





بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

LII

AT-TŪR

الطُّورُ

INTRODUCTION

**Name**

It is derived from the very first word "*Waṭ-Ṭūr-i.*"

**Period of Revelation**

From the internal evidence of the subject-matter it appears that this Sūrah too was revealed in the same stage of the Holy Prophet's life at Makkah in which the Sūrah Adh-Dhāriyāt was revealed. While going through it one can clearly feel that during the period of its revelation the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was being showered with objections and accusations but there is no evidence yet to show that severe persecution of the Muslims had started.

**Subject-Matter and Topics**

The subject-matter of its first section (vv. 1-28) is the Hereafter. As arguments for its possibility, necessity and occurrence had already been given in *Sūrah Adh-Dhāriyāt*, these have not been repeated here. However, swearing an oath by some realities and signs which testify to the Hereafter, it has been stated most emphatically that it will surely come to pass, and none has the power to prevent its occurrence. Then, it has been stated as to what will be the fate of those who deny it when it actually occurs, and how will those who believe in it and adopt the way of piety and righteousness accordingly, be blessed by Allah.

Then, in the second section (vv. 29-49) the Quraish chiefs' attitude towards the message of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has been criticised. They called him a sorcerer, a madman, or a poet, and would thus mislead the common people against him so that they should not pay any serious attention to the message he preached. They looked upon him as a calamity that had suddenly descended on them and would openly wish that he met with a disaster so that they were rid of him. They accused him of fabricating the Qur'ān by himself and of presenting it in the name of Allah, and this was, God forbid, a fraud that he was practising. They would often taunt him, saying that God could not have appointed an ordinary man like him to the office of Prophethood. They expressed great disgust at his invitation and message and would avoid him as if he was asking them for a reward for it. They would sit and take counsels together to devise schemes in order to put an end to his mission. And while they did all this they never realized what creeds of ignorance they were involved in and how selflessly and sincerely was Muḥammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) exerting himself to deliver them from their error. While criticizing them for this attitude and conduct, Allah has put them certain questions, one after the other, each of which is either an answer to some objection of theirs, or a criticism of some error. Then, it has been said that it would absolutely be of no avail to show them a miracle in order to convince them of his Prophethood, for they were such stubborn people as would misinterpret anything they were shown only to avoid affirming the faith.

In the beginning of this section as well as in its end, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has been given the instruction that he should persistently continue giving his invitation and preaching his message in spite of the accusations and objections of his opponents and enemies, and should endure their resistance patiently till Allah's judgement comes to pass. Besides, he has been consoled, as if to say: "Your Lord has not left you alone to face your enemies, after raising you as a Prophet, but He is constantly watching over you. Therefore, endure every hardship patiently till the Hour of His judgement comes, and seek through praising and glorifying your Lord the power that is required for exerting in the cause of Allah under such conditions.



وَالظُّورِ ۝ وَكِتَابٍ مَسْطُورٍ ۝ فِي رَقٍ مَنشُورٍ ۝ وَالْبَيْتِ الْمَعْمُورِ ۝ وَ  
 السَّقْفِ الْمَرْفُوعِ ۝ وَالْبَحْرِ الْمَسْجُورِ ۝ إِنَّ عَذَابَ رَبِّكَ لَوَاقِعٌ ۝ مَا لَهُ  
 مِنْ دَافِعٍ ۝ يَوْمَ تَمُورُ السَّمَاءُ مَوْرًا ۝ وَتَسِيرُ الْجِبَالُ سَيْرًا ۝ قَوْلٌ  
 يَوْمِيذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ۝ الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي خَوْضٍ يَلْعَبُونَ ۝ يَوْمَ يُدْعَوْنَ إِلَىٰ  
 نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ دَعَاً ۝ هَذِهِ النَّارُ الَّتِي كُنْتُمْ بِهَا تُكذِّبُونَ ۝ أَفَسِحْرُ هَذَا أَمْ  
 أَنْتُمْ لَا تُبْصِرُونَ ۝ إِصْلَوْهَا فَاصْبِرُوا أَوْ لَا تَصْبِرُوا سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْكُمْ إِنَّمَا تُحْزَنُونَ  
 مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ۝ إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي جَنَّتٍ وَنَعِيمٍ ۝ فَكِهِينَ بِمَا أَتَّهُمُ رَبُّهُمْ ۝  
 وَوَقُهُمُ رَبُّهُمْ عَذَابَ الْجَحِيمِ ۝ كُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا هَنِيئًا بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ۝  
 مُتَكِبِينَ عَلَىٰ سُرْرِ مَصْفُوفَةٍ ۝ وَزَوَّجْنَاهُمْ بِحُورٍ عِينٍ ۝ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

LII

AT-ṬŪR

الطُّورُ

*Verses: 49*

*Revealed at Makkah*

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

By the (mount) Ṭūr,<sup>1</sup> and an open Book written on a fine scroll,<sup>2</sup> 1-16  
and the inhabited House,<sup>3</sup> and the elevated roof,<sup>4</sup> and the surging  
ocean,<sup>5</sup> the torment of your Lord shall surely come to pass, which none  
can avert.<sup>6</sup> It will be on a Day when the heaven shall reel and shake  
violently,<sup>7</sup> and the mountains shall fly about.<sup>8</sup> Woe on that Day to the  
deniers who are today engaged in their (useless) arguments for sport.<sup>9</sup>  
The Day when they are driven and pushed to Hell-Fire, it will be said  
to them, "This is the same Fire that you were wont to deny. Now tell:  
Is this magic? Or, do you not perceive it?"<sup>10</sup> Now burn! Whether you  
bear it patiently or not, it is all the same for you. You are being  
recompensed only according to your deeds.

The righteous<sup>11</sup> shall be in Gardens and Bliss, rejoicing in what 17-20  
their Lord shall give them; and their Lord shall save them from the  
torment of Hell.<sup>12</sup> (It will be said to them:) "Eat and drink with relish<sup>13</sup>  
as a reward for what you have been doing." They will be reclining on  
couches, facing each other, and We shall wed them to houris with  
beautiful eyes.<sup>14</sup>

1. Ṭūr means a mountain, and at-Ṭūr the particular mountain on which Allah had blessed the Prophet Moses with the Prophethood.

2. In ancient times the books and writings which were meant to be preserved for long were written on the skin of deer instead of the paper. This skin was especially prepared for writing as a thin and fine parchment and was called *raqq* terminologically. The Jews and Christians in general wrote the Torah, Psalms, the Gospels and the Prophets' Books on this same *raqq* so that they would endure. Here, by "an open Book" is implied the same collection of the holy scriptures which the followers of the Book possessed. It has been described as "an open Book" because it was not extinct; it was read and one could easily find out what was written in it.

3. According to Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan Baṣri, "the inhabited House" implies the House of Allah, the Ka'bah, which is never without its visitors and pilgrims at any time of the day and night. However, Ḥaḍrat 'Alī, Ibn 'Abbās, 'Ikrimah, Mujāhid, Qatādah, Ḍaḥḥāk, Ibn Zaid and other commentators have stated that it implies the *Bait-al-ma'mūr* (the inhabited House) which the Holy Prophet referred to in connection with his *Mi'rāj* (Ascension), against the wall of which he had seen the Prophet Abraham reclining. Mujāhid, Qatādah and Ibn Zaid say that just as the Ka'bah is the centre and place of refuge for all God-worshippers, so is there in every heaven a similar Ka'bah for its dwellers which occupies a similar central position for the worshippers of Allah there. One of these Ka'bahs was the one against the wall of which the Holy Prophet had seen the Prophet Abraham reclining on the occasion of the *Mi'rāj*; and with it the Prophet Abraham had a natural affinity, for he himself was the founder of the Ka'bah of the earth. In view of this explanation, this second commentary does not go against the commentary given by Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan Baṣri, but if both are read together, we can understand that here the oath has not been sworn only by the Ka'bah of the earth, but it also includes an oath by all the Ka'bahs that are there in the entire Universe.

4. "The elevated roof": the sky which seems to be spread over the earth like a vault: here this word has been used for the entire Universe. (For explanation, see E.N. 7 of Sūrah Qāf).

5. Several meanings have been given of the word *al-baḥr-il-masjūr* as used in the original. Some commentators have taken it in the meaning of "full of fire": some take it in the sense of "empty and un-occupied", the water of which might have sunk into the earth; some take it in the meaning of "restricted and confined", by which they imply that the ocean has been restrained so that its water neither sinks into the earth nor spreads over the land to drown all its dwellers. Some have taken it in the meaning of mixed and blended because in it sweet and saline, warm and cold, water is mixed together; and some take it in the meaning of brimful and surging. The first two of these meanings bear no relevance to the context. These two states of the ocean—splitting of the bottom of the ocean and sinking of its water into the earth and then its being filled with fire—will appear on



the Day Of Resurrection, as mentioned in Sūrah Takvīr: 6 and Infitār: 3. These states of the future do not exist at present and therefore cannot be sworn by to convince the people of today of the occurrence of the Hereafter. Therefore, here *al-bahr il-masjūr* can be taken only in the meaning of confined, mixed, brimful and surging.

6. This is that truth for which an oath has been sworn by the five things. "The torment of your Lord" implies the Hereafter, for it will be a torment for those who deny that it will come. That is why it has been called "the torment of your Lord" instead of the Resurrection, or the Hereafter, or the Day of Retribution. Now let us consider how the five things by which an oath has been sworn point to its occurrence.

Mount Tūr is the place where a decision was taken to exalt an oppressed nation and to abase an oppressive nation, and this decision was taken not on the basis of a physical law but on the basis of a Moral Law and the Law of Retribution. Therefore, Mount Tūr has been presented as a symbol for the Hereafter. It implies that the decision of exalting a helpless nation like the children of Israel and the drowning of a powerful and mighty ruler like the Pharaoh along with his hosts, which was taken in a quiet and listless night on the Mount Tūr, is proof of the fact how the nature of the Kingdom of the Universe demands that man who has been endowed with powers and authority, should be subjected to moral accountability and rewarded and punished accordingly, and for meeting this demand adequately a Day of Reckoning is necessary when the whole of mankind should be gathered together and called to account for its deeds. (For further explanation, see E.N. 21 of Sūrah Adh-Dhāriyāt).

The holy scriptures have been sworn by because all the Prophets who came to the world from the Lord of the Universe and the Books they brought gave the same one news in every age which the Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) is giving, i.e. that all humans of the former and latter generations will one day be resurrected and presented before their God and rewarded and punished according to their deeds. There has been no heavenly Book that fails to proclaim that this life is not the only life, that man will not end in the dust after death and that there will be both accountability and reckoning.

"The inhabited House" has been sworn by for the reason that in those days the building of the Holy Ka'bah was a great sign, particularly for the Arabs, which pointed to the truthfulness of Allah's Prophets and to the fact that they were supported by Allah Almighty's far-reaching wisdom and great power. 2,500 years before the revelation of these verses a person happens to visit these barren and uninhabited mountains, without any army or worldly provision, leaving behind a wife and a suckling child devoid of material support. Then, some time later the

same man returns and builds at this desolate place a house for the worship of Allah and gives a call to the people to come and visit that house as pilgrims. This same structure and the call are so fervently received that the House becomes the centre of the entire population of Arabia. People respond to the call enthusiastically and are drawn from every corner of the country to the House in a spirit of devotion and dedication. For 2,500 years this House continues to remain such a sanctuary of peace that while blood is shed in the country around it, none can dare raise his hand against another as soon as people enter its sacred boundaries; and then because of this very House Arabia is blessed with four months of such total peace every year when caravans travel in full safety, trade flourishes and markets are held. Then the House inspired such awe that during this whole period no tyrant could ever look towards it with an evil intention, and whoever dared do so was so seized by Allah's wrath that he became an object of warning for others. Such a miracle had been witnessed by the people themselves only 45 years before the revelation of these verses, and many of those who had witnessed it were still present and living in the city at the time when these verses were being recited to the people of Makkah. What greater proof could be there of the fact that the Prophets of God never uttered empty words? They see with their eyes that which others do not see; they talk freely of such realities as cannot be comprehended by others by intellect; they engage at times in works which might be viewed as madness by the contemporary world but which might strike with amazement the people coming centuries afterwards. When men of such calibre have unanimously been giving in every age the news that Resurrection shall occur and accountability shall take place, it would be sheer madness to dub it as the bragging of the insane.

The elevated roof (the sky) and the surging ocean have been sworn by, for both these are a pointer to Allah's wisdom and His power, and the same wisdom and power prove both the possibility of the Hereafter and its occurrence and necessity. As for the sky's being a pointer we have already explained it in E.N. 7 of *Sūrah Qāf* above. As for the ocean, anyone who considers it deeply with an unbiased mind will testify that the provision of water in such abundance on the earth is by itself such an amazing work which cannot be the result of an accident or chance. This also proves that it is not possible that such a perfect system could come into being by chance and the bodies of each species could be made precisely according to the depth in which it has to live. Its water has been made saline so that the bodies of the millions of the animals which die in it daily do not rot. Its water has been restrained at a particular level in such a way that it neither sinks into the earth's belly passing through its cracks and holes, nor it spreads over the land to submerge it, but has been checked at the same level for millions of years. Because of the existence of this great store of water the rainfall is arranged on the dry parts of the earth, in which the heat of the sun and the

circulation of the winds cooperate with full regularity. Then the ocean's being inhabited with life and the creation in it of the various kinds of creatures has given man the advantage that he obtains from it his food and other necessities in large quantities. Then its being checked and restrained to a limit has given birth to the continents and islands which are the home of man, and because of its adhering to and following some fixed laws has it become possible that man may navigate his ships in it. Such an arrangement could not have possibly existed without the wisdom of an All-Wise Being and the power of an Absolute Ruler, nor could this deep relationship that binds the interests of man and other creatures of the earth to the arrangement of the ocean be established at random. Now, if this is undeniable evidence that an All-Wise and All-Powerful God has created a vast and surging, brackish ocean also besides making countless other arrangements for the purpose of settling man on the earth, that person would be foolhardy, who expects that the All-Wise God would make arrangements for man that he should water his crops from the ocean and provide him sustenance thereby but would never question him as to how he returned thanks after eating His provisions, and that He would grant man the power that he should run his ships on the surface of the ocean but would never question him as to whether he had run the ships for the sake of the truth, righteousness and justice, or had committed robberies. Likewise, it would also be sheer folly to imagine that the Absolute Sovereign of Whose power the creation of the wonderful ocean is a petty, insignificant sign, Who has checked and restrained this vast store of water on this suspended globe which is moving in space, Who has dissolved a huge quantity of salt in it, Who has created countless varieties of creatures in it, and has arranged their sustenance therein, Who carries billions of tons of water from it every year by means of the wind and causes it to fall regularly as rain on millions of square miles of dry land, becomes so helpless and powerless after creating man that He could not resurrect him again.

7. The word *maur* in the original is used for turning round, boiling, fluttering, rotating, swinging and moving forward and backward. The object of depicting the condition of the heavens on the Day of Resurrection in these words is to give the idea that the system of the heavens on that Day will be wholly upset, and when an observer will look up to the sky, he will feel that the constant pattern and order that it always used to present, has been broken and there is disorder, confusion and chaos on every side.

8. In other words, the pull of the earth which is keeping the mountains in place, will become loose, they will be uprooted and start floating about in space like clouds.

9. It means that they are mocking and ridiculing the news of Resurrection. Hereafter, Heaven and Hell when they hear it from the Prophet, and instead of

[Contd. on p.178

وَاتَّبَعْتَهُمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ بِإِيمَانٍ أَلْحَقْنَا بِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَمَا أَلَتْنَاهُمْ مِنْ عَمَلِهِمْ  
 مِنْ شَيْءٍ كُلُّ امْرِئٍ بِمَا كَسَبَ رَهِينٌ ﴿١١﴾ وَآمَدَدْنَاهُمْ بِفَاكِهِةٍ وَلَحْمٍ مِمَّا  
 يَشْتَهُونَ ﴿١٢﴾ يَتَنَازَعُونَ فِيهَا كَأْسًا لَا لَغْوٌ فِيهَا وَلَا تَأْتِيهِمْ ﴿١٣﴾ وَيَطُوفُ عَلَيْهِمْ  
 غِلْمَانٌ لَهُمْ كَأَنَّهُمْ لُؤْلُؤٌ مَكْنُونٌ ﴿١٤﴾ وَأَقْبَلَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ ﴿١٥﴾  
 قَالُوا إِنَّا كُنَّا قَبْلُ فِي أَهْلِنَا مُشْفِقِينَ ﴿١٦﴾ فَمَنْ اللَّهُ عَلَيْنَا وَوَقِنَا عَذَابَ  
 السَّمُومِ ﴿١٧﴾ إِنَّا كُنَّا مِنْ قَبْلُ نَدْعُوهُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْبَرُّ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿١٨﴾ فَذَكَرَ فَمَا أَنْتَ  
 بِنِعْمَتِ رَبِّكَ بِكَاهِنٍ وَلَا مَجْنُونٍ ﴿١٩﴾ أَمْ يَقُولُونَ شَاعِرٌ نَتَرَبَّصُ بِهِ سَرِيبَ  
 الْمَنُونِ ﴿٢٠﴾ قُلْ تَرَبَّصُوا فَإِنِّي مَعَكُمْ مِنَ الْمُنْتَرِبِينَ ﴿٢١﴾ أَمْ تَأْمُرُهُمْ أَحْلَامُهُمْ  
 بِهَذَا أَمْ هُمْ قَوْمٌ طَاغُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾ أَمْ يَقُولُونَ تَقَوَّلَهُ بَلْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾ فَلْيَأْتُوا  
 بِحَدِيثٍ مِثْلِهِ إِنْ كَانُوا صَادِقِينَ ﴿٢٤﴾ أَمْ خَلِقُوا مِنْ غَيْرِ شَيْءٍ أَمْ هُمُ الْخَالِقُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾  
 أَمْ خَلَقُوا السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بَلْ لَا يُوقِنُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾ أَمْ عِنْدَهُمْ خَزَائِنُ رَبِّكَ أَمْ  
 هُمُ الْمُضَيِّطُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾ أَمْ لَهُمْ سُلُوكٌ يَسْتَمْعُونَ فِيهِ فَلَيَاتِ مُسْتَمِعُهُمْ بِسُلْطَنٍ  
 مُبِينٍ ﴿٢٨﴾ أَمْ لَهُ الْبَنَاتُ وَلَكُمُ الْبَنُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾ أَمْ تَسْأَلُهُمْ أَجْرًا فَهُمْ مِنْ مَغْرَمٍ  
 مُثْقَلُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾ أَمْ عِنْدَهُمُ الْغَيْبُ فَهُمْ يَكْتُبُونَ ﴿٣١﴾ أَمْ يُرِيدُونَ كَيْدًا فَالَّذِينَ  
 كَفَرُوا هُمُ الْمَكِيدُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾ أَمْ لَهُمْ إِلَهٌ غَيْرُ اللَّهِ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَإِنْ  
 يَرَوْا كِسْفًا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ سَاقِطًا يَقُولُوا سَحَابٌ مَرْكُومٌ ﴿٣٤﴾ فَذَرَهُمْ حَتَّى يُلْقُوا  
 يَوْمَهُمُ الَّذِي فِيهِ يُصْعَقُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾ يَوْمَ لَا يُغْنِي عَنْهُمْ كَيْدُهُمْ شَيْئًا وَلَا هُمْ  
 يُنصَرُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَإِنَّ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا عَذَابًا دُونَ ذَلِكَ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ  
 لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾ وَاصْبِرْ لِحُكْمِ رَبِّكَ فَإِنَّكَ بِأَعْيُنِنَا وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ



Those who have believed and their offspring also have followed in their footsteps in degrees of faith, We shall join to them those of their offspring also (in Paradise) and shall not deprive them of anything of their deeds.<sup>15</sup> Every person is a pledge for what he has earned.<sup>16</sup> We shall go on providing them well with fruits and meat,<sup>17</sup> such as they may desire. They shall zealously be passing from hand to hand a cup of wine which shall neither contain idle talk nor immorality.<sup>18</sup> And there will go round to them young boys, exclusively appointed for their service,<sup>19</sup> who will be as lovely as well-guarded pearls. They will turn to one another and ask (about their worldly lives). They will say, "Before this we lived among our kinsfolk, in fear and dread.<sup>20</sup> Consequently, Allah has been bounteous to us and has saved us from the torment of the scorching wind.<sup>21</sup> Indeed, we prayed only to Him in our previous life. Most surely He is the Beneficent, the Merciful."

