







XVII

BANĪ-ISRĀ'ĪL

بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ

INTRODUCTION

Name

This Sūrah takes its name (Banī Isrā'īl) from v. 4. But this name is merely a distinctive appellation like the names of many other Sūrahs and not a descriptive title, and does not mean that "Bani Isrā'īl" is the theme of this Sūrah.

Period of Revelation

The very first verse indicates that this Sūrah was revealed on the occasion of *Mi'rāj* (Ascension). According to the Traditions and books on the life of the Holy Prophet, this event happened one year before Hijrah. Thus, this Sūrah is one of those which were revealed in the last stage of Prophethood at Makkah.

Background

The Holy Prophet had been propagating *Tauhid* for the previous twelve years and his opponents had been doing all they could to make his Mission a failure, but in spite of all their opposition, Islam had spread to every corner of Arabia and there was hardly any clan which had not been influenced by his invitation. In Makkah itself the true Believers had formed themselves into a small community and were ready and willing to face every danger to make Islam a success. Besides them, a very large number of the people of Aus and Khazraj (two influential clans of Al-Madīnah) had accepted Islam. Thus the time had come for the Holy Prophet to emigrate from Makkah to Al-Madīnah and there

gather together the scattered Muslims and establish a state based on the principles of Islam.

These were the conditions when *Mi'rāj* took place and on his return the Holy Prophet brought down the Message contained in this Sūrah.

Theme and Topics

This Sūrah is a wonderful combination of warning, admonition and instruction, which have been blended together in a balanced proportion.

The disbelievers of Makkah had been admonished to take a lesson from the miserable end of the Israelites and other communities and mend their ways within the period of respite given by Allah, which was about to expire. They should, therefore, accept the invitation that was being extended by Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) and the Qur'ān; otherwise they shall be annihilated and replaced by other people. Incidentally, the Israelites, with whom Islam was going to come in direct contact in the near future at Al-Madīnah have also been warned that they should learn a lesson from the chastisements that have already been inflicted on them. They were warned, "Take advantage of the Prophethood of Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) because that is the last opportunity which is being given to you: If even now you behave as you have been behaving, you shall meet with a painful torment."

As regards the education of mankind, it has been impressed that human success or failure, gain or loss, depends upon the right understanding of *Tauhid*, life-after-death and Prophethood. Accordingly, convincing arguments have been put forward to prove that the Qur'ān is the Book of Allah and its teachings are true and genuine; the doubts of the disbelievers about these basic realities have been removed and on suitable occasions they have been admonished and rebuked in regard to their ways of ignorance.

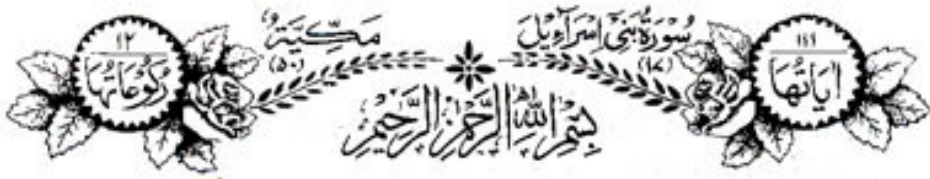
In this connection, those fundamental principles of morality and civilization on which the Islamic System of life is meant to be established have been put forward. Thus this was a sort of the Manifesto of the intended Islamic State which had been proclaimed a year before its actual establishment. It has been explicitly stated that that was the

sketch of the system on which Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) intended to build human life first in his own country and then in the world outside.

Besides these, the Holy Prophet has been instructed to stick firmly to his stand without minding the opposition and difficulties which he was encountering and should never think of making a compromise with unbelief. The Muslims who sometimes showed signs of impatience, when they met with persecution, calumny, and crooked arguments, have also been instructed to face adverse circumstances with patience and fortitude and keep full control over their feelings and passions. Moreover, *Salāt* was prescribed in order to reform and purify their souls, as if to say, "This is the thing which will produce in you those high qualities of character which are essential for everyone who intends to struggle in the righteous way". Incidentally, we learn from Traditions that *Mi'rāj* was the first occasion on which the five daily Prayers were prescribed to be offered at fixed times.

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سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي أَسْرَى بِعَبْدِهِ لَيْلًا مِّنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ

الْأَقْصَا الَّذِي بَرَكْنَا حَوْلَهُ لِنُرِيَهُ مِنْ آيَاتِنَا إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ ﴿١﴾
 وَآتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ وَجَعَلْنَاهُ هُدًى لِّبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ إِلَّا تَتَّخِذُوا مِنْ دُونِي
 وَكَيْلًا ﴿٢﴾ ذُرِّيَّتَهُ مَن حَمَلْنَا مَعَ نُوحٍ إِنَّهُ كَانَ عَبْدًا شَكُورًا ﴿٣﴾ وَقَضَيْنَا
 إِلَى بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ فِي الْكِتَابِ لَتُفْسِدُنَّ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَرَّتَيْنِ وَتَعْلَقَنَّ عُلوًّا
 كَبِيرًا ﴿٤﴾ فَإِذَا جَاءَ وَعْدُ أُولَاهُمَا بَعَثْنَا عَلَيْكُمْ عِبَادًا لَّنَا أُولِي بَأْسٍ شَدِيدٍ
 فَجَاسُوا خِلَالَ الدِّيَارِ وَكَانَ وَعْدًا مَّفْعُولًا ﴿٥﴾ ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَا لَكُمُ الْكَرَّةَ
 عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَمْدَدْنَاكُمْ بِأَمْوَالٍ وَبَنِينَ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ أَكْثَرَ نَفِيرًا ﴿٦﴾ إِنَّ أَحْسَنَهُمْ
 أَحْسَنُكُمْ لِأَنفُسِكُمْ وَوَإِنْ أَسَأْتُمْ فَلَهَا فَإِذَا جَاءَ وَعْدُ الْآخِرَةِ لِيَسُوءُوا
 وُجُوهَكُمْ وَلِيَدْخُلُوا الْمَسْجِدَ كَمَا دَخَلُوهُ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَلِيُتَبِّرُوا مَا عَلَوْا
 تَتَبِيرًا ﴿٧﴾ عَلَى رَبِّكُمْ أَنْ يَرْحَمَكُمُ ۗ وَإِنْ عُذْتُمْ عُدْنَا ۗ وَجَعَلْنَا جَهَنَّمَ
 لِلْكَافِرِينَ حَصِيرًا ﴿٨﴾ إِنَّ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ يَهْدِي لِلَّتِي هِيَ أَقْوَمُ وَيُبَشِّرُ
 الْمُؤْمِنِينَ الَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ الصَّالِحَاتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ أَجْرًا كَبِيرًا ﴿٩﴾ وَأَنَّ الَّذِينَ

السجدة
الجزء ١٥

وقف لا تقرأ

XVII

BANĪ ISRĀ'ĪL

بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ

Verses: 111

Revealed at Makkah

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

Glory be to Him, Who transported His Servant one night from 1
the Masjid-i-Harām to the distant Temple, whose surroundings We have

blessed, so that we might show him some of Our Signs:¹ the fact is that He alone is All-Hearing and All-Seeing.

2-8 Before this We had given the Book to Moses and made it a means of guidance for the Israelites² with this Command: "Do not make any other guardian than Myself.³ You are the descendants of those whom We bore in the Ark with Noah,⁴ and he was truly a grateful servant". Besides this, We forewarned the Israelites in the Scriptures:⁵ "You will work great mischief twice in the land and will become overbearing and arrogant."⁶ When the occasion of the first of the two mischiefs came, O Israelites, We raised against you such of Our servants who were very mighty and formidable; so they penetrated through all parts of your country. This was a warning that was bound to be fulfilled.⁷ Then after this We afforded you an opportunity to over-power them and helped you with abundance of riches and children and increased you far more in numbers than before.⁸ Behold! If you did good it proved to be good for yourselves and if you committed evil it proved to be bad for your own selves. Then, when the time came for the fulfilment of the second warning, We set other enemies on you so that they might disfigure your faces and enter into the Temple just as the former enemies had entered and destroyed whatever they could lay their hands on.⁹Now again your Lord may show compassion on you, but if you again repeat your former behaviour; We will again visit you with Our punishment, for We have prepared Hell to serve as a prison-house for the ungrateful people.¹⁰

1. The event referred to in this verse is known "Mi'rāj" and "Isrā'". According to authentic traditions, this took place a year before Hijrah. In the traditional and biographical literature, its details have been related by a large number (25) of the Companions. Anas bin Mālik, Mālik bin Sa'asa'ah, Abūzar Ghifārī, and Abū Hurairāh (Allah be pleased with them all) have related details of the event. Besides them, 'Umar, 'Ali, 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd.....(Allah be pleased with them) have also related some parts of this event.

In this verse, the Qur'ān mentions only a part of the Journey, i.e., from Masjid-i-Harām to the Temple at Jerusalem. The object of this journey as stated here was that Allah willed to show His servant some of His signs. The Qur'ān does not give any details other than this but we find further details in the traditions, which are to this effect:

One night the Angel Jibrīl transported the Holy Prophet on al-Burāq from Masjid-i-Harām to Masjid-i-Aqsā (the Temple). There the Holy Prophet offered his prayers along with the other Prophets. Then he took him towards the higher spheres, where he met some of the great Prophets in different spheres. At last he

reached the Highest Place in the Heavens, and was received in audience by Allah. It was there that besides other important instructions five daily Prayers were prescribed. Then he returned to the Temple and from there came back to Masjid-i-Harām. During this Journey, according to many traditions, Paradise and Hell were shown to him. We also learn from authentic traditions that on the following day when he mentioned this event, the disbelievers of Makkah scoffed at him, and some of the Muslims also were sceptical about this.

The above additional details based on the traditions cannot be said to be against the Qur'ān, for these are additions to the details given in the Qur'ān; therefore, the details related in the traditions cannot be rejected on the plea that they are against the Qur'ān. Nevertheless, if one rejects any part of those details which are given in the traditions, one cannot be declared a renegade. On the other hand, if one rejects the details given in the Qur'ān, one does become a renegade.

There are different versions of this Journey. Some say that this happened in a dream, while others are of the opinion that the Holy Prophet was fully awake and went on the Journey with his own physical body; some others say that it was merely a mystic vision which was shown to him. The opening words of this verse: "Glory be to Him, who transported His Servant....." however, clearly show that it was a super-natural event which was brought about by the unlimited power of Allah. It is quite obvious that if the event had been merely a mystic vision, it would not have been introduced by the words *سُحْبَانَ الَّذِي* which imply that the Being Who brought about this event is free from each and every kind of weakness and defect. Again the words "transported His servant one night" also show that this was not a dream or a vision but a physical journey in which Allah arranged that the Holy Prophet should make observation of His Signs with his physical eyes. Therefore, one is bound to admit that this was not a mere spiritual experience but a physical journey and visual observation which Allah arranged for His Prophet.

It is strange that some people are of the opinion that this extraordinary journey could not be possible, but now when man with his limited—very limited—power has been able to reach the moon, it is absurd to deny that Allah with His limitless powers could enable His Messenger to make this journey in the extraordinary short time it took.

Above all, the question whether a thing is possible or not, can arise only in the 'case of human beings whose powers are after all limited, but such questions cannot be raised where the All-Powerful Allah is concerned. Only such a person who does not believe that Allah is able to do everything can raise objections against this wonderful Journey about which Allah Himself says that He transported His Servant one night from Masjid-i-Harām to Masjid-i-Aqsā.

Likewise all the objections raised against the various details which are given in the traditions are frivolous, except two, which are plausible:

First, if we accept these details, then we shall have to admit that Allah is confined to a certain place: otherwise there was no need that His Servant should be transported for this purpose to a certain place. Secondly, according to traditions, the Holy Prophet was enabled to observe Paradise and Hell where he saw some people suffering from torment. The objection is: why should some people be awarded punishments or rewards before the Final Judgement after Resurrection?

As regards the first objection, it is true that Allah is Infinite by Himself, but in dealing with His creation, He employs those means which suit His imperfect creation not because of any limitation of His, but because of the limitations of His creation. For instance, when He speaks to any of His creature, He adopts the same limited mode of conversation as the addressee can understand, though He has limitless modes of speech. Likewise, when He desires to show some of the wonderful Signs of His Kingdom to a servant. He transports him to the place where the Signs are to be shown. It is obvious that the servant cannot see at one and the same time the whole of the universe as Allah does, for Allah has no need to go to any place at all for this purpose but the servant has. The same applies to the appearance of the servant before the Creator. Though Allah is not confined to any locality, it is necessary for the servant to go to the place where His manifestations have been concentrated for his observation because it is not possible for the servant with his limited powers to go in His Presence in His Infinite Capacity.

As regards the second objection, it is based on the lack of understanding the thing: many of the Signs which were shown to the Holy Prophet were symbolical. For instance, a small hole from which a fat ox came out but could not go back into it, represented mischief personified. In the same way the adulterers were shown as if they had fresh meat before them but instead of that they were eating rotten flesh. Similarly punishments for evil deeds shown to him were only symbolic observations of the punishments in the Hereafter so that he might see in advance the things which would take place in the Hereafter.

In regard to the *Mi'rāj* it should be kept in view that all the Prophets were enabled by Allah to see His Signs in the heavens and the earth according to their ranks. And for this purpose all the material curtains were lifted so that they could see with their naked eyes the unseen realities, to which they were required to invite the people.

This was done so that the Prophets could say with full conviction what they had seen with their own eyes. For this experience would distinguish them from a philosopher who bases all his theories on guess-work and cannot say that

he bears witness to what he claims. In contrast to philosophers, Prophets could say that they bore witness to the things which they presented because they had seen them with their own eyes

2. As this verse has no apparent connection with the event of *Mi'rāj*, it may appear to a cursory reader that either of the two verses has been misplaced here. But if we try to understand the matter in the context of the theme of the whole Sūrah, we can easily understand the connection between the two. The main object of this Sūrah is to give a warning to the disbelievers of Makkah. That is why the mention of *Mi'rāj* has been made in the very first verse, as if to say, "The person whom you dub as an impostor and reject the Book sent down to him, has just now seen with his naked eyes great Signs of Allah. So you should learn a lesson from the history of the Israelites who discarded the Book of Allah and therefore, were given painful punishment."

3. The Arabic word "*vakīl*" (guardian) denotes a person who is trustworthy and can be depended upon in regard to one's affairs and may be turned to for guidance and help.

4. That is, "You are the descendants of Noah and his companions;" therefore, you should behave in a manner as behoves such people. You should make Allah alone your Guardian, for your ancestors escaped death from the Flood only because they had made Allah their Guardian."

5. The original Arabic word "*Al-kitāb*" does not stand here for the Torah but for all the Divine Books.

6. Such warnings have been given in different Books of the Bible. As regards their first mischief and its evil consequences, the Israelites were warned in the Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel and the warnings about their second mischief and its severe punishments are found in Matthew and Luke. Below are given extracts to confirm this statement of the Qur'an.

Prophet David was the first to warn the Israelites in his Psalms of their first mischief:

"They did not destroy the nations, concerning whom the Lord commanded them: But were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works. And they served their idols which were a snare unto them. Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils, And shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughtersTherefore, was the wrath of the Lord kindled against his people, insomuch that he abhorred his own inheritance. And he gave them into the hand of the heathen ;" Psalms: Chapter 106, vv. 34-38, 40, 41.

The above events have been described in the past tense as if they had already actually happened. The Scriptures employ this mode of expression to emphasize the importance of the prophesies.

When this mischief actually came to pass, Prophet Isaiah warned them of its ruinous consequences: "Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil-doers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: How is the faithful city become an harlot!-it was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers. Thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves: everyone loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them. Therefore, saith the Lord, the Lord of hosts, the mighty One of Israel. Ah I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies: they be replenished from the east, and are soothsayers like the Philistines, and they please themselves in the children of strangers. Their land also is full of idols; they worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made: Moreover the Lord saith, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet: Therefore, the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the Lord will discover their secret parts. Thy men shall fall by the sword, and thy mighty in the war. And her gates shall lament and mourn: and she being desolate shall sit upon the ground. Now therefore, behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria, and all his glory: and he shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks: That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the Lord: Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits: Wherefore thus saith the Holy One of Israel, Because ye despise this word, and trust in oppression and perverseness, and stay thereon: Therefore, this iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall,....And he shall break it as the breaking of the potters' vessel that is broken in pieces; he shall not spare: so that there shall not be found in the bursting of it a shred to take fire from the hearth, or to take water withal out of the pit." (Isaiah, Chapter 1:verses 4-5; 21-24,Chapter 2:verses 6,8; Chapter 3: verses 16-17, 25-26; Chapter 8: verse 7; Chapter 30: verses 9-10, 12-14.)

After this Prophet Jeremiah raised his voice when the flood of corruption swept away everything before it.

"Thus saith the Lord, What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity and are become vain?

