have to be aware of such practices and such claimants. Allâh leads only those to the path of success who strive in His way with all their heart, attention, and vigor.

Muslims are enjoined to pray five times a day, and the Holy Prophet (pbuh) has taught us supplications for many occasions of life. Yet, for your personal urgent needs, you need to engage in special *Salât* Prayers. Repetition of memorized words of a certain Prayer in an indolent, heedless, and careless manner, without proper conviction and attention, cannot be truly termed as Prayer. Nothing can be achieved without a strenuous striving. For the *Salât* Prayer to reach its proper destination at the Exalted Threshold, and for you to become the recipient of His gracious bounties, your hard work and focused attention is required. To engage in *Salât* Prayer properly is like going into a deathlike state as you read:

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهُوا فِينَا لَهُمْ يَنْهَا سُبُّلًا

“And those who strive hard in Our cause We will certainly guide them in the ways that lead to Us” (29:69)

Would it be fair for someone who is full of vanity and pride, who prays for show, who is sunk in laziness, sloth, neglect, and carelessness, whose thoughts are occupied with worldly matters, to be considered as deserving of his Lords bounties as one who strives in His ways, who leaves his bed in the wee hours of the night, and who engages in *dhikr* ذِكْر (devotions aiming to Divine Remembrance and Divine Discourse) with all his heart, with all his might, and with his utmost efforts only for seeking Allâh’s pleasure, and whose Prayers and his sacrifices, his living and his dying are all for the sake of Allâh, the Lord of the worlds? (cf. 6:162).

Another objection raised against the institution of Prayer is that there are many who never pray. They argue that there are atheists, who never turn to God for the fulfilment of their needs and alleviation of their suffering, and there are others who call upon already-dead people for help. There are still others who do not believe in the doctrine of the acceptance of Prayer and are wholly dependent on worldly plans and stratagems for the solution to their difficulties. Yet, the sceptics say, the problems of such people are also solved. Therefore, a natural question arises: What is the difference between those who never pray (or who pray to dead people), and those who call upon Allâh for help? The answer to this question is in the verse with which a Muslim starts his Prayer, namely: “With the name of Allâh (Who is) *al-Rahmân* and (Who is) *al-Rahîm*.” In other words, Allâh’s Mercy manifests itself in two ways: the way of *Rahmân* and the way of *Rahîm*. His Attribute of *Rahmânîyyat* necessitates that He bestow His bounties, His Mercy, and His kindness without your asking for them. His Attribute *Rahîmîyyat*, however, comes into play in response to your asking for something. Allâh’s Grace and kindness (*Rahmânîyyat*) is for

everyone, irrespective of his caste, creed, colour, or religion, in the same way that the warmth of His sun is the same for everyone. Those who do not pray get a share from the divine bounties of *Rahmânîyyat* that are for everyone, but remain deprived of His bounties that come from His Attribute of *Rahîmîyyat*, His special Mercifulness. When the Prayers of the sincere believer are accepted out of His special Mercifulness, and when the supplicant is informed from Allâh that the plans of his enemies against him shall fail, then any and all efforts on the part of his opponent will be in vain.

There are some, though they believe in the existence of God and concede that He grants blessings and bounties, hold the view that there is no necessity of supplicating and petitioning Allâh for the solution to their problems, because they are saying, in effect, “He is All-Knowing, All-Aware, Beneficent, and Merciful, and thus He is even more aware of our problems and our troubles. To pray to Him would be telling Him what He already knows.” In such people are hidden traits of vanity and haughtiness. Again, for the attainment of those bounties of Allâh that are related to His Attribute *Rahmânîyyat*, there is no need for Prayers and supplications, because everyone is granted them without asking. Such have no knowledge of the sweetness and the beauty of the of those bounties that come from His Attribute of *Rahîmîyyat* that is reserved for those who ask and beg.

Those who negate the efficacy of formal Prayer are denying Allâh’s Powers over everything. They consider that all events are happening at “random,” or by “nature.” They apparently forget that Allâh has invested Prayer with powerful effects, more effective than the dousing effect of water on fire. They are mistaken who imagine that Prayer has nothing to do with the fulfilment of their needs, or that the institution of Prayer is an unfounded notion coming from a superstitious mind, or that it is a dogma. On the contrary, it is a tried-and-true prescription.

Some people believe that Prayer is nothing but an act of worship, that it would perhaps earn a reward in the hereafter. The notion those

rituals Prayers are only for the hereafter, that they have no effect in the present world, is incomplete and inconsistent. If Prayers were ineffective in this world, what logical argument would you have for it being effective in the hereafter? It should be noted here that Allâh has given you in the Holy Qur'ân historical examples of people whose Prayers were granted. Miracles were manifested at their hands. Allâh not only accepted their Prayers but also spoke to them and revealed the future to them. Who else but He can answer the call of the afflicted person and remove his distress? (27:62) Would it be equally befitting that a careless person, who never prays, should benefit from His Grace and His Mercy to the same extent as another who seeks His pleasure and His attention and His favours with all his heart, with great striving and sincerity, standing before Him in the greater part of the night, immersed in awe? (73:20).

Sometimes it happens that Allâh in His Perfect Wisdom has accepted the Prayer of the supplicant in a manner that is appropriate for the supplicant, yet that person out of ignorance has not recognized the subtle bounties of the Lord, for he does not have that deep perception of the circumstances of the matter, nor is he aware of the fine spiritual realities. He says:

وَعَسَىٰ أَن تَكُرْ هُوَا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ ۝ وَعَسَىٰ أَن تُحِبُّوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ شَرٌّ
لَكُمْ ۝ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

“But it may be that a thing is hard upon you though it is (really) good for you, and it may be that you love a thing while it is bad for you. Allâh knows (all things) while you do not know” (2:216)

If a thing asked for would be harmful to you, Allâh's non-acceptance of such a Prayer is in fact tantamount to His acceptance of it. Consider, for example, how a child who, in ignorance, wants to catch hold of a flame of fire because he is attracted by the flames brilliance. In spite of his cries, would a prudent mother allow him to do so?

Many of your desires may lead to pitfalls, but Allâh can save you by His refusals; His great Mercy can protect you from the perils of your weak or misguided desires and can constantly provide you with great unasked-for gifts.

Notion of Predestination

Supplication and the doctrine of ritual Prayers is brought into question by those who believe that whatever is going to happen is predetermined and must happen, and those things that are not going to happen are predestined not to happen, a conclusion that renders moot the issue of Prayer or supplication. The answer to this is that laws of nature govern all affairs in this universe, and you, too, despite your volition, are deriving great benefits from these predestined laws. Your safety in the air and water and your means of comfort all depend on the consistency of these predestined laws. Hence, predestination is dominant and covers every affair, yet predestination does not mean nullifying all knowledge or discrediting all means. If you, using your free will, put your hand into fire, would it be in order for an onlooker to say that if it is decreed that your hand would remain unharmed, it will remain unharmed?

Anyone who thinks that an objective can be achieved without the use of means, spiritual or physical, is, in fact, negating the Wisdom of Allâh and denying His measures, His Laws, His Decrees, and His *taqdir* تقدیر. Allâh, the High, has tied His divine measures and decrees to certain causative agents, and these causative agents share intricate links with one another. Yet, He has also created means and sources of averting the consequences of these causes. In the case of a lethal illness, the outcome can be different, either by relying only on predestination and not seeking treatment or by going to a physician in order to cure the disease. Relying on predestination (*taqdir, kismet*) makes the science of medicine useless. In this example, proponents of

predestination contradict themselves when they refuse the predestined effect of a cure by not seeking it.

Hence, in spite of your faith in predestination, if you rely on good medicine and you find that medicines are not without effect, then why should you deny the effects of Prayer? To concede that a certain antibiotic will kill bacterial infections if used but not to accept that passionate and humble supplications to Allâh, full of high resolve, can be effective would be an unfair discrimination. In simple words, *taqdir* (predestination) is Allâh's Law, His Intention, His Knowledge, and His Decree that if you are thirsty and you drink water, your thirst will be quenched, that if you are hungry and you eat food, your hunger will be satisfied, and that if you are in difficulty and you pray, your sufferings will be alleviated. It has always been Allâh's Law that humble and tearful supplications made to Him are bound to provoke a response from Allâh's Mercifulness. The doctrine of prayer is brought into question by those who believe that whatever is going to happen is predetermined and must happen, and that things that are not going to happen are predestined not to happen, a conclusion that renders moot the issue of prayer. The answer to this is that laws of nature govern all affairs in this universe, and we all, despite our volition, are deriving great benefits from these predestined laws. Our safety in the air and water and our means of comfort all depend on the consistency of these predestined laws. Predestination is dominant and covers every affair, yet predestination does not mean nullifying all knowledge or discrediting all means. If out of your free will, you put your hand into fire, would it be in order for an onlooker to say that if it is decreed that your hand would remain unharmed, it will remain unharmed?

Anyone who thinks that an objective can be achieved without the use of means, spiritual or physical, negates the Wisdom of Allâh and denies His measures, His Laws, His Decrees, and His *taqdir*. Allâh, the High, has tied His divine measures and decrees to certain causative agents, and these causative agents share intricate links with

one another. Yet, He has also created means and sources of averting the consequences of these causes. Even in the case of a lethal illness, the outcome can differ. Someone might either rely solely on predestination and not seek treatment or visit a physician in order to cure the disease. Relying on predestination (*taqdir*, *kismet*) would make the field of medicine useless, which is an absurd proposition. In this example, proponents of predestination contradict themselves when they refuse the predestined effect of a cure by not seeking it.

If despite someone's belief in predestination he takes medicine when in bad health, finding that they can be helpful, then such a person recognizes through his behaviour that his actions do have effects. Then why would that same person deny the effects of prayers claiming the outcome is determined anyway on grounds of predestination? To concede that a certain antibiotic will kill bacterial infections if used but not to accept that passionate and humble supplications to Allâh, full of high resolve, can be effective would be an unfair discrimination. In simple words, *taqdir* (predestination) is Allâh's Law, His Intention, His Knowledge, and His Decree that if you are thirsty and you drink water, your thirst will be quenched, that if you are hungry and you eat food, your hunger will be satisfied, and that if you are in difficulty and you pray, your sufferings will be alleviated. It has always been Allâh's Law that humble and tearful supplications made to Him are bound to provoke a response from Allâh's Mercifulness.

There are two types of predestination: One type is predestination that cannot be averted, since it is a part of Divine Law—death, for example. The other is the predestination that can be averted with the help of Prayer and Divine Will—for example, access to water, food, and medicinal cures, as previously cited. There is a saying of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) concerning Prayer and destiny: "The Prayer can avert the Hand of Destiny." Both words, *taqdir* (predestination) and *qudrat* (absolute Divine Power), have the same root, *qadara* قادر, which means

“to decree” or “to decide.” Allâh is *al-Qâdîr*, the All-Determiner, Who made and determined everything according to His measure. He says: فَقَرَّبْنَا فِيْعَمُ الْقَادِرُوْنَ “*Thus did We determine, and how good We are at determining!*” (77:23). This does not mean that after Allâh had made this universe from His *qudrat* His Power and Determination, and after He had laid down the laws under which the universe must operate (*taqdir*), He became bereft of all authority and fell into a slumber and left every affair to His laws. Allâh’s Sovereignty and His full control continue to be exercised over His creation at every moment. Hence, to deny the effect of Prayer is to deny His control over His own laws. Prayer, as an attracting and intervening force, is a part of His Plan (*taqdir*), and like other laws, it can become a means of achieving your objectives. Everything responds instantly to His Call, and controlling the strings of all laws lies in His Hands.

وَلِلّٰهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا ۝ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ ۝ وَاللّٰهُ عَلٰى كُلِّ
شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

“*To Allâh belongs the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth and all that lies between the two. He creates what He will, for He is the Possessor of full power to do all that He will.*” (5:17).



INVOCATION AND “REMEMBRANCE” OF GOD

Dhikr-i-Ulûhiyat

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ ذِكْرًا كَثِيرًا

“*O Believers! Remember Allâh with much remembrance*” (33:41)

Thus, the Command of *dhikr* ذِكْر is for the believers. *Dhikr*, derived from *dhakara* ذِكْر, literally means to remember and mention someone. If you are in love with someone, you remember and mention that person again and again. He says:

فَلَذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَذْكُرِكُمْ أَوْ أَشَدَّ ذِكْرًا

“...remember Allâh with praises as your lauding of your parents or yet more earnest devout lauding” (2:200)

To remember someone is an expression of love similar to the love you have for your parents, or even stronger and more earnest. Ibn Manzûr, in his monumental *Lisân al-'Arab*, writes that *dhikr*, in religious terminology, is thankfulness and obedience; *dhikr* is the glorification of the Lord and is the invocation of Him. *Dhikr* is also reciting and pondering over the verses of the Holy Qur'ân (3:58; 12:104; 15:9; 16:44; 36:69) and *dhikr* is enjoining good, and rejecting evil”.

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ تَزَكَّى وَذَكَرَ اسْمَ رَبِّهِ فَصَلَّى

Verily, that person who purifies himself truly will succeed (both in this life and in the Hereafter), And remembers and extols the name of his Lord and offers Prayers (87:14)

Thus, *dhikr* is part of divine worship. *Dhikr* of Allâh is to remember and reflect over Allâh’s Names and invoke His favours and blessings, and to glorify and pay homage to Him (7:206). *Dhikr* of Allâh is to bring to our consciousness His Attributes that subsist in His Eternal Light; remembering and reflecting over them in *our mind with humility and awe* (7:205). It is the repeated confession that Allâh is our true Lord, who is *Rabb al-‘Âlamîn* - رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ - the Creator, Sustainer and Evolver of all the worlds of matter and spirits. He is *Al-Rahmân*; الرَّحْمَنُ; all the mainstay of life proceeds from His *Rahmâniyyat* and all, good or bad, are benefiting from it according to their needs and capacities. He is *Al-Rahîm*; الرَّحِيمُ; the One Who causes good results to follow on good deeds, and would not nullify anyone’s work and labour, and He is *Mâlik-i-Yaum al-Din* - مَالِكٌ يَوْمَ الدِّينِ - Master of the Day of Judgment. He can forgive or give more than the due and show mercy wherever and in whatever manner He may like. He is *Mâlik*, مَالِكٌ, He has full authority to dispense reward or punishment as he may determine. There is no room for anyone to object or find fault with that what He decides and why He decides. He is not the judge who is under obligation to decide and announce his verdict under some law. He is free from all such obligations.

The remembrance of Allâh is not limited to the acts of ritual Prayer, as the verses 87:14-15 and 3:191–192 inform us:

الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَامًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَى جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَكَبَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بِاطْلَالًا سُبْحَانَكَ فَقَنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ
رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ مَنْ تُدْخِلِ النَّارَ فَقَدْ أَخْرَيْتَهُ

“These are the persons who remember Allâh standing, and sitting and (lying) on their sides and reflect upon the creation of the heavens and the earth (and say,) Our Lord! You have not created (all) this in vain. Glory be to You, save us from the punishment of the Fire. Our Lord! Whomsoever You cause to enter the Fire, You have truly disgraced him.” (3:191–192)

INVOCATION AND “REMEMBRANCE” OF GOD

Istighfâr (- desire to suppress and cover up ones weaknesses) and *Taubah* (repentance and turning to Allâh in all humility), are all form of remembrance. If you do not worship Him and reflect over His favours, if you do not glorify His Name and call on Him and prostrate before Him, Allâh will not attend to you, because “*Allâh is Independent of the worlds*” (3:97). If you want to know your place with Allâh, you must find Allâh’s place in your heart and on your tongue, in your remembrance. For certainly Allâh shall give precedence to His servant in this world and in the hereafter according to the precedence that the servant assigned to Allâh.

Dhikr is a means to rise to eminence (80:11-12). Therefore there is a repeated exhortation in the Holy Qur’ân to *dhikr* (ذَكْر) (7:205-206; 2:152; 87:15). Its practice underwent many elaborations beyond the divine worship associated with ritual Prayer in solitude. These elaborations included various body movements, music, meditations, breathing, and repetitions of few religious words. All such trappings are definitely not *dhikr* in a real sense, however. What is meant by *dhikr* is explained in the Holy Qur’ân in the following words:

وَادْكُرْ رَبّكَ فِي نَفْسِكَ تَضَرُّعًا وَخِيفَةً وَدُونَ الْجَهْرِ مِنَ القَوْلِ بِالْغُدُوِّ
وَالْأَصَالِ وَلَا تَكُنْ مِنَ الْغَافِلِينَ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ عِنْدَ رَبّكَ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنِ
عِبَادَتِهِ وَيُسَبِّحُونَهُ وَلَهُ يَسْجُدُونَ

“Keep on remembering your Lord in your mind with humility and awe and in a voice not loud, in the mornings and the evenings, and do not be of the heedless. Verily, those who are near to your Lord, (and feel His presence with them), do not wax too proud to worship Him but they glorify Him and prostrate themselves in obedience to Him” (7:205–206)

Thus, remembrance of Allâh must be with presence of mind, with no discrepancy between your words uttered and your inner state. It must be with humility and in a voice not loud (دون الجهر), in secrecy, and

there are no fixed times for it. It should be a part of worship accompanied with prostrations of ritual prayers. The *dhikr* of Allâh involves remembering, reflecting, and invoking divine favours and blessings, and glorifying and paying homage to Him (7:206).

وَاصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الدِّينِ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدَاءِ وَالْعَشَّيِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ ۖ
وَلَا تَعْدُ عَيْنَاكَ عَنْهُمْ تُرِيدُ زِينَةَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا ۖ وَلَا تُطِعْ مَنْ أَغْفَلَنَا قُلْبُهُ عَنْ
ذِكْرِنَا وَاتَّبِعْ هَوَاهُ وَكَانَ أَمْرُهُ فُرُطًا

“Keep yourself attached to those who call upon their Lord morning and evening, constantly seeking His pleasure, and do not let your eyes turn away from them to pursue the glamour of the present life and do not follow him whose heart We have declared unmindful of Our remembrance.” (18:28)

Remembrance (*dhikr*) of Allâh is to bring into your consciousness His Attributes, which subsist in His Eternal Light, remembering and reflecting over them in your “*mind with humility and awe*” (7:205). He promises to bestow on you His special favours (87:14-15).

فَادْكُرُونِي أَذْكُرْكُمْ وَاسْكُرُوا إِلِي وَلَا تَكُفُرُونِ

“So glorify Me and I will grant you eminence and be thankful to Me, and be not ungrateful to Me (for my favours to you)” (2:152)

Consider the rank and the sublimity of *dhikr*, and to the degree of dignity that it brings to the one who obeys His Command “*glorify Me!*”. What great honour is bestowed upon you when the Exalted and the Supreme Lord, says: “*I will grant you eminence*” *أَذْكُرْكُمْ*, and when He bestows His special favours on you for remembering Him, He reminds you to “*be not ungrateful*” *وَاسْكُرُوا إِلِي*.

Divine Remembrance (*dhikr*) has guided many to a state of holy life. It can be said that the Light of Allâh’s acceptance has been engendered in them, and that their faces reflect the Light of Divine

Glory (80:38–39). Such beaming and smiling faces have appeared in every age among the followers of the path prescribed by Him. Whosoever remembers and glorifies Allâh sits with Allâh and Allâh with him. Now, the one who in the presence of Him and are perceptive will be able to see his Companion with his inner eye. If he cannot see Him, then at least he is worshipping Him and he is in Divine Discourse with Him. And if he is worshipping Him, he should be able to see Him. He can also listen to Him, since he is in Divine Discourse with Him. Shiblî once said: “I Remember You, O Allâh! Not because I ever forgot You, but because Your name comes off my tongue. Without the ecstasy of Your remembrance, I nearly died of yearning. When the ecstasy showed me that You were near, my heart within me became restless. I witnessed that You exist in every place. I perceived something known near me without seeing it and my heart found its peace.” Thus, remembering Allâh is not to recall Him because you had forgotten Him, but it is an expression of adoration, a means to fly towards a secret sky and to make fall a hundred veils that had hidden Him. Ibn al-‘Arabî said: “For the sight, it is vision at the time of remembrance and contemplations. At the time of the discourse with Allâh, it is the hearing of the ear. Look at Him with the eye of union, and you shall find Him.” So listen carefully to what He might be saying in response to your acts of worship. It is said that no angel presents to Allâh the act of remembrance, because no angel has any awareness of it when Allâh’s servant is engaged in *dhikr*. It is a secret between the servant and Allâh, the Glorious.

You will one day stand before your Lord, waiting for His Judgment. Then, on that Day, the forgetful souls shall finally remember: “*But of what (avail) will their abomination be to them (and how will they be able to repent) when it actually comes upon them (all of a sudden)*” (فَلَنَّى لَهُمْ إِذَا جَاءُنَّهُمْ ذُكْرًا هُمْ (47:18), says Allâh. “Time is passing, and abundant water from the river of His Love is flowing away. The thirsty and the forgetful should therefore dip their empty jug into the vast and sweet ocean of His love. When the jug becomes heavy, they

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shall know with certainty that some water has gone into the jug that will save them” (Rumî), and finally and above all

أَلَا يَذْكُرُ اللَّهُ تَطْمِئْنَ الْقُلُوبُ

“It is in the remembrance of Allâh alone that the hearts really find peace” (13:28)



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Tawakkul

وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ

“In Allâh should the believers put their trust” (14:11).

To put ones trust in Allâh is a Divine Command for the believers. Trust (*tawakkul*) in Allâh pertains to belief (*imân*), and belief demands confession (*tasdîq*) and certitude (*yaqîn*) in the following: “*There is no other, cannot be and will never be one worthy of worship but Allâh*” (37:35) and “*No associate-partner has He*” (6:163). This requirement is repeated when you read: “*in Allâh you should put your trust when you are believers (in Him)*” (5:23), and: “*So in Allâh alone let those put their trust who have learnt to put their trust in Him*” (14:12).

Tawakkul (trust) is derived from *wakala* وَكَلَ, which means “to empower an attorney” or “to commission someone to take care of what is being entrusted.” The one who is entrusted is called *wakil* (the

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trustee). The one who trusts his case needs to have a state of confidence in his attorney before he commissions his case. His mind should be at peace about the knowledge, aptitude, and qualities of his trustee. He should be confident that there is no weakness or deficiency in the *wakil* whom he has selected to carry out the task that burdens him. This state of confidence also demands that the *wakil* is able, eloquent, and flawless in speech and arguments; is rightly guided; and has sympathy for the one whom he is representing. Without compassion for the one who is entrusting him, even the most powerful *wakil* will be less concerned and interested, might not be fully committed, and might even give up the case if difficulties arise during the process. This implies that the client will certainly have varying degrees of confidence and peace of mind, according to the different levels of qualities regarding the *wakil*. Allâh invites you to make Him your Trustee (-*wakil*). He says:

وَمَن يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

“But (the truth of the matter is that) who so puts his trust in Allâh finds that surely Allâh is All-Mighty, All-Wise.” (8:49)

Here Allâh refers to His Attributes of Might and Wisdom for the task so that no doubt remains that He is the best choice, the only One in Whom your trust can be placed. You will have the strength of trust (tawakkul) in Allâh only when you are certain that Allâh understands your problems and appreciates your uncomfortable situation. When you are convinced of the perfection of Allâh’s Knowledge that He comprehends your needs, that He has the Might and Authority to meet all of them, that no other power surpasses the reach of His Power, and that He is Merciful, it would be foolish not to entrust to Him your affairs. In other words, your belief in Allâh’s Powers and your Faith and confidence in His Mercy are the source spring of your trust (tawakkul) in Allâh, Glory be to Him.

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Faith (*imân* ايمان) is a state of certitude (*yaqîn* يقين) in the Divine Being. Your belief in God has its stages. Its initial, primitive stage is the stage of observing and examining the objects that exist in nature, which can be perceived by your five senses, and then reflecting on their cause and source. This contemplation brings forth hints of possible Divine Existence. When such hints become continuous and are combined with sound knowledge as well as reflective thoughts, additional evidence of the existence of Divinity emerges. After this, an accumulative stage is reached, where you reflect on the enormity of creation and the greatness and vastness of the Divine Kingdom (67:2–5). A threshold is reached where you seek no further evidence, as you become convinced of the Divine Existence and admit:

وَهُوَ اللَّهُ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَفِي الْأَرْضِ

“And He is Allâh Who alone (exercises every authority) in the heavens and in the earth.” (6:3)

لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ

“The kingdom of the heavens and the earth belongs to Him. He gives life and causes death” (57:2).

After this stage of belief is the irreversible state of confession (*tasdîq*), which is followed by the stage of certitude (*yaqîn*) “that there is no other, cannot be and will never be one worthy of worship other than Allâh” (47:19). You are now aware of your duties towards your Creator and His creation. Thereafter, you abide in obedience in actions corresponding to these duties. The culminating name of all of these stages when summed together is Faith (*imân*).

With spiritual advancement, you enter another stage, where you come close to the knowledge of Divine Unity (*Ahadîyyat*). The Faith in Divine Unity has its own stages: The lowest stage is when you merely profess: *Lâ ilâha illâ Huwa* لَّا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ, “There is no other worthy of

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worship but He,” but your heart may still be heedless, and this profession often amounts to mere lip service. Sometimes your heart may believe in associated gods as well. In the next higher stage, you actually believe in your heart the Words of Divine Unity: *La ilâha ill-Allâh*, لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ, “There is no other, cannot be and will never be one worthy of worship but Allâh.” This appears to be the case with the majority of the Muslim community.

وَإِلَهُكُمْ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ, “And your God is One God, there is no other, cannot be and will never be one worthy of worship but He, the Most Gracious, the Ever Merciful” (2:163). Here you ache with the state of certainty in your conviction: *Lâ ilâha ill-Allâh*, لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ, “there is no other, cannot be and will never be one worthy of worship but Allâh,” and your knowledge of His Graces and Mercifulness. While confessing the Divine Unity, while admitting, and understanding His Attributes of Mercy, you are already treading on the Illuminated Path of Allâh’s guidance. You are consequent in religious practices and take pleasure in ritual Prayer and worship. While doing so, you are constantly striving hard to “draw near” to your Lord.

The fourth stage is the highest, the stage of those who have already reached the threshold of Ahadîyyat أحادیث and are standing before their Lord in great humility, with bowed heads. They see none but the Divine in His absolute and unique Unity.

According to Imâm al-Ghazâlî, trust (*tawakkul* توكل) in Allâh can be achieved in the third stage by those who bear witness to the Divine Unity while treading on the illuminated path of religious practices and “drawing near” to their Lord. If you cannot find this third state of certitude (*yaqîn*) in you, that amounts to a weakness in your Faith, in your belief. There will be neither tranquillity nor peace in such a heart and no trust. At the fourth and highest stage, however, it will not be required that you to put your trust in Allâh, because Allâh will already be taking care of all your affairs.

Trust in Allâh also means giving up hope of whatever is in the hands of human beings. Trust in Divine Providence is one of the stations of those who have reached a state of certainty in their conviction: وَإِنَّهُمْ لَيَعْلَمُونَ، إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَاحِدٌ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ “And your God is One God, there is no other, cannot be and will never be one worthy of worship but He, the Most Gracious, the Ever Merciful” (2:163). They know it for certain that: “he who puts his trust in Allâh, He is sufficient for him (to fulfil his needs)” (65:3).

When people say, “I put my trust in Allâh,” many would mean that they could forgo provisions of action and planning and just lie in wait for a divine decision. This is a stark misconception, however, since appropriate planning and action are a crucial prerequisite for trust (*tawakkul*). At the same time, you should do no planning and you should undertake no activity *before* you put your trust in Allâh. The authentic Advocate, who is Allâh, is the Creator of whatever power is required for any action, and He is the One Who provides this Power. Whosoever has this certainty (*yaqîn*) receives the exquisite reward.



SAINTHOOD IN ISLAM

Tasawwuf — Walâyat — Muhaddathîyat

Tasawwuf, *walâyat* وَلَانِيَت and *muhaddathîyat* تصوُّف محدثيَّة are the states and ranks (*marâtib*) of those people who are imbued with divine qualities. They tread on a path that is higher in rank than that of believers. Their station as knowers of Allâh is higher than that of many others. Nevertheless, they are all followers of the Holy Prophet

(pbuh), and as followers, they cannot overtake the Leader. They cannot be conceived of as a comprehensive class or as a subclass of Prophets or apostles. They receive Divine Revelation, but not one of them can be called *nabî* or *rasûl* in the sense generally understood by the common Muslims.

Ibn Khaldûn wrote the following on *tasawwuf* “تصوّف” “This knowledge is a branch of the sciences of Sacred Law that originated within the *ummah*. The path of such people had been the path of the early Muslim community and its notables, of the Companions of the Prophet (pbuh), of those who were taught by them, and of those who came after them” (Ibn Khaldûn, *al-Muqaddima* [n.d. reprint, Makkah: Dâr al-Bâz, original: 1397 AH / 1978 CE], 467). The ultimate goal in *tasawwuf* is the love of God and Divine Communication with Him. A *Hadîth-i-Qudsî*, as related by *Imâm Bukhârî*, *Ahmad ibn Hanbal*, *Abû Bakr al-Baihaqî*, and others, discloses the central reality of *tasawwuf*: “My servant keeps drawing nearer to Me with voluntary works until I love him. And once I love him, I become his hearing, with which he hears, his sight, with which he sees, his hand, with which he seizes, and his foot, with which he walks. If he asks Me, I will surely give to him, and if he seeks refuge in Me, I will surely protect him” (*Fath al-Bârî* 11/340–341). The one who treads on the path of *tasawwuf* is an aspirant to spiritual development, who submits to the inner and the outer aspect of the *Sunnah*. He knows and understands the essence of worship and abandonment of the mundane life. He follows those who are models of God-Consciousness. They learn Islamic sciences of the Qur’ân and its exegesis, traditions (*hadîth*), and jurisprudence (*fiqh* ﷺ). Their souls are connected through chains of divine scholars to the Holy Prophet (pbuh), who was sent to bring creation closer to their Lord.

Your direct relationship with your Maker and the cultivation of this relationship is *tasawwuf*. Ever since scholars began to speak about Sufism and *tasawwuf*, they have defined it in many different ways,

and over time many misconceptions have arisen about Sufism and taṣawwuf. Errant sūfīs as well some religious scholars think that taṣawwuf is something beyond the Qur’ân and *Sunnah*, which is the practice of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). They have shunned the Qur’ân and Hadīth, and shunned the taṣawwuf. Many self-proclaimed sūfīs deviated from the right path of taṣawwuf, either because they misunderstood the message of the Holy Qur’ân or because they had worldly ambitions. They gathered simpleminded followers around them, transformed graves into places of worship, and made supplications to dead objects. They introduced dances, music, and other innovations to their followers. Those who think Sūfi philosophy is universal in nature, that Sufism is not something that belongs to any one religion, have erred. The schools of Sufism in Western countries, which attempt to instruct non-Muslims on following the Sūfi path, have nothing to do with taṣawwuf. This type of “Sufism” is not true Sufism; it is outside the sphere of Qur’ânic teachings.

Sufism is the inner, or esoteric, dimension of Qur’ânic teachings, a dimension supported and complemented by the outward, or exoteric, practices of Islam. It is absolutely necessary to tread the path of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) in order to be a true Sūfi, because Sufism is inoperative without “Muhammadan” affiliation. Sūfīs are servants of Allâh who have been clothed in intimacy with the Most High and who have embraced the concept of “ease after struggle (94:6).” They live secluded behind the curtain of intimacy with Allâh.

Jurist and Hadīth master Ibn Taymiyyah, in his *Al-Risala al-Safadiyya*, defended taṣawwuf. His reverence for the group of such ‘auliyâ’ (Muslim Saints) as ‘Abdul Qâdir al-Jilâñî is also expressed in his *Futûh al-Ghaib*. Ibn Taymiyyah stressed that the primacy of the *sharia* forms the soundest tradition in taṣawwuf, and to argue this point, he listed over a dozen early masters, as well his own masters al-Anṣârî al-Harâwî, ‘Abdul Qâdir al-Jilâñî, and Hammad al-Dabbas: The upright among the followers of the path, he stated, were early

auliyâ, such as Fudhayl ibn Iyâd, Ibrâhîm ibn Adham, Ma'ruf al-Karkhî, al-Sari al-Saqatî, al-Junayd ibn Muhammad, *Shaikh* Abû al-Bayân, and *Khâhtim al-Auliyâ* Ibn al-'Arabî. *Imâm* Abû Hâmid Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Ghazâlî narrated in his *Al-Munqidh min al-Dalâ'il*: "I am convinced that the group of *auliyâ*' is the only truthful group who follows the right path, displays best conduct, and surpasses all sages in their wisdom and insight. They derive all their overt or covert behaviour from the illuminating guidance of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), the only guidance worth quest and pursuit." This is what defines the intent and path of Islam through the genuine submission of one's soul (*nafs*) to Allâh and His Commandments. *Walâyat* can be understood as maintaining a special friendship or relationship with Allâh. *Wali* means guardianship, friend, helper, ally, and Saint (*walî* is the singular of *auliyâ*). We read:

إِنَّ وَلِيَّ اللَّهُ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ الْكِتَابَ ۖ وَهُوَ يَتَوَلَّ الصَّالِحِينَ

"Verily, My Protecting-Friend is Allâh, Who has revealed this perfect Book and He takes into (His) protection all the righteous." (7:196)

In other words, the *walî* is the person whose affairs Allâh, Glory be to Him, takes charge of. This person is not left at the mercy of others or of his own ego. You are told:

إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا الَّذِينَ يُقْبِلُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَâةَ
وَهُمْ رَاكِعُونَ

"Your real ally [*walî*] is only Allâh, and His Messenger, and those who believe, who observe Prayer and present the Zakât, and they bow down (in obedience to Allâh)" (5:55)

This shows that the friends (*auliyâ*) of Allâh are also the friends of the Messenger (pbuh) and the believers: Allâh is their *walî*, and they are Allâh's *auliyâ*. There is a two-sided relationship between them

and Allâh. This does not mean that both sides are equal. Definitely, the friendship (*walâyat*) of Allâh with the believers is different from the *walâyat* of the believers with Allâh. One side is obeyed, and the other obeys; one side guides, and the other is guided. The *walî* takes the service and worship ('ibâdat) of Allâh into his care, and his service and worship flow without any disobedience or expectation of any reward. A *walî* is not necessarily from a particular Muslim school of thought. He may be Hanbalî, or Shaf'î, or Hanafi, or anyone else. For example, Shaikh 'Abdul Qâdir al-Jilânî was Hanbali, and Shaikh Mu'înuddîn Chishtî was Hanafi.

A *Sûfi* looks upon his own person with an eye that comprehends his smallness, and when any miraculous Divine Grace appears to him, he is afraid that it may be a test, and he is terrified of falling from where he is. The *walî*, on the other hand, knows his positions and his state with Allâh. To know the source and the reality of miraculous Divine Graces is a part of this awareness. A *walî* distinguishes these miraculous Divine Graces from other miracle-like events that might happen. He knows that these miraculous Divine Graces are from "the Truth" (*al-Haqq*) and that they are a true reality. Divine Knowledge, Divine Revelations, and Divine Words descend directly to him, and his supplications are accepted.

Muhaddathîn are those with whom Allâh converses more directly and frequently than with other believers. To this class belong the Friends of Allâh (*auliyâ'*) and other Saints who have reached the station of *walâyat*. Among them are also the *mujaddadîn*, who are appointed by Allâh for the reformation of His religion. The station of *muhaddathîyat* محدثیت is the highest station a follower of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) can reach. He has the station and rank of a Prophet, but he cannot be conceived as Prophet or as a member of a subclass of Prophets. He is among the ones who have received their light from the Divine Light. Behold the Light of Allâh from the lamps of these holy Saints who have gone before. They are the signs and guide on the road

of divine seekers. “While the thirsty seek water, water also seeks the thirsty” (Jalâl al-Dîn Rûmî).



SOURCE OF MORALITY AND THE ORIGIN OF EVIL

وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّا هَا فَالْهَمَّهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَا هَا قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مِنْ زَكَّاهَا وَقَدْ خَابَ
مَنْ دَسَّاهَا

“And the (human) soul and That (Mighty Lord) Who made it perfect, Then He revealed to it [the soul, the ways off] its evil and its righteousness. (All these are cited to witness that) one who purifies it [his soul], certainly succeeds, and he indeed is ruined who corrupts it” (91:7–10).

Our Creator, at the time of our creation, gave us a simple and pure nature and embedded in us a desire to seek Him, adore Him, and worship Him (91:7–10). Our innocent nature was fortified with divine guidance and divine inspiration. He says: لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ شُفَوِّيج, “We have surely created the human being in the finest make and the best proportions (with enormous capabilities for an all-round advancement through the process of evolution)” (95:4). This description as well as the statement: وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّا هَا فَالْهَمَّهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَا هَا, “And the (human) soul and That (Mighty Lord) Who made it perfect, Then He revealed to it [the soul, the ways off] its evil and its righteousness” (91:7–8) substantiates the absence of evil and the purity of your soul from any inherited sin at the time of our creation. It also states that there was no “original” sin that needed to be washed

away with someone's blood. In other words, you were born innocent and unblemished in your nature, and you did not enter this world carrying a load of "original" sin.

The topic of the origin of good and evil has presented intricate issues for religion and philosophy. Crude notions and inaccurate ideas have given rise to many doctrines. For the old Zoroastrians in Persia, evil and good each came from a god, the god of evil and the god of good, and humankind therefore became a toy in the hands of these two deities. According to Pauline Christian doctrine, human nature has been contaminated with inherited sin from its very outset. According to Lord Headley (Rowland George Allanson-Winn, 1271–1354 AH / 1855–1935 CE), the notion of original sin was absurd: "As if the machine became amiss at the beginning. [A person] could not set it right for thousands of years." To the Buddhists, the very existence of human beings is a loathsome thought: Trouble and misery, which are viewed as the fruits of evil, dominate human destiny, from which human beings cannot be extricated. In Buddhism, human liberation lies only in annihilation. Hindu philosophers, in turn, have great difficulty rebutting the presumption that Para Brahman, their greatest god, is the author of evil.

Those who suppose that a human being is sinful by birth are mistaken. Similarly, it is a wrong assumption, as believed by some, that a human being is the product of an earlier life, that his present birth is an outcome of some previous birth, and that he is caught up in the ramifications of his actions from a previous existence. There is no mention of "original sin," "atonement," or "transmigration of the soul" in the Holy Qur'ân, because these concepts run counter to rational thought and the laws of human nature. Our original instinctive state was the opposite of being selfish and aggressive; it was selfless and loving, definitely *not* the state of an instinct-controlled animal, which the Holy Qur'ân calls *al-naâfîs al-Ammârah* النفس لأمارة.

The consciousness of good and evil is embedded in human nature (91:7). God says:

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَفْوِيمٍ ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَاهُ أَسْفَلَ سَافَلِينَ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فَلَهُمْ أَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُونٍ

“We have surely created the human being in the finest make and the best proportions (with enormous capabilities for an all-round advancement through the process of evolution). Then (according to Our law of cause and consequence) We degrade him to the lowest of the low (if he does evil deeds). Different, however, is the case of those who believe and do deeds of righteousness. There awaits them a never ending reward.” (95:4–6)

Accordingly, our Creator was the Fountainhead of all morality, and the “fallen” and corrupted state developed later, as the Word *ثُمَّ*, *thumma*, “then” or “thereupon” or “thereafter,” in the foregoing passage informs us. Thus, the evil in the human being is something that evolved later. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) is reported to have said, “No infant is born except with an inborn sense of natural goodness, and then his parents make him a Jew, a Christian, or a Muslim” (*Bukhârî*).

When it is said that a human being is by nature good and virtuous, the question arises as to why we are endowed with negative states and why troubles and agonies are a part of human destiny. In the light of the Qur’anic teachings, the answer is that though it cannot be denied that some negative faculties found in human beings lead to hardship and defilement, this condition does not prove that humans are sinful by nature. These negative emotions have a use; they have been vouchsafed to us for our defensive needs. A human being needs such emotions as much as he needs the finer emotions, such as sympathy and forbearance. The fact of the matter is that all the faculties found in a human personality, if used properly, are good morals in themselves.

If at any time you see a defect in your personality or if you notice a slip, it is due to your misuse of these faculties. The capacity for good morals has been endowed in your nature, and through your use of will power and training, this capability can safeguard against slipups.

The Holy Qur'ân teaches that when an immoral act is committed, human nature and natural animal-like instincts are not the basic motivators of such an act. Instead, the perpetrators wrong upbringing, his training, his unsuitable environment, his desires instigated in a society of artificially created necessities, his bad company, and his imbalanced use of his natural passions and impulses generate his animal-like behaviour. However, when your passions and impulses come into play, you can remain within the bounds of Divine Law, and such consequential acts can fall within the definition of good morals. For example, your libido can be controlled by marriage, your hunger from observing a fast, and your anger from self-discipline. *Imâm Abû Hâmid Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Ghazâlî* stated that it is against human nature and disposition for us to be inclined towards evil and blameworthy actions. On the other hand, your inclination towards the Love of God, the worship of God, and Gods Gnosis is as natural as your inclination towards eating good and pure things and channeling your libido, because this first inclination is in complete accord with your nature and disposition and the very desire of your heart. What is the heart? It is an inspired Command of Allâh, and the inclination of your heart towards the dictates of your passions is imposed upon it from outside your person (*al-Ghazâlî, Ihyâ ulûm al-Dîn* 3:63).

Behavior psychologists have invented excuses to justify selfish and aggressive behaviour, the main one being that you, as a human being, have savage animal instincts that make you compete and fight for food, shelter, territory, and a mate. This explanation has arisen from the biological theory of Social Darwinism; however, just blaming your genes fails to adequately explain your selfish and aggressive behaviour. In the first place, the theory overlooks the fact that your

behaviour involves your unique, fully conscious, thinking mind. Such descriptions as egocentric, arrogant, deluded, hateful, mean, immoral, and alienated all imply consciousness-derived actions. The “savage instincts” in you cannot be the real explanation for any divisive, selfish, or aggressive behaviour of yours. Proponents of this theory are overlooking the fact that you also have altruistic, cooperative, and loving moral instincts—what is recognized as your “conscience”—and these moral instincts in you are not derived from reciprocity, from situations where you always do something good for others in return for a benefit you expect from them, as evolutionary psychologists would have you believe. No, you have an unconditionally selfless, fully altruistic (that is, universally considerate of others), truly loving, genuinely moral conscience.

If human faculties are the source of morals, and immoral actions emanate from humans, must you then understand that some of these emotions and faculties are evil in themselves? The Holy Qur’ân has answered this question in the negative, teaching that the headwaters of human birth are not muddied, nor is sin and immoral behaviour an intrinsic part of human nature.

وَمَا بِكُمْ مِّنْ نِعْمَةٍ فَمِنَ اللَّهِ ۖ ثُمَّ إِذَا مَسَّكُمُ الظُّرُуْرُ فَإِلَيْهِ تَجْرُونَ

“And whatever blessings you have, come from Allâh. And when affliction befalls you [is from you] it is to Him that you cry (for redress)” (16:53)

All faculties that come from Allâh are for the good of humanity. If properly used, within given limits, they cannot harm you. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) said, “The good, all of it, is in the Hands of Allâh, and the evil does not go back to Him.” Allâh is not the source of evil, nor did evil enter into the world as a separate entity; rather, evil results from the misuse of faculties provided to you by Allâh (see 7:31). Allâh created a human being and breathed into him His spirit (15:29), and then made him His vice-regent on earth (2:30). *“We have surely*

created the human being in the finest make and the best proportions (with enormous capabilities for an all-round advancement through the process of evolution)" (95:4). Therefore, sin and evil are not innate features of human nature; rather, humans have impulses towards morality and righteousness, as verses 91:7-10 and 92:5-10 states.

The foremost question that arises concerning any moral code of conduct is: What are the sources and the causes of evil? The Holy Qur'ân mentions three sources of good morality, and all three are embedded in human nature. They are the commanding self, the self-reproaching spirit, and Faith in the All-Mighty.

1. The Commanding Self (*Nafs al-Ammârah*): The inciting animal impulse that drives a human being to commit evil acts is the *commanding self* (*nafs al-Ammârah*, النفس لامارة). You read in the Holy Qur'ân what Joseph said:

وَمَا أَبْرُرُ نَفْسِي ۝ إِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَأَمَارَةٌ بِالسُّوءِ إِلَّا مَا رَحِمَ رَبُّهُ

“*Yet I do not hold myself to be free from weakness, for the Commanding Self [the animal self] is surely prone to enjoin evil, except on whom my Lord has mercy.*” (12:53)

Your commanding intellect challenges your inborn “to-do-good” instincts for control, and a battle breaks out between your inborn instincts and the commanding self. If the commanding self wins the battle, you can fall into the selfish and aggressive state known as the evil human condition. Controlling the commanding self (*nafs al-Ammârah*), which is inciting an evil action, is the first source of morality. Your human reasoning faculty is sufficiently well developed that you can critically self-analyze your behaviour, become conscious of the evil-inciting forces, and perceive both the immediate and the remote consequences of your actions. It is your sense of critical self-reasoning that is triggered whenever animal-like impulses, actions, and behaviour try to take control.

Out of this exercise of reason and controlling efforts a basic moral state starts to take shape. In other words, the foundation of good morals lies in your exercising control over your naturally endowed powers and instincts. Hunger and sexuality are the basic commanding needs of both humans and animals alike. If you can bring these basic commanding forces under control through fasting and marriage, they then become virtues. It must be emphasized that there are varying degrees of quality and quantity of natural powers among individuals. There is a difference between origins and practical manifestations of emotions across various races, regions, and cultures and these differences give rise to a vast sea of moral values.

The Holy Qur'an has not only discussed in detail the basic human emotions and instincts, but also has gone further by bringing to light the underlying causes behind the arousal of such emotions. It can also guide you to channel and sublimate these emotions in an effort to establish and evolve your moral perception and behaviour.

2. The Self-Reproaching Spirit (*Nafs al-Lawwâmah*): The second source of morality is the *self-reproaching spirit* (*nafs al-Lawwâmah*, *نَفْسُ اللَّوَامَةِ*). This is the voice of the conscience, which becomes louder in the face of any wrongful act. Every human being is endowed with this voice. You read:

وَلَا أَقْسِمُ بِالنَّفْسِ اللَّوَامَةِ

"And I swear by (and bring to witness) the self-reproaching soul [nafs al-Lawwâmah] (at the doing of an evil deed as an evidence to the truth of Final Resurrection)" (75:2).

The self-reproaching spirit (*nafs al-Lawwâmah*, *نَفْسُ اللَّوَامَةِ*) is present in every person, and every person is endowed with a voice of conscience that reproaches him when he performs an evil act. A person with a sense of morality tries to get a ruling from *nafs al-Lawwâmah*, which is the call of the conscience.

Here is a simple method for getting a ruling from the voice of your conscience: When you are about to commit any action affecting others, you should first imagine applying such an action to yourself. If you would not be adversely affected by this action applied to you, and if the action proves to be good and effective for you, then such an action would also likely be beneficial and good for others. If you cannot accept it for yourself, then you must assume that it is inappropriate for others as well. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) is reported to have said, “When deciding whether something is good or bad, ask your inner self, and if that deed gives you a feeling of satisfaction to your heart and inner soul, it is a virtuous deed. The deed that rankles in your heart and produces perturbation and hesitancy in your mind is a sinful deed, however, even though people may tell you that it is a lawful deed.”

The question that arises is the following: If the self-reproaching spirit is present in every person and if every person is endowed with the voice of conscience, then why is it that so many people still commit immoral acts. The answer is simple. Though our conscience does raise its voice in protest against the commission of such acts, most people do not pay heed to that voice. Immorality is a poison, and repeated doses of this poison blunt or destroy the self-reproaching conscience.

3. Faith in the All-Mighty: The third, and ultimate, source of morality is *Faith in the All-Mighty*. Through a firm Faith in Allâh, you become free of all weaknesses, unlawful and prohibited acts, and find peace and tranquillity.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا تَنَزَّلُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَلَا تَخَافُوا وَلَا
تَحْرُنُوا وَأَبْشِرُوا بِالجَنَّةِ الَّتِي كُنْتُمْ تُوَعَّدُونَ حُنْ حُنْ أُولَئِا وَكُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا
وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ ۝ وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا تَشْتَهِي أَنفُسُكُمْ وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا تَدَّعُونَ

“Verily, those who say, Allâh is our Lord, and then remain steadfast (and follow the straight path), the angels will descend

upon them (saying), Have no fear nor grieve rather rejoice at the glad tidings of receiving the Gardens (of Paradise) which you have been promised. We are your Patron in the present life and in the Hereafter and you shall find in that (Paradise) all that you desire and you shall have therein all that you ask for.” (41:30)

Faith in a Supreme Deity is within your nature, as it is within the nature of all humans. Faith is at your disposal and exists within your various natural states. Faith in Allâh is the foundation of the Qur’ânic code of ethics in the sense that Allâh’s Attributes are like milestones on the way to good morals. It is through this channel that your soul can find its ultimate peace and tranquillity, which is called in the Holy Qur’ân *al-nafs al-Mutma’innah*, the soul at peace (89:27–30). Faith in the hereafter and in the Day of Judgment is the continuation of the principle of retribution and recompense for your deeds, which is the pivotal determinant in the laws of nature. If you are merely adhering to a moral code only by using your own personal judgment or the norms of your society, you are not motivated by the idea of any reward that you may get. When the Holy Qur’ân motivates you towards higher morals, however, it simultaneously tells you that by adopting higher morals, you not only improve and reform society, but you are also making your next life better (41:30–31).

When a person with Faith in Allâh commits an act of disobedience (6:120), he exposes himself to divine punishment. When affliction descends upon him because of his act, he returns to Allâh in repentance. His repentance may be accepted by Him (3:135; 16:119; 61:12; 71:4), depending on the level of his Faith (*imân*). Allâh then repels the affliction from him and protects him and possibly others from the consequences of his wrongful deeds. This occurs because of Divine Mercy. The believer then offers thanks to his Lord, in the form of purifying alms and his repentance. Allâh says: “*Do they not know that Allâh is He Who accepts repentance from His servants and accepts their alms and that Allâh is He Who is Oft-Returning (with*

compassion), Ever Merciful?” (9:104). The significance of the Words “*Do they not know*” is inevitability: Nothing can stop Him from accepting the repentance of His servant, and in return He expects the servant to give alms to the poor and needy.

Khulq خلق is the term used in the Holy Qur’ân (see 68:4) to describe the disposition in a human beings virtue from which moral actions flow spontaneously and effortlessly. All the moral principles that exist are nothing else but a manifestation of natural human emotions, and human nature is the source of them all. However, also the human being can degrade himself to the “lowest of the low (if he does evil deeds) (95:5). He degrades himself only because of the Divine Law of cause and consequence.

The Attributes of Allâh mentioned in the Holy Qur’ân are the measures, balance, and standard of good. Observance of those measures is a virtue, and their contravention is sin. Virtue is not the suppression or denial of your human passions. When controlled correctly, passions can lead you to develop a high morality. Asceticism, monasticism, and priesthood have always caused more harm than good, because they demand the suppression of natural impulses, a suppression that can have disastrous results. On the other hand, all natural human impulses are necessary constituents for human progress. It is only a question of measure and balance (see 55:4–5).

The Holy Qur’ân uses many Words to differentiate the various acts of evil—such Words as *dzamb*, *ithm*, *‘udwân*, *sharr*, *fuhush*, *sû’i*, *isyân*, *fisq*, *fujar*, *khatâ*; *fasâd*, *bagh’î*, *munkar*, and *kufîr*. Each of these words expresses a different aspect of evil. *Dzamb* (3:31; 3:135; 3:147) is an act whose consequences are disagreeable because of unintentional disobedience; it is an evil act committed through inadvertence. *Ithm* (2:188; 2:206; 5:2; 6:120; 24:11), on the other hand, is intentional offense or crime. ‘*Udwân* (5:2) is transgression, a going beyond the limit, a state of being in enmity (4:14; 65:1; 68:12; 70:31). *Sharr* is the finding of faults in others, the descent into evil

nature from ones upbringing (68:11–13). *Fuhush* is shameful, immoderate lewdness, the knowledge of which is confined to the one who commits it (2:168; 3:135; 4:15; 4:19). *Sū'i* is a bad deed that makes a person regret and feel sorrow (2:169; 3:30; 4:17, 149; 9:37; 12:24). *Iṣyān* is rebellion against the law (2:61; 3:112; 73:16; 79:21). *Fisq* is first acceptance a law but then going against it (5:3; 6:121). *Fujar* is oral wickedness (38:28; 71:27; 75:5). *Khatā'* is the commission of an offense accidentally. Mischief making that may cause bloodshed is *fasād* (2:11, 60; 7:56; 38:21; 47:22). *Baghī* is rebellious transgression (2:90; 3:19; 7:33). The vice that society and people discover and condemn is *munkar* (3:104, 110, 114; 5:79, 7:157; 9:67). Besides these social evils are those that pertain to God, such as denying His messengers (3:98; 38:14), hiding the truth revealed by God (*kufr*; 3:70), betraying trust (4:107), and associating a son to Allāh (2:116;; 10:68; 17:111).

Ignorance is the Source of Evil

The Holy Qur'ân also mentions ignorance (*jahâlat* جَهَالَةٌ) as a source of evil. People do evil acts out of lack of knowledge as you read:

إِنَّمَا التَّوْبَةُ عَلَى اللَّهِ لِلَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ السُّوءَ بِجَهَالَةٍ ثُمَّ يَتُوبُونَ مِنْ قَرِيبٍ
فَأُولَئِكَ يَتُوبُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ ۝ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمَا حَكِيمًا

“Verily, Allāh undertakes to accept the repentance of only those who do evil through lack of knowledge, then repent soon after. Such are the persons towards whom Allāh turns with mercy. And Allāh is All-Knowing, All-Wise” (4:17).

Imâm Ghazâlî said, “When you grow up, a whole world of observation and perception is opened before you by nature, and the laws of nature begin to unfold themselves one by one before you. A reservoir of information of diverse types accumulates and is built up gradually in your mind, and this reservoir itself becomes a source of

training for you and your fellow beings. Most people observe events unintentionally and pass over them summarily and think that their memory has not preserved these in its storehouse, but in fact, these observations and scenes find their way into your consciousness silently and imperceptibly, and they affect your behaviour.”

To acquire knowledge is a Divine Command, as the commanding word *qul* قُل (say!) in verse 20:114 قُلْ رَبِّ زِدْنِي عِلْمًا tells us. The real source of knowledge is the All-Knowing (*al-'Alîm*), Who out of His Grace of Mercy (*Rahmânîyyat*; 55:1) has *taught* the human being *the art of intelligent and distinct speech* عِلْمُ الْبَيْان (55:4). He has implanted in you faculties of in you to acquire knowledge. What cannot be acquired by you with these faculties He has taught you through the Revelation of *al-Qur'ân* (55:2). There are four faculties implanted in you that help you to acquire knowledge. All these four faculties require effort on your part to make use of them. They are: 1) *Ta'aqil* تَعْقِل (cf. 13:4; 11:51; 16:12; 8:22, mentioned 49 times). 2) *Tafakkur* تَفَكَّر (cf. 45:13; 16:12; 30:8, 13:3 mentioned 18 times). 3) *Taddabur* تَذَبَّر (cf. 38:29; 4:82, mentioned 44 times) and 4) *Tafaqqah* تَفَقَّه (cf. 7:179; 4:78, mentioned 20 times). *Ta'aqil* تَعْقِل is derived from ‘*aqala* عَقَل’ that means, to be intelligent, use understanding, use reason, to ascend on the summit of the mountain, abstain from evil with the use of reason, to bind something that is contrary to understanding, keep back from something if it is in opposition to what was understood. *Ta'aqil* تَعْقِل is to acquire knowledge in an intelligent manner about objects around you with direct observation that will enable you to make reasonable conclusion out of this observation. It demands from you the understandings of the proportion to which they appear, is to be used and is intended, and abstain you of using in a manner that can harm you. And by making use of your ‘*aqal* you can understand their origin and cause that is Allâh. You read for example:

وَفِي الْأَرْضِ قِطَعٌ مُتَجَاوِرَاتٌ وَجَنَّاتٌ مِنْ أَعْنَابٍ وَزَرْعٍ وَنَخِيلٌ صِنْوَانٌ
وَغَيْرُ صِنْوَانٍ يُسْقَى بِمَاءٍ وَاحِدٍ وَنَفْضَلٌ بَعْضَهَا عَلَى بَعْضٍ فِي الْأَكْلِ
إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لِآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ

“And in the earth are (diverse) tracts side by side, and (in them there are) gardens of vines and (different kinds of) cornfields and date-palms; growing in clusters (many together from one root) and (others) growing separately from different roots. They are all watered with the same water, yet We make some of them excel others in (respect of) bearing fruit and (their) tastes. Behold! in all this, there are signs (to recognize their Lord) for a people who use their understanding” (11:4)

Tafakkur تَفَكُّر is derived from *fakara* فَكَرْ that means to reflect, think over with care, give proper attention. It is the act of speculation combined with thought and emotion. This faculty demands from you to think and reflect over a matter to ascertain the root cause of some action. This requires your attention, meditation and observation of nature in order to speculate the laws under which they are happening and exhibiting their actions and arrive at the cause and originator of that observation. For example you read:

وَهُوَ الَّذِي مَدَ الْأَرْضَ وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا رَوَاسِيًّا وَأَنْهَارًا ۖ وَمِنْ كُلِّ النَّمَراتِ
جَعَلَ فِيهَا زَوْجَيْنِ اثْنَيْنِ ۖ يُغْشِي اللَّيْلَ النَّهَارَ ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لِآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ
يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

“And it is He Who drew forth the earth (from another heavenly body) and made it productive and fertile by means of particles (of other planets), and made firm mountains and rivers on it. He has grown therein fruit of every kind in a pair comprising both sexes (the male stamens and female pistils). He causes the night to cover the day. Behold! in all this there are signs for a people who reflect”. (13:3)

Taddabur تَدْبِيرٌ is an obligation to consider, think over and ponder over something in an excellent manner and to get maximum benefit out of it. The word is derived from *dabara* دَبَرَ that means to manage and administer an affair in excellent manner; to consider the issues and the results of the affairs; perform and execute the affair with thought and consideration, and regulate an affair (Tâj; Lisân; Lane). You read:

كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكُمْ بِارْكٌ لَّيَدَبَرُوا آيَاتِهِ وَلَيَتَذَكَّرَ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ

“(Behold! this Qur’ân is) a great Book which We have revealed to you; full of excellences, so that these (people) may ponder over its verses and so that those gifted with pure understanding may take heed” (38:29)

Faqîh فَقِيهٍ is the one who is learned and skilled in laws of nature and other Divine laws. He makes use of his faculty of *tafaqquh* تَفَقُّهٌ to penetrate, understand and then master that particular field of knowledge. He makes use of all other three faculties to acquire knowledge. A person who does not make use of this faculty is described in Qur’ân dumb, deaf and blind.

وَلَقَدْ ذَرَانَا لِجَهَنَّمَ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنْسَنِ ۖ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ أَعْيُنٌ لَا يُبَصِّرُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ أَذَانٌ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا ۖ أُولَئِكَ كَالْأَنْعَامِ بِلٰهُمْ أَضَلُّ ۖ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْغَافِلُونَ

“And, verily, We have created many of the jinns [fiery natured] and the ordinary people whose end is Gehenna. They have hearts wherewith they do not understand and they have eyes but they do not see with them (the truth), and they have ears but they do not hear (the Messages) with them. They are like cattle, nay, they are (even) worse. It is these who are utterly heedless (to the warnings)”. (7:179)

Every action is followed by a reaction. You already know how your health is influenced by changes in the weather, by your food, your dress, and your home. The Holy Qur'ân goes even further, saying that these environmental influences affect even your morals. The Qur'ânic commandments, such as its laws about food, dress, the principles of government, and the economic order, are meant not only to keep the physical, social, and economic aspects of your life in order, but also to uplift your moral condition. For example, the use of unclean and unlawful food (alcohol and so on) will negatively affect your moral condition and your family life.

To safeguard the new-born from any evil influence and to impress upon him the highest form of uplifting sound effects, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) used to recite the *adzân* (the call for Prayer) in the right ear and the *iqâma* (the Prayer service readiness call) in the left ear of a new-born child. If you look closely at the wordings of these two calls, you notice that they consist of sentences calling one to the highest level of purification. Another way to avoid evil is to keep away from the company of persons of low moral standards. We are told:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ

“O You who believe! Keep your duty to Allâh and be with the truthful” (9:119).

This companionship with the truthful can be accomplished in different ways, but one practical way would be for you to develop friendships with the pious, attend gatherings of such persons, study their writings, and read their biographies. The pollution of the environment can be another source of evil. To rectify this kind of uncleanness, the Holy Qur'ân teaches:

وَثِيَابَكَ فَطَهِّرْ وَالرُّجْزَ فَاهْجُرْ

*“And purify your clothes and your heart. And idol-worship, (spare no pains to) exterminate it and shun all uncleanness”.
(74:4–5)*

“Atonement” obviates the Necessity for Good Deeds

In Christian theology, atonement refers to the forgiveness, or pardoning, of sin through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Christians believe that Jesus died for the sins of humankind, the sins of the past, the present, and the future. It is this teaching that prevails in Christianity today, and it is the marketing tool of all Christian missionaries. It is the foundation of virtually every Christian church, whether it be Catholic, Lutheran, Episcopalian, Baptist, Methodist, or any of the other denominations. Majority of Christians believe that their sins are forgiven by the blessed name and blood of Jesus. They believe that the sacrifice of the “Son of God” was needed to atone for the evil deeds of humanity, since God, being a judge, cannot, and should not, forgive sins without taking revenge, unless somebody can be found to provide compensation. In the ransom metaphor, Jesus has liberated humankind from its slavery to sin and its slavery to satan by giving his own life as a ransom sacrifice. This “ransom view of the atonement” is one of the main doctrines in Christian theology, providing the effect of the death of Jesus Christ. According to Christian belief, the death of Christ was a ransom sacrifice, usually said to have been paid to satan, and in some views paid to God the Father, in satisfaction for the bondage and debt on the souls of humanity as a result of inherited sin.

Since the Christian God could not find any other remedy for the cleansing of human sins, then you would have to conclude that there is no need of any good action on your part. If forgiveness and the cleansing of sins were attainable merely by a belief in the “Grace of

Blood,” few would consider it worthwhile to bear the hardships and trials of a life of piety and righteousness. Many Christians feel that belief in atonement obviates the necessity for good deeds. It is dangerous to believe in such doctrines as atonement, which not only have no bearing on your life but also are actually harmful in their effects on the building of your character. In the matter of culture and civilization, such doctrines as atonement have proven an implacable enemy to spiritual progress. Law loses all its force and cannot compel universal adherence unless and until some reward or punishment comes to the one who fulfils or breaks it. Only a few have the moral fortitude to pursue virtue for its own sake. It is only the requital and reward of virtue, especially when seen in its efficacy in counterbalancing the effects of sin that leads to constant fulfilment of the law and a good life. We cannot imagine any greater harm to the very fabric of human society than that which comes to us as a belief in the doctrine of atonement. It is here that the makers of the modern Christian creed have erred. The doctrine of atonement was inherited from paganism and is contrary to the very teachings of Jesus Christ, who demanded of every person that he should bear his own cross.

It is also wrong to think that a human being was born with a hereditary stain, that this stain, for which he was not personally responsible, had to be atoned for, and that God was compelled to make a blood sacrifice of His own “innocent son” in order to neutralize this mysterious curse. It goes against the justice and Mercy of our Creator. It is a piece of superstition and can never receive approval from reason and culture. It was created to popularize the Christian faith in the pagan world. The dogma of God incarnate, along with other mysterious tenets within the prevailing pagan psyche, has been incorporated into the real and simple faith of Jesus Christ. The crucified deity is an old myth, an overly simplified understanding of personal responsibility and Faith, only befitting those who are inclined to shift their burdens onto the shoulders of others. The Holy Qur’ân has this to say about such a believer:

أَعْنَدَهُ عِلْمُ الْغَيْبِ فَهُوَ يَرَى أَمْ لَمْ يُبَيِّنَا بِمَا فِي صُحُفِ مُوسَىٰ وَإِبْرَاهِيمَ الَّذِي
وَفِي أَلَا تَزِرُّ وَازِرَةٌ أَخْرَىٰ وَأَنَّ لَيْسَ لِلنَّاسَ إِلَّا مَا سَعَىٰ وَأَنَّ سَعْيَهُ
سَوْفَ يُرَىٰ ثُمَّ يُجْزَاهُ الْجَرَاءُ الْأَوْفَىٰ

“Has he the knowledge of the unseen so that he can see (his own future)? Has he not been informed of the contents of the Scriptures of Moses, and (those of) Abraham who thoroughly and faithfully fulfilled (the commandments of his Lord? (The Scriptures say that) no soul that bears a burden shall bear the burden of another (soul). And that a human being will have (to his account) what he strives for. And that his strivings shall necessarily be seen (and evaluated), Then will he be recompensed fully and fairly.” (53:35–41)

It is only the awe and fear of Divine Majesty that can safeguard against sin and evil. Once you realize that Allâh is the Dispenser of punishment and that His punishment is severe (2:165), this awesome consciousness becomes a barrier against sins.

Suppression of Natural Instincts is not Piety

Allâh does not expect you to suppress your basic instincts and renounce the good things of life, nor has He told you that any human faculty or desire is in itself bad. You read:

يَا بَنِي آدَمَ حُذُوا زِينَتُكُمْ عِنْدَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ وَكُلُّوا وَاشْرَبُوا وَلَا شُرْفُوا ۖ إِنَّهُ
لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ

“O Children of Adam! Look to your elegance (by dressing properly) at every time and place of worship, and eat and drink but exceed not the bounds, for He does not love those who exceed the bounds.” (7:31)

The Qur’ânic moral teachings come to light through this verse. Your instincts and impulses become bad when you use them inappropriately

by exceeding limits. The Holy Qur'an has lauded those who control their libido but not the one who wipes out his capacity for libido. In fact, the triumph of joy and cheerfulness in this world is promoted not through snuffing out your emotions and instincts; rather, it lies in your proper, balanced, and appropriate use of them. Allâh also discourages the giving up of this worldly life and adopting monasticism:

وَرَهْبَانِيَّةً ابْتَدَعُوهَا مَا كَتَبْنَا هَا عَلَيْهِمْ إِلَّا ابْتِغَاءَ رَضْوَانَ اللَّهِ فَمَا رَعَوهَا
حَقًّا رَعَيْتَهَا ۝ فَاتَّيْنَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْهُمْ أَجْرًا هُمْ ۝ وَكَثِيرٌ مِنْهُمْ فَاسِقُونَ

“..but as for monasticism they invented it themselves, We did not enjoin it upon them. (They started monastic life) to seek Allâh's pleasure, but they did not observe it (as faithfully) as it should have been observed. Yet We duly rewarded such of them as (truly) believed but many of them were transgressors” (57:27).

The monks and recluses are often a burden, because they live off the society. In addition, some moral qualities require a minimum amount of interaction with society to develop fully. The Holy Qur'ân has never aimed at the elimination of any human power, faculty, or emotion; rather, it has stressed the need for the normalization and training of these natural powers.

قُلْ مَنْ حَرَمَ زِينَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي أَخْرَجَ لِعِبَادِهِ وَالطَّيِّبَاتِ مِنَ الرِّزْقِ ۝ قُلْ هِيَ
لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا خَالِصَةٌ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ۝

“Say, Who has made things unlawful Allâh's beautiful things of adornment and elegance which He has produced for His servants and the delicious and pure things of (His) providing? Say, They are primarily meant for the believers (and for the disbelievers too) in this present life (but) exclusively for (the believers) on the Day of Resurrection.” (7:32)

Holy Qur'ân does not advocate the abandonment of any of these instincts; rather, it has drawn attention towards the promotion of their growth. Behind all Qur'ânic commandments, the same wisdom is at work, and that is to train these instincts. You should not go about suppressing your physical desires and start living the life of a monk in order to attain His pleasure and acceptance. In other words, the measure of moral excellence lies midway between unrestricted license to follow your desires, on the one hand, and monasticism, on the other hand. Avoidance of attachment to physical needs, when carried out within certain limits, is useful in developing your spiritual powers, since no spiritual power can develop without your first controlling your physical powers. Such control is encouraged in the form of fasting, including *I'tikâf*, the ten days of seclusion devoted to Prayer during the month of fasting. It is the only such isolation recommended in Islam.



THE QUR'ÂNIC CONCEPT OF PARADISE

جَنَّاتٍ عَدْنٍ الَّتِي وَعَدَ الرَّحْمَنُ عِبَادَهُ بِالْغَيْبِ

"*Gardens of Eternity which the Most Gracious (God) has promised to his servants while (these Gardens are) yet hidden (from the sight)*" (19:61)

Jannât جَنَّاتٍ, mostly translated as Gardens, is the word used for Paradise. *Jannât* (plural) is derived from *Jana* جَنَّ meaning something hidden, something unknown (Lane). *Jannât* would thus mean things hidden. About the true believer who strive hard to please their Lord:

**يُبَشِّرُهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ بِرَحْمَةٍ مَّنْهُ وَرِضْوَانٍ وَجَنَّاتٍ لَهُمْ فِيهَا نَعِيمٌ مُّقِيمٌ حَالِدِينَ
فِيهَا أَبْدًا ۝ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ**

Their Lord gives them good tidings of great mercy from Him and of good pleasure and of Gardens obtaining lasting and abundant bliss for them.(9:21)

The Holy Qur'ân gives us the idea of many Divine Gardens, such as Jannât 'adnîn جَنَّاتٍ عَنْ "Gardens of Eternity" (9:72), Jannat al-Khuld جَنَّةُ الْخَلْدُ Eternal Gerdens (25:15); Jannât al-Nâ'im جَنَّاتٍ نَّعِيمٍ "Gardens of Bliss" (10:9), Jannât al-Firdaus جَنَّاتُ الْفِرْدَوْسِ "Gardens of Paradise" (18:107) -, Jannât al-Ma'wâ جَنَّاتُ الْمَأْوَى "Gardens of Eternal Abode" (32:19) or simply Jannât - جَنَّاتٍ "Gardens" (15:45). In verses 55:46-58 and 55:62-76 of the chapter al-Rahmân four Gardens are described in awe-inspiring words. They begin with the words: وَلَمْنَ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ جَنَّاتٍ "There are two Gardens (of bliss) for such as fear when they stand before (the judgment seat of) your Lord" (55:46). The verses that follow (55:48-58) give beautiful metaphoric description of these two Gardens. Then we read: "Besides these two (Gardens) there are two other Gardens" (55:62). What follows (55:64-76) describe the beauties of two "other" Gardens. This time the description is different from that of the two previous Gardens. No doubt, these are the descriptions of reward for different ranks of the dwellers of Paradise.

Descriptions of Paradise are metaphors: The Holy Qur'ân always uses the plural form Jannât (- Gardens) to describe Paradise and provides many symbolic descriptions of those Gardens. In Paradise there shall be delightful and goodly dwelling places (9:72); lofty mansions (25:75); couches and carpets (55:54); cushions (beautifully) arranged in rows (88:15); everlasting fruit and (so will be) its shade (13:35); clustered bananas and the thornless Sidrah, or Lote Tree (a symbol of bliss; (56:28-29); all kinds of fruit and dates and pomegranates (55:68); streams of water (which is) unstaling, and streams of milk the taste and flavor of which does not change, and streams of juice

extracted from grapes, a delight to the drinkers, and streams (too) of clarified honey (47:15); other wonderful drinks (76:17–18; 83:27); flesh of birds exactly to their taste (56:21); green robes of fine silk and rich brocade (18:31); bracelets and vessels of silver and gold (18:31; 22:23; 43:71; 76:21); and beautiful and pure spouses (37:48; 44:54; 52:20). The verses 55:46- 78 and 56:15-37 describe the utmost beauty of the Paradise. While describing the blessings of Paradise, special mention is made of *Sidrah Nifm* – a thornless lotus-tree – side by side with those of a garden. This is to signify these are things that are beyond the farthest end of human knowledge (cf. 56:28; 53:14-16). The verses 13:35; 47:15; 57:12 and others clearly convey that the description given for Paradise is symbolic and metaphoric. You can take these Qur'ânic verses either literally or metaphorically, but the fact remains, as we are told:

فَلَا تَعْلَمُ نَفْسٌ مَا أَخْبَى لَهُمْ مِنْ قُرَّةِ أَعْيُنٍ جَزَاءً بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

“No soul knows what (comforts) lie hidden for them [the believers in the form] of a joy to the eyes as a reward for their righteous deeds.” (32:17)

There are some who object that Allâh promises *houris* and virgin women to men only. They cite the verses such as: وَحُورٌ عَيْنٌ كَأَمْثَالِ اللُّؤْلُؤِ “*the minkûn*” “And (there will) fair houris with lovely large eyes. (*Chaste*) like pearls, well-guarded and well preserved” (56:22-23). Ignorance of the classical Arabic language and its mode of expression is the cause of this widespread assumption. *Houris* are the English rendering of the Arabic word *hûr* حُور, which is the plural form of *ahwar* (masculine) and *haura* حُور (feminine). Thus *hûr* stands both for masculine and feminine in plural form. It is derived from *hâra* حَارَ meaning “to be perplexed”, “to become dazzled”. It can be anything when one looks at, the eyes become perplexed and dazzled. This is how Paradise is described. *Hawâr* حَوَار also means intense whiteness and lustrous blackness (Lisân, Lane, Tâj). The “whiteness” and

“blackness” of eyes are brought in Arab poetry in relation to the whiteness of the eye ball and the blackness of iris. Another verse is cited to emphasize the claim.

إِنَّا أَنْشَأْنَا هُنَّ إِنْسَانٌ فَجَعَلْنَا هُنَّ أَبْكَارًا عَرْبًا أَتْرَابًا

“We have made them excellent and have raised them into a special new creation; and have made them virgins, pure and undefiled. They are the loving ones, suiting to their ages and matching them in every respect”. (56:22-24)

Expressions *Abkâra* ‘أَبْكَار’ *Urubâ* عَرْبَ and *Atrâba* أَتْرَابَ in the verses above are being used to describe those who are in Gardens of Paradise. These words are metaphors of beauty. We cannot and should not restrict them to virgin females waiting for every Muslim. Men prefer to think mostly of women when they read words like virgins, pure and undefiled. Allegory and metaphor cannot form the basis of Faith, and if you base your faith on figurative statements, forsaking the basic principles, the message in them and neglecting the original meaning, you will go astray and cause others to fall away from the right path. The metaphors are the ornament of a language. They make expression effective. They enhance the rhetorical dignity of a book, no matter whether it is the word of God or that of a mortal. The objection as to why Allâh made use of metaphors in Scriptures will not be proper. It betrays the ignorance of the object or with regard to aesthetic literature and elegance of a language to describe a beauty hidden from human eyes (13:35; 40:8).

Reward of Paradise is according to the worth of deeds: Just as in the competitions of the worldly affairs, not all are ranked equal; some are the foremost and others stay behind and there are some who do not qualify. Similar are the ranks of those who carry out acts of righteousness and kindness, as the Holy Qur’ân says:

وَلِكُلِّ دَرَجَاتٍ مَمَّا عَمِلُوا ۖ وَلِيُوْفِيهِمْ أَعْمَالَهُمْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ

And all shall have positions and grades (with their Lord) according to the worth of their deeds; and (it shall be so) that He may repay them fully for their deeds and that they may not be treated unjustly. (46:19)

Some are the foremost (56:10) and the others are those who are left behind (56:9) and that “they cannot be treated alike”. The rewards shall be according to the efforts made to attract the pleasure of Allâh.

كُلُّ أُمَّةٍ تُدْعَى إِلَىٰ كِتَابِهَا الْيَوْمَ تُجْزَوْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

“Every community will be summoned to (face) their records (of deeds). (And it shall be said to them,) ‘This day you shall be recompensed according to your deeds.’” (45:28)

Cheerfulness of Paradise begins in this very life

The Holy Qur’ân tells us that one of the many promised Gardens is on this very earth (cf. 10:64). Allâh says:

لَهُمُ الْبُشْرَىٰ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ

“They shall have glad tidings (for they commune with their Lord) in the present life and (also) in the Hereafter.” (10:64)

The glad tidings الْبُشْرَى in the present life are the taste of the “Gardens” promised in the Hereafter (89:28). We read: “They fulfil their duties (towards Allâh and His creation) and fear the Day the woes of which shall be widespread. They give food for the love of Him to the indigent, the orphan and the captive. They say We feed you only to seek the pleasure of Allâh, we desire no recompense from you nor thanks. We fear from our Lord the Day of frowning and distress. Allâh will guard them from the evils of that Day and bestow on them cheerfulness and happiness (in this world)”. (76:5-7).

In the words of Jalâl al-Dîn Rûmî: “When have you done something wrong without suffering the consequences? When have you have done something good without blessing being showered on you? If you grasp the cord of understanding, and look at this world with a seeing eye, you will not need to wait until the Day of Judgment to see the effects of all your actions. If you want a pure heart, be observant, and see for every act its own response” (*Mathnawî* IV: 2458). You read:

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَسْرِي نَفْسَهُ أَبْتَغِيَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ ۖ وَاللَّهُ رَءُوفٌ بِالْعِبَادِ

“Of the people there is he who sacrifices his very life seeking the pleasure of Allâh. And (as a result) Allâh is very kind and compassionate toward such (of His) servants.” (2:207)

They reached the exalted spiritual stations during their present life, and as a result, they found deliverance from sufferings and sorrows (10:62) in this world. The souls of these devoted servants of Lord are at peace in this very world. They are already living in Paradise-like condition. They reached the exalted spiritual stations in their present life, and as a result, they found deliverance from sufferings and sorrows of the Hereafter (10:62). They are those servants of Allâh that He has chosen for Himself. They are the *حُورٌ مَّقْصُورَاتٌ فِي الْخِيَام* - *pure and chaste houris confined to (their goodly) pavilions*“ (55:72). Allâh has confined them into “pavilions” so that no ordinary gaze falls on them. They do not make themselves noticeable with miracles (-*kramât*), and they make no show of their piety. People do not point at them and take notice of them because of their humble nature that confines them. They are in fact the hidden guardians of the earth. Their hidden holiness continues in the Hereafter. Abû Umama transmitted the following *Hadîh-i-Qudî*: “Allâh said, ‘Among the most intimate to Me of My servants are the believers of humble means who find their pleasure in Prayers, worshiping their Lord secretly in the most beautiful way. They are hidden among the people. They are not always pointed out, their mourners are few’.”

Entering the Gardens of Paradise is not the End

After allotting people “Hell” or “Paradise”, the job of God is not over. You read: “*On this Day, the owners of Paradise will be occupied (in their pursuits), rejoicing,*” (36:55). In other words, the life in paradise will not be one of inaction.

لَكِنَ الَّذِينَ اتَّقُوا رَبَّهُمْ غُرَفٌ مِّنْ فَوْقِهَا غُرَفٌ مَّبْنَيَةٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا
الْأَنْهَارُ

“*But for those who take their Lord as a shield, there awaits them lofty mansions, story upon story with streams running beneath them*” (39:20)

The “lofty mansions, story upon story,” are a reference to an endless advancement in heavenly life. Entering the “Gardens of Eternity” is not the end of our journey, and the job of Allâh is not over. Even after entering paradise, you will not stop traveling. Crossing from your grave to the way station of resurrection, you will be carried to the abode of your felicity. You shall have positions and ranks with your Lord according to the worth of your deeds (46:19) and knowledge. Then from there you will embark on another never-ending journey:

يَوْمَ لَا يُخْزِي اللَّهُ النَّبِيَّ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ ۖ نُورُهُمْ يَسْعَى بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ
وَبِأَيْمَانِهِمْ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا أَتْمِمْ لَنَا نُورَنَا وَاغْفِرْ لَنَا ۖ

“*On that day (when human beings will be raised to life again) Allâh will not disgrace the Prophet nor those who have believed with him. Their light [nûr] will advance swiftly (radiating) in front of them and on their right hands while they will go on (praying and) saying, Our Lord! (Continue to) perfect our light for us [atmim lanâ nûranâ] and protect us (against our lapses). Verily You are the Possessor of prudential power to do every desired thing.*” (66:8)

In the language of the Saints, the Gardens of Paradise will be the Gardens of Divine Attributes (*Jannât al-Sifâfat-i-Ilâhi*), where there will be roaming freely in the meadows with running streams of Divine Converse. The progress therein shall be perpetual until you arrive at attributes that fall short of His Attributes. Those who reach close to the Divine Essence (*ma'rîfat al-Dhât*) will embrace the least glimmer of the Most-Radiant Light, which is concealed behind the Veil of Protecting Might (*hijâb al-'Izzâ*). Allâh invites us all to His Garden:

وَسَارُّوا إِلَى مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا السَّمَاوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ

“Wing your way to the protection of your Lord and to the Paradise whose expanse is as (vast as) the heavens and the earth” (3:133)



DIVINE PUNISHMENT AND CONCEPT OF “HELL”

أَيْطُمْعُ كُلُّ امْرَىءٍ مِّنْهُمْ أَن يُدْخَلَ جَنَّةً نَّعِيمٍ كَلَّا ۝ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاهُمْ مِّمَّا يَعْلَمُونَ
فَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِرَبِّ الْمَشَارِقِ وَالْمَغارِبِ إِنَّا لَقَادِرُونَ عَلَىٰ أَن نُبَدِّلَ خَيْرًا مِّنْهُمْ
وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمَسْبُوقِينَ فَذَرْهُم يَخُوضُوا وَيَلْعُبُوا حَتَّىٰ يُلَاقُو يَوْمَهُمُ الَّذِي
يُوَعَّدُونَ يَوْمَ يَخْرُجُونَ مِنَ الْأَجْدَاثِ سِرَاعًا كَانُوهُمْ إِلَىٰ نُصُبٍ يُوَفِّقُونَ
خَاسِعَةً أَبْصَارُهُمْ تَرْهَقُهُمْ ذَلَّةٌ ۝ ذَلِكَ الْيَوْمُ الَّذِي كَانُوا يُوَعَّدُونَ

“Does each and every one of them covet to be admitted to the Garden of Bliss. No (never shall they enter it). We have created them for that substantial purpose (the worth of) which they know. But nay! I call to witness the Lord of the easts and the wests. We

are certainly Powerful to change (them into) better beings than they are and that We can never be frustrated (in Our purpose). Therefore, leave them alone to indulge in unimportant conversation and to amuse themselves (in idle pursuits) until they meet that day of theirs that they are warned of, the day when they (having risen to life) will come out hastily from their graves as though they were racing to a target (which they must meet). Their eyes will be downcast and shameful; humiliation will be overwhelming them. Such shall be the punishment of the day with which they are being threatened”. (70:36-44)

This is a clear message of the Holy Qur’ân related to the purpose of divine punishment in the Hereafter – to change the corrupt ones into better ones. The verses tell us that all human beings – good or bad - are created with a special purpose. That purpose is already made known in the previous verses of this chapter (70:22-35). The divine aim of “punishment” is the to remove the impure from the pure (8:37). Good is part of your essence. How could it be otherwise, as “Perfectly Good Creator” created your essence? Evil is not a part of your natural repertoire. To be good and do good is the prescribed way (95:4), while to be evil, and do evil is an option given to you (91:7-8). Evil is a learnt behaviour. If you are conscious of the consequences, you will determine your behaviour and refrain from evil. The punishment is the introduction of aversive stimuli aimed at reducing the unwanted behaviour. A learnt behaviour can be decreased or even eradicated by punishment and expectation of reward; what may be called negative and positive reinforcement. The same principle applies to divine punishment. The divine punishments aim at reducing excess of evil that coexist with inherent good.

The word used for punishment in the Holy Qur’ân is ‘*adzâb* عَذَابٌ (2:7; 2:10; 2:90). It is derived from ‘*adzuba*, which is something that can be easily swallowed, something that is digestible. ‘*Adzbun* is to deny a thing, to hinder one, to debar, to prevent (*Tâj al-‘Arûs, Lisân al-‘Arab*,

Lane). Punishment is called ‘*adzâb*’ as it hinders, debars and prevents from committing evil acts. There are different kinds of punishment mentioned in the Holy Qur’ân such as: عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ “mighty punishment” (2:7), عَذَابٌ مُّهِينٌ “woeful punishment” (2:10), عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ “humiliating punishment” (2:90), عَذَابٌ النَّارِ “punishment of the fire” (2:126), عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ “severe punishment”, عَذَابٌ وَاصِبٌ “perpetual punishment” (37:9), “the greatest punishment” (88:25) or simply العَذَابُ الْأَكْبَرُ “the punishment” (2:96). The reader should differentiate the word for punishment (‘*adzâb*’) with definite article *al*, as in *al-Adzâb al-Âkhirah* (العَذَابُ الْآخِرَةُ) (11:103) and without the definite article says in above examples. When used with definite article *al* the punishment refers to the great punishment of the Hereafter, otherwise it may mean any punishment.

The word used for Hell is *al-Jahîm* (الجَحِيمُ) (83:16), translated as Gehenna. It is derived from *jahama* that means to have looks with severe, stern and morose face. Hell is also called *Jahannam* جَهَنَّمُ (14:16; 16:29; 20:74; 39:60...), which means, “a dark and waterless place that makes the faces of its dwellers ugly and contracted” (Lane, Lisân). The “fire of Hell” is *nâr jahannam* نَارُ جَهَنَّمُ (9:35). Other words used for Hell are, “The great Fire” (النَّارُ الْكَبِيرُ (87:12) and “blazing fire” نَارًا حَامِيًّا. Different kind of evil acts have different grades and types of punishments. Not all punishments refer to the great punishment of the Hereafter (6:43; 7:4; 7:97; 7:134-136; 8:32; 10:98; 15:83; 32:21). You read:

وَخَلَقَ اللَّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ وَلِتُجْزَى كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ

“Allâh has created the heavens and the earth with an eternal purpose to ensure that every soul be recompensed according to his deeds and no one be done injustice to.” (45:22)

Creation of heaven and earth was Allâh’s free choice. He gave you some of His attribute of free choice. Out of His Great Mercy, He then guides you to make the right choice (91:7-8), and informs you about the recompense for your right or wrong decision (91:9-10)

“Punishment” is the natural Consequence of Evil Acts

In a society, there are doers of good, and there are doers of evil. The doers of good may or may not get a reward, but those who commit crime, when caught, are liable for punishment according to state laws. The punishment may be hard or mild, depending upon the crime committed. Sometimes the criminal escapes. Divine law is not different from the state laws of punishment, with a difference that nothing remains concealed and nothing escapes from Divine recording. You are told every action, good or bad, is recorded (18:49; 19:79; 36:12)

كُلُّ أُمَّةٍ تُدْعَى إِلَىٰ كِتَابِهَا الِيَوْمَ تُجْزَوْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

“Every community will be summoned to (face) their records (of deeds). (And it shall be said to them,) ‘This day you shall be recompensed according to your deeds.’” (45:28)

The Holy Qur’ân mentions all possible bad actions and evil deeds that are to be avoided if one wants to escape punishment in this world or in the Hereafter (2:178, 188,206; 4:16, 26; 5:33, 38; 6:120; 24:2,4...). Your failure to avoid them leads to the ordeals you suffer in your life. These sufferings may continue in the Hereafter. Contrary to criminal laws of the society, Allâh punishes not every crime – great or small.

Divine Punishment starts before the Day of Resurrection

**وَالْمُرْسَلَاتِ عُرْفًا لِالْعَاصِفَاتِ عَصْنِيَّا وَالنَّاشرَاتِ نَشْرًا لِالْفَارِقَاتِ
فَرْقًا لِالْمُلْقِيَّاتِ ذِكْرًا اعْذَرًا أَوْ ثَذَرًا**

“I call to witness those (messengers of Truth) who are sent forth to spread goodness (in continual series). Those that drive off forcefully (falsehood and forces of evil as chaff is carried before the wind), And those that spread (the truth) far and wide, And those (forces) that fully distinguish (the right from the wrong), And those (forces) carrying the (Divine) Message of (rising to) eminence far and wide, (And those presenting the source of eminence) in an attempt to purify (some) from the abomination of sin and to warn (others)” (77:1–6)

These verses tell you that God ever sent His Prophets with a message and teachings to reform corrupt societies. They not only brought with them the divine guidance, but also, in case of denial, warned of pending punishments. Their narrations in the Holy Qur’ân inform you of different kinds of punishment people received because of their denial (15:79,83; 16:26,113; 29:5). You read: “*And We certainly destroyed several generations before you when they went wrong in spite of the fact that there had come to them their Messengers (of God) with clear proofs but they would not believe. Just (as We repaid them) so We repay all such guilty people (with punishment)*” (10:13). This verse and several others (16:63) point out that, with the forces of reformation, punishment of sin starts already in this very world (6:43; 7:4; 7:97; 7:134-136; 8:32; 10:98,102; 15:83...). The punishment people receive is not because of their disbelief in the Lordship of Allâh but a consequence of their evil action (10:98; 11:116-117). He says: “*And if Allâh were to seize the people for their (committing) injustice (and their ascribing partners with Him), He would not leave any (unjust and polytheistic) living and crawling creature on the face of the earth*” (16:61). Allâh warns you ever again to be at guard before you decide the way you go. If you make wrong decision, He gives long respite (7:183; 22:44) out of His Mercy, to think over and mend (7:156) though He says:

هُوَ الْقَادِرُ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَبْعَثَ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابًا مِّنْ فَوْقِكُمْ أَوْ مِّنْ تَحْتِ أَرْجُلِكُمْ أَوْ
يَلْبِسَكُمْ شَيْئًا وَيُذِيقَ بَعْضَكُمْ بِأَسْبَاطَ بَعْضٍ

“He has the power to send upon you a calamity from above and from beneath your feet or He may throw you into confusion by making you confront with conflicting parties, and make you taste the dissension (and violence) of one another.” (6:65)

In the Holy Qur’ân punishment of fire (عَذَابِ النَّارِ) (2:126) refers mostly to the ordeals and destructions of warfare. The word *nâr* (نَارٌ fire) is often used in Arabic as a symbol of war. The Arabs used to kindle fire as a sign of imminent war. There is yet another type of punishment of “fire” mentioned in the Holy Book. This is the punishment that “rises over the feelings of the hearts” (104:5-7) and kindles fire in the heart and burns it. You read:

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الْحُطْمَةُ نَارُ اللَّهِ الْمُوْقَدَّةُ نَارُ اللَّهِ الْمُوْقَدَّةُ

“And what should make you know what the crushing torment is? (It is) the fire set ablaze by Allâh, which rises over (the feelings of) the hearts” (104:5–7)

Vice, crime, unfulfilled worldly desires, unsatisfied impulses and other sinful acts generate a feeling of restlessness and distress in conscious hearts. Persistent grief and anxiety brings the soul out of equilibrium. From the sorrows that emerge from such unfulfilled worldly desires, and the *nafs al-Lawwâmah*, the self-reproaching soul which stirs conscious hearts at the time of evil acts, a fire is set ablaze that makes the hearts burn. This burning is felt like a “crushing torment”. Such hearts suffer from extended grief and weariness (35:35–36). Thus, this “crushing torment”, originates already in this present life in the form of spiritual and emotional torture. This punishment remains hidden from the eyes of others and continues into the hereafter as the “the hellish fire”.

The Door of Repentance Remains Open

إِنَّمَا التَّوْبَةُ عَلَى اللَّهِ لِلَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ السُّوءَ بِجَهَالَةٍ ثُمَّ يَتُوبُونَ مِنْ قَرِيبٍ
فَأُولَئِكَ يَتُوبُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ ۝ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ حَكِيمًا

“Verily, Allâh undertakes to accept the repentance of those who do evil through lack of knowledge, then repent soon after. Such are the persons towards whom Allâh turns with mercy. And Allâh is All-Knowing, All-Wise” (4:17).

Allâh has kept the door of repentance open if you are indulged in evil acts (6:54). But repentance is of no avail if you go on doing evil until, when death visits you, you say, I do repent now, nor it is of any use to those who die whilst they are engrossed in evil acts. Before this Allâh has given a long respite to you to think over and repent the evil ways (7:183; 22:44).

A great prominence is given to the Attributes of Mercy and Forgiveness: *al-Rahmân*, *al-Rahîm*, and *al-Ghafîr* of Allâh. The Holy Qur’ân says: “He has taken upon Himself (the rule of) mercy” (6:12; 6:54). There is a hidden Mercy in His wrath (- *ghadzab*) and His punishment, whereas in human affairs there is anger often without any mercy whatsoever. If a human being gets angry, at the moment of his anger, he typically will not think of any mercy, and his acting out of anger will not contain any tinge of mercifulness. Allâh’s wrath is never free from being mixed with His Mercy, because Allâh is “the Lord of All-Embracing Mercy” (6:147). There is a great message of hope and a feeling of love inspired in you when you read:

قُلْ يَا عِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِنْ رَحْمَةِ اللَّهِ ۝ إِنَّ
اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا ۝ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

“Say, O My servants, who have committed excesses (and wrongs) against their own souls, do not despair of the mercy of

Allâh. Surely, Allâh forgives all sins. He is the Great Protector, the Ever Merciful.” (39:53)

Such a Merciful and most Gracious One cannot punish human beings without there being some elaborate reformative design that would set them again on the right path for a higher and progressive life after they have been cleansed from the dirt of sin and evil. When He resorts to punishment, His punishment cannot be ruthless and never-ending, but is rather like the punishment of a mother towards her child (101:8–11), a punishment to reform, not to devastate.

The Persian mystical poet Hâfiż Shîrâzî said: The Great Mercy wants to reach out and teach us. Break all our teacup talk of gods. If you give the Beloved His choice, on some nights He would drag you by your hair around the room, taking away from your grip all those toys of the world that bring you no joy. The Beloved sometimes gets tired of speaking sweetly and wants to rip to shreds all your erroneous notions of truth. The Beloved sometimes wants to do us a great favour by holding us upside down and shaking all the nonsense out.

We read in verse 4:48, “Surely, Allâh does not forgive that a partner be associated with Him but He forgives everything short of it to whomsoever He will. And whoso associates a partner with Allâh has indeed committed a very great sin”. This verse and the similar verse 4:116 emphasize the seriousness of the sin of associating partners with Allâh. The passage uses the word *ghufiru*, translated as “forgive,” whose root word, *ghafara* means, “to cover up,” “to envelop,” “to curtain,” or “to provide protection.” One can only protect or cover a body. These associates are non-existent, so He does not find them, and that is why He does not cover them. Thus, this verse expresses the extreme dislike of this action on the part of Allâh by saying these associates are “non-existent” before Him. The statement “Associate no partners with Allâh, surely this (act of) associating partners (with Him) is a grievous wrong.” (31:13) is the cornerstone of all statements in the Holy Qur’ân. Association of other gods with Allâh is not

limited to the worship of objects of nature or to suppose that any of His creation, dead or alive, possess one or more of the Attributes of Allâh to the same extent. To go after ones desires, making these desires the object of goal and ultimately object of “worship” is also a form of association with Allâh (25:43). Even here, Allâh has kept open the door of repentance open and forgiveness during your lifetime. It is not impossible that one may well realize that he was treading on the wrong path and running after a shadow. He may feel the need of correction and repentance. This door is still open to him during his lifetime. On the Day of Judgement Allâh’s *Mâlikîyyat* (Kingship) shall prevail. He may forgive all those sinful acts for which you were unable to ask forgiveness during your lifetime, with the exception of “associating partners” with Allâh. This act will not go unpunished unless the sinner turned to Him with repentance during his lifetime. إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ *He is the Great Protector, the Ever Merciful.*” (39:53)

Good and Evil shall not Continue to Co-exist after Death

You will observe that good and evil are two opposing forces that exist side by side in societies and individuals. Good without evil has no meaning. Likewise, evil without good has no meaning either. Good is absence of evil. The presence of one makes you realize the absence of other. In a person, one condition may dominate the other (41:35). Allâh says on the Day of judgement He will separate the two:

لِيَمِيزَ اللَّهُ الْخَيْثَ مِنَ الطَّيِّبِ وَيَجْعَلَ الْخَيْثَ بَعْضَهُ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ فَيَرْكُمُهُ
جَمِيعًا فَيَجْعَلُهُ فِي جَهَنَّمَ ۝ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ

“So that Allâh may distinguish and separate the impure from the pure and (in doing so) He will pile the impure one upon another, then He will huddle them all together, then He will consign them [the huddled pile] to Gehenna. Such, in fact, are the very losers.” (8:37)

To be good and do good is the prescribed way, while to be evil, and do evil is an option. This option shall be removed on the Day of Judgement. Allâh will separate people according the grades of their actions so “*that He might show whoever of you was the best in deeds and conduct.*” (11:7). Then He says:

إِنَّ الْمُجْرِمِينَ فِي عَذَابٍ جَهَنَّمَ حَالِدُونَ لَا يُفَتَّرُ عَنْهُمْ وَهُمْ فِيهِ مُنْلَسُونَ وَمَا
ظَلَمْنَاهُمْ وَلَكِنْ كَانُوا هُمُ الظَّالِمِينَ وَنَادَوْا يَمَّالِكَ لِيُقْضَى عَلَيْنَا رَبُّكَ ۖ قَالَ
إِنَّكُمْ مَكِثُونَ لَقَدْ جِئْنُكُم بِالْحَقِّ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَكُمْ لِلْحَقِّ كَفُرُهُونَ

“The guilty will be abiding in the torment of Gehanna. That (torment) will not be allowed to abate for them (unless they are completely cleansed from their rust), and once caught in it they shall completely despair. (By punishing them so) We did them no injustice, rather (We were just, and) it was they themselves who were the unjust and wrongdoers indeed (and corrupted their own souls by their actions). And they will cry, O Mâlik [the angel in charge of Hell], let your Lord finish with us (and thus rid us of the torment once for all). He will reply, ‘You have to remain (here) in this very state’. (God will say,) ‘We really brought you the Truth, yet most of you were those who found the truth hard (to follow)’.” (43:74–78)

Ibn al-‘Arabî said, “Dont you see that if one is in the Fire, it is because Allâh is just? If he is in paradise, it is because of His *fadzal* [favour, graciousness]; Allâh favours and obliges. If you say this one is an infidel, I say, Allâh is just. If you say this one is a man of Faith, I say, Allâh favours and obliges with His paradise. He decrees and differentiates the affair.”

“Hell” is the Manifestation of Allâh’s Mercy

The Holy Qur’ân uses many Words to differentiate the various acts of evil—such Words as *dzanb*, *iitham*, *‘udwân*, *sharr*, *fuhush*, *sûi*, *isyân*,

fisq, fujur, khatâ’; fasâd, baghî, munkar and kufar. Each of these words expresses a different aspect of evil. Allâh says evil is a disease of heart (2:10; 5:52; 8:49; 9:125). For such souls, a curing treatment is needed. Then Allâh says evil deeds rust the hearts:

كَلَّا ۖ بْنَ رَانَ عَلَىٰ فُلُوْبِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ

“The truth is that their (evil) deeds have rusted their hearts” (83:14)

The Ever Merciful cannot leave the corrupted and rusted souls as such forever. The rust must be removed through heat and then cleansed by fire. He says: “*Then your hearts hardened after that, so that they were (hard) like rocks or harder still*” (2:74). Such hard “hearts” should be “melted” with the Fire of Hell *nâr jahannam*. You always get a chance to clean the dirt on your heart before it gets “rusted” and hard during your lifetime. Unfortunately, many die before their process of cleansing and healing is finished. For such souls, a curing treatment is needed. You are told:

وَأَمَّا مَنْ حَفَّتْ مَوَازِينُهُ قَائِمُهُ هَاوِيَةٌ وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا هِيَهُ نَارٌ حَامِيَةٌ

“But as for the person whose scales (of good deeds) are light (and of no account), The abyss [Gehenna] shall then be a (nursing) mother to him (till the souls are completely cleansed of the taint of sin and they are reborn). Ah! What should make you know what that (abyss) is! It is a blazing Fire (for burning out all the dross that people collect by leading a sinful life in this world)” (101:8–11)

Here the Holy Qur’ân has used the Word *أُمَّةٌ, ummahu*, “(his) nursing mother,” to describe the hellfire. It is called *ummahu*, ones nursing mother, to indicate that one’s connection to hellfire is similar to that of a baby with its mother. As the embryo goes through various stages of development in the womb until it is born, so will the guilty sinners pass through different processes until their souls are ready for a new

birth and start a development towards eternal life in His Gardens. The Word *umma*, the nursing mother, also describes the relationship between mother and child. The mother not only admonishes a child in order to educate and teach good manners, she also at times punishes him. She nurses him whenever the child becomes ill and needs treatment, even admits him into a hospital when required. However, mostly she grants him protection and care. “The bosom of hell is like the bosom of a mother.” In this abode, the dweller of hell is nursed and brought up in the same manner as a child is nursed and brought up. Moreover, as the love and mercy of a mother towards her misbehaved, naughty, and discourteous child is stronger than her anger and punishment, so is the Love and Mercy of the All-Mighty Lord, because He has not only the love of a father but also the kindness of a mother for His creation. Then you are told:

قُل لِّلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا سَتُغْلِبُونَ وَتُحْشَرُونَ إِلَى جَهَنَّمَ ۝ وَبِئْسَ الْمِهَادُ

“Say to those who disbelieve, You shall soon be overcome and gathered together to be driven towards Gehenna. What an evil abode it is! ” (3:12)

Allâh says Gehenna is *al-Mihâd* – a word derived from *mahada* - meaning an abode, a resting place that lies spread out with provisions (*Tâj al-'Arûs*, *Lisân al-'Arab*, Lanes dictionary), a kind of convalescent home. Hell is also called the “friendly protector” *maulâ*, of the sinners. You read, “*Hell-Fire is the final abode of you all. That is your friendly-protector*” مَأْوَكُمُ النَّارُ ۝ هِيَ مَوْلَكُمْ (57:15). This is to indicate its role as a protecting friend that hinders from further sinful acts. *Mirṣâd* is another description of hell. You read:

إِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ كَانَتْ مِرْصَادًا لِّلظَّاغِينَ مَاءِ الْبَيْتَيْنِ فِيهَا أَحْقَابًا لَا يَدْعُونَ فِيهَا بَرْدًا
وَلَا شَرَابًا إِلَّا حَمِيمًا وَغَسَاقًا لَجَزَاءً وِفَاقًا

“Surely, only Gehenna shall be in wait (for those who deny the truth). A closed place for the rebellious. There they shall be staying for long (till all their maladies are completely treated). There they shall find no (comfort of) coolness, nor (intoxicating) drink. All that they shall have will be boiling water or stinking fluid (befitting their disease), A befitting recompense (for the evils done by them)” (78:21–26).

Mirsâd, مِرْصَاد (78:21–22), is a closed observing place (Lane). Patient who receive treatments are observed closely. They are under watchful eyes when under intensive care. Hell is also called *mathwa'* - مَثْوَى - a resort. These verses provide a description of hell where the diseased souls (the sinner) will get treatment. “A nursing home, hospital and a recovering center, a resort, observing place” is the concept we get about hell from the Holy Qur’ân. Hell is thus a remedial place and a permanent resort. It is not for the purpose of torture or reprisal and retaliation, but for the preparation of the corrupted human souls for further never-ending progress, to make the soul fit for further advancement so that it may be awakened for a higher eternal life. So hell is a kind of hospital, a nursing home, established for the treatment of those who were suffering from some ugly and painful diseases, so consequently, during their stay in hell, there would naturally be shrieks and cries, weeping and mourning. You read: “As for the wretched, they shall be in the Fire, where they shall moan and cry” (11:106). Just as in the case of the physically sick, the spiritually sick will have to taste some bitter and nauseous medicine and take distasteful hot drinks (bitter teas and so on), a medicine that “neither nourishes nor satisfies” (88:7) their hunger or thirst. Like those who suffer from a skin disease, they shall also need protective coverings or even a change of skin (22:19–20), and like those with cancer, they shall have to undergo some sort of surgical operation (22:21; 23:104) and bandages (14:50).

In order to point out another aspect of hell, the Holy Qur’ân has called it *fitnah* (37:63), an expression denoting the assaying of gold and the casting of that gold into the fire in order to purify it. The use of this Word is a clear indication that another purpose of the hellfire is the purification of the precious human soul, which was rusted because of sin (which is the non-use or misuse of human faculties) during ones lifetime on this earth. Such a soul must undergo those severe trials, which it, out of laziness, neglected in this life (70:23–34; 73:20) and thus must now experience through the remedial ordeals of hellfire.

These four Words—*umma*, the nursing mother (101:9), *maulâ*, the friendly protector of the sinners (57:15), *mirsâd*, the nursing home (78: 21–22), and *fitnah*, the assaying of gold and the casting of it into the fire in order to purify it (37:63)—describe the Qur’ânic concept of hell by informing you that its purpose is to raise the human soul and purify it of the dross of sins, just as you would apply the rule of reward and punishment to educate and train your children. Hell is thus a purgatory for one’s moral and spiritual diseases. In spite of all this suffering, the treatment in hell will cure him, and he “shall neither die therein nor live” (87:13). The Holy Qur’ân has clearly laid down the same laws for the punishment in hell as are imposed on human beings here in this world for disease and misbehavior (7:94–100).

Jalâl al-Dîn Rûmî explained the concept of punishment by fire in the following words in his *Mathnawî*: “Look at the pea in the pot, how it leaps up when it feels the fire. While boiling, it rises to the top and cries, Why are you setting fire under me? No! Boil nicely now, and do not try to leap away from One Who has made the fire. It is not because you are hateful to Him that He boils you, He boils you so that you gain flavor, become nutritious, and mingle with essential spirits. This affliction is not because you are despised. When you were green and fresh, you were drinking the water in the garden, and that water drinking was for the sake of this fire.”

Hell is therefore not a punishment resulting from some sort of revenge of Allâh’s. Because of His great Mercy, the stay of the sinners in hell is only for a limited (though very long) time and hell is not eternal (6:128; 11:107; 78:23). This is the consequence of His Attribute “All Embracing Mercy,” which dominates everything (6:147). Otherwise, if the punishment were eternal and never-ending, it could only have been inflicted by a most cruel and merciless God. Compare this interpretation with the Christian belief regarding hell, generally defined as the eternal fate of unrepentant sinners after this life.

Divine Punishment shall be According to Evil Deeds

وَالَّذِينَ كَسَبُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ جَزَاءٌ سَيِّئَةٌ يُمْثِلُهَا

“And (as for) those who knowingly committed evil deeds, they shall be punished in measure with the evil done” (10:27)

Not all your evil actions have the same level and intensity. They will not get the same level and intensity of punishment. Just as not all good deeds shall get the same recompense, so not all corrupted souls will get the same quality of punishment. All your actions, good or bad are conserved. You will reap the reward of your actions accordingly.

كُلُّ أُمَّةٍ تُدْعَى إِلَى كِتَابِهَا الْيَوْمَ ثُجْرُونَ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

“Every community will be summoned to (face) their records (of deeds). (And it shall be said to them,) ‘This day you shall be recompensed according to your deeds.’” (45:28)

The verse, like many other verses (see 18:49; 19:79; 36:12), informs us about the divine law of “conservations of actions”. You further read:

أَمْ حَسِبَ الَّذِينَ اجْتَرَحُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ أَنْ نَجْعَلُهُمْ كَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ سَوَاءً مَحِيَّا هُمْ وَمَمَاتُهُمْ ۝ سَاءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ

“Do those who commit evil deeds think that We will treat them like those who believe and (accordingly) do deeds of righteousness so that their lives and deaths be alike? How ill they judge!” (45:21)

Allâh has arranged different levels and ranks in hellfire for particular evil deeds in a known proportion. *“He will recompense the evil doers according to their deeds,”* (53:3). He says: *“The hypocrites shall surely be in the lowest reaches of the Fire”* (4:145). This is because they received and heard the Divine Messages, and still they conformed only to the outer forms of prescribed commandments while inwardly not having the least belief in them. This sets them apart from other nonbelievers, who never heard the Divine Messages or were kept unaware of them.

You are told that the dwellers of hell will be made to drink intensely hot or intensely cold and stinking fluid, because they had not made proper use of their faculties, had gone to extremes in using them, and had not followed the golden mean (38:56–57). Thus, the purpose of the remedy is to achieve equilibrium by lessening that which had increased in intensity and increasing that which had lessened in intensity.

Punishment in “Hell” will not be Eternal

لَا يُشْنَىٰ فِيهَا أَحْقَابًا

“There they shall be staying long” (78:23)

The stay in hell has been described in the above verse with the Word *ahqâba* أَحْقَاب (78:23). *Ahqâba* is derived from *haqiba*, meaning rainless year, as in *haqaba al-Matar* - “rain was delayed.” Thus, *ahqâba* is a long period but not eternity, not forever. Here the Qur’ânic concept of hell is different from the Christian view that the stay in “hell” is forever. It is also because of the four descriptions

(*umma, maulâ, mirsâd, and fitnah*) that the stay of the sinners in hell is only for a limited (though long) time; therefore, hell is not eternal (6:128; 11:107; 78:23).

In the Divine Knowledge, which the Holy Qur’ân brings to you, Allâh is described as sometimes pleased (98:8) and sometimes displeased (16:106). The anger causes the pleasure to cease, the pleasure causes the anger to cease, and pleasure is the preference also sought by Allâh. It is therefore not possible that the people of the hellfire will suffer Allâh’s anger and displeasure forever without ever enjoying His pleasure. The dwellers of hellfire will eventually be relieved because of the inclination and preference of God for pleasure. It will be His pleasure to relieve the inmates of hellfire ultimately from its tortures.

The Holy Prophet (pbuh) is reported to have said, “Surely a day will come over Hell when there shall not be a single human being in it” (*Fath al-Bayân* 4:372). According to ‘Abdullâh Ibn Mas‘ûd (d. 29 AH / 650 CE), the Prophet (pbuh) said, “Surely a time will come over Hell when its gates shall be blown by wind, there shall be none in it”, and a saying of ‘Umar^(rz), the second Caliph, is recorded as follows: “Even if the dwellers in Hell may be numberless as the sands of the desert, a day will come when they will be taken out of it” (*Fath al-Bayân* 4:372). Similar sayings are reported from many other Companions of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), such as Ibn ‘Umar, Jabîr Ibn Abdullâh, Abû Sa‘îd, Abû Hurairah, as well as from the learned men of the next generation; later such *imâms* as Ibn al-‘Arabî, Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn Qayyim, and many others have held similar views.

There is a *Hadîth-i-Qudsi* transmitted by the Holy Prophet (pbuh): Allâh said, “The angels have interceded, the believers have interceded, now the Most Merciful will intercede. He will draw out from the fire even persons who never offered acts of goodness and whose hardened hearts have been melted. He will then immerse them in the river that flows before the entrance of Paradise called the River of Life.” (Narrated by Jabîr Ibn Abdullâh). See here Chapter 45.

NOTIONS OF THE DOCTRINE OF “ATONEMENT”

وَمَنْ يَكْسِبْ حَطَبَيَّةً أَوْ إِثْمًا ثُمَّ يَرْمُ بِهِ بَرِيًّا فَقَدْ احْتَمَلَ بُهْتَنًا وَإِثْمًا مُّبِينًا

“But one who commits a fault or a sin and imputes it to an innocent person, he certainly bears the burden of calumny along with that of a flagrant sin.” (4:112)

In other words, the blood of an innocent cannot wash out your sins. There is a principle in every civilized society, and this is laid down

وَلَا تَزِرْ وَازِرَةٌ وَزْرَ أَخْرَى ۝

“And no soul that bears the burden shall bear the burden of another.” (17:15)

This principle is repeated several times in the Holy Qur’ân (6:164; 35:18; 53:38). Everyone has to carry its own cross. There is no forgiving or pardoning through the blood of an innocent helpless person. Every soul is responsible for its own actions and stand before his Lord with his own record of deed as He says: *“And (on that day) the record (of their deeds) will be exhibited (before them)”* (18:49). This is the Qur’ânic law and Divine justice and this is the fundamental principle of ethics. Deviation from this principle is unethical.

In Christian theology, the atonement refers to forgiving or pardoning of sin through the death and resurrection of Jesus. The story of the crucifixion of Jesus, with all its different versions, is in itself controversial among Christians. Still, it is the cornerstone of Christian beliefs, and according to Christian dogma, those who deny this story deny Jesus and, in doing so, do not deserve Gods blessings. They

cannot enter the kingdom of God and transcend to glory. Instead, they are destined to eternal torture in hell.

In other words, the mere belief in the story of the crucifixion, as presented by the Christian Fathers, is sufficient to transcend to glory, enter the kingdom of God, and avert the eternal hellfire. At the base of this belief are two stories: the story of Adam and the story of Jesus. Serious Christian scholars question the authenticity and truthfulness of each of these stories. Is the story of Adam merely a myth? They ask, and did the person Jesus as presented by Christian fathers actually exist as such in history? There is serious disagreement about the date of Jesus birth, his place of birth, and his actual parenthood. His early life and his youth remain in darkness. And what really happened when he was taken off the cross after a few hours is also clouded in mystery. Where did he hide? Who helped to bring him down from the cross and to escape? How was he “resurrected to heaven”? Did his flesh-and-blood body were resurrected, or was it just his spirit? All these controversies are carefully labeled as “mysteries,” and the Christian believer is supposed to believe in them in order to escape eternal hellfire.

Here is another mystery: How can the “suicidal death” of one man have any effect on the morality of another person and qualify that person to enter paradise? If sin is innate, as the story of Christian Adam tells us, then how is that innateness changed by atonement? Is it not a fact that you have the capacity to discriminate between good and evil and, besides this, have been equipped with reason, logic, and conscience? What is more, you have been given free will. If you so desire, you can walk along the path of virtue, and if you so will, you can take the evil way and “become the lowest of the low” (95:4–5). Assuredly, no atonement can change the fundamental nature of yours. The atonement of Jesus can neither efface the fact of sin nor change the tendencies and capabilities reposed in human nature. Religion can only teach you the method of acquiring control over your passions and

show you the way of salvation. The atonement has not succeeded in terminating sin and evil practices among its adherents; rather, it has given them a free hand, an excuse for evil practices, because there awaits them, in their imagination, a mindless forgiveness. One cannot hang an innocent person for the sin of another. That is not only unethical and against human nature, it is also against human conscience and is clearly unjust. No law in any society supports such injustice. Atonement is the invention of wild and lazy imaginations. Allâh says:

لَيْسَ بِأَمَانِيْكُمْ وَلَا أَمَانِيْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ مَنْ يَعْمَلْ سُوءًا يُجْزَ بِهِ وَلَا يَجْدُ لَهُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيرًا

“(O people!) It [the salvation] shall not be according to your vain desires, or according to the vain desires of the people of the Scripture (the Jews and the Christians). He who does evil shall be recompensed accordingly and he shall find for himself neither patron nor a helper besides Allâh” (4:123).

Consider: Would not the “Father” of Jesus be a cruel, unjust, and implacable tyrant, Whose anger moved Him to crucify His own innocent and beloved son for its pacification? Can He not forgive sins without wanting some reward for this Mercy? Why was the blood of the son needed to mollify the anger of the Father and to wash out the sins of the rest of the children? If God, Who is considered All-Mighty both by Christians and Muslims, needed a son for the atonement of humankind, then He would be dependent, insufficient, and imperfect. Such a god could not be called All-Mighty. The Holy Qur’ân teaches you: *“And those who strive hard in Our cause We will certainly guide them to the ways that lead to Us”* (29:69). This is opposite to the easy way of atonement. The Holy Qur’ân teaches you:

مَنِ اهْتَدَى فَإِنَّمَا يَهْتَدِي لِنَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ ضَلَّ فَإِنَّمَا يَضْلُلُ عَلَيْهَا وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازْرَةً وَزْرَ أَخْرَى وَمَا كُنَّا مُعَذِّبِينَ حَتَّىٰ تَبَعَثَ رَسُولًا

“He who follows the right way follows it to his own good and he who goes astray, surely, he goes astray to his own loss. And no soul that bears the burden shall bear the burden of another. And We never punish unless We have sent a (warning) Messenger” (17:15).



DOGMAS OF TRINITY IN DIVINITY

Tathlîth

انطِلِقُوا إِلَىٰ مَا كُنْتُمْ بِهِ تُكَذِّبُونَ انطِلِقُوا إِلَىٰ ظِلٍّ ذِي ثَلَاثٍ شَعِيلًا ظَلِيلًا وَلَا يُغْنِي مِنَ الْهَبَانَهَا تَرْمِي بِشَرَرِ الْقُصْرِ كَانَهُ جَمَالُتُ صُفْرٌ

“Now, move on towards that (punishments) which you cried lies to. Move on to the shadow that has three branches, (Which is) neither affording shade (to you) nor protects (you) from the flame. Rather it throws huge sparks as huge and high as towers; (Sparks) that look like tawny camels.” (77:29-33)

Trinity is a doctrine that defines God as three “divine Persons” in one. Trinity is found in many varieties within Christianity, Hinduism, and other forms of paganism. In the Christian religion, the Trinity is supposedly composed of God the Father, God the Son (Jesus), and God the Holy Spirit. Jesus is considered God incarnate. With the Hindus, there is Brahma, who, like the Christian God, is one God in three Persons: Brahma himself, Vishnu, and Shiva. Together, these make Creator, Sustainer, and Destroyer (the *Trimûrti* of Hinduism).

Brahma is the aspect of God that continually creates the universe and all within it, Vishnu is the aspect of God that is incarnate upon earth in order to save the world and sustain it, and Shiva is the destroyer of the old so that the new may arise. It is also notable that Vishnu is said to have been crucified to a tree, with arrows piercing his hands and feet (R. C. Majumdar, “Evolution of Religio-Philosophic Culture in India” in S. Radhakrishnan, *The Cultural Heritage of India*, 2nd ed., Vol. 4 [Calcutta: The Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, 1956], p. 47). In ancient Egypt there was the trinity of Ra/Re (Spirit), Path (Father), and Amun (Amen/hunter), and later there was the Trinitarian group of Osiris, Isis, and Horus (John F. Nash, “Trinity and its Symbolism,” *The Esoteric Quarterly*, Summer 2005 p.33). Enlil, with “An” and “Enki”, form the supreme Mesopotamian triad of deities (Nötscher 1938: 382-387).

L. L. Paine recorded that the Christian doctrine of Trinity stemmed from pagan roots: He noted, “Among the more highly civilized Chaldeans, Babylonians, Assyrians, and Egyptians, triads of gods were a common and notable feature of their theologies.” Trinity was taught in the oldest Chaldean, Egyptian, and Mithraic schools. The Chaldean sun god, Mithra, was called “Triple”; the Trinitarian doctrine of the Chaldeans was inherited from the Akkadians, who themselves belonged to a race that was the first to conceive a metaphysical trinity (*A Critical History of The Evolution of Trinitarianism and Its Outcome in the New Christology* [Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1900], p. 4). Records of early Mesopotamian and Mediterranean civilizations document many varieties of polytheistic religion, though many scholars believe that the earliest man was monotheistic. Rev. Alexander Hislop devoted several chapters of his book *The Two Babylons or the Papal Worship Proved to Be the Worship of Nimrod and His Wife* (1858) to show how this original belief in one God was replaced by the triads of paganism, which were eventually absorbed into Christian dogma. There is no question that ancient man believed in a “sole and omnipotent Deity who created all

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things” at one time, a belief that became corrupted at a later point into a belief in a multitude of gods.

Moses stressed the oneness of God: “Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord” (Bible: Deuteronomy 6:4). Jesus repeated it when he said, “The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord” (Bible: Mark 12:29). Muhammad (pbuh) appeared approximately six hundred years later, bringing the same message again: *“And your God is One God, there is no other, cannot be and will never be one worthy of worship but He”* (2:163).

The word *Trinity* is not to be found in the Bible, nor does the explicit doctrine of Trinity appear in the New Testament (Verlyn D. Verbrugge, ed., *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000]). Lyman Abbott, in his *Dictionary of Religious Knowledge: For Popular and Professional Use* (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 1874/2010), stated that many historians believed that the Trinity “is a corruption borrowed from the heathen religions, and engrafted on the Christian faith.” Edward Gibbon, in his *History of Christianity: Comprising All That Relates to the Progress of the Christian Religion in “The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire”* (New York: Peter Eckler Publishing, 1891/1916, p. xvi), noted, “If paganism was conquered by Christianity, it is equally true that Christianity was corrupted by paganism.” The pure monotheism of the first Christians was corrupted by the Church of Rome into the incomprehensible dogma of the Trinity. Historian Will Durant observed: “Christianity did not destroy paganism; it adopted it. From Egypt came the ideas of a Divine trinity” (*The Story of Civilization*, Vol. 3, *Caesar and Christ* [New York: Simon and Schuster, 1944], p. 595).

Greek philosophy had its own influence on the development of the Christian Trinity. According to *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopaedia of Religious Knowledge* (Samuel Macaulay Jackson, ed. [New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1912]), the doctrines of the

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Logos and the Trinity received their philosophical aspect from Greek thinkers. Elements of Greek Platonism are unmistakably present in the Trinitarian definition of One God in “three Persons.” Many of the pagan tenets invented by the Egyptians and idealized by Plato were retained as being worthy of belief. One recalls in particular the Neoplatonic views of the Supreme or Ultimate Reality that is triadically represented. Pagan gods were still the official gods of the state when the dissolute Roman government began to crumble. At that time, there was brutal persecution of the followers of nascent Christianity; to remain faithful to the belief of Jesus Christ meant hardship and ridicule. Christianity digressed from the concept of the Oneness of God into the vague and mysterious doctrine that was formulated during the fourth century CE.

Christians say Jesus is God (Bible: John 1:1, 14); they say the Father is God (Bible: Philippians 1:2); and they say the Holy Spirit is God (Bible: Acts 5:3–4). Since the Son speaks to the Father, they are separate persons (Bible: John 17). Since the Holy Spirit speaks also (Bible: Acts 13:2), it too is a separate entity. Still they maintain that there is only One God. The property of numbers is the property of a thing that displays that property. The “manyness” of a thing imposes that “manyness” upon it. How is it possible for a servant to serve the entity of “manyness,” with the All-Mighty Creator being one of them? Now, the existence of Jesus as being one of the three either must be existent not as God and not being part of it, or he must consist of the Being of God. Since there is no existence from eternity without beginning except that of the All-Mighty Creator, Jesus cannot be a God because of his beginning in some form, as a “Word” or as a child.

He who limits his Creator and gives it the form of a human body has made Him take on limits like himself. High indeed is the One and the Only God, the Creator. He is beyond any notion of judging Him by means of what He has created. He, not we, is the Judge Himself. The profession that the One God is the Present Reality (*al-Wajūd al-*

Haqq), Who is Incomparable in His Essence, Who is One and Alone and Self-Sufficient, demands that there be no likeness (*mumâthilat*) between us and Him in any respect, because He is Self-Sufficient, and we depend for our existence on Him. No one depended on Jesus for his existence (Ibn al-'Arabî, *Fatûhât al-Makkîyya*).

Now, if we say in this relationship of Trinity, two of them are not He, or that the other two are other than He, or that all of the three are He, these would be confusing, contradictory statements and would effectively negate His being Self-Sufficient, One and Alone and Independent. These lifeless words denote a deficiency of knowledge about the One Reality (*al-Wajûd al-Haqq*) and lack of speculative power. If they say that the son is not He, and then that the son has no existence, they have only relations, and the relationships of a Deity are non-existent. No matter which argument you are offered to accept, another stands opposed to it. The intellect will be incapable of reaching and understanding this kind of “knowledge.” You have to be blind or pretend to be blind to accept such a faith.

فُلْ أَنْعَبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَمْلِكُ لَكُمْ ضَرًّا وَلَا نَفْعًا

“Say, Do you worship beside Allâh that which has no power over doing you any harm or good (and they follow the fancies of the people who had gone astray before them)? ” (5:76).

“You embrace some form carved with your own minds, saying He is this. He is not this (the Jesus on the cross), or that (the Holy Ghost). He is the Unique One. Your three idols prostrate before Him. Your every thought form perishes in His formlessness” (*Mathnawî of Jalâl al-Dîn Rûmî*).

لَقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ ثَالِثُ ثَلَاثَةٍ ۝ وَمَا مِنْ إِلَهٍ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَاحِدٌ ۝ وَإِنْ لَمْ يَتَهُوْوا عَمَّا يَقُولُونَ لَيَمْسَأَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

“Most certainly, they have disbelieved who say, Allâh is the third of the three. But in fact there is no other, cannot be and will never be one worthy of worship except One God. And if they refrain not from what they say, there shall certainly befall those who disbelieve from among them, a grievous punishment” (5:73).

Thus, concept of Trinity in any form must categorically be rejected, and no interpretation (such as the three are actually one) is to be accepted. The Christian concept of Trinity cannot inspire us with love for the One and Only Truth and for humankind (though it can inspire some with a love for Jesus). No foot of the believers in Trinity reaches the firm foundation in the real Truth; no clear path to Him appears before them, as they see Him identical to a human being. This image of Christ stands between them and the real goal. Christians cannot distinguish God, Who is the Creator, from His creation. They say, “He is like this”; they say, concerning a form or a body, “He [the body] is like Him.” Christians identify Him through the forms that change and disappear. Their people of knowledge try to separate him from Him, but they are unable to do so. In their sermons they try to make him identical with Him, but when that cannot be verified, they remain impotent in their belief, their understanding becomes weary, and their intellects bewildered. Their tongues speak of him and Him in contradictory expressions. At one time they say he and mean Him, at another, they say not He but he, and at still another time, they say He and he, not he but He. There is no issue in any theology more obscure and confusing than the beliefs in Trinity and the “sonship” of God.

Human consciousness generates in a person hope and fear to an extent unknown in animals. This hope and fear in turn generate a desire in the human mind to seek a deity for help in dealing with the vicissitudes of life. Unless you allow your nascent mind to be guided by the One Who created the universe, these two passions, hope and fear, will make you forever bow before created things. In the words of the Persian mystic Hâfiz: “The tiny gods say, We are the sacred

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yearning in the unrequited soul; We are the blushing cheek of every star and planet. Dear ones! Beware of the tiny gods that the frightened men create to bring an anesthetic relief to their sad souls.”



DOGMAS OF THE “SONSHIP” OF GOD

وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ الرَّحْمَنُ وَلَدًا ۝ سُبْحَانَهُ ۝ بَنْ عِبَادٌ مُّكْرَمُونَ

“And they say, The Most Gracious (God) has taken to Himself a son. Holy is He. Rather they (whom they so designate) are (only His) honoured servants” (21:26).

The plural form “*they (whom they so designate)*” in the verse draws our attention to the fact that there were others besides Jesus who were spoken of as the sons of God. Such beliefs were not limited to Christianity or to the Mediterranean culture. In the regions into which the early Christian faith was eventually introduced, there were numerous temples dedicated to gods and sons of gods, such as Apollo or Dionysius among the Greeks, Hercules among the Romans, Mithra among the Persians, Adonis and Altis in Syria, Osiris and Horus in Egypt, and Bal among the Babylonians. Nearly all of these deities had significant commonalities, as Edward Carpenter in *Pagan and Christian Creeds: Their Origin and Meaning*, (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1921) says:

- They were sons of god.
- They were born on or very near to Christmas Day.
- They were born of a virgin mother.

- They were born in a cave or underground chamber.
- They led a life of toil for humankind.
- They were called by the names of Light-Bringer, Healer, Mediator, Savior, Deliverer, or Messiah.
- They descended into hell or the underworld.
- They rose again from the dead and became the pioneers of humankind, leading the way for humans to reach the heavenly world.
- They founded communities of Saints and churches, in which disciples were received by baptism.
- They were commemorated by Eucharistic meals.

Madonna, the mother goddess with the “Child Redeemer Horus,” was honoured in northern Egypt, and Isis was supposedly a virgin mother, worshipped just as Mary is today. Osiris was also reputed to have been born of the virgin Neith on December 29. He was betrayed, was slain, and was “arisen” to life again. Among the Germanic tribes, the goddess Hertha was regarded as a virgin with a child in her arms. Balder of Scandinavia was called a “healer” and a “Savior” of humankind. Gods such as Odin bore sons, and Frigga was conceived from a “Father-god.” Bacchus, also called Dionysius, was said to have been born of a virgin named Demeter on December 25. All such legends, stories with which the whole pagan world was fully saturated, were imputed to Jesus, his mother, and his church.

According to Rev. Joseph B. Gross, the Chinese also had a “Virgin Mother Goddess” (*The Heathen Religion in Its Popular and Symbolical Development* [Boston: J. P. Jewett, 1856]). The Hindu Lord Krishna was never born out of the womb of his mother, as an ordinary human baby is (though outwardly he appeared like a normal human being); he was actually Lord Narayan or Vishnu, and he came down to planet earth from his “Supreme Abode” to eradicate the evil forces, to restore the “Dharma,” and to liberate the worthy ones or

devotees (*Mahabharata, Udyoga Parva* 49.20; *Bhagavata Purana*, Canto 10 Chapter 3 Verse 46).

Mithraism flourished for six hundred or more years in Persia, reached Rome in about 70 BCE, and spread throughout the Mediterranean region. During the third century CE, it was the most powerful cult in Europe. What we know about Mithra is that he was reputed to be a mediator between God and man. He was born of a virgin in a cave on December 25. He had twelve disciples. He died in the service of humanity. He was buried but rose again from the tomb. His resurrection was celebrated with great joy. His great festivals were on Christmas and Easter. People entered his cult through baptism.

No doubt, the foregoing information will elicit surprise and create doubt in the mind of a Christian reader, because this Mithraism cult has left virtually no traces. The Christians in power in Alexandria and Rome suppressed it with all available powers throughout the Mediterranean region and the rest of Europe. Otherwise, Christianity, in its present form, would have had no chance to flourish. Mithraism died when most of its legends were incorporated into the new religion of Christianity, and through the efforts of such Church Fathers as Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and Saint Jerome, the name Mithra was replaced by a new name: Jesus Christ (John M. Robertson, *Pagan Christs: Studies in Comparative Hierology* [London: Watts & Co., 1911]). The historian Tertullian (approx. 160–225 CE) stated that the learned in his day considered Mithraism and Christianity as identical.

Coincidences may occur in some instances, of course, but repetition of almost all distinctive points of Christ’s life with those lives of legendary “son gods” are too numerous to ignore. These facts need thoughtful perusal and considered judgment. It is enough for you to understand that many Christian mysteries cannot safely be ascribed to divine origin. The Holy Qur’ân says,

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لَا تَغْلُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ غَيْرَ الْحَقِّ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا أَهْوَاءَ قَوْمٍ قَدْ
ضَلُّوا مِنْ قَبْلٍ وَأَضَلَّوْا كَثِيرًا وَضَلَّوْا عَنْ سَوَاءِ السَّبِيلِ

“Say, O People of the Scripture! Do not exaggerate in (the matter of) your religion falsely and unjustly, nor follow the fancies of a people who had gone astray before (you) and had led many astray, and (now again) who have strayed from the right path” (5:77).

This verse tells us that in making these doctrines the basis of their religion, the Christian Fathers have simply followed erroneous doctrines followed by people before them. We read in Holy Qur’ân:

وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ عُزَيْرُ ابْنُ اللَّهِ وَقَالَتِ النَّصَارَى الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ اللَّهِ ۖ ذَلِكَ قَوْلُهُمْ
بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ ۖ

“There are some of the Jews who say, Ezra is the son of Allâh, while the Christians say, The Messiah is the son of Allâh. These are mere words that they speak. They only imitate the words of the infidels of old. Allâh assail them! Whither they are deluded away! ” (9:30).

Christians have created a god for themselves, a man who came out of the womb of an Israelite woman: “A virgin shall conceive, and bear a son” (Bible: Isaiah 7.14; also Matthew 1.23); and “Thou art my son” (Bible: Psalms 2:7). This is a new-born god, who is at the same time a weak and helpless man, yet this man is considered independent of all, and we are all expected to depend on him for our needs, and without him no affair can supposedly be accomplished. But perplexingly enough, he had to die on a cross in an ungodly state. For some Christians, Mary is the divine Mother and omnipotent intercessor.

وَالَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ لَا يَخْلُقُونَ شَيْئًا وَهُمْ يُخْلُقُونَ مَا وَاتُّهُمْ غَيْرُ
أَحْيَاءٍ ۖ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ أَيَّانَ يُبَعْثُوْنَ إِلَهُكُمْ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ ۖ

“And the things whom they call upon apart from Allâh can create nothing. Rather they are themselves created. They are dead, not alive. And they do not perceive when they shall be raised (to life again). Your God is One God” (16:20–22).

وَاتَّخِذُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ آلهَةً لَا يَخْلُقُونَ شَيْئًا وَهُمْ يُخْلَقُونَ لِأَنفُسِهِمْ
ضَرًّا وَلَا نَفْعًا وَلَا يَمْلِكُونَ مَوْتًا وَلَا حَيَاةً وَلَا نُشُورًا

“Yet people worship apart from Him gods who, rather than create anything, are themselves created and who have no power of (averting) harm or (doing) good to themselves, nor have they any control over death or life or Resurrection” (25:3).

أَيْسَرُكُونَ مَا لَا يَخْلُقُ شَيْئًا وَهُمْ يُخْلَقُونَ وَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ لَهُمْ نَصْرًا وَلَا
أَنفُسِهِمْ يَتَصْرُّونَ وَإِن تَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَى الْهُدَىٰ لَا يَتَبَعُوكُمْ سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْكُمْ
أَذْعَوْتُمُوهُمْ أَمْ أَنْتُمْ صَامِتُونَ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ عَبَادُ أَمْتَالِكُمْ
فَادْعُوهُمْ فَلَيُسْتَحِيُوا لَكُمْ إِن كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ لَهُمْ أَرْجُلٌ يَمْشُونَ بِهَا أَمْ لَهُمْ
أَيْدٍ يَبْطَشُونَ بِهَا أَمْ لَهُمْ أَعْيُنٌ يُبَصِّرُونَ بِهَا أَمْ لَهُمْ أَذَانٌ يَسْمَعُونَ
بِهَا قُلْ اذْعُوا شُرَكَاءِكُمْ ثُمَّ كَيْدُونَ فَلَا شُرُورُونَ إِنَّ وَلِيَ اللَّهِ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ
الْكِتَابَ وَهُوَ يَتَوَلَّ الصَّالِحِينَ وَالَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ
نَصْرًا وَلَا أَنفُسِهِمْ يَتَصْرُّونَ وَإِن تَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَى الْهُدَىٰ لَا يَسْمَعُوا
وَتَرَاهُمْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَيْكَ وَهُمْ لَا يُبَصِّرُونَ خُذِ الْعُفْوَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْعُرْفِ وَأَعْرِضْ
عَنِ الْجَاهِلِينَ

They associate (with Him as partners) those who create nothing but are themselves created. They (the associated gods) will have no power to give them (who associate partners with Allâh) any help, nor can they help themselves (but will themselves perish). If you invite these (associated gods) for (your) guidance, they will not respond to you. It makes no difference to you whether you call them or you remain silent.

“Verily, those whom you call on beside Allâh are (merely helpless maids or) servants like yourselves. (If it is not so then) call on them, they should then make a response to you if you are right.

“Have these (gods) feet with which they walk, or have they hands with which they hold, or have they eyes with which they see, or have they ears with which they hear? Say, Call upon your associate gods, then contrive you all against me and give me no respite, (yet you will see that I am triumphant because) Verily, My Protecting-Friend is Allâh Who has revealed this perfect Book and He takes into (His) protection all the righteous.

“And those whom you call upon besides Him have no power to help you, nor can they help themselves. And if you call these [sermon readers] to guidance they will not even be able to hear (you speak). And though you see them (as if they are) looking at you while (as a matter of fact) they do not see (anything being absent minded as they are). Take to forgiveness and ever forbear and enjoin (the doing of) good and turn away from (those who intentionally want to remain) ignorant” (7:191–199).

Jesus own history, as presented in the New Testament, bears witness against his divinity. Had he been divine, he would not have cried, *Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?* - My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? (Matthew 27:46). When his opponents dared him, saying that if he came down from the cross on his own, they would believe in him, he would at once have done so. When satan challenged him saying, If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread (Matthew 4:3), he would have done so. However, in response he was helpless.

On no occasion did Jesus demonstrate his “godly” powers. The *Trimurtis* of Hindus - the three main gods— Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva—seem superior to him in many respects, as do their other deities. They are more divine than the Nazarene god is, and they can

claim more genuineness for their life record. Their precepts are, in general, more majestic, more awe-inspiring, and of greater practical utility than the visionary Sermon on the Mount of Jesus. The “son god” of the Christians was a humble person like many others, and he was characterized by human weaknesses. He demonstrated no divine attribute, and there was nothing in him that is not to be found in other human beings.

The Holy Qur’ân has thoroughly presented the question of the alleged divine sonship of Jesus in several verses and rejects it altogether in very strong and uncompromising Words in any form:

لَقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ ۖ وَقَالَ الْمَسِيحُ يَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبَّكُمْ

“Indeed they have disbelieved who say, ‘Allâh, He is the Messiah Son of Mary, whereas the Messiah himself said, O children of Israel! Worship Allâh Who is my Lord and your Lord’ (5:72).

بَدِيعُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۖ أَنَّىٰ يَكُونُ لَهُ وَلَدٌ وَلَمْ تَكُنْ لَهُ صَاحِبَةٌ ۖ وَخَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ ۖ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

“He is Wonderful and Primary Originator of the heavens and the earth! How (and whence) can there be a son for Him, when He has no consort? He has created all things and He has perfect knowledge of everything” (6:101).

These verses describe the transcendental Unity of the Divine Being. To attribute a son to Him is to acknowledge that He needs a consort, but there was no wife of God, and if He has no wife, He can by no means have a son. Besides, the mother and father must belong to the same species, and they must supplement each other, whereas God is peerless. The birth of a son necessitates a relationship between a male

and a female, which cannot be ascribed to God; thus, a connection will imply a certain weakness in His person and His Attributes.

Allâh is the Wonderful Originator of the heavens and the earth. He has created everything. He is the Knower of all things. These attributes are peculiar to Allâh alone, and are not to be found in anyone else in the universe. Jesus displays none of these attributes. Had he been the son of God, as he is alleged to have been, he would have to have possessed some of the peculiar and distinctive qualities of his father, as other sons possess some peculiarities of their fathers. On the contrary, we find nothing in him of the qualities of a Creator and Sustainer. He was every bit a mortal and helpless creature, inasmuch as he always stood in need of food; his mother and he both used to eat food (5:75). As Creator and Originator, Allâh possesses the Knowledge of all the details about His creation, a quality that Jesus did not possess in the least. We find Jesus, once driven by hunger, approaching a fig tree in the winter season and, not finding any fruit on it, becoming angry and cursing it just like any ordinary, frustrated man.

A man wants a son because he is subject to death and wants to leave behind a progeny. Allâh, however, is everlasting and eternal; He can therefore be in no need of a son. The capacity for having progeny is meant only for such beings who are mortal in their nature, whereas Allâh is Self-Existing; He is the basis of the existence of the whole creation. He is the Fountainhead of all life, and He alone maintains life. As such, He is in no need of a son or any assistant to help Him in His work or to succeed Him. He is far above the needs of all the worlds (29:6). The Holy Qur’ân has approached the question of the alleged divinity, or sonship, of Jesus from various angles:

مَّا الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ إِلَّا رَسُولٌ قَدْ خَلَّتْ مِنْ قَنْلِهِ الرُّسُلُ وَأُمُّهُ صِدِّيقَةٌ ۝
كَانَا يَأْكُلُانِ الطَّعَامَ ۝

“The Messiah, son of Mary, was only a Messenger (of Allâh), all the Messengers have (like him) passed away before him, his mother was a highly truthful woman. They both used to eat food. See how We explain the arguments for their good, yet see, how they are turned away (from the truth)” (5:75).

Jesus and his revered mother were each mortal and were each subject to the laws that govern mortals. Never did Allâh “give them such bodies as could go without food, neither were they people given unusually long lives (to enjoy)” (21:8).

Jesus himself used to worship Allâh and pray to Him. The Gospels bear ample testimony to the fact that he did so. He was neither God nor the son of God; he was but a humble being who was in dire need of help from the All-Mighty, Whom he worshipped and to Whom he prayed with utter humility and with tears in his eyes.

لَنْ يَسْتَنِكِ الْمَسِيحُ أَنْ يَكُونَ عَبْدًا لِّلَّهِ وَلَا الْمَلَائِكَةُ الْمُقَرَّبُونَ

“The Messiah never disdains to be (looked upon as) a servant of Allâh, nor do the angels who are nearest (to Him consider the fact degrading for themselves)” (4:172).

Verses 4:171–172 indicate the positions of Jesus and Mary, defend them both from false claims of divinity, and re-establish the honour they deserve.

يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لَا تَغْلُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ وَلَا تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْحَقُّ ۚ إِنَّمَا
الْمَسِيحَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَكَلِمَتُهُ الْفَالِهَا إِلَىٰ مَرْيَمَ وَرُوْحٌ مِّنْهُ
فَأَمْنَوْا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُلِهِ ۖ وَلَا تَقُولُوا ثَلَاثَةٌ ۖ انَّهُمْ حَبْرًا لَّكُمْ ۖ إِنَّمَا اللَّهُ إِلَهٌ
وَاحِدٌ ۖ سُبْحَانَهُ أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُ وَلَدٌ ۖ لَّهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي
الْأَرْضِ ۖ وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ وَكِيلًا

“O people of the Scripture! Do not go beyond the limits (of propriety) in the matter of your religion, nor say anything

regarding Allâh except that which is perfectly true. The Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary was only a Messenger of Allâh, and (a fulfilment of) His word which He communicated to Mary, and a mercy from Him. Believe, therefore, in Allâh and in all His Messengers, and do not say, (There are) three (Gods). Refrain (from following this doctrine) it will be better for you. Verily, Allâh is the One and only worthy of worship. He is Holy. Far above having a son. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth. And Allâh suffices as a Dispenser of affairs” (4:171).

Christians associated a son to Him with an additional “Holy Spirit,” still not disagreeing on His Unity (calculating one from one plus one plus one). Allâh says, “*Most certainly, they have disbelieved who say, Allâh is the third of the three.*” (5:73)

In the history of many kingdoms in Asia and Europe, there were kings whose heirs raised a disturbance in their respective domains; in some cases, the father felt obliged to have his son killed, and other cases, the son felt it necessary to have his father killed. Similarly, whenever there were two rival claimants to a particular throne, the affairs of the kingdom generally became chaotic and violent; in the end, one of them typically was killed or expelled from the country so that order could be restored in the kingdom. The Holy Qur’ân refers to this aspect:

لَوْ كَانَ فِيهِمَا إِلَهٌ إِلَّا اللَّهُ لَقْسَدَتَا ۝ فَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَرْشِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ

“Had there been in them [the heaven and the earth] other gods beside Allâh, then surely both would have gone to ruin (because of chaos, disorder and confusion). Glorified then be Allâh, the Lord of the Throne of power, far above what they attribute (to Him)” (21:22).

وَالَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ لَا يَخْلُقُونَ شَيْئًا وَهُمْ يُخْلَقُونَ أَمْوَاتٌ غَيْرُ
أَحْيَاءٍ ۝ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ أَيَّانَ يُبْعَثَرُونَ

“And the things whom they call upon apart from Allâh can create nothing. Rather they are themselves created. They are dead, not alive. And they do not perceive when they shall be raised (to life again)” (16:20–21).

This is an unequivocal statement, addressing those who call upon Jesus. Jesus is dead, his mother is dead, and there was no resurrection. The statement needs no further interpretation. If the All-Mighty God is Self-Sufficient, without limits and without dimension, we would be fools to ask Him to step down from His throne of infinite Powers and give birth through the womb of a woman to his own son. How can a limitless, infinite Being be confined in the mind of a man or in the belly of a woman? Helplessness, need, and weakness are not divine attributes. Being a needy, helpless, and weak son of an All-Mighty negates his alleged divine origin. Holy is Allâh, far above all that they attribute to Him. He has Knowledge of both the hidden and the manifest. He is exalted above all the things and beings they associate with Him (23:91–92). He says: “*your god is One God*” (2:163). They have made the son of man into His deputy, as if Allâh had appointed him his vice-regent with full powers. They put the son of man on the same level as their Lord. They say they serve them only that he may bring them near to Allâh in station (39:3). By saying so they have transgressed the limit set by Allâh (6:110) and they have tried to make their own transgression into a means of nearness to Him (39:3). They do not know that this is actually a distance from Him. “*They have strayed, a far off straying*” (4:116). He also says, “*Allâh does not protect [– Ghafara means to protect or cover] that a partner be associated with Him*” (4:116). One can only protect or cover a body. These associates are non-existent, so Allâh does not find them, and that is why He cannot cover and protect them. This verse expresses the extreme dislike of their action on the part of Allâh.

JESUS OF THE HOLY QUR'ÂN

مَا الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ إِلَّا رَسُولٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ الرُّسُلُ وَأُمُّهُ صِدِيقَةٌ طَّعَامٌ اَنْظُرْ كَيْفَ تُبَيِّنُ لَهُمُ الْآيَاتِ ثُمَّ اَنْظُرْ اَنَّى يُؤْفَكُونَ

"The Messiah, son of Mary, was only a Messenger, all the Messengers have passed away before him, his mother was a highly truthful woman. They both used to eat food. See how We explain the arguments for their good, yet see, how they are turned away (from the truth)" (5:75).

The Christian Jesus is not the Jesus ('Isâ) of the Holy Qur'ân. According to the Gospels, Christian Jesus was born from a "virgin mother" as the "son of God". His ministry started when he was about thirty years old; he began preaching in Galilee and gathered disciples. He started his final journey to Jerusalem after three years, when he was about thirty-three years old. Towards the end of his final week in Jerusalem, he had the "Last Supper" with his disciples, and the next day he was betrayed, arrested, tried, and then crucified. Three days after his "burial," he was resurrected; he appeared off and on to his disciples over a forty-day period, after which he ascended to heaven. The Gospels have nothing to say about his life before the age of thirty or about his life forty days after his crucifixion, and they are confused about those three days after he was removed from the cross. As the Holy Qur'ân says: "*Verily, those who differ therein [about Jesus death] are certainly in (a state of) confusion about it*" (4:157).

Jesus came to demolish paganism. So says both the Church and the Holy Qur'ân. Therefore, his life history should be distinctly different from that of the deities of the ancient world and other pagan gods. However, the life history of Jesus as sketched by the Church is not

different from the history of pagan gods, especially the history of Mithra (sometimes referred to as Mithras). Repetition of almost all distinctive features of Christ's life with those of the sun god Mithra are too numerous to ignore (see chapters p. 211-227). These facts need thoughtful perusal and considered judgment. It should not be difficult for a critical mind and a heart free from prejudice to understand that Christian doctrines cannot safely be ascribed to divine origin.

What the Holy Qur'ân tells us about Jesus life history is indeed very different. In fact, the Qur'ân mentions mainly those events in the life of Jesus that differ greatly with those described in the Gospels. The Holy Qur'ân is not a book of history; the life events of Jesus and his mother are scattered throughout many chapters of the Holy Book, as befit the subject matter of the each of those chapters. If you carefully read all these verses and bring them together, you can easily sketch the life events of this great Prophet.

The name and title: His name and title, "Jesus, son of Mary," was provided by Allâh, as you read, "When the angels said, O Mary! Allâh gives you good tidings through a (prophetic) word from Him (about the birth of a son) whose name is the Messiah [*al-Masîh*], Jesus, son of Mary ['*Isâ ibn Maryam*]" (3:45). Being given this name and title by Allâh must have had a deep significance; the meanings of the names contain prophecies about Jesus life. *Masîh* is derived from *masaha*, which means not only "to wipe away" or "to anoint" but also "to set forth on a survey through the land." *Imâm* Ibn al-Fadzal Muhammad Râzî suggested that Jesus was called *al-Masîh* because he was to travel much. May be Jesus was called *al-Masîh* because he was supposed to "wipe away" (from *masaha*) the corruption in the Jewish Temple. In the name *al-Masîh* was a hidden prophecy given to Mary about Jesus traveling and his art of healing.

The history of Jesus in the Gospels is limited to about three years. What about the other years of his life? It looks obvious that Jesus was not present in his country of birth. He travelled to learn not only the

Torah but also other sciences of “Wisdom,” as the Holy Qur’ân says: “*And He will teach him the art of writing (and reading) and the Wisdom and the Torah and the Evangel*” (3:48). *Al-Masih* is also translated as the “the anointed,” referring to Jesus as a healer. It is very possible that through his travels in other countries, Jesus learned the art of healing certain diseases that were not known to his people, as you read, “*and by My leave you absolved the blind, the leprous*” (5:110). The title “son of Mary,” on one hand, show Allâh’s appreciation and acceptance of Mary (see 3:37) and, on the other hand, negate the notion that Jesus was the son of God.

Place of birth: Jesus was born in some oasis as the verses 19:23–26 suggest, under the trunk of a palm tree with a rivulet flowing nearby: “*She [Mary] conceived him [the child] and withdrew with him to a remote place [makânan qâsiyya]*” (19:22), a distant place, not in Jerusalem or its nearby towns. This passage clearly negates what the Gospels claim, that his birthplace was Bethlehem.

Time of birth: Jesus was born when the dates were ripe. At the time of the delivery of the child, *the throes of child birth drove her to the trunk of the palm-tree* (19:23). She heard a voice calling: “*Shake the branch of the palm-tree, drawing it towards you, it will cause fresh and ripe dates to fall upon you*” (19:24-25). Dates are not ripe at Christmas time, in the winter, when the days are cold, but during the summer months. Thus, Christmas day is not the day of Jesus birth, as the Christians are told to believe, and the learned among the Christians know quite well that he was not born in the last week of December; this time happens to be when Mithra was born.

Family tree: The Holy Qur’ân gives information on the ancestors of Jesus, primarily to refute the notion of his being the son of God and of his divinity. The mother of Mary is referred to as a “woman from the tribe of Amran.” We read: “(*Allâh listened*) when a woman of (*the*

family of) Amran [‘Imran] said, My Lord! I do hereby vow to You what is in my womb to be dedicated (to Your service); so do accept (it) of me.” (3:35) According to the Bible, Amran (‘Imrân was the mother of Aaron and Moses [Exodus 6:20], who, according to the Holy Qur’ân, was a recipient of Divine Revelation (20:11–16). Mary is referred to as the daughter of ‘Imrân (66:12). Mary is also called the sister of Aaron. This is a reference to her family tree going back to the sister of Moses and Aaron (19:28). This sister is also mentioned in the Holy Qur’ân in verse 20:40.

Educational development: Jesus was not simply a son of a carpenter, as the Gospels claim, but was according to the Holy Qur’ân highly educated, endowed with great wisdom. Mary received the glad tidings that Allâh “will teach him the art of writing (and reading) and the Wisdom and the Torah and the Evangel” (3:48). Here the mention of knowledge is not restricted to knowledge of religious books but also to the arts of reading, writing, and other branches of wisdom. The fulfilment of this prophecy is mentioned in 5:110, where you read:

إِذْ قَالَ اللَّهُ يَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ اذْكُرْ نَعْتِي عَلَيْكَ وَعَلَىٰ وَالدَّاتَكَ إِذْ أَيَّدْتَكَ
بِرُوحِ الْقُدْسِ تُكَلِّمُ النَّاسَ فِي الْمُهْدَ وَكَهْلًا ۖ وَإِذْ عَلَمْتَكَ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ
وَالنُّورَةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ ۖ وَإِذْ تَخْلُقُ مِنَ الطَّينِ كَهْيَةً الطَّيْرَ بِإِذْنِي فَتَنْتُخُ فِيهَا
فَتَكُونُ طَيْرًا بِإِذْنِي ۝

“(Again imagine) when Allâh said, O Jesus, son of Mary! Remember My blessing upon you and upon your mother, how I strengthened you with the holy revelation. You spoke to the people (when you were) in the cradle and when of old age, and how I taught you the Scripture and the wisdom and the Torah and the Evangel, and how you determined from clay [a person] the likeness of a bird by My leave, then you breathed into it (a new spirit) then it became a soaring being [a spiritual person] by My leave, and by My leave you absolved the blind, the leprosus,

and by My leave you raised the (spiritually or nearly) dead to life, and how I warded off the Children of Israel from (putting) you (to death). It was the time when you came to them with clear arguments, but those among them who disbelieved had said, This is naught but a hoax cutting (us) off (from the nation). ”

Historians agree that Jesus was viewed as a wise teacher and healer in Galilee and Judea and that he spoke in parables. The Words of verse 5:110 are his style of metaphoric language. Apparently, his healing was not restricted to the spiritual healing of those who were blind in faith or morally and spiritually dead, but also to the healing of those who had become blind or leprous in body or on the verge of death due to the lack of cures known to the people of Palestine.

Jesus, the Messenger of Allâh: Jesus was a Messenger and Prophet to the Jews, in fulfilment of the prophecies mentioned in the Torah.

وَقَفَّيْنَا عَلَى آثَارِهِم بِعِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمْ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ التُّورَةِ ۖ
وَأَتَيْنَاهُ الْإِنْجِيلَ فِيهِ هُدًى وَنُورٌ وَمُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ التُّورَةِ وَهُدًى
وَمَوْعِظَةً لِلْمُتَّقِينَ

“And We sent Jesus, son of Mary, in the footsteps of these (Prophets), fulfilling that which was (revealed) before him, of the Torah, and We gave him the Evangel [Injîl] which contained guidance and light, fulfilling that which was (revealed) before it, of the Torah, and was a (means of) guidance and an exhortation for those who guard against evil” (5:46).

It should be emphasized that what is known today as the New Testament is not the *Injîl* given to Jesus, mentioned in this verse. The New Testament is an anthology, a collection of Christian works written in the common Greek language of the first century at different times by various writers; it was finished by about the year 150 CE.

Injîl is derived from *najala* that means to argue. Thus, Injil given to Jesus would mean arguments that were given to Jesus.

وَمُصَدِّقاً لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيَّ مِنَ التُّورَةِ وَلَا حِلَّ لَكُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي حُرِّمَ عَلَيْكُمْ ۝
وَجِئْتُكُمْ بِآيَةٍ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُونِي إِنَّ اللَّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُوهُ ۝
هَذَا صِرَاطٌ مُسْتَقِيمٌ

“And (I come) confirming that which is before me, namely the Torah, and that I declare lawful for you some of the things that had been forbidden to you. I come to you with a sign from your Lord, so take Allâh as a shield and obey me. Surely, Allâh is my Lord as well as your Lord, therefore worship Him; this is the right path” (3:50–51).

Like all the other Prophets, Jesus preached submission to One and the Only Deity (5:72). Jesus message of reform was deeply rooted in the Jewish tradition. His mission was not a universal mission, and he likely never viewed himself as creating a new religion per se; he felt that he was just reforming the one he had been born into.

يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لَا تَغْلُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ وَلَا تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْحَقُّ ۝ إِنَّمَا
الْمَسِيحُ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَكَلْمَنْتُهُ الْفَاهَا إِلَى مَرْيَمَ وَرُوحٌ مِنْهُ ۝
فَإِمْنَوْا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ۝ وَلَا تَقُولُوا تَلَاثَةٌ ۝ انْتَهُوا خَيْرًا لَكُمْ ۝ إِنَّمَا اللَّهُ إِلَهٌ
وَاحِدٌ ۝ سُبْحَانَهُ أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُ وَلَدٌ □

“O people of the Scripture! Do not go beyond the limits (of propriety) in the matter of your religion, nor say anything regarding Allâh except that which is perfectly true. The Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary was only a Messenger of Allâh, and (a fulfilment of) His word [of promise] which He communicated to Mary, and a mercy from Him. Believe, therefore, in Allâh and in all His Messengers, and do not say, (There are) three (Gods). Refrain (from following this doctrine) it will be better for you.

Verily, Allâh is the One and only worthy of worship. He is Holy. Far above having a son... ” (4:171).

People of the Script include Muslims, and the warning above applies equally to Jews and Muslim not to exaggerate in matters of religion particularly in reference to Jesus.

Jesus - the servant of Allâh: Jesus was the servant of Allâh (عَبْدُ اللّٰهِ).
إِنِّي عَبْدُ اللّٰهِ أَتَانِي الْكِتَابَ وَجَعَلَنِي نَبِيًّا وَجَعَلَنِي مُبَارَّاً أَئِنَّ مَا كُنْتُ
وَأَوْصَانِي بِالصَّلٰةِ وَالزَّكٰةِ مَا دُمْتُ حَيًّا وَبَرًّا بِوَالِدَتِي وَلَمْ يَجْعَلْنِي جَبَّارًا
شَقِيقًا

“(It came to pass that the son of Mary) said, I am indeed a servant of Allâh, He has given me the Book, and made me a Prophet. And He has made me blessed wherever I may be, and He has enjoined upon me prayer and alms-giving so long as I live. And (He has made me) dutiful to my mother, and He has not made me arrogant, graceless” (19:30–32).

Jews planned to crucify Jesus: Some influential Jews in the time of Jesus raised strong objections concerning his prophethood. They wanted to see him die an accursed death on a cross. We are told:

وَمَكَرُوا وَمَكَرَ اللّٰهُ ۖ وَاللّٰهُ خَيْرُ الْمَاكِرِينَ

“And they [the persecutors of Jesus] planned (to crucify him) and Allâh planned (to save him) and Allâh is the best of the planners” (3:54).

The belief that Jews were the driving force behind putting Jesus on a cross has been found in Christian foundational literature from the earliest days of the Jesus movement, and this story has not been easily debunked just because of the arguments of modern historians. Some Jews of today (*al-Yahûd-* with the prefix *al*) have hoped that the

Christian Church might say that the Jews had in fact played no role in Jesus death. According to the Holy Qur'ân, though, those Jews bear the primary responsibility for putting Jesus on the cross with the help of the Romans. Killing a person by nailing him on a cross, according to the laws of the Torah, was considered an accursed death; therefore, by having Jesus killed on the cross, the Jews wanted to prove that Jesus was a false Prophet according to their traditions. Moreover, a person of illegitimate birth was also considered accursed (on this issue, see the section “The Notion of Jesus Virgin Birth,” below). The Holy Qur'ân has refuted both these charges and has pinpointed the Jews as being the main players in the attempt to kill Jesus through crucifixion (4:157–159). You are told:

فِيمَا نَفَضُّهُمْ مِّيَتَاهُمْ وَكُفْرُهُمْ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَقَتْلُهُمُ الْأَنْبِيَاءَ بَغْيَرِ حَقٍّ وَقَوْلُهُمْ
قُلُوبُنَا غُلْفٌ ۝ بَلْ طَبَعَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهَا بِكُفْرِهِمْ فَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا وَبِكُفْرِهِمْ
وَقَوْلُهُمْ عَلَىٰ مَرْيَمَ بُهْتَانًا عَظِيمًا وَقَوْلُهُمْ أَنَا قَتَلْنَا الْمَسِيحَ عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ
رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَمَا قَتَلْنُوهُ وَمَا صَلَبُوهُ وَلَكِنْ شَبَّهُ لَهُمْ ۝ وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ
أَنَّفِي شَكٌ مِّنْهُ ۝ مَا لَهُمْ بِهِ مِّنْ عِلْمٍ إِلَّا اتَّبَاعُ الظَّنِّ ۝ وَمَا قَتَلُوهُ يَقِينًا بَلْ
رَفَعَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَيْهِ ۝

“Then because of their breaking their covenant and their denial of the Messages of Allâh and their antagonizing the Prophets without a just cause and their saying Our hearts are uncircumcised (and so cannot hear). Nay, (the truth however is) Allâh has set a seal upon their hearts (thus the Truth cannot enter their hearts) because of their disbelief so that they believe but a little. And (The Lord has done this) because of their denying (Jesus) and because of their uttering a great calumny against Mary, And because of their (falsely) claiming, We did kill the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, the (false) Messenger of Allâh (on the cross), whereas they killed him not, nor did they cause his death by crucifixion, but he was made to them to resemble (one

crucified to death, and they mistakenly believed that he died on the cross, and thus died an accursed death). Verily, those who differ therein are certainly in (a state of) confusion about it. They have no definite knowledge of the matter but are only following a conjecture. They did not kill him; this much is certain (and thus could not prove the Christ as accursed). Rather Allâh exalted him with all honour to His presence” (4:155–158).

A very clear statement is repeated in the Holy Qur’ân: “*They did not kill him, this much is certain*” (4:157). Since Jesus did not die on the cross, there cannot be any resurrection or a new descent in later ages. Mary was given a divine promise that her son “*will speak to the people when in the cradle [as a child] and when of old age, and shall be of the righteous*” (3:46). There is very little written about Jesus early life. In the Bible, the Gospel of Luke (2:41–52) recounts that a twelve-year-old Jesus had accompanied his parents on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem and was found in a temple, discussing affairs with some of Jerusalem’s elders. There are no trace references in the Gospels of Jesus speaking in his old age. He began his ministry at age thirty, and there is no mentioning of what happened to him after the incident of his supposed crucifixion about three years later. Killing a person by nailing him on a cross was considered an accursed death (Deut. 21.23), a similarly a person of illegitimate birth was also considered accursed (Deut. 23.2). The Holy Qur’ân says, “*They did not kill him, this much is certain*” (4:157), in other words he did not die an accursed death as claimed by those Jews, but Allâh exalted him in ranks and freed him of these accusation. The promise given to Mary in the Holy Qur’ân states that he will also speak to people in his old age. You are told after this incident “*We gave them both refuge [rabwah] upon a worth-living lofty plateau abounding in (green and fruitful) valleys and springs of running water*” (23:50; for *Rabwah* see the *Arabic-English Lexicon* by William Edward Lane [London, 1863], *Tâj al-‘Arûs* and *Lisân al-‘Arab*).

ذَلِكَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ ۖ قَوْلُ الْحَقِّ الَّذِي فِيهِ يَمْتَرُونَ

“Such was Jesus, son of Mary. (This is) a statement of true facts (about him), concerning which they so deeply disagree” (19:34).

Misconceived Beliefs about Jesus

Jesus virgin birth? Christians believe in the virgin birth of Jesus, and there are some who claim to read in Qur'ânic verses that Mary gave birth to Jesus while she was “untouched”. The virgin birth of Jesus from Mary was never an issue at the time of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) and in the early period of Islamic history. As more and more people embraced Islam—in particular, those who had been Christians in Syria and other parts of the Byzantine Empire—they, not being in command of classical Arabic, read into some Qur'ânic verses many of their firmly entrenched beliefs, such as that Mary was a virgin when she gave birth to Jesus and that Jesus was resurrected with his body. When the gravity of knowledge shifted from the Muslim-dominated world to the European Christian world and the Western powers started to influence the Islamic territories, Western missionaries reinforced such wrong beliefs. To support the view that Mary gave birth to Jesus while she was a virgin and untouched by a man, verses as the following are referred to: “She [Mary] said, My Lord! How can I and whence shall I have a child while no man has yet touched me (in conjugal relationship)?” (3:47) and, “She said, How can I bear a son while no man (has married me and) has yet touched me, nor have I been unchaste.” (19:20) These verses plainly refer to the glad tidings through a prophecy to Mary (3:42, 45–46; 19:17–19) while she was still unmarried and in a state of virginity, as she herself confesses (3:47; 19:20). The wife of Abraham made a comparable statement (-*Ibrâhîm*) when she was given the good tidings of the coming birth of Isaac: “She said, O wonder for me! Shall I bear a child while I am a very old woman and this husband of mine (also) a very old man? This

is a wonderful thing indeed! ” (11:72). In both cases the answer the received was the same. Nowhere does the Holy Qur’ân say that Mary gave birth to Jesus while she was still a virgin. You are told that Jesus mother “*was a highly truthful woman*” (5:75), not that she was a virgin at the time she received Divine Revelation in the form of a prophecy that she will give birth to such an such male child. She received Divine Revelations because of her virtues and piety: “(*Recall the time) when the angels (of Allâh) said, O Mary! Surely, Allâh has chosen you, has rid you of all impurities, and has preferred you to the women of all (contemporary) people. O Mary! Be devout to your Lord and prostrate yourself and bow along with the congregations of the worshippers of God.*” (3:42–43) Thus, the statement in verses 3:47 and 19:20 was clearly uttered at the time when Mary was still unmarried, and contrary to the practices of most of the women of her time, she “*took care to guard her chastity*” (66:12). The guarding of her chastity was made an example for the believers, as you read:

وَضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا لِّلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا امْرَأَتَ فِرْعَوْنَ إِذْ قَالَتْ رَبُّ ابْنِ لِي عِنْدَكَ بَيْتًا فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَنَجَّنِي مِنْ فِرْعَوْنَ وَعَمَلَهُ وَنَجَّنِي مِنْ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ وَمَرِيمَ ابْنَتْ عِمْرَانَ الَّتِي أَحْسَنَتْ فَرْجَهَا فَنَفَخْنَا فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِنَا وَصَدَقَتْ بِكَلِمَاتِ رَبِّهَا وَكُثِّيَّهُ وَكَانَتْ مِنْ الْقَانِتِينَ

“And Allâh compares those who believe to the wife of Pharaoh. Behold! She said, My Lord! Make for me an abode in the Garden (of Paradise) close to You and deliver me from Pharaoh and his work and deliver me from the wrongdoing people. And (Allâh next compares the believers to) Mary, the daughter of ‘Imrâan, she who took care to guard her chastity, so we breathe into him [the believer who is exemplified here] Our inspiration. She declared her faith in the revelations of her Lord and His Scriptures and she became of the devoted ones to prayers and obedient to Him” (66:11–12).

Now, the Word used in the above verse in whom Allâh breathed into is *fihi* (فِيهِ), which is masculine and thus cannot refer to Mary. This is the mistake made by many translators. The Holy Qur'ân did not say, “We breathed into her”; it states, “We breathe into him,” clearly indicating the believer who is compared to Mary. Divine breath (*rûh*) is always used in the Holy Qur'ân in the sense of Divine Revelation. A believer who is exemplified as Mary becomes the recipient of Divine Revelation. Here is another verse in the Holy Qur'ân when carefully read, negates the notion of a virgin birth for Jesus:

ذَلِكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الْغَيْبِ نُوحِيهُ إِلَيْكَ ۝ وَمَا كُنْتَ لَدَيْهِمْ إِذْ يُقْرَأُونَ أَقْلَامَهُمْ أَيْمُهُمْ
يَكْفُلُ مَرْبِمَ وَمَا كُنْتَ لَدَيْهِمْ إِذْ يَحْتَصِمُونَ

“These are some of the important accounts of the things unseen
We have revealed to you. You were not present with them when
they [the priests] cast their quills (to decide) as to which of them
should have Mary in his charge” (3:44).

The Word *yakfulu* (يَكْفُلُ) has a root in *kafala*, which means “to take charge” or “to be responsible for.” *Yakfulu* is a reference to putting Mary in charge of someone who will take care of her and be responsible for her including her marriage. The strongest argument comes from Allâh Himself:

أَنَّى يَكُونُ لَهُ وَلَدٌ وَلَمْ تَكُنْ لَهُ صَاحِبَةٌ

“How (and whence) can there be a son for Him, when He has no
consort?” (6:101).

The Word used here is *sâhibat* (صَاحِبَةٌ), which is a female companion, or partner or a female friend (again see the *Arabic-English Lexicon* by William Edward Lane, *Tâj al-'Arûs* by al-Zabîdî, and *Lisân al-'Arab* by Ibn Manzûr). Here Allâh testifies that the birth of a child from someone requires two, and acknowledges that even He would need a consort, a *sâhibah*, to give birth to a child. This statement refers to

Divine Law that a woman cannot bear a child without a consort. How can a Muslim believe in the notion of a virgin birth without doubting the statement of Allâh? That Mary was a married woman when she gave birth to Jesus refutes the charge by the Jews of the time that Jesus was illegitimate and therefore accursed. By keeping her “virgin” and “unmarried” at the time of conception will cast doubt and support the blasphemy charge of the Jews that Mary bore an illegitimate child? We know from the Gospels that Mary was married to an Israelite named Joseph and that Jesus was not the only son of Mary. The Holy Qur'ân has no need to mention the name of a person without any spiritual importance, just as the Holy Book never mentions the names of the relatives of the Prophets unless they themselves are Prophets or Saints.

Resurrection or Ascension of Jesus? The notion that Jesus was raised to heaven [with his body] and that he shall return someday is another common belief among many Muslims borrowed from Christianity. To support this notion, zealot Muslim clerics along with the Christian clergy come forward with such verses as

إِذْ قَالَ اللَّهُ يَا عِيسَى إِنِّي مُتَوَفِّيكَ وَرَافِعُكَ إِلَيَّ وَمُطَهِّرُكَ مِنَ الظِّنَنِ كَفَرُوا

Behold! Allâh said: "O Jesus! I will take thee and raise thee to Myself and clear thee (of the falsehoods) of those who blaspheme; [as translated by Yusuf 'Alî] (3:55)

Here are two words that need some consideration; the first is *mutawaffika* رَافِعُكَ, and the second is *râfi'uka* رَافِعُكَ. If either of these words is a proof of the raising of Jesus with his body to heaven, the question is which one? Another verse brought in to support this misconception is 4:158 where we read about Jesus: بَلْ رَفَعَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْهِ "Allâh raised him up unto Himself;" [Translated by Yusuf 'Alî]. Here again the word *râfi'a* رَفَعَ is used. Let us suppose *râfi'a* رَفَعَ suggests that he ascended, resurrected or was raised to heaven (may be with his body). You would have to give that word the same meaning elsewhere

in the Holy Qur'ân (see 4:154; 43:32; 58:11). Reflect on the following verse: ”فِي بُيُوتِ أَدِنَ اللَّهُ أَنْ تُرْفَعَ وَيَذْكُرَ فِيهَا اسْمُهُ يُسْبَّحُ لَهُ فِيهَا بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالآصَالِ” (*This light is now lit in houses (of the Companions) which Allâh has ordained to be exalted [from the root rafa'a] and His name be commemorated in them*) (24:36). Should you honestly believe here that these houses would be raised to heaven along with their walls and foundations? What about وَرَفَعْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ دَرَجَاتٍ لِيَلْتَهُذَ بَعْضُهُمْ بَعْضًا سُخْرِيًّا “*We exalt [from the root rafa'a] them (in rank) one over another so that some of them may take others in service*” (43:32); are you to believe that the bodies of each of these men of importance were raised to heaven? And what about Prophet Idrîs (Enoch)?

وَادْكُرْ فِي الْكِتَابِ إِدْرِيسَ ۖ إِنَّهُ كَانَ صِدِيقًا نَبِيًّا وَرَفَعْنَاهُ مَكَانًا عَلَيْهِ

“And give an account of Idrîs [Enoch] in this Book. He was a very truthful man, a Prophet. And We raised [from the root rafa'a] him to an exalted position” (19:56–57).

The root word *rafa'a* رَفَعْ is used in the Holy Qur'ân at least thirty times, but only in the case of Jesus in 3:55 and 4:158 do the zealous teachers of simple Muslims give this word the meaning of “raised to heaven with body”. In fact, the words “to heaven or with body” are added very often to the Holy Qur'ân in many explanatory notes without any justification. The rendering of *râfi'a* رَفِيَّا into “to raise” make the real meaning confusing and misguiding. This rendering bring the underlying Divine messages of rejecting the divinity of Jesus in doubt and raise Jesus into heaven near to the seat of the God Who is *Raf'i al-Darajât* – the Exalted One in ranks

Sometimes the word *mutawaffika* مُتَوَفِّيكَ (whose root is *wafa*) is translated as “take you away”, “took him up”, or “shall take you away” instead of saying in clear words, “will cause you die a natural death. Such a rendering is intended to be understood as “raise to heaven with body”. The root word *wafa*, in its twenty-eight forms, occurs more than sixty-five time in the Holy Qur'ân. Only in relation

to two verses on Jesus (3:55 and 5:117) is the word translated as “take away”, “take him up,” and “will take thee up”. In verse 12:101 تَوْفِي مُسْلِمًا وَالْحُقُّنِي بِالصَّالِحِينَ the word **Tuwaffanî** تَوْفِي in the statement from Joseph is clearly meant in the sense of dying and not in the sense of a physical body rising to heaven.

Here is an example how the real message of Exalted Lord has to adapt to the fancies of misconceived belief of ignorant Muslim clergy. Amatul Rahmân Omer, the first ever Muslim woman to translate the Holy Qur'ân, renders the above verse 3:55 as follows: “(Recall the time) when Allâh said: O Jesus! I will cause you to die [a natural death - *mutawaffika*], and will exalt you [*râfi'uka*] to Myself, [thereby] clear you of the unchaste accusations of those who disbelieve” (3:55). This translation is very near to the truth.

Jesus elevation was elevation in ranks and degrees and not in body. The Elevated One (*Raf'i al-Darajât*) is one of Gods Attribute and not of Jesus. Jesus was elevated because of his actions and he was elevated in degree because of his knowledge. God unites the two kinds of elevation in the “Houses in which His Name is commemorated day and night” (cf. 24:36). So was Prophet Idris (Enoch) elevated. There will be some who will continue to disagree and still argue concerning *mutawaffika* and *râfi'uka* that these Words refer to the raising of Jesus to heaven. However, they must acknowledge the following verses: “*They [Jesus and Mary] both used to eat food*” (5:75). Jesus, if living bodily in heaven, is somehow taking in his daily food and somehow getting rid of the digested food. Then you read, “*Nor did We give them [the Prophets] such bodies as could go without food, neither were they people given unusually long lives*” (21:8). The final judgment on this affair comes from Allâh, the Most High, when He says:

مَا الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ إِلَّا رَسُولٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ الرُّسُلُ

“The Messiah, son of Mary, was only a Messenger; all Messengers have (like him) passed away before him” (5:75)

وَمَا مُحَمَّدٌ إِلَّا رَسُولٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ الرُّسُلُ

“And Muhammad is but a Messenger. Surely, all Messengers have passed away before him.” (3:144)

At the time of the death of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), many—including ‘Umar Ibn Khattâb^(rz), who would become the second Caliph—overwhelmed with grief, were in doubt that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) had died. On this occasion, the first Caliph, Abû Bakr^(rz), emphatically recited the Qur’ânic verse: قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ الرُّسُلُ “All Messengers have passed away before him” (3:144). Not a single person questioned his statement by interrupting, “except Jesus.” Great Muslim scholars—those such as *Imâm Mâlik ibn Anas*, *Imâm Ibn Hazm*, and *Imâm Ibn Ismâ‘îl al-Bukhârî*—never mentioned that Jesus was alive in heaven and that the same Jesus would return one day. In the same way, such learned men as Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn Qayyim were of the same view. It would be a daring invention to say that the ascending and descending of Jesus from heaven, along with his body, is a matter of contention. Modern Islamic *muftîs* from *Jamî‘at al-Azhar* in Cairo, such as *Muftî Mahmûd Shaltût* (in *al-Fatâwa*), *Muftî Mustafâ Al-Marâghî* and *Muftî Muhammad ‘Abduh*, have been of the same opinion. Now reflect on verses 5:116-117:

وَإِذْ قَالَ اللَّهُ يَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ أَنْتَ فُلْتَ لِلنَّاسِ اتَّخِذُونِي وَأُمِّي إِلَهِينِ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ ۝ قَالَ سُبْحَانَكَ مَا يَكُونُ لِي أَنْ أَقُولَ مَا لَيْسَ لِي بِحَقٍّ ۝ إِنْ كُنْتُ قُلْتُهُ فَقَدْ عَلِمْتَهُ ۝ تَعْلَمُ مَا فِي نَفْسِي وَلَا أَعْلَمُ مَا فِي نَفْسِكَ ۝ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ عَلَامُ الْغُيُوبِ مَا قُلْتُ لَهُمْ إِلَّا مَا أَمْرَتَنِي بِهِ أَنْ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبَّكُمْ ۝ وَكُنْتُ عَلَيْهِمْ شَهِيدًا مَا دُمْتُ فِيهِمْ ۝ فَلَمَّا تَوَفَّيْتَنِي كُنْتَ أَنْتَ الرَّقِيبَ عَلَيْهِمْ ۝ وَأَنْتَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ

“And when Allâh said, O Jesus the son of Mary! Did you say to people, “Take me and my mother for two gods beside Allâh”? He [Jesus] replied, Glory be to You! It was not possible and proper for me to say a thing to which I had no right (to say). If I had said it, you would indeed have known it, (for) You know all what is in my mind but I do not know what is in Yours. It is You alone Who truly knows all things unseen. I said nothing to them except what You had commanded me, “Worship Allâh, my Lord as well as your Lord.” I was a witness over them (only) so long as I remained among them but ever since You caused me to die, You Yourself have been the Watcher over them and You are the Witness to everything” (5:116–117).

When is this question being asked by Allâh to Jesus? Obviously, this question is being asked on the Day of Judgment and not while he was living among his people or hanging on cross. Jesus reply is that he had no knowledge that some people took him and his mother as gods. If Jesus is referring to his first and only life on earth, then he is telling the truth. He could not have known that after his death some followers of his had started to worship him as god. If he were living with his body somewhere in heaven, then in this conversation he would be lying to Allâh, since he would have known that he was being worshiped. What about his second advent? If he must come again to earth in order to wipe out sin, vice, and to establish Truth, then at the Day of Judgment he would have had to know that some people were worshiping him and his mother like gods. Why would he be lying before Allâh? You read in another Qur'ânic verse, which more clearly testifies that Jesus is no longer living alongside Allâh in heaven:

يَوْمَ يَجْمِعُ اللَّهُ الرُّسُلَ فَيَقُولُ مَاذَا أُحِبْتُمْ ۖ قَالُوا لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا ۖ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ عَلَّامُ الْعِيُوبِ

“(Imagine) the day when Allâh will gather together all the Messengers and ask, What response did you receive? They will

say, We have no real knowledge, surely it is You alone Who have true and perfect knowledge of all things unseen.” (5:109)

If the same Jesus has to come again, how can he give such a reply to Allâh? Is he lying again? Moreover, Allâh has promised, whosoever enters the heavenly paradise would never leave it. In other words, there is no exit door (see 15:48). Now, if there is no expulsion from paradise, the simple minded who believe in the ascending and returning of Jesus, have to invent a third place, a place other than paradise and hell, to put Jesus. Reason tells you that it is not possible that a mortal body should ascend to heaven and discard all the requirements of earthly life, such as eating, drinking, and breathing, for thousands of years and return to earth again.

The Muslims believe in the finality of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), that he is the last of the Prophets, “the Seal of the Prophets,” as stated in the Holy Qur’ân (33:40). Jesus was a Prophet of Allâh, as all Muslims know and believe, and Muhammad (pbuh) is the last of the Prophets. Now, if Jesus, who is a Prophet in view of Muslims, has to come again, then what about the finality of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)? Either these Muslims have to negate that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is the last of the Prophets (*khâtim al-Nabiyyîn*), or they would have to deny the second advent of Jesus. A strange solution to this dilemma is offered by the zealots: They say that at the time of the second advent of Jesus, Allâh will deprive Jesus of his prophethood. From where did these people get such information? Why should Allâh degrade him and rob him of his title of prophethood after keeping him alive for thousands of years in His presence? What would be the purpose and benefit of such a Jesus?

Those among the Muslims who believe in the bodily ascent of Jesus into heaven and his second advent refer to some Traditions of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). All of these Traditions need careful reflection and interpretation. Any Tradition that stands in contradiction to the Holy Qur’ân, that conflicts with any statement of the Holy Book,

either must be rejected as fabricated or must be subjected to careful thought in order to comprehend the metaphoric meanings embedded in such *hadîth*.

The belief of some Muslims who imagine that Jesus ascended to heaven and that he is alive and he will return one day is based on misinterpretation of some Traditions (*ahâdîth*) of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). There are many controversies in interpreting these Traditions, and each interpretation invites a number of objections. However, people with knowledge have no difficulty in their understanding. These beliefs originated in the middle Ages, which was as a period of great distortion. The foundations of these beliefs were laid by Christian preachers and have been reinforced during the present dark age of Islam. These Muslims raise the status of Jesus almost to divinity. Reflect on some other Qur'ânic verses to arrive at an answer:

وَمَا جَعْلَنَا لِبَشَرٍ مِّنْ قَبْلِكُمْ الْخَلْدُ ۝ أَفَإِنْ مَتَّ فَهُمُ الْخَالِدُونَ

“And We have not assigned to any human being before you an unusually prolonged life. If you [Muhammad] should die then shall they live (an) unusually long while (here)?” (21:34).

وَمَا جَعْلَنَا هُمْ جَسَدًا لَا يَكُلُونَ الطَّعَامَ وَمَا كَانُوا حَالِدِينَ

“Nor did We give them such bodies as could go without food, neither were they people given unusually long lives (to enjoy)” (21:8).

What *Ahâdîth* and Islamic scholars say about Jesus' death?

1. There is a testimony of ‘Âishah^(rz), wife of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) who relates that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said: “Jesus, son of Mary, lived to the age of 120 years.” (*Hujjaj al-Kirâmah*, p. 428)

2. There is a similar testimony of **Fâtimâ**^(rz), daughter of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) who relates from the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) that he said: “Jesus, son of Mary, lived to the age of 120 years.” (*Kanz al-‘Ummâl*, vol. vi, p. 120)
3. In the *Mustadrak* it is reported from **Ibn ‘Umar** that Jesus lived to the age of 120 years. It is likewise also in the *Asâbah*.” (*Tafsîr Kamâlain*).
4. *Imâm Hasan*^(rz) ascended the pulpit after the martyrdom of ‘Alî^(rz) and said: “He died on the night on which the soul of Jesus, son of Mary, was taken up, that is the twenty-seventh of Ramadzân.” (*Tabaqat Kabîr*, vol. iii, p. 26)
5. Explaining the Qur’ânic verse, “O Jesus, I will cause you to die (*mutawaffî-ka*)”, **Ibn ‘Abbâs** is recorded as saying: *mutawaffî-ka* means ‘I will cause you to die (*mumîtu-ka*)’.” (*Bukhârî*, *Kitâb al-Tafsîr*, on verse 5:110).
6. Regarding *Imâm Mâlik*, one of the four *imâms* of jurisprudence (*fiqh*), it is written: “While most people believe that Jesus did not die, Mâlik said that he died.” (*Majma’ Bihâr al-Anwâr*, vol. i, p. 286). In the ‘Utbiyya it is written that Mâlik said that Jesus, son of Mary, died. (*Ikmâl al-Ikmâl*, Commentary of Abû Muslim, vol. i, p. 265)

Other great scholars of the Islamic history were of the same opinion when commenting on verses 5:110 and 3:55.

1. Ibn Hazm al Qurtabi (*Muhalli fil-Fiqh*, p. 23); (*Jalâlain*, under verse 3:55)
2. Ibn Taymiyya: *Al-Jâwwâb as-Sâhih li-man baddala dîn al-Masîh*, (vol. ii, p. 280)
3. Ibn Qayyim: *Zâd al-Ma‘âd*, (vol. i, p. 20)
4. Abû Hayyân: *Bahr al-Muhiṭ*, (vol. iv, p. 4)
5. Shaukânî: *Fath al-Qâdir Qalmî*, (p. 4)

6. Muḥammad Abduh: *Qasas al-Anbiyâ* by Abdul Wahâb al-Najar, p. 428); (*Al-Manâr*)
7. *Allama Rashîd Razâ* disciple of Mufti Muḥammad ‘Abduh (*Qur’ânîc Commentary* by Al-Sayyid Rashîd Raza, part vi, pp. 42, 43)
8. Mahmûd Shaltût: *Al-Fatâwâ*, published by Al-Idâra al-‘Ama lil-Thaqâfat al-Islamîya bil-Azhar, pp. 52-58)
9. Mustafâ al-Marâghî: *Tafsîr al-Marâghî*, part iii, p. 87 and p. 165)
10. Zain al-‘Âbidîn Qur’ânîc commentary published with the support of the Iranian Government, (vol. i, p. 268).

Strategies of Evangelists to confuse Muslims

The wrongly conceived Qur’ânîc verses regarding Jesus may mislead some to believe in incarnation. By reviving the dead and ascending to heaven, Jesus must be Son of God on earth. Muslims who believe as such have no choice but to attribute divinity to a body. Christian evangelists approach simple minded Muslims by telling them these stories and that Jesus enjoys a special and [may be] a higher status than the Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh) according to Qur’ân. A status that is close to his divinity. They cite in Qur’ân as Jesus being:

- The word of God (*Kalimat-Allâh*; 3:45; 4:71; 19:34)
- The Spirit of God (*Rûh-Allâh*) 4:171; 3:91; 2:86; 5:110)
- The one blessed from God (*Mubârak*) 19:31
- The Mercy of God (*Rahmat-Allâh*) 19:21
- The one purified by God (*Zakî*) 3:46
- The one who stands (or sits) near God (*Muqarrab*) 3:45

At first glance, the attributes attached to Jesus may create doubts in the mind of some Muslim. In fact, none of the attributes, in any form, given to Jesus are exclusive to him. If they say, Jesus is *Kalimat-Allâh* (the word of God), so are all Allâh's creatures His words, as the verse 31:27 tells you. When they say, Jesus is the Spirit of God (*Rûh Allâh*), and God infused His spirit into Mary (19:17), so Allâh strengthens His sincere believers with His spirit as the verses 59:22 16:2; 32:8-9; 38:71-72; 42:53 inform you. Similarly, Jesus was not alone the recipient of Allâh's Mercy (رَحْمَةً 19:21). Isaac and Jacob were also recipient of Allâh's Mercy (رَحْمَةً 19:50-51). Moreover, the word *Rahmat* رَحْمَةً (mercy) is to be found about 115 times in the Holy Qur'ân. If Jesus received Divine Blessings (مُبَارَكًا 19:31), so did many others. Verses 6:92; 23:29; 28:30 and 50:29 will tell you what else are blessed (*baraka*) by God other than Jesus. Similarly there shall be many who will be *muqarrab* to God - that is who shall stand (or sit) near God (56:11-12 and 83:21). Jesus alone is not *Zaki* (3:46). *Zaki* are all those who are pure at heart and they believe in One and the Only God, as you read in the verses 24:21 and 91:9.

How Jesus raised “dead” to life? Another misconceived belief among Muslims is that Jesus rose dead to life, and made birds from the clay. The verse 3:48 and 5:110 are cited to strengthen such belief. We read for example in 5:110.

إِذْ قَالَ اللَّهُ يَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ اذْكُرْ نِعْمَتِي عَلَيْكَ وَعَلَىٰ وَالدَّيْنِكَ إِذْ أَيَّدْتِكَ
بِرُوحِ الْقُدْسِ تُكَلِّمُ النَّاسَ فِي الْمَهْدِ وَكَهْلًا ۖ وَإِذْ عَلَمْتُكَ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ
وَالثُّورَةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ ۖ وَإِذْ تَحْلُقُ مِنَ الطَّيْنِ كَهْيَةً الطَّيْرِ بِإِذْنِي فَتَفَطُّخُ فِيهَا
فَتَكُونُ طَيْرًا بِإِذْنِي ۖ وَتَبْرُئُ الْأَكْمَةَ وَالْأَبْرَصَ بِإِذْنِي ۖ وَإِذْ تُخْرُجُ
الْمَوْتَىٰ بِإِذْنِي ۖ وَإِذْ كَفَّتُ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ عَنِكَ إِذْ حِشَّتُهُمْ بِالْبَيْنَاتِ فَقَالَ الَّذِينَ
كَفَرُوا مِنْهُمْ إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ مُّبِينٌ

“Allâh said, ‘O Jesus, son of Mary! Remember My blessing upon you and upon your mother, how I strengthened you with the holy

revelation. You spoke to the people (when you were) in the cradle and when of old age, and how I taught you the Scripture and the wisdom and the Torah and the Evangel, and how you determined from clay the likeness of a bird by My leave, then you breathed into it (a new spirit) then it became a soaring being by My leave, and by My leave you absolved the blind, the leprous, and by My leave you raised the (spiritually or nearly) dead to life, and how I warded off the Children of Israel from (putting) you (to death). It was the time when you came to them with clear arguments, but those among them who disbelieved had said, "This is naught but a hoax cutting (us) off (from the nation)." (5:110)

You read in verse 30:19 and again in verse 57:17 “It is Allâh Who gives life to the earth after its death”, and again in 30:52 you read, “And you [-Prophet Muhammad] cannot make the dead hear, nor can you make the deaf hear the call when they retreat turning their backs (on you)”. These verses clearly tell you that the “dead” are the ones who are spiritually dead. Anyone who revives a dead soul with the life of spiritual knowledge and truths about real Lord has thereby brought him to life. That is to say, they are formed like a bird that soars high with his enlightened spirit. Allâh says, “He alone raises the dead to life” (42:9). Raising the spiritually and morally dead by God through His Prophets is that eternal, luminous and sublime life of which Allâh says:

□ مَنْ كَانَ مَيْتًا فَأَحْيَيْنَاهُ وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُ نُورًا يَمْشِي بِهِ فِي النَّاسِ

“Who was lifeless (before) and to whom We gave life and We provided for him a light whereby he moves about among the people, (6:122)

Another misunderstood words in the above cited verse 5:110 are أَيَّدْنَاهُ بِرُوحِ الْفُسْسٍ “I strengthened you with the holy spirit”, [as Yusuf ‘Alî translates]. God, when He perfected the human body said to Engels, “So when I have shaped him in perfection and have breathed My

revelation (Rûh) into him, fall you down in submission to him” (15:29). Thus, every human being is attributed with this formal Divine Spirit (*Rûh* رُوح), The word *Rûh* رُوح is used in the sense of Divine Revelation and Mercy in the Holy Qur’ân (cf.16:2; 32:9; 38:72; 42:52; 16:102; 2:253; 2:87; 58:22; 26:193; 4:171). *Rûh al-Quds* is that ‘holy spirit’ who brings the Divine Revelation of Allâh’s to His Messenger. You can read in verse 16:102

فُلْ نَزَّلَهُ رُوحُ الْقُدْسِ مِنْ رَبِّكَ بِالْحَقِّ لِيُنَبِّئَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَهُدَىٰ وَبُشِّرَىٰ لِلْمُسْلِمِينَ

“Say, ‘The Spirit of Holiness (Rûh al-Quds) has brought this (Qur’ân) down from your Lord to suit the requirement of truth and wisdom, (Allâh has revealed it) so that He may strengthen those who believe in their faith and so that (this may serve as) a guidance and good tidings for Muslims’. (16:102).

Christians call upon Jesus their Lord, the Helper and the Saviour apart from “Father” and the “Holy Ghost”. Allâh says:

وَالَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ لَا يَخْلُقُونَ شَيْئًا وَهُمْ يُخْلَقُونَ أَمْوَاتٌ غَيْرُ أَحْيَاءٍ ۖ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ أَيَّانَ يُبْعَثَرُونَ

“And the things whom they call upon apart from Allâh can create nothing. Rather they are themselves created. **They are dead, not alive.** And they do not perceive when they shall be raised (to life again)” (16:20–21).

Allâh did not say here, and at other relevant places (cf. 21:8; 21:34; 5:109; 3:144) with the exception of Jesus. He could have said so, if Jesus were alive sitting somewhere in heaven. Allâh has expounded the whole affair about Jesus in different ways and with various arguments.

Reader of the Holy Qur'ân must be very clear that **Taurât** التُّورَة and **Injîl** إِنْجِيل cited in verse 5:110 and else where refer to the original books that were revealed to Moses (the *Taurât* التُّورَة) and the teachings promulgated by Jesus (the *Injil*). The Old and New Testaments, and in some other Gospels are not **Taurât** التُّورَة and **Injîl** إِنْجِيل mentioned in the Holy Qur'ân. Similarly, Zabûr are not the Psalms of David (Clarke, W. K. L., Concise Bible Commentary. London: Society for Promotion of Christian Knowledge [S.P.C.K], 1952). Jesus never received his own Book of Law. Nowhere in Qur'ân you read Jesus was given a Book similar to the one given to Moses or to the Holy Prophet Muhammad. The verse 55:110 simply tells us, God taught him the Book - that is “Divine Law” عَلَمْتُكَ الْكِتَاب. As the subject of this chapter is not the review of the previous books, no further details about them will be provided here. [Precise summary on this subject is to read in *Qur'ân and Hadîth* by Allâmah Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi; Printed and Published by: Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania P.O. Box 20033 Dâr-es-Salâm, Tanzania, ISBN 9976 956 87 8].

In order to understand the word المُهْدٌ وَكَهْلًا (cradle and maturity) in the verse 5:110 correctly, one has to go back to the original classical Arabic words and their meanings from dictionaries of the classical Arabic and put aside the modern Arabic dictionaries. There are many such dictionaries that can serve the purpose (see introduction and One has to keep in view the allegorical style of the Holy Book).

Therefore, you should be careful what the sermon readers and preachers tell you, and read what Allâh says about them in verses 3:187; 4:51; 5:13-14; 6:91 and 7:162. Allâh speaks the Truth and He is the sole Lord (cf. 3:62)



AN INVITATION TO THE PURIFICATION OF SOULS

Tazkiya al-Nafs

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَكُم مَوْعِظَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَشَفَاءٌ لِمَا فِي الصُّدُورِ وَهُدًى
وَرَحْمَةٌ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ قُلْ يَغْضِلُ اللَّهُ وَبِرَحْمَتِهِ فَإِذَا كَفَرُوا هُوَ خَيْرٌ مِمَّا
يَحْمَعُونَ

“O People! There has come to you an exhortation (to do away with your weaknesses) from your Lord and a cure for whatever (disease) is in your hearts, and (a Book full of) excellent guidance and a mercy, (and full of blessings) to the believers. Say, All this (revelation of the Qur’ân) is through the grace of Allâh and His mercy. In this, therefore, let them rejoice, (because) this (Qur’ân) is better than all that they hoard.” (10:57–58)

This is a universal call appealing to humankind to leave behind all conventional and limiting religious beliefs. This is the invitation from the Exalted One to get rid of your spiritual and moral diseases, which you have acquired. This is a call of Divine Grace and Mercy (56:75–82), which invites you to the purification of your soul. He is inviting you to go beyond your blind faith and self-created doctrines and to follow the guidance of the Most Exalted Lord, Who shall lead you to reach the spiritual certainty (*‘ilm al-Yaqîn*; see 102:5) about Him, and shall help you rise to eminence (28:51) and finally to eternal salvation.

هَدَا بَيَانُ لِلنَّاسِ وَهُدًى وَمَوْعِظَةٌ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ

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“This (Qur’ân) is a clear exposition (of the truth) for humankind (to follow) and a (means to) guidance, and an exhortation to those who guard against evil.” (3:138).

This is the guidance from your Lord Who created you and Who sustains you. He has given you a free choice:

**قُلْ آمِنُوا بِهِ أَوْ لَا تُؤْمِنُوا ۖ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ إِذَا يُتْلَى عَلَيْهِمْ
يَخِرُّونَ لِلأَذْقَانِ سُجَّدًا**

“You may believe in it [the Qur’ân] or you may not believe, those who have been given the knowledge [of divine revelations] fall down on their faces prostrating submissively (before their Lord) when it is recited to them;” (17:107–109).

When you are reading this Book, it is, as if you are listening to the divine voice. You are in company with your Lord Who has evolved you from non-existence, Who sustains you and nourishes you. He is in company with you - nearer to you than your jugular vein (50:16). This is the best and the fairest discourse you can have (أَحَسَنُ الْحَدِيثِ)

إِنَّهَا تَذَكِّرَةٌ فَمَنْ شَاءَ ذَكَرَهُ فِي صُحْفٍ مُّكَرَّمَةٍ مَّرْفُوعَةٍ مُّطَهَّرَةٍ

“This is a means to rise to eminence (for you all). So let him who desires, pay heed to it and rise to eminence. (This Qur’ân is preserved) in such written leaves (of the Book) as are greatly honoured, (Which are) ranked high (and) are rid of all impurities” (80:11–14).

There is no compulsion to accept His invitation and listen to His discourse. If you listen to it and accept it, and after that you decide to leave His company nowhere you will find any word in His Book that imposes on you a punishment for “apostasy” at the hands of believers. What you hear about apostasy is the product of fearful minds and what they show you written, or you read about this in books other than

AN INVITATION TO THE PURIFICATION OF SOULS

Allâh's Book, should be approached with a careful thought. Allâh simply says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَن يَرْتَدَّ مِنْكُمْ عَنِ دِينِهِ فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِي اللَّهُ بِقَوْمٍ يُحِبُّهُمْ وَيُحِبُّونَهُ

"O you who believe! if anyone of you should renounce his Faith (let him remember that) Allâh will bring forth (in his stead) a people (more zealous in faith) whom He will love and who will love Him." (5:54)

There is a particular beauty in these Divine words “يُحِبُّهُمْ وَيُحِبُّونَهُ” *Whom He will love and who will love Him*”, which come from the use of pronouns of absence (3rd person plu.) and a future tense without end, indicating that Allâh's love for His servants will be endless. His love for you will exist whether your state is the one of physical existence or of another existence after death. Those who kill from excessive zeal for God should know that none other than the One who created human being with its physical and spiritual perfection has the right over it. Whoever takes control of life and seeks its destruction transgresses His limits. Be sure, solicitude in caring for God's creation is better way than killing it from excessive zeal for God. Have you not considered that Allâh has ordained tax (*jiz'ya*) and truce (cf. 8:61; 9:29) so that He might spare life through you? Have you not considered in case of retaliation the injured party is encouraged to exact a ransom or forgive (cf. 2:178)? The “House of God” cannot be raised by the hands of those who split blood. Your extolling or praising Him will not add to His glory, nor does any **blasphemy** or disobedience to His Prophets can take away of His grandeur and dignity; He is already Exalted and Glorified. If you glorify Him by confessing, “Yes! You are my sole Lord”, your glorifications shall bestow purification and radiance to your own soul. So let him who desires pay heed to it (فَمَن شَاءَ ذَكَرَهُ) and occupy a seat close to the Most Exalted One.

COMMENTARY

PART II

COMMENTARY

Selected Verses

الفاتحة 1. CHAPTER

Al-Fâtihah – The Opening Chapter

(Revealed Before Hijrah)

Al-Fâtihah الفاتحة is the opening chapter of the Holy Qur’ân, consisting of “seven oft-recited verses” (15:87). Every supplicating prayer service starts with its verses. It is called *umm-al-Kitâb* (Mother of the Book); for it comprehends in summary form all the branches of ethical and moral teachings. It is also called *umm al-Qur’ân* (Mother of the Qur’ân), as it is a fine summary of the objectives of the Holy Qur’ân and presents the totality of its message in a concise manner. It is also known under the name of *al-Hamd* (The Perfect and True Praise/Glory), since it opens with the praise and glory of the Lord, the Most High, and its name *sab‘a* (seven) signify the seven gates of Hell: each verse of it wards off the flames of one of those gates. Its seven verses are recited every day, in every *rak‘at* of every *Salât* (ritual Prayer) by all Muslims around the world.

Al-Fâtihah informs us the real object of Praise and tells us whom should we worship and what should we supplicate. It also contains hidden prophecies and warnings for the Muslims of coming generations. Pages of books are needed to justly appraise the excellence of those truths that comprise Al-Fâtihâh. Its literary charm and conciseness, condensing volumes of meaning in relatively few words, cannot be surpassed. The splendor of its language, its fluency, its clarity, and its spiritual effectiveness miraculously transform human hearts. When rightly understood thoughtfully spoken, it feeds every guest who desires to be entertained at the Divine court. It provides drink for every visitor who wishes to quench his thirst from the fountain of Divine knowledge. It dispels every fear that would

lead to the brink of disaster and uproots every worry that would bring on anxiety and depression. It leads every leader who has lost the way back to the right path, humbles every implacable enemy, and cheers up the seeker. There is no physician comparable to it for washing out the poisons of sin and healing the crookedness of hearts. Its words, when carefully contemplated, lead to certitude of the absolute Divine Unity.

The recitation of Al-Fâtihâh verses in ritual Prayer (*Salât*) is obligatory. Reflection on its verses show that no prayer can be made without these words. The Attributes of our Creator mentioned here are the basics of all His Attributes and they are not to be found in any other deity. They refute those who do not believe in prayer or in the Hereafter. Therein is a realisation that our Creator is All-Powerful, He embodies all Excellences and that His Mercy and His Benevolence are indispensable for our survival, and that He is the Source and Fountainhead of all Graces. It tells us that we have to estimate ourselves as humble and utterly dependent on His help and His guidance. These are the incentives to the performance of fervent prayer, and they are captured in beautifully succinct words within the seven verses of this chapter. It begins with the words:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

1:1 “*With the name of Allâh, Most Gracious, and Ever Merciful*”. This verse is a revealed part of the chapter and not a later addition (Abû Dâ'ûd; Ibn Kathîr; Imâm Hanbal). No other verse is repeated so often in the Holy Qur'ân. It is repeated at the beginning of all chapters (*Sûrah*) of the Holy Qur'ân with the exception of Chapter 9 (*Al-Taubah*). Besides this, a letter written by Solomon to Queen Sheba also begins with these words (27:30). The Holy Prophet attached great importance to this verse. According to him, any work that begins with these words carries Divine Blessings. His famous letters to the kings and the emperors of his time began with these

words. It has become traditional among Muslims to recite this verse before the start of any work and enterprise, big or small, with the purpose of seeking Divine Blessings and Help.

The very first word starts with the Arabic alphabet “ba” ب . In Arabic, if a words starts with “ba” ب it means that there exists an expression before this that has not been mentioned, but is a part of the word. “Ba” ب before a word signifies that this should be made a source or a cause of something that is to be achieved. Here the omitted word before *Bi-Ism-Allâh* بِسْمِ اللَّهِ (with the name of Allâh) is اقْرَأْ (meaning “Read!” (cf. 96:1 see also *Kashshaf* of *Zamakhsharî*). *Bi-Ism-Allâh* بِسْمِ اللَّهِ is a reply to the very first revealed word of the Holy Book that was at the same time the first Divine Command - “Read with the Name of your Lord! اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ”!

The word *ism* (- name) embedded in **Bi-Isam-Allâh** بِسْمِ اسْمِ is a derivative of *wasma* and *wasmun* and means “the mark left by branding”. *Ittasamar-rajulu* is used when a person chooses a mark of identification by means of which people distinguish him from others. In popular parlance, the *isam* of a thing stands for its distinguishing mark but, in the view of the learned, it signifies its reality.

This blessed verse names the Supreme Lord, Allâh. Allâh is the proper name of the Being Whose excellences are the culmination of beauty and beneficence (cf. page 8), Who does not suffer from any shortcoming, and Who combines in Himself all perfect Attributes. Allâh is the Being, Imperceptible, above the reach of reason, beyond of beyond, finer than the finest towards Whom all objects of creation turn in worship: “*Whatever is in the heavens and the earth declares the Glory of Allâh. He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise*” (57:1). He has named Himself Allâh, which is comprehensive of all His other names and Attributes. He has not accorded that status to any other name when He says, “*Do you not know that there is no one who is called with the same name?*” (19:65). The meaning of the word Allâh is known only to Him.

Al-Rahmân الرَّحْمَنُ and **Al-Rahîm** الرَّجِيمُ, translated as Most Gracious and Ever Merciful, are derived from the same root *Rahama* signifying love, tenderness, grace, mercy, pity, forgiveness, and goodness (Lane). All these qualities are required for exercising beneficence. Both *Al-Rahmân* الرَّحْمَنُ and *Al-Rahîm* الرَّجِيمُ are active participial nouns of different measures denoting intensiveness of significance. An Arabic intensive is more suited to express Allâh's Attributes than the superlative degree (*Bahr al-Muhît*). It is wrong to think that *Rahmân* and *Rahîm* are the repetition of one and the same Attribute, and they are placed in the first verse of the Holy Qur'ân one after another for the sake of emphasis. The fact is that these are two different Attributes of Allâh. *Rahmân* is in the measure of *fa'lân*, which conveys the idea of fullness and extensiveness and indicates the greatest preponderance of the quality of mercy, which comprehends the entire universe without regard to the effort and asking. It circumscribes the quality of abounding grace inherent in and inseparable from Him. *Rahîm* is in the measure of *fa'il*. This measure denotes the idea of constant repetition and giving of liberal reward again and again to those who ask for it and deserve it (*Bahr al-Muhît*).

The difference between *Al-Rahmân* and *Al-Rahîm* is that the *Rahmân* grants of His own accord out of pure grace and beneficence without reference to any deed or request, while *Rahîm* is the One Who causes good results to follow on good deeds, He would not nullify anyone's work and labour (cf. 2:218). Allâh is *Rahmân* in the sense that He grants a pure nature to human beings, without the taint of sin, in the finest make and the best proportions with enormous capabilities for all-round advancement and for attaining proximity to the Creator (95:4). Allâh is *Rahîm* in the sense that when one makes use of his faculties Allâh blesses his efforts with good results (Ibn Qayyim in *Zâd al-Ma'âd*). To punish every sin is incompatible with these Attributes.

In the words “*With the name of Allâh, Most Gracious, Ever Merciful*” بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ our Creator has signified His two Attributes that subsist in His Eternal Light.

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

1:2 Al-Hamdu-lil(l)-Allâh الحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ conveys that “all praise is due to the rightfully worshipped Being whose name is Allâh, Who combines in Himself the aggregate of all Perfect Excellences and Praise”. **Al-Hamdu** الحَمْدُ is that praise which is offered in appreciation for the commendable actions of one worthy of praise. It also refers to the lauding one who has done a favour of his own volition and according to his own choice (*Râghib*). Allâh did not inaugurate His book with thanks (- *shukr*) or with commendation (- *thanâ*) or gratitude (- *madah*) to Him, but with al-Hamdu. *Shukr* differs from *hamd* in the sense that its application is restricted to the beneficent qualities of someone. *Shukr* can be used for those who have done a favour, small or great. *Madah* differs from *hamd* in the sense that it applies to involuntary beneficence. This kind of praise can be true or false (Lane). *Thanâ* (accolade) of someone serves the purpose of self-interest or publicity based on some experience.

Hamdu حَمْدٌ is used in both the active and the passive sense, that is, it is used both for the subject and the object, and it signifies that Allâh is praiseworthy and receives perfect praise (*Muhammad* in Arabic) and He also bestows it (*Ahmad*). This interpretation derives support from the fact that Allâh has followed up the word *hamd* with the mention of His Attributes, the most Gracious (*Al-Rahmân*) and the Ever Merciful (*Al-Rahîm*). *Al-Rahmân* signifies that *hamd* is used in the active sense and *Al-Rahîm* signifies that it is used in the passive sense, as His *Rahîmiyyat* is not hidden from those who possess knowledge. Allâh has used the word *hamd* as a veiled reality that uncovers His face through His Attributes of *Al-Rahmân* and *Al-Rahîm*.

The Bestower of bounties upon His creation of diverse kinds, without any claim on their part, becomes the object of the adoration of all those who become conscious of these bounties. In its culmination of adoration, the worshipper makes *Al-Rahmán* the *Muhammad* (loved One; praised One). When Divine commendation and adoration reaches perfection, then *Al-Rahîm* becomes *Ahmad* (the lover/or praiser) of the worshipper.

Al-Hamد is that verbal praise and glorification, which is offered to honour the Mighty and the Noble for His acts of beneficence. *Al-Hamد* is the praise that also implies the humility, lowliness, and submissiveness in the person who offers it (Râghib). Perfect praise and glory is the exclusive prerogative of the Lord of Majesty. The ultimate goal of all kind of glorification be it in a small or a large measure, is our Lord Who guides the misguided and exalts the lowly and is the only object of praise.

Every type of praise and glory, whether relating to external aspects or internal realities, to inherent excellences or as manifested in natural phenomena, is due exclusively to Allâh. No other shares in it. Whatever true praise or perfect excellence the wisdom of the wise can imagine or the minds of thinkers can contemplate belongs to Allâh. The true Praise Al-*Hamد* is the due only of Allâh, Who is the source of all grace and light and exercises beneficence deliberately and not under compulsion. He is the true Benefactor, and from Him proceed all benefits from beginning to end; and for Him is all glorification, in this world and in the Hereafter, and all praise that is bestowed on others reverts back to Him.

The word *hamd* contains in it the refutation of the worshippers of humans, animals, and idols. They praise their imagined deities and ascribe to them the Attributes of God. Their deities lack love, tenderness, grace, mercy, pity, forgiveness, goodness—the high qualities that are required for exercising beneficence. Even if they ascribe such qualities to them, they cannot of their own accord grant

to humankind grace and beneficence irrespective of their deed or request, race or religion. Allâh is that Perfect Deity Who grants to all living creatures the shape and constitution appropriate to them, without their asking. Such a Lord who combines in Himself all perfect Attributes, and Who is free from every defect, the One without associate and the Source of all beneficence, is to be rightfully praised.

The Holy Prophet (pbuh) said, “Allâh is free from imperfection and I begin with His praise as many times as the number of His creatures, in accordance with His Good Pleasure, equal to the weight of His Throne and equal to the Ink that may be used in recording His words” (Abû Muslim). (*See also the exegesis of chapter 1, page 252-254*)

In the words that follow - **Rabb al-‘Âlamîn**, رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ, the word *Rabb* رَبٌّ means Creator, Sustainer, and Guardian Evolver to Perfection of the Universes. According to *Lisân al-‘Arab* and *Tâj al-‘Arûs*, the two most authentic lexicons, the word *Rabb* رَبٌّ has seven connotations, namely: *Mâlik* (Supreme Master), *Sayyad* (Chief), *Mudabbir* (Determiner), *Murabbî* (Provider), *Qayyûm* (Sustainer), *Mun‘im* (Rewarder) and *Mutammim* (Perfector).