So, O Prophet, go on admonishing (them). By the grace of your Lord, you are neither a soothsayer nor mad.<sup>22</sup>

Do they say, "He is a poet for whom we are awaiting the adverse turn of fortune?"<sup>23</sup> Say to them, "Yes, wait; I too shall wait with you."<sup>24</sup> Do their minds command them to do so, or, are they a people who have transgressed all limits?<sup>25</sup>

Do they say, "This man himself has forged this Qur'ān" The fact is that they do not want to believe.<sup>26</sup> Let them then produce a discourse like it, if they are true in what they say.<sup>27</sup>

Have they been created without a Creator? Or, are they their own creators? Or, have they created the heavens and the earth? The fact is that they lack faith.<sup>28</sup>

Do they possess the treasures of your Lord? Or, is it they who control them?<sup>29</sup>

Do they have a ladder by climbing which they overhear what goes on in heavens? Then let any of them who has overheard bring a clear proof. Is Allah to have daughters and you sons?<sup>30</sup>

Do you ask them for any rewards that they are weighed down under a load of debt?<sup>31</sup>

- 41 Do they have the knowledge of the unseen realities whereby they may be writing down?<sup>32</sup>
- 42 Do they intend to devise a plot?<sup>33</sup> (If so,) the plot shall recoil upon the disbelievers themselves.<sup>34</sup>
- 43 Do they have a god other than Allah? Exalted is Allah above what they associate with Him.<sup>35</sup>
- 44-47 Even if they saw fragments of the sky falling down, they would say, "this is a mass of clouds advancing."<sup>36</sup> Therefore, O Prophet, leave them to themselves till they meet that Day of theirs wherein they shall be struck down, the Day when neither shall their own plotting avail them anything nor shall anyone else come to their rescue. And even before that there awaits the wrongdoers another torment, but most of them do not know.<sup>37</sup>

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*Contd. from p. 175]*

considering it seriously they are disputing it only for fun and amusement. Their discussions of the Hereafter are not meant to understand the reality, but only to amuse themselves, and they do not at all realize the fate for which they are destined.

10. That is, "When the Messengers in the world warned you of this Hell, you said that it was only by magic that they were fooling you. Now say: Is this Hell which you are facing mere magic, or you still do not see that you have actually met with the same Hell which was being foretold to you?"

11. "The righteous": the people who believed in the news given by the Prophets and who safeguarded themselves in the world itself and refrained from thoughts and deeds that doom man to Hell.

12. There seems to be no need to mention a person's being saved from Hell after it has been said that he will be admitted to Heaven, but at several places in the Qur`ān these two things have been mentioned separately because a person's being saved from Hell is by itself a great blessing. And the words, "their Lord shall save them from the torment of Hell", is an allusion to the truth that man's being saved from Hell is possible only through Allah's grace and bounty; otherwise human weaknesses cause such flaws to occur in everyone's work that if Allah does not overlook them by His grace and instead decides to subject him to accountability, none can save himself from His punishment. That is why although entry into Paradise is a great bounty from Allah, his being saved from Hell is no less a mercy.

13. Here, the word "with relish" contains vast meaning in itself. In Paradise whatever a man receives, he will have it without any labour and toil. There will be no question of its sustenance in short supply. Man will not have to spend anything for it. It will be precisely according to his desire and choice and taste. In whatever quantity and whenever he will desire it, it will be made available. He will not be staying there as a guest that he may feel shy of asking for something, but everything will be the reward of his lifelong deeds and the fruit of his own labours. His eating and drinking anything will not cause any illness nor will he eat for satisfying hunger or for survival but only for the sake of enjoyment. Man will be able to obtain as much pleasure from it as he pleases without the fear of indigestion, and the food eaten will not produce any filth. Therefore, the meaning of eating and drinking "with relish" in Paradise is much more vast and sublime than what is understood by it in the world.

14. For explanation, see E.N.'s 20, 29 of Sūrah As-Sāffāt, and E.N. 42 of Ad-Dukhān.

15. This theme has already been mentioned in Sūrah Ar-Ra'd: 23 and Al-Mu'min: 8 above, but here a greater good news has been given. In the verse of Sūrah Ar-Ra'd only this much was said: "They will enter into them (Gardens) along with the righteous from among their forefathers, wives and descendants," and in Sūrah Al-Mu'min: "The angels ask forgiveness for the believers; they say Our Lord...(admit therein also) of their parents and wives and children who are righteous." Here, what has been said in addition is: If the children had been following in the footsteps of their forefathers in faith, they will be joined with them in Paradise even though they might not deserve, on the basis of their deeds, the same high rank which the elders would attain on the basis of their superior faith and deeds, and this joining will not be of the nature of occasional visits and meetings but they will be lodged permanently with them in Paradise as is borne out by the words: *alḥaḳna bi-him*. For the sake of further satisfaction it has been stated: "In order to be joined with their offspring the parents will not be lowered and reduced in rank, but in order to be joined with their elders the rank of the children will be enhanced and exalted".

Here, it should be borne in mind that this news has been given in respect of the children who on reaching maturity voluntarily decided to affirm faith and of their own free will followed in the footsteps of their righteous forefathers. As for those of the children of a believer, who might have died even before reaching maturity, there cannot be any question of belief or disbelief, obedience or disobedience, for they will be admitted to Paradise automatically and will be lodged along with their parents to be a comfort of the eyes for them.

16. Here, the metaphor of *rahn* (pledge) is very meaningful. If a person takes a loan from somebody, and the creditor keeps some article belonging to the debtor as a pledge with himself as a guarantee for the payment of his right, the debtor cannot redeem his pledge unless he pays off the debts; and if he does not redeem his pledge within the fixed time limit, the pledged article stands forfeited. The nature of the affair between man and God has been compared here to this very situation. The provisions, powers, capabilities and authority that God has granted man in the world are a debt that the Master has given to His servant, and as a guarantee for this debt the self of man is a pledge with Allah. If man by employing the provisions and the powers and authority in the right way earns the good by which the debt can be paid off, he will redeem the pledged thing, i.e. his own self, otherwise it will be forfeited. This thing has been said immediately after the preceding verse because even though the righteous believers may themselves be the people of a very high rank, their children cannot redeem their pledge unless they redeem their self by their own labour and effort. The earning of the forefathers cannot redeem the children. However, if the children are able to redeem themselves by virtue of their faith in some degree by following their righteous forefathers in their footsteps, it would then be Allah's grace and bounty that in Paradise He may exalt them from lower ranks to be joined with their parents in the higher ranks. The good done by the forefathers can benefit the children only so far, but if by their own deeds they deserve Hell, it is not possible that they may be admitted to Paradise for the sake of the forefathers. Another thing that can be deduced from this verse is that the less righteous children's being joined with their more righteous forefathers is not in reality the result of the life-work of the children but of their forefathers'. They by virtue of their deeds will deserve the grace that their children be joined with them in order to be a comfort of the eyes for them. That is why Allah will not lower their ranks to join them with their children but will exalt the children's ranks to be joined with them, so that the perfection of Allah's blessings on them is not marred by the distress that they may suffer on account of the remoteness of their children far away.

17. In this verse, there is the mention of providing the dwellers of Paradise with every kind of meat generally, and in Sūrah Al-Wāqi'ah it has been said: "They will be served with the flesh of fowls." We do not know what exactly will be the nature of this flesh. But just as in some expressions of the Qur`ān and in some *Aḥādīth* it has been said about the milk of Paradise that it will not have been drawn from the udders of animals, and about the honey of Paradise it has been said that it will not have been produced by the bees, and about the wine of Paradise it has been said that it will not have been distilled from rotten fruit, but these things will flow out of the springs into the canals by the power of Allah, so it can be argued by analogy that this flesh too will not be obtained from slaughtered



animals but this too will be a natural product. The God Who can produce milk and honey and wine directly from earthly substances can also produce tasty flesh of every kind from the same substances, which should even surpass the flesh of animals in taste and delight. (For further explanation, see E.N. 25 of Sūrah Aṣ-Ṣāāffāt, E.N.'s 21 to 23 of Sūrah Muḥammad).

18. That is, the wine of Paradise will not intoxicate that they should get drunk and talk nonsense, or use abusive language, or conduct and behave indecently as drunkards. (For further explanation, see E.N. 27 of As-Sāāffāt).

19. Here, the word used is *ghilmān-ul lahum* and not *ghilmān-u-hum*. If *ghilmān-u-hum* had been used, it would have meant that their servants in the world would be made their servants in Paradise too; whereas whoever from the world goes to Paradise, will go there on the basis of his own work and entitlement, and there is no reason that after his entry in Paradise he may be made a servant of the same master whom he had been serving in the world. But it can also be that a servant on account of his deeds may attain a higher rank than his master in Paradise. Therefor, by using *ghilmān-ul-lahum* no room has been left for this suspicion. This word provides the explanation that these will be the boys who will be exclusively appointed for their service in Paradise. (For further explanation, see E.N. 26 of Sūrah Aṣ-Ṣāāffāt).

20. That is, "We were not heedless and living a care-free life of ease and comfort, but we were always on our guard lest we should commit an evil for which we may be held accountable before God." Here, the mention of "...living among our kinsfolk, in fear and dread," in particular, has been made for the reason that man commits evil mostly when he is deeply engrossed in arranging ease and comfort for his children and trying to make their future secure and happy. For the same purpose he earns forbidden things by forbidden means, usurps the rights of others and makes evil plans. That is why the dwellers of Paradise will say to one another: "That which particularly saved us from the evil of the Hereafter was that while living among our families we did not think so much of arranging the pleasures of life and a splendid future for them as for avoiding for their sake those methods and means that might ruin our life in the Hereafter and that we should not lead our children also on to the way that might make them worthy of the torment of Aḥah.

21. The word *samūm* in the original means hot, scorching wind; here it implies the waves of hot wind that will be arising from Hell.

22. After depicting a scene of the Hereafter the address now turns to the obdurances of the disbelieves of Makkah with which they were resisting the message of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace). This verse though apparently addressed to the Holy Prophet is actually meant for the disbelievers through him.

Whenever he spoke of Resurrection and the gathering together of mankind, and accountability, and meting out of rewards and punishments, and Heaven and Hell and recited the verses of the Qur'ān in support thereof, with the claim that he received that information from Allah and that it was Allah's Word that had been revealed to him, their leaders and religious guides and depraved people neither listened to him seriously themselves nor wanted that the other people should pay any attention to him. Therefore, they would sometimes taunt him saying that he was a sorcerer, or that he was a poet, or that he was a madman, or that he fabricated those strange things himself and presented them as Revelations from Allah only in order to impress the people. They thought that by passing such remarks against him they would be able to create suspicions among the people about him and would thus render his preaching ineffective and vain. About this it is being said: "O Prophet, the truth in fact is the same that has been presented from the beginning of the Sūrah to this point. If these people call you a sorcerer and a madman on account of these things, you should not take it to heart but should go on arousing the people from their heedlessness and warning them of the reality, for by the grace of God you are neither."

The word *kāhin* (sorcerer) in Arabic is used for an astrologer, fortune teller and a wise man. In the pre-Islamic days of ignorance it was a full-fledged profession. The sorcerers claimed, and the credulous people thought and believed, that they knew the destinies of the people, or they had a special link with the spirits, devils and jinn through whom they came to know of the unseen realities. If a thing was lost, they could tell where it lay; if a theft occurred somewhere, they could tell who the thief was; and they could foretell destinies. People came to them, and they would tell them unseen things in exchange for gifts and offerings. They would sometimes visit the towns and villages and would cry about their profession so that the people might approach them. They had a way and manner and appearance of their own by which they became easily recognisable. The language they used also differed from the common speech of the people. They would utter rhymed and rhythmical sentences with a peculiar accent and modulation and generally used vague and ambiguous sentences from which every person could draw his own meaning. The Quraish chiefs in order to deceive the common people accused the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) of sorcery only for the reason that he was giving the news of the realities that are hidden and his claim was that an angel from God came to reveal that news to him, and the Word of God that he was presenting was also rhymed. But no one in Arabia could be deceived by this accusation because no one was unaware of the sorcerers' profession and their general way and appearance and their language and business. Everyone knew what they did, why the people visited them, what they told them, what sort of modulated sentences they uttered and what subject-matter they

contained. Then, above all, it could not be that a sorcerer would rise with a creed that went against the prevalent beliefs of the nation and would exert himself preaching it continuously at his own risk. Therefore, this accusation of sorcery did not apply to the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace) at all and no one in Arabia who had any common sense could be deceived by it.

Likewise, the disbelievers of Makkah also accused him of madness only for their own satisfaction, just as some shameless Western scholars of the present day in order to satisfy their malice and enmity against Islam, claim that, God forbid, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) had epileptic fits and whatever he uttered during those fits was taken as Divine Revelation by the people. No sensible person in those days regarded such absurd accusations as worthy of any attention, nor can anyone today who reads the Qur'ān and studies the wonderful feats of the Holy Prophet's leadership and guidance believe that these were the product of epileptic fits.

23. That is, "We are waiting for him to be afflicted with calamity so that we be rid of him." Probably they thought that since Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) was opposing their deities and denying their supernatural powers, he would fall under the curse of some deity, or some bold devotee of a god would put an end to him.

24. This can have two meanings: (1) "I would also see whether this desire of yours is fulfilled or not ;" and (2) "I am also waiting to see who goes to his doom, you or I."

25. In these two sentences, the opponents' entire propaganda has been nailed, and they have been completely exposed. The reasoning briefly is this: These Qaraish chiefs and elders pose as very wise people, but does their intellect tell them that they should call a person a poet when he is not a poet, and call him a madman when he is well-known for his wisdom among the people, and dub him a sorcerer when he has not the remotest association with sorcery? Then, if you are passing these judgments only on the basis of intellect and reason, you should have passed one judgement, and not so many contradictory judgements simultaneously. After all, how can one and the same man be a poet and a madman and a sorcerer at one and the same time? If he is mad, he can then neither be a sorcerer nor a poet. If he is a sorcerer, he cannot be a poet, and if he is a poet, he cannot be a sorcerer, for the language and diction and themes of poetry are quite different from the language and themes of sorcery. The one who knows the distinctions between poetry and sorcery cannot possibly call and regard the same discourse both as poetry and as sorcery at one and the same time. Therefore, it is evident that these contradictory things are being said against the Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) not on the basis of intellect and reason but only due

to obduracy and stubbornness, and the big chiefs of the nation blinded by their prejudice and enmity are levelling absurd charges which no serious person can regard as worthy of any attention. (For further explanation, see E.N. 104 of Al-A`rāf, E.N. 3 of Sūrah Yūnus, E.N.'s 53, 54, of Banī Isrā'īl, E.N.'s 130, 131, 140, 142-144 of Ash-Shu`arā`.

26. In other words, it means this: The Quraish who think that Muḥammad (upon whom be peace) himself is the author of the Qur`ān know it in their innermost hearts that it cannot be his word, and those others also whose mother tongue is Arabic not only clearly feel that it is far more sublime and superior to human speech but any one of them who knows Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) personally cannot ever suspect that this is actually his own word and speech. Therefore, the thing plainly is that those who ascribe the authorship of the Qur`ān to the Holy Prophet do not, in fact, wish to affirm faith. That is why they are inventing false excuses one of which is this excuse. (For further explanation, see E.N. 21 of Yūnus, E.N. 12 of Al-Furqān, E.N. 64 of Al-Qaṣaṣ, E.N.'s 88,89 of Al-Ankabūt, E.N.'s 1 to 4 of As-Sajdah, E.N. 54 of Hā Mīm As-Sajdah, E.N.'s 8 to 10 of Al-Aḥqāf).

27. That is, "Not only is the Qur`ān not the word of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) but the truth is that it is not human at all; it is beyond the power of man to compose and produce it. If you think it is human, you are challenged to produce the like of it, which should also be human." This challenge had been given not only to the Quraish but to all the disbelievers of the world first of all in this verse. Then it was repeated thrice in Makkah and then finally in Madīnah. (Please see Yūnus: 38, Hūd: 13, Banī Isrā'īl: 88, Al-Baqarah: 23). But no one could dare meet this challenge of the Qur`ān at that time, nor has any one else had so far the ability to compose and produce a man-made work like the Qur`ān.