And I brought you into a plentiful country to eat the fruit thereof and the goodness thereof; but when ye entered, ye defiled my land, and made my heritage an abomination. For of old time I have broken thy yoke, and burst thy hands: and thou saidst, I will not transgress; when upon every high hill and under every green tree thou wanderest, playing the harlot. As the thief is ashamed when he is found, so is the house of Israel ashamed: they, their kings, their princes, and their priests, and their prophets, Saying to a stock, Thou art my father; and to a stone, Thou hast brought me forth: for they have turned *their* back unto me, and not *their* face: but in the time of their trouble they will say, Arise, and save us. But where *are* thy gods that thou hast made thee? let them arise, if they can save thee in the time of thy trouble; for according to the number of thy cities are thy gods, O Judah. The Lord said also unto me in the days of Josiah the king, Hast thou seen that which backsliding Israel hath done? She is gone up upon every high mountain and under every green tree, and there hath played the harlot. And her treacherous sister Judah saw it. And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also. And it came to pass through the lightness of her whoredom, that she defiled the land, and committed adultery with stones and with sticks. Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if can find a man, if there be *any* that executeth judgments that seeketh the truth; and I will pardon it. How shall I pardon thee for this? thy children have forsaken me, and sworn by them that are no gods: when I had fed them to the full, they then committed adultery, and assembled themselves by troops in the harlots' houses. They were as fed horses in the morning: every one neighed after his neighbour's wife. Shall I not visit for these *things*? Saith the Lord: and shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this? Lo, I will bring a nation upon you from far, O house of Israel, saith the Lord: it *is* a mighty nation, it is an ancient nation, a nation whose language thou knowest not, neither understand what they say. Their quiver is an open sepulchre, they *are* all mighty men. And they shall eat up thine harvest, and thy bread, *which* thy sons and thy daughters should eat: they shall eat up thy flocks and thine herds; they shall eat up thy vines and thy fig trees: they shall impoverish thy fenced cities, wherein thou trustedst, with the sword. And the carcasses of this people shall be meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beasts of the earth; and none shall fray *them* away. Then will I cause to cease from the cities of Judah, and from the streets of Jerusalem, the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride: for the land shall be desolate.

And it shall come to pass, if they say unto thee, Whither shall we go forth? then thou shalt tell them, Thus saith the Lord; Such as are for death, to

death; and such as are for the sword, to the sword; and such as are for the famine, to the famine; and such as are for the captivity, to the captivity. And I will appoint over them four kinds, saith the Lord: the sword to slay, and the dogs to tear, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the earth, to devour and destroy." (Jeremiah, Chapter 2: verses 5-7, 20, 26-28; Chapter 3: verses 6-9; Chapter 5: verses 1, 7-9 15-17; Chapter 7: verses 33, 34; Chapter 15: verses 2, 3.)

Then Prophet Ezekiel was raised to warn them in time. Addressing Jerusalem he said:

The city sheddeth blood in the midst of it, that her time may come, and maketh idols against herself to defile herself. Behold, the princes of Israel, every one were in thee to their power to shed blood. In thee they have set light by father and mother: in the midst of thee have they dealt by oppression with the stranger: in thee have they vexed the fatherless and the widow. Thou hast despised mine holy things, and hast profaned my sabbaths. In thee are men that carry tales to shed blood: and in thee they eat upon the mountains: in the midst of thee they commit lewdness. In thee have they discovered their fathers' nakedness: in thee have they humbled her that was set apart for pollution. And one hath committed abomination with his neighbour's wife; and another hath lewdly defiled his daughter-in-law; and another in thee hath humbled his sister, his father's daughter. In thee have they taken gifts to shed blood; thou hast taken usury and increase, and thou hast greedily gained of thy neighbours by extortion and hast forgotten me, can thine hands be strong, in the days that I shall deal with thee? And I will scatter thee among the heathen, and disperse thee in the countries, and will consume thy filthiness out of thee. And thou shalt take thine inheritance in thyself in the sight of the heathen, and thou shalt know that I am the Lord." (Ezekiel, Chapter 22: verses 3, 6-12, 14-16.)

Besides the above mentioned warnings which were given to Israelites at the time of their first mischief, Prophet Jesus Christ warned them of the consequences of their second* great mischief. In a forceful address he criticized their moral degeneration like this:

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." (Matthew, Chapter 23: verses 37, 38; Chapter 24: verse 2.)

Then, when the Roman officials were taking Prophet Jesus out for crucifixion, and a great company of people including women were following him bewailing and lamenting, he addressed them and gave his final warnings:

But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For, behold, the days are coming, in which they shall say; Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the paps which never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us. (Luke, Chapter 23: verses 28-30.)

7. This refers to the terrible destruction that the Israelites suffered at the hands of the Assyrians and Babylonians. One cannot fully appreciate the historical background of this merely from the extracts that have been reproduced above from the Books of the Prophets. A brief history of the Israelites is also needed so that a student may become acquainted with all the causes and circumstances on account of which Allah removed this nation, that professed to believe in a revealed Book, from the leadership of mankind and turned it into a humiliated, condemned and backward community.

When, after the death of Prophet Moses, the Israelites entered Palestine it was inhabited by the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, Jebusites, the Philistines, etc. These communities had adopted the worst kind of idolatry, their supreme deity being Ayl whom they regarded as the father of gods and who was usually represented by the bull-images. His consort was called Asherah from whom had descended a whole line of gods and goddesses, about 70 in number. The most powerful god among them was Baal who was regarded as the god of rain and growth and the lord of the earth and heavens. In the northern regions his consort was called Anathoth and in Palestine Ashtaroth. These two were the goddesses of love and procreation. Besides them, there was a god of death, a god of disease and famine, and a goddess of health, and thus all the worldly powers and agencies stood divided among a large number of deities. The people had ascribed such dirty and base qualities and acts to these deities that even a worst offender against morality would shun being known by them. Obviously the people who have adopted such mean deities for worship and devotion cannot remain secure from the worst kind of moral degeneration and the modern excavations have shown this conclusively.

Child sacrifice was a common thing among them. Their places of worship had turned into brothels, where women were kept as religious prostitutes and illicit relations with them were regarded as a part of worship and devotion.

The Israelites had clearly been told in the instructions given in the Torah that they should destroy those communities and wrest the land of Palestine from them, and that they should avoid mixing up with those people and ward off their moral and ideological weaknesses:

But when the Israelites entered Palestine they set this guidance aside. They not only did not establish a united kingdom of their own but fell a prey to tribal parochialism. Each of their tribes was content to take a part of the captured land and become a separate and independent state. This disunity among them did not leave any of the tribes strong enough to purge its territory completely of the idolaters, and therefore they had to allow them to live side by side with them in the same land. Not only this, but there had remained in the conquered territories a number of small city states of these idolatrous communities which the Israelites had not been able to subjugate. It is this very thing which has been complained against in the extract of the Psalms reproduced above in the beginning of E.N. 6.

The first consequence of intermixing with those communities, was that the Israelites also became idolatrous, and gradually began to adopt other moral evils also. This has been complained about in the Book of Judges as below: "And the children of Israel did evil, in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim: And they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the Lord to anger. And they forsook the Lord, and served Baal and Ashtaroth". (Judges, 2: 11-13.)

The second consequence suffered by the Israelites was that the communities whose city-states they had left unconquered and the Philistines whose land they had not at all touched set up a united front against them and drove them out of a major part of Palestine by incessant attacks, so much so that they deprived them of the Holy Ark of their Lord. At last, the Israelites felt the need of establishing a united kingdom of their own under one ruler, and on their request Prophet Samuel appointed Saul as their king in 1020 B.C. (For details see vv. 246-48 and E.N.'s. 268-270 of Al-Baqarah.)

This united kingdom was ruled by three kings: Saul (1020 B.C. to 1004 B.C.), Prophet David (1004 to 965 B.C.) and Prophet Solomon (365 to 926 B.C.). These kings brought to completion the mission that had been left incomplete by the Israelites after the death of Prophet Moses. They annexed all the territories except the Phoenician state on the northern and the Philistine state on the southern coast, which, of course, became tributaries.

After the death of Prophet Solomon the Israelites again adopted the ways of the world and fought among themselves and split into two independent kingdoms, the kingdom of Israel in the northern Palestine and Jordan with Samaria as its capital, and the kingdom of Judah in the southern Palestine and Edom with Jerusalem as its capital. These kingdoms were strife-ridden from the very beginning and this state of affairs persisted till the end.

The rulers and people of the kingdom of Israel were the first to be affected grievously by the ideological and moral weaknesses of the neighbouring communities. Specially after the marriage of its ruler, Ahab, with the idolatrous princess Jezebel of Zidon, idolatry and other evils began to spread unchecked among the Israelites under the official patronage. Prophets Elias and Elisha tried their very best to check this deluge but the Israelites who were rapidly degenerating, did not heed their warning. At last the wrath of Allah overtook the kingdom of Israel in the shape of the Assyrians who started subjecting Palestine to incessant attacks from 900 B.C. downward. During this period, Prophet Amos (787-747 B.C.) and then Prophet Hosea (747-735 B.C.) rose and warned the Israelites again and again but the wretched, depraved people did not heed their warnings at all, and transgressed all limits. Prophet Amos was banished by the king of Israel from the realm of Samaria and warned not to preach his mission in the country. Not very long after this the wrath of Allah burst upon the kingdom of Israel and its people. The Assyrian king Sargon took Samaria in 721 B.C. and put an end to this northern kingdom. Thousands of Israelites were put to the sword and 27 thousand of their leading men were driven out of their homeland and scattered in the eastern districts of the Assyrian empire and replaced by settlers from other parts of the empire. When the remaining Israelites intermixed with the settlers they also lost gradually their national and cultural identity.

The other kingdom of the Israelites, called the kingdom of Judah, which was set up in southern Palestine also began to adopt godless ways soon after the death of Prophet Solomon, though its moral degeneration took place at a slower pace than that of Israel. Therefore, it was allowed to exist for a longer period. Then, like the kingdom of Israel, it also began to be subjected to continual attacks, its cities ruined and its capital besieged, but this kingdom could not be wholly destroyed by the Assyrians; it only became a tributary. Afterwards, when in spite of the best reformatory efforts of Prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah the people of Judah did not give up idol-worship and other moral evils, king Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon attacked and captured the whole of Judah in 598 B.C. including Jerusalem and took the king of Judah as prisoner. Even then the Israelites did not mend their ways and paid no heed to the warnings and guidance of Prophet Jeremiah. Instead of reforming their ways, they started making plans to change their fate by revolting against Babylon. At last in 587 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar punished them heavily by invading Judah and destroyed all its important cities. He razed Jerusalem and Solomon's Temple to the ground and did not leave a wall of it standing in place. He drove a large part of the Israelite population out of their land and scattered them into the adjoining countries. The people who were left behind were cursed and subjected to all kinds of humiliations by the neighbouring communities.

This was the first calamity that came as a warning to the Israelites and the first chastisement that they suffered as a result thereof.

8. This refers to the lease of time that the Israelites (That is the people of Judah) got after their release from the captivity of Babylon. As for the people of Israel and Samaria, they did not rise again after their moral and spiritual degeneration. But among the people of Judah there still were some people who practised the truth and invited others also to follow it. They carried on their work of invitation to the truth among the remaining Israelites in Judah and exhorted those also to repent and follow the truth who had been driven out into Babylon and other lands. At last the mercy of Allah came to their help. The downfall of Babylon started. The Persian king, Cyrus, took Babylon in 539 B.C. and in the following year issued a decree allowing the Israelites to return to and re-settle in their homeland. The Israelites began to return home in caravan after caravan, and this continued for a long time. Cyrus also allowed the Israelites to rebuild the Temple of Solomon but the neighbouring communities who had settled in this land resisted it. At last Darius I appointed Zerubbabel, a grandson of the last king of Judah, governor of Judah in 522 B.C. who got the Temple rebuilt under the care of Prophet Haggai, Prophet Zechariah and Joshua. In 458 B.C. Ezra arrived in Judah along with an exiled group and the Persian king Artaxerxes made the following decree.

“And thou, Ezra, after the wisdom of thy God that is in thine hand, set magistrates and judges, which may judge all the people that are beyond the river, all such as know the laws of thy God; and teach ye them that know them not.

And whosoever will not do the law of thy God and the law of the king let judgment be executed speedily upon him whether it be unto death, or to banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment.” (Ezra, 7:25-26).

Taking advantage of this decree, Ezra carried out the revival of the religion of Prophet Moses. He gathered together all the righteous and good people from the Israelites and set up a strong organisation. He compiled and spread the Pentateuch which contained the Torah, made arrangements for the religious education of the Israelites, enforced the law and started purging the people of moral and ideological weaknesses which they had adopted by intermixing with the other communities. He compelled the Jews to divorce the idolatrous wives they had married, and took a covenant from them that they would worship God alone and follow His Law only.

In 455 B.C. an exiled group came back to Judah under Nehemiah whom the Persian king appointed as the ruler of Jerusalem and ordered him to build the wall round the city. Thus, after 150 years the Holy city was fully restored and became the centre of Jewish religion and culture. But the Israelites of northern

Palestine, and Samaria did not benefit by the work of revival done by Ezra. They built a rival sanctuary on Mount Gerizim, and tried to make it the religious centre for the people of the Book. This caused a further, and perhaps the final, split between the Jews and the Samaritans.

The Jews suffered a set-back for a while with the fall of the Persian Empire and the conquests of Alexander the Great and the rise of the Greeks. After the death of Alexander, his kingdom was subdivided into three empires. Syria fell to the lot of the Seleucide empire, with Antioch as its capital, whose ruler Antiochus III incorporated Palestine into his dominions in 198 B.C. These Greek conquerors who were idolatrous by precept and freelance morally felt greatly ill at ease with the Jewish religion and culture. So, they began to propagate the rival Greek way of life and culture by political and economic pressure, and were able to win over a strong section of the Israelites who became their helpers. This external interference caused a split in the Jewish nation. One group among them readily adopted the Greek dress, the Greek language, the Greek way of life and the Greek sports, while the other persistently stuck to their own culture and way of life.

In 175 B.C. when Antiochus IV (who was called Epiphanes, that is, the manifestation of God) came to the throne, he used all his power and authority to stamp out the Jewish religion and culture. He got idols installed in the Holy Temple at Jerusalem and forced the Jews to prostrate themselves before them. He strictly forbade the rite of offering the sacrifices at the altar, and commanded the Jews to offer sacrifices to idolatrous deities instead. He proposed death penalty for those who would keep the Torah in their houses, or observe the Sabbath or perform circumcision of their children. But the Jews did not yield to this coercion, and started a powerful resistance movement, known in history as the revolt of the Maccabees. Though in this struggle the sympathies of the Greece-oriented Jews were with the Greeks, and they fully cooperated with the despots of Antioch to crush the Maccabean revolt, the common Jews who still retained the religious fervour of the days of Ezra sided with the Maccabees, who were ultimately able to drive out the Greeks and establish a free religious state which remained in power till 67 B.C. This state prospered and in time extended to all those territories which had once been under the control the kingdoms of Judah and Israel. It was able to annex a part of the land of the Philistines which had remained unconquered even in the days of Prophets David and Solomon (Peace be upon them).

This is the historical background of the verse of the Qur'an under commentary.

9. The historical background of the second degeneration and its chastisement is as follows:

[Contd. on p.602



۱ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ اَعْتَدْنَا لَهُمْ عَذَابًا اَلِيمًا ۝ وَيَدْعُ الْاِنْسَانَ بِالشَّرِّ
 دُعَاءَهُ بِالْخَيْرِ ۝ وَكَانَ الْاِنْسَانُ عَجُولًا ۝ وَجَعَلْنَا الْاَيْلَ وَالتَّهَارَ اَيَّتَيْنِ
 فَمَحَوْنَا اَيَّةَ الْاَيْلِ وَجَعَلْنَا اَيَّةَ التَّهَارِ مُبْصِرَةً لِّتَبْتَغُوا فَضْلًا مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ
 وَلِتَعْلَمُوا عَدَدَ السِّنِينَ وَالْحِسَابَ ۝ وَكُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَصَّلْنَاهُ تَفْصِيلًا ۝ وَكَلَّ
 اِنْسَانَ اَلزَّمْنَهُ طَيَّرَهُ فِي عُنُقِهِ ۝ وَنُخْرِجُ لَهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ كِتَابًا يَلْقَاهُ
 مَنشُورًا ۝ اِقْرَأْ كِتَابَكَ ۝ كَفَىٰ بِنَفْسِكَ الْيَوْمَ عَلَيْكَ حَسِيبًا ۝ مِّنْ اِهْتَدَىٰ فَاِنَّمَا
 يَهْتَدِي لِنَفْسِهِ ۝ وَمَنْ ضَلَّ فَاِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهَا ۝ وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ
 اُخْرَىٰ ۝ وَمَا كُنَّا مُعَذِّبِينَ حَتَّىٰ نَبْعَثَ رَسُوْلًا ۝ وَاِذَا اَرَدْنَا اَنْ نُّهْلِكَ
 قَرْيَةً اَمَرْنَا مُتْرَفِيهَا فَفَسَقُوا فِيهَا فَحَقَّ عَلَيْهَا الْقَوْلُ فَدَمَرْنَاهَا تَدْمِيرًا ۝
 وَكَمْ اَهْلَكْنَا مِنَ الْقُرُونِ مِنْ بَعْدِ نُوحٍ ۝ وَكَفَىٰ بِرَبِّكَ بِذُنُوبِ عِبَادِهِ خَبِيرًا
 بَصِيرًا ۝ مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ الْعَاجِلَةَ عَجَلْنَا لَهُ فِيهَا مَا نَشَاءُ لِمَنْ نُّرِيدُ
 ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَا لَهُ جَهَنَّمَ ۝ يَصْلَاهَا مَذْمُومًا مَّدْحُورًا ۝ وَمَنْ اَرَادَ الْاٰخِرَةَ وَ
 سَعَىٰ لَهَا سَعِيهَا وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ كَانَ سَعِيهِمْ مَّشْكُورًا ۝ كَلَّا نُبَدُّ
 هٰؤُلَاءِ وَهٰؤُلَاءِ مِنْ عَطَاءِ رَبِّكَ ۝ وَمَا كَانَ عَطَاءُ رَبِّكَ مَحْظُورًا ۝ اَنْظُرْ
 كَيْفَ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ ۝ وَالْاٰخِرَةُ الْاَكْبَرُ دَرَجَتٍ وَّ الْاَكْبَرُ تَفْصِيْلًا ۝



۲ لَا تَجْعَلْ مَعَ اللهِ اِلٰهًا اٰخَرَ فَتَقَعَّدَ مَذْمُومًا مَّخْذُورًا ۝ وَ قَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ
 اَلَّا تَعْبُدُوْا اِلَّا اِيَّاهُ ۝ وَ بِالْوَالِدَيْنِ اِحْسَانًا ۝ اِمَّا يَبْلُغَنَّ عِنْدَكَ الْكِبَرَ اَحَدُهُمَا اَوْ
 كِلَهُمَا فَلَا تَقُلْ لَهُمَا اَيٌّ وَلَا تَنْهَرُهُمَا وَقُلْ لَهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيْمًا ۝
 وَ اَخْفِضْ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ الذَّلٰلِ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ وَقُلْ رَبِّ ارْحَمْنِيْمَا كَمَا رَبَّبْتَنِيْ

Indeed the Qur'an shows that way which is perfectly straight: 9-10
 To those who believe in it and do good deeds, it gives the good news
 that there is a great reward for them and to those who do not believe in
 the Hereafter, it gives the warning that a painful torment has been
 made ready for them.¹¹

Man invokes evil instead of goodness for he is very hasty and 11
 impatient.¹²

Behold! We have created day and night as two signs: We have 12
 deprived the sign of night of light and made the sign of day bright to
 enable you to seek bounty of your Lord and to reckon months and
 years. Thus We have made everything manifestly distinct.¹³

We have fastened the augury of every man to his own neck,¹⁴ 13-14
 and on the Day of Resurrection We will bring forth a writing which he
 will find like an open book. (It will be said to him,) "Here is your
 record: read it. Today you yourself suffice as reckoner against
 yourself."