The word *al-‘Âlamîn* الْعَالَمِينَ is a plural of ‘âlam (realm), which is derived from ‘alama and means knowledge, sign, distinguishing mark, created object, and realm. Thus *al-‘Âlamîn* includes any sign by means of which one is able to know its Creator. The expression employed here is not *Khâliq al-‘Âlamîn* (Creator of the worlds) but *Rabb al-‘Âlamîn*. The word *al-‘Âlamîn* is to be translated as all the worlds or many worlds. This can refer to worlds of particles and elements in cosmos, the worlds that are manifest and those that are hidden, worlds of plants and animals. The expression also includes the worlds of knowledge, worlds of human thoughts and intellect, and worlds of non-particles, the worlds of Paradises, the worlds of Fire and Hell (55:46-75, 88:4-16), the worlds of souls (*nafûs*) and many other worlds that are known only to Allâh (6:59; 6:73). *Al-‘Âlamîn* is everything other than Allâh.

The word ‘Ālamîn has its root also in ‘alama which means to know. ‘Ālam in the sense of knowledge means something concerning which report or information is given. Thus, ‘Ālamîn are the means by which one knows the Creator. *Rabb al-‘Ālamîn* رب العالمين impels the seeker to seek knowledge about his Creator, the Sustainer, and his Evolver. Sometimes, *al-‘Ālamîn* is used in a restricted sense. We read, “*O Children of Israel! Remember My favours, which I conferred upon you that exalted you above all your contemporaries*” (2:122), or similarly, “*Blessed is He Who revealed Al-Furqân (the Holy Qur’ân) to His servant that he may be a warner to all humankind*” (25:1). In verse 2:122, the restriction applies to the people of a particular period, and in 25:1 the restriction is to humankind. In both cases *al-‘Ālamîn* cannot include the other realms of non-particles and that of animal and plant worlds.

Allâh, as *Rabb al-‘Ālamîn*, has provided all the means for the physical requirements of all kinds of life, without discrimination (35:25). *Rabb al-‘Ālamîn* is an outright refutation to those who seek to confine the Providence and His Grace to their own people, believing that their own communities were preferred (cf. 35:25). If it is so, people may have reason to complain that God was gracious towards some chosen people and not towards others. Some may say that a particular people was given a Book so that it may be guided thereby and another was not, or that He manifested Himself through His Words and Revelation and signs in a certain age but remained hidden in another age. By extending His Providence universally, He disposed of all such objections and exercised such universal benevolence that no people or age was denied the beneficence of His material and spiritual grace. These words are also a refutation to those who have taken the created as their lord, as the expression of Creator, Nourisher, Sustainer, Guardian; Evolver of the world cannot be applied to created lords.

The expression *Rabb al-‘Ālamîn* tells us that none of the forces in operation in the heavens and the earth in various shapes and forms to

ensure the proper running of the universe operates on their own, but that Divine power operates through them. All the faculties with which the celestial bodies and earthly elements are invested are but a reflection of the Powers and Attributes eternally possessed by Allâh, the Supreme. With the words *Rabb al-‘Âlamîn* رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ Allâh has made it plain to us that the cosmos and its spheres are nothing in themselves; it is His dominating Power (*Rabûbiyyat*) that operates in them, as it were, from behind a screen. He makes the moon shed light in dark nights that ripen the fruits. He manifests a glorious light by His Power of *Rabûbiyyat* through the instrumentality of the sun and makes manifest His multifaceted Designs in various ways. It is His Power of *Rabûbiyyat* that descends from the sky in the form of rain that revives and refreshes the dead earth, and provides drink for the thirsty (cf. 30:48-50). It is His Power of *Rabûbiyyat* that gives fire the quality of combustion and invests the air with the quality to refresh life, make flowers blossom, lift clouds, and convey the beautiful sounds (cf.: 56:57-74). It is His Power of *Rabûbiyyat* that enables the earth to carry on its back humans with their burden of sins, and the beasts. “The heavens are about to burst on account of that, and the earth about to split asunder, and the mountains to fall down in pieces, because they have ascribed a son to the Most Gracious” (19:91-92). His *Rabûbiyyat* sustains the earth despite these claims.

Divine Power manifests itself as the power of the hand manifests itself through the pen. We say the pen writes but, in fact, it is the hand and not the pen that does the writing. Similarly, it is true that all the heavenly bodies and earthly elements, indeed every atom in the lower and upper spheres that is visible and perceptible; manifest themselves by virtue of the powers of the *Rabb al-‘Âlamîn*.

A magnifying glass, by reflecting the rays of the sun, may ignite fire, but that causes no diminution in the power of the sun. Fruits are fostered and ripen under moonbeams, but that process does not wear down the moon. These natural phenomena furnish insight into Divine

working. The same principle is at the center of all spiritual phenomena. The universe has come into existence through the word *kun* of *Rabb al-Âlamîn*. The same idea is expressed in another verse (27:44) that the world is as if a palace with floors paved with transparent glass, under which runs a strong current of water. An unaware person ignores the glass and is afraid to step on the floor lest he should tumble into the swift current. In 17:70, it is stated: “*We (...) have carried them over land and sea*”; which also conveys the same idea, namely, that horses, cars and ships are only the visible means of carriage and that it is Divine Power, which is the real carrier. This *Rabûbiyyat* is operative and pervasive throughout the universe, in the heavens, in the earth, in bodies, in souls, in the realms of knowledge, substances, and essences and in animals, plants, minerals and all others. This *Rabûbiyyat* sustains all. A human being receives sustenance from the spring of this *Rabûbiyyat*, from the early embryonic, even pre-embryonic state, to the time of death, and beyond in the stage of life in the Hereafter. Divine Providence (*Rabûbiyyat*) is thus the creator of every existing thing and Sustainer of every extant object, yet it is the human being that benefits most by it. Here the human being who is supposed to be the vice-regent of Allâh on this earth is being reminded that Allâh is the Lord and Providence of the universe, so that the horizon of his hopes may be extended and he may believe in the statement of our Lord: إِنَّمَا أَنَا اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا “*I, and I alone am Allâh. There cannot be, is no other and will never be one worthy of worship but I*” (20:14).

الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ

1:3 *Al-Rahmân* الرَّحْمَنُ and *al-Rahîm* الرَّحِيمُ are the two basic Attributes of Allâh. Two principal Divine Graces are embedded in these two Attributes: the Grace of *Rahmânîyyat* (Graciousness and Beneficence), and that of *Rahîmîyyat* (Compassionate Mercy). Both these Graces with all other Graces were always with Him as they are

present today. Allâh intended that He be known. Therefore, He, from His eternal and all-embracing Knowledge (*Al-‘Alîm*) created existence from non-existence by His commanding word “Be!” (*Amr*). He provided through His Grace of *Rabûbiyyat* all the means to earthly and heavenly objects to sustain. He then extended His Grace of *Rahmânîyyat* to the living realm, without reference to any merit or right of any of his creation, in relation to their respective requirements (14:34), and not as a recompense of any action on their part. It is because of His *Rahmânîyyat* that everything capable of sensation and consciousness is alive, works, eats, drinks, feels secure against afflictions and has its needs fulfilled. In verse 67:19, this aspect of His *Rahmânîyyat* is presented, ”*Have they not seen above them the birds with spread out wings (in flight), which they also draw in? None but al-Rahmân الرَّحْمَن holds them (there).*”

All the mainstays of life proceed from His *Rahmânîyyat* (cf. 17:110) and every believer and disbeliever, good and bad, is benefiting from it according to his needs. His *Rahmânîyyat* pours forth on all His creatures, without discrimination, through the sun, the moon, the earth, and its vegetation and other innumerable bounties. Allâh, out of His eternal knowledge, knew that the best creature on His earth would have a longing to know Him and an urge to worship Him. Just as the Gracious Lord provided food for the body at the time of need, so did He provide spiritual nourishment. Out of His *Rahmânîyyat* He sent messengers as guide. Many remained heedless and rendered no thanks. He says, ”*And when it is said to them, Prostrate to the Most Gracious (الرَّحْمَن). They say, What is this the Most Gracious? Shall we prostrate to whatever you bid us to show submission? So this increased them in aversion. Blessed is He Who has placed stars in the heaven and has set in it the glowing sun and the glittering moon.*” (25:60-62).

He says: ”...*He gives life to earth after its death*” (30:19). The dead earth signifies extreme moral and spiritual decay and Divine

Revelation can bring it back to life. It's sending through His Prophets and Messengers was not due to the prayer and supplication or the purity and piety of any of those individuals. When the spiritual darkness reaches its peak (30:41), the dark gloom of humanity stirs Allâh's Mercy to compassion for troubled humankind. Allâh's *Rahmânîyyat* demanded the descent of the glorious Light in that extreme spiritual darkness (cf. 30:41) to illuminate His earth. This darkness reached its extreme at the time of the advent of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). The most Perfect Man (- *insân-i-kâmil*) was commissioned to receive it. He was addressed: "*We did not send you (O Muhammad!) but as a blessing and mercy for all beings.*" (21:107) The dark world experienced the bright Light in the form of His Book; Al-Qur'ân, the like of which none had seen before and none shall after (cf. 6:155-157; 16:64).

"And it is He Who has made the night and the day, one following the other; (He has done it) for (the benefit of) the person who would care to receive exhortation and who would care to be grateful" (25:62.). The day and night alternate, and by the wisdom underlying this system the seeker of insight is instructed; he is thereby relieved again and again from the darkness of ignorance and neglect through Reformers (*Mujaddidîn*) and His special friends (*Auliâ*, Saints of Islam), so that he who is disposed to the Truth will be grateful and may render thanks for the repeated Divine bounties.

His *Rahmânîyyat* covers both believers and disbelievers. In 7:156 Allâh says, "My Mercy embraces all things." In verse 21:42 we read: "Who protects you by night and in the daytime from (the punishment of) the Most Gracious (الرَّحْمَن)? But rather (than to thank Him) they are averse to proclaiming the greatness of their Lord." It is because of His *Rahmânîyyat* that He gives respite to the disbelievers and the disobedient, so that they may have the opportunity to repent (19:75; see also 7:183, 13:32 and 14:10).

He named Himself **Al-Rahmân** الرَّحْمَن and said: “Call upon (Me by the name of) Allâh, or call upon (by the name of) al-Rahmân. (17:110). His attributive name *Al-Rahmân*, unlike His Attributes of resemblance such as *al-Kalîm* (one who speaks), *al-Bâsîr* (one who sees), or *a(l)-Sam’î* (one who listens), is exclusive to Him and cannot be shared by anyone else. This shows that the Grace of *Rahmâniyyat* is very comprehensive.

Allâh’s attributive name **Al-Rahîm** الرَّحِيم follows *Al-Rahmân* to preserve the natural order between them. Whereas *Rahmâniyyat* has a universal character and requires no effort from the side of Allâh’s creatures, *Rahîmiyyat* is concerned exclusively with human efforts and requires human actions. Only the human being is endowed with the capacity to worship, pray, supplicate and carry out deeds of righteousness for the sake of others - deeds that are to be rewarded.

Some declare that there is no use for prayers and fasting and say that if fortune favours them they will escape ill fate. In other words, their attitude is whatever has to be shall be. However, Allâh says, “*Whosoever has done so much as an atoms weight of good will see (the good result of) it*” (99:8), establishing His law of cause and effect based on striving and effort that leads to success, rather than being the result of random favours and punishment.

To worship and pray is in human nature, and responding to prayer originates from Allâh’s *Rahîmiyyat*. “*Your Lord says, Call on Me, I will answer your prayer*” (40:60) وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمْ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ، and He says, “Those who believe and do deeds of righteousness We shall invariably rid them of their evils, and We shall, of course, reward them according to the best of their deeds” (29:7). “And as to those who believe and do deeds of righteousness We will certainly admit them to (the fold of) the righteous” (29:9), and “Allâh suffers not the reward of the doers of good to be lost” (9:120). Good actions together with worship are the prerequisites for invoking Allâh’s special Mercy.

Allâh's *Rahîmîyyat* does not let go to waste anyone's work or effort. Indeed, He crowns them with results and achievement. If a person did not believe that his labour and his work would produce fruit, he would grow indifferent and lazy. Thus, Allâh's *Rahîmîyyat*, widens the horizon of human hope and acts as a powerful incentive towards good deeds. It is certain that Allâh hears the prayers and supplications, accepts good deeds, and averts calamities and catastrophes.

It is through the operation of *Rahîmîyyat* that a person is enabled to reach his goal, and by means of its Blessings and Light, he reaps the harvest of his efforts and diligence. That is why Allâh's *Rahîmîyyat* is mentioned immediately after His Attribute of *Rahmânîyyat*. It must be realized that the effectiveness of the Divine Words of the Holy Qur'ân, working upon human souls, is brought about by Allâh's *Rahîmîyyat*. For seeking the benefit of *Rahîmîyyat*, it is incumbent on a person to strive. These two Divine Graces, the Grace of *Rahmânîyyat* and that of *Rahîmîyyat*, are indispensable for our very existence. They are the most evident manifestations that keep the whole system of our lives running. For sustaining life, growth, and evolution the All-Mighty has set in motion the two springs of two Graces, which, in fact, are two of His Attributes, for the fostering of our total existence.

مَالِكٌ يَوْمَ الدِّين

1:4 The fourth Divine Attribute **Mâlik-i-Yaum al-Dîn** الدّيْن مَالِكٌ يَوْمٌ (the Master of the Day of Requital) follows His two Attributes of Mercy. *Mâlik* مالك and *Malak* ملک are two different words from the same root *Malaka* ملک. According to the rules of forming derivations in the Arabic language, the larger the number of letters added to the root word, as the *alif* in *Mâlik*, the more intensive and more extensive does the meaning become (*Bahr al-Muhît*). Hence a **Mâlik** مالك or Master is one who possesses the right of ownership over a thing and has the power to deal with it as he likes. *Mâlik* is the one whose hold

on that which he owns is complete, and who can use it in any way he pleases, who has sole title to it, with no one having any share in it. In this sense, *Mâlik* is not applicable to anyone other than Allâh.

Mâlik is more than *Malak* who is a king or ruler (Lane). The use of *Mâlik* مالك shows that the All-Mighty is not like a king or a judge who is bound to give his judgment strictly in accordance with the prescribed law, but being the Master He can forgive or give more than the due and show mercy wherever and in whatever manner He may like. As *Mâlik* He has full authority to dispense reward and punishment. It is obvious that no one can truly be called Master unless he has the power to pardon or punish as he may like and determine. He does, as He will. There is no room for anyone to find fault with what He decides and why He decides to do a thing. The attributive word *Mâlik* مالك serves a twofold purpose. On one hand, it gives courage, hope, and confidence to a person who has, in a moment of weakness, committed some wrong or sin, not to lose hope as the beneficent Allâh being his Master has the power to forgive or even give more. On the other hand, it serves as a warning against taking undue advantage of the graciousness and beneficence of Allâh. Both these are essential for human spiritual progress and advancement.

In the words **Yaum al-Dîn** يَوْمُ الدِّين the word *yaum* is usually translated as “Day” (5:3; 8:41; 9:25), but it also means time, absolutely short or long, day and night, and eons (*Tâj-al-‘Arûs*). This word is used in the terminology of the Holy Qur’ân referring to any period of time (3:9; 6:15; 7:14), any moment (5:28; 6:15), one year (22:47), one thousand years (32:5), fifty thousand years (70:4), or eons, a period which we cannot count in our reckoning (32:4). The Divine attribute *Mâlik-i-Yaum al-Dîn* مالك يَوْمُ الدِّين is a link between the Attributes *Rabb* (- the Nourisher to perfection), *al-Rahmân* (- the Most Gracious), and *al-Rahîm* (- the Ever Merciful). This attribute shows the development of continued Divine Mercy.

The Grace of *Mâlik-i-Yaum al-Dîn* مالِكَ يَوْمَ الدِّين (Supreme Master of the Day/Time of Judgment and of Requital), unlike that of *Al-Rahîm*, does not manifest itself merely in response to efforts and exertions in the present life. It connotes that on that Day every comfort and torment, pleasure and pain that a human being will experience shall proceed directly from Allâh. He will be the sole Master of Dispensation; nearness to Him or distance from Him will determine eternal happiness or long-lasting misfortune. For those who had believed in Him, had held fast to Divine Unity, and had dyed their hearts with His pure love, the light of the Mercy of *Mâlik* مالِك shall cover them and protect them. All comfort and joy from requital and reward will be seen as emanating directly from Him, with no screen or barrier in between, nor will there be any room left for any doubt, that He is the only Lord Who decides according to His discretion. Its recipients will find a perfect state of felicity enveloping their bodies and souls and their exterior and interior, leaving no part of them outside the embrace of this great happiness. Those who did not experience Divine Love, because of their evil deeds, will be denied this joy and comfort.

Allâh has named Himself *Mâlik-i-Yaum al-Dîn* (the Supreme Master of the Day/Time of Judgment and of Requital). Requital may not always follow Judgment immediately. All our actions in this life are judged, but their requital, deliverance, or punishment may take some time. This can be likened to a judge who passes a judgment of sentence for a crime, but the punishment may be carried out at a later time. There are ample indications in nature and in our lives that the Divine Law of requital is constantly at work and is being manifested every moment. In fact, punishment for wrongdoing is necessary in the Divine scheme, as is the reward for good deeds. Reward and punishment are different phases of the exercise of the Attribute of *Mâlikiyat*. Fear of punishment is a powerful deterrent designed to crush evil. The pressure of legal penalties is a strong

discouragement to wrong, and whenever it relaxes its hold, evil begins to crop up.

The Judgment referred to *Yaum al-Dîn* يَوْمُ الدِّين is the perfect and final requital mentioned in the Holy Qur’ân in the words: الْيَوْمَ تُجْزَى كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ لَا ظُلْمَ الْيَوْمَ “This day every soul shall be requited for deeds it has accomplished. No injustice will be done this day.” (40:17) This is reinforced in verses 40:7-20. This perfect requital, however, demands a perfect manifestation of full Divine Sovereignty, which excludes all instrumentality.

The enduring Grace of *Mâlikîyyat* is the most exclusive of all Divine Graces, and is the culmination of other Graces. Its recipient ascends to the apex of everlasting felicity, which is the fountainhead of all joys. Whosoever is debarred from this Grace is condemned to Divine punishment. Its manifestation demands that the perfect Might of the Master should shine forth directly in its full splendor without the intermediary of any veil. This ultimate grace should be manifested with the utmost clarity, excluding every possible doubt, so that its deliberate bestowal on the part of the Gracious Bestower is the Reality. This grace is the culmination of the supreme manifestation of the unveiled Beauty of the Beneficent One, a certainty emerging from potential into actualization.

The requital of the Eternal Master should become manifest like the brightness of the day. The recipient of grace should realize with the highest degree of certitude that it is indeed the Sovereign of the universe and his Supreme Master Who has bestowed on him felicity and joys for his good deeds. .

The manifestation of such perfect, superb, and enduring grace shall be clear and bear the Divine attestation. This manifestation of grace shall comprehend the highest and most refined pleasures for the soul. The imperfect, limited world of bodies lacks capacities, and is not suited to serve as a sphere for this grand manifestation, brilliant lights and

eternal bounties, nor can it comprehend those full and enduring auroras. An altogether different realm is needed for the manifestation of the grace of *Mâlikîyyat*, independent and free from the opaqueness of physical spheres, adequate to demonstrate the absolute and pure Light of the Overpowering Unique Lord.

Yet a foretaste of this most special grace is vouchsafed in this very life to those perfect and purified persons who tread on the path of righteousness and God-consciousness, and reach the proximity of their Lord. They discard their worldly desires. Their bodies are in this world, but their hearts are already with their Lord. They wean their minds away from all temporalities and make a break with human ways and values, and their faces are turned towards their Lord full of hope. The Beneficent Lord also treats them in like manner and manifests His Light to them in a way in which it is not manifested to others except after death, and thus they become recipients in this very life of a portion of the Light of this most special Grace.

Mâlikîyyat follows *Rahîmîyyat*. This sequence is in agreement with the Book of Nature. Perfect composition in a Book of Revelation demands that the order followed in the Book of Nature should also be kept in view in a Book of Revelation. To reverse the natural order in composition is to reverse the law of nature.

These are the four Divine Graces that are mentioned right in the beginning of the Holy Qur'ân. Glancing at the Book of Nature, we first encounter the *Rabûbîyyat* (universal Providence of Allâh), next His *Rahmâniyyat* (Graciousness and Beneficence), and then His *Rahîmîyyat* (Compassionate Mercy), and finally His attribute *Mâlik-i-Yaum al-Din* (the Sole Dispenser of ultimate reward and punishment). Elegance of syntax requires that the order of priorities in the Book of Nature should be reflected in the same sequence in the Book of Revelation.

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ

1:5 Na‘budu نَعْبُدُ is derived from ‘*abada* عبدَ and means to serve, adore, obey, venerate, submit, devote, accept the impression of a thing. It also means to impress Divine Attributes (Lisân, Tâj, Râghib). According to Ibn ‘Abbâs, the meaning of commanding word *A‘budu* أَعْبُدُوا, “Serve (Me)!” (2:21) is in the sense of “Know (Me)!” It also means, “Be lowly towards Me!” No being can be lowly towards another unless the first knows the second. The real worship is to impress Divine Attributes (Râghib; 2:138). The Holy Prophet (pbuh) said each act performed for the sake of Allâh and to please Him is an act of worship (Bukhârî). Thus, the idea of worship is not limited to the ritual Prayers, counting beads in the hand and fasting. *Nasta‘în* نَسْتَعِينُ is derived from ‘*âna*, meaning to aid or assist (Lane; Tâj).

With the words “You alone do we worship and You alone do we implore for help” إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ, the worshipper declares as if, “O Lord! We have adopted You alone for our worship, preferring You over all, and we adore nothing save Your countenance, and we believe in Your Unity. Allâh has placed the phrase, “*You alone do we worship*” before the phrase, “*You alone do we implore for help*” as a reminder that the worship takes precedence over imploring. He has placed these words after mentioning His four Attributes. In doing so, He has reminded us of His Graces of *Rabûbîyyat*, *Rahmânîyyat*, *Rahîmîyyat*, and *Mâlikîyyat* before supplication. Thus, the worshipper begins, as if he says, “Lord! I thank You for my seeking help from Your Providence and Sustenance (*Rabûbîyyat*), and I thank you for Your bounties with which You have favoured me long before my existence, and for those You gave to me without asking You for them (*Rahmânîyyat*). Now I invoke Your *Rahîmîyyat*. Give me the strength to offer my Prayers before You and to place my petitions before you. I hope for a good reward (*Mâlikîyyat*) for my deeds and efforts, which I have done in Your Name and for Your sake, seeking to please You; rewards you bestow on those supplicating, praying and begging for

help from You.” These words thus urge us towards the grateful appreciation of gifts that have been granted, and towards eagerness for whatever is perfect and excellent, and towards the steadfast supplication required. They also urge us towards non-reliance on one’s own competence and ability and towards throwing oneself before the Holy One in hope and expectancy, persisting in worship in all humility with glorification and praise, in a state between fear and hope.

The statement, “*You alone do we implore for help*,” urges us towards confession and the acknowledgement that we are weak and cannot carry out the duties of worship without Allâh’s special help, and that we cannot seek the ways of spiritual pleasure without His support. It also demands from us that we discard pride and arrogance and hold fast to the Power and Might of Allâh when we experience difficulties and hardships. When we say, “*You alone do we implore for help*,” it is as if the Lord of Glory were saying, “O My servant! Regard yourself as dead and then seek life from Me, for I give life” (cf. 3:27). Let not a youth take pride in his vigor, nor let not an elder rely on his staff, nor a wise one feel elated with his intelligence, nor a scholar trust in the accuracy of his knowledge, the soundness of his understanding, or the keenness of his intellect. Let not a worshipper depend for support neither on his inspiration nor on the fervor of his prayers. Allâh does what He pleases, rejects whom He pleases, and admits among His chosen ones whom He pleases (cf. 3:26).

“*You alone do we implore for help*” also warns us of the allure of the evil-prompting ego (*Nafs al-Ammârah*), which endangers our souls like a vicious reptile who swallows up its victim. There is no power and no strength except from the Power of Allâh. It is His Power that annihilates the satans in us. Allâh teaches His servant these words, which are a source of hope for him, and says, in effect, “O My servants! Beg of Me with humility and in lowliness.” For His help we have to struggle to get rid of all prideful behaviour meant to impress

others, confusing ideas about Allâh's Lordship, superstitions, dogmas, and dark thoughts.

With the words "*You alone do we implore for help*" we are urged to come forward, in our obedience to Him, with the utmost effort, standing upright in Prayer, responding to His Call. We spare no pains in our striving, in observing His commands, and in seeking His pleasure. With these words we are seeking His help and His protection against pride and self-glorification, and we beg of Him to grant us the strength that would lead us to win His pleasure. We are firm in our obedience to Him and in His worship, and we implore that He writes us down among those who submit to Him.

When we implore, "*You alone do we worship and You alone do we implore for help*", we also mean to say, "We adore and worship You, making use of all the resources and means that You have granted us. You have granted us a tongue that can glorify You, ears that can listen to Your words, feet to walk on the right path, hands to give generously, and intellect to reflect. How wonderful are these gift to render thanks." This is one significance of the plural form "*we worship*" and "*we implore for help*." This is our confession that no part of our body has neglected His gifts. The use of the first person plural also conveys that this prayer is for us as well as for the benefit of all our near and dear ones and even for all of humanity. Thus, Allâh urges the believers towards mutual accord, unity, and love.

He alone is capable of true worship to whom the love of Allâh draws so close that his own self is excluded altogether. The impression of His magnificence on the heart should be so deep that the entire world should appear to be dead in contrast with Him; every fear should derive from Him alone, and all pleasure should be in His love, and all joy in seclusion with Him, and no comfort without Him. However, this state cannot be achieved without the special help of Allâh, the Most Excellent in His Powers and Attributes. Therefore, the Supreme Being taught us to say, "*You alone do we implore for help*"; that is,

we cannot carry out worship in the true sense unless we receive special help from Allâh. Nevertheless, we can beg Him for the gift of keenness, eagerness and readiness of heart and overflowing faith and joy. We can then beg Him for light to embellish our hearts with the decor of Truth and the garments of delight, so that we may win the certainty of Faith and arrive at the ocean of Reality. To worship Allâh as the real object of all Love is true saintliness, which is the highest degree a human being can reach, but this is unattainable except with His help. It is attained when His magnificence is imprinted on the heart and the heart is filled with His Love and relies totally on Him and chooses Him alone and prefers Him to all else, making His remembrance its only goal.

Allâh created us, and sent us a law and prescribed for us rules while informing us of the penalties for breaking them. The primary object of all this is not that we should attain to salvation. We have been created for perpetual servitude of our Creator. The object of our religious life is eternal serfdom to Allâh, salvation being its necessary, associated attainment.

Freedom from sin is also not the object of law and the ordinances; freedom from sin is also a concomitant of the true objective of our life. The words of Allâh, the Exalted, “*You alone we worship and You alone do we implore for help*” indicate that all good fortune is comprised in putting oneself in accord with the Attributes of the Lord of the worlds. The essence of worship is to take on the complexion of the worshipped One and that is in the eyes of the righteous, the culmination of Supreme Grace.

A worshipper is not a worshipper in truth unless his character reflects the Attributes of the gracious God (*Rahmân*). Therefore, one feature of true worship is that a kind of providence reflecting the *Rabûbiyyat* (Divine Providence) of the Lord of Honor should take its birth in the worshipper, and in a similar way the Attributes of *Rahmâniyyat* (Graciousness), *Rahîmiyyat* (Compassion and special Mercy), and

Mâlikîyyat (Mastership of Requital) should be reflected in him (2:138). This is the right path, which we have been commanded to seek, and this is the way that we have been urged to hope for from the Bounteous Lord of open Grace.

When the servant of Allâh says, “*You alone do we worship and You alone do we implore for help,*” with all his sincerity and loyalty deeply immersed in Divine remembrance and Love, then Allâh, the Sublime, causes a wide stream of righteousness to stream forth, which flows down onto his heart filling it with love and tranquillity. Though he approaches Allâh with a paltry offering, Allâh, the Exalted, bestows on him the precious gift of His attention. The servant of Allâh is then granted a volume of insights and verities and such strength that no one can stand in opposition to him. He attains the excellence of *siddiq* (the righteous and the truthful). Raised to the rank of *siddiqîyyat* he worships Allâh to the extent of his capacity and potential, in full realization of his feebleness and nothingness, he adheres to truthfulness, and he turns away from every type of pride and falsehood.

When he utters the words: “*You alone do we worship,*” that in itself is worship of high quality. Whether he utters the words, “*You alone do we implore for help,*” or not, Allâh, the Sublime, the Source of all righteousness, helps him and reveals to him the high tenets and verities of *siddiqîyyat* (4:69).

اهدِنَا الصَّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ

1:6 In the words, “*Lead us on the exact right path till we reach the goal*” اهداً الصراط المستقيم, the word *Huda* هُدٌ is used in particular when Allâh guides a person (19:76). *Huda* is to lead someone towards light (Ibn Mas‘ûd; Ibn ‘Abbâs). It also means to guide someone with kindness, to show the right path with kindness and to make a person follow the right path until that person reaches the goal (Baqâ; Lisân, Tâj, Lane). It is opposite of *dzâllîn* ضالين or those who have gone

astray, mentioned in the next verse. When we say, “*Lead us on the exact right path till we reach the goal*,” اهْدِنَا الصَّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ, we are not limiting ourselves to following the path that is shown or pointed out to us, but we are asking for Divine Company until we reach our goal or destination. Guidance means being led with kindness, like a child who holds the hand of his mother or father. We are told, “*All perfect and true praise belongs to Allāh Who guided us to attain to this (Paradise). We could never have been led aright (to this) if Allāh had not guided us*” (7:43). It also means to point out something with kindness as in “*And We have pointed out to him (the human being) the two conspicuous high ways (of right and wrong)*” (90:10). The guidance that we are asking for is also to reach the excellences of Allāh’s Attributes (2:138) as He has said, “*And those who strive hard in Our cause We will certainly guide them in the ways that lead to Us*” (29:69).

Undoubtedly, the four basic Attributes, as mentioned earlier (1:2-3) are sufficient for the cleansing of our abominations and vice. Thus, Allāh has taught His worshipper to say, “Guide us!” اهْدِنَا. Next, He taught us where He should guide us, as if it was His pleasure to bestow gifts of His guidance upon His servant. The seeking of guidance is like turning to an eminent physician and placing oneself wholly into the hands of the healer.

Al-Sirât الصَّرَاطُ is that path which is wide enough and can be walked on without difficulty or any danger. Al-Sirât الصَّرَاطُ is also a path, all of whose sections are properly adjusted and joined to one another (Râghib). **Al-Mustaqqîm** الْمُسْتَقِيمَ is a path without crookedness, undeviated and straight. It has also the meaning to stand erect, firm as in ritual Prayer, and rise (as in the Night Prayer called *Tahajjud*; Râghib). Allāh has very clearly defined the exact right path الصَّرَاطُ (الْمُسْتَقِيمَ) in verse 36:61 where He says: “...worship Me! This is the straight and right path” هَذَا صِرَاطٌ مُّسْتَقِيمٌ وَأَنِ اعْبُدُونِي. The straight path is the path that leads back from *Asfal Sâfilin* أَسْفَلَ سَافِلِينَ, from the

extreme depth back to the state where the human being started his journey; namely that perfect state “*Ahsan al-Taqwîm*” (95:4)

Al-Mustaqîm المُسْتَقِيم, derived from *qama*, has the sense of steadfastness; *Istiqa'mah* is steadfastness. Steadfastness (-*istiqa'mah*) means to place things and affairs in right order. In other words, the natural order may be described as steadfast. Unless the human mold is maintained in its natural order and in its normal condition, it cannot develop its excellences. Allâh has already commanded us to be steadfast when He said, “*O you who believe! Be steadfast, upholders of the right for the cause of Allâh, bearers of true witness in equity*” يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُوثُرًا قَوَاعِدَ إِلَّا شُهَدَاءَ بِالْقُسْطِ (5:8). When this state is reached, one realizes the significance of “*Call on Me, I will answer your prayer*” اذْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ (40:60). It is through *istiqa'mah* (steadfastness) that Allâh accepts our prayers. He said, “*The prayer of you both has been accepted. Remain you two steadfast and follow not the way of those who do not know*” قَدْ أَجِبْتُ دُعْوَتُكُمَا فَاسْتَقِيمَا وَلَا تَتَّبِعَانَ سَبِيلَ (10:89). It is *istiqa'mah* (steadfastness) indeed by means of which we reach the proximity to our Lord. It is the fragrance of *istiqa'mah* that is exuded by the dust of Prophets and apostles and the *Siddîq* (truthful and the righteous) and the *Shahîds* (Bearers of Testimony to the truth of the religion of Allâh by their words and deeds). During periods of hardships and afflictions, Allâh sends down tranquillity into the hearts of His servants. When the servant perceives signs of approaching death, he does not start contending with His Generous Lord, calling upon Him to save him from the visitations. In fact, the true lover goes forward at this hour holding life of no account. He has already laid aside the love of life and placed himself entirely at the disposal of His Lord. Allâh says, “*Of the people there is he who sacrifices his very life seeking the pleasure of Allâh. And Allâh is very Kind and Compassionate toward such (of His) servants*” (2:207). *Istiqa'mah* (steadfastness) is identical with *fanâ* (sacrifice of self), the term used by the *Sufî*.

Allâh is the loftiest name of our Creator. Similarly, the highest human attribute (*Ism-i-Âzam*) is *istiqâmah* (steadfastness). Allâh gives glad tidings, “Verily, those who say, Allâh is our Lord, and then remain steadfast, the angels will descend upon them (saying): Have no fear nor grieve, rather rejoice at the glad tidings of receiving the Gardens (of Paradise) which you have been promised.” إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ تَعَالَى ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا تَسْرِّعُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَلَا تَخَافُوا وَلَا تَحْزُنُوا وَأَبْشِرُوا بِالْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي كُنْتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ (41:30).

The words to ask to show us the straight path, keep us steadfast while we are treading on the course that leads to Your presence, and safeguard us from the punishment اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ are treasures full of wisdom.

صِرَاطُ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ

1:7 Three states are mentioned in this verse. The first is the state of Divine favour أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ, the second the state of Divine wrath المَغْضُوبِ and the third the state of Divine misguidance الضَّالِّينَ. These three descriptions illustrate the three conditions of human beings that are the products of their own activity or inactivity. When we use the word *Ghadzab* غُضْبٌ for Divine wrath or Divine anger, we may be ascribing upon Allâh the attribute of negative emotion. But Allâh says He possesses only all beautiful Attributes وَلَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَى (7:180). The fact is Allâh’s wrath is but a reflection of the human beings own attitude. The true nature of Divine wrath is the state of the loss of Divine Mercy, otherwise termed as the state of Divine displeasure. When a person abandons the right path, which is the means of receiving Divine Mercy, he forfeits Divine Mercy, and those who lose the way to Divine Mercy are lost. This is the significance of the word Divine wrath.

Similarly, some people ask why Allâh should have the attribute of misguidance. Those who ask about Divine guidance do not realize that Divine guidance is accorded only to those who strive for it and walk

the way that one must walk to have Divine Mercy. Those who object to Divine misguidance do not reflect that, in accord with His eternal law, Allâh treats everyone according to his intentions. Those who would not strive after Him because of indolence and negligence, He deprives of His support for guidance. He says, “And those who strive hard in Our cause We will certainly guide them in the ways that lead to Us” (29:69). Thus, it is not Allâh Who misguides; it is the refusal of human beings to strive for Allâh’s guidance that earns them wrath.

Since the search for guidance and purification of self are not enough for the attainment of nearness to God, without the practical example from divines and those rightly guided, Allâh, the Holy, did not confine His direction to the instruction, “*Lead us on the exact right path*”, but also exemplified it as the path of those upon whom He has already bestowed His favours. Their ways were the ways of Divine guidance. They carried with them the Light of Allâh, and through them, the hearts of people were illuminated. In this verse, Allâh did not teach us the prayer, “Do not include us among the law-breakers and the rebellious.” Instead, He taught us to pray for being included among the favoured ones. People gifted with God-fearing hearts and His Light do not regard any path (- *tarîq*) as *Sirâط* until it comprises the prominent features of the Faith selected by Allâh. These are rectitude, leading to the goal with certainty, being the shortest; being broad and safe for travellers. Thus the goal is that of the Prophets, the *Siddîqs* (Truthful in their belief, words and deeds), and the *Shahîds* (Bearers of Testimony to the truth of the religion of Allâh by their words and deeds), as well as the Martyrs, and the Righteous (who stick to the right course under all circumstances); how excellent companions they are! See then how benevolent Allâh has been to us, commanding us in the Mother of the Book, to seek through prayer every type of guidance granted to the Prophets and His Saints: أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِم مِّنَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَالصَّدِيقِينَ وَالشَّهِيدِينَ وَالصَّالِحِينَ (4:69). This is the bounty, which Allâh has indicated for His servants. Allâh will reciprocate such a servant with His sweet Discourse and His inspiration. He will be

among His protected servants similar to his “friend” Abraham with His command to the Fire of Hell, as if “O fire! Be you a means of coolness and safety” (21:70).

Out of abundant compassion, Allâh taught this prayer, commanding us to seek Him by following the ways of those He had favoured. Had there been no possibility of such resemblance and likeness, it would have been a very limited prayer. All the narrations and mentioning of the excellences achieved by those who have passed away would have been meaningless. With these words He has ordained that He will continue to raise the *Siddiqs* (Truthful in their belief, words and deeds) and the *Shahîds* (Bearers of Testimony to the truth of the religion of Allâh by their words and deeds), as well as the Reformers (*Mujaddidîn*) and Saints among those who will walk in the footsteps of the Prophets.

There is within Allâh’s knowledge a party of the favoured ones who are the contemporaries of those who incurred His displeasure (*al-Maghdûb* المُغْضوب) and of those who went astray (*al-Dzâllîn* الصَّالِّيْنَ). These two groups are mentioned in contrast to the favoured ones. The supplication is made to seek protection against these groups and from becoming one of them. Among those who were smitten by His wrath are undoubtedly the people who opposed Allâh’s Messengers (cf. 3:112), in particular the teachings revealed by Allâh to the Holy Prophet (pbuh). About them, Allâh says, “... *they reject that (source of guidance) which Allâh has revealed, grudging that Allâh should send down His grace on such of His servants as He pleases. Thus they have incurred (His) displeasure after displeasure*” (2:90), and “*They took in exchange that which is inferior for that which is superior*” (2:61). Because of this “*they were smitten with abasement and destitution, and they incurred the displeasure of Allâh*” (2:61).

The group of people who lost their way, deviated from true guidance and were left wandering in error is the group of *al-Dzâllîn* الصَّالِّيْنَ who exaggerate in matters of religion. They are mentioned in the Holy

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Qur'ân with the following words: “*Say, O People of the Scripture! Do not exaggerate in (the matter of) your religion falsely and unjustly, nor follow the fancies of a people who had gone astray before (you) and had led many astray, and (now again) who have strayed away from the right path.*” (5:77)

Some commentators have designated the Jews as the people who had incurred Divine wrath (*al-Maghdzûb*); however, this interpretation is too narrow, as many other former peoples practiced vice and rejected their Prophets. Moreover, not every Jew is under Divine wrath.

The mentioned groups are in reality a warning to the Muslims and a hidden prophecy: there will always be a group of people among the Muslims who will act in opposition to the Divine teachings (25:30). They will insult their own Prophet (pbuh) by acting contrary to the teachings revealed to him. They will incur Divine wrath. Equally, this is the state of the loss of Divine Mercy. Without a doubt, there will be a large group of people who will exaggerate in matters of religion as the Christians did about Jesus. They will issue *Fatwas* (religious declarations) based on their own agenda and desires and not grounded in Qur'ânic teachings and give them the status of the Divine Law (- *sharî'a*). Unfortunately, this was and will always be a common practice among the Muslims.



2. CHAPTER سورة البقرة

The Cow

(*Revealed after Hijrah*)

The second chapter, named **Al-Baqara** (“The Cow”), was revealed in its entirety after the migration of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) from Makkah to Madinah. It derives its title from verse 67, which states, “*Allâh commands you to slaughter the cow*” إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَن تَذْبَحُوا بَقَرَةً that is, to give up idol worshipping and worship the One Who is the Creator and not the created. The chapter is also known by the name of *Al-Zahra* الزهرة meaning “the bright one” (Abû Muslim).

The chapter begins by telling us what is guidance, as asked for in the preceding chapter *Al-Fâtihah* (الهُدَى الصَّرَاطُ الْمُسْتَقِيمُ). It begins with words, “*Herein is the guidance for those who guard against evil*” (هُدَى الْمُتَّقِينَ). Next, it continues with the fundamental principles needed for guidance - belief in Allâh as the only One to be asked for guidance, belief in His Revelations that are the source of His guidance, and belief in the Last Day (الآخرة) when the judgment shall be pronounced. Two practical ordinances are then given for the one who desires to tread on the path leading to divine proximity, the ritual Prayer (*al-Salât*) and charity without obligations (*Zakât*). The chapter then continues to detail the three groups of people mentioned briefly in *Al-Fâtihah*, namely the *Mun‘im’alaihim* (أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ), *Maghdzûb* (المَغْضُوبُ) and *Dzâllîn* (الضَّالُّينَ).

We are also told right in the beginning (2:4) that the Revelation of the Holy Qur’ân and the principles laid down in it are the continuation of the divine guidance granted to humanity since the beginning of human consciousness. All nations, at all times, had their guides sent from God (35:24). The major world’s religions and “religious philosophies” such as Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism, Taoism, Buddhism,

Shintoism and others are different branches of the same tree that was nourished from the water of Divine Revelation. Some of its branches got dried up. Their founders and their Prophets were the guides sent by God for their people to make them conscious of their Real Object of worship and to show them how to live in peace and harmony with themselves and with their fellow beings. They spoke in their respective languages to make their message understand (14:4). They were accepted by some and opposed by others (22:52; 34:34). Only a few of those many find mention in this Book (40:78).

Qur'ân, unlike Bible, is not a book of history of a particular people; still it makes frequent allusions to the history of Jews, Christians and Arabs. The audience of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) was the desert Arabs, the references given to them were those from the nations with whom they had contact or whose histories were familiar to them; and not from far away people like the Japanese, Mongolians, Chinese, Koreans or Indians. That would have confused the audience of his time and failed the immediate purpose. For this reason, the Prophets mentioned in this Book are those who were sent to older Arab tribes or to their neighbouring lands and were familiar to the audience of the Holy Prophet (26:123; 26:141). Many Jews and Christians lived with pagan Arab whose history goes back to Arab lands. For this reason many, but not all of the Prophets of Jews are mentioned.

This chapter also serves as a warning to the Muslims by pointing to them the errors committed by earlier people, namely the *al-Maghâdzûb* (المغضوب) and *al-Dzâllîn* (الضالّين) and suffered losses. In the later part of this chapter, some of the legal ordinances are provided. They touch upon the questions of ethics, social relations, imposed wars, and justice.

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2:1 The chapter begins with three letters of Arabic alphabet - *Alif Lâm Mîm* الْمَ. There are a few more chapters of the Holy Qur'ân that also

have the same beginning (cf. 3:1; 29:1; 30:1; 31:1; 32:1). There are others where we find letters: *Alif Lâm Mîm Sâd* المص (7:1), *Alif Lâm Râj* راج (10:1; 11:1; 12:1; 14:1; 15:1), *Alif Lâm Mîm Râ* رام (13:1), *Kâf Hâ Yâ 'Ain Sâd* كييعص (19:1), *Tâ Sîn Mîm* طس (26:1; 28:1), *Tâ Sîn* طس (27:1), *Sâd* ص (38:1), *Hâ Mîm ح* (40:1; 41:1; 42:1; 43:1; 44:1; 45:1; 46:1), *'Ain Sîn Qâf* عسق (42:1) and *Qâf* ق (50:1); in total there are 29 chapters. These letters are called *muqatta'ât* مقطعات or abbreviations. They are also known as *fawâtih* فواجح or “openers” as they form the opening verse of their respective chapters (*Sûrâ*). *Fawâtih* فواجح or *muqatta'ât* مقطعات are written together like a word, but each letter is pronounced separately. Of the 28 letters of the Arabic alphabet, exactly one half appear as *fawâtih* فواجح of the Holy Qur’ân, either singly or in combinations of two, three, four, or five letters. Some examples are:

Nun ن in chapter al-Qalam (Ch. 68)

Hâ Mîm ح in chapter *Hâ Mîm Sajda* (Ch. 41)

Alif Lâm Mîm م in chapter Al-Baqarah (Ch. 2)

Alif Lâm Mîm Râ ر in chapter Al-Raad (Ch. 13)

Kâf Hâ Yâ 'Ain Sâd كييعص in chapter Maryam (Ch. 19)

The majority of the combinations begin either with *Alif Lâm Mîm* or *Hâ Mîm*. In all but 3 of the 29 cases, these letters are almost always immediately followed by mention of the Qur’ânic revelation or a great prophecy as in 30:1. Some argue that *Sûras* 29, 30, and 68 are exceptions. When read carefully what follows, these three cases make no exception, since mention of the revelation is made later in the *Sûrah*. All but 3 of these *Sûras* are of Makkan origin. The exceptions are *Sûras* 2, 3, and 13.

Many modern translators and scholars of the Holy Book are reticent in to discuss the significance of these letters. There are some who think that these alphabets are meaningless. Others believe that their

meaning is a sacred secret of Allâh and His mystic symbols, and that the purpose of this mystery cannot be known to human beings; further, any attempt to translate them will make one liable for Divine punishment. However, these scholars are unable to justify Allâh's intent to hide and punish. There are others who say that perhaps the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) knew their meaning but was prohibited from telling his followers in order to protect the mystery. However, these scholars give no rational reason as to why He was prohibited from revealing their meaning, and they cite no Tradition relating back to the Holy Prophet (pbuh), to support this view. To anyone who is seriously interested in understanding the message of the Holy Qur'ân, such confused explanations can be a source of irritation and may even create doubts in the minds of seekers of Divine knowledge.

Most if not all widely used languages of the world make use of abbreviations, and Arabic is not an exception. *Imâm Râzî* says that Arabs would name things after letters; for example, money as ع, clouds as غ, and fish as ن. In the books of Islamic Traditions (*-ahâdîth*), abbreviations are common. For example *anâ* انا for *akhbarna* حبّتنا [خبرنا]; *Hâ* for *hawalnâ al-Sanad* and *nâ* نا for *hadathnâ* حدثنا frequently used by well-known compilers of the Traditions, such as *Tirmidhî*, *Nisaî*, *Abû Dâ'ûd*, *Abû Muslim* and *Bukhârî*. In the science of Islamic jurisprudence (*'ilm al-Fiqah*), medicine (*'ilm al-Tib*), syntax (*'ilm al-Nahaw* علم نحو), administration (*'ilm al-Saraf* صرف علم) and other fields of knowledge, abbreviations are always present; For example: *Sîn* س for *Sam'a* سمع يسمع; *Kâf* ک for *Karam* كرم; *Nûn* ن for *Nasr* نصر; *Dz* ض for *Dzarb* ضرب; *Fâ* ف for *Fatah* فتح *Yaftahu* يفتح ط for *Ataf* عطف; *Mâf* مف for *Maf 'ûl* مفعول etc. Knowing their meanings is mandatory for any student of these fields.

Similarly, the punctuation used in the Holy Qur'ân are all abbreviations. Muslim scholars carefully established the standards in order to avoid errors in the comprehension of the Holy Book. They inserted abbreviated signs for pauses, short pauses, long pauses, full

stops, commas, colons, semicolons, and so on. For example, a circle O at the end of a verse means the verse has ended. This circle is an abbreviated form of the word *waqf-i-tâm*, which indicates statement's completeness. Further examples are *mîm* م, *jîm* ج, *lâ* ل and *ta* ط among others. The sign of *mîm* on the top of the circle stands for *lâzim*, and indicates a mandatory pause (*waqf-i-lâzim*). The sign of *jîm* stands for *jâiz* and means that a pause is permitted. Other examples of abbreviations are ^a for *rakû'* رکوع to denote a paragraph; *qâf* ق indicates that a reader may not stop here, or may not join the current sentence with the next one. This system of punctuation is a great aid in avoiding distortions to the messages being conveyed. No translator should neglect their significance while translating the Holy Book. Unfortunately many modern translations have neglected or omitted the basic rules of Qur'ânic punctuation, the most notorious being the translation of Arthur J. Arberry.

Traditional Arabs were very proud of their language and Arabic eloquence and poetry was enjoying golden age when the Qur'ân was revealed. Abû 'Abdullah Al-Qurtubî explained the use of abbreviations in Arabic in his great work *Al-Jam'i al-Ahkâm al-Qur'ân* and quotes Walîd bin 'Uqbah, a well-known poet of classical Arabic: فقلت لها قفي فقللت ق أراد : قالت وقفت “I said to her stay, she said *Qâf* ق - I am staying.” Here, 'Uqbah uses the letter *Qâf* ق to abbreviate *waqaftu* وقفت to express I am staying. Qurtubî quotes another Arabic poet, Dhahhak Abû 'Alî al-Hussain Ibn Zahîr Basrî, who said:

بالخير خيرات وإن شرا فولا اريد الشر إلا أن تا
أراد : وإن شرا فشر . واراد : إلا أن تشاء .

“Such a one supplicated. (The Lord said in reply), I will return good for your good, but if you are bent upon mischief, I do not intend mischief except that you yourself desire it.” Here the poet uses the shortened forms of *fâ B* for *fasharrun* فشر (- mischief) and *tâ* تا for *tashâ'* تشاء (- you yourself desire it). Even the Holy Prophet (pbuh), according to the customs of the language, sometimes used

abbreviations instead of the whole word. Al-Qurtubî quotes the Holy Prophet (pbuh): “كفى بالسيف شا معناه” – “The sword is sufficient for us as a remedy.” Here the Prophet (pbuh) used the abbreviated letter *shâ* بـق for *shâfi* يـبـق (- remedy).

The Holy Qur’ân presents a challenge to non-believing Arabs to produce works at least somewhat comparable to it in beauty and elegance, especially if they doubted the authenticity of its claims (17:88; 52:34; 10:38). The easiest challenge was given in 10:38 where we read: “أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَاهُ فَلْنَا فَلَوْا بِسُورَةٍ مِّثْلَهِ” “And yet they say He has forged it. Then produce a (single) chapter like it.” and again in 2:23: “وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مَّمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلَى عَبْدِنَا فَلَوْا بِسُورَةٍ مِّنْ مِّثْلِهِ” “And if you have any doubt as to which We have revealed to Our servant from time to time, produce a single *Sûrah* like any of this”. The challenges were there as they are today, and the claim “وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْآنَ لِلّاَكُرَ” “Indeed, We have made the Qur’ân easy for admonition” (54:17) was repeated several times. Had these abbreviations been ambiguous or meaningless to nonbelievers in the early Muslim communities, they certainly would have come forward and refuted the Qur’ânic challenges that followed, however this did not happen. The contemporaries of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) understood the underlying meanings of these alphabetic verses well. Allâma Maudûdî is of the opinion that these letters no doubt have implication, they are not meaningless, and the Companions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) were aware of the meanings of all these letters. Not only were the early Companions aware of their meanings but the Bedouins of the time also would have had no difficulties with them (*Tajhîm al-Qur’ân*). So it is wrong to say that some words of the Holy Qur’ân are vague whose meanings cannot be known other than by Allâh. With the passage of time, their meanings were lost to the later generations. Arabs themselves used abbreviated forms of these words in their vocabulary and therefore had no reason to challenge such words.

Many western writers came forward with their interpretation of *muqatta'ât*. Theodor Nöldeke, in the first German edition of his book *Geschichte des Qurans* (-The History of the Qur'ân), suggested that these letters were signatures or initials of those who were its copyists and the first writers. His view has been adopted by a number of other western scholars. However, such a view cannot be accepted, not only because it challenges the purity of the Qur'ânic text, but also because it contradicts the history of how the Qur'ân was preserved. It is inconceivable that the Holy Prophet or any of his followers would have allowed the marks of the copyists to remain in the Holy Book. Moreover, the Holy Qur'ân was not only preserved in written form in the lifetime of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), but was committed to heart by several hundred of his companions, and all recited these letters wherever they appeared. In addition, none of the letters has any relationship with the names of the copyists of the time of the Holy Prophet. While Nöldeke himself later gave up his theory, other scholars like Hartwig Hirschfeld did not and in turn have influenced Muslim scholars.

Otto Loth, who criticized Nöldeke, came forward with the view that these letters were part of the Divine Revelation and were intended by the Prophet (pbuh) to impress the illiterate Arabs among whom he preached as something mysterious and miraculous. Unfortunately, many Muslims adapted his view. If this was the intent of the Prophet (pbuh), then some of these letters should also appear within the context of the chapters while verses were being revealed in a chronology other than we read today, and not only at the beginning of each. Moreover, there is no historic evidence that the Bedouins of the desert were actually impressed by such letters. Had they been ambiguous, meaningless, or senseless, they would have contradicted the repeated assertion contained in the Qur'ân, that it is a clear book with clear messages and verses (3:138, 10:15) Some Muslim traditionalists have defied any attempt at explanation of the **Muqatta'ât** (مقطعات) in the Holy Qur'ân despite efforts by many

Muslim scholars of all generations to explain their meaning. These "traditionalists" cite the Qur'anic verse "But no one knows its true interpretation except Allâh" (3:7) to support their view. This reasoning is weak as the verse continues with the words "and those who are firmly grounded in knowledge" (3:7).

Respected Muslim agreed with the statement: "But no one knows its true interpretation except Allâh", as well as the Qur'anic statement in Ch. 3 verse 7: "*He it is Who has revealed to you this perfect Book, some of its verses are definite and decisive. They are the basic root (conveying the established meanings) of the Book - umm al-Kitâb, and other (verses) are susceptible to various interpretations. As for those in whose hearts is perversity, they follow (verses) that are susceptible to different interpretations, seeking (to cause) dissension and seeking an interpretation (of their own choice). But no one knows its true interpretation except Allâh, and those who are firmly grounded in knowledge*". However, despite their acceptance of these verses, none of the scholars like Ibn Kathîr, Jalal-u-Din Sayyûtî, and Ahmad Ibn Taymîyyah were opposed to discussing possible interpretations of the words for which these letters stand

Shah Waliullah Muhibbîth Dehlavi: writes in *Al-Fauz al-Kabîr fi Uṣûl al-Tafsîr*: These verses possess a huge world of knowledge that only can be assessed through Divine Proximity. All the mysteries that are hidden from existing world but are present on their real locations have been determined in these words. It was in this sense that Abû Bakr Siddîq^(rz) said, "For every book there is a mystery, and the mysteries in Qur'ân are in the *fawâtih* of Qur'ân (في كل كتاب سر، وسره). Abdullah Yusuf 'Alî writes: "This is not a mystery of the same class as mysteries by which we are asked to believe against the dictates of reason. If we are asked to believe that one is three and three is one, we can give no intelligible meaning to the words. If we are asked to believe that certain initials have a meaning

which will be understood in the fullness of time or of spiritual development, we are asked to draw upon faith, but we are not asked to do any violence to our reason” (*The Meaning of the Holy Qur’ân: by Abdullah Yusuf ‘Alî, (Appendix I, The abbreviated Letters *Al-Muqatta’ât*).*

Imâm Fakhr al-Dîn Râzî in his famous *Tafsîr Kabîr* of the Holy Qur’ân said; “It is not possible that Allâh would include in His Book (*al-Qur’ân*) that His creation would not understand, because Allâh is the One Who command us to reflect over His Book and seek guidance from it. This cannot be achieved except by understanding its meanings.”

Ibn Kathîr in his *Tafsîr* on *Alif Lâm Mîm* (2:1) noted that some ignorant people say that some of the words in the Qur’ân do not mean anything (referring to these letters). However, he considers these people mistaken because All-Mighty Allâh’s sayings cannot, by their very nature be worthless, useless, or meaningless for mankind. (Ibn Kathîr - *Tafsîr* Page 47, Vol 1 - unabridged edition). Ibn Kathîr further writes: “On the contrary, these letters carry a specific meaning.”

Another eminent scholar, Ahmad **Ibn Taymîyyah** said there are two opinions about *fawâtih*. First: the meanings of these letters are confined to Allâh and thus none knows their meanings except Him. Second: *fawâtih* are the Names and the Attributes of Allâh and that the letters specify the Name and Attributes of Allâh. For example, the letter *Alif* is specified for the Name Allâh, the letter *Lâm* is specified for the Name *Latîf*, the letter *Mîm* is specified for the Name *Mâlik*. He also said there is some wisdom behind starting the *Sûra* with such letters. The context shows that while not being certain, he considers the abbreviations that he indicates a possible correct interpretation (Ahmad Ibn Taymîyyah: *Al-Fatâwa*). Even widely accepted Qur’ânic interpretations are often given with the same disclaimer, to indicate that there might be more than one explanation and to acknowledge that all humans are prone to error.

When we look at these abbreviated letters it strikes that they have so much in common, both in form and context, it becomes impossible to believe that they do not make any sense or have no meanings, and their meanings are kept hidden for no apparent reason. Only a small effort will be necessary to solve this self-created hypothetical mystery. *Imâm Râzî*, *Zamakhsharî* and *Abû Hayyân* have discussed this topic in their famous exegeses. *Abû Ja‘far Muhammad bin Jarîr al-Tabarî* in particular have dealt it in some detail. According to them learned companions of the Holy Prophet such as ‘Alî al-Mûrtadha^(rz), ‘Abdullâh ibn ‘Abbâs , ‘Abdullâh ibn Mas‘ûd, and Ubayy bin Ka‘b and their pupils Mujâhid, Sa‘îd bin Jubair, Qatadah, and Raba bin Anas, Suddi, *Sha‘bi* all agree in interpreting these abbreviated letters by giving them meanings.

Abû ‘Abdullah Al-Qurtubî, a great scholar from Cordoba (Spain) of Maliki origin, in his monumental work *Al-Jâm‘i Al-Ahkâm Al-Qur’ân*, quotes the following Tradition (- *hadîth*) from Ibn ‘Abbâs (*Tanwîr al-Miqbâs min Tafsîr Ibn ‘Abbâs*):

وروى هذا القول عن أبي بكر الصديق وعن علي بن أبي طالب رضي الله عنهمَا . وذكر أبو الليث السمرقندى عن عمر وعثمان وابن مسعود أنهم قالوا : الحروف المقطعة من المكتوم الذي لا يفسر

فروي عن ابن عباس وعلي ايضاً : أن الحروف المقطعة في القرآن اسم الله الأعظم ، إلا أنا لانعرف تأليفه منها

كقول ابن عباس وغيره : الألف من الله ، واللام من جبريل ، والميم من محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم . وقيل : الألف مفتاح اسمه الله ، واللام مفتاح اسمع لطيف ، والميم مفتاح اسمه مجيد . وروى أبو الضحى عن ابن عباس في قوله " : الـ " قال : إنا الله أعلم ، الر إنا الله أرى ، المص أنا الله أفضل . فالالف تؤدي عن معنى أنا ، واللام تؤدي عن اسم الله ، والميم تؤدي عن معنى أعلم . واختار هذا القول الزجاج وقال : اذهب الى أن كل حرف منها يؤدي عن معنى

وقال زيد بن أسلم : هي أسماء للسور . وقال الكلبي : هي أقسام أقسام الله تعالى بها لشرفها وفضلها ، وهي من أسمائه ،

“... The abbreviated letters of the Holy Qur’ân (الحروف المقطعة) are the Great Name of Allâh (*Ism-i-Allâh al-Â’zam*), none other than me (Abû Bakr^(rz)) know their meaning. *Alif* is from Allâh, *Lâm* is from Gabriel, and *Mîm* is from Muhammad (pbuh), *al-Alif* is the opening word of the name Allâh, *al-Lâm* is the opening word of *Latîf* and *al-Mîm* is the opening word of the name *Majîd*. Abû al-Dzahâ narrates through the authority of Ibn ‘Abbâs that *Alif Lâm Mîm* are أَنَا اللَّهُ أَعْلَم - I am Allâh who sees, *Alif Lâm Mîm Râ* are أَنَا اللَّهُ أَرَى - I am Allâh who excels. *Alif* here has been given in meaning of *Anâ* (“I”), *Lâm* is derived from the name Allâh, and *Mîm* is given the meaning of ‘Âlam أَعْلَم or Knowing. Al-Zajjâj narrates through the authority of Ibn ‘Abbâs as narrated by Abû Bakr^(rz) that the meanings of these letters are within the words formed by them. Zaid Ibn Aslam said these are the most elevated Names. Al-Kalbî believed these were the oaths that Allâh swore, like other oaths from His presence and His Exaltation. In other words, these are be derived from His titles.

Ibn Jarîr Al-Tabarî in his monumental work *Al-Jâm‘i al-Bayân fî Tafsîr Al-Qur’ân*, did not disagree with Al-Qurtabî. He agrees to what Qurtabî writes with reference to Ibn ‘Abbâs that the meanings of these letters are within the words formed by these letters, and stands for the great names of Allâh. According to him:

أن الحروف المقطعة في القرآن اسم الله الأعظم

(*The Muqatta’ât in al-Qur’ân are the Great Names of Allâh*)

Which particular letter stands for which particular Divine attributive name becomes clear by the context of the subject matter of the *Sûrah* (Chapter). Their always exists a deep and far reaching connection between them and the subject matter of the chapter which immediately follows them. Such few letters conveys extensive connotations, perfect to express the most appropriate attributive names of Allâh. Ibn Jarîr further quotes what Akramah narrated that these

are the oaths that Allâh swore, like other oaths to be found in various places of the Holy Qur'ân (cf. 75:1; 77:1; 79:1; 85:1-3; 86:1-2; 91:1-7; 92:1-3; 93:1-2 and 90:1). Akramah stated that Ibn 'Abbâs said:

هو قسم الله به و هو من اسماء الله

"These are the oaths that Allâh swore, [like other oaths from His presence and His Exaltation]. These are from the names of Allâh".

Ibn Jarîr mentions other opinions as well. He quotes Mujâhid that these are the shortened form of the name of the Chapter of the Qur'ân (*ismâ'-al-Sûr*) اسماء السور where they occur. He quotes al-Rabî bin Ans opinion encouraging multiple meanings to these words, as long as they are within the confines of the core spirit of the Message of al-Qur'ân. He made an effort to prove that there is no harm in considering any one, or agreeing with all these multiple meaning. He made a very scholarly effort in linking these meanings with each other, thus proving them to be supporting each other and being complementary to each other, if keenly reflected by the reader. He believes that all these meanings are complementary to each other. Ibn Jarîr discusses further the statements and opinions of the second generation (- *taba'în*) after the Holy Prophet (pbuh) in detail.

Regardless of some discrepancies in interpretation, none of the learned at the time of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) claimed that the words for which these letters stand were unknown. Nor were these alphabets mysteries, nor had their meanings been concealed from humans by Allâh. The debate of these eminent scholars has always centered on the actual interpretation, but has never suggested the abbreviations are less than an important part of Gods message. Claiming these words to be mysterious was put forward by later translators who lacked the knowledge of the use of shortened forms or *muqatta'ât* in classical Arabic.

Abû Hayyân al-Gharnati in his *Bahr Al-Muhiṭ* clothes all *muqatta'ât* (مقطعات) in words. According to him:

Alif (ا): is an abbreviation for *Ana* (أنا, I am).

Hâ (ه): is an abbreviation for *Al-Hamîd* (الحميد, the Praised).

Râ (ر): is an abbreviation for *Al-Basîr* (All-Seeing) (البصير).

Sîn (س): is an abbreviation for *Al-Sam'î* (السميع, the Hearing).

Sâd (ص): is an abbreviation for *Al-Sâdiq* (الصادق, the Truthful).

Tâ (ط): is an abbreviation for the Most Benignant.

Ayn (ع): is an abbreviation for *Al-'Âlim* (the Knowing).

Qâf (ق): is an abbreviation for *Al-Qâdir* (ال قادر, the All-Mighty).

Kâf (ك): is an abbreviation for *Al-Kâfi* (كافي), the Sufficient).

Lâm (ل): is an abbreviation for *Allâh* (الله, using the second letter).

Mîm (م): is as either an abbreviation for *Al-'Âlîm* (العليم, the Knowing, using the ending letter) or for *Al-Majîd* (المجيد, the Glorious).

Nûn (ن): is a word and not an abbreviation meaning “ink-stand”.

Hâ (ه): is an abbreviation for *Al-Hâdî* (الهادي, the Guide).

Yâ (ي): an interjection equivalent to “O!” as in *YâSîn*.

Imâm Jâfir Sâdiq have also explained the meanings of these letters in the context of the names and Attributes of Allâh. Imâm Jâfir Sâdiq says:

Alif Lâm Mîm م - *Anâ Allâh-u al-Majîd* الم - أنا الله المجيد - I am Allâh, the Most Glorious

Hâ Mîm ح - al-Hamîd al-Majîd الحميد المجيد - The Most Praiseworthy (The Most Glorious).

Alif Lâm Râ ر - Anâ Allâh-u al-Râ'ûf الرّاعف - أنا الله الرّاعف - I am Allâh the Most Compassionate

Sâd - الصادق - ص - الصادق - The Most Truthful

-انه الكافی و الهدی الولی العالم الصادق الوعد- كھیعص *Kâf Hâ Yâ ‘Ain Sâd* Allâh is sufficient for all, and He is the True Guide, Bestower of security and blessings, the All-Knowing, the Most Truthful to my promise

YâSîn - يس - *Yâ Ayyuhâ al-Sâm’i al-Wahi* It means the hearer of the Revelation. (This is the name of the Holy Prophet).

TâHâ - طا - ي طالب الحق الهدی اليه - It means, O seeker of Allâh and who guides towards Him (This is the name of the Holy Prophet)

Nûn ن as one of the five names of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) mentioned in the Holy Qur’ân, like Muhammad, Ahmad, Abd-Allâh and Yâsîn. (*Imâm Jafir Sadiq Persian translation of the Holy Qur’ân by Faizul Islâm*)

Imâm Jalâl-u-Dîn Sayyûtî in his book *Al-I’tqân* has discussed *al-Harûf al-Muqatta’ât* (الحروف المقطعة) and what they mean and represent. In *Al-Durr al-Manthûr fi Tafsîr bil-Mâthûr* الدر المنشور في التفسير بالمانثور on various occasions he has given the words for which these abbreviations stand. About *Kâf Hâ Yâ ‘Ain Sâd* (كھیعص) for example Sayyûtî quoted Abdullâh bin Abbâs as saying that *Kâf* stands for *Karîm*, *Hâ* for *Hâdî*, *‘Ain* for *‘Alîm* and *Sâd* for *Sâdiq*.

Husain bin Mas‘ûd al-Baghawi in *Ma‘âlim at-Tanzîl* (*Tafsîr al-Baghawî*) quotes Ibn ‘Abbâs as saying that *Kâf* stands for *Kâfi*, *Hâ* for *Hâdî* or *Hakîm*, *‘Ain* for *‘Alîm* and *Sâd* for *Sâdiq*. On *Alif Lâm Mîm Sâd* he says, stand for *Anâ Allâh al-Mâlik al-Sâdiq*. He quotes Rabî bin Ans that *lâm* in *Alif Lâm Mîm* stand for *Latîf*. Al-Baghawi quotes further Muhammad bin Kab, Saîd bin Jabîr and Zajjâj to give the same meaning to above abbreviations.

The great Turkish *Imâm Sheikh Ismâ‘îl Haqqî* al-Barûsawî al-Naqshbandî (d. 1127 AH) in his voluminous exegesis of the Holy Qur’ân, *Rûh al-Bayân fi Tafsîr al-Qur’ân* says that these letters refer

to the Supreme Power of All-Mighty Allâh. Regarding *Alif*, *Lâm*, and *Mîm*, he says, *Alif* stands for Allâh, *Lâm* for *Laŷf*, and *Mîm* for *Majîd*. Concerning *Alif Lâm Mîm Râ* he says the letters stand for ‘I am Allâh who sees’. The alphabet *Qâf* means that All-Mighty Allâh is Qahhâr. About *Kâf Hâ Yâ ‘Ain Sâd* (كَفْ يَهُصْ), he also agrees with what *Imâm Sayyûti* says who quoted from Abdullah bin ‘Abbâs: *Kâf* stands for *Karîm*, *Hâ* for *Hâdî*, ‘*Ain* for ‘*Alîm*, and *Sâd* for *Sâdiq*. Then he says that *Hakîm* has adopted the way of Sa‘îd bin Jabair who has copied Ibn ‘Abbâs quotation in *Tanwîr al-Miqbâs min Tafsîr Ibn ‘Abbâs* that *Kâf* stands for *Karîm*, *Hâ* for *Hâdî*, ‘*Ain* for ‘*Alîm*, and *Sâd* for *Sâdiq*.

Shah Waliullah Mu in his work *Al-Faudz al-Kabîr fi Usûl al-Tafsîr* has described every letter very clearly, whether it is a single word or in association with other letters. He says, the meanings of these letters have been explained to him by way of spiritual taste (*dha'uq*). To taste brings one closer to the truth than the description of the taste. He writes: “These letters form the titles of the *Sûrah*. As a title shows its subject, so *Harûf al-Muqatta‘ât* are the terse and lucid symbols of its subject. Every letter of *muqatta‘ât* has its own meaning. These letters have knowledge that is related to the essence of Allâh”. Then he says: These verses possess a huge world of knowledge that only can be assessed through Divine Proximity. All the mysteries that are hidden from existing world but are present on their real locations have been determined in these words. The meaning of *Alif Lâm Mîm* الْمِمُّ is that the unspecified unseen is specified in relation to the visible world, which is defiled. Both *Alif* and *Hâ* give the meaning of the unseen, except that *Hâ* is the unseen of this world whilst *Alif* is the unseen of the abstract world... It is, therefore, for this reason, at the time of interrogation and conjunction the Arabs say *wa(w)* or *a(m)*- both meaning, “or”. The reason is that an affair set right is disturbed, and it is the unseen in relation to the specified. In the same way, what makes them hesitate in it is an unseen. They add an interrogative *Alif* at the beginning of a question so that it may indicate that the picture is gained in their minds, the details of which are such and such. They

choose *Hâ* because it is an unseen of this world, and the specified is summarized, since *Lâm* gives the meaning of specification. It is, therefore, that at the time of making a common noun proper, the *Lâm* of introduction (*ta'rif* تعریف) is added. When *Lâm* and *Mîm* meet, their combination gives an indication of the defiled matter in which various realities are collected and have become restricted. And because of the requirement of the abstract, they are subjected to restriction and space. Thus, *Alif Lâm Mîm* alludes to the simple grace which has come down into the world of space according to the customs of people, and in consequence, their sciences ('ulûm) became specified. It fought against the hardness of their hearts by means of reminding, and struck against their corrupt sayings and useless actions by show of love with the prescription of the limits of virtue and vice".

"*Alif Lâm Râ* is like *Alif Lâm Mîm*, except that *Râ* indicates hesitation, namely that the unseen which is specified by defilement has again come with defilement and become specified. *Mîm* also gives the same sense and alludes to the sciences which are frequently striking hard against the foul acts of the people, and that is true, as is seen in the stories of the Prophets and their discourses time after time and in their repeated questions and answers. The whole chapter 10 is the explanation of it.

"*Tâ* and *Sâd* both suggest an upward movement from the defiled world to the higher world, except that *Tâ* points to greatness and glory or to the ugliness and dirtiness of the moving thing whilst *Sâd* gives the meaning of purity (- *sâfa*) and fineness. *Sâd* signifies an aspect which appeared near the time of concentration by the Prophets upon their Creator, both by nature and acquisition by deeds. Thus, *Kâf Hâ Yâ 'Ain Sâd* (the prefix to Surah Maryam Ch. 19) conveys the meaning of an ugly, dark world in which the sciences ('ulûm), some shining brightly and others dimly, are specified at the time of their return to the Creator. About the letter *Sâd*, Shah Walfullah says: "It shows the relation between the Prophets and Allâh". Similarly, *Yâ Sîn*

stands for that knowledge, which prevails in the universe. He says that Tâ Hâ is the word which gives indication about the area which is specialized for the Holy Prophet (pbuh). Sîn gives the sense of penetration and its disappearance and dispersion throughout the world. Thus, Tâ refers to the stations of the Prophets, which are the marks of their paying attention to the higher world, so that an unseen picture may be created. In this world, they are mentioned in the Divine Books and their account is given in general terms. Tâ Sîn Mîm signifies the stations of the Prophets which are the marks of their upward movement and which have penetrated and spread throughout the material world”.

“The guttural Hâ (ح) is similar to the airy Ha (ه), the meaning of which has already been given. In addition, when the Hâ sound possesses shining light, appears and discriminates, it is manifested as the guttural Hâ. Thus, the meaning of Hâ Mîm is a brightly-shining generality which is connected to Attributes of a world defiled by false beliefs and corrupt actions. This is an allusion to the rejection of peoples wicked actions. It also gives the meaning of the appearance of the Truth in places of doubt and disputation and in their customs. ‘Ain ع points to the appearance of the shining light and its specification. Qâf ق conveys the meanings of power, severity and force that are specified in this world. It is like one who says that the object of his intention is the aspect which is created in the world by force and stroke. The letter Qâf ق suggests that All-Mighty Allâh is Qahhâr, the One Who breaks the backs of the powerful among His enemies. Qâf is like Mîm م and indicates this world but from the aspect of power (Qâwwah) and severity. Kâf ك is like Qâf ق, save that its power is understood to be less than what is implied in Qâf. Mîm because of the collection and the piling up of forms in it signifies the brightly-shining love of the Real that pervades the ugly world.”

“Nûn means light (nûr) which penetrates the darkness and is dispersed like a state that is seen at the time of true dawn or near the time of the

setting of the sun. *Yâ* is similar to *Nûn*, save that there is less light in it and it is specified less than the guttural *Hâ*. Thus, *Yâ Sîn* is an allusion to meanings which are spread (and dispersed) in the world”.

About *Kâf Hâ Yâ ‘Ain Sâd* (كَفِيْعُصْ) he agrees with what *Imâm Sayyûtî* has quoted from Abdullâh bin ‘Abbâs : *Kâf* stands for *Karîm*, *Hâ* for *Hâdî*, *‘Ain* for *Alîm*, and *Sâd* for *Sâdiq*. Regarding *TâHâ*, *Shah Walîullah* has discussed it very briefly, saying that *TâHâ* is one word and stands for the Holy Prophet. *Shah Walîullah* then says, “It is not possible to say more than these words which have been recorded in this book in general meanings. These words are not sufficient to explain their depth and how they differ from each other in one respect or the other.”

These are one of the most compelling and scholarly opinions great Scholars. Ibn Taymîyyah, Ibn Kathîr, Zamakhsharî and Sayyûtî are correct when the say that the true meanings of these letters are in the knowledge of Allâh. Their statements in no way contradict what has been said before. When these abbreviations stand for the Great attributive Name of Allâh (*Ism-i-Allâh al-Âzam*; اِسْمُ اللّٰهِ الْأَعْظَمُ), then the true essence of these attributives are known to Allâh, since only He has comprehensive knowledge of the essence of His Names. Allâh says: “*Nothing is like His likeness*” (42:11) that is, His Essence (*Haqîqat al-Dzât*) is known only to Him and His attributive Names closely adhere to His Essence. In His Essence, He is incomprehensible (*Al-Latîf*; 6:103) and no soul (- *nafs*) can comprehend His gnosis. Then Allâh says, لَا تُنْرِكُهُ الْأَبْصَارُ وَهُوَ يُنْرِكُ الْأَبْصَارَ وَهُوَ الْلَّطِيفُ الْخَبِيرُ “The physical vision comprehends Him not, but He comprehends all visions. He is the All-Subtle Being (*Al-Latîf* (اللطيف incomprehensible and imperceptible, the All-Aware” (6:103). Therefore, knowledge of His Reality, His Essence and the essence of His Attributes cannot be known, neither through logical proof (- *dalîl*) or rational considerations (- *bûrhan ‘aqlî*). He is the Only One Who knows His own Essence. Like His Essence, His Great Attributes (*Ism-*

i-Allâh al-‘Âzam; (اسم الله الأعظم) and the their real meanings are mysteries. Nothing is as mysterious as the essence of these Attributes.

Shah Waliullah and Sheikh Ismâ‘il Naqshbandî possessed high degrees of Divine knowledge and their station is considered a station of proximity to the Lord (- *maqâm al-Qurbâ*). They are among those who have been defined as ones “who are firmly grounded in knowledge” (3:7). Those who attain nearness to Him, وَالرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ, and are able to penetrate these mysteries, they are the people of knowledge and His true lovers. It is for this reason the Holy Prophet said: “I do not say that *Alif-Lâm-Mîm* is a word, but *Alif* is a word *Lâm* is a word and *Mîm* is a word.” (Transmitted by Tirmidhi; Hadîth 1003; narrated by ‘Abdullah ibn Mas‘ûd). It was in this sense that Abû Bakr Siddîq^(rz) said, “For every book there is a mystery, and the mysteries in Qur’ân are in the *fawâtih* of Qur’ân (وسره في القرآن فواتح القرآن). It is in this sense the great Islamic scholars have said that there is wisdom behind these letters, and that the real essence of these letters is with Allâh.

The most accepted words given to abbreviations used in the beginning of chapters appear at the appropriate places, and that the chapters where the abbreviations appear and the subsequent chapters where they do not, are connected with each other through the Divine Attributes for which the abbreviations stand.

ذَلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَبِّ لَهُ هُدَىٰ لِلنَّجِينَ ۝

2:2 Dhâlikâ ذَلِكَ refers to an object that is far away. In English, it is to be translated as that. *Dhâlik-al-Kitâb* ذَلِكَ الْكِتَابُ would mean, “*That* is the Book”, but is normally translated as “*This* is the Book”. The typical Arabic word for an object that is close is *hadha* هَذَا We must however point out that, according to Ibn ‘Abbâs , Mujâhid, Akhfash, Saîd, and Abû Ubâida, *dhâlikâ*, under certain circumstances, can also have the meaning of *hadha* and it is not necessarily incorrect to translate *dhâlikâ* as “this”. Yet this rendering does not adequately

reflect the true essence of the intended meaning for this particular verses grammatical context. As an extended note, That is the *Perfect Book* is an even more correct literal translation. The definite article “*al*” before *Kitâb* is used in Arabic to denote the combination of all possible attributes existing in the object to which reference is being made. For instance, *zaid al-Rajulu* corresponds to Zaid is essentially the perfect man and not simply Zaid is a man. *Dhâlika* is a non-specific word (*harf-i-Mubham* حرف مبهم) that is made more specific by the use of the definite article *al* before the word *Kitâb* (*al-Kitâb*). Thus, *Dhâlika al-Kitâb* indicates this is the Perfect Book or the only Book that possesses all of the excellent qualities that a perfect book should possess. English is capable of using the definite article in a similar way, as in the popular expression, “You are the man.” The implication is that the person embodies those qualities that are being praised. While reading the Holy Qur’ân, such signs (*ishâra*) bearing the prefix *al* are important, especially for the understanding of Divine Words.

Dhâlika ذَلِك is a demonstrative singular pronoun for something remote. It is composed of *dhâ* Ag - the demonstrative pronoun; *li*, the sign of elongation and remoteness (*al-Lâm al-Bu'd*) and *ka* ° (the *kâf al-Mukhâtilib*) telling us that a particular object is being addressed.

In Arabic, *dhâlika* is usually used to refer to an object that is either physically far away and/or of considerable dignity (Lane, *Tâj*). We read in verse 3:58: “ذَلِكَ تَثْوِيْهُ عَلَيْكَ مِنَ الْآيَاتِ وَالدُّكَّارُ الْحَكِيمُ” – “That is what We recite to you; the Messages and the Reminder full of Wisdom.” – implying that the recitation is from the Most High and what is being recited is of great dignity. In 12:31-32 we read: قَالَتْ فَذَلِكَنَّ الَّذِي لَمْ نَتَنَتَّيْ فِيْ – “She said, ‘That is he about whom you blamed me.’”. The woman, conscious of Josephs eminence, addressed him with high dignity and honour by using the personal pronoun *dhâlika* – “that one” – and not *hâdha* – “this one”, which would be offensive to a man of Josephs stature and reputation. Thus *dhâlika* is an address to any

object of loftiness that is worthy of respect. The Qur'ânic words *dhâlik-al-Kitâb* convey the meaning that Allâh, the All-Knowing Teacher, is referring to a perfect book that is exalted in dignity and far removed from any limited judgment by the reader in regards to its purity and prominence.

- تِلْكَ آيَاتُ الْكِتَابِ الْحَكِيمِ In the opening verse of the 10th. Chapter, we read “Those are the verses of the Book, full of Wisdom”. The feminine singular counter-part of *dhâlîka* is *tilka* تِلْكَ. The use of *tilka* in the verses of the Holy Qur'ân has the same significance already mentioned for *dhâlîka*. Both *dhâlîka* and *tilka* are demonstrative singular pronouns; in both cases there is the subtle indication of a Call from afar by the Most Exalted, to the reader who is being personally and directly addressed to a particular book or the verses of a book (3:58). It alludes to being high in dignity and distinction. It is the use of the letter *kâf* in *dhâlîka* and in *tilka* that is the basis of the allusion.

Dhâlîka and *tilka* point to the existence of a union with Allâh and His Divine Verses or *Âyât* (آيات) (3:58) before their separation. In other words, the Words contained in this Book were a part of the Knowledge of Allâh, Most High, which then “came down from above” (32:2; *tanzîl*). *Tanzîl* is something that *descends*, and so the separation occurred. Now, what is separated, namely the *Âyât*, are exalted and dignified in that they were with the Most Exalted. The completion of this separation is confirmed by the All-Mighty Allâh Himself in the words: لَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَشْهُدُ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ إِلَيْكَ أَنْزَلَهُ بِعِلْمٍ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ يَشْهُدُنَّ وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا “Allâh bears witness through His revelation to you that He has descended it (the Qur'ân, pregnant) with His Knowledge; and the angels bear witness (to this fact). Yet Allâh alone suffices for a Witness” (4:166).

Al-Kitâb الْكِتَابُ is that Perfect Book in which Divine Knowledge takes the form of words full of Wisdom - *al-Kitâb al-Hakîm* (cf. 10:1). The use of the word *al-Kitâb* (the Book) at the very beginning indicates that the Divine Revelations were to be in the form of a book in visible

characters on writing material; otherwise, it could not be called *Al-Kitâb*. The Holy Qur’ân itself explains the meanings of *al-Kitâb*. It says

- 1) Its words are in written form كِتابٌ مَرْقُومٌ *Kitâbun-Marqûm* (83:20),
- 2) It is a Book which is inscribed, taking the form of sentences كِتابٌ مَسْتُورٌ *Kitâbin-Mastûr* (52:2) and
- 3) Its contents were in Allâh’s Knowledge أَنْزَلَهُ بِعِلْمٍ *Anzalahu bi-‘ilm ihî* (4:166)

The very first Revelation to the Holy Prophet (pbuh) shows how mighty and prophetic these Words were: الَّذِي عَلِمَ بِالْفَلَمِ (٤) عَلِمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ (٥) “Who taught knowledge by means of the pen. He taught the human being what he did not know” (96:4-5). The mentioning of the pen indicates that Divine Knowledge shall be taught to humankind in written form. This explains the Holy Prophets concern for the preservation of the Holy Qur’ân in writing.

Raib رَيْبٌ refers to something that disturbs the mind; something that disquiets; something suspicious; or something that creates anxiety, perplexity, and doubt. It also can indicate a false charge, a doubt that is based upon prejudice and suspicion, or a doubt, which stands in way of the advancement of knowledge, reason and research (Baqâ, Lisân, Tâj, and Lane). In the words - هُدًى لِلْمُتَّقِينَ (2:2) “It is guidance (*hudan*) for those who are *muttaqî* (متّقى).” (2:2) is an answer to the Prayer in Sûra *Al-Fâtihah*, verse 6 where the supplicant implores: “Guide us!” *Huda* هُدًى is used in particular when Allâh Himself guides a person. As He says, وَيَرِيدُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ اهْتَدُوا هُدًى “Those who follow guidance, Allâh give increased guidance.”(19:76).

Huda is to lead someone towards light (Ibn Mas‘ûd; Ibn ‘Abbâs). It also means to guide someone with kindness, to show the right path with kindness, and to make a person follow the right path until that person reaches the goal (Baqâ; Lisân, Tâj, Lane). It finds its opposite

in the concept of *dzâllîn* - ضالٰين “those who have gone astray”, and *zulûmât* - ظلمات “the darknesses”.

Muttaqîn مُتّقِين are those who guard against those acts that harm and injure morals, and who are attentive to their obligations towards humankind (Râghib, Lisân). The root of *Muttaqîn* is *waqa*, which conveys the role of saving, guarding, preserving, and protecting. *Ittaqa bihî* إنْقَى بِهِ means, he took it as a shield. *Muttaq* (plu. *muttaqîn* مُتّقِين) is the nominative case of *Ittaqa* إنْقَى (Râghib, Tâj). The verse that immediately follows expounds on the meaning of *muttaqîn*. In the Qur’ânic language, the *muttaqîn* (those who possess *taqwâ*) are understood as those who guard against sins and who take Allâh as a shield or shelter. The word is often simply translated as the “righteous”, however, that is not linguistically sufficient. The verses 2:177; 3:15-17; 3:133-135; 5: 27; 9: 3; 16:128; 45:19; 65:2 describe what *taqwâ* is. Verses 65:2-3 tell us that a *muttaqî* is the one whom Allâh provides with a way out of his ordeals and difficulties and provides him sustenance when he least expects it. (2:194; 8:29).

The statement هُدًى لِلْمُتّقِين - “it is a guidance for the righteous” does not stand in conflict with the statement that says, the Holy Qur’ân is هُدًى لِلنَّاسِ - “a guidance for all humankind” (2:185). When it is said this is a guidance for *Al-Muttaqîn*, this only means that it provides regulations for those who have a desire to guard against sins, and therefore seek to take Allâh as a shield or shelter - whether they be Christian, Jew, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, or other. In other words, it is not exclusively for those who are already deemed *muttaqî*. Thus, the “guidance for the righteous” هُدًى لِلْمُتّقِين is the guiding light for those who desire spiritual supervision and who, because of their inner purity, sanity, and eagerness in the search of Truth and proper Faith, yearn for Divine Proximity. The following verse encapsulates this message clearly: “نُورًا نَهْدِي بِهِ مَن نَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا” We made it (this Revelation) a light, whereby We guide such of Our servants who desire it from Us” (42:52).

What follows the words *guidance for the muttaqîn* هُدیٰ لِلْمُتَّقِینَ are the basic conditions for divine guidance relative to spiritual realities. Anyone who treads on the path following these guiding principles and adheres to the injunctions laid down in this Book will become deserving of Allâh's special Love and Mercy (-*Rahîmiyyat*). He will soon reach a station where he will find that Allâh is already leading him to limitless stages of perfection and spiritual purification (cf. 9:4; 2:27). In the previous paragraphs, we explained important terms that are introduced in the first verses of *Sûrah Al-Baqarah* in the detail. If we apply these explanations to the first two verses we could paraphrase the first Qur'ânic statement: الم (۱) ذَلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رِبُّ لَهُ هُدیٰ لِلْمُتَّقِینَ as follows: "I am Allâh, the All-Knowing (with these words, the author of the Book has introduced Himself). This (or "That" as discussed earlier) is a Perfect Book in which the Knowledge coming from the All-Knowing takes the form of a Book, which possesses all those excellent qualities that a Perfect Book should rightly possess. As regards its eminence, its holiness, its dignity and its loftiness – it is far above an ordinary readers ability to judge. This is a Call from afar, establishing human guidance from One Who teaches knowledge by words inscribed and presented in the form of a Book. Through the agency of His Qur'ân, Allâh teaches a human being what he could not know. Its teachings do not disturb the sane mind nor does it contain anything that disquiets, makes suspicious, or creates anxiety or perplexity. There is no false charge in it, no judgments based upon prejudice or suspicion, and it contains no statement that stands in the way of human reason and research. It is the answer to the Prayer of Sûra Fâtihah where the supplicant implored, "Guide us!"

Through this Book guidance is provided with the kindness of a mother; the mind finds the right path and strength is given to follow the path until one reaches their goal. This Book leads towards light and away from all kinds of darknesses. The ability to guard against evil while being mindful of duties is the basic condition and the very first stage in human spiritual advancement, therefore, one who guards

against evil and against that which harms and injures the body and the soul, finds guidance in it. It guides those who are attentive to their duties, who guard themselves against sins, and who take their Lord as their shield and shelter. It is they who, because of their inner purity, sanity, and eagerness in the search of truth, would in the end arrive at a high degree of faith and perfected righteousness. This Book lays down the exact principles to be followed so that the highest stages of spiritual and moral advancement might be achieved. It helps a person to attain limitless stages of perfection and makes him more deserving of Allâh’s Love. No guidance would benefit a person who is careless in guarding against sin and evil.

It is worth mentioning that in the conception, making, and creation of an object/thing there are four main cause components - the Holy Book in this case:

‘Illat-i-Fâilî (- علت فاعلی) (Subjective Cause): Who made and produced the object/thing.

‘Illat-i-Mâdi (- علت مادی) (Material Cause): From what material the object/thing was made of?

‘Illat-i-Sîrî (- علت صوری) (Attributive Cause): What are the inbuilt attributes, shape, and properties of the object/thing.

‘Illat-i-Ghaî (- علت غائی) (The Objective cause): What is the purpose and goal of making that object/thing.

When you apply the above four mentioned ‘illât (- cause components) to the Holy Qur’ân, and reflect on the first four verses of *sûrah al-Baqara* (2:1-4), you will find that in these first four verses all the four cause components of the revelation of al-Qur’ân have been mentioned and explained.

‘Illat-i-Fâilî (- علت فاعلی) (Who made and produced the object): is *Alif Lâm Mîm* ﷺ: “I am Allâh, the All-knowing [Who made this Book]

'Illat-i-Mâdî (- علت مادی Material Cause): is *dhâlik-al-Kitâb* ذلک الکتاب: That exalted Book (*al-Qur'ân*) is made from pen, ink, and parchment in the form of a book.

'Illat-i-Sûrî (- علت صوری Attributive Cause): is *lâ raiba fîh* لا رب فيه: The attributes and properties of this Holy Book are such that it contains nothing doubtful, harmful or destructive, there is no false charge in it.

'Illat-i-Ghaî (The Objective cause): is *hudan li al-Muttaqîn* هدی للمتقین: The objective of this Holy Book is that it is a guidance for those who are *muttaqî* متّقی. The *muttaqî* are explained in the following verse (2:3).

This makes further clear that *muqatta'ât* مقطعات *Alif Lâm Mîm* الم must stand for the attributive name and powers of Allâh, who is the first of the four cause components, i.e. '*illat-i-fâ'ilî*' (Subjective Cause). Thus the sequential arrangement of these four verses is the key to understand the meanings of these *muqatta'ât* (- مقطعات abbreviated letters). The above logic is further strengthened by the fact that almost all these abbreviated letters are followed by references to the Qur'ânic, Revelation or other great prophecy as in 30:1. This fact is overwhelmingly directing the reader to the reality of the attributive names for which the *muqatta'ât* مقطعات stand.

الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيَقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنفِقُونَ

2:3 To believe in the existence of hidden reality is the first requirement for Divine Guidance. *Yu'minûna* يُؤْمِنُونَ is derived from *amana* امّن and is the plural of *Mu'min* مؤمن (believer). *Amana* means to trust, be secure from, and to be safe. The word *Îmân* إيمان is also derived from the same root and is usually translated as “faith” or “belief”. The word *Islâm* إسلام expresses only outward submission whereas *Îmân* signifies sincerity and firmness of Faith in the Absolute Truth. For a true believer, *Îmân* comes first and *Islam* afterwards.

However, in those people who profess to the faith because of tradition and custom, *Islâm* takes precedence over *Îmân*.

The Holy Qur'ân explains the meaning of *Yu'minûna* in 32:15-16 where we read, “The believers are those who believe in Our revelations, who when they are reminded by means of them, fall down prostrate and proclaim the Glory with the Praises of their Lord and they are not proud. While getting up for late-night Prayer (-*tahajjud*), they forsake their comfortable beds calling upon their Lord with an awe-inspired and hopeful state of mind. And they spend out of that what their Lord has provided them” (32:15-16). In the following verses, we find other descriptions of *Mu'min* - “The believers are those whose hearts tremble when the name of Allâh is mentioned before them, and when His Messages are recited to them, it increases them in Faith, and in their Lord only do they put their trust; who observe Prayer and go on spending from that which their Lord has provided for them. It is these who are the believers in Truth” (8:2-4); “Believers are those who remain constant and steadfast in their Prayers.”(70:23; 23:10).

There are many other verses that describe believers (cf. 3:139; 4:60, 65, 136; 5:81; 7:85; 8:1-3, 74; 9:110; 24:58-64; 49:6-12,15). Chapter 23 of the Holy Qur'ân is called “The Believers” (*Al-Mu'minûn*). This chapter describes their main characteristics in much more detail. There is a Tradition (- *hadîth*) that says, “Gabriel asked the Holy Prophet (pbuh), What is *îmân* (belief)? The Holy Prophet (pbuh) replied, It is the belief in Allâh, His angels, His Books, all His messengers and in the Day of Resurrection (cf. 2:285; 2:177; *Bukhârî*; *Ibn Mâjâ*; *Abû Muslim*). He did not say belief in predestination. This was added later. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) used to say that there are more than 70 branches of *îmân*, the most excellent of which is the declaration that there is no God other than Allâh, and that there cannot be and will never be One worthy of worship but He. When asked which *îmân* has

the highest grade, he replied, “Good morals and the humblest of which is the removal of what is injurious from a path.” (*Bukhârî*).

Verse 3 of chapter 2 lays down the three basic duties of a believer, namely: belief in the unseen realities, observance of ritual Prayer and discharge of duties arising out of kindness and affection towards Allâh’s creatures (*Bukhârî*). *Imân* is also spoken of as light (57:12-13) and light is something which makes manifest what is hidden – *Ghaib* غَيْبٌ. **Ghaib** is something that is invisible and hidden from human senses. *Ghaib* can also be a state in which someone or something is secluded, hidden from view, removed, or remote from others. Here it refers to the truths, realities, and facts that are not visible or conceivable by ordinary people (Lane, Tâj, Lisân). *Ghaib* does not apply to Allâh as He says, “Allâh knows the hidden realities of the heavens and the earth” (49:18); “Such is He, Who knows the hidden realities and the obvious” ذَلِكَ عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ (32:6) and “He is the Knower of hidden realities and visible” عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ (13:9)

The statement “those who believe in the hidden realities” يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ does not demand from us belief in imaginary or unreal things, but in certain realities that are hidden from our eyes. Some of these realities were discovered with time, while others are yet unseen and some are beyond the reach of perception through our ordinary senses and cognizance; nonetheless, they exist and are real. Angels, Revelation, the Hereafter, Paradise and Hell, and the conservation of our deeds and actions that will result in reward or punishment are all hidden realities. They are unseen, but they are realities conveyed to us in this Holy Book. We find in the Holy Qur’ân arguments in reference to these realities. The Book demands from us that we make use of our reasoning, reflection and logic in order to understand what is being conveyed (cf. 12:2). There is nothing in this Book that insults intelligence, disputes reason or negates scientific discoveries. The Book appeals not only to human conscience but also to the intellect.

Its teachings reject dogmas and make logic, mindfulness, and reason the only tests of religious truth and its beneficence. There is no chapter that refers to anything unseen without giving an argument in support of its reference. The Holy Qur’ân does not impose upon its followers any mysteries of faith or invite them to believe in them blindly. A Prophet is visible as a man. The fact of exactly how he has been sent with a mission and message from Allâh is unseen to the ordinary human eye, yet what he conveys appeals to the innocent human intellect which is designed to recognize truth. *Belief in the hidden realities* يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ thus conveys the idea of accepting a certain principle as the truth; when the truth becomes manifested then it becomes *îmân*.

Ghaib also means “lonely and solitary” (Lane; Tâj), “Belief in the hidden realities” يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ *Yuminûna bil-Ghaib* would mean that the *Muttaqîn* mentioned in the preceding verse fear their Lord in their hearts, even when they are alone and in a solitary state. They discharge their duties and perform their worship without the thought of any visible or immediate reward. Their actions result from their belief in the unseen reality. The verse 21:49, الَّذِينَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَيْبِ, “Those who stand in awe before their Lord (and fear him in their hearts) when they are alone (and in a solitary state), and who dread the hour of Judgment” conveys this idea.

Yuqîmûn al-Salât يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ is usually translated as “Who observe the Prayer”. **Yuqîmûn** is derived from *aqâma* اقامة, which means one who kept the affair in a proper state (Tâj). Here, the expression refers to those who perform their ritual Prayers according to all the prescribed conditions and in a proper state.

The Day of Resurrection is called *qiyyâmat* قيامۃ, which is from the same root. *Qâma* قام also means to stand, stand firm and stand up. It also has the meaning to be lively or to appear in full light. Thus, the word *qâma* has a very broad meaning. All of these can apply to *yuqîmûn*.

Salât is Prayer and *Al-Salât* with the suffix *al* is that particular Prayer, which the Holy Prophet (pbuh) demonstrated from his own example. It consists of three parts: physical purification and cleanliness; certain gestures including *ruk'û* (- bowing down) and *sajdah* (- prostration) and recitation of Qur'ânic verses and additional Prayers taught by the Holy Prophet (pbuh).

The physical movements are the index of our inner feelings, and the recitation is direct conversation with Allâh using His own Words. Prayer "restrains from indecency and abominable things and loathsome deed and all that runs counter to reason and moral sense" says the Holy Book (29:45), and this is the main purpose of *Al-Salât*. The performance of ritual Prayer according to all the prescribed conditions requires strength, energy and the highest level of concentration on the part of the performer. It is also the first condition to be met on the road to developing *taqwâ* (cf. 2: 238-239). By praying, we render the best service to ourselves; and by adoring and glorifying Allâh we are reminded of the Object of Veneration.

Prayer, like charity, is as old as humanity and exists in all religions in various forms. However, the Qur'ânic objective of Prayer is not fulfilled by mindlessly repeating words on a bead, distracting our minds with dancing or music, performing ritual acts that can gratify only the eyes or ears, or performing elaborate ceremonies too complex for most believers.

The Prophet (pbuh) of Allâh rid people of all superstitions because they block the path to sincere and rational glorification of our Lord *Al-Salât* is *du 'â* دعاء meaning to supplicate in humility. Believers are taught to say: فُلْ إِنْ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمُحْيَايِي وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ - "My Prayer and my sacrifice and my living and my dying all are for the sake of Allâh" (6:163). Accordingly, our Master is not to be treated as a servant, being asked to do this or give that. It is He who demands, not his lowly creatures. The gist of Qur'ânic Prayers is summarized in the following verses: "Call upon your Lord with humility and longing for

Him, full of hope” (7:55). “Continue to remember your Lord in your mind with humility and awe and in a voice not loud, in the mornings and the evenings” وَادْكُر رَبَّكَ فِي نَشَكٍ (7:205). “Your Lord will not hold you to be of any worth if you do not call on Him” قُلْ مَا يَعْبُدُونَ بِكُمْ (25:77). رَبِّي لَوْلَا دُعَاؤُكُمْ

Razaqnâ-hum رَزْقُهُمْ is a compound word of the root verb *razaqa* - رُزق to provide, and the pronouns *nâ* (“we”) and *hum* هُمْ (“them”). The related word *Rizq* رِزْق is something whereby one profits; anything from which one derives an advantage; that can be food or knowledge. The expression وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفَعُونَ “they spend out of that which We have provided them” includes their wealth, time, offspring, power, influence, knowledge, intellectual qualities and other capacities (Râghib). This expression is fittingly explained in the saying of the Holy Prophet (pbuh): “You yourself have a right or claim upon you, your Lord has a claim upon you, your guest has a claim upon you and your family has a claim upon you. So you should give everyone his due.”(Tirmidhî).

وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أُنْزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ

2:4 “*That was revealed before you*” مَا أُنْزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ is a reference to one of the fundamental doctrines of the continuity of Divine revelations taught in the Holy Qur’ân. With these words, the Divine origin of other religions is acknowledged. This is testified in the following words: "And indeed We have sent Messengers before you. There are some of them whom We have mentioned to you (in this Qur’ân) and there are some whom We have not mentioned to you." (40:78).

The Holy Qur’ân thus requires a belief not only in its own truth, but also in the same truth brought by previous messengers and their Scriptures. It thus infuses a spirit of allegiance and reverence not only to Moses and Jesus, but also to all other revealed religions and their founders, whether they are Krishna, Confucius, Lao Tzu or Buddha.

The statement وَمَا أُنْزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ “and in that which had been revealed before you” indicates the acceptance that believers must have regarding other religions and fosters feelings of great respect. Hindus, Christians and Jews, while claiming Divine origin of their faith, deny this generosity to the adherents of other faiths. This becomes a root cause of hatred between the nations and has often resulted in untold bloodshed. The Holy Qur’ân rejects the very idea of religious bigotry that leads to discord and disputes between nations and religions. It teaches that every nation has been blessed with a teacher from Allâh (35:24; 2:80). These words are a declaration that all the Prophets in various lands came from Allâh and brought the same light from One source. This teaching provides great hope towards the promotion of peace, harmony and tolerance among the followers of different religions.

أُولَئِكَ عَلَىٰ هُدًىٰ مِّنْ رَّبِّهِمْ ۖ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

2:5 Muflîhûn مُفْلِحُونَ are those who are successful in attaining their objective in this life and in the Hereafter. The word muflîh مُفْلِح is the nominative of falâha فَلَحَ that means to unfold something in order to reveal its intrinsic properties; to till and break open the surface of the earth and make its productive powers active (Tâj, Lane). Aflâha أَفْلَحَ means to be successful and lucky. Fallâh فَلَّاحَ is prosperity, safety or success, both in this life and in Hereafter. It is one of the striking beauties of Arabic that its words in their primary sense denote the state, which when realized also conveys the import of the same. This is well illustrated in the word fallâh. Therefore, fallâh is the application of our latent faculties to our best ability. Whatever is noble and good and is hidden in us must be unfolded, and whatever is yet only potential in the human mind must be made a reality. Therefore, fallâh is also the fulfilment of our own evolution and the realization of the potential that our Creator has placed in us. Fallâh is a much higher level than the attainment of najâh نَجَّا –salvation, or the corresponding

idea of Moksha and Nirvana in Hinduism and Buddhism. In the Arabic language there is no better word than fallâh to describe attaining what one desires, reaping the fruits of labour, and success and gains to which one may aspire, whether material or spiritual, whether of this world or of the Hereafter.

A muflîh is one who is prosperous, happy and attains his desires (Lisân, Tâj). The words “It is they who are successful in attaining their object” وَأُولَئِنَّكُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ conveys to us that a person who follows this guidance, Allâh in return will provide him a way out of his ordeals and difficulties and protect him from the undesirable results of his incorrect judgments. Allâh will provide him sustenance from where he least expects and will fulfil all his needs. By following this guidance not only will this person be saved from evil, but he will also be filled with positive good of the highest order. Al-Fallâh (with the suffix al) not only means success but also signifies what constitutes the complete and perfect success. Al-Fallâh as promised in this Book knows no limit.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا نَسَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ ءَانْدَرْتُهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تُنْذِرْهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

2:6 Kafarû - كَفَرُوا “They disbelieved and denied; they covered”. After mentioning the class of the believers (Mu'minîn) and their characteristics, the Holy Qur'ân now refers to the class of the disbelievers – Kâfirîn كافرین. The word kâfir is derived from kafara كفر, meaning to cover, deny, hide, renounce, reject, disbelieve, be ungrateful, neglect, expiate, or darken (Lane). Kafara also means to cover the sown seed with earth, or to conceal the benefit or favour conferred on one (Tâj, Lisân). It can also be suggestive of a dark cloud (which covers the sky), night (which covers the land), a coat of mail (that covers the body), or the impious who cover the Truth (Tâj, Lisân).

The Holy Prophet (pbuh) is reported to have warned, “Beware! Do not become disbelievers or ungrateful (kuffâr) after me, so that some

of you should strike off the necks of others” (Bukhârî). The slaying of a Muslim by a Muslim is therefore condemned as an act of kufr كُفْر. In another Tradition, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) said, “Abusing a Muslim is transgression and fighting against him is kufr (Bukhârî). Ibn Athîr in Al-Nihâyah writes, ‘Kufr is of two kinds, one is denial of the Faith itself and the other is denial of a fraction or branch of Faith. Denial of a fraction of Faith does not necessarily mean losing all faith in Islam, which would make one kâfir’. This is what is called kufrun dûna kufrin كُفْرُونَ كُفْر. So this second kufr cannot be simply equated with unbeliever, infidel or being a kâfir in the specific and restricted sense. Much bloodshed among the Muslims would have been avoided if they understood the real meaning of kufr. The real kuffâr are the ones who reject knowingly the whole system and doctrine of Islam and try to conceal the Truth.

Al-Kâfir الكافر is the one who denies Lâ ilâha Ill-Allâh Muhammad al-Rasûl-Allâh – “There is no other, cannot be and will never be one worthy of worship other than Allâh, and Muhammad is His Messenger”, and refuses knowingly the underlying meaning of these words. “Just as îmân is the acceptance of the Truth, so kufîر is its rejection. Likewise, just as the practical acceptance of the Truth or doing of a good deed is called îmân or part of îmân, the practical rejection of Truth and doing evil is called kufr or part of kufr (Ibn Athîr). This root in its 47 forms is used in the Holy Qur’ân 525 times.

خَتَّمَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ وَعَلَىٰ أَبْصَارِهِمْ غِشْوَةً ۖ وَلَهُمْ
عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ

2:7 Khatama خَتَّم means to set a seal. After setting a seal, nothing goes inside. The statement in this verse, “Allâh has set a seal upon their hearts and upon their hearings and on their eyes is a covering” does not mean that Allâh has pre-emptively prevented some people from understanding His message by setting a seal on their hearts, eyes and ears. We read elsewhere, “Then because of their breaking of covenant

and their denial of the Messages of Allâh and their antagonizing the Prophets without a just cause and their saying, Our hearts are uncircumcised, Allâh has set a seal upon their hearts.” (4:155) And again, “Those who dispute concerning the Messages of Allâh without any proof and authority having come to them. This is extremely abhorrent to Allâh and to those who believe. That is how it is! Allâh sets a seal upon the heart of every arrogant (and) haughty person.”(40:35). Thus, there is a precondition involving human choice before Allâh sets a “seal upon their hearts”. These verses have been stated to show that Allâh has not created these individuals differently from others, but they do not use the faculties of reason and intellect bestowed on them. Allâh says, ﴿فَلَمَّا زَاغُوا أَرَأَعَ اللَّهُ قُلُوبَهُمْ﴾ -“When they deviated from the right course, Allâh let their hearts deviate.” (61:5). Imâm Râghib explains that the words of this verse mean, “they dispute concerning the Messages of Allâh without any proof and authority having come to them.”

Allâh has instituted all the paths of nature and every cause is followed by its natural effect; thus the sealing (خَتَمٌ) is the consequence of a choice and not predestined. We are told, *- بَنِ رَانَ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ*, “Their evil deeds have rusted their hearts.” (83:14). The rusting of the heart refers to the natural law that we also know from medicine; when an organ is not used, it becomes gradually weaker and finally useless. When one eye for example is covered for long with a patch, it loses its vision. The disbelievers do not use their power of reasoning to understanding and accept the Truth. Such people are spoken of as such: *- لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ لَا يَقْعُدُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ أَعْيُنٌ لَا يُبَصِّرُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ أَذْنُ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا*: “They have hearts wherewith they do not understand and they have eyes but they do not see with them (the truth), and they have ears but they do not hear (the Messages) with them” (7:179)

The Bible says: “Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand, and seeing ye shall see and not perceive. For the hearts of this people are waxed gross and their ears are dull of hearing and their eyes have they

closed” (Ac. 28.25-27); and “They have not known nor understood for He has shut their eyes that they cannot see; and their hearts, that they cannot understand” (Is 44.18). Verse 2:7 can therefore be taken to mean that because of misuse or lack of use of the spiritual and physical faculties of seeing, hearing, and understanding, people lose these God-given faculties and become صُمْ بُكْمٌ عُمْيٌ - “deaf and dumb and blind” (2:18).

Qalûb قلوب is the plural form of qalb قلب, which means heart. In the Holy Qur’ân the word is always used as an allusion. Allâh says, فَأَنْجَاهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ - زَاغُوا أَزَاغَ اللَّهُ فَلَوْبَهُمْ - “But when they deviated from the right course, Allâh let their hearts deviate (as they were)”. Qalb has a broad meaning; we read, “The Holy Qur’ân has been revealed for healing of the diseases of the heart” (10:57), and “It is he (Gabriel) who has brought down this (Qur’ân) on your heart” (2:97), as well as “Allâh guides the heart of a person who believes in Him” (64:11). Hafiz said, “All I know is Love, and my heart finds Him Infinite and Everywhere”. Thus qalb conveys a different sense than fuâd، فؤاد which is more literally the heart that pumps blood inside the chest.

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَقُولُ آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَبِالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَمَا هُمْ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ

2:8 After mentioning the two classes of people, the believers (-muminîn) and the rejecters of the Revelation (- kâfirîn), the Holy Qur’ân now comes to a third class of people: the hypocrites or Munâfiqîn منافقين. Hypocrites are those who profess to be believers, but who are disbelievers at heart and in deeds, lacking the strength of Faith necessary for complete obedience. The hypocrite “wanders like a blind man” (2:15). Chapter 63 of the Holy Qur’ân (Al-Munâfiqûn - The Hypocrites) and chapter 9, verses 38-108 deal in detail with this category of people. There are other places where the Holy Qur’ân also gives detailed accounts of the tactics of the hypocrites (3:149-180), and confirms that hypocrisy cannot remain hidden for long (29:11).

يُخَلِّدُونَ اللَّهَ وَاللَّذِينَ ءامَنُوا وَمَا يَخْلُدُونَ إِلَّا أَنفُسَهُمْ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ

2:9 Yakħâdi’ûn is derived from *khada‘a* meaning, “he forsook, abandoned or refrained” (Lisân, Tâj; Lane). It also means, “He besought or desired to deceive but did not succeed in this attempt to deceive”(Baqâ, Tâj). The verse would mean that the *munâfiqîn* منافقين besought and desired to deceive Allâh and the believers but did not succeed in this attempt. The verses that follow describe further the state of the hypocrites.

فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ فَزَادَهُمْ اللَّهُ مَرَضًا ۖ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْذِبُونَ

2:10 “In their hearts was a disease. “Hypocrisy is thus a "disease of the heart". *Maradz* مرض refers to any cause of the loss of physical, moral or spiritual health of a person, or any physical or moral weakness or defect in Faith, or anything that hinders a human beings physical or moral progress (Râghib). Moreover, if this disease is not cured in time, its effects become increasingly damaging and deleterious (فَزَادَهُمْ اللَّهُ مَرَضًا). The power of decision on the part of hypocrites is weak. They lack trust and confidence and are consumed by jealousy and doubt. They are not trustworthy and are habitual liars. They try to compromise with good and evil, which is in reality an act of weakness (Lisân). فَزَادَهُمْ اللَّهُ مَرَضًا also refers to the increased feelings of jealousy in their hearts. The rapid expansion of Islam escalated their jealousy as it forced them to display increased outward accord with the Muslims alongside inner discord.

The words used for the punishment of disbelievers is ‘*Adhâb al-‘Azîm* “great punishment” (2:7), whereas in the case of hypocrites it is ‘*Adhâb Alîm* عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ “woeful and grievous punishment” (2:10), which is a pain and anguish that cannot be seen by the eyes but is felt in the heart. Thus, the qualities of punishments vary accordingly. This is because disbelievers express their disbelief and enmity openly,

whereas hypocrites keep their feelings of hatred and malice hidden in their hearts.

We are told - إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ فِي الدَّرْكِ الْأَسْفَلِ مِنَ النَّارِ “The hypocrites shall surely be in the lowest reach of the Fire” (4:145), but the next verse states that their repentance will be accepted if they mend their ways (4:146).

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ لَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ قَالُوا إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ مُصْلِحُونَ

2:11 Tufsidû is derived from *fasada* فَسَدَ and means to become evil, corrupted, invalid, decomposed, bad, spoiled, tainted, vicious, wrong, or to make mischief or a foul deal. *Fasad* فَسَادٌ is corruption or violence. *Mufsid* مُفْسِدٌ is the one who acts corruptly, spoils, or commits violence. Mischief and bloodshed is sometimes caused knowingly by people and nations who claim their actions are part of a mission of peace. However, they often have little true perception of right and wrong, and lack the courage to uphold justice.

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ آمَنُوا كَمَا آمَنَ النَّاسُ قَالُوا أَنُؤْمِنُ كَمَا آمَنَ السُّفَهَاءُ ۖ لَا إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ السُّفَهَاءُ وَلَكِنْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

2:13 Al-Sofahâ’ سُفَهَاءُ is the plural form derived from *safiha* سَفِحَةٌ, meaning to be foolish, flimsy, inconsequential, light or half-witted, to become unwise, lose ones mind, be imprudent, ignorant, or to deem anyone foolish, or be stupid (cf. 4:5). The hypocrites called the Muslims fools and idiots (- sofahâ) سُفَهَاءُ because the Muslims underwent suffering and made sacrifices to differentiate themselves from the community of disbelievers. The hypocrites on the other hand thought they could protect their lives and property by keeping friendly relations with the disbelievers and believers alike.

وَإِذَا لَقُوا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قَالُوا إِنَّا وَإِذَا خَلَوْا إِلَى شَيَاطِينِهِمْ قَالُوا إِنَّا مَعَكُمْ إِنَّمَا تَحْنُ مُسْتَهْزِئُونَ

2:14 Shayâṭîn شیاطین is the plural of Shaitân شیطان and refers to one who is not only himself far from truth, but also turns and misguides others away from it. The singular form shaitân has a different meaning as discussed in 2:36 (cf. 2:102). Ibn Mas‘ûd says that shayâṭîn denote the leaders in disbelief, the ring-leaders which are referred to in verse 2:76 where we read: “and when they are alone, one with another” وَإِذَا حَلَّا بَعْضُهُمْ إِلَيْ بَعْضٍ and the verse states 33:67, - وَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا إِنَّا أَطَعْنَا سَادَتَنَا وَكُبَرَاءَنَا فَأَضْلَلُنَا السَّبِيلَا. “They will say, Our Lord! We obeyed our leaders and our respected ones, but they led us astray from Your path.”

اللَّهُ يَسْتَهْزِئُ بِهِمْ وَيَمْدُهُمْ فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ

2:15 Ya‘mahûn يَعْمَهُونَ are those who are blindly wandering. They have lost all signs and are helpless in finding their way. The word is derived from ‘amiha عَمَهُ, meaning to be confounded, perplexed, confused, to wander blindly, to stumble to and fro, to be unable to find the right course, or to suffer mental blindness. Whereas ‘amiya عَمِیَ is applied to physical blindness, ‘amiha is used only for spiritual blindness (Lane, Tâj, Lisân, Râghib). It is said: “The servant of self-will has run away from his Masters kingdom, but he cannot go outside of it, so he wanders aimlessly”.

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرَوُ اُضْلَالًا بِالْهُدَىٰ فَمَا رَبَحَتْ تَجْرِيْثُهُمْ وَمَا كَانُوا مُهْتَدِيْنَ

2:16 Ashtraw اشترؤا is derived from shara'a شرء, meaning “giving up one thing and laying hold of another” (Tâj). Here we are told when guidance was shown to the hypocrites they preferred error and renounced guidance, thinking this course would bring them financial and other advantages.” However, “فَمَا رَبَحَتْ تَجْرِيْثُهُمْ، meaning that the bargain has fetched no profit”; meaning that the hypocrites will have neither worldly gains nor divine guidance, and that they shall be losers in their worldly affairs and their spiritual lives alike. The statement “but

their bargain has fetched no profit" is also an allusion to the fact that many hypocrites are dishonest traders.

مَثُلُّهُمْ كَمَثَلِ الَّذِي أَسْتَوْقَدَ نَارًا فَلَمَّا أَصْبَأَتْ مَا حَوْلَهُ ذَهَبَ اللَّهُ بِنُورٍ هُمْ وَتَرَكُوهُ فِي ظُلْمَاتٍ لَا يُبَصِّرُونَ

2:17 Zulumât (plural) means thick darknesses, afflictions, hardships or dangers. The word is also used figuratively to signify error or ignorance, just as the word for light is used to signify guidance and knowledge (Lisân, Tâj). Zulumât, when used in the plural form, stand for spiritual, moral, or physical darknesses. The plural form signifies that sins and evil deeds do not stand alone, but grow and multiply, with one transgression leading to another.

"The kindler of the fire" is a reference to the Holy Prophet (pbuh) who kindled the light of guidance. He is reported to have said, "My example is the example of a man who kindles a fire" (Bukhârî). The personal pronoun used here lends weight to the explanation. The illuminator is one person, while those whose light are taken away are many. In a fire there is always light and heat. When the fire goes out, the darkness is worse than before even though heat remains from the combustion. The case of the hypocrites is similar: the light touches them, but owing to the diseased condition of their hearts, it does not penetrate inside and illuminate their inner darknesses. Their end is therefore like that of the deliberate rejecters of the Faith (2:7), wildly groping about blindly (فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ). They have suppressed the instinctive ability of human beings to discern good from bad, and from that, abdicate their moral responsibility.

أَوْ كَصَيْبٌ مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ فِيهِ ظُلْمَاتٌ وَرَاعِدٌ وَبَرْقٌ يَجْعَلُونَ أَصَابِعَهُمْ فِي
ءَادَانِهِمْ مِّنَ الْصَّوَاعِقِ حَدَّرَ الْمُؤْتَمِ وَاللَّهُ مُحِيطٌ بِالْكُفَّارِينَ

2:19 The analogy of rain and water from heaven (كَصَبِّبُ مِنْ السَّمَاءِ) symbolizes Divine Revelations that pour down in the periods of spiritual drought and utter moral darknesses (ظُلْمَاتٌ). Thunder (رَعْدٌ) is an analogy for warnings, which accompany the Revelations, and lightning (بَرْقٌ) symbolizes the hope for rain in a state of drought. We are told, “It is He, Who shows you the lightning to induce fear and to inspire hope [in you]; and [it is He] Who raises the heavy clouds; and the thunder glorifies Him with His true praise and [so do] the angels in awe of Him. He sends the thunderbolts and therewith smites whom He will. Yet they dispute about Allâh, though He is Mighty in prowess” (13:12-13). As the rain is a mercy from Allâh, so is Revelation. As rain is accompanied by thunder, which is a warning of severe weather and lightening - a promise of hope for life-giving rain, in the same way Revelation comes with a message of hope as well as a warning. Rûmî says, “Allâh continually turns you from one state of feeling to another, revealing His Truths by means of opposites, so that you may have two wings; fear and hope, وَرَعْدٌ وَبَرْقٌ for the bird with one wing is unable to fly” (Mathnawî Rûmî). Then we read: وَيُرِزِّ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً “رَجْزُ الشَّيْطَانِ لَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ بِهِ وَلَذُّهَبَ عَنْكُمْ” “He sends down upon you water from clouds that He might thereby purify you and remove from you the scour of satan, that He might thereby strengthen your hearts and make your feet firm and strong” (8:11) and again, وَاللَّهُ أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَحْيَا بِهِ “It is Allâh Who sends down water from above and with it He gives life to the earth after its death. Surely there is a sign in this for the people who would listen” (16:66; 2:164; 6:6; 16:10).

“Heavy downpour” (صَبَبٌ مِنْ السَّمَاءِ) also refers to the heaviest of Revelations, namely the Holy Qur’ân. Just as lightning and thunder bring messages of hope and fear, so this Divine Revelation, in the form of Holy Qur’ân, came to people with dual tidings. However, many refused to hear either message. They block their ears both physically and spiritually and refuse to listen. The physical analogy is the action of putting the fingers in the ears, which does not protect them in a thunderstorm because lightning can still strike them.

يَكَادُ الْبَرْقُ يَخْطُفُ أَبْصَارَهُمْ ۖ كُلَّمَا أَضَاءَ لَهُمْ مَّشَوْا فِيهِ وَإِذَا أَظْلَمَ عَلَيْهِمْ قَامُوا ۗ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَذَهَبَ بِسَمْعِهِمْ وَأَبْصَارِهِمْ

2:20 “Taking away the hearing and their sight” means to keep one in ignorance. As the sight and hearing are the means of attaining knowledge, so their taking away results in ignorance. Commenting on this verse, Rûmî says, “Lack of knowledge cannot discern; it mistakes a flash of lightning for the sun. This lightning is transient. Without (mental) clarity, you will not know the transient from the permanent. Regard this transient lightning as something which takes away the sight and regard the eternal light as a Helper” (*Mathnawî Rûmî*).

يَأَيُّهَا النَّاسُ أَعْبُدُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقَوْنَ

2:21 After mentioning the three groups of people: the group of believers on whom Allâh bestows His blessings (Mun‘im ‘alaih مُنْعِمٌ عَلَيْهِم), the group that displeases Allâh (Maghdzûb مُغْضوب), and the group of hypocrites who have gone astray (Dzâllîn ضالّين) and who let other people go astray from the path of righteousness.

Allâh then addresses humankind as a whole: “يَأَيُّهَا النَّاسُ أَعْبُدُوا أَنْهَاكُمْ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقَوْنَ” O People! Worship your Lord.” This is the first commandment in the Holy Qur’ân. It is addressed to all, not only to the believers, to Arabs or to any single nation. The command is to “submit” (A‘budû) to the One Who created the heavens and the earth and provided the means of sustenance of the living, and non-living.” It is in obedience to this command that a Muslim proclaims إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ Iyyâka na‘budu - “You alone do we worship” in his five ritual Prayers when he stands before his Lord with folded hands.

A‘budû is derived from ‘abada and means to serve, adore, obey, venerate, submit, devote, or accept the impression of a thing. Its real meaning is to impress Divine Attributes (Lisân, Tâj, Râghib). According to Ibn ‘Abbâs the meaning of this commanding word

A ‘budû - أَعْبُدُوا’ “Serve [Me]!” is in the sense of “Know [Me]!” It also means, “Be lowly towards Me!” No being can be lowly towards another unless the first knows the second. Therefore, it is necessary to know Allâh and to be aware that He is the possessor of All-Mightiness before whom all the mighty are to be lowly. Ibn ‘Abbâs in his explanation of the word ‘abd عبد expressed his opinion by emphasizing the meaning of knowledge and of knowing. Alî bin Abi Talib(rz) transmitted the following Hadîth-i-Qudsî: “Those who place their hope in any other than Me have not truly known Me. Those who have not known Me have not truly worshiped Me. Those who have not worshipped Me encounter My displeasure”.

‘Ibâdah عبادة is worship. The significance of worship is to subject oneself to a rigorous spiritual discipline and to apply all innate powers and capacities to the fullest in perfect harmony with, and in obedience to the Divine commandments. In this way, a person is able to assimilate Attributes of similitudes of Allâh and is capable of manifesting them in his own being. The purpose of the creation of all rational beings is their cognition of the existence of their Creator and their conscious willingness to conform their own existence to His Will and Plan. It is the two-fold concept of cognition and willingness that gives the deeper meaning to what the Holy Qur’ân describes as ‘Ibâdah - worship.

The call for worship, *A ‘budû* أَعْبُدُوا, does not arise from any supposed need on the part of the Creator Who is Self-Sufficient and Infinite in His power, but is designed to be an instrument for the inner development of the worshipper with the aim of achieving *taqwâ* تقوى (cf. 2:2). If we worship and serve Him we do so for our own good (17:7). The Qur’ânic concept of worship must not be confused with what is in vogue among other religions in their religious ceremonies: it is free of all ascriptions. The Qur’ân confirms that Allâh needs no glory, praise, or thanksgiving (17:15; 31:12).

The Holy Qur'ân summarizes the object of worship in one sentence: صِبْغَةُ اللَّهِ that is, "Imbue yourself with the Divine Attributes" (2:138). The Holy Book informs us of some of Allâh's Attributes, (though they are numberless); our duty is to understand them and to imbue them into our character (7:180). Mentioning certain Holy Names (Ismâ al-Husnâ) in our Prayers is equivalent to constructing a sacred mould in which to form our own character. The true worship is the fulfilment of the requirements of those names and Attributes of Allâh that can be shared with Him; His Attributes of resemblance. We are taught to seek refuge in Allâh by reflecting on His Attributes in the words of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) when he said, "I seek refuge and protection in You O Lord! From You."

There is nothing lower than the state of servitude ('Abûdiyyat) of a servant of Allâh ('Âbid) before Allâh, and the state of servitude ('Abûdiyyat) in its true station is to assume His Attributes. However, this does not mean that Allâh lowers Himself to the state of the servant ('Âbid). The relationship of a person in the state of servitude ('Abûdiyyat) before Allâh is like a shadow of a person before a light. The closer he moves towards the light, the greater is the shadow. The more the person moves away from the light, the smaller his shadow becomes, and if a person moves away from Allâh, he leaves aside those Attributes of Allâh that he should have adopted.

When one enters into the state of servitude with His shared Attributes, He manifests in His Divine Theophany (*Jalâl*) - His visible manifestation, to a human being with the same shared attributes. In this state of servitude, the servant comes to know the mystery of his relationship to Him. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) assures us of this when he says that through implicit worship ('Ibâdat), our God becomes our limbs with which we walk, and ears with which we hear, and our tongues with which we speak, and our eyes with which we see. This is an astonishing relationship with Allâh, and there are very few who are able to experience it. Worship is realized when we say: قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِي

- وَتُسْكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ "My Prayer and my sacrifice and my living and my dying are all for the sake of Allâh, the Lord of the Worlds". (6:162) Thus our eating, sleeping, walking, sitting, standing, speaking, seeing, and hearing, in short—all our actions are a kind of worship if we perform them according to the Divine Will. The commandment أَعْدُوا رَبَّكُمْ "Serve your Lord" is the fundamental objective of our creation (51:56). In 19:36 we read that Jesus said, وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُوهُ ﴿٣٦﴾ “Surely, Allâh is my Lord and your Lord. So worship Him” - that is, lower yourself to the state of servanthood before Him and not me. As “Lord”, Jesus may see creation as making demands on him, which he is unable to answer. But as servant, he encompasses the Great Reality. So, be the servant of the Lord.

الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ قِرَاشًا وَالسَّمَاءَ بُنَاءً وَأَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجَ بِهِ مِنَ النَّمَرَاتِ رِزْقًا لَكُمْ ۖ فَلَا تَجْعَلُوا لِلَّهِ أَنْذَادًا وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

2:22 The word **al-Aradz** الأرض is used in the Holy Qur'ân 462 times and has broad range of meanings (cf. 14:48; 50:4; 50:7; 50:44; 39:67-69; 13:3). It is used to signify land (cf. 30:9; 4:97; 40:21), the city (cf. 12:21), the country (cf. 5:21; 7:37;), the ground (cf. 11:44; 13:17), something which brings forth herbs abundantly (cf. 71:17; 10:24; 32:27), something that rotates, or any celestial body (51:48; 13:15; 39:63; 79:30). In the verse 2:64 "Surely in the creation of the heavens and earth, and the alternation of day and night, there are signs for people with pure and clear understanding" is a reference to the revolving earth that causes our perceptions of day and night.

As regards the word **Samâ'** سماء Râghib writes, “Every height is a samâ' in relation to what is beneath it”. The orbit of a planet is also called its *samâ'* (cf. 23:17). The Holy Qur'ân sometimes uses the singular form, *sama'*, as in this verse, and sometimes the plural form *samawât* سماوات to signify different aspects of the Divine creation (cf. 67:3-5). **Bina'** بناء is an edifice for protection, a structure, roof, canopy, or any production or piece of work consisting of parts joined

together in some definite manner (Tâj). Heaven is called a structure in reference to the order that prevails among heavenly bodies, as they are joined together in a definite manner. As a building or a roof is a source of protection, similarly the nearest parts of the universe are a protection for our planet, as we are told, وَحَفْظًا مِّن كُلِّ شَيْطَانٍ مَّارِدٍ “We (have placed therein in the nearest heaven) effective safeguards” (cf. 37:6-10).

By addressing humanity as a whole, this verse indicates that the message of the Holy Qur’ân is not exclusively for any section of race, colour, or country. Instead, humanity is a single family living in one house; our earth, and under one roof; our sky. While referring to the perfection of the physical world, attention is drawn to the need of perfection in the spiritual world. Human beings are gifted with reason and intellect, but reason and intellect have limitations; they make the existence of the Supreme Creator subject to guesswork. The statement ﴿وَأَنزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً﴾ “and [He] caused water to pour down from heaven” is an allusion to Divine Revelation. It is only through His Self-Disclosure that we know with certainty the existence of that Supreme Being Who is the origin of all that we receive and perceive what we cannot perceive. His Self-Disclosure in the form of Revelation is the only source of knowledge about Him and the only proof of His existence.

Andâd انداد are compeers or rivals. The compeers of Allâh may be idols in temples, statues, human beings raised to the status of divinity or semi-divinity and saints. They can be shrines of the holy or self-declared holy, monuments or acts which are made the object of adoration, superstitions, racial pride, the craving and obsession for more wealth leading to the neglect of duties towards Allâh and his creatures. The compeers are also any object of adoration to which some or all of Gods qualities are ascribed, putting trust in self-proclaimed spiritual leaders, or asking for help and salvation from the dead or supplicating at their graves. (Tâj, Lisân).

وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِّمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِّنْ مِّثْلِهِ
وَأَذْعُوا شَهِادَاءِكُمْ مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

2:23 Here, in this verse, “Produce a single Sûrah like the one” فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ is the most stimulating challenge ever made to any people or any nation in history. The Holy Qur’ân is a continuing miracle in multiple ways: the Book provides answers to all innate questions that weigh on us such as the origin of the human being and its real nature (fitrat); where we go after death; what is good and what is evil; the nature of Salvation (Fallâh) and how it can be achieved and the reality of life after death. All of this and more besides are dealt with in this Book. It offers guidance on the structure of an ideal society, social life, financial laws, and spiritual laws that cannot be inferred with intellect and logic alone. The Book also corrects the corrupted teachings of previously revealed Scriptures and informs us about events of the future. This Book surpasses any other Book claiming to be of Divine origin. Its supreme elegance of style and its sublime language are unparalleled and no other book can match them. All these aspects are distinct and separate one from another, and all of them stand for all time with none of them superseding or cancelling out the other. The subject of the incomparable excellence of the Qur’ân is contained in 52:34; 17:88; 11:13; 10:38. وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِّمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِّنْ مِّثْلِهِ

فَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلُوا وَلَنْ تَفْعَلُوا فَأَتَقْرُبُوا إِلَيْنَا وَقُوْدُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ
أُعِدْتُ لِلْكَافِرِينَ

2:24 “And never shall you do” وَلَنْ تَفْعَلُوا is another challenge. Al-Hijârah الحجارة is derived from hajara حجّر and means to deprive, harden, hide, resist, forbid, prevent, or prohibit access. Al-Hijârah literally refers to the stones and rocks. It also refers to people who try to hide Truth, prevent people from worshipping, and who are hard hearted like stones (Lisân). Concerning the Jews of the time of Jesus,

the Holy Qur'ân says: "Then your hearts hardened after that, so that they were [hard] like stones (rocks) or harder still; for there are rocks out of which streams come gushing, and there are some others out of which water comes forth when they split asunder" (2:74).

The verse informs us about two classes of the inmates of Hell, ordinary disbelievers (الْجَاهَّارُونَ) and stone-hearted persons (النَّاسُ) who have no love for God. Stones are also the objects to which people turn for worship, the powerlessness and inefficacy of the stones finding a symbolic equivalence in their lifelessness.

وَبَشَّرَ اللَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا
الْأَنْهَارُ كُلُّمَا رُزِقُوا مِنْهَا مِنْ شَرَبَةً رِزْفًا ۝ قَالُوا هَذَا الَّذِي رُزِقْنَا مِنْ
قَبْلٍ ۝ وَأُتُوا بِهِ مُتَشَبِّهًاتٍ ۝ وَلَهُمْ فِيهَا أَرْوَاحٌ مُطَهَّرَةٌ ۝ وَهُمْ فِيهَا خَلِدونٌ

2:25 Jannât جنّات are gardens. The word is derived from janna, meaning something which is concealed, covered, wrapped or hidden. Jannât has been used in the Holy Qur'ân in many different senses. Some commentators apply this word to countries with abundant water. In another sense, Jannât are things that were promised but are still hidden to our eyes. "This is the same we were given before" هَذَا الَّذِي رُزِقْنَا مِنْ قَبْلٍ also refers to what was promised to us before our physical death. It also signifies that the fruits of Paradise granted to people in the Hereafter will be given corresponding to their deeds in this life. "Gardens from beneath which the streams flow" is the ever-recurring description of Paradise. Metaphorically, the word **Nahar** نهر symbolises abundance, good deeds, faith, knowledge, good character, gardens, or symbolic "milk and honey". Some commentators apply this word to describe knowledge of the Holy Qur'ân (Tatîr al-Anâm).

The descriptions of Paradise as given in the Holy Qur'ân are metaphors (e.g. 13:35; 47:15; 55:46-78 56:15-38; 88:8-16). It is beyond the human mind to comprehend its real nature. فَلَا تَعْلَمُ نَفْسٌ مَا

أَخْفِي لَهُم مِّنْ فُرَةٍ أَعْيُنٍ جَزَاءً بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ“ - No soul knows what comfort lies hidden for him of a joy to the eyes as a reward for their righteous deeds”(32:17). The Holy Prophet (pbuh) said, “No eye has seen it nor has any ear heard of it nor can the imagination of human beings conceive of it” (Bukhârî). While describing the blessings of Paradise, the Holy Qur’ân uses the names of objects generally looked upon as good in this world (e.g. 13:35; 47:15; 55:46-78 56:15-38; 88:8-16), though in the Hereafter, they will be there in similar, albeit different forms. The words “This is the same we were given before,” tells us as much. The life in the Hereafter will be similar but different to the life that we know on earth.

Azwâj (plural) is derived from *zâja* زاج meaning to marry a person, couple a thing, pair, or mingle either of the two components. It can refer to male or female, or an object and its shadow (cf. 13:23).

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَسْتَحِي أَن يَضْرِبَ مَثَلًا مَا بَعْوَذَةً فَمَا فَوْقَهَا حَقًا فَمَا لَدُنَّهَا حَقًا إِنَّمَا أَنَّمَا الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَيَقُولُونَ مَادَا أَرَادَ اللَّهُ بِهَا مَثَلًا يُضْلِلُ بِهِ كَثِيرًا وَيَهْدِي بِهِ كَثِيرًا وَمَا يُضْلِلُ بِهِ إِلَّا الْفَاسِقِينَ

2:26 Fawq فوق means both greater and smaller (Râghib). Allâh cites the parable of a gnat to point out the weakness of false deities (cf. 22:73; 29:41). Such metaphors and similes express depth of meaning that cannot be adequately expressed otherwise. The symbol of the gnat is used because this insect is considered by the Arabs to be very weak and helpless. The reference to a gnat immediately after the description of Paradise is a figure of speech, comparing the earthly life with what is yet to come. It is also meant to say that the words used for Paradise in the previous verse may be as inadequate and insignificant as a gnat, yet the believers understand them; the more they reflect on this parable, the more they receive Divine light. Disbelievers, on the other

hand, lack an understanding of this simile, and, because they do not understand, they find fault.

The expression “*Yadzilla bi-hî kathîrah*” - يُضِلُّ بِهِ كَثِيرًا “Many does He adjudge to be erring” can also mean that He found them to have gone astray (*Kashshaf*). The Arabic expression *adzalla ni saddiqî* means, “my friend pronounced me to be in error” and not that “my friend misguided me or led me astray” (*Râghib, Tâj*). When the Holy Prophet (pbuh) came to a certain people, he found them to have gone astray (*adzallâ-hum*); it does not mean that it was he, the Holy Prophet (pbuh), who misguided them. So it is not Allâh Who misleads, but a given human beings *nafs al-Ammârah* (- the self that incites to evil; cf. 28:15; 6:119).

الَّذِينَ يَنْقُضُونَ عَهْدَ اللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مِيثَاقِهِ وَيَقْطَعُونَ مَا أَمَرَ اللَّهُ بِهِ أَنْ يُوصَلَ
وَيُفْسِدُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْخَلِيلُونَ

2:27 ‘Ahad عَهْد is a covenant. The covenant mentioned here is the human beings moral obligation to use his inborn faculties. The omission of any reference to a particular covenant in this verse suggests that the covenant stands for something that is rooted in human nature. That human nature bears witness to the existence of a Creator is referred to in 2:29. In the next verse He says, كُنْتُمْ أَمْوَاتًا فَأَحْيَيْنَاهُنَّ - “You were dead; He raised you to life”. For this purpose, and in conformation to this covenant, He sent series of Prophets to bring the spiritually dead to life (cf. 3:81; 7:172). However, few believed, but many refused and created discord, enmity, and disorder.

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ أَسْتَوَى إِلَى السَّمَاءِ فَسَوَّهُنَّ
سَبْعَ سَمَوَاتٍ

2:29 Saba‘a Samâwât سَبْعَ سَمَوَاتٍ is an idiomatic expression which, when literally translated, means seven heavens. As part of Arabic idioms, the number seven is used to express a concept like several or

many and not usually an exact number seven (Lisân, Tâj). Hence, seven heavens signify many heavens. The verse presented uses the plural form of “heaven” to express different aspects of the cosmic creation (cf. 67:3-5). The plural form has different significances than the singular form. Seven heavens can signify seven types of stars or many types of stars, seven dimensions, or seven layers of rolled universes (cf. 2:29; 23:86; 39:67; 65:12; 71:15). The orbit of a planet is also called its heaven (cf. 23:17), thus, the phrase فَسَوَّهُنَّ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ expresses many cosmic aspects in their perfection.

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ أَتَيْ جَاعِلٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً ۝ قَالُوا أَتَجْعَلُ فِيهَا مِنْ يُفْسِدُ فِيهَا وَيَسْفِكُ الدَّمَاءَ وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُنَادِسُ لَكَ ۝ قَالَ إِنَّا أَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

2:30 Qâla - قال “He said” is the use of figurative speech to describe an event or a state of affairs without there being any actual speech or dialogue in any human language. This linguistic device may allow even inanimate objects to “speak” as in the following expression:

إِمَلَاءُ الْحَوْضِ قَالَ قَطْنِي

‘When the tank was full, it said stop!’

It may also be used to convey that which is not spoken in words, but in motions or actions, or in situations in which logical argument is to be presented. A poet writes:

قُلْتُ لَهُ الْعَيْنَانِ سَمِعًا وَ طَاعَةً

‘Her two eyes said: We listen and we obey’.

These examples of Arabic idiom show, any translation of this word into a language other than Arabic must be done according to the context and the subject matter (cf. 15:36; 112:1; 113:1; 114:1). Qâla as used in this and the other indicated verses is not an actual conversation between Allâh and the Angels or Iblîs, but an indication

of a state of affairs, which is to be brought into execution. *Qâla* قَالَ is not used here in the same sense as *takallamâ* تَكَلُّمًا that means discourse. The words *qâla*, *fa ‘ala* فَعَلَ and *dzaraba* ضَرَبَ are very close to each other in their meanings and can often be substituted for one another depending upon the situation (Lisân, Tâj). For example, in 4:34, the verb *dzaraba* used in connection with disobedient women could be replaced by *qâla*. *Qul* قُلْ (Say!) on the other hand stand for command as in chapters 112, 113, and 114).

The usual translation of the word **Malâik** ملائكة is “angels”. *Malâik* are part of the Divine system through which Allâh executes His Will and Command, both in the worlds of particles and non-particles. We may imagine them as carriers and executors of Divine commands. They are message bearers and bringers of Divine Revelation (41:30). They descend upon the faithful giving them joyful news (41:30). In the physical world, they are the medium that forms a link between the chain of the laws in nature, and in the spiritual world, they form a link between Allâh and human beings (cf. 2:97). The existence of the *Malâik* as a medium of revelation has been recognized by righteous people in all ages and it is a part of Muslim Faith (2:177; 2:285).

Khalifah خليفة is a successor, vice regent, someone who inherits, who comes after or who stands in the place of someone who precedes him (Tâj; Lane). According to Ibn Mas‘ûd and Ibn ‘Abbâs , in Qur’ânic terminology the *khalifah* is the one who judges and rules under Allâh’s command (cf. 38:26; Ibn Jarîr). We read in verse 38:26 يَا دَاوُودُ - إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاكَ خَلِيفَةً فِي الْأَرْضِ “O David! We have made you (Our) vice regent (*khalifah*) in this land” (38:26); that is, We will make you inherit this land or We will make you rule this land. Similarly, we read with reference to those who followed the destroyed generations: لَمْ يَأْتُوكُمْ مِّنْ بَعْدِهِمْ - جَعَلْنَاكُمْ خَلِيفَاتٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ “Then We made you inherit the land (*khalifah*)”; that is We made you ruler over that land (10:14). About the followers of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), we read, وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ - وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَيُسْتَخْلَفُوهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كَمَا اسْتَخْلَفَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ “Allâh has

promised those of you who believe and do deeds of righteousness that He will make them successors (khalîfah; vouchsafed with both spiritual and temporal leadership) on the earth as He made successors from among their predecessors” (24:55). Therefore, in 2:30, the Holy Qur’ân is definitely not referring to the first human being on the earth. Adam is the khalîfah - the vice regent of God who has the power of initiative, choice and decision, and still whose independent actions are under the control of Divine Will. It is in this sense that Allâh makes Adam—the prototype of the human race— inheritor of the earth (cf. 7:10-11). The Angels, as we are told, were aware only of the darker side of animate creation, namely the “shedding of blood”, and not of the high rank that this new creation was destined to hold on earth. They were also unaware that faculties would be given to a human being, which would enable him to imbue the Attributes of Allâh (as the next verse وَعْلَمَ إِذَا مَا أَنْتُمْ informs us). Because of these potentialities, Adam could claim to be Allâh’s khalîfah. إِنَّمَا أَنْتُمْ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ - “I know that which you do not know,” indicates the ignorance of the Angels in this regard. The Angels are not given the faculties that would allow them to object to Allâh’s purpose, nor can they claim any superiority over Allâh’s creation; this is the significance of their reply: وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَسِّنَ لَكَ - “While we already glorify You with Your true praise and extol Your holiness.”

وَعَلِمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا ثُمَّ عَرَضَهُمْ عَلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ فَقَالَ أَنْبِيُونِي بِاسْمَاءِ هُؤُلَاءِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

2:31 Asmâ’ اسماء’ is the plural form of *ism* اسم. Ism is an expression conveying the knowledge of attributes for distinguishing them from others (Tâj). In this verse, Asmâ’ stands for the Attributes of the Real Living Deity that distinguish Him from other deities and created objects. Thus, the knowledge of Allâh’s Attributes is the only source to know Him as the only Creator. عَلِمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ “He taught Adam (His Names)” - means that the new creation called Adam, who stands here

as Allâh's vicegerent (*khalîfah*), was blessed, in contrast to other objects of Allâh's creation, with the knowledge of those Divine Attributes that helped him to know his real Deity, and after knowing Him through His Attributes, to manifest them in his own character.

Human beings needed language in order to become civilized and continue progressing. "Teaching Adam names" is also a reference to the faculty of speech and of learning. The Holy Qur'ân refers to this: "He created human being and taught him the art of intelligent and distinct speech" (55:4). It is also said that *asmâ* denotes the human beings faculty of logical definition and conceptual thinking, and capability of learning and acquiring knowledge and reasoning. Allâh's Attributes (أسماء الحسنی) are numberless (31:27), however, human being as symbolized by Adam is capable of understanding and grasping only those that are within the scope of the faculties (-*mâhiyat*) given to him.

Adam أَدَم is derived from *adama* أَدَم, which means to reconcile or be brown. In classical Arabic dictionaries *adam* stands for a human being, man, person, intelligent person, brown man, brave man, civilized person, chief, honest person, kind and polite person, a person who is created from different substances, a person in possession of different powers, one who enjoys the comforts of life, one who is by nature social, one who has heirs. Adam also stands for the whole human race and humankind. All these meanings are given to the word *adam* (Tâj, Lisân, Lane, Râghib). The Qur'ânic verse إِنَّ مِثْلَ عِيسَىٰ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ كَمْثُلَ آدَم "The likeness and case of Jesus is as the likeness and case of Adam" (3:59) is to be read and understood in the light of the above meanings, that Jesus was a human being like any human being and not God incarnated.

The Adam who lived, according to biblical tradition, about 6000 years ago is often taken to be the proper name for the first human being. The Bible tells the story of Adam and of Eve who was born of his ribs, of a snake, a tree and a fallen angel. This story has poisoned the minds of

many Muslims. The Holy Qur'ân does not affirm this story nor does it affirm that someone called Adam was the first human being, or that there was no creation before him. Nowhere in Qur'ân is it stated that Adam was the first Prophet, though he is still considered as such by many Muslims. The word *khalîfah* as used for *Adam* in the foregoing verse (2:30) is a reference to the fact that modern human race is the successor of an older one. *Khalîfah* are not Prophets. Abû Bakr^(rz) was not a Prophet, neither 'Umar^(rz), 'Alî^(rz) or 'Uthmân^(rz).

Human evolution was the evolutionary process leading up to the appearance of modern humans. It began with the last common ancestor and the emergence of *Homo sapiens*. Anatomically modern humans evolved from archaic *Homo sapiens* about 200,000 years ago. The transition to behavioral modernity with the development of symbolic culture, language, and specialized lithic technology happened around 50,000 years ago, and according to many anthropologists even earlier.

Ibn 'Abbâs says there were races known as the *Jinn*, *Himm* and *Dinn* that lived before *Adam*. It is possible that he was referring to Neanderthals and other early hominids. Great Muslim scholars were of the view that there were hundreds of thousands of *Adams* (in *Rûh al-Ma'âni*). The world has passed through different cycles of creation and civilizations; *Adam* stands for the first link in such cycles and not for the very first human being in Allâh's creation. The Holy Qur'ân neither follows the Bible in holding that the world began with the birth of Adam and Eve nor does it claim that all members of humankind, who are now found in different parts of the world, are the progeny of the self-same Adam, or that all the races which lived before this Adam were entirely swept away before he was born. Taken literally the Biblical story implies that all of Adam and Eves grandchildren would be children born of a union of a daughter and a son of theirs. This is an incestuous concept of the origin of the

modern human. It is absurd and not supported by any statement in the Holy Qur'ân.

Ibn al-'Arabî, writes in his famous work *Fatûhât* that he saw in a vision, a building erected hundreds and thousands of years ago. Such a vision could indicate that there was a kind of civilization on this earth hundreds and thousands years ago. Ibn 'Arabî writes further that once, in a vision, he was performing a circuit around the Ka'bâh . In his vision, he saw himself with a different kind of people who were also performing the circuit. "I inquired of one of them, Who are you? He said, Of your old ancestors. How long is it since they died? I asked him. The man replied, More than forty thousand years. But this period is much more than that which separates us from Adam, said I. The man replied, Of which Adam are you speaking? About that Adam, who is nearest to you or of some other Adam?" In addition to this, Ibn 'Arabî writes that he once saw in a vision the Prophet Enoch (Idrîs) and asked him if his own vision about the Adam was true. Enoch replied that the information he received in his vision was true. "Then I recollect the saying of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) to the effect that Allâh had brought into being no less than a hundred thousand Adams and between each and every Adam there is a period of seventeen thousand years. Then I said to myself, Perhaps these people who are said to be the ancestors of mine were of the previous Adams." (*Fatûhât al-Makkîyyah, Bâb Hadîs al-Dunyâ* 3/607). Archaeological discoveries have indeed brought to light people similar to us, who inhabited this earth many thousands of years ago. The notion that human beings originated only in the last few thousand years from a single man called Adam comes from the genealogies of the Old Testament.

In 7:10-11, while addressing humankind, Allâh says, "We have indeed established you on the earth (giving you power thereon) and provided for you thereon (various) means of subsistence. How little thanks you give. We did determine you, then We gave you shape, then said to the

angels, Make submission for Adam, so they all submitted.” These words leave no doubt that here the reference is to the human race. Human beings were already living on this earth, and that this was revealed after the creation of human beings, and not just to a single Adam. When angels received this command, it was in reference to the species. In addition to this, the shedding of blood as referred to in the verse 2:30 could not be the work of one person; the reference is to the shedding of blood by human beings in general. In a later statement (in the verse 2:38), “قُلْنَا اهْبِطُوا مِنْهَا جَمِيعًا” “Go forth from this state, all of you”, there is a transition of address from the singular number to the plural. It indicates that the lesson taught here relates to the human race as a whole. The word Adam in this verse is therefore used to refer to the prototype of all humankind (cf. 2:31; 7:16; 7:24) and the word *khalîfah* stands for that perfect human (- *insân-i-kâmil*) who is the recipient of Divine Revelation.

If we reflect on many different verses in the Holy Qur’ân dealing with *Adam*, we find that the word *Adam* has broad meanings depending upon the relationship of the verses with connecting verses. We find that it stands for the human being who is the crowning object and the culmination of all creation, and whose own creation became complete after a long process of gradual development and evolution (17:70) as indicated by the very first Divine Attribute of *Rabb al-Âlamîn* رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ, “the Evolver from the crudest form to perfection and Sustainer of all the worlds”(1:1). The words “When I have made him perfect and breathed into him my Spirit (سَوَّيْتُهُ وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِنْ رُّوحِي) (15:29) and the verses 32:9; 18:7; 91:7, tell us that “Adam” stands for that “single soul” that single spiritual essence from which humankind was created. God endowed his best creation (the human being) with faculties of speech and intellect (55:2-3). By breathing into him of His own spirit (32:9; 15:29; 18:37; 91:7) God made him capable of receiving the Divine Revelation (91:8). Then He taught the human being through His Revelations what he knew not (96:5).

On the Origin of Human Beings: The Holy Qur’ân gives a different story of creation to the one we read in the Bible. In the Holy Qur’ân, the creation of human being is summarized in the following words:

“Recall the time when your Lord said to the angels, I am going to create a human being from dry ringing clay from black mud, moulded into shape [*salsâl min hamâ’ masnûn* صَلْصَالٍ مِّنْ حَمَّاً مَّسْتُونٍ]. So when I have shaped him in perfection, and have breathed My Spirit into him, fall you down in submission to him (15:26, 28)”.

The story of the origin of humankind is scattered throughout the Holy Qur’ân. We can begin it with the Qur’ânic statement: هل أَتَى عَلَى الْإِنْسَانِ “جِنْ مِنَ الدَّهْرِ لَمْ يَكُنْ شَيْئًا مَّذْكُورًا” “There did pass over a human being a while of a long space of time when he was not a thing worth mentioning” (76:1). This was our state of non-existence. Like the cosmos, the emergence of human beings begins from the smallest particles called diffused chaotic scattered dust -*Turâb* (22:5; 30:20; 35:11; 40:67; 18:37). The Holy Qur’ân mentions many intermediate stages in the human evolution starting from its crudest stage of scattered dust. The scattered dust was brought together to form *tîn* or dry clay (32:7; 38:71). Thereafter سُلَالَةٌ مِّنْ طِينٍ was a stage of an extract from clay - *sulâlat min tîn* (23:12) and by adding water to it a “clay that sticks together” (- *tîn al-idzab*; طِينٌ لَا زِبٌ 37:11). We find several verses that refer to the origin of life from water (24:45) – a fact that was scientifically verified in modern times. The origin of life from water includes human being, which is confirmed by the Holy Qur’ân: “It is He Who created the human being from water (25:54) هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ مِنَ الْمَاءِ بَشَرًا”. This prerequisite was already in place, for He used this water in the creation of humankind

In the process of creation there were stages of *sulâlat min mâ muhîn* – سُلَالَةٌ مِّنْ مَاءٍ مَّهِينٍ extract derived from clay and water (32:8), of dry ringing clay mixed with water and formed black mud, which was then moulded into a shape (*salsâl min hamâ’ masnûn* صَلْصَالٍ مِّنْ حَمَّاً مَّسْتُونٍ

15:26). Then there is an insignificant fluid (*mâ muhîn* مَاءٌ مُّهِينٌ), which is deposited in a safe place until an appointed time (77:20-21). *Mâ muhîn* is not to be confused with human sperm, which is called يَرِيدُ فِي الْخُلُقِ, (76:2; 18:37). Allâh says in 35:1: نُطْفَةٌ أَمْشَاجٌ - ما يَشَاءُ ‘He adds to his creation constantly as He wants.’ (See also 41:9-12; 70:9, 73:14, 77:8-9, 35:16). This is the short description of the origin of various forms of life and humankind; from scattered dust through dry ringing clay, from black mud moulded into shape. About this evolution, we read in verse 56:62, وَلَقَدْ عِلِّمْنَا النَّسَاءَ الْأُولَئِي فَلَوْلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ, ‘You know the first (evolution) of the intended creation, why dont you then reflect?’

‘Aradza-hum عَرَضَهُم is a compound of ‘*aradza* عَرَضَ and *hum* هُمْ, translated as “He presented them”. In the Arabic idiom, the form *hum* is used only for rational beings. The use of the pronoun *hum* indicates that the objects were rational living things. The use of the word *Aradza-hum* tells us that Allâh presented to the Angels a highly rational being who was to be the manifestation of a number of His Attributes, the perfect human being (- *insân-i-kâmil*). The creation of such a perfect human being who can be imbued with Divine Attributes was a refutation of the concern of Angels when they said, “Will You create therein beings who will cause disorder on the earth and shed blood?” أَتَبْغَلُ فِيهَا مَنْ يُقْسِدُ فِيهَا وَيَسْفِكُ الدَّمَاءَ (2:30). This question was justified because some people will recognize Allâh’s vicegerent, accept him, follow him, while others will disagree with him, and reject him, causing discord, friction and bloodshed between the two groups. Allâh meant that such a perfect Adam could not initiate disorder and shed blood. This becomes clearer in the following verse 2:33 when Allâh says, قَالَ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ, ‘Did I not tell you that I know the hidden realities of the heavens and the earth?’ In other words, Allâh did not give this knowledge to the Angels.

The word **kullahâ** كُلُّهَا used here does not imply absolute totality or all in its perfection, because the absolute knowledge is the Attribute of

Allâh alone. For this is the word *al-‘Alîm* الْعَلِيمُ, mentioned in the next verse. *Kullahâ* كُلَّهَا simply means all that was necessary (cf. 6:44; 27:16; 28:57).

قَالُوا سُبْحَانَكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا إِلَّا مَا عَلِمْنَا ۖ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ

2:32 The angels have their limitations. They confess that they cannot reflect on Allâh’s Attributes in the way human beings are capable of doing. They can reflect only such of Allâh’s Attributes as He in His eternal wisdom had given them the power. Angels glorify and sanctify the Great Reality with Names taught to them and have no knowledge of the comprehensiveness of the Divine Attributes taught to the perfect human being (- *insân-i-kâmil*) who is the recipient of Divine Revelation, nor they are capable to sanctify Him with the sanctification human being is capable of.

قَالَ يَآءَادُمُ أَنِّي بِأَسْمَائِهِمْ ۖ فَلَمَّا آتَيْنَاهُمْ بِأَسْمَائِهِمْ قَالَ اللَّهُ أَفْلَى لَكُمْ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ
غَيْبُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَأَعْلَمُ مَا تُبَدِّونَ وَمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْثُمُونَ

2:33 “I know what you reveal and what you have been concealing” وَأَعْلَمُ مَا تُبَدِّونَ وَمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْثُمُونَ means that Allâh knows which of His Attributes the angels were not capable of manifesting. The word **Taktamûn** تَكْثُمُونَ derived from *katma* - “concealing”, and is used to describe a state of affairs without there being any attempt or desire on ones part to conceal or suppress anything; such a state may merely be the result of circumstances or the outcome of nature (Tâj). Adam is aware of Divine Attributes unknown to Angels.

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ أَبَى وَاسْتَكْبَرَ وَكَانَ مِنَ
الْكَافِرِينَ

2:34 **Sajadû** سَجَدُوا is used here in the sense of obedience and submission, and not in the sense of prostration. Thus, the word means that the angels were ordered to assist Adam (who stands for human

beings in general) in his mission. Sajadû li-Adama does not mean fall prostrate before Adam. The Qur'ân definitely says: لَا تَسْجُدُوا لِلّٰهِمَّ وَلَا لِلّٰهِمَّ وَلَا سُبْحٰنَ الَّذِي خَلَقَهُنَّ - “Pay no homage [or prostrate] to the sun or the moon, rather pay homage only to [or fall prostrate only before] Allâh who created them” (41:37). Therefore, prostration before Adam is opposed to the Divine Will. The Qur'ânic words are not sajadu adam—prostrate before Adam but Sajadu li-Adam that is pay homage to the humankind, as the word “Adam” throughout this section (2:30-33) stands for human beings and not to a particular man. The verse implies that a human being has superiority over the angels, which are the guardians and controlling powers of the forces of nature, and that by his capacity of acquiring knowledge a human being can subsequently harness the forces of nature.

A human being has two conquests to make in its life: the conquest of the forces of nature, and the conquest of the part of his own self that incites him to evil. He may conquer the forces of nature through his intellect, but he experiences many difficulties in conquering his own evil tendencies and desires. Allâh, in His infinite wisdom, has provided a good start by giving him a good and pure nature (30:30). As the Holy Prophet (pbuh) has said, "Every child is born with a good nature" (Bukhârî). Allâh's command to the angels was to serve humanity and inspire their hearts to virtue. Allâh raised his Prophets and sent down His Revelations through the agency of angels for the guidance of humanity. Thus, if a human, being because of his freedom of choice and lack of guidance goes astray, he may still be called back to the right path. It is because of his free will that a human being is entitled to reward for his good deeds or punished for sins.

The Divine instruction in the verses 2:32-33 and the verses that follow (2:34-37) is one way Allâh instructs His most trusted servants, His representative (- khalifah). With these verses Allâh expounds to us so that we may learn from it the proper attitude towards Him. These verses are not a narration of a fictitious man called Adam.

Illa إلا means except, exception, to the exclusion of, or to be left out. There is an exception within the same class and species, and there is an exception because of a different class or species. The Arabic language distinguishes between two types of exceptions. For the first category of exception, the Holy Qur'ân uses the word *ghair* غير (cf. 6:46; 4:24; 35:3; 10:15), which is an exception within the same class. **Illa** إلا refers to an exception in which the object of exception belongs to a different class or species (2:163; 2:255; 9:10). This is the case in the verse, "We said to the angels, Make obeisance to Adam. So they all obeyed, except Iblîs". Here, in the words *fa-Sajadû illa Iblîs* فَسَجُّوْا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ the preposition **Illa** إلا is used, describing an being as exceptional because it does not belong to the same class, namely that of angels. It was Iblîs إِبْلِيس who was an exception, and he belonged to a different class of beings called *Jinn* جِن (18:5; for the discussion on Jinn see 15:27; 72:1).

Iblîs is derived from *balasa* بلسَ or *ablas* أَبْلَسَ, which means to be overcome with grief, desperate, struck dumb with despair, remain disheartened and gloomy, stupefied or speechless. An Iblîs symbolizes the one who despairs, a person in whom good and virtue have decreased, who is broken in spirit, mournful, perplexed and unable to see his way, who has become silent on account of grief or despair, who was cut short or silenced in argument, who is unable to continue his journey, who was prevented from attaining his wish or a person of desperate character. Metaphorically, the term Iblîs stands for those human beings who behave proudly, arrogantly, and disobey the Divine Commandments.

Iblîs has been described in 2:34 as having disobeyed a Divine Command (cf. 18:50), while the angels have been described as ever submissive and obedient (16:49; 66:6). His rebellion is repeatedly stressed in the Holy Qur'ân. Hence, Iblîs could not be an angel. Indeed, the theory of the fallen angel is contrary to the Qur'ânic teachings (Lisân; Lane; Tâj; Zamakhsharî; Râghib). The Holy Qur'ân

makes it clear that, there is a difference in the meanings of Iblîs and Satan (for the discussion on Satan, see 2:36).

وَقُلْنَا يَآأَدَمُ أَسْكُنْ أَنْتَ وَزَوْجُكَ الْجَنَّةَ وَكُلَا مِنْهَا رَغَدًا حَيْثُ شِئْتُمَا وَلَا
تَفْرَبَا هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةِ فَنَكُونَا مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ

2:35 Jannat جَنَّةٌ is usually translated as “Paradise”; however it has a different meaning. The word used is *al-Jannah* الْجَنَّةُ that is derived from *janna* جَنَّ meaning something that is concealed, covered, wrapped or hidden. The garden spoken of in this verse was on this earth, as it was here that Adam was placed and made vice regent (2:30). It was not the Paradise to which the righteous go after death, and from which they will never be expelled (15:48). The place where human beings, symbolized by Adam dwelt was called a garden because of the fertility of its soil and abundance of the fresh green colour of its trees, and because they led there a life of comfort, as is shown by the words that follow (see also 20:117).

No tree exists in this world with the ability to make a man naked or give him knowledge of good or evil, or of immortality as is suggested by the Bible (Gn. 3.5). Many Christian scholars think that tree designated in the Bible is the Tree of Life and knowledge of life and death. The idea was that by eating from the tree, Adam and Eve became aware of their own mortality, and because they feared death, fell into strife and sin. (Gen. 2.9) Many Christians also believe that the tree was a real not a symbol. The Tree أَشْجَرَةٌ in this verse represent a symbol. The base verb of the Arabic word *shajarah* شَجَرَةٌ is *shajara* شَجَرٌ. The idiom *shajar al-amr bayna-hum* شَجَرُ الْأَمْرِ بَيْنَهُمْ means that the affair became confused and became a subject of disagreement and difference between participants: it therefore indicates a quarrel (*Fath al-Bayân; Madârik al-Tanzîl* by Ibn Taimîyah). *Shajarah* شَجَرَةٌ also signifies the stock or origin of a person, as in the expression هو من شجرة الطيبة “he is of good stock” (*Lisân, Tâj*). Similar idiom exists in

English. We might say, “He comes from good stock,” or he has a good family tree.

The Holy Qur’ân makes mention of two kinds of trees: a good tree and a bad tree (14:24-26). Pure things and pure teachings correspond to the good tree, and impure things and impure thoughts correspond to the bad tree. Thus, the word shajarah stands symbolically for evil and quarrelling, discord, fighting, and bloodshed. Here the human beings are warned against these behaviors. This was the tree of evil, which Adam was forbidden to approach. The verse is a reflection of real human nature. Allâh said that the result of approaching the “prohibited tree” of discord would be that human beings would lose moral rectitude, thereby losing their paradisiac state of a life in safety and comfort. Another meaning is that Adam was warned about evil, and the limits that Allâh had set on a human beings desires and actions; limits beyond which he should not go.

فَأَزَّلْهُمَا الشَّيْطَانُ عَنْهَا فَأَخْرَجَهُمَا مِمَّا كَانَا فِيهِ ۝ وَقُلْنَا أَهْبِطُوا بَعْضُكُمْ
لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌ ۝ وَلَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُسْتَقْرٌ وَمَتَّعْ إِلَيْهِ حِينٍ

2:36 Shaitân شيطان is derived from *shatana* شَطَنَ and means to be obstinate, perverse, become remote or far from the truth and far from the Mercy of Allâh. Shaitân is the one who is not only himself far from the Truth, but also turns others away from it. A shaitân burns with hatred, jealousy and anger, and is lost. Râghib says, every insolent or rebellious one from among the jinn, human beings, and from among the beasts is shaitân. It is often translated as a term for a devil, or conflated with the name for Satan. However, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) is reported to have said that a single rider is a shaitân, a pair of riders is also a pair of shaitâns, but three riders are a body of riders (Abû Da’ûd). This Tradition lends support to the view that the term shaitân does not necessarily mean a devil. Shaitân also can refer to a (ring) leader, a rebellious, noisy, troublesome person or thing (cf. 14:22). It is a fact that some influential people misguide the simple

and weak to bring them into trouble. Such people might be defined as Shaitân.

In the phrase *fa-Azallâ-humâ* فَأَرَلَهُمَا means “caused both to slip away”, *Azallâ-huma* أَرَلَهُمَا is derived from *zalla* زَلَّ and means to slip unintentionally, or to lapse (*Râghib*). It was not the serpent that misled Eve, nor did Eve mislead Adam as the Bible says (Gen. 3:1-6). The statement means that Shaitân (the evil suggestions in the human mind) made them both (the male and female) forget their respective duties, whereupon they commit an unintentional fault. We read in 20:115: وَلَقَدْ عَاهَدْنَا إِلَى آدَمَ مِنْ قَبْلِ فَقْسِيٍّ وَلَمْ نَجِدْ لَهُ عَزْمًا “We had given a stern command to Adam before this but he forgot, and We found no resolve on his part [to disobey Us]” (20:115). Similarly we read of an incident in the story of Moses when he left with his comrade in search of knowledge: قَالَ أَرَأَيْتَ إِذْ أَوْبَتْنَا إِلَى الصَّخْرَةِ - فَإِنَّمِي تَسْبِيْتُ الْحُوتَ وَمَا أَنْسَانِي إِلَّا الشَّيْطَانُ أَنْ أَذْكُرَهُ “He, [the young comrade of Moses] replied, Did you remember when we betook ourselves to the rock for shelter (and rest), I forgot the fish; and none but shaitân made me forget to mention this to you” (18:63). Satan not only makes one forget ones duty, but also creates evil suggestions in human minds. Satan cast an evil suggestion into the minds of both Adam and Eve, as he casts evil suggestions into the minds of all of their offspring to divert them to the way of guile and deceit (7:20). This is what is indicated by the expression “slipping”; evil gradually tempts human beings from a higher to a lower state (cf. 36:60; 62:65).

There is a difference between the words *Iblîs* and *satan*. *Iblîs* stands for the one who is proud, arrogant, stubborn and who refuses to obey (cf. 2:34). These evils are confined to one person, whereas *satan* misleads and brings misfortune (cf. 2:14). The one who mislead and bring misfortune can be dictators, organizations, preachers, sermon readers, self-proclaimed religious leaders, writers of misleading books and similar.

فَتَلَقَّى آدُم مِنْ رَبِّهِ كَلِمَاتٍ فَتَابَ عَلَيْهِ ۝ إِنَّهُ هُوَ التَّوَابُ الرَّحِيمُ

2:37 **Fatalqqâ** فَتَلَقَّى is derived from *laqya* لقى meaning to receive, meet, see, come across, experience, suffer from, occur, undergo, endure, find out a thing, lean upon, come face to face with, or to go in one direction (Tâj, Lane). *Jalasa tilqâ'i fulânun* جلس تلقى فلان means to sit facing or opposite to. *Fa'ala-hû min tilqâ'i nafsihî* فعله من تلقى نفسه means to do a thing oneself, or to do of ones own accord without being forced (Tâj; Râghib; Lisân). The words here imply that Adam made efforts of his own accord and without being forced, to correct the faults committed by him. In response, through Allâh's Grace, he received useful words of Prayer from his Lord as well as guidance. In the verse 7:23 we read: "Both of them said, Our Lord! We have done injustice to our souls, and if you do not protect us (against the consequences of our faults) and do not have mercy on us, we shall surely be of the losers." These were words of repentance asking for *forgiveness*. *The words of repentance are for all human beings in similar situations.* It is also worth noticing that the blame is not placed on the woman (as according to the narration in the Old Testament), but instead both take responsibility for their lapse.

**فَلْنَا أَهْبِطُوا مِنْهَا جَمِيعًا ۝ فَإِمَّا يَأْتِيَنَّكُمْ مَنِّي هُدًى فَمَنْ تَبَعَ هُدًى فَلَا خَوْفٌ
عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْرُثُونَ**

2:38 "Go forth from this state, all of you" أَهْبِطُوا مِنْهَا جَمِيعًا is a transition of address from the singular number in 2:33 to the plural. It evidently indicates that the lesson to be learned here relates to the human race as a whole and not to a specific person at a specific time. The word Adam is used here to refer to the prototype of all humankind (cf. 2:31; 7:16; 7:24). The term *Ihbitû* أَهْبِطُوا is derived from *habita* هَبَطْ meaning to move from one place to another (Tâj, Râghib); it does not mean to expel, from either Paradise or any other place. Adam and his wife were not expelled from Paradise as the story in Bible tells us. In no way should the term *ihbitû* be understood as indicating a

punishment from Allâh in the shape of expulsion, as the next verse mentions Allâh's attribute of Oft-returning with compassion, the Ever Merciful إِنَّهُ هُوَ التَّوَابُ الرَّحِيمُ. Elsewhere we read, “Adam did not observe the commandments of his Lord” (20:121) and in spite of this, “His Lord chose him for (His benediction) and turned to him with mercy and guided him” (20:122). *Ihbitî* also means a change in condition (Râghib, Lisân). This verse, that addresses all human beings, can be translated as, “Go forth, move from one place to the other, some of you are the enemies of others, and for you (the human beings) there is a sojourn on this earth and a provision for some time.” In this verse, there is a promise that guidance will come from Allâh in the words: “and when there comes to you guidance from Me” فَإِنَّمَا يَأْتِيَكُم مَّنِي هُدًى we are told that guidance will come from Allâh from time to time. This guidance could only be in the form of Divine Revelation given to chosen guides. This guidance is not restricted to one particular place, one country, or one people.

Then He says, “Those who follow My guidance shall have nothing to fear and nothing to grieve at” فَإِنَّمَا يَأْتِيَكُم مَّنِي هُدًى فَمَنْ تَبِعَ هُدًى فَلَا حَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ. It is all of humankind that is addressed here and not just the person of Adam or a particular chosen people.

يَا بَنِي آدَمَ إِنَّمَا يَأْتِيَكُمْ رُسُلٌ مِّنْكُمْ يَقُصُّونَ عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِي ۝ فَمَنْ اتَّقَىٰ ۝ وَاصْلَحَ فَلَا حَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ
Verse 7:35 reads: “O Children of Adam! Whenever there come to you Messengers from amongst yourselves relating to you My Messages, then whosoever (by accepting them) becomes secure against evil and amends, there shall remain no fear on them nor shall they grieve” (cf. 2:62; 2:112; 2:262 2:274; 2:277; 3:170; 2:69; 6:48; 7:35).

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِإِيمَانِنَا أُولَئِنَاقٌ أَصْحَابُ الْنَّارِ ۝ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

2:39 The consequences of not following the guidance sent by Allâh shall be suffering in this world and in the Hereafter. There is considerable misunderstanding about the duration of these sufferings,

and whether they shall only take place in Hell. **Khâlidûn** خالدون is derived from *khalada* meaning to remain a long time, or to live for a long time (Lane; Tâj). It can also mean to live without change or deterioration (Lisân). It does not necessarily convey the idea of perpetuity or eternity. The Qur'ânic concept of Hell does not teach that the stay in Hell is endless. This would violate Allâh's Attribute of Mercy (-*Rahmâniyyat* and *Mâlikîyyat*).

بَيْتَنِي إِسْرَاعِيلَ اذْكُرُوْا نَعْمَتِي الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَأُوْفُوا بِعَهْدِي أُوفِ
بِعَهْدِكُمْ وَإِيَّاَيَ فَارْهَبُونِ

2:40 Isrâ' إِسْرَاعِيلَ is another name of Jacob. According to the Bible, God bestowed this name on him later in his life (Gen. 32:28). The original Hebrew word is a compound of *Yisra* and *Ail*, (بني ישראֵל) Bnai Yisra'el and means Gods warrior or soldier. In this and the following verses, the Holy Qur'ân now draws the readers attention to a nation to whom favours of Divine Revelations were granted. Many Prophets were raised among the Children of Israel (5:20). An appeal is made to them by referring to those Divine favours, and subjectively to their own traditions. As for the covenants (عَهْدَى) spoken of here, see Gen. 17:4-14; Ex. 20, Dt. 5,18,26. The verses are at the same time a clear warning to Muslims to take a lesson from the history of the Israelites (73:15).

وَآمِنُوا بِمَا أَنْزَلْتُ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا مَعَكُمْ وَلَا تَكُونُوا أَوَّلَ كَافِرِ بِهِ ۖ وَلَا تَشْتَرُوا
بِإِيمَانِي ثَمَنًا قَبِيلًا وَإِيَّاَيَ فَاقْتَلُونَ

2:41 Muṣaddiqan مُصَدِّقًا is derived from *sadaqa* صَدَقَ meaning to confirm or verify. The confirmation or verification of previous scriptures signifies that these Scriptures contained certain prophecies about the coming of a Prophet. Confirmation signifies that their teachings were the same as those of the Holy Qur'ân. When the word is used in the sense of verification or confirmation, it also conveys

ideas related to the fulfilment of the prophecies contained in them. An example of such a fulfilment is indicated in Dt. 18.15-18: “The Lord, thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken... I will raise them a Prophet from among their brethren like unto thee, and will put My words in his mouth”. It is only in the Holy Qur’ân that the “word of God”, as promised here, is put into the Prophets mouth; no other Prophet ever claimed to have come in fulfilment of this particular prophecy except the Holy Prophet (pbuh). The whole of the Israelite history after Moses is silent as to the appearance of the Prophet promised in Deuteronomy; not even Jesus said that he came in fulfilment of this prophecy. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) claimed that he was the like of the Prophet Moses (73:15) in fulfilment of that which is in the Jewish and Christian Scriptures.

وَأَنْتُمْ أَيُّومًا لَا تَجْزِي نَفْسٌ نَفْسًا وَلَا يُبْلِي مِنْهَا شَفَاعَةً وَلَا يُؤْخَذُ
مِنْهَا عَدْلٌ وَلَا هُمْ يُنْصَرُونَ

2:48 Shafâ’at شَفَاعَةٌ is derived from shafa’ā, meaning to make even that which was odd, to protect, mediate, intercede, to be an intercessor, or to pray in support of another person. It also means to pair or to join a thing to its like; such that the two that are joined have a likeness and similarity to each other (Râghib; Lane; Sihâh; Abû Ubaid). *Man yafsh’ā shafâ’atan* 4:85 من يشفع شفاعة means He who joins with others and assists in doing good or evil, and thus aids, strengthens and partakes of the benefits or the harms of their actions. Shafâ’ah شَفَاعَةٌ is a Prayer to increase and give in surplus or in excess (Mubarrad), Thal’ab). *Al-Qur’ân Shâfi’un* القرآن شافع means the Holy Qur’ân is the intercessor for he who acts according to its teachings. Shafâ’at has a twofold significance: firstly it enables a person to walk on the ways of righteousness by imitating a model; secondly, it provides him a shelter from the evil consequences of certain weaknesses that he is unable to overcome by himself, and that require

the Prayer and support of an innocent person. The person for whom favour, or *shafâ'at* is sought must generally be virtuous, and one who has made an honest effort to win the pleasure of Allâh (21:28). It is another form of repentance (- *taubah* توبه), a way of reforming a broken connection or tightening up a loose one. Whereas the door of repentance becomes closed with death, the door of *shafâ'at* remains open. Moreover valid *shafâ'at* can only be made with Allâh's express permission to the one who is interceding (2:255; 10:3). *Shafâ'at* is also the manifestation of Allâh's Mercy as He is not a judge but a Master, with the freedom to extend His Mercy to whomsoever He pleases (cf. 2:255). The Holy Prophet (pbuh) said, "The angels have interceded; the believers have interceded; now the Most Merciful will intercede. He will draw out from the fire even persons who never offered acts of goodness and whose hardened hearts have been melted. He will then immerse them in the river that flows before entrance of Paradise called the River of Life" (narrated by Jâbir Ibn 'Abdullah).

وَإِذْ نَجَّيْنَاكُم مِّنْ ءالِ فِرْعَوْنَ بِسُوءِ مُوْنَكُمْ سُوءَ الْعَذَابِ يُدَبِّحُونَ أَبْنَاءَكُمْ
وَيَسْتَحْيُونَ نِسَاءَكُمْ

2:49 The Pharaoh first ordered the male children of the Israelites to be strangled and later changed the decree to other methods of killing (Ex.1.8-22). The Holy Qur'ân uses the word **Yudhabbahûn** يُدَبِّحُون derived from *dhabaha* زَبَح meaning to cut the throat, rip open the body, slaughter, massacre, or to slay in large numbers. The order of the Pharaoh was to spare their daughters, who were thus allowed to grow to womanhood.

وَإِذْ قَرَفْنَا بِكُمُ الْبَحْرَ فَأَنْجَيْنَاكُمْ وَأَغْرَقْنَا آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ وَأَنْتُمْ تَنْظُرُونَ

2:50 "And when We parted the sea for you, and rescued you and drowned the people of Pharaoh, while you were beholding." This verse has a significance that applies to all arrogant nations and individuals, here symbolized by the Pharaoh. The incident relates to

the journey of the Israelites to the Promised Land while being pursued by Pharaoh. The Holy Qur'ân does not mention how the Israelites were able pass through the sea or in what manner the parting of the sea was brought about. The Bible states, “The Lord caused the Sea to go back by a strong east wind” (Ex. 14.21). This enabled the people of Moses to pass through. Another explanation is that when the Israelis arrived, the sea was at low tide and had receded, exposing dry sand dunes interspersed with depressions filled with water. Moses led Israelites to cross the waters from the dry parts of the seabed. The Pharaoh and his army in their haste neglected the times of high tide. Thus, the said miracle was brought in accordance with natural laws. The Holy Qur'ân also mentions this incident in 20:77; 26:63; 44:24.

وَإِذْ وَعَدْنَا مُوسَى أَرْبَعِينَ لَيْلَةً ثُمَّ أَتَخْدَتُمُ الْعِجْلَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَأَنْتُمْ ظَلَمُونَ

2:51 Four hundred years of slavery left deep impacts on the minds of the Israelites. Since cow-worship was common in the Egypt of the Pharaohs, when the Israelites left Egypt, some repeatedly requested Moses to sanction similar worship for them (7:138,148). So eager was their desire, that when Moses went to Mount Sinai, they could not resist this temptation.

وَإِذْ عَاهَدْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ وَالْفُرْقَانَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهَتُّدونَ

2:53 Kitâb كِتَاب derived from *kataba* كَتَبَ also stands for “commandments”. Here *al-Kitâb* الْكِتَاب indicates the Divine Commandments and Laws given to Moses and written on stone tablets (*Alwâh*; cf. 7:145, 150, 154). *Furqân* فُرْقَان is anything that makes a separation or distinction between truth and falsehood. **Al-Furqân** الْفُرْقَان is another name of the Holy Qur'ân. (25:1). So, here is a mention of two Books as a means of guidance for Israelites: the Commandments given to Moses and *al-Furqân* in the form of the Holy Qur'ân for the Muslims. Another interpretation is that the commandments given to Moses were *Furqân* for the Israelites. *Al-*

Furqân الْفُرْقَان can also be seen as a metaphor whereby the falsehoods of Pharaoh were separated from the Truth that Moses brought.

وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَى لِقَوْمِهِ يَقُولُ إِنَّكُمْ ظَلَمْتُمْ أَنفُسَكُمْ بِاتْخَادِكُمُ الْعِجْلَ فَتُوبُوا إِلَيَّ
بَارِئُكُمْ فَاقْتُلُوا أَنفُسَكُمْ ذَلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ عِنْدَ بَارِئِكُمْ قَتَابٌ عَلَيْكُمْ إِنَّهُ هُوَ
الْتَّوَابُ الْأَرْحَيمُ

2:54 Râzî says that the expression *faqtulû anfusa-kum* فَاقْتُلُوا أَنفُسَكُم means to mortify yourselves, or to suppress your desires or your passions. It can also stand as an injunction to kill there ring-leaders who misled into cow worship and disorder. Both meanings are to be adopted here.

ثُمَّ بَعْثَنَاكُمْ مِّنْ بَعْدِ مَوْتِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

2:55-56 This reference is to the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and their wandering in the deserts of Sinai for forty years (19:16-17). *Maut* موت has a broad meaning: “We give the earth life after its death” (cf. 57:17; 14:16). Here *Maut* does not mean the physical death of Israelites. According to Râghib, the word here means to be deprived of moral consciousness. Râghib gives several other meanings to this word. Here, the word *Maut* is used in the sense of death-like stupor, or metaphorically, moral death before spiritual life.

وَظَلَّنَا عَلَيْكُمُ الْعَمَامَ وَأَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَنَّ وَالسَّلَوَى ۝

2:57 *Manna* المَنَّ is anything which comes without much effort. *Salvâ* السَّلَوَى indicates an object that brings contentment in a situation of privation. *Salvâ* is also the name of a certain bird resembling the quail (*Tâj*). Symbolically, it also refers to a favour or gift as well as honey or dew (*Lisân*). According to Zajjâg, *salvâ* السَّلَوَى includes all those things, which God bestowed on Israelites as gifts during their time in the wilderness and granted them freely without much exertion on their part (in *Bahr al-Muhît*; cf. 7:160).

وَإِذْ أَسْتَسْقَى مُوسَى لِقَوْمِهِ فَقُلْنَا اضْرِبْ بِعَصَاكَ الْحَجَرَ

2:60 “Smite that particular rock with your staff” may also mean, “Go forth with your people into the rocky desert”. Moses lived for many years of his life in the desert where he learned to identify places where water could be found below the sand dunes. This art of finding water is still known today to Bedouins living in the Sinai desert. ”Smite that particular rock with your staff” would mean that God revealed to Moses those specific spots where water was easily available. The Divine command to Moses of “Go forth with your people”, the “cleavage of waters of the sea” and the “gushing forth of springs from rocks” were acts of Divine Intervention, but not breaches of the laws of nature.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالنَّصَارَى وَالصَّابِئِينَ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ
الْآخِرِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَأَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خُوفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ
يَحْزَنُونَ

2:62 The Arabic word for a Jew is *yahûdî*. It is derived from *hada* هدى literally meaning one turned towards the Truth or towards God with repentance (Lisân; Tâj). A distinction should be made between *yahûd* and *al-Yahûd*. *Yahûd* are the Jews in a general sense (3:67), whereas *al-Yahûd* is refers to a particular category of Jews (2:120). Both these words are used in the Holy Qur’ân and have different significance.

The Arabic word for the Christians is **Nasârâ** نَصَارَى. It is derived from *nasara* - نَصَرَ - to help. *Nasârâ* were the disciples of Jesus who sided with him as his and Allâh’s helpers (3:52), they came to be known as *nasârâ*. **Sâbî** صَابِي is one who forsakes his old religion and adopts a new one, an apostate. In practice, the name was applied to star worshippers living in Mesopotamia (Mas’ûdî). **Sâbî** is the name of that faith, which is a patchwork of Judaism, Christianity, and Zoroastrianism (Ibn Kathîr). The term **Sâbî** is also applied to a proto-

Christian sect in Babylonia whose beliefs closely resembled those of St. John the Baptist and his followers, known as al-Mughtasilah. People who lived near Mosul in Iraq who believed in one God, claiming to follow the religion of Noah were also called *Sâbî* (Ibn Jarîr; Ibn Kathîr). None of the above-mentioned peoples should be confused with the Sabeans of Harran mentioned by some commentators as people inhabiting ancient Yemen at the time of Queen Sâbâ (Sheba).

The verse strikes at the Jewish belief in their being the chosen people, and at the Christians belief in atonement and salvation being exclusively reserved for members of their religion. Similarly, the verse does not say that belief in Allâh and in the Hereafter is alone sufficient for salvation, but puts another condition: that of good deeds وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا. Allâh will reward only deeds of righteousness and piety.

وَإِذْ أَخْدَنَا مِيثَاقَكُمْ وَرَفَعْنَا فَوْقَكُمُ الطُّورَ

2:63 The reference here is to Moses when he retreated to Mount Sinai. He left his people at the foot of the mountain. The verse tells us that a Covenant was taken from the Israelites at a time when they were standing at the foot of the mountain and the mountain was shaken by an earthquake. The word *Raf'a* رفع according to the Arabic idiom, signifies rising in rank (cf. 2:127; 2: 253; 4:158; 6:165; 43:33; Râghib, Tâj). Mount Sinai was raised in rank relative to other mountains because of it being the place where Moses received the Divine Commandments.

وَلَقَدْ عِلِّمْتُ الَّذِينَ اعْتَدُوا مِنْكُمْ فِي السَّبَّاتِ فَقُلْنَا لَهُمْ كُونُوا قِرَدَةً خَاسِئِينَ

2:65 It is wrong to infer from the word “apes” that the profaners of the Sabbath were in reality transformed into apes. It is simply a parable similar to that of the donkey in verse 62:5 (Mujâhid bin Jubair). According to Ibn Jarîr it means, “Only their hearts were transformed,

not that they were metamorphosed into apes.” Râghib says the verse relates that Allâh made the profaners ape-like in morality. In Arabic the endings “*ûn*” and “*în*” as in **Khâsi’în** خَاسِيْنَ are only added to the plurals of words that refer to rational beings. Had the Holy Qur’ân meant to imply their literal transformation into apes, it would have used the form *khâsi’ah*, not *Khâsi’in* –like apes. In conformity with this rule, the qualifying word used here about apes alluded not to irrational, but to rational beings, or those people that had developed the character of apes. Even in the root meaning of the word *Qirada* قِرَدَ there is a sense of abjectness and humiliation. *Qirada* means to cleave to the ground, or to lie in the dust. *Aqrada* أَقْرَدَ means to be or become abject or mean. Certain of these traits are conspicuous in particular animals, and these traits cannot be fully described unless the animal to which they are known to belong is expressly named (cf. 4:47; 5:60). Ibn Kathîr says that Allâh used such expressions figuratively.

وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تَنْبُحُوا بَقَرَةً ۖ قَالُوا أَتَخْخِذُنَا هُزُوا ۖ

2:67 Although the act of calf-worship mentioned in 2:51 had been prohibited, veneration for the cow lingered on in the hearts of the Israelites. This was a cultural habit adopted after centuries of slavery under the Pharaohs of Egypt. Here, they were ordered to slaughter such a cow that was an object of veneration and eradicate the thoughts of cow-worship. This is an allusion to the command to give up idol worshipping in any form.

وَإِذْ قَتَلْنَا نَفْسًا فَادَارُ أُنُثٍ فِيهَا

2:72 The Holy Qur’ân has not named the person to be slain. The generality of this account of the incident is an indication that it refers to some well-known event in history. The incident in this verse most probably refers to Jesus and the efforts made by Jews of his time to

kill him: *Qatal-tum* قَتَلْتُم meaning you killed. According to the Jewish tradition, they killed Jesus by putting him on the cross. However, *Qatal-tum* also means to seek, attempt, claim or to make up ones mind to kill (cf. 40:28; Tâj). There is a well-known Arabic idiom: *Idza ma mât maitun* إِذَا مات مَيْتٌ “when a dead man dies”. Here the word “dead” in reality does not signify a dead man but one who is about to die (Lisân), similar to the expression dead man walking in reference to death row inmates before the execution in the English language. The expression *Qatal-tum* is used here because the Jews asserted that they had killed Jesus, son of Mary (4:157). It can also mean that a plan and or attempt was made to kill him. Thus the verse refers to the bringing forth of that which they were hiding. This was a case of giving life to the nearly dead as mentioned in the next verse: كَلَّا لَكُمْ يُخَيِّرُ اللَّهُ الْمُؤْمَنُونَ, for Jesus, being unconscious, appeared to be dead to the onlookers. This inference becomes stronger when we compare the incidents narrated here with the same incidents as narrated in 4:157. In that verse, the word *nafsan* (نفس) (the indefinite form of which is *nakira* نَكِير), refers to an important personage (Sibwaih). In one explanation of this verse, a story was circulated that a murdered person was restored to life after Jews were commanded to strike his dead corpse with flesh of the sacrificed cow. This explanation has no basis in any book of Traditions or any other serious source. This story also lacks sense and is devoid of any moral teaching. It also contradicts the law laid down by Allâh as expounded in 21:95 and 23:99-100: that no dead person can come to life again.

أَفَتَطْمَعُونَ أَن يُؤْمِنُوا لَكُمْ وَقَدْ كَانَ فَرِيقٌ مِنْهُمْ يَسْمَعُونَ كَلَامَ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ
يُحَرِّفُونَهُ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا عَقْلُوهُ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ

2:75 Here the Israelites are accused of not having preserved the purity of their scripture. In Jeremiah we read, “Ye have perverted the words of the living God” (Jeremiah 23:26).

وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِئَاقَكُمْ لَا تَسْفِكُونَ دِمَاءَكُمْ وَلَا تُخْرِجُونَ أَنفُسَكُمْ مِّن دِيَارِكُمْ ثُمَّ
أَقْرَرْتُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ تَشَهُّدُونَ

2:84-85 The previous verse is a reminder of the covenant with the Israelites, and speaks of the covenant with the Muslims, that they “shall not shed each others blood and shall not expel people from their homes.” The verse also refers to the written treaty of peace with the Jews of Madînah (Ishâq). The change of tense from the past to the optative in 2:85 is an allusion to the attempts by some Jews in Madinah to break this treaty and conspire with the Makkhan enemies of the Muslims (Râzî).

وَآتَيْنَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَيَّدْنَاهُ بِرُوحِ الْقُدْسِ

2:87 “We gave Jesus, son of Mary, clear arguments and strengthened him with blessed Revelation”. **Rûh al-Quds** is the blessed Word, or the blessed Divine Revelation, and not the holy ghost of the Christian faith. Muslim scholars usually translate the word as Holy Spirit. Even then, the term is not the same as that third of the Trinity (4:171). **Rûh** is derived from *râha* راح. It means to go or to do a thing in the evening. *Turihûna* means to bring home in the evening (16:6). Rûh is like the term *râhat* راحت, meaning rest from grief, fatigue and sadness. Other related words include *raiḥân* ريحان - fragrant flowery plants; *rawâḥun* رواح - a blowing wind in the afternoon, and also an evening journey; *rîhun* ريح is wind, power, dominance, conquest, strength, victory, a good and pure thing, mercy or aid for an enemy (Tâj, Lisân, Lane). When it is used in the singular, it generally signifies Divine punishment as in 17:69; 54:19; 69:6; but when it is used as plural *riyâh* رياح, it generally signifies Divine blessing, as in 27:63. The word *Rûh* روح in the sense of the breath of life, a life giving and soothing mercy, is often used in the Holy Qur’ân to indicate Divine Revelation as it gives succor and strength to the heart of the recipient, and hope to humanity. *Rûh* can also be translated as the breath of life, the soul, spirit, inspiration (19:17),

revelation, essence, joy and happiness, mercy, the life-giving words of Allâh, the Prophets divine message (because of its life-giving qualities), angels and the Archangel Gabriel.

It was through the function of *Rûh al-Quds* (Gabriel) that the Holy Qur’ân was revealed to the Holy Prophet (pbuh) and it was also the Archangel Gabriel who was the medium of Revelation for Jesus and others. It is through this function that the Prophets are protected from the onslaughts of their enemies (cf. 2:98). It was through this Divine Law that Jesus was protected from the plan to kill him (cf.:16:2; 32:9; 38:72; 42:52; 16:102; 2:253; 2:87; 5:110; 58:22; 26:193; 4:171).

فَبَاءُوا بِغَضَبٍ عَلَىٰ غَضَبٍ

2:90 “*They incurred displeasure after displeasure*”. The repetition refers to two refusals by the Jews: the refusal to accept Jesus and the refusal to accept the Holy Prophet (pbuh). The displeasure is due to their rejection of that source of guidance (The Holy Qur’ân), which Allâh has revealed, and their begrudging the fact that Allâh has sent down His Grace on such of His servants who did not belong to their faith.

فِنْ إِنْ كَانَتْ لَكُمُ الدَّارُ الْآخِرَةُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَالِصَةً مِنْ دُونِ النَّاسِ فَتَمَنَّوْا
الْمَوْتَ إِنْ كُنُّمْ صَادِقِينَ

2:94 *Fa-Tamannu al-Maut* - فَتَمَنُوا الْمَوْتَ to invoke death, or to wish for death. The phrase has two possible meanings: either the Jews started by praying for the death of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), after which the challenge was to wait and see if their Prayers had been heard by Allâh, or that they prepared for a fight, as the word *Maut* موت also means “war” or “fight” (cf. 3:143). *Tamannu al-Maut* فَتَمَنُوا الْمَوْتَ does not necessarily mean to wish for physical death. According to

Râghib, the word is also used in the sense of the deprivation of moral consciousness or moral death.

مَنْ كَانَ عَدُوًّا لِّلَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَجِبْرِيلَ وَمِيكَالَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَدُوُّ لِلْكَافِرِينَ

2:98 *Malâ'ik* مَلَائِك (plu. Angels) are part of the systems through which Allâh executes His Will, both in the physical and the spiritual worlds. They are message bearers and agents of the All-Mighty King (*Mâlik*), not ghosts or spirits, but symbols of some Divine Laws we are unaware of it. In the physical world they are the medium, which form a link in a chain of laws governing nature. The Arch-Angel *Mikâl* میکال or Michael is the highest in rank in the realm of elements and of bodies. In the spiritual world, the Archangel Gabriel جِبْرِيل occupies the highest rank (2:97). The inspiration people receive to do righteous deeds and the inner impulse people experience that moves their minds to do good and shun evil, are the works of Gabriel. Belief in angels means turning a good thought into action. By ignoring this thought, a person loses the chance to do good, and by repeatedly ignoring such impulses and thoughts, the person moves away from the path of virtue. Therefore, belief in angels is an essential part of the Islamic religion. The enemy of Gabriel would refer to rejecters (disbelievers) of the Divine Revelations.

وَلَقَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ آيَاتٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ ۖ وَمَا يَكُفُرُ بِهَا إِلَّا الْفَاسِقُونَ

2:99 Certain Jews of the Post-Talmudic era insisted that the promised Prophet should bring them an offering to be burnt at the altar, and that he should be an Israelite and revive the Israelite law. The Holy Qur'ân answers this objection by saying that a burnt offering is not a criterion for verifying the truth of a Prophet, as it can easily be done by an impostor. The actual criteria stipulated that the promised Prophet should bring a Book, which is full of wisdom (*Bayyinah* بَیِّنَة) in the form of a Glorious Scripture that establishes the truth of the claimant of prophethood.

وَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ مُصَدِّقٌ لِمَا مَعَهُمْ نَبَذَ فِرِيقٌ مِّنَ الَّذِينَ أَوْتُوا
الْكِتَابَ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ وَرَأَءَ ظُهُورَهُمْ كَانُوهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

2:101 The Israelites had pledged to their own Prophets that they would accept the Prophet who was to appear from among their brethren. Now when the Prophet has come with an illuminating Book, they reject and break their covenant. This commitment finds mention in their own Book. *Kitâb-Allâh* - the Book of Allâh - refers to their own Book, the Torah and not to the Holy Qur'ân.

وَاتَّبَعُوا مَا تَنْثَلُ الشَّيَاطِينُ عَلَىٰ مُلْكِ سُلَيْمَانَ ۖ وَمَا كَفَرَ سُلَيْمَانُ وَلَكِنَّ
الشَّيَاطِينَ كَفَرُوا يُعْلَمُونَ النَّاسَ السُّحْرُ وَمَا أُنْزَلَ عَلَى الْمُلَكِينَ بِبَابِ
هَارُوتَ وَمَارُوتَ ۚ وَمَا يُعْلَمُانِ مِنْ أَحَدٍ حَتَّىٰ يَقُولَا إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ فِتْنَةٌ فَلَا
تَكُونُ

2:102 *Tatlû* تَنْثَلُ is derived from *talâ* تَلَّى, which means to follow or to recite (cf. 19:73; Râghib). The Holy Qur'ân says, “By the moon when it follows the sun” (91:2). The word ‘alâ علىٰ gives the impression of *fî* في – “in”, during or against (*Mughnî*). *Shayâtîn* شياطين (plural) refers to rebels, rebellious ring leaders; here in this verse *Shayâtîn* شياطين are those rebellious ringleaders who conspired against Solomon (cf. 2:14; 2:36; Râzî, see also *Bahr al-Muhît*). *Sihîr* سحر is falsehood and deception. *Sihîr al-fidzdzatah* سحر الفضة would mean that he coated a piece of silver so as to make it look like gold. *Sihîr* also refers to the action underlying a cause which is not visible, presenting falsehood in the form of truth, a crafty device, or mischief (Lisân, Tâj). *Hârût* هاروت and *Mârût* ماروت are descriptive names. *Hârût* is one who tears, and *Mârût* is one who breaks (Lisân). These descriptive names signify that the object of these Holy persons was to tear asunder and break the grandeur and power of certain rebellious peoples against Solomon. The word “angels”, as applied to *Hârût* and *Mârût* is also figurative, and signifies holy men of knowledge, wisdom and power (*Baidzawî*, Râzî). The Holy Qur'ân refers to

Joseph, “He is but a gracious angel” (12:31). Thus, in the present verse, *al-Malakain* المَلَكَيْن refers to two men with wisdom, knowledge, power and insight, whose mission was to tear asunder and break the glory of the Babylonian empire. Ibn ‘Abbâs says they were the Prophets Haggi and Zachariah, the son of Iddo (Ezra 5:1).

In the days of Solomon, certain members of the Jewish community became rebels, plotting and inciting against Solomon. In these plots, secret signs and symbols were used (1 Kings. 11.1-6; 14,23,26,29-32; 11 Chron. 10.2-4; 11.15). Similar tactics were repeated in the days when King Nebuchadnezzar took Israelites into Babylon as captives (cf. 17:5). When Cyrus, King of Media and Persia (Dhul Qarnain 18:83) rose to power, the Israelites entered into a secret agreement with him and facilitated his conquest of Babylon. In return for this service, Cyrus not only allowed them to return to Palestine, but also helped them in rebuilding their temple in Jerusalem (cf. 17:6). The efforts of the Jews on these two occasions met with two different results. In the days of Solomon, they conspired against a Prophet of God, and they failed. On the second occasion however, they were on the side of the righteous (Cyrus or Dhul Qarnain of Persia; 18:83) and were successful.

This verse clearly refers to Jewish secret societies, their conspiracies, and their secret signs and symbols (cf. 58:7-8). When the Jews of Madînah saw that the power of Islam was steadily expanding and that not only the opposition from the Arabs, but also their own efforts to check the progress of the new religion had failed, they resorted to a variety of occult evils and took the matter to the secret councils. Their behaviour was the same as in the time of Solomon and during the period of their captivity in Babylon.

At the time of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), the Israelites were already opposed to the Roman Empire and were looking for support from the Persians, where their co-religionists enjoyed considerable influence in the court of the Persian King Chusro II. They incited the Persian King

against the Holy Prophet (pbuh). Because of their intrigues, Chusro II issued orders to the Governor of Yemen, Bahdżān, to send to him the “Arabian claimant” as a captive. It is to these efforts of the Jews that the Holy Qur’ân alludes in the verse under consideration.

The verse also contains a warning to future Muslim leaders that there may be such groups in their own time who will be resorting to the same tactics, which the Jews adopted at the time of Solomon. However, in the words of the Holy Qur’ân, “Yet they would not harm anyone” by this practice as they could not harm Solomon. The condition is that the Muslim leader should be just and righteous as Solomon.

فَيَتَعَلَّمُونَ مِنْهُمَا مَا يُرِقُّونَ بِهِ بَيْنَ الْمَرْءَ وَزَوْجِهِ ۝ وَمَا هُمْ بِضَارِّينَ بِهِ
مِنْ أَحَدٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ ۝ وَيَتَعَلَّمُونَ مَا يَضْرُّهُمْ وَلَا يَنْفَعُهُمْ ۝ وَلَقَدْ عَلِمُوا
لَمَنِ اشْتَرَاهُ مَا لَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنْ خَلَاقِ ۝ وَلَبِسَ مَا شَرَوْا بِهِ أَنْفُسُهُمْ ۝ لَوْ
كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ

The verse continues to reveal that Jews “are teaching things that would harm them and do them no good”. In the concluding portion of the verse it is said, “They do it though they know very well that he who adopts this course will have no share of good in the Hereafter”. The mention in the verse, “So they [Hârût and Mârût] learnt from them [the Jews] that teaching by which they made a distinction between a man and his wife “refers to the membership of the secret societies available exclusively to males. The same theme is mentioned in 58:8-10 in more detail, along with an ethical code in verse 58:10. This episode of Israelite history is mentioned again in verses 17:5-8 with a warning for the Muslims that the same or similar could also happen to them. The verse 17:8 gives hope to the Israelites for the future.

In attempts to explain this verse, many legends have arisen without being sanctioned either by the Holy Qur’ân or the sayings of the Holy

Prophet (pbuh). One of these legends is the story of two rebellious angels hanging by their feet with their heads downward in a well of Babel. It would be quite wrong to interpret the verse based on these myths without substance (Râzî, see also *Bahr-al-Muhît*).

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَقُولُوا رَاعِنَا وَقُوْلُوا انْظُرْنَا وَاسْمَعُوا ۝

2:104 Râ'ina was used by the Muslims for the Holy Prophet (pbuh) to say, “please listen to us, be attentive to us”. *Râ'ina* is a compound word of *Râ'* رَاعَ and *nâ* نَا is a pronoun meaning “us”. This word was pronounced by the Israelites with a twist of the tongue that gave it an insulting meaning. Therefore an unambiguous word **Unzurnâ** انْظُرْنَا with the same meaning of, “please listen to us, look to us, have regard for us”, without any pejorative overtones was suggested. The general lesson imparted is to beware of others using words that sound outwardly complimentary, but have a hidden barb in them.

After describing the intrigues and secret plots of certain Jewish tribes, the Holy Qur'ân then shows the machinations to which they resorted in order to deprecate the Holy Prophet (pbuh) and how their enmity towards him affected their observation of even the ordinary rules of decency; for instance, their ruse of addressing the Holy Prophet (pbuh) with words out of harmony with the spirit of discipline and respect, or that bore a twofold sense, one good and another bad. The verse contains one of the many moral injunctions laid down in the Qur'ân.

مَا يَوَدُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ وَلَا الْمُشْرِكِينَ أَنْ يُنَزَّلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ ۝ وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ إِلَيْهِ مَنْ يَسِّأْلُ ۝ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ

2:105 This verse is an introduction to a new theme, the transfer of prophethood from the House of Isaac to that of Ismâ'il (continuation in 2:124-129). The two previous sections dealt with a particular

Israelite objection to the revelation of the Prophet: “Why a new revelation was sent down to Muhammad (pbuh) and why a new law promulgated in the presence of Mosaic Law “and their claim, “Our hearts are storehouses of Knowledge; we do not need any new book” (2:188). The answer is given partly in this verse, and partly in the verse following it.

Previous scriptures contained two kinds of commandments: firstly, those, that owing to the changed conditions of the world and universality of the new revelation, required abrogation. Secondly, it refers to those containing eternal truths that did not require abrogation. It is a fact that there are many similarities between the Holy Qur’ân and Torah: hence the words “the like of it”.

مَا نَسَخْ مِنْ آيَةٍ أُو نُنْسِهَا نَأْتِ بِخَيْرٍ مِّنْهَا أَوْ مِثْلِهَا

2:106 Nansakh - نَسَخْ - “We abrogate” relates to the word *Khairin* - خَيْر - “one better”, and the word *Nunsiha* - نُنْسِهَا - “We abandon”, relates to the word *Mithliha* مِثْلِهَا “the like of it”. The implication is that when Allâh abrogates with the passage of time and evolution in human intellect and societies a certain message, He brings a better one in its place. When He abandons a message, He resuscitates it in another form, more suited to that particular time and age. In this verse an argument has been brought forth in support of the fact that Qur’ânic revelation abrogates the previous revelations and is in reply to the Jewish objection raised in the previous verse.

The abrogation of some of the Qur’ânic verses themselves, though a completely erroneous notion, is due to a misconception concerning the word *âyât* أَيَّة occurring in the verse. There is no doubt the word *âyât* (messages) in this verse is also used to denote verses of the Holy Qur’ân, as every verse contains a message. However, in this context this meaning is not applicable. In both the preceding and the following verses, a reference is made to the people of the Scripture and their jealousy of the new message. This shows that the word *Âyât* - the

message spoken of in this verse as being abrogated, refers to the previous messages received by the Jews and others. Allâh therefore abrogated a portion of the previous Commandments, substituting them with new and better ones in accordance with the needs, changed conditions and the demands of the new social life of the people. This is the true meaning, which is consistent with the context.

Among commentators who uphold the incorrect view that some verses of the Holy Qur’ân were abrogated there is disagreement as to the verses and their number that are said to have been abrogated. According to some, not more than five verses have been abrogated (Shah Waliullah), others estimate the number to be as much as five hundred. Where one commentator considers a certain verse to be abrogated, another calls this an erroneous view, demonstrating that any discussion of such abrogation is simply a matter of conjecture. The fact is that at the root of the so-called “doctrine of abrogation” lies the inability of some of the commentators to reconcile one Qur’ânic passage with another. The Holy Qur’ân says: أَفَلَا يَتَبَرَّوْنَ ﴿٤:٨٢﴾ وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ لَوَجُدُوا فِيهِ اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا “*Why do they not ponder over the Qur’ân? Had it been from anyone other than Allâh, they would surely have found therein a good deal of inconsistency*” (4:82). Their solution to the difficulty of not understanding the message of a verse is to declare that one of the verses in question had been abrogated. This procedure is arbitrary, and explains why there is no unanimity among the upholders of the doctrine of abrogation. This verse of the Holy Qur’ân when correctly understood, refutes the idea of abrogation.

The difficulty in interpreting this verse lies in the misunderstanding of the word *âyât*. The word *âyât* is in common use throughout the verses of the Holy Qur’ân, and many interpreters identify this word with the verses of the Holy Qur’ân. The difficulty disappears if the meaning of the word *âyât* is understood correctly. *Âyât* is the plural form of *âyt*, which means a sign, an apparent sign, mark, indication, message,

evidence, proof, miracle, or communication (cf. 42:29; 42:32; 43:46). The same word is used to refer to the verses of the previous scriptures. Literally, *âyat* refers to a monument or a lofty building that should acquire renown as a sign of its greatness. It signifies any apparent thing, inseparable from another thing not equally apparent, so that when one perceives the former, one perceives the other which cannot be perceived by itself, e.g. خرج القوم بآياتهم; Râghib; Lane)

The word in this plural form has been used in the Holy Qur'ân as many as 287 times with all those meanings mentioned above in different contexts. The difficulty arises when we limit the meaning of this word to the “verses of the Holy Qur'ân”. If we read the verse in conjunction with the context, it becomes clear that those who are addressed here are the Jews who refused to accept any revelation that might supersede that of the Torah and that was not granted to an Israelite (cf. 2:91). Their objection was, “Why was another message sent down to Muhammad (pbuh) and why was a law containing new commandments promulgated in the place of the older Mosaic Law?” The answer is given in this verse. If read in this context, the abrogation relates to the former Divine messages and not to any part of the Holy Qur'ân itself. An limited teaching with a confined mission must give way to a superior and complete Book with a universal mission.

أَمْ تُرِيدُونَ أَنْ تَسْأَلُوا رَسُولَكُمْ كَمَا سُئِلَ مُوسَىٰ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ

2:108 The Jews are addressed here again; the verse mentions another artifice that the “disbelievers among the people of the Scripture “employed to pervert the mission of Allâh. They asked the Holy Prophet (pbuh) absurd questions as they did with Moses. Their objective was that the dignity of faith should suffer and that “their hearts might gradually become estranged from the faith and give way to doubt.”

وَقَالُوا لَن يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ إِلَّا مَن كَانَ هُودًا أَوْ نَصَارَىٰ ۝ تِلْكَ أَمَانِيْهُمْ ۝ فُلْنَ
هَأْتُوا بُرْهَانَكُمْ إِن كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

2:111 Another moral code laid down in the Holy Qur’ân is contained here, namely that the followers of a particular religion should not look down upon the beliefs of others. When applied to Muslims, it would mean that one school of thought, Sunnî, Shî'a, Hanaffî, Mâlakî, Hanbalî etc. should not boast about or claim exclusivity as being the best qualified to receive the Grace of Lord or to enter Paradise.

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ مَنَعَ مَسَاجِدَ اللَّهِ أَن يُذْكَرَ فِيهَا اسْمُهُ وَسَعَىٰ فِي حَرَابِهَا ۝
أَوْ لَنِكَ مَا كَانَ لَهُمْ أَن يَدْخُلُوهَا إِلَّا خَانِفِينَ ۝ لَهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا حِزْبٌ

2:114 The verse predicts disgrace for those who prohibit the name of Allâh from being extolled in the houses of worship and who strive for their desolation. Houses of worship مَسَاجِدَ اللَّهِ include churches, synagogues, temples and mosques (cf. 22:40). This verse is a warning to Muslims, where one school of thought prohibits the entry of the members of another school of thought in their respective mosques. Up to the twelfth century, no distinction was made between different mosques, whether a Shî'a mosque, a Sunnî mosque, or a Hanafi mosque. The more the practice of distinction emerged, the more disgrace the Muslims experienced at the hands of their enemies. It is a well-known fact that when a delegate of Christians arrived in Madînah, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) allowed them to use the mosque in Madînah for their worship.