Some people because of lack of understanding the real nature of this challenge, say that not to speak of the Qur`ān, no one has the power to write prose or compose poetry in the style of another person. Homer, Rūmī, Shakespeare, Goethe, Ghālib, Tagore, Iqbāl, all are unique in their styles: it lies in no one's power to produce poetry like theirs by imitation. Those who give this answer to the challenge of the Qur`ān are, in fact, involved in the misunderstanding that the meaning of "let them then produce a discourse like it", is a challenge to man to compose and write a book like the Qur`ān, in the style of the Qur`ān: whereas it does not imply any resemblance in literary style but it implies this: Bring a book of the same sublimity and quality and rank, not only in Arabic but in any language of the world, that may be regarded as a match for the Qur`ān in respect of the characteristics for which the Qur`ān is a miracle. The following are in brief some

of the main characteristics because of which the Qur'ān has been a miracle before as it is a miracle today:

- (1) The Qur'ān is the highest and most perfect model of the literature of the language in which it was revealed. No word and no sentence in the entire Book is sub-standard. Whatever theme has been presented in it, has been presented in the most appropriate words and in the most suitable style. One and the same theme has been presented over and over again but every time in a new style avoiding the defect of repetition everywhere. The entire Book, from the beginning to the end, is set in the choicest words, like chiselled and polished gems, that cannot be replaced. The discourses are so impressive that no one who knows the language, even if he is a disbeliever, can help being moved to ecstasies on hearing them. Even after 1,400 years this Book is still the model of Arabic literature and no other Arabic book can approach it in literary excellence not to speak of equalling it. Not only this: this Book has so controlled the Arabic language that even after the passage of 14 centuries the standard of this language's beauty and eloquence is the same that had been set by it; whereas in such long periods languages change out of recognition. No other language of the world has remained in the same state in so far as its spelling and diction, idiom, rules of language and usages are concerned. But it is only the power of the Qur'ān that has held the Arabic language in place; each idiom of it is still in use in Arabic literature; its literature is still the standard literature of Arabic; and in writing and speech still the same language is regarded as good Arabic that had been used in the Qur'ān 1,400 years ago. Is there any man-made book in any language of the world that bears the same characteristics?
- (2) This is the one single Book in the world, which has so extensively and so universally influenced mankind's thoughts, morals, civilization and way of life as has no precedent in history. In the first instance, its impact changed one nation; then that nation rose and changed a major part of the world. No other Book has proved to be so revolutionary. This Book has not remained confined to writing on paper but in the practical world its each word has formed and moulded ideas and thoughts and built up a lasting civilization. Its influence has continued being operative for 1,400 years and its circle of influence and impact is still expanding every day.
- (3) The theme that this Book discusses is the most extensive theme which comprehends the whole Universe, from eternity to eternity. It deals with the reality of the Universe, its beginning and end, its system and law. It tells as to who is the Creator and Controller and Disposer of this Universe, what are His attributes, what are His powers, and what is that essence and basis on which He has established this entire system of the

world. It specifies man's position and his place which he cannot change. It tells what is the right and correct way of thought and action for man in view of this place and position, which corresponds to the reality, and what are the wrong ways which clash with the reality. Then to prove why the right way is right and the wrong ways wrong, it presents countless arguments from various phenomena of the earth and heavens, from different aspects of the system of the Universe, from man's own self and existence and from man's own history. Besides, it also tells how and for what reasons man adopts the wrong ways, by what means he can find out the right Way, which has always been one and shall remain one, and how he has been guided to it in every age. It does not merely point to the Right Way but presents a plan of the complete system of life for following that way, which contains a detailed and systematic code concerning beliefs, morals, purification of self, worship, social life, civilization, economy, politics, justice, law and every other aspect of human life. Furthermore, it also tells in full detail what are the results of following this Right Way and of adopting the wrong ways in this world and what consequences of this will appear in the Next World after the present system of the world has come to an end. It depicts fully the coming to an end of the present world and of the establishment of the New World; it gives every detail of the process of change; it portrays the Next World and describes fully how man will find a totally new life there, how his deeds from worldly life will be subjected to accountability, what things he will be questioned about, how his complete record, which he will not be able to deny or dispute, will be placed before him, what strong evidence will be produced in proof thereof, why the culprits will be punished and the righteous rewarded, what rewards will be bestowed on the righteous and in what forms will the culprits suffer the evil consequences of their misdeeds. The way this vast theme has been dealt with in this Book is not of the nature of some conclusions that its Author might have reached from some syllogistic premises but its nature is that its Author has the direct knowledge of the Reality.

He sees everything happening from eternity to eternity. All the realities are manifest for Him and the entire Universe is like an open book before Him. He sees the entire life of mankind, from its origin to its end, even beyond the present life into the second life simultaneously, and He is guiding man not on the basis of conjecture and speculation but on the basis of knowledge. Not a single truth that He presents as knowledge has been proved to be wrong so far. The concept of the Universe and Man that He presents fully explains all the phenomena and events and can become the basis of research in every branch of knowledge. His Word contains the answers to all the ultimate problems of philosophy and natural and social sciences, and they are so coherent and consistent logically that a perfect,

consistent and comprehensive system of thought can be built on their basis. Then from the practical aspect the guidance that He has given to man about various spheres of life is not only highly rational and pure but countless men have been living according to it in actual fact in different parts of the earth for 1,400 years and have found it by experience to be the only valid way. Is there any manmade book of this unique quality present in the world, or has ever been, which may be produced to match this Book ?

- (4) This Book was not composed and written all at once and presented before the world, but a reformatory movement was started with some basic and initial instructions and then for 23 years as the movement passed through different stages of its development its parts were presented by the tongue of the leader, sometimes as lengthy discourses and sometimes as brief sentences, as the conditions and requirements of the occasion demanded. Then, when the Mission was brought to completion, these parts that had been issued at different times were compiled in the form of a complete Book which has been known by the name of the "Qur'ān". The leader of the movement states that these discourses and sentences are not his original work but were sent down to him by the Lord of all Creation. If a person asserts that they are the original work of the leader himself, he should produce a precedent from history to prove his contention. He should show whether it is possible that the speeches made and the instructions given by a man at different times while leading a powerful collective movement for years continuously by himself in different capacities, sometimes as a preacher and teacher of morals, sometimes as a leader of an oppressed class, sometimes as the ruler of a state, sometimes as the commander of a fighting army, sometimes as a victor, sometime as a law-giver and legislator, could form a complete and consistent and comprehensive system of thought and action, which should be free from every contradiction and inconsistency, which should appear to be dominated by the same central idea and pattern of thought, which should show that the leader has been building up a universal system of belief and action on the basis of the same foundation of his message with which he had started his work, and which should be a system each element and part of which is in perfect harmony and consistency with the other parts. Then the one who reads this collection of the discourses with a discerning eye cannot help realizing that the founder of the movement at the outset had a full plan of the movement in view till the last stage, and it never happened that a new idea might have struck him at some later stage, which was unknown to him before, or which he had to change later. If ever there has been a man of this calibre, his name should be made known to the world.

- (5) The leader who had been made to give these discourses and speak these sentences did not suddenly emerge from a hidden place to present these before the people nor would disappear after he had done so. He had lived his life in full view of society before he started his movement as well as continued to live in the same society after that till his last breath. The people were well aware of the language and style of his conversation and speech. *Hadith* still presents a major part of it and by going through it the people who know Arabic can easily find out even today what was the leader's own style of speech and conversation. His contemporaries who spoke his language felt then and those who know Arabic feel today that the language and the style of this Book is very different from the language and style of that leader. So much so that whenever in the midst of a sermon delivered by the leader there occurs a sentence or two of this Book, the distinction between the two becomes all too obvious. The question is: Has a man in the world ever had the power, or can he have the capability, that he should go on conversing in two absolutely different styles consistently for years at a stretch and it should never become known that the two separate styles are, in fact, of one and the same person? It is possible that one may succeed in such affectation temporarily but it is not at all possible that for twenty-three years continuously a person should have a different diction and style when he recites the Revelations from Allah and a wholly different diction and style when he speaks in his personal capacity.
- (6) The leader while leading and guiding the movement met with different sorts of conditions. Sometimes he became the target of ridicule, humiliation and severe persecution of his fellow-countrymen and the people of his own tribe and clan; sometimes his companions were so harshly treated that they were compelled to emigrate from the country; sometimes the enemies plotted against his life; sometimes he himself had to leave his home and city; sometimes he had to pass through extreme poverty and starvation; sometimes he had to fight wars successively in which he suffered defeats as well as won victories; sometimes he overcame the enemies and the same enemies who had persecuted him, came before him humbled; sometimes he achieved such power which few people in the world have been able to achieve. Under all such conditions a person's feelings obviously cannot remain the same. When on these different occasions the leader spoke in his personal capacity, his words and speeches carried the clear impression of his personal feelings, which naturally arise in the heart of a man on such occasions. But the discourses that were heard from him as Allah's Revelations in these different conditions, are wholly devoid of human feelings. At no place can even an acute observer and critic point out the play of human feelings in them.



- (7) The vast and comprehensive knowledge that is contained in this Book, is not possessed even by any of the distinguished learned people of this 20th century, not to speak of the people of Arabia and Rome and Greece and Iran of those days. The condition today is that after a man has spent his whole life-time studying a branch of philosophy or a natural or social science, he comes to know what ultimate problems of his field of study are, but when he studies the Qur'an seriously he comes to know that this Book contains a clear answer to those problems. This thing is not confined to any one branch of knowledge but holds good in respect of all those sciences which have anything to do with the Universe and Man. How can one believe that 1,400 years ago an unlettered man in the Arabian desert possessed such deep insight into every branch of knowledge, and he had thought over every basic problem and thought out an absolute and final answer to it?

Although there are several other aspects also of the Qur'an's being a miracle, if a man ponders over these few aspects only he will realize that the Qur'an's being a miracle is far more evident today than it was at the time when it was revealed and if Allah so wills, it will go on becoming more and more evident and manifest as time passes till the Day of Resurrection.

28. The questions asked before this were meant to make the disbelievers of Makkah realize that whatever they were saying to belie the Prophet Muḥammad's claim to prophethood was highly irrational. Now in this verse the question put before them is: "What is that in the message of the Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) which you find so embarrassing for yourselves? He just says that Allah is your Creator and you should only serve Him. Why are you annoyed at it? Are you your own creators? Or, has this vast Universe been created by you? If neither of these is true, and you admit that your Creator as well as the Creator of the Universe is Allah alone, why do you then feel angry with the person who tells you that Allah alone is worthy of your service and worship? What you should actually feel angry about is that you worship him who is not your Creator instead of Him Who is your real Creator. You admit with the tongue that Allah alone is your Creator as well as of the whole Universe, but if you really had faith in this, you would not have so maligned the person who was calling you to Allah's service.

This was such a pungent and stinging question that it shook the polytheistic faith to the root. Bukhārī and Muslim have related that after the Battle of Badr, Jubair bin Muṭ'im came to Madīnah to negotiate release of the Quraish prisoners of war on behalf of the people of Makkah. The Holy Prophet at that time was leading the Maghrib Prayer, and he recited this Sūrah *aṭ-Ṭūr* in it. Muṭ'im himself has stated that when the Holy Prophet reached this place, his heart seemed

to be leaving his breast. One main reason of his embracing Islam afterwards was that Islam had taken root in his heart on hearing these very verses on that day.

29. This is an answer to the objection of the disbelievers of Makkah who said: Why had Muḥammad, son of ʿAbdullah (upon whom be peace), only been appointed a Messenger? The answer implies this: "Somebody in any case had to be appointed a Messenger in order to deliver the people from their error of serving others than Allah. Now the question is: Who should decide whom Allah should appoint His Messenger and whom He should not? If these people refuse to accept the Messenger appointed by Allah, it means that either they regard themselves as the masters of the world or they presume that the world may belong to Allah, but it should be ruled by them."

30. A detailed reasoning has been compressed into these brief sentences. It means to say: "If you deny what the Prophet says, then what means have you got to know the reality? Has any of you had access to the heavens where he found out directly from Allah or His angels that the beliefs on which you have based your religion are absolutely in accord with the reality? If someone makes this claim he should come forward and tell as to when and how he had access to the heavens and what knowledge he has brought from there. If you do not make any such claim, then consider how ridiculous is your creed that you assign children to Allah, Lord of the worlds, and that too daughters, whom you regard as disgraceful for yourselves. Without knowledge you are wandering in the darkness of such errors and turning hostile to the person who bring you the light of knowledge from God."

31. The question is actually directed to the disbelievers. It means: "If the Messenger had a selfish motive and had been exerting only for a personal gain from you, there would be a rational ground for you to avoid him. But you yourselves know that he is absolutely selfless in his invitation and is exerting himself only for your own benefit and well-being. Then, how is it that you are not even inclined to listen to him with a cool mind?" There is also a subtle hint in this question. Like the self-styled guides and guardians of religious shrines of the world, the religious guides, priests and scholars of the polytheists of Arabia also were engaged in a religious business. In view of the same, this question was put before them: "On the one hand, these dealers in religion are openly receiving gifts and offerings and fees for every religious service from you; on the other, a person who has ruined his trading business, is trying to show you the right way with highly rational arguments, absolutely selflessly. Is it not sheer senselessness that you shun him but run after them?"

32. That is, "What particular knowledge do you have to refute the truths that the Messenger is presenting before you, which you may present with the

claim that you directly know the realities hidden behind the phenomenal world? Do you really have the knowledge that God is not One, but all those whom you have set up as deities also possess godly attributes and powers? Have you really seen the angels and found that they are girls, and, God forbid, are begotten of God? Do you really know that the Revelation has neither come to Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings), nor it can come to any man, from God? Do you really have the knowledge that no Resurrection will take place, that there is going to be no life after death, that there will be no Hereafter when man will be subjected to accountability and rewarded or punished according to his deeds? If you claim to possess any such knowledge, can you give in writing that you are belying what the Prophet says about the unseen realities on the ground that you have peeped into the hidden realities and seen that the truth is not that which the Prophet presents." Here, one may express the misgiving that if in response to this, those people had given this in writing, in their stubbornness, will not this reasoning have become meaningless? But this misgiving is misplaced because even if they had given this in writing on account of their stubbornness, the common people of society in which this challenge had been given openly were not blind: everyone of them would have understood that the writing had been given out of sheer stubbornness, and no one, in fact, was refuting what the Prophet said on the basis that he had the knowledge that it was false.

33. The allusion is to the secret plots that the disbelievers of Makkah used to devise in their meetings in order to defeat the mission of the Holy Prophet (on whom be Allah's peace) and to kill him.

34. This is one of the clear prophecies of the Qur'an. In the initial stage at Makkah when the Holy Prophet (on whom be Allah's peace) had no apparent power and support with him except a handful of the ill-equipped Muslims and the whole nation was opposing and resisting him relentlessly, the confrontation between Islam and disbelief appeared to be utterly unequal. No one at that time could imagine that after a few years the tables would be turned on disbelief. Rather, the superficial observer could safely predict that the strong opposition of the Quraish and entire Arabia would at last put an end to the message of Islam. But even under those conditions, a challenge was thrown to the disbelievers and they were told in clear terms: "You may devise whatever plots you wish in order to frustrate this message, they will all recoil upon you, and you will never succeed in defeating and putting an end to it."

35. That is, "The fact of the matter is that those whom they have set up as deities, are not in fact the deities, and *shirk* is wholly an unreal thing. Therefore, the person who has risen with the message of *Tauhid* has the power of the truth with him; and those who are supporting *shirk* are indeed fighting for the imaginary. How will then *shirk* win in this conflict?"

[Contd. on p. 192



## حِينَ تَقُومُوا لِلَّهِ وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَسَبِّحُوهُ وَإِدْبَارَ النُّجُومِ ﴿٤٩﴾

48-49

Endure patiently, O Prophet, until your Lord's judgement comes to pass<sup>38</sup>: you are in Our sight.<sup>39</sup> Glorify your Lord with His praise when you rise up,<sup>40</sup> and glorify Him in the night too,<sup>41</sup> and also at the retreat of the stars.<sup>42</sup>

*Contd. from p. 191]*

36. This is meant to expose the stubbornness of the Quraish chiefs, on the one hand, and to console the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) and his Companions, on the other. The Holy Prophet and his Companions wished that those people should be shown such a miracle by Allah as should convince them of the truth of his Prophethood. At this, it has been said: Whatever miracle they might see with their eyes, they will in any case misinterpret it and invent an excuse for persisting in disbelief, for their hearts are not at all inclined to believe. At several other places also in the Qur'an their this stubbornness has been mentioned, e.g. in Sūrah Al-An'ām: 111, it has been said: "Even if we had sent down the angels to them and made the dead speak with them and ranged all the things of the world before them (as a proof thereof), they would still have disbelieved," and in Sūrah Al-Hijr: 15: "Even if We had opened a gate for them in heaven, and they had begun to ascend through it during day time, they would have said: "Our eyes have been dazzled; nay, we have been bewitched."

37. This is a repetition of the same theme that has already occurred in As-Sajdah: 21 above: "Even in this world We shall make them taste (one or the other) lesser torment before that greater torment; maybe they desist (from their rebellious attitude)." That is, "We shall send down personal and national disasters from time to time in the world to remind that there is above them a superior power which is deciding their destinies and none has the power to change its decisions. But the people who are involved in ignorance have neither learnt any lesson from these events before nor will learn any lesson in the future. They do not understand the meaning of the disasters and calamities occurring in the world. Therefore, they explain them away in every such way as takes them further and further away from the reality, and their mind never turns to any explanation, which might make the error of their atheism or polytheism manifest to them. This same thing has been explained by the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) in a *Ḥadīth*, thus: "The example of a hypocrite who falls ill and then gets well, is of the camel whom the masters tied, but it did not understand why they had tied it, and when they untied

it, it did not understand why they had untied it." (Abū Da'ūd: *Kitāb al-Jana'iz*). For further explanation, see E.N. 45 of *Al-Anbiyā'*, E.N. 66 of *An-Naml*, E.N.'s 72, 73 of *Al-'Ankabūt*).

38. Another meaning can be: Remain firm and steadfast in carrying out the Command of your Lord."

39. That is, "We are watching over you and have not left you alone."

40. There can be several meanings of this and possibly all may be implied:

First, "Whenever you rise from a meeting, you should rise glorifying and praising Allah." The Holy Prophet himself acted upon this as well as instructed the Muslims that they should glorify and praise Allah when they rose from a meeting. Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhī, Nasā'ī and Hākim have related, on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, that the Holy Prophet said: "If a person sat in a meeting in which much controversy took place, and he pronounced the following words before rising, Allah would forgive whatever passed in the meeting: *subhānaka Allāhumma wa bi-hamdika. ashhadu-al lā-ilāha illā Anta, astaghfiruka wa utubu ilaika*: "O Allah, I glorify You with Your praises: I bear witness that there is no deity but You: I seek Your forgiveness and offer repentance before You."

The second meaning is: "When you get up from bed, glorify your Lord with His praise." The Holy Prophet acted upon this himself and had also taught his Companions that they should pronounce the following words when they got up after sleep: "*La ilāha ill-Allah waḥda-hū lā sharīka lahū, lahul mulku wa lahul-ḥamdu wa huwa 'alā kulli shai'in Qadīr. Subhān-Allāh-i wal-hamdu lillāhi wa la ilāha ill-Allāh, wallāhu Akbar, wa lā ḥaula wa lā quwwata-illā-billah.*" (Musnad Aḥmad, Bukhārī, on the authority of 'Ubādah bin aṣ-Ṣamit).

Its third meaning is: "When you stand up for the Prayer, begin it with the praise and glorification of Allah." Accordingly, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) taught that the Prayer should be begun, after the first *takbīr*, with the following words: *Subhānak-Allāhumma wa bi-ḥamdī-ka wa tabāarak asmuka wa ta'āla jadduka wa lā ilāha ghairuka*: "Glory be to You, O Allah, and I praise You. Blessed is Your name, and You are exalted. There is no god other than You."