Whosoever adopts the righteous way, his righteous conduct will 15
 be for his own good, and whosoever goes astray, his deviation shall
 bring its consequences on him.¹⁵ No bearer will bear the burden of
 another.¹⁶ And We do not inflict punishment until We have sent a
 Messenger¹⁷ (to make Truth distinct from falsehood.)

When We decree that a habitation should be destroyed, We give 16-17
 Commands to its well-to-do people and they show disobedience; then
 that habitation incurs just torment and We totally exterminate it.¹⁸ Just
 see how many generations have been destroyed by Our Command after
 Noah. Your Lord is fully aware of the sins of his servants and is seeing
 everything.

If a person hankers after the immediate good things of this 18-21
 worldly life,¹⁹ We give him whatever We will; then We condemn such a
 one to Hell, wherein he will burn, accursed and deprived of mercy.²⁰ On
 the other hand, whoso desires the life of the Hereafter and strives for it
 as best as one should strive, and is a believer, the endeavour of every
 such person will be appreciated.²¹ As regards the provisions of this
 worldly life, We bestow them on these and on those; this is a gift of
 your Lord and there is none to withhold the gift of your Lord.²² But in

spite of this you can see that We have exalted one people above the others and in the Hereafter these grades will be far greater, and their superiority will be far higher.²³

22 Do not associate another deity with Allah,²⁴ otherwise you shall be reduced to a state of ignominy and helplessness.

23-24 Your Lord has enjoined the following:²⁵

1. You should not worship anyone but Him.²⁶

2. Treat your parents with great consideration; if either or both of them live with you in their old age, do not say even "fie" to them; nor rebuke them, but speak kind words to them; treat them with humility and tenderness and pray: "Lord, be merciful to them just as they brought me up with kindness and affection."

Contd. from p.599]

The moral and religious fervour with which the Maccabees had started their movement gradually cooled down and was replaced by love of the world and empty external form. A split appeared among them and they themselves invited the Roman General, Pompey, to come to Palestine. Pompey turned his attention to this land in 63 B.C. and, taking Jerusalem, put an end to the political freedom of the Jews. But the Roman conquerors preferred to rule their dominions through the agency of the local chiefs rather than by direct control. Therefore, a local government was set up in Palestine which eventually passed into the hand of Herod, a clever Jew, in 40 B.C. This ruler is well known as Herod the Great. He ruled over the whole of Palestine and Jordan from 40 to 4 B.C. On the one hand Herod patronised the religious leaders to please the Jews, and on the other, he propagated the Roman culture and won the goodwill of Caesar by showing his loyalty and faithfulness to the Roman Empire. During, his reign, the Jews degenerated and fell to the lowest ebb of moral and religious life.

On the death of Herod his kingdom. was subdivided into three parts. His son, Archelaus, became the ruler of Samaria, Judaea and northern Edom. In A.D. 6: however, Caesar Augustus deprived him of his authority and put the state under his Roman governor, and this arrangement continued up till A.D. 41. This was precisely the time when Prophet Jesus (Peace be upon him) appeared to reform the Israelites whose religious leaders opposed him tooth and nail and even tried to get him the death sentence by the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate.

The second son of Herod, Herod Antipas, became the ruler of Galilee and Jordan in northern Palestine, and he was the person who got Prophet John (Peace be upon him) beheaded at the request and desire of a dancing girl.

Herod's third son, Philip, succeeded to the territories bounded on one side by river Yermuk and on the other by Mount Hermon. Philip had been much more deeply influenced by the Roman and Greek cultures than his father and brothers. Therefore the preaching of the truth could not have even so much effect in his land as it had in the other parts of Palestine.

In A.D. 41, the Romans appointed Herod Agrippa, the grandson of Herod the Great, ruler of the territories that had once been under Herod himself. Coming into power this man did whatever he could to persecute the followers of Prophet Jesus (Peace be upon him) and used all the forces at his disposal to crush the movement that was functioning under the guidance of the Disciples to inculcate fear of God in the people and reform their morals.

In order to have a correct estimate of the condition of the common Jews and their religious leaders, one should study the criticisms levelled by Prophet Jesus on them in his sermons contained in the four Gospels. Even a religious man like Prophet John was beheaded before their eyes and not a voice was raised in protest against this barbarity. Then all the religious leaders of the community unanimously demanded death sentence for Prophet Jesus, and none but a few righteous men were there to mourn this depravity. Above all, when Pontius Pilate asked these depraved people, 'which condemned prisoner he should release, according to the custom, at Passover, Jesus or Barabbas the robber', they all cried with one voice 'Barabbas'. This was indeed the last chance Allah gave to the Jews, and then their fate was sealed.

Not long after this, a serious conflict started between the Jews and the Romans, which developed into an open revolt by the former between A.D. 64 and 66. Both Herod Agrippa II and the Roman procurator Floris failed to put down the rebellion. At last, the Romans crushed it by a strong military action and in A.D. 70 Titus took Jerusalem by force. About 1,33,000 people were put to the sword, 67 thousand made slaves, and thousands sent to work in the Egyptian mines and to other cities so that they could be used in amphitheatres for being torn by wild beasts or become the "practice-target" for the sword fighters. All the tall and beautiful girls were picked out for the army of conquest and the Holy City of Jerusalem and the Temple were pulled down to the ground. After this the Jewish influence so disappeared from Palestine that the Jews could not regain power for two thousand years, and the Holy Temple could never be rebuilt. Afterwards the Roman Emperor, Hadrian, restored Jerusalem but renamed it Aelia. The Jews,

however, were not allowed to enter it for centuries. This was the calamity that the Jews suffered on account of their degeneration for the second time.

10. Though this admonition has been given as a parenthesis at the end of the address to the children of Israel, it does not mean that this and the address itself are solely meant for them. As a matter of fact, the whole address is really directed towards the disbelievers of Makkah but, instead of addressing them directly, some important historical events from the history of the children of Israel have been cited in order to serve as admonition for them.

11. This means to warn those persons or people or nations who do not take a lesson from the admonitions of the Qur'ān to be ready to undergo that chastisement which Israelites had to suffer.

12. This is in answer to the foolish demands of the disbelievers of Makkah who repeatedly demanded from the Holy Prophet to bring about that torment with which he threatened them. It is closely connected with the preceding verse, as if to say, "O foolish people instead of asking goodness you demand the torment: can't you realise the sufferings of the community which is visited by God's torment?"

It also contains a subtle warning to those Muslims who prayed for punishment for those disbelievers who persecuted them and rejected the Message obdurately; there were still among those disbelievers many such people who afterwards embraced Islam and became its standard bearers in the world. That is why Allah says, "Man does so because he is very hasty and impatient; " He prays to Allah for all such things as are the immediate need of the time, though often subsequent experience shows that if Allah had granted his prayer, it would have been very harmful to him.

13. Allah invites man to study the wisdom that underlies variety in the world and not get confused and long for monotonous uniformity. In fact, the whole system is based on variety, distinctiveness and diversity in things. For the sake of illustration let us take the case of the signs of day and night: "You see these underlying opposite things daily in your life. If you just consider the underlying wisdom, you will find that without this variety there would have been hardly any activity in the world. Likewise great wisdom lies in the creation of the people with different temperaments, thoughts and inclinations. If Allah had made all men righteous by birth or annihilated disbelievers and wicked people and left only believers and submissive people in the world, the purpose of men's creation could not have been realized. Therefore, it is wrong to desire that there should only be day and no night. The righteous thing is that these people, who have got the light of guidance, should exert their utmost to remove the darkness of deviation. It is their duty that if they find darkness like that of night, they should pursue it like the sun so that the light of guidance should re-appear".

14. "We have fastened the augury of every man to his own neck": therefore one does not need to take omens from a bird.: This is to remove the superstition of the disbelievers who used to take omens from birds etc., as if to say, "The causes and consequences of good fortune or bad fate exist in man's own person. He merits good fortune because of his own good conduct and good judgment, and likewise, suffers the consequences of evil fate by the lack of these". This was necessitated because foolish people always try to attribute their misfortunes to external causes, when in fact our fate depends on our own deeds, good or bad. If they probe into the causes, they will find that their fate was decided by their own good or bad qualities and judgments.

15. This is to impress that if a person adopts the right way, he does not do any favour to God or His Messenger or a reformer but he himself gets its benefits. On the other hand, if a person deviates from the right way, he can do no harm to God or His Messenger or a reformer, for they desire only to protect men from wrong ways and guide him on to the Right Way, and not for any selfish ends. Therefore, the right course for a wise man is to adopt the righteous way, when it becomes distinct to him what is truth and what is falsehood. On the other hand, if he rejects Truth because of his prejudices and self-interest, he will be his own enemy and not a well-wisher.

16. The Qur'an has laid great stress on the doctrine of personal responsibility at several places, for one cannot follow the Right Way scrupulously without understanding fully its implication. It means that, everyone is solely responsible for one's moral conduct and is accountable to God as an individual in one's own person and no other person can share the burden of responsibility with him. As an instance, we may take the case of a particular action or a particular way of conduct in which a generation or a community or a large number of people had collaborated. When the people will assemble before Allah on the Day of Judgment their collective action will be analysed so as to lay the burden of its responsibility on each and every person who had been conducive to it, and rewarded or punished in accordance with it. Neither will a person be punished for the part another had played in its performance nor shall the burden of the sin of one individual laid on the shoulders of another. This doctrine has been emphasized over and over again so that a wise man should not act in imitation of another or justify his own conduct by similar deeds of others. If a particular person feels the sense of his own responsibility, he will act in such a way as to come out successful on the Day of Judgment, regardless of what the others do.

17. This is another doctrine which has been impressed on the minds by the Qur'an in different ways. This is to emphasize the basic importance that a Messenger has in the dispensation of Divine justice because this is determined in the light of the Message brought by him. This will be employed as an argument in

favour of or against the concerned people. Otherwise the infliction of punishment on the people would be unjust for in that case they could argue that they should not be punished as the knowledge of the righteous way had not been conveyed to them. But after the Message had been conveyed to a particular people, and they had rejected it, there would be left no excuse for them.

It is an irony that instead of accepting the Message some foolish people are misled by reading verses like these and they ask such absurd questions: "What will be the position of those, who might not have received the message of any Prophet?" The wise course for such persons would have been to ask themselves what their own position will be on the Day of Judgment, because they themselves had received the Message. As regards other people, Allah knows best who has received the Message, and when, how and to what extent and what attitude a certain person adopted towards it. In short, Allah alone is aware of whether a particular person received the Message in such a way as to fulfil the required condition for punishment.

18. Here a definite form of Divine procedure for the destruction of a people has been stated. When the well-to-do people of a habitation become disobedient, it is a portent that it is doomed to destruction. After their persistent and continuous transgression, the well-to-do people become so obdurate in their disobedience that they begin to discard the instinctive dictates of their conscience. The same thing has been stated in v. 16: "When We decree that a habitation should be destroyed We give Commands to its well-to-do people and they show disobedience." This is because Allah has created conscience for the guidance of man. Therefore, the dictates of conscience are really the commands of Allah. Thus it has become quite obvious that by "When We decree that a habitation should be destroyed" is not meant that Allah intends to destroy it without any reason. It is destroyed because after their disobedience "that habitation incurs Our just wrath and We totally exterminate it." The habitation deserves such a punishment because its common people follow the well-to-do people who are the factual leaders of a community and are mainly responsible for the corruption of the community. At first the well-to-do people commit acts of disobedience, wickedness, mischief, cruelty and tyranny and then the common people follow them and incur the torment of Allah. Incidentally, this is a warning for every community that it should be very discreet and prudent in choosing and electing its leaders and rulers, for if the latter are mean and wicked, they will inevitably lead the community to destruction.

19. The Arabic word '*Ājilah*' literally means something which can be had immediately, but the Qur'ān employs it as a term for "This World" which yields its advantages and results in this worldly life. Its antonym is '*Ākhirat*' (Hereafter)

which will yield its advantages and results after death in the life of the Next World.

20. The person who does not believe in the life of the Hereafter deserves Hell, because he strives only for the successes and good things of this world and his endeavours are confined to material objects. Consequently, such a person becomes a mere worshipper of this world and adopts wrong conduct, for he has no sense of personal responsibility and accountability to God and ultimately deserves the torment of Hell.

21. "His endeavours will be appreciated": he will be rewarded for the efforts he had made for success in the Hereafter.

22. Allah gives the provisions of this world both to those who strive for this world and to those who strive for the Hereafter, but it is the gift of Allah alone and not of anyone else. It does not lie in the power of the worshippers of the world to deprive the seekers after the Hereafter of these provisions: nor have the seekers after the Hereafter any power to withhold these provisions from the worshippers of the world.

23. This is to show that the seekers after the Hereafter have been exalted over the worshippers of the world even in this worldly life. However, this exaltation is not in regard to the good things of this world —rich food and dress, palatial dwellings, limousines, helicopters and other grand things, but it is from another point of view. They enjoy that true honour, love and good-will which is denied to the tyrants and the rich people in spite of the fact that they may be indigent. This is because whatever the seekers after the Hereafter get in this world, it is earned in righteous and honest ways, while the worshippers of the world amass wealth by employing dishonest and cruel ways. Then the former spend what they get with prudence and righteousness. They fulfil the obligations they owe to others. They spend their money in the Way of Allah and to please Allah on the needy and the indigent. In contrast to them, the worshippers of this world spend their money in the enjoyment of luxuries, wicked works, corruption and spreading other evil things. This makes the former models of God-worship and purity in every respect and distinguishes them so clearly from the worshippers of the world that they shine in exaltation over the latter. These things clearly indicate that in the next world the grades of the seekers after the Hereafter will be far greater and their superiority far higher than those of the worshippers of the world.

24. Or it can be rendered like this: "Do not invent another deity besides Allah", or "Do not set up another as a deity beside Allah."