وَلِلَّهِ الْمَشْرِقُ وَالْمَغْرِبُ ۝ فَإِيْنَمَا تُولُوا فَتَمَّ وَجْهُ اللَّهِ ۝ إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَاسِعٌ عَلَيْهِ

2:115 "Whichever way you turn, you will find there is Allâh's attention" فَإِيْنَمَا تُولُوا فَتَمَّ وَجْهُ اللَّهِ is a message of comfort and consolation for those who are forbidden to enter places of worship. A true worshipper always maintains himself in a state of continuous Prayer, his inner face always turned towards the Sacred Mosque. The Sacred

Mosque is the symbol of the face of the Divinity, and by facing it, one is face to face with the Lord. However, we must not think that He is found in the direction of the Sacred Mosque alone. This is only an outward expression of worship. Our inward attitude should recognize the impossibility of confining His face to a particular direction.

Through this verse, Allâh intends to maintain the alertness of the spiritual heart of the worshipper, and to prevent any transient thing of this world from deflecting him from the remembrance of Allâh. Some scholars see in the words: “*To Allâh belongs the East and the West*” وَلِلّٰهِ الْمَشْرُقُ وَالْمَغْرِبُ a hidden prophecy that Islam will spread first in the east and then in the west.

وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللّٰهُ وَلَدًا ۖ سُبْحَانَهُ ۖ بِلَّهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۖ

2:116 The expression Son of God is used metaphorically in Jewish literature in the sense of a beloved servant of God, or a Prophet (Deut.14.1; Exod. 4.22; Gal. 3.36), but Christians gave it a literal connotation (Luke 20-36; Matt. 5.9, 45, 48). The Holy Qur’ân repudiates this idea of son-ship in any physical sense, and gives five arguments against it, three in this verse and two in the following verse 2:116-117: Allâh is Holy and Free from such relationships, and He is limitless in His Glory. He is far from any imperfection such as would be implied in the necessity or even possibility of having a progeny. He is the Originator of the heavens and the earth without depending upon any matter or pattern. In addition, when He issues a decree it comes to be. Although primarily the Jews are addressed in this chapter, Christian doctrine is simultaneously rejected.

وَإِذْ أَبْتَلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ رَبُّهُ بِكَلْمَاتٍ فَأَتَمَّهُنَّ ۖ قَالَ إِنِّي جَاعِلُكَ لِلنَّاسِ إِمَامًا ۖ
قَالَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي ۖ قَالَ لَا يَنَالُ عَهْدِي الظَّالِمِينَ

2:124 Here the Jews are reminded that their deprivation of prophethood conformed to the promise given to Abraham, which

contained a condition that such of his descendants who defied Gods commandments would be deprived of the promised favour (Gen 17.9-14). This covenant necessitated the appearance of a Prophet in Arabia, and that the seed of Ismâ‘il and Isaac were to be equally blessed (Gen 12.2-3). Muslims sent the Blessing of Allâh on Abraham and on his progeny both from Isaac and Ismâ‘il (see also Genesis 15.4-5; 16.10; 17.2-6,8,10; 18,20).

وَإِذْ جَعَلْنَا الْبَيْتَ مَثَابَةً لِلنَّاسِ وَأَمَنًا وَاتَّخُذُوا مِنْ مَقَامِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ مُصَلَّى

2:125 In this verse, promises were made to Abraham about the House (*Al-Bayt*) that would be made into a place of reward and a Center where people shall gather. The House and, for that matter, the town (Makkah) will be places of peace and security. The world has seen the rise and fall of empires since the dawn of history but the peace of Makkah has never been disturbed. The religious centers of other faiths have never claimed this, and have in fact never enjoyed such peace. Jerusalems history is the living proof of it. Centers of other religions such as the Hindu Haridwar of Venares or the Golden Temple of Sikhs in Amritsar, India, were scenes of bloodshed. No alien conqueror has ever shed blood in Makkah.

وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّي أَجْعَلْنِي هَذِهِ بَلَادًا آمِنًا وَارْزُقْنِي أَهْلَهُ مِنَ النَّمَراتِ مَنْ
آمَنَ مِنْهُمْ بِإِلَهِهِ وَالْيَوْمُ الْآخِرُ ۖ قَالَ وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَأُمْتَدَّهُ قَلِيلًا ثُمَّ أَضْطَرْهُ إِلَى
عَذَابِ النَّارِ ۖ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ

2:126 When Abraham offered this Prayer, no town existed there. Abraham prayed for a place of security and peace. In fulfilment of this Prayer, the town of Makkah arose and has since remained a place of peace and security (بَلَادًا آمِنًا). The place was in a desert, and Abraham asked for all kinds of fruits –both spiritual and actual for its inhabitants. Allâh accepted his Prayers when He said, “*And on him too who disbelieves I will bestow favours for a little while*” وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَأُمْتَدَّهُ

قَبِيلًا. Makkah always witnessed the fulfilment of Abrahams Prayers, for both believers and the disbelievers.

وَإِذْ يَرْفَعُ إِبْرَاهِيمُ الْقَوَاعِدَ مِنَ الْبَيْتِ وَإِسْمَاعِيلُ رَبَّنَا تَفَّلَّ مِنَ ۖ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

2:127 Abraham was not the founder, but only the builder of the House he raised on the existing foundation. These words inform us that a previous structure existed already. The Holy Qur'ân tells us of Abrahams Prayer in the following words: "O our Lord! I have made some of my offspring to dwell in a valley without cultivation, by the sacred House" (14:37). From this verse, it also becomes evident that a "sacred House" existed before Abraham arrived. Elsewhere the Holy Qur'ân speaks of the House as the first House founded for the good and worship of humankind (3:96). Diodorus Siculus Sisley (60 BC) speaking of the region now known as Hijâz says that this place was "specially honoured by the natives," and adds, "an altar is there, built of hard stone and very old in years to which the neighbouring peoples throng from all sides." These words surely refer to the Holy House at Makkah. Ibn 'Abbâs says it was a ruin of stones, the floodwaters passed from its right and from its left (Bukhârî).

رَبَّنَا وَأَبْعَثْ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِّنْهُمْ يَنْذُرُ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِكَ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُرِزِّكُهُمْ ۖ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

2:129 This Prayer of Abraham was fulfilled in the person of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). History shows how the Holy Prophet (pbuh) combined in his person the four characteristics mentioned in this verse. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) is reported to have said, I am the Prayer personified of Abraham (Jârif). This Prayer and its beauty are aptly introduced in the argument here.

وَمَنْ يَرْغُبُ عَنْ مِلَّةِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِلَّا مَنْ سَفَهَ نَفْسَهُ ۝ وَلَقَدْ اصْطَفَيْنَاهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا ۝ وَإِنَّهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ لَمِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ

2:130 Istafainâ-hu اصْطَفَيْنَاهُ means we made him pure from all dross (see in *Bahr al-Muhît*), we chose him (Tâj). Its root is *safuwa* صَفُورٌ - to purify. One of the titles of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) is Mustafa - the Purified and the Chosen one.

وَوَصَّىٰ بِهَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ بْنَيْهِ وَيَعْقُوبَ بْنَيَّ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَى لَكُمُ الدِّينَ فَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ

2:132 Religion is of two kinds; the religion chosen by the Supreme Creator and the religion that originates in the minds of the created beings. Abraham informs his sons of the religion chosen by the Supreme Creator in the words, “Allâh has chosen for you the Faith” إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَى لَكُمُ الدِّينَ. The word **al-Dîn** - the Religion in this verse bears the definite article of *al* to specify that the religion is the one established by Allâh. We are told elsewhere: “The true religion accepted by Allâh is Submission (Islam)” (3:19). The Holy Qur’ân has laid down the principles of Submission (- Islam). Our Submission is our actions according to those principles. These Commands were put into practice by the Holy Prophet (pbuh) for our guidance.

وَقَالُوا كُونُوا هُودًا أَوْ نَصَارَىٰ تَهْتَدُوا ۝ قُلْ بَلْ مِلَّةٌ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفٌ ۝ وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

2:135 Hanîf حَنِيفٌ is derived from *hanafa*, which means to lean, incline, turn away from error to guidance, incline to the right religion, stand firmly on one side, leave a false religion or turn to what is right. In pre-Islamic times, this term had a clearly monotheistic connotation and was used to describe a person who turned away from sin, worldliness and dubious beliefs, especially idol worship. Before the advent of Islam, there was a school of thought known as *hanîf* who

openly avowed Unitarianism as their faith, which they professed the religion taught by Abraham. These few earnest people were averse to idolatry and were believers in One God. They did not find solace and satisfaction in Christianity or Judaism. At the time of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), they included Zaid Ibn Amr bin Nufail, ‘Umar’s uncle, a renowned poet and the chief of Taif. Many instances of the use of this term can be found in the works of pre-Islamic poets such as Umayyah ibn Abî Salt and Jarîr al-Aud. The word *hanîf* is of Arabic origin, and is not derived from the Canaanite or Aramaic word *hanpa* or *hanfa* whose literary meaning is “one who turns away” (Lane; Tâj; Râghib; Zamakhsharî).

فُلُوا آمَّا بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْنَا وَمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ
وَيَعْقُوبَ وَالْأَسْبَاطَ وَمَا أُوتِيَ مُوسَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰ وَمَا أُوتِيَ النَّبِيُّونَ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ
لَا نُفَرَّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِنْهُمْ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ

2:136 This verse also relates the cosmopolitan nature of Qur’ânic teachings. All Prophets of Allâh and all revelations coming from Him must be accepted; no distinction is to be made between one Prophet and any other. The Holy Qur’ân recognizes the Prophets of the Jews and the Christians, and the Prophets of all the other nations. The Jews think that God revealed the truth only to the Israelites; The Christians think that the truth was revealed only to Jesus; The Hindus believe that God revealed the truth only to the sages of India and the Zoroastrian thinks that the truth was revealed to Zoroaster alone. It is a merit of Islam that it is the only major religion that recognizes the Prophets of all countries and of all nations, and of all times.

صِبْغَةُ اللَّهِ ۖ وَمَنْ أَحْسَنْ مِنَ اللَّهِ صِبْغَةً ۖ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ عَابِدُونَ

2:138 **Sibghat** صِبْغَة is derived from *Sabaghâa* and means to dye, colour, baptize, dip, immerse, and assume the attribute, hue, mode, nature, code of law or religion. In the Holy Qur’ân the Attributes of

Allâh and His code of law is called *Sibghah Allâh* صِبْغَةُ اللَّهِ (2:138). This word has been used here as a hint to Christians that the baptism with water does not change a person. It is *Takhalluq-bi-Akhlâq* تَخَلُّقٌ بِالْأَخْلَاقِ - بِالْأَخْلَاقِ - the adoption of God's Attributes and the broad principle of faith that brings about real change in the mind and character. It is through this Islamic "baptism" that a new birth takes place. According to Arabic usage, on occasions when it is intended strongly to induce a person to do a certain thing, the verb is omitted, as in 2:138 and only the object is mentioned. Therefore in the translation of that verse, one must add a verb such as *khudhû* خذوا meaning to assume or adopt. (Lisân; Tâj; Râghib; Zamâkhsharî).

سَيَقُولُ الْسُّفَهَاءُ مِنَ النَّاسِ مَا وَلَأْهُمْ عَنْ قِبْلَتِهِمُ الَّتِي كَانُوا عَلَيْهَا ۝ قُلْ اللَّهُ
الْمَشْرِقُ وَالْمَغْرِبُ ۝ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

2:142 The weak-minded among the people السُّفَهَاءُ objected to the change in direction of the Prayer. Here two arguments are given for the change of direction. Allâh says, even though to *Him belongs the east and the west* (cf. 2:115), no other place can equal the power this place exerts in the heart of worshippers and believers, and no other place can diminish its Power, and by making His own House the direction of Prayers, Allâh desired to guide humankind to the right path leading to Him. Although great honour is given to the Ka'bah , no worshipper worships the Ka'bah with its pile of stones by facing it. Instead, they worship the Lord of the Ka'bah .

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أَمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ
عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا ۝ وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الْقِبْلَةَ الَّتِي كُنْتَ عَلَيْهَا إِلَّا لِنَعْلَمَ مَنْ يَتَّبِعُ الرَّسُولَ
مِنْ يَنْقَابٍ عَلَى عَفْيَتِهِ ۝ وَإِنْ كَانَتْ لَكَبِيرَةً إِلَّا عَلَى الدِّينِ هَذِهِ اللَّهُ ۝ وَمَا
كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُضِيعَ إِيمَانَكُمْ ۝ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِالنَّاسِ لَرَءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ

2:143 The companions of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) and his true followers are called here 'ummâtun wustâ', meaning the

middlemost and exalted community, a community that keeps an equitable balance between extremes (Lisân).

While at Makkah, the Prophet (pbuh) used to pray before the southern wall of the Ka'bah , facing north, to face both the Ka'bah and Jerusalem. In Madînah he continued to pray northwards in the direction of Jerusalem. Sixteen months after his arrival at Madînah, verses 142-150 of this chapter were revealed. These verses established the Ka'bah as the *al-Qiblah* – القبلة – the only direction of ritual Prayer. This verse and those that immediately follow give reason for this.

The first is to “*distinguish him who follows the Messenger from him who turns upon his heels* مَن يَتَّبِعُ الرَّسُولَ مَنْ يَتَّقْبَلُ عَلَى عَقِبِهِ”. *إِلَّا لِتَعْلَمَ* نَعْلَمْ should mean we might distinguish and not so that We know. Allâh is *al-'Alim* - the All-Knowing, so He stands in no need of knowing. The roots of *Na'lama* are ‘*Alima* علم and ‘*Ilm* علم, meaning knowledge. However, when it is followed by the particle *min* من, as here, it means to distinguish one thing from the other (see *Bahr al-Muhît*). Then He says, “*And this [change of al-Qiblah] is indeed a hardship except for those whom Allâh has guided aright*”. The rightly guided recognize that whatever physical structure is represented by the *Qibla*, it is only a symbol for its Owner, who is God, and therefore do not attach any meaning to the structure itself. Caliph ‘Umar^(rz) recognised this, and even wanted to crush the black stone (*hajar aswad*), but then he kissed it instead in order to follow the Holy Prophets example.

Allâh gives another reason for assigning the Ka'bah as the *Qiblah*. He says “*It was not Allâh's purpose that your faith and your worship should go in vain*” . وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُضِيعَ إِيمَانَكُمْ” So He made *Bayt al-Atiq* بَيْتُ الْعَتِيقِ the ancient house (22:29) standing in the mother of cities – *Umm al-Qurâ* أُمُّ الْقُرَى (6:92), the navel of the earth (Ibn ‘Abbâs) and zero point in space (Ibn al-‘Arabî), His own house where the worshipper can look at it without veil. He made it the heart of existence (*qalb al-Wajûd*). Its history is older than all histories, its

place precedes all geography, and it contains some sublime untold Divine secrets. In choosing this pile of stone as a place for His house and designating it as the place where His creatures should direct their faces in their Prayers Allâh instituted a decree for humankind and raised these stones in significance for the purpose that our faith and our worship should not go in vain.

قَدْ نَرَى تَقْلِبَ وَجْهَكَ فِي السَّمَاءِ فَلَنُولَّنِيكَ قَبْلَهُ تَرْضَاهَا فَوْلٌ وَجْهَكَ شَطَرَ الْمَسْدُدِ الْحَرَامِ وَحَيْثُ مَا كُنْتُمْ فَوْلُوا وُجُوهُكُمْ شَطَرَهُ وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ أَوْتُوا الْكِتَابَ لَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا يَعْمَلُونَ

2:144 The Muslims are enjoined to turn their faces to the Ka‘bah while saying their ritual Prayers. However, if in certain circumstances it becomes difficult to turn ones face to the Ka‘bah or to keep it turned in that direction, one can still say his Prayer, because, “He is with you wherever you may be” (57:4) as it is impossible to assign His presence to one place. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) was seen once saying his Prayer while riding on the back of a camel. A sick person may say his Prayer facing any direction that he may find comfortable.

الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ فَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُمْتَرِينَ

2:147 This verse does not suggest that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) doubted the Truth given by his Lord, فَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُمْتَرِينَ, but should be correctly translated as “You will never be of those who doubt”, with the word *lā* لا used for negation. Moreover, the true servants of Allâh are being addressed here.

كَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِنْكُمْ يَأْتِيُهُمْ وَيُزَكِّيُهُمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمْ مَا لَمْ تَكُونُوا تَعْلَمُونَ

2:151 This is the reference to Abrahams Prayer (cf. 2:129).

إِنَّ الصَّفَا وَالْمَرْوَةَ مِنْ شَعَائِرِ اللَّهِ ۖ فَمَنْ حَجَّ الْبَيْتَ أَوْ اعْتَمَرَ فَلَا جُنَاحَ
عَلَيْهِ أَنْ يَطْوُفَ بِهِمَا ۖ وَمَنْ تَطَوَّعَ خَيْرًا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ شَاكِرٌ عَلَيْهِ

2:158 Al-Safâ and al-Marwah are two low outcrops of rocks situated in the immediate vicinity of the Ka'bah . These rocks were the scene of Hagars suffering. Distraught with thirst and fearing for the life of her son Ismâîl, Hagar ran between the two rocks in search of water, looking for some caravan. While doing that she fervently prayed to Allâh for help. Finally, her reliance on Allâh and her patience were rewarded by the discovery of a spring still in use to this day and known as the Well of Zamzam. It is in remembrance of Hagars rigorous trial and her faith in Allâh that these outcroppings of rocks have come to be regarded as symbols of faith and patience, and are now part of circumambulations by the faithful.

A circuit of these rocks was also performed in pre-Islamic days. An idol called Usâf was placed on Safâ and one called Nâilah was placed on Marwah. The pagan Arabs who came to Makkah for their pilgrimage used to touch these idols and pay them homage. Because of this the people of Yathrib (as Madînah was then known) were averse to going to these hilltops (Bukhârî). Some earlier Muslims were also reluctant to go to these sites, which in their view were associated with idolatry (Râzî). The verse dispels these doubts.

وَإِلَهُكُمْ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ ۗ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ

2:163 In the statement: “And your God is One God, there is no other, cannot be and will never be One worthy of worship but He” the word **Ilâha** إِلَهٌ is in its infinitive noun, or the basic form of the verb (*masdar* مصدر or *jumlah ismâih* جملة إسمية), and expresses verbal motion containing all the three tenses of past, present and future. As an infinitive, the word should be taken without limitations of time, space,

or circumstances. English grammar does not allow sentences to be formed without a verb, but in Arabic, this is possible. Such sentences without a verb are called *jumlah ismîah*. The advantage of such sentences is that they are not controlled by the present, past or future tense. They are highly appropriate for describing a permanent attribute of a thing or a person. Thus, the words express the infinity of the Deity in the past, the present and the future. The words إلَّا هُوَ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ are often simply translated as “There is no God but He”, however this is not sufficient (*Mughnî*).

لَيْسَ الْبَرُّ أَنْ تُؤْلِوْا وُجُوْهُكُمْ قَبْلَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَلَكِنَّ الْبَرَّ مَنْ أَمَنَ
بِاللهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالْكِتَابِ وَالنَّبِيِّنَ وَأَتَى الْمَالَ عَلَىٰ حُبِّهِ دَوِيِّ
الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينَ وَأَبْنَى السَّبِيلَ وَالسَّائِلِينَ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَأَقامَ
الصَّلَاةَ وَأَتَى الزَّكَّةَ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ بِعَهْدِهِمْ إِذَا عَاهَدُوا ۖ وَالصَّابِرِينَ فِي
الْبَلَاسِ وَالصَّرَاءِ وَحِينَ الْبُلْسِ ۝ أَوْلَئِكَ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا ۝ وَأَوْلَئِكَ هُمُ
الْمُتَّقُونَ

2:177 The verse contains the fundamentals of faith and the principles of ethics and morality. Without faith, real morals cannot be developed. Caution is advised to the believers that they should not fall into the trap of only performing the outward ceremonial aspects of their religious duties. Simply turning ones face towards the east or west is performing acts of Faith without the spirit behind the act.

Misâkîn مَسَاكِينٌ is derived from *sakana*, meaning to become still, silent or motionless. A *Miskîn* مُسْكِنٌ is the one, who is in a state of lowliness, submissiveness, humiliation, poverty, disgrace or wretchedness, or a person who is physically or mentally weak or disabled, or one who has learnt a profession but has been prevented from practicing it (Lane, Tâj, Lisân). *Yatîim* يَتِيمٌ is generally translated as orphan, but it should mean a person left alone to himself without due care, including, but not limited to, a child without a father.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِسْطَاصُ فِي الْقُتْلَىٰ ۝ الْحُرُّ بِالْحُرِّ وَالْعَبْدُ
بِالْعَبْدِ وَالْأَنْثَىٰ بِالْأَنْثَىٰ ۝ فَمَنْ عُفِيَ لَهُ مِنْ أَخِيهِ شَيْءٌ فَاتَّبِعُ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ
وَأَدَاءِ إِلَيْهِ بِإِحْسَانٍ ۝ ذَلِكَ تَخْفِيفٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ ۝ فَمَنْ اعْنَدَىٰ بَعْدَ
ذَلِكَ فَلَهُ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

2:178 This verse contains the basic principle of Islamic civil law, which necessitates the awarding of proportionate punishment to all offenders without any distinction of race, trait, or origin. The duty of punishing the culprit does not rest on the family of the victim but, as the plural form ‘alaikum *عليكم* indicates “on you”, meaning the governing authority. Individuals cannot take the law into their own hands. The words used in the verse are of a general nature and apply to all offenders. The punishment must be carried out, unless pardoned by the relatives of the victim or the pardon is brought with the sanction of the competent authorities. The heirs of the victim are given the option to forgive of their own free will, without any pressure, and under circumstances that are calculated to lead to the improvement and betterment of social conditions. This verse clearly implies that the death penalty is not a necessity.

The Jewish law of perfect retaliation is greatly modified in the Holy Qur’ân (cf. 5:45). It is obvious that life for a life would not correspond in every case to the requirements for equity, peace and justice in a society. There are differences between premeditated murder, and murder under extreme provocation, culpable homicide, manslaughter, reckless endangerment, accidental killing and so forth. This has been made clear for instance in 4:92, where legal retribution for unintentional killing is dealt with. Whatever the status of the guilty person, he is to be punished in a manner both appropriate and proportionate to the crime. The words “the freeman for the freeman” does not mean that a freeman should not be punished for the murder of a slave, or that a woman should not be put to death for killing a member of the opposite sex. This verse describes a particular case. If a

free man is the murderer, he himself is to be punished, and if a woman murders a man, then she is to be put to trial. These particular cases are described in order to abolish certain pagan customs; according to these, when determining punishment, the sex and the social status of the murderer and the murdered person are taken into consideration. The pagans used to insist—in certain cases where the person to be punished was of influential descent—upon the execution of someone other than the convicted person. Thus the Holy Qur’ân eliminated these excesses that related to the pre-Islamic customs of retaliation. The companions of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) also agreed that a Muslim could be put to death for the murdering of a non-belligerent disbeliever (Jarîr). This law is based on the principle that if one life is lost, society should not waste other lives in retribution; at most, let the law take a maximum of one life under strictly prescribed conditions and with the cessation of any further private vengeance or tribal retaliation. The decision of the authority is to be respected (cf. 4:59)

The word **Qisâs** - قِصَاص -“equitable retaliation “is almost synonymous with *musawât* - مساوات - making a thing equal to another thing. Here it is making the punishment equal or appropriate to the crime, a meaning rendered in the translation as equitable retaliation. *Fil Qatlâ* في قتلٍ refers to matters of killing in general. The words “*but as for him who has been granted any remission by his brother*” فَمَنْ عُفِيَ لَهُ مِنْ أَخِيهِ شَيْءٌ indicate that the infliction of capital punishment is not obligatory. It is important to note that where the Holy Qur’ân speaks of pardon and remission, it uses the word brother instead of referring directly to the heirs of the murdered person or to the authorities concerned. This is to invoke brotherly feelings and sentiments so that a more lenient view can be taken of the offence.

وَلَكُمْ فِي الْقِصَاصِ حَيَاةٌ يَا أُولَئِكَ الْأَلْبَابِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقَوْنَ

2:179 **Qisâs** التّقْسِيص “equitable retaliation”, described in the preceding verse is the guarantee of social peace. The objectives of *Qisâs* are the

protection of life and social security, not revenge or harassment. It is notable that while speaking of *Qisâs* the Holy Qur'ân is addressing “*the people of pure and clear wisdom*” (أُولَئِكَ الْأَلْيَقُونَ).

كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذَا حَضَرَ أَحَدُكُمُ الْمُوْتُ إِن تَرَكَ خَيْرًا وَالْوَصِيَّةُ لِلَّهِ الدِّيْنِ
وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ حَفَّا عَلَى الْمُتَّقِينَ

2:180 **Khair** denotes much wealth or considerable wealth (*Kashshaf*, *Baidzâwî*). The verse under comment refers to bequests made in favour of individuals or charitable organisations, not legally entitled to a share in the testators property. In a will, such bequests should not exceed one third of the property (*Bukhârî*), this being the utmost limit to which the testator can exercise his discretion. It does not refer to bequests made in favour of legal heirs dealt with in 4:11-12; each part operates in its own sphere and draws strength from the others. The perusal of the verses 4:11-12 shows clearly that they recognise the validity of any additional will that may have been made. For evidence that the law of making an additional will is not abrogated by the verse 4:11-12, one may refer to the verse 5:106. The revelation of the verse 5:106, where the calling of witnesses at the time of making a will is enjoined, was clearly after 4:11-12.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقَوْنَ

2:183 Fasting has been made obligatory for all Muslims. It has thus become one of the five fundamentals of Islamic practice. The verse refers to fasting in general, and not the month of fasting. Fasting is an exercise of self-discipline and has multiple purposes. It makes a person realize that if he can abstain from that which is otherwise accessible and available, he can abstain from the evil ways, which are forbidden by Allâh. Fasting has a powerful purifying effect on the mind and makes one realise through personal experience how it feels

to be hungry and thirsty, and thus gain a real appreciation of the needs of the poor. It habituates a person to the suffering of tribulations and hardships; finally, it awakens a living consciousness of the existence of God, and it is an expression of love for the Creator. Verse 2:186, which follows, informs us about the real purpose of fasting and the reward we may receive for obedience to this Divine injunction. The verse also refers to the fact that the institution of fasting is found in all significant world religions, as well as in past religions that no longer exist.

أَيَّامًا مَعْدُودَاتٍ ۝ فَمَنْ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ مَرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِنْ أَيَّامٍ
أُخْرَ ۝ وَعَلَى الَّذِينَ يُطِيقُونَهُ فِدْيَةٌ طَعَامٌ مُسْكِنٌ ۝ فَمَنْ تَطَوَّعَ خَيْرًا فَهُوَ
خَيْرٌ لَهُ ۝ وَأَنْ تَصُومُوا خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ ۝ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

2:184 Yuṭiqūna-hū is derived from *tâqa* meaning to be able to do a thing, to possess strength, capacity and power to do a thing. *Tâqa* is also used to refer to strength that is just barely sufficient for a certain task; or a strength with which a thing can be done with difficulty and trouble. A strength that is sufficient for the task set for it. That is the reason why the word *Tâqat* طاقت strength, is never used to express the Power of Allâh, instead the word *Quwwat* قوّة is used. The words *Tataww'i Khairan* - طَوْعَ خَيْرًا extra good, are used in this context to refer to extra fasting apart from the obligatory act required during the month of Ramadzân, or an extra charity in lieu of being unable to fast.

شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنْزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ هُدًى لِلنَّاسِ وَبَيِّنَاتٍ مِنَ الْهُدَىٰ
وَالْفُرْقَانِ ۝ فَمَنْ شَهِدَ مِنْكُمُ الشَّهْرَ فَلْيَصُمِّمْهُ ۝ وَمَنْ كَانَ مَرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَىٰ
سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخْرَ ۝ يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ وَلِئَلَّكُمْ
الْعِدَّةَ وَلِنَكْبِرُوا اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ مَا هَدَاكُمْ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

2:185 Formerly, the name of this month was *Nâtiq*, which was changed to *Ramadzan* by the Muslims. The root meaning of

Ramadzan is excessiveness of heat and burning. According to Shawkâni, Ibn Asâkir and Mûsa Ibn Mardawaîh the word *Ramadzan* conveys to us the idea that fasting burns away the sins and produces in the heart the necessary warmth of love for the Creator. Those who are on a journey, or who are weak or ill, and are not allowed to fast for the prescribed days of the month of *Ramadzan*, are already mentioned in the previous verse. This injunction is repeated in this verse. It is imperative and not permissive. “*Allâh wishes facility for you*” يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ also refers to places and cases, which are exceptional and rare, where the days and the nights are long, or where there is no periodic appearance of the moon at the beginning of the lunar month such as in countries near to the poles of the earth. The Companions asked the Holy Prophet (pbuh) about their Prayers in a day which extended to half a year or a month. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) is reported to have said that they should measure according to the measure of their regular days (*Dâ’ûd*).

وَإِذَا سَأَلْتُكُمْ عَنِ الدِّينِ قُرْبَىٰ فَإِنَّمَا أَحِبُّ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ ۖ
فَلْيَسْتَحِيُوا لِي وَلَيُؤْمِنُوا بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ

2:186 The verse mentions the real reward of fasting; Allâh answers our prayers and supplications and brings us closer to Him.

هُنَّ لِبَاسٌ لَّكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لِبَاسٌ لَّهُنَّ ۖ

2:187 This metaphor describes the rights and status of women, and the object and significance of marriage. A wife and husband provide mutual support, comfort, protection and embellishment. As garments (cf. 7:26 and 16:81) hide our nakedness and any physical defects that need covering, so do a husband and a wife hide the weaknesses and faults of each other. Just as our clothes give comfort and protection from heat and cold to our body, husbands and wives also find comfort and protection in each others company. As apparel is a gracing beauty and an embellishment of the body, so are wives and husbands to one

another. Imr al-Qays, a famous poet of classical Arabic alludes to clothing as symbolizing love and union.

وَلَا تُبَاشِرُوهُنَّ وَأَنْتُمْ عَاكِفُونَ فِي الْمَسَاجِدِ ۖ تِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ فَلَا تَعْرِبُوهَا ۝

‘Akifûn اِعْتَكَافٌ are those who sit in *I’tikâf* عَاكِفُونَ are those who sit in *I’tikâf* is one of the recommended acts of worship of high merit. It consists of retiring to the mosque during the last ten days of Ramadzan, devoting oneself exclusively to remembering Allâh, and not leaving the mosque except for essential needs. *I’tikâf* is not possible if one is not fasting or if it is done outside the month of Ramadzan. It commences on the 21st day of Ramadzan, after the Morning Prayer.

وَلَا تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوَالَكُمْ بَيْنَكُمْ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَتَنْذُرُوا بِهَا إِلَى الْحُكَمَ لِتَأْكُلُوا فَرِيقًا مِنْ أَمْوَالِ النَّاسِ بِالْإِثْمِ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

2:188 Besides the primal physical needs of a human being, which are apt to make him greedy, there is another greed - the greed of wealth. The purpose of fasting is not accomplished until this other greed is restrained. If we fail to understand, it is as if we have not learned the full lesson of self-denial through fasting.

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْأَهِلَّةِ ۖ قُلْ هِيَ مَوَاقِيتُ لِلنَّاسِ وَالْحَجَّ ۝ وَلَيْسَ الْبِرُّ بِأَنْ تَأْتُوا بِبُيُوتَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهَا وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنْ أَنْقَلَ ۝ وَأَتُوا بِبُيُوتَ مِنْ أَبْوَابِهَا ۝ وَأَنْقَلُوا اللَّهَ لَعْلَكُمْ ثُفِّلُونَ

2:189 The aim of this verse is to curb superstitions. When the Muslims heard of the great blessings of the month of Ramadzan, superstitious ones desired to know the special blessings of other months. They were told that what is essential is worship and obedience to Allâh, which can be performed in any month and for that times (*mawâqît* مَوَاقِيتُ are not relevant. The verse contains a reference to another superstitious practice of the Arabs. When Arabs of the time of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) left their homes for pilgrimage, then if for

some purpose they had to come back to their houses, they did not enter them from their front doors but climbed into them from the back walls (*Bukhârî*).

Similarly, there was another widespread superstition. When someone was unable to attain an important objective, he would not go into his house by the main door but would enter it from the backyard and continued to do so for a year (*Râzî*). By citing the superstitious behaviour **تَأْتُوا الْبُيُوتَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهَا**, the Holy Qur'ân disapproves of such meaningless practices, as there is no virtue in them. All virtue proceeds from righteousness (*taqwâ*). Doors (*abwâb*) are a means of access or means of attainment of a thing (*Tâj*). Thus, the expression entering a house through its door is used to denote a proper approach to a problem. *Baidzâwî* says in explanation of this verse, "No virtue lies in tackling problems from the wrong end; it lies rather in being God-conscious. Tackle a problem from the right end and take Allâh as a shield (*taqwâ*) so that you may attain your goal." At the death of the son of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), there was a complete solar eclipse, which the Muslims took as a sign of heavenly mourning. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) disapproved of this superstitious idea, and at once delivered a sermon explaining that an eclipse was independent of the birth or the death of any person. There are similar other verses aimed at curbing superstitions (cf. 6: 143-144).

وَاقْتُلُوهُمْ حَيْثُ تَقْفُطُو هُمْ وَأَخْرُجُوهُمْ مِّنْ حَيْثُ أَخْرَجُوكُمْ ۝ وَالْفَتْنَةُ أَشَدُ
مِنَ الْقَتْلِ ۝ وَلَا تُقَاتِلُوهُمْ عِنْدَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ حَتَّىٰ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِيهِ ۝ فَإِنْ
قَاتَلُوكُمْ فَاقْتُلُوهُمْ

2:190-193 These verses enjoin Muslims to fight those who fight against them, and some limits are mentioned. Fighting is allowed until persecution and oppression (*fitnatun* فتنۃ) ceases. *Fitnah* is persecution, seduction from any faith by any means, mischief, fighting, or sowing dissension (Lane; *Tâj*; *Râghib*). Other conditions for fighting are further clarified in 22:39-41. Verses from chapter 22

related to warfare, and were the first verses that gave Muslims permission to take up arms in self-defence. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) had to fight three major battles during his lifetime. The first was the battle at *Badr*, where a poorly equipped party of 313 Muslims confronted a force of 1,000 Makkhan warriors (cf. 3:122). The second was at *Uhad*, a hilltop three miles north of Madînah, three years after the and twelve months after the defeat of Makkans at Badr. The Makkans attacked Madînah with 3,000 soldiers, including two hundred cavalry and seven hundred mail-clad veterans. The Muslims defended with 1,000 men and women, only two horsemen and one hundred men in armor. The Muslims suffered losses at *Uhad* but not a defeat, as some western historians have suggested. The Makkans did not achieve their goal and left Madînah without finishing their task.

The period after the Battle of *Uhad* was a period of great hardship for the Muslims. The instinct of self-preservation impelled the Muslims to take appropriate precautions, indulging in many small engagements and skirmishes with their enemies. The third big battle was the Battle of *Ahzâb* - أحزاب - Battle of trenches. In this battle, Jewish clans from Khaiber allied with the Makkans and other Arab tribes. A large army, estimated between ten and twenty-four thousand, was brought together in the 5th year after the *Hijrah* to attack Madînah from all sides. In addition to this, the Jewish tribes residing inside Madînah also changed loyalties.

The Muslims defended their city by digging ditches. The account of this event is contained in chapter 33 verse 9-27. Because to the treachery of the Jewish tribe of Madînah, the relationship between the Jews and the Muslims became strained (3:110-118). This community was a source of perpetual danger inside Madînah, and the attack on Khaiber by the Muslims was in retaliation to their conspiracies. These events are mentioned in the Holy Qur'ân and are historical facts. They illustrate that war was only waged in self-defence during the time of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). Nowhere in the Holy Qur'ân can one find

any command to spread the faith by force. Waging war against peaceful people to expand influence or territory is not allowed. The war sanctioned here was a necessity arising out of self-defence. When looked at carefully, the permission to fight under the conditions mentioned in these verses and the verse 22:39-41 is a service to humanity.

لِشَهْرِ الْحَرَامِ بِالشَّهْرِ الْحَرَامِ وَالْحُرُمَاتِ قِصَاصٌ

2:194 The sacred months mentioned in this verse were those in which the Arabs observed the cessation of all hostilities. It was also during these months that the *Hajj* (pilgrimage to Makkah) was performed. As this chapter deals with the injunction relating to the fighting, the question relating to the sacred months is appropriately dealt with here. The message here is that if your enemies are determined to prevent your rectification with force and persecute you, then fighting is permissible during the holy months.

وَأَنفَقُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تُلْقُوا بِأَيْدِيكُمْ إِلَى النَّهْلَكَةِ ۝ وَأَحْسِنُوا ۝ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

2:195 The defensive wars required financial resources, so the Muslims are told here that they should contribute to the war funds.

وَأَتِمُوا الْحَجَّ وَالْعُمْرَةَ لِلَّهِ ۝

2:196 The prescribed Muslim Pilgrimage (*Hajj*) takes place once a year in the month of *Dhul Hijjah*, whereas ‘*Umrah* عمرة, a pious visit to Makkah, may be performed at any time. In both the *Hajj* and the ‘*Umrah*, the pilgrims are required to walk seven times around the Ka‘bah and seven times between the hilltops of Safâ and Marwah. In the course of *Hajj* they must also attend the gathering on the plain of Arafat on the 9th day of the month *Dhul Hijjah*. This constitutes the culmination of the *Hajj*. The pilgrims are required to remain on that

plain until the sun sets. The multitudes of pilgrims then move back in the direction of Makkah, stopping overnight at a place called Muzdalifah and then at Mina for two, three or four days. Irrespective of whether they are performing a *Hajj* or only an ‘Umrah ، the pilgrims must enter into the state of *Ihrâm* إحرام until the end of the pilgrimage. “*Till the offering reaches its destination*” means, according to Râzî، the time of sacrifice and, in this case, the conclusion of the pilgrimage. *Tamatt'u* تَمْتَعْ relates to an interruption of the state of pilgrimage (*Ihrâm*) during the time between the completion of an ‘Umrah عمرة and the performance of the *Hajj*. The pilgrim who takes advantage of this is obliged to sacrifice an animal or fast for ten days. In *tamatt'u*, after the performance of the *Hajj*, the pilgrim no longer remains in the state of *Ihrâm*.

الْحَجُّ أَشْهُرٌ مَعْلُوماتٌ

2:197 Since the *Hajj* takes place in one particular month, namely Dhul Hijjah, the use of the plural form “months” indicates its annual recurrence.

لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَن تَتَبَغُوا فَضْلًا مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ ۚ فَإِذَا أَفْضَلْتُمْ مِنْ عَرَفَاتٍ
فَادْكُرُوا اللَّهَ عِنْدَ الْمَشْعُرِ الْحَرَامِ

2:198 ‘Arafât عَرَفَاتٍ is the name given to the valley to the east of Makkah about nine miles from the Ka‘bah. Pilgrims stop here in the latter portion of the ninth day of Dhul Hijjah, and this stop marks the culmination of the *Hajj*. *Al-Mash‘ar al-Haram* المُشْعُرُ الْحَرَامِ is the name given to a small hillock in Muzdalifah about mid-way between Arafât and Minâ, six miles from Makkah. The name is a compound of *Mash‘ar* مشعر meaning the place of perception, or means of perception and knowledge, and *al-Haram* الحرام meaning “sacred”. At this place, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) said his evening (*Maghrib*) and his night (*Isha*) Prayers, and offered a long Prayer before the rising of the sun. It is a place specially meant for meditation and Prayer during the *Hajj*.

۝ ثُمَّ أَفِيضُوا مِنْ حَيْثُ أَفَاضَ النَّاسُ وَاسْتَغْفِرُوا اللَّهُ ۝

2:199 Some Arab tribes, particularly those living in Makkah, such as the Quraish and the Kanânah, did not go to Arafat, but stopped at Muzdalifah. They considered going to ‘Arafât as beneath their dignity.” From where people proceed” is meant to correct this mistake, and specifies that the rites are the same for all, and no special privileges are given (Bukhârî). The rituals of Hajj are well known.

فَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَقُولُ رَبَّنَا آتَنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَمَا لَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنْ خَلَقٍ

2:200 It is significant to note that in the words “Our Lord! Grant us all things in this world” the word Hasanâ (what is good) is missing. This is the supplication of the people who are only after worldly gains with no care for the Hereafter.

وَادْكُرُوا اللَّهَ فِي أَيَّامٍ مَعْدُودَاتٍ ۝

2:203 The “appointed days” are the three days following the day of sacrifice, and are called the days of *tashriq*, or the days of beauty and brightness; these are the 11th, 12th and the 13th days of the month of Dhul-Hijjah.

وَإِذَا تَوَلَّى سَعَى فِي الْأَرْضِ لِيُفْسِدَ فِيهَا وَيُهْلِكَ الْحَرْثَ وَالنَّسْلَ ۝ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْفَسَادَ

2:205 When some people are given authority and power “they create chaos and lawlessness”, and “they destroy the tillage and the stock” (- Harth). Harth indicates the upsetting of family life, damage to the social fabric, and widespread moral decay.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ادْخُلُوا فِي السَّلْمِ كَافَةً وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُواتِ الشَّيْطَانِ ۝ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌ مُّبِينٌ

2:208 Kâffâh كافية is derived from *kaffa* - to withhold, desist, refrain from, or keep back. *Kâffâh* expresses wholeness, entirety, or completeness. *Kâffâh* كافية is used in the sense of repulsing the enemy completely until peace is restored. It may also mean restraining one self and others from sin and digression (*Râghib*). In the verse, the believers are told that truth cannot be established unless they enter into *Kâffâh* كافية. Here both meanings are correct.

هُلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ فِي ظُلُلٍ مِّنَ الْغَمَامِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ وَتُضْيَى
الْأَمْرُ ۝ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ تُرْجَعُ الْأُمُورُ

2:210 The form of speech has been changed here from the second to the third person, and addresses humankind in general and disbelievers in particular. We are told that by desisting from belief and making mischief they are invoking Divine punishment. However, Allâh, out of His limitless Mercy, will send to them raining clouds. Rain symbolizes mercy and Revelation that will come in the form of Divine guidance. The word **Ghamâm** الغمام - the shadows of the clouds, is used to indicate both mercy (7:160) and punishment (25:25).

According to some commentators, this verse also contains an indirect reference to the battle of Badr; wherein 313 Muslims were facing an army of 1,000 well-armed Makkhan warriors. Heavy rain the night before the actual fight made the ground slippery for the Makkans who took positions at the upper level of a hillock, which erased the tactical advantage of their position. Here rain symbolizes Divine help (cf. 2:30) in the form of angels. In this battle, the angels inspired the believers with courage and filled the hearts of the disbelievers with fear (8:9-11).

يَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا يُنْفِقُونَ ۝ قُلْ مَا أَنْفَقْتُمْ مِّنْ خَيْرٍ فَلَلُوَالدِّينُ وَالْأَقْرَبَيْنَ وَالْيَتَامَاءِ
وَالْمَسَاكِينَ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ ۝ وَمَا تَفْعَلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ

2:215 **Khair** خیر refers to considerable wealth acquired through honest means (Lisân, Tâj). This wealth is to be spent only after meeting the needs of the family and other dependents, and it is to be spent freely without compulsion (cf. 2:180).

كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِتَالُ وَهُوَ كُرْهٌ لَّكُمْ ۝ وَعَسَىٰ أَن تَكُرَّ هُوَا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ حَيْرٌ
لَّكُمْ ۝ وَعَسَىٰ أَن تُحِبُّوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ شُرٌّ لَّكُمْ ۝

2:216 Western historians allege that it was for the sake of plunder and for spreading Islam by force that the Companions of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) were keen to take up arms. The fact is Companions were too few to carry out any armed struggle against the considerable forces that were bent upon their destruction. It is told here that the “*fighting was hard upon them*” - cf. 2:190-193). They were conscious of their weakness and could not dare to think of wars for any reason other than self-defence. *Kurhun* كُرْهٌ is something was hard and difficult, troublesome, or painful (46:15); it does not mean repugnant. The statement means to suggest that for the few Companions, the fight was not an easy undertaking (*kurhun* كُرْهٌ); it was financially painful, with extremely high risks of losing their lives, families and/or properties (cf. 2:256).

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْخَمْرِ وَالْمَيْسِرِ ۝ قُلْ فِيهِمَا إِثْمٌ كَبِيرٌ وَمَنَافِعٌ لِلنَّاسِ وَإِثْمُهُمَا^١
أَكْبَرٌ مِنْ نَفْعِهِمَا

2:219 **Khamr** الخمر is any intoxication that clouds, obscures or covers the intellect (Tâj, Qâmûs). It should not be understood that the Holy Qur’ân only prohibits the use of intoxicants in a quantity that clouds, obscures or covers the intellect (Dâ’ûd 25.5). While dealing with the subject of war the Holy Qur’ân fittingly turns to the subject of intoxicants and games of chance, both are related to burdens on the society and taxes on gambling and alcohol have in the past been levied to help finance wars. Islam declared both those practices

unlawful because “*their harms are greater than their advantages*” وَإِنْمَّا هُمْ أَكْبَرُ مِنْ نَفْعِهِمَا. The negative social and consequences of alcohol and drug use and gambling addiction are well known.

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْبَيْتَمَىٰ ۖ قُلْ إِصْلَاحٌ لَهُمْ خَيْرٌ ۗ وَإِنْ تُحَالِطُوهُمْ فَإِخْوَانُكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ الْمُغْسِدِ مِنِ الْمُصْلِحِ ۗ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَاَعْتَنَكُمْ ۗ

2:220 Wars inevitably leave orphans and widows; the injunctions regarding their care are mentioned here.

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْمَحِيطِ ۖ قُلْ هُوَ أَذْىٌ فَاعْتَرُلُوا النِّسَاءَ فِي الْمَحِيطِ ۗ وَلَا تَقْرُبُوهُنَّ حَتَّىٰ يَطْهَرْنَ ۖ فَإِذَا تَطَهَّرْنَ فَأُنْوَهُنَّ مِنْ حَيْثُ أَمْرَكُمُ اللَّهُ ۗ

2:223 This verse is an eloquent testimony to the dignity of the language in the Holy Qur’ân while discussing the relationship between a man and a woman.

وَإِنْ عَرَمُوا الطَّلاقَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلَيْمٌ

2:227 Talâq طلاق is an infinitive noun from *talaqa* طلق meaning she was left free to go her way; this is the case when a woman separates from her husband. The word thus signifies the dissolution of the ties of marriage (Lisân, Tâj). Though divorce is allowed in Islam, there are still many safeguards against its misuse. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) said, “Of all things which have been permitted, divorce is the most hated by God” (Dâ’ûd).

وَالْمُطْلَقَاتُ يَرْبَصْنَ بِأَنفُسِهِنَّ ثَلَاثَةَ قُرُوءٍ ۗ وَلَا يَحِلُّ لَهُنَّ أَنْ يَكْتُمْنَ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ فِي أَرْحَامِهِنَّ إِنْ كُنَّ يُؤْمِنَنَّ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ۗ وَبَعْوَلَتُهُنَّ أَحَقُّ بِرَدَدِهِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ إِنْ أَرَادُوا اصْلَاحًا ۗ وَلَهُنَّ مِثْلُ الدِّيْنِ عَلَيْهِنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ۗ وَلِلرِّجَالِ عَلَيْهِنَّ دَرَجَةٌ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

2:228 Pregnancy and menstrual discharge are important in determining the period of waiting before a divorced woman can remarry. The statement - وَلِلرِّجَالِ عَلَيْهِنَّ دَرَجَةٌ - “men have place above them” is added simply to show that as regards to domestic affairs, men are given the prime responsibility. The Arabic word *darajah* درجة is translated here as meaning “to have a place above”. This word is derived from *daraja* درج and means rank, dignity, or degree that can be different (Lisân, Tâj). These words do not nullify the rights mentioned in the previous passage; neither do they place men in a position of holding governing or ruling authority over women. Because men differ from women in some respects such as physical strength, they have special obligations towards the family. Women excel over men in bringing up children and other family affairs. As far as legal rights are concerned, women have their rights “similar to their obligations and these rights are to be given to the women in an equitable and just manner” وَلَهُنْ مِثْلُ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِنَّ. The rights are to be further defined by the constituted authorities (cf. 2:229) and are also discussed in verse 4:34 of the Holy Qur’ân

الطَّلاقُ مَرْتَانٌ ۝ فَإِمْسَاكٌ بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ تَسْرِيحٌ بِإِحْسَانٍ ۝

2:229 All authorities agree that this verse relates the right on the part of the wife to obtain a divorce. Such a dissolution of marriage is called *khul'a*. *khul'a* literally means “to release”. It is a divorce arranged on the initiative of the wife, which is her right. The case of Jamîlah, wife of Qais bin Thabit provides a good illustration of the exercise of the right of *khul'a* by a woman. She demanded *khul'a*, which was given to her, but she had to return to her husband the orchard he had given her as a gift at the time of marriage (Bukhârî; Nayl al-Autâr 7/34-41; Bidâyah 2/54-57). The words “if you also fear”, refer to the constituted authorities who can intervene in the matter of an unjust divorce.

When a woman is divorced twice by the same husband, a third pronouncement of divorce makes it final and irrevocable. The husband cannot remarry her until she has been married to another man and then divorced. The verse abolishes the immoral custom of *halalah* حلاله or temporary marriage.

حَافِظُوا عَلَى الصَّلَوَاتِ وَالصَّلَاةِ الْوُسْطَىٰ وَقُومُوا لِلَّهِ قَانِتِينَ

2:238 *Wustâ* وُسْطَى is a comparative form, and means the best, most excellent with reference to a place or degree (Râghib). The verse should correctly be translated as “be watchful over the Prayers and over the most excellent Prayer.” The excellent Prayer is that in which both the external form and the spirit of worship are carefully observed. In the *Hadîth*, the latter afternoon Prayer (‘Asr عصر) is spoken of as *Salât al-Wustâ* الصَّلَاةِ الْوُسْطَى (Bukhârî). This name may have been given to it because, from the point of view of everyday business, this is the busiest part of the day and hence the most difficult moment to observe Prayer in the most excellent form and spirit. The subject of Prayer is interpolated here between injunctions to marital life. In accordance with the system prevailing throughout the Holy Qur’ân any lengthy discourse dealing with social laws is almost invariably followed by a call to Allâh.

فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ فَرِجَالًا أَوْ رُكْبَانًا ۖ فَإِذَا أَمِنْتُمْ فَادْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَمَا عَلِمْتُمْ مَا لَمْ
تَكُونُوا تَعْمَلُونَ

2:239 The five daily ritual Prayers constitute the most important worship in Islam. ‘Umar bin Khattâb^(rz) related that he heard the Holy Prophet (pbuh) saying, “Prayer is a Gift from Allâh, so accept it.” Ibn Mas‘ûd said, “I asked the Holy Prophet (pbuh), which deed is dearest to Allâh? He replied: (Ritual) Prayer at its proper time and in its proper manner.”(Bukhârî; Abû Muslim). Abû Hurairah reported Allâh’s Messenger as saying, “What do you think if there is a stream at the gate of your house and you take bath five times a day, will there

be left any dirt or filth on your body?” The Companions replied, “No, nothing of the filth and dirt”. On this the Holy Prophet (pbuh) observed, “So is the similitude of five Prayers” (*Bukhârî; Abû Muslim*).

According to the present verse, there are no circumstances in which a Muslim can neglect his ritual Prayers, even when he is in a state of extreme fear or danger. He has the flexibility to perform them while lying down, or riding, or in any other state when formal Prayer with its proper gesticulations is not possible. The subject of ritual Prayer during times of danger and fear has been dealt with in the Holy Qur’ân in two more places. Verse 4:101 describes the possibility of the shortening of Prayer at times of journey and trouble. Verse 4:102 deals with Prayer performed in congregation. As ‘Âishah^(rz) said, “At the beginning, while the Holy Prophet (pbuh) was still in Makkah, Prayer was prescribed as consisting of two *Rakat*. After the Messenger of Allâh emigrated to Madînah it was adjusted to four, in *Zuhur* ظهر (the noon Prayer), *Asr* عصر (the afternoon Prayer) and *Ishâ* (the night Prayer); however, while traveling it was left according to the original prescribed form of two *Rak’ats* (*Bukhârî; Abû Muslim*). Ibn ‘Abbâs said, “Allâh has prescribed the Prayer by the tongue of your Prophet as four *Rak’ats* while in peace and at home, two when traveling and one when in danger” (*Bukhârî; Abû Muslim*). Ibn ‘Umar said that Allâh’s Messenger established the practice of praying two *Rak’ats* when traveling, constituting a complete observance and not an abbreviation (*Ibn Mâjâh*). The shortening of Prayer as mentioned in 4:101 does not mean reducing the prescribed number of *Rak’ats*, but the quality and time of Prayer (*Ibn Kathîr*). Descriptions of as many as fourteen different methods of Prayer in times of danger and fear are to be found in the sayings of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). In these accounts, the circumstances leading to the shortening of Prayer were different each time.

مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يُقْرِضُ اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا

2:245 According to Zajjâj, *Qardz* is an act for which a reward may be expected (Râzî, Lisân, Tâj).

وَقَالَ لَهُمْ نَبِيُّهُمْ إِنَّ آيَةً مُلْكِهِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَكُمُ التَّابُوتُ فِيهِ سَكِينَةٌ مِّنْ رَبِّكُمْ

2:248 *Tâbût* refers to the heart that is the storehouse of knowledge, wisdom, and peace. On at least five occasions in the Holy Qur’ân, descent of tranquillity is mentioned, and in each case the recipient is the heart. An *يَأْتِيَكُمُ التَّابُوتُ فِيهِ سَكِينَةٌ* would mean that there will be descent of tranquillity from Allâh during the reign of Tâlût.

فَلَمَّا فَصَلَ طَلْوُتُ بِالْجُنُودِ

2:249 *Tâlût* means a tall one, a man with controlling authority. It is an attributive title. According to the Hebrew Bible, Saul (שָׁאֵל, Šâ’ûl, طالوت, Tâlût) was the first king of the united Israel. He was anointed by the Prophet Samuel and reigned from Gibeah. He was succeeded by his son-in-law David. The Holy Qur’ân refers to him with the title Tâlût - The man of controlling authority. The Bible calls him a mighty man of valor (1-Sam 10.23) or a warrior, general and wielder of authority. According to some commentators, the allusion is to Gideon (Judges 6-8).

وَلَمَّا بَرَزُوا إِلَيْهِمْ جَلُولُتَ وَجُنُودِهِ

2:250 *Jâlût* is also an attributive title meaning a person who is unruly and who attacks and assaults others. In the Bible, the corresponding name is Goliath (1- Sam 17.4).

وَأَتَيْنَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ الْبَيْنَاتِ وَأَيَّدْنَاهُ بِرُوحِ الْقُدْسِ

2:253 The word **Rûh al-Quds** - بِرُوحِ الْقُدْسِ the spirit of Holiness, is always used in the Holy Qur’ân in the sense of Divine Revelation and

Mercy (cf.:16:102); **Rûh** روح is not a part of Allâh's Attribute but His Command (17:85).

لَا إِكْرَاهٌ فِي الدِّينِ ۖ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ ۝

2:256 Al-Dîn الدين is religious law, faith, or religion (cf. 3:19). *Ikrâh* إِكْرَاه is derived from *kariha* meaning to be unwilling, feel aversion, be disagreeable, or against ones will. *Ikrâh* إِكْرَاه is to compel a person to a thing against his will; *Ikrahun* is compulsion. “*There is no compulsion of any sort in religion*” لَا إِكْرَاهٌ فِي الدِّينِ is a clear injunction. The enforcement of “Religion” (الدِّين), refers to the enforcement of its laws; the so-called "*Shari'a* Laws" against the will of its subjects. Such enforcement is against the very spirit of this verse. A state has its constitution, and its laws and the violation of those laws carries the risk of punishment. However, when a state enforces a law in the name of religion of Islam, it is called the “*Shari'a* Law”. According to this verse, its violation cannot be punished because it becomes a religious compulsion. Allâh says there should not be any religious compulsion. Here is a strong point to reflect for those who want to install punishable “*Shari'a* Law”.

Similarly, conversion by force means to confess Islam without being convinced in heart. This brings the person into a state of hypocrisy (cf. 2:8). It is not possible that the Holy Qur'ân denounces hypocrisy (cf. 2:9-10) but allows forced conversion. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) conformed fully to this principle on all occasions whenever he overpowered his foes. When he entered Makkah victorious, he told them, “This day there is no reproof against you. Go! You are free.” It is reported by Ibn Ishâq that one of the *Ansâr* of Madînah had two sons who were Christians and would not accept Islam. He came to the Holy Prophet (pbuh) and asked whether he should force them to accept Islam. It was on this occasion that this verse was revealed.

Going astray from the right path is *ghayya* الغيّ. If there is no compulsion in matters of religion, there cannot be any punishment for

ghayya الْغَيَّ. This verse is frequently quoted but seldom understood. Ibn Athîr, while commenting on this verse, sums up its meaning in the following words: "You do not need to force anyone to accept Islam and follow its rules, as it is so manifest and clear, and arguments and reasoning in its favour are so powerful and convincing that there is no need of any force. Whosoever receives guidance from Allâh, opens his breast to the truth, and possesses the wisdom to understand the arguments in this Book will accept it voluntarily. And if a person is so blind as not to see any reason, his acceptance of Islam is useless." This message is also supported by verse 10:99 that states, "And if your Lord had enforced His will, those who are on earth would have believed one and all". There are other verses in the Holy Qur'ân, which convey the same message (cf. 18:29; 26:3-4; 76:3; 6:105; 17:7).

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِي حَاجَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ فِي رَبِّهِ أَنْ آتَاهُ اللَّهُ الْمُلْكَ إِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّي
الَّذِي يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ قَالَ أَنَا أَحْيِي وَأَمِيتُ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْتِي
بِالشَّمْسِ مِنَ الْمَشْرِقِ فَأَتَ بِهَا مِنَ الْمَغْرِبِ فَبُهِتَ الَّذِي كَفَرَ

2:258 Yuhyâ يُحْيِي and Uhyâ أَحْيِي are derived from *hayya* ÍéY and has a broad meaning (cf. 2:260). King Nimrod and his people worshipped the sun. When the king said to Abraham he could give life and bring about fertility and cause death and desolation based on his powers as regent, Abraham advanced the argument, "Allâh surely makes the sun rise from the east, so you should make it rise from the west." فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْتِي Yumîtu وَيُمِيتُ Umito أَمِيتُ are words derived from *mâta* مَاتَ meaning to die or pass away. They are sometimes used in a sense imparting distress, grief, spiritual death (2:260; 14:17), or the fall of nations (2:43). The sayings of Jesus in 3:49 and 5:110 should be understood in the metaphoric sense of giving life to the spiritually dead. In a similar metaphoric sense, the words "He brings dead earth into life" (2:164; 29:63) are to be understood. In 14:17 the word takes on the meaning of "torment". In

verse 39:42 it is used to describe a state of sleep, either physical or spiritual.

أَوْ كَالَّذِي مَرَّ عَلَىٰ قَرْيَةً وَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلَىٰ عُرُوشَهَا قَالَ أَنَّىٰ يُحْبِي هَذِهِ اللَّهُ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا ۝ فَأَمَاتَهُ اللَّهُ مِائَةً عَامٍ ثُمَّ بَعَثَهُ ۝ قَالَ كُمْ لَبِثَتْ ۝ قَالَ لَبِثَتْ يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ ۝ قَالَ بَلْ لَبِثَتْ مِائَةً عَامٍ فَانظُرْ إِلَيْ طَعَامِكَ وَشَرَابِكَ لَمْ يَسْنَدْ ۝ وَانظُرْ إِلَيْ حِمَارِكَ وَلْنَجْعَلَكَ آيَةً لِلنَّاسِ ۝ وَانظُرْ إِلَيْ الْعِظَامِ كَيْفَ نُنَشِّرُ هَا ثُمَّ نَكْسُوْهَا لَحْمًا ۝ فَلَمَّا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ قَالَ أَعْلَمُ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

2:259 This verse is an allusion to the rise and fall of nations. A difficult and confusing portion of the Bible (Ezekiel. 37.1-10) is explained here, and an illustration is presented from later Israelite history as to how “dead” nations are raised to life (cf.: 2:260). This verse is a reference to Ezekiel’s vision (Ezekiel Ch.37). The Holy Qur’ân usually dispenses with words showing an incident to be a vision when either the context or the nature of the incident or a reference to earlier history makes it clear that it was a vision and not an actual event (cf.12:4). The statement here, “*Allâh kept him in a state of death for a hundred years, and then he raised him to life*”, does not mean that Ezekiel was physically dead and then rose to life again. His reply, “*I may have stayed a day or a part of day*” also indicates it was his vision. The words, “*Now look at your food and drink, they have escaped the action of time, and look at your donkey too*” also clearly point to visionary nature of his experience; there would have been no spiritual reason for Allâh to keep a donkey alive for a hundred years. Imâm Râzî says that this incident relates a vision of a Prophet Ezekiel. Ezekiel was a Prophet to the Israelites who were in the state of captivity and great plight following the invasion of Jerusalem in 599 BC (Kings 24.10).

The Prophets always pray for their people. In response to Ezekiel’s Prayers, the Lord showed him a vision in which he had died and

remained dead for a hundred years and then came back to life (Râzî). A Prophet represents his people (cf.65:1) and the death-like slumber of a Prophet signifies the death-like sleep of his people. Allâh informed Ezekiel, through this vision, that his nation, that of the Israelites, would remain in a state of captivity and “lifelessness” for a century, after which a new life would be granted to them, and they would return to their city of Jerusalem. The statement “restoring the destroyed and dead town to life” can only mean to make it spiritually alive. In 538 BC, the Persians conquered Jerusalem. Cyrus allowed the Israelites to return to their homeland and, in the year 537 B.C., gave them permission to rebuild their temple. The temple was eventually finished in 515 B.C. (Ezra 6.15); it took another 15 years for the scattered and captive Israelites to settle back in Jerusalem. In total, this period extended from 599 to 500 B.C.

وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبَّ أَرْنِي كَيْفَ تُحْكِيُ الْمَوْتَىٰ ۖ قَالَ أَوَلَمْ تُؤْمِنْ ۖ قَالَ
بَلَىٰ وَلَكِنْ لَيَطْمَئِنُّ قَلْبِي ۖ قَالَ فَخُذْ أَرْبَعَةً مِّنَ الطَّيْرِ فَصُرِّهُنَّ إِلَيْكَ ثُمَّ
اجْعَلْ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ جَبَلٍ مِّنْهُنَّ جُزْءًا ثُمَّ ادْعُهُنَّ يَا تَبَّانِكَ سَعْيًا ۝

2:260 This verse provides yet another illustration in a beautiful parable of a difficult subject relating to life and death, the rise and fall of nations, spiritual guidance, and how human nature is prepared and in a position to receive Divine guidance. In the first instance, this verse relates the difference between *imân* ايمان (faith) and *itminân* اطميان (being at peace). In the former state, one believes that Allâh can do a certain thing, while in the latter one actually receives confirmation that the act will be done in a certain way as promised. The evidence of actually seeing or experiencing something is of a higher degree than the evidence of just hearing about it.

Tuhyî - حُيّ - “you give life”, is derived from the root *hayya* حَيّ and means “to give life” (cf. 21:30), “to live”(cf. 19:31), “be alive”, “fertilize the earth”(cf. 2:164; 29:63), “bring to life”(cf. 50:11), or “rise to life after physical or spiritual death”(cf. 2:28; 6:95; 19:15;

10:31). The root *hayya* in its 28 forms is used in the Holy Qur'ân 190 times. Mostly it is used in the broader sense of bringing the spiritually dead to life (cf. 2:28; 2: 259; 10:31; 6:95).

Five times a day in all mosques throughout the world, there is a call to Prayer in the following words, *Hayya ala-Al-Salât* حیی علی الصلاۃ and *Hayya 'ala-al-Fallâh* حیی علی الفلاح. Here *hayya* does not mean “come to life” in a physical sense, nor does it mean, “come to Prayer”, as most people understand. In these words, there is a call to come back to a life that can only be a spiritual life. *Al-Hayyi* الْحَیٰ is the name and the attribute of Allâh.

Al-Mawtâ المَوْتَیٰ is derived from *mâta* مات meaning to die, die away in fire, to burn out, become still (wind), cool ones anger, cool ones passions, be obsolete, or to exert ones self to the utmost (*Istamâta lahû*). *Mautâ* موت thus means death, swoon, madness, being about to die, or to spiritually dead. *Maut* موت or death, is of many kinds, just as life *hayya* حیی, is of many kinds. The decay of strength and vigor of the senses, of the faculty of growth and generative faculty of human beings, animals and of vegetables, of the power of expression, of the sense of taste, touch, of imagination, perception, apprehension, disorientation of the generative faculty, ignorance, grief, sleep, and expiation are examples of *maut* (cf. 2:260; 57:18; 6:123; 50:12).

The word *Surr* صر when derived from *Sâd*, *Waw*, *Râ* with *waw* as the central root letter, means to attach to a thing or incline towards it, particularly when it is used with the proposition *ila* إلی. An example of usage is - أرى لك إلیه صرّة - “I observe that you have an inclination towards him and you love him” (*Sihâh*, *Muhkam*, *Qâmûs*, *Zajjâj*, *Zamakhsharî*, *Lisân*, and *Tâj*). In modern psychological terminology, it means programming, shaping behaviour, or conditioning. Great lexicologists agreed that the word *Sur* used here is the imperative form of *Sîrr*, which means “made to incline, made to attach” (*Lisân*, *Tâj*). “Cutting into pieces” is not the significance of this word, and would

make the verse meaningless (Râzî, Zamakhsharî). Ibn ‘Abbâs is also of the opinion that Sur-hunna فَصُرْهُنْ is in the sense of *amil-hunna* املهٰن - “make it incline”. *Juz* جُزْ has the meaning of a part, a piece, or each one of them. In the verse, it means putting each separate bird on a separate hill and not placing portions of the minced meat there. The number four signifies the four directions, north, east, south, and the west.

The story of cutting the birds into pieces and mincing their meat is absurd and makes no sense, nor is it traceable to any authority. This is a wrong understanding of the verse. The word Tâir الطّير is derived from *târa* طار meaning to fly, flee, or hasten to do a thing. The *Tair* is the one who soars in the higher spiritual spheres (cf. 3:49; 5:110; Râzî, *Qâmûs*, Maydanî, Tâj, Lisân). The answer to Abrahams question, “*How do you give life to the (spiritually or physically) dead?*” كيف تحيي الموتى is answered with this beautiful parable. Through the parable of the birds, Abraham is made to realize how Allâh controls the destiny of nations and how He guides the spiritually dead who then fly to higher spiritual spheres. The capacity for receiving guidance is inborn in human nature. Abû Muslim Khurâsâni says, “If a human being is able, as he undoubtedly is, to train birds in such a way as to make them obey his call, then it is obvious that Allâh, whose Will everything obeys, can call the spiritually and physically dead into life by simply decreeing, Be! ” (Râzî).

The three verses (2:258-260) have one thing in common: they speak of “rising to life after death”. The use of the word “death” also stands for spiritual death, and rising to life is a spiritual awakening. Rising to life after death is accomplished through the Prophets with the aid of Divine Revelation (symbolized by rain); thereby the dead earth comes to life again. When the dead earth (the people) receives rain (by listening to the Divine messages of the Prophet), the grains sprout. This symbolism is explained in verse 261 of the Holy Qur’ân more clearly. Similar symbolism is applied to the day and the night (cf.

3:27). The death of a Prophet in a vision signified the spiritual death of his people. That a Prophet remained dead for a hundred years is an allusion to the spiritual degradation and death of his people, and that after every hundred years, Reformers ("Mujaddidin") are sent to awaken the people from their spiritual slumber. In Islamic spiritual history, these *Mujaddidin* are well known (see also 10:11; 10:47). The mention in *ahâdîth* of the advent of "Mahdi" is also to be seen in this context.

يُؤْتَى الْحِكْمَةُ مَن يَشَاءُ ۚ وَمَن يُؤْتَ الْحِكْمَةَ فَقَدْ أُوتِيَ خَيْرًا ۖ

2:269 The injunction regarding spending of wealth is based on wisdom (see also 2:261).

الَّذِينَ يَأْكُلُونَ الرِّبَا لَا يَقُومُونَ إِلَّا كَمَا يَقُومُ الَّذِي يَتَخَبَّطُهُ الشَّيْطَانُ مِنَ الْمُسْ۝ ۝ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا إِنَّمَا الْبَيْعُ مِثْلُ الرِّبَا ۝ وَأَحَلَ اللَّهُ الْبَيْعَ وَحَرَمَ الرِّبَا ۝

2:275 Ribâ means to increase, grow, augment, (financial) interest, usury, any addition or increase in capital fixed before its investment. Usury and interest is not trade, "*Allâh has made trade lawful and made interest unlawful*" . *وَأَحَلَ اللَّهُ الْبَيْعَ وَحَرَمَ الرِّبَا* The earliest mention of *Ribâ* in the chronology of Qur'ânic Revelation appears in 30:39. The Holy Qur'ân draws a distinction between trading, *Ribâ*, and *Dayn* دَيْن, which is a loan without interest. If labour does not bring profit, the capitalist should share in the losses along with the labourer. There can be *Tadâyan* تَدَائِن (cf. 2:282) - an interchange of borrowing and lending in money, but without involving usury.

The subject of usury and interest is introduced as a continuation after mentioning charity. An economic system that is not based on interest and usury promises prosperity. Interest increases disparities in wealth and eventually leads to economic unrest. It encourages belligerent nations to borrow money beyond their capacity, and makes them

economically ever more dependent on others with little hope for progress and prosperity.

يَمْحُقُ اللَّهُ الرِّبَا وَيُرْبِي الصَّدَقَاتِ

2:276 Sadaqât الصَّدَقَاتِ is the plural form of Sadaqa صدق meaning to remit in charity or forgo. It has also the means to speak the truth or prove true. Allâh said, "Allâh annuls usury and interest and makes alms and charity grow". Charity reflects the broad basis of human sympathy, whereas usury and interest annihilate all sympathetic affections. "*Allâh annuls usury and promotes charity*" is to be read in connection with verse 2:269: The Prophet (pbuh) said, "On the Day of Resurrection Allâh will ask: Where are the things you gave to those who asked you in My name? The servant will point to insignificant objects. Allâh will then say, Are you ashamed to appear before Me with these valueless alms you gave? You knew you were going to appear before Me. Then Allâh will say, I have pardoned you because of a beggars request and the joy you gave him. I have made your alms grow. Allâh will then show the alms given by the servant that have become larger than the Mount of Uhad" (Bukhârî).

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا تَدَايَنْتُم بِدِيْنِ إِلَى أَجْلٍ مُسَمًّى فَاكْثُبُوهُ ۝

2:282 Tadâyan تداین (to transact) is derived from *dâna*, which means to lend or to give a loan. Its noun form is *dayn* دَيْن. The word has other meanings, such as to have a good or bad habit, to requite, recompense, judge or honour. Its noun is *dîn* دِيْن. *Tadâyan* covers any transaction based on credit, whether it is a direct loan or a commercial negotiation without involving usury. *Tadâyan* is permissible whereas usury is not.

In the statement "from amongst your men" وَاسْتَشْهِدُوا شَهِيدَيْنِ مِن رِجَالِكُم the word "your" indicates that the witnesses should not be strangers but be known persons residing in the same locality and circle. The

words “such as you approve as witnesses” point to the idea that the witnesses, whether men or women, must be able to understand the transaction and be easily available if the need for a witness arises. They should be respectable and reliable persons and enjoy the confidence of both parties.

Although, women in many societies do not take much part in business, and in the past, they were not permitted to function as witnesses, this privilege is now given to them. “But if there be no two males (available), then let there be one male and two females, such as you approve as witness (فَإِنْ لَمْ يَكُونَا رَجُلٌ فَرْجُلٌ وَامْرَأَتَانِ) does not mean that a single woman is not capable of giving evidence or that her testimony will be counted as half against the testimony of a man. Neither is the significance of the verse that the evidence of two female witnesses is required before a case can be decided.

The men of that time did not give weight to the evidence of a woman and considered her evidence as weak. Here, she is permitted to bring another woman witness in such circumstances. She is given the privilege to bring another witness to confirm, support and strengthen her own evidence. In the patriarchal societies of the past, courts did not accept women as witnesses. Under this Qur’anic injunction, the patriarchs unwillingly had to accept women as witnesses, but they tended to degrade their evidence by alleging that woman is forgetful or untrustworthy, so her testimony should carry less weight. In such a situation, the woman is given the right to bring another woman to support her witnessing. This is what is meant by the words: “so that if either of the two women forgets [as alleged by the men] then she may remind [testify or support] the other **بَطْلِ إِحْدَاهُمَا فَتَذَكَّرَ إِحْدَاهُمَا الْأُخْرَى**”. This privilege is not given to men.

Patriarchs, in fear of losing a case that might otherwise result in an advantage for them, created hindrances that prevented witnesses from supporting the woman, or even denied her this right outright. “*Let the witnesses not refuse (to give evidence) whenever they are summoned*”

(وَلَا يُأْبِت الشُّهَدَاءِ إِذَا مَا دُعُوا) is also a warning to those who refused the right of the woman to call another witness to support her case. It must be emphasized that this is a privilege that *can* be used, it is not required.

‘Âishah^(rz) is the sole witness and narrator of many actions of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) referred to in collections of the Traditions (*Ahâdîth*) and she bears testimony to hundreds of his sayings. Her testimony was never questioned, nor was objections rose that her testimony is the testimony of a single woman. Similarly, there were other female Companions of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) who gave testimony as to his actions and sayings. In some cases, such as regards fostering, the testimony of women is preferable to those of men. Cases may also be decided on circumstantial evidence as well, which may be sometimes stronger than the evidence of witnesses; for example, Josephs innocence was established on circumstantial evidence (12:26-27). Verses 275-281 were among the last revelations made to the Holy Prophet (pbuh) (*Bukhârî*).

لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَعَلَيْهَا مَا اكْتَسَبَتْ رَبَّنَا لَا تُؤَاخِذنَا إِن نَسِينَا أَوْ أَخْطَلْنَا رَبَّنَا وَلَا تَحْمِلْنَا عَلَيْنَا إِصْرًا كَمَا حَمَلْنَا عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِنَا رَبَّنَا وَلَا تُحَمِّلْنَا مَا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا بِهِ وَاعْفُ عَنَا وَاغْفِرْنَا لَنَا وَارْحَمْنَا أَنْتَ مُوَلَّنَا فَانصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ

2:286 “Allâh charges no soul but to its capacity.” لا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا; means that Allâh does not impose on any person religious obligations beyond that persons faculties and scope. This is an argument against the Pauline notion that religious law is a curse because it is impossible to practice at the same level by all. The commandments of Allâh are intended to be applicable with due regard for human limitations, and the judgment shall be rendered accordingly. The words: “It [the soul] shall be paid for that which it has done [of good] and against it who has incurred [evil

deliberately] أَلَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَعَلَيْهَا مَا اكْتَسَبَتْ is a refutation any doctrine, like the Christian, of atonement. *Kasabat* كَسَبَتْ denotes the doing of good deeds, and *iktasabat* اكْتَسَبَتْ means to incur evil deliberately. Deliberation requires a greater effort and exertion on the part of a person who commits evil (*Lisân*). A person will be rewarded for good deeds even if they are done casually and without any effort, while he can only be punished for his evil deeds if they are committed deliberately and with effort. It is because of this concept that *nisyân* نسيان forgetfulness or lapses, and *khatâ* خطاء mistake or error, are not punishable by Allâh as they lack intention or the motive that is necessary for awarding punishment.

Isr إِصْرًا is a burden that restrains one from motion or the burden of sin, as sin also hampers spiritual progress (*Râghib*). *Isr* also means not to make one responsible for acts that caused no harm to others thus not justifying severe punishment for a sin (*Tâj*, *Râghib*). “*Lay not on us the burden as you did lay upon those before us*” لَا تَحْمِلْنَا عَلَيْنَا إِصْرًا كَمَا حَمَلْنَا عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِنَا refers to protection from being disobedient and breaking Allâh’s covenant. Difficult, complex and detailed religious obligations, similar to those of Jews, may become a cause of disobedience. “*Our Lord! Charge us not with the responsibility which we have not the strength to bear*” رَبَّنَا وَلَا تُحَمِّلْنَا مَا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا بِهِ here the servant is asking for Allâh not to place on him those heavy duties and responsibilities that are difficult to fulfil, and at the same time asking not to make him culpable for acts that caused no harm to others. Sin, in this context, should not be understood as an act that causes actual harm to other people. Instead, this burden is personal and spiritual, *Isr* refers to those sins that do not actively harm others, and thus do not justify severe punishment, *Isr* are a class of burdens that cannot ever exceed a believers capacity to carry, and thus do not require severe punishment.

“*Overlook our faults and grant us protection and have mercy on us*” غُفِّرْنَا وَاعْفُ عَنَّا وَاغْفِرْ لَنَا here *ghafar* (protection) means to cover, hide,

conceal, protect, or suppress a defect. As Barmawî explains, *ghafar* is of two kinds, either protecting a human being from the commission of sin, or protecting him from the punishment of a sin that he has committed (Qustalâni). All the Prophets of Allâh laid emphasis on *istighfâr* إستغفار. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) said, "I implore Divine Protection - *istighfâr* at least seventy times each day, and you people are not better who have been excused of this practice of *Istighfâr* (Bukhâri). The Divine Attributes *Ghâfir* عافر, *Ghafir* غفور and *Ghaffâr* عفّار are from the same root and mean "one who protects us from committing sins and faults and passes over our sins and faults" (Nihayah). *Istighfâr* is a way for the believers to protect themselves from the evil consequences of their deeds and suppress their weaknesses. Satan invites us to indulge in evil and do things that are foul and obscene (2:169; 2:268; 24:21), while Allâh promises us *maghfirat* (2:268; 5:9; 24:26; 48:29) and places a veil between the sinning believer and his act of indecency and disobedience to protect him. In Allâh's *maghfirah* there are in fact two veils: one is the veil He covers the believer in to protect him from the evil consequences of his disobedience in this world; the other is the one He will cover him with in the life hereafter and use to protect him from the Fire. An example of the protection of the first veil is given in verse 2:268, where the believer is protected by repelling the scourge of poverty - *fuqr* فقر (poverty). The second veil is the result of the Divine Grace of Mercy (*Rahimiyat*), meaning that the *Rahîm* Allâh has Himself taken the responsibility for protecting His servant and has shown him the way that leads to His protection (33:4).

The words: رَبَّنَا لَا تُؤَاخِذْنَا إِنَّنَا سَيِّئَاتٌ أَفْ أَخْطَلْنَا “Our Lord! Take us not to task if we forget or [if] we make a mistake” imply that no severe punishments apply to the involuntary transgressions (*khatâ* خطاء) or forgetfulness (*nisyân* نسيان). Allâh imposes on every soul only that much religious burden which it has the capacity to bear (cf. 2:233; 6:152; 7:42; 23:62) and He desires to bring ease to His servant if even this appears difficult (65:7-8). If no reference is made to an injunction

by either the Holy Qur'ân or *Sunnah al- 'Ibâdiyah* (سنّة العباديّة), then the injunction does not have the status of Divine law (*sharî'a*). Moreover, the Divine laws are imposed only on persons who are capable of accepting such obligations. The Holy Qur'ân reminds us of this repeatedly (2:233; 6:152; 7:42; 23:62). Every person carries the burden according to his or her capabilities and capacities, and these vary according to intellect and power of reflection. “Our Lord! Lay not upon us the burden [of disobedience] رَبَّنَا وَلَا تُحَمِّلْنَا مَا لَا طَقْةَ لَنَا بِهِ” remind us of our limitations.

With the words, “as You laid upon those before us” كما حَمَلْنَاهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِنَا the Lawgiver intends to lessen the burden of religious prescriptions by reiterating warnings about what the Jews did with their laws. Because of this, we are not obligated to follow any religious laws promulgated before ours, despite the fact they were authentic sacred laws of that community, and we do not accuse such laws to be false.

The imitation of the habits of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) (*Sunnat al- 'Âdiyat* (سنّة العاديّة) is not mandatory (*wâjib*); if it were, it would be the heaviest or impossible burden for the Muslim community. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) was a man of feelings: he smiled and he showed his displeasure. He worked to sustain his family, he walked and travelled on the back of camels, he fought with a sword. Sometimes he wore his hair short and other times so long that it touched the ground when he was in a state of prostration (*sajdah*). We are not obliged to follow such of his habits. We are only expected to follow the commands that he explicitly gave us to obey (*Sunnah al- 'Ibâdiyat* (سنّة العباديّة)). Blind conformity (*taqlîd*) to the opinion of the “men of knowledge”, or scholars of religion and *Muftis*, dead or living, is not permissible in matters of Divine laws (*sharî'a*). Their opinion is permissible only if they have a clear and strong support in the words of the Holy Qur'ân. Their opinion can be accepted based on *ijmâ'*—consensus of the Companions of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). The

سورة آل عمران 3. CHAPTER

rule of *ijmâ'* was applied when there was no clear statement to be found on a particular issue in the Holy Qur'ân or the religious practices of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). There were very few issues where such decisions were made, and these instances are well documented in the Books of Traditions. *ijmâ'* اجماع produced in later Muslim societies by later Muslim scholars do not have the status of Divine law (*shari'a*). Nor is it permissible to call a Muslim state law a *shari'a* law. No *shari'a* law can be made on the basis of personal opinion (*al-Raiy'* الرأى), or on the opinion of the scholars or leaders in power unless they are based upon a clear evidence from the Holy Qur'ân. The validity of *sharia* law should also be questioned if it has no support from the *Sunnah al-Ibâdîyya* as exemplified by the Holy Prophet (pbuh) and not his cultural habits. If these rules are not followed, the personal opinions (*qiyâs* قياس) of so-called “scholars” will lead to an infinite number of religious laws and prescriptions.



سورة آل عمران 3. CHAPTER

The family of Amran ('Imrân)

(Revealed after *Hijrah*)

The chapter derives its name from verse 33: “Truly Allâh chose Adam, Noah, the family of Abraham and the family of Amrân (Imrân)”. Imrân was the father of Moses and Aaron, the progenitors of the family from which Mary and Jesus originated. The chapter is also known by the names of *Al-Amman* الامن “the Peace”, *Al-Kunz* الكنز “the Treasure”, *Al-Istighfâr* الاستغفار “the Seeking of Protection”, *Al-Tayyabah* الطيبة “the Pure” and *Al-Zahra* الزهرة “the Bright one.” These names throw light on the subject dealt with in this chapter.

There exists a direct connection between this chapter and the preceding one, as the two together are called “*Zahrawân* زهروان” “the two Bright ones”. Like the previous chapter it begins with the words *Alif Lâm Mîm* آلم. Whereas *Al-Baqarah* البقرة dealt primarily with the beginning of revelation and errors committed by people who followed the earlier revelations, with particular reference to the Jews, the present chapter deals with dogmas that attribute divinity to a human being. Its verses refute strongly the erroneous beliefs in the sonship of God. It is because of this that the Divine Attributes of the All-Knowing (*Al-'Alîm* العلیم) is embedded in the abbreviation *Alif Lâm Mîm*; cf. 2:1). Attributes of “The Ever-Living” (*Al-Hayî* الحي) and “The Self-Subsisting, All-Sustaining” (*Al-Qayyûm* القیوم) follow the Attribute of *Al-'Alîm* All these three Attributes of Allâh refute the alleged “Lordship” of Jesus and contradict the necessity of Allâh having a son.

The chapter also mentions some of the early battles of the Muslims in which they suffered victories and losses. At the end of the chapter there is a prophecy that the Faith chosen by Allâh for the benefit of humankind will suffer set-backs at the hands of powerful non-believers, but finally shall emerge as victorious. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) said, ‘Islam started as a sufferer at the hands of others, and it will, once again, after rising to power, return to the original weak state in which it began and suffer at the hands of non-believers’ (Ibn Mâjah/35.15). The chapter ends with an address to the believers: “O you who believe! Be patiently persevering and strive to excel (the disbelievers) in being patiently persevering, and guard (the frontiers) and ward off evil, keep your duty to Allâh so that you may attain your goal” (3:194).

الله لا إله إلا هو الحي القيوم

3:2 This verse is a part of *Âyat al-Kursî* (آيات الكرسي) - “the verse of knowledge” mentioned in *Al-Baqarah* (2:255). These words are

not only a reminder, but also refer to the main subject matter of this chapter that Allâh alone is the Ever-Living (الْحَيُّ) and no human being or any other deity can claim this Attribute. All others raised to a level of divinity are dead. It is only Allâh Who perceives, and under Whose perception none of the perceived things can escape. He is the Self-Subsisting (الْقَوِيمُ). He is the only Existence whose essence would suffice for itself and not be conditioned by the existence of another. Jesus or others raised to the level of divinity remain in need of specific conditions for their existence.

نَزَّلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَأَنْزَلَ التُّورَةَ وَالْإِنجِيلَ

3:3 Taurât and **Injîl** as used in the Holy Qur’ân refer to the Divine Commands revealed to Moses (*al-Taurât* for his people and the teachings promulgated by Jesus (*al-Injîl*). Fragments of them survive in the received canonical, the Old and New Testaments, and in some other Gospels (Clarke, W. K. L., Concise Bible Commentary. London: Society for Promotion of Christian Knowledge [S.P.C.K], 1952).

Taurât was the name given to the Book of Moses. Its rendering in Hebrew is Torah The word. *Taurât* is derived from *waraä Ôi* meaning to strike (fire) or to kindle fire. *Taurât* was called so for its reading and acting upon its teachings kindled in the heart the fire of Divine Love. The Holy Qur’ân refers to this in the words: “You must have surely received the narrative about Moses. When he saw a fire, he said to his companions, Stay here, for I perceive a fire creating feelings of love and affection. I hope I may bring you a firebrand from there. Rather I feel that I find guidance at the fire.” (20:9-13)

“Torah” in Hebrew signifies the revealed will of God. According to the Qur’ânic teaching, Moses was a Messenger of Allâh for the people of Israel, who brought the Law (*shari‘a*) to his people. The *Taurât* mentioned in the Holy Qur’ân is not identical to what we know today as the Old Testament, the Pentateuch, or the Torah. The Old

Testament is a Christian term, and Catholics and Protestants do not completely agree on the number of records to be included in the canon. It is also not correct to say *Taurât* as “the Pentateuch,” a Greek word meaning “the Five Books.” The Pentateuch are the first five books of the Old Testament, containing a semi-historical and legendary narrative of the history of the Jews, beginning with Adam and ending with the arrival of the Jews in the Promised Land; though a part of the Mosaic Law is embodied in it. The Books are ascribed to Moses, but it is certain that they were not written by Moses, and only emerged a considerable time after Moses. Unfortunately, much of their content has been distorted from the original and many parts have been lost.

Injîl is derived from *najila* نَجِلَ that means to become verdant, disclose, manifest, or to have large eyes. *Anjala* means “to pasture (cattle) on herbage.” Just as the *Taurât* is not the Old Testament, so the *Injîl* الإنجيل mentioned in the Holy Qur’ân is certainly not the New Testament. The *Injîl* was the preaching and original teachings of Jesus. Their fragments have survived in the Hebrew Canonicals and the New Testament, and in various other scripts such as the Gospel of Barnabas. Modern Christian researchers raise serious doubts on the authenticity of the New Testament. No more than 18% of its contents are original sayings of Jesus. Most of the body of this literature is an odd assortment of texts. None of the Books of the New Testament was intended by their authors to form one of the Canons. They were assembled incongruously as a collection of reports and stories compiled at dates whose exactitude is dubious, some of them many centuries later by people who were unknown, undesignated, and unforeseen in the apostolic age. They are far from being the revealed words of Allâh, and were never meant for publication and distribution as such. Sentences and paragraphs from original versions have been abbreviated and expressions changed. The transmission of the first written version of the collection of the sayings and doing of Jesus was also open to possible modification or embellishment by the next

person who copied it. The four Canonical Gospels were only four out of many, of which others have also survived. The final form of the New Testament Canons was determined in the fourth century A.D. by Athanasius and his associates, and then adopted by the Council of Nicaea

The reason Jesus' revelations, his sayings, and his actions were called *Injil* in the Holy Qur'ân is that they contained not only good news for those who accepted him, but also gave the glad tiding of the advent of the greatest and last Prophet (61:6). He was described in Jesus' metaphorical language as the coming of the Kingdom of God (Matt. 1.15), the coming of the Lord himself (Matt. 21.40), the advent of Paraclete or periklutron (one who consoles or comforts, one who encourages or uplifts; hence refreshes, and/or one who intercedes. "John 14.16) or the Spirit of Truth (John 14.17), among others. This is the meaning of *Hudann* هُدَى "guidance for humankind." The Holy Prophet (pbuh) said, "The breasts of my Companions are like Gospels." It means that the breasts of his Companions are repositories of the life history and teachings of Jesus.

In short, the *Taurát* and *Injil* frequently mentioned in the Holy Qur'ân are not identical with what is known today as the Bible, the Old Testament or the New Testament, but refer to original revelations bestowed upon Moses and Jesus. The fact that they are lost and forgotten is alluded to in the Holy Qur'ân (5:14) and other records of history. Their confirmation by the Holy Qur'ân refers only to the basic truth still discernible in the Bible and not to its legislation or to its present text. As they exist now, they afford guidance in some respects but remain a mixture of facts and fiction.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَخْفِي عَلَيْهِ شَيْءٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَاءِ

3:5 This verse is an argument against the "son of God" doctrine. Allâh is not only All-Powerful but He is also All-Knowing. Nothing is hidden from Him, and His knowledge encompasses His entire

creation. Lack of knowledge is incompatible with Lordship. Jesus never made such a claim, and “his father in heaven” kept many things concealed from his knowledge. The verse has yet another significance - given that Allâh has the absolute knowledge of everything, He reveals from time to time some of the knowledge of the unseen to his Prophets.

هُوَ الَّذِي يُصَوِّرُ كُمْ فِي الْأَرْحَامِ كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ

3:6 This verse provides us with yet another argument against the divinity of any human being. Sawwirun صَوْرٌ means, “fashioning”. Sawwirun صَوْرٌ includes detailed formation and the endowment of a child with moral and spiritual faculties. After Allâh brings into existence a body in the womb of a mother, He endows it with the faculties and capacities necessary to fulfil its destiny. It is therefore in the womb of the mother that the foundation of the child's future is laid.

As the formation of the child takes place in the womb, it is also affected by its environment and by the physical and moral conditions of the mother. The reference to the mystery of the birth of a human being prepares us for the mystery of the birth of Jesus. Jesus, whose body, like that of other human beings, was formed in the womb of a woman (Mary), could not escape from being affected by the limitations and failings inherent in a human being, in this case his mother Mary: “*She conceived him (Jesus) and withdrew with him to a remote place. The throes of the child's birth (at the time of the delivery) drove her to a trunk of a palm tree*” (cf. 19:22-23). This is why in his discussion with the Christians of Najrân the Holy Prophet (pbuh) pointedly referred to the birth of Jesus as an argument against his divinity (Ibn Jarîr). The statement in this verse, “*There is not, cannot be and will never be One worthy of worship but He, the All-Mighty, the All-Wise,*” has been placed as a natural consequence of the preceding discussion. When it is Allâh who fashions children in the

wombs of their mothers, no child born of a woman can claim to be divine (cf. Matt. 24.36).

هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ مِنْهُ آيَاتٌ مُحْكَمَاتٌ هُنَّ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ وَأَخْرُوْ
مُشَابِهَاتٍ فَمَمَا الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ رَبِيعٌ فَيَنْبَغِيُونَ مَا تَشَابَهَ مِنْهُ ابْتِغَاءُ الْفُتْنَةِ
وَابْتِغَاءُ ثَوْلِيهِ وَمَا يَعْلَمُ ثَوْلِيهُ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَالرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ يَقُولُونَ
آمَنَّا بِهِ كُلُّ مَنْ عِنْدِ رَبِّنَا وَمَا يَذَكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ

3:7 This verse lays down the principle rule of understanding the verses of the Holy Qur’ân. The Qur’ânic verses can be divided into two categories: The first is the category of **Muhkamât** مُحْكَمَاتٌ “definite and decisive,” in which there is no ambiguity or possibility of doubt. The meaning of the verse is clear, decisive in exposition, firm and stable, secured from change and interpretations (Râghib, Tâj). The words in the verse state clear and concise ideas. According to Ibn Jarîr *Muhkamât* of a verse are ordinances or statements, which are self-evident by virtue of their wording. They are also the mother, nucleus, source, origin, base, means of sustenance, and support or means of reformation and correction for another verse whose meaning is not clearly understood by the reader. Such verses are called **Mutashâbihât** مُشَابِهَاتٍ. All Qur’ânic verses are basically *Muhkam* مُحْكَم, but in some verses the correct meaning does not become evident in the first reading; a second meaning can then be attached to these verses, given that they are open to interpretations. The second meaning attached to them cannot contradict any other verse. A verse remains in the category of *Mutashâbihât* as long as its meaning remains open to interpretations. The allegorical or the interpretive meanings can be known by referring them to verses that have been termed decisive (*Muhkam*). The meanings of *Mutashâbihât* are rightly understood with repeated consideration (Lisân). Only after thorough reading and through prayer, repeated reflections, and *Taqwâ* (nearness to Allâh) do their meanings become evident to those who are “firmly grounded in knowledge” (والرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ) as the Holy

Qur'ân calls them. Here, it must be borne in mind that the two divisions explained above is not between verses of the Holy Qur'ân, but between the meanings to be attached to the same verse, for the whole of the Holy Qur'ân is a Book whose verses are all *Muhkam* and are made plain (cf. 11:1).

The subject is fittingly dealt with here as a prelude to a controversy with the Christians, who attribute divinity to Jesus and who uphold the doctrine of atonement based on certain ambiguous words and allegorical statements without reference to the fundamental principles. The verse was revealed when a party of Christians from Najrân visited the Holy Prophet (pbuh) in Madînah. It gives the genesis of the later Christian doctrines and explains how the true original teachings became. What caused the corruption of the original Christian faith was that expressions like "son of God," "Father in heaven," etc., used metaphorically, were taken literally. This was done clearly against the principles laid down in unmistakable words in the Hebrew Scriptures. Any statement carrying a doubtful significance or one which is apparently opposed to the principle so laid down and apparently endowed with different meanings, must be interpreted subject to the principle concerned. The verse under comment serves four more purposes:

- 1) It describes how the critics of Islam are always ready to distort their own scriptures and the true Qur'ânic teachings.
- 2) It provides a firm and trustworthy principle for interpreting Scriptures or other Divine Books in the right manner.
- 3) It warns Muslims to learn the lesson from the history of the Christians and followers of other religions.
- 4) It gives us a golden rule for the translation and interpretation of the Holy Qur'ân.

There is no contradiction between the various portions of the Holy Qur'ân. Whenever it is necessary to interpret or to explain a verse of the Holy Qur'ân, which is open to several interpretations, and is not

easily comprehensible, the verse should be referred to those portions of the Holy Qur'ân which are similar to the verse under consideration and the meanings of which are obvious. The meanings or interpretations given to them should not stand in conflict to any other verse of the Holy Qur'ân. Thus by reading various passages in the light of each other one can discover the true significance of metaphorical verses that may be open to different meanings.

رَبَّنَا لَا تُزِغْ قُلُوبَنَا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَيْنَا وَهُبْ لَنَا مِنْ لَذْنَكَ رَحْمَةً ۝ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ
الْوَهَابُ

3:8 This is the prayer of those who are firmly grounded in knowledge. The more they know, the more they realize how little they know of all the profound Truth of the spiritual world. They also realize that there is no bigger loss than going astray after having found the right path. The prayer is a fitting sequel to the preceding verse. It draws attention to the purification of the heart and intensive prayer that eliminates the error of interpreting any seemingly ambiguous Qur'ânic statement in a manner that is at variance with the nucleus and foundation of the Book. With no ambiguity left, it is clear in meaning and decisive in exposition. “Purification of the heart” is therefore necessary to understand the underlying meanings. The Holy Qur'ân says that only those, who by leading righteous lives achieve purity of heart, are granted true understanding and insight into the real meanings of the Holy Qur'ân (56:79). The verse points out that people often receive a favour from Allâh, which some time later, because of their sins, proves to be an obstacle for them. They misinterpret divine guidance and thus bring about their own ruin, as in the case of some Christians. Muslims are also warned to pay attention to this kind of error. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) while witnessing a dispute over the interpretation of certain verses of the Holy Qur'ân, is reported to have said, “Thus were ruined those who have gone before you. They interpreted certain parts of their Scriptures in such a manner as to make them contradict

other parts. However, the Holy Qur’ân has been so revealed that different parts of it should corroborate with one another. So do not reject any truth by making one part contradict the other” (*Musnad* of ‘Ahmad bin Hanbel).

رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ جَامِعُ النَّاسِ لِيَوْمٍ لَا يُخْلِفُ الْمِيعَادَ

3:9 This verse tells the eventual return to Allâh, when all doubts will be resolved. There is also an allusion in it to the gathering of hostile forces in battle, and to Allâh’s promise to bestow victory on the believers. The verse that follows makes this explicit.

**إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَنْ تُغْنِيَ عَنْهُمْ أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَلَا أُولَادُهُمْ مَنْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ شَاءَتْ
وَأَوْلَئِكَ هُمُ وَقُودُ النَّارِ**

3:10 Some people refuse to embrace the faith of Islam out of fear that this act will bring about financial loss, or endanger their life or the lives of their families. The Holy Qur’ân refutes this idea by saying: *لَنْ تُغْنِيَ عَنْهُمْ أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَلَا أُولَادُهُمْ* “Neither their possession nor their children shall avail them. Nâr (fire) generally refers to the fire of hell (نار الجهنّم), but here it also means the fire of war (نار الحرب) (cf. 5:64). The next verse supports this meaning.

**كَذَابٌ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ۚ كَذَبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا فَأَخَذْهُمُ اللَّهُ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ ۚ
وَاللَّهُ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ**

3:11 Pharaoh relied upon his resources, his power, and his armies to oppress the people of Moses. In a similar way, a warning is given here to those who oppress Muslims. *Dhanb* ذنب is an act that has an evil result; it may be a crime, fault, offense, or sin. The punishment due to *dhanb* refers to the one of this world and the next.

قُلْ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا سَتُغْلِبُونَ وَتُحْشَرُونَ إِلَى جَهَنَّمَ ۚ وَبِئْسَ الْمِهَادُ

3:12 This verse is not an allusion to the battle of Badr referred to in the next verse, as it was revealed after this confrontation. Instead, it addresses the opponents of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) in the city of Madînah. Among them were the Jewish tribes of *Qunaiq* ‘a), (بُنُوْقِيْفَاعْ), *Nadîzir* (بنُوْنَصِيرْ) and *Qurîdzah* (بنُوْقِرِيْضَةْ), as well as the Christians of *Ghatfân* غطان and the hypocrites who were in fact allies of the opposing forces (cf. 2:8). The message of the verse can be extended to later battles that Muslims had to fight. The verse contains a prophecy that these enemies will be gathered and they shall be overcome with Allâh’s help (cf. 3:22).

قَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ آيَةٌ فِي فِتْنَتِنَا ۖ فَنَّهُ تُقَاتِلُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَأَخْرَىٰ كَافِرَةً
يَرَوْنَهُمْ مُتَّلِّهِمْ رَأَيِ الْعَيْنِ ۚ وَاللَّهُ يُؤَيِّدُ بَنَصْرِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۖ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ
لَعْبَرَةً لِأُولَئِي الْأَبْصَارِ

3:13 The reference here is to the Battle of Badr in which 313 Muslims with few resources inflicted defeat on one thousand armed Makkan soldiers led by some of the strongest and most experienced warriors of Arabia. The battle was fought in the plain of Badr about 50 miles southwest of Madînah and about 150 miles from Makkah, in the third week of Ramadzân and in the second year of Hijrah (cf. 2:190-193). It is stated here to be a sign of Allâh concerning the truth of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), because it fulfilled two prophecies: one contained in an earlier revelation of the Holy Qur’ân (54:47-48), the other in the Bible (Isa. 21.14-17, 42.11; 60.7; Ps.120.5). In addition, it firmly established Islam and largely decided the fate of Arabia. This victory would have been impossible without Divine Will.

رُّزِينَ لِلنَّاسِ حُبُّ الشَّهَوَاتِ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ وَالْبَنِينَ وَالْقَنَاطِيرِ الْمُقْنَطِرَةِ مِنَ
الْذَّهَبِ وَالْفِضَّةِ وَالْحَيْلِ الْمُسَوَّمَةِ وَالْأَنْعَامِ وَالْحَرْثِ ۚ ذَلِكَ مَتَاعُ الْحَيَاةِ
الْدُّنْيَا ۖ وَاللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ حُسْنُ الْمَآبِ

3:14 Some of the pleasures of this world are enumerated here. It is because of their inordinate interest in these worldly things that many have been led astray from the “Right Path” (- *Sirât al-Mustaqîm*). Islam does not prohibit seeking or benefiting from the good things of the world, but it condemns the actions of those who become engrossed in them and make them the sole object of their life. Elsewhere the Holy Qur’ân refers to those whose efforts are all lost in the life of this world (18:104). The beautifier referred to here is *satan* who endows the things of the world with the engrossing beauty that monopolizes the attention paid to them (cf. 16:63; 49:7).

الصَّابِرِينَ وَالصَّادِقِينَ وَالْقَانِتِينَ وَالْمُنْفِقِينَ وَالْمُسْتَغْفِرِينَ بِالْأَسْحَارِ

3:17 **Ashâr** لأسحár is the plural of *sahar* سحر which means the later part of the night. In order to be raised to the level of *muttaqîn* (cf. 3:15), one must implore Divine protection in prayers and worship in the late hours of the night. *Ashâr* أحسا ر also means the cores of hearts, the inner part of hearts, or simply hearts (*Lisân*, *Tâj*). The verse thus has a second meaning: “those who implore Divine protection (*istighfâr* cf. 2:282) in the cores of their hearts. **Sâbirîn** صابِرِين is the plural form of *sâbir* صابر derived from *sabara* صَبَرَ and means those who endure patiently, who steadily adhere to commands of God, who restrain from what reason and law forbids, or who restrain from manifesting or expressing grief other than before God (*Tâj*, *Lisân*). However, this does not imply that adhering to Allâh’s commandments requires a superhuman act of effort, as “Allâh charges no soul beyond its capacities” (2:286).

لَا يَتَّخِذُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الْكَافِرِينَ أَوْلَيَاءَ مِنْ دُونِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۝ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ فَإِنَّمَا مِنْ اللَّهِ فِي شَيْءٍ إِلَّا أَنْ تَنْقُوا مِنْهُمْ ثُقَّةً ۝ وَيُحَدِّرُ كُمُ اللَّهُ نَفْسَهُ ۝ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ الْمَصِيرُ

3:28 With the accession to political power of Islam, political alliances became necessary for the Muslims. This verse embodies the guiding principle that the Muslims should be on their guard against the plots and machinations of the disbelievers, with verse 60:1 giving additional detail and clarity. They are forbidden to take as friends those “who are enemies of Allâh and the Holy Prophet (pbuh) and those who hatch an intention of fighting them,” as well as “those who have driven out the Messenger and the Muslims from their homes” (cf. 60:1). The Muslims are, however, free to contract friendly relations with non-Muslims who are friendly towards them.

دُرْرَيَّةَ بَعْضُهَا مِنْ بَعْضٍ

3:34 This is an allusion to the fact that all Prophets were spiritually linked with one another: they all came with the same fundamental Truth. The verse forms a logical sequence to verses 31 and 32. The word “Adam” has a broad meaning (cf. 2:31). In the following verses some historical aspects from the life of Jesus are given (cf. 19:16-34). As a prelude, the birth of Mary and the parallel story of John the Baptist (*Yahya*, the son of Zachariah) are mentioned (cf. 19:2-15). John’s (*Yahya*’s) mother Elizabeth was a cousin of Mary. Mary’s mother was Hanna (Anna or Anne). Imrân was the father of Moses and Aaron, the progenitors of the family from which Jacob, David, Solomon, Mary, and Elizabeth originated (66:12; 20:38; 28:7). Mary is called in 19:28 the sister of Aaron and in verse 66:12 daughter of Imrân.

قَالَ رَبِّ اجْعَلْ لِي آيَةً فَقَالَ آتِكَ أَلَا تَكُونُ النَّاسَ ثَلَاثَةَ أَيَّامٍ إِلَّا رَمْزًا
وَاذْكُرْ رَبَّكَ كَثِيرًا وَسَبِّحْ بِالْعَشِيِّ وَالْإِبْكَارِ

3:41 Zachariah was simply commanded not to speak to anyone: he was not struck dumb, as the New Testament narrative relates (Luke 1:20-22). The instruction was for Zachariah’s utter self-abandonment to prayer and contemplation. *Yahya* (John), son of Zachariah, was the

Prophet who appeared in fulfilment of the biblical prophecy (Matt. :1, 4:5). The Hebrew form is Yohanna, which means Allâh has been gracious. The name Yahya was a Prophetic name to indicate that he will live long (cf. 19:2-15).

ذَلِكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الْعِيْبِ نُوحِيْهِ إِلَيْكَ ۝ وَمَا كُنْتَ لَدَيْهِمْ إِذْ يُقْرَأُونَ أَفَلَامَهُمْ أَيُّهُمْ
يَكْفُلُ مَرْيَمَ وَمَا كُنْتَ لَدَيْهِمْ إِذْ يَخْتَصِمُونَ

3:44 The life history of Mary and Jesus was shrouded in mystery and darkness until the Holy Qur’ân clarified their true roles as righteous servants of Allâh, and rejected two other and extreme views: the Jewish view that Jesus was conceived in sin and was an illegitimate child; and the Christian view that he was the son of God.

Mary’s life as narrated in the New Testament casts no light on these subjects; therefore the verse starts with the statement that ‘these are some of the important accounts of the things unseen’. It informs us that the person who took “charge” (يَكْفُلُ) of Mary (-Zachariah) was chosen by casting quills, as there were many candidates interested in taking Mary in their charge. The person who takes “responsibility”; according to the word “kafalu” (كُفْلُ) used here, is responsible for the child till “nikkah” (Tâj, Lisân). In the Christian terminology, the expression “nikkah” is equivalent to getting married. The verse thus negates the view that Mary never married. “Giving her child to someone in charge in a Closter” was the promise of the Mother of Mary given to God (3:31).

إِذْ قَالَتِ الْمَلَائِكَةُ يَا مَرْيَمُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُشَرِّكُ بِكَلِمَةٍ مِّنْهُ

3:45 What the Angels said to Mary was not from them, but were the words from Allâh. Here *kalimatin minhu* كَلِمَةٍ مِّنْهُ refers to a promise given by the All-Mighty Allâh to Mary.

وَيُكَلِّمُ النَّاسَ فِي الْمَهْدِ وَكَهْلًا وَمِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ

3:46 Al-Mahad الْمَهَدُ is derived from *mahada* مَهَدٌ, meaning to prepare, extend, unfold, or stretch out. *Mihâd* مِهَادٌ is a resting place that lies spread out, and *al-Mahad* الْمَهَدُ is a particular spread-out resting place (Thalabî, Mughnî, Asâs). The reference to Jesus speaking in *al-Mahad* المَهَدُ conveys a Prophetic announcement to Mary that her son will be prepared for and endowed with the power of forceful and eloquent speech. It is not correct to understand from the words وَيُكَلِّمُ النَّاسَ فِي الْمَهَدِ that Jesus spoke while he was an infant in his cradle.

Kahlan كَهْلًا means to be of old and mature age (Thalabî, Mughnî, Asâs). There is a significant difference in the suffix *al* الـ being used before *mahad* مَهَدٌ, but not before *kahlan*. “Speaking of Jesus in old age to the people” brings the good news to Mary that her son will reach a mature age, and that Allâh will save him from the plots and enmity of people attempting to kill him. The verb **Kallamu** كَلَمٌ means “to speak” or “to express”. *Kalimatun* كَلِمَةٌ means word, expression, saying, assertion, expression of opinion, decree, commandment, argument, news, sign, plan, design, glad tidings, creation of Allâh, promise, that which is said. The announcement of Jesus advent had been made in the Books of the Prophets before him, so when he came it was said, “This is the Prophetic word” and so he was called “a Word of Allâh” (Râzî). According to *Tâj al-‘Arûs*, Jesus was called *kalimat Allâh* كَلِمَةُ اللَّهِ because his words were helpful to the cause of religion of Allâh. This is similar to the person who helps the cause of religion by his values and who is called *saif Allâh* سِيفُ اللَّهِ (the sword of Allâh) or *asad Allâh* اَسَدُ اللَّهِ (the lion of Allâh). Related words include *kalama* كَلَمٌ, the act of speaking; *kalâm* كَلَامٌ, a saying, speech, or idea occurring in the mind even if it is not expressed; and *takallama* تَكَلُّمُ - to utter a word, or speak.

وَيُعَلِّمُهُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَالتُّورَاةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ

3:48 Teaching Jesus the “*art of writing and wisdom*” يُعَلِّمُهُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ other than *Injîl* and *Torah* is the continuation of prophetic news to

Mary that her son will be learned and will possess knowledge in fields other than the Torah and the Evangel. Christian history is silent about the life of Jesus after his birth and his youth. Some historians say that Jesus spent of the time of his youth outside Palestine, and that he travelled considerably during his youth, and in doing so he acquired knowledge in many fields, including medicine. “Curing the blind and leprous” and “informing people to what they should eat and what they should store” is also a reference to this aspect of the knowledge of Jesus.

وَرَسُولًا إِلَىٰ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَنِّي قَدْ حَتَّمْتُ بِآيَةً مِّنْ رَبْكُمْ ۖ أَنِّي أَخْلَقُ لَكُمْ مِّنَ الطِّينِ كَهْيَنَةَ الطَّيْرِ فَانْفَخْتُ فِيهِ فَيَكُونُ طَيْرًا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ ۚ وَأَبْرَئُ الْأَكْمَمَهُ وَالْأَيْرَصَ وَأَحْيِي الْمَوْتَىٰ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ ۖ وَأَنْبِكُمْ بِمَا تَأْكُلُونَ وَمَا تَدْخُرُونَ فِي بُيُوتِكُمْ

3:49 The words “*a messenger to the Children of Israel*” وَرَسُولًا إِلَىٰ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ show that the mission of Jesus was confined to the Tribes of Israel. He was not a universal Messenger (Mark 10.5-6; 15.24; 18.11-12; 19.28; Luke 19.10; 15.4; 22.28-30; Acts 3.25-26; 13.46). Paul first put forward the idea that Jesus message was for all the nations of the world. In these verses is the negation of the Christian claim that Jesus came with universal message.

In order to understand the significance of other passages that follow, we must bear in mind that the chief characteristic of Jesus speech was that he spoke in parables and preferred to express his message in allegorical language. This way of talking had been predicted in the previous Scriptures to be the characteristic of his speech (Matt. 13.34-35). If this is kept in mind, the reader will find little difficulty in understanding these passages.

Khalaqa أَخْلَقَ has the meaning of measuring, proportioning, determining or fashioning of a thing, to be apt for a thing, be fit, to behave kindly (Tâj, Baidzawî). In the sense of creating a new being

with life, the act of *khalq* خلق has been attributed in the Holy Qur’ân to Allâh alone. This is a point of fundamental importance; in particular, it says that any created being considered by people to be a god, does not and cannot truly create anything as they themselves have been created (16:20; 25:3). Likewise, the groundless notion that the power to create, although the exclusive prerogative of God, might have been temporarily delegated by Him to another is rejected by the Holy Qur’ân (31:9-11). We also find in the Holy Qur’ân, “What you worship apart from Allâh are only false gods, they are the creation of your lies” (29:17). Therefore *khalaq* خلق is used here to signify the measuring, proportioning, determining, and fashioning of a thing (*Tâj*, *Baidzawî*). The word was also used in this sense in pre-Islamic poetry.

The mission of Prophet is beyond the need of making real or toy birds, which would serve no meaningful moral purpose (*Baidzawî*). There is no mention in the New Testament of the so-called miracle of creating birds, as believed by some Muslims to have been performed by Jesus. If Jesus had really created physical birds, it is curious that the New Testament omits to mention it. Such a miracle would have lent support to the claim of the divinity of Jesus. The Holy Qur’ân says, “And the things they call upon apart from Allâh can create nothing. Rather they are themselves created” (16:20). This is the Divine Law, and there is no reason to make an exception to it for Jesus who is also called upon.

A human being is spoken of in the Holy Qur’ân as being created from *tin* طين that is clay or mud. Clay or mud is something, which can easily be molded and given a new shape. Being created from *al-Tin* الطين not only refers to the origin of the human being from inorganic particles, but metaphorically it also stands for his humble origin, which can be molded to any form. It also stands for a person who possesses a docile nature suitable for being molded like malleable clay. The word *Tair* طير (“bird”) is a metonymy for one who soars into the higher spiritual regions (cf. 2:260). Jesus talked in the language of

metaphors. When he said, “*I determine from clay a bird, and then I shall breathe into it so that he becomes a flier,*” to deduce from it that Jesus created a bird from dead clay is not correct. What Jesus meant was that if ordinary people of humble origin, but possessing the inherent power of spiritual and moral growth and development, understood and accepted his teachings, they would undergo a new transformation in their lives. From ordinary creatures at ground level that did not see beyond their physical and material concerns, they would change into birds soaring high into the lofty regions of the spiritual firmament. Thus under the impact of the ennobling teachings and care of their master, the humble fishermen of Galilee began soaring like birds. Here was, no doubt, mere dust, which the messenger of Allâh converted into birds soaring high by breathing the Spirit of Truth into them. We read elsewhere in the Holy Qur’ân that “There is no terrestrial creature that crawls on the earth nor bird that flies in the air with its two wings” but they are creatures and generations like us (6:38). The meaning is apparently that among human beings, there are those who only walk on the earth and do not rise above their material cares and mundane concerns, while others soar into the higher spiritual regions.

The word “bird” used here is also used in the sayings of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) for believers occupying high ranks. He said, “In Paradise the souls of the martyrs will be in the deep interior of green bird(s)” (Abû Muslim). Verse 46:4 rejects categorically the notion that Jesus created birds in the following words: “Do you realize what it is you call on, apart from Allâh? Show me what portion of the earth they have created.” In the words that follow—*أَنْتُونِي يَكْتَبُ مِنْ قَبْلِ هَذَا أَوْ أَثْلَاثَةً مِنْ*—“Bring me any Book (revealed) before this or some vestige of knowledge (to confirm your practices) if you are truthful (in your claim)” —the use of words “relics and vestige of knowledge” indicate that human knowledge, science and reason also lend no support to such thinking. The verse also indicates that only the revealed Scripture can form the basis for determining faith.

As for absolving the blind and the leprous, it is evident from the Bible that people suffering from certain diseases (e.g. leprosy) were considered unclean and were not allowed to be exposed to others. Jesus removed the discrimination that afflicted the people suffering from such maladies. **Ubri'u** أُبْرِي “I absolve,” is derived from *bera'* برى meaning, “he was or became clear or free from a thing.” “The phrase برى من الدين ابرى means, he became clear of debt; he declared him free from the defect attributed to him; he acquitted him or he absolved him (Tâj; Lane). By using the term *ubri'u* أُبْرِي “I absolve”, Jesus rejects the belief in the reincarnation of souls, a belief originally from Hinduism and apparently in the minds of the people at the time of Jesus. According to this belief, to be leprous, lame, or blind was the result of sins in the previous lives.

Prophets of Allâh are spiritual physicians. They restore sight to those who have lost spiritual vision, hearing to those who are spiritually deaf, and life to those who are spiritually dead (cf. Qur'ân 8:24; Matt. 13.15). Further references to this include “They that need not a physician but they that are sick” (Matt. 9.12), and Jesus message to John the Baptist: “The blind receive their sight and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up and the poor have the Gospel preached to them” (Matt.11.5). The concluding words show that the sick, lame, and blind belong to the same category as those poor in heart. The Holy Qur'ân speaks of the blind and the deaf frequently, but it never means those who have lost the physical senses of seeing and hearing.

The words وَأَحْيَ الْمَوْتَىٰ بِإِذْنِ اللّٰهِ “And I quicken the dead by the authority of Allâh,” do not mean that Jesus literally brought the dead to life. Those who are biologically dead are never restored to life in this world. Such a belief is opposed to the whole Qur'ânic teaching (2:28; 23:99-100; 21:95; 39:52-59; 40:11; 45:26; see also Tirmidhî, Ibn Mâjah). The use of the description “the dead” and of their being raised to life is used frequently in the spiritual sense (cf. 6:122; 8:24; 35:22).

We read in the Holy Qur'ân, "O you who believe! Respond to Allâh and His Messenger when he calls you to that which will give you life" (8:24), and again, "Can he, who was lifeless and to whom We gave life and We provided for him light whereby he moves among people" (6:122). The duty of the Prophets is to bring to life those who are spiritually dead (see also 2:260; 5:110).

قَالَ الْحَوَارِيُّونَ نَحْنُ أَنْصَارُ اللَّهِ

3:52 The word Hawârî حَوَارِي used for the disciples of Jesus means, one tried and found to be free from vice and fault, a person of pure and unsullied character, one who advises or counsels or acts honestly and faithfully, or "a true and sincere friend or helper" (Râghib, Tâj).

وَمَكَرُوا وَمَكَرَ اللَّهُ ۖ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الْمَاکِرِينَ

3:54 This verse signifies that the persecutors of Jesus planned to crucify him and put him to death, but he was saved from death on the cross (compare with 5:110).

إِذْ قَالَ اللَّهُ يَا عِيسَى اِنِّي مُتَوَفِّيكَ وَرَافِعُكَ إِلَيَّ وَمُطَهِّرُكَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
وَجَاعِلُ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوكَ فَوْقَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ ۖ ثُمَّ إِلَيَّ مَرْجِعُكُمْ
فَأَحْكُمُ بَيْنَكُمْ فِيمَا كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلُّونَ

3:55 Ibn 'Abbâs has translated the word **Mutawaffî-ka** مُتَوَفِّيك as *mumitu-ka*, مُمِيتِك, meaning, "I will cause you to die a natural death" (Bukhârî 65/12). Abû al-Qâsim Mahmûd ibn 'Umar Al-Zamakhsharî, says that *Mutawaffî-ka* means "I will grant thee full leave and cause you to die a natural death, not being killed by any other mean" (*Kashshaf*). Outstanding scholars and commentators like *Imâm Mâlik*, Bukhârî, Ibn Hazm, Ibn Quyyim, Qatâda, Wahhâb, *Muftî 'Abduhu of Egypt*, and others are of the same view - (see Bukhârî; Chapter on *Bâ'd ul Khalq*; *Majm'a Bihâr Al-Anwâr* by Sheikh Muhammad Tâhir of Gujrat; *Zâd Al-Ma'âd* by Muhammad Ibn Abû Bakr al-Dimashqî;

Durr al-Manthûr by Sayyutî; *Tafsîr al-Kabîr* (unabridged) by Ibn al Kathîr; and *Tafsîr* by Muftî ‘Abduhu. This word has been used in no less than twenty-five different places of the Holy Qur’ân, and in these instances the meaning is twenty times “to take away the soul at the time of death.” Only in two places is the meaning “to take the soul away at the time of sleep,” but there the qualifying word “sleep or night” has been added (6:60; 39:42). According to Lisân al Arab, the expression *tawaffah-Allâh* means, “Allâh took his soul or caused him to die.” The Holy Prophet (pbuh) said, “Had Moses and Jesus now been alive they would have followed me” (Kathîr). In some traditions, he even fixed the age of Jesus at 125 (lunar) years (Kathîr). Not a single instance from the Holy Qur’ân, from the sayings of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) or from the Arabic literature, can be cited to show that this expression can be used in any other sense than that mentioned above. Some modern translators have defined a different meaning to the one above while translating this verse. However, according to *Fath al-Biyân*, those commentators who have tried to put other meanings into the word *tawaffi* تَوَفَّى have done so in accordance with their belief that Jesus was transported to heaven alive. The word *Mutawaffika* مُتَوَفِّكَ possesses no other meaning than that of taking away the soul or causing to die (cf. 7:37; 32:11).

The word **Râfi‘u-ka** رَافِعُكَ, “will exalt you,” is the active participle from *rafa‘a* رَفَعَ, which signifies raising, elevating, exalting, or making honourable (Tâj; Lisân, Lane). Where the *rafa‘a* of a human being is mentioned, it is always in the sense of making him honourable and not in the sense of “raising him to heaven with his body.” The Holy Qur’ân says, “In houses which Allâh has commanded to be exalted” (24:36), and “All good words go up to Him” (35:10). We read about the father of Joseph, *wa rafa‘a abwaiha* (رفع ابويه) meaning, “they raised his parents (in honour and took them to the royal court)” (12:100). “The Mount (of Sinai) was towering above you” (*rafa‘a*; 2:63) and “there are some of them, the Prophets, Allâh has exalted them above the others” (2:253). The Holy Prophet (pbuh) said, “He

who truly humbles himself for the sake of Allâh, Allâh would exalt him”. In our daily prayers we pray, *Rabbî rafa’ni رَبِّي رَفِعْنِي* “O my Lord! Exalt me! “No one supposes that in this place we pray for our physical ascension to the heavens. Râzî writes while commenting on this verse that *rafa’ā* رَفَعْ is exaltation in degree and in praise, not in place and direction. In addition, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) says that Allâh will, by means of this Qur’ân, ‘exalt some people and humble others’ (Ibn Mâjah). We read about the Prophet Idrîs in the chapter 19, “We [Allâh] raised him (رَفَعْنَا) to an exalted position” (19:57), but no translator has ever suggested that Idrîs was physically lifted to heaven.

These examples illustrate, that when the *rafa’ā* رَفَعْ of a person is spoken, the meaning is invariably his spiritual elevation. The *rafa’ā* of Jesus is mentioned in the verse being discussed in reply to the false assertion of the Jews that he was accursed for having died on the cross or of illegitimate birth. Raising a human being in his body to God implies that the Divine Being is limited to a place and time. Jesus himself denied the possibility of his rising physically to heaven: “and no man hath ascended up to heaven but he that came down from heaven, even the son of man which is in heaven” (John 3.13).

The root word *waffa* وَفَى occurs sixty-six times in the Holy Qur’ân and *rafa’ā* رَفَعْ more than thirty times. It is a curious fact that some translators systematically adopt the meaning of physical ascension for these words in verses related to Jesus, whereas in other contexts they use different meanings. It demonstrates a lack of integrity on the part of these translators simply because this translation suits their own preconceptions and fancies.

This verse has been linked with the preceding one with the word *idh* إِذ - “When”, and contains a prophecy. It relates to the occasion when Jesus was the object of a plot by Jews to have him crucified and thereby prove him to have died an accursed death. But in the present verse, Allâh says that He will cause Jesus to die a natural death and will exalt him, and free him of the accusations against him, and that

his enemies will not be able to kill him on the cross and neither therefore to sully his spiritual reputation.

وَجَاءُكُمْ أَنْذِيرٌ مِّنْ أَنفُسِكُمْ فَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ (الذِّينَ كَفَرُوا إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ) - Allâh will make the followers of Jesus prevail over those who disbelieve him. The Christians and the Muslims claim to be the followers of Jesus; the Jews are the rejecters of Jesus. Thus according to this prophecy, the Jews will never prevail over the Christians or the Muslims, no matter how hard they try. Either they will always depend on the Muslims or the Christians for their security (cf. 3:112). Not only this, as the following verse (3:56) tells us, the rejecters of Jesus will experience continuous and repeated calamities in this world in the form of persecution, and their punishment will continue in the Hereafter. In verse 3:112, this prophecy has been elaborated on once again. We read there, “Smitten are they (the Jews) with ignominy wherever they are found unless they have a bond of protection from Allâh (the Muslims) or a bond of protection by the people (the Christians, the Romans or the Persians). They have incurred the displeasure of Allâh and have been condemned to humiliation.” The end of the verse along with verse 4:160-161 give reasons for this Divine punishment.

إِنَّ مَثَلَ عِيسَىٰ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ آدَمَ ۖ خَلَقَهُ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ قَالَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ

3:59 Adam آدم is derived from *adama* آدم that means variously human being, man, person, intelligent person, brown man, brave man, civilized person, chief, honest person, kind and polite person, person who is created from different substances, person in possession of different powers, one who enjoys the comforts of life, one who is by nature social, or one who has heirs (Tâj, Lisân, Lane, Râghib). The word also stands for the human race, or humankind. The verse, “The likeness and case of Jesus is as the likeness and case of Adam” is to be taken to correspond to the meanings of *Adam* آدم given above. The verse simply means that Jesus is mortal and there can be no attribution

of divinity to him. The words, “Then He said to him, *kun fayakûn*” گُنْ فَيَكُونْ (“Be! and he was”), show that this command of Allâh concerned his (Jesus) death and not his birth, because his birth had already been mentioned in the words just before, namely *khalaqahu min turâb*, خَلَقَهُ مِنْ تُرَابٍ, “He fashioned him from dust.” The words *kun fayakûn* گُنْ فَيَكُونْ in the Holy Qur’ân always appear in connection with death and raising the dead to life on the day of resurrection (6:73; 16:40; 36:83). Thus in the above verse, the words *kun fayakûn* contain a message that Allâh will cause Jesus to die and will raise him to life on the day of resurrection like other human beings (cf. 6:73; 16:40; 36:83). In this verse and the following verse there is a challenge to Christians who believe in the divinity of Christ to come forward with their proof.

ثُمَّ نَبْتَهُنْ فَنَجْعَلُ لَعْنَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَى الْكَاذِبِينَ

3:61 Nabtahil نَبْتَهُنْ means, he humbled and abased himself, he addressed himself with earnest and energetic supplication, he prayed or supplicated humbly and earnestly and fervently with energy and effort (Tâj). In this verse the “prayer-contest” known as *Mubâhalah* مِبَاهَلَةً is mentioned. When all other methods of settlement fail, the parties approach God to decide between them with earnest supplication to Allâh to uphold the truth and destroy falsehood; the result is then left to Divine Will and Wisdom. This prayer-contest (*mubâhalah*) is an extremely serious affair and should be used only in very rare cases. Unfortunately, there are some religious leaders who, being ignorant of the seriousness of such a contest, take it lightly.

The persons addressed here were the members of the Christian deputation from Najrân. Sixty members of this tribe headed by their chief ‘Abdul Masih, also known as Al-Âqib, met the Holy Prophet (pbuh) to discuss the doctrine of the divinity of Jesus. After long discussions, some of the members of the deputation continued to insist on their doctrine of the divinity of Jesus. It was then that the Holy

Prophet (pbuh) invited them as a last resort to join him in a *mubâhalah* - prayer-contest. The Christian delegation declined to accept the challenge (Bukhârî 64/74). The challenge was given according to the order of Allâh, as the word *Qul* (“Say!”) indicates.

**قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ تَعَالَوْا إِلَى كَلْمَةٍ سَوَاءٍ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنُكُمْ إِلَّا نَعْبُدُ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَلَا
نُشْرِكُ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُنَا أَرْبَابًا مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ**

3:64 This verse lays down the basis for creating peace among the religions of the world and promoting religious dialogue. There cannot be peace in the world without peace and understanding between the religions of the world. The followers of different religions and peace-seeking sects are invited to come forward and agree to a premise that is common to them. All major religions assume the basis of Divine Unity, which is therefore common to all; but each religious system then diverges because of its specifics on which the others do not agree. To promote peace and understanding among the world religions the verse tells us we should proceed by looking for a premise that is common among religions. It calls us to a belief free from all additions to Allâh’s Unity—a common and simple belief. The verse is intended to suggest an easy and simple method by which one can arrive at a consensus with no claim of any exclusivity of any religion. The Holy Prophet (pbuh), while writing to Heraclius in the year 6 A.H., used this very verse in his letter (Bukhârî). The common premise then serves as a meeting ground for further religious dialogue.

**كُلُّ الطَّعَامٍ كَانَ حِلًّا لِّبْنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ إِلَّا مَا حَرَّمَ إِسْرَائِيلُ عَلَىٰ نَفْسِهِ مِنْ قَبْلِ
أَنْ تُنَزَّلَ التُّورَةُ**

3:93 Israel إِسْرَائِيلُ stands here for the Israelite nation. When they refused to follow Moses into the Holy land, they were made to aimlessly wander in the wilderness for forty years (5:21-26).

يَوْمَ تَبَيَّضُ وُجُوهٌ وَتَسْوَدُ وُجُوهٌ ۝ فَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ اسْوَدَتْ وُجُوهُهُمْ أَكَفَرُتُمْ بَعْدَ إِيمَانِكُمْ فَدُوْقُوا الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ

3:106 Aswadah أسودة means, “clouded” or “his face became expressive of grief or sorrow” (Râghib, Tâj). It is an expression for an unsatisfactory or undesirable condition, failure, or sorrow (Lisân; see also 75:23; 80:39).

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرُ أُمَّةٍ أَخْرِجْتُ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمِرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ
وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ ۝

3:110 The excellence of a nation lies in what it accomplishes for the good of humankind, its ordinance to do good and its prohibition of evil, and its propagation of belief in one God. These were also the actions of the Companions of the Prophet.

ضُرِبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الدَّلْلَةُ أَيْنَ مَا نَقْفُوا إِلَّا بَحْلَنَ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَحْلَنِ مِنَ النَّاسِ وَبَاءُوا
بِغَضَبٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَضُرِبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمُسْكَنُهُ ۝ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ بِآيَاتِ
اللَّهِ وَيَقْتُلُونَ الْأَنْبِيَاءَ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ ۝ ذَلِكَ بِمَا عَصَوْا وَكَانُوا يَعْتَذُونَ

3:112 This verse contains another far-reaching prophecy about the Jews. The history of their community bears eloquent testimony to the truth of this harrowing prediction. In all countries and in all ages Jews have been victims of bitter persecution. They could either improve their condition by accepting the protection of the nation whose subjects they are or by making a pact of security with other people able to give them protection. It is a fact of history that the Jews did not suffer persecution under Muslims as they did under the Romans and the Christians; yet their enmity against Muslims is deep-rooted (see 5:82 and 3:55; 7:167).

3:121-127 The verses refer to the Battle of Uhud which was fought in the third year after Hijrah. After suffering a defeat at Badr, the Pagans of Makkah were determined to expunge their disgrace and annihilate

the Muslims in Madînah. A well-equipped army of 3,000 warriors marched against Madînah under the leadership of Abû Sufyân. When the Holy Prophet (pbuh) heard of this, he consulted his Companions. ‘Abdullâh bin Ubayy bin Salûl and certain elderly Companions were of the opinion that they should defend themselves by remaining in the city. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) was also of the same view. However, the majority of his followers were eager to march out of Madînah and meet the enemy in a pitched battle. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) respected the vote of the majority. To meet the danger the Holy Prophet (pbuh) decided to take a defensive position at Mount Uhad, which dominated the city of Madînah some three miles to the north, on the morning on the seventh day of Shawwal 3 A.H. (January, 625 A.D.). As a precaution, he stationed fifty archers on a hilltop in the rear of the Muslim army under the leadership of ‘Abdullâh bin Jubair in case the enemy attacked from the rear. The archers were given the express order not to leave their position until ordered by the Prophet (pbuh) himself. They were expected to remain in place under all circumstances, even if they saw the Makkans fleeing before the Muslims or the Muslim fighters being defeated and killed. In the beginning, the battle went well for the Muslims. The enemy made three consecutive general assaults and was repulsed each time. At last, the enemy wavered; its forces broke and retreated. At this moment, the Muslim archers became lax and disagreed among themselves about the sense of the orders given to them by the Holy Prophet (pbuh). Forty of them disobeyed their leader and left their positions to join in the pursuit and share in the booty. Khalid bin Walîd, who was among the leaders of the Makkan army, took advantage of the weakness created by the archers and attacked with the help of his party of horsemen, killing the few remaining men with their leader ‘Abdullâh bin Jubair. They then attacked the Muslim army from the rear. There was intense hand-to-hand fighting. More than seventy of the Companions of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) fell in the Battle. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) himself received wounds to his head and face.

This was nevertheless only a temporary setback for the Muslim army, as Abû Sufyân and his Makkan army thought it more prudent to withdraw. Madînah was saved and the Muslims learned a lesson in faith, constancy, and firmness. Uhad is as much a symbol as Badr in this respect.

إِذْ هَمَّتْ طَائِفَتَانِ مِنْكُمْ أَنْ تَفْشَلَا وَاللَّهُ وَلِيُّهُمَا

3:122 The two parties hesitating referred to in this verse, were the two tribes of Banû Salamah Khazraji and Banû Hârithah of Aus (Bukhârî 64/18).

إِذْ تَقُولُ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَلَّا يُكْيِّكُمْ أَنْ يُمَدَّكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ بِثَلَاثَةِ آلَافٍ مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ
مُنْزَلِينَ

3:124 This verse refers to the Battle of Uhad in which the enemy attacked with three thousand warriors. The Muslims, poorly equipped and outnumbered, were promised “the help of three thousand angels” to meet the enemy force. The number of angels sent to the Battle of Badr was a thousand (cf. 8:9-10), as the number of the enemy on that occasion was also one thousand. This verse and verse 8:9 inform us of the number of enemies at each of the battles, Badr and Uhad.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَأْكُلُوا الرِّبَآ أَضْعَافًا مُضَاعَفَةً

3:130 All forms of financial interest are prohibited, whether moderate or excessive. The verse under discussion does not mean that interest is permissible at a moderate rate and that only a high rate is forbidden. The words *Adz̄ ‘afan mudz̄â‘afah* أَضْعَافًا مُضَاعَفَةً are not used here as a qualifying phrase to restrict the meaning of interest, but as a descriptive clause to point to the inherent nature of interest, which continually increases. Individuals and nations alike have been ruined by lending and borrowing large sums of money on interest, leading to foreign interference in their affairs. The position of the verse indicates

that war and interest are closely related to each other: interest and the resulting debt is one of the causes of war and instrumental in prolonging it (see also 2:275).

وَاتَّقُوا النَّارَ الَّتِي أَعِدْتُ لِكَافِرِينَ

3:131 Al-Nâr in this verse is the excessive love of wealth (cf. 104:1-7); it is also the fire of war.

وَلَفَدْ كُنْتُمْ تَمَنَّوْنَ الْمَوْتَ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تَلْقَوْهُ فَقَدْ رَأَيْتُمُوهُ وَأَنْتُمْ تَنْظُرُونَ

3:143 In the Battle of Uhud the opinion of some of the Companions of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) was that they should meet the enemy outside Madînah in the open field: they said, “We had longed for this day, let us go out to fight our enemies, lest they think we are cowards”. The “desire for fighting the enemy and being slain in the cause of truth” is called a “desire for death.”

وَمَا مُحَمَّدٌ إِلَّا رَسُولٌ قَدْ حَلَّتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ الرُّسُلُ ۚ أَفَإِنْ مَاتَ أَوْ قُتِلَ انْقَلَبُمْ عَلَىٰ أَعْقَابِكُمْ ۚ وَمَنْ يَنْقِلِبْ عَلَىٰ عَقِبِيهِ فَلَنْ يَصُرَّ اللَّهُ شَيْئًا

3:144 All Prophets are human beings, and they cannot escape death; all Prophets who lived before the Holy Prophet (pbuh) have died; and Jesus is not an exception to this fact. Those Muslims who insist that Jesus is still physically living should reflect on this verse. The verse also lays stress on the essential truth of Islam: even if a Prophet is slain his mission to teach the Unity of God never fails, for this mission does not depend on the life of an individual, however great he may be. Abû Bakr^(rz) recited this verse when the Holy Prophet (pbuh) died eight years later and the Prophets (pbuh) companions and followers were extremely distraught by the news of the death of their leader and spiritual guide. It also demonstrates that Jesus Christ was also dead; otherwise, Abû Bakr’s^(rz) argument would not have silenced any doubts concerning the Holy Prophets death.

The verse also refers to a situation in the battle of Uhud, when the Holy Prophet (pbuh) was wounded, and the Muslims were suffering casualties. A rumor spread that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) had been killed during the fight. The verse should not be understood to mean that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) could ever be killed in war or at the hand of an assassin. He was promised Divine protection (5:67).

وَلَفَدْ صَدَقْكُمُ اللَّهُ وَعْدَهُ إِذْ تَحْسُونَهُمْ بِإِذْنِهِ ۖ

3:152 The reference is not only to the general promise of victory and success repeatedly given to the Companions of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), but also to the promise contained in the verses 124-126.

إِذْ تُصْعِدُونَ وَلَا تَلُوْنَ عَلَىٰ أَحَدٍ وَالرَّسُولُ يَدْعُوكُمْ فِي أُخْرَأِكُمْ فَاثَابُكُمْ
عَمَّا بِعْمَ لِكِيلًا تَحْزَنُوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَاتَكُمْ وَلَا مَا أَصَابَكُمْ ۝

3:153 According to some commentators, the first “sorrow” mentioned was the dangerous position in which the Muslims saw the Holy Prophet (pbuh), and the second “sorrow” refers to the failure of the archers, stationed at the neighbouring heights to prevent the enemy attack from the rear, to faithfully observe the orders of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), thus denying the Muslims the clear victory.

ثُمَّ أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِّنْ بَعْدِ الْغَمَّ أَمْنَةً نُعَاسًا يَغْشَى طَائِفَةً مِّنْكُمْ ۝

3:154 “*Slumber which overwhelmed a party of you*” refers to the end of the Battle of Uhud. Abû Talhâ, a Companion of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), said, “I lifted my head on the Day of Uhud and began to look about and there was none among us on that day but was bending down his head as in slumber” (*Tirmidhî*). Those who had fought a hard fight were visited by *sakînah* سکینۃ, meaning a kind of a slight sleep, or “sweet natures nurse.” Slumber here implies calm and quietness, which is a sign of peace and tranquillity (*Râghib*).

The words مَا قُتِلْنَا هَاهُنَا “We would not have been killed here”, refer to the statements given by the hypocrites of Madînah who did not take part in the battle of Uhad (cf. 2:54).

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَوَلَّوْا مِنْكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّمَا اسْتَرَلَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ بِعَضٍ مَا كَسَبُوا

3:155 “Satan’s” influence on human beings is not the primary cause of sin but its consequence.

فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاسْتَعْفِرْ لَهُمْ وَشَارِرُهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ

3:159 The injunction Shâwirî-hum “consult them” is one of the fundamental clauses of all Qur’ânic legislation relating to statecraft (cf. 42:38). The Prophet selected the place of Uhad to meet the enemy as the result of a consultation, even though his own inclination was different. Like some of his elderly Companions, his preference would have been to meet the outnumbering forces of the attacking enemy inside the city of Madînah for a street-by-street battle. He respected the vote of the majority; the result was that the Muslim forces suffered losses.

قَالُوا لَوْ نَعْلَمُ قِتَالًا لَا تَغْنَاكُمْ

3:167 The expression “If we but knew that it would be a fight” is an allusion to the desperate situation of the Muslim forces. By most rational analyses, their inferior armament and their smaller number suggested a desperate and hopeless mission that would have led to their destruction.

وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتًا ۚ بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ

3:169 Amwâta – “dead,” also means “one whose blood has not been avenged,” “one who leaves behind no successors,” or “one

stricken with sorrow and grief” (Lisân, Tâj). **Âhyâ**, (living), also means “one who is in Paradise.”

الَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِلَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا أَصَابَهُمُ الْقَرْحُ لِلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا مِنْهُمْ وَأَنْفَوْا أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا

3:172 The reference here is to the expedition the Holy Prophet (pbuh) led against the pagans of Makkah after the Battle of Uhad. The withdrawing Makkan army boasted that they were victorious, but they had nothing to show for it—neither any booty nor prisoners. Anticipating their return, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) on the following day left with 250 men to pursue the enemy forces. When the Makkan army heard of this, they dispersed. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) continued the pursuit as far as Hamrâ al-Asad, a place about eight miles from Madînah in the direction of Makkah. This expedition was named after this place.

الَّذِينَ قَالَ لَهُمُ النَّاسُ إِنَّ النَّاسَ قَدْ جَمَعُوا لَكُمْ فَأَخْشُوْهُمْ فَرَادَهُمْ إِيمَانًا وَقَالُوا حَسِبْنَا اللَّهَ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ

3:173 This verse and the following two verses (3:174-175) refer to the expedition known as *Badr al-Sughrah* (“the smaller Badr”), undertaken a year later after the battle of Uhad. It is called “*al-Sughrah*” (“the smaller”) to distinguish it from the “big” battle of Badr. Abû Sufyân, commander of the Makkan army, challenged the Muslims to meet him and his army again at the fair of Badr the next year. The Muslims accepted the challenge. Abû Sufyân sent an emissary, Nu‘aim bin Mas‘ûd to Madînah to spread false rumors among the Muslims that significant preparations were being made by the Makkans. He is the “*Satan*” spoken of in verse 175 (Râzî), and his friends are referred here as the “hypocrites.” This clumsy artifice failed: not only did the Muslims go to Badr at the appointed time, but

they also benefited considerably by trading in a fair held there as indicated in this verse.

وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُطْلَعُكُمْ عَلَى الْغَيْبِ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَجْتَبِي مِنْ رُّسُلِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۝

3:179 A human being in his fragile state of evolution is unprepared for all the secrets of the Unseen, in particular the spiritual secrets. Such secrets are, however, revealed to him from time to time by Prophets chosen for the purpose, and in accordance with the progress of intellectual evolution. The passage does not mean that some of the Messengers are chosen and others not, but that Allâh chooses the persons whom He ordains to be sent as His Messengers, and provides them with knowledge suited to that particular era.

الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَهْدُ إِلَيْنَا أَلَا نُؤْمِنَ لِرَسُولٍ حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِنَا بِقُرْبَانٍ تَأْكُلُهُ
النَّارُ ۝

3:183 In the religious ceremonies before Moses and also later in the Mosaic Law, the priests burnt the offerings on the altar. This was called “burnt sacrifice” or “sacrifice consumed by the fire”: a reference is made to this in Lev. 1:9. While blessing Israel, Moses says, “They shall put incense before thee, and whole burnt sacrifice upon thine altar” (Deut. 33:15). When the Jews were told that they were opposing Islam through covetousness (cf. 3:181), their response was that they opposed the Muslims because the Muslims, unlike them, devoured those animals, which they offered as burnt sacrifices, so they could not accept a Prophet who did not observe Jewish Law. They persisted in their requirement that the promised Prophet should observe the Jewish Law, although this aspect of the Law had been left in abeyance ever since the destruction of the second temple in Jerusalem. Jews also insisted that the promised Prophet should bring to them an offering which the priest should burn on the altar and that he should be an Israelite and should revive the Israelite law. The Holy Qur’ân answers this objection by saying that the “burnt offering” is no

criterion to test the truth of a Prophet, as such an act could easily be accomplished by an impostor. A clear Book full of wisdom and glorious Scripture establish the truth of a claimant. Moreover, their Mosaic Law did not instruct them to reject the promised Prophet if he did not conform to the Law of the Torah in every detail. Yet even if observance of the “burnt offering” according to Mosaic Law was the criterion of the promised Prophet, the question then arises about their rejection of Prophet Jesus who conformed to that law (cf. Matt. 23:37; Thess. 2:15).

فَإِنْ كَذَّبُوكَ فَقَدْ كُذِّبَ رُسُلٌ مِّنْ قَبْلِكَ جَاءُوا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالْزُّبُرِ وَالْكِتَابِ
الْمُنَبِّرِ

3:184 Zubur زُبُر is to “copy” or “throw stones. *Zubura* is a fragment of iron, a large piece of metal, or a mane of iron. *Zubûr* is thus something, which is hard (*Tâj*, *Lissân*). Some interpreters wrongly translate the word as “books of psalms” (cf. 3:3; 3:55; 4:163; 17:55; 21:80; 34:10).

لَنْبَلُونَ فِي أَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ وَلَتَسْمَعُنَّ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أَوْتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ
وَمِنَ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا أَدَدِيَّ كَثِيرًا ۝ وَإِنْ تَصْبِرُوا وَتَتَّقُوا فَإِنَّ ذَلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ
الْأَمْوَارِ

3:186 There is a saying of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) that Islam started weak (*gharîb* - غريب “a sufferer at the hands of others,” and that it will once again, after rising to power, return to the state in which it began and shall suffer at the hands of its enemies (Ibn Mâjah 35:15).

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اصْبِرُوا وَصَابِرُوا وَرَأِطُوا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ نُفْلِحُونَ

3:200 This concluding verse speaks of four requirements, which are the keys to success and to achieve promised in the verse 3:194



سورة النساء - 4. CHAPTER

The Women

(Revealed after Hijrah)

This chapter was revealed after the battle of Uhud mentioned in the previous chapter. In that battle, though the attack of the enemy was thwarted, the Muslim forces suffered considerable losses. It is estimated that about one tenth of the Muslim fighters were killed, thus leaving many widows and orphans behind. This situation necessitated defining laws and regulations for the guidance of a society under such circumstances.

This chapter is named “the Women” **النساء** Al-Nisâ as it deals mainly with the rights of women, their status in society, and family life. The chapter also compares teachings of the two religions, Islam and Christianity, with prophetic reference to the political progress and domination of Christian nations in the latter days.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِّنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا
وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً ۝ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ

4:1 This verse addresses the whole of humanity. It begins with an appeal for the unity and equality of men and women. The words *Nafsin Wâhida* – نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ “Single being or a single soul” refer to a common evolutionary origin of males and females. It can also refer to the common innate natures of man and woman. The particle *min* - من - “from,” does not mean a portion of something or out of something, but a species, one of similar nature or with similar essence (*Bahr al-Muhît*, Râzî). Hasan explains the expression as meaning “of the same kind” (*Bahr al-Muhît* 7:189). The pronoun *minhâ* منها refers to *nafs*

خَلَقْتُم مِنْ (نفسٍ وَاجْدَةٍ). The expression “Who created you from a single being” should not lead to the understanding that woman was created out of the first man Adam or from his rib some six thousand years ago as the Bible narrates; rather she belongs to the same kind and species as a man, having the same nature and the same propensities. The meaning of this expression becomes clearer when we read: “Allâh has created you out of dust (inorganic particles) and then from a drop of fluid (the involvement of water in the process of evolution from inorganic dust to organic entity) *and then made you pairs* (the process of continued creation and evolution through pairing of males and the females)” (35:11). We also read, “And Allâh has made for you mates of your own nature from your own species” (16:72), and “He has made for you pairs from among yourselves” (42:11). This means that like other creatures, a partner was provided for a human being from his own species; just as other females are not created from the ribs of males, neither was the wife of Adam (cf. 30:20-21). The biblical story of the creation of Eve from a rib of Adam (Gen. 2.21) may be allegorical, but it is superfluous to Qur’ânic teaching.

The underlying significance of this verse is to give women a status of equality with men and to remind us of the strength of the ties between males and females. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) used to recite this verse when delivering a marriage sermon in order to remind both the parties of their responsibilities to each other, as well as their duties towards humankind and Allâh. It is important to note that the injunction to adopt righteousness, the word *taqwâ* تقوی, comes twice in this verse and is thus emphasised. The verse also reminds us of the important role that women play in our existence and in our social relationships, and of the reverence and the respect, they deserve in the society. In order to know what the Holy Qur’ân means by *taqwâ*, see among others the verses 2:2; 2:177; 3:15-17; 3:133-135; 5:27; 9:3; 16:128; 45:19; 65:2. Following this introduction, the chapter enters into a discussion of women, orphans, and family relationships.

وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَا تُقْسِطُوا فِي الْيَتَامَىٰ فَإِنْ كَحُوا مَا طَابَ لَكُمْ مِّنَ النِّسَاءِ مَثْنَىٰ وَثُلَاثَةَ وَرُبَاعَ ۝ فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَا تَعْدِلُوا فَوَاحِدَةً أَوْ مَا مَلَكْتُ أَيْمَانُكُمْ ۝ ذَلِكَ أَذْنَىٰ أَلَا تَعُولُوا

4:3 The intent of this verse is not to grant permission to Muslims to marry four wives. Its basic purpose is to discourage the practice of polygamy and protect the rights of women by avoiding situations in which a woman may suffer economically and socially as the result of a divorce. To have several dozen wives was a common practice for Arabs of the time of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). This practice is also known in other cultures; it even still exists in modern times in societies where polygamy is not permitted, but is nonetheless practiced in secret.

To discourage polygamy, the Holy Qur'ân first limits the number of wives to a maximum of four, before imposing a strict condition of equality: “*If you fear that you will not be able to deal equitably then (marry only) one.*” Later in verse 129 we are told, وَلَنْ شَنْطَطِيْعُوا أَنْ تَعْدِلُوا, “It is not within your power to maintain perfect balance between wives, even though you are so eager.” To deal equitably is an injunction; any violation of this is a significant sin and against Qur'ânic law. Thus, this permission of a maximum of four wives nonetheless imposes considerable restriction and severe conditions on males that makes taking another wife almost impossible.

Permission to have more than one wife is not a substantive law in the Holy Qur'ân, but a remedial or emergency law. It should not be brought into operation unless circumstances justify it, such as times of war when many men lose their lives, women are widowed and children are orphaned. The objects of marriage are four-fold: 1) protection against social, moral, and spiritual maladies (2:187; 4:24); 2) a source of progeny (4:1); 3) a source of a loving companion

providing peace of mind and comfort (30:21); and 4) the social and economic protection of orphans and widows of war (4:127).

Moral, physical and social problems have arisen in societies with very strict monogamy laws. Strict monogamy is often associated with high divorce rates and extramarital affairs, which can lead to considerable societal, psychological, and financial hardship. Limited polygamy allows for widows and divorced women to enter into a stable marital relationship in times of war, when the male population has been severely decimated. It is to meet such exigencies that the Qur'an allows the contraction of multiple matrimonial relationships by the man. Marriage in Islam is also a civil contract. Both the parties enter into it under certain conditions. Thus, a woman is at liberty to set a condition on the marriage that the men not take another wife. The violation of that condition will be sufficient to entitle her to divorce her husband and, if so provided in the contract, claim reasonable damages. She is at liberty to separate herself from her husband if he does not abide by the conditions that were agreed on. On the other hand, the example of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) is one of nobility and charity. While still youthful and full of vigor, at the age of twenty-five he married a forty-year-old widow, Khadijah, and led an exemplary monogamous life with her for another twenty-five years, even though society at the time would have allowed him to take another wife. After the death of his first wife, he took in marriage older widows and divorced women with the sole intention of giving them social and economic protection. Only one of his wives, 'Aishâ, was a young unmarried woman. The monogamy that now is predominant in the West should not be considered as a Christian accomplishment. Until recent times, polygamy was practiced by Christians and was allowed in Judaism, Hinduism, and many other religions. Abraham, David, Solomon, and many other Prophets and patriarchs of the Israelites, as well as Krishna and Zoroaster and others esteemed for their sanctity, had more than one wife.

The phrase مُتَّشِّيٍ وَثَلَاثٌ وَرُبَّاعٌ “Two or three or four” is a parenthetic clause relating to both the free woman mentioned in the first part of the sentence and to females “whom your right hands possess” from among prisoners of war. Both these nouns are governed by the imperative of the verb “marry.” Thus, the meaning of the passage is to marry from among free woman or captives. The obscene interpretation that female prisoners of war can be held as concubines is incorrect and runs counter to the moral teachings of Islam.

There is yet another aspect given in this verse concerning this permission. We read فَانكِحُوا مَا طَابَ لَكُمْ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ “Marry of women as may be agreeable to you.” The term “marriage” in Islam always means a mutually-agreed-upon civil contract between husband and wife, and forced “marriages” are not permitted. Unfortunately, this is still a practice in many societies.

وَأَنْوَا النِّسَاءَ صَدَقَاتِهِنَّ نِحْلَةً ۝ فَإِنْ طِبَنَ لَكُمْ عَنْ شَيْءٍ مِنْهُ نَفْسًا فَكُلُّوهُ
هَنِينًا مَرِينًا

4:4 Saduqât صَدُقَاتٍ - “dowers” is the plural of saduqa called because these are a symbol of truthfulness and sincerity on the part of the husband. Sadaqah means charity or alms. It is different from saduqât (Tâj). Nihlah نِحْلَةٌ means giving a thing willingly, cheerfully and without expecting a return (Râghib, Kashshaf). It is necessary that a dower should be given to every woman joined in marriage. Thus, every woman in Islam begins her married life as the full owner of some piece of property. The amount of the dower should be reasonable. It should also be within the means of the husband and proportionate to the socioeconomic circumstances of the couple.

وَلَا تُؤْتُوا السُّفَهَاءَ أَمْوَالَكُمُ الَّتِي جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ قِيَاماً وَارْزُقُوهُمْ فِيهَا
وَأَكْسُوْهُمْ وَقُولُوا لَهُمْ قَوْلًا مَعْرُوفًا

4:5 This verse tells us how to treat the property of the “weak of understanding.” It says it is “your property,” as **Amwâlu-kum** أموالكم means. This does not mean that the rightful owners who are “weak of understanding” should be disowned from what they possess. The expression **وَلَا تُؤْتُوا السُّفهَاءِ أُمُوَالَكُمْ** means not to hand over the property of the weak of understanding, such as young orphans, mentally handicapped, etc., for free use. Such a property should be treated as if it were “your property” أموالكم, that is, as if it were the property of the custodian or of the welfare state. It should be used or spent carefully for the benefit of the “weak-minded” who rightfully own it. In other words, a custodian, which can be an individual or the state, must safeguard that interest of the weak and mentally retarded individuals. Minors and weak-minded persons, when given the full authority to spend their property are apt to lose it. The verse also points out that the wealth of such individuals is in reality the wealth of the society, as indicated by the words **وَارْزُقُوهُمْ فِيهَا**, “which are made a means of subsistence for you.” This verse also emphasizes that wealth is not a resource to be wasted, as it is a means of support. The words that follow qualify the above explanation. According to ‘Aisha the Holy Prophet (pbuh) is reported to have said, “Whoever is the guardian of an orphan who has a property, should trade with it and should not leave it undeveloped so that the Zakât should consume it” (Musnad Ahmad). **Qaul** قول denotes “words of kind advice.” It is also used to express advice (see *Nihâyah*). Thus after speaking of the maintenance and protection of orphans and the weak, the Holy Qur’ân now brings attention to another great need: their education in good behaviour and manners. .

للرجال نصيبٌ ممّا ترك الوالدان والأقربون وللنساء نصيبٌ ممّا ترك
الوالدان والأقربون ممّا قلّ منه أو كثُرَ نصيبياً مفروضاً

4:7 This verse forms the basis of the Islamic law of inheritance and lays down the general principle that both men and women inherit.

Among the Arabs of the time, women and children had no shares in inheritance. A saying of the time went, “None shall inherit but he who smites with the spear,” limiting inheritance to those who could go to war. The great reform introduced by the teachings of the Holy Qur’ân not only raised the status of women to one of equality with men, but established basic rights for women in all matters of social life.

لِذَكْرٍ مِثْلُ حَظِّ الْأُنْثَيَيْنِ ۝ فَإِنْ كُنَّ نِسَاءً فُوقَ اثْنَيْنِ فَهُنَّ ثُلَّا مَا تَرَكَ ۝
وَإِنْ كَانَتْ وَاحِدَةً فَهَا النَّصْفُ ۝ وَلَا يَبْوِيهُ لِكُلِّ وَاحِدٍ مِنْهُمَا السُّدُسُ مِمَّا
تَرَكَ إِنْ كَانَ لَهُ وَلَدٌ ۝ فَإِنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ وَلَدٌ وَرَبَّهُ أَبُوهُ أَوْ فَلَامِهُ التَّلِيلُ ۝ فَإِنْ
كَانَ لَهُ أَخْوَةٌ فَلَامِهُ السُّدُسُ ۝ مِنْ بَعْدِ وَصِيَّةٍ يُوصَىٰ بِهَا أَوْ دِينٌ ۝ أَبَاوْكُمْ
وَأَبْنَاؤْكُمْ لَا تَدْرُونَ أَيُّهُمْ أَقْرَبُ لَكُمْ نَفْعًا ۝ فَرِيضَةٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ ۝ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ
عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا

4:11 The principles of the Islamic law of inheritance for children, spouses, and near relatives are laid down in this verse. The precise details have been worked out based on the Holy Prophets (pbuh) practice and that of his Companions, and by interpretation and analogy. Muslim jurists have collected a vast amount of learning on this subject. Islam prescribes suitable shares for all near relatives in the property of a deceased person. The law of inheritance aims at a fair distribution of wealth and suitable chances of progress for all. To give the property of a deceased to the first-born son only, to exclude the females, or to disinherit elderly parents, has proved a veritable curse for society, morally, socially, and economically.

The categories of sharers among whom an inheritance is to be divided are twelve in number: four males and eight females. The categories for males are father, paternal grandfather, husband, and brother of a person having no children. The categories for females are daughter, son’s daughter, mother, wife, sister, sister of a person having neither parents nor children, paternal grandmother and maternal grandmother. It is sometimes appropriate that the male takes a share double that of a

female in his own category, because he has been made responsible for the maintenance of the family (*Rûh al-Ma‘âni*).

The share of daughters, in case there are two, is not expressly stated, and at first sight the Arabic words in the text *fauq al-Athnatain* فوق اثنتين appear to mean “if they are more than two daughters.” However, the use of the conjunction and the alternative in the next clause, “but if they be all females more than two,” logically and clearly points to the fact that the first clause must mean, “if they be all females (two or) more than two. “Moreover, the share of two daughters can be calculated from what has already been said in the beginning of the verse about the ratio between the shares of the males and the females. According to that ratio, a son receives as much as two daughters. Thus, if there is one son and one daughter, the son will have two-thirds. However, as the share of one son has been made equal to that of “two daughters, “the latter, in case there is no son, will have two-thirds, the same share as has been expressly fixed for three daughters. Thus the very construction of the verse shows that if there are two daughters and no son, then the two daughters, as in the case of three daughters, will get two-thirds; and the share of two-thirds to which “more than two” daughters are entitled remains the same even when the daughters are only two.

A single daughter is entitled to one-half, as is made clear in verse 177 of this chapter, where two sisters are mentioned but they include more than two. A saying of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) himself corroborates the above. It is related that when a Companion of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) named Sa‘d bin Rabia died in the Battle of Uhud leaving two daughters and one widow, the widow of Sa‘d went to the Holy Prophet (pbuh) and explained the situation. Then this verse was revealed and the Holy Prophet (pbuh) called upon Sa‘d’s brother to give two-thirds of Sa‘d’s property to his two daughters, one-eighth to the widow and keep the rest for himself (*Tirmidhî*).

The power of free testamentary disposition extends over only one-third of the property, while the rest is distributed according to the rules discussed. Additional shares cannot be left to any of the heirs included in the scheme of distribution, as it will amount to upsetting the shares and undue preference of one heir over another. All distribution takes place after all debts including funeral expenses have been paid. It was in compliance with this Qur'anic injunction that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) systematically ensured the payment of debts before bequests. So strict was the Holy Prophet (pbuh) in these matters that he refused to perform the funeral service of a person whose debts were likely to remain unpaid if the inheritances were distributed.

وَلَكُمْ نِصْفٌ مَا تَرَكَ أَزْوَاجُكُمْ إِن لَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُنَّ وَلَدٌ فَلَكُمْ الرُّبُعُ مِمَّا تَرَكْنَ مِنْ بَعْدِ وَصِيَّةٍ يُوصِينَ بِهَا أُوْ دَيْنٍ وَلَهُنَّ الرُّبُعُ مِمَّا تَرَكْتُمْ إِن لَمْ يَكُنْ لَكُمْ وَلَدٌ فَلَهُنَّ الثُّلُثُ مِمَّا تَرَكْتُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ وَصِيَّةٍ ثُوَصُونَ بِهَا أُوْ دَيْنٍ

4:12 In the case when the deceased is survived by parents, the parents first take their respective shares and the remainder goes to the children. When the deceased leaves a husband or a wife, the spouse takes his or her share first, as in the case of parents, and the remaining portion goes to the children. If there are parents as well as a spouse and children, the parents and spouse take their shares first.

وَإِن كَانَ رَجُلٌ يُورَثُ كَلَالَةً أَوْ امْرَأَةً

Kalâlah كَلَالَةٌ is a person who has no children, whether he has parents or not. Ibn 'Abbâs is reported to have explained this word as meaning "one who does not leave offspring whether he leaves parents or not." 'Umar ^(rz) also is reported to have said that *kalâlah* is one who has no children (Râghib). *Kalâlah* spoken of here is one who has no children but has parents. The case of *kalâlah* who has neither children nor parents is dealt with in the last verse (4:177) of this chapter.

The words *Ghair Mudzâr*, غير مضرار, “without being harmful,” mean that equity and fair dealing should be observed in all matters so that no persons interests are prejudiced. Thus, funeral expenses should be reasonable, debts must be genuine, bequests should not be made that would leave nothing for legal heirs, and the shares must be calculated with fairness.

وَاللَّاتِي يَأْتِينَ الْفَاحِشَةَ مِن نِسَائِكُمْ فَاسْتَشْهُدُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ أَرْبَعَةٌ مِنْكُمْ ۝

4:15 This verse again aims at protecting women’s rights against harsh treatment by men. Women were sometimes subjected to ill-treatment for minor faults, or simply because they were not found pleasing by their husbands. In order to safeguard women from false charges, four eyewitnesses are required to pronounce them guilty of immoral conduct (see also 24:4). The use of the word *minkum* منكم signifies that the four witnesses are to be among those respected in society. The women referred to in this verse are those guilty of *Fâhishah*, الفاحشة, which is anything that is grossly immodest, lewd, abominable in word or deed, manifests improper conduct, flagrantly indecent (including but not limited to adultery or fornication), or anything that exceeds the boundaries of decency (*Tâj*, *Lisân*, Lane). To maintain peace in society, women found guilty are to be confined to their houses. The purpose of confinement is to protect them from physical excesses by men and to prevent them from mixing with other women. The confinement is until they are married (in case they were unmarried), or until they amend themselves and seek forgiveness from Allâh, as the words “Allâh makes for them a way out” and the verses which follow (4:16-17) suggest.

وَاللَّذَانِ يَأْتِيَانَهَا مِنْكُمْ فَأَذُو هُمَا

4:16 The crime spoken of in this verse is the same as that in the previous verse; it refers to those who are guilty of clear immoral conduct - *ighlâm* -homosexual relations. The form of punishment has

been left to the discretion of society; however, it expressly excludes the punishment of death, which would make it impossible for the offenders to repent in the future, as stated in the verse.

إِنَّمَا التَّوْبَةُ عَلَى اللَّهِ لِلَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ السُّوءَ بَحْتَهَا ثُمَّ يَتُوبُونَ مِنْ قَرِيبٍ
فَأُولَئِكَ يَتُوبُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ

4:17 In this context the word **min Qarîb** “soon after” denotes the time before the approach of death.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَحْلُّ لَكُمْ أَنْ ترثُوا النِّسَاءَ كَرْهًا ۝ وَلَا تَعْضُلُوهُنَّ
لَتَدْهُبُوا بِبَعْضٍ مَا آتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِيَنَّ بِفَاحِشَةٍ مُّبِينَةٍ ۝ وَعَاشِرُوهُنَّ
بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ۝ فَإِنْ كَرْهُنُّهُنَّ فَعَسَى أَنْ تَكْرَهُوَا شَيْئًا وَيَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ فِيهِ حَيْرًا
كَثِيرًا

4:19 To treat women as inherited property is an abominable practice still existing in different guises in many societies. The relatives of the deceased husband of a widow may perhaps prevent her from taking another husband, force her to marry someone from among themselves, or marry her to another against her will (Bukhârî 4/6). They may sometimes take away her property by force and deprive her of her right of inheritance. In other cases, a man may treat his wife harshly without divorcing her, because he hopes to obtain her property after her death; or he compels her by ill-treatment to obtain “separation” (*khul'a* خلع divorce at the demand of the wife) from him by surrendering the whole or a part of her dower or of her other property. The Qur'ânic injunctions in this verse in this regard are clear and need no further interpretation.

The phrase **Fâhišat mubayyanah** فَاحِشَةٌ مُّبِينَ meaning “except that they commit flagrant indecency,” indicates two things: first, the relatives of the deceased cannot prevent the widow from contracting a new marriage, unless the widow engages in severely immoral

conduct; second, if the wife seeks separation (*khul'a* - divorce at the demand of the wife), the husband cannot prevent her from doing so. This permission is immediately followed by the injunction ‘**Âshirû-hunna bil-Ma‘rûf**’، عاشِرُوهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ, “consort with them in peace”. ‘**Âshirû**’ is from ‘*ashara*’ عاشِرٌ meaning to consort, live in a cultivated way, or be peaceful. ‘*Ashiratun*’ عشیرة is kinsfolk. **Ma‘rûf** مَعْرُوفٍ means befitting, good, fair, kind, or learned. Its opposite is **munkar** منکر. In the words that follow, “*If you dislike them,*” Allâh Himself argues and pleads for women and makes a recommendation with the words, “It may be that Allâh has placed a good deal of good in them (what you do not know)”.

وَإِنْ أَرَدْتُمْ اسْتِبْدَالَ زَوْجَ مَكَانَ زَوْجٍ وَآتَيْتُمْ إِحْدَاهُنَّ قِنْطَارًا فَلَا تَأْخُذُوا مِنْهُ شَيْئًا ۝ أَتَأْخُذُونَهُ بِهَتَّانًا وَإِنَّمَا مُبَيِّنًا

4:20 The phrase “*if you still desire to take one wife in place of another*” signifies divorcing the first and marrying another against the recommendation given by Allâh in the preceding verse.

وَكَيْفَ تَأْخُذُونَهُ وَقَدْ أَفْضَى بَعْضُكُمْ إِلَى بَعْضٍ وَأَخْدَنَ مِنْكُمْ مِيَثَاقًا غَلِيظًا

4:21 The marriage is called a covenant and a contract between the husband and the wife – (مِيَثَاقًا غَلِيظًا). There can be no agreement or no covenant unless both parties give their free consent to it.

حُرّمتْ عَلَيْكُمْ

4:23 this list of prohibited degrees agrees with what is usually accepted among civilized nations, barring minor details, and is in harmony with the Mosaic laws and human nature. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) is reported to have said that the marriage relations with foster-mothers, who gave breast-feeding, are forbidden to the same extent as those within a prohibited degree of relationship of the real mother.

The bar against two sisters in marriage at the same time also applies to an aunt and her daughter.

وَالْمُحْصَنَاتُ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ إِلَّا مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ

4:24 Muhsinât مُحْصَنَاتُ is in the plural form and is derived from the root *hasuna* meaning “a place was inaccessible” or “the woman was married.” *Ihsân* means fortifying a place or marrying. *Muhsinât* مُحْصَنَاتُ are married women (Lisân). Islam recognizes only *Ihsân* as permanent marriage. All other conjugal relations that are outside *Ihsân* are denounced as *Musâfihîn* - مُسَافِهِينَ “giving oneself to debauchery and fornication.” *Ihsân* gives rise to certain rights and obligations for women, which are established for life, but such rights and obligations do not arise in *musâfihât* مُسَافَهَاتٍ and *mutt'a* متّعٌ (temporary marriage).

Muhsinât مُحْصَنَاتُ (married women) refers to all women who are in wedlock and whose marriage was performed according to the rules of any religion, society, or system. Islam acknowledges their marriage and thus prohibits another marriage of such women before the dissolution of the previous marriage. An exception is made to this rule by allowing marriage to female prisoners of war. By the expression *Mâ malakat îmân-u-kum* - مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ “whom your right hand possesses,” are meant female prisoners of war. Islam does not allow women to be taken and kept as prisoners. To protect captive women separated from their relatives socially and morally, marrying them is made lawful, even though their former husbands might not have divorced them formally. In such cases, formal hostility dissolves civil ties. However, it is wrong to suppose that permission is given here to have conjugal relations outside of marriage with war captives. There is not a single verse in the Holy Qur'ân or any instance in the life of Holy Prophet (pbuh) that sanctions concubines. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) is reported to have said, “The man shall have a double reward, who has a slave woman and he educates her in the best manner and

gives her the best training, then he sets her free and marries her” (Bukhârî 3:31). Moreover, marriage cannot be performed without the consent of the female prisoners of war and until a waiting period of three months has passed (*istibra*). Neither does it mean that such war captives are assigned to anyone or given as property. All captives in war belong to the community (the term “your” property is in that sense alone), and their captive condition is accidental and redeemable. Râzî holds the view that the expression *mâ malakat imân-u-kum* ما ملکت ایمانکم “whom your right hand possesses,” includes those women who are rightfully “possessed” through wedlock.

وَأَحِلَّ لَكُمْ مَا وَرَاءَ ذَلِكُمْ أَنْ تَبْتَغُوا بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ مُحْصَنِينَ عَيْرَ مُسَافِحِينَ فَمَا اسْتَمْتَعْتُمْ بِهِ مِنْهُنَّ فَاثْوَهُنَّ أَجُورَهُنَّ فَرِيضَةٌ

Istimta‘tum استمتعتم means “he benefited temporarily,” but it also means, “He benefited for a long time” (*Lisân*). It must be noted that whenever the noun *tamatt'u* تمتع is used to denote temporary connection with a woman it is followed by the proposition *ba* BI put before a pronoun, which is clearly not the case in the above example. Here the preposition *min* من comes before the pronoun *hunna* هُنْ, thus referring to the permanent conjugal relationship as in marriage. While explaining the words *istimt'a*, “the benefits you draw from them temporarily or permanently,” *Lisân al-‘Arab* quotes Zajjâj as saying, “While interpreting this verse some people have made a great blunder owing to their ignorance of the Arabic language. They have inferred from it the legality of *mutt'a* متّع, the temporary marriage, which by the consensus of Muslim theologians has been declared to be unlawful. Here the words simply mean marriage performed in accordance with the conditions mentioned above.” *Mutt'a* was expressly prohibited by the Holy Prophet (pbuh) in the Battle of Khaibar and again clearly denounced at the time of the fall of Makkah (Bukhârî).

فَإِذَا أُحْصِنَ فَإِنْ أَتَيْنَ بِفَاحِشَةٍ فَعَلَيْهِنَ نَصْفُ مَا عَلَى الْمُحْسِنَاتِ مِنْ
الْعَدَابِ

4:25 “*Half of that punishment prescribed for free women*” (فَعَلَيْهِنَ نَصْفُ) can only mean that there is no death punishment for adultery, as the death punishment cannot be halved. This command is cited by some opponents of Islam as being harsh and inhuman. However, upon looking more closely at this injunction it becomes evident that the Holy Qur’ân through this verse abolishes capital punishment for adultery, such as stoning to death, practiced by pagan Arabs, the Jews at the time of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), and even today in some societies. This injunction, like the injunction in verse 24:2, aims at preventing any punishment that may lead to death. In connection with verse 24:4, it also aims at protecting women from cruelty at the hands of the men, because the conditions, including four respected eyewitnesses, that must be fulfilled to warrant such a punishment are very hard to meet. The final words of this verse, إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْهِ حَكِيمًا - *“Allâh is indeed a Great Protector and full of Great Mercy”* and the verse that follows (4:26-28) make clear the purpose behind this injunction: we read, “Allâh desires to turn to you with mercy,” a statement repeated again in the next verse (4:27), and (4:28) “Allâh desires that He should lighten you from your burdens.”

يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِبَيْنَ لَكُمْ وَيَهْدِيْكُمْ سُنَّ الدِّينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ وَيَنْهَا عَلَيْكُمْ

4:26 In this verse, three reasons for the injunctions mentioned in the foregoing verses are given. First, without the law having been explained fully, the need would have remained unfulfilled and a human being would have led an ungoverned life. Second, the revelation is not new: it has already guided people to enable them to gain access to Allâh and nearness to Him. Third, the injunctions can be laid down and fitly defined only by One Who is possessed of extensive knowledge and Who is Wise and full of Mercy.

يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَنْ يُحَقِّفَ عَنْكُمْ وَخُلِقَ الْإِنْسَانُ ضَعِيفًا

4:28 Another reason behind the revelation of the law is that a human being is weak by nature. By himself, he is unable to determine the ways of spiritual advancement; without Divine Guidance, he cannot devise functioning family laws and determine a workable framework of social relationships for his own advantage and advancement. Allâh does not seek to entrust a human being with a task that he cannot accomplish. The human weakness to which the verse refers does not signify that he cannot act in accordance with the law, but that he cannot make the law by himself. This was a burden that Allâh made light for humankind's well-being.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوَالَكُمْ بَيْنَكُمْ بِالْبَاطِلِ إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَ تِجَارَةً عَنْ تَرَاضٍ مِّنْكُمْ

4:29 In the first part of the verse, all illegal methods of acquiring wealth are forbidden. All the property we hold—whether it is in our name or belongs to the nation or to people over whom we have custodianship—is in trust, and to waste it is wrong. We must also guard women and orphans' rights concerning their property. The expression “*rather it be a trade based on mutual free consent*” does not mean that the dilapidation of the property by unlawful means can be made lawful by mutual consent. It simply means that we are encouraged to increase property not by unlawful means, but by trade. In all lawful transactions, mutual consent of the parties concerned is also necessary. The word **illa** إِلَّا also means “not even” (*Qâmûs, Mughnî*).

وَكَانَ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرًا

4:30 “*It is ever easy for Him*” to cast aggressors and the wrongdoers into fire. This is an expression of His Attribute of being *al-Ghanî*, or “absolute and independent in His judgment.” Moreover, it shows that

His Attribute of Compassion and Mercy will not prevent people from going to hell, nor make it hard from Him to throw such aggressors into the fire.

إِنْ تَحْتَبُوا كَبَائِرَ مَا تُنْهَوْنَ عَنْهُ نُكَفَّرُ عَنْكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَنُنْذِلُكُمْ مُّذَخِّلًا كَرِيمًا

4:31 This verse deals with the subject of ethics. One evil deed leads to committing another, until the evil deeds reach a point at which they become significant. For example, entertaining the idea or actually considering committing a theft is already a sin; and setting out with the intent to do it is yet another, until the theft itself is committed.

There is no distinct classification of a major sin and a minor sin in the Qur'ân. The lists of grievous sins as given in some Books of *Hadîth* do not encompass all sins, nor did the compilers of such books ever mean to do so. They serve the purpose of mentioning specific sins with reference to certain environmental circumstances and particular situations. Ibn Qayyam, who occupies an exalted position among the Muslim scholars, has discussed the topic at length in his book *Madârij al-Sâlihîn*. In short, the major sins are the infringements of the prohibitions laid down in the Holy Qur'ân by Allâh, and the minor sins are the evil deeds leading to the last stage (infringement) of a prohibition. This verse is interpreted as saying that if a person restrains himself from committing the final evil deed, he will be forgiven for all the preliminaries. It also conveys the idea that if we avoid doing things, the renunciation of which seems hard to us, we will eventually be able to rid ourselves of evil inclinations and ideas. The expression *mud'khal* مُذَخَّل denotes “place and manner of entering” (Râzî).

وَلَا تَتَمَنُوا مَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بِهِ بَعْضَكُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ لَّرْجَالٍ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا
أَكْتَسَبُوا وَلِلنِّسَاءِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا أَكْتَسَبْنَ وَاسْأَلُوا اللَّهَ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ

4:32 The expression “*And do not covet the favours, which Allâh has bestowed on some of you to excel others*” (وَلَا تَنْتَهُوا مَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بِهِ بَعْضَكُمْ) means that we should not pray that Allâh may give us exactly what others have been granted. We constantly receive gifts and rewards from Allâh; some people appear more favoured than others. This may seem unjust, but we are assured that the All-Mighty (*al-‘Azîz*) Lord bestows His reward according to His scheme. According to His right Judgment, people receive what they earn. So we are recommended to go on praying to Allâh, asking for His bounty and grace, and we should try our utmost to use the resources and capabilities that He has bestowed on us. However, we should not pray that Allâh might give us the things that are against His Wisdom and Attributes, or the very same things that another person possesses. While praying one should not keep in view any particular favoured person, wishing that Allâh might make one like that particular person. The phrase “*لِلرِّجَالِ نَصِيبٌ مَّا أَكْسَبُوا*” contains the key to individual and collective progress. The words also reveal the equality of men and women so far as their work and reward are concerned.

الرِّجَالُ قَوْمٌ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ

4:34 This verse lays down a big responsibility of maintaining and sustaining women and provides guidelines in case of family disputes. **Qawwâmûn** قَوْمَوْنَ is derived from *qâma* قَامَ and means one who manages affairs well; who sets things right; who stands firm in another's business; who protects his or her interest and looks after his or her affairs; or a maintainer or a sustainer (Lisân, Tâj). Thus, the word combines the concept of physical maintenance with that of moral and financial responsibility. *Qawwâmûn* قَوْمَوْنَ is an intensive form of, and thus more comprehensive than *qâ'im* قائم. The verse

describes the responsibilities of men in a family, as embedded in the word *qawwâm* قوام.

وَاللَّاتِي تَخَافُونَ نُشُورَ هُنَّ فَعَظُوهُنَّ وَاهْجُرُوهُنَّ فِي الْمَضَاجِعِ
وَاضْرِبُوهُنَّ ۝ فَإِنْ أَطْعَنُكُمْ فَلَا تَبْغُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ سِبِيلًا ۝

Nashûz نُشُور means, disobedience, rebellion, ill will, deliberate bad behaviour, and desertion, rising against someone, resisting, or hating (Tâj, *Qâmûs*). Abû Hayyân explains it as moving out of the married couple's home against the wishes of the husband (*Bahr al-Muhit*). It also includes what is now frequently described as "mental cruelty, and persistent breach of marital obligations." In such a situation, three steps are mentioned that can be taken in the following order: verbal advice and admonition, temporary suspension of conjugal relations, and, lastly, some other kind of symbolic punishment.

Inflicting physical punishment on women was sadly common in many societies, and, unfortunately, some men derive the legitimacy of punishing their wives from the word **Adzribû** اضربو stated in this verse. *Adzribû* is derived from *dzaraba* ضرب, a word with a great variety of meanings and interpretations in the Arabic language and in the Holy Qur'ân. Such meanings include to heal, strike, put forward an example, put forth a parable, make a journey, move away, travel, mix, cover, impose, prevent, or take something away. This word has been used in the Holy Qur'ân fifty-eight times with different meanings (cf. 30:28; 43:5; 2:273; 2:60; 2:61; 18:11; 57:13). Thus, *adzribû* does not mean here to strike physically and it certainly does not mean to inflict physical punishment on women. Meanings such as "take something away" or "put forth an example" (symbolically) can be used as the translation of this word here. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) is reported to have said, "You will not find these men as the best among you who punish their wives" (Dâ'ûd 12/42). Also, He rhetorically asked, "Could any of you beat his wife and then lie with her in the evening?" (*Bukhârî*). Ibn 'Abbâs says the most

extreme punishment may be with a toothbrush or something lighter than this (*Bahr al-Muhît*). Therefore, the last resort of punishment must be symbolic. According to *Imâm Shafî*, it is preferable not to resort to chastisement of one's wife (Râzî).

The measures mentioned in the verse are not to remain in force for an indefinite period: wives are not to be left "like a thing suspended" (cf. 4:129). Four months, according to the Holy Qur'ân, is the utmost limit for abstention from conjugal relations. If all this fails, counsel is recommended in the next verse. This may allow family disputes to be settled without undesirable publicity or the formal procedures of the law courts. The arbiters for each family are in theory acquainted with the cause(s) of the difference and the characters of both parties. It is also often easier for both spouses to present their cases to a third party and for the arbiters to effect a real reconciliation. If all hopes of reconciliation fail, a divorce or *khul'a* خلع is allowed as a last resort.

وَإِنْ حَفْتُمْ شِقَاقَ بَيْنَهُمَا فَابْعُثُوا حَكَمًا مِنْ أَهْلِهِ وَحَكَمًا مِنْ أَهْلِهَا إِنْ يُرِيدَا
إِصْلَاحًا يُوقَّقُ اللَّهُ بَيْنَهُمَا

4:35 Ahl-i-hâ أَهْلُهَا "the companion by your side" can be a wife or husband, intimate friend, associate, travel companion, partner in a trade, co-worker, or immediate neighbour. The words *mâ malakat imân-u-kum* ما ملكت إيمانكم "whom your right hands possess," are those women who are rightfully "possessed" through wedlock. The expression may also refer to anyone who has no civil rights, to servants or subordinates, war captives, the mentally handicapped, or animals (*Bahr al-Muhît*, Râzî).

الَّذِينَ يَبْخُلُونَ وَيَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْبَخْلِ وَيَكْتُمُونَ مَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ

4:37 Some are miserly to the point that they will not even spend their wealth on themselves, let alone spend it for the needs or benefits of the poor. They conceal the bounties Allâh has bestowed on them. The

Holy Qur'ân says, "Acknowledge the bounty of your Lord in words and deeds" (93:11). The Holy Prophet (pbuh) is reported to have said, "When Allâh bestows a favour on any of His servants, He also likes that the people should see the signs of His bounty on him" (Bahr). The gifts that have been given to such a servant are his wealth, position, talent, time, and knowledge blessed by his Lord.

وَالَّذِينَ يُنفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ رِتَاءَ النَّاسِ وَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَلَا بِالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ
وَمَن يَكُن الشَّيْطَانُ لَهُ قَرِيبًا فَسَاءَ قَرِيبًا

4:38 Qarînâ قَرِيبًا means companions or friends. Here the "satan" is their accompanying friend.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَقْرَبُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَنْتُمْ سُكَارَىٰ حَتَّىٰ تَعْلَمُوا مَا تَقُولُونَ
وَلَا جُنُبًا إِلَّا عَابِرِي سَبِيلٍ حَتَّىٰ تَعْتَسِلُوا

وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ مَرْضَىٰ أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ أَوْ جَاءَ أَحَدٌ مِنْكُمْ مِنَ الْغَائِطِ أَوْ لَامَسْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَلَمْ تَحِدُوا مَاءَ فَتَيَمَّمُوا صَعِيدًا طَيِّبًا فَأَمْسَحُوا بِوُجُوهِهِمْ وَأَيْدِيهِمْ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَفُوا غَفُورًا

4:43 Salât الصَّلَاة here may mean the prescribed Prayer, the place of Prayer, or a mosque. Prayer cannot be considered to have been properly performed if the devotee simply repeats the words of Prayer without understanding what he says. It is also implicit in the verse that a non-Arab Muslim, besides praying in the prescribed Arabic words, should also pray in his own language in which he can best express his thoughts and feelings. Muslims should also know the translation of all the Arabic words that they recite in the ritual Prayer. The word **Sukârâ** سُكَارَى signifies one who is intoxicated (Tâj). The word is also applied to confusion of judgment, the condition when one cannot think properly on account of extreme grief, a fit of anger, the raptures of love, being in a state of half-sleep, receiving a great and sudden shock, being stricken with fear, or being afflicted by some disturbing

element that distracts a person's attention or obscures his reason. Consequently, ritual Prayer is of no avail in a dazed state of mind or in any state of mental instability (Râghib, Lisân, and Tâj). Thinking clearly is an indispensable element in every act of worship.

The clause “*have recourse to pure and clean dust*” refers to symbolic ablution called **Tayammum** تَبَّمْ. It consists in touching the pure and clean dust with the palm of ones hands and then applying it lightly over ones face and hands. The *tayammum* the place of both the *ghusl* (“bath”) or *wodzû* (“ablution”) whenever water is unavailable, too costly, or cannot be used because of illness or weakness.

مِنَ الَّذِينَ هَادُوا يُحَرِّفُونَ الْكِلَمَ عَنْ مَوَاضِعِهِ وَيَقُولُونَ سَمِعْنَا وَعَصَيْنَا
وَاسْمَعْ غَيْرَ مُسْمِعٍ وَرَأَيْنَا لَيْاً بِالْسِنَتِهِمْ وَطَعَنْنَا فِي الدِّينِ

4:46 The verb **Yaqûlûna** قالُونَ is derived from *qâla* meaning “they say.” It is used not only for speech, but also for what one expresses by ones condition or conduct. It is also used for whispering. In verse 2:30 the word *qâla* has been used in all these senses. The expression “*you to whom no one would lend an ear*” (غَيْرَ مُسْمِعٍ) also means, “you may not be made to hear,” “you may not hear by reason of deafness”; “you may not hear any speech or news which you would like to hear or which may please you,” or “you may not be obeyed.” For the expression *râ'ina* رَاعَنَا and for the ambiguity introduced into this expression by the Jews as mentioned previously, see 2:104.

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ أَوْثَوْا نَصِيبًا مِنَ الْكِتَابِ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْجِبْتِ وَالْطَّاغُوتِ
وَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هَؤُلَاءِ أَهْدَى مِنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا سِبِيلًا

4:51 **Jibt** جِبْتٌ refers to things that are nonsense such as sorcery (Bukhârî) and idols (Tâj), all manner of superstitions or divination (Dâ'uð), as well as what is worthless in itself or a thing in which there is no good (*Qâmûs*). This general statement found its practical

application in the Battle of Confederates. The Jewish tribes incited the Makkans and other Arab tribes to join forces against the Muslims in Madînah and succeeded in allying 10,000 fighters. In order to rally the pagan Arabs to their cause, the Jews stated that the polytheistic religion of the pagan Arabs was superior to their own monotheistic religion. Though they were in possession of the Divine Book of the Torah, they proclaimed the pagans “*better guided than they*” (cf. 33:9-26).

أُمٌّ يَحْسُدُونَ النَّاسَ عَلَىٰ مَا أَتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۖ فَقَدْ آتَيْنَا آلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ
الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَآتَيْنَاهُمْ مُّلْكًا عَظِيمًا

4:54 The Holy Qur’ân asks those among the Jews who dislike the Muslims whether that feeling is born out of jealousy. Allâh granted Jews bounty and grace because of their belief in Abraham and Moses, but then, because of their rejection of Jesus and the Holy Prophet (pbuh), Allâh deprived them of His blessings (cf. 4:52). There are, however, some Jews who believe in the Holy Qur’ân as they believe in the Torah.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِإِيمَانِنَا سَوْفَ نُصْلِيهِمْ نَارًا كُلَّمَا نَضَجَتْ جُلُودُهُمْ بَذَنْنَاهُمْ
جُلُودًا غَيْرَ هَا لِيَدُوْقُوا الْعَذَابَ ۝

4:56 Here it is said that the skins and not the flesh will be replaced. The skin is much more sensitive to pain than the flesh.

وَنُدْخِلُهُمْ ظِلًا ظَلِيلًا

4:57 Zill ظِلٌّ is a shade, a covering, or a shelter. Figuratively, it also means protection (Râghib), a state of ease, pleasure and plenty (Tâj), and happiness (Râzî).

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَن تُؤْدُوا الْأَمَانَاتِ إِلَيْ أَهْلِهَا وَإِذَا حَكَمْتُم بَيْنَ النَّاسِ أَن تَحْكُمُوا بِالْعُدْلِ ۝ إِنَّ اللَّهَ نِعِمَّا يَعِظُّكُم بِهِ ۝

4:58 This verse was revealed in Madînah when the political power of Muslims was non-existent. In this section, there is a prophecy that political power will be granted to the Muslims. The Muslims are required to entrust authority to such persons who are qualified and competent to rule. The words “*When you judge between the people you should judge with justice,*” corroborate this meaning. Authority or power to rule has been described here as **al-Amânat**, “trust of the people.” This means that the power and authority belong to the people and are not the birth right of any particular individual or dynasty. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) himself explained the word **al-Amânat** as meaning government or affairs of state. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) is reported to have said that a position or office of authority is also an *amânat*. Ibn ‘Abbâs said that it means duties (*Lisân*). *Amânat* also means “trustworthiness,” “faithfulness or fidelity,” “a thing committed to the care of or trust of a person,” “a trust or deposit,” or “a duty or task allotted to a person” (*Tâj*).

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولَئِكُمْ هُمُ الْمُنْكَرُ ۝

4:59 This verse defines rules of guidance in matters relating to the welfare of the community and of state. **Oliy-al-Amr** are those who are charged with authority, responsibility, decision-making, or the settlement of affairs. Thus the commander of a section of the army was considered as *uliy-al-Amr* (*Bukhârî*). Secular authorities are to be obeyed in secular matters, while religious authorities must be obeyed in religious matters; otherwise, there will be no order or discipline. Any difference of opinion should be referred to Allâh and His Messenger or, in other words, to the Holy Qur’ân, and the sayings and acts of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). Judgments of the Sheikhs are acceptable only when subject to their compatibility with the Qur’ân,

the Sunnah and the *Hadîth*. The great *Imâm Abû Hanîfah* is himself reported to have said, “Give up my words for the words of Allâh, and give up my words for the words of the Holy Prophet (pbuh).” In regard to the secular authorities, the rule is laid down in the saying of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) that the authority of those entrusted should not be disputed unless you see an act of open disbelief against which you have a clear argument from Allâh (*Bukhârî* 93/2). What should the Muslims do if they have to live under a non-Muslim authority? In such cases, the example of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) and of his Companions in their relations with Abyssinia is a sufficient guide. About a hundred of the Companions were advised by the Holy Prophet (pbuh) to seek shelter in the Christian kingdom of Abyssinia, where they lived for about ten years and obeyed the laws of the Christian government they were subject to.

فَلَا وَرَبَّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ حَتَّىٰ يُحَكِّمُوكَ فِيمَا شَجَرَ بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُوا فِي
أَنفُسِهِمْ حَرَجاً مِّمَّا قَضَيْتَ وَيُسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيماً

4:65 This verse lays down the obligation to submit to the ordinances of the Prophet in matters of religion. These ordinances are called the *sunnat al-‘Ibâdiyah* سُنَّةُ العبَادِيَّة of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). They are simply the practical demonstrations of the ordinances to be found in the Holy Qur’ân such as how to pray, what to pray for, the call for Prayer, call for the Friday sermon and Prayer, the rituals of *Hajj*, how to fast and what and how much *Zakât* to pay. It also refers to many other matters related to morality and ethics, and gives practical explanations of verses of the Holy Qur’ân. It is important here to differentiate between *sunnat al-‘Ibâdiyah* and *sunnat al-‘Âdiyah* سُنَّةُ العَادِيَّة. The latter are the habits of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) in matters such as eating, clothing, wearing a beard, sleeping, talking, buying, and selling, and trading for his family expenses, and so on. All these are not part of *sunnat al-‘Ibâdiyah* (see also 4:80) as they are not

demonstrating acts required in the Qur'ân. On the other hand there is no harm in adopting habits from his *sunnat al-'Âdiyah*.

وَمَنْ يُطِعَ اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ فَأُولَئِنَّا مَعَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ النَّبِيِّنَ
وَالصَّدِيقِينَ وَالشَّهَدَاءِ وَالصَّالِحِينَ ۝ وَحَسْنَ أُولَئِنَّا رَفِيقًا

4:69 This verse is an explanation of the verse 1:7, where *mun'im* - “those on whom Allâh has bestowed His Mercy” are described. This is the wish expressed by Muslims in their daily ritual Prayer that Allâh will count them as companions of the people mentioned in this verse.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا حُذُّوا حِذْرَكُمْ فَإِنْفِرُوا ثِباتٍ أَوْ انْفِرُوا جَمِيعًا

4:71 Some actions for the welfare of a society need combined efforts; others require individual ones.

إِنَّ كِيدَ الشَّيْطَانِ كَانَ ضَعِيفًا

4:76 “*The stratagem of satan is ever weak,*” indicates that evil is not an independent, occult entity but rather a result of human beings succumbing to the temptations arising from their own moral weakness.

قُلْ كُلُّ مَنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ ۝

4:78 “*Everything is from Allâh*” means it is Allâh who rewards good deeds and punishes bad ones.

وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا

4:79 “*Allâh suffices as witness*” signifies that people will witness the fulfilment of the prophecies made in the Holy Scriptures and the Holy Qur'ân.

مَنْ يُطِعَ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ اللَّهَ ۝

4:80 This verse affirms once again the obligation to submit to the ordinances of the Prophet in matters of religion. These ordinances are called the *Sunnat al-Ibâdiyah* (See also 4:65).

أَفَلَا يَتَبَرَّوْنَ الْقُرْآنَ ۝ وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ لَوَجَدُوا فِيهِ اخْتِلَافًا
كَثِيرًا

4:82 The consistency of the Holy Qur'ân is undeniable. It was not communicated in a single revelation, but in portions over a period of twenty-three years in highly varied circumstances—from the Holy Prophets (pbuh) solitary reclusion in the cave of Hirâ to the time when he became the sole leader of the whole of Arabia. Nevertheless, its freedom from discrepancies is a recognized fact. There are four ways that inconsistencies and contradictions may arise, not a single one of which occurs in the Qur'ân. The first way is if the Qur'ânic topics, the laws of nature, and human nature, and intelligence contradicted each other; second, if the Qur'ânic topics were mutually contradictory; third, if the prophecies mentioned in the Holy Qur'ân proved to be false; and fourth, if a change of circumstances produced a change of teachings. The Holy Qur'ân is free from all such possible contradictions.

مَنْ يَشْفَعْ شَفَاعَةً حَسَنَةً يَكُنْ لَّهُ نَصِيبٌ مِنْهَا ۝ وَمَنْ يَشْفَعْ شَفَاعَةً سَيِّئَةً يَكُنْ
لَّهُ كِفْلٌ مِنْهَا ۝

4:85 *Yashfa'u* and *Shafâ'at* شَفَاعَةٌ are derived from the same root *shafa'a* شَفَعَ, which means to make even that which was odd, protect, mediate, intercede, or be an intercessor. *Shafâ'at* شَفَاعَةٌ here means interceding or praying for a person that he may be shown favour. As he is connected with the intercessor, it also implies that the petitioner or intercessor is a person of higher position than the one for whom he pleads and has a deep connection with the person for whom he intercedes (*Râghib*, *Lisân*). *Shafâ'at* also means increase and “give in

surplus or excess” (*Mubarrad*, *Tha’lab*). *Mann yashf'a shafâ'atan شفاعةً يُشْفَعُ* means “He who joins with others and assists in doing good or evil and thus aids and strengthens, and partakes the benefits or the harms of it” (4:85). In this verse *shafâ'at* has twofold significance: first, it enables a person to walk in the ways of righteousness by imitating a model; and second, it affords him a shelter from the evil consequences of weaknesses he cannot overcome by himself and which require the prayer and support of a holy and innocent person (*shafâ'ah hasana*). The person in whose favour *shafâ'at* is sought must generally be a good person who has made an honest effort to win the pleasure of Allâh (21:28). Once one has fallen into sin in a moment of weakness, *shafâ'at* can be made, however only with Allâh’s express permission (2:255; 10:3). It is another form of repentance or *taubah* توبۃ. *Taubah* signifies reforming a broken connection or tightening up a loose one. Whereas the door of repentance becomes closed with death, the door of *shafâ'at* شفاعةً è remains open. The second form is *shafâ'at sayy'ah* شفاعةً سیّة, which is to intercede for a wrongful cause.

وَإِذَا حُبِّيْتُم بِتَحِيَّةٍ فَحَيُّوا بِأَحْسَنَ مِنْهَا أَوْ رُدُّوهَا

4:86 Huyyîtum حُبِّيْتُم, Tahayyatu تَحَيَّتُ and Hayyû حَيُّوا are derived from hayya حَيّ that has a broad meaning (see 2:258; 2:260; 3:49). Here it can mean to greet a person, treat a person well, or do good to a person. In verse 11:69, we see a practical example of how Abraham replied to the greeting *salâma* سلاماً with a better greeting of *salâmun* سلام, which according to Arabic grammar is a higher form. The verse suggests that if someone does well towards a person, the beneficiary should attempt to repay the kindness, if possible, in a better form.

فَإِنْ كَانَ مِنْ قَوْمٍ عَدُوًّ لَكُمْ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مُؤْمِنَةٍ

4:92 The last portion of this verse relates to cases where the victim is a non-Muslim belonging to a people in alliance with Muslims. In such

cases, the penalty is the same as that imposed for the killing under similar circumstances of a fellow believer. In case a fellow Muslim is killed, the command relating to the penalty to be paid has been mentioned after the commandment to free a slave; however, in the case where a person belonging to a people to whom Muslims are bound by a covenant is killed, the order has been reversed. This change of order is not without meaning: it has been done to impress the need to pay special attention to the existence of pacts and treaties.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَن يُشْرِكَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَن يَشَاءُ ۝ وَمَن يُشْرِكْ
بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا

4:116 Yashraku شِرْك is from *sharika* meaning to be a companion, sharer or partner or to give companionship. The Qur’ânic verse, “In case you ask them, Who has created the heavens and the earth and harnessed the sun and the moon, they will answer, Allâh, then whither are they being turned away?” (29:61) shows that people normally do not differ as to admitting the existence of a Supreme Being, but they do differ in their ways of worship and adoration. Here a partner is associated with Him in the sense of *shirk fil ‘Ibâdat* شِرْك — فِي العبادة — association of partners with Allâh in matters of worship, adoration, devotion, and obedience. To warn people not to associate such partners with Allâh was consistently the reason for sending Prophets (cf.4:131).

إِن يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ إِلَّا إِنَّا وَإِن يَدْعُونَ إِلَّا شَيْطَانًا مَرِيدًا

4:117 Inâth إِنَاثٌ are lifeless or inanimate things (*Tâj*), things that are passive (*Râghib*), idols (Ibn Jarîr on the authority of ‘Âishah^(rz)), or false deities, whether living or dead. Hasan says every Arabian tribe had an idol, which they called the *Untha* انسن of the tribe (Râzî). Mention of some of these lifeless deities has been made in the Holy Qur’ân in 53:19-21.

وَلَا أُضْلِنَّهُمْ وَلَا مَنِيَّنَهُمْ وَلَا مُرَنَّهُمْ فَلَيَعْبُرُنَّ
خَلْقَ اللَّهِ

4:119 Corrupting and changing Allâh's creation also means deifying Allâh's creation, corrupting Allâh's religion, turning to evil use that which Allâh has created for good use. In modern times, this may include cloning of Allâh's creatures, weapons of mass destruction, and similar offenses.

وَمَا يُنَزَّلُ إِلَيْكُمْ فِي الْكِتَابِ

4:127 The phrase, “as has been mentioned to you in the Book,” is the reference to verses 4:3-4 and 4:19-25 of this chapter.

وَلَنْ تَسْتَطِعُوا أَنْ تَعْدِلُوا بَيْنَ النِّسَاءِ وَلَوْ حَرَصْتُمْ ۝ فَلَا تَمِيلُوا كُلَّ الْمِيلِ
فَتَذَرُّو هَا كَالْمَعْلَقَةِ ۝

4:129 This verse can also be read with reference to 4:3.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ثُمَّ كَفَرُوا ثُمَّ آمَنُوا ثُمَّ كَفَرُوا ثُمَّ ازْدَادُوا كُفْرًا لَمْ يَكُنْ اللَّهُ
لِيغْفِرَ لَهُمْ وَلَا لِيَهْدِيهِمْ سَبِيلًا

4:137 This verse describes the immorality of hypocrites who change their religion when it is to their material advantage (cf. 4:142). Another conclusion that can be drawn is that a change from the state of belief (إيمان) to disbelief (كفر) cannot be punished with the death penalty, as a person cannot be put to death twice. In some Muslim societies that profess to have introduced *shari'a* (Islamic law) in their constitution, death is the penalty for those who leave Islam and convert to another religion. This law is clearly not Islamic and is against the teachings of the Holy Qur'ân. The subject is dealt with in more detail in the verse 5:54.

الَّذِينَ يَتَّخِذُونَ الْكَافِرِينَ أُولَئِكَ مِنْ دُونِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

4:139 Here the word **Auliâ** أُولَيَاء “friends,” also refers to moral and political alliances. Here is a warning for those Muslims who seek political or professional influence by allying with those who take their religion lightly. We are told that such a friendship will not be of any avail. The injunction is also to protect Muslims from the immoral influence of non-believers.

وَقَدْ نَزَّلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الْكِتَابِ أَنْ إِذَا سَمِعْتُمْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ يُكَفِّرُ بِهَا وَيُسْتَهْزِئُ بِهَا
فَلَا تَقْعُدُوا مَعَهُمْ حَتَّىٰ يَحُضُّوا فِي حَدِيثٍ غَيْرِهِ ۝ إِنَّكُمْ إِذَا مَنَّا مُنَّمُ ۝ إِنَّ
اللَّهَ جَامِعُ الْمُنَافِقِينَ وَالْكَافِرِينَ فِي جَهَنَّمَ جَمِيعًا

4:140 The injunction to which reference is made is in 6:68. The purpose of the verse is to further emphasize the seriousness of religious matters and to protect the believer against the demoralizing influences of such companies or assemblies where religion is mocked. The purpose is not to avoid sincere religious discussions with non-believers, which are allowed.

لَا يُحِبُّ اللَّهُ الْجَهْرَ بِالسُّوءِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ إِلَّا مَنْ ظَلَمَ ۝ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ سَمِيعًا عَلَيْهَا

4:148 One can make injurious remarks in public in a number of ways: One way is by sensationalizing moral failures, which often leads to more evil by imitation. Another is by spreading malicious gossip, which does no good but may hurt the feelings of others. Yet another may be by malevolent slander or libel, intended deliberately to cause harm to people's reputation or injure them in other ways. However, justification for such remarks may exist if a person has been wronged, and if by pointing out this injustice others come to his help. Redress may also be possible in a court of law.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكُفِّرُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَيُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يُفَرِّقُوا بَيْنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَيَقُولُونَ
أَنَّمِنْ بِبَعْضٍ وَنَكْفُرُ بِبَعْضٍ وَيُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يَتَخَذُوا بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ سَبِيلًا

4:150 “Who chose to make a distinction” refers to people who claim to believe in Allâh, but not in His Messengers, or to believe in some of the Messengers and deny others.

وَقَوْلُهُمْ إِنَّا قَتَلْنَا الْمَسِيحَ عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَمَا قَاتَلُوهُ وَمَا صَلَبُوهُ
وَلَكِنْ شُבَّهَ لَهُمْ ۝ وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ لَفِي شَكٍّ مِّنْهُ ۝ مَا لَهُمْ بِهِ مِّنْ عِلْمٍ
إِلَّا اتَّبَاعُ الظَّنِّ ۝ وَمَا قَاتَلُوهُ يَقِينًا

4:157 In this verse both *qatal* (killing) and *salab* (death on the cross) of Jesus are denied. In *Mufradât Râghib* it is written that *qatal* قتل is to separate the soul from the body. Death by a violent blow, sword, or stoning fall under the category of *qatal*. *Tâj al-;Arûs* gives the same meaning. Both *Tâj al-’Arûs* and *Lisân al-’Arab* say *salab* is the death in a certain well-known manner by hanging on a cross. Just as to stone or hit someone with an object who did not die as the result is not *qatal*, so to hang someone on cross who did not die is not *salab*. No standard Arab lexicon says that *salab* صلب is just to hang a person on cross without a resulting death. Unfortunately, this is the wrong understanding of many Muslims. *Salab* صلب is “to kill a person by putting him on cross long enough till his body dries up and blood has flown out and the body fat has melted away” (*Tâj*, *Lisân*). The body has to remain on the cross for at least three days (*Encyclopaedia Biblica* and *Jewish Encyclopaedia*), enough time for the crucifixion to be universally fatal. It is this fact the Qur’ân denies when it says, “They killed him not, nor did they cause his death by crucifixion.” In other words, it is wrong to conclude that Jesus is alive and did not die at all, just because the Holy Qur’ân states he did not die by crucifixion or another violent cause. The Holy Qur’ân does not reject outright the histories of other nations, but deals exclusively with those facts that refute their wrong beliefs pertaining to Divine Laws and religious doctrines. It is accepted by Jewish and Christian historians that Jesus was on the cross only for a few hours. As the Sabbath was approaching, he was removed the same day

before sunset. There is also a historical dispute whether his hands and feet were nailed or just tied with a rope, which would have caused even less injury. One of the main arguments the Jews used to deny Jesus prophethood was that he died a cursed death by crucifixion. Two different beliefs prevail among the Jews regarding this allegation about the death of Jesus. One is that Jesus was first killed and his dead body was then hung on the cross; the other version is that being put on the cross caused his death (cf. Deut. 21.23; Ezek.13.9; Is.14.15). The Holy Qur'ân refutes both these beliefs by saying, “They killed him not, nor did they cause his death by crucifixion.” The words *mâ Salbû-hu* مَا صلبوه do not negate that Jesus was placed on the cross. I simply means Jesus was not killed by putting him on a cross, or he did not die on cross. Thus the Holy Qur'ân first rejects the slaying of Jesus in any form by saying *mâ qatalû-hu* مَا قتلوا “they killed him not,” and then proceeds to deny the particular way of killing him by hanging him on a cross. The meaning is that he was made to resemble a person who had died—in other words, became unconscious. It was for this reason that he was mistakenly thought to be dead. This interpretation is not only in harmony with the Qur'ânic context but is also clearly borne out by the Bible and the relevant facts of history. The verse emphasizes that Jesus Christ was not a false prophet. He was worthy of regard in this world and the hereafter and was one of those who are drawn close to Allâh. However, according to Jewish law, his supposed death on the cross proves him an impostor, as the associated curse means he could not be a true prophet. Yet several points mentioned in the Bible indicate this is not correct and support the version of events laid out by the Holy Qur'ân. These can be summarized as follows:

1. Jesus himself had predicted his escape from death on the cross saying, “As Jonah was three days and three nights in the whales belly, so shall the son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth” (Matt. 12.40). It is recognized that Jonah had entered the whales belly alive and had come out alive; therefore, according to his

own prophecy, Jesus was to enter the heart of the earth (his tomb) alive and was to come out of it alive.

2. The magistrate Pilate (Pilatus) who tried the case of Jesus believed him to be innocent and, out of sympathy for him, made efforts to save his life (Matt. 27.17; Mark 15.9-10-14; Luke 23.4, 14-15, 20, 22; John 18.38). Pilates wife had seen a vision concerning the innocence of Jesus, and while he (Pilatus) was sitting in judgment, his wife sent to him a message: “Have thou nothing to do with that just man, for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him” (Matt. 27:19). Pilate actually “washed his hands with water,” saying that he was innocent of the blood of that just man (Matt. 27.24); he therefore contributed to saving the life of Jesus. He had Jesus put on the cross on a Friday knowing that the body would have to be taken down before the Sabbath started at sundown the same day, so that he would not die on the cross.

3. Jesus prayed the whole night before his arrest to be saved from death on the cross, and he asked his Disciples to pray for him. The Prayers of a Prophet in distress are always accepted. Apparently, he received a promise from Allâh to be saved, to which he referred when he cried out on the cross, “My God, my God! Why hast Thou forsaken me?” This indicates that he might have transiently doubted this promise in his painful state on the cross; however, Gods promise is always true. Heb. 5.7 makes the matter still more clear, for there it is plainly stated that the prayer of Jesus was accepted, “when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him Who was able to save him from death and he was heard in that he feared.”

4. The appointed soldiers also treated Jesus with kindness, apparently under Pilate’s instructions. Every male carried his own horizontal crossbar, but another man was made to carry that of Jesus (Matt. 27.32; Mark15.21).

5. Jesus was given myrrh mixed in a drink, as myrrh was said to lessen pain. The two thieves who were crucified with him were not given this drink. When after some time the effects of the drink began to wear off and Jesus cried out with pain, the drink was administered to him again (Matt. 27.34, 48; Mark 15.23, 36; John 19.29-30). The unconsciousness that followed his ingestion of the drink was mistaken for death (John 19.30).
6. Jesus remained on the cross only for a few hours (Mark 15.25; John 19.14), but death by crucifixion is always a lengthy process and this relatively short amount of time was by no means sufficient to kill a healthy young man of thirty-three like Jesus. The two men crucified with Jesus were still alive when taken down from the cross; therefore, the presumption is that Jesus, too, was alive.
7. The legs of the other two men were broken, but this was not done to Jesus (John 19.32-33).
8. When Jesus side was pierced, blood rushed out, which was also a certain sign of life.
9. Even Pilate, who had much experience in such cases, did not believe that Jesus actually died in so short a time. When Joseph of Arimathaea came and asked for the body of Jesus, “Pilate wondered if Jesus was already dead, and calling to him the centurion, asked him whether he had been any while dead” (Mark 15.44).
10. Jesus was not buried in the earth with the two thieves, who were killed with an axe after their removal from the cross, but was given into the charge of a wealthy disciple of his, Joseph of Arimathaea, who lavished care on him and laid him separately in a spacious sepulchre hewn out of a rock and situated in a garden, which was Josephs private property (Mark 15.46; John 19.41- 42).