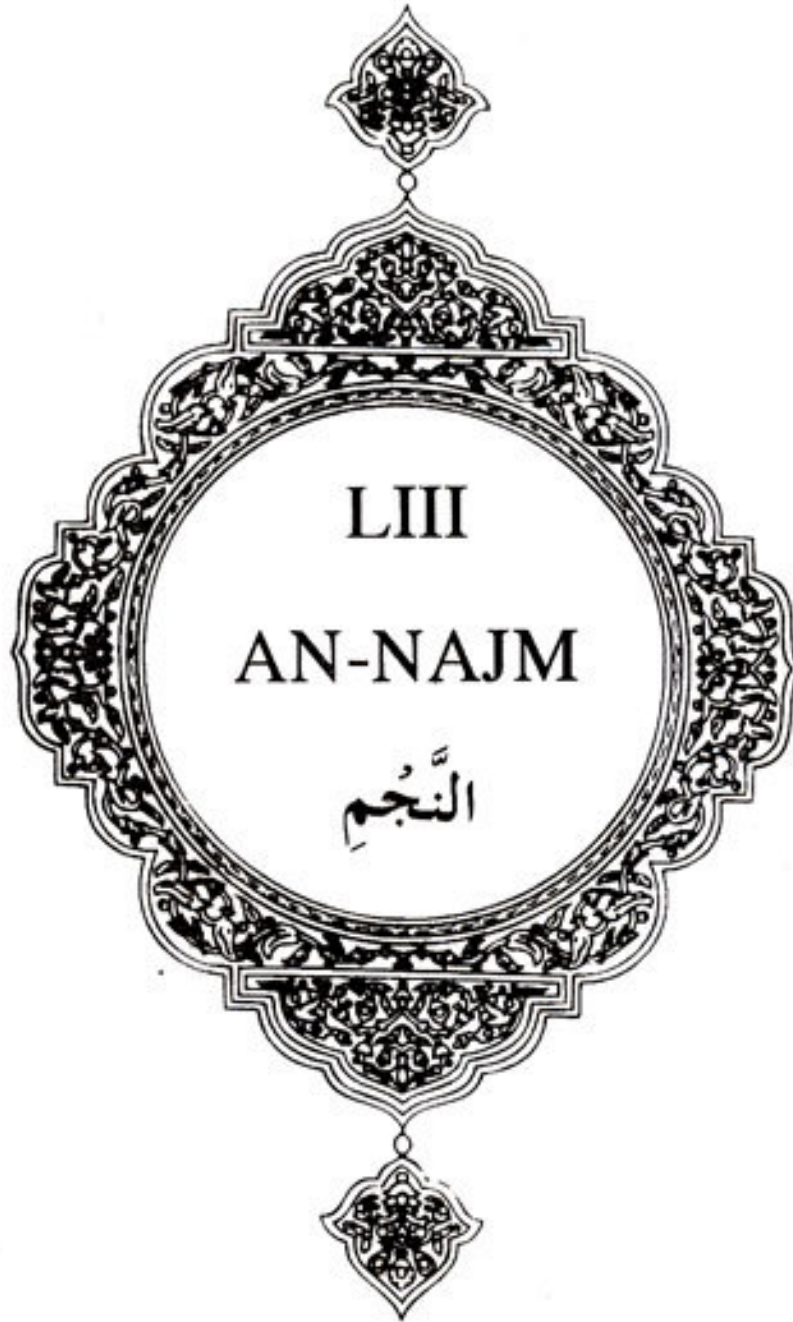
Its fourth meaning is: "When you rise to invite others to Allah, begin your invitation with the praise and glorification of Allah." That also was the Holy Prophet's constant practice, and he always began his addresses with the praise and glorification of Allah Almighty.

Commentator Ibn Jarīr has given still another meaning of it, and it is this: "When you get up after the midday nap, offer the Prayer and this implies the *Zuhr*

Prayer.”

41. This implies the Maghrib, the 'Ishā' and the Tahajjud Prayers as well as the recital of the Qur'an and the remembrance of Allah.

42. "Retreat of the stars" implies the early hours of the morning when the stars set and they lose their lustre on the appearance of dawn. This is the time of the Fajr Prayer.







بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

## LIII

### AN-NAJM

النَّجْمِ

#### INTRODUCTION

##### Name

The Sūrah derives its name from the very first word *wan-Najm*. This title also does not relate to the subject-matter, but is a name given to the Sūrah as a symbol.

##### Period of Revelation

According to a Tradition related by Bukhāri, Muslim, Abū Da'ūd and Nasā'i, on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, the first Sūrah in which a verse requiring the performance of a *sajdah* (prostration) was sent down, is Sūrah An-Najm. The parts of this *Ḥadith* which have been reported by Aswad bin Yazid, Abu Ishāq and Zuhair bin Mu'āwiyah from Ḥaḍrat Ibn Mas'ūd indicate that this is the first Sūrah of the Qur'an, which the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had publicly recited before an assembly of the Quraish (and according to Ibn Mardūyah, in the Ka'bah) in which both the believers and the disbelievers were present. At the end, when he recited the verse requiring the performance of a *sajdah* and fell down in prostration, the whole assembly also fell down in prostration with him.

and even those chiefs of the polytheists who were in the forefront of the opposition to the Holy Prophet (peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) could not resist falling down in prostration. Ibn Mas'ūd (may Allah be pleased with him) says that he saw only one man, Umayyah bin Khalaf, from among the disbelievers, who did not fall down in prostration but took a little dust and rubbing it on his forehead said that that was enough for him. Later, as Ibn Mas'ūd relates, he saw this man being killed in the state of disbelief.

Another eye-witness of this incident is Ḥaḍrat Muṭṭalib bin Abi Wadā'ah, who had not yet become a Muslim. Nasā'i and Musnad Aḥmad contain his own words to the effect: "When the Holy Prophet recited the Sūrah An-Najm and performed the *sajdah* and the whole assembly fell down in prostration along with him, I did not perform the *sajdah*. Now to compensate for the same whenever I recite this Sūrah I make sure never to abandon its performance."

Ibn Sa'd says that before this, in the Rajab of the 5th year of Prophethood, a small group of the Companions had emigrated to Abyssinia. Then, when in the Ramaḍān of the same year this incident took place the news spread that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had recited Sūrah An-Najm publicly in the assembly of the Quraish and the whole assembly, including the believers as well as the disbelievers, had fallen down in prostration with him. When the emigrants to Abyssinia heard this news they formed the impression that the disbelievers of Makkah had become Muslims. Thereupon, some of them returned to Makkah in the Shawwāl of the 5th year of Prophethood, only to learn that the news was wrong and the conflict between Islam and disbelief was raging as furiously as before. Consequently, the second emigration to Abyssinia took place, in which many more people left Makkah.

Thus, it becomes almost certain that this Sūrah was revealed in the Ramaḍān of 5th year of Prophethood.

### Historical Background

The details of the period of revelation as given above point to the conditions in which this Sūrah was revealed. During the first five years of his appointment as a Prophet, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had been extending invitation to Allah's Religion

by presenting the Divine Revelations before the people only in private and restricted meetings and assemblies. During this whole period he could never have a chance to recite the Qur'ān before a common gathering openly, mainly because of the strong opposition and resistance from the disbelievers. They were well aware of how magnetic and captivating was the Holy Prophet's personality and his way of preaching and how impressive were the Revelations of the Qur'ān. Therefore, they tried their best to avoid hearing it themselves and to stop others also from hearing it and to suppress his invitation by false propaganda by spreading every kind of suspicion against him. For this object, on the one hand, they were telling the people that Muḥammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had gone astray and was now bent upon misleading others as well; on the other, they would raise an uproar whenever he tried to present the Qur'ān before the people so that no one could know what it was for which he was being branded as a misled and misguided person.

Such were the conditions when the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) suddenly stood up one day to make a speech in the sacred precincts of the Ka'bah, where a large number of the Quraish had gathered together. Allah at that time made him deliver this discourse, which we have now in the form of the Sūrah An-Najm with us. Such was the intensity of the impression that when the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) started reciting it the opponents were so completely overwhelmed that they could not think of raising any disorder, and when at the conclusion he fell down in prostration, they too fell down in prostration along with him. Later they felt great remorse at the weakness they had involuntarily shown. The people also started taunting them to the effect that whereas they had been forbidding others to listen to the Qur'ān, that day not only had they themselves listened to it, with complete absorption, but had even fallen down in prostration along with Muḥammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). At last, they had to invent a story in order to get rid of the people's taunt and ridicule. They said: *"After he had recited afara'ait-ul-Lata wal-'Uzza wa Manat ath-thālitha-al-ukhra, we heard from Muḥammad the words: tilk-al-gharaniqatal-'ulā, wa anna shafā'at-u-hunna latarja: 'They are exalted goddesses; indeed, their intercession may be expected.'* From this we understood that Muḥammad had

returned to our faith.” As a matter of fact, only a mad person could think that in the context of this Sūrah the sentences they claimed to have heard could have any place and relevance. (For details, please see E.N.’s 96 to 101 of Sūrah Al-Ḥajj).

### Subject-Matter and Topics

The theme of the discourse is to warn the disbelievers of Makkah about the error of the attitude that they had adopted towards the Qur’an and the Prophet Muḥammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

The discourse starts in a way as if to say: “Muḥammad is neither deluded nor gone astray, as you are telling others in your propaganda against him, nor has he fabricated this teaching of Islam and its message, as you seem to think he has. In fact, whatever he is presenting is nothing but Revelation which is sent down to him. The verities that he presents before you, are not the product of his own surmise and speculation but realities of which he himself is an eye-witness. He has himself seen the Angel through whom this knowledge is conveyed to him. He has been directly made to observe the great Signs of his Lord: whatever he says is not what he has himself thought out but what he has seen with his own eyes. Therefore, your disputing and wrangling with him is just like the disputing and wrangling of a blind man with a man of sight over a thing which the blind man cannot see but he can see.”

After this, three things have been presented in their successive order:

First, the listeners have been made to understand that: “The religion that you are following is based on mere conjecture and invented ideas. You have set up a few goddesses like Lāt and Manāt and ‘Uzzā as your deities, whereas they have no share whatever in divinity. You regard the angels as the daughters of Allah, whereas you regard a daughter as disgraceful for your own selves. You think that these deities of yours can influence Allah in your favour, whereas the fact is that all the angels together, who are stationed closest to Allah, cannot influence Him even in their own favour. None of such beliefs that you have adopted, is based on knowledge and reason, but are wishes and desires for the sake of which you have taken some whims as realities. This is a grave error. The right and true religion is that which is in conformity to the reality, and the reality is never subject to the people’s wishes and

desires so that whatever they may regard as a reality and truth should become the reality and truth. Speculation and conjecture cannot help to determine as to what is according to the truth and what is not; it is knowledge. When that knowledge is presented before you, you turn away from it, and brand the one who tells you the truth as misguided. The actual cause of your being involved in this error is that you are heedless of the Hereafter. Only this world is your goal. Therefore, you have neither any desire for the knowledge of reality, nor you bother to see whether the beliefs you hold are according to the truth or not.

Secondly, the people have been told that: Allah is the Master and Sovereign of the entire Universe. The righteous is he who follows His way, and the misguided he who has turned away from His way. The error of the misguided and the righteousness of the righteous are not hidden from Him. He knows whatever everyone is doing: He will requite the evil with evil and the good with good. The final judgement will not depend on what you consider yourself to be, and on tall claims you make of your purity and chastity but on whether you are pious or impious, righteous or un-righteous, in the sight of God. If you refrain from major sins, He in His mercy will overlook your minor errors.

Thirdly, a few basic principles of the true Religion which had been presented hundreds of years before the revelation of the Qur'ān in the Books of the Prophets Abraham and Moses have been re-iterated so that the people did not remain involved in the misunderstanding that the Prophet Muḥammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had brought some new and novel religion, but they should know that these are the fundamental truths which the former Prophets of Allah have always been presenting in their respective ages. Besides, the same Books have been quoted to confirm the historical facts that the destruction of the 'Ād and the Thamūd and of the people of the Prophets Noah and Lot was not the result of accidental calamities, but Allah has destroyed them in consequence of the same wickedness and rebellion from which the disbelievers of Makkah were not inclined to refrain and desist in any case.

After presenting these themes and discourses the Sūrah has been concluded, thus: "The Hour of Judgement has approached near at hand, which no one can avert. Before the occurrence of that Hour you are

being warned through Muḥammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and the Qur'ān in the like manner as the former people had been warned before. Now, is it this warning that you find novel and strange? which you mock and ridicule? which you turn away from and cause disorder so that no one else also is able to hear what it is? Don't you feel like weeping at your folly and ignorance? Abandon this attitude and behaviour, bow down to Allah and serve Him alone!"

This was that impressive conclusion hearing which even the most hardened deniers of the Truth were completely overwhelmed, and when after reciting these verses of Divine Word the Holy Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) fell down in prostration, they too could not help falling down in prostration along with him.





وَالنَّجْمِ إِذَا هَوَىٰ ۗ مَا ضَلَّ صَاحِبُكُمْ وَمَا غَوَىٰ ۗ وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ ۗ  
 إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ ۗ عَلَّمَهُ شَدِيدُ الْقُوَىٰ ۗ ذُو مِرَّةٍ ۗ فَاسْتَوَىٰ ۗ وَهُوَ  
 بِالْأُنْفُِقِ الْأَعْلَىٰ ۗ ثُمَّ دَنَا فَتَدَلَّىٰ ۗ فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَىٰ ۗ فَأَوْحَىٰ  
 إِلَىٰ عَبْدِهِ ۗ مَا أَوْحَىٰ ۗ مَا كَذَبَ الْفُؤَادُ مَا رَأَىٰ ۗ أَفَتَسْمُرُونَ عَلَىٰ مَا يَرَىٰ ۗ  
 وَلَقَدْ رَأَاهُ نَزْلَةً أُخْرَىٰ ۗ عِنْدَ سِدْرَةِ الْمُنْتَهَىٰ ۗ عِنْدَ مَا جَنَّهَ الْمَأْوَىٰ ۗ  
 إِذْ يَغْشَى السِّدْرَةَ مَا يَغْشَىٰ ۗ مَا زَاغَ الْبَصَرُ وَمَا طَغَىٰ ۗ لَقَدْ رَأَىٰ مِنْ آيَاتِ  
 رَبِّهِ الْكُبْرَىٰ ۗ أَفَرَأَيْتُمُ اللَّتَّ وَالْعُزَّىٰ ۗ وَمَنْوَةَ الثَّالِثَةَ الْآخِرَىٰ ۗ أَلْكُمْ  
 الذَّكْرَ وَلَهُ الْأُنْثَىٰ ۗ تِلْكَ إِذْ قَسَمَ ۗ ضِيَازِي ۗ إِنْ هِيَ إِلَّا أَسْمَاءُ سَمَّيْتُمُوهَا  
 أَنْتُمْ وَآبَاؤُكُمْ مِمَّا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ بِهَا مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ ۗ إِنْ يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَمَا  
 تَهْوَى الْأَنْفُسُ ۗ وَلَقَدْ جَاءَهُمْ مِنْ رَبِّهِمُ الْهُدَىٰ ۗ أَمَرَ لِلإِنْسَانِ مَا تَمَنَّىٰ ۗ  
 فِئْتِهِ الْآخِرَةُ وَالْأُولَىٰ ۗ وَكَمْ مِنْ مَلَكٍ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ لَا تُعْنِي شَفَاعَتُهُمْ شَيْئًا  
 إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ أَنْ يَأْذَنَ اللَّهُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَرْضَىٰ ۗ إِنْ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ  
 بِالْآخِرَةِ لَيْسَتُوهن الْمَلَائِكَةَ تَسْمِيَةَ الْإِنْسَىٰ ۗ وَمَا لَهُمْ بِهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ ۗ إِنْ  
 يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ ۗ وَإِنَّ الظَّنَّ لَا يُعْنِي مِنَ الْحَقِّ شَيْئًا ۗ فَأَعْرِضْ عَنْ  
 مَنْ تَوَلَّىٰ ۗ عَنْ ذِكْرِنَا وَكَمْ يُرِدُ إِلَّا الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا ۗ ذَٰلِكَ مَبْلَغُهُمْ مِنَ  
 الْعِلْمِ ۗ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِهِمْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ ۗ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ اهْتَدَىٰ ۗ





## LIII

## AN-NAJM

## النَّجْم

Verses: 62

Revealed at Makkah

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

By the Star<sup>1</sup> when it set, your companion<sup>2</sup> is neither gone astray 1-12  
nor deluded.<sup>3</sup> He does not speak of his own desire; it is but a  
Revelation which is sent down to him.<sup>4</sup> One mighty in power has taught  
him,<sup>5</sup> who is endowed with great wisdom.<sup>6</sup> He stood poised in front  
when he was on the uppermost horizon.<sup>7</sup> Then he drew near and hung  
suspended above, two bow-lengths away or even closer.<sup>8</sup> Then he  
revealed to the servant of Allah whatever he had to reveal.<sup>9</sup> The heart  
belied not what he saw.<sup>10</sup> Do you then dispute with him concerning  
what he sees (with the eyes)?

And he saw him once again by the farthest lote-tree, nearby 13-18  
which is the Garden of Repose.<sup>11</sup> At that time the lote-tree was covered  
with that which covered it.<sup>12</sup> The sight was neither dazzled nor it  
exceeded the limit,<sup>13</sup> and he saw of the greatest Signs of his Lord.<sup>14</sup>

Now tell: Have you ever pondered over the reality of this Lāt, 19-25  
and this 'Uzza, and another, the third goddess, Manāt?<sup>15</sup> Are the sons  
for you and the daughters for Allah?<sup>16</sup> This would indeed be an unfair  
division! These are nothing but mere names which you and your  
forefathers have invented. Allah has sent down no authority for them.<sup>17</sup>  
The fact is that the people are following mere conjecture and the lusts  
of their souls,<sup>18</sup> even though right guidance has come to them from their  
Lord.<sup>19</sup> Is it that whatever man desires should become the truth for  
him?<sup>20</sup> To Allah belongs the present and the Hereafter.

How many an angel is there in the heavens! Their intercession 26-28  
can avail nothing until Allah permits it in favour of whomever He wills  
and is pleased with.<sup>21</sup> But those who do not believe in the Hereafter,

name the angels with the names of goddesses,<sup>22</sup> although they have no knowledge of this. They follow mere conjecture,<sup>23</sup> and conjecture can avail nothing against the Truth.

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1. In the original the word "*an-najm*" has been used. Ibn `Abbās, Mujāhid and Sufyān Thaurī opine that it implies the Pleides. Ibn Jarīr and Zamakhsharī have held this same interpretation as preferable, for in Arabic when the word *an-najm* is used absolutely it usually implies the Pleides. Suddī says that it implies Venus; and Abū `Ubaidah, the grammarian, holds that here the word *an-najm* has been used generically so as to express this idea: "When the day dawned, and the stars set." In view of the context we are of the opinion that this last interpretation is more preferable.