صَغِيرًا ۗ رَبُّكُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا فِي نُفُوسِكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ تَكُونُوا صٰلِحِينَ فَإِنَّهُ كَانَ
 لِلَّهِ الْوَٰبِقِينَ ۗ غَفُورًا ۗ وَآتِ ذَا الْقُرْبَىٰ حَقَّهُ وَٱلْيَسٰكِينَ وَٱلْبَنَ السَّبِيلِ
 وَلَا تَبْذُرْ تَبْذِيرًا ۗ إِنَّ الْمُبْذِرِينَ كَانُوا إِخْوَانَ الشَّيْطٰنِ ۗ وَكَانَ الشَّيْطٰنُ
 لِرَبِّهِ كَفُورًا ۗ وَ إِمَّا تُعْرِضَنَّ عَنْهُمُ ابْتِغَاءَ رَحْمَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكَ تَرْجُوهَا
 فَقُلْ لَهُمْ قَوْلًا مَّيْسُورًا ۗ وَلَا تَجْعَلْ يَدَكَ مَغْلُولَةً إِلَىٰ عُنُقِكَ
 وَلَا تَبْسُطْهَا كُلَّ الْبَسْطِ فَتَقْعُدَ مَلُومًا مَّحْضُورًا ۗ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَن
 يَشَاءُ وَيَقْدِرُ ۗ إِنَّهُ كَانَ بِعِبَادِهِ خَبِيرًا بَصِيرًا ۗ وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا ١٢٥
 ١٢٤ ١٢٣
 ١٢٢ ١٢١ ١٢٠
 ١١٩ ١١٨ ١١٧
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 ١١٠ ١٠٩ ١٠٨
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 ١١ ١٠ ٩
 ٨ ٧ ٦
 ٥ ٤ ٣
 ٢ ١ ٠

Your Lord best knows what is in your minds. If you live righteously, He surely forgives and turns towards all such people as are penitent and obedient.²⁷ 25-27

3. Fulfil your obligations towards your relatives and the indigent and the wayfarer.

4. Do not be a spendthrift because the spendthrifts are the brethren of Satan and Satan has been ungrateful to his Lord.

5. If you have to put them (the needy persons) off because you are still waiting for Allah's favour that you are expecting, put them off with tenderness.²⁸ 28

6. Do not tie your hand to your neck nor stretch without any restraint lest you should become blameworthy and left destitute.²⁹ Your Lord provides plentifully to whom He wills and withholds His provisions from anyone He pleases, for He is fully aware of the condition of His servants and observes them closely.³⁰ 29-30

7. Do not kill your offsprings for fear of want: for it is We Who provide them and you as well. Indeed their killing is a heinous crime.³¹ 31

8. Do not even go near fornication for it is a very indecent thing and a very evil way.³² 32

9. Do not kill any soul whose killing has been forbidden by Allah³³ except by right³⁴: and if one is killed unjustly We have granted the right of retribution to his guardian.³⁵ So he should not transgress the limits in retaliation,³⁶ for he shall be helped.³⁷ 33

10. Do not go near the property of an orphan except in the best manner until he reaches the age of maturity.³⁸ 34-35

11. Keep your pledges, for you shall be accountable for your pledges.³⁹

12. Give full measure when you measure and weigh with even scales⁴⁰ when you weigh. This is the best way and will prove to be the best in the end.⁴¹

13. Do not follow that of which you have no knowledge for you shall be questioned for (the use) of your eyes, ears and minds.⁴² 36

37 14. Do not strut about in the land for you can neither cleave the earth nor attain the height of the mountains.⁴³

38-40 The evil aspect of each of these Commandments is odious in the sight of your Lord.⁴⁴ These are the things of wisdom which your Lord has revealed to you.

And behold! do not associate any other deity with Allah lest you should be cast into Hell reproached and deprived of every good⁴⁵— What! has your Lord favoured you with sons and adopted angels as daughters for Himself?⁴⁶ Indeed it is a big lie that you are uttering.

Contd. from p. 607]

25. In the succeeding verses, those main basic principles have been put forward on which Islam desires to build the whole structure of human life. These form, so to say, the Manifesto of the Invitation of the Holy Prophet declared by him at the end of the Makki stage of his mission, on the eve of the new stage at Al-Madinah so that it should be known to all that the new Islamic Society and State were going to be built on such and such ideological, moral, cultural economic and legal principles. (Please also refer to vv. 151-153 and E.N.'s thereof of Chapter VI).

26. This commandment is very comprehensive. It prohibits not only the worship of anyone except Allah but also implies that one should obey and serve and submit to Allah alone without question: one should accept His Commandments and Law alone to be worthy of obedience and His authority to be supreme above all. This was not merely an instruction confined to a religious creed and individual practice but it served as the foundation of the moral, cultural, and political system which was practically established in Al-Madinah by the Holy Prophet. Its first and foremost principle was that Allah alone is the Master, Sovereign and Law giver.

27. This verse enjoins that after Allah's right, the greatest of all the human rights is the right of parents: therefore, the children should obey and serve and respect their parents. The collective morality of society should make it incumbent on children to be grateful and respectful to their parents, they should serve them as they nursed and brought them up in their childhood. Above all, this verse is not merely a moral recommendation but is the basis of the rights and powers of parents the details of which we find in the Books of *Hadith* and *Fiqh*. Moreover, respectful behaviour and obedience to and observance of the rights of parents comprise the most important element of the material education and moral training in the Islamic Society and civilization. Incidentally, all these things have determined for ever the principle that the Islamic State shall make the family life

sound and secure by laws, administrative regulations and educational policy and prevent its disintegration.

28. These three articles (3-5) are meant to impress that a man should not reserve his earnings and his wealth exclusively for his own person. He should do his utmost to fulfil his own necessities of life in a moderate way and render the rights of his relatives, neighbours and other needy persons as well. This attitude will help create the spirit of cooperation, sympathy and justice in the collective Islamic life. Thus every relative will cooperate with the other and every well-to-do person will help the needy in his neighbourhood and a wayfarer would find himself an honourable guest among generous hosts. The conception of rights should be so extensive that every person should consider that all other human beings have rights on his person and his property so that he should serve them with the idea that he is rendering their rights and is not doing any favour to them. In that case one would beg pardon of the other if one was unable to serve him and would pray to God to send his blessings upon him to enable him to serve His servants.

These articles of the Islamic Manifesto were not merely confined to moral teachings but these formed the basis of the Commandments of *Zakāt* and voluntary charity. The laws of inheritance and of making will and endowments were based on these articles. The rights of the orphans were determined by these and it was made obligatory on every habitation to entertain a wayfarer gratis for at least three days. Subsequently the whole moral system was formed so as to create the feelings of generosity, sympathy and cooperation. So much so that the people began to realize the importance of and observe voluntarily the moral rights which could neither be demanded legally nor enforced by law.

29. "Do not tie your hand to your neck" is the 'literal translation of the Text which means: "Do not be parsimonious" ; "nor stretch it without any restraint" means, "Do not be extravagant". If verses 27 and 29 are read together, it becomes obvious that the Qur'ān desires the people to follow the golden mean, i.e., they should neither be so parsimonious as to prevent the circulation of wealth nor so extravagant as to destroy their own economy. On the contrary, they should learn to behave in a balanced manner so that they should spend money wherever it should be spent and refrain from becoming spendthrifts so as to involve themselves into trouble. As a matter of fact, it is ingratitude towards Allah's favour to spend money for the sake of show, luxury and sinful acts and similar things which are neither man's real necessities nor useful. Therefore, those people who spend money lavishly on such things as these are the brethren of Satan.

These clauses too, are not merely meant to be moral instructions for individuals. They are intended to safeguard the Islamic Society against

extravagance by moral instruction, collective pressure and legal restrictions. Accordingly, in the Islamic State of Al-Madinah practical steps were taken to safeguard the community against extravagance. First, many forms of extravagance and luxury were forbidden by law. Secondly, legal measures were taken against it. Thirdly, social reforms were introduced to put an end to those customs which involved extravagance. The Government was empowered to prevent people from the obvious forms of extravagance. Above all, *Zakāt* and voluntary charity helped to break parsimony and the lust of hoarding money. Besides these measures, a public opinion was created that enabled the people to discriminate between generosity and extravagance and thrift and parsimony: so much so that parsimonious people were looked down upon as ignominious and the thrifty people were regarded as honourable. This moral and mental attitude became a part and parcel of the Muslim society, and even today the parsimonious people and hoarders are looked down upon in the Muslim society, while the generous people are respected everywhere.

30. That is, "Man cannot realize the wisdom of the disparity of wealth among the people": therefore, man should not try to interfere by artificial means with the natural distribution of wealth. It is wrong to level down natural inequality or to aggravate it by artificial means so as to make it unjust. Both the extremes are wrong. The best economic system is that which is established on the Divine Way of the division of wealth.

As a result of the realization of the wisdom of economic disparity, no such problems arose which might have made that disparity an evil in itself so as to demand the creation of a classless society. On the contrary, in the righteous society established at Al-Madinah on these Divine principles which are akin to human nature, the economic differences were not artificially disturbed. But by means of moral and legal reforms these became the means of many moral, spiritual and cultural blessings and benefits instead of becoming the means of injustice. Thus, the wisdom of the disparity created by the Creator of the Universe was practically demonstrated at Al-Madinah.

31. This verse cuts at the very root of the movement of birth control, which has been going on from ancient times to our present age. It was the fear of want that induced people to kill their children or resort to abortion. In our age another plan has been added to these, i.e., contraception. This article of the Islamic Manifesto prohibits the people from reducing the number of mouths by artificial means but exhorts them to increase the means of production according to the natural methods enjoined by Allah. According to this article, it is one of the biggest mistakes of man to check birth rate as a solution to the want and scarcity of provisions: therefore, it warns him, as if to say, "O man, it is not you who make arrangement for food, but Allah, Who settled you in the land and has been

providing for you and will provide for those who will come after you". History tells us that the food resources have always expanded in proportion to the number of inhabitants of a country: nay, often they have exceeded far more than the needs of the inhabitants. Thus it is a folly on the part of man to interfere with the arrangements of Allah.

It is very significant that as a result of this teaching no movement has ever been started to control birth nor has there been any inclination to infanticide among the Muslims ever since the revelation of the Qur'ān.

32. "Do not even go near fornication." This commandment is meant both for individuals and society as a whole. It warns each individual not only to guard against adultery or fornication itself but against all those things that lead to or stimulate it. As regards society as a whole the commandment enjoins it to make such arrangements as prevent adultery and eradicate the means and stimulants that lead to adultery. Therefore, the society should employ all those legal and educative means that help develop such an environment as prevents and eradicates indecency.

Finally, this article formed the basis of laws and regulations of the Islamic system of life. In order to fulfil its implications adultery and false accusation of adultery were made criminal offences: regulations about "Purdah" were promulgated: the publication of indecent things was banned and drinking of intoxicants was made unlawful: restrictions on music, dancing and pictures which are conducive to adultery were imposed. Then such laws were enacted as made marriage easy, and cut at the root of adultery.

33. "Do not kill any soul" includes not only the prohibition of the killing of other souls but also one's own soul as well for it is also included in the prohibition that immediately follows this command. Thus suicide is regarded as heinous a sin as murder. Some foolish people object to the prohibition of suicide saying that they themselves are the masters of their souls. Therefore, there is nothing wrong in killing one's own self or in destroying one's own property. They forget that every soul belongs to Allah, and none has any right to destroy it, nay, even to abuse it, for this world is a place of trial, where we should undergo the test up to the end of our lives in accordance with the will of Allah. It does not matter whether our circumstances are favourable or adverse for trial. Therefore, it would be wrong to run away from the place of test, not to speak of committing such a heinous crime as suicide (which Allah has prohibited) to escape it, for it means that the one who commits suicide tries to run away from small troubles and ignominies towards greater affliction and eternal torment and ignominy.



قَوْلًا عَظِيمًا ۗ وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَا فِي هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ لِيَذَكَّرُوا وَمَا يَزِيدُهُمْ
 إِلَّا نُفُورًا ۗ قُلْ لَوْ كَانَ مَعَهُ آلِهَةٌ كَمَا يَقُولُونَ إِذًا لَأَبْتَغُوا إِلَىٰ ذِي
 الْعَرْشِ سَبِيلًا ۗ سُبْحٰنَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ عَمَّا يَقُولُونَ عُلُوًّا كَبِيرًا ۗ تَسْبِيحُ
 لَهُ السَّمٰوٰتُ السَّبْعُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيهِنَّ ۗ وَإِنْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا يُسَبِّحُ
 بِحَمْدِهِ وَلَكِنْ لَا تَفْقَهُونَ تَسْبِيحَهُمْ ۗ إِنَّهُ كَانَ حَلِيمًا غَفُورًا ۗ وَإِذَا قَرَأْتَ
 الْقُرْآنَ جَعَلْنَا بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ حِجَابًا مَّسْتُورًا ۗ
 وَجَعَلْنَا عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ أَكِنَّةً أَنْ يَفْقَهُوهُ وَفِي آذَانِهِمْ وَقْرًا ۗ وَإِذَا ذَكَرْتَ رَبَّكَ
 فِي الْقُرْآنِ وَحْدَهُ وَلَّوْا عَلَىٰ آذَانِهِمْ نُفُورًا ۗ نَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَسْتَمِعُونَ بِهِ
 إِذْ يَسْتَمِعُونَ إِلَيْكَ وَإِذْ هُمْ نَجْوَىٰ إِذْ يَقُولُ الظَّالِمُونَ إِنْ تَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا رَجَا
 مَسْحُورًا ۗ أَنْظِرْ كَيْفَ ضَرَبُوا لَكَ الْأَمْثَالَ فَضَلُّوا فَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ سَبِيلًا ۗ وَ
 قَالُوا إِذَا كُنَّا عِظَامًا وَرُفَاتًا ؕ إِنَّا لَمُبْعُوثُونَ خَلْقًا جَدِيدًا ۗ قُلْ كُونُوا
 حِجَارَةً أَوْ حَدِيدًا ۗ أَوْ خَلْقًا مِّمَّا يَكْبُرُ فِي صُدُورِكُمْ ؕ فَسَيَقُولُونَ مَنْ يُعِيدُنَا
 قُلِ الَّذِي فَطَرَكُمْ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ ؕ فَسَيُنْغِضُونَ إِلَيْكَ رُءُوسَهُمْ وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَىٰ
 هُوَ ۗ قُلْ عَسَىٰ أَنْ يَكُونَ قَرِيبًا ۗ يَوْمَ يَدْعُوكُمْ فَتَسْتَجِيبُونَ بِحَمْدِهِ



وَتَذْتَنُونَ إِنْ لَيْسَ لَكُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ۗ وَقُلْ لِعِبَادِي يَقُولُوا الَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ ۗ
 إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ يَنْزِعُ بَيْنَهُمْ وَإِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ كَانَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ عَدُوًّا مُّبِينًا ۗ رَبُّكُمْ
 أَعْلَمُ بِكُمْ إِنْ يَشَأْ يُرْحِمَكُم أَوْ إِنْ يَشَأْ يُعَذِّبِكُمْ ۗ وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَكِيلًا ۗ
 وَرَبُّكَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۗ وَلَقَدْ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَ النَّاسِ
 عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ وَآتَيْنَا دَاوُدَ زُبُورًا ۗ قُلْ ادْعُوا الَّذِينَ زَعَمْتُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ

We have admonished the people in different ways in the Qur'ān 41-44 so that they may take warning, yet they are running further and further away from the Truth. O Muhammad, tell them that if there had been other deities beside Allah, as they assert, they would surely have tried to find a way to (dethrone) the Master of the Throne.⁴⁷ He is free from and far above the things they say about Him. The seven heavens and the Earth and all the things therein⁴⁸ are chanting hymns of His glory⁴⁹ along with His praise but you do not understand their hymns. The fact is that He is very Forbearing and Forgiving.⁵⁰

When you recite the Qur'ān, we place an invisible curtain 45-48 between you and those who do not believe in the Hereafter and we cover their hearts with a covering so that they understand nothing and we make their ears hard of hearing.⁵¹ And when in the Qur'ān you mention your one Lord only, they turn their faces away in aversion.⁵² We know best what they really wish to hear, when they listen to you, and also what they say, when they sit together in secret conversation. These wrongdoers say to one another, "The man you are following is really bewitched"⁵³—Behold! what epithets they apply to you! They have gone astray, so they cannot find the Right Way.⁵⁴

They say, "What! shall we really be raised up again into a new 49-52 creation, when we are reduced to bones and dust?" Say to them, ("yes, most certainly you shall be brought back to life,) even if you be stone or iron or even something harder than this which you consider in your minds impossible to be brought to life." At this they will ask, "Who is he who will bring us back to life?" Say to them, "The same Being Who brought you to life in the first instance." Then they will shake their heads at you and ask,⁵⁵ "Well, when will this happen?" Say, "That time may be near at hand. On the Day when He will call you, you will rise up in response to it, praising Him, and you will think, "We have remained in this state only for a little while."⁵⁶

And O Muhammad!, say to My servants,⁵⁷ "They should utter 53-54 only that which is the best of all."⁵⁸ In reality, it is Satan who tries to sow discord between human beings. The fact is that Satan is the avowed enemy of man.⁵⁹ Your Lord is fully aware of everything concerning you. If He will, He may show mercy to you, and if He will, He may

give you severe chastisement.”⁶⁰ And, O Prophet, We have not sent you to be the guardian over people.⁶¹

55

Your Lord is fully aware of all the creatures in the heavens and the earth. We have exalted some Prophets above the others in ranks,⁶² and We gave the Psalms to Dāvid.⁶³

Contd. from p.613]

34. When the Islamic State was established, “killing by right” was confined to five cases only: To punish (1) a wilful murderer for retribution, (2) opponents of the true religion during war, (3) those who attempt to overthrow the Islamic system of government, (4) a man or woman guilty of adultery and (5) an apostate.

35. We have translated the Arabic word “*sultān*” into “the right of retribution”. Here it stands for “a ground for legal action”. This also lays down the legal principle that in a case of murder, the real plaintiff is not the government but the guardian or the guardians of the murdered person who are authorized to pardon the murderer or receive blood-money instead of taking his life.

36. Transgression in killing would be to kill more persons than the murderer or to kill the criminal by degrees with torment or to disfigure his dead body or to kill him after receiving blood-money, etc., etc. All these things have been forbidden.

37. It has not been defined how succour will be given because at the time of its revelation the Islamic State had not yet been established. After its establishment it was made clear that a guardian was not authorised to enforce retribution by murdering the criminal. The Islamic Government alone is legally authorized to take retribution; therefore, succour for justice should be demanded only from it.

38. This too, was not merely a moral instruction. When the Islamic State was established, legal and administrative methods were adopted to safeguard the rights of orphans, the details of which are found in the literature of *Hadith* and *Fiqh*. Then this principle was extended to cover the cases of all those citizens who were unable to safeguard their own rights. The Holy Prophet himself declared, “I am the guardian of the one who has no guardian”. And this is the basis of many rules and regulations of the Islamic Law.