11. The Jews themselves were not sure that Jesus was dead, “for they came to Pilate and requested that his (Jesus) legs be broken” (John 19.31).
12. The suspicion that Jesus was alive and might, with the aid of his sympathisers, escape from the sepulchre rankled in the mind of the Jews. They also remembered the prophecy of Jesus that he would show them the miracle of Jonah and would come out of the belly alive, and so they besought Pilate to command that the sepulchre be made secure until the third day (Matt. 27.62-66).
13. In spite of the watch and the sealing by the stone, Jesus had left the sepulchre before the third day had dawned. When Mary Magdalene and “the other Mary,” (probably mother of James), came to see the sepulchre, they found the stone rolled away and the sepulchre empty (Matt. 28.1-6; Mark 16.1-6). It is very possible that the men guarding the tomb were won over by, or in league with the friends and sympathisers of Jesus. When both women saw the tomb, the stone was found to have been removed from its opening, which would not have been the case if there had been a supernatural rising.
14. After leaving the sepulchre Jesus moved about secretly, to prevent the Jews from having him arrested again (Mark 16.12; John 20.19,26; 21.4. Mary Magdalene, when she saw him, took him, for a gardener (John 20.15), as he likely was disguised as such. Such a disguise would not have been needed if Jesus had risen from the dead.
15. The Ointment of Jesus that was prepared for the wounds from the cross proves that he did not die on the cross: otherwise, there would have been no need of such an ointment.
16. It was in the same body of flesh and clay that Mary Magdalene and the Disciples saw Jesus (Mark 16.9-12).
17. Jesus showed them his wounds to assure them that the body they saw before them was the same physical body that had been put to the

cross (Luke 24.39-40) and the wounds were still there, deep enough for a man to feel with his hands (John 20.25-28).

18. After leaving the sepulchre Jesus felt hungry and took food with his Disciples and ate as his Disciples ate (Luke 24.39-43; John 21.5, 13).

19. Jesus undertook a journey to Galilee with two of his Disciples walking side by side with them (Matt. 28.10), which indicates that he was fleeing for refuge. A journey to Galilee was not necessary to rise to heaven.

20. In all post-crucifixion appearances Jesus is found hiding himself as if he feared being discovered. The statements made in the Holy Qur'ân corroborate the above statements quoted from the Gospels that Jesus did not die on the cross, but that he was alive when he was taken down from the cross. Furthermore, he was also alive when he was laid in the sepulchre, and he came out of the sepulchre alive the third day in the early morning, as he himself prophesied. Later he appeared to his Disciples in secret and assured them that he was not dead. Jesus had said, "And other sheep I have which are not of this fold, them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice and there be one fold and one shepherd" (John 10.16). In these words, he was referring to the ten lost tribes of Israel who were scattered because of the attacks by Nebuchadnezzar. Jesus travelled to the East in search of them after his escape from death on the cross, and he now lies buried among them.

The words in the text **Shubbîha** شُبْهَةٌ mean that the matter was rendered confused, obscure, and dubious (Tâj; Lisân; Mufradât Râghib; see also *Rûh al-Mâ'âni*). To get out of the muddle of wrong translation and misunderstanding of "وَمَا قَتَلُوهُ وَمَا صَلَبُوهُ" "They killed him not, nor did they cause his death by crucifixion," a story has been invented that someone else was made to resemble Jesus and was then crucified in his place. This story has no support from Qur'ân and has no historical foundation. Allâh would not allow unjustly crucifying someone who

is innocent in order to save Jesus from death. If we accept this explanation, we have to admit either Jesus was an imposter and deceiver, as the Jews claimed, or Allâh gave Jews intentionally the wrong impression that they killed Jesus. This would enforce the Jews in their claim that Jesus died an accursed death. Why should Allâh keep Jews in this wrong belief for more than 600 years, until the Revelation of the Holy Qur'ân to clarify the matter?

وَالْمُقِيمِينَ الصَّلَاةَ ۖ وَالْمُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ
أُولَئِكَ سَنُوتِنِهِمْ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا

4:162 According to linguists like Sibway the use of the accusative case in the expression **Muqîmîna al-Salât**, “observer of the Prayer,” instead of the nominative case “*al-Muqimûna*” is a legitimate grammatical device meant to stress the special praiseworthy quality attached to ritual Prayer and to those who are devoted to it (*Kashshaf, Râzî*).

يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لَا تَغْلُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ وَلَا تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْحَقَّ ۚ إِنَّمَا
الْمَسِيحُ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَكَلِمَتُهُ الْفَاقِهَا إِلَى مَرْيَمَ وَرُوحٌ مِّنْهُ ۖ
فَأَمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ۖ وَلَا تَقُولُوا ثَلَاثَةٌ ۖ انْتُهُوا خَيْرًا لَّكُمْ إِنَّمَا اللَّهُ إِلَهٌ
وَاحِدٌ ۖ سُبْحَانَهُ أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُ وَلَدٌ ۖ لَّهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي
الْأَرْضِ ۖ وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ وَكِيلًا

4:171 **Kalimat** كَلِمَة is from *kalama* كلام, meaning to speak or to express. It is a unit of language consisting of one or more spoken sounds that can stand as complete utterance. *Kalima* كلام means word, expression, proposition, speech, sentence, saying, assertion, expression of opinion, decree, commandment, argument, news, sign, plan, design, glad tidings, creation of Allâh, prophecy, or His promise. The word *kalimatun* كَلِمَة as used in the Holy Qur'ân has the meaning of “promise” (cf. 8:7; 10:19, 33, 82, 96; 39:71). According to Ibn Jarîr, *Kalimatu-hu* كَلِمَتُهُ is Allâh's announcement and promise to Mary

of a son as a result of her prayers, just as Zachariah received the glad tidings and promise *kalimatun min Allâh* كَلْمَةٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ from Allâh about the birth of John (*Yahyâ*) (3:39).

The word **Rûh** رُوحٌ is derived from *râha* راحٌ, which has a significance of respite from grief and sadness. *Rûh* is a breath of life, soul, spirit, inspiration, essence, joy, life-giving words of Allâh, or a Prophets Divine message (16:2; 16:102; 5:110; 58:22; 12:87; Lisân, Tâj). The word *Rûh* is used often in the Holy Qur'ân in the sense of Divine Revelation as it gives life to hearts that were dead in ignorance (26:193; 16:2; 97:4). In the chapter "Joseph" (12:87), we read the father of Joseph say, "Go my sons, and make a thorough search of Joseph and his brother. Do not despair of Allâh's soothing mercy (*Rûh Allâh*). Verily none but the people who deny (the truth) can ever lose hope of Allâh's soothing mercy (*Rûh Allâh*)". Similarly we read in the chapter "Al-Mujâdilah" (58:22), "It is they (the true believers) in whose hearts Allâh has inscribed true faith and has strengthened them with His own Revelation (*Rûh*), and in the chapter "al-Nâhl" (16:2) it is written, "He sends down the angels with revelation (*Rûh*) by His command to such of His servants as He will" (cf.19:17). Thus, in the verse under discussion the word *Rûh* means Divine Mercy (12:87) or Divine Revelation with glad tidings (58:22) given to Mary. The verses referred to above tell us that the true believers are eligible to be strengthened by Divine Spirit or by Divine Revelation (*Rûh*). The words *kalimatun* كَلْمَةٌ and *Rûh* رُوحٌ are not attributes of Jesus, but they are used to raise the dignity of Mary as she receives a Promise and a Divine Revelation about the birth of a son who was to be a source of mercy and blessing (- *Rahmah* رَحْمَةٌ) for the people (19:21). The word *Al-Rûh* الروح used in verse 78:38 stands for *Al-Rûh al-Quds*, which cannot be applied here (see 2:87; 2:253; 4:171; 26:193; 32:9; 38:72; 42:52).

يَسْتَفْتُونَكَ قُلِ اللَّهُ يُفْتِنُكُمْ فِي الْكَلَالَةِ

4:176 This verse is fittingly placed here, even if at the first glance it does not appear to be so. **Kalâlah** الْكَلَالَةُ means one having no child or no heirs. The word *kalâlah* used here is a parable which draws our attention to the lack of spiritual heirs of Jesus Christ. He was the last prophet to the Jews, and because of their refusal, Jesus was left without spiritual successors among them. In this sense, he had neither parents nor children: therefore, his spiritual heritage was now taken from his family, the Israelites, and handed over to the brother nation of the Ishmaelite (cf. Deut. 18.15 and Matt. 21.43).

Ithnayain إثْنَيْنَ in this verse signifies two or more. The law of inheritance mentioned in this verse was applied by the Holy Prophet (pbuh) to Jabîr, who died leaving seven sisters and whose parents were already dead (Ibn Jarîr).



سورة المائدة 5. CHAPTER

The Table Spread with Food

(*Revealed after Hijrah*)

The name of this chapter is derived from the prayer of Jesus at the request of some of his followers (الْحَوَارِيُّونَ 5:112) who asked for their ‘daily bread’, symbolizing material progress and prosperity. This reference is made in verses 112-115 of this chapter. This chapter, like the preceding two chapters deals with Christian history and in particular, it denounces the Pauline doctrine that Jewish law was a curse and was supposedly abolished by Jesus.

It opens with the injunction that all covenants must be fulfilled, and that it is necessary to define what is lawful and what is unlawful. The chapter also gives practical precepts concerning food, cleanliness,

justice and fidelity, swearing before law and false evidence, intoxication, gambling, violation of sanctuary, and superstitions. It lays down a series of ordinances and warns against the use of subjective deductions to enlarge the area of Divine ordinances.

The chapter proceeds to claim that the Holy Qur'ân has laid down the final commandments concerning human being's complete development. This affirmation of the Holy Qur'ân is embodied in the 3rd verse of the chapter that states: "*This day have I perfected for you your faith and completed My blessings upon you and have chosen Islam for your religion*" **اللَّيْلَةُ الْكَبِيرَةُ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتَمَّتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمْ () إِلَلٰهٌ إِلَّا اللَّهُمَّ دِينًا** (5:3). This verse was revealed during the Holy Prophet's last pilgrimage in the year 10 A.H. on the ninth of the month of Dhu'l-Hijjah when he was on the plain of 'Arafât (*Bukhârî* 2/32). In the words of the above vere words not only Muslims but all humankind is addressed..

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَوْفُوا بِالْعُهُودِ

5:1 This first statement of this chapter is admirably comprehensive. Covenants, contracts, and engagements are made for the welfare of the individual and society, and are fundamental in social relations. The covenants include those imposed by Allâh as well as the mutual agreements made between people (*Tâj*). Thus, respect for law, spiritual as well as temporal, is made obligatory here. The word '**Uqûd**' **عُهُود** obligations, denotes a solemn undertaking or engagement involving more than one party. According to *Imâm Râghib*, this verse refers to three types of obligations: 1) Obligation towards Allâh. 2) Social obligations to one another. 3) Obligations towards one's own spiritual and moral state. These categories span the entirety of our spiritual and social responsibilities. Complying with these obligations brings peace and harmony to a society and to our souls; breaching them leads to discord and enmity and is the source of restlessness in individuals and society.

أَحِلَّتْ لَكُمْ بَهِيمَةُ الْأَنْعَامِ إِلَّا مَا يُنْتَلِي عَلَيْكُمْ غَيْرَ مُحْلِي الصَّيْدِ وَأَنْتُمْ حُرُّمٌ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَحْكُمُ مَا يُرِيدُ

Bهِيمَة are quadrupeds or any beasts which resemble domesticated cattle in that they feed on plants and are not beasts of prey - simply call them domesticated herbivores (Lisân, Râzî).

حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْنَةُ وَالدَّمُ وَلَحْمُ الْخِزْرِ وَمَا أَهْلَ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ بِهِ وَالْمُنْخَنَقَةُ وَالْمَوْقُوذَةُ وَالْمُتَرَدِّيَةُ وَالنَّطِيْحَةُ وَمَا أَكَلَ السَّبُّعُ إِلَّا مَا ذَكَرْتُمْ وَمَا ذَبَحَ عَلَى النُّصُبِ وَأَنْ تَسْتَقْسِمُوا بِالْأَزْلَامِ ۝ ذَلِكُمْ فِسْقٌ

5:3 Dhakkai-tum ذَكَرْتُم means “you have duly slaughtered”; the infinitive noun **تَرْكِيَة** means causing the natural heat of the body (*harârat-i-gharîzî*) to pass forth. Technically, it is the slaughtering of an animal by cutting jugular vein and causing its blood to flow out of its body (Râghib, Tâj). **Makhmasah** مُخْمَصَة is extreme hunger, emptiness caused by hunger, a situation in which overwhelming extraneous forces beyond a person’s control may compel him against his will to act in a way that is prohibited (Lisân).

الْيَوْمَ أَحِلَّ لَكُمُ الطَّيِّبَاتُ ۝ وَطَعَامُ الَّذِينَ أَوْتُوا الْكِتَابَ حِلٌّ لَّكُمْ وَطَعَامُكُمْ حِلٌّ لَّهُمْ

5:5 This permission to share the food of followers of other Scriptures excludes anything already forbidden. What is prohibited cannot become lawful because a Jew, a Christian or the follower of any other revealed Book, offers it.

Tayyibât الطَّيِّبَاتُ refers to all those things which do no physical or moral harm, and are not contrary to the principles laid down in the Holy Qur’ân. Intermarriage with polytheists is prohibited (2:221). The marriage of women of the “People of Book” is allowed. No explicit reference is made to the marriage of a Muslim woman to the follower of another religion (for the Jewish and Christian Law in this regard,

see Deut. 7.3; 2- Cor. 6.14). From the earliest times, the practice of women marrying men of different faiths has been avoided. However, Islam enjoins reverence to all the Prophets of the “People of the Book”. Therefore, despite doctrinal differences, the Muslim husband and his family will refer to the Prophets of the faith of a wife who is Christian, Jewish, or a follower of another qualifying religion with the utmost respect. On the other hand, the followers of many other religions reject the Prophet of Islam (pbuh). A Muslim woman who marries a non-Muslim would not necessarily experience the same respectful attitude concerning Allâh’s messengers from her non-Muslim husband. In practice, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) married a Christian, Maria (*Maryam*), and a Jew, Sophia (*Safiyah*). The point is that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) made the marriage contract when they were still Christian/Jewish. Both these women eventually converted to Islam after marriage.

الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ بِعْدَمِي وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا

5:3 "This day have I perfected for you your faith and completed My blessings upon you and have chosen Islam for your faith" were among the last Revelations to the Holy Prophet (pbuh), revealed a few months before his death. This verse marks the culmination of his teachings and his mission. The Qur’anic Revelations and their teachings in the form of *Sunnah* – (practice by the Holy Prophet, pbuh) were brought to completion. The final fulfilment of his mission was to be later when “the earth shall radiate with the Light of his Lord” (39:69) and his message of peace and faith in one God would spread around the world.

What follows from this Divine Declaration is that we now have the perfect Divine Law and should live according to it. The absence of a command or an aspect of a command also has a significance. A human being has no authority to fill the gaps in the law where Allâh is silent. Reasoning by analogy (- *qiyâs*) or by consensus (- *ijmâ'*)

should not lead to additions or deletions in Divine Law (- *shari'a*). The Qur'anic words should retain the meanings they had in the language of the classical Arabs of the time. “Consensus” of the Muslims is often used to justify a certain interpretation of law, however consensus (*-ijmâ'*) in its correct use was the consensus among the Companions of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) and not among the “learned” of the later generations” (Ibn Hazm). Agreement (*-ijmâ'*) was only seen among the Companions of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) on a very limited number of subjects. Consensus agreement of the community through the votes of its specialists and representatives is the preferred approach in a Muslim society. However, it has not the authority of *shari'a*. Such agreement can only offer ways or opinions for special situations. Decisions based on *qiyâs* and *ijmâ'* is allowed if it does not add to the Injunction of Divine Law (- *shari'a*). They are clearly defined in the Holy Book. Labels such as forbidden (*harâm*), recommended (*halâl*), obligatory or discouraged are accidental and not part of *shari'a*. These expressions should be taken out when discussing religious injunctions. Such expressions are not be found in Qur'an.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا قُمْتُمْ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ فَاغْسِلُوا وُجُوْهَكُمْ وَأَيْدِيْكُمْ إِلَى
الْمَرَافِقِ وَامْسَحُوا بِرُءُوسِكُمْ وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ إِلَى الْكَعْبَيْنِ

5:6 In this verse Allâh is directing us to purification before Prayer, which can be performed with either clean water or pure dust, the constituent parts of the body. The ablution of the body before ritual Prayer also symbolizes spiritual purification. Ablution through the mystery of life, which is water, is to witness the Living who created all life from water, while ablution through the element of dust, connects to our substance of origin: “He fashioned him out of dust, then He said to him, Be!, and it came to be” (3:59).

وَلَقَدْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ مِيثَاقَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ وَبَعَثْنَا مِنْهُمْ أُنْشَى عَشَرَ نَبِيًّا

5:12 Ithna ‘Ashara Naqîban اثْنَيْ عَشَرَ نَقِيبًا means “twelve chieftains”, in the sense that Jesus had twelve disciples. In the statement that follows, “Allâh said. ‘I will certainly absolve you of your sins and will surely admit you to Gardens served with running streams” (ولَأَذْخُلَنَّكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ) refer to the “promised gardens” that was described by Joshua and Caleb, son of Jephunnah as a land in which “flows milk and honey” (Num. 14.8).

وَمِنَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّا نَصَارَىٰ أَخَذْنَا مِنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ فَسُوا حَطَّا مَمَّا ذُكِرُوا بِهِ
فَأَغْرَيْنَا بَيْنَهُمُ الْعَدَاوَةَ وَالْبَعْضَاءَ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ

5:14 Mîthâq مِيثَاق is a covenant. In the New Testament, we read Jesus saying, “I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth” (John 16.12-13). The Kingdom of God, so often spoken of by Jesus, was none other than the spiritual kingdom to be established by the Holy Prophet (pbuh) of Islam. Christians look for other interpretations of this verse.

لَقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ ۚ قُلْ فَمَنْ يَمْلِكُ مِنَ اللَّهِ
شَيْئًا إِنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يُهْلِكَ الْمَسِيحَ ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ وَأَمَّهُ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا

5:17 Yuhlika يُهْلِك means, “to put an end to” or “to cause to die”. This verse is another argument that neither Jesus nor his mother is living on this earth or in heaven waiting to return. Mary died, so did Jesus. He was not made an exception to Mary. All those who consider Jesus to still alive in some form should know that he died like all Prophets. “And all those that were in the earth” does not mean all those human beings who are on the entire earth, but all his contemporaries (cf. 2:47). The Holy Qur’ân repeatedly rejects the divinity of Jesus and presents an argument that he died like any other human being (cf. 5:72-75). We read, “The Messiah, son of Mary was only a Messenger, all Messengers have passed away, and his mother

was a highly truthful woman. They both used to eat food. See how we explain the arguments for their good; yet see how those (who believe that Jesus is living or was a son of god) are turned away from truth" (5: 75).

يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ قُدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولُنَا يُبَيِّنُ لَكُمْ عَلَىٰ فَتْرَةٍ مِنَ الرُّسُلِ أَن تَقُولُوا
مَا جَاءَنَا مِنْ بَشِيرٍ وَلَا نَذِيرٍ

5:19 'Alâ fatratîn means "after a break". The Holy Prophet (pbuh) is reported to have said, speaking of Jesus, "There has been no Messenger between him and me" (Bukhârî 21:48). No nation or religion claims the appearance of any universal messenger bringing a new Divine Law between the lives of Jesus and Mohammad (pbuh). This does not mean that Allâh remained dumb for six hundred years and He did speak to anyone. The verse simply says that Mosaic Law retained its validity in this period. One must differentiate between *nabi* that is Prophet, and *rasûl* who is a Law bringing Messenger. Not all Prophets are Messengers. Moses was a Law Giving Messenger (*rasûl*) and a Prophet (*nabi*) (19:51) and Aaron was only a Prophet (19:53).

وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ يَا قَوْمَ اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ جَعَلَ فِيْكُمْ أَنْبِيَاءً
وَجَعَلَكُمْ مُلُوكًا وَأَتَكُمْ مَا لَمْ يُؤْتِ أَحَدًا مِنَ الْعَالَمِينَ

5:20 Mulûk means, "Master of your own affairs" (for this rendering see Jarîr, Zamakhsharî, Râzî). It is an allusion to the Israelites freedom and independence after their Egyptian bondage, and therefore is not an anachronism.

قَالُوا يَا مُوسَىٰ إِنَّا لَنَنْدَخِلَّهَا أَبَدًا مَا دَامُوا فِيهَا ۖ فَادْهَبْ أَنْتَ وَرَبُّكَ فَقَاتِلَا
إِنَّا هَا هُنَا قَاعِدُونَ

5:24 What is said here concerns the spiritual immaturity of the people of Moses (Num. 13:32; 14:1-4, 6-9) which can be seen as contrasted

against the attitudes of Companions of the Holy Prophet. Before the Battle of Badr one of the Companions, Miqdâd Ibn Amar, said to the Holy Prophet (pbuh), “We are with you. We will never say, as the people of Moses said to him, go forth you and your Lord, then fight there you two, we will sit down here and watch. We will fight your enemies in front of you, and behind you, and on your right and on your left” (*Bukhârî*). Moses prayed about his own people: “bring about separation between us (Moses and Aaron and his sincere followers) and these disobedient people.” Joshua and Jephunnah supported the position of Moses with respect to these “disobedient people” and said to them, “rebel not ye against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land, their defense is deported from them and the Lord is with us, fear them not” (Num. 14:6-9). It was under the leadership of Joshua and Jephunnah that finally, after forty years, the Israelites were to enter the Promised Land.

وَاتْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَأً ابْنِي آدَمَ بِالْحَقِّ إِذْ قَرَبَا قُرْبَانًا فَتُقْبَلَ مِنْ أَحَدِهِمَا وَلَمْ يُتَقْبَلْ مِنِ الْآخَرِ قَالَ لِأَقْرَبَنَّا

5:27 The verse is an reference to the Jews and their relationship with the Muslims. Their offerings were rejected because they rejected the Divine Discourse revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

مِنْ أَجْلِ ذَلِكَ كَتَبْنَا عَلَىٰ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَنَّهُ مَنْ قَتَلَ نَفْسًا بِعِينِ نَفْسٍ أَوْ فَسَادٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَكَانَنَّا قَاتِلَ النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا وَمَنْ أَحْيَاهَا فَكَانَمَا أَحْيَا النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا

5:32 The human being is Allâh’s noblest handiwork. He is the zenith of His creation, its aim and end. Humanity is Allâh’s vicegerent on earth (2:30; 17:30). It is therefore natural that the religion, which has put human beings on such a high pedestal, should also attach great importance and sanctity to human life. According to Islamic teaching, of all things, human life is the most sacred and inviolable (see also 17:33 for the gravity of the crime of murder). In the verse, the word

nafs stands for a human being, but may also refer to any great reformer or any prophet. As the word **Nafsan** نَفْسًا here is used as an indefinite, then according to Arabic syntax, the word must refer to the Jewish plots to kill the Holy Prophet (pbuh), but does so without detracting from the universal validity of the injunction against murder. The words “**كُنَّا عَلَىٰ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ**” also refer to its earlier enunciation. The same text you can read in Talmud: Mischna Sanhedrin IV.5.

أَنَّمَا جَزَاءُ الَّذِينَ يُحَارِبُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَيَسْعَوْنَ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَسَادًا أَنْ يُقْتَلُوا أَوْ يُصَلَّبُوا أَوْ تُقْطَعَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَرْجُلُهُمْ مِنْ خِلَافٍ أَوْ يُنْفَوْا مِنِ الْأَرْضِ

5:33 Those who wage war against Allâh and His Messenger and who attempt to spread violence and chaos mostly end up being slain, crucified, or banished from the land. There is a more general application in a legal sense against deceit, murder and the (attempted) spread of corruption.

وَالسَّارِقُ وَالسَّارِقَةُ فَاقْطَعُوا أَيْدِيهِمَا جَزَاءً بِمَا كَسَبُوا نَكَالًا مِنَ اللَّهِ

5:38 Al-Sâriq السارق is a noun of intensiveness of *sâriq*. It is derived from the root *saraqa* سرق meaning, “To steal”. *Sâriq* is the one who steals. *Al* ال before the noun gives the sense of intensiveness and perfection. Such a noun is called *ism mubâlaghah* اسم المبالغة. Thus *Al-Sâriq* is not just an ordinary thief or a person who commits an act of theft, but a professional, habitual thief. *Al-Sâriqah* السارقة is the female counterpart of such a habitual thief. The word **Aqta‘û** اقطعوا literally means, “to cut” and *faqta‘û aidî-huma* أقطعوا أيديهم means, “cut the hand of the two”. However, the punishment prescribed in the verse is not for a simple act of theft (*saraqa*), or for an ordinary thief (*sâriq*) but for *Al-Sâriqa*, the addicted, habitual thief, whether man or woman.

In order to correctly understand the nature of this punishment, it is necessary to know the metaphorical meaning of *faqta'û aidî-huma* فَاقْطُلُوَا أَيْدِيهِمَا or “cut the hand of the two”. The Arabic expression for silencing someone is *qat'a lisâna-hu* قطع لسانه - “cut off his tongue”. However, *qata'a-hu bil-hijjati* قطعه بالحجّة means, “he silenced him with argument” (Lisân). We read in the chapter of Joseph, *qata'na aidîyahunna* قطعن إيديهن meaning “cut their hands”: “when they (the women of the township) saw him (Joseph) they began to cut (off) their hands” (12:31). This does not mean that the women of the township where Joseph lived literally cut their hands off when they saw Joseph, but his appearance made them fall silent this way. Therefore, *faqta'û aidî-huma* (“cut the hand of the two”) has to be read metaphorically. It means that the *Al-Sâriq* (or *Al-Sâriqa* the female counterpart) must be deprived of the power and means to continue stealing and to prevent them from committing repeated thefts. This could be done by imprisonment or other means. This punishment must be compared with the minimum punishment for those who "make war" and "create disorder in land" such as bandits and murderers, as mentioned in verse 33 of this chapter. As stated there (5:33), for such people the minimum punishment is imprisonment, yet theft is a less serious crime than "creating disorder in land" and "making war". The minimum punishment for theft should therefore not be more severe than the minimum punishment these more severe crimes.

There is also another argument that *faqta'û aidî-huma* - “cut the two hands” is to be taken metaphorically and not literally, and that is by looking at the practice of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). According to a saying of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), a hand was not to be cut off when a theft was committed in the course of a journey (Da'ûd 37:19); a further saying is that a hand was not to be cut off for stealing fruit from a tree (Da'ûd 37:19). Another tradition (*hadîth*) states that at the time of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) when a person stole another's belongings. The rightful owner was invited to sell it to the person who had stolen it, and the Holy Prophet (pbuh) approved of

this arrangement (Dâ‘ûd). ‘Umar^(rz), the second caliph did not cut off the hands of Ibn Abî Batta and his companions who stole a camel because they were hungry. Therefore, without a system of social security this punishment cannot be imposed as every citizen is entitled to a share in the community’s economic resources. It is therefore against the background of such a system of social security that the Holy Qur’ân imposes this punishment. In a state in which security, social justice, and the basic needs of all are assured, theft represents an attack against the system as a whole. Thieves should be stopped and confined if peace is to be maintained in such a society. In a state where this social security does not exist, such a punishment should not be imposed and state law must confine itself to milder forms of punishment. It was based on this principle that ‘Umar^(rz) waived the *hadd* (limit) of hand cutting in the case of Ibn Abi Battâ during a period of famine that afflicted the nation during his reign. This punishment therefore is not a required punishment under all circumstances as it is often misunderstood, but rather the absolute maximum punishment that can be imposed if certain strict conditions are met. Another aspect that should be remembered is that theft in those times often resulted in severe consequences and even death of the victim of such crimes, for example if a riding camel or water and food provisions were stolen in the desert. Even if taken literally, it should be noted that this punishment, by imposing a maximal limit on the punishment for theft abolished the death penalty for this crime, which in that day and age was commonly imposed.

سَمَّاعُونَ لِلْكَذِبِ أَكَالُونَ لِلسُّخْتِ

5:42 *Suh* سُخت literally means, “things forbidden”. Its root is *sahata* سَحَّت meaning to gain what is unlawful; make unlawful profit; do anything that leads to destruction; devour that which is forbidden (*Lisân*), or take a bribe (*Râghib*). Hence, the passage denotes those who greedily devour all that is forbidden.

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا التُّورَةَ فِيهَا هُدًى وَنُورٌ ۝ يَحْكُمُ بِهَا النَّبِيُّونَ الَّذِينَ أَسْلَمُوا لِلَّذِينَ
هَادُوا وَالرَّبَّانِيُّونَ وَالْأَحْبَارُ بِمَا اسْتَحْفَظُوا مِنْ كِتَابِ اللَّهِ وَكَانُوا عَلَيْهِ
شُهَدَاءَ ۝ فَلَا تَحْسُنُوا النَّاسَ وَاحْشُونَ وَلَا تَشْتُرُوا بِأَيَّاتِي ثُمَّا قَلِيلًا ۝ وَمَنْ
لَمْ يَحْكُمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْكَافِرُونَ

5:44 Torah was a Divine Revelation and provided “*light and guidance*” (هُدًى وَنُورٌ). It was intended for the children of Israel, and was never meant to have universal validity. This verse does not offer evidence of the purity of the text of the scripture in what we read today, or that this “light and the guidance” were kept intact throughout the ages. The Rabbis and those learned in their law were required to guard their scripture. However, scholars among the Jews (and Christians) know that major alterations were made and are still being made by human hands to their holy scriptures, which they claim are from God. The alteration of these books is clearly referenced in the Holy Qur’ân in 2:75-79. The light and guidance also refer to the Divine teachings and the prophecies about the advent of Jesus and the Holy Prophet (pbuh). It is the duty of the learned to inform their people about the true teachings and the prophecies and these verses warn against trying to conceal or modify them.

وَلِيَحْكُمْ أَهْلُ الْإِنْجِيلِ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ فِيهِ

5:47 The words “*and let the followers of the Evangel judge according to what Allâh has revealed therein*”, like similar concepts in 5:44 do not enjoin obedience to any Law of Moses or of Jesus but refer to the prophecies contained in the Torah and the Evangel about the advent of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) of Islam.

وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدِيهِ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَمُهَيْمِنًا عَلَيْهِ

5:48 The Holy Qur’ân is *Muhaimin*, which means “guardian over the previous scriptures”. The Holy Qur’ân is the deciding factor

as to what is genuine and what is false. *Al-Haqq* is distinct as the absolute Truth, as opposed to books which contain both truth and falsehood. *Al* before the noun *haqq* gives the sense of intensiveness and perfection.

فَتَرَى الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ يُسَارِ عُونَ فَيَقُولُونَ نَحْشَى أَنْ تُصِيبَنَا
دَائِرَةً ۝ فَعَسَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ بِالْفَتْحِ أَوْ أَمْرًا مِنْ عِنْدِهِ فَيُصِيبُهُوا عَلَىٰ مَا
أَسْرُوا فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ نَادِمِينَ

5:52 Al-Fatha means “The victory” or “The opening of good fortune” (Tâj, Asas). *Al* before *Al-Fatha* refers to a particular victory, not just victory as a general concept. Here it may refer to the victory of Makkah. The verse indicates that certain people were blessed with good fortune at the time of victory. The “remorsefulness” experienced by others is due to missing the opportunity of receiving great fortune by not accepting the Divine message.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَنْ يَرْتَدِدْ مِنْكُمْ عَنْ دِينِهِ فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِيَ اللَّهُ بِقَوْمٍ يُحِبُّهُمْ
وَيُحِبُّونَهُ أَذْلَةً عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَعْزَةً عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ يُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
وَلَا يَخَافُونَ لَوْمَةً لَائِمٍ ۝ ذَلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ

5:54 There is a particular beauty in the Divine words “Whom He will love and who will love Him”, which comes from the use of pronouns of absence (3rd person plural) and a future tense without end, indicating that Allâh’s love for His servants will be endless. His love for us will exist whether our state is one of existence or non-existence. He confirms His intention in the following words: “He will be with you wherever you may be” (57:4).

فُلْ هُنَّ أَنْبِئُكُمْ بِشَرٍّ مِنْ ذَلِكَ مَثُوبَةً عِنْدَ اللَّهِ ۝ مَنْ لَعَنَهُ اللَّهُ وَغَضِبَ عَلَيْهِ
وَجَعَلَ مِنْهُمُ الْقِرَدَةَ وَالْخَنَّاسِيرَ وَعَبَدَ الطَّاغُوتَ

5:60 “*He has made (as) apes and pigs*” (جَعَلَ مِنْهُمُ الْقَرْدَةَ وَالْخَازِيرَ) is a metaphorical description of the moral degradation sinners undergo: they became degraded, egoistic, devoid of morals, and abandon themselves to the pursuit of lust (Mujâhid, Jarîr, see also 2:65).

وَاللَّهُ يَعْصِمُكَ مِنَ النَّاسِ

5:67 Ya‘simu-ka - يَعْصِمُكَ “*He will protect you*” is derived from ‘*asma*, which means to protect, hinder, defend, save from evil, or protect from sin (Tâj, Lisân). Commenting on this verse *Imâm Râghib* writes that the ‘*ismat* عِصْمَتِ or protection of the Prophet is given to him by Allâh in the first place by characterising him with purity of essence; by creating him with a pure nature free from any sin, and by protecting him from evil and sinful deeds. Thus with these words, Allâh grants the Holy Prophet (pbuh) physical protection as well as spiritual excellence. This verse is to bring tranquillity to the Holy Prophet (pbuh). Al-Alûsî also gives a similar explanation in *Rûh al-Ma‘âni*.

“*Allâh will protect you from all the onslaughts of people on your life*” is a great prophecy. In Makkah, the Holy Prophets enemies were the Quraish. His Hijrah to Madînah multiplied the numbers on his enemies. In Madînah, most of the Quraish, Jews, Christians, and the other tribes of Arabia, the hypocrites, and the kingdoms of Persia and Byzantine were all hostile towards him. In this critical situation, this promise is given that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) will remain under Divine protection against the many dangers that threaten his life. The reality of this promise can be judged from the fact that three of the four caliphs that followed him, ‘Umar^(rz), ‘Uthmân^(rz) and ‘Alî^(rz), were killed, although they had by that time acquired greater political power. The verse also refutes the opinion of some people that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) was afraid of Abû Bakr^(rz), his father-in-law and the first caliph. Abû Bakr^(rz) was known as a soft-hearted person and a sincere friend of the Holy Prophet. He had no reason to be afraid of

Abû Bakr^(rz). Besides, the promise of protection from All-Mighty Allâh removes the fear of another human being.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالصَّابِرُونَ وَالنَّصَارَىٰ مِنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ
الْآخِرِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْرَنُونَ

5:69 The verse repeats once again what was already said in 2:62 in the same words.

لَقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ ۖ وَقَالَ الْمَسِيحُ يَا بْنَيِ إِسْرَائِيلَ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبَّكُمْ

5:72 The Christian doctrine of the Trinity is refuted here. The name of Holy Ghost or the alleged divinity of Mary is not mentioned where reference is made to the Trinity (5:73). The doctrine concerning the deification of Mary or “Mariolatry” by the Catholics is well known.

مَا الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ إِلَّا رَسُولٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ الرُّسُلُ وَأُمَّةُ صِدِّيقَةٍ كَانَ
يَأْكُلُنَّ الطَّعَامَ

5:75 The verse advances a number of arguments against the alleged divinity of Jesus (3:2; 3:5; 3:6; 3:55; 4:157). The statement “*The Messiah, son of Mary, was only a Messenger, all the Messengers have (like him) passed away before him*” also indicates that Jesus has died and is not still living with his body somewhere in heaven.

فُلُّ أَتَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَمْلِكُ لَكُمْ ضَرًّا وَلَا نَفْعًا

5:76 All who profess to worship Christ, love only the images they themselves have constructed. In effect, by doing so, they profess Allâh’s similarity with His creation. The perfect knowledge of Him demands that He is incomparable (cf. 42:11).

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لَا تَغْلُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ غَيْرُ الْحَقِّ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا أَهْوَاءَ قَوْمٍ قَدْ ضَلَّوْا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَأَضَلَّوْا كَثِيرًا وَضَلَّوْا عَنْ سَوَاءِ السَّبِيلِ

5:77 The Christian doctrines that God is the Christ or God is the third of the trinity are groundless. The verse tells us that in making these doctrines the basis of their religion, Christians have incorporated doctrines preached by the pagans. Ibn al-'Arabî says about the followers of trinity: "No foot of the believers in trinity reaches a firm foundation in Him; no clear path to Him appears for them, as they see Him identical to a human being. This image of Christ stands between them and the Goal. Their people of knowledge try to separate him from Him but they are unable to do so. Others try to make him identical with Him, but that does not become verified for them so they remain impotent in their belief, their understanding becomes weary and their intellects bewildered. Their tongues speak of him and Him in contradictory expressions, At one time they say he and mean Him, at another they say not He but he, and at still another time they say He and he, not he but He." (Ibn al-'Arabî)

لِعْنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ عَلَىٰ لِسَانَ دَأْوُودَ وَعِيسَى ابْنِ ذَلِكَ بِمَا عَصَوَا وَكَانُوا يَعْنَدُونَ

5:78 After Moses, David and Jesus represent the highest achievements of Israelites in temporal and spiritual glory. In addition, of all the Israelite Prophets, these two suffered the most at the hands of the Jews. The hardships David was subjected to by his ungrateful people are reflected in the deep pathos of his Psalms (in particular, see 109:17-18; 78:21-22); the persecution of Jesus culminated in his being hung on the cross. Yet both had warned the Jews that their transgressions called for Divine punishment. Accordingly, the warning by David was manifested in the Israelites being smitten by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C., while the warning by Jesus was realized by terrible hardships inflicted on them by Titus of Rome in 70 A.D.

وَلَوْ كَانُوا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالنَّبِيِّ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ إِلَيْهِ

5:81 Al-Nabî النَّبِي refers to the perfect Prophet as signified by the suffix *al* before *Nabî*. In the Holy Qur'an this expression is always used to mean the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). He is referred to as The Prophet or That Prophet in early scriptures (John 1.21-25).

لَتَجِدَنَّ أَشَدَّ النَّاسَ عَدَاوَةً لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِالْيَهُودِ وَالَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا ۖ وَلَتَجِدَنَّ أَفْرَبَهُمْ مَوَدَّةً لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّا نَصَارَىٰ ۚ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ مِنْهُمْ قَسِيسِينَ وَرُهْبَانًا وَأَنَّهُمْ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ

5:82 The Christians are nearer to Islam than the Jews because of two main reasons: Christians reject only one prophet that is the Holy Prophet of Islam (pbuh), whereas the Jews reject two Prophets, Jesus and the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). Another reason is given in this verse: “*That is so because there are priests and monks among them and because they are not haughty*”. In the early history of Islam, Negus the Emperor of Abyssinia accepted Islam, Heracles was favourably disposed towards it, and many Christians in Egypt, North Africa, Syria and Iraq converted to Islam in large numbers. There are no such examples among the Jews. In contrast, only few Jews were friendly towards Islam. The Jews, who think of themselves as the chosen people, tended to be haughty. Many concealed deep-rooted hatred and jealousy in their hearts against Muslims. Although throughout history the Jews faced pogroms and extreme persecution almost exclusively at the hands of Christians, they found protection among the Muslims. Despite this, they allied with Christians against Muslims whenever they saw a chance to harm the Muslims (5:51, 52, 80; 3:112). The animosity against Jews that currently can be found in some Muslim countries is a recent development over the last decades, which are based on political rather than religious reasons.

وَإِذَا سَمِعُوا مَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيَّ الرَّسُولُ تَرَى أَعْيُّهُمْ تَفِيضُ مِنَ الدَّمْعِ مِمَّا عَرَفُوا مِنَ الْحَقِّ ۝ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا آمَنَّا فَأَكْتُبْنَا مَعَ الشَّاهِدِينَ

5:83 This verse also refers to the verse 39:23 and to the Christians of Abyssinia and Negus their king. When verses 19:16-34 of the Holy Qur'ân were recited to him by Ja'far, it is related that eyes of Negus overflowed with tears.

لَا يُؤَاخِذُكُمُ اللَّهُ بِاللَّغُو فِي أَيْمَانِكُمْ وَلَكِنْ يُؤَاخِذُكُمْ بِمَا عَدَّنُتُمُ الْأَيْمَانَ

5:89 This verse should be read as a continuation of the previous two verses. The oaths referred to are vows by which one forbids oneself what is otherwise lawful or good and pure. It is wrong to think that the verse sanctions the expiation of all kinds of oaths. Oaths that pertain to the rights of others cannot be broken. Such oaths cannot be expiated even by adopting any or all of the three courses mentioned in the verse above. “*عَدَّنُتُمُ الْأَيْمَانَ*” “Do guard your oaths” means oaths are not to be sworn lightly, but only when there is an urgent need.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّمَا الْخَمْرُ وَالْمَيْسِرُ وَالْأَنْصَابُ وَالْأَزْلَامُ رِجْسٌ مِّنْ عَمَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ فَاجْتَنِبُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

5:90 There is no doubt that intoxicants and gambling are highly addictive. Similarly, games of chance, "divining arrows" and some rituals in churches and temples can also be addictive as they create a false sense of spirituality. Religious rituals accompanied by songs, dance and music cause a kind of euphoria that distracts from mindful contemplation. This addiction is not only due to a state of ecstasy, but also from an experience very close to the altered state of consciousness characterized by good feelings.

لَيْسَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ جُنَاحٌ فِيمَا طَعِمُوا إِذَا مَا اتَّقَوْا وَآمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ ثُمَّ اتَّقَوْا وَآمَنُوا ثُمَّ اتَّقَوْا وَأَحْسَنُوا

5:93 The statement: “*There is no blame on those who believe and do deeds of righteousness for what they have eaten*” does not justify in any form drinking and eating what is unlawful (cf. 5:3) as the verse might be misinterpreted; neither does it allow the consumption of any unlawful food mentioned in verse three of this chapter. Rather, the verse is speaking of those Muslims who died before the promulgation of the prohibitions mentioned in verse 5:90 above or before knowledge about these prohibitions reached them. It informs us about the conditions to be observed and which can safeguard a person against the use of forbidden items. “Eating” has a broad meaning here, and is not limited to blood and pork. It also includes things that are acquired by unjust means through bribery, cheating, stealing, forgery, and other methods (cf. 4:2, 6, and 10). The command to avoid “eating what is unlawful” is *taqwâ* تقویٰ. The word *attaqû* اتّقُوا is repeated three times in this verse and the particle *thumma* ثم is used to emphasize *attaqû*. The *muttaqîn* مُتّقِينَ are those who are God-conscious, observe their daily duties, and guard against evil: their belief is so strong that it becomes a natural and constant source of good works (2:2). The reason for this repetition is to emphasize and remind us of our three-fold duties: towards Allâh, towards our fellow beings, and towards ourselves. People who are *muttaqîn* could never conceive of “eating what is unlawful”.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَقْتُلُوا الصَّيْدَ وَأَنْتُمْ حُرُمٌ

5:95 *Al-Sayd* الصَّيْد can be translated as “fish” or “prey”. The word is derived from *sâda* eäBu meaning to hunt or chase game and to fish. *Al-Sayd* in this context is restricted to only edible animals. It does not include potentially harmful animals such as snakes, scorpions, or rabid dogs. Here the Ka‘bah also signifies the sacred precincts of Makkah as well as the sanctuary itself, lest this verse not make sense (Râzî; cf. 5:96). The prohibition against killing game during a pilgrimage in the sacred precincts of Makkah is to ensure not

only the respect and the security of the Ka‘bah, but also for the overall safety of large gatherings of people. The prohibition also serves to maintain an environmental balance, as during the days of pilgrimage huge numbers of people come together. If a large number of pilgrims go hunting in this relatively small area, the environmental balance is bound to be disturbed.

أَحِلَّ لَكُمْ صَيْدُ الْبَحْرِ وَطَعَامُهُ مَتَاعًا لَكُمْ وَلِلصَّيْرَةِ ۝ وَحُرْمَنْ عَلَيْكُمْ صَيْدُ الْبَرِّ مَا دُمْنُمْ حُرْمًا

5:96 Bahr بَحْر is any large accumulation of water. Thus *Sayd al-Bahr* صَيْدُ الْبَحْر comprises all water-game, whether derived from the sea, rivers, streams, ponds, or lakes (Jarir). Fishing during pilgrimage is allowed; it is much less likely to disturb the ecological balance than hunting

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَسْأَلُوا عَنِ اشْيَاءٍ إِنْ تُبْدِ لَكُمْ تَسْوِيْكُمْ وَإِنْ تَسْأَلُوا عَنْهَا
حِينَ يُنَزَّلُ الْقُرْآنُ تُبْدِ لَكُمْ عَفَّا اللَّهُ عَنْهَا

5:101 Extreme positions and obsession over minute details in the interpretation of *Shari‘a* law is prohibited according to this verse. Fixating on trivial details leads to superstition, aversion, and finally disbelief. Just as the absence of *Shari‘a* is harmful, so is the other extreme. We have to apply appropriate moderation and make efforts to understand the spirit behind the laws of *Shari‘a*. Here is also a prohibition to insist on questions that have little to do with morality and righteousness (*taqwâ*). Actual examples of such questions are: the kind of wood was used by Noah to construct the ark; the size of his ark; the kind of tree that Adam was forbidden to approach; or the name of the person with whom Abraham debated. Equivalent questions in modern times are whether it is “*halâl*” to put fresh flowers in toilets, or “*harâm*” to use nail polish during prayer. The list of such trivial discussions is long. This passage also holds a

prohibition against the creation of new but effectively useless and potentially harmful ordinances (-*fatwâ*), and against interpretations of *Sharia* that were never mentioned in the Holy Qur'ân. The Holy Qur'ân has made the details in important matters explicit, yet there are questions where no direct answers are given. This does not mean that Allâh has forgotten them or wants us to remain ignorant. The purpose is that we exercise our own judgment and reasoning – *Ijtihad*. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) said, "The difference of opinion among my *ummah* (community) is a source of mercy and blessing. "Such differences represent opportunities for the cultivation of reasoning power as well as suitable, intelligent interpretations of the law in the face of constant change.

Obsessive analysis of the details of each injunction also leads to discord. Some "Mullahs" (self-made religious authorities, *shari'a*-makers) add to or interpret *shari'a* laws in ways that are irrational or even repulsive for many minds and have no basis in the Holy Qur'ân. This subject is considered again in the following verse (5:102). The words "Allâh is a great protector" refer to the protection by Him from a return to disbelief because of newly devised religious ordinances by misguided scholars. Ibn Hazm has discussed this problem at length in the first volume of his book *Muhâlla*.

مَا جَعَلَ اللَّهُ مِنْ بَحِيرَةٍ وَلَا سَابِيَّةٍ وَلَا وَصِيلَةٍ وَلَا حَامٍ ۝ وَلَكِنَّ الَّذِينَ
كَفَرُوا يَقْتَرُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ

5:103 The verse conveys to us the message that once people start following a superstition or senseless tradition, they cannot refrain from it, and they make little use of their faculties for reasoning and logic.

إِذْ قَالَ اللَّهُ يَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ اذْكُرْ نَعْمَتِي عَلَيْكَ وَعَلَىٰ وَالدِّيْنِكَ إِذْ أَيَّدْتُكَ
بِرُوحِ الْفُؤُسِ ثُكَّلُ النَّاسَ فِي الْمَهْدِ وَكَهْلًا

5:110 Kahlan كهلاً comes from *kahala* meaning, “to reach an old and mature age” or “to be of an age when a person’s hair becomes grey”. In the words “تَكَلَّمُ النَّاسَ فِي الْمَهْدٍ وَكَهْلًا You spoke to people while you were a young person and when your hair turned grey because of old age” we are informed that Jesus not only lived and preached in his youth, but also when he reached a mature advanced age. Jesus was put on the cross when he was still young; probably when he was a little over thirty. If he also spoke when his hair was already grey, it means that he did not die on the cross or ascend to heaven after being taken down from the cross. “You spoke ... and when your hair turned grey because of old age” only makes sense if Jesus continued to live on earth, even if he no longer lived in Palestine. The use of the past tense in “you spoke..” indicates that he spoke in the past and not that he will speak some time in the future upon descending to earth from heaven as some people believe. The word *Rûh* روح is always used in the Holy Qur’ân to indicate Divine Revelation and Mercy (cf.16:2; 32:9; 38:72; 42:52; 16:102; 2:253; 2:87; 58:22; 26:193; 4:171).

وَإِذْ تَحْلُقُ مِنَ الطِّينِ كَهْنَةٌ الطَّيْرُ بِإِذْنِي فَتَنْفُخُ فِيهَا فَتَكُونُ طَيْرًا بِإِذْنِي ۝
وَتُنْبِرُ الْأَكْمَةُ وَالْأَبْرَصُ بِإِذْنِي ۝ وَإِذْ تُخْرُجُ الْمَوْتَى بِإِذْنِي ۝

While commenting on the words “وَإِذْ تُخْرُجُ الْمَوْتَى بِإِذْنِي by My leave you raised the dead to life” Imâm Al-Ghazâlî says: “Ignorance is death and knowledge is the noblest life. Allâh has mentioned ignorance and knowledge in His Holy Book and has called them death and life. Whosoever lifts another out of ignorance to knowledge has created him anew and revivified him to a blessed life. Should a man have a way of conveying knowledge to people and calling them to the Most High that would be a kind of revivification, and such would be the level of Prophets” (*Al-Maqṣad al-Asna fi sharḥ asmā Allâh al-Husna* by al-Ghazâlî translated by David Burrell and Nazih Daher; cf.:6:122)

قَالَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّنَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْنَا مَائِدَةً مِنَ السَّمَاءِ تَكُونُ لَنَا
عِيْدًا لَأَوَّلَنَا وَآخِرَنَا وَآيَةً مِنَّا ۖ وَارْزُقْنَا وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الرَّازِقِينَ

5:114 Mâ'îdah مائدةٌ is derived from word *mâda* مادٌ and has the meaning of furnishing with food again and again. Food can also be knowledge, as knowledge is a spiritual food. All Prophets pray for their people (cf. 71:26). This verse is the prayer of Jesus for his people. The words لَأَوَّلَنَا وَآخِرَنَا “*the former and the later ones*” show that the prayer was not only for the followers of his time, but also meant for his followers in later periods. The words وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الرَّازِقِينَ “*You are best of the providers of sustenance*” supports this meaning. *Mâda* has the meaning of rotation, revolving, and ever again returning. This also shows that the prayer of Jesus was forever returning a blessing of spiritual knowledge and of food.

وَإِذْ قَالَ اللَّهُ يَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ أَنَّتَ قُلْتَ لِلنَّاسِ اتَّخِذُونِي وَأُمِّي إِلَهَيْنِ مِنْ
دُونِ اللَّهِ ۝ قَالَ سُبْحَانَكَ مَا يَكُونُ لِي أَنْ أَقُولَ مَا لَيْسَ لِي بِحَقٍّ ۝ إِنْ كُنْتُ
قُلْتُهُ فَقَدْ عَلِمْتَهُ ۝ تَعْلَمُ مَا فِي نَفْسِي ۝ وَلَا أَعْلَمُ مَا فِي نَفْسِكَ ۝ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ عَلَامُ
الْغُيُوبِ (۱۱۶) مَا قُلْتُ لَهُمْ إِلَّا مَا أُمْرَتُ شَيْئًا بِهِ أَنْ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبَّكُمْ ۝
وَكُنْتُ عَلَيْهِمْ شَهِيدًا مَا دَمْتُ فِيهِمْ ۝ فَلَمَّا تَوَفَّيْتَنِي كُنْتَ أَنْتَ الرَّقِيبُ
عَلَيْهِمْ ۝ وَأَنْتَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ

5:116-117 Jesus shall be asked by Allâh on the Day of Judgment: قُلْتَ لِلنَّاسِ اتَّخِذُونِي وَأُمِّي إِلَهَيْنِ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ “Did you say to the people, Take me and my mother for two gods beside Allâh? Jesus will deny this and say that he had no right of saying this, that he has no knowledge of it, that he said only what he was commanded by Allâh to say, and that he was a witness only as long as he lived among his people. Now those who insist that this Jesus ascended to heaven, that he is living with his body somewhere in the heaven, and that the same Jesus is going to return to earth in later days and end the disbelief, should carefully reflect on this verse. Jesus clearly indicates that he has no knowledge

of his own and his mother's deification. However, Jesus certainly would have come to know the fact that some people took him as god and worshipped him when he returned to the earth some time before the Day of Judgment. These people should reflect again: Jesus was a prophet of Allâh as the Holy Qur'ân repeatedly says. Now if he is to come again, what about the claim that Mohammed (pbuh) was *Khâtim al-Nabiyyîn* – the last of all Prophets. How can he be the last one? Is Allâh going to strip Jesus of his prophethood? If Jesus were to come again as an ordinary man, then what sense and what wisdom was there in keeping him alive over all these years? These verses reject not only the divinity of Jesus but also clearly announce: (1) Jesus died a natural death; (2) he was not lifted to heaven alive, where he is still alive waiting to return; (3) he will not return to this earth a second time in his own person; (4) it was only after his death that people deified him (see also 3:2; 3:5-6; 3:55; 4:157; 5:72, 110).



سورة الأنعام

The Cattle

(*Revealed before the Hijrah*)

The chapter derives its title from the verses 136-138 where cattle are mentioned in connection with certain pagan superstitions and idolatrous practices. The abolition of these practices was necessary to establish the Doctrine of Divine Unity in all its purity. The objective of the Holy Qur'ân is not only to preach Divine Unity, but also to make it the basis of practical life. Previous chapters dealt with the spiritual history of humankind, and mention earlier revelations and their subsequent corruption. The latter part of the preceding chapter refuted the Christian doctrine of the deification of Jesus.

The chapter also deals with idolatry and other kinds of polytheistic beliefs. The very first verse expounds the doctrine of dualism such as that found in the Zoroastrian faith and in the writings of some philosophers. It also covers some of the regulations for daily life of the new community of Muslims, and the ways in which Jews and Christians failed to maintain many of the doctrines of their own laws.

الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَجَعَلَ الظُّلُمَاتِ وَالنُّورَ

6:1 The chapter opens with a forceful declaration of the Divine Unity behind the entire multiplicity of creation, and refutes the dogma of Dualism - like the Zoroastrian faith that teaches the duality of godhead - of two separate gods - a god of good that is light, and a god of evil that is darkness. Allâh says He is the Creator of both. Darkness cannot co-exist with light. It perishes when light shines. The doctrine of Dualism is also refuted by using the plural form of darkness -Zulumât الظُّلُمَاتِ. The plural form stands for different kinds of darkness, including the darkness of spiritual and moral evils, of afflictions, hardships and dangers. The use of plural form signifies that sin and evil deeds, affliction and hardship do not stand alone. They multiply - one sin leading to another and one evil deed leading to may hardships and afflictions. In contrast to Zulumât, the Verse uses the word Nûr (light) in its singular form. Nûr is an attributive Name of Allâh. Nûr also stands for Allâh's guiding Light. Unlike Zulumât, Nûr cannot be and is never used in plural Form.

Referring to the creation of “the heavens and the earth”, the word Khalqa خَلَقَ is used, but for all kinds of darknesses and the Light, the word Ja'ala جَعَلَ “brought into existence”, is adopted. The verse is an example of Divine Words, the beauty of which a reader can only imagine.

The inclination to do good and the readiness to follow evil are in reality two links of the same chain (95:4-6). The evils (“the darknesses”) and good (“the light”) are not independent of one

another. Evil is nothing but the wrong use of God-given faculties. Sin is the yielding to primitive and evil impulses that remain uncontrolled. Both, impulses that lead us to evil (*Nafs al-Lawwâmah*), as well as positive impulses that prompt us to shun evil (*Nafs al-Ammârah*), are within us side by side, imbedded in our nature. Both are mentioned in the Holy Qur'ân. When we do evil, a kind of warning in our conscience accompanies them (cf. 91:7-8). These evil impulses and the accompanying warnings, that some people may call "conscience", are the basis of Qur'ânic moral teachings. Thus, instead of pointing to the duality of the godhead, they constitute an argument in favour of the Oneness of the Creator (91:7-8). Nothing is evil and bad in and of itself. Things, in some instances can lead to evil, such as sexuality, are also things for which praise is due to Allâh. The ultimate origin of all objects is the Great Creator "of the heavens and the earth" and all *perfect praise* (الحمد) belongs to Him. Accepting the necessity of evil and darkness (as dualists do) is incompatible with the praise of Allâh, for whom comes all Light and Beauty. The existence of evils and of darknesses as a necessity is not compatible with the praise of Allâh Who is Light (- *Nûr*) (نور) and Beauty (- *Jamâl*). Darkness has a hidden good in it. Besides, darkness only exists in very limited forms intended to foster the development of our free will, and ultimately in the realization of Divine Mercy. It is His Attribute of Mercy under which the entirety of creation moves in a process of continued evolution from "clay" to the "finest make" (95:4).

وَأَجْلٌ مُّسَمَّىٰ عِنْدَهُ

6:2 Ajal-an Mussammâ أَجْلٌ مُّسَمَّىٰ is the period from death to resurrection.

وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا أُنْزِلَ عَلَيْهِ مَلَكٌ ۖ وَلَوْ أَنْزَلْنَا مَلَكًا لَقُضَى الْأَمْرُ ثُمَّ لَا يُنْظَرُونَ

6:8 The "angels descend" with one of two objectives - either to bring revelation –*Wahî* وحي or Divine Punishment.

الَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يَعْرِفُونَ كَمَا يَعْرِفُونَ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ

6:20 The verses 6:8-20 contain arguments and proofs to support the Holy Prophets (pbuh) mission. The words of the verse, “*Those whom we have given this perfect Book recognize him (the Holy Prophet Muhammad) as they recognize their own sons,*” describes yet another way by which Allâh bears testimony to the truth of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). As the chastity, honesty, and modesty of a wife provide proof that her husband is the real father of their child, likewise the truthfulness, modesty, and sinless life of the claimant of prophethood is a proof of the truth of his claim (cf. 10:16). Just as a child bears some of the features and attributes of its father, one can see in the Holy Prophet (pbuh) reflections of the Attributes of Allâh who revealed to him His Holy Words. There is another message in this verse: people doubting that this revelation is from Allâh should remember that they have no such doubts concerning their sons, even though they do not possess absolute proof and certainty of being the father.

The verse also refers indirectly to those Jews who accepted the Truth brought by the Holy Prophet (pbuh). They recognize the Prophet who appeared among the Children of Ismâîl, as they recognized the Prophets of the past who appeared among their own ancestors, the Children of Israel. They know that the blessings of God were promised equally to both sons of Abraham, Ismâîl and Isaac, and that their own Scriptures contain prophecies that clearly apply to the Holy Prophet (pbuh).

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِنِ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا أَوْ كَذَبَ بِآيَاتِهِ

6:21 The Holy Writ is not forged by anyone; forgery cannot be hidden. The verse thus contains yet another proof about the truthfulness of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) and the truthfulness of the Holy Qur’ân.

وَإِن يَرُوا كُلَّ آيَةٍ لَا يُؤْمِنُوا بِهَا ۚ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءُوكَ يُجَادِلُونَكَ يَقُولُ الَّذِينَ
كَفَرُوا إِن هَذَا إِلَّا أَسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ

6:25 The Holy Qur’ân is not a book of history that concerns itself with stories, unless there is a clear underlying moral message to it. The Book mentions the names and episodes of the life of certain Prophets to illustrate aspects of its moral teachings and lacks the salacious and sometimes immoral stories found in the Old Testament. At times, the Quran mentions certain Israelite Prophets to clarify these misconceptions and restore the dignity and status of these Prophets of God. To cite some examples: the Holy Qur’ân corrects the Biblical stories of David and his concubines, the love story of Solomon with the Queen of Sheba, and the story of Jesus being the son of God. The objection that the Holy Qur’ân is “just a book of old stories” applies also to the Holy Books of those who make this objection - أَسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ - “old stories”.

وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ آيَةٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّهِ ۖ قُلْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَادِرٌ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يُنَزِّلَ آيَةً
وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

6:37 The sign spoken of here is the one asked for in verse 35. Allâh sent the sign of His measure and His determination. However, He is not under any obligation to fulfil the demands and wishes of His creation: He is the Master and not the One who fulfils demands. The word **Qâdir**, قَادِرٌ, meaning “Appraiser”, embodies the sense of measuring and determining (Tâj). *Qâdir* is used as active participle and is intended to denote a readiness to show the required power; the closing words of the verse support this with a clause to the effect that Allâh is the Appraiser of how and when to send down the sign, and that he is devising the means for the success of the religion chosen by Him for humankind.

وَمَا مِنْ ذَابَةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا طَائِرٍ يَطِيرُ بِجَنَاحِيهِ إِلَّا أُمَّمٌ أَمْتَلُكُمْ

6:38 Umamum أُمَّةٌ (plu) refers to creatures, living beings, group of living things having certain characteristics common, or communities (Lisân, Tâj; see also 6:42). All living things are provided for by Allâh just as He provides for human beings: human beings must therefore obey the laws of nature as other creatures do. Animals and birds understand the signs that a change has taken place in their environment and in the season of the year, disbelievers however do not recognize the signs of their disbelief. The verse, moreover, indicates two classes of the people. Those who, like beasts, are wholly focused on the earth and cannot raise their heads upright (من دَابِّةٍ), and those who fly like birds, soaring to higher spiritual regions (طَائِرٌ يَطِيرُ بِجَنَاحَيْهِ). *Ummun ÂC* means origin, mother, or source (Lisân, Tâj). The verse can also mean that human beings, as well as the birds and the animals on earth have the same origin, thus referring to the laws of nature and evolution of life on earth. It also suggests that the birds and the animals form communities like us (cf. 6:42).

فُلْنَ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ سَمْعَكُمْ وَأَيْصَارَكُمْ وَخَتَمَ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِكُمْ مَنْ مِنْ إِلَهٌ غَيْرُ
اللَّهِ يَأْتِيكُمْ بِهِ

6:46 These words warn those who are in the habit of procrastinating to use their hearing, sight, and inner awareness to recognize the Divine Messenger. Delay may otherwise lead to the total extinction of their faculties.

وَمَا نُرْسِلُ الْمُرْسَلِينَ إِلَّا مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ فَمَنْ آمَنَ وَأَصْلَحَ فَلَا خُوفٌ
عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

6:48 Allâh sends Prophets to people who are in moral and spiritual poverty, afflicted with adversaries, calamities and destitution. The purpose of sending Prophets is to give people a chance to become humble (6:42). The Prophets come to warn those who are unwilling to amend their behaviour (مُنذِرِينَ), and they come as bearers of good

tidings for those who believe and change their sinful ways (مبشرين : ٦:٤٩). The good tidings they receive are that “*they will have no cause of fear, nor shall they grieve*” (فَلَا خُوفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُنْ يَخْرُقُونَ). **Amana** أمن means to trust, be secure, be in safety, or confide in. *Îmân* إيمان is derived from *amana* and means faith or belief. When the word *islâm* (Islam) (“submission”) is used along with the word *imân*, then *imân* signifies sincerity and firmness of faith in one’s heart, while *islâm* without *imân* expresses only outward submission or practical obedience. For a true believer, *imân* comes first and then *islâm* but for those who are weak of faith, *islâm* takes precedence over *imân* (cf. 63:7).

فَلَّا أُفُوْلُ لَكُمْ عِنْدِي حَزَائِنُ اللَّهِ وَلَا أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبَ وَلَا أُفُوْلُ لَكُمْ إِنِّي
مَلَكٌ ۝ إِنْ أَتَبْعَ إِلَّا مَا يُوْحَى إِلَيَّ ۝ قُلْ هُنْ يَسْتَوِي الْأَعْمَى وَالْبَصِيرُ

6:50 The Holy Prophet (pbuh) talked plainly and with great modesty. Although it would have been easy to claim supernatural power among superstitious people, he never presented himself as being superhuman. Even though as a great prophet he dispensed Allâh’s tremendous treasures of truth, and although he possessed the gift of prophecy, he remained humble and modest. As well as being holy, pure and beautiful as angels are, he was the greatest Adam, the perfect human being (- *insân kâmil*) before whom the angels made obeisance (cf. 2:34). Allâh revealed His will for His creation to him and he faithfully put into practice everything he received from Allâh. He was a model for human beings to follow.

وَإِذَا جَاءَكَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِآيَاتِنَا فَقُلْ سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ

6:54 **Salâm** سلام is derived from *salima* سليم meaning to be in sound condition, well, without blemish and safe. *Salâm* is safety, security, immunity, peace, obedience, and freedom from fault, defect, and imperfection or vice. The word has a much wider meaning than merely abstinence from strife, and implies prosperity, good health,

and wholeness. *Al-Salâm* is also an Attribute of Allâh. Related words include: *Salâmun* سلام - “peace”; *Silmun* سلّم - “obedience to the doctrine of Islâm”, “peace”, “treaty of peace”; *Istaslama* إِسْتَسْلَمَ - “to follow the right path”; *Salîm* سليم - “safe”, “secure”, “perfect” and “sincere”; *Salimun* سلمٌ, “one who is safe”; *Sallamaä* سلم - “to preserve”, “to give salvation”; *Sallimû* سلموا - “salutation”, “to say peace be upon someone”.

The message conveyed in this verse is *Salâm-u-'Alaikum* سلام عَلَيْكُم, meaning “Peace be upon you”. This is the promise of Allâh, which the Holy Prophet (pbuh) is to convey to the believers, and which can be read in verses 10:10-11: “As to those who believe and do deeds of righteousness, their Lord shall lead them because of their faith in Him to Gardens of Bliss served with running streams. Their Prayer therein shall be Glory be to You, O Allâh! and their greetings therein shall be Peace (- *salâm*).” The same promise is made in the verses 7:46, 13:24 and 39:73. It is significant that the Holy Qur’ân uses the word *salâm* and not *al-Salâm* in these verses. In the greetings *Al-Salâm-u-'Alaikum*, *al-Salâm* is the noun of intensiveness. The prefix *al* before *salâm* gives the word *al-Salâm* a special meaning: “the promised peace”. It is with reference to this promised peace that the believers are enjoined to greet one another with the words *Al-Salâm-u-'Alaikum*. These words also have a spiritual connotation denoting ethical soundness and safety from all that is evil, and therefore freedom from moral conflict.

فُلْ إِنِّي عَلَىٰ بَيْنَهُ مِنْ رَبِّي وَكَذَّبُمْ بِهِ مَا عِنِّي مَا شَتَّعْجُلُونَ بِهِ إِنِّي
الْحُكْمُ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ يَقْصُّ الْحَقَّ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الْفَاصِلِينَ

6:57 “*Which you seek to hasten*” (ما شَتَّعْجُلُونَ بِهِ) refers to the sarcastic demand of the unbeliever that Allâh should punish them as proof that the Prophet is the bearer of Allâh’s Message.

وَعِنْهُ مَفَاتِحُ الْعَيْنِ لَا يَعْلَمُهَا إِلَّا هُوَ ۚ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ ۚ وَمَا تَسْقُطُ مِنْ وَرَقَةٍ إِلَّا يَعْلَمُهَا وَلَا حَبَّةٌ فِي ظُلُمَاتِ الْأَرْضِ وَلَا رَطْبٌ وَلَا يَسِّرُ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُّبِينٍ

6:59 The expressions “land and sea” (الْبَرُّ وَالْبَحْرُ), “falling of a leaf” (شَسْقُطُ مِنْ وَرَقَةٍ), “grain in the darkness of the earth” (حَبَّةٌ فِي ظُلُمَاتِ الْأَرْضِ) and “green and dry” (رَطْبٌ وَلَا يَسِّرُ) are metaphors. In Arabic symbolism ‘the sea’ represents hardship, whereas ‘and’ implies ease and comfort. The ‘falling of a leaf’ indicates that its power to draw nourishment has ended, referring not only to individuals but also to the fall of nations. The ‘grain in the dark beds of the earth’ stands for the mission of the Holy Prophet (pbuh): the grain in that context was destined to grow into a tree of exceptional proportions. ‘Anything fresh’ indicates those servants of God who prosper when they are watered with the pure water of Divine Mercy, and the ‘green and dry’ are those that must fall off like leaves. ‘An illuminating book’ (كتابٍ مُّبِينٍ) is the great law of cause and effect, and Allâh’s Perfect knowledge. Note here the word for book, *Kitâb*, is without the prefix “*al*”, thus it is not referring to the Holy Qur’ân, which is called *al-Kitâb* (2:2). This verse gives a further reason why the work of punishment must remain in the Hand of God, who alone knows the hidden facts. *Mafâtih* is derived from *fataha* meaning “to open”, and can be translated as “keys”. It may refer to the preparedness of the heart and its openness for Divine knowledge; in this sense, preparedness is not earned, but is a Divine gift.

قُلْ هُوَ الْقَادِرُ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَبْعَثَ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابًا مِّنْ فَوْقَكُمْ أَوْ مِنْ تَحْتِ أَرْجُلِكُمْ
أَوْ يُلْسِكُمْ شِيَعًا وَيُدْبِقَ بَعْضَكُمْ بَاسَ بَعْضٍ

6:65 “Calamity from above” signifies storms, famines, earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, torrential rains, blizzards, punishment at the hands of corrupt leaders, or tyrants of nations. Punishments من “from beneath your feet” signify droughts, diseases,

pestilence, violent revolts against the rulers, or punishment at the hands of servants (Ibn ‘Abbâs, Râzî). The third type of punishment is in the form of civil unrest, discord, disunity and dissension, which sometimes provokes civil wars. All these forms of punishment are under the control of Allâh and He alone has the power to send down punishment. The Holy Prophets opponents witnessed the three forms of punishments. The punishment from above in the form of a storm was witnessed in the Battle of the Confederates, when the army of the enemy took flight because of a storm. The punishment from beneath was in the form of drought that brought great affliction upon the Pagans for seven years, and at the same time they were experienced the third type of punishment as they suffered defeats and losses at the hands of the Muslims in the battles, which they themselves started.

وَذَرُ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا دِينَهُمْ لَعِبًا وَلَهُوَا وَغَرَّنُهُمُ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا

6:70 “Who take their religion as futile” (الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا دِينَهُمْ لَعِبًا) indicates that some groups take their religion lightly. The reference here is to singing and dancing in places of worship, and religious festivals that serve the purpose of amusement and fun, rather than worship.

وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ لِأَبِيهِ آزَرَ اتَّخِذْ أَصْنَامًا إِلَهًا ۖ إِنِّي أَرَاكَ وَقَوْمَكَ فِي
ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ

6:74 There is confusion in the minds of some about the relationship between Abraham and Azar. The Holy Qur’ân calls Azar Abrahams *Abb* أب. The word *Abb* أب is for a person who is respected in a family, possibly a father, senior, ancestor or an uncle (Râghib, Tâj). In verse 2:133, it is clearly applied to ancestors. In Arabic the word for a real father is *wâlid* والد. In the Holy Qur’ân, though Azar is called *Abb* of Abraham, this does not refer to his real biological father. Abraham’s *wâlid* is spoken of in 14:41 as a believer whereas the *Ab* in verse 9:114 is spoken of as having continued with idolatry (cf. 26:86). Later, in verse 60:4, we are told that Abraham had made a promise to

Azar that he would pray to Allâh for his forgiveness; but that when Abraham discovered that Azar أَزَّرْ was an enemy of Allâh he abstained from praying for him and was in fact forbidden to do so. The verse 9:114 gives reason for Abrahams praying for Azar – “Abraham was soft of heart and forbearing”. Elsewhere (14:41; 71:28) a prayer of Abraham is recorded in the Holy Qur’ân, which he offered in the last days of his life. In this prayer, Abraham prays for his parents (*Wâlidayya* والدي). This clearly shows that Azar who has been called the *Ab* of Abraham was a different person from the *wâlid* of Abraham. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) was also forbidden to pray for the polytheists "even if they be his near kinsmen" (9:114; - see also 9-113; 19:41-50; 21:51-72; 26: 69-89; 29:16-33; 37:83-113). While it is certain that Azar was not the biological father of Abraham, different ideas exist as to their relationship. There are some who suggest he was the uncle of Abraham; others say he was the father of his wife Sarah. The Bible says that Abraham married Sarah, the daughter of Tara - the biblical form of Azar (Gn. 20.2).

وَكَذَلِكَ نُرِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ مَلَكُوتَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلِيَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُوقِنِينَ

6:75 Abraham lived among the Chaldeans, who had great respect and knowledge of planetary bodies. They worshipped sun, moon and different stars and planets, Mercury in particular. Abraham's knowledge went beyond their physical world as Allâh showed him the spiritual glories behind the magnificence of the physical universe. **Malakût** مَلَكُوت means sovereignty, dominion, a great kingdom, or the power to deal with a thing as one likes (Lisân). The word is specifically used for the kingdom or dominion of Allâh (Râghib). Shihâb al-Dîn Suhrawardî, a great Muslim mystic, says in his well-known book ‘Awârif al-Mâ’ârif that when a spiritual wayfarer reaches a stage when he is made to witness the sovereignty of Allâh, he is spiritually reborn, and this rebirth is a prerequisite for being admitted into the presence of Allâh. Doubt in one’s creator cannot enter the

mind of such a person who has attained this stage of certainty and conviction because he then lives in the presence of Allâh.

فَلَمَّا جَنَّ عَلَيْهِ اللَّيْلُ رَأَى كَوْكَبًا ۖ قَالَ هَذَا رَبِّي ۖ فَلَمَّا أَفَقَ قَالَ لَا أُحِبُّ
الْأَفْلَئِينَ

6:76 Kaukab كَوْكَبًا likely refers to Mercury, worshipped by the Chaldeans at the time of Abraham. The phrase *hâdha Rabbî* هَذَا رَبِّي “is this my Lord?” is an interrogatory phrase in this context. Abraham used this phrase to express his disapproval and to highlight the absurdity the Chaldean belief in celestial objects (Râzî). This and the following verses contain an argument which Abraham employed to make his idolatrous people aware of their situation, and to make them reflect on their belief in their gods of the stars, the moon and the sun. “These were the arguments with which We equipped Abraham against his people,” says verse 6:83. There is no suggestion that Abraham was in search of an answer, or that he himself took the evening star, the moon, and the sun for God.

The preceding verses (6:74-75) have clearly informed us that Abraham had already been given knowledge of the Divine sovereignty and had attained the stage of "certainty" before he started to argue with his people. The words of Abraham, “*lâm Yahdinî* لم يهدني “had my Lord not guided me aright”, also show that Abraham was already rightly guided by his Lord. In the words of the following verse, (6:79): “I have never been of the polytheists”, Abraham himself removes all doubts that he was in any uncertainty while arguing with his people. We also read the statement of Abraham in 6:80, “When He Himself has already guided me aright”.

It has always been the custom of the Prophets to start preaching first to their closest circle of acquaintances. Before starting to argue with his people, Abraham turned first towards Azar (see the preceding

verse 6:74). The verse 2:131 states: "When his Lord said to him, Submit! He replied, Lord (you know that) I have already submitted".

إِنِّي وَجَهْتُ وَجْهِي لِلَّذِي فَطَرَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ حَنِيفًا

6:79 The verse informs us about the real *Qiblah* (direction of prayer). Outwardly it is the house (Ka'ba) in Makkah; inwardly it is "towards Him Who originated the heavens and the earth" (see also 6:162).

وَتِلْكَ حُجَّتَنَا آتَيْنَاهَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ عَلَى قَوْمِهِ نَرْفَعُ دَرَجَاتٍ مِّنْ نَشَاءُ

6:83 Tilka Hajjatu-nâ - تِلْكَ حُجَّتَنَا “this was Our argument” refers to the argument given by Abraham in verses 6:76-78. “We raise in degrees in ranks whomsoever We will” is the great hope given to believers that favours received by Abraham are not limited to him only, and that others can also qualify for similar favours; in the verses which follow (6:84-87), some examples are given in support of the last statement.

وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ إِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ كُلَّا هَدَيْنَا وَنُوحاً هَدَيْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِهِ وَمِنْ
دُرِّيْتِهِ ذَارُودَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ وَأَيُوبَ وَيُوسُفَ وَمُوسَى وَهَارُونَ وَكَذِيلَكَ نَجْزِي
الْمُحْسِنِينَ وَزَكَرِيَاً وَيَحْيَى وَعِيسَى وَإِلْيَاسَ كُلُّ مَنْ
الصَّالِحِينَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَالْيَسَعَ وَيُونُسَ وَلُوطًا وَكُلُّا فَضَّلْنَا عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ

6:84-87 Seventeen Prophets are mentioned here, although not in chronological order. Particular aspects of the lives of these Prophets are referred to here in three verses and three different groups. This is because the concluding phrases of each of the three verses speaking of each of the three different groups of Prophets are different. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) is the final prophet (*Khâtim al-Nabiyyîn*) and the Divine Law (- *shari'a*) he brought is final. It is not a necessity that in order to receive the Divine Revelation (*Wahi*), one has to be a prophet. The disciples of Jesus (*Hawwâriyyûn*) received the Divine Revelation, though none of them claimed to be a prophet

(5:111). Verse 6:87 indicates there will be others who will not be Prophets of Allâh, but who will also be blessed with Divine favours similar to those received by the Prophets. The *Kushûf* - “the Visions” of the *Mujaddadîn* (the Reformers), *Auliyâ* (the friends of Allâh), *Muhaddathîn* (those who converse with Allâh) and the *Sûfiyâ* (people endowed with Divine Knowledge) and many others are proofs of this promise. Their books mention their divine experiences. The Holy Revelation brings about spiritual awakening and living consciousness. The open doors of Allâh’s blessings of communication, and His lifting of the veils (- *kushûf*) are still part of this age, as they were in the past. He whose soul seeks the truth should strive to obtain that perfect knowledge. It is not for us to decide if a person is a believer or a non-believer if he claims that he has communicated with Allâh, or has been blessed with a vision. Verse 6:93 warns that, if any person fabricates such information, “His Angels will lay down their hands on such and they will receive a disgraceful punishment”. The verse conveys yet another message namely, none of the Prophets was ever guilty of sin at any time in their lives. The Holy Qur’ân absolves them from the accusations leveled at them in the Bible.

وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ ۖ وَهُمْ عَلَىٰ صَلَاتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُونَ

6: 92 This verse addresses those people who think that mere belief in the Hereafter and the belief that the Holy Qur’ân is the Divine Book is sufficient. The verse lays down a further condition, namely the condition of regular Prayers. This verse should also be read with reference to the verse 4:150.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ فَالِقُ الْحَبَّ وَالنَّوْيَ ۖ يُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَمُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتِ مِنَ
الْحَيِّ ۗ ذَلِكُمُ اللَّهُ ۖ فَإِنَّمَا تُؤْفَكُونَ

6:95 Here are arguments to prove the need for Revelations sent by Allâh to His Prophets. These revelations bring to life people who were

morally dead. The preaching of the Prophets is likened to the sowing of the seed that grows into a large tree. يُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ “*Bringing forth the living out of the lifeless*” means bringing back to life one who is spiritually dead. It is the moral awakening, which accompanies the advent of the Prophets. Similarly, bringing forth the lifeless from the living refers the spiritual death of those who were previously granted spiritual life through a Divine Revelation.

فَالَّقُ� اِلٰءِ اصْبَاحٍ وَجَعَلَ اللَّيلَ سَكَنًا وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ حُسْبَانًا ۝ دَلِيلٌ تَقْدِيرٌ
الْعَزِيزُ الْعَلِيمُ

6:96 Fâliq فَالِقُ is derived from *falaqaā* فَلَقْ and means to cleave, split, come forth, or become separated. *Falaq* فَلَاقْ is the daybreak because it cleaves the darkness; *Falaq* is also the cleaving of a seed or the stone of fruit. It also indicates the emergence of the truth after its initial doubtfulness. *Fâliq* فَالِقُ is the “one who cleaves asunder”, “who is the cause of the appearance of truth and Revelation”. Allâh says He is *Fâliq*. Allâh uses two excellent metaphors in these two verses when He says that He is *Fâliq al-Habb wa Nawâ* “One Who cleaves asunder the grain seeds and date stones”, and *Fâliq al-Asbah* فَالِقُ اِلٰءِ اصْبَاحٍ “One Who cleaves asunder the day from the night”. It is a metaphor to tell us that, just as from seeds of fruits and date palm, which apparently have no value, He creates fruit-bearing trees pleasing to the eyes; similarly, after He sends His Revelation, human beings are born with excellent qualities in them. Through these metaphors we are reminded of the necessity of Divine Revelation. *Fâliq al-Habb wa Nawâ* and *Fâliq al-Asbah* are two Divine Attributes.

وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ النُّجُومَ لِتَهَتَّدُوا بِهَا فِي ظُلُماتِ الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ

6:97 In these metaphoric words another reason is provided for why a human being needs Revelation for his guidance. The stars are the Prophets and saints who receive Divine Revelations, and whose lives

and teachings guide us. As we continuously need guidance to travel in the darknesses of land and sea, so we need continued guidance to make our way through the domain of the spiritual.

وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجَنَا بِهِ نَبَاتٍ كُلُّ شَيْءٍ فَأَخْرَجَنَا مِنْهُ خَضِرًا تُخْرِجُ مِنْهُ حَبًّا مُتَرَاكِبًا وَمِنَ النَّخْلِ مِنْ طَلِيعَةٍ قُبْوَانٌ دَانِيَةٌ وَجَنَّاتٌ مِنْ أَعْنَابٍ وَالزَّيْتُونَ وَالرُّمَّانَ مُسْتَنْدِهَا وَغَيْرَ مُسْتَنْدِهَا اَنْظَرُوا إِلَى ثَمَرَهِ إِذَا أَثْمَرَ وَيَنْعِهِ

6:99 The metaphor in this verse refers to Allâh sending down water to represent His sending down of guidance and Revelation. Just as fresh water is needed to bring forth vegetation, likewise, Divine Revelation is needed when the spiritual land is barren.

وَجَعَلُوا لِلَّهِ شُرَكَاءَ الْجِنَّ وَخَلَقُهُمْ ۖ وَخَرَقُوا لَهُ بَنِينَ وَبَنَاتٍ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ

6:100 In spite of all His graces and abundant proofs of His existence, human beings are ungrateful and pursue false deities by ascribing to Him "sons and daughters".

بَدِيعُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۖ أَئِ يَكُونُ لَهُ وَلَدٌ وَلَمْ تَكُنْ لَهُ صَاحِبَةٌ ۖ وَخَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ ۖ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

6:101-102 Once again the sonship of any person, including Jesus, is refuted with the argument that He is the Sole and the Wonderful Originator of all heavens and the earth, and a son cannot be the Sole originator. In this case, He would depend upon a female partner to have a son; however, Allâh is Self-Sufficient and Independent. He has no (female) consort nor has He any need of a consort. The verse also denies the virgin birth of Jesus from Mary and says even He – Allâh would need a Sâhibah (صَاحِبَةً) – a female companion or female friend to bear His child (cf.: 3:44). The argument continues

لَا تُدْرِكُهُ الْأَبْصَارُ وَهُوَ يُدْرِكُ الْأَبْصَارَ ۖ وَهُوَ اللَّطِيفُ الْخَبِيرُ

6:103 “*The physical vision comprehends Him not, but He comprehends all visions*” is another argument that a human being needs direct guidance from Allâh, and for this guidance he is not in need of any son. The vision of the created cannot comprehend the Infinite Oneness of the Creator. Human reason alone, unaided by Divine Help and Revelation, is incapable of apprehending, knowing, or grasping the Infinite Allâh. It is Allâh himself Who reaches human understanding and discloses himself to human beings through His Revelation. The verse rejects in yet another way the assignation of Divine Attributes to any human being. No human being, Jesus included, possesses comprehensive vision; it is only the All-Mighty, Who comprehends all visions. If Jesus is the son of God in a literal sense, then in this context he is weak and helpless; if his sonship is allegorical, then the meaning is very broad and not limited exclusively to the person of Jesus. The Divine attribute **Al-Latîf** - “All-Subtle Being” refers to “*the physical vision comprehends Him not*” and the attribute **Al-Khabîr** - “All-Aware” means, “*He comprehends all visions*”.

فَذَجَاءُكُمْ بَصَائِرُ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ ۖ فَمَنْ أَبْصَرَ فَلِنَفْسِهِ ۖ وَمَنْ عَمِيَ فَعَلَيْهَا ۖ
وَمَا أَنَا عَلَيْكُم بِحَفِظٍ

6:104 The human being is endowed with enough intelligence and reason to be capable of grasping and understanding the Truth. It now behoves him to make use of his spiritual eye.

وَلَا تَسْبُوا الدِّينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَيَسْبُوا اللَّهَ عَدُوًا بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ

6:108 There is an important point of moral teaching in this verse. In spite of the fact that people ascribe sons and daughters to Allâh, and they worship deities other than Allâh, God says the believers should not confront them directly about it and insult or ridicule these objects

of worship. If the disbelievers are obstinate, nothing will convince them and such attacks might in turn cause them to insult Allâh. There was no life fuller of signs than the life of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), but the disbelievers demanded yet more. The demand referred to relates to a particular sign: the sign of the overthrow of the power of which they were so proud. The reply to this demand is that there are many signs of the truth of the Prophet of Allâh. The sign, which they were demanding, was to be shown to them, as well as many other signs.

وَلَوْ أَنَّا نَزَّلْنَا إِلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةَ وَكَلَّمَهُمُ الْمَوْتَىٰ وَحَشَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ قُبْلًا
مَا كَانُوا لِيُؤْمِنُوا إِلَّا أَن يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ يَجْهَلُونَ

6:111 "Sending down of angels" metaphorically means inspiration of good thoughts, or inspiration of thoughts, which incite one to do something good (see 2:98). "Speaking of dead" metaphorically means seeing the dead in their dreams (cf. 2:56). "Bringing all things together face to face", means here to see people suffering in front of them. The meaning of the verse is that many people do not heed admonition in spite of the fact that from time to time good thoughts arise in their hearts, they receive guidance in their dreams or they witness the miseries of other people who failed to follow guidance.

أَفَغَيْرَ اللَّهِ أَبْنَغَيِ حَكْمًا وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْكِتَابَ مُفَصَّلًا

6:114 "Who has revealed to you this perfect Book clearly explained". **Mufassalan** is something that is clearly explained in a manner that brings out the distinction between truth and falsehood. In order to receive guidance in matters of dispute and disagreement, we are told here to be attentive to the teachings of the Holy Qur'ân and seek the final judgment from it. The following verse 6:115-116 clarifies the matter further.

وَتَمَتْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ صِدْقًا وَعَدْلًا لَا مُبَدِّلَ لِكَلِمَاتِهِ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

6:115 “*The (promised) word of your Lord is bound to be fulfilled in truth and justice*”. When related to Allâh, the term *Kalimah* is often used in the Holy Qur’ân in the sense of promise (3:45; 6:34), and when used related to human beings, it means to talk or to speak (3:46). Here it also refers to the prophecies in previous Scriptures about the advent of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) of Islam (cf. Deut.18.15).

فَكُلُوا مِمَّا ذُكِرَ اسْمُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ بِآيَاتِهِ مُؤْمِنِينَ

6:118 This is not a repetition of food laws already promulgated. The purpose is instead to remind us that the observance of such laws should go beyond simple rituals. It is a reminder in a metaphor that just as the animal is sacrificed, we should also sacrifice our worldly wishes to receive the pleasure of Allâh.

وَمَا لَكُمْ أَلَا تَأْكُلُوا مِمَّا ذُكِرَ اسْمُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ وَقَدْ فَصَّلَ لَكُمْ مَا حَرَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ إِلَّا
مَا اضْطَرَرْتُمْ إِلَيْهِ ۝ وَإِنَّ كَثِيرًا لَّيَضْلُّونَ بِأَهْوَائِهِمْ بِعَيْرٍ عِلْمٍ

6:119 The central theme of these verses is again the establishment of the doctrine of Divine Unity. This required the abolition of all idolatrous practices, among them was the practice of slaughtering animals in the name of idols. This is the connection of this verse with the subject matter of the previous verses. The fact that this verse is preceded by the article “fa” (then) shows that this commandment has come as a sequence of what has gone before. The Holy Qur’ân says, “you who believe! Eat of the good and pure things we have provided you with and give thanks to Allâh (2:172),” and “you Messengers! Eat of the things that are good and pure and do good deeds (23:51).” There is a direct bearing on the thoughts and actions of a person whose gratefulness leads to good deeds.

وَدَرُوا ظَاهِرَ الْإِثْمِ وَبَاطِنَهُ

6:120 “Refrain from the sin in form (open) and in spirit (secret)”, that is to say, a human being is enjoined not only to guard against committing deeds that are explicitly and clearly sinful, but he is also to refrain from entertaining evil thoughts. Sinful deeds should be committed neither publicly nor in private. In other words, a sin remains a sin whether other people see it or not. According to this verse, sins can be divided into two categories: open sins, such as stealing other people’s property; and hidden sins, for example, arrogance, hypocrisy, holding others in contempt, or jealousy. Every sin has an external aspect and a more subtle hidden aspect. For instance, some openly do not believe in the existence of Allâh, whereas others do not deny Him, but pay no heed to Him either; others set up associates and compeers with Him, and there are still others who have secret idols that they adore without confessing it. These are the hypocrites. The aspect of deceit in the hidden idolatry of hypocrites makes them even worse than those with open disbelief.

وَإِذَا جَاءَتْهُمْ آيَةً قَالُوا لَن نُؤْمِنَ حَتَّىٰ نُؤْتَىٰ مِثْلَ مَا أُوتِيَ رُسُلُ اللَّهِ ۖ اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ حَيْثُ يَجْعَلُ رِسَالَتَهُ

6:124 One of the objections of those who do not believe in revelation and prophethood is that Allâh’s revelations were not made directly to everyone, which they consider necessary if Allâh truly meant to reveal His Message. The answer is that, not everyone is fit to receive communication with the Divine Being and that Allâh revealed His Message only to a person who was fit to receive it.

وَيَوْمَ يَحْشُرُهُمْ جَمِيعًا يَا مَعْشَرَ الْجِنِّ قَدِ اسْتَكْثَرْتُمْ مِّنَ الْإِنْسَانِ ۖ وَقَالَ أُولَئِكُو هُمْ مِّنَ الْإِنْسِ رَبَّنَا اسْتَمْتَعْ بِعَصْنَا بِعَصْنِ وَبَلَغْنَا أَجَلَنَا الَّذِي أَجَلْنَا لَنَا

6:128 The infidels of the past referred to the *jinn* چن as an imaginary ghost-like being that they sometimes worshipped. The Holy Qur’ân does not give this meaning to the word. We read in verse 72:6

الْإِنْسَنُ يَعْوَذُونَ بِرِّجَالٍ مِّنَ الْجِنِّ - “Humble people among the folk used to seek refuge with the haughty, shrewd and powerful people among the folk.” In Arabic there is a difference between *bashar* بشر, *rijâl* رجال *inas* إنس and *jinn*. Although all these terms refer to human beings, the Holy Qur’ân differentiates between them while using them at appropriate places with their appropriate meanings. The word *jinn* is derived from *jannaé* جَنَّ that means to cover, wrap, conceal, be dark, be covered (with plants), or be hidden (cf. 6:76). *Janna* also means to be mad or excited (with joy or anger) as the sane mind is clouded by excitement, madness and insanity. *Janûn* جنون is madness, insanity, diabolical fury, passion (51:52; 54:9) and *junnatun* جُنَاحٌ is the covering or shield. *Jannât* جَنَّاتٍ (sing. *jannat*) are the Gardens of Paradise as they are still concealed, covered, wrapped or hidden to human beings. *Janîn* (plu. *Ajinnutun* أَجْنِنَةٌ) means embryo, or foetus that is hidden, but present in a body (53:32; Lisân). According to dictionaries of classical Arabic (Tâj, Lisân, Lane, Râghib), *jinn* is any hidden thing, anything that hides, conceals, or covers. *Jinn* is thus what remains hidden or becomes invisible, or one who remains aloof from the people as if remaining concealed from eyes of the common folk. That may be a king or someone with high rank and enormous wealth. Metaphorically, it can be an intense or confusing darkness, spirits that inspire evil thought (cf. 114:6), a germ that we cannot see with the naked eye, or a very small insect. The word is also used for peoples of different remote countries living apart from other civilized peoples (cf. 46:29-32), or people who inhabited the earth in prehistoric times before the birth of Adam (7:38; 41:25). Stalwarts whom Solomon had taken into custody, made his subjects, and put to work as builders of huge buildings, and who were also expert divers, were also called *jinns* (cf. 27:17, 39; 34:12-13). The English word “genius” is probably derived from *jinn*. The word *jinn* was also used for the Jews of Nasîbîn at the time of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) (cf. 72:1). These Jews were called *jinns* by the Arabs because of their intelligence, their great knowledge and their closed community. Dubai ibn Abî Sulmâ has

used the word *Jinn* for people who are fearless, or who have no matches or equals. Tabrīzī writes in his book *Sharh al-Hamāsah* that a *jinn* is a human being who is highly shrewd, and possesses great powers and abilities (41:29). A *jinni* is also the one who is haughty and arrogant (7:179; 18:50). It is in all these senses that the word is used in the Holy Qur’ān, but never in the sense of a ghost (see also verses 15:27 and 7:38; 7:179; 18:50; 27:17; 34:41; 41:25; 46:18; 46:29; 51:56; 55:33; 72:5; 114:6).

The primary meaning of the word *Ma’shar* معشّر “the community” in the verses 6:128, 130; 55:33 also reinforces the above-mentioned meanings of *jinn*. *Ash’arahū* أشراء means, “he lived in close communion with him and was on intimate terms” (Lisān). Thus, by calling *al-Jinn* and *al-Nās* أَلْجِنَّ وَالنَّاسُ a single community, it is made clear that, in this context, *jinn* and *nās* are not two different kinds of beings. In that verse (55:33), giving this word the meaning of “ghost or “demon” does not make sense as the context clearly implies a community of human beings comprised of *jinn* and *nās*.



سورة الأعراف 7. CHAPTER

The Elevated Places

(Revealed before *Hijrah*)

The title **Al-‘Arâf** الأعراف of this chapter is taken from verses 47 and 48. ‘Arâf عراف means, elevated places. It is the plural of ‘urf عرف, which is the substantive of ‘urufa. ‘Urfun means goodness, favour, bountiful, good fellowship with others, or an elevated place (Lisān, Tāj). The phrase ‘Araf al-Shai’a means, “he knows the thing”, “he was or

became acquainted with a thing”, or “he knows it by means of the five senses or by mental perception or reflection”. ‘Araf ‘alâ al-Qaumi means, “he was or became manager or superintendent of the affairs of the people”, or “became acquainted with their circumstances”. The elevated places refer to places where the righteous servants of Allâh who walked on the path of Truth shall stand. These eminences are the high spiritual status of those who recognised (- ‘ârifîn عارفین) the Eternal Truth. These servants of Allâh who are distinctly mentioned in 56:7-27. *Shuhadâ* شُهَدَاء are the witnesses of their people, similar to the way Prophets are repeatedly spoken of as being witnesses (*shahîd* شَهِيد) over their people (cf. 4:41). According to Hasan and Mujâhid, the men on the elevated places will be the elite among the believers and are gifted with Divine knowledge - the ‘Arif عارف. Accordingly, Al-‘Arâf ألاعْرَاف are the places where the ‘Arifîn will be present. It is wrong to consider this chapter as a reference to those people who are midway between paradise and hell

This chapter is closely connected, in both chronological and logical sequence, with the previous chapter. The preceding chapter dealt with the doctrine of the Oneness of Allâh in the light of knowledge, deep and sound thought, and logical outcomes (6:76-91; 101-103). The Divine Revelation and prophethood were discussed as appendixes (6:104-106). In this chapter, prophethood and the Divine Revelation are now the main themes with references to the histories and teachings of different Prophets in chronological order: Noah, Hûd, Sâlih, Lot, Shu‘aib, Moses and other “Prophets of the townships” (cf. 7:94-99), and finally the Holy Prophet (pbuh). It expounds the doctrine of Revelation and the spiritual history of human beings by illustrations from these narratives, from Adam to the Holy Prophet (pbuh), in whom Allâh’s Revelation is perfected and completed.

7:1 Alif Lâm Mîm Sâd المص is an abbreviation of *Anâ Allâh A‘lâm* أَنَا اللَّهُ أَعْلَم *A ‘lam* and Sâd ص stands for *Sâdiq al-Qawl* or *Sâdiq al-Wâ‘d* meaning “I am Allâh the All-Knowing, True to Promise and True to What is

said” (cf. 2:1). Ibn ‘Abbâs and ‘Abdullâh ibn Mas‘ûd are said to have favoured this view. *Sâd* ص can also stand for *Sâbir* صابر, meaning the Patient; God Who gives a respite to the wicked. The abbreviations may also mean Allâh اللطيف (All-Subtle, Unfathomable, and Incomprehensible). *al-Majid* المجيد (the Most Glorious and the Most Magnificent) and *al-Sâddiq* الصديق (the Most Truthful). [Abû Hayyân, Râzî, Ibn Jarîr]

اَتَّبَعُوا مَا اُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ أُولَيَاءَ

7:3 Ibn Taymiyyah maintains that the verse indicates the prohibition of attributing legal validity, when comparing Qur’ânic ordinances, to the subjective opinions of any person other than the Prophet. Ibn Hazm is also of this opinion.

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَاكُمْ ثُمَّ صَوَرْنَاكُمْ ثُمَّ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِإِدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ
لَمْ يَكُنْ مِّنَ السَّاجِدِينَ

7:11 The account of Adam was given in 2:30-39. A similar account with an emphasis from a different point of view and with a different purpose is given here. In the statement, “*We did determine you, then We gave you shape, then said to the angels, Make submission to Adam,*” use of plural form “*determine you*” indicates that the Adam being spoken of was neither the first human being nor the first prophet. Instead in this and the following verses, humankind as a whole is being addressed as Adam, and the angels are instructed to assist an ‘Ârif ²iB§ - a particular Adam among the human beings as well as humanity as a whole.

قَالَ مَا مَنَعَكَ أَلَا تَسْجُدُ إِذْ أَمْرُنِي

7:12 The verb **Qâla** قال does not always signify the actual uttering of words; it is also sometimes used to simply represent a state of affairs (cf. 2:30). What is represented in this verse as a dialogue between

Allâh and *Iblîs* does not mean that an exchange of words actually took place between the two. The words only depict a state of affair, a metaphoric picture to convey and explain a particular message. The intent is to inform us of the spiritual capacities of a human being and those qualities and of pride and arrogance that hinder him in his spiritual ascent, as symbolised by *Iblîs*. *Iblîs* is the pride (*kibar*) that incites disobedience to the Divine command. The subject matter becomes clearer in the verse 7:40 (see also 7:48) in which we are informed about the consequences of *kibar*.

قَالَ أَنْظِرْنِي إِلَى يَوْمٍ يُبَعْثُونَ

7:14 The “raising” also refers to the spiritual resurrection of the people when the Prophets of Allâh come with their messages. *Iblîsîyyat* can lead a human being astray only as long as he is not spiritually resurrected. This is a similar spiritual stage to the one mentioned in 17:65.

تُئْمِنُ لَآتَيْنَاهُمْ مِّنْ بَيْنِ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ وَعَنْ أَيْمَانِهِمْ وَعَنْ شَمَائِلِهِمْ

7:17 Here is a description of the network of seduction orchestrated by *Iblîsîyyat* in human nature. The assault of evil is from four sides, and takes advantage of every weak point in human character. *Iblîs* said, “*I will come upon them from their front and from their backs and from their right and from their left*”, but we have every reason to be grateful to our Lord that two sides, above and beneath, are still out of the reach of *Iblîs*. *Imâm Ghazâlî* explains the meaning of the different sides and the ways to protect us against these 4 different attacks.

فَلَمَّا دَأَقَا الشَّجَرَةَ بَذَتْ لَهُمَا سَوَاتُهُمَا وَطَفَقَا يُخْصِفَانِ عَلَيْهِمَا مِنْ وَرَقِ
الْجَنَّةِ وَنَادَاهُمَا رَبُّهُمَا أَلَمْ أَنْهَكُمَا عَنْ تَلْكُمَا الشَّجَرَةِ وَأَقْلَلْكُمَا إِنَّ
الشَّيْطَانَ لَكُمَا عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ

7:22 “They began to stick the leaves of the garden over themselves” is an allegorical statement, signifying the desire to remedy the fault they had committed. The early humans lived naked. The first ordinance that came from Allāh was of covering the body. “The clothing that guards against evil”, which is mentioned in a later verse (7:26) as being the best clothing, gives a still deeper meaning to the word “covering” in this verse. Every human being has certain weaknesses which are hidden even from him, but which become exposed at times of trial.

فَالا رَبَّنَا ظَلَمْنَا أَنفُسَنَا وَإِن لَمْ تَغْفِرْ لَنَا وَتَرْحَمْنَا لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ

7:23 Note here the Adam does not blame his wife, as the Bible teaches, for committing a folly and causing his subsequent misfortune. Both Adam and his wife admit their mistake and pray, asking for forgiveness, instead of blaming each other.

يَا بَنِي آدَمَ قَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكُمْ لِبَاسًا يُوَارِي سَوْآتِكُمْ وَرِيشًا ۖ وَلِبَاسُ التَّقْوَىٰ
ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ ۝

7:26 There are three kinds of raiment, or garment:

1. raiment that covers the body from nakedness;
2. raiment as a source of pride; and
3. raiment of righteousness and piety (*taqwâ*) that guards against evil (for *taqwâ* cf. 2:2)

To cover the body from nakedness was the first Divine Command for human being in their early evolutionary stage. Then we are told in the narration of Adam and *Iblîs* (cf. 7:11) not to cover ourselves in the raiment of pride, and now we are guided to the kind of raiment, which is ultimately the best for us, the raiment of righteousness and piety that guards against evil.

قُلْ أَمْرَ رَبِّي بِالْقِسْطِ ۖ وَأَقِيمُوا وُجُوهُكُمْ عِنْدَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ وَادْعُوهُ مُخْلِصِينَ
لَهُ الدِّينَ ۗ كَمَا بَدَأْكُمْ تَعُودُونَ

7:29 The word **Qist** here means “Divine Unity”. It also means, “What is good and right”, “truth”, or “justice” (Tâj, Lisân, Lane). The phrase **كَمَا بَدَأْكُمْ تَعُودُونَ** “As He brought you into being in the first instance, so shall you return to Him again” points to the fact that just as our physical body develops in the wombs of our mothers (22:5; 23:12-15), so our soul passes through a similar process and stages of development.

يَا بَنِي آدَمَ خُذُوا زِينَتَكُمْ عِنْدَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا

7:31 According to *Imâm Râghib*, *Zînat* is a beautifying thing that does not disgrace or render unseemly, in the present life or in that which is to come; it may therefore signify anything of beauty in both the physical and moral connotation of the term.

قُلْ مَنْ حَرَّمَ زِينَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي أَخْرَجَ لِعِبَادِهِ وَالظَّبَابَاتِ مِنَ الرِّزْقِ ۚ قُلْ هِيَ
لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا خَالِصَةٌ ۝ يَوْمُ الْقِيَامَةِ

7:32 Our Lord expects from us neither that we live the life of monasticism nor does it recommend self-renunciation and self-mortification in order to please Him. This verse contradicts any belief that these practices will lead to God. The verse implies disapproval of those who forbid the use of “pure and good things”.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَاسْتَكَبَرُوا عَنْهَا لَا تُفَتَّحُ لَهُمْ أَبْوَابُ السَّمَاءِ وَلَا
يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ حَتَّىٰ يَلِجَ الْحَمْلُ فِي سَمَّ الْخِيَاطِ ۝

7:40 **Jamal** is “twisted rope”. It also means camel (Lisân). Ibn ‘Abbâs gave it the meaning thick rope or twisted cable; the same interpretation is attributed to ‘Alî^(r), the fourth caliph (Tâj, Râzî, *Zamakhsharî*).

وَنَزَّعْنَا مَا فِي صُدُورِهِمْ مِنْ غُلٌّ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهِمُ الْأَنْهَارُ ۖ وَقَالُوا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي هَدَانَا لِهَذَا وَمَا كُنَّا لِنَهْدِي أَنُولَا أَنْ هَدَانَا اللَّهُ ۖ لَقَدْ جَاءَتْ رُسُلٌ رَبِّنَا بِالْحَقِّ ۖ وَنُودُوا أَنْ تَلَكُمُ الْجَنَّةَ أُورِثْنُوهَا بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

7:43 The grace of Allâh's Mercy is the only source of salvation, but our good deeds, earnest efforts, endeavours, and obedience of the commandments of our Lord are causal agencies that entitle us to His grace of *Rahîmîyyat*. While the Messengers and Saints of Allâh may convey the message, only He can guide us to salvation. The words أَنُولَا أَنْ هَدَانَا اللَّهُ if Allâh had not guided us, and again أَنْ هَدَانَا اللَّهُ “All perfect and true praise belongs to Allâh Who guided us to attain to this (Paradise) show that guidance and salvation comes exclusively from Allâh. No intercession of any Prophet will avail. This verse is a strong refutation of the dogmas of intercession other than Allâh, may he be Jesus, Buddha, a pious saint in the eyes of ordinary people or even a Prophet.

الَّذِينَ يَصُدُّونَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَيَبْغُونَهَا عِوْجًا وَهُمْ بِالْآخِرَةِ كَافِرُونَ

7:45 Here we are told that the inmates of Hell are those who seek to make the path of Allâh look crooked, or those who suggest doubts regarding the Truth and who expect a reward from Allâh, for example, through intercession by another person, while remaining crooked.

وَنَادَى أَصْحَابُ الْأَعْرَافِ رَجَالًا يَعْرُفُونَهُمْ بِسِيمَاهُمْ قَالُوا مَا أَغْنَى عَنْكُمْ
جَمِيعُكُمْ وَمَا كُنْتُمْ تَسْتَكْبِرُونَ

7:48 Jam‘ukum - جَمْعُكُم “Your multitude” also means your strength in numbers and your amassing of worldly wealth.

إِنَّ رَبَّكُمُ اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ

7:54 Ayyâm أَيَّام is a plural of *Yaum* يوم. *Yaum* is applied to any period of time (*Tâj*). In 55:29, a day is equal to a moment. In 22:47 and 32:5

a day is a thousand years by our reckoning, and in 70:4 the day is 50,000 years. The word *ayyâm* أيام is also used metaphorically as in 14:5. The expression “Days of Allâh” refers not so much to time as to the growth in us of spiritual senses and awareness of Allâh’s all-embracing Mercy and His displeasure, and His dealings with the righteous and the wicked. *Sittat-i-Ayyâm* سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ – “six eons” refers to the history of earth, suggesting six epochs of evolution.

ثُمَّ اسْتَوَى عَلَى الْعَرْشِ يُعْشِي اللَّيْلَ النَّهَارَ يَطْلُبُهُ حَتَّنَا وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ
وَالنُّجُومَ مُسَخَّرَاتٍ بِإِمْرِهِ ۝ إِلَّا لَهُ الْخَلْقُ وَالْأَمْرُ ۝ تَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ
الْعَالَمِينَ

Al-‘Arsh - العَرْشِ “The Throne” is a symbol of Allâh’s might, power, authority, eminence and one of His transcendental Attributes. Transcendental Attributes (*Sifât al-Tanzîyah*) are those Attributes of Allâh that are not to be found in His creation. *Imâm Râghib* says, “*Al-‘Arsh* of Allâh is one of the things, which a human being cannot perceive or imagine, as he does not know in reality but only by name, and it is not as the imagination of ordinary people hold it to be”.

In the sense of this passage, having created the heavens and the earth, He manifested Himself to His Creation with His Attributes of resemblance or similitude (*Sifât al-Tashbihiyah*) of the Nourisher (*Rabb* رب), the Most Gracious (*Al-Rahmân*) الرحمن, the Ever Merciful (*Al-Râhîm*) الرحيم and the Master (*Mâlik*). These four Attributes of similitude are said to be the bearers of His *Arsh* – His Throne of Might, Power and Majesty, and with these bearers He is established on His Throne of Glory and Authority (*Istawâ*). As “there is none His likeness” (42:11), so is His status of *Istawâ* on His Throne - a status that is beyond what is already beyond and the farthest away from creation; beyond *Sidrah al-Muntahâ*, which stands at the farthest end of knowledge (53:14).

It is incorrect to think that *Arsh* of Allâh is the “resting-place for Allâh”. The phrase أَسْتَوْى عَلَى الْعَرْشِ “*He is well established on the throne of Glory and Authority*” is used in the Holy Qur’ân in six other places (cf. 10:3; 13:2; 20:5; 25:59; 34:4 and 57:4). A reference to all these places will show that the phrase is invariably used after mentioning the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in relation to the Divine control of His creation and the law and order to which the universe is subservient. After creating the universe, Allâh has not left it to run its course independently, but His command holds sway and He regulates the affairs as He has planned them as the words “*His is all the creation and the command*” أَلَا لَهُ الْخُلُقُ وَالْأَمْرُ tell us. These words are to avoid any infatuation with the false idea from the Old Testament that after the creation of the heavens and the earth Allâh rested on the seventh day (may be on Saturday or Sunday). Similarly, it is wrong to think that creation now runs by itself. His authority is being exercised constantly and “Every moment He manifests Himself in a new state of Glory” (55:29). He not only creates but also maintains, governs and regulates the affairs of His entire creation, which is continuously evolving and is advancing from one stage to another towards perfection. To make it even clearer, the verse ends with the words “*Blessed be Allâh, Lord Nourisher of the worlds to perfection*” (ثَبَّرَكَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمَيْنَ). The spiritual perfection of the human being is mentioned in connection with ‘*Arsh*’ (cf. 40:15). Still more clearly, the righteous servants of Allâh symbolized as angels, who deliver the Divine messages of Allâh to the people are called the bearers of the throne of Allâh (39:75).

Then He says أَلَا لَهُ الْخُلُقُ وَالْأَمْرُ “*His is all, the creation and the command*”. The difference between *khalaq* خلق “creation” and *Al-Amr* - أَمْرٌ “command” is that while the former generally means the measuring out or evolving of a thing out of pre-existing matter, the latter (*Al-Amr*) means bringing into being out of nonexistence. These two Attributes of Allâh came into play in the creation of cosmos.

ادْعُوا رَبَّكُمْ تَضَرُّعًا وَخُفْيَةً

7:55 *Ud'â* ادْعُوا means to “Call upon for help”. It is used in the sense when someone who is in trouble and in great need calls for help. It can also mean “Pray!” Prayer is *Du'â* دعاء, which is the believers weapon and the mainstay of faith. After dealing with the Divine Attributes and describing how the world is subservient to Divine Laws and subject to His command, our attention is now drawn to the importance of prayers and worship. To “call upon for help” is not only the means for our needs and requirement to be fulfilled but also a kind of worship. He says, “You will call upon Him alone (- pray to Him), then He will, if He pleases, relieve you of that distress for (the removal of) which you called upon Him.” (6:41). It is impossible to refute a request from a beggar by a merciful heart, how can the “Most Gracious and Ever Merciful” ever refuse the supplication of a distressed. It is not possible to refute a truth, which has been established by the experience of generation after generation by mere speculation, and conjecture that there is no reality behind prayers. Prayer is a connecting link between a noble soul and its Creator. He says, “*And when My servants ask you concerning Me (tell them), I am nearby indeed, I (and no one else) answer the prayer of the suppliant when he prays to Me, and so they should respond to My call and believe in Me.*” (2:186)

The beneficence of the Gracious Lord (-*Rahmânîyyat*) draws the distressed human soul towards Him and the magnetic attraction of His *Rahîmiyyat* for a noble and sincere devotee draws him even closer to his Benefactor (- *Al-Rahîm*). While such a devotee is busy praying and is fully absorbed in making humble supplications, this connection and this nearness to his Lord (- *Rabb al-'Âlamîn*) is producing wonderful results. Then the devotee becomes lowly before his Lord and his Master (- *Mâlik*), and when he lowers his forehead and touches the dust from which he was created, with hope and intense love, he reaches the sublime threshold of his spiritual awakening. The servant then addresses Him, calls Him, and begs for His attention; the

attention so fervently sought is then at once granted to him. After passing through stages of devotion the servant is completely lost in His love and finds himself at the threshold of Allâh; He, with all His Grace (-*Rahîmiyyat*) then attends to him and stretches out His Loving Hand. A situation is created when His command “Be!” is given and it comes to be. Therefore to say that what is destined to happen will necessarily happen, that prayer cannot avert it, and that there is no need to be lowly and humble in prayer for a thing that has not been predestined (because what is destined is inevitable) are all thoughts of ignorance. Destiny is another name for Allâh’s knowledge. Though Divine knowledge encompasses all good and evil, He has still fixed certain laws and devised certain means to achieve good and avert evil, just as a certain medicine is a fixed remedy for an illness. Yet it would be wrong to think that if God has not made a medicine as an effective cure, then knowledge of medical science is useless because the outcome of a medical condition is inevitable. The answer is that while God has determined certain things, He has also fixed effective measures and means to control them, prayer being one of these. Some might argue that not all prayers are granted, but it would be wrong again to refute the effectiveness of prayer on that account. Some illnesses still prevail despite cures and remedies, and death is still unavoidable at some point in our existence. Yet medicines are still effective in other cases, and destiny and fate have not rendered sciences and sources of knowledge null and void.

وَهُوَ الَّذِي يُرْسِلُ الرِّيَاحَ بُشْرًا بَيْنَ يَدَيِ رَحْمَتِهِ ۝ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَفْلَتْ سَحَابًا
ثُقَالًا سُقْنَاهُ لِبَلَدٍ مَّيِّتٍ فَأَنْزَلَنَا بِهِ الْمَاءَ فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ مِنْ كُلِّ التُّمَرَاتِ ۝ كَذَلِكَ
نُخْرُجُ الْمَوْتَىٰ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ

7:56 Metaphorically “*Sending of winds as a good tiding heralding His mercy*” is a reference to the advent of prophethood, “Rain” is Divine revelation and “bringing forth of fruit” refers to those

pious people who follow the Prophets, whereas the “dead” are those who are spiritually ignorant.

فَقَالَ يَا قَوْمَ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ

7:59 “Worship Allâh, there is no one worthy of worship other than Him”, is the basic message brought by all Prophets (cf. 7:65, 73, 85, 140, 158).

فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَلَأْنِجِينَاهُ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ فِي الْفُلُكِ وَأَغْرَقْنَا الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِإِيمَانِنَا إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَوْمًا عَمِينَ

7:64 Noah is a very ancient Prophet who, as the Bible tells us, lived nine generations after Adam and eleven generations before Abraham (Gn. 5.3-32). His native land was Iraq. The word *Nûh* نوح is most probably derived from *nâha* نَحَّ that means; “he bewailed or mourned”. The Holy Qur’ân does not support the idea of a worldwide deluge. Allâh’s retribution came as a great flood only where Noah lived. It was a great punishment for the unbelievers in his message, and only unbelieving people were drowned. This punishment could not have extended to other innocent people who never heard the message of Noah. The descendants of the people Noah who were saved seem to have spread in many lands after the deluge and have told the stories of the great water and the floods, as this incidence is to be found in traditional stories of many nations.

وَإِلَى عَادٍ أَخَاهُمْ هُودًا

7:65 **Hûd** هُودٌ was the grandson of Iram ارم mentioned in 89:7, who was a grandson of Noah. The tribe of ‘Ad عَادٍ lived in the desert of *al-Ahqâf* (46:21) in southern Arabia extending from Oman on the mouth of the Persian Gulf to Hadzramawt and Yemen at the southern end of the Red sea. The people of this tribe were tall in stature and great builders. Violent storms destroyed their lodgings. A small remnant of

them, known as the second ‘Âd or the Thamûd ثمود were saved. The Prophet Hûd هو د is the Eber of the Bible.

وَإِلَىٰ ثَمُودَ أَخَاهُمْ صَالِحًا

7:73 Thamûd ثمود were the successors to the culture and civilization of the ‘Âd عاد. The tribe flourished more than two hundred years after ‘Âd and occupied the territory known as al-Hîjrah (15:80), or Agra by its Greek name, known also as Wadi-al-Qura, which forms the southern boundary of Syria and the northern of Arabia. In the ninth year of the Hijrah, when the Holy Prophet (pbuh) led his expedition to Tabûk, about 400 miles north of Madînah, against the Roman forces, he and his Companions came across the archaeological remains of the Thamûd. There is a tradition to the effect that some Muslims read a poetic inscription about the Thamûd during the reign of Muawîah. The inscription was rediscovered in 1834 A.D at Hisan al-Ghurab, a place near Aden.

هَذِهِ نَاقَةُ اللَّهِ لَكُمْ آيَةٌ فَدَرُوهَا تَأْكُلُ فِي أَرْضِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تَمْسُوهَا بِسُوءٍ فَيَا خُذُّكُمْ عَذَابُ الْيَمِّ

7:73 Prophet Salih صالح moved about with a she-camel for his mission of preaching. While he preached, his she-camel became a symbol of Salih. He told his people that placing obstacles in the way of the free movements of the she-camel or doing harm to her would be tantamount to obstructing the work with which Allâh had entrusted him and that it would invoke the punishment of Allâh. The animal became a symbol of the liberty of movement of Salih, although it was an ordinary she-camel. Neither the Holy Qur’ân nor any saying of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) lends any support to the numerous legends regarding its miraculous appearance and prodigious size. The Nabatean tribe of Thamûd descended from the tribe of ‘Âd and is therefore often referred to in pre-Islamic poetry as the “second ‘Âd”. At the time of which the Holy Qur’ân speaks, the Thamûd were

settled in the northern Hijaz near the confines of Syria. Their rock-inscriptions can still be found in the region of the west of Al-Hijr.

وَإِلَى مَدْيَنَ أَخَاهُمْ شُعْبِيَا ۖ

7:85 Shu'aib شُعَيْب is said to be identical with Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses. The region of Midyan, or Midya according to Bible, extended from the Gulf of Aqabah westward deep into the Sinai Peninsula and to the east of the Dead Sea.

قَالَ أَوْلَوْ كُنَّا كَارِهِينَ

7:88 The statement “*even though we are unwilling*” shows that belief cannot be forced, but must be from heart.

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا فِي قَرْيَةٍ مِّنْ نَّبِيٍّ إِلَّا أَخْذَنَا أَهْلَهَا بِالْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَضَرَّ عُونَ

7:94-99 The verses show that punishment from Allâh is meant as a warning for others and is intended to awaken the people from their lethargy and that others may become humble before the All-Mighty Lord (لَعَلَّهُمْ يَضَرَّ عُونَ). It is not designed for taking revenge (cf. 7:101).

أَوْلَمْ يَهْدِ لِلّذِينَ يَرْثُونَ الْأَرْضَ مِنْ بَعْدِ أَهْلِهَا أَنْ لَوْ نَشَاءُ أَصْبَنْنَاهُمْ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ ۚ وَنَطْبَعُ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ

7:100 The verse informs us how the “hearts” of disbelievers are sealed. They are sealed only when they refuse to make use of their God-given faculties of reasoning and of understanding.

تِلْكَ الْفُرَّارِيَّ تَفْصِيلٌ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ أَنْبَائِهَا

7:101 The narrations above are to be a warning to present and future generations: they should know that if they fall prey to the same negligence and sins, they would meet the same fate.

ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ مُوسَىٰ بِآيَاتِنَا إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ وَهَامَانَ فَظَلَمُوا بِهَا

7:103 Episodes from the life of Moses are told in many places in the Holy Qur’ân, but each time with a special lesson in accompanying them. In 2:49-71 the narration is an example of those who incurred Allâh’s displeasure, with an appeal to the Jews from their own Scriptures and traditions to show them their true place in the religious history of humankind and how they forfeited their favoured status . After mentioning small episodes from the lives of other Prophets, a more detailed description is given from the accounts of Moses. This is because in the narration of Moses, the careful reader will find instructive parallels to the mission of the Holy Prophet (pbuh).

فَالْقَوْلُ عَصَاهُ فَإِذَا هِيَ ثُغَبَانٌ مُبِينٌ

7:107 The miracle mentioned in the verse had a special significance. The serpent played an important role in Egyptian mythology. The sun god “Ra” won a great victory over the serpent Apophysis, typifying the victory of light over darkness. Many of their gods took the forms of snakes to scare their enemies. Moses staff as a symbol of a serpent appealed to the Egyptian mentality. The miracles by the Prophets are meant to serve spiritual purpose. The metaphor behind this miracle was that the people of Moses, as represented by his staff (which was emblematic of his community), would prevail over their foes. The Holy Qur’ân has used three different words for describing the turning of the staff of Moses into a serpent:

1. *Thu'bân mubîn* تُعْبَانٌ مُبِينٌ means a serpent plainly visible (7:107). *Thu'bân* is an enormously long, fabulous serpent.
2. *Hayyah tas'â* حَيَّةٌ تَسْعَا is a serpent moving about (20:20). *Hayyah* حَيَّةٌ is applied to both a large and a small serpent (Lisân).

3. *Ja'ân*, جَان, a tiny serpent with quick movements (27:10; 28:31).

The different words have been used to suit different situations and indicate different attributes of the “serpent” symbolized by the staff. Thus, there is no conflict or contradiction in using these three different words for three different situations. The word *jaân* جَان has been used on the occasion when the staff is made to appear as a serpent to Moses alone. *Hayyah tas'â* حَيَّةٌ تَسْعَا and *ja'ân* جَان were visionary experiences of Moses. The description *thu'bân* ثُعْبَان has been used in connection with the occasion when the miracle was made public; to the Pharaoh it appeared as if it was a large serpent. Thus, the use of different words for different occasions was deliberate and intended to serve a special purpose and meaning. Moses staff was an ordinary rod. He said, “On it I lean, with it I beat down fodder for my flocks and in it I find other uses” (20:18). Nowhere is it mentioned that whenever Moses flung down his staff, it turned into a serpent. The Holy Qur’ân lends no support to the idea that the staff actually turned into a real and living serpent. The staff only “appeared” like a swiftly moving serpent (20:66; 20:69). This may correspond to a state in which a person is temporarily transported in spiritual spheres, a state in which the Prophets and the righteous receive Divine Revelation. It is not a state of sleep but a state of certainty. It is a state in which the mind goes beyond the limits of the physical environment, beholding things that are invisible to the physical eye, hearing things that the physical ear cannot hear and smelling that which the physical nose cannot smell. So it may be that on these two occasions mentioned in the Holy Qur’ân, the sorcerers and the onlookers observed the staff in the shape of a serpent while they were in a state of temporary spell. The sorcerers were “impelled by Divine Mercy to fall down and prostrate and said, We believe in the Lord of the world, the Lord of Moses and Aaron.” (7:120-121). It was not just an ordinary snake but also the knowledge that convinced them and made them steadfast and ignore the threats of Pharaoh (7:123-124). They were transported to a state

not known to them before; an experience that left unshakable belief in what they saw. Traditions of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) tell us that some Companions of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), who were sitting with him in the mosque (*Bukhârî*), saw Gabriel. Similarly, angels were seen by some of the disbelievers at the Battle of Badr (*Jarîr*; 6:47). Another instance of this kind took place when in the reign of ‘Umar^(rz), the second caliph, a Muslim contingent under the well-known Muslim general Sâriyah was fighting the enemy in Syria. ‘Umar^(rz), while delivering his Friday sermon at Madînah, saw in his vision that the rear of the Muslims contingent was about to be attacked by the enemy from behind and that a disastrous defeat was imminent. Thereupon he suddenly cried out from the pulpit, “O Sâriyah! Take to the mountain”. Sâriyah, hundreds of miles away and surrounded by the deafening noise of the battle heard the voice of ‘Umar^(rz) and obeyed it, and the Muslim contingent was saved (*Khamîs*, 2:270).

وَنَزَعَ يَدَهُ فَإِذَا هِيَ بَيْضَاءُ لِلنَّاظِرِينَ

7:108 The miracle of the white hand has also been mentioned in the Bible (Ex.4:6), with the difference that in the Bible the hand is “leprous”, whereas the Holy Qur’ân says it is **Baidzâ** (بَيْضَاءٌ) (from *bâdzâ* باذن), meaning white and without blemish or disease (28:32). Another difference between the two narrations is that in the Holy Qur’ân the Pharaoh actually saw both signs, but that according to the Bible, Moses was only instructed to show these signs to Pharaoh (Ex.4:8); whether he did so is not stated.

The bodies of pious people are known to emit “light” according to the degree and nature of their spiritual status. The Holy Qur’ân says, “Some faces will be lit up by happiness” (3:106). Here the word *tabayyadz* تبیضن from the same root *bâdzâ* باذن is used, and again, “As for those whose faces shall be lit up”, we find the word *abyadzdzat* أبیضت. A kind of “light” radiates from the bodies of Prophets and from the bodies of those who find nearness to Allâh. Moses drew out

his hand from the folds of the garments on his breast and it was “white and shining with divine light”. The Divine “light” that issued from the hand of Moses was made visible to others: it “appeared white to the beholders”. This was no trick or illusion. Moses hand was emitting the Divine “light” which no Egyptian sorcerer could produce or imagine. When they saw this Divine sign from Moses, the sorcerers were awestruck again and said, “We believe in the Lord of the worlds, Lord of Moses and Aaron” (cf. 7:121). A metaphorical meaning for this miracle is that Moses arguments shone with clearness and his teachings radiated. This was to counter any suggestions of dark powers, which the serpent might have created.

وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْهِ مُوسَى أَنَّ الْقِعْدَةَ هِيَ تَلْقُفُ مَا يَأْفِكُونَ

7:117 The staff of Moses was a simple shepherds wooden stick, which he used “to beat the leaves to make them fall for his sheep” (20:18). This staff symbolized the spiritual power of a great Prophet. Assisted with the Divine knowledge he was able to counter the trickery of the sorcerers and establish the truth. The Holy Qur’ân in *Sûrah Tâhâ* contains the words “Their cords and their staves appeared to him (Moses) by their tricksters only as though they ran about” (20:66). The cords and the staves did not actually change into serpents; the show of the sorcerers was nothing but chicanery. Again, we read the Divine words spoken to Moses, “Now, cast you down that which you have in your right hand. It will destroy their artifices, for all they have wrought is the device of a sorcerer” (20:69). This shows that the staff of Moses did not turn into a serpent; it merely exposed the dupery of the sorcerers. This statement is in agreement with the present verse.

The words **Talqaf mā Yâfkûn** تَلْقُفُ مَا يَأْفِكُونَ are sometimes wrongly translated or understood to mean that the rod of Moses was in fact transformed into a serpent and this serpent started eating the small serpents of the sorcerers. Such a translation is an example of Israîlyat, meaning—the influence of the Bible on the translators of the Holy

Qur'ân. The word *talqaf* تَلْقَفُ according to *Qâmûs* means to catch a thing immediately (*tanâwâl hû bi-sura'tin*; تَنَوَّلَه بِسَرْعَةٍ); يَأْفِكُونَ *Yâfakûn* (تَقْتَلُونَ) is *ifka wa afûka kazaba* - إِفْكًا وَ أَفْكَ كَزَابًا - what was lied (*Qâmûs*). The correct translation should be “it began to expose their lying show”.

وَوَاعْدُنَا مُوسَىٰ ثَلَاثِينَ لَيْلَةً وَأَتْمَمْنَاهَا بِعَشْرِ فَتَمَّ مِيقَاتُ رَبِّهِ أَرْبَعِينَ لَيْلَةً

7:142 According to Ibn 'Abbâs and several others of the Companions, the first thirty days and nights were to be spent by Moses in prayers and spiritual preparation and in the remaining ten he received the revelation (Râzî, Zamakhsharî).

وَلَمَّا جَاءَ مُوسَىٰ لِمِيقَاتِنَا وَكَلَّمَهُ رَبُّهُ قَالَ أَرْنِي أَنْظُرْ إِلَيْكَ ۝ قَالَ لَنِ
تَرَانِي وَلَكِنِ انْظُرْ إِلَى الْجَبَلِ فَإِنِ اسْتَنَقَرَ مَكَانُهُ فَسُوفَ تَرَانِي ۚ فَلَمَّا تَجَلَّ
رَبُّهُ لِلْجَبَلِ جَعَلَهُ ذَكَارًا وَخَرَّ مُوسَىٰ صَعِقًا ۖ فَلَمَّا أَفَاقَ قَالَ سُبْحَانَكَ تُبَثُّ
إِلَيْكَ وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

7:143 Moses asked Allâh to lift His veil and show Himself to him. This asking was out of the extreme love of a person who desires to look at his beloved and not because of any doubt in the Real Truth. He perceived Him as the Prophets perceive Him. Moses sought from his Lord according to his station; every prophet has his own station, which is different from fellow Prophets. “Then when his Lord manifested His glory to the mountain, He sent it crashing down into pieces and Moses fell down unconscious”, here the word *tajalli*, translated as manifested, also means revealing to the mountain Light of His Throne. Allâh manifests to His servant according to his rank with Him, which is perceptible to His worshipper.

وَاتَّخَذَ قَوْمٌ مُوسَىٰ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ مِنْ حُلَيَّهُمْ عِجْلًا جَسَدًا لَهُ خُوارٌ ۚ أَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّهُ
لَا يُكَلِّمُهُمْ وَلَا يَهْدِيهِمْ سَبِيلًا ۖ

7:148 The calf is condemned as a deity unable to speak or answer the supplications. The criteria of a true deity are that it must be able to speak to its servants and respond to their supplications. A deity that cannot speak is no better than a mute and useless calf. Therefore, it is wrong to think that, whereas Allâh used to speak in the past, He has ceased to do so now. No attribute of Allâh can cease to operate or become extinct. The gift of Divine Revelation (*wahî* وَهِيَ and *mukâshifât* مُكَاشِفَاتٍ) is attainable even now, as it was attainable in the past. This was the message of all *Mujaddadîn* (Reformers), *Muhaddathîn* (Recipients of Divine Revelation), *Auliya* (Saints) and other spiritual *Imâms* of the era after the Prophet Muhammad, and we have several examples of such people.

وَلَمَّا سُقِطَ فِي أَيْدِيهِمْ وَرَأُوا أَنَّهُمْ قُدْ صَلَّوَا قَالُوا لَئِنْ لَمْ يَرْحَمْنَا رَبُّنَا وَيَغْفِرْنَا لَنَا لَنْكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ

7:149 *Suqita fi aydî-him* سُقِطَ فِي أَيْدِيهِمْ is a proverb and means, “to be smitten with remorse” (Tâj). Explaining the phrase, *Imâm Bukhârî* says, “everyone who repents is spoken of as *suqita fi yadi-him*” (*Bukhârî*, 65:4).

وَلَمَّا رَجَعَ مُوسَى إِلَى قَوْمِهِ عَصْبَيَانَ أَسْفًا قَالَ بِنْسَمَا حَلْفُتُمُونِي مِنْ بَعْدِي ۝ أَعْجِلْتُمْ أَمْرَ رَبِّكُمْ ۝ وَالْقَى إِلَّا لَوْاحَ وَأَحَدَ بِرَأْسِ أَخِيهِ يَجْرُهُ إِلَيْهِ ۝

7:150 The Bible says, Moses anger waxed hot, and he cast the tablets out of his hands and broke them beneath the Mount (Exodus 32.19). The Holy Qur’ân simply states that he put down the tablets. We are not told that the Tablets were broken; in fact, the verse 154 below indicates that they were whole. There is a touch of disrespect in supposing that Allâh’s Messenger broke the Tablets in an uncontrollable rage. The Qur’ânic statement is in harmony with the dignity of a Prophet. Aaron was quite innocent, neither having taken

part in making the calf nor in worshipping it. The Biblical account, which makes this righteous Prophet of Allâh guilty of the most heinous sin, must be rejected as false. Moses “caught hold of Aarons head” and declared him responsible for the acts of Israelites because he thought that Aaron had not successfully, properly and effectively managed affairs and not because he believed him to be directly involved. The anger of Moses was justified because a great sacrilege had been committed and his lifes work was jeopardized, however he accepted Aarons defense that his life had been threatened and asked Allâh to forgive both of them (7:151).

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا الْعِجْلَ سَيِّئَاللَّهُمْ عَصَبٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّهِمْ وَذَلِكَ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا
وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُفْتَرِينَ

7:152 In the verse there is a general statement informing us of the consequences of vainly pursuing deities other than the True One.

الَّذِينَ يَتَبَعُونَ الرَّسُولَ النَّبِيَّ الْأَمْمَى الَّذِي يَحْدُونَهُ مَكْتُوبًا عَنْهُمْ فِي التُّورَةِ
وَالْأَنْجِيلِ يَأْمُرُهُمْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَا هُمْ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُحِلُّ لَهُمُ الطَّيِّبَاتِ
وَيُحَرِّمُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْحَبَائِثَ وَيَضْطَعُ عَنْهُمْ إِصْرَهُمْ وَالْأَغْلَالُ الَّتِي كَانَتْ
عَلَيْهِمْ فَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِهِ وَعَزَّرُوهُ وَنَصَرُوهُ وَاتَّبَعُوا النُّورَ الَّذِي أُنْزِلَ
مَعَهُ أَوْلَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

7:157 For the teaching of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), this verse of the Holy Qur’ân is before us. The words وَيَضْطَعُ عَنْهُمْ إِصْرَهُمْ وَالْأَغْلَالُ الَّتِي كَانَتْ “Who relieves them of the heavy burden and shackles that weigh on them having burden” are a reference to the many strict rituals and commandments of the Mosaic Law being practiced by the Jews, as well as to the tendency towards asceticism in the teaching of the Gospels. This verse serves as a warning for the Muslims.

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ جَمِيعًا

7:158 Our attention had been directed by the Holy Qur'ân to various Prophets, who were sent with missions to their different peoples and in each of whose lives there is a degree of foreshadowing of the life of the last and greatest of them, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) . We are now asked to listen proclamation of his universal mission: the message of the one universal God to all humankind. After this, we no longer have to contemplate partial truths, specific to only a certain time and place. All Prophets before Muhammad (pbuh) were sent to their people only, but the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is spoken of here as having been sent to all people.

وَاسْأَلْهُمْ عَنِ الْقُرْيَةِ الَّتِي كَانَتْ حَاضِرَةً الْبَحْرِ إِذْ يَعْدُونَ فِي السَّبْتِ إِذْ تَأْتِيهِمْ حِيتَانُهُمْ يَوْمَ سَبْتِهِمْ شُرًّا عَـا وَيَوْمَ لَا يَسْبِئُونَ لَـا تَأْتِيهِمْ كَذَلِكَ نَبْلُو هُم بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْسُوْنَ

7:163 *Sabat* السَّبْت means comfort and rest. Metaphorically, the verse can also mean that when Allâh blesses some people with comfort and affluence, they become *fâsiq*. *Fâsiq* is the one who is wicked, perverted, or commits lewdness (*Lisân*, *Tâj*, Lane). **Nablû** is from *balâ*, meaning to try, or put someone on trial. Abraham was put on trial (2:124). Allâh puts some people on trial to give them a chance to mend their ways (cf. 2:124; 7:168; 2:156). Here, affluence and comfort is a kind of trial for people to become thankful and obedient servants of Allâh. Allâh says that this comfort and affluence made them disobedient, wicked and perverted.

فَلَمَّا عَنَوا عَنْ مَا نَهُوا عَنْهُ قُلْنَا لَهُمْ كُونُوا قِرَدَةً حَاسِـيـنَ

7:166 “Be as apes despised” is an expression in Arabic meaning, "to be despised and rejected" (cf. 2:65; 5:60).

وَإِذْ تَأَذَّنَ رَبُّكَ لَيْبَعَثَنَّ عَلَيْهِمْ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ مَنْ يَسُوْمُهُمْ سُوءَ الْعَذَابِ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَسَرِيعُ الْعِقَابِ وَإِنَّهُ لَغَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

7:167 This verse is a prophecy about the Jews. Because of their rejection of Jesus and later the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) (cf. 2:87-96), their habit of conspiracies and breaking of covenants (cf. 2:102), and their claim that they are the chosen and beloved ones of God (5:18), God will “continue to subject them to afflictions and the worst treatment at the hands of people”. Allâh rejects their claim that they are “the chosen ones of God and His loved ones” (5:18) and says, “They are human beings like others” (5:18), deserving no special treatment and having no special status (5:18). Their claim to be the chosen ones is incompatible with the punishment God causes them to receive in the shape of persecutions and their dispersal (7:168) among various nations. If they are His loved ones they should be under His special mercy, protection and care. God being quick in punishment refers to their afflictions already in this very world and that the evildoers among them will not be given respite in this world till the Day of Judgment. The verse ends with “He is Great Protector and Ever Merciful”. Bringing this Divine attribute here points out that in spite of His punishments, Allâh shows mercy on them (2:40; 2:47; 17:7-8) and will continue to offer them a chance (cf. 17:104). Their comfort and affluence (cf. 7:163) from time to time is because of this Divine Mercy, and is meant as a trial and a chance for them to become grateful.

وَقَطَّعْنَاهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَمَّا

7:168 “*And We broke them into separate sections*” is another Qur’ânîc prophecy about the Jews. The Jewish community has been scattered over many parts of the world for centuries; Jewish communities can be found in East and West Europe, North and South America, Africa, the Islamic world, Australia, and New Zealand. “We shall bring you back gathering you from various lands” (17:104), will be another act of mercy by Allâh and another chance to change their attitude. If they continue with their “treacherous ways” (cf. 2:87-96, 2:102) and

“behave haughtily without justification” (7:146), they will again become the object of Divine punishment, but if they were to show gratitude they would be shown Divine Mercy.

وَإِذْ أَخَدَ رَبُّكَ مِنْ بَنِي آدَمَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهِمْ وَأَشْهَدَهُمْ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ
أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ قَالُوا بَلَىٰ شَهَدْنَا أَنْ تَقُولُوا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّا كُنَّا عَنْ
هَذَا غَافِلِينَ

7:172 It is good to remember the promise our souls made to its Creator when He created them. He asked each soul “ - أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ ” - “Am I not your Lord?” and the response was “ - بَلَىٰ شَهَدْنَا ” - “Indeed you are, we witness,” (7:172). This is the original covenant.

In the preceding verse reference was made to the implied covenant of the Israelites; now it is to the implied covenant of the whole of humankind. It refers to the inherent consciousness of every human being about the existence of a Supreme Being Who is the Creator, the Cherisher and the Sustainer. This consciousness has been embedded in the very nature of every human being so that he may thereby find a way towards his Creator and recognise Him as his Lord. The witness spoken of in the verse is the human nature itself. This is the same witness mentioned elsewhere in the Holy Qur’ân where it is called the nature in which Allâh has made human being (30:30), referring to the basic human nature that is pure and uncorrupted in its essence. The innate faculties of a human being are sufficient to enable him to distinguish between right and wrong (91:8), and to warn him when he deviates from the right course. A “quiet, soft, low and faint voice” within him always makes an appeal in this context. In its uncorrupted state the human soul is capable of listening to this voice (*nafs al-Lawwâmah*) and acknowledging the Truth; metaphorically remembering the covenant it gave: Yes, You are my Lord!. It is a metonymy for the creative act of Allâh and of human beings existential response to it. A poet has said:

أثر القدم تدل على السفر
ما تقول انا الارض و السموات تدل على العلم القدير

"The signs of footsteps are proof of someone who walked. How can you deny that the heavens and the earth are not proofs of the existence of the All-Knowing All-Powerful?" The expressions used here do not necessarily mean that a dialogue actually took place while making this covenant. The words are simply meant to express a state of affairs. Moreover, the verse does not mention that this covenant was made between Adam and God, but from the descendants of Adam, that is—humankind as a whole. The advent of the Prophets is to remind us of this covenant.

وَأَنْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَّا الَّذِي أَتَيْنَا آيَاتِنَا فَانسَلَخَ مِنْهَا فَاتَّبَعَهُ الشَّيْطَانُ فَكَانَ مِنَ
الْغَاوِينَ (١٧٥) وَلَوْ شِئْنَا لَرَفَعْنَاهُ بِهَا وَلَكِنَّهُ أَخْلَدَ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ
فَمَنْثُلُهُ كَمِثْلُ الْكَلْبِ إِنْ تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْهِ يَلْهَثُ أَوْ تَشْرُكُهُ يَلْهَثُ ۝ ذَلِكَ مَثْلُ الْقَوْمِ
الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا ۝ فَاقْصُصِ الْقَصَصَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَكَبَّرُونَ

7:175-176 The verses contain a general statement and do not refer to any particular individual. The statement is a parable in a general sense and applies to all those to whom Allâh shows signs through Prophets, and who reject them. Their selfish worldly desires and emulation debases them and they are lost in pursuit of material things. In explaining this verse, Qatadah says that it speaks generally of every person to whom guidance is brought but he turns aside from it. This view is corroborated by what is stated at the conclusion of the parable of "the people who reject our messages". The people spoken of here are those who do not care for the higher values of life. Our Lord, out of His eternal Mercy gave us the Book as a guide (2:2), and the commandments therein to follow. He promised to raise us and exalt us to His nearness as He raised and exalted others (4:158; 19:58) in "whose houses His name is commemorated" (24:37). Many remained aloof and rejected this offer, remaining focused on worldly

سَاءَ مَثَلًا الْقُوْمُ الَّذِينَ كَدَّيْوَا بِأَيَّاتِنَا things, and permanently greedy, “like a dog”. وَأَنفُسَهُمْ كَانُوا بَظَلِمُونَ “Sad is the case of such people” who did not avail themselves of this offer (7:177).

وَلَقَدْ نَرَأَنَا لِجَهَنَّمَ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنْسَنِ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ أَعْيُنٌ لَا يُبَصِّرُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ أَذَانٌ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا أَوْلَئِكَ كَالْأَنْعَامِ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ

7:179 The particle *lâm* ل in the expression **le-Jahannam** لجهنم is used to denote the “end or result” and not the object or goal of the creation of the *jinn* and humans. The *lâm* ل in such a case is known as *lâm-i-‘Âqbat* (Tâj). No doubt Allâh has created many ordinary persons and *jinns* (extraordinary persons) whose end is Hell; however, these persons are simply the heedless. Allâh has not created them differently from others. They were given a free choice but they decided not to use their faculties, reason or perception, seeing and hearing, which Allâh has granted them to tread on the right path, thus they were not better than the animals.

وَلِلَّهِ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَى فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا وَدَرُوا الَّذِينَ يُلْحِدُونَ فِي أَسْمَائِهِ

7:180 The proper name of our Lord is simply Allâh. Allâh is not a compound of *al* and *ilâha* as some incorrectly think. His attributive Names are many (cf. 7:54) and He has taught some of them to us through His self-disclosure. These attributive Names should be part of our prayers, worship and praise. We must endeavour to mould our life according to them (cf. 2:138); this is the only right and straight path we ask for in our daily ritual Prayers (1:5). The verse also informs us of how our prayers can be accepted through calling Him by these Names. We should invoke those Attributes of our Lord that are directly related to the object of our prayer. On the other hand, we must not, as the verse says, associate with people who use Allâh’s Names with profanity or as a suggestion of anything derogatory to His dignity

and His Unity ascribing to Him an improper or inaccurate attribute or interpreting His Attributes in a manner that does not befit Him (Râghib). Polytheism of any kind is a violation of the sanctity of Divine names.

أَوْلَمْ يَتَفَكَّرُوا ۚ مَا بِصَاحِبِهِمْ مِنْ جِنَّةٍ

7:184 The use of the word **Sahib** – صاحب “comrade” has its significance. Makkans are told that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) is their comrade because he has spent many years of his life among them and they know him thoroughly. It is easy for them to admit that he is perfectly sane.

قُلْ لَا أَمْلَكُ لِنَفْسِي نَفْعًا وَلَا ضَرًّا إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ ۖ وَلَوْ كُنْتُ أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبَ
لَا سْتَكْثِرَتْ مِنَ الْخَيْرِ وَمَا مَسَنَّيَ السُّوءُ ۖ إِنْ أَنَا إِلَّا نَذِيرٌ وَبَشِيرٌ لِّقَوْمٍ
يُؤْمِنُونَ

7:188 “I have no power of bringing any gain or avoiding any harm to myself” (لَا أَمْلَكُ لِنَفْسِي نَفْعًا وَلَا ضَرًّا) is a statement of high nobility that is unsurpassed for a king, as the Holy Prophet (pbuh) essentially became, with all powers in his hands. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) gives glad tidings of triumph to all who believe in his message and warns the evil doers of the consequences of their deeds in this life as well as in the Hereafter. At the same time he makes no claim to possess Divine powers (cf. 6:50)



8. CHAPTER سورة الأنفال

The Voluntary Gifts

(*Revealed after Hijrah*)

The name of the chapter **Al-Anfâl** is taken from its very first verse. The chapter was revealed shortly after the battle of Badr, which was fought on Friday, the 17th of Ramadzân in the second year of Hijrah; the first armed conflict for the new Muslim community. This battle had to be fought before any treasury, arsenal, or army had been organized. Muslims were called upon to make voluntary gifts for this critical occasion. Therefore the main topic dealt with in this chapter are voluntary gifts, spoils of war, requirements for defence, effects of armed conflicts on community and social life, forbearances due to war, and the obligations as well as sanctity of treaties. Certain equitable principles of division of gains from war have been laid down to avoid greed and selfishness.

The first seven chapters dealt with the early spiritual history of humankind and the Divine teachings sent through the Prophets; not being restricted only to Israeli Prophets. There was reference to the Israelites and their last Prophet, Jesus. As the result of the teachings brought by the Holy Prophet (pbuh), a new community was formed. This chapter now deals with the next stage: the stage of emergence of a new societal group and the rules to consolidate the new and ever-expanding community.

In the very first verse there is an injunction to reconcile any mutual differences. This statement indicates that there were some differences among the Muslims about the fight, and that in future fights the differences shall emerge again, which will have to be reconciled. Knowledge of these differences in the form of Revelation was given to the Holy Prophet (pbuh). These Revelations are not mentioned in

the Holy Qur'ân, as they were not to be a part of the Holy Book. This shows that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) was able to distinguish between the Revelation that was to be the part of the Holy Qur'ân and that was not the part of the Holy Book.

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْأَنْفَالِ ۖ قُلِ الْأَنْفَالُ لِلَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ ۗ فَإِنَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَصْلِحُوا
ذَاتَ بَيْنِكُمْ ۗ وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ

8:1 Anfâl انفال is derived from root *nafala* meaning to give someone a gift or a present, to do more than what is commanded, give in addition what is due or give something in excess of one's obligation. *Anfâl* is the plural form of *nafal*. *Salât al-Nafâl* is the supererogatory Prayer or the extra Prayer prescribed for Muslims (17:79). *Anfâl* is often translated as the spoils of war, as these spoils are coincidental accessions. The statement that the voluntary gifts or the spoils of war are for Allâh and His Prophet means that they are public property (*Râghib*, *Miqyâs*, and *Tâj*). As the chapter deals in particular with the battles of the Muslims at the time of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) and in general battles the Muslim will fight in the future. The injunction here is to reconcile any mutual differences.

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الدَّيْنَ إِذَا ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ وَجِلَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَإِذَا تُلَيِّنَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُهُ
زَادُهُمْ إِيمَانًا وَعَلَى رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ

8:2 Here we are told that the heart of a Muslim trembles only “when the name of Allâh is mentioned” and not from a battle forced on him because of his belief.

وَإِذْ يَعْذِّبُكُمُ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ الطَّائِفَتَيْنِ أَنَّهَا لَكُمْ وَتَوَدُونَ أَنْ غَيْرَ دَاتِ الشَّوَّكَةِ
تَكُونُ لَكُمْ وَبَرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَنْ يُحِقَّ الْحَقَّ بِكَلِمَاتِهِ وَيَقْطَعَ دَابِرَ الْكَافِرِينَ

8:7 Taiftayn الطَّائِفَتَيْنِ “the two parties” refer to the caravan of the Quraish coming from Syria under the leadership of Abû Sufyân and the armed force of the infidels of Makkah under the command of Abû

Jahl. Two years after *Hijrah*, Abû Jahl raised an army of 1000 Makkans with the intention of eradicating the small Muslim community of Madînah. The Muslims were forced to encounter the advancing force at the time when no resources for war had been organized. They had two alternatives: either to look for resources to equip themselves or to fight as things stood. Their own trade caravan was on their way back from Syria, but still two thirds of the distance away from Madînah. At the same time a richly laden Makkan Caravan lead by Abû Sufyân with 40 men was also on its way back, not very far from north of Madînah. A number of the Muslims wished to attack the Makkan caravan first, seize the riches, and equip their army. Plundering this caravan would have been an easy, safe and lucrative solution; however, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) did not agree with such an attack.

Badr, where the encounter with the Makkan forces took place, lies at a distance of six days journey or about 150 miles from Makkah, and two days journey or about 50 miles from Madînah. Non-Muslim historians insist that it was the Muslims who were aggressors. However, they overlook certain facts: the place of encounter was south of Madînah, and not to the north where the caravan of the Makkans was on its way. On the other hand, the Makkans were already advancing towards Madînah and were at a distance of a few days journey from Madînah. If the Holy Prophet (pbuh) had prepared for attacking the caravan, he would have taken a route towards the north from where the caravan of Abû Sufyân was coming. Any intention of the army of Abû Jahl to supply an escort for the caravan is in contradiction with the fact that the Makkan army stayed at Badr after the caravan of Abû Sufyân crossed Madînah in safety and had left the city of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) far behind.

The Holy Prophet (pbuh) and his Companions decided to meet the enemy outside Madînah in order not to put in danger the lives of the innocents. Companions of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) made speeches to

encourage Muslims to take up arms against the enemy. Miqdâd bin Amar announced, “O Prophet of Allâh! We are with you. We will never say to you as the people of Moses said to him, Go you and your Lord and fight, you two, while we sit here and watch, we will fight your enemy in front of you and your rear and on your right side and on your left side and they cannot reach you without marching on our dead bodies” (Bukhârî, Abû Muslim). Sad bin Ma‘âdz said, “March out with your decision (O Prophet!). By Allâh! If you would jump in the ocean of the enemy, we will be with you” (Bukhârî, Abû Muslim). These speeches indicate that the aim of the Muslims was not to attack and plunder the caravan, but to save themselves from being overwhelmed by the Makkhan forces.

إِذْ تَسْتَغْيِثُونَ رَبّكُمْ فَاسْتَجِابَ لَكُمْ أَنّى مُمْدُّكُم بِالْفِي مِنَ الْمَلائِكَةِ مُرْدِفِينَ

8:9 It is said that on the day of the Battle of Badr, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) implored Allâh in the following words: “O Lord! Fulfil what you have promised. O Allâh! If this little band of your servants is destroyed you will not be worshipped on earth.” (Bukhârî, Abû Muslim). The verse above was revealed in response to this prayer. The “*help with a thousand angels*” should be understood in a metaphorical sense. There is no statement in the Holy Qur’ân that angels actually fought. Here and in 3:125 it is to be meant that the help from angels was in the form of strengthening the hearts of the Muslims against the three times bigger and much more well-equipped Makkhan forces, and at the same time filling the hearts of their enemies with fear: وَمَا جَعَلَهُ اللّٰهُ إِلّا بُشَرًا وَلَتَطْمِئِنَّ بِهِ قُلُوبُكُمْ It is said that during the fight calm and tranquillity fell upon the Companions who were fighting (8:10), and their hearts felt strengthened and their footsteps steadied (8:11).

The number one thousand angels is significant. In the battle of *Badr* the number of enemies fighting against the Muslims was 1,000 and the number of angels who came to aid the Muslims was 1,000. In the battle of Uhud the enemy attacked the Muslim with 3,000 men, and

the angels who came to aid the Muslims were also 3,000 (3:124). Finally, in the Battle of the Confederates, the enemy came with 5,000 soldiers and correspondingly the number of angels on the Muslim side was 5,000 (3:125). These varying numbers also tell the number of the enemy forces fighting against the Muslims on each of these three occasions.

إِذْ يُعَشِّيْكُمُ النُّعَاسَ أَمَّنَهُ وَيُنَزِّلُ عَلَيْكُم مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً لِّيُطَهِّرَكُم بِهِ
وَيُدْهِبَ عَنْكُمْ رِجْزَ الشَّيْطَانِ وَلِرِبْطٍ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِكُمْ وَيُثَبِّتَ بِهِ الْأَقْدَامَ

8:11 Before the start of the fight, two kinds of Divine favours were granted to Muslim fighters. The first favour pertained to a state of slumber and tranquillity that gave a sense of peaceful security. Calm is essential in battle. As a battle begins, there is generally great excitement and anxiety among the participants: their pulses race, and calmness and sleep become impossible. If the excitement and uneasiness become excessive, the mind cannot execute even a well-considered or well-conceived plan. There is a connection between the soul and coming events. Accordingly if a soldier experiences a kind of unusual and unsolicited slumber before battle, it is considered as a good sign, a sign of victory. The second favour pertained to the falling of heavy rain. Wet ground inverted the superiority of the positions of the enemy. The enemy had encamped on hard and firm ground, as they were the first to reach the location of the battle; consequently, the Muslims had been obliged to encamp at a low, sandy place, which at the time was tactically weaker. Timely rainfall made the former place slippery and the latter place firm and thus strengthened the position of the Muslims. The enemy had also taken control of the water supply and the Muslims naturally feared that lack of water might be a source of great hardship. Heavy precipitation resolved these problems.

In allusion to this day we read, “On that Day the heaven shall burst asunder with the clouds and the angels shall be sent down in large

number. The true kingdom on that day shall belong to the most Gracious Allâh and it shall be a hard day for the disbelievers” (25:25).

The Day of Badr was indeed a day the heaven burst asunder with the clouds and a day of distress and hardship for the disbelievers of Makkah. In reality, the victory of Badr was not due to any skill or prowess on the part of the Muslims. They were too few, weak and ill equipped to win a victory against a numerically superior and better equipped trained army.

اُذْ يُوحَى رَبُّكَ إِلَى الْمَلَائِكَةَ أَنِّي مَعَكُمْ فَتَبَّوَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ۚ سَأَلِقُّي فِي قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الرُّعْبَ فَاضْرِبُوهَا فَوْقَ الْأَعْنَاقِ وَاضْرِبُوهَا مِنْهُمْ كُلَّ بَنَانٍ

8:12 “*I shall strike terror in their hearts*” (سَأَلِقُّي فِي قُلُوبِ) is addressed to the believers, and “مَعَكُمْ فَتَبَّوَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا”, “make those who believe stand firm” is the Divine Command to the angels (Râzî) and the last sentence of the verse, “So smite on your enemys necks and above these (that is on their heads), and strike off all their fingertips”, addresses the fighting Muslims through the angels. The two phrases respectively signify the killing of the enemy and disabling him so that he cannot fight. The vulnerable parts of an armed person are the neck and above the neck, where a blow can be fatal. His armour protects his other organs, such as his heart. When his hands are put out of action, he is unable to wield a sword or a lance.

فَإِنْ تَقْتُلُوهُمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ قَاتَلَهُمْ ۖ وَمَا رَمَيْتَ إِذْ رَمَيْتَ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ رَمَى ۖ وَلَيُنَبَّئِنِي الْمُؤْمِنِينَ مِنْهُ بَلَاءً حَسَنًا

8:17 When the battle began, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) prayed and threw a handful of sand in the direction of the enemy, In this moment the wind became strong and started to blow against the faces of the enemy. The act of throwing sand by the Holy Prophet (pbuh) bears a remarkable resemblance to the striking of the waters of the sea by

Moses with his staff. Just as the act of Moses was a signal for the wind to blow and the tide to return, the throwing of sand by the Holy Prophet (pbuh) was also a signal for the wind to blow. This contributed to the defeat of the forces of Abû Jahl whom the Holy Prophet (pbuh) had referred to as the Pharaoh of his people. In both cases, the operation of the forces of nature coincided with the act of the two Prophets under special Divine decree. Every event in the battle is ascribed to Allâh as this fight was for His cause and undertaken only under His command. The word *remiyta* رَمِيْتَ (you threw) is taken by some to mean the act of shooting an arrow or flinging a spear.

وَإِن تَعُودُوا نَعْدُ وَلَن تُغْنِيَ عَنْكُمْ فِتْنَكُمْ شَيْئًا وَلَوْ كَثُرَتْ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

8:19 When the leaders of the disbelievers left Makkah to attack the Muslims, they held onto the curtain of the Ka'bah and prayed thus, "O Allâh! Assist the best of the two parties and the most rightly directed of the two parties and the most honoured of the two groups and the most excellent of the two religions" (Râzî; cf. 8:32). On the battle field, Abû Jahl prayed saying, "O Allâh, whoever of us is the greater cutter of the ties of relationship and more wicked, destroy him tomorrow morning" (Râzî). The disbelievers demanded Divine judgment repeatedly in the form of victory (for the just). They were told that Divine decision and judgment did indeed come in the form they demanded.

وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ قَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَهُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ

8:21 The verse and the following two verses the symbolic meaning of being "deaf" and "dumb".

وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَحُولُ بَيْنَ الْمَرْءَ وَقَلْبِهِ

8:24 “Allâh intervenes between a person and his heart” signifies that one must respond immediately to any Divine call by the Holy Prophet (pbuh). This delay or hesitation may result in the loss of the chance to follow that call. The expression also signifies that when a drive to do some good act is incited in our heart we must react soon. If we wait or hesitate the chance of doing good may be lost.

وَانْقُوا فِتْنَةً لَا تُصِيبَنَّ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْكُمْ خَاصَّةً ۝

8:25 The word **Fitnah** فتنه means an affliction, which comprises seduction, confusion, discord, trial, dissension, oppression, persecution, temptation to evil, or anything else which may cause a person to go astray (*Qâmûs*, *Râghib*, *Lisân*, *Miqyâs*, *Tâj*; cf. 33:72). The reference here is not to one particular infliction but to any affliction. We are not safe unless we also reform our environment. A house surrounded by a raging fire is likely to burn as well. Infliction may not be limited to the non-believers, but it may also involve innocent believers. Ibn Kathîr is of this opinion. Ibn Zubair says this verse can be applied to Alî, ‘Uthmân, Talha and Zubair who were innocently killed. Suddî says this verse applies to the people killed at Badr and Jamal. Ibn ‘Abbâs says this verse is a warning to Muslims who may lose their lives because of *fitnah*.

وَادْكُرُوا إِذْ أَنْتُمْ قَلِيلٌ مُسْتَضْعِفُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ تَخَافُونَ أَنْ يَتَخَطَّفُوكُمُ النَّاسُ
فَأَوْ اكُمْ وَأَيْمَكُمْ بِنَصْرِهِ وَرَزَقْكُمْ مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

8:26 Social and political weakness or being few in numbers is no excuse not to preach Islam and deliver the message of Allâh and the Holy Qur’ân.

وَإِذْ يَمْكُرُ بِكَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِيُنْبِتُوكَ أَوْ يَقْتُلُوكَ أَوْ يُخْرِجُوكَ ۝ وَيَمْكُرُونَ
وَيَمْكُرُ اللَّهُ ۝ وَاللَّهُ حَيْرُ الْمَاكِرِينَ

8:30 *Imâm Râghib* says *makar* مكر is to devise a scheme or a plot. There are two types of *makar*: *Makar mahmûd* مكر محمود, which is a scheme or a plan with good intentions, and *makr madzmûm* مكر مضموم, which is a plot or a conspiracy with bad intentions.

وَإِذَا تُنْتَلَى عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِنَا قَالُوا قَدْ سَمِعْنَا لَوْ نَشَاءُ لَفَنَا مِثْلَ هَذَا ۝ إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا
أَسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ

8:31 Here the expression *qulnâ* فلنَا means, “We could certainly compose”, and alludes to the often repeated but never fulfilled boasts of the opponents of Islam.

وَإِذْ قَالُوا اللَّهُمَّ إِنْ كَانَ هَذَا هُوَ الْحَقُّ مِنْ عِنْدِكَ فَأَمْطِرْ عَلَيْنَا حِجَارَةً مِنَ
السَّمَاءِ أَوْ ائْتِنَا بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ

8:32 As related by Anas that these words were uttered by Abû Jahl, who was killed in the battle of Badr (cf. 8:19).

وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَأَنْتَ فِيهِمْ ۝ وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ مُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَهُمْ يَسْتَغْفِرُونَ

8:33 The verse indicates that the punishment of the Makkans would overtake them when the Holy Prophet (pbuh) was no more among them, before his exodus to Madînah. Allâh does not destroy a township if His Prophet or saint is living in it. The verse can also mean that as long as Muhammads teachings are being followed in it, Allâh will save the township from destruction.

وَمَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا يَوْمَ الْفُرْقَانِ يَوْمَ التَّقَىِ الْجَمِيعَانِ ۝

8:41 *Furqân* الفُرْقَان means discrimination, distinction, “criterion for differentiating between right and wrong, or decision between the forces of faith and disbelief (see also 2:53, 3:12; 8:29). The Day of Discrimination يَوْمَ الْفُرْقَان referred to here is the Day of Badr.

إِذْ أَنْتُم بِالْعُدُوَّةِ الدُّنْيَا وَهُم بِالْعُدُوَّةِ الْقُصُوْىٰ وَالرَّكْبُ أَسْفَلَ مِنْكُمْ ۝ وَلَوْ
تَوَاعَدْتُم لَا حَنَقْتُم فِي الْمِيعَادِ ۝ وَلَكِنْ لَيَقْضِيَ اللَّهُ أَمْرًا كَانَ مَفْعُولًا لَيَهْلِكَ
مَنْ هَلَكَ عَنْ بَيْنَهُ وَيَحْيَى مَنْ حَيَّ عَنْ بَيْنَهُ ۝

8:42 The verse gives a graphic picture of the position of the different parties at Badr.

إِذْ يُرِيكُمُ اللَّهُ فِي مَنَامِكَ قَلِيلًا ۝ وَلَوْ أَرَاكُمْ كَثِيرًا لَفَشَلْتُمْ وَلَتَنَازَ عَثْمُ فِي
الْأَمْرِ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ سَلَّمَ ۝

8:43 On his way to Badr the Holy Prophet (pbuh) saw in a dream that the pagan Makkan army was less in number than was truly the case (Jarîr, Kathîr, Râzî). The enemy, as a battle tactic, had kept one third of their number hidden behind a hillock so that at the time of their encounter, the Muslims perceived them as less than their real number.

وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ حَرَجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ بَطَرًا وَرِئَاءَ النَّاسِ وَيَصُدُّونَ عَنْ
سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ۝

8:47 Here is a reference to the Makkan army that met its doom. These words are a warning to the believers of all times never to go to war boastfully and for the sake of vain glory.

وَإِمَّا تَخَافَ مِنْ قَوْمٍ خِيَانَةً فَانبِذْ إِلَيْهِمْ عَلَى سَوَاءٍ ۝

8:58 “If you fear treachery” also means that such a fear must not be based on mere surmise but on clear objective evidence (Jarîr, Baghawî, Râzî). Ibn Jarîr explains: “Before making war, inform the enemy that because of the clear evidence of their treachery the Muslims have renounced the treaty, so that they may know why they are at war. None of the parties should be under the false impression as to why the Muslims have renounced the treaty” (Baghawi). Mere suspicion cannot be made an excuse for rejecting the treaty.

مَا كَانَ لِلَّهِ أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُ أَسْرَى حَتَّىٰ يُثْخِنَ فِي الْأَرْضِ

8:67 Yuskhina is a great slaughter or a great wounding among the enemy (Tâj). *Sakhana* means it was thick, coarse and hard. The verse lays down the general rule that captives should not be taken unless there is a real defensive battle with bloodshed and the enemy is overpowered. Taking captives or hostages without warfare is against the will of Allâh. The greed of gain in the shape of captives or hostages has no place in Islam. This verse also strikes out at slavery. Starting war purely for territory, trade advantages, revenge, military glory and supremacy, is condemned.

وَأُولُو الْأَرْحَامِ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلَىٰ بِيَعْصِي فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ

8:75 The last clause of the verse refers to genealogical family relations as distinct from the spiritual brotherhood. The expression *âlu-al-Arham* - “blood relation” is derived from the noun *rahm* رَحْمٌ, which means “womb”. The verse indicates that blood relations are more deserving of ones help than those who have accepted Islam and have migrated from their homes.



سورة التوبة 9. CHAPTER

The Repentance

(*Revealed after Hijrah*)

Another name of the chapter **Al-Taubah** التوبه is Al-Barâh البراء, meaning immunity or absolution. This chapter continues the arguments found in the last chapter and is considered a part of it. For this reason, it is the only chapter that does not begin with *Bi Ismillâh al-Rahmân, al-Râhîm* (“With the name of Allâh the most Gracious,

the Ever-Merciful”). Chronologically, this chapter and the previous one are separated by an interval of seven years. This is the only instance where a chapter of the Holy Qur’ān has been split into parts; all the other chapters are self-contained. This part has been given its own name because it deals mainly with absolution and repentance. It also provides a declaration of immunity to those who fought against Muslims, those who were guilty of treachery among the Jews and the hypocrites, and those who repeatedly violated the treaties of peace. This revelation was necessary because no nation can perpetuate a treaty if the other party violates it. Islam specifies that a period of four months should be allowed by way of notice after the denunciation of a treaty, due protection should be accorded in the intervening period, and that possibilities for repentance and reunion should remain open.

The chapter also contains a brief description of the expedition to Tabûk, which took place in the late summer of 9 A.H. Tabûk is a valley near the frontier of Arabia and Syria. In the time of Muhammad (pbuh), Syria was a Byzantine territory and the Byzantines were at war with Persians. They were making preparations to invade the Arabian Peninsula. The Byzantine Emperor was near the frontier for that purpose, so the Holy Prophet (pbuh) likewise approached the border and marched his army to Tabûk. The Byzantine invasion did not take place, though for a variety of different reasons. The reference to Tabûk serves as a reminder for Muslims that after the conquest of Makkah and much of Arabia, they could still not be certain that they would be allowed to live in peace. They are warned that owing to the intrigues by some Jewish and Christian tribes, hypocrites and secret societies hostile towards Islam, new wars will be imposed on them in the future.

وَأَذَانٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ إِلَي النَّاسِ يَوْمَ الْحَجَّ الْأَكْبَرِ أَنَّ اللَّهَ بَرِيءٌ مِّنَ
الْمُشْرِكِينَ ۝ وَرَسُولُهُ

9:3 Here the Greater Pilgrimage - **الحجّ الأكبير** refers to the pilgrimage in the year 9 A.H. in which the Holy Prophet (pbuh) himself did not participate. He entrusted Abû Bakr^(rz) with the office of *Amîr al-Hajj*, leader of the pilgrims. The designation of “Greater Pilgrimage” is given to distinguish it from the minor pilgrimage that is ‘Umrah .

فَإِذَا انْسَلَخَ الْأَشْهُرُ الْحُرُمُ فَاقْتُلُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ حِيْثُ وَجَدْتُمُوهُمْ وَخُذُّوهُمْ
وَاحْصُرُوهُمْ وَاقْعُدُوهُمْ كُلَّ مَرْضَدٍ

9:5 Al-Ashhar al-Huram **الأَشْهُرُ الْحُرُمُ** do not signify the sacred months of Shawwâl, Dhu al-Qadah, Dhu al-Hijjah and Rajab (see 2:194,217), but refer to the four months mentioned in verse two above. These four months were intended as an interval during which the pagans Arabs could travel freely through land and see for themselves where the new religion had reached. In this way, they would become convinced that the great prophecy about Islams triumph is being proven true. Four months were sufficient to travel all over the Arabian lands using the standard modes of transportation of that time.

كَيْفَ يَكُونُ لِلْمُشْرِكِينَ عَهْدٌ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَعِنْدَ رَسُولِهِ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ عَاهَدْتُمْ عِنْدَ
الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ

9:7 The treaty (عہد) mentioned in this verse codified the truce between the Muslims and the pagans of Makkah, which was concluded for a term of ten years in 6 A.H. at a place called Hudaibîyyah near Makkah.

مَا كَانَ لِلْمُشْرِكِينَ أَنْ يَعْمِرُوا مَسَاجِدَ اللَّهِ شَاهِدِينَ عَلَى أَنفُسِهِمْ بِالْكُفْرِ

9:17 “*It is not for the polytheists to keep the mosques of Allâh in a good and flourishing state*” was the reason why Allâh gave control of Kaaba to Muslims. It would be wrong to conclude from this and the following verse that the non-Muslims are not allowed to enter mosques. In 9 A. H. after the revelation of this verse, the Holy Prophet

(pbuh) himself lodged a deputation of the pagan tribe Banû Thaqîf in his mosque and allowed a Christian delegation from Najrân to offer their prayers in the mosque (Râzî).

فُلْ إِنْ كَانَ آبَاؤُكُمْ وَأَبْنَاؤُكُمْ وَإِخْوَانُكُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُكُمْ وَعَشِيرَتُكُمْ وَأَمْوَالٍ
اَفْتَرَقْتُمُوهَا وَتِجَارَةً تَخْسُونَ كَسَادَهَا وَمَسَاكِنُ تَرْضُونَهَا أَحَدٌ إِلَيْكُمْ مِنْ اللَّهِ
وَرَسُولِهِ وَجِهَادٍ فِي سَبِيلِهِ فَتَرَبَّصُوا حَتَّىٰ يَاتِيَ اللَّهُ بِأَمْرِهِ

9:24 Eight items are mentioned here that cover the major aspects of civilized life. A human beings heart cleaves to his parents, children, brothers and sisters, husbands or wives, his other kith and kin, wealth and prosperity, commerce or means of profit and gain, and houses of dignity and comfort. If any of these become a hindrance to operate in the cause of Allâh, they should be abandoned.

لَقَدْ نَصَرَكُمُ اللَّهُ فِي مَوَاطِنَ كَثِيرَةٍ ۝ وَيَوْمَ حُنَيْنٍ ۝ إِذَا أَعْجَبْتُمُوكُمْ فَلَمْ
تُغْنِ عَنْكُمْ شَيْئًا وَضَاقَتْ عَلَيْكُمُ الْأَرْضُ بِمَا رَحْبَتْ ثُمَّ وَلَيْئَمُ مُدْبِرِينَ

9:25 Hunain حُنَيْن is a valley on the road between Taif and Makkah, about fourteen miles to the southeast of Makkah. This valley was the scene of a battle between the Muslims and the pagans led by the Hazwîn and the Thaqîf tribes in 8 A.H. A number of newly converted believers from Makkah, most of whom were still inexperienced in fight, took part on the side of the Muslims. A large force of 2,000 marched towards Hunain (Zurqanî, 3:6). “When your multitude made you feel proud” - إِذَا أَعْجَبْتُمُوكُمْ refer to this sizable force of Muslims. Contrary to the practice of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), the new converts hastened to attack the enemy. However, the enemy archers were highly skilled, and had occupied strategic positions in the mountain passes. The advancing Muslim party was quickly repulsed, and had to retreat from the battlefield in confusion. This caused disorder in the main Muslim force following them, which was passing through a narrow gorge. “and the land with all its spaciousness became

straitened for you وَضَاقَتْ عَلَيْكُمُ الْأَرْضُ بِمَا رَحِبَتْ refer to this situation of the Muslim forces. Finally, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) himself rallied his forces and managed to turn the course of the battle, resulting in a victory. In fact, the help that came for the retreating Muslim forces was from Allâh (لَقَدْ نَصَرَكُمُ اللَّهُ)

فَاتَّلُوا الدِّينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَلَا بِالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَلَا يُحَرِّمُونَ مَا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ
وَرَسُولُهُ وَلَا يَدِينُونَ دِينَ الْحَقِّ مِنَ الدِّينِ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ حَتَّىٰ يُعْطُوا الْجِزْيَةَ
عَنْ يَدٍِ وَهُمْ صَاغِرُونَ

9:29 The injunction to fight is relevant only in the event of aggression committed against Muslims (2:190-191), and in the presence of a real threat to the security of women, children and the elderly (4:75). Allâh and His messenger declare that unprovoked war is unlawful (22:39-41). In an Islamic state, every able-bodied Muslim should participate, in case of external or internal threat, in the defence of the society, and to pay Zakât, which is essentially a social security tax. The non-Muslim citizens of Muslim states are not expected to fight for the Muslims. Instead, they must pay a special tax, called *al-Jizyah*. This tax is in lieu of both Zakât and military service, and in compensation for the Muslim forces providing them protection against outside enemies. The word *jizyah* جِزْيَة is derived from the verb *jaza* جَزَ meaning “a compensation in lieu of something else” (*Tâj*).

Nevertheless, if non-Muslims prefer to pay Zakât and render military service, no such special tax will be levied on them. No fixed rate has been set either by the Holy Prophet (pbuh) or the Holy Qur’ân for this tax. Most sources agree that it is to be considerably lower than the Zakât, for which Muslims are liable. Non-Muslim women, old men, the sick or crippled, priests, and monks are exempted from the payment of *jizyah*. ‘*An-yadin* عن يدِ means that payment is required only if they can afford it, or pay it with a willing hand and without reluctance.

وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ عُزِّيْرٌ ابْنُ اللَّهِ وَقَالَتِ النَّصَارَى الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ اللَّهِ ۖ ذَلِكَ قَوْلُهُم بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ ۗ يُضَاهِهُونَ قَوْلَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ قَبْلِ ۗ فَإِنَّهُمْ اللَّهُ أَنَّى يُؤْفَكُونَ

9:30 Uzair (or Ezra) lived in the fifth century B.C. He occupies a unique position in the esteem of the Jews, and is highly praised by them. It was he who restored and codified the Torah after it had been lost during the Babylonian exile. His verdicts on the Law of Moses have come to be regarded by the Talmudists as practically equivalent to the Law itself. In Qur'anic ideology such elevation of a human being to the status of a quasi-Divine lawgiver amounts to “shirk”. Nevertheless, the Jews of Madînah and Jewish sects in Hadzera-mount believed him to be the son of God (*Qastalâni* in *Kitâb al-Nikah*); nor did the Jews of the time of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) deny this claim when the Qur'ân confronted them with the charge. The word “son” was used for Ezra in its literal meaning.

It is also related here that the doctrine Jesus divine parentage was borrowed from earlier pagan beliefs. Christians themselves know that Christian festivals such as that of Christmas have their roots in pagan customs from Europe. The reason for this belief is explained in the next verse.

اتَّخَذُوا أَحْبَارَهُمْ وَرُهْبَانَهُمْ أَرْبَابًا مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَالْمَسِيحَ ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ

9:31 The reason for taking Ezra and Jesus to be the sons of God is because “they have taken their learned men and their monks for lords apart from Allâh.” **Ahbâr** أَحْبَار refer to the learned among the Jews. **Ruhbân** رهبان are the Christian monks. The verse does not mean that they took them to be gods. Instead, the suggestion is that the simple-minded among the Jews and Christians follow their *ahbâr* and *ruhbân* blindly. They made lawful what was declared lawful by them and unlawful what was declared unlawful by them. Their followers obey them and believe what they are told to believe. It is related that

when this verse was revealed, Âdi bin Hâtim, a Christian, who later converted to Islam, said to the Holy Prophet (pbuh) that the Christians did not worship their learned men and monks as this verse asserted. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) replied, “Was it not that you considered lawful what they declared to be lawful? Âdis reply was in the affirmative” (Tirmidhî 44/9). In other words, they are *treated* like lords and gods, as their personal opinions and rulings are heeded as if they were Divine Law.

يُرِيدُونَ أَن يُطْفِئُوا نُورَ اللَّهِ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَيَأْبَى اللَّهُ إِلَّا أَن يُتَمَّ نُورَهُ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ
الْكَافِرُونَ

9:32 The statement “*They seek to put out the light of Allâh with the breath of their mouth*” illustrates the efforts of non-believers to attack Islam through missionaries and propaganda.

هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينُ الْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ وَلَوْ
كَرِهَ الْمُشْرِكُونَ

9:33 This verse is repeated three times in the Holy Qur’ân in almost the exact same wording. The other occurrences are in 48:28 and 61:9. Here it is mentioned in connection with Judaism and Christianity, in 48:28 it is mentioned in the context of the Arab opposition to Muslims, and in 61:9 in connection with all the religions of the world who are opposing the religion of Allâh. Therefore, it has to be translated accordingly to make the context understand. The message of the verse is that all Prophets preached the same religion, even though their teachings were corrupted by later generations. Even Islam will at risk of this process of gradual corruption.

However, it is Divine Will to perfect His Light brought by the Prophets. The Holy Prophet is the last and the seal of all Prophets and no new prophet shall come. This is because with him, Allâh has perfected His religion. This perfection shall now be protected through

the work of Reformers; *Mujaddadîn and Mehdi*, Saints and *Auliyyâ*; those endowed with special Divine favours and blessed with Divine knowledge. They will carry the original Light. Although the opponents and enemies of Allâh will repeatedly try to blow out the Light with the breath of their mouths, indicating the use of misleading information and propaganda, their fruitless efforts will be “hard for them to bear”.

إِنَّمَا النَّسِيءُ زِيَادَةٌ فِي الْكُفْرِ

9:37 Al-Nasiء means the postponement of a sacred month to some other month. This postponement relates to the four months during which, according to Arab custom, no warfare was practiced. These four months are Muharram, Rajab, Dhul Qadah, and Dhul Hijjah. Their postponement was accomplished by declaring other months as “sacred” and the above-mentioned “sacred months” as ordinary. The postponement defied the objective of these months, which was to guarantee security and peace for a fixed period. Three of these months are consecutive, and the fourth month, Rajab, is separated from them. This ensured a pause in hostilities at least twice a year – an important factor in maximizing the chance of ending a given state of war and succeeding with peace negotiations. In modern terminology, one may call it a period of enforced ceasefire.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَا لَكُمْ إِذَا قِيلَ لَكُمْ انفِرُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ اثْأَلْقْنَا إِلَى الْأَرْضِ

9:38 This verse, as well as the following verses, allude to the expedition to Tabûk, a town situated about half way between Madînah and Damascus. The expedition took place against the background of the opposition of the Christian Empire of Byzantium to the Muslims leading up to the conquest of Makkah. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) had sent a peaceful delegation of Muslims to Heracles. Ka‘b bin-‘Umair, the leader of the mission, was killed at a place called Dhât al-Alha.

Shurahbil, the Governor of Basra, killed Hârith bin Umair, the Muslim ambassador to Basra. In addition to these events, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) received news that the Emperor of Byzantium was preparing an attack of the Muslim lands in the north with the help of the Governor of Basra. In the 8th year of Hijrah, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) sent a Muslim army of 3000 towards Syria to fight the considerably larger army of Shurahbil and the Byzantines. It is said that the Emperor of Byzantine himself was observing the fight from a place called Hems, having already summoned additional troops under the command of his brother Theodor to assist Shurahbil. Nonetheless, the Muslim forces succeeded in defeating the opposing forces of Shurahbil at Mu'ta. In retaliation, the Shurahbil allied with the Ghassâns and other tribes of Arabia and began to draw up forces under the command of the Byzantine Emperor.

The situation represented an existential threat to the Islamic community. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) prepared, tackling the difficult task of raising an army sufficient to meet the strong, well-disciplined forces of the Eastern Roman Empire. The Muslim forces undertook a long and arduous journey from Madînah, through deserts, to the confines of Syria in intense heat. Drought and scarcity beleaguered them along the way. In the face of these difficulties, the weak of faith and the hypocrites in Madînah lost heart and displayed extreme reluctance to join the Muslim forces. Finally, about 30,000 followers of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) left Madînah for Syria to engage the Byzantines. By the time the Holy Prophet (pbuh) reached Tabûk, the emperor had decided to withdraw his forces from the frontiers of Arabia. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) was able to return with his army to Madînah without having engaged in a battle. This voluntary withdrawal is yet another example that shows that the Muslim forces were fighting out of defense only. Had it been an act of deliberate aggression, they could have advanced further and confronted the Byzantines after they had undertaken such a long and otherwise purposeless journey through the desert. It also shows that they were

not out to plunder or capture Christian property and slaves in Syria, otherwise they would not have let go the opportunity to raid the undefended borderlands. Instead, after incurring heavy expenses in preparing for war, and suffering the hardships of a desert campaign, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) with his men returned without a fight. These are the actions of a spiritual man and not of a worldly conqueror in pursuit of fame and booty. The Tabûk expedition is also appropriately known as *Ghazwah al-‘Usra* - “the expedition of distress” (cf. 9:117).

إِلَّا تَتْصِرُّوْهُ فَقَدْ نَصَرَهُ اللَّهُ إِذْ أَخْرَجَهُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ثَانِيَ اثْنَيْنِ إِذْ هُمَا فِي
الْغَارِ إِذْ يَقُولُ لِصَاحِبِهِ لَا تَحْزُنْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَنَا

9:40 The verse refers to the Holy Prophets (pbuh) forced migration from Makkah to Madînah. Abû Bakr’s devotion to the Holy Prophet (pbuh) was so great that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) chose him to be his sole companion or, in Arabic phraseology, he (- the Holy Prophet) was the “second of the two”. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) has been referred to as “the second” because in the Arabic idiom the more important member of the group is enumerated last. For instance, see 5:73, where Allâh (The Father) is referred to as being “the third” of the trinity according to the Christian doctrine.

The Holy Prophet (pbuh) and Abû Bakr^(rz) took refuge for three days and three nights in a cave called Thaur, difficult to access and hidden on a mountaintop three miles from Makkah. Tracing their steps, the enemy reached the place where they were hiding. “We are but two”, said Abû Bakr^(rz). “No,” was the reply, “for Allâh is with us”. Abû Bakr was not so much worried about himself than for the Holy Prophet (pbuh): “If I die, it is only the question of a single life but, Allâh forbid, if you die, O Prophet of Allâh, it will be the death of Islam and of the entire Muslim community” (*Zurqânî*). However, faith gave his mind peace and Allâh gave them safety. They reached Madînah and a new chapter opened for Islam. This story has a parallel in the book of Exodus, when Israelites addressed Moses in anxiety,

saying, “We are surely overtaken”. His reply was, “Nay speaks not thus, for my Lord is with me. He will direct me aright” (Exod. 13:14).

The verse also exhibits parallels with Jonah’s experience in the whale, and to Jesus in the tomb: they had also remained confined for three days. The verse also speaks volumes about Abû Bakr’s^(rz) spiritual greatness. The pronoun *us* signifies that Allâh was not only with the Holy Prophet (pbuh), but with Abû Bakr^(rz) as well. It was Abû Bakr^(rz) whom Allâh specifically chose to be the sole companion of His beloved servant in that most critical hour of his life. The “sole companion” became one of Abû Bakr’s^(rz) most honoured titles.

عَفَا اللَّهُ عَنْكَ لِمَ أَذِنْتَ لَهُمْ حَتَّىٰ يَتَبَيَّنَ لَكَ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَتَعْلَمَ الْكَاذِبُونَ

9:43 ‘Afâ Allâh ‘an-ka means Allâh (will) set your affairs aright. This is an Arabic idiom which is normally used, although not exclusively, for a person who has committed sins or made mistakes. But it can also be used for a person who has committed no sin or error, and even for someone who is incapable of committing a sin. It is sometimes used to express love. For instance, an Arab may say this to a person whom he holds in high esteem, meaning, “May Allâh set your affairs aright and bring honour and glory to you”. It is said that two hypocrites from Madînah came to the Holy Prophet (pbuh) with excuses why they were unable to join the expedition of Tabûk. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) said to them, ‘afâ Allâh ‘an-ka (عَفَا اللَّهُ عَنْكَ) to express his love and kindness even under these circumstances.

إِنَّمَا يَسْتَأْذِنُكَ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَارْتَابُتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ فَهُمْ فِي رَيْبِهِمْ يَتَرَدَّدُونَ

9:45 The meaning of “those who believe in Allâh and the Last Day do not beg leave of you” depends upon the context. Contrary to this we read in 24:62, “Surely it is those who ask your permission who believe in Allâh and His Messenger.” In the first instance, the hypocrites are

afraid for themselves and their possessions asking to abandon the Messenger, in the second instance the believers stand firmly by the Holy Prophet (pbuh) until he gives them permission to leave when the task is completed.

فُلْ أَنْفَقُوا طَوْعًا أَوْ كَرْهًا لَنْ يُتَّبِّعَ مِنْكُمْ ۝ إِنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ قَوْمًا فَاسِقِينَ

9:53 Charity is for the sake of *taqwâ* (– piety) and *imân* (– faith; cf. 2:2). There should not be any sense of compulsion behind it. The verse that follows explains further reasons for non-acceptance of charity in the cause of Allâh.

لَوْ يَجِدُونَ مَلْجًأً أَوْ مَعَارَاتٍ أَوْ مُدَخَّلًا لَوَلَّوْا إِلَيْهِ وَهُمْ يَجْمَحُونَ

9:57 The verse indicates that the innermost cause of all hypocrisy is fear: fear of moral commitments and fear of an open breach with one's social environment.

إِنَّمَا الصَّدَقَاتُ لِلْفُقَرَاءِ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَالْعَامِلِينَ عَلَيْهَا وَالْمُؤْلَفَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَفِي
الرِّقَابِ وَالْغَارِمِينَ وَفِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ ۝ فَرِيضَةٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ

9:60 The verse specifies the purposes and persons on which Zakât funds are to be spent. Eight categories are mentioned, and their sequence of appearance reflects their priority. The first category is that of the poor or those oppressed by poverty, disease or old age - *Fuqarâ* فُقَرَاء. The second category is those of **Masâkin** المساكين who are in need of help; they have learnt a profession but are unable to put their professional talents to use due to lack of funds. Examples are craftsmen or businessmen without sufficient means to start a business. ‘**‘Amilîn** العاملين’ are the employees of the government whose duty is to organize the collecting of the Zakât, its management and administration. **Mu’allafah al-Qulûb** (المُؤْلَفَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ) are the people whose hearts are inclined towards the truth, but who cannot express their belief openly because of the material or social disadvantages they

may suffer. These also include new converts to Islam who are in need of funds because of social disruption because of their acceptance of Islam. A further example is that of qualified people who want to travel from place to place in order to spread the message of Islam, but who cannot do so because they lack funds. **فِي الرَّقَابِ** are the prisoners and slaves. The Zakât money should be used for the freeing of the prisoners of war and of slaves. **الْغَارِمِينَ** are those who are unable to pay their debts or those who have suffered extraordinary losses in business. Squanderers of wealth are not included in the category. **فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ** literally means “in the way of Allâh”. The expression is used for fighters and soldiers and their families, and those who are engaged in the dissemination of teachings of Islam. **Ibn Sabil** are those stranded while on a journey for lack of funds and other reasons. They include those who travel in search of knowledge or for promoting social relations.

The Zakât funds are not only for Muslims, but are for all members of the community or society, irrespective of their religion or nation. Nothing in Islam prevents the use of Zakât funds to build hospitals, schools or other institutions from which the whole community may benefit. It should be noted that the family and the tribe of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) are excluded from the benefits of Zakât. It is said that *Imâm Hussein*, the grandson of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), while still a child, took one date presented as Zakât. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) noticed this and immediately took the date out of the mouth of his grandchild.

وَرِضْوَانٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ

9:72 If Allâh is well pleased with His servant, this is the greatest blessing and the greatest protection. To reach and achieve His good pleasure is the goal, which Allâh wants us to endeavor to accomplish (cf. 89:27-30; 9:100).

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ جَاهِدُ الْكُفَّارَ وَالْمُنَافِقِينَ وَاغْلُظْ عَلَيْهِمْ

9:73 The verses 45-59 and 61-69 give an account of hypocrites. The present verse says, “*O Prophet! Strive hard against the disbelievers and the hypocrites*”. It is a historical fact that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) never physically fought against the hypocrites of Madînah. This indicates that *jihâd* does not mean to fight against people physically; otherwise, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) would have done so against the hypocrites. The verse clearly gives different meaning than usually understood, to the word *jihâd*. *Jahada* جهاد – the root word, signifies the using of ones utmost power in contending with an object of disapprobation (*Tâj*). As this verse indicates, there is nothing in the word *jâhida* جاحد to indicate that its outcomes must be achieved by force (*Râzî*). An exception was the case of hypocrites collaborating and physically fighting with the enemies of Islam at the time of the Battle of the Confederates in Madînah (cf. 33:61).

يَحْلِفُونَ بِاللَّهِ مَا قَالُوا وَلَقَدْ قَالُوا كَلِمَةَ الْكُفُرِ وَكَفَرُوا بَعْدَ إِسْلَامِهِمْ وَهُمُوا بِمَا لَمْ يَتَأْلُوا وَمَا نَقْمُو إِلَّا أَنْ أَغْنَاهُمُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ فَإِنْ يَتُوْبُوا يَكُ خَيْرًا لَّهُمْ وَإِنْ يَتُوْلُوا يُعَذِّبُهُمُ اللَّهُ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَمَا لَهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ

9:74 Another characteristic of the hypocrites is that they can never attain what they meditate and cherish (، وَهُمُوا بِمَا لَمْ يَتَأْلُوا)، and Allâh will punish them in his world (، يُعَذِّبُهُمُ اللَّهُ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا فِي الدُّنْيَا) وَمَا لَهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ (). This verse also refutes indirectly the suggestion of some that Abû Bakr^(rz) and ‘Umar^(rz) were hypocrites themselves. These characteristics do not apply to Abû Bakr^(rz) or to ‘Umar^(rz).

الَّذِينَ يَلْمِزُونَ الْمُطَوَّعِينَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فِي الصَّدَقَاتِ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَجِدُونَ إِلَّا جُهْدَهُمْ فَيَسْخَرُونَ مِنْهُمْ سَخَرَ اللَّهُ مِنْهُمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

9:79 Some of the Companions of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) were extremely poor, but nevertheless gave Zakât and paid alms. Here, the hypocrites who ridiculed these Companions are mentioned. The verse also contains an implicit warning that Allâh dislikes giving large sums as alms for show. This is in reference to the expedition of Tabûk (cf. 9:38).

رَضُوا بِأَن يَكُونُوا مَعَ الْخَوَالِفِ وَطَبَعَ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ

9:87 Khwâlif are misbehaved and worthless (Lane; Tâj). It is the plural form of khalafa – those who stay behind.

أَعَدَ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ۝ ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ
الْعَظِيمُ

9:89 “Allâh will provide them gardens served with running streams” refers not only to the Paradise of the Hereafter, but also to the fertile lands which Muslims will one day possess. This is the promise and the prophecy made in the Holy Qur’ân. This and the following verse refer to those who stayed behind from the expedition of Tabûk.

وَالسَّابِقُونَ الْأَوَّلُونَ مِنَ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالْأَنْصَارَ وَالَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُمْ بِإِحْسَانٍ
رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ وَأَعَدَ اللَّهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي تَحْتَهَا الْأَنْهَارُ
خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا

9:100 Allâh is well pleased with all those who were first to embrace Islam from the Emigrants and the Helpers. This includes Abû Bakr^(rz) and ‘Umar^(rz), as no exception is made here. The words used are رَضِيَ اللَّهُ and not بِرَضِيَ اللَّهِ (cf. 89:27-30; 9:72)

وَمَمْنُ حَوْلَكُمْ مَنْ الْأَعْرَابُ مُنَافِقُونَ ۝ وَمَنْ أَهْلُ الْمَدِينَةِ ۝ مَرَدُوا عَلَى النَّفَاقِ لَا تَعْلَمُهُمْ ۝ نَحْنُ نَعْلَمُهُمْ ۝ سَعَدَبْهُمْ مَرَّتَيْنِ ثُمَّ يَرْدُونَ إِلَى عَذَابٍ عَظِيمٍ

9:101 “*We will punish them twice*” سَنُعَذِّبُهُمْ مَرَّتَيْنَ. This punishment shall take place in the present world and again in the Hereafter. This expression also means again and again.

وَآخَرُونَ مُرْجَوْنَ لِأَمْرِ اللَّهِ إِمَّا يُعَذِّبُهُمْ وَإِمَّا يَتُوبُ عَلَيْهِمْ

9:106 “*There are yet others*” وَآخَرُونَ refers to the three persons - Hilâl, Murârah and Ka'b - who stayed behind and were not among those who accompanied the Holy Prophet (pbuh) on the expedition of Tabûk (see also 9:118).

وَالَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مَسْجِدًا ضِرَارًا وَكُفْرًا وَتَقْرِيقًا بَيْنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَإِرْصَادًا لَمْنَ حَازَبَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ مِنْ قَبْلٍ

9:107 “Who has already made war against Allâh and His Messenger” is a reference to a Christian called Abû ‘Âmer, “The Monk”, a prominent member of the Khazraj tribe, who played a key role in inciting the Byzantines to attack the Muslims at Tabûk.

So far, three categories of hypocrites have been discussed. In this passage, we are introduced to a fourth class of insidious evil-doers. This type is illustrated in the story of the mosque of Dzirâr of Qubba, a suburb of Madînah about three miles to the southeast. When the Holy Prophet (pbuh) entered Madînah at the time of his Hijrah, he stayed for fourteen days at Qubba before entering the town. The first Mosque of Islam was built here. Taking advantage of these sacred associations, certain hypocrites built another mosque opposite the mosque at Qubba, called mosque of Dzirâr, pretending to advance Islam, but with the objective of distracting the attention of the people from the original mosque. This plot was also hatched by Abû Amer. After the Battle of Badr, Abû Amer fled to Makkah and incited the Makkans to avenge the defeat. He also fought among the Makkan army at Uhud and he joined the Battle of the Ditch and the Battle of Hunain, fighting on the side of the enemies of Islam. After the Battle

of Hunain he fled to Syria, with the aim of enlisting the help of the Byzantine against the Holy Prophet (pbuh). It was the wish of the founders of the new mosque that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) should give the mosque a blessing by praying in it. However, Divine Revelation forbade him to do so and this new mosque was subsequently razed to the ground later. The verse relates primarily to the historical events mentioned above, yet also has a wider bearing on all attempts at creating sectarian division within the Muslim ummah.

لَا تُقْنِمْ فِيهِ أَبَدًا ۝ لَمَسْنَدٌ أُسْسَ عَلَى التَّقْوَىٰ مِنْ أَوَّلِ يَوْمٍ أَحَقُّ أَن تَقْنِمْ
فِيهِ ۝ فِيهِ رِجَالٌ يُحِبُّونَ أَن يَتَطَهَّرُوا ۝ وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُطَهَّرِينَ

9:108 Some Companions of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) understood the “Mosque whose foundation was laid from the very first day on piety” لَمَسْنَدٌ أُسْسَ عَلَى التَّقْوَىٰ مِنْ أَوَّلِ يَوْمٍ to mean the mosque at Qubba, which was built on the site where the Holy Prophet (pbuh) had alighted before entering the city of Madînah; others have opined that the reference here is to the mosque that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) built at Madînah (see Muslim). The wording of the verse seems to support the latter view, and furthermore, any mosque built for the cause and service of Allâh and built in the proper spirit of piety may be compatible with this description. This view is supported by the next verse.

مَا كَانَ لِلنَّبِيِّ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَن يَسْتَغْفِرُوا لِلْمُشْرِكِينَ وَلَوْ كَانُوا أُولَئِي قُرْبَىٰ
مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُمْ أَصْحَابُ الْجَحِيمِ

9:113 The prohibition mentioned here relates only to such polytheist sinners who heard the message of Divine Unity, then refused and opposed, and died without repentance. Otherwise, when asked to pray in a negative sense for those who were fighting against him in a battle, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) would not have prayed thus: “Lord! Protect them.”

وَمَا كَانَ اسْتِغْفَارُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لِأَبِيهِ أَلَّا عَنْ مَوْعِدَةٍ وَعَدَهَا إِيَّاهُ فَلَمَّا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ أَنَّهُ عَدُوُّ اللَّهِ تَبَرَّأَ مِنْهُ ۝ إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لِأَوَّلَةٍ حَلِيمٌ

9:114 Abrahams promise to his sire is mentioned in 19:47 and 60:4.

لَقَدْ تَابَ اللَّهُ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ وَالْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالْأَنْصَارِ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ فِي سَاعَةِ
الْعُسْرَةِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا كَادَ يَزِيغُ قُلُوبُ فَرِيقٍ مِنْهُمْ ثُمَّ تَابَ عَلَيْهِمْ

9:117 The reference is to the expedition of Tabûk, which is also known as *Ghazwah al-Usra* - “the expedition of distress”.

وَعَلَى الْثَّلَاثَةِ الَّذِينَ خَلَقُوا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا ضَاقَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الْأَرْضُ بِمَا رَحِبَتْ
وَضَاقَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ أَنفُسُهُمْ وَظَنُوا أَنَّ لَا مَلْجَأً مِنَ اللَّهِ إِلَّا إِلَيْهِ ثُمَّ تَابَ عَلَيْهِمْ
لَيَتُوبُوا

9:118 The three men referred to here were Ka'b bin Mâlik, Hilâl bin Umayyah and Murârah bin Rabî. They were sincere Muslims who failed in their duty not from ill will, but from thoughtlessness, slackness, and human weakness. Having failed to obey the Holy Prophets (pbuh) summons, they were called on to explain their behaviour. Consequently, they were excluded from the life of the community for fifty days. Their mental state is depicted here. “Whose case was deferred” means that they were left behind with respect to the commandment of Allâh concerning them (see also 9:106 and *Bukhârî*). After fifty days Allâh turned to them with Mercy and they were forgiven. Though the illustration is taken from the Tabûk expedition, the lesson is generally applicable and is valid for any era.

وَمَا كَانَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لَيَنْفِرُوا كَافَةً ۝ فَلَوْلَا نَفَرَ مِنْ كُلِّ فِرْقَةٍ مِنْهُمْ طَائِفَةٌ
لَيَتَنَقَّهُوا فِي الدِّينِ وَلَيُنَذِّرُوا قَوْمَهُمْ إِذَا رَجَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَحْذَرُونَ

9:122 Wars may become inevitable, but they should not be glorified. In the middle of a discussion about war, the Holy Qur’ân introduces

the subject of intellectual activities and the innermost sources of our behaviour, pointing out that these are also necessities. It was only through faith and intellectual work that Islam could be spread. This was an important duty that was vital to remember, even when the community was in a life and death struggle. This subject is mentioned here because the weakness of faith and action resulted from lack of knowledge and training. The verse speaks of the way in which such weakness could be removed.



سورة يونس 10. CHAPTER

Jonah (*Yunus*)

(*Revealed before Hijrah*)

The 10th to the 16th chapter form a group of seven chapters, which all, except for the last one, begin with the abbreviation *Alif, Lâm, Râ* الر. For this reason they are referred to as the *Alif, Lâm, Râ* chapters.

The preceding nine chapters dealt mainly with the legal aspects of the newly emerging Muslim community and its conflict with those who wished prevent its growth and consolidation or to destroy it by force. Having dealt with the external enemy and restored peace, the question that concerned the Muslim nation is that of self-preservation and its relation with the Creator. This and the following six chapters tells us about the importance of the Revelation, particularly that of the Holy Qur'ân, and refer to the Divine Messenger and his purpose and mission. Emphasis is placed on the Holy Prophets advent by discussing the criteria and characteristics of prophethood, the claims and history of earlier Prophets and arguments based on common

sense. Although the accounts of Noah and Moses are more detailed than Jonah's, Jonah stands out because his people benefited from his warning. Naming the chapter after him suggests that the believers in the Holy Prophet (pbuh) would similarly benefit. As Allâh's Mercy encompasses and transcends all objects of His creation, it demands the highest form of devotion and thanks to attract it.

الرَّ تِلْكَ آيَاتُ الْكِتَابِ الْحَكِيمِ

10:1 *Alif, Lâm, Râ* الرَّ are the abbreviations of “I am Allâh, the All-Seeing” [Abû Hayyân, Qurṭabî, Râzî, Ibn Jarîr]. Ibn ‘Abbâs and Abd-Allâh ibn Mas‘ûd stated that *Râ* stands for *Râî* (the Seer); or *Arâ* (*I see*). *Alif Lâm Râ* can also mean I am Allâh, the all Subtle and the Provider. *Alif* for Allâh, *Lâm* ل for *Latîf* اللطîف (all Subtle, Unfathomable, and Incomprehensible) and *Râ* ر for *Razzâq* (the Provider). Here *Râ* may also mean *Râ’ûf* (The Compassionate).

Tilka تِلْكَ is a demonstrative feminine pronoun to indicate something distant. The remoteness of the Qur’ânic verses invokes an impression of dignity and eminence (cf. 2:2). The verses of this Book are called *al-Hakîm* - الحَكِيم “full of wisdom” as they impart sagacity and embody teachings suited to all occasions. Reward and punishment alike are both based on Divine Wisdom.

أَكَانَ لِلنَّاسِ عَجَبًا أَنْ أُوحَيْنَا إِلَى رَجُلٍ مِّنْهُمْ أَنْ أُنذِرِ النَّاسَ وَبَشِّرِ الَّذِينَ
آمَنُوا أَنَّ لَهُمْ قَدْمَ صِدْقٍ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ

10:2 The verse indicates that the degeneration of some disbelievers is so great that they imagine only someone from outside could change their condition and it is unconceivable to them that one of their own could rescue them. This is an allusion to Jonah (10:97), the preceding chapter, and particularly the verse 9:128. **Qadama Sidq** قَدَمَ صِدْقٍ is a strong and honourable footing, a footing of firmness, precedence of

truthfulness or going forward with truth in words and deeds with complete sincerity (Râghib).

ثُمَّ اسْتَوَى عَلَى الْعَرْشِ

10:3 Thumma ثُمَّ is used as a conjunction indicating a sequence in order with no time interval in between. It is usually translated as that, thereafter or thereupon. There are frequent instances in the sayings of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) and in pre-Islamic Arabian poetry where this word has the significance of a repetitive stress, alluding to something that has already been stated and is now emphasized once again. In cases where it is used to link parallel statements it has often the function of the simple conjunction *wa* ـ “and”.

لِيَجْزِيَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ بِالْقِسْطِ

10:4 Sâlihât الصَّالِحَاتِ are just and righteous deeds done in keeping with the requirements of specific occasions and circumstances.

مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ ذَلِكَ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ

10:5 The verse points to the fact that everything in the universe, whether existing or potential, concrete or abstract, has a purpose to serve: nothing in His creation is accidental (cf.3:191; 38:27).

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ لَا يَرْجُونَ لِقاءَنَا وَرَضُوا بِالْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَأَطْمَأْنُوا بِهَا وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ آيَاتِنَا غَافِلُونَ

10:7 Yarjûn يَرْجُونَ means both fear and hope (Tâj).

كَذَلِكَ رُّبِّنَ لِلْمُسْرِفِينَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

10:12 Musrifîn مُسْرِفِينَ are those who are given to excesses or commit excesses; who are wasteful; who thwart their own selves, or destroy their moral and spiritual potential (Râzî, Lisân).

وَإِذَا تُنْتَلِي عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِنَا بَيِّنَاتٍ ۝ قَالَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَرْجُونَ لِقَاءَنَا أَنْتَ بِقُرْآنٍ
غَيْرَ هَذَا أَوْ بَدْلًا

10:15 The challenge to present a Qur'ân other than this or to change in it according to the fancies of mortals, is an indirect proof of the emphasis the Holy Prophet (pbuh) placed on conveying the Divine Revelation in its pure, unaltered form.

فُلْ لَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا تَنَوُّثُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَا أَدْرِكُمْ بِهِ ۝ فَقَدْ لَبِثْتُ فِيْكُمْ عُمْرًا مِنْ
قَبْلِهِ ۝ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ

10:16 The verse embodies an infallible test of the truth and honesty of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) in particular, and of any claimant to prophethood in general. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) had been renowned for his undisputed honesty and integrity ever since his early youth to the extent that his Makkan compatriots gave him the title of *Al-Amîn* meaning “the trustworthy”, “the faithful” or “the truthful”. During his entire life until the claim of prophethood, his being *Al-Amîn* was never doubted even at a single occasion. The argument he is making and on which he bases his claim to prophethood demands extraordinarily high standards of truthfulness and integrity. Now that he has passed through youth, where passions can lead to false speech, the incontestability of his credibility is even greater.

فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِنْ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا أَوْ كَذَّبَ بِآيَاتِهِ

10:17 The verse brings to light two eternal truths: impostors and false claimants of prophethood cannot succeed, and those who reject and oppose Allâh's Messengers can never escape His punishment. If the Holy Prophet (pbuh) himself had composed the Qur'ân and then attributed it to Allâh, his success would have been impossible, and if he had wrongfully claimed to be a Messenger of Allâh, he could not have escaped Allâh's punishment.

وَلَوْلَا كَلِمَةً سَبَقَتْ مِنْ رَبِّكَ لَعُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ فِيمَا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ

10:19 prophethood (*Nabîwwat* نبوة) and Apostleship (*Risâlah* رسالة) ended with Muhammad (pbuh): After him, there will no further Prophets bringing Divine law. However, Sainthood (- *walâyat*) will continue as part of His special Mercy and will never end. Allâh will continue to warn people by sending Reformers (-*mujaddadîn*), and Saints (-*Auliyâ*) as guides in a similar way. This is the Promise embedded in the Words وَلَوْلَا كَلِمَةً سَبَقَتْ مِنْ رَبِّكَ (cf. 10:47, 64; 8:33; 27:72; 34:30). This Promise is out of His great Mercy (*Rahmânîyyat*). The verse that follows refers to this Mercy in the words: “When We show Mercy to the people...” (10:21) The variance among people arises when the appointees of Allâh – the Prophets or Reformers come: some believe in him and others reject him and call him mad (cf. 2:213)

وَإِذَا أَدْقَنَا النَّاسَ رَحْمَةً مِنْ بَعْدِ ضَرَاءٍ

10:21 The showing of “Mercy” here is a reference to the above verse and the promise (Word كلاماً) given by Allâh.

هُوَ الَّذِي يُسَيِّرُكُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ ۖ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا كُنْتُمْ فِي الْفُلُكِ وَجَرَيْنَ بِهِمْ
بِرِيحٍ طَيِّبَةٍ وَفَرِحُوا بِهَا جَاءُهُمْ رِيحٌ عَاصِفٌ وَجَاءُهُمُ الْمَوْجُ مِنْ كُلِّ مَكَانٍ
وَظَلُّوا أَنْهُمْ أَحِيطُ بِهِمْ

10:22 Within this verse the discourse changes abruptly from the direct address of “you” to the third person plural “they”, extending its validity beyond the Makkans and non-believers of Arabia to all times and all nations.

إِنَّمَا مَثَلُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَاءٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَاخْتَلَطَ بِهِ نَبَاتُ الْأَرْضِ
مِمَّا يَأْكُلُ النَّاسُ وَالْأَنْعَامُ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَحَدَتِ الْأَرْضُ زُخْرُفَهَا وَأَرَيَتْ وَظَنَّ

أَهْلُهَا أَنَّهُمْ قَادِرُونَ عَلَيْهَا أَتَاهَا أَمْرُنَا لَيْلًا أَوْ نَهَارًا فَجَعَلْنَاهَا حَصِيدًا كَأَنَّ لَمْ
تَغُنِ بِالْأَمْسِ ۝ كَذَلِكَ تُفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَنْقَرُونَ

10:24 The verse alludes to the rise and fall of nations. Economic and spiritual advance gives way to the decline of both prosperity and morality. Reference is also made to verse 10:14 of this chapter. Muslims are not excluded from this rule as their history shows us.

لِلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا الْحُسْنَىٰ وَزِيَادَةُ

10:26 “And a good deal more” وَزِيَادَةٌ, according to some commentators, means special communion with the Most Exalted Allâh in the form of Visions (*kashîf*) and Revelations (*wahî* and *ilhâm*).

وَالَّذِينَ كَسَبُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ جَزَاءً سَيِّئَةً بِمِثْلِهَا وَتَرْهُفُهُمْ ذَلَّةٌ ۝ مَا لَهُمْ مِنْ اللَّهِ
مِنْ عَاصِمٍ ۝ كَانُوا أَغْشِيَتْ وُجُوهُهُمْ قطعاً مِنَ اللَّيْلِ مُظْلِمًا ۝ أُولَئِكَ
أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ

10:27 The reward of goodness shall exceed the actual act of goodness, whereas the recompense of evil will equal the evil committed if it is not forgiven. Punishment shall be levied according to the sin.

وَيَوْمَ نَحْشُرُهُمْ جَمِيعاً ثُمَّ نَفْوُنَ لِلَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا مَكَانِكُمْ أَنْتُمْ وَشَرَكَاؤُكُمْ

10:28 **Makâna-kum** - مَكَانِكُم “keep your place” bears a connotation of contempt and implied threat. “*On that day We will separate them thoroughly*” (يَوْمَ نَحْشُرُهُمْ) also means “the two will dispute with one another”. Because of their dispute, they shall be separated.

قُلْ مَنْ يَرْزُقُكُمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَمْنَ يَمْلِكُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَمَنْ
يُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَيُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتَ مِنَ الْحَيِّ وَمَنْ يُدَبِّرُ الْأُمْرَ ۝
فَسَيَقُولُونَ اللَّهُ ۝ فَقُلْ أَفَلَا تَتَّقُونَ

10:31 *Rizq* رُزْق is sustenance. It is not limited to the satisfaction of physical needs, but also includes spiritual needs. *Rizq* includes all kinds of provisions and their management and administration (*tadâbir*). Eyes, hands, feet, ears and intellect and knowledge are all required for physical sustenance and for spiritual sustenance constant divine guidance is needed. **Yudabbir** يُدَبِّر is from *dabara* دَبَرْ which means to conduct affairs in an orderly and regular manner and maintain proper balance between different deeds. This is a part of *Rizq*. All these aspects have been included in this beautiful verse. This verse and the following five verses are the explanation of the Divine attribute *al-Haqq*. These verses are also an allusion to the process of spiritual life and death.