2. "Your Companion" implies the Holy Messenger of Allah (upon whom be peace) and the addressees are the Quraish. The word *Ṣāhib* as used in the original means a friend, a companion, a close associate. Here, making mention of the Holy Prophet by the word *Ṣāhib-u-kum* (your Companion) instead of "Our Messenger" is very meaningful. This is meant to make the people of the Quraish realize: "The person being mentioned is no stranger to you: he is not an outsider whom you may not be knowing or recognizing already. He is a man of your own clan and tribe; he lives and moves among you; even your children know who and what he is, what is his character, what are his dealings, what are his ways and habits and characteristics, and how he has passed his life among you so far. If some one of you were to say an improbable thing about him, there would be a thousand men among you who knew him, who could see for themselves whether what was said actually applied to him or not."

3. This is the thing for which an oath has been sworn by the setting star or stars. "Going astray" means a person's adopting a wrong way being unaware of the right way, and "being deluded" means his adopting the wrong way knowingly and consciously. The verse means: "Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) is a well-known man among you. Your accusation that he has gone astray, or is misguided, is utterly wrong. In fact, he is neither gone astray nor misguided." Here, the propriety of swearing by the setting stars is that in the darkness of the starry night a person cannot see the things of his surroundings clearly, and from their vague appearances can form wrong judgements about them, e.g. he may take a tree for a ghost in the dark, a string for a snake, a rock in the sand for a beast of prey. But when the stars have set and the day has dawned, everything appears before man in its real form and shape, and there remains no doubt whatever about the reality of anything. The same is the case also of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) among you. His life and personality is not hidden in darkness, but is manifest like the bright dawn.

You are aware that this “companion of yours” is a right-minded, wise and sagacious man. How can somebody from among the Quraish have the misunderstanding that he has gone astray? You also know how well-intentioned and honest and righteous person he is. How can one of you form the view that he has knowingly adopted a crooked way not only for himself but has started inviting others also to the same falsehood?

4. It means this: “The things for which you accuse him of having gone astray or been misled and deceived, have neither been fabricated by himself nor motivated by any selfish desire on his part, but they have been sent down, and are being sent down, to him by God. He did not intend to become a Prophet of his own desire so that he might have laid a claim to Prophethood in order to satisfy his desire, but when Allah appointed him to that office through Revelation, then only did he rise to preach his mission and to tell you that he had been appointed God’s Messenger to you. Likewise, this invitation to Islam, this teaching of the doctrine of *Tauhid*, this news about the gathering together of all mankind on the Day of Resurrection and their accountability, the truths that he is presenting about the Universe and Man and the principles of leading a pure life, are not a philosophy propounded by himself, but the knowledge of all this has been bestowed on him by Revelation. Likewise, this Qur`ān that he recites before you, is also not of his own composition but it is Divine Word which is sent down to him by Revelation.”

Here, the question arises: To which of the words spoken by the Holy Prophet do Allah’s Words: “He does not speak of his own desire; it is only a Revelation which is sent down to him,” apply? Do they apply to everything that he spoke, or to some of his words and not to others? The answer is: As far as the Qur`ān is concerned, the Divine Words apply to it most completely. As for the other words, apart from the Qur`ān, which the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) spoke, they could inevitably be of three kinds:

First, those words which he employed for preaching religion and inviting others to Allah, and for explaining the themes, teachings and commands of the Qur`ān, or for giving admonition and instruction to the people to fulfil the object for which the Qur`ān was revealed. In this regard, obviously nobody can have the doubt that, God forbid, he fabricated these things from his own mind. In these matters, his position, in fact, was of the official interpreter of the Qur`ān and of Allah’s authorised representative. Although these things were not revealed to him literally as the Qur`ān was revealed, yet these were necessarily based on the same knowledge that he had been given by Revelation. The only difference between the Qur`ān and these was that the Qur`ān, both in word and in meaning, was entirely from Allah, and in these other things the meanings were those taught by Allah and the words those which he himself employed to express those meanings. On the basis of this very distinction, the Qur`ān has been described as *wahī-jalī* (manifest

Revelation) and the Holy Prophet's other sayings as *wahī-khafi* (concealed Revelation).

The second kind of the words were those which the Holy Prophet spoke in connection with the struggle of raising Allah's Word and his services for establishing Islam. In this regard, he had to perform countless duties of different kinds as the leader and guide of the Muslim community. In this many a time he took counsel with his Companions as well, and followed their advice instead of his own view. On being asked he sometimes told them that he was expressing a particular view not under Allah's command but as his personal opinion, and on several occasions it so happened that he said something on the basis of his own opinion and later an instruction came down against it from Allah. None of the things of this nature that he said or did could be based on a selfish motive. As for the question whether these sayings were based on Divine inspiration, the answer is that except for the things in regard to which he made it explicit that they were not based on Divine command, or about which he took counsel with his Companions and accepted their advice, or with regard to a thing against which Allah sent down an instruction after he had said or done something on the basis of his personal judgement, all other things were based on concealed Revelation (*wahī khafī*) just like the things of the first kind. For the office of the leader and guide of the Islamic Movement and the chief of the believing community and the ruler of the Islamic State, which he held, was not self-invented or bestowed by the people, but he had been appointed to it by Allah, and whatever he said and did in carrying out the duties of this office, his position in it was of the representative of Divine Will. In this matter, whatever he said on the basis of his personal judgement, his judgement in those matters was approved by Allah, and was, derived from the light of the knowledge which Allah had blessed him with. That is why whenever his personal judgement was even slightly turned away from Allah's pleasure, it was immediately rectified by manifest Revelation (*wahī jalī*). This rectification of some of his personal judgements is itself a proof that all the rest of his religious judgements and interpretations were precisely in accordance with Divine Will.

The third kind of the things were those he said concerning common matters of life as a man, which had nothing to do with the duties of Prophethood, which he said before being appointed a Prophet as well as continued saying even after having been appointed a Prophet. About this kind of the things it should be understood at the outset that there was no dispute with the disbelievers concerning them. They had not accused him of being a misled and misguided person because of these but because of the first two kinds of the things. These things were not disputed and therefore could not become the cause of a verse from Allah. But although they were not the subject of any dispute, yet the fact is that in this private aspect of his life also never did the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) utter a

word that was opposed to the truth, but at all times, under all conditions, his words and deeds remained within the bounds that Allah had prescribed for living his life as a Prophet and righteous man. Therefore, the light of Revelation shone in that sphere as well. This same thing has been reported from the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) in some authentic *Aḥādīth*. In Musnad Ahmad a Tradition has been related on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, saying that the Holy Prophet once said: "I never say anything but what is true and right." A Companion said, "O Messenger of Allah, you say things sometimes in jest also." The Holy Prophet replied: "Indeed, I never say anything but the truth." According to Musnad Aḥmad and Abū Da'ūd, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin 'Āṣ is reported to have said: "I used to write down whatever I heard from the sacred tongue of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) so as to preserve it. The people of the Quraish forbade me to do this, saying: 'You are writing down everything whereas the Holy Prophet is a man: he sometimes says things in the state of anger too'. At this I gave up writing. Afterwards when I mentioned this before the Holy Prophet, he said: 'You should continue writing: By Him in Whose hand is my life, never have I said anything but the truth'." (For a complete discussion of this question, see my book *Tafhīmāt* vol. I, Article: Prophethood and Its Injunctions).

5. That is, "There is no human being who teaches him this, as you seem to think, but he obtains this knowledge through a supernatural source." According to some people, "mighty in power" implies Allah Himself, but a great majority of the commentators are agreed that it implies the Angel Gabriel (upon whom be peace). This same view has been reported from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, Qatādah, Mujāhid and Rabi' bin Anas, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Kathīr, Razi, Ālūsī and others also have adopted this very view. Shah Waliyullah and Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī also have followed this same view in their translations. And the fact is that from the other explanations of the Qur'ān itself also this very thing is confirmed. In Sūrah Takwīr it has been said: "This indeed is the Word of a noble Messenger, who has great power and high rank with the Owner of the Throne: there he is obeyed and held as trustworthy. And (O people of Makkah), your Companion is not mad. He has seen that Messenger on the bright horizon." (vv. 19-23). Then, in Sūrah Al-Baqarah: 97, the Angel has been mentioned by name through whom this teaching had been revealed on the heart of the Prophet: "Say to them: Whoever is enemy to Gabriel should understand that he has, by Allah's Command, revealed to your heart the Qur'ān." If these verses are read with this verse of Sūrah An-Najm, there remains no doubt that here "mighty in power" implies the Angel Gabriel and not Allah. More about it to follow.

Here, some people express the doubt as to how the Angel Gabriel can be regarded as the Holy Prophet Muḥammad's teacher. For this would mean that he

was the teacher and the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) his pupil, and this would place him above the Holy Prophet in rank. But this suspicion is misplaced, because Gabriel did not impart instruction to the Holy Prophet from any personal knowledge of his own, which might give him superiority over the Holy Prophet. Allah, in fact, had made him a means of conveying knowledge to the Holy Prophet, and he was the Holy Prophet's teacher in the metaphoric sense for being only a medium of instruction. That does not give him any superiority whatever. To quote an example: After the Prayer was prescribed five times a day, Allah sent Gabriel (peace be upon him) to teach the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) the correct times of the Prayers, and he led him in the Prayers five times daily for two days. This has been related in Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhī and Mu'awwā and other collections of the *Aḥādīth*, with authentic chains of reporters, and in this the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) himself has explained that he was the follower and Gabriel his leader in the Prayers. But his being made the leader only for the purpose of instruction does not mean that he was superior to the Holy Prophet in rank.

6. Ibn 'Abbās and Qatādah take *dhū-mirra-tin* of the Text in the meaning of beautiful and grand. Mujāhid, Ḥasan Baṣri, Ibn Zaid and Sufyān Thaurī say that it means strong and powerful. Sa'id bin Musayyab has expressed the opinion that it means wise. In a *Ḥadīth* the Holy Prophet has used this word in the sense of healthy and sound. In Arabic usage this word is used in the meaning of sound in judgement, wise and learned also. Allah has chosen this word for Gabriel (peace be upon him) here because he possesses both intellectual and physical powers to the highest degree. We have adopted only one of these meanings in the translation, for his physical powers have been mentioned in the preceding sentence.

7. The horizon means the eastern edge of the sky where the sun rises and the day dawns. The same has been referred to as *ufuq mubīn* (bright horizon) in Sūrah Takwīr: 23. Both the verses make it explicit that when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) saw Gabriel (peace be upon him) for the first time, he had appeared on the eastern horizon of the sky; and there are several authentic Traditions which show that at that time he was in his real shape in which Allah has created him. We shall quote all such Traditions below.

8. That is, "After appearing on the uppermost edge of the sky, Gabriel started advancing towards the Prophet till he reached and hung suspended above him in mid air. Then he bent down to him and came within just two bow-lengths or even closer." The commentators generally have taken *qāba qausain* in the meaning of "two bow-lengths", but Hadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās and Hadrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd have taken *qaus* in the meaning of a *dhirā* (an arm-length, cubit), and have interpreted the words *kāna qāba qausain*, saying that the distance between them was reduced to only two arm-lengths. And since all bows are not

equal in length, the approximate distance has been expressed by "two bow-lengths away or even closer."

9. The sentence *fā auḥā ilā 'abd-i-ḥī mā auḥā* of the Text can have two translations: (1) "He revealed to His (Allah's) servant whatever he revealed"; and (2) "He (Allah) revealed to His own servant whatever He revealed." According to the first translation, the meaning would be: Gabriel revealed to the servant of Allah whatever he had to reveal"; according to the second: "Allah revealed through Gabriel to His servant whatever He had to reveal." The commentators have given both these meanings; the first meaning, however, fits in better with the context, and the same has been reported from Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan Basri and Ibn Zaid. Here, the question may be asked: "How can the pronoun of *'abd-i-ḥī* turn to Allah instead of to the subject of *auḥā*, whereas Allah has nowhere been mentioned from the beginning of the Sūrah to this place?" The answer is that wherever it becomes apparent from the context that the antecedent of a pronoun refers to a particular person, the pronoun turns to him automatically whether it has been mentioned before or not. There are several instances of this available in the Qur'ān itself. In Sūrah Al-Qadr: 1, Allah says: "We have sent it down in the Night of Glory." There is no mention of the Qur'ān in this sentence, but the context explicitly shows that the antecedent of the pronoun is the Qur'ān. At another place Allah says: "If Allah were to seize the people because of their misdeeds, He would not leave any creature (unpunished) on its back." In this sentence there is no mention of the earth anywhere, but the context clearly shows that "its back" implies "the earth's back". In Sūrah Yā Sīn: 69, it has been said: "We have not taught him poetry, nor does poetry behove him." Here, there is no mention of the Holy Prophet, neither before this sentence nor after it, yet the context is explicit that the antecedent of the pronouns is the Holy Prophet himself. In Sūrah Ar-Rahmān: 26, it has been said: "Whatever exists on it shall perish." There is no mention of the earth either before or after it, but the style clearly shows that the pronoun of *'alaiḥā* turns to it. In Sūrah Al-Wāqī'ah: 35, it has been said: "We shall have created them especially." There is no noun or pronoun before or after it to which the pronoun of *humna* may be referring. It is apparent from the context that it signifies the women of Paradise. Thus, as *auḥā ilā 'abd-i-ḥī* cannot at all mean that Gabriel revealed to his servant, the meaning necessarily would be that "Gabriel revealed to the servant of Allah", or that "Allah revealed to His own servant through Gabriel."

10. That is, "As the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be peace) observed all this in broad daylight in the waking condition, with open eyes, his heart did not deem it was a delusion, or that it was a jinn or a devil, who had appeared before him, or that it was an imaginary figure, or a vision that he was seeing while awake, but his heart fully confirmed what his eyes saw. He did not

for a moment doubt that it was the Angel Gabriel and the Message he was conveying was indeed God's Revelation to him."

Here, the question arises: How is it that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) did not entertain any doubt at all concerning such a wonderful and extraordinary observation, and he confirmed with full faith that whatever his eyes saw was an actual fact and not an imaginary figure, nor a jinn or devil? When we consider this question deeply we are led to five reasons for it:

First, that the external conditions in which this observation was made, testified to its truth and validity. The Holy Prophet did not observe this in darkness, or in a state of meditation, or in a vision, or in a sleep-like condition, but the day had dawned and he was fully awake, and he was seeing the whole scene in the broad daylight in the open with his own eyes precisely in the way as one sees the other things in the world. If doubt is cast on this, then whatever we see in the day time, e.g. rivers, mountains, men, houses, etc., also would become doubtful and illusory.

Second, that the Holy Prophet's own internal condition also testified to its validity. He was in his full senses. He had no idea whatever in his mind that he should observe, or that he was going to observe, such a thing. His mind was absolutely free from such a thought and any longing for it, and in this state he met with this experience suddenly. There was no room for doubting that the eyes were seeing an actual scene, but that an imaginary thing had appeared before his eyes.

Third, that the being who had appeared before him in that condition was so marvellous and magnificent, so beautiful and bright, that neither had he ever had any concept of such a being before that he could take it for a product of his own imagination, nor could a jinn or a devil have such an appearance that he would have taken him for a being other than an angel. Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd has reported that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) said: "I saw Gabriel in the shape that he had six hundred wings." (Musnad Aḥmad). In another Tradition Ibn Mas'ūd has further explained that each single wing of Gabriel (on whom be peace) was so extensive that it seemed to be covering the whole horizon (Musnad Aḥmad). Allah Himself has described him as *shadīd al-quwā* (one mighty in power) and *dhū-mirra* (one endowed with great wisdom).

Fourth, that the teaching that the being was imparting also testified to the validity of the observation. The Holy Prophet had no concept of the knowledge that he received suddenly through him, a knowledge that comprehended the realities and truths of the whole Universe. About it he could not have the doubt that it consisted of his own ideas which were being set and arranged by his own mind. Likewise, there was no ground for thinking either that it was Satan who was imparting that knowledge to him and thus deluding him, for it is not for Satan that



he should teach, nor can he ever teach, the doctrine of *Tauhid* to man as against polytheism and idol-worship, that he should warn of the accountability of the Hereafter, that he should create contempt against ignorance and its practices, that he should invite people to moral excellences, and should exhort a person not only to accept that teaching himself but should also rise to eradicate polytheism, injustice, wickedness and sin from the world and replace these evils by the virtues of *Tauhid*, justice, equity and piety.

The fifth and by far the most important reason is that when Allah chooses a certain person for His Prophethood, He cleanses his heart of doubts and suspicions and evil suggestions and fills it with faith and conviction. In this state no hesitation or vacillation is caused in his mind about the validity of whatever his eyes see and his ears hear. He accepts with complete satisfaction of the heart every truth that is revealed to him by his Lord, whether it is in the form of an observation that he is made to witness with the eyes, or in the form of knowledge which he is inspired with, or in the form of a Revelation that is recited to him literally. In all these cases the Prophet is fully aware that he is absolutely safe and secure against Satanic interference of every kind, and whatever he is receiving in any form is precisely and definitely from his Lord. Like all God-given feelings this sense and feeling of the Prophet also is a certainty which does not admit of any misunderstanding. Just as the fish has a God-given sense of being a swimmer, the bird of being a bird, and the man of being a man, and there can be no likelihood of any misunderstanding in this regard, so has the Prophet also a God-given sense of his being a Prophet. He does not even for a moment entertain the doubt that he has perhaps been involved in the misunderstanding of being a Prophet.

11. This is about the Holy Prophet's second meeting with Gabriel (upon whom be peace) in which he appeared before him in his real shape and nature. The place where this meeting took place has been described as *Sidrat-al-muntahā*, along with which it has been said that nearby it is located *Jannat al ma'vā* (Garden of Repose).

*Sidrah* in Arabic means the lote-tree and *muntahā* the extreme edge or limit. Thus, literally, *sidrat al-muntahā* means "the lote-tree that is situated on the extreme edge or limit". 'Allāma Ālūsī in his *Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī* has explained it thus: "At this the knowledge of every learned man comes to an end; whatever is beyond it is known to none but Allah." Almost the same explanation of it has been given by Ibn Jarīr in his commentary, and by Ibn Kathīr in *An-Nihāyah fī Gharīb al-Ḥadīth wal-Āthār*. It is difficult for us to know what kind of a lote-tree it is that is situated at the farthest end of this physical world and what is its nature and state. These are the mysteries of the Divine Universe which are incomprehensible for

us. In any case, it is some such thing for which there was no more appropriate word than "*sidrah*" in human language, in the sight of Allah.