39. “Fulfilment of pledges” was not meant to be merely a moral instruction for individuals but afterwards when the Islamic State was established, this became the guiding principle for the conduct of all internal; and external affairs by the Muslim Community and the Islamic Government.

40. This instruction was not confined to individuals only but it has been made a part of the duties of an Islamic Government to supervise transactions in the markets and streets to see that exact measures and weights are being observed, and prevent their breach and violation by the force of law. Afterwards it was made one of the duties of the government to eradicate dishonesty in all commercial dealings and economic transactions.

41. That is, "Its end will be best in this world and it will be best in the Hereafter." It is best in this world because it produces mutual trust between sellers and buyers. As a result of this, commerce prospers and there is a general prosperity. As regards the Hereafter, there the end depends wholly on honesty, piety and fear of God.

42. The meanings of "Do not follow that of which you have no knowledge" are very comprehensive. It demands that both in individual and collective life, one should not follow mere guess work and presumption instead of "knowledge". This instruction covers all aspects of Islamic life, moral, legal, political, administrative and applies to science, arts and education. It has thus saved the society from numerous evils which are produced in human life by following guesswork instead of knowledge. The Islamic moral code demands: Guard against suspicion and do not accuse any individual or group without proper investigation. In law, it has been made a permanent principle that no action should be taken against anyone without proper investigation. It has been made unlawful to arrest, beat or imprison anyone on mere suspicion during investigation. In regard to foreign relations, the definite policy has been laid down that no action should be taken without investigation, nor should rumours be set afloat. Likewise in education the so-called sciences based on mere guess-work, presumptions and irrational theories have been disapproved. Above all, it cuts at the very root of superstitions, for this instruction teaches the Believers to accept only that which is based on the knowledge imparted by Allah and His Messenger.

43. This instruction warns against the ways of tyrants and vain people and is not merely meant for the individual but also for the collective conduct of the Muslim Community. It was because of this guidance that the rulers, governors and commanders of the Islamic State which was established on the basis of this Manifesto, were free from every tinge of tyranny, arrogance, haughtiness, pride and vanity, so much so that even in the battlefield they never uttered a word which had the slightest indication of any of these vain things. Their gait, dress, dwelling and conveyance showed humility. In short, their ways of conduct were not those of "big ones" but those of humble persons. That is why they never tried to overawe the people of a conquered city by show of pomp and pride.

44. That is, "Allah disapproves of the commission of anything that has been prohibited" or, in other words, "He disapproves of disobedience to any of these Commandments."

45. Though this has been addressed to the Holy Prophet, the real addressee is every human being as in the case of many such verses.

46. Please refer to verses 57-59 and their E.N's.

47. That is, "They would have themselves tried their best to become masters of the Throne". This is because if there had been more than one partners in Godhead, it would produce one of the two results: (1) If they were all independent gods, it was not conceivable that they would agree and co-operate with one another in the management of the boundless universe and there could never have been unanimity, uniformity and balanced proportion in its functioning. There would have been conflict at every step and everyone would have tried to dominate others in order to become its sole master. or (2) if one of them had been the supreme god and the others his obedient servants whom he had delegated some of his powers, then, according to the maxim "power corrupts", they would never have been content with remaining obedient servants of the supreme god and would have conspired to become the supreme god themselves.

Whereas the fact is that in this universe not even a grain of wheat or a blade of grass can grow unless and until everything in the earth and the heavens cooperate with one another for its production. Therefore, only an utterly ignorant and blockheaded person can conceive that there are more than one independent or semi-independent rulers, who carry on the management of this universe. Anyone who has tried to understand the nature and functioning of the universe will most surely arrive at the conclusion that there is One and only One Sovereign ruling over this universe, and there is absolutely no likelihood of any one else to be a co-partner in this at any stage.

48. That is, "The whole of the universe and everything in it bear witness to the fact that their Creator and Guardian is free from each and every fault, defect, and weakness, and that He is far above this that there should be any partner or associate in His Godhead."

49. Everything is not only singing hymns of the glory of its Creator but is affording the proof that He is perfect in every respect and worthy of all praise. Everything is an embodiment of the proof that its Creator and Administrator is the one in whom there is perfection of every quality. Therefore, He alone is worthy of praise.

50. That is, "It is due to His forbearance and forgiveness that though you are persistently insolent to Him and go on inventing one false thing or the other

against Him, He forbears and forgives you, . He neither withholds provisions from you nor deprives you of His favours nor strikes an insolent person instantly dead with a thunderbolt. Above all, He is so forbearing and forgiving that He gives long enough respite to the individuals and communities to mend their ways, sends His prophets and reformers for their admonition and guidance and forgives all the past mistakes and errors, if one sincerely repents and adopts the Right way.

51. This refers to the Divine law according to which those people, who do not believe in the Hereafter, cannot benefit from the Qur'ān. Allah has attributed this law to Himself, as if to say, "The natural result of disbelief in the Hereafter is that the heart of such a man becomes dull and his ears become deaf to the Message of the Qur'ān, for Qur'ān bases its invitation on the belief in the Hereafter. So it warns the people that they should not be deluded by this apparent aspect of the worldly life if there appears to be none to call them to account here: for it does not mean they are not at all accountable and answerable to anyone. Likewise if Allah allows freedom of belief to practise *shirk*, atheism, disbelief or *Tauhid* with impunity in this world, and their practice does not appear to make any practical difference in this world, it does not mean that these things do not produce any results at all. For, in fact, everyone shall be accountable and answerable but after death in the Next World. Then every one will realize that the doctrine of Tauhid alone is true and all other doctrines are false. For, if at present the consequences of deeds do not appear after death they shall inevitably appear, but now the Reality has been hidden behind an invisible curtain. There is an inevitable moral law according to which submission to it will bear its fruit and disobedience shall incur its losses. As decisions according to this moral law will be made in the Hereafter, you should not be enticed by the charms of this transitory life. You should, therefore, keep in view that ultimately you shall have to render an account of all your deeds in this world before your Lord, and adopt that true creed and moral attitude which may be conducive to your success in the Hereafter".

From this it must have become obvious that if a man does not believe in the Hereafter, he will never consider the message of the Qur'ān worth his while but will hanker after this world and its joys which he can feel and experience. Naturally his ears will not listen to the Message and it will never reach the depths of his heart. Allah has stated this psychological fact in this verse.

In this connection, it should be remembered that the words contained in this verse were uttered by the disbelievers of Makkah as quoted in verse 5 of Sūrah 41: "They say, O Muhammad, a covering has fallen over our hearts, and our ears are deaf for the Message you give and there is a curtain between you and us. You may go on with your work and we will do whatever we desire." Here the same words have been cited, as if to say, "You consider this state of yours to be a

virtue, whereas this is a curse which has fallen on you according to the Divine Law because of your disbelief of the Hereafter."

52. That is, "They do not like it at all that you should consider Allah alone as your Lord and not mention the Lords they have set up." They seem to think it strange that one should go on praising Allah and never mention the "miracles" of their elders and saints nor praise them for their favours. For, according to them, Allah has delegated the powers of His Godhead to their great ones. Therefore, they say, "What a strange fellow he is! He believes that the knowledge of the unknown, and all the power and authority belong to One Allah alone. Why does he not pay tribute to those who give us children, cure us of diseases and help make our commerce flourish, in short, fulfil all our wishes and desires?"

53. This refers to those devices which they conspired against the Message of the Holy Prophet. They would secretly listen to him, and then hold consultations in order to counteract this. Sometimes it so happened that they suspected that someone had been influenced by the Qur'ān. Then they would sit together and try to dissuade him, saying, "How is it that you have been influenced by a person who himself is bewitched by some enemy and talks like this?"

54. This is to say that they expressed different opinions at different times which contradicted each other. Sometimes they said, "You are a sorcerer" and at other times, "You have been bewitched by someone, or you are a poet or you are possessed of some evil spirit." These contradictory things were a proof that they did not know the reality. Otherwise, they would not have invented a different name to suit each occasion. This also shows that they themselves were not sure of the 'charge' they levelled against him. If they called him by one epithet one day, they themselves felt afterwards that it did not fit in. Then they would invent the second epithet and then the third and so on. Thus every new epithet contradicted the previous ones and showed that there was no truth in them, but in their enmity they were inventing one falsehood after the other.

55. "They will shake their heads at you" in astonishment or to express doubt or disapproval or to scoff at you.

56. That is, "You will feel as if the intervening period between death and coming again to life on the Day of Resurrection was only a few hours or so, for you will think that you had just woken up after a short sleep by the sudden noise produced on the Day."

As regards ".....you will rise up praising Him," it is a subtle hint towards a great reality: at the time of rising up from death both the believer and the unbeliever will be uttering the praise of Allah. The believer will do so because

in the worldly life also he believed in this creed and practised it. As regards the unbeliever, he will have the urge to do so because of the inherent and ingrained tendency in him which he had been suppressing by his folly. In the new life all those deliberate suppressions will vanish away and he will involuntarily utter the praise of Allah.

57. "The believers."

58. The believers have been enjoined to say only the best things even in their discussion with the disbelievers and other opponents of their Faith. They should neither use harsh words nor make exaggerated statements. They should be cool in their conversation and say only what is true and dignified in spite of the provoking behaviour of the opponents.

59. The believers have been forewarned to guard against the provocations of Satan, as if to say, "While answering your opponents, if you feel that you are being aroused to anger, you should at once understand that it is Satan who is exciting you in order to do harm to your dispute, in which he wants to engage human beings for sowing discord between them."

60. This is to warn the believers to refrain from making claims of piety so as to assign Paradise to themselves and Hell to their opponents. It is Allah alone Who has the power to decide these things because He is fully aware of the known and secret and the present and future things about all human beings. It is He Who will decide whether to show mercy to anyone or give chastisement. However, a man may say in the light of the Divine Book that a certain kind of human beings deserve mercy and another kind of people incur chastisement but none has any right to say specifically that a particular man will be given chastisement and another will get salvation.

61. This is to declare that a Prophet is sent to convey the Message and not to decide whether a person will receive mercy or get chastisement. It does not, however, mean that, God forbid, the Holy Prophet himself did such a thing and Allah had to warn him. In fact, this is to warn the Muslims that when the Prophet himself is not in a position as to decide the fates of the people, they should never think of such a thing as to assign Paradise and Hell to anyone.

62. Though this has apparently been addressed to the Holy Prophet, in fact the real addressees are the disbelievers of Makkah. This is to rebuke them for the low opinion they held in regard to the Holy Prophet. As it commonly happens contemporaries, in general, and opponents, in particular, do not see anything great and noble in a person of their own time. The same was the case with the contemporaries of the Holy Prophet who could not see anything extraordinary or

فَلَا يَسْتَلِكُونَ كَشْفَ الضَّرِّ عَنْكُمْ وَلَا تَحْوِيلًا ﴿٥٤﴾ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ يَبْتَغُونَ إِلَى
 رَبِّهِمُ الْوَسِيلَةَ أَيُّهُمْ أَقْرَبُ وَيَرْجُونَ رَحْمَتَهُ وَيَخَافُونَ عَذَابَهُ إِنَّ عَذَابَ
 رَبِّكَ كَانَ مَحْذُورًا ﴿٥٥﴾ وَإِنْ مِنْ قَرْيَةٍ إِلَّا نَحْنُ مُهْلِكُوهَا قَبْلَ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ
 أَوْ مُعَذِّبُوهَا عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا كَانَ ذَلِكَ فِي الْكِتَابِ مَسْطُورًا ﴿٥٦﴾ وَمَا مَنَعَنَا أَنْ
 نُرْسِلَ بِالْآيَاتِ إِلَّا أَنْ كَذَّبَ بِهَا الْأَوَّلُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾ وَآتَيْنَا سُودَ النَّاقَةِ مُبْصِرَةً فَظَلَمُوا
 بِهَا ﴿٥٨﴾ وَمَا نُرْسِلُ بِالْآيَاتِ إِلَّا تَحْوِيلًا ﴿٥٩﴾ وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لَكَ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ أَحَاطَ بِالنَّاسِ ﴿٦٠﴾
 وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الرُّؤْيَا الَّتِي آرَيْنَاكَ إِلَّا فِتْنَةً لِلنَّاسِ وَالشَّجَرَةَ الْمَلْعُونَةَ فِي
 الْقُرْآنِ وَنُحَوِّفُهُمْ لَمَا يَزِيدُهُمْ إِلَّا طُغْيَانًا كَبِيرًا ﴿٦١﴾ وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ
 اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ ﴿٦٢﴾ قَالَ ءَأَسْجُدُ لِمَنْ خَلَقْتَ طِينًا ﴿٦٣﴾ قَالَ
 أَرَأَيْتَكَ هَذَا الَّذِي كَرَّمْتَ عَلَيَّ لَئِنْ أُخِّرْتَنِي إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ لَآخِثَتِكَ
 ذُرِّيَّتَهُ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴿٦٤﴾ قَالَ أَذْهَبَ فَمَنْ تَبِعَكَ مِنْهُمْ فَإِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ جَزَاءُكُمْ
 جَزَاءً مَوْفُورًا ﴿٦٥﴾ وَاسْتَفْزِزْ مَنْ اسْتَطَعْتَ مِنْهُمْ بِصَوْتِكَ وَأَجْلِبْ عَلَيْهِمْ
 بِخَيْبِكَ وَرَجِلِكَ وَشَارِكْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَوْلَادِ وَعَدَّهُمْ ﴿٦٦﴾ وَمَا يَعْبُدُهُمْ
 الشَّيْطَانُ إِلَّا عُرُودًا ﴿٦٧﴾ إِنَّ عِبَادِي لَيْسَ لَكَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطَانٌ وَكَفَى بِرَبِّكَ
 وَكِيلًا ﴿٦٨﴾ رَبُّكُمُ الَّذِي يُرْجِي لَكُمْ الْفَلَكَ فِي الْبَحْرِ لِيَبْتَغُوا مِنْ فَضْلِهِ إِنَّهُ كَانَ
 بِكُمْ رَحِيمًا ﴿٦٩﴾ وَإِذَا مَسَّكُمُ الضُّرُّ فِي الْبَحْرِ ضَلَّ مَنْ تَدْعُونَ إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ ﴿٧٠﴾ فَلَمَّا
 نَجَّكُمُ إِلَى الْبَرِّ أَعْرَضْتُمْ ﴿٧١﴾ وَكَانَ الْإِنْسَانُ كَفُورًا ﴿٧٢﴾ أَفَأَمِنْتُمْ أَنْ يَخْصِفَ بِكُمْ
 جَانِبَ الْبَرِّ أَوْ يُرْسِلَ عَلَيْكُمْ حَاصِبًا ثُمَّ لَا تَجِدُوا لَكُمْ وَكِيلًا ﴿٧٣﴾ أَمْ آمَنْتُمْ
 أَنْ يُعِيدَكُمْ فِيهِ تَارَةً أُخْرَى فَيُرْسِلَ عَلَيْكُمْ قَاصِفًا مِنَ الرِّيحِ فَيُغْرِقَكُمُ



Say to them, "You may invoke for help those deities whom you consider to be (your helpers) beside Allah: They will not be able to relieve you of any trouble nor change it."⁶⁴ In fact those whom these people invoke for help themselves seek means of approach to their Lord and vie with one another to be nearer to Him and hope for His mercy and fear His chastisement.⁶⁵ The fact is that the chastisement of your Lord is a thing to be dreaded. 56-57

There is no habitation which We shall not destroy before the Day of Resurrection or punish with a severe chastisement.⁶⁶ This has been ordained in the Eternal Record. 58

And nothing has hindered Us from sending Signs⁶⁷ except that the former people refused to acknowledge them as such. (For example.) We sent the She-camel as an open Sign to Thamūd but they treated her with cruelty;⁶⁸ whereas We send Signs only by way of warning.⁶⁹ Call to mind, O Muhammad! We told you at the very beginning that your Lord is encircling these people.⁷⁰ And We made what We have shown you now⁷¹ and also the Tree which has been cursed in the Qur'an⁷² as a trial for these people." We are giving them warning after warning but each warning helps only to increase their insurrection. 59-60

And remember: when We commanded the angels, "Bow yourselves before Adam," all bowed down but Iblis.⁷⁴ He replied, "Should I bow before the one whom you have created of clay?" Then he added, "Just consider this: Was he worthy of this that you have exalted him over me? If you give me respite up to the Day of Resurrection, I will uproot the whole of his progeny;⁷⁵ there shall be only a few of them who will be able to save themselves from me." Allah replied, "Well, get away. Hell is your ample reward and the reward of those who follow you. You may try to allure with your invitation whomsoever you can.⁷⁶ Rally against them your horsemen and your footmen:⁷⁷ set a partner with them in their wealth and children⁷⁸ and entice them with your false promises. And Satan's promises are nothing but deception—. Indeed you will have no power over my servants."⁸⁰ And your Lord suffices for you as a guardian.⁸¹ 61-65

Your (real) Lord is the One, Who drives your ship across the sea⁸² so that you may seek His bounty.⁸³ The fact is that He is very 66-68

merciful towards you. When a misfortune befalls you on the sea, all of those whom you invoke for help fail you but He (is there to help you⁸⁴): yet when He brings you safe to land, you turn away from Him. Indeed man is very ungrateful. What, do you feel quite secure that sometimes Allah would not cause you to sink underground even on land, or send a deadly whirlwind charged with stones toward you, and you may not find anyone to protect you from it ?