كَذَلِكَ حَقَّتْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ فَسَقُوا أَنَّهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

10:33 **Fâsiq** فاسق is the one who rebels, a deliberate sinner, a denier of the truth, or one who is disobedient (Lisân). “The verdict of our Lord shall be confirmed” حَقَّتْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ should be read in conjunction with the foregoing verses 10:19-21.

وَمَا كَانَ هَذَا الْقُرْآنُ أَنْ يُفْتَرَىٰ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلَكِنْ تَصْدِيقَ الَّذِي بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ
وَتَفْصِيلَ الْكِتَابِ لَا رَبِّ فِيهِ مِنْ رَبٌّ الْعَالَمِينَ

10:37 Both this and the next verse give reasons why the Qur’ân is of Divine origin and will be the final Holy Book delivered to humanity.

- 1) It explains many important themes that, in other religions, had been left ambiguous or obscure in their scriptures and expounds upon their teachings in a clear and comprehensive manner.
- 2) It deals with such principles that are beyond the power of human beings to know without direct knowledge and revelation from the Creator.
- 3) The wisdom inherent in the Holy Qur’ân precludes any possibility of its having been composed by a human being.

4) It confirms and gives a final formula to the eternal Truths which have been conveyed to humanity through a long succession of Prophets; Truths that have subsequently been obscured through differing interpretations, deliberate omissions, interpolations or losses of the original texts.

5) The prophecies of the previous Prophets establish the Holy Qur'âns Divine origin.

6) It contains all the arguments needed to prove its Divine origin, and does not require any outside help or reference for this purpose.

7) It satisfies the moral and spiritual requirements of all human beings under all circumstances for all ages.

8) No other single cause can produce even a single chapter like it (cf. 52:34; 17:88; 11:13).

Verse 37 ends with the sign of *qaf*; this implies that the reader should pause and give deep and thorough thought to this verse. According to Abû 'Ubaidah Ma'mar ibn al-Muthanna the particle *amm* آمّا, which introduces this verse is also synonymous with the conjunction *wa* و meaning “and” (*Baghawi*).

بَنْ كَذَّبُوا بِمَا لَمْ يُحِيطُوا بِعِلْمِهِ وَلَمَّا يَأْتِهِمْ تَأْوِيلُهُ

10:39 *Tâ'wil* تَأْوِيل - “true significance” also indicates the consequences stemming from the rejection of the Truth; or the ultimate state of the perfect manifestation of Truth.

وَلِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَسُولٌ فَإِذَا جَاءَ رَسُولُهُمْ فُصِّلَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ

10:47 Here once again stress is placed on the continuity of Divine Revelation for the benefit and guidance of people, and that no community, period or civilization shall be left without Divine guidance (cf. 6:13; 10:19; 18:33; 27:72; 34:30; 35:24).

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَتُكُم مَوْعِظَةٌ مِن رَبِّكُمْ وَشَفَاءٌ لِمَا فِي الصُّدُورِ وَهُدًى
وَرَحْمَةٌ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

10:57 Mau‘izah مَوْعِظَةٌ refers to exhortations or teachings that proceed from a genuine desire to impart good council; teachings that have a deep effect and touch the human heart; or teachings that have set forth in a good manner all those principles and rules of conduct which lead to moral reformation and success in life (Tâj).

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ مِنْ رِزْقٍ فَجَعَلْتُمْ مِنْهُ حَرَاماً وَحَلَالاً قُلْ اللَّهُ أَذِنَ
لَكُمْ ۝ أُمْ عَلَى اللَّهِ تَفْتَرُونَ

10:59 “Those who forge a lie in the name of Allâh” (أُمْ عَلَى اللَّهِ تَفْتَرُونَ) are those men of knowledge (- ‘ulamâ rasûm) who proclaim a law based on their conjecture (*Qiyâs* قياس), and call it a Divine law (*Shari‘ah* شريعة) (see also 2:286).

وَمَا يَعْرِبُ عَنْ رَبِّكَ مِنْ مُتَّقَلٍ دَرَرَةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَاءِ وَلَا أَصْغَرَ
مِنْ ذَلِكَ وَلَا أَكْبَرَ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ

10:61 There are objects that we cannot see because they are too small; on the other hand there are other things that we cannot see because of their largeness. However, nothing small or big, can escape from Allâh’s sight.

لَهُمُ الْبُشْرَىٰ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ ۝ لَا تَنْبِيلَ لِكَلِمَاتِ اللَّهِ

10:64 The friends of Allâh (أَوْلَيَاءِ; cf. 10:62), the righteous and the believers (cf. 10:63) shall receive “the glad tiding” (الْبُشْرَىٰ) from Allâh in this very world in the form of true dreams and visions through which they will commune with Allâh. In other words, His Self-Disclosure will continue unchanged as in the past (cf. 6:34; 18:27; 10:19-21, 47; 8:33; 27:72; 34:30).

Kalimat Allâh كَلِمَاتُ اللَّهِ are the words of Allâh. “*There is no change in the words of Allâh*” means لَا تَنْدِينَ لِكَلِمَاتِ اللَّهِ, there will be no change in His Divine laws. Furthermore, the words in a broader sense mean that there can be no changes made to the Qur’ânic verses, and so this passage refutes the suggestion of some that certain verses of the Holy Qur’ân were abrogated.

وَلَا يَحْزُنْكَ قَوْلُهُمْ

10:65 Those who are near to Allâh (أَوْلَيَاءِ) are not grieved by hostile words spoken against them because they need no respect nor power (cf. 10:62). They look upon their person with an eye that sees their smallness.

قَالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ وَلَدًا ۖ سُبْحَانَهُ ۖ هُوَ الْعَنِيٌّ ۖ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۖ إِنْ عِنْدَكُمْ مِّنْ سُلْطَانٍ بِهَذَا ۖ أَنْتُوْلُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

10:68 Here arguments are provided against the assertion that Allâh has taken to himself a son. He is limitless in His Glory and is immune to the laws of decay and death, therefore He requires no son to continue His work. He is self-sufficient and independent, so He needs no son to help Him conduct the affairs of His creation. Finally, the assertion that claims divine parentage is groundless and without proof, and is no more than mere conjecture. Those who make such assertions forge a lie against Allâh, and therefore they will not attain “*Fallâh*” (cf. 2:5).

وَاتْنَ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَأً نُوحٌ إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ يَا قَوْمٌ إِنْ كَانَ كَبُرَ عَلَيْكُمْ مَّقَامِي
وَتَذَكِّرِي بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ فَعَلَى اللَّهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ فَاجْمِعُوا أَمْرَكُمْ وَشُرَكَاءَكُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَكُنْ
أَمْرُكُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ غُمَّةٌ ثُمَّ افْضُوا إِلَيَّ وَلَا تَنْتَظِرُونَ

10:71 This and the following verses give accounts of three Prophets (Noah, Moses and Jonah). Their stories and accomplishments are epitomized by the life of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). At Makkah he

played the part of Noah, at Madînah that of Moses, and in his re-entry into Makkah that of Jonah. His people benefited from his warning. There is a suggestion that just as the people of Jonah benefited by his warning, the Makkans and Arabs will ultimately believe in the Holy Prophet (pbuh).

The account of Noah in this verse affirms that the Prophets of Allâh do not depend on armies and allies. Moses demonstrated this when his followers said, “We are overtaken” (10:61). Moses replied, “Not at all, my Lord is with me” (10:62). We see parallels to the life of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). This is the secret behind prophethood. Allâh shows His Majesty in situations when there are no obvious indications of success.

وَيُحِقُّ اللَّهُ الْحَقَّ بِكَلِمَاتِهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُجْرِمُونَ

10:82 “Allâh establishes the truth by dint of His decrees” indicates that a righteous case does not need the support of unrighteous means. Truth establishes itself through its own inherent strength and not by falsehood. “*Allâh’s decrees*” means His will is manifested in the laws of nature as well as in the Revelation granted by Him (cf. 8:7; 42:24).

فَمَا آمَنَ لِمُوسَى إِلَّا ذُرَيْثٌ مِّنْ قَوْمِهِ عَلَىٰ خَوْفٍ مِّنْ فَرْعَوْنَ وَمَلِئُهُمْ أَنْ يَقْتَلُهُمْ

10:83 “A few youths among his people accepted Moses”: Here, “his people” refers to the Egyptians. The Holy Qur’ân relates that certain Egyptians believed in Moses message (cf. 7:120-126). Pharaoh’s wife was also among those who believed (66:11). Another verse (40:8), mentions a “believer” among the people of Pharaoh. This understanding is supported by the reference to “their chiefs” (مَلِئُهُمْ), an expression referring to the Egyptian chiefs.

وَأَنْجَنَا بِرَحْمَتِكَ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ

10:86 The deliverance from persecution refers to the persecution by the Pharaohs, which according to Jewish history lasted for almost 250 years or perhaps even longer.

وَاجْعَلُوا بُيُوتَكُمْ قِبْلَةً وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ

10:87 **Qiblah** قِبْلَةٌ is derived from the term *qabula* means “face to face”, “before”, or “opposite”. Here Moses directs his people to construct houses that face each other and to live close together in order to help one another in times of need. It also means “make your houses of equal standing”, “make houses a place of worship”, or “make your houses places of your sacrifice”. Figuratively, the phrase means that the people of Moses should worship a common god. The Israelites, as they did not have religious freedom and had no public place of worship, were obliged to perform their prayers in their houses. Figuratively this could also be interpreted as a message to the Israelites that their only salvation lay in God-consciousness and devotion to Him.

رَبَّنَا اطْمِسْنَا عَلَى أَمْوَالِهِمْ وَاشْدُدْنَا عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ فَلَا يُؤْمِنُوا حَتَّى يَرَوُا الْعَذَابَ
الْأَلِيمَ

10:88 The Prophets of Allâh are mild at heart, but like all other human beings, sometimes their patience can be exhausted. “Destroy their wealth and attack their hearts (and make their hearts hard), so they believe not until they see the grievous punishment” was a prayer offered by Moses. Noah’s prayer was similar: “My Lord! Do not leave a single dweller from among the disbelievers on the land” (71:26). It was the acceptance of this prayer that we read of further below in verse 10:90.

فَالْيَوْمَ نُنَجِّيُكَ بِبَدْنَكَ لِتَكُونَ لِمَنْ خَلْفَكَ آئِيَةً

10:92 “We will preserve you in your body only” is an allusion to the ancient Egyptian custom of embalming the bodies of their kings and chiefs intended to preserve them for the afterlife. The Holy Qur’ân declares that Allâh said to the Pharaoh that his body would be saved to serve as a lesson for the generations to come. This prophecy is another profound Qur’ânic miracle and a further demonstration of the truth of the word of Allâh: the Pharaohs body was really cast ashore and preserved through mummification. It can still be seen today in the Royal Mummy Rooms of the Egyptian Museum of Antiquities in Cairo.

This is another instance of the insufficiency of the Bibles narrative when compared to Qur’ânic revelation. The Qur’ân supplements the Bible because the Bible makes no mention of this event, nor does any other book of history. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) could not have known about this mummification, as the discovery was never made until after a period of more than 3,000 years. The name of this Pharaoh was Merenptah or Merneptah.

فَإِنْ كُنْتَ فِي شَكٍّ مِمَّا أَنْزَلَنَا إِلَيْكَ فَأَسْأَلُ الَّذِينَ يَقْرَءُونَ الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ لَقَدْ جَاءَكَ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ فَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُمْتَرِينَ

10:94 “And if you are in doubt” (فَإِنْ كُنْتَ فِي شَكٍّ), refers to a doubt that particular to any reader of the Holy Book who is unable to grasp the underlying meanings and the message because of his limited spiritual knowledge. If someone is unable to understand the message being conveyed, he is advised to refer to the explanation given by the people blessed with Divine knowledge. As such people may be difficult to find in the time and place of the reader, the reader is told to refer to the explanations given by the learned of the past, “who were before him”. This verse has been attached by Christian missionaries who try to use it to prove that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) was in great doubt, and therefore should have consulted the learned of the past - the Christians and Jews. Some Muslims are misled by this argument

and incorrectly start to assume that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) is being addressed here. However, it becomes clear that verse 94 and 95 address the readers of the Holy Qur’ân endowed with less knowledge when we read the admonition in verse 95: “Be not of those who cry lies to the messages of Allâh” (Râzî). The Holy Prophet never “cried lies” in response to the messages he received from the Exalted One. It is the reader, who out of lack of knowledge and misunderstanding, rejects the messages of the Holy Qur’ân. In the words, “which We have revealed to you”, the Holy Prophet is of course the recipient of the revelation and the reader has received it only through him, but if we carefully continue to read the subsequent verses, it becomes clear to whom the message is addressed. The opening words of the next section read: “Say, O you people! If you are in doubt regarding my creed” (10:104). The addressee is the same as in 10:94.

The Holy Prophet (pbuh) is said to have had the fullest certainty about the Revelation which he received and never entertained any doubts. Similarly, in 17:23 we read, “Your Lord has enjoined you to be good to parents.” Here too, the reader is being addressed, and not the Holy Prophet (pbuh) who was an orphan.

فَلَوْلَا كَانَتْ قَرِيَّةً آمَنَتْ فَنَعَّهَا إِلَّا قَوْمٌ يُؤْنِسُ

10:98 Lau-lâ لولا is sometimes synonymous with *hal-lâ* هل لا and can be translated as “why not”. *Lau-lâ* is one of the so-called *huruf al-Tahdîd* (a particle denoting insistence). When it is followed by a verb in the past tense, as in this case, it implies reprove for ones not having done something that should have been done. There is no equivalent English idiom conveying the same meaning.

The verse refers to Jonas, who is mentioned in six different places in the Holy Book. In the Bible he is spoken of as an Israelite Prophet who was bidden to go to Nineveh (cf. 37:139-148).

وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ لَآمَنَ مَنِ فِي الْأَرْضِ كُلُّهُمْ جَمِيعًا

10:99 “If your Lord had enforced His will, those on the earth would have all believed.” The obvious implication of this verse is that He has willed the minds of human beings to operate otherwise, giving us the freedom to choose between right and wrong; an absolute necessity for spiritual progress. This status distinguishes human beings from animals, which can only follow their instincts. We are given the power to choose because the Creator Himself “chose” between existence and non-existence. This freedom of choice is an attribute of Allâh, and is innate in us. Yet with this freedom we must still accept responsibility for the choices we make. The verse also tells us unequivocally that the Holy Qur’ân does not allow the use of force for its dissemination.

وَمَا كَانَ لِنَفْسٍ أَنْ تُؤْمِنَ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ

10:100 “No one can believe save by the leave of Allâh,” means that we only can believe in the Truth by virtue of Allâh’s guidance and our God-given ability to discriminate between right and wrong. It does not mean that Allâh would prevent someone from believing despite their sincere efforts. Since a human beings freedom of moral choice expresses itself in his adoption or rejection of conforming to his God-willed nature, it can be said to depend, in the last resort, on Allâh’s leave. It also indicates that one cannot attain true belief by mere lip service to certain doctrines. “By the leave of Allâh” also signifies “by the observance of the laws of Allâh”.

ثُمَّ نُنَجِّي رُسُلَنَا وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ۚ كَذَلِكَ حَقًّا عَلَيْنَا نُنْجِي الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

10:103 Haqqan ‘alainâ حَقًّا عَلَيْنَا means, “We made it binding on ourselves”. According to Râzî, the words denote rather a logical necessity, which is the unavoidable fulfilment of Allâh’s free will and does not imply that He is under some obligation. There is nothing

binding upon Him, nor has a human being ever had any claim with regard to his Creator and creation.



سورة هود 11. CHAPTER

(Prophet) Hûd

(Revealed before Hijrah)

This chapter bears a great resemblance to the former, both in method and subject matter. The preceding chapter had classified the opponents of Truth as three types: Those who were wholly spared - the people of Jonas. Those who were completely destroyed - the people of Noah. Those who were only partly destroyed - the Pharaoh and his armies.

In the present chapter the Holy Qur'ân discusses the reasons why the people of Hûd were destroyed and that no trace of them was left. Next, believers are warned against associating with people for whom Divine punishment has been promised in this chapter. Additionally, some of the narrations of earlier Prophets mentioned in the previous chapter are developed further in the present chapter in some detail. They are illuminated more deeply from a different perspective. There is a particular stress placed on dealing justly. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) is reported to have said, "Chapter Hûd has prematurely aged me." This was because of the responsibility conferred on him for his followers, as we read in verse 112.

الر ۚ كِتَابٌ أُحْكِمَتْ آيَاتُهُ ثُمَّ فُصَلَّتْ مِنْ لَدُنْ حَكِيمٍ خَبِيرٍ

11:1 Alif Lâm Râ الر is the abbreviation of "I am Allâh Who is seeing" (cf. 2:1). *Uhkimat* أُحْكِمَتْ is something that is characterized by

wisdom. It also means to be made solid, sound and firm, clear by itself, free from defect, imperfection or ambiguity (Tâj; Lane). According to Zamakhsharî and Râzî, the conjunction **Thumma** ثُمَّ does not denote a sequence in time, but rather a coordination of qualities and conditions. *Fussilat* فُصِّلَ signifies something to be explained in detail. Here it has been substituted for *mutashâbihat*, which means “explained in detail those aspects of the Qur’ânic teachings that have many meanings” (cf. 3:7). Thus the Holy Qur’ân contains both the fundamental teachings of Islam and the details of those teachings. However, the details are always subordinate to the fundamentals.

وَأَنِ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبِّكُمْ ثُمَّ تُوبُوا إِلَيْهِ يُمْتَعَكُمْ مَتَّعًا حَسَنًا إِلَى أَجَلٍ مُسَمَّى
وَيُؤْتِ كُلَّ ذِي فَضْلٍ فَضْلًا

11:3 The verse shows that the state of *taubah* - توبۃ “turning to Allâh in repentance” comes after, and is higher than *istighfâr*; seeking protection from Allâh against the faults of our spiritual development. Some people object that there is insufficient time to carry out the religious duties between their daily life and the struggles for earning their livelihoods. This notion is rejected here and Allâh gives a promise to those who fear such. The verse 10:6 elaborates further on the subject.

أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ يَتَّخِذُونَ صُدُورَهُمْ لِيَسْتَخْفُوا مِنْهُ ۝ أَلَا حِينَ يَسْتَعْشُونَ ثِيَابَهُمْ يَعْلَمُ مَا يُسِرُّونَ وَمَا يُعْلِنُونَ

11:5 **Yathnûna Sadûra-hum** يَتَّخِذُونَ صُدُورَهُمْ is derived from *thna sadra-hum* شَيْ صدرهُم literally meaning, “he folded his bosom”; or “he concealed something (enmity or other)in his breast” (Tâj). Similarly, we read *Yastaghshûna Thiyâbahum* يَسْتَعْشُونَ ثِيَابَهُمْ that means, “They wrap themselves in their garments in order that they might not see nor hear” (Lisân); “They make their garments a covering over their ears, and thus they are holding back from lending an ear”. It is an allusion

to their running away from Truth (Râghib). It also suggests that they allow their hearts to be enveloped by prejudice, denying them spiritual perception. The verse cites reasons why the disbelievers cannot accept the Truth: it is because of their hidden enmity, doubts and objections, and their refusal to open their hearts to have their doubts resolved. **Thiyâb** ثياب hearts and minds to remain wrapped up in prejudice (see also 2:88; 71:7).

وَمَا مِنْ ذَبَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا عَلَى اللَّهِ رِزْقُهَا وَيَعْلَمُ مُسْتَقْرَرَهَا وَمُسْتَوْدَعَهَا

11:6 Mustaqar مُسْتَقَرٌ is permanent lodging place. *Mustauda* means temporary sojourn. These words signify not only a place of permanent lodging and of temporary sojourn but also “a final or determined limit of a thing”, either in time or place; “appointed term”; or “end of one’s course” (Tâj). For the Hereafter, there is also a *Mustaqar* مُسْتَقَرٌ and a *Mustauda* مُسْتَوْدَعٌ.

وَهُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ وَكَانَ عَرْشُهُ عَلَى الْمَاءِ
لِيَتَلْوَكُمْ أَكُفُّمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلاً

11:7 Sittat-i-Ayyâm سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ literally means “six days”. *Ayyâm* أيام means here, periods or stages. A reference is made here to the six stages of evolution. In this context, the term cannot be interpreted to mean “days” however, because the concept of reckoning a day comes from the rising and setting of the sun.

The metaphoric reference to the “Throne of His power resting over on water” is explained by the Holy Qur’ân itself. Water is repeatedly described as the source of all life (21:30, 164; 6:99; 16:10; 25:54; 35:27; 77:20; 86:6). Similarly, Allâh’s Revelations and His Word are compared to water at several places in the Holy Qur’ân (15:22; 16: 65; 22:63; 39:21). The Divine Attributes of the Might of Allâh find their manifestation through living creatures, and above all through the human being who is the highest developed form of life. Just as

physical life grows out of rainwater, spiritual life grows out of Allâh's water of Revelation, and these Attributes find their manifestation through His Word "Be!" The object of the creation of the human being is that He, the Great Creator, be known by his creation. He has made this possible through His Self-Disclosures. However, His manifestation will only take place in its complete form in the life after death, as the lifespan of this world is very short. The system of creation means that we shall have a life after death and after our time in this temporal abode, we shall have a permanent lodging place.

وَلَئِنْ أَذْفَنَا إِلِّيْنَاسَ مِنَ رَحْمَةِ ثُمَّ نَزَّ عَنَاهَا مِنْهُ إِنَّهُ لَيَوْسُ كُفُورٌ

11:9 Ya'ûs يُوسُ is from *ya'isa* يَسِّن meaning to despair or give up hope. The verse says that the true believers never give up hope; only those who are weak in belief despair. The Prophets of Allâh never despaired. We read in 12:84-87, "He (Jacob) turned away from them and said, 'O my grief for Joseph!', and his eyes were drowned with tears of grief and he was suppressing his sorrow. Then Jacob said, I complain of my anguish and my sorrow to none but Allâh. He then said to his sons, Do not despair of Allâh's soothing mercy, none but people who deny (the truth) lose hope of Allâh's soothing mercy."

فَلَعْنَاكَ تَارِكٌ بَعْضَ مَا يُوحَى إِلَيْكَ وَضَائِقٌ بِهِ صَدْرُكَ أَنْ يَقُولُوا أَلَّا أُنْزِلَ عَلَيْهِ كَنْزٌ أَوْ جَاءَ مَعَهُ مَلَكٌ

11:12 Dzâikun bihî Sadraka ضَائِقٌ بِهِ صَدْرُك literally means, "His heart became narrow because of this". This is an Arabic expression for feelings of distress, sorrows and worries.

فَإِلَمْ يَسْتَحِيُوا لَكُمْ فَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا أُنْزِلَ بِعْلَمَ اللَّهِ

11:14 "But if they (the disbelievers) do not respond to you (the believer or the reader), then know that this (Qur'ân) which has been revealed is with Allâh's knowledge." Here, in the word *Fâ-illam* فَإِلَمْ

the conjunction *fa* suggests that what is now being said is connected with the challenge made in the preceding verse, thus disbelievers are being addressed again. The use of the plural pronoun *lakum* لَكُم, “you”, instead of *laka* لَكَ, “they”, suggests that it is now the reader who is being addressed. The translation becomes فَإِنْ يَسْتَجِيبُوا لَكُمْ: “If they (the disbelievers) do not respond to you (the believers).” Thus when the verse is read as a continuation of the preceding verse, it indicates that the Holy Qur’ân will forever stand unrivalled and that the challenge of verse 11:13 is not for the Holy Prophet (pbuh) alone, but remains valid for Muslims of every era.

أَفَمَنْ كَانَ عَلَىٰ بَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنْ رَّبِّهِ وَيَنْلُوُهُ شَاهِدٌ مِّنْهُ

11:17 “He who stands upon a clear proof” applies to the Holy Prophet (pbuh), and Shâhid شَاهِد is witness. The witness is the one who bares testimony to this Truth. These witnesses are those from among the followers of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) who confirm the Truth; the witnesses par excellences are the *Mujaddadîn* and the Saints (*Auliyyâ*).

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمِنْ افْتَرَىٰ عَلَىٰ اللَّهِ كَذِبًا ۝ أُولَئِكَ يُعْرَضُونَ عَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ وَيَقُولُونَ
الْأَشْهَادُ هُؤُلَاءِ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا عَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ

11:18 **Ashhâd** الشَّاهِد is the plural of *shâhid* شَاهِد. The witnesses are holders of high standards of morality imbued with Divine Attributes. The word is also used for Divine Revelation (*Tâj*, *Lisân*). As reported by Ibn ‘Abbâs, the *ashhâd* are the Appointees (- *mâ ‘mûr*) of Allâh, and they may be the Prophets of a nation or its reformers (- *mujaddadîn*) and saints, who on the Day of Judgment will be called upon to testify for or against the people to whom they were sent (*Baghawî*). In 16:84, witnesses “out of every community” is mentioned who will testify for or against their people.

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ حَسِرُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ وَضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ

11:21 Yaftarûn - يَفْتَرُونَ “That which they forged” is a phrase which applies not merely to false deities, but also to deceptive ideas or half-truths meant to delude the mind (cf. 6:112), and more generally, anything that causes people to lose sight of spiritual values.

مَثَلُ الْفَرِيقَيْنِ كَالْأَعْمَى وَالْأَصْمَمُ وَالْبَصِيرُ وَالسَّمِيعُ ۝ هُنَّ يَسْتَوِيَانِ مَثَلًا ۝ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ

11:24 “The blind and the deaf and the seeing and the hearing” كَالْأَعْمَى is a beautiful contrast: the believers and those who reject the Divine Revelation.

قَالَ يَا قَوْمَ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُ عَلَىٰ بَيِّنَةٍ مِّنْ رَبِّي وَآتَانِي رَحْمَةً مِّنْ عِنْدِهِ فَعُمِّيَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْزَلْنَا مُكْمُنُوهَا وَأَنْتُمْ لَهَا كَارِهُونَ

11:28 Anlazi-mukumûha - أَنْلَزْمُهُوهَا - “Shall we thrust it upon you to accept?” - is derived from *lazama* لَزَمَ, meaning to thrust, adhere, fasten, or to compel one to do. The verse informs us of a cardinal Islamic principle that there shall be no coercion in matters of faith (2:256).

وَيَا قَوْمَ لَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مَالًا ۝ إِنْ أَجْرِيَ إِلَّا عَلَى اللَّهِ ۝ وَمَا أَنَا بِطَارِدٍ
الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ۝ إِنَّهُمْ مُلَاقُو رَبِّهِمْ وَلَكِنِي أَرَاكُمْ قَوْمًا تَجْهَلُونَ

11:29 The Holy Prophet (pbuh) used the same words “O my people! I ask you in return for this...” while discussing matters with the leaders of the pagan Makkans.

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَ أَمْرُنَا وَفَارَ التَّنَوُّرُ قُلْنَا أَحْمَلْ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ زَوْجَيْنِ اثْنَيْنِ
وَأَهْلَكَ إِلَّا مَنْ سَبَقَ عَلَيْهِ الْقُولُ وَمَنْ آمَنَ ۝ وَمَا آمَنَ مَعَهُ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ

11:40 The Flood was not a universal visitation affecting the whole world or all people. The Holy Qur’ân indicates that it took place in the land of the people of Noah, who was not a universal Prophet. The

mention of the water flowing from the valley also indicates that it was only a tract of land that was flooded and not the entire earth. *Al-Tannûr* التّنور is the high ground. It also stands in for “early in the morning”. The words translated as “*Embark in it with two of every kind*” do not mean that Noah boarded with mating pairs of every kind of living creatures. There are two words in the verse that set a limit on the numbers. Firstly, the word *min* من that means “from some” and secondly, the word *kul* كل. The word *kul* does not necessarily mean “all”. We read for instance about the Queen of Sabâ in that “She was given everything” (- *kullum*; 27:23), and about Dhul-Qarnain, “We provided him with all sorts of means” (18:83). It is obvious that Queen Sabâ and Dhul-Qarnain were not given everything existing on the earth at that time.

وَقِيلَ يَا أَرْضُ الْبَلْعَيِّ مَاءَكِ وَيَا سَمَاءَ أَفْلَعَيِّ وَغَيْضَ الْمَاءِ وَفُضِّيَ الْأَمْرُ
وَاسْتَوَتْ عَلَى الْجُودِيِّ

11:44 The mountain al-Jûdî is part of a long chain of mountains on the eastern side of the Tigris.

قَالَ يَا نُوحٌ إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ مِنْ أَهْلِكَ ۖ إِنَّهُ عَمَلٌ غَيْرُ صَالِحٍ

11:46 “*He does not belong to your family*” إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ مِنْ أَهْلِكَ means that the family of a Prophet consists of his followers and does not refer to his blood relations. The Qur’ânic words *Innahu ‘amalan ghaira Sâlihan* literally mean: “He is of unrighteous conduct” or “a person given to unrighteous conduct”. In Arabic, when reference is made to a person who is the embodiment of a certain quality, he is designated not as the one who possesses that quality, but as the quality itself. The use of the infinitive as an active participle when an intensified sense is intended is in harmony with the Arabic idiom.

تِلْكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الْغَيْبِ نُوحِيهَا إِلَيْكَ ۖ مَا كُنْتَ تَعْلَمُهَا أَنْتَ وَلَا قَوْمُكَ مِنْ قَبْلِ
هَذَا ۖ فَاصْبِرْ ۖ إِنَّ الْعَاقِبَةَ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

11:49 The account concerning the “news of the hidden or unseen realities” (أَنْبَاءِ الْغَيْبِ) is not a reference to the history of the various Prophets, but to the history of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) and the fate of his opponents in comparison with the history of these other Prophets. The words that follow, “be patient” (فَاصْبِرْ), are an indication of this.

وَبِاً قَوْمٌ هَذِهِ نَاقَةُ اللَّهِ لَكُمْ آيَةٌ فَدَرُوهَا تَأْكُلُ فِي أَرْضِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تَمْسُوهَا
إِسْرَاعٍ فَيَأْخُذُكُمْ عَذَابٌ قَرِيبٌ

11:64 The she-camel, upon which he used to ride and move around to preach his mission was a symbol of the free movement of Salih to preach.

وَلَقَدْ جَاءَتْ رُسُلُنَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ بِالْبُشْرَىٰ قَالُوا سَلَامًا ۖ قَالَ سَلَامٌ ۖ فَمَا لَيْثٌ
أَنْ جَاءَ بِعِجْلٍ حَنِيدٍ

11:69 Abraham was greeted by the words *Salâma* سلاما, “Peace!” According to Arabic idiom, this is a greeting with a reference to a particular time, which may be the past, present, or future. On the other hand, *Salâma* سلام is a greeting with no reference to time and no temporal limitations. In other words *Salâma* سلام means “peace for all times”. Thus, the greeting with which Abraham replied was of better standing (- *martaba*) than the one by which his guests addressed him. This is in accordance with the Qur’ânic decree: “Whenever you are greeted with a prayer, greet you with a better prayer, or at least return the same” (4:86). Abraham, being an of moral virtues, greeted his guests with a better prayer. As an example of his friendliness towards his guests, he also did not wait to ask them whether they were hungry or wanted to eat, but “he lost no time in serving his guests with a roasted calf” . لَيْثٌ أَنْ جَاءَ بِعِجْلٍ حَنِيدٍ

فَلَمَّا رَأَى أَيْدِيهِمْ لَا تَصِلُّ إِلَيْهِ نَكَرَهُمْ وَأَوْجَسَ مِنْهُمْ خِيفَةً ۝ قَالُوا لَا تَحْفَظْ
إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ قَوْمًا لُوطٍ

11:70 When Abraham saw that the hands of his guests did not extend to the meal he served, he at once realized that they had come with bad news. The guests however first gave Abraham the good news that his barren wife was to bear a son. The details of the bad news were given later. “Have no fear” (لَا تَحْفَظْ) refers to the fear of Abraham before Allâh, and not from his guests.

وَامْرَأَتُهُ قَائِمَةٌ فَضَحِكَتْ فَبَشَّرْنَاهَا بِإِسْحَاقَ

11:71 Dzahikat is derived from dzahika ضَحِكَ meaning to wonder, rejoice, inspire with awe, become clear. It has also the meaning to menstruate (*Tâj*, *Râghib*, Lane).

رَحْمَتُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ عَلَيْكُمْ أَهْلُ الْبَيْتِ

11:73 Ahl al-Bait - أَهْلُ الْبَيْتِ “Members of a household” can include both males and females, or only males or females. The guests sent the greetings of Allâh’s Mercy and Blessings to the members of the household of Abraham. “The members of the house” signifies only Abraham’s wife, as there was no child at that time. Thus, here *Ahl al-Bait* may consist of only a female. This assumption is justified further when we read verse 28:12 in which the household mentioned consisted of the mother of Moses who was to nurse Moses.

وَلَمَّا جَاءَتْ رُسُلُنَا لُوطًا سِيَّءَ بِهِمْ وَضَاقَ بِهِمْ ذِرْعًا

11:77 Lot was the son of Abraham’s brother. Later he settled down on the east of the Jordan, near what is today the Dead Sea.

وَجَاءَهُ قَوْمٌ يُهْرَعُونَ إِلَيْهِ وَمَنْ قَلَّ كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ السَّيِّئَاتِ ۝ قَالَ يَا قَوْمَ
هَؤُلَاءِ بَنَاتِي هُنَّ أَطْهَرُ لَكُمْ ۝ فَأَتَقْوَا اللَّهَ وَلَا تُحْزِنُونَ فِي ضَيْفِي ۝ أَلَيْسَ
مِنْكُمْ رَجُلٌ رَّشِيدٌ

11:78 Lot offered his daughters who were married in the town as hostages so that he might be allowed to keep his guests with him. According to 15:70 he had been forbidden to give shelter to strangers; this may have been due to the constant danger of tribal fighting and the possibility of harboring spies of the enemy.

قَالُوا لَقَدْ عِلِّمْتَ مَا لَنَا فِي بَنَاتِكَ مِنْ حَقٌّ وَإِنَّكَ لَتَعْلَمُ مَا نُرِيدُ

11:79 “We will not take your daughters as hostages, as we have no right on them” was their refusal to accept the offer of Lot, as it was against their custom to accept females as hostages.

قَالَ لَوْ أَنَّ لِي بِكُمْ قُوَّةً أَوْ أَوِي إِلَى رُكْنٍ شَدِيدٍ

11:80 Lot at first mentions power, but at once realizes that all Power belongs to Allâh. *Rukn Shadid* رُكْنٍ شَدِيدٍ refers directly to the “power and support of Allâh”.

فَأَسْرِ بِأَهْلِكَ بِقْطَعٍ مِنَ الَّذِينَ وَلَا يَنْقِتُ مِنْكُمْ أَحَدٌ إِلَّا امْرَأً تَنِقِّ

11:81 “Let not any one of you look back” is an idiom for severing all contacts and associations with the object or a place being left. The expression is often taken literally (Râzî). Lots wife refused to cut ties with the unjust people of the town and was punished along with them.

فَلَمَّا جَاءَ أَمْرُنَا جَعَلْنَا عَالِيهَا سَافِلَهَا وَأَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهَا حِجَارَةً مِنْ سِجِّيلٍ
مَنْضُودٍ

11:82 سِجْلٌ *Sijjil* is to be petrified or hardened. The “rain of petrified stones” indicates a volcanic eruption. *Sijjil* also is a on for a written roll or written scrolls (Lane). The word is derived from *sajala* سَجَلْ meaning to pour out, spill a liquid, or write on a paper or a scroll (*Tâj*). It also means to decide judicially or to scribe (Lisân). *Mandzûd* مَنْضُودٍ means clustered or laden with fruit. It is derived from *nadzada* نَصَدْ meaning, “to pile up one upon the other”.

وَإِلَى مَدْيَنَ أَخَاهُمْ شَعَّابِيَا ۝ قَالَ يَا قَوْمَ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ ۝
وَلَا تَنْقُصُوا الْمِكِيلَ وَالْمِيزَانَ

11:84 The region inhabited by Shu'aib's people (the Midianites) extended from what is known today as the Gulf of 'Aqabah to the mountains of Moab lying to the east of the Dead Sea. Midian was a son of Abraham from his third wife Ketûra (Gen. 25:1). His descendants were the Midianites and their capital was called Midian.

قَالَ يَا قَوْمَ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُ عَلَىٰ بَيِّنَةٍ مِنْ رَبِّي وَرَزَقَنِي مِنْهُ رِزْقًا حَسَنًا ۝
وَمَا أَرِيدُ أَنْ أَخَالِفَكُمْ إِلَىٰ مَا أَنْهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ ۝ إِنْ أَرِيدُ إِلَّا الْأَصْلَاحَ مَا
اسْتَطَعْتُ ۝ وَمَا تَوْفِيقِي إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ ۝ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكُّلُّتُ وَإِلَيْهِ أُنِيبُ

11:88 Dishonesty by using false measures and weights does not lead to prosperity. Shua'ib cites his own example. His prosperity was not the result of dishonesty in measures and weights. All Prophets of Allâh emphasize *istighfâr* (See 2:286).

قَالُوا يَا شُعَيْبُ مَا نَفْقَهُ كَثِيرًا مَمَّا تَقُولُ وَإِنَّا لَنَرَاكَ فِينَا ضَعِيفًا ۝ وَلَوْلَا
رَهْطُكَ لَرَجَمْنَاكَ ۝ وَمَا أَنْتَ عَلَيْنَا بِعَزِيزٍ

11:91 “We do not understand much of what you (Shu'aib) say” is a self-confessed lack of understanding, and a lame excuse to reject Shu'aib.

خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا مَا دَامَتِ السَّمَاوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ رَبُّكَ

11:107 According to Ibn Jarîr, the passage “As long as the heavens and the earth endure” means time cannot endure beyond this limit imposed by Allâh. “Unless your Lord otherwise wills” means unless Allâh decides to bestow on them yet another and a greater reward, and open up to them a new, yet higher stage of evolution (Râzî). This indicates ongoing spiritual progression in the Hereafter.

فَاسْتَقِمْ كَمَا أُمِرْتَ وَمَنْ تَابَ مَعَكَ وَلَا تَطْغُوا

11:112 According to sound Traditions, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) was referring to this verse in particular when he said that the chapter of Hûd made him old. Here he was made responsible for his own people. The command “stand up” (فَاسْتَقِمْ) refers to the standing position of formal Prayer. The command of formal Prayer is second in rank after *shahâda* (the declaration of the unity of Allâh and the prophethood of Muhammad (pbuh)). Allâh has prescribed the state of standing before Him for Divine conversation with Him because of His Attribute of *al-Qayyûm* - the Self-Subsisting One. The servant does not know what to say other than what His Lord has taught him to say before Him (the words of *al-Fâtiha*). The rising after bowing down (- *rakû*) is another standing. This second standing is the position to be taken before prostration. One can only assume prostration from the standing position as humility comes only after elevation. When humility comes from the already humbled self, then that is not humility but humiliation.

وَلَا تَرْكُوا إِلَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا فَتَمَسَّكُمُ النَّارُ

11:113 “And do not incline” comprises the concepts of inclining to ones feelings and personal opinion as well as relying on someone else other than Allâh.

سورة يوسف 12. CHAPTER

Joseph (*Yûsuf*)

(*Revealed before Hijrah*)

This chapter discusses prophecies about the Holy Prophet (pbuh) found in the narrations of Prophet Joseph, as the previous chapters did in the narrations of other Prophets. Chapter 10 dealt with the aspects of Allâh’s Punishment as well as Mercy. The two topics are then picked up again in separate chapters: Chapter 11 focused on His Punishment and the present chapter deals with His special Mercy (*Rahîmiyyat*).

The message is based on a narration (*qasas* قصص), which is a “recapitulated account” and not *qisâs* قِصَّه or a “told (fictional) story”. The account of Joseph is the Holy Qur’âns most detailed account of a Prophets life. The reason for this is that the life of Joseph bears a very close symbolic and metaphoric resemblance to that of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). Instead of being simply a story, the text prophetically states that the dealings between the Holy Prophet (pbuh) and his opponents would be similar to the dealings between Joseph and his brethren. There is persecution on one side, and forgiveness and mercy on the other. It was in the words of Joseph to his brothers, “No reproach from me shall be on you this day” (12:92), that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) forgave the people of Makkah all their atrocities against him and his followers.

The words of dialogue of Joseph make ample mention of human vicissitudes, but also of beauty, piety, sublimity and truth as explained in verse 7, “Surely there are many signs in (the account of) Joseph and his brothers for the inquirers لَقَدْ كَانَ فِي يُوسُفَ وَإِخْرَيْهِ آيَاتٌ لِّسَائِلِيْنَ”. The Qur’ânic version of this narration agrees outwardly with, but is not identical to the Biblical version (Gn. 27 and 39-46), which conveys an

altogether different atmosphere. The Biblical story resembles a folk tale without emphasis on moral teachings. It exalts the cleverness of the Jews compared to the Egyptians, and explains certain ethics and tribal peculiarities in later Jewish history. The distinguishing characteristic of the Qur'anic treatment is its spiritual tenor. It is more of a spiritual sermon than a story, explaining the apparent contradictions in life and the enduring nature of virtue in a world in flux and change. In the Holy Qur'an it serves as an illustration of Allâh's guidance and Mercy.

In the context of the narration, the chapter shows the reality of true dreams at the hand of different dreams it deals with: The dream of a believer (Joseph); and the dreams of disbelievers and criminals. There is another lesson in the mentioning of dreams. A great Divine dream, as narrated by Joseph, takes longer for its fulfilment.

الرَّ تِلْكَ آيَاتُ الْكِتَابِ الْمُبِينِ

12:1 Alif Lâm Râ الرَّ is translated as, “I am Allâh, the Seeing (cf. 2:1).” *Mubîn* المُبِين is an attributive noun and means “That which itself is clear and manifest”, “That which makes other things clear”, or “That which cuts off one thing from another and renders it distinct and separate from it” (Tâj).

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا لَّعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ

12:2 The word *Arabiyyan* عَرَبِيًّا conveys a sense of completeness, fullness of abundance and clarity. The Holy Qur'an possesses not only clarity but also an abundance of meanings. It was revealed through the medium of Arabic, which, unlike Latin, ancient Greek, or Sanskrit, is a living language, spoken, written and understood in several countries of the world and by millions of people today. Its grammar, vocabulary, idioms, pronunciation, and script have remained unchanged in most parts of the Arabic world. It claims to be the

mother and source of all other languages. ‘Arabiyyan is derived from ‘ariba عَرِبٌ meaning, “To be pure and free of faults”, or “one who speaks clearly, plainly, and distinctly”. Arabic is so-called because its roots are innumerable and are full of meanings, and because it is most expressive, eloquent, and comprehensive. The expression ‘Arabiyyan for the Holy Qur’ân then means that the Holy Qur’ân is a book that expresses its meaning in a clear, eloquent, and comprehensive language (Lane).

نَحْنُ نَقْصُ عَلَيْكَ أَحْسَنَ الْقَصَصِ بِمَا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ هَذَا الْفُرْقَانُ وَإِنْ كُنْتَ
مِنْ قَبْلِهِ لَمْنَ الْغَافِلِينَ

12:3 The narration of Joseph is called *Ahsan al-Qasas* – أَحْسَنَ الْقَصَصِ – “the best and finest explanation”. This is not because of its charm and beauty or its justifiable appeal to both men and women in all walks of life. It is a highly spiritual sermon and an illustration of Allâh’s unfathomable direction of the affairs of human beings. This explanation is given in the words that follow: “*You were of those not possessed of requisite knowledge.*” The Holy Prophets unawareness relates to his own future, of which this chapter gives a very clear indication in the prophetic incidents of Josephs life. At this point, Râzî draws the readers attention to 42:52: “*You did not know what revelation, nor what faith implies.*” Thus unawareness also refers to all those prophecies that are mentioned in the Holy Qur’ân.

إِذْ قَالَ يُوسُفُ لِأَبِيهِ يَا أَبَتِ ارْأَيْتِ أَنِّي رَأَيْتُ أَحَدَ عَشَرَ كَوْكَبًا وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ
رَأَيْتُهُمْ لِي سَاجِدِينَ

12:4 Idh إِذْ is a time reference and is used as a corroborative particle meant to draw the readers attention to a development in this discourse (Mughnî, Tâj). The word can be translated as “remember the time”.

The Holy Qur’ân mentions the eleven stars first and the sun and the moon afterwards, but the Bible reverses the order (Gn. 37.9). The

historical facts support the order given by the Holy Qur'ân. It was the brethren of Joseph (the eleven stars) who met him first and made their obeisance to him, and his parents (the sun and moon) who followed suit afterwards.

قَالَ يَا بُنَيَّ لَا تَقْصُصْ رُؤْيَاكَ عَلَىٰ إِخْرَاجِكَ فَيَكِيدُوا لَكَ كَيْدًا

12:5 The vision signifies that Josephs parents and brethren would submit to his authority. Jacob, who was himself a Prophet, did not fail to understand its prophetic quality and its deeper implications. However, the Bible wrongly describes the father of Joseph as “rebuking” him (Gn. 37:10).

**وَكَذَلِكَ يَجْتَبِيَ رَبُّكَ وَيُعَلِّمُكَ مِنْ تَأْوِيلِ الْأَحَادِيثِ وَيُتِمُ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكَ وَعَلَىٰ أَلِيَّا
آلِ يَعْقُوبَ كَمَا أَتَمَّهَا عَلَىٰ أَبُوِيْكَ مِنْ قَبْلِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْحَاقَ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ عَلِيهِمْ
حَكِيمٌ**

12:6 The words "Your Lord will make you his chosen one" show that Jacob understood and correctly interpreted the vision of Joseph.

لَقَدْ كَانَ فِي يُوسُفَ وَإِخْرَاجِهِ آيَاتٌ لِلسَّائِلِينَ

12:7 The verse reminds us again about the real purpose underlying this narration that there are many signs in the account of Joseph and his brothers for the “inquirers”.

**إِذْ قَالُوا لَيُوسُفَ وَأَخْوَهُ أَحَبُّ إِلَيِّ أَبِينَا مِنَا وَنَحْنُ عُصْبَةٌ إِنَّ أَبَانَا لَفِي
ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ**

12:8 Benjamin was Josephs brother by the same mother, Rachel. The Jews claim to be the descendants of Abraham through Sarah, and the Arabs claim their descent from Abraham through Hager. The verse points to the jealousy felt by some people towards the Holy Prophet (pbuh) (cf. 5:82; 43:31). Like Josephs stepbrothers, the Holy Prophets

(pbuh) fellow tribesmen were of the opinion that one of their members was more entitled to the position of prophethood, and the corresponding attention and affection of Allâh. They looked upon the Holy Prophet (pbuh) as too ordinary a person to merit such an exalted office. The Makkans, and later the Jews in Madînah, in collaboration with the Makkans, plotted to kill the Holy Prophet (pbuh) or at least turn him out (cf. 8:30). This is another parallel to the life of Joseph.

اَفْتُلُوا يُوسُفَ اَوِ اطْرَحُوهُ اَرْضًا يَخْلُ لَكُمْ وَجْهُ اَبِيكُمْ وَنَكُونُوا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ
قَوْمًا صَالِحِينَ

12:9 The brothers of Joseph wanted to return to piety after committing a flagrant sin. This is not permissible in the eyes of Allâh. Piety and virtue cannot be attained after an intentionally bad act without an extensive period of sincere repentance, prayer and efforts to right the wrong committed,

قَالَ قَائِلٌ مِّنْهُمْ لَا تَقْتُلُوا يُوسُفَ وَالْفُوْهُ فِي غَيَابِتِ الْجُبْ يَلْنَقِطُهُ بَعْضُ
السَّيَّارَةِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ فَاعْلَمْ

12:10 Similar to the brothers of Joseph, the pagan leaders of Makkah also conspired against the Holy Prophet (pbuh) to confine him, slay him, or drive him away (8:30).

اَرْسِلْهُ مَعَنَا عَدَا يَرْتَئِعْ وَيَلْعَبْ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ

12:12 It is significant to note that the brothers of Joseph never said, “*Inshâ Allâh*” - if Allâh wills, a typical form of speech heard from pious people. Conspicuously, this expression was missing in their promises.

قَالَ إِنِّي لَيَحْزُنُنِي أَنْ تَدْهِبُوا بِهِ وَأَخَافُ أَنْ يُأْكِلَهُ الدَّبْبُ وَأَنْتُمْ عَنْهُ غَافِلُونَ

12:13 Unlike in the Bibles narration, Jacob immediately doubted the sincerity of the brothers of Joseph. As a prophet of Allâh, Jacob sensed evil plot by his children against their half-brother Joseph. When at nightfall they returned to him weeping and asserted that a wolf had devoured Joseph, he at once said, “This is not true, but you yourselves have made a (malicious) thing seem fair to you.” (12:18). His advanced knowledge is also evident from his expression of hope in verse 83 of this chapter. He was never convinced that Joseph was truly dead, although his other sons always wanted him to believe so.

وَلَقَدْ هَمَتْ بِهِ وَهُمْ بِهَا لَوْلَا أَنْ رَأَى بُرْهَانَ رَبِّهِ كَذَلِكَ لِنَصْرَفَ عَنْهُ
السُّوءَ وَالْفَحْشَاءَ إِنَّهُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُخْلَصِينَ

12:24 “He would have made up his mind with regard to her...” does not signify that Joseph had any desire for the Egyptians wife, but that the temptation was so strong that if he had not already seen manifest signs from his Lord, he could not have shown such determination and he would have inclined towards her. He was not cast into prison for being guilty of having committed a sinful act with the wife of Al-‘Azîz.

There is a similarity between this incident and the life of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). Just as an attempt was made to tempt Joseph away from the path of piety and truth, similarly, the chiefs of Makkah made an unsuccessful attempt to lure the Holy Prophet (pbuh) to give up his mission by offering to make him their king or to collect great wealth for him, or to give him the most beautiful women in marriage. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) rejected the offer with the historic words: “If you place the sun on my right hand and the moon on my left hand, even then I will not leave my right path”.

قَالَ هِيَ رَأَوْدَنِتِي عَنْ نَفْسِي

12:26-28 These verses indicates that circumstantial evidence is permissible.

وَقَالَ نِسْوَةٌ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ امْرَأُتُ الْعَزِيزِ تُرَاوِدُ فَتَاهَا عَنْ نَفْسِهِ ۖ قَدْ شَغَّفَهَا حُبًا

12:30 Shaghafaha Hubban “love entered beneath the pericardium of her heart” means her love for Joseph penetrated deep into her heart and she was in love to the point of obsession.

فَلَمَّا رَأَيْنَهُ أَكْبَرْنَهُ وَقَطَّعْنَ أَيْدِيهِنَّ وَقُلْنَ حَاشَ اللَّهُ مَا هَذَا بَشَرًا إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا مَلَكٌ كَرِيمٌ

12:31 Qatta'na Aidiya-hunna “cut their hands” is an idiom (cf. 5:38), which means his appearance made them motionless and powerless. Their saying, pointing to Joseph: “That is a noble angel” “إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا مَلَكٌ كَرِيمٌ” attests to the innocence of Joseph and the awe and spell they were in when they saw him.

ثُمَّ بَدَا لَهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا رَأَوْا الْآيَاتِ لَيْسُجُنْتُهُ حَتَّىٰ حِينٍ

12:35 Joseph may well have preferred to stay in prison in order to spend more time in solitude to worship Allâh. Joseph was imprisoned because of a false accusation (cf. 24:11) and not because he was guilty of an outrage on Potiphars wife. Al-'Azîz was entirely submissive to his wife and wished to appease her; in addition, the ill fame of his wife had spread in the township. His solution to the scandal-mongering was to imprison Joseph in order to shift the guilt and attention away from his wife to Joseph.

ذَلِكَ مِنْ فَضْلِ اللَّهِ عَلَيْنَا وَعَلَى النَّاسِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَشْكُرُونَ

12:38 Joseph wanted to use this opportunity to guide his fellow-prisoners towards the truth. Thus before explaining to his fellow-prisoners the meanings of their dreams, he asked them to first listen to a short discourse on the oneness of God. The verses 12:37-41 contain

the same preaching as that practiced by other Prophets. It is also similar to what the Holy Prophet (pbuh) later preached.

يَا صَاحِبِي السّجْنِ أَرْبَابُ مُتَفَرِّقُونَ حَيْرٌ أَمِ اللَّهُ الْوَاحِدُ الْفَهَارُ

12:39 *Arbâb* أَرْبَابٌ is the plural form of *Rabb* ربٌ meaning “the Nourisher”. The verse shows that the word *Rabb* can sometimes be used for influential and powerful people. The Pharaoh said, “I am your supreme Lord” (*Rabb*); cf. 79:4; 12:42). Allâh is *Rabb al-Âlamîn* – رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ – “Nourisher of all the worlds”.

قَالُوا أَضْغَاثُ أَحْلَامٍ ۖ وَمَا نَحْنُ بِتُؤْلِيلِ الْأَحْلَامِ بِعَالَمِينَ

12:44 The nobles of the court did not realize or admit their ignorance and their inability to interpret the kings dream. Instead, they made a fool of him by telling him that his dreams were confused, and lacked any sense (الأَحْلَام).

وَقَالَ الَّذِي نَجَّا مِنْهُمَا وَادَّكَرَ بَعْدَ أُمَّةً أَنَا أَنْبِئُكُمْ بِتُؤْلِيلِهِ فَأَرْسَلُونَ

12:45 The fellow prisoner who remembered Joseph, after some time, went to Joseph to ask him for the meaning of the kings dream. In the following verse we see that he did not apologize for his forgetfulness nor did he mention that it was the King who had this dream. Here we see a similarity with the *Dajjâl*. The selfish character of the fellow prisoner became evident to Joseph; accordingly, Joseph did not attempt to preach to him.

يُوْسُفُ أَيُّهَا الصَّدِيقُ أَفْتَنَا فِي سَبْعَ بَقَرَاتٍ سِمَانٍ يَأْكُلُهُنَّ سَبْعَ عِجَافٍ
وَسَبْعَ سُنُلَاتٍ خُضْرٍ وَأَخْرَ يَاسِاتٍ لَعَلَّي أَرْجِعُ إِلَى النَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ

12:46 The dream of the king and the behaviour of Josephs fellow prisoner (c.f. 12:45) is also an allusion to the period of *Dajjâl* (see Bukhârî on *Dajjâl*).

قَالَ تَزْرَعُونَ سَبْعَ سِنِينَ ذَأْبًا فَمَا حَصَدْتُمْ فَدْرُوهُ فِي سُنْبَلِهِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مُّمَّا تَأْكُلُونَ

12:47 Seven years of famine and hardship and then seven years of prosperity are again an allusion to the history of *Dajjâl*. The number seven in Arabic also stands in for “many” (*Tâj*, *Lisân*).

وَقَالَ الْمَلِكُ ائْتُونِي بِهِ

12:50 The king said, “Bring him to me.” His messengers came to Joseph who refused this audience until a full inquiry was made into his case and he was acquitted with honour from all charges against him.

وَمَا أَبَرِئُ نَفْسِي ۝ إِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَأَمَارَةٌ بِالسُّوءِ إِلَّا مَا رَحِمَ رَبُّي

12:53 *Nafs al-Ammârah* التّنفّس لِأَمَارَةً is the commanding spirit or the human nature that incites to evil. *Nafs* is the human soul, nature, or spirit.

There are three stages in the spiritual development of a human being. The first is the stage of *Nafs al-Ammârah*, the stage where the *Nafs* enjoins evil. This is the lowest stage and corresponds to the “animal self”. At this level, our desires and passions rule our minds and the animal in us predominates. Since *nafs al-Ammârah* dominates our actions and we submit to its prompting and compelling demands, it is called the commanding spirit - *nafs al-Ammârah*. The second stage of human development is called *nafs al-Lawwâmah*, which is “the self-accusing spirit” (75:2). Sometimes something within us reproves us if we stray from the right path or balk at the injunctions of righteousness. An inner voice admonishes when we think of violating the sanctities and plan evil. Some people call it “conscience”, which is an ambiguous term. *Nafs al-lawwamah* is the first evolutionary stage in the growth of our spirit. The moment we acquire the knowledge of

right and wrong, a struggle starts between the *commanding spirit* and *self-accusing spirit*. The former commands usurpation and misappropriation, while the latter speaks of justice and equity. When there is a departure from the path of rectitude, the accusing voice speaks out, provided it is not yet completely suppressed or killed by *Nafs al-Ammârah*. When we heed this voice, we advance to the next higher level of spiritual evolution.

This is known as *nafs al-Mutma'innah* النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَةُ or “the spirit at rest” (89:27). At this level, the human soul has tasted the fruit of “Peace”. It is on its way to perfect peace within itself. The inner restlessness and struggle between *nafs al-Ammârah* and *nafs al-Lawwâmah* is ongoing, but through relentless effort, *nafs al-Ammârah*, the evil commanding spirit, is completely subdued and *nafs al-Lawwâmah* prevails. This soul now focuses steadily on its evolutionary path and reaches a point where a “fire from above” descends on it and burns away every remnant of evil inclinations. A voice then says, ”اَرْجِعِي إِلَى رَبِّكَ رَاضِيًّا مَرْضِيًّا“، and the soul returns to its Lord and becomes reconciled with Him. Divine Will becomes his will and the Lord is well pleased with it. Then a voice says, فَادْخُلُّ فِي عَبَادِي، and this soul enters into the companionship of the Lords special servants. This again is not the place to stop and take rest. A light shines forth and guides this soul to the realms of the Lord and the souls walk steadily therein. As this soul sees the grand Divine Kingdom, it runs towards its creator and wants to leave everything that had veiled it from its Lord behind. At this advanced stage the soul is already commanded - وَادْخُلِي جَنَّتِي - “Enter My Paradise” where there will be rest, however this does not imply stopping its striving in this world or cessation of spiritual progression.

Those who have attained the *nafs al-Lawwâmah* (self-accusing soul) and those who have attained the *nafs al-Mutma'innah* are spoken of as “those on whom the Lord has mercy”. These are the words of Joseph. The righteous never attribute any good to themselves, but only to their

Lord, Who is the source of all goodness. When a man addressed Jesus as good master, he said, “Why callest thou me good? (Mar.10:18).”

قَالَ اجْعَلْنِي عَلَىٰ حَزَائِنِ الْأَرْضِ ۖ إِنِّي حَفِظٌ عَلَيْمٌ

12:55 Although Joseph did not want to remain permanently close to the king, he did not want to appear ungrateful by rejecting the king's offer. Joseph asked the king to appoint him as a keeper of treasures in the land. His motivation was not out of any worldly desire or temptation, but from a wish to spend the next years in service to the people of Egypt. He knew that seven years of good harvest would be followed by seven years of austerity and drought. In taking charge of the finance department, his objective was to assure the efficient constitution of grain reserves during the years of plenty, and to manage them in the following years of penury.

وَقَالَ يَا بَنِي لَا تَدْخُلُوا مِنْ بَابِ وَاحِدٍ وَادْخُلُوا مِنْ أَبْوَابٍ مُّنَفَّرَةٍ

12:67 Jacob was surely possessed of knowledge as “Allâh had imparted full knowledge to him” (12:96), and he had been informed by Divine Revelation that Joseph was alive. He ordered his other sons to enter the city by different gates so that Joseph might have an opportunity to meet his brothers. He also wished to avoid attracting the attention of the people of the township of a foreign land during famine years, which might then have led to intrigue, false charges or other difficulties. In contrast, the Bible narrative represents Jacob as being quite ignorant about Joseph.

فَلَمَّا جَهَرَ هُمْ بِجَهَازِهِمْ جَعَلَ السَّقَائِيَّةَ فِي رَحْلِ أَخِيهِ ثُمَّ أَذْنَ مُؤَذِّنٌ أَيْتَهَا
الْعِيرُ إِنَّكُمْ لَسَارِقُونَ

12:70 It is wrong to say that Joseph himself first placed, or ordered the drinking cup (- *siqâyah* السَّقَائِيَّة) to be placed in his brothers sack, to then accuse him of theft. The verse states, “someone put a drinking

cup in the saddle-bag of his brother.” Nowhere in the Holy Qur’ân is it suggested that an accusation of theft was made on Josephs orders. The words, “that is how We contrived for Joseph” in verse 12:76 indicates that the theft was not planned by Joseph but it was the plan of the All-Mighty. The providential combination of several circumstances enabled Joseph to keep his brother Benjamin with him.

قَالُوا نَفِقْدُ صُوَاعَ الْمَلِكِ وَلِمَنْ جَاءَ بِهِ حِمْلٌ بَعِيرٌ وَأَنَا بِهِ زَعِيمٌ

12:72 The Holy Qur’ân relates in the above verse that it was a drinking cup - *siqâyah* السُّقَيَّة, which was Josephs own property that was placed in Benjamins sack; but the vessel that was declared to have been lost by the herald was a **Suwa-al-Malik** صُوَاعَ الْمَلِك, or a kings measuring-vessel, which was the property of the government. Many commentators have confused the two, and wrongly taken Josephs drinking cup (- *siqâyah*), to be synonymous with the kings measuring vessel (*Suwa al-Malik*), which the kings heralds were searching for. During their search, they found the drinking cup (*siqâyah*) belonging to Joseph inside Benjamins bag, but not the kings measuring vessel (*Suwa al-Malik*).

قَالُوا جَزَاؤُهُ مَنْ وُجِدَ فِي رَحْلِهِ فَهُوَ جَزَاؤُهُ

12:75 It seems probable that one of Josephs own brethren put Josephs *siqâyah* سُقَيَّة into Benjamins camel-pack in order to estrange him from his father (cf. 12:8). There is a clear indication of this possibility when Joseph accuses them and says, “You are in an evil condition” (12: 77). This was confirmed by Jacob when his other sons reached home and gave their account of what had happened. In response to their affirmation, “Your son has committed the theft”, his response was, “Nay, it is not so, rather your baser selves have embellished to you another abominable thing” (12:83). There is a further indication in 12:89 where Joseph says, “Are you aware of what you did to Joseph and his brother (Benjamin to involve him in trouble?)”.

There is yet another indication that Josephs brothers were involved in placing the *siqâyah* of Joseph into Benjamins camel-pack. When Josephs servants asked his brothers what the punishment should be for this theft, the brothers immediately replied, “The punishment for this is that he in whose luggage this vessel is found shall himself be the penalty for it”, meaning that he himself was to be confiscated in punishment. In the words of the brothers, “This is how we punish the wrongdoers”, there is yet another hidden intention to push Benjamin back. From these episodes, it is certain that Joseph did not play a trick to keep his brother with him. This view is further supported by the words in the next verse, *Kidnâ li-Yusuf*, meaning, “We [God] contrived it for Joseph”.

فَبَدَا بِأَوْعِيَّتِهِمْ قَبْلَ وِعَاءِ أَخِيهِ ثُمَّ اسْتَخْرَجَهَا مِنْ وِعَاءِ أَخِيهِ ۝ كَذَلِكَ كَدَنَا لِيُوسُفَ

12:76 The kings herald began searching other sacks before searching Benjamins. This was a sign of respect as Joseph had lodged with him and showed him special consideration. Yet, instead of ordering Benjamins belongings to be excluded from the search, Joseph abided by the laws of the Egyptians. The same expectation applies to all Muslims living under the laws of non-Muslim governments. A similar case arose when a group of Muslims migrated to Abyssinia and were instructed to observe the laws of that government. The words *Kidnâ li-Yusuf* “We [God] contrived it for Joseph” once again suggests that these things happened in accordance with Divine Will.

قَالُوا إِنْ يَسْرِقُ فَقَدْ سَرَقَ أَخْ لَهُ مِنْ قَبْلٍ

12:77 One sin leads to another. Here the brethren of Joseph again made a false charge of theft against him, indicating their deep-rooted dislike for Joseph even after so many years. This also supports their role in framing Benjamin for theft as discussed (see verse 12:75).

فَلَمَّا اسْتَيَأْسُوا مِنْهُ خَلَصُوا نَحِيًّا ۖ قَالَ كَبِيرُهُمْ أَلَمْ تَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ أَبَاكُمْ قَدْ أَخْذَ عَلَيْكُمْ مَوْتِقًا مِنْ أَنْهِ وَمِنْ قَبْلٍ مَا فَرَطْتُمْ فِي يُوسُفَ

12:80 The word *Kabîr* كَبِيرٌ is used here to describe Jacob, Josephs father. *Kabîr* does not only mean big or elder, but also indicates a leader, someone great in estimation, rank, and dignity (Tâj). It is in this sense that the word has been used here. This was a sign of respect that the Josephs brothers had for their father, while at the same time being jealous of their half-brothers. A parallel is the relationship of the Jews with Abraham and his children. The Jews respect Abraham, the common father of Isaac and Ismâ‘îl (cf. 12:8), but are jealous of Ismâ‘îl.

فَالَّذِي سَوَّلْتُ لَكُمْ أَنفُسُكُمْ أَمْرًا ۖ فَصَبَرُّ جَمِيلٌ ۖ عَسَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يَأْتِينِي بِهِمْ جَمِيعًا

12:83 Jacob has an extraordinary trust in Allâh that his children would be reunited with him, and he speaks of this here when he says, “It is not far from the Grace of Allâh to bring them all to me.” The verse also shows that through his prophetic vision, Jacob had been granted the knowledge that his other sons had once again plotted to get rid of the second brother when he said, “No! It is not so [as you tell me], rather your [baser] selves have embellished to you another [abominable] thing”. These words are another proof that it was not Joseph who played a trick to keep Benjamin with him.

وَتَوَلَّى عَنْهُمْ وَقَالَ يَا أَسْفَى عَلَى يُوسُفَ وَابْيَضَّتْ عَيْنَاهُ مِنَ الْحُزْنِ فَهُوَ كَظِيمٌ

12:84 Ibn ‘Abbâs explains the words *Abyadzdzat ayna-hu* وَابْيَضَّتْ عَيْنَاهُ as the filling of the eyes with tears (Râzî). It is wrong to translate this term as “his eyes became blind”. This expression is used for a person who is stricken with grief and whose tears fill his eyes (Tâj). The Holy

Qur'ân lends no support to the view that Jacob had become blind because of weeping. Jacob, though a prophet and trusting fully in Allâh, was still a human being with passions and feelings of sorrow and joy. He missed his son for many years, and it was only natural that his eyes would fill with tears when his other sons returned without Benjamin. Jacobs love for Joseph was all the stronger knowing that Joseph was chosen by Allâh (cf. 12:6).

قَالَ هَلْ عَلِمْتُمْ مَا فَعَلْتُمْ بِيُوسُفَ وَأَخِيهِ إِذْ أَنْتُمْ جَاهِلُونَ

12:89 “Are you aware what you did to Joseph and his brother” is an allusion to the brothers involvement in the incident with the drinking vessel; the alacrity with which they suggested that the punishment for the theft should be that he who committed should himself be confiscated, and the readiness with which they accepted Benjamins supposed guilt.

إِنَّهُ مَنْ يَتَّقِ وَيَصْبِرُ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُضِيغُ أَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

12:90 Sabar صبر is to be patient and constant, to steadily adhere to reason and command, to restrain from what reason and law forbids, or to restrain from manifesting grief, agitation and impatience. Thus, Sabar عن الغضب صبر عن الغضب, meaning to restrain from manifest grief, agitation and impatience and sabar alâ salât صبر الصلاة meaning, “to adhere and be constant in prayer and *taqwâ* ” تقوى (cf. 13:22; 2:2)

قَالَ لَا شُرِيكَ لِلَّهِ كُلُّمٌ يَعْفُرُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَهُوَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ

12:92 Joseph did not keep his brothers in suspense. He allayed their apprehensions concerning the treatment he would extend to them and said, “No reproach from me shall be on you this day. May Allâh forgive you”. The analogy to the Holy Prophet (pbuh) continues here. When he gained honour and power in exile and Makkah lay prostrate

at his feet, he took hold of the two sides of the gate of Ka‘bah and said to his people, “What treatment did you expect from me”. They said, “We hope for good, the same treatment that Joseph accorded to his brethren”. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) then said the same words uttered by Joseph in this verse, with the exception of the words “*May Allāh forgive you* وَهُوَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ”, for these were not the words of Joseph but of God

اذْهُبُوا بِقُمِيصِي هَذَا فَالْفُوْهُ عَلَى وَجْهِ ابْنِي يَأْتِ بَصِيرًا وَأُتُونِي بِأَهْلِكُمْ
أَجْمَعِينَ

12:93 Joseph choosing his shirt was an allusion to the torn shirt with false blood on it, which Josephs brethren had brought to his father. It was most probably the same shirt that Joseph had worn when he was taken away by his brethren and put into a dry well.

وَلَمَّا فَصَلَّتِ الْعِيْرُ قَالَ أَبُوهُمْ إِنِّي لَا جُدُّ رِيحٍ يُوسُفَ لَوْلَا أَنْ تُفَدَّوْنَ

12:94 **Rîh** رِحْ is derived from *rāuh* رَوْح meaning mercy. Linguistically the word is related to the noun *rûh* رُوح (the breath of life) and has the metonymic significance of *rahat* راحت, expressed as “rest from grief and sadness” (Tâj). Jacob said, “*I do scent the power of Joseph* إِنِّي لَا جُدُّ رِيحٍ يُوسُفَ” as if to say, I feel rest from the grief and sadness, and I sense good news involving Joseph and know that he is alive. The verse is usually translated to indicate that Jacob picked up the scent of Joseph; however, it does not have to be understood in a strict literal way. The Prophets of Allāh are always endowed with extraordinary powers of foresight and prophecy. The verse shows that Jacob knew by Divine Revelation that Joseph was alive and that he was in Egypt.

فَلَمَّا دَخَلُوا عَلَى يُوسُفَ آوَى إِلَيْهِ أَبْوَيْهِ وَقَالَ ادْخُلُوا مِصْرَ إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ أَمْنِينَ

12:99 Adkhalū Misra, ادْخُلُوا مِصْرَ, “enter the city”, indicates that Joseph came out of the town to greet his family as a sign of respect. If it is true, as indicated in the Biblical account, that Josephs real mother Rachel had died while giving birth to Benjamin, there is still no contradiction in the use of the word “parents” in the verse, as we may assume that the mother in this instance is Jacobs second wife, Leah. Leah was Rachels elder sister and a wife of Jacob (Gn. 29:16-28). As his foster-mother, Joseph also paid her respect by calling her mother. It is significant to note that in mentioning Allâh’s bounties, Joseph points out only his release from prison and does not refer to his rescue from the well, to avoid that his brothers should feel ashamed. There were no words of complaint (cf. 12:92).

تَوَفَّنِي مُسْلِمًا وَالْحَقْنِي بِالصَّالِحِينَ

12:101 The word **Tuwaffanî** in this statement from Joseph is clearly meant in the sense of dying and not in the sense of a physical body rising to heaven (cf. 5:117).

ذَلِكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الْغَيْبِ نُوحِيهُ إِلَيْكَ

12:102 The statement means that this account of Joseph was not simply told to relate a story, but to embody mighty prophecies relating to the future of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). *Anbâ al-Ghaib* (plu) أَنْبَاءُ الْغَيْبِ are important news of the unseen; the hidden prophecies embedded in this narration. The phrase does not refer to the ancient histories of previous Prophets, but to the repetition of similar events in the life of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). The words, “You were not present with these [enemies of yours] when they agreed upon their plan [against you] and they are [still] hatching subtle plots” shows still more clearly the underlying meaning of the phrase *anbâ al-Ghaib*.

قُلْ هَذِهِ سَيِّلِي أَدْعُو إِلَى اللَّهِ عَلَىٰ بَصِيرَةٍ أَنَا وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَنِي ۖ وَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

12:108 “I am on sure knowledge verifiable by reason and (so are) those who follow me” is a superb testimony to the elevated intellectual and spiritual standing of the Companions and other followers of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) and their exceptional faith. They do not call to Allâh out of mere conjecture of His existence; instead, their knowledge is the outcome of a conscious insight accessible to and verifiable by a human beings understanding and reasoning.

لَقَدْ كَانَ فِي قَصَصِهِمْ عِبْرَةٌ لِأُولَئِكَ الْأَلْبَابِ ۚ مَا كَانَ حَدِيثًا يُفْتَرَىٰ وَلَكِنْ تَصْدِيقٌ لِذِي بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَتَفْصِيلٌ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً لِفُؤُمِ يُؤْمِنُونَ □

12:111 In this single verse, five reasons are given to show the Holy Qur’ân is no forgery, and that this revelation could not possibly be the invention of a human being.



سورة الرعد 13. CHAPTER

The Thunder

(Revealed after Hijrah)

The title **Al-Ra‘d** - الرعد - The Thunder, is derived from verse 13. Divine Revelation is like thunder, which is associated with rain. Just like rain, revelation is a mercy from Allâh, and rain accompanied by thunder incites fear, in the same way revelation is accompanied by the warning of punishment, even if its real object is to bestow benefits upon the recipients. The chapter deals with Allâh’s creative powers as manifested in phenomena of nature. Verses 2-4 refer to these powers.

All of the laws of nature and its elements are under His control and He made them subservient to the cause of His creation. The message is also that any demand for punishment to be visited is as foolish as a desire to be struck by thunder and lightning.

المر ٰ تلْكَ آيَاتُ الْكِتَابِ

13:1 This Chapter opens with the letters *Alif Lâm Mîm Râ* (المر), which are an abbreviation of أَنَا اللَّهُ أَعْلَمْ وَأَرَىٰ—“I am Allâh Who knows and Who is seeing.” In contrast, the previous three chapters began with only three of these four letters, namely *Alif Lâm Râ* الـرـ which is short for أَنَا اللَّهُ أَرَىٰ—“I am Allâh Who is seeing.” The addition of the abbreviated letter *mîm* م shows that the subject matter of this chapter is slightly extended from that of the three preceding chapters. This illustrates how every letter in the Qur’ân is divinely selected and intended.

اللَّهُ الَّذِي رَفَعَ السَّمَاوَاتِ بِعَيْرٍ عَمَدٍ تَرَوْنَهَا

13:2 **Samâwât** سَمَاءٌ is the plural form of *samâ* سَمَاءٌ and denotes something that is above. This can be anything that is above us; the skies, clouds, the cosmic space, stars, planets, nebulæ, the solar systems and the galaxies (cf. 2:22). The word also signifies the abstract concept of the forces emanating from Allâh. “He raised the heavens without pillars” is a reference to forces working independently of gravity in the universe.

وَهُوَ الَّذِي مَدَ الْأَرْضَ وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ وَأَنْهَارًا ۖ وَمَنْ كُلَّ الشَّمَرَاتِ
جَعَلَ فِيهَا زَوْجَيْنِ اثْنَيْنِ ۖ يُغْشِي اللَّيْلَ النَّهَارَ ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ
يَتَكَبَّرُونَ

13:3 **Madda** مَدَ means to stretch, stretch forth, draw forth, draw out, spread, widen, fertilize or spread particles to make fertile (Tâj, Lisân, Lane). During the process of creation, the earth was a part of another

heavenly body from which it was drawn away. It also signifies that *ardz* أَرْض is something that has been stretched. *Madda* مَدَّ can also refer to the fall of cosmic particles that make the earth “fertile” and are responsible for the origin of life on this earth.

This verse, the preceding one and the following one refer to the process of creation. Human beings are like the “*Fruit He created in pairs*” وَمِن كُلِّ النَّمَاءَتِ جَعَلَ فِيهَا رَوْجَيْنَ اثْنَيْنِ. The expression also refers to the fertilisations that lead to fruit formation. He feeds us as He feeds the fruit tree. He wants us to be useful like the fruit tree and “feed” others; otherwise, our creation has no purpose (cf. 38:27). The fruit tree ages and dies, and then is born again from its seed, which is also true for human beings. There is a reminder here that Allâh created things in pairs in order to distinguish Himself from all else, as His Name Allâh and His Existence is the only One. لَكَ لَآيَاتٍ لَقَوْمٍ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لَقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ “*Therein are signs for the people who reflect*”, but this reflection is according to the capacities and the aptitudes of the people who are reflecting upon them.

وَفِي الْأَرْضِ قِطْعَ مُتَجَاوِرَاتٍ وَجَانَّتْ مِنْ أَعْنَابٍ وَزَرْعٍ وَنَخِيلٌ صِنْوَانٌ
وَغَيْرُ صِنْوَانٍ يُسْقَى بِمَاءٍ وَاحِدٍ وَنُفَصِّلُ بَعْضَهَا عَلَى بَعْضٍ فِي الْأَكْلِ

13:4 Unity from diversity is ubiquitous in nature, which is a sign of the unity of the Great Author of all existence. In the context of diversity, the verse also offers another idea on which to reflect. There are many tracts of land which are in proximity to one another and still differ widely regarding the nature of their soil, fertility and vegetation, even though they are watered with the same water. Similarly, the Prophets can also excel above their fellow people living in the same town.

وَإِن تَعْجَبْ فَعَجَبْ قَوْلُهُمْ أَإِذَا كُنَّا تُرَابًا أَنَّا لَفِي خُلُقٍ جَدِيدٍ ۝ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ
كَفَرُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ ۝ وَأُولَئِكَ الْأَغْلَانُ فِي أَعْنَاقِهِمْ

13:5 This verse signifies that one can believe in Allâh when one looks at all the evidence accessible to ones observation in cosmos. The observers realization of a definite purpose in the creation of cosmos and of life can also lead to belief in the creating reality. In spite of this, many refuse to believe in the Hereafter and individual resurrection and ask, أَدَأْ كُنَّا ثُرَابًا إِنَّا لَفِي حَقْقٍ جَدِيدٍ: "What! When we have become dust, shall we then be in a state of new creation?"

If Allâh has created the universe and the phenomenon of life as such, He has the power to recreate life and its requisite vehicles in a new act of creation. By denying the possibility of resurrection, these people implicitly deny Allâh's Almightiness. The *Aghlal* الأَغْلَال are the halters. Its singular is *ghullun* غَلْن and this is derived from *ghalla* meaning to insert one thing into another, deceive, hide, fetter, bind, or put into iron shackles. The verse speaks of the chains and shackles of false beliefs, customs and evil practices; this is a metaphor for human beings self-imposed abandonment to false values and evil ways that result in the enslavement of the human spirit.

وَيَسْتَعْجِلُونَكَ بِالسَّيِّئَةِ قَبْلَ الْحَسَنَةِ

13:6 "They want you to hasten on their punishment in preference to (your doing them) good"; that is, instead of willingly accepting the guidance offered to them, they mockingly challenge the Holy Prophet (pbuh) to bring about exemplary punishment. A demand for punishment is as foolish as a desire to be struck by lightning.

وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوْلَا أُنْزِلَ عَلَيْهِ آيَةٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّهِ ۝ إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُنذِرٌ ۝ وَلَكُلُّ قَوْمٍ هَادٍ

13:7 This sentence lends itself to two interpretations. According to the first, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) is a guide for every people and the whole of humankind, which emphasizes the universality of the Islamic message in the words *Li kull-i-Qaumin Hâd* . In the second

interpretation, it could be said that every nation has had a prophet as their guide; this is in accordance with the Qur'anic doctrine of the continuity of prophetic guidance.

اللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَحْمِلُ كُلُّ أُنْثَىٰ وَمَا تَغْيِضُ الْأَرْحَامُ وَمَا تَزْدَادُ ۖ وَكُلُّ شَيْءٍ
عِنْدَهُ بِمِقْدَارٍ

13:8 The physical law of nature is spoken of here with a deeper reference to the spiritual law. In accordance with the spiritual law, some will be spiritually reborn and others will not. Allâh knows the natural capacities and aptitudes of the Holy Prophet (pbuh)s people and those who accept him will grow and increase in number, while those who oppose Him will decline and decrease: “Allâh knows the innermost disposition of every human being and the direction in which he will develop”.

سَوَاءٌ مِنْكُمْ مَنْ أَسْرَ الْقَوْلَ وَمَنْ جَهَرَ بِهِ وَمَنْ هُوَ مُسْتَخْفٍ بِاللَّيْلِ وَسَارِبٌ
بِالنَّهَارِ

13:10 Qaul denotes a statement or an idea irrespective of whether it is expressed in actual words or merely conceived in the mind as an opinion, a view or an action (cf. 2:30).

لَهُ مُعَقِّبَاتٌ مَنْ بَيْنِ يَدِيهِ وَمَنْ خَلْفِهِ يَحْفَظُونَهُ مِنْ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ

13:11 Mu'aqqibât مُعَقِّباتٌ is a double plural feminine of *mu'aqqib* مُعَقِّب, which signifies something that comes immediately after another thing or succeeds another thing without interruption. Most of the classical commentators interpret *mu'aqqibât* مُعَقِّباتٌ to mean the hosts and companies of the guardian angels that watch over every human being without interruption. The root word ‘*aqqaba* عَقَبَ means to look at the consequence or result of the affair (Tâj). Guardian angels (*hafazah*) are also mentioned in 6:61. They guard against the negative consequences of the deeds of human beings. The plural feminine form

is used because of the frequency of their acts, since in Arabic the feminine form is sometimes employed to suggest emphasis and frequency. The statement is a general one, but there is also a deeper allusion to the Divine protection provided by the angels to the Holy Prophet (pbuh), his mission and his devoted followers (82:11;12).

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّىٰ يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنفُسِهِمْ

The statement “*Allâh does not change the condition of a people*” has both a positive and a negative connotation: Allâh does not withdraw this blessing from the people unless they themselves deprive their inner selves of it (cf. 8:53); neither does He bestow His blessings upon willful sinners until they change their inner disposition and become worthy of His grace. This refers to the Divine law of cause and effect, and dominates the lives of individuals as well as those of nations. The rise and fall of a civilization then depends on its peoples moral inclinations.

هُوَ الَّذِي يُرِيكُمُ الْبَرْقَ حَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا وَيُنَشِّئُ السَّحَابَ التَّقَلَّبَ

13:12 Al-Barq - الْبَرْقُ the lightning, is a symbol of approaching revelation. The thunder (*al-Râ‘id*) is the revelation that follows the lightning and is associated with awe and fear. The use of the definite article *al* before these words makes the above meanings possible. Lightning inspires both fear and hope as it brings the hope of rain after a period of drought.

وَيُسَبِّحُ الرَّعْدُ بِحَمْدِهِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ مِنْ خِيفَتِهِ وَيُرْسِلُ الصَّوَاعِقَ فَيُصِيبُ بِهَا
مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَهُمْ يُجَاهِلُونَ فِي اللَّهِ وَهُوَ شَدِيدُ الْمِحَالِ

13:13 Thus when the Divine Revelation is about to come, “the angels fall down in prostration before Allâh”, and it is only the human beings who is capable of facing and refusing this thunder. The Divine Attribute *Shâdîd al-Mihâl* شَدِيدُ الْمِحَالِ means the Mighty in prowess.

This Divine Attribute is mentioned in the Holy Qur'ân only this one time. It signifies His power of contriving in a manner hidden from human eyes and in a manner wherein wisdom lies. *Shadîd al-Mihâl* also encompasses His powers of seizure, punishment, severity, planning, or revealing of defects (*Râghib*, *Lisân*).

لَهُ دُعْوَةُ الْحَقِّ ۖ وَالَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ لَا يَسْتَحِيُونَ لَهُمْ بِشَيْءٍ إِلَّا
كَبَاسِطٌ كَفَيْهِ إِلَى الْمَاءِ لِيَلْتَغَ فَاهَ وَمَا هُوَ بِبَالِغٍ ۚ وَمَا دُعَاءُ الْكَافِرِينَ إِلَّا
فِي ضَلَالٍ

13:14 Lahu da'wat al-Haq literally means, “His is the call of the Truth”. Allâh alone deserves to be called upon in worship and prayer, and it is praying to Allâh alone that is useful or beneficial.

وَلِلَّهِ يَسْجُدُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ طُوعًا وَكَرْهًا وَظَلَالُهُمْ بِالْغُدوِّ
وَالْأَصَالِ

13:15 Yasjudu – يَسْجُدُ they submit, is meant in the sense of complete submission. The entire creation is under the Will of Allâh and comes into being from His Merciful intention (*al-Irâdat al-Muqaddas*), and His intended Command “Be!”; so every existing object is subject to the laws decreed by the Existence-Giving Sustainer. However, the human being is given a certain freedom of choice in his actions (90:10). With his tongue, a human can praise and thank his Creator who formed him and speak the truth, but he can also spread falsehood. Nevertheless, even in actions in which a human being appears to have been granted freedom of choice, he is subject to certain obligations and follows certain laws not conscious to him. In other words, his freedom of action is under a kind of Divinely ordained compulsion. Between two choices, he is bound to opt for what he thinks to be beneficial for him. Thus, decisions based on the freedom of choice are actually not his absolute free will, but are subject to a range of limitations.

According to most classical commentators, the believers are those who submit to Allâh willingly and consciously, whereas the disbelievers are those who submit to Him unwillingly and that their shadows are their followers. The closer an object is to light (or Divine Light), the larger is its shadow; and the further it is from the light, the shorter is its shadow. According to the disbelievers, the words “*Whether they choose to obey or not*” طُوْعًا وَكُرْهًا refer to the compulsion of conscious creatures; believers or disbelievers. However, both types of creation, conscious and non-conscious have their shadows. Therefore, compulsion of submission apparently applies not only to conscious beings, but also to all other objects of creation.

The words of the verse also refer to the variability of the lengths of the shadows projected, depending on the objects position with respect to the incident light. The earth projects its shadow relative to its position to the sun, and so do the objects on this earth. Since the earth's rotation around the sun is the outcome of Allâh's creative Will, the greater length of a shadow in the morning and evening and its contraction towards noon is a visible expression of the shadows subjection to the Will of Allâh. This is what is meant by “even their shadows”.

The same analogy applies to the spiritual world, whereby the Prophet is the sun who spreads the Divine Light and the shadows cast by his work are his followers. Each of his followers has a shadow depending upon their position with respect to the sun and accordingly, the length of his shadow varies. As shown by the example of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), the recital of this verse is followed by prostration, so that the physical state of the body may be in perfect agreement with the spiritual condition of the mind. It is worth noting that during prostration the worshipper touches his own shadow.

Rûmî says, “Every wayfarer, whether righteous or wicked, Allâh is dragged, bound in chains, into his presence”. All are hauled along this way reluctantly, except those who are acquainted with the mysteries

of divine action. The command to “come against your will” is addressed to the blind followers, whereas the command “come willingly” is for the man aligned with truth.

قُلِ اللَّهُ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ

13:16 The Holy Qur’ân has used two different words to express Divine Unity: *Wâhid* واحد and *Ahad* أحد. The attribute *Wâhid* indicates that Allâh is the real source of all creation and that everything leads to Him. The attribute *Ahad* denotes the absolute Unity of Allâh in His absolute uniqueness, He is forever One and Alone, Who has no second to share either in His Lordship or in His Essence (Lisân). He is neither the starting link of any chain nor its last link. He is the Independent and Besought of all. He begets not nor is He begotten, and there is none like unto Him (112:1-4). The verse mentions some of the most beautiful and perfect Attributes of Allâh.

أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَسَالَتْ أُودِيَّةٌ بِقَدَرِ هَا فَاحْتَمَلَ السَّيْلُ رَبِيدًا رَّابِيًّا ۝
وَمِمَّا يُوقَدُونَ عَلَيْهِ فِي النَّارِ انتِغَاءٌ حَلِيلٌ أَوْ مَنَاعٌ زَبَدٌ مَّثُلُهُ ۝ كَذَلِكَ ۝
يَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْحَقُّ وَالْبَاطِلُ ۝ فَإِمَّا الزَّبَدُ فَيُذْهَبُ جُفَاءً ۝ وَإِمَّا مَا يَنْفَعُ
النَّاسَ فَيَمْكُثُ فِي الْأَرْضِ ۝ كَذَلِكَ يَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَالَ

13:17 The verse uses two apt parables. In the first parable, Truth (*al-Haqq*) is compared to water, and falsehood (*al-Bâtil* الباطل) to foam. Falsehood appears at first to prevail over the Truth like foam over water, but in the end, it is swept away by the waters powerful current. In the second parable, Truth is likened to a metal, which when melted to make ornaments, utensils, and tools, throws off the dross leaving behind the unmixed metal that is pure and bright. The parables also signify that those who believe and work for the good of others and for the benefits of the people shall be granted long life. On the other hand, those who uphold evil practices and worthless customs will be swept away before the mighty current of the true teachings.

The words يَنْفَعُ النَّاسَ فِيمَكُثُ فِي الْأَرْضِ are a prescription for long life – one must do good for humankind and make oneself useful for others.

الَّذِينَ يُوفُونَ بِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ وَلَا يَنْقُضُونَ الْمِيَاتِ

13:20 Ahad عَهْد means “covenant”. In this context, a covenant is a general term embracing the spiritual obligations arising from ones faith in Allâh and the moral and social obligation resulting from that faith towards ones fellow-beings (*Kashshaf*). The observance of these duties constitutes the basis on which the whole structure of religion stands.

وَالَّذِينَ يَصِلُونَ مَا أَمْرَ اللَّهُ بِهِ أَنْ يُوصَلَ وَيَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ وَيَخَافُونَ سُوءَ الْحِسَابِ

13:21 “Who keep the ties” refers to all ties that form human relations such as those of love, the bonds of family, responsibilities for orphans and the needy, the mutual rights, duties towards neighbours, the spiritual and practical bonds of the brotherhood of Islam, and to treat all living beings with love, compassion and mercy (Râzî).

وَالَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا ابْتِغَاءَ وَجْهِ رَبِّهِمْ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَنْفَقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً وَيَذْرُعُونَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ السَّيِّئَةَ أُولَئِنَّا لَهُمْ عُقْبَى الدَّارِ

13:22 Sabar, صبر according to Râghib, means patiently perseverant, limiting oneself to that which reason and law requires, or withholding from that which is prohibited (cf. 12:90). “Who avert evil with good” means that such a person follows the course best suited for the eradication of evil. If punishment helps to eradicate evil, they punish; if forgiveness is the solution, then they forgive (cf. 42:40). If they are subjected to injustice or transgression, they repel it in a good and just way. It also refers to endeavors to bring situations from evil to good by the right words, or good and just deeds.

وَالَّذِينَ يَنْقُضُونَ عَهْدَ اللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مِيَانِقَهُ وَيَقْطَعُونَ مَا أَمَرَ اللَّهُ بِهِ أَنْ يُوصَلَ وَيُقْسِدُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ ۝ أَوْ لَئِكَ لَهُمُ اللَّعْنَةُ وَلَهُمْ سُوءُ الدَّارِ

13:25 La'nah is usually, but inexactly, translated as “curse”. Literally, it denotes banishment or alienation from all that is good (Lisân). Whenever it is attributed in the Holy Qur'ân to Allâh with reference to a sinner, it signifies the latters exclusion from Allâh's Mercy and Grace because of his rejection of and subsequent disapproval by Allâh.

كَذَلِكَ أَرْسَلْنَاكَ فِي أُمَّةٍ قَدْ حَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهَا أُمَّةٌ لَتَتَّلَوَّ عَلَيْهِمُ الذِّي أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ وَهُمْ يَكْفُرُونَ بِالرَّحْمَنِ

13:30 “*Yet they disbelieve in the Most Gracious*” by refusing to acknowledge His existence, by rejecting His guidance or by ascribing His Attributes to other objects of praise and worship.

وَلَوْ أَنَّ قُرْآنًا سُيِّرَتْ بِهِ الْجِبَالُ أَوْ قُطِّعَتْ بِهِ الْأَرْضُ أَوْ كُلِّمَ بِهِ الْمُوْتَىٰ ۝ بِلَّهُ أَكْمَلُ الْأَمْرِ حَمِيعًا ۝ أَقْلَمْ بَيِّنَاتِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنَّ لَوْ يَشَاءُ اللَّهُ لَهَدَى النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا ۝ وَلَا يَرَالُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا نُصُبِّيْهُمْ بِمَا صَنَعُوا قَارِعَةً أَوْ تَحْلُّ قَرِيبًا مِنْ دَارِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِيَ وَعْدُ اللَّهِ

13:31 The verse indicates that the Holy Qur'ân will work great wonders. **Jibâl** جبل is the plural form of *jabal* and figuratively indicates difficulties, chiefs, learned men, proud people, lords, mighty persons, heights towering above and mountains (Lisân). One meaning of the phrase is therefore that the Holy Qur'ân provides a solution to every problem encountered by human beings. It can also mean that the chiefs and learned persons will be moved by the arguments of the Holy Qur'ân. The phrase, “أَوْ قُطِّعَتْ بِهِ الْأَرْضُ”, “*the earth could be torn asunder*”, also means that the Words of Allâh penetrate deep down into the heart of people, which are compared here to the earth. The phrase, “أَوْ كُلِّمَ بِهِ الْمُوْتَىٰ”, “*the dead could be made to speak*,” also signifies

that the spiritually dead will not only be reanimated into a new life, but will also be made to speak powerful words of wisdom. The phrase, “as for those who disbelieve, one calamity or the other will continue to befall them,” وَلَا يَرَأُنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا نُصِيبُهُم بِمَا صَنَعُوا قَارِعَةٌ means that disaster after disaster will strike the disbelievers; a prophecy relating to the complete destruction of their power.

أَفَمَنْ هُوَ قَائِمٌ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ ۖ وَجَعَلُوا اللَّهَ شُرَكَاءَ قُلْ سَمُوْهُمْ ۖ أَمْ تُنَبِّئُونَهُ بِمَا لَا يَعْلَمُ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَمْ بِظَاهِرٍ مِّنَ الْقُوْلِ

13:33 Sammû-hum سَمُوْهُمْ is an invitation to name the attributes and the functions of other allegedly divine entities, leaving the choice of names open, but which will ultimately demonstrate how unreal and meaningless such beings must be. This is another expression of idea found here and in 7:71 and 12:40. “Their designing and their activities are made fair-seeming” (cf. 6:43; 16:63; 29:38).

مَثُلُ الْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي وُعِدَ الْمُتَّقُونَ ۖ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ ۖ أُكْلُهَا دَائِمٌ وَظِلُّهَا ۖ تِلْكَ عُفْيَ الَّذِينَ اتَّقُوا

13:35 Descriptions of Paradise found in the Holy Qur’ân are parables: “The blessings of Paradise are such as no eye has seen, nor has any ear heard nor has any mind ever conceived of them (59:8).” A human being cannot therefore know what Paradise is truly like. The Qur’ânic description is only a semblance: it is a metaphorical and parabolic illustration by means of something that we know from our experience or our desire for objects that are beyond our reach. The human mind cannot conceive of anything that is in both its components and its totality entirely different from anything that can be experienced in this world. *Zill* ظِلٌّ is shade, mightiness or plenty (*Râghib*). It also has the meaning of protection, happiness, covering, and state of ease, shelter or cloud giving shade (*Tâj*).

قُلْ إِنَّمَا أُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ وَلَا أُشْرِكَ بِهِ

13:36 Inna-mâ إنما stands for “only”. The expression indicates that that no obligation, no ordinance, and no prohibition exist in the Holy Qur’ân without being connected with the words, "Worship Allâh and do not associate anything with Him" (Râzî).

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلًا مِّنْ قَبْلِكَ وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُمْ أَزْوَاجًا وَدُرْرِيَّةً وَمَا كَانَ لِرَسُولٍ
أَنْ يَأْتِي بِآيَةٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ لِكُلِّ أَجْلٍ كِتَابٌ

13:38 “*Yet it was not possible for a Messenger to bring a sign but by Allâh’s command*” signifies that the sign so often demanded will come at the appointed time.

أَوْلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّا نَأْتَى الْأَرْضَ نَنْقُصُهَا مِنْ أَطْرَافِهَا

13:41 Aṭrâf أطراف (plu) means sides, outlying parts, high and low persons, leaders, scholars, thinkers, or the best of the fruits (Tâj). The reference is to the fact that Islam is spreading and making inroads into all sections and levels of society.

فُلْ كَفَى بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ وَمَنْ عِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ الْكِتَابِ

13:43 “*Those who possess knowledge of the Divine Book*” are those who have true knowledge of previous revelations and the prophecies contained in previous Scriptures. They will testify to the truth of the Holy Qur’ân because it is revealed in fulfilment of the prophecies mentioned in previous Divine books.



سورة إبراهيم 14. CHAPTER

Abraham

(Revealed before Hijrah)

The title of the chapter is drawn from Abrahams prayer (verse 35:41), which is at the core of this chapter. It serves as a parenthetic reminder of the way to righteousness and the real purpose of the Qur'ânic Revelation, which is to lead people out of the darkness of ignorance and into the light of Divine Knowledge. When Abraham settled his son Ismâ'il and his wife Hager in the wilderness of Paran, what is today known as Makkah, there was a Divine purpose at work. Allâh wanted that the barren and bleak region would one day become the center of humanitys spiritual focus.

الرَّ كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ لِتُخْرِجَ النَّاسَ مِنَ الظُّلْمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ

14:1 Kitâb كِتَاب “book” or “written document”. Without the suffix *al* it can also indicate a decree, ordinance, prescription, or command (Tâj, Lisân, Lane; cf. 2:183; 15:4; 52:2-3). Here, the word *kitâb* is written in the indefinite form without the article *al* as in 2:2. Therefore, the more appropriate translation here would be “decree”, “ordinance”, or “command”. The Divine Commands brought by the Holy Prophet (pbuh) are for all humankind (cf. 7:158; 18:1; 21:10; 34:28).

الَّذِينَ يَسْتَحِبُونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا عَلَى الْآخِرَةِ وَيَصُدُّونَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَيَبْغُونَهَا
عَوْجًا

14:3 Awija عوج means to be crooked, bent, uneven, distorted, and ill natured. It also has the meaning “to turn aside” (Tâj, Lisân).

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ رَسُولٍ إِلَّا بِلِسَانٍ قَوْمِهِ لِيُبَيِّنَ لَهُمْ

14:4 The messengers of Allâh deliver the Divine Message in the language of their people. Since the messages of the Holy Qur’ân and the Prophet Muḥammad are meant for all humankind (18; 1; 21:10; 34:28), this implies that Arabic is a universal language and the root of all other languages. Arabic claims to be *umm al-Alsinah* – أُمُّ الْأَسْنَة – the mother of languages. As such, the field of linguistics has not given the Arabic language the attention it deserves. More scientific research should be undertaken in analyzing the Arabic roots (about 1500) that have been used by the Holy Qur’ân, and their relationship with the other languages of the world.

وَذَكَرُهُمْ بِأَيَّامِ اللَّهِ

14:5 *Ayyâm* أَيَّام (plu) is usually translated as “days”. The expression is sometimes used to describe momentous historical events, e.g. *Ayyâm al-‘Arab*, أَيَّامُ الْعَرَب, for the days or periods of inter-tribal wars of pre-Islamic Arabia. This is similar to English, where “the days of ...” is also used as a phrase. The expression *Ayyâm Allâh* اللهِ أَيَّام signifies Allâh’s mercy towards the righteous and His punishment of the wicked.

جَاءُتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَرَدُوا أَيْدِيهِمْ فِي أَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَقَالُوا إِنَّا كَفَرْنَا بِمَا أُرْسِلْنَا بِهِ وَإِنَّا لَنِي شَكٌ مَّمَّا نَدْعُونَا إِلَيْهِ مُرِيبٌ

14:9 “*To put the hands in the mouth*” is an Arabic idiom. When a person cannot refute a reasonable preposition by cogent, logical counter-arguments and is unable to counter, he “puts his hands into his mouth”. In the context of this verse, it can also mean that the disbelievers bite their hands in rage and frustration (cf. 3:120), or that they “put their hands in the mouths” of believers to silence them and prevent them from talking about their claims. The verse relates that Prophets were also raised among nations other than

those formed by the progeny of Abraham. The Holy Qur'ân does not claim to narrate the history of all of them.

قَالَتْ رُسُلُهُمْ أَفِي اللَّهِ شَكٌ فَاطِرُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۖ يَدْعُوكُمْ لِيغْفِرَ لَكُمْ مِنْ ذُنُوبِكُمْ وَيُؤْخِرُكُمْ إِلَى أَجْلٍ مُسَمًّى

14:10 Yadû-kum - “**يَدْعُوكُمْ**” is the proof of Allâh's existence. In other words, He converses with humankind.

قَالَتْ لَهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ إِنَّنَّا لَا يَشْرُكُ مَنْ كُنْتُمْ وَلَكُنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ عَلَىٰ مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ ۝ وَمَا كَانَ لَنَا أَنْ نَاتِيَكُمْ بِسُلْطَانٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ

14:11 The appointment of Prophets is entirely at the discretion of Allâh. Righteousness and piety in themselves do not impart prophethood.

وَلَنْسِكَنَّكُمُ الْأَرْضَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ ۝ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ خَافَ مَقَامِي وَخَافَ وَعِيدِ

14:14 Here both the singular and the plural have been used for the personal pronoun with reference to Allâh. The singular is used where Allâh's self-sufficiency and independence are intended to be emphasized, or where a work is to be performed through some special divine decree. The plural is used when the power and majesty of the Supreme Being is expressed, or it is being emphasized that Allâh will bring about a result through the agency of angels.

مِنْ وَرَائِهِ جَهَنَّمْ وَيُسْقَى مِنْ مَاءِ صَدِيدٍ

14:16 Sadid is an infinite noun derived from sadda صَدَدْ and means “he turned away”, “he was averse to something”, or “he cried out loudly” (Lisân, Qâmûs). Sadid signifies anything that is repulsive. It can also be used to describe hot or boiling water. In Râzîs commentary on this verse, he suggests that the expression should be

understood as a metaphor of bitter frustration, which in the life to come awaits those who systematically denied spiritual truths.

يَتَجَرَّعُهُ وَلَا يَكَادُ يُسِيغُهُ وَيَأْتِيهِ الْمَوْتُ مِنْ كُلِّ مَكَانٍ وَمَا هُوَ بِمَيِّتٍ

14:17 Maut is the cessation of life or the coming of death. It is used here to indicate of distress, grief, agony and the approach of death. This means that the sins of disbelievers will assume different forms of grief and distress (cf. 2:60).

مَئُولُ الدِّينِ كَفَرُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ ۖ أَعْمَالُهُمْ كَرَمًا دَشَّتْ بِهِ الرِّيحُ فِي يَوْمٍ عَاصِفٍ ۖ لَا يَقْدِرُونَ مِمَّا كَسَبُوا عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ

14:18 **‘Amâl** (plu) are works, efforts or exertions of the disbelievers in their opposition to the Prophets.

وَقَالَ الشَّيْطَانُ لَمَّا قُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَعَدَكُمْ وَعْدَ الْحَقِّ وَوَعَدْتُكُمْ فَأَخْلَقْتُكُمْ ۖ وَمَا كَانَ لِيٌ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ إِلَّا أَنْ دَعَوْتُكُمْ فَاسْتَجَبْتُمْ لِي ۖ فَلَا تَلُومُنِي وَلَوْمُوا أَنفُسَكُمْ ۖ مَا أَنَا بِمُصْرِخٍ وَمَا أَنْتُمْ بِمُصْرِخٍ ۖ إِنِّي كَفَرْتُ بِمَا أَشْرَكْتُمُونَ مِنْ قَبْلُ

14:22 The Satan mentioned in this verse is the leader who considered himself great and misguides weak and simple people (cf. 2:36; Ibn ‘Abbâs).

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا كَلِمَةً طَيِّبَةً كَشَجَرَةً طَيِّبَةً أَصْلُهَا ثَابِتٌ وَفَرْعُعَهَا فِي السَّمَاءِ

14:24 Kalimat Tayyibat **كلِمَةٌ طَيِّبَةٌ** is a holy and pure word. A holy and pure word is of Divine origin, which is free from all impurities (**Tayyabah** طَيِّبَة), and free of any teaching that goes against human nature, reason, and conscience. It is metaphorically compared to a strong, healthy, deep-rooted tree with a robust and stable structure

called here **Aslu-ha thâbitun** أَصْلُهَا ثَابِتٌ. This tree receives the fresh water of Divine Revelation that sustains it and gives it life and strength. Its roots are deep and firm, and its branches strong, so that it firmly resists winds of opposition and criticism. Its branches are high and reach to heaven (**Far‘uhâ fi Samâ’** فَرَعُهَا فِي السَّمَاءِ) in a way that no satan can reach them. The highest branch is the spiritual state where the pious have communion with Allâh. The spiritual eminence of the holy and the pious yields its fruit in every season and in abundance and at all times. The Holy Qur’ân is this *Kalimat Tayyibat*.

وَمَثَلُ كَلِمَةٍ حَبِيبَةٍ كَشَجَرَةٍ حَبِيبَةٍ اجْتَنَّتْ مِنْ فَوْقِ الْأَرْضِ مَا لَهَا مِنْ قَرَارٍ

14:26 Kalimat Khabîtha كَلِمَةٍ حَبِيبَةٍ is an evil word, a forged holy book or any holy book that is changed and rewritten by human hands claiming to be of divine origin. The unholy word can be compared to an infirm and sickly tree that can be uprooted from above the earth easily as its roots do not reach deep into the earth and cannot support the process of nutrition. Such a tree does not prosper and cannot bear any fruit. The unholy word symbolized by the tree cannot withstand criticism or scrutiny. The laws of nature and requirements of wisdom do not support its teachings. Its teachings fail to produce holy persons who have a real connection with Allâh.

وَيُضْلِلُ اللَّهُ الظَّالِمِينَ

14:27 Adzalla اضْلَلْ is derived from *dzalla*, ضَلَّ, which means, “to let a person go astray” or “to adjudge a person to be erring”; usually because they follow the wrong path. Allâh allows people to go astray and adjudges them to be erring if they themselves have opted to follow the wrong path.

رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيَ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَوْمَ يَقُولُ الْحِسَابُ

14:41 This verse is recited in the Funeral Prayer. It is significant that in this prayer, Abraham asks for forgiveness for the sins of his father and his mother - **Wâlidayya** وَالدَّيْ. *Wâlid* والد is used for “father” and *abb* أب for any respectable person (cf. 60:4). In chapter 60 (*al-Mumtahanna*), Abraham was prohibited to ask for forgiveness for his *abb*, who was his uncle, but not for his *wâlid*, his biological father. .

وَتَرَى الْمُجْرِمِينَ يَوْمَئِذٍ مُّقَرَّنِينَ فِي الْأَصْفَادِ

14:49 The description of the guilty chained together is also an allusion to the chain reaction in which an evil deed may trigger another.



سورة الحجر 15. CHAPTER

Dwellers of Al-Hijr

(*Revealed before Hijrah*)

The title of this chapter is derived from verse 80, which refers to the dwellers of the Arabian region known as **Al-Hijr** الحجر. Since *Al-Hijr* is the name of a geographic area, it should not be translated as either “rocky” or “forbidden tract”. The fate of its inhabitants serves as a warning to those who sought to assassinate the Holy Prophet (pbuh). The chapter continues to deal with the manifestations of Allâh’s creative activity and with His guidance for humans brought by Him through revelation and His Self-Disclosure. The most exalted revelation is the Revelation of the Holy Qur’ân. Verse nine assures us that it will remain free from all kinds of corruption forever because of its exaltedness and finality.

رَبِّ تِلْكَ آيَاتُ الْكِتَابِ وَقُرْآنٌ مُّبِينٌ

15:1 Al-Kitâb indicates here not only a book or written document, but also a decree, ordinance, prescription, or command (Tâj, Lisân, Lane; cf. 2:183; 15:4; 52:2-3). Note that the definite article *al* precedes the word *Kitâb*. As in 2:2 this article connotes a sense of perfection and wholeness. *Qur’ân* is derived from *qara’*, قراء, meaning something to be read and conveyed. The verse contains a prophetic suggestion in the words *al-Kitâb* and *Qur’ân* that this Book will continue to be written, read and conveyed (cf. 2:1; 27:2).

رُبَّمَا يَوْدُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوْ كَانُوا مُسْلِمِينَ

15:2 The desire of the disbelievers that they be Muslims is not to be understood as a wish to be fulfilled after their deaths. There is no record that disbelievers expressed such a desire in the time of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) or afterwards. This verse is to be read in connection with the prophetic statement made in the verse above. The disbelievers compare their own holy books with the Holy Qur’ân, which they reject, but inwardly feel ashamed that their own books lack the Qur’âns dignity, nobility and power of argument.

ذَرْهُمْ يَأْكُلُوا وَيَمْتَعُوا وَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآمِنَ

15:3 The disbelievers are in pursuit of worldly enjoyment and material gains. “Leave them alone (ذَرْهُم),” as there is no compulsion from Allâh placed on the believers to make them Muslims.

مَا تَسْبِقُ مِنْ أُمَّةٍ أَجَلَهَا وَمَا يَسْتَأْخِرُونَ

15:5 Ajal أَجَل means “term”. It signifies the biological span of life. An organism is destined to grow, reach maturity and ultimately decay. *Ajal* also signifies the time appointed for the punishment of the opponents of a prophet as predicted by him.

إِنَّا هُنُّ نَرَّلْنَا الدَّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ

15:9 “It is We Who are, most certainly, its Guardian” is a great prophecy (see also 85:22) from the time when the lives of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) and his followers were in acute danger. In his mystical approach, Rûmî gives yet another interpretation of this verse: “We have placed in you a substance, a desire to seek, a yearning, of which We are the Keepers. We will not allow it to be wasted”.

وَلَقْدْ جَعَلْنَا فِي السَّمَاءِ بُرُوجًا وَزَيَّنَاهَا لِلنَّاظِرِينَ (١٦) وَحَفَظْنَا هَا مِنْ كُلِّ
شَيْطَانٍ رَّجِيمٍ (١٧) إِلَّا مَنْ اسْتَرَقَ السَّمْعَ فَاتَّبَعَهُ شَهَابٌ مُّبِينٌ

15:16-18 **Barûj** بُرُوج is the plural of *buraj*, denoting motions of spheres, constellations or towers. It is derived from *barija*, بُرِيج, which means to have a good face, beauty, and finery.

Shaitân شَيْطَانٌ is the rebellious and rejected one. Shatana شَطَنَ means “he was or became remote from all that is good and true”. It also signifies one who is excessively proud, rebellious or audacious, whether a simple human being, a jinn, or a beast (Tâj, Râghib, Ibn Jarîr, *Kashshaf*, *Baidzawî* cf.: 2:36). The verse contains further information pertaining to certain laws of physics. It informs us that in heaven, which is adorned with stars (cf. 67:5), there are towers and protective constellations, and those shooting stars (meaning meteorites that enter the earths atmosphere), guard these. Most meteorites disintegrate because of the heat that is generated; see also the verses 37:10-11, 67:5 and 72:10-11, which deal with the same topic. There are additional verses in the Holy Qur’ân (for example 77:1-9 and 79:1-8) that convey similar information when their more profound meanings are taken into consideration. These verses also undermine the claims of fortunetellers, psychics, and astrologers. These people pretend to receive communication from “above” but in reality fabricate their prophecies and have no access to the true source of purity and holiness. The description of spiritual truth in words relating

to physical laws is a common occurrence in the Holy Qur’ân (cf. 37:8; 67:5; 72:8).

وَالْأَرْضَ مَدَّنَاهَا وَأَقْيَنَا فِيهَا رَوَاسِيًّا وَأَبْتَنَّا فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مَوْزُونٍ

15:19 There are two main prerequisites for the earth to support suitable and well-proportioned growth. Firstly, it should be enriched with fertilizers, and secondly, irrigated by water. Astronomical research has established that the earth derives much of its fertility from the particles of matter that fell on it from outer space, providing important trace elements and minerals. To ensure the supply of water, mountains were created as reservoirs of pure water and in the form of snow, which is then distributed over the earth as rivers.

وَإِنْ مَنْ شَيْءٌ إِلَّا عِنْدَنَا خَزَانَةٌ وَمَا نُنَزِّلُهُ إِلَّا بِقَدْرٍ مَعْلُومٍ

15:21 Allâh is able confer endless blessings and benefits on every single object in the universe. However, in His infinite Wisdom, He bestows them in accordance with a well-defined measure, and when a real and genuine need for them arises. In parallel to the material universe, the Holy Qur’ân is a spiritual universe containing hidden treasures of spiritual knowledge and sources of wisdom, which are revealed to individuals according to their needs, and to people according to the needs of the time.

وَأَرْسَلْنَا الرِّياحَ لَوَاقِحَ فَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَسْقَيْنَاكُمُوهُ وَمَا أَنْتُمْ لَهُ بِخَازِنِينَ

15:22 Allâh lets loose the winds to fertilize plants by pollination as well as to bring rain clouds. *Lawâqih* لَوَاقِحَ are the winds that raise clouds bringing rain; vapours rising from the sea are carried by the winds to the upper regions where they assume the form of clouds. The word also denotes the winds that carry pollen from the male to the

female plants to fecundate them. Here they also represent the signs of revelation symbolized by the rain.

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ حَمَّا مَسْنُونٍ

15:26 Salsâl صَلْصَالٍ is dry ringing clay that emits sound, evolved from dark fetid mud (Râzî, Tâj, Lisân). The word occurs in three places in this chapter (verses 26, 28, 33) as well as in 55:14. Himâ حَمَّا is black, fetid mud or a jelly-like fluid that has taken a shape. It also means clay mixed with water that has started to smell (Râzî, Tâj, Lisân). The verse draws our attention to the origin of creation from inorganic material and water, and then to the process of evolution (cf. 7:11). Insân إِنْسَانٌ (common gender) signifies one having attachments, fellows, one who is loveable or affectionate. The word is derived from *anisa* أَنْسَأَةً, meaning to be familiar, polite, kind, social, or have an intimate connection. *Ânasa* أَنْسَأَنْسَأَ means to see with feelings of warmth, of affection and love, to be sociable, to be friendly, and to be familiar with, to delight with good manners, or to perceive a thing from afar. *Istânas* أَسْتَانِسَ is to act as a social person, get accustomed to social life, seek familiarity, ask permission, beg pardon, ask for kindness, and to be polite. All these expressions are related to manners, ethics, and civilization. The entire process, starting from dust, clay, and water to the stage of *insân* is an act of great creation that can only infuse one with love and awe for the Great Creator.

وَالْجَانَّ خَلَقْنَاهُ مِنْ قَبْلٍ مِنْ نَارٍ السَّمُومُ

15:27 Ja'ân جَنَّ is the plural form of *jinn*, جِنْ derived from *janna* é جَنَّ and can be used in transitive as well as intransitive form. It mean to be dark, to cover, wrap, conceal, to be mad, be covered, to be hidden from, or to be over-excited. These are attributes opposite to those of *insân* as described in the above verse. The term *jinn* has numerous possible interpretations: genius, a hidden thing, intense or confusing darkness, or inspiration by evil thought. The word is also used for

imaginary beings that the infidels worship. In the Holy Qur'ân the word is also used for the people of remote places living apart from other civilized peoples, people who inhabited the earth in prehistoric times, without laws or rules of conduct – uncivilized and uncultivated in manners opposite to the characteristics of *insân* إنسان described above. It was a gradual evolution from the stage of *jinn* to *insân*. The words قَبْلَ - مِنْ - “before this” - direct our attention to this understanding. In the narration of Adam, we are told that Iblîs, who belonged to the category of *jinn*, already existed at the time when Allâh, out of His Holy Intention, created *insân*, who was then perfected to the stage of Adam – a perfect human being recipient of Divine Discourse. The *jinn* stage was created before any civilized being developed. The *Insân-i-Kâmil* called Adam laid the foundation of the spiritual civilization or *Shari'at*.

Ja'ân البَجَانُ are definitely not ghosts or spirits as many people assume. Zubair ibn Abî Salmâ has used the word *jinn* for people who are uncivilized, peerless, or those having no match or equal. Tabrîzî writes in his book *Sharh al-Hamâsah* that a *jinn* is a being who is highly potent, shrewd and possessed of great powers and abilities. Expressions like “Whatever hides or conceals or covers”, “whatever remains hidden or becomes invisible”, and “things or beings that remain aloof from the people as if remaining concealed from eyes of the common folk” correspond to the way in which Zubair uses the word. *Junnatun* جُنَاحٌ denotes a covering, shield, or protection. *Janîn* حَنِينٍ is its plural. *Ajinntun* أَجْنَنْ signifies embryo, fetus or anything hidden. *Janûn* جَنُونٌ is madness, insanity, diabolical fury, or passion. *Majnûn* مَجْنُونٌ indicates madness, to be possessed or a luxuriant (plant). *Jannatun* جَنَّةٌ is used to describe Paradise as a hidden garden.

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي خَالِقٌ بَشَرًا مِّنْ صَلْصَالٍ مَّنْ حَمَّاً مَسْنُونٍ
15:28 *Salsâl* صَلْصَالٍ is derived from *salla* صَلَّى, meaning to resound. *Salsâl* is a dried thing that resounds, akin to dry and ringing clay that

emits a sound when it is struck. *Salsâl* is the next evolutionary stage after **Hamâ** حماء, which is a dark slime or fetid mud that changes in its composition and shape when it dries out. **Masnûn** مَسْنُونٍ is derived from *sanna* سَنّ, meaning to clean, follow a clean path, polish, shine, or mould. *Sunnat* سُنّة is the line of conduct, mode of life, or an example. *Masnûn* مَسْنُونٍ can be translated here as something that is molded into a shape of conduct and form, specifically related to behaviour, such as the perfectly molded behaviour of a prophet. This is in contrast to the notion of being uncultivated, arrogant and untamed associated with the term *jinn*.

Thus by the mentioning of the creation of *insân* and *jinn*, a reference is being made in these two verses to the two sides found in human nature, and also to the two types of creations with opposite natures. We are told elsewhere that Iblîs was a *jinn* (18:50) and that he was created from fire (7:12). Thus, human beings are endowed with the two opposite natures of *insâniyyat* أنسانيّة (compassionate and benevolence nature) and *iblîsiyyat* إبليسية which is opposite to it.

Bashara بَشَرٌ is glad news. Prophets are called *Bashîr* because they bring good news for their people who are unable to see the way that leads them to their glory. They come with Divine guidance shown to them through Divine Revelation. The mention of the creation of *bashar* clearly refers to a human being who will be the recipient of Divine Revelation; to whom the Great Creator will disclose Himself. This is the meaning of *rûh* in the next verse (15:29), which is infused in such people.

فَإِذَا سَوَّيْتُهُ وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِي فَقَعُوا لَهُ سَاجِدِينَ

15:29 The Creator “breathed His Spirit into him (*insân*)” and thus made him capable of receiving Divine Revelation (cf. 17:62). Now this perfect creation demanded “prostration” before the Creator (لَهُ سَاجِدِينَ). The word *lahu* (لَهُ) informs that this prostration had to be done before the Creator for the sake of this *Bashar* بَشَر (- bringer of good

tidings, who can be a Divine Messenger, see 15:28) endowed with His *Rûh*. **Rûh** has the sense of Divine Revelation and Mercy (cf. 32:9; 38:72; 42:52; 16:102; 2:253; 2:87; 5:110; 58:22; 26:193; 4:171).

إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ أَبَى أَن يَكُونَ مَعَ السَّاجِدِينَ

15:31 *Iblîsiyyat* (ابليسیت) is stubbornness and arrogance (see 15:28). These traits are a great hindrance in the spiritual uplifting of a human being (cf. 2:34; 37; 7:13).

وَإِنَّ عَلَيْكَ اللَّعْنَةَ إِلَى يَوْمِ الدِّينِ

15:35 Allâh dislikes and does not accept stubbornness and arrogance (*Iblîsiyyat* (ابليسیت) in a human being.

قَالَ رَبِّ فَأَنظِرْنِي إِلَى يَوْمٍ يُبَعْثُثُونَ

15:36-37 The respite which Iblîs asked for and which was granted to him should not be understood as the acceptance of the wish of Iblîs by the Holy Lord. The words are used here metaphorically (cf. 2:34). *Iblîs* is a person in despair, a person in whom good and virtue have been attenuated, who is broken in spirit, mournful, perplexed, and unable to find his way, who has become silent on account of grief or despair, who was cut short or silenced in argument, who is no longer able to continue his journey, who has been prevented from attaining his wish, or a person of desperate character. Metaphorically, *Iblîs* stands in for those human beings who behave proudly and arrogantly, and who disobey Divine commands. We are told that these characteristics in human beings will always stand in the way of their spiritual elevation, and a human being will have to struggle in order to overcome these hindrances. We are also told that vice and *Iblîsiyyat* will continue to fight against Divine laws and will continue to reject them. Respite is granted by Allâh in the sense that a human being is granted and endowed with free will: the Lord does not impress His

will, and does not choose a way for him or force him to follow it. He will however continue to send His guidance through His Prophets and His books. In general, those who reject truth, whatever their religion, will always be in conflict with those who follow truth. *Qâla* (- said) is not in the sense of *takallamâ* (which is a discourse that actually took place as in the case of Moses and God in 20:12-24; cf. 2:30).

إِلَى يَوْمِ الْوَقْتِ الْمَعْلُومِ

15:38 “*Till the day of which the time is known [to Me]*” is not forever. It is part of the Mercy of our Lord that His rejection of such people shall not be eternal. There will come a time, depending upon the faculties of each individual, that a person will realize his shortcomings and mistakes, and return to His Lord with repentance, or he will be cleansed of the rust of disbelief in the Fire.

لَهَا سَبْعَةُ أَبْوَابٍ لِكُلِّ بَابٍ مِنْهُمْ جُزُءٌ مَقْسُومٌ

15:45 **Sab‘ah** سَبْعَةٌ literally means “seven”, but has the meaning of “many” (Lisân, Tâj). The doors of Hell will be many, and each door shall lead to the place suited for the one who enters. Hell shall have different grades and so the punishment shall be in accordance with the crimes committed.

قَالَ وَمَنْ يَقْنَطُ مِنْ رَحْمَةِ رَبِّهِ إِلَّا الضَّالُّونَ

15:56 **Dzâllûn** - ضَالُّونَ The “erring ones” refers here to those who are ignorant of the Divine attribute of Mercy. In the verse 15:30 we were told that the human being has been endowed with the capacities to recognize his Lord, and His Attributes, and that he remains the object of His Mercy (cf. 2:36).

قَالَ فَمَا حَطَبُكُمْ أَيُّهَا الْمُرْسَلُونَ

15:57 Upon hearing the good news, Abraham nonetheless inquired about the purpose of their visit, as he knew that there was an ulterior motive behind it.

وَجَاءَ أَهْلُ الْمَدِينَةِ يَسْتَبَشِرُونَ

15:67 The residents of the city suspected that Lot was conspiring with their enemies. By finding strangers at his house, they now believed they had found a proof of their suspicions about him, and this was the cause of their rejoicing (Râzî). This also gave them an excuse to finally rid themselves of Lot who had preached at them to mend their ways and adopt the path to piety and virtue.

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّلْمُؤْسِمِينَ

15:75 **Mutawassemîn** مُؤْسِمِينَ is derived from *wasam* وَسَمَ meaning to brand, mark, or depict (cf. 68:16). **Mutawassemîn** مُؤْسِمِينَ are those who can depict, interpret, and read the signs of Allâh.

فَأَخَذْتُهُمُ الصَّيْحَةُ مُصْبِحِينَ

15:83 **Sayhah** الصَّيْحَةُ is a dreadful punishment. It also means a loud noise. The people of Hijr were the dwellers of mountains, and their punishment was most probably in the form of an earthquake. When a strong earthquake shakes mountains, it is associated with enormous noise.

وَإِنَّ السَّاعَةَ لَا يَنْهَا ۖ فَاصْفَحْ الصَّفْحَ الْجَمِيلَ

15:85 “And the [threatened] Hour [of punishment] is sure to come.” There are two reasons for natural calamities: the apparent reason, which science gives, and the hidden reason, which is according to Divine Wisdom. Based on what has been said in the previous verses, natural disaster has Divine Reason. Sometimes the God-fearing also suffer from such disasters.

وَلَقْدِ آتَيْنَاكَ سَبْعًا مِّنَ الْمُثَانِي وَالْقُرْآنَ الْعَظِيمَ

15:87 *Sab‘an* *mann al-Mithâni* are “the seven oft-repeated”. According to most interpreters, this refers to the seven verses of the opening chapter *al-Fâtihah* أَفَاتَحْهُ, which are repeated during each prayer cycle. According to others they refer to seven chapters: *al-Baqarah* آلُّبَقَرَةِ, *آلِ امْرَانَ*, *al-Imrân*, *النِّسَاءِ*, *al-Nisâ*, *الْمَâi ’dah* المَادَّةِ, *al-An’âm* الْأَنْعَامِ, *al-’Arâf* الْأَعْرَافِ, and *al-Taubah* التُّوبَةِ (or possibly, according to some, *Yûnus* يُونُس instead of *al-Taubah*).

كَمَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَى الْمُقْتَسِمِينَ

15:90 *Muqtasimîn* مُقْتَسِمِينَ is derived from *qasama* قَسَمَ, meaning to divide or separate a portion. *Qismatun* قِسْمَةٌ is a partition, separation, or division. *Muqtasimîn* مُقْتَسِمِينَ are those who divide people (*Tâj*, *Lisân*, Lane). This division can be caused in different ways. For example, believing in a part of Divine Revelation and rejecting the remainder; giving contradicting interpretations of Qur’anic verses; or intentionally misinterpreting Qur’anic injunctions.



The Bee

(*Revealed before Hijrah*)

يُنَزِّلُ الْمَلَائِكَةَ بِالرُّوحِ مِنْ أَمْرِهِ عَلَىٰ مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ

16:2 The word *al-Rûh* الرُّوح is used in the sense of Divine Revelation and Mercy in the Holy Qur’ân (cf. 32:9; 38:72; 42:52; 16:102; 2:253; 2:87; 5:110; 58:22; 26:193; 4:171) and not in the sense of spirit. In

Rûh-ul-Mââni commentary of the fifteenth verse of this *Sûrah*, “He sends His word by His command to whomsoever of His servants He pleases”, he cites the saying of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) about *Mujaddadîn*, who are the reformers that Allâh will raise at the beginning of each century. According to *Rûh-ul-Mââni*, this verse refers to the receivers of Divine revelations before the advent of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) and to the reformers (*Mujaddadîn*) coming after him. The recipients of Divine Revelation after the Holy Prophet (pbuh) will not have the status of Prophets, as the Holy Prophet (pbuh) is the last and the seal of all Prophets (cf. 33:40). The true believer (*mu'min* مؤمن of verse 38-45 who was saved from the torments of Divine punishment (cf. 40:15) also refers to the Reformers of the era and to other saints.

وَالْحَيْلَ وَالْبِعَالَ وَالْحَمِيرَ لِتُرْكُبُوهَا وَزِينَةً ۝ وَيَخْلُقُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

16:8 In our present time, means of transportation are available which were unknown to the contemporaries of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), and we may continue to see yet other new forms of transport. وَيَخْلُقُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ - “And He will yet create [for you] things of which [today] you have no knowledge” refer to a great prophecy, which we can witness unfolding today. A further description of such means of transportation is given in verse 16:14.

هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً ۝ لَكُمْ مِنْهُ شَرَابٌ وَمِنْهُ شَجَرٌ فِيهِ شَيْمُونَ

16:10-11 Water from heaven also stands for Divine Revelation. In analogy, people who accept and those who reject revelation are of different character.

وَهُوَ الَّذِي سَخَّرَ الْحَرَّ لِتُأْكُلُوا مِنْهُ لَحْمًا طَرِيًّا وَتَسْتَخْرُجُوا مِنْهُ حَلْيَةً
تَلْبِسُونَهَا وَتَرَى الْفَلَكَ مَوَاحِرَ فِيهِ وَلِتَبْتَغُوا مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

16:14 Mawâkhîr مَوَاحِدَ are those things that cleave and plough through waves with dashing noise, and which are heavy. It is derived from *makhira* مَخْرَى, which means, “to plough the waves of water or air” (Tâj, Lisân, Lane). The verse is an allusion to sea and air transportation that uses heavy, noisy vehicles (cf. 35:12).

وَالْقَوْيُ فِي الْأَرْضِ رَوَاسِيَ أَنْ تَمِيدَ بِكُمْ وَأَنْهَارًا وَسُبُلًا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ

16:16 The verse refers to certain physical laws governing the universe. **Ardz** الأَرْضِ is derived from *aradza* أَرَضَ, which means anything that rotates. Our earth is a rotating celestial body, but is not the only one. The Milky Way and other galaxies also rotate the word therefore can also be applied to them. **Tamîd** تَمِيدَ means to shake, quake, or to move an object away. Its root word *mâda* مَادَ has the meaning of furnishing with food and knowledge, as knowledge is a spiritual food. From its sense of rotation, the circulation of blood is called *mid* مِيدَ. The word *mâida* مَانِدَة is derived from spreading or circulating and indicates a table spread with food or knowledge. Verse 5:114 can be understood in the sense that Jesus prayed for knowledge to come to his followers. **Rawâsî** رَوَاسِيَ are things that are well set, firm, stable, immovable, still, or at anchor. The word, which is derived from *rasâ* رَسَا is also used to denote mountains. **Alqâ** الْقَوْيُ has a broad meaning. The word is derived from *Laqiya* لَقِي meaning to meet, occur, suffer from, endure, lean upon, receive, come face to face with, or to go in a particular direction. **Subulan** سُبُلًا is derived from *subula* سُبْلَى, and means cause, means of access, or path (Tâj, Lisân, Lane, *Qâmûs*, *Râghib*). All these words combined point to physical laws of nature that is yet to be understood. Other verses with similar topics are 41:10-12 and 27:88.

وَعَلَامَاتٍ ۖ وَبِالنَّجْمِ هُمْ يَهْتَدُونَ

16:16 ‘Alâmât عَلَامَاتٍ is the plural of ‘âlam عَالَمٌ. Its root word is ‘alima عَلِمَ, which signifies to mark, sign, or to distinguish. ‘Âlimât

means worlds or universes. ‘Alamun علم is a sign or a long mountain range, and Alâmat علامات are the means by which one knows a thing – a landmark.

إِنَّمَا قَوْلُنَا لِشَيْءٍ إِذَا أَرَدْنَاهُ أَنْ تَقُولَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ

16:40 His command is carried out as fast as the blink of an eye (cf. 54:50). What is true for sight is also true for insight and reflection.

إِنَّمَا جَعَلَ السَّبَّتُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ اخْتَفَوْا فِيهِ

16:124 The observance of the Sabbath was ordained for Jews only. It was not necessary for the Muslims to observe a day of worship; even Abraham, a model of virtue, did not observe a particular day of worship. Initially the Sabbath day was Friday; Jews changed it to Saturday and Christians to Sunday.

ادْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحِكْمَةِ وَالْمُؤْمِنَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ ۖ وَجَادِلْهُم بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ

16:125 Three principles for delivering the Message of the Holy Qur’ân and resolving religious controversies are laid down in this verse. Discussions with adherents of other creeds should be based on knowledge and wisdom (بالحكمة); service, equity, justice, forbearance, firmness and truth (الحسنة), and sincere exhortation (الموعظة). Arguments should be presented in the most benevolent way, in accordance with the requirements of the situation and following the rules of etiquette (وجادلهم بالتي هي أحسن). The purpose is not to find fault with others or to disparage them. Self-restraint should always be observed while arguing with people of another persuasion, without offense against decency or intellectual equity. Although retaliation in argument is permissible if ones integrity is impeached, it is stated twice that one should show patience and do good (أحسن).



سورة الإسراء

17. CHAPTER The Night-Journey

(Revealed before Hijrah)

With this *Sûrah* we reach a new series of chapters. Chapter 17 begins with a reference to the Night Journey (*al-Isrâ'*; ﴿الإِسْرَاء﴾) and Ascension (*Mi'râj* - مَرْجَعٌ - a spiritual experience of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). The chapter then proceeds to a brief mention of the spiritual history of the nations and deals with the methods for the spiritual evolution of individuals. As the chapter refers to some of the important incidents in the history of the Israelites and the spiritual and moral stages they had to pass, some of the Companions of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) used to designate this chapter by the title *Banî Isrâ'il*; The tribe of Israel). The Holy Prophet (pbuh) used to recite this chapter in his nightly Prayer (Tirmidhî, Nasâî, Ahmad bin Hanbal).

The purpose of Spiritual Ascension (*Mi'râj*) is not to physically reach some place in heaven where Allâh is sitting. No place can hold Him and He is never apart from us. Instead, the purpose of (*Mi'râj*) is to show His servants “some of the great signs and manifestation, which stand at the farthest end of knowledge” (53:14).

In the narration of the Night Journey and of the Ascension, we find many highly allegorical descriptions, which are so obviously symbolic that they preclude any possibility of interpreting them literally and in physical terms. For instance the Holy Prophet (pbuh) introduces this experience, as quoted by Bukhârî, with the words, “While I lay on the ground next to the Ka‘ba, there came to me an angel who cut open my breast, and took out my heart. Then a golden basin full of faith was brought to me, and my heart was washed therein and was filled with it. Then it was restored to its place”.

From these words, it becomes obvious that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) himself regarded this experience as a purely spiritual one. When the Angel Gabriel brought the “*Burâq*” to the Holy Prophet (pbuh), he mounted it and had gone only a short distance when he saw an old woman. He was told by Gabriel that this old woman was the mortal world. Then the Holy Prophet (pbuh) passed by some people who were sowing and harvesting but every time they completed their harvest it grew up again. Gabriel said, “These are the fighters in the cause of Allâh.” Then they passed by some people whose heads were being shattered by rocks, and every time they were shattered they became completely again. Gabriel said, “These are they whose heads were oblivious of Prayer.” Then they passed by some people who were eating a raw and rotten meal and throwing away cooked, wholesome food. Gabriel said, “These are the adulterers.”

The explanation and interpretation by Gabriel of the things the Holy Prophet (pbuh) saw shows that the Journey was not physical, as it involves only things experienced spiritually that need such interpretations and explanations. ‘Âishah^(rz), Mu’âwiyah, Al-Hasan of Basra, and many other authorities declared emphatically and uncompromisingly that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) was transported in his spirit (*bi-Rûhî*) while his physical body did not leave its place (Jarîr, *Kashshaf*, Ibn Kathîr). The concluding words of another report, which speaks of the Ascension are: “and the Holy Prophet (pbuh) awoke and he was in the Sacred Mosque” (Bukhârî). These confirm once again the spiritual nature of this journey. In another *hadîth*, the condition in which the Holy Prophet (pbuh) was in was described by him with the words: “Whilst I was in a state between that of one sleeping and one awake” (Bukhârî, *Sahîh* 59/6; 61/24).

Ibn Qayyam says, “It is necessary to know the difference between sayings, The night Journey took place in dream (*manâm* منام) and It was performed by his soul without his body.” The difference between these two views is tremendous. What a person sees in a dream are

symbols or *mathâl* - مثل - that is the reproduction of forms already existing in ones mind. What the Holy Prophet (pbuh) experienced was very different and far beyond all that one experiences in a dream (Ibn Qayyam in *Zâd al-Mâ'âd*). We have no reason to doubt the absolute reality of this experience as narrated by the Holy Prophet (pbuh).

By declaring that the Night Journey and the Ascension was not bodily, ‘Âishah^(rz), Mu’âwiyah, Al-Hasan of Bašra, and others did not diminish the extraordinary value of his experience. The eyes of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) were closed while his soul was awake and separated from his physical body in order to traverse those heights narrated by Holy Prophet (pbuh) in this condition.

This journey was his complete withdrawal from the world of bodies into the realm of souls. It was a spiritual experience of the highest order and was experienced in a state of complete wakefulness and vigilance; a state different however different from conventional wakefulness and vigilance. He was traversing the Grand Kingdom of Allâh with a body of light.

The human spirit has a yearning to return to its Source (cf. 8:32); just as the suns rays reflected by a polished mirror return to the sun, and neither disappear nor are destroyed. As Allâh says, “He breathed into the human being his own spirit” (8:32), this spirit is a part of that Great Spirit and has an affinity and love for that Source from which it was separated. The people of Allâh whose souls tread on this path have eyes with which they see, ears with which they hear, hearts with which they understand, and tongues with which they speak, but they are different from the eyes, ears, hearts, and tongues of ordinary people. It is with these eyes that they witness what they narrate, and with these ears that they listen to the Divine Discourse, and convey what they have been told to convey. With these hearts they understand the Truth, and with these tongues they speak the truth. Allâh says that the soul is under His direct Command (17:85).

Gnostics of all ages confirm the reality of states of temporary independence of the human spirit from the physical body. In the event of such a temporary moment, and without dependency on his material form, the spirit appears to be able to freely traverse out of the space of world and time. Ibn al-‘Arabî claims he received the gist of his knowledge in one such spiritual experience. Perhaps related phenomena, which ordinary people can experience, are so-called “near death experiences”. In a condition where the body's physiological functions come near to a standstill – often as the result of a severe accident – people frequently experience a spiritual condition they insist is far more real than any dream could ever be. For such common people, whose spiritual light is dim, only the diminishing of their bodily functions allows their spiritual self to gain predominance for a while. Though the purity of such a spiritual experience does not reach that of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), it should be understood that even ordinary people could have a spiritual experience that is much more real than a dream. In fact, such an experience can appear more real than their physical lives.

Allâh is All-Powerful and All-Mighty (22:74). He created His human beings with a wide range of faculties. Just as the faculties of intellect, sight, and hearing are different, so He favours some of his servants by bestowing them with some spiritual powers like the narration we read in the Holy Qur’ân (2:259).

During the Night Journey, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) led a Prayer in the Mosque of Jerusalem, in which all other Prophets ranged themselves behind him. This symbolizes, in a figurative manner, that the religion preached by the Holy Prophet (pbuh) is the same; a continuation of the religion preached by other Prophets, and his mission is for the fulfilment and perfection of humankind's religious development, and that the teachings he brought perfected the messages all other Prophets received. The Holy Mosque (*Masjid al-Harâm*) is one of the designations given in the Holy Qur’ân to the Ka'aba, the mosque at

Makkah. That is where the first house of worship was set up for humankind (3:96), even before Abraham and Ismâîl, who repaired it by raising its foundations and cleaned it for worship (2:127). The Distant Mosque (*Masjid al-Aqṣâ*) denotes the ancient Temple of Solomon, or rather its site, which symbolizes the Hebrew Prophets who preceded the advent of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), and are alluded to by the phrase the precincts of which we have blessed. It is important to note that in this verse, the houses of worship belonging to non-Muslims are also called *masjid*.

سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي أَسْرَى بَعْدِهِ لَيْلًا مِنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَى
الَّذِي بَارَكْنَا حَوْلَهُ لِنُرِيهُ مِنْ آيَاتِنَا

17:1 *Isrâ’* أَسْرَى is the word used for the Holy Prophets Night Journey from the Holy Mosque (الْمَسْجِدُ الْحَرَامُ) at Makkah to the Distant Mosque at Jerusalem (الْمَسْجِدُ الْأَقْصَى). His spiritual experience of Ascension – *Mi’râj* and his Night Journey (*Isrâ’*) are two different stages of his mystical experience. Bukhârî mentions *Isrâ’* in the *Sahîh* in chapter 63:41 and the *Mi’râj* in 63:42. Bukhârî then goes on to narrate the traditions which speak of the *Mi’râj* and of the Prayer that was made obligatory during it (see also various other well-documented Traditions extensively quoted and discussed by Ibn Hajar in *Fath al-Bârî* and Ibn Kathîr in his commentary on verse 17:1).

وَآتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ وَجَعَلْنَا هُدًى لِبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ

17:2 The statement “*We gave Moses the Book*” وَآتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ refers to the Divine Commandments received by Moses for his people. The word *Kitâb*, كِتَابٌ, derived from *kataba* كَتَبَ also means to command or to write (cf. 2:183). The conjunctive particle and at the start of the verse indicates that the mystic Night Journey is an experience of a similar kind of Divine grace as that bestowed upon Moses.

وَقَضَيْنَا إِلَى بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ فِي الْكِتَابِ لِتُفْسِدُنَّ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَرَّتَيْنِ وَلَتَعْلُمَنَّ
عُلُواً كَبِيرًا

17:4 Qadzainâ قَضَيْنَا means, “we decreed, decided, or judged”. It is derived from *qadzâ* قَضَى, meaning to issue a decree or to determine (cf. 17:23). The judgment or decree mentioned here and in the following verses (17:5-8) refers to the prophecies and their fulfilment already mentioned in the Jewish Scriptures (e.g. Lu. 26.14-39; Du. 28.15-68; 30.15; Mtt 23.38; Lk 21.24; as well as to the prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah). Jerusalem was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon in 588 B.C. and then again in 70 A.D. by Roman forces under the Emperor Titus.

In 588 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar took King Zedekiah as prisoner, his sons were slain and he was carried to Babylon bound in fetters. The Jewish chief priests and other leaders were put to death, and Jews were carried off in captivity. The conquest of Jerusalem resulted in the disappearance of the greater part of the Hebrew nation and the so-called “ten lost tribes”. In 70 A.D., the Temple of Solomon was burned down by Titus.

By alluding to these two episodes of Jewish history (verses 4-7), the Holy Qur’ân warns the Muslims that they could suffer a similar fate. The first such punishment overtook the Muslim nation when the Mongols destroyed Baghdad, a great seat of learning and power, and massacred the people of that city in 1258 A.D. The second great punishment of the Muslims came at the hands of the Christians in Spain, when the great achievements of their fading empire were undone after the *Reconquista* in 1491. Verse 8 contains a message of hope not only for the Jews, but also for the Muslims.

ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَا لَكُمُ الْكَرَّةَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَمْدَدْنَاكُمْ بِأَمْوَالٍ وَبَيْنَ وَجَعْلَنَاكُمْ أَكْثَرَ نَفِيرًا

17:6 The reference here is to the return of Israelites from Babylonian captivity. In the last quarter of the sixth century B.C., they made a

secret agreement with Cyrus, King of Persia and assisted him in occupying Babylon. Babylon surrendered to his army in 539 B.C. As a reward for their services, Cyrus allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem and helped them rebuild the Temple of Solomon. The Jew Sheshbazzer, the governor under Cyrus, returned vessels to the temple, which Nebuchadnezzar had carried away. A large body of exiled Jews were permitted to return to Jerusalem. The rebuilding was completed in 516 B.C. during the time of Prophet Nehemiah (see also 2:59). Ten tribes of Jews, as history and the Bible tell us, were “lost” during the occupation of the Babylonians. They escaped the pogroms and persecutions and were scattered within the vast lands of other nations. Contemporary Jews are traced back mostly to the two tribes who were able to return to the Palestinian lands under Cyrus. Later, they too were scattered into the lands of other nations who gave them shelter and refuge. This diaspora is mentioned in 17:105.

عَسَى رَبُّكُمْ أَن يَرْحَمُكُمْ ۝ وَإِنْ عُذْتُمْ عُذْنَا

17:8 This verse conveys a message of hope for the Jewish and for the Muslim nations (cf. 17:4), but at the same time it contains a clear warning for both. It also contains a hidden message for Jews, that at some time in the future, they will regain the power and glory lost since the time of David – a prophecy whose fulfilment we witnessed in the creation and establishment of the state of Israel . However, Allâh also says that if they return to evil behaviour and mischief-, this Mercy will be taken away from them.

وَجَعَلْنَا اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ آيَتَيْنِ ۝ فَمَحَوْنَا آيَةَ اللَّيْلِ وَجَعَلْنَا آيَةَ النَّهَارَ مُبْصِرَةً
لَنْبَتُّهُوا فَضْلًا مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَلَنَعْلُمُوا عَدَّ السَّنِينَ وَالْحِسَابَ

17:12 Here is an oblique allusion to the Divine Laws in nature, which invariably makes the rise and fall of nations dependent on their moral qualities. This should be seen in the context of what we have been told about the Jewish nation and the rise and fall of the Muslim dynasties.

مَنِ اهْتَدَى فَإِنَّمَا يَهْتَدِي لِنَفْسِهِ وَمَنِ ضَلَّ فَإِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهَا وَلَا تَرُكُوا زِرَّةً وِزْرًا أَخْرَى

17:15 If a human being has been given the choice of good and evil, he needs knowledge and guidance to discriminate between the two. Discretion without such guidance and knowledge would be a terrible burden. It is unjust to be punished for the wrong use of ones discretion and free will without being able to know what is wrong and to be avoided, and what is right and to be adopted to successfully reach the goal (*Fallâh*). Such knowledge must precede any punitive action. The verse states that such guidance and knowledge is offered to human beings through revelations and through Prophets as guides (cf. 91:8). However, if a human after receiving such guidance persists in error it is to his own detriment (cf. 91:10). The words “*no soul that bears the burden shall bear the burden of another*”, draw our attention to a fundamental principle of ethics; that everyone has to bear his own cross as the effect of each persons actions clings to him only. This verse strikes at the root of the doctrine of atonement. (see also 6:164; 35:18; 39:7; 53:38, and 29:13).

وَقَضَى رَبُّكَ أَلَا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا إِمَّا يَلْعَنَ عِنْدَكَ الْكِبَرُ أَحَدُهُمَا أَوْ كِلَّاهُمَا فَلَا تُقْلِّلُ لَهُمَا أَفَ وَلَا تَنْهَرْهُمَا وَقُلْ لَهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا

17:23 “*Be good to parents!*” is placed next to worship of Allâh, for after our Creator and Sustainer, none has a greater claim upon us than our parents. Whereas Allâh is the real, ultimate cause of our life, our parents are its outward and immediate cause. It is in the parental mirror that the Attributes of our Creator (*al-Khalîq*), Nourisher and Sustainer (*Rabb*), the Merciful (*al-Râhîm*) and others are reflected on a minor human scale. Since it is impossible for us to return the favours of our Lords bounties and gifts bestowed upon us, we should at least refrain from *shirk* شرک and worship none

but Him. However, in the case of parents, we are in a position to return their love, affection, and kindness, though inadequately. Here is a positive commandment to be kind and obedient to them.

Moreover, obedience to parents is the seed from which springs the great obligation of obedience to Allâh and all constituted authority. The word or sound *uff* (fie) indicates contempt, dislike, or disgust in words. *Nahr* نَهْر (reproach) is to express ones contempt, dislike, or disgust through actual deeds. By combining these two words, the verse indicates that we should never speak harshly with our parents, much less act harshly towards them. As parental love is not capable of being adequately repaid, the deficiency in this respect is to be made up by prayer for them. The words of the prayer “وَقُلْ رَبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيْنَايٰ ”صَغِيرًا show that in old age parents need to be tended to as carefully and affectionately as little children are looked after in their childhood - with respectful words and kindness.

وَاتِّذَا الْفُرْبَى حَقَّهُ وَالْمِسْكِينَ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ وَلَا تُبَدِّرْ تَبَذِيرًا

17:26 *Tubadhdhir* تُبَذِيرْ means squandering or wasting. The squander of resources does not relate to the quantity being wasted, for which the Arabic word *isrâf* إِسْرَاف is used, but rather to the purpose of ones spending. Thus, Ibn ‘Abbâs and Ibn Mas’ûd defined *tabzîr* تَبَزِير as spending without a righteous cause, or in a frivolous one (*Tâj*). Mujâhid says that if a person were to spend even a small amount in a frivolous cause, it is squandering.

وَلَا تَقْرِبُوا الزَّنَنَا ۝ إِنَّهُ كَانَ فَاحِشَةً وَسَاءَ سَبِيلًا

17:32 With the exhortation “And Keep away from adultery and fornication” (وَلَا تَقْرِبُوا الزَّنَنَا), the Holy Qur’ân not only forbids fornication and adultery but also enjoins people not to go near them, thus avoiding all opportunities which are likely to tempt one to commit such acts. The Qur’ânic teaching seeks to close all those doors

that can lead to adultery and fornication. *Zinâ*, translated as adultery and fornication, includes all types of sexual acts between a man and a woman who are not husband and wife.

وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ

17:33 Illâ bil-Haqq – “Except for a just cause”, may be in the execution of a legal punishment, a just war of self-defense, or in an individual, legitimate act of self-defense. In the preceding two verses, reference was made to the two indirect ways of killing. In this verse murder is discussed directly.

إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُولَئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْنُواً لَّا

17:36 The Divine Law of Conservation is being pointed out to us in this verse. Every action, every sound, every word that is being uttered will be conserved and questioned (cf. 50:4; 17-18).

تُسَبِّحُ لَهُ السَّمَاوَاتُ السَّبَعُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيهِنَّ ۝ وَإِنْ مَنْ شَيْءٌ إِلَّا يُسَبِّحُ
بِحَمْدِهِ وَلَكِنَ لَا تَفْقَهُونَ شَبِيهَهُمْ

17:44 Tasbîh تسبیح is to extol the Glory of the Lord. The word is used with regard to Allâh’s Attributes. His glorification is to be free from all imperfections. The whole universe is declaring Him free from every imperfection and impurity, and from anything that is derogatory to His dignity. Everything that exists glorifies Him in ways that we cannot understand. This glorification comes from the fact that the entire cosmos is flawless and perfect in its structure, chained together under Divine Law; the laws of nature are none other than the Will of Allâh. These laws are unalterable. Objects in nature stand in complementary relation to each other. They combine with each other in a fixed proportion to create new things. We human beings have not created anything new that was not already in existence. The whole universe is in a measured order, and everything in it follows a course

that comes from Allâh. Nature discloses regularity, precision, punctuality, knowledge, power, command, intellect, pre-ordination, pre-arrangement, precaution and other features that show that the Creator is free from every imperfection and impurity, and from everything derogatory to His dignity. By discharging its allotted task, and by fulfilling the object for which it has been created, every created thing declares Allâh free from every defect and imperfection. This is the real significance of *Tasbih*.

وَإِذَا قَرَأْتَ الْقُرْآنَ جَعَلْنَا بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ حِجَابًا مَّسْتُورًا

17:45 Hijâban Mastûra - means, an impregnable screen or hidden barrier. This is the aversion of those who do not believe in the Hereafter. This passage is connected with verse 41 where we read: “وَمَا يَزِيدُهُمْ إِلَّا نُفُورًا”; “it increases them only in aversion”. Allâh “cover(s) their hearts with veils and plug(s) their ears with something heavy, lest they should understand it” because of this aversion (cf. 2:7; 6:25; 7:179).

نَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَسْتَمِعُونَ بِهِ إِذْ يَسْتَمِعُونَ إِلَيْكَ وَإِذْ هُمْ نَجَوْيَ إِذْ يَقُولُونَ
الظَّالِمُونَ إِنْ تَتَبَعُونَ إِلَّا رَجُلًا مَسْحُورًا

17:47 Mashûr is derived from *sahara* سحر and *sahira* سحرا. *Sahara* means either to bewitch or to practice sorcery, *sahira* is to rise in the morning and take food. *Mashûr* مسحور is a person who is deprived of senses, who is under a spell, who is the victim of deception, or who is bewitched. It can also mean a person who rises and takes food in the morning for example, to begin the days fast. The verse can thus be translated as “You follow a man who eats food”. The opponents of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) used to object that he was an ordinary person who eats and drinks (cf. 23:33), which they believed undermined his claims.

فَسَيِّئُنْجُضُونَ إِلَيْكَ رُءُوسَهُمْ وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَىٰ هُوَ ۖ قُلْ عَسَىٰ أَنْ يَكُونَ قَرِيبًا

17:51 *Yunghidzûna* is derived from *naghadza* meaning to move the head in another direction out of disbelief or from the rejection of a proposition. The Arabs used to express their rejection by a typical head movement that meant that they not only rejected, but also at the same time considered the person who was talking to be lowly and of little status.

وَقُلْ لِعِبَادِي يَقُولُوا الَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ ۚ إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ يَنْزَغُ بَيْنَهُمْ ۚ إِنَّ
الشَّيْطَانَ كَانَ لِلنِّسَانِ عَدُوًّا مُّبِينًا

17:53 The righteous are warned that they should be extremely careful about what they speak (cf: 12:100).

وَرَبُّكَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۖ وَلَقَدْ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَ النَّبِيِّنَ
عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ ۝ وَآتَيْنَا دَاوُودَ زَبُورًا

17:55 *Bi-mann* is the demonstrative “those”. It is used only for living and not for inanimate things. We are told here that there are other living creatures in the heavens, and that He knows them all. *Fadzdzalnâ Ba'dza* - فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَ - “We have exalted some above others”, refers to the different ranks of Prophets, Saints and *Auliyâ* – the friends of Allâh (cf. 4:163-165). This is also an allusion to the excellence of the Holy Prophet (pbuh).

Usually the word *Zabûr* زَبُورٌ is translated as the Book of Psalms given to David. The origin of this word is *zabara jlk*, meaning to copy or pelt with stones. *Zubur* زُبُر is a fragment of iron, piece of iron, lump of iron, mane of iron, or a big piece of metal (*Tâj*, *Lisân*). In verse 34:10 we read that Allâh “made iron soft for [David]” (34:10), and in 21:80, Allâh taught David the art of “making coats of mail” (from iron), and his artisans designed them to “fortify and protect his soldiers in war”. *Zabûr* was a kind of Divine Knowledge given to David. *Zabûr* was

also the Book of Wisdom that contained aside from Divine Commandments, Psalms of Divine Love, and the knowledge of working with iron (cf: 21:80; 34:10).

This verse should be read in continuation of the foregoing verse 17:54, in which we are told that Allâh made different ranks of the Prophets, and David was distinguished in the sense that he received this particular kind of knowledge. Some interpreters of the Holy Qur’ân are of the view that the words وَاتَّبَعْنَا دَارُودَ زَبُورًا “We gave David the Zabûr”, as they appear in the context of the verse, mean to say that in the Book given to David, there was a mention about the advent of the Holy Prophet (pbuh).

وَمَا مَنَعَنَا أَن نُرْسِلَ بِالآيَاتِ إِلَّا أَن كَذَّبُوهَا الْأَوَّلُونَ ۝ وَاتَّبَعْنَا ثُمَّوْدَ النَّاقَةَ
مُبْصِرَةً فَظَلَمُوا بِهَا ۝ وَمَا نُرْسِلُ بِالآيَاتِ إِلَّا تَحْوِيْفًا

17:59 “And nothing could prevent Us from going on sending [Our signs]”. By adding *al* before *âyât*, the word acquires a stronger meaning of “the particular Signs”. A more detailed translation might be, “And nothing will prevent Us from sending those particular signs [that disbelievers ask for], and even then they will keep on denying just as the former people denied.” The people of Thamûd asked for a particular sign from their prophet Sâlih, and when this sign was given to them, they still refused to follow. This verse in no way says that Allâh will not send or cannot send any more signs because the people before rejected His signs. How can it be possible that Allâh changes His Will just because of some disbelievers in His Messages who did not recognize His signs?

Christian missionaries tend to present this verse as an excuse by the Prophet of Islam (pbuh) that he was unable to produce any sign or show any wonder, similar to those shown by Jesus. We read in Mark, “The Pharisees came out disputing with him, seeking from him a sign from heavens, to put him to test.” Though this was a golden chance

for Jesus to prove his claim, “He sighed deeply and said, Why does this generation ask for a sign? Truly I tell you, no sign will be given to it.” (Mark 8.11-12). Similarly, we read in Luke that Herod wanted to see some miracle performed by Jesus. In spite of his repeated requests, Jesus kept silent (Luke 23.8). Here again it could be said, was a missed chance by Jesus to prove his claims.

Regardless, Jesus never performed miracles that were contrary to the laws of nature. If he did, then what Mark wrote in 16.15-17, could have been witnessed daily. The “signs” should not be confused with, “wonders” (cf. Matt. 4.3-9). The wonders of Christ were nothing more than wrongly understood metaphors (cf. 54:47; 61:8). Similar to Jesus, the people of Makkah made demands on the Holy Prophet (pbuh) to come forward with some wonders (cf.: 17:90-93). Allâh did bless the Holy Prophet (pbuh) with them, but in a metaphorical way, as Jesus showed the metaphorical wonders asked for by his opponents. Moses was also not spared by his people, who urged him to come forward with wonders.

The greatest sign brought by the Holy Prophet (pbuh) is the great spiritual change he inspired in the world. No other prophet, not even Jesus, whom Christians claimed to be the son of God, was ever able to produce spiritual change so rapidly and of such magnitude. We \ continue to witness these signs today. He also came forward with signs mentioned in verses 110:1-2 and the verse 34:49. The Holy Qurâن promises the believers and the followers of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), “He will make from them spiritual successors (*Khalifa*) as He made spiritual successors from their predecessors and He will establish their Faith” (24:55).

At the start of each century, it is the Divine practice to send His *Mujaddads*, the spiritual Reformer for that century, among the followers of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). One can cite as examples ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azîz, *Imâm Ghazâlî*, Abdul Qâdir Gilânî, Ibn al-‘Arabî, Mujaddad Alif *Thâni*, *Fakhr al-Dîn al-Râzî*, and others. Allâh

always has a vicegerent on earth who comes forward when the earth becomes filled with injustice and corrupted beliefs. These spiritual successors are also the ones who are endowed with the blessing of His nearness (*Wali* (ولي), His discourse (*Ilhâm* (إلهام)), and His unveiling (*Kashaf* (كشف)). There are many *Muhaddith* – people with whom Allâh spoke, and *Auliâ'* – people who were granted the nearness and friendship of Allâh. There are many whom Allâh blesses with His Discourse.

The Doors of Divine Discourse are open only to the followers of Muhammad (pbuh) and such is possible only through Muhammadan Light. How can we imagine that a person who disqualifies the Messenger sent by Allâh would be granted nearness by Him? Another great sign is the one mentioned in the verse 15:9. In this verse, Allâh Himself takes the responsibility of safeguarding the Holy Qur'ân from corruption. Can any other Book claim that it has been protected from corruption over the centuries?

It should also be noted that the Holy Qur'ân never uses a word that can be translated as “wonder”, but instead it uses *âyah* آية, meaning “sign”, or *burhân* برهان, meaning “discrimination by reason”. The Prophets of Allâh come forward with their signs or *âyah*, which are manifested in stages over time, and not like the trickery of a magician on a stage.

وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الرُّؤْيَا إِلَّا فِتْنَةً لِلنَّاسِ وَالشَّجَرَةُ الْمَلْعُونَةُ فِي
الْقُرْآنِ ۚ وَنَحْوُهُمْ فِيمَا يَرِيدُهُمْ إِلَّا طُغْيَانًا كَبِيرًا

17:60 Al-Ru'yâ - الرُّؤْيَا - The vision refers to the spiritual experience mentioned in 17:1. *Shajarah al-Mal'unah* (الشَّجَرَةُ الْمَلْعُونَةُ), meaning, “the cursed or the disapproved tree”, is the tree of *Zaqqûm* زقزم (Bukhârî 63:42). The Qur'ân speaks of it in 37:62 and 44:43. It is one of the manifestations of Hell and symbolizes Hell as well as the living conditions therein. As the word *Shajarah* شَجَرَة is also used for

“family” or “tribe”, some commentators are of the opinion that the cursed tree refers to those Jews who had been cursed by David and Jesus (5:78; 4:47) because of their disloyalty towards David, and those who staunchly denied Jesus and the Holy Prophet (pbuh), scheming to kill Prophets of God. Support for this view comes from the fact that this chapter particularly deals with the Israelites as its title *Banî Israel* suggests.

Another explanation of the disapproved tree is that, according to the Holy Qur’ân, every good word and action is likened to a good tree and every evil action and word to an evil tree (14:24). The Holy Qur’ân also refers to the liars, and the staunch disbelievers and the breakers of the covenant as the cursed ones (cf. 2:161; 3:87; 5:13; 7:44; 33:68).

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِإِدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ قَالَ أَسْجُدُ لِمَنْ خَلَقَنَا

17:61 For an explanation of the allegory of Adam, angels and Iblîs see 2:30; 7:11; 15:26. This verse stresses the contempt voiced by Iblîs for the whole humankind and the human beings dignity, hence this statement is connected with the preceding verse and with the end of verse 17:53 (cf: 17:70).

وَاسْتَفْرِزْ مَنِ اسْتَطَعْتَ مِنْهُمْ بِصَوْتِكَ وَأَجْلِبْ عَلَيْهِمْ بِخَيْلَكَ وَرِجْلَكَ
وَشَارِكْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأُولَادِ وَعِدْهُمْ

17:64 According to the author of *Jâmi al-Bayâن* (Ibn Jarîr) the horsemen and footmen of Iblîs are the armies of the disbelievers creating disorder in the land. This meaning is supported by the words “sharing of Iblîs with all your might”, referring to the fighting force. The “sharing of Iblîs in wealth” signifies the possessions acquired by sinful and unlawful means, or those spent on sinful and unlawful purposes. “Sharing in children” is in reference to committing acts of adultery and fornication, which result in births out of wedlock. *Istafziz*

استُفْرِزْ; “To beguile”, “to make weak by way of humiliation”, “to turn away by deceit”, “to make someone weak by way deceit so that the person loses control over himself and becomes the object of humiliation” (Lisân, Tâj, Râghib). *Istafziz bi-Sautika* بِصَوْتٍ means to beguile with speech. The word *saut* صَوْتٌ translated here as “speech” is also in the sense of *la'ab* - لَعْبٌ games of chance and gambling, that make one forgetful of duties towards family and society.

وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ وَحَمَلْنَاهُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَرَزَقْنَاهُمْ مِّنَ الطَّيَّابَاتِ
وَفَضَّلْنَاهُمْ عَلَىٰ كَثِيرٍ مِّمَّنْ خَلَقْنَا تَفْضِيلًا

17:70 “We have made the children of Adam greatly honoured”, indicates that the human being is born without “sin”. He is given an unsullied and pure nature with inborn faculty and tendency to do good. This verse refutes the Christian notion of original sin. Human beings are also endowed with the power of *Tafaqquh* تَفْقُهٌ, the power of rational thinking, and with the power of *Tadabbur* تَدْبُّرٌ, the power of reflection and meditation and the power of *Tuaqqul* تَعْقُلٌ, the power to acquire knowledge. The human being can be honoured with the gift of *nafs mutma'innah* نفس المطمئنة, the self that is in peace and tranquillity.

When an earnest human soul advances on his evolutionary journey, it ultimately reaches a point where virtue and piety rule in every corner of his heart. A fire from above descends upon him, burning out his *nafs-i-amara* – that is, his animate nature, and “he becomes reconciled to his Lord. He is also pleased with him” (cf. 89:27-28). This is the honour that is bestowed on the human being expressed in the words, وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَفْوِيمٍ. Allâh says, “We have surely created the human being in the finest make” (95:4). Through spirituality he can rise and become the mirror, in which Divine Attributes are reflected. It is the honour of nearness to the

Lord, which is spoken of in this verse. Great honour was bestowed on the Holy Prophet (pbuh) during his Night Journey.

By using the words “the children of Adam (بني آدم)” the verse demolishes all notions of superiority based on colour, creed, or ethnic origin. This honour is universal, thus refuting the Jewish claim of being a chosen people. It is also a violation of the Just Universal Providence to prefer a particular nation, and especially to choose one group for the bestowal of His honours.

All nations have had their Prophets. We must regard spiritual founders of other religions as part of one universal dispensation. The whole of humanity is a single nation. We are all members of Allâh’s family, as the Holy Prophet (pbuh) said, “*Al-Khaliqu iyâl Allâh*.” The verse gives a gospel of universal salvation and peace to people of any persuasion. All avenues of progress and prosperity have been kept open for all human beings. However, the human being is also given free will to reject these blessings.

يَوْمَ نَدْعُو كُلَّ أَنَاسٍ بِإِمَامِهِمْ فَمَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ بِيمِينِهِ فَأُولَئِكَ يَقْرَءُونَ كِتَابَهُمْ وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ فَتِيلًا

17:71 *We shall call all people along with their leaders* نَدْعُو كُلَّ أَنَاسٍ بِإِمَامِهِمْ indicates that the righteous will follow righteous leaders and the wicked will follow their wicked leaders. According to Râzî the expression *Imâm* (leader) in this context has an abstract connotation, good or bad, which governs a persons behaviour and provides motives for his actions. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) said that actions would be judged according to the conscious intentions that prompted them. The “leaders” therefore can be interpreted as these intentions. In the phrase, فَمَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ بِيمِينِهِ, “whoever is given his book in his right hand”, the book is the one mentioned in verse 14; the effect of ones deeds. The right hand is a symbol of blessing, strength and power while the left is that of weakness. Giving of the record of ones deed in

ones right hand signifies that it will be a favourable record. The book of deeds is given in the right hand to those who held the Book of Allâh here in this life with strength and resolution, and acted upon it accordingly.

وَمَنْ كَانَ فِي هَذِهِ أَعْمَالٍ فَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ أَعْمَالٍ وَأَصْلَى سَبِيلًا

17:72 This verse shows that a human being in the Hereafter is not merely conditioned by the manner of this life, but is also an organic extension of the latter. The blindness mentioned here is of a spiritual kind.

**وَإِنْ كَادُوا لَيُسْتَفِرُونَكَ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ لِيُخْرُجُوكَ مِنْهَا ۖ وَإِذَا لَا يُبْلِثُونَ
خِلَافَكَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا**

17:76 “That they might drive you out from it. But in that case they (themselves) would not have stayed after you except for a little while” was the news given to the Holy Prophet (pbuh) at the time of his extreme adversity. The prophecy was fulfilled a little over two years later when the same leaders who were responsible for the expulsion of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) from Makkah were killed in the Battle of Badr. About six years later, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) returned to Makkah as a conqueror (cf. 14:13-14).

This principle is not limited to the victory at Badr, but also has an application for later Muslims. The enemies of Muslims will spare nothing in unsettling them in their lands; however, they will fail as long as the Muslims remain steadfast and strong in their belief.

**أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِدُلُوكِ الشَّمْسِ إِلَى غَسَقِ اللَّيْلِ وَقُرْآنَ الْفَجْرِ ۖ إِنَّ قُرْآنَ
الْفَجْرِ كَانَ مَشْهُودًا**

17:78 The recitation of the Holy Qur'ân in the early hours of the day is called *Mushhûd* acceptable and witnessed by Allâh, as the

mind is able to concentrate well at this time. Thus, the Morning Prayer becomes a means of attaining deeper insight into the realm of spiritual truths and of achieving communion with all that is holy. *Imâm Râzî* says that the witness (*Mushhûd*) to which the Holy Qur'ân refers here is the spark of Allâh giving illumination to the human soul, the heightening of his inner perception at the time when the darkness and stillness of night begins to give way to the life as the light of the day gives light to the darkness and removes it.

وَقُلْ رَبِّ أَدْخِلِنِي مُذْكَرَ صِدْقٍ وَأَخْرِجْنِي مُخْرَجَ صِدْقٍ وَاجْعَلْ لِي مِنْ
لَذِكْرِ سُلْطَانًا نَصِيرًا

17:80 Here we are taught the supplication used for entering into an affair. We may also conclude an affair with it. We pray that Divine help is granted to us in all our honest undertakings, and these undertakings are to be accompanied with Prayer and request for Divine help. According to Ibn 'Abbâs the verse also refers to the Holy Prophets (pbuh) emigration to and from Makkah and his journey to Madînah.

وَقُلْ جَاءَ الْحَقُّ وَزَهَقَ الْبَاطِلُ ۝ إِنَّ الْبَاطِلَ كَانَ زَهُوقًا

17:81 After the conquest of Makkah, while the Holy Prophet (pbuh) was clearing the Kaaba of the idols, he repeatedly recited verses 17:80-81 (*Bukhârî*; 46:32). The verse contains the great prophecy, *إِنَّ الْبَاطِلَ كَانَ زَهُوقًا* that falsehood will never again enter the vicinities of this house, and that non-believers shall never occupy this “Holy House” again.

وَنَزَّلْنَا مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ مَا هُوَ شَفَاءٌ وَرَحْمَةٌ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

17:82 Referring to the Holy Qur'ân, Allâh says, *huwa Shifâ* (هُوَ شِفَاءٌ); “That is the source of healing”. This means that its reading and recitation will not only heal spiritual illnesses, but one can ask for

Allâh's healing power through the recitation of the Holy Qur'ân for physical illnesses also. Allâh says He is *al-Shâfi* – the Healer. Its recitation is a kind of prayer made obligatory for the Muslims (cf. 17:78).

وَإِذَا أَنْعَمْنَا عَلَى الْإِنْسَانِ أَعْرَضَ وَنَأَى بِجَانِبِهِ ۖ وَإِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ كَانَ يُنْوِسًا

17:83 “*When We bestow favours on a human being, he turns away*” that is, the favours make him forgetful of the Source of these favours. The human nature tends to be ungrateful.

قُلْ كُلُّ يَعْمَلٍ عَلَى شَاكِلَتِهِ

17:84 Shâkila شاكِلته means the way or fashion. “Everyone acts according to his own way and fashion” and thinks that both what he does and what he believes is right, and that he, with his religion or beliefs, is treading on the only right path. It is only Allâh who knows the rightly guided, and a human being cannot be sure without His intervention. We are taught to ask for His guidance in our daily ritual Prayers. If He is pleased, He will guide the supplicant to the right path.

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الرُّوحِ ۖ قُلِ الرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّيِّ وَمَا أُوتِينَمِ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا

17:85 Translating the word *al-Rûh* as the spirit or the soul is perhaps ambiguous. The root word of *Rûh* is *râha*, which means to go or do a thing in the evening. *Rawâh* is the blowing of the wind in the afternoon or the evening on journey when it is used in the Holy Qur'ân in the singular form as in 17:69; 54:19; 69:6. *Rîhun* has the meanings of wind, power, dominance, strength, victory, good and pure things, aid against the enemy, or mercy. *Rîh* also signifies Divine punishment as in 27:69, but when it is used in the plural form as in

27:63, it signifies Divine blessings. *Rawh* is similar to mercy, but is more appropriately a life giving and soothing mercy as the related word *Râhat* means rest from grief and sadness.

Clearly, the word *Rûh* has a broad range of meanings. In the Holy Book, we find that *al-Rûh`* mostly stands for the Divine Revelation. For example in *Sûrah al-Nâhâl* we read, “He sends down the Angels with the Revelation” (16:2). Verses 42:51-52 further clarify this. The same meaning can be derived from the narration of Adam in 38:72; 15:29 and 32:9. In these verses the word *Rûh* (without the suffix *al* ال) stands for the capacity of a human being to receive Divine revelation. In this verse *al-Rûh* uses the definite article *al* and refers to the greatest Divine Revelation: the Holy Qur’ân.

While the Holy Prophet (pbuh) was passing *Bait al-Madâris* in Medînah, some Jews asked him about *al-Rûh`*. Their question concerned the Qur’ânic Revelation. The reply of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) was that this Revelation had come through “Divine Command”, and that in spite of their knowledge in many worldly matters (2:88), they have been given little knowledge of the great treasures, light, and comfort hidden within this Revelation. This view finds support if we continue to read to verse (17:88) in which a challenge is made to all ordinary people and the learned, especially to the Jews claiming that their hearts are storehouses of knowledge (2:88), to join their efforts and produce the likeness of the Holy Qur’ân.

If one translates the word *al-Rûh* as the Spirit, it will convey another Truth. It was a common belief at the time of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), and even today of many Hindus of India, that the spirit is eternal and that God and the Spirit have existed side by side since eternity. This notion is refuted in this verse. The Divine words، الرُّوْحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي، “it is under the command of my Lord”, correct the wrong belief of the eternity of the spirit, as it is only Allâh Who is eternal and the spirit was created under His Divine Command Be!. However, *al-Rûh* should

not be given solely the meaning of spirit or soul. Such a translation would make the understanding of many other Qur'ânic verses ambiguous, because the word can carry such a variety of connotations (note also that in 2:87 the word refers to the Divine Revelation and not the Holy Ghost or the Holy Spirit). The verse sheds light that the Divine Revelation (*al-Rûh*) is a necessity.

If one is to be punished for breaking any law, one should be given knowledge of that law beforehand. Allâh provides us with the required Knowledge to secure real happiness (*râhat*) and real life (14:32-34). We mortals grope in darknesses, committing our misdeeds and sins and do not know how to come out of it, so we need light from the Unseen, for He is the Perfect and all penetrating Light of the heavens and the earth (24:35) that can guide us (cf. 14:1; 16:2; 42:52).

وَلَئِنْ شِئْنَا لَنَذْهَبَنَّ بِالَّذِي أُوحِيَنَا إِلَيْكَ ثُمَّ لَا تَجِدُ لَكَ بِهِ عَلَيْنَا وَكِيلًا

17:86 “Had We so willed We could surely take away that which We have revealed to you”. Here the taking away of the revelation signifies its alienation from the hearts of people. This implies that a time would come when Qur'ânic knowledge and the kernel and spirit of the Book would disappear from the hearts of many people (Ibn Mâja) and “there will be none who shall plead the cause” of the Holy Prophet (pbuh).

قُلْ لَئِنِ اجْتَمَعَتِ الْإِنْسُونُ وَالْجِنُّ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَأْتُوا بِمِثْلُ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ لَا يَأْتُونَ
بِمِثْلِهِ وَلَوْ كَانَ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ ظَهِيرًا

17:88 The challenge stands for all times to all people who deny the Divine origin of the Holy Qur'ân. A *Jinn* is not a ghost, but a special class of people. The word is variously used for the leaders in evil affairs, the persons acting with penetrative energy in their affairs, and those people who indulge in occult practices and claim that they can summon to their aid the hidden spirits from whom they receive

spiritual knowledge. In 72:1 the word *Jinn* is used for the Jews of Nasîbîn (cf. 52:34; 11:13; 10:38). The verse should be read in the context of 17:85.

وَقَالُوا لَنْ تُؤْمِنَ لَكَ حَتَّىٰ تَفْجُرَ لَنَا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ يَنْبُوْعًا

17:90 The miracles demanded by the disbelievers in this and the verses that follow (17:90-93) were derived from the claim of the Holy Book at various places that this Divine Revelation is the clear exposition of all Truths, and is a complete and perfect Revelation and that it contains all information needed for the guidance of humankind (cf. 3:138). If this is so, the argument goes, and then the recipient of such a Book should be able to work miracles. The reply to such requests was simple: “Glory be to my Lord! I am not but a human being (sent as) a Messenger” (17:93). Despite this, the demands made were fulfilled in due course.

The believers were granted lands and countries with gardens and streams running in them in Iraq, Syria, Egypt, India and Spain. The demand of punishment was fulfilled through the defeat of the disbelievers. The angels descended on the pious people who followed the Holy Prophet (pbuh) and blessed them with revelations of *Wahî*, *Ilhâm* and *Kashûf*. Their demand for him to “ascend into heaven”, is denied as it is against the glory of Allâh for a mortal to ascend to heaven with his physical body. However, the spiritual ascension – the *Isra*, as mentioned and explained in the very first verse of this chapter should also be looked at in the context of this demand. Thus all the demands of the disbelievers of the time of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), though against human experience, and considered impossible were fulfilled to prove the truthfulness of the Holy Qur’ân and its claims. Even then, the disbelievers persisted in their disbelief (cf. 6:7-9).

قُلْ لَوْ كَانَ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَلَائِكَةٌ يَنْشُونَ مُطْمَنِينَ لَنَزَّلَنَا عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ
مَلَكًا رَسُولًا

17:95 The angels (مَلَائِكَةٌ) descend upon angelic persons and bring the Divine revelation. Only a human being can be the recipient of Divine Revelation, as humans alone have this capacity. “Verily, We presented the trust (Our Injunctions and Laws) to the heavens and the earth and the mountains and they refused to prove false to it, and they were struck with awe of it. On the other hand a human being has proved false to it (by betraying the trust and violating the Divine commandments), for he could be unjust and is forgetful” (33:72). This choice was not given to the heavens or the earth and the angels. They are under permanent obedience of Divine Law. The human being, in spite of this offer to attain Divine nearness is mostly unjust, ignorant and forgetful (cf. 17:83).

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَىٰ تِسْعَ آيَاتٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ

17:101 The “nine clear signs” given to Moses were: 1) the sign of the staff (7:107); 2) the sign of his hand (7:108); 3) the years of draught; 4) the scarcity of fruits and children (7:130); 5) deaths and destruction; 6) locusts; 7) lice; 8) frogs and 9) wars (blood) (cf.: 7: 133 and 27:12).

وَقُرْآنًا فَرَقْنَاهُ لِتُقْرَأَهُ عَلَى النَّاسِ عَلَى مُكْثٍ وَنَزَّلْنَاهُ تَنْزِيلًا

17:106 Faraqnâ-hu - فَرَقْنَاهُ “We divided it” refers to the Holy Qur’ân, separated into distinct chapters. According to some authorities quoted by Râzî, *Faraqnâ-hu* means, “We set forth with clarity”.



سورة الكهف 18. CHAPTER

Place of Refuge

(Revealed before Hijrah)

The last chapter was brought to a close with the statement that “Allâh has not taken to himself a son”. This chapter begins by denouncing this misguided doctrine (cf. 18:4), and gives a stern warning to its adherents. The chapter *Al-Kahf*، الْكَهْفُ، particularly the first and the last ten verses, deal mainly with two epochs of Christianity as exemplified by *Ashâb-al Kahf* - أَصْنَابَ الْكَهْفِ - the people of the place of Refuge, and *Ashâb al-Raqîm* - أَصْنَابَ الرَّقِيمِ - the people of Inscription. In *Al-Nahl*، النَّحل، (Chapter 16), it was prophesied that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) would face severe opposition from the Jews. Chapter *Al-Kahf* is the analogue with respect to the Christians. Thus the chapters 16, 17 and 18 are linked together in this respect. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) advised the Muslims to recite the first ten and the last ten verses of this Chapter on each Friday for protection from the onslaughts of the *Dajjâl* – دجّال – the Anti-Christ, and Gog and Magog (cf. 18:97-99), therewith explaining to us who the *Dajjâl* is and how and from whom to be on guard.

الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلٰى عَبْدِهِ الْكِتَابَ وَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ عِوْجًا

18:2 “Who has revealed this perfect Book” refers to the Holy Qur’ân having the form of a book from the outset and shall dispel doubts that the form of a book was given to this revelation only at some time after the death of the Holy Prophet. It also reminds the reader of the claim that the Qur’ân is in its entirety a divinely revealed Book, in contrast to the Bible, for example, which at best is a human recording of revelations and a history of a particular people written by several unknown writers over a passage of long time. The verse also puts

forward a claim that it is a perfect code of laws for all times, not subject to adaptions according to the demands of the present zeitgeist.

مَا لَهُمْ بِهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ وَلَا لِأَبَائِهِمْ كَبُرْتُ كَلِمَةً تَخْرُجُ مِنْ أَفْوَاهِهِمْ إِنْ يَقُولُونَ إِلَّا كَذِبًا

18:5 In the statement - مَا لَهُمْ بِهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ “They have no real knowledge of Him”, the pronoun *bihī* refers to Allāh (Ibn Jarīr). Whosoever makes such a claim that Allāh has taken to Himself a son has no real knowledge of Him. Such an assertion is a mere dogma, devoid of proofs and contrary to logic; unable to withstand even cursory intellectual scrutiny. It is also a doctrine, which does not contribute to human guidance. Such a belief does not nourish our faculties and nor does it bring them to grow. The doctrine of the sonship of Jesus is based on stories about Jesus written decades or even centuries after his crucifixion. It is not substantiated by solid arguments, any Divine Book nor any claim by Jesus himself. The verse goes on to say that, the ancestors of the people holding this belief likewise had no knowledge about Him, as they themselves were pagans and polytheists. If we look at the sources of the Christian dogma of trinity, the virgin birth, and of atonement, we find striking similarities with ancient Greek and Roman mythologies. One has only to add some aspects of the Mithra mythology of the east, replace the name of Zeus and Apollo, with the name Jesus to find a belief system almost identical with Christianity. Teachers of Christianity may frequently utter the statement that God has a son, but it does not come from their hearts, since such words necessarily lack spirituality.

فَأَعْلَمُكَ بَاخْرُجُ نَفْسَكَ عَلَى آثَارِهِمْ إِنْ لَمْ يُؤْمِنُوا بِهَذَا الْحَدِيثِ أَسْفًا

18:6 This rhetorical question is addressed in the first place to the Holy Prophet (pbuh), who once in a vision saw the great power, the embellishment and the finery of the world given to the followers of the Christian faith. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) felt great sorrow

regarding their spiritual state and was deeply distressed by the coming hostility of some Christians towards Muslims that was foretold. This rhetorical question is also addressed to everyone with the deep concern that humankind should rise to its true dignity.

وَإِنَّا لَجَاءْلُونَ مَا عَلَيْهَا صَعِيدًا جُرُزًا

18:8 The verse under comment and the one preceding it direct our attention to the transitory nature of the fleeting embellishments and finery of this life. They also imply a prophecy that the nations of the West, after acquiring great wealth and strength and luxuries, would transform the earth into barren soil, a dust without herbage (cf: 17:58).

أَمْ حَسِبْتَ أَنَّ أَصْحَابَ الْكَهْفِ وَالرَّقِيمَ كَانُوا مِنْ آيَاتِنَا عَجَبًا

18:9 **Kahf** كهف literally indicates the end of the land or at the border of the land (Lisân). The English word “cape” is likely derived from it. Verse 18:17 suggests that this particular place was in the north. *Raqîm* الرَّقِيم is an inscription or something that is written. Some fantastic stories and legends have been woven around the People of Refuge (*Ashâb al-Kahf*) and the People of Inscription (*Ashâb al-Raqîm*). This verse however does not depict these people as strange individuals. The early Christians were the true believers in Allâh and for that reason suffered persecution and had to hide themselves from their persecutors. The “People of the Place of Refuge” (*Ashâb al-Kahf*) and the “People of the Inscription” (*Ashâb al-Raqîm*) represent the two most prominent aspects of the Christian religion. It began as a persecuted faith and in years of hardship and will end by becoming a religion of engrossment in worldly affairs, a religion of business and trade in a world of writings, inscriptions and propaganda. The word *Ba'athnâ* بَعْثَاثُنَا in verse 18:12 indicates their rising to another state, the state as the People of Inscription (*Ashâb al-Raqîm*). **Am Hasibat** أَمْ حَسِبْتَ means, “Do you think?”, “Do you wonder?”, “Do you imagine?”, “Do you reckon?”, or “Do you

calculate?” The expression of wonder in form of a question tells us that these people were not the only signs and wonders of Allâh, there were countless others.

إِذْ أَوَى الْفِتْيَةُ إِلَى الْكَهْفِ فَقَالُوا رَبُّنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ رَحْمَةً وَهَيْئٌ لَنَا مِنْ أَمْرِنَا رَشِداً

18:10 Fityah الفتية is a “brave”, “generous”, or “a young and bold fellow”. With these highly praiseworthy characteristics the early Christians are described who left Palestine for northern countries (see 18:17)

نُّمَّ بَعَثْنَا هُمْ لِنَعْلَمَ أَيُّ الْجِزْبَيْنِ أَحْصَى لِمَا لَبِثُوا أَمَدًا

18:12 Ba‘ath-nâ بَعَثْنَا here indicates their raising to another state, the state as the People of Inscription (*Ashâb al-Raqîm*). The reference to the two groups tells us that they will be divided into factions of opposite opinions and interests (cf.: 5:14).

نَّحْنُ نَفْصُنُ عَلَيْكَ نَبَاهُ بِالْحَقِّ

18:13 Nabâ نَبَاهُ is something high and lofty. *Nabûwwat* (prophethood) is derived from this word. Here it refers to a message of great importance that leads to great knowledge, which is awe-inspiring and makes the heart tremble with fear (Baqâ, Râghib, Lisân). This account has the impact of a prophecy and the “awe that make the hearts tremble with fear” will be the quality of the account that follows this verse.

وَرَبَطْنَا عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ إِذْ قَامُوا رَبُّنَا رَبُّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَنْ نَذُعَ مِنْ دُونِهِ إِلَّا هُوَ لَقَدْ قُلْنَا إِذَا شَطَطْنَا

18:14 The Christians of the early times, though few in number, pledged that they would never call for help on any god other than the

رَبُّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ). Sustaining Lord of the Heavens and the Earth. They did not call on the “son” or the “holy ghost” for help in their prayers, as many later Christians eventually started doing.

هَلُولَاءٍ قَوْمًا اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ الْهَمَةً

18:15 “These people of ours” refers to the Romans and Greeks at the time of the early Christians and their polytheistic beliefs.

وَتَرَى الشَّمْسَ إِذَا طَلَعَتْ تَزَوَّرُ عَنْ كَهْفِهِمْ ذَاتَ الْيَمِينِ وَإِذَا غَرَبَتْ
تَقْرِضُهُمْ ذَاتَ الشَّمَاءِ وَهُمْ فِي فَجْوَةٍ مِنْهُ

18:17 The verse informs us of the place of their refuge. When one is in a northern country, says Central Europe, and looks towards the West, the sun is on the right side, and if one looks towards the east, the sun is on the left side. This is exactly what the verse tells us: that these early Christian went and lived in a safe place in the north.

قَالَ قَائِلٌ مِنْهُمْ كَمْ لَيْشُمْ ۖ قَالُوا لَيْثُنَا يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ ۗ قَالُوا رَبُّكُمْ أَعْلَمُ
بِمَا أَلِيشُمْ فَابْعَثُوا أَحَدَكُمْ بِوَرْقَمْ هَذِهِ إِلَى الْمَدِينَةِ فَلِيَنْظِرْ أَيْهَا أَرْكَيْ طَعَامًا
فَلِيَأْتِكُمْ بِرِزْقٍ مِنْهُ وَلَيُتَلَطِّفْ وَلَا يُشْعِرَنَ بِكُمْ أَحَدًا

18:19 This verse refers to a vision experienced by the Holy Prophet (pbuh) in which he was shown the future of the Christian nations. At the time of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), the Christians of the north were not in power and had little influence on world affairs. Politically, militarily, and technologically they were in a state that could be called “dormant and asleep”. The Holy Qur’ân describes that state of theirs as *raqûd* - رُقُود - dull, dormant (18:18); in a state of lull. But the Holy Prophet (pbuh) in his vision saw these nations in a restless and wary state. *Nuqallib* (18:18) from *qalaba* قَلَب means to turn a thing upside down or to change its condition. *Nuqallibu* is an act of changing directions or moving back and forth. The expression, “We will make them change their directions now to the right and then to

the left”, points to the moving about of the Christian nations in pursuit of their affairs around the globe. The mention of a dog in their courtyard refers to their social life. The dog is also a symbol of greed. Thus, the verse is also referring to the worldly ambitions of these people. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) became full of sorrow because of their lack of morality.

The verse further points out that this only scratches the surface of their troubles. If you had become aware of their true state, and the havoc they would later play among other nations and peoples of the world, their exterminating ancient civilizations, their conquering or colonizing vast territories, their enslaving of other people, their missionary activities, and their enmity towards the Muslims (cf.: 18:20), “You [the Holy Prophet (pbuh) and the reader] would have turned back from them in fright and you would have surely been filled with great awe and sorrow because of them”.

Yaum يَوْمًا can be a day, a year, a thousand years (22:47), and even fifty thousand years (cf. 70:4). Here, a “period of a thousand years, more or less” is given. This period is in agreement with the time it took the Christian nations to wake up from their slumber and come to dominate all world affairs. It was almost a thousand years after the Holy Prophet (pbuh) that the rise of these nations began. The four characteristics of the people mentioned in this verse are:

1. The establishment of financial institutions – *Bu‘athû Warqi* بُعْثُوا وَرِقٌ. *Ba‘athû* is derived from *ba‘tha* بَعَثَ - to raise, and *Warqi* وَرِق meaning money, specifically silver coins. *Warqi* also can refer to leaves or sheets of paper. Thus *Ba‘athû Warqi* بُعْثُوا وَرِق could be an allusion to the paper money to be introduced by these nations.
- 2) Transport of food and merchandise – *T‘âmâ طَعَامًا*. This word is derived from *t‘ima طَعَم*, meaning the act of feeding.
- 3) Polite talk and gentle behaviour. *Yatalattaf يَتَلَطَّفُ* means “let him be courteous”, “let him behave with great care”, “conduct with great

caution”. Its root word is *latufa* لطف meaning to be delicate, graceful, elegant, gentle, kind.

4) *Lâ-Yus’iranna* – لا يُشْعِرَنَّ “let them not understand your real purpose”, or “let them not perceive”. Its root word is *sh ‘ara* شَعَرَ - to perceive or to understand.

The colonizers of the Christian nations left Europe in all directions at the beginning of the 15th and 16th centuries (cf. 18:19). They entered the newly discovered lands under the pretext of trade. They raised funds, created trading companies, brought food and other merchandise, and during the initial stages of colonization behaved politely and gently towards the people, they encountered. They did not reveal their ulterior purpose of their coming to faraway lands. They also gleaned the secrets of the local population, all the while guarding their own secrets, particularly in the area of weaponry. Furthermore, they also introduced paper money.

قَالَ الَّذِينَ غَلَبُوا عَلَىٰ أَمْرِهِمْ لَنَتَّخَدَنَّ عَلَيْهِم مَسْجِدًا

18:21 The context of this verse becomes clear in the light of what has been said above. The early colonizers were given the status of national heroes. Numerous churches were built in dedication to them; their kings and missionaries.

سَيَقُولُونَ ثَلَاثَةٌ رَابِعُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ وَيَقُولُونَ خَمْسَةٌ سَادِسُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ رَجْمًا
بِالْغَيْبِ ۝ وَيَقُولُونَ سَبْعَةٌ وَثَامِنُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ

18:22 The mention of their numbers is an allusion to the number of different churches and nations within the Christian world. The dog is mentioned because among the Arabs, the dog is a symbol of greed. Whatever the number of churches was, all of them greatly aspired to wealth and worldly riches contrary to the teachings of Jesus.

وَلَا تَقُولَنَّ لِشَيْءٍ إِنِّي فَاعِلٌ ذَلِكَ غَدًا (٢٢)

18:23-24 To say *Inshâ-Allâh*, “Allâh willing”, when there is an intention of doing some task in the future is not a habit among the Christians and non-Muslims. In the narrative of Joseph, his brothers said, “We will keep guard on him (12:12)” and again, “We shall certainly persuade his father” (12:61), and then “We are sure to do it”. In all these cases the intention was made without the addition of *Inshâ-Allâh*. The verse is also to be understood in the context of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) making plans to leave Makkah for Madînah. He was told to add the words *Inshâ-Allâh* - “Allâh willing”.

وَلَبِثُوا فِي كَهْفِهِمْ ثَلَاثَ مِائَةٍ سِنِينَ وَأَرْدَادُوا تِسْعًا

18:25 The verse further elaborates on the situation of the early Christians. The Christians were weak in the beginning and had to hide for three centuries. It was after this period that Christianity emerged as a state religion.

وَاصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ يَذْعُونَ رَبَّهُم بِالْغَدَاءِ وَالْعَشَّيِّ بُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ

18:28 “And keep yourself attached to those who call upon their Lord” is in the first place, a command for the Holy Prophet (pbuh), and in the second place, for Muslims in general. As for the Holy Prophet (pbuh), in obedience to this command, his company was foremost of all Abû Bakr^(rz).

وَقُلْ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ ۖ فَمَنْ شَاءْ فَلْيُؤْمِنْ وَمَنْ شَاءْ فَلْيَكُفِرْ

18:29 “Let him who wishes believe, and let him who wishes disbelieve”. Allâh has His Free Will (*al-Mâlik*), and He gave free will to humans. The freedom of choice implies the possibility for making wrong decisions. Such a choice in the matter is not given to the angels. They do only what they are commanded to do (14:50; 66:6). Nor does space or matter have a choice to disobey Allâh (cf 41:11). The earth revolves involuntarily, and its movement deserves neither

reward nor punishment. Only our actions undertaken because of free will shall be weighed on the Day of Reckoning. He does not compel obedience but invites us to it for our own benefit. Our power to choose good is increased by the inspiration of *Rûh al-Quđus* and to do evil is prompted by *Iblîs*. *Rûh al-Quđus* and *Iblîs* present to us opposing choices. Rûmî says, “Free will is the endeavor to thank Allâh for His beneficence; predestination is the denial of this beneficence.”

يُحَلُّونَ فِيهَا مِنْ أَسَاوِرَ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ وَيُلْبِسُونَ ثِيَابًا حُضْرًا مِنْ سُندُسٍ
وَإِسْتَبْرَقٍ مُنْكَبِينَ فِيهَا عَلَى الْأَرَائِكِ

18:31 Thayâban Khudzrah – ثِيَابًا حُضْرًا “Green robes”. These are a symbol of ever-fresh life. Râzî draws our attention to the difference in construction of the two parts of this verse. The first part is in the passive form, “They shall be adorned”, and the second in the active, “and wear”. The active form alludes to what the righteous will have earned by virtue of their deeds, whereas the passive form denotes all that will be bestowed on them by the Beneficent Allâh out of His Grace.

وَاضْرِبْ لَهُمْ مَثَلًا رَجُلَيْنِ جَعَلْنَا لِأَحَدِهِمَا جَنَّتَيْنِ مِنْ أَعْنَابٍ وَحَفَقْنَا هُمَا
بِنَخْلٍ وَجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمَا زَرْعًا

18:32 This and the following verses are a parable, and not a narration. What follows needs interpretation and an understanding of the allusion being used. The form and wording of the dialogue is not a real conversation but is a portrait given in a metaphorical language. One interpretation that fits nicely into this parable is as follows: The two men symbolize Isaac, Ismâîl, and their respective communities, the Israelites and the Muslims. Isaac and his children settled in Palestine with abundant vine. At the time of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) their stronghold was the city of Khaibar, north of Madînah and they

owned cornfields between these cities. As the verse says, “One of the two inherited two vine-gardens fenced with date palms and between the two were cornfields”. The “one” mentioned here are Isaac and his progeny – the Jews. Hager, together with her son Ismâîl, was left in the desert, a completely barren place with no cornfields or vines. The Arabs, who regard themselves as descendants of Ismâ‘îl did not dwell in any place with abundant fruits, vines or cornfields.

كُلَّتَا الْجَنَّتَيْنِ آتَتْ أُكُلَّهَا وَلَمْ تَظْلِمْ مَنْهُ شَيْئًا ۝ وَفَجَرْنَا خَلَالَهُمَا نَهَرًا

18:33 “*We placed cornfields between the two*” is a description that also fits nicely with the oasis of Khaibar (north of Madînah) together with Palestine, with its river Jordan sustaining cornfields on both sides. In Palestine there were riches, and Khaibar was the center of the political and military power of the Jews in the time of the Holy Prophet (pbuh).

وَكَانَ لَهُ ثَمَرٌ فَقَالَ لِصَاحِبِهِ وَهُوَ يُحَاوِرُهُ أَنَا أَكْثَرُ مِنْكَ مَالًا وَأَعَزُّ نَفَرًا

18:34 “*I am richer than you in wealth and mightier in respect of man-power*” refers to the pride felt by the children of Israel with respect to their wealth, influence and power, and their arrogance towards the children of Ismâ‘îl – the Arabs. Verse 35 continues to describe the conditions of the Jews in their later days.

وَمَا أَطْنُ السَّاعَةَ قَائِمَةً وَلَئِنْ رُدِدتُ إِلَى رَبِّي لَأَجِدَنَّ خَيْرًا مِنْهَا مُنْقَبًا

18:36 “*I will find there an ever better resort than this*” refers to the claims of Israelites “*nahnu Abnâ Allâh*” – We are the sons of God and His chosen people (cf. 5:18; 2:88).

قَالَ لَهُ صَاحِبُهُ وَهُوَ يُحَاوِرُهُ أَكَفَرْتَ بِالَّذِي خَلَقْتَ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ سَوَّاكَ رَجُلًا

18:37 In the parable of The Companion, the Arab-Muslims are referred to in particular; those who claim to be the children of Ismâîl, and Muslims in general. The dialogue is a reminder and an invitation to the Jews by the Holy Prophet (pbuh) and to the Muslims referring to their common origins, while being a refutation of their claim to being the chosen people.

لَكِنَّا هُوَ اللَّهُ رَبُّنَا وَلَا أُشْرِكُ بِرَبِّي أَحَدًا

18:38 “*He, Allâh alone is my Lord, and I will associate none with my Lord*” is the main message of the Holy Qur’ân and the confession of faith of all Muslims. This confession indirectly addresses the non-believers in this context.

فَعَسَىٰ رَبِّي أَن يُؤْتِنِنَ حَيْرًا مِّنْ جَنَّاتِكَ وَيُرْسِلَ عَلَيْهَا حُسْبَانًا مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ
فَتُصْبِحَ صَعِيدًا زَلَاقًا

18:40 In the statement “*there is every hope that my Lord will give me a garden better than yours*”, is the great promise that Muslims will inherit vast lands and expanded power, better than the land of Palestine, and manpower much superior to that of the Jews. The lands and the power of the Muslims eventually expanded from Arabia to Spain to the west and up to the borders of China on the east. The stronghold of the Jews in Khaibar was lost early at the time of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) and was turned into a barren land. Even today Khaibar is a wasted and barren land, as was prophesied.

وَأَحِيطَ بِثَمَرِهِ فَأَصْبَحَ يُقْلِبُ كَفَيْهِ عَلَىٰ مَا أَنْفَقَ فِيهَا وَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلَىٰ
عُرُوشِهَا وَيَقُولُ يَا لَيْتَنِي لَمْ أُشْرِكْ بِرَبِّي أَحَدًا

18:42 “*His fruit was utterly destroyed and while it [the vine garden] lay toppled over on its trellises*” is an allusion to the Israelites, who shall lose their “two gardens” and become scattered across all nations for a period.

وَلَمْ تَكُنْ لَهُ فِئَةٌ يَنْصُرُونَهُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَمَا كَانَ مُنْتَصِرًا

18:43 “*There was no party left to defend him against Allâh, nor could he defend himself*” is the reference to the political and military weakness of Israelites. They shall always need the protection of others, as they will not be able to protect themselves without outside help.

وَاضْرِبْ لَهُمْ مَثَلَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَاءٍ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَاحْتَلَطَ بِهِ نَبَاتُ الْأَرْضِ فَأَصْبَحَ هَشِيمًا تَذْرُوهُ الرِّيَاحُ

18:45 The condition of the worldly life is elaborated on by another parable. In the words “*Mâlik al-Hayâat ad-Dunyâ*”, the similitude of the life of this world, the rise and fall of powerful and wealthy nations who clamor after worldly gains are addressed.

وَيَوْمَ نُسَيِّرُ الْجِبَالَ وَتَرَى الْأَرْضَ بَارِزَةً وَحَشِرْنَاهُمْ فَلَمْ نُغَادِرْ مِنْهُمْ أَحَدًا

18:47 Al-Jibâl – الجبال usually translated as “the mountains”. The word is sometimes used to describe powerful nations (Lisân, Tâj). نُسَيِّرُ, “set the mountains in motion and make them vanish”, also alludes to the formidable armies of powerful nations marching against one another.

فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ كَانَ مِنَ الْجِنِّ فَفَسَقَ عَنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّهِ

18:50 For the discussion on *al-Jinn* see verses 6:128; 15:27 and 7:38; refer to 27:17; 34:41; 41:25; 46:18; 46:29; 51:56; 55:33; 72:5; 114:6.

وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَى لِفَتَاهُ لَا أَبْرَحُ حَتَّى أَبْلُغَ مَجْمَعَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ أَوْ أَمْضِي حُقُّبًا

18:60 From here begins the spiritual journey of Moses, where one finds major incidents of the life of Moses described metaphorically (*Bukhârî; Ta'âfir*). This narration is Moses vision and has parallels with

the Ascension (*Isrâ*) of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) referred to in the preceding chapter (cf.: 17:1).

“I will not stop till I reach the confluence of the two rivers” (مَجْمَعُ الْبَحْرَيْنِ) refers to the branching of the Nile. It also symbolizes the union of the rivers of human and Divine knowledge, as the narration that follows indicates.

فَلَمَّا بَلَغَا مَجْمَعَ بَيْنِهِمَا نَسِيَا حُوتَهُمَا فَاتَّخَذَ سَبِيلَهُ فِي الْبَحْرِ سَرَّابًا

18:61 The loss of the symbolic fish was to serve as a sign that the union of the rivers of human and Divine Knowledge has been attained (*Bukhârî* 3:44). Asking for a meal denotes weariness (*Bukhârî*; see also *Ta’îr*). This grand servant of Allâh who is the central figure of the whole narration, stands for the Holy Prophet (pbuh) in possession of the most perfect form of prophetic knowledge (see *Ta’îr*). According to some interpreters, “the sincere young comrade” was Joshua, who appears so prominently in the History of Israel, and the junction of the two rivers is the branching of the Nile near Khartûm. In one tradition, this grand servant of Allâh is spoken of as Khidzir - the green one (*Bukhârî*; *Ta’îr*). This is an epithet rather than a name, implying that his wisdom was ever fresh and imperishable (cf. 18:31).

وَأَمَّا الْحِدَارُ فَكَانَ لِغَالَمِينَ يَتَبَيَّنُونَ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ وَكَانَ تَحْتَهُ كَنْزٌ لَّهُمَا وَكَانَ أَبُوهُمَا صَالِحًا فَأَرَادَ رَبُّكَ أَنْ يَبْلُغَا أَشْدَهُمَا وَيَسْتَخْرِجَا كَنْزَهُمَا رَحْمَةً مِّنْ رَّبِّكَ ۝ وَمَا فَعَلْنَاهُ عَنْ أَمْرِي ۝ ذَلِكَ تَأْوِيلٌ مَا لَمْ تَسْطِعْ عَلَيْهِ صَبْرًا

18:82 The incidents described are Prophetic allegories of Moses own life's work. In the narration, Moses voices concerns towards “his teacher” three times:

- 1) Moses feared that the poor people and their families might drown because of the damage done to the boat.
- 2) The killing of a young man was not justified.

3) Working without recompense is a senseless act.

In all these three situations, we find similarities in the life incidents of Moses.

A) The boat symbolizes the source of livelihood for the poor Israelites at the time of Moses, and the brutal king was the Pharaoh who seized all resources and earnings from the people of Moses so as to keep them slaves and dependent (cf. 2:49). Moses feared that the poor family (the Israelites) might be drowned, but it was the brutal king (Pharaoh) who was drowned (cf. 2:50; 44:23).

B) “The killing of a young man” refers to the Copt killed by Moses (cf. 20:40; 28:15).

C) Moses worked for many years in Midian without recompense (cf. 28:27-28). The repair of the wall finds its parallel in 10:26. Moses was given wisdom and knowledge (cf. 28:14). He exhorted the Israelites for patience just as in the narration, Moses is expected to show patience (cf. 7:178).

The interpretation of these three incidents of the vision shows a manifestation of Divine Wisdom, implying that whatever the great man had done was an impulse brought on by a higher Truth. The mystic insight that was revealed to the “wise man” is the Reality beyond the physical world. This Reality is always working in nature and is always directing humanity to goals of great Good, though that Good may be reached with apparent loss.

In the first occasion, when the boat was damaged, there was no real loss and the apparent loss turned out to have brought much benefit to the needy. In the second instance, there is a real loss of the life of a potentially wicked person, but it is for the good of his pious parents and also for humanity at large and perhaps even for the person himself to have died at an age before he could cause more harm. The third episode illustrates that for the good of others, deeds must be done that bring no immediate reward (cf. 10:26).

The Qur'anic verses do not support the idea claimed by some, who say that the fish mentioned in this narration was dead and fried, and then came to life and slipped away. No word in these verses gives support to this view nor does it make any sense.

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ ذِي الْقَرْنَيْنِ

18:83 “*They ask you about Dhul Qarnain*” - This was the question some Jews asked the Holy Prophet (pbuh) with reference to the vision of Daniel mentioned in their Scriptures (cf. Daniel 8.1-20). As the Holy Qur'an always does, it offers a corrected account of an important historical event and concludes with great prophecies related to said account. *Qurnain* is the dual form of *qaran* قَرْنٌ. *Qaran* is a generation, a century, an edge, border, or a brave man (Tâj, Lisân, *Qâmûs*). According to *Qâmûs*, it also means 100 years. ‘Alî^(rz) was given the title of *Dhul Qarnain* by the Holy Prophet (pbuh) (“*Inna laka baita fi Jannat wa innaka la Dhul Qarnaîha*”). This prophecy is about ‘Alî^(rz), and found its fulfilment when ‘Alî became the effective ruler of the lands of Tigris and Furat. *Dhul Qarnain* also means the “two-horned one”, “one belonging to two generations”, or “ruler of two kingdoms with two borders”. In the past, it was common that the kings and the knights used to wear crowns with two horns as a symbol of their power and bravery. The Old Testament (Daniel 8.20) gives the interpretation of Daniels vision. “The ram that you saw possessing the two horns, stands for Midya and Persia, and the hairy he-goat stands for the king of Greece”. In that light, the opinion of some that the *Dhul Qarnain* of the Holy Qur'an is Alexander the Great of Greece is wrong. Most importantly, it is impossible that the figure is Alexander of Greece since it is not consistent with the Holiness of the Qur'an to praise a polytheist.

The question arises then as to who this king was for whom the Holy Qur'an finds words of praise. Who was this king and Prophet (cf. 18:87-88; 18:95) who ruled over a vast empire and was concerned

with the welfare of his people? To get back to the biblical vision, he was Jehovahs “friend”, His “anointed” and His “shepherd”, and he “performed all His pleasures” (Daniel 8.3-20). When one reads the Qur’ânic narration that follows carefully, all descriptions apply to Cyrus, known as *Kaiqabad Khourus* - the king of Midya and Persia who lived about 535 BC (*Târikh Ibn Khaldûn*). He is erroneously called Darius in the Bible (Isaiah 44.28; 45.1-3; Ezra 1.1-2; Chron. 36.22-23).

This narration teaches us in the first place that worldly renunciation is not a prerequisite to true spirituality. Worldly status and royal power need not conflict with piety or prophethood. We find two other such examples in the Holy Qur’ân, that of David and then of his son Solomon, who were both powerful kings. *Dhul Qarnain*, or Cyrus, was the founder of the great Midyo-Persian Empire, which is symbolized by the two horns. He was a great and just ruler of vast territories (cf: 18:84). He is famous for the “Cyrus cylinder”, which some scholars call the first human rights charter in history. The verses 18:85-98 describe the extent of his territories and the people he ruled. His empire extended to the black sea and Asia Minor in the west (18:85-88), in the east to the barren lands of Baluchistan and Afghanistan (18:90) and in the north to the territory between Caspian Sea and Caucasus mountains. The narration of Gog and Magog and *Dhul Qarnain* are inseparably linked with each other. Verses 18:99-100 contain the prophecies about the return of nations described here as Gog and Magog, who will try to seize control over these lands.

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغَ مَغْرِبَ الشَّمْسِ وَجَدَهَا تَغْرُبُ فِي عَيْنٍ حَمِئَةٍ

18:86 Christian theologians raise an objection to this verse saying that the statement is wrong. How can it be possible that a sun, which is supposed to be several times larger than the earth, can sink into a muddy pool of murky water? The answer to this objection is very simple: If that were the case, the Holy Qur’ân would have used the

words: *wa kâna hunâk taghrub al-Shams* – وكان هناك تغرب الشمس indicating that was the place where the sun actually sank and disappeared. Now compare these verses with, “Here I am saving my people from the land of the sunrise and the setting of the sun” (Zechariah 8.7). The place mentioned here was most probably the delta of the Danube on the Black Sea

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغَ بَيْنَ السَّدَّيْنِ وَجَدَ مِنْ دُونِهِمَا قَوْمًا لَا يَكَادُونَ يَقْهُوْنَ قَوْلًا

18:93 Saddain - سَدَّيْنِ two barriers. This wall is mentioned in accounts by Muslim historians and geographers such as Marâsid al-Ittilâ‘, Ibn Faqîh, and Baidzawî. The pass of Derbent, where the wall was erected, is located between the Caspian Sea and the Caucasian mountains. The wall was constructed at Derbband (Derbent), a town in the Caucasus in the province of Daghistan, on the western shore of the Caspian Sea. It cuts through a narrow strip of land from which it climbs up the steep heights. According to the descriptions, it was 29 feet high, 10 feet wide and stretched over a length of 50 miles, with iron gates and numerous watchtowers allowing for an effective defense of the Persian frontiers from Gog and Magog, the barbarian tribes invading the northern parts of Cyrus territory.

قَالُوا يَا ذَا الْقَرْبَيْنِ إِنَّ يَاجُوحَ وَمَأْجُوحَ مُفْسِدُوْنَ فِي الْأَرْضِ

18:94 Yâjûj wa Mâjûj - يَاجُوحَ وَمَأْجُوحَ Gog and Magog. This is the form in which these names have achieved currency in all European languages (see also Genesis 10.2; 1 Chronicles 1.5; Ezekiel 38.2; 39:5-6). In Ezekiel we read, “Here I am against you, O Gog, chieftain of Meschech and Tubal” (Eze. 38.3; see also Eze 38.2). If we go further to the north of the Caucasus, we find two rivers bearing the names of Tonal and Mosko, on the latter of which is situated the ancient city of Moscow and on the former, the city of Tobolsk. These two rivers were named after two tribes of Ezek. Josephus, the famous Jewish historian, identifies Gog and Magog with the Scythians.

Throughout classical literature, Scythia generally referred to all regions to the north and northeast of the Black Sea. In *Târikh* Ibn Khaldûn, *Shahnama*, and *Ghais al-Lughât*, Yâjûj and Mâjûj are the people inhabiting lands north of Bactria. From the books of Islamic history, it can be concluded that Gog and Magog were the Gothic tribes who later settled on the southern coasts of the Baltic Sea, they were the ancestors of the present Teutonic and Slavic races, who then migrated into European territories (cf. *Târikh* Ibn Khaldûn, *Tafsîr Mu'âlam* by Suddî; Qitâdah; Baidzawî).