"*Jannat al-ma'vā*" literally means "the *Jannat* (Garden) that is to be an abode." Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan Baṣri says that this is the same *Jannat* which the believers and righteous will be given in the Hereafter, and from this same verse he has argued that that *Jannat* is in the heavens. Qatādah says that this is the *Jannat* in which the souls of the martyrs are kept; it does not imply the *Jannat* that is to be given in the Hereafter. Ibn 'Abbās also says the same but adds that the *Jannat* to be granted to the believers in the Hereafter is not in the heavens but here on the earth.

12. That is, "its Splendour and Glory exceeds all description. The Divine Glory and effulgence was such as can neither be conceived by man nor can any human language depict it adequately.

13. That is, "On the one hand, the Holy Messenger of Allah was so firm and steadfast that even in the Presence of the great Divine Splendour and Glory his sight was not dazzled and he went on gazing at it with great composure. On the other, he was in such complete control of himself and so exclusively attentive that he kept his mind and his sight focussed upon the object for which he had been summoned, and he did not let his sight wander to any side like a spectator's to have a glimpse of the wonderful objects present there. This can be understood by the example of a person who gets an opportunity to be present in the court of a mighty and powerful king, where he comes across such glory and splendour that had never even been conceived by him before. Now, if he be a shallow person, he would be struck with amazement, and if he be un-initiated in the court etiquette, he would become heedless of the royal presence and would turn his gaze to every side to look at the embellishments of the court. But a noble, reverent and dutiful person will neither be stupefied and confounded, nor will become lost in witnessing the court, but will present himself with full dignity and will keep his mind concentrated on the object for which he had been summoned in the royal court. This very virtue and quality of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has been esteemed in this verse.

14. This verse clearly states that the Holy Prophet had not seen Allah but His wonderful Signs. Even according to the context, this second meeting also took place with the same being with whom the first meeting had taken place. Therefore, one will have to admit that neither the one whom he had first seen on the uppermost horizon was Allah nor he whom he saw afterwards by the farthest lote-tree was Allah. Had he seen Allah Almighty on either occasion it would have been a great thing and must certainly have been mentioned here explicitly. About the Prophet Moses it has been said in the Qur'ān that he had besought to see Allah

and the reply given was: *Lan tarānī* "You cannot see Me." (Al-A'rāf 143). Now, obviously if this honour that was not granted to the Prophet Moses, had been granted to the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings), it would by itself have been such an important thing which must have been stated in clear words. But we see that nowhere in the Qur'ān has it been said that the Holy Prophet had seen his Sustainer and Lord. But in Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl also, where mention has been made of the event of *Mi'rāj* (Ascension), it has been said that "We had transported Our servant...so that We may show him some of Our Signs" (*li-nuriya-hū min āyāt-i nā*), and here in connection with his visit at *Sidrat al-muntahā* also it has been said: "He saw of the greatest Signs of His Lord" (*laqad ra'ā min āyāt-i Rabb-i-hil kubrā*).

In view of these reasons apparently there was no ground for the dispute whether the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) on both these occasions had seen Allah Almighty or the Angel Gabriel (on whom be peace). But, the reason that has given rise to this dispute is that the traditions of *Ḥadīth* differ on this question. Below we reproduce in their sequence the *Aḥādīth* that have been reported from the different Companions in this regard:

(1) Traditions of Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah:

Ḥaḍrat Masrūq has stated in *Kitāb at-Tafsīr* of Bukhārī asked Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah: O mother of the faithful! Had Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) seen his Lord and Sustainer? She replied: Your question has terrified me. Why do you forget that if a person lays claim to three of the things, he would lay a false claim? (The first of these things that Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah mentioned was): Whoever among you says that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) had seen his Lord and Sustainer, tells a lie. Then Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah recited these verses: *Lā tudriku-hul-abṣār* "Eyes cannot comprehend Him;" and: *Mā kāna li-bashar-in anyyukallima-hullāh-u illā waḥy-an au min-warā-i-ḥijab- in au yursila rasūl an fayū-hiā bi-idhni hī mā yashā-u*: "It is not given to any mortal that Allah should speak to him, face to face; He speaks either through Revelation (secret instruction), or from behind a curtain, or He sends a messenger (an angel), who by Allah's Command, reveals whatever He wills." (Ash-Shūrā: 51). Then she said: "The Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) in fact had seen Gabriel (on whom be peace) in his real shape twice."

A part of this *Ḥadīth* is also found in Bukhārī (chapter 4 of *Kitāb at-Tauhīd*) And in the tradition that Bukhārī has cited from Masrūq in *Kitāb Bidā'al-Khalq*, he states: "Hearing this thing from Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, I asked: What would then Allah's words, *Thumma danā fa-tadallā, fa-Kāna qāba qausain-i au adnā*, mean? She replied: This refers to Gabriel; he always appeared before the Holy

Prophet in human shape, but on this occasion he had appeared before him in his real shape and nature and the whole horizon was filled with him."

In Muslim (*Kitāb al-Imān, Bābu fī Dhikr Sidrat al-muntahā*) this conversation between Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah and Masrūq has been related in greater detail, its most important part being this: "Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah said: The one who claims that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) had seen his Lord and Sustainer imputes a lie to Allah. Masrūq says: I was leaning back. Hearing this I sat up and said: Mother of the faithful, do not make haste: Has not Allah said: *wa laqad ra'ā-hu bil-ufuq-il mubīn?* and *laqad ra'ā-hu nazlat-an ukhrā*? Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah replied: I was the first one in this *Ummah* who inquired of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) about this. He had replied: "It was Gabriel (on whom be peace). I have never seen him in his real shape and form in which Allah has created him except on these two occasions. On these two occasions I saw him descending from the heavens and his great presence was covering the whole space between the earth and the heavens."

Ibn Mardūyah has related this tradition of Masrūq, thus: "Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah said: I was indeed the first person who asked the Holy Prophet: Did you ever see your Lord and Sustainer? He replied: No, I had only seen Gabriel descending from the heavens."

(2) Traditions of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd:

Bukhārī (*Kitāb at-Tafsīr*), Muslim (*Kitāb al-Imān*) and Tirmidhī (*Abwāb at-Tafsīr*) contain a tradition on the authority of Zirr bin Ḥubaish, saying that Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd gave this commentary of *fa-kāna qāba qausain-i au adnā*: "The Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) saw Gabriel (on whom be peace) in the shape that he had six hundred wings."

In the other traditions of Muslim, Zirr bin Ḥubaish has reported this very commentary of *Ma kadhab al-fu'ādu mā ra'ā* and *laqad ra'ā min āyāt-i Rabbi-hil kubrā* from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd.

In Musnad Aḥmad this commentary of Ibn Mas'ūd has been reported by 'Abdur Raḥmān bin Yazid and Abū Wā'il also besides Zirr bin Ḥubaish. Furthermore, in Musnad Aḥmad two more traditions of Zirr bin Ḥubaish have been related in which Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd commenting upon *wa laqad ra'ā-hu nazlat-an ukhrā, 'inda-sidrat-il muntahā* stated: "The Holy Messenger of Allah said that he saw Gabriel by the lote-tree he had six hundred wings. "Imām Aḥmad has cited a tradition on the same subject, on the authority of Shaqīq bin Salamah also, in which he states that he heard Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd saying that the Holy Prophet himself had said that he had seen Gabriel (on whom be peace) in that shape at *sidrat al-muntahā*.

(3) When 'Aṭā' bin Abī Rabāḥ asked Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah the meaning of the verse *laqad ra'ā-hu nazlat-an ukhrā*, he replied: "The Holy Prophet had seen Gabriel (on whom be peace).": (Muslim: *Kitāb al Imān*).

(4) Imām Muslim has related in *kitāb al-Imān* two traditions of 'Abdullah bin Shaḥīq on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Abū Dharr Ghifārī, in one of which he says that he asked the Holy Prophet: "Did you ever see your Lord?" The Holy Prophet replied: *Nūr-un annā arā-hu*; and in the other he says that the Holy Prophet gave this answer to his question: *Ra'aitu nūr-an*. Of the first answer of the Holy Prophet Ibn al-Qayyim has given this meaning in his *Zād al-Ma'ād*: "Between me and the sight of my Lord there was Light," and of the second this: "I did not see my Lord but only a Light."

Nasā'ī and Ibn Abī Hātim have reported the saying of Ḥaḍrat Abū Dharr, thus: "The Holy Prophet had seen his Lord with the heart (mind), not with the eyes.

(5) Imām Muslim in his *Kitāb al-Imān* has related this tradition from Ḥaḍrat Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī: "The Holy Prophet said: The sight of no one from among His creatures has reached Allah Almighty."

(6) Traditions of Hadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās:

According to Muslim, when Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās was asked the meaning of: *Mā kadhab al-fu'ādu mā ar'ā, wa laqad ra'ā hu nazlat-an ukhrā*, he said: "The Holy Messenger of Allah saw his Lord twice with his heart." This tradition is also contained in Musnad Aḥmad.

Ibn Mardūyah has cited this saying of Ibn 'Abbās, on the authority of 'Aṭā' bin Abī Rabāḥ: The Holy Messenger of Allah had not seen Allah with the eyes but with the heart."

Nasā'ī contains a tradition from 'Ikrimah saying that Ibn 'Abbās said "Do you wonder at this that Allah made the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) His friend, blessed Moses with His Word and honoured Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) with His sight?" Ḥākim also has cited this tradition and held it as authentic.

In Tirmidhī, there is a tradition from Sha'bī to the effect that Ibn 'Abbās said in a gathering: "Allah had distributed His Sight and His Word between Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) and Moses (upon whom be peace). He spoke to Moses twice, and Muḥammad saw Him twice." Hearing these very words of Ibn 'Abbās, Masrūq had approached Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah with the question: "Had Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) seen his Lord?" She had replied: "What you have said has made my hair stand on end." After this the same

dialogue that we have cited above under the tradition of Hadrat 'Ā'ishah took place between Hadrat 'Ā'ishah and Masrūq.

In one of the traditions reported in Tirmidhī from Ibn 'Abbās, he says: "The Holy Prophet had seen Allah Almighty." In yet another he says: "He had seen Him twice", and in a third one; "He had seen Him with the heart."

In Musnad Aḥmad a tradition from Ibn 'Abbās is to the effect: "The Holy Prophet said: I saw my Lord, the blessed, the exalted." In another tradition he says: "The Holy Messenger of Allah said: Tonight my Lord came to me in the best shape." I think that by this the Holy Prophet meant that he saw Allah Almighty in a vision.

Ṭabarānī and Ibn Mardūyah have related this tradition also from Ibn 'Abbās: "The Holy Messenger of Allah had seen his Lord twice, once with the eyes and the second time with the heart."

- (7) Muḥammad bin Ka'b al-Qurẓī states that when some of the Companions asked the Holy Prophet, "Did you ever see your Lord?" he replied: "I have seen Him twice with my heart." (Ibn Abī Hātim) Ibn Jarīr has related this very tradition, thus: "He said: I have not seen Him with the eye, but with the heart twice."
- (8) A tradition of Hadrat Anas bin Mālik which Imām Bukhārī has cited in his *Kitāb at-Tauḥīd* in connection with the event of the *Mi'rāj*, on the authority of Sharīk bin 'Abdullah, contains words to the effect: "When the Holy Prophet reached *sidrat al-muntahā*, Allah Almighty drew near him and hung suspended above him till there remained between the Holy Prophet and Him a distance equal to two bow-lengths or even less. Then, what Allah revealed to him included the Command for 50 Prayers." But, besides the objections that Imām Khattābī, Hāfiz Ibn Hajar, Ibn Hazm and Hāfiz 'Abdul Haq (author of *Al-Jam' bain al-Sahīḥain*) have raised in respect of the authenticity and subject-matter of this tradition, the main objection against it is that it clearly contradicts the Qur'ān, for the Qur'ān mentions two separate occasions when the experience of the vision took place, the first initially at the uppermost horizon to which reference has been made in: *Danā fa-tadallā, fa-kāna qāba qausain-i au adnā*, and a second time near *sidrat al muntahā*. But this tradition mixes up the two occasions and presents them both as one occasion of the vision. Therefore, because of its being contradictory to the Qur'ān, it cannot be acceptable in any case.

As for the other traditions that we have cited above, the weightiest among them are those that have been related from Hadrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd and Hadrat 'Ā'ishah, for both of them have unanimously reported this saying of the

Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) himself that on neither occasion he had seen Allah but Gabriel (peace be on him), and these traditions fully conform to the explanations and allusions of the Qur'ān. Furthermore, they are also confirmed by the sayings of the Holy Prophet which Ḥaḍrat Abū Dharr and Ḥaḍrat Abū Musa al-Ash'arī have reported from him. On the contrary the traditions that have been cited from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās in the books of *Hadith* are self-contradictory. In some he regards both the experiences as a vision with the eyes, in some both as a vision with the heart, in some one with the eyes and the other with the heart, and in some he wholly negates the vision with the eyes. In none of these traditions he has cited any saying of the Holy Prophet himself and where he has cited such a saying, it contains no mention of either of the two experiences stated in the Qur'ān; besides, the explanation of one of his traditions given by the other indicates that the Holy Prophet at some time had seen Allah Almighty not in the waking condition but in a vision during sleep. Therefore, in fact, for the commentary of these verses the traditions ascribed to Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbas cannot be held as reliable. Likewise, although the traditions of Muḥammad bin Ka'b al-Qurẓī cite a saying of the Holy Prophet, they do not mention the names of the Companions who might have heard this thing from the Holy Prophet himself. Moreover, in one of them it has been said that the Holy Prophet had clearly denied having seen Allah with the eyes.

15. That is, "You regard the teachings being given to you by Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) as erroneous and falsehood, whereas he is being given this knowledge by Allah, and Allah has made him see with his own eyes the verities to which he is testifying before you. Now consider it for yourself as to how irrational are the beliefs that you are following persistently and as to whom you are causing loss by opposing and resisting the person who is guiding you to the Right Way. In this connection, especially the three goddesses that were worshipped generally by the people of Makkah, Ṭā'if and other parts of Ḥijaz have been taken as an example. About them, they have been asked: Have you ever considered rationally whether they could have even the slightest role in the affairs of the Godhead of the earth and heavens? Or could they bear any relationship whatever with the Lord of the Universe?"

The shrine of Lāt was in Ṭā'if and the Banī Thaḳīf were so devoted to it that when Abrahā was advancing to Makkah with his army of elephants to destroy the Ka'bah, the people only in order to save the temple of their deity had provided the wicked man with guides to lead him to Makkah so that he should spare Lāt, whereas like all the Arabs the people of Thaḳīf also believed that the Ka'bah is Allah's House. Scholars have disputed the meaning of Lāt. According to Ibn Jarīr Ṭabari, it is the feminine gender of Allah, i.e. originally this word was *allahatu*, which became al-Lat. According to Zamakhshari, it is derived from *lava yalva*,

which means to turn to or bow to somebody. As the polytheists turned to it for worship and bowed to it and circumambulated it, it began to be called Lāt. Ibn 'Abbās reads it as *latt* (with a stress on t) and holds it is derived from *latt yalittu*, which means to churn and mix together. He and Mujāhid state that this, in fact, was a man, who lived on a rock near Ṭā'if, and used to entertain the pilgrims to Makkah with barley drinks and food. When he died the people built a shrine to him on the same rock and began to worship him. But this explanation of Lāt, in spite of having been reported on the authority of scholars like Ibn 'Abbās and Mujāhid, is not acceptable for two reasons. First, that in the Qur'ān it has been called Lāt and not Latt; second, that the Qur'ān describes all the three as goddesses, and according to this tradition Lāt was a man, not a woman.

'Uzzā is derived from *'izzat*, and it means the one (female) enjoying veneration and respect. This was the special goddess of the Quraish and her shrine was situated at Ḥurād in the valley of Nakhlah, between Makkah and Ṭā'if. (For the location of Nakhlah, see E.N. 33 of Sūrah Al-Aḥqāf). The people of Banī Shaibān, who were the allies of the Banī Hāshim, were its attendants. The Quraish and the people of other tribes paid visits to it and presented offerings and made sacrifices to it. As for the Ka'bah sacrificial animals were driven to it also and it was held in the highest esteem. Ibn Hiṣṣām relates that when Abu Uḥaiyah was on the point of death, Abū Lahab paid him a visit and found him weeping. Abū Lahab asked, "Why do you weep, Abū Uḥaiyah? Are you afraid of death?—and death is the destiny of everybody!" He said, "By God, I do not weep because of the fear of death, but I am grieved to think as to how 'Uzzā will be worshipped after me." Abū Lahab said, "It was neither worshipped for your sake in your lifetime, nor will it be given up after you have left the world." Abū Uḥaiyah said, "Now I am satisfied that there are people who will take my place after me."

The shrine of Manāt was situated at Qudaid by the Red Sea between Makkah and Madīnah, and the people of Khuzā'ah and Aus and Khazraj were in particular its great devotees. People visited it as pilgrims, circumambulated it and made offerings and sacrifices before it. In the Ḥajj months as soon as the pilgrims became free from their visit to the Ka'bah and the religious services at Minā and 'Arafāt, they would start raising cries of "*Labbaik, labbaik*" even there for the purpose of visiting Manāt, and the people who intended to go on this second "ḥajj" did not run between the Ṣafā and the Marwah.

16. That is, "You held these goddesses as daughters of Allah, Lord of the worlds, and did not consider while inventing this absurd creed that as for yourselves you regarded the birth of a daughter as disgraceful, and desired to have only male children, but as for Allah you assign to Him only daughters!"



17. That is, "Those whom you call gods and goddesses are neither gods nor goddesses, nor do they possess any attribute of divinity, nor any share whatever in the powers of Godhead. You have of your own whim made them children of God and deities and associates in Godhead. Allah has sent down no authority which you may produce as a proof in support of your presumptions."

18. In other words, the basic causes of their deviation are two: First, that they do not feel any need for the knowledge of reality for the purpose of adopting a creed and religion, but make a supposition on the basis of a mere conjecture and then put belief in it as though it were the reality. Second, that they have, in fact, adopted this attitude in order to follow the lusts of their souls: they desire that they should have such a deity as should help them attain their aims and objects in the world, and if at all there is to be a Hereafter, it should take the responsibility to have them granted forgiveness there too. But it should not impose any restriction of the lawful and the unlawful on them nor should bind them in any discipline of morality. That is why they do not feel inclined to worship One God as taught by the Prophets, and only like to worship these invented gods and goddesses.

19. That is, in every age the Prophets appointed by Allah have been guiding these wicked people to the Truth, and now Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) has come to tell them as to whom belongs Godhead in reality in the Universe.

20. Another meaning of this verse can be: "Is man entitled to take anyone he pleases as his god?" Still another meaning can be: "Can the desire of man to have his prayers answered by these gods ever be fulfilled?"

21. That is, "Even if all the angels together intercede for a person, it cannot be beneficial for him not to speak of the intercession by these invented deities of yours, which can do no one any good. All the powers of Godhead rest with Allah. Even the angels cannot dare intercede for somebody before Him unless He permits it and is pleased to hear their intercession in his behalf."