Contd. from p. 621 |

great in him. He appeared to be merely a common man of their habitation. On the other hand, they were full of praise in regard to the famous personalities who had lived in the past few centuries and imagined them to be the perfection of greatness. That is why, they raised frivolous objections against his claim to Prophethood, as if to say, "Look at this man who considers himself to be a Prophet whereas he cannot stand in comparison with the former great Prophets who are held in high esteem by all." Allah has answered their objection, as if to say, "We are fully aware of all Our creatures in the heavens and the earth, and We know their ranks but you do not know. We know whom to favour with Prophethood, as We have been favouring the former Prophets and exalting some Prophets above others in rank."

63. It appears that Prophet David has been particularly mentioned to show that Prophethood does not mean that one should have nothing to do with the life of this world. This was the answer to the objection they were raising against the claim to Prophethood by Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him), that he was a man of the world. It means to say, "Though David was a king who had to engage himself in worldly affairs more than a common man, he was favoured by Allah with Prophethood, and given the Book, the Psalms. Likewise Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) could be favoured with Prophethood inspite of the fact that he had wife and children and passed his life like other common people and was engaged in buying and selling in the market, in short, in performing all those duties that a man of the world has to perform to meet his necessities of life. This was necessitated because according to the disbelievers of Makkah, such a man of the world could not be considered to be even a pious man, much less a Prophet, for pious people should have nothing to do with the worldly affairs but should sit in seclusion and remember God whereas the Holy Prophet had to work to fulfil the necessities of life.

64. This warning helps to elaborate the Doctrine of *Tauhid* and negate *shirk*. According to this, *shirk* is not confined merely to falling prostrate before any other than Allah but it is also *shirk* to pray to or invoke the help of any other

than Allah; for praying to or calling for help any other than Allah is in reality a kind of worship. Therefore, the one who invokes for help any other than Allah is as much guilty of *shirk* as the worshipper of an idol. This verse also shows clearly that none other than Allah has any power to attend to prayers and relieve any one of trouble or alter any one's bad condition. Hence, if one believes that some one other than Allah has any power, he shall be guilty of *shirk*.

65. The words of the text are a clear proof that the deities and the helpers referred to in this verse were not idols of stone but were either angels or dead saints. It is clearly implied in this that no prophet, no saint and no angel, whom the people invoke for help, has the power to hear prayers and help anyone. They themselves hope for mercy from Allah and dread His punishment and vie with one another in seeking means for nearness to Him.

66. This is to remove the delusion of the disbelievers that their habitations were immune from danger or chastisement. This verse warns that every habitation will be destroyed as a matter of course or by Allah's chastisement.

67. Here "Signs" mean those visible miracles which are presented as a proof of Prophethood. The disbelievers from among the Quraish were demanding such Signs over and over again.

68. This is to warn the disbelievers, as if to say, "It is the mercy of Allah that He is not showing such a Sign so that you might mend your ways but in your folly you presume that such a Sign cannot be presented. You should know that a Sign is not being sent because its denial inevitably brings chastisement and the community is annihilated. You can learn from the past History that those communities which disbelieved in the open Signs were utterly destroyed, such as the people of Thamūd.

69. That is, "Miracles are not shown for fun. These are meant to warn the people that the Prophet is being helped by the Almighty and that they should realize the terrible consequences of disobedience."

70. That is, "At the very beginning of your Prophethood, when the disbelievers of the Quraish had started opposition to your message, We declared that We are encircling them. They might try their worst to obstruct your Message, but they will inevitably fail in this and your Mission will succeed in the teeth of opposition. Can't they see that this declaration has come out true as a miracle, for their opposition has failed to hinder your Message, and they have not been able to do any harm to you at all? This was a clear Sign of the fact that the Mission of the Holy Prophet was being supported by the Almighty God."

As regards the declaration that Allah is encircling the disbelievers and

بِمَا كَفَرْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ لَا تَجِدُوا لَكُمْ عَلَيْنَا بِهِ تَبِيعًا ﴿٥٥﴾ وَ لَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ
 وَحَسَلْنَاهُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَرَزَقْنَاهُمْ مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَفَضَّلْنَاهُمْ عَلَى كَثِيرٍ مِمَّنْ
 خَلَقْنَا تَفْضِيلًا ﴿٥٦﴾ يَوْمَ نَدْعُوا كُلَّ أُنَاسٍ بِإِسْمِهِمْ فَمَنْ أُوْتِيَ كِتَابَهُ بِيَمِينِهِ
 فَأُولَئِكَ يَقْرَءُونَ كِتَابَهُمْ وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ فَتِيلًا ﴿٥٧﴾ وَمَنْ كَانَ فِي هَذِهِ أَعْمَى
 فَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ أَعْمَى وَ أَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا ﴿٥٨﴾ وَإِنْ كَادُوا لَيَفْتِنُونَكَ عَنِ الَّذِي
 أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ لِتَفْتَرِيَ عَلَيْنَا غَيْرَةً ﴿٥٩﴾ وَإِذَا لَا تَأْخُذُوكَ خَلِيلًا ﴿٦٠﴾ وَ لَوْ لَا أَنْ
 تَبَتَّنَا لَقَدْ كِدْتَ تَرْكُنْ إِلَيْهِمْ شَيْئًا قَلِيلًا ﴿٦١﴾ إِذَا لَأَذَقْنَاكَ ضَعْفَ الْحَيَاةِ
 وَضَعْفَ الْمَمَاتِ ثُمَّ لَا تَجِدُ لَكَ عَلَيْنَا نَصِيرًا ﴿٦٢﴾ وَإِنْ كَادُوا لَيَسْتَفْرِزُوا مِنْكَ
 مِنَ الْأَرْضِ لِيُخْرِجُوكَ مِنْهَا وَإِذَا لَا يَلْبَثُونَ خَلْفَكَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴿٦٣﴾ سُبْحَانَ مَنْ
 قَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا قَبْلَكَ مِنْ رُسُلِنَا وَلَا تَجِدُ لِسُنَّتِنَا تَحْوِيلًا ﴿٦٤﴾ أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِذِكْرِكَ
 الشَّمْسِ إِلَى عَشِيِّ الْيَلِيلِ وَ الْقُرْآنِ الْفَجْرِ إِنَّ الْقُرْآنَ الْفَجْرِ كَانَ مَشْهُودًا ﴿٦٥﴾
 وَمِنَ الْيَلِيلِ فَتَهَجَّدْ بِهِ نَافِلَةً لَكَ تَعَسَى أَنْ يَبْعَثَكَ رَبُّكَ مَقَامًا مَحْمُودًا ﴿٦٦﴾
 وَقُلْ رَبِّ أَدْخِلْنِي مُدْخَلَ صِدْقٍ وَ أَخْرِجْنِي مَخْرَجَ صِدْقٍ وَ اجْعَلْ
 لِي مِنْ لَدُنْكَ سُلْطَانًا نَصِيرًا ﴿٦٧﴾ وَقُلْ جَاءَ الْحَقُّ وَ زَهَقَ الْبَاطِلُ إِنَّ
 الْبَاطِلَ كَانَ زَهُوقًا ﴿٦٨﴾ وَ نُزِّلَ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَ رَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ
 وَ لَا يَزِيدُ الظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا خَسَارًا ﴿٦٩﴾ وَ إِذَا أَنْعَمْنَا عَلَى الْإِنْسَانِ أَعْرَضَ وَ نَا
 بِجَانِبِهِ ﴿٧٠﴾ وَ إِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ كَانَ يُسُوفًا ﴿٧١﴾ قُلْ كُلُّ يَعْمَلُ عَلَى شَاكِلَتِهِ
 فَ رَبُّكُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ هُوَ أَهْدَى سَبِيلًا ﴿٧٢﴾ وَ يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الرُّوحِ قُلِ الرُّوحُ
 مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي وَ مَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴿٧٣﴾ وَ لَئِنْ سَأَلْتُمْ لَسَدَابِقَ



Or, are you not afraid that God may again send you to the sea and smite you with a violent tempest and drown you for your ingratitude, and you may not find any one to question Us in regard to this end of yours?— It is a favour that We have honoured the sons of Adam and blessed them with conveyances on land and sea and provided them with good and pure things and exalted them above many of Our other creatures.⁸⁵ Just imagine the scene on the Day, when We will summon every community with its leader: then those, who will be given their records in their right hands, will read their records⁸⁶ and will not be wronged in the least; on the other hand, the one, who leads his life in this world as if he were blind shall be blind in the Hereafter, nay, he shall fare even worse than a blind person in finding the way. 69-72

O Muhammad these people have left no stone unturned to tempt you away from that which We have revealed to you so that you might fabricate something in Our name.⁸⁷ Had you done that, they would have made you their friend. It was just possible that you might have inclined a little towards them, if We had not given you strength. But if you had done so, We would have made you taste double chastisement in this world as well as in the Hereafter: then you would have found no helper against Us.⁸⁸ 73-75

And these people have persistently been trying to uproot you from this land and exile you from it, but if they do so, they will not be able to stay here much longer.⁸⁹ 76

This has always been our Way with the Messengers whom We sent before you,⁹⁰ and you will find no change in Our way. 77

Establish *Salât*⁹¹ from the declining of the sun⁹² to the darkness of the night,⁹³ and be particular about the recital of the Qur'ân⁹⁴ at the dawn of the morning, for the recital of the Qur'ân at the dawn is witnessed.⁹⁵ Besides this, offer *Tahajjud* Prayer⁹⁶ at night: this is an additional prayer for you.⁹⁷ That time is not far when your Lord may exalt you to a laudable position.⁹⁸ 78-79

And pray, "Lord, whereto Thou takest me, take me with truth, and wherefrom Thou takest me out cause me to go out with truth:"⁹⁹ and grant me a power from Thee to help me."¹⁰⁰ 80

And declare, "The Truth has come and falsehood has vanished: 81

for falsehood is a thing that must by its nature vanish."¹⁰¹

82-84

We are sending down to you through the revelation of the Qur'an what is a healing and mercy to the Believers, though it adds nothing but loss to the workers of iniquity.¹⁰² Man is a (strange) creature: when We bestow favour on him, he behaves arrogantly and turns his back, but when misfortune befalls him, he begins to despair. O Prophet, say to them, "Everyone is following his own way but your Lord alone knows best who is on the right way."

85

They ask you about "The Spirit."¹⁰³ Say, "This Spirit comes by the Command of my Lord, but you have been given only a little of the 'Knowledge'."

Contd. from p.625]

helping the mission of the Prophet, it occurs in several Sūrahs of the first stage of Prophethood at Makkah. For instance, in vv. 17-20 of LXXV, Allah says, "These disbelievers do not learn a lesson from the stories of the people of the Pharaoh and Thamūd but are rejecting the Message whereas Allah is encircling them on all sides."

71. This refers to *Mi'rāj* (Ascension) for here word "*ru'yā*" does not mean "seeing things in a dream" but seeing things actually with physical eyes. It is quite obvious that if it had been a mere "dream" and the Holy Prophet had presented it as a dream to the disbelievers, there was no reason why it should have become a trial for them. Everyday people see strange dreams and relate them to the people but these dreams never become such a curious thing as to make people scoff at the dreamer and accuse him of making a false claim or of being a mad person.

72. This cursed tree, "*Az-Zaqqūm*" which has been mentioned in vv 43-44 of Sūrah XLIV, grows at the bottom of Hell and its dwellers shall have to eat it. This has been called a cursed tree because it is not given to people to eat as a mercy from Allah but as a symbol of His curse so that the accursed people should eat it and get more sore, for this will, so to speak, burn in their bellies like the boiling water.

73. That is, "We showed you such things during the *Mi'rāj* so that they should have the first hand knowledge of the Reality from a truthful and honest man like you and be warned by it to the Right Way. They, however, began to make fun of you, though We had already warned them through you that their evil ways would force them to eat of the *Az-Zaqqūm*. Instead of this they began to scoff at you, saying, 'Just consider the logic of this man: on the one hand, he says

that there is an awful fire burning in Hell and, on the other, he says that trees are growing in it'."

74. Please also refer to II: 30-39, IV: 117-122, VII: 11-25, XIV: 22, XV: 26-43.

This story has been cited here to impress upon the disbelievers that their attitude of arrogance and indifference towards Allah is exactly the same as was adopted by Satan; As a matter of fact, they were following Satan who is the avowed enemy of man, and were being entangled in the snare spread by him who had challenged the progeny of Adam at the very beginning of human history that he would allure and ruin them.

75. That is, "I will uproot them from the high position of Divine Vicegerency which demands steadfastness in obedience. Their removal from that high position is just like the tearing of a tree from its roots."

76. The literal meaning of the Arabic Text is, "You may sweep away those whom you find superficial and weak-minded."

77. Here, Satan has been likened to that robber who assaults a habitation with horsemen and footmen, and orders one to rob this thing and the other to plunder that thing and so on—The horsemen and the footmen of Satan are those jinns and human beings who are engaged in numerous forms and positions in carrying out his mission.

78. This is a very meaningful sentence which depicts a true and perfect picture of the relationship between Satan and his followers. On the one hand, Satan becomes a partner with the one who follows him in the earning and spending of his money without putting in any labour in it; on the other, he does not become a partner in bearing the consequences of his error, crime and sin. But his foolish dupe follows his instructions as if he were a partner, nay, a stronger party. Again in regard to the children of such a man, the father himself bears the whole burden of bringing them up, but under the misguidance of Satan he trains them in wrong and immoral ways as if he alone was not their father but Satan as well was a partner in it.

79. Satan entices them with false promises of success and entangles them in the snare of false expectations.

80. It has two meanings: (1) "You will have no power over human beings to force them to follow your way. What you are allowed to do is that you may delude them by false counsel and entice them by false promises, but they will have the option to follow or not to follow your counsel. You will not have the power over them to force them to follow your way against their will." (2) "You will not

succeed in 'alluring My righteous people. Though the weak-minded will be enticed by you, My righteous people who are steadfast in My obedience will not succumb to you."

81. That is, "Those who will trust in Allah and believe in His guidance and help, will not stand in need of any other support in their trial by Satan for Allah will guide them, protect them and help them to be safe from his allurements. On the other hand, those people, who will place their trust in their own power or that of any other than Allah, will not come out successful in their trial by Satan."

82. This passage (vv. 66-72) is closely connected with the previous one. It tells man that if he wants to protect himself from the allurements, temptations and false promises of Satan who has been his avowed enemy from the day of his creation, he should recognize his real Lord and be steadfast in His obedience. Satan intends to prove that man is not worthy of the honour with which Allah has blessed him. Therefore if he follows any other way he cannot escape the snares of Satan.

In this passage, arguments of *Tauhid* have been put forward in order to make man steadfast in his Faith and refrain from *shirk*.

83. That is, "Try to avail of the economic, social, educational and intellectual benefits which are provided by the sea voyages."

84. That is, "This is a proof of the fact that your real nature knows no other Lord than Allah, and you feel in the depths of your hearts that He alone possesses the real power of every gain or loss. Had it not been so, man would never have invoked Allah at the time when he realized that no other helper could remove his misfortune."

85. That is, "It is an obvious fact that the superiority man enjoys over all other beings on the Earth and all that is in it, has not been bestowed upon him by a jinn or an angel or a prophet. Most surely that is Allah's blessing and favour. Is it not then the height of folly and ignorance that after having achieved such a high rank, man should bow down before any creature of Allah instead of Him?"

86. We learn from the Qur'an that on the Day of Resurrection, the righteous people will be given their records in their right hands and they will be overjoyed to have a look at it and will show it to others. As regards the wicked people, they will get their records in their left hands and in their shame will try to hide it behind their backs. (Please refer to LXIX: 19-28, LXXXIV: 7-13).

87. In order to understand the significance of this verse, we should keep in view the circumstances through which the Holy Prophet had been passing at Makkah during the preceding decade or so. The disbelievers of Makkah were

exerting their utmost to turn the Holy Prophet away, somehow or other, from his Message of *Tauhid*, which he was presenting, and to force him to make a compromise with shirk and the customs of ignorance. In order to achieve this end, they tempted him in several ways. They practised deception upon him, and tempted him with greed, held out threats, and raised a storm of false propaganda against him, and persecuted him and applied economic pressure and social boycott against him. In short, they did all that could be done to defeat his resolve.

88. This review implies two things: (1) "If you had compromised with falsehood after recognizing the Truth, you might have pleased your degenerate people but would have incurred the wrath of Allah and would have received double chastisement both in this world and in the Hereafter." (2) "No man, not even a Messenger of Allah, can fight single-handed against the deceitful methods of falsehood, unless he receives the succour of Allah." It was the fortitude which Allah had bestowed upon the Holy Prophet, which helped him to remain steadfast on the right position he had taken, so that no persecution, howsoever great, could turn him away in the least from that position.

89. This was a clear prophecy which was made at the time when it appeared to be no more than a mere threat, but it was fulfilled literally in a decade or so. A year after the revelation of this Sūrah, the disbelievers of Makkah compelled the Holy Prophet to leave his home. Then within eight years he entered Makkah as a conqueror, and within two years after this, the whole of Arabia was totally freed from *mushriks*. Then whosoever stayed in that country, he remained there as a Muslim and not as a *mushrik*.

90. That is, "This is how Allah has always dealt with the people who killed or exiled His Messengers. They never survived in the land after this. They were either annihilated by the scourge of Allah or were brought under the sway of an enemy or were subdued by the followers of the Messenger."

91. The Muslims have been commanded to establish *Salāt* immediately after the mention of obstacles and adversities. This implies that the perseverance required to face adverse circumstances is obtained by the establishment of *Salāt*.