Based on what has been said, Gog and Magog can refer to the numerous nations located north of Persia, particularly in Russia and Europe - the Christian nations of today. According to the Christian interpreters of the Bible, Gog and Magog were the evil nations who will serve as the forces of Satan at Armageddon. They are also the last two survivors of a mythical race inhabiting Britain (Encyclopedia Britannica). A curious side-note in this context is the gigantic statues of Gog and Magog at the gates of Guild Hall in London, England, which are sometimes referred to as the guardians of the city. It is known that effigies similar to these existed in London as early as the time of Henry V.

قَالَ هَذَا رَحْمَةٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّي ۖ فَإِذَا جَاءَ وَعْدُ رَّبِّي جَعَلَهُ دَكَّاءً

18:98 “But when the promise of my Lord shall come to pass, He will raze it (the wall erected for the protection of Midya and Persia and the Southern territories)”. This is also an allusion to the future when such a wall will be of no avail against the weaponry to be developed in later ages.

وَتَرَكْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَمْوَجُ فِي بَعْضٍ ۝ وَنُفَخَ فِي الصُّورِ فَجَمَعَاهُمْ جَمْعاً

18:99 “And We shall leave them (- Gog and Magog) alone at that time, surging as waves in furious attacks” is a hint that these nations who played havoc at the time of Dhul Qarnain, will do the same again in later times. They will try repeatedly to occupy territories and steal the resources of others. The colonization by these now Christianized nations started about a thousand years after the advent of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). These nations found new ways to reach and occupy territories south of their lands and developed new weapons to overcome protective walls and fortresses. The Bible refers to the forces of Gog and Magog as the evil forces of Satan.

Jama‘nâ-hum Jam‘â – فَجَمَعْنَاهُمْ جَمِيعًا – “We will gather them in big gatherings and bring them face to face”, suggests that they will see each other as fighting in large numbers and in massive battles. Based upon what has been said compare this verse and the foregoing verses with the vision of Daniel (8.3-20) and the prophecy in Ezekiel (38.1-9) about the one with two horns and Gog and Magog. Other Biblical passages (Daniel 1.20; Ezekiel 1-9) also have prophetic meanings, rather than having a mere mystical purpose as assumed by many Bible scholars.



سورة مريم 19. CHAPTER

Mary (*Maryam*)

(*Revealed before Hijrah*)

The spiritual evolution of a human being as an individual soul and the spiritual heights it can reach (The *Isrâ'* of the Holy Prophet) was dealt with in chapter 17 and in chapter 18. This discussion continued by means of another spiritual journey namely that of Moses in the land of the confluence of two rivers. We now pass to the narration of the lives

of other Messengers of Allâh who also treded on the same path. Here we also read about their personal relations and their dealings within close environments: Yahya (John) with his father Zachariah, Jesus with his mother Mary, Abraham with his uncle Azar, Moses with his brother Aaron, Ismâ‘il with his family, and Idris (Enoch) in his personal high station to which he was called. While the last chapter dealt with the rise and spread of Christianity, this chapter deals with the falsity of their religious dogmas.

19:1 Kâf Hâ Yâ ‘Ain Sâd كَفِيْعُصْ are abbreviations (cf. 2:1). The Holy Prophet (pbuh), as reported by Ummi Hâni, have said that in the abbreviated letters, *Kâf* stands for *Kâfi* (All-Sufficient), *Hâ* for *Hâdi* (True Guide), ‘*Ain* for ‘*Alîm*, (All-Knowing), and *Sâd* for *Sâdiq* (Truthful). According to Ibn ‘Abbâs ، *Yâ* stands for *Yâmîn* (One possessing blessings). According to Ibn ‘Abbâs the letter *Kâf* ک stands for *Kabîr* (the Great), *Hâ* ه for *Hâdi* (the Guide), *Ya* ي for *Yâmîn* (Who gives peace, protection, and blessing). ‘*Ain* ع for ‘*Azîz* (the Mighty) and *Sâd* ص for *Sâdiq* (the Truthful). All of the above are the attributive names of Allâh. These abbreviations therefore express several core Divine Attributes and repudiate the basic Christian dogma of atonement.

بِرِّثِي وَيَرِثُ مِنْ آلِ يَعْقُوبَ ۖ وَاجْعَلْهُ رَبُّ رَضِيًّا

19:6 Yarithu يَرِثُ comes from *waritha* – وَرِثَ – to inherit, or a sustainer of one after another (Tâj, Lisân, Lane). The inheritance mentioned here refers to the blessings of prophethood found in the lineage of the House of Jacob, grandson of Abraham. Zachariah also anticipated that his kinsfolk would lack the moral strength to fulfil their duties.

يَا زَكَرِيَا إِنَّا نُبَشِّرُكَ بِغُلَامٍ اسْمُهُ يَحْيَى لَمْ نَجْعَلْ لَهُ مِنْ قَبْلٍ سَمِيًّا

19:7 Yahya يَحْيَى means, “he shall live long”. The name was given by Allâh, therefore this meaning is of significance. “To live long,” means that he will be remembered for a long time. It also signifies that Zachariah would be remembered long because of his son. Among Christians, the names John and its derivatives like Johannes, Jan, Sean, Juan, Johan, and Zachariah are still common today. The names Yahya and Zachariah are also common among the Muslims.

فَالْ رَبِّ اجْعَلْ لِي آيَةً ۝ فَانْ آتَيْكَ أَلَا تُكَمِّ النَّاسَ ثَلَاثَ لَيَالٍ سَوِيًّا

19:10 The purpose behind the commandment to abstain from talking is to devote time to the remembrance (*dhikr*) of Allâh. This was a spiritual measure calculated to recuperate Zachariahs exhausted physical powers. He was not struck dumb as suggested in the New Testament (Luke 1:24). Here the word “night” also includes the days in between, as in 3:40 the words are “three days”.

يَا يَحْيَىٰ حُذِّ الْكِتَابَ بِقُوَّةٍ ۝ وَآتَيْنَاهُ الْحُكْمَ صَبِيًّا

19:12 Sabiyyâ صَبِيًّا is derived from *sabâ* which is to feel a youthful propensity. *Sabiyyâ صَبِيًّا* is a male youth (Tâj, Lisân, Lane). Unfortunately there are some who translate this word as infant especially while translating the verse 19:29 related to Jesus. No classical Arabic dictionary gives the word *sabiyyâ* this meaning. Here in this verse, it is clearly implied that John had in the meantime reached an age, which enabled him to receive and understand Allâh’s commandment. Unlike the Bible, the Holy Qur’ân omits all those details that are unnecessary or are of little moral or spiritual value.

وَسَلَامٌ عَلَيْهِ يَوْمُ وُلْدَ وَيَوْمَ يَمُوتُ وَيَوْمَ يُبَعْثَ حَيًّا

19:15 Yauma Yamûtu يَوْمَ يَمُوتُ – “The day I die”. Yahyâ is counted among the dead, and no one believes that he is still alive or that he has been raised to heaven with his living body. Similar are the words

uttered by Jesus in verse 19:33— *Yaum amûtu* يَوْمَ أَمُوتُ. He refers to “the day I die”, and not “the day I will be raised to heaven bodily”. It should be noted that in both these cases the word *Yaum* يَوْمٌ is used and not *al-Yaum* – referring to a particular, but otherwise unknown day.

وَادْكُرْ فِي الْكِتَابِ مَرْيَمَ إِذْ انْتَبَدْتُ مِنْ أَهْلِهَا مَكَانًا شَرْقِيًّا

19:16 Makânan Sharqiyya - مَكَانًا شَرْقِيًّا “Eastern place”. *Imâm Râghib* and many others are of the opinion that the word *sharqiyya* شَرْقِيًّا is in the sense of *wâs'iat fasîhah* - وَاسِعَةٌ فَسِيْحَةٌ a broad and spacious place, sunny and with fresh air; the opposite to cloistered dwelling in which Mary was living. The words *من أهلهَا* “with her family” indicate she was not living alone when she became pregnant.

فَاتَّخَذْتُ مِنْ دُونِهِمْ حِجَابًا فَلَرْ سَلَنَا إِلَيْهَا رُوْحَ حَنَّا فَتَمَثَّلَ لَهَا بَشَرًا سَوِيًّا

19:17 Rûh - رُوح the Divine Revelation (cf. 17:85; 16:2; 32:9; 38:72; 42:52; 16:102; 2:253; 2:87; 5:110; 58:22; 26:193; 4:171). Here the word *rûh* (without the suffix *al* ال) stands for the capacity of a human being to receive Divine Revelation. Also in 2:87, the word means the Divine Revelation and is not a reference to the Holy Ghost or the Holy Spirit (cf. 42:52; 2:87). The Holy Ghost or the Holy Spirit are Christianized meanings and not the Qur’ânic meaning of this word. No spirit of any sort had entered Marys womb, rather an angel had appeared to her in a vision. The angel who brought the good news of the birth of a son (Jesus) is here called *Basharan Sawiyyâ* - بَشَرًا سَوِيًّا a perfect and well-proportioned man, to indicate that the son (Jesus) will be possessed of the best moral excellences that a man is capable of possessing. It was a Divine vision that was extremely clear and overwhelming, particular for someone who had never had this kind of spiritual experience before. As a virtuous young woman living screened from the rest of the world in a Jewish Temple (cf. 19:20), Mary was understandably frightened and perplexed at first, and it was

quite natural that she sought “Divine Protection”. *Basharan* بَشَرًا is derived from *bashara* بَشَرٌ, meaning “a bearer of good news”. *Bashara* means, “He gave or imparted important, urgent, pressing, significant news which changed the features of the listener and perplexed him or her” (Lisân, Râghib, Tâj, Lane).

فَحَمَلْتُهُ فَانْتَبَدَتْ بِهِ مَكَانًا قَصِيًّا

19:22 Makâna Qasiyyâ مَكَانًا قَصِيًّا refers to a remote and distant place. Here, it refers to the departure of Mary from the “eastern place” (*makânan sharqiyya* مَكَانًا شَرْقِيًّا) to some “distant place” where water and date palms were abundant. The Holy Qur’ân does not mention the name of the place, but does give a brief description. Ibn Jarîr and many other interpreters of the Holy Qur’ân agree that this place was somewhere in Egypt. It appears from the Gospel that after Jesus birth at Bethlehem, Joseph had taken Jesus and his mother Mary to Egypt, and it was after the death of Herod that the family came back to Nazareth (Matt. 2.13-23). Unlike the version of the New Testament, according to the Holy Qur’ân, Mary left Palestine for Egypt before the birth of Jesus and the birth-place of Jesus is some “remote and distant” oasis with a small stream (cf. 19:25-26). Here the Holy Qur’ân disqualifies Bethlehem or any other Palestinian city as being the birth-place of Jesus.

فَأَجَاءَهَا الْمَخَاضُ إِلَى جَذْعِ النَّخْلَةِ قَالَتْ يَا أَلَيْتُنِي مِثْ قَبْلَ هَذَا وَكُنْتُ نَسِيًّا
مَنْسِيًّا

19:23 Mary gave birth to Jesus under the same ordinary, natural circumstances that all women experience while giving birth to a child. “*Oh! Would that I had become unconscious before this and had become a thing gone and forgotten*” were words uttered under extreme pain of birth. The throes of childbirth compelled her to cling to a date tree for support and to utter these words. This verse is intended to tell us that the birth of Jesus was just like any other birth

of a human child, not under extraordinary circumstances to justify him as a son of God. The words, “*The throes of childbirth compelled her to cling to a date tree for support...*” are also symbolic of the support sought by Mary against the spiritual ignorance and opposition by the Jewish leaders and the complaints she makes because of the pain she felt from the opposition of her own people. According to some Sufi saints, these words also stand as symbols for the spiritual reformers in Islam (*Mujaddids*) who act as a kind of support for believers at the time when the religion chosen by Allâh begins to suffer from the attacks of its enemies.

وَهُرِيْ إِلَيْكِ بِحِدْعِ الْخَلَّةِ تُسَاقِطُ عَلَيْكِ رُطْبًا جَنِيًّا

19:25 The exact date and year and place of Jesus birth have never been settled by historians. According to this verse his birth took place at a “distant place” at a time when dates are ripening on palms trees. This corresponds to the Jewish month of Elul, which in turn corresponds to the months of August and September. If one can give any credence to the birth story in Luke where he says, “And there were shepherds in the same country (Judea) abiding in the field and keeping watch by night over their flocks” (Luke 2:7,8), the birth of Jesus did not take place in winter when the nightly temperature is low in the hills of Judea and snow is not uncommon. There is no scriptural authority for the belief that December 25th was the birthday of Jesus.

When in the 4th century A.D. the fathers of the Christian Church decided upon a date to celebrate the birthday of their Master, they chose the day of the celebration of the winter solstice, which was the most important pagan festival of the time. The winter solstice was regarded as the birthday of the sun, and in the Roman north on December 25th, a big pagan festival was observed. The fathers of the Church, unable to stamp out this popular festival and to win the sympathy of the Nordic peoples, Christianized it as the Feast of the Nativity of the Sun of Truth. The Christmas day celebrated on the 25th

of December is a later addition and has nothing to do with the real birthdate of Jesus – neither according to historians, nor according to the Bible, nor according the Qur’ânic account in verse 19:25. This verse of the Holy Qur’ân exposes this incorrect account just as it disqualifies Bethlehem as his birthplace.

فَأَتْتُ بِهِ قَوْمَهَا تَحْمِلُهُ ۖ قَالُوا يَا مَرْيَمُ لَقَدْ جِئْتِ شَيْئًا فَرِيًّا

19:27 As a rule the Holy Qur’ân omits details that would have no spiritual or moral value or other particular significance. For instance the Holy Qur’ân has does not narrate the childhood years of John (cf. 19:11-12), and similarly it has passed over the biography of Jesus from birth to early adulthood. It is therefore unreasonable to assert that a verse following the one in which the birth of Jesus is mentioned must chronologically refer to a time while Jesus was still a baby in the arms of his mother. However, the Holy Qur’ân provides a corrected account of some historically important facts wherever it becomes necessary.

Here, it was not Mary who was carrying Jesus in her arms, but a riding animal that was carrying Jesus. This results in a big mistake made by many translators. They do not follow the correct rules of classical Arabic grammar and syntax. *Tahmilu-hu* تَحْمِلُهُ is a compound of *tahmilu* تَحْمِلُ and *hu* هُوَ. *Hamala* حَمَلَ means to load, charge with, undertake responsibility, provide with carriage and other necessities for a journey, and charge one with duty or responsibility (cf. 9:92; Tâj, Lisân, Lane, Tâj). Words derived from *hamala* حَمَلَ have broad meanings throughout the Holy Qur’ân. Some examples are to be found in verses: 2:286; 6:146; 7:189; 17:3; 20:87; 24:54; 31:14; 69:14; and 69:14. The same word *tahmilu* تَحْمِلُ is also found in verse 9:92. There we read, “*Idza mā atúka le-tahmilu-hum* إِذْمَا تُوكِلُوكَ لَتَحْمِلُهُمْ – that you should mount them” and again لا أَجُدُ مَا أَحْمَلُكُمْ “I find not whereupon I may mount you” Here the use of the same expression does not mean that the people requested the Holy Prophet (pbuh) to carry them in

their laps, but simply, “When they came to you [and requested of you] that you should mount them (provide them with riding animals)”. With this example from the Holy Qur’ân we have no doubt left as to the correct translation of the expression *tahmilu-hu* in this verse. The compound word *tahmilu-hu* signifies that Jesus was “on a mount”, or Jesus was “provided with carriage and other necessities of journey”, or to adopt the second meaning of *hamala*, Mary “was charged with the responsibility of Jesus”. The last translation fits better when we read the verses that follow 19:27. In these verses, it is Mary who is being questioned to give an explanation about the behaviour of Jesus, and she is still held accountable for the “irresponsible behaviour of her son”. In what has been said, the expression in no way means that Jesus was still a baby and Mary was carrying him in her hands or on her lap. Such an interpretation could only be a result of a Christianized reading of the Qur’ân.

“*You have brought a strange thing*” لَقْدْ جِئْتِ شَيْئًا فَرِيًّا was an expression of disrespect directed towards Jesus by the proud Jews of the Temple. This was the time when Jesus started speaking out against the Jews of the Temple because of their abandoning the authentic Mosaic Law. The reference to Mary,: “*You have brought a strange thing*”, and as a “forger of lies” were the accusations of her people that she had given birth to a false Prophet and one who asserted religious authority above the elders of Israel.

يَا أَخْتَ هَارُونَ مَا كَانَ أَبُوكِ امْرًا سَوْءٍ وَمَا كَانَتْ أُمُّكِ بَغْيًا

19:28 Mary is here called by the Jews the “sister of Aaron” to point out her lineage from the sister of Aaron and Moses. In the same sense Elizabeth, the wife of Zachariah, is called daughter of Aaron (Luke 1.5) and Jesus is called the son of David and the son of Abraham (Matthew 1.1). In Arabic *akh* أخ and *ukht* أخت have broader meanings than just indicating nearest kin. Allâh says, “We sent towards the tribe of Thamûd their brother Sâlih” (11:61) and again, “We sent to the

tribe of Âd their brother Hûd” (11:52). From the Islamic books of Tradition we know that Safiyah, the wife of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), who belonged to the Jewish tribe from Khaibar, was once taunted because of her Jewish origin. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) told her to say, “My father was Aaron and Moses was my uncle and I am the wife of Muhammad (pbuh)” (Ibn Jarîr 16:52).

فَأَشَارَتْ إِلَيْهِ قَالُوا كَيْفَ نُكَلِّمُ مَنْ كَانَ فِي الْمَهْدِ صَبِيًّا

19:29 “Fa Ashârat alai-hi – فَأَشَارَتْ إِلَيْهِ She pointed towards him – that is she refused to take responsibility for Jesus, as he was already a grown up man (see the meaning of *tahmilu* in 19:27). The expression “Mann kâna fi al-Mahdi صَبِيًّا is usually translated as, “Who is a child in a cradle”, however this translation is incorrect. To understand what is being said, we must first of all note that it is the past tense (من كان) that is being used here and not the present tense. Secondly, the word Sabiyyâ صَبِيًّا means “a youth” (see 19:12). Al-Mahd مَهْدٌ is derived from *mahada* مَهَادٌ that means to prepare, extend, unfold, or make provisions. *Mihâd* مِهَادٌ (2:202; 78:6) is a resting place that is spread out and *yamhadûn* يَمْهُدُون means that they prepare or make provision (30:44). If we adopt the meaning “to prepare”, *mahd* مَهْدٌ would be “a period of preparation”. To read this verse as if Jesus was addressed by the Jews of the Temple, when he was still a small baby in a cradle and that he suddenly started talking is an absurd idea. Any such interpretation comes from a superficial reading, based on ignorance of the meanings of Arabic grammar, and with no basis in the Qur’ânic spirit. Nor would this interpretation make any moral or spiritual sense. On the contrary, such an interpretation may incite rejection of the Qur’ânic teaching in a rational mind. When we consider that this view is not supported by the subsequent verse (19:30) either, we must reject such a translation.

The words, “*who was a child in a cradle*”, uttered by the Jews of the Temple who claimed to possess the knowledge of Torah, were condescending and belittling Jesus and manifested an arrogant and boastful attitude. It was this arrogance, which Jesus later alluded to by saying, “*He [his Lord] has not made me arrogant [as you are]*” (19:32). The Jews of the Temple exhibited their arrogance and disrespect towards Mary when they said, “Who is this thing that you have brought” (19:27). Jesus referred to this when saying, “*He has made me dutiful to my mother*” (19:32).

When Mary directed the attention of the elders of the Jews to Jesus, they refused to talk to him and contemptuously asked why they should speak to one who was until recently a child in the cradle? Elderly people are wont to talk like that when invited to learn wisdom from one who is younger. By mentioning the cradle (*mihâd*) together with “old age” (*kahla* كهلا), they are insinuating that one so young could not have anything to teach them. In verse 3:46 the Holy Qur’ân implies that Jesus would be imbued with wisdom from his youth up to his old age. The joining of these two sets of words also implies that Jesus did not die at a young age but lived up to a ripe old age (*kahlan*). And if the word *mahd* is taken in the sense of “period of preparation” (*Lisân*) then the verse 3:46 would mean that Jesus spoke to people both in his period of preparation (*mahd*), his youth, and in his old age (*kahla*). The reference to his old age is again debunking the belief that he died on the cross or raised to heaven with his body.

قَالَ إِنِّي عَبْدُ اللَّهِ آتَانِيَ الْكِتَابَ وَجَعَلَنِي نَبِيًّا

19:30 “*He gave me the Book and me made me a Prophet*” shows clearly that the person referred to was not “a child in cradle” but a grown up man, with a mission of prophethood. The use of the past tense again makes it clear that it was not a child in a cradle who was speaking. Putting such words in the mouth of a child would be preposterous. It is absurd to suppose that Prayers and alms (Zakât)

were enjoined on Jesus while he was still an infant. It is a Divine rule that a Prophet is not appointed before attaining full maturity of intellect and experience. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) was forty when he received his first Revelation and entrusted with prophethood, as was Moses. When reading the verses 19:29 to 19:30, the parallel should be drawn with 19:11 and 19:12. In the words “*He gave me a book*” أثَانَنِي الْكِتَابُ, the use of the word Book is in the sense of new commands for the Jews, as the word *kitâb* is derived from *kutîba* as in 2:183.

وَبَرًّا بِوَالِدِتِي وَلَمْ يَجْعَلْنِي جَبَارًا شَفِيعًا

19:32 In the context of the narration, Jesus is here demonstrating his loyalty to his mother in the face of the earlier derogatory remark against her on account of him (cf. 19:27). The statement is also a rebuttal of an incident related by the Gospels according to which Jesus was rude to his mother (Matt.12.48). This Qur’ânic verse rejects this accusation. It is one of the objects of the Holy Qur’ân to clear Prophets of false charges.

The fact that only the mother of Jesus is mentioned and not his father, could be because Joseph, the father of Jesus mentioned in the Bible may not have been alive at that time. The mother and the brothers of Jesus are the only relatives mentioned in the Gospels following the onset of the ministry of Jesus. It is probable that Joseph died before the mission of Jesus began.

ذَلِكَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ قَوْلُ الْحَقِّ الَّذِي فِيهِ يَمْتَرُونَ

19:34 Ibn Maryam - ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ - The Son of Mary is Jesus distinctive name. This is an allusion to the many conflicting views about Jesus, ranging from the blasphemous assertion that he was a false Prophet and a product of an illicit union (as Mary was living alone with Jesus and her other children), to the belief that he was the son of God. The Gospels have also used the epithet “son of man” to describe Jesus.

The expression *ibn* (son of) appears in numerous contexts in the Bible and “son of man” means nothing but “human”, as if to emphasize Jesus being of human nature as opposed to be of divine nature. The epithet “son of man” has been used in the Bible for others as well.

Great honour was bestowed on Mary by the All-Mighty Allâh to name Jesus as *Ibn Maryam* (ابن مريم). Allâh also designates Mary as *Saddiqah* – صَدِيقَة – the Truthful (5:75), a rank not of a Prophet but very close to it (cf. 4:69; 19:56; 12:46). The Arabs call any action that leads to excellent results *siddiq*. Abû Bakr^(rz) was given the same rank; he is remembered as Abû Bakr *Siddiq*^(rz). Neither *Ishâq* nor *Ismâ'il* received a similar title (19:41; 19:56) although their mother is likewise respected, and the rituals carried out between *Saffa* and *Marwâ* – the two hilltops near Ka‘aba in Makkah, are performed by millions of devotees in remembrance of Hager, mother of *Ismâ'il*. Mary was the recipient of Divine Revelations, and the true believers are likened to her (66:11-12).

The supposed virgin birth of Jesus is topic of an unnecessary, but ongoing debate among Muslims. For Muslims, it does not add to spirituality or morality if he believes in the virgin birth, nor will it affect the morality and spirituality of a Muslim if he rejects the virgin birth of Jesus. If we make this a crucial issue, it becomes a source of discord. Allâh has not made this issue a part of the Muslim belief (*imân*). The alleged virgin birth of Jesus is also not an argument for the sonship of Jesus.

If the virgin birth is brought by Christians as an argument to prove the divinity of Jesus before Muslims, the Holy Qur’ân has come forward with much greater and stronger arguments than this to disprove the divinity of Jesus (3:2-7; 72:116; 19:88; 21:21; 43:15,81; 9:19; 23:31; 6:165). The Qur’ân describes Mary as being virgin and still unmarried while in the Temple at the time she received the Divine Revelation of the future birth of a son (19:21). Compare also with Zachariah, who received a similar announcement of the future birth of a son who will

be a Prophet (3:38-40, 19:7-9). It was a great Prophetic Revelation that a young, virgin women and still not in wedlock, receives the news of giving birth to a pure son (*Ghulâm Zakiyya* غلام زکیٰ 19:19) who will be worthy of regard in this world and the Hereafter (*Wajîhan fi al-Dunyâ wa al-Âkhirah* و جیہا الدنیاء و فی الآخرة 3:45), who will be one of the nearest ones (*Mugarrabîn* 3:45) to Allâh, the All-Mighty, and who will reach old age (*kahlan* کھلان).

This reference to his old age is again a soothing prophecy for Mary that her son will escape all of his enemies attempts to murder him. What great news for Mary! This was the mighty prophecy, a “Word of Promise” (3:45) given to Mary by Allâh, a great wonder, if one wants to call it a wonder. Giving birth as a virgin, if at all, is not that great as compared to what Mary was told. There is no direct mentioning of a virgin birth anywhere in the Holy Qur’ân. The concept of virgin birth is deduced from some Qur’ânic verses, and this deduction could be right or wrong. It cannot be taken as an indication of virgin birth that the father of Jesus is not mentioned in the Holy Qur’ân. It is not the habit of our Lord to mention the names of the parents of His apostles in His Holy Book and it is still understood that they had their fathers and mothers. Regardless, this debate has no moral or spiritual value. For those who are still curious to know the answer, they should ponder over verse 3:44. Perhaps they will find an answer there.

Questions of the virgin birth or of his talking while still a baby, or restoring life to the dead in the literal sense was never an issue at the time of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) and in early Muslim history. It became an issue soon after the colonization of Muslim lands by the Christian powers and renewed attempts by Christian missionaries to convert the Muslims back to Christianity.

إِذْ قَالَ لِأَبِيهِ يَا أُبَيْتِ لَمْ تَعْبُدُ مَا لَا يَسْمَعُ وَلَا يُبْصِرُ وَلَا يُعْنِي عَنْكَ شَيْئًا

19:41 “*Why do you worship that which can neither hear nor see*” is a reminder to those who call upon the dead. Many pagans at the time of

Abraham worshipped idols who had neither eyesight nor hearing. This verse is also another reminder that Jesus is dead and he can neither hear nor see those who implore him for help. The Holy Qur'an negates the faculty of hearing and seeing of deities.

قَالَ أَرَاغِبُ أَنْتَ عَنْ إِلَهِي يَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ لَئِنْ لَمْ تَتْهِ لَأْرْجُمَنَّكَ

19:46 la-Arjumanna-ka رَجَمْ is derived from *rajam* meaning to stone, or stone to death. It also means to expel, expel with a curse, or to speak foul. From this, *la-Arjumanna-ka* should be understood to mean that we will speak foul of you and your God. This later meaning was adopted by the Companions of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) (Ibn Kathîr). All these meanings can apply to the above expression.

قَالَ سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكَ سَاسْتَغْفِرُ لَكَ رَبِّي إِنَّهُ كَانَ بِي حَفِيًّا

19:47 “*Peace be upon you*” سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكَ was the reply of Abraham under these circumstances. This reply is a great moral example for us to follow in situation of blasphemy. This salutation became a part of Islamic moral teachings.

أَوْلَا يَذْكُرُ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنَا خَلَقْنَاهُ مِنْ قَبْلٍ وَلَمْ يَأْكُ شَيْئًا

19:67 Al-Insân – الإنسان – the human being. By adding the suffix *al* before *insân*, the verse is addressed to those human beings who deny Resurrection.



سورة طه

O Man be at Rest!

(Revealed before Hijrah)

The last chapter dealt at length with Mary and the birth of Jesus; this chapter deals with that of Moses. Five sections out of eight deal with the account of Moses, who gave the Israelites a comprehensive Divine Law, the basic principle of the doctrine of monotheism. It is connected to the previous chapter in the sense that Christianity, which is only a branch of the Mosaic dispensation, should not and could not have gone against this Law.

It was the recital of this very chapter that convinced ‘Umar bin Khattâb^(rz) to accept Islam five years after the pronouncement of prophethood and nine years before Hijrah. At that time this chapter had already been put into writing and had been circulating among the Companions and committed by them to memory (Ibn Hishâm; Ibn Sad III/1:191).

20:1 Tâhâ طه is not a combination of two letters of Arabic alphabets but a meaningful expression of its own signifying “O man! be at rest” (Jarîr; Râzî; Kathîr). Tâhâ is one of the names of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) (Bahr al-Muhît). Ibn ‘Abbâs said upon the explanation of Allâh’s saying: TâHâ طه, “We have not revealed unto you (Muhammad) this Qur’ân that you should be distressed. We have not revealed the Qur’ân to you that you should toil”. This verse was revealed when the Prophet (pbuh) used to stand in prayer at night vigil until his feet swelled up, and so Allâh alleviated this for him through this verse. He said, TâHâ, which in the dialect of Makkah means ‘O perfect man’. The title is particularly appropriate in three ways:

- 1) It is a word of comfort to the Holy Prophet (pbuh).

- 2) It is a direct and personal address to a perfect human being, a personal appeal to face the realities of life.
- 3) It takes up the narration from the last chapter, describing the human being as a spiritual being.

مَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْآنَ لِتَشْفَعَ

20:2 “We have not revealed this Qur’ân to you that you should fail in your mission.” So it cannot be that the Prophet, to whom the Holy Qur’ân is revealed, should remain unsuccessful in bringing about the transformation for which it was revealed. It cannot be a failure, as it is a manifestation of the Divine Will. There is nothing in the Qur’ânic Law that is repugnant to human nature and that, if acted upon, should put a human being into trouble. The ethical discipline imposed upon us by its teachings is meant not to narrow down our field of life, but to enhance it by deepening our consciousness of right and wrong.

وَإِنْ تَجْهَرْ بِالْقَوْلِ فَإِنَّهُ يَعْلَمُ السُّرُّ وَأَخْفَى

20:7 “He knows the secret thoughts as well as what is yet hidden deeper” (subconscious and unconscious). Allâh knows not only every human beings unspoken, conscious thoughts but also all that goes on within his subconscious mind, and all those ideals, ideas, and ambitions of a person that lie hidden in the womb of futurity and which have never crossed his mind.

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ لَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَى

20:8 Asmâ’ al-Husnâ means beautiful names. Allâh’s Names are His Attributes, which He ascribes to Himself in His Holy Book. He makes Himself known through His Attributes, which are His Beautiful Names. There are names that make Him known such as the Powerful and All-Mighty (*al-‘Azîz*; 22:74), the Self-Subsisting and All-Sustaining (*al-Qayyûm*; 3:2), Possessor of full power to do

whatever He likes (*al-Qadîr*; 2:284). Then there are names of similarity such as the All-Hearing (*al-Samî'*; 22:61) the All-Seeing (*al-Basîr*; 22:61), the Living (*al-Hayyî*), All-Knower (*al-'Alîm*), the Hearer (*al-Sâm'i*), the Well-Aware (*al-Khabîr*) and the Creator (*al-Khâliq*). There are other names that are taken from acts ascribed to Him, as for instance *Al-Râfi'*- the One Who exalts; *Al-Bâsit*, the One Who releases in abundance joy, relief and ease. *Al-Mûjib* – Responder to prayers and supplications *Al-Muhyî*- the Giver of life; *Al-Mumît* – the One Who causes to die. He has the Attribute of *al-Kalîm* (the One who Speaks) that is mentioned indirectly in the Holy Qur'ân because He speaks indirectly, from behind a veil. He said, “*It is not given to a human being that Allâh should speak to him except by Revelation (Wahî) or from behind a veil*” (42:51; 9:164; 7:143). Then there are names with polarity as Allâh ascribes to Himself as being the Manifest (*al-Zâhir*) and the Un-manifest or Hidden (*al-Bâtin*). He is hidden (*al-Bâtin*) from those who are veiled from seeking Him with their five senses and reason, and He is manifest (*al-Zâhir*) for those who seek Him by His Light (*Nûr*) in their hearts. He is *al-Bâtin*, hidden behind the veils, because the cosmos cannot perceive Him as He perceives Himself, nor He can ever be unveiled. He names himself the First (*al-Awwal*), as the One without beginning, contradicting any priority in the sense of existence and non-existence. Being infinite, He calls Himself the Last (*al-Âkhir*). He says He is the Unique One (*Ahad*), He is the Self-Sufficient Being (*al-Samad*), and nothing is His likeness (42:11), and He stands High above any similarity (37:180): these are the Attributes of Incomparability, which is related to Allâh's Essence. In addition, He possesses the Attributes of Transcendence, i.e., He is the Light of the Heavens and the Earth (24:35). We should “know Him as both Comparable and Incomparable. We will sit in the abode of Truth” (Ibn al-‘Arabî).

There is a saying of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) that Allâh has 99 Attributes. These 99 Attributes are such as can be read in the pages of nature: we can perceive them, and they can come within the scope of

our coping, and with them, we can imbue ourselves. They remind us of those Divine moulds in which we have to cast our daily life. High morality consists of reflection and doing deeds in conformity with these Attributes and to a certain extent imitating them (7:180). These 99 Names are not the only Attributes He possesses. His Attributes are limitless and innumerable (18:109). He says, “*Every moment He manifests Himself in a new state of glory and wondrous way*” (55:29). No one can comprehend them in their entirety. He is the only knower of His own Essence. His Attributes have ranks (*Marātib*) and the Name Allâh embraces all His Beautiful Names (*Asmâ’ al-Husnâ*). His Attributes are a part of His essence, and thus cannot be separated from Him. His Attributes are His mysteries, and the essences of His Attributes are the mysteries of mysteries. Those who attain His nearness are able to penetrate some of these mysteries. They are the true lovers of Allâh.

إِذْ رَأَى نَارًا فَقَالَ لِأَهْلِهِ امْكُثُوا إِنِّي آتَيْتُ نَارًا لَعَلِيٍّ آتَيْتُكُمْ مِنْهَا بِقَبِيسٍ أَوْ أَجِدُ عَلَى النَّارِ هُدًى

20:10 Moses “*saw a fire*” رأى ناراً. This seeing was a Divine Manifestation that he perceived with his spiritual eye. The fire in this context is synonymous with light, the illumination, which Allâh bestows on his Prophets. Moses was quite aware of this manifestation, as he said, “*I would find some guidance at the fire.*” Clearly, he meant a spiritual Divine guidance.

إِنِّي أَنَا رَبُّكَ فَاقْلِعْ نَعْلَيْكَ ۝ إِنَّكَ بِالْوَادِ الْمُقَدَّسِ طُورِي

20:12 This and the following verses are some of the few in which Allâh speaks in “I” form. This occurs only when there is closeness between a human being and Allâh (cf. 89:20-30), and only when the talk comes around to love and affection (cf. 20:39; 89:20-30). This closeness was already indicated in the preceding verse, “*When he came close.*” This intimacy and closeness becomes more evident,

when he is asked to “*take off your shoes*.” To ask someone to take off shoes is a polite expression that the person is welcomed, and it is said to one who is invited to stay (*Tâj*; *Baidzawi*). Some interpreters of this verse are of the opinion that “*taking off the shoes*” is to make ones heart free from all discomfort and worries of the world and the care of the family.

Tûwa طُوى is the name of a hallowed valley. *Zamakhsharî* explains it as meaning twice from *tîwan*: twice done, twice hallowed. The Divine voice was heard echoed in the valley, and Moses was raised there to prophethood. *Imâm Râghib* gives similar explanation, saying that the word *tûwa* is spoken in reference to the selection of Moses to prophethood (cf. 28:30).

إِنَّنِي أَنَا اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا

20:14 The use of “I-Form”, in which the pronoun *inni* or *anâ* is translated as “I,” is called the “I-ness” (*inniya* or *anniya*) of Allâh (cf. 28:30; 27:9; 20:39). The use of first person necessitates the existence of another. Mostly we find “We-Form” (*mâhiyyat al-Haqq*) and “He-Form” (*Huwiya*) in His verses. Their occurrence and use has relevance in reference to what is being said.

إِنَّ السَّاعَةَ آتِيَةٌ أَكَادُ أَخْفِيهَا لِتُجْرِيَ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا شَاءَ

20:15 **Ukhfîhâ** خَفِيَّهَا is derived from *khafiya* خَفِيَ meaning, to be hidden, conceal a thing. It also means to remove the covering, be perceived. Thus, the word has contradictory meanings. It is *said khafiy al-Barq* - خَفَى الْبَرْقُ - the lightening removed its covering, that is it was a lightening - and similarly *khafiya al-Shai al-Zahara* - خَفَى الشَّئْ الظَّاهِرُ - a thing became revealed—and *khafiya al-Matar al-Nâfiq* - خَفَى الْمَطَرُ النَّفِيقُ - rain uncovered the hole of the mouse. Here **akâdu ukhfîya** أَكَادُ أَخْفِيهَا means, “We are going to uncover” and not “We are going to conceal.”

وَاصْمُمْ يَدَكَ إِلَى جَنَاحِكَ تَخْرُجْ بَيْضَاءَ مِنْ غَيْرِ سُوءٍ آيَةً أُخْرَى

20:22 Idhmum Yadaka اصْمُمْ يَدَكَ means, to get hold of something or to draw close. Some interpreters are of the opinion that the expression “*Put your hand close under your armpit*” was an allusion to the Book to be given to Moses and that this Book will be “*white and shining*,,” and “*without any disease*.” This interpretation finds its support from the statement “*A Divine Book and guidance for his people*” (cf. 7:142-144; 7:150).

قَالَ رَبِّ اشْرَحْ لِي صَدْرِي

20:25 Moses prayed, “*O Lord! Enlighten my mind*,” but on the other hand the Holy Prophet (pbuh) was told, “We did already enlighten your mind” (94:1). Was his prayer an allusion to the Holy Prophet?

وَأَقْيَثْ عَلَيْكَ مَحَبَّةً مَنِّي وَلِتُصْنِعَ عَلَى عَيْنِي

20:39 Note here the address with “We” in the verse above (إِذَا وَحَنَّا إِلَيْ) 20:38) changes to “I.” This is then when the talk comes around to love and affection.

فُؤْلًا لَهُ قُوَّلًا لَيْنَا لَعَلَهُ يَتَذَكَّرُ أَوْ يَحْشِي

20:44 To speak in a gentle speech قُوَّلًا لَيْنَا is a lesson on morality and ethics for all of us. One should always use gentle and polite language and show due respect to those whom Allâh has endowed with worldly honour and power, no matter how bad they are. Although Pharaoh “transgressed all limits,” still Allâh tells Moses to speak to him in a polite and gentle voice. Certainly, Allâh knows the future: the tentative form in the phrase, “*May be he pays heed*,” لَعَلَهُ يَتَذَكَّرُ does not imply any doubt on Allâh’s part. It implies His command to the bearer of His message to address the king with an outlook on the latter’s self-

view. It relates to the intention and hope with which one should approach his task (Râzî).

وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَىٰ مَنِ اتَّبَعَ الْهُدَىٰ

20:47 “*Peace will be upon him who follows the guidance*” was the Divine offer under condition for Pharaoh. Moses offers Pharaoh the salutation of “Peace.” The dwellers of Paradise will greet each other with the salutation of “Peace” (cf. 56:26). Thus, Allâh offered Paradise to Pharaoh.

قَالَ رَبُّنَا الَّذِي أَعْطَىٰ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلْقَهُ ثُمَّ هَدَىٰ

20:50 “*Our Lord is He Who gives every creation its form and character and then guides them.*” Here the words **Thumma Hudâ** contain an argument for the necessity of Divine Revelation needed for human guidance. Human beings stand always in need of spiritual and moral guidance. How can we think for a moment that Providence ignores our chief necessity when He has already met all other requirement for our sustenance? If consciousness appears appreciably in animals, it attains in a human being the capacity to reach perfection, and its requisite must come from Above like other things we need.

قَالَ فَمَا بَالُ الْقُرُونِ الْأُولَىٰ

20:51 Pharaoh said, “*What will be the fate of the former generations?*” who did not believe in these things. Here Pharaoh is trying to divert the discussion in a different direction, as he is speechless and feels uncomfortable before the argument given by Moses.

مِنْهَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ وَفِيهَا نُعِيدُكُمْ وَمِنْهَا نُخْرِجُكُمْ تَارَةً أُخْرَىٰ

20:55 “We have created you” - خَلَقْنَاكُمْ here the dialogue between Moses and Pharaoh ends for the time being, with a direct Qur’ânic discourse addressed to human beings in general (Râzî).

فَالْأَجْئَنَا لِتُخْرِجَنَا مِنْ أَرْضِنَا بِسِحْرِكَ يَا مُوسَىٰ

20:57 Pharaoh was left with no argument on the actual subject matter. He had no other alternative but to accuse Moses: “Have you come to us to turn us out of our country?” This was a clever move by Pharaoh, a common strategy employed by the powerful.

فَلَنَأْتِيَنَّكَ بِسِحْرٍ مِّثْلِهِ فَاجْعَلْ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكَ مَوْعِدًا لَا نُخْلِفُهُ نَحْنُ وَلَا أَنْتَ مَكَانًا سُوَّى

20:58 Being a great king, Pharaoh offers Moses **Makânan Sawiyyâ** مَكَانًا سُوَّى, a fair place and acceptable time for the contest. As a powerful king, he knows how to behave. In this offer there is also a hidden trick. In case Pharaohs people lose, he could say that all this was planned by Moses, and if he is the winner, he can claim it was a fair contest.

فَالْمَوْعِدُكُمْ يَوْمُ الزَّيْنَةِ وَأَنْ يُخْشَرَ النَّاسُ ضُحَّى

20:59 Moses surpasses Pharaoh in politeness and gives Pharaoh the first choice. In yet another place Moses offers his counterparts to present their arguments first (cf. 20:66). The verses 20:47-73 inform us how the disbelieving powerful people behave, and how the believers should react to them. The manners, the politeness, and the respect shown by Moses before his enemies become an argument for some of the people of Pharaoh to accept Mosess message (20:71-73).

فَأَوْجَسَ فِي نَفْسِهِ خِيفَةً مُّوسَىٰ

20:67 “*Moses felt afraid in his mind*” does not mean that Moses was afraid of the contest for himself, but he feared that his people might be misled by the antics of the magicians. Prophets and true believers are never afraid of the people, but fear only Allâh (cf. 37:33; 37:39).

وَأَلْقِ مَا فِي يَمِينِكَ تَأْفِفْ مَا صَنَعُوا ۝ إِنَّمَا صَنَعُوا كَيْدُ سَاحِرٍ ۝ وَلَا يُفْلِحُ
السَّاحِرُ حَيْثُ أَتَى

20:69 “*Cast down what you have on your right!*” is a phrase in classical Arabic meaning that a command was given that Moses should now come forward with the arguments of Divine Unity he learned from Allâh, which were his strength, and show Pharaohs people the weakness of their religion (cf. 18:60; 20:40-41; 20:27; 20:61). With such “powerful” arguments - as ‘Asâ (staff) stands for power and strength. Moses removed *sahar*, - the spell, the deception, the false fascinations of the glory of Pharaohs kingdom, and falsehood in the guise of “truth.” The Holy Qur’ân says, “*وَأَضَلَّ فِرْعَوْنُ قَوْمَهُ وَمَا هَدَى*” “Pharaoh misled his people and did not lead them to the right path” (20:79).

قَالَ آمَنْتُ لَهُ قَبْلَ أَنْ آذَنَ لَكُمْ

20:71 Pharaoh claims for himself the attributes and powers of a god when he says, “*Dared you believe in him (Moses) before I gave you permission?*” He thus takes advantage of his worldly powers to behave as if he were a god, or at least his vice-regent. He seeks to rule on his own, thereby ignoring the Divine Rule. Moses, on the other hand, is the messenger of God who acts in conformity with the Divine Law, but with no power of his own to enforce it. Whereas Moses has spiritual authority and rank, Pharaoh has worldly power and rank. The dialogue between them, similar to the dialogue between Abraham and his sire, and Abraham and Nimrod, and other Prophets and their rebellious people, which on the surface appears to be a simple confrontation of “good” and “bad,” is, in reality, something that has

been continually going on as polar principles of the “Creative Act” (cf. 6:95; 11:7; 8:37) and “Divine Wish”.

وَلَقَدْ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى مُوسَى أَنْ أَسْرِ بِعِبَادِي فَأَصْرِبْ لَهُمْ طَرِيقًا فِي الْبَحْرِ يَبْسَأُ
لَا تَخَافُ دَرَكًا وَلَا تَخْشَى

20:77 Referring to the phrase, “*Take them along a dry path,*” Ibn Jarîr explains: “Choose for them a dry path” (cf. 26:63-66). The verse shows that there was at that time a dry path running through the marshland. Divine Revelation gave knowledge of this dry path to Moses. Moses had no knowledge of this before.

قَالَ هُمْ أُولَاءِ عَلَى أَثْرِي وَعَجِلْتُ إِلَيْكَ رَبُّ لِتَرْضَى

20:84 Aulâ'i alâ Atherî - “*They are close on my heels*” is an expression in Arabic meaning, they are faltering my guidance; they are stumbling, losing strength, hesitating to follow the guidance (Lisân, Tâj).

قَالَ فَإِنَّا قَدْ فَتَّنَّا قَوْمًا مِنْ بَعْدِكَ وَأَضَلَّهُمُ السَّامِرِيُّ

20:85 The designation **al-Sâmarî** السَّامِرِيُّ is an adjectival noun denoting the persons descent or origin. Sâmarî was one of the many Egyptians who had joined the Israelites on their exodus from Egypt (Ibn ‘Abbâs). Most probably, the word is derived from *shemer*. In the Coptic language, *shemer* means “foreigner.” *Sumrat* is a colour between fair and black. The golden calf symbolizes the glamor of this life (cf. 20:131)

فَأَخْرَجَ لَهُمْ عِجْلًا جَسَدًا لَهُ خُوارٌ فَقَالُوا هَذَا إِلَهُكُمْ وَإِلَهُ مُوسَى فَنَسِيَ

20:88 The interpolation “it came to pass” is necessary because of the change from the direct speech in the preceding verse to the indirect in this one and in the sequence. Sâmarî symbolizes those who are astray

and who lead others astray. Sâmarî in his vision thinks that he has recognized God in the shape of a bull, and he chose to worship him instead of the Real One. When Sâmarî said, “*I perceived that which they did not perceive,*” قَالَ بَصَرْتُ بِمَا لَمْ يَبْصُرُوا, he spoke from his false visionary certainty. It is just such visionary certainty that even today drags along the idol-worshipper.

أَفَلَا يَرَوْنَ أَلَا يَرْجِعُ إِلَيْهِمْ قَوْلًا وَلَا يَمْلِكُ لَهُمْ ضَرًّا وَلَا نَفْعًا

20:89 The argument put forth in the words, “*Could they not see that this made them no answer and could neither avoid harm to them nor do good?*” shows that the real Lord not only listens to prayers but also gives reply to His true worshippers.

إِنَّ الَّذِي أَلَا تَجُوعُ فِيهَا وَلَا تَعْرِي (١١٨) وَأَنَّكَ لَا تَظْمَأُ فِيهَا وَلَا تَضْحَى

20:118-119 Protection from heat, food, and clothing to cover the body are the references to the amenities that are conjoined to civilized life.

فَأَكَلَا مِنْهَا فَبَدَثْ لَهُمَا سَوْأَتْهُمَا وَطَغِيَّا يَخْصِفَانِ عَلَيْهِمَا مِنْ وَرَقِ الْجَنَّةِ (١٢١)
وَعَصَى آدُمْ رَبَّهُ فَغَوَى (١٢١)

20:121-122 A brief account of the lapse by human beings as symbolized by Adam is given here. Lapse is unintentional and not out of stubbornness and pride. Here, the dogma of original sin is traced to its very root and then refuted. It is made clear that sin forms no part of the heritage of man and that he is punished only for his own trespasses and offences. If it were not possible for a human being to get rid of sin, then the very purpose of Divine punishment is defeated. The “forbidden tree” is simply an allegory of the limits Allâh has set on our desires and actions. Human lapse, symbolized here by Adam is only an error of judgment: it is inadvertent and involuntary, not at all intentional or deliberate. The verse tells that negligence is one of the recurrent characteristics of the human race (Râzî). Since the faculty of

conceptual thinking is a human beings endowment, his forgetting is an evidence of the weakness that is characteristic of the human race (4:28). This emphasizes once again the necessity of Revelation and the human beings dependence on unceasing Divine guidance, as pointed out in verse 113. Therefore, Allâh has sent His Laws through His Messengers to every nation, and that Law was not a burden. Divine Law is a blessing, since it repeatedly informs us of the bounds we have to keep in order to secure happiness and prosperity. In this chapter the detailed account of Adam is given also with the object to refuting the Paulian idea of many Christians that the Divine Law is a burden or even a curse. Christianity has a link to Mosaic dispensation. Moses was a Law-giving Prophet; if the Law was a curse then Moses should have been condemned and denounced.

قَالَ اهْبِطُوا مِنْهَا جَمِيعًا ۖ بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ ۖ فَامَّا يَأْتِينَكُمْ مَنِي هُدًى
فَمَنْ اتَّبَعَ هُدًى اَيَ فَلَا يَضِلُّ وَلَا يَشْقَى

20:123 The words “both parties” in the statement “*Go hence! Both parties one and all, you being enemies one to another*” refers to the fighting and contesting parties, not Adam and his wife. The words that follow explain this context.

وَلَوْلَا كَلِمَةً سَبَقْتُ مِنْ رَبِّكَ لَكَانَ لِزَاماً وَأَجْلُ مُسَمَّى

فَالَّذِي أَصِيبُ بِهِ مِنْ أَشَاءُ ۖ وَرَحْمَتِي وَسِعْتُ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ “As for My punishment, I inflict on whom I will, but My Mercy embraces all things” (7:156).



21. CHAPTER سورة الأنبياء

The Prophets

(*Revealed before Hijrah*)

The last chapter dealt with the account of Moses, and contrasted it with the growth of evil in individuals like Pharaoh and Sâmarî. It concluded with a warning against sin and evil and an exhortation to the purification of the soul with prayer and praise. This chapter begins with the external obstacles placed by evil against such purification, illustrating this with reference to Abrahams fight against idolatry, Lots fight against unnatural wickedness, Noahs against unbelief, Davids and Solomons against injustice, Jobs against impatience, the fight of Ismâîl, Idris (Enoch) and Dhul-Kifl against want of steady perseverance, Zunnûns fight against hasty anger, Zachariahs against spiritual isolation, and Marys against the lusts of this worldly life. Each of the accounts is designed to illustrate a specific point about the souls purification. Prophets were human beings and had to win their ground against resistance from evil. If we had inherited sin and could not shed it, then there would be no sense or justification in punishing sinners nor there a point in sending long chains of Divine Messengers. The narration of the Prophets is meant to illustrate the continuity and intrinsic unity of all Divine Revelations and of the human beings spiritual experience. The chapter points to another Divine Law, which is that whenever spiritual darkness enshrouds a nation, Allâh envoys a Messenger. The chapter deals more with the deliverance of the righteous than the punishment of the evil, more with the triumph of truth than the annihilation of falsehood.

This chapter also exhorts us of the favours of Allâh to the righteous and informs us, in verse 94, in His words, “*Whoever does deeds of righteousness and is a believer will find there is no disapproval of his*

endeavors" (21:94; 101;). Abraham was saved from being burnt by fire just as Noah was saved from the rising waters (21:76), Lot from an earthquake (21:71; 74), David from the conspirators who climbed the walls of his palace (38:21-22), Job from the thirst of the desert (21:84), Jonas from drowning in the sea (21:88), Zachariah from being left alone without an heir (21:89), Moses from the tides of the ocean (20:78), Jesus from the cross (3:55; 4:157), and the Holy Prophet (pbuh) from the murdering schemes of his opponents. At the end of the chapter we are taught the prayer to achieve this goal.

وَمَا جَعَلْنَاهُمْ جَسَدًا لَا يَأْكُلُونَ الطَّعَامَ وَمَا كَانُوا خَالِدِينَ

21:8 All appointees of Allâh were human beings and differed from other humans by rank and distinction but not in their basic nature. The verse denies any supernatural quality in the Prophets, and Jesus is not an exception. If Jesus is in heaven, as some Muslims believe, waiting for his return to earth, then he must be getting his daily meals from somewhere. The verse also informs us that "*neither were they people given unusually long lives*". If Jesus were still alive in heaven, he would now be more than 2000 years old. This sentence also debunks the beliefs of some Muslims who think that earlier Prophets remained among their followers for centuries. This may be true of their teachings, but not of the Prophets themselves. Only a bit further down, the assertion of a limited lifespan is generalized to all human beings: "*We have not assigned to any human being before you an unusually prolonged life. If you die shall they live unusually long?*" (21:34). No exception to this Divine Law has been mentioned. All Prophets had a mortal body that needed food for its support, and every one of them tasted death. Therefore it should not be insisted that verse 3:55 describes a bodily ascension of Jesus into heaven. We should make use of our understanding, as required by the Holy Qur'ân (21:10).

لَقَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ كِتَابًا فِيهِ ذِكْرُكُمْ ۖ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ

21:10 When the opponents of the Holy Qur'ân demanded a sign of destruction, they are told that the Holy Qur'ân has been revealed not to destroy them but to make them a great and eminent nation. This is an allusion to the dignity and happiness that a human being may attain by following the precepts laid down in the Holy Qur'ân.

لَوْ كَانَ فِيهِمَا إِلَهٌ إِلَّا اللَّهُ لَفَسَدَتَا ۚ فَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَرْشِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ

21:22 Allâh is spoken of as the “Lord and Nourisher to perfection (**Rabb** (ربّ of the Throne of Power”) (**الْأَرْش**). Everything in existence is subject to the Divine Law, or the laws of nature, as atheists would say. In these laws there is order, regularity, and precision. Everything is finely adjusted, so much that even a small deviation would cause a collapse of the fine balance. The history of the natural sciences consists of attempts to unify seemingly different phenomena as manifestations of a more unified law. The quest for a unified theory describing all phenomena in the universe is the highest goal of theoretical physics. One Law points to One Author and Maintainer of that Law. The unity of Law is a clear proof of the Unity of the Maker.

لَا يَسْبِقُونَهُ بِالْقَوْلِ وَهُمْ بِأَمْرِهِ يَعْمَلُونَ بَلْ عِبَادٌ مُّكَرَّمُونَ

21:27 This verse affords a conclusive proof of the innocence of the Prophets. The context shows clearly that the verse speaks of the Prophets who are close to Him and are wholly dedicated to Him (عبد). Their being close to Him is a metaphorical expression of their spiritual eminence and place of honour in His sight, and does not bear any special connotation of physical nearness, as Allâh is limitless in space as well as in time (*Kashshaf*; Râzî).

أَوَلَمْ يَرَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ كَانَتَا رَتْقًا فَفَسَقْنَا هُمَا ۝ وَجَعَلْنَا مِنَ الْمَاءِ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ حَيٌّ

21: 30 This verse points to the unitary origin of all matter and all life. The unmistakable reference to the unitary origin of the universe, dubbed here “the heavens and the earth,” strikingly anticipates the modern view of astrophysicists that the universe originated and expanded from one tiny point. Very little was known of biology and biochemistry in those days, but the Holy Qur’ân, in the clearest terms, speaks of water as the element from which all life originated and water as a necessity for life.

وَجَعَلْنَا فِي الْأَرْضِ رَوَاسِيَّ أَنْ تَمِيدَ بِهِمْ وَجَعَلْنَا فِيهَا فِجَاجًا سُبُلًا لَّعَلَّهُمْ يَهْتَدُونَ

21:31 This verse points to the great upheavals and violent agitations that led to the formation of the mountains before human beings existence on earth. The mountains owe their rise to the gradual balancing process to which the solid crust of the earth is subjected. The mountains are as pegs, symbols of the firmness and relative equilibrium that the surface of the earth has gradually achieved in the course of its geological history. In the cosmic space are aggregations of matter, which form planets, stars, nebulae, or galaxies. They may have the shape of mountains and pyramids. They are suspended in space and move in their respective orbits, and each orbit or sphere contains a kind of matter in which it floats and which is a source of our protection from some deadly particles. The Holy Book is not a treatise on science. It merely refers to a certain phenomenon in nature for the purpose of elucidating the principles underlying nature. Since it comes from the Omniscient, All-Knowing Allâh, it cannot import wrong knowledge. Such scientific truths were mentioned in the Holy Qur’ân at a time when no one knew them. The Holy Qur’ân inspired the early Muslims to rescue astronomy from the clutches of astrology.

and place it on a strictly scientific basis, leading to many valuable discoveries.

فُلَّا يَا نَارُ كُوْنِي بَرْدًا وَسَلَامًا عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ

21:69 The enemies of Abraham planned to kill Abraham by burning him in fire (cf. 29:24). Neither the previous verse 21:68, nor the following verse, nor anywhere else does the Holy Qur'ân state that Abrahams enemies did actually manage to throw him into fire. According to this verse Allâh countered their plan (see also 29:24; 37:97-98). There are many fictional accounts concerning Abraham and the fire, but all are products of peoples imagination, unfounded in the Holy Qur'ân.

وَذَأْوَدَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ إِذْ يَحْكُمَانَ فِي الْحَرْثِ إِذْ نَفَشَتْ فِيهِ غَنَمُ الْقَوْمِ وَكُنَّا
لِحَكْمِهِمْ شَاهِدِينَ

21:78 Al-Harth “الْحَرْث” “a certain crop”. The suffix *al* before *harth* specifies the reference being made. *Al-Harth* may also stand for Davids land that he ruled, and *Ghanam al-Qaum* “sheep of a certain people” may signify those neighbouring tribes who infringed upon the borders of the land under Davids rule. The reference is to the measures, which David and Solomon adopted to repel their enemies raids. David was a great warrior, so he favoured adopting a strong and severe policy; Solomon, however, wished to pursue a milder policy. Since both had been inspired by a deep sense of justice, Allâh “bore witness to their judgments.”

فَفَهَمَنَاهَا سُلَيْمَانٌ وَكُلُّاً أَتَيْنَا حُكْمًا وَعِلْمًا وَسَخَرْنَا مَعَ ذَأْوَدَ الْجِبَالَ
يُسَبِّحُنَّ وَالطَّيْرَ وَكُنَّا فَاعِلِينَ (٧٩) وَعَلَمْنَاهُ صَنْعَةَ لَيُوسٍ لَكُمْ لِتُحْصِنُكُمْ
مِنْ بَاسِكُمْ

21:79-80 Allâh taught David “the art of making coats of iron” to be used in warfare by his soldiers. The words also allude to the fact that it

is Allâh Who teaches how to make garments of *taqwa* (7:26), which guard against sin, harm, distress, and fear. The “*subjugation of birds*” is the use of birds for rapid communication (e.g. carrier pigeons), and the subjugation of mountains is the submission of the dwellers of mountains. Just as the *Qaryah* فَرِيَة (city) is sometimes used in the sense of *Ahl Qaryah* أَهْلَ الْقَرْيَةَ, the inhabitants of a city (cf.:21:95; 22:47), so **al-Jibâl** أَجْبَالٌ stands for **Ahl al-Jibâl** أَهْلُ الْجِبَالِ. We have to account for the suffix *al* in the words **al-Jibâl** and **al-Tair** الطَّيْرُ. The suffix *al* specifies the meanings of these words, and thus is not to be used in literal sense. That “*the mountains celebrated the Glory (of Allâh)* أَجْبَالٌ يُسَبِّحُنَّ” is an indication that the dwellers in the mountains followed the faith of David, the true faith of belief in One God. According to some interpreters *Al-Jibâl* also stands for “powerful nations,” as in 19:90 and 20:105.

وَلِسُلَيْمَانَ الرِّيحَ عَاصِفَةً تَجْرِي بِأَمْرِهِ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ الَّتِي بَارَكْنَا فِيهَا

21:81 “*Subjugation of winds*” is an indication that Solomon used the knowledge about the blowing of winds to propel sailing ships for warfare and trade.

وَتَقْطَعُوا أَمْرَهُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ كُلُّ إِلَيْنَا رَاجِعُونَ

21:93 The sudden turn of the discourse from the second-person plural to third-person is indicative of Allâh’s disapproval, i.e., His turning away from those who tried to break the believers unity.

وَحَرَامٌ عَلَىٰ فَرِيَةٍ أَهْلَكْنَاهَا أَنَّهُمْ لَا يَرْجِعُونَ

21:95 This verse informs us of the inviolable Divine Law: those nations that are dead as a result of Divine punishment will not return to power again.

وَاقْتَرَبَ الْوَعْدُ الْحَقُّ فَإِذَا هِيَ شَاصَةٌ أَبْصَارُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يَا وَيْلَنَا قَدْ كُنَّا
فِي غُفْلَةٍ مِّنْ هَذَا بَلْ كُنَّا ظَالِمِينَ

21:97 This verse again contains a great prophecy about the destruction of the forces of “falsehood” in later days. That is, the forces of “Gog and Magog” will lose their power. Gog and Magog symbolize “those powers that are let loose”, and who “will come crashing down from every height” with their air power, and “from the crest of every wave” with their trading ships and warships in the oceans (cf. 18:99-100; 21:96).

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ سَبَقَتْ لَهُمْ مِّنَ الْحُسْنَى أُولَئِكَ عَنْهَا مُبْعَدُونَ (١٠١) لَا يَسْمَعُونَ
حَسِيسَهَا ۖ وَهُمْ فِي مَا اشْتَهَى أَفْسُهُمْ خَالِدُونَ

21:101-102 These two verses indicate that, as for those who are righteous servants of Allâh and to whom He has promised a most fair treatment, they shall be kept far removed from the punishments in this world and the Hereafter. They will not hear the slightest sound thereof, let alone enter it. This refutes the idea of some who read into verse 19:72 that even the righteous shall first go to Hell.

يَوْمَ نَطْوِي السَّمَاءَ كَطَيِّ السِّجْلَ لِلْكُتُبِ ۝ كَمَا بَدَأْنَا أَوَّلَ خَلْقٍ نُعِيْدُهُ ۝ وَعَدًا
عَلَيْنَا ۝ إِنَّا كُنَّا فَاعِلِينَ

21:104 This verse contains the mystery of the start of creation, the mystery beyond the “Big Bang.” Allâh informs us here that it was an “unrolling of heavens like the unrolling of the written scrolls of a book.” Reference to a “book” signifies the knowledge of each “word” written on this universe by Allâh, He being the All-Knowing.

وَلَقَدْ كَتَبْنَا فِي الزَّبُورِ مِنْ بَعْدِ الذِّكْرِ أَنَّ الْأَرْضَ يَرْثِيْهَا عِبَادِيَ الصَّالِحُونَ

21:105 According to Ibn Jarîr al-Zabûr is a generic term denoting any Book of wisdom. This is meant here. The word *zabûr* is derived

from *zabarajlk* which means to throw stones, pelt with stones (Lane; Lisân; Tâj). *Zubrat* is a fragment of iron, lump of iron, mane of iron, big piece of iron. We were told before (cf. 21:80) that Allâh taught David the art of making iron coats. Hence *al-Zabûr* الْزَّبُور in its deeper meaning also contains references to some scientific knowledge related to iron that was given to David. Very often *al-Zabûr* refers to the book of Psalms supposed to be from David. In this sense *al-Zabûr* can mean the Divine Scripture given to David containing spiritual and scientific knowledge.

With reference to the prophecies in the Book of David and the other later Divine Scriptures, the verse reminds us that the “land” will be possessed by عِنادِي الصَّالِحُون - “the true worshippers.” The land can be the land of Palestine or some other. During the caliphate of ‘Umar^(rz), Muslims became the rulers of Palestine, and soon after, their rule extended from Spain to the borders of China. **Al-Ardz** الأرض (the earth) is not limited to a particular place or a country or to our planet. The verse is an echo of a great prophecy given in the preceding verse. The promise is given to the عِنادِي الصَّالِحُون - “righteous servants” of Allâh who are His true worshippers and not to those who profess to be Muslims with their tongues. The following verse reinstates this reference and reinforces the necessity of worship.



سورة الحج 22. CHAPTER

The Pilgrimage

(Revealed after Hijrah)

The previous five chapters dealt with Messengers who were appointed to proclaim the Truth and show the guidance to overcome evil. The following four chapters carve out the specifics of dealing with the environments and methods wherewith to enhance our spiritual progress. This chapter focuses on the implication of pilgrimage, sacrifices, striving hard, and fighting in defense. It also deals with the fall of Makkah, the emigration to Madînah, and victory over the Byzantines, over Persia, and over the Jewish tribes.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُدْخِلُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا
الْأَنْهَارُ يُحَلَّوْنَ فِيهَا مِنْ أَسَاوِرَ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ وَلُؤْلُؤًا ۗ وَلِبَاسُهُمْ فِيهَا حَرِيرٌ

22:23 The Holy Prophet (pbuh) and his Companions were well aware that “gardens served with running streams” and “ornaments of bracelets of gold and pearls” and “raiment of silk” were references to the rich and fertile lands ruled by the kings of Persia and the Emperors of the Byzantium, and the lands of Mesopotamia and Syria. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) is reported to have said, “The Nile and the Euphrates are two of the rivers of Paradise” (Abû Muslim). This saying of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) explains this verse.

ثُمَّ لِيَقْضُوا نَفَّعَهُمْ وَلِيُوفُوا نُذُورَهُمْ وَلِيُطَوَّفُوا بِالْبَيْتِ الْعَتِيقِ

22:29 According to Ibn Jarîr the phrase **Thumma la-Yaqdzu tafathahu** means, “*Then let them complete the rites of worship incumbent on them by virtue of their pilgrimage.*”

لَن يَنَالَ اللَّهُ لُحُومُهَا وَلَا دِمَاؤُهَا وَلَكِنْ يَنَالُ اللَّهُ الْقَوَىٰ مِنْكُمْ ۝

22:37 The verse sheds light on the essence, inwardness, and real object and purpose of sacrifice. Sacrifice in Islam does not serve the purpose of appeasing an offended deity. The object underlying sacrifice is to realize and proclaim the Oneness of Allâh by sacrificing our desires and aspirations for His sake. The subject of sacrifice is interrelated with the Pilgrimage, as every Pilgrimage (*hajj*) requires the sacrifice of an animal. It is the lesson of sacrifice that is taught in Pilgrimage. When an animal is sacrificed, Allâh's name is mentioned over it, reminding us that we are sacrificing something over which we hold control, and that it is Allâh who holds control over us.

أَذِنْ لِلَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَ بِأَنَّهُمْ ظَلَمُوا

22:39 In the preceding verse Allâh gave a promise to “defend the believers.” In connection with this promise the present verse enunciates the permission to fight physically in self-defense. This is the earliest Qur’ânic reference to the problem of war. The principle of war to be waged in self-defense, and only in self-defense, has been further elaborated in the chapter of Al-Baqarah as well as some other places of the Holy Qur’ân. The defense of religious freedom is the foremost cause for which arms may be taken up (see also 2:193). Religious freedom, which is enjoined by the Holy Qur’ân, has not yet been surpassed by the most civilized and tolerant of nations. It allows war only to defend ones faith, honour, life, and country. Otherwise the Holy Qur’ân has attached very great importance and sanctity to human life (5:32; 17:33). The section under comment lays down the conditions under which Muslims can take up arms.

الَّذِينَ أُخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ إِلَّا أَنْ يَقُولُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ۝ وَلَوْلَا دَفْعُ اللَّهِ
النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُمْ بِبَعْضٍ لَهُدَمَتْ صَوَامِعٌ وَبَيْعٌ وَصَلَوَاتٌ وَمَسَاجِدٌ يُذْكَرُ فِيهَا
اسْمُ اللَّهِ كَثِيرًا ۝

22:40 Just a few verses before, religious rites of other people were acknowledged: “We have prescribed certain rites of worship for every people” (22:34). Now the places of worship of other faiths are shown respect when He says, “*Cloisters and churches and synagogues and mosques are the places where Allâh’s name is being mentioned.*” This is because He said that He has created His creatures to worship Him (51:56). Allâh says, “He has decreed that you should not worship any but Him” (17:23). This means that human beings have an inherent inclination to worship Allâh, however often worship their own poor and limited idea of God. Thus He is worshipped in every object of worship: the worship is inherent in us and does not need to be prescribed. Often the object of worship that people consider proper is not, as it reflects misconception on the part of the people, who envision an „image of Allâh“ in the form of a created thing. Often the object of worship that people consider proper is not, as it reflects misconception on the part of the people, who envision their deity in the form of a created thing. These images take the forms like a star, the sun, monkeys (*Hanumân*) or other animals or human beings (cf. 35:13-15). That is why we are told to pray, “Show us the right and straight path (1:6).” His special favour guides us to the right path that leads to Him.

وَيَسْتَعْجِلُونَكَ بِالْعَذَابِ وَلَنْ يُخْلِفَ اللَّهُ وَعْدُهُ ۝ وَإِنَّ يَوْمًا عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ كَافٌِ
سَنَةً مِّمَّا تَعُوْنَ

22:47 “*One day with your Lord is (sometimes) equal to one thousand years by your counting.*” The Holy Prophet (pbuh) is reported to have said that the first three centuries of Islam would be its best period, after which falsehood would spread and a period of darkness would set in that will extend to over a thousand years (*Tirmidhî*). This saying of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) explains the verse under discussion. Those spoken of here are the opponents of truth who were to come later and

who have been allowed to oppose the advancement of Islam for a thousand years (see also 6:57; 8:32; 13:6; 20:102; 32:5).

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رَسُولٍ وَلَا نَبِيًّا إِلَّا تَمَنَّى أَلْفَى الشَّيْطَانُ فِي
أَمْنِيَّتِهِ فَيَنْسَخُ اللَّهُ مَا يُلْقِي الشَّيْطَانُ ثُمَّ يُحْكِمُ اللَّهُ آيَاتِهِ

22:52 “When he (the Prophet) longed (to attain what he sought), satan (interfered and) put hindrances in the way of what he sought after.” It is not possible for satan to interfere with the purity of the Qur’ânic Revelation. The word **Tamannâ** تَمَنَّى, “to long for or to wish,” signifies the desire to attain to that which is liked by the Prophets. What every Prophet desires is the establishment of the Truth, and it is with this desire that satan interferes.

Some careless, prejudiced Christian writers connect the revelation of this verse to the false story of what they call “the lapse” of Muhammad (pbuh). They say that one day at Makkah when the Prophet recited the 20th. and 21st. verses of chapter 53 (*Al-Najm*), satan put in his mouth the words, “These are exalted goddesses and their intercession is hoped for” (*Tilka Gharâniq al-Úlâ wa innâ shafâ‘atahum ma laturajja* تِلك غرائق الاولى وانني شفاعة هم ماترجع). They claim that it was the Prophets compromise with idolatry. All sound and reliable writers (*Kathîr*; *Râzî*; *Baidzawî*) have rejected this story. The critics of Islam rely for such stories upon *Waqîdî*, the inveterate liar and fabricator of reports (*‘Ainî*; *Qâzî Ayyâd*; *Nawâwî*). It is further alleged that this verse was revealed in connection with this incident. But the fact is that chapter 53 was revealed in the fifth year of the call and this chapter in the twelfth and thirteenth year, on the eve of the Holy Prophets departure from Makkah to Madînah. It is because of this purported inconsistency that it is said that the chapter was revealed partly before and partly after Hijrah. *Dhahhak*, however, holds the view that the whole of this chapter was revealed after the Hijrah. The reply given by Allâh can be found in verses 57:59 and 5:62-63.

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ يُولِجُ اللَّيْلَ فِي النَّهَارِ وَيُولِجُ النَّهَارَ فِي اللَّيْلِ

22:61 **Nahâr** stands for power and prosperity and **Lail** the loss of power. Thus “*making the night gain on the day*” refers here to the turn of fortune, in the form of the rise and fall of nations.

أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۝ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ فِي كِتَابٍ ۝ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ

22:70 This verse puts forward three arguments against idolatry: 1) human knowledge and reason (أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ); 2) the verdict of history (إِنَّ ذَلِكَ فِي كِتَابٍ); 3) the ease with which Allâh destroys the dwellings of the wrongdoers (إِنَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ).



سورة المؤمنون 23. CHAPTER

The Believers

(Revealed before Hijrah)

This chapter deals with the virtues that are the seedbed of Faith, especially in an environment in which truth is denied and its votaries are insulted and persecuted. Emphasis is laid on the unceasing Divine guidance manifested in a long chain of God-inspired Prophets.

In the previous chapter conditions for the victories of the Faithful were mentioned. Permission for self-defense against wrongful aggression was given. In this chapter some additional prerequisites for success are explained. They are summarized in the first nine verses. These verses describe the seven spiritual stages of spiritual evolution. In verses 13 and 14 seven physical stages of evolution are mentioned.

The chapter begins with a brief description of the attributes and characteristics of the Believers.

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنِ الْلَّغْوِ مُعْرِضُونَ

23:3 Laghw is vain talk or thought and futile and frivolous action. To avoid *laghw* is the first condition of success. This includes vain talk related to some verses of the Holy Qur'ân (cf. 22:52), e.g., How long was the rod of Moses? What kind of wood was used by Noah to construct the ship? If Allâh is All-Mighty, can He can also send the righteous to Hell, and so on. Similarly, inventing stories about verses not understood by simple people also belongs to the category of *laghw* (cf. 5:57; for example 3:45-49; 19:16-30; 27:16-23)

إِلَّا عَلَىٰ أَزْوَاجِهِمْ أَوْ مَا مَلَكُتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ

23:6 The particle *aw* does not denote an alternative with the meaning “or” but in the sense of “rather,” in the nature of an explanatory amplification, as is used in 25:62. It should not be inferred from this verse that sexual intercourse with ones female slave is permitted without marriage. This assumption is contradicted by the Holy Qur'ân (see 4:3,24,25; 24:32). Just as the word *muminûn*, “believers,” applies to men and women alike, and the term *Azwâj*, “spouses,” also denotes both the wife and the husband, so there is no reason for attributing to the phrase **mâ malakat aimân-u-kum** **مَا مَلَكْتُ أَيْمَانُهُمْ** the meaning of “their female slave.” The phrase does not relate to slaves at all, but has the same meaning as in 4:24, that is, those whom they rightfully possess through wedlock.

الَّذِينَ يَرْثُونَ الْفِرْدَوْسَ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

23:11 Firdaws is a garden that contains everything that should be in a garden, and which produces opulently and of various kind, and is broad, wide, capacious, and comfortable (Tâj). The verse means

that, as they brought death over their desires, so in return they will be given ever-lasting life.

وَلَقَدْ حَلَفْنَا لِلنَّاسَ مِنْ سُلَالَةٍ مِّنْ طِينٍ

23:12-14 Sulâlah in its root expresses the process of evolution, starting from the inorganic state to the organic, then from a single cell to organized cells, then to the state of primitive animals, and, finally, a human being. The creation of the human being is here traced back to earth, as the life-germ in sperm is an extract of food that is drawn from earth in whatever form it may be. The verses show that the human soul is not implanted into the human body from outside but grows in the body as it develops.

وَشَجَرَةٌ تَخْرُجُ مِنْ طُورٍ سَيِّنَاءَ تَنْبُتُ بِالدُّهْنِ وَصِبْغٍ لِلْأَكْلِينَ

23:20 The olive tree symbolizes the Muslim nation (see 24:35). It reminds us of the prophecy of Deut. 33.2.

وَجَعَلْنَا ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ وَأَمَّةً آتَيْنَا وَآوْيَاهُمَا إِلَى رَبْوَةٍ ذَاتِ قَرَارٍ وَمَعِينٍ

23:50 This verse gives us a clue to the mystery of the disappearance of Jesus after the event of the Cross. According to the Gospels, Jesus was affixed to the cross merely with ropes and not with nails, and hung there only for a few hours. In this short period he could not have died. This verse indicates that having been delivered from the clutches of his enemies he was given refuge at some place described as Rabwah رَبْوَةٍ. **Rabwah** means a land worth living; lofty plateau; land abounding in green and fruitful valleys and with springs of running water.

يَا أَيُّهَا الرُّسُلُ كُلُوا مِنَ الطَّيَّبَاتِ وَاعْمَلُوا صَالِحًا

23:51 “*Eat of the things which are clean, good and pure and (thus) do good works*” points to a connection between the food one eats and ones deeds.

بِالْعَذَابِ فَمَا اسْتَكَانُوا لِرَبِّهِمْ وَمَا يَتَضَرَّ عُونَ

23:76 This is an allusion to the famine that overtook the Makkans after the Emigration of the Holy Prophet (pbuh).

قُلْ رَبِّ إِمَّا تُرِينَ مَا يُوَعِّدُونَ

23:93 This portion of the chapter was revealed toward the end of the Makkhan period. The Emigration of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) was an indication that Divine punishment was about to overtake the pagan Makkans.

وَمِنْ وَرَائِهِمْ بَرْزَخٌ إِلَى يَوْمٍ يُبَعَّثُونَ

23:100 **Berzakh** بَرْزَخٌ is a barrier. *Berzakh* denotes the intermediate state from the time of death to the day of Resurrection. It is an intermediate state of incomplete realization of the Requital. The verse also asserts that the dead can never return to life in this world. The dissolution of the barrier on the Day of Resurrection does not mean that people will return to this world. The Day of Resurrection will spell the end of our earth (cf. 21:104), and there is no question of returning to the present life (*Kashshaf*).



24. CHAPTER سورة النور

The Light

(*Revealed after Hijrah*)

This chapter is named after the Divine Attribute of Light (*Nûr*), which is the Attribute of Allâh’s Incomparability, mentioned in verse 35. The chapter focuses on Allâh’s relationship to human beings. Every Light that is visible in the heights or in the valleys, whether in the soul or in bodies, whether personal or impersonal, whether apparent or hidden, whether in the mind or outside it, is a bounty of this Grace. It envelops everything and nothing is deprived of this Light. It pierces all objects and casts no shadow.

In the title-giving verse of this chapter we encounter the metaphor *Nûr alâ Nûr*—Light upon Light, over and over. Allâh Himself is the Source of all Lights and the fountainhead of all mercies and laws. The second occurrence of “light” in the metaphor can be interpreted to represent such of Allâh’s servants who will receive His Light. That is to say that there shall be servants of Allâh who shall receive Allâh’s Light and will guide others who are groping in darkness (cf.: 24:55). The preceding chapter assured us that through the grace of the Holy Qur’ân Allâh would keep raising servants of Him who would win His pleasure.

الَّذِينَيْهُ وَالَّذِينِي فَاجْلَدُوا كُلَّ وَاحِدٍ مِّنْهُمَا مائَةَ جَلْدٍ ۝ وَلَا تَأْخُذُكُمْ بِهِمَا
رَأْفَةً فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ

24:2 The first ten verses of this chapter serve to explain to the first ten verses of the previous chapter, notably in verses 23:5-7. The environmental and social influences that wreck our spiritual and social life have to do with sexuality and its misuse, whether in the form of unregulated behaviour of false charges or scandals, or in breaching the

refined conventions of personal or domestic privacy. Avoiding pitfalls in such matters enables us to rise to a state that allows us to perceive Divine Light. Chastity is a moral virtue that Allâh holds in high esteem (cf.21:91; 66:12). *Zina* زنا is voluntary sexual intercourse between a man and woman not married to one another. It covers both adultery and fornication. From the old Scriptures times through centuries of Christian teachings, sins of sexual transgression have been among the most dreaded and denounced. In ancient Israel the penalty for adultery was death by stoning. The Roman Catholic Church, in medieval times, considered this unlawful intercourse no less sinful than murder. In Puritan America sexual sinners were at the risk of being flogged, shackled, or ostracized. The Holy Qur'âns rulings on one hand abolish the cruellest forms of punishment for *zina* بَأْكَ but at the same time denounce this practice in the strongest possible words. It makes clear that this act is punishable, though not by stoning to death as recommended in the Jewish Scriptures; it does not carry a punishment equivalent to murder, but it demands a strong punishment. This punishment can only be in the form of flogging, which is not intended to cause serious injury and not in the form of more serious beatings or stoning. In order to stop possible misuse of this Divine injunction, Allâh imposes a highly restrictive condition on carrying out this punishment. The verse obliges the accuser to bring forward four respectable eyewitnesses. If he fails to do so, he himself must receive this punishment (24:4).

وَالَّذِينَ يَرْمُونَ الْمُحْصَنَاتِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَأْتُوا بِأَرْبَعَةٍ شُهَدَاءَ فَاجْلِدُوهُنْ مَمَانِينَ
جَلْدَةً وَلَا تَقْبِلُوا لَهُنْ شَهَادَةً أَبَدًا

24:4 Muhsinât المُحْصَنَاتِ are chaste women, i.e., women who are fortified against unchasteness, implying that from a legal perspective every woman must be considered chaste unless at least four eyewitnesses to the contrary produce a conclusive proof. It is obvious

that the implication of this injunction applies to protect women from false accusation by men.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ جَاءُوا بِالْأَفْكَرِ عُصْبَةٌ مِّنْكُمْ ۝ لَا تَحْسِبُوهُ شَرًّا لَّكُمْ ۝ بَلْ هُوَ خَيْرٌ
لَّكُمْ ۝ إِلَّا كُلُّ امْرَءٍ مِّنْهُمْ مَا أَكْتَسَبَ مِنَ الْإِثْمِ ۝

24:11 Verses 11-13 illustrate the practical application of the rulings laid out in verses 1-10. The verses refer to an incident related to ‘Âishah^(rz), the wife of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). While the Holy Prophet was returning from the campaign against the tribe of Mustaliq in the year 5 A.H., his wife ‘Âisha, who accompanied him on that expedition, was inadvertently left behind. A group of the Muslim soldiers she was travelling with struck camp before dawn a short distance from Madînah. ‘Âisha went out some distance from the camp to attend to the call of nature. Because of her absence, her attendants assumed that ‘Âisha had joined another section of the group and left the camp before the break of dawn. When ‘Âisha returned, realizing the camel and the men had departed without her, she sat down in her helplessness. Safwân, son of Mu‘attal, found and recognized her, and brought her to the next halting place of the troop (*Bukhârî* 52:15). The hypocrites of Madînah led by Abdullah bin Ubayy bin Salûl spread false rumors about alleged misconduct on the part of ‘Âishah^(rz). ‘Abdullah bin ‘Ubayy bin Salûl was the known chief of the hypocrites (*Bukhârî* 64/36).

The sentence *walladhi tawalla* also means, “He who has taken in hand to magnify it,” or “who played the major part,” referring to those who play major roles in accusing women. In this case, it was ‘Abdullah bin ‘Ubayy bin Salûl (*Bukhârî* 64/36). Here, as is the case with all Qur’ânic allusions to historical events, the mention of this episode is to bring out an ethical proposition valid for all times under all social circumstances.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُحِبُّونَ أَنْ تَشْيِعَ الْفَاحِشَةُ فِي الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا
وَالْآخِرَةِ

24:19 Spreading slanderous rumors is also a cause of spreading unchasteness, misconduct, and social and family unrest. The Prophet (pbuh) said, “Beware of all guesswork about one another, for behind such guesswork is the most deception, and do not spy upon one another, and do not try to expose other peoples failing” (*Bukhârî*; cf. 49:12).

وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ مَا زَكَى مِنْكُمْ مِنْ أَحَدٍ أَبَدًا وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يُزَكِّي
مَنْ يَشَاءُ

24:21 The passage, “*Not one of you would ever have been pure, but Allâh purifies him who wishes to be purified,*” shows that the *zakîs* are purified by Allâh’s Grace. So was the case with the Companions (*Sahâba*) of the Holy Prophet (pbuh).

وَلَا يَأْتِلُ أُولُو الْفَضْلِ مِنْكُمْ وَالسَّعَةُ أَنْ يُؤْتُوا أُولَى الْقُرْبَى وَالْمَسَاكِينَ
وَالْمُهَاجِرِينَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ۝ وَلَيُعْفُوا وَلَيَصْفَحُوا ۝ أَلَا تُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يَعْفَرَ اللَّهُ
لَكُمْ

24:22 Abû Bakr^(rz), the first Companion of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), swore that he would never again help his relative Mistah, a poor *muhâjir* (immigrant), whom he had supported until Mistah had taken part in slandering Abû Bakr’s^(rz) daughter ‘Âisha. Thus the first person to confirm the truth of this verse was Abû Bakr^(rz), but the ethical purpose of the verse, like all verses, is timeless. In this verse there is a command for the Muslim to overlook and forgive the excesses of others, based upon the argument that they themselves desire that Allâh should overlook their own excesses and forgive their sins.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَرْمُونَ الْمُحْسَنَاتِ الْغَافِلَاتِ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ لُعِنُوا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ
وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ

24:23 The use of the words **Muhsinât**, **Ghafilât**—chaste, unwary, innocent, having no idea of sin—have both general validity and specific applicability to the calumny regarding ‘Aishah^(rz). Here ‘Aisha’s complete innocence is established.

يَوْمَ تَشَهُّدُ عَلَيْهِمْ أَسْنَنُهُمْ وَأَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَرْجُلُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

24:24 Here it is indicated that every word spoken, every movement of our hands, feet, or other parts of the body, leaves some imprint that is invisible to us but is fully preserved and will be given an embodied form in the next life. That way the hands and limbs will testify about us, favourably or unfavourably.

قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَعْضُوُا مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا فُرُوجَهُمْ ۝ ذَلِكَ أَزْكَى لَهُمْ

24:30 *Yahfazū furūja-hum* – “those who guard their chastity,” carries both the literal sense of covering of their private parts and modesty in dress, and the injunction to be mindful of chastity and the importance of restricting themselves to lawful marital intercourse. Similarly, “restrain their looks” refers to both physical and mental modesty (cf. 21:91; 66:12).

وَقُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَعْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ وَلَا يُبَدِّيْنَ
زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا ۝ وَلَيَضْرِبَنَّ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَى جُيُوبِهِنَّ ۝ وَلَا يُبَدِّيْنَ
زِينَتَهُنَّ

24:31 This verse requires women not to display the natural beauty of their body in public. The words – “except such as cannot be helped,” indicate “that which a human being may openly show in accordance with prevailing custom” (*al-Qiffal*). What cannot be helped may also include a womans face, hands, and feet, and sometimes even

more than that, as before a physician or surgeon. The exception also includes her voice, gait, or stature. This injunction is broad and there is no requirement here to cover the face with a veil or wear “*burqa*.” The norms of a civil society determine what should not be exposed. The rather vague nature of the injunction gives—with limits—a flexibility to adapt to customs, which vary by time and location.

وَأَنْكِحُوا الْأَيَامَى مِنْكُمْ وَالصَّالِحِينَ مِنْ عِبَادِكُمْ وَإِمَائِكُمْ

24:32 Ayâma الأَيَامَى are women having no husband, whether or not they had already been married in the past (*Tâj*). It also means a man having no wife (*Râghib*). The **Sâlihîn** الصَّالِحِينَ here connotes moral, social, and physical fitness for marriage. The verse rules out the keeping of concubines, and postulates marriage as the only lawful institution governing an intimate relationship between a man and woman.

وَالَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الْكِتَابَ مِمَّا مَلَكْتُ أَيْمَانُكُمْ فَكَاتِبُوهُمْ إِنْ عَلِمْتُمْ فِيهِمْ خَيْرًا ۝
وَأَتُوهُم مِّنْ مَالِ اللَّهِ الَّذِي أَتَكُمْ ۝ وَلَا تُكْرُهُوْا فَتَبَيَّنُكُمْ عَلَى الْبَغَاءِ إِنْ أَرَدْنَا
تَحَصَّنًا لَتَتَّبَعُوا عَرَضَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا ۝ وَمَنْ يُكْرِهُ هُنَّ فِيَّنَ اللَّهُ مِنْ بَعْدِ
إِكْرَاهِهِنَّ غُفْرَرَ حِيمٌ

24:33 The verse, “As for those of your bondsmen (or women) as ask for a written contract (of freedom for themselves), write this (deed of manumission for them) provided you find good capabilities in them and give them out of Allâh’s wealth, which He has given you,” aims at the abolition of slavery. The deed of freedom asked for by a slave may be refused. The only precondition is evidence in the court or before an unbiased arbiter of the slaves good character and his ability to make a living on his own. To help him stand on his own feet the injunction is “and give them out of Allâh’s wealth, which He has given you.” It is a moral obligation on the part of the owner to promote the slaves efforts to obtain the necessary income by helping

him or her to achieve economic independency. It is also the obligation of the state treasury and other members of the society to finance the freeing of slaves (cf. 2:177; 9:60).

اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ مَثُلُّ نُورٍ كَمِشْكَاهَ فِيهَا مِصْبَاحٌ
 الْمِصْبَاحُ فِي زُجَاجَةٍ الْزُجَاجَةُ كَانَهَا كَوْكَبٌ دُرْرِيٌّ يُوقَدُ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ
 مُبَارَكَةٍ زَيْتُونَةٍ لَا شَرْقِيَّةٍ وَلَا غَرْبِيَّةٍ يَكَادُ رَبِّنَاهَا يُضِيءُ وَلَوْ لَمْ تَمَسَّسْهُ
 نَارٌ نُورٌ عَلَى نُورٍ يَهْدِي اللَّهُ لِنُورِهِ مَنِ يَشَاءُ

24:35 With these words Allâh describes His relationship to a human being and His servant, who came close to Him while treading on the path of piety (*taqwâ*) as shown by Him (cf. 23:1-10 and 23:57-61). The verse contains very beautiful and highly sublime metaphors. It begins with the Divine Attribute of Light – **Nûr**, which is Allâh's Attribute of Incomparability (39:69) and tells how His Light falls on other objects of His creation and how it illuminates some human souls. For this He uses the beautiful metaphoric expression **Nûr 'alâ Nûr** - نُورٌ عَلَى نُورٍ

In the preceding chapter it was stated that through the Holy Qur'ân people would continue to be raised who would win Allâh's pleasure (24:55; cf. 23:10, 18, 44). The characteristics of such people were described in verses 23:1-10 and 23:57-61). The same knowledge is here encapsulated in the allegorical words *Nûr 'alâ Nûr*, "Light upon Light over and over"; that is to say that there shall be servants of Allâh who shall receive Allâh's Light and guide others who are groping in darkness (cf.: 24:55). The source of their light of guidance shall be the only One source that is Allâh. Allâh Himself is the source of all lights and He is the Fountainhead of all mercies and laws.

The Divine Light manifests itself and manifests others (*Nûr 'alâ Nûr*). The Light is perceptible, and at the same time it is a source by which perception takes place. Every light that is visible on

the heights or in the valleys, whether in soul or in bodies, whether personal or impersonal, whether apparent or hidden, whether in the mind or outside it, is a bounty of this Grace. His Light envelopes everything and nothing is deprived of it. It penetrates all things and casts no shadow.

Nûr 'alâ Nûr, *Light upon Light, over and over*, is to say there are other lights whose source is Allâh. The Light of Wisdom shines on the path of wisdom and knowledge. Similarly, the Light of guidance shines upon the path that guides His servant to Him. When the two lights are combined, it is *Light upon Light*. The light by which the servant of Allâh is guided is the Light of Certainty of the existence of Allâh. This combined light makes visible the unseen angelic realms in the heavens and the earth. In darkness, beauty cannot be perceived, and in darkness, the way is lost. In spiritual terminology the Prophets and *Auliyyâs* (Saints) in general and the Holy Prophet (pbuh) in particular are manifestations of this Divine Light (5:15, 44).

The glass globe surrounding the lamp protects the light received by the servant of Allâh from being extinguished by the puffs of wind (their enemies), and the niche preserves the light over the length of time. The light placed high on the pillar, to illuminate the entire world, is the light of the Holy Prophet (pbuh).

The oil of the blessed tree, which fuels the lamp of Revelation, suffers neither from excess nor from deficiency, and has been made in the best mold of the fine bright and high (moral) qualities, which are nourished by the clear fountain of perfect reason. The Divine Light in the form of Revelation always descends in accord with the nature of the person to whom it is vouchsafed (5:15). When the Divine Revelation descends under Divine Command, **Law lam tamassahu al Nâr** - وَلَوْ لَمْ تَمْسَسْ نَارٌ such an oil (the recipient of the Divine Revelation) needs no ignition, as this oil is already radiating from the Divine Light.

According to *Imâm Ghazâlî* the human soul has five main faculties:

- 1) The sensory faculty that receives the information perceived by the five senses;
- 2) The imaginative faculty that records the information conveyed by the senses and presents it to the intelligent spirit above it;
- 3) The intelligent spirit, which apprehends ideas beyond the spheres of sense and imagination;
- 4) The discursive or rational spirit, which takes the data of pure reason, combines them, and deduces from them abstract knowledge;
- 5) The transcendental prophetic spirit found in Prophets and saints.

These five faculties are symbolized by the Niche, Glass, Lamp, Tree, and Oil. All these are related to lights, for it is through them that all kinds of existing things are manifested.

Eyesight cannot perceive this Light (6:103) except through Faith. Allâh is concealed within His own Light, as He calls Himself *al-Bâtin*, The Hidden One. When someone with Faith knows the ways of “striking,” this Light becomes visible. So one can witness Him only through Light, and the Light is He.

فِي بُيُوتٍ أَذِنَ اللَّهُ أَنْ تُرْفَعَ وَيُذْكَرَ فِيهَا اسْمُهُ يُسَبَّحُ لَهُ فِيهَا بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالآصَالِ

24:36 Allâh guides the one who desires to be guided with His Light. His Light is thus a source of guidance for all people. Those houses where Allâh is being adored and worshipped day and night are raised in honour (ترفع).

The rendering of the meaning of the word *raf'a* رفع should be the same as in the verse 3:55. Just as the houses of the believers cannot be physically raised to the heaven, so the body of Jesus cannot be raised physically into the heaven. Those who believe in the bodily ascension of Jesus should ponder over this verse, and all those twenty-one verses

where *rāfa'a* is being used, and not give exceptional meaning to it when the word refers to Jesus.

أَوْ كَظُلْمَاتٍ فِي بَحْرٍ لَّجِيْ يَعْشَاهُ مَوْجٌ مِّنْ فَوْقِهِ مَوْجٌ مِّنْ فَوْقِهِ سَحَابٌ ۝
ظُلْمَاتٌ بَعْضُهَا فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ إِذَا أَخْرَجَ يَدَهُ لَمْ يَكُنْ يَرَاهَا ۝ وَمَنْ لَمْ يَجْعَلِ اللَّهَ
لَهُ نُورًا فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ نُورٍ

24:40 Darkness is the absence of light. There are “*Layers of darkness, one upon the other*” for the one who is faithless, as he closes the window of his inner chamber of conscience. Although his conscience (*nafs al-Lawwāmah*) is continuously pricking him, he still rejects guidance, thereby extinguishing the Light of Certainty and obscuring his vision. He has preferred misguidance to guidance and preferred darkness to light. A dark smoke covers his self-accusing conscience. Darkness also envelops his conscience that becomes another blinding veil. These are the “*layers of darkness, one upon the other*. “Resisting the darkness and receiving the cure is within his ability, but he is not ready to receive that Divine Light: thus, there is no light of guidance for such a person.

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفُنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كَمَا
اسْتَخْلَفَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ

24:55 The verse embodies a prophecy that Muslims will be vouchsafed in terms of both spiritual and temporal leadership, and the establishment of a Divine kingdom and its permanence. In the words *Azan Allâh-u* in 24:36, there is also a reference to the Divine promise to raise reformers among the Islamic *ummah*. From “*among their predecessors*” particularly relates to the followers of Moses (*Baidzawî*; cf: 73:15), but may also include the followers of all other Prophets. This prophecy contains an oblique allusion to the Divine Law, which invariably makes the rise and fall of nations dependent on their moral qualities. This verse is also explanatory of the verse 15:9

and furnishes the reply to the question pertaining to how the Qur'âns benefits and effects will be safeguarded.

Khalifah is the one who literally or spiritually follows someone before him, a successor, and supreme ruler, someone who inherits, a vicegerent (cf. 2:30). In this verse the khalifah is the one who treads along the Muhammadan path and takes his light from the Muhammadan light (cf. *Nûr 'alâ Nûr*, Light upon Light over and over). Allâh will continue to raise khalifah from among the righteous and the believers, just as he raised similar khalifah before—for example, among the followers of Moses (Baidzawî, cf.: 73:15). The Holy Prophet (pbuh) also said, “Allâh will raise up for the Islamic *ummah* in the beginning of every century one that will revive Allâh’s religion” (Dâûd 36.1). They will not be “Prophets” who bring new Divine Law, as the Holy Prophet (pbuh) set a seal on prophethood and has brought the final perfect Divine Law as foreseen by Allâh. Rather they will be *Mujaddads* (reformers) who will renew the troubled religion of Allâh brought in its perfect form by the Holy Prophet (pbuh). It will be at the time of extreme danger and weakness in Faith when such people shall appear under Divine command and re-establish the Faith, which He has chosen. They shall end the believers state of fear and restore security and peace. By these qualities he can be recognized. The words “*Promise of Allâh*” (عَدَ اللّٰهُ) makes it clear that this spiritual status is granted in accordance with the Divine Will (cf. 6:124) and not awarded through votes or elections nor passed on by inheritance. Allâh will assist the reformer, and his power will be derived from the Power of Allâh. Under His care he will succeed in the mission entrusted to him. His people oppose him in the beginning, just as Adam, the appointed khalifah was opposed (2:30), but the “Angels” will recognize him, and bow down before him, and ultimately he will gain acceptance with people, except the Iblîs-natured persons.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لِيَسْتَأْذِنُكُمُ الَّذِينَ مَلَكْتُ أَيْمَانُكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ لَمْ يَبْلُغُوا الْحُلْمَ
مِنْكُمْ ثَلَاثَ مَرَاتٍ ۝

24:58 It is wrong to limit the meaning of the phrase **Malakat aimânu-kum**, ملكت أيمانكُم, “those whom your right hands possess” to slaves. This expression also includes dependents and domestic servants, as the institution of slavery is envisaged in Islam as a mere historic phenomenon that must, with time, be abolished (see 23:6).

وَالْقَوْاعِدُ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ الَّتِي لَا يَرْجُونَ نِكَاحًا فَلِنَسَ عَلَيْهِنَ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ يَضْعُنَ
ثِيَابَهُنَّ عَيْرَ مُتَبَرِّجَاتٍ بِزِينَةٍ ۝ وَأَنْ يَسْتَعْفِفْنَ حَيْرَ لَهُنَ ۝

24:60 La yarjuna nikâhann لَا يَرْجُونَ نِكَاحًا should be translated, *who do not hope for sexual intercourse* (Jawhârî and Azharî). In these verses the discourse returns to the considerations of some of the rules of healthy social behaviour.

فَإِذَا دَخَلْتُمْ بُيُوتًا فَسَلِّمُوا عَلَى أَنفُسِكُمْ تَحِيَّةً مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ مُبَارَكَةً طَيِّبَةً ۝

24:61 This verse enumerates different categories of houses. Thereby it implicitly demands that such houses, as mentioned in the verse, should be independent; this will avoid family tension, which develops when a multitude of family members are living under one roof without privacy. At the time of entering the houses, we are commanded to greet their inhabitants with a salutation of “Peace.” Thus, the verse stresses fellowship of all humans and the avoidance of potential causes of tension.



25. CHAPTER سورة الفرقان

The Standard of Truth and Falsehood

(Revealed before Hijrah)

The title of this chapter **Al-Furqân** (الْفُرْقَان) is taken from the very first verse. *Furqân* فُرْقَان is something that differentiates between true and what is false; an argument; a proof, or evidence. It also signifies morning or dawn, because dawn distinguishes the day from the night. This chapter further develops the contrast between light and darkness, which is symbolized by knowledge and ignorance, or right and wrong. **Al-Furqân** is one of the names of the Holy Qur'ân, as this Book lays down the standard of eternal Truth and falsehood.

تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ الْفُرْقَانَ عَلَىٰ عَبْدِهِ لِيَكُونَ إِلَٰعَالَمِينَ تَدِيرًا

25:1 Every Prophet is granted *al-Furqân* from Allâh. The *al-Furqân* of Moses was when Pharaohs troops were drowned in the pursuit of Moses. In Islamic history, the word *furqân* also stands for the Battle of Badr. The expression “*that he may be a warner to his people*” indicates that the punishment brought by a *furqân* is not the ultimate punishment, but serves as a warning (cf. 2:66). The two subsequent verses refer to the warner the Christians believe in and contain a strong warning for Christians by asserting, “And He has neither begotten nor taken to Himself a son...”

الَّذِي لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَمْ يَتَّخِذْ وَلَدًا وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ شَرِيكٌ فِي
الْمُلْكِ وَخَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ قَدَرَهُ تَقْدِيرًا

25:2 **Taqdîr** قَدْرٌ is derived from *Qadara* meaning to determine in proper measures. Thus *taqdîr* تَقْدِيرٌ is an impetus to make an effort and do good. A big misconception surrounds these words. By no means

has Allâh predestined the fate of a human being by creating him from the outset as someone destined to enter paradise or destined for hell. This should however not be construed as being in contradiction to Allâh's knowledge about the future. He has not predetermined human efforts, but the outcome shall be in proper measure in accordance to the effort invested. The best explanation of this is given in 53:39-41. If the outcome were already predestined, then why pray and endeavor to work righteously? It would be against justice and reason if someone was predestined for Paradise and as a result could expect forgiveness even after spending a life in sin. This is the belief of many Christians who think that their mere confession of belief alone delivers them, through Jesus supposedly having atoned for their sins. His words, that "He has determined proper measure of everything," are a source of encouragement and hope for human beings and not a cause of resignation and hopelessness. With reference to this false belief of those who claim Allâh has taken to Himself a son, reason is given here in the Divine words حَقَّ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَقَرَرَهُ تَقْدِيرًا that this is not possible. Just as a student will reap the fruits of his labour after his exams, so each human being shall reap the fruits of his own endeavors. No Christ will come to deliver him, but Allâh's Justice and Mercy shall prevail. The verse directly addresses the Christian doctrine that He has begotten a son, and through the words, "*He has created everything*" حَقَّ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ the verse also disqualifies the claims of Arya Samaj and Hinduism that Allâh was not the creator of souls.

وَاتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ أَلِهَةً لَا يَخْلُقُونَ شَيْئاً وَهُمْ يُخْلُقُونَ وَلَا يَمْلُكُونَ لِأَنْفُسِهِمْ
ضَرًّا وَلَا نَفْعًا وَلَا يَمْلُكُونَ مَوْتًا وَلَا حَيَاةً وَلَا شُورًا

25:3 This verse refutes the many weak notions and doctrines through which human beings raise the status of created things to the level of divinity and turn them into objects of worship. A created being has no right whatsoever to be worshipped, nor can it logically be justified. A created thing can never be on par with its creator. It has no power over

its own creation, nor full control over what happens to it after being created. What did Christ create? He was so helpless that his enemies succeeded in hanging him on a cross based on false charges.

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا افْتَرَاهُ وَأَعَانَهُ عَلَيْهِ قَوْمٌ أَخَرُونَ ۖ فَقَدْ جَاءُوا ظُلْمًا وَزُورًا (٤) وَقَالُوا أَسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ اكْتَبْتُهَا فِيهِ تُنَزَّلِي عَلَيْهِ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا

25:4-5 These verses refute the allegation that the Qur'ân is a forgery (إِفْكُ افْتَرَاهُ) and that the Prophet (pbuh) had requested some stories of the ancients to be written down by certain people who then assisted him in doing so. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) had acquired an untarnished reputation of trustworthiness and truthfulness among the people, and to now brand him a liar or an impostor was out of question. It was against his nature to lie, and followers and foes alike had born unanimous testimony to his honesty and integrity. Charging truth with being a forgery is a great injustice. Thus, indeed have they brought a perversion of the truth. It also remains unanswered where he would find the unnamed, alleged helpers (16:103) who supposedly assisted him in producing a book that aimed the axe at the root of the very beliefs, which his contemporaries held so dear. Mere stories would not have such a profound impact on peoples hearts as the Holy Book: Divine Revelation has always brought about Transformation in peoples lives. The words, “He Who knows the secrets has revealed this,” (25:6) area testimony to this, because the Holy Qur'ân contains many secrets of the heavens and the earth that were known to Allâh alone and could not have been unveiled through mere human efforts. Moreover, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) was “*Ummi*,” that is, he had no knowledge about the Books of contemporary religions. The verse is also proof that the Holy Qur'ân had already been “*set down in writing*” (اكتَبْتُهَا) at the time of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). The verse records the testimony of the enemies of Islam that the Qur'ân was dictated to him and he had it written down or transcribed.

قُلْ أَنْزَلَهُ اللَّهُ الَّذِي يَعْلَمُ السُّرَّ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ

25:6 “*He Who knows the secrets has revealed this*” tells us that the Holy Qur’ân is not reproducing stories of the past, as the nonbelievers claimed back then—and as they do today. Rather it is full of wisdom and prophecies, containing many secrets of the heavens and the earth, which are revealed to His believing servants.

تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي إِنْ شَاءَ جَعَلَ لَكَ خَيْرًا مِنْ ذَلِكَ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا
الْأَنْهَارُ وَيَجْعَلُ لَكَ قُصُورًا

25:10 The words are a clear prophecy that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) and his Companions and followers will receive a handsome reward in this life. Gardens and fertile lands of this earth and its palaces shall be inherited by the Muslims. As history shows, it would not take long until Muslims became owners of the lands of both Persia and Rome.

وَإِذَا أَلْقُوا مِنْهَا مَكَانًا ضَيِّقًا مُّقْرَنِينَ دَعَوْا هُنَالِكَ ثُبُورًا

25:13 While explaining the verse “*when they are thrown into some narrow place* (*مَكَانًا ضَيِّقًا*) *of it, chained in fetters*” Zamakhsharî writes, “Distress is accompanied by a feeling of constriction, contraction, squeezing and narrowness, just as happiness is accompanied by a feeling of spaciousness. That is why the Holy Qur’ân describes Paradise being as vast as the heavens and the earth” (3:133; see also 14:49).

قُلْ أَذْلَكَ خَيْرٌ أَمْ جَنَّةُ الْخُلُدِ الَّتِي وُعِدَ الْمُتَّقُونَ

25:15 **Jannat al-Khuld** جَنَّةُ الْخُلُدُ is the eternal Paradise from which the servants of Allâh will never be expelled. *Jannat al-Khuld* is not identical with the *Jannat* mentioned in the narration of Adam (cf. 2:35) from where he was expelled. Nor is it the paradise of the green fertile lands of this earth. Adam had to leave that *Jannat* (cf.: 2:36),

and the Muslim had to give back their paradise in Andalusia; as this was a temporary paradise (*Jannah*) on this very earth (2:30), whereas nobody entering *Jannah al-Khuld* جَنَّةُ الْخَلْدِ will be expelled from it (cf.: 15:48). In *Jannah al-Khuld* جَنَّةُ الْخَلْدِ “*they will hear no vain discourse, no topics of falsehood*” (78:35).

وَيَوْمَ تَشَقَّقُ السَّمَاءُ بِالْغَمَامِ وَنُزَّلَ الْمَلَائِكَةُ تَنْزِيلًا

25:25 “*When the heaven shall burst and melt into raining clouds*” is also an allusion to the day of the battle of Badr and the heavy rainfall on that day. This description is also given in 8:11 and 3:124. More generally the verse applies to the Day of Judgment.

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ الْقُرْآنُ جُمْلَةً وَاحِدَةً كَذَلِكَ لِتُبَثَّتَ بِهِ فُوَادَاتٌ ۝ وَرَتَّلَاهُ تَرْتِيلًا

25:32 This verse points to the gradual revelation of the Holy Qur’ân sent down piecemeal and at intervals (رَتَّلَاهُ تَرْتِيلًا). Its arrangement revealed to the Holy Prophet (pbuh) and was not the work of ‘Uthmân , or any other person (cf. 4:82; 39:23) The Holy Qur’ân is spoken of as fully self-consistent and free from inner contradictions. The piecemeal revelation of the Holy Qur’ân is also in accord with the prophecy of the Bible (Isa. 28:9-10).

وَلَا يَأْتُونَكَ بِمَثِيلٍ إِلَّا جِئْنَاكَ بِالْحَقِّ وَأَحْسَنَ تَفْسِيرًا

25:33 This is an allusion to the self-explanatory character of the Holy Qur’ân. The disbelievers cannot raise an objection against the Qur’ân which has not been answered in the Holy Qur’ân itself with eternal Truth (بِالْحَقِّ). Thus the Holy Book contains answers to all objections levelled against it. The word **Mathal** مَثَلٌ also means argument (Tâj). Accordingly, each claim is accompanied by supporting and substantiating arguments with no need to look to some other agency for aid.

وَعَادًا وَثُمُودَ وَأَصْحَابَ الرَّسْنِ وَقُرُونًا بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ كَثِيرًا

25:38 Râss رَسْ means prelude, beginning, first symptoms of an illness or of love, a mine, an old well. Al-Rass الرَّسْ is the name of a valley (Lisân; Tâj). The “People of Rass” are the inhabitants of the valley al-Rass. A town of the name *Al-Rass* exists to this day in the central Arabian province of al-Qâsim. Zajjâj thinks that *Râss* was the place inhabited by the descendants of Nabatean tribe of Thamûd. Others are of opinion that *al-Rass* is the name of a town in Yamâmah. Râzî quotes various conflicting interpretations and rejects them as purely conjectural.

أَرَأَيْتَ مَنِ اتَّخَذَ إِلَهَةً هَوَاهُ أَفَإِنْتَ تَكُونُ عَلَيْهِ وَكِيلًا

25:43 Here the blind submission to ones own low desires, fancies and preconceived ideas are described by words used for *shirk* شِرْك, associating others with Allâh. With this verse the doctrine of *tauhid* - the Unity of Divinity, has been brought to perfection, not found elsewhere. The verse indicates how broad the concept of *shirk* is. Intellectually humans may have advanced beyond bowing before stones, stars, trees, rivers, animals, tombs, forces of nature, or fellow humans who are supposed to be gods or incarnates of God, but humankind has not outgrown the worship of his false notions, prejudices, pre-conceived ideas, and low desires. These idols lie enthroned within the depth of the heart whose worship is condemned here.

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى رَبِّكَ كَيْفَ مَدَ الظَّلَّ وَلَوْ شَاءَ لَجَعَلَهُ سَاكِنًا ثُمَّ جَعَلَنَا الشَّمْسَ
عَلَيْهِ ذَلِيلًا (٤٥) ثُمَّ قَضَنَاهُ إِلَيْنَا قَنْصًا يَسِيرًا

25:45-46 This and the previous verse are a metaphorical allusion to the rise, progress, power, and decline of Muslims, and illustrate it as the example of a phenomenon of nature. An object in the proximity of a source of light casts a large shadow; as it recedes, the shadow

shrinks. The early Muslims, being nearer to the *Muhammadan* light, cast their shadows to faraway lands. As time passed, and the distance to the *Muhammadan* light increased, the shadows decreased. When the sun is in the back of an object its shadow lengthens; similarly when Allâh is behind the Muslims their power and influence increases. As in many other places in the Holy Qur’ân, the abrupt change from the third-person pronoun “He” to the first-person plural “We” is meant to illustrate the fact that Allâh is indefinable—that it is only the inadequacy of human speech that makes it necessary to refer to the Supreme Being by pronouns, which in reality are applicable only to finite, created persons. The change from “He” to “We” also indicates the employment of several forces by Allâh in that particular process. The references to Allâh, through “He,” “We,” “I,” or “Allâh,” which sometimes even occur within a single sentence, are not haphazard and accidental and are not even what one might call poetic license, but are deliberate and ultra-linguistic devices. “I” and “My” are expressions of closeness between servant and Master (87:27-29; 20:12-15; 28:30). Through “We” and “Our” form He is referring to His might, majesty, kingship and sovereignty. In His He-ness, nothing is like Him as He says in His own words (42:11). And “Allâh” is the proper name combining all His Attributes.

وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ الرِّيَاحَ بُشْرًا بَيْنَ يَدِيْ رَحْمَتِهِ ۝ وَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً طَهُورًا

25:48 Just as pure water from above gives life to a dead land, so does the pure water of Revelation raise the spiritually dead to life.

لَنْحِيَّ بِهِ بَلْدَةً مَيِّنَا وَنُسْقِيَهُ مِمَّا حَلَقْنَا أَنْعَامًا وَأَنَاسِيَّ كَثِيرًا

25:49 This verse refers to the decline of the Muslim power in an allegorical way. The significance of these words is a part of Divine knowledge. The meanings of these expressions are for the

understanding of people who are close enough to Allâh to be able to comprehend the beauty of His metaphors.

فَلَا تُطِعُ الْكَافِرِينَ وَجَاهِدُهُمْ بِهِ جِهَادًا كَبِيرًا

25:52 The word **bihi** بِهِ in the verse clarifies the **jihâd**. **Bihi** بِهِ means “with this”, here “this” refers to the Holy Qur’ân. Therefore the great and real *jihâd* according to this verse is to convey the Message of the Holy Qur’ân with the arguments contained in it and to strive for the dissemination of its teachings (see also 25:73).

وَهُوَ الَّذِي مَرَجَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ هَذَا عَذْبٌ فُرَاتٌ وَهَذَا مُلْحٌ أَجَاجٌ وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَهُمَا بَرْزَخًا وَجِبْرًا مَحْجُورًا

25:53 Al-Bahrain الْبَحْرَيْنِ “The two waters” may represent a sweet life of goodness and a bitter life of wickedness, or the salt water of the sea and the sweet water of lakes and rivers.,

تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ فِي السَّمَاءِ بُرُوجًا وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا سِرَاجًا وَقَمَرًا مُنِيرًا

25:61 From this verse to the end of the chapter is described the great transformation that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) had brought about in the lives of His Companions and true believers. These verses are their true story.

وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِرُوا بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ لَمْ يَخْرُوا عَلَيْهَا صُمًّا وَعُمْيَانًا

25:73 “Who do not shut their ears and eyes to the commandments of their Lord.” They listen to them attentively and with their eyes open. Explaining this verse, Zamakhsharî writes that most people approach the Holy Writ with mere outward shows of eagerness, for the sake of show or to look pious, but in reality, they make little attempt to understand the message therein. They therefore remain “deaf and blind, “their ears and eyes shut to its contents”. The truly God-

conscious are deeply desirous of understanding it and therefore listen to it with wide-awake ears and look into it with seeing eyes. Their belief is based on certainty and not on mere hearsay and dogmas.

وَالَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا هُبْ لَنَا مِنْ أَزْوَاجِنَا وَدُرْرِيَاتِنَا قُرَّةً أَعْيُنٍ وَاجْعَلْنَا^ا
لِلْمُتَّقِينَ إِمَامًا

25:74 Imâm إمام is a model and leader, and thus the verse purports to say that one must not be satisfied with only becoming righteous himself but should aim at being a model and pattern for others. (For conditions to be an Imâm see 32:24)



سورة الشعراء 26. CHAPTER

The Poets

(Revealed before Hijrah)

This chapter is the first of a group of three chapters narrating small episodes about the lives of other Prophets whose story ends with the destruction of their people as a result of denying the Prophets message: —وَمَا يَأْتِيهِم مِنْ ذِكْرٍ مِنَ الرَّحْمَنِ مُخْدِثٌ إِلَّا كَانُوا عَنْهُ مُغَرِّضِينَ “There never comes to them a fresh Reminder (in a new form and with new details) from the Most Gracious (God) but they turn away from it.” (26:5). The Holy Prophet (pbuh) knew what end the disbelievers in Divine messages came to. Since he was sent as a messenger for all humankind, the denial of his message would have particularly grave consequences. But the destruction of all of humanity would run counter to the Divine design. And in the Prophets love for humanity, he felt grieved at the possible and probable destruction of the disbelievers: —أَعَلَّكَ بَاخْ فَتَسْكَ أَلَا يَكُونُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ “Perhaps you will consume

yourself away (with anxiety) because they do not become believers”(26:3), and he desired that humanity be saved. In this chapter the stories of seven Prophets are related, which forewarn about potential destruction. The mention of each is ended with the Attribute of Allâh ﷺ — “*وَإِنْ رَبَّكَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ*” (And your Lord, of course, He is the All-Mighty, the Ever Merciful” (26:9) as the Possessor of all Powers but also as the Ever Merciful, indicating that the dealing with the opponents of the Prophet of Islam would be merciful, and only a small fraction of them will be destroyed while a great majority will accept Islam.

26:1 **Tâ Sîn Mîm** طسّم means, “Allâh is Gentle/Benign, All-Hearing, and All-Knowing”. Ibn ‘Abbâs interprets *Tâ* ط as standing for *Latîf* لطيف (gentle/kind/benign), *Sîn* س as standing for *Samî’* سميع‘ (All-Hearing), and *Mîm* م as standing for ‘*Alîm* علیم (All-Knowing)

وَإِذْ نَادَى رَبُّكَ مُوسَىٰ أَنْ انْتِ الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ

26:10 In the words **Nâdâ Rabbu-ka** نَادَى رَبُّكَ “Lord called him in a loud voice,” *Nâdâ* نَادَى means not only to call, but also to call in a loud voice. The use of these words suggests that sometimes Divine Revelation is heard in the ears of Prophets in the form of a loud voice.

فَلَمَّا نَادَى رَبُّ إِنَّي أَخَافُ أَنْ يُكَذِّبُونَ

26:12 The reply of Moses, “O Lord, I fear” suggests that Moses was neither keen on nor prepared for this mission.

وَلَهُمْ عَلَيَّ ذَنْبٌ فَأَخَافُ أَنْ يَقْتُلُونِ

26:14 The reference is to the death of an Egyptian as mentioned in 28:15. Pharaoh had charged Moses with having killed him. It was no intentional or deliberate murder; however, this incident had caused Moses to flee from Egypt. He later defends himself on this issue in verse 21.

فَأَتَيْنَا فِرْعَوْنَ فَقُولَا إِنَّا رَسُولُ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

26:16 Noteworthy is the singular form of the word **Rasûl** رَسُولٌ, while the subject **inna** إِنَّا and the verb **qûla** قُولَا used are in the dual form, as though it were “We two are a deputation with a single message.” Several reasons are given for this. According to *Qâmûs* words of the form *fu’ûl* فُعُولٌ are both singular and plural. Therefore, it is permissible to use the singular predicate for a subject in the dual or plural number. The word *Rasûl* according to some lexicologists is considered to be a noun of action used adjectively (see also the word “*adâwwun*,” which is also singular in 26:77).

فَهَرَزْتُ مِنْكُمْ لَمَّا خِفْتُكُمْ فَوَهَبَ لِي رَبِّي حُكْمًا

26:21 There is wisdom in the words of Moses when he said, “*I fled from you [Pharaoh] because I apprehended injustice from you.*” He did not say, “I fled from you because of my desire for safety and well-being.” Moses continued, “*My Lord granted me knowledge and (right) judgment and made me (one) of the Messengers.*”

فَالَّذِي أَنْتَ مِنْهُ مُحَمَّدٌ وَرَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ

26:23 Pharaoh was an intelligent ruler. There is purpose in his question regarding the nature of Allâh, “*What is this Lord of the worlds?*” and not “Who is the Lord of the worlds?” He did not ask this question out of ignorance. He asked this question in a misleading way in order to acquaint those who were present.

فَالَّذِي أَنْتَ مِنْهُ مُحَمَّدٌ وَرَبُّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُّوقِنِينَ

26:24 Moses answered in the way of one who knows, “*He is the Lord of the heavens and the earth.*” This answer is for those who are convinced **Mu’qinîn** مُّوقِنِينَ, namely the people of inspiration, as if he was saying to them, “I have only informed you of what you already knew and what your inner selves have made you certain of.”

قَالَ لِمَنْ حَوْلَهُ أَلَا تَسْتَعْمِلُونَ

26:25 In order to preserve his position and dignity before others, Pharaoh pretended that Moses had not answered his question, and that he knew more than Moses did. He said to those around him, “Do you hear what he says?” as if Moses had not replied to his question.

قَالَ رَبُّكُمْ وَرَبُّ آبَانِكُمُ الْأَوَّلِينَ

26:26 Moses continued to answer Pharaoh’s original question (cf.:26:23) about the Lord of the Worlds

قَالَ إِنَّ رَسُولَكُمُ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ إِلَيْكُمْ لَمْجُنُونٌ

26:27 Pharaoh knew that Moses would answer in such a way and said, “*This messenger is a madman indeed,*” meaning that Moses was ignorant of what was asked. Thus he tried to triumph over his people. Pharaohs boast was valid as he asked, “*What is this Lord of the worlds?*” and not “Who is this Lord of the worlds?” However, for the people of true learning and Divine knowledge, the answer given by Moses was the only true answer. As Moses himself says in the above verse 26:24, this answer is for those who are convinced *Mu’qinîn* مُّقْنِيْنِ the people of inspiration.

قَالَ رَبُّ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا ۖ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ

26:28 The answer, “*He is the Lord of the east and the Lord of the west,*” addressed the people of intellect and reasoning (*‘aqal*), as if Moses meant to say that this answer can be understood if you have the power of intellect and reflection. The answer is already known to those who possess intellect, as their intellect provides them sufficient proof of His Lordship.

قَالَ لَئِنِ اتَّخَذْتَ إِلَهًا غَيْرِي لَأَجْعَلَنَّكَ مِنَ الْمَسْجُونِينَ

26:29 Pharaoh was in a position to threaten Moses because of his position of power. “*If you worship any god other than me,*” shows that Pharaoh claimed for himself the attributes and powers of Divinity. He thus took undue advantage of his worldly powers, and sought to rule on his own, thereby ignoring the Divine Rule. Moses on the other hand is the “servant of Allâh” who acts in conformity with the Divine Law, but with no power of his own to enforce it. Whereas Moses has spiritual authority and rank, Pharaoh has worldly power and rank. The dialogue between Moses and Pharaoh, similar to the dialogue between Abraham and his sire, and Abraham and Nimrod, and other Prophets and their rebellious people, which on the surface appear to be a simple confrontation of “good” and “bad” is, in reality, something that has been going on ever since the polar principle of the “Creative Act” and the “Spiritual Wish” of Allâh had been made manifest. The threat of Pharaoh that “*I will certainly make you one of the imprisoned*” was a sign that he had no good response for Moses words and was an indication of the defeat of his argument

قَالَ أَوْلَوْ جِئْنُوكَ بِشَيْءٍ مُّبِينٍ

26:30 Moses did not say, “Pharaoh, you are accepting your defeat and giving proof of your ignorance by threatening me.” Instead, in a sense, he recognized Pharaohs higher worldly rank, but at the same time, he resisted the threat and offered to bring further proof when he said, “*even though I bring to you something that makes (the truth of my statement) clear to you?*”

قَالَ فَأْتِ بِهِ إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ

26:31 Pharaoh had no choice but to accept the offer of Moses, lest he should appear weak and unjust before his people.

فَالْقَوْلُ عَصَاهُ فَإِذَا هِيَ ثُعَابُ مُبِينٍ

26:32 Staff, snake, and the strands are symbols that stand for arguments. His staff and the snake symbolize the powerful arguments of Moses, and the weak arguments of Pharaoh and strands and ropes symbolize his advisers.

وَنَزَعَ يَدَهُ فَإِذَا هِيَ بِبَصَاءٍ لِلنَّاظِرِينَ

26:33 The “shining hand” is an allegorical expression of the shining teaching and the Book of Law that Moses brought.

يُرِيدُ أَنْ يُخْرِجُكُمْ مِنْ أَرْضِكُمْ بِسْحَرِهِ فَمَادَا تَأْمُرُونَ

26:35 The question of Pharaoh, “*What do you advise?*” فَمَادَا تَأْمُرُونَ indicates that he was an intelligent ruler who considered the counsel of his advisers.

قَالُوا لَا ضَيْرٌ إِنَّا إِلَى رَبِّنَا مُنْفَلِبُونَ

26:50 The reply of the sorcerers to the threat of Pharaoh to cut off their hands and crucify them, “*It does not matter,*” لا ضَيْرٌ shows how convinced they were by the arguments of Truth and the proof brought by Moses in support of his mission.

فَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى مُوسَى أَنِ اصْرِبْ بِعَصَاكَ الْبَحْرَ فَانْفَلَقَ فَكَانَ كُلُّ فِرْقٍ كَالطَّوْدِ الْعَظِيمِ

26:63 **Adzrab bi ‘Asâk al-Bahr** اضرِبْ بِعَصَاكَ الْبَحْرَ literally means, “strike the sea with your staff.” **Adzrab** اضرِبْ has a very broad meaning in classical Arabic. Here *Adzrab* اضرِبْ is an expression meaning “tread on dry land between the seas.” Similarly, *Adzrab bi ‘Asâk al-Hajar* (2:60), literally “strike your staff on the rock,” means to tread through the rocky desert. This meaning is further clarified in verse 20:77 where we read, “Take them along a dry path.” طريق *Tariq* is a dry path. The Bible says, “The Lord caused the sea to go back by

strong east wind all that night and made the sea a dry land” (Exod. 14.21). From various indications in the Bible, in particular Exodus (14.2-9), it appears that the miracle of the crossing of the sea took place at the northwestern end of what is known today as the Gulf of Suez. Some modern researchers think it can also be the middle or even the south of what is today the Suez Canal. In ancient times there were several seas there, separated from each other by land, and in most of the parts that were not very deep, they were somehow connected with the Mediterranean Sea to the north or the Red Sea to the south. Allâh miraculously arranged that Moses and his party should cross the sea during the time of low tide, leaving a dry path for them to pass (20:77).

قَالُوا بَلْ وَجَدْنَا آبَاءَنَا كَذَّلِكَ يَفْعَلُونَ

26:74 The people who associate other creatures with Allâh have no proof for their dogma and merely say, “*We found our fathers doing likewise.*” These are just lame excuses, devoid of real argument.

فَإِنَّهُمْ عَدُوٌ لِي إِلَّا رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ

26:77 Abraham declared himself enemy to the gods of the polytheists. This was a difficult challenge to the polytheists: if these gods existed and were his enemies, they should be capable of doing some harm to Abraham.

وَإِذَا مَرِضْتُ فَهُوَ يَشْفِينِ

26:80 Abraham did not say, “When You cause me to become ill” — but rather, “*When I fall ill*” . Here Abraham attributes all maladies to himself and all remedy to Allâh, as in 4:80.

إِلَّا عَجُوزًا فِي الْغَابِرِينَ

26:171 As is evident from 7:83, 11:81, 27:57, 29:32, and 66:10, the old woman was Lots wife, a native of Sodom, who chose to remain with her own people instead of accompanying her husband.

وَإِنَّهُ لَفِي زُبُرِ الْأَوَّلِينَ

26:196 “*It is the Book which you find mentioned in the Scriptures of the earlier peoples*” means that the Qur’ân has been mentioned and foretold in the Divine Wisdom of ancient Scriptures, and its basic teachings are in their purport identical with those preached by the earlier Scriptures.

أَوَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَّهُمْ آيَةً أَنْ يَعْلَمُهُ عُلَمَاءُ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ

26:197 Here the learned among the Jews and the Christians are addressed, such as ‘Abdullah bin Salâm and Ka‘b bin Malik in the lifetime of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), and Ka‘b al-Ahbar of Yemen and a number of his compatriots during the reign of ‘Umar^(rz), as well as many others in the course of centuries and even today.



سورة النمل 27. CHAPTER

The Tribe of the Naml

(Revealed before Hijrah)

The title **Al-Naml** النمل is taken from the mention in verse 18 of a tribe known as the “*Naml*,” in connection with Solomons campaign against the Queen of Sheba. Another name of the chapter is **Tâ Sîn** طس named after the letters preceding its first verse. The previous chapter opened with the abbreviated letters **Tâ Sîn Mîm** طسم. In the beginning

of this chapter the letter **Mîm** م has been omitted. This indicates that the subject matter of this chapter constitutes a continuation of the subject matter of the preceding chapter though in a different form.

At the close of the preceding chapter an allegation by the opponents was made that the Prophet of Islam was a poet and that satans descended upon him. To this taunt the chapter returns the answer, in effect saying “You are being made to learn the Qur’ân from the presence of the All-Wise, the All-Knowing.”

طس ٰ تلّك آياتُ الْقُرْآنِ وَكِتَابٍ مُّبِينٍ

27:1 In this verse the two very important names of the Holy Book are mentioned: the Qur’ân القرآن and the Book (**Kitâb** كتاب). When we reflect on the meaning of these two (the often recited book) we find therein a powerful prophecy that this Holy Book will be widely recited and read. In addition, the name *Kitâb* (without the suffix *al*) implies that the Holy Qur’ân will continue to be preserved in the form of a book and that it contains commandments and obligations that distinguish right from wrong.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ رَيَّنَا لَهُمْ أَعْمَالَهُمْ فَهُمْ يَعْمَهُونَ

27:4 It is the evil suggestions and whispers that make an evil deed look beautiful (6:43; 8:48), but inasmuch as it comes about in accordance with a Divine Law, it is attributed to Allâh. Another rendering of the verse could be, “Although Allâh presents the deeds that ought to be done by the nonbeliever in the Hereafter in a beautiful and fair seeming way, and they still wander on heedlessly making all sorts of blunders.”

وَإِنَّكَ لَتَلْقَى الْقُرْآنَ مِنْ لُدْنٍ حَكِيمٍ عَلَيْهِ

27:6 “*You are being made to learn the Qur’ân from the presence of the All-Wise, the All-Knowing.*” This teaching and learning has

illuminated the spirit of the Holy Prophet with knowledge. Thus the spiritual illumination of a human being is possible only through Divine Revelation. This verse is a bridge between the first verse of the chapter and the following.

إِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِأَهْلِهِ إِنِّي آنْسَتُ نَارًا سَائِنِكُمْ مِّنْهَا بِخَبَرٍ أَوْ آتَيْكُمْ بِشَهَابٍ
قَبْسٌ لَّعَلَّكُمْ تَصْطَلُونَ

27:7 Here we are informed about a spiritual vision of Moses. The expression **Innî anastu Nâra** “إِنِّي آنْسَتُ نَارًا” *I perceive with a feeling of warmth and love something like a fire*” supports that he felt some heart-warming love. Had it been physical fire that Moses had seen he would not have used the expression *anastu* آنْسَتُ “I perceive, I feel with love,” but “I have seen a fire.” The wording suggests that it was Moses alone and none among his companions who perceived this warmth of love in the appearance of fire. Ibn al-‘Arabî says, “Moses, the great saint, reflected in the mirror of his heart the infinite form of the One Who is formless, the image of the One who is unseen. This form, this image, cannot be contained in heavens, in the oceans, or in the universe. All these have limits, but the mirror of the human heart has no limit.”

فَلَمَّا جَاءَهَا نُودِيَ أَنْ بُورِكَ مَنْ فِي النَّارِ وَمَنْ حَوْلَهَا وَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ رَبِّ
الْعَالَمِينَ

27:8 The voice Moses heard came from the All-Mighty, and it came in the manner in which the Divine call comes to all Prophets in the form of Divine Revelation. “*Blessed are those who are around this place*” shows that Moses was not alone. Whenever there is a Divine Revelation, the angels guard the recipient. It refers therefore to the “angels” present, as Moses was in the Divine Presence (cf. 72:27).

وَالْقِ عَصَاكَ ۝ فَلَمَّا رَأَاهَا تَهْتَزُ كَانَهَا جَانٌ وَلَى مُذْبِرًا وَلَمْ يُعَقِّبْ ۝ يَا
مُوسَى لَا تَحْفُ إِنِي لَا يَخَافُ لَدَيَ الْمُرْسَلُونَ

27:10 Alqi ‘Asâka أَلْقِ عَصَاكَ “Put down your staff.” When understood correctly, these words contain a great prophecy given to Moses in beautiful, concise, metaphoric words. Moses understood that a staff (‘Asâ) is a symbol of respect and power, and that power and respect were prophesized for him.

وَادْخِلْ يَدَكَ فِي جَيْبِكَ تَخْرُجْ بَيْضَاءَ مِنْ غَيْرِ سُوءٍ ۝ فِي تِسْعَ آيَاتٍ إِلَى
فِرْعَوْنَ وَقَوْمِهِ ۝

27:12 This was the second message conveyed to Moses. “*Put your hand in the bosom*” is to come forward with a book and “*without any disease*” means a flawless sparkling Divine Book with Divine Laws and full of wisdom. These are two of the nine signs he shall be given for his mission to Pharaoh and his people. For the nine signs, see 7:107-108,117, 130,133,138.

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا دَاؤُودَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ عِلْمًا ۝ وَقَالَا حَمْدُ اللَّهِ الَّذِي فَضَّلَنَا عَلَىٰ كَثِيرٍ
مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

27:15 “*We granted knowledge to David and Solomon*” indicates that Allâh alone is the source of knowledge, and that He gives knowledge to whom He pleases. He gives even more to the ones who show thanks (14:7-8; 20:114). Davids and Solomons exaltation was not just over ordinary people, but over “*believing servants.*” Exaltation over normal folk only, would not be an extraordinary special status.

وَوَرِثَ سُلَيْمَانُ دَاؤُودَ ۝ وَقَالَ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ عُلِّمْنَا مَنْطِقَ الطَّيْرِ وَأُوتِينَا مِنْ
كُلِّ شَيْءٍ ۝

27:16 Solomon succeeded David not only on his throne but also in spirituality and Divine knowledge. Solomon was granted intelligence

and the knowledge of communication, with which he equipped his army. In the words spoken by Solomon, “*And we are bestowed with everything*,” “everything” should be understood not in an absolute sense but in the sense of “everything he needed and required according to the demands of his time.”

وَحُشِرَ لِسْلِيمَانَ جُنُودُهُ مِنَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنْسِ وَالطَّيْرِ فَهُمْ يُوزَّعُونَ

27:17 The army of Solomon was divided into three classes: **al-Jinn** (الْجِنِّ) (with prefix *al*) were fighters belonging to mountain tribes whom Solomon had subjected. Then the cavalry of his own men; **الأنس**; and **al-Tair** الطَّيْرُ birds such as carrier pigeons that can deliver messages. The word *jinn* was never understood as “jinnie”, “genie” or “ghost” in the earlier Islamic period. Such meanings are modern, based on lack of knowledge of classical Arabic, and make the whole narration absurd and ridiculous. *Jinn* literally means something hidden, not visible, but existing. This can be people living in far-ledged areas or mountains. Some Jews of the time of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) who spent most of their time in secluded places of worship were also called *jinn*. For the discussion on *jinn* see verses 6:128, 15:27, and 7:38; and refer to 18:50, 34:41, 41:25, 46:18, 46:29, 51:56, 55:33, 72:5, 114:6.

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَتَوْا عَلَىٰ وَادِ النَّمْلِ قَالَتْ نَمْلَةٌ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّمْلُ اذْخُلُوا مَسَاكِنَكُمْ لَا يَحْطِمُنَّكُمْ سُلَيْمَانٌ وَجُنُودُهُ وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ

27:18 **Wâd al-Naml** - وَادِ النَّمْلٍ—here the word **al-Naml** (النَّمْل) (with article *al*) is used as a proper noun, not the indefinite *naml* نمل meaning “ant.” This valley is situated between Jibrân and Asqalân, a coastal town twelve miles north of Gaza near Sinai (see *Taqwîm al-Buldan*). *Namlah* نملة literally means “ant” when without the article *al*, but the definite article *al* changes *Namlah* to the name of a tribe (*Qâmûs*). In addition, *Nâmil* نامل is a clever man and *Namlah* نملة a clever woman (*Tâj*). The name *Namlah* نملة also used to be given to a child in whose hand an ant was placed at birth, a ritual

supposed to make the child wise and intelligent (Tâj). In *Qâmûs* it is mentioned that Abriqah is one of the springs of that valley (*Qâmûs*). In the Arabic language, it was common practice that tribes were named after animals and beasts, such as Banû Asad (literally “lion”), Banû Kalb (“dog”), etc. This practice also existed in European nations. Moreover, the words **udkhalû Masâkina-kum** ادْخُلُوا مَسَاكِنَكُمْ “get into your habitations,” indicate that the Naml were a tribe, since the word **Masâkina** مَسَاكِنْ is used in Arabic only for human habitations, and it is in this sense that it has been used elsewhere in the Holy Qur’ân (cf. 29:38; 32:26). Thus the valley of Al-Naml does not mean the valley of ants, but a valley where a tribe named al-Naml lived. The word “unknowingly” indicates that the goodness of Solomons soldiers was famed everywhere. They would not knowingly harm anybody, and this was what pleased Solomon. The name of the person of the tribe of Naml mentioned in this verse who gave the advice was Hars, and he belonged to the clan of *Banû Shaisân* (Ibn Kathîr).

وَتَقَدَّمَ الطَّيْرُ فَقَالَ مَا لِي لَا أَرَى الْهُدْهُدَ أُمَّ كَانَ مِنَ الْغَائِبِينَ

27:20 Al-Hudhud الْهُدْهُدُ was not the lapwing or hoopoe or any other bird (mind the suffix *al* before *hudhud* هُدْهُدٌ but the title of an officer who was entrusted by Solomon with an important mission to the court of Sheba. In many cultures, both first and last names that have the meanings of birds or animals are widespread. There is the Hebrew Rachel (“ewe”) and Deborah (“bee”), the biblical Jemima (“dove”), the Spanish Paloma (“dove”), and the German surnames Vogel, Adler, and Specht (“bird,” “eagle,” “woodpecker”). In English, “Robin” is a common first name and a number of bird names exist as last names (“Sparrow,” “Stork,” “Dove,” “Swan”), albeit not so common as in other tongues. In ancient times, **Hudhud** used to be a popular name: among those bearing it was a son of Ismâîl, an Edomite prince (1 Kings 11.14), and it is said to be the name of the father of Sheba

(*Muntah al-'Arab*). The Arab writers speak of a king of Himyâr as *Hudhud* (*Lisân*). According to the same authority, *Hudhud* is also written as *Hudahad*, which was the name of a tribe in Yemen. Therefore, there is nothing strange about such a name. Birds do not speak, neither tell the truth nor lie, and cannot be subject to the infliction of a severe punishment by a great monarch such as Solomon. Similarly incomprehensible is the exposition of the great spiritual doctrine of unity by the lapwing or hoopoe. Occasionally it is objected that the word *Zabaha* in the verse is used in connection with the slaughtering of an animal. This objection can be refuted easily by referring to verse 2:49 and its use of the word.

اذهب بكتابي هدا فآفأله إليهم ثم تول عنهم فانظر مادا يرجعون

27:28 The words “*Then withdraw from them and wait*” show that Solomon instructed his representative to give due respect according to the status of the queen. In a similar way Moses was ordered, “*Speak to him (Pharaoh) in a gentle speech*” (20:44).

إِنَّهُ مِنْ سُلَيْمَانَ وَإِنَّهُ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

27:30 Solomons letter constitutes a beautiful specimen of how a great, important, and comprehensive meaning can be condensed into a few brief words. Letters written by the Holy Prophet (pbuh) also had the same beginning.

قَالَتْ يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَلَأُ أَفْشُونِي فِي أَمْرِي مَا كُنْتُ قَاطِعَةً أَمْرًا حَتَّىٰ تَشَهَّدُونَ

27:32 The queen asked her chieftains for advice just as Pharaoh consulted his advisors (cf. 26:35). From the second part of the verse, it appears that Sabâ was more democratic than Pharaoh was.

قَالَ يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَلَأُ أَيُّكُمْ يَأْتِينِي بِعَرْشِهَا قَبْلَ أَنْ يَأْتُونِي مُسْلِمِينَ

27:38 Ya'tînâ bi 'Arshihâ يأتيني بِعَرْشِهَا means “Bring me a throne befitting her.” Solomon receives a queen befitting her status. It does not say, “bring me her throne,” which would have been expressed by Yatînâ 'Arshihâ يأتيني عَرْشِهَا (without suffix *bi*). This is a common mistake of translators.

فَالَّذِي عِنْدُهُ عِلْمٌ مِّنَ الْكِتَابِ أَنَّا آتَيْكَ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَرْتَدَ إِلَيْكَ طَرْفُكَ ۝

27:40 In classical Arabic, the ambassador or a representative of Yemen was called *Tarf* طرف, which also means government taxes. In this case the translation is, “before your taxes are due.” For the rendering of **Tarfu-ka** طرفك as “your Yemenite,” (see *Tâj al-'Arûs*). The period of Queen Shebas rule continued up to 950 B.C. With her submission to Solomon the Biblical prophecy, “the kings of Sheba shall offer gifts,” was fulfilled (Psalms 72.10).

فَلَمَّا جَاءَتْ قِيلَ أَهَكَدًا عَرْشُكَ ۝ قَالَتْ كَانَهُ هُوَ ۝ وَأَوْتَيْنَا الْعِلْمَ مِنْ قَبْلِهَا
وَكُنَّا مُسْلِمِينَ

27:42 “We have been given the knowledge before this”. Here knowledge can be both the knowledge of the superior power of Solomon and knowledge about Solomons monotheistic religion. “We have already submitted (**Muslimîn**” مُسْلِمِينَ) can be in the context of what Sabâ said before in verse 27:34 or can be a confession that in reality she already was a believer in one God and submissive to Him.

قِيلَ لَهَا ادْخُلِي الصَّرْحَ ۝ فَلَمَّا رَأَتْهُ حَسِبَتْهُ لُجَّةً وَكَشَفَتْ عَنْ سَاقِيهَا ۝ فَالَّ
إِنَّهُ صَرْحٌ مُّرَدٌ مِّنْ قَوَارِيرٍ ۝ قَالَتْ رَبِّي ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِي وَأَسْلَمْتُ مَعَ
سُلَيْمَانَ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

27:44 Solomon intended the noble woman to realize the error of her idol-worship in symbolic language by presenting a throne to her, which was much superior to her own throne. He wanted to impress upon her that what he possesses in knowledge—both spiritual and

worldly—is much superior to what she is so proud of and what she worships. The palace referred to in the verse was constructed by order of Solomon. When she entered the palace, she mistook the transparent glass for water, which ran beneath. The sight of the water perplexed and perturbed her. **Kashafat ‘ann sâqai-hâ** is a well-known Arabic idiom meaning to become perturbed or perplexed (Lisân. Tâj). Only ignorance of the Arabic language would make anyone assume the literal meaning of the words as “uncovered her shanks” (see also 68:42). In English idiom that something surprising might happen, one would say something shall „knock your socks off“: it does not mean the person will start going barefoot.

وَلَفْدٌ أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْهِ تَمُودُ أَخَاهُمْ صَنَالِحًا أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ فَإِذَا هُمْ فَرِيقَانٍ
يَخْتَصِمُونَ

27:45 Farîqân فَرِيقَانٍ two factions, two groups: believers and non-believers.

وَكَانَ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ تِسْعَةُ رَهْطٍ يُفْسِدُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا يُصْلِحُونَ

27:48 The city referred to is the region known as al-Hîr in northern Hijâz. However, by implication, the reference in the verse is to the enemies of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), and it is a Prophetic reference. Nine persons were the most severe enemies of the Holy Prophet in Makkah. They were Abû Jahal, Walîd, Nadzar, ‘Utba, Shaiba, Umayya, ‘Ubbî, ‘Uqba, and Harith bin Amer. Like Sâlihs people, the Makkan chiefs also plotted against the life of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) (see also 8:30).

أَمَّنْ خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَأَنْزَلَ لَكُمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَنْبَتَنَا بِهِ حَدَائِقَ
ذَاتَ بَهْجَةٍ مَا كَانَ لَكُمْ أَنْ تُنْثِيوا شَجَرَهَا ۝ إِلَلَهٌ مَعَ اللَّهِ ۝ بَلْ هُمْ قَوْمٌ
يَعْدُلُونَ (٦٠) أَمَّنْ جَعَلَ الْأَرْضَ قَرَارًا وَجَعَلَ خَلَالَهَا أَنْهَارًا وَجَعَلَ لَهَا
رَوَاسِيَ وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ حَاجِزًا ۝ إِلَلَهٌ مَعَ اللَّهِ ۝ بَلْ أَكْثُرُهُمْ لَا

يَعْلَمُونَ أَمَّنْ يُحِبُّ الْمُضْطَرُ إِذَا دَعَاهُ وَيَكْشِفُ السُّوءَ وَيَجْعَلُكُمْ حُلَفاءَ
الْأَرْضِ ۝ إِلَهٌ مَعَ اللَّهِ ۝ قَلِيلًا مَا تَذَكَّرُونَ

27:60-61 These verses provide some arguments in support of the existence of the All-Mighty, His great powers of creation (خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ) (وَأَنَزَلَ لَكُمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً) (وَالْأَرْضَ), and Revelation (وَالْأَرْضَ). In the diversity of His creation, He draws our attention to the fact that all is the work of One God (إِلَهٌ مَعَ اللَّهِ). The first argument is taken from the marvelous power of the All-Mighty in nature (27:60-61), and the next when He manifests Himself in the human beings inner conscience, when he cries to Him in the agony of his soul (أَمَّنْ يُحِبُّ الْمُضْطَرُ إِذَا دَعَاهُ) and Allâh listens to his cry (وَيَكْشِفُ السُّوءَ). The existence and Oneness of the All-Mighty is not to be sought in the power of a human being as the conqueror of the forces of nature, but in his weakness. Thus, we are told that the proof of the existence of the Supreme Being and His Unity and great powers are manifested in the mighty forces of nature as well as in the weak mortals who then inherit the land (وَيَجْعَلُكُمْ حُلَفاءَ) (الْأَرْضِ)

أَمَّنْ يَبْدَا الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ وَمَنْ يَرْزُقُكُمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۝ إِلَهٌ مَعَ
اللَّهِ ۝

27:64 This is a reference to the human beings life on earth and his resurrection after death, as well as to this worldly cycle of birth and death (cf.: 7:57).

وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَىٰ هَذَا الْوَعْدُ إِنْ كُنْתُمْ صَادِقِينَ

27:71 The question “*When will this promise come?*” is put by the Muslims in this verse. In verse 34:29 and in 36:48 the same question was asked by the non-believers. The reply given here is in the words *Radaf* ردف indicating “it will follow him”—i.e., when the Holy Prophet (pbuh) is not there. Verse 32:29 also contains the answer to this question.

وَإِذَا وَقَعَ الْقَوْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ أَخْرَجْنَا لَهُمْ دَابَّةً مِّنَ الْأَرْضِ تُكَلِّمُهُمْ أَنَّ النَّاسَ كَانُوا
بِآيَاتِنَا لَا يُوقِنُونَ

27:82 “*The creature from the earth which will speak to them*” is apparently an allegory of the human beings earthly outlook on life. These people are those who have lost all sense of the higher values of life, along with those whose labour has gone to waste in mere worldly pursuits but who nonetheless think they are doing good deeds (18:104). In other words, the soul-destroying materialism is characteristic of the time preceding the Last Hour. However, if **Dâbbah** دَابَّةٌ is taken in the sense of an insect and **Tukallimu** تُكَلِّمُ should mean, “it will bite them,” it will be a reference to the appearance of diseases and epidemics caused by microorganisms in the latter days. The verse was also construed this way by the Holy Prophet (pbuh).

وَتَرَى الْجِبَالَ تَحْسَبُهَا جَامِدَةً وَهِيَ تَمُرُّ مَرَّ السَّحَابِ

27:88 Al-Jibâl - الْجِبَالَ “mountains” also signify great men, institutions, powerful nations and ideas (Tâj), which seemed to have become firmly fixed and rooted like mountains. But physical mountains, too, are only seemingly immovable and fixed but on a larger timescale build up, disappear and pass by, fleeting just like clouds.



28. CHAPTER سورة القصص

The Narrative

(Revealed before Hijrah)

This is the third and last of the chapters which belong to the *Tâ Sîn Mîm* طس ميم group. It opens with the same abbreviated letters, thereby pointing to its connection with the previous two chapters. *Tâ Sîn Mîm* are abbreviations of *al-Latîf* الطيف (the Benign), *al-Samî'* السميع (the Hearing), and *al-Majîd* or *Al-'Alîm* العليم (the All-Knowing). These are the Attributes of Allâh.

In this narration, reference is made to the flight of Moses from Egypt to Midian, his sojourn there for duration of ten years, and his subsequent return to Egypt and the deliverance of the Israelites from Pharaohs enslavement. As the Holy Prophet (pbuh) is compared to Moses (73:15), the narration is an indication that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) would leave his place of birth. Like Moses, he would come back to his homeland after ten years and deliver the weak Muslims there from the clutches of the Makkan pagans. Verse 85 in this chapter, “*Who has made the teaching of the Qur'ân binding on you, O Prophet! I shall most surely bring you back to the place of pilgrimage*” (Makkah), further clarifies the subject matter. This verse was revealed to the Holy Prophet (pbuh) during his escape from Makkah to Madînah at a place known as Jahfah (*Bahr al-Muhîl*).

The narration of Moses (28:3) has been given much weight in the Holy Qur'ân. His accounts have been presented to us in 7:103-157; 10:75-94; 11:96-100; 18:60-82; 19:51-53; 20:9-99; 23:45-49; 26:10-68; 27:7-14; 28:3-50; 40:23-54; 44:17-33; and 51:38-40, each time with different emphasis and purpose. The messages of these narrations are summarized in 2:47-96.

نَّثُرُ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ نَّبِإِ مُوسَىٰ وَفِرْعَوْنَ بِالْحَقِّ لِقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ

28:3 In this narration people with faith (لِقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ) are addressed in the first place. The Arabic word used for “narration” is **Nabâ** نَبِإِ and not أَسَاطِيرِ means an account of great importance that contains prophecy. Thus this account should be read as *Nabâ* and not as *Asâṭîr*, which is a compilation of words and lines (cf. 23:83). Narrations of Moses should not be read as a story of magic and counter-magic. For the benefit of all, the Holy Qur’ân expresses its purpose in an outward fashion, catering to the less educated people among its readers and listeners. This is in the same way that the language of the Apostles is outwardly simple for reaching a wide audience. The one who does not delve into the depths of its meanings, and cannot see beyond the outward forms, wonders about its outward manifestations and says, “This is the garment of a Great King.” The one with refined spiritual wisdom and understanding probes the depths to look for pearls in the garment of the Great King. He examines the quality of this garment and thereby realizes the respect to be commanded by the one wearing it: he knows there is someone worthy of it. The Prophets in their messages combine the outward form for the public and the inward meaning for the special believers. This was in the wisdom in Moses’ words when he said, “*I fled from you (Pharaoh) because I apprehended injustice from you.*” Moses did not say, “I fled from you because of my desire for safety and well-being” (21:26). Similarly, Moses gave two answers to the question of Pharaoh, “*What is this Sustainer of all the worlds?*” (*Rabb al-‘Âlamîn* cf. 26:23). The first reply was for those who have deep insight and absolute faith – *Yu’qinûn* (cf. 26:24, 20:72-73) when he said, “*He is the Lord of the heavens and the earth and of all that lies between the two, your Lord and the Lord of your forefathers if you have faith.*” His second reply was for those who depend only on their power of intellect and reason (‘Aql, cf. 26:28) when he said, “*The Lord of the east and*

the Lord of the west and all that which lies between the two, if you could only use your senses.”

Many aspects of this narration are symbolic and require a different approach. Great spiritual scholars of Islam point out parallels to the life of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) and Islamic history. They interpret it as an explanation of the Qur’ānic statement, “*Humankind! Now, We have sent a Messenger to you who is a witness over you, just as We sent a Messenger towards Pharaoh*” (73:15). The Qur’ānic Pharaoh stands for an arrogant, unbelieving, self-deifying human being, one who knows the Truth but in his heart conceals it (**kufr**). The inward realization of Pharaohs faith is reaffirmed at the point of his death when he says, “*I confess and believe that there is no One worthy of worship but He, in Whom the children of Israel have believed and I am of those who submit.*” The staff, the serpents, the golden calf, the spell is all symbols maintaining significance at all times.

إِنَّ فِرْعَوْنَ عَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَجَعَلَ أَهْلَهَا شِيَعًا يَسْتَضْعُفُ طَائِفَةً مِّنْهُمْ

28:4 Shai‘an شِيَعًا signifies parties, groups and division including racial division based on birth. Here the word Shai‘an refers to the division of people into high- and low-born, a division that is utterly condemned. Pharaoh is not a proper name but a title, a symbol for arrogance. The behaviour of some powerful nations toward the weaker is no different. They exploit them by creating divisions based on ethnic origins and religious beliefs.

وَنُرِيدُ أَن نَّمَنَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ اسْتُضْعَفُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَنَجْعَلَهُمْ أَئِمَّةً وَنَجْعَلُهُمْ
الْوَارِثِينَ

28:5 The verse informs us about the general Divine rule that those people who are considered low shall, if they follow the Divine commands and remain steadfast, one day get the upper hand and be respected (32:24).

وَنُمْكِنَ لَهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَنُرِيَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَهَامَانَ وَجُنُودَهُمَا مِنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَحْذَرُونَ

28:6 The compound designation “Ha-Amon” was given to every high priest of the Egyptian god Amon. *Hâmân* هامان, as used in the Holy Qur’ân in verses 28:38, 29:39, and 40:24,36, is not a proper name but the Arabic form of Ha-Amon, the high priest of Amon, the sun-god of Egypt. Similarly, Pharaoh is not a proper name but a title assumed by Egyptian rulers at the time of Moses. *Hâmân* هامان is a caretaker charged with construction work. At the time in question, the cult of *Amon* was dominant in Egypt; his high priest Ha-Amon or *Hâmân* held a rank second only to that of the king—similar to the role of popes in the Middle Ages. The point is strengthened by the fact that Pharaoh demanded that *Hâmân* هامان erect for him a lofty tower from which he could have a look at the God of Moses (28:38; 40:36) which may be an allusion to the function of the high priest as his chief architect. The name of this high priest was Nebunnef, who held this position under Ramses II and his son Menfatiah (or Merneftah). This *Hâmân* is not to be confused with the Persian “Haman” of the Old Testament (Esther 3.1).

وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى أُمِّ مُوسَىٰ أَنْ أَرْضِعِيهِ

28:7 It should be noted that the mother of Moses was not a prophetess in the sense commonly understood, yet Allâh says: “*We revealed to the mother of Moses.*” The disciples of Jesus also received revelation (5:111). This shows that it is not only Prophets who can receive information directly from on High.

وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ

28:14 Additional occurrences of this statement, “*That is how we reward the doers of good,*” are found in verses 6:84, 12:22, and 37:110)

وَلَمَّا وَرَدَ مَاءَ مَدْيَنَ وَجَدَ عَلَيْهِ أُمَّةً مِّنَ النَّاسِ يَسْقُونَ وَوَجَدَ مِنْ دُونِهِمْ
أَمْرَأَتَيْنِ تَذُودَانِ ۖ قَالَ مَا حَطَبُكُمَا ۖ قَالَتَا لَا نَسْقِي حَتَّىٰ يُصْدِرَ الرِّعَاءُ ۖ
وَأَبُو نَا شَيْخٌ كَبِيرٌ

28:23 The old man is Shû'aib (7:85; 20:40). The verse tells that women can go out of their homes to carry out their duties, but they should be modest in their walk and behaviour.

قَالَ إِنِّي أُرِيدُ أَنْ أُنَكِّحَ أَحَدَى ابْنَتَيْ هَاتِئِنِ عَلَىٰ أَنْ تَأْجُرَنِي ثَمَانِي
حِجَاجٍ ۖ فَإِنْ أَتَمْمَتَ عَشْرًا فَمِنْ عِنْدِكَ ۖ وَمَا أُرِيدُ أَنْ أَشْقَى عَلَيْكَ ۖ
سَتَحْدِنِي إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ

28:27 It is wrong to think that Shû'aib agreed to marry one of his daughters in lieu of eight or ten years service. Shû'aib, a godly person, a Prophet, realized through his Divine wisdom that a great Divine mission lay before Moses. He therefore offered him one of his daughters in marriage, with the desire that Moses should live with him and thereby benefit from Shu'aib's knowledge as a Prophet. Thus the training of Moses was now under the spiritual guidance of a Prophet, as his early training and education had been under a worldly ruler (28:7-14; 18:60-82). Both types of training were necessary for his later mission. There is no reference to "eight or ten" years in the Jewish record. But what is stated in the Holy Qur'ân has really a deeper significance. Moses' stay in Midian for eight to ten years is a Prophetic reference to the Holy Prophets (pbuh) life in Madînah after the emigration from Makkah and his triumphant return to Makkah after eight years. Further references to this are in verses 45 and 85.

قَالَ سَنَشُدُ عَصْدَكَ بِأَخْبَكَ وَنَجْعَلُ لَكُمَا سُلْطَانًا فَلَا يَصِلُونَ إِلَيْكُمَا ۖ بِآيَاتِنَا
أَنْتُمَا وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَكُمَا الْعَالِمُونَ

28:35 Moses shows no boastfulness when he is selected for the mission and does not hesitate to accept his own weakness when stating, “*My brother Aaron is more fluent and eloquent in speech.*”

إِنَّهُ لَا يُفْلِحُ الظَّالِمُونَ

28:37 “*These wrongdoers shall never prosper*” are the words of Moses.

وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنٌ يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَلَأُ مَا عَلِمْتُ لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرِي فَأَوْقِدْ لِي يَا هَامَانُ
عَلَى الطَّينِ فَاجْعَلْ لِي صَرْحًا لَّعَلِي أَطْلَعُ إِلَى إِلَهِ مُوسَى وَإِنِّي لَأَظْنُهُ مِنَ
الْكَاذِبِينَ

28:38 Pharaohs demand for a high building is a contemptuous attack on the concept of God presented by Moses, representing Him as inconceivably high above all that exists.

وَمَا كُنْتَ بِجَانِبِ الْغَرْبِيِّ إِذْ قَضَيْنَا إِلَى مُوسَى الْأَمْرَ وَمَا كُنْتَ مِنَ
الشَّاهِدِينَ

28:44 This verse points to a prophecy of Moses about the advent of a Prophet like himself from among the Ishmaelite, the brethren of the Israelites (Deut. 18.18). His prophecy was so clear that one would think that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) of Islam was present in person with Moses on the western side of the Mount Sinai when the latter was making the prophecy. The opening words of the next verse indicate that a very long time had elapsed between the prophecy and its fulfilment. The clear prophecy of Moses about the appearance of a Prophet like himself was fulfilled after about two thousand years, yet none of the Prophets who followed Moses, including Jesus, had ever claimed to be a Prophet like Moses. Verse 46 also sheds light on the significance of this verse. Moses prophesied the advent of the Holy Prophet on three occasions, mentioned in the following verses, and in

verses يُحَاجِبُ الْغَرْبِيَّ You were not present on the western side” (28:44); “وَمَا كُنْتَ بِجَانِبِ الْمَدْيَنِ” You were not living among the people of Midian”(28:45); “وَمَا كُنْتَ بِجَانِبِ الطُّورِ” You were not present on the foot of Mount Sinai” (28:46). See also 7:157 and 61:6 for the claim that the advent of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) was foretold in the Torah.

إِنَّ الَّذِي فَرَضَ عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْآنَ لَرَادُكَ إِلَىٰ مَعَادٍ

28:85 This verse was revealed while the Holy Prophet (pbuh) was on his way from Makkah to Madînah. “*He shall most surely bring you back to your ordained place of return*” is the prophecy that, although forced to leave Makkah now, he will eventually come back. Specifically, the “*ordained place of return*” is the place of Pilgrimage. The verse constitutes a befitting sequel to the chapter which gives a somewhat detailed life story of the Holy Prophet (pbuh)—the like of Moses.

وَلَا يَصُدُّنَّكَ عَنْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ بَعْدَ إِذْ أَنْزَلْتُ إِلَيْكَ وَادْعُ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ وَلَا
تَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ (٨٧) وَلَا تَنْدُعُ مَعَ اللَّهِ الَّهَا أَخْرَىٰ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ
كُلُّ شَيْءٍ هَالِكٌ إِلَّا وَجْهَهُ لَهُ الْحُكْمُ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ

28:87-88 These last two verses sum up the subject matter of the chapter. “*Everything is liable to perish but those faces by means of which you seek His attention*” is also a possible translation of the verse



سورة العنكبوت 29. CHAPTER

The Spider

(Revealed before Hijrah)

The previous chapter was the last of the series in which the growth of the spiritual person as an individual is concerned, especially illustrated by the ways in which the great apostles were prepared for their missions and responsibilities. It also closed the sub-series beginning with chapter 26, concerned with the spiritual Light. This chapter starts a group of four chapters headed by the abbreviated letters *Alif Lâm Mîm* – آم “I am Allâh, the All-Knowing” (cf. 2:2; 32:2; 4:166). The title ‘Ankabût العنكبوت has been derived from the parable of the spiders web, in verse 41, a metaphor for the weak beliefs and values in which people are entangled.

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّبِعُوا سَبِيلَنَا وَلَنَحْمِلْ حَطَابِكُمْ وَمَا هُمْ
بِحَامِلِينَ مِنْ حَطَابِهِمْ مَنْ شَاءَ عَزَّزَهُمْ

29:12 This verse and the following area rebuttal of the statement “Follow our way and we will bear (the consequences of) your sins”. They serve as a stern warning for such people who blindly follow cult leaders, or leaders who promise Paradise or salvation in return for monetary gifts. This is the practice of many Christian leaders who promise Paradise in return for the belief in Jesus and their church. Unfortunately, some self-proclaimed Islamic leaders make similar promises.

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا إِلَى قَوْمِهِ فَلَيَتَ فِيهِمْ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ إِلَّا حَمْسِينَ عَامًا فَأَخَذَهُمْ
الظُّوقَانُ وَهُمْ ظَالِمُونَ

29:14 The age of a reformer stands for the length of his dispensation and teaching. Therefore, the period 950 years is not the span of Noah's personal physical life (cf. 21:8 or 21:34). In describing the limit of Noah's age two words are used here—**Sanah** سَنَةٌ and ‘**Āmā** عَامًا. The root of the former word gives a sense of badness, while the latter carries sense of goodness. It shows that the first fifty years of Noah's dispensation were years of all-around spiritual progress and regeneration, and that after that period moral degeneration set in. **Sanatin** سَنَتَةٌ, which has been translated as “year,” is used also for seasons, i.e., one quarter of a year (**Tâj**; **Lisân**).

أَوْلَمْ يَرَوْا كَيْفَ يُبَدِّئُ اللَّهُ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ

29:19 Resurrection is but a continuation of the cycle of creation.

وَقَالَ إِنَّمَا اتَّخَذْتُم مِّن دُونِ اللَّهِ أَوْثَانًا مَوَدَّةً بَيْنَكُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا ۖ ثُمَّ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يَكُفُّرُ بَعْضُكُمْ بِبَعْضٍ وَيَلْعَنُ بَعْضُكُمْ بَعْضًا وَمَأْوَاهُكُمُ النَّارُ وَمَا لَكُم مِّنْ نَاصِرٍ

29:25 The disbelievers are friends of one another, and overvaluing their friendship becomes a hindrance to performing pious deeds.

وَقَالَ إِنِّي مُهَاجِرٌ إِلَى رَبِّي

29:26 A believer may leave his country for the sake of his faith.

وَلَمَّا أَن جَاءَتْ رُسُلُنَا لُوطًا سِيَّءَ بِهِمْ وَضَاقَ بِهِمْ دُرْعًا وَقَلُوا لَا تَخْفُ وَلَا تَحْرُنْ

29:33 **Sia'** **bi-him** سِيَّءَ بِهِمْ is often wrongly translated as: he scolded them, talked badly about them, became rude to them. The correct translation should be that Lot felt distressed and felt bad because of their refusal (to accept his hospitality).

مَثُلُ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أُولَئِاءِ كَمَثَلُ الْعَنْكَبُوتِ اتَّخَذُتْ بَيْتًا ۝ وَإِنَّ
أُوْهَنَ الْبَيْوَتِ لَبَيْتُ الْعَنْكَبُوتِ ۝ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ

29:41 The missionary activity of religious activists, in particular of some cults in the Islamic world and of Christian missionaries, are compared with Al-‘Ankabût, the house of a spider. In the case of the Christians, they take Jesus as their helper and friend to the exclusion of God, and in some Muslim cults, some saints and reformers are taken as friends and helpers.

اٰتُّلُّ مَا أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ ۝ إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَىٰ عَنِ
الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ ۝ وَلَذِكْرُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ ۝

29:45 This verse invites believers and skeptics alike to the acceptance of the Holy Qur’ân on account of its purifying qualities. As all other religions have ceased to effect delivery from the bondage of sin, now only this Book lays down the right ways for eliminating sin. Here, some basic principles to that effect are given. The best, most powerful, and most effective restraint upon sin is the observance of Prayer and the recitation of the Holy Qur’ân. The significance of Allâh’s remembering the supplicant is explained by Ibn ‘Abbâs as follows: “Allâh’s remembrance of the human being is His raising him to a place of eminence.” The verse refutes again the Christian doctrine that belief in Jesus Christ will rid one from the bondage of sin. The next verse testifies that specifically Christians and Jews are addressed. Here we encounter the difference in the rites of worship between the Christians and Jews on one side, whose prayer rites consist of recitation from their Book (*Utal min al-Kitâb* اٰتُّلُّ مِنَ الْكِتَاب), and on the other the Muslims, who are commanded to stand for Prayer as expressed in the word **Aqim al-Salât** —“Stand up for Prayer”! The Muslim Prayer requires inner and outward cleanliness. In the ritual Prayer the Muslims remember the Divine Attributes of *Rabi‘bîyyat*, *Rahmâniyyat*, *Rahîmîyyat*, bow and prostrate as if He

were present before them, and glorify His Greatness. The verse also holds a big promise for the supplicant through the words, “*Verily, the (ritual) Prayer restrains from indecency and abominable things and loathsome deeds and that which runs counter to morals and reason.*”

وَلَا تُجَادِلُوا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ إِلَّا بِالْتَّيْهِ هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْهُمْ ۝
وَقُولُوا آمَنَّا بِالَّذِي أَنْزَلَ إِلَيْنَا وَأَنْزَلَ إِلَيْكُمْ وَإِلَهُنَا وَإِلَهُكُمْ وَاحِدٌ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ

29:46 This verse tells the Muslims how to deal with the People of Book—the Christians and the Jews. The word **Ahsan** includes such prohibitions as not to start an argument, not to become emotional or aggressive, to accept the other sides arguments or proofs, and not to attempt to proselytize, but rather just to say, “We believe in all that which is revealed to you, and our God and your God is One to whom we stand resigned.” This is a common ground for a dialogue.

وَمَا كُنْتَ تَتْلُو مِنْ قَبْلِهِ مِنْ كِتَابٍ وَلَا تَخْطُطْهُ بِيَمِينِكِ ۝ إِذَا لَأْرَتَابَ الْمُبْطَلُونَ

29:48 The Holy Prophets (pbuh) fellow citizens knew well that he neither applied himself to learning, nor frequented with learned men, and lived in a land that was, through its vast deserts, largely isolated from other countries. He could not have derived his extensive knowledge from earlier Scriptures. He had to convince impartial persons that his knowledge must have come to him through Divine Revelation. There is a difference of opinion whether he could read and write. He is called *ummî* in the Holy Qur’ân (7:157), which is usually translated as someone who cannot read or write. This, however, is an incorrect translation, leaves a wrong impression, and is the cause of many objections. Makkah was called *Umm al-Qurâ’* and a Makkan Arab is an *ummî*. Jews at the time of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) used to refer to all Arabs who had no knowledge of the Torah dismissively as *ummî*, likening them to illiterates. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) could

indeed read and write. He used to double-check the Divine Revelation when it was put into writing. How could an illiterate be confident that what Allâh revealed is written down accurately? Moreover, he was a successful business person who must have command of arithmetic.

وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا أُنْزِلَ عَلَيْهِ آيَاتٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّهِ فَنِعْمَاً إِنَّمَا الْآيَاتُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَإِنَّمَا أَنَا نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ

29:50 The opponents demanded a “sign.” The verse tells that one of the big signs is that the Holy Prophet is a warner of punishments, and the punishment is due. The types of wars and other punishments are mentioned in verse 55.

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِالْبَاطِلِ وَكَفَرُوا بِاللَّهِ أَوْ لِئَلَّا هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ

29:52 **Bâtil** is something that has no reality.



The Byzantines
(Revealed before Hijrah)

The main subject of the chapter is the social and economic laws for a welfare state. Its title is derived from the prophetic reference to the Byzantines in the very first verse. It opens with two prophecies: that the Romans would be victorious over the Persians in not less than three years and not more than nine years, and that the persecuted Companions of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) would also have a reason to rejoice. The prophecy of the victory of the Romans was made in the sixth year of the call (615 A.D.), when the wave of the Persian

conquest was at its height. They had already occupied the Roman territories of Syria and Anatolia in 614 A.D., they took Jerusalem, and Egypt fell to them in 615-616 A.D. The Persian armies were knocking at the gates of Constantinople itself. The total destruction of the Byzantine Empire seemed imminent. It was then beyond human logic to predict that the tables would be completely turned upon the Persians and the victors would become the vanquished.

غُلِبَتِ الرُّومُ فِي أَذْنَى الْأَرْضِ وَهُم مَن بَعْدَ غَلِبْتُمْ سَيَغْلِبُونَ

30:2-3 It is the defeat of the Romans that is alluded to in this verse and their subsequent victory is prophesied. Ghulibat in its passive voice means defeated. The date of the revelation of this verse is the period when the Persian took Jerusalem in 614 A.D. and penetrated deep into the Byzantine territories. “*The Byzantines have been defeated*” **غُلِبَتِ الرُّومُ**. This prophecy was followed by another prophecy: “*They after their defeat shall overpower.*” In 622 A.D., in accordance with the prophecy of this verse, the Byzantines succeeded in defeating the Persians at Issus and subsequently drove Persians out of Asia Minor: in 624 A.D., the Persian armies were completely routed. In 625 A.D., the ninth year after the Hijrah, the Romans not only gained a signal victory over the Persians but also carried the war into Persian territory and despoiled the city of Medayon.

When this verse was revealed, Abû Bakr^(r) asserted in a public gathering that the Romans would overcome the Persians, but ‘Ubayy bin Khalf, an enemy of Islam, denied this; to show the confidence the Companions had in the prophecy, a hundred camels were wagered. The fulfilment of this prophecy is universally acknowledged, but some biased writers object on the Arabic vowel marks of the word **Ghulibat**. It is true that the vowel points on the consonants were not written in the early version of the Holy Qur’ân, but the Arabs of the time of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) knew how to pronounce a word correctly. Irrespective of what vowel marks one adds to for a correct

word and no matter whether one pronounces the word *ghuleba* غلَب or *ghalaba* - غَلَب - in active or passive form—the meaning will not change.

Arabic can be written without vowel points, but not spoken without vowels. The prophecy in question, like the rest of the Qur'ân, was proclaimed verbally with the correct pronunciation. Its prophecies were not put in sealed boxes to be opened after the event. It was the Holy Prophets habit that after receiving a revelation he proclaimed it at once. The purpose of this prophecy was to encourage the despondent Muslims and warn the opponents of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) that they, like their Persian friends, would soon be defeated. This happened at Badr soon after.

وَيَوْمَئِذٍ يُفَرِّحُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ

30:4-5 The “good news” for the Muslims refers to the Battle of Badr, which took place in 624 A.D. In this small but highly significant battle, a force of Muslims numbering 313 decisively defeated a better-equipped Makkhan force of about 1,000. The mention of the Divine Attributes of the عَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمِ, Mercy and Power, at the end of the verse indicates that this victory will prove to be a great blessing from the All Powerful.

اللَّهُ يَبْدَا الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ

30:11 *Yabdu' al-Khalq* يَبْدَا الْخَلْقَ here means, “Who brings existence from nonexistence” and “Who is Originator of matter.”

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقْتُمْ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ إِذَا أَنْتُمْ بَشَرٌ تَتَشَرَّوْنَ

30:20 The creation of the human being from dust refers to the process of evolution from an inorganic matter into the organic, which then undergoes a gradual process of evolution. Here the origin of the human being is in agreement with the findings of modern science. The

Bible and some Christian theologians disagree with this process of creation.

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ خَلْقُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَإِخْتِلَافُ الْسِنَنِكُمْ وَالْوَانِكُمْ إِنَّ فِي
ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّلْعَالَمِينَ

30:22 This verse refers to the diversity in nature of human beings and tells us that in spite of their different skin colours and languages, they all have one origin. It invites us to ponder the creation of cosmos and laws of nature, and to pay attention to the differences in colours and languages. The diversity of tongues has been placed on the same footing as the diversity of human races and that of nature: they are all part of one system, whose source is Allâh. Just as we marvel at the creation of the heavens and earth and at our immediate surroundings in nature with all its diversity, and find it beautiful and admirable, and feel the urge to take care of it and to preserve it, so should we look at all humans, irrespective of their ethnic origin, colour, race, or language. Here is the instruction to leave our narrow ideas of nationalism and racism. The verse also directs us to study the origin of humankind, the science of languages, and social interactions.

فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلَّدِينِ حَنِيفًا فَطَرَ اللَّهُ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا تَبْدِيلَ
لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيْمُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

30:30 No Divine Command stands in conflict with basic human nature, and there is no command in the Holy Book that is contrary to reason and logic. The Faith chosen by Allâh suits our nature. This is the basis of the claim that this Faith is the right and the perfect Faith (دِين حَنِيفاً). All other religions are devoid of this attribute and quality. They require belief in their dogmas that stand against human logic and reasoning. Christianity, like other religions of the past, requires a blind belief in a son of god and in the concept of trinity without logical reason or proof. The Qur'ân requires belief in one God Who brings

existence from nonexistence and Who is Originator of matter. Its proof is embedded in human nature (فَطَرَ النَّاسَ).

فَآتِ ذَا الْقُرْبَىٰ حَقَّهُ وَالْمِسْكِينَ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ ۝ ذَلِكَ خَيْرُ الَّذِينَ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَ
اللهِ

30:38 Wherever the Holy Qur’ân demands that we help the needy and the poor in the form of **Zakât**, charity, a gift, or in any other way, it invariably uses the word **Âti** ات instead of **Iti** إت. The former word conveys the sense of presenting something as a gift, whereas the latter word expresses the sense of giving under some compulsion (see *Kashshaf*). To offer someone a gift safeguards the self-respect of the person who receives the help. The word **Haqqahu** حقّه means “his due, his right.” This embodies that the owner of wealth is not its absolute owner, but that someone other than him has contributed substantially to its production and acquisition. There are others who have some rights in the wealth of the rich, and a share in it. When any help or charity is given, one should always have in mind that the provider is returning it to the one to whom it belongs.

وَمَا آتَيْتُمْ مِنْ رِّبَآ لِيَرْبُو فِي أَمْوَالِ النَّاسِ فَلَا يَرْبُو عِنْدَ اللَّهِ ۝ وَمَا آتَيْتُمْ مِنْ
زَكَّةٍ ثُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَ اللَّهِ فَأَوْلَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُضْغَفُونَ

30:39 This verse institutes a contrast between **Zakât** and **Riba**. Whereas by means of **Zakât** the Holy Qur’ân seeks to improve the lot of the poor, the institute of **Ribâ** (loan coupled with interest) has the opposite effect. The taking of interest and usury does not improve the economic condition of the poor but serves the purpose of making the rich even richer. Interest-bearing loans involve an exploitation of the economically weak by the resourceful. On the other hand, the institution of **Zakât** improves the lot of the poor while safeguarding their dignity, without significantly affecting the richest of the rich.

Ribâ literally means the increase of a thing over and above its original size or amount: it signifies an addition to what was lent by the creditor. In other words, *Ribâ* is the money on top of the amount of money lent, so that the borrower has to return more than he had borrowed. *Ribâ* is mentioned and commented on in four different places in the Holy Qur'ân, (2:275-278; 3:130; 4:161; 30:39), and it is condemned in the strongest possible terms. This verse contains the earliest mention of the term and the concept of *Ribâ* in the chronology of Qur'ânic Revelation. The chapter is from the Makkan period about six years before the Hijrah.

There can be no question about the prohibition of *Ribâ*. According to some interpreters, *Ribâ* does not mean interest but rather usury or the practice of lending anything at a rate of interest that is excessive or unlawfully high, and that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) passed away before having explained it. The fact is there is no mention of “excessive”, high or low, and there is no place left in the word *Riba* رِبَّا for quantity, low or high. The fact is that *Ribâ* refers to interest as well as usury, and it is unacceptable in an ideal Islamic society under any circumstances. It is wrong to say that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) passed away before having explained its meaning and before the details of the question were settled. The severity with which the Holy Qur'ân condemns *Ribâ* and those who practice it makes it impossible that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) left without pointing out a sufficiently clear indication of its nature and its social, economic and moral implications. Again we have many sayings of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) in the books of Hadîth about *Ribâ*.

‘Umar^(rz), the second successor of the Holy Prophet, did not feel any difficulty in interpreting *Ribâ* and its implication. His intention was that the Muslim *ummah* must not practice *Ribâ* nor acts that resemble *Ribâ* (Ibn Kathîr; 2:275). The money obtained through any kind of interest-bearing loans, irrespective of the rate of interest and the economic motivation involved, should be condemned.

Not only the taking but even the giving of *Ribâ* is prohibited. Such a practice cannot be allowed that the idle wealth of the people is made to give returns. The lender accumulates wealth exponentially at the cost of borrower. The result of such a practice is that most of the wealth starts circulating in the hands of a few lenders. The wealth of the nation is thus in a system that promotes inequality in a society by accumulation of wealth among just anew. A system should channel wealth back to the needs of poor into additional circulation. The Islamic system is neither socialist nor communist nor capitalist. It does not put any limit on lawful earning.

The mentioning of Zakât and *Ribâ* together, also points to their intricate connection: no Zakât is to be paid on money that is lent to someone without interest. Thus in a system with obligatory Zakât, there is still a financial incentive to lend money, thereby encouraging investments. The owner of the money has the choice either to pay Zakât at a rate, which essentially had been set at 2.5% annually, or lend out his money and be entitled to the return of the full amount at its due date. By lending his money without interest the lender is saving 2,5% of his wealth, which otherwise has to go as “Charity” for the poor. The economic incentive to do so is identical to a system without Zakât with 2.5% tax rate or no interest on borrowing but with 2.5% inflation.

The existence of inflation in many paper money systems further complicates interest-free lending, since excessive inflation makes money unsuitable for interest-free lending, and one would have to resort to something with intrinsic value less susceptible to fluctuations. In a society in which the obligation to pay Zakât is ignored, a mere prohibition of interest stifles the flow of money toward economically viable investment opportunities, especially when losses of real worth as a result of inflation of the paper money system further disadvantage the creditor. Modern systems of (so-called) Islamic finance operating in such an environment usually simply hide

the interest or call it by a different name. But when looking at the actual flow of money and goods, they are little different from ordinary interest, and they still fulfil the definition of *Ribâ*, since in the end the creditor receives in return more in real value than he lent out. Other attempts to closely follow the prohibition of *Ribâ* are to distribute the risk of the investment differently between creditor and borrower, so that the creditor may benefit from the profits of the investment, but also bears entrepreneurial risk. Whether such an agreement is in line with the definition of *Ribâ* depends on the specific contractual details. However, it is only with the institution of *Zakât* that, even up to an annual loss of 2.5%, it would still be beneficial to lend money. This difference could go to a bank or intermediary for managing the loan.

To sum up, there is a fundamental difference between a true Islamic economic system and the modern Western economic and fiscal systems. In the latter, income is heavily taxed and additionally there is usually a sales tax. Thus there is a cost to earning and spending money and an inhibition to the circulation of wealth. In the Western system, there is a price to *earning* wealth, whereas in a true Islamic system, there is a price to *owning* wealth.

ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِي النَّاسِ لِيُذْيِقُهُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي
عَمِلُوا لَعْنَهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ

30:41 This verse refers to the adverse social and moral conditions of humankind at the advent of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). The words “land” and “sea” may here signify those peoples living on distant continents and on islands. The expression also refers to the nations whose cultures and civilizations were based on purely human experiences, and those whose cultures and civilizations were based on Divine Revelation. The verse also indicates that when darkness enshrouds the face of the earth, and the human being consigns his Creator to oblivion, and the world is on the verge of chaos, Allâh raises a Reformer to bring back the erring flock into the Masters fold.

The greater the darkness, the greater must be the reformer who is needed. Such was the condition of the world in the beginning of the seventh century, the time of the advent of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) of Islam. Similar darknesses, like the cycle of day and night, re-emerge repeatedly, so there is a repeated need for Reformers.

اللَّهُ الَّذِي يُرْسِلُ الرِّبَاحَ فَتَشِيرُ سَحَابًا فَيَسْطُطُهُ فِي السَّمَاءِ كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ وَيَجْعَلُهُ كَسْفًا فَتَرَى الْوَدْقَ يَخْرُجُ مِنْ خَلَالِهِ ۝ فَإِذَا أَصَابَ بِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ إِذَا هُمْ يَسْتَبِّشُونَ وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلِهِ لَمْبُسِينَ فَانظُرْ إِلَى أَثَارِ رَحْمَتِ اللَّهِ كَيْفَ يُحِيِّي الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا

30:48 The water is of two types. One type of water is that of springs and rivers mixed with salts and mud (25:53), though its origin is of the wholesome, pure, cool, and fresh rainwater. This water symbolizes the knowledge that comes from your rational thinking and intellect, which can vary in quality according to the amount of mud and sediment mixed in it. Those who drink from the river water make different statements about the same thing at different times, since preconceived notions and prejudices may cloud their knowledge. The other type is rainwater described here, that is pure, free from any contamination, with the highest degree of clarity and refinement. It is the water converted from dense vapours and clouds. This water is compared with the Divine Knowledge and Divine Revelation, which is pure and which purifies your essence for intimate Divine Converse (*mukâlima*) with your Lord. The water descending from the One Most High is pure, and those who taste it make the same statements and do not differ; rather they confirm one another.

اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ ضَعْفٍ ثُمَّ جَعَلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ ضَعْفٍ قُوَّةً ثُمَّ جَعَلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ قُوَّةٍ ضَعْفًا وَشَيْئًا ۝

30:54 Dz“uf, “weakness,” is used here three times for the three stages of human weakness: the embryonic stage, childhood, and old

age. The verse also contains a deeper reference to the law of the rise and fall of nations and the cycles of moral weaknesses and strengths catalyzed by Reformers.

فَيَوْمَئِذٍ لَا يَنْفَعُ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مَعْذِرَتُهُمْ وَلَا هُمْ يُسْتَعْتَبُونَ

30:57 lâ Yusta‘tabûn also means they will not be permitted to make amends or any corrections, and no excuse will be accepted (Tâj; Lisân).



سورة لقمان 31. CHAPTER

Luqmân

(Revealed before Hijrah)

The chapter is named for the sage Luqmân who was an Ethiopian (Ibn Jarîr; Mas‘ûd). Because he is not mentioned in the Old Testament, some people assume that Luqmân was a mythical, imaginary, or fictitious figure. His being mentioned testifies to the extensiveness, breadth, and the fundamental principles of Islam. The Holy Qur’ân says, “*There are no people to whom a warner has not been sent*” (35:24). There are many similarities between the first five verses of this chapter and the first verses of chapter 2 (*al-Baqarah*). The chapter opens with the claim that this is a Book full of wisdom, and in the following verses, it expands on those commandments related to wisdom.

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَشْتَرِي لَهُوَ الْحَدِيثَ لِيُضْلِلَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ
وَيَتَّخِذُهَا هُرُواً

31:6 This statement does not refer to a particular person, but describes a type of mentality and has a general applicability. A human being has been created to serve a noble purpose. But many people in their ignorance are taken to frivolous discourse, and they are themselves led astray from the path of Allâh and also lead others toward a wrong path.

فَبَشِّرْهُ بِعَدَابٍ أَلِيمٍ (٧) إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتُ النَّعِيمِ

31:7-8 The deliberate contrast between the plural in the promise of “Gardens of bliss” and the singular in that of “punishment” is meant to show that Allâh’s grace surpasses his punishment (see also 6:12; 7:156).

خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ بِغَيْرِ عَمَدٍ تَرَوْنَهَا ۖ وَالْقَوْمَ فِي الْأَرْضِ رَوَاسِيَ أَنْ تَمِيدَ
بِكُمْ

31:10 Bi-Ghair-i-‘Amadin Traunahâ means it (the heaven) has pillars, but you cannot see them. **Rawâsi** are things that are firmly immovable and fixed, like the pegs of a tent. **Tamîd** means to crush, to make flour (from a grain); **mîd** is nutrition. **Tamîdu-bi-kum** means, “it (earth) may not be crushed down with you.” This verse points to some laws of nature not understood thus far. In this case, literal meanings are to be taken. For people endowed with Divine blessings there is always a support from Above that is firm, which other people do not see or perceive with their eyes.

Moreover, this verse is another of the many Qur’ânic passages in which the personal pronoun relating to the All-Mighty is suddenly changed from “He” to “We” to indicate that Allâh, being infinite, cannot be circumscribed by any pronoun to finite created beings and that the use of such pronouns with reference to Him is only a concession to the limited nature of every human language.

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا لُقْمَانَ الْحِكْمَةَ أَنْ اشْكُرْ لِلّهِ

31:12 There is no mention in the Holy Qur’ân that Luqmân was a Prophet of God, but the verse affirms that he was blessed with wisdom (Hikmat) by Allâh. To be thankful to the Creator is the first sign of wisdom.

وَإِذْ قَالَ لُقْمَانُ لِابْنِهِ وَهُوَ يَعْظُهُ يَا بُنَيَّ لَا تُشْرِكْ بِاللّهِ إِنَّ الشَّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيمٌ

31:13 Luqmân admonishes his son in a very beautiful way. First is not to associate partners with Allâh. This is called al-Shirk. This is the very first commandment, and no other command is above this (4:116; 5:72; 18:26; 18:110; 22:21). *Lâ Ilâha Ill-Allâh* is the very kernel of the Qur’ânic message and Faith. We are told: “*Allâh does not forgive (without repentance) that a partner be associated with Him*” (4:48). A very simple form of shirk is mentioned in the following words. “*Do not prostrate before the sun or the moon (or any other object that has been created)*” (41:37). Not very different from this shirk is the shirk of those who say, “*The Messiah, son of Mary, is God,*” (5:72) or who say, “*Allâh is the third of the three*” (5:73). Another form of shirk is that of looking for help from dead or living saints, self-made khâlîfâs and pîrs (the so-called pious), raising them to the status of demigods, or prostrating oneself before graves. The Holy Qur’ân says, “*Say (O Prophet), I have no power over bringing gain or avoiding any harm and loss to myself....Had I known the unseen I would surely have a great deal of good and no harm would ever come to me*” (7:188). When the Holy Prophet (pbuh) himself is so helpless and has no power over things, how can dead or living saints and Pirs be of any value? The concept of shirk is much broader than what has been said so far. We read at one place, “*Have you considered the case of him who has taken his low desires for his god?*” (45:23). The Holy Qur’ân mentions yet another type of shirk - “*There are some people who take to themselves compeers as opposed*

*to Allâh. They love them as they should love Allâh” (2:165). How narrow is the path we have to tread in order to avoid *shirk* and how careful we have to be not to fall into the grave sin of *shirk*.*

وَصَيَّنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ حَمَلْتُهُ أُمَّهُ وَهُنَّ عَلَىٰ وَهُنِّ وَفَصَالُهُ فِي عَامِينِ أَنِ اشْكُرْ لِي وَلَوَالِدِكَ إِلَيَّ الْمَصِيرُ (١٥) وَإِنْ جَاهَدَاكَ عَلَىٰ أَنْ تُشْرِكَ بِي مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ فَلَا تُطِعْهُمَا ۝ وَصَاحِبُهُمَا فِي الدُّنْيَا مَعْرُوفٌ

31:14-19 Allâh taught wisdom to Luqmân and he forwarded this to his son. What follows is the most beautiful style of admonishment with timeless and universal application. There are eight poles of wisdom: set no compeer with Allâh (31:13); be good to parents (31:14); do not obey them if they ask you to set up equals with God, but still show courtesy to them (31:15); Allâh is the Knower of all hidden secrets (*al-Latîf* and *al-Khabîr*; 31:16); observe Prayer, enjoin good, and forbid evil and wrong (31:17); endure with fortitude what befalls (31:17); show no pride nor behave arrogantly, do not walk haughtily and boastfully (31:18); and talk in soft and gentle tone (31:19). The first four of these are matters of faith and belief, and the last four are the practical aspects. The theme of verse 19 is adopting the golden mean by accepting the middle position between two extremes.

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يُجَادِلُ فِي اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَلَا هُدًى وَلَا كِتَابٍ مُّنِيرٍ

31:20 This verse tells us that not everybody has the capacity to argue about religion. There are three conditions that are to be met by such a person: Knowledge (‘Ilm), guidance from God (**Hudânn**) and sound knowledge of the Holy Qur’ân (**Kitâb Munîr**). So this is a warning for Muslims not to indulge in missionary activity unless these three conditions are met. Some zealous Muslim missionary groups are unaware of this command. As a result, they cause harm to the Islamic cause.

وَإِلَى اللَّهِ عَاقِبَةُ الْأُمُورِ

31:22 “With Allâh rests the end of all affairs” means that He alone causes all actions to produce their results.

وَلَوْ أَنَّمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ أَفْلَامٌ وَالْبَحْرُ يَمْدُدُهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ سَبْعَةُ أَبْحُرٍ
نَفَّذَتْ كَلِمَاتُ اللَّهِ

31:27 The number seven is used in Arabic sometimes to denote a large number instead of its usual meaning as an ordinary numeral. Jesus Christ was just one “word of God” (كلِمَةٌ 4:171), but the verse indicates that the number of His words (كَلِمَاتٌ) is innumerable and inexhaustible. Everything created is a word of Allâh as it is created by His command “Be!” In a *Hadîth Qudsî* transmitted by Abû Dharr, Allâh says, “O My Servants! Even if the all of the intelligent beings, from the very first to the last of you, possessed the heart of the most righteous among you, this would add nothing to my kingdom. O servants, even if all of the intelligent beings, from first to last, possessed the heart of the most rebellious one among you, this would not take away anything from my Kingdom.”

أَلمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُولِجُ اللَّيْلَ فِي النَّهَارِ وَيُولِجُ النَّهَارَ فِي اللَّيْلِ وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ
وَالْقَمَرَ كُلُّهُ يَجْرِي إِلَى أَجْلٍ مُسَمَّى

31:29 Besides its apparent meaning, this verse also refers to the rise and fall of nations, a process subject to the same laws of nature as all human beings with respect to their individual progress and degradation. It also refers to periods of spiritual darkness and the light brought by the Reformers and the Messengers. The sun is symbolic of the Prophets, and the moon represents those servants of Allâh who borrow their light from the light of the sun. All this is in accordance with Divine Law, and will continue until an appointed time.

أَلمْ تَرَ أَنَّ الْفُلْكَ تَجْرِي فِي الْبَحْرِ بِنِعْمَتِ اللَّهِ لِيُرِيكُمْ مِنْ آيَاتِهِ

31:31 Besides the apparent meaning, “*that the ships sail through the sea carrying bounty*,” this verse contains a subtle promise for the Muslim that they will sail with laden ships in lands near and far. So did the Holy Prophet (pbuh) understand the meanings of this and the following verse. There is a tradition that once while the Holy Prophet (pbuh) was with his wife Umm Aimān, he suddenly smiled and Umm Aimān asked the reason. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) replied that he had seen Muslims crossing seas and oceans. Umm Aimān asked, “Will I be among those riding those ships?” The Holy Prophet replied in the affirmative. In the lifetime of Umm Aimān, Muslims arrived in Cyprus and the island of Rhodes, and Umm Aimān was among those who were present in one of the ships anchoring on this island.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عِنْدُهُ عِلْمُ السَّاعَةِ وَيُنَزِّلُ الْعِيْثَ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۖ وَمَا تَدْرِي نَفْسٌ مَّا دَرَأَتْ ۖ وَمَا تَدْرِي يَأْيُّ أَرْضٍ تَمُوتُ ۖ

31:34 It is unknown whether the rain will prove useful or harmful; no one can know whether the planter will ultimately enjoy the fruit, which the trees bear because of the rain. So also is the case with Divine Revelation. Nobody can guess the time when the condition of people will determine the sending down of Divine Revelation, nor do they ever know the land and the people to whom it will come down. Who knows whether the unborn child will be hard of luck or enjoy good fortune, whether he will perform virtuous deeds in life or whether he will earn evil. There are times when a person will be a believer while going to bed at night, but when he gets up in the morning, he is in a state of disbelief. That is why one is enjoined always to pray to Allāh that he should remain ever steadfast in belief and never falter.

‘Ilm al-Sâ’at عِلْمُ السَّاعَةِ is the knowledge of Time or knowledge of the Hour. In this chapter, the believers are addressed and some prophecies are made about their future. “The knowledge of the Time” also refers to the basic truth that with Allāh alone rests the knowledge of the

Hour of the overthrow of disbelief and the triumph of Faith. Again *al-Sâ'at* السّاعَةُ (the Hour) also means the hour of the final destruction of the enemies of Truth. “*He sends down the rain*” also indicates the revival of the spiritually dead with His Reformers. The words “*what the wombs contain*” also contain a prophecy about a generation yet unborn, and who will be devout to Allâh and will be the devout helpers of His cause. Some people object to the words, “*Nobody knows the land where he will die.*” It is true that sometimes a king can claim that he will die in his own land and he dies therein. Some people have dug out their own graves in their lifetime and were actually buried therein. These verses convey to us “no one is aware whether this earth will be a Garden of Bliss for him or will turn out to be a pit of fire.” The words “*the land where he will die*” also refer to the devoted followers of Truth who will leave their hearths and homes for distant corners of the world, upholding the Qur’ân and spreading its teachings until they meet death away from their homes. Thus sons of Ibn ‘Abbâs were scattered in all four directions. One died in Central Asia, another in Africa, the third in Europe, and the fourth in Arabia. This was the meaning given by the Holy Prophet (pbuh) (cf. 31:31). It is to be remembered here that the news of the unseen has not been comprehensively expounded in this verse: only a few aspects and a few explicit truths have been cited as an example (cf. 43:61).



سورة السجدة 32. CHAPTER

The Prostration

(Revealed before Hijrah)

This short chapter closes the series of the four *Alif Lâm Mîm* chapters. Its theme is the mystery of the Final End as viewed through the light of Divine Revelation. The keyword that is the title of the chapter appears in verse 15. Toward its close, the chapter sums up its central theme.

اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَى عَلَى
الْعَرْشِ

32:4 Thumma ^{ثُمَّ} is not in the sense of “then” or “after that,” rather in the sense of “another fact is that.” The creation of the heavens and the earth was in six stages, as the word **Yaum** يوم has a broader meaning than just “day.”

يُدَبِّرُ الْأَمْرَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ يَعْرُجُ إِلَيْهِ فِي يَوْمٍ كَانَ مِقْدَارُهُ أَلْفُ
سَنَةٍ مِّمَّا نَعْدُونَ

32:5 Al-'Amr الْأَمْرُ, the Scheme, is a reference to the “affair of Faith chosen by Allâh.” Its command comes from Above to establish Truth on earth that has to pass through a period of sustained progress. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) is reported to have said, “The best century is the one in which I live, then the next century, then the century after that. Then it will receive a setback, the process of decline and decay will continue during the day the length of which is a thousand years according to human reckoning. After that the advancement of Islam will begin again, as unhampered as it was in its early stages.” In another saying it is said, “Faith will ascend to the Pleiades and a man

of Persian descent (a non-Arab) will bring it back to the earth” (Bukhârî).

ٌثُمَّ سَوَّاهُ وَنَفَخَ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِهِ ۝ وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ ۝
قَلِيلًا مَا تَشْكُرُونَ

32:9 The Creator wanted to be known by His creation. There are endless veils between the Creator and His perfect creation. He loved him because He created him so He wanted to lift those veils. For this purpose He then perfected his soul (cf. 91:7) by “breathing into him of His spirit” *Rûh*, and He gave him “eyes” *al-abصار* to perceive Him and “ears” *as-sam’* that could listen to His sweet Voice and intellect *al-aqâidah* that could understand the words spoken by Him.

“Breathing into him His Spirit” *Nafâ’* is a metaphor for the Divine gift of life, consciousness and Revelation (cf. 26:52; 15:29; 17:85). The word *Rûh* is used in the Holy Qur’ân in the sense of Divine Revelation and Mercy (cf. 16:2; 32:9; 38:72; 42:52; 16:102; 2:253; 2:87; 5:110; 58:22; 26:193; 4:171). *Rûh* – Revelation, is under the Divine Command and not a part of Allâh’s essence (17:85). This command originates from the One who endowed the human being with all the sustenance and requirements of his life so that he may know Who the source is. This command (*Rûh*) requires prostrating oneself before the Creator and Sustainer in submission and thanks. Thus, this human being has no excuse left not to submit before his Lord in obedience, or he will be counted among the thankless—
قَلِيلًا مَا تَشْكُرُونَ.

وَلَوْ شِئْنَا لَآتَيْنَا كُلَّ نَفْسٍ هُدًاهَا وَلَكِنْ حَقَّ الْقَوْلُ مِنِي لِأَمْلَانَ جَهَنَّمَ مِنَ
الْجَنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ

32:13 Had Allâh enforced His Will and His guidance, it would have deprived the human being of all progress and evolution. Allâh says that the right way has been pointed out to a human being (91:8) and

therefore he has the choice to follow it or to follow his own desires. If he accepts and follows His Way (هُدًاهَا), he will succeed (91:9) and get the reward mentioned in verse 17, and if he rejects then he will suffer the consequences mentioned in verse 21.

فَلَا تَعْلَمُ نَفْسٌ مَا أُخْفِي لَهُمْ مِنْ قُرْبَةٍ أَعْيُنٍ جَزَاءٌ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

32:17 This verse clearly alludes to the unknowable quality of life in the Hereafter. Describing the form and nature of the blessing of Paradise, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) is reported to have said, “Allâh says, I have prepared for my righteous servants what no eye has ever seen and no ear has ever heard and no heart of a human being has ever conceived” (Bukhârî 59:8).

وَلَنْذِيقَنَّهُمْ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ الْأَدْنَى دُونَ الْعَذَابِ الْأَكْبَرِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ

32:21 This verse indicates that every evil deed is bound to have a consequence in one way or another in this world. By the nearer, minor, closer at hand (الْعَذَابِ الْأَدْنَى) is meant the punishment and sufferings in this very life that ensue because of the evil deeds. The greater and supreme punishment (الْعَذَابِ الْأَكْبَرِ) is the punishment of the Hereafter. Smaller miseries that befall people are warnings so that they may take heed (لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ).



سورة الأحزاب

33. CHAPTER The Confederates

(Revealed after Hijrah)

The title of this chapter is derived from the references to the Battle of the Confederates - the alliance of the Quraish of Makkah, the Jewish tribe of Banû Nadzîr, several of the other Arabian tribes such as Banû Kinânah, Banû Asad and the people of the coastlands of Tehâmah, as well as the powerful Najdî tribe of Ghatfân and its allies - the Hawazin and Banû Sulaim. All united against the Muslims in Madînah. At that point, another Jewish tribe known as the Banû Quraizah, who had settled in the outskirts of Madînah and until that time had a pact with the Muslims, broke their treaty of alliance and openly joined the Confederates. The resulting battle occupies a prominent place in the early history of Islam. "That was the time when the believers were put to hard trial and were violently shaken" (33:11).

This chapter deals with two major themes:

- 1) The attempt to suppress the truth with violence and military force.
- 2) The attempt to poison the relations between woman and man by slander or unseemly conduct.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ اتْقِ اللَّهَ وَلَا تُطِعِ الْكَافِرِينَ وَالْمُنَافِقِينَ ۝

33:1 "O You Prophet! Take Allâh as shield" is indirectly addressed to all followers of Muhammâd (pbuh), as is the case with the two verses that follow. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) described eight characteristics of hypocrites (*Munâfiqîn*): 1) they lie; 2) they break their promises; 3) they become verbally abusive during discussions and disagreements 4) they are miserly and suggest miserliness to others; 5) they are dishonest when trusted with something; 6) they are lazy in

their Prayers, particularly the morning and the evening Prayers; 7) they are very indecisive 8) they lack courage and fight (Bukhârî).

مَّا جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لِرَجُلٍ مِّنْ قَلْبِينَ فِي جَوْفِهِ وَمَا جَعَلَ أَزْوَاجَكُمُ الْلَّائِي
تُظَاهِرُونَ مِنْهُنَّ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ وَمَا جَعَلَ أَذْعِيَاءَكُمْ أَبْنَاءَكُمْ ذَلِكُمْ قَوْلُكُمْ

33:4 Tuzâhirûn ظهر is derived from zahar literally meaning the back of a person. This is a reference to the two pre-Islamic customs called zihâr ظهار. An Arab in the so-called Days of Ignorance would say, *anti 'alayya ka zahri ummî* -you are to me as the back of my mother." If a husband pronounced these words, conjugal relations between husband and wife were ended immediately as through a divorce, but unlike a divorce, the woman could not remarry or even leave the household. Islam abolished this cruel pagan custom in the beginning of the 5th year of the Hijrah in chapter 58 of *Al-Mujâdilah*.

The verse also refers to specific rules of adoption and the perceived creation of blood relations, which resulted in marriage restrictions that should only apply to biological sons and daughters. A wife cannot become the "mother" of the husband nor an adopted son, a real son. It is morally inadmissible to attribute to one and the same person two mutually incompatible roles within the framework of human relationships as the words قلبي في جوفه mean to say (cf. 33:37). (Kashshaf).

وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ مِيثَاقَهُمْ وَمِنْكَ وَمِنْ نُوحٍ وَإِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَى وَعِيسَى
ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ وَأَخَذْنَا مِنْهُمْ مِيثَاقًا غَلِيلًا

33:7 The covenant spoken of with the Prophets (من النبيين) refers to the covenant mentioned in 3:81 verifying all previous revelations by the Holy Prophet (pbuh). The words "and with you" (وَمِنْكَ) in the context of this chapter also refer to the covenant mentioned in 2:84 - "You shall not shed each other's blood and you shall not expel each other's

people from your homes.” These mutual obligations were the basis of a treaty, which the Muslims entered into with the Jews of Madînah. The Jews who took up arms against Muslims are being reminded of that covenant.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ جَاءَنَّكُمْ جُنُودٌ فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِحَّاً وَجُنُودًا لَمْ تَرَوْهَا ۝

33:9 The verses 9 to 27 refer to the Battle of the Confederates, also called the Battle of the Trenches, which took place in the 5th year of the Hijrah in the month of Shawwâl. Detailed historical accounts are available about this battle.

The confrontation was instigated by two Jewish tribes. One was the Banû Nadzîr from the city of Khaiber, led by people like Salâm bin Haqîq Nadzîrî, Huyaiy bin Akhtâb Nadzîrî, and Kanân bin Rabî Nadzîrî. The other was called Banû Wail, and it was led by Hudzah bin Qais Wailî and Abû Amâr Wailî. Khaiber, a Jewish stronghold north of Madînah, was considered unconquerable. On their instigation several of the most powerful tribes of Arabia formed a confederacy against the Muslims. The force they assembled is said to have numbered 10,000 warriors during their siege of Madînah. The Muslims could only raise 600 poorly equipped fighters in opposition to this force. They resorted to digging trenches for their defense. It is said that these fortifications were the idea of Salman, a Persian Muslim and a practice hitherto unknown to the Arabs. As such, these aggressors had no experience attacking such emplacements.

The different tribes of the Confederate forces kindled a fire to signal the start of the battle. The night of the attack, a sudden strong wind started blowing, bringing with it a cold front. The Muslims were dug into the trenches, but the attacking forces were exposed to cold and wind, for which they were unprepared. One tribes signal fire was extinguished by the wind, which was considered a bad omen by the

Arabs of that time. This tribe left the alliance. Seeing them leave the battlefield, another tribe decided to follow their example, followed by a third.

The difficulties of the attacking Confederates did not end here however. It is said that Naufal bin Abdullah, a leader of one of the Arab tribes, was killed in the attempt to take the trench. This further disheartened the Arabs and by sunrise the Confederates had dispersed and the siege of Madînah was lifted. This ended the major attempts of the pagans and some Jewish tribes to destroy Islam. “The hosts that you could not see” were the angelic hosts, whose intervention helped dishearten the enemy.

إِذْ جَاءُوكُم مِّنْ فَوْقِكُمْ وَمِنْ أَسْفَلَكُمْ وَإِذْ رَأَيْتَ الْأَبْصَارَ وَبَلَغَتِ الْفُلُوبُ
الْخَنَاجِرَ وَتَظْنُونَ بِاللَّهِ الظُّنُونَ

33:10 Min asfal min-kum – منْ أَسْفَلَكُمْ meaning, from below you, or from within you. It refers to the invading forces from the highlands of the east and from the valley below on the western side of Madînah. The Ghaftân group, considered to be the strongest of the Arab tribes, tried to take the trench by assault from the upper eastern part of Madînah, while the Quraish from Makkah and their allies launched and attacked from its lower, western part. “From within you”, is a reference to the treachery of some Jewish tribes living inside Madînah (cf. 33:25-26). “Some of you entertained diverse thoughts” refer to the fears of the hypocrites and weak-hearted persons. In regards to the thoughts of the faithful, see verse 22.

وَإِذْ يَقُولُ الْمُنَافِقُونَ وَالَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ مَا وَعَدَنَا اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ إِلَّا
غُرُورًا

33:12 The words “Allâh and His Messenger only made us a false and delusive promise” is a reference to the promises regarding the ultimate victory of Islam in verse 38:11 and

54:45, both revealed before Hijrah, and to a vision of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), which he had while digging the trench. It is said that the Holy Prophet saw a spark of fire coming out of a stone after each strike. In each of these sparks the Holy Prophet (pbuh) was shown the kingdoms of Persia and Byzantium submitting themselves into the hands of Muslim armies. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) narrated his vision to many of his Companions, who later became witnesses to the fulfilment of this vision. All authentic books of Traditions testify to this announcement.

وَإِذْ قَالَتْ طَائِفَةٌ مِّنْهُمْ يَا أَهْلَ يَثْرَبَ لَا مُقَامَ لَكُمْ فَارْجِعُوْا

33:13 Yathrib يَثْرَب was the name by which Madînah was known before the Prophets emigration to that city. It was dubbed Madînat al-Nabî - the city of the Prophet or simply Al-Madînah – the City later on. At the instigation of hypocrites, some tribes of Yathrib who joined to defend the city became disheartened and left the Muslim force. This reduced the count of the Muslim defenders from 600 to about 300 to face 10,000 of the Confederates.

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لَمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُو اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ
وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا

33:21 “*Certainly, you have an excellent model in the Messenger of Allâh*” لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ points to the most significant and the distinguishing characteristic of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). Khawaja Kamaluddin in his book *The Ideal Prophet* writes: “The greatness of a man does not lie in the working of miracles and wonders, nor does it lie in the preaching of sermons or formulating theories. The greatness of a man lies in the possession of a noble personality. Such a personality should be of everlasting value for his companions and others around him as well as for those who come after him. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) had such a personality. He is a man, a Reformer, a Prophet, a Messenger from Allâh to serve as a guide and a model. He

is a Prophet in human colours and consequently a true specimen for our imitation. An angel, a supposed god or son of god would be different in nature and could not serve as a practical role model to follow. He faces difficulties and surmounts them with means within the reach of a human being. He himself puts into practice all the principles he taught to others. In fact one who has not experienced changes in life cannot be, in every respect, a perfect model for others. From orphan to statesman, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) passed through many different stages of life. Events of diverse nature arose in the course of his care, which demanded the manifestation of various characters. At every stop he was weighed but was never found wanting. A head of the state, a law giver, a judge, a warrior, general and conqueror, a tradesman, a persecuted fugitive, a friend, a son, a father, a husband, a neighbour, and all these characters are mirrored in the most beautiful colours in his single life (أَسْوَةُ حَسَنَةٍ). In this respect he is the only and solitary noble example in history. How can any other personality be taken as an ideal and universal model for the human race if its own life had not been of a universal character? History fails to point out any personality other than him where we find the assemblage of all the virtues that constituted an evolved humanity in such a high condition. Of all he was the bravest, the gentlest and the most charitable. He was exemplary in adhering to promises, doing of justice, fairness in dealing, disregard of distinction, modesty, leniency, sacrificial spirit, sublimity of manners, religious tolerance, right use of the sword, respect for learning and reason. All this procured for him universal respect and admiration. He was the most successful of all religious figures. He effected such a political, social, mental and spiritual transformation the like of which has never been effected in any nation, even by successive generations of Reformers. He aroused men from their death-like sleep and carried them to the highest pinnacle of development. The most debased of sinners became righteous and pious. The most deep-rooted evils were swept away before his words like straws before a hurricane. In short, he was the

ideal character; he was the ideal teacher of religion, the ideal expander, the ideal exemplar, the ideal assemblage of virtues and the one who achieved the ideal success”

وَلَمَّا رَأَى الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الْأَحْزَابَ قَالُوا هَذَا مَا وَعَدَنَا اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَصَدَقَ اللَّهُ
وَرَسُولُهُ ۝ وَمَا زَادُهُمْ إِلَّا إِيمَانًا وَتَسْلِيمًا

33:22 “This is what Allâh and His Messenger promised” – هَذَا مَا وَعَدَنَا is a reference to the promise made in the Holy Qur’ân in verses 38:11; 54:45, both revealed before Hijrah.

مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ رِجَالٌ صَدَقُوا مَا عَاهَدُوا اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ ۝ فَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ فَضَى نَحْبَهُ
وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَنْتَظِرُ ۝ وَمَا بَدَّلُوا تَبْدِيلًا

33:23 This verse constitutes a great memorial to the fidelity, sincerity and steadfastness in faith of the Companions of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). Never did the followers of any Prophet receive from God such a certificate of good conduct; just as the master was ideal and unique, so were his pupils.

وَأَنْزَلَ الَّذِينَ ظَاهَرُوْهُمْ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ مِنْ صَيَّاصِبِهِمْ وَقَدَّفَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ
الرُّغْبَ فَرِيقًا تَقْتُلُونَ وَتَأْسِرُونَ فَرِيقًا

33:26 The tribe of Quraizah were in alliance with the Muslims and when the enemy laid siege to Madînah, they were bound by a treaty to repel the attack. It is said that Huyaiy bin Akhtâb Nadzîrî approached Ka‘ab bin Asad of the Banû Quraizah and persuaded him to join the forces of the Confederates. Ka‘ab bin Asad refused initially, but was under the pressure of Huyaiy bin Akhtâb and agreed when he heard that a force of 10,000 warriors had already surrounded Madînah. The Holy Qur’ân refers to this in the following words, “We are the united force, capable of defending one another” (54:44). With this argument Ka‘ab bin Asad yielded to Huyaiy bin Akhtâb Nadzîrî, broke the treaty he signed with the Muslims and joined the alliance with the

pagan Confederates. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) wanted to have certainty about this betrayal. He sent Sa‘ad bin Mu‘âdz, Sa‘ad bin ‘Ibâdah and Ibn Rawâha to confirm this report. This created another danger for the Muslims from inside. If the warriors of Banû Quraizah decided to leave their defensive position and attack the Muslims from behind, then the Muslim defeat would have been inevitable. The Holy Prophet (pbuh), after consulting his Companions, sent some of the defending forces to siege the quarters of Banû Quraizah in the vicinity of Madînah. After the siege, which lasted twenty five days, they surrendered to the Muslims and asked to submit to the judgement of Sa‘ad bin Ma‘âdz.

At the request of besieged Banû Quraizah, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) sent Abû Lubâba bin Mandhir to negotiate the terms of surrender. Unfortunately, Abû Lubâba gave his own mistaken opinion that the Muslim court might impose the death penalty on account of their betrayal. On hearing this, the leaders of Banû Quraizah requested that Sa‘ad bin Mu‘âdz, the chief of the tribe of A‘us would determine their punishment and not the Muslims. Sa‘ad ruled according to their own Mosaic Law (Deut. 20.10-15) and punishment was implemented with the result that three hundred men suffered death. Had they trusted their case to the Holy Prophet (pbuh), he would probably have treated them leniently, as he treated Banû Qainuqa.

وَأُورِثْتُمْ أَرْضَهُمْ وَدِيَارَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ وَأَرْضًا لَمْ تَطْئُهَا

33:27 “And He allowed you to inherit their land, their homes and their belongings” is the reference to the lands of Khaiber. The words, “He shall give you yet more lands” found their fulfilment in the eventual victories over the Persian and Byzantine Empires, and the countries beyond, upon which the Muslims had so far not been

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُل لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُنَّ نُرِدُنَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا وَرِزْقَنَاهَا فَقَعَالَيْنَ
أَمْتَعْكُنَّ وَأَسْرَحُكُنَّ سَرَاحًا جَمِيلًا

33:28-29 After defeating the Confederates and the tribe of Banû Quraizah, and later occupying the strongholds of the Banû Nadzîr from Khaiber, there now came a warning to the wives and daughters of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) that they should not expect riches and royal status. The Holy Qur'an expected the wives of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) to act as models of social behaviour, just like their husband. It was befitting that they should have been required to set an example in self-denial. Like him, they were expected to abide by high standards of self-abnegation. By the time this verse was revealed, the life of the Muslims was becoming easier, but this was not reflected in the conduct of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), who continued to allow his household only the bare essentials for a very simple lifestyle.. It was no more than natural that his wives were longing for a standard of living comparable to that which other Muslim women could now enjoy. But acquiescence by the Holy Prophet (pbuh) to this would have conflicted with the principle observed by him throughout his life that the standard of living of Allâh's Messenger and his family should not be higher than that of the poorest of the believers. When the Holy Prophet (pbuh) recited, "But if you choose [the good will of] Allâh and [of] this Messenger and [in this way prefer] the Abode of the Hereafter, then truly Allâh has prepared a great reward for the doers of good among you", they rejected the luxuries and comforts of this life immediately and declared that they had chosen Allâh and his Prophet (pbuh) and the good of the Hereafter (*Bukhârî*).

يَا نِسَاءَ النَّبِيِّ مَنْ يَأْتِ مِنْكُنَّ بِفَاحِشَةٍ مُّبِينَةٍ يُضَاعِفُ لَهَا الْعَذَابُ ضَعْفَيْنِ ۝

33:30 "*You (- the women of the House of the Holy Prophet) will receive double the punishment*", is in reference to the foregoing sentence, "You are made an excellent model". Serving as a model for other Muslim women, they will be imitated, which would be harmful if there were leading less than exemplary lives. This will result in double punishment – punishment because of their own bad conduct

and the punishment due to others who followed them in their bad conduct (cf 16:25). **Fâhišah** فاحشة is a conduct unacceptable to a society.

وَقَرْنَ فِي بُيُوتِكُنَّ وَلَا تَبَرُّجْ جَاهِلِيَّةِ الْأُولَى ۝

33:33 “*Remain in your houses with grace and dignity*” does not mean that women remain confined to their houses. It is a historic fact that ‘Âisha and other women of the House of Prophet were even active in battles the Muslims had to fight in defense against the Makkans. In one battle known as the battle of “Jamal”, ‘Âisha was leading a troop of men. This command is in contrast to the way women lived at the time of ignorance in Arabia. “*Allâh desires to rid you of all uncleanliness and to purify you completely*” is also an indirect reference to those widows such as Maria, who was a Christian, and Safiyya who was Jewish, when they married the Holy Prophet (pbuh).

إِنَّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَالْقَانِتِينَ وَالْقَانِتَاتِ
وَالصَّادِقِينَ وَالصَّادِقَاتِ وَالصَّابِرِينَ وَالصَّابِرَاتِ وَالْخَاسِعِينَ وَالْخَاسِعَاتِ
وَالْمُتَصَدِّقِينَ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقَاتِ وَالصَّائِمِينَ وَالصَّائِمَاتِ وَالْحَافِظِينَ فُرُوجُهُمْ
وَالْحَافِظَاتِ وَالذَّاكِرِينَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا وَالذَّاكِرَاتِ أَعَدَ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا
عَظِيمًا

33:35 The verse tells us that women stand on the same level with men and that they can attain the same spiritual and moral heights men can attain, although the spheres of activities of men and women, and their duties are different. This verse repudiates the charge that the Qur’ân accords a lower status to women. **Sâ’im** الصائم also means someone who sacrifices his own needs and comforts for the benefit of others and denies himself.

وَإِذْ تَقُولُ لِلَّذِي أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَأَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِ أَمْسِكٌ عَلَيْكَ زَوْجَكَ وَاتْقِ اللَّهَ
وَتَخْفِي فِي نَفْسِكَ مَا اللَّهُ مُبْدِيهِ وَتَخْشَى النَّاسَ وَاللَّهُ أَحَقُّ أَنْ تَخْشَأَ ۝ فَلَمَّا

قَضَىٰ رَبِّنَا وَطَرًا زَوْجَنَاكُمْ لَكُمْ لَا يَكُونُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ حَرَجٌ فِي أَزْوَاجٍ أَذْهَبْتُمُوهُمْ إِذَا قَضَوْا مِنْهُنَّ وَطَرًا وَكَانَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ مَفْعُولًا

33:37 The Qur’ânic teachings make no distinction of nation, race, or family. In order to give it a practical shape, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) decided to give Zainab, his cousin, daughter of his aunt Umaimah and ‘Abdul Muttalib, to Zaid Ibn Harithah. He was a slave who was bought and then freed by the Holy Prophet (pbuh). After giving Zaid his freedom, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) adopted him as his son. In spite of this, Zaid still carried the stigma of slavery in the minds of many people. It was this stigma, this invidious distinction between free and slave, which the Holy Prophet (pbuh) sought to remove through this marriage with Zainab, who was considered by the Arabs to be of very high status. But unfortunately the marriage did not bring happiness to either Zainab or Zaid. On several occasions Zaid was about to divorce his new wife. Each time he was persuaded by the Holy Prophet (pbuh) to persevere in patience and hold on to her, as divorce, according to Islam is to be discouraged. He also feared that the breakdown may result in an ostensible failure of the experiment in Islamic brotherhood and this would cause some confusion and uneasiness among people who were weak in faith.

In the end, the marriage proved unstable and Zaid divorced Zainab in the year 5 A.H. Afterwards the Holy Prophet (pbuh) married the divorced Zainab possibly in order to redeem what he considered to be his moral responsibility for her past unhappiness. However, the Holy Qur’ân does not give this as the reason. The reason is plainly given in the second part of the verse, “We gave her in marriage to you, so that the believers might incur no blame in [getting married to] to the wives of their adoptive sons after they have dissolved the marriage tie with them.”

The Divine Purpose in causing him to marry the former wife of his so-called adopted son was to show that an adoptive relationship does not

involve any of the marriage restrictions, which result from actual, biological parent and child relations. Thus, this separation also served a very useful purpose by cutting at the very root of the Arab custom, which made it a sacrilege to marry the divorced wife of ones adopted son (cf. 33:4). The next verse shows that this marriage of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) took place in obedience to Divine command. *Takhshi al-Nâs* – تَخْشِي النَّاسَ – “You are afraid of the people” – refers in the first instance to the person who is being addressed in the foregoing sentence, namely Zaid, the husband of Zainab. “You are afraid of people, whereas Allâh has a better right that you should stand in awe of Him” is a basic Divine Command found at many points within the Holy Qur’ân (cf. 2:150; 5:3; 5:44; 9:13; 33:39). Some opponents of Islam say that here we read that it was the Holy Prophet (pbuh) who was afraid of people, however, verse 33:39 challenges all such allegations. There we read, الَّذِينَ يُبَلِّغُونَ رِسَالَاتِ اللَّهِ وَبَخْشُونَهُ وَلَا يَخْشُونَ أَحَدًا إِلَّا اللَّهُ “Those who deliver the message of Allâh stand in awe of Him, and stand in awe of none but Allâh.”

وَلِكِنْ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَخَاتَمَ النَّبِيِّنَ ۝

33:40 **Khâtam** خاتم means “seal”, the “best and most perfect”, “embellishment” or “ornament” (Lane; Tâj.). There is a difference in meaning between **Khâtim** خاتم and **Khâtam** خاتم. The former (**Khâtim**) stands for the last part or portion of a thing. The latter (**Khâtam**) stands for that last part or portion of a thing, which is the best, thus carrying the sense of finality, combined with perfection. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) is **Khâtam al-Nabiyyîn** - خاتم النَّبِيِّنَ - **Khâtam**, in the sense of the full meaning of the word. Mohammad (pbuh) is the seal of the Prophets because with him, the object of prophethood, the manifestation of Divine Will, was finally accomplished through the revelation of a perfect law in the form of the Holy Qur’ân (5:3). He is the Seal of the Prophets because he is the embellishment and ornament of Prophets and certain favours bestowed on Prophets were

to continue forever among his followers. The highest of these favours is Divine Inspiration, as it is recognized by the Holy Qur'ân that Allâh speaks to His chosen ones now as He spoke in the past, although such people are not Prophets. According to a saying of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), There will be in my *ummah* أُمّةٌ people who will be spoken to by Allâh though they will not be Prophets (Bukhârî 62.6)." They will be in the shadow of the Prophet (pbuh). For his *ummah* the door of conversation with Allâh would never be closed and without the attestation of the Muhammadan seal no grace can reach anyone. He is the Seal of the Prophets because no Prophet can be regarded as true unless his prophethood bears the Muhammadan seal. He is the Seal of the Prophets because he is the best, noblest and the most perfect, and last of all Prophets. The words in the verse have saved the entire Muslim community for all times from indulging in the same grave mistakes prevailing in other religions, whose adherents raise their founders to the status of gods, or sons of god, or even mothers of gods. "They believe in nonsensical things devoid of good" (4:51). This can be attributed to the love for their founder on one hand and a deep-rooted habit of idol worship on the other hand. This verse was a great mercy for the Muslims as it has protected them from repeating these mistakes made by the followers of other religions.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِنَّا أَحْلَنَا لَكَ أَرْوَاحَ الَّذِي أَتَيْتَ أُجُورَهُنَّ وَمَا مَلَكْتُ يَمِينَكَ
مِمَّا أَفَاءَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ

33:50 Ahlal-na laka - أَحْلَنَا لَكَ - "We made lawful for you" is here written in the past tense. Earlier, verse 4:3 limited the number of wives to four. When that verse was revealed, the number of wives the Holy Prophets (pbuh) had was already more than four. The use of the past tense in "We have made lawful to you, your wives whom you have paid their dowers", tells us that he should not divorce the excess number to comply with the restriction made in 4:3.

When the wives of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) were offered a choice between his companionship or worldly gain, and the finer amenities of life (verses 33:28-29), all of them emphatically rejected all thoughts of separation and declared that they had chosen Allâh and his Prophet (pbuh), and the good of the Hereafter. Relations between themselves and the Holy Prophet (pbuh) remained in a state of suspension until they had made their choice. The verse under comment is a restriction in the matters of marriage. Whereas all other Muslims are free to marry any of their paternal or maternal cousins, the Prophet (pbuh) was allowed to marry only such from among them as proved their strong early attachment to Islam by having accompanied him to Madînah. The clause “And [also has been made lawful to him] any other believing woman who offers herself to the Prophet,” is by many commentators interpreted to signify a marriage proposal without demanding or expecting a dowry, which, as far as ordinary Muslims are concerned, is an essential condition for marriage (4:4; 24). The sentence later in this verse: *“We know what we have enjoined on them”* refers to the previously revealed laws relating to marriage (2:221; 4:3,19,25) and the laws dealing with the question of dowries.

ثُرْجِي مَنْ شَاءَ مِنْهُنَّ وَتُؤْوِي إِلَيْكَ مَنْ شَاءَ ۖ وَمَنْ ابْتَعَيْتَ مِنْ عَزْلَتْ
 فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكَ ۚ ذَلِكَ أَذْنِي أَنْ تَقْرَأَ عَيْنَهُنَّ وَلَا يَحْزُنَ وَيَرْضَيْنَ بِمَا
 آتَيْتَهُنَّ كُلُّهُنَّ

33:51 This verse must be read along with verses 28 and 29, wherein a choice is given to the Holy Prophets wives to remain with him or to leave him. In this verse, a similar choice was given to the Holy Prophet (pbuh), but he did not exercise it.

لَا يَحِلُّ لَكَ النِّسَاءُ مِنْ بَعْدٍ وَلَا أَنْ تَبَدَّلَ بِهِنَّ مِنْ أَزْوَاجٍ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَكَ
 حُسْنُهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا مَلَكَتْ يَمِينُكَ

33:52 Here is a prohibition barring the Holy Prophet (pbuh) from marrying any woman beyond those to whom he was already married. This verse was revealed after year 7 A.H.; the year in which the conquest of Khaiber was completed and the Holy Prophets (pbuh) marriage to Saffiyah (his last) took place. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) did not contract any marriage after the seventh year of Hijrah when this verse was revealed.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُل لَا زَوْجٌ لَكَ وَبَنَاتُكَ وَنِسَاءُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ يُدْنِينَ عَلَيْهِنَّ مِنْ جَلَابِيبِهِنَّ

33:59 “*They should draw lower upon them their outer coverings (جلابيبهن)*”. Women and men of the time of the Holy Prophet used to wear loose dresses جلابيب as a protection from heat. This verse does not deal with head covering as is often assumed, but is directed at wearing loose clothing, in contrast to very tight and revealing clothing that accentuates the shape of the female body, which can attract unwanted attention. There is no mention of any head covering.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا

33:70 The expression *Qaulan Sadida* – قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا “straight forward words” refers to language that is to the point, that hits the mark, is devoid of any hidden meaning, insinuation and frivolous suspicions. It is language that aims at straightforward truths. Holy Prophet (pbuh) used to recite this verse when contracting a marriage - (Nikâh).

إِنَّا عَرَضْنَا الْأَمَانَةَ عَلَى السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالْجِبَالِ فَأَبَيْنَ أَنْ يَحْمِلُنَّهَا وَأَشْفَقُنَّ مِنْهَا وَحَمَلَهَا إِنَّهُ كَانَ ظُلُومًا جَهُولاً

33:72 **Amânah** is the Trust in the sense of Divine Injunctions and Laws. It also stands for reason or intellect, faculty of volition, or the ability to choose between good and evil (Lisân, Tâj): “*We presented the Trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains and they*

were struck with awe. It was a human being who bore this Trust.” The injunctions of Divine Commandments in the form of religious laws, and the choice of free will were not given to the heavens or the earth. These things are permanently made to obey the Divine Command. Freedom of choice was given to human beings, an offer that can help them attain Divine nearness. Despite of this generous offer, “*he (a human being) is mostly unjust, ignorant and forgetful.*”



سورة سبا 34. CHAPTER Sabians (Revealed before Hijrah)

The name of this chapter is derived from the people of Saba (Sheba), in Yemen mentioned in 34:15. Just like the Israelites, they defied the Divine commandments, incurred the displeasure of Allâh and finally suffered a destructive punishment in the form of a mighty flood. Five chapters of the Holy Qur’ân – the 1st, 6th, 18th, 35th, and this one all begin with the words; “All kind of true and perfect praise is due to Allâh.” As such, these chapters all deal with the subject of the Lordship, Omnipotence, and Majesty of Allâh.

This chapter is the beginning of a new group of chapters, which is opened by these words in this chapter and ends with precisely the same words, closing chapter 39.

يَعْلَمُ مَا يَلْجُ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا يَخْرُجُ مِنْهَا وَمَا يَنَزِّلُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَمَا يَعْرُجُ فِيهَا

34:2 “*All that goes into the earth and all that come forth from it*” is an allegory for the metamorphosis of life, from birth to death, seed into plant, and their subsequent decay; it encompasses the birth and rise of

new civilizations, their downfall, and their traces buried in the earth. The raising of the dead to new life, the ascent of peoples prayers, supplications and good deeds and the descent of Divine Mercy in return are “all that go into the earth and all that comes forth from it, and all that comes down from the heaven and all that goes up to it”.

The verse combines a physical with a spiritual phenomenon. The words, “He knows all that goes into the earth and all that comes forth from it”, is to say that it is Allâh alone who knows what kind of teaching is needed in a particular age and situation and what kind of change it will affect. When He says He knows “all that goes up”, it means that He knows both when to send and when to take back a particular teaching that it might suit the requirements of a certain time. To give an analogy, He takes water back to heaven in the form of vapours and sends it down again as purified rain. The pure rain water stands for Divine Revelation.

لَا يَعْزُبُ عَنْهُ مِثْقَالُ ذَرَّةٍ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا أَصْغَرُ مِنْ ذَلِكَ وَلَا أَكْبَرُ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُّبِينٍ

34:3 The words: “*not even so much as an atoms weight in the heavens or in the earth, nor is there anything smaller*” speaks of an atom but also of something smaller than an atom; the suggestion is that the atom could be broken into pieces. “...in a Book revealing (the truth)” (إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُّبِينٍ) is a reference to those laws of physics that can be discovered or revealed.

أَفَمْ يَرَوَا إِلَىٰ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفُهُمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۝ إِن نَّشَأْ نَخْسِفُ بِهِمُ الْأَرْضَ أَوْ نُسْقِطُ عَلَيْهِمْ كَسْفًا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ ۝

34:9 *Samâ’* السَّمَاءُ is something above, whether it be a cloud, a downpour of heavy rain, a bursting of clouds, or the fall of meteorites and cosmic rays. The singular form is a reference to our heaven; the sky above us, and not to “heavens” (- *samâwât*) in plural, which

together with the word the earth (الْأَرْضَ) commonly translated as “the heavens and the earth”. Together the expression refers to the entire cosmos.

وَلَقَدْ أَتَيْنَا دَاوُودَ مِنَّا فَضْلًا ۝ يَا جِبَالٍ أَوْ بِي مَعْهُ وَالْطَّيْرَ ۝ وَالنَّا لَهُ الْحَدِيدُ

34:10 Hadîd الحَدِيد means something that is sharp in both literal and abstract sense of the word (Lisân), as the Qur’ân says, فَبَصَرُكَ الْيَوْمَ حَدِيدٌ Sharp is your sight today (50:22). Thus, it means that Allâh has softened all sharpness in David. It also means that iron and the making of iron was made soft to him. This signifies the extensive use of iron by him.

وَلِسُلَيْمَانَ الرِّيحَ غُدوُهَا شَهْرٌ وَرَاحُهَا شَهْرٌ

34:12 al-Rîh - الرِّيح - the wind, it also means power, dominance, or conquest (Lisân). Therefore the meaning may be that Solomon’s kingdom was so extensive that it took a months journey to the east and a months journey to the west. His dominion would have extended from northern Syria along the coast of the eastern Mediterranean down to the Red Sea along the Arabian Sea, up to the Persian Gulf. The *al-Jinn* (with the suffix “*al*” referred to in this verse were none other than the members of outside tribes whom Solomon subjected under his rule.

لَقَدْ كَانَ لِسَبَأٍ فِي مَسْكَنِهِمْ آيَةٌ ۝ جَنَّاتٌ عَنِ يَمِينٍ وَشَمَائِلٌ ۝ كُلُّوا مِنْ رِزْقٍ
رَبُّكُمْ وَاسْكُرُوا لَهُ ۝ بَلَدَةٌ طَيَّبَةٌ وَرَبٌّ غَفُورٌ

34:15 Sabâ BJm was a city of Yemen, situated about three days Journey from San‘â, in southwestern Arabia. The Sabeans were at that time very prosperous people and enjoyed many amenities of life. During the course of centuries, they constructed a large system of dams, dikes and sluices, with astonishing remnants existing to this day. They were destroyed by the bursting of the dam of Ma’ârib

around the second century A.D.; this event is referred to in the next verse.

ذَلِكَ جَزَيْنَاهُم بِمَا كَفَرُوا ۖ وَهُنَّ نُجَازِي إِلَّا الْكُفُورَ

33:17 Kafara كَفَرَ is here used in the literal sense of ingratitude towards favours and not in the sense of disbelief.

وَجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ وَبَيْنَ الْقُرَى الَّتِي بَارَكْنَا فِيهَا قُرَى ظَاهِرَةً وَقَدَرْنَا فِيهَا السَّيْرَ ۖ سِيرُوا فِيهَا لَيَالِيٍّ وَأَيَامًا آمِنِينَ

34:18 “the towns which We had blessed” refer to the towns of Palestine, the seat of Solomon’s government with which the Sabeans conducted flourishing trade.

فَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا بَاعِدْ بَيْنَ أَسْفَارِنَا وَظَلَمُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ فَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ أَحَادِيثَ وَمَرْقَاتَهُمْ كُلَّ مُمْزَقٍ ۝

34:19 They did not necessarily pray with the actual words, ”Our Lord! Make longer the distance between our journeys”. The supplication put in their mouths is descriptive of their actual condition when they disobeyed the commandments of their Lord. The prosperous and frequented routes became deserted, desolate and increasingly dangerous and as a result the time to travel the distance between one stage to another increased. There was a mass exodus of their tribes in all directions and thus they were eventually reduced to mere fables.

فُلْ يَجْمَعُ بَيْنَنَا رَبُّنَا ثُمَّ يَقْتَحُ بَيْنَنَا بِالْحَقِّ وَهُوَ الْفَتَاحُ الْعَلِيمُ

34:26 The verse is an allusion to the Battle of Badr, the first military encounter between the Muslims and the disbelievers. (cf.: 27:72).

وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَى هَذَا الْوَعْدُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

34:29 “*When will this promise come?*” refers to the encounter mentioned in 34:26. This question by the opponents of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) indicates that they understood the prophecy in 34:26.

قُلْ لَكُمْ مِّيقَادُ يَوْمٍ لَا تَسْتَأْخِرُونَ عَنْهُ سَاعَةً وَلَا تَسْتَقْدِمُونَ

34:30 “*Appointment of a day*” is a period of one year in the measure of Prophets, and one thousand years or more in the measure of Allâh (cf. 22:47; see also 6:57; 8:32; 13:6 ; 20:102; 32:5). The same question is repeated in verse 36:49. The battle of Badr took place exactly one year after the Holy Prophet (pbuh) left Makkah. (See also here the prophecy in Isaiah 21.11-17; Kaidâr was the son of Ismâ‘îl who was the son of Abraham).

وَجَعَلْنَا الْأَغْلَالَ فِي أَعْنَاقِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا

34:33 Shackles are a metaphor for the enslavement of their souls to the false values to which they surrendered and for the sufferings. Shackles are also the rites and the customs of people.

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا فِي قَرْيَةٍ مِّنْ نَذِيرٍ إِلَّا قَالَ مُتَرَفُوهَا إِنَّا بِمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْهُ كَافِرُونَ

34:34 **Mutraf** is a term for well-off people who indulge in the exclusive pursuit of pleasures and enjoyment with no regard for moral considerations. Their hedonistic pursuits corrupt them, and their life of luxury and ease causes them to behave insolently (*Mughnî*). Because the Prophets come to raise the oppressed among humanity to their rightful place in society and remove inequality, people in positions of power and privilege usually range themselves against the Prophets.

وَيَوْمَ يَحْشُرُهُمْ جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ يَقُولُ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ أَهُؤُلَاءِ إِيَّاكُمْ كَانُوا يَعْبُدُونَ

34:40 Here, the word “angels” refers to the righteous and holy people who are taken as gods by the ignorant. This meaning is clarified in the

قَالُوا سُبْحَانَكَ أَنْتَ وَلِيُّنَا مِنْ (وَلِيُّهُمْ دُونِهِمْ) cf. 34:41).

بَلْ كَانُوا يَعْبُدُونَ الْجِنَّةَ

34:41 The *Jinns* in this context are the powerful and influential members of society who are taken as protectors by the weak. For the discussion on *Jinn* see verses 6:128; 15:27 and 7:38; refer to 18:50; 27:17; 41:25; 46:18; 46:29; 51:56; 55:33; 72:5; 114:6.

فُلْ إِنَّمَا أَعِظُّكُمْ بِوَاحِدَةٍ أَنْ تَقُومُوا لِلَّهِ مُثْنَى وَفُرَادَى ثُمَّ تَتَفَكَّرُوا مَا بِصَاحِبِّكُمْ مِنْ جِنَّةٍ

34:46. Mathnâ wa furâda. “مُثْنَى وَفُرَادَى” in twos and ones”, refer to human social behaviour and their actions concerning others, as well as to their inner, personal attitude in all situations requiring a moral choice.

فُلْ إِنَّ رَبِّي يَقْذِفُ بِالْحَقِّ عَلَامُ الْغُيُوبِ

34:48 “*He is thoroughly aware of hidden realities*” (**عَلَامُ الْغُيُوبِ**) suggests that the words said immediately before and after these words contain a great Divine prophecy.

فُلْ جَاءَ الْحَقُّ وَمَا يُبَدِّيُ الْبَاطِلُ وَمَا يُعِيدُ

34:49 “The perfect truth has come and [as a prophecy keep it in mind that] falsehood [and idol-worship has gone] never to sprout [again from this soil] and never to return” was the great promise announced in 34:48 (cf. 17:81). We can still witness this today, even after 1400 years.



سورة فاطر 35. CHAPTER

The Originator

(Revealed before Hijrah)

The chapter derives its title from Allâh's attribute the Originator فَاطِر mentioned in the chapters first verse. Virtually the entire chapter deals with Allâh's unique power to create, both in this world as well as through later resurrection. The Originator of the heavens and the earth sweeps away the old order and generates a new one. Another title of the chapter is *Al-Malaikah* (الْمَلَائِكَةِ); the Angels), also based on the opening verse, and because it is through the agency of angels that Allâh originates a new creation. Moreover, the angel *Rûh al-Quds* enables people to attain nearness to their Originator. The chapter deals with the mystery of creation and its maintenance with various forces typified by the “wings” (a symbol of power) of the angels (الْمَلَائِكَةِ), and how they themselves were also created by the All-Mighty. He alone is the Source of all existing objects, all forces of power, and the Truth flows from Him alone.

Allâh's attribute *Fâtir* فَاطِر is derived from *fatara* that means to cleave or split, to originate or bring a thing into existence newly or for the first time, it not having existed before (*Tâj*). Thus, there may be a reference to the creation of primeval matter in the original significance of cleaving or splitting. Derived from the same root is *fitrah* فُطْرَةٌ that means the nature, constitution, natural quality, or original quality according to which all human beings are said to have been made (30:30). Therefore, *fitrah* has been translated as the faculty of knowing Allâh, with which He has endowed humankind (*Tâj*).

جَاعِلُ الْمَلَائِكَةِ رُسُلًا أُولَى أَجْنِحَةً مَئْتَنِي وَثَلَاثَ وَرُبَاعٍ يَزِيدُ فِي الْخَلْقِ
مَا يَشَاءُ

35:1 **Malâ'ikah** مَلَائِكَةٌ refers to the angels or the powers that are entrusted with the control, management, and supervision of the affairs of the physical and spiritual worlds (cf. 2:30). The “wings of the angels” are a metaphor for their different powers and types (Tâj). Their multiplicity - two or three, or four and beyond, is intended to stress the countless ways in which He causes His commandments to materialize within the cosmos and the mediums through which He manifests His Attributes. Thus, the verse indicates that the angels possess powers and qualities in varying degrees and in accordance with the importance, quantity and quality of the work entrusted to each one of them. Ibn Mas'ûd reports, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) saw Gabriel endowed with six hundred wings (Bukhârî). Therefore, the power of the angels is not limited to four “wings” يَرِيدُ فِي الْخَلْقِ مَا يَشَاءُ as he says in the above verse.

وَإِنْ مَنْ مِنْ أُمَّةٍ إِلَّا خَلَقْنَا نَذِيرًا

35:24 Prophets were raised in every nation, following a particular way of life and a particular behaviour and civilization (Jauharî). The Holy Qur'ân mentions mostly the Arab and Israeli Prophets known to the Arabs, Christians and Jews living in the surrounding lands. Had He mentioned Prophets unknown to the contemporaries, it would only have caused confusion among the locals. The aim was to make the teachings understandable to them with references to their own Prophets and to correct misconceptions about them. People living in places like India, China, Africa, the two Americas, Australia and any remote parts of the world had their own guides (cf. 40:78; 2:285).

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجَنَا بِهِ ثَمَرَاتٍ مُّخْتَلِفًا لَّوْا نَحْنَا وَمِنَ الْجِبَالِ جُدُدٌ بِيَضْ وَحُمُرٌ مُّخْتَلِفُ لَوْا نَحْنَا وَغَرَابِيبُ سُودٌ

35:27 The Divine Revelation is likened to water, which produces different effects on different people according to the condition of the soil—that is “of their hearts” referring to their receptivity to the

Divine message. Note the different effects of the Qur'ânic Revelation on Abû Bakr^(rz), the friend of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) and on Abû Jahl, his most bitter enemy. Both received the same "water", but the fruit produced was different in each of them. As the strata of the mountains are different, so the receivers and hearers of the Divine Message are of different colours and races.

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ وَالْدَّوَابُ وَالْأَنْعَامُ مُخْتَلِفُ الْوَانُهُ كَذَلِكَ ۝ إِنَّمَا يَخْشَىَ اللَّهَ مِنْ
عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ ۝

35: 28 “*Those of His servants who are endowed with right knowledge hold Allâh in reverential awe*” points to the fact that among the followers of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) were the *Auliyâ* (the friends of Allâh), the *Mujaddadîn* (the renewers of religion who appear every hundred years), the *Muhaddathîn* (people with whom Allâh speaks), the *Mulhims* (the receivers of Divine Revelation), the *Ahl-Kashaf* (people who receive Divine Visions). There are also Iblîs-natured people (30:34), who are like beasts or cattle, blindly following falsehood, and those who have fallen to the lowest of the low (95:5). The verse defines also “the person of knowledge” – he who stands in awe before his Lord, being fully conscious of His Glory, His Majesty, and His Power. This definition of the “person of knowledge” is further clarified in the next verse

لَمْ أُورْثَنَا الْكِتَابَ الَّذِينَ اصْطَفَيْنَا مِنْ عِبَادِنَا ۝ فَمِنْهُمْ ظَالِمٌ لِنَفْسِهِ وَمِنْهُمْ
مُّقْتَصِدٌ وَمِنْهُمْ سَابِقٌ بِالْخَيْرَاتِ يَإِذْنِ

35:32 In order to qualify for Divine “bracelets of gold and pearls” a human being has to undergo three stages of moral development: The first stage is the stage of suppression of the animal instincts in order to gain full control over his *nafs al-Ammârah* - the self which incites him towards evil (12:53). In the Qur'ânic words, one has to be “unjust towards their own self” (فَمِنْهُمْ ظَالِمٌ لِنَفْسِهِ) in order to control those animal

instincts which incite him to act selfishly and evil. Persons who are “unjust towards their own self” are the ones who sometimes succeed in getting control over their ego, but sometimes their ego (*Nafs al-Ammârah*) gains control over them. They get the control with the help of their reasoning and upbringing.

The second stage is the stage of those “who follow the middle course” (وَمِنْهُمْ مُّقْتَصِدٌ). Their self-accusing conscience (*nafs al-Lawwâmah*) at the commission of an evil deed, comes to their assistance (75:2) and helps them to refrain from evil.

The third stage is the stage of those “who are foremost in actions and good deeds” (وَمِنْهُمْ سَابِقٌ بِالْخَيْرَاتِ). This is the stage when one is freed from all weaknesses and calamities. Such a person starts to live a life of peace and security, freeing himself from the filth of vice and sin. This ultimate peace and tranquillity is called in the Holy Qur’ân *nafs al-Mutma’innah* - the Soul at Peace (89:27-30). The words “By the leave of Allâh” (بِإِذْنِنِ) in this verse, remind us that it is Allâh Who strengthens our hearts to achieve the good and shun evil, and it is He Who helps us attain this stage, which is the stage of “great distinction”.

فَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَعَلَيْهِ كُفْرُهُ

35:39 These words refute the false Christian dogma of atonement that Jesus Christ will rescue his followers (25:2). No Christ will come to deliver them and only the Lords Justice and Mercy shall prevail.

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ شَرَكَاءِكُمُ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَرُونَيْ مَاذَا حَلَّوْا مِنَ
الْأَرْضِ أَمْ لَهُمْ شَرْكٌ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ أَمْ أَتَيْنَاهُمْ كِتَابًا فَهُمْ عَلَىٰ بَيِّنَتٍ مِّنْهُ

35:40 These words beautifully refute the divinity of any created thing (25:3). This verse also refutes all those notions and doctrines in which a human being is raised to the status of god or is made an object of

adoration and worship. A created thing can never have the status of a creator as it does not even have power over his own creation.



سورة يس 36. CHAPTER

O Perfect Man! (*Yâ Sîn*)

(*Revealed before Hijrah*)

The chapter is devoted to the Holy Prophet (pbuh), the revelation he brought, and humanity's moral and spiritual responsibilities. We are also reminded about the certainty of the Hereafter and the final Judgment. For this reason, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) advised the Muslims to recite it before the dying and in prayers for the dead. Ibn 'Abbâs states that the letters **Yâ Sîn** represent two distinct words, namely the exclamatory particle *Yâ* and *Sîn*, which is an abbreviation of *al-Insân* – the perfect human being or man par excellence. This interpretation has been accepted by Akramah, Dhahhak, Hasan of Basra, Ibn Jubair, Ibn Jarîr, Zamakhsharî and Baghawî. According to Ibn Jarîr, 'Abdullâh ibn 'Abbâs and Akramah believed that this *YâSîn* يس is in its origin an Abyssinian word meaning, "O man." If we admit that *Yâ* ي is the evocative particle, and that *Sîn* س is for *insân* انسان ("man") then, the allusion by "man" could be to the noblest of men, Muhammad. Ibn Mas'ûd too is of the same opinion

The title of the chapter is taken from the initial letters in which "the perfect human being is addressed". This is how the Almighty addresses the Holy Prophet. The statement "The Holy Qur'an witnesses that you are, indeed, one of the Messengers" that follows shows that the series of Divine Prophets, which began with the first bloom of humankind, found its most perfect manifestation in the

person of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). The path shown by the Holy Prophet is now the only right and straight path that leads to that Exalted Being who is the Creator. A human being can achieve His closeness by following the path shown by “the perfect man”. This chapter is also called the heart of the Holy Qur’ân, as it concerns the central figure in the teaching of the Qur’ân. The chapter deals further with human beings moral and spiritual responsibilities. We are also reminded about the certainty of the final Judgment and the life in the Hereafter.

وَالْقُرْآنُ الْحَكِيمُ إِنَّكَ لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ

36:3 In the words **إِنَّكَ لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ** *You are, indeed, one of the Messengers*, points out that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) was raised on the path of prophet hood in a style similar to the previous Prophets and that he missed nothing of the truth and wisdom his predecessors brought. The words **Yâ Sîn** () (O you Perfect man bears testimony that this is a perfect human being who was vouchsafed with a Book of great knowledge and wisdom, and that the Truth he brought to the world in the form of the Qur’ân excels all other revealed Scriptures in wisdom, beauty and excellence and that is a complete code of laws for all times.

عَلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ

36:4 The path shown by the Holy Prophet (pbuh) is the straightest (cf.1:6), and therefore shortest straight path (**صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ**) leading to the Exalted Almighty Being. This illuminated path, free from crookedness, extremes and flaws, is the path that protects us from falling into pits of difficulties and darkness. It enables us to attain spiritual heights in the shortest possible time, as we are guided directly through this Divine Revelation (**الْقُرْآن**). This verse marks the distinction between a Prophet and a philosopher. The philosopher’s quest for the truth is time-consuming, and he wanders through a

labyrinth of abstract ideas and logic, and often gets lost in the quest, as his conclusions are faulty when his assumptions are erroneous. A Prophet of Allâh receives his knowledge directly through the Divine Revelation, without the need for abstraction and intricate and possibly flawed, logical deductions.

تَنْزِيلُ الْعَزِيزِ الرَّحِيمِ

36:5 the words tell us of the greatness of the Holy Qur’ân, as it has been revealed by the Al-Mighty through His Attribute of being All-Powerful and All-Merciful.

لِتُنذِرَ قَوْمًا مَا أَنذَرَ آبَاؤُهُمْ فَهُمْ غَافِلُونَ

36:6 This phrase “*because their forefathers have not been warned*” does not mean that their ancestors had not been sent Prophets as warners. It means that their ancestors did not believe in the warning given to them. After all, Jews and the Christians reached the Arabian Peninsula and through them, the Arabs of the desert, in a way, received religious warning. The Arabs at large were heedless to this warning. The duty of religious reformation was thus entrusted to this Prophet of Islam.

إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا فِي أَعْنَاقِهِمْ أَغْلَالًا فَهُمْ إِلَى الْأَدْقَانِ فَهُمْ مُعْمَلُونَ

36:8 In Arabic usage when something sticks and does not leave or break, it is said, *hâdha fi ‘unuq-i-fulanin* “this is under the shackles.” In the word *a’nâq-i-him* (أَعْنَاقِهِمْ) their shackles - the reference is to the chains of pride, prejudice, stubbornness, false customs, niggardliness and disbelief. Such was the attitude of the Arabs towards Islam, which prevented them from listening to and accepting the message. These shackles of arrogance “reaching up to their chins” prevented them from bowing down their heads to their Lord with humility.

وَجَعَلْنَا مِنْ بَيْنِ أَيْدِيهِمْ سَدًّا وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ سَدًّا فَأَغْشَيْنَاهُمْ فَهُمْ لَا يُبَصِّرُونَ

36:9 The verse illustrates how the disbelievers, because of the chains of prejudice, stubbornness and bad customs are unable to look ahead and realize the bright future that would lie ahead of them if they accepted Islam. Similarly, because of these chains they are unable to look back into the past and draw the right lessons from it.

وَاضْرِبْ لَهُمْ مَثَلًا أَصْحَابَ الْقَرْيَةِ إِذْ جَاءَهَا الْمُرْسَلُونَ

36:13 *Ashâb al-Qaryâh* أَصْحَابَ الْقَرْيَةِ are the people of the town. This expression can refer to the people of Makkah or residents of any other town, or to humankind at large. The next verse indicates that here it stands for the people of Egypt and Palestine.

إِذْ أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْهِمْ اثْنَيْنِ فَكَذَّبُوهُمَا فَعَزَّزْنَا بِثَالِثٍ قَالُوا إِنَّا إِلَيْكُمْ مُرْسَلُونَ

36: 14 The “Two” in this verse refers to two Messengers - Moses and Jesus - who prophesied the coming of a third Messenger. His special status is pointed to by the choice of word *fa ‘Azaznâ* (فَعَزَّزْنَا), “We strengthened with honour”, which is derived from ‘*Azza* عَزَّ meaning, glorious, highly esteemed, excellent, worthy, powerful, strong, and noble. These adjectives describe Muhammed (pbuh), as befits the name of this chapter. Therefore, according to many interpreters, the three Messengers of Allâh in this verse are Moses, Jesus, and Muhammed (peace upon them). Muhammed strengthened and honoured Moses and Jesus by fulfilling the prophecies they had made about his advent (Deut. 18.18; Matt. 21.33-46).

قَالُوا مَا أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مَتَّنَا وَمَا أَنْزَلَ الرَّحْمَنُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِنْ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا تَكْذِبُونَ

36:15 The justification to refuse the Divine Message brought by these three was identical in all cases – namely the Most Gracious has not revealed anything to them, and that they are liars. (cf. 18:5).

قَالُوا إِنَّا تَطَيِّرُنَا بِكُمْ ۖ أَلَئِنْ لَمْ تَنْهُوا لَنَرْجُمَنُّكُمْ وَلَيَمْسَكَنُّكُمْ مَّنَا عَدَابُ الْآِيمَّ

36:18 The disbelievers said to all these three Prophets, “*We augur ill from you, for we are always seized with one calamity or the other after your advent.*” Whenever a Prophet is raised among the people, they are visited by punishments and calamities like diseases, famine, wars, persecution, and loss of their power (cf. 7:94; 6:42). These calamities serve a Divine Purpose (cf. 94:6). People always receive a warning through the Prophets before they are taken to account by punishment. The fate of Pharaoh, the influential Jews of the time of Jesus, and the fall of Makkah are the respective historical examples.

وَجَاءَ مِنْ أَفْصَى الْمَدِينَةِ رَجُلٌ يَسْعَى قَالَ يَا قَوْمَ اتَّبِعُوا الْمُرْسَلِينَ

36:20 “*There came a man running from the farthest end of the town*” is evidently a parable of the minority of true believers in every religion. Every Prophet has a follower among the people who bears testimony to the Prophets truth. Thus the Holy Qur’ân speaks of a believer from among the people of Pharaoh (40:28). Moses also had a helper by the name of Habil. Jesus had Joseph of Arimathaia as follower and helper. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) had such a follower in Abû Bakr^(rz). Besides him, commentators mention another man who informed Holy Prophet (pbuh) of a conspiracy being hatched against his life in Dâr al-Nadwâh. Such men as these “came running toward belief”. *Rajal* رَجُل has also the meaning of footmen and soldiers (Tâj, Lisân, Lane). Therefore, here the use of word *rajal* may also signify a number of such people who were staunch followers of the Prophets of their time and were ready to lay down their lives for the cause.

أَتَتَّخِذُ مِنْ دُونِهِ أَلَّهًا إِنْ يُرِدُنَ الرَّحْمَنُ بِضُرٍّ لَا تُغْنِ عَنِّي شَفَاعَتُهُمْ شَيْئًا
وَلَا يُنْقِدُونَ

36:23 “*Whose intercession will not be of any avail*” refers in the first place to the followers of Jesus. However, Jews and Muslims are also

addressed and warned not to expect any intercession from Moses or Mu_{hammad} (pbuh) or any other they hold in high reverence. People will be judged based on their deeds, but they can hope for Divine Mercy.

قِيلَ ادْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ ۖ قَالَ يَا لَيْتَ قَوْمِي يَعْلَمُونَ

36:26 *Enter Paradise!* is the good news given to all Prophets. Here, in the context of verse 36:14-20, it refers to the devout companions of Moses, Jesus and Mu_{hammad} (pbuh). The verse is a promise of Paradise given by Allâh to the ones “who came running” to accept and believe. Some people are of the opinion that this man was killed and thus after his death he was told to enter Paradise. However, this theory has not been established in the Qur’ânic text here or elsewhere, and is unconvincing. Many people are promised Paradise in this very life by Allâh, as for example *al-Ash’arah al-Mubashsharah* - the ten blessed ones of the Companions of the Holy Prophet (pbuh).

يَا حَسْرَةً عَلَى الْعِبَادِ

36:30 “Alas for My servants!” is the voice of the All-Merciful, as if to say I prepared a beautiful Garden for them, but they refused.

وَآيَةٌ لَهُمُ الْأَرْضُ الْمَيِّتَةُ أَحْيَيْنَاهَا وَأَخْرَجْنَا مِنْهَا حَبَّا فَمِنْهُ يَأْكُلُونَ

36:33 Here a metaphor has been used to establish a truth. When rain falls on dry land, no power can prevent the growth of vegetation, similarly when the spiritual rain has fallen in the form of the advent of a Prophet, a new generation will spring up because of it and no hand can stop its growth. From dry lands will gush forth springs of spiritual knowledge and trees bearing spiritual fruit will grow in plenty (cf. 36:37).

سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْأَزْوَاجَ كُلَّهَا مِمَّا تُنْبَتُ الْأَرْضُ وَمِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَمِمَّا لَا
يَعْلَمُونَ

36:36 Pairs exist of everything including all those things, which are becoming known as the sciences are advancing and making ever-new discoveries.

وَآيَةٌ لَهُمُ الَّذِينَ نَسْلَخُ مِنْهُ النَّهَارَ فَإِذَا هُمْ مُظْلِمُونَ

36:37 In other words, the night of darkness representing sin and ignorance will disappear and the sun of enlightenment and righteousness will shine forth.

وَالشَّمْسُ تَجْرِي لِمُسْتَقَرٍ لَهَا ۝ ذَلِكَ تَقْدِيرُ الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ

. **36:38** **Mustaqar** مُسْتَقَرٍ is the goal determined for something on its ordained course. *Mustaqar* is the fixed course of the planets revolving around the sun. In the Arabic language *lám* before *Mustaqar* is used in the sense of *fi* – “in”), and in the sense of *ilâ* (إِلَى - towards). According to former usage, the word *Mustaqar* it would mean that the sun along with its system of planets is moving towards a determined goal. It can also mean that the sun has an appointed time. This verse is also an allusion to the spreading of Divine Teaching and Divine Light.

وَالْقَمَرُ قَدَّرْنَاهُ مَنَازِلَ حَتَّىٰ عَادَ كَالْعَرْجُونِ الْقَدِيمِ

36:39 When a new moon appears in the form of a crescent, it looks bent like an old (- *Qadim* قَدِيم) twisted twig of a tree. **Al-Qadim** القَدِيم does not signify being old as in knowing no beginning. For that reason the word *qadim* has not been used as an attribute of Allâh, neither in the Holy Qur’ân nor in the traditions of the Prophet, nor in the sayings of his Companions. The Holy Qur’ân is free from the use of all words that are derogatory to the Majesty. Such words were partly introduced when the scholars of the comparative study of the religions began

their discussions over religious beliefs. The verse alludes also to the rise and fall of nations.

لَا الشَّمْسُ يَنْبَغِي لَهَا أَنْ تُدْرِكَ الْقَمَرَ وَلَا اللَّيلُ سَابِقُ النَّهَارِ ۚ وَكُلُّ فِي
فَلَّاكٍ يَسْبُحُونَ

36:40 The statement: “*It is not given to the sun to attain to the moon*” points to the fact that the two follow different orbits, which do not cross. This and the previous verse contradict the old view that the heavenly bodies were fixed with something solid to one another. Rather the verses describe the heavenly bodies floating freely through space. It is the characteristic of the Holy Qur’ân that it uses expressions, which not only contradict erroneous views and ideas, but also anticipate new discoveries in the domain of science and philosophy.

وَآيَةٌ لَّهُمْ أَنَّا حَمَلْنَا دُرُّيَّتَهُمْ فِي الْفَلَّاكِ الْمَسْحُونِ

36:41 Al-Falak **الفلك** is a celestial body and **Fulk** is a ship. Both words derive from the same root. Here *al-Falk* **الفلك** does not necessarily mean ships on the ocean. It may refer to any means of transportation that cleaves or sails through a medium, be it water, air or space. It is said that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) was enjoying his midday rest when he rose up with a smile on his face. A lady named Umm-i-Sulaim inquired about the reason for his smile. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) replied that the soldiers of his *ummah* would wage Jihâd while on board of sailing ships. The verse is a prophecy about the future ocean travel on fully laden ships. These means of transportation may also include airships of the modern age. In that sense, the verse also contains a prophecy about the future travels on sea and air.

وَخَلَقْنَا لَهُمْ مِّنْ مَّثْلِهِ مَا يَرْكَبُونَ

36:42 “And We will make for them other such things as they will board” is another Qur’ânic prophecy. Allâh will bring into existence new means of transportation and conveyance. We are witnessing this promise, and future generations will “board such things” of which we are not yet aware of today. The modern age has seen a clear fulfilment of it in the form of trains, cars, airplanes (see 55:24), and other modes of transportation which we still do not know about.

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ أَنفَقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ قَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْطُعُمُ مَنْ لَوْ يَشَاءُ اللَّهُ أَطْعَمُهُ إِنْ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ

36:47 **T’ama** طعم means to feed. Here it is also used in the sense of spiritual food. Allâh expects from us that we feed those who are in need to sustain life, but also feed spiritually by propagating morality and virtue. Only the disbelievers would say that feeding and helping others is not their jobs, but is only the responsibility of Allâh.

قَالُوا يَا وَيْلَنَا مَنْ بَعَثَنَا مِنْ مَرْقَدِنَا

36:52 **Marqad** مرقد is a resting or a sleeping place. When on Judgment Day the disbelievers will be raised, they will cry in despair, “*O woe be on us! Who has aroused us from our sleeping place?*” An objection might be raised with respect to this interpretation. Can we say that the grave is a place of rest for the disbelievers? How can this be when the disbelievers are facing the punishment of the grave? The answer to this is that it is a matter of comparison. The chastisement of Gehenna is great, but the punishment that a disbeliever must suffer in the grave is comparatively lighter. When compared with the punishment after Resurrection, the punishment of the grave is therefore restful, comfortable, and easy to bear. It has been described merely as a window opened towards the fires of Hell. Remember that in the Hereafter the trumpet will be blown twice. Soon after the trumpet is blown for the first time all of the people will become motionless, as if in a stupor. On the second blow, they will be raised.

The condition experienced between the two notes of the trumpet is likened to the place of rest spoken of here. As the Holy Qur'ân says, That Day there shall be a blast of the trumpet and all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth will fall into a swoon except whom Allâh will like to spare. Then there will be a blast another time and people shall stand up (awaiting judgment before their Lord).” (39:68)

إِنَّ أَصْحَابَ الْجَنَّةِ الْيَوْمَ فِي شُغْلٍ فَاكِهُونَ

36:55 “*The owners of Paradise will be occupied*” means to say that the life in the Paradise will not be a life of sluggishness and inactivity.

أَلَمْ أَعْهَدْ إِلَيْكُمْ يَا بَنِي آدَمَ أَن لَا تَعْبُدُوا الشَّيْطَانَ ۖ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌ مُّبِينٌ

36:60 “*The worship of satan*” comes in many forms. This may include following blindly people who are evil by nature and inciting others to do evil (3:22; 38:6). Worshipping satan also means following one's own evil desires, thereby making these desires into objects of worship (25:43; 45:23; 2:268). Shaitân شَيْطَانٌ is not only far removed from the truth himself but also turns others away from it. Al-Shaitân الشَّيْطَانُ is the one who burns with hatred and anger and is lost, who makes evil suggestions (7:20; 4:120; 8:48). Ibn Mas'ûd says that shayâtîn شَيْطَانٌ are the leaders in unbelief, the ring-leaders (cf. 2:102), referred to in verse 2:76 (“and when they are alone, one with another”) and in verse 33:67 (“They will say, Our Lord! We obeyed our leaders and our respected ones, but they led us astray from your path.”) The expression Al-Shaitân الشَّيْطَانُ conveys many meanings, which are discussed in 2:36.

وَلَقَدْ أَضَلَّ مِنْكُمْ جِلَّا كَثِيرًا ۖ

36:62 Adzalla - أَضَلَّ - to lead astray. The expression adzalla does not signify that some evil spirit or a person called Satan leads a great multitude of people astray. If this were the case, then only Satan

would be punished on the Day of Judgment, and Divine Judgment therefore, would not be just. It also should not be concluded from these words that Allâh is powerless to prevent such deception. Just consider the verse in 14:36: “*A large number of people have gone astray because of these idols.*” *Asnâm* أصنام is the thing held responsible for leading many people astray; in this case idols that possess no power or will to create anything. In 5:91 we read, “Satan only intends to precipitate enmity and hatred between you,” and in 4:60, “Satan desires to lead them astray” expresses only his desire, but it does not mean that he is the creator of evil. The Holy Qur’ân rejects Zoroastrian dualism according to which *Yazdân*, the Good Spirit, is the creator of all good things and the creator of evil is *A’hrâman*, the evil spirit. The idea that Allâh is the source of good and Satan that of evil is not reflected in the Qur’ân nor in any authentic tradition. Verse 28:50 says, “Know that they (the evil persons) are just following their own low and evil desires. Who should be more erring than the one who, leaving aside the guidance of Allâh, only follows his own low and evil desires.” We read in verse 28:50, “Have you considered the case of him who has taken his own low and evil desires for his god and whom Allâh has forsaken and adjudged as lost on the basis of His [infinite] knowledge,” and again in verse 25:43, “Have you considered [the plight of] the one who has taken his own low and evil desires for his deity?” Therefore, the path to evil is the subjugation to the low desires (*nafs al-Ammârah*) the self which incites towards evil (7:20; 12:53). Correspondingly, not heeding *nafs al-Lawwâmah* - the innate self-reproaching spirit, which at the commission of a bad deed comes to human beings assistance (75:2), also leads to evil. The words in the verse, “Why do you not then make use of your understanding”, indicates that our given intelligence, (“*aqal*”) can warn us of the pitfalls of *Nafs al-Ammârah*, only if we make use of it. ‘*Aqala*’ means to abstain from something (Tâj, Lisân, Lane). Here ‘*aqal*’ would mean to abstain from evil suggestions and low desires, and not to make them our *ilâh* or deity. According to the Holy Qur’ân, the one who loses his

reason and does not make use of his understanding is “under the influence of Satan” (2:275). In other words, Satan gains mastery over those who do not remember Allâh (58:19). In 7:176; 18:28 and 20:16 this subject matter is explained in a beautiful way (cf: 35:32; 37:63).

هَذِهِ جَهَنَّمُ الَّتِي كُنْתُمْ تُوَعَّدُونَ

36:63 The “warning” being spoken of here came from the Prophets, the Divine Books, the spiritual teachers, and finally from the *Nafs al-Lawwâmah* the innate self-reproaching conscience (cf. 4:119; 37:63).

اَصْلُوهَا الْيَوْمَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ

36:64 The verse explains further the above subject matter in that it is we who will be made responsible for our deeds and not any “satan” (cf. 36:55).

الْيَوْمَ نَخْتِمُ عَلَىٰ اَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَتَكَلَّمُنَا اِيْدِيهِمْ وَتَشْهُدُ اَرْجُلُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ

36:65 “*The hands shall speak and the feet shall bear witness*” points again to the deeds we have done. Students of medicine know that the appearance of, or movements of the hands can be used to diagnose some diseases, while a persons gait points to others and a similar concept is alluded to here. In the preceding verse, the disbelievers were addressed directly, in this verse they are mentioned in the third person in order to show their identification. This is an allusion to the Divine Law of the conservation of deeds and thoughts, good or bad.

وَلَوْ نَشَاءُ لَمْسَخَنَا هُمْ عَلَىٰ مَكَانَتِهِمْ فَمَا اسْتَطَاعُوا مُضِيًّا وَلَا يَرْجِعُونَ

36:67 **Masakhna** means we could have destroyed and we could have humiliated.

وَمَنْ تُعَمِّرْهُ تُنَكِّسْهُ فِي الْخَلْقِ

36:68 “We reverse the mechanism of the created thing (- Khalq الخلق”, the created thing can be a human being, a civilization or a nation or any other creation in the process of evolution (36:79). It can also apply to the non-living, such as a star, which builds up from cosmic dust, and as the ages pass, it may implode or become a black hole and finally disintegrate into dust again. **Nu‘ammir** – نعمّر – We grant long life. The word is derived from the root ‘amara عمر meaning to inhabit, to make inhabitable and ‘umara عمر is long life. Thus, it may also refer to a star, the earth or land. The process begins in a weak state, reaches its height of power and then returns to the original state of weakness. This cycle is in effect in human beings as well as in the cosmos and continues to be repeated (cf. 36:77-80)

وَمَا عَلِمْنَاهُ الشِّعْرَ وَمَا يَنْبَغِي لَهُ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ وَقُرْآنٌ مُبِينٌ

36:69 Shi‘ra الشِّعْرُ are poetic words not based on reality. “We have not taught him the art of composing verses” وَمَا عَلِمْنَاهُ الشِّعْرَ that is fictional poetry. Instead, he conveys facts that impress peoples minds (69:41; 52:30; 37:36). The Holy Qur’ân is free from poetic license and imagination, but contains only truths full of serenity and dignity (53:3-7).

الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنَ الشَّجَرِ الْأَخْضَرِ نَارًا فَإِذَا أَنْتُمْ مِنْهُ تُوقِدُونَ

36:80 This is another metaphor. Twigs and leaves of certain trees, especially from resinous trees, can catch fire owing to the heat generated by friction when rubbed together. Fire is also ignited by rubbing together the wood of the *Markh* and *Afar* trees even when they are green. Similarly, when people come, see and meet the Prophets or encounter their teachings, a new fire in their spiritual life results from it. This is reflected in the ancient Arabian proverb, “In every tree there is a fire.” In this verse, there is also an allusion to the metamorphosis of green plants into fuel, be it through desiccation or

charcoaling, or by a millennial, subterranean process of decomposition into coal, gas, or oil.



سورة الصافات 37. CHAPTER

Those Ranging in Ranks

(Revealed before *Hijrah*)

The title of this chapter **Al-Sâffât** الصّافات is taken from its first word and means “those who range themselves in close ranks”. This may refer to the closeness of Muslims standing in rows while at Prayer, or to the ranks of the righteous engaged in spreading the Truth. This meaning is elaborated on in verses 165-166 of this chapter. In the preceding chapter, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) was called the Perfect Human Being, while in this chapter it is stated that this Perfect Man will, with the help of this Divine Revelation, and by his own noble example, succeed in establishing a community of righteous, noble, and accomplished people who shall then spread the Message. Since humans are apt to err, they are in constant need of Divine Guidance. This explains the renewed reference to the stories of some of the earlier Prophets, as well as the allusions to the Qur’ân itself.

وَالصَّافَاتِ صَفَا

37:1 The verse commences with the word *Waw* و that stands for ‘and’ or ‘by’. It also means to swear or to call to witness. The Arabs say: *Wa-Allâh* – وَاللهُ – ‘I swear by Allâh’ to mark a solemn oath-like assertion - a calling to witness, as in the expression *Wa-Allâh* is an expression used to give weight to a subsequently stated truth or evidence and solid argument of Truth being conveyed (*Lisân; Tâj*).

The philosophy behind such Qur'ânic oaths is to make an assertion more convincing. The conviction is produced, not by mere allegation as in the case of an ordinary oath, but by some clear argument, which upholds the truth of the assertion made. Another object of such Qur'ânic oaths is to make a prophecy, the fulfilment of which establishes its truth. This is the case here. The description given in the first three verses applies to true believers.

وَجْهْتُمْ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْطَانٍ مَارِدٍ

37:7 The verse uses the expression **شَيْطَانٍ مَارِدٍ**. **Mârid** is derived from *marada* مَرَدْ meaning to moisten in order to soften, inert, insolent (*Râghib*, *Tâj*: *Lisân*). The word is usually translated as “disobedient and rebellious” (*Râghib*, *Tâj*: *Lisân*). Thus, here is apparently not a mention of the devil per se, but something inert and insolent that may cause harm.

ذُحُورًا لَا يَسْمَعُونَ إِلَى الْمَلِإِ الْأَعْلَى وَيُقْدِرُونَ مِنْ كُلِّ جَانِبٍ

37:8 According to many commentators this verse tells us that the so-called diviners, the soothsayers, and the class known as *Kâhins* (Astrologers) have neither access to Divine secrets nor to the source of prophecy. They mislead people through their guesses and conjectures, which they claim to be knowledge they obtained from the stars. Since some of their conjectures come to be true by chance, and others are so fuzzy that in hindsight it is easy to apply them to later events, people begin to believe in such popular superstitions with no basis in reality, no sign of Divine strength, and no grandeur. But “there soon follows them a flame that pierces through the darkness spread by these soothsayers” is to say that the excellent teachings of the Prophets dispel all the superstitions spread by these *Kâhins* and charlatans. The Prophets of God break the spell they cast on others (7:107-110). This happened at the time of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) with the result that ultimately the profession of the *Kâhins* and soothsayers who falsely

claimed to foretell the future lost their influence and disappeared from Arabia.

إِنَّا زَيَّنَّا السَّمَاءَ الدُّنْيَا بِزِينَةِ الْكَوَافِكَ (٦) وَحَفَظْنَا مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْطَانٍ مَّارِدٍ (٧)
 لَا يَسْمَعُونَ إِلَى الْمَلَأِ الْأَعْلَى وَيَقْدِفُونَ مِنْ كُلِّ جَانِبٍ (٨) دُحُورًا وَلَهُمْ
 عَذَابٌ وَاصِبٌ (٩) إِلَّا مِنْ خَطِفَ الْخَطْفَةَ فَاتَّبَعَهُ شَهَابٌ تَاقِبٌ (١٠)

37:6-10 Here is a mention that **Shaitân-i-mârid** will receive ‘**Adzâb-i wâsib**’. The word ‘**Adzâb**’ (عَذَابٌ) is usually translated as “punishment”, but also means hindrance, obstacle, or refusal (Lane, Tâj, Lisân). **Wâsib** (وَاصِبٌ) is from **wasabi** وَصَبِّ, meaning perpetual, continuous, or lasting (Lane, Tâj, Lisân). Thus ‘**Adzâb-i-Wâsib**’ would also indicate a continuous, perpetual, and lasting hindrance.

‘**Malâ’** مَلَأْ used in the expression **Malâ’ al-A’lâ** signifies a fullness with awe, or refers to a chief that fills the heart with awe and affection. The use of the expressions **Shaitân-i-Mârid** in combination with ‘**Adzâb-i-Wâsib**’ and **Mala’â al-A’lâ** may be a reference to some natural phenomena, probably meteorites “pursued by a bright shining flame” that advance towards the earth, but they are stopped and repelled continuously. Verses 15:16-18; 67:5 and 72:10-11 deal with the same subject matter.

جَاءَ بِالْحَقِّ وَصَدَّقَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ

37:37 This verse confirms the legitimacy of the Prophets of all times. Some, but not all of them, are mentioned in the Holy Qur’ân(48:78). They came with the same Truth, and the Holy Prophet (pbuh) confirmed this.

أَذِلَّكَ حَيْرٌ نُزُلًا أُمْ شَجَرَةِ الرَّقْم

37:62 Here, there is a mention of the tree of **Zaqqûm** which will serve as food for those in hell. Thal‘ab explains *Zaqqûm* is a food that kills. Accordingly, such will be the deadly food that is in store for those who go to Hell and it will cut at the root of the evils they committed in this life by following in the footsteps of satan.

إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاهَا فِتْنَةً لِّلظَّالِمِينَ

37:63 It cannot be repeated often enough that all Qur’ânic references to “Hell” are highly allegorical. Hell is a logical and moral necessity consequent to human beings evil actions. It satisfies the needs and spiritual necessities, brought on by resurrection. The low voice of conscience, *nafs al-Lawwâmah* will, after the resurrection, grow too strong to be ignored. Hell will goad the person on to purification. He shall be left with no alternative but to enter into an abyss, which will become a nursing mother to him (101:9). It is like a hospital where he will receive a remedy for his moral defects, a purgatory for his spiritual cure. The door to Heaven will eventually be opened for him when he is purged of all carnal desires and is free of the rust of his sins.

The nourishment of the inmates of Hell is, as the Holy Qur’ân says, the fruit of a tree called *Zaqqûm*. It will boil in their bellies. They will be thirsty but will be given only boiling water to drink. The description indicates that the fruit appears to act as a medicine.

In Indian herbal medicine, a fruit of the same name is known. Patients with a form of syphilis are treated with this fruit that grows on a dust coloured tree with small round leaves, without thorns. It has a pungent odor, tastes bitter, and has knots in its stems. The tips of its leaves resemble the heads of serpents. After eating, the patient feels hot, and hot water is given to them to drink, which causes a violent evacuation of the bowels. Motions after motions come, bringing out black deleterious matter from the stomach, and finally the patient is relieved and the underlying disease resolves (cf. 44:43; 56:52; 17:60).

فَنَظَرَ نَظْرَةً فِي النُّجُومِ

37:88 It is an allusion to the controversy between Abraham and his people about Divine Attributes dragged on till late into the night. The people with whom Abraham contended were not only worshippers of idols but also worshipper of stars. Hence, Abraham cast a glance at the stars and declared that he could not bear their worshiping others than Allâh. (cf. 6:76-79)

فَأَرَادُوا بِهِ كَيْدًا فَجَعَلْنَاهُمُ الْأَسْفَلِينَ

37:98 Arâdû – ارَادُوا – they designed, they intended. The verse only speaks of the *intention* to throw Abraham in a fire and not of an actual occurrence. .

قَالَ يَا بُنْيَ إِنِّي أَرَىٰ فِي الْمَنَامِ أَنِّي أَذْبَحُكَ فَانظُرْ مَا دُرِيٌّ

37:102 The words “*I saw in a dream*” show that Abraham was not commanded by Allâh to sacrifice his son, but that he saw himself do so in a dream. Therefore, Allâh did not change His command later, but rather clarified its meaning (see 37:105). According to a *Hadîth* mentioned in *Bukhârî* of Abû Mûsa, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) said, “I saw in a dream that I was migrating from Makkah to a land where there are gardens of date palms. I concluded from this dream that I will migrate one day to Yamâma or Hajar. As it turned out later, it was the city of Yathrib”. Here the Holy Prophet (pbuh) initially interpreted his own dream differently from how events ultimately transpired. Similarly, Abraham saw in his dream how he sacrificed his son. In reality, his dream had a different interpretation.

The Holy Qur’ân makes it clear that it was Ismâ‘îl whom Abraham thought he should sacrifice (cf. 112-113). It is also made clear by this verse that it was after this incident that Abraham received the good news of the birth of Isaac. The fact that Ismâîl’s descendants kept a memorial of this sacrifice in the annual Pilgrimage to Makkah also

supports the point. The Qur'ân and the Bible are at variance as to which of his two sons, Ismâ'îl or Isaac, was to be sacrificed. According to the Bible, it was Isaac (Gn. 22.2). However, the Bible contradicts itself in this respect. According to it, Abraham was commanded to offer his only son for sacrifice, while Isaac was at that time not his only son. Ismâ'îl was senior to Isaac by thirteen years (Gn. 17.23; 16.10; 17.20). No traces are found in the religious ceremonies of Jews or Christians of the supposed sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham.

قَدْ صَدَّقَ الرُّؤْيَا

37:105 The words above are, “*You have already fulfilled your dream*”, and not, “My command”. Therefore, an actual slaughter was not required for the fulfilment of the prophetic dream; symbolically, the prophecy had already been fulfilled when Abraham left his son Ismâ'îl in the wilderness of Makkah in obedience to the Divine Command. Putting a knife on the neck of Ismâ'îl was an act of Abrahams and Ismâ'îl’s readiness, a practical demonstration of their willingness to obey what they believed to be the Divine Command - as they understood the dream. The sacrifice of a son was common among Canaanites in Syria and Palestine. In Christian dogma, a central theme is the sacrifice of the son by the “Father”. This dogma is a continuation of the old Syrian tradition. This incidence of Abraham’s readiness for the sacrifice of Ismâ'îl shows that the act of killing or crucifixion is not needed for atonement.

وَقَدِّنَاهُ بِذِبْحٍ عَظِيمٍ

37:107 Dhabîh ‘Azîm ذبْحٍ عَظِيمٍ is a great sacrifice or a great slaughter. According to many commentators, these words refer to the great Islamic institution of sacrifice where animals are slaughtered. This sacrifice of animals is repeated annually by believers on the occasion of Hajj - the Pilgrimage to Makkah. The sacrifice of animals is not

only an integral part of the ceremonies undertaken on the *Hajj*, but also is recommended on various occasions to Muslims at times of adversity. The act of sacrifice, not only in the form of an animal, is expected from every Muslim. The act of animal sacrifice on the occasion of *Hajj* commemorates the act of Abraham and Ismâ‘îl and is an important component of it. .

وَإِنَّ إِلْيَاسَ لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ

37:123 The Hebrew Prophet Elijah (Elias; Ilyâs) is mentioned in the Bible (1 Kings 17; 2 Kings 1,2) as having lived in the northern kingdom of Israel during the reigns of Ahab and Ahaziah, in the ninth century B.C., and having been succeeded by Elisha (Al-Yas‘a). He was a native of Gilead, a place on the eastern bank of the Jordan.

أَتَدْعُونَ بَعْلًا وَتَدْرُونَ أَحْسَنَ الْخَالِقِينَ

37:125 **B‘al** بَعْل is lord or master. It was a honourific title for the numerous male deities worshiped in Syria and Palestine. **B‘al** بَعْل was also the name of an idol worshiped by the people of the Prophet Elias. These people worshiped the sun, so it also represents the sun god. The town Ba‘lbakk in Lebanon is named after this idol.

سَلَامٌ عَلَىٰ إِنْ يَاسِينَ

37:130 **Ilyasîn** إِنْ يَاسِين being the plural of *Ilyâs* refers to Ilyâs and the people who followed him. According to *Zamakhsharî*, *Ilyasîn* (إِلْيَاسِين), is only another form of *Ilyâs*; as *sîn* سِين in *sînîn* سِينِين in verse 95:2 is another form of the word for Mount Sinai (cf. 23:20)

إِذْ أَبَقَ إِلَى الْفُلُكِ الْمَسْحُونِ

37:140 **'Abaqa** أَبْقَى means “to flee”. **'Abaqa** is a slave who flees from his master without any apparent reason. The verse refers to the migration of Jonas from his land and his people. Migration is a

universal phenomenon with all of the Prophets of Allâh, but the word used in the case of Jonas informs us that the circumstances for him were not so full of terror and fear as to make the migration binding upon him.

فَلَتَقَمَهُ الْحُوتُ وَهُوَ مُلِيمٌ

37:142 Fâ-iltaqama-hu al-Hût - فَلَتَقَمَهُ الْحُوتُ literally means, “Then the big fish took him in his mouth.” According to the Bible, Jonas went into a boat but was cast into the sea because of a storm and was devoured by a fish (Jonas, 1:15-17). The words used in the Qur’ân to describe this event are *Iltaqama* لَقَمَةٌ. *Laqm* لَقْمٌ means a morsel, and it stems from the same root is *iltaqama*, which means to take into mouth, it also means to embrace (Tâj; Lisân), which does not signify an act of devouring or swallowing. So the meaning can be rendered thus: Then it came about that he embraced himself to a big fish. Rendering the above words, “Then the big fish took him in his mouth” is also correct.

فَلَوْلَا أَنَّهُ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُسَبِّحِينَ (١٤٣) لَلَّيْلَتِ فِي بَطْنِهِ إِلَى يَوْمٍ يُبَعْثُونَ

37:143-144 If Jonas had not been entrusted with the responsibility of prophethood and the spreading of the message of One Deity; he would have been drowned in the sea and died. This is what is signified by the following words (37:144); that he would have tarried there after death until the Day of Resurrection. The significance of this verse is that the big fish would have devoured him and he would have died. By the words “he would have surely remained in its belly till the time people are raised up” does not imply that the fish was an immortal fish that could live to the time of resurrection. A person’s death is generally called “the time of his resurrection”. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) is reported to have said, “He who dies, his resurrection comes to pass.” That is why the Islamic Sufis are of the opinion that the account of Jonas is the account of a vision experienced by Holy Prophet (pbuh).

فَإِذَا نَزَلَ بِسَاحَتِهِمْ فَسَاءَ صَبَاحُ الْمُنَذِّرِينَ

37:177 The Holy Prophet and the company of Muslims did not attack their enemies during the night or before Morning (*fajr*) ritual Prayer. When they heard the call (*adzân*) for Morning Prayer, they prayed the *fajr*, and before fighting his enemies recited this verse.



سورة ص 38. CHAPTER

Sâd (*Sâdiq*)

(*Revealed before Hijrah*)

Sâd ص, is an abbreviation of *Sâdiq* and stands for “Truthful”) or for *Sadaq Allâh* - صدق الله - Allâh speaks the truth (cf. 2:1). The contents of this chapter bear a close resemblance to the previous one, which ended with the pronouncement that it shall be an evil day for the opponents of Islam when Divine punishment shall descend into them. This chapter opens with an equally emphatic declaration that it is an unalterable decree of the Truthful that by acting upon the teaching of the Holy Qur’ân the believers will attain power, glory, and eminence. Verse 11 prophesies that the disbelievers will attack Madînah but that their armies will be vanquished. This prophecy was fulfilled in their defeat in the Battle of the Confederates (*Ah'zâb*).

Vanity, envy, suspicion, and separatism are roots of evil. The illustrative narrations are mainly those of David and Solomon who were Prophets as well as kings. Those who rejected these Prophets were mentioned in the order or their remoteness. Nations inhabiting places distant from Makkah such as the people of Mosul, Ahqâf and Egypt have been mentioned first. The people who lived nearer to

Makkah, like the Hajar, Sadom, Madyan and Âi'kah, are mentioned afterwards.

وَالْقُرْآنُ ذِي الذِّكْرِ

38:1 Dhikr ذِكْر is reminder of something that exalts to eminence. The Holy Qur'an is a "Reminder" as it reminds us of our basic duties, which we tend to forget, notably the belief in One God.

كَذَّبُتْ قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمٌ نُوحٌ وَعَادٌ وَفِرْعَوْنُ دُو الْأُوتَادِ

38:12 Autâd الأُوتَاد refers to pegs that have been firmly driven into the ground (cf. 78:7). *Autâd al-Ardz* are mountains and *Autâd-al-Bilâd* بلاد signify the chiefs of the towns, provinces, or countries (Lisân).

The number of poles supporting a Bedouin tent is determined by its size, and the latter has always depended on the status and power of its owner. Thus, a mighty chieftain is often alluded to as *Autâd*. In classical Arabic, the term is used idiomatically for mighty dominions, a firmness of power, and strong armies (*Kashshaf*). Here we are told that Pharaoh was *Dhul-Autâd* (89:10) because his kingdom was as firmly established as a tent, secured by stakes and pegs, or because he was a commander of large armies and hosts, or because he was in the habit of fastening the hands and feet of his victims to pickets driven into the ground (Baidzawî). The tent-like shape of the Egyptian pyramids in which the Pharaohs were buried may also have been eluded to here.

اصْبِرْ عَلَى مَا يَقُولُونَ وَادْكُرْ عَبْدَنَا دَاعِوْدَ دَا الْأَيْدِ ۝ إِنَّهُ أَوَابٌ

38:17 Asbir اصْبِرْ is a command to be patient. To be patient does not mean not to complain and supplicate to God to remove affliction. Job complained to God, he was called man of patience. Patience is not to complain to something other than God. **Dhal-Aid** دَا الْأَيْدِ literally, one

with hands – The verse describes David as a man with hands. This is an expression of classical Arabic, meaning a man of power (48:10). A literal meaning will not make any sense. Similarly, the literal meaning of the verse 5:38 can be also questioned (cf. 7:71).

وَالْطَّيْرُ مَحْشُورَةٌ كُلُّ لَهُ أَوَابٌ

38:19 Tair الطَّيْرُ is derived from *târa* طَارَ meaning a swift animal, bird, swift cavalry, or can refer to people who are sharp and quick. Here, it is used as a reference to people who disliked settling down and preferred moving about the land (*Qâmûs*, *Maydanî*, *Râzî*).

وَهُنَّ أَنَّاكَ نَبِأُ الْخَصْمُ إِذْ تَسَوَّرُوا الْمُحْرَابَ

38:21 Jewish power was at its zenith during the reigns of David and Solomon, yet mischief-mongers were busy stirring up discord, and some evil-minded persons even sought to kill David. It is to one such attempt at David's life that reference has been made in the verse.

The two men who tried to attack David by scaling the ramparts of the fortress were his enemies. When they found that David was ready to meet them and their plan had been foiled, they invented an excuse for coming to him in such an unusual manner. By pretending they were two litigants who sought his judgment, they conjured up a story of their case at the spur of the moment. However, they did not fool David, nor did he lose his presence of mind. Instead, he announced his decision like a judge, and left the incident as it was, considering it a reminder from Allâh. By referring to such instances, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) tells the righteous that their enemies would also hatch plots against them, but Allâh will protect them and the enemies will fail in their plans.

One should be careful about fabrications that may develop around this incident. Nowhere does the Holy Qur'ân say that these two men mentioned above were angels. The description of them as

“adversaries” and to their scaling the ramparts of the fortress (38:21) is also inconsistent with this suggestion. The story of David committing adultery with Beth-Sheba, wife of Uriah, and two angels having come to remind him of the sin, is a later fabrication wherever it may be found (the *Isrâiliyât* – the stories of Jewish traditions). It is an allegation, which has always been rejected by Muslim scholars as highly offensive and slanderous. Râzî says, “Most of the learned, and those who have searched for the truth among them declare this charge as being false. It is a lie and a mischievous story.” The fourth caliph, ‘Alî^(rz) (quoted by Zamakhsharî on the authority of Sâ‘îd bin al-Musayyab), said, “If anyone should narrate the story of David in the manner in which the story tellers narrate it, I will have him flogged with one hundred and sixty stripes, for this is a suitable punishment for slandering Prophets of Allâh.” This proclamation indirectly recalls the Qur’ânic ordinance in 24:4, which ordains a punishment of eighty stripes for accusing someone of adultery without legal proof.

وَظَنَّ دَاوُودُ أَنَّمَا فَتَّاهُ فَاسْتَغْفَرَ رَبَّهُ وَخَرَّ رَاكِعًا وَأَنَابَ

38:24 The words **Fastaghfara** فَاسْتَغْفَرَ and **Ghafarna** غَفَرَنا in verse 25 by no means indicate that David had committed a sin, for *Istighfâr* أَسْتَغْفَرْ really signifies the seeking of protection (Barmawî in his commentary of *Bukhârî*). **Ghafra** غَفْرَانَةُ means covering with that which protects a thing from dirt (*Râghib*). In religious terminology, the word **Ghafra** غَفْرَانَةُ is used in the sense of seeking protection from the commission of sins and faults (see *Nihâyah*). David sought Divine protection when he saw that his enemies had grown so bold against him that in spite of all means of protection he had taken, they could even enter into his private chamber. No doubt the Prophets of Allâh are human beings, and subject to the weaknesses inherent in human nature as such, and theoretically they can sin by virtue of their very nature, but because of being chosen by Allâh, they remain *Ma’sûm* (مَعْصُوم) - innocent) and cannot commit sin. Their purity comes from

their inner struggles and trials and thus represents a moral achievement, which is a result of an in-born quality given by God. As the Holy Prophet (pbuh) said, “I, too, have a Satan, but my Satan has embraced Islam and he is my obedient servant, and he does not enjoin me except to righteousness and the Truth.” Therefore, the Prophets of Allâh cannot ever commit sins and are of pure character. After all, how could a sinful person purify others from sins, which is the main function of Prophets?

However, the story of Uriah, somewhat arbitrarily developed by the writers of the Bible (11 Samuel), over the course of the centuries, contradicts this doctrine. It may be added that a party of the Israelites themselves was opposed to David (2:102), and that the revolt of the ten tribes against Rehoboam, son of Solomon, is a proof of this. This explains many of the false charges originating among Israelites against their own two Prophet-kings. However, the Holy Qur’ân says that David “ever turned to Allâh” and that “he gave him wisdom and a clear judgment” (27:15; 34:10, 6:84) .

وَلَقَدْ فَتَّأَ سُلَيْمَانَ وَالْفَيْنَا عَلَى كُرْسِيِّهِ جَسْداً ثُمَّ أَنَابَ

38:34 Jasd جَسْد is a body (cf. 21:8; 7:148; 20:88). To explain this verse some commentators advance the most fantastic stories, almost all of which can be traced back to Jewish sources. Râzî rejects them all, maintaining that they are unworthy of consideration or even mention. It is to be borne in mind that in classical Arabic, a person utterly devoid of moral values is often described as a *jasd* (جَسْد): a body devoid of spiritual faith (cf. 21:8; 7:148; 20:88). The reference made here is to Solomon’s son, an imbecile heir to his throne, who lost the allegiance of all except a single tribe of Israel (1 Kings, 12:17). Solomon had himself either foreseen this or had a vision, that after his death his kingdom would not maintain its integrity and glory under an incompetent and inefficient “creature of the earth who ate away his staff” (cf.: 34:14). Therefore, he turned to Allâh and prayed

to Him for a spiritual Kingdom (38:35), for that is the only type of kingdom that could not be inherited by anyone, therefore is not in danger of being spoiled by an unworthy heir or being exposed to worldly intrigue.

وَإِنْكُرْ عَبْدَنَا أَئُوبَ إِذْ نَادَى رَبَّهُ أَنَّى مَسَّنِي الشَّيْطَانُ بِنُصْبٍ وَعَذَابٍ

38:41 All that the Holy Qur'ân states about Ayûb (Job) is that he was a righteous servant of Allâh, who suffered some kind of distress, who remained patient under trials and was ultimately delivered. Neither Job nor Adam were given the title of Prophet in the Holy Qur'ân. As such, it is irrelevant to discuss whether Job and Adam were Prophets. The dramatic story of the Bible comprising forty two chapters known as the Book of Job finds no place in the Holy Qur'ân. It seems what we read in Qur'ân is that Job lived in a country whose ruler was – as the use of the word *shaitân* (شیطان) shows – a cruel and tyrannical polytheist who persecuted him and afflicted him with torments. Job had to emigrate and take a refuge in another country, and in his long and tiresome journey, the “devil of the desert”– thirst, afflicted him with weariness and torment. Furthermore, his migration separated him from his family and his tribe.

اِرْكُضْ بِرْ جِلَّكَ هَذَا مُغْتَسَلٌ بَارِدٌ وَشَرَابٌ

38:42 In obedience to Divine Command, Job continued his journey. He not only found cool and refreshing water with which he washed himself and assuaged his thirst, but Allâh also reunited him with his family and his earlier followers and gave him many new adherents.

It was said, "Urge with your foot, for there is a cool bathing place." in other words, cool water is the remedy of strong heat, as he had to be soothed by Allâh with the coolness of water.

وَخُذْ بِيَدِكَ ضِغْنًا فَاضْرِبْ بِهِ وَلَا تَحْنَثْ إِنَّا وَجَدْنَاهُ صَابِرًا نَعْمَلُ
الْعَبْدُ إِنَّهُ أَوَّابٌ

38:44 In this verse, Allâh commends Job for being *Sâbir* (صَابِرٌ) – patient, steadfast and oft-returning to Allâh (*Awwâb*). Patience is neither resigned acceptance of something believed to be predestined, nor is it, as many think, merely restraining from complaint. Rather it is the restraint from complaining to anyone other than Allâh. In this narration, Allâh has specified a particular aspect of His identity by which we should call on Him to alleviate a continuously reoccurring distress as the words *awwâb* (أَوَّابٌ) and *sâbir* (صَابِرٌ) indicate. Job acted according to this wisdom given by Allâh. Allâh “*found him repentant and always returning to Him*” in prayers. He therefore correctly appealed to the All-Mighty, the One Who alleviates the hurt, instead of resorting to a particular cause that might not be in accord with Allâh’s knowledge concerning the hurt (cf. 39:10). The supplicant may then be compelled to say, “Allâh does not answer my prayers” when he resorts to the cause and not to the alleviator of the cause. The narrative of Job is an important lesson for the community of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

هَذَا فَلْيَدُوْفُوهُ حَمِيمٌ وَغَسَاقٌ

38:57 The rebellious disbelievers will be made to drink things which are intensely hot (حَمِيمٌ) or intensely cold (غَسَاقٌ), as they went to extremes and did not follow a moderate middle course. Thus, it is for the medicine to lessen that which has increased in intensity and to increase that, which has decreased in intensity to achieve equilibrium. Allâh is described sometimes as pleased (98:8) and sometimes displeased (16:106). A person’s anger causes his pleasure to cease, and his pleasure causes his anger to cease. Pleasure is the preference sought by Allâh. It is therefore not possible that the people of the fire will suffer Allâh’s wrath and displeasure of Allâh forever, and will never enjoy His pleasure. The dwellers of Fire will eventually be

relieved because of the inclination and preference of Allâh for Mercy. It will be His pleasure to relieve the inmates of fire ultimately from the tortures of the heat.



سورة الزمر 39. CHAPTER

The Multitudes

(Revealed before Hijrah)

This is the last of the six chapters dealing with the secrets of the Hereafter. The chapters name refers to the two multitudes: the multitude of believers and those of the disbelievers. By contrasting them, it has been concluded that the disbelievers suffer setbacks in life as they do not follow the ways of rectitude, invent lies, and reject moral values. On the other hand, the believers are of sublime character and are people of high-mindedness, so that they progress by accepting the truth brought by the Prophets and follow the path shown to them.

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ فَاعْبُدِ اللَّهَ مُخْلِصًا لَّهُ الدِّينَ

39:2 ‘Abud اعْبُد is derived from ‘abada عَبَدَ and means to worship, serve, adore, obey, venerate, submit, devote, to accept the impression of a thing, or to impress Divine Attributes (Lisân, Tâj, Râghib). According to Ibn ‘Abbâs the meaning of this commanding word, *Fa ‘abud Allâh* (فَاعْبُدِ اللَّهَ), “serve Allâh!” is meant in the sense of “know Allâh!” It can also mean, “be lowly towards Allâh!” Nobody can be lowly towards another unless he knows him. Therefore, it is necessary to know Him and know the fact that He is the possessor of All-Mightiness before Whom all the mighty of the world are to be lowly. Ibn ‘Abbâs , in his explanation of the word ‘abada laid emphasis on

the meaning of “knowledge” and “knowing”. We are reminded again that we have to turn to the Alleviator of the cause and not to the cause itself in order to see our prayers accepted (cf.: 38:44; 39:10; 39:20)

وَالَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ أُولَيَاءَ مَا تَعْبُدُهُمْ إِلَّا لِيُقَرَّبُونَا إِلَى اللَّهِ رَبِّنَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ ۝ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي مِنْ هُوَ كَافِرٌ كَفَّارٌ

39:3 Worshippers of God incarnates claim that such deities are worshiped only to achieve nearness to God, as if God Himself were unapproachable. Idol-worshippers often claim that the idols are only symbols to concentrate their attention on God. Christians say one cannot worship the unseen God, so Jesus Christ is nothing but an incarnation of God, and that without the son they can have no access to God. This undue reverence to created things is a step leading to the degradation of human nature. The words *“We serve them only that they may bring us near to Allâh in station”* relates not only to the worship of Jesus, Buddha, Mary, Saints, Angels, and other deified entities, but also of their symbolic representation in crosses, statues, pictures, relics, tombs and even human representatives of the Divine like monks in temples.

أَكِنِ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا رَبَّهُمْ لَهُمْ غُرَفٌ مِّنْ فَوْقِهَا غُرَفٌ مَّبْنِيَةٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا
الْأَنْهَارُ

39:20 This verse describes Paradise in a manner very different from any other religion or Divine Book. The “lofty mansions, story upon story” are a reference to the endless advancement of Heavenly life. The progress of human soul therein does not stop, hence the Dwellers of Paradise are taught a prayer which is given in verse 66:8 where it says, “Our Lord! Perfect our light for us and [continue to] protect us [against our lapses]” (66:8).

أَلْمَ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَسَلَكُهُ يَنَابِيعَ فِي الْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ يُخْرُجُ بِهِ
زَرْعًا مُخْتَلِفًا أَلْوَانُهُ ثُمَّ يَهْيَجُ قَنَراً مُصْفَرًّا ثُمَّ يَجْعَلُهُ حُطَاماً إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ
ذِكْرًا لِأُولَئِكَ الْأَلْبَابِ

39:21 “Behold! In this is a reminder for people endowed with pure and clear understanding” shows that here is a similitude to Divine Revelation, how it affects people of various natures and ethnic origins. This message is repeated in verse 39:27.

وَلَقَدْ ضَرَبَنَا لِلنَّاسِ فِي هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ مِنْ كُلِّ مَثَلٍ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ

39:27 “We have set forth for the people all sorts of excellent and useful proofs in this Qur’ân” refers to the information provided in verse 39:21. The Holy Qur’ân is a Perfect Book that contains not only all the right ideas, ordinances, and principles of permanent utility, but also responds to all objections of its opponents (cf.: 25:33).

ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا رَجُلًا فِيهِ شُرَكَاءُ مُتَشَاكِسُونَ وَرَجُلًا سَلَمًا لَرَجُلٍ هُلْ
يَسْتَوِيَانِ مَثَلًا

39:29 “We have set forth for the people all sorts of excellent and useful proofs in this Qur’ân” refers to the information provided in verse 39:21. The Holy Qur’ân is a Perfect Book that contains not only all the right ideas, ordinances, and principles of permanent utility, but also responds to all objections of its opponents (cf. 25:33).

فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ كَذَبَ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَكَذَبَ بِالصَّدْقِ إِذْ جَاءَهُ

39:32 The worst category of people are those who claim that Allâh speaks to them, when Allâh has not, in fact, spoken to them. This also includes people who invent dreams, as dreams are the first category of Divine Revelation. The verse also refers to people who falsely ascribe statements to the Prophets of God, in particular to Holy Prophet

(pbuh). *Kadhdhaba bil-Sidq* (كَذَّبَ بِالصِّدْقِ) is the forger of Traditions (Hadîth) of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), as he spoke in the name of Allâh.

The following individuals were notorious for forging Traditions: 1) Ibn ‘Abdu al Ihya’ in the city of Madînah; 2) Waqîdî in Baghdad. He is frequently quoted by Christian theologians; 3) Muqated bin Salam in Khurasân; 4) Muhammad bin Zaid in Syria; 5) Ibn ‘Alî Aufa Kufî; 6) Ahmad Zubairî; 7) Ibn Akshah; 8) Ibn Taimûr. These persons forged Traditions indiscriminately, according to the needs of society or factional creed, or to simply adorn their writings. The true scholars of the traditions (*Muhaddithîn*) did not stop at identifying the spurious traditions but also compiled books to disclose their falsehoods and fabrications, and to put the people on guard against them.

The following are some of the important *Muhaddithîn* who worked to prove the falsehood of the above self-proclaimed traditionalists: 1) Ibn Zauj; 2) Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr; 3) Mulla “Alî al-Qârî; 4) Shaukâñî. It is important to note that these *Muhaddithîn* were not paid by any organization or political leader, and were thus independent and unhampered by outside influences. They did not even spare the Caliphs, officials, and people of authority. They would rather have been imprisoned or endured torture than sacrifice their independence in selecting genuine Traditions (- *Ahadîth*).

لَهُم مَا يَشَاءُونَ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ ۝ ذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

39:34 “*They will have what they desire*” means that the prayers and supplications of **Muhsinîn** – المُحْسِنِينَ – the doers of good deeds, will be accepted, as these people *wish nothing except what Allâh wishes* (cf.: 76:30). This Divine promise is for all times.

وَلَئِن سَأَلْتَهُم مَنْ خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ لَيَقُولُنَّ اللَّهُ

39:38 There is a voice in every human being that proclaims that certainly there is someone who is the creator of the heavens and the earth.

اللَّهُ يَتَوَفَّى الْأَنْفُسَ حِينَ مَوْتِهَا وَالَّتِي لَمْ تَمُتْ فِي مَنَامِهَا

39:42 “*To take away souls*” يَتَوَفَّى الْأَنْفُسَ is meant in the sense that the power of choice, self-recognition, and decision is no longer at human disposal at the time of death or when a person is sleeping. Just like the soul does not perish in sleep, neither does it do so after death. In both cases, the soul is under Divine control. When the sleeper awakens, it is as if Allâh, by His leave, gives back the body its soul. The body regains its power of choice, self-recognition and decision. For those who die, the soul remains under the Power of their Lord “till a fixed period”. At the end of this fixed period, that is the Day of Judgment, all souls will be raised to life again and judgment will be passed. This judgment is passed soon after death for those with whom Allâh is pleased, whereas the guilty ones remain in a state that is neither death nor life (cf. 20:70-76). The verse confirms life after death in a beautiful way that appeals to our reflecting thoughts.

قُلْ لِلَّهِ الشَّفَاعَةُ جَمِيعًا ۝

39:44 Shafâ‘at الشَّفَاعَةُ is intercession. There are many types of intercession: Intercession out of love, intercession out of mercy, intercession out of friendship, intercession owing to rank and position. The verse tells us that all types of intercession belong to Allâh (cf. 4:85; 43:86; 53:26).

قُلِ اللَّهُمَّ فَاطِرُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ أَنْتَ تَحْكُمُ بَيْنَ عِبَادِكَ فِي مَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ

39:46 This is a beautiful prayer being taught to us (cf. 27:62; 21:86)

وَأَنِيبُوا إِلَى رَبِّكُمْ وَأَسْلِمُوا لَهُ مِن قَبْلٍ أَن يَأْتِيَكُمُ الْعَذَابُ ثُمَّ لَا تُنَصَّرُونَ

39:54 Turning to the Lord and submitting to His will are the two conditions that must be met for the promise given in the previous verse (39:53).

وَاتَّبِعُوا أَحْسَنَ مَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ مَنْ قَبْلٍ أَن يَأْتِيَكُمُ الْعَذَابُ بَعْثَةً وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَشْعُرُونَ

39:55 The expression “follow the best that has been revealed” أَحْسَنَ مَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ means that what Allâh has revealed is the best. Another interpretation of this verse is possible if one takes into account the broader meaning of the word *Ahsan* (أَحْسَن). There are two ways to resolve an injustice done to someone. Either, the harsher principle of eye for an eye, which is allowed in some cases, or more mercifully, *ihsân* احسان. The verse teaches us that the way that is good (*Ahsan*) should be followed. *Ahsan* is the way of forgiveness, and of foregoing injustice (cf. 39:58).



سورة غافر 40. CHAPTER

Granter of Protection

(*Revealed before Hijrah*)

The title of this chapter is derived from verses 2 and 42. This is the first of seven consecutive chapters that start with the abbreviated letters *Hâ Mîm حم*. These abbreviations stand for Allâh’s Attributes *al-Hamîd* - الحميد - the Praiseworthy and *al-Majîd* - المجيد - the Lord of Honor (cf. 2:1). The first Attribute is related to the creation and to Revelation and the second to the Hereafter and Eternity. According to Ibn ‘Abbâs

it is an oath; the two letters are an abbreviation for *al-Rahmân* الرحمن, (the Beneficent). *Imâm Râzî* has given three interpretations for *Hâ Mîm* حم.

- i. *Hâ ح* stands for *Hamîd* حمید (Praiseworthy God) and *Mîm م* stands for *Majîd* مجيد (God of Glory and Honour).
- ii. *Hâ Mîm حم* stands for *Hayya* حيى (the Living) and *Qayyûm* قيوم (the Self-Subsisting)
- iii. *Hâ Mîm حم* stands for *Rahmân* رحمن (Most Beneficent) and *Rahîm* رحيم (Ever Merciful)

Hamîd حمید is the One Who is praised. He is praised by virtue of His praise of Himself since His eternity and by virtue of praise by His servants for Him until eternity (cf.1:2). This praise recalls His Attributes of perfection. *Majîd* is the one who is noble in essence, loving in actions, gracious and bountiful in gifts. *Al-Majîd* المجيد is the Most Glorious. The nobility of actions is “glory” when it is combined with goodness and kindness of actions. *Al-Majîd* combines the meaning of Majesty - *al-Jalîl* الجليل loving Bestower - *al-Wâhhâb* الوهاب and Generous - *al-Karîm* الکریم (*Al-Ghazâlî* in *Asmâ Allâh al-Husnâ*). These two subjects take up the central themes in these seven chapters.

The chapter also carries the name *Al-Mu'min* - the believing one, because it recounts the failures of the enemies of Islam, and foretells that some of them will become supporters of the Truth. This is described as the triumph of Islam over falsehood. It further makes a firm declaration that a Messenger of Allâh by himself occupies an exalted place when he stands up to help the cause of Truth. The chapters illustrate the invariable Divine Law that say that the help and succor of Allâh is always with those who are on the right path (cf. verse 40), and failure and frustration will continue to dog the footsteps of the wrongdoers till the end of time (cf. verses 46-50). Note that the name of this chapter, *Al-Mu'min* المؤمن - the believer - is in the singular whereas the earlier 23rd chapter of the Holy Quran was called

Al-Mu'minûn - المؤمنون - the believers (in the plural). This signifies that collective forces as well as individual powers, both lend their support to uphold the cause of truth, and that Islam will gain strength through them. We read in verse 15 of this Surah: يُلْقِي الرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِ عَلَىٰ مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ “He sends His word by His command to whomsoever of His servants He pleases.” *Rûh-ul-Mâ’ânî* cites the saying of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) about the *Mujaddadîn* - the Reformers, that Allâh will raise in the beginning of each century. According to *Rûh-ul-Mâ’ânî* this verse also refers to the receivers of Divine Revelations before the advent of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). The recipients of Divine Revelation after the Holy Prophet (pbuh) will not have the status of Prophets, as the Holy Prophet (pbuh) is the last and the seal of all Prophets (cf.: 33:40). As a *Mujaddad* is a true believer (*mu’mîn*), this subject rightly fits into this chapter. Finally, there is mention of a believing person in verse 38-45 who was saved from the torments of divine punishment (cf. 16:2).

رَفِيعُ الدَّرَجَاتِ دُوْلُ الْعَرْشِ يُلْقِي الرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِ عَلَىٰ مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ
لِيُنذِرَ يَوْمَ التَّلَاقِ

40:15 The word *Rûh* is used in the Holy Qur’ân mostly in the sense of Divine Revelation and Mercy (cf. 16:2; 32:9; 38:72; 42:52; 16:102; 2:253; 2:87; 5:110; 58:22; 26:193; 4:171). The statement يُلْقِي الرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِ عَلَىٰ مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ “He sends His revelation by His own command to such of His servants as He will”, shows that the blessings of Divine Revelation are not limited to the Prophets alone. Allâh also chooses His servants as He wills, and no pious or righteous person can lay claim on any particular blessing.

وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ يَا هَامَانُ ابْنِ لِي صَرْحًا لَّعَلِي أَبْلُغُ الْأَسْبَابَ

40:36 **Hâmân** هَامَانُ is used in the Holy Qur’ân in verses 28:38; 29:39; 40:24,36, not as proper name, but the Arabic form of Ha-Amon, the high priest of Amon, the sun-god of Egypt. Similarly, the term

pharaoh is not a proper name, but the title given to Egyptian kings at the time of Moses. *Hâmân* in Arabic also means caretaker, or one charged with construction work.

In ancient Egypt, the compound designation Ha-Amon was given to every high priest of the Egyptian God Amon. The point is strengthened by the fact that Pharaoh demanded that *Hâmân* erect for him a lofty tower from which he could have a look at the God of Moses (28:38; 40:36), which may be an allusion to the function of the high priest as his chief architect (cf. 28:6).

النَّارُ يُعَرَضُونَ عَلَيْهَا غُدُوًّا وَعَشِيًّا ۝ وَيَوْمَ تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ أَدْخِلُوا آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ أَشَدَّ الْعَذَابِ

40:46 The verse speaks of a punishment, which is presented “morning and evening” (غُدوًّا وَعَشِيًّا). As after the Day of Judgment there will not be any sunrise or sunset, it should be applied to the present world. The “people of Pharaoh” are representative of arrogant transgressors that are prevalent in any age. The expression “morning and evening” may also refer to the punishment of the souls in the graves and to *Barzakh*, which is an intervening stage before the full and complete manifestation of Heaven and Hell on the Day of Judgment (cf. 23:100). The verse in reference speaks of the fire that “Pharaohs people” will be exposed to both *morning and evening* (غُدوًّا وَعَشِيًّا), and speaks of the punishment of the day when the appointed Hour of Resurrection is to come, and “Pharaohs people” are ordered to be cast into the severe punishment. Therefore, we learn that the arrogant and haughty ones will be chastised in this world even before the ultimate punishment of the Judgment Day and will be subjected to the punishment of the grave and that of *Barzakh*.

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ فِي النَّارِ لِخَزَنَةِ جَهَنَّمَ ادْعُوا رَبَّكُمْ يُحَفَّ عَنَّا يَوْمًا مِّنَ الْعَذَابِ

40:49 Begging on the day of Resurrection for the relief from torments will be of no avail. This is because the verdict has been already spoken upon people in recompense for their deeds. The opinion of some commentators based on this verse is that the prayers of the disbelievers are never accepted. This is not true. The Holy Qur'an says, "Or Who is it that answers the distressed person when he calls on Him, and removes [his] distress?" (27:62) Thus Allâh does answer the prayers of a distressed person when he calls upon Him, whether he is a believer or a disbeliever. Here the term "a distressed person" is a general term and can refer to anybody - a believer or a disbeliever.

وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لِذَنِبِكَ وَسَبّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ بِالْعَشِيِّ وَالْإِبْكَارِ

40:55 The Morning and Night Prayer are prescribed here.

لَخْقُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَكْبَرُ مِنْ خَلْقِ النَّاسِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

40:57 According to Abul 'Âliyah and other renowned scholars such as Baghawî and Ibn Hajar, the word *al-Nâs* (النّاس) in the text also signify the *Dajjâl* - the Anti-Christ. It is reported that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) said that from the creation of man to the coming of the Hour, there is no creation greater in temptation than the Anti-Christ (*Bukhârî*; *Ma'âlim al-Tanzîl* by Baghawî cf. 114:1). If there is a majority of people who do not know the Divine mysteries, it does not mean that these mysteries are absent (cf. 40:83).



سورة فصلتْ 41. CHAPTER

Detailed and Clear in Exposition

(Revealed before *Hijrah*)

Fussilât فُصِّلَتْ means detailed and clear in exposition. The title is taken from verse 3 and refers to the clearly spelled-out messages of the Holy Qur'ân. This subject matter is expounded on in verses 40-44. An alternative name of the chapter is **Hâ Mîm Al-Sajdah**, where *Hâ* stand for *Hamîd*, Praiseworthy, and *Mîm* for *Majîd*, Lord of Honor. (cf. 40:1) As the second of the seven chapters of the *Hâ Mîm* group, chapter 41 is closely linked to the preceding chapter 40 and the subsequent chapter 42 in content and style.

When 'Utbah ibn Râbiyah came to the Holy Prophet (pbuh) with a message from the pagans of Makkah for a compromise, he recited in reply the first thirteen verses of this chapter. When the Holy Prophet (pbuh) reached verse 13, warning the Makkans of the fate of 'Âd and Thamûd, 'Utbah requested him to speak no more.

قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مُّنْذُكٌ يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ أَنَّمَا إِلَهُكُمْ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ فَلَا سُتُّقِيمُوا إِلَيْهِ
وَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ ۝ وَوَيْلٌ لِّلْمُشْرِكِينَ (٦) الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْتُونَ الرِّزْكَةَ وَهُمْ بِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ
كَافِرُونَ

41:6-7 Belief in Divine Unity, charity for the needy and the belief in the Hereafter are three cardinal commandments of the Holy Qur'ân. Conversely, a deliberate offense against any of these three demands amounts to a denial of ones responsibility before Allâh.

قُلْ أَنِّي كُمْ لَتَكْفُرُونَ بِالَّذِي خَلَقَ الْأَرْضَ فِي يَوْمَيْنِ وَتَجْعَلُونَ لَهُ أَنْدَادًا

41:9 With reference to this and the following verses, some people question why two periods are mentioned even though Allâh is All-

Powerful and therefore might bring everything into being in a moment by uttering a single word “Be!” The truth is that everything starts to unfold gradually once it is decreed, at the command “Be!” of the All-Powerful, to come to pass. Nature exhibits a steady process of evolution and development. It takes time for a young sapling to grow into a tree and bear fruit, and this long process is similar for newborns in the animal and human world. **Yaumain** يَوْمَيْن means two unspecified periods of time, whether they are equivalent to the blink of an eye or extend over millions and trillions of years. This earth has not existed eternally (cf. 21:30); it was originally a part of a large mass (79:30) and had a definite beginning in time. It required a definite span of time to evolve into its present formation and condition. In the beginning, the earth was a gaseous matter (41:11). Then Allâh transformed it from a formless matter into a gradually evolved form after it had cooled down and condensed and assumed its solid shape. The two periods are thus an initial gaseous stage and a subsequent solid stage, or the period of chaos and the period of arrangement and order.

وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ مِنْ فَوْقِهَا وَبَارَكَ فِيهَا وَقَدَرَ فِيهَا أَقْوَاتَهَا فِي أَرْبَعَةِ أَيَّامٍ
سَوَاءً لِلسَّائِلِينَ

41:10 After describing the first two periods leading to the creation of earth in the preceding verse, the next four stages are mentioned in this verse; these include the establishment of mountains and bodies of water, the growth of plants and vegetation ,the creation of animals as well as other facilities to make human life possible. It required these additional developmental stages for the evolutionary process of the creation of humankind who were capable and ready to receive the Revelation (cf. 76:1-3). The words “placed therein various provisions according to a set measure,” indicate that the earth is fully capable of providing adequate sustenance for all the creatures that live on it.

ثُمَّ اسْتَوَى إِلَى السَّمَاءِ وَهِيَ دُخَانٌ فَقَالَ لَهَا وَلِلْأَرْضِ ائْتِنَا طَوْعًا أَوْ كَرْهًا
قَالَتَا أَئْتِنَا طَائِعَيْنَ

41:11 Thumma ثُمَّ is a link to parallel statements, not necessarily indicating a sequence in time. Here it has the function of a simple conjunction, hence rendering it as “again.” The command to creation to come willingly or unwillingly is a reference to the Divine Laws working in nature. Thus this passage is an illustration (*taswîr*) of the effect of His Almighty Power on all that is willed by Him, and their coming willingly or unwillingly is a figurative expression indicating that His Almighty Will must inevitably take effect, and that He is the sole Cause and Source of all that exists. What we see or observe is but a wondrous sign of His creative Power. The existence of one law throughout the universe is a clear evidence of the existence of one Creator, the maker of that law. The verse clearly lays down that the reign of law exists and dominates the whole cosmos and every particle of matter implicitly obeys this Divine Law. Nothing happens by chance, but—to the contrary—it is all intended by Allâh.

The origin of creation is some type of cosmic “dust” (41:11). Allâh’s creation came into existent to manifest His Realities (*al-Haqâiq al-Ilâhiya*). He manifested Himself in Theophany through His Light (cf. 24:35) to the dust, which contained the entire universe in potentiality and readiness. Each particle of the dust received from His Light in accordance to its preparedness (*Isti’dad*).

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا تَنَزَّلُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَلَا تَخَافُوا وَلَا
تَحْزَنُوا وَأَبْشِرُوا بِالْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي كُنْتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ

41:30 The verse tells us that in this very life the “angels” descend upon the faithful with Divine Revelations giving them joyful news. The “angels” (الْمَلَائِكَةُ) are the bringers of good news that can be the Divine Revelation (cf. 2:30).

وَلَا تَسْتَوِي الْحَسَنَةُ وَلَا السَّيِّئَةُ ۝ ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ فَإِذَا الَّذِي بَيْنَكُمْ
وَبَيْنَهُ عَدَاؤُهُ كَانَهُ وَلِيٌ حَمِيمٌ

41:34 The meanings of this verse are elaborated in the verse 42:40 in another beautiful way.

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنَّكَ تَرَى الْأَرْضَ خَائِشَةً فَإِذَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْهَا الْمَاءَ اهْتَزَّ
وَرَبَّتْ ۝ إِنَّ الَّذِي أَحْيَاهَا لِمُحْيِي الْمُوْتَىٰ

41:39 The allusion to the reviving earth often occurs in the Holy Qur'ân as a parable of a human beings ultimate resurrection. It is also an illustration of Allâh's power to bestow spiritual life upon hearts that have previously remained closed to the Truth. Therefore it implies a call to the believer never to abandon the hope that those who deny the Truth may one day accept the Truth of the Qur'ânic message.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُلْحِدُونَ فِي آيَاتِنَا لَا يَخْفَوْنَ عَلَيْنَا

41:40 **Yulhidûn** from *lahada* لَحَدَّ means to follow a crooked way, deviate from the right path, here in the sense of those who deny the Divine Attributes, or coin false attributes of Allâh like His taking to Himself a son, or who claim to be His chosen ones.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِالذِّكْرِ لَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ ۝ وَإِنَّهُ لِكَتَابٌ عَزِيزٌ

41:41 Al-Dhikr – الذِّكْر – The Reminder is one of the names given to the Holy Qur'ân. It is a reminder in the sense that it reminds us of the things that were rightly laid down in the former revealed Books, and it reminds us of the inborn inclinations and tendencies in human nature. It is a reminder because it presents, repeats and explains the Divine teachings in diversified ways. It is a reminder, for it confirms the truth that by acting upon the Divine teachings, a human being can attain nearness to Allâh and honour. The Holy Qur'ân is further described in this verse as an “invincible” Book because none of the principles and

ideals discussed in it have been contradicted or refuted by other sources or modern science. In addition this expression implies that its teaching will counter all attacks and spread into the remotest corners of the world in spite of any hostile efforts to prevent its dissemination.

وَلَوْلَا كَلِمَةُ سَبَقَتْ مِنْ رَبِّكَ لَفَضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ

41:45 The statement here, “Had it not been a word (of promise) already made by your Lord the judgment (between them—the disbelievers) would have been passed long ago” is a reference to the Divine words “My mercy encompasses all things” (7:156).

سَنُرِيهِمْ آيَاتِنَا فِي الْآفَاقِ وَفِي أَنفُسِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ

41:53 The verse indicates that sometimes Allâh makes the disbelievers understand His messages through what they “perceive in the utmost horizons of the universe and within themselves”, that is through a progressive deepening and widening of their insight and knowledge of the universe as well as through a deeper understanding of the human soul. The Holy Prophet said whoso knows himself knows his Lord. He did not mean that your Lord resides within you or has entered into you, nor His infinite Attributes are within you, or your soul has a similarity with your Lord. What he meant to say that you were never was and will never be without Him. You are through Him. Your existence, your essence and your attributes proceed from Him and not His Attributes proceed from you. In other words if you know your existence you will know your Lord. You should not fall into the errors of those who believe in the incarnation of God. He is not in a body, nor is anybody within Him. These are things besides Him. God says all things are non-existing besides Him, and nothing exists besides Him. What you are told in this verse is that your ignorance about Him shall cease.



42. CHAPTER سورۃ الشوری

The Counsel

(Revealed before *Hijrah*)

The title **al-Shûrâ** شوری is taken from verse 38. *Shûrâ* means a “process by which honey is extracted from hives.” In matters of government, this approach consists of a continuous dialogue between different interest groups until a consensus emerges. This process is more effective and fairer, but also much more complicated than a simple majority vote in which the losers interests are not necessarily considered. *Shûrâ* is an Islamic alternative not only to totalitarian rule but also to the rule by majority vote, which can lead to extreme polarization in society.. Even Americas founding fathers realized some of the problems with simple majority rule. John Adams said that: “There is nothing which I dread so much as a division of the republic into two great parties, each arranged under its leader, and concerting measures in opposition to each other. This, in my humble apprehension is to be dreaded as the greatest political evil under our Constitution.”

A comparison of different democracies will show that the ones with greater emphasis on consensus are the more effective regimes. In general, democratic government principles are consistent with Islamic rules of government, while dictatorial regimens or monarchies are not.

It is important to know that this *Sûrah* was revealed when the Holy Prophet (pbuh) was still in Makkah with only a very small group of followers, and nobody could even imagine the Muslims becoming a ruling power. It was under such circumstances that the form of government for the Muslims was revealed: a form in which they would transact social, economic, and government affairs by mutual

consultation. Thus, the verses 38-43 form the basis of the constituent laws of Islam.

A great prophecy that has yet to be witnessed is contained in verse 29. This verse informs us that life is scattered all over the universe and goes even further, declaring that these life forms will one day be witnessed by the inhabitants of the earth.

In the last verse of this *Sûrah* it is told that the Holy Qur'ân belongs to the world of **Amar** أمر, “command,” not to the world of *khalq* خلق, the created world. The Holy Qur'ân no doubt is a Divine Revelation, and the Revelation is under Divine Command. Had the Mu'tazalites (see Introduction) kept this verse in view and pondered over its significance, it would have sufficed to end their debates whether the Holy Qur'ân was a thing created (*khalq*) or a Divine Command (*Amr*).

42:1 Hâ Mîm ح م -These letters are the abbreviation for Hamîd حميد - Praiseworthy and Majîd مجید - Lord of Honour (cf. 40:1).

42:2 ‘Ain Sîn Qâf عسق are the Abbreviation of ‘*Alîm*, علیم, *Sam’î*, سامِع and *Qâdir* قادر (cf. 2:1) meaning the All-Knowing, All-Hearing and Seeing and All-Powerful Allâh who is revealing these verses. These Attributes are explained in verses 42:9-12. The four verses (42:3-6) that follow contain other powerful Divine Attributes.

فَاطْرُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۚ جَعَلَ لَكُم مِّنْ أَنفُسِكُمْ أَرْوَاجًا وَمِنَ الْأَنْعَامِ
أَرْوَاجًا ۖ يَدْرُؤُكُمْ فِيهِ ۗ لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ ۖ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ

42:11 Laisa ka-mithl-i-hî Shai'a - لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ Nothing has a likeness to Him. This is the gnosis of His Essence. He alone possesses Attributes not shared by anyone. No body (*jasd*) and no soul (*nafs*) can comprehend His Essence. He calls Himself the Hearing One, the Seeing, the Living –these are Attributes that make Him known. Yet then He negates *laisa ka-mithl-i-hî Shai'a* - لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ nothing has a

likeness to Him, thus He cannot be comprehended. With all His Attributes He has kept only for Him His proper Name – the name Allâh. The knowledge of Allâh's Reality (His Essence, *Haqîqat al-Dzât*, حقيقة ذات), cannot be known through logical proof (*-dalîl* دليل) or rational considerations (*burhân 'aqlî* برهان عقلي). Nor can any definition or description grasp Him. He manifests Himself to His creation through His Revelations (*Wahî*) and His Revelations are indispensable and absolute proof ('ilm al-Yaqîn; 102:7) of His existence.

From the words *laisa ka-mithl-i-hî shai'a*, أَلِيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ, that nothing has a likeness to Him, one must also conclude that Allâh cannot have a consort since a consort would share some commonalities. In connection with this verse which speaks of mates, and with other verses which speak of Allâh having “created all things in pairs” (51:49, 43:12), it thereby pre-empts any possible analogy that not only creation exists in pairs but Allâh might also have some consort.

اللهُ رَبُّنَا وَرَبُّكُمْ لَنَا أَعْمَالُنَا وَلَكُمْ أَعْمَالُكُمْ لَا حُجَّةَ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ اللَّهُ يَجْمَعُ بَيْنَنَا وَإِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ

42:15 He is the Lord of all, Muslims and non-Muslims, and we shall be judged only on the merits of our deeds, no matter what religion we formally belong to. Therefore, there should be no discord based on religion. Essentially the same idea is expressed in 3:83. The adoption of this principle brings peace between Muslims and non-Muslims. Quite evidently, this is a very beneficial announcement and has no parallel in other religious scriptures.

اللهُ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ وَالْمِيزَانَ

42:17 **Al-Mizân** الميزان is the equitable law. We are under the governance of the Divine Law, which we are ordained to follow and whose breach entails sanctioning. We are also told that we must

conduct ourselves with equity, justice and balance and that we are to carry out the commandments contained in the Book justly and equitably - this is *Al-Mizân*. The ordinances of the Book are given in words and the Prophet translates them into actions. The Prophets example is the practical application of *Al-Mizân*.

ذَلِكَ الَّذِي يُبَشِّرُ اللَّهُ عِبَادَهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ ۝ قُلْ لَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا إِلَّا الْمَوَدَّةُ فِي الْقُرْبَىٰ ۝ وَمَن يُقْتَرِفْ حَسَنَةً نَزِدُ لَهُ فِيهَا حُسْنًا

42:23 Al-Muwaddat fi al-Qurbâ means to cherish strong love. Some people understand from the words—“*I ask no reward from you for it. I ask you to cherish the strongest love to be near*”—that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) desired that his relatives, in particular his grandsons *Imâm* Hussein and Hassan, his daughter *Fâtima*, and his nephew “*Ali*”, be loved in return for his preaching. This desire was never expressed by the Holy Prophet (pbuh), and this narrow request would contravene his personality and ardent love for all members of his community. Moreover, this verse is of Makkian origin, and was revealed in his early days of prophethood. His main mission was to preach *Tauhîd*—the Oneness of Allâh and His worship. What he asked from his fellow beings was to cherish the strongest love to be near to the Creator. Nothing is closer than his Lord to the worshipper when he prostrates before his Lord and glorifies Him. This interpretation is supported by the similar request made by the Holy Prophet in verse 25:57.

Ibn ‘Abbâs gives another meaning to these words. According to him, the verse meant that the mutually fighting tribes should unite in love and friendship. Another further meaning would be the request to promote love and affection between near kin. It could also mean to love those objects and works that bring one nearer to Allâh. All these meanings can be correct, but as discussed, limiting the meaning to the Prophets desire that his family members be loved is too restricted a

meaning and inconsistent with the Holy Prophets mission to the whole of humanity.

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا ۝ فَإِنْ يَشَا اللَّهُ يَخْتِمُ عَلَى قَلْبِكَ ۝ وَيَمْحُ اللَّهُ الْبَاطِلَ وَيُحَقِّقُ الْحَقَّ بِكَلِمَاتِهِ ۝

42:24 “Set a seal upon your heart” يَخْتِمُ عَلَى قَلْبِكَ means to say that had the Prophet (pbuh) forged a lie against Allâh, He would have made the heart of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) devoid of all mercy for his opponents. The Holy Prophets kindness and magnanimity towards his enemies is evidence that this was not the case. Verses 69:44-46 describe another consequence if the Prophet had been untruthful: “If he had forged and attributed any saying to Us, We would indeed have cut his life vein, and deprived him of all ability to act.”

وَمَا أَصَابُكُمْ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ فِيمَا كَسَبْتُ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَيَعْفُو عَنْ كَثِيرٍ

40:30 The statement: “*Whatever calamity befalls you is of your own making*” removes doubts as to why Allâh does not intervene to end all wars or heal all sickness. We make Allâh responsible for them, but He says they are of our own making. Abraham saw the cause of illness in his own person, and he did not attribute it to Allâh (cf. 26:80).

وَالَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِرَبِّهِمْ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَمْرُهُمْ شُورَى بَيْنَهُمْ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ

42:38 Shûrâ شُورَى means consultation. Literally it means the process by which honey is extracted from the hives. In matters of society Shûrâ is a continuous dialogue between stakeholders until a consensus is reached. This rule applies equally at the individual level. Refusing to consult others for counsel before making major decisions is a sign of arrogance, and arrogance is the characteristic of Pharaoh.

In this verse as in many others, the Muslims are enjoined to observe Prayer and give in charity, yet between these two commandments, which always go side by side, a third is placed – *and their affair is decided by mutual consultation*. This injunction lays down the principle that all governmental business must be transacted in consultation. Here the Holy Qur'an has laid the basis of a political system based on mutual consultation and consensus. There should be a venue in which all interest groups are represented and a decision is made once a consensus develops in a process after mutual consultation. The injunction was implemented in practice in the early days of the Caliphate. The system is different from a parliamentary democratic system, where the decision is based on majority vote and the legitimate wishes and concerns of as many as 49.99% of voters can be ignored.

وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَهُمُ الْبُغْيُ هُمْ يَنْتَصِرُونَ

42:39 This is another injunction that the use of force is only permitted against wrongful aggression and transgression (الْبُغْيُ)

وَجَزَاءُ سَيِّئَاتٍ سَيِّئَةٌ مِّثْلُهَا ۝ فَمَنْ عَفَ وَأَصْلَحَ فَأُجْرُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ

42:40 The real object underlying the punishment is reformation. For a successful struggle against tyranny, one must not adopt a similar tyrannical attitude towards the oppressor. The reaction must be proportionate to the evil done, but if leniency is possible it is preferred. We are neither taught the strict application of “a tooth for tooth and an eye for an eye”, which would be too harsh in some cases nor the other extreme of always “turn the left cheek when the right is smitten”. The emphasis is on forgiveness but not to such an extreme as to make it impracticable and morally and socially injurious. If forgiveness affects a reform in the offender and does him some moral good and improves matters, he should be forgiven. From this verse, we can also derive that the punishment of murder is not necessarily

the death penalty. Verses 39 to 43 form the basis of the penal laws of Islam.

وَمَا كَانَ لِبَشَرٍ أَنْ يُكَلِّمَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا وَحْدَهُ أَوْ مِنْ وَرَاءِ حِجَابٍ أَوْ يُرْسِلَ رَسُولًا فَيُؤْخِي بِإِذْنِهِ مَا يَشَاءُ

42:51 This verse tells us how Allâh speaks to a human being or makes His Will known to him. Three modes of this self-disclosure of Allâh are enumerated. Firstly, through the direct Revelation, where the Divine Will is directly conveyed to the recipient and no interpretation is needed. Secondly, “*from behind a curtain*” such as in case of a dream. Here the real meaning is revealed at the time of fulfilment; and, thirdly, by sending a messenger. *Rasûl* رسول is a messenger who can be an angel or a Prophet (*Nabî* نبی). Thus, the verse informs us that ordinary human beings, other than Prophets can also be recipients of Divine information.

وَكَذَلِكَ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ رُوحًا مِّنْ أَمْرِنَا

42:52 The word **Rûh** روح is used in the Holy Qur’ân always in the sense of Divine Revelation and Mercy (cf.:16:2; 32:9; 38:72; 16:102; 2:253; 2:87; 5:110; 58:22; 26:193; 4:171). Before the revelation of *Iqrâ’* إِقْرَاء (96:1-5) and the life-giving Message of the Qur’ân, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) did not know what the Divine Book was, and what faith it teaches. Nor did he know that the very concept of faith implies a human beings complete self-surrender to Allâh’s Will. He was not thinking or expecting to be made a Prophet or Messenger of Allâh.



سورة الزخرف 43. CHAPTER

The Ornaments

(Revealed before *Hijrah*)

This is another chapter of the **Ḩâ Mîm** ﷺ series (cf. 40:1). The title of the chapter is derived from verse, 35 which refers to its subject matter. It deals with the contrasts between the real glory of Truth and the false glitter of peoples objects of worship (cf. verse 18). The real purpose of Divine Messages is to infuse a new life into the people and lend new charm to them by bedecking and bejewelling them with high morals, spiritual standards, and values. Attention is drawn to the distinction between the real beauty of the Truth as compared to the outward pomp and show that falsehood possesses. The chapter further emphasizes the point that one should not blindly desire wealth and worldly positions, for these things possess no value or worth in the sight of the Most High (see verse 29, 32-35).

In the last two sections of the chapter, Jesus Christ is mentioned as a noble Messenger of Allâh, and the doctrine of the Christ being Gods son is rejected. This section also alludes to how the love of wealth and worldly pomp has led many Christians astray.

In addition, this chapter outlines factors that lead to the defeat of the disbelievers. This perfect Prophet of Allâh, in his hour of grief and agony over the denial of the people and their mischievous opposition to him, implores the mighty Lord for His help. In the last verse of this chapter, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) is consoled and comforted. He is told that when that time of victory comes he should forgive his enemies.

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَنَا قَالَ يَا لَيْتَ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكَ بُعْدَ الْمَشْرِقِينَ فَبِئْسَ الْقَرِينُ

43:38 Mashriqain المُشْرِقَيْن signifies the two easts. It also means east and the west, and the place of sunrise and the place of sunset (Tâj). In classical Arabic idiom the dual form is sometimes used to refer to two opposites, for example two moons denotes sun and moon. The two easts could therefore mean two positions in the east, one in the north and the other in the southern hemisphere, or different places of sunrise in summer and winter.

فَاسْتَخَفَ قَوْمٌ فَأَطَاعُوهُ ۝ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَوْمًا فَاسْقِينَ

43:54 Pharaoh had “*made the minds of his people light*” that is, they were unable to realise their loss and recognise the profits they would enjoy by obeying their Prophet (Râghib; Ibn Kathîr).

وَإِنَّهُ لَعِلْمٌ لِلسَّاعَةِ فَلَا تَمْتَرُنَ بِهَا وَاتَّبِعُونَ ۝ هَذَا صِرَاطٌ مُسْتَقِيمٌ

43:61 Innahû – إِنَّهُ – “Indeed it” or “indeed he”. ‘Ilm al-Sâat عِلْمُ السَّاعَةِ is the knowledge of the time, and hour. This can be the time and the knowledge the time of the punishments (cf. verse 66). Besides their narrow meaning, these words can more broadly be interpreted as the knowledge about the rise and fall of nations and the reasons for this. Christian fathers erroneously present that the word *innahû* إِنَّهُ refers to Jesus by translating indeed he –Jesus – has the knowledge of time. Their intention is to create confusion. There is no basis for such a reading. In this chapter *innahû* إِنَّهُ unmistakably refers to the Holy Qur’ân (*al-Kitâb al-Mubîn* (الْكِتَابُ الْمُبِينُ twice before - in verse 3 and the verse 4. With *innahû* إِنَّهُ *al-Kitâb al-Mubîn* is meant. “*This is the straight and right path*” (صِرَاطٌ مُسْتَقِيمٌ) is the path shown by the Holy Qur’ân. The verses 60-62 are separated from the context of the previous verses and contain general statements. Verse 66 clarifies the subject matter where we read, “These await only the Hour of punishment (*al-Sâ’at* السَّاعَةِ so that it may befall them suddenly”. The notion that Jesus or anyone else would have the knowledge of time is contradicted by verse 85, “He (Allâh) alone has the knowledge of the

Hour ('Ilm al-Sâ'at عِلْمُ لِسَاعَةٍ and to Him you shall be made to return". You read the same in verse 31:34.

يُطَافُ عَلَيْهِم بِصِحَافٍ مِّنْ دَهَبٍ وَأَكْوَابٍ ۖ وَفِيهَا مَا تَشْتَهِيَ الْأَنْفُسُ وَتَلَذُّ
الْأَعْيُنُ ۖ وَأَنْتُمْ فِيهَا حَالِدُونَ

43:71 At the end of the verse the pronoun antumm أَنْتُم ("you") has been used in place of "they" to emphasize nearness. This style in Arabic is called *iltifât il tashrih*.

وَلَا يَمْلِكُ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ الشَّفَاعَةً إِلَّا مَنْ شَهَدَ بِالْحَقِّ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ

43:86 Shafâ'at الشَّفَاعَة intercession. Verse 39:44 tells us that all types of intercession belong to Allâh. In this verse the Holy Prophet (pbuh) and all those who "bear witness to the Truth" شَهَدَ بِالْحَقِّ are given permission to intercede. Similarly in 4:64 the words *fa istaghfir lahum al-Rasûl* indicate that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) will seek protection for his people. Intercession is not a guarantee and a passport to Paradise but a request, begging, supplication, and a Prayer. Allâh may accept the intercession for the sinners from his beloved ones. Though all those who bear witness to the Truth شَهَدَ بِالْحَقِّ are given the permission to intercede, the acceptance is utterly a Divine Grace (see 44:56-57; 3:132-133; 3:31). If this were not the case, there would be little difference between the Islamic doctrine of Salvation and that of the Christians. If good deeds are the only condition for salvation, then there is no reason for intercession. Neither good deeds nor intercession, but only Divine Grace of *Mâlikîyyat* and of Mercy - *Rahmâniyyat* (see 1:3-4), are the real sources of Salvation (- *fallâh*). This is a great hope as the verses 9:102, 39:53, and 44:56-57 convey. Divine Mercy is universal and embodies all objects of creation. This Mercy cannot be separated from Him (17:110). Flowing from this principal, the temporal and limited nature of "hell" and the sufferings of the world can be explained.

44. CHAPTER سورة الدخان

The Drought

(Revealed before Hijrah)

This is another chapter of the **Hâ Mîm** series (cf. 40:1). The name al Dukhân – the drought, is drawn from the prophecy of the drought contained in verse 10 that overtook the Makkans and lasted for seven years, until a leader of disbelief (Abû Sufyân) came to the Holy Prophet (pbuh) and begged him to pray for deliverance from that scourge. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) is said to have prayed for rain (دَعَاءٌ إِسْتَسْقَى). After that, the famine ceased. The Makkans did not show recognition and continued to oppose the Holy Prophet (pbuh). This prophecy is followed by another, indicating that because of their continued rejection another punishment would follow (see verse 16).

وَإِنِّي عُذْتُ بِرَبِّي وَرَبِّكُمْ أَن تَرْجُمُونَ

44:20 “I have taken refuge with my Lord and your Lord lest you should stone me or harm me” is a beautiful prayer taught to us.

أَهُمْ خَيْرٌ أَمْ قَوْمٌ شَيْءٌ وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ۖ أَهْلَكْنَاهُمْ ۖ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا مُجْرِمِينَ

44:37 *Tubba'* was the royal title of the kings of the united empire of Himyar, Hadharamaut and Sabâ in the south of Arabia. It is said that the king referred to was a believer. He reigned seven hundred years before the time of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). According to Ibn 'Abbâs he was a Prophet of Allâh (*Tafsîr Kabîr* by Ibn 'Abbâs).

إِنَّ شَجَرَاتَ الزَّقْوْنِ

44:43 *Zaqqûm* has been mentioned in connection with the food of the inmates of hell. The Holy Qur'ân has exemplified the fruits of

Paradise with grapes and pomegranates and symbolizes the unpalatable fruits of the *Zaqqûm* tree as the fruit in hell. In the Qur'ânic terminology, as *Imâm Râghib* has said, *Zaqqûm* is used for loathsome and abominable things. These fruits symbolize the fruit of ones labour and the deeds performed in this world.

كَذِلِكَ وَزَوْجُنَاهُمْ بِحُورٍ عَيْنٍ

44:54 *Imâm Râghib*, while commenting on the word **Zawwajna** زَوْجَنَا says that the dwellers of Paradise will have pure and beautiful beings as their companions. This expression does not mean that they shall be given fair maidens in marriage.

The noun **Hûr** حُور usually translated into English as “houries,” leads to a distortion of the message. This word occurs at three other places in the Holy Qur’ân (cf. 44:54; 52:30; 55:72). It is a plural of *aḥwar* أحَوْر (masculine) and of *ḥoura* حَوْرَة (feminine). The word *aḥwar* means pure and clear intellect (*Lisân*), and it stands for purity and beauty (Ibn Jarîr; Râzî; Ibn Kathîr). The related word *hawâr* حَوَار denotes intense whiteness of the eyeballs and lustrous black of the iris (*Qâmûs*). The word *hûr* is a common gender for both male and female, to indicate that *hûr* is a reward in Paradise with whom men as well as women will be blessed with in the Hereafter and their mutual relationship will be that of a companion and comrade and not that of a husband and wife. Concerning the word *hûr* in its feminine connotation quite a number of the earliest commentators, among them al-*Hasan Basîrî*, understood it as signifying the righteous among the women of humankind (Ibn Jarîr). Therefore, the term *hûr* applies to the righteous of both sexes. See also 56:34-37.

فَضْلًا مِّنْ رَّبِّكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ

44:57 The verse informs us again (43:86) that Salvation (- *fallâh*) is through the Grace and Mercy of Allâh and not through anyone's intercession.



سورة الجاثية 45. CHAPTER

Fallen on the Knees

(*Revealed before Hijrah*)

The title of this chapter is taken from verse 28. The leading idea of the previous chapter was that in spite of the signs of Allâh and the evidence of His Great Mercy people go about in disbelief and faithlessness. They forget that ultimately they have to appear before their Creator. This chapter continues the same train of thought from a different angle. It sheds light on the fact that just as the very extensive and perfect arrangements in the universe are required for the maintenance of physical life on earth, so there is a need of similar provision for the spiritual and thus eternal life (verses 3-6). This provision for the human beings spiritual sustenance is provided through revelation (verse 31).

أَفَرَأَيْتَ مَنِ اتَّخَذَ إِلَهًا هُوَ أَهُدٌ وَأَضْلَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ عِلْمٍ وَخَتَمَ عَلَىٰ سَمْعِهِ وَقَلْبِهِ
وَجَعَلَ عَلَىٰ بَصَرِهِ غِشَاوَةً فَمَن يَهْدِيهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ اللَّهِ ۝ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ

45:23 Belief in the Unity of Allâh in its true sense means to believe in that Hidden Reality (*al-Haqîqat al-Ghaybiyya* الحقيقة الغيبية Who is free from every associate, whether it is an idol or a human being or the sun or moon or river or fire or tree or ones ego or ones desires or deceit. It also means to conceive of no-one as possessing power in opposition to Him, not to accept anyone as sustainer, nor to hold anyone as bestowing honour or disgrace, nor to consider anyone as

helper. It means to confine ones love and one's worship, ones humility and ones hopes, and ones awe to none other than Him. Unity would be incomplete without the following three types of particularization: Firstly, the Unity of Being. Secondly, the Unity of Attributes, that is, that all good Attributes and Godhead are confined to His Being, and that all others who offer, sustain, or are benefactors are only a part of the system set up by His hand. Thirdly, the unity of love, sincerity, devotion, and worship: that is, not to consider anyone His associate in matters of love, worship, and prayer. This drive is embedded in human nature.



سورة الأحقاف 46. CHAPTER

The Dunes

(Revealed before Hijrah)

Al-Ahqâf is a place of unimaginable awe and amazement. Ahqâf أَحْقَاف are also the long and winding crooked tracts of sand dunes, characteristic of the country of ‘Âd, adjoining Yemen in the south of the Arabian Peninsula.

فُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَرُونِي مَاذَا خَلَقُوا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ أَمْ لَهُمْ
شَرُكٌ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ ۖ أَنْتُو نَبِيٌّ بِكِتابٍ مِّنْ قَبْلِ هَذَا أَوْ أَثَارَةٍ مِّنْ عِلْمٍ إِنْ
كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

46:4 This and the following verse embodies four strong and cogent arguments to repudiate polytheistic dogmas. The verse rejects the notion that Jesus created birds. The verse tells us human knowledge, science, and reason also lends no support to polytheistic thinking. It further points out that only the revealed Scripture can form the basis for determining faith.

وَمَنْ أَضَلُّ مِمَّنْ يَدْعُو مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَنْ لَا يَسْتَحِيْبُ لَهُ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ وَهُمْ عَنْ دُعَائِهِمْ غَافِلُونَ

46:5 “*They are even unaware of their prayers*” are the deities other than Allâh who are called on for help. Allâh is the only living Deity Who responds to prayers (cf. 2:186).

فُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَكَفَرْتُمْ بِهِ وَشَهَدَ شَاهِدٌ مِّنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ عَلَى مِثْلِهِ فَلَمَّا قَاتَنَ وَاسْتَكْبَرْتُمْ

46:10 “*Witness from among the Children of Israel has borne witness to his like*”. This witness (*Shâhid*) who bore witness of one like him is Moses who prophesized the advent of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) (see Deut. 18.18).

وَمَنْ قَبْلَهُ كِتَابُ مُوسَىٰ إِمَاماً وَرَحْمَةً وَهَذَا كِتَابٌ مُّصَدَّقٌ لِسَانًا عَرَبِيًّا لَّيَنْذِرَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا وَبُشِّرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

46:12 The reference to the Qur’ânic Message being in the Arabic language لِسَانًا عَرَبِيًّا signifies on hand the coming of the awaited Prophet who was foretold to be from the people who speak Arabic, that is, the Arabs of Ishmaelite descent. It also means that his message will be eloquent and clear (عَرَبِيًّا), free from all ambiguities.

قُدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مَنْ الْجِنْ وَالْإِنْسَنُ

46:18 For the discussion on *Jinn* see verses 6:128; 15:27 and 7:38; refer to 18:50; 27:17; 34:41; 41:25; 46:29; 51:56; 55:33; 72:5; 114:6.

وَلِكُلِّ دَرَجَاتٍ مِّمَّا عَمِلُوا وَلِيُوْقِنُهُمْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ

46:19 Paradise has its ranks, and so shall hell. According to some great Gnostics, the highest rank in “Paradise” shall be that of “the Dunes” (*al-Ahqâf* الأحقاف), a place of unimaginable awe and

amazement. It is also called the “Dunes of White Musk” (Ibn al-‘Arabî). In his words, “After your death you will be carried to the abode of your felicity, and from there to the dune of White Musk till infinity”. There shall be no rivers of honey [symbol of healing the diseases] and milk [symbol of knowledge], nor fruits [of reward], implying that these would be distractions for those select believers closest to Allâh. Only a few enter this highest level of Paradise, “Looking and (absorbed in the vision of) their Lord” (75:23).

وَإِذْ صَرَفْنَا إِلَيْكَ نَفَرًا مِّنَ الْجِنِّ يَسْتَمِعُونَ الْقُرْآنَ فَلَمَّا حَضَرُوا قَالُوا
أَنْصِتُوْا

46:29 Nafara نَفَرًا, translated as “some people,” according to Arabic idiom, means three to ten men (Tâj). *Nafara* is used only for humans (see also 72:1). *Al-Jinn* in relation to *nafara* الْجِنِّ refers to a Jewish tribe not well known to the Arabs. They are spoken of as believers in Moses in the next verse. The *Al-Jinn* الْجِنِّ were also those Jews who met with the Holy Prophet (pbuh) in the outskirts of Makkah. The next morning he had shown his Companions the marks of their halting places and fire pits where they had lit their campfires at night.



سورة محمد 47. CHAPTER
Muhammad – The Praiseworthy
(Revealed before Hijrah)

When the arrangement of the Holy Qur’ân is examined, one finds that a logical thread runs through it. At the place of this chapter, more than five-sixths of the Holy Book is finished. The remaining one-sixth consists of short chapters that again are grouped according to their

topics. The first three chapters deal with the organization of the Muslim community, both for external defense and for internal relations.

The designation of this chapter is Muhammad مُحَمَّد taken from verse 2, which means most praiseworthy. The most praiseworthy is in the first place Allâh, and His servant is His praiser. When a praiser with his love, devotion and actions bring him close to his Lord, he becomes praiseworthy (- *Muhammad* مُحَمَّد). The most praised is the Holy Prophet (pbuh). As a secondary meaning the term Muhammad as an attribute that also applies to whoever comes close to the Holy Prophet (pbuh) in his actions, beliefs (*Imâm Ghazâlî*). Each one of them is praised according to the degree of his good actions and faith. This indicates that those who believe in Muhammad (pbuh) will receive honour of praise. The only one praised in its absoluteness is Allâh.

The chapter is also known as *qitâl* قتال (war) because a large portion of it is dedicated to the subject of war, its causes, consequences and the ethics in war. It also announces that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) will have to face difficulties in the shape of warfare. This is the first of three chapters devoted to the subject of defense.

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَآمَنُوا بِمَا نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ مُحَمَّدٌ وَهُوَ الْحَقُّ
مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ ۝ كَفَرَ عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ وَأَصْلَحَ بَالَّهُمْ

47:2 For those who are righteous and live accordingly, if they believe in that which has been revealed to Muhammad (pbuh), there is an extra Divine promise. Allâh will purge them of their sins and further improve their spiritual status.

فَإِذَا لَقِيْتُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَضَرِبُوهُمْ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَخْتَنْتُمُوهُمْ فَشُدُّوا الْوَثَاقَ
فَإِمَّا مَنَا بَعْدُ وَإِمَّا فِدَاءً حَتَّىٰ تَضَعَ الْحَرْبُ أَوْ زَارَهَا ۝ ذَلِكَ وَلَوْ يَشَاءُ اللَّهُ

لَا تَنْصَرَ مِنْهُمْ وَلَكِنْ لَيْلُوا بَعْضَكُمْ بِبَعْضٍ ۝ وَالَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَأَنَّ
يُضْلِلَ أَعْمَالَهُمْ

47:4 Islam encountered slavery as an existing institution and took various steps to put a stop to it. Islam used both the moral (90:13) and the penal codes (9:60; 24:33) to do away with slavery. This verse forbids keeping prisoners of war as slaves and instead instructs to free them whether ransom is paid or not. In addition it limits the taking of prisoners to regular battle to the exclusion of other scenarios away from the battlefield. Taking hostages and making slaves by seizing people anywhere and selling them, as practiced notably by Europeans in Africa, was outlawed under Islam. When war is over, all prisoners of war should be released, either as an act of grace and favour, or against ransom, or by negotiating mutual exchange of prisoners. They should no longer be held in captivity. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) set free about a hundred family members of Banî Mustaliq, and in the case of Hawâzin, a full six thousand prisoners of war were released merely as an act of favour. Only in the case of the 70 prisoners taken at the Battle of Badr has it been mentioned that they were redeemed; those who could not pay their ransom in the form of money, but were literate, were required to teach reading and writing. The Holy Qur'ân thus struck very effectively at the roots of slavery, prohibiting enslavement of anyone completely and forever.

The verse lays down other important rules of ethics during war: 1) when the Muslims are engaged in regular defensive war, they are enjoined to fight. 2) When war becomes unavoidable, it should continue until peace is put on a firm foundation and religious, social, and political freedom is established.

وَيُدْخِلُهُمُ الْجَنَّةَ عَرَفَهَا لَهُمْ

47:6 “Which He has made known to them” (عَرَفَهَا لَهُمْ) that is: 1) which He has made known to them in the Holy Qur'ân; 2) which He has

promised them; 3) which He made known to them in this life by making them taste the spiritual blessings of good deeds; 4) of which they had a fore-taste because they saw with their own eyes the promise made to them about Paradise being fulfilled in this very life. It should be noted that that triumph over the disbeliever is also spoken of as a Paradise of this life (cf. 47:15).

مَثُلُ الْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي وُعِدَ الْمُتَّقُونَ ۖ فِيهَا أَنْهَارٌ مِّنْ مَاءٍ غَيْرِ آسِنٍ وَأَنْهَارٌ مِّنْ لَبَنٍ لَمْ يَتَغَيَّرْ طَعْمُهُ وَأَنْهَارٌ مِّنْ حَمْرَ لَذَّةِ اللَّشَارِبِينَ وَأَنْهَارٌ مِّنْ عَسلٍ مُّصَفَّى ۖ وَأَهْمُمُ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ النَّمَرَاتِ وَمَعْفُورَةٌ مِّنْ رَبِّهِمْ ۖ كَمَنْ هُوَ حَالٌ فِي النَّارِ وَسُقُوا مَاءً حَمِيمًا فَقْطَعَ أَمْعَاهُمْ

47:15 The blessings of Paradise mentioned in the verse are plainly called **Mathal** - a parable. These are the blessings which no eye has seen, nor has any ear heard, nor has it entered into the hearts of human beings to conceive them (*Bukhârî* 59/8). The word **Anhâr** has been used four times in the verse, besides other meanings, signifies rivers of light and amplitude. Accordingly, the verse indicates that the mentioned four things will be given in plenty. Water is the source of all life, milk gives health and vigour, wine induces pleasant sensations and makes one forget worries and honey cures disease.



The Victory

(*Revealed after Hijrah*)

The title of this chapter is derived from its opening verse. **Al-Fath** الفتح means the victory, the supreme achievement and the great reward (Lane, Tâj). The word is derived from *fataha* فتح to open. *Al-Fath* is

the exposition of Divine knowledge and Divine mysteries. It also means the spiritual victory. The victory referred to is that gained by the truce at Hudaibiyah in 6 A.H. (*Bukhârî* 64:37). The Holy Prophet (pbuh) had a vision that he was circumambulating the Ka‘bah along with a party of his followers. In order to fulfil his vision he set out for Makkah with about 1500 Muslims to perform ‘*Umrah*, the Lesser Pilgrimage, in the month of *Dhul-Qadah*. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) did not anticipate any hostility in this month, since this month was one of the four sacred months during which, in accordance with a time-honoured Arabian custom, all warfare was outlawed, particularly in and around the Holy City, and everybody was allowed to visit the holy places. On learning of the Prophets intention, the Makkans decided, against their traditions, to oppose his entry by force. A detachment of two hundred horsemen under the command of *Khâlid bin Walîd* (who embraced Islam about two years later) was sent out to intercept the Muslims, while several thousand heavily armed Makkans took up positions around Makkah. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) changed his marching direction and turned a little westward of the road and encamped at Hudaibiyah, a plain nine miles to the north of Makkah, west of a place called Bir Usfan, about one day’s journey from Makkah. By changing his course, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) avoided giving the enemy any pretext for violence. It happened that negotiations were initiated between the Muslims and the Makkhan oligarchy at this camp. After some discussions by emissaries of both sides, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) sent ‘*Uthmân Ibn Affân* as his envoy to the Makkans. Shortly after ‘*Uthmân*’s arrival in Makkah the rumor that he had been slain reached the Muslim camp. Thereupon the Holy Prophet (pbuh) became wary of a treacherous attack by the Makkans and assembled his Companions. Underneath an acacia tree he took a pledge from each one of them that they would remain steadfast and, if necessary, fight till death. During the pledge the Holy Prophet (pbuh) placed his left hand on top of his right hand and said, “This is as if ‘*Uthmân*’s hand.” After the revelation of verse 18 of this chapter this

“Pledge of the Tree” became known in history as Bait al-Ridzwân (The Pledge of Allâh’s Goodly Acceptance). When a few days later the rumor of ‘Uthmân’s murder proved to be false and ‘Uthmân returned to Hudaibiyah, it became clear that the pagans of Makkah were prepared to conclude a truce. A treaty was drawn up stipulating among other provisions that:

- 1) There was to be peace between the parties for ten years.
- 2) Any tribe or person was free to join either party, or make an alliance with it.
- 3) If a male from Makkah under some guardianship should join the Muslims without the guardian’s permission, he should be sent back to his guardian, but if in comparable case a male from the Muslims in Madinah should join the Makkans he should not be sent back to his guardian. This clause did not cover females
- 4) Muhammed (pbuh) and his party were not to enter Makkah that year, but they could enter unarmed the following year (Bukhârî 54/151).

Item 3 and 4 were objected to in the Muslim camp because they were deemed unfair, but the Holy Prophet (pbuh) accepted them and faithfully observed them.

This truce proved to be of great importance for the future of Islam. It opened the way to the peaceful expansion and spread of the Message of the Qur’ân. By putting a stop to hostilities, the opponents were given an occasion to ponder over the merits of the religion. For the first time in six years peaceful contacts were established between the Pagans and the Muslims, and thus the way was opened to the influence of the Qur’ânic ideas into the center of Arabian polytheism. The Makkans who had occasions to visit the Muslim camp at Hudaibiyah returned impressed, and many of them began to waver in their hostility. As soon as the perennial warfare came to an end and people of both sides were able to meet freely, new converts rallied around the Holy Prophet (pbuh). It was not only a great moral victory

but also it proved a masterstroke of strategy on the Holy Prophets part. It opened the way to the fall of Makkah and ultimately the whole of Arabia. Its lessons are expounded in this chapter as the lessons from the battle of Badr were expounded in 8:42-48, and that of *Uhud* in 3:121-129, 3:149, and 3:180. The import of verse 18 is that the 1,500 companions of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) who took the Pledge of Allegiance at that time, including ‘Uthmân, are declared to be those with whom Allâh is well pleased. These words should set to rest the doubts among the adherents of the idea of schisms among Muslims as to the sincerity of the Companions of the Holy Prophet (pbuh).

While the preceding chapter contained the prophecies about the victories destined for the Companions of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), this chapter deals with their fulfilment and gives a practical example of how the truth comes out victorious. There are lessons we learn from this chapter and the treaty of *Hudaibîyah*. It proves the magnanimity and grandeur of the Divine Revelation which, in the words of the Qur’ân, is named as the clear victory, the supreme achievement and the great reward. It becomes more majestic when we consider the initial helplessness and weakness of the followers of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). It was the completion of Allâh’s favour that opened the floodgates of the spiritual and political expansion of Islam. This treaty throws further light on how opponents of Islam devise schemes and how unfavourably these schemes ultimately turn out. Sometimes Allâh, in His wisdom, provides joy to the opponents of Islam through a perceived victory, but we see that such a victory always proves transitory. Towards its close, this chapter reverts to the subject that the true Faith of Allâh will prevail and triumph over all other religions. One should also remember that the real significance and sense of prophecies becomes clear only when they have seen their fulfilment.

لِيَعْفُرَ لَكُمْ أَنَّهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنِبٍ وَمَا تَأْخُرَ وَيُنَمَّ نِعْمَتُهُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَيَهْدِيَكُمْ صِرَاطًا
مُسْتَقِيمًا

48:2 Dhanbi-ka ذَنْبِكَ means the fault attributed to you (the Holy Prophet (pbuh)). Elsewhere in the Holy Qur’ân (5:30) a similar expression **ithmî** إِثْمِي is used meaning “the sin committed against me.” The Holy Prophet (pbuh) never committed a sin, and his *istighfâr* استغفار means the asking of Divine protection for him and his people (see the discussion on David’s supplication for Divine protection in chapter 34). Even before he was raised to the dignity of prophethood he was known as *al-Amîn* الامين, the most trustworthy, of safe conduct, faithful, sincere, steadfast; and *al-Sâdiq* الصادق, the most straightforward, perfect, unmixed, truthful, just, true, a man of veracity, a man who observes his promises faithfully and with soundness. Moreover, he received the highest praise of *Muhammad*.

This verse has been misunderstood based on a lack of knowledge of the Arabic idiom and translated as “your sin,” signifying that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) was guilty of moral lapse. The word **Dhanbi-ka** ذَنْبِكَ is in a genitive construction, which is also found elsewhere in the Holy Qur’ân and Arabic literature. For instance *shurakâ’* شُرَكَاءُ does not mean “my partners” but “my so-called partners associated with me by you, and that you set up with me” (cf. 6:22; 6:54; 28:44; 34:27, etc.). In the verse under comment the mutual construction of two nouns (*idzâfat* اضافت) carries a similar significance and the word means “*the fault attributed to you*,” or the shortcomings which were attributed to the Holy Prophet (pbuh) in the past and will be attributed to him by his adversaries in the future. Allâh’s Prophets are born sinless and they remain sinless throughout their life.

إِذْ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْحَمِيمَةَ حَمِيمَةً الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ

48:26 Jâhilîyyah جَاهِلِيَّة literally means “the ignorance”. In the verse, there is a concise expression for the pagan practice of the days before Islam. The word *al-Jâhilîyyah* الجَاهِلِيَّةُ refers to all practices that stand in contrast to the Islamic ideal of life.

لَقَدْ صَدَقَ اللَّهُ رَسُولُهُ الرُّؤْيَا بِالْحَقِّ ۖ لَتَنْدُخُلُنَّ الْمَسْجِدَ الْحَرَامَ إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ أَمْنِينَ مُحَلِّقِينَ رُءُوسَكُمْ وَمُقْصِرِينَ لَا تَخَافُونَ ۖ فَعَلِمَ مَا لَمْ تَعْلَمُوا فَجَعَلَ مِنْ دُونِ ذَلِكَ فَتْحًا قَرِيبًا

48:27 “Allâh had surely fulfilled for His Messenger the vision, that conformed to the rules of wisdom” referring to the vision of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) in Madinah when he saw himself circumambulating the Ka‘bah with his Companions. In an attempt to fulfil his vision he set out for Makkah with his Companions for ‘Umrah (or the Lesser Pilgrimage), but the Makkans denied him and his companions the access to the Ka‘bah. From the words, “*You shall enter the Holy Mosque if Allâh will* ” of the verse it was clear that the Muslims would most certainly enter the Ka‘bah and perform ‘Umrah but that the ceremonies would be performed that very year was not mentioned there. Among other useful lessons, the account of the Holy Prophets journey established that even great Prophets of Allâh are liable to exercise erroneous judgment in the matter of the interpretation of their visions. In fact, prophecies have an aspect that is generally hidden from human reasoning.

ذَلِكَ مَثَلُهُمْ فِي التُّورَةِ ۚ وَمَثَلُهُمْ فِي الْإِنْجِيلِ كَزَرْعٍ أَخْرَجَ شَطْأَهُ فَازَرَهُ فَاسْتَغْلَظَ فَاسْتَوَى عَلَى سُوقِهِ يُعْجِبُ الزُّرَاعَ لِيُغَيِّظَ بِهِمُ الْكُفَّارَ

48:29 The words “*Such is the description of (these) in the Torah*” may refer to the biblical description, He shined forth from mount Paran and he came with ten thousands of saints (Deut. 33.2). Moreover, the expression, “*and their description in the Evangel is*” may refer to, Behold a sower went forth to sow (Matt.13.3-8).



سورة الحجرات 49. CHAPTER

The Chambers

(Revealed after Hijrah)

This chapter is the third and last of the series which started with chapter *Muhammad* and in which the attention of the Muslims was drawn to internal and external polices of defense. The chapter takes its title from verse 4 إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَنْادُونَكَ مِنْ وَرَاءِ الْحُجَّرَاتِ, which enjoins the Muslims not to call out to the Holy Prophet (pbuh) from behind his private apartments and not to raise their voice above his voice. It also teaches to respect not only the Holy Prophets privacy but also each other's privacy. There are strict injunctions to Muslims to show full regard for the Holy Prophet (pbuh), not to anticipate his decision but to give unquestioning obedience to him.

This chapter deals predominantly with social ethics and domestic policies. It teaches the manners to be observed by the members of the rapidly growing community among themselves and towards their leader. Gossip and rumors should be avoided and must not be taken as fact; selfish impatience should be curbed by discipline. Ridicule, taunts and biting remarks should be avoided, whether the targeted person is present or absent. Suspicion and spying are unworthy of a Muslim. All human beings are part of a larger family. Their honour depends not on race or socioeconomic status, but on their standard of piety and righteous conduct. Faith is not a matter of words but of accepting Allâh's Will and striving in His cause. The embracing of Islam confers no favour on others but is itself a favour and a privilege. In verse 7 وَلِكُنَّ اللَّهُ حَبِّ الْيَكُمْ the faith of the believers and their status as followers of the right course is highly praised. Verses 9 and 10 provide an effective remedy to settle differences that endanger the security and unity of a nation. It lays down a sound principle for the

maintenance of international peace and rules of conduct for the solidarity of Muslims, and provides an effective remedy to quell disputes. Verse 11 lays special stress on Islamic goodwill. Islam's real strength lies in this ideal of unity, which transcends all barriers of caste, colour, culture or ethnicity. Verse 13 again stresses that the community of Muslims is a society that is neither Arabian nor Iranian, nor European nor Indian. An Arab has no superiority over the non-Arab, and likewise a white person has no superiority over a man or woman of colour. There is only one criterion by which a human beings superiority and greatness is to be judged—that is in piety. We are all equal partners in the limitless favours and benevolences of our Lord. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) says, the whole of humanity is a big family and he who renders the greatest service to Allâh's creation is the dearest and nearest to him.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تُقْرِنُوا بَيْنَ يَدِي اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ

49:1 This verse has both a literal and a figurative meaning. The words should be translated according to the Arabic idiom, Do not give higher importance to your opinion and sayings than to that of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). This verse tells us not to allow our desires to have precedence and overrule the ordinances of the Prophet (pbuh).

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَرْفَعُوا أَصْوَاتُكُمْ فَوْقَ صَوْتِ النَّبِيِّ وَلَا تَجْهَرُوا لَهُ
بِالْقَوْلِ كَجَهْرٍ بَعْضُكُمْ لِيَعْضُ اَنْ تَحْبَطَ اَعْمَالَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَشْعُرُونَ

49:2 This verse again has both a literal and a figurative meaning. Literal by instructing the Holy Prophets Companions to no raise their voices above his, and figurative also for believers of later times, implying that one's personal opinions and desires must not be allowed to overrule the legal ordinances and moral stipulations promulgated by the Holy Prophet (pbuh).

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظُّنُونِ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظُّنُونِ إِلَّا هُمْ

49:12 Suspicion leads to the next higher level of sin, namely to spy into the secrets of others, inevitably followed by backbiting, which is even more serious.

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَرْتَأُوا وَجَاهُوهُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ
وَأَنفُسِهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَوْ لِئَكُمْ هُمُ الصَّادِقُونَ

49:15 The verse defines *Mu'minûn* – المؤمنون – the believers.



سورة ق 50. CHAPTER

Qâf – The Glorious Qur’ân
(Revealed before Hijrah)

The chapter takes its name **Qâf** from the initial letter of the Qur’ân and from **Qayâmat** – قيامة the great Resurrection, calling our attention to the Powers of the Divine Being. The chapter deals with the important subjects of the two resurrections, a spiritual resurrection which was brought about by the teachings of the Holy Qur’ân, and the final resurrection in the life after death. The former resurrection is cited as an argument in support of the latter.

ق ٌ وَالْقُرْآنُ الْمَجِيدُ

50:1 The very first verse of this chapter essentially consists just of the word al-Qur’ân and points out that a great and glorious spiritual awakening will be brought about in the world by means of this Book. The letter *Qâf* ق may also stand for *Qâdir*, قادر, meaning meaning Omnipotent or All-Powerful/All Mighty. The letter *Qâf* suggests that

All-Mighty Allâh is *Qahhâr*; the One Who breaks the backs of the powerful among His enemies.

أَإِذَا مِنْتَنَا وَكُنَّا نُرَابًا ۖ ذَلِكَ رَجْعٌ بَعِيدٌ

50:3 The Wise Creator could not have brought into existence this complex universe without a sublime purpose behind its creation, and the Qur'ân is means and instrument to achieve that purpose.

قَدْ عَلِمْنَا مَا تَنْفَضُ الْأَرْضُ مِنْهُمْ ۖ وَعِنْدَنَا كِتَابٌ حَفِظٌ

50:4 The Divine Law of Conservation of actions is being pointed out to us in “*We have with Us a Book that preserves*”. Although the past appears to us as “gone”, our understanding of the concept of time is limited and every detail of the past, every action, every sound and every word that is being uttered will be conserved (cf. verse 17-18). “Do not follow and utter that of which you have no knowledge. Surely, the ear and eye and the heart, of all these, shall be called upon to account for it” (17:36). “Everything they did is (recorded) in scrolls, and everything, small and big, has been noted down” (54:53; 55:39)

أَفَلَمْ يَنْظُرُوا إِلَى السَّمَاءِ فَوْقُهُمْ كَيْفَ بَيْنَاهَا وَزَيْنَاهَا وَمَا لَهَا مِنْ فُرُوجٍ

50:6 The verses draws attention to the existence of a beautiful, complex and flawless cosmos.

وَالْأَرْضَ مَدَدْنَاهَا وَأَفْيَنَا فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ وَأَنْبَتْنَا فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ زَوْجٍ بَهِيجٍ

50:7 Al-Ardz is the body that appears flat. **Madadnâ** – مَدَدْنَا – مَدَدْنَا meaning to expand, stretch, spread out, fertilize. **Rawâsi** رَوَاسِي are firm bodies, immovable anchors like the pegs of a tent. This word is derived from **Rasâ** رَاسَا meaning to be firm (*Qâmûs*, Lane, Lisân). The expression “expanding earth” does not necessarily apply to our planet,

but can also include the expanding universe with its planets, stars, galaxies and black holes as modern physics informs us. Therefore our cosmos is a tent-like construction with fixed anchor points to provide stability and includes objects falling on our earth and on other heavenly bodies that help maintain balance and act as fertilizers. All this apparently points to another Divine Law being applied to the universe, besides the Law of Conservation of actions mentioned in verse 4. It appears that in the frequent combination *Samawât wa Al-Ardz*, usually translated as the heavens and the earth, the word *Al-Ardz* الأَرْض is used in the sense of the three space dimensions in modern language while the “heavens” in plural, of which the Qur’ân mentions seven, refers to another physical domain science has not yet grasped.

وَنَزَّلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً مُبَارَكًا

50:9 “*Pure water full of blessing*” is an allusion to Divine Revelations and life after death. Just like the dead land is brought to life again after every blessed rain, so shall be the Resurrection.

رِزْقًا لِلْعِبَادِ ۝ وَأَحْيَيْنَا بِهِ بَلْدَةً مَيْتَانًا ۝ كَذَلِكَ الْخُرُوجُ

50:11 ‘*Ibâd* العَبَاد is plural form of ‘*abad* (- worshipper). ‘*Abid* عابد is the one who subjects himself to a rigorous spiritual discipline, working with all inherent powers and capacities to their fullest scope, in perfect harmony with and in obedience to Divine commandments. The purpose is to receive Allâh’s attention and thereby be able to assimilate and manifest in one’s self His Attributes. The blessings of “Divine Rain” and the products that are the results of this blessing mentioned in the foregoing verses 9 and 10 are at the service of Allâh’s worshippers who are raised to a new spiritual life.

أَفَعَيْنَا بِالْخَلْقِ الْأَوَّلِ ۝ بَلْ هُمْ فِي أَبْسٍ مِنْ خَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ

50:15 “Are We wearied with the first creation” provides another argument for the continuation of some kind of life after death. The question that was brought up in this verse is answered in verse 38 “No weariness touched Us”.

وَلَقْدْ حَأْقَنَا الْإِنْسَانَ وَنَعْلَمُ مَا تُوَسْوِسُ بِهِ نَفْسُهُ ۝ وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ حَبْلِ
الْأَوْرِيدِ

50:16 “We know what suggestions his mind makes to him” وَنَعْلَمُ مَا تُوَسْوِسُ بِهِ نَفْسُهُ shows that the Divine Law of Conservation extends even to our thoughts although not a word is uttered. Two reasons are given for this: the All-Encompassing knowledge of the Creator, and His being nearer to us than our “jugular vein” حَبْلُ الْأَوْرِيدِ .

إِذْ يَتَّقَى الْمُتَّقِيَانَ عَنِ الْيَمِينِ وَعَنِ الشَّمَاءِ قَعِيدُ

50:17 Here and in the following verse the Divine Law of Conservation pointed out in verse 4, “We have with Us a Book that preserves” is explained from another angle. The law of conservation also is an important concept in physics.

وَجَاءَتْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَعَهَا سَائِقٌ وَشَهِيدٌ

50:21 “And every soul shall come forth (to account for his deeds). He will be accompanied by (an angel) who shall drive it and (an angel) who shall bear witness. This means that everything which has been preserved (cf. 50:4) will become manifest on the Day of Resurrection.

لَهُمْ مَا يَشَاءُونَ فِيهَا وَلَدَيْنَا مَزِيدٌ

50:35 “We will have in store much more [than] what they wish” is, according to some Gnostics, the view of the “Glorious Face” of Allâh.

51. CHAPTER سورة الذاريات

The Scatterers

(Revealed before Hijrah)

The peculiar characteristic of this *Sûrah* is that Divine truths have been explained in light of phenomena in physical nature. The symbolical epithets in the first four verses of this chapter, consisting of adjectival participles omitting the nouns that they qualify, have been interpreted in various ways. Since there is a consensus regarding the first of these participles **al-Dhâriyât**، as denoting the scattering winds, we may assume that the following three relate to different manifestations of the same phenomenon (Râzî.), namely to the life-giving function of wind, clouds, rain and cosmic fertilizers. *Al-Dhâriyât* may also be pointing symbolically to the Scatterers of Truth, who carry their blessed load, then speed along, reckoning with disbeliefs and with love and peace and then distribute and apportion the work by Allâh's command. Attention is drawn in this description to a similar arrangement in the spiritual world by which truth gradually advances. Like moisture-laden winds that induce life in a seed by causing it to germinate and like the clouds that provide rain to the vast areas of parched land and make them blossom into new life, the Qur'ânic message will spread and quicken the spiritually dead to life.

إِنَّمَا تُوَعَّدُونَ لِصَادِقٍ

51:5 The promise may refer to the prophecies in the Holy Qur'ân as a whole.

ذُوقُوا فِتْنَتَكُمْ هَلَا الَّذِي كُنْتُمْ بِهِ تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ

51:14 Fitnakum فَتَنَكُم derived from *fatana* means to put gold in fire so as to remove all its dirt and impurities (Râghib). This verse clarifies the concept of “punishment” and the hell fire.

كَانُوا قَلِيلًا مِّنَ الَّذِينَ مَا يَهْجَعُونَ

51:17 "They were in the habit of sleeping but a little at night" as they spent most of the night in prayer and remembering Allâh. Rûmî writes, "At the time of night prayer, when the sun slides down, the route the senses walk on closes and the route to the Invisible opens. The angels of sleep then gather and drive along the spirit. The spirit goes back to its old home; it no longer remembers where it lives and loses its fatigue."

وَفِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌ لِّلْسَائِلِ وَالْمَحْرُومِ

51:19 All that a Muslim possesses is a trust to the benefit of which other persons are also entitled. Those who can express their needs, as well as those who are unable to, all have a right in it. The words **Al-Mahrûm** “who could not ask” applies to all living creatures. . It can apply to human beings, who are debarred from earning due to physical infirmity and, out of self-respect, shame or for any other reason do not ask for help. The word can also apply to non-human creatures.

وَفِي الْأَرْضِ آيَاتٌ لِّلْمُوقَنِينَ

51:20 His creation is bearing witness to His existence (cf. 6:95-99; 59:24; 13:2-3).

وَفِي أَنفُسِكُمْ ۝ أَفَلَا تُبَصِّرُونَ

51:21 Our inner voice, our subconscious also bears witness to His existence (cf. 10:31-34; 6:100). This and the previous verse mirror the

two Divine Attributes of Allâh – He is the Manifest and He is the Hidden One (57:4).

وَمِن كُلِّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَا زَوْجَيْنِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ

51:49 “*The creation in pairs*” is not necessarily limited to the living creation. It may also include physical matter.

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونَ

51:56 This verse informs us about the great and noble purpose of our existence. **Li-Ya‘budûn** – لِيَعْبُدُونَ “So that they worship” - for ‘ibâdat عِبادَت see 50:11). This is a simple and concise answer to the question of the purpose of life, a question that common folks as well as philosophers have ever struggled with. The innermost purpose of our creation is our cognition of the existence of God - and hence our conscious willingness to conform our existence to whatever we may perceive of His Will and plan. Our life and death, eating and sleeping are all ‘ibâdat if they are according to His Will and plan. It is this twofold concept of cognition and willingness that gives the deepest meaning to what the verse describes as worship – ‘ibâdat. This call does not arise from any need on the part of the Creator who is Self-sufficient and Infinite in His power, but is designed as an instrument for the inner development and the benefit of the worshipper. For the discussion on *Jinn* see verses 6:128; 15:27 and 7:38; refer to 18:50; 27:17; 34:41; 41:25; 46:18; 46:29; 55:33; 72:5; 114:6.



سورة الطور 52. CHAPTER

The Mount Sinai

(Revealed before Hijrah)

Mount Sinai (al-Tûr) (الطور) is mentioned in the first verse of this chapter and lends it its name. It was on al-Tûr where Moses received the revelation, which not only embodied the Divine Law according to the needs of that time, but also other prophecies about the appearance of a great Divine Prophet. (Deut. 18:18 and 33:2). The advent of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) is likened to the advent of Moses (73:16).

وَالْطُّورِ (١) وَكِتَابٍ مَسْطُورٍ (٢) فِي رَقٍ مَنْشُورٍ (٣) وَالْبَيْتِ الْمَعْمُورِ

52:1-4 *Wa al-Tûr* is an expression to express “Mount al-Tûr, where We talked to one (i.e. Moses)”. The chapter opens with an emphatic reference to the Qur’ân and the Holy Prophet (pbuh) and the Revelations of Moses, the elevated city of Makkah and states that all these bear witness to the truth of the Holy Prophet (pbuh).

وَالْبَحْرِ الْمَسْجُورِ

52:6 “*The dry and empty sea*” is a desert. These words are truly applicable to the environment of Moses, just as they are true in the case of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). Thus, a similitude has been set up between the two.

مُتَكَبِّلَيْنَ عَلَى سُرُرٍ مَصْفُوفَةٍ ۝ وَرَوْجَنَاهُمْ بِحُورٍ عَيْنٍ

52:20 The noun *Hûr* – حُور – usually translated into English as houries (cf. 44:54; 52:30; 55:72) leads to misunderstanding of the message being delivered. *Hûr* is a plural of *aḥwar* أَحْوَر (masculine) and of

houra حُور (feminine). The word aḥwar means pure and clear intellect (Lisān), and it stands for purity and beauty (Ibn Jarīr; Rāzī; Ibn Kathīr). The word hūr is a common gender for both male and female. In its feminine connotation, quite a number of the earlier commentators, among them Ḥasan Baṣrī, understood it as signifying the righteous among the women of humankind (Ibn Jarīr). Therefore, the term hūr applies to the righteous of both sexes. It is nowhere used in the sense that men shall be given fair virgin maidens in marriage (see also 56:34-38; 44:54). This is a product of male confused mind.

وَيَطْوُفُ عَلَيْهِمْ غِلْمَانٌ لَّهُمْ كَانُوا مَكْنُونٌ

52:24 Ghilmān غِلْمَان are their sons in the sense of *aulād-u-hum* اولادهم, as clarified by Shaukanī, and Baidzawī. It is wrong to translate the word as slaves. Abraham did not receive the glad tidings of a slave (ghulām غلام) but a son (37:101) and Zachariah did not pray for a slave in 19:20. The verse is a continuation of what has been said in the verse 52:21, “We shall unite with those who believe, their children who follow them in Faith”. The subject matter is also mentioned in 76:19 “Their sons of perpetual bloom shall go around them” and in verse 56:17 the word wildān (- the sons) is used instead of ghilmān غِلْمَان to express the same meaning. In verse 56:17 the word mukhallid مُخَلِّد that also means one who is grey-haired is used to describe the sons (wildān وَلَادَن)

أُمُّ حُلْفُوا مِنْ غَيْرِ شَيْءٍ أُمُّ هُمُ الْخَالِقُونَ

52:35 According to Shaukānī *minn* من stands for *lā* لا conveying the meaning, “Have they been created without a creative agency for nothing and without any purpose?” This and the following verses give an answer to three questions: Who created them? Why were they created? Out of what were they created? (cf.: 17:88; 11:13; 10:38)



53. CHAPTER سورة النجم

Parts of the Revealed Qur'ân
(*Revealed before Hijrah*)

Al-Najm - النَّجْمُ the star, is taken from the very first word of verse and symbolically refers to the Holy Qur'ân and the Holy Prophet (pbuh). This chapter has a special relation to the subject of the truthfulness, majesty and purity of the Holy Qur'ân and of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). It describes both the beauty and the nobility of the highest status a human being has ever achieved in the person of the Prophet of Allâh (pbuh). The attributive words describing the majesty of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) have never been used for any human being before in any Divine Book. The titles of the chapter indicates that, just as people find orientation in the stars and their movement, determining the course and direction of their journey by them, likewise are they led on their spiritual journey by a star par excellence.

وَالنَّجْمٌ إِذَا هَوَىٰ

53:1 Al-Najm literally means the star. **Hawâ** means the rising and the setting. Thus the literal translation can be, “*And the star when it rises (or sets)*”. Al-Najm is the star from which people find the right direction (16:16). Metaphorically it can be applied to the Holy Qur'ân, which guides people to find the right direction and reach the goal.

Najam نَجَمٌ is derived from the verb *najama* نَجَمَ that means it appeared, began, ensued or proceeded in instalments. It also denotes also the unfolding of something that comes or appears gradually, as if by instalments (Tâj, Lisân, Lane). In this chapter, the word *najam* has been from the very beginning applied to each of the gradually

revealed parts of the Qur'ân. This was the interpretation of this verse given by Ibn 'Abbâs (Ibn Jarîr). This interpretation is regarded as fully justified by Râghib, Zamakhsharî, Râzî, Baidzawî, Ibn Kathîr and other authorities. Râghib and Ibn Kathîr in particular point to the phrase *Mawâqi al-Najûm* موقع النجوم in 56:75, which undoubtedly refers to the step-by-step revelation of the Qur'ân. Just as the star rises, reaches its height and then descends, so did the Holy Prophet (pbuh) rise to the zenith of morality, received the Greatest Revelation and descended with it to humanity to deliver the message (cf. verse 7).

مَا ضَلَّ صَاحِبُكُمْ وَمَا غَوَىٰ

53:2 The verse points out two characteristics a guide for humanity should possess. In the first place he should not be ill-informed (- **Dzalla** ضَلَّ), a possessor of corrupt ideas, or someone who forgets. Secondly he should not be an outsider or a stranger whom nobody knows, but should be one who had passed the greater part of his life among the people so that his character traits are known (- **Sâhibukum** صَاحِبُكُمْ - صَاحِبُكُمْ your comrade). He should be a man of action subscribing to noble ideals and able to live up to them - a sure and safe guide **mâ Ghawâ** ماغوی - who has not erred. The emphasis on him being their comrade, companion and fellow man (-*Sâhib-u-kum* صَاحِبُكُمْ *Sâhibukum*) serves to remind one that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) was publicly known to have led a life of unblemished purity and therefore the message he was conveying should be given proper consideration.

وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ

53:3 Another criterion for a spiritual guide is that he should earn his own livelihood. He should not depend on the money of his followers in the name of the religion he preaches or say anything out of his own fanciful desire in order to obtain any personal benefit.

The verse also tells us that the impression received by the Holy Prophet (pbuh) in the Revelation is neither an error of his heart nor a deception by others, nor does he speak out of selfish motives. He was given true knowledge and he did not err in theory and practice. He acted according to that knowledge and did not deviate in the least from the principles he presented.

فَكَانَ قَابِ قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَىٰ

53:9 This figurative description of the Holy Prophets approach is based on an ancient Arabic figure of speech and is meant to convey the idea that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) attained the utmost nearness to Allâh, which is possible for a human being to attain. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) scaled the heights of spiritual Ascension and sought an approach so near to Allâh, until all distance between them disappeared and became as it were, “*one chord to two bows*”. The proverb reminds us of an ancient Arab custom according to which two persons who pledge each other firm friendship joined their bows in such a way that they appeared as one and then they would shoot an arrow from that combined bow, symbolizing that they had become like a single person and that an attack on one would be considered an attack on the other. They say, *ramai-na ann qausin wâhid* رمينا عن قوس واحد meaning, “They shot at us from one bow” (Tâj). This stage has been elaborated in verse 8:17, “It was not you (the Prophet) who threw (a handful of small stones) when you did apparently, but it was Allâh who threw”. A similar message is conveyed in verse 48:10 in the words, “Those who swear allegiance to you as a matter of fact swear allegiance to Allâh”. “It is Allâh’s hand (and not the hand of the Prophet) over their hands”. In spite of this nearness, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) remains a human being (18:110) and His humble servant (see verse 10). The two bows also seem to indicate the Holy Prophets (pbuh) twofold perfection; his nearness to Allâh and his service to humanity (see verse 8).

ما كَدَبَ الْفُؤَادُ مَا رَأَىٰ

53:11 The revelation to the Prophet was not an illusion and his mind made no mistake in the interpretation of that which he saw. The illusion is in the minds of those who doubt and have false ideas about Revelation. **Fu'âd** is generally translated as heart, which is rather indirect and limits the meanings of the word. It may be translated as, intellect and the power of understanding and reflection in the mind.

عِنْدَ سِدْرَةِ الْمُنْتَهَىٰ إِنْدَهَا جَنَّةُ الْمَلَوِىٰ

53:14 Sidrah - سِدْرَةٌ - the lotus-tree. The leaves of this tree are always clean and possess the ability to preserve a dead body for some time due to their anti-septic properties. The lotus-tree is immune to the poisonous effects. No specific lotus-tree in a particular place in Arabia is referred to. Such a notion is refuted by the next statement, “*Near where also is the garden, which is the real eternal abode*”. Explaining the expression, Râghib suggests that owing to the abundance of its leafy shade, the word appears in the Qur’ân as well as in the sayings of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) as a symbol of the shade of Paradise (56:28). It is an exalted “place”, which was chosen for the Holy Prophet (pbuh) for Divine favours. The qualifying term **al-Muntahâ** المُنْتَهَىٰ - at the farthest end, is indicative of the fact it is a place beyond the confines of human knowledge. **Sadir** سَدَرٌ is derived from the same root meaning the sea (Tâj). Thus, the expression indicates that at that stage a sea of endless vistas of Divine knowledge and eternal realities were opened up for him. It also means to signify that the spiritual knowledge and intellect of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) was perfect, of a quality that could exercise antidote influences on the suffering humanity (Ibn Jarîr). The verse also signifies that the Revelation given to the Holy Prophet (pbuh) in the form of the Holy Qur’ân is not only itself immune like the lotus-tree, but is eminently fitted to save and preserve humankind from becoming corrupt and spiritually dead.

إِذْ يَعْشَى السُّدْرَةَ مَا يَعْشَى

53:16 “*When the sublime thing which was to cover Sidrah had covered it*” is a phrase deliberately vague indicative of the inconceivable majesty and splendour attached to this symbol of Paradise, which no description can illustrate and no definition can embrace.

أَفَرَأَيْتُمُ اللَّاتَ وَالْعُزَّى

53:19 After pointing out that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) was granted true insight into some of the most profound verities, the verse draws our attention to false symbols, which people so often choose to invest with Divine Attributes, qualities and powers. In this instance, by way of example and contrast to the blasphemous imagery of the pagans epitomized in the triad of *Lât*, *Manât* and ‘*Uzza*. The three goddesses were regarded by them as God’s daughters. The verse also applies indirectly to the trinity of the Christians.

A sect called Zandîqs (*Znâdiqat* ذنادقة) who claimed to be Muslims, but was in fact hypocrites (9:101) added a sentence after this verse that read as follows: These are the high deities, whose intercession will be accepted. This sentence fitted nicely into the wishful thinking of these hypocrites. They claimed that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) uttered these verses at the end of this verse in order to please the Makkans. Although in the entire Muslim world at all ages, no Qur’ân ever existed that contained these additional words, still the verse has been a target of attack by Christian missionaries based on the claims of the Zandîqs. Not only do the first six verses of this chapter strongly reject such a notion, but dozens of Qur’ânic verses reject this claim (cf. 69:43-48; 17:74). In fact such a sentence would be in total contradiction to the entire Qur’ânic teachings. Abû Bakr Baihaqî, Ibn Hazm, Râzî, Ibn Kathîr and other great Islamic authorities, all have taken a clear stance on this fabrication of the Zandîqs and strongly

rejected their blasphemy. The claims of the Zandîqs that this was transmitted in the form of a *Hadîth* are baseless, and such a *Hadîth* is nowhere to be found in authentic Traditions of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). Baidzawî states that whosoever has invented this sentence is a *mardûd* – a rejected hypocrite (9:101).

الْكُمُ الْذَّكُرُ وَلَهُ الْأَنْثَى

53:21 In view of the contempt these pagans felt for their female offspring (16:57), their attribution of daughters to Allâh was absurd and denigrating towards Allâh. Irrespective of the blasphemous belief in Gods having off-spring of any kind, their ascribing to Him what they themselves despised, belie their alleged reverence for Him whom they too regarded as the Supreme Being. This point is stressed with irony in the next verse.

وَكَمْ مِنْ مَلَكٍ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ لَا تُغْنِي شَفَاعَتُهُمْ شَيْئًا إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ أَنْ يَأْذَنَ اللَّهُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَرْضَى

53:26 *Shafâ'at* means intercession. According to the verse, nobody can be considered deserving of intercession for the position he holds, the high status he commands, for his love for someone or for the vastness of his knowledge. Intercession is accepted only from one who conforms to Allâh's will and with whom He is pleased. All types of intercession belong to Allâh (cf. 4:85; 43:86; 53:26).

الَّذِينَ يَجْتَنِبُونَ كَبَائِرَ الْإِثْمِ وَالْفَوَاحِشَ إِلَّا اللَّمَمَ ۝ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ وَاسِعُ الْمَغْفِرَةِ ۝ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِكُمْ إِذَا دَأْنَسَكُم مِّنَ الْأَرْضِ وَإِذَا أَنْتُمْ أَجِنَّةٌ فِي بُطُونِ أَمْهَاتِكُمْ ۝ فَلَا تُنْزَكُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ ۝ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنِ اتَّقَى

53:32 This verse deals with morality and sin. In the beginning, the sins are minor, but as they are repeated, they take the form of major sins. Attention is therefore drawn to the admonition that we should carefully guard against the roots of evil and ask for forgiveness for

minor moral lapses in order to avoid sliding into evil that is more serious. It is further stressed that a human being should always be striving for something good. Nothing good can be achieved by remaining passive. Another lesson is that no one can become a Saint or become Holy by self-designation or by nomination.



سورة القمر

The Moon

(*Revealed before Hijrah*)

This is the fifth of the group of seven Qur'ânic chapters, that began with chapter 50. As Râzî points out, the first verse of this chapter appears almost like a continuation of the last verses of the preceding one - especially 53:57, "that the Hour of punishment that was to come has drawn nigh", (أَرْقَتِ الْأَزْفَةُ) and the present chapter opens with the expression "that the threatened Hour has almost arrived", (اقْرَبَتِ السَّاعَةُ) it is at their very door. This chapter is a supplement to the preceding one. The theme of the chapter is explained by the refrain "Indeed, We have made the Qur'an easy for admonition and to understand, follow and remember. But is there anyone who would take heed?" وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْآنَ لِذِكْرٍ فَهُنَّ مَنْ مُذَكَّرٌ". This statement is repeated six times in the Sûrah. That is to say that it contains such injunctions as can be easily followed and put into practice by every person. It also means that the most difficult problems are dealt with in the Book in the easiest and most comprehensible style. This collective quality of the Holy Qur'ân is beyond human power to achieve. It has been revealed in Arabic, easy to understand and follow. The follower of

this Book can participate and exercise lasting influences on the literature of every language.

أَقْرَبَتِ السَّاعَةُ وَانْشَقَ الْقَمَرُ

54:1 Shaqq شَقْ is to cleave, burst or pierce (Lane). **Shaqq al-Qamar** شَقْ الْقَمَرُ means, cleaving, exploding, piercing or bursting on the moon. At the time of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), the moon was the national emblem of the Arabs and symbol of their power, just as the sun was the national emblem of the Persians. With reference to this symbol, the verse would denote that the hour of the destruction of the power of pagan Arabs, with which they were threatened in 53:58 has already arrived. Thus, the verse constituted a mighty prophecy, which met with a remarkable fulfilment nearly eight years after its announcement.

It was the insistent demand of the disbelievers of Makkah that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) should come forward with a miracle (*Bukhârî*; *Abû Muslim*). As a result of this demand **Shaqq al-Qamar** شَقْ الْقَمَرُ was announced, a natural phenomenon of unusual importance occurred and the disbelievers did not deny it but instead called it a tremendous illusion (*Baihaqî*). This incident is recorded in reliable collections of *Hadîth* and has been narrated successively in the traditions of reliable authorities and reported by such a learned companion of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) as *Ibn Mas'ûd*. Other companions of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) also observed and reported an unusual phenomenon. It may have been the falling of meteorites or a large meteorite on the surface of the moon visible to the naked eye because of the moon's proximity to the earth. According to some writers, like *Imâm Râzî* and *Shah Abdul 'Azîz* it was a half lunar eclipse.

This verse has been a target of attack, particularly from the followers of Arya Samâj from India, for being something against the laws of nature and against common sense. This objection may appear justified

when one takes the literal meaning of the word *shaqq* شَقْ as cleaving or bursting into two separate parts. On the other hand the falling of meteorites on the surface of the moon visible to the naked eye and a half-lunar eclipse would be as miraculous to the observer without contravening the physical laws of nature. Moreover, the event is supported by historical evidence from India. In a book of history called *Tārīkh Farishta* it is written that an Indian Raja around 600 CE witnessed an unusual phenomenon on the surface of the moon. This corresponds to years of the advent of the Holy Prophet (pbuh).

There should not be any problem in accepting the falling of meteorites or a large meteorite on the surface of the moon visible to the naked eye as a miracle. The objection can be solved by declaring it a phenomenon within the laws of nature, similar to that which occurred in the year 1994 when a series of meteorites bombarded and cleaved the surface of Jupiter. Because of the nearness of the moon, such a cleaving or bursting could be seen with the naked eye at the time of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), both in Arabia and India, whereas in the case of Jupiter, powerful telescopes were required to observe and photograph the event. The phenomenon becomes a “miracle” when it occurs at the instant demand of the disbelievers at the time of the advent of a Prophet of Allāh.

مُهْطِعِينَ إِلَى الدَّاعِ يَقُولُ الْكَافِرُونَ هَذَا يَوْمٌ عَسِيرٌ

54:8 The comparison with the fate of other people whose events are narrated by way of illustration shows that the punishment will not only be inflicted in the Hereafter but to some extent also in this life.

وَلَقَدْ رَأَوْدُوا عَنْ ضَيْفِهِ فَطَمَسْنَا أَعْيُنَهُمْ فَذُوقُوا عَذَابِي وَنُذُرٍ

54:37 According to Ibn ‘Abbās the expression **fa-tamasnâ ‘ayuna-hum** - فَطَمَسْنَا أَعْيُنَهُمْ - “We put a covering on their eyes”, denotes veiling of something from ones consciousness. Hence, the phrase may be

understood that Allâh deprived them of all moral insight because of their evil propensities (36:66).

سَيُهْزَمُ الْجَمْعُ وَيُوَلَّونَ الدُّبُرَ

54:45 “Soon that united force shall surely be routed. They will turn (their) backs” is a reference to the Battle of the Confederates. (cf. 33:9). United forces of Arab tribes, joined with some Jewish tribes, attacked Muslims in Madînah. The verse contains a great prophecy when one considers the time of its revelation. These words were revealed in Makkah, years before the Holy Prophets (pbuh) migration to Madînah and years before his victory over the army of the Confederates (see 33:9 onwards). This was the period when he still had only very few followers. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) came out facing the battlefield, reciting this verse. This is also a reference to the prophecies of the Holy Qur’ân regarding other victories of the Muslims. Verses 38:11 and 54:45 were both revealed before Hijrah in the earlier days, when the opponents of Muslims boasted over their unity.

وَكُلُّ صَغِيرٍ وَكَبِيرٍ مُسْتَطَرٌ

54:53 The Divine Law of Conservation is pointed to in this verse (cf. 50:4; 55:39; 17:36).



55. CHAPTER سورة الرَّحْمَن

The Most Gracious
(*Revealed before Hijrah*)

The chapter is titled after the name of the Divine Being **Al-Rahmân** - الرَّحْمَن - The Most Gracious (cf. 17:110), Who bestows existence upon all living creatures. The entire chapter deals with the beneficence of Allâh in the material and spiritual realms. At the same time, it is the sixth of the series of seven chapters dealing with Revelation. The sending of Revelation is especially connected with the Divine attribute *Al-Rahmân*. The revelation of the Holy Qur'ân is also an act of Divine grace (*Rahmânîyyat*).

The form and style of this *Sûrah* is highly poetic. The rhyme is in the dual grammatical form and repeats the refrain, Which of the benefactions of your Lord will you twain then deny? فِيأَيِّ لَاءِ رَبَّكُمَا تُكَبِّلُانْ This refrain is interspersed 31 times among its 78 verses. The argument implies that although things are created in pairs (51:49) there is an underlying unity through the Nourisher to perfection in the favours, which He bestows, and in the goal to which they are marching. The dual form of address appearing in this refrain refers to the males and the females (verse 13), to the leaders and their followers (verse 15), to the people of the two easts and the people of the two wests (verse 17), to the skilful and the unskilful (verses 21, 33), to the rich and the poor (verse 23), to the believers and the disbelievers (verse 31), to the two powerful hosts, armies or big powers (verse 31), to the body of *jinn* – the fiery natured arrogant people – and the humble people (verse 33), to the sinners and their leaders, to the two contrasts of the nature and or the two contrasts in human thought, the imaginable and the unimaginable (verse 52), to the two extreme points, to the two classes of the faithful (verse 62). The dual form is

also used to impart emphasis in order to denote the dignity of the commandment (see also 23:99; 50:25). The Holy Prophet (pbuh) said that when the verse is recited the hearer should respond by saying: None of Your favours, O Lord, do we deny and to You is all praise.

55:1 Al-Rahmân – الرَّحْمَنُ is “The Most Gracious and Merciful”. This Mercy is not bestowed as a reward for any action of ours. It is by the blessing of this grace that everything lives, eats, and has its sustaining needs fulfilled. It is through the operation of this grace that a human beings requirements of life are provided – the sun for heat, light and energy, air for breathing and water for drinking. It is the blessing of this Grace that from the earliest moment, all that is needed for spiritual development such as the capacities of rational thinking and speech, embedded love for the Creator, and innate drive for worship and the capacity to receive Divine Revelation have been provided.

Every created thing is the object of His Mercy. *Rahmâniyyat* is حُمَانِيَّةُ His Essence and His Grace, and being Merciful is His Attribute. His Mercy embraces everything and permeates all objects of creation. It has precedence over all His other Attributes. Every created thing is the object of His Mercy. The Mercy of Allâh flows in all created things and courses through His Selves and the Essences. The rank of Mercy is epitome to those who perceive and sublime to those of discursive mind.”

خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ

55:3 Al-Insân – إِنْسَانٌ “The human being”. It should be noted that the word used here is not simply *insân* but *Al-Insân*. This can signify here the perfect man, any person who becomes the recipient of Divine Revelation, a prophet or the Holy Prophet (pbuh) in particular. As the Holy Qur’ân is the culmination of Divine Revelation, in it the Divine Attributes found their most perfect manifestation. The two Muslim mystics who have elaborately discussed this idea are Ibn al-‘Arabî and ‘Abdul Karîm Jillî in *Al-Insân al-Kâmil* الإنسان الكامل.

عَلْمُهُ الْبَيَانٌ

55:4 Al-Bayân – الْبَيَان – “Intelligent and distinct speech”, applies to both thought and speech, in as much as it comprises the faculty of making a thing or an idea apparent to the mind and conceptually distinct from other things or ideas; it also comprises the power to express this cognition in spoken or written language (*Tirmidhî*). So the Most Gracious Lord attributed the teaching of intelligent and distinct speech, *Al-Bayân*, to Himself and not to human reflection. Here we come to know that there is a station beyond reflection that bestows upon human beings knowledge of various things. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) said there is a knowledge that has the guise of the Hidden. When it is mentioned, none denies it but those who are deluded about Allâh. There is thus a connection between this verse and the foregoing verse – He created the perfect human being - *al-insân al-kâmil*.

وَالسَّمَاءَ رَفَعَهَا وَوَضَعَ الْمِيزَانَ (۲۷) أَلَا تَطْغُوا فِي الْمِيزَانِ (۲۸) وَأَقِيمُوا
الْوَزْنَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا تُخْسِرُوا الْمِيزَانَ

55:7-9 Al-Mîzân المِيزَان means balance and harmony. It is also used for a scale. The word is repeated three times. *Al-Mîzân* at its first occurrence refers to the delicate balance of forces needed to sustain the heavens. No doubt, we see a perfect harmony and balance in the celestial bodies and planets. *Al-Mîzân* expresses a state of cosmic equilibrium and perfection. Equilibrium is associated with the instrument of the scale and with justice. Balance in the cosmos is cited first to refer to the balance of the laws of nature, the ecological and the social balance. Just as the violation of the cosmic balance will bring the cosmos into chaos and disharmony, so will the violation of environmental balance and social justice cause chaos and disharmony that will harm humanity. The verses aims to create an ecologically sustainable society rooted in environmental protection, social justice and democracy. Philosophical roots of environmentalism can be

traced back to these verses. Râbia al-Bâsîrî the great sage quoted that Allâh said, “O Children of Adam! I have created you for My delight, and I have brought forth the creation for your pleasure. Therefore do not corrupt what I have created for Myself with what I have created for you”.

رَبُّ الْمَشْرِقَيْنَ وَرَبُّ الْمَغْرِبَيْنَ

55:17 The words may refer to the extreme points of sunrise and sunset in summer and in winter. Moreover, every point on earth, relative to other points, is an east and a west (see 37:5; 70:40).

مَرَجَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ يَلْتَقِيَانِ بَيْنَهُمَا بَرْزَخٌ لَا يَبْغِيَانِ

55:19 Al-Bahrain – الْبَحْرَيْنِ signifies the two bodies of water, which are specified in the following verses. These are apparently the Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea, and the Atlantic Ocean and the Pacific Ocean, because these are rich in corals and pearls, of which reference is made in the following verse 22. The verse embodies a great prophecy, which was fulfilled by the construction of the Suez and the Panama canals.

وَلَهُ الْجَوَارُ الْمُنْشَاتُ فِي الْبَحْرِ كَالْأَعْلَامِ

55:24 “And to Him belong the ships raised aloft in the sea like mountain peaks” is the reference to ships as belonging to Allâh. Here, the reference is to the nature of human intelligence and inventiveness, which expresses itself in all that human beings are able to produce (see also 42:32-34).

كُلَّ يَوْمٍ هُوَ فِي شَاءِ

55:29 “Every moment He manifests Himself in a new state (of glory)”. Here Yaum يَوْمٍ is translated as ‘every moment’. This implies that universe is in a perpetual process of change.

يَا مَعْشَرَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنْسِ إِنْ أَسْتَطَعْتُمْ أَنْ تَنْفُذُوا مِنْ أَقْطَارِ السَّمَاوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ فَانْفُذُوا لَا تَنْفُذُونَ إِلَّا بِسُلْطَانٍ

55:33 There are three words in the Arabic language to express the meaning of “if”. They are - *idha* اذ, *inn* إن, and *lau* لو. *Idha* expresses the possibility, *inn* إن is used if achievement is hypothesised, and *lau* لو when unachievability is hypothesised. In the verse under comment the word used is *inn* إن, so it is an achievable hypothesis expressed by the word *inn* إن, and thus the Holy Qur'an suggests the possibility of its realisation under certain conditions. For the discussion on *jinn* see verses 6:128; 15:27 and 7:38; refer to 18:50; 27:17; 34:41; 41:25; 46:18; 46:29; 51:56; 72:5; 114:6.

يُعرَفُ الْمُجْرِمُونَ بِسِيمَاهُمْ فَيُؤْخَذُونَ بِالنَّوَاصِي وَالْأَقْدَامِ

55:41 The Divine Law of Conservation is pointed out to us in this verse. The sinners will find all that they ever wrought facing them (18:49), on that day, their own tongues, hands, and feet will also bear witness against them (24:24), and their ears, eyes, and skins will bear witness against them as to what they had been doing (cf. 50:4; 54:53; 17:36).

وَلِمَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ حَنَّانٌ

55:46 The two gardens can also signify: 1) A garden of bliss here in this life and a garden in the Hereafter. The garden of this life is the spiritual bliss and peace of mind, which the righteous find here. 2) A Paradise that will comprise both spiritual and physical joys (Râzî). 3) Worldly conquests, which the Muslims were promised. 4) The two fertile valleys watered by two sets of waters, those of the Tigris and of the Nile. 5) The two gardens of prosperous Sheba (34:15) and the two gardens of the Christian nations (18:32; see also 10:64; 41:31). Thus, the meaning of “two gardens” should not be limited to one aspect.

“The fear of Lord” is different from the fear humans have from tyrants. The true believer knows with certainty that the security is from Allâh. The one who fears stays close to his Lord. His heart finds peace through this nearness. The Divine nearness is such that Allâh causes them to fear Him with a fear different from our human fear of lions or other savage beasts, and of tyrants. He reveals to His servants that He is the only source of pleasure and ease, and He reveals to His servants with His exquisite beauty, and the servant is afraid of losing the attention of His Lord. Whosoever really fears the torment of the Hereafter and the Day of Judgment standing before the Absolute Judge, cannot but act in accordance with the pleasure of the great Creator. “Allâh cautions you against His retribution” (3:27) as “He knows what is in your minds” (2:235). The fear of Allâh is a protection (- *Maghfirat* المغفرة) from the harms of our misdeeds, and His protection is the strongest of all protections. “Fear Allâh and fear the fire” (3:130-131) is His Command (see also 67:12).

فِيهِمَا عَيْنَانِ تَجْرِيَانِ

55:50 ‘Ainâن – عَيْنَانِ – “Two springs”, which may symbolize the two sources of knowledge - **Wahî** - وَحْيٌ - experience of Revelation and the knowledge obtained through observation and intellectual analysis (*Baidzawi*). The one is for doing the duty to our Creator and the other for our fellow-beings.

فِيهِمَا مِنْ كُلِّ فَاكِهَةٍ زَوْجَانِ

55:52 Dzawjân – زَوْجَانِ – “Two pairs”. One of these two pairs is known in the present world through cognition or sensation and is imaginable based on our experiences. The second pair is strange, not yet known to us, and as such yet unimaginable to us (*Zamakhsharî*). The verses that follow tell us about “two pairs” of Paradises (see verse 46 and the verse 62).

وَمِنْ دُونِهِمَا جَنَّاتٌ

55:62 The faithful are spoken of in the very next chapter as belonging to two classes: His blessed ones (56:8) and His chosen ones (56:10). Both of them shall have their own two paradises.

مُدْهَمَّاتٍ

55:64 The colour green is often used in the Holy Qur'ân to represent ever fresh life. In verse 48 above, the gardens are described as having many varieties of trees, pointing to the gardens vast extent. Here the gardens are described as dark green with foliage inclining to blackness, also indicating intensity. It is the shortest verse of the Holy Qur'ân.

حُورٌ مَّقْصُورَاتٌ فِي الْخِيَامِ

55:72 “*Pure and chaste houris confined to (their goodly) pavilions*” are those servants of Allâh that He has chosen for Himself and confined into pavilions so that no ordinary gaze shall fall on them. They did not make themselves noticeable with miracles (- *karamât*). People do not point at them and take notice of them because of their piety. They are hidden guardians of the universe. Their hidden holiness continues in the Hereafter. Abû Umâma transmitted the following *Hadîth Qudsi*: “Among the most intimate of Me of My saints are the believers of humble means who find their pleasure in Prayer, worshipping their Lord in the most beautiful way secretly and openly. These saints are hidden among the people. They are not always pointed out, their death comes swiftly and their mourners are few”.



56. CHAPTER سورة الواقعة

The Great Event

(Revealed before Hijrah)

From chapter 50 (Qâf) until its closing, the Holy Qur’ân generally deals with the continuation of arguments pertaining to the Divine Revelation, the prophethood of the great Messenger of Islam, the Divine reality of the Holy Book of Allâh, and the Truth about the Hereafter. The first phase of the group of seven chapters beginning with chapter 50, are very similar in tone and tenor and all shed light on the bright and glorious future of Qur’ânic teachings, foretelling many of the greatly important events that shall come to pass in this world and in the Hereafter. Their fulfilment in this world will bear testimony to the truthfulness of the other prophecies about the life to come— when the prophecy about the repudiation of idolatry will see its fulfilment in this life, our attention is naturally drawn to the inescapable conclusion that the Resurrection is also an undeniable fact.

وَالسَّابِقُونَ السَّابِقُونَ

56:10 Al-Sâbiqûn – السَّابِقُونَ “The foremost”. The word is repeated twice to give force and dignity, and to indicate that the foremost are the leaders on the earth as well as in the Hereafter, as they were the foremost in accepting and practicing the Faith. Gifts given to **Sâbiqûn** سابقون mentioned in verses 10-26 of this chapter closely resemble those gifts that have been mentioned in verses 46-61 of the previous chapter.

بَطْوَفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَدَانٌ مُّخَلَّذُونَ

56:17 Wildân - وَلْدَانٌ Their own sons; in the sense of *aulâd-u-hum* أو لادهم, as clarified by Shaukânî, and Baidzawî. The subject matter is also mentioned in 76:19 where we read their “sons of perpetual bloom shall go around them” and in the verse 52:24 the word *ghilmân* (- the sons) is used instead of *wildân* to express the same meaning. Mukhallid مخلد also means one who is grey-haired.

فِي سِدْرٍ مَّخْضُودٍ

56:28 While describing the blessings of Paradise, special mention is made of **Sidrah** سدرة – a thornless lote-tree – side by side with those of a garden of clustered banana trees. This is to signify something beyond the farthest end of human knowledge (cf. 53:14-16). The Sidrah tree grows in a dry desert and the clustered banana trees need plenty of water.

عَلَى سُرُرٍ مَّوْضُونَةٍ

56:15-37 In these verses the description of Paradise with words such as **Abkâra** أبكار, **Urubâ** عُرُبَا and **Atrâba** اترابا are objected to by non-Muslims and those who are weak in their faith. They bring these words in connection with female *houris* and virgins who are waiting for the believers in Paradise. Ignorance of the classical Arabic language and expression is the cause of this widespread assumption. This objection ignores what the Holy Qur’ân says at other places while describing the Paradise. These words describe the utmost beauty of the Paradise. Verses 13:35; 47:15; 57:12 and others clearly convey that the description given for Paradise is only symbolic, and the fact remains that “no soul knows what comfort lies hidden from them in the form of a joy for the eyes as a reward for their righteous deeds” (32:17); and again, “Wing your ways to the protection of your Lord and to Paradise whose expanse is as vast as the heaven and the earth” (3:133; 57:21), in other words no one can conceive the reality and vastness of the Paradise.

The words **Abkâra** أَبْكَارًا and **Atrâba** عُرُبًا in verses 36-37 are metaphors of beauty. Allegory and metaphor cannot form the basis of our belief, and the one, who bases his faith on figurative statements, forsaking the basic principles, goes astray and causes others to fall away from the right path. Persons skilled in the use of languages know well that figures of speech and metaphors are the ornament of a language. They make expression very powerful and are especially useful as here, when the ones addressed do not have the capabilities to grasp the nature of a different realm. Furthermore, Metaphors enhance the rhetorical dignity of a book, no matter whether it is the word of God or that of a mortal.

نَحْنُ جَعَلْنَاهَا تَذْكِرَةً وَمَتَاعًا لِلْمُفْوَيِّنَ

56:73 The last word **Maqwîn** مُفْوَيِّن of the verse is the active particle of the noun *muqwî* مُفْوَى that is derived from the verb *qawaya* قَوَى and means it became deserted and desolate. The nouns *qawa* قَوَا and *qiwa* قِوَا are derived from the same root signify desert, wilderness or wasteland, as well as hunger or starvation. Hence, **Maqwîn** المُفْوَيِّن denotes those who are hungry as well as those who are lost or wandering in deserted places. Thus the word refers to the needy and the wayfarer, that is, those who are lonely, unfortunate and confused and who are hungry for spiritual guidance.

لَا يَمْسُأُ إِلَّا الْمُطَهَّرُونَ

56:79 The verse is commonly understood that only those who are clean (have clean hands or limbs) should touch this Book. Two words in this verse need attention. *Massa* مَسْ means to come close, or to touch. In the case of “touching” the Holy Qur’ân it would mean to come close to its understanding. Then there is the word *tahara* طَهْر that means purification or cleanliness. Allâh addresses human beings in their totality. There are outer aspects of purification and inner aspects of purification. Many who are dedicated to inviting people to

Allâh's religion emphasize mainly to the outer rules of Divine Law and ignore the requirements relating to inner purification. The inner purification is the purification of our heart and soul, which is achieved through *taqwa* – the deeds of righteousness achieved by following the prescribed Divine Laws. While reading the words of Allâh from the Holy Book, the servant is in intimate closeness to his Lord. When the servant desires to engage in intimate conversation with his Lord, it is incumbent on him to come close to his Lord in a purified state. The more purified he is, the more prepared he is to understand the words of his Lord and therefore to engage in an intimate conversation. The Divine Rule stated in this verse is that no one can achieve true insight into the Divine Words except those who are purified by leading righteous lives



سورة الحديـد 57. CHAPTER

The Iron

(*Revealed after Hijrah*)

Beginning with the present chapter and continuing through chapter Al-Tahrîm, the 66th chapter, begins a series comprising ten Madinîte chapters. This chapter's title Al-Hadid الحديـد means iron, something that is sharp and hard, both in the concrete and abstract sense of the word (Lane). In this chapter, we are forewarned that when the disbelievers will have recourse to iron in order to use it for weapons of warfare, the Muslims will be forced to defend them.

هُوَ الْأَوَّلُ وَالآخِرُ وَالظَّاهِرُ وَالبَاطِنُ ۖ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

57:3 Four of the numberless Divine Attributes are mentioned here. To render the translation of the Attribute Al-Âkhir الآخر as “He is the

Last or when nothing remains, He will remain” would mean that someday even the Paradise will no longer exist. This is contrary to what we are told about the Paradise, that the pure souls will dwell there forever. Therefore the rendering of this Attribute should be, “*As His creation depended on Him right from the very beginning, so it will depend upon Him after their death or end.*” **Al-Awwal** الأول means nothing in creation existed before Him, as He created everything. The explanation of the Attribute **Al-Bâtin** الباطن is to be found in verses 51:20-21 where we read, “There are signs on the earth for the people of knowledge and firm faith, and signs in your own person. Have you no eyes to perceive?”

يَوْمَ يُقُولُ الْمُنَافِقُونَ وَالْمُنَافِقَاتُ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا انظُرُونَا نَقْبَسْ مِنْ نُورِكُمْ قَلِيلٌ
اَرْجِعُو وَرَاءَكُمْ فَالْتَّمِسُوا نُورًا فَضُرِبَ بَيْنَهُمْ بِسُورٍ لَّهُ بَابٌ بَاطِنَهُ فِيهِ
الرَّحْمَةُ وَظَاهِرُهُ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ الْعَذَابُ

57:13 The expression used to address the dwellers of Paradise, “*Wait for us,*” indicates that in Paradise, spiritual growth will not stop and souls will continue to pass through an evolutionary process. Their ranks will continuously and gradually rise.

فَالْيَوْمَ لَا يُؤْخَذُ مِنْكُمْ فَدْيَةٌ وَلَا مِنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ۚ مَأْوَىكُمُ النَّارُ ۖ هِيَ
مَوْلَاكُمْ ۖ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ

57:15 It is significant to note that here the word “comrade” or “friend” or “friendly protector” (مُوْلَأَكُمْ) has been used for the punishment of Fire in the Hereafter. It may mean here that the Fire of the hell will make them fit for Paradise and spiritual progress, and thus “hell” will prove itself friendly to them, meaning thereby that the phase in the hell will be a remedial phase and a wholesome training. It is not a display of vengeance and retaliation by the All-Merciful. At another place in the Holy Qur'an, hell is spoken of as performing the duties of a nourishing mother for the sinful persons (101:9), that is to say,

providing them a means of making spiritual advancement and opportunities of reformation till they are completely clean of the taint of sin and undergo what can be described as a rebirth. In this way, hell is like a mother, who punishes only in order to educate and train, but in no case to torture or destroy.

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الصَّدِيقُونَ ۝ وَالشُّهَدَاءُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ لَهُمْ أَجْرٌ هُمْ وَنُورٌ هُمْ ۝

57:19 According to Qur'anic terminology **al-Siddiqûn** – the Truthful are next to the prophethood and occupy a position above all other believers. The Truthful one (صَدِيق) is, in a way, possessor of the spiritual capacities of a prophet and is to be followed as an example of a person of prophetic knowledge. He is looked upon as the spiritual descendant of a prophet as Abû Bakr **Siddîq**^(rz) (cf. 5:75; 5:119; 12:46; 19:56). The expression - “*They will have their full reward and their light*” points to their special position and rank.

اَعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا لَعْبٌ وَلَهُوَ وَزِينَةٌ وَتَفَاخُرٌ بَيْنَكُمْ وَتَكَاثُرٌ فِي
الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأُوْلَادِ ۝ كَمَثَلِ غَيْثٍ أَعْجَبَ الْكُفَّارَ بِبَأْثَهُ ثُمَّ يَهِيجُ فَتَرَاهُ مُصْفَرًّا
ثُمَّ يَكُونُ حُطَامًا ۝ وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرَضْوَانٌ ۝
وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَتَاعُ الْغُرُورِ

57:20 Five ethical teachings are presented here:

- 1) to refrain from frivolous pursuits (لَعْبٌ) that cause undue exhaustion
- 2) to refrain from useless pastimes (لَوْقٌ) that make one neglect moral values and indulge in the pursuit of transitory material pleasures as the life span is short
- 3) to remain watchful against outward affectation and show of ornaments of body (زِينَةٌ); neither showing off the bodies themselves nor fancy clothes that are worn.
- 4) to refrain from boasting and feeling proud and haughty (تَفَاخُرٌ);

5) to resist competing with others in children and accumulating wealth, and not to be greedy after things others possess (تَكَاثُرٌ فِي الْأَمْوَالِ) (وَالْأَوْلَادِ).