22. That is, "Their first folly is that they have taken these powerless angels who cannot even intercede for anyone before Allah as their deities; their second folly is that they regard them as female and daughters of Allah. The basic reason for these errors is that they do not believe in the Hereafter. For had they been believers in the Hereafter, they would never have behaved so irrationally and irresponsibly. Their denial of the Hereafter has made them heedless of their end, and they think that believing or disbelieving in God, or believing in a thousand gods, does not make any difference, for none of these creeds seems to entail any good or bad result in the present life of the world. Whether the people are deniers

*Contd. on p.224*

وَ لِلّٰهِ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْاَرْضِ لَا يُجْزَى الَّذِيْنَ اَسَاءُوْا بِمَا عَمِلُوْا وَّ  
 يُجْزَى الَّذِيْنَ اَحْسَنُوْا بِالْحُسْنٰى ۗ الَّذِيْنَ يَجْتَنِبُوْنَ كَبِيْرَ الْاِثْمِ وَالْفَوَاحِشِ  
 اِلَّا اللَّسْمَ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ وَّاسِعُ الْمَغْفِرَةِ ۗ هُوَ اَعْلَمُ بِكُمْ اِذْ اَنْشَاَكُمْ مِّنَ الْاَرْضِ وَّ  
 اُرَادَتْكُمْ اَجْنَتُهُ فِى بُطُوْنِ اُمَّهَاتِكُمْ ۗ فَلَا تُرْكُوْا اَنْفُسَكُمْ ۗ هُوَ اَعْلَمُ بِمِىْنَ اَتَقٰى ۗ  
 اَفَرَيْتَ الَّذِيْ تُوَلِّى ۗ وَ اَعْطٰى قَلِيْلًا وَّ اَكْثٰى ۗ اَعِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ الْغَيْبِ فَهُوَ  
 يَرٰى ۗ اَمَرَ لَمْ يُنْبِئْ بِهَا فِى صُحْفِ مُوسٰى ۗ وَ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ الَّذِيْ وُقِيَ ۗ اِلَّا تَزِرُ  
 وَازِرَةً وَّ زَرًّا ۗ اٰخْرٰى ۗ وَ اَنْ كَيْسَ لِلْاِنْسَانِ اِلَّا مَا سَعٰى ۗ وَ اَنْ سَعِيَهُ سَوْفَ  
 يُرٰى ۗ ثُمَّ يُجْزٰى الْجَزَاءَ الْاَوَّلٰى ۗ وَ اَنْ اِلٰى رَبِّكَ الْمُنْتَهٰى ۗ وَ اِنَّهُ هُوَ اَضْحٰكُ  
 وَ اَبْكٰى ۗ وَ اِنَّهُ هُوَ اَمَاتٌ وَّ اَحْيَا ۗ وَ اِنَّهُ خَلَقَ الزَّوْجَيْنِ الذَّكَرَ وَّ الْاُنْثٰى ۗ  
 مِّنْ نُّطْفَةٍ اِذَا تُمْنٰى ۗ وَ اَنْ عَلَيْهِ النَّشَاةَ الْاٰخْرٰى ۗ وَ اِنَّهُ هُوَ اَعْنٰى  
 وَ اَقْنٰى ۗ وَ اِنَّهُ هُوَ رَبُّ الشَّعْرٰى ۗ وَ اِنَّهُ اَهْلَكَ اَدَا الْاَوَّلٰى ۗ وَ شَمُوْدًا فَمَا  
 اَبْقٰى ۗ وَ قَوْمَ نُوْحٍ مِّنْ قَبْلٍ ۗ اِنَّهُمْ كَانُوْا هُمْ اَظْلَمَ وَّ اَطْعٰى ۗ وَ الْمُوْتَفِكَةَ  
 اَهْوٰى ۗ فَغَشَّهَا مَا غَشٰى ۗ فِى اَيِّ الْاِءِ رَبِّكَ تَتَمَارٰى ۗ هٰذَا نَذِيْرٌ مِّنَ  
 التَّنْذِرِ الْاَوَّلٰى ۗ اَزِفَتِ الْاَزْفَةُ ۗ لَيْسَ لَهَا مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ كَاشِفَةٌ ۗ اَفَمِنْ  
 هٰذَا الْحَدِيْثِ تَعْجَبُوْنَ ۗ وَ تَضْحَكُوْنَ وَّ لَا تَبْكُوْنَ ۗ وَ اَنْتُمْ  
 سٰمِدُوْنَ ۗ فَاسْجُدُوْا لِلّٰهِ وَ اعْبُدُوْا الْبَعِيْثَةَ



So, O Prophet, leave him alone who turns away from Our remembrance<sup>24</sup> and seeks nothing but the life of the world.<sup>25</sup> This<sup>26</sup> only is their amount of knowledge:<sup>27</sup> only your Lord knows best who has gone astray from His Way and who is on the right path, and to Allah belongs everything in the heavens and the earth<sup>28</sup>—so that<sup>29</sup> Allah may recompense the evil doers according to their deeds and give good rewards to those who have adopted the righteous attitude, who avoid grave sins<sup>30</sup> and open indecencies<sup>31</sup> save the minor offences.<sup>32</sup> Surely your Lord is liberal in forgiveness.<sup>33</sup> He knows you well from the time He produced you from the earth and when you were yet embryos in your mothers' wombs. Therefore, do not claim piety for yourselves: He alone knows best who is really pious and Godfearing.

29-32

Then, O Prophet, have you seen him who turned away from God's Way, who gave a little and stopped?<sup>34</sup> Does he possess the knowledge of the unseen that he sees the reality?<sup>35</sup> Has he not heard of those things that have been mentioned in the Books of Moses and in the Books of that Abraham who proved true to his pledge?<sup>36</sup>

33-55

"That no bearer of burdens shall bear the burden of another;<sup>37</sup> and that there is nothing for man but what he has striven for;<sup>38</sup> and that his striving shall soon be seen,<sup>39</sup> and then he will be fully rewarded for it; and that to your Lord is the final goal; and that it is He Who made (men) to laugh and to weep<sup>40</sup>; and that it is He Who gave death and granted life; and that it is He Who created the pair of male and female from a sperm-drop when it is emitted;<sup>41</sup> and that it rests upon Him to grant the second life;<sup>42</sup> and that it is He Who made rich and bestowed property;<sup>43</sup> and that He is the Lord of Sirius;<sup>44</sup> and that it is He Who destroyed the former 'Ād,<sup>45</sup> and annihilated Thamūd so as to spare none of them; and before them He destroyed the people of Noah because they were a most wicked and rebellious people. And He overthrew the subverted settlements, then there covered them that which (you know well) covered them.<sup>46</sup> Then,<sup>47</sup> O man, which of your Lord's bounties will you doubt?"<sup>48</sup>

This is a warning of the warnings already given.<sup>49</sup> That which is coming is near at hand.<sup>50</sup> None but Allah can avert it.<sup>51</sup> Is it at these things that you marvel?<sup>52</sup> And you laugh and weep not?<sup>53</sup> And you ward them off by merry-making?<sup>54</sup> Bow down before Allah and

56-62

worship Him.<sup>55</sup>

*Contd. from p 2211*

of God, or believers in many gods, or in One God, their crops ripen as well as fail, they fall ill as well as recover from illness, and they pass through all kinds of circumstances, good as well as bad. Therefore it is not at all an important and serious matter for them that man should or should not take some one as a deity, or should take as many deities or of any kind as he likes of his choice. When according to them the decision as to what is truth and what is falsehood is to take place in this very world, depending on the results thereof appearing here, obviously the results here do not decide absolutely that one creed is true and another false. Therefore, the adoption of one creed and rejection of another is a matter of mere whim with these people."

23. That is, "They have not adopted this creed about the angels on the ground that they had found through some means of knowledge that they were females and daughters of God, but they have presumed this on mere conjecture and have set up these shrines at which they pray for fulfillment of desires, make offerings and pay tributes."

24. *Dhikr* here may imply the Qur'an as well as mere admonition; it may also mean that he does not like that even God be mentioned before him.

25. That is, "You should not waste your time in making him understand the truth, for such a person will never be inclined to accept any invitation which is based on God-worship, which calls to objects and values higher than the material benefits of the world, and according to which the real aim of life may be the eternal success and well-being of the Hereafter. Instead of expending your time and energy on such a materialistic and ungodly person, you should devote attention to the people who are inclined to heed the remembrance of Allah and are not involved in the worship of the world."

26. This is a parenthetical sentence which has been inserted here as an explanation of the preceding verse.

27. That is, "These people neither know nor can think anything beyond the world and its immediate gains; therefore, it is futile merely to expend time and energy on them."

28. In other words, neither the question whether a person is gone astray or is on right guidance, is to be decided in this world, nor has its decision been left to the judgement of the people of the world; the decision rests with Allah. He alone is the Master of the earth and heavens and He alone knows which way out of the different ways being followed by the people of the world, is the way of

guidance and which of error and deviation. Therefore, you should least bother if the polytheistic Arabs and the Makkan disbelievers think you are deluded and misguided and regard their own ignorance as truth and guidance. Leave them alone if they wish to remain lost in their falsehood. You need not waste your time in disputing with them.

29. The theme is resumed here and connected as a continuous whole with verse 29. Without the parenthesis, it would read: "Leave him alone so that Allah may requite the evildoers for their evil deeds."

30. For explanation, see E.N. 53 of An-Nisā.

31. For explanation, see E.N. 130 of Al-An'ām and E.N. 89 of An-Nahl.

32. The word *lamam* as found in the original is used for a small quantity of something, or its slight effect, or its mere closeness, or its existence for a short time. This word is used to express the sense that a person did not commit an act but was very near to committing it.

On the basis of its usages some commentators have taken the word *lamam* in the meaning of minor sins. Some others have taken it in the meaning that a person should practically reach very near a grave sin but should desist from actually committing it. Still others take it in the sense of a person's remaining involved in a sin temporarily and then desisting from it. And according to some it implies that a person should think of, or wish, or intend to commit a sin but should take no practical steps towards it. In this regard, the views of the Companions and their immediate followers are as follows:

Zaid bin Aslam and Ibn Zaid opine, and a saying of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās also is to the same effect, that it signifies those sins which the people had committed in the pre-Islamic days of ignorance, then after embracing Islam they refrained from them.

Another view of Ibn 'Abbās is, and the same is also the view of Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin 'Āṣ, Mujāhid, Ḥasan Baṣri and Abū Ṣāliḥ, that it implies a person's being involved in a grave sin or indecency temporarily, or occasionally, and then giving it up.

Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, Masrūq and Sha'bī say, and the same also has been reported from Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah and Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās in authentic traditions, that this implies a person's approaching the very point of a grave sin and crossing all its preliminaries but then restraining himself at the final stage. e.g. a person goes out with the intention of stealing but refrains from it in the end, or has close association with other women, but refrains from committing adultery.

Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Zubair, 'Ikrimah, Qatādah and Ḍaḥḥāk say that this signifies those minor sins for which no punishment has been prescribed in the world nor any threat of punishment held out in the Hereafter.

Sa'id bin al-Musayyab says that this implies one's thinking of a sin in the mind but restraining oneself from committing it practically .

These are the different explanations which have been reported in the traditions from the Companions and their immediate followers. The majority of the later commentators and doctors of law and jurists are of the opinion that this verse and verse 31 of Sūrah An-Nisā classify sins into two main kinds: the major sins and the minor sins, and these two verses give man the hope that if he abstains from the major sins and open indecencies, Allah will overlook his minor errors. Although some distinguished scholars have also opined that no sin is minor and the disobedience of Allah is by itself a major sin, yet as stated by 'Imām Ghazālī the distinction between the major and the minor sins is something which cannot be denied, for the sources of knowledge of the *Shari'ah* values and injunctions all point to this.

As for the question, what is the distinction between the major and the minor sins, and what kinds of sins are major and what kinds of them minor? we are satisfied that: "Every such act is a major sin which has been forbidden by a clear ordinance of the Divine Book and the *Shari'ah* of the Prophet, or for which Allah and His Messenger have prescribed a punishment in the world, or have held out a threat of punishment in the Hereafter, or have cursed the one guilty of committing it, or given the news of infliction of punishment on those guilty of committing it." Apart from this class of sins all other acts which are disapproved by the *Shari'ah*, come under the definition of minor sins. Likewise, the mere desire for a major sin, or an intention to commit it, also is not a major sin but a minor sin: so much so that even crossing all the preliminaries of a major sin does not constitute a major sin unless one has actually committed it. However, even a minor sin becomes a major sin in case it is committed with a feeling of contempt for religion and of arrogance against Allah, and the one guilty of it does not consider the *Shari'ah* that has declared it an evil worthy of any attention and reverence.

33. That is, "The forgiveness for the one guilty of minor sins is not for the reason that a minor sin is no sin, but for the reason that Allah Almighty does not treat His servants narrow-mindedly and does not seize them on trifling faults: if the servants adopt piety and abstain from major sins and indecencies, He will not seize them for their minor errors and will forgive them magnanimously on account of His infinite mercy."

34. The reference is to Walid bin Mughīrah who was one of the prominent chiefs of the Quraish. According to Ibn Jarir Ṭabari, this person had first become inclined to accept the invitation of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), but when a polytheist friend of his came to know of his intention to become a Muslim, he counselled him not to give up his ancestral faith, and asked him that if he was afraid of the punishment of the Hereafter, he should pay him a certain amount of money and he would take the responsibility to suffer the punishment on his behalf. Walid accepted the offer and turned away from Allah's way. Then he paid only a little of the amount that he had promised to pay his polytheist friend and withheld the rest. The allusion to this incident was meant to toll the disbelievers of Makkah what kind of errors and follies they were involved in because of their heedlessness of the Hereafter and their ignorance of the Divine Religion.

35. That <sup>in</sup> "Does he know that this conduct is in any way beneficial for him? Does he know that a person can save himself even in this way from the punishment of the Hereafter?"

36. In the following verses a resume is being given of the teachings sent down in the Books of the Prophets Abraham and Moses. The Books of Moses signify the Torah. As for the Books of the Prophet Abraham they have become extinct and no mention of them is found even in the holy scriptures of the Jews and Christians. Only in the Qur'ān at two places have some parts of the teachings contained in the Books of the Prophet Abraham been cited, here and in the concluding verses of Sūrah Al-A'lā.

37. From this verse three cardinal principles are derived: (1) That every person is himself responsible for what he does; (2) that the responsibility of one man's act cannot be transferred to another unless he has a share in the commission of the act; and (3) that even if a person wishes he cannot take on himself the responsibility of another man's act, nor can the actual culprit be let off on the ground that another person is willing to suffer the punishment on his behalf.

38. From this verse also three important principles are derived: (1) That every person will get only the fruit of his own deeds; (2) that the fruit of one man's deeds cannot be given to another unless he has a share in that deed, and (3) that none can attain anything without striving for it.

Some people wrongly apply these three principles to the economic problems of the world and conclude that no person can become the lawful owner of anything except of his own earned income. But this conclusion clashes with several laws and injunctions given by the Qur'ān itself, e.g. the law of inheritance, according to which many individuals inherit a person and are regarded as his lawful heirs, whereas the heritage is not their earned income. As for a

suckling for instance, it cannot be proved by any stretch of imagination that its labour had any share in the wealth left by its father. Likewise, there are the injunctions about the *zakāt* and voluntary charities according to which the wealth of one man is transferred to others only on the basis of their legal and moral entitlement and they become its lawful owners, whereas in the production of this wealth they did not make any contribution at all. Thus, it is against the intention of the Qur'ān to take a verse of it and derive from it such conclusions as clash with the other teachings of the Qur'ān itself.

Some other people regard these principles as concerning the Hereafter and raise the question whether, according to these principles, the deeds of one man can in some way be also beneficial for the other person, and whether the deeds of a person which he does for another person, or on his behalf, can be accepted from him, and whether it is also possible that a person may transfer the reward of his act to another. If the answer to these questions be in the negative the sending of spiritual rewards (*isāl thawāb*) for the dead and performing Ḥajj on behalf of another, would be inadmissible; even the prayer of forgiveness for the other person would be meaningless, for this prayer also is not the concerned person's own act and deed. However, this extreme point of view has been adopted by none among the followers of Islam except the Mu'tazilites. Only they take this verse in the meaning that one man's acts and deeds can in no case be beneficial for the other. On the contrary, the followers of the *Sunnah* are unanimous that the prayer of one man is beneficial for the other because it is confirmed by the Qur'ān; however, they differ only in details, and not in principles, as to whether the sending of spiritual rewards for another and doing a good work on behalf of another is beneficial or not.

- (1) The term *isāl thawāb* means that after a person has performed a good act, he may pray to Allah to grant its rewards to another. In this regard, Imām Mālik and Imām Shāfe'ī have expressed the opinion that the rewards of the pure bodily acts of worship, e.g. the Prayer, the Fasting and recitals of the Qur'ān, etc. cannot reach the other person; however, the rewards of one's monetary acts of worship, e.g. charities, or Ḥajj, which is a combination of the monetary and bodily worships, can reach the other, for the principle is that one man's act should not be beneficial for the other. But since according to authentic *Aḥādith* the rewards of charities can be conveyed and Ḥajj on behalf of another also can be performed, they admit the permissibility of conveying of rewards to the extent of this kind of the acts of worship only. On the contrary, the Ḥanafī viewpoint is that a man can send the reward of each of his virtuous acts as a gift to the other, whether it is the Prayer, or the Fast, or the recitation of the Qur'ān, or remembrance of Allah, or charity, or Ḥajj and 'Umrah. The argument is that just as a man after carrying out a piece of work can tell the master to



pay the wages to such and such other person instead of him, so after performing a good deed also he can pray to Allah to grant its rewards to such and such other person instead of him. In this there is no rational ground for making exception of some kinds of virtues and keeping it restricted to some other kinds of virtues. The same is confirmed by a large number of the traditions:

A Tradition, on the unanimous authority of Ḥaḍrat `Ā'ishah, Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, Ḥaḍrat Jābir bin `Abdullah, Ḥaḍrat Abū Rāfi', Ḥaḍrat Abū Ṭalḥah Ansāri and Ḥudhaifah bin Usaid al-Ghifāri has been reported in Bukhāri, Muslim, Musnad Aḥmad, Ibn Mājah, Ṭabari (in *Awsat*), Mustadrik and Ibn Abī Shaibah, saying that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) got two rams and sacrificed one on behalf of himself and his family and the other on behalf of his Ummah.

Muslim, Bukhāri, Musnad Aḥmad, Abū Da'ūd and Nasā'i have related a Tradition from Ḥaḍrat `Ā'ishah to the effect that a person said to the Holy Prophet: "My mother has died suddenly. I think if she had a chance to speak, she would have asked me giving away something in charity. Now, if I give away something in charity on her behalf, will she get a reward for it?" The Holy Prophet replied: "Yes, she will."