92. We have translated the words of the Arabic Text into "the declining of the sun." Though some of the Companions and their followers are of the opinion that it means "the sunset", the majority of them are of the opinion that it means "the declining of the sun from its zenith." Caliph 'Umar, Ibn 'Umar, Anas bin Mālik, Abu Barza-tal-Aslamī, Hasan Basri, Sha'abi, Atā', Mujāhid and, according to a Tradition, Ibn 'Abbās (Allah be pleased with them all) are of this opinion and Imam Muhammad Bāqir and Imām Ja'afar Sādiq also are of the same opinion. Besides this, there are some Traditions from the Holy Prophet to the same effect, though they are not so authentic.

93. According to some, the original words of the Arabic text mean "complete darkness of the night", while others take it to mean "midnight" If the first opinion is accepted, it will imply the beginning of the time of the 'Ishā' Prayer and according to the other it will mean "the last limit of the time of 'Ishā'."

94. The literal meaning of the word *fajr* is "dawn", that is, "the beginning of the morning after the darkness of night."

Here the "recital of the Qur'ān in the morning" stands for the Morning Prayer. At some places the Qur'ān has used the word *Salāt* for 'Prayer' and at other places a particular part of *Salāt* for Prayer as a whole, e.g., *tasbīh*, *hamd*, *zīkr*, *qayām*, *rukū'*, *sujūd* etc. Likewise, here "recital of the Qur'ān at dawn" does not mean the mere recital of the Qur'ān but its recital during the Prayer. Thus, the Qur'ān has also incidentally referred to the different parts of which *Salāt* is composed and these guided the Holy Prophet to prescribe the definite form of *Salāt* in which it is performed by the Muslims to-day.

95. The recital of the Qur'ān at dawn is witnessed by the angels of Allah to testify it, as has been explained in the Traditions. Though the angels witness each prayer and each good deed the special mention of their being witnesses at the time of the recital of the Qur'ān during the Morning Prayer gives it a particular Importance. That is why the Holy Prophet used to recite long passages from the Qur'ān during the Morning Prayer. His example was followed by the Companions, and the succeeding Muslim scholars held it to be a desirable thing.

In this verse, it has been briefly stated how to establish *Salāt* which was made obligatory on the occasion of *Mi'rāj* at the prescribed timings. It has been ordained that the first Prayer is to be offered before the sunrise and the remaining four after the declining of the sun till the darkness of the night. Afterwards Angel Jibril was sent to the Holy Prophet to define the limits of the timings of each Prayer. According to a Tradition of Abu Da'ūd and Tirmizi related by Ibn 'Abbās, the Holy Prophet said, "Jibril led me in the five Prayers twice near the Ka'abah. On the first day, he offered the *Dhuhr* Prayer just after the declining of the sun, when the shadow of everything was the shortest. Then he offered the 'Asr Prayer when the shadow of each thing was equal to its own length; then the Maghrib Prayer at the time when one breaks one's fast, and the 'Ishā' Prayer was offered just at the time when twilight had disappeared, and *Fajr* Prayer at the time when it becomes unlawful to eat and drink anything for the one who intends to observe a Fast. The next day he offered the *Dhuhr* Prayer at the time when the shadow of each thing became equal to its own length and the 'Asr Prayer when the shadow had doubled. The *Maghrib* Prayer was offered as on the previous day and the 'Ishā' Prayer when one-third of the night had passed away, and the Morning

Prayer when light had spread all over. After this Jibril turned towards me and said, 'O Muhammad, these are the timings of *Salāt* of the Prophets and the right timings are between these two extreme limits.'

The Qur'ān has also pointed to these five times of *Salāt* on different occasions:

- (1) "And listen; establish *Salāt* at the two ends of the day and in the early parts of the night..." (IX: 114).
- (2) "...And glorify your Lord with His praise before the sunrise (*Fajr*) and before sunset (*'Asr*) and then glorify Him during the night (*'Ishā'*) and then at the ends of the day (*Fajr, Dhuh*r and *Maghrib*)..." (XX: 130).
- (3) "So glorify Allah when it is evening for you (*Maghrib*), and when it is morning (*Fajr*). Praise is only for Him in the heavens and the earth and glorify him in the later part of the afternoon (*'Asr*) and in the afternoon (*Dhuh*r)." (XXX: 17-18).

There is great wisdom in this system of the timings of *Salāt*. One of these is to avoid the timings of the worship of the sun-worshippers. This is because the sun has always been in every age one of the greatest deities of the *mushriks*, who worshipped it especially at the time of sunrise and sunset. Therefore, these two times have totally been forbidden for *Salāt*. Besides this, they worshipped the sun at the time of its zenith. That is why Islam has ordained that the Muslims should offer their two Prayers during the day-time after the sun has declined and the *Fajr* Prayer before the sunrise. The Holy Prophet himself has stated this wisdom of the timings of Prayer in several Traditions. For instance, in the Tradition related by 'Amar bin 'Abasah, the Holy Prophet is reported to have replied to a question to this effect: "Offer your Morning Prayer, but refrain from it when the sun is about to rise until it has risen high. For the sun rises between the horns of Satan and the unbelievers fall prostrate before it at that time."

Then after mentioning the *'Asr* Prayer, he said:

"After *'Asr* Prayer, refrain from any Prayer until the sunset, for during that time the sun sets between the horns of Satan and the unbelievers fall prostrate before it."

The rising and the setting of the sun between the horns of Satan is a symbolic expression that has been used in this Tradition. This implies that both these times are used by Satan as temptations for the people. This is, as if to say, that Satan is so pleased with the worship of the unbelievers at the time of sunrise and sunset that he appears to carry the sun on his head as a mark of approval. This interpretation of the Tradition is based on this remark of the Holy Prophet: "The unbelievers fall prostrate before it."

[Contd. on p. 636

بِالَّذِي أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ ثُمَّ لَا تَجِدُ لَكَ بِهِ عَلَيْنَا وَكِيلًا ۗ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً مِّنْ رَبِّكَ ۗ إِنَّ فَضْلَهُ كَانَ عَلَيْكَ كَبِيرًا ۗ قُلْ لِّمَنِ اجْتَمَعَتِ الْإِنْسُ وَالْجِنُّ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَأْتُوا بِمِثْلِ هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ لَا يَأْتُونَ بِمِثْلِهِ وَلَوْ كَانَ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ ظَهِيرًا ۗ وَ لَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَا لِلنَّاسِ فِي هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ مِنْ كُلِّ مَثَلٍ فَأَبَىٰ أَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ إِلَّا كُفُورًا ۗ وَقَالُوا لَنْ نُؤْمِنَ لَكَ حَتَّىٰ تَفْجُرَ لَنَا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ يَنْبُوعًا ۗ أَوْ تَكُونَ لَكَ جَنَّةٌ مِّنْ نَّخِيلٍ وَعِنَبٍ فَتُفَجَّرَ الْأَنْهَارُ خِلَافَهَا تَفْجِيرًا ۗ أَوْ تُسْقَطَ السَّمَاءُ كَمَا زَعَمَتْ عَلَيْنَا كِسْفًا أَوْ تَأْتِيَ بِلَهُةٍ وَ الْمَلَكَةِ قَبِيلًا ۗ أَوْ يَكُونَ لَكَ بَيْتٌ مِّنْ زُخْرٍ أَوْ تَرْقَىٰ فِي السَّمَاءِ ۗ وَلَنْ نُؤْمِنَ لِرُقِيِّكَ حَتَّىٰ تُنَزَّلَ عَلَيْنَا كِتَابًا نَّقْرُؤُهُ ۗ قُلْ سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ هَلْ كُنْتُ إِلَّا بَشَرًا رَسُولًا ۗ وَمَا مَنَعَ النَّاسَ أَنْ يُؤْمِنُوا إِذْ جَاءَهُمُ الْهُدَىٰ إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا أَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ بَشَرًا رَسُولًا ۗ قُلْ لَوْ كَانَ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَلَائِكَةٌ يَّمْشُونَ مُطْمَئِنِّينَ لَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَلَكًا رَسُولًا ۗ قُلْ كَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ ۗ إِنَّهُ كَانَ بِعِبَادِهِ خَبِيرًا بَصِيرًا ۗ وَمَنْ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَهُوَ الْمُهْتَدِ ۗ وَمَنْ يُضِلِلْ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِنْ دُونِهِ ۗ وَ نَحْشُرُهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ عَلَىٰ وُجُوهِهِمْ عُنُقًا وَ بَكْمًا وَصَمًّا ۗ مَا وَلَّهُمْ جَهَنَّمَ ۗ كُلَّمَا خَبَتْ زِدْنَاهُمْ سَعِيرًا ۗ ذَلِكَ جَزَاؤُهُمْ بِآثَمِهِمْ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَقَالُوا إِذَا كُنَّا عِظَامًا وَرُفَاتًا ۗ إِنَّا لَنَبْعَثُثُونَ خَلْقًا جَدِيدًا ۗ أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّ اللَّهَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ قَادِرٌ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَخْلُقَ مِثْلَهُمْ وَجَعَلَ لَهُمْ أَجَلًا لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ ۗ فَأَبَى الظَّالِمُونَ إِلَّا كُفُورًا ۗ قُلْ لَوْ أَنْتُمْ تَتْلِكُونَ خَزَائِنَ رَحْمَةِ رَبِّي إِذًا لَأَمْسَكْتُمْ خَشْيَةَ الْإِنْفَاقِ ۗ وَكَانَ الْإِنْسَانُ



O Muhammad, We may, if We so will, take back from you all 86-88
of what We have revealed to you: then you will find none to help you
in getting it back from Us. All that you have received is by the favour
of your Lord. Indeed His favour to you is very great.¹⁰⁴ Declare this,
“Even if human beings and jinns should cooperate with one another to
bring forth a book like the Qur'ān, they will never be able to bring
anything like it, even though all of them help one another.”¹⁰⁵

In this Qur'ān, We employed different ways to make the people 89-93
understand the Message, but the majority of them persisted in unbelief,
and they said, “We will not believe in what you say until you cause a
spring to gush forth from the earth for us, or a garden of date-palms
and vines be created for you, and you cause canals to flow in it; or until
you cause the sky to fall on us in fragments, as you threaten us; or you
bring Allah and the angels face to face before us or a house of gold
comes into being for you or you ascend the sky, and we are not going
to believe in your ascension until you bring down to us a writing that
we may read”—O Muhammad, Say to them, “My Lord be glorified!
have I ever claimed to be anything more than a human Messenger?”¹⁰⁶

Whenever Guidance came before the people nothing prevented 94-95
them from believing in it except this (excuse): they said: “Did Allah
send a human being as His Messenger?”¹⁰⁷ Say to them, “Had angels
settled on the Earth and moved about in peace, We would certainly
have sent an angel as a Messenger to them.”¹⁰⁸

O Muhammad, say to them, “Allah suffices for a witness to 96
judge between you and me: for He is fully aware of and is observing
what His servants are doing.”¹⁰⁹

Whomsoever Allah guides, he alone is rightly guided and 97-99
whomsoever He lets go astray, you will find for such people no other
protector and helper besides Him.¹¹⁰ On the Day of Resurrection, We
will muster them prostrate upon their faces, blind, dumb and deaf.¹¹¹
Their abode will be Hell: whenever its fire abates, We will rekindle it
for them. This is their recompense, for they rejected Our Signs and said,
“*What! shall we really be raised up anew, when we have been reduced
to bones and dust?*” Could they not perceive that the same Allah, Who
created the Earth and the Heavens, has the power to create the like of

them? He has ordained a time for resurrecting them which shall inevitably come, but these workers of iniquity persist in their disbelief.

100 O Muhammad, say to them, "Had the treasures of your Lord's blessings been in your possession, you would have held them back lest they should be spent up. Indeed man is very narrow minded."¹¹²

Contd. from p.633]

96. The literal meaning of "*Tahajjud*" is to rise up by breaking sleep. Therefore, the sentence has been translated into "Offer *Tahajjud* Prayer", which means "Rise up from sleep after the passing of a part of night and then offer your Prayer."

97. "*Nafil*" literally means "something done in addition to an obligatory duty". This shows that the *Tahajjud* Prayer is in addition to the five prescribed Prayers.

98. "..... may exalt you to a laudable position": "You may attain such a high position in this world and in the next world that people from everywhere may be full of praise for you, and you may become a praiseworthy personality." This is, as if to say, "Now your opponents are engaged in calling you names and are trying to defame you throughout the country, and have raised a storm of false accusations against you but that time is not far when the world will ring with the echoes of your praise and in the Hereafter you will become worthy of praise by all creatures." The exaltation of the Holy Prophet to the high position of intercession on the Day of Resurrection is also a part of that "laudable position."

99. This prayer clearly shows that the time of *Hijrah* (Migration) had come near. That is why Allah has instructed the Holy Prophet to this effect: You should follow the truth wherever and in whatever condition you be. If you migrate from a place, you should migrate for the sake of the truth, and wherever you go, you should go for the sake of the truth.

100. That is, "Either grant me power and authority or make some government my helper so that I may use its power to reform the corrupt world." This is because power is required to check indecency and sin and to enforce the law of justice.

Hasan Basri and Qatadah have made the same interpretation of this verse, and the great commentators like Ibn Jarir and Ibn Kathir have adopted the same. This is supported by a Tradition of the Holy Prophet: "Allah eradicates by the power of government those evils, which are not eradicated by the teachings of the Qur'an." This is a clear proof that according to Islam, political power is also required to introduce reform, for admonition alone is not enough for this. Besides

this, when Allah Himself has taught this prayer to His Prophet for the establishment of His Way and enforcement of His Law, it is not only lawful but desirable to acquire power and those, who consider this to be a worldly thing, are obviously in the wrong. What is really "worldliness" is that one should desire and acquire power for one's own interest. On the contrary, the desire of power for the sake of Allah's Way is not the worship of the world but the worship of God.

101. At the time of this declaration, the persecution of the Muslims was at its height. A large number of them had emigrated to Habash, and those who had remained behind were suffering from untold hardships at Makkah and its suburbs: so much so that the life of the Holy Prophet himself was always in danger. Therefore, to all appearances, falsehood was prevailing everywhere and there was no sign to show that the truth would ever overpower falsehood. That is why the disbelievers took it for a boastful talk and scoffed at it when this declaration was made. But this prophecy of victory did come out true in less than a decade when the Holy Prophet entered the same city of Makkah as a conqueror, and entered the Ka'abah where he made the same declaration while he was breaking the three hundred and sixty idols. According to a Tradition of Bukhārī, related by Hadrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, "On the day of the conquest of Makkah the Holy Prophet went on striking idols and uttering these words: 'The Truth has come and falsehood has vanished; for falsehood is a thing that must by its nature vanish. The Truth has come and falsehood will never reappear nor return'."

102. That is, "Those people who make the Qur'ān their guide and their book of law, are favoured with the blessing of Allah and are cured of all their mental, psychological, moral and cultural diseases. On the other hand, those wicked people who reject this and turn their back on its guidance, in fact, are unjust to themselves. Therefore, the Qur'ān does not allow them to remain even in that bad condition in which they were before its revelation or its knowledge but involves them in a greater loss than before. This is because before the revelation of the Qur'ān or their acquaintance with it, they suffered from ignorance alone but when the Qur'ān came before them and made distinct the difference between Truth and falsehood, no excuse was left with them to remain in their previous condition of ignorance. After this, if they reject its guidance and persist in their deviation, it is a clear proof that they are not ignorant but workers of iniquity and worshippers of falsehood, which are averse to the Truth. For then their position is of the one who, when presented both poison and elixir, makes a choice of poison. Therefore, they themselves are in that case fully responsible for their deviation and whatever crimes they commit after that, shall incur their full punishment. It is obvious that the consequent loss of wickedness must be far greater than the loss of ignorance. The Holy Prophet has summed this up in this concise and

comprehensive sentence: "The Qur'ān is either an argument in your favour or against you."

103. It is generally understood that the Arabic word "*Rūh*" stands here for "soul" as if the people asked the Holy Prophet about the soul of man in regard to its nature, and the answer was that it came by the Command of Allah. But we have great hesitation in accepting this meaning for it could be taken only if the verse be isolated from its context; otherwise these words would become quite incoherent for there is no reason why the question about "soul" should have intervened between the preceding three verses and following verses which deal with the theme of the Qur'ān.

If we read the verse in its context, it becomes quite obvious that here the word "*Rūh*" (The Spirit) stands for the angel who brings Revelation. This was in answer to the question of the *mushriks*, "Where from do you bring the Qur'ān?" as if to say, "O Muhammad, these people ask you about 'The Spirit', that is, the source of the Qur'ān or the means of acquiring it", so tell them, "This Spirit comes to me by the Command of my Lord but your knowledge is so little that you cannot distinguish between the nature of human words and the Divinely revealed words. That is why you suspect that this has been fabricated by some man."

The above interpretation is to be preferred, because it fits in excellently between the preceding and the succeeding verses. This is also supported by the Qur'ān itself: "...He sends down by His Command 'The Spirit' to any of His servants He wills so that they should warn the people of the Day, when they shall be assembled together." (XL: 15) "And likewise We have sent down 'The Spirit' to you by Our Command: you did not know what the Book was and what the Faith ..." (XLII: 52).