The verse describes the worldly life in a beautiful metaphor -Life “is like the rain, the vegetation produced through it pleases the cultivators. Then it blooms and flourishes so that you can see it turn yellow. Then (there comes a time when) it becomes (worthless) chaff”.

سَابِقُوا إِلَىٰ مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٌ عَرْضُهَا كَعَرْضِ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ
أَعِدَّتْ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ذَلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتَيْهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ ذُو
الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ

57:21 As the extensiveness of Paradise is described as beyond the heaven and the earth it would indicate that Paradise is not already somewhere in the creation yet. It can also be understood that Paradise is not only in the heavens, but also extends to the earth. The righteous start tasting this “Paradise” already during their life span on this earth.

مَا أَصَابَ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مِّنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ
تَنْزَلَهَا

57:22 One should not doubt the reward of ones efforts, thinking that fate has been sealed before ones birth and nothing can happen contrary to that, believing that there is absolutely no use in striving for something. In the verse, the word **Kitâb** كِتَابٍ signifies Divine Law. The verse means that everything is subject to a certain law of nature, and that the causes and cures of miseries and afflictions that befall individuals and nations have been mentioned in the Holy Qur’ân.

لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلًاٍ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَنْزَلْنَا مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْمِيزَانَ لِيُقُومَ النَّاسُ
بِالْقِسْطِ

57:25 Here **al-Mîzân** المِيزَان with its definite article “*al*” stands for *Sunnah Ibâdiyah* or the injunctions as practiced by the Holy Prophet (pbuh) to be an example of the right use and implementation of the Commandments of Allâh as outlined in the Holy Qur’ân.

وَجَعَلْنَا فِي قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ رَأْفَةً وَرَحْمَةً أَبْتَدَعُوهَا مَا كَتَبْنَا هَا
عَلَيْهِمْ إِلَّا ابْتِغَاءَ رِضْوَانِ اللَّهِ فَمَا رَعَوْهَا حَقٌّ رَعَيْتَهَا ۝ فَاتَّبَعْنَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
مِنْهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ ۝ وَكَثِيرٌ مِنْهُمْ فَاسِقُونَ

57:27 The monasticism practiced by the early Christians incorporated wisdom that was not brought by the Prophets. “*Yet We duly rewarded such of them*” as a good deal of this practice was in harmony with the Divine determination, although Allâh did not prescribe it for them. Thus Allâh, although unknown to them through the message of the Apostles, opened the doors of Mercy in their hearts. Their endeavours were not vain, thanks to Allâh’s Mercy. This Mercy was only for those who practiced it in a sincere way in order to achieve Allâh’s blessings. The Qur’ânic teaching is contrary to the practice of monasticism, as we read in verse 7:32 “Who has made unlawful Allâh’s beautiful things of adornment and elegance, which He has produced for His servants and the delicious and pure things of His providing? The fact is, they are primarily meant for the believers in this life”...and again in verse 23:51, “Eat of things that are clean and pure and do good works”.



58. CHAPTER سورة المجادلة

The Pleading Woman

(Revealed after Hijrah)

The preceding chapter dealt with wars that led to the rise and fall of nations, including that of Islamic nations, summarized in verse 57:22 in the words: “No disaster befalls either on the earth or in your own selves but it forms part of the Divine Law before We bring it into being.” This chapter emphasizes the importance of the central administration and social reforms during times of unrest. In this context, there is sharp censure of the ways of the Jews and those of the hypocrites. Here we are told that Allâh in His grace listens even to a weak woman when she pleads and quarrels over some factual truths. However, since these Jews and the hypocrites do not stand upon truth, their feuds and quarrels were all based upon falsehood, so Allâh is heedless of them and does not listen to them. Some verses in the second section of the chapter refer to the secret plots and conspiracies against Islam by the Jews and the hypocrites. Then there is a reference to the expulsion of the three Jewish tribes from Madînah because of their secret plots and fights against the Muslims and the Holy Prophet (pbuh). Here, the formation of secret societies with the purpose of creating anarchy is strongly condemned.

قَدْ سَمِعَ اللَّهُ قَوْلُ الَّتِي نُجَادِلُكَ فِي زَوْجِهَا وَتَشْتَكِي إِلَى اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ يَسْمَعُ
تَحَاوُرَكُمَا

58:1 According to the Islamic Books of Traditions the woman whose petition was heard by Allâh was Khoulah, daughter of Tha‘lab. Her husband Aus bin Sâmit had said to her in his anger, “You are as unlawful to me as the back of my mother”. This practice was called zihâr ظهار. In old Arab custom, when zihâr was announced, all

conjugal relations between the husband and his wife ceased and the wife remained as a suspended woman, neither divorced nor enjoying the status of a wife. Khoulah came to the Holy Prophet (pbuh), complained to him of her situation, and sought his help. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) pleaded his inability to do anything for her, as it was his habit that he would not give his decision on matters where there was no Qur'anic injunction. Khoulah in the height of her frustration began to call for Allâh's help, raising piteous cries in prayer. Thereupon the verses were revealed to the Holy Prophet (pbuh) in which the evil practice of zihâr ظهار was sharply denounced.

وَالَّذِينَ يُظَاهِرُونَ مِنْ نِسَائِهِمْ ثُمَّ يَعُودُونَ لِمَا قَالُوا فَتَحْرِيرٌ رَقْبَةٍ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَتَمَاسَّا ۝ ذَلِكُمْ ثُوَّاعِظُونَ بِهِ

58:3 Those who call their wives mothers, then retract their words, must atone for this heinous moral lapse, and in such cases make the prescribed expiation before re-establishing conjugal relations (Bahr 6.410). The Qur'anic teachings aim to inculcate in human beings excellent morality and institute a society of individuals possessed of sublime moral character.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا قِيلَ لَكُمْ تَفَسَّحُوا فِي الْمَجَالِسِ فَافْسَحُوا يَفْسَحَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ ۝ وَإِذَا قِيلَ اشْرُوا فَانشُرُوا يَرْفَعَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ أَوْتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ

58:11 Commenting on this verse Râzî writes, It indicates that if one widens the means of well-being towards Allâh's creatures, Allâh will widen for him all that is good. Literally, the word **al-Majâlis** المَجَالِس refers to the assemblies held by the Holy Prophet (pbuh), when his Companions would throng around him in their eagerness to listen to him and to the congregations in the Mosques. However, since the noun **Majâlis** مَجَالِس is in plural, it refers according to Râzî, also to the human society as a whole. Ibn Jarîr says that the word **Inshazû** انشُرُوا

also means that, whoever is called openly to do a good deed, should respond to this call. The believers should spend some money in charity on the poor before going to read the Holy Qur'ân for consultation of their daily affairs. This commandment has not been rescinded; however, it is not obligatory, but optional and preferable.



سورة الحشر 59. CHAPTER

The Banishment

(Revealed after Hijrah)

Hashra حشر means to gather people at a place and then send them towards another place. It refers to the banishment of the Jews and the hypocrites from Madînah and several other places of dwelling. Chapter 33 deals in detail with this subject matter. The preceding chapter dealt with the mischiefs and the machinations of some Jews against Islam and embodied a prophecy that since some of these people belonged to the satanic league; they would certainly be humbled before the sublime and powerful message brought by the Prophet of Islam. The present chapter describes an example of the fulfilment of the above prophecy.

هُوَ الَّذِي أَخْرَجَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ لِأَوَّلِ الْحَشْرِ ۚ مَا
ظَنَّنْتُمْ أَنْ يَخْرُجُوا ۖ وَظَنُّوا أَنَّهُمْ مَانِعُهُمْ حُصُونُهُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّهُمْ اللَّهُ مِنْ
حَيْثُ لَمْ يَحْتَسِبُوا ۖ وَقَدْ فَرِيقُهُمْ بِالرُّغْبَةِ ۗ يُخْرِجُونَ بُيُوتَهُمْ بِأَيْدِيهِمْ
وَأَيْدِي الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فَاعْتَرُوا يَا أُولَئِي الْأَبْصَارِ

59:2 This verse informs us about the banishments and expulsions of Jews from their places of settlement in different countries of the

world. Islamic history tells us that the Jewish tribe of Banû Nadzîr was expelled from Madînah because under their leader Ka'b bin Ashraf, they had secretly hatched plots against the state of Madînah and entered into a secret pact with the disbelievers of Makkah against the Muslims. Thus **Al-Hashr** الحشر, in the first instance, signifies this banishment of the Banû Nadzîr a few months after the battle of Uhud, in the year 4 A.H. The words “*the first banishment*” (الأول الحشر) denote that other banishments were destined for the Jews to follow. ‘Umar^(rz) bin Khattâb banished the Jewish tribes from Khaibar. The Bible also contains a prophecy that the Jews would suffer banishments (Deut.18.23). The statement, “*He struck their hearts with terror and they demolished their houses with their own hands*” can be taken literally and metaphorically. Metaphorically it would also mean that the Holy Qur’ân shall disqualify their own religion as they will not find arguments to support their dogmas.

وَلَوْلَا أَنْ كَتَبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْجَلَاءَ لَعَذَّبْهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا ۖ

59:3 If the Jews are not banished from time to time from their places of dwellings, they will suffer other Divine punishments at the hands of nations. We are told this is because of their claims of being the “chosen ones of God”. An argument is provided here - If they are right in their claim, “*why then are they punished ever repeatedly in this world*” through the hands of other people? Their sufferings are much greater than the sufferings of any other nation in human history.

مَا قَطْعَنْتُمْ مِنْ لِينَةً أَوْ تَرَكْتُمُوهَا قَائِمَةً عَلَىٰ أَصُولِهَا فَإِذَا نَادَنَ اللَّهُ وَلِيُخْرِي
الْفَاسِقِينَ

59:5 “*You cut down no palm-tree (of theirs) bearing small dates of inferior quality*” is in the first instance a reference to the cutting down of some of the palm trees belonging to Banû Nadzîr whose dates were of inferior quality and unfit for human consumption (Al-Roudz-al Unf). The cutting of trees was also needed for implementing a strategy

of warfare (Zurqâni). The basic message is that apart from stringent military exigencies, the destruction of any property, including vegetation—even if it is of inferior quality—of the enemy on their land is prohibited. (Ibn Jarîr; Baghawî; Ibn Kathîr).

كَيْ لَا يَكُونَ دُولَةً بَيْنَ الْأَغْنِيَاءِ مِنْكُمْ

59:7-10 The statement, “*That (wealth) should not circulate among your rich people*” lays down the basic principle of social economics and justice. The less privileged groups of a society are described in this and the following four verses. In most societies the wealth is in the hands of few, but because this wealth has been created through the labor of both the rich and the poor, the less privileged should also benefit from the wealth of the rich. This social justice principle was introduced by Islam in the teachings of the Holy Qur’ân and not by any western revolutionary like Marx or Lenin, who taught corrupted forms of this basic principle. It is significant to note that the wealth of the rich is neither condemned nor are any limitations laid on them.

لَأَنْتُمْ أَشَدُّ رَهْبَةً فِي صُدُورِهِمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ

59:13 The verses opening word **la-antum** (لَا تُنْهِمْ) is identical with the Arabic word *lantum*, which in the Qur’ânic script is always written as *la-antum* لَا تُنْهِمْ. This example of writing is a strong and invariable proof of guarding, protecting and preserving of the Holy Qur’ân in its original form, even if something seems to be found therein against the current rules of grammar and proper usage. The later generations of course have made no change or alteration in this unusual form of writing. The promise about the protection and preservation of the Qur’ân made in 15:9 has been remarkably fulfilled in this way also.

كَمِثْلِ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ قَرِيبًا

59:15 “*Immediate predecessors*” مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ قَرِيبًا is a reference to Banū Qainuqa, another Jewish tribe of Madīnah who took up arms against the Muslims in Madīnah after the Battle of Badr. After their defeat, they were banished just as the Jewish tribe Banū Nadzîr was later banished.

هُوَ اللَّهُ الْخَالِقُ الْبَارِئُ الْمُصَوِّرُ ۖ لَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ ۚ يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۖ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

59:24 If we ponder over these verses we will find a vivid sketch of the remarkable Attributes of Allâh. He is the Creator (الخالق), the Maker and the Originator (البارئ), and the Fashioner (المصوّر) of human being in different shapes, colours and temperaments. The human mind is in fact unable to grasp the Essence of Divine Attributes. Therefore, Praised be He Who becomes distant and approaches, who rises and descends (يسُبّح لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ), He whom the human mind knows in accordance with his intellect, knowledge and reckoning.



سورة الممتحنة 60. CHAPTER

Woman who is to be examined

(Revealed after Hijrah)

Muslims had to fight several wars, so here some further rules and regulations in the times of conflict are laid down. The chapter opens with an emphatic probationary injunction to Muslims against having intimate relations and friendly correspondence with disbelievers who are allied with those who are already at war with the Muslims. The hidden intention of such ties and intimacy may be to spy on the affairs of the Muslims by their foe. Here our attention is specially drawn to

the practice of Prophet Abraham who strictly dissociated himself from all his near relatives and left his place of birth. Spying in older times was mostly carried out through women. Muslims are advised to test women who proclaim to embrace Islam before trusting them or even marrying them. The Companions of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) abided by this instruction so strictly that their Makkhan opponents remained unaware of the Muslims advancing forces until they reached the outskirts of Makkah. This chapter, at the same time, lays down the principles of maintaining friendly cooperation with the disbelievers.

لَا يَنْهَاكُمُ اللَّهُ عَنِ الدِّينِ لَمْ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَلَمْ يُخْرُجُوكُمْ مِّن دِيَارِكُمْ أَنْ تَبَرُّو هُمْ وَتُقْسِطُوا إِلَيْهِمْ ۝ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ

60:8 The injunction to be kind to those who have not waged war against Muslims because of their religion and have not turned them out of their homes is the basis of international relations between Muslim states and non-Muslim states. This injunction is based on justice and mutual respect. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) himself acted accordingly with the Jewish tribe of Banū Hâris and the Christian tribe of Banū Najrân who entered into a friendly treaty with the Muslims.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِذَا جَاءَكَ الْمُؤْمِنَاتُ يُبَأِعْنَكَ عَلَىٰ أَن لَا يُشْرِكُنَّ بِاللَّهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَسْرُقْنَ وَلَا يَرْبِّنَ وَلَا يَقْتُلْنَ أَوْلَادَهُنَّ وَلَا يَأْتِنَ بِبُهْتَانٍ يَفْرَرُنَّ إِذْنَ أَيْدِيهِنَّ وَأَرْجُلَهُنَّ وَلَا يَعْصِيَنَّ فِي مَعْرُوفٍ ۝ فَبَأِعْنَهُنَّ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُنَّ اللَّهُ ۝

60:12 The Muslims are advised to be cautious when entering into intimate relations with women who come as refugees and claim to have converted to Islam. They should be carefully examined since it is possibly that they came as spies. In the past and even today, women were sent in the guise of helpless persons to spy. Similarly, the unbelieving women, when they are in matrimonial relations with the Muslims, may spy for the enemies fighting against the Muslims. In this case the Muslims are advised “not to hold on” to such wives.

سورة الصف 61. CHAPTER

The Ranks

(Revealed after Hijrah)

A number of military battles were imposed on the early Muslims. Verse 13 contains the prophecy of an “early victory”. However, before this eventually happens, the Muslims will have to strive with their wealth and persons in compact ranks as required in verses 4 and 11. The title of this chapter is derived from verse 4, **الَّذِينَ يَقْاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِهِ**, صَفًا

وَإِذْ قَالَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ يَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ إِنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ مُّصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيَّ مِنَ التُّورَةِ وَمُبَشِّرًا بِرَسُولٍ يَاتِي مِنْ بَعْدِي أَسْمُهُ أَحْمَدُ ۖ فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ بِالْبُيُّنَاتِ قَالُوا هَذَا سِحْرٌ مُّبِينٌ

61:6 The verse mentions a prophecy of Jesus about the advent of an apostle “Ahmad” أَحْمَدُ , which was fulfilled in the person of the Holy Prophet Mu_{hammad} (pbuh). Ah_{mad} أَحْمَدُ is an attributive name of the Holy Prophet. The Holy Prophet of Islam enjoys two distinct attributive names. One is an attribute of glory called *Jalāl* جلال, as implied in his name Mu_{hammad}, which saw its manifestation in his Makkah life. The other attribute is of his dignified position called *Jamāl* جمال, which is an aspect of grace, as implied in his name **Ahmad** (أَحْمَدُ). This was perceptible in his Madinah life. Mu_{hammad} is the result of the Divine Attribute of *Rahmāniyyat* رحمانیت as verse says, “We have sent you as a *Rahmat* (Grace and Blessing) for all humankind” (21:107). The Revelation of the Holy Qur’ān is also His *Rahmāniyyat* as the verse says, “*Al-Rahmān* has taught (and sent) this Qur’ān” (55:1). However, the attributive name **Ahmad** (أَحْمَدُ) is from His Divine Attribute of *Rahīmiyyat* – رحیمت – that is the result of the Prayer of Abraham. In 2:129, we read a prayer of Abraham: “Our

Lord! Raise among them (his progeny) a prophet from them who will read them Your Revelations, and teach them the Book and the Wisdom and purify them”.

This verse refers to a prophecy of Jesus about the advent of Ahmad who would come after him. He would glorify him and testify to his truth. The prophecy of Jesus of the coming of Ahmad (أَحْمَدُ) in the person of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) was in the Books of the Christians at the time of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). He used to recite this verse before his contemporary Christians telling them that his advent had been prophesised in their Holy Book. Modern Christians claim that such a prophecy never existed. It is still to be found in the pages of the Book of John (John 14.15-17; 15.26; 16.7-14) in a modified form. In addition, the Gospel of Barnabas, which was the most authentic Bible in the eyes of the Christians until the year 496 A.D. but was later banned by pope Gelasius, contained this prophecy in even clearer words. In this Gospel, the Greek word Periclyte is used, which means “Ahmad” if translated back into Aramaic. Other translations render it as Illustrious or Praiseworthy. In the Book of John, Periclyte was most likely corrupted to read Paraclete.

The prophecy of Jesus about the coming of the Paraclete as given in John is as follows: “And I will request the Father and he will give you another ‘helper’ (Paraclete, Farqalit, Ahmad, Admirable, Glorified one) to be with you forever, the spirit of the truth (John 14.16-17)”. “However, when that one arrives, the spirit of the truth, he will guide you to all truth” (John 16.26). The term “spirit” here does not mean that the coming one would be a spirit as opposed to a human being. In religious books, the word spirit applies to an inspired person, the possessor of a spiritual communication or revelation. This is why the next sentence of the prophecy containing this expression says, He will guide you into all the truth. How can a ghost-like spirit guide all human beings—or at least all the Christians—to something called “Truth”. Note that “all” the truth can be understood to refer to

Muhammad (pbuh) being the seal of the Prophets and the Qur'anic message he brought as the complete teaching, which will not be added to by later Prophets. Compare the following words in John – “He will not speak of his own impulse, but what things he hears (from God), he shall speak” (John 16:25-26) with the Qur'anic verse - “He does not say anything out of his fanciful desires” (53:4). These words also describe the unique form of the Holy Qur'an as directly revealed speech. The next sentence in John, “But the helper, the holy spirit, which the father will send in my name, that one will teach you all the things and bring back to your mind all the things I told you” (John 14:26). The statement is informing the Christians that they will forget his teachings and that the “helper”, the Holy Spirit will remind them of the teachings they forgot. This applies to the current Christian dogma of atonement, which the Holy Qur'an repeatedly rejects (6:164; 35:18; 39:7; 53:38). We continue to read in John, “I am going away, or the helper will by no means come to you, but if I do go. I will send him to you”. This statement clearly tells us that the helper, the Holy Spirit was not present at the time of Jesus, and only after him this helper is to come. This helper “spirit” cannot be the Holy Ghost, as the spirit of the Holy Ghost was present with Jesus at the time of Baptism. This odd interpretation involving the “Holy Ghost” gained currency only after the church began to regard God as a Trinity with the Holy Ghost being the third of the three.



62. CHAPTER سورة الجمعة

The Congregation

(*Revealed after Hijrah*)

The theme of this chapter is the need for social contacts in the *ummah* (the Muslim community) to enhance mutual understanding and brotherhood and to keep the spirit of brotherhood alive. In order to fulfil this incumbent need of the society, the importance of the congregational (Friday) Prayer is emphasized. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) frequently used to recite this chapter during the congregational Prayer; therefore reciting it on this occasion is a form of following the practice of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). Congregational Prayer is not restricted to cities and large gatherings, but can also be observed by only two people or a few more. The sermon delivered on this occasion must be based on spiritual matters, reminding the audience of their moral obligations and religious duties. The sermon should be in their everyday language, otherwise the audience does not fully comprehend the message addressed to them and the purpose of the sermon is lost. Muslims are enjoined to interrupt their work for the time when the congregational Prayer is performed. Before the Friday Prayer and after it Muslims may, as usual, pursue their daily activities. The concept of the Friday Prayer differs from the Jewish Sabbath or the Christian Sunday and Friday is not, according to this chapter, a work-free holiday.

هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمَمِينَ رَسُولًا مِّنْهُمْ يَنْتُلُ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيَهُمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمْ
الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلِ لِفِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ

62:2 The preceding chapter recalled the prophecy of Jesus about the advent of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). This statement, “Who has raised among the Arabs a grand Messenger” tells us that

the Prophecy of Jesus is fulfilled in the person of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). In 2:129 we read a prayer of Abraham: “Our Lord! Raise among them (his progeny) a prophet from them who will read them Your Revelations, and teach them the Book and the Wisdom and purify them”. This verse is the answer to the supplications of Abraham. Four characteristics are cited here that are to be the duty of this Prophet or any prophet:

- 1) He will provide the arguments of Allâh’s presence (آياتِهِ);
- 2) He will create a community of pure and righteous (بُرَّكَيْهِمْ) who believe in the Divine teachings and follow them (Zakkî);
- 3) He will come forward with a Book and explain to them its contents by his own actions (Sunnah) and words (يُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ);
- 4) He will teach them wisdom (الْحِكْمَةِ).

Lack of any one of these characteristics will make the prophet and his claims doubtful.

This verse refers to the fourfold sacred duty every Divine Reformer is entrusted with. This duty encompasses all aspects of the training of human beings. In fact every Reformer can succeed in his mission only when he prepares by his noble and purifying example a community of sincere, devoted and righteous followers to whom he first teaches the ideals and principles of his Message, their philosophy and importance and then scatters them to preach to other people. The training so imparted to his followers refines their intellect and the philosophy of his teachings engenders in them certainty of faith. His noble example creates in them purity of heart and makes them *Zakî*. It is to these basic facts that the four relevant Attributes of Allâh in the very first verse of the chapter refer. The characteristics of *Zakî* are to be found in Qur’ânic verses like 17:107-109: “Those who have been given the knowledge of this Book fall down on their faces prostrating submissively when it is recited to them, and they say, Glory be to our Lord! The promise of our Lord is really bound to be fulfilled, and they fall down on their faces prostrating and weeping (as they read or listen

to the Divine Words), and this adds to their humility. And Who pass their night for the sake of their Lord prostrating and standing up, and who say, Our Lord, avert from us the punishment of the Gahanna, for its punishment is indeed most vehement and unshakable” (25:64-65). “And they forsake their beds calling upon their Lord with an awe-inspired and hopeful state, and they spend (to purify them) from what We have provided them” (32:16). The followers of Christianity and other creeds have raised the status of a created one to Divine level. Such people cannot compete with the class of people just described.

Some object by asking, “What is the purpose of a teacher if there is already a book?” A Book alone is not sufficient—if this had been the case, no teacher would ever be needed in any subject: everyone could have learned just by reading the book and passing the examination. Other religions also claim to possess their Holy Books. No doubt, these Books contain teachings and messages of high value. However, have these Books alone created followers to be found in Qur’ānic verses 17:107-109, 25:64-65, and 32:16? They could not, also because their followers reject the teachers sent by Allāh from time to time. The case of those who say there is no need of a *Muzakkî* مزكّي the Purifier, is the case of a donkey as described in the following verse 5. **Ummiyīn** أمّ الْأُمَّيَّنِ is the plural of *ummi* أمي and is usually and wrongly translated as “the one who can neither read nor write.” There were certainly many Arabs at the time of the Holy Prophet well versed in reading and writing. The city of Makkah was titled *Umm al-Qur’â* أم القراء (Mother of the cities) and its residents were *ummis*. The Jews at the time of the Holy Prophet used to call those who had no knowledge of their Holy Book (Torah) *ummi*, thus giving the word a dual meaning of being an illiterate, devoid of knowledge, and a Makkan. The suffix *al* ال before *ummi* refers clearly to a particular people (the Makkans) and not in general to humans beings who cannot read nor write. This translation that a “prophet is now sent to the illiterate who can neither read nor write” is highly provocative and objectionable to

the person of the Holy Prophet of Islam since it would imply that only the illiterate can be convinced by Allâh's Messenger.

وَآخَرِينَ مِنْهُمْ لَمَّا يَلْحَقُوا بِهِمْ

62:3 Some commentators of the Holy Qur'ân relate this verse to the “advent” of the Holy Prophet’s teachings in later days. The verse is metaphorical and refers to the great Deputies of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) in the robes of spiritual servants and guides. They will make their appearance in the *ummah* أُمّة (followes of the Holy Prophet [pbuh]). The advent of such persons (called *Mujaddidîn*) has been mentioned in several Traditions of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). These Reformers will revive the teachings of the Holy Qur'ân, they will teach what the Holy Prophet (pbuh) taught and follow the Holy Prophets noble example, and they will be able to prepare a community of teachers, writers and leaders of their age, who will be spreading the light and the learnings of the Holy Qur'ân. They will play a role analogous to the role of the Companions of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) in the early days of Islam. Appearances of Divine teachers in the shape of *Mujaddid* مُجَدِّد (reformer) and *Muzakkî* – مُزَكَّى – the purifiers – is a Divine Law because of the necessity to keep on creating *Muzakkî* (cf. 62:2). This is the meaning of the Prayer we are taught in *al-Fâtihah*, when we recite, “Show us the right path, the path of those whom You have shown your blessings” (*an 'amta 'alaihim an'umta 'alayhim*). Who were the people on whom Allâh showed His grace and blessings? The answer is given in 4:69: “And those who obey Allâh and this Messenger, it is those who are with those upon whom Allâh has bestowed His blessings (*an 'amta 'alaihim an'umta 'alayhim* - the truthful (*saddiq* صَدِيق), the bearers of testimony (*shâhid* شَاهِد), the martyrs (*shahîd* شَهِيد) and the righteous (*muttaqî* مُتَّقٍ)”. Another answer is given in verse 19:58. In 2:85 the believers are addressed with the words. “You believe in a part of the Book and refuse to believe in the other part,” conveys the message that accepting the

Imâms of the era, the *Mujaddad* or the *Muzakkî* is a requirement for the Muslim. Calling them liars would be a grave mistake.

There is yet another argument that necessitates the Reformers (*Mujaddad*). We read therein: “Their prophet will say, My Lord! My people have abandoned even this Qur’ân (25:30)”. It cannot be that our Lord will not send new teachers who shall remind the Muslim of the Qur’ânic teachings and reform the decrepit corruption in the final and true religion chosen by Allâh. These teachers will not be new Prophets; rather they will revive and give new life to the Religion chosen by the All-Mighty Creator for His best creation.

مَثُلُ الَّذِينَ حَمَلُوا التَّوْرَاةَ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَحْمِلُوهَا كَمَثُلَ الْحِمَارِ يَحْمِلُ أَسْفَارًا ۚ بِئْسَ
مَثُلُ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ كَدَبُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ

62:5 In this verse, by implication, the Muslims are warned against behaving like the Jews when the Deputy of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) appears among them. It also conveys the message that the Muslims should not make Friday a work-free holiday just as the Jews have made Sabbath their resting day.

فُلْ يا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ هَادُوا إِن زَعَمْتُمْ أَنَّكُمْ أُولَيَاءُ اللَّهِ مِنْ دُونِ النَّاسِ فَتَمَنَّوْا
الْمَوْتَ إِن كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

62:6 “Express your wish for death” (فَتَمَنَّوْا الْمَوْتَ) is a challenge to the Jews and the Christians on their claim that they are the chosen ones, and loved ones, and sons of God (ref: 5:18). The word “death” does not refer to physical death, but to the death of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) and/or his mission or teachings. The protection of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) and his mission is guaranteed in the words, “And Allâh will protect you (- the Prophet) from the onslights of the people” (5:67).

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا نُودِيَ لِلصَّلَاةِ مِنْ يَوْمِ الْجُمُعَةِ فَلَا سُعْدُوا إِلَى ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ
وَدَرُّوا الْبَيْعَ ۚ ذَلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

62:9 al-Jumu‘ah الجُمُعة means the special or the particular gathering. This may be a reference to the gathering on Fridays, or a gathering behind a *Muzakki* – purifier, which is a spiritual gathering. The meaning may also include the great gathering on the Day of Resurrection, which verse 18:99 وَنُفَخَ فِي الصُّورِ فَجَمَعْنَاهُمْ جَمْعاً refers. The words that follow apply to all three types of gatherings. Attendance at the *Jumu‘ah* (- the gathering) Prayer is obligatory. As soon as the call to this Prayer is sounded, Muslims should leave their business and hasten to the Mosque. In other words, business activity before the call of the Friday Prayer may not to be abandoned. Moreover, when the Prayer is finished then they should disperse in the land and seek of Allâh’s grace in their businesses and in their efforts of earning their livelihood. “*And when the Prayer is finished, disperse in the land and seek Allâh’s grace and bounty*” فَإِذَا قُضِيَتِ الصَّلَاةُ فَانشِرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَابْتُلُوا جُمُعةٌ in the next verse means the business after the *Jumu‘ah* Prayer should be continued and not *can* be continued. There is no clause of choice in this verse. The Muslim countries that make Friday a day off work are not acting according to this Qur’ânic injunction. Unlike the Jewish Sabbats or Christian Sundays, for Muslims, Friday is not a day of rest. Before and after the Friday Prayer Muslims are exhorted to follow their daily activities.

وَإِذَا رَأَوْا تِجَارَةً أَوْ لَهْوًا افْتَضُوا إِلَيْهَا وَتَرَكُوكَ قَائِمًا ۝ فُلْ مَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ مِّنَ اللَّهُو وَمِنَ النِّجَارَةِ ۝ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الرَّازِقِينَ

69:11 The words “*When some people see amusement or merchandise, they leave you standing on the pulpit*” hint that at some time, there will be a craze for trade and a stampede for worldly gains and other pursuits and enjoyments, so that the preacher in the pulpit will be left standing with little or no audience. Here is an exhortation and a warning to Muslims not to allow worldly affairs to distract their attention from performing their religious obligations.



سورة المنافقون 63. CHAPTER

The Hypocrites

(*Revealed after Hijrah*)

This is the 63rd. chapter, revealed when the appointed time of the Holy Prophet's death was approaching. He died at the age of 63. The last verse of this chapter (وَلَن يُؤْخِرَ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِذَا حَانَ أَجَلُهَا) refers to his demise. This chapter is followed by the chapter Al-Taghâbun—the manifestation of loss, which expresses great regrets at the passing away of a man of such a highly exalted position who was Allâh's viceregent on earth. The chapter completes the subject matter of the preceding chapter and elucidates the fact that too much engrossment in worldly affairs and involvement in material interests makes one a hypocrite—therefore the name of the chapter. In this connection, Jews and some other enemies of Islam have been mentioned.

وَإِذَا رَأَيْتَهُمْ تُعْجِبُكَ أَجْسَامُهُمْ ۖ وَإِن يَقُولُوا تَسْمَعْ لِقَوْلِهِمْ ۖ كَانُوهُمْ خُشُبٌ
مُسَنَّدٌ ۖ يَحْسَبُونَ كُلَّ صَيْحَةٍ عَلَيْهِمْ ۖ هُمُ الْعَدُوُ فَاحْذَرُهُمْ

63:4 **Khushubun Musannadah** are “Wooden statues”. According to *Imâm Râghib*, the expression is used for a person who is completely devoid of the sense of shame. **Musannadah** مُسَنَّدَة is derived from *sanada* سَنَد - a thing or person upon or against whom one leans or rests (*Lisân; Tâj*). Thus, the expression also indicates that a hypocrite lacks self-reliance. He is always in search of someone to rest or lean on. These words describe the personality of a hypocrite in a metaphorical way. The hypocrite appears outwardly to be reasonable, dignified and honest but inwardly he is hollow and rotten to the core.

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْا يَسْتَغْفِرُ لَكُمْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ لَوْلَا رُءُوسَهُمْ وَرَأْيَتُهُمْ يَصُدُّونَ
وَهُمْ مُسْتَكِبُرُونَ

63:5 Lawwou Ra'usa-hum - لَوْلَا رُءُوسَهُمْ they turn their heads aside. This verse serves as an example of giving up all respect for something by the hypocrites (Lisân). “And you see them keeping others (also) back, while they swell big with pride” are two other characteristics of the hypocrites.



سورة التغابن 64. CHAPTER

The Manifestation of Loss

(Revealed after Hijrah)

In continuation of the preceding chapter, the believers are told that they can make up for remissions if they discharge their obligations to Allâh and their fellow beings by giving unquestioned obedience to the Commandments of Allâh and by spending liberally in the cause of Truth ; فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ وَاسْمَعُوا وَأطِيعُوا وَأَنْفَقُوا خَيْرًا لِأَنفُسِكُمْ (verse 16). In this chapter, the Muslims are repeatedly exhorted to show reverence to Allâh and guard against evil. If we do not do so, mere observance of outward laws is of no use.

Only a man of keen spiritual insight like Abû Bakr^(rz) can grasp that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) will breathe his last breath when he reaches the age of only 63 years, since the number of this chapter is sixty-three. The same type of conclusion was drawn by Ibn 'Abbâs from the chapter 110 (Al-Nasr) with regard to the demise the Holy Prophet (pbuh).

يُسَبِّحُ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ ۖ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

64:1 “*To Him belongs all sovereignty and the Kingdom*” reminds us that no one can escape Him, as His Kingdom is everywhere (cf. 55:33) and no corner of His creation is left where His Supreme Power and His Law does not reach. The verse also negates the prayer of Christians, “Thy kingdom come”. Emmet Fox (1886-1951) says that the words, “Thy kingdom come” mean that that it is our duty to be ever occupied in helping to establish the ‘Kingdom of God’ on earth. The Holy Qur’ân tells us here that the Kingdom of Allâh, the Creator, is already established, and His every creation is occupied in glorifying Him. The verse continues to reject the Christian prayer, “Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth, as it is in heaven” with the following words, “*He is the Possessor of Power to do every desired thing*”. In fact, verses 1-4 are a continued refutation of the main Christian prayer. How can a Lord hear a prayer if his kingdom is not on the earth and He is not able to execute His will and His will is still not being done?

إِنَّمَا أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَأَوْلَادُكُمْ فِتْنَةٌ

64:15 To translate this verse only literally as “Some of your possessions and your children are enemies to you” will lose the object of moral training intended by Allâh. The verse carries the wider sense that sometimes a person becomes remiss in the performance of his duties to Allâh and to humankind because of the bonds of relationship and his being busy with pursuing his obligations towards his family. It is in this sense and in such cases, his near relations become a kind of trial for him. The better translation should be, “*Verily, your possessions and your children are a means to reveal your hidden Attributes.*”



سورة الطلاق 65. CHAPTER

The Divorce

(*Revealed after Hijrah*)

This chapter and the chapter al-Tahrîm deals with and completes the discussion on the subject of divorce. Divorce is also topic of chapter al-Baqarah. The Jews and the Christians had adopted extremes in matters of divorce. In Judaism, divorce was illegal unless a woman was found guilty of adultery and in Catholicism; divorce was not possible at all. In contrast, the pagan Arabs imposed no rules on it whatsoever. This chapter presents a moderate solution for this important social problem. In the preceding chapter, a note of warning was given regarding some of the wives and children, as sometimes they tend to become an impediment in the cause of Truth. This may possibly lead to estrangement between the husband and wife, and ultimately to divorce. It was therefore necessary to lay down the correct procedure for divorce.

The Holy Prophet (pbuh) said, “In the sight of Allâh the most hateful of all allowable things is divorce”. Thus, divorce is the last resort when it becomes evident that nothing can save the marriage. The pronouncement of divorce should be made in the interval between two monthly courses. This course of action shows that the decision of divorce is taken after cool deliberate and reflection. A divorced wife remains in her house until the expiration of the ‘iddat - the period of waiting – to make reconciliation possible. (cf. 2:226-230).

After the closing of the topic of divorce, the subject passes on to the defiance of the Divine Commandments. Those who defy Allâh’s commandments effectively divorce themselves from Allâh’s grace. The connecting link between the two subjects is that the *ummah* is likened or compared to a woman. Thus, we are told that, just as a

husband by nature has the power to exercise influence over his wife, so has a Messenger of Allâh been spiritually endowed to influence his community and the *ummah* in its turn has been so formed as if by nature to accept the influence exercised by a Divine Messenger. In this way a very subtle similarity exists between the divorce of a woman from her husband and the defiance of a human being regarding Divine Commandments. This subject is further discussed in detail in verse 10 of the next chapter.

65:2-5 In these verses, Allâh gives five promises to the righteous (*Muttaqî*): منْقِي

- 1) Allâh will always make a way out of his ordeals and difficulties وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلُ لَهُ مَحْرَجاً
- 2) Allâh will provide him sustenance from where he least expects وَيَرْزُقُهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْسِبُ
- 3) Allâh will fulfil all his needs; وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلُ لَهُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِ يُسْرًا
- 4) Allâh will provide facility in all his affairs وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يُكَفِّرُ عَنْهُ سَيِّئَاتِهِ وَيُعَظِّمُ لَهُ أَجْرًا
- 5) Allâh will rid him of all the evil consequences of his sins and misdeeds. Allâh calls these promises His Command.

رَسُولًا يَتَّلُو عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ مُبَيِّنَاتٍ لِّيُخْرِجَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ

65:11 “He brings out of all kinds of darknesses those who believe and do good deeds”. The “darknesses” (الظُّلُمَاتِ) are of many kinds. It is the darkness in the stomach of the mother, darknesses of illiteracy, ignorance, bad habits (gambling, addiction, alcohol etc.), darkness of traditions, and the darkness of weakness in character such as breaking promises or telling lies.

الَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ وَمِنَ الْأَرْضِ مِتْلَهُنَّ

65:12 The number “seven” (*sab'a* سُبْعَ in classical Arabic idiom stands for “many” (Tâj, Lisân, Lane). Thus, Allâh has created many heavens and many earths similar to our earth (وَمِنَ الْأَرْضِ مِثْلُهُنَّ).



سورة التحرير 66. CHAPTER

The Prohibition

(*Revealed after Hijrah*)

The preceding chapter dealt with some aspects of permanent separation between husband and wife. This chapter deals with temporary separation in cases wherein a man, due to some disagreement or conflict, temporarily gives up lawful conjugal relations with his wife. This is the final of ten Madinite chapters, which began with chapter 57 *Al-Hadid*.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ لَمْ يُحَرِّمْ مَا أَحَلَ اللَّهُ لَكَ ○ تَبَتَّغِي مَرْضَاتَ أَزْوَاجِكَ

66:1 It has been related in *Bukhârî* on the authority of ‘Umar^(rz) that the theme of this chapter is based upon an incident in the life of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). The Holy Prophet (pbuh) temporarily separated himself from his wives. The books of *Bukhârî* and of Abû Muslim relate this verse to another incident in the life of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). It is said that once the Holy Prophet (pbuh) enjoyed a drink containing honey in the house of Zainab, his cousin’s wife. His wife ‘Âishah^(rz), daughter of Abû Bakr^(rz) and Hafsa^(rz), daughter of ‘Umar^(rz) taunted that they sensed a bad smell coming from the mouth of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). Thereupon he decided to avoid drinks containing honey in the future.

Without a clarification from this verse, suspension of conjugal relations and temporary separation from the wife would have become “*sunnah*” – a kind of Islamic law. Though it was an injunction addressed personally to the Holy Prophet (pbuh), it applies to his followers as well. It is said that in a situation of disharmony extreme measures should not be resorted to, and that such disharmony and other similar cases of friction between husbands and wives are inconsistent with the exalted interests of a Muslim society.

وَإِذْ أَسَرَ النَّبِيُّ إِلَى بَعْضِ أَرْوَاحِهِ حَدَّيْنَا فَلَمَّا نَبَأَتْ بِهِ وَأَظْهَرَهُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ
عَرَفَ بَعْضَهُ وَأَعْرَضَ عَنْ بَعْضٍ فَلَمَّا نَبَأَهَا بِهِ قَالَتْ مَنْ أَنْبَأَكَ هَذَا
قَالَ نَبَأَنِي الْعَلِيمُ الْحَبِيرُ

66:3 The verse mentions another incident in the life of the Holy Prophet. According to the Books of Traditions, it is stated that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) said something personal to Hafsa^(rz), which concerned only her. Hafsa^(rz) disclosed it to ‘Aishah^(rz). A group of Sunni Muslims say that the secret information was that Abû Bakr^(rz) is going to be the next leader of the Muslims after the demise of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). The Shî‘a community claims that it was said that ‘Alî^(rz) should be the *Khalifa* of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). There is no Tradition that any of the two – ‘Aishah^(rz) and Hafsa^(rz) – conveyed the contents of this “secret talk” further. There is no Tradition to support the claims of any of the two schools of thoughts – the Sunnis and the Shî‘a s. It may be that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) expressed his love in some gentle words spoken into the ears of his wife.

إِن تَتُوْبَا إِلَى اللَّهِ فَقَدْ صَغَّتْ قُلُوبُكُمَا

66:4 “*Both of you*” refer to the two wives of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) – ‘Aisha^(rz) and Hafsa^(rz).

مُسْلِمَاتٍ مُؤْمِنَاتٍ قَانِتَاتٍ ثَائِبَاتٍ عَابِدَاتٍ سَائِحَاتٍ ثَيَّبَاتٍ وَأَبْكَارًا

66:5 This verse mentions the qualities “*submissive (to Allâh), faithful, obedient, penitent, devout (worshippers of God), given to fasting*” that were found in the wives of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), and suggests believing women should emulate these qualities.

نُورُهُمْ يَسْعَىٰ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَبِأَيْمَانِهِمْ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا أَتَمْ لَنَا نُورَنَا وَاغْفِرْ لَنَا

66:8 The statement, “Their light will advance swiftly (radiating) in front of them and on their right hands while they will go on (praying and) saying, Our Lord! Perfect our light for us and protect us” points out that the ‘Afterlife’ will not be of inaction. To the contrary, spiritual progress and advancement will know no end and will continue ceaselessly (cf. 67:2).

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ جَاهِدُ الْكُفَّارَ وَالْمُنَافِقِينَ وَاغْلُظْ عَلَيْهِمْ ۝ وَمَا وَاهِمْ جَهَنَّمْ ۝

66:9 “*Strive hard against the disbelievers and the hypocrites and be stern with them*” is a Divine Commandment. This verse was known and well understood by ‘Alî^(rz) and Fâtima^(rz). If Abû Bakr^(rz) and ‘Umar^(rz) were hypocrites, as some Shî‘a believe, then ‘Alî^(rz) and Fâtima^(rz) would have waged “Jihad” against these two.

ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا لِّلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا امْرَأَتَ نُوحٍ وَامْرَأَتَ لُوطٍ ۝ كَانَتَا تَحْتَ عَنْدِيْنِ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا صَالِحِيْنَ فَخَانَتُهُمَا فَلَمْ يُغْنِيَا عَنْهُمَا مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْيًّا وَقَيْلَ ادْخَلَ النَّارَ مَعَ الدَّاخِلِيْنَ

66:10 **Khânatâ-humâ** means variously, “They acted treacherously; they defrauded; they opposed; they spoke against” (Lisân, Lane, Tâj). Here, the wives of two Prophets are mentioned who opposed the Divine messages of the Prophets of their time. A disbeliever is compared with the wives of Noah and of Lot, who acted treacherously so that the companionship of righteous men—even of Prophets of Allâh—did not benefit them. This shows that even the

near ones of virtuous people cannot escape the consequences of their evil deeds.

وَضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا لِّلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا امْرَأَتَ فِرْعَوْنَ إِذْ قَالَتْ رَبُّ ابْنٍ لِّي عِنْدَكَ بَيْتًا فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَأَنْجَنِي مِنْ فِرْعَوْنَ وَعَمَلِهِ وَأَنْجَنِي مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ

66:11 The “wife of Pharaoh” represents those believers who, though passionately desiring and praying fervently to Allâh to get rid of sins, cannot fully dissociate themselves from evil influences. The self-accusing soul sometimes fails and falters. By mentioning the Pharaohs wife, the believers are advised to keep on praying and desiring to dissociate themselves from the wrongdoing people.

وَمَرْيَمَ ابْنَتَ عِمْرَانَ الَّتِي أَحْصَنَتْ فَرْجَهَا فَنَفَخْنَا فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِنَا وَصَدَقَتْ بِكَلِمَاتِ رَبِّهَا وَكُتُبِهِ وَكَانَتْ مِنَ الْفَاغِتِينَ

66:12 Here, the believer is compared to Mary. She represents the righteous servants of Allâh, who have closed all avenues of sin and made peace with Allâh. Such a servant is blessed with Divine Revelation. This personal pronoun **fihi** فيه him is the believer for whom Mary is set as an example. The parable illustrates how Divine Revelation is granted to some of Allâh’s servants, although they are not Prophets of Allâh. The verse also tells us that such a person will be like Mary and then Allâh will infuse His **Rûh** رُوح in them and they will become like Jesus. The verse clearly informs us that in the *ummah* of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), there will be people—both men and women—like Mary, who will guard their chastity, be devoted to prayers, declare faith in the Scripture and because of being an obedient servant of Allâh will receive the blessings of Divine Revelations (see **Rûh** in 16:2; 32:9; 38:72; 42:52; 16:102; 2:253; 2:87; 5:110; 58:22; 26:193; 4:171). This promise has been given in the very first chapter of al-Fâtihâh in the words, “Show us the path of those whom you bestowed your Mercy”.

سورة الملك

67. CHAPTER The Supreme Kingdom and Supreme Power (Revealed before Hijrah)

With this chapter begins a new group of forty-eight chapters which extend to the end of the Qur'ân. With the exception of chapter 110 (*Al-Nasr*), they are all from the Makkah period. All these chapters exhibit a special majesty and grandeur, the beauty of rhythm and the charm of brevity. It is not possible to describe in so short a space all of the shining qualities of these chapters, which captivate the human spirit, and to describe the impact they leave on the human heart if it reflects on them. This group of chapters generally but very eloquently deals with matters of belief, the existence of the Supreme Being and His Glorious Attributes, the prophethood, the Resurrection and life after death.

In this chapter, special reference is made to the Divine Attribute, *al-Râhmân* - الرَّحْمَن - the Most Gracious. The chapter opens by proclaiming the Lordship, the Sovereignty and the Omnipotence of Allâh. Towards the end of the second verse, two more Attributes of Allâh – the Mighty (*Al-'Azîz*) and the Most-Forgiving (*Al-Ghafîr*) – are mentioned. *Al 'Azîz* claims supremacy and sovereignty for His Prophets and the believers over their opponents. *Al-Ghafîr* demands over-looking and ignoring of the allegations attributed to His Messengers and the believers by their opponents and demands to protect from them from their onslaughts. The chapter ends with the words, “*It is He Who is the Most Gracious*، *الرَّحْمَن*، *in Him we believe and in Him we put our trust*”.

There is a saying of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) that reciting this chapter entitled one to inherit Paradise and become deserving of Allâh's grace and bounties, and secure against the lawful punishment of the grave.

This is all true, but it does not at all mean that the reader may go on repeating the words without pondering over their meaning and not acting upon its contents. Mere words of the Holy Qur'ân, no doubt have their own manifold Divine blessings and spiritual influences, so one should make the proper use of them, but the real purpose behind the recitation of this chapter is that one should fully realize its implications and try to achieve the very purpose of its Revelation.

تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي بِيَدِهِ الْمُلْكُ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

67:1 Tabâraka – تَبَارَكَ Blessed is the One Who is a continuous and permanent source of whatever is good for His creation, Who himself is in no need of any good, and who is independent, and not acting under any law, as He Himself is the Law-Giver. *Baraka* برَكَ possess the sense of firmness, continuity, steadiness, abundance, exaltation. This is a part of the Divine Attribute of *Rahmânîyyat*, which is explained in verses 2-5 and verses 19-24.

الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ لِيَنْهَا كُمْ أَكْمَنْ عَمَلاً وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْغَفُورُ

67:2 The purpose underlying the physical death and life after death is explained here, keeping in view the inborn and natural desire of the human being to live forever. In order to satisfy this desire, Allâh has, in all His Wisdom, allowed souls to survive after the death of the physical body, and the soul shall take, after resurrection, another type of body. Thus, the death is of greater significance, since it opens to a human being the door of an everlasting life and continued unending progress (cf. 66:8). The life on earth is therefore a temporary sojourn and a preparation for a permanent and everlasting life beyond the grave. One should note in this verse the sequence; first comes the word ‘death’ (المُوت), which is followed by the word ‘life’ (الْحَيَاة). The mention of death and thereafter life also alludes that Allâh sends His messengers to bring the spiritually dead to life, and the nations are

raised to life when the Prophets come (see also 8:24 for the meaning of “life”). Another explanation is that present life is the preparation for an examination as the verse 49:3 states that Allâh examines the hearts of the believers so that they attain piety (- *taqwa*). After death, we see the result and reward of the endeavours of this life.

لَذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ طِبَاقًا مَّا تَرَى فِي خَلْقِ الرَّحْمَنِ مِنْ تَفَاقُتٍ
فَارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ هُنَّ تَرَى مِنْ فُطُورٍ

67:3 Sab'a – سَبْعَ – seven, in the sense of many (cf. 65:12). **Tibâqâ** طِبَاقًا – one over the other, similar to the rolls of the scrolls of a book (cf. 21:104). Allâh's creation is wonderful indeed. We see how vast, varied and orderly are hundreds of millions of systems of which our solar system and our cosmos are just one. They are so wisely arranged and distributed in relation to one another that there runs a beautiful order and harmony in them and no incongruity or flaw is visible there. It all implies that the flawless creation of the universe and the beautiful order that pervades the cosmos are proofs of His existence and that He has created the human being to serve a sublime purpose and to achieve a sublime goal. It also signifies that all the basic requirements of a human beings material life depend upon the heavens, as for example, no physical life can exist without water or sunlight from the heaven, and so the spiritual life needs for its sustenance the heavenly water of Divine Revelation.

وَلَقَدْ زَيَّنَا السَّمَاءَ الدُّنْيَا بِمَصَابِيحَ وَجَعَلْنَاهَا رُجُومًا لِّشَيَاطِينٍ وَأَعْتَدْنَا
لَهُمْ عَذَابَ السَّعِيرِ

67:5 The three words **Rajûm** رُجُومًا and **Shayâṭîn** شَيَاطِينٍ and **Sa'îr** السَّعِير need explanation. The translation of this verse becomes confused if the in-depth meanings of these words are ignored. *Rajam* رَجَمَ means throwing stones at random. It also means conjectures, as conjectures are like throwing of stones at random. The word is derived from

rajama ÁUi meaning to stone (Lisân, Tâj, Lane). *Shaitân* is something that harms people, something that creates trouble. The word should not be translated as devil (see also 2:36). *Shayâtîn*, its plural form, means things that are harmful to the people (*Qâmûs*, Jauharî, Lane, Tâj, Lisân). Here in the verse the plural form has been used, so it should not be confused with the word *satan*. *Sa’îr* means flaming fire, kindled fire, blaze, flame. *Sa’îr* is derived from *s’ara* سَعَرَ - to kindle fire; create trouble (Lisân, Tâj, Lane). The verse gives us a clue into some cosmic laws. We learn that in our cosmic world, which is adorned with stars, and “decked fair for the beholders” (cf.: 15:16) there are meteorites that are stones thrown at random intervals” and that when they reach the earth can harm the people. Therefore, they are destroyed by a flaming fire. This is an example of Divine grace of Mercy (*Rahmâniyyat*). A meteorite is a natural stone originating in outer space that survives an impact with the earth’s surface. While in space, it is called a meteoroid. When it enters the earth’s atmosphere, impact pressure causes the body to heat up and emit light, thus forming a fireball, also known as a meteor or shooting star. Most meteoroids disintegrate because of the heat and blaze when entering the earth’s atmosphere. However, a number ranging in size from marbles to basketballs or larger do reach the earth’s surface sometimes. Some Divine blessing behind these phenomena serves as a kind of protection and a continuous source of benefit for human beings. The trace elements they contain are fertilizer for the earth as the verse 15:19 also indicates. Ibn Kathîr says there are two kinds of protections behind the shooting stars – the physical protection of the earth from destruction by the meteorite and the spiritual protection of the earth by the advent of a Prophet or Divine reformer. This meaning is supported in the verse 72:10. It is a known historical fact that at the time of the advent of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), shooting stars were observed in large numbers.

Some other cosmic laws have been pointed out in 15:16-20. There we read “We have indeed set up constellations in the heaven, and we have

decked it fair for the beholders, and We have guarded it against the intrusion of every rejected, harmful (thing).” Verses 15:16-18, 37:10-11 and 72:10-11 deal with the same subject matter. There are more verses such as 77:1-9, and 79:1-8 that convey similar information.

Some commentators explain this verse as saying that, astrologists and conjecture makers use the stars to make their random guesses, that Allâh dislikes this practice and that they will be punished for this practice.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَخْشُونَ رَبَّهُم بِالْغَيْبِ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرٌ كَبِيرٌ

67:12 *الَّذِينَ يَخْشُونَ رَبَّهُم* is commonly translated as, *those who fear their Lord*. This fear is not the fear of a lamb before a wolf. The true believer knows from certainty that the security is from Allâh. The one who fears stays close to his Lord and is under His protection. His heart finds peace through His nearness. The Divine nearness is such that Allâh causes them to fear Him with a fear different from the fear humans have of lions and tyrants. He reveals to His servants that the pleasure and ease are from Him. His Lord reveals to His servants with His exquisite beauty, and the servant is afraid of losing the attention of His Lord. Whosoever really fears the torment of the Hereafter and the Day of Judgment standing before the Absolute Judge, cannot but act in accordance with the pleasure of the great Creator. “Allâh cautions you against His retribution” (3:27), He says: “He knows what is in your minds” (2:235). The fear of Allâh is a protection (*maghfirat* مَغْفِرَةٌ) from the harms of our misdeeds and His protection is the strongest of all protections, and there is a great reward for the Divine nearness with Allâh (**Ajarun Kabîr**). “Fear Allâh and fear the fire” (3:130-131) is His Command (see also 55:46).

أَلَا يَعْلَمُ مَنْ خَلَقَ وَهُوَ اللَّطِيفُ الْحَسِيرُ

الْخَيْرُ **الْلَطِيفُ** and **الْخَابِرُ** **الْحَبِيرُ**

67:14 Two Divine Attributes – **Al-Latîf** اللَّطِيفُ and **Al-Khabîr** الْخَابِرُ have a relation to the creation. A creator must know well what he is going to create beforehand, and the knowledge of the abstruse and the subtle is a prerequisite.

هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ دَلْوًا فَامْشُوا فِي مَنَاكِبِهَا وَكُلُوا مِنْ رِزْقِهِ
وَإِلَيْهِ النُّشُورُ

67:15 Dhalûlân دَلْوًا is derived from *dhallâ* ذَلَّ and is something that carries the burden. **Dhalûl** ذَلُولٌ is an animal that carries a burden and moves (Tâj, Lisân, Lane). **Dhalûlân** دَلْوًا points to the moving earth that carries a huge burden. **Munâkib** مناكس is derived from *nakaba* نَكَبَ It is something that is spacious and at the same time deviated and oblique. This can be applied to our earth and to the cosmic earths (cf. 65:12).

أَمِنْتُمْ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاءِ أَنْ يَخْسِفَ بِكُمُ الْأَرْضَ فَإِذَا هِيَ تَمُورُ

67:16 Mann fi Samâ' مَنْ فِي السَّمَاءِ is usually translated as the One Who is in the heaven. This translation is misleading, as it will limit Allâh to the heaven only. It will be contrary to the statement “Allâh encompasses everything” (41:54). **Samâ'** السَّمَاءِ is not heaven, but something that is above. Allâh is above all, so the correct rendering should be “The One Who is above all with all His Attributes”.



سورة القلم

68. CHAPTER The Pen (Revealed before Hijrah)

In the preceding chapter, attention was drawn to Divine grace of Mercy (*Rahmâniyyat*) in the Heavenly kingdom, and on people irrespective of their origin or faith. This chapter continues with other examples of Divine Grace, namely the Holy Qur’ân (cf. 55:1-2) and the bringer of the Holy Qur’ân (cf. 21:107). The Holy Qur’ân is, like the spacious universe, a spiritual universe, an ocean without shore, in which lie hidden treasures of spiritual knowledge and sources of wisdom, which are revealed to people according to the needs of the time. The Chapter opens with a great prophecy that the knowledge—spiritual as well as scientific—will continue to advance and the writings and books shall spread widely. The chapter also mentions some examples of human behaviour (verses 9-15) disliked by Allâh.

نَ وَالْقَمْ وَمَا يَسْطُرُونَ

68:1 Ibn Mas‘ûd and his two students Hasan and Qatadah regard that the letter *Nûn* ن here stands for inkstand. The context, which mentions the pen and writing, clearly supports this interpretation. Ibn ‘Abbâs considers the meaning of *Nûn* ن to be fish as mentioned in the same chapter. *Imâm Râzî* supports the view of Ibn ‘Abbâs. There is a viewpoint that *Nûn* ن is not an abbreviation, but a complete word meaning both – ink-stand or fish

“The Pen” وَالْقَمْ indicate the spread of knowledge through “*ink and pen*”. The Holy Qur’ân is what has been written from this ink and pen, and its safety and security has been guaranteed by the Writer (cf.: 15:9). It is not any pen (*qalam* قلم) but it is “the Pen” (*Al-Qalam* الْقَمْ). Allâh has created in His vast kingdom a holy element, a “grand Pen”

(الْقَلْمَنْ), which He cites as witness. When the “grand Pen” moves on the sacred guarded Tablet (52:2), it writes what no one else can write, and no one can change what is written. The “Pen” writes the commands of the Lord and His Divine Will. What is then written reaches humankind and is shared by all. What is written is distributed in all corners of the world, because its origin is from “High above”.

مَا أَنْتَ بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّكَ بِمَجْنُونٍ

68:2 The Prophets of Allâh were always referred to as “mad” (مجونٌ) by their opponents and the Holy Prophet (pbuh) was no exception to it. With the advancement of the knowledge, the absurdities of the charge of madness attributed to the Holy Prophet (pbuh) will be expounded upon and he will be declared the sane and wise. The actions of a mad man lack balance, order or arrangement, so they fail to produce abiding and useful results, but not the Words uttered from the mouth of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). The Holy Qur’ân will bear testimony that he was not mad as stated in this verse.

وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ

68:4 We fully realize that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) is the sublimest of men, possessed of all those moral excellences which makes him a perfect image of his Creator (cf.: 33:21). The All-Mighty Allâh Himself testifies to this in this verse. He is the complete embodiment of all the good and virtuous qualities a human is ever capable of possessing. His far-sightedness, courage, forgiveness, open heartedness and immense spiritual knowledge testify to his being **Khulq ‘Azîm** – خُلُقٌ عَظِيمٌ – possessing an “outstandingly high standard of moral excellence”. ‘Aishah^(rz), the wife of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), testified, the Prophet possessed all those moral excellences that are mentioned in the Holy Qur’ân (Bukhârî).

يَوْمَ يُكْشَفُ عَنْ سَاقٍ وَيُدَعَوْنَ إِلَى السُّجُودِ فَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ

68:42 *Yakshafu 'ann Sâqi* يُكُشَّفُ عَنْ سَاقٍ is an idiom of classical Arabic meaning “to be exposed, be in a state of agitation, restlessness of mind and disturbances” (see also 27:44). The Arabic idiom *kashafat al-Harb 'ann sâqi* الحرب عن ساق means a state of agitation and restlessness during a battle. Literally, *Sâq* ساق means shank or lower leg and *Yakshafu 'ann Sâqî* يُكُشَّفُ عَنْ سَاقٍ gets the literal translation, when the lower leg is exposed to express a state of confusion, and restlessness of mind (cf. 27:44). The idiomatic use of the word *Sâq* is explained in more detail in the chapter of Al-Qiyâmah (75:24-29). Some commentators are of the opinion that *Yakshafu 'ann Sâq* يُكُشَّفُ عَنْ ساق is a Divine Attribute on the Day of Resurrection when Allâh will expose Himself. This does not mean that He will become visible to the people, but people will recognize Him as the All-Mighty Supreme Being.



سورة الحاقة 69. CHAPTER

The Sure and Inevitable Great Reality

(*Revealed before Hijrah*)

Al-Hâqqah الحَاقَةُ is the sure inevitable Reality. The word is repeated twice; therefore, it must have a dual meaning. In its first meaning, it refers to the final overthrow of disbelief. This meaning is supported by the verses that follow (verses from 4 to 12). With this meaning *Al-Hâqqah* الحَاقَةُ is a prophecy. Another meaning of *Al-Hâqqah* الحَاقَةُ refers to the inevitable Reality of the Day of Resurrection as the verse 15 and verses that follow indicate. After these mighty announcements the subject matter of the previous chapter is continued. The preceding chapter stated that Prophets of Allâh are no mad persons as the signs

and qualities of madness are not to be found in them, and that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) was not an exception. Here it is told that he was neither a poet nor a soothsayer but an “honourable Messenger” (Verse 40-43). At the end of the chapter, a mighty word *le-Haqq al-Yaqîn* - لحق اليقين - “With the absolute Truth and with the Reality” are used for the Holy Qur’ân.

وَالْمَلَكُ عَلَى أَرْجَائِهَا ۝ وَيَحْمِلُ عَرْشَ رَبِّكَ فَوْقَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ ثَمَانِيَّةٌ

69:17 In this verse we learn about the “*Throne of your Lord and its eight bearers*”. “The Throne of the Lord” (عَرْشَ رَبِّكَ) is a figure of speech. It does not signify any place that is physically created. “Whichever way we may turn our face, we will find Allâh” (2:115) and, “He is nearby indeed” (2:186). His Throne (*al-Arsh*) is the symbol of His Power and Rule, His Might, His ability to control, His Authority, His Dominion and His Mastery. The word expresses Allâh’s state of Holy Supremacy - that is, when His Attribute of Holiness (*Quddûssiyat*) covers up all His other Attributes, placing Him far beyond every reach, totally hidden. In His Divine words, “The Most Gracious (*al-Rahmân*) is firmly and flawlessly established on His Throne of Power” (20:5), *Astawâ* اسْتَوَى الرَّحْمَنُ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ اسْتَوَى stands for the flawlessness, and perfection in all aspects of Divine Attributes - beyond what a human being can imagine. Thus, *al-Arsh* عَرْشٌ and *Astawâ* are the Attributes relating to His transcendence (*Sifât al-Tanzîh*) of Allâh. For the declaration of His Attributes of resemblance (*Sifât al-Tashbih*), the Holy Qur’ân mentions – “He is All-Seeing, He is All-Hearing” (42:11), and then to remove the suspicion of resemblance, it states that there is nothing like unto Him. If we insist only on His Attributes of resemblance, we restrict Him. If we insist only on His Attributes of transcendence, we limit Him again. If we accept both aspects, we are right (43:80-82). We see Him in the essences of things both boundless and limited. Allâh’s countenance is the mirror of both these Attributes.

The four Divine Attributes of *Rabûbîyyat*, *Rahmânîyyat*, *Rahîmîyyat* and *Mâlikîyyat* mentioned in the very first chapter of the Holy Book are upholding His throne here in this present world and they are in full operation. In the Hereafter, these four Attributes shall continue to operate. Thus the operation of each of these Attributes will be displayed doubly and thus appear as eight. "The eight Divine Attributes on the Day of Resurrection shall be bearing the Throne of Power of your Lord." (69:17). Here are the Attributes of the transcendence (*Sifât al-Tanzîh*) of Allâh. The Attributes of transcendence (*Sifât al-Tanzîh*) and of resemblance (*Sifât al-Tashbîh*) has nothing to do with His essence but rather are for the purification of our own essence as we are the focus of His essence.

ثُمَّ فِي سِلْسِلَةٍ ذَرْعُهَا سِبْعُونَ ذِرَاعًا فَاسْكُوْهُ

69:32 The “chain the length of which is seventy cubits” is a long chain of the low desires and sensual passions in which rebellious are indulged and entangled. The number also refers to seventy years, an average life span of a human being, which will assume the form of fetters for him in the life to come.

وَلَوْ تَقُولَ عَلَيْنَا بَعْضَ الْأَقَاوِيلِ

69:44-46 This verse and the following three lay down an excellent standard to test the truthfulness of the claim of any prophethood. The argument is given that if the Holy Prophet (pbuh) had been a forger, Allâh’s strong hand would have seized him by the throat, he would have been under constant curse of Allâh and His people, and he would have certainly met with a violent death and his whole mission would have certainly failed. Such is the fate of a false prophet and of one who fabricates Divine Revelation. It is a special grace conferred on the Holy Prophet (pbuh) that the period of his prophethood has been cited as a test for the truthfulness of his claim and the claims of any true Prophet of Allâh (cf. 72:27).

سورة المعارض 70. CHAPTER

The Ways of Ascent

(Revealed before Hijrah)

Dhî-Ma‘ârij – ذي المعارض – Master of the ways of Ascent is another Divine Attribute cited in verse 4 of this chapter. Verses of this chapter mention some of the important moral values that are required by the human being to be granted the exalted ranks. The ascent to the heights of spiritual perfection will be without end.

تَعْرُجُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَالرُّوحُ إِلَيْهِ فِي يَوْمٍ كَانَ مِقْدَارُهُ خَمْسِينَ أَلْفَ سَنَةً

70:4 The mentioning of the “angels” (الملائكة) and the “Divine Revelation and Manifestation” (الروح) at the same time signify that the development and progress of the human soul will continue, knowing no end. It also describes “the measure of the day” (يوم) as fifty thousand years, referring to the fact that some Divine plans and programs take thousands of years to mature. The length of the Divine “day” according to our measurements is variously mentioned in the Holy Qur’ân. Chapter Al-Sajdah (32:5) gives such a day as being equal to a thousand years and in another verse (97:3) the mention is of a thousand months. It can also be of one day’s duration (34:30). In the sayings of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) a *Mujaddid* - a spiritual Reformer is appointed by Allâh every hundred years. All this is a matter of no great wonder, for we observe many such examples in the laws of nature. We find that some crops become ripened and ready for use in three months and others may take several years before fruits are borne. Again, we see that some of the things such as the oil in the earth take hundreds of thousands of years to become ready for usage. For similar reasons, technical terms like light year have been invented.

It should be mentioned in this connection that Heavenly Books and Divine prophecies and the particular great changes related to them have different fixed periods, epochs and cycles in which they are fulfilled. Some such periods last for a day, others continue for fifty thousand years. When we ponder over the history of Islam and think over the important changes of time we come to realize that there was a period of twenty-three years, a period of Qur'ânic revelation after the expiration of which the Holy Prophet (pbuh) passed away. The second epoch-making period lasted for thirty years when *Khilâfat-i-Râshidah* saw its end with the death of 'Alî^(rz). Then came the revolutionary change in Islamic history with the death of Amîr Mu'âwiah in the seventieth year of Hijrah and no Companion of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) succeeded him as *Khalîfa-i-Râshid*. Similarly, another period of one hundred years elapsed when with end of the Umayyad dynasty the indirect reporting and recording of the Traditions of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) ceased. Then came an era of five hundred years, after that the Arab empire started its decline. Then there ensued a period during which the European nations resorted to establishing trade companies in the world and setting up colonies in foreign lands. This was the time when Gog and Magog came out with their designs to subdue the Muslim nations of the world.



71. CHAPTER سورة نوح
Noah
(Revealed before Hijrah)

The full subject matter of the whole chapter revolves around the events in the lives of Noah and that of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) of Islam. The country of Noah, Nainwah, was situated between the two

rivers - Euphrates and Tigris. This part of the country was visited by a strong flooding. While in the preceding chapter, warning was given to the opponents of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) of the evil consequences of their rejection of the Divine message, the present chapter has confirmed the warning by referring to a great historical event that occurred in the lifetime of Noah.

أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَإِنَّقُوهُ وَأَطِيعُونَ (٣) يَغْفِرْ لَكُم مَّنْ ذُنُوبِكُمْ وَيُؤَخْرِكُمْ إِلَى أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى

71:3-4 Human beings are desirous of being granted a long life. They also pray for wealth and children and at the same time, are wishful for adversities to beset his enemies. The statement آنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَإِنَّقُوهُ وَأَطِيعُونَ presents a very useful and effective prescription for us to try.

وَيُمْدِدُكُم بِالْمُؤْمَنِينَ وَيَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ وَيَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ أَنْهَارًا

71:12 As a result of asking the Divine protection again and again from weaknesses, lapses and wrong doings فَقَلَّتْ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبِّكُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ غَفَارًا (71:10), some rewards are mentioned in this and the following verses.



It was told in the preceding chapter that Noah's exhortation and preaching proved to be a lonely voice in the wilderness and only a few people had given him allegiance. In this chapter we are similarly told that in circumstances of extreme agony when the Holy Prophet (pbuh)

was beset with all sorts of hardships and when the people whom he preached the message of Islam thanked him with nothing but ridicule, opposition, and even persecution, he was given the consolation that the cause of truth would surely be established. The chapter tells us that there existed a similarity between the circumstances of Noah and those of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) of Islam. Towards the end of the chapter, it is stated that the prophecies are an infallible criterion to test the Divine source of the message of a Prophet. It has been further reaffirmed that the Divine Message is above all misconceptions or doubts, since it contains prophecies about great world events which ordinary human knowledge cannot foresee or foretell and that the Messenger succeeds in fulfilling his mission.

The folklorist image of “*jinn*” جن has somewhat obscured the original connotation of the message in this chapter and its significance. *Jinn* give the sense of something hidden, not public. They are not ghosts or spirits as some simple people tend to think. According to the Arabic lexicon, *jinn* are those beings, things or forces, which cannot normally be perceived or seen by common people. The sense of being hidden is implied in the root-verb *janna*, something concealed or covered in darkness; (cf. 6:76 which speaks of Abraham, when the night darkened over him.). Great men also come under the category of *jinn*, as it is not easy for the general public or common folk to meet them. Remote tribes inhabiting the forests, in the mountainous and distant lands are also a kind of *jinn*. Paradise is called *jannat* as it is hidden to us. Similarly, *junnat* is a shield that covers the body in warfare, *janîn* is the child who is still in the belly of the mother, as it cannot be seen and *janûn* is the delusion that covers the sound mind. The “*jinn*” nature (- *iblisîyyat*) seeks to disquiet, whereas the “human” nature (- *insâniyyat*) seeks to set at ease.

In this chapter, a historical event has been described. The prefix “*al*” ^{¾A} before the word *jinn* (الجن) refers to some particular people. **Al-Jinn** mentioned here are human beings (*rijâl*) – رجال

who walk on two feet, term used for human beings), as the verse 6 clarifies. The Jews inhabiting the place of Nasîbin were known as the *Jinns*. They used to visit Ukaaz, a famous trade market of Arabia. At a place known as Nakhlah, while the Holy Prophet (pbuh) was reciting the Qur'ânic verses in one of his morning Prayers, they listened to the Holy Qur'ân. This listening to the Words of Allâh had a tremendous effect on them. For the discussion on *jinn* see verses 6:128; 15:27 and 7:38; refer to 18:50; 27:17; 34:41; 41:25; 46:18; 46:29; 51:56; 55:33; 114:6.

فُلْ أُوحِيَ إِلَيَّ أَنَّهُ اسْتَمَعَ نَفْرٌ مِّنَ الْجِنِّ فَقَالُوا إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا قُرْآنًا عَجِبًا

72:1 It is stated that a party of the *Jinn* - a people not known to the Holy Prophet (pbuh), visited him, listened to the Holy Qur'ân and believed in him. It was a time of great dismay for the Holy Prophet (pbuh).

وَأَنَّهُ كَانَ رِجَالٌ مِّنَ الْإِنْسِ يَعْوِذُونَ بِرِجَالٍ مِّنَ الْجِنِّ فَزَادُوهُمْ رَهْقًا

72:6 The words **Rijâl minn al-Ins** (رِجَالٌ مِّنَ الْإِنْسِ) and the suffix “al” before the word *jinn* refutes further that “jinn” are something like supernatural beings but are simply walking human beings (*rijâl*). (رِجَالٌ).

وَأَنَّا لَمَسْنَا السَّمَاءَ فَوَجَدْنَاهَا مُلِئْتُ حَرَسًا شَدِيدًا وَشُهُبًا

72:8 Lamas-nâ لَمَسْنَا is from *lamasa* لَمَسْ meaning to seek something without obtaining it or unable to touch it, whereas *massa* مَوْسَى is something that can be obtained and felt with the senses of touch. **Muli'at** مُلِئْتُ from *malâ'* مَلَءَ signifies fullness, something that fills with awe and attraction. The chiefs are called *malâ'un* مَلَءَ as they fill the eyes of ordinary people with awe and attraction. **Harasa** حَرَسًا means to guard strongly. **Shadidâ** شَدِيدًا is something that is tightly bound (like the power of gravitation), something violent, severe,

strong, terrible and stern. The word is derived from *shadda* - to bind tightly, strap firmly, hard and strongly. **Shahâb** شَهَابٌ is a comet, a small body that orbits the sun and, when close enough to the sun, exhibits a visible coma or a tail from the effects of solar radiation upon the comets nucleus. Comets have their own orbital periods, ranging from a few years to hundreds of thousands of years, while some are believed to pass through the inner solar system only once before being thrown out into interstellar space. Short-period comets are thought to originate near the orbit of Neptune and long-period comets are believed to originate at a much greater distance from the sun, in a cloud consisting of debris left over from the condensation of the solar nebula. If the comets path crosses earth's path, then there are meteor showers as the earth passes through the trail of debris. The comet-like bodies in the outer solar system may number millions. The number of naked-eye comets averages roughly one per year. When a historically bright or notable naked-eye comet is witnessed by many people, it may be termed a Great Comet. The expression used in this verse and the following refer to the quest of getting knowledge on some cosmic observations and laws.

وَأَنَا كُنَّا نَفْعُدُ مِنْهَا مَقَاعِدَ لِلسمْعِ فَمَنْ يَسْتَمِعُ الْآنَ يَجِدُ لَهُ شِهَابًا رَّصَدًا

72:9 Rasada رَّصَدٌ – to watch, to lie in wait, observe **Maqâ'id** مقاعِد – observatory, place of observation. Here the mention is of places of observation, not necessarily the observatories of the movement of stars.

In the above two verses and the following verses, the “jinns” were particularly Jews described as righteous (cf. verse 11) people of learning, who were busy in observing the laws of physics in space. These verses and also verses 37:10-11, 67:5 and 72:10-11 deal with the same subject matter. There are more verses in the Holy Qur'an that convey similar information when their in-depth meanings are taken into consideration. They are verses 77:1-9, and 79:1-8.

وَأَنَّ الْمَسَاجِدَ لِلَّهِ فَلَا تَدْعُوا مَعَ اللَّهِ أَحَدًا

72:18 The initial words of this verse are usually translated as, “the Mosques are for Allâh”. This is a simple meaning, but the in-depth translation should be, “*the hands, and the feet are there to prostrate before Allâh*”.

وَأَنَّهُ لَمَّا قَامَ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ يَدْعُوهُ كَادُوا يَكُونُونَ عَلَيْهِ لِبَ

72:19 “And when Allâh’s servant stands up calling to Him”; here *Abdullah* – عَبْدُ اللَّهِ – Here the servant of Allâh is the Holy Prophet (pbuh). He is called “His servant” in verses 17:1 and 25:1.

إِلَّا مَنْ ارْتَضَى مِنْ رَسُولٍ فَإِنَّهُ يَسْلُكُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِ رَصَدًا

72:27 The words, “*He orders an escort of (guarding angels) to go before him and behind him*” embodies incontestable prophecy that a special Divine protection is granted to Allâh’s Messenger, and that the great heavenly Revelation brought by the Holy Prophet (pbuh) will be completely secure against being distorted and tampered with for all times to come.



سورة المزمل 73. CHAPTER

The one covering himself up
(Revealed before Hijrah)

In this chapter, special attention is drawn to devoting a part of the night to *Tahajjud* - getting up at night for Prayer, for this Prayer is a strong means of activating human power to rise to spiritual eminence. The latter part of the night has a special connection with the awakening of the soul to imbibe the Divine blessings. Prayer and

remembrance of Allâh in the solitude and the calm of the night is the most effective means to draw Divine attention. In the stillness and solitude, peace prevails and one being alone with Allâh avails special communion with Him. The time is most eminently suited for making all behests and requests from Him who listens, grants and bestows His choicest blessings. When the mind is illuminated with heavenly light, it helps us to develop strength of character and makes our speech sane, solid and sound while imploring Allâh.

يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُرْزَّلُ

73:1 Al-Muzzammil المَرْأَلُ is the one wrapped in his garments to get ready to perform his prayer. The famous commentator Akramah says that title means the one who is to carry a heavy responsibility of preaching the Divine message to the world. The name given to the chapter signifies both concepts.



سورة المدثر 74. CHAPTER

One Endowed with Excellent Capacities

(*Revealed before Hijrah*)

Al-Muddaththar المَدْتَرُ is a person who is endowed with capacities of excellent standard; one adorned with the best moral powers and qualities and prophetic dignity (see *Rûh al-Ma'âni*). **Al-Muddaththar** المَدْتَرُ is derived from *dâihâr* iBQe - a cloth worn over the clothes that touch the body. Thus, literally Al-Muddaththar also means a person who is wrapped up in a mantle. Al-Muddaththar and Al-Muzzammal المَرْأَلُ have similar meanings. All these epithets fittingly apply to the Holy Prophet (pbuh). In the preceding chapter, the Holy Prophet

(pbuh) and the believers were enjoined to devote themselves to *Tahajjud Prayer*. The present chapter complements the subject of the preceding one. While Al-Muzzammal informs us of the means of achieving sublime status of spiritual perfection, Al-Muddaththar المدثر tells us the result of such an effort.

يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَدْثُرُ (١) قُمْ فَانذِرْ (٢) وَرَبَّكَ فَكَبِّرْ (٣) ۝ وَثِيَابَكَ فَطَهِّرْ (٤)
وَالرُّجْزَ فَاهْجُرْ (٥) وَلَا تَمْنُنْ شَسْكُثْرُ (٦) وَلِرَبِّكَ فَاصْبِرْ

74:1-7 These verses were the second revelation to the Holy Prophet (pbuh) after chapter 96. The use of the word Al-Muddaththar المدثر for the Holy Prophet points to the fact that there is absolutely no use in always remaining wrapped up in the mantle (*Muzzammal* مُزَمْمَل) and praying, but there is also a time to stand up and attend to the strenuous duties and responsibilities of a Prophet. **Qum** قُمْ – Arise! Stand up! This was the second Divine Command given to the Holy Prophet (pbuh) after *Iqra* اقْرَا Read! That is why Muslim sermons are always in a standing position. The third Command was **Unzur** أَنذِرْ – Warn! The fourth command was to announce the supremacy of the Lord (- **Kabbir** كَبِّرْ). *Allâh Akbar* is pronounced daily in five *Adzâns* (ÆAgA - call for Prayer) six times each, and before *Aqâma* أَقَاما -standing up for prayer) and during the movements of the Prayer. This all is in accordance with this command وَثِيَابَكَ فَطَهِّرْ (and purify your clothes). **Thiyâb** ثياب has also the meaning of “heart” and “spirit” (Lane). It also means put your works in order. Cleanliness and Purity (*al-Tahhar*) is an Attribute of God. It is of two kinds in human beings, the first is the physical purity and cleanliness of the body - in particular specific places of the body, there is no disagreement and dispute about it and the other is the cleanliness of the heart.

دَرْنِي وَمِنْ حَلْفُتْ وَحِيدًا

74:10 Wahîd وَحِيدٌ is the one who is without parallel; unique in properties; the created one. Here it refers to unthankful human beings endowed with wealth and sons.

عَلَيْهَا تِسْعَةُ عَشَرَ

74:30 In explaining this verse, most commentators are of the view that *nineteen that are the keepers of the Hell* is a parable that is illustrated in the next verse. According to Râzî, the number nineteen refers to the number of human qualities, which are to be used to purge sin in us. We have here a reference to the nineteen physical, intellectual and emotional powers within us. We are endowed with nine major senses, i.e. five senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch), one proprioceptive sense of position in space and the senses arising from internal organs relating to hunger, thirst and sexuality. These, coupled with their nine spiritual counterparts together with a guardian or controlling sense - the will-power, which dominates and controls all these different faculties of human nature, are the nineteen guardians of Hell. The foregoing verses (5-25) mention nineteen evils that need to be purged in order to attain purity. The Qur'ânic teachings aim at disciplining these semi-autonomous functions. The neglect and misuse of these nineteen angelic fine qualities is the root of all sins and suffering in the Hereafter. They are spoken of as wardens of the Fire of Hell.

كَلَّا وَالْقَمَرُ (٣٢) وَاللَّيْلُ إِذْ أَدْبَرَ (٣٣) وَالصُّبْحُ إِذَا أَسْفَرَ

74:32-34 In these three verses there is the earliest Qur'ânic instance of the particle *wa* و used in the sense of an oath-like assertion. A call to witness is meant to give weight to a subsequently stated truth or the evidence of the truth. Here the truth to be stressed is that of the changing phases of the moon and the alternation of night and day, which is the outcome of Allâh's given natural laws, so the sinners

suffering in the Hereafter is but a natural outcome of his deliberate negligence of those above-mentioned nineteen qualities.

وَمَا يَذْكُرُونَ إِلَّا أَن يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ هُوَ أَهْلُ النَّقْوَىٰ وَأَهْلُ الْمَغْفِرَةِ

74:56 In this last verse and the previous verse, attention has been drawn to the last of the nineteen wardens - the free will of the human being. In order to be rightly guided one should be willing to follow the ways and means enjoined by Allâh for our guidance. Here it does not at all mean that a human being is simply obliged to conform his own will to the will of Allâh. In spite of his own free will, he will subordinate all of his desires to the Divine Will.



سورة القيامة 75. CHAPTER

The Resurrection

(*Revealed before Hijrah*)

After the subject of Divine Unity, His Divinity and His Law of Revelation, the most important subject is the subject of the life after death. In fact, it is the belief in the Hereafter that is the true motive behind all our virtuous deeds and the refusal to believe is the root cause of all evils. The name of the chapter, **Al-Qiyâmah** - the Day of Resurrection, is mentioned in the very first verse. It deals with the subject of Resurrection and gives arguments, which affirm that it will undoubtedly take place. The Revelation of the Holy Qur'ân and the fulfilment of all those prophecies mentioned in it are cited as a proofs concerning the validity and reality of the Hereafter.

لَا أُفْسِمُ بِيَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ

75:1 لَا لَا is a negation. Some translators are of the opinion that the word *lâ* لَا is an unnecessary addition without any function. This is not the case, No word is without purpose in Divine Revelations. Here *lâ* لَا is the negation of the “claim by the disbelievers that they will not be raised” (cf. 64:7).

وَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِالنَّفْسِ اللَّوَامَةِ

75:2 *Nafs al-Lawwâmah* نفس اللوامة is the self-accusing and self-reproaching soul. *Nafs al-Lawwâmah* نفس اللوامة is cited as the proof that the Day of Resurrection is bound to take place. Every human being, naturally enough, knows that he may be caught because of his misdeeds and his crimes, and if caught, he will not go unpunished. Similarly, we should fear the day when we will be called to account for all our actions, however hidden they might be in this life. Thus, when the conscience of a person is awakened to upbraid him for doing bad deeds and retrain his passions and appetites, the *Nafs al-Lawwâmah* stands in the way and whispers fear of the punishment of the day when he will be called to account. Thus, the awakening of the *Nafs al-Lawwâmah* is the first stage and preliminary step towards the development of spiritual life. It is the beginning of moral resurrection and therefore is an evidence of the final Resurrection. *Nafs al-Lawwâmah* is an inborn, natural feeling of abhorrence of sin and a belief that a human being has to account for it, that is he must be repaid for his actions, both good and ill.

بَلْ يُرِيدُ الْإِنْسَانُ لِيَفْجُرَ أَمَامَهُ

75:5 Now, the fact remains to be considered is to why a person, in spite of the warnings by the *Nafs al-Lawwâmah*, the voice of his conscience and self-accusation, refuses to believe in the Resurrection. This verse provides us with the answer: His denial of Resurrection is because a human being likes to continue in his evil ways in the life that is before him without fearing the consequences of his deeds. To

remain absorbed in a sinful life is easier to manoeuvre like a downhill track, and his denial of Resurrection helps him to continue on this easy track (cf. 92:10). The path of virtuous deeds is on the other hand the uphill path. If we listen to the “soul” which has given its promise (cf. 7:172), and follow what it whispers inside of us, then we will find ourselves obeying what Allâh commands and forbids. It is by hearing the voice of *Nafs al-Lawwâmah* that we are with Divine Harmony.

وَخَسَقَ الْقَمَرُ

75:8 At the eclipse of the moon, darkness hides all that was visible, but when the moon shines again, the reality of the world again becomes visible. This is also a reminder of heedlessness that hides the Reality from a human beings inner eye. Metaphorically “*and the moon will eclipse*” can also refer to the downfall of the Muslim power symbolized by the moon on their banners. Another reference is to the Holy Prophet (pbuh), as he is compared to the moon deriving its light from the real Sun. The eclipse of the moon can also refer to his teachings that will suffer a temporary phase of darkness.

وَجُمِعَ الشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ

75:9 Metaphorically, the sun stands for Divine light and the moon for the Prophets. When the earth faces the moon and the moon faces the sun, the earth receives the light. Similarly, Divine Light like the light of the sun sheds light on the moon and that moon in return shines on the earth at night. The light of the moon is not its own light, but borrowed light from the sun. The uniting of the sun and the moon may also be physical, thus bringing the life in the solar system to an end, heralding in the Day of Resurrection. The expression - *the sun and the moon will be brought together* also refers to the solar eclipse and the lunar eclipse occurring within a very short period of each other. Metaphorically, it may imply the coming together and uniting of nations with the moon as their symbol (on their banners and in their

calendar - which are the Islamic nations), and of most non-Islamic countries with the sun as their symbol of power (on their banners and in their calendar).

يُبَشِّرُ إِلَيْنَا إِنْسَانٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ بِمَا قَدَّمَ وَأَخْرَى

75:13 Qaddama قَدَّمَ are the acts that were not to be performed but were performed. **Akhkhara** أَخْرَى are acts that were ought to be performed that were not performed.

وُجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ نَّاضِرَةٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهَا نَاظِرَةٌ

75:23 “*Some faces will be beaming, looking at their Lord*” is the highest state a servant can reach while treading on the path shown by His Lord. The Lord will appear with His Glory before His servants and His Light shall beam on their faces. This is the state of intimacy and “closeness” to the Lord. Paradise has its ranks (46:19) and the highest rank is that of “the Dunes” (al-Ahqâf). The perfect servant has already ascended to the highest rank of Paradise prepared for him by Him. It is a place of unimaginable awe and amazement where the “faces will be beaming, looking at their Lord”. There are no rivers of “honey”, which is a symbol of healing (16:69), as this servant is already healed, and there is no “milk”, which is a symbol of knowledge, as His selected servant already knows Him. The path treaded by His perfect servant will lead him to the Light of His Uniqueness – *Ahadiyyat* (112:1-3; 46:31). *Ahadiyyat* is a state of realization that there is no other Reality but Allâh. He is the One Who sees, He is the eye. He is the One who will be seen through His own eyes (Shabustari in *Gulshan-i-Râz*). The one who knows, knows Him through the services of a “perfect guide” – His Prophets. These servants treaded on the path shown by the “perfect guide”. Those who do not know their “perfect guide,” will not see Him. “Whosoever remained blind to the Truth in this world shall remain blind in the Hereafter” (17:72; cf. 6:50).

فَلَا صَدَّقَ وَلَا صَلَّى

75:31 lâ Saddaqa - لا صدق - he did not confirm the Truth of Divine Uniqueness (His *Ahadiyyat*). lâ Sallâ – وَلَا صَلَّى – and he did not Pray. The sequences of the words reflect the importance of Saddaqa.

أَوْلَى لَكَ فَأُولَى ثُمَّ أَوْلَى لَكَ فَأُولَى

75:34 Aulâ laka - أَوْلَى لَكَ Woe be to you! These words are repeated four times, twice in this verse and twice in the following. This refers to the double punishment in this world and in the Hereafter because of denying the “Truth” and of not performing the “Prayer” (cf. verse 31).

أَلِيسَ ذَلِكَ بِقَادِرٍ عَلَى أَنْ يُحْيِي الْمَوْتَىٰ

75:40 “Has not such a One the power of raising the (physically and spiritually) dead to life?” The reply should be:

Balâ! Subhân-ka –Allâhuma. Balâ innahû ‘alâ kulli shai’in Qadîr

سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ بِلَيْ إِنَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

“Glorified is my Lord. Surely! He is the Possessor of power to do all that He wills (and desires).”



76. CHAPTER سورة الإنسان

The Human Being

(Revealed before Hijrah)

Another name of this chapter is **Al-Dahar** الْدَّهْر which means a long time past. Both names are derived from the very first verse of this chapter. It informs us that a long time passed on the earth before the human being came into existence. It thus refers to the long process of human evolution starting from an inorganic entity to a germ cell. We were then told that during the process of physical evolution, the great Creator endowed us with various capabilities and faculties and that those who train these natural capabilities and mould their inclinations will advance to develop spiritual powers leading to the inference that their lives have a Divine purpose to serve. He made the human being “hearing and seeing” so that he may find the right guidance towards his Creator, and to realize that the great Creator who created him from an insignificant beginning, possesses the power to give him a new life after his physical death. He can realize that the physical death is not the end of everything but the evolution and progress of souls will continue beyond the grave. The chapter also describes the process of evolution that will take place after the physical death. Thus this chapter continues the subject started in the previous chapter Al-Qiyâmah القِيَامَة.

هَلْ أَتَىٰ عَلَىٰ إِلْهَانَ حِينٌ مِّنَ الدَّهْرِ لَمْ يَكُنْ شَيْئًا مَّذْكُورًا

76:1 Al-Insân الإنسان is usually translated as the human being, but its root is *anisa* أَنِسَ that means to be polite, familiar, and social, have intimate connection; *anasa* أَنْسَ is to be friendly, polite, with feelings of warmth, to have good manners, to perceive things. Here is a mention of a creation with the above characteristics. The particle **hall**

هـ implies the positive meaning of **qad** قد to denote that an endless span of time passed before human beings appeared.

إِنَّا هَدَيْنَاهُ السَّبِيلَ إِمَّا شَاكِرًا وَإِمَّا كَفُورًا

76:3 Free will needs to be rooted in human essence for his physical and spiritual progress. Free will is the endeavour to thank Allâh for His beneficence and predestination is the denial of that beneficence. The spiritually enlightened choose freely to devote themselves to the work of the next world; others choose freely the work of this world. Free will leads to righteousness when exercised by someone who has self-control and who fears the Lord. With self-control and moral safeguards, the spiritual strengths of such a person increases. In the absence of self-discipline and self-control, he loses his will, which leads him to the abyss.

إِنَّا أَعْذَنَا لِلْكَافِرِينَ سَلَاسِلَ وَأَغْلَالًا وَسَعِيرًا

76:4 Three types of punishments for the rejecters of Truth are described here. “Chains and shackles” (سَلَاسِلٌ) are instruments that hinder one from changing, from giving up the wrong path and adopting the right path, and the blazing fire is greed, filthiness, (أَغْلَالٌ) and lust (سَعِيرٌ) as described in 104:6-9.

إِنَّ الْأَبْرَارَ يَسْرَبُونَ مِنْ كَأسٍ كَانَ مِرَاجِهَا كَافُورًا

76:5 *Abrâr* أَبْرَارٌ is derived from *barra* بَرَرَ meaning, “to be just, be truthful, to bestow bountiful gifts, to keep oath, to behave courteously”. From these meanings derive the characteristics of *al-Abrâr* الأَبْرَارُ as described in verses 7-10 (cf. 2:177). One has to suppress his lust, filthiness and greed in order to reach the rank of *Abrâr*. Here we are told that the *Abrâr* will take drinks tempered with camphor (**Kâfûr** كَافُورًا). Camphor is something that cools down, covers and suppresses. *Kâfûr* كَافُورٌ symbolizes the conditions of the

Abrâr in this life and in the Hereafter. Concerning this world, it represents the cooling down of animal-like passions, so that they will not lose control over their passions and animal-like desires. The use of the word *Kâfir* كَافِرًا also denotes that the poison of their evil deeds is washed away when they drink the antidote - the “cup of camphor”. They also let others drink from the cups to quench their thirst for spiritual knowledge (see the following verses 6-10). Allâh confers on them in the Hereafter all sorts of reward that flow from His love and Divine realization (see verses 11-22)

وَيُسْقَوْنَ فِيهَا كَاسًا مِّزَاجُهَا زَنجِبِيلًا

76:17 Zanjabil زَنجِبِيل (- ginger), is a compound of *zana* اَنْجِيل (- to ascend) and *jabal* جَبَل (- mountain). The compound word *Zanjabil* زَنجِبِيل would mean “he ascended the mountain”. Its mention conveys the idea that a believer has to scale the heights of difficulties that stand in the way. *Zanjabil* has the effect of a tonic on the body and metaphorically on the spiritual system.

عَيْنًا فِيهَا شَمَّاء سَلْسِبِيلًا

76:18 Salsabil سَلْسِبِيل is a compound of *sall* سَلَّ (- ask), and *sabîl* سَبِيل (- way); it literally means inquire about the way. The verse signifies that at the *Zanjabil* stage, the spiritual wayfarer becomes so intoxicated with the love of his Creator that in his overwhelming fondness to meet Him he will inquire about the nearest and speediest approach. On this way, he will find all of the blessings mentioned in verses 76:19-22.

وَيَطُوفُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلْدَانٌ مُّخَلَّدُونَ إِذَا رَأَيْتَهُمْ حَسِبْتَهُمْ لَوْلَوْا مَنْتُورًا

76:19 Wildân وَلْدَان has the meaning of “Their own sons” in the sense of *aulâd-u-hum* أَوْلَادُهُم as clarified by Shaukâni and Baidzawî. The verse is a continuation of what has been said in verse 56:21, “We shall

unite with those who believe with their children who follow them in Faith". Immortal youths وَلْدٌانْ مُّخَلَّدُونَ are the children of the dwellers of Paradise who were born to them in their earthly life and who will join them in Paradise. The subject matter is also mentioned in the verse 52:21-24. Some raise the objection that the Qur'ân promises young maids to the men, so what about the women? The answer is provided in verses 56:35-38 where we are told that Allâh will raise the pious women as a special new creation, pure and undefiled, loving ones, suiting the ages of their spouses. Thus, the ordinary men and women after their death and their entry into Paradise will turn into beautiful, pure new creations.

عَالِيَّهُمْ ثِيَابٌ سُنْدُسٍ خُضْرٌ وَإِسْتَبْرَقٌ ۖ وَخُلُوا أَسَاوِرَ مِنْ فِضَّةٍ وَسَاقَاهُمْ
رَبُّهُمْ شَرَابًا طَهُورًا

76:21 In this and the following verses a glimpse of paradise is sketched for us. The “*robes of fine green silk and of thick brocade*” ثِيَابٌ سُنْدُسٍ خُضْرٌ وَإِسْتَبْرَقٌ are for protection from the disturbing effects of heat and cold. Vessels of silver and goblets (فِضَّة) أَسَاوِرَ من فِضَّة are the manifestation of the beneficent influence of the Prophets of Allâh. The conferment of bracelets of silver are as like medals bestowed upon them for winning the goodwill of their Lord and like a certificate from Him. The drinks of purifying beverage (شَرَابًا طَهُورًا) that they are offered shows that they have attained nearness to their Lord and have been perfectly purified of vices and sins. Despite all these explanatory attempts, the caveat has to be kept in mind that our imagination is not capable of understanding the future life in a different dimension, “No soul knows what joy of the eyes is kept hidden from them as a reward for the Good they used to do” (32:17).

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْآنَ تَنْزِيلًا

76:23 **Tanzîlân** تَنْزِيلًا is gradual and piecemeal Revelation. It is a known fact that the Holy Qur'ân was revealed gradually over a period

of twenty-three years. The wisdom in this has been explained by the Holy Qur'ân itself, as such a gradual process of revelation served a dual purpose. First, it would facilitate believers to learn, remember, and assimilate it, allowing them to mold their lives in accordance with its teachings; doing so permitted them to meet the increasing needs of a changing society and to strengthen the belief and conviction of the Muslims. Meanwhile, both Muslims and non-Muslims had the opportunity to witness the fulfilment of some of the revealed prophecies.



سورة المرسلات

Those Sent Forth

(*Revealed before Hijrah*)

The preceding chapter dealt with Resurrection and the continuation of the process of spiritual progress after Resurrection. The topic of the last two chapters ends in this chapter. The chapter derives its name from the first word in the first verse **Al-Mursalât** - المُرْسَلَات those sent ahead, and refers to certain phenomena of nature, which may be winds or even cosmic winds. The blowing winds are helpful for the moving of clouds and the sprouting of life. They sometimes become fierce, furious, and even devastating. Again, there are winds that rent asunder, thereby performing works of disuniting and joining. Through the medium of air, we hear and listen and without this agency, scientific facts and knowledge could not have reached others.

In the spiritual sense Al-Mursalât carry the voices of the Messengers to the ears of the believers. Thus by describing the phenomenon of nature there has been adduced the great spiritual revolution that is brought by Divine Messengers among their people, especially the marvellous moral changes that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) brought about in the degenerating societies of his time. It is because of

this that Ibn ‘Abbâs said that, the agency of winds works wonders in the life of the human being. The word *Mursalât* مُرْسَلَاتٍ also stand for Allâh’s Messengers. Just as winds are health giving and refreshing, similarly the agency of prophethood is a source of health for the spiritual life. *Mursalât* is also an allusion to the spreading of the message of Allâh, sometimes slowly and gently, and sometimes fast and vigorously. Just as the wind separates the good grain from chaff, so the spiritual wind separates believers from the deniers.

فَإِذَا النُّجُومُ طُمِسَتْ (٨) وَإِذَا السَّمَاءُ فُرِجَتْ (٩) وَإِذَا الْجِبَالُ نُسِقَتْ

77:8-10 In these verses, some of the signs of the approaching days are recounted. “When the small stars are made to lose their light” also implies that small worthless religious scholars will be deprived of the Heavenly light. “*When the heavens shall be opened*” may be a reference to some heavenly calamities and perhaps to the discoveries in space. **Al-Jibâl** literally means mountains. Al-Jibâl also stand for nations (*Tâj*, Lane). “*When the mountains shall be blown down to pieces*” وَإِذَا الْجِبَالُ نُسِقَتْ refers to the powerful nations and influential people who will be laid low and also to the advancements in science and technology which led to the blowing up of mountains to build means of transport, communication, to tame rivers and to exploit natural resources. It may also refer to a heavenly calamity still waiting.

أَلَمْ نَجْعَلِ الْأَرْضَ كِفَاتًا

77:25 Kifâtâ كِفَاتًا from *kafata* – كَفَتَ – to draw things or objects near. The verse refers to the phenomenon of gravitation and other physical laws (cf. 77:25; 77:26; 31:10; 22:31; 16:15; 2:22).

انطَلَقُوا إِلَى مَا كُنْتُمْ بِهِ تُكَذِّبُونَ انطَلَقُوا إِلَيَّ ظِلٌّ ذِي ثَلَاثٍ شَعَبٍ لَا ظَلِيلٍ
وَلَا يُغْنِي مِنَ اللَّهَ بِـ

77:29-33 Ibn ‘Abbâs is of the opinion that here the believers in trinity are addressed. The followers of this doctrine will be provided with a shadow with three branches, neither that of the Father nor of the son, nor of the Holy Spirit. This shadow will neither protect them from the heat of hell nor safeguard them from the flames spreading all around them, nor from the onslaughts of sparks. Some portion of this shadow will consist of smoke, the other of sparks of flames and of burning coal. This is also an allusion to the wars that Christian nations will be waging against each other.



78. CHAPTER سورة النباء

The Message of Great Importance

(*Revealed before Hijrah*)

This is the first chapter of the last part (Part 30) of the Holy Qur’ân. The title **Al-Nabâ’** النباء derives from the second verse of this chapter and means a message of great importance, an announcement of great utility that brings knowledge, which inspires awe and makes the heart tremble with fear (Râghib; Lisân). The chapter gives a brief but awe-inspiring picture of the Day of Reckoning in continuation of the previous chapter, and a graphic description of the Heavenly blessings that await the righteous and of the punishment that will be meted out to the rejecters of Truth in this life and the next.

كَلَّا سَيَعْلَمُونَ ثُمَّ كَلَّا سَيَعْلَمُونَ

78:4-5 The words “*It is not as they assume. They shall surely know*” have been repeated twice. According to the explanation of Dzâhhâk, the first time serves as a warning to the disbelievers and the repetition implies that the disbelievers will see not only their own destruction,

but will also witness the triumph of the faith of Allâh over all other religions.

وَالْجِبَالَ أَوْتَادًا

78:7 The expression “*mountains are fixed with pegs*” refers to some laws of physics in the cosmos. Apparently, here is a reference to the forces of gravitation and other unknown forces interacting in the cosmos according to certain measures. Similar to the pegs of a tent, these forces maintain the “mountains” in their positions. It is because of these forces that the pre-lunar state of the shaking of the earth has ended.

إِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ كَانَتْ مِرْصَادًا

78:21-22 **Mîrsâd** مِرْصَاد is a closed nursing home. This is the description of hell where the sinners will undergo their treatment. A “nursing home” is the concept conveyed about hell. Rûmî explains the concept of punishment in fire in the following words in his *Mathnawî*: “Look at the pea in the pot, how it leaps up when it feels the fire. While boiling it rises to the top and cries, Why are you setting fire under me? No! Boil nicely now, and do not try to leap away from one who has made the fire. It is not because you are hateful to him that he boils you, He boils you so that you gain flavour, and become nutritious and mingle with essential spirit. This affliction is not because you are despised. When you were green and fresh, you were drinking the water in the garden, that water drinking was for the sake of this fire.”

لَا يُبَثِّنَ فِيهَا أَحْقَابًا

78:23 **Ahqâb** أَحْقَاب in the sense of delay such as rain was delayed. Thus, *ahqâb* is a long period but not eternity or forever. Here the

Qur'anic concept of hell is mentioned. Contrary to the Christian view, the stay in the “hell” is not forever (see: 78:21-22).

وَكَوَاعِبَ أَتْرَابًا

78:33 Atrâb أَتْرَابًا is usually translated as young maidens, but the root is *taraba*, تَرَبَ, which means to have much earth or dust, *turâb* تُرَابٌ is dust. *Atrâb* أَتْرَابٌ stands for humbleness.



سورة النازعات 79. CHAPTER

Those who Perform their Duties Vigorously
(*Revealed before Hijrah*)

The first five verses of this chapter describe five stages of character development. In order to reach the point of possible perfection, whether spiritual or material, it is binding upon a person to pass through these five stages, befitting the noble position of the Companions of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). Accordingly, these five stages describe the stages of a *Seeker* on his spiritual pathway to Allâh.

وَالنَّازِعَاتِ غَرْقًا

79:1 Al-Nâzi‘ât - النَّازِعَاتِ who perform their duties vigorously, also means groups of people who draw arrows and bows as the followers of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). Atâ has said that it alludes to bows which are drawn in *jihâd*.

وَالسَّابِحَاتِ سَبْحًا

79:3 Sâbihât - السَّابِحَاتِ who steer their courses swiftly, also means the swift-footed horses with fighters on their backs who go far into the battle in pursuit of their enemies and try to excel one another in carrying their mission for the cause of Truth (Ibn Kathîr)



سورة عبس 80. CHAPTER

He Frowned

(Revealed before Hijrah)

We are told in this chapter that the poor and the oppressed will rise to exalted positions. It also informs us of the importance of being conscious of the downtrodden and oppressed people. It is not only worldly and social status that determines the real worth of a person but the goodness of the heart and willingness to listen to the Truth. Moral values and spiritual qualities count more than anything else in determining the true rank of a person. Verses 11 to 16 not only laud the sublimity of the Holy Qur'ân but also points out the high stature of its writers, reciters and those who commit it to memory.

عَبْسَ وَتَوَلَّىٰ (١) أَنْ جَاءَهُ الْأَعْمَىٰ

80:1-8 It is narrated that a blind man (Ibn Umm-i-Maktûm) approached the Holy Prophet (pbuh) with some questions. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) was busy discussing his message with some nobles of Makkah. He felt interrupted and “frowned” (عَبْسَ). In this situation these verses were revealed. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) realized that he was not kind to the blind man. He approached Ibn Umm-i-Maktûm and treated him with all due respect according to the traditions of that time. This incident is a proof that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) himself acted according to the Divine Revelation as soon as it was revealed.

ثُمَّ أَمَاثِيلُ فَاقْبَرَهُ

81:21 Qabar – قبر – “the grave”. in the Qur’ânic sense is not the pit in which the body is buried, nor is this the pyre prepared for the burning of the dead body. Here the grave is another name for *Barzakh* or the intermediate state in which human souls live after death until the Resurrection, where every human soul after its departure from its physical habitation has to go, even though that human being’s body is drowned or burnt to ashes or is eaten by some beast. Human soul acquires a new body and an abode of happiness or of misery, according to the nature of the actions the person has done during his life on earth. The Prophet (pbuh) said, - القبر روضة من رياض الجنة، The grave in which a believer is put is a garden.



سورة التكوير 81. CHAPTER

Losing of the Light

(Revealed before Hijrah)

The chapter speaks of the great changes that will take place in the world after the Revelation of the Holy Qur’ân. After a fleeting reference to the moral degeneration of the Muslims at the time of the advent of *Mehdi* (- the promised Saviour) and the causes thereof, the chapter continues by striking a note of optimism and cheerfulness to the believers and gives promise that eventually their future will be bright and glorious. We are informed of the progress of human civilization in the times after the Revelation of the Holy Qur’ân. Many of these verses are so clear that no further explanation is needed in the light of what we know today.

إِذَا الشَّمْسُ كُوَرَتْ

81:1 The sun is also an allusion to the Holy Qur'ân and its teachings (see 25:30).

وَإِذَا النُّجُومُ انَّكَرَتْ

81:2 The stars also stand for the people with Divine knowledge.

وَإِذَا الْجِبَالُ سَيَرَتْ

81:3 The “mountains” also represent powerful nations.

وَإِذَا الْعِشَارُ عُطِلَتْ

81:4 “When the excellent she-camel will be discarded” is a prophecy concerning the future means of transportation that will replace the camel as means of transport.

وَإِذَا الْوُحُوشُ حُشِرَتْ

81:5 Here is a reference to animal reservations such as the ones created in Africa and elsewhere.

وَإِذَا الْبِحَارُ سُجِّرَتْ

81:6 The huge rivers shall be drained off and diverted for irrigational purposes.

وَإِذَا النُّفُوسُ زُوَجَتْ

81:7 Far off inhabitants are brought closer to each other with new and faster means of transportation and communication.

وَإِذَا الْمُؤْعُودَةُ سُنِّلَتْ (٨) بِأَيِّ دَنْبٍ قُتِّلَتْ (٩)

81:8-9 Here is a reference to a change of attitude and laws regarding some vices committed in the days of the past.

وَإِذَا الصُّحْفُ نُشَرَتْ

81:10 A reference to the spread of knowledge and information.

وَإِذَا السَّمَاءُ كُشِطَتْ

81:11 **Samâ'** السَّمَاءُ is anything that is above us (cf. 22:15). This includes the air and the space. Here the discovery of the heights is mentioned, which is not limited to the air space above us, the moon and the stars, but also encompasses the discovery of far off objects in the universe.

وَإِذَا الْجَحِيمُ سُعِرَتْ

81:12 **Jahîm** - الْجَحِيمُ The hell-Fire stands for massive scale wars.

فَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِالْخُنَسِ الْجَوَارِ الْكُنْسِ

81:16 Here we are told how the planets of the earth ascribe to their unique course. Sometimes they progress ahead and are called **Jawâr** الجوار and sometime they begin to recede and go back from whence they had come; then they are named as **Khunnas** خُنس (Lisân). This and the following verse may refer to celestial objects on elliptical orbits, thereby receding to their earlier position in respect to the body they are orbiting around and to other celestial objects which recede by following a hyperbolic trajectory. This is in contrast to other bodies that pass by in a straight course without receding. The movement of these planets and the various influences they exert on earth due to these movements are somehow necessary for life on earth. This phenomenon is cited as a proof that the system of our universe is entirely in the hands of One All-Powerful Organiser. He decrees things to come into force in any way He will. How can it be

impossible for such an All-Mighty Being to bring about wonderful changes on the Day of Resurrection or on the approach of Resurrection? Again, this phenomenon of nature is cited as a proof of the sending down of Revelation to serve a useful purpose for the spiritual evolution of humanity. Just as the making of the planets and their forwards and backwards journeying is an important means of physical sustenance of humankind, similarly Revelation and Divine Messages are an important means of the spiritual and moral uplifting of humankind.

وَاللَّٰئِلِ إِذَا عَسْعَنَ

81:17 After presenting the heavenly signs of the planets, some of the earthly phenomena are taken into consideration. “*When the night begins to depart*”, the dawn appears with all its glory. Similar are the gloomy conditions on earth when the Divine Revelations are sent to the people for their enlightenment and guidance.

إِنَّهُ لِقَوْلٌ رَسُولٌ كَرِيمٌ (١٩) ذِي قُوَّةٍ عِنْدَ ذِي الْعَرْشِ مَكِينٌ (٢٠) مُطَاعٍ ثُمَّ
أَمِينٌ (٢١)

81:19-21 The verses say that the Holy Qur’ân was revealed to the Holy Prophet (pbuh) as it is. It is the noble Messenger himself who, having received the message from Allâh conveyed it to humankind. It does not mean that Allâh had certain messengers to convey to human beings and that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) expressed that Divine purpose and those messages in his own words.



سورة الانفطار 82. CHAPTER

The Cleaving Asunder

(Revealed before Hijrah)

This chapter is like an appendix to the preceding chapter though bearing a separate name. It emphasizes in very strong words the importance and the certainty of the Day of Judgment and explains vividly the events that are to take place at the time of the Resurrection when it draws near. It tells us that the heavenly rain of the Divine Revelation imparts vigour and strength to the spiritual powers of human beings. At the advent of Resurrection the heavens might be rent asunder and the earth cleft apart and the mountains fall down into pieces and the wrath of Allâh will be excited and the Divine punishment will overtake the world and tremendous change will become visible in the system of heavenly bodies so much so that every item of the universe will leave its centre and place. It will be so that, after making everything extinct, Allâh will appear in his True and Magnanimous manifestation of the One All-Powerful Being.

إِذَا السَّمَاءُ انفَطَرَتْ

82:1 The Holy Qur'ân has condemned the propagation of the Christian doctrines of Trinity, the sonship of Jesus and Atonement with the same strong words of **Fatatra** – فَطَرْ to cleave asunder, to burst. تَكَادُ السَّمَاوَاتُ يَنْقَطِرُنَّ مِنْهُ وَتَنْشَقُ الْأَرْضُ وَتَخْرُجُ الْجِبَالُ هَذَا أَنْ دَعَوْا لِلرَّحْمَنَ وَلَدًا “The heavens might well-nigh be rent asunder thereat and the earth cleave asunder and the mountains fall down into pieces as they ascribe a son to Allâh” (19:91-92).

وَإِذَا الْكَوَافِكُ انْتَرَتْ

82:2 The expression “when the planets will become dispersed” also means the disappearance of persons possessing true spiritual knowledge and guidance and their becoming rare. It may also mean

when scholarly divines will spread to the corners of the earth. This refers to the changes in the later days.

وَإِذَا الْبِحَارُ فُجِّرَتْ

82:3 **Bihâr** بِحَارٌ (plural) are rivers and oceans. The opinion by some translators that *al-Bihâr* الْبِحَارُ are only the salty oceans is wrong, as elsewhere we read, “Two waters (الْبَحْرَانِ) are not alike, the one is palatable, sweet and pleasant, while the other is saltish and bitter” (35:12). We can read that the time will come when the rivers and great waters are made to flow into one another by means of canals and the mouth of the seas will be dug wide open so as to make large ships pass through them. The reference may also apply to the canals of Panama and Suez. Metaphorically speaking, the verse also means that the rivers of all sciences and all categories of knowledge will flow forth.

وَإِذَا الْقُبُورُ بُعْثِرَتْ

82:4 **Bu‘thirat** بُعْثِرَتْ is derived from *ba‘thara* بَعْثَرَ – to lay open the earth, to excavate the earth. The verse refers to archaeological excavations. It may thus mean that in the later days graves will be laid open as has been done in the case of the tombs of the ancient kings of Egypt and elsewhere. It also means that the long forgotten monuments and towns submerged will be dug out and laid open. The laying open of the earth also refers to the mining of metals and precious stones, and drilling deep for oil and gas wells or perhaps the scientific exploration of the depths of the earth. As regards its metaphoric meanings, it can be interpreted as saying that owing to the spiritual renaissance the spiritually dead will come to life. *Imâm Râghib* has given the metaphorical meanings to this verse that dead and lifeless teachings will be revived (see 100: 9).

عَلِمَتْ نَفْسٌ مَا قَدَّمَتْ وَأَخَرَتْ

82:5 The expression also means, “The deeds that ought to be done were not done, and the deeds that should not be done were done.”

الَّذِي خَلَقَكَ فَسَوَّاكَ فَعَدَّلَكَ

82:7 “then perfected you (with wisdom), then endowed you with great natural powers and faculties“. Every form needs a temperament. Our temperament is based on our faculties. Faculties are like tools and the best craftsman can make the best use of these tools. If we ponder over all the faculties and natural powers we have been endowed with, we can well realize that we can rise to the highest peaks of spiritual and scientific eminence.

فِي أَيِّ صُورَةٍ مَا شَاءَ رَكَبَكَ

82:8 “He fashioned in whatever form it pleased Him”. Here **mâ** ما is an infinite particle, which applies to everything including our faculties and different temperaments.



سورة المطففين 83. CHAPTER

The Defaulters in Duty

(Revealed before Hijrah)

In the preceding chapter, attention was drawn to a person's duties towards his Creator, while here we are pointedly reminded of our duties towards our fellow humans.

وَيْلٌ لِّلْمُطْفَفِينَ

83:3 Al-Mutaffifin –المطففين are those who give less than what is due. This word is used not only for giving short measure or short weight but also for falling short of ones duties in every walk of life especially in a person's dealings with his fellow-beings with special reference to the cruel exploitation of the weaker by the more powerful. If only this single rule of guidance were enacted upon, many evils of society and many other harmful factors that endanger the peace and harmony of the community would be rooted out.

كَلَّا إِنَّ كِتَابَ الْفُجَارِ لَفِي سِجْنٍ

83:7 Here, the unjust and the dishonest (**Al-Fujjār**) are warned that they will not be left unpunished. Our bad actions are preserved and kept so to speak in **Sijjīn** - سجين a place of disgrace and ignominy. *Sijjīn* is derived from *sijin* سجن meaning a prison where one cannot make any progress and their faculties of doing good are shut up as if in prison.

وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْمُكَدِّبِينَ (١٠) الَّذِينَ يُكَدِّبُونَ بِيَوْمِ الدِّينِ (١١) وَمَا يُكَدِّبُ بِهِ إِلَّا كُلُّ مُعْتَدِلٍ أَثِيمٍ (١٢) إِذَا تَنْتَلَ عَلَيْهِ آيَاتِنَا قَالَ أَسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ

83:10-17 People who deny messengers coming forward with Divine Truth will face harmful consequences. The basic reason for this disbelief is the denial of the Judgment Day. Arrogance, pride and

stubbornness in the conduct of the ordinary affairs of life are the major hindrances in the path of belief. It is a sublime characteristic of the Holy Qur'ân, that cites again and again the causes of every effect in the most opportune manner and thus leads to the conclusion of how the result of one action becomes the cause of another. In the verses 12-17 is embedded prophecies of future great wars among the rejecters of Truth.

كَلَّا إِنَّ كِتَابَ الْأَئْرَارِ لَفِي عَلَيْنَا

83:18 On the other hand, those who are conscious of their duties towards fellow human beings and their Creator and who are true to their obligations and responsibilities to others (- *Abrâr*), their deeds shall be kept in elevated and lofty places: - ‘**Aliyyîn** عَلَيْنَا. This word is derived from *a'lâ* – أَعْلَى – to rise, to be high, be elevated and lofty.



سورة الانشقاق 84. CHAPTER

The Bursting Asunder

(Revealed before Hijrah)

Just as the rainwater helps the hidden powers of the seed to burst asunder, grow and develop, similarly the coming down of the Divine Revelation helps a person to do so.

إِذَا السَّمَاءُ انشَقَّتْ (١) وَأَذِنْتُ لِرَبِّهَا وَحُقْتُ

84:1-2 All heavenly bodies are included in the word **Samâ'** السَّمَاءُ and these bodies will be destroyed at the time of the Resurrection. Their listening means their being obedient to Divine Command.

Metaphorically **Inshiqâq** - الانشقاق the bursting asunder may mean the coming down of Divine Revelation.

وَإِذَا الْأَرْضُ مُدَّتْ

84:3 Muddat مُدَّت is from *madda* مُدَّ meaning to stretch. The stretching of the earth also signifies the extensiveness of the cosmos and its fertility.

يَا أَيُّهَا الْإِنْسَانُ إِنَّكَ كَادِحٌ إِلَى رَبِّكَ كَذَّا فَمُلَاقِيهِ

84:6 This verse indicates that the Resurrection is also the imbedded yearning of a person who is striving hard to come closer to his Lord.

وَالْقَمَرٌ إِذَا اتَّسَقَ

84:18 “*And the moon when it became full,*” that is to say: in the journey leading to the unveiling of the Divine Realities, the seeker moves through various stages of knowledge.



سورة البروج The Starry Spheres (Revealed before Hijrah)

In verse 18 of the preceding chapter “*And the moon when it became full*”, وَالْقَمَرٌ إِذَا اتَّسَقَ, has been cited as a proof that the human being is bound to move onward from stage to stage in a progression from birth, through growth, decline, death, and finally Resurrection. Here the

stars are cited as evidence of the Truth. These stars are also Companions of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) as designated by the Holy Prophet (pbuh) himself, "My Companions are just like stars". The term also stands for the Divine Reformers (*Mujaddad*) of the Islamic community and the righteous.

Ibn al-'Arabî says, "In the Prophets whom Allâh has sent since all ages since the creation of humankind, and especially in the last and the seal of them, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), we are given a clear voice that speaks guidance to our souls. Although prophethood has ended now until the end of time, in every age the world will contain a spiritual Pole - a star whose position guides the wayfarer in the right direction. Not all may know his name and place, yet he is the guide of the time, and the Divine representative who explains Allâh's ordinances. If you meet him, you will know him and his position. If you find consistency in what he says and what he is, then listen to him." This chapter contains prophecies and arguments that the Prophet of Islam was the final Prophet for all times and to all classes of people. Arguments have been provided to show that the enemies of Islam will suffer destruction. As a proof of the fulfilment of these Qur'ânic prophecies, the events from the life of Pharaoh and those about the destruction of the people of Thamûd, and the incidents that happened to the Fellows of the Trench are cited.

وَالْيَوْمُ الْمَوْعِدُ وَشَاهِدٌ وَمَشْهُودٌ

85:2 Al-Yaum al-Mau'ûd - الْيَوْمُ الْمَوْعِدُ - The Promised Day. The Promised Day has been interpreted in various ways. According to some it is the day of victory of Muslims at Badr, others interpret it as the day when Pharaoh, the people of Thamûd and the Fellows of the Trench were destroyed (cf.; verse 4 and 17-18). For the Shî'a school of thought it is the Day of Ashura and still for others, it is the day of gathering, which is Friday. For the Gnostics "The Promised Day" is the Day of Resurrection as supported by the next verse where we read

“*Shâhid wa Mashhûd* وَشَاهِدٌ وَمَشْهُودٌ. It is the Day when the righteous will enjoy the bliss of meeting with their Lord. Not all these interpretations can be challenged. When we read the verses 7, 10-12), it appears that the Promised Day is the Day of the Triumph of the righteous.

فُتِلَ أَصْحَابُ الْأَخْذُودِ

85:4 In order to explain this verse, some commentators refer to the burning to death of some Christians by the Jewish king *Dhu Nawâs* of Yemen (Râzî), some others refer to the Biblical legend of Nebuchadnezzars attempt to burn three Israelites in a fiery furnace (Dan. 3.19-22). The verse in general applies to those enemies of truth who at the time of every Divine Reformer bitterly oppose and persecute the believers. There may be a prophetical reference here to the Confederates at the Battle of the Trenches. The fire is generally spoken about as war in the Qur’ânic phraseology.

وَمَا نَقْمُدُ مِنْهُمْ إِلَّا أَنْ يُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَمِيدِ

85:8 This verse indicates that the enemies of Truth know in their heart that their opposition is cruel and unjustified and that the victims of their tyranny are innocent.



86. CHAPTER سورة الطارق

The Night Visitant

(Revealed before Hijrah)

The preceding chapter ended with the announcement of everlasting Divine protection of the Holy Qur'ân while the chapter under comment speaks of the guardianship and protection of the Star of piercing brightness (الطارق) - the Holy Prophet (pbuh), whose advent was like the morning star in the night of spiritual darkness. The need for Divine Revelation, in the final form of the Holy Qur'ân and the existence of the angels has once again been presented in this chapter, and as an argument for this, the laws of nature working in the heavenly bodies are mentioned. Just as the supreme Divine Being has created millions of heavenly bodies for our physical protection, He has not neglected the arrangements and provision for our spiritual well-being. Specifically, rain is likened to revelation. The life of the greenery and vegetation of the earth depends on the rain coming down from heaven, and when it ceases to come, the earthly life gradually dries up. Similarly, the human mind loses its purity and strength of reason without receiving heavenly Revelation. The subject matter of the chapter is the protection afforded to every human soul in the darker period of its spiritual journey. The physical nature of the human being may be insignificant but the soul given to him helps him to win a glorious future in the end.

فَلَيَنْظُرِ الْإِنْسَانُ مِمَّ خُلِقَ (٥) خُلِقَ مِنْ مَاءٍ دَافِقٍ (٦) يَخْرُجُ مِنْ بَيْنِ
الصُّلْبِ وَالثَّرَابِ

86:5-7 “Jetting fluid” does not refer to ejected semen. As the verse specifies, it is the fluid that originates from a region, which lies between the breastbone (**al-Tarâib**) and the backbone (**al-Sulb**). Anatomically this is the region of the human heart; and the

heart has much broader significance in the language of Gnostics. With this significance, we can reflect on the true message of these verses.



سورة الأعلى 87. CHAPTER

The Most Exalted and High

(Revealed before Hijrah)

When a person attains the highest spiritual status by establishing a connecting link with his Lord through Prayer, his person reflects Divine Attributes to such an extent that he becomes a mirror of his Creator.

In the first four verses of the chapter, we are taught why the perfect law was not revealed and a perfect Prophet not sent in the beginning of the creation. The word *Rabb* - who makes things grow and develop by stages, implies that a perfect law should be revealed and a perfect Prophet should be sent when the human beings intellect and reasoning power have attained a sufficient level of development, which took place only until after passing through a long and gradual process of evolution.

سَبِّحْ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ الْأَعْلَى

87:1 Here we are especially enjoined to reflect on the greatness and the bounties (*Rabûbiyyat*) of the Lord, the Most Exalted and High. There should be a reflective pause after reading this verse.

سُنْفُرُكَ فَلَا تَنْسَى إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ إِنَّهُ يَعْلَمُ الْجَهَرَ وَمَا يَخْفِيٌ

87:7 When we read: “*We will certainly teach you and make you recite so that you shall not forget*”, it has no reference to the following words “*What Allâh please*”. These words pertain to other matters of everyday life, which the Holy Prophet may forget. What was taught by Allâh, the Exalted One and recited by the Holy Prophet (pbuh) will not be forgotten. He will deliver it to humankind in exactly the same words he was taught.

لَمْ لَا يَمُوتُ فِيهَا وَلَا يَحْيَىٰ

87:13 The verse signifies that there is a no life in the hell, for life is only for the righteous, neither is there death, as death signifies a state of complete rest. This is another description of hell.

وَذَكِّرْ اسْمَ رَبِّهِ فَصَلِّ

87:15 Here we are again enjoined to perform our ritual Prayers (فَصَلَّى) regularly and punctually. The Prayer is the *Mi’raj* - ascension, a means of rising to a state of spiritual eminence.

إِنَّ هَذَا لِفِي الصُّحْفِ الْأُولَئِ

87:18 This statement points out that the basic teachings of all the Prophets have always been the same.



88. CHAPTER سورة الغاشية

The Overwhelming Event
(Revealed before Hijrah)

This chapter continues the theme of the previous chapter in which we were especially enjoined to observe Prayers as a means of establishing a relationship with our Creator. This chapter deals primarily with the principle that those who keep away from purifying their souls and remain heedless of establishing ties with Allâh are always overwhelmed with grief and sorrows. This chapter expresses a special concern for the collective life of the *ummah*. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) generally recited this chapter in Friday and “Eid” prayers.

هَلْ أَنَّاكَ حَدِيثُ الْغَاشِيَةِ

88:1 Al-Ghâshiyah - الغاشية “The overwhelming event of Resurrection”. Some commentators also refer *Al-Ghâshiyah* to the severe famine that held Makkah in its grip for about seven years in the time of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) and it can also apply to the punishments of the present life.

تُسْقَى مِنْ عَيْنٍ آنِيَةٍ

88:5 “Spring of boiling hot water” (عَيْنٍ آنِيَةٍ) can never quench the thirst from heat. According to al-Qaffal this kind of hellish drink and food conveys the same sense as expressed by the words of the utterly hopeless.



سورة الفجر 89. CHAPTER

The Dawn

(Revealed before Hijrah)

The preceding chapter dealt with the vicissitudes a person has to endure in this life and the life of the Hereafter if he loses touch with his Creator. In this chapter we are reminded again how we can guard ourselves against such difficulties of life, namely by devoting ourselves to the worship of Allâh and to fervent Prayers. We can make ourselves safe and secure and enjoy complete immunity from fear of failure or faltering and attain the bliss of the “Soul-at-rest” (*Nafs al-Mutma’innah* نَفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَةُ). Those who are bent upon opposing Allâh and his Messengers are warned by the example of the destruction of the people of ‘Ad, the people of Thamûd and of Pharaoh.

وَالْفَجْرِ (١) وَلَيَالٍ عَشْرٌ (٢) وَالشَّفَعَ وَالْوَتْرِ (٣) وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا يَسْرِ (٤) هُنَّ فِي
ذَلِكَ قَسْمٌ لِذِي حِجْرٍ

89:1-5 The introductory five verses specify the times that are particularly suited for the offering of prayers and for remembrance of our Lord. It is the prayer at the time of the daybreak (*Salât al-Fajr*), then the last ten nights of the month of fasting (لَيَالٍ عَشْرٌ) that is the starting time of the observance of *I’tikâf* when a Muslim may spend day and night in a mosque in seclusion. Then an even and odd number of prayers are mentioned, which are performed before sleep and during the ten nights of seclusion in the mosque. The ten nights are also in reference to the last ten nights of the month of Ramadân. “And the Night when it moves on” refers to the Night of Majesty – *Lailah-tul-Qadr*. Ibn ‘Abbâs supported this interpretation on the authority of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). Tabriz has gone so far as to say that the aforementioned interpretation of the ten nights has been

confirmed by consensus. When the Holy Prophet (pbuh) was requested to comment upon the significance of the “even and odd” - he is reported to have said that by this expression is meant the prayer, which consists of both even and odd *rak'ats* (cf. 44:89).

وَأَمَّا إِذَا مَا ابْتَلَاهُ فَقَدَرَ عَلَيْهِ رِزْقُهُ فَيَقُولُ رَبِّي أَهَانَنِي

89:16 the source of “disgrace” (ابٰتَلَاهُ) is not the Lord, but the human actions, as verse that follows explains. The punishment in the form of disgrace is the result of evil deeds (cf. 2:81)

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَةُ ارْجِعِي إِلَى رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَرْضِيَةً

89:27 *Nafs al-Mutma'innah* نَفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَةُ is the highest stage of a human's spiritual development; the stage in which he rests contented with His Lord and finds his quietude and his delight in Him. When an earnest soul keeps steadily on his evolutionary journey, it ultimately ascends to a station where virtue and Divine love engulfs his heart. A fire from above descends upon him; it burns out the whole of his physical nature and consumes every vestige of evil inclination that is therein, and he becomes reconciled to his Lord. Blessed is the one with whom his Lord is pleased. One who is pleasing is being loved; therefore, what the Loved One does is also love. The servants mentioned here are those who know their Lord. The personal pronoun in “My Paradise” is used to express Divine love, which is nearness and intimacy. Such persons, as true servants of their Lord, are covered by the protection of this proximity.



90. CHAPTER سورة البلد

The City (of Makkah)

(Revealed before Hijrah)

The preceding chapter contained a warning to those who oppose the prophet of their time with reference to the fate of other surrounding strong powers of Âd in their east, the people of Thamûd in their west and the decedents of Pharaoh in their north-west. Thus, from all the three bordering lands of the peninsula lessons are drawn for the antagonists. Now in this chapter a prophecy was made that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) will alight as a conqueror in his native city (﴿ وَأَنْتَ حَلٌّ بِهَذَا الْبَلَدِ ﴾). Commentators generally refer to **Al-Balad** الْبَلَد as the city of Makkah in the context of this verse. Generally speaking, it means any residential abode and the tenor of the whole chapter seems to warrant a wider and more general interpretation.

وَأَنْتَ حَلٌّ بِهَذَا الْبَلَدِ

90:2 Hillun حَلٌّ signifies that “You will be made free from obligation in your place of abode; you will be the target of every conceivable abuse, harm, injury, cruelty or violence against your life, property and honour in your city; it is considered lawful to do you harm, even to kill you in your city; you will alight as a conqueror in this city from where you are being driven out as a fugitive”. All these explanations apply to the Holy Prophet (pbuh) but also in a broader sense to the believers, as the message of the Holy Book is meant for all times and is not limited to particular instances of history.

وَوَالِدٍ وَمَا وَلَدٌ

90:3 Wâlid وَالِدٌ denotes both male and female parents in the classic Arabic idiom. The use of the word Father (وَالِدٌ) may also refer to

Abraham, and the son (ولد) to Ismâ‘îl. Both of them were the best examples to be followed. The father and the son (والإِنْ وَمَا وَلَدَ) have been cited to bear witness to the Holy Prophet (pbuh) as both had close connections with the city of Makkah. According to Ibn Jarîr, every male human being is a father or a son, and as such, he bears witness to the final Truth revealed by Allâh.

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي كَبَدٍ

90:4 Kabad كَبَدٍ comprises the concept of pain, distress hardship, toil, and trial. Attention has been drawn to the fact that every person has to undergo great hardships and incessant struggle in order to achieve the great goal of spiritual advancement, including physical struggle for physical progress.

أَلَمْ نَجْعَلْ لَهُ عَيْنَيْنِ (٨) وَلِسَانًا وَشَفَتَيْنِ (٩) وَهَدِينَةَ النَّجَدَيْنِ

90:8-10 “*We have pointed out to him the two conspicuous high ways وَهَدِينَةَ النَّجَدَيْنِ*. These paths are the paths of evil (- *fujr*) and of righteousness (- *taqwa*; 91:8). Here they are called the two conspicuous ways in order to denote that they are easily discernible from a distance and can be clearly distinguished. Allâh has already given every human being the knowledge of what is virtue and of what is evil, and of what is *fujr* and of what is *taqwa*. He has imbedded this knowledge in his nature (فَلَأَهْمَهَا فُجُورُهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا 91:8). Now He expects that the human being will reflect over his own creation and his physical structure. He has endowed him with two eyes to enable him to visualize the way chosen for him by his Creator. Then he has bestowed the power of speech unto him so that he can ask for guidance if he loses the track. A person then is given the choice to decide by his own free will which of the two he chooses to follow. He is however warned that he will be answerable before Allâh for his decision, as he has no excuse left.

فَلَا اقْتَحَمَ الْعَقَبَةَ وَمَا أَذْرَاكَ مَا الْعَقَبَةُ فَكُلْ رَقْبَةٍ

90:13 The freeing of a captive (فَكُلْ رَقْبَةٍ) does not only mean the freeing of a slave; the term also covers all forms of subjugation and exploitation, social, economic or political that can be described as slavery. Freeing of a captive also signifies freeing of one's self, and others who are plunged in sinful deeds and are slaves of materialism (Râzî; Baghawî).



سورة الشمس 91. CHAPTER

The Sun

(Revealed before Hijrah)

The preceding chapter addressed the historical event of the return to Makkah. In this chapter, the destruction of Thamûd is cited as a reminder. The chapter, like others contains numerous symbolic expressions from nature (- *ishârât*) that refer to a human being as the “microcosm”.

الشَّمْسُ وَضُحَاهَا (۱) وَالْقَمَرُ إِذَا تَلَاهَا

91:1-2 Al-Shams wa Dzuhâha – “The sun and its light and heat”. The sun also means the sun of the spiritual world. The earth receives light from the sun only on an intermittent basis, although the sun is shining incessantly. Its light has to recur again and again to illuminate the earth and its inhabitants. Just as the temporary and the artificial lights of the earth are of inferior value when compared with the bright and continuous light of the sun, similarly human reason is incomplete and needs repeated illumination from the Divine light of

guidance. This necessitates the advents of Allâh's Prophets and the final Prophet (pbuh) who will be followed by people endowed with Divine Light. They have reached proximity to their Lord and are called, "Auliyâ, *Muhaddith* and *Mujaddadîn* in the Islamic terminology. They are like moon that derive their light from the original sun. In analogy, the Reformers borrow their light from the Muhammadan light, which they follow, and then they illuminate the hearts of those who are receptacles of this light. Other inhabitants of the earth of their era also benefit from their light.

وَالنَّهَارِ إِذَا جَلَّا هَا (٣) وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا يَغْشَا هَا

91:3-4 The signs of night (اللَّيْل) and day (النَّهَار) explain that one who purifies his soul is like the day (cf. 91:9), whose brightness makes things manifest and thus enables human beings to carry on their struggle enlightened by Revelation. On the other hand are those who plunge their souls into the darkness of low desires and therefore, cannot benefit from the light of the sun.

وَالسَّمَاءِ وَمَا بَنَاهَا (٤) وَالأَرْضِ وَمَا طَحَاهَا

91:5-6 The reference to the heaven (السَّمَاء) and the earth (الأَرْض) serves to illustrate another aspect of the argument. Though the earth possesses the powers and capacities to produce all sorts of vegetation from the seeds, it is helpless without receiving the benefit of rain from above without which its latent power remains lifeless. Similarly, human wisdom and the other latent powers of a human being remain dead and useless without receiving heavenly revelations through the divinely missioned Prophets.

وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا

91:7 Nafs نَفْسٍ “The human soul”. It refers to the mysteries related to the knowledge of the human mind and behaviour and to the mental

faculties necessary for progress, which are given to every human being. There are some who develop them and make them thrive, yet others who corrupt them by allowing them to remain hidden and not employing them to their advantage (cf. 91:10). Moreover, there exists a unified harmony in the system of the universe, clearly indicating the unity of God. The perfect souls are the souls of Prophets.

فَالْهَمَّهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا (٩) قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَاهَا (٨)

91:8-10 Ilhâm الْهَمَّ – refers to Divine inspiration. It is different from the Divine Revelation given to the Messengers and Prophets. Revelations to the Prophets of Allâh and His servants are called *wahî* - وَهِيَ. Their ranks are much higher. Many people are unaware of the significance of *ilhâm*. When, during supplication a person feels inclined to follow or adopt a certain course of rectitude, it is the first phase of *ilhâm*. It can be compared with the inspiration of an inventor whose mind focuses with concentration on a certain topic while inventing. Sometimes a person's natural inclination also serves as an inspiration for him. *ilhâm* is the way to righteousness that is revealed and is to be followed. There is thus a good deal of difference between *ilhâm* – inspirations, and Divine Revelations. Râzî says, *ilhâm* is the intimation and inspiration that allows a person to distinguish between good and evil. This happens by virtue of the clarity of a human mind and his inner light.

Despite this internal voice, a human being may still choose the wrong way. In contrast, Prophets of Allâh always receive Revelation to perform what is good and are never incited by them to commit sinful deeds. It is through *ilhâm* - Divine inspiration that Allâh has brought into us the qualities He wants in us so that we may know Him.

Allâh's free Will has given rise to our free will. His Commands, rewards and punishments all acknowledge our free will. He does not compel obedience, but invites us to the abode of salvation, which is “*Fallâh*” فلاح. The earth revolves involuntarily under His Command

and its movements deserve neither reward nor punishment. Only actions taken by free choice shall be weighed on the Day of Judgment. Our power of free will, our power of choosing good or evil, is increased by the inspiration of *Rûh al-Quds*, or the Iblîs, presenting opposing choices to us.

كَذَّبُتْ ثَمُودٌ بِطَغْوَاهَا إِذْ أَنْبَعْتَ أَشْقَاهَا

91:11 From this verse on, the remainder of the chapter relates the account of the people of Thamûd whose end was destruction as they followed corrupt ways of life. There is thus an implied warning not to choose the ways of evil and disbelief. Metaphorically, attaching the highest value to our souls (see verse 7) can be applied to the account of Allâh’s “she-camel” for our souls have been perfected with innumerable excellent qualities. As the she-camel used by Shu‘aib to preach was deterred by his people to move freely and drink, so the wretched people deter others to drink from the fountain of the love for Allâh as the word سُقْيَا indicates. **Suqyâh** سُقْيَا is the place of drinking.



سورة الليل 92. CHAPTER

The Night

(Revealed before Hijrah)

Allâh’s free Will has given rise to our free will. Only actions taken because of our free will shall be weighed on the Day of Judgment. This chapter deals with the subject of the reward of action as the result of the exercised free will. In the preceding chapter the Prophets were compared with the sun, and here we are told that those who benefit

from the light of the sun, and those who are heedless to his message cannot be alike.

وَاللَّيْلٌ إِذَا يَعْشَىٰ (١) وَالنَّهَارٌ إِذَا تَجَلَّىٰ (٢) وَمَا خَلَقَ الذَّكَرَ وَالْأُنثَىٰ (٣) إِنَّ سَعْيَكُمْ لَشَّانٌ

92:1-4 The first four verses of this chapter disapprove of the idea of unrestrained freedom of behaviour. This is illustrated with an example of night and of day. The function and purpose assigned to the night is different from the one of the day. Similarly, the contrast between the male and the female is brought to attention, who likewise have different functions and duties assigned to them according to their different physical constitutions. This law also govern the spiritual life of human beings.

وَإِنَّ لَنَا لِلآخِرَةِ وَالْأُولَىٰ

92:13 The statement “*to Us belong both, the next world and the present*” emphasizes that the life in this world and in the Hereafter are but two stages of one continuous entity.

فَإِنَّدِرْتُكُمْ نَارًا تَلْظِيلًا يَصْلَاهَا إِلَّا الْأَشْقَالُ الَّذِي كَذَبَ وَتَوَلَّىٰ

92:14 This and the following verses contain a threat. In order to stay safe from it, it is good to remember the promise our soul made to its Creator at the time of its creation when He asked, “Am I not your Lord?” and the soul responded, “Indeed you are!” (7:172). This is the original promise of our human essence to Allâh, and it exists in all of us, and the warning is for those who belie this promise (الَّذِي كَذَبَ وَتَوَلَّىٰ).



سورة الضحى

The Forenoon Brightness

(Revealed before Hijrah)

This Makkan chapter comprising eleven verses contains many prophecies. The words of the entire chapter swing like a pendulum between the polarities whose spheres of allusion and references are the spiritual and the natural “sub-solar” and “sub-lunar” worlds. In the last sentence, the oscillations of the pendulum come to a sudden halt when the great Reality (*Rabb* رَبْ) and His bounties are revealed. Each resplendent prophecy increases in grandeur and majesty when one does not find any sign of its occurrence beforehand and no indication or precursor to base it on before its actual fulfilment. The metaphor of the rising of the sun illuminating the Divine Revelation is continued here. As the sunshine is not fully resplendent immediately after the rising of the sun, so will the truth shine only gradually into its full brightness.

The commentators are of the opinion that this chapter was revealed after a pause in the Revelation. According to *Bukhârî*, this pause was of two or three days only. The first three verses of the chapter are an example of the subtle and diversified modes of explaining things from different angles. The meanings to be conveyed by verses given in the beginning are explained and made clear in the verses following them in an alternating order of arrangement.

وَالضُّحَىٰ وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا سَجَىٰ

93:2 Just as Moses success was a time of dawn for the Jews, so would the advent of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) – bearing a similitude with Moses – be the time of dawn for the Muslims. After this dawn, which signifies the advent of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) and the Holy Qur’ân,

the world will be overtaken by a period of spiritual darkness. This darkness was named *Fajj-i-Awaj* in the words of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) and is expressed in the words “the night” (الليل) in this verse. In this period, the situation for Muslims will be so miserable it will seem as though Allâh has forsaken them.

ما وَدَعَكَ رَبُّكَ وَمَا فَلَىٰ

93:3 “Your Lord has not forsaken you, nor is He displeased“ is a message of great hope that Allâh would never forsake His servant. Instead, after this period of darkness the second advent of the Holy Prophets mission would take place. Then Allâh, in all His Glory, would raise up some of the believers who will carry his light. Men of great Divine knowledge in the Prophets *ummah* will be the ones who will revive Islam. According to some commentators, “the night” also points to the vicissitudes of the Prophet’s life.

وَلِلآخرة خَيْرٌ لَكَ مِنَ الْأُولَىٰ

93:4 “Surely, the future is better for you than the past” means to say that as time passes, the Prophets mission would go on thriving and that more people would enter into the fold of Islam. In the beginning, the Prophet had only his wife Khadîja^(rz) and his friend Abû Bakr^(rz) on his side, and his early days at Makkah were full of hardships and difficulties. Better days followed his migration to Madînah, and finally he entered Makkah with ten thousand followers. More and more people are sending blessings on the Holy Prophet (pbuh) with the words: *Allâhumma sallé ‘alâ Muhammâd*.

وَأَمَّا السَّائِلُ فَلَا تَنْهَىٰ

93:10 Al-Sâil السَّائِل is the one who asks for help or seeks guidance. This signifies not only that a beggars requests should not be refused, but also that anyone asking for help in a difficult situation, be it

physical, moral or for the enlightenment of his soul, should not be let down.



سورة الشرح 94. CHAPTER

The Expanding of the Breast

(*Revealed before Hijrah*)

The title of the chapter is taken from the first verse. It is translated as “the opening and expansion of the breast”. The same word is also used in Moses prayer 20:25 (translated as the enlightenment of the mind) and occurs in 6:126. Here we find an account of the spiritual blessings that were bestowed upon the Holy Prophet (pbuh) in particular and to the pious servants of Allâh in general. A consolation is given.

أَلْمَ نَشْرَحْ لَكَ صَدْرَكَ

94:1 Sharha شُرَحْ stands for “opening and expansion” and means that Allâh had protected the heart of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) from all harmful influences; Allâh is his Preceptor and Teacher and besides temporal knowledge, He has expanded his heart to comprehend the Divine mysteries. “*Have We not already expanded (and illuminated) for you your bosom?*” indicates that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) never suffered from a straitened heart and was endowed with patience and fortitude. Abû Hayyân, the great commentator of the Holy Qur’ân says, The “expanding of the breast” signifies its illumination with wisdom and its vastness for the reception of what was to be revealed to him. Râghib gives a similar explanation. It is reported that Gabriel “opened the breast” of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) while he was yet a boy and “washed his heart”. The expanding of the Holy Prophets breast was an event and a vision (*Kashaf*) of excellent clarity. The

Holy Prophet (pbuh) experienced this at the age of ten. This event is reported to have been observed by his foster brother, the son of Halîma - his foster mother (see *Sîrat-i-Halâbiyah*). Moreover, many of the traditions relate that there was a scar on his chest. Many times the effect of a vision was so strong and evidently clear that people around could also see it, so much so that parts of the vision (*Kashâf*) assume the form of reality. It is reported that once, at the time of the descending of the Revelation, the camel that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) was riding, was bent low under its pressure. Once it so happened that when the Revelation started descending on him, the leg of his Companion was underneath the knee of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). The Companion felt the heavy pressure of the Prophets knee on his knee to such an extent that he thought that his leg would be fractured due to the weight. It is also reported that sometimes, even in extreme cold weather, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) perspired so profusely while receiving the Revelation that drops of sweat appeared on his forehead. The same is the condition for some of the visions of other religious and spiritual personalities. The famous mystic 'Abdullah bin Jalla says, Once I saw in my vision that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) visited me and presented me a loaf of *nân* (bread) to eat. I had hardly eaten half of it when I woke up from sleep and the other half of the *nân* was in my hand (*Tazkarat-ul-Auliyâ* by Farîdud-Dîn Attâr).

This very incident of *expanding of the breast* of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) also took place at the time of the Mi'râj - his spiritual ascent to the heaven (*Raudh-ul-Unf*). As the author of *Bahr al-Muhiṭ* writes, the spiritual effect of this vision was that the heart of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) was illuminated with wisdom and its vastness was increased for the reception of what was to be revealed to him.

In order to emphasize the point, a negative assertion was employed which tells us that this incident was already known to the Holy Prophet (pbuh) as well as others and that they will see the proof that his heart is endowed with a vast capacity for the reception of the

Divine Revelation. He also possesses the calmness and tranquillity of mind and is pleased to follow the commandments of Allâh with an “expanded heart” that can contain, due to its vastness, the treasures of Divine knowledge.

وَوَضَعْنَا عَنْكَ وَزْرَكَ الَّذِي أَنْفَضَ ظَهْرَكَ

94:2 This and the next verse show that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) was entrusted with heavy responsibilities that had nearly crushed him under their weight but Allâh made his burden light, first by removing the constriction of his heart, then by granting him broadmindedness and high acclaim.

وَرَفَعْنَا لَكَ ذِكْرَكَ

94:4 The significance of the words “*And have (We not) exalted for you your name and given you fame?*” lies in the fact that when this verse was revealed in his early Makkah period he seemed an ordinary person with only a scant number of followers. This verse was a great promise that his name shall be exalted and he will be raised to the highest level of respect and eminence to which a human being can rise. In the Muslim Call to Prayer (- *adhâh*) the words “Muhammad is the Messenger of Allâh” are pronounced from the minarets five times a day in all countries of the world and in every Prayer blessings are asked for him by over a billion Muslims.

فَإِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا إِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا

94:5 “*Surely every hardship is followed by ease*” has been repeated twice. The repetition emphasises that the mission of Muhammad (pbuh) will have to pass through hardships, in both the early and the later days. However, the hardships faced by the Prophet and the Muslims would be of temporary and transitory nature, while their final success will be permanent and ever-expanding.

فَإِذَا فَرَغْتَ فَانصَبْ وَإِلَى رَبِّكَ فَارْجِبْ

94:7 This verse and the next provide consolation to the mind of the Prophet (pbuh), and in the broader sense to his true followers that the real difficulties of life will soon be over. These verses also goad one towards further action in making the Lord their exclusive object of worship. It is a practice of all the Prophets of Allâh that their outward efforts and hard work accompanied by inward resolve and courageous attempts attended by fervent prayer necessarily bring triumph nearer. The verses also tell that if one works hard to his utmost capacity but does not pray, ones object will not be achieved. Similarly, if there is prayer only and no striving hard for the cause, the desired object cannot be achieved.



سورة التين 95. CHAPTER

The Fig Tree

(Revealed before Hijrah)

Here, four epochs of human history are quoted which are in correspondence to spiritual progress. In order to reach the stage of perfect development (- *insân kâmil*), the seeker of Allâh has to move through stages of knowledge.

وَالنَّبِيُّنَ وَالزَّبَّيْثُونَ

95:1 The fig tree apparently stands for Adam. We find in the Holy Qur'ân both (Adam and his wife) began to cover themselves with the leaves of the gardens trees (7:22). This is also reflected in the Bible, where we read that the two made themselves aprons from sewn fig

leaves (Gen 3.7). Similarly, the olive stands for Noah as we read, A dove came to him in the evening, and lo! There was a fresh olive leaf in her mouth plucked off, so Noah knew that the water had abated from the earth (Gen. 8.11). Ibn Kathîr on the authority of Ibn ‘Abbâs in his commentary also attributes the olive to stand for Noah.

وَطُورِ سِينِينَ

95:2 Mount Sinai is the place where Moses received the Divine Law. In the first phase, the foundation of human civilization was laid. Noah was the founder of *Shari‘a* (Divine Law). With the advent of Moses, the details of the *Shari‘a* were revealed. Finally, through the Holy Prophet (pbuh) the Divine Law came to its perfection (cf. 5:3).

From another perspective, the Fig may also be symbolic of the Mosaic Dispensation and the Olive of the Islamic Dispensation. This analogy has been further expressed in more concrete form by the words Mount Sinai and this Town of Security. That the Fig stands for the Jewish Dispensation is provided by certain Biblical references. It is said that coming from Bethany early in the morning, Jesus drew near to a fig tree so that he might pluck some figs to satisfy his hunger and that, seeing nothing on it but leaves, he cursed the tree, and in cursing it, it immediately withered to the root. Another biblical reference mentions two baskets with figs. One of the baskets contained good fresh figs and the other basket was full of vile figs, with the interpretation that the good figs represented the righteous among the Jews and the vile figs the wicked ones (Jeremiah 24). Jesus’ cursing of the fig tree, which had only leaves and no fruit, evidently signified the rejection of the Jews.

About the “olive tree”, the Holy Qur’ân compares it to the Law of Islam: “Allâh is the Extensive Light of the heavens and the earth. His light can be compared to a (lustrous) pillar on which a lamp is put. The lamp is inside a crystal globe. The globe of glass is, as it were, a glittering star. It (- the lamp) is lit (by the oil) of a *blessed Olive Tree*

which belongs neither to the east nor to the west (rather welds the whole world in its fold). Its oil is likely to glow forth of itself even if no fire has touched it. This (lamp) is a combination of many lights repeatedly. Allâh guides towards His Light whoever desires (to be enlightened). And Allâh sets forth excellent parables for people” (24:35). Thus the light lit from the blessed *Olive Tree* belongs neither to the east nor to the west but is meant for all people in all ages and in all parts of the world. When the Lord of Moses revealed His glory to the mountain, He caused it to crumble to dust and Moses fell down in a swoon (7:143). What Moses wanted to see was the great manifestation of Divine glory, which was reserved for the Holy Prophet (pbuh) of Islam. In fact, both Moses and Jesus were not equal to the task, which was reserved for the Holy Prophet (pbuh). Jesus himself said that he could not teach his followers all things but that when the Paraclete will make his appearance, he would guide them into all truth. Moses was also unequal to the task, when his Lord manifested His glory to the mountain He made the Mount Sinai crumble unto dust. This foretells that at some time, the Mosaic Law will pass away and the Islamic Dispensation will set in.

وَهَذَا الْبَلْدَ الْأَمِينِ

95:3 Adding the word **Al-Amîn** – الأمِينُ “secure”, to the city of Makkah from where Islam originated, is a reference to the idea that the Dispensation of Truth, Right and Justice will always go on illuminating the entire world until the end of the world.

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا إِلِّيْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ

95:4 This verse refers to the human intellectual, moral and spiritual capabilities and the capability of establishing close spiritual ties with his Creator. In no way does it imply that all human beings have the same excellent make with respect of their bodily, moral or mental endowments. It does, however, imply that every human being,

irrespective of his natural advantages or disadvantages, is endowed with the ability to make for himself the best possible use of his inborn qualities in his environment. The question arises why a human being sins, when by nature he is pure and is endowed with the intuitive ability to discern between right and wrong (91:8)? To answer this, we will quote from Bukhârî and Abû Muslim the saying of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) who said, it is his parents that turn him in to a Jew, a Christian or a Magean. Here the term “parents” has the wider meaning covering social, environmental and educational influences. The verse also implies that in Allâh’s creation, its perfection is manifested in humankind. We are placed between the Divine attribute of Might (- *Al-’Azîz*) and Grace (- *Al-Rahmân*). He teaches humankind what he knows not (96:5), and the human has the capacity to learn what He teaches.

ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَاهُ أَسْفَلَ سَافِلِينَ

95:5 This statement is a warning that when we do not take advantage of our capacity to establish a relationship with our Creator, we can be reduced to the lowest of the low. Without developing high moral values and without advancing spiritually, guided by Divine Revelation, we are like animals, or even worse. Rûmî says, “The angel is free because of his knowledge, the beast because of his ignorance. Between the two remains the son of man to struggle.”



96. CHAPTER سورة العلق

The Clot

(Revealed before Hijrah)

This chapter marks the commencement of the Revelation of the Holy Qur'ân. The first five verses of this chapter are the first Revelation, which descended upon the Holy Prophet (pbuh) in the cave Hirâ, near Makkah. That was in a night during the last third of the month of Ramadzan, thirteen years before Hijrah (610 A.D.). The Prophet (pbuh) was at this time forty-five years of age. As Ibn Kathîr said, these verses are the first act of Mercy (*Rahmânîyyat*) with which Allâh blessed His servant.

From time immemorial, Allâh had been sending His Messengers with a message that His Will be revealed. Just as the creation of humankind is the result of a gradual process of evolution and mental development, so are there stages of spiritual evolution. Allâh has been revealing Himself according to the spiritual needs of humankind. The Prophets, whose examples are cited in the Holy Book, arrived at different stages in the spiritual development of humankind. At the time of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), the spiritual development had matured to the level of being capable of receiving and accepting the complete Message of our Lord. As the last of the chain of Prophets, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) represents in his person the best specimen of the human beings complete evolution.

The first Message of the Prophets call is embedded in the first five verses. These verses allude to the human beings embryonic evolution out of a fertilized ovum, thus contrasting the permitiveness and simplicity of his biological origin with his intellectual, moral, and spiritual potential, which he can attain during his process of evolution.

These verses point to the existence of a conscious design and a purpose underlying the creation of life.

اَفْرَأَيْتُمْ رَبّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ

96:1 Allâh spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai when Moses was commissioned to liberate the children of Israel from the yoke of Pharaoh. His assignment was of a tribal nature. After a series of additional Prophets comes the Son of Mary, on whom the spirit of the Lord descended in the shape of a dove. According to the Gospel writers, his message was that “the son of man was the son of God”. Thus, the mission of Moses concerned the affairs of a tribe, while that of Jesus spoke of the personal aggrandisement of some particular personality. However, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) of Islam is given a Message above individual, racial or ethnic interest. His message is addressed to humanity as a whole. It is of a universal character and brings the entire human race within its folds. It tells of the highest goal that a son of man is capable of reaching – that of sweet converse with his Creator. This Message shows the ways and means to achieve that grand goal. “*Recite with the Name of your Lord, Nourisher to perfection*” اَفْرَأَيْتُمْ رَبّكَ has been used with reference to this great goal of glory, which humanity as a whole was destined to attain.

خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ

96:2 The verb **Khalaka** خَلَقَ carries the sense that the act of Divine creation has not ended but is being continuously repeated. ‘Alaq عَلَقٍ means “hanging on something” and thus forming a connection with it. ‘Alaq عَلَقٍ also means to stick fast to something. It has in it the essence of concern and love. The phrase *Khalika minn ‘alaq* – who created from a clot embodies in it the idea that love for his Creator is ingrained in human nature and is a part of it. It is therefore natural that he should find his connection to his Creator. In a broader sense the word ‘Alaq عَلَقٍ also signifies a clot, a germ cell that fertilizes the

female ovum by forming a connecting link and sticking with the ovum. The words tell us how a human being develops from the state of primitiveness, simplicity and the insignificance of his biological origin to the perfection of his intellectual, moral and spiritual state. We also find a similar message in verse 30:54 where we read, “Allâh is He who created you from a state of weakness”. The verse also carries the message for the one who received these words: Similar is your condition. You are being created as a new being after you have formed a connection with your Creator. In this verse, the initial stage of a mere sperm drop has been intentionally left out, for the Holy Prophet (pbuh) had already passed through this stage of his life when the Divine Revelation started descending upon him. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) worshiped in the Cave of Hirâ for many years before this verse was revealed. Therefore the word ‘alaq has been used to show that the Holy Prophets (pbuh) love was for his Lord and the spiritual connection with Allâh had already been formed.

الَّذِي عَلِمَ بِالْقَمَلِ

96:4 “Who taught knowledge by means of the Pen” is an allusion that the Qur’ânic Message will be spread and taught by means of writing. The Pen is a symbol of the art of writing and for all knowledge recorded by means of writing. This also explains the summon, “Read!” (اقرُّ) at the beginning of the chapter.

عَلِمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ

96:5 The human being (الإنسان) is spoken of as being taught knowledge by Allâh, which he cannot acquire with his own power of intellect, rational thinking and reflection. It also includes the human ability to speak and express himself in an eloquent and clear fashion. This ability was not the result of accidental evolution but was directly willed and inspired by Allâh (cf. 55:2-4). Animals can be trained to obey the command of their master. Many are also capable of learning

and communicating with each other within their own species, but they can never learn to speak and express themselves in clear words. Thus, human speech is a Divine gift exclusive to human beings. Allâh's "teaching the human being" signifies Revelation, which is the only sure source and proof of His existence.

كَلَّا لَا تُطِعْهُ وَاسْجُدْ وَاقْرَبْ

96:19 "Yield not to him, rather continue to prostrate yourself and draw near". A saint would go on to say, "If you wish for light, prepare yourself to receive it, if you wish to be far from Allâh, nourish your egoism. If you wish to find a way out of this ruined prison, don't turn your head away from your beloved but, "bow down in worship and draw near" (وَاسْجُدْ وَاقْرَبْ).



سورة القدر 97. CHAPTER

The Majesty
(Revealed before Hijrah)

The verses of the preceding chapter mark the birth of the Holy Qur'ân. The present chapter explains the significance of this Noble Book. The opening verses inform us of the high status, dignity and excellence of the Qur'ân with reference to its revelation during *Lailah al-Qadr* ليلة القدر - the Night of Majesty, which has been described as the Blessed Night (44:4). This special Night recurs every year in the last ten days of the month of Ramadzan. That this night is specifically set apart for the manifestation of special Divine powers can be found in all

authentic collections of traditions. One such Divine powers is the acceptance of prayers offered in this Night.

Apart from this basic understanding, the Night of Majesty refers to the period when the world is covered with spiritual darkness that naturally demands Heavenly Light for the guidance of its inhabitants. It is in this extreme darkness that the Most Exalted sends *Rûh al-Quds* in the world to form a connection with His chosen ones. In His Wisdom, Allâh appoints a Reformer in this Night of Majesty for the renewal of His teachings that have become gradually obscured with the passage of time. Another conclusion can be inferred from the above reasoning that in the days of darkness and error the hearts of the people feel exceptionally inclined towards religion. It is a sure sign that a Divine Reformer is bound to appear or has already appeared.

But the greatest and most significant Night of Majesty is the one that extends over a long period of time beginning with the advent of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) and lasting until the day of Resurrection. This Night that first witnessed the shining of Divine Light in the form of the Holy Qur'ân, which was destined to illumine the whole world till the day of Resurrection, has been described as a Night full of blessings in the words: “We revealed this (Book) in a Night full of blessings إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةٍ مُّبَارَكَةٍ” as it has been Allâh’s practice to warn people against evil (44:3).

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةٍ مُّبَارَكَةٍ

97:1 Night (ليلة) stands for a period of spiritual darkness and time of ignorance. A Prophets advent is always preceded by such darkness. When the Holy Prophet (pbuh) made his appearance, such darkness prevailed all over the globe, as the Holy Qur'ân testifies: “Disorder and corruption has prevailed on land and sea owing to the evil (deeds) which people have wrought ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِي النَّاسِ” (30:41). Thus this Night was called the Night of Majesty, as in it the world received the greatest manifestation of Divine Light, and it gave

to humanity its greatest teacher, and the last and the most perfect law. Generally the words *lail* لَيْلٌ and *lailah* لَيْلَةٌ both mean night, but, as the famous lexicographer Marzûqî indicates, the word *lail* لَيْلٌ is used as opposed to *nahâr* نَهَارٌ and *lailah* لَيْلَةٌ as opposed to *yaum*, thus the word **Lailah** لَيْلَةٌ possesses a wonder and more extensive meaning than *lail* لَيْلٌ as *yaum*, which in its opposite has a wider sense than *nahâr*, which is the opposite of *lail*. The word *lailah* has been used as many as eight times in the Holy Qur’ân: Three times in chapter 97, once in 2:51, 2:187 and 44:3 and twice in 7:142. In each instance, it has been used in connection with Divine Revelation. The Night of Majesty لَيْلَةُ الْقُدْرِ thus refers to the dignity, the majesty and the greatness of those nights in which the Holy Qur’ân was revealed.

لَيْلَةُ الْقُدْرِ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ أَلْفٍ شَهْرٍ (۳) تَنَزَّلُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَالرُّوحُ فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ
مِّنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ (۴) سَلَامٌ هِيَ حَتَّىٰ مَطْلَعِ الْفَجْرِ

97:3-5 “The Night of Majesty is better than a thousand months” A thousand months are equal to eighty three years and four months, leaving about seventeen years to complete a century. This verse carries the same message as the saying of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) that a Divine Reformer shall appear among the Muslims at the commencement of every century. The Night of Majesty at the advent of every Reformer is actually a branch or a *Zill* of that very Night of Majesty, which was granted to the Holy Prophet (pbuh), the dignity of which is very high. “Peace” (سَلَامٌ) is the distinctive mark of the Majestic Night. This peace comes to the hearts of the true devotees of Allâh. It is that tranquillity of mind, which enables them to receive Divine blessings and wisdom.



سورة البينة 98. CHAPTER

The Clear Evidence or the Manifest Proof
(Revealed before Hijrah)

This chapter gives an answer to the question of the need of a Clear Evidence in the form of this Book despite the existence of former revealed Scriptures.

رَسُولٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ يَتْلُو صُحْفًا مُّطَهَّرًا

98:2 “A Messenger from Allâh reciting written leaves of the Book, free from all impurities” is the claim that this Book is free from all impurities, and possesses the excellent quality of purifying the hearts of people. Previous Scriptures have lost their purity and thereby their power to purify the hearts.

فِيهَا كُتُبٌ قَيِّمَةٌ

98:3 The revealed Book to the Prophet (pbuh) “Consists of eternal laws and commandments” (كتُبٌ قَيِّمَةٌ). It contains laws that are not only good for human social and spiritual lives, but also commandments that are everlasting and imperishable. It has qualities the previous Scriptures lacked, and new teachings which humanity needed for its moral and spiritual development. All those right ideas, principles and commandments, which were of paramount utility to human beings have been incorporated into the Holy Qur’ân. It stands as a guardian over those Books and has steered clear of all the defects and impurities found in them.



سورة الزلزلة 99. CHAPTER

The Shaking (Revealed before Hijrah)

This chapter is a commentary on the preceding chapter *Al-Bayyinah* سورة البينة. In addition to referring the Resurrection, the chapter also hints at the spiritual awakening and the great transformation that will be brought about by the “eternal laws and commandments” (كُلُّ بَيِّنَةٍ قِيمَةٌ) of the Holy Qur’ân. The chapter also contains some prophecies about the latter ages.

وَأَخْرَجَتِ الْأَرْضُ أَثْقَالَهَا

99:2 “*The earth shall throw up all her treasures*” these treasures are a kind of burden to the earth in the form of hidden minerals, oils and gas fields. The treasures are also the knowledge of sciences and arts. There will be a vast release and upsurge of spiritual and scientific knowledge. It also signifies that the latent aptitudes and capacities of human beings will find their expression. The changes will be so profound and the discoveries so far-reaching that people will exclaim with wonder and in bewilderment, “*What is the matter with her?*” (وَقَالَ إِنْسَانٌ مَا لَهَا).

يَوْمَئِذٍ تُحَدَّثُ أَخْبَارُهَا

99:4 When the Holy Prophet (pbuh) was asked about the meaning of “*That day she will relate all her news*” he is reported to have said that actions done in open and in secret will become known (*Tirmidhî*).

يَوْمَئِذٍ يَصْدُرُ النَّاسُ أَشْتَاتًا لِيَرُوا أَعْمَالَهُمْ

99:6 The statement “*That day all people will come forth in various groups to be shown their deeds*” indicates that in the latter days, in order to promote and establish their political, economic and other interests, people will form *various groups* in the form of political parties, common interest groups, companies, powerful guilds, cartels, corporations, syndicates and organizations.

فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ (۷) وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ

99:7-8 “*Whosoever has done so much as an atoms weight of evil shall also see it*” tells us that no action of a human being, good or bad, is wasted. All actions produce their consequences.



سورة العاديات 100. CHAPTER

The Assailters and the Chargers

(*Revealed before Hijrah*)

According to Ibn ‘Abbâs this chapter deals with Islamic defensive wars in a prophetical way. The forces of disbelievers will wage wars and the Muslims will not be spared from these wars.

100:1 ‘*Ādiyât* العاديات means both the companies of warriors and their chargers. According to *Rûh al-Ma’âni* the reference is to the Muslim warriors or the Companions of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) and their willingness to lay down their lives for the cause of Truth. The next four verses are closely connected. Allâh himself swearing by them in this verse gives an idea of how dear these fighters who fight against the forces of evil must be to Him.



سورة القارعة

Disastrous Rattling and the Sudden Calamity

(Revealed before Hijrah)

This chapter gives a description of the punishment in this life and in the Hereafter to the opponents of Truth at the hands of the “snorting chargers” (الغاديات) mentioned in the preceding chapter. Al-Qâri‘ah القارعة is a name given to the Day of Resurrection. Al-Qâri‘ah also refers to the series of calamities that befell the Makkans and their leaders and the suffering of the opponents of Truth who waged wars against Islam. The next few verses give some idea of the confusion and destruction and the horrible “disastrous rattling” of warfare in the future. The emphasis added by repeating the third verse lends weight to the warning contained in the chapter.

فَأُمُّهُ هَاوِيَةٌ (٩) وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا هِيَةٌ (١٠) نَارٌ حَامِيَةٌ

101:9-11 Gahenna is called a “nursing mother” (فَأُمُّهُ هَاوِيَةٌ). A nursing mother punishes to educate and to induce a change of behaviour always in the child’s best interest but never destroys or kills her child in rage. So long as the child is under care and training, it is in a relationship with his mother, which is sometimes punishing, sometimes affectionate. After his training is over, it is separated from the lap of his mother. Thus, the inmates of Gahenna are taken out of hell after they have remained there for some time, but not all at the same time, as their lapses and diseases shall be of different nature and severity. This is to say that the stay in hell is only for a limited time until the diseases of their heart are healed. In other words, the punishment of Gahenna serves the purpose of remedying and training in order to outfit an inmate for his spiritual life and progress in

Paradise. The sinner is not in hell-fire for purposes of vengeance or retaliation.



سورة التكاثر 102. CHAPTER

Vying to Excel

(Revealed before Hijrah)

In this chapter we are told what leads to *Al-Qâri‘ah* – الْفَارِعَةُ – the calamities of this and the next world. That is the person’s inordinate desire to acquire more and outstrip others in wealth, position, and prestige. He remains blindly engrossed in worldly pursuits until he finds himself accosted with *Al-Qâri‘ah*. This passion of acquiring more knows no limits and leaves him no time to reflect on his state after death and the reckoning of the Hereafter. Therefore, the start of his punishment in this very life is obvious.

كَلَّا سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ (٣) ثُمَّ كَلَّا سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ (٤) كَلَّا لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ عِلْمَ الْيَقِينِ

102:3-5 Repetition of the words “you shall come to know in time” thrice adds emphasis to the warnings contained in the chapter. This verse and the following verses group “Certainty” (الْيَقِين) into three degrees: ‘Ilm al-Yaqîn – (عِلْمَ الْيَقِين) certainty by inference; ‘Ain al-Yaqîn certainty by sight and *Haqq al-Yaqîn* certainty by realization. On receiving punishment in this life a person can, by inference, attain to a certainty of the existence of hell in the Hereafter. The punishment of the grave or *Barzakh* is the certainty by sight. However, a perfect “Certainty” will come by a perfect manifestation of the punishment on the Day of Resurrection. When we read the Holy Qur’ân we come to know of two states after death. The first state is the state of the grave

or *Barzakh*. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) is reported to have said, One who dies, his Resurrection takes place there and then. At another place the saying is, “The grave or *Barzakh* is a Garden from among the Gardens of Paradise or it is a ditch from the ditches of Hell”. The soul is given a sort of physical body to reap the fruit of his actions. This body is prepared for him out of the nature of the deeds he has performed in this life. Beyond the state of the grave is the time that is called Resurrection, which is prescribed for the full manifestation of Divine Attributes.



سورة العصر 103. CHAPTER

The Time

(*Revealed before Hijrah*)

The preceding chapter cautioned not to hanker after wealth and waste time in the acquisition of worldly riches. Here we are told that those who do not desist from such pursuits lead a purposeless life. The purpose of life is clearly pointed out and the value of time has been particularly stressed. We are surely losing every minute that passes away and the time at our disposal is short and can never be recaptured. It is binding upon us to make the best use of our time. In this short chapter, Allâh has set forth once again ways of doing so – that is, “Who believe and do deeds of righteousness and (who) exhort one another to (accept and preach) the truth and exhort one another to (abide by it with) patience and perseverance” *آمُنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ* () *وَتَوَاصُّوا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَاصُّوا بِالصَّابَرِ*.

The title of the chapter *وَالْعَصْرُ* makes us realize that the time of advent of a Messenger of Allâh is like the afternoon, the latter part of the day

when the sun is in decline. Therefore, little time is left for humankind to make up for its loss and deficiencies. Time is running short to realize the Divine Proximity, and bow before His Majesty in supplication. It is now time for the Congregational Prayer, to glorify and Exalt His Names in the company of the faithful. Little time is left to reach the depths of true understanding of Divine Unity (-*Wahdāyyat*), His Uniqueness (-*Ahadiyyat*), His being without associate in His Attributes and to realize His Exaltedness. It is high time for the human being to listen to the holy suggestion of His “angels”, his inner voice calling him to the right path. He should now have faith in this Book that shall guide him. Time is running out, so he should listen to the message of Allāh spoken through the Holy Prophet (pbuh), and prepare Himself for the Day when he has to stand before his Lord and account for his deeds.

The sage Wahb Ibn Munabbî transmitted that the Exalted Allāh said, “O Children of Adam, if you could see the minute span of the precious time that remains for you, you would desire to renounce your vain and selfish wishes and you would restrain all your desires to possess, and you would see k to act good. Live with clear consciousness of the Day when you will stand before your Lord so that you may be free from distress and remorse.”

وَالْعَصْرِ (١) إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ

103:1-2 Al-‘Asr means time, succession of age, afternoon or evening. *Al-‘Asrān* are the night and the day (*Lisān*; *Tāj*). *Dahr* is another word for time. The difference between *al-‘Asr* and *al-Dahr* الدهر is that in the former the time can be counted and estimated whereas the latter can neither be counted nor estimated. The word also refers to the time of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). In an authentic saying he compares his own time to ‘*Asr* or the afternoon (*Bukhārī*). “*The human being is pursuing a losing bargain*” إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ is a reminder that little time is left to make up for the loss when he has to

stand before his Lord and account for his deeds. Little time is left to free him from the distress and remorse that awaits him if he continues to go after the temptations of worldly joys and forgets thereby his obligations towards his fellow beings. It will not be an easy job to pursue that spiritual goal, as it will require patience and perseverance.

In addition there are other words in the Holy Qur'ân that refer to time, they are moment (*waqt*), day (*yaum*), daytime (*nahâr*), night (*lail*), the age (*dahar*) as discussed above, eternity without beginning (*azal*), eternity without end (*abad*), which are in fact negation of beginning and end. Smallest possible time, which is no more divisible is also called "day" (*yaum*) or the "day of event" (*yaum al sh'an*; كُلَّ يَوْمٍ هُوَ فِي شَانٍ; 55:29). This infinitesimal little time what we call "now" is passing.



سورة الهمزة 104. CHAPTER

The Slanderer

(*Revealed before Hijrah*)

In parallel to two good qualities brought up in the previous chapter - patience and righteous deeds – in this chapter two bad qualities are mentioned. The slanderers and defamers are condemned here. All the wealth that people hoard and that they deem to be in their possession or spend against the cause of Truth will not be of any avail to them. The subsequent chapter **Al-Fîl** الفيل illustrates this warning with an example. Here we are told that one who knowingly treats others wrongfully will not pass away from this life until he involves himself in a similar situation of abuse and troubles.

وَيْنِ لُكْلُ هُمَزَةٍ لُمَزَةٍ

104:1 Humazah هُمَزَةٍ mean those who are always after finding fault with others behind their backs and are careless about their own reformation. Instead of spending their wealth in promoting good, they simply amass it.

كَلَّا لَيُبَدَّلَ فِي الْحُطْمَةِ

104:6 Such people are the victims of **Hutamah** حُطْمَةٌ - the crushing torment and burning of heart.



سورة الفيل 105. CHAPTER

The People of the Elephant
(Revealed before Hijrah)

The chapter **Al-Fil** الفيل cites the example of the warning given in the preceding chapter. The chapter alludes to the Abyssinian attack under Abû Yakthûm Abrahah bin Sabah al-Ashram, the viceroy in Yemen of the Christian king of Abyssinia in the year 570 A.D. His main object was to destroy the Ka'bah.

Despite the fact that Yemen was the most advanced province in the Arabian Peninsula and the most civilized because of its fertile lands and the efficient administration of its water resources, its religious practices never commanded the respect of the inhabitants of the desert and others in the country. None of its temples was ever a centre of Pilgrimage. Abrahah al-Ashram built a magnificent cathedral in Sana, the capital of Yemen. Abrahah took special care to decorate the house with exquisite furnishings and statues. He thought with his wealth and

pomp he could detract attention from the Ka‘bah towards his cathedral. When he realized his plans failed, he became jealous.

Makkah on the other hand, was due to the Ka‘bah a destination of pilgrimage ever since the beginnings of Arab history. For this respect and esteem, which Makkah and its Holy House enjoyed, as well as for its distinguished position in the trade of the peninsula as a whole, Abraha desired to destroy the pride of the desert Arabs and to disseminate Christianity in Arabia. He schemed to invade Makkah and destroy the Ka‘bah.

An army of 20,000 strong, equipped with elephants was set in march for this purpose. Dhu Nafar and Nufail bin Habîb al-Khasamî, leaders of the two tribes of Shahrân and Nahîs tried to stop Abraha. Both were taken prisoners after a brief but gallant fight. At the same time, the people of Taif cooperated with Abraha. On approaching Makkah, Abraha sent Hunatah al-Himyarî to inform the Makkans that Abraha had not come to make war against them but only to destroy the House. The Quraish first thought of holding their ground and fighting the invaders, but they soon realised that Abraha’s power was far superior to theirs. Therefore, ‘Abdul Muttalib, leader of the Quraish, informed Hunatah of the intention of the Makkans not to fight them. Hunatah told ‘Abdul Muttalib, his sons and some other leaders of Makkah to go with him to Abraha in order to talk to him directly. The Makkhan delegation led by ‘Abdul Muttalib, grandfather of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), met Abraha who treated him with great honour. Instead of asking Abraha that their House of worship be spared, ‘Abdul Muttalib requested that only his two hundred camels be returned. He reasoned that he is the master of the camels and the Ka‘bah has a Master of its own who will protect it. The Makkans offered to pay him one third of the yearly crop of the Tehamah province if they spared them. Before leaving Makkah, ‘Abdul Muttalib holding the skirts of the Ka‘bah prayed to Allâh saying, Just as a human being protects his house and property from plunder, so

you, O Lord! Defend your House (Muir). A contagious disease broke out with deadly pustules and blains - probably an aggravated form of smallpox (Muir). Most probably the microbes of the disease were carried there by the flocks of birds (Ibn Ishâq). In confusion and dismay, the army started to retreat. Abrahah himself died from the disease after his return to Sana. This was the first time, as quoted by Ibn Hisham and Ibn Kathîr, that spotted fever (- *hasbah*) and smallpox (- *judrî*) appeared in the land of the Arabs. This phenomenon was so extraordinary that the Arabs designated the year as the year of the Elephant and reckoned time by it.

By relating the memorable invasion of Makkah by the Army of the Elephant our attention has been drawn to the fact that by protecting the Holy House against an enemy, the All-Mighty Allâh had shown a purpose. The coincidence of the year with the year of the Holy Prophet's (pbuh) birth, no doubt, furnishes a hint to that purpose. The Arabs not only knew that the Sacred House had Abraham's blessings but also that he had prayed for the appearance of a great Prophet from among them who should purify the House. The mentioning of the incident conveyed a warning to the Quraish of Makkah that if the Lord had destroyed an army because of its intention to demolish His House He would also destroy those who wanted to destroy His Prophet. Just as the Army of the Elephant owned innumerable wealth and equipment and still their possessions proved of no avail to them, similarly the wealth possessed by the enemies of Islam will benefit them not in the least.



سورة قريش 106. CHAPTER

The Tribe of Quraish

(Revealed before Hijrah)

The security of the *Quraish* is a metonym for the security of the Ka‘bah, the focal point of the Faith based on the concept of Allāh’s Unity. The chapter further tells us that at the Ka‘bah only the Lord of it رَبُّ هَذَا الْبَيْتِ shall be worshiped and that the trade journeys will become the means of the dissemination of Islam. There shall also come an era of peace and harmony for the attendants of Ka‘bah and the inhabitants around it.

Quraish قُرَيْشٌ is the name given to the descendant of Nadzr bin Kananah. The word *Quraish* قُرَيْشٌ is a dominative of *qarash*, a big animal of the sea that eats others and is not itself eaten. *Quraish* also means to gather. The people of this tribe gathered from all parts of Arabia in Makkah and surpassed all other tribes in honour, power and prosperity. The tribe of *Quraish* descended from Ismā‘il and the Holy Prophet (pbuh) was a *quraishi*. The *quraishis* were traders who travelled in summer to Iraq and Iran and further eastwards where the Mageans and the Sabians lived. Their trade routes reached Syria where Jews were found in large number as well as to northern countries where they traded with Christians. In winter they journeyed to African countries inhabited by different tribes, and even to India, the land of Hinduism and China, where the adherents of Confucius could be encountered.

106:1-4 This and the verses that follow remind us of the great benefits conferred on the tribe of *Quraish* as the attendant of the Ka‘bah.

فَلْيَعْبُدُوا رَبَّ هَذَا الْبَيْتِ الَّذِي أَطْعَمَهُمْ مِنْ جُوعٍ وَآمَنَهُمْ مِنْ حَوْفٍ

106:5 The Ka‘bah was the first house built for the worship of Allâh by humankind. Hundreds of houses of worship were constructed, many turned into ruins or their residents suffered from famines and wars. As for this place, the residents are all secure from danger and hunger for all times. Now the command is to worship its Lord.



سورة الماعون 107. CHAPTER

Acts of Kindness

(Revealed before Hijrah)

The previous chapter described some of the bounties of Allâh for the inhabitants of Makkah and attendants of Allâh’s House. This chapter teaches us that since the Most Gracious is the source of all bounties and blessings, we should show our gratitude towards Him and thank Him by fulfilling the duties and obligations we owe to humankind. The acts of kindness to Allâh’s creatures are the basis of all morals expected from us. This chapter reminds us once again of those two basic teachings which are the worship of Allâh and service to fellow human beings. Their neglect constitutes the denial of religion itself.

أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي يُكَذِّبُ بِالدِّينِ

107:1 The first verse, though outwardly a question, is in fact an expression of emphasis. Besides lending beauty to it, this mode of expression is also creates inquisitiveness in the readers mind to identify the believer and to make him conscious of the evil of the deed mentioned afterwards.

الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ صَلَاتِهِمْ سَاهُونَ

107:5 In this verse we are warned against being unmindful of Prayer. This neglect of Prayer may assume different forms. Some people do not perform Prayers at all and are Muslim by name only. There are those who say their Prayers but not regularly, others who say their Prayers but they perform them at home. They deem it useless to go to the mosque and attend the Prayer behind an *imâm*. Some of them do perform their Prayers in the mosques after an *imâm* but do not pay heed to the spirit of Prayer and do not complete it in accordance with the rules of its performance, their intention being to see others and be seen by them. During the Prayer, they are engrossed in irrelevant thoughts and perform it quickly and dismissively. There are yet others who do not perform their Prayers as devised by the Messenger of Allâh; rather they invent their own method of performing the Prayer. They disregard all historical evidence and the continued consensus of the *ummah* with regard to the performance of Prayer. All such types of prayers are condemned here.

الَّذِينَ هُمْ يُرَاءُونَ

107:6 Allâh does not accept the good act or the act of worship of those who do it because they like to be seen by people as opposed to for the love for Allâh and His pleasure. Their good acts are for show. Allâh takes into account their subtle inner intentions, and according to these intentions, they shall be judged.

وَيَمْنَعُونَ الْمَاعُونَ

107:7 In this verse the word **al-Mâ‘ûn** المَاعُونَ is explained by Bukhârî as meaning any good or kind act. According to Akramah, its highest form is obligatory Zakât and its lowest the lending or giving of small items of daily use to others, and to aid or assist anyone in difficulty.

Exhorting others and guiding them on the path of piety is also *Mâ ‘ûn Mâ’ûn*. Honour is with generous thoughts and actions.



سورة الكوثر 108. CHAPTER

The Abundance of Good

(Revealed before Hijrah)

The preceding chapter exposed the character traits of an evil and hypocritical individual. Here we come to learn about a person who exhibits all good and noble qualities. It is such a person who has been granted by Allâh an abundance of good - **Kauthar** الْكَوْثَرُ of every kind. According to Ibn ‘Abbâs, *Al-Kauthar* الْكَوْثَرُ is the abundance of good which Allâh gave to the Holy Prophet (pbuh) in the form of the Holy Qur’ân, which is humanity’s infallible guide for the time to come and whose blessings will last till the Day of Resurrection. The word *Kauthar* الْكَوْثَرُ also signifies a man with great possessions who gives much and often. All the material and spiritual good was bestowed upon the Holy Prophet (pbuh) in full measure, which will take the form of a vast river (- *haudz*) feeding all other rivers of knowledge. Keeping in view the second meaning, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) is a person from among whose followers a stream of divinely inspired Reformers will emerge who will successfully defend him and Islam in every age and guide the erring Muslims to the right path. Thus, the granting of the abundance of Allâh is not related to the first advent of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) only but it speaks of the abundance of good granted to him with his latter advent through his righteous followers. Another everlasting good that will be bestowed on his *ummah* is that his true followers who seek closeness with Allâh with utmost devotion

shall become the recipients of Revelation and hold communion with Allâh in their very life.

إِنَّا أَعْطَيْنَاكَ الْكَوْثَرَ (٢) فَصَلِّ لِرَبِّكَ وَانْحِرْ

108:1-2 Prophet (pbuh), and through him to every believing man and woman. Two ways are pointed out in this chapter as to how to attain the abundance of good - Praying to Allâh and making sacrifice or devoting one's life to the good of humanity. These are the ways of communion with Allâh, which raises in our hearts the highest aspirations and makes us drink deep at the fountain of *Kauthar*. A saint has said, "Giving thanks for abundance is sweeter than the abundance itself: Should one who is absorbed with the Generous One be distracted by the Gift? Thankfulness is the soul of beneficence, for thankfulness brings to a place where the Beloved lives, thankfulness brings alertness. Hunt for bounty with the net of gratitude!"



سورة الكافرون 109. CHAPTER

Those Who Deny the Truth
(*Revealed before Hijrah*)

The Makkans made an all-out effort to dissuade the Holy Prophet (pbuh) from preaching Islam and offered him various attractive proposals to deter him from his resolve. However, he vehemently rejected all these proposals and refused to compromise with idolatry in any way. The preceding chapter dealt with the abundance of good granted by Allâh to the Holy Prophet (pbuh). Here we are told how one who has had all these favours be bestowed upon him can desert

Allâh. We are told furthermore, that the religion taught by the Holy Prophet (pbuh) is free from all impurities of disbelief. A believer in one Deity and His genuine worshipper cannot cease to invite the disbelievers to accept the true religion and to forsake the worship of false deities.

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا الْكَافِرُونَ

109:1 Yâ-ayyo-ha يَا أَيُّهَا is a composition of three letters: **Yâ** يَا is a nominative of address, **ayyo** اَيُّ is a word of specification and **ha** هَا is a note of admonition. The verse thus means that the disbelievers against whom a Divine decree has been issued will not accept Islam. Even after having seen manifest signs they voice disapproval, and they expect the Muslims to give up their Faith and accept their doctrines. They refuse to accept the Truth brought by the Holy Qur'ân.

The word **yâ** يَا refers to the third person - the absentee, and **ayyo** اَيُّ the second person, who is present, and **ha** هَا is used to sternly admonish, both whether present or absent. The only reasonable course left to them is to wait for Allâh's judgment to come into operation. At the same time, the believers are enjoined to stick to their Faith even in hostile environments and under adverse circumstances.

لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِينِ

109:6 Dîn دِين translated as recompense also means Faith. Thus, the verse also speaks of the freedom of religious opinions that everyone should be entitled to. There is no compulsion of any sort in religion (2:256) is the final verdict on the subject of this verse.



سورة النصر 110. CHAPTER

The Help

(Revealed before Hijrah)

This chapter was revealed during the month of Dhul Hijjah (10 A.H) on the occasion of the Farewell Pilgrimage at Mina in the middle of *Ayyâm al-Tashrîq*. This was only seventy days before the Holy Prophets (pbuh) death. Unquestionably the last entire chapter that was revealed was preceded only one day earlier, on Friday, the 9th of Dhul Hijjah by the revelation of the verse الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتْمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي “*This day have I perfected for you your faith and completed My blessings upon you and have chosen Islam for your religion*” (5:3). Since that verse was almost immediately followed by the present chapter, some of the Companions of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) with spiritual insight concluded that his mission was fulfilled and that he was about to die (*Bukhârî*). Among them was Abû Bakr^(rz).

The preceding chapter foretold that the outcome of the two side's efforts would show whose Faith was the true one: The Holy Prophet (pbuh) in his effort to disseminate Islam or the disbelievers working towards its annihilation. This chapter announces that the victory promised to the believers through the Holy Prophet (pbuh) with Divine help has arrived and that the doors of further victories have been opened. At the time of revelation, masses of people were already entering the fold of Islam and the doors of spiritual as well as physical conquest were opened. These final verses tell us how to act after having successfully achieved a goal.

إِذَا جَاءَ نَصْرٌ اللَّهُ وَالْفَتْحُ

110:1 The word **Jâ'a** جَاءَ at the very start of the chapter indicated that it was the Divine succour and victory that came to the Prophet (pbuh) rather than he running after it. The word **Al-Fath** الفَتْحُ also refers to that special victory which was promised to the Holy Prophet (pbuh)

and his Companions: The conquest of Makkah, which has been called *Fathul Fatūh* - The Great Victory.

فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ وَاسْتَغْفِرْهُ ۝ إِنَّهُ كَانَ تَوَابًا

110:3 Note that “glorification of the Lord with His praise” has been enjoined before seeking His protection and forgiveness. Glorification of the Lord points out His *Jalālī* - جلائی Majestic Attribute and seeking His Protection draws our attention to His *Jamālī* - جمالی - lovable and amiable qualities. It is proper to first remind ourselves of Allâh’s praiseworthy Attributes before seeking a favour. The seven verses of Surah al-Fâtihah are also divided into its first three and a half verses of glorification and the remaining three and a half verses of seeking protections.

In the case of a sinful person, the injunction of seeking His protection and forgiveness - *istighfâr* means seeking the pardon of Allâh. On the part of a sinless person like the Holy Prophet (pbuh), who has already been purified by the Lord Himself, it means seeking further grace, greater blessings and protection from the satanic forces opposing his mission. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) is told here that since Islam has gained predominance in the land and his former enemies have become his devoted servants he should now ask Allâh to forgive them the grave wrongs they had done to him in the past. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) has also been enjoined to ask Allâh’s protection against weaknesses and shortcomings that might find their way into the Muslim community because of the lack of knowledge and training of the new Muslims. Beside this, he is also enjoined to ask that his followers may be saved by Allâh from deviating from Islamic principles and precepts. The verse should not be understood to mean that the Prophet (pbuh) is called to ask for forgiveness of sinful actions of his own part. According to the Holy Qur’ân he enjoyed complete immunity from every moral lapse or deviation from the right course. Moreover, asking forgiveness does not mean only remaining

safe from the lapses that one has committed, but it also points to the reaching of that standard of moral excellence and of innocence where one becomes deserving of exercising the right of intercession for his community. Thus, even the most innocent stands in need of *istighfâr* [استغفار]. All Prophets of Allâh asked for *istighfâr* (cf. 38:24). The verse also indicates that if people should embrace Islam in hosts, a true believer ought not to grow self-complacent, but should rather become more humble and more conscious of his own failings.



سورة المسد

The Twisted Strands

(Revealed before Hijrah)

Chapter Al-Kâfirûn pointed out that believers and disbelievers are following two different courses. Chapter *Al-Nasr* discussed the successful achievements of the believers and the prediction that the door for future victories will be opened to them. In this chapter, we come to know of the utter failure to be met by the leaders of disbelief, their companions and their bands. Again, we are made to realize that those who behave haughtily and indulge in nefarious designs against the Religion chosen by Allâh will end in perdition.

تَبَّتْ يَدَا أَبِي لَهَابٍ وَتَبَّ

111:1 *Abi Lahab* أَبِي لَهَابٍ personifies one who invents something which produces fire and kindles flames, and who has a fiery temperament and is easily enraged; one who looks beautiful because of his glowing and ruddy countenance (*Lisân*; *Râghib*; *Zamakhsharî*;

Râzî). The expression **Yada** يَدَا - the two hands, is a metonym for power, help, protection, wealth and possessions: - someone who has many children, since children can also be a source of strength. Abû Lahab was the nickname (- *kunyah*) of ‘Abdul ‘Uzza, one of the uncles of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). This name was given to him because of his glowing countenance, his fiery temperament and his outbursts of rage. He was the Holy Prophets inveterate enemy and persecutor. Here we are told that Abû Lahab or anyone who is his personification, will have his hands, the symbol of his power, cut. This was the lot of ‘Abdul ‘Uzza. Divine punishment overtook him. For fear of his life, he did not fight in the Battle of Badr against the Holy Prophet. Only seven days after the war, he died of a disease called *adasah*, a deadly and contagious type of plague. Nobody ventured to go near his dead body, and quite the same was the fate of those in the war who had gone too far in their hostilities towards Islam. Moreover, similar is the punishment that lies in wait for Gog and Magog who are making all kinds of efforts against Islam. They will themselves be enveloped by the flames of the wars that they have kindled against the followers of Islam (cf. 18:98-100).

سَيِّنْلَى نَارًا دَاتَ لَهَبٍ

111:3 The “*fire full of leaping flames* نَارًا دَاتَ لَهَبٍ” is the fire of passions in which a person burns when he is met with repeated failures. It also denotes the fire of war and the fire of Gahenna.

وَامْرَأَتُهُ حَمَالَةُ الْحَاطِبِ

111:4 **Imra’tu-hu** امْرَأَتُهُ - his wife; his associate; his comrade. The word also signifies a subordinate to someone with power and influence (*Lisân; Tâj*). This purports to say that the culprits are also their assistants responsible for kindling and adding fuel to the fire, whether men or women. Abû Lahab’s wife Arwa Ummi Jamîl, daughter of Harb son of Umayyah strew the Holy Prophet’s path with

thorny firewood and would go about spreading calumnies against him. **Hatab** الحَطَبٌ means firewood (Lisân) or spreading calumnies (Bukhârî; Lisân).

فِي جِيدِهَا حَبْلٌ مِّنْ مَّسَدٍ

111:5 Masad مَسَدٌ signifies anything that consists of twisted strands, irrespective of the material (*Qâmûs*; Lisân; *Mughnî*). Twisting rope makes it stronger. It also signifies those powers who are constantly engaged in manufacturing fire weapons for destruction. It is said that Ummi Jamîl, the wife of Abû Lahab became strangled by the very rope by which she carried firewood and thorns when she died. This is a warning to people of influence who are proud of their wealth and power that no blood relationship whatsoever, even with the Holy Prophet (pbuh) as exemplified in this chapter, will be of any avail to them.



سورة الإخلاص 112. CHAPTER

The Purification of the Unity
(*Revealed before Hijrah*)

This chapter summarizes the gist of the Qur'ânic teaching, which is the Unity and Perfection of the Creator. Unity has been presented in a very beautiful and comprehensive manner. It is said that one third of the Holy Qur'ân is revealed as an explanation of this synthesis. Human reason demands that there should be no associate or partner with Allâh. This chapter has conceded the rationality of the requirement that Allâh is One, Alone and Unique, that there can be no associate with Him in His position and status, and that He is above all

needs. The Divine Attribute “*He begets none and is begotten by no one*” لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُوَلَّ obviates any imagined need that He would require the assistance of someone without whom He cannot carry on His work and who should continue His work after Him. He is perfect in all His Attributes. He does not stand in need of an associate or partner in any way whatsoever. The perfect order that pervades and permeates the universe demands in light of human reason that one uniform law must govern it. The doctrine of the unity of Allāh carries also the idea of the unity of the human race. All the nations of the world are the children of one “Father” and He takes equal care of all and deals with all of them alike like a mother.

The Attributes of *Ahad* أَحَد - He is Unique in His Oneness and *al-Samad* الصَّمَد – are two basic Divine Attributes. These are Attributes that cannot be shared by any of his creatures unlike other Attributes such as He sees (- *huwa al-Basîr*), He listens (- *huwa al-Sam’î*), which to some extent can be exhibited by those He has created. The two Attributes of *Ahad* أَحَد and *al-Samad* الصَّمَد denote His essence no other language has any one word that conveys the full meaning of these two words.

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ

112:1 The chapter starts with the word **qul** قُل that means, Say!; Admit!; Go on proclaiming and conveying to others; the fact is. The second word in the verse is **huwa** هُوَ - here used as *dzamîr shân* which signifies that the truth is embedded in nature that He is One in His Uniqueness, and that He is One, Alone and Unique. The Jews considered Yahowa the sacred name of God and considered it a sin to even utter this word from their mouths unless they offered a prayer and observed a fast. It looks apparent that Yahowa is a compound of Ya! howa, (- O! that Being). They believe that it is beneath the dignity of the Exalted Being to call Him by any word or name.

The verse states that *huwa هُوَ* is Allâh, Who is **Ahad** أَحَدٌ - the Unique One. There are two Arabic words to signify oneness, one is *Ahad* أَحَدٌ and the other is *Wâhid*. Allâh is *Ahad* أَحَدٌ and *Wâhid*. It is one of the wonders of the Arabic language and of Qur’ân that the word *Ahad* أَحَدٌ is used as an Attribute of Allâh which can never be used to describe anyone other than Him, whereas the word *Wâhid* denotes the number one which is followed by the second and then the third and so on. When we speak of *Ahad* أَحَدٌ no second is understood to share in His Lordship and no second or third number can follow Him. According to Qur’ân Allâh is *Ahad* أَحَدٌ , - One in the sense of the absolute Oneness, not in the numerical sense. He is such a One that even His Attributes are His Essence and not separate and never separable from Him. He is not of a composite nature. He is All-Compact in His Unity and human intellect fails in conceiving His existence. There is no place in it as being One of many, nor does it admit any differentiation or distinction.

اللّٰهُ الصَّمَدُ

112:2 Al-Samad الصَّمَدُ occurs in the Holy Qur’ân only once and is applied to Allâh alone. *Al-Samad* الصَّمَدُ is something that has no vacuum in it nothing can enter it nor anything can come out of it; *Al-Samad* الصَّمَدُ is hard, clean, transparent and invisible on which no dust can fall; *al-Samad* is that Supreme Being Who is beyond all philosophical conceptions. *Samad* is a Being that is Eternal and Everlasting, *Al-Samad* الصَّمَدُ is the Lord and everything depends upon Him while He is Independent (Lane). The word therefore comprises the concepts of the Origin of Cause and Eternity, and Independence combined with the idea that everything existing or conceivable goes back to Him as its source and is dependent on Him for its beginning as well as for its continued existence (Lisân; Tâj; Râghib). Thus, this Being (- *Wajûd*) always existed and will always exist and His Lordship will never cease.

وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَّهُ كُفُواً أَحَدٌ

112:4 At the end the word **Ahad** أَحَد is repeated once again to remove all doubt that any other being could exist and, like Him, might also possess the Attributes He possesses. It says that there is none like Him and none equals Him. The chapter cuts at the very roots of all polytheistic beliefs or ideas, in particular the doctrine of the Trinity. The chapter rejects the belief of the Hindu Aryas that soul and matter are eternal and co-exist with God. It also negates the belief of incarnation according to which a mere human being is likened to God. Association can be of four types. It could be in respect of number or rank, or descent or action and effect. Allâh is free from association of all these types.

Christians discard the Unity of God when they claim divinity for Jesus. Jesus was a humble person and possessed human weaknesses and human limitations of knowledge. He possessed no Divine Attributes and there was nothing in him that cannot be found in other human beings.

Allâh's Unity combines all potentialities in His creation. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) received these words from Allâh: “**Al-Ikhlas** الإِخْلَاصُ is a secret known only unto Me. I entrust it to the hearts of those whom I love most intensely among My servants” (reported by Hudhafiya).



سورة الفلق 113. CHAPTER

The Dawn

(Revealed before Hijrah)

This and the following chapter teach us a comprehensive prayer against all the difficulties and obstacles in our way. We are enjoined to seek protection of Allâh against four evils. They are in fact four hurdles through which every person has to pass for spiritual advancement. The fourth hurdle is the stage of success, when a person achieves his objective and persons of jealous nature seek to deprive him of the fruit of his labour. As a protection against these perils in life, a believer is enjoined to seek the help of Allâh to protect him from the evil designs and nefarious machinations of jealous persons. This chapter also contains a prophecy that the Dajjâl, a personification of satan and his people, like Gog and Magog, will be responsible for bringing about widespread spiritual darkness in the world. Some apparently powerful nations, with their evil designs will pose a great threat to Islam. They will put evil suggestions into the resolution of people and thus in the management of their affairs. Their malicious activities will originate from secret jealousy they feel towards the religion of Muslims. Their leaders will resort to hidden mischief mongering and their politics will revolve around secret alliances and secret plots against Islam and indulging in secret nefarious activities. The chapter creates an atmosphere of prayer to ward off the evils of this darkness and we are given hope that the “Daybreak” (الفلق) will dispel the darkness and there will be a gradual manifestation of the Truth and its ultimate triumph.

قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ الْفَلَقِ

113:1 Al-Falq – الفلق – “the dawn”, “the daybreak”. This expression is used in the Holy Qur’ân in two different contexts: Cleaver of the daybreak (- *Fâliq al-Asbâh*) and the One who causes the grain and the

date-stone to germinate (- *Fâlliq al-Habb wa al-Nawâ* 6:96-97). The word also means the origin of the creation; the plain appearance of the truth after it had been dubious; an elevated ground; a low or depressed place of the earth between two hills; the hell (*Lisân*; *Tâj*). In this verse our attention has been drawn to the fact that it is by means of prayers that all impediments in our path can be removed and darknesses can be dispelled. In addition it tells us that even such an insignificant thing as a date-stone comes under the nourishment of the Lord and can produce excellent results in the form of green gardens and flourishing farms, similarly when a human being places himself under Divine protection and nourishment, it will surely produce very wonderful results.

وَمِنْ شَرِّ النَّفَاثَاتِ فِي الْعُقَدِ

113:4 Naffâthât fi al-'Uqad means those who whisper evil suggestions into knots of threads as do those who cast evil spells; those who enter into secret contracts to break down friendships. *Naffâthât* is derived from *anfus*; that is a singular of *nafs* - a feminine noun, and literally means, those (not necessarily females) who blow upon knots of threads. This is an idiomatic phrase employed in classical Arabic to designate all supposedly occult endeavours (*Râzi*; *Zamakhsharî*).

At all times and ages and in all cultures we come across people who profess to possess magical or supernatural powers and people who garb themselves in the robe of piety or self-proclaimed “saints.” Some of them cause harm to society. Some devise ways and means to make their fellow beings succumb to difficulties through hidden and harmful planning and conspiracies. Others hoard riches by propagating their “saintliness” and “holiness.” Their visitors express their intense wishes before them and expect their wish to be fulfilled in return for some material reward. Often such wishes are vicious, such as to bring about death to an enemy or afflict him with disease.

Now this “holy man” will set to work to prove his powers by performing some ceremonies, which may include a kind of “knot of thread” that he will blow over. He will apply all his tricks to convince the people about his claims and spare no efforts to assure others that he is a competent “saint.” We are enjoined to seek refuge with Allâh from such practices, despite their palpable irrationality.



سورة الناس 114. CHAPTER

The People

(Revealed before Hijrah)

This last chapter and the chapter before have been named by the Holy Prophet (pbuh) as *moawwadatayn* - the two that bring the believers into the protection of Allâh. This is their mutual relationship. **Al-Nâs** الناس is the continuation of the chapter **Al-Fâq** الفَاق and in a way is complementary to the subject matter of the former. The content of these two chapters suggests that when you are facing physical or spiritual difficulties, we should seek refuge in the Omnipotent Lord Who alone can give the needed relief. The Holy Qur’ân in its very beginning taught us to seek assistance from Allâh with respect to any work towards into which we put our efforts. We were commanded to commence our actions with the name of Allâh - بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ (*Bismillâh al-Rahmân al-Rahîm*), and now at the end we are taught to seek ultimate refuge in Him. These last two chapters mention seven evils, which we can hardly escape from, and we therefore must seek Divine help and protection against them. Three distinct Attributes of Allâh are repeated in it:

- 1) **Rabb** - رَبُّ - the Sustainer and Nourisher to perfection;

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- 2) **Malik** مَلِكٌ - the Sovereign King and Controller of affairs;
- 3) **Ilâh** إِلَهٌ - the Controller of hearts and desires, Who deserves to be worshiped and loved and before Whom the people must bow.

These three Attributes have a deep significance in this sequence. There are three ways a human being becomes influenced and overpowered by evil thoughts, firstly when he considers some other being as his foster other than his Lord, Who is his real Nourisher to perfection (*Rabb* رَبُّ); secondly when a person submits in obedience before a king other than his Sovereign King (*Malik* مَلِكٌ), and thirdly when he makes others his beloved, his aim and object of worship and adoration (*ilâh* إِلَهٌ). These three Attributes, in a broader sense, also refer to three obligations of the human being. The first concerns the individual, the second concerns society, and the third concerns our duties towards our Lord. These three Divine Attributes also refer to the three conditions or the three stages of spiritual advancement or retrogression of the human soul and as well as the three Divine awards (*faidhân*) that are conferred on the human soul in those conditions. The person occupying the lowest stage is the one who is completely ignorant as to how to attain a stage of virtue. He is under the influence of his *nafs al-Ammârah* (12:53), the soul inclined to command evil. However, Allâh is the Nourisher to perfection of all humankind (*Rabb* رَبُّ النَّاسِ), even if they are disbelievers in His Being and are regardless about His existence. His *Rabûbîyyat* covers all and can be compared to the rain that irrigates the lands of everybody, and the sunshine that provides its light to all corners of the world.

A rank above the aforementioned class of people is that of those who have been enamoured in acquiring knowledge of Allâh and who have come to realize the value of virtue. They are eager to get rid of their weaknesses, and their *nafs al-Lawwâmah* - the self-accusing-soul (75:2) is alive and warning them from time to time, but some evil of their souls keeps them from guaranteeing their soul's purity. They take every precaution to guard themselves but owing to one weakness

or the other, they repeatedly fall into the pit of darkness. They know that their true King (**Malik** ملک) is Allâh and they profess that they owe allegiance to the true King, the Sovereign of humankind, but out of their weakness they commit faults while having this knowledge.

The highest in rank are those who having given up their vices, are now free from every low desire. They find the joy of their hearts in the worship of their Lord, Who is their only **Ilâh** إله (cf. 2:163), Who is the Controller of their hearts, and their only object of love and adoration is Allâh. In this exalted stage of pure and perfect sincerity, truth and righteousness, their soul is at Peace (*nafs-i-mutmainnah*; 89:27). It is this soul that is rewarded by the All-Mighty, who grants him a heaven of Peace in this very life and in the Hereafter.

The word **al-Nâs** الناس has been repeated five times in this chapter and each time it denotes a different class of people. At its first occurrence, it denotes the class of children, the infants or the weak in belief. The second time it stands for the class of the young people and/or those stronger in Faith. The third class of people comprises of old folk and/or the wise. By the fourth, it refers to the righteous people; lastly, it denotes the fifth class the **Khannâs** الخناس or *Dajjâl* or a group of evil whisperers.

Another message we read in this chapter is the pointed rejection of the Christian faith. The Christians call Jesus “Our Lord, Jesus the Christ”. They also name him as the Prince of the King and call him the son of God. Christ is worshiped like a God. It is to eradicate their false beliefs that the first three verses of this chapter have been revealed for the people to give thought to what they say. This chapter also alludes to another truth, that a time will come when neither the Muslims at large will be in a position to defend Islam against the onslaught of the enemy, nor will there be a king, a true patron, or a Divine scholar of theirs who will be able to guard the fortress of Islam. At such a time, only Allâh will provide them true asylum. Only He will redress their grievances and will come to their respite. The chapter teaches us a

prayer against the discord and disorder that will set in among the people, among the various nations and among the followers of different religions. It further tells us that, whenever a human being feels like attending to the evil suggestions of the whisperer, he should, at once turn to Allâh with a penitent mind and seek His protection.

قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاسِ

114:1 Qul (قُلْ - Say!), This is Divine Command. We are enjoined to seek protection not only by verbal solicitation but also by deeds and actions to attract Allâh's grace. According to Abul 'Âliyah and other learned scholars such as Baghawî, Ibn Hajar, the word **النَّاسُ** also signify Dajjâl - Anti-Christ. It is also reported that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) said that from the creation of man to the coming of the Hour, there is no creation greater in temptation than Anti-Christ is. (*Bukhârî; Ma 'alim al-Tanzîl*).

مِنْ شَرِّ الْوَسْوَاسِ الْخَنَّاسِ

114:4 Al-Khannâs (الْخَنَّاسُ means, the sneaking one, who hides, retires and shrinks after his whispering, who comes forward first and then retreats. It is one of the names given to satan when satan acts according to the nature of a servant and follows fraudulent and crafty ways. It is named *nahhas* in Hebrew. In the beginning of the Bible, we read that it was *nahhas* who made Eve deviate from the right path. The concluding chapter of the Holy Qur'ân make it clear that this very *nahhas* will assume the form of *Dajjâl* (Anti-Christ) in the latter ages when satan and the Children of Adam will wage wars between themselves in which satan will be ultimately overpowered.

مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ

114:6 The last verse of the chapter implies that the evil thoughts are whispered into the hearts of some influential and fiery natured people

(*al-Jinnat* with suffix *al*; 15:27) and also in the hearts of *al-Nâs* (some common, ordinary people), and these thoughts spare none. You should therefore ever seek refuge with your real Lord against such evil whisperings.

وَحْشَىٰ

اللَّهُمَّ، أَنْسُ وَحْشَىٰ فِي قَبْرِيٍّ
اللَّهُمَّ، اسْهَبِنِي بِالْقُرْآنِ الْعَظِيمِ وَاجْعَلْ
لِي إِمَامًاً وَوَزِيرًاً وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً ۝ اللَّهُمَّ
ذَكِّرْنِي مِنْهُ مَا لَمْ يُسْتَ
جِهَتْ وَأَرْزُقْنِي بِيَوْمَ الْحِسْبَانِ
وَأَنْهَمْ الْهَمَارَ وَاجْعَلْنِي
فِي سَابِقِ الْفَلَكِيْنِ ۝

O Allâh! Change into love any fear (I may have) in my grave. O Allâh! Have mercy on me because of the great Qur'ân. Make it my leader, my light, my (source) of guidance and mercy. O Allâh! Make me remember whatever of the Qur'ân I may forget; make me learn that which I have become ignorant of, make me recite it day and night and make it an argument and plea for me (on the Day of Judgement) O Lord of all the worlds!