In Musnad Aḥmad there is a Tradition from Ḥaḍrat `Abdullah bin `Amr bin `Aṣ to the effect that his grandfather, `Aṣ bin Wā'il, had vowed in the pre-Islamic days of ignorance to sacrifice 100 camels. His uncle, Hishām bin `Aṣ, sacrificed fifty camels of his own share. Ḥaḍrat `Amr bin `Aṣ, asked the Holy Prophet as to what he should do. The Holy Prophet replied: "If your father had affirmed faith in the Oneness of God, you may observe fasts on his behalf, or give something in charity: this would be beneficial for him."

A Tradition has been reported in Musnad Aḥmad, Abū Da'ūd, Nasā'i and Ibn Mājah, on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan Baṣri, to the effect that Ḥaḍrat Sa'd bin `Ubādah asked the Holy Prophet: "My mother has died. Should I give something in charity on her behalf?" The Holy Prophet replied in the affirmative. Several other traditions bearing on the same subject also have been related in Bukhāri, Muslim, Musnad Aḥmad, Nasā'i, Tirmidhi, Abū Da'ūd, Ibn Mājah, etc. on the authority of Ḥaḍrat `Ā'ishah, Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah and Ḥaḍrat Ibn `Abbās, according to which the Holy Prophet permitted giving away of something in charity on behalf of the deceased person describing it as beneficial for him.

According to Dāraqutnī a person said to the Holy Prophet: "I have been serving my parents while they were alive; what should I do now when they are dead?" The Holy Prophet replied; "This would also be their service if you offered the Prayer on their behalf along with your own Prayers, and observed the Fast on their behalf along with your own Fast." Another tradition in Dāraqutnī has been

related from Ḥaḍrat 'Alī according to which the Holy Prophet said: "If a person passing by the graveyard recites "*Qul huwallāh-u ahad*" eleven times and gives away its reward for the dead, all the dead ones will be granted their due shares of the rewards."

This large number of the traditions which support one another explicitly state that the transfer of the spiritual rewards is not only possible but rewards of all kinds of acts of worship and virtuous deeds can be sent and conveyed and in it there is no specification of any particular kind of acts and deeds. In this connection, however, four things should be understood well:

First, that the reward of that act only can be transferred, which may have been performed purely for the sake of Allah and according to the *Shari'ah* injunctions; otherwise obviously an act which is performed for the sake of another than Allah, or in contravention of the *Shari'ah* injunctions, cannot even entitle its doer himself to any reward, nothing to say of its transfer to another person.

Secondly, the gift of the rewards will certainly reach those righteous persons who are staying as guests with Allah, but no rewards are expected to reach those culprits who are placed in confinement there. The gift can reach the guests of Allah but the criminals of Allah cannot be expected to receive it. If a person sends his rewards to him because of a misunderstanding, it will not go waste but instead of reaching the culprit it will return to the actual worker himself just like the money-order which returns to the sender in case it does not reach the one to whom it has been sent.

Thirdly, the transfer of the reward is possible but not the transfer of punishment. That is, it is possible that one may do a good deed and may willingly transfer its reward to the other and it reaches him, but it is not possible that one may commit a sin and transfer its punishment to the other and it reaches him.

The fourth thing is that a virtuous act is beneficial in two ways: First, on account of its those results which accrue to the soul and morality of the doer himself because of which he becomes worthy of a reward in the sight of Allah; second, on account of the reward which Allah grants him as a gift and favour. The transfer of the spiritual reward does not concern the first but only the second. This can be understood by an example. A person tries to attain proficiency in the art of wrestling by constant practice. The strength and skill thus gained is in any way specially meant for his own self; it cannot be transferred to another. Similarly, if he is attached to a royal court, and there is a stipend fixed for him as a wrestler, he alone will receive it and no one else. However, in respect of the prizes and gifts that his patron may like to grant him as an appreciation for his creditable performance, he may request that they may be given to his coach, or parents, or some other benefactor, on his behalf. The same is the case with the virtuous

deeds: their spiritual benefits are not transferable and their rewards also cannot be transferred to another, but as for their rewards and gifts he can pray to Allah that these may be granted to a near and dear one, or a benefactor of his. That is why it is termed as *iṣāl thawāb* (conveying of spiritual rewards) and not as *iṣāl jazā'* (conveying of material reward).

- (2) Another form of a person's work being beneficial for another is that one should either do a virtuous deed on the desire or beckoning of another, or without his desire or beckoning, on his behalf, which, in fact, was obligatory for him to carry out, but which he was unable to carry out himself. In this regard, the Ḥanafī jurists say that the acts of worship are of three kinds: purely physical, e.g. the Prayer; purely monetary, e.g. the *zakāt*; and the compound acts of bodily and monetary worship, e.g. Ḥajj. As for the first kind, nobody can act as an agent of another. As for the second kind, one can act as an agent of the other, e.g. the husband can pay the *zakāt* due on the ornaments of the wife. As for the third kind, one can act as an agent of the other only in case the actual person on whose behalf the act is being performed, is permanently, and not just temporarily, unfit to carry out his obligation himself. For example, Ḥajj can be performed on behalf of another only in case the person concerned is unable to go for Ḥajj himself nor may have the hope that he would ever be able to perform it himself. The Mālikīs and the Shāfi'īs also concur on this. However, Imām Mālik lays down the condition that if the father has willed that his son should perform Ḥajj after him, on his behalf, the son can perform Ḥajj on his father's behalf, otherwise not. But the traditions in this regard are very explicit. Whether the father has expressed the desire, or made a will or not, the son can perform Ḥajj on his behalf.

Ibn 'Abbās has related that a woman from the tribe of Khath'am said to the Holy Prophet: "The command for Ḥajj has reached my father at a time when he has become very old: he cannot even sit on the camel's back." The Holy Prophet replied: "You then may perform Ḥajj on his behalf." (Bukhārī, Muslim, Aḥmad, Tirmidī, Nasā'ī). A tradition bearing on the same subject has also been related by Ḥaḍrat 'Alī. (Aḥmad, Tirmidhī).

Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Zabair has made mention of a man of the same tribe of Khath'am, who also put a similar question to the Holy Prophet concerning his aged father. The Holy Prophet asked: "Are you his eldest son?" He answered in the affirmative. Thereupon the Holy Prophet said "If your father had left behind a debt and you paid it off, would it stand paid on his behalf?" He replied that it would. The Holy Prophet said: "Then you should likewise perform Ḥajj also on his behalf." (Aḥmad, Nasā'ī).

Ibn 'Abbās relates that a woman from the tribe of Juhainah came to the Holy Prophet and said: "My mother had vowed to perform Ḥajj but she died before performing her vow. Now, can I perform Ḥajj on her behalf?" The Holy Prophet replied: "If your mother had left behind a debt, would you not have paid it? Likewise, you should also discharge the vow made to Allah, and Allah has a greater right that the vows made to Him be performed." (Bukhārī, Nasā'ī). Bukhārī and Musnad Aḥmad contain another tradition to the effect that a man came and put the same question to the Holy Prophet concerning his sister as has been mentioned above, and the Holy Prophet gave him also the same answer.

These traditions provide a clear proof that so far as the compound acts or bodily and monetary worships are concerned, one can act on behalf of another. As for the purely bodily acts of worship, there are some *Aḥādīth* which prove the permissibility of acting on behalf of another in this kind of worship as well. For example, Ibn 'Abbās has related that a woman from the tribe of Juhainah asked the Holy Prophet: "My mother had vowed to observe the Fast and she died without performing her vow. Now, can I observe the Fast on her behalf?" The Holy Prophet replied: "Observe the Fast on her behalf." (Bukhārī, Muslim, Aḥmad, Abū Da'ūd). And Ḥaḍrat Buraidah's tradition that a woman asked concerning her mother: "She had one month's (according to another tradition two months') Fasts to observe; can I observe those Fasts on her behalf?" The Holy Prophet said that she could." (Muslim, Aḥmad, Tirmidhī, Abū Da'ūd). And Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah's tradition that the Holy Prophet said: "If a person dies and he had some Fasts to observe, his guardian should observe those Fasts on his behalf." (Bukhārī, Muslim, Ahmad). In the tradition related by Bazzār the Holy Prophet's words are to the effect: "If his guardian may so like, he may observe those Fasts on his behalf." On the basis of these very traditions the *Aṣḥāb al-Ḥadīth* and Imām Auḏā'ī and the *Zāhirīs* have formed the view that one is permitted to perform bodily acts of worship also on behalf of the other. But Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, Imām Mālik, Shāfe'ī and Imām Zaid bin 'Alī have given the ruling that a fast cannot be observed on behalf of a dead person, and Imām Aḥmad, Imām Laith and Ishāq bin Rāhawaih opine that this can be done only in case the deceased person might have so vowed but might not have been able to perform his vow. Those who oppose this give the argument that the reporters of the *Aḥādīth*, which prove its permissibility, have themselves given their rulings against it. Ibn 'Abbās's ruling has been related by Nasā'ī, thus: "No one should offer a Prayer or observe a Fast on behalf of another." And Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah's ruling, according to 'Abdur Razzāq, is: "Do not observe the Fast on behalf of your dead ones; feed (the needy) instead." The same has been related from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar also by 'Abdur Razzāq that the Fast should not be observed on behalf of the deceased person. This shows that in the beginning it was permissible to perform

acts of bodily worship on behalf of others, but the practice that became established in the end was that it was not permissible to do so; otherwise it was not possible that those who have reported these *Aḥādīth* from the Holy Prophet, should have themselves given rulings against them.

In this connection, it should be understood well that fulfilment of an obligation on behalf of another can be beneficial only to those people who have themselves been keen and desirous of fulfilling their obligations and might have been unable to do so being rendered helpless by circumstances. But a person who deliberately shirked going for Ḥajj although he had the necessary means for it and had no feeling whatever of this obligation in his heart either, cannot be benefited even if several Ḥajj be performed on his behalf afterwards. This would be analogous to the case of a person who deliberately avoided paying his debts and had no intention to pay them till the last. Afterwards even if every penny is paid off on his behalf, he would remain a debtor in the sight of Allah. The payment of the debts by another, can relieve only such a person who in his lifetime was desirous of paying off his debts but was unable to do so due to straitened circumstances.

39. That is, "In the Hereafter the people's deeds shall be examined and judged in order to see what provisions they have brought with them." As this sentence occurs immediately after the preceding sentence, it by itself indicates that the preceding sentence relates to the rewards and punishments of the Hereafter, and the view of those who present it as an economic principle relating to this world is not correct. To interpret a verse of the Qur'an in a way as is irrelevant to the context as well as clashes with the other ordinances of the Qur'an cannot be right.

40. That is, "Allah provides the means both for joy and for grief. He controls good and ill luck. There is no one else in the Universe, who may have anything to do with making or marring of destinies."

41. For explanation, see E.N.'s 27 to 30 of Sūrah Ar-Rūm, E.N. 77 of Sūrah Ash-Shūrā.

42. When this verse is read with the two preceding verses, the sequence by itself seems to provide the argument for the life-after-death also. The God Who has the power to give death and grant life and the God Who brings about a creature like man from an insignificant sperm-drop, rather brings about two separate sexes — male and female — from the same substance and by the same method of creation, cannot be helpless to resurrect man once again.

43. Different meanings have been given by the lexicographers and commentators of the word *aqūā* as used in the original. According to Qatādah, Ibn

‘Abbās took it in the meaning of *ardā* (pleased), and according to ‘Ikrimah in the meaning of *qanna’a* (satisfied). According to Imām Razi, whatever is given to a person over and above his need and requirement is *iqnā’*. Abū ‘Ubaidah and several other lexicographers have expressed the view that *aqnā* is derived from *qunya-tun*, which means lasting and secured property, e.g. the house, lands, gardens, cattle, etc. Ibn Zaid, however, has given quite a different meaning of it. He says that *aqnā* here has been used in the sense of *afqara* (made penniless), and the verse means: He made whomever He pleased rich and whomever He pleased penniless.

44. *Shi’rā* is the brightest star in the heavens, which is also known by the names of *Mirzam al-Jawzā’*, *al-Kalb al-Akbar*, *al-Kalb al-Jabbār*, *Ash-Shi’rā al-‘Abūr*, etc. In English it is called Sirius, Dog Star and Canis Majoris. It is 23 times as luminous as the Sun, but as it shines over eight light years away from the earth, it appears to be smaller and less luminous than the Sun. The Egyptians worshipped it, for it made its appearance at about the time of the season when the annual floods were beginning in the Nile: the Egyptians believed that Sirius caused the Nile floods. The pagan Arabs also held the belief that this star influenced human destinies. That is why they worshipped it as a deity, and the Bani Khuza’ah, the neighbouring tribe of the Quraish, were particularly well known for being its devotees. What Allah says means: Your destinies are not made and controlled by *Shi’rā* but by the Lord of *Shi’rā*.

45. ‘Ād Ūlā signifies the ancient ‘Ād to whom the Prophet Hud (peace be upon him) had been appointed a Prophet. When those people were inflicted with the torment in consequence of denying the Prophet Hud, the believers only escaped the punishment. Their descendants are called ‘Ād Ukhra, or the latter ‘Ād, in history.

46. “The subdued settlements”: the settlements of the people of Lot, and “covered them that which covered them” probably imply the waters of the Dead Sea, which spread over their settlements after they had sunk underground, and cover the region even till this day.

47. According to some commentators this sentence also is a part of the resume of the Books of the Prophets Abraham and Moses, and according to others it ended with *Fa-ghashshā-hā mā ghashshā*, and with this begins a new theme. According to the context, however, the first view seems to be preferable, for the following words “This is a warning of the warnings already given,” point out that the whole preceding passage is “of the warnings already given”, which had been sent down in the Books of the Prophets Abraham and Moses.

48. The word *tatamārā*, as used in the Text, means both to doubt and to wrangle. The address is directed to every listener. To every person who may be listening to this discourse, it is being said: Even after witnessing what has been the fate in human history of denying the bounties of Allah and of wrangling with the Prophets concerning them, will you still commit the same folly? What the former peoples had doubted was whether the bounties and blessings they were enjoying in the world, had been bestowed by One God, or by other associates of His, or by no one, but had become available by themselves. On account of this they wrangled with the Prophets. The Prophets asserted that all these blessings had been granted to them by God, and by One God alone; therefore, they should be grateful to Him and should serve Him alone; but the people did not believe this and wrangled with the Prophets on this very count. Now, O man: "Don't you see in history what fate these nations met for entertaining this doubt and for their wrangling? Will you entertain the same doubt and indulge in the same wrangling as proved disastrous for others?"

In this connection, one should also bear in mind that the 'Ad and the Thamūd and the people of Noah had passed long before the Prophet Abraham, and the people of Lot had met with the torment during his own lifetime. Therefore, there can be no difficulty in regarding this passage as a part of the resume of the Prophet Abraham's Books.

49. The words in the original are: *Hādha nadhīr-un-min-an-nudhur il ula*. The commentators have expressed three points of view in the explanation of this sentence. First, that *nadhīr* here implies the Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace); second, that it implies the Qur'ān; third, that it implies the fate of the peoples already destroyed, which has been referred to in the foregoing verses. In view of the context, we are of the opinion that this last commentary is preferable.

50. That is, "Do not be under the delusion that there is yet enough time for thinking and consideration; therefore, you may not give immediate and serious attention to these things and may not decide that you should accept them without further delay. Nay: no one among you knows how much of the respite of life is left to him. Any one of you can die at any time and the Last Hour can also take place suddenly. Therefore, do not think that the Hour of Judgement is yet far off. Whoever has any concern for the Hereafter, should mend his ways forthwith, for one may not have a chance to take a second breath after the present breath."

51. That is, when the Hour of Judgement does arrive, you will not be able to stop it, nor your deities other than Allah have the power to avert it. Allah alone can stop it but He will not.

52. The word *hādih-al-Ḥadīth* as used in the original, signifies the whole teaching that was being presented in the Qur'ān through the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) and "marvel" implies the marvel that man expresses on hearing a novel and incredible thing. The verse means this: "That to which Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) is inviting you is the same that you have already heard. Now, is it this very thing at which you marvel and feel alarmed, and express wonder as if something very strange and novel was being presented before you?"

53. That is, "Instead of weeping at your ignorance and deviation you, on the contrary, are mocking, the Truth".

54. Two meanings have been given of the word *sāmidūn* by the lexicographers. Ibn 'Abbās, 'Ikrimah and Abū 'Ubaidah, the grammarian, are of the view that in the Yamanite tongue *sumūd* means singing and playing, and the verse alludes that the disbelievers of Makkah, in order to suppress the recitation of the Qur'ān and to divert the people's attention away from it, would start singing in a loud voice. The other meaning of it given by Ibn 'Abbās and Mujāhid is: "*Sunnud* means bending down the head out of arrogance; when the disbelievers of Makkah passed by the Holy Prophet, they would pass by him angrily with their faces lifted up." Rāghib Iṣṣḥānī in his *Mufradāt* also has adopted the same meaning: accordingly, Qatādah has translated *sāmidūn* into *ghāfilūn* and Sa'id bin Jubair into *mu'ridūn*.

55. According to Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, Imām Shāfe'i and many other scholars it is obligatory to perform a *sajdah* on the recitation of this verse. Although Imām Mālik himself used to perform a *sajdah* here (as cited by Qāḍī Abū Bakr ibn al-'Arabī in *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*), yet he held the view that it was not obligatory to perform a *sajdah* here, the basis of his view being this tradition of Hadrat Zaid bin Thābit: "I recited Sūrah an-Najm before the Holy Prophet, and he did not perform a *sajdah*." (Bukhārī, Muslim, Aḥmad, Tirmidhi, Abū Da'ūd, Nasā'i). But this *Ḥadīth* does not negate the incumbency of the prostration here, for it is likely that the Holy Prophet did not perform the *sajdah* then due to some reason but might have performed it later. Other traditions on the subject are explicit that the prostration was always performed on this verse. Hadrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, Ibn 'Abbas and Muṭṭalib bin Abī Wadā'ah have unanimously stated that when the Holy Prophet recited this Sūrah for the first time in the Ka'bah, he had prostrated himself and along with him the whole assembly of the believers and the disbelievers also had fallen down prostrate. (Bukhārī, Aḥmad, Nasā'i) Ibn 'Umar has reported that the Holy Prophet recited Sūrah an-Najm in the Prayer and prostrated himself and lay long in that state. (Baihaqī, Ibn Mardūyah). Saburat al-



Juhani states that Ḥaḍrat 'Umar recited Sūrah an-Najm in the Fajr Prayer and performed a *sajdah*, then stood up, recited Sūrah al-Zilzāl and performed the *rukū'*. (Sa'id bin Mansūr). Imām Mālik himself has related this act of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar in his *Mu'waṭṭā'* (*Bāb Mā Jā'fī Sujūd al-Qar'ān*).

The first part of the paper is devoted to the study of the asymptotic behavior of the solutions of the system (1) as  $t \rightarrow \infty$ . It is shown that the solutions of the system (1) tend to zero as  $t \rightarrow \infty$  if and only if the matrix  $A$  is stable.

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