Besides this, Ibn 'Abbās, Qatādah and Hasan Basri (may Allah bestow His mercy upon them all) have also adopted the same interpretation. Ibn Jarir has attributed the same thing to Ibn 'Abbās on the authority of Qatādah, but at the same time he tells a strange thing that Ibn 'Abbās stated this thing only in secret. Again the author of *Rūh-ul-Ma'ānī* cites these words of Hasan and Qatādah: "By rūh is meant Jibril: the question was about the nature of his coming down and inspiring the heart of the Holy Prophet with Revelation."

104. Though these words are apparently addressed by the Holy Prophet, they are in fact meant for the disbelievers who considered the Holy Qur'ān to be either the invention of the Holy Prophet himself or of some other man, who secretly taught him the Qur'ān. They are being told that this is the Word of Allah, as if to say, "Our Prophet has not fabricated the Qur'ān but We have bestowed this on him, and if We take it back from him, the Prophet has no power to invent

such a thing nor has any other man the power to help the Prophet to present such a miraculous Book."

105. This challenge occurs at several other places in the Qur'ān: (II: 23, X: 38-39, XL: 13-14, LII: 33-34). At all these places, this has been cited as an answer to the charge of the disbelievers that Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) has himself invented the Qur'ān but is presenting it as Allah's Word. Besides this, the same has also been refuted in X: 16: "Say also, 'Had not Allah willed that I should recite the Qur'ān to you, I could not have recited it to you, nor could I have been able to give you any information about it: already have I lived a lifetime among you before its revelation. Do you not use your common sense?'"

Now let us turn to the three arguments contained in these verses as a proof that the Qur'ān is the Word of Allah.

- (1) The Qur'ān is such a miracle in regard to its language, style, arguments, themes, topics, teachings and prophecies that it is beyond any human power to produce the like of it, as if to say, "You say that a man has invented this but We challenge that even the whole of mankind combined cannot produce a Book like this: nay, even if the *jinn*s, whom the *mushriks* worship as deities and whom this Book openly attacks, should come to the help of the disbelievers, they cannot produce a Book like this to refute this challenge."
- (2) As regards the charge that Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) has himself invented this Book, the Qur'ān refutes their claim, as if to say, "Muhammad is one of you and not a foreigner. He has lived among you for forty years before the revelation of the Qur'ān. Did you ever hear words like those of the Qur'ān from him even a day before his claim of Prophethood, or did you ever hear him discussing themes and problems contained in the Qur'ān? If you consider the matter from this point of view, it will become obvious to you that the sudden change which has come about in the language, ideas, information, style and the way of thinking of Muhammad, could not take place without Divine Guidance."
- (3) "Can you not see that after the recital of the Qur'ān he does not disappear but lives among you? You hear other things than the Qur'ān from him. Do you not notice that the distinction between the two different styles of expression is so obvious that no man can successfully adopt the two styles at one and the same time?" The distinction can also be noticed, even today, between the language of the Qur'ān and that of the Traditions of the Holy Prophet. Anyone well-versed in the Arabic language and literature notices the difference which is so marked that one can



فَتَوَرَّأَ ۗ وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى تِسْعَ آيَاتٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ فَنَسِيَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ إِذْ جَاءَهُمْ
 فَقَالَ لَهُ فِرْعَوْنُ إِنِّي لَأَظُنُّكَ يَمُوسَى مَسْحُورًا ۗ قَالَ لَقَدْ عَلِمْتَ مَا أَنْزَلَ
 هَؤُلَاءِ إِلَّا رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ بِصَآئِرٍ ۗ وَإِنِّي لَأَظُنُّكَ يَفِرْعَوْنُ مَثْبُورًا ۗ
 فَأَرَادَ أَنْ يَنْتَفِرَهُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ فَأَغْرَقْنَاهُ وَمَنْ مَعَهُ جَمِيعًا ۗ وَقُلْنَا
 مِنْ بَعْدِهِ لِبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ اسْكُنُوا الْأَرْضَ فَإِذَا جَاءَ وَعْدُ الْآخِرَةِ جِئْنَا
 بِكُمْ كَافِيًا ۗ وَبِالْحَقِّ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ وَبِالْحَقِّ نَزَلْنَا ۗ وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا مُبَشِّرًا وَ
 نَذِيرًا ۗ وَقُرْآنًا فَرَقْنَاهُ لِتَقْرَأَهُ عَلَى النَّاسِ عَلَى مُكْتٍ ۗ وَنَزَلْنَاهُ تَنْزِيلًا ۗ
 قُلْ آمَنُوا بِهِ أَوْ لَا تُؤْمِنُوا ۗ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ إِذَا يُتْلَى عَلَيْهِمْ
 يَخِرُّونَ لِلْآذِقَانِ سُجَّدًا ۗ وَيَقُولُونَ سُبْحَانَ رَبِّنَا إِنْ كَانَ وَعْدُ رَبِّنَا
 لَمَفْعُولًا ۗ وَيَخِرُّونَ لِلْآذِقَانِ يَبْكَونَ وَيَزِيدُهُمْ خُشُوعًا ۗ قُلْ ادْعُوا اللَّهَ
 أَوْ ادْعُوا الرَّحْمَنَ ۗ أَيًّا مَا تَدْعُوا فَلَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ ۗ وَلَا تَجْهَرُ بِصَلَاتِكَ
 وَلَا تُخَافِتْ بِهَا وَابْتَغِ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ سَبِيلًا ۗ وَقُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي لَمْ
 يَتَّخِذْ وَلَدًا ۗ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ شَرِيكٌ فِي الْمُلْكِ ۗ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ وَلِيٌّ مِنَ
 الذَّلِّ ۗ وَكَبِّرْهُ تَكْبِيرًا ۗ

وقف لا تفر

السجدة ٣



And We gave to Moses nine Signs which were quite manifest.¹¹³ 101-104
 Now you yourself may inquire from the children of Israel about it: when those Signs came before Pharaoh, he uttered these very words: "O Moses, I consider you to be a bewitched man."¹¹⁴ Moses replied, "You know it full well that none but the lord of the Heavens and the earth had sent down these signs as eye-openers,¹¹⁵ and O Pharaoh, I consider you indeed to be a doomed person."¹¹⁶ At last Pharaoh resolved to uproot Moses and the Israelites from the land but We drowned him and his followers all together. Then we said to the Israelites, "Now you should settle down in the land¹¹⁷ and when the prescribed time of Resurrection comes about, We will gather all of you together."

We have sent down the Qur'ān with the truth and with the truth 105-109
 it has come down; and O Muhammad, We have sent you only to give good news (to the Believers) and warning (to the disbelievers).¹¹⁸ And we have sent down this Qur'ān piecemeal so that you may recite it to the people gradually piece by piece, and We have sent it down by gradual Revelations¹¹⁹ (to suit particular occasions). O Muhammad, say to these people, "Whether you believe in it or not, those who were given the knowledge before this,¹²⁰ fall prostrate on their faces when it is recited to them and cry out, 'Our lord is glorious and His promise was surely to be fulfilled'. "And they fall down on their faces, weeping when they listen to it, and this increases their Humility¹²¹ all the more."¹²²

O Prophet, say to them, "You may call Him by any name, Allah 110-111
 or Rahmān, for it is all the same by whichever name you call Him because all His names are most excellent.¹²³ And do not raise your voice high in your Prayer nor make it very low but adopt the middle way¹²⁴ between these two and say, "Praise is for that Allah who has begotten no son nor has any partner in His Kingdom nor is helpless to need any supporter,"¹²⁵ And glorify Him in the most glorious way.

Contd. from p.639]

categorically say that these modes of expression cannot belong to one and the same person. (For further reference please also see E.N. 21 of X : 16).

106. This is the second answer to the demand of the disbelievers for a miracle. The first answer is contained in V. 59. The eloquence of this concise answer is above praise: "You demand from me that I should cause a spring to gush forth, or in the twinkling of an eye should bring into being a garden in full bloom with canals flowing in it: or I should cause the heaven to fall into pieces on those of you who are rejecting the message: or I should cause to build a furnished palace of gold: or I should call Allah and the angels to stand before you and testify to this effect: 'We Ourselves have sent down Muhammad as Our Messenger': or I should go up to the sky in your presence and bring down, addressed to you, the letter of authority of my appointment duly signed by Allah so that you may touch it with your hands and read it with your own eyes." The concise answer to these big demands was this, "My Lord be glorified! Have I ever claimed to be anything more than a human Messenger?" It may be expanded like this: "O foolish people! have I claimed to be God that you are demanding such things from me? Did I ever say that I am all-powerful and am ruling over the Earth and the Heavens? From the very first day my claim has been that I am a human being who is bringing the Message from God. Therefore, if you want to judge the authenticity of my claim, you may judge it from my Message. If you are convinced that it is based on the Truth and is absolutely rational, then you should believe in it without making foolish demands. On the other hand, if you find any defect in it, you may reject it. If you want to test whether my claim is based on truth, you should judge it by the standard of my conduct and morals as a human being and my mission. Is it not a folly that, instead of this, you are demanding from me to cleave the earth and cause the sky to fall? Is there any connection whatsoever of Prophethood with things like these?"

107. It implies that this misunderstanding has always been common among the ignorant people of every age that a human being could not be a Messenger of Allah: They rejected a Messenger just because he was a human being and took his meals and had wife and children like themselves. In contrast to this, after the passage of the time the credulous followers of a Messenger began to claim that he was not a human being at all because he was a Messenger. That is why some people made their Messenger their God, others the son of God and still others the incarnation of God. In short, the ignorant people had never been able to understand that a human being could be a Messenger of Allah.

108. This is to say that Messenger does not merely convey the Message but is sent to reform human life in accordance with it. He has to apply the principles of the Message to the circumstances of human beings and has himself to demonstrate practically those principles. Moreover, he has to remove the misunderstandings of those people who try to listen to and understand his Message. Besides this, he has to organize and train the Believers to create a

society based on the teachings of his Message. He has to struggle against those who reject and oppose his Message in order to subdue those powers that are bent upon corruption, and bring about that reformation for which Allah has sent His Messenger. As all these things have to be done in a society of human beings only a human Messenger can perform the mission. If an angel had been sent as a Messenger, the most he could have done was to convey the message, for he could not live among human beings and share their life and problems in order to reform them. It is thus clear that a human Messenger only could be suitable for this purpose.

109. That is, "Allah is fully aware of all my efforts which I am expending in order to reform you, and He is fully aware of the efforts you are making against my mission. His witness is sufficient because He will pass the final judgement."

110. In this verse, the Qur'an has enunciated a Divine principle. Allah guides to the Right Way only that person who intends to follow His Guidance, and lets go astray that person who intends to go astray. Thereafter none is able to bring back to the Right Way the one against whom Allah has closed the door of guidance because of his own persistent deviation and obduracy. It is obvious that if a man turns his back against the truth and rests content with falsehoods there is no power in the world to make him turn away from falsehood and come to the truth.

This is because after this depravity Allah provides for that wicked person such means as increase his aversion to truth and his love for falsehood.

111. On the Day of Resurrection, they will be raised up blind, dumb and deaf because they behaved like such people in this world and would not see the Truth nor listen to the Truth nor speak the Truth.

112. This verse also suggests the same thing that has already been mentioned in V. 55. This hints at the real psychological reason why the disbelievers of Makkah were not inclined to accept Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him), their contemporary, as a Prophet. For thus they would have to acknowledge his superiority and one does not easily acknowledge the superiority of one's contemporary. This verse may be expanded like this: "Those people who are so narrow-minded that they are unwilling even to acknowledge the real superiority of another, cannot be expected to be generous in spending on others, if they possessed the keys of the treasures of Allah's blessings."

113. It should be noted that this is the third answer to the demand of the disbelievers of Makkah for Signs. They said, "We will not believe in you until you do this and do that before our eyes." In answer to this demand, they are being warned: "Nine clear Signs, like the ones you are demanding, were shown one

after the other to Pharaoh before you and you also know full well what he said, simply because he did not want to believe in Moses; you also know that when he rejected the Prophet, even after seeing the Signs, We drowned him."

The nine Signs mentioned here have also been mentioned in VII: 133. These were: (1) The staff which turned into a monster snake. (2) Moses' bright hand which shone like the sun. (3) The public defeat of the sorcery of the magicians. (4) Universal famine. (5) Storm. (6) Locusts. (7) Lice. (8) Frogs. (9) Rain of blood.

114. This has been particularly mentioned here because the *mushriks* of Makkah attributed the same epithet to the Holy Prophet as contained in V. 47. "These wrong-doers say to each other, 'The man, you are following, is a bewitched person'. "Here they are being warned that in this they were following Pharaoh, who gave the same epithet to Prophet Moses.

In this connection, we want to make a brief reference to an objection which has been raised by the modernists against a Tradition according to which the Holy Prophet once came under the influence of sorcery. They say that this Tradition confirms that the epithet "bewitched" applied to the Holy Prophet by the Qurāish was correct, whereas the Qur'ān refutes this as false. They forget that the same argument could be applied to the case of Prophet Moses whom Pharaoh accused of being bewitched, for the Qur'ān says, in XX: 66-67: "When the magicians threw down their cords and rods (instruments of their sorcery), it seemed to Moses as if they were running, as a result of which Moses conceived in his mind a sort of fear." If the words of the Tradition were to be considered against the Qur'ān, do not these words of the Qur'ān contradict its own words that the charge of Moses being bewitched was false? Do these modernists consider this verse to confirm Pharaoh's charge?"

As a matter of fact, these objectors do not know the sense in which the disbelievers of Makkah and Pharaoh called the Holy Prophet and Prophet Moses (Allah's peace be upon them) bewitched. What they meant was that some enemy had so bewitched them that they had lost their senses and so in their insanity claimed to be prophets and delivered a curious message. The Qur'ān refutes this charge as false. As regards the temporary influence of magic on some person or a part of him has not been denied, for the influence of magic is like the effect produced on a person who is hit with a stone. The fact that some prophet was temporarily influenced by magic, does not in any way affect his prophethood adversely. Just as poison produced its effect on a prophet, or a prophet was wounded, so a prophet could also temporarily come under the influence of magic. Such a temporary magic could not cause any defect in his prophethood. God forbid, had magic produced any adverse effect on his reasoning and thinking

faculties, one might have been sceptical about the authenticity of the Message. And when Pharaoh and the disbelievers of Makkah said that Prophet Moses and the Holy Prophet were bewitched, they meant that they had lost their senses under the influence of magic. The Qur'an refutes this charge brought against the Prophets.

115. Moses could say these words categorically that the Signs were from the Lord of the Universe because the calamities which visited Egypt could not be brought about by magic or by any human device. For it is not possible for any human power to bring about frogs over vast areas or to cause all granaries in the land to be eaten up by weevils. Then it should also be kept in view that Prophet Moses warned beforehand of an impending Sign, warning Pharaoh to give up his obduracy, and the calamity did come exactly as he had predicted. In these circumstances only a mad or obdurate person could say that those calamities were sent by any other than the Lord of the Heavens and the Earth.

116. That is, "I am not a bewitched man but you are indeed a doomed person. As you have been persistent in your disbelief even after seeing such obvious Divine Signs, you are surely doomed to destruction."

117. This part of the story of Pharaoh has been related here because it applied exactly to the *mushriks* of Makkah who were doing their worst to uproot the Holy Prophet and the Believers from the land of Arabia. This story, so to say, tells them, "Pharaoh resolved to uproot Moses and the Israelites but was himself completely annihilated along with his followers and Moses and his followers settled down in the land. Likewise, if you persist on the same way, you will surely meet with the same end."

118. That is, "It is not your responsibility to cause, in a supernatural manner, springs to gush forth or gardens to grow or pieces of the sky to fall down in order to convince those people who do not judge the Qur'an by its teachings nor decide between the Truth and falsehood on merit. As the Qur'an has been sent down with truth, you should present it before the people and tell them plainly that the one, who believes, does so for his own good and the one who rejects it, does it at his own peril."

119. This is an answer to this objection: "Why has not Allah sent down His Message as a whole? Why is He sending it piecemeal? Has Allah any need to think deliberately what to send down?" As the answer to this objection has been given in XVI: 101-102 and in the Explanatory Notes 104-106 added to them, there is no need to repeat the same here.

120. This refers to those people of the Book who were well-versed in the Scriptures and could judge them from their themes and wording.

121. That is, "When they listen to the Qur'ān, they at once recognize that its bearer is the promised Prophet mentioned in the Books of the former Prophets."

122. This attitude of the righteous people of the Book has been mentioned at several places in the Qur'ān, *e.g.*, III: 113-114, 199, V: 83-84.

123. This is the answer to another objection of the disbelievers. They said, "We have heard the name Allah for the Creator but where from have you brought the name *Rahmān*?" This was because the name "*Rahmān*" was not used for Allah and they did not like it.

124. This instruction was given at Makkah. Ibn 'Abbās relates that when the Holy Prophet or his Companions offered their Prayers, they recited the Qur'ān in a loud voice. At this the disbelievers would raise a hue and cry and often called them names. Therefore, they were enjoined that they should neither say their Prayers in such a loud voice as might incite the disbelievers nor should they say it in such a low voice that their own Companions might not hear it. This instruction was discontinued under the changed conditions at Al-Madinah. However, if the Muslims may have to face the same conditions, at any place or at any time, they should observe the same instruction.

125. A subtle sarcasm is implied in the sentence. The *mushriks* believed that Allah had appointed assistants and deputies for the administration of His Kingdom. Obviously this meant that Allah was helpless and powerless to carry out the administration of His Kingdom: therefore, He needed supporters to help Him in the work of His Godhead. This sentence negates their false creeds, saying, "He does not stand in need of any gods and saints in order to delegate to them the different departments of His Godhead or make them governors in different parts of His Kingdom."

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